Lord of Mysteries
Cuttlefish That Loves Diving

Chapter 1 - Crimson

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Ouch!

It hurts so much!

My head is killing me!

The bizarre dream filled with murmurs shattered instantly. Zhou Mingrui, still asleep, felt a throbbing pain in his head as if someone had hit him with a pole—again and again. No, it was more like a sharp object had pierced his temple, twisting it in the process!

Ouch… In his stupor, Zhou Mingrui tried to turn over, hold his head, and sit up, but he couldn't move his limbs. They refused to budge, leaving him completely immobilized and helpless.

[image]

It looks like I'm still not awake, still dreaming… Maybe in a short while I'll think I'm awake, but I'm still sleeping… Zhou Mingrui, used to such disorienting experiences, struggled to focus and break free from the shackles of darkness and confusion.

However, while half-awake, he tried to focus his will that felt as insubstantial as a wisp of fog—there one moment and gone the next. His thoughts refused to be controlled or examined. No matter how hard he tried, his focus kept slipping away as random notions and images bubbled up unbidden.

Why would I suddenly get such a terrible headache in the middle of the night?

And it’s so painful!

Could it be a cerebral hemorrhage or something?

F**k, am I going to die young like this?

I need to wake up! Now!

Huh? It doesn’t hurt as much as before, but it still feels like a blunt knife is slowly slicing through my brain…

Looks like I can’t go back to sleep. How am I supposed to work tomorrow?

Why am I even thinking about work? With a headache like this, I should take the day off! No need to worry about the manager’s nagging!

Hey, putting it that way, it doesn’t seem too bad. Hehe, I can end up getting some spare time for myself!

The throbbing pain allowed Zhou Mingrui to gradually gather immaterial strength. Finally, he straightened his back and opened his eyes, fully breaking free from his reverie.

His vision first blurred, then was tinged with a faint crimson. He saw a wooden desk in front of him with an open notebook in the center. The pages were coarse and yellowed, with an eye-catching sentence written in deep black ink at the top.

To the left of the notebook was a stack of neatly arranged books, numbering about eight. The wall to their right had grayish-white pipes and a wall lamp connected to them.

The lamp had a classic Western style, about half the size of an adult’s head, with a transparent glass inner layer and a black metal grid on the outside.

Diagonally beneath the extinguished wall lamp was a black ink bottle bathed in a pale red glow. Its embossed surface formed a blurry angel pattern.

In front of the ink bottle, to the right of the notebook, lay a dark-colored pen with a rounded body. Its tip shimmered faintly, and its cap rested next to a brass revolver.

A gun? A revolver? Zhou Mingrui was stunned. Everything he saw was so unfamiliar and looked nothing like his room!

In his shock and confusion, he noticed that the desk, notebook, ink bottle, and revolver were covered in a layer of crimson “veil” from the light shining through the window.

Subconsciously, he lifted his head and his gaze slowly moved upwards.

In midair, against a backdrop of ‘black velvet curtains,’ a crimson moon hung high, shining silently.

Wh— Zhou Mingrui felt inexplicably terrified and stood up abruptly. But before he could straighten his legs, his head throbbed with pain again, causing him to lose strength and fall back heavily onto the hard wooden chair.

Thud!

The pain did little. Zhou Mingrui propped himself up with his hands on the table, stood up again, and turned around in a panic, examining his surroundings.

It was a small room with a brown door on each side and a wooden bunk bed against the opposite wall.

Between the bed and the left door was a cabinet with two open doors on top and five drawers below.

Next to the cabinet, at about the height of a person, was another grayish-white pipe connected to a strange mechanical device with some exposed gears and bearings.

In the right corner of the room near the desk were items resembling coal stoves, along with soup pots, iron pots, and other kitchen utensils.

Across from the right door was a dressing mirror with two cracks. Its wooden base had simple and plain patterns.

With a quick glance, Zhou Mingrui caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror—the current him: black hair, brown eyes, a linen shirt, a thin build, average features, but with a rather deep outline…

Wh— Zhou Mingrui gasped, his mind flooded with helpless and confused thoughts.

The revolver, the classical Western decor, and the crimson moon different from Earth's moon all indicated one thing!

C-could I have transmigrated? Zhou Mingrui's mouth slowly opened.

He had grown up reading web novels and often fantasized about such scenarios. But when it really happened, he found it hard to accept.

Almost a minute later, Zhou Mingrui muttered to himself, trying to find some humor in his situation, This is probably what it means to love a fantasy[1]?

If it weren't for the persistent headache keeping his thoughts sharp, he would have definitely thought he was dreaming.

Calm down, calm down, calm down… After taking a few deep breaths, Zhou Mingrui tried hard to stop panicking.

At that moment, as his mind and body calmed down, memories began flooding him, slowly appearing in his mind!

Klein Moretti, a citizen of the Northern Continent's Loen Kingdom, Awwa County, City of Tingen. He is also a recent graduate from the

Department of History at Khoy University…

His father was a sergeant in the Imperial Army who died in a colonial conflict on the Southern Continent. The compensation money allowed Klein to attend a private grammar school, laying the foundation for his university admission…

His mother was a devotee of the Evernight Goddess. She passed away the year Klein passed the entrance examinations to Khoy University…

He also has an elder brother and a younger sister. They live together in a two bedroom apartment…

Their family is not wealthy, even struggling. They are currently supported by his elder brother who works as a clerk at an import and export company…

As a history graduate, Klein had learned the ancient Feysac language—considered the source of all languages in the Northern Continent—and the Hermes language often found in ancient mausoleums related to rituals and prayers…

Hermes language? Zhou Mingrui's mind stirred. He reached out to rub his throbbing temples and looked at the open notebook on the desk. The text on the yellowed paper went from strange to alien, then from alien to familiar, until it became readable.

It was text written in Hermes language!

The dark ink said: "Everyone will die, including me."

[image]

Hiss! Zhou Mingrui felt inexplicably horrified. He instinctively leaned back, trying to distance himself from the notebook and the text on it.

He was so weak he nearly fell, but managed to grab the edge of the table in a panic. The surrounding air felt turbulent, with faint whispers echoing around him. It reminded him of hearing horror stories from his elders when he was young.

He shook his head, telling himself it was just an illusion. Zhou Mingrui steadied himself, shifted his gaze from the notebook, and took deep breaths.

This time, his gaze landed on the shimmering brass revolver. A sudden question popped into his mind.

With Klein's family situation, how could they afford or even get a revolver? Zhou Mingrui couldn't help but frown.

While deep in thought, he suddenly noticed a red handprint on the edge of the table. Its color was deeper than the moonlight and thicker than the 'veil.'

It was a bloody handprint!

A bloody handprint? Zhou Mingrui subconsciously turned over his right hand that had been holding the edge of the table. Looking down, he saw his palm and fingers were covered in blood.

At the same time, the throbbing pain in his head continued. Although it had weakened a little, it was still persistent.

Did I smash my head? Zhou Mingrui wondered as he turned around and walked towards the cracked dressing mirror.

A few steps later, a medium-built figure with black hair and brown eyes came into view. The person had a distinctly scholarly air.

Is this me now? Klein Moretti?

Zhou Mingrui paused for a moment. Due to the dim light, he couldn't see clearly, so he moved forward until he was just a step away from the mirror.

Using the crimson moonlight, he turned his head to check the side of his forehead.

The clear reflection in the mirror showed a grotesque wound on his temple, with burn marks around it. The area was stained with blood, and grayish-white brain matter slowly wriggled within.

This is actually a proverb that describes Lord Ye. In ancient times, Lord Ye was very fond of dragons, adorning his whole palace-beams, pillars, doors, windows and walls-with drawings and carvings of them. When a real dragon in heaven heard of this, it was deeply moved by his infatuation and paid him a visit. When Lord Ye saw the real dragon thrusting its head in through the window of his study and its tail moving in his palace, he was frightened out of the house for his life. Clearly, what Lord Ye loved was not a real dragon.

Chapter 2 - Situation

◆

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Zhou Mingrui reeled back in fear at the sight that greeted him. It was as though the person in the dressing mirror was not himself, but a dessicated corpse.

How could a person with such grievous wounds be still alive!?

He turned his head in disbelief again and checked the other side. Even though he was a distance away and the lighting was poor, he could still see the penetrating wound and dark red blood stains.

“This…”

Zhou Mingrui drew a deep breath as he tried hard to calm himself.

He reached out to press his left chest and sensed his racing heart that exuded immense vitality.

He then touched his exposed skin. Beneath the slight coldness was flowing warmth.

When he squatted down and after verifying that his knees could bend, Zhou Mingrui stood up again and calmed down.

“What’s happening?” he muttered with a frown. He planned to inspect his head injury seriously once more.

He took two steps forward and suddenly paused. The moonlight of the sanguine moon was relatively dark, so it was insufficient for his 'serious inspection.'

A memory fragment triggered as Zhou Mingrui turned his head to look at the grayish-white pipes and the metallic-gridded lamp on the wall right beside the study desk.

This was the most common gas lamp of the times. Its flame was stable and its illumination capabilities were excellent.

With Klein Moretti's family situation, even a kerosene lamp was a dream, much less a gas lamp. Using candles was most apt for their standing and stature. However, back when he burned the midnight oil four years ago to be admitted into Khoy University, his elder brother, Benson, felt that it was an important matter which their family's future depended upon. Therefore, he insisted on creating conducive studying conditions for Klein even if it meant taking on debt.

Of course, Benson, who was literate and had worked for several years, was not a rash person who did not think of the consequences. He had quite some tricks up his sleeve. He reasoned with the landlord to 'raise the apartment's standards by installing gas pipes to improve the likelihood of rentals in the future.' The landlord was convinced and provided the money to complete the basic modifications. Then, using the convenience of working at an import and export company, he purchased a brand new gas lamp which was nearly at cost price. In the end, all he needed was to use his savings and did not need to borrow money.

After the memory fragment flashed past his mind, Zhou Mingrui came to the desk where he turned the pipe's valve and began twisting the gas lamp's switch.

With a sputtering sound, a spark sounded from friction. Light did not descend upon Zhou Mingrui as he had expected.

He twisted the switch a few more times, but all the gas lamp did was sputter and remain dark.

“Hmm…” Retracting his hand and pressing on his left temple, Zhou Mingrui sought for the reason by rummaging through his memory fragments.

A few seconds later, he turned around and walked toward the door. He arrived at the machine installation which was similarly inset into the wall and had grayish-white pipes connected to it.

This was a gas meter!

After seeing the exposed gears and bearings, Zhou Mingrui took out a coin from his trousers’ pocket.

It was dark yellow in color and had a bronze shimmer to it. The front of the coin was engraved with a portrait of a crown-wearing man, and there was a ‘1’ on a clump of wheat on the back.

Zhou Mingrui knew that this was the most basic currency of the Loen Kingdom. It was called a copper penny. One penny’s purchasing power was roughly three to four yuan before his transmigration. Such coins had other denominations such as the five pence, a halfpence and a quarter-pence. Despite the three types, the denominations were not in small-enough units. In everyday life, one had to buy several different things just to spend a single coin from time to time.

After flipping the coin—which was only minted and circulated after King George III ascended to the throne—a few times, Zhou Mingrui inserted it into the gas meter’s thin vertical ‘mouth.’

Clink! Clang!

After the penny fell to the bottom of the meter, the sound of grinding gears sounded immediately, producing a short but melodious mechanical rhythm.

Zhou Mingrui stared at the meter for a few seconds before returning to the burly wood desk. He then reached out to twist the gas lamp's switch.

After some sputtering, there was a sharp sound!

A fire plume ignited and rapidly grew. Bright light first occupied the internals of the wall lamp before penetrating the transparent glass, blanketing the room with a warm glow.

The darkness quickly receded as the crimson retreated out the window. Zhou Mingrui felt at ease for a baffling reason as he quickly came in front of the dressing mirror.

This time, he seriously inspected his temple and did not miss a single detail.

After a few rounds of inspection, he realized that apart from the original blood stain, liquid was no longer flowing out of the grotesque wound. It appeared like it had received the best hemostasis and bandaging. As for the slowly squirming grayish-white brain and the discernible growth of flesh and blood around the wound, it meant that the wound might take thirty to forty minutes, or maybe even two to three hours before it would only leave a light scar.

“The restorative effects that transmigration brings?” Zhou Mingrui curled up the right corner of his mouth as he muttered silently.

Following that, he let out a long sigh. Regardless, he was still alive!

After settling his mind, he pulled open a drawer and took out a tiny piece of soap. He took one of the old and tattered towels hanging by the side of the cupboard and opened the door. He then walked to the public bathroom which was shared by the tenants on the second floor.

Yes, I should clean up the blood stains on my head, or I'll keep looking like a crime scene. It's fine scaring myself, but if I were to scare my sister, Melissa, when she gets up early in the morning tomorrow, it would be quite problematic!

The corridor outside was pitch black. Silhouettes were barely accentuated by the crimson moonlight from the window at the end of the corridor. They looked like a pair of monster eyes that silently observed the living late into the night.

Zhou Mingrui lightened his footsteps as he walked towards the communal bathroom with a shuddering fear.

When he entered, there was even more moonlight, allowing him to see everything clearly. Zhou Mingrui stood in front of a wash basin and turned the tap's knob.

Upon hearing the gushing sound of water, he suddenly recalled his landlord, Mr. Franky.

As water was included in the rent, this short and thin gentleman who wore a top hat, a vest, and a black suit, always inspected the bathroom actively to take note of any sounds of flowing water.

If the water gushed too loudly, Mr. Franky would ignore all of his gentlemanly traits by flailing his walking stick and striking the bathroom's door, shouting things like 'Darn thief,' 'Wastage is a shameless matter,' 'I'll remember you,' 'If I see this happen another time, scram along with your filthy luggage,' 'Mark my words, this is the most value-for-money apartment in Tingen City. You will not find a more kindly landlord anywhere else!'

Putting away those thoughts, Zhou Mingrui used a moist towel to clean the blood stains from his face again and again.

After checking himself using the rundown mirror in the bathroom and verifying that all that was left was a hideous wound and a pale face, Zhou Mingrui relaxed. Then, he took off his linen shirt and used a bar of soap to wash away the bloodstains.

At that moment, he knitted his brows and recalled a possible problem.

The wound was too exaggerated and there was too much blood. Apart from his body, his room likely still had signs of his injury!

After Zhou Mingrui was done with his linen shirt a few minutes later, he briskly returned to his apartment with a moist towel. He first wiped the blood handprint on the desk and then, using the gas lamp's illumination, sought out spots which he missed out.

He immediately discovered that quite a substantial amount of blood had splattered onto the floor beneath the desk. And there was a yellow bullet to the left side of the wall.

"Releasing a round with a revolver pointed at the temple?" After mixing and matching the clues from before, Zhou Mingrui had a rough idea how Klein had died.

He was in no hurry to verify his guess. Instead, he seriously wiped away the blood stains and cleaned up the 'scene.' Following that, he took the bullet and returned to the side of his desk. He opened the revolver's cylinder and poured out the rounds inside.

A total of five rounds and a cartridge shell all had a brass luster to them.

"Indeed…" Zhou Mingrui looked at the empty cartridge shell in front of him and stuffed the rounds back into the cylinder while nodding.

He shifted his gaze to the left and it landed on the notebook's words: 'Everyone will die, including me.' Following that, even more questions arose in him.

Where did the gun come from?

Was it suicide or a faked suicide?

What kind of trouble could a history graduate of humble origins get himself into?

Why would such a suicide method only leave behind so little blood? Was it because I transmigrated in a timely manner and it came with healing benefits?

After pondering for a moment, Zhou Mingrui changed into another linen shirt. He sat on the chair and began pondering over more important matters.

Klein's experience was still not something he needed to concern himself with. The true problem was to figure out the reason for his transmigration and if he could return!

His parents, relatives, best buddies, and friends. The fascinating world of the Internet and all sorts of delicious delicacies… These were reasons that prompted his desire to return!

Click. Click. Click… Zhou Mingrui's right hand was subconsciously pulling out the revolver's cylinder and slamming it back into place, again and again.

Yea, there has not been much difference for me between this period of time and the past. I was just a little unlucky, but why would I transmigrate for no baffling reason?

Bad luck… Yes, I tried a luck enhancement ritual before dinner today!

A thought flashed in Zhou Mingrui's mind, illuminating the memories which were concealed by a fog of confusion.

As a qualified keyboard politician, keyboard historian, keyboard economist, keyboard biologist, and keyboard folklorist, he had always deemed himself as 'knowing something of everything.' Of course, his best buddy would often mock him as 'only knowing a little of everything.'

And one of them was Chinese Divination.

When he visited his hometown last year, he had discovered a thread-bound book titled 'Quintessential Divination and Arcane Arts of the Qin and Han Dynasty' at an old bookstore. It looked pretty interesting and could aid him in posturing on the Internet, so he bought it. Unfortunately, his interest was short-lived. The vertical script it used made the reading experience horrible. All he did was flip through the beginning pages before he threw it into a corner.

He had experienced a spate of bad luck in the past month—losing his cell phone, customers running away after cheating him, and mistakes at work. Only then did he suddenly recall the luck enhancement ritual written at the beginning of 'Quintessential Divination and Arcane Arts.' Furthermore, the requirements were extremely simple, without any basic foundation requirements.

All he needed was to get four portions of the staple food in his area and place them in the four corners of his room. They could be placed on furniture such as tables and cupboards. Then, standing in the middle of the room, he had to take four steps in a counter-clockwise fashion to make a square. The first step required him to sincerely chant 'The Immortal Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.' The second step was to silently chant, 'The Sky Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.' The third step was 'The Exalted Thearch of Heaven and Earth for Blessings,' and the fourth step was 'The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.' After the four steps were taken, he needed to close his eyes and wait five minutes in his original spot. Only then would the ritual be considered complete.

Since it did not cost him any money, he found the book, followed what was stipulated, and did it before dinner. However… nothing happened back then.

Who would have guessed that he would actually transmigrate in the middle of the night!

Transmigration!

"There is a distinct possibility that it's due to that luck enhancement ritual… Yes, I should give it a try here tomorrow. If it's really because of that, I stand a chance of transmigrating back!" Zhou Mingrui stopped flicking the revolver’s cylinder and suddenly sat straight up.

Regardless, he had to give it a try!

He had to attempt a Hail Mary!

Chapter 3 - Melissa

◆

After confirming his plan, Zhou Mingrui immediately felt he had a mental crutch. His fear and unease were all swept away into a corner of his mind.

Only then did he have the mood to carefully study Klein's memory fragments.

Zhou Mingrui habitually stood up before turning off the pipe's valve. He watched the wall lamp gradually dim until its flame extinguished before sitting back down. As he subconsciously fiddled with the revolver's brass cylinder, he pressed the side of his head. He slowly recalled his memories in the crimson-dyed darkness as though he was the most attentive viewer in a movie theater.

Perhaps as a result of having a bullet pass through his head, Klein's memories were like shattered glass. Not only were the memories not contiguous, there were many spots which were clearly missing. For example, memories pertaining to how the exquisite revolver appeared in his possession, whether he had committed suicide, or was killed, as well as the meaning of the words 'Everyone will die, including me' on the notebook, or whether he had participated in anything odd two days before the incident.

Not only had these particular memories become fragmented, there were also missing pieces. It was the same even for knowledge he ought to know. In light of the present situation, Zhou Mingrui believed that if Klein were to return to university, it was unlikely he could graduate.

This was despite him having left campus just days ago without relaxing one bit.

He needs to participate in the Tingen University's History department interview two days later…

The university graduates of Loen Kingdom do not have the tradition of staying at their alma mater… His mentor had given him a recommendation letter for Tingen University and Backlund University…

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Through the window, Zhou Mingrui silently observed the red moon setting in the west. The gradual sinking of the moon continued until faint light glowed from the east, dyeing the horizon golden.

At that moment, there was a commotion inside the apartment. Soon, the sound of footsteps approached his door.

"Melissa is awake… She's really as punctual as always." Zhou Mingrui smiled. Due to Klein's memories, seeing Melissa made him feel as though she was really his younger sister.

However, I do not have a younger sister… He immediately contradicted himself.

Melissa was different from Benson and Klein. Her rudimentary education was not completed at the Sunday school classes offered by the Church of Evernight. When she reached schooling age, the Loen Kingdom had enacted the 'Basic Education Law.' A Primary and Secondary Education Committee was established and was specially provided with funding, increasing the kingdom's investment into education.

In less than three years, under the premise that numerous church schools would be incorporated, many public primary schools were established to strictly maintain the principle of religious neutrality. This was to prevent education from involving itself in the conflicts between the Lord of Storms, Evernight Goddess, and the God of Steam and Machinery.

Compared to Sunday school that only cost a copper penny a week, a public primary school's cost of three pence a week appeared rather expensive. However, the former only provided education every Sunday, whereas the latter provided six days of classes a week. In conclusion, the price was so low that it was almost free.

Melissa was different from most girls. From a young age, she enjoyed things like gears, springs, and bearings. Her ambition was to be a steam mechanic.

Having suffered from a lack of culture, Benson, who knew the importance of education, supported his sister's dreams just like how he supported Klein's university education. After all, Tingen Technical School was only considered secondary education. There was no need for her to attend language school or a public school for more knowledge.

In July last year, fifteen-year-old Melissa passed her entrance examinations and fulfilled her dreams of becoming a student at the Tingen Technical School's Steam and Machinery department. As such, her weekly school fees raised to nine pence.

Meanwhile, Benson's company was affected by the situation in the Southern Continent. There was a drastic drop both in profit and business transactions. More than a third of the employees were retrenched. In order to keep his job and maintain their livelihood, Benson could only accept more arduous tasks. He had to work overtime more frequently or head to places with harsh environments. That was what he was occupied with the past few days.

It was not that Klein did not think of helping share his elder brother's burden but being born a commoner and having been admitted into an average language school, he felt a strong sense of inadequacy when he enrolled into university. For example, as the origin of all languages in the Northern Continent, the ancient language of Feysac was something all the children of nobles and of the wealthy class would learn from a young age. In contrast, he only made first contact with it in university.

He faced many similar aspects during his schooling career. Klein nearly gave his all and often stayed up late into the night and woke up early before barely managing to catch up to the others, eventually allowing him to graduate with average results.

Memories regarding his elder brother and younger sister remained active in Zhou Mingrui's mind until he turned the doorknob open. Only then did he jolt awake and remember that he held a revolver in his hand.

This was a semi-regulated item!

It will scare children!

Also, there's still the wound on my head!

With Melissa arriving at any moment, Zhou Mingrui pressed onto his temple and hurriedly pulled open a desk drawer and threw the revolver in before slamming it close.

"What happened?" Melissa looked over curiously when she heard the commotion.

She was still in the prime of her youth. Even though she didn't have much nutritious food to eat, making her face thin and slightly pale, her skin remained lustrous as it exuded the vibes of a young girl.

When Zhou Mingrui saw his sister's brown eyes look over, he forcibly composed himself and picked up an item beside his hand before calmly closing the drawer to conceal the existence of the revolver. He placed his other hand on his temple, the texture confirming that his wound had already healed!

He took out a silver vine-leaf pocket watch and pressed the top gently, causing its cover to flip open.

It was a picture of the siblings' father. It was the most valuable item the Imperial Army sergeant left behind, but being a second-hand item, it would often malfunction from time to time in recent years even though he had gotten a watchsmith to fix it. It had embarrassed Benson who enjoyed bringing it with him to elevate his status many a time, so it was thrown away back at home in the end.

It had to be said that perhaps Melissa did have talent in machinery. After grasping the principles behind the watch, she borrowed the tools from her Technical School to fiddle with the pocket watch. Recently, she even claimed to have fixed it!

Zhou Mingrui looked at the watch's open cover and saw that the second hand was not moving. Subconsciously, he twisted the top dial to wind the pocket watch.

However, despite winding it a few times, he did not hear the sound of taut springs. The second hand remained motionless.

"It looks like it's broken again." He looked at his sister while trying to find a topic of conversation.

Melissa shot him an expressionless glance and briskly walked over to take the pocket watch away.

She stood in her spot and pulled up the button sitting atop the pocket watch. With a few simple turns, the tick-tocking of the second hand sounded.

Isn't pulling the button up usually meant to adjust the time… Zhou Mingrui's expression immediately turned blank.

At that moment, a bell chimed from a faraway cathedral. It chimed six times, sounding distant and ethereal.

Melissa tilted her head to listen to it and pulled the button up once again. Following that, she turned it to synchronize the time.

“It’s okay now,” she said simply without emotion. She then pressed the top button back and handed the pocket watch back to Zhou Mingrui.

Zhou Mingrui returned a smile politely in embarrassment.

Melissa gave her elder brother a piercing stare before turning to walk to the cupboard. She took her toiletries and towel before opening the door to leave. She headed for the public bathroom.

Why did her expression have a look of disparagement and resignation?

Is it a look of love and concern for a retarded brother?

Zhou Mingrui lowered his head and chuckled. He closed the pocket watch’s cover with a click before opening it again.

He repeated this action as his idle thoughts focused on a question.

Klein committed suicide without a silencer. Well, I’ll consider it as suicide for now. His suicide should have caused quite a commotion; yet, Melissa, who was just a wall away, did not notice it at all.

Was she sleeping too soundly? Or is Klein’s suicide shrouded in mystery to begin with?

Click! The pocket watch opened. Clack! The pocket watch closed… Melissa returned from washing up and saw her brother’s subconscious act of constantly opening and closing the pocket watch.

Her gaze was once again glazed with exasperation as she said with a sweet voice, “Klein, take out all the remaining bread. Remember to buy fresh ones today. There’s meat and peas too. Your interview is soon. I’ll make you mutton stewed with peas.”

As she spoke, she moved a stove out from a corner. With some charcoal, she boiled a pot of hot water.

Before the water boiled, she opened the cupboard's lowest drawer and took out what seemed like a treasure—a can of inferior tea leaves. She threw about ten leaves into the pot and pretended that it was real tea.

Melissa poured two big cups of tea as she shared two pieces of rye bread with Zhou Mingrui over tea.

There is no sawdust or excessive gluten mixed in, but it is unappetizing… Zhou Mingrui still felt weak and was starving. He forced himself to swallow the bread with the tea while complaining inwardly.

Melissa finished eating a few minutes later. After she adjusted her black hair that reached down to her vest, she looked at Zhou Mingrui and said, "Remember to buy fresh bread. All we need is eight pounds. The weather is hot, so the bread will easily spoil. Also, buy the mutton and peas. Remember to buy them!"

Indeed, she was showing concern for her dull brother. She even had to repeat to emphasize it another time… Zhou Mingrui nodded with a smile.

"Alright."

Regarding the Loen Kingdom's pound, Zhou Mingrui matched Klein's muscle memory with his. He believed it was close to half a kilogram of what he was accustomed to.

Melissa did not say anything further. She stood up and tidied the area. After packing away the last bit of bread for lunch, she put on a tattered veil cap that their mother left behind, picked up a self-sewn bag used to carry her books and stationery, and prepared to leave.

It was not Sunday, so she had an entire day of classes to attend.

Walking from their apartment to Tingen Technical School took about fifty minutes. There were public horse carriages that cost a penny a kilometer with a limit of four pence in the city and six pence in the city outskirts. In order to save money, Melissa would leave ahead of time and walk to school.

Moments after she opened the main door, she paused in her footsteps and turned her body halfway, saying, “Klein, don’t buy too much mutton or peas. Benson might come back on Sunday. Oh, and remember we only need eight pounds of bread.”

“Alright. Sure thing,” answered Zhou Mingrui exasperatedly.

Simultaneously, he repeated the word ‘Sunday’ a few times in his head.

In the Northern Continent, a year was similarly split into twelve months. Every year, there were 365 or 366 days. A week was similarly split into seven days.

The splitting of months was a result of astronomical observations. It made Zhou Mingrui suspect whether he was in a parallel world. As for the splitting of days, it was a result of religion. This was because the Northern Continent had seven orthodox gods—the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, the Evernight Goddess, Earth Mother, the God of Combat, and the God of Steam and Machinery.

Watching his sister close the door and leave, Zhou Mingrui suddenly sighed. Soon, his thoughts focused on the luck enhancement ritual.

Sorry, I really wish to return home…

Klein Moretti potrait:

阅文好物 授权
诡秘之主
Lord of Mysteries
Goods Wave
© YUEWEN

Chapter 4 - Divination

◆

Returning to his chair, he heard the faraway cathedral's bells chime again. It continued seven times before Zhou Mingrui slowly stood up. He went up front to the cupboard and took out his clothes.

A black vest with a matching suit, trousers that clung tightly to his legs, a halved top hat and his faint scholarly air made Zhou Mingrui feel like he was watching an English drama set in the Victorian era.

He suddenly muttered softly as he shook his head with a wry smile, "I'm not going for an interview. All I'm doing is buying some ingredients to prepare for my luck enhancement ritual…"

Klein was so concerned about his impending interview that it became instinct. When he was not focused enough, he habitually wore his only decent set of clothing.

After taking a breath, Zhou Mingrui took off his suit and vest, switching to a brownish-yellow coat. He also changed to a felt hat with a rounded edge of the same color.

With his outfit done, he walked to the side of the bed and lifted a square cushion. He reached his hand into an inconspicuous hole beneath and rummaged around before finding an intermediate layer.

When he retracted his right hand, there was a roll of notes in his palm. There were about eight notes with faded dark green colors.

These were all the savings Benson had at the moment. It even included the living expenses for the next three days. Two of them were five-soli notes and the remaining were one-soli notes.

In the Loen Kingdom's currency system, soli was ranked second. It originated from ancient silver coins. One soli was equivalent to twelve copper pence. They had denominations of one and five soli.

At the top of the currency system was the gold pound. They were also paper based but were guaranteed by gold and pegged directly. A gold pound was equivalent to twenty soli. They had denominations of one, five, and ten gold pounds.

Zhou Mingrui spread a note and caught a whiff of the faint unique ink.

This was the smell of money.

Perhaps a result of Klein's memory fragments or his constant desire for money, Zhou Mingrui felt like he had instantly fallen in love with these notes.

Look, their designs are so beautiful. It makes the stern and old-fashioned George III and his two mustaches appear especially adorable…

Look, the watermark that can be seen when the note is placed against sunlight is so alluring. The exquisite design for the anti-counterfeit label makes it completely different from those fake fancy schlocks!

Zhou Mingrui admired it for nearly a minute before pulling out two one-soli notes. He then rolled up the remaining notes and stuffed them back into the cushion's concealed layer.

After arranging and flattening the cloth around the hole, Zhou Mingrui folded the two notes he had taken out neatly and placed them into the left pocket of his brownish-yellow jacket. He separated the notes from the few pence he had in his trouser pocket.

With all of this done, he placed a key into his right pocket and brought a dark brownish paper bag along with him and quickly walked toward the door.

His shuffling footsteps slowed down from a brisk pace until it eventually stopped.

Zhou Mingrui stood by the door and was unsure when he had already begun to frown.

Klein's suicide was fraught with peculiarities. Would he encounter any 'accidents' if he were to leave just like that?

After some deep thought, Zhou Mingrui returned to his desk and pulled open the drawer. He then took out the shimmering brass revolver.

This was the only defensive weapon he could think of, and it was the only weapon with sufficient power!

Although he had never practiced shooting, just pulling such a revolver out would definitely daunt anyone!

He caressed the revolver's cold metal before stuffing his revolver into the pocket where his notes were. He clasped the money in his palm as his fingers pressed onto the gun's handle. It was perfectly concealed.

Feeling secure, he who knew a little of everything suddenly had a worry.

Would I end up misfiring?

Being deluged with such a thought, Zhou Mingrui quickly thought of a solution. He drew the revolver and released the cylinder. He then aligned the empty chamber which was a result of the 'suicide' along the gun's hammer before closing it.

This way, even if there was a misfire, he would discharge an 'empty round!'

After stuffing his revolver back into his pocket, Zhou Mingrui kept his left hand in there.

He pressed down on his hat with his right hand and pulled open the door before leaving.

The corridor during the day remained dim as limited sunlight shone in from the window situated at the end of the corridor. Zhou Mingrui quickly went down the stairs and left the apartment before taking in the brilliance and warmth of the sun.

Although it was almost July, it was still considered the middle of summer. However, Tingen was situated north of the Loen Kingdom, so it had unique climate characteristics. The highest annual temperature was not even 30°C on Earth, with even cooler mornings. However, the streets were awash with filthy water and strewn junk. From Klein's memories, this was not a rare sight in low-income communities, even if there were sewers. After all, there were just too many people and people needed to survive.

"Come and try our delicious roasted fish!"

"Hot and fresh oyster soup. Drink a bowl in the morning and feel invigorated all day!"

"Fresh fish from the port for just five pence apiece!"

"Muffins and eel soup make the perfect combination!"

"Conch! Conch! Conch!"

"Vegetables freshly plucked from the farms outside the city. Cheap and fresh!"

†

The mobile hawkers who sold vegetables, fruits, and hot food shouted along the streets as they beckoned the rushing pedestrians. Some of them would stop and carefully compare before purchasing. Others would impatiently wave their hands as they had yet to find work for the day.

Zhou Mingrui took in a whiff of the air that mixed both noxious and fragrant aromas. As he clenched the revolver tightly in his left hand, he held the notes tight. He pressed down on his hat with his right hand while passing through the busy street, slouching a little.

There was bound to be thieves in populated areas. Furthermore, this street had no lack of poor citizens who were working part time after losing their previous jobs. There were also starving children that were exploited by adults to do their bidding.

He proceeded forward until he reached a point where the crowdedness around him restored to normal. He straightened his back and raised his head to look down the street.

There was a vagrant accordionist busking. The melody was sometimes pleasant, sometimes fervent.

Beside him were several children in ragged clothes with sallow complexions due to malnutrition.

They listened to the music and moved to the beat, dancing self-made choreographies. Their faces were filled with joy as though they were a prince or an angel.

A deadpan woman passed by; her skirt was dirty and her skin was dull.

Her gaze appeared dull and sluggish. Only when she looked at the bunch of children did a faint glow flash. It was as though she had seen herself from three decades ago.

Zhou Mingrui overtook her and turned into another street before stopping at Smyrin Bakery.

The owner of the bakery was a seventy-plus year old granny named Wendy Smyrin. Her hair was completely grayish-white and she always wore a genial smile. From the beginning of Klein's memories, she had been here selling bread and pastries.

Oh, the Tingen biscuits and lemon cakes she bakes are very delicious…

Zhou Mingrui gulped a mouthful of saliva and smiled.

"Mrs. Smyrin, eight pounds of rye bread."

"Oh. Dear Klein, where's Benson? Is he not back?" Wendy asked smilingly.

"In a few more days," answered Zhou Mingrui vaguely.

As Wendy took the rye bread, she sighed. "He sure is a hardworking lad. He will have a good wife."

Upon saying this, the corners of her lips curled up as she said playfully, "All is good now. You have already graduated. You are a history graduate of our Khoy University~ Oh, you will soon be able to earn money. You should not be staying in the apartment you are currently living in. At the very least, you should have a bathroom you can call your own."

"Mrs. Smyrin, you seem to be a young and energetic woman today." All Zhou Mingrui could do was respond with a dry smile.

If Klein were to successfully pass his interview and become a lecturer at Tingen University, it was true that his family would immediately be pushed up to a higher socioeconomic status!

In his memory fragments, he had once fantasized about renting a bungalow in the suburbs. There would be five or six rooms, two bathrooms, a huge balcony upstairs, two rooms, a dining room, a living room, a kitchen, a bathroom, and an underground storage room on the first floor.

This was not a wishful dream. Even a lecturer on probation at Tingen University would have a weekly salary of two gold pounds. After the probationary period, the salary would be raised to three gold pounds and ten soli. One had to know that despite working for so many years, Klein's brother, Benson, only had a weekly salary of one pound and ten soli. Ordinary workers at a factory did not even get a pound or, at best, a little more. And rent for a bungalow was about nineteen soli to one pound and eighteen soli.

"This is the difference between earning three to four thousand yuan and earning fourteen to fifteen thousand yuan a month…" Zhou Mingrui mumbled to himself.

However, all of this was under the premise that he passed either the Tingen University or Backlund University interviews.

There were not many other opportunities. People without any connections were unable to get recommendations to become a public servant. And those who studied history were more limited in job opportunities. There was not much demand for private consultants from the aristocrats, banks, or industrial magnates.

Taking into account that the knowledge Klein grasped was fragmented and incomplete, Zhou Mingrui felt awkward and guilty towards Mrs. Smyrin's expectations of him.

"No, I have always been this young," answered Wendy humorously.

As she spoke, she packed the sixteen rye bread she had weighed into the brown paper bag that Zhou Mingrui had brought. She stretched out her right hand and said, "Nine pence."

Every rye bread weighed about half a pound as differences were inevitable.

"Nine pence? Wasn't it eleven pence two days ago?" Zhou Mingrui asked subconsciously.

It cost 15 pence the month before the previous month.

“You have to thank the people who protested on the streets for the repeal of the Grain Act,” said Wendy as she shrugged.

Zhou Mingrui nodded in vague acknowledgment. Klein’s memories regarding this were incomplete. All he remembered was that the core tenet of the Grain Act was to protect the prices of domestic agriculture products. Once the prices rose to a certain level, grain imports from Southern nations like Feynapotter, Masin, Lenburg were stopped.

Why would people protest the act?

Without saying much, Zhou Mingrui, afraid he would end up pulling out the revolver, carefully took out his notes and handed one of them over to Mrs. Smyrin.

He was given three copper pence in change. Stuffing them into his trouser pocket, he took the paper bag containing the bread and headed for the ‘Lettuce and Meat’ market across the street. He was working hard for the mutton stewed with peas his sister had exhorted.

There was a municipal square at the intersection of Iron Cross Street and Daffodil Street. Many tents were erected there, and clowns dressed in odd and funny attires were distributing fliers.

“There’s a circus performance tomorrow night?” Zhou Mingrui glanced at the fliers in the hands of others as he read their contents under his breath.

Melissa would definitely like it. However, how much is the entrance fee?

With that thought, Zhou Mingrui went closer.

Just as he was about to ask a clown with a red and yellow painted face, a hoarse woman’s voice sounded from beside him.

“Would you like to try a divination?”

Zhou Mingrui subconsciously turned his head and saw a woman wearing a pointed hat and a long black dress standing in front of a short tent.

Her face was smeared with red and yellow paint and her eyes were a profound grayish-blue.

“No,” Zhou Mingrui shook his head in response. He did not have the spare cash for divination.

The woman laughed and said, “My tarot divination is very accurate.”

“Tarot…” Zhou Mingrui was instantly dumbfounded.

This pronunciation was almost identical to the tarot cards on Earth!

And tarot cards from Earth were a set of cards used for divination. They just had graphics that represented different omens.

Wait… He suddenly recalled the origins of tarot divination in this world.

It did not originate from the seven orthodox gods nor was it an ancient legacy. Instead, it was created by the Intis Republic’s Consul of that era, Roselle Gustav, more than 170 years ago.

This Mr. Roselle invented the steam engine, improved the sailing boat, overthrew the Intis Kingdom’s imperial rule, and was recognized by the God of Craftsmanship. He also became the first Consul of the Intis Republic.

Later, he invaded other nations and placed Lenburg and other nations under his protection. He made the Loen Kingdom, Feynapotter, Feysac Empire and other powerful Northern Continent nations bow down to the Intis Republic. Following that, the Republic was then changed to an Empire and he became the self-proclaimed ‘Emperor Caesar.’

It was during Roselle’s rule that the Church of Craftsmanship received its first public holy revelation since the Fifth Epoch. Ever since, the God of Craftsmanship was changed to the God of Steam and Machinery.

Roselle also invented tarot divination. He also established the contemporary system of paper-based cards and their playstyles. There were many familiar styles that Zhou Mingrui was familiar with, such as Upgrade, Fighting the Landlord, Texas Poker, and Quint…

In addition, the marine fleets he sent out discovered a sea route that led to the Southern Continent through the stormy and turbulent seas. This also began the era of colonialism.

Unfortunately, he was betrayed in his old age. In the year 1198 of the Fifth Epoch, he was assassinated by the combined forces of the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, the former Intis royal family—the Sauron family—and other aristocrats. He eventually died in the White Maple Palace.

This… To recall such general knowledge suddenly made him facepalm.

Could this be a transmigration senior?

With this in mind, Zhou Mingrui was intrigued to see what tarot cards looked like. Therefore, he nodded at the pointy hat woman with the painted face and said, “If the… well… price is reasonable, I’ll give it a try.”

The woman immediately said with a laugh, “Sir, you are the first one here today, so it’s on the house.”

Chapter 5 - Ritual

◆

Free? Free things cost the most!

Zhou Mingrui silently mumbled and decided that he would not purchase any additional services whatsoever. He would firmly refuse them all.

If you are really that capable, try divining that I transmigrated here!

With this in mind, Zhou Mingrui followed behind the woman whose face was painted red and yellow, stooping low to enter the low tent.

The tent's interior was extremely dark, illuminated only by several beams of light that managed to seep inside. A table covered with paper cards could be made out faintly in the low illumination.

The woman with the sharp pointy hat was not affected by this at all. Her long black dress glided as though it was moving over water while she went around to the table. She sat on the opposite side and lit a candle.

The dim yellow light flickered, causing the inside of the tent to appear bright and dark at the same time. It instantly added a much more mysterious feel to the atmosphere.

Zhou Mingrui sat down quietly, his gaze sweeping over the tarot cards on the table where he discovered familiar cards like "The Magician," "The Emperor," "The Hanged Man," and "Temperance," etc.

Could Roselle have been a 'senior'… I wonder if he was also a fellow countryman of mine… Zhou Mingrui mumbled to himself subconsciously.

Before he could finish looking at the opened cards on the table, the woman who claimed to have accurate divinations had already reached out her hands to gather all of the cards together. She stacked them into a deck and pushed it in front of him.

“Shuffle the cards first and cut the deck,” the circus fortune-teller said in a muted voice.

“Me? Shuffle?” Zhou Mingrui asked reflexively.

The yellow and red paint on the fortune-teller’s face squirmed together as she revealed a slight smile, saying, “Of course, everyone’s destiny can only be unraveled by themselves. I only serve as a reader of it.”

Zhou Mingrui immediately questioned her warily, “This reading does not require additional fees, right?”

As a keyboard folklorist, I’ve already seen too many of such tricks!

The fortune-teller was visibly taken aback before finally saying muffledly, “It’s free.”

Zhou Mingrui, relieved, stuffed the revolver further back into his pocket. Thereafter, he calmly reached out his two hands to shuffle and cut the deck skillfully.

“It’s done.” He placed the already shuffled tarot cards in the middle of the table.

The fortune-teller clasped the cards with both her hands and carefully looked at cards for a while. Then, she suddenly opened her mouth and said, “I’m sorry, I forgot to ask, but what would you like to ask about?”

Back when he was wooing his first love, Zhou Mingrui had also done research on tarot cards. He asked unhesitatingly, “Past, present, and future."

This was a type of divination as part of tarot card interpretation—three cards when opened sequentially symbolized one's past, present, and future.

The fortune-teller nodded first, then curled her lips to reveal a smile and said, "Then please reshuffle the deck. You can only truly get the cards you want if you know what you would like to ask about."

Were you fooling me just now? Do you have to be this petty? Didn't I only ask a few times if this would be a free service? Zhou Mingrui's cheeks twitched a little. He took a deep breath and took the tarot deck back to reshuffle and cut it.

"There won't be any problems this time, right?" He placed the already cut deck back onto the table.

"No problem." The fortune-teller reached out her fingers and picked a card from the top of the deck. Then she placed it on the left side of Zhou Mingrui. Her voice was going lower and lower as she spoke, "This card symbolizes your past."

"This card symbolizes your present." The fortune-teller placed the second card right in front of Zhou Mingrui.

Then, she picked the third card and put it on the right side of Zhou Mingrui.

"This card symbolizes the future."

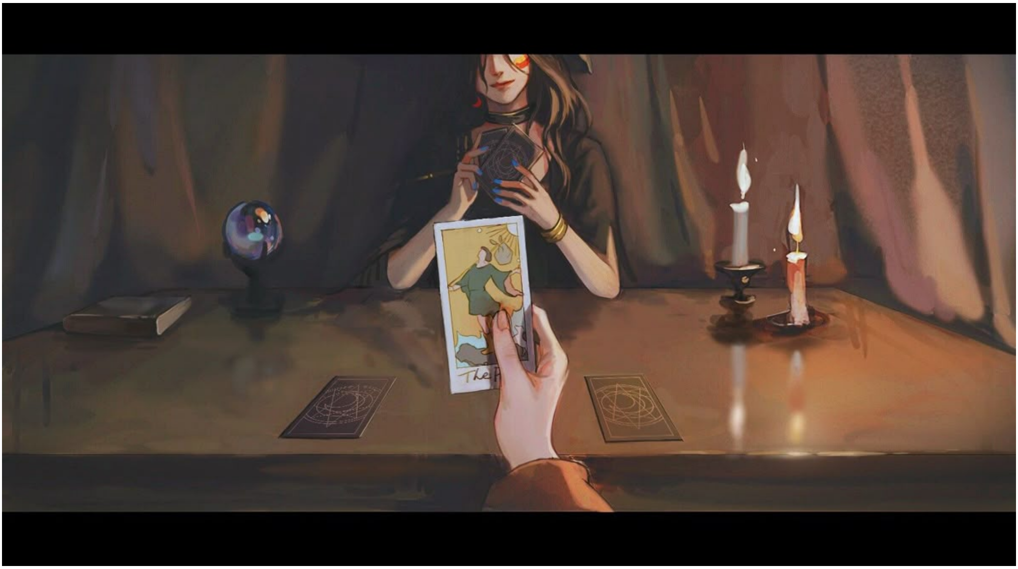
"Alright, which card would you like to see first?" The fortune-teller raised her head up after completing her placement of the cards and gazed deeply at Zhou Mingrui with her grayish-blue eyes.

[image]

"I'll have a look at the 'present' first," Zhou Mingrui said after giving it some thought.

The fortune-teller nodded slowly and flipped over the tarot card that was directly in front of Zhou Mingrui.

A colorfully dressed character was depicted on this card, wearing splendid headgear with a stick over his shoulder. There was a bindle hanging on the end of the stick and a puppy was following behind him. It was numbered “0.”



“The Fool,” the fortune-teller lightly read out the name of the card with her grayish-blue eyes affixed on Zhou Mingrui.

The Fool? The “0” card of tarot? A start? A fresh beginning with all kinds of possibilities? Zhou Mingrui was not even considered an amateur enthusiast of tarot, so he could only make a rough interpretation based on his own impressions of tarot.

Just as the fortune-teller was about to say something, the cloth curtains of the tent were suddenly lifted open. The ray of sunlight that shone in was so blinding that it caused the back-facing Zhou Mingrui to instinctively narrow his eyes.

“Why are you impersonating me again! It’s my job to handle the divination for people!” a woman’s voice growled angrily. “Return to your post quickly! You must remember that you’re just an animal trainer!”

An animal trainer? Zhou Mingrui’s eyes had already adapted to the light by now. He saw a similar-looking woman who was also wearing a sharp pointy hat in a black dress, with her face painted in red and yellow as well. The only difference was that she was taller and had a slimmer physique.

The woman who was seated in front of him immediately stood up and said disgruntledly, “Don’t mind this, it’s just that I like doing this. But I have to say, my divination and interpretation can be really accurate sometimes. I’m serious…”

She spoke and lifted up her dress to go around from the side of the table before quickly trotting away from the tent.

“Sir, would you like me to interpret your cards for you?” the real fortune-teller looked at Zhou Mingrui and asked with a smile.

Zhou Mingrui’s lips twitched and asked her sincerely, “Is it free?”

“…No,” the real fortune-teller answered.

“Then forget it.” Zhou Mingrui pulled his hands back and put them into his pockets. He clutched his revolver and money before stooping again to exit the tent.

Damn! He actually got an animal trainer to be his fortune-teller?

Was an animal trainer who didn’t want to be a fortune-teller not a good clown?

Zhou Mingrui very quickly put this matter behind him. He spent seven pence at the ‘Lettuce and Meat’ market for a pound of not-so-great mutton. Then, he also bought some tender broad beans, cabbage, onions, potatoes, and other items. Together with the bread that he bought earlier, he spent a total of 25 copper pennies, which converted to two soli and one pence.

“There is really not enough to go around for spending. Poor Benson…” Not only had Zhou Mingrui spent the two notes that he had brought with him, but it was also necessary for him to top it up with the one penny he had in his pocket.

He just sighed and did not think further about it as he hurried back home.

With the staple food, he could now carry out the luck enhancement ritual!

†

After the second-floor tenants gradually left, Zhou Mingrui was still in no hurry to carry out the ritual. Instead, he translated the “The Immortal Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings” and related phrases into the ancient Feysac language, as well as the Loen language. He was intending to try the ritual again the next day in those local languages if the original incantation did not take effect!

After all, he had to take into consideration the differences between the two worlds. In Rome, do as the Romans do!

As for translating it into an ancient ritual prayer that used the dedicated Hermes language, Zhou Mingrui had a difficult time completing it due to his lack of vocabulary.

After readying everything, he finally took out the four loaves of rye bread. He placed one in the corner where the coal stove was originally, one at the bottom inner side of the dress mirror, one at the top of the cupboard where two walls met, and one at the right side of the study table where miscellaneous items were kept.

With a deep breath, Zhou Mingrui came to the center of the room and spent a few minutes to calm himself. Then, he took a solemn step forward and went in a counter-clockwise direction in the shape of a square.

When he took the first step, he chanted in a low whisper, “The Immortal Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

The second step, he sincerely chanted, “The Sky Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

The third step, Zhou Mingrui breathed out a whisper. “The Exalted Thearch of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

At the fourth step, he spat out a foul breath and meditated in concentration. “The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

When he returned back to the original spot, Zhou Mingrui closed his eyes and waited in his place for an outcome. He had some anticipation in him, some unease, some hope, and some fear.

Could he make it back?

Was there going to be any effect?

Could there be some unexpected situation?

The darkness in front of him was tainted with the crimson light of hope. Zhou Mingrui’s thoughts were swirling in his head and he was finding it difficult to quell it.

It was at this time that he suddenly felt the surrounding air seem to stop, becoming thick and mysterious.

Immediately after, a low whisper could be heard beside his ears that sounded at times real, at times sharp, at times imaginary, at times alluring, at times maniacal, and at times crazy.

He clearly did not understand the murmuring that went on, but Zhou Mingrui still couldn't help himself from wanting to listen to it and distinguish what it was saying.

His head was in pain again. It was so painful that it felt like someone had stuck a steel drill rod into it.

Zhou Mingrui only felt like his head was going to explode. His thoughts were filled with psychedelic colors.

He knew that something was wrong and tried to open his eyes. However, he wasn't even able to complete such a simple action.

His entire body was getting tighter and tighter and it felt like he could just break apart at any time. At this time, a self-mocking thought came up in Zhou Mingrui's mind:

If you wouldn't die if you didn't court death…

He could no longer bear it. Just as his mind was going to break, the murmuring of voices faded away and his surroundings became very quiet. The mood was an erratic one.

It was not only the mood; Zhou Mingrui felt his own body going through the same sensations as well.

He tried once more to open his eyes, an extremely easy task this time.

A gray fog appeared over his eyes—haziness, vague, and endless.

"What's with this situation?" Zhou Mingrui suddenly looked around him and then lowered his head down to discover that he was floating at the edge of an endless fog.

The fog was flowing like water and was dotted with a lot of crimson 'stars.' Some of them were enormous while others were tiny. There was a sense of them being hidden in the deep depths, while others floated over the surface of this water-like fog.

Looking at the seemingly holographic sight, Zhou Mingrui reached out his right hand in a half-confused, half-exploring manner to try to touch the crimson 'star' that was seemingly floating on the surface. He was trying to find a way to leave this place.

When his hand touched the surface of that star, a water mark suddenly appeared from within his body and agitated the stars into a "crimson" burst. It looked like a dreamlike burning of flames.

[image]

Zhou Mingrui got a fright from it. He retracted his right hand in a panic, but accidentally touched yet another crimson star.

As a result, this star burst with splendid light as well.

In turn, Zhou Mingrui felt his mind empty and his spirit dissipated.

†

In the Loen Kingdom's capital, Backlund. Inside a luxurious looking villa at the royal district.

Audrey Hall sat in front of a dresser. The markings on it were antiquated and there was a cracked bronze mirror on the surface.

"Mirror, mirror, awaken…

"In the name of the Hall family, I command you to awaken!"

†

She switched between many different sayings, but there was no reaction from the mirror at all.

After more than 10 minutes, she finally chose to give up and pouted her lips in grievance. She said in a soft murmur, "Father was indeed lying to me. He always tells me that this mirror was the treasure of the Solomon

Empire’s Black Emperor, and that it is an extraordinary item…”

Her voice trailed off. The bronze mirror which rested on the dresser suddenly glowed with a crimson light that shrouded her completely.

†

In the Sonia Sea, a three-masted sailboat that looked like an obvious relic was navigating through a storm.

Alger Wilson stood on deck, his body undulating with the currents at sea, maintaining his balance easily.

He wore a robe embroidered with lightning patterns, and in his hand was a quirky-shaped glass bottle. Bubbles billowed inside the bottle at times, frost turned into snow at times, and signs of gusting wind could be seen at times.

“Still short on the Ghost Shark’s blood…” Alger murmured.

Then at this moment, a crimson burst appeared in the space between the glass bottle and the surface of his palm. In an instant, it enveloped the surroundings as well.

†

In the fog of gray mist, Audrey Hall regained her sight. She started reckoning the situation in a state of horror and confusion when she noticed the blurry image of a man on the opposite side of her doing the same as well.

Immediately after, the both of them discovered another mystery person standing not far from them who was shrouded in a gray mist.

The ‘mysterious person’ was none other than Zhou Mingrui. He was similarly dumbfounded.

“Sir, where is this?”

Audrey and Alger were startled at first, falling silent in the process. Then, they immediately started speaking in unison.

“What are you planning on doing?”

Chapter 6 - Beyonder

◆

Not only did they speak the same Loen language, they also shared the same grim and tense vibes.

Where am I? What do I plan to do here? I would like to know too… Calming himself down, Zhou Mingrui silently repeated the questions posed by the two.

What left the deepest impression on him were neither the sentences formed by words nor the meanings behind them, but the display of bewilderment, vigilance, panic, and reverence by the couple!

For some baffling reason, two people had been mysteriously dragged into this world surrounded by gray fog. As the perpetrator, Zhou Mingrui was already feeling abnormally dumbfounded and startled, let alone the couple who was pulled into this mess completely passively!

For them, such events and encounters might already be beyond their imaginations, right?

Momentarily, Zhou Mingrui thought of two options: The first option was feigning victimhood to hide his true identity, and in turn gain a considerable amount of trust. He could then take a wait-and-see approach and take advantage of his circumstances where necessary. The other option was to maintain his mysterious identity in the eyes of the couple. He could then affect the subsequent development while gleaning valuable information from them.

Without the luxury of time to deliberate over the situation, he grasped hold of the thought that flashed across his mind. He made an immediate decision to try out the second idea.

Exploit the psychological state of the others to gain the greatest advantage for himself!

After a few seconds of silence in the fog, Zhou Mingrui chuckled. With a low but not heavy tone, he calmly spoke as though he was replying to the polite greetings from the visitors, "An attempt."

An attempt… an attempt? Audrey Hall looked at the mysterious guy veiled in the grayish-white fog, and the only thought was that whatever was happening was absurd, funny, horrifying, and weird.

She was at the dressing table inside her bedroom only moments ago. But just by turning around, she had "come" to this place that was filled with gray fog!

How inconceivable!

Audrey took a breath, revealing an impeccable, courteous smile. She asked in a somewhat perturbed way, "Sir, is the attempt over? Might you permit our return?"

Alger Wilson also had the intentions to probe Zhou Mingrui in a similar fashion, but his rich experience made him statelier. He held back his impulse and only took on the role of a silent onlooker.

Zhou Mingrui looked at the questioner. Looking through the hazy mist, he could roughly see the silhouette of the person in question. It was a tall girl with smooth blond hair, but her exact countenance could not be seen clearly.

He did not rush to reply to the girl's question but turned around to look at the man. He had messy dark-blue hair, as well as a medium stature that was not considered stout.

Zhou Mingrui suddenly realized something. Once he became stronger or had a deeper understanding of the foggy world, perhaps it was possible for him to see through the fog and discern the girl and the man.

In this situation, they are the visitors, and I'm the master!

After changing his mindset, Zhou Mingrui instantly noticed details that he had neglected earlier on.

The girl with a melodious voice and the mature, withdrawn man both looked considerably incorporeal. Tainted by a faint crimson red, they resembled a projected image of the two crimson red "stars" beyond the gray fog.

This projection was based on the connection between the crimson red and himself, an intangible connection that only he himself could realistically grasp hold of.

The projection would disappear once the connection is cut, and the couple would then return… Zhou Mingrui nodded mildly and looked at the blond, chuckling. "Of course, if you make a formal request, you can return this very moment."

When she did not identify any ill intention from his tone, Audrey heaved a sigh of relief. She believed that since a gentleman who was capable of such miraculous things had given his word, he would definitely abide by it stringently.

With her mind somewhat mollified, she surprisingly was in no hurry to request her leave. She rolled her virid eyes left and right, which sparkled with an abnormal radiance.

She said in an anxious, anticipative and tempted manner, "This is such a wonderful experience… Yes, I have always been hoping that something like this would happen. I mean—I like mysteries and supernatural miracles. No, my point is—what I mean is that, Sir, what can I do to become a Beyonder?"

She got more excited as she spoke, so much so that she was fumbling over her words. The dream that sprouted in her as a result of listening to thrilling fantasies as told by her elders finally saw the possibility of being materialized.

However, with just a few words, she had already forgotten all her previous fears and horrors.

Good question! I would also like to know the answer… Zhou Mingrui complained inwardly.

He started to ponder on an answer to the question to maintain his unfathomable image.

At the same time, he felt that it was quite unbecoming of him to talk while standing. Shouldn't he be in a palace, sitting at the head of a long table, and on a mysterious high-back chair engraved with ancient patterns, while silently observing his visitors?

As soon as this thought surfaced, the gray fog started to churn, giving both Audrey and Alger a shock.

In an instant, they saw a number of towering stone pillars around them. Above them was a vast dome that encapsulated them.

This entire edifice looked magnificent, grand and lofty, just like a legendary palace for giants.

Directly under the dome where the gray fog gathered, a long, bronze table appeared with ten high-back chairs on either side in a symmetrical arrangement, along with a chair on each of the two ends of the long table The back of each chair dazzled and shone faintly with crimson red, drawing the outlines of weird constellations that differed from reality.

Audrey and Alger sat face-to-face, sitting next to the Seat of Honor.

The girl looked to her sides, and could not help but mumble, "How fascinating…"

It is certainly fascinating… Zhou Mingrui extended his right hand and caressed the edge of the bronze table a little while maintaining an unperturbed expression.

Alger inspected the surroundings, and after a few seconds of silence, he suddenly opened his mouth, and answered Audrey's question in place of Zhou Mingrui.

"Are you from Loen?

"If you want to become a Beyonder, join the Churches of either the Evernight Goddess, the Lord of Storms, or the God of Steam and Machinery.

"The majority of us will not meet a Beyonder our entire lives. This has caused Churches, and even some clergymen within some of the biggest Churches, to suspect the same. While this is the case, I am certain to tell you that Beyonders still exist in courts, tribunals, and execution agencies. They are still fighting against the dangers that grow in the dark, only that their numbers are much fewer as compared to before and during the early days of the Iron Age."

Zhou Mingrui listened attentively, but he tried his best to present himself as paying little attention to Alger's words, much like how he was listening to kids telling stories.

Relying on Klein's fragmented general knowledge of history, Zhou Mingrui knew clearly that the "Iron Age" referred to the current epoch, which was the Fifth Epoch that began 1349 years ago.

Audrey silently listened to Alger finish his sentence before sighing.

"Mister, I know all about what you just said; I even know more than that, including the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind, but I don't want to lose my freedom."

Alger gave a low-sounding laugh, and said vaguely, “You can’t become a Beyonder without sacrifices. If you don’t consider joining Churches and accepting their given challenges, you can only seek the royal families and the few nobles with family histories of more than a thousand years. If not, you can rely on your luck to search for clandestine evil organizations.”

Audrey puffed her cheeks subconsciously and looked around in a fluster. After confirming that both the “mysterious man” and Alger did not notice her tic, she pressed, “Are there no other solutions?”

Alger sank into silence. About half a minute later, he turned around to look at the “mysterious man” who was watching the two of them in silence.

Realizing that Zhou Mingrui had no plans to make any comment, he looked back at Audrey and said with deliberation, “I have two sets of Sequence 9 potion formulas.”

Sequence 9? Zhou Mingrui muttered to himself.

“Really? Which two sets?” Audrey clearly knew what the Sequence 9 potion formulas meant.

Alger leaned back slightly, and replied unhurriedly, “As you know, humanity can only depend on potions to become real Beyonders, while the names of potions come from the ‘Blasphemy Slate.’ After constant translations into Jotun[1], Elvish, ancient and modern Hermes, and ancient Feysac, they have undergone changes to match the day and age of that era. The essence is not in their names, but whether they portray the ‘core characteristics’ of the potions.

“I have a Sequence 9 Potion named ‘Sailor.’ It enables you to have excellent balancing capabilities. Even if you were on a boat in a rainstorm, you will be able to walk about freely as though you were on land. You will also gain immense strength and illusory scales under your skin. They will enable you to swim like a fish and be difficult to catch. You will move agilely underwater just like marine animals. Even without any equipment, you will be able to easily submerge underwater for at least ten minutes."

"Sounds great… the 'Keepers of the Seas' from the Lord of Storms?"

"It was called by that name in the past." Alger did not pause and continued. "The second Sequence 9 potion is called 'Spectator.' Although I am not sure what it was called in the past. This set of potions enables you to have an exceptionally sharp mind with acute observational abilities. I believe you can understand what 'spectator' means from watching operas and plays. Just like an audience, spectators judge the 'actors' in the secular world, catching a glimpse of the real thoughts of them through their emotions, conduct, and mantras."

At this point, Alger emphasized, "You must remember, regardless of whether you are at an extravagant banquet or a crowded street, spectators can only be spectators forever."

Audrey's eyes shone as she listened, and spoke after a long while, "Why? Alright, this is a follow-up question. I-I think I have fallen in love with this feeling—of being a 'Spectator.' How can I get this potion's formula? What can I use to trade with you for it?"

Alger looked like he was already prepared as he said in a deep voice, "The blood of Ghost Sharks, at least 100 milliliters of it."

Audrey nodded her head excitedly, but subsequently asked worriedly, "If I can get it—and I'm saying if—how do I hand it to you? How can you promise me that you can give the potion's formula to me in return for the Ghost Shark's blood, as well as the authenticity of the formula?"

Alger said calmly, "I'll give you an address. I'll mail the formula to you, or tell you directly here, once I receive the blood of the Ghost Shark."

"As for promises, I think that both you and I can feel assured under the witness of the mysterious sir."

As he said this, he swept his eyes towards Zhou Mingrui who was sitting up straight at the Seat of Honor.

"Sir, the fact that you brought us here shows that you have tremendous strength unimaginable to us. Neither one of us would dare violate a promise with you as a witness."

"That's right!" Audrey's eyes sparkled and agreed with excitement.

From her perspective, the mysterious gentleman who had unimaginable abilities was definitely an "authoritative" witness.

How could I or the guy opposite me dare trick him!

Audrey half-turned her body and looked at Zhou Mingrui earnestly.

"Sir, please be the witness of our trade."

At that moment, she then realized that she was all too impolite, having forgotten all along to ask a particular question. She asked hurriedly, "Sir, how should we address you?"

Alger nodded slightly, and echoed the same question in a serious manner, "Sir, how should we address you?"

Zhou Mingrui was taken aback. He gently rapped his fingers on the bronze table. The contents of the earlier divination flashed across his mind suddenly.

He leaned back, withdrew his right hand, and crossed his ten fingers, placing them below his chin. He gave the duo a faint smile.

"You can address me as…"

Upon saying this, he paused for a moment. He said amiably and calmly, "The Fool."

Language of Giants.

Chapter 7 - Code Names

◆

“You can address me as The Fool.”

The simple answer soon emanated through the grand hall and dissipated into the fog. However, the voice kept resonating in Audrey’s and Alger’s hearts, stirring up one ripple after another.

They never expected such a designation, but they felt that he was deserving of it. The designation perfectly embodied his image as someone mysterious, powerful, and bizarre!

After a few seconds of silence, Audrey stood up, held up her skirt slightly and bent her knees, curtseying to Zhou Mingrui.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, would you please permit me to take the liberty of requesting you to be the witness of our trade?”

“It’s nothing.” Zhou Mingrui’s mind whirred as he answered in a way that matched his status.

“It’s our honor, Mr. Fool.” Alger stood up as well. He bent his back slightly with his right palm over his chest.

Zhou Mingrui lowered his right palm and smiled.

“Continue, the both of you.”

Alger nodded and sat back down before looking at Audrey.

“If you can obtain the Ghost Shark’s blood, get someone to send it to the

Warrior & Sea Bar at Pelican Street, in the White Rose Borough of Pritz Harbor. Tell the boss, Williams, that it's what the 'Captain' wants.

"Once I acknowledge receipt, will you be giving me an address to mail the potion formula to or do you want me to tell it to you here directly?"

Audrey thought for a moment before saying with a smile, "I will choose the more secure method. Let's do it here, although it's a test of my memory."

Since Mr. Fool had agreed to bear witness for the trade, it also represented that there would be a similar 'gathering' the next time.

With this in mind, she suddenly turned her head as she looked at Zhou Mingrui with sparkling eyes. With a tone of interest, she suggested, "Mr. Fool, would you mind making a few more 'attempts' like this?"

Alger listened to her suggestion calmly; he was tempted by the suggestion as well. He hurriedly echoed, "Mr. Fool, don't you find such 'gatherings' interesting? Although your powers exceed our imaginations, there has to be certain domains that you don't understand or excel in. The person across me is obviously a young lady of lofty stature. I also have my unique set of experiences, insights, mediums, and resources. Perhaps there will come a day when both of us can help you complete something trivial that might be inconvenient for you."

From his point of view, the fact that he had been pulled into this space without any warning or any means to resist meant that the mysterious Mr. Fool was in control. Participating in the 'gatherings' was not necessarily something he could refuse. Therefore, it was better to reap the benefits of this encounter as much as he could to make up for his passive and disadvantaged state.

The trio at the long table had different backgrounds, resources, information channels, and comprehension of the mystical domain. If they interacted and enjoyed some limited cooperation, they could produce unpredictable and immeasurable effects!

The resource trade that had just been negotiated was one example. Another example would be if he wished to kill someone. He could easily request the gathering's members who did not appear to be related to him both on the surface and in reality for help. He could perfectly misdirect any investigators.

A young lady of lofty stature… Was my behavior and accent that obvious? Audrey stared blankly, mouth slightly agape, but she soon jolted back to her senses and nodded her head without any hesitation.

"Mr. Fool, I think it's a very good suggestion. As long as this gathering becomes regular, you can totally leave certain things that are inconvenient for you to us. Of course, it has to be something within our capacities."

From the moment he heard the suggestion, Zhou Mingrui was already weighing the pros and cons. More gatherings definitely allowed him to gain more knowledge of the secrets of the Beyonders or other mysteries, a boon for his transmigration back. For example, it was likely that the potion formula would appear at the next gathering because of the 'spectators.' Similarly, the information he gained was bound to be helpful for his present life.

However, more gatherings meant it was easier to expose himself!

Indeed, regardless of the world, there is no such thing as a free lunch… Zhou Mingrui extended his right hand again as he rapped the side of the long table with his finger gently.

Considering the fact that he was in control of the gathering's summoning and dismissal, any threat of exposure was within the confines of his control. The pros clearly exceeded the cons, so Zhou Mingrui rapidly made a decision.

He stopped his rapping as he smiled at the anticipative and perturbed gazes of the duo.

“I’m a person who likes a fair and equal exchange.

“Your help will not go unrewarded.

“Every Monday at three in the afternoon, try your best to be alone. After I make a few more attempts and figure out certain things, perhaps you can apply for a leave of absence ahead of time. You will no longer need to worry about being in inappropriate situations.”

This was a form of agreement to Alger’s and Audrey’s suggestions.

Audrey had just turned seventeen. Having been taken care of her entire life, she had the character of a young girl. Therefore, she could not help but clench her fist and gradually pump it in front of her chest when she heard The Fool’s reply.

Without waiting for Alger to say a word, Audrey said in excitement, her eyes glowing, “Then, shall we give ourselves code names? After all, we can’t use our real names for conversation.”

Although I might not be able to deceive Mr. Fool regarding my true identity, the person opposite me poses some danger. I must not let him know who I am!

“Good idea,” answered Zhou Mingrui in a simple and relaxed manner.

Audrey’s mind immediately began whirring as she aired her thoughts as they came to her.

“You are Mr. Fool which is derived from tarot cards. Then, as a fixed, long-term, and secretive ‘gathering,’ we should be uniform in our designations. Yes, I’ll also choose one from the tarot cards.”

Her tone slowly turned joyous.

“I’ve decided. My designation shall be ‘Justice!’”

It was one of the twenty-two Major Arcana tarot cards.

“What about you, Mister?” Audrey cheekily smiled at her ‘partner’ sitting across her.

Alger frowned slightly before relaxing it immediately.

“The Hanged Man.”

It was another Major Arcana card.

“Alright, then we can be considered as the founding members of the Tarot Club!” Audrey was the first to blurt it out happily, only to look fearfully at the fog-concealed Zhou Mingrui. “Will that be alright, Mr. Fool?”

Zhou Mingrui shook his head in amusement.

“You can decide on such trivial matters by yourselves.”

“Thank you!” Audrey was clearly thrilled.

Following that, she looked at Alger.

“Mr. Hanged Man, can you repeat the address again once more? I’m afraid that my memories will fail me.”

“No problem.” Alger was very pleased with Audrey’s seriousness as he repeated the address once more.

After repeating it to herself silently thrice, Audrey said again in excitement, “I heard that tarot cards were invented by Emperor Roselle as a game. In fact, doesn’t it come equipped with the power to divine the future?”

“No. Most of the time, divination stems from one’s self. Everyone has something spiritual about themselves, allowing them to attune to the spiritual world and connect to information about themselves at an even higher level. However, ordinary folks are unable to notice this, much less be able to interpret the ‘signs’ they receive. This information will present itself with the help of divination tools. Let me raise a simple example, dreams and dream interpreters.” Alger took a glance at Zhou Mingrui and seeing no response from him, he refuted Audrey’s claim. “Tarot cards are, in fact, such a tool. It uses more symbolism and more logical elements to help us in conveniently and accurately interpreting the signs.”

Although Zhou Mingrui appeared indifferent, he was actually listening very carefully. It was only at this point that his empty mind slowly became heavy as his head began to feel a throbbing pain.

“Got it.” Audrey nodded in agreement. Following that, she emphasized, “That’s not what I meant. I’m not doubting the tarot cards, but I heard that Emperor Roselle had actually created another set of cards, secret and mysterious ones. They were paper cards which symbolized a particular unknown power. There were a total of twenty-two cards that he completed. Later on in life, he referenced them to create the twenty-two Major Arcana tarot cards which are used as a gaming tool. Was what I said correct?”

She looked at Zhou Mingrui as though she was attempting to get an answer from the mysterious Mr. Fool.

All Zhou Mingrui did was smile without saying a word. He cast his gaze at The Hanged Man as though he was putting him to the test.

Alger subconsciously straightened his back and said in a deep voice, “That’s right. It is said that Emperor Roselle had seen the Blasphemy Slate and that set of paper cards contain the profound mysteries of the twenty-two paths of the divine.”

“Twenty-two paths of the divine…” repeated Audrey with a longing tone.

At that moment, Zhou Mingrui’s headache intensified. He felt that his invisible connection with the crimson stars and grayish-white fog was beginning to falter.

“Alright, that will be all for today’s gathering,” he said in a deep voice after making the decision immediately.

“By your will.” Alger bowed his head respectfully.

“By your will.” Audrey mimicked The Hanged Man.

She still had many questions and thoughts; thus, she was unwilling to have it end so soon.

As Zhou Mingrui severed the connection, he said with a smile, “Let us look forward to the next gathering.”

The ‘stars’ brightened once more as the crimson light receded like water. Just as Audrey and Alger heard Mr. Fool’s words, their figures turned into a blur as they phased away.

In a second, the ‘projection’ shattered as the gray fog restored its silence.

As for Zhou Mingrui, he felt himself turning heavy rapidly. His surroundings turned fleeting as his eyes met darkness before changing into dazzling sunlight.

He was still standing in the middle of his apartment.

“It was like a dream… What the heck was that foggy world… Who or what sort of power created the changes that just happened…” Zhou Mingrui sighed softly. He was completely puzzled as he walked towards the study desk as though his legs were filled with lead.

He picked up the pocket watch he placed outside to determine how much time had passed.

“Time flowed at the same pace.” Zhou Mingrui made a rough judgment.

After putting down his pocket watch, he found himself unable to endure the splitting headache any further. He sat on the chair and lowered his head, using his left thumb and middle finger to massage his temples.

After a long while, he suddenly let out a sigh and said in Mandarin, “From the looks of it, I won’t be able to return any time soon…”

Only the clueless could be fearless. After witnessing such a fascinating event and learning the situation regarding Beyonders and the mysterious world, Zhou Mingrui no longer dared to rashly try the luck enhancement ritual using ancient Feysac or Loen language.

Who knew what other kinds of situations would happen. Perhaps, it would be more bizarre, horrifying, or even a living hell!

“At the very least, I should attempt only when I have a deep mastery of mysticism,” thought Zhou Mingrui helplessly.

Thankfully, the so-called gathering could provide him with help.

After another bout of silence, he muttered to himself with a tone of dismay, disappointment, agony, and grief, “From this moment forth, I’m Klein.”

†

Klein tried his best to refocus his solutions and plans so as to purge the negative emotions in him.

Perhaps, he could learn the potion formula for ‘Spectator’ from the side…

The ‘gathering’ that just happened sure is fascinating. People who reside in different places across the world can reduce hundreds of kilometers to just mere inches and discuss face-to-face while supplying each other’s needs. Uh, speaking of which, this does sound a little familiar…

Klein was stunned for a few seconds before he burst out in laughter. Pressing against his temple, he jested under his breath, “Wasn’t that a social networking platform?”

Chapter 8 - A New Era

◆

Whoosh!

Howling wind accompanied the downpour. The three-mast sailboat was tossed around by the crests and troughs of the incoming waves, as if it was being toyed by a giant.

The crimson glow in Alger Wilson's eyes faded. He found himself still remaining on the deck and nothing appeared to have changed.

Almost immediately, the quirky-shaped glass bottle in his palm shattered and the frost within melted into the rain. In seconds, there were no longer any traces left that suggested the existence of the wondrous antique.

A hexagonal crystal-like snowflake emerged on Alger's palm. It then faded rapidly until it was seemingly absorbed by the flesh, vanishing completely in the process. Alger nodded his head in a hardly noticeable manner, as if he was thinking about something. He remained still and silent for a full five minutes.

He turned around and headed for the cabin. As he was about to enter, a man who wore a similar robe embroidered with lightning patterns emerged from inside.

This man, who had soft blond hair, paused and looked at Alger. He held his right fist to his chest and said, "May the Storm be with you."

Alger replied with the same words and gesture. There were no emotions on his rough face which had a well-defined structure.

Alger entered the cabin after the greeting and proceeded to the captain's cabin situated at the far end of the corridor.

Surprisingly, he did not encounter any sailors on the way. The whole place was as quiet as a graveyard.

Behind the door to the captain's cabin, a soft brown carpet overlaid the floor. A bookshelf and a wine rack took the opposite side walls of the room. The books with their yellowish covers and wine bottles with their dark red color looked peculiar under the flickering candlelight.

On the desk with the candle, there was a bottle of ink, a quill, a black metallic telescope and a sextant made of brass.

Behind the desk sat a pale middle-aged man wearing a captain's hat which had a skull on it. As Alger approached him, he said menacingly, "I will not give in!"

"I believe you can do it," Alger said calmly, so calm that it felt like he was commenting on the weather.

"You…" The man seemed to be stunned by the unexpected answer.

At this very moment, Alger leaned forward slightly and suddenly dashed across the room until they were only separated by the desk.

Pa!

Alger tightened his shoulder and reached out his right hand to choke the man.

Illusory fish scales appeared on the back of his hand as he crazily mustered more strength to choke the man, giving him no time to respond.

Crack!

Amid the crisp cracking sound, the man's eyes widened as his body was lifted up.

His legs twitched furiously before they soon became motionless. His pupils began to widen as he stared aimlessly. There was a stench from between his legs as his pants gradually turned moist.

While lifting the man, Alger lowered his back and strode toward the wall.

Bang! He used the man as a shield and smashed forward at the wall. His extremely muscular arm was monstrous.

A hole cracked open in the wooden wall, and rain poured in, accompanied by the scent of the ocean.

Alger flung the man out of the cabin, straight into the giant waves that resembled mountains.

The wind continued to howl in the dark as almighty nature devoured everything.

Alger took out a white handkerchief and wiped his right hand carefully before throwing it into the sea as well.

He stepped back and waited patiently for company.

In less than ten seconds, the blond man from before rushed in and asked, "What happened?"

"The 'captain' has escaped," Alger answered in an annoyed manner as he panted. "I didn't know he still had some of his Beyonder powers."

"Damn it!" the blond man cursed softly.

He went up to the opening and stared into the distance. However, nothing was visible except for the waves and the rain.

"Forget it, he was just extra loot," the blond man said, waving his arm, "We will still be rewarded for finding this ghost ship from the Tudor Era."

Even if he was a Keeper of the Sea, he would not have hastily dived into the sea under this weather condition.

"The 'captain' will not be able to survive much longer if the storm continues." Alger said, as he nodded in approval. The wooden wall was repairing itself at a discernible rate.

He gazed at the wall and turned his head subconsciously towards the rudder and the sail.

He was perfectly aware of what was going on behind all the wooden planks.

The chief mate, the second mate, the crew, and the sailors were not present. There was no living person on board!

Amidst all the emptiness, the rudder and the sail moved eerily by themselves.

Alger again pictured "The Fool" who was covered in grayish-white fog and sighed.

He turned back and looked outside at the mighty waves and spoke as though in a reverie while filled with anticipation and awe, "A new era has begun…"

†

Empress Borough, Backlund, capital of the Loen Kingdom.

Audrey Hall pinched her cheeks in disbelief of her encounter a while ago.

On the dressing table in front of her, the old bronze mirror had shattered into pieces.

Audrey cast her gaze downwards and saw the swirling “crimson” on the back of her hand; it was like a tattoo depicting a star.

The “crimson” gradually faded and disappeared into her skin.

Only at this point in time was Audrey certain that it was not a dream.

Her eyes twinkled as she grinned. She could not help but stand up before bending down to lift up the hem of her dress.

She curtseyed towards thin air and started dancing lively. It was the “Ancient Elf Dance,”the most popular dance among royalty at the moment.

She had a bright smile on her face as she moved about gracefully.

Knock! Knock! Someone suddenly knocked at her bedroom door.

“Who is it?” Audrey immediately stopped her dance and asked as she tidied her dress to look more elegant.

“My Lady, may I come in? You should start to prepare for the ceremony,” Audrey’s maidservant asked from outside the door.

Audrey looked into a mirror on the dressing table and quickly wiped the smile from her face, leaving only a tiny hint of a smile.

She responded gently after she had ensured everything was presentable, “Come in.”

The doorknob turned and Annie, her maidservant, pushed in.

“Oh, it cracked…” Annie said as she instantly saw the outcome of the old bronze mirror.

Audrey blinked and said slowly, “Erm, Yes! Susie was here just now. I am sure you know she likes to wreak havoc!”

Susie was a golden retriever that was not so much of a purebred. It was a gift given to her father, Earl Hall, when he bought a foxhound. Nevertheless, Audrey adored it.

“You should train it well,” Annie said, as she picked up the pieces of the bronze mirror adeptly and with care, lest it hurt her mistress.

As she finished tidying up, she asked Audrey with a smile, “Which dress do you want to put on?”

Audrey thought for a while and answered,” I like the dress designed by Mrs. Guinea for my 17th birthday.”

“No, you can’t wear the same dress twice to a formal ceremony or others will gossip about and question the Hall family’s financial ability,” Annie said, shaking her head in disagreement.

“But I really like it!” Audrey insisted in a gentle manner.

“You can wear it at home or when you attend an event that isn’t so formal,” Annie said firmly, suggesting that it was not negotiable.

“Then it will have to be the one with the frilly designs along the sleeves given by Mr. Sades two days ago,” Audrey said as she drew in a gasp inconspicuously, maintaining her sweet smile.

“You always have such a good taste,” Annie said as she stepped back and shouted towards the door, “The sixth dressing room! Ah, forget it, I shall fetch it myself.”

Maidservants began to work. The dress, accessories, footwear, hat, makeup, and hairstyle—everything had to be taken care of.

When it was almost ready, Earl Hall appeared at the door wearing a dark brown waistcoat.

He had a hat sharing the same color as his clothes and a nice mustache. His blue eyes were filled with joy, but his loosening muscles, widening waist, and wrinkles were obviously destroying his handsome youth.

“The most dazzling jewel of Backlund, it is time for our departure,” Earl Hall said, knocking at the door twice.

“Father! Stop calling me that,” Audrey protested as she got up with the help of the maidservants.

“Well then, it’s time to set off, my beautiful little princess,” Earl Hall said as he bent his left arm, signaling Audrey to hold his arm.

Audrey shook her head slightly and said, “That is for my mother, Mrs. Hall, the Countess.”

“Then this side,” Earl Hall bent his right arm with a smile and said, “This is for you, my greatest pride.”

†

The Imperial naval base, Pritz Harbor, Oak Island.

When Audrey took her father’s arm and walked down the carriage, she was suddenly shocked by the juggernaut in front of her.

In the military port not far away, there was a huge ship shimmering with metallic reflections. It did not have a sail, leaving only an observatory deck, two towering chimneys, and two turrets at the ends of the ship.

It was so majestic and large that the fleet of sails nearby were like newborn dwarfs clustering around a giant.

“Holy Lord of Storms…”

“Oh, m’lord.”

“An ironclad warship!”

†

Amidst the furore, Audrey was also shocked by this unprecedented miracle created by mankind. It was an ocean miracle that had never been seen before!

It took a while for the aristocrats, ministers, and Members of Parliament to compose themselves. Then, a black spot on the sky started to grow in size until it occupied a third of the sky and entered everyone's view. The atmosphere suddenly became solemn.

It was a gigantic flying machine with a beautiful streamlined design hovering in mid-air. The deep blue machine had airbags made of cotton which were supported by alloy structures that were strong but light. The alloy structure's bottom had openings mounted with machine guns, projectile launchers, and muzzles. The exaggerated humming noise from the ignition steam engine and the tail blades produced a symphony that left everyone amazed.

The King's family arrived on their airship, exuding a lofty and indisputable authority.

Two swords, each with a ruby crown at the handle, were pointing vertically down and reflected the sunlight on both sides of the cabin. They were the "Sword of Judgment" emblem which symbolized the Augustus family and has been passed down from the previous epoch.

Audrey was not yet eighteen, so she had not attended the "introductory ceremony," which was an event led by the Queen that marked one's debut into the Backlund social scene, to announce her adult status. Therefore, she could not be nearer to the airship and had to remain silent at the back to watch the entire event.

Nevertheless, it did not matter to her. In fact, she was relieved that she did not need to deal with the princes.

The 'miracle' that mankind used to conquer the sky touched down gently. The first ones to step down the stairs were the handsome young guards who wore red ceremonial uniforms with white trousers.

Decorated with medals, they formed two lines with rifles in hand. They were awaiting the appearances of King George III, his queen, and the prince and princess.

Audrey was not new to meeting important people so she showed no interest at all. Instead, she had her attention on the two statue-like black-armored cavalry flanking the king.

In this era of iron, steam, and cannons, it was surprising that there was still someone who could bear wearing full armor.

The cold metallic luster and the dull black helmet conveyed solemnity and authority.

“Could they be the higher-order Disciplinary Paladins…” Audrey recalled snippets of a casual conversation among adults. She was curious but did not dare go close.

The ceremony commenced with the arrival of the king’s family. The incumbent Prime Minister, Lord Aguesid Negan, went up to the front.

He was a member of the Conservative Party and the second non-aristocrat to become the Prime Minister till this very day. He was given the title of a Lord for his great contributions.

Of course, Audrey knew more. The main supporter of the Conservative Party was the present Duke of Negan, Pallas Negan, who was the brother of Aguesid!

Aguesid was a slender and almost bald fifty plus year old man with a sharp gaze. He surveyed the area before speaking.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe you have witnessed this history-making ironclad warship. It has dimensions of 101 by 21 meters. It has an amazing port and starboard design. The armor belt is 457 millimeters thick. The displacement is 10060 tonnes. There are four 305-millimeter main cannons, six rapid-fire cannons, 12 six-pound cannons, 18 six-barrel machine guns, and four torpedo launchers. It can reach a speed of 16 knots!

“It will be the real hegemon! It will conquer the seas!”

The crowd was roused. The mere descriptions were enough to instill fearful images in them, let alone the fact that the actual thing was right in front of them.

Aguesid smiled and spoke a few more lines before saluting the king and requested, “Your Majesty, please give it a name!”

“Since it will set sail from Pritz Harbor, it should be named”The Pritz,” George III responded. His expression showed his delight.

“The Pritz!”

“The Pritz!”

†

The words spread from the Navy Minister and the Admiral of the Imperial Navy to all the soldiers and officers on the deck. They all exclaimed in unison, “The Pritz!”

George III ordered the Pritz to set sail for a trial in the midst of the gun salutes and the celebratory atmosphere.

Honk!

Thick smoke spewed out from the chimneys. The sound from the machinery could be heard faintly beneath the sound of the ship horn.

The juggernaut departed from the harbor. Everyone was shocked when the two main cannons at the ship’s bow fired at an uninhabited island in its path.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The ground shook as dust shot up into the sky. Shock waves spread out, producing waves in the sea.

Satisfied, Aguesid turned back to the crowd and announced, “From this day on, doomsday will fall on the seven pirates who call themselves Admirals and the four who call themselves Kings. They can only shiver in fear!

“It is the end of their era. Only the ironclad warship will roam the seas no matter whether the pirates have the powers of the Beyonders, ghost ships, or cursed ships.”

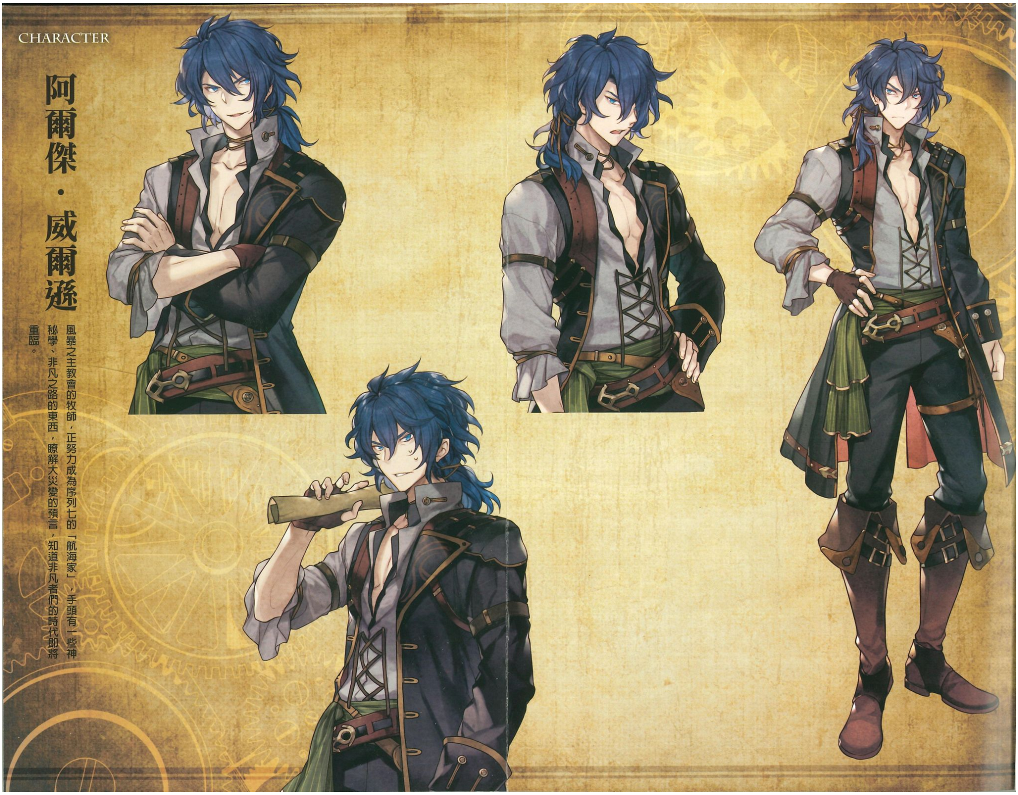
Aguesid’s chief secretary deliberately asked, “Can’t they build their own ironclad warships?”

Some of the nobles and Members of Parliament nodded, feeling that such a possibility could not be eliminated.

Aguesid immediately smiled and shook his head slowly as he answered, “Impossible! It will never be possible! Building our ironclad warship required three big coal and steel amalgamators, a scale of more than twenty steel factories, 60 scientists and senior engineers from the Backlund Cannon Academy and Pritz Nautical Academy, two royal shipyards, almost hundred factories for spare parts, an Admiralty, a ship-building committee, a Cabinet, a determined king with excellent foresight, and a great country with an annual steel production of 12 million tonnes!

“The pirates will never achieve it.”

Having said that, he paused and raised his arms before shouting in agitation, “Ladies and gentlemen, the era of cannons and warships has dawned upon us!”



風暴之主教會的牧師，正努力成為序列七的「航海家」，手頭有一些神秘學、非凡之路的東西，瞭解大災變的預言，知道非凡者們的時代即將重臨。

Alger Wilson

A captain of the Church of the Lord of Storms, he is currently striving to become a Sequence 7 "Seafarer." He possesses knowledge of certain mystical secrets and the "Paths of the Beyonders." He is aware of the prophecy of the Great Cataclysm and knows that an era that does not belong to ordinary mortals is about to come again.

Chapter 9 - The Notebook

◆

After half an hour of rest, Zhou Mingrui, who now viewed himself as Klein, finally recovered. In the meantime, he found that there were now four black dots on the back of his hand, which happened to form a small square.

These four black spots faded and disappeared quickly, but Klein knew that they were still hiding in his body, waiting to be awakened.

“Four spots forming a square; is it in correspondence with the four pieces of staple food at the four corners of the room? Does this mean that in the future, I don’t need to prepare the food and can do the ritual and chants immediately?” Klein made a guess.

This might seem good, but the emergence of the spots was ominous, and “things” that one lacked understanding of were always scary.

The fact that those inexplicable Chinese Divinations from Earth could produce effects here, the strange transmigration in his sleep, the mysterious murmurings that almost drove him crazy during the ritual, and the mysterious and trippy gray world whose significance he had no idea of made Klein shiver in the hot weather of June.

“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest fear is the fear of the unknown.” He recalled this saying as he was experiencing the fear of the unknown acutely.

There was in him an unprecedented and irresistible urge to make contact with the mysterious domain, to learn more, and to explore the unknown. There was also a contradicting escape mentality within him compelling him to pretend nothing had happened.

Intense sunlight shone through the window onto the desk, making it appear as if grains of gold were sprinkled on it. Klein gazed at the desk, feeling as though he had come into contact with warmth and hope.

He relaxed slightly, and a strong sense of fatigue washed over him.

His eyelids were as heavy as lead as they kept closing themselves. It must have been the combined effect of the sleepless night and the tiring encounter.

Klein shook his head and pushed himself up with the aid of the desk. He stumbled towards the double-decked bed, completely disregarding the rye bread placed at the four corners of the room. He fell asleep immediately after he lay down.

Groan! Groan!

Klein was woken up by hunger pangs. When he opened his eyes, he felt rejuvenated.

“There’s still a slight headache.” He rubbed his temples and sat up. He was so hungry that he could eat a horse!

He returned to the desk while straightening his shirt. He picked up the silver vine-leaf pocket watch.

Pa!

The pocket watch’s lid sprang open and the second hand was ticking.

Half past twelve. I slept for three hours… Klein put the pocket watch back into his linen shirt pocket while swallowing.

In the Northern Continent, there were 24 hours in a day, 60 minutes in an hour, and 60 seconds in a minute. Whether each second passed at the same rate here compared to Earth was unknown to Klein.

At this moment, he could not even think of terms such as mysticism, rituals or the grayish world. His mind was occupied by one thing—food!

He would leave thinking after his meals! Only then could he work!

Klein picked up the loaves of rye bread from the four corners and wiped off the minute specks of dust on it without any hesitation. He planned on making one of them his lunch.

He decided to dig into the offerings because he only had five pence with him and there was a tradition of eating the offerings back in his hometown. After all, there was not any observable change to the bread. It was better to be frugal.

Of course, the memory and habits left behind by the original Klein had also played a role.

It was a huge waste to use the expensive gas only to light up the room. So, Klein took out a furnace and boiled water with it after adding some coal. He paced around as he waited.

Anyone would choke eating those loaves of rye bread without water.

Yikes. Life with meat only for dinner is going to be dreadful… No, wait, this is already an exception. Melissa would only allow our meals to have meat twice a week if not for my upcoming interview, Klein thought, as he looked around, hungry. He had nothing better to do.

His eyes seemed to turn avaricious when he set his eyes on the pound of mutton in the cupboard.

No, I need to wait for Melissa to eat it together, Klein thought as he shook his head and rejected the idea of cooking half of it right now.

Although he often ate outside, he had still developed some basic culinary skills, owing to his living in a big city alone. His dishes were not delicious, but they were at least edible.

Klein turned his body around so that the mutton would not “seduce” him. Then, he suddenly realized that he had also bought peas and potatoes in the morning.

Potatoes! Klein immediately had an idea. He quickly turned back to the cupboard and took out two potatoes from a tiny pile of them.

He first cleaned the potatoes in the public bathroom and then added them into a pot so they were boiled together with the water.

After a while, he sprinkled into the water some yellow coarse salt from the spices container he found inside the cupboard.

He waited patiently for a few minutes before lifting the pot and pouring the “soup” into a few cups and a bowl. He took out the potatoes with a fork and placed them on the desk at the end.

Fffffff!

He blew at the potato as he peeled it bit by bit. The fragrance of boiled potato diffused through the air. It smelled very appetizing.

He salivated crazily; the heat could not deter him any longer. Klein took a bite despite having the potato only half peeled.

How fragrant! It had a powdery texture and tasted sweet as he chewed. He was instantly filled with emotions and he wolfed down the two potatoes. He even ate some of the skin.

Then, he held up the bowl and enjoyed the ‘soup.’ The pinch of salt in water proved to be thirst-quenching.

I really enjoyed eating potatoes this way when I was young… A filled Klein exclaimed in his head. Meanwhile, he tore off a small piece of bread and dipped it into the ‘soup’ to soften it before eating.

Perhaps the ritual was too tiring; Klein ate two loaves of bread which amounted to a whole pound.

Klein felt he was finally rejuvenated. He enjoyed the joy of life after he drank the 'soup' before tidying up. Then, he took in the lustrous sunshine happily.

He sat back at the desk and began planning.

I can't escape. I must think of a way to come into contact with mysticism and become a Beyonder as mentioned by Justice and The Hanged Man.

I need to overcome the fear of the unknown.

The only way now is to wait for the next 'gathering.' I need to see if I can learn the formula of the 'Spectator' potion or other things related to mysticism.

There are four more days before Monday. Before that, I need to first figure out the problem with Klein. Why did he commit suicide? What happened to him?

Unable to transmigrate back and wash his hands of everything, Klein picked up the notebook that lay on the table. He wanted to find hints that could help him regain his lost memory fragments.

The original Klein obviously had the habit of taking notes. He also liked to write diaries.

Klein was fully aware that the cabinet that supported the desk on the right stored a whole stack of completed notebooks.

The book he had began on the 10th of May. Matters regarding his school, and mentor, as well as content pertaining to knowledge were at the beginning.

"12th May. Mr. Azik mentioned that the common language used by the Balam Empire in the Southern Continent also developed from Ancient Feysac, a branch of Jotun. Why is this so? Does this mean that every sentient living being once spoke the same language? No, there has to be a mistake. According to ‘The Revelation of Evernight’ and ‘The Book of Storms’, giants were not the only hegemons of the world in primordial times. There were also elves, mutants, and dragons. Anyways, these are just myths and fantasies.”

†

“16th May. Senior Associate Professor Cohen and Mr. Azik discussed the inevitability of the Age of Steam. Mr. Azik opined that it was just a coincidence because if it wasn’t for Emperor Roselle, the Northern Continent would still be wielding swords like the Southern Continent. Mentor argued that Mr. Azik had placed too much emphasis on the contribution of an individual. He believes that with progress, even if there wasn’t an Emperor Roselle, there would be an Emperor Robert. Therefore, the Age of Steam might come late, but eventually come nevertheless. I found little meaning in their discussion. I prefer discovering new things and unraveling the hidden past. Perhaps I am more suited to study archeology than history.”

†

“29th May. Welch found me and told me that he had acquired a notebook from the Fourth Epoch. Oh my Goddess! A notebook from the Fourth Epoch! He didn’t want to ask the archeology department’s students for help so he came to Naya and me to help him decode the contents. How can I refuse? Of course, I can only do it after my graduation defense. I can’t afford diverting my attention at this stage.”

This caught Klein’s attention. Compared to the notes about history and viewpoint disagreements, the appearance of a notebook from the Fourth Epoch might have led to Klein’s suicide.

The Fourth Epoch was the epoch before the present “Iron Age.” Its history was mysterious and incomplete. Due to the fact that very few tombs, ancient cities, and records had been found, archaeologists and historians could only refer to the ambiguous records provided by the seven major Churches that centered around their religious teachings to roughly form the ‘original’ picture. They knew the existence of the Solomon Empire, the Tudor Dynasty, and the Trunsoest Empire.

Having set his sights on solving the mystery and restoring history, Klein didn’t have much interest in the first three eras, whose roots were closer to legends. He was more interested in the Fourth Epoch, also known as the Age of the Gods.

Hmm, so Klein was concerned for his future career and thus focused on the interview. But it was all futile… Klein could not resist exclaiming.

Universities were still very scarce and the majority of students were either from noble or wealthy families. As long as he did not have an extreme mindset, a commoner who had been admitted into university would have been able to build precious social connections through group discussions and networking events despite the prejudice and exclusion from the entrenched social circles.

The very generous Welch McGovern was an example. He was the son of a banker from Constant City, Midseashire, Loen Kingdom. He was used to asking Naya and Klein for help because they were always in the same group for work.

Without thinking further, Klein continued reading the notebook.

“18th June. I have graduated. Farewell, Khoy University!”

“19th June. I have seen the notebook. By comparing sentence structures and root words, I discovered that it is a modified form of ancient Feysac. More precisely, over the course of its thousand-year history, the Feysac language had changed constantly, a little at a time.”

“20th June. We have deciphered the contents of the first page. The author was a member of a family called Antigonus.”

“21st June. He mentioned the Black Emperor. This is anachronistic with regards to the time this notebook is deduced to be written. Is Professor wrong? Is 'Black Emperor' a common title for every emperor of the Solomon Empire?"

"22nd June. The Antigonus family apparently had a very high standing in the Solomon Empire. The author mentions that he was making a secret transaction with a person named Tudor. Tudor? Is it related to the Tudor Dynasty?"

"23rd June. I am trying to restrain myself from thinking about the notebook and going to Welch's place. I need to prepare for the interview! It's very important!"

"24th June. Naya tells me that they have found something new. I think I need to check it out."

"25th June. From the new deciphered content, the author had accepted a mission to visit the 'Nation of the Evernight' situated at the summit of the highest peak of the Hornacis mountain range. Oh my Goddess! How can a nation exist at the summit of that peak which is over 6000 meters above sea level? How do they survive?"

"26th June. Are these strange things real?"

The record ended at this point. Zhou Mingrui transmigrated in the early hours of the 28th.

Which means to say that there was indeed an entry for June 27th, it's that line… Everyone will die, including me… Klein flipped to the page he first saw when he arrived, feeling goosebumps while he made the deduction.

In order to solve the mystery of the original Klein's suicide, he thought that he should visit Welch and take a look at the ancient notebook. However, with a lot of experience from novels, movies, and TV drama series, he suspected that if they were really related, this visit would be very dangerous—those who went investigating castles despite knowing that they were haunted served as a warning!

However, he had to go since escaping would never solve the problem. It would only make things worse, until it welled over and completely drowned him!

Perhaps call the police? But claiming to have committed suicide would be silly, right…

Knock!

Knock, knock!

There was a series of quick and forceful knocks.

Klein sat straight up and listened.

Knock!

Knock, knock!

The knocks echoed through the empty hallway.

Chapter 10 - The Norm

◈ ◈ ◈

“Who is it?”

Klein was thinking about the mysterious suicide of the original owner of this body and the unknown danger he might encounter when he heard the sudden knock on the door. He subconsciously opened the drawer, took out the revolver, and asked vigilantly.

The other party was quiet for two seconds before a slightly sharp voice, in Awwa’s accent, replied, “It’s me, Mountbatten, Bitsch Mountbatten.”

The voice paused for a moment before adding, “The police.”

Bitsch Mountbatten… When Klein heard this name, he immediately thought of the owner of this name.

He was the policeman in charge of the street where the apartment was located. He was a rude, brutal, hands-on man. But perhaps, only such a man could be a deterrent for alcoholics, thieves, part-time thieves, villains, and hooligans.

And his unique voice was one of his trademarks.

“Okay, I’ll be right there!” Klein responded loudly.

He had planned to put the revolver back into the drawer but thinking that he had no idea why the police were outside and that they might search the room or do other things, he cautiously ran to the stove where the flames had already been extinguished and put the revolver in it.

Then he picked up the coal basket, shook a few pieces into the stove, covered the gun, and finally placed the kettle over the stove to conceal everything.

After doing all of that, he tidied up his clothes and quickly approached the door and murmured, “Sorry, I just had a nap.”

Outside the door stood four policemen in black-and-white checkered uniforms with peak caps. Bitsch Mountbatten, the one with a brown beard, coughed and said to Klein, “These three inspectors have something to ask you.”

Inspectors? Klein looked at the shoulder badges of the other three reflexively and found that two of them had three silver hexagons and one had two, both of which looked superior to Bitsch Mountbatten, who had only three chevrons.

As a history student, Klein did little to no research into the ranks of police epaulets, except that Bitsch Mountbatten often boasted of being a senior sergeant.

So these three are inspectors? Influenced by conversations with Benson, Welch, and his classmates, Klein had the common sense to make way and point into the room.

“Please come in. How might I help you?”

The leader of the three inspectors was a middle-aged man with sharp eyes. He seemed to be able to read the mind of a person and make them fearful. His eyes were wrinkled, and the edge of his hat revealed light brown hair. He looked around the room and asked in a deep voice, “Do you know Welch McGovern?”

“What’s wrong with him?” Klein quivered and blurted back.

“I’m the one asking the questions.” The dignified middle-aged police inspector had a stern look in his eyes.

The inspector next to him, also wearing three silver hexagons, looked at Klein and smiled gently.

“Don’t be nervous. It’s just a routine questioning.”

This policeman was in his thirties, with a straight nose and gray eyes that, like a lake in an ancient forest that no one visited, gave him an indescribable sense of depth.

Klein took a breath and organized his words.

“If you mean Welch McGovern, the graduate of Khoy University from Constant, then I’m sure I know him. We are classmates with the same mentor, Senior Associate Professor Quentin Cohen.”

In the Loen Kingdom, “Professor” was not only a professional title, but also a position, just like the combination of professors and department deans on Earth. That meant there could only be one professor in a university’s department. If an associate professor wanted to become professor, they had to wait for their superior to retire, or force out their superior with their abilities.

As talents needed to be retained, the kingdom’s Higher Education Commission had added senior associate professors in the three-level system of lecturers, associate professors and professors after years of observation. This title was given to anyone with high academic achievements or with enough seniority but did not make it to the position of professor.

At this point, Klein looked into the eyes of the middle-aged police inspector and thought for a second.

“To be honest, our relationship is quite good. During this period, I met with him and Naya frequently to interpret and discuss the Fourth Epoch notebook that belonged to him. Inspectors, did something happen to him?”

Instead of answering, the middle-aged police inspector looked sideways at his gray-eyed colleague.

The inspector with the peak cap and ordinary looks replied mildly, “I’m sorry, Mr. Welch has passed away.”

“WHAT?” Despite having some hunches, Klein could not help but shout out in astonishment.

Welch died just like the original owner of this body?

That is a little scary!

“What about Naya?” Klein questioned hurriedly.

“Ms. Naya passed away too,” the gray-eyed police inspector said quite calmly. “Both of them died in Mr. Welch’s house.”

“Killed?” Klein had a vague guess.

Perhaps it was suicide…

The gray-eyed inspector shook his head.

“No, the scene suggests that they committed suicide. Mr. Welch hit the wall with his head many times, covering the wall with blood. Ms. Naya drowned herself in a basin. Yes, the kind used to wash your face.”

“That’s impossible…” Klein’s hairs stood on their ends as he seemed capable of imagining the strange scene.

A girl kneeling on a chair and burying her face into a basin filled with water. Her soft brown hair swaying in the wind, but her entire person remaining motionless. Welch falling to the ground and staring at the ceiling intently. His forehead in a complete blood-mangled mess, while the traces of the impact on the wall were evident with the streaks of blood…

The gray-eyed inspector continued, “We believe so too, but the autopsy results and the situation at the scene exclude factors such as drugs and external forces. They—being Mr. Welch and Ms. Naya—showed no signs of struggling.”

Before Klein could speak again, he stepped into the room and asked, pretending to be casual, “When was the last time you saw Mr. Welch or Ms. Naya?”

As he spoke, he gestured with his eyes to his colleague with two silver hexagons.

He was a young police inspector and looked about the same age as Klein. With black sideburns and green pupils, he was good looking and had a poet’s romantic temperament.

When he heard the question, Klein thought about it and answered it thoughtfully, “It should be June 26th, we were reading a new chapter in the notes. Then, I went home to prepare for my interview on June 30th. Uh, the interview was for the History Department of Tingen University.”

Tingen was known as the city of universities. There were two universities, Tingen and Khoy, as well as technical schools, law colleges and business colleges. It was second only to Backlund, the capital.

As soon as he finished, he saw the young police inspector walk towards his desk in the corner of his eye and pick up the notes which resembled more of a diary.

Damn! I forgot to hide it!

“Hey!” Klein cried out.

The young inspector smiled back at him, but did not stop flipping through his notes, while the gray-eyed inspector explained, “This is a necessary procedure.”

At this time, Bitsch Mountbatten and the dignified middle-aged police inspectors were just watching without interrupting or assisting in the search.

Where are your search warrants? Klein had intended to question them, but on second thought, the judicial system of the Loen Kingdom did not seem to have such a thing as search warrants. At least he did not know if there was one. After all, the police force had only been established for fifteen or sixteen years.

When the original owner of this body was still a child, they were still called Public Security Officers.

Klein couldn't stop it. He watched the young inspector flip through his notes, but the gray-eyed inspector did not ask any questions.

"What is this strange thing?" The young police inspector turned to the end of the notes and suddenly asked, "And what does this mean? 'Everyone will die, including me'…"

Isn't it common sense that everyone dies except for deities? Klein was prepared to quibble, but it suddenly occurred to him that he had planned to "connect" with the police in case of possible danger, but he had no reasons or excuses.

He made a decision in less than a second. Putting his hand over his forehead, he answered painfully, "I have no idea. I really have no idea… When I woke up this morning, I felt I wasn't quite right, as if I had forgotten something. It's especially true for whatever happened recently. I don't even know why I had written such a sentence."

Sometimes, being frank was the best way to solve a problem. Of course, it required skills. There were things that could be said and could not be said, and the order of what was said first mattered.

As an expert keyboard warrior, Klein was also good at sophistry.

"That is ridiculous! Do you think we are fools?" Bitsch Mountbatten could not help but interject angrily.

This is such a bad lie that it insults the intelligence of his and his colleagues!

It's better for you to pretend to be mentally ill than to pretend to be an amnesiac!

"I'm speaking the truth," Klein responded frankly, looking into the eyes of Mountbatten and middle-aged police inspectors.

It really could not be more true.

"Maybe it is," the gray-eyed police inspector said slowly.

What? He really believed it? Klein was surprised himself.

The gray-eyed inspector smiled at him and said, "An expert will come in two days and believe me, she should be able to help you to recall your lost memories."

Expert? Help me remember my memories? In the field of psychology? Klein frowned.

Hey, what if his memories of Earth were exposed? He suddenly felt like facepalming himself.

The young police inspector put down his notes and searched his desk and room. Fortunately, he focused on books instead of lifting the kettle.

"Well, Mr. Klein, thank you for your cooperation. We advise that you'd better not leave Tingen for the coming days. If you have to, please notify Inspector Mountbatten, or you'll become a fugitive," the gray-eyed police inspector warned.

That's it? That's it for today? No other questions with deeper investigations? Or taking me back to the police station to torture me for information? Klein was at a loss.

Nevertheless, he wanted to solve the odd turn of events brought about by Welch too. So he nodded.

“That wouldn’t be an issue.”

The inspectors exited the room one by one, and the young man at the end suddenly patted Klein on the shoulder.

“It’s really nice. Very lucky.”

“What?” Klein’s face was puzzled.

The green-eyed police inspector with a poet’s temperament smiled and said, “Generally speaking, the norm is for all the involved parties to die in such an event. We are very glad and fortunate to see you still alive.”

After that, he exited the room and closed the door behind him politely.

The norm is for everyone to die together? Very glad that I’m still alive? Fortunate that I’m still alive?

On this June afternoon, Klein was chilling all over.

Chapter 11 - Real Culinary Skills

◆

The norm is for everyone to die together? Very glad that I’m still alive? Fortunate that I’m still alive?

Klein shivered and quickly ran to the door, trying to catch up with the policemen and ask for protection.

But as soon as he reached the handle, he suddenly stopped.

That officer talked so horribly about it, why didn’t they protect me, an important witness or key lead?

Isn’t that too careless?

Were they just probing me? Or maybe it’s a bait?

All kinds of thoughts rushed into Klein’s mind; he suspected that the police were still secretly “watching” him, observing his reaction.

He felt much calmer after thinking of this and was no longer so panicked. He slowly opened the door, deliberately shouting with a trembling voice at the staircase, “You guys will protect me, right?”

Tap, tap, tap…There was no response from the police officers, and there was no change in the rhythm of the contact between the leather shoes and the wooden stairs.

“I know! You’ll do that!” Klein shouted again in a tone of feigned conviction, trying to act like a normal person that was in danger.

The sound of footsteps gradually weakened and disappeared into the bottom floor of the apartment.

Klein snorted and laughed, “Isn’t that response too fake? Their acting skills are not up to standard!”

He did not run after them. Instead, he turned back to the room and closed the door behind him.

In the next few hours, Klein fully expressed what they called back in Foodaholic Empire, China—restlessness, nervousness, agitation, inadvertence and murmuring words that he did not understand. He did not slack just because there was no one around.

This is called the self-cultivation of an actor! He laughed at himself in his heart.

When the sun moved to the west, the clouds on the horizon appeared to be reddish-orange. Tenants in the apartment came home one after another; Klein shifted his focus elsewhere.

“Melissa is almost done with school…” He looked at the stove, lifted the kettle, peeled off the coal and took out the revolver.

Without pause or delay, he reached to the back of the board under the double-decked bed where more than ten wooden strips were staggered out.

After clipping the left wheel between a piece of wooden strip and board, Klein straightened up and waited uneasily, fearing that the police would burst open the door and rush into the room with guns in their hands.

If it was an Age of Steam, he was certain he would not be seen by anyone when he did that. However, there were extraordinary powers here, ones that he had proven through his own experiences.

After waiting for a few minutes, there was no movement at the door.

There was only the chatter between two tenants who were heading for the Heart of the Wild Bar on Iron Cross Street.

“Phew.” Klein exhaled, feeling assured.

All he needed to do was wait for Melissa’s return and cook the stewed mutton with tender peas!

When the idea came to Klein’s mind, his mouth seemed to taste the rich flavor of the gravy; he remembered how Melissa cooked stewed mutton with tender peas.

First, she boiled the water and stir-fried the meat. Then, she added onions, salt, a little pepper, and water. After a specific period of time, the peas and potatoes were added, and the stew was to be cooked for an additional forty or fifty minutes with the lid on.

“It’s indeed a simple and crude way to do it… Supported purely by the flavors of the meat itself!” Klein shook his head.

But there was no other way about it. It was hard for commoners to have many kinds of condiments and various cooking methods. They could only pursue simple, practical, and economical methods. As long as the meat was not burnt or spoiled, anything was good for people who could only eat meat once or twice a week.

Klein was not a very good cook himself and ordered takeout food most of the time. But by cooking three or four times a week, after many weeks of accumulated practice, he had a passing standard and felt that he would not let the pound of mutton down.

“When Melissa comes back to cook it, it will be done after 7:30pm. She would be starving by then… It’s time for her to see what real cooking is!” Klein made an excuse for himself. First, he started the fire again, went to the bathroom to collect water, and washed the mutton. Then he took out the kitchen boards and knives before chopping the mutton into tiny chunks.

As for the explanation for his sudden culinary skills, he decided to blame it on the dead Welch McGovern, who had not only hired a chef who was good at the Midseashire flavor, but also often created his own delicacies and invited people to try them.

Well, the dead cannot refute me!

Nevertheless, tsk, this is a world with Beyonders; the dead are not necessarily unable to speak. With that in mind, Klein felt a little guilty conscience.

He threw aside his confused thoughts and put the meat into the soup bowl. Then he took out the condiment box and added in a spoonful of the crude salt, half of which had begun yellowing. In addition, he cautiously took some black pepper grains from a special small bottle, mixing and marinating them together.

He placed the saucepan on the stove and, while waiting for it to heat up, Klein rummaged for the carrots from yesterday and cut them into pieces with the onions he bought today.

When he was done with his preparations, he took out a small can from the cupboard and opened it. There was not much lard left in it.

Klein took a spoonful, put it in the pan, and melted it. He added in the carrots and onions and stirred it for a while.

As the fragrance began to pervade, Klein poured all the mutton into the pot and fried it with care for a while.

He should have added cooking wine in the process, or red wine at least. However, the Moretti family did not have these luxuries and could only drink a glass of beer a week. Klein had to make do with whatever was available and poured in some boiled water.

After stewing for about twenty minutes, he opened the lid, put the tender peas and cut potatoes in it, and added a cup of hot water and two spoons of salt.

He closed the lid, lowered the fire, and exhaled satisfactorily, waiting for his sister to reach home.

As seconds turned into minutes, the fragrance in the room intensified. There was the allure from the meat, the rich smell of potatoes, and the refreshing scent of onions.

The smell gradually mixed up, and Klein swallowed his saliva from time to time, keeping track of the time with his pocket watch.

After more than forty minutes, some not-so-brisk but rhythmic footsteps approached. A key was inserted, the handle was turned, and the door opened.

Before Melissa came in, she whispered doubtfully, “Smells good…”

With her bag still in her hand, she stepped in and glanced over at the stove.

“You made this?” Melissa took off her veil hat and her hand paused mid-air, looking at Klein in astonishment.

She twitched her nose and inhaled more of the fragrance. Her eyes quickly softened, and she seemed to find some confidence.

“You made this?” she asked again.

“Are you afraid I’d waste the mutton?” Klein smiled and returned with a question. Without waiting for an answer, he said to himself, “Don’t worry, I specifically asked Welch to teach me how to cook this dish. You know, he has a good cook.”

“First time?” Melissa’s eyebrows creased subconsciously, but they were smoothed by the fragrance.

“It looks like I’m talented.” Klein laughed. “It’s almost done. Put your books and veil hat down somewhere. Go to the bathroom and wash your hands, and then get ready to taste it. I’m very confident about it.”

When she heard her brother's orderly arrangements and saw his gentle and calm smile, Melissa stood rooted at the door and failed to respond in her daze.

"Do you prefer the mutton to be cooked longer?" Klein urged with a laugh.

"Ah, okay, okay!" Melissa jolted back to her senses. With a handbag and veil in each hand, she rushed into the room quickly.

When the lid of the saucepan was uncovered, a sudden blast of steam appeared before Klein's eyes. Two pieces of rye bread were already placed to the side of the mutton and tender peas, allowing them to absorb the fragrance and heat to become soft.

By the time Melissa had packed her items, washed her hands and face, and returned, a plate of stewed mutton with tender peas, potatoes, carrots and onions was already placed on the table. Two pieces of rye bread, colored by a light dip into the gravy, were on their plates.

"Come on, try it." Klein pointed to the wooden fork and spoon next to the plate.

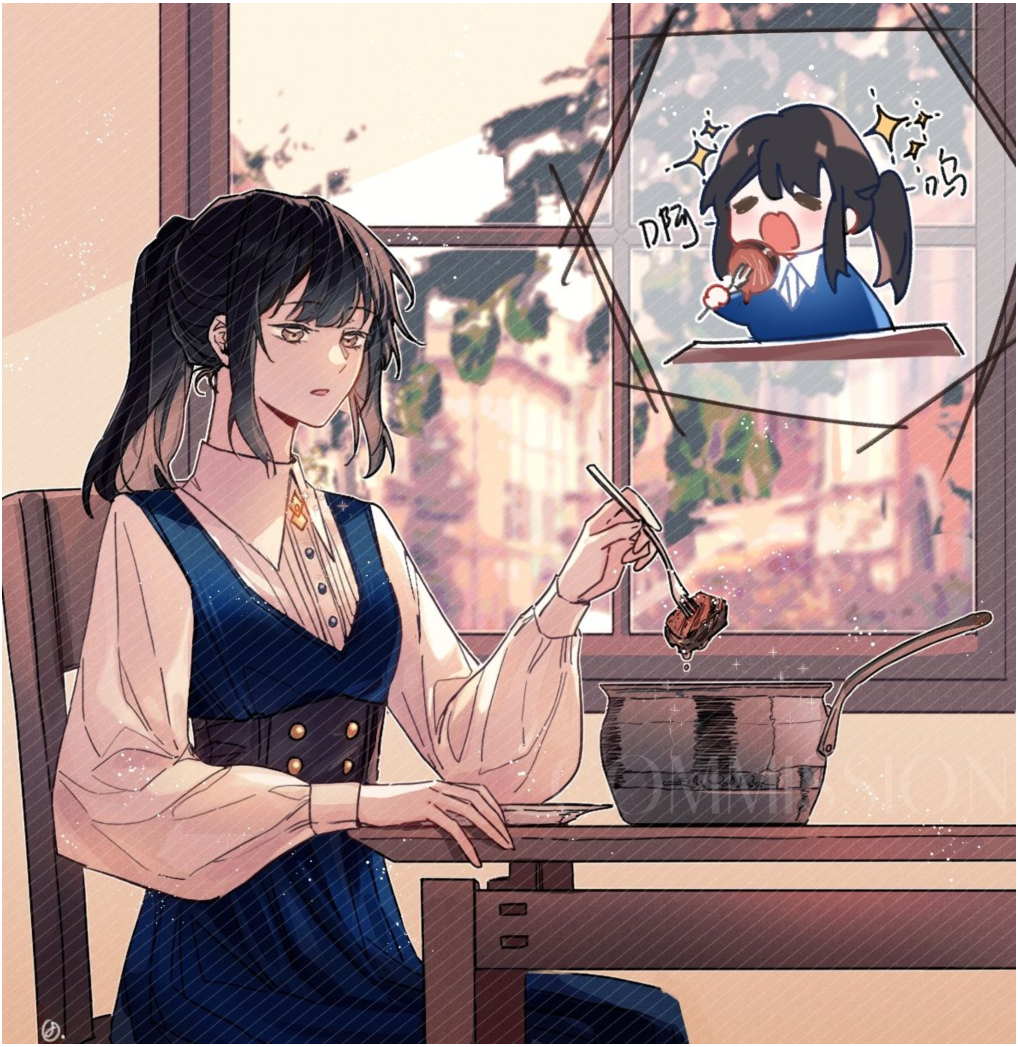
Melissa was still a little confused. She didn't refuse; she picked up a potato with her fork, put it into her mouth and bit it lightly.

The taste of the starchy potato and gravy fragrance flooded her mouth. Her saliva secretion went crazy as she gobbled down the potato in a few mouthfuls.

"Try the mutton." Klein gestured at the plate with his chin.

He had tasted it just now and thought it was barely at a passing standard, but it was enough for a girl who was inexperienced with what the world had to offer. After all, she only ate meat occasionally.

Melissa's eyes were filled with anticipation as she carefully forked some mutton.



It was very tender and, as soon as it entered the mouth, nearly melted. The fragrance of the meat exploded in her mouth, filling it with delicious meat juices.

It was an unprecedented feeling that made Melissa unable to stop eating.

By the time she realized it, she had already eaten several pieces of the mutton.

“I… I… Klein, this was supposed to be prepared for you…” Melissa blushed and stammered.

“I’d nibbled some of the food just now. It’s the privilege of being a cook.” Klein smiled and soothed her sister. He picked up his fork and spoon. At times, he would eat a piece of meat and sometimes, he would stuff his mouth full of peas. At other times, he would put down the utensils, break off a piece of rye bread and dip it in gravy.

Melissa relaxed and was immersed in the delicacy again by Klein’s normal behavior.

“It’s really delicious. It doesn’t seem like you were doing it for the first time.” Melissa looked at the empty dish and praised him with all her heart. Even the gravy was finished.

“It’s a long way from Welch’s chef. When I’m rich, I’ll take you and Benson out to the restaurant and have a better meal!” Klein said. He was beginning to look forward to it himself.

“Your interview… Burp…” Melissa did not finish her words because she suddenly let out a sound of contentment involuntarily.

She put her hand over her mouth in a hurry and looked embarrassed.

The fault is with the stewed mutton with tender peas just now! It was just too delicious.

Klein laughed secretly and decided not to make fun of his sister. He pointed to the plate and said, “This is your mission.”

“All right!” Melissa stood up immediately, took the basin and rushed out the door.

When she came back, she opened the cupboard to check the condiment box and other items as per normal.

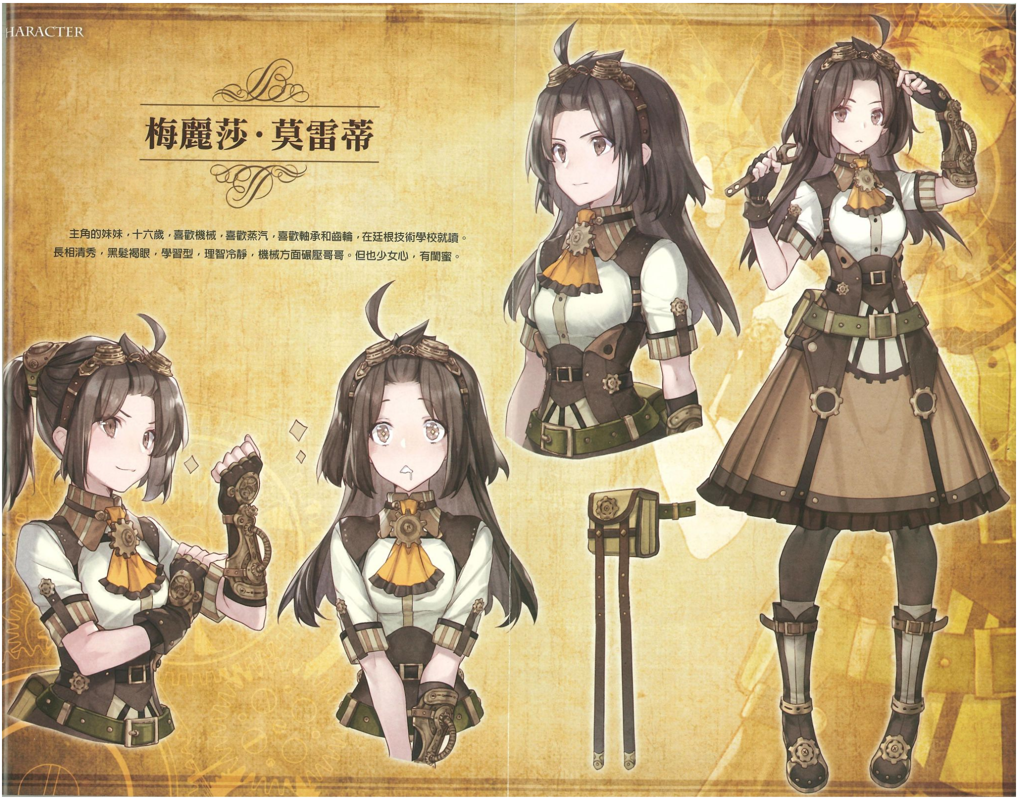
“Did you just use them?” Melissa was surprised, and turned to Klein, holding the black pepper bottle and lard can.

Klein shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

“Just a little. It’s the price of a delicacy.”

Melissa’s eyes twinkled, her expression changing for a few moments, before she finally said, “Let me cook in the future.”

“Um… You have to hurry up and prepare for the interview. You have to think about your job.”



主角的妹妹，十六歲，喜歡機械，喜歡蒸汽，喜歡軸承和齒輪，在廷根技術學校就讀。長相清秀，黑髮褐眼，學習型，理智冷靜，機械方面碾壓哥哥。但也少女心，有閨蜜。

Melissa Moretti

The protagonist’s younger sister, sixteen years old. She likes machinery, likes steam, and likes gears and mechanical devices. She studies at Tingen Technical School.

She has a delicate appearance, black hair and brown eyes. She is studious, rational, and calm. In terms of mechanical knowledge, she is only slightly inferior to her older brother. However, she is still a young girl at heart and can be a bit of a crybaby.

Chapter 12 - Here Again

◆

Melissa, can you not rub in it… Klein muttered inwardly. He felt a throbbing pain in his head.

The amount of content Klein had forgotten wasn't considered a lot, but neither was it negligible. The interview was in two days, so how could he find the time to make up for it…?

Furthermore, he was involved in such strange paranormal activity, so how would it be possible that he would be in the mood to revise?

Klein gave his sister a perfunctory response and began putting on the appearance of studying. Melissa moved a chair over to sit beside him. With light shining from the gas lamp, she began working on her assignments.

The atmosphere was serene. When it was almost eleven o'clock, the siblings bade each other goodnight and went to bed.

†

Knock!

Knock! Knock!

Poundings on the door roused Klein from his dreams.

He peered out of the window to see the first glimmer of dawn. In a daze, he flipped over and sat up.

"Who is it?"

Look at the time now! Why didn't Melissa wake me up?

"It's me. Dunn Smith," a man with a deep voice outside the door replied.

Dunn Smith? Don't know him… Klein got off his bed and shook his head as he walked towards the door.

He opened the door to see the gray-eyed police inspector whom he had met the day before standing in front of him.

Alarmed, Klein asked, "Is there something wrong?"

The policeman replied with a stern look, "We found a carriage driver. He testified that you had gone to Mr. Welch's place on the 27th—the day when Mr. Welch and Ms. Naya died. Furthermore, Mr. Welch was the one who paid for your transportation fees."

Klein was startled. He did not feel a tinge of fear or guilt that one would expect from having his lies exposed.

It was because he was not even lying. In fact, he was surprised by the evidence provided by Dunn Smith.

On the 27th of June, the former Klein had indeed gone to Mr. Welch's place. On the night that he returned, he killed himself, the exact same way as Welch and Naya did!

Klein gave a forced smile and said, "This is insufficient evidence. It does not directly prove that I am associated with the death of Welch and Naya. Honestly speaking, I'm also very curious about the whole incident. I want to know what exactly happened to my two poor friends. But… But… I really can't remember. In fact I have almost completely forgotten what I had done on the 27th. You may find it hard to believe, but I fully relied on the diaries I had written to roughly make a guess that I had gone to Welch's place on the 27th."

"You sure have great mental fortitude," Dunn Smith said while nodding. He showed not a trace of anger; nor was he smiling.

"You should be able to hear my sincerity," Klein looked him straight in the eye and said.

I'm telling the truth! Of course, only part of it!

Dunn Smith did not give an immediate response. He swept his glance across the room before saying slowly, "Mr. Welch lost a revolver. I guess… I should be able to find it here. Right? Mr. Klein?"

Indeed… Klein finally understood where the revolver had come from. A thought flashed in his mind and he came to the final verdict in an instant.

He raised his hands halfway and retreated, leaving a path open. Then, he signaled at the bunk bed with his chin.

"Behind the bed board."

He did not specifically mention that it was the bottom deck, as no one would normally hide things at the back of the bed board on an upper deck. That would be too obvious for guests to notice at a glance.

Dunn Smith did not move forward. The corners of his mouth twitched as he asked, "Nothing to add on?"

Without hesitation, Klein replied, "There is!"

"Yesterday, when I woke up in the middle of the night, I realized I was laying on my desk with a revolver beside me. There was a bullet at the corner of the room. It was as if I had committed suicide. But due to a lack of experience of never having used a gun, or maybe I was too scared at the final moment… Anyway, the bullet did not achieve the desired result, my head is still in its place. I am still alive now.

"And since then, I have lost some memories, including what I saw and did at Welch's place on the 27th. I'm not lying. I really can't remember."

For the sake of being eliminated as a suspect. For the sake of getting rid of all these strange events surrounding him, Klein explained almost everything that had happened. Except, the transmigration and "gathering."

Also, Klein was careful with his words, allowing every sentence to be amenable. Such as, not revealing the fact that the bullet had hit his brains, but only mentioning that it did not achieve the desired result, and that his head was still in its place.

To others, these two statements might seem to convey the exact same ideas, but in reality they were like chalk and cheese.

Dunn Smith listened quietly, then said, "This corresponds with what I had surmised. It also corresponds with the hidden logic of similar incidents in the past. Of course, I have no idea how you managed to survive."

"I'm glad you believe in me. I don't know how I survived either." Klein heaved a small sigh of relief.

"But—" Dunn threw out a conjunction. "There is no use in me believing you. You are currently the prime suspect. You have to be confirmed by an 'expert' that you have indeed forgotten what you went through, or that you indeed have nothing to do with the deaths of Mr. Welch and Miss Naya."

He coughed, his expression becoming serious.

"Mr. Klein, I seek your cooperation on coming with me to the police station for the investigation. This should take roughly two to three days if it is confirmed that there are no issues with you."

"The expert is here?" Klein asked blankly in return.

Didn't they say it would take another two days?

"She came earlier than expected." Dunn turned sideways, signaling for Klein to leave.

"Allow me to leave a note," Klein requested.

Benson was still away and Melissa had gone to school. He could only leave a note to inform them that he was involved in an incident associated with Welch so that they would not worry about him.

Dunn nodded, barely minding.

"Alright."

Klein returned to the desk. As he searched for paper, he began thinking about what was about to occur.

Honestly speaking, he did not wish to meet the 'expert.' After all, he had a bigger secret.

In a place where there were seven major churches, under the premise that Emperor Roselle, who was suspected to be a transmigrator predecessor, was assassinated, a thing like 'transmigration' usually meant having to go to court and enter arbitration!

But, without weapons, combat skills, or superpowers, he was no match for a professional policeman. What's more, a few of Dunn's subordinates were standing in the dark outside.

Once they draw their guns and shoot at me, I'd be finished!

"Ugh, I'll take one step at a time." Klein left the note, grabbed his keys, and followed Dunn out the room.

Along the dark aisle, four policemen in black-and-white checkered uniforms split into pairs and guarded them on both sides. They were very alert.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein followed alongside Dunn as they went down the wooden stairs which occasionally creaked in protest.

Outside the apartment, there was a four-wheeled carriage. On the side of the carriage, there was the “two crossed swords and a crown” police emblem. Their surroundings were crowded and bustling with noise as usual.

“Go on, up.” Dunn signaled for Klein to go first.

Klein was just about to step forward when an oyster seller suddenly grabbed a customer and claimed that he was a thief.

Both parties wrestled and triggered a response from the horses, causing great chaos.

An opportunity!

There wasn’t much time for Klein to think any further; he bent forward and dashed towards the crowd.

Either shoving or dodging, he escaped frantically towards the other end of the street.

Right now, for the sake of not “meeting” the expert, he could only proceed by going to the pier outside the city, taking a boat down the Tussock River and escaping to the capital, Backlund. The population was higher there, making it easier to hide.

Of course, he could also get on a steam train, go eastward to the nearest Enmat Harbor and take the sea route to Pritz, then towards Backlund.

Not long after, Klein arrived at a street and made a turn onto Iron Cross Street. There were several carriages that could be hired.

“To the pier outside the city.” Klein reached out his hand and hopped onto one of the carriages.

He had thought through things clearly. Firstly, he had to mislead the police that were coming for him. Once the carriage was a suitable distance away from them, he would jump right off!

“Alrighty.” The carriage driver tugged at the reins.

Clop! Clop! Clop… The carriage left Iron Cross Street.

Just as Klein was about to jump off the carriage, he noticed that it had turned into another road. It wasn’t leading out of the city!

“Where are you going?” Klein blurted in his momentary daze.

“To Welch’s place…” the carriage driver answered monotonously.

What!? Klein was at a loss for words. The carriage driver turned around, exposing his cold gray eyes. It was Dunn Smith, the gray-eyed policeman!

“You!” Klein was flustered. Everything suddenly became a blur as though the world spun around him when he instantly sat up.

Sat up? Klein looked around, confused. He noticed the crimson moon outside the window and the room being covered in a crimson veil.

He reached out with his hand to feel his forehead. It was all moist and cold. Cold sweat. His back felt exactly the same.

“It was a nightmare…” Klein heaved a sigh. “All is well… All is well…”

He found it weird. He was rather clear-minded in his dream, he was even able to think calmly!

After calming down, Klein looked at his pocket watch. It was only two in the morning. He got out of bed quietly and planned to head to the washroom where he could wash his face and empty his burgeoning bladder.

He opened the door and walked along the dark corridor. Under the dim moonlight, he walked lightly towards the washroom.

Suddenly, he noticed a silhouette outside the window at the end of the corridor.

That silhouette was wearing a black trench coat that was shorter than a coat, but longer than a jacket.

That silhouette was partly camouflaged in the darkness, bathing in the crimson moonlight.

That silhouette turned around slowly. His eyes deep, gray, and cold.

Dunn Smith!

Chapter 13 - Nighthawk

◆

Plop!

Klein could not help but take a step back. For a moment he was unsure if he was awake or still in his dreams.

The silhouette took off his black top hat and bowed a little as he said with a smile, “Reintroducing myself, Nighthawk, Dunn Smith.”

[image]

Nighthawk? One of the codenames of the Church of Evernight’s Beyonder teams which ‘Justice’ and ‘The Hanged Man’ mentioned before? Klein suddenly realised something, and exclaimed after making a connection, “You can control dreams? You just made me dream of that?”

Nighthawk Dunn Smith wore his black hat again, concealing his slightly high hairline. With deep gray eyes he said, “No, I only entered your dream and made the necessary guidance.”

His voice was deep and soothing; it reverberated through the dimly lit corridor without disturbing the sweet dreams of others, “In dreams, even though much of your usually suppressed emotions and various dark thoughts in you are amplified—making everything seem chaotic, absurd, and crazy—they are all rooted in reality since reality exists. For veterans like me, everything is crystal clear. Compared to a conscious you, I believe the you in your dreams more.”

This… What normal human being could control his dream? If I had dreamed of something on Earth, wouldn't Dunn Smith have noticed? Klein was petrified by what had happened in the dream.

Yet he quickly found it bizarre. He remembered being very much sober and rational—knowing what to say and what not to say.

To put it simply, it did not feel like dreaming at all!

So, Dunn Smith only "saw" what I wanted him to see?

Klein's mind whirled as he gained a glimmer of understanding.

This is a perk that resulted from transmigration? Like having a special body and soul? Or was it the effects of that luck enhancement ritual?

"So, Mr Smith, do you believe that I really lost my memory?" Klein organized his thoughts and asked in reply.

Dunn Smith did not answer him directly. Instead he looked at him keenly.

"You are actually not surprised by the course of events?"

"I've met people who wouldn't believe in the power of the Beyonders, and they would rather believe that they haven't really woken up."

Klein tersely acknowledged as he said, "Perhaps, I have always been praying, hoping that there was such power to help me."

"An interesting train of thought… Perhaps you survived not only because you were lucky." Dunn nodded expressionlessly. "I can now confirm that you really lost parts of your memories due to the incident, especially those related to it."

"So can I go back now?" Klein heaved a long sigh of relief in his heart as he probed.

Dunn placed a hand in his pocket and walked slowly towards Klein, the surrounding darkness becoming tranquil and gentle.

“No, you still have to come with me to see the expert,” he smiled politely and said.

“Why?” Klein blurted out, then added, “You don’t believe in the findings from my dream?”

You must be joking, if that “expert” specializes in hypnosis or mind-reading and stuff, then wouldn’t my biggest secret be exposed?

The consequences would be beyond imagination!

“I’m quite humble usually, but I’m still confident for things related to dreams.” Dunn calmly replied, “However, for important key matters, there is no harm in confirming them again. Plus, our specialties lie in different areas. Perhaps, she can help you recover some of your memories.”

Not waiting for Klein to reply, his voice turned deeper. “After all you’re connected to the whereabouts of that Antigonus family notebook.”

“What?” Klein froze.

Dunn stopped in front of him, locking his gray eyes on Klein’s eyes and said, “At the scene of the suicide, there was not a single trace of that notebook from the Fourth Epoch. Welch is dead, Naya is dead; you are our only lead.”

“…Alright then.” Klein went silent for a moment before exhaling.

A missing notebook… now this is really peculiar!

How did I not think about the whereabouts of that notebook from the Fourth Epoch!

Dunn nodded slightly, walking past Klein and said, “Lock your door and come with me to Welch’s apartment, the expert is waiting for us there.”

Klein took in a silent breath. His heart was thumping wildly as he felt uneasy.

He wanted to decline and even had the intention to run. However, he believed that with what had happened in his dreams, Dunn Smith would have definitely heightened his level of guard. And with the difference in strength between a normal human and a Beyonder, there was little chance of success by using force.

He must have a revolver with him too… He must also have had practice using the revolver…

Many thoughts flashed past his mind, and eventually Klein chose to accept the reality.

“Alright.”

Sigh, I can only take one step at a time and see how things unfold; maybe, that miraculous power in my dream will take effect again…

“Then let’s go,” Dunn said in an indifferent tone.

Klein turned and followed. After taking two steps, he suddenly stopped and said, “Mr. Smith, I… I would like to use the bathroom first.”

I came out originally for the bathroom…

Dunn did not stop him. Instead, he gave him a keen look and said, “No problem, Klein. Believe me, I am far more powerful than you can imagine in the dark night.”

In the dark night… Klein silently repeated this phrase.

He did not make any reckless attempt to escape and honestly relieved himself. He then washed his face with cold water, completely calming himself down.

Klein changed his outfit and closed the door to his apartment. With gentle steps, Klein followed Dunn down the stairs and walked towards the building's entrance.

In such a tranquil setting, Dunn Smith opened his mouth and spoke suddenly, "At the end of the dream, why did you try to escape? What were you afraid of?"

Klein immediately thought of an answer as he said, "I do not remember what I did at Welch's place, nor do I remember if I was directly involved in Welch's and Naya's deaths. I was afraid that if it was really proven to be my doing, I would rather gamble and escape. I can then start anew in the Southern Continent."

"I would've done the same if I were you," Dunn said as he pushed open the door to the building, letting in the cool midnight breeze to disperse the sweltering heat inside.

He was not afraid of Klein running away as he got on the carriage. It was exactly the one Klein had dreamed of—a four-wheeled carriage drawn by a single horse and the carriage driver. There was also the police emblem of double-crossed swords that clustered a crown carved onto the side of the carriage.

Klein followed into the carriage. Inside, there was a thick carpet laid out and the place was filled with a soothing fragrance.

Having sat down, he looked for a topic to probe for more information.

"Mr. Smith, what if—and I mean if—the 'expert' confirms that I have really forgotten a part of my memories? And that there is no other evidence which points to me being the perpetrator or a victim, would this be over?"

"In theory, yes. We will try to search for the notebook through other means. As long as it exists, it can be found. Of course, before that, we will have to make sure you are not cursed or have any scent of cacodemons and that there are no related psychological problems lingering. We must ensure that you can embrace the rest of your life peacefully and healthily." Dunn Smith had a smile on his face, a rather unusual smile.

Klein caught on to this point keenly, and promptly inquired, "In theory?"

"Yes, only in theory. In this field of work, there are always twisted, unorthodox, and inexplicable things happening." Dunn looked Klein in the eye and said, "Their continuation or end are not what we can foresee or control at times."

"For example?" Klein actually felt frightened for a moment.

The carriage sped through an almost empty street. Dunn took out his tobacco pipe and sniffed it, saying, "When we believe that things have come to an end, with everything going back to normal, it would resurface in a terrifying, chilling way."

"A few years ago, we handled a case regarding an evil cult. They did live sacrifices to please an evil god by making followers commit suicide. When one of the followers was chosen, his survival instincts triumphed over his foolishness, twisted beliefs, and psychedelic drugs. He secretly escaped and reported to the police.

"The case was handed over to us. It was a very small mission, since there were no Beyonders in that cult. The deity they worshiped was actually randomly thought up by their leader merely for the sake of money and satisfaction. Humanity was lost there.

"We only used two members, coupled with the support from the police, to suppress this cult. No one was off the hook. For that whistleblower, we also confirmed that he had no lingering demonic scent left on him. He was not cursed and did not suffer any mental disorders. He didn't have any personality problems or any other irregularities, nothing.

"Later, he got a decent advancement in his career, got married to a very good wife, had a son and a daughter. His dark past seemed far away from him. The horror and bloodshed seemed to have completely vanished.”

At this point, Dunn Smith gave out a laugh and said, “Yet in March this year, despite being in good financial health and having a loving wife and adorable kids… he strangled himself to death in his own office.”

The crimson moonlight outside the carriage window shone upon Dunn Smith.

At that instance, his seemingly self-derisive smile made Klein feel unspeakably horrified.

“Strangled himself to death…” Klein drew in a gasp of cool air silently, as if seeing his own tragic end.

Even if I escaped it once, it might just be temporary?

Is there any way to resolve this completely?

Become a Beyonder to fight it?

The carriage returned to silence. Countless thoughts welled in Klein’s mind.

Under an awkward silence, the carriage traveled for a long time at high speeds.

Just as Klein made up his mind to consult Dunn Smith for any solutions, the carriage came to a halt.

“Mr. Smith, we have reached Welch’s apartment.” The carriage driver’s voice was heard.

“Let’s get down.” Dunn straightened out his black trench coat that reached his knees.

“Oh, let me introduce beforehand, the official disguise of the ‘expert’ is the most renowned spirit medium of Awwa County.”

Klein suppressed his other thoughts and asked curiously, “Then what is her actual identity?”

Dunn half-turned his body and turned his head back, with his abstruse gray eyes he said, “A true Spirit Medium.”

Chapter 14 - The Medium

◆

A true medium… Klein repeated this description inwardly, and did not speak again. He followed Dunn Smith down the carriage.

Welch's place in Tingen was a detached house with a garden. The road outside the hollowed metal gates allowed four carriages to pass through at once. Street lamps lined the sides of the road every fifty meters. They looked different from the ones Klein had seen in his previous life. They were gas lamps and the height of every lamp was about that of an adult male so that it was convenient to light the lamps.

The black metal was closely appressed to the glass, forming a checkered pattern, casting out classical paper lantern-like 'artworks.' Coldness and warmth were intertwined while darkness and light coexisted.

Walking along the pathway blanketed by rays from the sunset, Klein and Dunn Smith entered Welch's rented place through the ajar metal gate.

Facing the main entrance was a cemented road that led straight to a two-floored bungalow. Two carriages could go at once.

There was a garden on the left and a lawn to the right. The pleasantly faint fragrance from the flowers mixed with the cool scent of the fresh grass made one feel happy and relaxed.

As soon as he stepped in, Klein shivered and peered around.

He felt that in the garden, somewhere in the lawn, on the roof, behind the swing, somewhere in a dark corner, pairs of eyes were observing him!

There was clearly no one here; yet, Klein felt as if he was on a crowded street.

This strange contrast—this peculiar feeling—tensed him up. A chill ran up his spine.

“Something’s wrong!” he couldn’t help but exclaim to Dunn.

Dunn’s expression remained unchanged as he walked beside him and replied calmly, “Just ignore them.”

Since the “Nighthawk” had said so, Klein tolerated the chilling feeling of not being able to notice the perpetrator despite being followed, spied, and observed. Step by step, he arrived at the main entrance of the bungalow.

If this goes on any longer, I will go crazy… As Dunn reached out his hand to knock on the door, Klein quickly turned around. Flowers swayed in the wind, without a person in sight.

“Come in, gentlemen.” A seemingly ethereal voice came from inside the house.

Dunn turned the doorknob, pushed the door open and said to a woman on the sofa, “Daly, any results?”

The chandelier in the living room was unlit. A set of two leather couches surrounded a marble coffee table.

On the table was a lit candle, but the light emitted a cobalt blue glow. It covered the half-enclosed living room, dining room, and kitchen in a strange, eerie hue.

On the middle of the sofa sat a lady in a hooded black robe who wore blue eyeshadow and blush. An exposed silver bracelet with a hanging white crystal pendant was worn around her wrist.

At the first sight of her, Klein had an inexplicable feeling. She was dressed just like a real medium…

Was she stereotyping herself?

Daly, the “medium” with uncanny beauty, took a quick glance at Klein with her twinkling emerald eyes. She looked at Dunn Smith and said, “The original spirits have all disappeared, including that of Welch’s and Naya’s. Right now, all these little rascals know nothing at all.”

Spirits? Spirit Medium… All the invisible things that were spying on him previously were spirits? There were so many of them? Klein removed his hat and placed it across his chest, bowing slightly as he said, “Good evening, Madam.”

Dunn Smith sighed. “That’s tricky…”

“Daly, this is Klein Moretti. See if you can get anything out of him.”

The medium, Daly, shifted her gaze onto Klein immediately. She pointed at a single armchair and said, “Please, take a seat.”

“Thank you.” Klein nodded, took a few steps over, and sat down obediently. His heart raced uncontrollably.

Whether I survive, whether I get through this successfully or have my secrets exposed will all depend on whatever happens next!

And the thing that made him feel the most helpless was that he had nothing to rely on. He could only place his hopes on his inherent specialness…

This feeling really sucks… Klein thought bitterly.

Next, Dunn sat on the two-seater sofa opposite of Klein. Daly took out two thumb-sized glass bottles from her waist pouch.

Her emerald eyes smiled at Klein as she said, “I need a bit of help here. After all, you are not an enemy, I can’t treat you harshly. That might make you uncomfortable or put you in pain. It might even leave some serious after-effects on you. I will give you some fragrances, making you feel tender and smooth, which will allow you to let loose bit by bit so that you can truly indulge in those feelings.”

That sounded wrong… Klein gaped as his eyes were filled with shock.

Seated across him, Dunn laughed and said, “Don’t be weirded out. We are different from the fellows from the Church of Storms. Here, the ladies can also verbally tease men. In this regard, you should be able to understand. Your mother was a devout believer of the Goddess. You and your brother used to attend Sunday school at Church.”

“I understand. It’s just that I never thought that she would be such a… such a…” Klein gestured, as he could not find the right words. He almost blurted out the direct translation for “veteran driver”[1].

Dunn curved the corners of his mouth up and said, “Don’t worry. Actually, Daly seldom does this. She just wants to use these methods to calm you down. She prefers corpses over men.”

“You make me sound perverted,” Daly interjected with a smile.

She opened one of the little bottles and dripped a few drops onto the bright blue candle flame.

“Night vanilla, slumber flower, and chamomile, all distilled and extracted to form this aromatic floral essence. I call it ‘Amantha;’ it means tranquility in the Hermes language. It smells really amazing.”

As they chatted, the candle flame flickered, evaporating the floral essence and filling the room with its aroma.

A beautifully enchanting aroma found its way into Klein’s nostrils. He no longer felt tensed up. He was instantly calm as if he was gazing into the darkness of the silent night.

“This bottle is called the Eye of the Spirit. Barks and leaves of drago and poplar trees are sun-dried for seven days and decocted thrice. Then, they are immersed in Lanti Wine. Of course, there would be several incantations while we’re at it…” As Daly described the liquid, the amber substance dripped onto the cobalt blue candle flame.

Upon smelling the ethereal scent of the aromatic wine, Klein noticed that the candle flame was dancing wildly. The luster of Daly’s blue eyeshadow and blush shone oddly, to the extent of him seeing double.

“It is a great helping hand for mediumship. It is also a floral essence that is sufficiently enchanting…”

As Daly explained continuously, Klein felt as if her voice was coming from all around.

Bewildered, Klein looked around and realized that everything was swaying and in a blur. He felt like he was shrouded by layers and layers of fog. Even his body was swaying as it phased away before he began floating and then losing his balance.

Colors blended like an impressionist painting—the reds were redder, the blues were bluer, and the blacks were blacker—appearing more defined than usual. It was dreamy and hazy. Distinct murmurs from the surroundings came through as if hundreds and thousands of people who could not be seen were debating.

“This feels similar to the luck enhancement ritual I did before, but without the kind of madness that makes your head feel like exploding…” Klein looked around and thought questioningly.

At this moment, his vision was locked onto a pair of eyes that were crystal clear like emerald. On a blurry “sofa” sat Daly in a black robe. Eccentrically, her gaze concentrated on the tip of Klein’s head. She smiled and in a gentle voice, said, “Let me properly introduce myself. I am the Spirit Medium, Daly.”

I can still… have rational thoughts… It’s like when I was at that luck enhancement ritual and that gathering… The thought crossed Klein’s mind as he intentionally behaved muddled and said, “Hello there…”

“The mental worlds of humans are extremely vast. Many secrets are hidden within the mind. Look at the ocean—what we know about it is all on the superficial level. But in reality, deep in the ocean, there is a larger unseen portion. Other than islands, there is the entire ocean. There is the boundless sky that symbolizes the spiritual world…

“You are the spirit of your body. Not only do you know of the islands above, but you also know of the things hidden beneath the sea, as well as the entire ocean…

“Anything that exists leaves some traces behind. The superficial memories of the islands may be wiped out, but what is left under the sea and the entire ocean will definitely have a corresponding projection left in it…”

Daly went on and on, bewitching Klein. The vague surrounding winds and shadows took on similar forms. It was as though Klein’s spirit was fully exposed in the form of an ocean, waiting for him to search and discover.

Klein watched patiently, as he ‘churned’ the ocean occasionally. Then, in an airy voice, he replied, “No… I can’t remember… I have forgotten…”

He expressed his agony at just the right level.

Daly tried to guide him once again, but the clear-headed Klein was unaffected.

“Okay. We shall end here. You may leave.”

“Leave.”

“Leave…”

The airy voice lingered and Daly disappeared. The wind and shadows began calming as the ethereal smell and subtle scent of the aromatic wine became more distinct again.

The colors returned to their normal state and the fuzzy feeling was no longer around. Klein's body quivered, and he found his balance again.

He opened his eyes, which he had no memory of closing, and noticed that the candle with the bright blue flame was still before him. Dunn Smith was still resting comfortably on the couch. Same for Daly with the black-hooded robe.

"Why did you use the theory that belongs to that bunch of evil madmen, the Psychology Alchemists?" Dunn furrowed his eyebrows and stared at Daly.

As Daly put away the two little bottles, she replied calmly, "I think it's pretty accurate. At least, it corresponds with some of the things I've made contact with before…"

Without waiting for Dunn's reply, Daly shrugged and said, "This tricky fellow did not leave a single trace behind."

Upon hearing this, Klein heaved a huge sigh of relief. Pretentiously, he asked, "Oh, it's over? What happened? It felt like I just took a nap…"

That was a pass, right?

Thankfully, I had the 'luck enhancement ritual' as a rehearsal!

"Just take it as such." Dunn interrupted him and looked at Daly. "Have you examined Welch's and Naya's bodies?"

"The corpses can tell us a lot more than you can imagine. It's such a pity that Welch and Naya had indeed committed suicide. So, the force that drove them to it is to be feared. Not a single trace was left behind." Daly stood up and pointed at the candle. "I need some rest."

The cobalt blue glow vanished, and the house was instantly inundated with a blurry shade of crimson.

†

"Congratulations. You can return home now. But do remember, do not reveal this incident to your loved ones. You have to promise this." Dunn said as he led Klein to the door.

Surprised, Klein asked, "Is there no need to examine the curses or the trails left behind by the evil spirits?"

"Daly didn't mention anything about it, so there's no need for it," Dunn answered simply.

Klein calmed down. As the thought of his previous worries came to mind, he asked hurriedly, "How can I be sure that I will be free from trouble from now on?"

"No worries." Dunn twitched his lips and said, "Based on statistics of similar incidents in the past, eighty percent of the survivors of the incident do not experience any horrifying after-effects. Yeah… This is based on what I know… roughly… more or less…"

"Then… there's still one fifth of those poor souls…" Klein did not dare to try his luck.

"Then you can consider joining us as a civilian staff. This way, even if there are any precursors, we can discover it in time," Dunn said casually as he approached the carriage. "Or simply become a Beyonder. After all, we are not nannies. We can't babysit you all day long and even watch what you do with women."

"Can I?" Klein questioned the statement.

Of course, he did not expect much. After all, how was it even possible to be a part of the Nighthawks so easily and obtain the power of the

Beyonders?

That was the power of the Beyonders!

Dunn paused, and turned his head sideways to look at him.

“It’s not that you can’t… It depends…”

What? The transition in his words shocked Klein. Klein stared blankly beside the carriage before answering, “Really?”

Who are you kidding? Is it so easy to become a Beyonder?

Dunn laughed lightly; his gray eyes were hidden in the shadow of the carriage.

“You don’t believe me, huh? Actually, when you become a Nighthawk you lose a lot. For instance, freedom.

“Even if we don’t talk about this now, there is another issue. Firstly, you are not a member of the clergy, nor a devotee. You can’t pick whatever you want or choose the safest approach.”

“And secondly…” Dunn held onto the handle and hopped onto the carriage as he went on. “Among the cases that we—us, the Mandated Punishers, the Machinery Hivemind and other Judiciaries—have to deal with annually, a quarter of them were a result of Beyonders who lost control.”

A quarter… Beyonders who lost control… Klein was dumbfounded.

Just then, Dunn turned slightly. His gray eyes were deep. With no sign of a smile, he continued, “And among the quarter of cases, a large number of them are our teammates.”

Veteran driver is an Internet slang phrase describing people who are very experienced in particular domains, especially sexually-related things such as posting pornographic resources.

Chapter 15 - The Invitation

◆

A wave of tumultuous emotions rose up in Klein's heart after he heard Dunn. Instinctively, he uttered, "Why?"

The Beyonders have serious hidden dangers? So much so that the Church's internal Judiciary and the Beyonders, who dealt with bizarre phenomenon, are also prone to problems?

Dunn stepped into the carriage and sat back in his seat. His expression and tone remained the same.

"This is not something that you need to understand. Neither is it something you can understand, unless you become one of us."

Klein was struck dumb for a moment, after which he sat down and questioned in a tone that was half dubious and half-joking.

"If I don't come to understand, how is it possible for me to make a decision to join?"

And not joining would mean Klein could not understand. This would end in a deadlock…

Dunn Smith took out the pipe once again, placed it against his nose, and took a whiff.

"You probably misunderstood; a civilian staff member is also one of us."

"In other words, as long as I become one of your civilian staff members, I will be able to understand the relevant secrets, figure out the hidden dangers that plague Beyonders, and the dangers that may be encountered, as well as consider whether I want to become a Beyonder later?" Klein reorganized his thoughts and paraphrased what Dunn had shared.

Dunn smiled and said, "Yes, that is the case, except for one point. You cannot simply become a Beyonder just because you want to because every church will be equally strict in this aspect."

It would be odd if the churches were not strict… Klein lampooned silently, as he added with a more intense tone coupled with stronger body language, "What about civilian staff members? This should be quite strict as well, right?"

"There shouldn't be any problems if it's you," said Dunn with half-closed eyelids as he whiffed the pipe with partially relaxed countenance. However, he did not ignite it.

"Why?" Klein asked as he was once again grappled by doubt.

At the same time, he jested inwardly.

So my uniqueness and halo as a transmigrator are akin to the fireflies in the night, ever so bright and outstanding?

Dunn opened his half-closed eyelids, his silver-colored eyes reflecting the same tranquility as before.

"First, you managed to survive without our help in such a situation. Certain exceptional qualities are not present in others. For instance, luck. Lucky people are often welcomed."

Seeing that Klein's expression had turned blank, Dunn smiled slightly.

"All right, just treat this as a humorous statement. Second, you're a graduate of the history department from Khoy University; this is something we urgently need. Although a believer of the Lord of the Storms, Leumi, perceives women in a way that is loathsome, his views regarding society, humanities, economics, and politics remain incisive. He said before that talents are key to maintaining a competitive advantage and positive development, a point that I very much agree with."

Noticing that Klein was slightly furrowing his eyebrows, Dunn casually explained, "You should be able to imagine that we often encounter documents and objects from the Fourth Epoch or earlier. Many cults and heretics have tried to gain power from these things. Sometimes, they themselves can lead to strange and terrible things.

"Except for the Beyonders in special fields, most of us are not good with our studies, or have passed that age." Having said that, Dunn Smith pointed to his own head, and the corner of his mouth turned up slightly as if he was mocking himself.

He then said, "Those dry, boring knowledge always puts us to sleep. Even the Sleepless can't help it. In the past, we would cooperate with historians or archaeologists, but this posed the risk of exposing secrets, and mishaps might befall on these otherwise uninvolved professors and associate professors. Thus, the addition of a professional in our ranks is hard to refuse."

Klein nodded lightly and accepted Dunn's explanation. With his thoughts all over the place, he asked, "Then why don't you directly, um, groom one?"

Dunn continued, "This brings me to the third point, which is also the final and most important point. You've already been through a similar ordeal, so inviting you doesn't violate the confidentiality clause.

"With regard to developing others, I will bear the responsibility of exposure if it fails. Most of our team members, our civilian staff members, come from within the Church."

After Klein finished listening silently, he asked curiously, "Why are you so strict about maintaining confidentiality? Wouldn't spreading the news publicly to more people and increasing awareness lessen the chances of a similar mistake from happening again? The greatest fear stems from the fear of the unknown; we can make the unknown become known."

"No, humanity's stupidity is beyond your imagination. It actually leads to more people emulating these acts, creating more chaos and more severe incidents," Dunn Smith shook his head and replied.

Klein acknowledged as he replied in enlightenment, "The only lesson that humans can learn from history is that humans do not gain any lessons from history, and they're always repeating the same tragedies."

"That famous quote from Emperor Roselle is indeed filled with much philosophical meaning," agreed Dunn.

…Emperor Roselle said that? This transmigrator senior really did not give the 'latecomers' any chance to posture… Klein did not know how to follow up on Dunn's words.

Dunn turned his head and gazed out of the horse carriage. The dim yellowish light of the street lamps intertwined to display the splendor of civilization.

"…There is a similar discourse within the judiciary of the major churches. This may be the main reason for the strict confidentiality and the prohibition of ordinary people from knowing."

"What is it?" Klein asked as his interest was piqued, pleasured that he seemed to be spying on secrets.

Dunn turned his head; his facial muscles pulled themselves so slightly that it was hardly visible.

"Faith and fear bring troubles. More faith and more fear bring more troubles, until everything is destroyed."

After he said that, Dunn signed, "Besides praying for the blessings and help from gods, humans can't solve their real major problems.

"Faith and fear bring troubles. More faith and more fear bring more troubles…" Klein recited silently, but he could not fully understand it.

What followed next was the fear of uncertainty that came from the unknown. It was like the dark shadows formed by the street lights outside. In the darkness without light, it appeared as though there were pairs of callous-looking eyes and wide-opened mouths.

As the horse galloped vigorously and nimbly while the wheels of the horse carriage reeled on ahead with Iron Cross Street in sight, Dunn broke the silence suddenly and formally invited Klein.

"Would you like to join us as a civilian staff member?"

In Klein's mind, multiple thoughts surfaced, making him indecisive. He contemplated and asked, "Can I have some time to consider?"

Since this matter had serious implications, he could not hastily and recklessly make the decision.

"No problem, just give me a reply before Sunday," Dunn nodded and added. "Of course, remember to keep this a secret and don't disclose the information regarding Welch to anyone, including your brother and sister. Once this is violated, it'll not only bring them trouble, but you might also have to attend a special court."

"Okay," Klein answered gravely.

The carriage was once again plunged into silence.

Seeing that they were nearing Iron Cross Street and that he was almost reaching home, Klein suddenly thought of a question. He hesitated for a few seconds before asking, "Mr Smith, what kind of salary and benefits do civilian staff get?"

This was a serious question…

Taken aback momentarily, Dunn smiled instantly and answered, “There’s no need for you to worry about this issue. Our funds are guaranteed by the Church and the police department. For newly registered civilian staff, the weekly salaries are placed at two pounds and ten soli. There is an additional ten soli as compensation for the risk and confidentiality. All of this will add up to a total of three pounds. This is hardly worse than a confirmed university lecturer.

“After which, your salary will gradually rise according to your experience and contributions.

“As for civilian staff members, the contract is generally five years. After five years, you can quit normally if you’re no longer willing to stay. You only have to sign a lifetime confidentiality agreement and you’re not allowed to leave Tingen until permission is given. If you want to move to another city, the first thing you must do is register with the local Nighthawk.

“By the way, there are no weekends and you can only work in shifts. At any point in time, there should be three civilian staffs on duty and if you wish to go to the South or Desi Bay for a vacation, you’ll need to arrange it with your colleagues.”

Just as Dunn finished speaking, the horse carriage pulled to a stop and the apartment building where Klein and his siblings resided in appeared on the side.

“I get it now,” Klein turned around and walked down the horse carriage. He stopped at the side and asked, “By the way Mr. Smith, where do I find you after I’ve come to my decision?”

Dunn gave a deep and low throaty laugh before saying, “Go to the ‘Hound Pub’ at Besik Street and find their boss, Wright. Tell him that you want to hire a small mercenary squad for a mission.”

“Huh?” Klein asked confusedly.

“Our location is confidential too. Before you agree to become one of us, I can’t tell you directly. Alright Mr. Klein Moretti, I wish you a good dream tonight as well,” Dunn smiled as he said.

Klein took off his hat and saluted, watching as the pace of the departing horse carriage gradually sped up.

He took out his pocket watch.

“Click,” he pressed it open and saw that it was only a little past four in the morning. The street was filled with a relaxing, cool breeze. A dim yellowish light from the street lamps illuminated the surroundings.

Klein drew a deep breath and took in the deep silence of the night around him.

The busiest and noisiest district in the day could be so lifeless and quiet at night. This was in stark contrast to the silent observations and medium’s seance in Welch’s residence.

It was only then that Klein realized that the back of his linen shirt was unknowingly drenched in sweat, cold and clammy.

Chapter 16 - Rat-Baiting With Dogs

Phew, I finally got through the round with the medium…

Klein let out a foul breath. He slowly turned around and enjoyed the cool breeze and tranquility of the night while walking closer and closer to the apartment building’s door.

He took out his keys, inserted the correct one in and turned it gently, allowing the crimson-mixed darkness to expand with the creaking sound of the opened door.

Walking on the staircase without a single person in sight and taking in the cold air, Klein had an inexplicable and amazing feeling. It felt like he had a few more hours than others. This caused him to hasten his pace.

In a similar state of mind, he opened the door to his room and before he even stepped inside, he saw a silhouette sitting silently in front of his desk. It had reddish black hair, bright brown eyes, and a delicate, pretty face. Undoubtedly, she was Melissa Moretti!

“Klein, where did you go?” Melissa asked curiously as she relaxed her eyebrows.

Without waiting for Klein’s reply, she added, “Just now, I got up to go to the bathroom and realized you weren’t home.” It was as if she wanted to know everything clearly, from the causes and effects of the matter to the underlying logic.

With great experience at lying to his parents, Klein’s brain took a spin before he gave a bitter smile and calmly replied, “I couldn’t fall asleep again after I woke up. Instead of wasting time, I decided that I should train my body. So I went out to run a few rounds. Look at my sweat!”

He took off his jacket and half-turned his body, pointing to his back.

Melissa stood up, took a glance half-heartedly and deliberated for a few moments before saying, “Honestly speaking, Klein, you don’t have to stress yourself out. I’m sure you can pass the interview to Tingen University. Even if you can’t, er—I mean if—you can still find better ones.”

I haven’t even thought about the interview… Klein nodded his head and said, “I understand.”

He did not mention the “offer” that he had gotten because he had not decided whether he wanted to join them or not.

Staring at Klein intensely, Melissa suddenly turned around and trotted into the interior of the house. She took out an object that resembled a tortoise. It consisted of items like gears, rusted iron, torsion springs and ordinary springs.

After quickly tightening the torsion spring, Melissa placed the object on the desk.

Ka! Ka! Ka!

Dum! Dum! Dum!

The “tortoise” moved and jumped with a rhythm that could pull anyone’s attention.

“Whenever I feel irritated, I feel much better seeing it move. I’ve been doing this very often recently and it’s very effective! Klein, give it a try!” invited Melissa as her eyes brightened.

Klein did not turn down his sister’s goodwill. He approached the “tortoise” and waited for it to stop before laughing. He said, “Simplicity and regularity can indeed help relaxation.”

Without waiting for Melissa’s reply, Klein pointed to the “tortoise” and casually asked, “Did you make this yourself? When did you make this? Why wasn’t I aware of it?”

“I made use of unwanted materials from school and picked up things from the streets to make this. It was only finished two days ago,” Melissa said in her usual tone, the side of her lips upturned a few more degrees.

“That’s impressive,” Klein praised sincerely.

As a boy with poor skills in machine assembly, he encountered great difficulties even assembling a four-wheel toy car as a child.

With her chin slightly raised and her eyes slightly bent, Melissa calmly replied, “It was okay.”

“Being overly humble is a bad trait,” Klein smiled slightly and continued, “This is a tortoise, right?”

Instantly, the atmosphere in the room took a great plunge, leaving behind an air of graveness for a while. Then, Melissa faintly replied with a voice that seemed enigmatic like the crimson veil, “It’s a puppet.”

Puppet…

Klein gave an awkward smile, and tried to forcefully explain, “The problem lies in the materials, they’re too rudimentary.”

Following that, he tried to change the topic and said, “Why would you go to the bathroom in the middle of the night? Isn’t there a toilet here? Don’t you always sleep till dawn?”

Melissa was taken aback momentarily.

It was only after a few seconds, before she opened her mouth, prepared to explain.

At that moment, an intense sound of digestion sounded from her thoracoabdominal[1] area.

“I-I’ll go get some more sleep!”

Bang! She grabbed her tortoise-like “puppet”, trotted to the interior of the house, and closed the door to her room.

Last night’s dinner was too good, she ate too much and now her stomach is having trouble digesting it… Klein shook his head as he smiled, slowly walking towards his desk. He sat down soundlessly, silently pondering Dunn Smith’s invitation as the crimson red moon emerged from behind the dark clouds.

Being a Nighthawk civilian staff member had its apparent disadvantages.

With me being a transmigrator, “The Fool”—initiator of the mysterious Gathering—and the multiple secrets I have, it will be risky to be under the noses of the Church of Evernight’s team that specializes in dealing with matters regarding the Beyonders.

As long as I join Dunn Smith and his team, I would certainly aim to become a Beyonder. I could then cover up the benefits gained from the Gathering.

Yet, becoming a formal member would entail many restrictions on my freedom, like how a civilian staff has to report his leaving of Tingen. No longer would I be able to go wherever I want or do whatever I want. I would miss many opportunities.

The Nighthawks are a strict organization. Once a mission is given, I can only wait for the arrangements and accept orders. There is no room for rejection.

Beyonders have the risk of losing control.

†

Having all the disadvantages listed out one by one, Klein turned to considering the necessities and advantages:

Judging from the situation of the luck enhancement ritual, I'm not one of the eighty percent of lucky people. In the future, there is bound to be some bizarre event happening to me, increasing the dangers I face.

Only by becoming one of the Beyonders or by joining the Nighthawks can I be equipped with the ability to resist.

The wish to become a Beyonder cannot be solely reliant on the Gathering. The potion formula is not a major problem, but where can I find the corresponding materials? How am I to obtain and concoct them?

Not forgetting the nous of daily practice, I'm faced with serious obstacles! It is just not possible for me to consult Justice and The Hanged Man on every matter and exchange every object with them. This would not only hurt the image of The Fool and arouse their suspicions, but there will also be inadequate time to communicate on such trivial issues.

Similarly, I am unable to produce anything that can pique their interest.

Besides, more materials would more often than not leave behind the trail of my real identity. Then, "online disputes" would effectively be transformed into "offline conflicts," bringing about immense troubles.

By joining the Nighthawks, there would definitely be contact with the common knowledge of the world of mystery and relevant channels. This can sufficiently accumulate into a corresponding social circle and can be used as leverage. Only then can I initiate the Gathering and in turn gain the greatest benefits from Justice and The Hanged Man. In fact, the gains can feedback into reality, allowing me to obtain more resources and form a virtuous cycle.

Of course, I could also go to an organization that is suppressed by the various Churches such as the Psychology Alchemists mentioned by Dunn and join them.

Yet I'll also lose my freedom, and be in a constant state of fear and anxiety. However, more importantly, I have no idea where to look for them. Even if I manage to gain the corresponding information from The Hanged Man, such rash contact with them could endanger my life.

Becoming a civilian staff leaves opportunity for a buffer and exit.

The inferior recluse hides away in the wild; the superior, the crowd. Perhaps the identity as a Nighthawk can be a better cover.

In the future, when I become one of the top authorities of the tribunal, who would imagine that I am a heretic, the head of the secret organization who is working behind the scenes?

†

As the first rays of the morning sun shone, the crimson disappeared. Gazing at the golden light on the horizons of the sky, Klein made up his mind.

He would find Dunn Smith today and become part of the Nighthawk's civilian staff!

At this moment, Melissa, who had gotten out of bed again, had pushed open the door to the room. She was surprised to see her brother stretching in an unglamorous manner. "You didn't sleep?"

"I was thinking through some things." Klein smiled, feeling relaxed.

Melissa thought for a moment and said, "Whenever I encounter problems, I'll list out both the pros and cons one by one and compare them. After that, I would be able to get a hint of what I should do next."

"That's a good habit. I did that too," Klein smiled and replied.

Melissa’s countenance was relaxed, and she did not add more. Holding a yellowish sheet of paper and her toiletries, she headed to the bathroom.

Not in a hurry to leave after he finished his breakfast and his sister’s departure, Klein took a good nap. Based on what he knew, nearly all the pubs were closed in the morning.

At two o’clock in the afternoon, he smoothed the pleats of his silk hat and handkerchief using a small brush. He also removed the dirt to reestablish the tidiness.

Thereafter, he wore a suit of formal clothing, just like he was going for an interview.

Besik Street was a little far, and Klein was afraid that he would miss the “working hours” of the Nighthawk. Therefore, he did not walk there, but instead waited for a public horse carriage at Iron Cross Street.

In the Loen Kingdom, public horse carriages were placed under two categories—without track and with track.

The former consisted of a carriage drawn by two horses and could sit approximately 20 people while taking into account the top of the carriage. Only a general route existed, without specific stations. It had flexible operations and could be hailed anywhere unless it was full.

The latter was operated by the Orbital Carriage Company. First, a rail-like service device was laid on the main street. The horses would move on the inner lane while the wheels ran on the tracks, making it easier and more labor-saving. This could thus pull a bigger double-decker carriage that sat nearly fifty passengers.

However, the only problem was that the route and stations were fixed, making many places inaccessible.

After ten minutes, the sound of the wheels hitting the tracks approached from a distance. A double-decker horse carriage stopped in front of the station at Iron Cross Street.

“To Besik Street,” Klein said to the carriage driver.

“You have to transfer at Champagne Street but when you get there, it takes about ten minutes to walk to Besik Street,” explained the carriage driver to Klein, with regards to the route.

“Let’s go to Champagne Street then.” Klein nodded in approval.

“It’s more than four kilometers, four pence”, said a young man with a fair and clean face, as he extended his hand.

He was a worker responsible for money collection.

“Okay.” Klein fished out four copper coins from his pocket and handed it to the other party.

He walked up to the carriage and found that there were not many passengers. Even on the first floor, there were a few empty seats.

“I only have three pence on me now, so I can only walk when I go back…” Klein pressed his hat down and sat down firmly.

On this floor, the men and women were mostly well-dressed although there were a few clothed in their work clothes, leisurely reading newspapers. Almost no one spoke, and it was rather quiet.

Klein shut his eyes and recharged his strength, oblivious to the coming and going of passengers around him.

Station after station passed until he finally heard the few words “Champagne Street.”

After alighting the horse carriage, he inquired along the way and soon reached Besik Street, where he saw the pub with the brownish-yellow hound logo.

Klein reached out his right hand and gave a forceful push. The heavy door gradually opened, inundating him with a wave of uproarious noises and an impetuous heat wave.

Although it was still afternoon, there were already many customers in the pub. Some were temporary workers, looking for opportunities here, waiting to be hired. Others were simply idling around, numbing themselves with alcohol.

The pub was dimly lit. In the center, there were two large iron cages with a third of its bottom sinking deep into the ground without any gaps.

People held wooden wine cups and surrounded it, sometimes discussing loudly while laughing, sometimes cursing loudly.

Giving a curious glance, Klein found two dogs caged inside. One was black and white, similar to the husky found on Earth. The other was wholly black, with shiny fur, making it look healthy and fierce.

“Do you want to bet? Doug has won eight games in a row!” said a little man wearing a brown beret, as he neared Klein and pointed to the black dog.

Bet? Taken aback at first, Klein regained his senses immediately.

“Dog-fighting?”

When he was at Khoy University, those aristocratic and wealthy students would always ask him contemptuously and curiously, if the boorish workers and unemployed hooligans enjoyed participating in boxing and gambling at the pubs.

Besides being able to gamble on boxing and card games, didn’t it also include cruel and bloody activities like cock-fighting, dog-fighting, and others?

The short man smirked. “Mister, we’re civilized people. We don’t engage in such unglamorous activities.”

Having said that, he whispered, “Besides, laws were introduced to ban these things last year…”

“Then what are y’all betting on?” asked Klein curiously.

“The better hunter.” Just as the short man finished his sentence, a resounding cacophony sounded.

He turned his head, waved his hands excitedly, and said, “You can’t place a bet for this round as it has started, wait for the next one then.”

Upon hearing that, Klein tipped his toes, lifted his head, and looked as far as he could.

He saw two strong men each dragging a sack, coming to the side of the iron cage and opening the “prison door.” They then dumped the contents of the sack into the cage.

There were gray and disgusting animals!

Klein tried to identify them carefully before realizing that they were rats. Hundreds of rats!

As the iron cage was deep underground without any gaps, the rats moved in all directions but could not find a way out.

Right then, just as the door of the cage was closed, the chain of the two dogs were untied.

“Woof!” The black dog pounced ahead and killed a rat in one bite.

The black-and-white dog was dazed at first before it started playing excitedly with the rats.

The surrounding people either raised their wine cups and intensified their gaze or shouted loudly, “Bite it! Kill it!”

“Doug, Doug!”

Motherf**king rat-baiting with dogs[2]… Klein regained his senses and the corner of his mouth twitched unceasingly.

The objective of the gamble is to determine which dog can catch more rats…

Perhaps, one can even bet on the specific number of rats caught…

No wonder there were people purchasing live rats at Iron Cross Street…

That's really unique…

Klein shook his head, laughing as he backtracked, and circled along the edge of the alcoholic customers, and reached the front of the bar.

"New here?" said the bartender as he spared Klein a glance while wiping the cups. He continued, "One cup of rye beer is a penny. Enmat beer, costs two pence. Four pence for Southville beer, or do you want a cup of purely brewed malt Lanti?"

"I came here for Mr. Wright," said Klein directly and bluntly.

The bartender whistled and shouted to the side, "Old Man, someone is looking for you."

"Oh, who…" A vague voice sounded, and an intoxicated old man stood up from behind the bar.

He rubbed his eyes, shifted his gaze to Klein and asked, "Lad, were you looking for me?"

"Mr. Wright, I would like to hire a small mercenary squad for a mission," replied Klein, according to what Dunn had instructed.

"A small mercenary squad? Are you living in an adventure story? This hasn't been around for a long time!" the bartender interrupted and smiled.

Wright went silent for a few seconds before saying, "Who told you about this place?"

"Dunn. Dunn Smith," replied Klein in all honesty.

Instantly, Wright broke out in a chuckle and replied, “I see. Actually, the small mercenary squad still exists. It’s just in another form, with a more contemporary name. You can find it on the second floor of No. 36 Zouteland Street.”

“Thank you,” thanked Klein sincerely before he turned and squeezed out of the pub.

Before he went out of the pub, the alcoholic customers who surrounded him suddenly quieted down, as they murmured, “Doug was actually defeated…”

“Defeated…”

Klein smiled and shook his head. Then he left quickly and found his way to the nearby Zoeterland Street after asking around.

“30, 32, 34… Here,” he counted the house numbers and walked into the stairwell.

Going around the corner and slowly climbing up the stairs, he saw the vertical sign with the current name of the so-called small mercenary squad.

“Blackthorn Security Company.”

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Areas relating or affecting the thorax and abdomen.

Note, this is not an invention of the author, but an actual legal blood sport known as rat-baiting back in the Victorian era.

Chapter 17 - Special Operations Department

◆ ◆ ◆

“Blackthorn Security Company.”

Upon seeing the signboard, Klein felt surprised yet found it reasonable.

Man… what do I say about this… He shook his head and laughed before walking up the steps and knocking gently on the half-closed door with his right hand.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

The sound echoed slowly but rhythmically, but there was no response; only a faint sputtering sound could be heard.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Klein repeated, only to be met with the same outcome.

He switched to pushing the door, making the gap larger as he stared inside—a classic sofa which might have been for serving guests, a soft fabric armchair, and a burly wood coffee table. There was a girl with brown hair behind a table right across with her head drooped.

Even though “Security Company” is just a guise, isn’t this just… just too “unprofessional?” How long has this place been out of business? Right, you guys don’t need any business… Klein drew closer as he complained silently and knocked on the table just beside the girl’s ear.

Knock! Knock!

The brown-haired girl sat up immediately and swiftly took the newspaper in front of her, covering her face.

Tingen City Honest Paper… Nice name… Klein silently read the title of the page facing him.

"The steam train service 'Soaring Express' that directly reaches Constant City is starting operations today… Oh come on, when will there be one that goes straight to Brindisi Bay. I really don't want to take the ship there again, it's too awful, really awful… Hey, who are you?" The girl with brown hair read pretentiously and gave her opinion. As she spoke, she lowered the newspaper and revealed her bright forehead and light-brown eyes, looking at Klein with a fawning and startled look.

"Hello, I am Klein Moretti, and I am here at the invitation of Dunn Smith," Klein said as he took down his hat to his chest and bowed slightly.

The brown-haired girl looked to be in her early twenties. She wore a light green, Loen-styled dress. She was accentuated by the beautiful laces on her sleeves, collar, and chest.

"The Captain… alright, wait here for a moment. I'll go get him." The girl scurried up and went into the room beside her.

She didn't even serve a cup of water or anything… The level of service awareness is worrying… Klein smiled faintly as he waited at his spot.

After two to three minutes, the brown-haired girl opened the door and came out. She said with a sweet smile, "Mr. Moretti, please follow me. The Captain is on watch at the 'Chanis Gate' and is unable to leave at the moment."

"Okay." Klein quickly followed behind. In his mind, he pondered to himself.

Chanis Gate, what could that be?

Going through the partition, the first thing he saw was a small corridor, with only three offices on each side.

Some of these offices were locked tight, while some were opened, revealing someone on the inside who typed non-stop on a heavy mechanical typewriter.

At a glance, Klein noticed a familiar figure: the young officer that had investigated his apartment, the one with the black hair, green eyes, and romantic vibe of a poet.

He was not in official wear; his white collared shirt was not tucked in, making for quite an unruly appearance.

Perhaps he really is a poet… Klein nodded in greeting and was greeted with a smile.

The brown-haired girl pushed opened the left office door at the end of the room and pointed inside, chirping, "We still have to go down a few levels."

This office had no furniture in place, only a grayish-white stone staircase that extended downwards.

The two sides of the stairs were lit up by gas lamps. The stable glow dispelled the darkness and gave a sense of harmony.

The brown-haired girl walked in front, staring at her feet while walking carefully.

"Although I walk here often, I am still constantly afraid of falling down, tumbling down like a barrel. You don't know, Leonard did such a folly. On the first day of becoming a 'Sleepless'—the first day where he had not mastered his new powers—he tried to rush down the flight of stairs. And-and he became a cartwheel. Haha, it was hilarious if you think about it. Oh yes, it was the guy that greeted you just now. This was about three years ago. Speaking of which, I have been with the Nighthawks for five years; I was only seventeen when I joined…"

[image]

The girl watched her steps as she spoke. Suddenly, she smacked her forehead and said, “I forgot to introduce myself! I’m Rozanne. My father was a member of the Nighthawks, who sacrificed himself in an accident five years ago. I suppose we are colleagues from now on— Err, yeah ‘colleague’ is the right word… we are not teammates since we are not Beyonders.”

“I hope to have the honor, but still it depends on what Mr. Smith has to say,” Klein said as he sized up the enclosed surroundings. He felt that they were going underground—dampness seeped out from the stone walls, dispelling the summer heat.

“Don’t worry, the fact that you came so far means the Captain has agreed. I’ve always been a little afraid of him, even though he is amiable, a fatherly figure. I don’t know why but I’m still afraid.” Rozanne spoke as though there was a piece of sweet in her throat.

Klein answered humorously, “Isn’t being afraid of a father normal?”

“True.” Rozanne said as she held the wall around the bend.

As they spoke, the two finished walking down the stairs and reached a stone-paved floor.

It was a long aisle; both sides of the walls were mounted with gas lamps surrounded by metal gratings. Klein and Rozanne’s shadows were elongated under the illumination.

Klein keenly noticed that there was a “Dark Sacred Emblem” every few meters—the symbol of the Evernight Goddess. A deep black background dotted with sparkling embellishments, as they clustered precisely half the crimson moon.

These emblems did not seem special, but walking between them gave Klein a sense of serenity. Rozanne also stopped talking, unlike her previous talkative state.

Before long, an intersection appeared up front. Rozanne briefly introduced,

“The path to the left will lead to the Saint Selena Cathedral; to the right are the armory, storeroom, and archives. And straight ahead is the Chanis Gate.”

Saint Selena Cathedral? Then, Zouteland Street is just behind Red Moonlight Street? Klein was a little stunned.

Saint Selena Cathedral of Red Moonlight Street was the headquarters of the Church of Evernight in Tingen, a sacred ground where local followers yearned to visit. Along with “Holy Numerics Cathedral” of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery in the suburbs, and the “River and Sea Cathedral” of the Church of Storms in North Tingen, they sustained the religious circles in Tingen City and its affiliated towns and villages.

Aware that his status made it unsuitable for him to ask more, Klein only listened silently.

They passed the intersection and moved straight ahead. In less than a minute, a black iron split gate carved with seven sacred emblems was seen.

It stood there, heavy, cold and domineering, like a giant guarding in the darkness.

“Chanis Gate.” Rozanne reminded him and pointed at the room beside them, saying, “Captain is inside. Go on in by yourself.”

“Alright, thank you.” Klein replied politely.

The room Rozanne was referring to was just in front of “Chanis Gate.” The windows were opened, revealing the lit room inside. Klein took a deep breath to calm himself.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

“Come in.” He heard Dunn Smith’s deep and amiable voice.

Klein opened the unlatched door gently. There was only a table and four chairs inside. Dunn Smith with his high hairline, who was wearing the black coat from the previous night plus a gold watch chain around his chest, was reading the newspaper leisurely.

“Come and have a seat. Have you decided? Are you certain you want to join us?” Dunn smiled and asked as he put down the newspaper.

Klein removed his hat and bowed, then he sat beside the table and said, “Yes, I am certain.”

“Then take a look at this deed, heh heh. People like to call it a contract now.” Dunn pulled out the table drawer and took out two contract copies.

There were not many clauses, and most of them had been mentioned by Dunn Smith. The emphasis was on the confidential clause. Violators were tried in the tribunal courts of the Church of Evernight instead of the kingdom’s courts. It was akin to how soldiers and officers were sent to court martial for trials.

A five year contract… Two pounds and ten soli for weekly wages, ten soli as compensation for the risk and confidentiality… Klein read through it and answered resolutely, “I’ve no problem with it.”

“Then sign it,” Dunn said as he pointed to the dark red fountain pen and ink.

Klein used a piece of waste paper to try out the pen before drawing a breath. He signed on both contracts with his name: Klein Moretti.

As he did not have a stamp yet, he could only use his thumbprint.

Dunn received the contract, took out a stamp from the drawer, and stamped on the end of the contract and a few key parts.

With that done, he stood up and returned a contract with one hand, and reached for Klein with the other saying, “Welcome, from now on, you are one of us, and please note that the contract is confidential as well.”

Klein stood up as well. He received the contract, shook his hand, and said, “So, I shall be addressing you as Captain?”

“Yes.” Dunn’s grayish eyes seemed especially deep in the dim surroundings.

After shaking hands, they sat down. Klein glanced at the stamp on the contract, it read: “Nighthawk team, Tingen City, Awwa County, Loen Kingdom.”

“I can’t believe you guys would use the name ‘Blackthorn Security Company’ as a disguise,” he laughed and said.

“Actually, we have other signboards.” Dunn pulled out a piece of paper from the drawer.

It was stamped with the stamps of the city government and the police department. The contents were as follows: “Seventh Unit, Special Operations Department, Awwa County Police, Loen Kingdom.”

“The first four units are the regular police responsible for general security, like the VIP Protection Unit and Key Installations Protection Unit. And from unit five onwards are the ones dealing with supernatural incidents in each city. Our unit is responsible for incidents related to the followers of Evernight Goddess in Tingen. If there are different types of followers, then we divide the area accordingly; we are mainly in charge of places like the north, west and the Golden Indus region.”

Dunn briefly introduced, “Unit Six of the Mandated Punisher squad under the Church of Storms is in charge of the pier region, the east, and the south. The university area and the suburbs are under Unit Five, which is the Machinery Hivemind squad in Tingen.”

“Right.” Klein had no questions about it. He then laughed. “What happens if someone really comes here due to the ‘Blackthorn Security Company’ signboard and requests for our services?”

“We’ll take those requests; why shouldn’t we? As long as it doesn’t affect our daily operations,” Dunn said slowly and humorously. “Any earnings would be considered additional bonuses, so our members are quite willing to take those jobs. Anyway, the market for trivial and troublesome matters such as finding dogs and cats have been monopolized by private detectives.”

“So how many people are there in this Nighthawks team?” Klein asked since they were on this topic.

“There aren’t many supernatural incidents, so there are even fewer Beyonders. There are only six formal members of the Nighthawks in the entire Tingen City, including me. Heh heh, as for civilian staff, there are six including you.”

Klein nodded his head, and eventually asked the question that he was most concerned about, “So, Captain, what do you mean by Beyonders losing control? Why does it happen?”

Chapter 18 - Origin and Cause

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing Klein’s question, Dunn looked out of the window toward the corridor that led to Chanis Gate. He took out his pipe, stuffed it with some tobacco and mint leaves, and held it to his nose. He took a deep whiff as his voice turned reflective and drifting.

“Only at home can I enjoy the beautiful flavors of tobacco mixed with mint leaves without any worries… Klein, do you know about the creation myth?”

“Of course, when I received primary education during Sunday school, we learned to read using The Revelation of Evernight. Among them, the Book of Wisdom and the Letters from the Saints mentioned the myth of creation.” Klein attempted to recall via the memory fragments of the original Klein. He slowed down his tempo and said, “The Creator awoke from Chaos and shattered the darkness, creating the first ray of light. ‘He’ then fused ‘Himself’ completely into the universe and made up all of existence. ‘His’ body became the land and stars. One of ‘His’ eyes became the sun, while the other became the crimson moon. Some of ‘His’ blood rushed into the seas and rivers, nourishing and nurturing lives…”

Klein subconsciously paused when he said that. Partially, it was because the relevant memories were a blur and that the creation myth was very similar to the Chinese creation myth of Pangu.

The imaginations of people from different worlds shared something in common with their myths and legends!

Noticing that Klein was having ‘trouble,’ Dunn smiled and added, “His lungs turned into the elves; His heart turned into the giants; His liver turned into the treants; His brain turned into the dragons; His kidneys turned into the feathered serpents; His hair turned into the phoenixes; His ears turned into the demonic wolves; His mouth and teeth turned into the mutants, and His remaining bodily fluids turned into the sea monsters, of which the essence was Naga. His stomach, His small and large intestines, and the evil parts of His body turned into devils, evil spirits and various kinds of unknown maleficent existences. His spirit became the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of the Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom…”

“His wisdom gave birth to humanity. That was the first Epoch, the Chaos Epoch.” Klein finished the last sentence for Dunn, but he found it funny and ridiculous.

As a keyboard folklorist, it was the first time he came into contact with a creation myth that was ‘arranged’ in such great detail. It was so detailed that almost every prominent race corresponded to a particular body part of the Creator.

It’s like a children’s song with children sitting in a row and eating fruit…

Furthermore, it was not only mentioned in the canon of the Evernight Goddess. The Churches of the Lord of Storms and God of Steam and Machinery also had similar descriptions. None of them alleviated themselves or devalued the other gods…

This either means that the creation myth is real or hints that the few Churches had undergone a long period of strife before compromising before the Fifth Epoch…

With this in mind, Klein suddenly had another question. He asked with a frown, “It feels problematic. Why are the Eternal Blazing Sun, Lord of Storms, and God of Knowledge and Wisdom born directly from the Creator’s spirit, while the Goddess isn’t?”

In the Revelation of Evernight's prehistorical records, the Evernight Goddess had only awoken at the end of the Second Epoch. Together with the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and other gods, she blessed and helped humanity survive the Cataclysm. It was also known as the Third Epoch, the Cataclysm Epoch.

It was during that time that Earth Mother and the God of Combat appeared as well. As for the God of Steam and Machinery, whose original name was the God of Craftsmanship, He was born only in the Fourth Epoch.

In that sense, the standing among the gods seemed self-evident.

The ones who were more ancient were more orthodox. It was extremely clear!

This also troubled the believers of the Evernight Goddess.

Dunn Smith held his pipe with another hand and instead of answering, he returned with a question, "Repeat the Goddess's full title."

Klein immediately felt like he had stabbed himself with a knife. He racked his brains and tried his best to recall.

"The Evernight Goddess stands higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity. She is also the Lady of Crimson, the Mother of Concealment, the Empress of Misfortune and Horror, Mistress of Repose and Silence."

Thankfully, Klein's mother was a devout believer of the Evernight Goddess. When she was still alive, she would recite this every evening at dinner. Even though the memories of the original Klein had fragmented, not all was lost.

"What does the Lady of Crimson symbolize?" Dunn asked with a guiding tone.

"The red moon." The moment Klein answered, he immediately understood.

“Then which part of the Creator did the red moon come from?” asked Dunn with a smile.

“A single eye!” Klein and Dunn smiled at each other.

This was no way less impressive than the Lord of Storms who was formed from a third of the Creator’s spirit!

As for the Churches of Earth Mother and the God of Combat, they likely had similar explanations. However, the God of Steam and Machinery had been born too late to find a reason; thus, their church had been weak in the past thousand plus years. It was only with the invention of the steam engine that they seized the opportunity to truly be on par with the other gods.

Dunn stroked his pipe gently.

“Humanity was born out of the wisdom of the Creator, so we have clever and extraordinary brains, but lack other magical powers. However, from the creation myth, we can form a simple but clear conclusion. Everything stems from the same origin.”

“Stems from the same origin…” Klein repeated the last few words.

“According to this conclusion, humans who are protected by the gods were able to resist the giants, devils, and the mutants. Gradually, they figured out means to obtain the power of the Beyonders. That is by using the corresponding parts of the evil spirits, dragons, monsters, magical trees, flowers, or crystals and combining them with other materials to form potions. By consuming and absorbing the potion, one will gain different powers. This is common knowledge among mysticism studies.”

Dunn did not elaborate in detail and only gave a brief introduction. “In this process, our ancestors relied on painful lessons to discover that if they were to consume high-grade or extraordinary potions, it would easily lead to tragic consequences. There are three possible outcomes."

"Which three?" pressed Klein curiously.

"First, mental death and the complete breakdown of a body. Every piece of flesh would become a terrifying monster. Second, their personality will be changed by the powers contained in the potion. They will turn cold, sensitive, irascible, cruel, and indifferent. Third, well…" Dunn put down his pipe and picked up a porcelain cup and took a sip. "Fermo coffee from the Paz River Valley is bitter, but very fragrant. It leaves a splendid aftertaste. Do you want one?"

"I prefer coffee from the Feynapotter plateau. Of course, I have only drank it a few times at Welch's place." Klein politely declined. "What's the third outcome?"

"Mental disorder. Turning crazy on the spot, becoming more devilish than the devil. This is what it means by losing control." Dunn emphasized the words 'losing control.'

Without waiting for Klein to say a word, he put down his coffee cup and continued, "After a long period of experimentation and exploration, together with the birth of the Blasphemy Slate, humans have finally perfected the potion system. We formed a tiered system that chains into stable progression paths known as Sequences. The lower the number in a Sequence, the higher the grade of a potion. At this point, the seven major churches each control at least one complete Sequence. Besides, there are also incomplete 'paths' that they have gathered over the past hundreds or thousand years."

"Blasphemy Slate?" Klein sharply noticed the term.

At the Gathering, The Hanged Man had also mentioned it!

According to The Hanged Man, the Blasphemy Slate was the most critical factor of a potion's system formation and completion!

That seemed to contradict what Dunn had just said.

“Those were things created by some evil gods. As for which era it appeared, what it contains or what’s so special about it, I am unsure as well. If you discover any clues, you have to immediately report it to me. It deserves the highest level of response,” said Dunn vaguely. “I mentioned one of the types of losing control. I’ll now tell you the remaining four.”

“Alright.” Klein pushed the question of the Blasphemy Slate to the back of his mind and listened attentively.

“Although humans have clever minds, they lack extraordinary powers, it is not absolute. There are always a few lucky ones; perhaps I should call them the unlucky ones. They are born with relatively higher perception. Well, it also means the ability to sense spirits. They can hear voices that others cannot hear and see things that others cannot see. They have partial characteristics of Beyonders.”

While Dunn spoke, he looked at the empty air around him and watched Klein shudder in fear. “In other words, if they are half a Sequence 9 Beyonder and have fixed characteristics. Oh, Sequence 9 is the lowest grade in the ‘chain…’ In short, they can only choose a corresponding, fixed Sequence pathway. If they consume other potions, the effects might range from mental disorders to a loss of control, or even worse, death.”

“Got it.” Klein nodded slowly.

“The third kind is similar to the second kind. Once you choose a Sequence chain, you will be forced to go down that path. There will be no room for regret. If you were to consume potions from the corresponding Sequence of other ‘paths,’ there will be a high probability you will get mixed, unusual and warped powers. But it is almost certain that you would be in a semi-deranged state; sensitive and irascible, cruel and bloodthirsty, and silent and melancholic.

“And there is only one such opportunity. After that, regardless if you consume the potions from the original path or potions in the present

Sequence, the only result is a loss of control. The outcome could then be mental death; alternatively, the body breaks down into monsters or even transforms into an evil spirit.” As Dunn spoke, he lifted his coffee cup to take a sip.

Klein, who turned alarmed and fearful after hearing this, fell silent for a few seconds before asking, “What about the fourth kind?”

“The fourth kind, heh heh. That is the most common problem. When we consume potions to gain powers that originally belong to extraordinary beings, we undergo an unnatural transformation. Therefore, we would more or less be affected by the remnant spiritual powers. While perhaps the symptoms might not manifest and are undetectable to others, it will definitely lurk in one’s mind. If one rushes to consume the corresponding potion ranked higher in the Sequence before fully grasping the extraordinary powers the potion brings and eliminating the subtle traces, the madness will accumulate, increasing the chances of losing control…” Dunn suddenly fell silent.

After a short pause, he said with a sigh, “As per the internal rules of us Nighthawks, even if a teammate were to make a great contribution, they must have consumed the last potion three years ago and be examined before they can be promoted. Even so, there are still many who lose control every year.”

How terrifying… Klein drew a gasp as he asked, “Then what about the final kind?”

There was no trace of a smile despite Dunn’s curved lips.

“The fifth kind is the most common reason for a loss of control. For Beyonders, one’s spiritual perception would be enhanced more or less. The smaller the number in the Sequence, the more enhanced their perception. Therefore, they would hear what others cannot hear, see what others cannot see, and encounter things others would not encounter. They are constantly met with mysterious enticement and illusionary bewitchment. Once they are overstimulated or have greedy desires, they will slowly go down the path of losing control.”

As he spoke, Dunn looked straight at Klein, his gray pupils reflecting Klein’s figure.

His tone turned bleak as he said, “The founder of the Nighthawks, Archbishop Chanis, once said, ‘We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness.’”

Chapter 19 - Sealed Artifacts

◆

“We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against dangers and madness.”

The corridor outside the window was sealed, its walls ice-cold. The room was illuminated with bright yellow lights. Dunn Smith’s delivery echoed, sending blow after blow to Klein’s heart. It left him temporarily at a loss for words.

Dunn shook his head and smiled when he saw Klein silent.

“Are you very disappointed? Beyonders are not like what you imagine them to be. We are always treading alongside danger.”

“There is always a price to any gain.” Klein recovered from his shock as he answered with a quivering voice.

It was true that he never imagined that the halo, abnormality, and the inordinary aspects of a Beyonder would have such hidden threats. Perhaps it was only because he was hearing a description without witnessing it first hand and that he had been sucked into the vortex with a peculiar incident already befalling him. Klein soon brought his fear, uneasiness, worry, and apprehension under control.

Of course, the thought of shrinking back was inevitable; it lingered around and refused to leave.

“Not bad. Very mature and rational…” Dunn finished the last mouthful of coffee and added, “Also, Beyonders are not as powerful as you imagine them to be, especially a low-Sequence Beyonder. Heh, why would we use 1 to represent the highest grade and 9 the lowest? Isn't this against intuition and logic? The low Sequence we often mention refers to a low grade or a high number. They are the starting point of the Sequence chain.

"Alright, where was I? Yes, Beyonders are not as powerful as you imagine. A low-Sequence Beyonder's power is no match for guns, much less cannons. They are just more fascinating and indefensible than firearms. If you have a chance to become a Beyonder in the future, you must consider what I said today carefully. Do not make a rash decision."

Klein gave a self-deprecating smile.

"I don't even know when I will have the chance."

He felt that he would not miss the opportunity if it presented itself to him. Consuming the wrong potion or a higher-ranked potion in the Sequence could be mostly avoided. The major potential danger was the subtle influences the potions had and what he experienced from having heightened auditory and visual perceptions.

For the former, he could draw on the experiences from generations of people before him. As long as he was not in a rush to advance himself and patiently grasped control over his powers, the chances of losing control were relatively low. Furthermore, he still had to resolve the potential problem that he currently faced. He had to understand the essence of mysticism and seek a way to transmigrate back. These were the underlying reasons for taking the first step. He did not aim for higher Sequence spots. If it was easy to lose control, he could just forget about advancement, stay in his original Sequence, and rely on knowledge to plan a way 'home.'

It was needless to elaborate on the potential risks. Back when Klein held the luck enhancement ritual, he was nearly driven crazy. The murmurings that nearly blew up his head were still fresh in his mind. They were not unavoidable by not becoming a Beyonder; therefore, it was better to gain power that allowed him to defend himself.

With this in mind, Klein felt that the pros clearly outweighed the cons. It made his thoughts of withdrawal almost disappear.

Dunn picked up his pipe again as his gray eyes carried a smiling trace to them.

“I cannot give you an accurate answer on this. To become a Beyonder, firstly, you must make enough contributions. Perhaps tomorrow or the day after, you would be able to interpret critical ancient documents. Maybe you would be able to give us valuable ideas for one of our cases? Secondly, it depends on the arrangements of the higher-ups. No one can be sure.

“Alright, I believe you should know quite a bit about Beyonders now. In the future, do not make a rash decision. Now, I’ll introduce you to our Nighthawks team’s civilian jobs.”

He stood up and walked to the door. He pointed in the opposite direction of Chanis Gate and said, “We have an accountant and someone else who is in charge of procuring necessities and collecting supplies handed out by the Church and the police department while standing in as a carriage driver. They are professionals and do not need to take shifts, so they can rest on weekends. The other three civilian staff are Rozanne, Bredt, and Old Neil. Their jobs include: attending to visitors, cleaning the rooms, and writing case files and inventory registration lists. They also guard the armory, storeroom, and the archives, strictly enforcing the registration should someone wish to enter, take out or return an item. Each of them has one day off a week, other than Sundays. They negotiate among themselves on the arrangement of night shifts and rest days.”

“So is my job scope the same as Rozanne and the rest?” Klein swept away his thoughts about Beyonders and tried to clarify his job responsibilities.

“No, there’s no need. You are a professional,” said Dunn with a smile. “You currently have two tasks. First, every morning or afternoon, go take a stroll outside. Focus on the various streets that lead from Welch’s place to yours.”

“What?” Klein was dumbfounded.

What kind of job is this?

Is that very professional?

Dunn inserted his hands into the pockets of his black trench coat and said, “After you confirm that you have lost your memories, we will close the case on Welch and Naya. Similarly, that diary of the Antigonus family has vanished completely. We suspect that you brought it with you. You might have hidden it on your way home which might be why we did not find any clues at your place. This is also likely the reason why you were not there and chose to commit suicide at home.

“Although you were mysteriously influenced and have forgotten this piece of memory, the human spirit and brain is very fascinating, so there might be residual traces. Daly might not be able to obtain them through her means as a medium, but it does not mean that they do not exist. Perhaps you will feel a sense of déjà vu at a familiar and critical spot.

“That is what we wish to obtain.”

“Got it.” Klein was enlightened.

The Nighthawks’ deduction of the diary’s location was indeed reasonable.

He was the only one alive among the people involved. Only he had the time and motive to take the diary away and hide it on his way back!

“If you can find the diary this way, you will likely make enough of a contribution to become a Beyonder,” encouraged Dunn, indirectly revealing the importance of the diary.

“I hope.” Klein nodded.

Dunn changed the subject again.

“Secondly, you get a day off every week. You can decide which day it is for now. When you are not outside, go to our armory and read the literature and canon books. This is a job for a professional historian. When you finish them all, you will have to begin taking shifts with Old Neil and the rest.”

“Alright, no problem.” Klein heaved a sigh of relief.

This is not something too difficult…

At this moment, Dunn turned his body halfway and pointed to the black outward-swinging gates that was engraved with seven sacred emblems.

“This is Chanis Gate. It is named after the creator of the modern Nighthawks system, Archbishop Chanis. There is one under the central cathedral of every major city.

“It is guarded by formal Nighthawk members on rotation. Inside, there are at least two ‘Keepers’ who are sent by the Church, as well as countless traps. You must not approach it under any circumstances; otherwise, misfortune will befall you.”

“That sounds scary,” Klein expressed his feelings.

“The area inside is divided into a few zones. Stored within are certain potion formulas for certain Sequences and other magical materials. It is also used to temporarily hold heretics, mutants, cultists, and members of secret organizations. Heh heh, they will eventually be sent to the Holy Cathedral,” introduced Dunn in passing.

Holy Cathedral? The headquarters of the Church of Evernight located in the Winter County to the north of the kingdom, Cathedral of Serenity? Klein nodded slightly as though he was pondering over the matter.

“In addition, there are all sorts of classified documents and records inside. When you gain a higher clearance, you might have a chance of reading them.” Dunn hesitated for a moment before adding, “Behind the Chanis Gate, there are also Sealed Artifacts in the basement.”

“Sealed Artifacts?” Klein ruminated on the terms.

It sounded like a specialized term.

“Some of the extraordinary items we gather and retrieve are just too important and magical. If they fall into the wrong hands, it would cause immense destruction. Therefore, we have to keep it strictly confidential and watch them carefully. Even we can only use it under special circumstances. Besides…” With that said, Dunn paused for a moment before continuing, “Besides, there are some things inside that are very special. They had certain ‘living’ characteristics which can entice the Keepers. It would influence the surroundings, attempt escape, and cause catastrophic outcomes. They have to be strictly controlled.”

“How fascinating,” commented Klein wistfully.

“The Nighthawks headquarters have categorized these Sealed Artifacts into four grades. Grade 0 represents Extremely Dangerous. They are of the highest importance and of the highest confidentiality. They are not to be inquired, disseminated, described, or spied. They can only be sealed in the basement of the Holy Cathedral,” described Dunn in detail. “Grade 1 is Highly Dangerous. They can be used in limited ways. Their security clearance is limited to diocesan bishops or Nighthawks deacons and above. The central cathedral of diocese headquarters like Backlund can store one to two artifacts. The rest will be handed over to the Holy Cathedral.

“Grade 2 is Dangerous. They can be used with care and moderation. The security clearance requires one to be a bishop or a Nighthawks team's captain and above. The central cathedrals in the various cities can store three to five artifacts. The rest will be turned into the Holy Cathedral or the diocese headquarters. Grade 3 is Considerably Dangerous. They have to be used carefully. It can only be requested for operations that require three or more people. The security clearance requires one to be a formal member of the Nighthawks."

"In the future, you will see the corresponding documents. Through the numbers, you can understand what they represent. For instance, 2-125 means that it is a Dangerous grade Sealed Artifact No. 125."

As Dunn went on, he suddenly turned around and returned to his room. He pulled out a piece of paper from the bottom of the drawer.

"By the way, take a look at this. Three years ago, a newly appointed archbishop lost control. For some unknown reason, he stormed through the various levels of protection and vanished mysteriously with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. Memorize this photo. If you discover him, do not alert or disturb him. Return to report it immediately or the chance of you dying in the line of duty is a thousand percent."

"What?" Klein received the piece of paper. There was no title on it, just a black and white photo with a few lines of words.

"Ince Zangwill. Male. Forty years old. Former archbishop. A Gatekeeper who failed in his promotion and was enticed by the devil and was corrupted. He escaped with Sealed Artifact 0-08. Particular traits are…"

The picture depicted Ince Zangwill as wearing an all-black clergyman robe with buttons on both sides and a soft cap. His hair was dark blonde and his pupils were so blue that it was nearly black. He had a high nose and his lips were tightly pursed. His facial features were like a classic sculpture without any wrinkles. The most striking characteristic was that he was blind in one eye.

"The description of the corrupted is so detailed but the only thing about the Sealed Artifact is its codename…” Klein honestly offered his first impression.

“That’s why it is at the highest security clearance. The search for Sealed Artifacts No. 0-08 is only described verbally and never written in words. Even so, the description will be little,” said Dunn with a sigh. “0-08 appears to be a common quill, but it does not need ink to write. That’s all.”

Dunn did not dive deeper into the topic. He tugged at the golden chain on his black trench coat and took out a gorgeous pocket watch of the same color. He clicked it open and took a glance before pointing outside.

“I’ve told you all you need to know. Go to the armory to find Old Neil. Get him to arrange the documents that you need to read. He is no ordinary civilian clerk. He was once a formal member, but due to his advanced age, he failed to be promoted. His health is ailing, so it’s no longer suitable for him to handle cases. Furthermore, he does not wish to become an internal Keeper or rest at home. All he wishes is to be accompanied by documents and records.”

Chapter 20 - The Forgetful Dunn

◆ ◆ ◆

“Okay.” Klein bowed slightly as he wore his short top hat again. However, his mind was preoccupied with how Sealed Artifact 0-08 looked.

It appears to be just your everyday quill?

It writes without ink?

Then, what is its actual use? What makes it classified at the highest level of confidentiality that it’s deemed Extremely Dangerous?

Can it be a pen that kills anyone whose name is written?

No, that would be way too heaven-defying. Ince Zangwill wouldn’t need to escape and hide away if that were the case…

Just as Klein turned around to leave, Dunn suddenly shouted out to him.

“Hold on. I forgot something.”

“What?” Klein turned his head; his eyes puzzled.

Dunn put back his pocket watch and said with a smile, “Later, remember to visit the accountant, Mrs. Orianna, and get an advance payment of four weeks—a total of twelve pounds. After that, you’ll earn half your salary every week until the difference is covered.”

“That’s too much. There’s no need for this, the amount should be reduced," said Klein subconsciously.

He had no objection towards an advanced payment. After all, he didn't even have the money needed to pay for the public horse carriage trip home. However, to receive twelve pounds at once left him a little afraid.

"No, it's necessary," said Dun as he shook his head and smiled. "Think about it. Do you still wish to continue living in your present apartment? One that needs you to share a bathroom with so many other tenants? Even if you aren't taking yourself into consideration, think about the lady. Besides…"

He paused when he saw Klein nod in agreement. He smiled and sized up Klein's garbs and said with a meaningful intent, "Besides, you need a cane, and you should buy a new suit."

Klein was taken aback for a second before snapping back to reality. His face immediately burned with embarrassment since the suit he was wearing was cheap and of inferior quality.

Typically, a top hat was made of silk, costing five to six soli. A bow tie was three soli, a walking cane inlaid with silver was seven to eight soli, a shirt was three soli, while pants, a vest, and tuxedo were around seven pounds in total. Leather boots were nine to ten soli. As such, an entire suit cost more than eight pounds and seven soli. Of course, to be a presentable gentleman, one needed a watch chain, a pocket watch, and a wallet.

Back then, the original Klein and Benson scrimped and saved before managing to save up a pool of money. When they went to a clothing store to check the price, they ended up running off without even bothering to try haggling. They each bought a set at a bargain shop near Iron Cross Street for a total of less than two pounds.

It was also because of that incident that original Klein had a deep impression of the prices of clothes.

"O-Okay," Klein stammered a reply.

He was like the original Klein. He was someone who cared about his appearance.

Dunn took out the pocket watch again and clicked it open to take a glance at it.

"Perhaps you should find Mrs. Orianna first? I know you'll spend quite some time at Old Neil's while Mrs. Orianna will likely be returning home soon."

"Alright." Klein was acutely aware of his state of poverty and did not object to it.

Dunn returned to the table's side and pulled at a few hanging ropes as he said, "I'll get Rozanne to bring you there."

The ropes began their operation as the gears ground, producing a chime from a bell at the reception area of Blackthorn Security Company. When Rozanne heard it, she hurriedly stood up and carefully made her way down.

It did not take long before she appeared in front of Klein again.

Dunn said humorously, "I did not disturb your rest, right? Oh, bring Moretti to Mrs. Orianna."

Rozanne secretly curled her lips as she answered 'happily—'

"Alright, Captain."

"Is that all?" At that moment, Klein blurted out in surprise.

To get his advance payment from finance, isn't there a need to get an approval letter from the Captain? Shouldn't you write something?

"So?" Dunn returned with a question.

“I mean— Don’t I need your signature to claim an advance payment from Mrs. Orianna?” Klein tried his best to use simple language.

“Oh, no. There’s no need. Rozanne is enough proof.” Dunn pointed at the brown-haired girl and gave a reply.

Captain, it seems there’s almost zero management of our finances… Klein resisted his urge to deliver a sarcastic comment before turning to leave the room with Rozanne.

At that moment, he heard Dunn shout out again.

“Hold on. There’s still another thing.”

Can we finish it all at once? Klein turned back with a smiling face.

“Yes?”

Dunn pressed at his temple and said, “When you meet Old Neil, remember to collect ten demon hunting bullets.”

“Me? Demon hunting bullets?” Klein returned in astonishment.

“Welch’s revolver is still with you, right? There’s no need for you to turn it in.” Dunn inserted a single hand into his pocket and said, “With the demon hunting bullets, if you were to face a paranormal danger, you will be able to protect yourself. Uh, it will give you some courage at the very least.”

There’s no need for you to add on the final sentence… Just as Klein was vexing over the problem, he answered without any hesitation, “Alright. I’ll remember to do so!”

“This will require me to write a formal document. Wait a moment.” Dunn sat down and picked up the dark red fountain pen. He scribbled a ‘note,’ signed it, and stamped it.

“Thank you, Captain.” Klein received it sincerely.

He slowly walked back before turning around.

“Hold on.”

Dunn shouted one more time.

…Captain, you look to be in your thirties. Why do you have the symptoms of dementia? Klein squeezed out a smile and turned around to ask, “Anything else?”

“I forgot earlier that you are not trained in shooting, so getting demon hunting bullets would be useless. Let’s do this; collect thirty normal bullets every day. Take the opportunity when you are out to go to the street corner—the underground shooting range at No. 3 Zouteland Street. Most of it belongs to the police department, but there is one that is specially for us Nighthawks. Oh, right, you also need to get a badge from Old Neil. Otherwise, you won’t be able to enter the shooting range.” Dunn smacked his forehead and took back the note from Klein. He then added the information and stamped it with another seal.

“A good marksman is produced by expending bullets. Do not think lightly of it.” Dunn handed back Klein the modified note.

“Got it.” Klein, who was fearful of danger, yearned to visit the shooting range that very day.

He took two steps towards the exit before carefully turning around halfways. He deliberated before asking, “Captain, is there anything else?”

“No.” Dunn nodded firmly.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief and walked straight out the door. While walking, he had the strong urge to turn around to ask another, “Are you sure there’s nothing else?”

He resisted that urge and finally left the Keeper room successfully.

"Captain has always been this way. He often forgets things." As Rozanne walked by his side, she softly disparaged the captain, "Even my granny has a better memory than him. Of course, he only forgets the trivial stuff. Yea, trivial stuff. Klein, I'll call you Klein in the future.
Mrs. Orianna is a very affable person. It is easy to hit it off with her. Her father is a watchsmith with excellent skill…"

As Klein listened to the brown-haired girl rattle on, he stepped into the stairwell and returned to the upper floor. He found Mrs. Orianna in the far office on the right-hand side.

She was a black-haired woman dressed in a flounce lace dress. She appeared in her thirties and had fashionable curly hair. Her pair of green eyes were clear and smiling, and she seemed refined and elegant.

After Orianna heard Rozanne repeat Dunn Smith's instructions, she took out a note and wrote an advance slip.

"Sign here. Do you have a seal? If not, you can leave a thumbprint."

"Alright." Now familiar with the procedures, Klein completed the formalities.

Orianna took out a copper key and opened the safe in the room. As she counted the pounds, she said with a smile, "You are lucky. We have enough cash today. By the way, Klein, were you invited by Captain because you were involved in a paranormal activity and the fact that you have a specialty?"

"Yes, you have an impeccable intuition." Klein was not stingy with his compliments.

Orianna took out four notes with light-gray backgrounds with deep black patterns printed on them. After locking the safe, she turned around and smiled.

"That's because I had a similar experience too."

“Really?” Klein showed an appropriate level of surprise.

“Do you know about the serial killer that sent Tingen City into a frenzy sixteen years ago?” Orianna handed over the four gold pounds to Klein.

“…Yes! It’s the one which had five girls killed consecutively. Some had their hearts and stomachs removed by that Bloody Butcher? My mother often used that matter to scare my sister when we were young,” said Klein as he thought about it.

He received the notes and discovered that two of them were in five pound denominations and two of them were in one pound denominations. All of them had a gray background and were inked in black. The four corners had complicated patterns and special ink to prevent counterfeiting.

The former notes were slightly bigger and in the middle of them was Loen Kingdom’s fifth king, George III’s direct ancestor, Henry Augustus I. He wore a white hair band above his rotund face. His eyes were slender and he had an abnormally serious expression. However, Klein felt an indescribably sense of closeness to him.

This was a five-pound note!

It’s almost equal to four weeks of Benson’s salary!

In the middle of the one-pound note was George III’s father, the former king, William Augustus VI. This Might-wielder had a thick mustache and a firm gaze. While he was in power, he freed the Loen Kingdom from the shackles of the old order, allowing his nation to regain the pinnacle spot.

They were all ‘good kings…’ Klein could faintly smell the notes’ ink that elated and refreshed him.

“Yes, if the Nighthawks had not come in time, I would have been the sixth victim.” Mrs. Orianna’s tone still hinted at a sense of lingering fear despite the incident having happened more than ten years ago.

"I heard that the serial killer, no— The Butcher was a Beyonder?" Klein carefully folded the paper notes and placed it in an inner pocket of his suit. Then, he patted the area a few times to confirm it was there.

"Yes." Mrs. Orianna gave a firm nod. "He had killed even more before that. The reason why he was captured was because he was preparing a ritual for the devil."

"No wonder he wanted different organs… Sorry, Mrs. Orianna for making you recall such unpleasant memories," said Klein sincerely.

Orianna smiled. "I'm no longer afraid… I was studying accountancy in business school back then. After that incident, I've been here ever since. Alright, I'll stop keeping you from what you should do. You still need to head to Old Neil's."

"Goodbye, Mrs. Orianna." Klein took off his hat and bowed before leaving the office. Before he went downstairs, he could not help but pat his inner pocket to make sure the twelve pounds was still there.

He did a turn at a cross-junction and headed right. It did not take him long to see a half-closed iron door.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

While he knocked, an aged voice sounded from inside.

"Come in."

Klein pushed open the metal door and discovered a cramped room which only allowed for a desk and two chairs.

There was a tightly locked iron door inside the room and behind the desk was a hoary elder dressed in a class black robe. He was reading a few yellowed pages from a book with the illumination of a gas lamp.

He raised his head and looked at the door.

"Are you Klein Moretti? Rozanne said you were very polite when she came over a while ago."

"Miss Rozanne is really a friendly person. Good afternoon, Mr. Neil." Klein took off his hat as a gesture of respect.

"Have a seat." Neil pointed to the silver tin can with complex flowery patterns on the table. "Would you like a cup of handground coffee?"

The wrinkles at the edge of his eyes and mouth were deeply recessed. His dark red pupils appeared slightly turbid.

"It doesn't seem like you drink coffee?" Klein acutely noticed that Neil's porcelain cup was filled with clear water.

"Haha, it's a habit of mine. I do not drink coffee after three in the afternoon," Neil explained with a laugh.

"Why?" Klein asked in passing.

Neil held back his smile as he looked into Klein's eyes and said, "I'm afraid that it would affect my sleep at night. It will make me hear the murmurings of the unknown existence."

Klein was momentarily unable to answer him as he changed the subject.

"Mr. Neil, what documents and books should I read?"

As he spoke, he took out the note written by Dunn.

"Anything that has to do with history, or is complicated and incomplete. To be honest, I have always been trying to learn, but all I can achieve is a rudimentary grasp. It's just too troublesome for the other material, such as people's diaries, contemporary books, epitaphs, etc…" lamented Neil. "For example, the things I have here require more detailed historical records to determine the exact content."

"Why?" Klein turned confused.

Neil pointed to a few yellowed pages in front of him.

“These are from Roselle Gustav’s lost diary before his death. In order to keep things secret, he used strange symbols he invented to take records.”

Emperor Roselle? The transmigration senior? Klein was taken aback as he immediately listened attentively.

“Many people believe that he did not truly die, but instead became a hidden god. Therefore, cults which revere him have always been holding various rituals to attempt at gaining power. We will occasionally encounter such incidents and obtain a few original or duplicated copies of the diary,” Neil said with a shake of his head. “Till date, no one has been able to decipher the special symbols’ true meaning. Therefore, the Holy Cathedral has permitted us to keep copies for research, hoping that it would bring them a pleasant surprise.”

With that said, Neil revealed a smug smile.

“I have already deciphered a few symbols and have confirmed that they represent numbers. Look at what I discovered. It’s actually a diary! Yes, I wish to use history from different periods, especially events that revolved around the emperor. By comparing those records to the ones written in the diary for the corresponding day, I can try to interpret more of the symbols.

“That’s the mind of a genius, right?” The old gentleman with white hair and deep wrinkles looked at Klein with bright eyes.

Klein nodded in agreement.

“Yes.”

“Haha, you can also take a look at it. Tomorrow, you will have to help me with this diary.” Neil pushed the few yellowed pages towards Klein.

Klein turned them around and took a glance at them, but it immediately stunned him!

Although the ‘symbols’ had been copied in terribly ugly fashion, to the point of looking a little distorted, there was no way he could be mistaken…

This was because they were words he was most familiar with.

Chinese!

And it’s f**king Simplified Chinese!

Chapter 21 - An Old Friend In A Different World

◆

In that instant, Klein even believed that he had transmigrated back. However, the elegant gas lamp surrounded by brass grids and the silver-inlaid tin, which Old Neil kept his handground coffee in, made him recognize the reality he was in.

The transmigrator, Emperor Roselle, is really a fellow countryman of mine? He was using Simplified Chinese—which doesn't exist in this world—to record secrets? With the indescribable feeling of identifying an old friend in a different world, Klein quickly read through the three pages.

"18th November. Truly a fascinating matter. A blue-sky experimentation and a chance mistake made me discover the pathetic fellow lost and trapped in the deep darkness amid the storms. He can only approach the reality of this world on the day of the full moon every month; yet, he is unable to transmit his cries. He is lucky to have met me, the protagonist of this era."

"After reading the paragraph I wrote above, I suddenly felt a little down. Even my Chinese is written like a translation. Four decades have passed in a finger snap. My past memories feel more like a dream."

"1184, 1st January. At the grand New Year Gala, Lady Florena was truly splendid."

"2nd January. My diplomats are all idiots!"

"3rd January. I made a hasty choice back then. In hindsight, I should have chosen the Apprentice, the Seer, or the Marauder. Unfortunately, there is no way of redoing it."

"4th January. Why are my children so stupid? I've repeated myself so many times. Do not be fooled by those charlatans! The key thing about potions is not about grasping them, but digesting them! It's nothing about tapping powers, but acting! And the name of a potion is not solely symbolic at its core, but a concrete imagery, and the 'key' to digestion!"

"9th September. An alliance opposing me has been established. Feysac from the north, Loen from the east, Feynapotter from the south. My enemies have finally joined forces, but I have no fear. I will use facts to teach them that the generations of weapons and knowledge cannot be compensated by mere numbers and low-grade Sequencers. Besides, it's not as though I do not have subordinates. As for the higher-grades, heh heh. Have they forgotten who I am?"

"23rd September. I have lost communications with the ship seeking the Forsaken Land of God. I should consider inventing wireless telegraphs. I hope it would not be affected by the storm."

"24th September. Miss Ithaca is more mesmerizing than Lady Florena. Perhaps, I'm just being nostalgic about my youth."

Due to the complexity of characters in Simplified Chinese, the font was slightly larger than normal, leading to less content on each page. Furthermore, for preservational and research purposes, the back of each page was left empty. But even so, Klein still felt an upheaval of emotions when he read the diary. In particular, Emperor Roselle's description of the crux of potions made him feel like he found the path to the solution. He was thrilled at having learned a priceless secret.

Perhaps, this will be a beacon for my future path as a Beyonder! Well, the three pages belong to entries at different times. It seems Emperor Roselle only writes the year on the first entry of each year. It cannot be determined which year the two pages with September and November belong to…Who is the pathetic fellow he discovered?

What do “digesting” and “acting” actually mean?

Where is the Forsaken Land of God? …

These questions bubbled in Klein’s head. It made him eager to immediately gather all of Emperor Roselle’s diary and read it from cover to cover!

“Klein?” At that moment, Old Neil asked puzzledly across him.

Klein jolted awake as he hurriedly covered it up with a laugh. “I thought I would be the most special one. I was trying to decipher and interpret it.”

“You are young indeed.” Old Neil nodded, laughing. “I once believed that I was the most special one as well.”

Klein flipped through the three pages in his hand and after confirming that he had not missed anything, he handed it over to Old Neil and thoughtlessly asked, “Do we only have these few pages?”

I want to see more of Emperor Roselle’s diary! “Did you think there would be many?” Old Neil caressed the scripts as his wrinkles deepened from his scoff. “There are not many incidents a year that involve Beyonders and mystery to begin with. Sigh, the major reason is the gradual extinction of extraordinary species in our Northern Continent. Without them, there won’t be a lot of potions, causing the number of Beyonders to reduce with time. Sigh, over the past few centuries, dragons, giants, and elves have become simply records in books. Even the seafolks are no longer seen near the coastal waters.”

Upon hearing this, Klein suddenly thought of a meme. He immediately said with a smile, “I think it’s time to establish a Dragons and Giants Protection Association.”

Old Neil looked confused when he heard that. It took him quite some time to figure out what it meant. After figuring out its meaning, he rapped the table and laughed quite heartily in a not-so-gentlemanly manner.

“Haha, Klein, you really are humorous. This is a tradition of our Loen Kingdom. It’s good that young people have a sense of humor. I believe we shouldn’t be overly narrow in scope. Why are we only protecting dragons and giants? It should be called Fantastic Beasts Protection Association.”

“No, no, no. How can we forget those poor plants?” Klein shook his head.

They exchanged looks and proclaimed in unison: “Fantastic Organisms Protection Association!”

Both of them laughed tacitly. The awkwardness and unfamiliarity of the atmosphere between them dissipated considerably.

“There are fewer interesting young people like you these days… Where was I?” Old Neil’s wrinkles suffused a smile as he said, “I remember. There are not many incidents a year that involve Beyonders and mystery to begin with. The retards who revere Emperor Roselle are the minority of the minority. It’s already pretty good that we can obtain three scripts… Well, the other larger cathedrals or dioceses might have some…”

After muttering a few words, he took the approval note which Klein had placed on the table earlier and took a look.

“Are they pistol bullets, rifle bullets, or steam-pressured bullets?”

“It’s a revolver,” answered Klein honestly.

“Alright. I’ll go get them. Ahem, do you have an underarm holster? As a gentleman, we can’t let you have something bulging below your waist in public.” Old Neil made a joke that all men understood.

"Heh, no. Do I need to get Captain to include it?" Klein smiled cooperatively.

Old Neil stood up and said, "There's no need. I just need to make a record. It's an accessory item. Repeat after me: accessory item."

"Were you a teacher in the past?" joked Klein.

"I spent some time at the Church's Sunday school and free schools." Old Neil waved the note and took out a key from the drawer. He then opened the iron door that led into an inner chamber.

Beyonders do not seem much different from commoners… Klein murmured silently before casting his gaze on the table where the three pages of the diary were.

Emperor Roselle is indeed involved in the realm of mystery…

His diary is invaluable…To others, they are just pieces of scrap paper. It is unknown when they will be deciphered, but they are a valuable treasure to me! I wonder where the remaining parts of the diary are…

I have to think of ways to get more… Klein's mind went through upheavals as he could hardly calm down. This continued until Old Neil came out and closed the iron door.

"Ten demon hunting bullets, thirty revolver bullets. An ox-hide underarm holster, and a Seventh Unit, Special Operations Department badge. Please count them and give them a try. Remember to sign the log book." Old Neil placed the items down on the table.

The revolver bullets were arranged neatly in a paper box which was divided into three layers. The bullets shimmered with a yellow sheen just like the bullets back home, but they appeared narrower.

As for the demon hunting bullets, they were kept in a small iron box. The shape was identical to regular revolver bullets, but their surface was silver in color. Upon a more careful examination, there were complicated and dazzling patterns with tiny Sacred Emblems—a black background dotted with stars and a half crimson moon—engraved at the bottom.

The ox-hide holster felt solid and it came with a belt and buckle. Beside it was a badge half the size of a palm. It had a metallic background with “Awwa County Police Department and Seventh Unit, Special Operations Department” inscribed in silver text. They formed almost two sealed circles and surrounded the “two crossed swords and a crown” police emblem.

“Unfortunately, it’s not a Nighthawks badge,” Klein said half wistfully and half probingly.

Old Neil smiled and urged Klein to test the underarm holster.

After he took off his jacket, Klein took quite a bit of effort to buckle up the holster, which hung close to his left armpit.

“Not bad.” He put on his jacket again.

Old Neil sized him up and nodded in satisfaction.

“It suits you well. My judgment is as accurate as usual.”

After putting away the other items into his pockets and signing the log book, Klein had a short, casual conversation with Old Neil before leaving.

Halfway, he suddenly slapped himself in the forehead.

“I forgot to learn more about the Sequences and potions. It’s all the fault of Emperor Roselle’s diary…”

At this point, he was still unaware of what the first Sequence of the complete pathway the Church of Evernight possessed. All he knew was that it started with Sequence 9.

Rozanne had apparently mentioned something… The Sleepless? Just as

Klein was slowly walking towards the stairs, a person came down.

He wore tight trousers which made movement easy. His white shirt was not tucked in, and he had a clear romantic temperament of a poet. He was none other than the black-haired, green-eyed police inspector who had previously come to search Klein's place. They had met upstairs previously, but they had not exchanged words.

"Good afternoon," greeted the young poet-like Nighthawk with a smile.

"Good afternoon. I believe I do not need to introduce myself?" answered Klein humorously.

"There's no need. I have a deep impression of you." The young Nighthawk extended his right hand and said, "Leonard Mitchell. Sequence 8's Midnight Poet."

Sequence 8… He's really a poet… Klein smilingly shook his hand as he returned with a question, "You have a deep impression of me?"

Leonard Mitchell's green eyes were deep as he replied with a very faint smile. "You have a special disposition."

He feels and sounds so gay… The corners of Klein's mouth moved slightly as he barely said with a smile, "I don't think so myself."

"After encountering an accident like that, you remained alive despite not receiving our protection immediately. That makes you special enough." Leonard pointed ahead. "I have to replace Captain. See you tomorrow."

"See you tomorrow." Klein turned to make way for the Nighthawk.

As he walked to the ends of the stairwell, Leonard Mitchell suddenly turned around and stared at the stone-paved ground which was illuminated by the yellow sunset. He muttered into the air softly, "Did you manage to notice anything…"

†

“Indeed, there’s nothing special about him…”

Chapter 22 - Starting Sequence

◆

After he went up the stairs and returned to the reception hall, Klein was about to bid Rozanne farewell when he heard the brown-haired girl mention briskly, “Captain says that you can come on Monday. He wants you to settle your household affairs first.”

“…Alright.” Klein never expected the Nighthawks’ management to be so humane and accommodating. It made him feel a little grateful.

He was planning on waking early the next morning and making use of the opportunity to “wander around” to visit Tingen University. He planned on informing the staff in charge of the interview that he was not participating in the follow-up interviews. After all, he had originally obtained the opportunity to make the interview because of his professor’s recommendation letter. Regardless, it was basic courtesy to have formal closure. Even if it was not for himself, he had to respect his mentor’s efforts.

And in a world without telephones, where telegrams were charged by the character, and the fact that it would be too late to send a letter, he felt that taking the public carriage to the university was the most economical and suitable solution.

Having received the Captain’s special approval, Klein did not need to tire himself out. He could wake up late and still make his way there on time.

Klein was just about to take off his hat to bid Rozanne farewell when he suddenly thought of something. He looked around and suppressed his voice. “Rozanne, do you know what the starting point of the Church’s complete Sequence is?”

He had forgotten to ask Old Neil.

Rozanne’s eyes widened as she looked at Klein in astonishment. “You wish to become a Beyonder?”

Was I that obvious? Klein’s body language betrayed him as he answered in embarrassment, “Having learned that extraordinary and mysterious powers exist in the world, it’s inevitable that I have some yearnings for it.”

“Oh my Goddess. Do you know how dangerous it is? Didn’t Captain tell you? The enemies of Beyonders are not just cultists or dark warlocks, but themselves! People lose control nearly every year. Some even end up sacrificing themselves! Aren’t you going to consider how your family will feel?” Rozanne’s hand gestures amplified her tone as her reaction appeared overly agitated. “Klein, I think the better choice is to be a civilian staff. There’s nearly no danger, and our salary increases every year. After a few years of work, you will have saved up much money, allowing you to rent a bungalow in the North Borough or in the suburbs. You can then marry a rich and charming lady and have a wonderful family, having adorable and naughty little angels…”

“Rozanne, stop! Hold up!” Klein hurriedly stopped her in exasperation when he realized that she was changing the subject. “I just want to… to, well, understand the basics for now.”

“Alright…” Rozanne fell silent for a few seconds as she lowered her gaze, feeling somewhat sorry. “Due to what happened to my father, whenever I face similar problems, I tend to be… well, you know, a little agitated. However, to be honest, I’m filled with respect towards any man or woman who willingly wishes to be a Nighthawk.”

“I understand, I understand,” echoed Klein.

Rozanne blinked her light brown eyes and added, “My father once said that one should never think that they can resolve hidden risks or combat danger by simply becoming more powerful or a higher Sequencer. In fact, it’s the opposite. They will encounter more terrifying matters. When facing the unknown or a terrifying existence, death and insanity are the only two outcomes. Heh, he ended up sacrificing himself two weeks after saying that… Klein, don’t look at me with pity. My life is great now, really great! It’s only right to feel fear towards these matters!”

“I only want to know the basics…” Klein repeated his previous reply, not sure whether he should laugh or cry.

Captain explained it more clearly than you. And even if I do not become a Beyonder, I have already encountered something extraordinary… “Alright,” said Rozanne ruminatively. “I’ve heard Captain’s and Old Neil’s conversation before. As extraordinary creatures are declining or going extinct, few high Sequencers exist in this era. It’s already very impressive to become a Beyonder! Combining our Tingen City and the suburbs, there are hundreds of thousands of people or maybe even more. Yet, there are only about thirty plus Beyonders. Well, it’s just my guess… I’m not counting the cultists and dark warlocks who hide in the dark…”

Without waiting for Klein’s reply, she seemed to regain her vibrancy as she clenched her fist and brought it to her chest.

“And among these thirty plus Beyonders, most of them are at Sequence 9! Uh, it seems I have gone off topic…”

“It’s okay. That was something I wanted to know as well.” Klein wished that Rozanne could be like her usual self, revealing more information as she rambled on.

“Anyways, it’s already very, very impressive to become a Beyonder!” Rozanne repeated herself. “The starting Sequence of our Church’s complete Sequence is Sleepless: Sequence 9, Sleepless!”

Indeed… Klein nodded as he watched Rozanne finding it hard to stop herself from describing in detail.

“You should be able to guess from the name. A Sleepless is someone who does not need to sleep at night. Three to four hours of rest in the day would be sufficient. Man, I’m so envious… No, not at all! Sleep is a gift bestowed upon us by the Goddess. It’s the truest bliss!

“Where was I? Ah, right. A Sleepless can see through the darkness even without any lights. The deeper into the night, the more powerful they become. I mean more powerful in the aspects of their physical strength, their intuition, and their mental capabilities. However, although they can detect unknown dangers that lurk in the dark, they will still rely on demon hunting bullets and other items to handle monsters they are unable to deal with via normal means. My father was once a Sleepless.”

Without waiting for Klein to press on, Rozanne continued, “After that, it’s Sequence 8’s Midnight Poet, and one level higher is Sequence 7’s Nightmare.”

Nightmare? Klein instantly recalled that Dunn Smith had guided his dreams. He asked as a confirmation, “Captain?”

“You know about it?” Rozanne’s mouth nearly turned into an “O” shape.

“Captain once entered my dream…” Klein glanced around as he lowered his voice once more.

“Got it…” Rozanne was enlightened as she answered with a whisper.

She picked up a coffee cup beside her and took a sip before saying wistfully, “There are only two Sequence 7 Beyonders in our Tingen City’s Church. It’s likely that Captain is one of them. Even if he goes to a large diocese like Backlund, he is still an impressive figure. Some deacons might not even be stronger than he is!”

“So Captain is that impressive.” Klein echoed with a smile.

Frankly, Dunn Smith's appearance last night had left a deep impression on him. He had basically believed that Dunn was an extremely powerful Beyonder.

"Of course!" Rozanne proudly straightened her back.

In moments, the scatterbrained her said with a vexed expression, "As for what's above Sequence 7, I have no idea. Among all the Nighthawks, perhaps only Captain will know."

"Then what about other starting Sequences? The ones that aren't complete?" Klein was satisfied as he changed the subject.

It had to be said that Rozanne's description of Sleepless did match his imaginations and expectations of Beyonders. However, it was not the kind he wished to become. The perfect Sequence 9 was likely one that could study and grasp more knowledge of the mystery. By doing so, he could leverage on them to figure out the reason for his transmigration and lay the foundations of his future transmigration back.

Rozanne thought for a moment before saying with a sigh, "I'm not that interested in this aspect. I only know we have more than other churches. After all, the Goddess is the Mother of Concealment… Well, there should be two or three. Some of our teammates are cold and distant, making me fear them. They also have a strange smell to them. Some members… Well, I mean you should talk to Old Neil. He knows a lot, as well as quite a number of interesting magical rituals. Let me think. He once mentioned his Sequence 9 title, which is also the name of the potion formula… Ah, yes, it's called Mystery Pryer."

Quite a number of interesting magical rituals? Mystery Pryer sounds very close to what I want… Klein was slightly delighted.

"In addition, I also know of the name of a Sequence 7, the kind that's incomplete!" Rozanne said with a flaunting tone. She had just thought of it while recollecting.

"What is it?" Klein was abnormally curious.

In a world where high Sequencers were scarce to the point of them possibly not existing, Sequence 7 was probably considered quite a potent force in the Church.

Rozanne revealed a sweet smile as she replied smugly, "Spirit Medium!"

"Ma'am Daly?" asked Klein subconsciously.

After his initial surprise, he realized that it was nothing unexpected. Only a Sequence 7 Beyonder could achieve such an impressive performance as a medium!

Rozanne's eyes widened once again as she said in disbelief, "H-how do you know of that too?"

"I've met Ma'am Daly." Klein did not hide the matter.

"Alright," said Rozanne with an envious tone. "If I can become a Spirit Medium, one just like Ma'am Daly, then I'll be willing to be a Beyonder. No, I'll consider it carefully for ten minutes…"

"Yes, Ma'am Daly fulfills all my imaginations as a Beyonder," echoed Klein in a slightly exaggerated manner.

Having fulfilled his goals, he chatted idly with Rozanne for a few minutes until he realized he was not getting any new information. He took off his hat and bowed before leaving.

As he walked down the stairs, Klein suddenly stopped after taking a few steps. He reached out to pat the notes in his inner pocket.

Immediately following that, he took out twelve gold pound notes and clenched then tightly in his left palm. Then, he reached his hand into his pocket and refused to release or pull them out again. Without realizing it, a smile appeared on his face.

According to the customs of the Foodaholic Empire—China—a treat to dinner was in order after earning money!

It’s time to give Melissa a treat tonight!

Chapter 23 - Side Arm

◆

As Klein walked down Zouteland and while taking in the warm, humid breeze, he suddenly realized something.

He only had three pence of change. If he returned to Iron Cross Street via public carriage, it would cost him four pence. If he were to hand over a one-gold pound note, it would be akin to using a hundred-dollar bill to buy a bottle of cheap mineral water back on Earth. There was nothing wrong with that, but it was just quite awkward to do so.

Should I use three pence to travel three kilometers and walk the rest of the journey? Klein reached into his pocket with one hand as he slowed down his pace, considering other solutions.

That won’t do! Soon, he rejected the idea.

It would take him a while to walk the remaining journey. Considering how he was carrying twelve pounds—a massive fortune—it was not safe!

Furthermore, he had deliberately not brought the revolver with him, afraid that the Nighthawks would confiscate it. If he were to encounter the danger that instigated Welch’s death, there was no way he could fight back!

Get some change from a nearby bank? No, no way! There’s a 0.5% processing fee. That’s way too extravagant! Klein shook his head silently. Just the thought of the fees involved pained his heart!

Having ruled out one solution after another, Klein's eyes suddenly lit up when he saw a clothing shop in front of him!

That's right! Wouldn't the normal course of action be to buy something appropriately priced to get some change? A formal suit, shirt, vest, trousers, leather boots, and a cane were all within budget. They had to be bought sooner or later!

Oh, it's very troublesome when fitting clothes. Besides, Benson knows more about this than me and he's better at bargaining. I should consider it only after he's back… Then should I buy a cane? That's right! As the saying goes, a cane is a gentleman's best choice of defense. It is half as good as a crowbar. A gun in one hand and a cane in the other is the combat style of a civilized person! After debating internally, Klein made up his mind. He turned around and entered the clothing shop, Wilker Clothing and Hats.

The clothing store's layout resembled the clothing stores on Earth. The left wall was filled with rows of formal attires. The middle rows were decked with things like shirts, trousers, vests, and bowties. On the right were leather shoes and boots placed inside glass cabinets.

"Sir, may I help you?" A male salesperson dressed in a white shirt and red vest came over and asked politely.

In Loen Kingdom, rich and powerful gentlemen of high standing enjoyed wearing black suits consisting of white shirts matched with black vests and trousers. Their colors were relatively monotonous, so they required their male servants, salespeople, and service attendants to dress more brightly and colorfully, in order to distinguish themselves from their masters.

In contrast, ladies and mistresses wore dresses of all kinds in glamorous fashions. As such, maidservants would wear black and white.

Klein thought for a moment before answering the male salesperson's question. “A cane. Something that’s heavier and harder.”

The kind that can crack the skulls of others! The red-vested salesperson sized up Klein furtively before leading him into the store. He then pointed at a row of canes in the corner. “That cane inlaid with gold is made of Ironheart wood. It’s both very heavy and hard, and costs eleven soli seven pence. Do you want to give it a try?”

Eleven soli seven pence? Why don’t you go rob a bank! Big deal with the gold inlay! Klein was shocked by the price.

With an unperturbed expression, he nodded gently. “Alright.”

The salesperson took down the Ironheart wood cane and carefully handed it to Klein, seemingly afraid that Klein would drop and break the merchandise.

Klein took the cane and found it heavy. He tried moving with it and discovered that he could not sway it smoothly as he wanted.

“It’s too heavy.” Klein shook his head in relief.

This is not an excuse! The salesperson took back the cane and pointed at another three canes.

“This is made of walnut wood, created by Tingen’s most famous cane artisan, Mr. Hayes. It’s priced at ten soli three pence… This is made of ebony wood and inlaid with silver. It’s as hard as iron, costing seven soli six pence… This is made from the core of a white boli tree and also inlaid with silver, costing seven soli ten pence…”

Klein tried each one of them and found them of appropriate weight. He then tapped them with his fingers to gain an understanding of their hardness. Finally, he chose the cheapest one.

“I’ll take the one made from ebony wood.” Klein pointed at the cane with the silver inlay which the salesperson was holding.

“No problem, Sir. Please follow me to proceed with the payment. In the future, if this cane is scuffed or stained, you can hand it to us for handling for free.” The salesperson led Klein to the counter.

Klein took the opportunity to release the four gold-pound notes from his tight grip and removed two of the smaller denominations.

“Good day, Sir. It will be seven soli six pence.” The cashier behind the counter greeted with a smile.

Klein was planning on maintaining his gentlemanly image, but when he extended his hand with the one-gold pound note, he could not help but ask, “Can I get a discount?”

“Sir, what we have is all hand-crafted, so our costs are very high.” the salesperson beside him answered. “Since our boss isn’t here, we are unable to lower the prices.”

The cashier behind the counter added, “Sir, sorry about that.”

“Alright.” Klein handed the note over and received the black silver-inlaid cane.

While waiting for the change to be given to him, he took a few steps back and distanced himself from them. He swung around his side arm as a test.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The wind sounded heavy when the cane sliced through the air. Klein nodded in satisfaction.

He looked forward again, prepared to see notes and coins, but was appalled to see the red-vested salesperson retreating far away. The cashier behind the counter had retracted into a corner, leaning close to a double-barreled shotgun hanging to the wall.

The Loen Kingdom had a semi-regulated policy on firearms. To possess a firearm, one needed to apply for an all-purpose weapon permit or a hunter's license. Regardless of which type, one could still not be in possession of restricted military firearms such as repeaters, steam-pressured guns, or six-barrel machine guns.

An all-purpose weapon permit could be used to purchase or store any kind of civilian firearm, but earning the certificate was extremely troublesome. Even merchants of substantial standing might not be approved. A hunter's license was relatively easy. Even farmers in the suburbs could receive approval. However, the license was limited to hunting guns with restricted numbers. People with sizable assets would tend to apply for one to use it for self-defense in emergency situations, such as now…

Klein looked at the two wary salespeople as the corners of his mouth twitched. He chuckled dryly. "Not bad. This cane is perfect for swinging. I'm very pleased."

Realizing that he had no intention to assault them, the cashier behind the counter relaxed. He handed over the notes and coins he had taken out over with both hands.

Klein took a look at what he received and saw two five-soli notes, two one-soli notes, a five-pence coin, and a one-penny coin. He could not help but nod inwardly.

After a two-second pause, he ignored the way the salespeople looked at him and unfurled the four notes towards the light to ensure that the anti-counterfeit watermarks were present.

Klein put away the notes and coins when he was done. With the cane in hand, he tipped his hat and walked out of Wilker Clothing and Hats. He extravagantly spent six pence by taking a short-distance trackless carriage before transferring once before reaching home safe and sound.

After closing the door, he counted the eleven pounds and twelve soli notes thrice before placing them into the desk drawer. He then found the bronze revolver with the wooden grip.

Clink! Clang! Five brass bullets fell onto the table when Klein inserted the silver demon hunting bullets which had complicated patterns and the Dark Sacred Emblem into the revolver's cylinder.

Like before, he only inserted five rounds and left an empty spot to prevent any misfires. The remaining rounds were placed together with the five ordinary bullets in a small iron case.

Pa! He snapped the cylinder in place, giving him a sense of security.

He excitedly lodged the revolver into the holster at his armpit and buckled it securely. Then, he repeatedly practiced unbuckling and drawing the gun. He rested whenever his arms ached, and this continued until sunset when he heard the sounds of tenants walking along the corridor outside.

Phew! Klein let out a foul breath before putting his revolver back into his underarm holster.

Only then did he take off his formal suit and vest. He wore back his usual brownish-yellow coat and swung his arms to relax them.

Tap. Tap. Tap. He heard the sound of nearing footsteps before the twisting sound of an inserted key.

Melissa with her soft, black hair entered. Her nose twitched a little as she swept her gaze towards the unlit stove. The luster in her eyes dimmed slightly.

"Klein, I'll heat up the leftovers from last night. Benson will likely be home tomorrow." Melissa turned to look at her brother.

Klein had his hands in his pocket as he leaned against the edge of the desk. He smiled and said, "No, let's eat out."

"Eat out?" Melissa questioned in surprise.

“How does Silver Crown Restaurant at Daffodil Street sound? I heard they serve delicious food,” suggested Klein.

“B-but…” Melissa was still confused.

Klein grinned and said, “To celebrate my new job.”

“You found a job?” Melissa’s voice rose unknowingly, “B-but, isn’t the Tingen University interview tomorrow?”

“Another job.” Klein gave a faint smile before fishing the stacked notes from the drawer. “They even gave me an advance of four weeks’ pay.”

Melissa looked at the gold pounds and soli as she widened her eyes.

“Goddess… You- they- what job did you get?”

This… Klein’s expression froze as he deliberated on his words.

“A security company whose mission is to seek, collect, and protect ancient relics. They were in need of a professional consultant. It’s a five-year contract, earning me three pounds a week.”

“Were you vexing over this last night?” asked Melissa after a moment of silence.

Klein nodded. “Yes, although being an academic at Tingen University is respectable, I prefer this job.”

“Well, it isn’t bad either.” Melissa gave an encouraging smile. She asked half-suspiciously and half-curiously, “Why would they give you an advance payment of four full weeks?”

“It’s because we need to move. We need a place with more rooms and a bathroom that belongs to us,” said Klein while grinning and shrugging.

He felt that his smile was impeccable, just short of the word: “Surprised?”

Melissa was stunned momentarily before she suddenly spoke out in a fluster, “Klein, we are living quite well now. My occasional grumblings of not having a personal bathroom is just a habit. Do you remember Jenny? She lived next door to us, but ever since her father was injured and lost his job, they had no choice but to move to Lower Street. The family of five ended up staying in one room, with three of them sleeping in a bunk bed and two of them sleeping on the ground. They even wish to rent the remaining empty spot to someone…

“Compared to them, we are really very lucky. Don’t waste your salary on this matter. Besides, I love Mrs. Smyrin’s bakery.”

Sis, why is your reaction completely different from how it played out in my head… Klein’s expression went blank when he heard his sister.

Chapter 24 - Penny-Pincher

◆

The sky outside was gradually dyed golden as Klein looked into Melissa's eyes. He was momentarily at a loss for words; none of the lines he prepared could be used.

He coughed lightly twice as he quickly racked his brains.

"Melissa, this isn't a waste of salary. In the future, my colleagues, as well as Benson's colleagues might visit. Are we going to host them in such a place? When Benson and I get married and have wives, are we still going to sleep in bunk beds?"

"None of you have fiancées yet, right? We can wait a little while and save up more money in the meantime," answered Melissa in a logically concise manner.

"No, Melissa. This is a societal rule." Klein was stumped and could only count on lofty principles. "Since I'm earning three pounds a week, I should look like I'm earning three pounds a week."

To be honest, having rented an apartment before with others, Zhou Mingrui was no stranger to his present living conditions as Klein. He was very used to it, but it was because of his past experience that he knew how inconvenient such an environment was for a girl. Furthermore, his goal was to become a Beyonder and study mysticism to find his way home. In the future, he was bound to conduct some magical rituals at home. Having too many people in the apartment building made incidents prone to happen.

Klein saw that Melissa was about to continue arguing, and hurriedly added, “Don’t worry. I’m not planning to get a bungalow, but probably a terrace. Basically, it has to have a bathroom we can call ours. Also, I like Mrs. Smyrin’s bread, Tingen biscuits, and lemon cakes too. We can first consider places near Iron Cross Street and Daffodil Street.”

Melissa pouted her lips slightly and fell silent for a moment before nodding slowly.

“Besides, I’m in no rush to move either. We have to wait for Benson to return,” said Klein with a chuckle. “We can’t have him be shocked when he opens the door to find nothing, right? Imagine him saying in astonishment—‘Where are my things? Where are my siblings? Where’s my home? Is this my home? Did I make a mistake? Goddess, wake me up if this is a dream. Why is my home gone after a few days of absence!?’”

His mimicking of Benson’s tone made Melissa involuntarily smile as her eyes scrunched up and revealed her shallow dimples.

“No, Mr. Franky would definitely be waiting by the door to get Benson to hand over the apartment keys. Benson wouldn’t even be able to come up.” The girl disparaged the miserly landlord.

In the Moretti household, all of them would like to make Mr. Franky the butt of their jokes for every trivial and major matter. It was all thanks to Benson who initiated this practice.

“Right, there’s no way he would switch locks for the tenants after us,” Klein echoed with a smile. He pointed at the door and quipped, “Miss Melissa, shall we head to Silver Crown Restaurant for a celebration?”

Melissa sighed gently and said, “Klein, do you know Selena? My classmate and my good friend?”

Selena? An image of a girl with wine-red hair and deep brown eyes surfaced in Klein’s mind. Her parents were Evernight Goddess believers. They had named her after St. Selena as a blessing. She was not yet sixteen, and was half a year younger than Melissa. She was a happy, cheerful, and outgoing lady.

“Yes.” Klein nodded in affirmation.

“Her elder brother, Chris, is a lawyer. He currently earns close to three pounds a week as well. His fiancée works part time as a typist,” described Melissa. “They have been engaged for more than four years. To ensure a decent and stable life after marriage, they are still saving money to this very day. They have yet to go down the wedding aisle and plan to wait for at least another year. According to Selena, there are many people like her brother. They typically get married after twenty-eight. You have to make advanced preparations and save up. Don’t squander your money.”

It’s just a meal at a restaurant. Is there a need to preach at me… Klein was rendered at a loss whether to laugh or cry. After a few seconds of thought, he said, “Melissa, I’m already earning three pounds a week, and I’ll have increments every year. There’s no need for you to worry.”

“But we need to save some money in the case of any unexpected emergencies. For example, what if that security company suddenly closes down? I have a classmate whose father’s company went bankrupt. He had to find temporary work at the pier and their living conditions turned terrible instantly. She had no choice but to quit school,” advised Melissa with a serious expression.

“…” Klein extended his hand to cover his face. “T-that security company and the government… Yes, it has some connections with the government. It will not easily close down.”

“But even the government isn’t stable. After every election, if the party in power changes, many people will have their positions stripped off. It turns into a mess.” Melissa retorted in an unyielding manner.

…Sis, you sure know a lot… Klein found the humor in his exasperation as he shook his head. “Alright then…

"Then I'll boil some soup with the leftovers from yesterday. Buy some pan-fried fish, a slab of black-pepper beef, a small bottle of butter, and a cup of malt beer for me. Anyway, there should still be some celebration."

They were commonly-sold items by hawkers on Iron Cross Street. A piece of pan-fried fish was six to eight pence; a not-so-big piece of black-peppered beef was five pence; a cup of malt beer was a penny; and a bottle of butter weighing about a quarter pound was four pence, but buying a pound of butter would only cost one soli three pence.

The original Klein was responsible for buying ingredients during holidays, so he was no stranger to the prices. Klein did a mental estimate that Melissa would need about one soli six pence. Therefore, he took out two one-soli notes.

"Alright." Melissa did not object to Klein's proposal. She put down her backpack of stationery and took the notes.

When he saw his sister taking out a tiny bottle for the butter and pots for the other food before briskly walking to the door, Klein thought for a moment and shouted out to her. "Melissa, use the remaining money to buy some fruits."

There were many hawkers on Iron Cross Street who would buy low-quality or expiring fruits from other places. The residents were not outraged about this because the prices were extremely cheap. They could taste the magnificent flavors after removing the rotten parts, so it was a cheap enjoyment.

With that said, Klein took a few brisk steps forward and took out the remaining copper pennies from his pocket and stuffed it into his sister's palm.

"Ah?" Melissa's brown eyes looked at her brother in puzzlement.

Klein took two steps back and smiled. "Remember to go to

Mrs. Smyrin's. Reward yourself with a tiny lemon cake."

"…" Melissa's mouth widened as she blinked. Finally, she said a single word, "Okay."

She quickly turned around, opened the door, and ran toward the stairwell.

†

A river tore through the land, with cedar and maple trees lining the banks; the air so fresh, it was intoxicating.

Klein, who was here to put closure to his interview, had his revolver with him. He held his cane and paid six pence for the public carriage. He walked down a cemented path and approached a three-story stone building which was shaded by greenery. It was Tingen University's administrative block.

"It's truly worthy of being one of the two major universities of the Loen Kingdom…" With this being his first time here, Klein sighed as he walked.

Compared to Tingen University, Khoy University right across the river could only be described as shabby.

"Heave-ho!"

"Heave-ho!"

Voices approached slowly as two rowing boats made their way upstream across the Khoy River. Oars were being rowed in an orderly and rhythmic manner.

This was a rowing sport that was popular among all the universities in the Loen Kingdom. With Klein requiring a scholarship to finance his university studies, he, Welch, and the others had joined Khoy University's rowing club and were pretty good at it.

"This is youth…" Klein stopped and looked into the distance before sighing wistfully.

Such sights would no longer be seen in another week since school would break for summer.

As he proceeded down a road sheltered by trees, Klein stopped by a three-story stone building. He entered after successfully registering himself and easily found his way to the office of the person who had tended to him the other time.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He knocked lightly on the half-closed door.

"Come in." A man's voice sounded from inside.

A middle-aged instructor dressed in a white shirt and black tuxedo frowned when he saw Klein enter. "There's another hour until the interview."

"Mr. Stone, do you still remember me? I'm a student of Senior Associate Professor Cohen, Klein Moretti. You have read my recommendation letter before." Klein smiled as he took off his hat.

Harvin Stone stroked his black beard and asked, puzzled, "Is there something wrong? I'm not in charge of interviews."

"Here's the situation. I've already found a job, so I won't be participating in the interview today." Klein gave his reason for coming.

"I see…" When Harvin Stone learned of the reason, he stood up and reached out his right hand. "Congratulations. You are really a polite lad. I will inform the professor and senior associate professors."

Klein shook Harvin's hand and planned on making a little small talk before bidding him farewell when he heard a familiar voice behind him.

"Moretti, you found another job?"

Klein turned around and saw an elder with a head of silver hair that left a deep impression on his silhouette. His deep, blue eyes sunk deep into his face and he had few wrinkles. The man looked sharp in his black tuxedo.

“Good afternoon, Mentor. Mr. Azik,” he hurriedly greeted. “Why are the two of you here?”

The elder was none other than Senior Associate Professor of Khoy University’s history department, who was also his mentor, Mr. Quentin Cohen. Beside Cohen was a middle-aged man with bronze-colored skin of average build. He did not have any facial hair and held a newspaper in his hand. His hair was black and his pupils brown. His facial features were soft as his eyes revealed an indescribable sense of weariness like it had seen the vicissitudes of life. Beneath his right ear was a black mole which could only be seen if looked at carefully.

Klein recognized him since he was Khoy University’s history department lecturer, Mr. Azik, who often helped the original Klein. He enjoyed debating with his mentor, Senior Associate Professor Cohen. They often had a clash of opinion, but even so, they were best friends; otherwise, they would not have enjoyed meeting up for a chat.

Cohen nodded and said with a relaxed tone, “Azik and I are here to participate in an academic conference. What kind of job did you get?”

“It’s a security company which seeks, collects, and protects ancient relics. They were in need of a professional consultant and are paying me three pounds a week.” Klein repeated what he said to his sister yesterday. Following that, he explained, “As you know, I prefer exploring history, instead of summarizing it.”

Cohen nodded slightly and said, “Everyone has their own choices. I’m very happy that you bothered to come to Tingen University to inform them instead of just not showing up.”

At that moment, Azik interjected, “Klein, do you know what happened to Welch and Naya? I read in the newspapers that they were killed by burglars.”

The incident has become a case of armed burglary? And why is it already in the newspapers? Klein was taken aback as he weighed over his words.

“I’m not very clear of the specifics as well. Welch had obtained a diary of the Solomon Empire’s Antigonus family from the Fourth Epoch. He sought my help in interpreting it. I helped them for the first few days, but I later got busy with job hunting. The police even came to me two days ago.”

He deliberately divulged the matter regarding the Solomon Empire and the Antigonus family in hopes of getting any information from the two history teachers.

“The Fourth Epoch…” Cohen muttered with a frown.

The bronze-skinned and weary eyes of Azik went blank first before he inhaled. He rubbed his temple with his newspaper-wielding left hand and said, “Antigonus… rings a bell… But why can’t I remember…”

Chapter 25 - Cathedral

◆

While Azik muttered to himself, he subconsciously shot a glance at Quentin Cohen, seemingly hoping for hints to jolt his memories.

Cohen, with his deep set blue eyes, shook his head without any hesitation. “I do not have any impression of it.”

“…Alright then. Perhaps, it just shares a root word.” Azik lowered his left hand and gave a self-deprecating laugh.

Klein was rather disappointed with the outcome, and he could not help but add on. “Mentor, Mr. Azik, as both of you know, I’m very interested in exploring and restoring the history of the Fourth Epoch. If you ever recall anything or obtain relevant information, could you please write to me?”

“No problem.” As a result of Klein’s actions today, the silver-haired Senior Associate Professor was rather pleased with him.

Azik also nodded and said, “Is your address still the same as before?”

“For now, but I’ll be moving soon. I’ll write a letter to inform you when the time comes,” replied Klein in a respectful manner.

Cohen shook his black cane and said, “It’s indeed about time you moved to a place with a better environment.”

At that moment, Klein caught a glance at the newspaper in Azik’s hand. He deliberated on his words before saying, “Mentor, Mr. Azik, what did the newspapers say regarding Welch and Naya? I only learned a little from the police who were in charge of the investigations."

Azik was just about to answer when Cohen suddenly pulled out the pocket watch that was linked to his black tuxedo by a golden chain.

Click! He opened the pocket watch and tapped his cane.

"The meeting is about to begin. Azik, we can't be delayed any further. Give the newspaper to Moretti."

"Alright." Azik handed over the newspaper he had read to Klein. "We will be going upstairs. Remember to write a letter. Our address has yet to change; it's still the Khoy University History Department Office. Haha."

He laughed as he turned around and left the room with Cohen.

Klein took off his hat and bowed. After watching the two gentlemen leave, he bade farewell to owner of the office, Harvin Stone. He proceeded across the corridor and slowly exited the gray three-story building.

With his back against the sun, he lifted up his cane and unfolded the newspaper and saw the title: "Tingen Morning Post."

Tingen sure has all sorts of newspapers and magazines… There is the Morning Post, Evening Post, the Honest Paper, Backlund Daily Tribune, Tussock Times, family magazines and book reviews… Klein casually recalled the several names that surfaced in his mind. Of course, a number of them were not local. They were distributed via steam locomotives.

Now that the papermaking and printing industries were getting more advanced, the cost of a newspaper has already decreased to the price of a penny. The audience it reached also grew wider and wider.

Klein did not scrutinize the details of the newspaper, quickly flipping to the News section with the report "Armed Burglary Murder."

"…According to the police department, the scene at Mr. Welch's home was a horrible sight. There was missing gold, jewelry, and money, as well as anything valuable that could be easily taken away. Not even a penny was left behind. There is reason to believe that this was done by a merciless group of criminals that would not hesitate to kill the innocent, such as Mister Welch and Madam Naya, once sight of their faces were caught."

"This is outright contempt for our kingdom's laws! This is a challenge to public security! No one wishes to have such an encounter! Of course, one piece of good news is that the police have located the murderer and captured the main culprit. We will do our best to provide news on any follow-ups."

"Reporter: John Browning."

The matter has been handled and covered up… As Klein walked through the boulevard, he nodded in a hardly noticeable manner.

He flipped through the newspaper as he strolled down the path, reading the other news articles and serials in the process.

Suddenly, he felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand, as though needles were stabbing at him.

Someone is watching me? Observing me? Monitoring me? Various thoughts welled up in him as Klein had a faint realization.

Back on Earth, he had once felt an invisible gaze before ultimately discovering the source of the gaze. However, it had never felt as crystal clear as what he was experiencing now!

This was the same in the original Klein's memory fragments!

Was it the transmigration or the mysterious luck enhancement ritual which enhanced my sixth sense? Klein fought back the urge to seek out the observer. Using his knowledge from reading novels and watching movies, he slowed his pace and put away the newspaper before looking toward Khoy River.

Following that, he acted as if he was admiring the scenery, slowly turning his head in different directions. He acted natural as he turned around, taking in everything with his eyes.

Other than the trees, grassy plains, and students passing by in the distance, there was no other person there.

But Klein was certain that someone was watching him!

This… Klein's heart raced as his blood surged through his body with the intense thumping.

He unfolded the papers and covered half his face, afraid that anyone would discover anything wrong with his expression.

Meanwhile, he clenched his cane and readied himself to draw his gun.

One step. Two steps. Three steps. Klein proceeded forward slowly.

The feeling of being spied upon remained, but there was no sudden outburst of danger.

He walked through the boulevard in a somewhat stiff manner and arrived at the waiting point for public carriages when a carriage pulled up coincidentally.

"Iron… Zoute… No, Champagne Street." Klein continually dismissed his thoughts.

He originally planned on heading home immediately, but he was afraid of leading an observer of unknown motives to his apartment. Following that, he thought of heading to Zouteland Street to seek help from the Nighthawks or his colleagues. However, he thought otherwise, afraid that he would end up alerting his enemy and expose the Nighthawks. Therefore, he casually chose somewhere else.

"Six pence," the ticketing officer replied routinely.

Klein did not bring any gold pounds with him today. He had hidden the money in the usual spot and had only taken two soli notes with him. And before he came, he had spent the same amount of money, leaving him with one soli six pence. Therefore, he took out all his coins and handed them to the ticketing officer.

He found a seat after boarding the carriage, and finally with the closing of the carriage doors, Klein felt that unease of being watched vanish!

He exhaled slowly as he felt his limbs tingle slightly.

What do I do?

What should I do next? Klein looked out the carriage as he racked his brains for a solution.

Until he was clear about the intentions of the person watching him, Klein had to assume that there was malicious intent!

Many thoughts sprang up in his mind, but he dismissed them. He had never experienced such an event, and had to use a few minutes to organize his ideas.

He had to notify the Nighthawks; only they could truly get rid of this threat!

But I can't head there directly or I might expose them. Perhaps, that might be their goal…

Following this train of thought, Klein crudely surmised various possibilities as his thoughts turned clearer.

Fffffff! He exhaled as he regained some semblance of composure. He looked seriously at the scenery outside flying past him.

There were no accidents along the way to Champagne Street, but when Klein opened the door and stepped out of the car, he immediately had the uneasy feeling of being watched again!

He acted as though he had not sensed anything. He took the newspaper and his cane, slowly making his way in the direction of Zouteland Street.

But he did not enter that street. Instead, he took another route to the Red Moonlight Street behind. There was a beautiful white plaza there, as well as a large cathedral with a pointy roof!

Saint Selena Cathedral!

The Tingen headquarters of the Church of Evernight!

As a believer, there was nothing odd about him participating in Mass or praying on his day off.

The cathedral exhibited a design similar to Earth's Gothic style. It also had a tall, black, and imposing clock tower, situated between blue and red checkered windows.

Klein stepped into the cathedral and followed an aisle into the prayer hall. Along the way, the stained windows were composed of red and blue glass patterns that allowed colored light to shine into the hall. The blue was closer to black, the red the same color as the crimson moon. It made the surroundings seem unusually dark and mysterious.

The feeling of being watched vanished. Klein acted unfazed as he walked toward the open prayer hall.

There were no high windows here. The deep darkness was emphasized, but behind the arc-shaped holy altar, on the wall directly opposite the door, were about twenty circular fist-sized holes that allowed the radiant sunlight to enter the hall.

It was akin to pedestrians seeing the starry sky when suddenly looking up into the dark night to see the shimmering stars in all their nobility, purity, and holiness.

Even though Klein had always believed that gods could be analyzed and understood, he could not help but lower his head here.

The bishop was preaching in a gentle tone as Klein silently made his way down the aisle that split the pews into two columns. He searched for an empty area close to the passageway before slowly taking a seat.

Leaning his cane onto the back of the pew in front of him, Klein took off his hat and placed it onto his lap together with the newspaper. Then he clasped his hands together and lowered his head.

The entire process was done slowly and routinely as though he was really there to pray.

Klein closed his eyes as he silently listened to the bishop's voice in the darkness.

[image]

"Lacking clothes and food, they have no covering in the cold.

"They are drenched by rains, and huddle around the rocks for lack of shelter.

"They are orphans snatched from the breast, hope lost on them; they are the poor that have been forced off the proper path.

"The Evernight did not forsake them, but bestowed them with love[1]."

†

Echoes amplified as they entered his ear. Klein saw a swath of darkness in front of him as he felt his spirit and mind cleansed.

He calmly took it in until the bishop finished his preachings and ended Mass.

After which, the bishop opened a confessional door beside him. Men and women began lining up.

Klein opened his eyes and donned his hat once more. With his cane and newspaper, he stood up and found his place in line.

It was his turn after more than twenty minutes.

He stepped in and closed the door behind him. There was darkness in front of him.

“My child, what do you wish to say?” The bishop’s voice sounded from behind the wooden damper screen.

Klein took out the ‘Seventh Unit, Special Operations Department’ badge from his pocket and handed it over to the bishop through an opening.

“Someone is tailing me. I wish to find Dunn Smith.” As though he had been infected by the silent darkness, his tone turned softer as well.

The bishop took the badge and after a few seconds of silence, he said, “Turn right from the confession booth and walk to the end. There will be a secret door to the side. Someone will lead the way after you enter.”

As he spoke, he pulled a rope inside the room, causing a particular priest to hear a chime.

Klein retrieved his badge and took off his hat and pressed it to his chest. He gave a slight bow before turning around and exiting.

After confirming that the feeling of being watched was gone, he wore his halved top hat. Without any excessive emotions, he held his cane and turned right, until he arrived by an arched altar.

He found the secret door in the wall facing his side. He silently opened it before sneaking in quickly.

The secret door closed silently as a middle-aged, black-robed priest appeared under the illumination of gas lamps.

“What is it?” the priest asked tersely.

Klein showed his badge and repeated what he said to the bishop.

The middle-aged priest did not ask further questions. He turned around and proceeded forward in silence.

Klein nodded and took off his hat. With his black cane, he followed silently in tow.

Rozanne had once mentioned that heading left from the crossroads towards Chanis Gate would reach Saint Selena Cathedral.

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Adapted from Job 24:8, Old Testament.

Chapter 26 - Practice

◆

Tap! Tap! Tap! The sound of footsteps echoed through the dark, narrow corridor, which was otherwise silent.

Klein kept his back straight as he kept up with the priest's pace. He did not pose questions or chat idly with him, remaining silent like a windless body of water.

After passing through the heavily guarded passageway, the priest opened a secret door with a key and pointed down a stairwell made of stone. "Turn left at the intersection to reach Chanis Gate."

"May Goddess bless you." Klein gestured the sign of the crimson moon on his chest.

Commoners practiced etiquette, while the religious partook in ritual blessings.

"Praise the Lady." The priest returned with the same gesture.

Klein did not speak further as he walked down the dark stone stairwell with the aid of the refined inlaid gas lamps on both sides of the wall.

Midway, he subconsciously turned back and saw the priest standing at the entrance. He was in the shadows and appeared like an immobile wax statue.

Klein looked away and continued to proceed down. It did not take long before he hit ground laid with ice-cold stone slabs. This led him to the intersection.

He did not turn towards Chanis Gate because Dunn Smith, who had recently finished his shift, was definitely not there.

He turned right and saw the familiar path. Klein went back up another flight of stairs and appeared inside Blackthorn Security Company.

Seeing doors that were tightly shut or half-closed, he did not rush into them. Instead, he went to the reception and saw a brown-haired girl focused on a magazine with a sweet smile.

“Hi, Rozanne.” Klein came to her side and deliberately rapped the table.

Knock! Rozanne stood up suddenly and knocked over a chair and said in a fluster, “Hi, nice weather today. Y-you, Klein, why are you here?”

She patted her chest and heaved a few sighs of relief. She was like a young lady afraid that her father had caught her skiving.

“I need to find Captain,” answered Klein simply.

“…You gave me a fright. I thought Captain came out.” Rozanne glared at Klein. “Don’t you know how to knock!? Hmph, you should be thankful that I’m a tolerant and kind woman. Well, I do prefer the term lady… Is there a reason why you are looking for Captain? He’s in the room opposite Mrs. Orianna.”

Even though he felt uptight, Klein was so amused by Rozanne he smiled. He pondered for a moment before saying, “A secret.”

“…” Rozanne’s eyes widened and while she reeled in her disbelief, Klein did a slight bow before bidding her farewell.

He went through the reception’s partition and knocked on the door of the first office on the right.

“Come in.” Dunn Smith’s deep and gentle voice sounded.

Klein pushed the door and opened before closing the door behind him. He took off his hat and bowed. “Good morning, Captain.”

“Good morning, how can I help you?” Dunn’s black trench coat and hat were hanging on a clothes stand to his side. He was dressed in a white shirt and black vest. Even though his hairline was rather high, his gray eyes were deep, and he appeared much fresher.

“Someone is following me.” Klein honestly answered without any embellishments.

Dunn leaned back and clasped his hands together. His deep gray eyes silently looked at Klein’s eyes. He did not follow up on the topic of being followed and instead, asked, “You came from the cathedral?”

“Yes.” Klein answered.

Dunn nodded gently. He did not comment on its merits or demerits as he switched the subject back. “It might be that Welch’s father doesn’t believe the cause of death that we reported and had hired a private investigator from Wind City to investigate the matter.”

Midseashire’s Constant City was also known as Wind City. It was a region with extremely advanced coal and steel industries. It was one of the top three cities of Loen Kingdom.

Before waiting for Klein to give his opinion, Dunn continued, “It might also be a result of that notebook. Heh, we happened to be investigating where Welch received the Antigonus family’s notebook. Of course, we can’t eliminate other people or organizations that might be seeking out this notebook.”

“What should I do?” Klein asked in a serious voice.

Without a question, he hoped that it was the first reason.

Dunn did not immediately answer him. He raised his coffee mug and took a mouthful, his eyes not showing the sliver of a ripple. “Return the way you came, then do anything you wish.”

“Anything?” Klein returned with a question.

“Anything.” Dunn nodded with certainty. “Of course, do not scare them off or violate the law.”

“Alright.” Klein took a deep breath and bade him farewell. He left the room and went back underground.

He turned left at the intersection, and bathed in the light from the gas lamps on the two walls, he arrived silently to the empty, dark, and cold passageway.

The sound of his footsteps echoed, making him sound more alone and terrified.

Soon, Klein arrived at the stairwell. He went forward and saw a shadow standing there—the middle-aged priest.

The two did not say a word when they met. The priest turned around in silence and made way.

He proceeded silently before returning to the prayer hall. The circular holes behind the arched altar were still as pure and bright, while the darkness and silence of the building’s interior remained. There were still men and women lining outside the confessional, but much fewer than before.

After waiting for a moment, Klein slowly left the prayer hall with his cane and newspaper as though nothing had ever happened, successfully leaving Saint Selena Cathedral.

The moment he walked out, he saw the burning sun. He immediately regained the familiar feeling of being observed. He felt like he was prey being eyed by a hawk.

Suddenly, a question surfaced in his mind.

Why didn’t the “observer” follow me into the cathedral? Although I could have still used the dark environment and the priest to conceal my temporary disappearance, would it be hard for him to continue monitoring me by pretending to pray? If he had not done something wrong, there would be no problem walking in with an open and aboveboard manner, right? Unless the person has some dark history, making him afraid of the Church or fear the bishop, knowing that he might have the powers of a Beyonder.

In that case, the likelihood of it being a private investigator is very slim… Klein exhaled and no longer acted as nervous as he was previously. He took a casual stroll before going around and to the back of Zouteland Street.

He stopped at an ancient-styled building with mottled walls. The address on the door was '3.' Its name was the Zouteland Shooting Club.

Part of the police department's underground shooting range was opened to the public as a way to earn some additional funds.

Klein went in and the feeling of being watched vanished instantly. He took this opportunity to hand over his Special Operations Department badge to the attendant.

After a short verification, he was led underground to a small, confined shooting range.

"Ten-meter target." Klein informed the attendant simply. Next, he retrieved the revolver from his underarm holster and the box of brass bullets from his pocket.

The feeling of being suddenly targeted made his desire to protect himself win over his procrastination. Therefore, he could not wait to come over to practice his shooting.

Pa! After the attendant left, he flicked open the cylinder and removed the silver demon hunting bullets. Following that, he filled the cylinder with normal brass bullets.

This time, neither did he leave an empty spot to prevent misfiring, nor did he take off his formal attire and halved top hat. He planned on practicing in his usual getup. After all, it was impossible for him to shout “wait a minute, let me change into something more comfortable” after encountering an enemy or danger.

Click! Klein closed the cylinder and rolled it with his thumb.

Suddenly, he held the gun in both hands, raised it up straight, and aimed at the target more than ten meters away.

However, he was in no hurry to shoot. Instead, he recalled his experience at military training[1], how to form a line with the iron-sights, and knowledge about a gun’s recoil.

Rustle! Rustle! While his clothes rustled, Klein repeated his aiming and his holding stance. He was as serious as a student taking a high-school exam.

After repeating it several times, he retreated to the wall and sat down on a long, soft bench. He placed the revolver to the side, began massaging his arms, and rested for quite a while.

He spent a few minutes recalling his practice before he picked up the revolver with the wooden handle and bronze cylinder. He got into standard firing position and pulled the trigger.

Bang! His arm trembled as his body moved back from the recoil. The bullet missed the target.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Drawing from the experience he gained, he shot again and again until all six rounds were finished.

I’m starting to hit the target… Klein stepped back and sat down again as he exhaled.

Click! He swung the cylinder out and allowed the six shells to fall to the ground. Then, without a change in expression, he inserted the remaining brass rounds in.

After relaxing his arm, Klein stood up again and returned to his shooting position.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Ringing shots echoed as the target shook. Klein practiced and rested repeatedly. He expended all thirty normal rounds and the remaining five from before. He gradually hit the target and started aiming for the bull's eye.

He swung his sore shoulders and threw out the final five shells. He lowered his head and inserted the demon hunting bullets with the complicated patterns back into the gun, leaving an empty spot to prevent misfiring.

After putting the revolver back into his underarm holster, Klein patted the dust from his body and walked out the shooting range to return to the streets.

The feeling of being observed arose once again. Klein felt calmer than he previously felt as he slowly walked to Champagne Street. He spent four pence on a tracked carriage to return to Iron Cross Street before returning to his own apartment.

The feeling of being spied upon vanished without a trace. Klein took out his keys and opened the door to see a short-haired man nearing his thirties and wearing a linen shirt seated at a desk.

His heart tensed up before relaxing immediately. Klein greeted with a smile, "Good morning—no—good afternoon, Benson."

This man was none other than Klein's and Melissa's elder brother, Benson Moretti. He was only twenty-five this year, but his receding hairline and decrepit appearance made him look nearly thirty.

He had black hair and brown eyes, resembling Klein somewhat, but he lacked the faint scholarly air which Klein had.

"Good afternoon, Klein. How was the interview?" Benson stood up as he grinned.

His black coat and halved top hat were hanging on a protrusion of their bunk bed.

“Horrible,” Klein replied in a deadpan manner.

When he saw Benson stunned, Klein chuckled and added, “In fact, I didn’t even participate in the interview. I found a job ahead of the interview and it pays three pounds a week…”

He repeated what he told Melissa again.

Benson’s expression calmed down as he shook his head with a laugh. “It feels like I’m seeing a child grow up… Well, this job is pretty good.” He sighed and said, “It’s great that the first thing I heard is such good news after being away for work. Let’s celebrate tonight and buy some beef?”

Klein smiled. “Sure, but I believe Melissa will feel the pinch. Let’s buy some ingredients later in the afternoon? Let’s bring at least three soli? Well, to be honest, a pound exchanges for twenty soli, and one soli exchanges for twelve pence. There are even denominations like the halfpence and quarterpence. Such a coin system just goes against logic. It’s so troublesome. I think it must be one of the most foolish coin systems in the world.”

When he said that, he saw Benson’s expression turn stern. Feeling a little unease, he wondered if he had said anything wrong.

Could it be that in the lost memory fragments of the original Klein, Benson was an outright, extreme nationalist who showed no tolerance for any negativity? Benson took a few steps and refuted him with a stern expression. “No, it is not one of, but the most foolish coin system.”

Not one of! Klein was taken aback, but he quickly snapped to his senses. He looked at his brother in the eye and laughed.

Indeed, Benson was great at mocking humor.

Benson lifted the corners of his lips and said in all seriousness, “You should understand that to institute a reasonable and simple coin system, one needs to know how to count and grasp the decimal system. Unfortunately, there are too few talents among those important figures.”

LOTM Currencies:

[image]

[image]

[image]

†

This does not mean Zhou Mingrui was a soldier. Students in China are made to attend short military stints during their schooling days for short periods of time.

Chapter 27 - Siblings’ Dinner

◆

It’s simply sharp and incisive… Klein burst out in laughter. Using the rich experience he had from his previous incarnation, he added another insult. “In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that those important figures have any brains at all.”

“Good! Very good!” Benson roared with laughter as he gave a thumbs up. “Klein, you are a lot more humorous than before.”

After taking a breath, he continued, “I have to go to the pier in the afternoon. I’m only off work tomorrow. After that I’ll have time… to go to Tingen City Housing Improvement Company with the both of you. Let’s see if they have cheap and good terrace houses for rent. Also, I need to pay Mr. Franky a visit.”

“Our landlord?” the perplexed Klein asked. Does our current landlord have some terrace houses from pretty good districts under his name?

Benson shot his brother a glance and said, amused, “Have you forgotten the one-year rental contract we have with him? It has only been six months.”

“Hiss…” Klein immediately drew a gasp of cold air.

He had really forgotten the matter!

Although rent was paid once a week, the lease was a year long. If they were to move now, it was equivalent to a breach in contract. If they were taken to court, they would have to compensate large sums of money!

“You are still lacking in societal experience.” Benson touched his receding black hairline and said wistfully, “This was a clause I fought so hard back then. If not, Mr. Franky was only willing to lease it to us for three months each contract. To those with money, landlords would sign leases for a year, two years, or even three years to seek stable income. But for us—the past us—and our neighbors, landlords would have to be constantly worried that something bad might happen, depriving them of their rent. Therefore, they would only sign short-term contracts.

“In that case, they can offer to raise prices according to the situation.” Klein summarized and added, using the original Klein’s memories and his own experience as a tenant.

Benson sighed and said, “This is the cruel reality of today’s society. Alright, you don’t have to worry. The issue with the contract can be easily resolved. To be frank, even if we owe him a week’s rent, Mr. Franky would have immediately thrown us out and confiscated whatever valuable items we have. After all, his intelligence is below that of a curly-haired baboon’s. There’s no way he can comprehend overly complicated matters.”

Upon hearing this, Klein suddenly recalled a particular Sir Humphrey’s meme. He shook his head and said seriously, “No, Benson. You are wrong.”

“Why?” Benson was puzzled.

“Mr. Franky’s intelligence is still slightly higher than a baboon’s,” Klein replied in all seriousness. Just as Benson seemed to smile in response, he added, “If he is on form.”

“Haha.” Benson lost it and burst out in laughter.

After a series of rapturous laughter, he pointed at Klein, momentarily unable to put his thoughts in words. Only then, he returned to the topic at hand.

“Of course, as a gentleman, we cannot employ such shameless tactics. I will discuss this with Mr. Franky tomorrow. Believe me, he’s easily convinced, easily.”

Klein had no doubts regarding Benson’s point. The existence of the gas pipes was excellent proof.

After some idle chatter between the brothers, the remnants of pan-fried fish from the previous night were made into a soup with some vegetables. During the boiling process, the steam moistened the rye bread.

Smearing a little butter on the bread, Klein and Benson had a simple meal, but they were very satisfied with it. After all the fragrance and sweetness of butter brought them endless aftertastes.

After Benson left, Klein headed to the Lettuce and Meat market with three Soli notes and some spare pennies. He spent six pence on a pound of beef and seven pence on a fresh and succulent fish with few bones. Additionally, he bought potatoes, peas, radishes, rhubarbs, lettuce, and turnips, as well as spices such as rosemary, basil, cumin, and cooking oils.

During this entire time, he continued to feel like he was being watched, but there was no physical interaction.

After spending some time at Smyrin Bakery, Klein returned home and began weight-lifting with heavier items such as books to train his arm strength.

He had planned to exercise by military boxing, which he learned from his compulsory military stint for students. However, he had already forgotten the radio exercise routines from school, much less boxing which was only taught during the military stints. Exasperated, he could only do something simpler.

Klein did not overexert himself since it would lead to fatigue and thus put him in greater danger. He took an appropriate break and began reading the original Klein's notes and study material. He wished to read anything regarding the Fourth Epoch again.

†

In the evening, Benson and Melissa sat in front of a desk. The food was placed neatly like children in upper primary school.

The fragrances of the dishes were composed of a rich melody of scents —the soul captivating fragrance of the stewed beef, the obviously tender potatoes, the sweetness of the thick pea soup, the mellow flavors of the stewed rhubarb, and the sweetness of the buttered rye bread.

Benson gulped a mouthful of saliva as he turned around to see Klein placing a crispy fish onto a plate. He felt the fragrance of the oil permeate through his nostrils into his throat and then into his stomach.

Groan! His stomach made a distinct protest.

Klein rolled up his sleeves and held up a plate of fried fish before placing it in the middle of the tidied desk. Following that, he returned to the cupboard and took out two large cups of ginger beer and placed them where he and Benson sat.

[image]

He smiled at Melissa and took out a lemon pudding as if he were performing a magic trick. "We'll have beer, while you'll have this."

"…Thank you." Melissa took the lemon pudding.

When Benson saw this, he raised his cup and said with a smile, "This is to celebrate Klein's finding of a decent job."

Klein raised his cup and clinked it with Benson before clinking it with Melissa's lemon pudding. "Praise the Lady!"

Gulp. He tilted his head back and drank it down. The spicy feeling warmed his gullet, bringing him great aftertastes.

Despite its name, ginger beer did not contain any alcohol. It was a mixture of the ginger's spiciness and the sourness of lemon that made it taste similar to beer. It was a kind of beverage that both women and children found acceptable. However, Melissa did not like the taste of it.

"Praise the Lady!" Benson drank a mouthful as well while Melissa took a nibble of the lemon pudding. She chewed at it repeatedly before swallowing it down unwillingly.

"Give it a try." Klein put down his cup and picked up his fork and spoon and pointed at the tableful of food.

He was most pessimistic of his thick pea soup. After all, he had never eaten something so strange on Earth. All he could do was adapt the recipe from the original Klein's memory fragments.

As the eldest brother, Benson did not stand on ceremony as he dug up a spoonful of mashed potatoes and stuffed it into his mouth.

The beaten potatoes were boiled thoroughly and mixed with the faint taste of lard and just enough salt. It whetted his appetite and made him salivate.

"Not… bad… Not bad," praised Benson vaguely. "It's much more delicious than the one I had back at work. They only used butter."

This is one of my specialties after all… Klein accepted the praise. "It's all thanks to the teachings of the chef at Welch's place."

Melissa looked at the beef soup. The green basil leaves, the green lettuce heads, and the radishes were submerged in the colorless soup, covering the tender beef. The soup was clear and its fragrance tantalizing.

She forked a piece of beef and placed it in her mouth to chew. The beef retained a little chewiness despite being stewed tender. The mixture of salt, the sweetness from the radishes, and the spiciness from the basil leaves complemented the deliciousness of the beef.

"…" She seemed to give her approbation, but she could not stop her chewing.

Klein tasted it and felt that although it was delicious, it was not without regret. This was still far from his usual standard. After all, he was lacking in certain condiments and could only use replacements. It was no wonder it tasted different.

Of course, even with the best standards, one could only make do with the dishes they cooked personally.

Suddenly, his heart pained for Benson and Melissa who were stunted in their world view.

After swallowing a piece of beef, Klein picked up a piece of fried Tussock Fish which was sprinkled with cumin and rosemary. It was crispy on the outside and tender on the inside. The char was a perfect golden brown and the saltiness and oil fragrance intertwined as one.

Nodding slightly, Klein tried a piece of stewed rhubarb and found it palatable. It got rid of the cloyed taste of meat.

Finally, he mustered his courage and scooped a bowl of thick pea soup.

Too sweet and too sour… Klein could not help but frown.

However, after seeing Benson and Melissa looking satisfied from tasting it, he began suspecting his tastes. He could not help but down a mouthful of ginger beer to cleanse his tongue.

The siblings were stuffed by the end of the meal. They laid slumped in the chairs for quite a while.

“Let us praise the Lady once more!” Benson raised his ginger beer—which had only one mouthful left—as he said in satisfaction.

“Praise the Lady!” Klein downed the last bit of his beverage.

“Praise the Lady.” Melissa finally put the last bit of lemon pudding into her mouth and enjoyed the flavors swishing through her mouth.

When Klein saw this, he took advantage of his tipsiness and smiled. “Melissa, that’s not right. You should eat the thing you find most delicious at the beginning. That way, you can fully appreciate its most delicious aspects. Tasting it when you are filled and satiated will not do the food justice.”

“No, it’s still as delicious as it can be,” answered Melissa firmly and stubbornly.

The siblings had a happy chat, and after digesting their meals, they cleaned up the plates, cutlery, and stored the oil which was used to fry the fish.

After busying themselves, it was revision time. One refreshed his accounting knowledge while another continued reading the study material and notes. Time was spent to its fullest.

At eleven, the siblings extinguished the gas lamp and went to bed after washing up.

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Klein felt groggy as he stared at the darkness in front of him. A figure wearing a black trench coat and halved top hat appeared suddenly in Klein’s vision. It was Dunn Smith.

“Captain!” Klein jolted awake and knew he was dreaming.

Dunn’s gray eyes remained calm, as though he was mentioning something trivial. “Someone has sneaked into your room. Pick up your revolver and force him to the corridor. Leave the rest to us.”

Someone has sneaked into my room? The observer has finally taken action? Klein jumped in fright, but did not dare ask further. All he did was nod and say, “Alright!”

The scene before his eyes changed immediately as a swath of colors appeared like the bursting of bubbles.

Klein’s eyes opened as he carefully turned his head. He looked toward the window and saw a thin but unfamiliar back standing at his desk, rummaging for something in silence.

Chapter 28 - Secret Order

◆

Badump! Badump! Badump!

Klein’s heart began beating rapidly. It shrank into a clump before expanding abruptly. It made his body tremble gently.

There was an instant when he nearly forgot what he had to do until the lurking figure suddenly paused. The figure pricked his ears slightly as though listening for any changes.

Blood flowed back from his brain as Klein regained his basic cognitive abilities. He reached beneath the pillow for the wooden grip of the revolver.

He felt the firm but smooth feeling as he rapidly calmed down. He silently and slowly pulled out the revolver and aimed it at the trespasser’s head.

To be honest, he had no confidence in striking the intruder. Although he was already able to stably hit the target during practice, a moving person and a fixed target were completely different. He was not arrogant enough to confound the two together.

However, he vaguely remembered something from his previous life; the general idea was that a nuclear weapon wielded the greatest strength before its launch.

The principle held in his current situation. The best deterrence was before he shot!

By not pulling the trigger or shooting blindly, the intruder was unable to determine whether or not he was a complete rookie who had an extremely high chance of missing him. His worries and fears would make him deliberate more, resulting in him restraining himself!

In an instant, another thought arose in him. It immediately made Klein turn decisive. He was not the kind of person who turned calmer when faced with danger; instead, he had already imagined the situation when he faced the observer—using intimidation instead of attacking.

The Foodaholic Empire had an idiom: Where there is precaution there will be no danger!

When Klein pointed his gun at the intruder, the thin man froze suddenly, as though he had sensed something.

Following that, he heard a voice that hid a chuckle.

“Good evening, Sir.”

The scrawny man clasped both his hands together, and his body seemed to tense. Klein sat on the lower bunk, aimed the person’s head with the revolver, and tried to speak as leisurely and as naturally as he could.

“Please raise both of your hands and turn around. Try to do it slow. To be frank, I am very timid and I get nervous easily. If you move too quickly, I can be frightened, and I can’t guarantee that there won’t be a situation where I misfire. Yes, that’s right.”

The scrawny man raised both of his hands and held them up near his head before turning his body bit by bit. The first thing that came into view was a black tight suit with neat buttons. Next, he caught a pair of brown eyebrows that were thick and sharp.

The intruder’s deep blue eyes didn’t reflect fear, but rather gazed upon Klein with the intensity of a ferocious beast. It seemed that if Klein were careless for a second, the other person would leap forward and tear him to pieces.

He clenched the handle tightly as he tried his best to appear calm and indifferent.

It was only when the thin man faced him completely did Klein jerk his chin towards the door. He softly and gently said, “Sir, let’s take this outside. Do not disturb the beautiful dreams of others. Oh, do keep your motions slow. Lighten your footsteps a little too. It’s basic courtesy for a gentleman.”

The thin man’s cold pupils rolled as he swept Klein a glance. He continued raising his hands as he walked slowly to the door.

Under the revolver’s aim, he twisted the handle and slowly opened the door.

When the door was half-opened, he suddenly lowered himself and rolled forward. The door was pulled by a strong wind and it closed with a slam.

“Uh…” Benson, who was on the top bunk, was stirred. He almost woke up in a daze.

At that moment, a leisurely and serene melody entered from outside. The heavy and comfortable voice started to sing.

“Oh, the threat of horror, the hope of crimson cries!

“One thing at least is certain—that this Life flies;

“One thing is certain, and the rest is Lies;

“The Flower that once has bloomed forever dies… [1]”

The poem seemed to possess the power to calm and relax others. Benson, who was on the top bunk, and Melissa, who was in another room, again fell asleep amid their grogginess.

Klein's body and mind was also peaceful and quiet. He nearly yawned.

The way the thin man had darted off was so agile that he could not react in time.

Looking at the closed door, he smiled and muttered to himself. "You might not believe it, but pulling the trigger would not release a round."

The empty chamber to prevent misfiring!

Following that, Klein listened to the midnight poem as he patiently awaited for the battle outside to end.

Within a minute, the tranquil melody which resembled the reflection of moonlight on the surface of a lake stopped, and the dark night resumed its deep silence.

Klein silently spun the cylinder and moved the empty chamber away as he awaited for the outcome.

He uneasily waited for a full ten minutes. Just as he wondered if he should investigate, he heard Dunn Smith's staid and warm voice from the door.

"It's settled."

Phew. Klein exhaled. He held his revolver and took his key. Barefooted, he carefully approached the door before silently opening it to see the black trench coat and the halved top hat. Dunn Smith was standing there with his deep and calm gray eyes.

He closed the door behind him and followed Dunn to the end of the corridor and stood amid the weak crimson moonlight.

"It took me some time to enter his dream," said Dunn calmly as he looked at the red moon outside the window.

"Do you know his background?" Klein felt a lot more relieved.

Dunn nodded and said, “An ancient organization known as the Secret Order. They were established in the Fourth Epoch and are related to the Solomon Empire and a number of fallen aristocrats of that period. Heh, the Antigonus family’s diary came from them. Due to a member’s negligence, it entered the antique market and was obtained by Welch. They had no choice but to send people in search of it.”

Without waiting for Klein’s question, he paused before continuing.

“We will capture the remaining members they have according to the clues. Well, it might not end too well. These fellows are as good at hiding as the rats in the sewers. But at the very least, they would believe that we have likely obtained the Antigonus family’s notebook or that we have obtained a critical clue. In that case, as long as it’s not something extremely crucial or important, they would abandon the operation. That is their philosophy on surviving.”

“…What if the notebook is extremely crucial and important?” asked Klein worriedly.

Dunn smiled without an answer. Instead, he said, “We know very little of the Secret Order. Our success this time is all thanks to your sharp wits. This contribution is all yours. In light of the possibility of hidden dangers and how heightened perception would aid in finding the notebook, you have a chance at choosing.”

“A chance at choosing?” Klein vaguely guessed something as his breathing subconsciously turned heavy.

Dunn wiped the smile from his face as he said in all seriousness, “Do you wish to become a Beyonder? You can only choose the starting Sequence of an incomplete Sequence.

“Of course, you can give up this chance and choose to accumulate the merit you have garnered. Then, all you have to do is wait till there’s sufficient room for you to become a Sleepless, which is also the first, complete Sequence the Goddess has bestowed on the Nighthawks.”

Indeed… Klein felt delighted and did not have any hesitant emotions. He took the initiative to ask, “Then from which of the Sequence 9s can I choose from?”

I have to have detailed information to decide whether to give up or accept, as well as choose which one!

Dunn turned around and seemed to be cloaked in the crimson veil that shone down on him. He looked into Klein’s eyes and said slowly, “Apart from the Sleepless, the Church has three Sequence 9 potion formulas. One of them is Mystery Pryer, which is also the power Old Neil controls. Heh, Rozanne has likely mentioned this to you. She can never hold her tongue.”

Klein smiled awkwardly, at a loss for an answer. Thankfully, Dunn did not mind it as he continued. “Our Mystery Pryer potion formula and the later Sequences that aren’t directly chained were obtained from the Moses Ascetic Order. Back then, it was said that they had yet to fall to corruption. They persisted in their morals and precepts, determined in their pursuit of knowledge. They kept their secrets strictly confidential. Anyone that entered the order would be barred from speaking for five years after becoming a Mystery Pryer. They would learn to keep silent, so as to cultivate and enhance their focus. The maxim of the Moses Ascetic Order—do as you wish, but do no harm—began from them.

“Mystery Pryers have a comprehensive but rudimentary understanding and grasp of magic, witchcraft, astrology, and other mystical knowledge. They also know a fair number of magical rituals, but they can easily sense certain existences that hide among matter. Therefore, they have to be careful and show respect to their powers as a Beyonder.

“We lack a large portion of this Sequence, causing it to be an incomplete chain. For example, its Sequence 8. Of course, perhaps the Holy Cathedral has it.”

This pretty much meets all my requirements… Klein nodded slightly, to the point of having the urge to choose.

Thankfully, he still remembered certain things.

“What about the other two?”

“The second type is named Corpse Collector. Quite a number of cultists who worship Death in the Southern Continent choose it. After consuming the potion, unintelligent dead spirits would mistake them as one of their kind and not attack them. They would gain resistance to the cold, decay, and corrosiveness of cadaveric auras. They will be able to directly see a portion of evil spirits and see the characteristics and weaknesses of undead creatures, as well as gain certain attribute enhancements. We have the Sequence 8 and Sequence 7 that follows it. Heh heh, you probably can guess Sequence 7—Spirit Medium! This was chosen by Daly back then,” described Dun in detail.

Spirit Medium does appear mysterious and cool, but what I want most is to grasp knowledge of mysticism… Klein did not interject; all he did was listen quietly.

Dunn Smith looked sideways at the crimson moon and said, “We only have Sequence 9 of the third type. Whether the Holy Cathedral has it, I’m not sure. It’s called Seer.”

Seer? Klein’s pupils constricted as he recalled the regret Emperor Roselle had left in his diary: He regretted not choosing Apprentice, Marauder, or Seer!

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Adapted from the English translation of Rubáiyát.

Chapter 29 - “Jobs” and Rentals Are Serious Business

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Klein tried his best to remain his usual self as he asked with genuine interest, “What abilities do Seers have?”

“Your question is inaccurate; the question should be, ‘what abilities does consuming the Seer potion give?’” Dunn Smith shook his head and chuckled. His gray pupils and face turned away from the moon as his features hid in the shadows. “There are many kinds of things involved—astromancy, cartomancy, spiritual pendulums, and scrying. Of course, it does not mean that consuming the potion will immediately allow you to grasp all of them. The potion only equips you with the qualifications and ability to learn it.

“As they lack direct means of fighting enemies, heh. You can probably imagine that setting up a magical ritual requires a lot of preparation. It’s not suitable for combat. Therefore, in terms of knowledge of mysticism, a Seer will be more learned and professional than a Mystery Pryer.”

It sounds like it matches my requirements as well… However, the lack of means to directly deal with enemies is quite a dilemma… Furthermore, the Church of Evernight likely doesn’t have the subsequent Sequences… The Holy Cathedral likely refers to the headquarters, the Cathedral of Serenity… The means available to low-Sequence Beyonders against their enemies might not be comparable to firearms… Klein fell into deep thought as he racked his brains. He kept going back and forth between Mystery Pryers and Seers. He no longer considered Corpse Collector.

Dunn Smith smiled when he saw this.

“You don’t have to rush into a decision. Tell me your answer Monday morning. Regardless of your choice of Sequence or giving up this opportunity, none of us from the Nighthawks would have any other thoughts on the matter.

“Calm down and ask your heart.”

With that said, he took off his hat and bowed slightly. He slowly walked past Klein and headed for the stairwell.

Klein did not say a word and did not immediately reply. He silently bowed and watched as Dunn left.

Although he was constantly hoping to become a Beyonder previously, he was thrown into a dilemma when the opportunity arose; the subsequent missing Sequences, Beyonders having the risk of losing control, the believability of Emperor Roselle’s diaries, and the illusory murmurs that could corrupt people into madness all mixed together and formed a moat that obstructed his advancement.

He took a deep breath and slowly breathed out.

“No matter how bad it is, it can’t be worse than making an eighteen-year-old high-school student decide on his future career…” Klein gave a self-deprecating chuckle. Gathering his scattered thoughts, his opened the door softly and laid back on the bed.

He laid there with his eyes open, silently looking at the bottom of the top bunk that was dyed with the faint crimson of the moon.

A drunkard staggered outside the window as a carriage sped down the empty streets. These noises did not break the serenity of the night but instead made it even darker and more distant.

Klein's emotions settled down as he recalled his past on Earth. He recalled how he liked exercising, his father who always spoke loudly, his mother who enjoyed busying herself despite having a chronic disease, his friends who grew up with him, going from playing sports like soccer and basketball to games and mahjong, as well as the person he made a failed confession to… These were like a silent river; it did not have many ripples or deep sentimental feelings, but it silently drowned his heart.

Perhaps one will only learn to cherish things after they have lost them. When the crimson receded and the sky turned golden-yellow from the flaming ball's illumination, Klein had made his choice.

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He got out of bed and headed to the public bathroom to wash his face to wake himself up. Then, he took a one-soli note to Mrs. Wendy's to buy eight pounds of rye bread with nine pence, replenishing the staple food that had been consumed the previous night.

"The price of bread has begun stabilizing…" He commented after breakfast as Benson changed.

It was Sunday, so both he and Melissa finally had the chance to rest.

Klein, who was already in proper attire, was sitting on a chair and flipping through the outdated newspapers he brought back from yesterday. He said in surprise, "There's a house for rent here: North Borough's 3 Wendel Street, a bungalow with two floors. There are six bedrooms, three bathrooms, and two big balconies upstairs. Downstairs, there's a dining hall, a living room, a kitchen, two bathrooms, and two guest rooms, as well as an underground cellar… In front of the house are two acres of private land and there's a small garden behind. It can be rented for one, two, or three years, with a weekly rent of one pound six soli. Those interested can head to Champagne Street and look for Mr. Gusev."

“That’s our goal for the future.” Benson wore his black halved top hat as he smiled to say, “The rent for the places in newspapers is usually a little too expensive. The Tingen City Housing Improvement Company has options that do not pale in comparison to that for cheaper.”

“Why are we not searching in the Tingen Housing Improvement Association for the Working Class?” Melissa walked out from her room holding an old, veiled hat. She had changed into a grayish-white long dress that had been mended several times.

She was silent and introverted, but that could not mask her youthfulness.

Benson laughed.

“Where did you hear of the Tingen Housing Improvement Association for the Working Class? Jenny? Mrs. Rochelle? Or is it from your good friend Selena?”

Melissa looked to the side and whispered a reply, “Mrs. Rochelle… While washing up last night, I happened to meet her. She asked me about Klein’s interview and I told her roughly what happened. Then, she suggested I find the Tingen Housing Improvement Association for the Working Class.”

Benson noticed Klein’s puzzled expression and shook his head in amusement.

“They are targeted at the poor. Well, a precise description is that they are a housing association for the lower strata of society. They build and renovate houses that basically have communal bathrooms. They only provide three choices—a single, double or triple bedroom. Do you wish to continue living in such an environment?

“The Tingen City Housing Improvement Company is in the same business as them, but they also provide choices for the lower-middle class. To be honest, we are a little better than the lower-middle class, but we are still quite worse off than true middle-class families. It's not a matter of salary; it's just that we did not have the time to save up."

Klein came to a realization as he put away the newspaper. Picking up his top hat, he stood up.

"Then, let's set off."

"I remember that the Tingen City Housing Improvement Company is on Daffodil Street," Benson said as he opened the door. "They are like the Tingen Housing Improvement Association for the Working Class, known as Five Percent Charities. Do you know why?"

"I don't know." Klein raised his cane and walked to Melissa's side.

The girl with black hair that reached down her back nodded.

Benson headed out and said, "These kinds of housing improvement associations or companies were established as a result of Backlund. They are funded in three ways: One, by requesting donations from charitable foundations. Two, through funding proposals. They receive grants from the government's commission at a special rate of 4%. Third, through investments. By taking a portion of the rent received, they will give their investors 5% returns. That's why they are called Five Percent Charities."

The siblings went down the stairs and slowly walked toward Daffodil Street. They decided to confirm a place before talking to their present landlord, Mr. Franky. They did not want to be in a situation where they were forced to move when they had no place to stay.

"I heard from Selena that there are housing improvement companies that are purely run as charities?" Melissa asked in thought.

Benson chuckled.

"There are, such as the Deweyville Trust which Sir Deweyville donated money to establish. He builds apartments targeted for the working class. He also provides dedicated estate management personnel while only charging rather low rent. However, the criteria for applying is very strict."

"It sounds like you aren't fond of the idea?" Klein acutely sensed it as he asked with a smile.

"No, I respect Sir Deweyville a lot, but I'm certain he does not know what true poverty is. Staying in his apartment is like a priest giving hope. It's not very pragmatic. For instance, tenants have to receive the main vaccines and they have to take turns cleaning the bathroom. They are unable to sublease their apartments or use it for commercial activities. They aren't allowed to throw their rubbish wantonly and children are prevented from playing in the corridors. Goddess, does he wish to make everyone ladies and gentlemen?" Benson answered in his usual tone.

Klein creased his brows in doubt.

"Doesn't sound problematic. Those are all very reasonable criteria."

"Yeah." Melissa nodded in agreement.

Benson cocked his head and looked at them before chuckling.

"Perhaps I have protected both of you too well that you have not seen actual poverty. Do you think they would have the money for the main vaccines? The line for free charitable organization sets them back three months.

"Do you think their work is stable and not temporary? If they cannot sublet parts of their apartment to receive some extra income, are they to move out when they lose their jobs? Besides, many ladies mend clothes or make match boxes at home to maintain their livelihood. Those are included as commercial activities. Are you going to chase them all out?

"Most of the poor use all their efforts to survive. Do you think they have the time to discipline their children and stop them from running along the corridors? Perhaps they can only be locked at home until they're old enough, then sending them to places that accept child labor when they are around seven or eight years old."

Ben did not use many adjectives to describe the matter; it caused Klein to shudder a little.

This was how people from low socioeconomic classes lived?

Beside him, Melissa fell into silence. It took a long while before she said in an ethereal tone,

"Jenny no longer wished for me to visit her after she moved to the Lower Street."

"Let's hope her father gets back on his feet after that injury and finds a stable job. However, I have seen too many alcoholics use alcohol to numb themselves…" Benson laughed with a somber tone.

Klein was at a loss for words. Melissa seemed to be the same. As such, the siblings walked silently down Daffodil Street and found Tingen City Housing Improvement Company.

The person who served them was a middle-aged man with an amiable smile. He did not wear a formal attire or a hat, but instead, wore a white shirt and black vest.

"You can call me Scarter. Might I know what kind of house you have in mind?" When he caught a glance at Klein's silver-inlaid cane, his smile widened.

Klein looked at Benson, who was better with words, and gestured for him to answer.

Benson directly answered, "A terrace house."

Scarter flipped through the files and documents in his hand before smiling.

“There are currently five that haven’t been rented out. To be honest, we are geared more to serving customers—laborers and their children who have housing difficulties where six, eight, or even ten or twelve people squeeze into a house. There aren’t many terrace houses. There’s one at 2 Daffodil Street, one in the North Borough, one in the East Borough… The weekly rent goes from 12 to 16 soli. You can take a look at the detailed introductions here.”

He handed over a document to Benson, Klein, and Melissa.

After reading through it, the siblings exchanged looks and pointed to the same spot on the piece of paper simultaneously.

“Let’s take a look at 2 Daffodil Street first,” said Benson. Klein and Melissa nodded in response.

This place was a district they were familiar with.

Chapter 30 - Brand New Beginning

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2, 4, and 6 Daffodil Street were terrace buildings with multifaceted hipped roofs. Their exteriors were painted grayish blue, and three chimneys stood erected.

The place obviously did not have lawns, gardens, or porches. The entrances directly faced the street.

Tingen City Housing Improvement Company's Scarter took out a bunch of keys and while opening the door, introduced, "Our terrace houses do not have foyers, so you enter directly into the living room. There's an oriel window facing Daffodil Street, so there's pretty good lighting…"

Klein, Benson, and Melissa were greeted by a fabric sofa bathing in the golden rays of the sun, and an area more spacious than their previous two-bedroom apartment.

"This living room can be used as a guest hall. To its right is the dining room and on the left is a fireplace that will keep you warm in winter." Scarter pointed around with great familiarity.

Klein looked around and confirmed that it was a crude, open-style concept. The dining room and the living room were not separated by any partitions, but they were also far from the oriel window, making those spots rather dim.

There was a rectangular red wooden table surrounded by six hardwood chairs with soft cushions. The fireplace on the left wall looked exactly like the ones in foreign movies and TV series that Klein used to watch.

"Behind the dining area is the kitchen, but we do not provide any appliances. Opposite to the living room is a small guest room and a bathroom…" Scarter walked around and described the remaining layout of the house.

The bathroom was separated into two parts. The outer area was where one would wash their face and brush their teeth, while the inner area was the toilet. There was an accordion door that separated them. The guest room was described to be small, but it was as big as the room that Melissa currently stayed in. She was stunned at the sight.

After looking around the first floor, Scarter brought the three siblings to the stairway next to the bathroom.

"Down below is the underground cellar. It is quite stuffy downstairs, so you must remember to let some fresh air in first before entering."

Benson nodded casually and followed Scarter to the second floor.

"On my left, there's a bathroom. On the same side, there are an additional two bedrooms. It's the same layout on my right, but the washroom on this side is next to the balcony."

As he spoke, Scarter opened the bathroom door and stood sideways so that he would not obstruct Klein, Benson, and Melissa from looking in.

The bathroom had an extra bathtub. Like the other bathroom, there was an accordion door next to the toilet. Although it was a little dusty, it wasn't dirty, smelly, or cramped.

Melissa looked in a daze until Scarter walked to the bedroom next to it. Only then did she stop looking and follow the rest slowly.

She took another few steps before looking back.

Klein, who was experienced in life, was delighted and excited as well. Even though their landlord often supervised their cleaning up of the bathroom, it still was not clean enough. It was often nauseating, let alone the fact that they would easily encounter a line when they needed to relieve themselves.

The other bathroom was similar. One of the four bedrooms was slightly bigger and was furnished with a bookcase. The rest were about the same size as each other and had a bed, table, and wardrobe.

“The balcony is very tiny, so you won’t be able to dry too many clothes in the sun at a time.” Scarter stood at the end of the corridor and pointed to a spot with a door and lock. “There is a complete underground drainage, gas piping, meter, and other facilities. It is very suitable for you gentlemen and a lady like yourselves. It only requires thirteen soli of rent and five pence for use of the furniture weekly. In addition, there is a deposit that amounts to four weeks of rent.”

Without waiting for Benson to say a word, Klein looked around and asked curiously, “Roughly how much would it cost to buy the house?”

As a transmigrator from the Foodaholic Empire, the desire to buy property still existed within him.

Upon hearing that question, Benson and Melissa were shocked. They looked at Klein as though they were seeing a monster. Scarter replied calmly and firmly, “Buy? No, we do not sell property. We only provide rental properties.”

“I’m just trying to have a general sense of the prices.” Klein explained awkwardly.

Scarter hesitated for a few seconds before saying, “Last month, the owner of 11 Daffodil Street sold a limited-period land deed with a similar property sitting atop the land. 300 pounds for fifteen years. It is much cheaper than renting directly but not everyone can fork out such a large sum of money. If one would like to buy it over completely, the owner’s posted price is 850 pounds.”

850 pounds? Klein quickly made the mental calculations.

My weekly pay is three pounds, Benson eans one pound and ten soli… Rent is thirteen soli and if we eat well every day, we would spend nearly two pounds a week. On top of that, there are expenses such as clothes, transportation, social expenditures, so on and so forth. We can only save less than twenty soli a week. One year adds up to about 35 pounds. 850 pounds would require more than twenty years. Even if we bought the land for a limited period of time for 300 pounds, it would take us at least eight or nine years… That doesn't include getting married, living independently, raising children, traveling, and so on…

In a world without individual housing loans, most people are likely to opt for rental…

Realizing this, he stepped back and stole a glance at Benson. He beckoned him to talk to Scarter about the rent.

As for Melissa's intentions, they were obvious from her bright eyes!

At that moment, Klein suddenly thought of letting Benson loose.

Benson tapped his plain cane and looked around before he said, "We should take a look at other houses. The dining area's lighting isn't good, and the balcony is very small. Look, only that bedroom has a fireplace, and the furniture is too old. If we move in, we have to at least change half of these…"

He pointed out faults in a hurried tone, spending ten minutes to persuade Scarter to lower the rent to twelve soli and the furniture usage fee to three pence, while rounding up the deposit to two pounds.

Without further ado, the siblings returned with Scarter to the Tingen City Housing Improvement Company and signed two copies of the contract. They then headed over to the Notary Office of Tingen City to notarize the contract.

After paying the deposit and first week's rent, Klein and Benson's remaining money added up to nine pounds, two soli, and eight pence.

Standing before the door of 2 Daffodil Street, they each held a bunch of copper keys. They were momentarily unable to look away; their emotions churning within them.

“It feels like a dream…” After a while, Melissa lifted her head to look at the future “Moretti Residence,” and she spoke with a low yet unsteady voice.

Benson let out a breath and smiled.

“Then don’t wake up.”

Klein wasn’t as emotional as they were. He nodded and said, “We need to change the locks of the main door and balcony door as soon as possible.”

“There’s no hurry. The reputation of Tingen City Housing Improvement Company is very good. The rest of the money is for your formal suit. However, before that, we need to pay Mr. Franky a visit.” Benson pointed in the direction of the apartment.

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The siblings made do with rye bread at home before heading for a terrace apartment on Iron Cross Street. When they knocked on their landlord’s door, Mr. Franky declared imposingly while his short frame perched on a sofa, “You know my rules. No one is allowed to be behind their rent!”

Benson leaned forward and smiled.

“Mr. Franky, we are here to give up our lease.”

That straightforward? Would negotiating this way work? Standing beside Benson, Klein was shocked when he heard him.

On the way here, Benson had said that his bottomline was a compensation of twelve soli.

"Give up your lease? No! We have a contract, and there's still half a year left!" Franky glared at Benson as he flailed his arms.

Benson looked at him seriously and waited for a moment before saying calmly, "Mr. Franky, you should understand that you could have made much more money."

"Make much more?" Franky asked with interest, touching his skinny face.

Benson sat up straight and explained with a smile, "The two-bedroom unit was rented to the three of us for five soli and six pence. But if you were to rent it to a family of five or six people, with two or three of them working and getting paid, I think they would be willing to pay more to stay there instead of staying at Lower Street where it's ridden with crime. I think five soli ten pence or six soli would be a reasonable price."

Franky's eyes brightened up and his throat moved as Benson continued to say, "Besides, you are certainly aware that rental prices have been increasing in recent years. The longer we stay, the greater a loss you incur."

"But… I need time to look for a new tenant." Mr. Franky, who had inherited the apartment building, obviously liked the idea.

"I believe you can find one very quickly since you have the ability and resources to do so. Maybe two days, maybe three days… We will pay for the losses you incur during this time. How about the deposit of three soli that we have paid? It is very reasonable!" Benson immediately decided for Franky.

Franky nodded in satisfaction.

"Benson, you are such a conscientious and honest young man. Alright then, let's sign the termination of contract."

Klein was dumbfounded watching this happen. He completely understood how easy it was to 'convince' Mr. Franky.

That’s way too easy…

With the problem of the previous contract resolved, the three siblings first helped Klein buy his formal wear and then got busy with moving house.

They didn’t have anything heavy or bulky as bulkier items belonged to the landlord. Thus, Benson and Melissa rejected Klein’s idea of hiring a carriage, and instead carried their things themselves. They went back and forth between Daffodil Street and Iron Cross Street.

The hot sun outside the window set in the west, and golden rays shone through the oriel window, scattering across the desk’s surface. Klein looked at the rack that had books and notebooks arranged neatly before putting an ink bottle and a fountain pen on the table which he had wiped earlier.

It’s finally over… He let out a breath of relief and heard his stomach growl. He loosened his rolled up sleeves as he walked towards the door.

He had a bed that belonged to him. The bedsheet and blanket were white, old but clean.

Klein twisted the doorknob and walked out of his bedroom. Just as he was preparing to say something, he saw both doors on the opposite side open simultaneously as Benson and Melissa came into his view.

Looking at the dust and dirt marks on their faces, Klein and Benson suddenly burst out into laughter, sounding abnormally cheerful.

Melissa bit her lips lightly but the laughter was contagious. She eventually let out a soft laugh.

†

The next morning.

Klein stood before a full-length mirror with no cracks, seriously smoothing out his collar and sleeves of his shirt.

The outfit included a white shirt, black tuxedo, silk top hat, black vest, a set of trousers, boots, and a bow tie. He felt the pinch of paying eight pounds in total.

However, the effect was great. Klein felt that his reflection in the mirror exhibited greater scholarly qualities and made him look more handsome.

Click!

He closed his pocket watch and put it into his inner pocket. He then took his cane and hid his revolver. He took the tracked public carriage and arrived at Zouteland Street.

The moment he entered the Blackthorn Security Company, he realized that he was so used to his previous lifestyle that he had forgotten to give Melissa extra money but allowed her to walk to school instead.

Shaking his head, he took note of it before stepping into Blackthorn Security Company. He saw the brown-haired girl, Rozanne, making coffee. A rich aroma permeated throughout the office.

“Good morning, Klein. The weather is great today,” Rozanne greeted him with a smile. “To be frank, I have always been curious. In such weather, don’t you men feel hot wearing those formal suits? I know for a fact that Tingen’s summer isn’t as hot as the South’s, but it is still summer.”

“It’s the price of style,” Klein replied humorously. “Good morning, Miss Rozanne. Where’s the Captain?”

“Same old place.” Rozanne pointed inside.

Klein nodded. He went through the partition and knocked on Dunn Smith’s office door.

“Come in.” Dunn’s voice was deep and gentle as usual.

When he saw Klein, who looked quite different in a set of nice formal wear, he nodded and his gray eyes smiled.

“Have you decided?” he asked.

Klein took a deep breath and answered seriously, “Yes, I have made a decision.”

Dunn slowly sat up straight. His expression became solemn but the deep recesses of his gray eyes remained the same.

“Tell me your answer.”

Klein replied without hesitation, “Seer!”

Chapter 31 - Potion

* * *

Dunn Smith stared at Klein with his gray eyes for a full minute without a word.

Klein did not cower under the pressure of the silence and his gaze. He continued locking his eyes with Dunn.

“You must understand that once you consume the potion, there will be no room for regret.” Finally, Dunn spoke again in a deep emotionless voice.

Klein grinned and said, “I know, but I respect the voice in me.”

First, Sleepless does not meet my requirements. It was the same for Spectator which he heard from the Tarot Club based on description. He was unsure when he would come into contact with other Beyonder pathways. A slow remedy could not work for an urgent situation; therefore, there was no need for him to wait. By the same logic, Corpse Collector was eliminated as well, leaving the two choices—Mystery Pryer and Seer.

Under the premise that potions of the same Sequence were equally dangerous and him unable to obtain more information, as well as the fact that both Mystery Pryer and Seer met his requirements, then regardless of whether Emperor Roselle was making a passing remark or if he really regretted not choosing Apprentice, Marauder, and Seer, it was enough to tip the balance in his heart.

Furthermore, he could tell from the diary that as long as he figured out the true essence of digestion and acting, he would be able to avoid the negative effects the potion would bring to a significant extent. As for the murmurings and illusory enticements that could drive people to corruption and madness, he had already encountered that even without being a Beyonder!

“Alright.” Dunn stood up and picked up his halved top hat. As he put it on, he said, “Follow me down.”

Klein nodded and gave a gentleman’s bow in gratitude.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Both of them ventured down, their footsteps echoing through the silent and vast stairwell and passageway.

Klein suddenly felt gripped by anxiety as he tried to find a topic of conversation.

“Captain, you mentioned that taking the potion would not directly give me the corresponding knowledge on mysticism, that I’ll only have the qualifications to learn it. Then, where does the basic knowledge of mysticism come from? Did our predecessors risk their lives for it or obtain it via other means?”

Every time he went underground, he would find the air especially fresh. Clearly, the ventilation was excellent. However, the occasional gust of wind made one shiver.

Dunn glanced at him, the darkness in his gray eyes appearing abnormally deep.

He answered calmly, “One of them is as you said, experimentation, summarization, and enhancement. Second, being bestowed by the gods. Third, heh. The dangerous murmurs that others can’t hear do not only growl and roar senselessly. At times, they will describe some matters regarding mysticism. But according to what I know, people who truly listen to the murmurs on a long-term basis have gone mad without exception. Or they would fall to corruption and become monsters. Of course, we must thank them. The notebooks they've left behind are precious treasures in the field of mysticism."

Human lab rats? The underground passage's cold humidity made Klein shudder suddenly.

Then, would my luck enhancement ritual which turned into "Social Network Magic" eventually lead to similar effects due to the crazy and horrible murmurs?

At the intersection, Dunn did not proceed toward Chanis Gate, nor did he turn to the weapons, materials and archives. Instead, he took Klein to the left and approached Saint Selena Cathedral.

Midway, he stopped. It was unclear what he touched to open a secret door.

"This is our Nighthawks team's alchemy room. I will get Old Neil to retrieve the Seer potion formula and the corresponding materials from inside Chanis Gate. Heh, you have pretty good luck. The Goddess has blessed you with her favor. We should still have the materials needed for two Seer potions. If not, you would have to wait a long while." Dunn pointed at the room behind the door. "Wait here. Later, watch Old Neil concoct the potion. It's the most basic part of mysticism studies. Oh, do not randomly touch things in there. They are either very dangerous, expensive, or both."

With that said, Dunn added like before.

"Oh right, I forgot something again. Your becoming a Beyonder is a result of you having to face danger and the need to find the notebook. The meritorious deed was only a part of it; therefore, you will not be a member of our team for the time being. You will still be a civilian staff member with a corresponding salary. You will still do what I instructed you to do previously. One additional thing is to learn more about mysticism with Old Neil. You can arrange the time with him."

“Alright.” Other than feeling a little disgruntled by the lack of a pay rise, Klein was in full agreement with the rest.

According to Dunn, there was still the process of learning and grasping one’s newfound powers after consuming the potion. If he were to become a formal member immediately and participate in paranormal missions, his death was certain.

Dunn turned around and walked two steps towards the intersection when he suddenly turned back.

“Another thing.”

I knew it… Klein was already used to the “style” of his Captain.

“We got something out of the Secret Order’s actions,” said Dunn with his usual expression. “It’s unlikely they will provoke you in the near future, but don’t be careless. It has to do with them being temporarily unable to confirm whether the Antigonus family’s notebook is important to them. From what we discovered, they have preserved some of the ancient customs and we can confirm that they are related to the Solomon Empire and the corrupted nobles of that period.”

“Got it. Thanks, Captain,” said Klein as he exhaled.

This was also one of the reasons why he did not wish to wait, grasping the chance of becoming a Beyonder in such a hurry!

As he watched Dunn leave and confirmed that he would not turn his head to say more, Klein slowly walked into the alchemy room.

The room had long tables. There were test tubes, pipettes, scales and crucibles. It resembled a chemistry laboratory from his previous life. It was just more spartan and ancient.

Other than that, there was a huge cauldron, a darkwood ladle, a translucent crystal ball, and other items. The Dark Sacred Emblem and other strange emblems were visible everywhere. They gave the room a tint of mystery.

Klein looked around with interest, but he was not stupid enough to touch the things.

After a while, he heard footsteps. Old Neil carried a tiny silver chest with complicated patterns. He was still wearing his unique classic black robe that seemed anachronistic, matched with a felt hat with a rounded edge of the same color.

“Lad, I never expected you to choose Seer.” Old Neil put down the chest and used his somewhat turbid red eyes to size up Klein. “Your personality is just like mine when I was young. You just don’t want to follow the masses. Not bad. Light these few gas lamps and close the door.”

“Alright.” Klein tried hard not to tremble as he lit each gas lamp in the alchemy room. He made dim light rule over the place once again.

Tak! Tak! Tak! The secret door was closed. He turned back to see the white-haired and deep-wrinkled Old Neil using a bunch of strange tied tree branches to scrub the black cauldron.

“The concoction of a Sequence potion is extremely simple, at least for Sequence 7 and below. There’s no need for a special flame or any additional ritual, much less an incantation. There’s no need for one to participate in it spiritually. All one needs to do is go according to the formula’s steps, add the precise amounts, and mix it. That will be all.” Old Neil’s wrinkles seemed to bloom from his smile.

“For real?” Klein questioned in surprise.

This sounds as simple as my luck enhancement ritual…

Man, it’s quite frightening when you come to think of it…

“Perhaps it’s a gift of the gods. Praise the Lady.” Old Neil drew a haphazard circle over his chest.

Following that, he opened the silver chest and pulled out goatskin parchment that exuded antiquity.

The yellowish-brown goatskin unfurled inch by inch, revealing words on it. Klein looked from a distance and realized it was in Hermes, a language he was very familiar with.

It was written in ink that resembled blood, seemingly having its fluidity remain intact. But other than that, it did not seem extraordinary in any way.

“Seer: 100 milliliters of pure water, 13 drops of night vanilla liquids, 7 gold mint leaves…” Klein silently recited the formula’s content, but the rest of it was blocked by Old Neil’s wrist, preventing him from reading it.

“Pure water is water that is repeatedly distilled. Thankfully, I made some previously, so there’s no need to waste time on it.” While Old Neil gave the introduction, he took a large sealed glass bottle from the table with great familiarity.

He took off the stopper and poured about 100 milliliters of pure water into the cauldron without much thought.

Klein did not dare ask, afraid he would affect Old Neil’s concoction. After all, he was the one drinking the potion.

“13 drops of night vanilla juices. This can be extracted and stored as an essential oil ahead of time.” Old Neil took out a tiny brown bottle from the silver chest and with a pipette and dripped 13 drops into the cauldron in a relaxed manner.

A faint but easing fragrance emanated, making Klein feel an abnormal sense of peace.

“7 gold mint leaves…” Old Neil picked up a silver patterned can and removed its lid. With his bare hands, he picked up a few leaves and scattered it into the cauldron. He caught a whiff of a fresh and stimulating scent.

“4, 5, 6, 7. Perfect.” Old Neil chuckled and looked at the potion formula on the goatskin. “3 drops of poison hemlock. This isn’t something you should drink randomly. It can cause your entire body to numb to the point of death. In ancient times, it proved to be the best option for committing suicide.”

It’s not like I’m silly… Klein lampooned.

Old Neil changed pipettes and dripped the poison hemlock into the cauldron. The mixture caused a strange smell that freshened one’s mind.

“9 grams of dragon blood grass powder.” Old Neil took his time to reach his hand into the silver chest and pulled out a transparent test tube. There was some deep black powder inside.

He used a beaker and a scale to measure 9 grams of powder and poured it into the cauldron. He then stirred the mixture twice with the darkwood ladle. The laidback process of making the concoction made Klein a little worried.

“In fact, the materials from before were just supplemental. The exact amount doesn’t really affect the final outcome. Should I put a little bit more?” Old Neil made a joke. “The last two is what’s crucial. The amount can be slightly lowered, but it cannot be too far from the requirement, or your ‘enhancement’ can fail. Oh, the quantity cannot be any more, even just by a bit. If so, you will have to be treated for mental problems. It’s not impossible to die immediately.”

Klein immediately tensed up as he saw Old Neil pull out a black glass bottle from the silver chest.

“Lavos Squid’s blood, 10 milliliters. This kind of squid is considered an extraordinary biological species. It is clearly mutated. It is covered in mystery. Its blood will rapidly break down under sunlight and lose its unique qualities. It has to be stored in opaque material." Old Neil's tone no longer sounded relaxed. He quickly and carefully retrieved 10 milliliters of blood with a test tube.

The blood was blue like the sky. From time to time, it produced illusory bubbles as though it was connected to the spiritual world.

"After pouring the blood inside the test tube, the remaining drops are ignored as a form of precaution," whispered Old Neil.

The moment the blue blood entered the cauldron and made contact with the liquid from before, it produced bubbling sounds. The surrounding light was dyed with a light blue tinge, making Klein feel a strange sense of distance but also familiarity.

It felt like the feeling of being in a mother's womb. It elevated a human's soul.

"The final item. Star Crystal. 50 grams." Old Neil's voice sounded in Klein's ears, jolting him awake as he looked at the table.

In the old gentleman's hand was a piece of extremely pure crystal. Furthermore, the crystal appeared gelatinous, as though it was jelly from Earth. It lacked hardness.

Under the blue light's illumination, it reflected bits of light as it seemed to contain a resplendent void of stars within.

"This is excellent material for the creation of divination crystals… Just a little less in consideration of any mistakes." As Old Neil measured, he used a tiny patterned silver blade to extract the crystal.

"Pure water, night vanilla, gold mint leaves, poison hemlock juice, dragon blood grass, Lavos Squid blood, and Star Crystal make up a Seer…" At that moment, Klein could not help but recall the formula.

With everything done, Old Neil poured in a few blocks of Star Crystal into the cauldron.

Sizzle!

Illusory fog instantly spewed forth, turning the alchemy room into a blur.

Klein seemed to see a vast array of stars amid the fog and felt like he was being observed by an invisible existence.

A few seconds later, the fog dissipated. Old Neil used the darkwood ladle and scooped out some sticky dark-blue liquid. It had strange characteristics—gooey and inseparable. Not one bit was left in the black cauldron.

The dark-blue liquid was poured into an opaque cup before Old Neil pointed at it.

“It’s done, your Seer potion.”

Chapter 32 - Spirit Vision

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein looked at the dark-blue gelatinous liquid, finding it hard to describe it as either a block or cup of liquid. He swallowed his saliva and said in great difficulty, “Am I to drink it just like that?

“Is there no need for any other preparations? Like a ritual, an incantation, or a prayer?”

Old Neil acknowledged tersely before saying, “Preparation? There is. Get a cup of Intis Aurmir grape wine, suck on a Desi cigar, then whistle a relaxing tune, and dance an upbeat court dance. You can do a tap dance if you prefer that. Finally, play a round of Gwent cards…”

When he saw Klein’s expression turn dumbfounded, Old Neil laughed and summarized what he had just said.

“If you feel nervous.”

…You are quite humorous, aren’t you…? The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched as he resisted the urge to draw his gun.

He put his cane down and extended his right hand. As though he held something heavy, he raised the opaque cup. The smell of the potion was faint and seemingly ethereal.

“Lad, do not hesitate. The more you hesitate, the more nervous and afraid you will be. That will only affect the absorption that follows,” said Old Neil with his back facing Klein. It was as though he had said it casually.

It was unknown when he arrived by the nearby water basin. He turned on the tap and washed his hands.

Klein nodded silently and took a deep breath. Just like he was back when he was a child, he pinched his nose and drank it like medicine. He moved the opaque cup to his mouth and tipped his head, drinking it down with a gulp.

A cool and smooth feeling quickly filled his oral cavity. It then flowed through his gullet and into his stomach.

The sticky, dark-blue liquid seemed to grow out thin and long tentacles, bringing stimulation and coldness to every cell in Klein's body.

He could not help but convulse as his vision rapidly went into a blur. All colors seemed to saturate. The reds were redder, the blues were bluer, and the blacks were blacker. The rich colors blended like an impressionist painting.

Klein had seen such a scene before. It was back when he was questioned by the Spirit Medium, Daly.

At that moment, his vision became a blur and although his mind felt light, it was clear. He felt like a castaway floating in the sea.

Slowly, his surroundings turned discernible. All the colors returned to their original as a grayish and blurry fog emanated.

Around him were forms he found difficult to describe. There were transparent objects that did not seem to exist. Deep down, there were lustrous brilliances of different colors which seemed to possess life or contain immense knowledge.

This is a little similar to what I saw during the luck enhancement ritual… As Klein instinctively looked down, he realized that 'he' was still standing in his original spot, body convulsing.

Suddenly, he came to a realization, causing his consciousness to sink abruptly and fuse with him.

Boom!

The fog quickly dissipated as the colors restored to normal. The bright, clear halo and the inexistent objects instantly vanished.

The scene in the alchemy room returned to normal, but Klein felt his head swell. He felt like it was being yanked apart. Whatever he saw had countless afterimages. His ears were overwhelmed by an ethereal murmur.

“Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…”

Klein felt a stabbing pain at his forehead as he quickly had thoughts of causing destruction to vent the discomfort in him.

He frowned and hurriedly shook his head.

“Is your vision abnormal? Are you also hearing things you did not use to hear?” said Old Neil, at his side with a concealed smile.

“Yes, Mr. Neil, what should I do?” Klein tolerated the intense mania and asked.

Old Neil chuckled.

“This is the resulting seepage of the potion’s energy. You lack the means to control it. Alright, do as I say. Think of an object in your mind, something common. Make it simple and easy.”

Klein quickly focused as he envisaged his own halved top hat woven from black silk. He recalled the feeling when he touched it and its exact shape.

“Place all your focus on it. Keep repeating that while creating the outlines. Does it feel a little better?” Old Neil’s voice penetrated into his mind like a serene song.

Klein turned his focus bit by bit to the imagined top hat. He felt the murmurs subside into a whisper before they vanished. The afterimages he saw also stacked upon one another and no longer appeared a blur.

“Much better,” said Klein after calming his mind of chaotic emotions and having exhaled.

He looked down at his body and discovered that nothing abnormal had happened.

THE SEER PATHWAY
SEER
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He moved his limbs and with half-anticipation and half-doubt, asking, "I succeeded? I'm now considered a Seer?"

Old Neil pulled out a mirror-like mercury plate and shoved it in front of him.

"Look at your eyes."

Klein focused his gaze and saw that he was wearing a black top hat. His outline stood out and his facial features looked normal. Apart from having his face covered in sweat, he did not seem different in any way.

He followed Old Neil's instruction and carefully looked at his eyes. Only then did he discover that his brown eyes had deepened quite significantly. It was so much deepened that it was like the night—one in complete darkness. It felt so deep that it could absorb the souls of others.

Normally, dark brown pupils are easily recognized as black. Without looking very carefully, even Klein himself would not have noticed.

"This is a physical manifestation of the potion's powers. When you learn Cogitation and how to converge your power, your eyes will return to normal." Old Neil smiled as he reached out his right hand. "Congratulations, our new Beyonder, our Seer."

"Thank you." Klein reached out his hand and shook it. "Mr. Neil, when can I learn how to Cogitate?"

"You can learn it now. The initial steps of Cogitation are relatively simple. It's even more so for Beyonders," said Old Neil with a smile. "Just now, producing an object in your mind to divert your attention and turning the energy seepage inwards is actually the first step to Cogitation. Try doing it again."

Klein closed his eyes and once again, his mind depicted the halved top hat.

His concentration seemed to be more easily focused than before. Soon, random thoughts that surfaced would quickly vanish, leaving the hat's outline.

"Let your brain go somewhat blank. Exchange the object you imagined. Use something that does not exist in this world, an object you imagine completely out of thin air."

"You have to follow this rule. Only by doing so can you enter Cogitation, only then can you exceed the concept of 'I.' The limitless 'I' will become one with the universe, giving you the ability to see and understand the truth. You will obtain knowledge only you yourself can understand. In the domain of mysticism studies, it's called a Mystic Experience," said Old Neil using a pacifying tone. "You just need to listen to the descriptions that I'll get to later. What's most important is to enter Cogitation."

Something that doesn't exist in this world. Imagine something completely out of thin air… Would things from Earth count? Klein attempted using an earthy-green intercontinental missile he saw on television. He replaced the half top hat with this long and thick missile.

However, regardless of how he outlined it or imagined it, he ultimately only ended up focusing his attention.

It doesn't seem like it will work… Klein had no choice but to let his imagination run wild. He outlined a sphere of light and then many similar objects, gathering them together.

The spheres of light stacked upon one another. It felt like an object of fantasy. Klein's thoughts gradually turned ethereal and afloat.

His body and mind calmed down. The objects that did not seem to exist, the fog with the bright clusters of light, and the complex colors appeared once again. They floated in the sky in close reach.

He extended his spirituality inch by inch as he looked down at them quietly. He sensed it and took it in.

“Very good. As expected of a Seer. You entered Cogitation very smoothly. You are just slightly worse than me back then. Slightly,” said Old Neil with a chuckle. “In that case, I’ll begin teaching you the most common, easiest to grasp, and most useful ability in the future in mysticism. Spirit Vision!”

He switched off the gas lamps one after another but opened the door to the alchemy room. It made the spot where Klein was dark, but not to the point of failing to make out silhouettes of objects.

“Alright. in your present state, raise your hands and place them in front of your eyes. Your index fingers need to face each other, but they are not to touch.

“Open your eyes and keep them open until you are accustomed to the darkness.”

Klein completed each step according to Old Neil’s description. He saw the silhouettes of his fingers and the surrounding objects.

“Actually, you should be lying down to let your body be entirely relaxed. But since the effect of your Cogitation is not bad, let’s continue.” Old Neil laughed. “Focus your gaze on a spot behind your hands. It has to be behind. Then, slowly move your fingers and maintain the same pose without touching them. Also, do not pull them out of your sight.”

Klein calmly listened to it and cast his gaze at an empty spot behind his palms. He then slowly moved his index fingers within his vision.

Once, twice, thrice… Suddenly, Klein saw a fiery-red color in between his fingers.

“Eh…” He let out a sound.

“You see color? That’s right. That’s the initial step to Spirit Vision. The color you see is your aura,” said Old Neil with a chuckle. “No rush. Do it a few more times. After stabilizing it, look elsewhere. I'll also take this opportunity to explain to you the different meanings of the different colors."

"Alright." Klein moved his fingers back and forth while having his vision trained on the fiery-red.

Old Neil thought for a moment before saying, "To put it simply, the mainstream way of mysticism is to split non-physical parts of a human into four levels. At its core is the Soul Body, which is also everyone's basic spirituality. There is a school of thought that believes all biological creatures have spirituality and have a Soul Body.

"I'm not sure about anything else, but to Mystery Pryers, the goal of Cogitation and the method to increase our strength is directed toward the Soul Body.

"Outside the Soul Body is the Astral Projection. It is the means for the Soul Body to communicate with the spirit world and with the cosmos. It's considered an external manifestation of the Soul Body. Besides, it will be directly related to your personal ambition and your prevailing emotions… The scenes you see after consuming the potion are scenes your Astral Projection sees when it wanders through the spirit world. That world does not obey the laws of the physical world. It involves exceeding the concept of 'I,' the limitless 'I', and the Universe's 'I.' The past, present, and future might be stacked upon one another and that is the source of divination.

"In the spirit world, what you see is just an imagery, a symbol. You have to interpret it to understand its actual meaning.

"Divination and many magic spells are cast through the Astral Projection.

"Do not mistake its relationship and differences with a Soul Body."

One is just a body and the other is for form… Klein continued looking at the aura in between his fingertips and made the simple conclusion.

“Further out will be the Body of Heart and Mind. From this point forth, it will combine with the physical body… It involves your brain and is an overall manifestation of your inferential abilities, your analytical abilities, your observational abilities, and identification abilities. Some potions will mainly raise this. Quite a number of magic spells target it as well.”

Old Neil explained in relatively great detail, “The outermost layer is the Ether Body. It is a manifestation of your vital energies and physical form.”

“The aura color you see is an external phenomenon of your Ether Body. In other words, apart from the spiritual bodies, ghosts, and specters you can see directly with Spirit Vision, it might also include certain existences that should not be seen. You can also see the Ether Bodies of others or their auras. From their thickness, brightness, and color, you can determine their health and emotional state.

“When your Spirit Vision improves and you grasp more mysticism knowledge, you will be able to discover even more details. You can even determine the lifespan of others.

“By the way, the emotional state I mentioned would also manifest itself because of your Astral Projection. When you go higher in Sequence, your Spirit Vision will reach a relatively high stage. Someone else’s Astral Projection will even be detectable. That way, you will learn even more things. This is a level only Seers and Mystery Pryers can attain.

“Some fellows even claim that the strongest form of Spirit Vision allows one to see anything in any place, including the past and future. However, I’m skeptical about it.”

It sounds quite powerful… Klein was almost turning eager.

Old Neil coughed and continued, “Let’s return to the Ether Body and the colors of the auras. Your limbs and parts that are required in motion will appear red. Your head and brain's surface will appear as purple. Spots that excrete waste will appear orange. The digestion system will appear as yellow. The heart and other regulatory systems will appear green. Your throat and other parts of the nervous system will appear blue. An entirely balanced body will make a body be cloaked in white… That is a symbol of health.

"Once it turns dark or the thickness thins, the color will change. That indicates that the corresponding spot has turned problematic. It means it's in a state of exhaustion or illness.

"In addition, the inner layer of the Astral Projection represents prevailing emotions. Red means passion and excitement. Orange means warmth and satisfaction. Yellow means happiness and extroversion. Green means calm and peace. Blue means coldness and stillness that one is in thought. White means brightness, an eagerness to improve. Dark colors mean worry, sorrow, and silence. Purple means that spirituality is taking control of the lead, coldness and estrangement…"

Klein silently memorized the information and stabilized his initial Spirit Vision.

"Good, you can look at other objects." Old Neil did not speak further as he nodded.

Klein slowly turned his head and looked at Old Neil. Indeed, he saw different colors in different parts of his body. The aura was both thick and thin at different spots. The purple color at his head was brightest and his limbs' redness was relatively dark. The overall whiteness to his body was somewhat faded as well.

Indeed, he's getting on in age… Klein made a silent comment to himself.

Only with what he saw did he feel that he had become a Beyonder!

"I am now a Beyonder!"

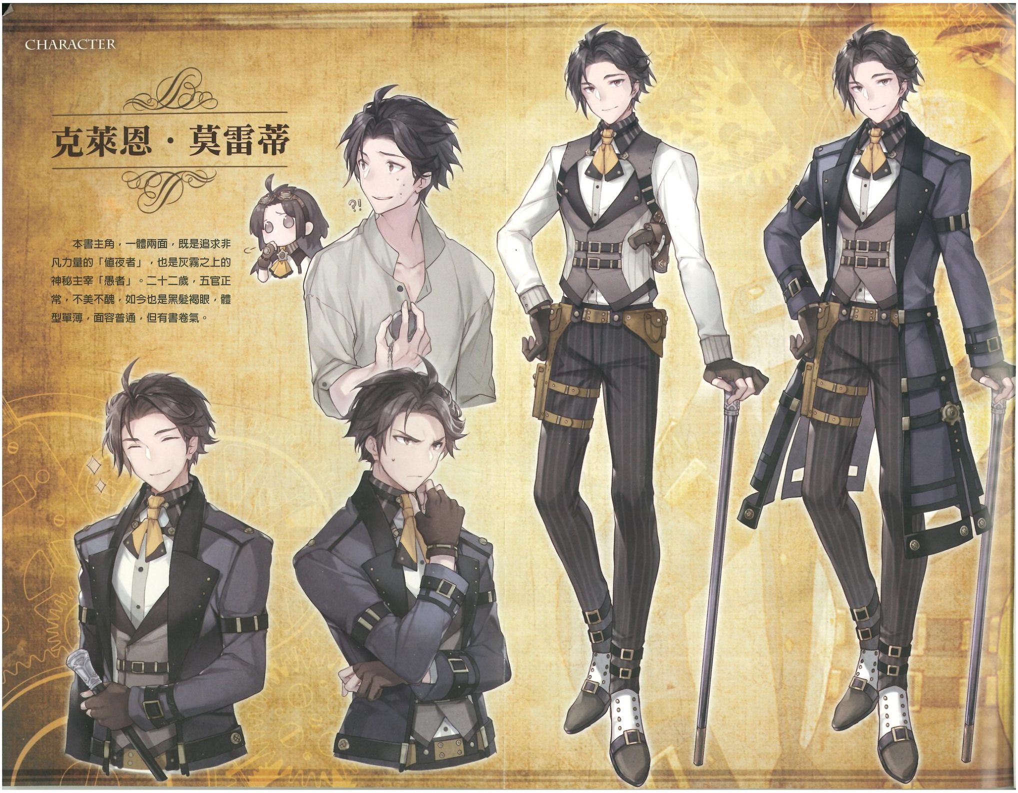
He shifted his gaze and carefully sized up Old Neil when suddenly he saw a translucent pair of cold and ruthless eyes without any brows in the void behind him!

These nearly illusory eyes were staring at Old Neil intently, as well as him!

This… Klein shuddered as he gapped and said, "You have a pair of eyes behind you!"

Old Neil was taken aback before he forced a smile.

"Ignore them."



本書主角，一體兩面，既是追求非凡力量的「值夜者」，也是灰霧之上的神秘主宰「愚者」。二十二歲，五官正常，不美不醜，如今也是黑髮褐眼，體型單薄，面容普通，但有書卷氣。

Klein Moretti

The protagonist of this story. He has a dual identity: he is both the “Nighthawk” who hunts supernatural powers and the divine oracle of the mysterious existence above the gray fog, the “Fool.”

Twenty-two years old, with regular facial features. If he had not transmigrated, he would probably still look the same as he does now—black hair and brown eyes, a somewhat thin build, an ordinary appearance, but with a scholarly air.

Chapter 33 - Switch

◆ ◆ ◆

The moment Old Neil finished his sentence, the illusory pair of eyes that lurked in the darkness behind him vanished. Even in his Spirit Vision state, Klein was no longer able to identify traces of its existence.

“This is a characteristic of ritualistic magic,” explained Old Neil with a chuckle.

Fascinating… Is Spirit Vision an enhanced version of Yin-Yang eyes? Klein felt like a child who had received a new toy. In excitement, he turned his gaze away and began observing every corner of the room. He wanted to see the differences of the alchemy room with and without the Spirit Vision.

The outlines of the objects in the dark such as the tables, test tubes, scales, cups, and cupboards did not look different from how it looked like without Spirit Vision. They did not emit any lights or colors.

Objects without lives do not have any spirituality? Klein mumbled to himself as he swept his gaze toward the silver chest.

Suddenly, he saw a vibrancy of colors. The colors were as blue as the sky, as resplendent as the stars, or as crimson red as burning flames!

“Materials from extraordinary beings still have some life in them, and uh… are still active? Even if the source is already dead?” Klein deliberated on his words as he sought Old Neil’s help.

“A precise description is that they have remnant spiritualities. It is one of the crucial points of a successful potion concoction. It is also one the reasons why a Beyonder will lose control. Dunn should have already informed you," explained Old Neil frankly.

He suddenly laughed, having recalled something.

"I remember that the formula of Corpse Collector requires a desiccated mature black-spotted frog. To consume that potion requires a lot of courage."

Klein imagined a little and found it disgusting. He did not echo Old Neil's words and turned his gaze to a dark area. However, there were no spiritual bodies or ghosts that he looked forward to seeing.

"Isn't it said that the world of spirits is everywhere?" he asked out of curiosity.

Old Neil chuckled tersely before saying, "Punk, repeat after me.

"This is the headquarters of a Nighthawk squad. This is the ground beneath the Church of Evernight. There are many Beyonders here!

"Do you think we will allow spirits and souls to wander around here? Furthermore, the spiritual world and spirit are two different concepts."

Klein felt a little embarrassed as he turned his head, pretending to look at the faint light from the gas lamps at the entrance.

"I get it."

While speaking, the area between his brows began to spasm.

What's happening? Just as Klein turned around to ask, he suddenly saw a figure standing quietly by the door at the periphery of the light. It appeared human, though its aura's colors and the darkness blended perfectly, making it impossible to discern.

Hiss!

Klein felt a painful spasm at his glabella[1]. His vision turned chaotic as he focused his attention again, but there was no “formless” figure!

Strange… He turned around and asked.

“Mr. Neil, the spot in between my brows is a little painful from spasms.”

“Haha, this is very common. You are a new Beyonder. Spirit Vision places a great burden on your Soul Body. Furthermore, it drains you constantly. Physical effects can be glabella spasms, headaches, oversensitivity, and minor bouts of hallucinations. And while viewing things with Spirit Vision, it’s very easy to feel uncomfortable as a result of the unfamiliar surroundings. It’s also very easy to have your emotions affected by others. These are things that require you to pay attention. You can become accustomed to and eliminate them with repeated practice. In addition, use it sparingly and end it in a timely fashion,” answered Old Neil with a smile.

Why does it feel like you are delighted by this… Klein hurriedly asked for advice, “Then, how do I exit from the state of having Spirit Vision?”

He had planned on mentioning the invisible figure he had seen, though when he heard of the minor bouts of hallucination among the symptoms, he struck that thought away.

From the glabella spasm and headache, he could completely guess Old Neil’s answer!

“Like before, think of an item to divert your attention. It will bring you out of Cogitation. Close your eyes and control your spirituality and repeatedly tell it to end. When you open your eyes again, you will discover that your Spirit Vision has ended.”

Old Neil described leisurely and when he was done, added, “Of course, that is the most trivial and clumsy method. We can repeatedly hint to ourselves in Cogitation from practice to affect our spirituality. That way, you will have a simple switch. For instance, tapping at your glabella twice lightly would allow you to easily activate Spirit Vision. Another two taps will simply end it. As for how you set it up, it depends on your habits and preferences.

“Got it.” Klein thought for a moment and planned to imitate Old Neil to use tapping his glabella twice as a switch for his Spirit Vision.

Tapping once was easily mistaken as an instinctive knock to his head and tapping thrice could be a waste of valuable time in dangerous situations. As for actions like snapping fingers, they were too attention-drawing.

He eased his focus and imagined the stacked spheres of light and re-entered a state of Cogitation.

Under Old Neil’s guidance, after repeated hints and practice, he finally “set up” his “switch.”

He clenched his fist slightly and used his index finger’s joint to tap at his glabella twice. Immediately, there were glowing auras of differing thickness and colors appearing before his eyes.

After another two taps, everything returned to normal.

“I’ve finally grasped it…” he sighed with delight.

Only then did he realize how exhausted he was, feeling like he could fall asleep at any time. His mind hurt as though he had stayed up for three nights.

Old Neil said with a chuckle, “We are not Sleepless. Every practice and every time Spirit Vision is used excessively, you will need some sleep. You can now go back and have a good rest. In the afternoon, go to Iron Cross Street where Welch’s place is and walk around. Try your best to find clues about the Antigonus family’s notebook as soon as possible. Tomorrow, I’ll continue teaching you about mysticism. Of course, do not forget to read the historical documents.”

“Alright.” Klein was in full agreement with Old Neil’s arrangements.

He picked up his cane and left the alchemy room. He watched the door close as Old Neil returned to the armory. Klein massaged his glabella and temples and with the help of his cane, sauntered up the stairwell.

At that moment, Dunn Smith came from behind him with the corners of his lips hooked. With a deep gaze, he said, “I heard from Old Neil that you are a very suitable candidate. Even without Cogitation, you were able to use Spirit Vision.”

“Perhaps, it’s a unique trait of being a Seer,” replied Klein humbly.

He guessed that Dunn had been watching the armory for Old Neil.

Dunn slowed down and went ahead of Klein a little. After a few seconds of silence, he turned around and said, “You have to remember that curiosity killed the cat. It can also kill Beyonders. Do not attempt to probe the murmurings you should not be listening to or seeing existences you should not see.”

“Alright.” Klein knew this was another reminder of how Beyonders lost control.

After entering Blackthorn Security Company, he greeted Rozanne who obviously did not know that he had become a Beyonder. He slowly walked out the door and reached the streets where he took a trackless carriage to Daffodil Street. He nearly fell asleep on his return journey.

It was still in the morning and the temperature was about twenty-six degree Celsius. Klein pulled out a copper key from his waistband and opened the door to his home.

There were still many items missing from his home. The living room and dining hall were still empty. Benson and Melissa had work or school, so they had both left early in the morning.

Klein did not have the capacity to bother with anything else. He closed the door and briskly went to the second floor and entered the bookshelf-equipped bedroom that belonged to him.

After taking off his tuxedo and hanging it on a clothing rack, he eagerly plunged into bed. The moment his head hit the pillow, he fell asleep.

Klein was awoken by bright sunlight. He turned his head and slowly opened his eyes to discover the burning sun outside.

“What time is it? Did I miss the Tarot Club in the afternoon?” He struggled to get up and walked to the clothing rack to take out his pocket watch from the pocket of the tuxedo’s inner lining.

Not only had he forgotten about the matter, he had forgotten to close the door to his bedroom and pulled the curtains to the oriel window.

Pa!

Klein pulled out the pocket watch and immediately felt relieved when he opened it.

It was only slightly past noon. There was still a lot of time until the scheduled gathering at three in the afternoon.

It was Monday, the day he would have a gathering with The Hanged Man and Justice.

Klein went into thought as he tapped his glabella twice. The scene before him changed once again as he saw that his body had been restored to a bright luster.

He tapped twice again and stopped his Spirit Vision. Relaxed, he went to the first floor and boiled a kettle of water. He placed some inferior-quality tea leaves and chewed on some rye bread dabbed in a little butter.

Afterwards, Klein flipped through historical materials and original Klein’s diary. He began ‘revising’ and consolidating his knowledge.

†

At 2:57pm, Klein closed his book and capped his fountain pen before pulling the curtains.

Immediately following that, he locked the bedroom's door, making the room turn abnormally dark.

He tapped his glabella twice and activated Spirit Vision to survey his surroundings.

After confirming that there were no invisible spiritual bodies in his room, Klein stopped the Spirit Vision and took out his pocket watch to check the time.

Tick-tock. Tick-tock.

One minute before three, he opened up his pace and like before, walked four steps in a counter-clockwise manner in a squarish shape. He chanted in Chinese softly.

Only this time, he did not prepare any staple food.

Klein closed his eyes as he felt the back of his hands turn itchy. It felt like the four black docks forming a square were protruding and projecting something.

Hysterical shouts and alluring murmurs began resounding, but Klein realized that the headache was not as bad as the first time.

It was not that he was unaffected, but that he was doing his best to stop himself from listening.

As a Beyonder, he had to have more self-control in such an environment.

Soon, his body turned light as he floated up. He saw the grayish-white and blurry fog that emanated. Then, he saw dark red 'stars.' Two of them had a minuscule connection with him with an abnormal sense of familiarity.

Klein looked at his blurry self and muttered in confusion, “The Astral Projection that Old Neil mentioned?”

He remained calm for a few seconds and again transformed the opulent divine palace with the tall bronze table under the domed ceiling, as well as the twenty-two high-back chairs that corresponded to the different constellations.

Klein calmly walked to the Seat of Honor and made his body and face be immersed in thicker gray fog. He extended his right hand and tapped two familiar deep-red stars and created a miraculous connection.

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The glabella, in humans, is the skin between the eyebrows and above the nose.

Chapter 34 - Advance Payment

◆ ◆ ◆

In an underground basement without any windows, the burly Alger Wilson sat by a long table with various apparatuses and goatskin parchments on it.

In front of him was a half-consumed candle. The dim, yellowish flame's flickering made the shadows of the objects and table move like a mirage.

Alger's hair was disheveled like seaweed with a deep blue color that resembled black. He wore a robe with lightning patterns embroidered on it. He clasped his hands with his thumbs facing each other while he focused on a bottle of black liquid to the left of the candle.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Splash! Splash! Splash!

The sound of tempestuous winds or the crashing of the sea waves howled from inside the sealed bottle. And in spots where the black ink did not sink, a faint fog would swirl. It was as though it grew eyes and a mouth.

Alger cocked his head to glance at the clock hanging on the wall and watched the needle strike three.

He pressed down on his temple as his eyes turned dark. Fascinating colors surfaced from the various items on the table.

At that moment, he discovered a deep-red light appear like a tidal wave from nowhere, drowning him instantly!

†

Backlund, Empress Borough, Inside the Hall family's luxurious mansion.

After dismissing her dance teacher, Audrey locked the door and sat straight up in front of her dressing table.

The sun outside was bright and gorgeous. There was a light-brown notebook made of exquisite goat skin. It was flipped open to reveal that it was blank. To its right was a fountain pen with a golden tip and embedded rubies.

Audrey did a test and made sure that she could pick up the fountain pen and write down the formula the moment she left the Gathering.

"I'm so looking forward to it…" She inhaled to repress her excited emotions as she looked at the mirror with puckered lips.

However, she did not see it reflect herself. Instead, a dark red and illusory beam burst out from her body!

†

Above the gray fog stood a majestic divine hall that looked like a giant's residence.

Dark red colors bloomed on both sides of the bronze table. They surged upwards like a fountain before pattering down. It 'carved' two blurry figures who sat in the same spots as before.

Audrey, with her soft blond hair and tall, slim build, instinctively looked towards the Seat of Honor. She saw the figure immersed in thick gray fog sitting back. One hand was flat, touching the table's side while the other hand was stroking his chin.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~!” Audrey shouted with a cheery voice.

Following that, she turned her head and looked at the person opposite her. With the same tone, she said, “Good afternoon, Mr. Hanged Man~!”

This lady sure is unsophisticated. Is she so sure that I’m a good person? Why isn’t there any fear from her? Is she a noble lady who has been protected well? Klein smiled and maintained his unfathomable image.

“Good afternoon, Miss Justice.”

As he spoke, he lowered his head slightly and moved his left hand and tapped his glabella twice.

What he saw changed instantly. He saw Justice and The Hanged Man emit the colors of their aura!

And the surrounding gray fog and dark red stars remained the same. Nothing that seemingly did not exist or lustrous brilliances that possessed life was seen.

He shifted his gaze and saw that Justice’s aura perfectly matched the colors Old Neil described. What was supposed to be red, purple, blue, or white were their respective colors. Furthermore, they maintained a lustrous brilliance and were of appropriate thickness. It was easy to tell that she was a vibrant young girl.

The colors of her emotions are red and yellow. That’s joy, zeal, and excitement… Klein made a judgment before casting his attention towards The Hanged Man.

Like Justice, there was nothing special about the colors of The Hanged Man’s aura. His emotions were blue mixed in with some orange.

Calm, thoughtful, careful, and a little pleased? With this being his first attempt, Klein made a conclusion without much confidence.

Just as he shifted his gaze away, he suddenly realized something strange.

The aura of the Hanged Man's innermost layer was nearly of the same color!

Klein focused his mind and took another careful look. He could faintly see that deep within The Hanged Man's Ether Body was a deep blue, akin to the sea. It felt like a tidal storm.

His Astral Projection? Or should I say the surface of his Astral Projection? From the looks of it, he's really a Beyonder, and one that's apparently stronger than Old Neil. Klein analyzed as his mind was filled with questions. "Not necessary. It might have to do with this being a unique environment. It's only because this is my home ground that I'm able to see these things that Old Neil did not manifest."

He turned his head toward Justice again and confirmed that it was a characteristic only Beyonders possessed.

At that moment, Alger also completed his greetings.

Audrey drew a light gasp as she asked in anticipation, "Mr. Hanged Man, did you receive the box of Ghost Shark blood?"

Alger took a look at Klein and saw him tapping his glabella as though he was considering other matters.

"Thank you very much. It perfectly met my expectations. I never expected you to send it to me so quickly. The Ghost Shark blood is not the typical extraordinary creature," said Alger frankly.

Audrey smiled humbly and said, "I'm very happy to see this outcome."

As she loved anything to do with mystery from a young age, she had befriended those in aristocratic circles with similar interests. They have exchanged information, books, and rare artifacts among each other. But before this, none of them had ever obtained any supernatural power to become a real Beyonder. Instead, there were a few princes that hinted that they could gift her what she wanted if she became their princess consort.

However, she had obtained the Ghost Shark blood directly from her family's vault. After all, the inventory only states 'one big bottle,' without mentioning how many milliliters or how full it had to be, she believed that pouring a little bit of it would go unnoticed. Even if there was an accident and the matter was exposed, her parents were unlikely to pursue the matter.

Alger looked deeply at The Fool who was enveloped in fog before turning his head back with a smile.

"According to our agreement, I will tell you the formula to the potion, Spectator."

"Let me prepare myself. Alright, begin." Audrey inhaled as she focused her full attention.

"Low-Sequence potions are very easy to concoct. Just follow the order that I provide you. Do remember that there can be smaller quantities of the ingredients but not more. It would cause major problems. You should have heard about news of Beyonders losing control. I believe there's no need for me to repeat it?" Alger first mentioned things to take note of.

Audrey nodded gently and said, "I understand completely."

While she spoke, she turned her head to look at Mr. Fool. She wished to know if the mystery expert had anything to add; unfortunately, The Fool was sitting silently there like a statue.

Alger thought for a moment before saying, "Having smaller quantities does not mean it should deviate by too much… If you do not have an assistant, I suggest you spend some time familiarizing yourself with chemistry experiments."

"I have a family tutor for such matters," answered Audrey without feeling the burden.

After Alger mentioned the furthest extent of the deviation, he recited with great fluency, “Spectator. Sequence 9 potion. 80 milliliters of pure water. 5 drops of autumn crocus essence. 13 grams of cow teeth paeonol powder. 7 petals of elf flowers. A matured Manhal Fish’s eyeball. Add 35 milliliters of goat-horned black fish blood.

“The final two items are the main ingredients. They are extraordinary creatures from the sea. You have to be careful.”

“Alright.” Audrey recalled and repeated, “80 milliliters of pure water. 5 drops of autumn crocus essence, 13 grams of cow teeth…”

“Paeonol powder,” reminded Alger.

With his help, Audrey gradually and precisely memorized the formula’s order. However, she appeared worried as she mumbled it again and again.

“Do you know about Cogitation?” When Alger saw Justice nod, he continued, “I do not know how much you know about Cogitation. Let me describe it once… After consuming the potion, quickly begin Cogitation to control your spirituality and energy… Make sure to practice every day to truly grasp the powers of the potion. Dig out the meaning it symbolizes and even more of its mysteries. That way, you can avoid the danger of losing control to the greatest extent. And the meaning of a potion mainly lies in its name, such as Spectator!”

Klein silently listened to the conversation and had no plans on interrupting. All he did was secretly memorize and study, but when he heard that, he suddenly had a thought.

Audrey listened to The Hanged Man’s explanations attentively, and just as she was about to inquire about something more detailed, she suddenly heard the rapping sound on the table,

She and Alger turned their heads and looked at The Fool. They realized that the mysterious and mighty figure was tapping gently with his fingers. He said in a deep voice, “It’s not about grasping them, but rather digesting them.

“It’s not about discovery, but rather acting.

“The name of a potion is not only symbolic, it’s also imagery. It is the key to digesting.”

Audrey was dazed and confused from hearing that. She was not very clear on what Mr. Fool was trying to express.

She subconsciously eyed The Hanged Man for a reaction from the corner of her eyes. She was surprised to see him jolt and freeze. It was as though an ordinary person had heard a loud and sudden clap of thunder.

“Digesting, acting… Digesting, acting… Digesting, acting, key…” Alger repeated it again and again softly as though he had grasped a key concept or had succumbed to a strange curse.

After a while, he raised his head and said with a hoarse voice, “Thank you, Mr. Fool. Your hint is as valuable as my life. You have enlightened me greatly. Of course, I believe I have yet to fully understand or comprehend it.”

Klein maintained his mysterious and unfathomable image by saying with a smile, “That was an advance payment.”

In fact, he did not truly understand the exact meaning of what was said. He was just certain that Emperor Roselle was more powerful than the typical Beyonder and stronger than The Hanged Man.”

Advance payment… Audrey looked at The Hanged Man’s reaction and knew that the hint from before was precious. As she ruminated over it, she asked, “Mr. Fool, what do you wish for us to do?”

Opposite to her, Alger said with a nod, “What matter might you wish to entrust us with?”

Klein leaned back slightly as he glanced at the two of them before saying in a soft and pleasant voice, “Collect Roselle Gustav’s secret diary on my behalf, even if it’s just one page of it.”

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~!” That will be aconic line LOL:

[image]

Chapter 35 - Exchange of Information

◆

Roselle Gustav’s secret diary?

Emperor Roselle?

Indeed, only such matters are worth the concern of a mighty figure like Mr. Fool… Audrey was first taken aback before she realized that she found it nothing surprising.

Rumor had it that Emperor Roselle had once seen the Blasphemy Slate. It was said that the secret cards he created hid the twenty-two paths of the divine. This was something every high-Sequence Beyonder would definitely pay attention to!

“Diary? That’s a diary?” Alger frowned slightly as he keenly noticed this tidbit.

The item which Roselle Gustav had left behind had been described by Mr. Fool as a diary!

How did he know?

How did he determine it?

Could he know the way to decipher Roselle’s cryptic text?

Faced with The Hanged Man’s question and having obtained the desired effect, Klein leaned back into his chair and interlocked his hands. He answered in a relaxed manner, “Let us first view it as a diary for now.”

He did not deny or confirm it.

Audrey had heard the children of other nobles mention the matter. However, she had never really learned much of it. With her curiosity piqued, she asked, “It’s said that Emperor Roselle’s, well, diary was written in a cryptic language or symbols he invented.”

“Yes,” answered Alger simply. “Some people believe that it is a unique set of symbols from mysticism. Others believe that it is a hieroglyph. But up to today, no one has found the correct way of deciphering it. At the very least, that’s all I know.”

With that said, he turned his head at Klein in a bid to get some confirmation or show his suspicions.

They are texts that have been passed down for generations, so are no longer in their original state. According to your line of thought, how can it be deciphered… Klein maintained his calm as he secretly gave a self-deprecating laugh.

As for how to handle the symbols of mysticism, he instantly thought of a ridiculous and funny scene.

Dressed in a black-pointed hat and long robe, an evil mage pulls up his sleeve to reveal a symbol tattooed on his arm. It was said that this was a symbol with mysterious power left behind by Emperor Roselle. They were written in two blue, large simplified Chinese characters:

“Retarded Joker!”

The corners of Klein’s mouth curved up slowly as he found himself in a good mood.

After hearing The Hanged Man’s description, Audrey said in a stumped manner, “We can’t understand the symbols or the words… Then, how are we to pass the information to you, Mr. Fool? Or are we to mail it somewhere?”

This is quite an important question… I do not have the means to accept an item secretly… Klein was in no hurry to answer. He repeatedly released his thumbs from his interlocked hands before tapping them back again.

Soon, he thought of a solution.

Since I can create a divine palace and table according to my wishes in here, would it be possible to project the content in the minds of others here?

I'll give it a try…

At that moment, Audrey and Alger saw Mr. Fool slowly sit up amid the thick grayish fog.

"Miss Justice, let us give it a try. Imagine a paragraph of text and give it the emotions of writing it with urgency. Yes, pick up the fountain pen beside you and write on the piece of paper."

Before Klein finished his sentence, Audrey saw a piece of yellowish-brown goatskin parchment and a dark red fountain pen in front of her.

She picked up the fountain pen both curiously and doubtfully. In accordance with the instructions, she imagined a poem Emperor Roselle once wrote:

"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?[1]"

After scrutinizing the text, she picked up her fountain pen and imbued them with the desire of projecting them out.

Klein sensed the emotions and using the fountain pen as a medium, he guided her.

The moment Audrey landed her fountain pen, she saw a line appear on the goatskin parchment.

"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

“Goddess, how fascinating!” Audrey exclaimed in astonishment while feeling rueful.

Following that, she looked at Klein with some fear.

“Mr. Fool, can you read what I’m thinking?”

“No, I’m only guiding you. I simplified the process of writing for you and made it become an imprint. If you did not wish to express it, nothing would appear.” Klein placated her with a low tone.

“Is that so… Then we can only memorize the symbols or the way the cryptic text looks like. Then, we can present it directly as we wish?” Audrey heaved a sigh of relief as she asked in enlightenment.

“Yes.” Klein answered.

“That’s not a bad method. Miss Justice, do not doubt your memory. After becoming a Spectator, you will receive immense improvement in this aspect.” Alger had watched the attempt from the side, fully coming to the realization that The Fool was more powerful and mysterious than he imagined.

As for his memory, he believed that the next advancement would improve it sufficiently.

Regarding this, Audrey nodded in delight.

“You have delighted me with this reminder. Mr. Hanged Man, do you have any other guidance on Spectators?”

With that said, she looked toward the Seat of Honor.

“Mr. Fool, I will work hard to complete your mission. I will do my best to gather more of Emperor Roselle’s secret diary.”

“I mentioned before that I’m a person who likes a fair and equal exchange. The advanced payment I gave is only equivalent to two pages of the diary for each person. If there are more, I will give additional in return," Klein said calmly, like he was an adult who did not take advantage of children.

As for where the additional payment could come from, it was naturally from the newly acquired Emperor Roselle diary pages. This formed a virtuous cycle.

"You are truly a generous gentleman." Alger fell silent for a few seconds before bowing slightly with his hand by his chest.

After the bow, he turned to Justice and said, "Let me emphasize once more. A Spectator will forever be a spectator.

"I know that many Spectators enjoy imagining themselves to be the protagonist or some other character. As a result, they invest a lot of feelings into it, to the point of crying, laughing, raging, and turning sorrowful because of the drama. However, that is not what a Spectator should do.

"While faced with the various dramas of society and figures who knowingly or unknowingly act the role of particular characters, you have to maintain the attitude of being an absolute bystander. Only then can you calmly and objectively observe them. You will discover their habits, their tics from lying, or their scent of nervousness. From those minute clues, you can grasp their true thoughts.

"Believe me, everyone is different because of their emotions. They will secrete different 'things' and different smells. However, only a real Spectator can sniff it out.

"Once you invest too many of your emotions, your observation will be influenced. Your sensitivity towards the emotions of others will deviate."

Audrey listened attentively as her eyes brightened gradually.

"It sounds, really, really interesting!"

Klein’s heart stirred when he heard that.

The Spectator potion’s requirement when summarized seemed to be “an absolutely objective and neutral spectator.”

In a particular sense, it was equivalent to acting…

Acting?

Was this the ‘acting’ which Emperor Roselle was referring to?

Then, I will have to act as a Seer, and from there, digest the potion bit by bit?

Just as Klein was immersing himself in thought, Alger finished explaining the demands he knew of a Spectator. He sighed before saying, “It seems like there’s nothing else?

“Perhaps we can have a casual chat. We can talk about things happening around us. Perhaps it is something very normal to you, but in the ears of others, it might be a very important clue.”

“Sure.” Klein snapped back and nodded slightly.

He was already planning to attempt to act as a Seer. After all, it did not seem like there were any negative effects from doing so.

“Then, shall we begin with you, Mr. Hanged Man?” Audrey agreed in excitement.

Alger thought for a moment before saying, “The infamous pirate who calls himself Admiral Ludwell has begun his voyage to explore the eastern end of the Sonia Sea again.”

“Oh? The owner of the Black Tulip?” returned Audrey with a question after some thought.

“Yes,” Alger replied with a nod.

I don't even know who that is… Klein listened silently while he pondered over the news he planned on sharing. It had to be something that did not expose him while also allowing him to gain feedback.

Soon, he decided. He maintained his unfathomable image as The Fool and caressed the side of the bronze table with his fingers.

"According to what I know, the Secret Order has lost an Antigonus family notebook."

This news was not only known by the Nighthawks from Tingen City. The Secret Order as well as Beyonders with close ties with them similarly knew.

"An Antigonus family notebook?" Alger repeated before smiling with a shake of his head. "I'm really curious as to what reaction the Church of Evernight will have if they learn of it."

Why would he mention the Church of Evernight? Klein acutely sensed a problem, but it was not appropriate for him to ask.

That would shatter his image as the mysterious and profound Fool.

At that moment, Audrey asked out of curiosity, "Why are you curious? What sort of special reaction would the Goddess's church have?"

Alger smiled and said, "The Antigonus family was destroyed by the Church of Evernight."

"I'm not really sure if it happened at the end of the Fourth Epoch or the early stages of the present epoch."

This… Klein's pupils constricted as a chill suddenly swept through him.

From the looks of it, the value the Nighthawks have placed on this Antigonus notebook far exceeds my imagination!

The reason why they nominated me as a Beyonder—having some contribution and to prevent danger to me are likely negligible reasons—

is that they wish for me to raise my spiritual sensitivity to aid them in finding the notebook.

This was not kept from me by Captain. He had mentioned it, but I just didn't pay much attention to it…

After hearing The Hanged Man's explanation, Audrey said with deep interest, "I never imagined that such a thing would happen…

"Alright, my turn. Let me think of what I have to share."

She cocked her head and held her head up with her hand before chuckling.

"Yesterday, my etiquette teacher taught me how to faint, how to faint elegantly without any faux pas. It's a practical skill used at social events to avoid awkward situations or nasty guys… Heh heh. I was just organizing my thoughts. What I really wanted to say is that ever since the failure of the battle on Balam's eastern shore, the king, premier, and gentlemen are under immense stress. They eagerly wish to change."

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Adapted from Ode to the Wind which is an ode, written by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Chapter 36 - A Simple Question

◆

While Audrey recalled the conversation between her father and elder brother about the situation, she put in her own words, “They believe that the government’s structure is too chaotic. Every election, if there is a change of the ruling party, there will be a change of personnel from top to bottom. It makes things a mess and lowers efficiency tremendously. Not only does it cause the battle loss, it also brings great inconvenience to the civilians.”

Klein knew very well that as there was no example to reference, the Loen Kingdom had yet to evolve into a system that examined public servants. The political situation was still in its preliminary stages; therefore, after every election victory, many so-called positions would be awarded to members and supporters.

Hmm, Emperor Roselle not establishing such an institution in Intis does not match his personality… Could it be that he diverted his focus to other things later in life?

When the Hanged Man, Alger, heard that he interjected with a soft chuckle.

“They believe? Then their beliefs are a little slow. Perhaps they will only feel the itch a year after they get bitten by black mosquitoes.”

Black mosquitoes were a type of creature that resided in the south of the Loen Kingdom. It was extremely venomous, and its venom made victims have the urge to rip apart their skin.

Audrey extended her palm and covered her mouth. Ignoring the Hanged Man's mockery, she expressed the core information of what she said, "Unfortunately, they are temporarily unable to find a good solution to replace this system."

Klein listened carefully and felt that the topic was in the domain of his expertise. He smiled faintly and said, "This is a simple problem."

The Foodaholic Empire and the decadent countries that studied the Foodaholic Empire had very advanced experiences of success.

"Simple?" Audrey returned with a question in puzzlement.

Although her education did not include politics, she often heard from the discussions of her father, brother, and people around her. She had a sufficient understanding of similar matters.

Klein felt as though he had returned to the message boards of yesteryear. Composed, he said, "An examination, just like an entrance-examination for college. Hold an exam that is open to the public. It can be split into two rounds or three rounds. Use the most objective method to select the elite."

"But…" Audrey knew what sort of objection this would entail.

Before she had the chance to arrange her thoughts, Klein continued, "After which, use these elites to fill the positions of the Cabinet, the county government, the city government, and the various towns. Yes, the positions that are directly handling matters, such as the Secretary of the Cabinet.

"Different positions should be given different requirements. The second or third rounds can be tested based on locale and region. Professional matters should be left to the professionals.

"As for political positions such as ministers, governors or mayors, they will be left to the parties that win the election. That is a slice of the pie they deserve."

Alger, who lacked interest in such matters, unknowingly turned his head and listened carefully. Audrey frowned slightly as she fell into deep thought.

"There's no hurry in replacing everyone at once. The cabinet and various agencies in the civil service will be crippled if that happens. You can have an examination every year or every three years. They can be gradually replaced. Finally, in light of the kingdom's expansion and the salaried civil servants' resignations that will bring in vacancies, you can systematically allot spots." Klein fully expressed his talent as a keyboard politician. He then faced his palm outwards and said, "Such a design can bring the kingdom's insightful elites into the government. Regardless of the party in power or who the minister is, the civil service will allow the kingdom to maintain its basic and effective operations."

Of course, a side effect was the birth of the undying devil that was bureaucracy.

While considering the suggestion, Audrey asked doubtfully, "Are you implying that even if those ministers become curly-haired baboons, the effects would be insignificant?"

"No," Alger interjected suddenly. "I believe that baboons are a better choice than the present ministers."

He paused before adding, "After all, baboons only need to eat, sleep, and mate. They would not come up with foolish ideas and insist on brainless projects."

Mr. Hanged Man, it sounds like you have quite a terrible superior… Klein sat at his seat of honor and shook his head in silent amusement.

Audrey ruminated over the suggestion Mr. Fool had offered and after a while, said in surprise, "It sounds like it actually might work…

"It's a very simple but effective solution!"

She looked at Klein and sincerely marveled, "Mr. Fool, you must be an elderly person with outstanding intelligence who is very experienced in life!”

… The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched a little as he looked at the Hanged Man and Justice for a few silent seconds.

“Let us end today’s gathering here.”

If Miss Justice is able to influence her family and effect change on this matter, I can guide Benson ahead of time and give him a chance at becoming a civil servant.

On careful thought, Benson was indeed suitable for such a career.

However, it is unlikely Justice would take the initiative to do it. This is because the Hanged Man and I can easily find out which noble suggested it and basically guess her identity.

Of course, she could do it through a roundabout manner secretly.

“By your will.” Audrey and Alger stood up together.

Klein leaned back slightly and severed the connection. He saw Justice and the Hanged Man’s illusory and blurry figures instantly shatter and dissipate.

Above the gray fog, in the opulent palace where gods seemingly lived, he was the only one sitting silently at the head of the bronze table.

Klein did not plunge into the gray fog like the other time to leave. This was because his mind was still energetic enough after becoming a Beyonder.

The reason why he had ended the Tarot Club early was because he learned the true attitude the Nighthawks had towards the Antigonus notebook. He decided that he had to search for it seriously and not sleep all the way. Doing so would make Dunn Smith suspicious of his activities at home.

Furthermore, he had benefited quite a lot this time.

Klein sat on the high-back chair at the head of the bronze table. His arms leaned on the armrest as he crossed his fingers while he observed the boundless gray fog carefully. He found the place serene as though no one had stepped into it for ten million years.

When he established the connection to summon the Hanged Man and Justice, he acutely noticed something.

That was the fact that as a Beyonder himself, he had the ability to touch another dark red star!

“Does this mean I can summon one more?” Klein recalled the feeling and muttered in confirmation.

However, he did not have the urge to make an attempt since he did not know what the identity of the newcomer would be or what sort of attitude they would have. After all, not everyone was like Justice or the Hanged Man who had unique personalities that easily blended in and took whatever they needed. They even seemed willing to conceal matters. If he pulled someone like Dunn Smith, then the mysterious organization he had just established would instantly come under the watch of the church.

As an “evil” organization’s boss, his future would be worrying.

Klein knew that the gray fog was special. He knew it was not something a Beyonder at Dunn Smith’s Sequence could see through. But the problem was that since he had the powers of a Beyonder, he had to consider the existence of the gods.

Klein had chosen to carefully believe that the seven orthodox gods existed in reality. Of course, he was more tenable to the belief that these gods were just more powerful than high-Sequence Beyonders. Furthermore, they were under strict limitations. At the very least, ever since the Fifth Epoch, apart from a few oracles, they have not appeared

again.

“Heh, forcefully pulling people here isn’t a good thing. No one would wish to be pulled into mystery for some baffling reason… Let’s wait and see how things go in the future…” Klein sighed and stood up.

He released his spirituality and sensed his body’s existence. Then, he began imitating the heavy feeling of rapidly plunging down.

The scenes in front of him changed. The gray fog and dark red instantly departed him. Klein felt like he had torn through endless water membranes before ultimately seeing the real world, his room in darkness.

This time, he was fully awake and seriously took in the entire experience.

“Strange… There are some differences between the gray fog and the spirit world…” Klein moved his limbs and felt the existence of his body.

After he seriously thought through the experience, he shook his head, walked to the desk and pulled open the curtains.

Whoosh!

The curtains were drawn as sunlight poured in, illuminating the room.

As he looked at the street outside the oriel window and the pedestrians going back and forth, Klein took a deep breath and muttered silently, “It’s time to go out and work.

“How should I act as a Seer?”

“It cannot be rushed… All I can do is use Spirit Vision now…”

†

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Audrey Hall looked at herself in the mirror. She saw her cheeks flushed red with excitement and her eyes, so bright that they would have daunted anyone from looking into them.

She did not examine any of this as she hurriedly recalled. She picked up the ruby-studded fountain pen and wrote the formula to the Spectator potion on the exquisite goatskin parchment.

“80 milliliters of pure water. 5 drops of autumn crocus essence, 13 grams of cow teeth paeonol powder. 7 petals of elf flowers. A matured Manhal Fish’s eyeball. 35 milliliters of goat-horned black fish blood.”

Phew… Audrey heaved a sigh of relief as she read it a few times to confirm that she had not made any mistakes.

She had the urge to dance again, but reminded herself to remain restrained.

After some thought, she began writing various chemical names around the potion’s formula. She then faked the page into complicated and messy chemistry.

Yes, as long as one doesn’t read it carefully, a person who flips through this randomly will not discover the details I have hidden in here… Excellent! Audrey praised herself and turned her mind towards the acquirement of the materials.

“I’ll first search the few vaults we have. I’ll then attempt to exchange for the missing parts with others…”

“If I still can’t gather them all, I can only seek help from the Hanged Man or the Fool… What can I offer as payment?”

After some thought, Audrey closed the notebook and placed it on a tiny bookshelf. Following that, she briskly walked to the door and pulled it open.

A golden retriever was sitting obediently outside.

The corners of Audrey's mouth curled as she revealed a radiant smile.

"Susie, you completed the mission perfectly!"

"In the serialized stories in the newspapers, detectives would often have a capable assistant. I think there should be a huge dog supporting a real Spectator~"

†

In an underground basement lit only by a flickering candle, Alger Wilson raised his palm and looked at it carefully.

After a long while, he let out a sigh.

"It's still that miraculous. I was unable to figure out any specific details at all…"

Despite having made sufficient preparations, he failed to understand how the Fool had completed the summoning…

He moved his gaze down and looked at the goatskin parchment on the table in front of him.

At the title head of the yellowish-brown parchment, there was a Hermes sentence written in dark blue ink.

"7. Seafarer."

Chapter 37 - The Club

◆

Under the scorching afternoon sun, Klein left his house.

Since he had to walk all the way from Iron Cross Street to Welch's place, he wore a linen shirt instead of his formal attire of top hat and leather boots. He wore a matching brown coat, a round felt hat and a pair of old leather shoes. That way, he did not need to worry that the stench of his sweat would contaminate the rather expensive suit.

As he went down Daffodil Street, he strolled toward Iron Cross Street. When he passed by the square around the corner, he subconsciously took a glance.

The tents had already vanished. The circus troupe from before had left after finishing their performance.

Klein originally imagined the animal trainer who had helped him tell his fortune to be a hidden expert. He believed she had purposely appeared to guide him after discovering something unique about him and that she would meet him and provide hints for the future. However, none of that happened. She left for the next stop in the tour with the circus troupe.

How can there be so many cliched tropes… Klein shook his head while grimacing a smile. He turned toward Iron Cross Street.

Iron Cross Street was not characterized by just a single street. Like its name suggested, it was formed by two roads that crossed each other.

With the intersection at its core, it was split into Left Street, Right Street, Upper Street, and Lower Street. Klein, Benson, and Melissa previously lived on Lower Street.

However, the residents living at his former apartment and the surrounding area did not think of the area as Lower Street. Instead, they created the term Middle Street. By doing so, they made a clear difference between those staying there and the poor who lived two hundred meters down the road.

There, a bedroom was occupied by five or six people, and sometimes even up to ten.

Klein walked along the periphery of Left Street as he let his mind wander. He recalled the Antigonus family's notebook and how it was missing. He thought of its importance to the Nighthawks and thought of the deaths that resulted from it.

His heart slowly turned heavy as his face turned ashen.

At that moment, a familiar voice sounded.

"Lad."

Oh… Klein turned his head curiously and found himself by Smyrin Bakery's entrance. Mrs. Wendy with a head of gray hair was greeting him with a wave and a warm smile.

"You don't look… very happy?" Wendy asked genially.

Klein rubbed his face and said, "A little."

"Regardless of your worries, tomorrow will always come," said Mrs. Wendy with a smile. "Here, try out my newly created sweet iced tea. I'm not sure if it suits the palate of the locals."

"Locals? Aren't you one, Mrs. Smyrin?" Klein shook his head in amusement.

Trying out something means it's free, right?

Wendy Smyrin raised her chin a little and said, "You guessed right. I'm actually a Southerner. I came to Tingen with my husband, but that was more than forty years ago. Heh heh, back then, Benson was not born yet. Even your parents did not know each other.

"I have always been a little unaccustomed to the dietary preferences of Northerners and I'm always missing my hometown's food. I miss pork sausages, potato bread, roasted pancakes, vegetables fried in lard, and roasted meat with specialty sauces."

"Oh, and I also miss sweet iced tea…"

Klein suffused a smile when he heard that.

"Mrs. Smyrin, this sure is a topic that makes me hungry… But I feel a lot better. Thank you very much."

"Delicacies can always cure sorrow." Wendy handed him a cup of brownish-red liquid. "This is sweet iced tea I made according to my memories. Try it and tell me if it's nice."

After thanking her, Klein took a sip and found it resembling iced black tea from Earth. However, it was not as stimulating. The taste of tea was stronger and felt more refreshing. It instantly expelled the heat brought by the burning sun.

"It's excellent!" he marveled.

"That puts me at ease." Wendy smiled with squinted eyes as she watched him finish the cup of tea in a genial manner.

After chatting with Mrs. Smyrin about his moving, Klein returned to the street he was most familiar with.

There were far fewer streetside hawkers in the afternoon. They gathered again after half past five. The ones that stayed behind looked drowsy and listless.

The moment he entered the area, Klein's heart suddenly felt overwhelmed by darkness. His heart felt heavy, down, and gloomy for an inexplicable reason.

What's happening? He sharply sensed something wrong about himself. He immediately stopped and observed his surroundings, but did not see anything strange.

After some thought, Klein raised his hand and tapped his glabella like he was thinking.

The extent of his vision immediately transformed. The auras of the hawkers and pedestrians all appeared.

Before Klein could observe the colors of their health, his attention was pulled away by the colors that represented gloominess.

He was unable to determine the exact thoughts of the observed, but the despondent, apathetic, and gloomy impression was deeply carved into his heart.

As he surveyed the area, he realized that even the sun could not disperse those dark colors.

It was a sense of gloom that tainted them from years of repression.

Upon seeing this, Klein instantly understood the reason.

Just as Old Neil said, activating his Spirit Vision easily pulled him into unfamiliar environments and made him feel discomfort. It was also easy for himself to be affected by the emotions of others.

A similar principle could be used on an ability like perception. This was an ability he obtained without additional practice after becoming a Seer. It was a passive sense that could not be declined. It allowed him to directly sense the existence of anything abnormal.

There was bound to be a level of interaction when perceiving things; therefore, in the Beyonder eyes of someone like a Spirit Medium, the intensity of everyone's perception is clear. It is like a fire in the night. Therefore, people with high perceptivity were naturally affected by the intense atmosphere of anything abnormal. It could only be repeatedly practiced to grasp, control, and adapt to such outcomes.

"Such a repressed color is probably formed over extended periods of time, right?" Klein sighed as he shook his head, feeling somewhat affected.

He tapped his glabella twice again and tried hard to converge his spirituality.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein walked toward the apartment and sensed for any abnormal existences or tiny connections while also searching for the Antigonus family's notebook which "he" had hidden.

The streets were the same as usual. There was filthy water and trash on the streets. It only cleared up when he reached the apartment's entrance.

Klein pushed open the half-closed door and circled the first floor in the darkness that the sunlight could not reach.

The wooden stairs creaked constantly as he went up them.

The second floor was as dim as always. Klein released his perception and looked into the darkness.

However, not only did he fail to discover any clues regarding his notebook, he even failed to see any invisible spiritual bodies.

"If it's so easy to encounter them, most ordinary people would not have already sensed the existence of extraordinary matters…" Klein sighed in reflection.

He had already understood that most "spirits" did not exist in the form of spiritual bodies, but in the form of spirituality. Only a Spirit Medium could effectively communicate with them.

After circling the third floor once, Klein left the apartment and retraced his memory's footsteps towards Welch's place.

He walked for a full hour but did not discover anything along the way.

Standing outside the gardened bungalow, Klein looked at the building through the locked iron gates and mumbled to himself, "There's no need for me to search Welch's place, right? Captain and Madam Daly must have done a carpet search of the place…

"Besides, I don't have the key. They can't expect me to climb the walls, right…

"I'll try another path tomorrow…

"I've walked so much today, but there are no step counter rankings…"

While lampooning, Klein returned to the nearby district. He planned on taking a public carriage to Blackthorn Security Company to retrieve his daily allocation of thirty bullets. He needed to make use of his time and practice.

A Seer's lack of quick and effective offensive means could only be made up with his revolver and cane!

The district around Welch's place was relatively clean. Shops with clean and bright windows lined the two sides of the street.

At the turn of the street, Klein was just about to seek out the carriage stop when his gaze swept past a few signboards on the second floor.

"Harrods Department Store."

"Military Veterans Mess."

"Divination Club."

†

Divination Club… Klein silently repeated the name and recalled that he had to ‘act’ as a Seer.

Yes, I should take a look… and seek out new ideas…

Amid his mixed thoughts, Klein went across the street and went to the second floor. He entered the main foyer to see a beautiful female attendant.

The woman with coiled brownish-yellow hair sized up Klein before saying with a smile, “Sir, do you wish to have your fortune told, or do you wish to join our club?”

“What are the conditions for entry?” asked Klein casually.

The woman explained with great familiarity, “Fill in your particulars and pay an annual membership fee. The first year is five pounds and subsequent years will be one pound a year. Don’t worry, we are not like political or business clubs which allow entry through recommendations from formal members.

“Members can freely use the club’s meeting room and various divination rooms and tools. They can enjoy the coffee and tea we provide and read the newspapers and magazines we subscribe for free. They can buy lunch, dinner, and alcoholic beverages at cost price, as well as education materials and materials needed for divination.

“In addition, we invite at least one famous fortune-teller to lecture every month to answer any questions.

“Most importantly, you can find a bunch of friends with the same hobbies and have an exchange with them.”

It sounds pretty good, but… I do not have the money… Klein gave a self-deprecating smile before asking, “Then what if I want my fortune told?”

Chapter 38 - Novice Hobbyist

◆

Upon hearing Klein's question, the beautiful lady with elegantly tied-up brownish-yellow hair appeared to lose her patience. However, she maintained her smile and said, "Our members are free to do divination for others in the club. They also have their prices and we take a very tiny cut as a fee. If you wish to have your fortune told, you can take a look at this album. It has introductions and rates of the members who are willing to do divination for others."

"However, it's Monday afternoon, so most of our members are busy at work. We only have five here today…"

As she introduced the club, she invited Klein to have a seat on the sofa beside a window in the reception hall. Then, she flipped through the album and pointed out the present club members.

"Hanass Vincent. Famous Tingen fortune-teller. The club's resident mentor. Good at various forms of divination. He charges four soli each time."

It's really expensive… That's enough to feed Benson, Melissa, and me to two sumptuous dinners… Klein clicked his tongue silently and did not reply.

When the woman saw this, she continued flipping the page and introducing one member after another.

"…And the final one, Glacis. A member who joined the club this year. He is skilled in tarot divination. He charges two pence each time.

"Sir, who do you plan on choosing?"

Klein did not stand on ceremony and answered, "Mr. Glacis."

"…" The female attendant fell silent for two seconds before saying, "Sir, I have to remind you that Mr. Glacis is only considered a novice."

"I understand. I will be responsible for my own decision." Klein nodded with a smile.

"…Then please follow me." The woman stood up and led Klein through a door beside the reception hall.

It was not a very long corridor and an open meeting room was situated at its end. There was enough sunlight and it was equipped with tables and chairs. There were newspapers, magazines, and paper cards. A faint coffee aroma drifted out.

About two rooms from the meeting room, the attendant gestured for Klein to stop. She sped up her pace and entered the room. She shouted gently, "Mr. Glacis, someone wishes for your divination."

"Me?" A voice filled with surprise and doubt immediately sounded. Following that, there was the sound of a chair moving.

"Yes, which divination room would you like to use?" replied the lady without any emotion.

"Topaz Room. I like topaz." Glacis appeared by the meeting room's door and looked curiously at Klein who was waiting not far away.

He was a man in his thirties; his skin was slightly dark and his pupils were a dark green shade. Under his light, yellow and soft hair, he was dressed in a white shirt and black vest. A monocle hung from his chest and he seemed to have a good disposition.

The attendant did not say anything further as she opened the door to the Topaz Room which was next to the meeting room.

The curtains inside were tightly shut, making it dim. It appeared that only by doing so would one gain revelations from the gods and spirits to obtain an accurate divination outcome.

“Hello there. I’m Glacis. I never expected you to choose me for your divination.” Glacis gave a gentleman’s bow, briskly stepped into the room, and sat behind a long table. “Frankly, I’m only attempting divination for others. I do not have much experience. For now, I’m not a good fortune-teller. You still have a chance for regret.”

After Klein returned the bow, he entered and closed the door behind him.

By the light seeping through the curtains, he said with a smile, “You are a really honest man, but I’m someone who is very firm on his choices.”

“Please have a seat.” Glacis pointed at the seat in front of him and thought for a few seconds. “Divination is my hobby. Heh heh. In life, one often receives guidance from the divine, but the ordinary person is unable to accurately understand the meaning. This is the reason why divination exists and also why I joined this club. In this aspect, I still lack confidence. Let’s make the divination that follows an exchange, a free exchange. How do you like my suggestion? I’ll cover the fees the club requires. It’s just a quarterpence.”

Klein did not agree or shake his head. Instead, he smiled.

“From the looks of it, you have a pretty well-paying and decent job.”

While he said so, he leaned his body forward slightly. He held his forehead with his right fist and tapped at it twice.

“But that does not enhance the accuracy of my divination,” answered Glacis humorously. “Does your head hurt? Do you want to divine problems regarding health?”

“A little. I wish to divine where an item is.” Klein had already thought of an excuse as he slowly leaned back.

In his eyes, Glacis's aura clearly presented itself. The orange colors by his lungs were dark and sparse. They even influenced the brightness in other areas.

This is not a symptom of exhaustion… Klein nodded in an indiscernible manner.

“Are you searching for a lost item?” Glacis thought for a few seconds before saying, “Then let's do a simple determination.”

He pushed the neatly stacked tarot cards on the black table toward Klein.

“Calm down. Think of that item and ask yourself ‘can it still be found.’ While doing so, shuffle and cut the deck.”

“Alright.” Klein actually did not remember what the ancient notebook looked like. All he could do was repeat the question to himself: Can the Antigonus family's notebook still be found?

While he repeated the thought, he skillfully shuffled and cut the deck.

Glacis picked the topmost card and pushed it in front of Klein. The card was facing down horizontally.

“Turn it clockwise until it sits vertical. Then flip it open. If the card is inverted, which means the picture on the card is facing away from you, it indicates that the item cannot be found. If the card is upright, then we can continue the divination and seek its actual location.”

Klein followed his instructions and turned the horizontal card vertical.

He clasped the end of the tarot card and flipped it over.

It was an inverted card.

“What a pity.” Glacis sighed.

Klein did not respond because his attention was focused on the tarot card in front of him.

The inverted card's picture was dressed in gorgeous clothes and splendid headdress—The Fool!

It's The Fool again? It can't be so coincidental, right… According to the Hanged Man and Old Neil, divination is the outcome of the communication of spirituality and the spirit world with a higher-dimensional "me." Tarot cards are only a convenient tool to read what the truth symbolizes. In theory, using any divination item doesn't matter as it doesn't affect the outcome… Klein frowned as he thought for a moment.

"Can it be divined whether the item is already in the hands of others?"

"Of course. Follow the same procedure and do it again." Glacis nodded with rich interest.

Klein shuffled and cut the deck while thinking of his question.

He drew a card and placed it horizontally before turning it vertical clockwise. He finished all the preparations with a serious expression.

Taking a deep breath, Klein reached out his hand and flipped over the tarot card.

Please do not be The Fool again…

While praying, he suddenly relaxed because the card was that of The Star and it was inverted!

"From the looks of it, the item has not been taken by others yet," interpreted Glacis with a smile.

Klein nodded and raised his right hand. He tapped his glabella, looking as though he was deep in thought. Then, he took out two pennies with a dark copper luster from his pocket and pushed it towards Glacis.

"Didn't I say it was free?" Glacis said with a frown.

Klein laughed as he got up.

“This is the respect divination deserves.”

“Alright, thank you for your generosity.” Glacis stood up and reached out his hand.

After shaking his hand, Klein took two steps back and turned around. He walked to the door and twisted the doorknob.

Just as he was about to leave, he suddenly turned his head and made a terse sound.

“Mr. Glacis, I suggest that you see a doctor as soon as possible. Focus on your lungs.”

“Why?” asked Glacis in surprise.

Are you cursing me because you aren’t pleased with the divination results?

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “It’s a symptom based on the color of your face. You, well… your glabella seems dark[1].”

“Glabella seems dark…” It was the first time Glacis was hearing such a description.

Klein did not explain further as he walked out the room with a smile. He closed the wooden door behind him.

“Is he an unlicensed doctor or a herbalist?” Glacis shook his head, amused. He then picked up his monocle for divination.

On careful look, he realized his glabella was indeed dark.

But this was a problem of the environment. In the darkness due to the closed curtains, not only was his glabella dark, his entire face was shrouded in darkness!

“It’s not a very likable joke.” Glacis muttered.

He worriedly divined his own health to make sure that everything was alright.

†

After leaving the Divination Club, Klein had an additional plan for the future.

It was to save as much money as possible to pay the annual fee to become a member of the club. After which, he could begin acting as a Seer.

As for why he did not choose to do it independently, it was because he temporarily lacked the resources and channels. He could not bring himself to stand on the streets as a hawker since he cared for his reputation.

A few minutes later, the public carriage arrived. He spent two pence and reached Zouteland Street which was not very far off.

He pushed open the door to Blackthorn Security Company but did not see the familiar brown-haired girl. He only saw the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell with his poetic bearing behind the reception counter.

“Good afternoon. Where’s Rozanne?” Klein asked after taking off his hat and bowing.

Leonard smiled and pointed at the partition.

“It’s her shift tonight at the armory.”

Without waiting for Klein to ask another question, Leonard said as though he was pondering over a matter, “Klein, I have a question that has always puzzled me.”

“What is it?” Klein wore a blank look.

Leonard stood up and smilingly said with a relaxed tone, “Why did Welch and Naya commit suicide on the spot while you returned home?”

“It likely has to do with how the unknown existence made me take the Antigonus family’s notebook away to hide it,” answered Klein with the official surmise.

Leonard paced around before turning to look straight into Klein’s eyes.

“If your suicide was meant to silence you and wipe out any clues, why weren’t you made to destroy the notebook there and then?”

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†

This is a classic Chinese saying to someone. It usually implies an ominous portent.

Chapter 39 - Interesting Trick

◆

In fact, I do not know if the notebook is destroyed or hidden… but by using backward reasoning, if it is to be destroyed, it could have been done on the spot. There was no need for me to take it away to carry out the destruction…

Upon hearing Leonard’s question, Klein instantly went into keyboard detective mode and said with a sigh, “Perhaps when Welch, Naya, and I made contact with the unknown existence, it enjoyed the sacrifice of life or wished for similar situations to continue. With the suicide definitely easily discoverable, I was made to take away the notebook to hide it so as to prepare for the existence’s second round of entertainment. However, some mishap happened during the process and I failed to succeed in my suicide.”

This was a reasoned guess Klein made from his consumption of novels, movies, and TV dramas which involved cult sacrifices.

As for the mishap that happened midway, he knew very well that it was due to the unexpected variable of him being a transmigrator.

“Quite a good explanation, but I believe there might be other possibilities. Welch’s and Naya’s suicide sacrifice might have made it possible for the unknown existence to descend on this world. Then, that notebook is a vessel or a breeding ground for evil. It made you take it away to hide it, worried that we would destroy it if we discovered its birth—before it became strong.” Leonard Mitchell suggested another possibility.

Having said that, he stared into Klein's eyes and smiled slightly.

"Of course, perhaps the notebook has been destroyed. The goal is to hide its content, to conceal the vessel or the brooding of evil. That way, there is a sufficient reason for your failed suicide."

What does he mean? Is he suspecting me? Is he suspecting that the original Klein's body is a vessel or used for the brooding of evil? No, what he's being a vessel for is a transmigrator… Actually, "Brooding" isn't a correct term. Klein was taken aback. While he secretly criticized the idea, he weighed his words.

"I will not try to defend myself since I've lost memories from that period. Be it Captain or Madam Daly, they have already confirmed that I'm fine. Your joke isn't funny."

"I'm only considering a possibility. It does not eliminate the blow the unknown existence encountered when it descended which caused your suicide to fail. We believe that the Goddess will ultimately bless us." Leonard laughed as he changed the subject. "Did you discover anything in the afternoon?"

After the conversation and the previous encounters, Klein was very wary of Leonard. He answered in a composed manner, "No. I plan on trying a different route tomorrow afternoon."

He pointed to the partition and said, "I'll need to head to the armory to draw the bullets."

The Shooting Club opened to nine at night. After all, its availability increased only after many of its members got off work.

"May Goddess bless you." Leonard smiled as he gestured the sign of the crimson moon on his chest.

He watched Klein pass through the partition and listened to his footsteps down the stairs. Leonard's smile gradually vanished as a look of doubt appeared in his green eyes.

He whispered something with a displeased tone.

†

Down the stairs, Klein followed the gas lamp-illuminated corridor to the armory and archives.

The iron door was open and the brown-haired Rozanne was standing in front of the table. She was chatting with a top hat-wearing middle-aged man with a thick black beard.

“Good afternoon, no. Good evening. It’s always night here. Klein, I heard from Old Neil that you have become a Beyonder? It’s called Seer?” Rozanne turned her head and deluged him with her questions.

She did not hide her curiosity and concern.

Klein nodded with a smile.

“Good afternoon, Miss Rozanne. It’s indeed always night here, but it makes one feel a sense of serenity. The description you gave wasn’t accurate enough. It should be said that the Sequence potion I consumed has the name Seer.”

“You still chose to become a Beyonder after all…” Rozanne said with a sigh as she fell into a deep thought.

Klein looked at the middle-aged man beside her and asked politely, “You are?”

Another Nighthawk member or one of the other two civilian staff I have not met?

Rozanne puckered her lips and said, “Bredt. Our colleague. He wishes to change slots with me to free up the night after tomorrow. He plans on going to the theater in the North Borough with his wife to watch The Prideful One. It’s to celebrate their fifteenth-year wedding anniversary. He’s truly a romantic gentleman.”

Bredt smiled as he extended his hand and said, “With Miss Rozanne around, there’s nothing that requires repeating. Hello, Klein. I never expected you to become a Beyonder so quickly. As for me, heh, I might never have the courage.”

“Perhaps it’s as the saying goes, the ignorant knows no fear,” Klein said in a self-deprecating manner as he extended his hand to shake Bredt’s.

“Me not having courage is not something bad,” said Bredt with a shake of his head. “A Beyonder once told me before his death to never probe strange and dangerous matters. The less you know, the longer you live.”

At that moment, Rozanne interjected, “Klein, there’s no need to mind it. I heard from Old Neil that as a Seer, you are used as support. It’s relatively safe as long as you do not attempt to communicate with unknown existences. Why are you dressed in such clothes? It’s so unbecoming of a gentleman! What are you here for?”

“I’m here to draw my thirty bullets.” Klein did not reply to Rozanne’s first question.

He believed that the lady would quickly forget the matter.

“Alright.” Rozanne pointed at the table and said, “Bredt, it’s all yours. You should know where the keys and bullets are. Oh, Old Neil really is petty. He did not even leave his hand ground coffee behind. He promised me that I could drink my fill today…”

She prattled on as Klein received the bullets.

The duo left together and went their separate ways at Zouteland Street. One took a public carriage home while the other walked into the Shooting Club.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein repeated the process—gripping the gun, raising his arms, shooting, releasing the cylinder, ejecting the empty shells, and stuffing in rounds—again and again. He became familiar with the process and built it into his muscle memory.

Of course, he had a few breaks in between to review and correct the process.

After finishing his practice, Klein used the grounds to do various exercises like push-ups. He worked hard to train his body to improve his physique.

Once everything was over, he sat in an untracked carriage home. Only then he realized it was nearing seven and the sky was already dark.

Just as Klein was planning to head to the market or streets to buy the ingredients for dinner, the door opened. Melissa had returned with her stationery-filled bag.

Apart from that, she carried quite a lot of groceries.

"…I thought you and Benson would be home rather late. This morning, I took out 1 soli from the place where you stash your money." Upon seeing her brother's questioning look, Melissa explained in her usual serious manner.

"Since you took the money, why didn't you take the public carriage to school?" Klein had been reminded of the matter from the morning.

Melissa said with a frown, "Why should I take a public carriage. It costs four pence to get to school. A return trip means eight pence. Counting Benson and you, we will be spending twenty-four pence on transportation daily. That's a whole two soli! In a week, yes, without counting Sunday, that's still twelve soli. It's almost equal to our rent."

Stop, stop, stop! Don't flaunt your mathematical prowess… Klein lowered his palm in an amused manner.

Melissa first stopped before adding, "It's pretty good walking to school. Our teacher said that everyone should exercise frequently. Besides, I can pick some damaged components on the way."

Klein chuckled and said, "Then let's do the math again. The public carriage costs twelve soli. The rent is twelve soli and three pence. It's a total of one pound, four soli and three pence. Using Benson's salary is enough to pay for it and there will be quite a bit of change left. Yes, he received last week's salary… As for me, I can still earn one pound ten soli every week. Even if we eat meat every day while counting expenses like gas, charcoal, wood, and condiments, we would still have some left if we are frugal with lunch. We can even subscribe to the morning papers for just one penny."

"In two months, when I make up for the advanced payment, I can save money for both you and Benson. We can have new clothes."

"But! But we have to think of the possible accidents." Melissa stayed firm on her point.

Klein smiled at her and said, "Then, we can eat less meat. Don't you find spending fifty, no, a hundred minutes on the road a waste of time? You could use that time to read more and think over problems and improve your results.

"That way, Melissa, you will graduate with excellent grades. You will be able to find a job with a pretty good salary. When that happens, what is there to worry about?"

"…"

He fully displayed his experience gained from debating with people on message boards and finally convinced Melissa. She agreed to take the public carriage to school.

Phew, I've finally suckered her into doing it. No, how can I call it suckering. This is called convincing… Klein lampooned before taking over the groceries that Melissa had bought. He said with a sigh, "Remember to buy beef or meat like mutton and chicken… Eat until you're full and enjoy yourself. Only then will you be equipped with a healthy body and a clever brain to match the demanding requirements needed for your studies."

Just mentioning it makes me salivate…

Melissa puckered her lips and after a few seconds of silence, said, "Alright."

†

The next morning, after ensuring that Melissa took a public carriage, Klein and Benson separated and went to their respective companies.

The moment Klein stepped into the door, he saw Old Neil and Rozanne chatting by the reception desk. The former was still in his classic black robe, without any concern for the gazes of others. The latter had changed into a casual cream-colored dress.

"Good morning, Mr. Neil, Miss Rozanne," greeted Klein as he took off his hat.

Old Neil gave him a mischievous look.

"Good morning, you did not hear anything you shouldn't have heard last night, right?"

"No, I slept very well." Klein was also quite puzzled over that.

He could only put it down to his inadequate perception…

"Haha, don't mind that. Actually, it's not that easily heard." Old Neil pointed to the partition and said, "Go to the armory. We will continue our mysticism lessons this morning."

Klein nodded and followed Old Neil down the stairs and arrived at the armory to replace Bredt who had been on duty the entire night.

“What will we be learning today?” asked Klein curiously.

Old Neil dragged out his response and said, “The complicated and basic knowledge. But before that, let me teach you an interesting trick.”

He pointed at the silver chain on his wrist. There was a pure moonstone hanging from the chain.

[image]

Chapter 40 - Mysticism Curriculum

◆

“An interesting trick?”

Klein asked out of extreme curiosity.

Old Neil chuckled and said, “I’ll complete my patrol of the armory, storeroom, and archives. Use the two cups on the table to make two cups of coffee. In one of the cups, put something unpleasant. As for what it is, you can decide for yourself. Use your imagination. The only request from me is to not waste too much coffee powder. Those are coffee beans grown on the Feynapotter plateau and hand ground by me!”

“Alright.” Although Klein was unsure what Old Neil was up to, he happily agreed to it.

He watched him open the iron gates to the armory with a copper key and then heard the echoing footsteps inside. Slowly, he settled the cups down and confirmed that there was still hot water in the kettle.

He removed the silver tin can’s lid and using a tiny spoon with a metallic sheen, Klein scooped a spoonful of rich aromatic coffee powder into each of the two cups. Then, he poured in the hot water and stirred it.

As a transmigrator who came from an era abundant in resources, he was no stranger to coffee. However, it was only limited to instant coffee.

After finishing the task, Klein pondered for a moment and sat down. He crossed his right leg and took some of the mud which had stained the bottom of his leather boots and placed it in the left cup.

Then, he carefully stirred it again until the colors and smells of the two cups of coffee were practically indistinguishable.

A few minutes later, Old Neil walked out the armory while swinging his keys. He then closed the iron gates with a clang.

“Are you done?” He turned his slightly turbid dark red eyes over and looked at Klein across the table.

“Yes,” replied Klein with a nod.

Old Neil chuckled and removed the silver chain around his wrist and sat down.

His expression quickly turned serene. He held out his chain-holding left hand and allowed it to hang over the coffee cup to his right. The moonstone nearly touched the liquid.

Amid the relaxing calmness, the moonstone trembled suddenly. It began spinning the chain in a counterclockwise manner.

“This cup is the one with the unpleasant thing,” said Old Neil surely.

Without waiting for Klein to confirm, he put away the silver chain and picked up the other cup of coffee and took a sip.

“Do you like bitter coffee? I’m used to having a tablespoon of sugar and a tablespoon of milk.”

Klein did not reply but instead asked with his interest piqued, “Your divination sure is accurate. Was it because of the moonstone? That was moonstone, right?”

“This is known as pendulum dowsing in divination. It’s also called spirit dowsing. It relies on your own Astral Projection’s connection with the spirit world and the cosmos to communicate with spiritual intelligence through the aid of natural materials such as crystals, gems, or special metals. The good and bad of things can be divined… Let's talk about the two cups of coffee. A counterclockwise motion implies bad, while a clockwise motion is good. If it doesn't move, it's neither good nor bad. You can write the statement on a piece of paper. Take note, it's a statement and not a question." Old Neil put down the cup of coffee and explained in detail.

Klein asked as though he was thinking, "Does that mean one shouldn't use questioning sentences?"

"Yes, you cannot use"is so-and-so willing to be my fiancée,' but you should instead use 'so-and-so is willing to be my fiancée.' Write it on a piece of paper and place it on the desk. Then use your dominant hand to hold the pendulum chain. Take note, use your dominant hand," said Old Neil with a chuckle. "When doing so, keep your arm straight. Adjust the chain's length and make the moonstone hang just above the piece of paper to the point of almost touching what we wrote. Then, close your eyes and repeat the sentence seven times in your mind. Open your eyes when you are done and see if the spirit pendulum turns or not. If it doesn't, close your eyes again and repeat the process until it moves."

Klein nodded slightly and asked, "Counterclockwise means 'no,' and clockwise means 'yes?'"

"It can also be interpreted as success or failure," corrected Old Neil. He taught Klein the other usages and details of spirit pendulum divination.

Klein pondered over the matter and discovered that it was a very useful divination trick. For instance, he could quickly use it in an unfamiliar environment to determine if the food he was offered was poisonous or not. He did not need any additional knowledge of field biology.

Of course, such divination methods were overly simple. The answers he could receive were limited to two or three. There was no way for deeper investigation or interpretation. For example, although something could be harmful to the body, it could become very beneficial after some processing. An example was certain foods. They were indeed damaging to the body, but nothing serious. If one was on the brink of starving, eating it would not be a huge problem. These were things that spirit dowsing could not determine.

"I will have to quickly save money to buy crystals or pure silver to create a spirit pendulum…" Klein sighed.

Old Neil looked at him in puzzlement.

"You can apply for one directly. This is a standard issue for Beyonders, especially Beyonders like us who take on a support role. There's still a topaz and pure silver spirit pendulum in the armory."

"But I'm still not a formal member of the team…" Klein's heart palpitated in excitement, but he felt a little hesitant.

Old Neil chuckled and said, "For Beyonders, regardless of whether they are formal members or not, they have to be provided with conveniences in other areas since there's no pay rise."

"Maybe the word 'perk' is more suitable. I'll apply with Captain later!" Klein clenched his fists secretly as he made up his mind.

How was he to know if Captain would approve his request without trying?

"Alright," said Old Neil with a smile. "We can officially begin our mysticism curriculum. The basics consist of symbolism. Do you know what symbolism means?"

Klein recalled the bits and pieces he had heard and the things he had seen and heard from his spirit world and the gray fog. He deliberated and said, "Regardless of the spirit world or the illusory cosmos, as well as the unknown realms, they are beyond our sensory world. It's not something that can be accurately described by the information our ears, nose, and eyes obtain. What we obtain are simply indescribable experiences and direct revelations. They also appear as abstract characters or pictorial symbols. These symbols represent different items and different meanings.”

“Very accurate. As expected of a Seer.” Old Neil nodded solemnly. “Only by grasping the ability to interpret the symbols can you really take the next step into the world of mysticism. Yes, the pictures on tarot cards and each of the elements in the pictures are symbols. They are man-made symbols that help us understand and interpret primordial revelations.”

He pulled out a piece of paper and picked up a fountain pen beside him. He drew a short curve.

Following that, he added a few vertical lines beneath the curve. He looked up at Klein and asked, “Do you know what this symbol represents?”

Klein looked at it for quite a while before saying hesitatingly, “Eyelashes?”

“…” Old Neil exhaled. “This is the symbol of the Bumper Harvest constellation. This is the Thunderous constellation, and this is the Frost constellation…”

He casually drew a few more symbols.

As Klein memorized them, he could not help but comment, “The names of these constellations are really… especially unsophisticated. Yes, unsophisticated!”

How tacky and primordial…

Old Neil revealed a smile.

“Emperor Roselle thought the same back then. He always had the intention of changing the constellation names to things like Virgo, Cancer, and Scorpio. Unfortunately, he did not have the strength to go against tradition. At the very least, these constellations' old names and the corresponding dates that they represent guide farming and harvests."

"I have to say that Emperor Roselle sure is a person with ideas." Klein was at a loss for words.

Yes, Emperor Roselle was likely a decent person when he was alive…

Old Neil was unable to understand Klein's humor as he continued explaining the various basic symbols, such as the various constellations, the sun, the crimson moon, the Brown Planet, the Scarlet Planet, and the Blue Planet.

While talking about these, he would teach Klein how to draw the divination astrolabe and indicate what things to pay attention to. He also taught the materials and creation of a crystal ball, and the choice of incantations. The teachings overwhelmed Klein.

If not for his discovery that the Seer potion had improved his memory slightly, he would have long asked Old Neil to stop to aid his digesting of the information.

"That's all for today's mysticism class. Think over it yourself and ask me if you have any questions." Old Neil took out a gold pocket watch and opened it with a snap to check the time. "Do not forget to read the historical documents I prepared for you. To be frank, I feel fear seeing them."

"Alright." Klein took the pieces of paper that were sketched with symbols by Old Neil. He quickly went through the mysticism knowledge he learned today to prevent himself from forgetting it.

Old Neil took a sip of a newly brewed cup of coffee and said, "Memory itself won't do. You have to use it often. That way, you can make the knowledge instinctual. Also, Cogitation has to be carried on every day. Only more practice and usage will allow you to grasp the power of the potion, digging into the mysteries it hides away and removing its unpleasant effects.

With this raised, Klein recalled acting and the Divination Club. He probed, “My potion’s abilities are related to divination. Practicing by myself will not do. I need to make contact with lots of people and divine for them to quickly grasp it. I plan on joining the Divination Club after having some spare cash—the one on Howes Street in North Borough—to become a real Seer.”

This was not something he could hide from the Nighthawks in the future. It was better to prepare them.

“Your idea is very similar to Daly’s. She has always clamored to be a real Spirit Medium.” Old Neil shook his head and laughed. “But why must you wait till you have spare cash? You can apply to Dunn and get him to approve of the expenses!”

“Organizations like a Divination Club might also have cultists or members of evil organizations in them. As a civilian staff member of the Nighthawks and a standard Beyonder, your membership makes it easy for us to monitor them. It’s part of the job! We would regularly monitor these places, but as we lack manpower, we can’t keep watch on them for long. Now, it can be handled to you.”

I can do that? As he looked at Old Neil’s serious expression, Klein was dumbfounded.

This is making an expense claim for private matters!

I know nothing about such matters…

Indeed, I’m just a keyboard warrior…

“You wish to use your own money to do this?” Old Neil smiled as he added when he saw Klein’s face.

Klein immediately shook his head as he answered firmly, “I plan on reporting it to Captain!”

Old Neil nodded in satisfaction and looked at the cup of coffee with the unpleasant thing inside. It had not been poured away.

“What did you put in there?”

Klein smiled embarrassingly.

“It’s just some dirt underneath my boots. Its color and your coffee powder looks almost the same.”

Old Neil was taken aback as he suddenly clasped his mouth and roared, “Why aren’t you pouring it away yet!?”

Chapter 41 - Audrey and Her Susie

◆

After pouring away the coffee and returning to the armory to take the thick stack of historical materials and explanatory transcripts from Old Neil, Klein followed the wall of lights up the staircase to the Blackthorn Security Company.

Tap. Tap. Tap. His footsteps echoed in the sealed and quiet basement.

After Klein left the spiral staircase, he pushed open the door and identified his bearings before heading for the second office opposite of him.

After familiarizing himself for two days, he had a general understanding of the layout of the Blackthorn Security Company.

The entrance brought visitors to a huge reception hall with sofas and tables. Through the partition, there was an inner region. To the left of the corridor were three rooms. From the nearest to the furthest, they were Mrs. Orianna's account room, a rest room with a few sofa beds, and the staircase that led underground.

On the right were three rooms. From the nearest to the furthest was Captain Dunn Smith's office, a civilian staff office with a typewriter, and the recreation room for formal members of the Nighthawks team.

Klein had previously seen Leonard Mitchell playing cards with two other teammates in the recreation room. He guessed that they were playing Fighting the Landlord. Of course, Emperor Rochelle had already given it a new name—Fighting Evil. However, the way it was played was identical to what Klein knew.

Bredt was entitled to a day of sleep after a night shift. Rozanne was at the reception desk. The carriage driver who was in charge of procuring necessities and collecting supplies, Cesare Francis, was out as usual. When Klein opened the door to the civilian staff office, the three desks inside were empty. Only the typewriter sat there silently.

"Akerson Company's Model 1346 typewriter…" Klein, who had seen similar objects in his mentor's office and Welch's place, muttered. He felt that the complicated mechanisms inside were filled with the beauty of machinery.

He walked to the desk with the typewriter. After preparing himself, he attempted to type something on air.

In the beginning, he often converted the local language to Chinese 'pinyin' instinctively. Only after he was familiar with it did he 'digest' the original Klein's corresponding memory fragment and no longer made mistakes.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The rhythmic tapping on the typewriter sounded like a melody composed from the heavy marriage of metal and industry. Under this melody, Klein quickly typed the expenditure application.

However, he was in no hurry to meet Dunn Smith. Instead, he focused his mind and read the materials provided by Old Neil seriously. It was both revision and new material.

When it was almost noon, he stretched his neck and put away the documents. He then read and consolidated what he had learned on mysticism in the morning.

Only after all that did he take his application to the office next door and knocked on the door gently.

Dunn was waiting for lunch to be delivered. When he saw Klein hand him the document, the corners of his mouth curved up.

“Did Old Neil teach you this?”

“Yes.” Klein did not hesitate to betray Old Neil.

Dunn picked up his dark red fountain pen and signed it.

“I happen to be applying for funding for the months of July, August, and September from the Church and the police department. I’ll add yours in. When it’s approved, get the money from Mrs. Orianna. You can draw the spirit pendulum in the afternoon.”

“Alright,” Klein answered simply and vigorously.

His tone and eyes were obviously filled with joy.

Before bidding Dunn farewell, he asked casually, “Shouldn’t the budget for July, August, and September be applied for by June?”

Why are you applying for July’s budget only in July?

Dunn fell silent for a few seconds before sipping his coffee.

“We encountered three cases in June. I was so busy that I forgot about it.”

As expected of Captain and his poor memory… Klein knew he had asked a question he should not have asked. He gave a chuckle before leaving immediately.

With that, he began a simple but regular lifestyle. He would spend half an hour in the early morning Cogitating. He would have two hours of mysticism lessons in the morning and an hour and a half of studying the historical documents. After lunch, he would take a short nap in the break room to regain his energy.

Following that, he would draw bullets and head to the Shooting Club.

After finishing his practice, he would stroll over to Welch's place, which was not too far. He would then change routes and return to Iron Cross Street. That way, he could save on the carriage fees. If he had time, he would practice his Spirit Vision and Spirit Dowsing. On the way, he would buy groceries.

†

In a private chemistry laboratory equipped with apparatus and items.

A tall, blond Audrey was looking at the cup in her hand. There were countless bubbles and it made the atmosphere serene.

Finally, the liquid in the cup precipitated into a sticky silver substance.

"Haha, I'm indeed talented in mysticism. I succeeded in one try! I was worried of failure and prepared two sets of materials!" the girl muttered to herself in delight.

She put away the items she took from her family's vault or exchanged them with others. She took a deep breath and prepared to close her eyes to drink down the Spectator potion.

At that moment, barking sounded from outside the laboratory. Audrey frowned instantly.

She hid the cup of silver liquid in a dark corner, turned around and headed to the door.

"Susie, who's here?" Audrey turned the doorknob and asked the golden retriever sitting in front of the door.

Susie wagged her tail in an obsequious manner. Her personal maidservant, Annie, had appeared in the corridor nearby.

Audrey walked out of the laboratory and closed the door. She looked at Annie and said, "Didn't I tell you? Do not disturb me when I'm running chemistry experiments."

A vexed Annie answered, “But there’s an invitation from the Duchess, Duchess Della.”

“Duke Negan’s wife?” Audrey took a few steps forward and asked Annie.

“Yes. She has managed to hire the services of the palace’s baker, Madam Vivi, and plans to invite you and Madam to afternoon tea,” Annie recounted the invitation.

Audrey tapped her cheeks discreetly and said, “Tell my mother that I have a headache. Perhaps I’m a little dehydrated because of the scorching sun. Please get her to convey my apologies to Madam Della.”

As she spoke, she acted frail.

“Miss, it’s not only afternoon tea, but a literature salon,” added Annie.

“But that won’t treat my dizziness. I need rest,” rejected Audrey firmly.

Simultaneously, she muttered deep down. If they insist, I’ll faint for all of you to see. The etiquette teacher said that I can do it most perfectly… I think I heard something?

“Alright,” Annie exhaled and said. “Do you need me to help you back to your room?”

“There’s no need. I’ll clean up the laboratory first.” Audrey was yearning to return immediately to consume the potion.

However, she suppressed her impatience. She only returned to the laboratory’s entrance when she saw Annie leave.

Suddenly, she discovered that the golden retriever, Susie, who was waiting outside, was gone. Furthermore, the door to the laboratory was half opened.

“I forgot that Susie can open doors with handles… What was that sound? Not good!” Audrey heard crisp sounds coming from within. Suddenly, she came to a realization as she charged into the laboratory.

All she could see was the cups shattered on the floor. Susie was licking the final drop of silver liquid.

Audrey stood rooted at the entrance like a statue.

Susie immediately sat down and looked at her owner innocently as she wagged her tail.

†

In the seas beyond the Pritz Harbor, there was an island perennially enveloped in storms. An ancient sailboat was docked at its harbor.

A blond man dressed in a robe with lightning patterns was looking at Alger Wilson opposite to him. He asked, perplexed, “Alger, you could have returned to the kingdom and become a captain of a Mandated Punisher team or a reputable bishop. Why did you choose to voyage out into sea and become the captain of the Blue Avenger?”

Alger wore a stoic expression on his rough face. He replied solemnly, “The sea belongs to the Storm. This is the Lord’s kingdom. I’m willing to abide by the Lord’s will and monitor this area of His kingdom.”

“Alright.” The blond haired man clenched his fist and struck his chest. “May the Storm be with you.”

“May the Storm be with you.” Alger replied with the same standard salute.

He stood on the deck with a few sailors and watched his companions leave the boat, walking into the distance.

“Sainz, you do not understand because you do not know enough…” Alger muttered silently.

Meanwhile, Audrey finished her second concoction in a panic-stricken state.

Seeing that the silver potion looked nothing different from before, she was nearly moved to tears.

Gulp. She quickly drank down the Spectator potion.

†

Friday. A storm befell Tingen. The heavy rain pounded on the windows of every household.

Inside the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein, Rozanne, and Bredt sat on the sofa in the reception hall and enjoyed lunch.

As there was only a kettle for boiling water, there was no way to heat up leftovers. Klein could not eat rye bread every day or take the carriage home every day. If he did that, he would have to walk from Iron Cross Street to Welch's place in the afternoon and consider taking a carriage back. It was a waste of money; therefore, he began joining Rozanne and his colleagues in eating the so-called 'office rations.'

The nearby Old Will's Restaurant would punctually send a waiter at half past ten every day. He would ask for their orders and after determining the quantity, he would send it over at half past twelve. The food was contained in what resembled meal boxes. At three, he would return to take their orders for dinner and take back the utensils.

The 'rations' included meat, vegetables, and bread. Although the quantity was lacking, it was barely sufficient to fill a person. A cost of a meal ranged from seven to ten pence depending on the different premium levels.

Klein would always thicken his skin and order the meal costing seven pence. Typically, there was half a pound of wheat bread, a tiny piece of meat cooked in different ways, a ladle of thick soup with vegetables, and tiny bits of butter or margarine.

"We actually only have one Nighthawk here today…" Rozanne said as she delivered a spoonful of thick soup into her mouth.

“I heard that a case with cultist elements is going on in Golden Indus. Therefore, the police department has requested for two Nighthawks…” Bredt said as he put down his bread.

Klein used the remaining wheat bread and dabbed it into the last bits of meat juice before stuffing it into his mouth. He did not say a word.

Under his left sleeve, there was a silver chain with a topaz hanging.

At that moment, knocks sounded outside the half-closed main door.

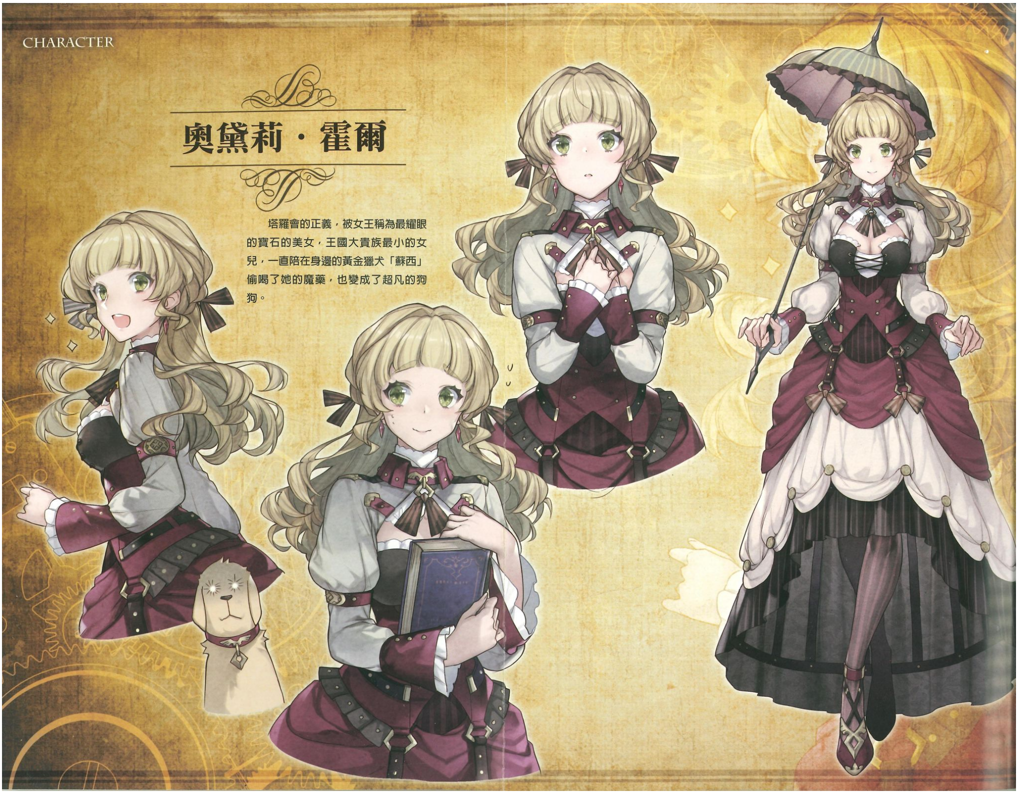
“…Please come in.” Rozanne was taken aback as she put down her spoon. She quickly used a handkerchief to wipe her mouth and stood up.

The door was pushed open as a man in a halved top hat came in. The left shoulder of his black formal suit was drenched.

The sides of his hair had grayed. He put away his umbrella and said to Klein and company, “Is this the former small mercenary squad?”

“You can say that,” answered Rozanne like clockwork.

The lanky man coughed and said, “I have a mission request.”



奧黛莉·霍爾

塔羅會的正義，被女王稱為最耀眼的寶石的美女，王國大貴族最小的女兒，一直陪在身邊的黃金獵犬「蘇西」偷喝了她的魔藥，也變成了超凡的狗狗。

Audrey Hall
The "Justice" of the Tarot Club, a beauty hailed by the Queen as the "most dazzling jewel." She is the youngest daughter of a great noble family of the Kingdom.
Her golden retriever, "Susie," who has always stayed by her side, secretly drank her potion and also became a transcendent (Beyonder) doggy.

Chapter 42 - Butler Klee

◆

A mission request… You probably came to the wrong place… This security company's signboard is really nothing but a signboard…

Klein immediately held back his urge to lampoon when he heard the visitor. How he yearned for there to be a message board and a screen for him to share his thoughts.

But he soon realized that he had once asked a similar question. The captain's answer was that they could take on jobs if they were free. The money earned could be used as funding for the team's petty cash account and bonuses for the participants.

Rozanne's eyes darted around as she thought for a moment before saying, "Our security personnel are all out on missions. The fastest it will take for them to return is an hour. If your matter isn't urgent, you can consider our services."

Among the six formal Nighthawk members, Captain Dunn Smith had been invited to the cathedral by the bishop for some unknown discussion. Leonard Mitchell was guarding Chanis Gate in his place.

Corpse Collector Frye and Sleepless Royale Reideen had already headed to the Golden Indus Borough to assist the police in the investigation of a robbery case with cultist inklings. Sleepless Kenley White was on leave, while Midnight Poet Seeka Tron had gone to Raphael Cemetery in the north suburb for a daily patrol.

As for the remaining two Beyonders, Old Neil was frail and too advanced in his years. He had not taken any missions in a long time. Klein was still a novice and was truly inadequate in various aspects.

“They are all out…” With one hand holding his umbrella, the lanky man’s expression turned gloomy as he took off his hat. He bowed and said, “Sorry for intruding. Goodbye.”

He turned around and walked out. He went down the stairs and left 36 Zouteland Street amid the spattering rain and howling winds.

“What a bloody pity.” Rozanne watched the man left and sighed regretfully.

Although she would not have gotten any share of the commission, she definitely would have been able to partake in a sumptuous meal.

“There’s nothing we can do about it. Chanis Gate needs someone watching it all the time.” Klein put down his cutlery in satisfaction. Even though he did not like the soup mixture of turnips and vegetables, he still drank it clean. “Don’t tell me you want Bredt to take the mission? Or yourself?”

Rozanne rolled her eyes and giggled.

“Bredt won’t do, but you can. Our Mister Seer…”

The moment she finished her sentence, she immediately realized what she had just said. She covered her mouth in shock because the door had not been fully closed. It someone walked past outside or heard anything about Beyonders, it would be considered a leak.

“Thankfully Captain isn’t around…” Rozanne looked out the door and secretly stuck her tongue out. “Or I’ll have to go for confession again!”

Bredt and Klein laughed out in unison as they exchanged looks before beginning to put away the cutlery.

After everything was done, Klein, who did not bring his umbrella, decided to stay at Blackthorn Security Company due to the ongoing rain.

He took out some newspapers and sat on the soft but bouncy sofa as he leisurely began his ‘afternoon break.’

“The airship route from Backlund to Desi Bay is now in service…”

“The complete anthology of the Great Detective Manseng is publishing soon…”

“An advertisement for Lagolas Weapons? A standard model revolver carrying six bullets costs three pounds and ten soli, a double barrel gun costs two pounds…”

†

Klein flipped through the Tingen City Honest Paper when a particular piece of news suddenly caught his attention.

“…the suspect responsible for killing Mr. Welch and Miss Naya has been caught. We believe it is a much-needed reprieve from the horror that has gripped North Borough, Golden Indus Borough, and East Borough… Welch’s father, Mr. McGovern, who is a banker, has escorted his youngest son’s corpse back to Constant City where a grand burial will be held…”

After reading it a few times, Klein suddenly sighed.

From the looks of it, Welch’s father had bought the police’s explanations and did not hire a private investigator to investigate the matter…

His grief from losing his youngest son can’t be any greater than that of my parents who lost their only son…

In a sullen mood, Klein sat there motionless for a long time.

He neither found it odd that he was not invited to Welch’s and Naya’s burials, nor did he feel depressed.

Once everything calms down, I'll find a chance to offer a bouquet of flowers to their graves… Klein was about to take a nap in the break room when a knock came from the door of the reception hall again.

"Please come in." Rozanne, who was nodding off, suddenly jolted awake.

The half-closed door was pushed open again. The lanky man from before walked in once again.

"Can I wait here? Your mercenaries, no— security personnel should be back soon, right?" He asked sincerely, trying his best to hide his anxious expression.

"Sure. Please have a seat." Rozanne pointed at the sofa nearby.

Klein asked out of curiosity, "Where did you hear about our security company? Who introduced you here?"

He had made two trips despite the heavy afternoon storm while still willing to wait?

Yes. The Nighthawks must have easily resolved missions that might seem very difficult to others. They must have accrued quite a reputation…

The man left his umbrella outside the door and as he walked to the sofa, he replied with a rueful smile, "I have traveled the nearby streets and paid a visit to all the mercenaries, uh—security companies and private investigators. You are my only hope. The others do not have the manpower to take additional missions… To be frank, if not for the waiter that delivers meals, I really did not imagine that there was another security company here."

…It's completely different from what I imagined… Klein was stunned.

Rozanne interjected with a question, “They are very busy? Are there that many missions?”

The man sat down and sighed.

“You are a mercenary team, no—a security company. I believe you must have heard of the armed burglary murder at Howes Street?”

Howes Street… Armed burglary murder… Alright, unfortunately, I’m one of the people involved… Klein nodded with a slightly heavy heart.

“Yes.”

“Due to the presence of a ferocious and cruel criminal, the rich men living in the neighboring streets, and even across all of Tingen City, are terrified. Apart from increasing the numbers of their security detail, they have also hired many more security personnel and private detectives. This resulted in a shortage of supply in your line of work,” the tall and skinny man explained clearly.

A standard chain-reaction… Klein and Rozanne exchanged looks and saw the self-deprecating smile from each other’s faces.

The security industry had entered a golden age. Yet, Blackthorn Security Company was not affected in any way. It was apparent how dismally the company was run.

Of course, to a certain extent, it also proved the success of the Nighthawks in hiding themselves.

After waiting for another twenty plus minutes, Klein prepared to leave since the rain was coming to a stop. He planned on practicing at the Shooting Club.

At that moment, the black-haired and green-eyed Leonard Mitchell walked out of the partition. He looked curiously at the sofa.

“This is?”

"A client. Is Captain back?" Rozanne asked delightfully.

"Back?" The lanky man was taken aback when he heard that.

He had been sitting there, staring at the door. How did he not discover someone's return?

Rozanne's expression immediately froze as she chuckled.

"As a security company, we don't only use the front door."

"Figures." The lanky man nodded in enlightenment.

He was also not surprised by the term 'Captain.' Security companies were mercenary teams or small-scale mercenary guilds. It was normal for 'Captain' to be used.

Leonard did not tuck in his white shirt. His black vest was also casually draped on. He took a glance at the lanky man when he suddenly snapped his fingers and said, "I'm a member of the security personnel at Blackthorn. How might I address you? How may I help you?"

Perhaps it was because he had long heard about the unrestrained characters of mercenaries that he did not feel the anger of being humiliated. Instead, he let out a breath of relief.

He watched Leonard sit down, and organized his words.

"My name is Klee, a butler of Mr. Vickroy, a tobacco merchant. His only son, little Elliott, was kidnapped this morning. We have already informed the police and the matter has been given high priority. However, Mr. Vickroy remains uneasy. He wishes to go through the channels which mercenaries, uh—security personnel have, as well as your understanding of Tingen, to investigate the case from a different angle and ensure that little Elliott is rescued safely."

"If you are able to find where the kidnappers are hiding, Mr. Vickroy will be willing to pay you 100 pounds. If you have the means to successfully save Young Master Elliott, he is willing to pay double. 200 pounds."

Leonard Mitchell smiled leisurely.

"Mr. Vickroy seems to only wish for us to find the kidnappers' hideout? If not, he will not think that his only son is worth a hundred pounds. A tobacco merchant who has close ties with the southern plantations will not just offer two hundred pounds."

"No, Mr. Vickroy is only an ordinary merchant. He's not considered wealthy. Besides, he believes the police will be more professional when it comes to rescuing his son," Klee answered frankly.

"Alright. No problem." Leonard snapped his fingers again.

His green eyes turned their gaze on Rozanne.

"My beautiful lady, please write up a contract."

"Don't always act like a poet. In fact, all you do is recite the works of others." Having forgotten the presence of the client, Rozanne quipped. She was used to exchanging snipes with Leonard.

Of course, the Blackthorn Security Company did not really care about its clients. It was great to have them, but it was also fine not having them.

Rozanne left the reception counter and entered the staff office. Soon, there were sounds of typing coming out from the office.

The corners of Klein's mouth twitched a little. He found them too unprofessional.

There was no standard template for a contract!

This sure is tragic…

And more saddening is the fact that I'm working at such an unprofessional company…

The moment these thoughts arose in him, Rozanne completed a simple contract that had only a few clauses. Then, Klee and Leonard Mitchell signed it.

After Klee stamped it, she took the contract and returned to the accounting room and got Mrs. Orianna to stamp it with the Blackthorn Security Company logo—something that was actually useless. Dunn typically handed it to Orianna for safekeeping. On Sunday, it would be passed to Rozanne and company.

“I’ll wait for your good news.” After receiving one copy of the contract, Klee stood up and bowed with his hat off.

Leonard did not respond. He seemed to be in deep thought.

He suddenly turned his head toward Klein and revealed a smile.

“I need your help.”

“Ah?” Klein was taken aback.

“I mean you and I can finish this mission together.” The corners of Leonard’s mouth curved up slightly as he explained, “I’m good at combat, shooting, climbing, sensing, and chanting, and taking on some support roles. But that does not include looking for people. You don’t expect Old Neil to go out in such weather, right?”

When he said ‘sensing,’ his voice was lowered to a mumble that Klein could barely hear.

“Alright.” Klein did have the urge to attempt his new ‘abilities,’ while also feeling a little wary toward Leonard Mitchell.

Phew. Let’s hope it will be completed successfully… I wonder how useful my Seer abilities will be… He wondered with some anticipation.

Chapter 43 - Search

◆◆◆

While looking at Klein, Leonard smiled and nodded.

“Then, do you need anything from them?”

He had cooperated with Old Neil and company numerous times, so he naturally knew that divination required a medium, especially when the person being divined was not present.

Klein thought for a moment before saying to Klee, “I need some of Elliott’s recent clothes which have not been washed or starched. It would be better if you have any accessories he used to wear on him.”

He tried to choose ordinary mediums, not something that would normally invite questions.

But even so, Klee wore a look of puzzlement.

“Why?”

After his question, he added, “I have a picture of Young Master Elliott on me.”

Why? Because we are divining his location… Klein was momentarily at a loss for an answer.

If he answered truthfully, ignoring the fact that it violated the confidentiality clause, Klee would likely storm out immediately and rip apart the contract while cursing, “This bunch of cheats! If that works, why don’t I find the most famous Spirit Medium in Awwa County!”

By the side, Leonard Mitchell chuckled and said, “Mr. Klee, my partner, um—colleague rears a unique pet. Its sense of smell is sharper than a hound’s. That’s why we need clothes that little Elliott wore and items he used to wear on him to aid us in finding him. As you know, clues typically bring you to a general region.”

“As for the picture, we would need it too. Both of us need to know what little Elliott looks like.”

Klee accepted the reason by nodding slowly.

“Will you be waiting here, or will you be going with me to Mr. Vickroy’s residence in the city?”

“Let’s go together. It saves time,” replied Klein simply.

Not only was he eager to try out his abilities as a Beyonder, but he also wanted to save the child.

“Alright, the carriage is downstairs.” As Klee spoke, he took out a black-and-white photograph and handed it to Leonard.

It was a picture of Elliott Vickroy alone. He was about ten years old with rather long hair that nearly covered his eyes. There were obvious freckles on his face and he did not seem to stand out.

Leonard glanced at it and handed it to Klein.

Klein took a careful look and placed the photograph into his pocket. Then, he took his cane and put on his hat. He followed the two out of Blackthorn Security Company and boarded the carriage downstairs.

The carriage’s interior was rather spacious. It was lined with thick carpet and a tiny table to rest items on.

As Klee was around, Klein and Leonard did not say a word. They quietly took in the experience of traversing the pooling roads in a carriage.

“The carriage driver is quite good.” Leonard broke the silence after some time with praise and a smile.

“Yeah.” Klein answered perfunctorily.

Klee forced a smile and said, “Your compliments are his honor. We will be there soon…”

As they were afraid of alerting the kidnappers, the carriage did not stop at the Vickroy’s residence. Instead, it stopped at the side of a nearby street.

Klee held an umbrella and returned along. After waiting for some time, Leonard talked to Klein again.

“My surmise the last time was not without a goal. I was just trying to tell you that the notebook will definitely appear again. Perhaps, it might be soon.”

“That really isn’t a happy surmise.” Klein used his chin to gesture towards the carriage driver outside, indicating that he did not wish to discuss sensitive topics with outsiders around.

Leonard whistled and turned his head to look out the window. He saw raindrops streak across the glass, leaving behind blurry marks. It made the world outside a complete blur.

After a while, Klee returned with a bag of items. Since he walked in a hurry, the edge of his trousers were soiled and his shirtfront was slightly wet.

“These are the clothes Young Master Elliott wore yesterday. This is the Storm Amulet he used to wear.”

Klein took it and glanced at it. He discovered it to be a miniature gentleman’s formal suit—a small shirt, vest, bow tie, etc.

And the Storm Amulet was made of bronze. It was carved with symbols representing gales and sea waves, but they did not trigger Klein’s perception.

“I’ll recount in detail the incidents leading up to Young Master Elliott’s kidnapping. Hopefully, it will let you find him easier…” Klee sat down and described the nightmare that happened in the morning, hoping that the helpers he went through great trouble to hire would be of help.

Klein and Leonard held no interest in the specifics. All they cared about was the number of kidnappers, if anything unusual had happened, or if they had any weapons.

“Three,” “normal,” “armed with firearms…” After obtaining the desired information, they bade Klee farewell and hired a two-wheeled light carriage.

Unlike public carriages, private-hire carriages were either four-wheeled or two-wheeled. They were charged either by time or distance. The latter was at four pence a kilometer in the city and eight pence a kilometer outside. The former cost two soli per hour or part thereof. After the first hour, there were additional charges of six pence every fifteen minutes. In inclement weather or if the customer needed to go faster, the fare could even be higher.

Klein had heard from Azik that in the capital, Backlund, these carriage drivers were famous for quoting outrageous prices.

To him, taking a private carriage was quite a luxury. However, he did not need to worry about this at the moment since Leonard had tossed two one-soli notes to the carriage driver.

“Charge it by the time.” After Leonard gave his instructions, he closed the carriage’s door.

“Where are you going?” The carriage driver was delighted and puzzled as he held the two notes.

“Wait a moment.” Leonard cast his gaze at Klein.

Klein nodded slightly and took out Elliott's clothes. He spread it out on the carriage's floor and then wound the Storm Amulet around his cane's handle.

He held the silver-inlaid black cane and hung it straight over Elliott's clothes.

He gathered the sphere of light in his head as his mind rapidly turned still. His brown eyes quickly turned deeper in color as he entered a half-Cogitation state.

He felt his body's "spirit" turning light. He vaguely saw the world of spirits everywhere. He silently said, "Elliott's location."

After repeating it seven times, he released his grip of the black cane, but the cane did not fall to the ground. It remained standing in front of him even though the carriage was shaking!

Minute but invisible stirrings happened around Klein and he felt as if pairs of eyes were looking at him.

Over the past few days, Klein had felt this sensation occasionally when he was in the state of Cogitation or Spiritual Vision.

With a little fear, he looked at the cane with his deep black eyes. He recited once again in his heart, "Elliott's location."

"Elliott's location."

After he finished saying that, the cane fell and pointed straight ahead.

"Straight." Klein held the cane and said in a deep voice.

His voice sounded a little ethereal as though it could penetrate the unknown world.

This was one of the divination abilities he had grasped. It was called "Dowsing Rod Seeking." The tool of choice had to be wooden, metallic, or a mixture of both.

In ordinary circumstances, he would require two real dowsing rods. Dowsing rods were shaped like two straight metal wires tapered to an edge. He would hold on to the shorter side and turn it to ascertain the correct direction. But as a Seer, Klein realized that through practice, he could search for people directly using this method. He could also use his cane as a replacement for dowsing rods. The direction in which the cane fell was the direction of the item he was seeking.

As for the Antigonus family's notebook, Klein could not remember it at all. Without the slightest impression, there was no way for him to find it.

"Go straight." Leonard instructed the carriage driver loudly. "We will tell you when there's a need to turn."

The carriage driver did not understand why that was necessary, but the notes in his pocket and the willingness of his passengers to hand over the money kept him quiet. He chose to follow the strange instructions.

The carriage proceeded slowly, passing through one street after another.

Midway, Klein used Dowsing Rod Seeking to correct their direction.

After the carriage circled a building once, he finally determined that Elliott was inside. It had only been thirty minutes since they bade Klee farewell.

After sending off the cane, Klein did not continue using Elliott's clothes. Instead, he placed the cane, entwined with the Storm Amulet directly onto the ground.

His eyes turned dark once again as the raindrops around him suddenly spun in place.

The cane fell to the front with a slant. Klein pointed at the staircase and said, "There."

"At times, I really envy Old Neil. Similarly, I envy you now." Upon seeing this scene, Leonard smiled with a sigh.

Klein shot him a glance and replied with a calm tone, "This is nothing difficult. If you are willing to learn, you would definitely be able to master it… Your perceptivity should be very high, right?"

Leonard nodded and chuckled.

"That's not something good."

He quickened his pace and walked into the building amid the ending rain.

Klein was afraid of drenching his formal suit, so he jogged in tow.

The building only had three stories. It was similar to a unit block from Earth. The entrance to each floor was situated along the flight of stairs. There were only two units on per floor. Klein used Dowsing Rod Seeking on both the first and second floors, but the cane remained still while pointing upward.

The two of them quieted their footsteps and arrived at the third floor. Klein once again placed the black cane on the floor.

Whoosh!

A breeze blew across the stairs as his pupils changed colors. The darkness seemed like it could suck the souls of people.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Sobs seemed to sound out around them.

Klein relaxed his palm as the cane with the entwined Storm Amulet magically stood erect.

He silently read "Elliott's location" again. He watched his black cane drop silently as it pointed to the right room.

“They should be in there.” While Klein picked up his cane, he tapped his glabella twice.

Various colors saturated as he looked at the right room. He saw all sorts of auras inside.

“One, two, three, four… Three kidnappers and one hostage. The numbers match… One of their auras is short. It’s likely Elliott… Mr. Klee said that they have two hunting rifles and a revolver…” Klein whispered.

Leonard chuckled.

“Let me recite a poem for them.”

“Why be a kidnapper? Why can’t you happily be civilized person?”

He put down the bag with Elliott’s clothes and took two steps forward. His expression suddenly turned serene and melancholic.

His magnetic and deep voice gradually sounded.

“Oh, the threat of horror, the hope of crimson cries!

“One thing at least is certain—that this Life flies;

“One thing is certain, and the rest is Lies;

“The Flower that once has bloomed forever dies…”

Chapter 44 - Fate

◆ ◆ ◆

Leonard's singing sounded like a lullaby as it lightly resounded through the doors and into the winding wooden stairwell.

Klein's mind immediately turned torpid. He felt like he saw a silent moonlight and serene rippling lake.

His eyelids rapidly turned heavy as if he were about to fall asleep standing.

Amid these indistinct sensations, he also felt a strange, formless, and indifferent focus on his back. It felt like he was wandering the spirit world himself.

A baffling sense of déjà vu suffused as Klein suddenly found his train of thought once again. With his strong spiritual perception and extreme familiarity with Cogitation, he barely escaped the influence of the Midnight Poem.

However, he remained serene and could hardly evoke any emotions.

Soon, Leonard stopped singing as he turned his head with a smile.

"I'm considering asking Captain's permission to apply for a Feynapotter lute. How can there not be an accompaniment when singing?

"Heh heh, I'm just kidding. I can hear them asleep."

The black-haired, green-eyed Nighthawk with his poetic vibe took a stride forward and walked to the door that separated them from the kidnappers and hostage.

He suddenly moved his shoulder and threw a punch at the door’s lock.

Crack!

The wooden board around the lock shattered in a muffled manner.

“This requires precise control.” Leonard turned his head and smiled. He then reached his hand into the hole and opened the door.

Klein, who had regained consciousness, was not as confident as him. He reached under his armpit, drew his revolver, and turned the cylinder, making sure that he could shoot at a moment’s notice.

As the door swung back, he saw a man sleeping on a table with a gun by his feet. Another man was rubbing his eyes in a daze while trying to stand up.

Bam!

Leonard slid forward and struck the awakening kidnapper unconscious.

Klein planned to enter as well when he suddenly sensed something. He turned around abruptly and faced the stairwell.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Footsteps were approaching from below. It became clear that “something” was a hatless man in a brown coat circling the stairwell in his progression toward the third floor while hugging a paper bag of bread.

Suddenly, he stopped. He saw a gun’s barrel aiming at him with a metallic luster.

His pupils reflected a young man dressed in a halved top hat, black formal suit with a bow tie of the same color. It also reflected the cane which rested along the rail and the dangerous revolver.

“Do not move. Raise your hands. Three, two, one…” Klein’s tone was deep but relaxed.

He held the revolver with both hands as he tried to imagine the man as a target from his practice.

Amid the tense atmosphere, the man in the brown coat threw the bag of bread and slowly raised his hands.

“Sir, is this a kind of a joke? Has there been a misunderstanding?” He stared intently at the finger that Klein had placed on the trigger as he forced a smile.

Klein was temporarily unable to determine if he was an accomplice or a neighbor, but he did not reveal any abnormalities. He said in a deep voice, “Do not attempt to resist. Someone will determine if it’s a misunderstanding in a while.”

At that moment, Leonard, who had finished handling the kidnappers, walked out and noticed the man in the stairwell. He said leisurely, “So the kidnappers have another accomplice responsible for buying and delivering food?”

Upon hearing this, the man’s pupils constricted as he suddenly raised his foot and kicked the bag of bread up in an attempt to block Klein’s vision.

Seemingly unaffected, Klein coldly pulled the trigger like his usual training.

Bang!

Blood burst out from the man’s left shoulder.

He tumbled to the ground and attempted to escape from the second floor; however, Leonard had already reached his hand towards the handrail before leveraging himself to jump over.

With a dull thud, Leonard landed on the man from above.

The man fainted as Leonard swatted away some of the blood that had splattered on him. He looked up at Klein and chuckled.

“Nice shooting.”

I was trying to hit his legs… The corner of Klein’s mouth twitched in an indiscernible manner as he caught a whiff of the smell of blood.

He discovered that despite not having any enhancements to his visual, auditory, or tactile senses after consuming the Seer potion, he could still “see” obstructed objects and “hear” faint footsteps, allowing him to take preemptive judgment.

Was this in the scope of spiritual perception? Klein nodded in thought as he watched Leonard find a sharp dagger in the accomplice’s possession and “drag” him into the room.

With a gun and cane in each hand, Klein entered the kidnapper’s room. They saw Elliott Vickroy jolt awake from the gunshot as he straightened his body and sat up slowly from a huddled position.

Leonard had securely tied up the three kidnappers with the rope they used against Elliott. Bunched together, they were thrown in a corner. The lack of rope was made up by tearing their clothes.

The unconscious man who had been shot in the shoulder was bandaged, but Leonard disdained getting his hands dirty, so he did not help him extract the bullet.

“W-who are you people?” Elliott stammered in pleasant delight when he saw the scene before him.

“Yes, you guessed right. Very precise.” The genuflecting Leonard answered casually.

I never expected this bastard to have some humor cells in him… Klein lowered his revolver and said to Elliott, “We are mercenaries hired by your father. You can also call us security personnel.”

“Phew, for real? Have I been saved?” Elliott said joyfully without daring to make any movements.

It was apparent that he had suffered quite harshly in the short few hours of being a kidnapping victim. He did not have the kind of rashness someone his age normally would have.

Leonard stood up and said to Klein, “Go downstairs and find some patrolling cops. Get them to inform the tobacco merchant. I do not wish to walk out with a child and four idiots like a kidnapper.”

Klein, who was wondering about the aftermath, nodded. He put away his revolver, picked up his cane, and walked to the staircase.

As he went down the stairs, he had a nagging feeling that he had forgotten something. In addition, he heard Leonard say to Elliott, “Don’t be nervous. You will soon see your father, mother, and your old butler, Klee. Why don’t we play a round of Quint?”

†

Klein held back his laughter and walked out into the streets. With the help of pedestrians, he found two patrolling policemen.

He did not use his badge and identification as a member of the Special Operations Department; instead, he used his identity as a professional security company and recounted the happenings factually.

As for him holding a gun, he was not worried at all. He had received an all-purpose weapon permit the day before yesterday. His application was accelerated by going through internal channels.

The two policemen exchanged looks and one of them left to gather reinforcements and inform the Vickroy family. The other policeman followed Klein to the kidnappers' room.

After waiting for more than forty minutes, Leonard signaled to Klein while the policeman was not paying attention. Klein was to sneak out of the room with him.

"Trust me, heading to the police station is an extreme waste of time. Let's leave first," the Nighthawk with the poetic bearing explained with a relaxed look.

Since Leonard was making it clear that he would take any responsibility for any repercussions, he did not retort and followed in tow.

Almost five minutes later, a few carriages rushed to the building where the kidnappers were. The old butler, Klee, disembarked with his portly master, Vickroy.

Up to this moment in time, he was still in a daze. He found it incredulous that news would come so fast. It felt like a dream.

Suddenly, he heard a crisp snap as he turned around.

A two-wheeled carriage drove past with its windows open. The black-haired and green-eyed Leonard had snapped his fingers again.

After passing by Vickroy's carriage, Leonard closed the window, turned around, and looked at Klein.

He extended his right hand and smiled.

"It was a pleasure working with you!"

I don't think we are on that good terms… Klein politely shook his head.

He did not expect the kidnapping case to be resolved so quickly. All he could do was marvel at the capabilities of Beyonders. Even though he was just a half-assed Sequence 9 Beyonder, he was able to do many inconceivable things.

“This is a celebratory gesture of peace among aristocrats after a clash of swords,” explained Leonard with a smile.

“I know.” Klein had many aristocratic classmates.

He looked outside the window and said with a frown, “Shouldn’t we confirm with Mr. Klee? If he believes that the police rescued Elliott, our commission will be halved.”

A total of 100 pounds!

There was no doubt about their providing of the kidnappers’ location from their ‘meeting’ from before.

“Don’t mind it. To us, money isn’t that important,” said Leonard with a shrug.

…It’s very important to me!

Klein forced a polite smile and said, “Many poets died early from poverty.”

Leonard chuckled.

“I believe Elliott would not lie on this matter. I can tell that he still has some of his innocence left in him. However, you will not get much of the 200 pound commission either.”

“How much would I get?” asked Klein immediately.

“As the unspoken rule has always been, half of the commission would be handed to Mrs. Orianna as additional funding for the team. The remaining would be split among members. A pity you aren’t a formal member; you will only get about ten percent of the remaining half.”

10 pounds? That isn’t bad either… Klein pretended to feel the pinch as he asked, “Aren’t you worried that the kidnappers will realize that they were under the influence of a Beyonder’s powers after they wake up?”

"They will not suspect anything. They will only believe that the weather was good and very conducive for sleeping, leading to them dozing off. They will even believe that the song existed only in their dreams. This is something we have verified before," answered Leonard very confidently. "Instead, it's your demon hunting bullets that might arouse suspicion. Of course, you being a queer who enjoys mysticism would be a perfectly reasonable explanation."

"I see." Klein was relieved. He just kept feeling like he had forgotten or overlooked something.

†

After returning to Zouteland Street, Klein did not wait for Klee's arrival. He strolled to Welch's place and took a different route home. On the way, he bought some beef and olives for dinner.

The meal was enjoyable as always, with the same three siblings chatting idly. However, there was an additional visitor.

He was a worker responsible for collecting one penny for the gas meter.

The evening grew dark as the siblings bade each other good night and returned to their rooms.

Klein was sleeping soundly when he was suddenly awoken by something familiar outside. He opened the door in puzzlement and arrived outside the bedroom that no one stayed in.

He pushed open the mottled door and saw a gray desk.

There was a notebook on the table and its cover was made of hard paper. It was completely black in color.

A baffling sense of déjà vu arose in him as he walked over and opened the notebook.

The page he flipped open to was of a picture—a picture of someone dressed in gorgeous clothes and splendid headdress—The Fool!

Beneath The Fool was a line in Hermes.

“Everyone will die, including me.”

Horror gripped Klein’s heart as he suddenly realized that the corner of The Fool’s mouth was curving up!

Fffffff!

He sat up in shock as he saw crimson moonlight penetrate his curtains. He saw his bookshelf and desk and the silhouette of his own bedroom. He realized that he had had a nightmare.

As a Seer, he knew what dreams typically portend. Therefore, he began to seriously search through his recollections.

Klein froze up when he did because he knew what he had missed out on today!

While he was immersed in Leonard’s singing, he had sensed a formless and indifferent focus on his back.

The feeling of being observed felt different from the usual Cogitation or experience he had from using Spirit Vision. It gave him a sense of déjà vu!

According to Captain Dunn, once a feeling of déjà vu arose in him, it probably means…

Klein suddenly sat straight and confirmed the feeling.

Yes, it’s that notebook! That Antigonus family’s notebook!

Chapter 45 - Returning

* * *

The Antigonus notebook is in the apartment across the kidnappers’!

Although it was very coincidental, Klein believed that his intuition was correct.

He immediately got out of bed and rapidly changed out of the old clothes he usually wore to bed. He picked up a white shirt beside him and draped it on, quickly buttoning from top to bottom.

One, two, three… He suddenly realized that he was “missing” buttons. The left and right sides did not seem to match.

On careful look, Klein realized that he had made a mistake buttoning the first button, causing the shirt to warp.

He shook his head helplessly before taking a deep breath and slowly breathing out, using some of his Cogitation techniques to restore his calm.

After putting on his white shirt and black trousers, he barely managed to wear his underarm holster steadily. He pulled out the revolver he hid under his soft pillow and holstered it.

Without time to tie a bow tie, he draped his formal suit on and with a hat and cane in each hand, he walked to the door. After putting on his halved top hat, Klein gently twisted the door handle and walked into the corridor.

He carefully closed his bedroom’s wooden door and sneaked downstairs like a thief. He used a fountain pen and paper in the living room to leave a note, informing his siblings that he had forgotten to mention that he had to be early for work today.

The moment he was out the door, Klein felt a cool breeze and his entire being calmed down.

The street in front of him was dark and silent without any pedestrians. Only the gas lamps illuminated the streets.

Klein took out his pocket watch from his pocket and snapped it open. It was just six in the morning and the crimson moonlight had not completely faded away. However, there was a hue of sunrise over the horizon.

He was just about to seek out an expensive for-hire carriage when he saw a two-horse, four-wheeled trackless carriage approaching him.

"There are public carriages this early in the morning?" Klein was puzzled as he went forward and waved for it to stop.

"Good morning, Sir." The carriage driver stopped the horses skillfully.

The ticketing officer beside him had his hand to his mouth while yawning.

"To Zouteland Street." Klein scooped out two pennies from his pocket and four halfpence.

"Four pence," the ticketing officer replied without any hesitation.

After paying for the ride, Klein got onto the carriage and found it empty. It exuded a clear loneliness amid the dark night.

"You are the first one," said the carriage driver with a smile.

The two brown horses widened their pace as they proceeded briskly.

"To be honest, I never imagined there to be a public carriage so early in the morning.” Klein sat near the carriage driver and made idle chatter to divert his attention and relax his tense mind.

The carriage driver said in a self-deprecating manner, “From six in the morning to nine at night, but all I earn is one pound a week.”

“Are there no breaks?” inquired Klein in bafflement.

“We take shifts to rest once a week.” The carriage driver’s tone turned heavy.

The ticketing officer beside him added, “We are in charge of plying the streets from six to eleven in the morning. Following that, we have lunch and an afternoon break. Near dinnertime, which is six in the evening, we replace our colleagues… Even if we do not need rest, the two horses will need it.”

“It wasn’t anything like that in the past. There was an accident that should not have happened. Due to fatigue, a carriage driver lost control of his carriage and it toppled. It resulted in us having shifts… Those bloodsuckers would never become this kind so suddenly otherwise!” The carriage driver scoffed.

Under the illumination of dawn, the carriage drove towards Zouteland Street and picked up seven to eight passengers on the way.

After Klein was less tense, he did not converse further. He closed his eyes and recalled the experiences from yesterday, hoping to notice if he had forgotten anything.

By the time the skies were bright when the sun was fully up, the carriage finally arrived at Zouteland Street.

Klein pressed his hat with his left hand and briskly jumped off the carriage.

He quickly stepped into 36 Zouteland Street and arrived outside Blackthorn Security Company after going up the flight of stairs.

The door was still closed and had yet to open.

Klein took out the ring of keys by his waist and found the corresponding brass key and inserted it into the keyhole and twisted it.

He pushed forward as the door slowly opened. He saw the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell sniffing at a recently popular cigarette.

“To be honest, I prefer cigars… You seem to be in a rush?” the poet-like Nighthawk asked in a relaxed and cozy manner.

“Where’s Captain?” Klein asked instead of answering.

Leonard pointed at the partition.

“He’s in the office. As an advanced Sleepless, he only needs two hours of sleep in the day. I believe it’s a potion those factory owners or bankers would like the most.”

Klein nodded and quickly passed through the partition. He saw that Dunn Smith had opened the door to his office and he was standing at its entrance.

“What’s the matter?” Dressed in his black trench coat, he held a gold-inlaid cane with a solemn and stern expression.

“The feeling of déjà vu came to me. It should be the notebook. The Antigonus family’s notebook.” Klein tried hard to make his answer clear and logical.

“Where was that?” Dunn Smith’s expression did not have any obvious changes.

However, Klein’s intuition told him that a clear and invisible stir had happened in him. This was possibly a flash of his spirit or a change in his emotions.

“It’s at the place Leonard and I saved the hostage yesterday. Opposite the kidnappers’ room. I didn’t notice it back then until I had a dream and received a revelation," Klein did not conceal anything.

"From the looks of it, I missed out on making huge contributions." Leonard, who had walked to the partition, chuckled.

Dunn nodded slightly as he instructed with a solemn expression, "Get Kenley to replace Old Neil's watch of the armory. Let Old Neil and Frye come with us."

Leonard stopped acting frivolous as he immediately informed Kenley and Frye who were in the Nighthawks' recreation room. One of them was a Sleepless and the other was a Corpse Collector.

Five minutes later, the two-wheeled carriage that came under the jurisdiction of the Nighthawks began driving down the sparse streets in the morning.

Leonard wore a feather hat, a shirt and a vest. He stood in as the carriage driver, lashing out a whip from time to time, sending out a crisp crack.

Inside the carriage, Klein and Old Neil sat on one side. Facing them were Dunn Smith and Frye.

The Corpse Collector's skin was so white it looked like it either had not been under the sun in a very long while or he had a severe blood deficiency. He looked to be in his thirties with black hair and blue eyes. He had a high nose bridge and his lips were very thin. He had a cold and dark demeanor and had a faint smell from often touching corpses.

"Repeat the situation again in detail." Dunn adjusted the collar of his black trench coat.

Klein stroked the hanging topaz in his sleeve as he began from their mission commissioning until the dream. By the side, Old Neil chuckled.

"Your fate seems to be entwined with that Antigonus family's notebook. I never expected you to meet it in such a manner."

That's right. Isn't this too much of a coincidence!? Thankfully, Leonard just mentioned that there was no indication of hidden factions of mysterious powers at play from the preliminary investigations of Elliott's kidnapping. It was solely a crime motivated by money. Otherwise, I would really suspect if someone had deliberately arranged for this to happen… Klein found the situation rather curious.

It was too coincidental!

Dunn did not express his ideas as he was in deep thought. Likewise, Corpse Collector Frye maintained his silence in his black trench coat.

Only when the carriage stopped at the building mentioned by Klein was the silence broken.

"Let's go up. Klein, you and Old Neil walk behind. Be careful, very careful." Dunn got off the carriage and pulled out a strange revolver with a clearly long and thick barrel. He stuffed it into his right pocket.

"Alright." Klein did not dare take point.

After Leonard found someone to watch the carriage, the five Beyonders walked orderly into the building. With very light footsteps, they arrived at the third floor.

"Is this the place?" Leonard pointed at the apartment opposite the kidnappers.

Klein tapped his glabella twice and activated his Spirit Vision.

In this state, his spiritual perception was enhanced again. He found the door familiar as if he had once entered it before.

"Yes." He nodded in affirmation.

Old Neil also activated his spiritual perception and after observing carefully, he said, "There's no one inside, nor are there any spiritual glows of magic."

Corpse Collector Frye added with his hoarse voice, “There aren’t any evil spirits.”

He could see many spiritual bodies, including evil spirits and restless wraiths, even without activating his Spirit Vision.

Leonard took a step forward and, like yesterday, punched the door’s lock.

This time not only did the surrounding wood shatter, even the door lock flew and fell noisily to the ground.

Klein seemed to feel an invisible seal instantly vanish. Immediately following that, he caught a whiff of an intense stench.

“Corpse, a rotting corpse,” Frye described coldly.

He did not appear to suffer from nausea.

Dunn reached out his black-gloved right hand and pushed open the door slowly. The first thing that they saw was a chimney. For early July, there was an abnormal heat emanating the room.

In front of the chimney was a rocking chair. Sitting on it was an old woman dressed in black and white. Her head hung low.

Her body was abnormally large. Her skin was blackish-green and swollen. It felt like she would explode from a simple prod, spewing a foul rotting stench from within. As maggots and other parasites squirmed between her flesh, blood, and rotting juices, or clothes and wrinkles, they appeared like points of light in Spirit Vision. They seemed to cling close to an extinguished darkness.

Pa! Pa!

The old woman’s eyeballs dropped to the floor and rolled a few times, leaving behind a yellowish-brown streak.

Klein felt disgusted and being unable to tolerate the putrid stench any longer, he bent over and puked.

Chapter 46 - Portrait

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Eugh! Eugh!

Klein squatted there, vomiting involuntarily. He was soon done with his puking since he did not eat breakfast.

At that moment, a tin-colored square flask that looked like a cigar box appeared in front of him.

The mouth which had lost its stopper emitted a mixture of smells akin to tobacco, disinfectant, and mint leaves. It cleared up Klein’s nose and rejuvenated him.

The pungent smell continued to linger, but Klein no longer felt nauseous. He soon stopped vomiting.

He traced the tiny flask up and saw a pale hand that did not seem to belong to a member of the living. He saw the mouth of a black trench coat’s sleeve and saw Corpse Collector Frye with his cold and dark bearing.

“Thank you.” Klein recovered completely and with his hands on his knees, he stood back up.

Frye nodded without any expression.

“It’ll be fine once you are used to it.”

He put back the flask’s stopper and put it into his pocket and turned around, walking to the highly decomposed corpse. Without gloves, he began examining the old woman. As for Dunn Smith and Leonard Mitchell, they paced slowly around the room, occasionally touching the table's surface or newspapers.

Old Neil pinched his nose and stood outside the door, grumbling in a muffled voice, "Seriously gross. I'm going to request for additional pay this month!"

Dunn turned his head over and touched the wall beside the chimney with his gloved right hand. While doing so, he asked Klein, "Does this place look familiar?"

Klein held his breath and constructed the silver pocket watch in his mind to calm down.

With him already in his Spirit Vision state, he immediately felt different. A scene that came from the deepest recesses of his memories flashed past his eyes.

Chimney, rocking chair, table, newspapers, the rusty nails on the door, the tin cans inlaid with silver…

The scenes were dark and dull, like a documentary from Earth. However, it was even more blurry and illusory.

The scene quickly stacked against what Klein was seeing. The feelings of déjà vu and having been here before presented themselves clearly. An illusory and ethereal scream seemed to pass through invisible walls:

"Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…"

"It feels a little familiar." Klein answered honestly while his brain felt a stabbing pain. Thankfully, he quickly tapped his glabella twice.

Hornacis… The Hornacis mountain range that appeared in original Klein's diary?

That is content that was deciphered from the Antigonus family's notebook…

The murmurs were very similar to one of the previous ones. It involved the word 'Hornacis' Is this a form of enticement?

Klein was gripped by shock as he did not dare think deeper, afraid that he would place himself on the trajectory of losing control.

Dunn nodded slightly and walked to a cupboard. He suddenly reached out his hand and pulled open its wooden door.

The bread inside was moldy and there were about seven gray, stiff dead rats.

"Leonard, go downstairs to get patrolling cops and explain the situation here," instructed Dunn.

"Alright." Leonard turned and left the apartment.

Following that, Dunn opened the door to two other bedrooms and did a careful search.

After being certain that there were no clues as well as any sign of the Antigonus family's notebook, Frye also stood up. He wiped his hands with a white handkerchief he brought along with him and said, "The time of death was more than five days ago. There are no external injuries nor are there any clear signs that it was a result of Beyonder powers. The exact cause of death will require a postmortem."

"Did you discover anything?" Dunn turned to look at Old Neil and Klein.

The two who were no longer in Spirit Vision state shook their heads in unison.

"Apart from the corpse, everything else is normal. Actually, no, there was an invisible energy sealing the apartment in the beginning. As you know, there will usually be similar processes when we use ritualistic magic," Old Neil thought for a few seconds before adding.

Dunn was just about to say something when he looked outside the door. A few seconds later, Klein and Old Neil sensed something and turned to look at the stairwell.

A few seconds later, faint footsteps grew louder as Leonard walked up with a policeman.

The policeman's expression changed once he caught the noxious smell. He immediately cooperated with his "colleague" from the Special Operations Department and began knocking on the doors of the residents on the second floor to gain an understanding of the situation on the third floor.

Moments later, the corporal with his two silver chevrons looked at the corpse on the rocking chair.

"Katy Stefania Bieber. Between 55 and 60 years old. Widow. Has rented this apartment with her son, Ray Bieber for more than ten years."

"Her husband was formerly a gem artisan. Her son is about thirty years old and is single. He inherited his father's trade and earns about one pound and fifteen soli a week. According to their neighbors, they have not seen them in more than a week."

Before the policeman continued, Klein already knew the critical point that followed.

Missing. To be more precise, it was unknown where Ray Bieber had gone to!

The ancient notebook could very well be on him!

"Do you have a picture of Ray Bieber?" Dunn looked at the police officer. He was acting as the role of a high-ranking inspector.

However, it was not really acting since he was indeed a high-ranking inspector on the police department's roster. His salary and various allowances were also paid according to his rank. Of course, it did not include his salary from the Church.

The police officer shook his head nervously and said, “I’m not sure… I’ll have to return to the station to search for it. It’s not typical for us to have pictures of every single person.”

“Got it. Continue questioning the residents on the first floor. Ask them in detail.” Dunn gave the order.

As he watched the police officer leave, he closed the door and turned to Old Neil.

“I’ll leave the rest to you. If not, we will have to make all the residents sleep and obtain Ray Bieber’s looks. Yea, I don’t really trust sketches based on verbal descriptions.”

Old Neil nodded. He took out a few thumb-sized bottles from a pocket in his black classic robe and scattered the liquids in a particular order.

Immediately following that, he pulled out a clump of powder and scattered it in a circle around him.

Strangely, a biting smell spread and was not influenced by the nauseating smells in the room. Klein also suddenly noticed that there was an invisible forcefield around him. It separated him from the environment and everyone else. It was like the room in its previous state.

Old Neil half-closed his eyes as his lips mumbled a soft and indiscernible incantation. Without being prepared, Klein vaguely heard the words, “Goddess, give me strength,” “We look forward to the protection of the Night…”

Hum! A sudden wind tore through the windows and blew up the powder.

Klein’s heart quaked suddenly as he felt goosebumps all over him. He found it difficult to describe. A terrifying “smell” that made him afraid of looking directly spread rapidly.

He was confused as he tensed up, unable to relax. It felt as though he had plunged into a state similar to what one would have after working on a highly advanced mathematical problem.

Suddenly, Old Neil's eyes opened, his eyes pitch-black.

He took out a fountain pen from his pocket and began drawing on a piece of scrap paper on the table. He was so fast that his entire body was trembling.

Klein focused his gaze and saw a face with recessed eyes and a tall nose bridge rapidly appear.

When the natural curly short hair was done, Old Neil wrote a single line beneath the portrait.

“Black hair, deep blue eyes. Left of his mouth is a fully ceramic tooth implant.”

Pada! The fountain pen in Old Neil's hand fell onto the paper as his body convulsed a few times.

“This is the image of Ray Bieber according to what's left in the room.” Old Neil whispered as the color of his eyes restored rapidly.

Then, he turned back to his original spot and slowly circled it. The invisible forcefield that isolated things immediately dissipated in the form of a breeze.

“Praise the Lady.” Old Neil tapped his chest in four spots, forming the shape of the crimson moon.

Klein's taut nerves relaxed as he made more acute observations. He discovered that there was nothing special about Ray Bieber's facial features. He had a relatively mild bearing. The only thing was that his philtrum sagged clearly.

"I'll try using Dowsing Rod Seeking." He picked up the portrait and found male clothes in the bedroom and spread them onto the ground.

Dunn, Leonard, and Old Neil did not stop him as they watched him place the black cane above the clothes and portrait. Frye was as silent as always.

Klein's eyes turned from brown to black as he finished his recitation, only to release his grip.

The black cane stood silently like it was embedded in the ground.

"Ray Bieber's location." Klein silently repeated to himself again.

With the sound of humming wind, the cane fell down but kept changing directions while falling. Finally, it began spinning in slight circles.

Without any external help, the black cane stood stably again.

Klein repeated a few times with the same outcome. All he could do was shake his head at Dunn and Old Neil.

A strange power was interfering with his "divination…"

Dunn took off his black glove and said to Leonard and Klein, "Take Ray Bieber's portrait and inquire the residents for a final confirmation. Following that, we will issue a warrant of arrest against him for the murder of his mother."

"Alright." Klein held his cane and bent down to pick the portrait.

After the neighbors confirmed that the portrait was indeed Ray Bieber, Dunn instructed Leonard and the police officer to finish the procedures at the station. He and Frye headed to a few bars in Tingen City to seek help via other means.

Klein and Old Neil returned to Blackthorn Security Company on a public carriage. It was not even eight by the time they arrived; Rozanne had not even clocked in.

After closing the door, Klein cocked his head at Old Neil and, hoping to learn and answer his questions, asked him, “Why would I send the Antigonus family’s notebook to Ray Bieber’s home?”

This was completely in a different direction from Iron Cross Street where Welch stayed.

Old Neil walked to the sofa and chuckled.

“Isn’t that obvious? Who knows what powers inside the notebook you invoked; maybe you did some described ritual out of curiosity and ended up provoking a strange existence that you should not have. The motive of this existence was to have the notebook sent to Ray Bieber and sever all clues, to prevent anyone from discovering it.”

“Therefore, apart from you who were selected, Welch and Naya committed suicide; regarding you… To be frank, I still have no idea how you survived.”

“I would like to know too…” Klein sat down as well as he deliberately replied with a wry smile. “I’ve also thought of the guesses you have of the proceedings. However, there’s one thing I don’t understand. Why did I have to hand the notebook to Ray Bieber?”

Old Neil shrugged and said, “Perhaps his Life Path Number[1] matches the requirements, or maybe he’s one of the last remaining descendants of the Antigonus family. In short, there are too many possibilities… And why the notebook was sold to Tingen City would have similar reasons.”

“I believe it’s the descendant reason.” Klein suddenly felt enlightened before he sighed. “Unfortunately, I did not discover immediately, and Ray Bieber and that notebook have vanished.”

Old Neil laughed.

“This is something that Dunn has to worry about. As for you, it’s something good.”

“Why do you say so?” Klein frowned in puzzlement.

[†] A Life Path Number was proposed by Pythagoras which is established from the date of birth and describes the nature of one’s journey through life.

Chapter 47 - Old Neil's Lack of Money

◆

Old Neil rubbed his temples and said, “I believe we have a general idea of why the three of you engaged in a mass suicide. That notebook is also now purportedly in Ray Bieber’s hands. Furthermore, the matter has already been exposed. Regardless of whether you are alive or dead, it will hardly influence any subsequent developments. I think—I believe that the surreptitious existence or mysterious power that caused all of this will not pay you any special attention. It’s just like how you would not pay attention to the ants on the ground. Heh heh, as long as you do not try to make Him recall you.

“And our arrest warrant for Ray Bieber will quickly reach the Secret Order. They will also be able to guess that it is related to the Antigonus family’s notebook. Believe me, for a secret organization that has been in existence for more than a thousand years, it has many channels of information. Therefore, their focus will be diverted to Ray Bieber’s whereabouts, in a bid to find the notebook before us. They will not, nor is it possible for them to harass, stalk, or deal with you.

“Lad, congratulations on stepping out from the shadows of the past. What follows will be a brand-new journey filled with sunlight.”

Klein nodded when he heard that as he said in a happy and relieved manner, “I hope so.”

Having transmigrated here, he had been enveloped in uncertainty. Now, it felt like it had finally dissipated…

However, Klein was still feeling uncertain because the notebook seemed to be tied to him in a certain manner. It went to the point of him bumping into remnant clues coincidentally from a normal mission of rescuing a hostage.

He was afraid that there would come a day when a delivery man would send him a parcel, only to realize that it was that Antigonus family notebook after opening it up!

Let's hope everything will go as Old Neil described… He silently prayed.

When Old Neil heard his reply, he immediately scoffed.

"You don't seem to be a devout believer of the Goddess. At this moment, shouldn't you be drawing the sign of the crimson moon at your chest and say—may Goddess bless us?"

"Mr. Neil, you don't seem like one either. A real devotee would not say 'what follows will be a brand-new journey filled with sunlight.'" Having been studying mysticism under Old Neil, Klein had established a decent friendship with him, so he did not stand on ceremony to return a sarcastic remark.

Both of them locked eyes and chuckled with great rapport. At the same time, they tapped their chests four times.

"Praise the Lady!"

At that moment, they heard the grinding sounds of machinery as the main door to Blackthorn Security Company opened.

The elegant Mrs. Orianna with her fashionably coiled hair stepped into the reception hall with a light-green dress.

"Good morning, Mr. Neil. Good morning, Klein." She held a small leather handbag as she greeted with a smile. "It's another fabulous day today. A pretty good day."

"Good morning, Orianna. You are still as beautiful as ten years ago," replied Old Neil with a chuckle.

Orianna's eyes turned to slits as she upturned her face.

"Mr. Neil, the way you praise is still as infuriating as ten years ago."

She enunciated the words 'ten years.'

"Is that so?" Old Neil looked at Klein, confused. He wore a perplexed look.

Never mention anything that will remind the ladies of their age… As a keyboard warrior that knew a little of everything, Klein instantly understood what had peeved Mrs. Orianna. He smiled lightly and said,

"Good morning, Mrs. Orianna. You are as beautiful as always."

"Thank you, our outstanding Khoy University graduate." Orianna smiled with a nod before saying, "That old butler has already paid the mission's commission. According to Captain's rules, half of it will be used as additional funds, while the other half will be split between you and Leonard. But since you aren't a formal member, you can only take ten percent of the half. Come over later to sign for it."

"How much did he pay?" Klein asked happily while also feeling the pinch.

"200 pounds. This was what he said back then—'Lord, the esteemed Storm! I never imagined or believed that this was resolved just like that! This is even harder than us having a dream! Why is your security company so unknown? It's an insult to the entire industry!'" Mrs. Orianna mimicked the old butler's southern accent.

Klein thought seriously for a few seconds before saying humorously, "This is just too unfair for those kidnappers."

Two Beyonders had resolved the problem quickly using methods that could be described as easy and pleasant… This is like an adult bullying a few kids while in full combat attire…

“They were just too unlucky. They must have lost the protection of the divine,” said Orianna with a soft laugh. “I told the butler that we were only lucky. One of our informants happened to see the kidnappers bring the child into the hideout. Therefore, do not have too much hopes for us. We really are just a very ordinary security company.”

Typically speaking, the more you emphasize something is ordinary, the more extraordinary it is… Klein lampooned with a smile. He watched Mrs. Orianna walk through the partition and enter the accounting room.

Old Neil puckered his lips by the side and said enviously, “You really are a lucky lad. You haven’t joined us for long and you’ve encountered a job worth 200 pounds.”

“Is that very rare?” Klein asked in puzzlement.

Prior to this, he was either studying history or mysticism, or wandering aimlessly outside, hoping to find clues with his spiritual perception.

“According to Orianna’s accounts, we might not encounter a single job an entire week. And most jobs are worth less than twenty pounds.” Old Neil rubbed the moonstone by his wrist and sighed.

Following that, he looked at Klein with anticipation.

“If you encounter any similar jobs in the future, remember to inform me.”

Upon hearing Old Neil’s words, Klein suddenly felt a strange feeling arise in him. Therefore, he asked directly, “Mr. Neil, you seem to be lacking in money. How much do you get paid a week? If you aren’t comfortable telling me, just ignore my question.”

Old Neil leaned back into the sofa and chuckled.

"This isn't something that needs hiding. I've been here for so many years. At present, I will obtain salaries from both the Church and the police department every week; a total of twelve pounds."

"A weekly salary of twelve pounds?" Klein blurted out in surprise.

A weekly salary of twelve pounds with fifty-two weeks a year, that meant more than 600 pounds a year!

Back when he read the Tingen Morning Post and Honest Paper, they had mentioned that high-profile lawyers only earned 800 to 1000 pounds a year. And those were the best lawyers!

As for the managers of Benson's trading company, they only earned six pounds a week. That was already quite a decent job.

"Yes, such a salary is actually quite generous, and we do not need to pay any taxes," added Old Neil with a smile.

Klein had heard from Benson that one had to pay E-type taxes when their weekly salaries exceeded one pound. In other words, the government and corporate employees had to pay 3% of taxes if they earned one to two pounds, 5% for two to five pounds, 10% for five to ten pounds, and 15% for ten to twenty pounds, capping at 20% for those above twenty pounds.

Other than that, he also read of four other kinds of taxes on the newspapers. A-type was related to land, housing, and other earnings from material items. It included property and rent. B-type was a tax paid by farmers. C-type was a tax on profits from bonds, funds, and equities. D-type was commercial, finance, or professional income.

"It's something admirable." Klein echoed Old Neil.

"However—" Old Neil shook his head. "Such a salary is insufficient for Beyonders like us who have to frequently study the hidden mysteries, practice and attempt rituals."

"Aren't materials obtainable via application?" asked Klein in puzzlement.

Old Neil scoffed.

"There's a limitation to it. At times, we have to give a sufficient legitimate reason. If you want to learn more and experiment in the field of mysticism, you can only spend your own dime to buy materials. It can be bought internally or at underground markets."

Klein jolted in surprise as he immediately asked, "There are Beyonder materials that are sold in underground markets? I thought the Churches would not permit their existence?"

He was lacking in means to obtain materials!

With him having a mysterious organization in its nascent stages, he could not always have them settled via the Nighthawks, right?

"There's no way to control such matters. Yeah, from the viewpoint of mysticism, all beings are sentient with their spirits and they stem from the same source. The materials we use are not limited to those extraordinary creatures. It also comes from ordinary animals, plants, and minerals. For example, the poison hemlock, gold mint leaves, and night vanilla in the bottle of Seer potion; they are items we can encounter frequently in our daily lives. They might not have any extraordinary characteristics, but they have special characteristics. Through concoction and blending, they will derive certain effects. Therefore, this is not a trade that the Church can ban," explained Old Neil in detail.

Without waiting for Klein to say a word, he continued, "Besides, it's not only the core of extraordinary beings that are of use. For example, the Lavos Squid. Apart from its blood, its eyeballs, skin, and tentacles are pretty good materials. Unless the Church captures it entirely with its own manpower, to completely corner and control any outflows would be a tremendous financial burden. The lower the grade of the extraordinary material, the more it is so. They can only do their best to prevent the more special materials from flowing out."

Old Neil suddenly laughed. "There's another important reason. It's better to know of an underground market than not knowing of it. Under the premise that secret organizations have not been fully eliminated, this is a pretty good strategy. Besides, it can help us obtain materials we are lacking. Of course, with the existence of such markets, contraband items will appear. As long as it's not something ridiculous or overly dangerous, we will turn a blind eye to it. At most, we would use them to enrich our vaults."

"Is it because the few large Churches put each other in place, so no one can take excessive action?" Klein guessed.

Old Neil acknowledged tersely but did not elaborate.

"I'm a Seer. In the future, I'll definitely need to practice and will need more materials. Mr. Neil, can you take me to the underground market to have a look?" Klein requested with a valid reason.

Old Neil appeared to be placed in a difficult position.

"In fact, those guys who are active in those places are mostly not Beyonders. Some of them might be aristocrats that like mystery or rich people who have inclinations towards mysticism… Uh, alright. I have a thirty pound bill that needs paying soon. It wouldn't be convenient for me to head over there for the time being."

"Alright…" Klein never expected the reason to be Old Neil's owing of money.

Moments later, he said with deliberation, "Mr. Neil, do you need me to lend you money? I just earned a commission of ten pounds."

"Haha, there's no need. I'll be able to settle it." Old Neil patted the sofa and slowly stood up. "Sigh, age is truly an enemy that biological creatures can't fight. I'm exhausted from last night's watch. Yeah, revise what I’ve taught you later this morning. Read more documents. Tomorrow, I’ll teach you the foundations of ritualistic magic.”

“Alright.” Klein got up and bade him farewell by taking off his hat.

When Captain Dunn did not return at noon, Klein pretended that he was still searching for the notebook as he roamed the streets again.

Having earned ten pounds, he no longer needed to wait for the next disbursement of the funds. He could head directly to the Divination Club!

Cogitation and Spirit Vision have been occasionally producing murmurings and illusions. It made him eager to begin ‘acting.’

Chapter 48 - Hanass Vincent

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In the Divination Club situated at the second floor of 13 Howes Street, North Borough of Tingen City.

Klein saw the beautiful lady that attended to visitors once again.

She was still having her brownish-yellow long hair coiled, making her look mature and elegant. It was hard to tell her age.

“Hello, Mr. Glacis isn’t here today. Would you like to change fortune-tellers today?” said the beautiful lady with a smile.

Upon hearing that, Klein, who had just taken off his silk hat and put it back on, was immediately surprised.

“You still remember me?”

That was already five days ago!

The woman puckered her lips into a smile.

“You are the first customer that sought Mr. Glacis’s services. You are also the only one to this very day. It’s hard for me not to have a deep impression of you.”

Was this the image of him being penny-wise, pound-foolish? Klein lampooned himself as he deliberated a question.

“When was the last time Mr. Glacis came to the club?”

The lady shot a glance at him and answered seemingly in recollection, "To be honest, we are unable to grasp when our members will come and go. They have their free will and personal matters to tend to. Well, I do believe that Mr. Glacis hasn't come to the club since he told your fortune that day."

I wish him the best of luck. May the Goddess bless him… Klein prayed and did not ask further. Instead, he asked with a smile, "I'm not here for divination services this time. I plan to join the club."

"Really? That's our pleasure." The lady expressed a timely look of surprise delight. "For the first year as a member, the membership fee is five pounds. It will be one pound a year thereafter. I believe there's no need for me to describe in the details again?"

Klein took out a five-pound note he recently received as he watched Henry Augustus I's portrait depart him.

After seriously checking the anti-counterfeit watermark, the woman stored away the note seriously and handed a form to Klein.

"Please fill in your detailed information. Let me prepare the receipt for you."

There's a receipt? You should bill it to Blackthorn Security Company… Klein was amused by his own thoughts as he picked up a fountain pen on the desk. With the blackish-blue ink, he filled in his name, age, address, and company information.

However, he had deliberately left his date-of-birth empty. To a Seer, that provided profound mysteries about his body through his Life Path Number.

After receiving the receipt and finishing his registration as a member, the lady extended her right hand.

"Congratulations on joining Tingen City's Divination Club. I'm Angelica Barrehart, your hardworking server. This is your member cufflinks. There are special inscriptions on them which will identify you as a member.”

“Hello, Madam Angelica.” Klein shook her hand and took the dark gold cufflinks.

He realized that the special inscription was written with the root word for ‘fortune-teller’ in Hermes.

Angelica retracted her right hand and thought for a few seconds.

“Might I ask what divination arts you are most familiar with? Or would you prefer to learn some divination methods from the club? We will consider inviting famous fortune-tellers of the corresponding domain to give classes. We will also introduce you members with similar expertise so that you can have a good time interacting with them.”

“I know a bit of every divination art. There’s no need to give me any special considerations.” Klein replied with some embellishments. In addition, he inquired, “Can I begin telling the fortunes of others? I’m not a total rookie.”

He was here to act as a Seer and not learn the divination methods ordinary people could learn.

Angelica maintained a polite smile as she said, “You can tell the fortunes of people anytime in the club. However, before we confirm your skills, we will not promote you when our customers ask. How much do you plan on charging for your fortune-telling?”

“Two pence.” Klein decided to gain at advantage with price while he was still unknown.

“We will go by the standard of taking an eighth, so we will be taking a quarterpence for fees…” Angelica repeated the various rules first before writing Klein’s information into the fortune-teller album which customers could choose from.

After all of this was done, she pointed at the meeting room at the far end of the corridor with a smile.

“Mr. Hanass Vincent is currently explaining astrolabe divination. You can find a quiet spot to listen in. You can also raise your questions if there are any queries.”

“Alright.” Klein walked toward the meeting room with his interest piqued. He wanted to know the differences between what Hanass Vincent and Old Neil said.

At that moment, Angelica chased up and whispered, “Mr. Moretti, would you want coffee or tea? We provide Sibe black tea, Southville coffee, and Desi coffee.”

Klein, who had been reading the papers regularly, knew that these coffees and black tea were considered as one of the inferior varieties, but he also knew that they were definitely of better quality than the ones he had at home. After some thought, he said, “A cup of Southville coffee. Three teaspoons of sugar without milk please.”

Loen Kingdom’s Southville was famous for its beer and red wine; many important figures were fond of them. However, their coffee was relatively unknown.

“Alright, I’ll send it to you in a bit.” Angelica pointed towards the meeting room.

Klein slowly walked to the half-closed door and heard a voice in a thick Awwa accent explaining, “Astrolabe divination is a relatively more complex one among the divination arts…”

But that’s only for ordinary people… Klein silently tagged on a sentence for the speaker. He saw about five tables placed in a circle inside the meeting room. It surrounded a middle-aged man in a black classic robe, Hanass Vincent.

The gentleman had obvious dark circles. His brown hair was thick and hard. Each strand stood firmly like a porcupine’s spikes.

Apart from that, there was nothing unique about him.

Upon seeing Klein enter, Hanass Vincent nodded gently without stopping his class. He only slowed down his speech.

Klein had one hand in his pocket while the other held his cane. He found a seat to the sides and sat down, leaning back comfortably in the process. He scanned the circle of six members. There were four men and two women.

Some of them were attentively taking notes, whispering, or returning Klein a rueful smile.

After placing his cane down, Klein adjusted his halved top hat and tapped his glabella twice in the process.

He cast his gaze at Hanass and saw the different colors, brightness, and thickness of his aura.

“Dark red. He’s a little worried… Actually, every other part of his body is healthy except that part. I wonder what’s wrong…” Klein listened to the class while muttering to himself.

At that moment, he clasped his right hand and covered his mouth to prevent his laughter from sounding. He suddenly felt like he was a quack.

He was rather pleased with his Spirit Vision ability. Although he could only make a general judgment and not the details, it was enough to gain him much useful information.

After surveying his surroundings, he tapped his glabella twice again as though he was pondering over what Hanass had just said.

Astrolabe divination was one of the astromancy divination methods. However, ordinary people could also attempt to interpret things. For instance, the most basic birth horoscope was to determine the inquirer’s fate by determining the positions of the sun, moon, Blue

Planet, and Scarlet Planet at their birth, the corresponding spots in the sky, matching the representative symbols to the astrolabe, and the corresponding situations of the different constellations.

This required the fortune-teller to be able to calculate the states of the planets and constellations which was rather complicated. Of course, there were publications that aided people to look up the values. Some even simplified it by making a vague read with just the constellations.

Klein listened silently without interjecting or asking any questions. From time to time, he would caress the hanging topaz at his sleeve or take a sip of the Southville coffee which Angelica had brought in.

After some time, Hanass rubbed his glabella and said, “Perhaps you will need to attempt at creating your own astrolabe. Ask me if you have any questions. I will be in Moonstone.”

After he left, a young man in a white shirt and black vest got up with a smile and walked to Klein’s side.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Edward Steve.”

“My pleasure. I’m Klein Moretti.” Klein stood up and returned the bow.

“Astrolabes are too complicated. Every time I hear about it, I can’t help but doze off,” said Edward self-deprecatingly.

Klein grinned and said, “That’s because Mr. Vincent can’t help but pass the knowledge he grasps to us. It’s like giving us an Intis feast. It’s just indigestible.”

“I’d be able to finish the Intis feast. They usually use a huge plate to serve tiny bits of food.” Edward chuckled and sat up. He asked out of curiosity, “Are you new? I’ve not seen you in the two years I was here.”

“I just joined the club today,” answered Klein frankly.

“What are you good at? I’m best at tarot and poker divination,” Edward casually asked.

“I know a little of everything, but just a little.” Klein gave a description he used to give himself.

He was not being modest since there was just too much mysterious knowledge he had not grasped in the domain of divination.

Just as the other members were thinking of talking about horoscope divination, Angelica walked into the meeting room.

“Mr. Steve, someone wants you to tell their fortunes.”

“Alright.” Edward stood up with a smile.

“I can tell you are an excellent fortune-teller,” said Klein as he looked at him.

“No, it’s because my price is most suitable,” said Edward with a soft chortle. “When ordinary people come to have their fortunes told, they will absolutely not choose the most expensive ones. And unless they had their heads kicked by asses, they would definitely not be choosing the cheapest few. It’s easiest to gain opportunities if you are in the middle.”

I’m one of those that had their heads kicked by asses… When he saw Edward leave, Klein suddenly shook his head with a wry smile.

It seems the price I set is problematic…

He stood up, picked up his cane, and left the meeting room. He found Angelica again.

“I wish to change the prices of my divination. Uh, set it to eight pence.”

Angelica took a deep look at him and said, “We will satisfy your request, but we will also tell customers that you only recently joined the club.”

“No problem.” Klein did not mind as he nodded.

At times, mystery was also an important element for a Seer to attract customers.

After changing his details, Klein returned to the meeting room.

At that moment, he saw Hanass Vincent walk out of Moonstone. He held a silver-coated mirror.

This well-known fortune-teller said to the five members in the meeting room, “I recently learned a new divination art. Magic mirror divination. Does anyone want to learn?”

Magic mirror divination? That’s not safe… Klein paused outside the meeting room and frowned.

Chapter 49 - Divination Art

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As a Seer who had just stepped through the gates of mysticism, Klein did not dare to claim he knew much. However, he was certain he knew more than ordinary people. He was aware that the various kinds of divination arts could be split into three categories based on particular standards.

And that standard was based on the source of the revelation!

The first category of divination included tarot, poker, pendulums, dowsing canes, and dreams. By using the inquirer's own spirituality and its communication with the spirit world to gain a revelation, it could be interpreted for an answer. However, spirit pendulums and dowsing canes had very high requirements of one's spirituality, Soul Body, and Astral Projection. Non-Beyonders were unable to obtain precise or clear revelations. Card divination provided fixed symbolism, presenting even an average person's faint revelation. Dreams were somewhere in between the other forms.

The second category included Spirit Numerology and astromancy, as well as their derived forms. The fortune-teller used either the personal details of the inquirer, or changes in nature before using calculations, inference, and interpretation to answer their questions. With this method, the initiative did not lie in the inquirer, but the fortune-teller.

The third category used an external third party, separate from the inquirer and the fortune-teller. The Ouija boards that Klein was familiar with from his previous life belonged in this category. They used rituals to ask for a direct answer from the unknown or the supernatural. Even though there was a high chance that an average person would not succeed, there were cases where they managed to communicate with malicious spirits or entities that drove them to insanity. These methods of divination usually led to tragedies.

The magic mirror divination that Hanass Vincent mentioned belonged to the third category. In mysticism, mirrors were connected to the unknown and mystery, like they were the doors of the spiritual world. Thus, Klein stopped outside the meeting room, intending to learn how the famous fortune-teller would explain the divination. Klein wanted to ascertain if he needed to inform the captain or not, raiding him at night.

Of course, there was a safe way to do the magic mirror divination; one could ask for answers from the seven orthodox divinities. Even if it was very difficult for an ordinary person to receive any real revelations, they would not be in any danger or suffer any after effects.

The magic mirror divinations that were strictly controlled by the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers were those that asked evil gods or mysterious existences for help. Furthermore, the fortune-teller couldn't randomly fabricate things. Some phrases or qualities had the potential to invite the attention of unknown entities.

In the world where the powers of the Beyonders exist, such divinations would often lead to tragedy. Klein even suspected that the original Klein, Welch, and Naya had committed such a forbidden divination by following the instructions of the Antigonus family's diary.

At that moment, Hanass also explained the principle behind magic mirror divination and described the actual process.

"First, you choose a suitable time and date according to the divinity you believe in. You can decide this using the Astromancy Manual. For example, we all know that Sundays symbolize the Evernight Goddess, for Sunday is the embodiment of rest. 2 to 3 in the early morning, 9 to

10 in the morning, 4 to 5 in the evening, and 11 to midnight are all related to the moon; thus, they are controlled by the Evernight Goddess. Thus, fortune-tellers that pray to the Evernight Goddess can use magic mirror divination during these times on a Sunday."

Quite a good foundation… Klein nodded slightly while using the half-closed door to the meeting room to conceal himself.

It had to be said that with the seven major churches keeping each other in check, some mysticism knowledge had indeed leaked. For example, many of the meanings behind the symbolism could be found in the Astromancy Manual. However, without the potions or Beyonder powers, ordinary people were unable to obtain the desired effects.

"Second, we must scrutinize the mirror carefully. It must be a mirror coated with silver. You place the mirror at the position representing the moon…" Hanass demonstrated with the prop in his hand.

No, what he needs now is spirit dowsing. First, choose a position and recite the phrase, 'This place is suitable for magic mirror divination' seven times in your head, then see which direction the pendulum turns. Clockwise for true, counter-clockwise for false… Of course, if you are asking for answers from a malicious supernatural entity, the position would not matter. Rather, it would depend on whether the entity is interested in answering your questions… Klein silently corrected him.

At this point, he felt like a teacher listening in on a lesson…

Hanass Vincent could not hear Klein's mental musings as he described the preparations in detail in a normal tone.

When the members finished taking notes, he continued explaining, "After showering, confirm that you have drawn all your curtains and locked your doors. After that, light up a candle and place it in front of the mirror before sincerely praying to the divinity you believe in. Try to keep your questions simple as there's no need for fanciful embellishment… After praying seven times, pick up your mirror and gently toss it on the ground. Make sure to be gentle… Remember the way it shatters as that is a revelation from the gods… I will tell you the main symbolisms in a second.”

Phew, this is orthodox magic mirror divination. Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he walked into the meeting room and sat back down in his previous seat. He finished the rest of his Southville coffee in one gulp.

So-called “orthodox” divination meant that it was possible to obtain revelations, but it was impossible to truly interpret it.

And for Beyonders who reached this step, they could look straight into the mirror to obtain clear information if they received a response!

As there were many potential symbolisms after the shattering, Hanass taught for a long while. He was not done even when Edward Steve returned to the room after finishing his fortune-telling.

Klein did not ask what Edward did for his fortune-telling or what method did he use since it was an unspoken rule among fortune-tellers. While acting as a Seer, he naturally had to abide by it strictly unless the other party mentioned it.

“I discovered that many a time, our interpretation is too vague, as though it’s meeting different requests, allowing different people to find a description of themselves from the interpretation.” Edward drank a mouthful of Sibe black tea and said with a soft sigh. “For example, those that encounter adversities and calamities will eventually see the light of hope. Heh heh, but no one knows when the light of hope will come. For example, a journey might not be very smooth-sailing, but you will definitely arrive alive. Hehe, the dead will not retort me.”

As he did not listen from the beginning, he ignored Hanass’s magic mirror divination class.

“Survival bias,” added Klein with a smile.

Survival bias generally meant that a lot of statistics would only include those who were alive and lucky. The data would ignore the dead; therefore, the results would be clearly biased.

“Right. Emperor Roselle was really a philosopher,” marveled Edward.

… Speechless, Klein raised his empty cup and pretended to take a sip.

The members were fully immersed in the study of horoscopes and magic mirror divination the entire afternoon. Occasionally, they would also discuss with Klein and Edward.

And when that happened, Klein would try his best to meet his duty as an informal member of the Nighthawks. He would try hard to steer the topic away from anything related to Beyonders or dangerous ideas.

However, he failed at the thing he wanted to do the most. A few inquirers came, but none of them picked him to do their fortune-telling.

Perhaps I have to be more proactive in entertaining them. Should I use a few phrases like ‘you are plagued with bad luck,’ ‘you have been unlucky recently,’ or ‘nothing you do will happen smoothly?’ No, that’s nothing like a Seer… With this in mind, Klein could not help but shake his head in self-deprecation.

He picked up his cane, stood up, and left after bidding everyone farewell.

At half past five, Edward Steve put on his coat and was prepared to walk out the Divination Club when he suddenly saw a familiar figure.

“Good afternoon, Glacis. Long time no see,” he greeted with a smile. He saw his friend with similar interests as him wear his usual format suit with a black bow tie. In front of his chest hung a monocle.

Immediately following that, he noticed that his friend did not look well. Even his soft blond hair looked dry.

“Good afternoon, Edward… Cough.” Glacis with his hat in hand suddenly used his fist to cover his mouth as he coughed a few times.

Edward asked out of concern, “You seem to be ill?”

“A very serious illness. It even turned into pneumonia. If it wasn’t for my wife who met an impressive apothecary and gave me a magical medicine, you would have probably had to visit me at the cemetery.” Glacis’s tone was filled with a lingering fear and joy.

“Lord, I can’t believe it. You were so healthy previously. Look at you, you look so frail now! I remember when I did divination on you, there were no signs that indicated that you would get a serious illness.” Edward waved his cane and said with an astonished sigh.

“My own divination had the same result as yours. Perhaps we are not qualified fortune-tellers. Besides…” Glacis suddenly recalled the happenings on Monday as his expression turned abnormally serious.

At that moment, the beautiful lady, Angelica, came over and bowed with a pleasant smile.

After exchanging greetings, she first showed concern for Glacis’s health and provided some suggestions. Then, she mentioned in passing, “Mr. Glacis, Mr. Moretti, who requested your divination services previously, has joined our club as well.”

“The one who got me to tell his fortune?” Glacis’s eyes lit up immediately. “Lord, where is he?”

“He just left.” Angelica and Edward were unable to comprehend Glacis’s abnormal reaction.

Glacis took two steps in agitation and said, “The next time he comes, please ask him when he will come if I’m not around!”

“Glacis, what happened? Did that Mr. Klein Moretti do something to you?” asked Edward in puzzlement.

Glacis raised his arm and stared straight into Edward’s and Angelica’s probing gazes. He said in excitement, “He’s a very, very, very magical…”

He lowered his arm and said after using “very” thrice, “Doctor!”

Chapter 50 - Old Neil's Method of Repayment

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Half past seven in the evening, around the Moretti family's dining table.

"Klein, why do you need to be at work so early as a consultant? Would emergency matters at the security company be more dangerous?" Benson forked a potato from a dish of potato-stewed beef as he raised the matter in concern.

Klein carefully spat out the bones from a pan-fried fish and gave his prepared answer.

"A batch of historical documents needed immediate shipping to Backlund. I had to be present to handle the handover and make sure there was nothing missing. As you can guess, the bunch of fist-swinging bastards don't know any Feysac."

Upon hearing his answer, Benson, who had finished chewing his food, could not help but sigh.

"Knowledge is truly important."

Making use of this opportunity, Klein took out the remaining five-pound note and handed it to Benson.

"This is my additional payment I received today. It's time you get some decent clothes too."

"Five pounds?" Benson and Melissa said in unison.

Benson took the note and looked at it repeatedly. He said in both shock and doubt, “This security company sure is generous…”

His weekly salary was one pound ten soli, which meant six pounds exactly every four weeks. He only earned one additional pound from this additional payment!

And with that salary, he had managed to support his siblings, giving them a decent place to stay and allowing them to eat meat two to three times a week. Every year, they could get a few new clothes!

“Are you doubting me?” Klein deliberately returned with a question.

Benson chuckled. “I doubt you have the ability nor the guts to rob a bank.”

“You aren’t someone who can lie,” Melissa answered seriously after lowering her fork and knife.

I-I’m now someone used to lying… Klein immediately felt a little ashamed.

Although it was a result of the circumstances of his reality, his sister’s belief in him left him melancholic.

“It was relatively urgent and important today. I also played a crucial role… which is the reason for the five pounds,” Klein explained.

In a way, what he said was the truth.

As for the five pounds that he would be reimbursed with—the one he would use to join the Divination Club—he planned on concealing it. Firstly, if he brought five pounds home again, he would truly scare his siblings, making them suspect he was doing something illegal. Secondly, he had to save to buy additional materials to practice being a Seer and to grasp more mysticism knowledge.

Benson bit off a mouthful of wheat bread in satisfaction and thought for more than ten seconds.

“The work I’m at doesn’t need any decent clothes. Well, to be precise, the clothes at home are sufficient.”

Without waiting for Klein to persuade him, he suggested, “With this additional income, we would truly have savings. I plan on buying a few books on accountancy and studying. Klein, Melissa, I do not wish that my weekly salary remain below two pounds in five years. Heh, as you know, my boss and manager have shit for brains. Their mouths stink the moment they open them.”

“Excellent idea,” agreed Klein. He also took the opportunity to steer the conversation. “Why don’t you read some of the grammar books in my room? To be truly dignified and to earn a handsome pay, that’s something rather critical.”

Perhaps, in the times to come, the civil servant examinations will appear in Loen Kingdom. Preparing ahead of time would give him the advantage…

Benson’s eyes lit up when he heard that.

“I’ve indeed forgotten about that. Here, let’s toast to a beautiful future.”

He did not drink rye beer. Instead, he poured clear oyster soup into three cups and clinked his cup with his siblings’.

After drinking the clear soup, he looked at his sister who was wrestling with the pan-fried fish. He chuckled and said, “Aside from Benson’s books, I think Melissa needs a new dress too.”

Melissa looked up and shook her head incessantly.

“No, I think it’s best…”

“To save it up.” Klein finished the sentence for her.

“Yeah.” Melissa nodded in agreement.

“In fact, if you do not seek the best fabrics and the newest designs, it would not be too expensive. We can save up the remaining money,” said Klein in a manner which did not allow for disagreement.

Benson added, “Melissa, are you planning on wearing the old dress again to Selena’s sixteenth birthday bash?”

Selena Wood was Melissa’s classmate and good friend. She came from quite a good family background. Her elder brother was a practicing solicitor and her father was a senior employee of Backlund Bank’s Tingen branch.

However, the so-called bash was only a dinner invitation to friends where they chatted and played cards.

“Alright.” Melissa lowered her head and mumbled a response. Then, she ruthlessly forked a piece of stewed beef.

After a short silence, she suddenly recalled something and looked up abruptly.

“Mrs. Shaud from next door got her maidservant to send a calling card over. She wishes to make a formal visit on Sunday, at four in the afternoon tomorrow. She wants to get to know her new neighbors.”

“Mrs. Shaud?” Klein looked at his siblings, confounded.

Benson rapped the side of the table with his fingers and appeared to be thinking.

“Mrs. Shaud from 4 Daffodil Street? I met her husband before. He’s a senior solicitor.”

“Senior solicitor… Perhaps he knows Selena’s brother,” said Melissa with some hints of delight.

We are at 2 Daffodil Street… Klein nodded slightly.

“It’s imperative we get to know our neighbors, but as you know, I still have to be at the company on Sunday. I only have time off on Monday. Please pass my apologies to Mrs. Shaud."

With that said, he suddenly recalled the neighbors of his former life when he was young, as well as the neighbors in the apartment from Iron Cross Street. He was amused as he sighed lightly.

"To have formal visits… Shouldn't neighbors get to know each other through natural interaction?"

"Haha, Klein, that's because you aren't aware. You have read a lot of newspapers recently, but you have not broached the magazines catered towards families and middle-aged women. They placed families with an annual income of a hundred to a thousand pounds as middle-class. They promoted it as the framework of the entire kingdom and praised how the middle-class doesn't have the arrogance of the aristocrats and the wealthy, nor are they as crass as the low-income brackets."

Benson lightly and happily explained, "These magazines impart many simplified ceremonies which the aristocrats practice in their interactions. As such, it becomes a target of the middle-class. Thus, this results in the differences between intimate calls, semi-formal calls, and formal calls."

As he spoke, he shook his head and chuckled.

"Typically, gentlemen, madams, and ladies who view themselves in this class will be very particular about details. They will visit their neighbors and friends from two to six in the afternoon. It's known as a morning call[1]."

"Morning call?" Klein and Melissa asked in surprise.

Why was a visit from two to six in the afternoon a morning call?

Benson put down his fork and knife, threw his hands up, and smiled.

"I do not know why either. All I did was read the magazines my female colleague brought. Yeah, perhaps it's because they wear their morning gowns to make the call…"

Morning gowns were a form of formal attire worn during Mass or gatherings. Later, it was considered as formal attire for the day, different from the formal attire for evening functions.

"Alright. Remember to buy some good coffee powder and tea leaves in the afternoon. Buy some muffins and lemon egg tarts from Mrs. Smyrin. We must not ill-treat our neighbors." Klein chuckled as he dipped his remaining bread into the meat sauces, grabbed some potato and put it into his mouth.

†

The next morning was a Sunday morning.

Klein finished the last mouthful of inferior tea, put down the newspapers, and wore his halved top hat. Picking up his silver-inlaid black cane, he sauntered out the door and took a public carriage to Zouteland Street.

He greeted Rozanne who was planning to sleep in the break room after finishing her night duty. After which, he went all the way down to the basement.

After turning a corner, he met a Nighthawk member, Sleepless Royale Reideen.

She looked like a cold lady. Her brows were long and slender, sitting atop large eyes. Her hair was a silky-smooth black.

"Good morning, Madam Reideen," Klein greeted with a smile.

Royale used her deep blue eyes to glance at him and nodded indiscernibly in return.

The two quickly passed by each other when Royale stopped and said with her eyes trained forward, “Ritualistic magic is a very dangerous thing.”

Ah… Klein was taken aback. By the time he turned around, all he saw was her departing back.

“Thank you.” He frowned and shouted at Royale Reideen’s back.

After taking a left band, he quickly met Old Neil inside the armory, as well as Bredt who should not have been there.

“Let’s go to my place. I’ve already received the corresponding materials. Bredt has agreed to watch the armory for me,” said Old Neil with a chuckle.

Klein was immediately surprised.

“We aren’t doing it here?”

Old Neil held a silver chest and tutted.

“There’s no space here to practice ritualistic magic.”

Klein did not ask further. He followed Old Neil up to the streets and took a public carriage to the North Borough’s suburbs.

Old Neil’s place was a bungalow. The garden in front of it was filled with roses, gold mint, and other “materials.”

The moment he entered, there was a carpeted foyer. There were two high-back chairs and an umbrella rack.

Through the foyer was an expansive living room. The walls were plastered with light-colored wallpaper. The floors were a dark brown color. In the middle of the room was a tiny carpet with floral imprints and placed above it was a heavy round table.

Surrounding the table were comfortable long benches, single-seaters, and a piano.

“My deceased wife loved music.” Old Neil pointed at the piano and mentioned in passing, “The sofa and coffee table are in the bedrooms… Let’s do the ritualistic magic in the living room.”

“Alright,” Klein replied cautiously.

After Old Neil put down the silver chest, he laughed and said, “Let me demonstrate to you ritualistic magic. Make sure to observe and remember the ritual.”

As he spoke, he took out a fake goatskin parchment from the chest. It was specially made and it had strange pictures drawn on it with black ink that exuded a serene fragrance.

Klein kept watching and finally discovered that Old Neil was seemingly, likely, possibly drawing an IOU!

When Old Neil filled in the corresponding field with the number “30” and the corresponding “£” symbol, Klein could not help but ask out of puzzlement and confusion, “Mr. Neil, what kind of ritualistic magic are you doing?”

Old Neil coughed and answered very seriously, “I’ll be using magic to settle that debt of thirty pounds today.”

You can do that? Klein’s eyes widened as his mouth gaped.

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The descriptions of calling cards and morning calls are facts regarding socializing in the Victorian era.

Chapter 51 - The Grounded Ritualistic Magic

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Using magic to settle an IOU?

Is he trying to curse his debtor to death or create counterfeit notes?

I might not have a solution to the problem, but I can finish you instead?

†

All sorts of thoughts appeared in Klein’s mind as he looked at Old Neil oddly.

He seriously considered the possibility of calling the cops, no—of informing the Nighthawks.

Old Neil shot a glance at him and said peeved, “I can see ignorance, foolishness, and the weak and shameless disbelief in your eyes. Didn’t Dunn tell you the maxim of the Mystery Pryers? Do as you wish but do no harm!”

Although this maxim originated from the secret and evil Moses Ascetic Order organization, Beyonders who choose the path of Moses Ascetic Order have proven that it’s right through their own experiences. As long as one strictly abides to it and shows the needed fear and reverence, the risk of losing control will be minimized. The contrary has similarly been established.

“Your suspicion towards me is an insult to Mystery Pryers!”

"Sorry." Klein did not hesitate to apologize.

He had indeed forgotten that Dunn Smith had once mentioned the maxim.

Old Neil was not truly angry. In a blink of an eye, he chuckled.

"A pity. Very few Beyonders choose to be Seers. There is no corresponding maxim to help you."

But I have Emperor Roselle's diaries… Yes, strictly abiding to the maxim has a hint of "acting…" Klein suddenly came to this thought as he nodded as if in deep thought.

Old Neil did not continue. He removed the vases and other items from the round table and placed them in a corner.

Immediately following that, he took out both a crimson red and black candle from the silver chest. He explained, "If ordinary people attempt ritualistic magic, they have to follow the results from astromancy or read corresponding manuals. They have to choose suitable dates and times. For example, the day representing the Goddess—the period when She rules over the moon. But for us Beyonders, especially Beyonders good in this domain, there's no need for that. Our acute spiritual perception and potent Astral Projections are key.

"Of course, if you are not confident about the ritualistic magic you are attempting, it's best to choose a suitable date and time. It can increase the probability of success.

"Ah right. This is based on a premise. Remember carefully to abide strictly by the rules!"

Old Neil placed two candles and turned to the side and looked at Klein, saying very solemnly, "Low-Sequence Beyonders are not strong enough. Almost all the ritualistic magic they can perform are the seeking of external powers and help. Therefore, you can only consider orthodox divinities like the Goddess or the Lord of Storms. Absolutely—

absolutely do not attempt to communicate with the unknown or unpredictable existences. Even if people believe in them or the promises recorded are filled with enticements!

“Believe me, don’t take any chances. As long as you attempt once, you will go down a slippery slope into the abyss with no return. Any work or resistance will only slow it down with no way to change the trajectory.”

“I’ll remember!” Klein said in a deep voice. However, he felt a little afraid.

My luck enhancement ritual has apparently sought power from an unknown and unpredictable existence…

Furthermore, I have gained powers capable of pulling people into the fog that even a senior Beyonder like the Hanged Man finds unbelievable. Well… At least I think he is a senior Beyonder…

Thankfully, I haven’t gone mad or have any signs of losing control…

While worrying over this, he proactively changed the subject.

“So, Nighthawks should seek the help of the Goddess?”

“No one will stop you if you pray to the Lord of Storms. However, we are unable to tell from our ritualistic magic whether He replies with malicious intent or not. The outcome will be distorted in unpredictable ways.” Old Neil successfully made Klein give up the idea in a joking manner.

There was no so-called “best,” only “necessary!”

After his exhortations, Old Neil picked up a crimson red candle and said, “By using candles made of moon flowers and dark-red sandalwood, it will represent the Goddess’s identity as Lady of Crimson in the ritualistic magic.”

He pointed to the black candles and said, “Candles made of night vanilla and slumber flowers represent the night.”

As he spoke, he placed the black candle on the top left end of the round table while the red candle was placed on the top right end.

“Why do we symbolize the Goddess with only two candles? She is also the Mother of Concealment, Empress of Misfortune and Horror, and Mistress of Repose and Silence.”

Old Neil chuckled.

“That’s right. This is something I wished you asked.

“Before their fall, the Moses Ascetic Order had a very good relationship with the Church. Their beliefs and results on ritualistic magic have heavily influenced us.

“They believe that all objects are numeric. Every number has a spirituality and in ritualistic magic, 0 represents the unknown or Chaos. It symbolizes the state of the universe before it was born. 1 represents a beginning, the first Creator. 2 represents the world and various divinities that were produced from His body. 3 represents contact between divinities and material objects to create all things. Here, using two candles represents the Goddess while the third candle is for you.

“Which two candles and which two symbols to have depend on the intended effects of the ritualistic magic.”

Three begets all things[1]? All things stem from three? Klein could not help but recall certain things from his previous life.

Seeing Klein listen attentively, Old Neil took a third candle and said, “This is the candle representing ‘me.’ It’s a very ordinary candle which only has a little bit of mint added. Take note that plants like roses, lemons, mint, moon flower, night vanilla, and slumber flower are beloved and cherished by the Goddess.

“Viewing it from another angle, the three candles represent the bodies, spiritualities and godhood of every person.”

After finishing the description, Old Neil placed the third candle in the middle of the round table.

He then took out a bottle of concocted “Full Moon Essence Oil,” a huge cauldron engraved with the Dark Sacred Emblem, a silver knife with gorgeous patterns, a cup of water, and a saucer of coarse salt.

“To Beyonders who are not good at ritualistic magic, there is a need for bells, crystal balls, silver cups, incense or other supplementary items. However, Mystery Pryers and Seers have no need for that. These artifacts are already sufficient.”

Old Neil placed the fake goatskin parchment with the IOU just below the cauldron and used a special quill to hold down one corner.

He turned to Klein and said, “Ritualistic magic needs a clean spiritual environment where you will not be disturbed. And that requires us to create it. The steps are to first enter Cogitation. Focus your mind and with the supplementary items, draw out our strength, and construct it around us. For example, Ray Bieber’s house had used Holy Night Powder while I’ll be using a ritual silver dagger.

“Throughout the entire process, we have to go according to the outcome we desire to confirm the symbolism and corresponding incantation. Incantations are best done in Hermes because ancient Hermes stemmed from Nature. It’s akin to ancient Dragonese and ancient Elvish. The effects are very direct, lacking the necessary concealment and protection. It easily causes the caster to fall into danger. This is also why it has been modified. However, it’s more effective.

“Alright, I have to focus on the ritualistic magic. I won’t explain things to you any further. Pay attention by watching and listening. Remember any problems and ask me when everything is done.”

"Alright." Klein took two steps back and trained his eyes on Old Neil.

Old Neil's eyes rapidly darkened as invisible wind around him spun.

He was silent for a moment, going from left to right, then up to down, using his psyche to cause friction and consecutively light up the three candles.

Following that, he picked up the silver knife and stabbed it into the coarse salt. Then, he chanted in Hermes:

"I sanctify you, blade of pure silver!

"I cleanse and purify you, allowing you to serve me in this ritual!

†

"In the name of the Evernight Goddess, the Lady of Crimson…

"You have been sanctified!"

After a short but powerful syllable, Old Neil drew a silver knife and inserted it into a cup of clear water. Then, he raised it and pointed to the space beyond the round table.

He aimed the blade tip in the periphery and took a step forward, circling the round table. Every step he took made Klein feel an invisible energy spew out of the silver knife. It was filled with spirituality as it connected with the air, forming a completely sealed wall.

After walking one round, the altar was completely isolated from its surroundings.

Old Neil stood in front of the round table and put the silver knife down. He picked up the bottle of Full Moon Essence Oil and dripped three drops on the black, dark red, and ordinary candles.

Sizzle!

A thin mist emanated as everything seemed to become veiled in mystery.

Old Neil put down the glass bottle and looked at the fake goatskin parchment silently for two minutes. Then, he picked up the quill and drew a mark he controlled—a square that framed all the content, indicating that he was in control of the debt.

Following that, he drew another 'cross,' indicating that it was canceled.

Upon reaching this step, he picked up the parchment with one hand and tapped his glabella with the other to activate his Spirit Vision.

Another invisible and exuberant energy bloomed as Old Neil whispered a chant:

"I pray for the power of the dark night.

"I pray for the power of the crimson.

"I pray for the Goddess's loving grace.

"Please provide me with the funds to pay this IOU.

"Night vanilla, an herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!"

"Moon flower, an herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!"

†

Klein was completely flabbergasted listening from the side. All sorts of thoughts arose in him.

Such an incantation can work?

Although it was recited from written Hermes…

Isn't this way too simple and down to earth?

Wouldn't the Goddess be angry and multiply the debt severalfold?

At that moment, the candlelight lit up suddenly!

After Old Neil finished his incantation, he closed his eyes for two minutes. He picked up the Full Moon Essence Oil and dripped one drop onto each of the three candles.

Immediately following that, he grabbed the parchment and pulled it close to the candle representing "me." When it ignited, he immediately threw it into the cauldron.

Old Neil closed his eyes again as he seemed to sense the burning of the IOU.

He opened his eyes after a moment and looked toward the black Sacred Emblem on the cauldron. The parchment was already completely incinerated.

"Praise the Lady!" Old Neil tapped his chest in four spots, forming the shape of the crimson moon. Then, he extinguished the candles in the opposite order as he lit them.

After finishing everything, he used the silver knife to rip apart the invisible wall around him.

A huge wind stirred immediately as Old Neil heaved a sigh of relief.

"It's done."

"That's it?" Klein asked in a daze. "Has the IOU been settled? How?"

"I don't know either. Anyways, it will be settled in a reasonable manner," said Old Neil with a smile as he threw up his hands.

This… Klein was unsure what expression or words to use as a response.

Isn’t this a little unreliable?

[†] This is a Daoism saying: Dao begets One, One begets Two, Two begets Three, Three begets all things.

Chapter 52 - Spectator

◆

“Stop thinking about the bloody IOU. Let’s discuss the ritualistic magic.” Old Neil put away the candles, cauldron, silver knife, and other items with a relaxed expression.

Klein really wanted to shrug his shoulders like the Americans in his previous life, but ultimately could not bring himself to do something that ungentlemanly.

He turned his focus toward the ritualistic magic and threw out detailed questions that puzzled him, receiving answers from them. For example, the incantations had a particular format. As long as they were satisfied and the key meaning was expressed in Hermes, the rest could be left to one’s creativity. Of course, blasphemy or disrespectful descriptions were absolutely forbidden.

The mysticism class lasted until noon before Old Neil coughed twice.

“We have to return to Zouteland Street.”

With that said, he grumbled in an indistinct manner, “To get these bloody materials, I missed my beloved breakfast.”

Klein looked around both amused and puzzled.

“Mr. Neil, do you have a chef? Or a maidservant in charge of cooking?”

A weekly salary of twelve pounds could hire several servants!

According to the newspapers, with board and lodging provided, hiring an ordinary chef cost anywhere between twelve to fifteen soli a week. It did not even need a pound. A maidservant to do miscellaneous chores was even cheaper. Their weekly salaries ranged between three soli six pence to six soli. Of course, one could not bear any hope of them having any culinary skills.

Uh, that's not right. With Mr. Neil's debt of thirty pounds, it's only normal he doesn't hire any chefs or servants…

It seems I've asked another question I should not have asked…

While Klein regretted his question, Old Neil shook his head without minding it.

"I often attempt ritualistic magic, research extraordinary items, and read corresponding documents at home, so I don't nor is it possible that I hire ordinary people as chefs, valets or maidservants. I only hire someone to clean up the place regularly. And if they are not ordinary people, do you think they will be willing to do such jobs?"

"I seem to have asked a silly question. It's possibly because I will not do anything that involves mysticism at home," explained Klein in a self-deprecating manner.

Old Neil had long stood up, wore his round felt hat, and while walking out the door, rambled on.

"I seem to smell pan-fried foie gras… Once the IOU is completely settled, I'll definitely have one set! For lunch, I'll definitely eat roasted pork glazed with apple juices. No, that's not enough. I must have a sausage infused with mashed potatoes…"

You are making me hungry… Klein swallowed his saliva as he caught up to Old Neil and headed for the nearby public carriage stop.

After returning to Zouteland Street, Old Neil suddenly grunted after stepping down the carriage.

“What do I see? Goddess, what am I seeing?”

He was suddenly as nimble as a seventeen or eighteen-year-old lad. He quickly came to the roadside and picked up an item.

Klein leaned close out of curiosity and looked carefully. He realized it was a wallet with fine workmanship.

With his lack of experience, he could barely tell if the dark brown wallet was made of buffalo skin or sheepskin, but he noticed a small light-blue logo embroidered on the side of the wallet—a white dove spreading its wings as if ready to take off.

That was Klein’s first impression. The second thing he noticed was the stack of paper notes in the bulging wallet.

There were more than twenty gray notes imprinted with black ink—gold pounds!

Old Neil opened up the wallet and pulled out the notes. When he looked at it carefully, he immediately chuckled.

“Ten-pound notes. The honorable Founder and Protector, William I. Wow, Goddess, there’s a total of thirty notes. There’s also a few five-pound notes, one-pound and five-soli notes.”

More than three hundred pounds? That’s a huge amount of money in every meaning of the word! I might not even earn that much in ten years… Klein’s breathing turned heavy involuntarily.

As the amount of gold pounds was immense, picking up such a wallet was equivalent to picking up a briefcase of banknotes in his previous life.

“I wonder which gentleman dropped it… He can’t be someone ordinary,” analyzed Klein calmly.

Such a wallet was clearly not a woman’s.

"There's no need to care who he is," said Old Neil with a chuckle. "It's not like we attempted to divine and take money that doesn't belong to us. We should wait here for a moment. I believe the gentleman will soon be back searching for it. It's not something that can be given up no matter who it is."

Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He had a brand-new understanding of Old Neil's morals.

He was rather worried that he would have used the Goddess's bestowment as an excuse and paid off his debt. He was still wondering how to prevent it and persuade him otherwise.

Is this "do as you wish, but do no harm?" Klein suddenly learned something new.

The duo did not wait more than a minute by the streets when a luxurious four-wheeled carriage zoomed over. Its side had a light blue logo with a dove spreading its wings.

The carriage stopped, and a middle-aged man dressed in a black formal suit with a bow tie of the same color alighted. He looked at the wallet, took off his hat, and said politely, "Sirs, that should be my master's wallet."

"Your logo is proof of everything, but I need to make additional verifications. This is to be responsible for all parties. Might I ask how much money is there in the wallet?" replied Old Neil politely.

The middle-aged man was taken aback as he said in a self-deprecating manner almost immediately, "As a butler, I do not know how much money Master had in his wallet. Sorry. Please permit me to ask."

"As you wish." Old Neil gestured for him to do as he pleased.

The middle-aged man walked to the carriage's side and through the window, conversed with the person within.

He approached Klein and Old Neil again and smiled.

“More than 300 pounds, but less than 350 pounds. My master does not remember the exact number.”

Does not remember… That’s really some filthy rich guy. If I had that much money on me, I would definitely be counting it again and again… Klein was filled with envy.

Old Neil nodded and handed the wallet back.

“With the Goddess as proof, this belongs to you.”

The middle-aged man took the wallet over and did an estimate before pulling out three ten-pound notes.

“My master is Sir Deweyville. He wishes to commend your morals. This is what an honest person should receive. Please do not reject it.”

Sir Deweyville? The one who established the Deweyville Trust? The Sir Deweyville who provided cheap rental apartments to the working class? Klein immediately remembered the name.

He was a knight that his brother respected but did not believe was grounded in reality.

“Thank you, Sir Deweyville. He is a kind and generous gentleman.” Old Neil did not stand on ceremony as he received the three notes.

After watching Sir Deweyville’s carriage depart, he turned to look at Klein when he saw that there was no one around. He flicked the notes and chuckled.

“Thirty pounds. The IOU is settled.

“I said it will be settled in a reasonable manner.

“This is the power of magic.”

…Holy f**king power of magic! That actually works!? Klein was once again flabbergasted.

A few minutes later, he entered the building's stairwell and while heading to the security company, he asked puzzledly, "Mr. Neil, why didn't you ask for more money?"

"Do not be greedy. One must take care not to be greedy when doing ritualistic magic. Temperance is a critical trait needed by every Mystery Pryer if they wish to live long," explained Old Neil happily.

†

In a huge ballroom, candles were burning on a few chandeliers, emitting a fragrance that soothed the minds of people. By the sheer number of candles, they produced a light in no way inferior to that of gas lamps.

There were long tables with pan-fried foie gras, grilled steak, roasted chicken, fried tonguefish, Desi oysters, mutton stew, cream soup, and other delicacies. In addition, there were bottles of Mist Champagne, Aurmir grape wine, and Southville red wine. They were all glistening with a tempting glow under the light.

Servants in red vests carried trays with crystal cups and shuttled between the gentlemen and ladies dressed both elegantly or gorgeously.

Audrey Hall was wearing a collared, high-waisted, pale-white dress with engageantes. Her corset was tightly fitted, while her voluminous layers were puffed up perfectly with a cage crinoline.

Her long blond hair was coiled up in an elegant bun and the earrings, necklace, and rings she wore sparkled brightly. At her feet were a pair of white dancing shoes that were stitched with roses and diamonds.

How many petticoats am I even wearing? Five? Six? Wearing white-silk gloves, Audrey caressed her crinoline gently with her right hand.

Her left hand was holding a glass of clear champagne.

Audrey was nothing like her usual self, usually placing herself center-stage of banquets and making her the focus of attention. Instead, she avoided the bustle and quietly stood in the shadows of hanging curtains by the French windows.

She took a sip of champagne as she watched the crowd as though she did not belong.

Earl Wolf's youngest son is chatting with Viscount Conrad's daughter. He likes to move his forearm to reinforce what he says. Hmm, the bigger the movement of his forearm, the more unbelievable his words. That is something gleaned from experience… He can't stop trying to elevate himself by putting other people down. However, he can't help but feel guilty. It can be seen by the way he talks and his body language…

Duchess Della has repeatedly covered her mouth while laughing with her left hand today. Ah, I see. She is showing off her pure ocean-blue sapphire…

Her husband, Duke Negan, is discussing the current situation with a few Conservative nobles. Since the banquet began, he has searched for Duchess Della once…

They almost never make eye contact. Maybe they aren't as in love as they pretend to be…

Baron Larry has made Madam Parnes laugh seven times. That's very normal, nothing strange about it, but why does she look at her husband with guilty eyes? Oh, they have gone their separate ways… That's not right, the directions they are headed leads to the garden…

†

In the extravagant banquet, Audrey saw many details she never noticed in the past.

There was an instant where she nearly believed that she was watching an opera.

Everyone is a good opera actor… She sighed silently as her eyes remained limpid.

At that moment, she suddenly sensed something and turned her head. She cast her gaze onto a dark corner in the large balcony outside.

In the shadows was a huge golden retriever sitting there silently. She was looking inside at Audrey while half her body was hidden in the darkness.

Susie… The corners of Audrey's mouth twitched as her expression instantly changed. She could no longer maintain her state as a Spectator.

Chapter 53 - Listener

An ancient three-masted sailboat was navigating through a tumultuous storm in the sea.

It was not fast and its displacement was lacking. With the weather and the sea looking like a cataclysmic scene, the sailboat was like a withered leaf separated from its tree. However, regardless of how the typhoons rampaged or how terrifying the waves were, it continued sailing peacefully without any signs of tilting.

Alger Wilson stood on the empty deck as he looked at the massive waves that resembled mountains. His thoughts were a mystery.

It’s going to be Monday again… he muttered silently to himself.

It was the day belonging to Earth Mother, the beginning of a series of waxing and waning.

However, it meant something different to Alger. It belonged to a mysterious existence forever enveloped in grayish-white fog.

At least I haven’t been reduced to a madman… He stopped looking around as he gave a self-deprecating chuckle.

At this moment, one of the only few sailors he had leaned over and asked reverently, “My Lord, where are we setting course for this time?”

Alger surveyed his surroundings and said in a calm voice, “Pursue the Listener from the Aurora Order.”

†

The storm subsided as mist emanated. On a strange sailboat with cannons on board, an eight or nine-year-old boy with soft yellow hair was looking at pirates around him in fear. They were disorderly—some enjoyed barrels of beer, some swung around with ropes, others mocked each other, and some even fought with their fists.

He turned to look at a black-robed man standing in the shadows. He suppressed his voice and asked, “Father, where are we going?”

Five days ago was his first time seeing his father, a father who proclaimed to be an adventurer.

If not for the oil painting his late mother left him that confirmed his father’s identity and the fact that the orphanage had opened its doors to him, he was absolutely unwilling to leave his hometown and follow his only kin who was also nearly a stranger.

The man in the shadows lowered his head and looked at his son. With an amiable expression, he answered, “Jack, I’m bringing you to a holy place, a holy residence where the Creator once lived.”

“Is that the Kingdom of God? We mortals can only enter by winning His grace…” Jack had been well-educated by his mother and knew this much. He was both surprised and fearful about the matter.

Standing in the shadows, the man had an unforgettable jawline as though he was a sculpture chiseled by the best artisan.

He placed his hand to his ear and made a listening pose. He replied in a tone that sounded like sleep-talking, “Jack, mortals are a wrong concept. The Creator created this world and He is everywhere. He exists in every living being. Therefore, all beings have godhood. Once the godhood attains a particular level, they can become an angel. The seven fake gods at present are only powerful angels.

"Look, I can now hear the teachings of the Creator. Ah, how extraordinary is this revelation! Life is only a tour of the spirit. When the spirit is sufficiently potent and resilient, we can find our godhood and fuse with even more godhoods…"

Jack could not understand the complicated description. He shook his head and asked another question he previously did not have the chance to.

"Father, I heard from Mother than after the Creator created this world, He split into all beings and does not exist in actuality. Then, why does His holy residence exist?"

As a seven to eight-year-old child, he was logical.

The man with the chiseled face was taken aback. He turned his head away as though he was listening to more murmurings.

Suddenly, he slumped down, knees on the deck. His exposed skin protruded black shards.

He clenched his head with both hands as his expression warped and he shouted in extreme pain, "They are lying!"

†

After lunch, having had Old Neil promise him that he would bring him to the underground market the next time he went, Klein slowly returned to the Blackthorn Security Company. He chose the two options of reading the documents in the staff office and practicing his abilities or take the opportunity to go out and act as a Seer in the Divination Club before Captain Dunn stopped him.

However, before he could make the decision, he saw Dunn Smith walk in. He was dressed in the usual black trench coat and halved top hat.

"Captain, any updates?" Klein thought of the whereabouts of the

Antigonus family's notebook as he asked with concern.

Without showing any signs of fatigue in his gray eyes, Dunn said, "The facts have corroborated that the Antigonus family's notebook is in Ray Bieber's hands. However, he has vanished completely.

"I have already informed the various Nighthawks teams of this matter through a telegram. They were requested to pay attention to the various piers and steam locomotive stations. The first batch of printed portraits was mailed out yesterday afternoon and will be printed in various major newspapers."

How nice it would be if there were phones, fax machines, surveillance cameras, and big data… What a pity. I know how to use all of them and even understand a little of the logic behind it… Klein exhaled silently.

"But regardless, we can consider ourselves as having found the notebook. And this is all thanks to you. Of course, it still needs another round of confirmations. I have already sent a telegram to the Backlund diocese, requesting them to escort Sealed Artifact 2-049 here. It was once a dangerous item of the Antigonus family. It can help us know if Ray Bieber is a descendant of the Antigonus family."

A Grade 2 Sealed Artifact… Dangerous… They can be used with care and moderation. Klein had originally wanted to ask about the Sealed Artifact, its special abilities, and the danger it posed out of curiosity, but he instantly recalled that he lacked the necessary clearance. He had no choice but to give up.

"May Goddess bless us." Klein tapped four spots on his chest, forming the sign of the full moon.

Dunn pushed open the door to his office and said with a slight nod, "The Goddess has always been protecting us. Klein, if you had not chosen Seer, you would be a formal member after this matter is verified. You could have chosen Sleepless, but pity… To be frank, I'm still puzzled over your choice. Although Corpse Collector is quite off-putting, you have seen Daly as well. You should know that Spirit Mediums vary in strength. As for Mystery Pryers, they're a good choice too. At the very least, you have Old Neil as a role model, so he will make sure the risk of losing control is minimized."

With regards to this question, Klein had prepared an answer from the beginning. He just never had a chance to use it since Dunn did not ask. He was only able to answer in passing.

He organized his words and said, "My considerations stem from the fact that Seers and Mystery Pryers are considered Beyonders with a support role. They do not need to always face enemies for that's too dangerous. And both you and Old Neil said that in the domain of mystery and Beyonders, curiosity and experimentation usually brings about terrifying outcomes. Describing Mystery Pryers as prying mysteries made me worried, so… Heh, as you know, I was only an ordinary graduate not long ago. A lack of guts is the only reason I made such a choice."

"I have to say that this is a very reasonable answer that goes beyond my expectations." Dunn massaged his temples and chuckled.

He turned halfway as his gray eyes sized up Klein.

"Continue going out for now. Do not limit yourself to the paths leading from Welch's place to Iron Cross Street. Perhaps you might sense the notebook and help us confirm Ray Bieber's location."

"Alright." Klein realized that he no longer need to be in a dilemma.

He bade Dunn farewell and turned around, his heart beginning to count.

Three, two…

"Hold on," shouted Dunn.

Klein turned his head and smiled.

"Captain, is there anything else?"

Dunn coughed slightly and said, "Well, support Beyonders have to fight their enemies from time to time. Although Seers sound like they can avoid such battles, they are not to be ignored. You have to maintain your shooting skills and work on increasing your strength."

"This is what I'm working hard towards." Klein pointed outside. "I'll be leaving."

"Alright. Uh, wait a moment." Dunn shouted for him once more. As he pondered, he said, "Perhaps I have to consider hiring a combat trainer for you. Of course, this matter is under the premise that you become a formal member."

Klein responded tersely before asking carefully, "Captain, is there anything else?"

"No." Seeing Klein's unbelieving eyes, Dunn shook his head and smiled. He emphasized again, "Really, nothing."

Only then did Klein walk past the partition divider. He bade farewell to Rozanne and Mrs. Orianna and headed to the Shooting Club for practice.

With all of this done, he went to the Divination Club and saw the beautiful Angelica sitting there reading magazines leisurely.

"Home"… Klein silently read. With the cane in hand, he walked over and greeted with a smile,

"Good afternoon, Madam Angelica."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti." In no rush, Angelica put down her magazine. She stood up and said, "Not long after you left yesterday, Mr. Glacis came. He just recovered from a major illness."

Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he smiled.

“That sure is something worth celebrating.”

Upon hearing this, Angelica, who was secretly observing him, lowered her voice and asked out of curiosity,

“Mr. Glacis said that you are a very, very, very magical doctor. Are you?”

What? Klein looked at the lady in front of him, suspecting if he was hearing things.

What made him think I’m a doctor?

Even I do not know…

Chapter 54 - The First Divination Requester

◆

Upon seeing Klein's odd expression, Angelica immediately felt her beliefs waver.

"Is that so? Mr. Glacis mentioned that you were able to tell of an ailment in his lungs simply from observation…"

Her voice softened until she finally shut up.

Observation? A dark glabella? Klein was instantly enlightened as he shook his head with a chortle.

"I believe Mr. Glacis was mistaken."

He was planning on being perfunctory, but after recalling that no one sought his divination services the entire afternoon yesterday, his mind whirled. It affected his goal of acting as a Seer, so he explained, "It's actually a form of divination."

"Divination? But Mr. Glacis only mentioned that you observed his face. That's also considered divination?" asked Angelica in shock and doubt.

Klein smiled, composed.

"As a member of the Divination Club, you should know about palm-reading, right?"

Palm-reading was not patented by the Foodaholic Empire. Even on Earth, India and old Europe had developed similar principles, much less in a world with Beyonder powers.

“I know about it, but it seems you did not read his palm? Were you observing him in secret?” asked Angelica curiously.

“I was using face-reading.” Klein cooked up a lie. “Its principles aren’t very different from palm-reading at a fundamental level.”

“Really?” Angelica’s eyes were filled with disbelief.

In order to develop his career as a Seer, Klein chuckled. He pretended to be in thought as he tapped his glabella twice.

He focused his eyes and Angelica’s aura presented itself. Her head was purple, her limbs were red, her throat was blue… There was no problems with her health except for some colors being duller. However, that was a manifestation of ordinary fatigue.

Klein then looked at her emotions and saw orange mixed in with some red and blue. It also meant warmth coupled with some excitement and thought.

Thankfully… After realizing that there was nothing abnormal about her, Klein planned on deactivating his Spirit Vision. But it was at that moment when he suddenly saw rich darkness hidden in the depths of her emotional colors.

Furthermore, she is lacking a little of white—an eagerness to improve… Klein nodded while in thought.

“Mr. Moretti, were you reading my face?” Seeing the young gentleman in black in front of her turn silent abruptly while seriously sizing her up, Angelica keenly noticed something. She asked in a half-curious and half-worried manner.

Klein did not immediately reply. Instead, he tapped his glabella lightly as he wore a look of scrutiny.

Just as Angelica was feeling unease, he said warmly, “Madam Angelica, there are some sorrows and pains which you should not seal in your heart.”

Angelica’s eyes widened as her mouth turned agape. However, she did not say a word.

She looked at Klein in his halved top hat with an apparent scholarly bearing. She heard him use a deep, comforting and warm voice to say, “You need to either go mountain climbing, a game of tennis, or perform a tragic play to exhaust your body due to exercising. Let your tears flow down uninhibited, then cry and scream. Express all those emotions.

“That will be very helpful to your health.”

The moment those words entered her ears, Angelica felt like she had transformed into a statue. She stood there motionless.

She tried hard to blink as she lowered her head in a fluster, saying deeply, “Thank you for your suggestion…”

“It seems like there are many members here today?” Klein did not continue. As though he had not done any divinations prior, he turned to his side and looked to the meeting room at the end of the corridor.

“Sunday afternoon… at least fifty members…” Angelica’s voice sounded a little hoarse. She only mentioned the key terms.

She paused as her vocal pace gradually returned to normal.

“Do you want tea or coffee?”

“Sibe black tea.” Klein nodded slightly. He politely took off his hat and slowly walked to the meeting room.

Only when he vanished behind the door did Angelica exhale slowly.

†

The Divination Club's meeting room was very large. It was nearly twice the size of Klein's high school classroom.

In the past, only five or six members would be present, making it look extremely empty. Now, there were dozens of fortune-tellers sitting in different spots. They filled up most of the room.

Sunlight shone into the room through the few oriel windows. The members were either discussing softly among themselves or asking Hanass Vincent questions. Otherwise, they were practicing and attempting divination or drinking coffee and reading newspapers by themselves.

Such a scene made Klein feel like he was back to his schooling days on Earth. The difference was that it was noisier and more rowdy back then, without the tranquility of the meeting room.

He looked around, but he didn't see familiar faces like Glacis or Edward Steve. So, he casually picked up a divination textbook, found a corner, and started flipping through it leisurely.

Very soon, Angelica came in with a cup of tea and left it on the table before Klein.

As she was leaving quietly, she suddenly saw Mr. Moretti take out an exquisite-looking silver chain from his left sleeve. There was a chunk of pure topaz hanging on the silver chain.

What is he doing? Angelica slowed down subconsciously and focused her gaze at Klein.

Klein held the silver chain with his left hand and allowed the topaz to hang above the Sibe black tea, just short of touching the surface of the liquid.

With a serene expression, he half-closed his eyes and the atmosphere around him suddenly turned quiet.

The topaz started moving slightly, along with the special looking silver chain, in a clockwise direction.

Upon seeing this, Angelica found Mr. Moretti extremely mysterious.

“The black tea you provide is great,” Klein said softly after he opened his eyes with a smile.

His actions were intentionally done for Angelica to see!

If he wanted people to select him for his divination services, Angelica’s recommendation was a very crucial factor!

Since he wanted to act as a Seer, Klein no longer had any reservations. He completely personified the identity.

“Yes, Mr. Vannas is very picky about the quality of tea,” Angelica said, stunned.

Klein put away his spirit pendulum by winding it properly. Then, he raised the white porcelain cup with floral design. With a smile, he gestured politely at her with his cup.

†

Angelica returned to the reception hall, but she no longer had the mood to read magazines. She sat there, gazing into the distance. It was a wonder what she was thinking about.

This continued until there were knocks on the door. She jolted awake and hurriedly looked at the entrance, only to see a lady dressed in a light-blue dress.

The lady took off her veiled hat with a powder blue ribbon. She looked calm and melancholic.

“Good afternoon, esteemed lady. Would you like to join the Divination Club, or are you looking for a divination?” Angelica asked like clockwork.

“I want a divination.” The lady had a beautiful pair of eyes hidden with sorrow, and she bit her lower lip as she spoke.

Angelica guided her to the sofa and explained to her how the Divination Club worked in detail.

She picked up an album and handed it over.

“You can pick anyone.”

In her low spirits, the lady flipped through the album seriously. As there were too many club members there that day, there were too many choices. It left her quite upset.

“Can you recommend one? From these few pages.” She pointed at the middle section of the album, omitting the fortune-tellers priced above two soli and those below four pence.

Angelica took the album and looked at it for a few minutes. She deliberated her words before saying, “I suggest this gentleman.”

The lady who looked uneasy took a glance and realized that it was a fortune-teller named “Klein Moretti.”

“Mr. Moretti just joined the club… Is his divination reliable?” she asked worriedly.

Angelica nodded with great affirmation.

“Another member of the club and I are certain that Mr. Moretti is an outstanding fortune-teller. If it wasn’t for his just joining the club, he wouldn’t take such low fees.”

“I understand.” The depressed girl nodded. “I’ll pick Mr. Moretti for a divination then.”

“Alright, please hold on for a second.” Angelica took the album and walked towards the meeting room.

She came next to Klein and said with a suppressed voice, “Mr. Moretti, someone wants you to divine for them. Which room would you like to use?”

That was effective. My first “business” is here. Klein put down his teacup and nodded calmly as he said, “Topaz room.”

“Alright.” Angelica walked slowly ahead of him and led him to Topaz room before opening its wooden door.

Klein sat behind the table that had various divination tools on it. He waited less than a minute before he saw a woman in a light-blue dress walk in. She looked down and melancholic.

Seizing the opportunity when she was closing the door, he tapped his glabella twice.

The yellow color in her stomach seems a little dull… The dark color of her emotions is very heavy, mainly worry and anxiety. Klein looked her over carefully and leaned backwards. He then lifted his hand to cut off his Spiritual Vision.

“Good day, Mr. Moretti.” The woman in the light-blue dress sat down.

“Good afternoon, how may I address you?” Klein asked politely, not carrying much hope of getting an answer.

As a keyboard warrior, he knew that many people were not willing to use their real names during divination.

“You can call me Anna.” The girl put her veiled cap aside. She looked at Klein with mixed anticipation and doubt, and said, “I would like to divine about my fiancé’s situation. He traveled to the Southern Continent in March for a business deal. He sent me and his family a telegram last month on the third, saying that he was going to set sail and return. But he did not return after twenty days. At first, I believed that his delay was due to the Berserk Sea's weather, but as of today, it has been more than a month. The ship he took, the Alfalfa, still hasn't arrived at Enmat Harbor."

The ocean that separated the Northern and Southern continent was called the Berserk Sea. It was well known for natural calamities and its countless dangerous currents. If it was not for Emperor Roselle, who sent men to discover a few safer sailing routes, countries in the Northern Continent would still have yet to enter the age of colonization, let alone lay an underwater cable to complete a transoceanic telegraph.

Klein looked at his very first client of his career as a Seer and asked carefully, "Which divination method do you wish to use?"

Chapter 55 - Revelation

◆

Anna, with her beautiful eyes, hesitated for more than ten seconds.

“You can choose any type that you believe will be accurate. You are the fortune-teller, while I’m not. Of course, apart from cards, including tarot, I have also attempted studying them at home. I always felt they were more like toys or a game.”

Klein thought for a moment, his wrists leaning on the edge of the table. He steepled his hands before his face, his gaze peaceful. He said softly, “Then we shall use the astrolabe.”

He pointed to a fountain pen and stack of white paper on the table and said, “Write down the name of your fiancé as well as his facial features, address, and date of birth. It would be even better if you can remember the specific time he was born.”

From her clothes, makeup, and demeanor, Klein did not believe that she was illiterate.

Anna did not reply. She extended her hand and took a piece of paper. She lifted the pen and dipped it in some ink. She started writing, pausing occasionally to think.

Two minutes later, she pushed the paper toward Klein.

Klein received it and turned it around. The information on the paper read: “Joyce Meyer, 15th September 1323, 2:00PM. Tingen City, East Borough, 8 Stevens Street. Short blond hair, aquiline nose…”

With just a short glance, Klein quickly calculated the person's spiritual number:

1+5=6

In the study of Spirit Numerology in mysticism, adding the numbers of the day the person was born was called their Birth Day Path Number, affecting the person's life before 27. Birth Month Path Number (calculated by adding the numbers in their birth month) affected their life from 27 to 54 years old, while the Birth Year Path Number (calculating the numbers in their birth year) affected their life from 54 years old onward.

It was July 1349, so Joyce was not yet 27; thus, Klein immediately calculated the Birth Day Path Number.

The number six represented a balanced and harmonious life, with a heart for giving and a decent marriage or engagement.

Following this, he quickly calculated Joyce's Year Path Number.

The so-called Year Path Number was calculated by replacing the birth year with the current year. The digits were then added with his Birth Day Path Number and Birth Month Path Number to get a general understanding of the person's luck for the year.

1+3+4+9=17, 1+7=8; 8+9 (Birth Month Path Number)+6 (Birth Day Path Number)=23; 2+3=5; His Year Path Number is 5, signifying that he would meet with change and accident. He would be required to take certain risks… Klein made a silent judgment after consolidating the facts. He confirmed that the information Anna gave was correct.

He retracted his gaze from the paper and turned it toward Anna, "Mr. Meyer set off on his journey on the 3rd of June?"

"If he did not lie, that is indeed the case." Anna bit her lips.

"Alright." Klein took the fountain pen and made a note of that.

He looked at Anna with his dark brown eyes and said gently, “I will begin creating the astrolabe now. I will need some time and absolute silence; do you mind waiting outside? Angelica will provide you with a cup of tea or coffee.”

“Alright.” Anna knew that some fortune-tellers had their eccentricities, so she stood up unsurprised. She took her hat with the light blue ribbon and left the Topaz room.

Klein locked the door and returned to the table. He followed the information and set up the astrolabe, including elements such as his horoscope and locations of the corresponding planets and stars.

Throughout the entire process, he did not open the Astromancy Manual. He completed the set up based on his memory.

Over the past few days of his mysticism studies, Klein realized that he could easily grasp and understand anything about divination, quickly turning it into instinct.

Perhaps that is the ability of a Seer… He completed the astrolabe and felt satisfied. He felt as though his body, heart, and soul had relaxed considerably.

As he looked at the outcome, he followed the path of the horoscopes and planets, as well as other supporting details to roughly deduce that Joyce Meyer had met with an accident but would ultimately survive it.

At this point, the divination was technically complete. But Klein wanted to pay much attention to his first business transaction. He hoped to build a reputation to aid in acquiring future jobs. He picked up the pen and wrote a sentence in Hermes: Joyce Meyer’s current situation.

He read the sentence silently and memorized the information on the piece of paper, repeating it again and again.

After seven times, Klein grabbed the piece of paper and leaned back into his chair.

He imagined the sphere of light, and his eyes became darker, allowing him to quickly enter a state of Cogitation.

The surroundings took on an ethereal quality. A formless, boundless fog stretched above him.

Klein recalled the contents of the piece of paper, then relaxed. He fell into a deep sleep in this state.

He was using a dream divination technique!

Repeating the question, remembering the details, and then allowing his Astral Projection to roam the spirit world in a dream would allow him to gain revelations!

Ordinary people also had this sort of experience sometimes, but it was hard for them to recall, as the signs in their dreams were more complicated and garbled. A Seer would not have such a problem, for they could see the images directly.

The surroundings began to turn hazy as Klein turned half asleep.

In the contorted fantasy, he saw a blond young man with an aquiline nose. He was swimming frantically in a sea of blood, nearly engulfed by the waves. But in the end, he managed to escape to shore.

The image shattered and changed. Klein saw a blue house with a toy windmill at the door. That blond young man was entering the house slowly, seemingly in joy.

At this moment, the image changed once again. Klein realized that he was inside a magnificent palace.

The walls were destroyed and damaged beyond repair. Moss and weeds grew in multiple areas. Through the holes in the walls, he could see a mountain peak and clouds clinging close to it outside.

Atop the palace was a huge throne carved out of stone. It was adorned with dull gemstones and gold. It looked as though it was not prepared for a human.

This giant throne was empty and mottled, as if it had been washed over by the ages.

Klein looked around in confusion. He did not understand why he would be dreaming of such a scene.

His turbid mind turned sharp as he subconsciously walked out of the palace in an attempt to ascertain where he was.

Suddenly, he felt a gaze fall upon him. It was a gaze that came from behind!

Klein suddenly turned around and stared towards the giant stone throne, only to see a scene of countless transparent maggots slowly twitching and growing.

[image]

Klein gasped.

He opened his eyes and woke up from his dream.

Crystal balls, tarot cards, and the prepared astrolabe entered his vision. Reality quickly replaced fantasy.

The initial dream was the result of the divination, but what was the later dream about? It seemed to be targeted at me? Klein put the piece of paper down. He rubbed his temples and contemplated.

He could confirm that it wasn’t his fear projecting itself in the form of a dream, for he was doing the divination himself.

A palace not meant for humans on the peak of a mountain… The silent stare… The contorted and weird scene of the maggots… Klein silently guessed as he recalled.

Has the luck enhancement ritual communicated with that existence? Or is it a result of the Antigonus family's notebook… Right, that notebook mentioned the Nation of the Evernight in the Hornacis mountain range! The palace in the dream was on a mountain peak!

He made a simple deduction and was relieved that he had picked Seer. According to Old Neil, Mystery Pryers could also divine through dreams, but they weren't as effective as a Seer.

Sigh, it sure isn't letting me go… All I can hope for is the early capture of Ray Bieber… Klein collected himself and picked up the piece of paper with the diagram of the astrolabe. He slowly walked towards the door.

He opened the door and headed to the reception area. He saw Anna looking out the window, completely ignoring her cup of black tea.

"Ah, Mr. Moretti, is there a result?" She saw Klein in her peripheral vision and stood up in a hurry.

Klein did not answer her immediately. Instead, he asked according to the revelation he received from the dream, "Does your house, or Mr. Meyer's house, have a toy windmill?"

Anna's eyes widened, shocked into silence.

After a while, she muttered, "That was a present he gave me. It is by the door at my house. How did you know that…"

C-can this be divined?

Klein smiled and spoke with a gentle tone, "Congratulations Miss Anna, Mr. Joyce Meyer is currently a guest at your place. If you rush back, you should still be able to meet him. He just experienced a calamity, an unimaginably painful journey. What he needs now are not questions, but consolation and a warm hug."

"Really?" Anna asked in disbelief.

The fortune-tellers she knew would never speak with such certainty or give such firm conclusions.

“You will know if you go back immediately,” Klein replied with a gentle tone and smile.

“Oh, Lord of Steam, is that true? Has my poor Joyce returned? Are you certain? No, I cannot believe it…” Anna froze for a moment and said a few delirious words.

She took out a one-soli note from her purse and did not wait for Klein to give her the change. She broke into a small jog as she left the Divination Club, taking a carriage back home.

“Does this include my tip?” Klein looked at the note and shook his head with a laugh.

†

A two-wheeled carriage steered quickly across the streets and entered East Borough.

Anna watched the streets sweeping past her, feeling a mixture of unease, anticipation, and fear. It did not take long before the toy windmill entered her field of vision.

She got off the carriage, showing no care for her bearing. She staggered quickly towards the door and rang the doorbell.

The door creaked open, revealing a blond young man dressed in a black formal suit. He was haggard, but his eyes carried a glint of joy. He had an aquiline nose.

“I thought that I would miss you today,” Joyce said with a smile.

“…Oh, Exalted Steam, you really are back!” Anna rubbed her eyes, exclaiming in pleasant surprise.

What the fortune-teller said was true!

No, that was a real seer!

It was simply fascinating!

Thoughts welled in her mind as Anna pounced forward with tears in her eyes and gave her fiancé a warm hug.

The two of them hugged silently outside the grayish-blue house. The toy windmill turned slowly, seemingly tossing all their difficulties far away.

Chapter 56 - Escape from the Sea

◆

In a rather spacious living room, Anna and Joyce were seated on different sofas, separated by Anna’s parents.

Joyce sighed with a satisfied expression and said, “Exalted Steam, I am so lucky to come back alive, to be able to see Anna again.”

“My poor Joyce, what happened?” Anna couldn’t help but ask with concern.

Joyce took a glance at his fiancée, and his expression turned grave.

“I still feel terrified to this day. I keep waking up from my dreams again and again. Five days after the Alfalfa left Caesar Pier, we came across pirates, scary pirates. The only fortunate thing was that their leader’s name was Nast.”

“The pirate that calls himself the King of the Five Seas?” Anna’s father, Mr. Wayne, asked in shock.

Although Joyce had already been there for half an hour, he did not volunteer details about his ordeal. He appeared to be fearful, perturbed, and uneasy. It was only after Anna returned and hugged him that he finally appeared to put it behind him.

“Yes, due to his declaration of being a descendant of the Solomon Empire, the King of the Five Seas, Nast didn’t believe in killing captives. Hence, we were only robbed and didn’t lose our lives. His subordinates even left us sufficient food,” Joyce said as he recalled the ordeal.

His body started to quiver, but he continued to describe his deepest and scariest nightmare.

“I didn’t lose much of my wealth. I believed that my misfortune was over, but as we continued towards our destination, a heated conflict erupted among the Alfalfa’s passengers and crew. From disagreement, to fighting, to drawing revolvers, and raising swords to kill each other… I saw nothing but blood during that period. One after another, people beside me fell with eyes opened, never to be closed. Their limbs, hearts, and intestines were scattered across the floors.”

“Those of us who were unwilling to turn into savage beasts, the rational group, had nowhere to hide and nowhere to escape. We were surrounded by deep blue waves and the boundless ocean… Some wailed, some begged for mercy, some sold their bodies, but their heads were hung from the mast either way.

“Anna, I reeled in despair back then. I thought I would never see you again. Fortunately, in such a nightmare, there was still a hero. The captain took us to hide in the sturdy keel of the ship, and we relied on the stored water and food there until the maniacs reached their limits. Mr. Tris encouraged us, courageously leading us in an assault against those murderers…

“After an unforgettable bloody battle, we survived. But the Alfalfa strayed off course, and only a third of the original sailors remained.”

†

When he depicted the most horrible and darkest side of the human psyche, Joyce couldn’t help but recall the “hero,” the man that called himself Tris. He had a round and amiable face. He was shy like a girl and enjoyed staying in a corner. Only people whom he was familiar with knew that he was a very good conversationalist.

But it was such an unremarkable boy who stood in front of everyone with determination in the worst of days.

“Oh, Exalted Steam, my poor Joyce, you went through such a heartbreaking ordeal. Thank God, praise be to God, He prevented us from eternal separation.” Tears welled up in Anna’s eyes as she constantly dotted three points to form a triangle, the Sacred Emblem for Steam and Machinery.

Joyce revealed a faint pale smile.

“This is the reward for our faith. The Alfalfa then went through storms, lost its course, and after surmounting one challenge after another, arrived at Enmat Harbor.”

“Due to the bloodbath that had taken place on the boat, those of us that survived were held captive by the police and questioned separately. We didn’t have a chance to send telegrams home to update our loved ones. When they released us this morning, I immediately borrowed some money from my friend and took the steam locomotive back. Thank God for letting me set foot on the land of Tingen again, allowing me to see all of you again.”

Then, he looked towards his fiancée in confusion.

“Anna, when you saw me, I could feel your happiness and surprise, but I couldn’t understand why you rushed towards the door so excitedly right after you got off the carriage. Heh, I had planned on giving you a huge surprise.”

Anna thought about what had happened earlier, and continued in disbelief, “There’s nothing to hide, Joyce. As I was worried about you, I went to the only divination club in Tingen City today for a divination. That fortune-teller—no, the seer told me, he said, ‘Your fiancé has returned; he’s in the house with a windmill.’”

“What?” the Wayne couple and Joyce exclaimed simultaneously.

Anna covered her face and shook her head.

"I can barely believe it either, but it happened. Exalted Steam, perhaps there really are miracles in this world."

"Joyce, that seer asked me for your name, characteristics, address, and birth date. He told me he was going to do an astrolabe divination. Then, he asked me if the house with a toy windmill was yours or mine. When I confirmed it was mine, he said, 'Congratulations Miss Anna, Mr. Joyce Meyer is currently a guest at your place. What he needs now are not questions, but consolation and a warm hug.'"

"God…" Joyce found it unbelievable and incomprehensible. "Does he know me? Did someone send him a telegram? Could it be that he is familiar with the police in Enmat Harbor? No, that doesn't explain it. How did he know that I came to your place? How could he possibly know that you would seek a divination? Did you make an appointment?"

"No, I made a selection at the last minute," Anna replied with a vacant-looking expression.

"Perhaps a good seer needs to be in control of vast amounts of information, even if it cannot be used any time soon. Perhaps, that is the fascinating aspect of divination." Anna's father, Mr. Wayne sighed and concluded. "In the known history of more than a thousand years and in the uncertain Fourth Epoch, divination has existed and has yet to disappear. I think there must be a reason for that."

Joyce shook his head lightly and asked, "What's that seer's name?"

Anna thought and said, "Klein Moretti."

†

In the reception lobby of the Divination Club.

As Klein had spoken softly, Angelica knew not to go close. Therefore, she only saw Anna leave as though she had lost her soul, wearing shock and confusion on her face.

Angelica briskly walked to the sofa and asked out of curiosity, “Was the result good?”

She did not dare ask the actual result, afraid of violating the unspoken rule of fortune-tellers.

“Yeah.” Klein nodded and took out three copper coins from his pocket. “One-eighth of one soli is one and a half pennies, right?”

“Yes.” Angelica looked at the copper coins and realized that one of them was a penny and two of them were halfpence. She quickly held it out and said, “There’s an additional halfpence.”

Klein smiled faintly and said, “Thank you for taking care of my customer. She gave me a tip, so it’s only right I give you one.”

It’s also to thank you for recommending me… he added in his heart.

“Alright.” Angelica felt an unknown fear of Klein, but since the reason was appropriate, she didn’t refuse the offer.

Klein returned to the meeting room, believing that there would be more people requesting his divinations.

However, he did not receive a second customer by forty minutes past five.

It wasn’t because the Divination Club’s business was poor, but because most people had already chosen a fortune-teller.

They likely were recommended by others and had long determined whose services to hire… In short, I’m still lacking in reputation… Klein laughed at himself for using game terminology.

He finished his third cup of Sibe black tea, grabbed his top hat and silver-edged cane, and walked leisurely out of the meeting room.

Angelica suddenly recalled Glacis's instructions, and she quickly moved to intercept him.

“Mr. Moretti, when will you next visit the club? Mr. Glacis would like to thank you in person.”

“I will come over whenever I'm free. If fate permits us, he will definitely meet me,” Klein replied, using the tone of a psychic charlatan, as though he was in character.

Then, he left the club before Angelica could respond and took the public carriage home.

When he stepped through the door, Klein found Benson reading the newspaper and Melissa putting together bits and pieces of gears, bearings, and springs in the evening sunlight.

“Good afternoon. Did Mrs. Shaud visit?” Klein asked casually.

Benson didn't put down his newspaper; instead, he lifted his head.

“Mrs. Shaud's visit lasted fifteen minutes. She brought some gifts, and she was very happy with the muffins and lemon cake that we prepared. She also invited us over whenever we have the chance to. She is a friendly, well-mannered lady. She knows how to carry a conversation very well too.”

“The only problem is their belief in the Lord of Storms. They believe that girls shouldn't go to school, but should be homeschooled instead,” Melissa complained.

It was obvious that she was very upset about it.

“Don't mind that. As long as she doesn't disturb us, she will still be a good neighbor,” Klein comforted his sister, smiling.

The Loen Kingdom was a multi-religious nation, unlike the Frosac Empire in the north which only believed in the God of Combat or the

Feynapotter Kingdom in the south which only worshiped Earth Mother. It was inevitable that the congregations from the three major churches of the Lord of Storms, the Evernight Goddess, and the God of Steam and Machinery had conflicts in beliefs and customs. After a thousand years of this, they restrained each other, making coexistence possible.

“Okay.” Melissa pursed her lips and redirected her focus onto the pile of parts again.

After dinner, Klein continued revising history. Only when Melissa and Benson showered and returned to their rooms did he wash up, enter his bedroom, and lock his door.

He needed to organize and summarize what he had learned and the problems that he encountered to prevent himself from forgetting or missing out any critical points. Only by doing so would he be able to respond to subsequent developments in the future with a clear train of thought.

Klein flipped open his notebook, took out his pen, and started writing in Mandarin.

“Why is the key to digesting potions acting?”

Chapter 57 - Organization and Summary

◆

After pausing for a moment, Klein continued writing.

“The essence to resolving the problems with potions is through digestion, not simply controlling it. This can be understood in a straightforward manner.

“Merely controlling it would be akin to using the power of potions as an external tool. A tamed beast no matter how well controlled would ultimately not be a part of a person. The risk of it turning on them would be ever present. As for digestion, it is to view the downed potion as a part of them. They can break it down, fuse with it, absorb it, and form an overall system.

“I am currently certain of this point. What is more important is how ‘acting’ helps in digestion.

“According to my experience as a Seer today, I can make two hypotheses. They can be verified in the future.”

“One: Acting based on the potion’s name changes the state of one’s body, heart, and soul, making them closer to the remnant headstrong psyche of the potion’s core. This results in resonance which allows gradual assimilation and absorption.

“Two: The remnant headstrong psyche spirit of the magic medicine might be like a computer with complete defensive mechanisms. If one wishes to attack it and break it down, they will need to find a bug, security hole, or key. The name of the potion provides a corresponding clue; thus, we can disguise our body, heart, and soul as 'part of the system' through acting, and so we deceive the system's defenses. This line of thought is similar to Emperor Roselle's description.

"No matter which guess is right, there is no escaping the body, heart, and soul, for they are the only bridge between acting and the power of potions."

Klein put down his pen and looked at the paragraph of text. For a moment, he even wanted to thank the education he received from the Foodaholic Empire.

No matter if he chose science or engineering for his further education, he was equipped with the basics of logical thought. Otherwise, there was no way he could have become a keyboard warrior, nor would he have been able to analyze his current situation.

"Acting might have an effect, but we'll have to wait and see for the specifics," Klein guessed.

After that, he wrote down his second question.

"Why would a Seer, being more well-learned and professional in the domain of mysticism, be lacking in means when it comes to direct combat? Wouldn't being more well-learned and professional make a Seer even more powerful, giving them the ability to discover a way to defeat their enemies?

"The reasons could be…

"First, just like the web novels I've read in the past, I have transmigrated to a game world that has become reality. Thus, different 'jobs' come with different specialties that have to be balanced against each other. But up to this point, there has been no sign of this world being a game, nor are there signs of mission-like developments. I'll put this reason on hold, but it's very unlikely.

"Second, the fundamental law of this world is balance. The Creator made this world with the core idea of balance.

“Third, potions at the same Sequence level would have the same level of power. It is the most optimal state based on what our forefathers found out and summarized. Exceeding this level of power would make it easier for one to collapse and lose control. Below this level of power would make it such that one would not obtain the desired Beyonder powers. Thus, under the situation of a balanced power level, being stronger in one area would naturally mean that one is weaker in another area.

“Fourth, everything in this world originated from the same source; they were formed by the remnants of the Creator. Thus, everything in this world is technically fragments of the Creator, and the fact that they have to complement each other would mean that there are inherent shortcomings to an individual.

“I am leaning towards the third and fourth reasons, but the latter stems from an unconfirmed myth and can only serve as a guide.

“Thus, I shall use the third reason as a guide, and try to ascertain it using my current knowledge and future studies.”

At this point, Klein had already written two full pages but did not stop. Instead, he penned a new question.

“From what I learned today, my luck enhancement ritual is categorized as a classic ritualistic magic.

“Similar kinds of ritualistic magic can be split into three parts, the first being a sacrifice that sparks the interest of a corresponding existence. The second is comprised of incantations specifically describing the existence in question. The third is using simple formatting and symbols to convey what one is asking for.

“Using this as a benchmark to analyze the luck enhancement ritual, there’s an obvious problem.”There is no third part!

“It has the sacrifice aspect in the placement of staple foods and walking a square in a counterclockwise manner with four steps. There is also a clear indication who the incantation is for, such as the phrase, ‘The Immortal Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.’

“But all I did after was close my eyes and wait. There was nothing in the ritual that described the goal of enhancing my luck.

“In other words, the corresponding existence has no way of knowing what the so-called luck enhancement ritual is asking for, and can only do as they see fit… Do as they see fit…

“What a troll! Isn’t that darn ‘Quintessential Divination and Arcane Arts of the Qin and Han Dynasty’ too much of a troll?

“I must have had rocks in my head back then for trying…”

Klein stopped writing and took two deep breaths, trying hard to calm himself down.

He spat out a foul breath and continued writing.

“I can consider re-designing the ritual, making it more complete. The motive of the ritual shall be to return to Earth, back to the world with my parents and friends.

“Then here comes the question: was the entity truly acting on a whim? Or is there a deeper meaning to it?

“Also, is the entity that the descriptive incantations point towards in this world the same one from Earth?

“If so, the difference in results between the first and second ritual could be explained as the entity doing as it wishes. But the results of me appearing above the gray fog during the second and third time, while being able to connect to Justice and The Hanged Man has basically no differences. Why would that be so?

"If the fourth ritual tomorrow afternoon shows me the same stable results, that would mean that the effects are consistent. That would mean that the unknown entity has an agenda I do not know about. If that is the case, adding new descriptions and requests would not get me a clear response. In fact, it might complicate the ritual and result in adverse effects.

"Would the difference between the first ritual and the subsequent rituals—under the premise that the entity I called upon is the same one—mean that the results would be different depending on the world I'm in? It is like I am using a different interface…

"Then how can I design it to obtain my desired outcome?

"If I think that the entities behind the first and subsequent rituals are different, some of the questions can be perfectly answered. But similarly, the stability of the results in the second and third rituals would mean that the entity I am praying to has a certain agenda, and there is no way I can change that for the time being.

"The most important question is the identity of the entity that the ritual is directed. Where is He, and why doesn't He give me any clues or guidance?

"Could He be deep in the world of fog?

"Hmm, can I treat Him as an entity in slumber, an entity that would give fixed responses if I give Him a certain stimulus, but would not interfere with what I do other than that?

"Then I can introduce a different ritual as a stimulus and conclude whether the feedback I receive is regular. That way, I can find the correct method of returning.

"But the problem lies in the possibility that He is not asleep. In that case, such tests might result in terrifying outcomes. It might be really dangerous.

“The first attempt must be conducted with extreme caution. The design must not anger the being…

“What a headache. I need more knowledge.”

Klein sighed and gave a summary.

Finally, he wrote down other miscellaneous items.

“There are always formless voices resonating in my ears, shouting ’Hornacis and… uh, was it saying Frygrea or Feygrea?

“Hornacis is the mountain range dividing the Loen Kingdom and the Intis Republic. Its main peak is six thousand meters above sea level.

“According to the records in the Antigonus family’s diary, there existed a Nation of the Evernight in the Fourth Epoch. Is the Nation of the Evernight related to the Evernight Goddess—is there any connection between the two? Are they allies or enemies? Was the Antigonus family obliterated by the Church of Evernight due to Nation of the Evernight?

“Did I hear murmurings coming from the diary, from the howls of the Antigonus family over one or two thousand years?

“What then does Frygrea, uh—Flegrea mean?

“An interesting question. To be able to leave behind such a diary, to leave behind Sealed Artifact 2-049 implies that the Antigonus family had possession of a relatively powerful Beyonder power. If that is so, which Sequence did they possess? Was it complete or not complete?

“My realization that the diary is in the hands of Ray Bieber was a bit of a coincidence, but without any indication of it being arranged, could my fate really be tied up with that diary’s?”

†

His ideas were penned on the pieces of paper. Klein tried his best to write down the events he had experienced and his guesses about their meaning.

He wrote a total of four pages on both sides of each paper.

Rip! Klein suddenly tore off the four pages and read them from top to bottom, sometimes marking certain sections with his pen, adding a few sentences at other times.

Time flew quickly. The crimson moon was temporarily covered by dark clouds. Klein picked up the pocket watch on the table, snapped it open, and looked at the time.

He put down the watch and took out a box of matches from his drawer. He lit one and brought it close to the four pages of notes.

The orange flame ignited the edges of the paper and quickly spread.

Klein placed the notes on top of the wooden dustbin and watched the ashes drop.

He then released his fingers, allowing the papers to fall. In just ten seconds, everything had disappeared. All that was left was the still-swirling ash and the charred bottom of the dustbin.

As there was Emperor Roselle's secret diary in this world, Klein did not dare leave behind any evidence that he knew how to write Chinese—if Old Neil and the rest discovered the four pieces of paper he wrote, he would have no idea how to explain the matter.

And while writing the confidential questions, Klein was worried that the one paying attention to his dreams would be able to see and decipher the contents no matter which language he used, be it Loen, ancient Feysac, or Hermes. Therefore, he could only write notes in Chinese to organize and summarize. After he was done with the task, he burned the notes to leave no traces.

And precisely because there was no way of saving, he set up a plan for himself. He would do this summary once a week just in case he forgot anything.

As he watched the ashes fall, Klein pulled out a white piece of paper. He wrote the title: “To my respected mentor,”

He wanted to write to Senior Associate Professor Quentin Cohen, asking if he had any relevant historical information about the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range.

Chapter 58 - A Train of Thought

The next day, a Monday morning.

Klein, who had the day off, didn't leave home. Instead, he gave Melissa his letter directed to Mentor Cohen Quentin and more than enough money to buy stamps. He entrusted her with the job of mailing the letter at the post office near the Tingen Technical School where she studied.

After breakfast, he slept in to make up for the lack of sleep caused by the previous night's "work." He only woke up because of his stomach's grumblings close to noon.

He heated up some leftovers from the night before and ate them with a loaf of rye bread. Klein grabbed a newspaper and entered the bathroom on the second floor.

Whenever he did that, he couldn't help but sigh at the lack of a cell phone.

After about seven or eight minutes, he left the toilet refreshed and washed his hands. He then returned to his bedroom and locked his door.

Klein drew the curtains, lit up the gas lamp, and cogitated for half an hour. After practicing his Spiritual Vision, spirit dowsing, and dowsing rod for half an hour, he spent another hour mentally reviewing the mysticism knowledge he had gained recently.

After doing that, he ripped up the old newspaper and crumpled them into a few balls. He wrote on them, “Moon Flower Candle,” “Full Moon Essence Oil,” and other names of materials. He followed the prescribed steps of ritualistic magic in his head in order to master every little detail. Until he was entirely familiar with it, he didn’t intend to try ritualistic magic because it was both a waste of materials and also easily attracted danger.

He repeated again and again until he picked up his silver pocket watch patterned with vine-leaves and took a glance. He realized that it was a quarter to three.

He considered for a few seconds and brought the scraps of old newspapers to the kitchen on the first floor to burn them. While doing so, he made sure he was in an optimal state of mind as he prepared for the Tarot Gathering.

Locking his bedroom door once again, Klein didn’t wait for the clock to strike three. He planned to enter the area above the gray fog ahead of time.

He wanted to seize the chance to explore the place thoroughly!

As Klein stood in an empty spot in his room and started walking counterclockwise, he suddenly worried that Justice and The Hanged Man had yet to enter a suitable environment. He thought of a particular matter.

Would they be disturbed or discovered?

He had previously mentioned to allow Justice and The Hanged Man to apply for “leave” ahead of time if they needed to be absent from the Gathering for some reason such as being unable to find time alone or unexpected circumstances.

It would have been an almost unsolvable problem for Klein in the past. There was no way he could build an entire server-based Internet by hand in a different world, right? Any technology beyond the telegram could expose him.

But now, he had suddenly found inspiration from ritualistic magic.

“Ritualistic magic borrows the powers of others by seeking the help of different existences. Similar incantations would make it clear who it is directed to in the beginning, such as the Evernight Goddess or the Lady of Crimson. It would be a description of the unknown and clandestine existences.”

“Then, can I amend the chant and redirect the beginning of the chant towards myself?”

“Directed at me…”

“This way, even if Justice and The Hanged Man conduct the ritual in different locations, I would receive their messages.”

Klein suddenly felt fresh insight as he began analyzing the likelihood of the method working.

“There are two difficulties. First, I am not an incredibly strong high-level Sequencer. Even if the description of the incantation was directed to me, I couldn’t possibly receive the ‘request.’”

“Second, how can I ensure that the description of the chant is directed at me accurately, and doesn’t stray away and hit some other unknown existence that fits the description? That would be incredibly dangerous.”

Klein paced back and forth, deep in thought for a possible workable solution.

He went in circles with silent footsteps. Then, he naturally linked the matter with the mysterious world of the gray fog.

“Even if I can’t receive the message, that doesn’t mean the gray fog can't. Its connection with the crimson stars can 'drag' a person into the space directly, regardless of where they are in the physical world.

"I could consider tying myself to the mysterious space together during the directed description…

"In accordance with this train of thought, even though I might not immediately receive the 'request' when the other party is holding the ritual, I will still be able to see the corresponding messages whenever I enter the gray fog.

"To put it simply, it is the difference between being online and offline on an instant messaging system."

Klein became more excited the more he thought. He felt that his idea was worth a try.

"Hmm, what kind of description could be used to precisely direct a message to me and to the gray fog world?" He started thinking about the actual details.

In fact, he had an incantation that would definitely work. It was none other than the Loen translation of 'The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.' But herein lies the problem: he would lose control of the gray fog and lose his leading role. He could only exclude it.

"The Fool from an alternate world?" No way. It is quite accurate, and there is almost no other existence that fits the criteria, but it would expose my biggest secret… Klein thought of one incantation after another, but he crossed off each one.

After about seven to eight minutes, he finally decided on the description of the first paragraph that directed to him.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era."

It was obviously not accurate enough; therefore, Klein quickly added, "The mysterious ruler above the gray fog."

The combination of the two lines practically limited it to him. Furthermore, he had tied the gray fog to him.

"It's still a little short. I cannot eliminate the possibility that there are multiple spaces and rulers above the gray fog. I cannot eliminate the fact that the description might be directed to the spirit world..." Klein creased his eyebrows and planned on making it more certain.

Hmm... He thought for a full minute and finally decided on the last part of the description.

The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck!

It shared a similar meaning to "The Exalted Thearch of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.[1]" If the incantation purely depended on that part of the description, it might end up being directed away and provoking unknown dangerous existences. But with the first two lines as a limitation, and his experience of arriving above the fog through a similar incantation, he believed that the target's description could result in a perfect lock on.

Klein wasn't sure if casting the ritualistic magic with those three descriptions would be effective, but he was definite that it would not attract the attention of another existence, It wouldn't throw Justice and The Hanged Man into danger.

Klein heaved out a long sigh and recited the incantation that he had decided upon.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, you are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; you are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck..."

He nodded his head slightly and took out his pocket watch to confirm the time.

It's already 2:58... Without further thought, Klein put away his pocket and entered Cogitation. Soon he chanted and took four steps counterclockwise to form a square.

The most ferocious noises and heart-stirring roars were heard once again. He felt the headache that was even harder to deal with than the pain of consuming the Seer potion.

The pain was not a sharp pain that tore through his head. It was a throbbing pain that made him manic and irrational. It was a pain that left him in chaotic confusion.

Klein controlled himself using Cogitation and tried hard to ignore the voices.

The muttering and murmurs receded like the tides. His body became ethereal, along with his spirituality. Everything seemed to float.

The boundless gray fog appeared before his sight, the crimson stars at varying distances from him, just like pairs of eyes.

Above the gray fog stood the palace, lofty and towering like the home of a giant. It was as though it had been there for millions of years.

All Klein did was will it and he disappeared from where he was, reappearing at the Seat of Honor at the long bronze table with twenty-two high-back chairs.

“The effect of the ritual is definitely fixed…” Klein muttered. He tapped his glabella gently and allowed the fog to engulf him, ones thicker than before. According to the description of The Hanged Man, if Justice had become a Spectator, it would be best not to reveal any of his tics before her.

Without any time for exploring, Klein extended his right hand and formed an invisible connection, connecting him to the two familiar crimson stars.

†

On the roaring blue waves of the Sonia Sea, an ancient sailboat was sailing with the wind.

Alger Wilson locked himself in the captain's cabin and made the ghost ship provide him the best protection.

He opened the pocket watch before him and laid it next to the brass sextant. The clock was ticking without joy as it exuded nervousness.

When the hour hand, minute hand, and second hand aligned, there was an explosion of crimson before Alger Wilson. It ignored the layers and layers of protection he had placed over himself.

Sigh… His sigh reverberated across the captain's room.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Audrey Hall laid against a down-feather pillow and glanced at the yellow paper in her hand. Her gemlike eyes looked like they had two souls spiraling slowly in them.

Her gaze was calm and cool, as if she were waiting for a play to begin.

As the crimson red erupted, she looked at herself being swallowed with complete detachment.

†

Above the gray fog, in the magnificent palace, on the ancient and mottled long bronze table.

Klein, who had already activated his Spiritual Vision, looked over when Audrey Hall's figure began to form. He was not surprised to see that the colors deep in her aura had blended together. It became pure and serene, like a lake that was clear and reflective.

She really did become a Beyonder… Klein was just about to move his gaze away when he suddenly saw the chair belonging to Miss Justice change.

The bright stars on the back of the chair moved swiftly, forming an illusory constellation that didn't belong to reality.

That constellation was familiar to Klein because it was one of the symbols of mysticism.

It was a symbol that represented "Giant Dragon"!

Spectator… Giant Dragon… Klein restrained himself from shaking his head and looked over at the back of The Hanged Man's chair.

Typically speaking, it was impossible for him to see the back of the chair from his angle, but this was where he was in control. Everything presented itself according to his will.

The constellation on the back of the chair had not changed, but since Klein had grasped the basics of mysticism, he wasn't as ignorant as before. He could recognize that it was the symbol of "Storm."

Sailor… Keeper of the Sea… Storm… That's reasonable. The color deep in The Hanged Man's aura is much purer than it was… Has he advanced? Oh yeah, what about the symbol behind my chair?

Klein suppressed his impulse to look, rapped the edge of the long table thrice just like before, and smiled as he said, "Congratulations, Miss Justice, you are a Beyonder now."

He can tell straight away? Audrey was stunned and smiled faintly.

"Thank you, Mr. Fool, and thank you, Mr. Hanged Man."

"That was much faster that I thought," Alger Wilson said honestly.

Klein didn't continue the topic but tapped his glabella and said with a smile, "Lady, Sir, have either of you found Roselle's diary?"

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†

In Chinese, Yellow refers to Earth, and Black refers to Heaven.

Chapter 59 - Roselle's Origins

◆

Upon hearing The Fool's question, Audrey did not immediately answer like in the past. Instead, she widened her crystalline eyes and glanced at The Hanged Man with a scrutinous attitude.

Alger subconsciously subdued his body motions. After a few seconds of silence, he said, "I found two pages of the Emperor Roselle's diary and have memorized their contents."

"I have one page," Audrey, whose vision was obscured by the fog, said as though she was removed from the conversation.

"Pretty good." Klein did not allow his joy or his disappointment be noticed from his voice.

He felt joy as there were three full pages, but disappointment also because there were only three pages. Their initial search for the diary was definitely easier, for all they had to do was ask through their connections and channels they were already familiar with. Collecting the pages would become more and more difficult as time went on as it would involve more and more elements.

"Should we 'express' them now?" Audrey inquired with a calm tone.

"Yes." Klein simply nodded.

He maintained his posture without any change. He had to be cautious in front of a Spectator.

As he finished his sentence, pieces of yellowish-brown goatskin parchment and dark red fountain pens appeared in front of Audrey and Alger.

The two of them picked up their pens and started to recall the symbols they had seen. They also infused the emotions of expressing them out.

Silently, lines of text appeared on the goatskin. Some of them appeared proper, some delicate, others slanted.

In a mere minute, the contents that Alger and Audrey had forcibly memorized were all written.

Klein willed the three pieces of parchment into his hands.

He gave the pages a cursory glance and realized that some of the grammar was wrong. There were also missing and wrong words in the content.

But experimentation had proved that incorrect sequencing of words to some extent did not affect the overall comprehension of Chinese. Klein was also not afraid of missing words since he often read web novels filled with censored asterisks.

“8th April. I stood at the bow of Black King and stretched my arms, saying to Grimm and Edwards, ‘My fortune is yours for the taking, but you’ll have to find it first. I left everything I own at the ends of the Fog Sea!’ They did not understand my humor at all and even asked if I really had other treasures. How boring. You can’t be my Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse if you keep at that!”

“11th April. I discovered a nameless island that was not on a safe sea route. There are a good number of extraordinary animals there, no—I prefer calling them extraordinary beings; it feels more impressive that way. Other than that, there are several weird creatures on the island. I believe that if Darwin had been transmigrated there, there is no way he could have written his Theory of Evolution.”

“15th April. Grimm has suddenly become a little odd. Has he been infected by something?”

When did Emperor Roselle, who was born in the Intis Kingdom, set off on a voyage? The Fog Sea should be the sea west of the Intis Republic… Yea, I need to use historical information from the library to cross reference this… Klein quickly finished reading a page, casting his gaze to the back of the piece of paper.

At this point, he no longer hid the fact that he could decipher Emperor Roselle’s secret symbols since this ability fitted the persona and status of The Fool. Audrey and Alger did not speak. They waited silently, as if unsurprised by such a revelation. In fact, they even believed that it was only right.

“2nd October. They actually wanted me to marry Matilda from the Abel family without even consulting me first! Heavens, I have not even met her! No, I must decline! Even if I were to run away from home and survive on my own and suffer the vicissitudes of life, I must fight against this marriage!”

“5th October. Miss Matilda is really pretty.”

“6th October. Her personality and her demeanor is just my type. I am starting to look forward to the marriage.”

Hey, Emperor, where is your integrity? Klein leaned back into his seat, not allowing his emotions to pass through the fog.

He realized that Gustav did not write in his diary every day early on. Most of the time, he would only write in the diary when there were certain events that he needed to lampoon, record, or to vent his emotions.

He shifted his gaze downward. Klein looked at the last sentence of this page.

“9th October. They actually called me the Son of the Steam. I like that very much.”

Klein was a little disappointed that the information in the first two pages was of little value.

But he did not turn sullen. He moved the third page to the top. This page had content written on both sides of the paper.

“21st May. The Church of the God of Craftsmanship gave me two choices, two beginning Sequence pathways. One of them is the Savant. It is a complete Sequence pathway they possess. The other is Mystery Pryer, which they obtained from the Moses Ascetic Order, but it lacks the higher Sequences.”

“22nd May. My choice was easy: Savant! The Savant has a complete Sequence pathway! Although wielding more information on mysticism can aid my return home, the problem is that if I am not strong enough, there is a need to acquire external help for transmigration. And I do not know if this external entity would be good or bad, benevolent or malicious. I cannot control it, and thus it could be very dangerous. In that case, why not strengthen myself and return by relying on my own powers? Thus, the complete Sequence was the most important factor in my considerations!”

“23rd May. I have become a Savant. With the power of the potion, I actually recalled all the knowledge I had learned in the past, such as physics, chemistry, etc…

“I have not only recalled the knowledge, but I understand it more deeply, as well as its possible applications and implications. Haha, this is a ‘job’ specially tailored for a transmigrator like me from an alternate realm. I will be able to express my advantage to the greatest extent! I have to say that if I were to return in my present state to the third year of high school, I would definitely become top scholar. If I could further specialize in an area, it wouldn’t even be too hard for me to become a scientist.”

“26th May. I am enjoying my status as a Savant. Something odd worth mentioning. When I address myself as a Savant, doing things that are in line with this role, the murmurings that drive me crazy become considerably softer. I have also been able to control my occasional temper outbursts. I have also recalled the matter regarding the diary.

"Is this the 'acting' that the mysterious Mr. Zaratul mentioned? This could be key in resolving the side effects posed by potions."

As Klein read the diary page, he had a deep realization that there was a fundamental difference between how he and Emperor Roselle did things.

For example, regarding the matter of returning home, Klein considered grasping in-depth knowledge of mysticism to avoid risks and accomplish his goal, while Emperor Roselle preferred to rely on himself and face the risk.

I have to say, I envy people like that sometimes. Perhaps everyone yearns for something they do not possess… Of course, I also have to consider strengthening myself; both of these are important, Klein thought, sighing a little.

The description provided by Emperor Roselle about acting instilled Klein with confidence that the conclusion he made about acting yesterday was more or less correct.

He put the three diary pages down, looked up at Justice and The Hanged Man. He smiled and said, "My apologies, I was too absorbed in reading them."

Audrey calmed the envy in her heart and smiled faintly.

"I can understand. I hope to one day be able to exchange information about the diary's contents."

"That will require a price." Klein smiled and glanced at Justice, then swept his gaze towards the silent Hanged Man.

Audrey put her palms together and placed them in front of her.

"Mr. Fool, Mr. Hanged Man, I have three questions to ask. If you think that the answers warrant a high price, tell me what you want, I will try my best to seek it."

"No problem," Alger answered succinctly.

Klein nodded and leaned back further, making himself comfortable.

Audrey thought for a few seconds and said, "The first question is, what does 'acting' really mean? I realize that the remnant psyche in the potion has minute effects on me; is that because I've been acting as a Spectator all this while?"

Alger did not speak; instead, he looked at The Fool, as though waiting for him to give an answer.

Klein rubbed his finger on the edge of the table and said in a relaxed tone, "Let me explain this with an analogy. Imagine the core powers of your potion as a tightly guarded castle. The remnants of the psyche that can cause a lash back resides within that castle. Our goal is to get rid of it and become the true master of the castle.

"There are two ways we can do that. The first is to forcefully invade the castle. There is no guarantee that this will work, and you will most definitely injure yourself unless you can suppress it with absolute power. But of course, we are not equipped to do that.

"The second way is to get the owner of the castle to extend an invitation. This invitation can allow us to slide through the scrutiny of the guards and infiltrate the castle. We can then easily finish off the enemies. But the problem lies in the fact that this invitation specifies the facial features and characteristics of the guest. Thus, we have to disguise ourselves and act as the guest, do you understand?"

Alger immediately asked, as if he had anticipated this reply, "Then the aforementioned invitation is the name of the potion's Sequence?"

"That's right," Klein answered with great affirmation.

Audrey froze for a moment, having the sudden feeling that she completely understood what ‘acting’ meant.

She immediately exited her Spectator state due to her excitement. She praised in joy, “What an exceptional method, I think—I think it fits your title. Its style is very compatible with The Fool… I would never have believed that acting would have such an effect. Luckily, I have been acting as a Spectator the past few days.”

She paused for a moment before saying, “I think that this is a very valuable answer; my heart is not at ease accepting it for nothing. Mr. Fool, what do you need in exchange? Of course, I still remember that I owe you a page of Emperor Roselle’s diary.”

“More pages of Roselle’s diary, or…” Klein paused for a moment.

He had wanted to get information about the Sequence regarding the Seer but felt that such a low-level request would ruin the mystical image of The Fool. Thus, he chose to give up on it and planned to ask them discreetly some other day.

I just advanced recently and have yet to completely digest the Seer potion… He consoled himself and added on without expression, “Anything regarding the Antigonus family, even if I’m already aware of them myself.”

Alger remained silent for a few seconds. He looked at the top of the long bronze table for a moment before slowly opening his mouth.

“Mr. Fool… I believe I can pay you back immediately with the information you requested just now.”

Chapter 60 - Second Blasphemy Slate

◆

“No problem.” Klein tried to maintain his unchanging deep tone.

He rested his left elbow on the armrest of his chair and supported his forehead slightly with his fingers, posing as though he was listening calmly.

Alger deliberated over his words and said, “The Antigonus is an ancient family. Their history can be traced back to the Cataclysm Epoch before the Fourth Epoch and is related to the second Blasphemy Slate.”

The second Blasphemy Slate? There’s a second Blasphemy Slate? How many are there? Klein’s pupils shrank, and he nearly changed his posture.

According to what The Hanged Man and Justice have said previously, the Blasphemy Slate contained the profound mysteries of the twenty-two paths of the divine!

There are two of such important items, or even more?

Twenty-two paths of the divine… Sequences and pathways… Could these two nouns mean the same thing? Every complete Sequence pathway leads straight to the throne of the divine?

At that instant, the description of the second Blasphemy Slate gave Klein numerous thoughts. He believed that if not for the thick grayish-white fog concealing him, his emotional reaction would probably have been discovered by Miss Spectator.

As for the words Cataclysm Epoch, he was no stranger to that term as a historian. It was the name of the third epoch.

After his recent revision, Klein even knew that the third epoch was separated into two eras: the Glorious Era and the Cataclysm Era.

“A second Blasphemy Slate?” Audrey plainly revealed her ignorance on the matter.

Before she calmed her emotions, she returned to her Spectator state.

Nice question! Klein secretly cheered for Miss Justice.

It was a question inconvenient for him to ask as The Fool.

Alger stole a glance at The Fool and noticed that his posture remained the same, nor did he make a sound. Hence, he thought and answered, “The first Blasphemy Slate appeared in the Dark Epoch, which is the second epoch where we humans struggled to survive under the protection of gods. The second Blasphemy Slate appeared at the end of the third epoch. It could even be said that its appearance symbolized the end of the Cataclysm Epoch.

“The content of the two Blasphemy Slates is kept secret by the seven major churches. I only know bits and pieces of it. I only know that they involve the paths of the divine, but I am not sure of the differences between them.”

“Was the Blasphemy Slate that Emperor Roselle saw the first or the second?” Audrey asked curiously.

Upon hearing that, Klein recalled what Alger said about the potion names during the first Gathering. He said that the names of the Sequence potions were derived from the Blasphemy Slate!

Similarly, Captain had also mentioned that the formation and completion of the potion system was thanks to the birth of the Blasphemy Slate… That indirectly confirms that the paths of the divine are the Sequence pathway! Klein answered his earlier question silently.

Then Alger simply replied, “The second one.”

The glint in Audrey’s eyes diminished and she returned to her Spectator state. She did not continue asking questions; instead, all she did was focus her gaze on The Hanged Man.

It was obvious that her scrutiny made Alger uncomfortable, but he suppressed the emotions within him. He lowered his voice and continued, “During the Solomon Dynasty in the Fourth Epoch, although the Antigonus family was considered an illustrious part of the aristocracy, they didn’t do anything very memorable until they supported the establishment of the Tudor Empire. They then stood right in the middle of the stage of Northern Continent.

“In that period, Antigonus, Amon, Abraham, Jacob, and others were illustrious names of the human kingdom. However, after the War of the Four Emperors, the Blood Emperor from the Tudor Empire perished. They fell from the top of their pedestal and are now hunted by the seven deities.

“I am not sure about the actual process, but I do know that the Antigonus family was destroyed at the hands of the Church of Evernight. Mr. Fool, if you’d like to know more, I am afraid that you can only obtain the information from the Church of Evernight or from the few ancient secret organizations. You know which few I am referring to.”

I don’t… Klein nodded while feeling bitter inside.

“Okay.”

The Secret Order is one. Captain and Old Neil mentioned the Moses Ascetic Order. I wonder if the Psychology Alchemists count…

While he mentally checked off the candidates, Alger provided him with the last bits of information.

"I similarly have no idea which Sequence pathways the Antigonus family held. There are only two adjectives that appear repetitively in the descriptions of the Antigonus family, and those are"strange" and "terrifying."

Strange and terrifying… Thinking back to the notebook, the original Klein and his classmates, and what happened to Ray Bieber's mother, it really is aptly worded… Klein continuously rapped the edge of the long table with the tip of his finger a couple of times.

Then, he slowly began to speak.

"Very well, I am satisfied with the payment."

The reason he continuously rapped the long table lightly with his fingers was to emphasize the action, to make Justice and The Hanged Man believe that he had a habit of rapping in order to conceal the fact that the same motion was used to activate and deactivate his Spirit Vision.

"It's my pleasure." Alger did not say anything else.

Audrey took a look at The Hanged Man and then The Fool. She smiled faintly and said, "Then, I shall ask the second question: what is the name of the subsequent potion for Spectator? Where can I find the clues?"

I'd also like to ask so straightforwardly, but different choices lead to different difficulties… Klein did not speak but cast his gaze towards The Hanged Man.

Alger remained silent for a few seconds before saying, "I'll answer the question for free because I led you on this pathway.

"The subsequent Sequence for Spectator is Sequence 8 Telepathist. The ancient name of Sequence 7 is Psyche Analyst but is called Psychiatrist now. This is what I found out from a member of the Psychology Alchemists. I think they should have quite a number of potion formulas for this pathway.”

Psychology Alchemists… Spirit Medium Daly was rather approving of their theory, but Captain thought of them as evil and crazy… Klein listened while in deep thought.

“Do you know the whereabouts of that particular Psychology Alchemists member?” asked Audrey as her eyes beamed with joy.

Be it Telepathist or Psychiatrist, both names appealed to her aesthetics.

Alger gave a rare laugh.

“I do. He’s immersed in the seas around Sonia Island. I sank him with my own hands.

“If you would like to look for the Psychology Alchemists, I have to apologize since I severed the clues.”

He was not worried that Justice would find his identity through his description because he did that on his own, out of the public eye.

“Sank…” Audrey was at a loss how to reply or what expression to wear.

She drew a deep breath and suddenly failed to maintain her Spectator state. She asked bashfully, “The third question. If—and I’m saying if—a normal animal were to drink a Sequence 9 potion, what would happen?”

What kind of a question is that? Klein tapped his glabella unnoticeably with his finger that was supporting his forehead.

Very quickly, he saw the changes in color and noticed that Audrey’s emotions had turned frantic, nervous, and a little ashamed.

Could she have done something that stupid? Klein was astounded, but didn’t find it strange.

After the past two Gatherings, he was certain that Miss Justice was quite an airhead.

The Hanged Man, Alger, was obviously dumbfounded as well. He took a while to reply.

“Normal animals do not have the brains of humans. They wouldn’t be able to learn Cogitation in a timely manner. Therefore, it would most likely lead to immediate death or a breakdown into a monster. However, if they survived the initial ingestion of the potion, they should become an extraordinary creature. If the potion has the ability to enhance their intelligence, they can even become smarter.”

“Alright.” Audrey breathed out a silent sigh and nodded while saying with a relaxed tone. “I have no other questions.”

Alger considered for a moment and did not mention matters regarding the Aurora Order or the Listener. Similarly, he shook his head and said, “Nor do I.”

“I have something.” Klein didn’t change his posture but said with a smile, “It will require your cooperation.”

He had yet to turn off his Spirit Vision, and he immediately saw that The Hanged Man was showing signs of nervousness, while Miss Justice was too simple-minded to show fear or carefulness.

Before they could reply, Klein comforted them, “Don’t worry. It’s trivial. If it succeeds, it will be beneficial to you, so I wouldn’t be paying extra remuneration.”

“Go ahead.” Audrey instinctively entered the Spectator state, but she couldn’t see through the thick gray fog engulfing The Fool.

“As you will,” Alger replied, steadying himself.

Klein moved his fingers and smiled when he said, “Previously, I said that we would do some experiments to enable you to ask for a leave of absence. That way, you do not have to worry if you have to be somewhere inappropriate on a Monday afternoon.”

“That’s our wish.” Audrey loosened her tightly knitted eyebrows.

Alger thought and said, “What do you need us to do?”

“You could try a piece of ritualistic magic during your free time. It need not be too formal. As long as you are in an environment that won’t be disturbed… Put four brand new candles on an altar, placed on four corners respectively. It’s best if they are candles with a sandalwood scent. Put a loaf of white bread near the candle on the top left corner, a bowl of Feynapotter noodles near the candle on the top right corner, paella by the candle on the bottom left corner, and a Desi pie by the candle on the bottom right corner… Use a silver knife to make a sealed spiritual environment…”

Klein described his modified version of the luck enhancement ritual and taught Miss Justice how to create a spiritual environment for free.

To be frank, as the ritual was targeted at himself, Klein believed that the former part, which was intended to attract the interest of an entity, could be omitted completely. However, he still worked hard to make the procedure seem important. Of course, it didn’t comply with what Old Neil taught about gods being second and oneself being third.

“…Mix moon flowers, gold mint, slumber flowers, fingered citron, and rock-rose together then distill it. Extract it for its essential oil, then pour a drop onto each candle…”

Audrey listened with piqued interest as she recorded all that he said. When he was done, she asked, “What about the incantation? Mr. Fool, what’s the corresponding incantation?”

Alger stopped writing with the fountain pen in his hand as well. He turned his head to look at The Fool.

Klein, who was immersed in the gray fog, tapped the edge of the long table with his finger lightly and said calmly and monotonously in

Hermes, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, you are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; you are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

Chapter 61 - Strange Symbol

◆

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era… the mysterious ruler above the gray fog… King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…” Audrey Hall recited the three descriptions to herself silently. She suddenly felt a tumultuous wave of emotion go through her, preventing her from maintaining her Spectator state.

As an enthusiast of mysticism, she had learned Hermes that was used in rituals and had tested out the rituals that fellow noble enthusiasts mentioned in private gatherings before she was pulled into the gray fog or made formal contact with Beyonder powers.

None of those rituals had any effects, but they had given Audrey a basic understanding of the structure of incantations.

Thus, she knew clearly what these three incantations described and signified.

The descriptions usually described one of the seven gods that looked over this world!

Thus, The Fool’s incantation was claiming status equal to the Lady of Crimson, Mother of Concealment, and the Empress of Misfortune and Horror!

Is Mr. Fool the unknown, mysterious, powerful, godlike entity that Glaint spoke of? The source of danger that we must avoid in rituals? Audrey quickly recalled the comments made during the strange rituals which she and her friends did not dare attempt back then. She was momentarily at a loss for words.

Alger Wilson, who knew and understood much more than Audrey, shivered from the bottom of his heart.

If the ritualistic magic which Mr. Fool designed truly points to him to allow him to accept our requests, w-we would have to be addressing him with Him. He is to be addressed in the third person, which is reserved for gods…

How lucky, how smart I was to act in concert with him and not do anything foolish. Even when I was testing him, I did not step beyond the boundaries of normalcy…

Could he perhaps be an ancient, mysterious, horrifying existence, only that he does not appear before us in his true form and name… The Primordial Demoness, the Hidden Sage, or the true Creator which many mysterious churches believe in?

Alger understood that The Fool he was looking at now might not be his true form. He might not even have a gender or be a humanoid creature.

Klein propped his forehead up with one hand and tapped on the table with the other hand. He acutely noticed the changes happening to The Hanged Man and Justice.

But he acted as though nothing happened, as if everything was within his expectations. He continued without any care.

“I pray for your help.

“I pray for your loving grace.

“I pray for you to give me a good dream.

“Moon flower, an herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!

“Fingered citron, an herb that belongs to the sun, please bestow your powers to my incantation.”

†

He finished describing the incantations that belonged to another type of ritual. After he was done, he smiled.

“Lady, sir, have you memorized it?”

“Ah…” Audrey exhaled. She quickly covered her mouth and recalled seriously.

With her improved memory as a Spectator, she quickly processed the information and repeated the incantations as a form of confirmation.

Alger acted more normally. His pen did not stop for a moment, no matter what he was thinking about.

After Klein confirmed that Audrey was correct, he smiled and said, “If this test is successful, then we shall modify the ritual next time to achieve what we want to do.”

“I hope that you will have the time to complete the ritual no later than Wednesday.”

He intended to come in here again on Thursday night to ascertain if the ritualistic magic was successful.

As for why he did not allow The Hanged Man and Justice to directly request a leave of absence, Klein was worried that he would be unable to discern if the results were from them asking for leave or merely the outcome of an attempt of the ritualistic magic. Was he to pull them into the Gathering if that happened?

“By your will.” Audrey and Alger replied respectfully, collecting themselves.

“According to The Hanged Man’s suggestion last week, we shall have a time for casual conversation after all official issues have been discussed. Who shall begin?" Klein gave a hand gesture signaling for someone to start.

Audrey sighed and said, "Mr. Fool, the suggestion you made regarding the exam selection and the separation between civil and political matters has received the approval of many members of parliament. Perhaps it could become a reality. Of course, with the efficiency of this government, the bill will only appear half a year from now at the earliest."

She was not worried that The Hanged Man would track her down using this piece of information. She had intentionally and intermittently dropped hints and guided those proud wives to think that they had conceived the idea. Those ladies had rushed to tell their husbands, their fathers, and their brothers.

At that moment Audrey felt as though she was watching a flock of golden peacocks showcasing their tail feathers.

She believed that those women would drill it in themselves that they came up with the idea to claim the glory for themselves. They would soon forget about what Audrey's role in the matter was, fighting among themselves to see who thought of the suggestion first.

Using this remarkable way to change the system of a kingdom gave Audrey a weird sense of satisfaction, as if she had found a way for a Spectator to influence the plot of a play.

"Let's hope so," Alger replied sarcastically.

He paused for a few seconds, then glanced at The Fool. He deliberated before saying, "In recent decades, the amount of activities of the various secret organizations has seen an upward trend. In fact, there are even new secret organizations appearing, some of them having reached scale with a good number of Beyonders."

Are you trying to ask me for the reason? I have not even gained access to information about illegal organizations… Klein merely smiled without commenting on The Hanged Man's news. He changed the subject and said vaguely, "An ancient power is about to wake from its slumber."

For example, the power represented by the Antigonus family diary…

"Is that so…" Alger muttered softly to himself, as though he recalled something.

Klein swept his gaze toward The Hanged Man, then past Justice and said with a smile, "If there is nothing else to share, then let's end today's gathering here."

"By your will." Audrey and Alger stood up together.

Klein moved his finger and severed his connection with the dark red stars. He watched as the two figures vanished from the magnificent palace.

He stood up and turned toward his own chair which was also the back of the Seat of Honor at the bronze table. He looked at its symbol.

Radiant stars formed a strange symbol. It was not a symbol that fit anything in Klein's present understanding of mysticism.

He observed it closely before identifying the "Pupil-less Eye," a symbol representing concealment. He also saw Contorted Lines that represented change. Each of the symbols were missing a portion and were overlapped with each other, creating a new symbol.

An incomplete concealment and an incomplete change… What do we get when we add them together? Klein creased his brows and muttered to himself, unable to come up with an answer.

He retracted his gaze and walked along the ancient, magnificent palace. His eyes scanned every corner of the palace.

“Back when I casually imagined this place, it was merely a rough concept; I did not describe the shape of the palace, table, or chairs… Where does this design come from? The best choice? The first prototype? Or are they a reflection of reality?” Klein suddenly had a question he neglected previously as he looked at the palace.

Sigh, I have to say that even though I am a keyboard warrior, I am lacking experience in many areas. I am also not observant enough, to the point of only realizing this question now… With such a self-reflection, Klein made a serious effort to examine every corner of the palace, but did not find any other living things or anything strange.

Klein did not dare to venture deeper, which seemed to be an illusory land without boundaries. He was afraid that he would end up completely lost.

Wow, this place is indeed filled with mysteries… Who knows if there will be any changes to this area when I become more powerful… Klein sighed. He unleashed his spirituality and enveloped himself within, causing him to feel the rapid rush of plummeting.

Everything flew past quickly. All kinds of illusions shattered. He tore through the grayish-white fog and saw reality. He saw the table, curtains, and clothes rack in his room.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Audrey saw the oil painting that hung on the wall. She felt the softness the down-feathered pillow under her head provided.

She did not stand up immediately; instead, she seriously recalled what had happened during the gathering, as if she was watching a play she had already watched.

“Mr. Fool had a certain confidence in his tone when he told us to try the ritual and gave us the descriptions of the mysterious ruler, the King of Yellow and Black… Confidence…" Audrey exhaled as she was analyzing this silently, her body shuddering slightly.

Forget it, since I cannot fight it, there's no need to think too much about it… Mr. Fool has always appeared friendly; he should be an entity that has a respect for order… Audrey's mood improved rapidly. She thought about her acting, and the weakening backlash of the potion.

She hummed a merry tune and got off her bed. She walked toward the door and adjusted her state of mind, taking on her state as a Spectator.

As she opened the door of the room, she saw a maid walking past. She saw the old calluses on her hands, the marks on her face, and other similar details. She could deduce many things from these observations.

At this point, Audrey had a strange feeling. She quickly turned to look at the shaded corner of the balcony.

She saw her golden retriever Susie sitting there, silently observing her, just like how she observed the maid.

My Goddess… Audrey's lips twitched as she sighed. She wanted so much to hide her face.

†

On the Sonia Sea, in the heavily protected captain's quarters.

Alger woke up and noticed that nothing had changed around him. It was as if nothing had happened.

He sighed and thought to himself, An ancient existence?

†

Klein, who had exited the ritual, pulled open the curtains. He took out his notebook and began writing once again.

He recalled the contents of Emperor Roselle's diary, hoping to reinforce the memory through writing and prevent himself from forgetting it in the future.

Klein reread the notes several times after he finished writing. Finally, he tore the notes up and incinerated them.

I shouldn't forget the most salient points if I do this once a week. But with time and the increasing complexity of my missions… How unfortunate, I do not have better ideas for the time being. I have not learned any cryptography… Klein collected himself and stretched his neck. He planned on heading to the Divination Club.

A Seer was defined differently by different people. No one could say that another person's methods were wrong. So, Klein, who did not know which kind of Seer fit the requirements of the potion, could only correct it as he experimented to ascertain which one was the best fit!

Chapter 62 - The Seer's Suggestion

◆ ◆ ◆

Before Klein left home, he took the time to meticulously clean up his suit and top hat with a small brush and a handkerchief. Then, he washed his white shirt, changing into a similar linen shirt along with the only decent cheap coat he had. He then briskly walked out onto the street.

First, Melissa's dress. Then, Benson's suit. Only then can I consider a second suit for myself. Money is never enough… Besides, we need to save money to buy porcelain tableware to receive our guests… Plus, I have to save money to buy a variety of materials related to mysticism… Klein sat on the public carriage and took note of the financial status at home. The more he did the math, the more he shook his head.

He reckoned he needed at least a year to let himself, his brother, and his sister live as a middle-class family.

Of course, that was without taking promotions and pay rises into consideration.

The public carriage drove past the streets and stopped opposite to the Divination Club on Howes Street.

Klein pressed down on his black top hat and hopped off the carriage. He walked along the familiar street and entered the club located on the second floor. He then saw the beautiful brunette, Angelica.

There was a hint of swelled redness to her eyes, but she looked extremely relaxed.

Klein raised his hand to tap his glabella lightly and carefully examined her. He found out that the grayness deep in Angelica's emotional colors had greatly dispersed. It had been replaced with sunlight-like whiteness.

After taking it in, Klein walked over, took off his hat, and smiled.

"Madam Angelica, it's a lovely day today, isn't it?"

Angelica lifted her head and was briefly shocked. She then beamed and said, "You are just like Mr. Vincent's cat. You don't make any sounds while walking, do you? You managed to tell? Hehe, I forgot that you are a fortune-teller skilled in face-reading…"

She paused, then she gently bit her lip before bowing.

"Thank you. Thank you for your suggestion yesterday. I feel much better. I haven't been this relaxed, happy, and contented in a year."

Upon hearing her show her sincere gratitude, Klein was infected with the joy and happiness she had. The corner of his lips lifted, and he said, "It's my pleasure."

As he spoke, he could feel his spirituality relax and turn livelier.

Is this what the Seer potion wants? A Seer that can really help the inquirer? Klein pinched his glabella as though he was thinking before secretly tapping twice.

It had to be said that he found the action of activating and deactivating his Spirit Vision in practice insufficiently inconspicuous. However, the problem was that he hadn't thought of a better solution yet. As he had just become a Seer recently, his spiritually had yet to reach its limit, and the same was applied to his mastery. Hence, there didn't seem to be many suitable locations for an activation switch for his Spiritual Vision. The glabella was the best option by far.

When I become a true Seer after fully digesting the potion, I should be able to design a more inconspicuous activation motion… Klein nodded unnoticeably and walked towards the half-opened meeting room.

“Coffee or tea?” Angelica asked hurriedly.

“Desi coffee.” Klein answered. He planned on trying out all the drinks the Divination Club had to offer.

Then, he saw that there were six or seven members present, but not Hanass Vincent who was almost always was.

“Mr. Vincent isn’t here?” Klein stopped in his tracks and asked a passing question.

Angelica was taken aback as she said, “Mr. Vincent doesn’t come every day. He accepted an invitation to give a lecture for a divination organization at Enmat Harbor. Are you looking for him?”

“Not at all. I was just curious. After all, I’ve seen him every time I’ve come here.” Klein shook his head with a smile.

Meanwhile, he realized that there was a familiar face among the seven members present.

Glacis, who had divined for him before, was present!

Glacis was reading some information on the table with his monocle when he suddenly sensed someone looking at him. He lifted his head and cast his gaze.

Obvious joy suffused his face as he propped himself up with both hands and stood up. He dashed towards Klein and stopped before him.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti. I have been wondering if you would come today.

“I heard from Angelica that you are not a doctor, but a fortune-teller who is good at face-reading?”

Klein smiled.

“That’s not the only thing I’m good at. Mr. Glacis. You no longer seem plagued by your ailment?”

He pinched his forehead and tapped his glabella twice. He noticed that Glacis’s health colors had returned to normal.

“Yes, I was very regretful for not taking your suggestion back then. Luckily, there is a very amazing apothecary near my place. He gave my wife a magical medicine which brought me away from death,” Glacis said emotionally.

As a quasi-member of the Nighthawks, Klein asked out of occupational interest, “Very amazing apothecary? Very magical medicine?”

Magical? How magical? Is it within the range of Beyonders?

“He said that it was a kind of folk medicine from Lenburg. In short, it helped with treating my illness a lot,” Glacis answered, without noticing anything abnormal about the question.

Folk medicine apothecary? Klein tapped his glabella as though he was thinking.

“What’s his name? Where does he stay? As you know, even a fortune-teller can’t guarantee that they would remain in the pink of health all the time. Perhaps, I will need to go to purchase some medication from him in the future.”

Klein learned from his teacher and classmates that the current health system in the world was in a nascent state. There was almost no cure to many diseases, so the magical medications and miraculous apothecaries still controlled the market. There was no harm in knowing more, since it could one day serve useful.

Glacis answered honestly, “His name is Lawson Darkwade. He has a tiny store at 18 Vlad Street in East Borough, named Lawson’s Folk Herb

Store."

"Thank you." Klein remembered it and spoke sincerely.

Glacis turned around and invited him to sit beside him. At that moment, Angelica came over to serve the coffee she brewed.

Compared to Southville coffee, Desi coffee is more fragrant, but has quite an inferior taste… Klein took a sip and savored it for a moment.

Glacis hurriedly deliberated his words when he saw Klein put down his white porcelain cup.

"Mr. Moretti, can I request a divination from you? I will pay according to a price you set."

"Eight pence is sufficient. I will not raise the price out of the blue." Klein was hoping that someone would request his divination services. "Do you need a divination room?"

"Alright. Topaz." Glacis led the way with much more familiarity.

After entering the divination room and locking the door, Klein sat behind the long table. He asked in a serious voice, "Mr. Glacis, what would you like the divination to be about?"

"I have an investment opportunity, but the amount of money it involves is huge. If it fails, my family and I will take a heavy hit. I wish to know if it will be a successful investment." Glacis volunteered the information. "I have divined using tarot cards previously. Hmm, a divination after purifying my soul. The result was pretty good. Yes, I did the interpretation myself, but I did not violate the principles of those symbols."

Klein thought and asked curiously, "It'd be great if you could describe the entire situation once more and give me your information again. It'd be best if you have the other party's information, too. We will do an astrolabe divination."

"Alright." Glacis organized his words and said, "When Mister Lanevus examined the Hornacis mountain range, he discovered a gigantic mine rich in high-quality iron ore. He poured in all his savings to buy that land and hired a professional company to survey it. The result was a heartening one."

"He lacks funds needed for subsequent developments, so he formed a steelworks company and intends to apply for a loan from the bank using the project. At the same time, he will also issue a corresponding number of shares to raise its initial capital. The plan is still in its preparatory stage and promises fat returns."

Klein, who had been reading the newspaper recently and also happened to be a "history expert," knew that there were shares in this world. He also knew that the concept of shares was derived from Emperor Roselle. Yeah, him again.

During the colonization of the Southern Continent, he had set up the West Balam company and solved the nation's fiduciary matters successfully by raising funds from the public through the issue of shares. As such, he had the first-movers advantage from colonization.

Because the returns were great, this development continued on. For example, there were railway shares, mining shares, steam development shares, and so on and so forth. There were some that succeeded and there were some that failed. Hence, it catalyzed the formation of organizations like the Backlund Stock Exchange.

Besides that, the Emperor Roselle had created national bonds, unit trusts, and other financial products. The former had become the most stable form investment, with a return of four to six percent interest.

Klein remembered that Benson had once said that if he could inherit three thousand pounds, there was no need to work hard any further. The stable annual interest of about five percent would result in an annual fixed income return of 150 pounds, roughly equivalent to Klein's annual income at present.

This is known as rentier capitalism… Klein sighed and asked carefully, “Are you sure there’s nothing wrong about this? Is Lanevus trustworthy?”

“I’ve seen his property papers and the inspection report. There is the Sivellaus county government’s stamp and an endorsement of a professional company. Plus, inside Mr. Lanevus’s office is a group photo of him with Sir Deweyville and the Mayor.” Glacis nodded in reply.

Group photo? That doesn’t mean anything… Klein, who was born in an era of information explosion, had seen too many similar incidents. He didn’t buy the story because of that.

However, it didn’t matter if he believed it or not. He could only pick up a pen and draw a corresponding astrolabe according to the crucial time and information that Glacis had provided him with.

After a long while, Klein pointed to the astrolabe and said, “You should be able to tell that this will be a very unsuccessful endeavor. Below the flourishing surface is a cliff, a chasm. My divination suggestions going around it, to avoid it.”

“…” Glacis fell into silence, his mouth turning agape a few times before he closed it.

A few minutes later, he said with a rueful smile, “I’ll consider it carefully when I’m back.”

Upon hearing this answer, Klein could only shake his head with a silent sigh. He realized the helplessness of a Seer.

A Seer could only give suggestions and not make the decision for others.

Just as the two left the Topaz room, Angelica walked over and said, “Mr. Moretti, someone wishes for your divination.”

When she said that, she added with a whisper, “He did not ask for my recommendations. Nor did he view the album.”

Has my reputation spread? Klein turned towards the reception hall in puzzlement.

Chapter 63 - Dream Interpretation

◆

Klein proceeded a few steps forward and saw the client. He was dressed in a formal black suit and a halved top hat. He held a gold-inlaid wooden cane and his short blond hair flared from the sides. His nose was aquiline like a hawk's beak.

Anna's fiancé… The Joyce Meyer that went through a terrifying ordeal. Klein, who had seen him in his dream divination, immediately greeted with a smile, "Good afternoon, Mr. Meyer."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti." Joyce took off his hat and bowed in greeting. "Thank you for the advice you gave Anna. She cannot stop praising how miraculous you are."

Klein chortled and said, "I did not change a thing. You should be thanking yourself. Without your determination and your hope for a better tomorrow, you wouldn't have been able to overcome such an ordeal."

After the exchange of pleasantries, Klein could not help but lampoon inwardly.

Does this count as mutual professional bootlicking?

"In all honesty, I still find my coming back alive a dream. I still cannot believe that I survived wave after wave of terrifying ordeals." Joyce shook his head wistfully.

Without waiting for Klein's reply, he asked curiously, "You knew who I was the moment you saw me. Was that because of my unique nose, or because you divined that I would visit you?”

“I had your detailed information. That is enough for a seer,” Klein answered vaguely, behaving like how a charlatan would.

Joyce was indeed stunned. More than ten seconds later, he squeezed a smile.

“Mr. Moretti, I wish to request a divination from you.”

The moment he finished his sentence, he suddenly realized something.

Mr. Klein Moretti had addressed himself as a seer, not a fortune-teller. A seer!

“Alright, let us head to Topaz.” Klein gestured.

At that moment, he felt as though he should have worn a long black robe. He tried to keep his words to a minimum to accentuate the mystique of a seer.

Joyce Meyer locked the door behind him after entering the divination room. While he observed his surroundings, Klein seized the opportunity to tap his glabella twice and activated his Spirit Vision.

Joyce sat down and set his cane down beside him. He pulled on his black bow tie and said hoarsely, “Mr. Moretti, I wish for you to interpret my dream.”

“Dream interpretation?” Klein acted as though it was within his expectations, but was merely asking for confirmation.

He saw that the colors representing Joyce’s health were dull, but none of them signified an impending illness. The colors symbolizing his emotions were predominantly blue, and its darkness showed that he was obviously high strung.

Joyce nodded seriously.

"I have had the same horrific dream every night ever since the Alfalfa arrived at Enmat Harbor. I know that this could be associated with the trauma of the ordeal and that I should go see a psychiatrist, but I suspect that this is no ordinary dream. A normal dream would definitely have some details that are different even if they recur every night, but this dream is, at the very least, constant in the parts which I can recall."

"To a seer, these kinds of dreams are seen as revelations given by the divine," Klein said, half consoling and half explaining. "Can you describe the dream to me?"

Joyce clenched his fists and held it to his mouth. He thought deep for a moment before saying, "I dreamed that I was falling from the Alfalfa into the ocean. The ocean was dark red, as if it was filled with rotting blood.

"As I fell, I was grabbed by a person on the boat. I could not identify him, but I know that he was very strong.

"And I was also holding onto a person in an attempt to save him from falling into the sea. I know that person. He was a passenger of the Alfalfa, Younis Kim.

"Because of his weight and his struggling, I could not bear the weight and could only release my hands and watch him get devoured by the sea of blood.

"At that moment, the person above me also released his hand. I flailed my arms, hoping to grab onto something, but there was nothing. I could only plummet rapidly.

"Then I wake up in horror, sweat covering my back and forehead."

Klein held his forehead and gently rapped it as though he was thinking. He then organized his words and said, "Mr. Meyer, nightmares, similar nightmares, and repeated nightmares, these are all psychological problems and have a corresponding source. The same nightmare recurring time and time again is a reminder from your spirituality. It is also a revelation given to you by the divine."

Upon seeing Joyce appearing confused, he elaborated, "Do not have any doubt, an ordinary person's spirituality is also capable of giving reminders.

"I do not know what exactly happened on the Alfalfa, but I can see that it was a tragedy of blood and steel. It has left a deep trauma in you."

Seeing Joyce nod slightly, Klein continued, "You must have been very horrified, very fearful on the ship. It is easy for a person to lose their observational skills when overwhelmed by such intense emotions; thus missing signs that they should not have been missed. This does not mean that you have not seen those signs, but you have disregarded them, you understand? Disregarded.

"In your subconscious, in your spirituality, the details that you have missed are present all the same. If the thing that the detail is pointing toward is important enough, then your spirituality will remind you in the form of a dream."

Previously, I had similar case of disregarding a feeling, only to later realize that the diary was with Ray Bieber… But I was more sensitive and had stronger spirituality. I was also more knowledgeable about mysticism and thus could make a deduction more quickly… Klein paused for a few seconds and looked into Joyce Meyer's eyes.

"Did Mr. Younis Kim, who you let fall into the sea of blood, requested you of something on the boat, but was ultimately unable to escape his fate?"

Joyce fidgeted his body unnaturally. He opened his mouth several times before answering, "Yes, but I do not pity him. Perhaps a few days or a week from now, you will see in the newspapers how cruel and evil he was. He raped and murdered at least three ladies and tossed a baby into the Berserk Sea. He also led a bunch of savages who had lost their rationality and brutally massacred the passengers and crew of the boat.

“He was scheming, strong, and evil. I did not dare, nor could I stop him. I would only have forfeited my life.”

“I am not doubting what you did,” Klein said, making clear his stand. Then he explained, “But your dream is telling me that you are feeling regret and sorry. You believe that you should not have released your hand back then. Since you believe that killing him was an act of justice, then why are you feeling regret and sorry for it, so much so that you have recurring dreams about you releasing your hand?”

“I don’t know either…” Joyce shook his head, confused.

Klein crossed his hands and placed it under his chin. He attempted to analyze the situation.

“Incorporating what I just described, it seems you have missed certain details. For instance, anything that Younis Kim mentioned, his contents of his plea, the way he presented himself, et cetera. I cannot recall the incident for you, so please think about it carefully.”

“There’s nothing… All he could say back then was ‘spare me, I surrender’…” Joyce muttered in puzzlement.

Klein did not know exactly what happened, so he could only guide him based on what he understood from the dream.

“Perhaps you felt that Younis Kim was more useful alive, that he could prove something or to explain something?”

Joyce knitted his brows. It was a while before he said, “Perhaps… I still find the conflict that arose on the Alfalfa happened too suddenly and turned intense too quickly. It was as if the passive evil in everyone’s heart just erupted uncontrollably… It was too abnormal, very abnormal… Perhaps—perhaps I wished to interrogate Younis Kim why he acted as though he was possessed by the devil in the first place…”

Klein suddenly had a stroke of inspiration after hearing Joyce's dreamy description. He spoke mysteriously with a tone unique to charlatan's.

"No, that's not the only reason."

"What?" Joyce seemed shocked.

Klein crossed his hands and held his chin up. He stared straight into Joyce's eyes and said with a slow, yet forceful tone, "Not only did you find the matter abnormal, but you also saw some things that you disregarded. And putting together these things that you disregarded results in a terrifying conclusion.

"Your spirituality is telling you that there is someone who should be under the highest suspicion. And that person is the one who had grabbed you but ultimately released his hand in the dream. You do not suspect him subconsciously, and thus you are unable identify him. He is your partner. He once had control over your fate, or maybe, even saved you before!"

Joyce leaned back suddenly, slamming into the back of the chair with a dull thud.

His forehead slowly became laced with sweat, his eyes filled with confusion.

"I… I see it…"

Joyce suddenly stood up noisily, causing his chair to wobble and nearly fall.

"Mr. Tris…" He used all the energy in him to utter the name.

He was a friendly and bashful little boy with a round face. He was the hero that saved the survivors…

Klein did not interrupt Joyce's thoughts. He leaned back slightly and waited.

Joyce's expression changed several times, finally returning to normal, a normal that had a little paleness.

He revealed a rueful smile.

"I understand now. Thank you for interpreting my dream. Perhaps it is time for me to make a trip to the police station."

He took out his leather wallet and fished out a one-soli note.

"I do not think that money can fully represent your worth, and I can only give you the price you asked for. This is for you." Joyce pushed the note toward Klein.

I wouldn't have minded if you gave me ten pounds… One soli, you sure are like your fiancée… Klein kept up his mysterious vibe as a charlatan and said nothing, smiling as he pressed on the note.

Joyce took a deep breath, wore his hat, and turned to walk toward the door.

As he was unlocking the door, he suddenly turned back and said with sincerity, "Thank you, Master Moretti."

Master? Klein laughed to himself. He watched as Joyce left the divination room and said silently to himself, Whatever happened on the Alfalfa seems extraordinary… If only the Captain was here. He would be able understand everything that happened in Joyce Meyer's dreams…

†

Tuesday at dawn. Backlund, Empress Borough.

Audrey, who woke up earlier, beckoned her golden retriever Susie over. She said with a serious tone, "Susie, you are also a Beyonder now. We are the same kind, ew—no, what I mean is that we have to help each other. Guard the door later and don't let anyone disturb me. I have to conduct a ritual.”

Susie looked at her mistress and shook her tail in exasperation.

Chapter 64 - Instigator

◆

After instructing her golden retriever, Susie, Audrey paced around, seemingly worried. She too was uncertain if the ritualistic magic would result in anything odd.

“Let’s do this…” Her eyes turned calm as she used her state as a bystander to view the imagined process. Soon, she came to a new arrangement.

Audrey unlocked the door to her bedroom and said to Susie, “Susie, sit here. If Annie and the rest try to barge their way in, immediately go to the bathroom to inform me.”

In order to prevent any accidents, her personal maidservant had the key to unlock her door.

Susie looked at her enigmatically and wagged her tail thrice.

“Very good. I will let you choose anything you want for lunch today!” Audrey pumped her fist gently.

After exhorting Susie, she entered the bathroom. The square bathtub was three to four meters on each side. There was clear water rippling gently in it with steam emitting from it. It was quite a dreamy sight.

Audrey tidied up a rectangular table with many bottles placed on it. Then, she went back out and moved candles, sacrificial items, and a white robe over.

Immediately after that, she closed the bathroom door.

With everything done, Audrey heaved a sigh of relief and picked up a translucent light-blue bottle beside the four candles.

The cylindrical bottle shimmered dreamily under the light. In it was the essence oils she had distilled from a mixture yesterday. As an enthusiast of mysticism, she had no lack of research regarding such items. She had many different kinds of extracts, flower essence, perfume, essential oils, and incense that she brewed herself at home. As such, she had already finished the initial preparations according to The Fool's instructions.

"Moon flowers, gold mint, slumber flowers, fingered citron, and rock-rose… What an odd concoction…" Audrey mumbled softly. "Oh, one has to cleanse one's body and calm their mind before engaging in ritualistic magic. This is a form of reverence to the divine—uh, to the target."

As she went through the entire process in her head, she placed the ritual's essential oil beside her bathtub. She reached out and began disrobing what she wore at home.

Pieces of her silk clothing fell into the laundry basket one after another. Audrey coiled up her hair into a bun and tested the water's temperature with her hand. Then, she carefully stepped into the bathtub, allowing her body to slowly sink into the water's warm embrace.

"Phew…" She exhaled comfortably, finding herself warm all over. She felt abnormally relaxed.

I don't even want to move a single finger… Audrey forcefully pumped herself out as she grabbed the translucent light-blue bottle beside her and dripped a few drops into the water.

A waft of fragrance dispersed, filling the silence with a refreshing smell. Audrey breathed in a few times and nodded in satisfaction.

"Not bad. It smells really good.

"How relaxing. How comfortable…

"I don't want to move at all. All I wish is to lie here in silence…

"Silence, in silence… si… lence…"

After losing her sense of time, Audrey suddenly heard barking.

She opened her eyes in shock, looking to her sides in a daze. She had no idea when Susie had opened the door and entered. She was squatting outside the bathtub, looking at her with an exasperated look.

As she rubbed the corners of her eyes, Audrey felt that the water had cooled down quite significantly.

I-I fell asleep? She subconsciously asked herself.

Susie looked at her without barking or wagging her tail.

"Haha, the effects of that bottle of ritual essential oil sure is great. Yeah, really great!" Audrey chuckled dryly as she explained with a cheerful tone.

She stood up, retrieved a towel, and as she wrapped and wiped her body, said to the golden retriever beside her, "Susie, continue keeping watch. Do not let Annie and the rest enter!"

Only when the golden retriever left did she secretly stick out her tongue. She threw her towel aside and wore a clean white robe.

After closing the door to the bathroom, Audrey recalled the ritual she had memorized.

She picked up four candles and placed them on the four corners of the table.

A loaf of white bread at the top left corner, a bowl of Feynapotter noodles at the top right corner. Smells great, but it's a little cold… No! It's not time to think of this! Paella at the bottom left corner and Desi pie at the bottom right… Audrey set up the altar according to The Fool's descriptions seriously, shaking her head twice during the process.

After she was done with the preparation, she left her four candles lit. She picked up a silver knife and stabbed it into a pile of coarse salt.

After narrating the sacred incantation in Hermes, Audrey raised the knife with beautiful patterns and placed it into a cup filled with clear water.

After focusing her mind, she pulled out the silver 'sacred blade,' cogitating her spirituality to spew out and spread from her blade.

Invisible energy spewed out as Audrey held the knife and circled the altar once. When she felt that a spirituality wall was fully erected around her, she expelled all the uncleanliness and distractions outside.

Maintaining her Spectator state, she prevented her excitement and joy from affecting the ritual.

She put down the silver knife and picked up the tiny light-blue crystalline bottle and dripped a drop on each candle.

Sizzle!

A faint fragrance emanated as Audrey's body, heart, and soul seemed to attain tranquility.

She drew a breath as she lowered her head in reverence and began chanting the incantation in Hermes.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era,

"You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog,

"You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck,

"I pray for your help.

“I pray for your loving grace.

“I pray for you to give me a good dream.

“Moon flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!

“Fingered citron, a herb that belongs to the sun, please bestow your powers to my incantation!”

†

Right after Audrey chanted the incantation and hoped to cogitate the contents of her plea, she felt there was a stir within the spirituality wall. She saw a dark red star swirling on the back of her hand.

Her heart leaped as she hurriedly closed her eyes and calmed her heart to plead sincerely.

When everything was over, she surveyed her surroundings wondrously, but did not find anything odd.

“Is that all?” Audrey knitted her eyebrows slightly as she whispered.

†

The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck… The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era… In the Blue Avenger’s captain cabin, Alger Wilson in his windstorm robe was silently reciting the three lines of description he had heard in the afternoon. He seemed to be attempting to find clues of the person’s identity through it.

He shook his head and stood up in a clearly vexed manner, but ultimately did not do anything.

Alger was not at ease inside the Blue Avenger, an ancient ship that was a relic from the Tudor Dynasty. Although he was already in control of the ship, he had a gut feeling that there were still many hidden secrets, just like the Blood Emperor.

Therefore, he planned on using the ship to test The Fool’s powers but did not wish to attempt the unknown ritualistic magic on the ship.

Alger ruminated for a few minutes before leaving the captain’s cabin and went on deck. He said to the few sailors, “We will be reaching the Rorsted Archipelago soon. We will be anchoring there for a day.”

The sailors immediately cheered as they shouted in unison, “Thank you, My Lord!”

As the ghost ship did not need sailors, there were very few sailors on board. There was no need to worry about their supplies, being able to enjoy fresh food and clean water. However, day after day of voyaging at sea and the nearly unending vistas exhausted them both physically and mentally. It felt like they were always repressed and tolerating something until they lost control.

As for the Rorsted Archipelago, it was a famous colony on the Sonia Sea. Their business was booming, and they had all kinds of industries.

“I simply can’t wait!” A crew member gyrated his hips and sniggered a meaningful laugh that all men would understand.

†

On the public carriage toward Zouteland Street, Klein, who was reading the newspapers leisurely, suddenly jolted. He seemed to hear an ethereal voice calling out to him.

Shapeless murmurs resounded in his mind as his forehead throbbed uncontrollably.

The contents of the calling that could not be heard left as fast as it came. In just ten seconds, it was gone. Klein pinched his forehead and resisted the throbbing pain deep in his brain.

Is this the murmurings of unknown existences that Old Neil mentioned? A result of having enhanced spiritual perception? Thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind as he suddenly saw four black dots appear on the back of his right hand. They were like tiny inconspicuous moles.

The four black dots that stemmed from the luck enhancement ritual quickly sank, dimmed, and vanished.

Klein looked at it in surprise and had an additional guess about what had just happened.

Justice or The Hanged Man has attempted the ritualistic magic I gave them?

Was my train of thought right?

Those three descriptions have precisely pointed towards me through the mysterious space above the gray fog?

But I’m far from powerful enough. I can’t hear the contents of their requests… I wonder if the information is ‘stored’ above the gray fog…

Yes, I should confirm it by entering tonight.

Klein felt a little perturbed and agitated. He quickly raised his newspaper and hid his face, preventing anyone from seeing the changes to his expression.

Soon, he arrived at Zouteland Street and entered the Blackthorn Security Company.

Before he could greet Rozanne, Klein saw Captain Dunn Smith walk out. He held a piece of paper with a portrait on it.

“Take a look at this internal warrant of arrest. A very cruel and vicious Beyonder has entered Tingen.” Dressed in his black trench coat, the hatless Dunn swept his gaze over and handed the piece of paper in passing.

Klein received it and the first thing that entered his vision was a portrait sketch.

The sketch was of boy with a round face. He looked amiable with a tiny hint of bashfulness and was fairly young, probably about eighteen or nineteen years old.

"Tris, a suspected Beyonder. The initial estimate is that he's a Sequence 8 Instigator and we are not eliminating the possibility that the Theosophy Order is behind it. The culprit behind the massacre of the Alfalfa… According to a witness testimony, he came to Tingen after leaving Enmat Harbor. His current whereabouts are unknown…"

Tris… Alfalfa… It's actually a crime committed by a Beyonder? Klein suddenly recalled the dream interpretation from yesterday afternoon and Joyce Meyer's description. He immediately said, "Captain, I know one of the witnesses. He might very well be an important witness."

"I know. Joyce Meyer. My help was requested by the Machinery Hivemind last night. I saw you in Joyce's dream. Many details have led to the confirmation that the Alfalfa tragedy was a result of Tris." Dunn's gray eyes looked unperturbed as he chuckled.

How uninteresting. Captain… thankfully it was my rest day yesterday and not me acting as Seer during working hours… Klein lampooned. He barely missed the horror of being caught skiving by his direct superior.

He asked instead, "Which Sequence pathway is Instigator? What kind of organization is the Theosophy Order?"

Was instigating others to kill each other the method Tris used to eliminate the side effects of the potion or was it a requirement needed to advance?

Dunn thought for a few seconds and said, "Coincidentally, it's about time for you to learn the relevant information regarding Beyonders and the mysterious organizations. You shouldn't be ordered by Old Neil to keep reading the historical documents all the time."

Captain, wasn't the reason for recruiting me to be your 'history expert?' Klein did not dare point out the problem as he nodded seriously.

"Alright."

Chapter 65 - Beyonder Information

◆

With a document signed by Dunn, Klein went underground and turned into the armory.

“Dunn is right. It’s time you understand the different Beyonders and the various secret organizations.” Dressed in a black classic robe, Old Neil read the note without finding it surprising. Instead, he supported the captain’s decision.

He then added immediately with a smile, “After all, you will be heading to the underground market with me tomorrow night.”

“Tomorrow night?” Klein did not conceal his pleasant surprise as he asked to confirm.

Old Neil nodded and said with a sigh, “I’m a person who can’t sleep when in debt. I always wish to settle them as soon as I can.”

You did not seem to act so previously. You left it to the last moment before using ritualistic magic to resolve the problem… So, I’m not the only one suffering from procrastination… Wait, is there a need to euphemize ‘afraid to spend away the money to repay a loan?’ Klein did not expose Old Neil and instead urged, “Mr. Neil, I’ll be troubling you to retrieve the corresponding information from Chanis Gate.”

There were mostly archaeological and historical documents in the armory. There were documents involving Beyonders and mysterious organizations, but few in number. Furthermore, they were mostly basic knowledge.

Old Neil slowly took a sip from his hand-ground coffee and smacked his lips. He then walked out the armory with the signed and stamped document. Klein watched the place on his behalf.

About ten minutes later, Old Neil returned with a huge stack of documents.

“They can only be read in here. They are not to be taken out,” he warned as he placed the information on the desk.

“Alright.” Klein gave a firm nod. He extended his hands and quickly flipped through the pages and did a general read through.

Very detailed… As expected of the Nighthawks’s internal documents… As expected of a Church with four thousand years history or even more… Klein sighed inwardly as he glanced through the documents.

Not only did the documents introduce the various secret organizations, it also listed down many of the Sequence pathways. It was very complete. Some of them only wrote the potion name of the corresponding Sequence while others only described the Beyonder abilities of the corresponding Sequence. Some were completely missing and left blank.

While holding back his excitement, Klein found the Sequence pathway that led from Seer.

He ruffled through the pages and soon found a familiar word.

Then, his delighted expression quickly froze because there was no corresponding potion name—Sequences 7 and 8—after Seer!

Thankfully, the abilities of the two following Sequences are present… Klein silently exhaled as he calmed his mind and read the description seriously.

“Sequence 8: Potion name unknown. The corresponding Beyonder is good at fighting with artifice and very crafty.”

Good at fighting with artifice? This is the next advancement of Seer? Why does it feel odd… I'm not a hunter… Am I going to become a melee mage? What does crafty mean? My intelligence is enhanced, making me good at fooling the enemy? Klein was stunned. He even suspected that the Nighthawks's information was wrong.

There were corresponding case studies appended, but he could not find a reasonable explanation despite reading it repeatedly.

He cast his gaze lower as the description of Sequence 7 entered his eyes.

"Potion name unknown. The corresponding Beyonder is good at many spells that can be quickly cast. Fuses one's body's skill and supernatural powers as one.

That's more like it! This is what an advancement of a Seer should sound like! Klein heaved a sigh of relief.

After seeing the case studies of Sequence 7, he cast his eyes to the overall description of the pathway.

"This Sequence pathway was first established by the Solomon Empire's Zaratul family. During the conflicts of the Fourth Epoch, the family was not fully destroyed. The family's name was occasionally heard in the history of the Fifth Epoch… It is suspected to be connected to the ancient organization, the Secret Order."

Zaratul? Upon seeing this name, Klein's eyes constricted.

He had just seen this name appear in the remnant diary pages of Emperor Roselle yesterday afternoon!

Roselle's acting came from a reminder by the mysterious figure known as Zaratul!

Because of that mysterious Zaratul, Emperor Roselle regretted not choosing Seer? Therefore, I was indirectly influenced, turning me into a Seer. It makes acting return to the embrace of the Seer… It feels like it was all predestined. Klein knitted his brows and felt that things were somewhat different.

Just from the logical chain, he did not feel that there was anything wrong in any aspect. However, in the domain of mysticism, pre-destiny often manifested things and involved new problems.

In addition, transmigration is quite a baffling matter… It's just confusing… And the guy I've possessed tried to commit suicide because of the lost notebook of the Secret Order… Klein thought for quite a while and had many guesses, but lacked the information needed to prove them.

Phew… After repeatedly reading the information, he finally suppressed his ideas and read the other records.

He first found the Sailor Sequence and discovered that it indeed belonged to the Lord of Storms.

For an old opponent that they haven't faced for perhaps more than two to three thousand years, the Nighthawks's internal records were rather detailed.

"Sequence 8: Folk of Rage. Ancient name—Guardian of the Storm. The corresponding Beyonder can release several strikes that exceed ordinary thresholds when enraged. Their strength and speed are greatly enhanced… Facing them is like facing a storm…

"Sequence 7: Seafarer. Ancient name—Storm Priest. The corresponding Beyonder is also a scholar of astronomy and geography. They have an intuitive grasp of magnetic fields, ocean currents, wind direction, and clouds… A boat with a Seafarer will never get lost at sea… They are even more beloved by the oceans and gain enhancements in every aspect at sea…

"They are friends of water. They can act freely underwater for more than half an hour… They can cast a limited number of water-related spells. Some are a result of their own capabilities and some are a bestowment from the Lord of Storms, for example…”

A Sequence 7 Seafarer is very powerful… Klein nodded while in deep thought.

He suspected that The Hanged Man was a Guardian of the Storm, if not a Seafarer. From how he has recently advanced, it was more likely he was the latter.

This also indicated in a way that The Hanged Man was either a member of the Mandated Punisher or a pirate who had been secretly absorbed by the Church of Storms.

Impressive. Impressive… Klein flipped back a few pages and found the advancement of Spectator. He discovered that the description was identical to what The Hanged Man had said.

Sequence 9 Spectator was like a Seer. They lacked direct combat means and could only observe a target to obtain information, gleaning the true thoughts of the target. By doing so, they could provide subtle influences and guidance to cause situations to develop in a way they wish.

Sequence 8 Telepathist was the advancement of Spectator. Their observation was not only limited to superficial details, but deeper into one’s aura, Ether Body, or other mysterious domains. The combination of the two allowed a Telepathist to precisely understand a person’s thoughts as though they could read their minds. In front of them, it was difficult to have any secrets.

Sequence 7’s Psychiatrist, which was also known as Psyche Analyst, had further enhancements above the Sequence 8 foundations. They could begin directly influencing a target. For instance, they could treat a target’s maniacal problems or alternatively, cause them to turn maniacal and lose their reason.

“A Beyonder that is very difficult to be noticed…” After reading the description, Klein made a reasoned judgment.

After understanding the relevant information concerning the Gathering members, he flipped to the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. This was because Emperor Roselle had chosen their Savant Sequence.

“Sequence 9: Savant. The corresponding Beyonder believes that knowledge is power. They have a rough understanding of the supernatural, but are more knowledgeable about aqua regia, nitroglycerin, and complicated bolts and gears. They seem to know everything.”

It is no wonder that Emperor Roselle said that this potion suited him perfectly, allowing for him to press his advantage to the fullest… Klein understood completely as he shifted his eyes down.

After several case studies, the corresponding Sequence 8 finally appeared in Klein’s vision.

“Archaeologist. They possess a good deal of knowledge about history and outdoor survival, as well as forbidden knowledge about ruins. They have a strong enough body and ability to face everything…”

“Sequence 7: Appraiser. They can intuitively understand the powers and problems of most extraordinary items, and can use them while keeping danger at its lowest…”

As Klein’s security clearance was insufficient, he only had access to Sequence pathways up to 7. It left him a little frustrated, but there was no other way around it. He only wished that Backlund would quickly send over the Sealed Artifact 2-049 to determine if Ray Bieber was a descendant of the Antigonus family.

That way, he would have a chance of becoming a formal member and obtain a higher security clearance.

Collecting himself, Klein read the material seriously from cover to cover. He knew that the sequences following Corpse Collector were Gravedigger and Spirit Medium. He also knew that there was no information about the Sequence 8 of the Mystery Pryer path. Not only was there no name for the potion, but even the description had been left blank. There was a name for Sequence 7 of that path: Warlock!

Sounds impressive… Klein slowly flipped the page and saw Apprentice and Marauder which Emperor Roselle had lingering thoughts for. Their records only reached Sequence 8 and nothing more.

“Sequence 9: Apprentice. Their abilities are rather strange. It can only be confirmed that this is the originating pathway of a mage. They are rarely trapped and very difficult to be stopped. They often are able to escape and pass through obstacles every time…

“Sequence 8: Trickmaster. They wield all kinds of strange but impotent spells…”

“Sequence 9: Marauder. Difficult to separate these Beyonders from ordinary bandits or thieves. Perhaps the means available to them are more impressive, but their goal of stealing riches is not for enjoyment or survival. It’s more like answering a calling…”

“Sequence 8: Swindler. We have also discovered traces of Beyonders in fraud investigations. They gain enjoyment from swindling…”

Gain enjoyment from swindling… This is ‘acting’ in a different form, isn’t it? If I had the choice, I might have chosen Apprentice… Klein silently said to himself. Suddenly, he discovered the corresponding Sequence potion of the culprit of the Alfalfa tragedy, Tris—Instigator.

Chapter 66 - Demoness Sect

◆ ◆ ◆

“Sequence 8: Instigator. They are adept at triggering the evil desires deep in people’s hearts, causing contradictions and inciting conflict, thus resulting in bloody massacres…”

The description isn’t detailed enough. From the looks of it, the Nighthawks do not understand the capabilities of this potion well enough… But it does match the characteristics of the Alfalfa tragedy… Klein cast his gaze up and read the corresponding Sequence 9 for Instigator.

“Sequence 9: Assassin. Can transform their bodies in a short period of time and become light as a feather. They can also utilize vision equal to that of an eagle. Every Assassin is adept at hiding in the shadows. They have dexterous steps and have the ability to release all their strength in one blow…”

After reading the description, Klein was left completely confused.

Assassin… The advancement from Assassin is Instigator?

This advancement is just as odd as how a Seer advances to a class that is good at fighting with artifice…

Some Sequence pathways advance in a very ordinary fashion, such as Spectator. Yet, there are Sequence pathways that seem to violate intuition and logic?

Well, that might not be completely true. Perhaps I just haven’t discovered some of the hidden common points…

For instance, Assassins and Instigators can both bring catastrophe to others…

But I can't figure out the advancement of Seer! Hey! Could it be of the Gandalf[1] lineage? After adding some supportive magic, the other attribute points are dumped into strength and techniques?

As Klein lampooned in a speechless manner, he silently shook his head. He flipped to the section about the secret organization, the Theosophy Order that involved Instigators.

"Theosophy Order. A secret organization that appeared in the Fifth Epoch, which is the early era of the current epoch. They believe that the mind is fundamental to a person, while the physical flesh is a cage that restrains the mind. The reason why humans do evil is a result of the physical body's influence. One has to use their spirituality to obtain knowledge, allowing the mind to gradually extricate from the body. Then, through the trials of the stars, they will eventually be separated from the material world, returning to the purest and truest self, obtaining eternal redemption."

"Therefore, many extremist members of the Theosophy Order will make destroying the bodies of others their goal, which has led to many bloody massacres… It is obvious that they possess two Sequence pathways. The first is the more common Apprentice and Trickmaster potions among their members. The other Sequence comprised of Assassin and Instigator rarely appear… There is currently no evidence that indicates that the Theosophy Order possesses Sequence 7 or higher potions.

"It is unknown how the Theosophy Order established itself. Their possible origins can only be analyzed using the two Sequence pathways. Firstly, the Apprentice and Trickmaster Sequences easily remind people of the Abraham family of the Tudor Dynasty in the Fourth Epoch. The Tamara family, tied to the Abraham family through marriage for extended periods of time, cannot be eliminated as well. Secondly, Assassin and Instigator point towards the Demoness Sect.”

The Abraham, Tamara, Antigonus and Zaratul families, the Solomon Empire’s Black Emperor, the Tudor Dynasty’s Blood Emperor, the Trunsoest Empire, and the Jacob and Amon families that the Hanged Man had mentioned… There are really lots of secrets buried in the history of the Fourth Epoch. There might be a lot of facts too… Klein was astounded from what he read. He had a deep appreciation for how the history of the Fourth Epoch was clouded in fog.

The outline he could see through the fog left him shuddering involuntarily. It was as though he could imagine a thriving era of Beyonders, an Epoch with blood and strangeness in a concerted dance or horror and distortion in a symphony.

Klein drew in a silent gasp and flipped through the book, but did not discover any corresponding descriptions of the Demoness Sect.

He looked up and saw Old Neil wrestling with some filter paper with his hand-ground coffee. He asked sincerely, “Mr. Neil, what organization is the Demoness Sect? I can’t find any introduction about them in the documents.”

Old Neil was in no hurry to respond. After wrestling with his coffee, he chuckled and said, “Your security clearance isn’t high enough. Even with Dunn’s permission, you would not be able to read the relevant information. It can also be said that a lot of the information is only available in the Holy Cathedral and isn’t stored behind Tingen City’s Chanis Gate. Perhaps wait till the day you become a captain of the Nighthawks. You would be sent to the Holy Cathedral for training and would then be able to access them.

“I do not understand much about the Demoness Sect. All I know is that they worship the Primordial Demoness. They believe that this secret existence is the true inheritor of the Creator. She was born out of the Chaos and was the earliest to be born from the Creator’s body. She is also the ultimate Ender that ends everything.

“Their Sequence pathways are related to this because to obtain the favor of the Primordial Demoness and to approach this secret existence, the upper echelons are all female. This is also why they are called the Demoness Sect.

“Anything else is not something a formal member like me will know. I’ve heard that the demonesses make it their mission to spread catastrophes.”

Spread catastrophes… This does match the hidden commonality of Assassin and Instigator… But this Mr. Tris’s future seems bleak. The subsequent potions seem to be more suited for females… Klein’s nodded slightly before he continued reading the information.

After he finished reading, he realized that the secret organizations were a lot more than he imagined. But on second thought, he found it very ordinary. After all, this world had so many years of history underlying it. There was once an era when Beyonder powers were extremely active.

According to the provided information, Klein categorized the secret organizations into three based on era.

First were the ancient organizations born in the Fourth Epoch. They included but were not limited to the Moses Ascetic Order, Secret Order, and the Blood Sanctify Sect which were followers of the Devil. However, the information only mentioned the Demoness Sect once.

The second was the secret organizations early in the Fifth Epoch, the present Epoch. For instance, the Theosophy Order or the Death-worshiping Numinous Episcopate. There is also the Life School of Thought which employs a master-apprentice heritage and the Rose School of Thought known among Beyonders for its bloody sacrifices.

The third category were new organizations that appeared in the recent century or two. They include the Aurora Order, the Iron and Blood

Cross Order, the Element Dawn, and the Psychology Alchemists, which Klein learned about much earlier.

Apart from them, there were other organizations that did not do anything major.

“Benson and Melissa must have never imagined that the world is so dangerous… it’s not only limited to wars…” Klein shook his head with a wry smile. He stacked the classified documents neatly before pushing it to Old Neil.

Meanwhile, he added silently in his heart.

Please don’t let my Tarot Club be on the list…

Old Neil never suspected that a leader of a secret organization was sitting opposite to him. He chuckled and took the documents and headed to Chanis Gate.

Klein sat there and wondered if he should divine the location of Instigator Tris. But he abandoned the thought after less than twenty seconds. After all, he only had a vague idea of Tris’s appearance and did not know if the name was genuine. If he could figure out his location with that, he would not be a Seer, but a Prophet!

By the time Old Neil returned, Klein had straightened his thought processes and continued his revision of mysticism studies to grasp even more forms of ritualistic magic.

He spent the day studying and revising. He did not participate in the joint operation needed for capturing Instigator Tris. He did hear that the delivery of Sealed Artifact 2-049 from Backlund had been delayed due to some reason or another. The actual time of arrival was still pending.

As he had earned nearly two soli from yesterday’s divination, Klein spent ten pence to buy a two-liter barrel of Enmat Beer for Benson on the way home. He also bought some lemon cakes fresh out of the oven for Melissa.

"Klein, I know you care for us deeply, but there's no need. There's no need to keep spending money on such matters," said Benson after he saw the tiny barrel of beer and deliberating over his words.

Melissa stood beside him and nodded slightly.

This is probably how our consumerist habits differ… Klein sighed in amusement.

"Benson, Melissa, don't worry. This was bought with my additional reimbursement. Yeah, I earn an additional two to four soli every week."

I can't tell them that these are the earnings I got from doing divinations for others, right… He added inwardly.

"…That job of yours is much better than I imagined." Benson was taken aback as he made an objective assessment.

That's right. I even learned divination from it… Klein mused silently before turning toward the kitchen.

Under the combined efforts of the trio of siblings, a sumptuous dinner was ready for eating.

After having their fill, Klein, Benson, and Melissa lay slumped in the living hall. It took them quite a while before they got up to clean up, chat, and study.

When Benson and Melissa fall asleep, I'll head above the gray fog to see the effects of the ritual… As Klein revised his history textbooks, he shot a glance at his siblings.

†

West Borough. Iron Cross Street Lower Street.

A three-storied apartment was immersed in darkness. There were no street lamps or any additional light.

Suddenly, a figure leaped out of a window from the third floor. It landed gently on the ground like a feather without causing so much as a stir.

His body crouched and suddenly vanished as though he had blended into the shadows. All that could be seen was the outline of his body.

As he traveled quickly, the figure arrived at the harbor. He headed for a corner devoid of anything except for a pile of goods.

He seriously observed for a moment, circling the area twice before the leaving the darkness and entering the corner.

One could see his round and amiable face. He was Instigator Tris, who had single handedly caused the tragedy of the Alfalfa.

“How does it feel?” A mysterious figure wearing a black hooded robe walked out of the shadows. The hoarse voice obviously belonged to a woman.

Tris revealed a friendly and satisfied smile.

“Feels great. It was a scene I dreamed and yearned for.

“I think I have appropriately completed the mission and have taken the necessary preparations for the advancement.”

The black-robed woman nodded indiscernibly and said, “Very well. According to the promise, I’ll hand you the Sequence 7 formula and the three main ingredients. You will have to gather the rest by yourself.”

“No problem.” Tris answered, seemingly prepared.

The mysterious woman raised her hand and handed a book-like object to Tris.

The “book” had an ancient and mottled bronze exterior cover with a strange star-shaped lock on its side.

Tris knew that inside the “book” was the formula and ingredients. He instantly became thrilled.

He tried hard to compose himself as he looked curiously at the potion’s name on the bronze outer cover.

“Witch!”

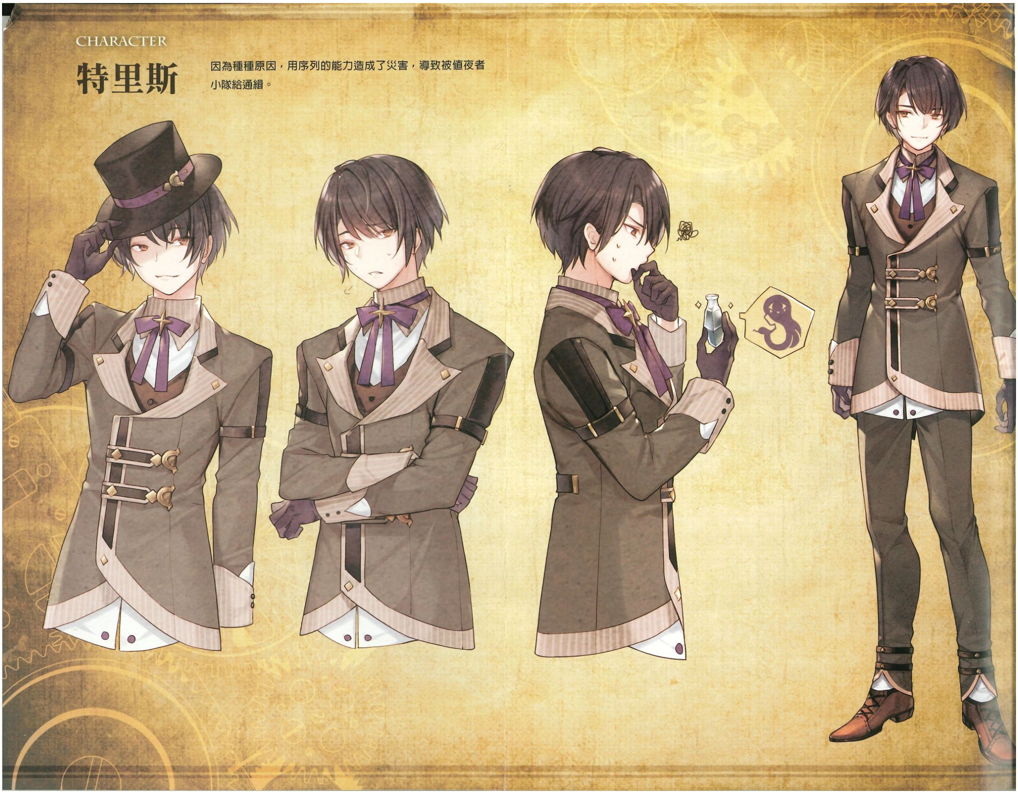
Tris exclaimed. He found it unbelievable that the word written in ancient Hermes was “Witch.”

Witch? I’ll advance to become a Witch? What a joke!

The mysterious woman covered her mouth and let out a chortle. It took her quite some time before she answered, “Weren’t you always curious? Curious about why our upper echelons are all female…

“That is the answer.”

Taiwan Triss


CHARACTER
特里斯
因為種種原因，用序列的能力造成了災害，導致被值夜者小隊給通緝。

Triss

Due to various reasons, they used their Sequence abilities to cause a disaster, leading to them being wanted by the Nighthawk squads.

Gandalf is a fictional character, a wizard and one of the protagonists in J. R. R. Tolkien’s novels The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings.

Chapter 67 - Response

◆

The crimson moon high in the sky hung silently in the darkness. It illuminated Tingen City, the city of universities, as it gradually fell silent.

Klein stood in front of his desk and looked through his oriel windows to see the empty Daffodil Street. He heard the sound of carriages quickly galloping far away without causing a din.

He picked up his vine-leaf patterned silver pocket watch and snapped it open. He took a glance at it and drew the curtains, making the yellowish lights of the gas lamp reflect back into the bedroom.

Klein turned around at an adequate speed, locked his room, and switched off the gas valve.

The room was immediately covered in darkness. Only a sliver of red moonlight penetrated the curtains. It gave rise to an atmosphere perfect for many late-night folk tales.

Klein took out the silver knife he had applied for. He imagined the spherical light and entered a half-Cogitation state.

He focused his mind according to his previous practice, allowing his spirituality to spew out from the tip of his blade. Then, he allowed their motion to miraculously fuse with his surroundings, sealing off the room.

He was doing it to prevent any abnormal stirrings that could wake

Benson and Melissa.

Following that, Klein put down the knife and walked four steps in a counterclockwise manner. Every step was accompanied by the incantation from Earth.

The unchanging roars and murmurs inundated him. With the same mania and pain inflicted on him, he did his best to control himself and withstood the most grueling and dangerous stage in his half-conscious state.

The grayish-white fog was endless. The dark red stars were at varying distances from him. The towering divine palace stood erect like a dead giant. Nothing seemed to have changed. The silence and antiquity that had accumulated over thousands of years swarmed him.

No, there is a change! Klein silently muttered to himself. His gaze locked onto a dark red star near him.

That was the star symbolizing Justice!

The star's deep redness began to pulse. It did so with average amplitude, but did not stop.

Klein carefully spread out his spirituality towards the deep redness.

The moment the two made contact, he felt a hum in his head. He saw a blurry and distorted scene and heard the illusory but stacked voice of prayers.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era;

"You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

"You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck;

"I pray for your help.

"I pray for your loving grace.

“I pray for you to give me a good dream.

†

“I pray for you to give me a good dream.

†

“I pray for you to give me a good dream.”

†

The female voice resounded constantly in an intermittent fashion. Klein’s psyche turned more irritable and chaotic. It was akin to listening to someone upstairs pounding on the floor when he had just fallen asleep.

He repressed his emotions and used Cogitation to calm the urge. He carefully discerned the blurry scene that appeared before him.

It was a girl dressed in white robes. She had a head of beautiful golden hair. She was standing before four flickering flames, her head lowered as she kept chanting.

From the distorted image, Klein barely recognized her to be Miss Justice!

At this point, he confirmed that the ritual incantation he had created could precisely point towards the gray fog, towards him!

This gave him a huge sense of achievement, going from nothing to having something.

I won’t praise myself for being awesome… Klein’s mood turned for the better. He felt that the pleading voice that echoed in his ears like a buzzing fly was now acceptable.

With a thought, he attempted to create a response in his mind, transferring it through the intricate connection to the dark red star.

"I'm aware."

†

The gray layer emanated before him. A distorted and blurry figure stood in the deepest depths.

The spot where his eyes ought to be swirled with deep redness as his voice resounded repeatedly in the vast and empty world.

"I'm aware."

"I'm aware."

"I'm aware."

†

Audrey Hall was jolted awake suddenly. She sat up with her blanket wrapped around her as her mind was fully occupied with the scenes she saw in her dream.

She knew very well that she had dreamed of the Fool, the mysterious being that lived above the fog!

"Is this a response to my morning prayers?" Audrey, who quickly entered her Spectator state, calmed down and analyzed.

Although she did not understand why The Fool did not respond on the spot and only did so at night, she was still shocked that the ritualistic magic was effective with the few lines of incantation.

In the past, she had prayed to the Evernight Goddess, but had never received any response!

Even if Mr. Fool was not a god, he is likely not far from being one… Audrey slowly inhaled before slowly exhaling.

Since he was a powerful existence that she had no means of resisting, she quickly threw aside her worries. She began considering what to do next.

“First, I have to completely digest the Spectator potion… My acting is still pretty good.

“Second, I have to seek out the Psychology Alchemists.

“Third, I should try to obtain the Telepathist potion formula from Mr. Fool or clues regarding the Psychology Alchemists elsewhere.

“However, every godlike existence should have a complete Sequence pathway that belongs to them. They might not know the formulas of other Sequence pathways… A new Beyonder organization like the Psychology Alchemists might not be able to garner Mr. Fool’s attention…”

†

With the connection severed, Klein sat at the bronze table’s seat of honor in a rather good mood.

He was completely covered in gray fog. He leaned back and clenched his fist to cover his mouth. He recalled and analyzed the process.

At that moment, he was the only living being in the world of the gray fog. Apart from that, there was absolute silence.

It seems I can only pass information over and am unable to use the powers in here… From the looks of it, my idea of manipulation would not work. Klein kept prodding his mouth as he silently made a conclusion.

He had originally planned on attempting to bind his body with the world of the gray fog in the same manner if the incantation and ritual proved effective. As such, he could then leverage all the power of this mysterious space.

If that happened, he could pray to himself, and through such a manipulative manner, he could go around the limitations, the mysteries, and the danger, allowing him to fully use the gray fog world.

For example, he could first conduct a ritual and pray to “himself” for spells. Following that, he could come above the gray fog and answer his own request and bestow it.

From the looks of it, I was being too idealistic… My understanding and control of the gray fog world has not reached that level… Klein shook his head in a self-deprecating manner and planned on leaving.

At that moment, he saw the dark red star that represented the Hanged Man begin to pulse. He heard an ethereal and formless voice spread out.

“I coincidentally chanced upon The Hanged Man’s ritual?” Klein nodded in thought.

He sat at the seat of honor of the long bronze table and extended his hand to tap on the star.

His spirituality spread as it touched the pulsing deep redness.

He heard The Hanged Man’s heavy and repeated prayers along with a blurry scene.

The Hanged Man was draped in a pure-black robe in the scene. He stood in front of four plumes of fire. The surrounding spirituality had formed a wall, isolating him from any external influence.

Klein did not immediately respond. All he did was watch and listen silently.

“…You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck;

“I pray for your help.”

†

After The Hanged Man finished his prayer, he waited for a while. Seeing that there was no response, he began dismantling the spirituality wall, extinguished the candles, and tidied up the altar.

Finally, he swiped his extended hand as aqueous light spread out, making the altar table look brand new.

Water-based spell… The bestowment of the Storm… The Hanged Man is indeed at least a Seafarer… Klein nodded slightly. Before the scene vanished, he responded via the method he imagined, transmitting it through the blob of dark redness.

†

Alger Wilson was situated in the Rorsted Archipelago’s City of Generosity.

He had not gone with the sailors to the famous Red Cabaret. Instead, he stayed inside the hotel and sealed the door and windows shut to attempt the ritual The Fool had described.

After familiarly finishing the prayer, Alger waited patiently for a moment, but did not receive any response.

“It seems this attempt isn’t too successful… Mr. Fool needs to change methods…” He was both overjoyed, but also a little disappointed.

After everything was done, Alger planned on going downstairs for a bottle of Lanti Proof—alcohol that could aid a Folk of Rage to unleash his powers. Mandated Punishers of the Lord of Storms were rather fond of this sort of beverage.

Pulling open the door, Alger was about to walk out when his vision blurred. He saw gray fog billow in the corridor and a hazy human figure sitting in the deepest depths of the fog, as if on a high throne.

"I'm aware." The familiar deep voice reverberated around Alger's ears, causing him to freeze where he stood as his head slightly throbbed in pain.

Alger's eyes suddenly turned dark. He looked around but realized that nothing had changed. There was still the same squeaky floorboard, the same aged wall candle stands, and the same unclean corridor.

I'm aware… The voice was still resounding by Alger's ears.

His expression sank as he hit his chest lightly with his fist but did not say any words of respect to the Lord of Storms.

After a long silence, Alger's expression was restored to normal, but his gaze seemed deeper.

†

Klein did not spend too much time above the gray fog. When all the remnant voices returned to normal, he enveloped himself in his spirituality and plunged into the gray fog, plummeting into the material world.

The lights before him flew by rapidly, like the scenes of a movie played back at a speed tens of times faster than normal. After Klein felt faint, he saw curtains that let crimson moonlight through along with the blurry outlines of the desk and bookshelf.

He picked up the silver knife again and removed the spirituality wall in the room. Then, a sudden gust of wind opened the door and went through the corridor.

He was completely relieved when he saw that there were no stirrings from Benson's or Melissa's room.

This luck enhancement ritual is really indispensable for traveling[1]… It’s concealed and mystical… Klein silently murmured and closed the door again, walking towards his bed.

His mission tomorrow was to head to the underground markets for Beyonder items with Old Neil.

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†

This is a Chinese meme that originated from Stephen Chow’s movie, “Flirting Scholar.”, The exact scene: https://youtu.be/Vg_HBVOvVWk?t=4440

Chapter 68 - Monster

◆

At dusk, the setting sun cast long shadows of the carriages and horses.

Having informed Benson and Melissa that he was having dinner at the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein headed to the harbor with Old Neil on a public carriage.

He was dressed in cheap formal attire, afraid that conflict might break out in such a complicated location—if he damaged his tuxedo which he took painstaking care of, he would probably cry his heart out.

When the sunlight appeared to turn fiery, the carriage stopped. Old Neil, in his usual classic black robe and felt black hat with a rounded edge, ignored the gazes of others and walked diagonally to the Evil Dragon Bar ahead of them.

Even though the bar was slightly far away and the heavy doors were tightly shut, Klein still heard wave after wave of rapturous shouts. They appeared to be cheering on a hero.

When he came close, he suddenly sensed something. He turned his head towards the warehouse opposite to the bar. He saw a stocky man dressed in a uniform standing at a hidden corner on the rooftop.

The man carried a huge grayish-white mechanical box and held a thick rifle in his hand.

The grayish-white mechanical box was obviously connected to the same-colored rifle via piping.

“Steam-pressured rifle?” Klein muttered in shock. He looked at Old Neil and said, “This bar can actually obtain such weapons?”

That was a military-controlled item!

Although it used extracted phlogiston[1], the size and weight of the steam backpack were still shocking, something only a true warrior of blood and iron could withstand. The rifle had an extremely high muzzle velocity and shocking destructive power too.

Matched with a suitable scope, it was nearly equivalent to an inferior sniper rifle.

“What?” Old Neil squinted his eyes as he looked over, having a confused look too. “Did something happen here?”

Something happened? Klein surveyed his surroundings and discovered a few more men holding repeating rifles who were searching for something.

“What happened?” Old Neil approached the bar and asked the brawny man guarding its door outside.

The brawny man obviously knew Old Neil and smiled wryly.

“The bar was nearly destroyed earlier.

“Apparently a wanted man was here trying to buy materials and was recognized. And this was what resulted from it. Oh Lord, what did he do, and how dangerous was he to receive such treatment? My legs went limp seeing all those firearms, limper than after spending an entire night with Ginger Sunny!”

He did not know the identity of the wanted man, much less know that the people who came to buy materials had Beyonders mixed in.

“Wanted man? Do you know his name?” Old Neil asked in interest.

“I think it was Tris or something?” the brawny man answered uncertainly.

Instigator Tris? Klein nodded in enlightenment, having understood what was happening.

Tris did not know that Joyce Meyer had cast his suspicion on him; therefore, he had sauntered right into the market to purchase materials without heed. He was likely recognized by an informant of either the Machinery Hivemind or the Nighthawks, resulting in an intense clash.

“Was he caught?” Klein tapped his silver-inlaid black cane.

Based on the surrounding situation, likely not…

The brawny man shook his head slightly and gestured with his chin to the rooftop of the warehouse opposite him.

“He rushed out before those terrifying guys arrived. Bloody hell, I’ve never seen a man run faster than he did!”

You haven’t seen the true skills of an Assassin, or you might be taken away to some indescribable place for further reeducation… Klein thought.

“Is the market still open?” Old Neil changed subjects and asked.

“It just restored operations,” replied the brawny man affirmatively.

“That’s great.” Old Neil quickened his pace and extended his right hand, pushing open the heavy door.

Klein followed closely in tow and walked in. He nearly fainted at the stuffiness and smell of alcohol that inundated him.

In the middle of Evil Dragon Bar was a boxing ring. Two half-naked men were in an intense brawl and surrounding them were dozens of customers shouting and cheering on the side they supported with no lack of vulgarities.

Old Neil ignored them and led Klein around the boxing ring and walked into a billiard room at the back.

In the billiard room, there were two people holding cue sticks, having a casual conversation. When they saw Old Neil enter, they instantly fell silent for a few seconds.

After confirming the visitor's identity, they moved aside and let Old Neil and Klein pass through the secret door behind them.

After passing through a few rooms, the sight before Klein's eyes opened up. He saw a place that was about the size of a lecture hall from his previous life.

Some vendors had set up roadside stalls with bottles and cans all over. Passers-by strolled through them, either scrutinizing their goods, chatting, or comparing prices.

"They have to give five percent of their profits to Swain. Ah, he is the boss of Evil Dragon Bar, former captain of a Mandated Punisher squad and older than I am. He's someone who wishes to drink himself to his death," Old Neil explained in a garrulous manner.

Klein thought and gave an honest evaluation.

"A rather profitable business."

After all, his only expense was providing the venue and protection.

"If any item catches your fancy but you lack the money, you can borrow from Swain. But of course, he charges a very high interest…" Old Neil trailed off as he gnashed his teeth.

As expected, it's like running a casino, they would provide usuries… Klein held his walking stick and looked around as he asked curiously, "Mr. Swain is a Seafarer?"

The captain of a Mandated Punisher squad was likely a Sequence 7.

“No, he is only a Folk of Rage. Tingen is not a coastal city, so the Church of the Goddess is much more powerful than the Lord of Storms here.” Old Neil scoffed. “Actually, Swain had the chance of becoming a Seafarer, but was afraid that he would lose control so he chose to give up.”

Just as Klein was about to ask if the boss of the bar had any experience of nearly losing control, he suddenly felt a strange phenomenon happen on his left.

There appeared to be something hidden there, muttering and recounting.

Klein turned his head and saw a pale young man. He was wearing an old linen shirt and blue jeans that the working class normally wore. His eyes looked demoralized with a hint of craziness, and he was constantly mumbling.

“His spiritual perception is very high… or perhaps, distorted?” Klein creased his eyebrows and muttered.

It was the young man’s spiritual perception that triggered his own spiritual perception!

Generally speaking, spiritual perception sensing something causes some interaction. It was nearly impossible to conceal it from others, but “others” referred to Spirit Mediums who had cast their abilities, as well as powerful figures with similar special traits. A Beyonder like Klein would actually find it hard to detect, only detecting if one’s spiritual perception reached a certain heightened level, or an abnormal distortion happened.

They made eye contact and the pale young man with messy black hair walked towards him with an expression looking as though he was half-sleepwalking and half-insane.

He stopped before Klein and stared at him.

Suddenly, he guffawed.

“Haha, it’s the smell of death, death… Ah!”

Before he was done talking, he suddenly screamed tragically. His eyes shut tightly as liquid with the color of blood flowed out.

“Ah! Darn it!” The young man covered his eyes and hugged his head. He struggled on the ground and only calmed down after a while. He then lay there panting.

During the entire process, not a single customer or stall vendor looked over.

Klein pressed down his halved top hat and looked at Old Neil. Klein’s mouth was hanging open in shock, using his actions to demonstrate his shock and to request for advice.

“Don’t mind him. He’s Ademisaul, an orphan, nicknamed ‘monster.’ He was born with high spiritual perception, and he has always been able to see things that he shouldn’t, hear voices that he shouldn’t. Hence, he is always raving and often getting hurt.” Old Neil shook his head as he explained.

He could tell that my body was once dead? Klein knitted his eyebrows and lowered his voice as he asked in doubt, “Haven’t the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind ever thought of taking him in?”

“No, we do not have the Sequence potion that suits him,” said Old Neil with a sigh.

Right, he was born with the starting point of half a Sequence… Klein asked again curiously,

“What Sequence pathway suits him?”

“The Sequence 9 that suits him is called ‘Monster.’ His nickname came from there. It's a pity that only the Life School of Thought has control over the Sequence pathway's beginning," Old Neil replied softly.

He tried to keep the conversation between him and Klein from the people around them to avoid leaking information to mysticism enthusiasts.

Life School of Thought? Klein recalled the information he had previously read.

The secret organization appeared in the beginning of the current epoch. Its actual origins were unknown, but it was mainly passed down via master and apprentice.

Their theories and beliefs were hardly known. Klein only knew that they separated the world into three layers: the world of absolute rationality, also known as the absolute truth world, the world of the spirit, and the material world.

Rumor had it that the secret organization had once produced a Soothsayer… Wasn't that a Sequence pathway that corresponded to Seer? Confusing, really confusing… Klein shook his head and saw Ademisaul struggle to get up and then wander off to another corner.

He reorganized his thoughts and followed behind Old Neil. They walked past one stall after another. There were plants like moon flower, fingered citron, night vanilla, and mineral resources like silver, topaz, ruby and so on.

"It's really very well equipped…" Klein muttered softly.

The mysticism enthusiasts of all ages and genders around him would be stopping, distinguishing, or talking at times. It gave the area a bustling vibe.

"Walk around on your own. I am going to settle my bill." Old Neil pointed at one of the two rooms at the end.

"Alright." Klein nodded without thought.

He strolled with his black cane and came before a stall which sold self-made amulets. He took a careful look at it for a while.

Just when Klein prepared to speak with the seller, he suddenly heard someone asking the stall behind him, "Is this powder ground from cow teeth paeonol?"

Cow teeth paeonol? Isn't that one of the supplementary ingredients of the Spectator potion? Klein thought, then turned around to look at the inquirer.

Justice had repeated the formula for the potion several times, so Klein had been left with a remarkably clear impression of the ingredients.

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†

A substance supposed by 18th-century chemists to exist in all combustible bodies, and to be released in combustion.

Chapter 69 - Protection Amulet

◆

Klein looked over and saw the person inquiring about the cow teeth paeonol.

The man was less than a meter away from him. He was wearing a black suit and a halved top hat of the same color. He had a cane adorned with silver in his hand and a pair of gold-framed spectacles on his face. He had a refined bearing.

“Yes, do you need it? This can here costs three soli.” The owner of the stall was wearing a long black robe, one filled mysticism traits.

The inquirer whose sideburns were pale yellow thought for a moment before saying, “Can it be cheaper? I still need to buy other ingredients too. For example, this bottle of white-edged sunflower petals.”

The stall owner considered for a few seconds before grudgingly replying, “Two soli and six pence. I don’t think you can find a price cheaper than that.”

Klein immediately felt that he was overthinking things after seeing how the bespectacled man was buying ingredients other than the cow teeth paeonol.

However, he still tapped his glabella twice as an act of caution. He swept the man with his Spirit Vision.

No problems. He looks very healthy. His emotions are alright too. Mister, you need to keep this up… Klein retracted his gaze, turned around, and looked at the stall selling homemade amulets once again.

The amulets were placed neatly before him. Some of them were made of pure silver, some with steel, others forged from gold.

But only a few of the amulets had a weak aura emanating from them, some crimson, some pale white, some golden.

This meant that some of them had weak traces of spirituality and were definitely effective to a certain extent!

Klein looked at the amulets carefully and confirmed that the stall owner making the amulets had some foundation in mysticism.

The stall owner did not make any mistakes matching the different energy sources to the different incantations. He was also extremely accurate at choosing the materials that corresponded to the different energy sources.

Of course, a mere mysticism enthusiast would definitely make some mistakes. Klein noticed that the stall owner did not fully understand the incantations. One could not create an incantation simply by translating the content of the prayer into Hermes. The incantations had to follow a certain format that followed unique rules.

The other problem was that the stall owner had made mistakes of varying degrees when he was choosing a suitable symbol for the energy sources. That explained why there were only two or three amulets releasing the faint light out of the dozens that were laid before him.

As for how much of an effect the two to three amulets would have, Klein could only say that it was better than nothing.

An amulet that was truly equipped with obvious effects needed the craftsman to release his spirituality from a blade while carving the incantations and symbols!

If one wanted even better results, they would have to supplement it with ritualistic magic.

And these two things were not something an ordinary person could achieve.

Klein tapped his glabella twice, then pointed at the upper left corner of the stall with his black cane.

“How much for these two?”

He did not ask about the amulets that had a rudimentary colored aura, but half-completed items. Other than external shape, they had not been carved with incantations or symbols.

To Klein, there was no reason to purchase the amulets that had weak effects. What he wanted to do was to transform the half-completed amulets into true amulets.

Hmm, I’ll make amulets that can protect a person from danger, one each for Benson and Melissa. As for my own, I can ask the Nighthawks to supply me with the ingredients… Man, I must have been influenced by Old Neil. I don’t feel any guilt when doing something like that… Klein’s mind wandered as he watched the stall owner pick up the half-completed silver amulets.

The first silver amulet was elongated and had a cavity in the middle. Around it were patterns of angel-like feathers. The craftsmanship was intricate and was very beautiful. The other was simple, almost completely devoid of any additional decorations or carvings. It had a vertical line representing the night, and a circle representing the crimson moon.

Klein, who paid much attention to appearances, took a liking to them immediately.

“This is six soli,” the middle-aged stall owner said, pointing to the intricate amulet. He was a man of few words.

After pausing for a while, he rubbed the simpler piece and said, “This is five soli three pence.”

“That’s too expensive. They are still far from being an amulet.” Klein had slowly been influenced by Benson and Melissa, so he had begun cultivating the habit of haggling.

After a battle of words, he bought the two silver accessories at five soli six pence and four soli nine pence respectively.

Yeah, they can only be considered silver accessories for the time being… Klein had that in mind.

The ten soli three pence was deducted from the reimbursement he received for his Divination Club membership.

Klein received the two silver accessories and placed them into his pocket. He was about to head to another stall when he heard a gentle voice.

“Sir, why are you not buying a completed amulet?”

Klein turned his head over and found a teenage girl asking him the question. She was about fifteen years of age and wore a lacy yellow dress while holding onto a veiled hat with a ribbon.

“It’s because I intend to make my own amulets. As you know, that is the wish of every enthusiast of mysticism,” Klein minced his words and answered.

He did not wish to make the stall owner think that he was trying to snatch his business, even though he had considered using his “skill” to earn a quick buck.

The teenage girl had naturally curly brown hair, and her face was adorable due to her baby fat. She looked at Klein with her light blue eyes and asked sincerely, “Can I seek your advice on choosing an amulet? Well, I was introduced here by a friend. I’ve been here several times and have a deep interest in mysticism. But I still do not know too much about it, and she, my friend, is going to turn sixteen soon. I wish to select an amulet as a gift to her. I didn't bring her along as I want it to be a surprise… I had previously sought her advice, but I cannot remember a lot of the critical points."

Klein gave a gentlemanly smile.

"What kind of protection amulets are you looking for? Something to avert misfortune? Something to avoid illnesses? Something that gives fortune? Different requirements would require different energy sources which means that they must point to different gods. Different gods would have different corresponding constellations, and the different constellations would mean that different materials have to be used.

"For example, the incantation for averting misfortune would belong to the Empress of Misfortune and Horror, who is the Evernight Goddess. As mysticism enthusiasts, we all know that the symbol of the Evernight Goddess is the moon. The corresponding metal would thus be pure silver.

"Therefore, if we hope to avert misfortune, it is best that we choose an amulet that is made of pure silver and has the corresponding incantations."

We would also have to make sure that the incantations are of the correct language and format. The corresponding symbol of the Empress of Misfortune and Horror means the Path Number, the spell's characteristic, and the relative positions of the symbols, etc, must also be correct… But this is too complicated, and there's no need for me to explain this for you… Klein added inwardly.

The girl's eyes sparkled. She asked with a little doubt, "Can a follower of the Goddess wear an amulet belonging to another god?"

"No problem. The gods do not mind such small matters," Klein consoled her.

It was not a problem for the person wearing the amulet, but the person creating the amulet had to be careful. If a believer of the Lord of Storms were to craft an amulet of the Eternal Blazing Sun, they would most likely receive something malicious.

Of course, these referred to amulets requiring the aid of ritualistic magic. The craftsman need not pay much attention to this otherwise.

The teenage girl heaved a sigh of relief.

“I hope to get her an amulet for good health; which deity should I choose from? The Eternal Blazing Sun, Earth Mother, or the God of Knowledge and Wisdom?”

“There should be no problem with the Eternal Blazing Sun and Earth Mother. The former is represented by the sun while the latter is represented by the Brown Planet.” Klein smiled as he said, “The material of the sun is gold, while the metal that symbolizes the Brown Planet is lead. I would suggest the sun, but I do not know if you brought enough money along with you.”

The reason for his suggestion was because he had noticed that among the three amulets with a rudimentary spiritual glow, one of them was a health amulet that came under the domain of the sun.

“Isn’t this…” Before the teenage girl finished her sentence, she stopped and warily looked at the stall owner who was waiting silently.

She thought for a moment before asking, “After I decide on the material, how should I distinguish the incantation and corresponding symbols?”

“Do you know Hermes?” Klein asked instead.

“I just started learning it,” the teenage girl replied, a little embarrassed.

“Then let me choose it for you.” Klein pointed at the health amulet made of gold and said, “This one has no problems, be it in the incantations or the representing symbol."

The teenage girl lifted the edges of her dress and squatted in front of the amulet. She picked up the health amulet with designs of the sun's rays around its edges. She felt as though the amulet was nourishing her, making her feel completely relaxed.

"Thank you, thank you." She stood up and curtsied in gratitude.

Klein laughed and said, "I'll leave the rest to you and the stall owner. I have other things to tend to."

He looked at the stall owner as he spoke and noticed that the man had a weird look in his eyes, as if deciding if he had to give a cut of the profit to Klein.

With a smile, Klein did not bother with the matter anymore. He continued touring the underground market, but he didn't notice any true Beyonder ingredients.

At this point, Old Neil had already paid off his debt. He was holding a dark colored wooden box in his hands.

He pointed to the other room behind and said after he noticed Klein's look of doubt, "Go there if you wish to buy or sell Beyonder ingredients. After all, no one wishes to let others know what extraordinary items they are purchasing."

"I understand." Klein nodded as though in thought.

There was no need for him to go there for the time being. He headed toward the exit of the underground market together with Old Neil.

"How much for these elf flowers?"

A query suddenly entered Klein's ears.

Elf flowers… That's also an ingredient for the Spectator potion… Klein thought as he glanced sideways. He once again saw the refined bespectacled man.

“What’s the matter?” Old Neil asked curiously.

“Nothing much.” Klein retracted his gaze.

Although he was a quasi-member of the Nighthawks, he did not feel that all Beyonders had to be absorbed by the Churches or locked up. He believed that it had to depend on the situation. Spectators definitely posed little danger to society or the kingdom, and the chances of losing control as a Sequence 9 were very slim.

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After leaving Evil Dragon Bar, Klein and Old Neil took a public carriage and left the harbor. They then split ways at the North Borough and headed back to their respective homes.

The public transport steered into Daffodil Street and stopped by the side of the road. Klein was about to get off the carriage when he suddenly saw a young lady wearing a grayish-white dress about to board the carriage.

This lady had smooth black hair, her face a little round. She had thin eyes and unassuming features. But paired together, she gave off the feeling that she was sweet and gentle.

Klein noticed her not because of her beauty, but because he discovered that her body was shuddering slightly. It was an unnatural shudder.

“Miss, are you alright?” Klein asked in concern.

The young lady shook her head abruptly.

“No, I-I am just too tired.”

The people behind Klein were urging for him to get off, so Klein could only leave the carriage.

When he found his footing, he paid attention to the situation from before again. He pinched his glabella twice, planning to determine if the lady was indeed alright.

He had the intention of sending her to the hospital if she had a serious illness that was going to act up soon.

Activating his Spirit Vision, the colors of the auras started to surface. Klein turned around and prepared to look at the sweet and gentle young lady.

Chapter 70 - 2-049's Arrival

◆ ◆ ◆

Clip-clop, clip-clop.

The horses widened their paces as the wheels began rolling in tow. Despite activating his Spirit Vision and turning around, hoping to observe the refined and sweet lady, Klein did not have his wishes fulfilled. All his eyes reflected were brown figures moving past him.

Meanwhile, the passengers from the stop had already boarded the carriage. The carriage door was closed tightly as it gradually departed.

Within the carriage, twenty to thirty people stood closely to each other, their energy fields overlapping and shielding each other. Hence, it was an explosion of colors in Klein's vision, making it difficult for him to differentiate.

He shook his head quietly and raised his finger to tap his glabella to deactivate his Spirit Vision.

To him, it was simply help he could provide if he happened to chance upon it. However, if he were to miss it, and the situation was not especially clear, there was no point taking it to heart and delaying his own matters.

While bathing in the crimson moonlight, Klein strolled back home on the still bustling Daffodil Street. He returned to see Melissa sitting beside the dining table. She was busy doing her homework under a bright gas lamp.

She bit at the fountain pen and frowned, appearing deep in thought.

“Where’s Benson?” Klein asked casually.

“Ah…” Melissa looked up. She blanked out for a few seconds before saying, “He said he went around a few boroughs today and was covered in sweat. He’s taking a nice relaxing bath.”

“Alright.” Klein chuckled. Suddenly, he realized that she was wearing a dress he had never seen before.

It was entirely beige in color. It had fashionable engageantes. The collar and edges of her top had thin frills. Apart from that, it was a rather simple design, the type one wore as daily casual clothing. It fully accentuated the youth of a sixteen or seventeen-year-old.

“New dress?” Klein asked with a smile.

It was a purchase that he and Benson had insisted upon.

Melissa answered in the affirmative tersely.

“I just took it back from Mrs. Rochelle. I was thinking that since I had to wash it later, I might as well try it on first.”

Klein was rather puzzled when he heard that.

“Mrs. Rochelle?”

Wasn’t she our former neighbor?

Melissa nodded and explained in all seriousness, “Mrs. Rochelle is actually a seamstress, but she was quite unlucky. She had no choice but to sew and mend clothes for others at home. She leads a pretty tough life. I knew that she had pretty good skill and the price she quoted is cheaper than at a women’s clothing store. Furthermore, it’s very well-tailored to my figure, so I ordered a new skirt from her. It only cost nine soli and five pence and took only a few days. A dress of a similar style would cost three halves of a pound at Harrods Department Store!”

What a frugal girl… Sis, I know that at least half the reason is due to your pity of Mrs. Rochelle… Klein did not reproach Melissa for deciding things for herself. Instead, he said with a smile, "When did you go to Harrods?"

That was at Howes Street, near the Divination Club. It was somewhere where the middle-class shopped.

"…" Melissa was momentarily at a loss for words. It took her a long while before she said, "It was Selena and Elizabeth. They insisted I accompany them. Actually, well—I actually prefer gears more. I like places with steam and machinery. Yeah."

"It's quite, well—nice for a girl to occasionally shop at a department store." Klein laughed as he comforted his sister.

After some idle talk, he briskly walked to the second floor, hoping to wash away the repulsive mixed smells from the bar.

Just as he was about to return to his bedroom to get a change of clothes, he suddenly heard sounds coming from the bathroom close to the balcony.

A few seconds later, Benson stepped out while drying his gradually receding hairline.

"How was it? Did you compliment Melissa's new dress?" He shot a glance at Klein and asked with a smile.

"I guess I forgot. All I did was ask where it was done…" Klein thought for a moment as he said.

Benson immediately chortled and shook his head.

"How unbecoming of an elder brother. When Melissa received the dress, she couldn't bear putting it down. After rushing to cook and wash the dishes, she immediately wore the dress and has refused to take it off ever since."

…Wasn't she planning on changing after showering? She can wash and starch the clothes while doing so… Klein subconsciously refuted with the explanation that Melissa had given.

"Tsk." Benson sighed. "It's been scorching the past few days. She was busy in the kitchen for a long time, so I believe she would feel much better doing her homework after a shower."

That's right… Klein was suddenly enlightened as he gave his brother a knowing smile.

So that's what kind of person you are, Melissa… There's nothing wrong with a girl caring for her appearance. There's no need to find excuses… The corners of his mouth curved up as he shook his head gently before walking into his bedroom.

While he was showering, Klein faintly heard knocking downstairs. He immediately wondered.

Doesn't the worker who's in charge of collecting coins for the gas meter come only once every two weeks?

Could it be Mrs. Shaud from next door? That can't be. It's said that this lady strictly abides by the etiquette of middle-class society. She would not visit at an inappropriate time.

In his puzzlement, Klein wiped dry his body. Wearing old but comfortable shirt and trousers, he came down the stairs.

He surveyed the area but did not notice any strangers. He asked, "Was someone at the door just now?"

Benson, who was reading the newspapers casually, said with a smile, "It was Bitsch Mountbatten, one of the policemen in charge of Iron Cross Street. He asked if we met an eighteen or nineteen-year-old boy who has a rotund face. Heh, he even gave us a sketch to identify. Unfortunately, neither one of us have seen him, or we would have received a reward. What about you?"

“Nope.” Klein had a general idea what was happening.

Instigator Tris had successfully escaped the Evil Dragon Bar at the harbor. He had escaped somewhere close to Iron Cross Street and Daffodil Street; therefore, the police were making visits from door to door.

And to go this far made it clear that the operation of nabbing the Instigator had completely failed!

Klein did not bother himself with the situation. He had yet to begin combat training. He only had basic mastery of shooting, so to consider dealing with a natural ‘Assassin’ was simply using his life as a joke.

He did not sleep well that night. He kept worrying that the Instigator would infiltrate their house to hide, causing another massacre.

Thankfully, Daffodil Street was quiet the entire night, with the morning sun rays dispersing all the fog.

The relaxed Klein changed into formal attire, wore his top hat, held his cane, and went all the way to Zouteland Street. He greeted Rozanne at the reception hall.

“Good morning, Klein,” replied Rozanne happily. She suppressed her voice and said, “I heard the huge operation last night failed?”

“The operation to nab Instigator Tris?” Klein asked in curiosity.

“Yeah!” Rozanne nodded heavily. She shot a glance at the partition and said, “Apparently an informant of the Mandated Punishers discovered the Instigator at the harbor… They were planning on waiting for additional Beyonders and another Special Operations squad from the police to arrive before beginning the operation to do the deed instantly without alarming the commoners. Unfortunately, that Instigator was extremely sharp. He charged out of the encirclement when he noticed something amiss, successfully escaping as a result.”

“At such times, they need a Beyonder with tracking abilities, such as me.” Klein made a joke.

“There was no lack of trackers back then.” Dunn Smith’s voice suddenly sounded.

Rozanne turned her head abruptly and saw the captain wearing his black trench coat. He was glaring right at her with his deep pair of gray eyes while leaning against the partition’s frame.

She hurriedly raised her hands to cover her mouth. Then, she shook her head incessantly, expressing her futile innocence.

Dunn turned his gaze to Klein and after some thought, he said, “There were a total of six Beyonders from the Mandated Punishers, the Machinery Hivemind, and us Nighthawks. We traced the injured Tris to Iron Cross Street’s Lower Street. We found his temporary residence, but the clues ended there. Be it Beyonder methods or ordinary investigations, nothing worked. It was as though he evaporated into thin air, disappearing completely.”

“Do you need my help with divination?” Klein asked probingly.

Dunn shook his head gently.

“The Machinery Hivemind had a Mystery Pryer. He is a senior Beyonder as good as Old Neil. I even suspect that he’s already at Sequence 8. I’m just unaware what the name of the corresponding potion is.”

“The Theosophy Order’s heritage to this day must have something special about it,” consoled Klein.

For the rest of the morning, he continued his mysticism curriculum, read the historical information and documents, and practiced various techniques just like always.

With lunchtime almost approaching, Klein’s mind began to wander.

Another few minutes later, he put away the documents, having heard the summoning of his stomach.

At that moment, Dunn Smith came into the clerk office. He said in a deep but mild manner, “Klein, follow me to Chanis Gate. Sealed Artifact 2-049 has arrived. The subsequent operation might require your sensing of that notebook.”

“…Alright,” Klein got up and replied.

His thoughts became scrambled. He imagined how the Sealed Artifact would look or if the operation would be dangerous.

While in this rather tense silence, he followed Dunn down the stairs and into the tunnel.

After going straight at the intersection, Dunn suddenly stopped and turned his head, saying sternly, “Do this action together with me. Keep doing it and absolutely do not stop. Remember, absolutely do not stop. This is for your own safety!”

While speaking, Dunn bent his arm followed by extending it. He repeated this action without stopping.

Klein looked at the captain demonstrate in a befuddled manner. Suddenly enlightened, he asked, “Has this got to do with the uniqueness of the Sealed Artifact?”

“Yes.” Dunn nodded with abnormal seriousness. “Repeating such an action will allow us to discover if anything happens to you immediately. Saving you in time will not result in any life-threatening dangers.”

“Okay.” Klein did not hesitate further as he began the repeated action of bending and extending his arm.

“If your arm is sore, use the other one,” added Dunn.

Sealed Artifact “2-049” sure is odd… What meaning does this action have? It seems very dangerous… These thoughts flashed past Klein’s mind as he looked solemnly at the captain.

“Alright.”

He had too many questions on his mind, but since Chanis Gate was in sight, he had no choice but to bear with it.

Besides, with my security clearance, I’ll probably not learn of the details. I can only do as I’m ordered… Klein exhaled as he followed Captain Dunn to the Keeper room outside Chanis Gate.

Chapter 71 - Sluggish Phenomenon

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein repeatedly bent and extended his arm as he watched Dunn push open the Keeper's room with his body sideways.

The captain's carefulness and high alertness, as well as the ridiculous and laughable "protective actions," left him feeling abnormally tensed. The feeling was identical to what he felt when taking tests of courage that required him to walk through spooky cemeteries at night in his youth.

A Grade 2 Sealed Artifact. Dangerous. To be used with care and moderation… It is something even a formal Nighthawk member does not know the details to… It is unknown how dangerous it is… Amid his tense nerves, Klein found it impossible to curb himself from overthinking.

At that moment, his brain suddenly turned numb as though a power switch had been flicked off.

Everything in Klein's vision turned slow. Even his arm actions shared the same fate.

He saw Captain Dunn stop in his tracks. He came close to him as though in slow motion, extending his palm out slowly before pushing him in the shoulder.

Suddenly, Klein's thought processes and vision were restored to normal at the same time. It was as though everything from before was just an illusion.

“What happened?” he whispered amid his fright and confusion.

Dunn shook his head and said in a deep voice, “Observe carefully.”

The moment he finished his sentence, he turned around and walked into the Keeper’s room. Klein followed closely behind and saw four other people in the room; they were either seated or standing.

One of them was the Midnight Poet, Leonard. The other three were people Klein had never met before. However, all of them shared a common trait. They were all doing the extending and bending arm “exercise” with utmost seriousness.

“Klein Moretti has a miraculous connection with the Antigonus family’s notebook.” Dunn gave a brief introduction.

Then, he pointed to the other three strangers and said, “These lady and gentlemen are colleagues from the Backlund diocese. They escorted Sealed Artifact 2-049 here. This is Madam Lorotta, Sequence 8 Gravedigger. She is a master sharpshooter.”

At that moment, the black-haired woman who looked about thirty nodded at Klein in a friendly manner.

She looked pretty good. She did not wear a hat and was dressed in what appeared like male attire—a black coat with a white shirt, tight black trousers and black leather boots. The corners of her mouth were slightly curved up.

After Klein exchanged greetings, Dunn pointed to a man seated behind the desk.

“Aiur Harson, someone just like me.”

Before he finished his sentence, Klein saw Mr. Aiur Harson in his gray trench coat turn sluggish with his arm motion. It was as though a gear had lost its lubricant or a joint covered in rust.

What's wrong… Amid Klein's daze, he saw Lorotta push Aiur Harson. Only then did the gentleman's actions return to normal.

Was I like that previously? Klein was first taken aback before he came to the realization.

This indicated the dangers that Sealed Artifact 02-49 held!

What would happen if one was not awoken in time?

Would one become a zombie?

Filled with questions, Klein greeted the charming middle-aged Aiur Harson.

"Borgia," Dunn said as he pointed to the last Nighthawk.

Borgia was a cold man with a knife scar on the side of his face. His sharp brown eyes were like an eagle's. He was constantly observing everyone in the room.

"Let's set off. The faster we end this, the faster we can seal 2-049," the handsome Aiur Harson said as he stood, his eyes revealing some wrinkles.

So, where is 2-049? Klein surveyed his surroundings curiously but did not notice any traces of the Sealed Artifact. Of course, he could not see the areas obscured by the table without activating his Spirit Vision.

"Alright," Dunn turned and looked at Leonard Mitchell. "You'll be in charge of driving. It is best not to involve Cesare with matters like this."

Cesare was the clerk in charge of procuring and collecting supplies for the Tingen Nighthawks while standing in as a carriage driver. He was the one who drove Klein to Welch's home to meet the Spirit Medium Daly.

"No problem." Leonard stopped acting frivolous and nodded seriously.

At that moment, Klein saw Aiur Harson bending over. He picked up a black metal chest which had been obscured by the table.

The chest was carved with resplendent stars and the crimson full moon. It was as though there was a formless barrier around the chest.

The Sealed Artifact should be inside there? I wonder what 2-049 looks like… Klein observed the chest curiously.

Thump!

Thump! Thump!

Violent knocking sounds suddenly erupted from the black chest. Even the surface of the chest bulged time and time again.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

It was as though something horrifying had awakened within the chest and was pounding wildly. The sound of the knocking was beaten into the hearts of everyone present.

It's alive? Just as Klein had a thought, he saw Captain Dunn's arm exercises turning sluggish, as if his joints were layered with glue.

Borgia, the Nighthawk from Backlund, pushed Dunn's shoulder, allowing him to recover.

It's like doing the robot dance when one is affected by 2-049… If all of us are under its influence, wouldn't we be some awkward dance squad… Luckily, 2-049 seems capable of only influencing one person at a time… Klein lampooned to relax his tense nerves. He did not dare halt his arm exercises.

He followed Dunn's lead and left his cane behind. He then followed behind the five Nighthawks through the tunnel and up the stairs to the second floor of the Blackthorn Security Company.

Leonard had gone ahead and notified everyone in the front of the buildings, so Rozanne and the rest had all made their way to the third level. These incidents rarely involved them, but they were not completely alien to them. Another Nighthawk, Kenley, had replaced Dunn in his watch over Chanis Gate.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief when he reached the carriage. He looked suspiciously out the window and said, “Won’t 2-049 affect the ordinary people on the streets?”

From their journey underground to the carriage, Sealed Artifact 2-049 had already caused six sluggish incidents, two of which were targeted at him. He had been jolted awake by Captain Dunn and Leonard Mitchell respectively. The rate of the sluggish effect was rather alarming!

“No worries, 2-049 will target humanoid creatures within five meters of it first. The closer you are to it, the easier it is for you to be chosen. As long as there are three people surrounding it, people who happen to be around when the carriage steers past will not be affected,” the beautiful, black-haired lady Lorotta explained with a lazy tone.

What a weird Sealed Artifact… Klein thought as he continued his arm exercises.

Dunn and the rest of the Nighthawks did not speak on the journey to Ray Bieber’s house. They were paying close attention to each other’s condition. Only Lorotta wore a nonchalant look. At times, she took in the sights of Tingen’s not-so-clean streets, and at other times, she praised Backlund’s underground water system.

Soon after, the familiar building finally entered Klein’s line of sight. The group of six made their way to the third level while observing each other.

The door to Ray Bieber’s house was labeled with the Tingen Police Department’s symbol, indicating that entry was forbidden to unauthorized personnel.

As Dunn did his stretching exercises, he took out a key. He opened the newly changed lock, then turned around, allowing Aiur Harson who was carrying the black chest to enter first.

Thump!

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The Sealed Artifact in the black chest knocked violently once again, even more violent than before. This made Aiur Harson's arm waver from side to side uncontrollably. It even made Klein suspect that the chest would be pounded open in time.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Klein quickly noticed that Captain Dunn's movements were becoming sluggish. He was about to wake him up when a buzz sounded in his brain. His brain became numb, the scenes before his eyes played as though they were in slow motion.

Didn't they say that… that it only affects one… person at a time… Klein's thoughts quickly became sluggish.

At this moment, the prepared Lorotta and Borgia woke each of them up respectively by pushing them.

Having his thought processes and vision restored, Klein looked around with lingering fear. He nearly blurted out.

"Didn't you say that 2-049 can only affect one person at a time?"

Thankfully, I did not stop my stretches!

"When Sealed Artifact 2-049 enters its berserk mode, it can affect up to two people at once. We can confirm that Ray Bieber is indeed a descendant of the Antigonus family," Aiur Harson said with a mechanical tone.

Lorota let out a faint laugh. She looked at Klein and said, "2-049 becomes very agitated when it meets a descendant of the Antigonus family, even if only their scent remains. Its abilities would also increase considerably. I believe you would be able to understand its feelings."

Well, I don't… Klein asked curiously, "So, is it a living creature?"

Lorotta smiled but did not reply him directly.

"You'll know in a while. As long as Ray Bieber hasn't escaped Tingen, 2-049 will lead us to him."

Klein could only put his other questions on hold as he walked around the room with the Nighthawks.

Amid the loud and violent thumping from the chest, they locked the door, walked down the stairs, and returned to the carriage.

Aiur Harson looked out the window several times and confirmed that there were no pedestrians within a five-meter radius of them. He then placed the black chest on the ground and twisted the mechanical switch to release its spiritual restraints.

The violent thumping stopped suddenly, slipping the entire carriage into silence. Not even the breaths of the Nighthawks could be heard.

Klein held his breath as the black chest opened slowly. A sharp creak that hurt his ears could be heard.

Creak!

The chest fell as a slender brown arm extended out of the chest. It was about the length of a child's finger.

Two arms pressed forward one after another as an object about the size a normal human being's palm appeared bit by bit in front of Klein and company.

It had clear elbow, finger, and knee joints. Covered in an oil-stained brown cloth, its face was painted with the colors of a clown—red and yellow.

It was a wooden puppet with a weird appearance!

2-049 lifted its head and looked at Klein with its pure black eyes.

Its rigid mouth slowly parted to reveal a clown-like smile.

Chapter 72 - Tracking

◆

The wooden puppet’s face was painted in red and yellow like the common clown. The corners of its mouth were upturned high, revealing an abnormally comical smile.

Its lips parted to reveal a dark and deep mouth. Klein, who had locked his gaze with it, felt his hair stand as intense horror leaped out of his heart in an uncontrollable manner.

Everything before his eyes grew dull, as though he was looking at the world through a piece of thick brown glass.

Klein’s thoughts slowed down gradually, and he instinctively wanted to ask for help, but his neck seemed to be held tight by a rope. He couldn’t make a single sound, and the single word was trapped in silence.

Just then, Dunn noticed his arm exercises becoming sluggish and pushed him heavily.

The brown glass before Klein’s eyes shattered in an instant. He blurted out the word “help” which had remained dormant in his throat. It reverberated within the carriage, with sharp panic.

“It’s getting stronger,” Klein spoke in a very certain tone.

Being next to a strange Sealed Artifact like 2-049 really placed on in terrifying peril if they were not careful. No, it was totally impossible to guard against it. It could only be avoided through other methods!

“It’s normal,” Aiur Harson said steadily, nodding.

Lorotta chuckled.

“It seems to like you? Don’t worry. It is a relatively less dangerous Grade 2 Sealed Artifact.”

In her naturally languid voice, the puppet whose joints clearly reflected a human’s stood up. It began tottering towards its left.

Its action was incomprehensible, just like a steam engine that someone had rusted due to a lack of lubricating oil.

Robot dance… Klein suddenly had the few Chinese words pop into his head. He had a new guess of the danger 2-049 posed.

It assimilates the living things that it seizes control of?

If I am not woken up in time by the others, would I have become a human-sized puppet, a real-life Barbie doll?

Just as thoughts flooded Klein, Aiur Harson was awoken by Dunn. He extended and bent his arms as he pointed in the direction that the puppet was walking slowly towards. He said to Leonard who was driving the carriage, “Over there!”

Leonard couldn’t make the carriage pass through the building, so he had to detour. During the detour, 2-049 constantly adjusted the direction that it was facing. It acted like a compass that pointed towards the Antigonus family.

Upon seeing the scene, Klein, who was constantly “exercising” his arms, nearly burst out laughing under the tension.

I heard that 2-049 was created by the Antigonus family… Is this an act of loyalty or the perfect example of screwing things up?

Leonard drove the carriage according to Aiur Harson’s occasional instructions.

Whenever the strange puppet 2-049 walked to the edge of the carriage, Aiur Harson would pull it back and start it all over again.

Every time that happened, its mouth would open and two people would be under its influence simultaneously.

Klein's taut feelings gradually began to relax. He realized that Sealed Artifact 2-049 was not as scary anymore. As long as there were more than three people present and they constantly maintained their arm motions, if they made sure to wake their partners in time, 2-049 was merely a puppet with slightly unique characteristics.

The carriage traveled at high speed, and quickly arrived at the harbor, where warehouses were clustered.

After circling a few times, they confirmed that 2-049 intended to enter the innermost grayish-white warehouse. Aiur Harson's expression turned solemn. He grabbed the puppet carefully and stuffed it back into the black chest.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Under constant ferocious knocking, Aiur woke up again and again with the help of Borgia and Lorotta as he activated the mechanism with great effort. He then injected his spirituality and activated the star and crimson symbols on the chest.

At the reappearance of the formless seal, Aiur Harson let out a long heavy breath.

"Let's get down," Dunn Smith said with a low and mild voice. "Leonard, tying the horse here will do."

Dressed in trench coats, suits, or shirts, the six left the carriage and walked into the innermost warehouse. As they walked, they uniformly stretched and bent their arms.

This added a comical and ridiculous vibe to the rather tense situation.

The Nighthawk Awkward Dance Squad… Klein could only complain inwardly to ease such a feeling.

However, there was no other way around it. According to his observations, 2-049 first affected the upper body. Therefore, to detect it in time to prevent a more dangerous situation from developing, they only had the choice of extending and bending their arms, shake their necks or bodies. However, the latter only made one look like a hooligan.

As for actions like blinking eyes and striking one's eyebrows, they were either too easily ignored or the action was too big. Neither was a good option.

This awkward dance squad is better than Causeway Bay[1] triad members… Klein sighed in resignation and followed Captain Dunn Smith and company.

As they approached the warehouse's door, the deeper his anxiety and worry became.

No one knew what kind of effect the notebook had on Ray Bieber!

If something dire happened, Klein did not dare pin his hopes on transmigrating again.

Furthermore, he discovered that he could still be injured and bleed while chopping ingredients for dinner. The speed at which he recovered at was normal too. He wasn't some kind of monster that was impervious to combat or death.

As they walked, Dunn suddenly lowered his non-moving hand and made a pressing gesture to beckon everyone to stop ten meters away from the warehouse's door.

"Klein, divine if there is any danger in the warehouse. It'd be better if you could tell the level of danger," Dunn said as he turned his head to Klein.

His gray eyes looked deep as usual; there was no fear.

Klein gave an unnoticeable nod and stopped the hand exercise. He extended his right hand to his left cuff and removed the silver chain that had a hanging piece of topaz.

As he was still moving his arms, Dunn realized his sluggish actions in time and woke him up with a nudge.

Klein held the silver chain with his left hand and allowed the topaz to hang down naturally. Simultaneously, he moved his right arm, but with a much smaller range of motion.

When the topaz stabilized, he half closed his eyes, outlined the spherical light, and entered Cogitation. He then mumbled, "There's danger in the warehouse."

"There's danger in the warehouse."

†

After seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the hanging topaz slowly going in clockwise circles.

It turned faster and faster, and in the end, Klein felt like it was pulling his left hand.

"There's danger, great danger," Klein replied honestly.

Clockwise meant affirmation to the chanted statement, while counter-clockwise meant denial.

To other Beyonders, even a Mystery Pryer, using spirit dowsing could only determine if there was danger, but it was unable to obtain information regarding the level of danger.

However, Klein discovered that when he used spirit dowsing, the pendulum would spin at different speeds, revealing the degree of the answer.

Although it was not very accurate and extremely vague, it allowed one to have a rough assessment of the actual situation.

As expected of a Seer potion… Klein was rather happy with the outcome.

Just as he was about to put away the topaz pendulum, Leonard Mitchell, who had maintained his silence, suddenly spoke.

“Divine if there is danger around us also.”

Dunn nodded in agreement. “Yes, I am worried that the Secret Order will not give up and that it has placed Ray Bieber’s house under constant surveillance. They could have followed us here and could cause trouble at a critical moment.”

Klein took a deep breath and entered a calm, ethereal state once again.

When the silver chain turned stable once again, he recited in his heart, “There is danger surrounding us.”

†

“There is danger surrounding us.”

†

After repeating the statement, Klein opened his eyes and looked at the silver chain.

In his dark brown eyes, the topaz pendulum first moved counterclockwise with difficulty. Then, it suddenly paused and started moving clockwise.

“There is danger surrounding us.” Klein felt a tug on his heartstrings as he spoke carefully.

Furthermore, someone had tried to intercept his divination, but had lost to him in the invisible fight!

Just as he spoke, an orange-yellow fireball the size of a fist flew towards them.

It came crashing towards the middle of the group with its blazing speed.

Dunn Smith, who had already drawn his long-barreled revolver before Klein did his divination, immediately raised his hand, aimed, and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The fireball didn't seem to be affected by the gunshot but continued its original trajectory, as though it was forcing everyone to scatter from dodging.

Klein originally thought nothing of the troublemaker who was following them. After all, there were six Beyonders present. They were not even short of Sequence 8 and Sequence 7 experts. It was a lineup that was practically unstoppable in a small city like Tingen.

But when the fireball smashed down, he came to a sudden realization.

To them, the most dangerous enemy was not the tracker nor the troublemaker, it wasn't even Ray Bieber who was in the warehouse in an unknown state, but the Sealed Artifact 2-049!

Once they dispersed and the battle began, they wouldn't be able to wake each other in time. Then, they would turn into real-life puppets one after another!

As these chaotic thoughts bombarded him, Klein was pulled by Leonard aside to dodge the fireball.

Without the time to feel anguish for his clothing, he saw the

Nighthawks split off into two groups while dodging. It was done very orderly.

Poof!

The orange-yellow fireball landed on the ground but didn't stir one bit of dust. It disappeared as though nothing had happened.

An illusion? Just as this thought came to him, Klein saw Aiur Harson lift the black chest and threw it least ten meters away.

"Stay away from it! Watch it!" Aiur shouted.

Before he finished his shout, Leonard and Borgia had separately approached it. They stood at least seven meters from the chest to prevent anyone from approaching.

As for Dunn and Lorotta, they each held guns. They stood beside Aiur Harson who had drawn a thin silver sword. They took up a formation resembling a crescent as they rushed towards the origins of the fireball, while taking note of the peripheral regions.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein, who needed to do the arm exercises without his cane, immediately heaved a sigh of relief. He realized he had overlooked an important matter.

2-049 had a limited range of influence. As long as they were at a sufficient distance from it, they did not need to worry about the danger.

Klein rolled over and stood up. He stuffed his topaz pendulum into his pocket with one hand while he reached into his holster for his revolver with the other.

†

A location in Hong Kong.

Chapter 73 - First Battle

Under the illumination of the afternoon sun, Klein in his dust-coated clothes quickly twisted his revolver’s barrel to remove his self-imposed safety. He went into a shooting stance, allowing the light to reflect from the brass body of the revolver.

He held the revolver with one hand, and moved his other arm, cautiously paying attention to anything that could happen around him.

At the same time, he was a little worried for Captain Dunn and Mr. Aiur Harson. After all, both were Nightmare Beyonders who specialized in influencing the enemy from the shadows. He did not know if they were adept at direct combat.

Just as Klein was having these considerations, Aiur Harson slowed down, his expression becoming serene and peaceful.

He opened his mouth and recited a peaceful poem, one that seemed to place a person into the night.

“When once the sun sinks in the west,

“And dewdrops pearl the evening’s breast;

“Almost as pale as moonbeams are,

“Or its companionable star,

“The evening primrose opens anew

"Its delicate blossoms to the dew;

"And, hermit-like, shunning the light[1]"

†

The recital reverberated around them. Klein nearly lost his tense feelings and completely relaxed.

He was lucky that he had experienced something similar before and was not facing Aiur Harson. Thus, he quickly collected himself and entered a half-cogitative state to combat the influence of the poem.

Phew… He let out a sigh of relief. He no longer had any doubts about Dunn's and Aiur's direct combat abilities.

As he had only advanced recently and still did not have a deep understanding of Sequence potions, Klein had forgotten that the Sequence 7 Nightmare was the advancement of Sequence 8 Midnight Poet. They could keep whatever abilities they had before and, in fact, enjoy a small increase in their abilities.

The impression Klein had of Midnight Poets all came from Leonard Mitchell. He knew that this "job" inherited the unique traits of a Sleepless. They were good at combat, shooting, climbing, and sensing. They were also adept in influencing the living creatures around them through the use of various poems. In simpler terms, they were violent poets.

While Aiur was reciting his poem, the large wooden crates stacked up around them seemed to suddenly ripple like water. A man wearing a black tuxedo and halved top hat appeared.

But this man's face was painted in three pastel colors—red, yellow, and white. The sides of his lips were arched high like a clown, forming a ridiculous contrast with his formal wear that was suitable for joining an evening banquet.

Thud! Thud! Thud! The black-haired Lorotta who had been introduced as a sharpshooter charged forward quickly. She had a gun in one hand and had clenched the other into a fist. She made it within inches of the suited clown in a few steps.

The suited clown seemed to be affected by Aiur Harson's poem. His body was swaying, and he had a peaceful expression in his eyes. He did not have any desire to retaliate.

Lorotta tilted her body with a boxing maneuver as she pulled back her fist, then punched toward the suited clown's face.

Bang!

The air crackled as the suited clown shattered suddenly like a mirror, pieces quickly evaporating and vanishing into thin air.

At this moment, the suited clown quickly appeared once again in the shadows of the wooden crates a few steps away. The suited clown's figure outline quickly appeared again.

The person under the influence of the poem was only an illusion! It was a performance!

The suited clown grinned again. It had a comical look as he pressed down on his halved top hat with one hand and pointed a finger gun with the other.

Bang!

The sound of a shot rang from the finger gun. Lorotta fell to the left and rolled on the floor, dodging the attack.

But nothing had happened, except for the fake gunshot.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Dunn and Aiur each lifted their guns and fired steadily. The suited clown dodged adeptly, sometimes to the right and left, sometimes rolling on the ground. It was as if he was an acrobat act in a circus.

Suddenly, Lorotta surprisingly charged forward again. Despite being called a sharpshooter, she was still using her fists.

Bam!

The suited clown could not dodge the attack in time and could only lift his left arm to block the fist.

Seeing the clown stop, Dunn and Aiur did not hesitate to each take aim and pulled the trigger.

At this moment, the arm that the suited clown used to block Lorotta's fist ignited with an orange-yellow flame.

In an instant, the flame enveloped the suited clown and spread towards Lorotta.

Bang! Bang! Dunn and Aiur fired their revolvers, hitting the ball of flame.

The flames burned rapidly and soon, all that was left were black ashes floating in the sky. But the suited clown once again appeared behind the stack of wooden crates close by.

He lifted his right hand and pointed a finger gun once again.

Bang!

Amid the illusory gunshot, Lorotta suddenly stopped in her tracks. She did not charge forward. Mud was splattering in front of her as a bullet appeared.

The suited clown was no longer delivering an illusion with this strike!

It was hard to discern real from fake, reality from illusion.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The suited clown shot at Dunn and Aiur repeatedly while hiding away and appearing at random times.

Upon seeing this, Lorotta squinted and lifted the dull gold revolver in her left hand.

Bang!

The suited clown suddenly squatted down, avoiding the fatal shot. His halved top hat was sent flying backward, falling to the ground. The bullet had left a visible scorch mark on the hat.

After rolling a few times on the floor, the suited clown scaled the stacks of wooden crates with the agility of a monkey. He shot air bullets out of his finger gun from the high ground.

Aiur Hanson took a few steps back and lowered his gun. He began his recital once again.

“Wastes its fair bloom upon the night,

“Who, blindfold to its fond caresses,

“Knows not the beauty it possesses.”

†

The suited clown jumped repeatedly between the crates. He suddenly raised his hand to scratch his ears and looked at Aiur with a comical smile.

Could he have stuffed his ears? The Sequence potion that the Secret Order possesses sure is weird… Klein observed the fight from far away as he made silent guesses.

Just as his thoughts flashed through him, he suddenly saw a figure appear at the top of a warehouse beside him. Furthermore, it was running straight inside where Ray Bieber was hiding.

That figure was dressed in a grayish-white uniform, one which workers at the docks wore. His face also appeared to be painted red, yellow, and white.

The suited clown is responsible for distracting Captain and the rest while the other person retrieved the diary? Klein instinctively raised his right hand and shot at the figure on the roof.

He had just taken aim when the figure suddenly squatted, switching from running to rolling on the ground.

Bang!

Klein did not stop pulling the trigger. He saw the figure suddenly pause, blood blooming in a spurt.

The figure looked at him in shock. While bearing the pain, he continued charging into the warehouse.

That felt like a lucky shot… Klein twitched his lips and pulled the trigger once again. This time, the bullet hit the wooden roof beside the figure.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Leonard and Borgia also shot but did not hit the figure.

Klein wanted to criticize how terrible their shooting skills were as compared to his when he suddenly stopped pulling the trigger.

That's right! Why must we stop him?

Didn't I divine that there is grave danger in the warehouse just now? Wouldn't it be great if we let that guy be the vanguard and step on the land mine for us?

Leonard and that Mr. Borgia must have had the same idea…

With this thought, Klein lifted the barrel of his revolver and shot at the sky.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

As the gunshots rang, the figure managed to reach the innermost region of the warehouse unobstructed.

He lunged downwards, slamming into the roof as he fell down with the collapsing roof.

Immediately following the commotion, the black-haired Lorotta’s eyes suddenly turned black. Her left hand began making a strange pulling action.

The suited clown’s jumping actions suddenly came to a pause as his ankle seemed to be grasped tightly by an invisible hand.

Dunn did not shoot immediately and instead pointed his revolver downward.

He opened his mouth and by simply using his spirituality to resonate the air around him, he produced a strange, faint and ethereal voice without the use of his throat.

“Thus it blooms on while night is by;

“When day looks out with open eye,

“Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun,

“It faints and withers and is gone.”

†

The suited clown suddenly became limp, as if he had lost the desire to live.

Aiur Harson lifted his handgun and took aim, his finger pulling the trigger immediately.

In that split second, there was an abnormal and tragic wail that came from the warehouse.

“Ah!”

The cry contained immense fear as though he had encountered an unimaginably terrifying matter.

The hair on Klein’s body stood on end. The tragic cries came to a sudden stop as silence was restored in the deepest parts of the warehouse. It was a skin-crawling silence.

Bang!

Affected by the cry, Aiur only managed to shoot the suited clown in the belly.

Haaa… Haaa… Haaa! The silence was once again broken from the deepest depths of the warehouse. What should have been soft panting sounded. It reached a crescendo that tightened everyone’s nerves.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!

Inside the black chest, 2-049 had reached a frenzied state.

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†

Adapted from John Clare’s Evening Primrose.

Chapter 74 - Ray Bieber

❖ ❖ ❖

Haa! Haa! Haa!

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The loud panting and the intense knocking alternated first before they resounded together. It made Klein and company extremely nervous, as though they were hearing some evil murmur.

Taking advantage of the moment Aiur, Dunn and Lorotta had their attention redirected, the suited clown suddenly pulled out a long piece of paper from his pocket.

Pa! He threw it with his right hand as the slip of paper ignited into a black fiery whip. Then, he lashed it towards the side of his ankle.

A fleeting but tragic scream sounded as the suited clown escaped the invisible shackles and did a backflip.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Dunn, Aiur, and Lorotta shot but their bullets only ended up hitting the wooden crates.

The suited clown did not stay any longer as he pressed down on his wound with his right hand while escaping in a direction opposite the warehouse.

He was so fast that in the blink of an eye, all that was left was a hint of his back.

And before he vanished, his right hand which pressed down on his abdomen moved towards his left arm. The wound on his stomach had already vanished, looking completely fine.

The location on his left arm which he touched with his right hand suddenly became badly mangled, and a silver bullet appeared in the torn flesh.

Dunn and the rest didn't chase after him because the panting from the innermost warehouse was so loud that it was making them nervous and insecure.

Bang!

The door of the innermost warehouse suddenly exploded and flew in all directions.

Then, something wrapped with a torn cloth flew out and landed not far from Klein.

When Klein cast his gaze over, he realized that it was an arm. Its bloody flesh had been chewed on and its white bones were cracked in an irregular fashion as they jutted out

Pa! Pa! Pa!

One item after another flew out. First it was a spray of blood, followed by a dilated eye and an ear which had been ripped out brutally. Finally, half a beating heart and intestines filled with yellowish-brown objects came out.

If Klein had not seen the more gruesome giant cadaver at Ray Bieber's place, he would have probably vomited there and then.

His nerves were on the brink of a breakdown. After a great deal of effort to hold back his urge to shoot into the pitch-black entrance, he ejected the empty shells from his revolver and reloaded with new demon hunting bullets.

Bang!

Dunn drew close as he stably shot into the warehouse.

However, his bullet was like a shot into the sea. There was no audible response.

Haa! Haa! Haa!

The loud panting sped up as grayish-white colors filled the opened door.

With another two loud shots, Aiur Harson's and Borgia's bullets tore through the whiteness, but failed to prevent the "color" from spilling outwards. It did not leave any wounds or cause liquid to seep out.

Klein held his breath and kept himself from shooting blindly. He watched as the whiteness slowly revealed a complete outline.

It was a humanoid creature more than two meters tall. Its limb joints were all unnaturally twisted. It was as though they had been snapped by someone forcefully.

White bones poked out from under its skin as the entire grayish-white surface was filled with gullies, like a human brain that had been stripped from its shell.

The monster had grayish-white, rotting, sticky liquid flowing all over it. Its head looked relatively normal, with deep wrinkles and pale skin.

As it opened and closed its mouth, Klein could see a porcelain false tooth that looked close to falling out, a few strands of bloody saliva, and bone and flesh that had been minced.

Was… Ray Bieber still even f**king human? Klein drew a silent gasp as he felt his heart pound rapidly.

Bang!

Leonard's demon hunting bullet hit Ray Bieber's forehead and tore right through it, leaving behind a deep hole.

Grayish-white liquid flowed out and dripped onto the ground. The liquid wriggled and turned into fat cream-colored maggots.

But the monster appeared completely unaffected. It was neither fast nor slow when it pounced at Borgia who was closest to it. Its actual target appeared to be the black chest that contained Sealed Artifact 2-049.

"Loss of control of Beyonder powers…" Dunn shouted in a deep voice. "Lorotta, it looks like a dead soul, so quickly look for its weakness!"

"Alright." Lorotta did not speak further as she raised her hands to press down on her eyes.

Her pupils turned gray then colorless, as though she had entered the world of spirits and a kingdom of dead souls. She looked down at the enemy from a higher vantage point as she searched for a "node."

Klein saw that a normal gunshot was ineffective, so he did not bother wasting more of his bullets. He lifted his hand to tap at his glabella to activate his Spirit Vision. He planned on helping Gravedigger Lorotta.

From his vision, Monster Bieber only had one kind of spiritual glow left. It was purely grayish-white, a whiteness filled with craziness.

Apart from that, Klein saw nothing else.

At that moment, Aiur Harson and Leonard Mitchell sang simultaneously.

"Oh, the threat of horror, the hope of crimson cries!

"One thing at least is certain—that this Life flies;

"One thing is certain, and the rest is Lies;

"The Flower that once has bloomed forever dies…"

†

The power that allowed one to enter a peaceful slumber emanated. The twisted grayish-white monster gradually slowed down as though it could not fight against the charm of the poem.

Then, it opened its mouth and let out a shrill cry that ordinary people were deaf to.

"Ah!"

†

Bang! Klein felt a sharp pain in his head as he automatically exited his Spirit Vision state.

He felt warm liquid flowing out of his nose, and when he subconsciously wiped it with his hand, he discovered the back of his hand covered in blood.

Aiur and Leonard fell back to the ground at the same time. They had blood stains lining the corners of their lips, noses, and eyes.

Borgia, Dunn, and Lorotta each took a step or two back, the color in their face draining.

That monster only screamed once, but it appeared to exceed what the six Beyonders could withstand. They instantly turned extremely weak.

Bam!

It closed in on Borgia and suddenly swung its twisted joint.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Borgia and Dunn shot twice each, but they didn't cause any damage to

Monster Bieber.

Bang! A blow sent Borgia flying out as his long-barreled revolver fell to the ground.

He tried to stand up a few times, but failed to do so.

The corner of Monster Bieber's mouth had stringy liquid oozing out as it leaped towards the black chest.

Bang!

At that crucial moment, Aiur Harson shot a bullet at the box to knock it some distance away, preventing Monster Bieber from grabbing it. Its momentum brought it forward by more than ten meters.

The black chest cracked and as the thumping within turned more intense it grew more obvious.

"Found it!" The black-haired Lorotta finally spoke. "I need you to control it for at least three seconds."

"Alright." Dunn didn't delay any further. He extended his hand to tap his glabella and closed his eyes.

He seemed to fall asleep as shapeless waves slowly rippled out one after another.

In that instant, Monster Bieber paused and the craziness in its eyes quickly receded. Its thin transparent eyelids began to close uncontrollably as well.

Dunn's body started quivering, and something popped up under his clothing and wriggled on the spot. It was as though he hid slippery scaleless snakes within.

Lorotta rushed over and with a roll, arrived under Monster Bieber.

She supported herself with one hand while raising a clenched fist, bombarding Monster Bieber's crotch like artillery.

Poof!

She ignored the corrosive pain but supported herself against the ground and directed more strength once again. She went higher a little as her fist drilled deeper in.

Rip! Lorotta pulled out her forearm as she dragged out an intestine filled with brownish-yellow blood stains.

In the intestine, there was an ancient notebook.

"Ah!"

Monster Bieber let out a blood-curdling scream, and his body suddenly lit up as though it was melting.

"Get down!"

Just as Aiur Harson's hurried shout ended, Klein saw Monster Bieber suddenly swell up.

Boom!

Amid a loud explosion, the distant Klein was tossed into the air by the shockwave and landed heavily.

He struggled to stand against a swirling headache, and he saw Monster Bieber turn into a pile of disgusting, rotting flesh. Then he saw Dunn and Lorotta, who were a dozen meters away, looking like they had been knocked out.

Aiur Harson, Borgia, and Leonard Mitchell were on the ground too. Some groaning in pain, some struggling to stand up but failing.

Klein was just about to relax when he suddenly saw a familiar object about two or three meters away from him.

The black chest had stopped rolling, and the cracked surface was facing the sky.

A skinny brown arm extended out.

Sealed Artifact… 2-049… F**k! Klein's heart tensed up as he immediately leaped in the opposite direction in a bid to escape 2-049's effective range.

The blast from before had thrown the black chest near him!

And at that moment, Klein's head suddenly buzzed as his thoughts turned sluggish.

Chapter 75 - Saving Himself

◆

Oh no! I've been controlled by the puppet!

Captain and company are either unconscious… or have yet to recover. They can't even get up… They will not be able to… wake me up in time…

No… I have to… save myself!

Everything before Klein's eyes was happening in slow motion. All his joints and his brain seemed to have been coated with an ever-thickening layer of glue.

He had no interest in becoming a human-version puppet, so he seized the opportunity of not being fully controlled by trying his best to seek a way to save himself.

I definitely can't… hit myself… There must be an… external force…

External force… I'll give it a try… There's no time for hesitation… Without the luxury of time to think through things, Klein came to an idea in less than three seconds. He moved his "rusty" knee joint and took a counterclockwise step.

At the same time, he did not try to escape the invisible rope that "hung" around his throat. All he did was recite inwardly.

The… Immortal Lord of… Heaven and Earth… for Blessings…

He wanted to use the mysterious world above the gray fog to awaken him and escape Sealed Artifact 2-049's assimilation!

Creak! Creak! Creak! Klein's knees and ankles let out an involved ear-piercing sound. With a slow contorted step, he took another step counterclockwise.

From The Sky Lord… of Heaven and Earth… for Blessings…

Klein's thoughts turned increasingly sluggish as he felt as though he was a computer that had all sorts of bloatware and every antivirus software installed. He lifted his left foot in a jerky manner as he took another step in the required spot.

The… Exalted Thearch…

Klein's thought processes turned more and more rigid and sluggish. He took the final step purely out of instinct.

At that point, he knew he was almost fully under the puppet's control. Even if Aiur Harson could get up in time to save him, he would probably be unable to be awakened.

But his strong desire to live made him chant the final line of the incantation.

The… Celestial… Worthy…

Just as he finished his incantation, the extremely chaotic and hysterical shouts and murmurs sounded. They quickly took over every corner of Klein's sluggish thoughts, shattering them in the process and reducing them to thoughts he had no control over.

Klein's brain became a boiling pot of potpourri as his stiff body turned light while his spirituality lifted.

Endless grayish-white fog and the dark red stars of varying distances appeared once again before his eyes. It was vast, mysterious, vague, and blurry.

Klein's confused mind quickly settled down as he finally regained his ability to think, only to see the magnificent palace.

"Phew… Thankfully, it worked." he whispered with a lingering fear.

According to his previous observations, he knew that once someone fell under the control of Sealed Artifact 2-049, it was equivalent to death. Normally, there was no medicine that could save the victim.

Luckily, his luck enhancement ritual and the mysterious world above the gray fog was not considered normal at all!

After pacing a few times, Klein began considering the situation he was in.

I can't just stay here the entire time, right?

By the time Captain and company wakes up and gathers over, I won't be able to explain the situation…

As things are right now, I only have the shell of my body, nothing more zombielike than a zombie…

But if I were to take the risk and return, there's no way to guarantee my safety… What if I get controlled by 2-049 again?

†

While suffering from his dilemma, Klein suddenly smacked himself in the forehead and could not help but chuckle softly.

"It looks like I haven't gotten used to my status as a Seer!"

Before he finished his sentence, he appeared at the seat of honor in front of the long bronze table, sitting on the high-back chair with the strange symbol.

Klein extended his hand as a fountain pen appeared out of thin air.

He scribbled a sentence on an illusory piece of paper.

“Returning to the real world is very safe.”

Immediately following that, Klein pulled out a projection of a spirit pendulum from his packet. After a few Gatherings, he discovered that the items he brought on him were projected above the gray fog, but they were relatively illusory.

Klein held the silver chain with his left hand as he allowed the topaz to nearly touch the paper.

He calmed his breathing and half closed his eyes. He calmly repeated the words on the piece of paper.

“Returning to the real world is very safe.”

†

“Returning to the real world is very safe.”

†

After repeating it seven times, Klein completed the divination with spirit dowsing.

He opened his eyes and saw the topaz slowly oscillating, guiding the silver chain in a clockwise spin.

Clockwise is an affirmation while counterclockwise is negative… Returning to the real world is very safe… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he habitually stored the chain away. Then, he released his spirituality and wrapped his body as he simulated a plummeting state.

The hazy fog and deep red stars turned ethereal and charged upward. Klein soon saw himself still in a daze in his original position. He saw the brown puppet, halfway out of the chest. He also noticed that the Sealed

Artifact had apparently stopped all motion.

His physical senses reached to his brain and just as he was about to try to move his arm to determine his condition, he suddenly heard a voice concealed within the wind.

“Do you wish to be awakened? You can be saved as long as you promise me one thing.

“This one thing is to help me take that Antigonus family notebook.

“Nod if you agree. I know you are still capable of completing that action.”

Who is it? Yes… 2-049 doesn’t seem like it’s attempting to control me… That’s right. It will not repeatedly influence the same person. There will be a break… Klein was shocked, but he did not show it on his face.

At that moment, the voice added quickly, “You can obtain additional rewards if you complete this matter. I know you are a Seer. I also know that the Church of Evernight does not have Sequence 8 that succeeds Sequence 9. But our Secret Order can give it to you.

“Heh, to be honest, I was a Seer before. If not, I wouldn’t have dared return. To show you my sincerity, I can now tell you that the corresponding Sequence 8 of Seer is Clown.”

Clown? Secret Order… Klein nearly did not maintain his “puppet” state.

He never made the connection between Seer and Clown.

Were they about to become the head honchos of a circus?

“Alright, make your choice. Believe me, you no longer have much time left to waste.” The voice sounded with the wind again. The distant Dunn and Lorotta were still unconscious. Borgia seemed heavily injured as he moaned without moving. Aiur Harson and Leonard Mitchell were in relatively good shape as they attempted to sit up.

Why me? The Secret Order… Is it that suited clown from before? After he escaped, he secretly returned in a bid to fish in troubled waters… Upon hearing the voice, all sorts of doubts instantly flashed through Klein's mind.

Since the person said that he was a Seer, Klein attempted using the thought processes of a Seer to analyze the situation.

He dared return because he divined 'hope.' He believed that Monster Bieber would be destroyed and that we would suffer a heavy setback.

He did not take the notebook by himself or deal with us directly because he likely divined that it would contain immense risk. Therefore, he is suspecting Captain and Madam Lorotta are feigning their unconsciousness, or that this is a trap laid out for him.

He did not make further divinations to determine my present state partially because firstly, he might not have the time. If he waited any longer, Mr. Aiur Harson and company would have regained some of their combat strength. Secondly, he belittles me and thinks it unnecessary.

He understands a Seer very well and is confident that I'm unable to escape the puppet's control… He is using me as cannon fodder to probe for any traps…

From another angle, this also means that the luck enhancement ritual does not cause any abnormal appearances…

With his brain no longer sluggish, Klein felt that his line of reasoning was clear. He was quite confident of the thoughts and goals of the suited clown.

As for the clown's promise, he believed not one bit of it. Cannon fodder did not have any human rights!

As the thoughts flashed through his head, Klein controlled his neck and difficulty nodded.

As he did this action, he confirmed that he had escaped the control of Sealed Artifact 2-049.

Just after he nodded, a transparent “curtain” stirred two to three meters to his side. It revealed the suited clown who had his face painted with a clown’s pastel colors. It was none other than the Secret Order member who had fled previously.

At that moment, as Klein had previously turned around in an attempt to leap out of 2-049’s effective range, his back was facing the black chest and the puppet. The suited clown was in front of him to his side. First, it was to stay away from the Sealed Artifact and second, to avoid his revolver’s barrel. It was clear that he was very careful.

The suited clown pulled out a long paper slip from his pocket and shook it vigorously until it turned straight like a wooden pole.

He held the wooden pole and at a distance of two to three meters, he gave Klein’s shoulder a prod in an attempt to wake him.

This fellow knows 2-049 very well. He knows that if the scent of an Antigonus family descendant is present, the puppet would go ballistic and control two at a time… He also knows that throwing a rock doesn’t seem effective. At the very least, I’ve seen Captain and company attempt similar means… Although Klein did not know why 2-049 had stopped assimilating him again, he did not dare stay within five meters of it any longer. Therefore, he waited as he held his breath.

Just as the wooden pole was about to touch his shoulder, Klein suddenly raised his left hand and grabbed the edge of the pole and yanked it backwards.

The suited clown was caught by surprise as his body was pulled forward. He staggered a few steps forward as the gap between him and Klein contracted once again. He was now less than two meters away.

At the same time, the prepared Klein squeezed his right finger on the revolver’s trigger.

Bang! Bang!

He shot twice but did not aim at the suited clown. Instead, he had aimed behind him, shooting to the side of Sealed Artifact 2-049!

Before the gunshot rang, the suited clown had taken the initiative to roll from his staggering state. He had instinctively backed off.

Klein released his hand which had grabbed the wooden pole as he took several steps away rapidly and rushed out the danger zone.

Just as the suited clown rolled twice and was about to jump backwards, his head went abuzz as his thoughts rapidly turned sluggish.

No good!

He forced me to… dodge in the direction of the Antigonus puppet!

I’m within… five meters…

How could he… not be… controlled by… the Antigonus… puppet…

†

The suited clown stopped from his rolling as he attempted to crawl out with his seemingly rusty joints.

At that moment, Klein had already turned around. He held his revolver with both hands as he aimed at the slowly-moving target.

To him, that was equivalent to shooting a fixed target.

Having seen the suited clown’s battle with Dunn, Aiur, and Lorotta, Klein knew that he was agile and good at rolling. Therefore, even when they were just a meter or two apart, he had carefully given up on shooting directly. Instead, he forced the clown to dodge to the “kill zone” he imagined—where Sealed Artifact 2-049 was!

If the puppet had been ineffective, the suited clown would have determined that he had fallen into a trap. He would then escape by leaping backwards and not pose any significant threat.

Bang!

Reflected into the indescribable eyes of the suited clown, the black-suited Klein pulled the trigger calmly.

Chapter 76 - Dealing With The Aftermath

◆ ◆ ◆

Bang!

The silver bullet traversed the short distance of a few meters and accurately bore into the suited clown’s neck. Large amounts of blood spewed out, dyeing his skin and bow tie red.

The suited clown was unable to let out a cry as his throat seemed to produce sounds of him gasping for breath. He wished to raise his arm to divert the fatal wound, but his joints appeared to be filled with glue. His motions were slow and jerky.

Bang!

Having entered a half-Cogitation state, Klein was not stunned by the appearance of blood. He pulled the trigger once again calmly, as though it was his usual daily practice.

A grisly hole appeared on the suited clown’s forehead as crimson red spewed out. The luster in his eyes dimmed as the intricate revolver’s might was far higher than what Klein had imagined to be.

As his knees buckled and his arms hung down, the suited clown gradually fell to the ground. His eyes were frozen with a dazed look.

His body convulsed a few times before it slowly relaxed and stopped moving.

Having delivered a headshot, Klein turned around in a cool manner. He spun his revolver and allowed the empty shells to fall down.

Then, dressed in his black formal suit and halved top hat, he walked towards Aiur Harson. He pulled out the final silver demon hunting bullet in his pocket and inserted it into the revolver's chamber.

The reason why he did not turn back to look at the suited clown's tragic fate was solely because of his discomfort with his first kill. However, it was necessary. He did not know what would happen if the suited clown was under the full control of the puppet.

Furthermore, he did not dare risk entering Sealed Artifact 2-049's effective range. After all, no one knew if something odd would happen that prevented his self-rescuing luck enhancement ritual to fail.

As for the items on the suited clown, Klein only cared if there was the so-called Clown potion formula or the relevant clues. However, this was not something he was in a hurry to carry out. In a while, he could do it together with Dunn, Aiur, and company. If the Nighthawks had it, it also practically meant that he had it. There was no way that they would be unwilling to share the potion formula of Sequence 8. At most, he would be required to accumulate his contributions over time. After all, he had only become a Seer recently; it would still be a long time until he fully digested it.

As his thoughts churned, Klein quickly walked next to Aiur Harson. The gentleman in his gray trench coat struggled to sit up but failed at every try. He was covered in dust and mud from the fall.

"Mr. Harson, what do you need me to do?" he asked, squatting down. He pointed the revolver in his hand at the ground in case of a misfire.

Aiur gasped for air and sighed.

"The monster was too strong; if not for its weakness…"

Then, he pointed at a sky-blue metal bottle beside him and said in a self-deprecating laugh, "I was trying to consume some medicine, but my hand shook…”

The sky-blue bottle was about the size of Klein’s finger. It was not longer than five centimeters long and a cap that hid spiral patterns had fallen to the side. The liquid had completely spilled.

Klein reached out to pick up the bottle. As he looked at it with narrowed eyes, he answered helplessly, “Mr. Harson, there are only a few drops left in the bottle.”

“Go to… Borgia and search his body. In his inner pockets.” Aiur said as he gasped for breath.

“Alright.” Klein stood up and casually asked, “Is this restorative medicine?”

An item from mysticism?

“No, it only has certain restorative effects. The main goal is to stimulate our minds and squeeze out the potential… of our bodies. It allows to maintain a decent state for a short period of time until we return, where we can receive treatment.” Aiur attempted to sit up only to fail again. “It’s name is the Goddess’s Gaze… Remember to let Borgia drink half a bottle.”

Klein did not delay any further as he turned around. He briskly arrived at Borgia who was groaning in pain. He found the uniform sky-blue metal bottle from the Nighthawk’s pocket.

After removing the cap, he carefully held the bottle to Borgia’s mouth.

Having sensed it, Borgia tried hard to open his lips.

The bottle was held up as dark red liquid flowed in Borgia’s mouth.

Klein estimated the quantity and stopped just in time. He then screwed the cap back on.

The medicine was rather effective. It only took Borgia a few seconds after drinking to regain the spirit in his eyes. Furthermore, he whispered, “Thank you.”

With that said, he pressed down on the ground as he slowly sat up. He first dealt with his wounds before walking to the unconscious Lorotta and Dunn. Then, he retrieved the Goddess’s Gaze from the latter’s inner pocket.

Klein returned to Aiur’s side and fed him the remaining half bottle.

After Aiur panted a few times, his actions suddenly became nimbler. He stood up as though he had never been injured.

“I’ll help Borgia. Help that partner of yours.” The gentleman with the charm of a middle-aged man pointed at Leonard Mitchell.

Klein had no objections to it. He turned around and jogged to the “poet,” Leonard.

“There’s no need. I can drink it by myself.” Leonard, with his disheveled hair, smiled as he raised the sky-blue bottle.

Upon seeing Leonard agilely get up by pushing up with one hand, Klein, who wanted to lampoon, was suddenly stunned.

Leonard’s injuries are lighter than I expected…

He had the ability to consume the medicine from the very beginning!

That also means that he could see me walk counterclockwise as I did the luck enhancement ritual!

No, that’s still alright. I had chanted inwardly and the luck enhancement ritual does not appear odd in any way, or the suited clown would not have fallen for it…

But even so, Leonard, who had long recovered but chose to watch by the sidelines, had seen quite a lot. Things like me not being affected by 2-049 and my sneak attack on the suited clown…

Just as Klein's eyes narrowed slightly, Leonard, who was walking in his direction, stopped beside him and chuckled softly.

"I actually wanted to save you but discovered that you didn't need it.

"Don't mind it. There are many special people in this world that can always do things others can't, such as you…"

"…and me." Leonard smiled as he went past Klein and walked to the awakening Dunn and Lorotta.

Narcissist… Klein thought silently as he felt a lot more relaxed.

From the looks of it, Leonard Mitchell hid quite a bit of secrets… As he regrouped with the rest while deep in thought, he saw Captain Dunn wear a glove and pick up the Antigonus family notebook that was covered in yellowish-brown blood stains.

The notebook's cover was completely made of thick black paper. It suffused an aura from an ancient and distant time without any signs of softening or rotting. It was nearly identical to the one he saw in his dream. He even suspected that flipping it open would only make him see the Fool wearing splendid headgear.

However, he soon realized that he was overthinking things since Dunn had flipped open the notebook to make a final confirmation.

Klein was unable to discern the words on it due to his poor angle, but he was certain that there was no drawing of the Fool with his gorgeous clothes and splendid headdress.

"Ahem. There's nothing wrong with it." Dunn closed the notebook and held it securely. Then, he looked at Aiur and company. "Let's store this notebook and Sealed Artifact 2-049 behind Tingen's Chanis Gate. We can wait until all of you are recovered or Backlund sends someone over."

Upon hearing that, Klein felt a little disappointed once again, but also felt happy. He wished to see the Antigonus family's notebook once more and figure out the reason for the death of the original Klein, Welch, and Naya. However, he also felt that the ancient item was filled with misfortune. It often brought catastrophe, so he did not dare touch it.

Handing it to the Church's headquarters and sealing it is considered the best choice… He secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

"Alright." Aiur Harson, Borgia, and Lorotta nodded in unison. They then turned around and arrived beside Sealed Artifact 2-049.

They woke each other up and stuffed the puppet which had resumed moving into the black chest with an opening as they monitored it strictly.

"Everything is back to normal." Aiur sounded a little more relaxed.

Inside the dimly lit black chest, the puppet wrapped in oil-stained cloth flipped over with its body creaking as it aligned its clown-painted face with the light source.

On the creepy face, under the black pupil-less eyes, two hardly noticeable crimson cracks appeared.

Meanwhile, Dunn, Leonard, and Klein, who had mustered his courage, began searching the suited clown's corpse. They found paper flowers, handkerchiefs, poker cards, glass pieces, and all sorts of strange items.

However, apart from that, he did not seem to carry anything of worth or potential clues.

Hmm, other than the wallet with seventy to eighty pounds and ten plus soli… Klein secretly sighed.

With money in mind, he immediately looked down and inspected himself. His face nearly fell literally.

His formal suit that cost several pounds had torn in five to six spots which required mending due to his rolling on the ground. Furthermore, it was covered in dust and dirt stains.

Dunn shot him a glance as the corner of his lips curved up.

“Losses during a mission can be reimbursed.”

Reimbursed… Upon hearing the term “invented” by Emperor Roselle, Klein instantly felt wonderful.

Yeah. This suit just needs some proper cleaning and mending before it can be worn again. It will still be presentable…

When the reimbursement comes, I can buy another set and I can take turns wearing them!

Hmm, I am not the kind of person that uses a reimbursement for something other than what it was intended for…

However, I should consider getting a set of clothes for combat in the future, such as a black trench coat like Captain… Clothes with slightly poorer material would be much cheaper than a tuxedo… Tsk, has the reason why the bastard, Leonard, doesn’t like wearing formal suits been due to him having such considerations…

“Let Frye take care of the dead body. We’ll see if he can find what the man originally looked like or find any relevant clues.” Dunn touched the suited clown’s face paint with his gloves.

Then, they searched the innermost warehouse and saw that there were a splotches of bloody flesh that looked like they had been smashed by boulders. They also saw one white bone after another that had been strewn everywhere.

“Ray Bieber was absorbing the power in the notebook via an ancient ritual, just like how we would consume a higher-level Sequence potion. A ritual like that is full of danger. It must be performed in an environment isolated from all disturbances, and the ritual would have required him to enter a deep sleep for a certain amount of time. That was probably why he had yet to leave Tingen.” Dunn guessed at the possibilities after inspecting the warehouse.

Upon hearing such a description, Lorotta laughed. Her black hair contrasted sharply with her pale face.

“Such a pity, we awakened him ahead of time. His anger at being woken up truly left a deep impression on us.”

“This is a kind of losing control,” Dunn looked towards Klein and told him, as both an explanation and a lecture.

“Why didn’t he just leave Tingen and try to absorb it elsewhere?” asked a perplexed Klein.

Aiur laughed and pointed to his head.

“People influenced by ancient or sinister powers often are lacking in this department.”

At that moment, Dunn inhaled and said while hiding his pain, “Leonard, you are still in good condition. Stay here and do not allow ordinary people to come close… The rest of us will immediately search for items among Ray Bieber’s remains. We will return with them and the Sealed Artifact, as well as the Antigonus family’s notebook. We will then get Frye, Royale, and the police to come here.”

Chapter 77 - Remnant Items

◆

“Alright,” answered Leonard with a relaxed expression when he heard Dunn’s suggestion.

Following that, everyone walked out of the warehouse and came close to where Monster Bieber had “self-destructed.” With him at the origin, they began searching outwards radially.

“Captain, what are we looking for?” Klein looked at the rotting flesh and blood that was strewn everywhere. He held back his urge to retch as he looked at Dunn Smith beside him ponderingly.

Dunn did not look up. Instead, he used his deep gray eyes to sweep the ground.

“Awakening ahead of time, losing control, and becoming a monster. This means that Ray Bieber did not fully absorb the Beyonder powers provided by the notebook. It also means that a part of his body is considered extraordinary, making it prime material.”

“If you ever encounter something similar, make sure not to miss out on doing a search. It might be a relatively important item.”

So that’s the case… Klein nodded slightly in enlightenment.

In the blink of an eye, he thought of another matter.

If the part where Monster Bieber had concentrated the Beyonder powers were some indescribable part, wouldn’t that be awkward… Wouldn’t it be extremely disgusting to concoct it into a potion…

Just as Klein’s mind wandered, Borgia with his sharp eagle-like eyes suddenly shouted.

“Found it. Ahem.”

Dunn and company immediately turned and closed in. Driven by his curiosity, Klein walked over to Borgia with a quickened pace.

Soon, he saw the item before Borgia. It was a grayish-white item about the size of a fist. Its surface was filled with gullies and it looked soft but ductile. It looked like a brain that had been extracted out of a living being.

Although Klein was unable to make out the extraordinariness of the blob of grayish-white, he was certain that Borgia had not made a mistake since it had remained intact despite the violent explosion it had undergone.

Dunn carefully observed it and squatted down. As he extended and bent his right arm, he used his black-gloved left hand to carefully grab the grayish-white item.

The moment it was touched, the blob of grayish-white immediately spread out into an extremely sticky liquid.

At that moment, Aiur Harson took out a tin-colored square case, removed the cigarettes from them and placed them into his pocket.

Then, he handed the square case to Dunn and smiled.

“I know, you only like pipes.”

Dunn chuckled and took the square case. Then, he “poured” the grayish-white sticky liquid into the case for temporary storage.

After storing it away, everyone did a cursory sweep of the area.

After confirming that they had not missed out anything, they left. When they came out, they saw the horses digging their hooves into the ground, clearly spooked and nervous. They had nearly escaped their reins.

"I'll drive." Borgia covered his mouth with his hand and coughed softly.

"I know you are good at placating animals," said Aiur with a smiling nod.

After boarding the carriage, Dunn, Lorotta, Aiur Harson, and Klein, who continued their "arm exercises," temporarily had nothing to say as they fell into silence.

When the trotting of the horses sounded while the carriage wheeled off, Dunn looked at Klein and deliberated over his words before saying, "I know you are filled with curiosity about the Antigonus family's notebook. You wish to understand what happened."

No, not at all… Klein subconsciously denied.

It was an ancient relic filled with misfortune!

Without giving him time to answer, Dunn continued and said, "However, I have to first report this to the Holy Cathedral. Only after they determine the confidentiality level of the notebook can we consider if this can be shown to you."

"No problem." Klein gave a short and simple reply.

Dunn continued his arm exercises as he thought before saying, "I once promised that you can be made a formal member of the Nighthawks when we confirm that Ray Bieber is a descendant of the Antigonus family clan. Now, not only have we determined Ray Bieber's identity, we have even eliminated the monster and spoiled the Secret Order's conspiracy.

"In this entire process, your performance was outstanding. You personally killed a member of an evil organization. Therefore, I will fulfill my promise and immediately make an application to the Holy

Cathedral. We'll wait for their approval.

"Right, I forgot something important. I still need to ask if you are agreeable to it.

"Mr Klein Moretti, are you willing to formally join the Tingen Nighthawks as one of its members? Your salary will increase severalfold, reaching six pounds a week. Furthermore, you will get a raise every subsequent year.

"Your salary will be paid by the Church and Awwa County's Police Department equally. You will also gain the identity of a probationary inspector. It will be very useful at times.

"As a support-type Beyonder, you do not always need to face enemies, but you will have to guard Chanis Gate once a week…

"Without the squad's permission, you are not to leave Tingen. Furthermore, you have to keep this a secret from your family…"

†

By the time Dunn finished listing the restrictions and benefits, Klein was already thinking deeply for more than ten seconds.

"I wish to become a formal Nighthawk."

Only by doing so could he continue to gain more access to mystery, such as the situation regarding the Secret Order!

After reading the gathered Roselle diaries, Klein had some changes in thoughts about himself. "Being skilled in mysticism knowledge to seek a way home was an immutable goal of his. Raising his strength further to more safely make the mysterious space above the gray fog do his bidding before using it to return home was a new addition to his goals.

Just as Emperor Roselle said, simply relying on external powers was very dangerous!

Furthermore, after becoming a Seer and obtaining Beyonder powers, Klein sensed that he had a better grasp of the mysterious space. For example, he could pull another person into the Gathering.

This forced him to consider what possibly beneficial changes would happen to the mysterious space above the gray fog when he reached Sequence 8, Sequence 7, or an even higher Sequence.

Of course, Klein knew very well that this was built on the premise that he completely resolved the side effects of the Seer potion. He could not rush or be rash.

“Very well. Once the Holy Cathedral approves of it, you will become one of us.” Dunn’s gray eyes were tinted with a hint of joy.

At that moment, Aiur Harson, who was listening in, interrupted.

“Klein, don’t mind me calling you Klein. Your performance today was really excellent. You managed to kill a Beyonder from the Secret Order. I even suspect that he has reached Sequence 7. How did you do it? I really find it incredulous.”

The question has finally been raised… Having long prepared for it, Klein acted as though he was organizing his thoughts.

He knew that it was indeed incredible and enigmatic that he had killed a Beyonder that ran rings around Dunn, Aiur, and Lorotta. Aiur and company were not blind or dumb, so it was a matter of time before they inquired about the process. However, he never expected them to wait till this moment.

That’s right. Captain and Mr. Harson were previously injured and their situations could have worsened at any time. At that moment, any matter that could result in conflict had to be put on hold. It was to prevent me from acting desperately because of my exposed “secret.” Only after I expressed my attitude and showed that I was willing to be a Nighthawk were they at ease enough to ask… How crafty. They did not have any obvious communication between themselves, but they had made the same tacit decision…

Klein answered as though in thought, “It’s an extremely lucky event. The clown in the tuxedo had made a fatal misjudgment.

“Back then, Sealed Artifact 2-049 was thrown near me as a result of the explosion’s blast. It looked about five to six meters from me, but it was only a crude observation. It was very easy to come to the conclusion that I was within the Sealed Artifact’s area of influence.

“And back then, I was feeling faint because of the explosion. My actions turned sluggish and looked as though I was being controlled.

“It was unknown when that suited clown came close to me in an invisible state. He tried to entice me by offering to save me and the corresponding Sequence 8, Clown, of the Seer potion. He wanted me to help him retrieve the Antigonus family’s notebook. Right, he said that the Secret Order is in control of the Seer potion’s corresponding Sequence pathway and that he was once a Seer.”

†

Klein recounted the situation back then in detail. He even described the theories he had back then, including how he believed that the suited clown had divined that taking the notebook would be an extremely risky endeavor; thus, he had changed his plans.

Of course, all the truths were used to conceal the lie made in the beginning—that he had been controlled by Sealed Artifact 2-049.

“Divined that it was extremely risky to retrieve the notebook? Yes, it’s indeed highly risky. However, the risk was actually because of you,” said Lorotta with a chuckle as she covered her mouth. “His divination was right, but it caused him to end up in a fatal situation. This sure is an interesting account.”

Klein was taken aback before he nodded seriously.

“Indeed. Divination is never crystal clear. And that vagueness only means that an interpretation can be wrong.”

Yes, I have to take note of that!

“How did you finish him off after that?” asked Dunn while he did his arm exercises and leaned back.

Klein smiled.

“I pretended to agree to him and made him awaken me. However, he did not dare enter the effective range of the Sealed Artifact. He stayed two to three meters away and used a strange paper slip in an attempt to push me.

“I seized the opportunity and pulled at his paper slip, causing him to be thrown into 2-049’s effective range. I then complemented it with repeated shots and completed my goal. Heh, it’s quite an embarrassing matter for me. I didn’t even have the confidence of hitting him despite being only two to three meters away from him.”

Aiur nodded slightly.

“With his evasive abilities, a distance of two to three meters is not an absolute guarantee. You might be able to strike him but fail to hit him in a vital spot. That would only make things worse… Your choice back then was impeccable. It can even be said to be outstanding. If I were in your shoes, I might not have been able to do it better than you.”

He did not ask further. After all, the suited clown’s entry into the Sealed Artifact 2-049’s area of influence basically sealed his fate. He became a living target.

“The subsequent Sequence of Seer is Clown… How odd…” Dunn suddenly said with a sigh.

Chapter 78 - Trauma

Aiur Harson added, “Exactly, it is hard to imagine that the subsequent Sequence of Seer would be Clown. According to normal logic, no one would link them together.”

“Is that strange? I remember that quite a number of Sequence potions also seem to lack similarities between their different levels.” Lorotta covered her mouth as she yawned. It was obvious that her injuries were more severe. Not even Goddess’s Gaze could help her to maintain her vibrant energy.

“No, Lorotta. This is completely different. Even if the other Sequence potions are lacking a connection, we can also find common points if viewed from a different angle. However, I cannot comprehend it for Seer and Clown at all,” said Aiur Harson as he shook his head and sighed.

Klein listened to their discussion and laughed.

“No, there’s still a common point.”

“What?” Aiur asked curiously. Even Dunn’s arm exercises clearly slowed down.

Klein replied without hesitation, “Be it a Seer or a Clown, both of them can be found at the circus.”

“…” Aiur, Dunn, and Lorotta were stunned.

“Pfft… Quite a good answer. I like young man like you!” Lorotta was the first to return to her senses as she burst out laughing.

Aiur also smiled as he shook his head.

“In this era, the number of gentlemen who are equipped with the spirit of self-deprecation is decreasing. Thankfully, we have met one today.”

Do you think I like to engage in self-deprecation… It’s not like I figured out any commonality between the two… Klein complained internally as he replied with a wry smile, “I only wish that the potions of the Sequence pathway would not have names like Beast Tamer, Acrobat, or Magician. That would really form a circus.”

Furthermore, it’s a one-man circus…

“Haha.” Dunn and company were immediately amused. It filled the carriage with a joyous atmosphere.

The carriage proceeded straight for Zouteland Street. Klein, who was not injured, was the first to enter Blackthorn Security Company.

“Goddess! What happened to you? Why are you like that?” Rozanne exclaimed when she caught sight of him.

Klein looked down at his dirty and tattered suit. He replied with his heart aching, “There are always all kinds of accidents during a mission. Thankfully, the Goddess blessed us and it ended beautifully.”

“Praise the Lady!” Rozanne devoutly drew the crimson moon across her chest.

Before waiting for Klein to continue, she asked, “Do you need us to hide in the third floor again? Is the Sealed Artifact really that dangerous?”

“Trust me. It’s far more dangerous than you can imagine,” replied Klein with a lingering fear.

If not for his even more mysterious luck enhancement ritual, he would have perished under the proverbial hands of 2-049!

“Goddess…” Rozanne’s lips quivered as though she had still a million things to say or questions to ask, but in consideration of how the captain was waiting downstairs, she held back her compulsion. She informed Mrs. Orianna and company to head upstairs to the third floor. The neighbors of Blackthorn Security Company were either estates of the Church, or devout clergymen who vaguely knew of the situation.

When all the civilian staff dispersed, Klein did not rush to the recreation room to inform the other Nighthawks. He immediately returned and helped the captain and the rest escort Sealed Artifact 2-049, Monster Bieber’s remnants, and the Antigonus family’s notebook to the second floor.

Through the partition, Dunn pushed open the recreation room’s door and said to the two Nighthawks who were playing Gwent cards, “Frye, Royale, both of you are to immediately head to the harbor’s Tyrell Warehouse and aid Leonard in dealing with the aftermath.”

“Alright.” Royale with her raven-black hair and cold expression was the first to stand up.

Corpse Collector Frye, with his black hair, blue eyes, and pale skin stood up next.

They put down their Gwent cards and walked out the recreation room and when they passed through the partition, they clearly paused.

“Wait,” Dunn shouted, not letting down their expectations.

“What else is there?” Sleepless Royale turned her head back and asked without an expression.

“Remember to inform the police. Let them seal off the road. Prevent anyone from coming close until you are done with the scene and move the corpse back,” Dunn said, smacking his forehead.

“Alright.” Royale turned around and took two steps before pausing once again.

She turned her head, blinked and confirmed coldly, “Captain, is there nothing else?”

“No,” Dunn answered categorically.

Royale nodded unnoticeably and walked towards the entrance.

As for Corpse Collector Frye who exuded coldness and darkness, he maintained his adequate pace.

At that moment, Dunn added, “Remember to tell Rozanne, Mrs. Orianna, and company that they can come down.”

“No problem.” Frye calmly replied as though no emotions stirred in him.

Klein watched as the two Nighthawks walked out the door and went upstairs before heaving a secret sigh of relief. He followed the captain and the rest underground. They proceeded straight to Chanis Gate.

As Dunn gestured for Sleepless Kenley to open Chanis Gate, he instructed Klein, “Go to the armory and get Old Neil here. We need his ritualistic magic to heal ourselves.”

As the effects of the medicine began to wear off, his mental state gradually waned.

“Alright.” Klein did not wait for the captain to continue, as he added, “I will watch the armory in Old Neil’s place. I will also request for at least twenty demon hunting bullets and also wait for the Holy Cathedral’s approval, curbing my curiosity about the Antigonus family’s notebook.”

“…” Dunn was instantly at a loss for words.

“Captain, is there anything else?” asked Klein with a smile after beating Dunn to it.

Dunn shook his head and remained speechless.

He pulled out his cane and turned around. After walking a certain distance, Klein turned into the armory and recounted the happenings generally to Old Neil who was drinking plain water.

“He became a monster that lost control… You even killed a Beyonder?” Old Neil quickly tidied up his desk. “It’s like I’m listening to the script of a play.”

He mumbled as he circled around the desk and walked straight towards the corridor without waiting for Klein’s answer.

Klein asked out of curiosity, “Mr. Neil, doesn’t the Church have real restorative medicine? Why would ritualistic magic be needed?”

“No medicine made with ordinary ingredients can provide the permanent restorative effects of a ritual. Extraordinary ingredients are very rare, and most of them are not suitable for restorative medicine,” Old Neil explained casually. “You should know about Goddess’s Gaze, right? When the medicine is first made via a ritual, it would be a standard, real restorative medicine. But every minute after its completion, its effect evaporates until little of its efficacy is left.”

“I see…” Klein nodded disappointedly.

As a former “keyboard warrior” and avid gamer, it was a habit to yearn for a medicine with magical healing properties.

He watched Old Neil leave and sat down, taking in the tranquility that he had not had in a very long time.

In the midst of his peace, he recalled the tragic death of the suited clown. He recalled himself shooting coldly, the gruesome wound and the spewing of fresh blood.

Klein’s body shivered as he felt discomfort. He first stood up, then sat down, then slowly repeated the process. He also did some pacing back and forth in between.

Phew… He let out a breath and decided to occupy himself with something so that he could stop thinking of those negative images.

Klein took off his silk hat and formal suit. He then took out a handkerchief and a brush to clean off the dirt and mud.

After an uncertain amount of time, he heard Old Neil's familiar footsteps. Old Neil's gait involved him walking on his heels, and it made a distinctive noise as he ambled down the hall.

"How tiring…" Old Neil complained as he walked into the room.

"Tell the rest that no one is to come here within the next hour. I need to rest," he instructed casually, glancing towards Klein.

"Why don't you rest upstairs, and I keep watch here?" Klein suggested out of kindness.

Old Neil shook his head.

"It's too noisy upstairs. Rozanne is a lady who just can't stop talking."

"Alright." Klein did not insist. He put on his coat and hat, picked up his cane, and returned to the corridor. Then, he pulled the armory's door ajar.

Tap. Tap. Tap. He slowly walked on the empty path when he suddenly saw many rooms he had never seen previously by the side.

"There is a secret door here…" Klein stopped at a spot around a bend as he looked at the room.

He discovered that Corpse Collector Frye had already returned. He was carefully examining a completely dissected corpse.

Corpse? Klein's heart stirred as he mustered his courage and approached the room. He knocked lightly on the opened door.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Frye stopped his actions and turned around, looking over with his blue but ice-cold eyes.

“Sorry for disturbing you. I just wish to know if this is a corpse of a Beyonder,” asked Klein as he controlled his tone.

“Yes.” Frye’s lips opened and closed, but only spat out a single word.

Klein’s gaze reached beyond him and landed on the corpse. Indeed, he discovered the familiar gruesome wound on the forehead.

It’s that suited clown… Klein secretly exhaled and said, “Any discoveries?”

“No,” answered Frye in an abnormally simple manner.

The mood instantly turned awkward. Just as Klein was about to bade farewell, Frye took the initiative to say, “If you feel uncomfortable, you can come in to take a look. You will discover that it’s only a corpse.”

Afraid that I’ll be traumatized? Klein nodded in thought.

“Alright.”

He entered the room and came in front of the long white-clothed table as he looked at the corpse.

The suited clown’s red, yellow, and white paint had been cleaned off, revealing an unfamiliar face that did not look anything special. He was in his thirties and had black hair and a high nose bridge.

At that moment, Frye went to a square table by the corner of the wall and picked up a pencil and piece of paper.

He returned to the corpse and placed the paper down and began drawing with the pencil.

Klein glanced at it in curiosity and found that Frye was sketching the suited clown’s head.

It did not take long before Frye stopped moving the pencil. On the piece of paper, there was a lifelike portrait. Compared to the corpse, the only difference was the lack of a wound with the addition of blue eyes.

What a talented genius… Klein marveled in surprise.

“I never expected you to be that good at sketching.”

“My dream was to become an artist before becoming a Nighthawk.” Frye’s tone was completely placid.

“Then why don’t you fulfill your dreams?” asked Klein curiously.

Frye put down his pencil and said with the suited clown’s portrait in hand, “My father was a priest of the Goddess. He wished that I become a priest. It’s a presentable job.”

“You became a priest?” Klein asked in surprise.

He found it unimaginable that Frye could become a priest with his personality and the vibes he exuded.

“Yeah, I did quite an okay job.” Frye wore a cold expression as the corners of his mouth curled up a little as he replied. “Later, I encountered and experienced some things and ended up a Nighthawk.”

Klein did not plan on infringing on his privacy, so he asked, “You were once a priest of the Goddess, so why not choose to be a Sleepless?”

“A personal reason,” answered Frye frankly. “Furthermore, Madam Daly is a good role model.”

Klein nodded and just as he was about to change the subject, he heard Frye say, “Help me watch this room. I have to immediately hand the sketch to Captain… Closing a secret door is very troublesome.”

“Alright.” Although Klein was a little afraid facing a corpse alone, he braved his fear in agreement.

With Frye gone, the room turned quiet. The corpse laid there as Klein's heart turned heavy.

He took a few breaths and, in a bid to defeat his fears, approached the long table.

The suited clown lay there silently with his pale face. His eyes were tightly shut, and he had lost all signs of breathing. Apart from the gruesome wound, he emitted the unique coldness of a dead man.

Klein observed for a moment as his emotions gradually settled as he was calming down.

He swept his gaze and discovered a strange brand on the suited clown's wrist. Gathering his courage, he extended his hand to touch it, hoping to turn it around to see it more clearly.

Just as the ice-cold touch reached from Klein's fingertips to his brain, the pale palm that had lost all vibrancy shot up suddenly, grabbing him by the wrist.

It grabbed at his wrist tightly!

Chapter 79 - Another Murmuring

◆

Klein instantly felt his hair stand on end as the icy hand tightened around his wrist. He instinctively pulled his wrist back in a desperate attempt to escape.

A heavy sensation bore down on him as Klein used every fiber of strength in his entire body to yank his arm back.

Bam!

The pale, naked corpse was yanked so forcefully to the side that it fell from the autopsy table.

However, the white, ice-cold fingers' grip remained firmly latched onto Klein's wrist.

Klein momentarily lost the ability to think; the only thought that went through his mind was to draw his revolver and riddle the corpse in holes.

However, as he could not retract his dominant hand, he threw his black cane and desperately tried to retrieve his revolver from his holster to no avail.

At that moment, the corpse's eyes rose, revealing a pair of calm, blue eyes.

His mouth moved as he muttered, "Hornacis… Hornacis… Hornacis…"

After those three words were said, Klein was completely flustered as he felt that the fingers gripping onto his wrist began to loosen before dropping limp.

The suited clown's eyes were shut once again, as though nothing had happened at all.

If the pale corpse wasn't lying on the stone floor, Klein would have imagined that he had been struck by a hallucination spell.

He staggered backwards a few steps and felt that most of his body was trembling as a result of the shock and fear.

Phew… Phew… Klein gasped for air as he slowly regained control of his mental facilities. He looked at the corpse on the ground in alarm and fear.

He drew his revolver and carefully retreated from the room, one step at a time. After confirming that the corpse was motionless, he took a glance at his wrist of the hand holding onto his revolver.

There were five deep, red finger marks imprinted on his wrist. They silently described his encounter.

Klein calmed down as vulgarities filled his mind.

F*cking hell. I almost died from the shock!

After panting for more than ten seconds, he began assembling items in his mind to quickly compose himself.

He carefully recalled everything that he encountered and pieced them together.

Although he did not understand the reason for the suited clown's "resurrection," he acutely noticed an important point. The corpse had repeated the words "Hornacis!"

"It's Hornacis again…" Klein knitted his brows. "The Antigonus family's notebook has records of a Nation of the Evernight in the Hornacis mountain range. While in Cogitation or Spirit Vision, I would hear sounds that I shouldn't be able to hear, and among those sounds is the word 'Hornacis'… Is the answer to all these questions on the Hornacis mountain range?… There might be massive danger lurking there. For example, an evil god might be sealed within and was using various forms of 'attraction' to achieve freedom."

While considering this, Klein carefully entered the room and touched the corpse a few times to verify that it was completely dead.

He didn't want Corpse Collector Frye to see him mess up the place, so he mustered his courage to move the corpse back onto the autopsy table.

Klein couldn't help but feel as though his heart was in his mouth throughout the process. The slightest movement could snap his tense nerves. Furthermore, the ice-cold feeling given out by the corpse felt particularly disgusting.

After finishing the mission with great difficulty, he recalled the reason he approached the corpse. Therefore, he focused on the suited clown's wrist and looked at the strange brand.

It was unknown when the brand had slipped off, shrinking into a spherical blob of blood which had tint of blue.

The spherical blob of blood was the size of a thumb. It floated in midair silently in defiance of the laws of physics.

"What is this?" Klein muttered, but he didn't dare to touch it rashly.

He had no intention of hiding the strange blood sphere. Firstly, he didn't know if it was a good or bad thing. Secondly, he was certain that Frye, who had examined the corpse, would have long discovered the brand on the wrist. It was even likely that he knew what the strange blood sphere was.

And even if Frye doesn't know, reporting it to Captain and letting the Nighthawks research it is definitely better than me making random attempts… That was Klein's train of thought.

Being in an organization meant he had to know how to make use of the organization's powers to its fullest.

Klein waited nervously for a few minutes before he saw the black-haired, blue-eyed, and thin-lipped Frye return.

He instantly noticed the strange blood sphere, and asked Klein a question he had previously asked himself.

"What is this?"

"No idea." Klein shook his head honestly. He recounted what had happened without hiding anything.

"The brand slipped off into a blood sphere…" Frye nodded, seemingly deep in thought. "The corpse of a Beyonder always tends to have some strange transformations…"

He looked up and said to Klein, "Bring the Captain here. Inform him about the contents that the corpse murmured as well."

"Alright." Klein was already itching to leave.

"You don't have to return with the Captain," Frye added. "I believe you won't like to see what happens next."

As he spoke, he picked up a silver surgical knife beside him.

Klein nodded with some lingering fear.

"I was hoping you'd say that."

He picked up his cane, wore his hat and hobbled over to the Chanis Gate. At the Keeper's room, he saw the no longer frail Captain Dunn.

After Dunn heard his recollection of what happened, he nodded indiscernibly.

"I'll report the matter to the higher ups and let the Holy Cathedral deal with it. Maybe they'll send people to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range to take a look."

Klein answered briefly in confirmation. Seeing that only Sleepless Kenley and the Captain were in the Keeper's room, he casually asked, "Are Mr. Aiur and the others resting?"

Dunn nodded and said, "Aiur and Borgia are at Saint Selena Cathedral. Lorotta is probably looking for a coffee shop."

"Coffee shop? Madam Lorotta hasn't recovered from her injuries, right?" Klein asked in surprise.

Dunn massaged his nose bridge and said with a laugh, "Lorotta has three hobbies—coffee, dessert, and maidservants. She says she needs these three things to speed up her recovery."

"Maidservants?" Klein asked, perplexed.

Does Madam Lorotta have a particular fetish?

Dunn shook his head helplessly and said, "She likes maidservants. Yeah, that's right. Furthermore, she likes ones with big breasts."

"…She sure is weird." Klein had no idea what kind of expression he should show in response.

Dunn didn't delay any further as he headed out the Keeper's room. As Klein watched his back, he silently waited for him to turn.

Meanwhile, he noticed at the corner of his eye that Sleepless Kenley had fished out his pocket watch and opened it.

Three, two, one… The moment Klein finished counting down silently, Dunn stopped and turned around.

"Another thing I forgot. Klein, you went through a lot today. Once you relax, you'll feel exhausted. There's no need for you to be here in the afternoon. Go back and get some rest. Tomorrow, I'll submit the application listing the detailed losses."

"Alright. Don't worry too much about your killing of a Beyonder. Killing him was equivalent to saving more lives."

"As a matter of fact, I'm actually feeling much better." Klein silently exhaled.

Dunn nodded slightly and just as he turned around, he smacked himself in the forehead.

"I've also handed the Beyonder's sketch to Leonard. He and the police department are in charge of the follow up investigations. I believe that the Beyonder must've rode on carriages, eaten food, and had somewhere to stay.

"Wherever he steps, whatever he touches, whatever he leaves behind, even unconsciously, will serve as a silent witness against him. Emperor Roselle's words are truly sensible."

"…Yes." Klein answered, stupefied.

After the captain walked far away, he left the Keeper's room and slowly walked to the second floor.

Along the way, he suddenly recalled something as he experienced an additional bout of fear.

That suited clown claimed that the Secret Order controlled the corresponding Sequence pathway of Seers… Even if he was exaggerating and they didn't have the higher Sequence potion formulas, they definitely have the lower Sequence ones.

It also means that they have a number of Seers.

Then, wouldn't they divine that I killed the suited clown and secretly exact revenge against me?

If they can't deal with the Nighthawks, can't they deal with me, a Seer without any direct measures against enemies?

Klein stopped in the stairwell and began thinking about the problem seriously. Soon, he discovered that he was worrying over nothing.

Firstly, the Secret Order doesn't know who are members of the Nighthawks.

Secondly, even if they know one or two, they definitely wouldn't include a civilian staff member like me.

Thirdly, under the present circumstances, unless they have a prophet, there's no way they can divine who the murderer is.

He heaved a sigh of relief and left the Blackthorn Security Company. He took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

Even though he hadn't eaten lunch yet, he still lacked the appetite.

After entering his bedroom, Klein removed his damaged suit first. Then, he took off his half top hat, got into bed and tried to go to sleep.

His mind remained active as though his entire existence couldn't relax. His mind wasn't repeating the scene of him shooting the suited clown to death, but of the scene of him moving the corpse, and that hair-raising experience.

He no longer felt uncomfortable about killing for the first time, but more of a disgust when he thought about it.

"This was probably Frye's goal. He hoped that I would approach the corpse and face it directly to overcome my trauma… But, even though the trauma from before is gone, I've been traumatized by something new…" Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh as he gradually felt his nerves calm down.

He had no idea when he dozed off, but when he woke up, his stomach was groaning in protest.

“I feel like I can eat an entire horse!” Klein muttered as he looked at the sun setting in the west as though the sky was alit.

Changing into old but comfortable casual clothes, he briskly walked to the first floor. Before he could consider what to make for dinner, he heard the door open.

Melissa… The corners of his mouth curled up at the thought.

Ever since she began taking the public carriage, his sister no longer returned home late.

The key twisted as the door opened. Melissa walked in with her bag that contained her books and stationery.

She looked at the kitchen and said, “Klein, there’s a letter for you. It’s from your mentor.”

A letter from Mentor? Right. I wrote to him asking about the relevant historical situation of the Hornacis main peak… Klein was taken aback at first before he recalled the matter.

Chapter 80 - Banquet Invitation

◆◆◆

After having dinner, a satiated Klein casually lounged on the living room sofa. He used a small letter opener to open the letter he received from his mentor.

Melissa was sitting by the dining table at the time, working hard on a textbook problem, with the gas lamp for illumination. Benson was cradled in a single seater, reading Accountancy for Beginners.

Klein found three pages in the letter that he read with both fear and anticipation.

"…very happy to receive your letter. It reminds me of the good old days over the past few years. Unfortunately, Welch and Naya have left us forever…"

"I attended their burials separately and could feel their parents' anguish. The two of them were young adults who were supposed to have beautiful, bright futures ahead of them…"

"Fate is always so unpredictable. No one can know what will happen to you next. I've experienced more as I've grown older, and I can increasingly sense the weakness and helplessness of humanity."

"…Regarding the historical information revolving around the Hornacis main peak, I recall that the archaeologist, Mr. John Joseph, once published a monograph detailing it. It includes his accounts of his time at the Hornacis main peak. He discovered a few ancient buildings that are more than a thousand years old."

“What shames every historian and archaeologist is our inability to precisely date the era. We can only make a crude estimate based on the architecture style, the characteristics of the murals, and a few of the texts that we can decipher.”

“It’s quite unbelievable that such a tall mountain peak would have humans living there. Mr. Joseph has ample evidence to prove that those humans developed a civilization that they can call their own. As for the details, it is hard to fully describe them in this letter. I suggest you try borrowing this monograph from the Deweyville Library. Trust me, Sir Deweyville’s donation to this library makes it have more books in its collection than the one built by the city government.”

“The monograph’s title is Research of the Hornacis Main Peak’s Relics. It is published by the Loen Publishing Firm.”

“In addition, there are some papers that discuss something of relevance. They are published in the journals—New Archeology, Archeology Summary. The exact issue and journal volume is…”

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Klein read every word, and repeated the names of the monograph and paper names silently.

Immediately afterwards, he found some paper and an envelope, as well as a fountain pen before penning his gratitude.

“Melissa, help me send this letter out. This is the money for the stamps.” Klein placed the sealed envelope and more than enough money for the stamps on his sister’s desk.

Melissa took a glance and curled her lips.

“Klein, stamps don’t cost that much.”

“Yes, stamps don’t, but a girl should have some allowance.” Klein replied with a smile. “I believe Selena has mentioned this to you before.”

Noticing that Melissa was about to protest, he quickly added, “It can be used to buy the materials and tools you need.”

“Tools…” Melissa repeated softly again and again before casting her gaze back onto her books. “Alright,” she said as she nodded imperceptibly.

The corners of Klein’s mouth immediately curved upwards as he briskly walked back to the sofa.

“Excellent persuasion skills. You precisely pinpointed Melissa’s weakness.” Benson gave a thumbs up as he said with a suppressed laugh. Klein cleared his throat and said in all seriousness.

“Then how shall I persuade you? Your self-study should emphasize language and ancient literature. Of course, basic mathematics and logic are equally important.”

According to the curriculum of the public schools and grammar schools, as well as the material tested for in college admissions, Klein was very confident about the general direction in which the upcoming ‘civil servant examinations’ would focus on.

Benson touched his hairline and said with a self-deprecating smile, “I feel like a curly-haired baboon in front of those books.”

“But they’re really useful,” Klein said with a determined smile.

At that moment, Melissa put down her fountain pen, stood up, and walked to the sofa.

“Benson, Klein. This Sunday is Selena’s birthday. She and her parents wish to invite all of us to their place for a banquet. Are both of you free?”

“Should be fine for me,” Klein said after some thought.

He could take the opportunity to be acquainted with his sister's friends. It could prevent him from being utterly clueless whenever something happened to her.

"Me too," Benson said as he combed his hairs with his fingers. "It looks like we'll have to think of a birthday present for Miss Selena."

Klein smiled.

"This should be left to Melissa. She knows Miss Selena better than us. Besides, what we need to do is what a gentleman ought to do—pay for it."

"This is the first time I've heard someone describe laziness in such a pleasant manner," Benson said as he shook his head and chuckled.

Klein returned with a smile.

"This is the purpose of language and ancient literature."

"…" Benson never expected Klein to return to the subject at hand; it left him momentary speechless.

†

The next day, Klein wore his cheap formal suit and held his black inlaid silver cane as he climbed up the stairs and arrived at the Blackthorn Security Company's entrance. His tuxedo had already been sent to the tailors.

Klein was just about to greet Rozanne when he saw Captain Dunn walk out of the partition.

"Good morning Klein. Did you have a good night's sleep?" Dunn asked with concern.

Klein answered honestly, "Better than I expected. I didn't even have nightmares. But I still feel heavy and a little disgusted when I recall it."

“Very good. I feel assured hearing that,” Dunn said with a nodding smile.

After chatting about the weather, he raised a matter.

“The Holy Cathedral has replied to my telegram. Aiur, Lorotta, and company are to immediately escort Sealed Artifact 2-049 and the Antigonus family’s notebook back to Backlund. They’ve also sent an additional Nighthawk yesterday afternoon via steam locomotive to help.”

“I believe that they’ve already set off by now.”

Already set off by now? Does that mean I’m completely free from the traumatizing Antigonus family’s notebook? Klein was taken aback. He found it surreal as though he was dreaming.

This is more relaxing than I imagined…

It’s unlikely that there will be any follow up, right?

“May the Goddess bless them and that they will have a smooth journey.” After a few seconds of silence, Klein made a gesture on his chest in the sign of the crimson moon.

Dunn wore his hat and pointed out the door.

“I have to patrol the Raphael Cemetery. Heh, I forgot one thing. The investigations of Leonard and the police department has borne fruit. They found the carriage driver that drove them. We have confirmed their temporary residence in Tingen City, but they are rather cautious. They didn’t leave behind any valuable clues.”

“As expected of an ancient secret organization,” Klein echoed wistfully.

Dunn nodded and turned to head to the door.

He stopped three seconds later and turned his head.

"Also, the Holy Cathedral needs another two to three days before they notify us of your application to become an official member. Heh heh, this is dealt with by a different department, separate from the one that deals with the Antigonus family's notebook. They have different levels of efficiency."

"I understand," Klein replied sincerely.

Meanwhile, he helped his captain add inwardly.

Remember to submit the compensation application today!

Watching Dunn leave, Klein heard the brown-haired Rozanne exclaim.

"Goddess! Klein, are you becoming a formal member? You haven't even joined us for a month!"

Klein smiled.

"After I consumed the Seer potion, it was only a matter of time."

"That's reasonable…" Rozanne fell into a daze for a few seconds before suddenly sighing. "I was praying that you finished your mysticism lessons so that you could be added to the roster for watching the armory, but… Goddess, I have to be on duty every two days. I'm not a Sleepless! My skin, my state of mind. Goddess, save me!"

"Shouldn't you be very familiar to such a lifestyle? Before I joined, it has always been you, Bredt, and Old Neil who took turns, right?" Klein asked, puzzled.

Rozanne shook her head with a depressed look.

"No, there were four previously, five even earlier. Unfortunately, Kenley chose to become a Sleepless. Viola did not choose to extend her contract last month and joined the Khoy Noel Machinery Company. She's a gifted girl when it comes to creation. She only lacked the opportunity and money. Five years as a civilian staff allowed her to have enough savings.”

Having said this, Rozanne suddenly glanced at Klein and laughed with her mouth covered.

“I’ve thought of a good solution. Klein, get married as soon as possible. Then, accidentally expose the secret of Beyonders to her. This is considered a very minor leak so there won’t be any particularly heavy penalties. After all, who can lie to a person who shares the same bed with you over prolonged periods of time. You can introduce her to us when that happens make her a civilian staff member! What a perfect plan!”

The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched.

“Miss Rozanne, you can also quickly find a husband. It should be even easier. I believe you have the adequate means to divulge the secret to him.”

Rozanne’s eyes widened and her mouth turned agape when she heard him.

“How can I? Marriage is a very serious matter. I have to carefully pick and observe him over a period of time to ensure that he’s alright.”

That’s not what you said a second ago… Klein didn’t bother engaging in sophistry with Rozanne. He smiled as he engaged in a little small talk before bidding farewell and heading underground.

At the armory, he saw Old Neil wrestling with the handground coffee. So, he sat down and waited patiently.

“Soon you’ll be an official member, right?” Old Neil asked casually as he filtered the coffee.

“Captain said that another two to three days are needed. It’s still a question of whether the Holy Cathedral will approve of it,” Klein said frankly.

“Hehe.” Old Neil chortled. “The Holy Cathedral won’t deny cases like these, especially when you’re already a Beyonder.”

With that said, he turned his head and faced Klein. He said with a chuckle, “You must be mentally prepared. There’s a ritual every official Nighthawk member has to undergo. They have to complete a mission independently. Of course, Dunn would definitely choose the easiest and simplest ones for a rookie. Besides, you’re a support-type Seer.”

Chapter 81 - Finally Meeting

◆

“I have to complete a mission independently in order to become an official member?” Klein was taken aback. “But we might not even have a mission this week, and it might not be so simple.”

Wouldn’t this mean that it’ll take me one to two months to become a official Nighthawk? Only then will I get a pay rise…

Old Neil sniffed at the coffee and shot a glance at him.

“It’s only a ritual among Nighthawks. After all, we stand at the peak of Beyonder danger and don’t want our teammates to act like children who require constant care. This won’t affect the salary that you’ll receive as an official member, or your privileges needed to fulfill your duty.”

So it’s just a ritual to gain the recognition of the other Nighthawks… But, Mr. Neil, why did you emphasize that it would not affect my pay grade as an official member… Did I make it that obvious? Klein touched his face and gave an embarrassed smile before asking, “Does it have to be a mission of the Beyonder variety?”

“That should be the case, but your performance yesterday was truly outstanding. You ingeniously killed a Beyonder that’s at least at Sequence 8. I believe Frye, Royale, and the rest have already acknowledged you. Therefore, Dunn might just assign you to an ordinary mission,” Old Neil said before suddenly sighing. “You’ll have your salary increase several-fold. I’ll never encounter something like that again in my lifetime.”

Klein chuckled as he raised the matter about his Sequence pathway.

“Mr. Neil, do you think that the corresponding Sequence 8 of Seer is Clown?”

In fact, thinking back to the description from the confidential documents, it did seem to add up.

A job good at fighting with artifice…

“I can’t give you any guarantees, but I think it’s highly likely. Firstly, it matches up with what’s said on the documents. Their agile movement and deception based battle style are key points. Next, other Sequence pathways have similar situations. Do you know the corresponding Sequence 8 for Mystery Pryer?” Old Neil asked with a chuckle.

“No, it’s not written in the information provided by the Church.” Klein shook his head honestly.

Old Neil chuckled briefly before saying, “I’m close friends with two old guys from the Machinery Hivemind. They mentioned it in passing, as a joke. The corresponding Sequence 8 potion of Mystery Pryer is Melee Scholar. Did you hear that? Melee Scholar. Goddess, I don’t like melee combat at all. This doesn’t suit the image of a Mystery Pryer at all!”

“I can understand… Mystery Pryer’s pursue the mysteries behind things. Melee combat is one of those mysteries,” Klein said after some thought.

Old Neil finished his handground coffee. “Alright, let’s not waste time. Let’s continue our mysticism studies. You still have a lot of ritualist magic that you need to grasp. You also need to learn how to create amulets and charms.”

“Alright.” Klein sat down and planned out his schedule for the day.

In the morning I’ll study mysticism and read through all sorts of historical records. I’ll submit the compensation request. After lunch, I’ll practice at the Shooting Club. Then, I'll head to the Deweyville Library at Golden Indus Borough and see if I can borrow the corresponding monograph and journal regarding the Hornacis main peak. After doing all that, if I have time, I'll spend some time at the Divination Club. I can't slack off on my "acting."

Once the compensation request is approved and I receive the money, I'll be able to buy a new suit on the way home.

Yes… I'll apply for the materials tomorrow morning and try to make a protective amulet to ward off danger for Melissa and Benson.

†

In a dining hall adorned with a chandelier and elegant decorations.

A few friends were congratulating Joyce Meyer on his escape from danger and his return to Tingen.

"We all read the news. Just the written description alone was enough to scare me," a man with a short stubble on his chin said wistfully. "Joyce, I can't believe you went through such an ordeal. Cheers. The tragedy is over now, and the sunlight shines down upon us. Exalted is the Steam."

Joyce and his fiancée, Anna, raised their cups and clinked them together with their friends. Then, they gulped down what little champagne they had left.

"Anna was extremely worried at the time. I suspect that she cried every night. Whenever I invited her for some afternoon tea, she was always absent minded. Thankfully, you're finally back now. Otherwise, I reckon she would've passed away just like that," a young lady, with a cute small nose and coiled brown hair, said to Joyce as she glanced at Anna.

"If Anna were to experience something like that, I'd be the same. I might be in an even worse state." The aquiline-nosed Joyce gave his fiancée, who was sitting beside him, a gentle look.

Anna wasn't used to expressing her emotions in front of others. She looked at the opposite end of the table and said, "Bogda, why have you been keeping your head down this entire time? I can sense how terrible your mood is."

The young lady with a petite nose answered in Bogda's place.

"Bogda is sick. The physician told him that there's something seriously wrong with his liver. He can only use medicine to reduce the pain but it doesn't treat his illness. He needs to undergo surgery."

"Lord, when did this happen?" Anna and Joyce asked in surprise and concern.

Bogda was a young man with short hair, but his face was sallow. His usually brilliant red eyes were replaced with a dim glow.

"It happened last week. Since Joyce wasn't back yet, I told Irene not to tell you," Bogda explained with a rueful smile.

Joyce asked staidly, "Have you decided when you'll undergo surgery?"

Bogda's expression changed a few times as he said, "No, I haven't decided yet. As you know, those surgeons are practically butchers. The patient is like a piece of meat on a chopping block, allowing them to butcher people as they please! I've read a lot of reports. They'll even use an ax for amputation! Lord, I suspect I might very well die on the operating table."

"But if you delay it further then surgery might not be able to save you," the man with a stubble said as he tried to persuade him.

At that moment, Anna interjected, "Bogda, perhaps you can consider doing a divination. If the divination indicates that everything will go smoothly, then proceed with the surgery as soon as possible. If the outcome of the divination is bad, seek other means. Seek it with the help of the fortune-teller. I know of a real, mysterious fortune-teller. No, I should address him as a Seer. I believe he can definitely help you."

"For real?" Bogda returned with a question, clearly looking doubtful. Their other friends shared the same attitude.

"Yes." Anna nodded without hesitation. "I hired his divination services, and after divining Joyce's situation, he told me to return home. 'Your fiancé is at home waiting for you.' Back then, I was like all of you, filled with doubt. But when I returned home, I really saw Joyce. He was really back!"

"I can testify on this point," Joyce echoed.

He didn't mention that he had sought Klein's help in interpreting his dreams. This was because the police had informed him that Tris hadn't been caught yet. Therefore, he had to keep it a secret in order to prevent revenge from being exacted upon him.

"Lord, this is absolutely unbelievable!"

"Is divination really that magical?"

†

Amidst the shouting, Bogda thought deeply for a moment before saying, "Perhaps I should get a divination. Anna, Joyce, could you tell me the Seer's name and address?"

Anna heaved a sigh of relief and said, "You made a very wise choice."

"That Seer is at the Divination Club at Howes Street.

"His name is Klein Moretti."

†

Golden Indus Borough. Deweyville Library.

Klein used the introduction note from his mentor's letter to successfully apply for a borrowing pass.

As he flipped the tiny card in his hand, he asked a few librarians, "Do you have the Research of the Hornacis Main Peak's Relics here? It was published by the Loen Publishing Firm."

A librarian immediately answered, "Please wait a moment. Let me check the records."

He turned around and looked at the drawers. He pulled open the letter that matched Hornacis and flipped through a card that was filled with single words that followed a particular order.

On careful inspection, he shook his head and said, "Sorry, Sir. We do not have this book in our collection."

"How regretful," Klein answered in clear disappointment.

From the looks of it, I need to write to the Loen Publishing Firm or pay a visit to the Khoy University…

Meanwhile, he sighed inwardly at how dated the management of the libraries of this world was.

You people need a computer. Unfortunately, I can't produce one… Klein made a silent, self-deprecating comment and turned to ask, "Then, do you have the journal issues of New Archeology and Archeology Summary?"

"We do," the librarian confirmed. "A gentleman just returned them."

He flipped out the corresponding card and pointed Klein in the direction of the bookshelf.

Klein went over to the bookshelf, scanned the journal issues, and pulled out the ones his mentor mentioned.

Then, he randomly found a spot by the window to sit down. Under the bright afternoon sun, he began reading the information in the library quietly.

"…Ancient relics don't solely exist on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range. They're also spread out across the surrounding forests, valleys, and gentle slopes around the main peak…"

"…These relics are formed from lofty domes and gigantic stone columns. Honestly, they can be be described as magnificent…"

"…I'm curious as to how the original residents mine and process these rocks? Hypothetically, let's assume that they performed their mining operation on the spot without needing to send them up the mountain…"

"…There's a strange pattern where the relics become larger in size the closer you are to the mountain peak. But surprisingly, there are no ruins on the peak. According to our hypothesis, there should be palaces that don't resemble man-made buildings, divine halls used for sacrifices…"

Palaces that don't look like they were man-made… divine halls used for sacrifices… Could it be the one that I saw in my dream? While Klein ruminated, he suddenly heard footsteps approaching him from a distance.

He looked up and saw a familiar face, a face that often appeared on the papers.

He had a squarish face, thick eyebrows, a firm nose, short dark-blond hair, azure-blue eyes, and tightly-closed lips. All of these features belonged to a certain famous person from Tingen City, a philanthropist, entrepreneur, and the owner of this library—Sir Deweyville.

Beside Deweyville was the middle-aged butler who Klein had met before.

Klein watched them walk by from more than ten meters away. Out of curiosity, he raised his right hand and lightly tapped his glabella twice.

Chapter 82 - Herb Store

◆ ◆ ◆

Various colors surfaced as auras and entered Klein’s eyes. He casually studied Sir Deweyville’s condition.

He’s very healthy; there are almost no hidden problems… His emotional state is horrendous. Amid the dullness, there’s frailty… His mental state is frail? He has trouble sleeping well? But the purple aura at his head is completely fine… Klein muttered silently to himself as Sir Deweyville walked off and left the library.

Retracting his gaze, Klein pinched his forehead and sighed inwardly.

Being a tycoon sure isn’t easy…

He didn’t pay much attention to the matter and returned his gaze onto the journal issues in front of him.

Klein didn’t find a lot of clues after reading each of them. He could only confirm a few things.

Firstly, there existed an ancient kingdom on the Hornacis mountain range, as well as its surroundings. The ancient kingdom’s history dated back to at least 1500 years. Secondly, their architectural style was primarily about being grand. They left behind all sorts of murals and from those murals, it could be deduced that they believed that the Evernight would protect the loved ones of the departed. Finally, in the ruins, there were symbols that represented the Evernight everywhere, but they were clearly different from the Evernight Sacred Emblem.

“If I had a chance, no— even if I have a chance, I’ll never go there!” Klein muttered with clenched teeth. He vowed not to court death.

After tidying the journal articles and returning them back to their original spots, he put on his hat, lifted his cane, and left the Deweyville library.

†

Divination Club.

Bogda looked at the beautiful lady in charge of receiving guests and said, “I’d like to have a divination.”

Angelica smiled politely and said, “Do you have a preferred fortune-teller? Or would you like to flip through our introduction guide and choose the one that’s most suitable for you?”

Bogda pressed the right side of his abdomen and gasped silently for breath while saying, “I wish to have Mr. Klein Moretti divine for me.”

“But Mr. Moretti is not here today,” Angelica answered with uncertainty.

Bogda fell silent for a moment as he paced a few steps and asked, “When will Mr. Moretti be available?”

“No one knows. He has his own matters to deal with. From what I’ve seen, he usually comes here on Monday afternoons,” Angelica said as she pondered over the matter.

“Alright.” Bogda’s face darkened as he turned around, planning to leave.

“Sir, you can choose other fortune-tellers as well. For example, you can choose Mr. Hanass Vincent who is famous in Tingen City,” Angelica tried her best to prevent the loss of business.

Bogda stopped in his tracks and considered it for a moment before saying, “No, I only trust Mr. Moretti. Well, can I wait here for a moment?

Perhaps he might come after he's done with his matters."

"No problem," Angelica said with a warm smile.

Bogda went to the sofa and sat down. Sometimes he stroked his cane; at other times he looked out the window, clearly looking rather impatient.

Seconds turned to minutes. Just as Bogda's mind was in a mess, unsure if he should continue waiting or leave, he heard the beautiful lady exclaim in pleasant surprise, "Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti!"

Klein saw the familiar Angelica and was just about to ask why it was always her. Did she not need to rest or take any days off?

However, he immediately took into consideration that he was a Seer, so it was not appropriate for him to ask such questions. Instead, he had to use the tone of a charlatan and say something like: "How marvelous it is for fate to compel us to meet once again, Madam Angelica."

Uh, would this sound like I'm hitting on her? Klein's mind whirled as he finally replied with a smile, "Good afternoon, Madam Angelica."

"A customer wishes to hire you for a divination." Angelica pointed to Bogda who had hurriedly stood up from the sofa.

Someone actually requested for me? Klein took off his half top hat in pleasant surprise, pinching his glabella twice while doing so.

"Good afternoon, Sir…" He looked over when his voice suddenly came to a pause.

In his Spirit Vision, he saw the requester's liver looking dim. It was nearly black in color. It was making the rest of his body unbalanced as his aura was thin in various places.

Klein deliberated over his words and he said in a serious expression, "Sir, you should see a doctor and not seek a divination."

Bogda stood stunned on the spot as he immediately gave a pleasant look of surprise while muttering, “How fascinating…”

“Anna wasn’t lying to me…”

†

He hurriedly looked up at Klein in earnest.

“Mr. Moretti, I’ve already seen a doctor and might have to undergo surgery. However, I’m frightened about the surgery. I would like to divine the outcome.”

The surgery of this era is really fraught with danger… Although Emperor Roselle had given the impetus, this era still lacks most of the necessary technology… Klein didn’t reject his request and nodded slightly.

“My divination fee is eight pence. Is that fine?”

“Eight pence?” Bogda exclaimed in surprise. “You’re only charging eight pence?”

According to Anna’s description, and the performance Mr. Moretti had just shown me, I’m willing to pay at least a pound!

Haven’t you heard of small margins with large volume? Klein was embarrassed for a moment. After thinking for a few seconds, he calmly smiled and replied, “It is enough just being blessed with the ability to receive revelations from the divine and catch a glimpse of fate. Therefore, we must maintain our humility and suppress our greed. Only by doing so, can we continue being bestowed with our gifts.”

“You are a true seer.” Bogda held his chest and bowed, his tone filled with sincerity.

Upon receiving Bogda’s praise and trust, Klein’s spirituality seemed to relax. As for the description of his “principles”, it also gave him some new insight.

“Miss. Angelica, is Topaz available?” He turned to the beautiful lady beside him.

Angelica heaved a sigh of relief for Bogda as she smiled sweetly.

“Yes.”

After entering the divination room, Klein instructed Bogda to lock the door. Then, he sat behind the table and pinched his forehead.

“Shall we use tarot cards for the divination?” he inquired with a smile.

“Spirit Dowsing” was only suitable to determine matters related to him. As for drawing an astrolabe, it was too time consuming.

“I’ll leave it up to you.” Bogda had no objections.

Therefore, Klein helped him shuffle and cut the deck before laying them out in an Intis formation.

Thanks to his uniqueness as a Seer, Klein did not flip the other cards. Instead, he directly flipped the card that indicated the final result.

“A reversed Wheel of Fortune. Things will develop badly.” he said solemnly as he shot a glance.

The color in Bogda’s face drained instantly and his lips trembled.

“Is it hopeless?”

As Klein tried his best to think of a solution, he said, “Let me try a different divination method. Please leave your ring behind. Next, write your date of birth on this piece of paper. Then, please wait outside quietly.”

Influenced by his gentle and comforting tone, Bogda calmed down and followed the instructions by writing down the information and leaving his ring behind.

As he watched Bogda leave, Klein wrote a sentence on the piece of paper.

“Outcome of Bogda Jones’s surgery.”

He picked up the ring and paper slip and leaned back into his seat before using a dream divination technique.

In a blurry and distorted world, he gradually found himself, only to see the gentleman collapse with an ashen expression. He was covered in white cloth as he was pushed out of the quaking operating room.

This time, Klein didn’t encounter anything strange. He no longer felt the sense of being watched, so he quickly woke up. He knitted his brows tightly as he considered how he was going to inform Bogda about the outcome.

The surgery may very well lead to death… I can try the restorative ritualistic magic I learned today… but that would expose the matter of Beyonders. Besides, I have to apply for Captain’s approval first… Yeah, and I might not be able to treat such a severe disease… Klein was racking his brains when he suddenly thought of something.

“Mr. Glacis’s lung disease was treated by an apothecary. He said that the medicine was extremely miraculous… What was it? Right, Lawson Darkwade, 18 Vlad Street in East Borough. Lawson’s Folk Herb Store!” As he tried his best to memorize the address back then, Klein quickly remembered the details.

He rapped the corners of the table and quickly made a decision.

After using Spirit Dowsing to quickly determine if it was a good or bad idea, Klein walked out the door. When he saw Bogda stand up in a fluster, he returned his ring to him and said warmly with a smile, “I found hope for you.”

“Really?” Bogda asked pleasantly surprised.

Klein did not reply him as he continued talking.

“Your hope lies in the East Borough, on Vlad Street. It’s related to the single term Lawson.”

“If you can’t find it, come back here again on Monday at four in the afternoon.”

“Good. Good.” Bogda nodded as he repeated himself. He excitedly fished out his wallet and produced five pence and three pennies.

He had done according to what Klein had said, without using tips to corrupt a true seer.

The corners of Klein’s lips twitched as he received the money, but he smiled brilliantly.

“I hope you will find hope as soon as possible.”

After Bogda left, he handed over the commission like the previous time and also gave Angelica tips, pretending as though he had collected a soli.

†

East Borough. Vlad Street.

Bogda walked from one end of the street to the other, repeating it three times until his liver started to ache.

Finally, he determined that there was only one place that had anything to do with Lawson on the street. It was the Lawson’s Folk Herb Store, numbered 18 on the street.

Mustering his courage, he walked in and caught the smell of the various herbs. He saw that the owner of the shop had black but very short hair. His face was round and he looked to be in his thirties or forties.

The boss's formal attire resembled that of a village witchdoctor. It was a deep black robe embroidered with all kinds of strange symbols.

"Hello, do you have medicine that can treat my disease?" Bogda asked politely.

The boss raised his head and swept his deep blue eyes across Bogda and smiled.

"Your liver disease is very serious, but the premise of everything is whether you have the money. Do you have enough to pay for the medicine?"

He can tell? Bogda suddenly felt a lot more confident as he nodded frantically.

"How much is your medicine?"

"Ten pounds. It's a very fair price." The boss fished out a bag of herbs from under the counter and said, "Add sufficient water and boil it into medicine. After boiling it, add ten drops of fresh rooster blood, then drink it down immediately. This bag of herbs can be cooked thrice. You will be fine after three times."

As he spoke, he opened the yellowish-brown paper and threw in all sorts of strange herbs.

It sounds extremely shady… Bogda gulped down his saliva and said, "That's it?"

The boss stared at him and immediately smiled.

"Do you still want something else? What about this bag? Once you recover from your liver disease, I can give you a guarantee that your wife will be very satisfied."

He chuckled as he took out a black-papered bag of herbs and suppressed his voice.

“There’s mummy powder inside… Trust me, a lot of aristocrats consume this stuff. They put it in their tea or boil it as soup.”

… Bogda’s confidence in the boss wavered to the point of feeling disgusted.

I believe in Mr. Moretti… He took a deep breath, fished out his wallet, and pulled out the two biggest notes from what little was left of his gold pounds.

Chapter 83 - Carving

◆

Holding onto the yellowish-brown paper bag full of herbs, Bogda staggered out of the Lawson’s Folk Herb Store.

While waiting for a tracked carriage, he suddenly came to a realization.

He had spent ten pounds to buy a bag of stuff?

This was nearly a month’s salary for him!

If it wasn’t for his trust in Anna and Joyce, he wouldn’t have brought that much cash to the Divination Club!

Could it be that the reason why Mr. Moretti only accepted eight pence for his divination, had something to do with his collusion with the boss of Lawson’s Folk Herb Store, so as to earn more? This was a classic scam written on the papers! When Bogda made this connection, he even began to suspect Klein a little. He even began suspecting Joyce and Anna.

When a tracked carriage stopped in front of him, he looked at the herbs in his hand. Unable to bring himself to return, he entered the carriage with a heavy heart.

†

Inside Lawson’s Folk Herb Store.

As the boss watched Bogda leave, he suddenly turned his head and shouted at the door where there was a pile of herbs, “Scharmaine, stop purchasing herbs from today."

"W-why, Master?" A handsome-looking youth with disheveled hair walked out.

The boss smiled and said, "This is the sixteenth customer that has come because of my fame. If this carries on, I believe the Nighthawks, the Machinery Hivemind, and the Mandated Punishers will notice me. When the time comes, I'll need to consider heading to other cities."

"Then, do we need to sublease this store?" Scharmaine nodded in understanding as he asked with concern.

The boss chuckled.

"If you wish to stay, you can be the boss of this store. You are already capable at identifying herbs and concocting medicine. Of course, remember to deposit half of your monthly profits into my anonymous Backlund Bank account."

"But, I haven't learned what you are really good at." Scharmaine was already sick of never staying in a city for more than a year, but he was unwilling to give up learning the magical formulas that his master was good at.

The boss leisurely rocked himself in his seat.

"That's not something you can learn just because you want to…"

†

A blackish-green bubbling liquid appeared in front of Bogda's eyes. It smelled of stinking socks and the color that makes one want to puke made him deeply suspicious about everything he had done today.

When the rooster blood was dropped into the medicine, Bogda's father looked at his son worriedly and said, "I think surgery is the best option."

The few drops of rooster blood bubbled with the boiling liquid before vanishing. Bogda took a deep breath and said, “If this medicine is useless, I’ll consider surgery.”

“The Lord will watch over you.” Bogda’s father gestured a triangular Sacred Emblem across his chest.

By the time the boiling liquid had cooled down, Bogda had no intention of wasting the ten pounds. He raised his right hand and closed his eyes. Flicking his head back, he gulped down the medicine in one go.

The pungent aroma that had the noxious smell of blood, swished around in his mouth as he nearly spat out everything he had just drank.

That night, Bogda had an upset stomach. He went to the bathroom six times, and by the time the crimson moon vanished, he fell asleep groggily.

After an unknown period of time had passed, he jolted awake, having dreamed that he was being reprimanded by his boss at work.

“Thankfully, I took three days of annual leave. I don’t have to rush to work.” Bogda heaved a sigh of relief when he discovered that he felt a lot more spirited.

This was in stark contrast to the sluggish state he was in for the past few weeks.

Bogda subconsciously reached out and pressed the right side of his abdomen. He noticed that the region which previously hurt when under slight pressure felt normal. He only felt the pain from ordinary pressure.

“Don’t tell me it was really effective? That apothecary was clearly just fooling me…” Bogda was both surprised and doubtful as he got out of bed. He stretched himself and felt his health returning to him.

He fell silent for a very long while as he muttered, “According to the apothecary, I still need to drink it twice. Once I'm done drinking, I'll go to the hospital to get a check up from a doctor…

"That apothecary didn't tell me how many times I can drink a day…

"…I still think he's a cheat…"

†

Inside the civilian staff office of the Blackthorn Security Company, from his prior request, Klein received a space where no one would disturb him.

He held a carving knife and emitted his spirituality. He seriously carved the incantations and symbols onto two silver accessories.

The incantation was a request to avoid misfortune and was written in Hermes. The two mysticism symbols symbolized the Evernight Goddess as well as the Empress of Misfortune and Horror.

Aside from that, Klein also added the Path Number that corresponded to the Goddess, 7, and the magical characteristic.

In addition to that, charms and amulets had to be engraved on both sides; and each side's symbols, incantations, and characteristics, their exact locations, or special formats was in the realm of mysticism. The ones that were spread amongst the ordinary populace were filled with mistakes.

At that moment, Klein had a lot of damaged materials to his right. Through repeated practise, and only after he confirmed that he had enough practice, did he dare to begin creating the amulets for Benson and Melissa.

As he calmed his mind, his spirituality spewed out from the tip of the carving knife. The number 7 appeared on the surface of the silver accessories.

He had already finished carving the incantations and symbols on the other side of the accessory. All that was left was to finish the remaining side.

After putting down his knife, all his spirituality chained together as Klein suddenly felt a strange, majestic, and terrifying energy surge throughout the room.

The commotion quickly vanished as the incantations on both sides of the accessory became complete with Klein's Spirit Vision. It emitted a serene blackness.

He put down his carving knife and gently polished the silver accessory that was formed from a circle and a vertical piece. He felt a tinge of coolness from the mild-to-the-touch surface.

"It's done!" He happily placed the finished amulet and another one that he had previously finished into his pocket, planning to find an opportunity to give it to Benson and Melissa.

Amulets created by Beyonders possessed a certain level of effectiveness. They allowed the wearer to unknowingly avoid disasters to a certain extent, but it was nothing too ridiculous. Furthermore, their spirituality would wane bit by bit. Unless one used a high-level ritualistic magic and created a prayer set, a year was the maximum one could use them for. As for high-level ritualistic magic, there was a terrifyingly high spirituality requirement. It wasn't something Klein could endure at the moment.

When the time comes, I can use my spirituality to make another one… Klein thought, nodding as he began tidying up the messy table.

He didn't make one for himself for the moment, because an amulet of that level had limited effects on him. Therefore, his goal was to gain a deeper understanding of incantations before trying to pair it with ritualistic magic. That way he could create a few defensive amulets that could be activated specifically with sound.

After everything was finished, Klein walked out the office and prepared to hand over the damaged materials. That was when he saw Captain Dunn walk over in his black trench coat.

Dunn's deep and gray eyes swept across him as he smiled.

"Klein, the Holy Cathedral has approved it. You're now an official member."

"Really? That's great!" Klein expressed his delight.

Dunn nodded and said with a smile, "You can now receive a make-up pay of three pounds for this week. You'll receive 4.50 pounds every subsequent week until the advance payment is cleared.

"By the way, did I mention the Nighthawks' ritual?

"Every official Nighthawk has to independently complete a mission. Only by doing so will you gain the recognition of your partners. In consideration of the outstanding performance you showed, I believe I can assign you an ordinary mission instead. When that happens, I'll formally introduce you to all the Nighthawks in Tingen City."

Klein replied without hesitation, "Alright!"

Three pounds plus his compensation of seven pounds. Getting a new suit wasn't a problem anymore!

Furthermore, he would still have plenty left over!

Well, who knows when my mission will arrive…

Klein waited all the way till Sunday, the day of Selena's birthday banquet.

†

Changing into his formal suit and using a brush and handkerchief to tidy his half top hat, Klein looked himself in the mirror before walking over to the first floor in satisfaction.

At that moment, Melissa was sizing up Benson's clothes.

"Is there a problem?" Benson raised his cane, feeling a little lacking due to his sister's gaze.

He felt that there was nothing wrong with him when he inspected himself. He was already dressed quite decently.

Melissa stopped staring at him and said with a serious expression, "Benson, that is a very old suit you're wearing."

"There will be a lot of excellent ladies and madams participating in today's birthday banquet. I believe that by wearing that, it'll be a form of disrespect to them."

Klein was originally filled with questions. However, when he heard Melissa's emphasis, he immediately realized what was happening. He went over with a chuckle and said, "Benson and I share a similar build. He can wear my other tuxedo."

He had already informed his siblings about buying a new suit. He explained it away by saying that his clothes had been torn while inspecting certain objects. Therefore, the company generously compensated him. Of course, he concealed the matter of him being "promoted with a pay rise." He was afraid of scaring them and only planned to tell them after half a year.

Such an explanation made Benson and Melissa extremely envious. They felt that the Blackthorn Security Company was an impeccable employer.

"There's no need to, right?" Benson retorted, having not realized the gravity of the situation.

"No, it's extremely important." Klein pushed Benson's shoulders up the stairs. “My tuxedo is hanging on the clothes rack.”

After watching Benson go up the stairs in a daze, Klein turned around and smiled at Melissa.

“Are you hoping that Benson will use the opportunity provided by Selena’s birthday banquet to begin a beautiful new romance?”

He had been reading quite a fair amount of newspapers and magazines recently. He knew that aristocrats and middle-class banquets were typically grounds for blind dates.

Melissa nodded solemnly.

“Yes, Benson has missed out too much because of us.”

Sis, why are you like a mother… Klein looked at Melissa as he suddenly shook his head with an exasperated laugh.

Chapter 84 - Elizabeth

◆ ◆ ◆

Seeing the unconvinced look his sister's face, Klein suddenly felt like it was a good opportunity. He sized her up and said with a solemn expression, "Melissa, I think you aren't showing enough respect to today's banquet as well."

"What?" Melissa wore a puzzled look.

Klein pointed at her neck.

"As a lady, you are lacking a necklace that accentuates that area."

Without waiting for his sister to say another word, he smiled as he fished out a silver amulet wrapped with angel wings from his pocket.

"Thankfully, I prepared one for you."

"…" Melissa was taken aback at first before she asked, "How much was it?"

Sis, your concerns are really quite misplaced… Klein silently scoffed as he explained with a chuckle, "It's actually not very expensive. Since it was in an incomplete state, I imitated an item that I've seen before and engraved blessing incantations and beautiful patterns on them."

"You engraved them?" Melissa was indeed distracted.

"How is it? What do you think of my work?" Klein took the opportunity to hand over the amulet to his sister.

Melissa studied it before gently biting down on her lip.

“I like the surrounding angel feathers.”

If you think the incantations and symbols I engraved are ugly then just say so. There’s no need to mince your words… An amulet’s value is in its effects! The corner of Klein’s mouth twitched. Just as he was about to urge his sister to accept it, he saw Melissa put on the necklace with a forced expression on her face. She then carefully adjusted the positioning of the amulet.

“Perfect.” Klein sized her up and gave her exaggerated praise.

Melissa shot him a glance and looked down at her amulet. She said listlessly, “Klein, you were never like that before. Acting like that…”

“Perhaps it’s because of my good job. With a decent income, I’ve become more confident.” Klein interrupted his sister and gave a preemptive explanation.

Sigh, even though I received the original Klein’s memory fragments, making myself appear natural in most major aspects, certain fine details are still there. I’m still used to presenting my real personality… Especially when I’m getting closer and more familiar with Benson and Melissa… He sighed inwardly.

Melissa seemed to accept his explanation and pouted her lips.

“It’s great that you’re like that… really great…”

After the two engaged in a short conversation, Benson came down having changed his clothes. He wore a white shirt with a black vested tuxedo. His black bowtie and a pair of long, straight trousers made it seem like he had undergone a complete makeover. It was like he was a successful businessman after years of hard work.

Same for the receding hairline… Klein chuckled inwardly.

“Excellent, Benson. It suits you very well,” he said with a brilliant smile while throwing up his hands.

Melissa also nodded in agreement on the sideline.

“The facts show that my clothing is more important than me.” Benson gave a self-derisive comment.

Klein took the opportunity to fish out the remaining amulet and repeated his explanation from earlier before saying, “I also made one for you.”

“Not bad. I’ll bring it with me.” Benson accepted it without a fuss as he quipped, “Klein, I wouldn’t find it odd, even if you were to suddenly know how to style your hair, make clothes, fix watches, and feed curly-haired baboons.”

“Life is just so full of surprises,” Klein replied with a smile.

Following that, the siblings tidied themselves up before walking out the main door. They took a trackless public carriage and arrived at the North Borough’s Fania Street where Selena’s house was.

The Wood family lived in a terrace house as well, but unlike Klein’s place, they had a porch. They had a small lawn in the front which made it look very elegant.

When they rung the doorbell, Klein, Benson, and Melissa only had to wait for around ten seconds before they were able to see the star of the day, Selena Wood.

With a head covered in wine-red hair, the girl gave Melissa a delighted hug.

“I like this dress of yours. It makes you look exceptionally beautiful.”

Standing beside Selena Wood was her father, Mr. Wood, senior employee of Backlund Bank’s Tingen branch.

“Welcome, our honorable elder brother. Welcome, our young historian.” He deliberately addressed Benson and Klein in an exaggerated manner.

Young historian… Why doesn’t he add the description of me having a conscience?… Klein retorted as he took off his hat and replied with a smile, “Mr. Wood, you look much more spirited and younger than I imagined.”

His style of flattery had unknowingly inclined himself to the Foodaholic Empire.

Benson held out his hand and shook Wood’s hand.

“I know a lot of bank employees, but they’re all equally arrogant and stiff, as though they’re the latest machines. None of them are as civilized as you.”

“If you were to meet me at the bank, you might not say that about me.” Wood laughed cheerfully.

After exchanging pleasantries, Selena, who was wearing a new dress, led the siblings inside with a hop in her step. At times, she would mention in her usual tone that, “Elizabeth is already here,” and at other times, she would suppress her voice saying, “Melissa, your brothers are more handsome than I imagined.”

Hey, I have good hearing… Although you are flattering me… Klein helplessly looked at the two sixteen-year-old girls walking ahead of him.

This isn’t right. I’m still quite far from being considered handsome… Tsk, Miss Selena, how ugly did you imagine Benson and I to be? A balding, gloomy, fat man with a pale expression and lifeless eyes? Klein pinched his glabella in passing as he diligently practiced his Spirit Vision.

Miss Selena Wood is healthy. She’s excited and very happy… Mr. Wood’s lungs are a little problematic. Right, I see his pipe… Klein swept his gaze across the crowd while in a good mood.

“Elizabeth, Melissa is here.” At that moment, Selena introduced with a brisk tone.

A girl dressed in a blue frilly dress walked over. She had naturally curled brown hair and adorable baby fat.

Klein was stunned when he saw her because he knew the girl.

He had helped her choose an amulet back at the underground market!

Elizabeth greeted Melissa first before looking at Benson and Klein.

She was stunned and her brows knitted slightly, as though she was thinking about something.

Soon, Elizabeth smiled and politely greeted them as though nothing had happened.

Klein also pretended not to recognize her. Under Wood’s lead, they came to the sofa in the living room where they were introduced to Chris—Selena Wood’s brother—and the other guests.

As Klein watched Benson chat with Chris and the other solicitors happily over the topic of their neighbor, Mr. Shaud, he couldn’t help but feel envious.

I don’t have such socializing skills… He picked up a cocktail from a table in the corner of the room as he listened quietly. At times, he would nod and echo with a smile.

It didn’t take long before all the guests arrived and the banquet officially began.

As too many guests had been invited, the Wood family’s dining table could not accommodate everyone. Therefore, the banquet was done in a buffet manner. The lady’s maid served the steak dishes, roast chicken, fried fish, mashed potatoes, etc and placed them on different tables. The valet was responsible for carving the meat, allowing for guests to take what they wanted.

Klein couldn't help but click his tongue when he saw the elegant enamel plates and silver cutlery. He felt that the Woods were being too extravagant as a middle-class family.

Since they're so rich, why would Chris need so many years to prepare for his wedding?" When he thought of what his sister had previously mentioned, he was puzzled. "Yeah, it was probably to save up money to buy this cutlery that would have taken them so many years to afford. To such families, they have to look respectable!

Amidst his mixed emotions, Klein picked up a plate and walked in front of a dining table. He forked a piece of honey-glazed roasted meat.

At that moment, Elizabeth with her adorable baby fat cheeks came over. As she looked at the food, she whispered, "So you are Melissa's brother… Thank you. Selena likes the amulet I gave her a lot. She said that she felt healthier the moment she wore it."

Selena… Amulet… Klein suddenly recalled the reason for selecting an amulet for the girl beside him.

It was to give to a friend who liked mysticism as a birthday gift!

That friend was Selena? Selena liked items related to mysticism? Klein frowned slightly as he smiled politely.

"It might just be akin to a placebo effect."

After saying that, he began waiting for her to praise Emperor Roselle.

However, Elizabeth's reaction was that of confusion.

"What's a placebo effect?"

"It means it's completely psychological. At times, we believe that we will turn for the better and end up really becoming better," Klein explained crudely.

"No, she said it's different from the amulets that she bought in the past. It feels different," Elizabeth emphasized.

She cocked her head and shot a glance at Klein and said curiously, "I never expected Melissa's brother to be an expert at mysticism."

"As you know, I studied history, so it's common to encounter similar matters." Klein diverted the topic skillfully as he asked, "Are you also studying at the Tingen Technical School?"

"No, Selena and I were Melissa's former schoolmates. Later, she went to a technical school. I study at the nearby Ivos Public School," Elizabeth explained seriously.

A public school wasn't established and maintained by the government. Instead, it was a school that accepted students from the public. It was an evolution of good grammar schools whose goal was to groom graduates so as to enter university. The schools were rather expensive and they would consider the students' family background. It could even be out the of range of typical middle-class families.

She didn't talk much. After choosing her food, she returned to Selena's side.

After congratulating the star of the day on a happy birthday, the banquet gradually came to an end. Klein and Benson were invited to a game of Texas hold'em. The small blind was half a penny, and the big blind was a penny. As for Melissa, Elizabeth, Selena, and their friends, they went upstairs. It was unknown if they were chatting or playing games.

Klein's luck was pretty bad. He played about twenty rounds, but didn't receive a good hand at all. All he could do was fold and be a spectator.

When he flipped the ends of his cards again, he found a Two of Hearts and a Five of Spades.

“Shall I try a bluff once?” Klein considered for a moment, but did not manage to muster the courage. He also resisted the urge to use divination to cheat.

He covered his cards and rapped the table, indicating that he was not making a call. Then, he got up and left the table to head for the bathroom.

Roselle was also a person with a obsessive-compulsive disorder. He actually found an odd reason to name the play style Texas… Klein shook his head as he proceeded forward.

At that moment, he suddenly came to a halt as his pupils constricted.

His spiritual perception told him that there was a strange fluctuation upstairs!

Chapter 85 - Urgency

◆

The strange, twisted, and obscure fluctuation was short-lived. Shortly afterwards, Klein even suspected that he was hallucinating.

If he wasn't considered rather skilled at spiritual perception, it was very likely that he would've written off the abnormality.

Klein frowned as he thought of his sister upstairs. He tightly held onto his cane as he went around the bathroom and hobbled to the Wood household's staircase.

He quickly went upstairs while following the traces with his spiritual perception before arriving at the living room beside the balcony.

This should be it… Klein mumbled as he raised his hand and tapped twice on his glabella.

Auras penetrated the walls and the large wooden door before entering his vision. Most of the colors were ordinary with a blurry outline.

However, one of them in particular was rippling with a sinister dark green color over its surface that slowly corroded inwards.

Just as I thought, something wasn't right. Klein wore a usually stern expression as he reached out with his right hand and removed the silver chain which was wrapped around his left wrist.

He held the silver chain in his left hand, allowing the topaz to dangle before him.

When the topaz stopped swinging, he traced the spherical light and chanted inwardly, “The room before me has danger caused by the supernatural.”

Normally, spirit dowsing was only suitable for divining something that was related to him or the specific circumstances in a small region around him. As such, Klein described the chant in very specific manner—the ‘danger’ could affect him and the room was right in front of him.

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“The room before me has danger caused by the supernatural.”

After repeating the chant seven times, Klein eyes widened as he saw the topaz rotating in a clockwise motion rapidly.

It was an indication that there was indeed danger caused by the supernatural inside the room, and it was of considerable danger!

Selena is a mysticism enthusiast. Did something go extremely wrong when she was dabbling with some sort of ritual? What should I do? Klein massaged his brows and wrapped the chain around his wrist before knocking on the door.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

He knocked on the door three times rhythmically and wore an amiable smile on his face.

The door opened with a creak. Melissa, who was wearing her new dress, appeared in front of Klein.

“Klein, is something wrong?” The girl didn’t expect her brother to be here, so she was momentarily surprised.

Klein responded with a smile, without any sign of distress.

“I was just curious since I heard you gals enjoying yourselves.”

“Sorry for disturbing all of you.” Melissa lowered her head in apology, feeling somewhat embarrassed. “We’re playing with magic mirror divination. Selena knows a lot and it’s very fun.”

Magic mirror divination… Sis, why don’t you gals play Charlie Charlie challenge[1] or Ouija boards?[2] Klein shook his head, feeling both peeved and amused.

He looked behind Melissa and into the living room. He saw Selena with her beaming smile and deep dimples.

However, in his Spirit Vision, the wine-red haired girl, who was holding a silver-coated mirror, was being encroached by the sinister dark green colors.

As his mind whirled, Klein deliberated over his words and said, “Heh heh, I won’t be interrupting your game. Ah, right. Where’s Elizabeth? I had chatted with her over Feysac grammar. She mentioned that she wanted to ask me some questions.”

“Elizabeth?” Melissa sized her brother up and said in an eccentric tone to emphasize her words. “She’s only 16.”

Hey, don’t let your imagination go wild! Klein immediately explained, “It’s a very normal academic discussion. Elizabeth is very interested in history and ancient languages.”

Melissa took a deep look at her brother before saying, “She’s inside. I’ll inform her.”

“Alright.” Klein took a step back and moved away from the door.

While watching his sister turn around, he heaved a sigh of relief. Although it wasn’t the best of reactions, he was thankful that the person in a danger wasn’t Melissa.

He only waited for about ten seconds before a puzzled Elizabeth walked out. She asked curiously, “Mr. Moretti, what’s the matter? I never said I was interested in history and ancient languages…"

At that moment, her sentence was halted by Klein's stern and solemn expression. Her nerves tightened as she seemed to sense that something wasn't right.

Klein took a few steps diagonally as a gesture for Elizabeth to hide partially behind the door.

The girl with the chubby baby fat was influenced by the sudden serious atmosphere so she unknowingly followed.

"As you know, I'm a mysticism enthusiast." Klein halted and turned around, speaking directly to the point.

Elizabeth nodded and replied, "Yes, I even believe that you're an expert at mysticism."

"No, I'm only an enthusiast, but this doesn't stop me from noticing that your magic mirror divination has turned into a problem," Klein said with a heavy tone.

"A problem?" Elizabeth nearly raised her voice as she hurriedly raised her hands to cover her mouth.

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "I know words alone will make it difficult for you to believe me. Return to the room and when Selena isn't paying attention, steal a glance at the front of the mirror which Selena has hidden away from all of you."

"How do you know that she hid the front of the mirror from us?" Elizabeth blurted out.

According to the information from the Nighthawks, more than ninety percent of the time, magic mirror divination cases which involve evil share such similarities… Klein smiled and said, "General knowledge."

When the doubtful and frightened Elizabeth returned to the room, his composed smile vanished instantly. His face looked worried.

Even though we're all in the North Borough, to go from Fania Street to Zouteland Street will take at least 15 minutes of travel by public carriage. By the time Captain arrives after making a round trip, the situation might have deteriorated to a hopeless state… If only Benson and Melissa wasn't here… But I can't deal with those hidden and unknown existences… Do I have any means to contain it… Right, Selena is a mysticism enthusiast. Her room definitely has no lack of extracts, essential oils, herbs, and other items…

Just as Klein was racking his brains for a solution, Elizabeth sat next to Selena by using an excuse of discussing something with her.

A girl opposite her sipped a mouthful of red wine, and under the teasing looks of everyone, despite her blushing, she mustered her courage to ask, "Can you help me divine when I'll meet a romantic and handsome gentleman?"

Selena lightly coughed twice as she rubbed the mirror's back and said, "Mirror, mirror, tell me. When will the gentleman in Yonina's heart appear?"

After repeating it three times, she picked up the mirror and raised it in front of her.

Seizing this opportunity, Elizabeth suddenly turned her body and stretched out her head to take a glance.

According to her expectations, she felt that she would see Selena's face and half her face.

However, the only thing she saw was Selena.

The tiny mirror only had Selena, and it was Selena's entire body!

The mirror was completely pitch-black, with Selena standing in the middle with a cold expression!

Elizabeth trembled all over as she lunged backward and leaned against the sofa. She momentarily forgot to breathe.

She involuntarily trembled and without giving an excuse, got up immediately, stumbling to the door. She didn't even dare to turn back to look at the beaming Selena.

"Yonina's gentleman will appear on the Sunday of the second week, half a year later…"

Amidst giggles, Elizabeth opened the door and left the room to see Klein who was standing in the shadows of the wall lamps in his tuxedo and half top hat.

"Mr. Moretti, I-I…" she stammered in a daze.

Klein calmly smiled.

"Don't disturb the girls and ladies inside."

Infected by his smile, Elizabeth calmed down significantly. She extended her hand and closed the door as she quickly walked over to the wall lamp.

"I saw it. I saw only Selena inside the mirror. A devil-like Selena…" she whispered hoarsely.

Indeed… Klein's expression turned serious as he asked in a deep voice.

"Do you know which is Selena's bedroom? Do you know where her mysticism items are?"

"There. The mysticism items are in there as well." Elizabeth didn't hesitate to point at a room diagonally across.

Klein held his cane and walked over, opening the unlocked wooden door. Under the streetlights and the crimson moon's illumination, he turned a valve and lit a gas lamp.

A pale yellow light glowed as he swept the area and found bottles of extracts, flower essence, boxes of herbal powder, candles and amulets.

These items were placed on tables or neatly arranged inside a rack. Their names were given on sticker labels.

After confirming the items, Klein said to Elizabeth who had followed behind him, “Do you want to save Selena?”

“Yes!” Elizabeth subconsciously nodded before asking in a daze, “Will it be dangerous?”

“A certain amount. After all, I’m only a mysticism enthusiast,” Klein replied frankly.

“A certain amount of danger…” Elizabeth pursed her lips tightly for a few seconds before saying, “Is there anything you need from me?”

Klein smiled warmly as he comforted her, “Don’t be nervous. Now, all you have to do is pretend to return as though nothing had happened. Return to Selena’s side. Five minutes later—remember—five minutes later, tell Selena that you have a pleasant surprise and bring her to me. Knock on the door softly, one long knock and two short ones. Following that, well—leave it to me.”

Elizabeth thought over it silently before nodding seriously.

“Alright.”

Seeing her return to the living room, Klein glanced at his pocket watch. He closed Selena’s bedroom and quickly cleared the desk. Then, he picked the items needed and placed them on a chair.

Immediately following that, he picked up two faint candles with a light aroma. He placed them on the upper left and right corners of the desk.

They were symbols representing the Lady of Crimson and the Empress of Misfortune and Horror.

Klein planned on holding a ritual here to borrow the Evernight Goddess's powers to ward off the mysterious and unknown existence that was affecting Selena!

As he was only a Sequence 9, the ritualistic magic he knew wasn't strong enough. In order to succeed, he needed Elizabeth to lure Selena into a sealing circle, right in the vicinity of the altar!

Therefore, he needed to consider situations in which Selena might notice and resist!

Due to these reasons, Klein planned on using suspension-style ritualistic magic.

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A paper-and-pencil game played using held or balanced pencils to produce answers to questions they ask.

A board with letters, numbers, and other signs around its edge, to which a planchette, movable pointer, or upturned glass moves, supposedly in answer to questions from people at a seance.

Chapter 86 - Prayer

◆

Suspension-style ritualistic magic referred to the termination of a ritual according to the Beyonder's judgment. They could finish other matters first before returning to continue the ritual. Even by doing so, it was still possible to gain the desired effects.

This was a technique produced over 1000 years of ritualistic magic development. After all, many high-level ritualistic magic required multiple steps. The duration ranged from an hour to half a day before finishing. It was difficult to ensure that no one disturbed them during the entire process or that there wouldn't be any accidents.

After gaining lessons from various predecessors through blood and tears, gaining feedback through each failure, being able to suspend ritualistic magic became mainstream at the higher levels while it also indirectly affected the lower level rituals.

However, being able to suspend a ritual didn't mean that the ritual could be suspended at any time. One had to abide by mysticism theory and grasp the corresponding technique. If not, the failure of the ritual was unavoidable. it could even result in a terrifying backlash effect.

Based on Klein's understanding, once one gained the attention of a particular divinity, and the divinity was waiting on the contents of the request, to suddenly say, "Wait, I need to use the bathroom," one can only be congratulated since they might never need to go to the bathroom ever again.

Phew… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he composed himself.

Even though he had held many luck-enhancement rituals and had even designed a corresponding ritual that made an attempt at Justice and The Hanged Man, this was his first actual ritualistic magic that abided by the rules.

After looking at the silver-inlaid cane by the side of the bed, Klein picked up the third candle and placed it in the middle of the desk to represent himself.

He placed the silver bowl that Selena used for rituals in front of the third candle and replaced the ax with a Sacred Emblem. On the left were extracts and essential oils of the Moon flower, Slumber flower, and other plants. While on the right, he placed a plate of salt, a small silver dagger, a piece of fake goatskin, and a quill that was dipped in ink.

Luckily, Selena had a complete inventory; otherwise, he wouldn't have had any way to complete the preparations. As for the moderately fast rituals that Old Neil could perform, they were not something a Seer could do…

From the looks of it, Selena is quite an experienced mysticism enthusiast. Yes, if she wasn't experienced then she wouldn't have gotten into such trouble… She was only 16 and had been exposed to all of this for at least a year… Who had guided her? Ideas flashed through his mind as he picked up Selena's cup from the bed. He poured plain water into it and placed it beside the coarse salt.

He took out his pocket watch and popped it open. He didn't delay any further after taking a glance at it. He traced layers of the spherical light in his mind and quickly entered Cogitation.

The room that was filled with floral fragrance, was suddenly subject to a formless whirlwind. Klein put away his pocket watch and his eyes suddenly turned darker, from brown to black, as though he could see through one's soul.

He extended his palm and laid it against the candle on the top right corner. He chanted inwardly, “Evernight Goddess, you are the Lady of Crimson!”

As Klein chanted, he extended his spirituality and rubbed the candle wick. After a couple of moments, the candle suddenly lit up, and there was a tranquil blue inside the dim yellow light.

“Evernight Goddess, you are the Empress of Misfortune and Horror!”

Just like he did before, Klein successfully lit up the second candle on the top left corner.

“I am your loyal guard; the shield that fends against danger in the dark night, and the long spear that stabs at evil in the silence!”

Whoosh!

The third candle that symbolized Klein began to burn.

The flame was still. He picked up the small silver knife and mimicked Old Neil’s motions. He used incantations, coarse salt, and plain water to fulfill the purification.

Then, he let his spirituality that he had gathered spewed out from the tip of the silver dagger, and naturally merged them as one.

With the silver knife in hand, Klein walked around the bedroom—kneeling when he came to the bed—and sealed the area with a formless barrier.

The light from the street lamp outside the window suddenly disappeared, but the red light was still shining through quietly.

Klein returned to the study desk and picked up the quill. With spirituality and ink, he drew incantations and symbols to ward off misfortune.

When all of that was finished, he put down the things he was holding. Then, he trickled a drop of extract, flower essence, and essential oils on each of the three candles.

Sizzle!

A faint fog filled the room which suddenly possessed an additional hint of mystery.

Next, he burned a few types of herbs before taking a step back from the mixture of fragrances and began reciting the corresponding incantation in the suspension ritualistic magic.

“Standing higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity, the Evernight Goddess.

“I pray for your loving grace.

“I pray for you to show your loving grace to a devout believer of yours.

“I pray for the power of the Crimson.

“I pray for the powers of Misfortune and Horror.

“I pray that you will cleanse your devout believer, Selena Wood, from evil’s corruption and be safe from danger.

“I pray that you would wait for a moment, a moment for that unfortunate girl.”

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“Moon flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!

“Slumber flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!”

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After reciting the incantation, Klein closed his eyes and repeated it seven times in his heart.

He saw that there was nothing out of the ordinary at the altar. He then lifted the silver dagger again and took a few steps back to the door of Selena's bedroom.

He tapped his chest in four spots, forming the shape of the crimson moon. He then turned around and raised his silver dagger.

His spirituality spewed out from the tip once again and sliced open the shape of a door in the formless wall.

Klein knew that even if he opened the door at that very moment, it wouldn't affect the tranquility and holiness of the altar.

He took out his silver vine-leaf pocket watch that had an intricate pattern. He checked the time and went through the process that was to happen in a few moments.

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In the living room on the second floor.

Elizabeth's body was quivering as she lifted her head from time to time to check the wall clock. She was counting down in silence under the illumination of the two gas lamps.

"It's almost time…" As she spoke softly, she looked sideways at the lively girl with long wine-red hair. Her dimples were deep, her smile was bright, and she gossiped well with all the friends around her.

But the more everything looked normal, the more terrified Elizabeth felt. The cold and terrifying Selena in the mirror seemed to be in her head, and she couldn't wipe the image away.

I can't wait anymore! I have to take action now! Elizabeth suddenly stood up. Before everyone's shocked gazes, she smiled and stuttered, “Selena, I-I have a surprise for y-you. Follow me out for a bit.”

“Really? Didn’t you give me a birthday present already?” Selena flipped the mirror the other way around and stood up in surprise.

“A surprise will n-not have any signs.” Elizabeth felt that she had no talent in acting at all.

Without saying another word, she walked toward the bedroom door first. Selena followed behind with a confused smile.

Melissa looked at her two best friends leaving, and unconsciously knitted her eyebrows.

Elizabeth is acting so strange today…

She started acting even stranger after she met Klein…

She suddenly ran out earlier and said that she needed to use the bathroom, but why did she look so anxious?

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Selena’s bedroom entrance.

Elizabeth took a deep breath and said to the girl in front of her, “Let’s go to your room.”

“Elizabeth, you seem very nervous and afraid. Why?” Selena looked puzzled at her good friend as she noticed her body trembling constantly.

“Excitement! Yes, excitement!” Elizabeth shot a glance at the mirror in Selena’s hand as she turned half her body around to knock on the door with a long knock followed by two short successive ones.

“Why are you knocking on the door…” Selena was baffled even more.

Creak. Her bedroom door opened. Dressed in his black tuxedo and half top hat, Klein appeared in front of the two girls.

“Pleasant surprise? This is a pleasant surprise?” Selena’s mouth turned agape as she felt perplexed.

At that moment, Klein suddenly reached out his hand and grabbed her by the wrist. He pulled her into the room as Elizabeth stood rooted to the ground.

Simultaneously, Klein’s silver dagger struck forward as it spewed out his spirituality which quickly mended the door-shaped passage.

The invisible spirituality wall sealed off the room, insulating Selena’s screams within.

Bang!

Klein suddenly closed the door and without even looking at Selena, he rushed to the desk.

The wine-red haired girl stopped screaming as she looked up and surveyed the room.

Her gaze rapidly turned cold as her skin was mottled with paleness. Her fingers rapidly grew sharp fingernails.

And at this moment, Klein had already returned to his Cogitation state. He trickled a drop of Moon flower and essential oil onto each candle as he chanted loudly, “Supreme Lady of Crimson, Great Empress of Misfortune and Horror.

“I pray for you to bestow your loving grace.

“Show your loving grace to the lost lamb, Selena Wood!”

While chanting, he picked up the fake goatskin and pushed it onto the candle representing the requester.

Whoosh!

He felt a cold wind blow behind him as an immense energy assaulted his body.

The goat skin was ignited and Klein threw it into a silver bowl. Then, he crouched downwards in accordance to his preparations to dodge the lethal strike.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The wind howled ferociously, and Klein felt the uncontrolled outpouring of his spirituality surging like the currents.

He saw the goatskin burning in the tiny silver bowl, burning in silent darkness, and he heard heavy items landing on the ground behind him.

Bam! Bang!

The two sounds followed one after another with almost no breaks in between. Wisps of dark green gases plunged into the silver bowl and vanished into the illusory darkness.

Klein rolled to the side and got up. He drew his revolver from his underarm holster. However, he saw that the adorable red-haired girl Selena had fallen to the ground and the silver-coated mirror had shattered into countless broken pieces on the carpet.

Those shattered pieces didn't reflect Selena, but showed the ceiling and Klein's silhouette.

Then, through the Spirit Vision he had left active, Klein saw the wicked dark green in Selena's aura had vanished completely. Everything returned to normal, but she seemed more frail.

Phew… He had just relaxed when he felt a sharp, throbbing pain in his glabella and head.

The sharp pain spread all over his body and made him want to roll around on the floor.

Klein held his fists tight, and the veins on the back of his hands popped and became black. They looked like moving worms.

Simultaneously, he heard silent screams and the whispers that ripped at his mind.

It took him nearly twenty seconds to survive the ordeal. His forehead and vest was soaked in cold sweat.

The ritualistic magic I used sucked up all my spirituality and almost made my Beyonder powers lose control? Klein made a rough guess of the situation.

That also made him notice that he had digested quite a bit of the remaining energy in the potion. Based on his calculations, if he had the strength at the time he consumed the potion, he believed that there was no way he could have survived the ordeal. He could have become a monster straightaway.

"Acting" is quite effective after all… Klein tapped his glabella and wiped away his sweat.

He turned towards the altar, tapped his chest four times, and said out loudly, "Praise the Lady!"

Following that, he extinguished the candles and quickly tidied up the altar.

Finally, he placed the items back into the desk and used his silver dagger to dispel the spirituality wall seal.

Whoosh!

The sound of the wind echoed before subsiding. Klein let out a long sigh of relief and felt a sense of lingering fear.

"If I hadn't walked through the process beforehand and successfully completed the ritual then things would have become troublesome…

Besides, I still don't know who my opponent or enemy is… Thankfully—yes—thankfully, the room was carpeted, so I didn't damage my clothes while rolling…"

He shook his head and reached out to open the wooden door to Selena's bedroom.

"How was it?" Elizabeth took two steps back and asked nervously.

Klein looked at her terrified expression and took off his half top hat before saying with a warm smile, "I've already corrected the mistake of her magic mirror divination. It's been resolved now."

Chapter 87 - Exhortation

◆

“Has it really been resolved?” Elizabeth asked in disbelief.

Klein smiled and nodded casually.

“Yes.”

“It wasn’t too hard.”

That last part was a lie… He added inwardly.

Perhaps it was the fact that Klein had been calm and collected all this time, or perhaps he was her only ray of hope. Either way, Elizabeth didn’t doubt him any more. She patted her chest and heaved a sigh of relief.

“Thank you. You truly are a trustworthy gentleman. I was scared senseless just now.

“How is Selena? Is she fine now?”

“She might remain unconscious for the next few minutes, but she’s completely fine now. Oh, two to three days of weakness is to be expected.” Klein suddenly had a stern expression on his face as he asked, “Who taught her mysticism? Didn’t he tell her about the basic taboos?”

Elizabeth straightened up a little more like a student who had just been scolded by her teacher.

She thought for a moment before saying, “Selena once mentioned that her teacher is Hanass Vincent. She met him a year ago at the Divination Club on Howes Street.”

Hanass Vincent… On the surface, he didn’t seem to teach anything questionable about magic mirror divination, but he secretly been teaching dark divination… If I knew about this earlier, then I would have reported it to Captain and have raided him earlier… Klein felt some regret as he asked in a deep voice, “Was he also the one who taught Selena magic mirror divination?”

Klein was left with a lingering sense of fear because this matter had nearly affected his sister—Melissa!

Elizabeth nodded cautiously.

“Yes, but Selena had tried magic mirror divination a few times without any success. Oh, today she told me that she had a peek at her teacher’s hidden incantations and that there would be no problems.”

She was basically an expert at courting death… Klein massaged his temples to alleviate his headache.

“Do you still remember the incantations she recited?”

Well… Although Hanass Vincent had not voluntarily imparted the dangerous knowledge to Selena, it’s obvious that he had been experimenting with it to extend an invitation to a mysterious, unknown entity. This would become a problem sooner or later. It has to be dealt with quickly before it gets worse and becomes a problem for someone else…

“I remember a part of it…” Elizabeth recalled. “She recited it in Hermes. As you know, I was only exposed to Hermes just recently. All I remember is her using the terms ‘revolve,’ ‘spirit,’ ‘Creator,’ and ‘grace.’”

Creator? The True Creator? Many underground mysticism enthusiasts believe in this ancient entity revered by many secret organizations…

Yes, an entity that appeared 1000 years ago during the early stages of the Fifth Epoch! Klein nodded amidst his thought and said, “Remember to ask Selena about the entire incantation after she wakes up, then find an opportunity to tell me.”

“Alright,” Elizabeth replied without any reservations.

But she immediately asked, feeling a little confused, “Mr. Moretti, why don’t you ask her yourself?”

“I don’t want to let Melissa know I enjoy mysticism. Can you help me keep that a secret?” Klein asked in return.

Elizabeth bit her lips, her eyes sparkling.

“No problem. Melissa prefers machines to mystery. She likes logic over instinct.”

Klein placed his hat in front of his chest and bowed gentlemanly.

“Thank you for your understanding. As for Selena, you do know that she’s not someone who can keep a secret.”

“A more accurate description is that she likes to share secrets with others,” Elizabeth agreed.

Klein put on his hat and thought for a moment before saying, “Remember to tell Selena after she wakes up that she suddenly fainted and shattered her mirror. I think her memory probably stopped at the point when she began the magic mirror divination.”

Seeing Elizabeth nod, he put on a stern expression once again and said, “Remember, be it divinations or trying other mysticism rituals, do not pray to any other entities other than the seven orthodox divinities! You should immediately burn those types of incantations and stay far away from anyone distributing those materials!

“If I hadn’t noticed this in time, Selena would have turned into a monster or an evil spirit in ten minutes, and everyone here would have been killed, myself included!"

Thinking about the ice-cold Selena in the mirror, Elizabeth had no doubts about what Klein had just said. She sighed with lingering fear and said, "I understand and I'll remember. I'll also keep an eye on Selena."

"Alright, go and take care of Selena." Klein raised his black cane and walked toward the stairway.

As he walked, his eyes became darker. He took out a single penny with his right hand and flicked it into the air.

"Selena is alright now.

"Selena is alright now."

†

Klein quickly repeated the description, then caught the falling coin. He saw George III's face facing upward.

This was not a simplification of spirit dowsing. Instead, it was a simplification of dream divination. At that moment, Klein had forced himself into a state of sleep with the aid of Cogitation in order to take a tour through the spirit world. The heads and tails of the coin were a symbolic manifestation.

Heads represented affirmation, while tails indicated dissent!

Great, everything is fine now… Klein twirled the bronze coin with his fingers happily.

That was a simplification only a Seer could accomplish.

†

Elizabeth was staring at Klein's back and saw the flying coin before he caught it.

Only when Klein vanished down the staircase did she turn to enter the bedroom. She saw Selena asleep on the floor with shattered pieces of the mirror beside her.

She held her breath and tiptoed into the room as she looked at the fragments of the mirror. She made sure that the ice-cold Selena was no longer present; instead, the fragments were reflecting the ceiling.

Phew. Put completely at ease, Melissa heaved a long sigh of relief.

But despite her efforts, she couldn't move Selena to the bed. Instead, she nudged her awake.

"Elizabeth… What happened to me? Did I get drunk?" Selena asked weakly, the glow in her eyes having turned considerably dull while her eyes were filled with confusion.

Elizabeth thought for a moment and replied in a serious tone, "No, Selena, something happened to you. Your magic mirror divination invited a malicious entity."

"Is that so?" Selena weakly made her way to the bed with Elizabeth's help. She rubbed her temple as she said, "All I remember is when I started the magic mirror divination."

Elizabeth told a half-truth, "You were a completely different person during the ritual. The you in the mirror was completely different from the you in real life… I was very scared. Using the excuse of giving you a surprise, I brought you into the bedroom before I snatched your mirror and shattered it onto the carpet. After that… after that, you fainted."

"Blessed be the Goddess, you're okay now!"

"I-I don't remember anything…" Selena muttered, her face pale.

The more Selena tried to remember, the emptier her mind became, and the more afraid she felt.

Subconsciously, she glanced at her desk and noticed that the placement of items was clearly different.

Just what happened exactly… Selena tried hard to remember, but she could only faintly remember a man in a black suit and hat. He was not strong or tall, but he had a straight back.

“Selena,” Elizabeth said seriously, “I met a mysticism expert when I went to the underground market to purchase the amulet. He said that we shouldn’t pray to any entity other than the seven orthodox divinities. Otherwise, we would be sure to invite disaster. Promise me, don’t try this anymore. I didn’t even know if what I did could save you just now!”

Selena was scared senseless. She nodded in a daze.

“No more, I’ll never try this again!”

“And, just what did the incantations of your mysticism mean? If I have the chance to meet the mysticism expert again, I will ask him for you,” Elizabeth asked, feigning nonchalance.

Selena rubbed her temple and said, “Spirit that revolves this world, the grace of the True Creator, the eyes that look at fate.”

†

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein smoothed the creases and patted the dust off his clothes as he walked down the stairs.

After that, he took off his hat and returned slowly to the long dining table.

“Where did you go? It has been nearly 10 minutes,” Selena’s brother, Chris, asked as he folded his hand.

Klein smiled and replied, “To the bathroom, then upstairs to acquaint myself with the ladies.”

“I appreciate your honesty,” Chris praised in laughter.

He had the red hair and short build that ran in their family. He wore gold-framed glasses and had quite the personality; he was an exceptional lawyer.

You wouldn’t say that if you knew that I had knocked your sister unconscious upstairs… Klein replied humbly, “We were merely engaging in academic discussion.”

In the area of mysticism…

He put down his hat and returned to his seat. He received his two cards as the new round started.

Flipping up the corner of his cards, he saw the King of Spades and the Ace of Diamonds.

Looks like I became luckier… Is this payback for doing a good deed? Klein took out a coin in preparation to place his bet.

Since Hanass didn’t intentionally reveal the incantation to Selena, there’s no need for me to urgently report this to Captain…

He continued his cautious playstyle in the following rounds, only betting when he had a good hand. He didn’t take any chances to bluff and didn’t win much. When the game ended at half past ten, he had won six pence.

“I won two soli and eight pence.” Benson fiddled with the notes and coins in his hand.

“I didn’t expect you to be an expert at poker,” Klein praised, laughing.

“No, I don’t play often, but I know that this is the same as negotiation. You have to hide your cards and figure out the hidden cards that people have before using various means to scare or entice them…” Benson hadn’t finished his sentence when he saw Melissa and the rest coming down from the second floor.

“It’s time to go home,” said Klein as he glanced at his sister and her friends while rubbing his temples.

The throbbing pain in his head remained.

After that, Klein went to the bathroom once more and took the opportunity to walk past Elizabeth and obtained the complete incantation.

Returning to his siblings, he smiled and said, “Oh right, I suddenly remembered something. I need to head back to the company for a while. Shall we go to Zouteland Street first? It’ll be quick.”

Chapter 88 - Report

◆ ◆ ◆

“What is it?” Benson asked casually.

Melissa looked at her brother with a serious expression because she felt that Klein’s behavior tonight was strange as well. In fact, it only looked slightly more normal than Elizabeth’s behavior and, later, Selena’s.

Klein chuckled as he had long thought of an excuse and said, “There was a mistake in one of the document descriptions, and I already informed my colleagues that I would hand it over to them when I arrive early at the company tomorrow morning. So, I can either amend it now since it’s on the way or wake up at least half an hour earlier tomorrow morning. No doubt, I’ve chosen to do the former.”

“Ah, no wonder. I had a nagging feeling that your mind wasn’t in the game, so you were actually thinking about work.” Benson smiled, suddenly enlightened. “No, I apologize. I should say, the card game helped you think.”

“Alright, we shall wait for you.” Melissa looked away and smoothed out the ruffles of her engageantes.

As it was past the operation time for both track and trackless public carriages, the three siblings bid their hosts farewell before hiring a carriage nearby. It cost two soli for forty-five minutes.

“I’ve heard that every carriage driver that rents out their own carriage adds ridiculous fees,” Benson complained in a low voice. He had used most of the money that he won earlier to pay the driver.

Klein smiled and replied, “I think it’s very acceptable. After all, it is almost eleven o’clock.”

“I was just joking. I thought that we could actually share the carriage with other guests. Forty-five minutes can take us to many places.” Benson looked out of the window at the other people who were hiring carriages one after another.

I know, ride-sharing… Klein rubbed the top of his silver-inlaid walking stick and said, “We don’t have a problem with that, but the other customers might. Benson, did you notice that they care a lot about their image and at looking respectable? I think that might be common among the middle-class.”

“Hmm.” Benson nodded seriously and said, “The Wood family was much more extravagant than I imagined. However, Wood’s weekly salary is only four pounds per week… Heh, ‘looking respectable’ might be the biggest difference between the middle-class people and curly-haired baboons.”

Do you have something against curly-haired baboons… Klein almost burst out laughing.

Melissa didn’t join in on their discussion. She took a seat and sized up Klein from time to time. Her gaze was sending chills down his spine.

The two-wheeled horse carriage was traveling quickly in the dark, quiet street. They arrived at Zouteland Street in only twelve minutes.

“Wait for me here. Five minutes, it won’t be more than five minutes,” Klein emphasized. He put on his top hat, grabbed his cane, and got off the carriage.

As the carriage driver was charging based on time instead of distance, the driver didn’t mind waiting.

Going up the stairs, Klein arrived at the Blackthorn Security Company and knocked on the door.

Within ten seconds, the door was opened wide. Leonard Mitchell appeared before him in a vest and shirt.

“You’re not on duty tonight,” Leonard pointed out, looking surprised to see him.

Klein was only on guard duty once a week for the Chanis Gate. They maintained a regular work schedule for the rest of the time. As for emergencies that happened at night, they would be dealt with by the Sleepless who enjoyed the night.

However, only getting two to three hours of sleep a day can cause baldness and memory loss… Whenever he thought about this, Klein couldn’t help but ridicule Captain Dunn Smith in his mind.

“I have something to report,” he answered simply.

“There’s a mission?” Leonard asked casually, moving aside.

When Klein entered the reception hall, he saw Dunn coming out in his black trench coat. His gray eyes were dark as usual.

“Captain, I came across an incident involving the supernatural.”

“Give me the details,” Dunn asked directly.

Klein recounted the whole story from earlier and reported the steps that he took to deal with it.

“…So, I think there’s a need to investigate Hanass Vincent.”

Back then he believed that since the evil entity that was invited by the magic mirror divination hadn’t caused a disaster, and there was no indication that he was in extreme danger. That meant that the entity probably still needed more time. It didn’t want to awaken or possess Selena ahead of time; therefore, as long as its goals were not exposed, the evil entity chose to observe the situation. Under such circumstances, it wasn’t hard for Elizabeth to trick Selena to head to the entrance of the bedroom.

“You’ve done well. You seized the opportunity before the evil spirit fully materialized to possess her body completely.” Dunn lifted his head lightly and said, “Let us take care of the follow-up investigations. You can return home to rest.”

Klein heaved a sigh of relief and chortled.

“I thought you would make this my initiation mission and make me complete it alone.”

From the incantation that Elizabeth provided him, Hanass Vincent was certainly dangerous…

“That’s because there’s already an initiation mission for you.” The desultory Leonard chuckled by the side.

“What?” Klein was shocked.

Dunn smirked and explained with his soothing voice, “At around seven tonight, the police station referred us to a case. From our initial assessments, there doesn’t seem to be any danger or urgency, so it was decided that you would complete it on your own tomorrow.”

“Alright, don’t ask about the case. Rest well tonight and move your day off to Tuesday or Wednesday.”

Captain, doing that only affects my sleep… Plus, Monday afternoon is when the Tarot Gathering takes place… Do I need to send a postponement notification to Justice and The Hanged Man? Klein shook his head and smiled bitterly. He then bade farewell and left.

Exiting the stairway, he suddenly sensed something. He lifted his head to look towards the carriage that they had hired. He only saw Melissa looking at him silently through the window.

When they made eye contact, Melissa suddenly looked away and sat properly.

The corner of Klein's mouth twitched, and he got into the carriage, pretending nothing had happened.

Under the crimson moon and pure night sky, the carriage moved quickly down one street after the other.

When they returned home, Klein yielded the bathroom to Benson for his shower while he went to Melissa's bedroom and knocked twice.

Melissa, who was planning to use the other bathroom, opened the door and looked at her brother suspiciously.

"Melissa, do you have any questions that you'd like to ask? I know you do," Klein asked straightforwardly.

Don't just observe me in silence…

Melissa lips trembled and creased her eyebrows as she spoke.

"Klein, what did you do to Elizabeth? She seemed a bit off."

"And, later on, Selena started acting very strange too."

Klein had prepared his reply.

"Do you know that Elizabeth and Selena are mysticism enthusiasts?"

"…Yeah, but I don't like it. I don't think there's anything that can't be explained in this world," Melissa answered seriously after being momentarily taken aback. "Anything that seems unexplainable is due to the fact that the knowledge we have grasped is insufficient."

"Yeah, I think so too," Klein echoed her sentiments guiltily.

I once thought so too, until I successfully courted death…

He coughed lightly and continued, "Mysticism involves Hermes, the language used specifically for ancient worship ceremonies and prayers.

Elizabeth knew that I am good at it. Heh, it is within a historian's domain after all. So, she asked me about the pronunciation of corresponding words and their actual meanings."

Melissa nodded lightly, signifying her acceptance of her brother's explanation. It went according to her understanding of both parties.

"As for why Elizabeth and Selena became weird later on, I have no idea about the actual reasons." Klein removed himself from the picture first, then he said, "But, I can make a guess."

"You managed to guess it?" Melissa blurted out in shock.

Klein lifted his hand and patted his lips.

"I could guess from the contents of what Elizabeth asked. The few Hermes words were related to divination, as well as the worshiping of evil entities. Yes, when Selena did the magic mirror divination, did she recite in Hermes?"

He proactively brought that up in order to remind his sister to keep her guard up against similar situations. It would be even better if she could cut off contact with Selena and Elizabeth.

"Yes…" Melissa replied after a delay. "I think I understand why Elizabeth and Selena were acting strange…"

Then, Klein asked deliberately, "As Selena's magic mirror divination involved a wicked, illegal belief, perhaps Elizabeth found an opportunity to criticize and correct Selena's mistake after she clarified with me the actual meaning of the Hermes that Selena had used?"

"I think so," Melissa didn't doubt this conclusion because she had made the same deduction herself.

Klein let out a breath of relief upon seeing that he had successfully directed the flow of the conversation.

"In the future, it's best if you advised Selena to put her beliefs in the orthodox."

Then, he tapped four spots on his chest just like a priest.

"Yes, I will!" Melissa replied, sounding determined.

"And, don't tell Elizabeth and Selena about our deduction or about the things that I've said. I actually promised Elizabeth not to tell you," Klein emphasized.

"Okay." Melissa nodded lightly.

†

On Monday morning at eight, in the Blackthorn Security Company.

Klein took off his hat and greeted Rozanne and Bredt. After exchanging a few words, he entered Captain Dunn Smith's office.

He pushed the door open and looked around. He suddenly had a shock, because Dunn's face was pretty pale and his gray eyes looked clouded, without their usual darkness.

"What happened? Hanass Vincent?" Klein asked in concern and shock.

Dunn rubbed his forehead, took a sip of coffee, and replied with a bitter smile, "Hanass Vincent is dead."

"Who killed him ahead of time?" Klein sat before Dunn with his cane in hand.

Dunn didn't answer immediately but sighed and said, "Leonard and I went to look for Hanass Vincent last night. As his usual behavior didn't show any unusual signs and there was nothing odd about his house, I decided to enter his dreams to look for clues."

"In his dream, in his dream…"

His eyes showed fear as Dunn repeated himself twice, that was when he said, “In his dream, I saw a cross, a huge cross, one that blotted out the sky. On the huge cross there was a naked man nailed to it with black nails. His arms and legs were pinned with his arms extended outwards. He was hung upside down, his head hung low like a chandelier. There was strips of blood stains on his body.”

“Upon seeing such a scene, I lost consciousness. I left Hanass Vincent’s dream, and when I woke up, Leonard told me that Hanass had died in his sleep.”

“Huge cross, hung upside down, the man covered in blood stains… It’s similar to some of the stories of the True Creator that some of the hidden organizations believe in, but there are considerable differences too…” Klein made a deduction in suspicion.

The few hidden organizations that believed in the True Creator had only appeared in the last two or three centuries, such as the Aurora Order and the Iron and Blood Cross Order. However, similar such depictions had never disappeared over the past thousand plus years.

Dunn rubbed his forehead again. “We’ll follow-up on this. As for you, go ahead and complete your initiation mission first.”

Chapter 89 - A Simple Mission

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein nodded and said, “Alright, but I still don’t know what my mission is.”

“Nothing dangerous. I haven’t seen any signs of danger at the very least,” Dunn emphasized. “This is a case which was referred to us by Golden Indus’s police department. The famous philanthropist Sir Deweyville has been experiencing unusual harassment over the past month. Be it his bodyguards, the security guards he has employed, or the police, none of them have been able to find the culprit. Inspector Tolle, who is in charge of this case, suspects that it involves Beyonder powers and, thus, handed the case over to us.”

I saw Sir Deweyville at the library the other day and noticed that he was feeling down and lethargic. So it was a result of being harassed… Klein knitted his brows and asked, “What kind of harassment is it?”

There hasn’t been any physical harm inflicted yet; thus, the harassment wouldn’t be considered dangerous.

“Sir Deweyville hears moans and cries every night, no matter where he is, be it Tingen or not. This has affected his sleep quality negatively.” Dunn flipped the notes in his hands. “He has seen a psychiatrist and has asked his butlers and servants to confirm that it was not an illusion. Having confirmed that it isn’t a hallucination, thus, it is suspected that someone is harassing him.”

Closing the file, Dunn looked up at Klein.

"Change into your probationary inspector uniform in the break room, then meet Inspector Tolle who is in charge of this case at the Shooting Club. He'll provide you with more details."

"Probationary inspector uniform?" Klein asked instinctively.

Dunn rubbed his forehead and smiled.

"Half of our salary comes from the police department, and the title of probationary inspector doesn't merely belong in the records. When you met Leonard and I for the first time, we were also wearing uniforms. This is a perk held by fully official members. Yes, the 'Perks' as Emperor Roselle would call it."

Unfortunately, I can't wear it as a casual outfit. Otherwise, I'd be able to have another spare outfit when my clothes are being washed… Klein picked up his cane and bade farewell before leaving the captain's office.

He headed toward the break room and saw a black and white checkered uniform, complete with leather boots, placed on the table. The uniform's peak cap was embroidered with the logo of the police department—two crossed swords and a crown. Located on the shoulder was a black and white epaulet with a shimmering silver star.

"This is a probationary inspector uniform?" Klein glanced at the uniform and noticed a string of numbers under the silver stars: 06-254.

He had some understanding of the police rank structure in the Loen Kingdom. He knew that those at the top were the minister and the chief secretary of the police force. Under them were the respective commissioners, deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners of the various police departments. Those in the middle were superintendents and inspectors, while those at the very bottom were the sergeants and constables.

After closing the door, Klein took off his suit and hat before changing into the uniform.

He hung his suit up and left the room. He made his way into the clerk's office and looked at himself using the full-body mirror that Rozanne brought to him.

The young man in the mirror had black hair with gentle brown eyes. The uniform on his body accentuated him with a heroic spirit.

"Not bad." Klein praised himself narcissistically. He left his cane in the office and left the Blackthorn Security Company.

Inside his pockets were a full set of equipment, ranging from weapons to his police badge.

†

At the hall of the Shooting Club.

Klein met Inspector Tolle immediately since he was the only one in a police uniform.

Of course, there's me too… Klein thought.

There were two silver stars on the epaulets of Inspector Tolle's uniform. His clothes were propped up by his stomach and he had a thick blond mustache. His frame was tall but not imposing. Perhaps, it was imposing in the past.

"Moretti? Klein Moretti?" Inspector Tolle noticed Klein and welcomed him with a smile.

"Hello, Inspector Tolle, I believe that you have the right person," Klein replied amicably, then following his memories, he raised his right arm, kept his fingers straight and tight before saluting.

Tolle chuckled.

"I can tell that you'll be a young man who's easy to get along with. That's good. Shall we head to Sir Deweyville's place now?"

Even though he was a higher rank than Klein, the tone in his query was obviously friendly.

“No problem.” Klein thought for a moment before he said, “You can fill me in on the details of the case on the carriage.”

“Sure.” Tolle stroked his thick blond beard and guided Klein out of the Shooting Club. They boarded a carriage which was stopped on the other side of the road.

There was the “two crossed swords and a crown” police emblem on the carriage, and it came with a personal carriage driver.

“Sir Deweyville is a believer of the Goddess, so we referred the case to you,” Tolle said quickly as he sat down.

“I know. The fine knight is a common figure on the covers of newspapers and magazines.” Klein flashed a friendly smile.

Tolle picked up the document docket beside him and removed the seal before taking out the materials inside. As he flipped through them, he explained, “Regardless, even if you are aware of it, I need to provide you with the detailed briefing.

“Sir Deweyville is one of the richest tycoons of Tingen City. He built his career beginning with a lead and porcelain factory. It has now expanded to steel, coal, shipping, banking, and bonds. He is also a great philanthropist that has been praised by the king, having set up the Deweyville Charity Foundation, the Deweyville Trust, and the Deweyville Library… He was also knighted five years ago… If he were willing to run for mayor, I don’t think anyone in Tingen City could contest with him.

“But Backlund is his goal; he wants to become a member of parliament. We once suspected that the harassment might be related to this, but we have no clues to this date.”

Klein nodded slightly and said, “We can’t rule out that possibility, but there's nothing to confirm that suspicion as of now."

Tolle didn't dwell on this point. He continued, "From the sixth of last month, Sir Deweyville has heard painful skin-numbing moans every night when he sleeps, akin to a patient's fight for his life. He has checked the surrounding rooms multiple times, but he hasn't found anything unusual. His butler and servants have also confirmed that they heard such sounds, but it is simply softer for them.

"In the beginning, Sir Deweyville believed that this matter would pass quickly and didn't pay too much attention to it. But the moans became more and more frequent, to the point of occasionally happening during the day. There was even the addition of heart-wrenching cries."

"This has made Sir Deweyville lose sleep, time and time again he had no choice but to leave Tingen to his villa in the villages. But it was to no avail. The moans and cries persisted. Similarly, the phenomenon persisted even in Backlund, just that it wasn't as serious.

"He employed security guards to check his surroundings, but they didn't find any clues. Our preliminary investigations also came up with nothing.

"Sir Deweyville, who has been tortured for more than a month, is on the brink of collapse. He visited psychiatrists time and time again but was unable to have his problems resolved. He told us that if this problem was not solved within a month, he would leave Tingen and head to Backlund. He believes that there would be people who can help him there."

After listening to Tolle's explanation, Klein quickly analyzed and came up with a few possibilities.

He offended a Beyonder and is suffering from a curse?

No, if he was suffering from a curse, the butlers and servants in his house wouldn't hear the same things…

There's a Beyonder with unknown motives hidden among his servants and bodyguards?

But the problem stems from the point that there has been no requests made of Sir Deweyville over the past month…

Perhaps Sir Deweyville accidentally came into contact with some vengeful evil spirit?

That possibility cannot be ruled out…

The carriage entered the Golden Indus borough while Klein was still deep in thought. It stopped at the door of Sir Deweyville's house.

A steel fence surrounded a lush garden. There were two statues by the side of the hollowed metal gates, a magnificent fountain that showered a marble sculpture with water, an expansive two-story building, as well as a path wide enough to fit three carriages.

"Even the knight's house is only two stories high… The newspaper reported that Backlund is experimenting with building ten-story apartments…" Klein got off the carriage and saw a sergeant with three chevron stripes walking over briskly.

He looked at Klein and saluted.

"Good morning, Sir!"

"Good morning." Klein nodded with a smile.

Tolle smiled.

"This is Sergeant Gate, you can tell him if you need anything.

"This is Probationary inspector Moretti, a history and psychological expert from the police department," Tolle introduced Klein to Gate.

…I don't deserve such a title… Klein felt a little embarrassed.

After the greetings, Gate pointed to the two-story building behind the fountain and said, “Sir Deweyville is waiting for us.”

“Alright.” Klein caressed the revolver at his waist.

That was his best bet against an enemy.

Since he was in police uniform, he could put his revolver in a holster at his hip, making it easier to draw it.

As they spoke, the trio made their way down the path, around the fountain, and arrived outside the door.

By then, the door was already opened by a servant who was waiting politely at the side.

As Klein pretended to adjust his hat, he tapped twice on his glabella to activate his Spirit Vision before entering the house.

The square-faced Sir Deweyville was massaging his forehead in the hall. He was clearly in low spirits. His blond hair and blue eyes were either dry or dull as though he had aged considerably by at least five years.

“Good morning, Sir Deweyville.” Klein, Tolle, and Gate bowed at the same time.

Sir Deweyville stood up and forced out a smile.

“Good morning, Officers. I hope that you can resolve what has been causing me distress.”

At that moment, Klein squinted and slightly knitted his brows.

Other than his low spirits, Klein couldn’t find any other problems with Sir Deweyville.

That’s odd… He thought for a moment before he said, “Sir, in which room did you first hear the moans?”

"My bedroom." Sir Deweyville shook his head.

"Can we take a look?" inquired Klein.

"Haven't you checked it many times?" the middle-aged butler interrupted from the side.

It was clear that he didn't notice that Klein was the partner of the kind-hearted soul that had "not pocketed the money that he picked up."

Klein smiled, composed.

"Those were my colleagues, not me."

"Sir, this is an expert sent by the police agency," Tolle said, taking the opportunity to introduce him.

Deweyville looked at the young expert and said, "Alright, Cullen, take him to my room."

"Sir, I hope that you will come with us," Klein said seriously.

Deweyville hesitated for a few seconds before saying, "If that can solve the problem…"

He grabbed his cane as he spoke. He made his way feebly toward the staircase with the butler Cullen and several guards beside him, ready to support him if needed.

Klein surveyed the surroundings as he followed behind them silently.

One step, two steps, three steps… They arrived at the second story and entered the master bedroom.

Klein didn't have the time to survey the surroundings when the hair on his body stood on their ends.

This was feedback from his spiritual perception!

Chapter 90 - Findings By Sight

◆

Sir Deweyville’s bedroom was larger than the living room and dining room of Klein’s house combined. It was partitioned into a place for a bed, a living space, a changing room, a bathroom, and a study desk and bookshelves. The furnishings were exquisite, and the details were extravagant.

But to Klein, the light seemed dimmer and the temperature was several degrees colder than the outside.

At the same time, he seemed to hear the sound of sobbing and moaning, as though one was putting up a last-ditch struggle.

Klein was in a trance, and everything suddenly returned to normal. The sunlight shone brightly through the window and poured over the entire bedroom. The temperature was reasonable, neither too high nor low. The surrounding policemen, bodyguards, and butler were quiet. No one spoke.

This… He looked sideways at the classic yet luxurious bed. He felt there were pairs of blurry eyes lingering in the shadow, like the moths that fearlessly stayed around gas lamps.

Taking a few steps closer, Klein lost the earlier images from his Spirit Vision.

Not a standard wraith or an evil spirit… What is it exactly? Klein frowned and recalled the mysticism knowledge that he had been learning all this time.

From what he had seen, the mission would have been easy if it was passed to a Corpse Collector, Gravedigger, or Spirit Medium. It was obviously not within his domain of expertise.

Holding back his urge to use divination as an investigative approach, Klein looked around slowly to look for other traces to confirm the few guesses on his mind.

“Inspector.” Sir Deweyville hesitated and asked, “Did you discover anything?”

“If it were that easy, I believe my colleagues wouldn’t have waited until now,” Klein replied, glancing at the philanthropist subconsciously.

Just as he planned to retract his gaze, he suddenly saw that there was a faint white human figure reflected behind Sir Deweyville in the mirror behind him.

No, there were many figures overlapping each other, resulting in a white distorted figure!

The figure flashed by and Klein seemed to hear faint sobbing.

Phew… He let out a breath to ease his nerves, having almost drawn his gun out out of fright.

Heightened spiritual perception with Spirit Vision will one day scare me senseless… Klein tried relaxing his tense nerves by joking around before redirecting his focus back onto Sir Deweyville.

This time, he saw something different.

Now that he was in the bedroom, Sir Deweyville had a faint and twisted figure shimmering around him. It even dimmed the lighting of that area.

Every flash was accompanied by an illusionary cry and moan that could hardly be detected by an ordinary person.

Hardly audible for an ordinary person under ordinary circumstances? Is it because it's daytime? Klein nodded as he thought.

He had an initial judgment for this case.

It was resentment that was haunting Sir Deweyville. It was the remnant spirituality that resulted from unresolved emotions before a human's death!

If such feelings of resentment stayed in this world over a period of time, they would become a terrifying wrathful spirit after becoming stronger.

However, Sir Deweyville was a famous philanthropist. Even Benson, who was a picky person, was in awe of him. Why would he be bogged down with the resentment of the dead? Is he actually two-faced? Could it be the means of a Beyonder with nefarious intentions? Klein guessed the possibilities suspiciously.

After some thought, he looked towards Deweyville and asked, "Honorable Sir, I have a few questions."

"Please ask." Deweyville sat down wearily.

Klein organized his thoughts and asked, "When you leave here to go to a new place, such as the village or Backlund, do you temporarily get at least half a night's worth of peace before the situation resumes and gradually worsens? Even when you sleep during the daytime, are you able to hear moaning and sobbing sounds?"

Deweyville's half-closed eyes suddenly widened as his deep blue eyes were suddenly beaming with hope.

"Yes, did you find the root of the problem?"

Only then did he realize that due to his extended period of insomnia and his poor mental state, he had completely forgotten to inform the police about such an important clue!

Seeing that Klein's question had uncovered something useful, Inspector Tolle relaxed. He knew that the Nighthawk had found a clue.

Sergeant Gate was surprised and curious too. He couldn't help but look closely at the psychological expert, Klein.

It coincided with the traits of gradual entanglement and the feature of accumulation… Having received the feedback, Klein had basically confirmed the cause.

Then, he had two ways of helping Sir Deweyville to shake off the burden. One was to set up an altar directly around the man and remove the resentment of the dead entirely using ritualistic magic. The second option was to use other mysticism measures to find the root of the problem and solve it from there.

Taking into consideration the rule of preventing commoners from learning of Beyonder powers to the best of his abilities, Klein planned on first attempting the second method. Only if it failed would he pray to the Goddess.

"Sir, yours is a psychological illness, a mental problem," he spoke nonsense with absolute seriousness while looking at Deweyville.

Sir Deweyville knitted his brows and asked in reply, "Are you telling me that I'm a mental patient, that I need to enter an asylum?"

"No, nothing that serious. Actually, most people have psychological problems to one degree or another," Klein casually comforted him. "Please allow me to introduce myself again. I am a psychological expert from the Awwa County Police."

"Psychological expert?" Deweyville and his butler looked at Inspector Tolle who they were familiar with.

Tolle nodded seriously and confirmed that it was true.

"Alright, what do you need of me for my treatment? Besides, I don't understand why my butler, my bodyguards, and my servants will hear the sobbing and moaning as well…" Deweyville held his walking stick with both hands, looking confused.

Klein replied professionally, "I will explain it to you after it's resolved."

"Please tell your butler, your servants, and your bodyguards to leave. Inspector Tolle, Sergeant Gate, please leave as well. I need a quiet environment to begin the initial treatment."

A "treatment" with magic… Inspector Tolle added in his heart and nodded at Sir Deweyville.

Deweyville fell silent for more than ten seconds before saying, "Cullen, take them to the living room on the second floor."

"Yes, Sir." Butler Cullen didn't retort since the request was made by a police officer, a probationary inspector, and a psychological expert.

After watching them leave the room one after another and closing the door behind them, Klein looked at Deweyville who had dark blond hair and blue eyes, and said, "Sir, please lie down on your bed. Relax and try to sleep."

"…Alright." Deweyville hung his coat and hat on the clothes rack before walking slowly to the side of the bed and then laid down.

Klein drew all the curtains, turning the room dark.

He took off his pendant and quickly used spirit pendulum to determine any dangers. Then, he sat on the rocking chair near the end of the bed, traced a spherical light in his mind, and entered Cogitation. He allowed the world of spirituality to extend before his eyes.

Then, he leaned against the back of the chair and fell into a deep sleep, allowing for his Astral Projection to make contact with the external world.

He was using the technique of dream divination, to let himself be in the spiritual environment like he was dreaming, so as to communicate with each and every resentment that plagued Sir Deweyville.

Only communication would be able to give him an answer and solve the problem!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

A sad sob reverberated in Klein’s ear, and he “saw” that the white translucent figures were floating around him.

A painful groan echoed as Klein, who barely regained his mental processes, extended his right hand and touched one of them.

Suddenly, the figures swarmed at him like moths darting toward a fire.

The image before Klein’s eyes suddenly turned blurry and his brain seemed to be cleaved into two. Half of his mind was calmly observing while the other half saw a “mirror.”

In the “mirror,” there was a young girl dressed in worker garbs. She looked strong and fit as she walked in a dust-covered factory while her head throbbed in pain.

Her eyesight occasionally turned blurry and her body became skinnier by the day.

She seemed to hear someone calling her Charlotte, and the voice said that she had a hysterical illness.

Hysterical illness? She looked towards the mirror and saw that she had a faint blue line on her gum.

†

The “mirror’s view” switched and Klein saw another girl called Mary.

She too walked into the lead factory, young and lively.

Suddenly, half of her face started twitching, followed by her arm and leg on the same side.

“You have epilepsy.” She heard someone say while her whole body was convulsing.

As she twitched and fell, the intensity increased before she finally lost consciousness.

†

There was another girl, and she was depressed. She was walking around the street in a daze, to the point of having a speech impediment.

She had a very bad headache, and she had a blue line on her gums. She would also convulse from time to time.

She met a doctor, and the doctor said, “Lafayette, this is a result of lead poisoning.”

The doctor looked at her with pity and saw her convulse again. She twitched continuously, and the doctor saw that her eyes had lost all their light.

†

Many images appeared before Klein, and he remained immersed within them and calmly observed.

Suddenly, he understood the plight of the girls.[1]

The female workers had been in extended contact with white lead. They had all died of lead poisoning as a result of long-term exposure to the dust and powder.

Sir Deweyville had a lead factory under his name and also two porcelain factories. All of them hired comparatively cheaper female workers!

Klein “saw” all of that in silence, and felt that there was something that still had not been clarified.

Such “death resentment” was insignificant. They could not affect reality or have any effect on Deweyville even when accumulated.

Unless— Unless there was a more powerful and stubborn resentment that had united them all.

Just then, he “saw” another girl.

The girl was no more than 18 years old, but she was glazing the porcelain in the factory.

“Hayley, how are you doing lately? Do you still have a headache? If it gets too serious, remember to inform me. Sir Deweyville has enforced a rule that people with severe headaches cannot continue being in contact with lead and must leave the factory,” an elder lady asked with concern.

Hayley touched her forehead and replied with a smile, “Just a little, I’m okay.”

“Tell me tomorrow if it gets any worse,” the elderly lady exhorted.

Hayley agreed. When she returned home, she massaged her forehead from time to time.

She saw that her parents and brother had returned, but their faces looked hopeless.

“Your father and brother lost their jobs…” her mother said as she wiped her tears.

Her father and brother hung their heads low and muttered, “We will try to get some work at the harbor.”

"But we don't even have bread money for the day after tomorrow… Maybe we will need to move to Lower Street…" Hayley's mother looked at her with reddened eyes. "When are you getting your pay? It's ten soli, right?"

Hayley massaged her forehead again.

"Yeah, Saturday. Saturday."

She didn't say anything else and remained as quiet as usual. She returned to the factory the next day and told her supervisor that her headache recovered and she felt fine.

She smiled and walked five kilometers back and fro to work daily. She massaged her head more and more frequently.

"You haven't found another job?" Hayley couldn't help but ask her father and brother while looking at the soup which was boiling with black bread.

Her father said in frustration, "The economy is in a recession. Many places are retrenching. Even the harbor jobs are sporadic. I could only get three soli and seven pence a week."

Hayley sighed and fell into her usual silence. However, she hid her left hand that was twitching suddenly.

On the second day, she walked to work again. The sun was shining brightly, and the street grew busier and busier with pedestrians.

Suddenly, she started convulsing all over.

She fell to the side of the road, foam spewing out of her mouth.

She looked up into the sky and her gaze turned into a blur. She saw people walking past and others getting close. She saw a carriage pass by with the Deweyville family emblem with a white dove with its spread wings as if ready to take off.

She tried hard to open her mouth, but she couldn’t make a sound.

So, she didn’t say a thing, quiet as ever.

But the difference this time was that she was dead.

---

†

The original inspiration for these girls come from Jack London’s “The People of the Abyss.”

Chapter 91 - Solution

◆

The scenery started to distort, turning illusory and began to fade away.

After Klein left his dreamlike state, his vision adapted to the darkness in the room.

He knew that with one pound and ten soli, which was thirty soli a week, Benson didn’t have an easy time supporting the family according to the standards of an average family.

He had thought that the majority of workers earned twenty soli a week.

He had once heard Melissa remark that Lower Street of Iron Cross Street had five, seven, or even ten families squeezing into the same room.

He also learned from Benson that as a result of the situation in the Southern Continent, the kingdom’s economy was in a recession for the past few months.

He knew that a maid, with board and lodging provided, could earn between three soli and sixpence to six soli a week.

Klein extended his hand and pinched his glabella. He was silent for a long time, until Sir Deweyville asked, “Officer, aren’t you going to say anything? The psychiatrists I went to would always speak to me and ask questions in such a situation.

“However, I must say that I feel at peace. I almost fell asleep. I haven’t heard any moans or cries yet.

"How did you do it?"

Klein leaned back in the rocking chair. Instead of providing an answer, he asked with a gentle tone, "Sir, do you know about lead poisoning? Do you know about the dangers of lead?"

Deweyville fell silent for a few seconds. "I did not know about it in the past, but I do now. Are you telling me that my psychological illness stems from my guilt—my guilt toward the female lead and porcelain factory workers?"

Without waiting for Klein to answer, he continued just like he always had—in his position of power during a negotiation.

"Yes, I did feel guilty about this in the past, but I did compensate them. At my lead and porcelain factories, the workers do not earn less than other workers in the same industry. In Backlund, lead and porcelain workers are paid no more than eight soli a week, but I pay them ten, sometimes even more.

"Heh, many people criticize me for breaking ranks since it makes it hard for them to recruit workers. If not for the repeal of the Grain Act that made many farmers bankrupt, sending them to the cities, they would have had to raise their wages just like I did.

"Furthermore, I've also informed the supervisor of the factories to make sure that those with repeated headaches and blurry vision are to leave the areas where they are exposed to lead. If their illness is really severe, then they can even ask for help at my charity foundation.

"I think I have done enough."

Klein spoke without a ripple of emotion in his voice, "Sir, at times, you cannot imagine how important a salary is to a poor person. Simply losing work for a week or two can result in an irreversible loss to their family, a loss that would cause tremendous grief."

He paused before saying, "I am curious, why wouldn't a kind person like you install equipment that can protect against dust and lead poisoning in your factories?"

Deweyville looked at the ceiling and laughed ruefully.

"That would make my costs too high for me to bear. I would no longer be able to compete with other lead and porcelain companies. I no longer pay too much attention to my profits in these areas of my business. In fact, I am even willing to fork out some money. But what's the point of keeping the business if I have to keep doing that? That can only help a number of workers and not become a standard in the industry or effect change on other factories.

"That would merely result in me forking out money to support the workers. I heard that some factories even secretly hire slaves to minimize costs."

Klein crossed his hands and said after a moment of silence, "Sir, the root of your psychological illness comes from the buildup of guilt, despite you believing that the guilt has faded and disappeared over time. It wouldn't have any visible effects under normal circumstances, but there was something that triggered you and set off all the problems at once."

"Something that triggered me? I'm not aware of such a thing," Deweyville said puzzled, but with conviction.

Klein allowed the chair to rock gently as he explained with a gentle tone, "You did fall asleep for a few minutes just now, and you told me something."

"Hypnosis?" Deweyville made a guess as he usually did.

Klein did not give a direct reply and instead said, "You once saw a girl dying on her way to work while you were on your carriage. She had died because of lead poisoning. She was one of your workers who glazed porcelain while she was still alive."

Deweyville rubbed his temples, speechless before saying somewhat doubtful, “I think that happened once… but I can’t remember it clearly…”

His prolonged insomnia had left him in a poor mental state. He could only faintly recall seeing such a scene.

He thought for a moment, but gave up taxing his brain. Instead, he asked, “What was that worker’s name?

“Well, what I meant was, what should I do to cure my psychological illness?”

Klein replied immediately, “Two things.”

“First, the worker that died by the side of the road was called Hayley Walker. That was what you told me. She was the most direct trigger, so you have to find her parents and give them more compensation.

“Second, spread information about the dangers of lead in the newspapers and magazines. Allow your charity foundation to help more workers who suffered from the damage. If you succeed in becoming a member of parliament, push for enacting laws in this domain.”

Deweyville sat up slowly and laughed in a self-deprecating manner.

“I will do all of the rest, but to enact a law, heh— I think it’s impossible since there is still competition from nations beyond our country. Setting up such a law would just slip the entire industry in the country into a crisis. Factories would become bankrupt one by one, and many workers would lose their jobs. Organizations that help the poor cannot save that many people.”

He slowly got off the bed and adjusted his collar. He then looked at Klein and said, “Hayley Walker, right? I’ll immediately get Cullen to retrieve information about her from the porcelain company and find her parents. Officer, please wait with me and continuously evaluate my mental state."

"Alright." Klein stood up slowly and smoothed his black-and-white checkered police uniform.

†

At eleven in the morning in the living room of Deweyville.

Klein sat on the sofa in silence as he looked at the man and woman being guided into the house by Butler Cullen.

The two guests had blemished skin, wrinkles already woven into their faces. The man had a slight hunch while the woman had a mole under her eyelid.

They looked nearly identical to what Klein had seen through Hayley, just older and more haggard. They were so skinny that they were almost all bone. Their clothes were old and ragged. Klein even learned that they couldn't continue living on Lower Street of Iron Cross Streets any further.

Sob…

Klein sensed an icy wind start to spiral through his spiritual perception.

He pinched his glabella and shot a glance toward Sir Deweyville. It was unknown when a faint white, translucent, contorted figure had appeared behind him.

"Good-good morning, Honorable Sir." Hayley's parents were unusually polite.

Deweyville rubbed his forehead and asked, "Are the both of you Hayley Walker's parents? Doesn't she also have a brother and a two-year-old sister?"

Hayley's mother answered in fear, "Her-her brother broke his leg at the harbor sometime back. We got him to take care of his sister at home."

Deweyville remained silent for a few seconds before he sighed.

"My deepest condolences for what happened to Hayley."

Upon hearing that, the eyes of Hayley's parents immediately turned red. They opened their mouths and said over each other, "Thank-thank you for your goodwill.

"The police told us-told us, that Hayley died from lead poisoning. That's the term, right? Oh, my poor child, she was only seventeen. She was always so quiet, so determined.

"You had sent someone to visit her before and sponsored her burial. She is buried at the Raphael Cemetery."

Deweyville glanced at Klein and changed his sitting posture. He leaned forward and said with a serious tone, "That was actually an oversight of ours. I have to apologize."

"I have considered that I need to compensate you, to compensate Hayley. Her weekly salary was ten soli, was it not? One year would be five hundred and twenty soli, or twenty-six pounds. Let's assume that she could have worked for another ten years.

"Cullen, give Hayley's parents three hundred pounds."

"Three-three hundred pounds?" Hayley's parents were dumbfounded.

They never had more than one pound of savings, even at their richest!

It wasn't only them who were dazed. Even the expressions of the bodyguards and maids in the room were also all that of shock and envy. Even Sergeant Gate couldn't help but draw in a deep breath—his weekly salary was only two pounds and among his subordinates, only one chevroned constable earned one pound a week.

Amidst the silence, Butler Cullen walked out of the study and held a bulging sack.

He opened the sack and revealed stacks of cash, some one pound, some five pounds, but mostly made up of one or five soli.

It was clear that Deweyville had made his subordinates receive "change" from the bank earlier.

"It's an expression of Sir Deweyville's goodwill," Cullen handed the sack over to Hayley's parents after receiving confirmation from his master.

Hayley's parents took the sack and rubbed their eyes, looking at it in disbelief.

"No, this-this is too generous, we cannot accept this," they said as they held the sack tightly.

Deweyville said in a deep voice, "This is what Hayley deserves."

"Y-you truly are a noble, charitable knight!" Hayley's parents bowed repeatedly in agitation.

They had smiles on their faces, smiles that they couldn't repress.

They praised the knight repeatedly, repeating the same few adjectives they knew. They kept insisting that Hayley would be grateful towards him in heaven.

"Cullen, send them home. Oh, take them to the bank first," Deweyville heaved a sigh of relief and instructed his butler.

Hayley's parents hugged the sack tightly and walked toward the door quickly without stopping.

Klein saw the faint translucent figure behind Sir Deweyville attempt to extend its hands towards them, hoping to leave with them, but the parents' smiles were abnormally radiant. They didn't turn back.

That figure turned fainter and, soon, vanished completely.

Klein also sensed that the icy feeling in the guest hall had instantly returned to normal.

From beginning to end, all he did was sit there silently, not expressing his opinion.

“Officer, I feel much better. Now can you tell me why my butler, servants, and bodyguards could also hear the cries and moans? This shouldn’t just be solely a psychological illness of mine, right?” Deweyville looked at him curiously.

Inspector Tolle, who knew the underlying truth, instantly became nervous.

Klein replied without much expression, “In psychology, we call this phenomenon—mass hysteria.”

Chapter 92 - Psychological Expert

◆

“Mass hysteria?” Sir Deweyville, who had met many psychiatrists recently, ruminated over the term Klein had said.

Despite their curiosity, his butler, bodyguards, and servants didn’t make a single sound since they had not been given permission by him.

As for Sergeant Gate, he looked towards Klein doubtfully as if he had never heard of that concept.

Klein controlled his habit of tapping the armrest with his fingertips and calmly explained, “Humans can be fooled easily by their sensory organs. Mass hysteria is a kind of psychogenic illness that is a result of tense nerves and other factors amongst a group of individuals as they influence each other.”

The jargon he spewed out confused Sir Deweyville, Sergeant Gate, and the rest, causing them to subconsciously opt to believe him.

“Let me give a simple example of this; this was one of the cases that I previously dealt with, one man held a dinner banquet and invited 35 guests. Midway, he suddenly felt disgusted and puked. After that, he even had severe diarrhea. After a couple times, he began to believe that he had gotten food poisoning. He shared his speculation with the other guests on the way to the hospital.

“In the next two hours, there were more than 30 guests that had diarrhea amongst the 35 guests, with 26 of them experiencing nausea. They flooded the entire emergency room of the hospital.

"The doctors went through a detailed examination and performed cross checks, and they concluded that the very first man didn't have food poisoning at all. Instead, it was a result of stomach inflammation caused by the change of weather and cold liquor.

"The most surprising fact was that none of the guests who went to the hospital had food poisoning. In fact, not a single one of them was sick.

"That is mass hysteria."

Deweyville nodded slightly and marveled, "I understand now. Humans do lie to themselves easily. It's no wonder that Emperor Roselle once said that a lie would become reality once it was repeated a hundred times.

"Officer, how may I address you? You are the most professional psychiatrist I have ever met."

"Inspector Moretti." Klein pointed at his epaulet and said, "Sir, your troubles have been resolved temporarily for now. You can try to sleep now while I determine if there are any other problems. If you are able to sleep well, please allow us to bid farewell ahead of time instead of waiting for you to wake up."

"Alright." Deweyville massaged his forehead, took his cane, and walked upstairs to his bedroom.

Half an hour later, a police carriage left the fountain at the door of Deweyville's residence.

When Sergeant Gate got off on the way and returned to his police station, Inspector Tolle looked towards Klein. He complimented in jest, "Even I believed that you were a real psychological expert…"

Before he finished his sentence, he saw the young man in a black-and-white checkered uniform looking expressionless. His eyes were deep and serene as he forced a smirk on his face and said, "I only had some experience with it in the past."

Inspector Tolle fell silent until the carriage arrived outside 36 Zouteland Street.

“Thank you for your assistance, allowing Sir Deweyville to be finally free from his problems and be able to find sleep again.” He extended his hand and shook Klein’s hand. “Thank Dunn on my behalf.”

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Alright.”

He went up the stairs and returned to the Blackthorn Security Company. He knocked and entered the captain’s office.

“Done?” Dunn was waiting for his lunch.

“Done.” Klein massaged his forehead, and kept his reply short and simple. “The root of the problem stemmed from the lead and porcelain factory under Sir Deweyville. From the moment they were established to this day, too many deaths have been caused by lead poisoning. And every accident left Sir Deweyville with some resentful spirituality.”

“Generally speaking, that wouldn’t bring too big of a problem. That might cause nightmares, at the most.” Dunn had experienced similar cases with his plethora of experience.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Yes, that’s usually the case. But, unfortunately, Sir Deweyville encountered a female worker who died of lead poisoning on the streets. She collapsed by the side of the street and happened to catch a glimpse of the Deweyville’s family emblem. She also harbored intense indignation, worry, and desires. It was only when Sir Deweyville gave her parents, brother, and sister a compensation of three hundred pounds did her emotions dissipate.”

“This is a societal problem. It isn’t rare in the Age of Steam and Machinery.” Dunn took out his smoking pipe, smelled the tobacco, and sighed. “Workers that make linen work in damp environments, and are generally diagnosed with bronchitis and joint related ailments. As for factories with serious powder and dust issues, even if the dust isn’t poisonous, it can still accumulate into lung problems… Sigh… We don't have to talk about this. As the kingdom develops, I believe these problems will be resolved. Klein, let's find a restaurant tonight to celebrate you becoming an official member, alright?"

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "How about tomorrow… Captain, I have used Spirit Vision for an extended period of time today and also used dream divination to directly interact with those resentments. I'm feeling especially drained. I want to return home in the afternoon to get some rest. Would that be okay? Oh, then I'll head over to the Divination Club at about four or five in the afternoon to see how the club members are reacting to news of Hanass Vincent's sudden death."

"No problem, that's only necessary." Dunn chuckled. "Tomorrow night it is. Let's do it at Old Will's Restaurant next door. I'll get Rozanne to make a reservation."

Klein took off his police peak cap and stood up to salute him.

"Thank you, Captain. See you tomorrow."

Dunn lifted his hand and said, "Hold on, did you mention that Sir Deweyville gave the female worker's parents a compensation of three hundred pounds?"

"Yes." Klein nodded and immediately understood the reason why the captain had mentioned it. "You are worried that they will get into trouble because of their wealth?"

Dunn sighed.

"I've seen many similar situations in the past. Pass me their address, I'll ask Kenley to arrange for them to leave Tingen for another city, to start life anew."

"Alright," Klein replied in a deep voice.

With all of that done, he left Dunn's office and entered the break room diagonally opposite. He changed into his original suit and left the police uniform in his locker.

Klein took the public carriage back to Daffodil Street in silence. He took off his coat and top hat. He then heated up the leftovers from last night and ate them with the last piece of wheat bread to fill his stomach.

Then, he went to the second floor, hung his clothes, and slumped into bed.

When he woke up, the pocket watch showed that it was already ten past two in the afternoon. The sun was hanging high up in the sky and the sunlight shone through the clouds.

Underneath the golden splendor, Klein stood next to his desk and looked out the oriel window. He watched the pedestrians in old ragged clothing as they entered or left Iron Cross Street.

Phew… He let out a breath slowly, finally overcoming his low spirits.

Every journey had to be taken one step at a time. Likewise, his Sequence needed to be advanced one level at a time. Everything worked like that.

He shook his head and sat down. He started concluding and reorganizing his encounter over the last week, so as to reinforce the important points in his mind to prevent himself from forgetting them.

Five minutes before three in the afternoon.

Above a blurry, boundless, grayish-white, silent gray fog stood a lofty palace. An ancient mottled bronze table sat there quietly.

On the seat of honor at the long table sat a man already engulfed by the thick gray fog.

Klein leaned against the back of the chair and contemplated. He suddenly extended his hand and tapped on the crimson stars that represented Justice and The Hanged Man.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Audrey lifted her dress as she quickly walked towards her bedroom.

Suddenly, she felt something and looked sideways at the shadow sitting on the balcony. As expected, she saw her golden retriever, Susie, who was sitting there in silence, observing her as always.

Audrey sighed and drew a crimson moon on her chest. She then got closer and looked down at her golden retriever from a commanding position.

“Susie, that’s not right. This is peeping. A Spectator has to observe in an open manner.”

The golden retriever lifted its head to look at its owner and shook its tail.

After nagging her dog, Audrey didn’t delay any further and continued walking towards her bedroom again.

In the few seconds of opening and closing the door, she suddenly had a weird idea.

“I wonder if Mr. Fool would allow Susie to enter that mysterious space. Then, there would be four members in the Tarot Gathering! And all of them would be Beyonders!

“No way, Susie can’t talk. If they were to let her express her opinion and share her thoughts, what would she do? Woof woof woof? Howl howl? Eww, why am I mimicking a dog’s bark here…

“Just imagining such a scene feels really strange. A mysterious and solemn gathering with the sudden barking of a dog… Mr. Fool would definitely kick us out of the Tarot Gathering directly…"

Audrey locked the door and sat by the side of her bed. She took out a piece of old yellowish-brown paper from underneath her pillow.

She read it repeatedly and entered her Spectator state.

†

In a particular area of the Sonia Sea, an old sailboat which was in pursuit of the Listener had already left the Rorsted Archipelago.

Seafarer Alger Wilson was worried that the wall clock's machinery would malfunction, so he entered the captain's cabin about half an hour earlier in case he had misjudged the time which would cause his subordinates to see him getting pulled into the Tarot Gathering.

In front of him was a glass of nearly transparent liquor. The rich aroma swirled strand after strand into his nostrils.

Alger trembled once again when he thought of the impending Gathering, the boundless fog that presented itself in front of him in the hotel's corridor, and the mysterious Fool who sat in the middle of the gray fog.

He lifted his glass and took a gulp, using the burning sensation in his throat to ease the emotions that had stirred within him.

Very soon, he restored his calm. He was as calm and stoic as he always was.

Chapter 93 - New Diary Page

Above the gray fog, gigantic stone columns held up a majestic divine hall.

Two dark red blobs extended out into faint human figures by the side of the ancient mottled bronze table.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool.” Augmented with a blurry effect, Audrey greeted him with a bow and smiled. “It is unfortunate that there is no wine here; otherwise, we could have a toast to your successful trial.”

She was referring to the ritualistic magic.

“You are more powerful than we imagined,” Alger Wilson praised as well.

Klein was surrounded by the thick fog as usual. He pressed down with his right arm and spoke with his normal tone, replying as though it was natural.

“Great, this means that we are on the path of excellence. If you have any matters to tend to that leave you unable to attend the gathering on Mondays, conduct the ritual and inform me. All you have to do is change the line in the incantation ‘I pray for a good dream’ with the reason.”

“Alright,” Audrey quickly agreed. “Mr. Fool, I obtained another page of Emperor Roselle’s diary. I believe I still owe you one page.”

“I was away from land this week and haven’t found any new pages.”

Alger placed his right hand near his chest and bowed in apology.

“No matter. I expected my request to take a long time.” Klein leaned back into his chair and tapped the armrest with his index finger. He looked at Miss Justice and said, “You can express the contents of the diary now.”

Audrey bowed slightly and said, “As you wish.”

A pen suddenly appeared before her. She recalled the symbols that she had memorized and tried her best to transcribe them.

In seconds, she saw that the goatskin was already filled with content. The strange symbols neatly covered the entire page.

After checking the contents, she put down the fountain pen and said, “It’s done.”

Klein raised his hand and the goatskin parchment appeared in his palm.

Shifting his gaze down, he started reading without emotion.

“July 9th. I suddenly thought of an interesting question. Since the Sequence pathways are also called the ‘Blessings of The Divinities’ or ‘Paths of The Dive’, then why would the stone slate that records the completed twenty-two Sequence pathways be called the ‘Blasphemy Slate’. Blasphemy, what an interesting term… Just who is the one blasphemed?

“And who created the Blasphemy Slate? How could that person hold all of the Sequence pathways? Just what other information was on the stone? I really want to see it…

“July 12th. I’ve realized another fact today. The Sealed Artifacts are an important component of a church’s overall strength, even though some of the Sealed Artifacts are very, very dangerous. Among the seven churches, the God of Craftsmanship wields the least number of Sealed Artifacts which are also relatively less dangerous… Did I join an organization without a future? No, I should think of it this way; only a blank piece of paper can produce a good painting. A weak organization is the best place for me to display my abilities!

"July 14th. I saw that mysterious Mr. Zaratul again. I never expected him to be the leader of an ancient organization, the Secret Order!"

Klein's pupils constricted when he read this. He nearly revealed an unnatural expression.

The Zaratul family only had a certain connection with the Secret Order in the notes of the Church of Evernight. But now, he learned from Emperor Roselle that the mysterious Mr. Zaratul was further determined to be the leader of the Secret Order.

From the looks of it, it is an unquestionable fact that the Secret Order holds the Seer Sequence pathway…

While Klein was reading the diary, Audrey looked over and began observing him out of habit.

However, her field of vision was completely obscured by the thick fog.

Momentarily taken aback, Audrey snapped back to her senses and turned her head frantically to look at the other illusory dark red star.

I was too reckless, too insolent, too foolish in trying to observe Mr. Fool… I was lucky, lucky that he isn't angry. Audrey stuck out her tongue secretly and pretended to admire the scenery. She was just short of humming a lively tune.

Alger sat silently, his gaze never leaving the long bronze table. He knew his place, as if he was in the presence of a true god.

Klein collected himself and scanned the last portion of the diary.

"After learning that I had become a Savant, Mr. Zaratul mentioned that I had chosen a difficult, yet relatively safe path. I asked him why that was the case, but all he did was smile before telling me that the Sequence pathway contains secrets beyond my imagination. I couldn't help but ask him which Sequence pathway he selected. He told me that his Sequence 9 was Seer.

"I intentionally mocked him and asked if every Seer only disclosed half-truths, never explaining things more clearly. Furthermore, he was clearly a powerful High-Sequence Beyonder. There was no need for him to continue acting as a Seer!

"Mr. Zaratul told me that it was a habit he adopted from back when he was a Seer, and that this was a method that could pique my curiosity and make me cooperate with him. He hoped that I could help him steal a dangerous Sealed Artifact from the Church of the God of Craftsmanship, a relic of the Antigonus family.

"Clearly, this must wait until I become a core member of the Church of the God of Craftsmanship. I asked Mr. Zaratul how long it would take to digest the potion if I used the acting method, and what standards I should use to determine if I had digested it completely.

"He told me that for the lower Sequences, it would only take half a year to digest the potion as long as one strictly used the acting method. In fact, in the fastest case, it might only take a month. And standard measure for progress was simple; every Beyonder would sense it immediately once the potion was completely digested. It is what it is.

"I asked him for more details, but he merely smiled at me.

"To hell with his smiles, I'll beat up every Seer I see when I become a High-Sequence Beyonder!"

…Rest in peace, Emperor… Klein read the diary several times before looking at Justice and The Hanged Man again.

"Sorry for the wait."

"It is our honor." Audrey was still shocked, forgetting that she was a

Spectator.

She looked at The Hanged Man and organized her words.

“Where can I find the Psychology Alchemists?”

Psychology Alchemists… Klein suddenly recalled the man buying supplementary ingredients for the Spectator potion at the Tingen underground market.

Perhaps he was a member of the Psychology Alchemists?

Just as Klein was considering how to get closer to that man, The Hanged Man, Alger Wilson shook his head and said, “Miss Justice, firstly, I don’t have a clue. Secondly, I don’t think there’s any rush in seeking out the Psychology Alchemists. What you should focus on now is completely digesting the Spectator potion.”

Audrey glanced at The Fool and noticed that he didn’t have any intention of adding to the conversation. She nodded in disappointment and said, “All I want is to have plenty of time to prepare so that I can approach them more naturally. Alright, then when can I digest the Spectator potion and stop acting? Is there a standard that indicates when I can? I’m almost at the point where I no longer feel frustrated, nor do I hear the constant murmuring anymore.”

Alger looked at The Fool in the fog but saw that he didn’t have any intention of speaking. He then deliberated before saying, “If you don’t use the acting method, the typical rule of thumb is to wait three years and confirm that you no longer feel restless or receive any auditory or visual illusions. There is one simple test to determine when you can. That method is to exhaust your body to its limit. If you still don’t hear any maniacal murmurings or see any strange things at that point, that would mean that you’re ready to advance.”

“With regards to the acting method, I have also just come into contact with it. It feels good, so I don’t think it’ll take three years.”

That wasn't useful at all… Three years, that's too long… Audrey criticized inwardly.

She had just thought about this when she heard an armrest being tapped.

Audrey froze, then turned her head in joy. She saw The Fool tapping on the edge of the long table.

Alger sat straighter, waiting for The Fool to speak.

Klein said in his normal tone, "For Low-Sequence Beyonders, as long as you strictly stick to acting, you should be able to digest the medicine in half a year. It's even possible to do it in a month."

He looked at Justice and added, "As for the signs of digestion, you'll know it when it comes. It doesn't need to be taught."

"One month… Great! Thank you, Mr. Fool!" Audrey exclaimed while brimming with joy.

Miss Justice, don't think that you are the chosen one. The key point is half a year… Klein lifted his right hand and placed it beside his lips.

"Half a year…" Alger repeated softly.

Audrey sensed joy, relief, and intense doubt in his tone.

What is he suspicious about? Audrey thought as she asked, "Mr. Fool, have you considered adding more members?"

Klein leaned back casually. He had long prepared an answer.

"This started as a trial, so I didn't spend much time thinking about extending our meetings.

"But now, as a regular gathering, we must choose our members carefully. Secrecy is our motto."

Audrey nodded gently and said, “That is to say that we have to follow a process of observation, recommendation, and testing process. Yes, a process.”

“You can interpret it that way,” Klein affirmed.

In his mind he was thinking about how he could inquire about the Secret Order and the Clown potion.

How can I ask questions in a way that befits my status? Klein was placed in a difficult spot.

At that moment, realizing that Justice temporarily had nothing else to say, Alger took the initiative to speak, “I’ve heard that a Listener from the Aurora Order is searching for traces of the True Creator, which is the holy residence they advocate.”

“True Creator?” Audrey asked, puzzled.

“It is an ancient entity worshiped by numerous secret organizations and cults. They believe that the Creator hasn’t completely perished. The Core he left behind is the True Creator.” Alger gave a rough explanation. “Since the Fifth Epoch, the True Creator has appeared in many forms, such as The Hanged Giant or the Eye behind the Shadow Curtains. Heh heh, many people believe that Emperor Roselle referenced the imagery of the True Creator when he was creating the tarot cards; hence, there exists the card of The Hanged Man.”

At this point, he looked at Klein and said, “Mr. Fool, there’s nothing with what I said, right?”

Is he trying to probe for my views on the True Creator? Klein thought about the bloody man on the cross that the Captain saw in Hanass Vincent’s dream and immediately had an idea.

Doesn’t both the hanging and the shadows imply evil connotations?

Therefore, he chuckled and said, “I am more inclined to call him, the

Fallen Creator.”

Chapter 94 - Hidden Sage

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“The Fallen Creator… Fallen…” Alger ruminated over The Fool’s words and fell deep in thought.

However, what struck Alger the most was The Fool’s relaxed, natural, and nonchalant attitude.

He acted as if they were equal!

If he hadn’t experienced their previous ritual, Alger might have thought The Fool was merely bluffing, and building himself up to intimidate him and Justice. But now, he was of the opinion that even if The Fool was inferior to the True Creator, he was at least close to that level.

It’s dangerous. It’s also an opportunity… Alger muttered softly. He then spoke with a smile, “Mr. Fool, your description is indeed more appropriate. According to our observations, Beyonders who believed in the True Creator, no—the Fallen Creator, have a higher probability of losing control. The rest of them are mostly psychopaths.”

That’s something that the Nighthawks’ intelligence mentioned as well… And the so-called ‘psychopaths’ didn’t lose their sanity; instead, their ideologies became twisted… Klein maintained his seated posture but didn’t continue with the conversation.

He was still considering how to inquire about the Secret Order and Clown potion, but he couldn’t figure out a way of asking the questions in a way that fit with his persona.

It's such a pity that the Gathering is still so different from an Internet forum. Otherwise, I could create another smurf account to join the Gathering, and that account would be in charge of asking questions that are inconvenient for me to ask… Perhaps, one day, I'll learn mirror-related magic and give it a try. For example, I can make half the members here my smurf accounts…

There are twenty-two chairs here, and there are twenty-two cards in the tarot deck. That matches up perfectly. But when I 'created' this divine hall, I didn't even name myself 'The Fool' or have any intention of forming a 'Tarot Club'. Hmm, do these symbolize the twenty-two different Sequence pathways?

I wanted a divine hall, so a divine hall appeared. If I wanted a smurf account, would I get a smurf account…

Upon seeing The Fool remain silently engulfed in the thick gray fog, Audrey asked both wistfully and curiously, "That sounds scary. Mr. Hanged Man, could you share, in detail, information about each, and every mysterious organization? And also the matters regarding each secret cult? It's hard for me to come into contact with them during my daily life. I can only understand them through the both of you. I'm willing to pay for it. May I know what you'd like in return?"

That's a great question! Miss Justice, you're playing the role of my smurf account to a certain extent… This way, The Hanged Man will definitely bring up the Secret Order… You're the best! Klein's mind stirred when he heard that, but he didn't let his emotions show through his expression or movements.

Alger thought for a moment before saying, "I need money—a thousand pounds. It'd be best if they weren't bills marked by a serial number. Or maybe gemstones that have just been unearthed. Price them according to the Backlund Jewelry Exchange's monthly average price."

A thousand pounds? That's a huge sum of money. It could be used to buy a house in a high-class street in Tingen City! Not everyone would have that available immediately… Captain might have an annual salary like that, I guess? Hayley's death compensation was only three hundred pounds… Although Miss Justice is a noble, she obviously hasn't inherited her family's wealth yet, and she'll only be receiving some sort of annual allowance… Hmm, it's no wonder that The Hanged Man stated that it could be paid via gemstones… Klein was very sensitive towards monetary figures. Luckily, he was blanketed in thick fog.

For a single lady or madam, two thousand pounds could let her live a decent life!

If two thousand pounds were invested, the investment could reliably produce an annual return of about a hundred pounds.

"A thousand pounds?" Audrey said, sounding shocked. She then replied happily, "No problem, do I send it to the previous address?"

Judging by Miss Justice's tone, she finds it very cheap? Klein didn't look over.

Alger was quiet for a good twenty seconds before he said, "Yes, send it to the Warrior & Sea Bar at Pelican Street, in the White Rose Borough of Pritz Harbor. Tell the boss, Williams, that it's what the 'Captain' wants.

"Alright." Audrey leaned back and posed in a Spectator-like manner. "Mr. Hanged Man, you can start now."

Alger looked at The Fool, deliberated for a moment before saying slowly, "Let's start from the Moses Ascetic Order. It is the earliest hidden organization. Of course, many think that the earliest hidden organizations are the Church of Evernight, the Church of Earth Mother, and the Church of the God of Combat.

"These people must be from the Church of Storms, the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, or the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom," Audrey refuted sulkily.

The Church of the Goddess is the earliest hidden organization? That was the first time Klein had heard of such a claim.

What exactly happened in the Fourth Epoch or the Third Epoch?

Alger smiled and said, “The truth is buried in ancient history. Only one thing is certain: no one has ever said that the Church of Storms, the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, or the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom were once hidden organizations.

“Alright, let’s save some time and return to the main topic. The Moses Ascetic Order was first established by a few humans that had read the Blasphemy Slate. They believed in an non-anthropomorphic god, called ‘the Hidden Sage’.”

“The description is that of a god, but it is more of an ideology, a natural law. For example, all objects are numeric. The Hidden Sage is an embodiment of Spirit Numerology. Or that knowledge is supreme, and the Hidden Sage is knowledge itself. Hence, the original Moses Ascetic Order was a very respectable organization, and it maintained a good relationship with the other major churches.

“The members of the organization led ascetic lives to resist losing control and to resolve the effects of the Remnant potion. They strictly kept their order’s secrets, and they upheld moral and religious precepts. They believe that humans continuously reincarnate after death…

“The Sequence 9 that they grasp is called Mystery Pryer… The word ‘Warlock’ was also spread from that organization.”

Audrey listened to The Hanged Man’s description carefully and asked sharply, “You said that the Moses Ascetic Order used to be a respectable organization. Are they not one anymore?”

Alger nodded his head indiscernibly.

“Yes, they have fallen into corruption and are now an evil organization.”

"Why? I find their beliefs very good and very normal," Audrey expressed her confusion.

That was Klein's confusion too. The information that he could get at his security clearance didn't provide the reason for the Moses Ascetic Order's fall from grace.

Alger looked at the unfathomable Fool and tersely agreed.

"I am not sure of the real reason. It might be because it has been buried by history. However, I have heard one terrifying explanation.

"In that story, the main reason why the Moses Ascetic Order fell into corruption was because the god that they believed in, the Hidden Sage, had come to life!

"He became the personification of an evil god!"

"Came to life? This… how?" Audrey found it unimaginable as she replied with an incredulous tone.

Without realizing it, she had exited from her Spectator state.

It's like a horror story, but the ghost is even a god… Klein's heart stirred with a surge of emotions as well.

"I'm sorry, no one knows the answer." Alger had originally wanted to casually say, "Maybe Mr. Fool would know," but he held back the urge.

He had already teetered on the borders of danger once.

In The Book of Storms 5:7, there was a saying that Alger remembered clearly, which was: "Thou shalt not test God!"

Audrey calmed herself down and didn't press for more answers. She gestured for him to continue.

Klein maintained his seated posture and his silence, validating The Hanged Man's descriptions with his own understanding.

Finally, he realized that there were four points that he needed to take note of.

First, the Demoness Sect was also known as the Demoness Family in the Fourth Epoch. Back then, they had very few members, and their beliefs were passed down through their bloodlines. Plus, they would kill the fathers of their children and abandon the baby boys. Hence, all the members were female. Of course, that was all from Alger's description, and there was no way to verify it at the moment.

Second, the Numinous Episcopate that believed in Death and the Rose School of Thought that liked bloody sacrificial worship ceremonies both originated in the Southern Continent. After the colonial era came, they almost vanished under attacks by the seven churches. But as such, they began spreading to the Northern Continent.

Third, the current Psychology Alchemists was similar to the earlier Moses Ascetic Order. They believed in an non-anthropomorphic existence and believed that the human spirit could change everything.

Fourth, the Secret Order had the lowest activity level among all the other hidden organizations. Thus, they were the most unknown. Every time they appeared, they seem to be after something or looking for something.

What are they after or looking for? Klein suddenly recalled the diary which he had read earlier: The leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul, cooperated with the Roselle. His goal was to get something left behind by the Antigonus family.

Their appearance that time was to look for the lost notebook, the Antigonus family notebook… Klein narrowed his eyes slightly and felt that he had apparently found the key reason for the Secret Order's actions.

They are after the things that the Antigonus family left behind!

Klein suppressed his urge to tap the edge of the table as his thoughts appeared one after another.

Oh, they were looking for remnant traces the Antigonus family left behind?

Then must I direct my focus onto these areas to obtain the Clown potion formula from the Secret Order?

After a further exchange of information, Klein announced the end of the Gathering.

“By your will.” Audrey and Alger stood up together.

Cutting off the connections, he saw both their figures shatter and disappear. Klein rubbed his glabella and attempted conjuring a smurf account with his mind.

As he thought, a figure appeared at the furthest end of the long bronze table. That figure was wearing a black tuxedo, a silk top hat, and a dull expression. His actions were clumsy and inarticulate. Even though he was engulfed in gray fog, it was obvious that something was wrong with him.

That won’t do… Klein experimented a few more times before sighing and dismissing the idea of creating a smurf account.

He attempted other things too. He continued to sit above the gray fog in the seat of honor at the long bronze table. He considered what Audrey had said, and he cast his gaze curiously at the illusory crimson stars.

After a moment of silence, Klein started to pray as a form of feedback instead of establishing contact with those stars.

Amidst the tranquility and silence, he didn’t receive any feedback from the ten plus crimson stars nearby.

In order to receive feedback, I need to pull someone above the gray fog before I can reply? Klein nodded as he thought, feeling somewhat disappointed.

He didn't want to violate someone else's will and forcefully pull them into this mysterious space.

Hmm… Klein was just getting ready to leave, but he habitually touched a nearby illusory crimson star.

Just then, he suddenly felt that there was a faint and insignificant prayer deep inside the crimson star!

Chapter 95 - The Supplicant

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“A prayer?”

Klein’s mind stirred as he used the same method he used back when he spied on The Hanged Man. He allowed his spirituality to spread outward and touch the crimson blob.

A hazy and contorted image appeared within his sight. He could faintly see a blond teen kneeling on the ground, facing a pure crystal ball.

That teenager was dressed in a tight-fitting black outfit, with a style very different from the contemporary styles of the Loen Kingdom. It was more congruent with the traditional clothing of the Feysac Empire and the Intis Republic that Klein had seen from reading magazines.

The area surrounding the teenager was dark and had old furniture. From time to time, the room would be illuminated, but Klein couldn’t hear the roaring thunder or the pattering of rain.

In the image, the teenager had his hands on his forehead, fingers crossed. He bowed forward, continually praying for something. His thick accent buzzed in Klein’s ears.

Klein listened attentively but discovered an awkward fact.

He couldn’t understand what the other party was saying. It was a language that he had never come across in his life!

…To think that I cannot understand a foreign language even though I am the mysterious ruler of this world above the gray fog… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh. He indignantly tried listening in once again in a manner more attentive than when he had to do English listening comprehension tests back on Earth.

As he was listening to the prayers, he gradually discovered something.

Even though he had never learned the language the young man was speaking, he found that it had similarities to Ancient Feysac!

Father… Mother… Those are likely the meanings of those two terms, right? It is quite similar to Ancient Feysac, but not without its differences… Klein creased his brows and slipped into deep thought. Ancient Feysac was a common language in the Fourth Epoch. It is also the root language of all the contemporary languages of this era. Furthermore, it is still evolving… I cannot confirm it right now…

He listened to it over and over again, eliminating the possibility of the language being a modern language like Loen, Feysac, or Intis.

Could it be a dialect of Ancient Feysac? Like the language used in the Antigonus family's diary? Klein tapped his finger on the edge of the bronze table and nodded indiscernibly. There was another possibility. Ancient Feysac didn't spring into existence out of nothing, it was an evolution of Jotun, the language of the Giants… The Feysac Empire in the north has always claimed that its people possesses the bloodline of the Giants. Perhaps, this is ancient Jotun.

At this point, Klein, who lacked knowledge, could only stop. He retracted his spirituality, without looking or listening in to that scene.

He had no intention of pulling the praying teen up above the fog immediately. He wanted to know what the young man was talking about first.

Of course, before that, he had to observe him frequently and conduct basic 'tests'.

Phew. Klein exhaled as he leaned back in his chair.

He enveloped himself with his spirituality and simulated the feeling of falling.

†

After “revising” Roselle’s diary, Klein changed into his formal wear and left for the Divination Club.

He took the public transport despite his pay rise, but he did splurge to support Mrs. Wendy’s business. He spent 1.5 pence on sweet iced tea to combat the afternoon heat.

When he arrived at Howes Street, Klein tossed the empty cup into the trash can and walked up to the second floor.

Before entering the building, he pinched his glabella and activated his Spirit Vision.

Klein had just entered the hall when he felt a faint, lingering grief.

The pretty receptionist Angelica was sitting there; her slightly red eyes looked unfocused.

“The grief will pass in time,” Klein said with a gentle and firm tone as he walked toward Angelica.

Angelica looked up abruptly and muttered, clearly confused, “Mr. Moretti…”

She quickly came to her senses and asked, perturbed, “Y-you already know about Mr. Vincent?

“Oh right, I forgot that you’re an exceptional fortune-teller.”

Klein sighed appropriately.

“I only managed to divine a very rough outline of what transpired… Just what exactly happened to Mr. Vincent?”

"The boss told us that Mr. Vincent had a heart attack in his sleep and left this world peacefully." Angelica cried as she said, "He was so friendly, so polite, a true gentleman. He was the spiritual mentor of so many of our members. H-he was still so young…"

"I am sorry for bringing up this sad topic." Klein didn't console her any further. He walked toward the meeting room slowly.

Angelica took out a handkerchief and wiped her eyes and nose. She then looked at Klein's back and asked loudly, "Mr. Moretti, what would you like to drink?"

"Black tea." Klein preferred black tea to coffee, even though he found the black tea average.

In comparison, he preferred ginger beer and sweet iced tea. But as a gentleman, it was not right for him to act like a child in a formal setting…

As it was a Monday, there were only five or six members in the meeting room. Using his Spirit Vision, Klein saw that they each had different colors of emotion. Some were grieving, some more dull, some relatively unaffected.

They're all rather normal… normal reactions. Klein nodded slightly. He picked up his cane and found a spot in the room.

He was about to deactivate his Spirit Vision when he saw Angelica walk in and walk towards him.

"Mr. Moretti, a customer is looking for you. Well, it's the person from last time," the beautiful lady said with a hushed tone.

"You still remember him?" Klein asked with a smile.

Hmm, I wonder if he bought the magical medicine as I instructed… I wonder if he still needs surgery…

Angelica covered her mouth and said, “He was the only person who was willing to wait an entire afternoon in the club for a divination.”

Klein grabbed his cane and stood up. He walked outside without saying anything.

In the reception area, he found the person who had sought his services the other day. He also noticed that the aura near his liver had regained its normal color. His overall health had also improved.

“Congratulations, the feeling of being healthy is wonderful indeed.” Klein smiled as he extended a hand.

Bogda was first taken aback before he immediately extended both hands. He grabbed Klein’s right palm tightly.

“Mr. Moretti, you truly can ‘see’ my condition!

“Yes, I have fully recovered! The doctors asked me questions over and over again, ran repeated tests on me, but they cannot believe that I recovered just like that!”

Upon hearing Bogda’s ecstatic description, Klein calmly confirmed one thing—the apothecary at Lawson’s Folk Herb Store was definitely a Beyonder!

He had seen how severe the man’s liver disease had been. Fully healing him in the span of a few days was beyond the capability of herbs and medical ability. The only possible explanation was that of a Beyonder!

Coupled with the incident with Glacis, there could only be one answer.

“I have to repent to God. To think that I would suspect you, suspect that miraculous doctor.” Bogda refused to let go of Klein’s hand. He continued on about his shame and gratitude, “…those ten pounds were truly money well spent. It bought my life back!”

What? Ten pounds? You spent ten pounds on the miraculous medicine?

And you only gave me eight pence for my divination… Just eight pence… eight pence… pence… Klein was dazed just hearing about it.

At this moment, Bogda released his hands as he took a step back while beaming. He bowed reverently and said, “I am here today to express my gratitude. Thank you, Master Moretti. You showed me the way and saved my life.

“This was the outcome of you paying to have something divined. You need not thank anybody.” Klein lifted his head slightly and looked at the divide between the wall and the ceiling. His answer fully expressed the vibes of a charlatan.

“You are a true seer,” Bogda praised. “Next, I’ll be heading to Vlad Street to thank that apothecary and buy the medicine he recommended.”

“Haven’t you already recovered?” Klein expertly hid the shock in his voice.

Bogda looked around, and laughed when he confirmed that the receptionist was not paying attention to them. He chuckled softly and said, “The doctor mentioned a concoction of herbs that includes mummy powder. It is a prescription that would satisfy both men and women… I didn’t believe the doctor back then, but I have no more doubts now.”

…There’s a prescription like that? Klein suddenly felt that the apothecary was a cheat, and suspected if he had pushed the person in front of him into a fiery pit of doom.

He observed Bogda and confirmed that there was no problem with his aura.

“Mummy powder?” Klein cautiously asked.

“Yes, mummy powder. I have asked a friend, he said that even the nobles of Backlund are maniacally looking for such an item. It’s a powder made by grinding mummies which gives men peak performance in bed. Even though it's disgusting and sounds dirty, it truly is a material used by the aristocrats…" Bogda gave a detailed description. He had an eager desire in his eyes.

Mummies? Mummies made from corpses? Then grinding them to powder? Klein was dumbfounded. He nearly retched in front of Bogda.

Those nobles sure are hardcore… Just as he was about to advise Bogda against doing so, Glacis, who had suffered from a lung disease previously, stepped into the door and heard Bogda's description.

"Yes, it's very effective. I would recommend that you head to Lawson's Folk Herb Store at Vlad Street. Mr. Lawson's secret recipe is very effective!" Glacis took off his spectacles and leaned over with interest. He recommended with a hushed tone, "My experience was very, very, very perfect."

"You know of it too? I was just about to head to Mr. Lawson's Folk Herb Store." Bogda's worries vanished completely.

After a short conversation, he left the Divination Club in a hurry.

Up until then, Klein was still a little dumbfounded.

He waited till twenty past five in the afternoon before putting on his hat and picking up his black cane. He took a carriage down to Vlad Street, intending to observe the apothecary named Lawson Darkweed before deciding if he should notify the captain or not.

†

18 Vlad Street.

Klein stood outside the herb store and saw the closed door, as well as a subletting notice.

…Quite a wary man… he muttered silently.

Since this had happened, he no longer had to be troubled or perform any observations.

Chapter 96 - Daly's Guess

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By the afternoon of the next day, Klein had fully recovered from any signs of exhaustion. He walked into the Blackthorn Security Company with steady footsteps.

“Good morning, Klein. The weather is so cool and beautiful today, I’m looking forward to tonight’s feast.” Rozanne who was wearing a light green dress greeted him with a smile from behind the reception desk.

Klein deliberately touched his stomach and said, “Miss Rozanne, you shouldn’t be talking about that so early in the morning! I’m already sick of today’s mission that has yet to arrive. I only hope for the evening to arrive sooner.”

“Me too.” Rozanne chuckled.

She looked to the left and right, then she beckoned for Klein to come closer. She lowered her voice and said, “I met Madam Daly earlier.”

“Spirit Medium Madam Daly?” Klein asked in surprise.

The most famous Spirit Medium from Awwa County had been living at Enmat Harbor all this time, and it wasn’t a short distance from Tingen.

“Yes.” Rozanne gave a firm nod and said, “But, she has already left. Ah, she is my ideal Beyonder. If I were to become a Spirit Medium, I would leave Tingen and travel all around the world by myself. To Intis, to Feysac, to Feynapotter, to the Southern Continent; to the vast prairies, primitive forests, and snow-covered plains!”

Lady, be aware of the Nighthawks' rules… Klein shook his head in amusement.

"Even Madam Daly has to apply and obtain permission to leave Enmat Harbor."

"I know that, but you can't just remind me about it now and shatter my dreams!" Rozanne said peeved. "The truth is, I would never become a Beyonder. It's too dangerous. I don't know when I'll die from sudden gunfire. From what I've seen, Beyonders are basically people who turn themselves into monsters to fight against monsters."

"Archbishop Chanis said that we are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness," Klein replied, sighing. The quote had left a deep impression on him.

To fight against the abyss, we have to endure the corruption of the abyss.

The two of them fell silent in unison. Rozanne was the first to break the silence as she pursed her lips towards the partition and said, "Captain wanted you to meet him when you arrived."

"Alright." With his hat and cane in hand, Klein passed through the partition and entered Dunn's office after knocking on the door.

A middle-aged gentleman with deep and serene gray eyes and a high hairline put down his coffee cup and said with a smile.

"Daly was here."

"Can't say that I'm surprised; Rozanne had just informed me," Klein replied with a smile.

Dunn didn't mind his humor but sighed.

"Daly was just transferred to the Backlund diocese, which is the world's busiest and most crowded city. They have the highest population of Beyonders and the most opportunities… She has a higher chance of becoming an archbishop or a senior deacon than me.”

“Why?” Klein asked curiously as he took a seat.

Dunn thought for nearly twenty seconds before answering, “She has a unique talent in mastering and exploiting Sequence potions… I’ve mentioned the internal rule of the Nighthawks before. If you want to consume the next potion in the Sequence, you’ll have to wait three years and go through a strict examination to prevent any loss of control. But typically, three years is far from sufficient. I spent three years going from a Sleepless to a Midnight Poet. It took me nine years to go from a Midnight Poet to Nightmare—a full nine years. And to go from Nightmare to Sequence 6, I’ve already spent three years. I have no idea how many more years I need.

“When our bodies age and our energy starts to decline, even if we overcome the latent dangers, we shouldn’t attempt advancing anymore. This is because the risk of losing control at that point is so high that no one is willing to risk it.

“As for Daly, she is different from me and most Beyonders. After she became a Corpse Collector, she handed in a special application after only a year. She hoped to consume the follow-up potion immediately. What surprised everyone was that she actually passed through the stricter examination and obtained the Gravedigger potion.

“It only took her one more year to go from Gravedigger to Spirit Medium. Heh, this year will be her fifth year as a Beyonder. She is only twenty-four this year, young enough to have many opportunities ahead of her.”

On the surface, she’s the most famous spirit medium in Awwa County, but she truly is an actual Spirit Medium… Isn’t that acting? Old Neil had apparently mentioned that Madam Daly had similar tendencies… Klein felt that he had grasped the key reason for Madam Daly’s quick ascension through the ranks.

“Captain, you’re young enough as well. You’re only in your thirties,” Klein comforted Dunn, but added in his heart, It’s just that your memory isn’t that great…

Dunn drank a sip of his coffee. He shook his head and smiled bitterly.

“Why didn’t you ask Madam Daly about her method of mastering and exploiting Sequence potions?” Klein purposely asked.

Dunn put down his coffee cup and massaged his temples as he spoke.

“She told me to become a true Nightmare… I don’t know what that means.”

Play the role of a Nightmare. Man, a Nightmare sounds sinister… Klein creased his eyebrows and temporarily fell silent.

Then, Dunn took out his smoking pipe and sniffed at it.

“Daly and I discussed the possibility of Seer’s follow-up potion being Clown. Assuming that the member of the Seers didn’t lie to you, she brought up an interesting hypothesis.”

“What hypothesis?” Klein asked hurriedly, his eyes turning bright.

He had once used a divination method to determine if Clown was the follow-up potion of Seer. The answer he received had been vague, but it seemed close to being a confirmation.

Dunn’s deep and serene gray eyes swept his gaze at him while he said in thought, “A normal Sequence pathway proceeds in a stepped manner. They advance according to a particular similarity. For instance, Sleepless, Midnight Poet, and Nightmare are all obviously related to the darkness of the night, as well as the peaceful sleep and tranquility that is generated from sleep. It can be imagined that every subsequent Sequence would have identical traits, only with more power and a wider scope. They might be linked to secrets, disaster, horror, the crimson moon, etc…

“Certain Sequence pathways appear unrelated, but when we analyze them in detail, we can still find similarities, such as Assassin and Instigator. Their implied similarity is to bring people calamities, pain, sorrow, and despair. Hence, the follow-up Sequences should abide by this pattern.”

Klein paid close attention and asked proactively, “But Seer and Clown doesn’t have such a connection?”

“Yeah.” Dunn nodded and said, “Daly believes that there might be Sequence pathways that share another kind of relationship. After all, there’s a lot we do not know.”

He paused for a moment before saying, “Daly said that, in this sort of pathway, the low to mid Sequence potions would respectively provide the Beyonder an ability that seems brand new and unrelated to the others. When the Beyonder reaches a point of qualitative change, these abilities will mix into an abnormally powerful ‘job’ that includes them all.”

“In other words, the pathway doesn’t advance step by step, but instead it’s a relationship of dissection and combination.”

Klein listened intently, but he felt lost. Dunn lifted his right hand and said, “A normal Sequence pathway advances a bit at a time, just like a child growing up. A growing child becomes taller, stronger, heavier, and more mature from a young age.”

“While special Sequence pathways are more like…”

Having said this, Dunn lifted up his thumb.

“This is Sequence 9.”

Then, he lifted up his index finger.

"This is Sequence 8."

Then, he gradually lifted up the rest of his fingers.

"Each and every finger is independent, and doesn't seem to be related to the others. But in the end…"

When he said the word 'end,' Dunn clenched his fingers into a tight fist!

"I understand now." Klein was suddenly enlightened. He agreed with Lady Daly's guess and the Captain's metaphor.

Maybe that's how it is? He nodded in deep thought.

Sequence 8 Clown and Sequence 9 Seer are completely different and have brand new abilities. And according to the description from the Nighthawks' intelligence, the corresponding Sequence 7 and Sequence 8 Clown don't share any similarities either…

Klein fell silent for a while before curiously pressing on, "At which stage would the different abilities combine to form a qualitative change?"

Dunn took another sip of coffee and chuckled.

"Daly and I guessed Sequence 4!"

"Why?" Klein blurted out.

"Because according to the way the churches categorize Sequences, Sequence 4 is the beginning point of the higher Sequences. It is said that merely achieving such a level brings about qualitative changes in vitality and energy. In ancient times, Sequence 4 Beyonders were qualified to be called demigods in the Fourth Epoch. It's a pity that such Beyonders are very rare in this era," Dunn said wistfully.

"If Sequence 4 to Sequence 1 are High-Sequence Beyonders, then who are the Low-Sequence Beyonders?" Klein asked with interest.

"Sequences 9 through 7 were considered as Low-Sequences a thousand years ago. But, in recent centuries, Beyonders are few in number and each church has listed Sequence 7 as a Mid-Sequence." Dunn laughed in a self-deprecating manner.

Sequence 9 and Sequence 8 are Low-Sequences. Then, Sequences 7 through 5 are Mid-Sequences. Finally, those Sequence 4 and above are High-Sequences… Klein repeated in his head and inevitably felt a yearning for that.

Emperor Roselle was a High-Sequence Beyonder!

However, the higher the Sequence, the greater the risk of losing control… Klein thought to himself in fear.

He asked as though in a seemingly casual manner, "What is the Sequence 4 potion for the Church of the Goddess called?"

"In actual fact, I'm not sure. My security clearance isn't high enough for me to be privy to that information. I'll be able to read them when I become a diocese bishop or Nighthawks deacon." Dunn shook his head and smiled. "In fact, at least half of the Church's thirteen archbishops and nine senior deacons at the top of the Church's hierarchy are below Sequence 4. Hmm, that's just me being optimistic. The archbishop Ince Zangwill, who became wanted, lost control when he tried to advance to Sequence 4."

The one who stole Sealed Artifact '0-08?' His potion was apparently called Gatekeeper… Klein thought and probed, "Is Sleepless Sequence 5 Gatekeeper?"

"No, that's in Spirit Medium's pathway. You'll be allowed to access that information when you reach Sequence 7 and become a bishop or a Captain of a Nighthawks team."

Gatekeeper is Sequence 5 of the Spirit Medium pathway? Does it mean that it's keeping watch over the gates to Hell? Or keeping watch over the gates to the Spirit World? Klein guessed.

“Alright, go to Old Neil and continue with your studies.” Dunn smiled and said, “Don’t forget about dinner tonight, at Old Will’s Restaurant. Reservations have been made. I’ll introduce you to the rest of the Nighthawks officially.”

“Alright, I’ve already prepared the money.” Klein forced a smile.

“No, there’s no need. Have you forgotten that we have additional bonuses? The part about you completing an assigned mission.” Dunn waved.

Klein was momentarily taken aback before replying with a beaming smile, “Alright, Captain.”

He turned around and walked towards the door, while counting inwardly, Three, two, one… Eh, why didn’t Captain call me back?

Klein dragged out “one” for a very long time, only to be surprised that Captain Dunn Smith hadn’t forgotten add anything.

A miracle…

†

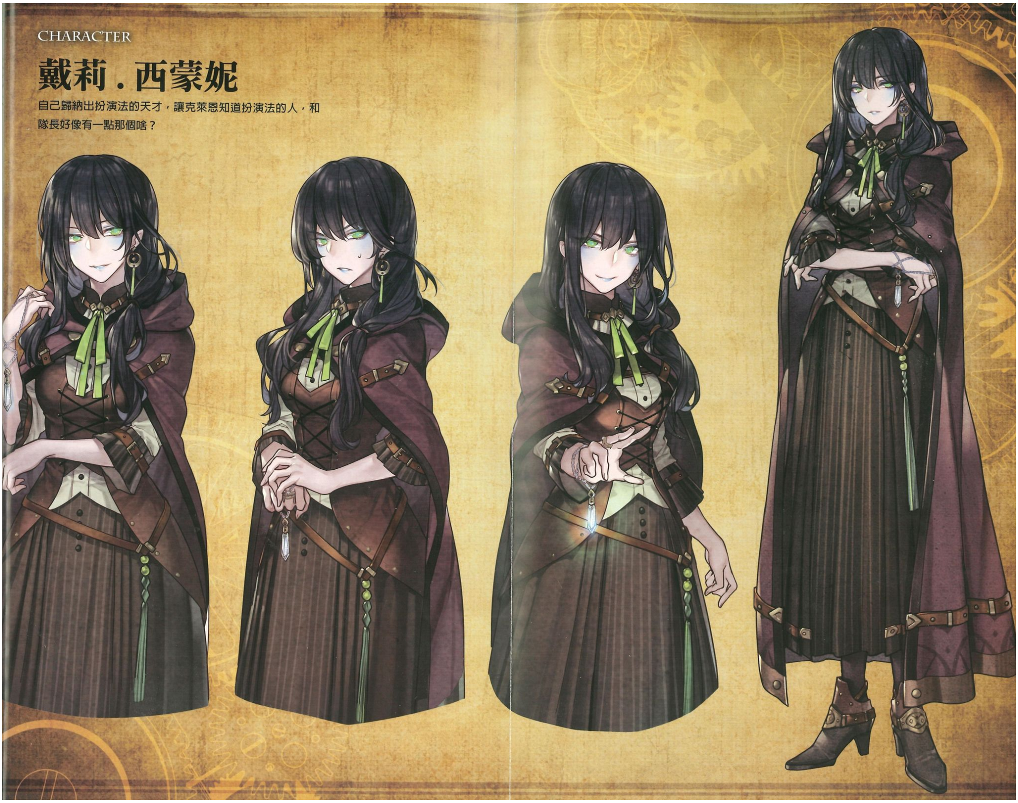
In the armory, Old Neil stole a glance at Klein, who was in a good mood.

“Don’t be obsessed with tonight’s dinner. You still have a lot of things to learn, such as more ritualistic magic, ancient Hermes, Dragonese, Elvish, and many more.”

“Yeah, every afternoon besides your day off, you have to have at least two hours of combat training with an instructor.”

“Combat training? Captain didn’t mention it…” Klein was shocked.

Old Neil nodded and didn’t hesitate to answer, “He forgot.”


CHARACTER
戴莉．西蒙妮
自己歸納出扮演法的天才，讓克萊恩知道扮演法的人，和隊長好像有一點那個啥？

Daly Simone

A genius who summarized the "Acting Method" on her own. She is the person who let Klein perceive the existence of the Acting Method. It seems like she and the Captain have a bit of "that kind of thing" going on?

Chapter 97 - Combat Teacher

◆

At two in the afternoon, outside of a simple two-storied building that was in disrepair at the outskirts of the North Borough.

Klein, who was in his probationary inspector uniform, looked at the weed-filled garden and the vines that had crept up the walls. He turned his head in surprise.

“My combat instructor lives here?”

Shouldn’t a combat artist who was selected by the Nighthawks be exceptional…

Leonard Mitchell, who had guided Klein there, snickered and said, “Don’t underestimate Mr. Gawain because of his residence’s surroundings. Although he was never conferred an aristocratic title, he was a true knight back in the day.”

Having said that, the poetic Nighthawk, who was dressed in a white shirt, black trousers, and buttonless leather boots suddenly felt melancholic.

“He was active during the waning era of the knights. The warriors donning their armors would storm through enemy ranks despite the gunfire and cannon fire, destroying their enemies and redefining the battle lines. But alas, they were quickly met with the invention of the high-pressure steam guns and six-barrel machine guns. From then on, the knights had to gradually step down.

“Mr. Gawain met the same fate. More than twenty years ago, the Awwa Knights’ Order of Chivalry faced the most advanced weaponry of the Intis Republic army… Sigh, every time I recall this, it seems like I’m touching the dust heaps of history. The poet in me stirs when thinking of this irreversible and fated destiny, but alas, I do not know how to compose the poem.”

…Then what’s the point in saying so much? Klein acted oblivious to Leonard’s self-deprecation and gave a serious suggestion, “My university schoolmate once told me that the composing of poems requires a certain degree of talent. It’s best you start by reading the Classical Poems Anthology of the Loen Kingdom.”

Leonard’s mood changed on a whim. He replied with a light-hearted tone, “I purchased that book a long time ago, as well as other titles, such as the Selected Poems of Roselle. I will work hard to become a true Midnight Poet, Mr. Seer”

Is he hinting at the… acting method? Klein replied, as though he couldn’t understand him, “You would still need books on grammar.”

“Alright, let’s enter.” Leonard extended his hand and pushed open the half-closed metallic gates. The two of them then followed the path towards the house.

They were still a distance away from the house when Klein saw a tall man walking out from behind the main door.

He had short blond hair, his brows already laced with white hairs. His facial features looked like they had been ravaged through age, his wrinkles were etched deep across his face.

“What are you doing here?” the aged man asked in a deep voice.

“Mr. Gawain, as per your contract with the police department, this probationary inspector will be learning the art of combat under your guidance,” Leonard explained with a smile.

“Combat? There’s no need to study combat in this era.” Gawain looked at Klein with turbid eyes and said in a dead voice, “You should learn how to draw your gun and shoot. You should master the most advanced weaponry.”

Was this the psychological trauma caused by the six-barrel machine guns and high-pressure steam guns? Klein didn’t give a reckless reply; instead, he smiled and looked at Leonard.

“The art of combat is still a skill a policeman has to master. Most of the criminals we face are not those who must be executed on the spot. Some might not even have weapons. In that case, we have to rely on combat techniques,” Leonard said, obviously prepared for the situation.

With a dark expression, Gawain fell silent for more than ten seconds before saying, “Throw a punch.”

He was speaking to Klein.

Klein, who was not holding his cane, remembered the boxing matches he had seen in his previous life. He raised his arm and threw it forward.

Gawain’s lips twitched indiscernibly. He thought for a moment and said, “Kick.”

Tilting to the side slightly and twisting his hips, Klein tightened his thigh muscles and kicked forward with his right foot.

Cough… Gawain covered his mouth and cleared his throat. He looked at Leonard and said, “I will honor my contract. But based on his foundation, he needs to come here four times a week, three hours each time, for the first month.”

“You’re the combat expert. It’s up to you.” Leonard nodded without hesitation. He smiled and said to Klein, “See you at dinner.”

After Leonard walked out the metallic gates, Klein asked out of curiosity, “Instructor, how should I begin practicing? Punching, or footwork?”

As a qualified keyboard warrior, he understood the importance of footwork in combat.

Gawain stood akimbo as he shook his head lethargically.

“What you need now is strength training.

“See those? Those are two dumbbells made of steel. They shall be your partners for today.

“Other than that, you also have to practice deep squats, running, and rope-skipping. Let us take those one set at a time.”

While Klein was still in a daze, Gawain suddenly raised his voice and said sternly, “Understood?”

“Understood!” At this moment, Klein felt as though he had returned to military training and was facing an inhumane instructor.

“Change out of your clothes. There’s a set of knight’s training clothes on the sofa.” Gawain suddenly sighed. He turned around and walked toward the black steel dumbbells.

†

Six in the evening, at a corner table of the Old Will Restaurant.

Other than Frye, who was guarding Chanis Gate, all the members of the Blackthorn Security Company were present. There were six Nighthawks and five civilian staff.

A white tablecloth was draped over the long table. Waiters carried over plates of food, portioned them before serving them to each individual guest.

Klein saw steaks drenched in black pepper sauce. He saw bacon, sausages paired with mashed potatoes, egg puddings, asparagus, and specialty cheeses. He even saw rose-colored champagne. However, he had no appetite. The training in the afternoon had nearly made him vomit.

Noticing the pale, newly-inducted Nighthawk with turbid eyes, Dunn raised the glass of red wine in front of him and laughed.

“Let us welcome our newest official member, Klein Moretti, cheers!”

The cold and introverted black-haired lady, Royale Reideen, the Sleepless Kenley White, the sloppy Leonard Mitchell, as well as the white-haired, black-eyed Midnight Poet Seeka Tron all raised their cups and looked at the new member of their team.

Klein fought back the discomfort of the training and raised his glass of amber champagne. He stood and said, “Thank you.”

He clinked glasses with every Nighthawk, tilted his head back, and finished the small amount of champagne.

“Is our Miss Author not going to say something on this occasion?” Dunn smiled as he looked at Seeka Tron.

Seeka Tron was a lady in her thirties. She had average looks, but had an exceptional demeanor, one that was quiet and serene. Coupled with her few strands of graying hair, it added a unique charm to her.

Klein had heard Old Neil mention that this Midnight Poet had taken on a side job as an author and had attempted to submit her works to newspapers and magazines. Unfortunately, only a few smaller newspapers had accepted them.

Seeka smiled and looked at Dunn.

“In order to make the term ‘Miss Author’ into a reality, Captain, I think you should give me some funds to self-publish my work.”

Dunn laughed.

“You should learn from Old Neil and give me a more suitable reason.”

“I’m most impressed with Mr. Neil in this department!” Rozanne echoed in-between her mouthfuls of roast mutton.

Amidst the chatter and laughter, Leonard looked at Klein and said with a chuckle, “Are you so tired that you have no appetite to eat?”

“Yeah.” Klein sighed.

“If you haven’t touched your food yet, I can be of assistance.” Leonard acted as though he didn’t want to waste any food.

Klein didn’t mind. He nodded and said, “That wouldn’t be an issue.”

And with that, a good portion of the food in front of him was eaten by Leonard and the rest.

Nearing the end of the dinner, the waiters served plates of beef pudding and ice-cream.

Klein tasted ice-cream and found it cold and sweet. It was particularly appetizing.

Before he realized it, he had finished the ice-cream drizzled with a blueberry sauce.

And as a result of this, he started to feel the hunger pangs. It was a hunger which demanded recharging food that came after intense exertion.

Swallowing his saliva, Klein looked to the front, only to see that all the plates were empty. There were no leftovers.

“Let’s end the dinner here, and give Klein a final toast,” Dunn suggested.

Before finishing his sentence, Klein asked, “Captain, may I order another plate of food?”

The group fell silent after hearing such a request, only to break out into chuckles moments later.

“Haha, you’ve finally recovered. No problem, order two plates if you want to.” Dunn shook his head and laughed.

While patiently waiting an unbearable amount of time, Klein heard his stomach growling.

Finally, a freshly prepared black pepper steak was served before him.

His fork and knife danced as Klein finished the medium-done steak in ninety seconds, tears nearly falling from his eyes. The meat juices and the fragrance of the sauce lingered in his mouth.

Sometime later, Klein let out a satisfied sigh as he looked at his empty plate. He put down his knife and fork and took a sip of his champagne.

“Waiter, the bill please.” Dunn turned around and called for the waiter.

The waiter went to the counter, then returned with the check. He gave a thorough breakdown,

“You opened five bottles of Desi Champagne, each bottle being twelve soli and three pence, a small glass of Southville Red Wine for ten pence… Each black pepper beef steak was one soli two pence… Each serving of beef pudding was six pence, the servings of ice cream was one soli each… The total would be five pounds, nine soli, and six pence.”

Five pounds, nine soli, and six pence? That’s nearly my weekly salary! A restaurant is indeed much more expensive than eating at home! Klein clicked his tongue upon hearing that. He felt lucky that the Captain had said that he didn’t need to pay out of his own pocket. They had some petty cash from bonus earnings!

He calculated the cost carefully and noticed that the most expensive portion of the meal was the alcohol. Five bottles of champagne had cost more than three pounds!

This is no different from Earth… Klein secretly rubbed his stomach and forced down the last of his champagne.

†

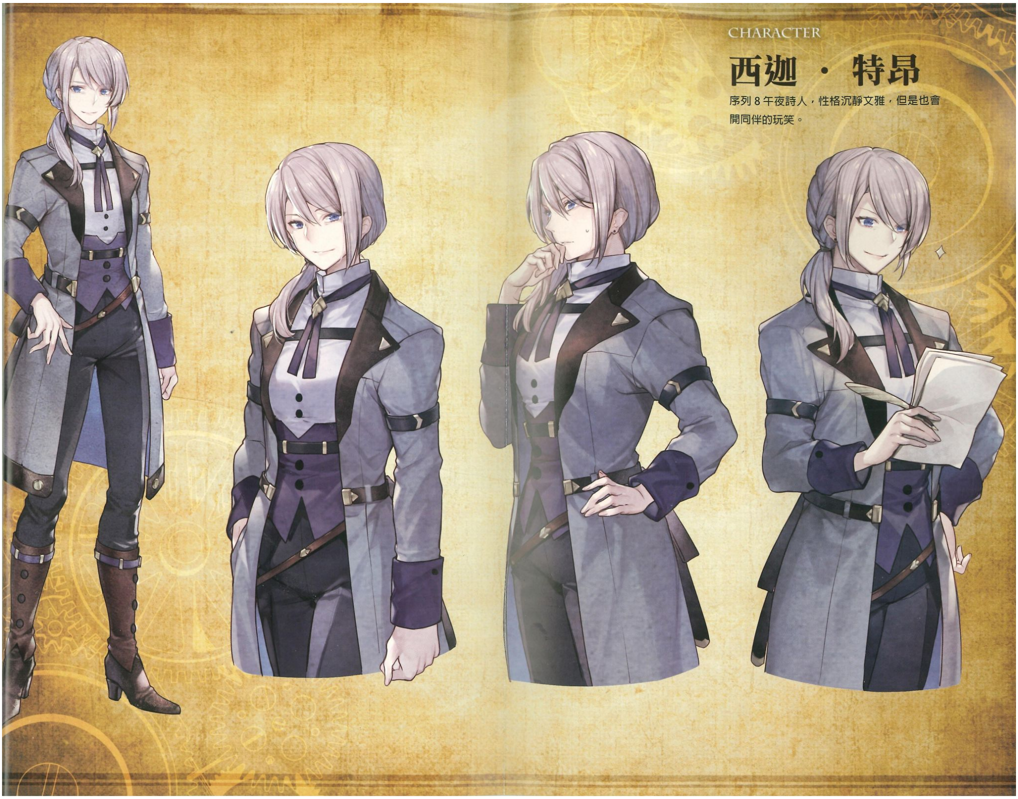
The next morning, Klein felt bloated. He tried to get off the bed in his sleepy stupor.

Just as he exerted strength, he was instantly awakened by his aching muscles. He felt as though his body wasn’t under his control.

“What a familiar feeling… It’s the same as that day after we got punished with frog jumps. Today is a rest day, but I still have to pay a visit to my mentor and see if I can borrow the monograph on the Hornacis main peak from the library at the University…” Klein’s lips twitched as he made his way outside with some effort.

He wanted to draw a gasp with every step.

“Klein, what happened to you?” Melissa, who had just come out of the bathroom, sized up her brother suspiciously for his odd posture and slow movement.



CHARACTER

西迦・特昂

序列８午夜詩人，性格沉靜文雅，但是也會開同伴的玩笑。

Chapter 98 - Mr. Azik

◆

Faced with his sister’s question, all Klein could do was reply with a regretful smile, “Sore muscles.”

He originally believed that by consuming the Sequence potion, his constitution would be enhanced as a Beyonder, but the harsh reality told him that a Seer’s stats points were all allocated to his spirituality, mind, intuition, and interpretation. It didn’t aid him in adjusting to combat training quickly.

As for the original Klein, he had focused on his studies early on and had suffered from malnutrition. That led him to possess a below-average physical condition. The fact that he was having ‘after effects’ from working out was to be expected.

“Sore muscles? I remember you returning after dinner last night and you didn’t do anything else… Does alcohol cause sore muscles?” Melissa inquired with an inquisitive look.

Does alcohol cause sore muscles… Sis, that question… can’t help but make me have inappropriate thoughts… Klein laughed dryly and said, “No, this has nothing to do with alcohol. It was from yesterday afternoon. I joined the company’s combat training.”

“Combat?” Melissa was even more astonished.

Klein organized his thoughts and said, “Well, this is what happened. I considered it and believe that as a historical and relic consultant of a security company, it’s impossible for me to stay in the office or port warehouse forever. Perhaps there will come a day when I have to accompany them to the villages or an ancient castle, to the site of some relic. That might require me to hike, to cross rivers, and to walk a lot. I'll have to endure all sorts of tests posed by nature, so I have to possess a sufficiently healthy body."

"So you joined combat training to enhance your stamina?" Melissa seemed to understand her brother's intention.

"That's right," Klein answered with great affirmation.

Melissa said with a frown, "But that isn't gentlemanly… Don't you always keep yourself to the standards of a professor? A professor only requires the ability to read historical documents, ponder over difficult questions, and maintain a polite and gentlemanly demeanor.

"Of course, I'm not saying that those aren't all good things. I prefer men who can solve problems on their own, regardless of whether that solution requires brawn or brain."

Melissa smiled.

Klein smiled and said, "No, no, no, Melissa. Your definition of a professor contains a misconception. A true professor can communicate with people gently and politely, but he can also educate the other person using the principles of physics by raising a cane to convince someone when there is an obstacle in communication."

"Principles of physics…" Melissa was momentarily at a loss, but she quickly understood what her brother was saying. She was suddenly unable to retort him.

Klein didn't say anything more but widened his pace with great difficulty as he headed for the bathroom.

Melissa stood there and looked for a few seconds. She suddenly shook her head and caught up to Klein.

"Do you need my help?"

She posed as if she was supporting someone.

"No, there's no need to. I was hamming it up a bit earlier." Klein felt humiliated. He suddenly stood straight and walked normally.

Watching her brother walk steadily to the washroom and close the door, Melissa pursed her lips and muttered, "Klein is getting more and more pretentious… I even believed that his muscle soreness was really that serious…"

In the bathroom, Klein stood behind the tightly shut door, his face suddenly contorting in pain.

Ouch, ouch, ouch… He held his breath, tensed his body, and stood there for a good seven or eight seconds.

When he finally went downstairs with great effort, had breakfast, and saw Benson and Melissa off, his soreness finally began to ease.

After resting for a little while, Klein took his cane, donned his top hat, and left the house, strolling towards the public carriage stop.

†

During the summer, Khoy University had trees with shade-providing foliage, flourishing with birds and luxuriant flowers. It was peaceful and calm.

Walking along the river, Klein took a turn towards the history department. Then, he found the three-story building which showed its age and located his mentor's, Cohen Quentin's, office.

He knocked and entered the room, but he was shocked to see that the man sitting at his mentor's seat was the academic, Azik.

"Good morning, Mr. Azik, Where's my mentor? We made an appointment by letter to meet here at ten," Klein asked, puzzled.

Azik, who was Cohen Quentin's best friend and often debated with his mentor regarding academic topics, smiled and said, "Cohen had a last minute meeting and went to Tingen University. He asked me to wait for you here."

He had bronze skin, an average height and build, black hair, brown eyes, and gentle facial features. Being in his presence brought on an indescribable feeling, as though you could see in the man's eyes that he had been through the vicissitudes of life. Under his right ear was a tiny mole that one wouldn't notice unless closely examined.

Having said the reason, Azik suddenly frowned as he carefully observed Klein.

Feeling confused by the sudden scrutiny, Klein looked at his attire. "Have I committed some breach of etiquette?"

Tuxedo, black vest, white shirt, black bow tie, dark colored trousers, leather boots with no buttons… Everything seems normal…

Azik's brows eased and he chuckled softly.

"Don't mind me. I suddenly noticed that you are way more energetic than before. You look even more like a gentleman now."

"Thank you for your compliment." Klein accepted it calmly and asked, "Mr. Azik, did my mentor manage to find the book 'Research of the Hornacis Main Peak's Relics' in the school library?"

"He found it with my assistance," Azik said, smiling gently. He then pulled open the drawer and took out a gray-covered book. "You are no longer a Khoy University student anymore. You can read it here, but you cannot take it home."

"Alright." Klein delightfully took the academic monograph, and with a hint of fear.

The book’s design was fully in-line with the current trends; it used hard paper as a hardcover and it was printed with an image like an abstract version of the main peak of Hornacis mountain range.

Klein took a glance and found a seat. He flipped open the book and started reading carefully, line by line.

As he became engrossed in the book, he suddenly realized that there was a cup of rich and fragrant coffee by his side.

“Help yourself to the sugar and milk.” Azik put down the silver saucer and pointed at the milk jar and sugar container.

“Thank you.” Klein nodded with gratitude.

He added three cubes of sugar and a teaspoon of milk before continuing to read his book.

The book, Research of the Hornacis Main Peak’s Relics, was not a very thick book. Klein finished reading it when it was almost noon. He took note of a few noteworthy points.

First, the settlement on the main peak of Hornacis Mountain and its surrounding area was obviously an advanced civilization, which existed as part of an ancient nation.

Second, from their wall murals, their perspective on life appears similar to that of humans. I can assume for now that they were human.

Third, they revered yet feared the darkness of the night. Hence, they called their god the Ruler of the Evernight, Mother of the Sky.

Fourth, the weirdest part is that researchers haven’t found any graves in the entire area, which initially seems to indicate that the people didn’t need to be buried, because they didn’t die. However, that would be contradictory to the contents of the wall murals. In the wall murals, the people in the nation believed that death is not the end. They believed that their deceased family would protect them in the night.

Hence, they would keep their deceased family members at home, on the bed, by their side, for a full three days.

There is nothing beyond that for the wall murals as it doesn’t involve burials.

Klein took another sip of coffee and continued to write down his ‘afterthoughts’ in his notebook.

Mother of the Sky, Skymother is such a grand title, while the Ruler of the Evernight obviously overlaps with the Evernight Goddess… Is this a contradiction at its roots?

In the ancient remains on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range and its surrounding area, every arrangement and decoration was well-preserved. Even the wall murals didn’t have any signs of damage. Before it was discovered, there seemed to be no disturbance at all… The table was arranged with cutlery, and there were dried stains of rot on the dining plates… In some rooms, there were half-filled bottles of alcohol that had almost turned into plain water…

What happened to the nation’s people? They seemed to have left their homes in a hurry, without taking anything with them, and they never returned.

Considering how there are no burial grounds, this only makes it weirder.

The author, Mr. Joseph, also mentioned that when he first discovered the remains, he even had the belief that the people residing there had just vanished all of a sudden.

Klein stopped writing and cast his gaze at an illustration.

On John Joseph’s third visit to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, he had used a new camera model to shoot a monochrome photograph.

In the photo, the lofty palace had a collapsed wall and was overgrown with weeds. It followed a grandeur style for its design.

When he flipped to the photograph, Klein's first thought was that of the palace he had seen in his dream.

The two styles were identical. The only difference was that the one he had dreamed of was on a peak and it was way more magnificent. It also had a huge chair—a seat of honor—that looked like it didn't seat a human. Countless translucent maggots clustered together and squirmed slowly beneath the chair.

I can confirm that my dream is related to the ancient remains on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range… That should be the Nation of the Evernight which was referenced in the Antigonus family's notebook… Klein nodded slightly and closed the book.

At that moment, Azik, who was sitting opposite him touched the inconspicuous mole under his right ear and said, "How was it? Found anything?"

"Quite a bit. Take a look, I've written so many pages of notes." Klein pointed at the table and smiled.

"I don't understand why you're suddenly so interested in this matter." Azik sighed and said, "Klein, when I was studying at the Backlund University, I had dabbled with some divination and did quite a bit of research on that. Well, I discovered that there is disharmony… in your fate."

What? Divination? Are you talking to me about divination? As a Seer, Klein looked at Azik the academic in amusement.

"How is it disharmonious?"

Azik thought for a moment.

"Have you encountered many strange coincidences in the past two months?”

“Coincidences?” As he was indebted to Mr. Azik, Klein didn’t dispute his question as he subconsciously began thinking.

If we are talking about coincidences, the most obvious matter was when we were after kidnappers. We actually managed to find clues of the Antigonus family’s notebook that was lost for days in the room opposite the kidnappers.

Also, Ray Bieber didn’t flee from Tingen in a hurry; instead, he found a place to digest the power bestowed by the notebook, allowing for Sealed Artifact 2-049 to track him down easily. That seemed to be against common sense. Although Aiur Harson gave a reasonable explanation, I always had a nagging feeling that it was somewhat coincidental…

Oh, Selena had stolen a glance at Hanass Vincent’s secret incantations, but she held back till her birthday dinner banquet to try it out, and I happened to discover it, which is quite a coincidence too. Otherwise, Hanass Vincent wouldn’t have been the only one to die so suddenly…

Klein thought about it seriously for a few minutes and said, “There are three. Neither too many, nor too frequent. Furthermore, there was nothing that indicated someone’s involvement and guidance.”

Azik nodded slightly.

“As Emperor Roselle once said, a single coincidence is encountered by anyone. Twice is still normal. Thrice is when one should consider what internal factors are influencing those coincidences.”

“Can you tell me anything else?” Klein probed.

Azik laughed and shook his head.

“I can only tell that there’s some disharmony, but nothing else. You have to understand that I’m not a real seer.”

Isn't that basically equal to saying nothing… Mr. Azik is quite odd… He's playing a charlatan in front of a charlatan like me… Klein let out a breath, seizing the moment when Azik stood up, he pinched his glabella and activated his Spirit Vision.

When he looked over, Azik's aura fully appeared before his eyes and everything seemed fairly normal.

Unfortunately, I can only see the Ether Body and Astral Projection of a person above the gray fog… Klein thought carefreely as he tapped his glabella again whilst standing up.

Chapter 99 - Red Chimney

◆

Late in the afternoon, Klein returned home and drew the curtains, allowing his room to slip into darkness.

He took out his pen and paper and thought for a long time, finally writing down a sentence: “The kidnapping of Elliott was due to Beyonder elements.”

As a Seer, Klein had tried to divine if those coincidences were a consequence of unnatural developments, but the results showed otherwise.

This time, he was influenced by Azik to look into these events again. He also drew lessons from the suited clown. He seriously designed an appropriate divination statement, eliminating any descriptions that might be vague or cause confusion.

“Yes, I should break down the three coincidences and divine them separately…” Klein nodded in thought as he slowly removed the topaz from his wrist.

He held the spirit pendulum with his left hand and allowed it to hang close over the divination statement on the paper.

He collected himself and entered a state of Cogitation. With his eyes closed, Klein started chanting repeatedly, “The kidnapping of Elliott was due to Beyonder elements.”

As he recited the statement over and over again, Klein opened his eyes and looked at the pendulum, only to see the topaz turning counterclockwise slowly.

“It’s still a negative…” Klein muttered to himself. He designed several other divination statements, but the results persisted—there was nothing strange about that incident.

He then separately divined the “event of Ray Bieber’s stay in Tingen” and “Selena’s magic mirror divination incident,” but the answers for both events were normal.

Heh, was I, a real Seer, frightened by the charlatan Mr. Azik? Besides, Captain and the others didn’t feel that anything was off… Klein laughed and shook his head. But he remained cautious. He planned on using the dream divination technique to get a final confirmation.

After some thought, he changed the divination statement to fit the change in method.

“The true reason for Elliott’s kidnapping.” As he scribbled with the fountain pen, Klein paused and pondered over his words.

After reading it over and over again, he tore the slip of paper and walked toward his bed. He relaxed and laid down.

With the divination statement in hand, Klein quickly fell asleep with the help of Cogitation.

He found himself in a contorted, broken world. Regaining his senses, he began swimming through the blur.

Gradually, he saw the few kidnappers. He saw them lose their final chip at a gambling table, saw them obtain guns from underground sources, and saw them survey the area. They even rented the apartment across Ray Bieber’s apartment as their hideout…

These didn’t form a continuous scene, instead, they were presented in the form of flashing pictures. Klein couldn’t find anything that was abnormal.

Furthermore, it had also aligned with the statements given by the kidnappers.

After exiting the dream, Klein separately divined the other two incidents but had the same result. Their developments followed logic. The coincidences were really coincidences.

“I was indeed overthinking things. Mr. Azik is merely a divination enthusiast…” Klein stabilized his pendulum and shook his head with a bitter smile.

He was about to draw the curtains and allow sunlight into the room when he froze.

“From the original Klein’s impression of Mr. Azik, he is a dependable and trustworthy person. He had never once said anything baseless. Even if he was always quarreling with Mentor, it was limited to academic topics, and each of them had their reasons… If he was truly a mere divination enthusiast, he wouldn’t have interacted with me like that… And the memories of original Klein has nothing about him liking divination… Of course, this could be due to the loss of a corresponding memories…” Klein frowned and couldn’t ease his worries. He needed a way to confirm this.

He suspected that Mr. Azik had unwittingly come across some insider information and was trying to remind him by using divination as an excuse.

“How should I confirm this?” Klein paced back and forth across the dark room, trying to recall the other divination techniques he knew.

One step, two steps, three steps. He suddenly halted as an idea came to him.

“Let’s assume that these coincidences are dubious. I’m unable to divine a result either because my Sequence isn't high enough or I'm being affected by outside interference, but I can change my environment! I can change my environment to someplace that is even more mysterious and even harder to understand." Klein felt pumped. He pulled open his drawer and took out a silver dagger.

He concentrated and allowed his spirituality to flow out from the tip of the dagger, becoming one with his surroundings.

With each step he took, the wall of spirituality sealed off the entire room.

Klein planned on doing the divination above the gray fog, to do the divination in that mysterious world!

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In the magnificent ancient divine hall above the endless gray fog.

Klein sat at the seat of honor on one end of the bronze table. Before him was a piece of goatskin he willed into existence.

He lifted a pen and tried writing the divination statement as he had previously.

"The kidnapping of Elliott was due to Beyonder elements."

He held the spirit pendulum and hung it low. Klein quickly composed himself as he turned silent and ethereal.

Half-closing his eyes, he recited the statement seven times, using his spirituality to interact with the spiritual world that stood above all.

Feeling the tug of the silver chain, Klein opened his eyes to look at the pendulum.

The sight made him freeze immediately.

The pendulum was spinning clockwise!

This meant that there was a Beyonder element behind Elliott's kidnapping!

This was completely different from the result he had gotten in the outside world!

There were no traces of any interference… Such power or means is terrifying… What's the motive of the person behind this? Is my fate intertwined with the Antigonus family's diary? Klein was immensely shocked. He lost his calm and the rotation of the pendulum slipped into chaos.

He put down the topaz and rubbed his glabella. His expression was abnormally grave.

After contemplating for a few seconds, he didn't attempt to divine the other two events. Instead, he wrote a new divination statement: "The true reason for Elliott's kidnapping."

He held the paper in his hand and recited the statement seven times. Klein leaned back and fell into sleep above the fog.

Soon, he saw a boundless, illusory grayish-white fog.

The fog dissipated slowly, revealing a colorful lawn filled with flowers.

The space behind the flowers and the plains was folding into itself, like a monster that had come alive.

Klein tried his best to look forward, barely making out an image of a dark red chimney.

At this point, the scene before him shattered, putting an end to his dream.

Klein abruptly straightened his back in the majestic divine hall. His heart was beating wildly without reason.

Phew… It felt like I had just spied on a terrifying thing… He took in two deep breaths to stabilize his chaotic emotions.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein tapped on the side of the table sometime later and slipped into deep thought.

Red chimney… garden… lawn… How is this related to the person behind all of this? I cannot determine his motive from the coincidences, nor can I conclude that there is any evil intent…

In the midst of this thinking, Klein felt alarmed, for himself, Captain, Frye, and the others.

We are like puppets dancing on a string. What's even scarier is that we thought so highly of ourselves…

Sigh… I don't know how to raise this matter to Captain. Old Neil's divination produced the same results as mine in the outside world… If they asked me to confirm it in front of them, I have no way of doing that… Klein rubbed his temples as if he had a headache.

After nearly twenty seconds of calm, he began divining the "event of Ray Bieber's stay in Tingen." Similarly, he first used spirit dowsing.

This time, Klein was shocked to see his topaz hang motionless. It was neither a confirmation or rejection of the statement.

"Strange…" he muttered. He started to guess the reasons for this phenomenon, "The person behind this has sensed my divinations and engaged in countermeasures?"

Following this, he tried the dream divination technique, but all he saw were fragmented pieces of fog. He no longer made any new discoveries.

The results of "Selena's magic mirror divination incident" were the same.

Klein could almost confirm his conjecture at this point. Since he had no way of notifying Captain Dunn Smith for the time being, he had an unprecedented motivation to improve his abilities.

“I must head to the Divination Club later and quickly succeed in my ‘acting’ to digest the Seer potion… Also, I have to confirm whether the Clown potion is indeed the subsequent Sequence of Seer, as well as gather clues about it… In addition, I have to interact more with Mr. Azik and see if I can dig up whatever inside information he holds…” Klein held his forehead with his right palm and quickly drew up a plan, and determined his focal point.

After some thought, a goatskin appeared in front of him again. He picked up his pen and wrote:

“The corresponding Sequence 8 of Sequence 9 Seer is Clown.”

From his prior experience, the present Klein was completely convinced that his divination abilities were augmented and enhanced above the gray fog.

“Just like how raids are usually successful… is this the result of having good luck?” he muttered and picked up his spirit pendulum.

Sometime later, Klein received a definitive answer:

The corresponding Sequence 8 of Sequence 9 Seer was Clown!

He then wrote on the paper once again.

“The corresponding Sequences 8, 7, 6, and 5 of Seer would grant at least one brand new, unrelated power.”

Klein exhaled as he tried spirit dowsing again.

However, he saw the topaz hang motionlessly without any rotations.

“There isn’t enough information to complete the divination and receive a revelation?” he muttered to himself while seemingly deep in thought. Then, he set down the silver chain and began considering the required statement for a dream divination.

Nearly twenty seconds later, he picked up his fountain pen and wrote seriously: “Clues to the Clown potion.”

Chapter 100 - Interpreting Symbols

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“Clues to the Clown potion.”

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On the seat of honor at the ancient bronze table, Klein repeated the divination statement a few times before leaning back and entering a deep sleep.

His surroundings quickly became peaceful and quiet. He saw a hazy view, with countless distorted and blurry scenes flashing past, just like drops of morning dew on tender flower petals.

Gradually, Klein grasped his spirituality and came to his senses.

He saw a fireplace before him with a rocking chair in front of it. Sitting on it was an old woman dressed in black and white.

Although he couldn’t see her face since she was hanging her head low, Klein’s gut feeling told him that she was an old lady. And he was pretty certain about it.

The old lady was facing a desk directly. There were newspapers and tin cans inlaid with silver on the desk.

“This is…” Klein found the scene before his eyes very familiar, and he quickly recognized what he saw.

This was where Ray Bieber and his mother stayed!

This was where he saw a bloated cadaver for the first time!

“There are clues that point to the Clown potion here?” Just as Klein’s thoughts flashed past, the scene around him transformed.

It was a grayish-white warehouse, hidden among identical buildings.

There were white bones scattered all around, and a few balls of flesh that looked like they had been squashed by a boulder.

In the middle of the warehouse was a grayish-white object that was the size of a fist. Its surface was filled with ditches and it looked soft but ductile. It looked like a brain that had been extracted out of a living being.

Just as Klein recognized the scene and recalled something, the scene before him distorted like rippling water before transforming into another new blurry scene.

A naked body was laid on a long table covered with a white cloth. There were some bluish, discolored patches on the corpse’s skin.

Klein suddenly knitted his eyebrows and muttered, “It was first the images of Ray Bieber’s hiding place and his remains, and now, it’s related to the brand on the suited clown’s wrist?”

Just as he attempted to speculate what the scenes meant, the scene suddenly changed again.

A marble coffee table, a set of two leather couches, and a chandelier that hung high on the ceiling.

There were three people—Klein Moretti, who had black hair, brown eyes, and a scholarly temperament; a wealthy man with a chubby body and pale skin; and a beautiful young lady with fishnet gloves.

Following that, it was another three people and an object—a middle-aged man in a black robe who had thick spiky brown hair; a wealthy man with a chubby body and pale skin; a half-century-old elder with messy eyebrows, thin brown hair, and gray-blue eyes; and a black notebook on the round table in-between all of them, a notebook that exuded an ancient and distant air.

The Antigonus family's notebook!

Klein suddenly sat up straight and the dream vanished.

Looking outside the divine hall where there was boundless gray fog and crimson stars, he thought in both shock and confusion.

I was divining for clues to the Clown potion… Why would the Antigonus family's notebook show up?

Let me think, let me think, that chubby guy was Welch. Yes, Welch, an unfortunate fella who bought the Antigonus family's notebook and triggered a sequence of incidents… The beautiful young lady wearing fishnet gloves was Naya…

I remember, the marble coffee table and leather couch combination is a hallmark of Welch's place. I saw Spirit Medium Daly there.

In other words, what I saw was Welch's living room. It was a scene where the original Klein and his two classmates were discussing the notebook.

Klein calmed himself down and tapped on the edge of the long bronze table rhythmically.

Then, what does the last scene represent? The notebook appeared, Welch appeared. Could it be the scene where he bought the ancient item?

There were another two people, and one of them looked very familiar. I feel like I've seen the middle-aged man in the classic black robe somewhere before… That spiky brown hair, severe dark eye circles… Yes, I know who is he now. Hanass Vincent from the Divination Club, the Hanass Vincent who 'died peacefully' after Captain snuck into his dream, having learned that Selena secretly obtained the secret incantation from him!

No way, he was the one that sold the notebook to Welch?

Everything appears to be coming full circle. The world sure is small, no—Tingen is really small! On careful thought, it really is a possibility that Hanass Vincent wasn't an ordinary fortune-teller. He was obviously deep into mysticism and obtained the attention of an ancient evil god. He had the channels, ability, and opportunity to acquire the notebook that was accidentally released by the Secret Order…

It's no wonder Captain and company never figured out where Welch bought the notebook. Their investigative approach was entirely wrong. They had attempted to investigate via the antique market… But when the actual whereabouts of the notebook was found, they gave up on that lead.

What a pity, Hanass Vincent just passed away not too long ago. Otherwise, we definitely could've found out something regarding the notebook… Since he was involved in mysticism, he should've researched the notebook… His death was way too coincidental!

However, there was another person at the scene, a man in his fifties. He might know quite a bit of what happened.

Klein stopped tapping his fingers on the edge of the table and looked through every scene of his dream divination once more.

Ray Bieber's house, Ray Bieber's hideout spot, the remains of Ray Bieber, the brand on the suited clown's wrist, Welch's house; Welch, Naya, and original Klein's exchange; Welch, Hanass Vincent, and the Antigonus family notebook's 'group photo'. Hehe, besides the brand on the suited clown, everything else is directly related to the Antigonus family's notebook!

But I had divined for clues to the Clown potion… This isn't scientific, nor does it make mystical sense!

After becoming a Seer, Klein once tried to divine where Welch had bought the Antigonus family's notebook, but he never considered using the unique qualities that the area above the gray fog possessed. As such, he had failed to receive any revelations, but now, he had chanced upon the truth by divining something separate.

After spending nearly twenty seconds to calm down, Klein summarized the context provided by Roselle's diary and attempted to interpret his dream divination.

The first possibility: Zaratul or should I say, the Secret Order, was searching and pursuing the relics of the Antigonus family. So, the symbolic meaning of the dream is to use matters related to the Antigonus family to lure the Secret Order into appearing, so as to obtain the Clown potion's formula.

The second possibility: the Clown potion's formula is directly recorded in the Antigonus family's notebook… The fact that the Zaratul family is seeking the relics of the Antigonus family implies that they share very deep connections. They could've been allies or enemies. Hence, it seems fairly natural that the Antigonus family possessed parts of their Sequence. Things would be obvious if they were allies, but enemies are the ones who would know each other the best…

But the second explanation wouldn't be able to link it to the brand on the suited clown. Sigh, I do wish that the second explanation were true though. When the Holy Cathedral finds an expert to interpret the notebook, I would be able to obtain the Clown potion without any risk.

It seems that the first explanation is the most plausible. My gut feeling as a Seer tells me that there might be a deeper symbolic meaning.

Having thought of this, Klein massaged his forehead and suddenly realized the limitations of a Seer.

Unless it was a very simple and straightforward sign, a Seer had to be extremely careful when making interpretations. It was just like walking on the edge of the abyss or walking on a thin layer of ice over a lake's surface. The suited clown's outcome was an actual and bloody example of what a single mistake in interpretation or failure to grasp a key point could result in!

In that instant, Klein had an illusion of himself mastering the true essence of a Seer. He seemed to be just one step away from digesting the potion completely.

"Thank you for enlightening me with your life… Praise the Lady!" he muttered and drew a crimson moon before his chest.

Then he divined whether Azik had good intentions or if he was an amazing Beyonder. He received confirmations for both of them.

Eventually, the continuous divinations exhausted Klein. He had no choice but to stop churning through his thoughts and decide on the crucial matters that he needed to attend to.

I have to find the man that appeared in the same scene with Welch, Hanass Vincent, and the Antigonus family's notebook as soon as possible!

I can begin my search with the Divination Club.

I can't just confront Mr. Azik. Yes, he might be a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Life School of Thought, but there's a lack of information, making it impossible for me to divine…

Phew. Klein let out a breath and conjured the portrait of the half-century-old elder with messy eyebrows, thin brown hair, and gray-blue eyes on the goatskin that appeared before him.

This was the third person present when the Antigonus family's notebook was traded between Welch and Hanass Vincent!

Looking at the portrait, Klein suddenly fell into a dilemma.

I can't draw. During art class in primary school, I was always the one receiving the greatest criticism from the teachers.

Should I use ritualistic magic like Old Neil? This was done by praying to the Goddess… If I were to use the uniqueness of the area above the gray fog… I would be in trouble if the divinities noticed something amiss!

Hold on a second, perhaps I can pray to myself! Transmitting images and transmitting voices are similar… Although I'm temporarily unable to access the mysterious power above the gray fog, accomplishing such a minor matter shouldn't be a problem!

Having thought of this, Klein immediately emanated his spirituality to envelop himself to simulate the feeling of falling.

Back in his bedroom, he lit the gas lamp and 'prayed.'

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era;

"You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

"You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck;

"I pray for your revelation and pray that you allow me to draw what I've seen."

After reciting the incantation, Klein didn't splash essential oils or burn any herbs to gain the help of their powers.

It was just that informal when praying to oneself!

There were suddenly murmurs in his ears as he saw the four black dots that formed a square surface on the back of his hand.

He walked four steps counterclockwise and recited the incantation before penetrating the maniacal chaos to return to the area above the gray fog.

This time he didn't see any of the crimson stars shrinking or expanding. But behind the seat of honor at the long bronze table, the strange symbol formed by a partial Pupil-less Eye and partial Contorted Lines shimmered weakly as it produced illusory prayers.

Klein held his ear to it and listened. After making sure that there were no mistakes, he conjured the portrait of the 'third person', and cast it towards the flowing light in accordance to the prayer's format.

After everything was done, he immediately left the mysterious world above the gray fog and returned to his bedroom.

Just as he found his footing, a portrait surfaced immediately in front of Klein's eyes. Furthermore, he sensed a weak and illusory power augmenting him.

He picked up a fountain pen and found a piece of white paper and expressed his intent.

Klein was surprised to find his right hand moving uncontrollably as it quickly drew lines.

Before long, he saw a lifelike portrait of the 'third person'.

After writing down the hair and eye colors, as well as other unique characteristics, Klein heaved a sigh of relief despite the spasms of his right hand.

The illusion before his eyes rapidly dissipated.

Chapter 101 - Unexpected Clue

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Howes Street, Divination Club.

Klein pressed down on his half top hat and walked along the stairway towards the main door.

He wasn’t dressed in his usual formal wear. Today, he was wearing a white shirt and a light-colored vest, paired with a thin black trench coat, making him look more spirited than he had before.

This set of clothing was more suitable for combat and had only cost him one pound, including the fee for the small pocket that he had sewn into the vest. Compared to the suit he had purchased, it was so cheap that it brought tears to his eyes.

He stroked the revolver in his holster, as well as the metal bottles in his tiny inner pocket. Klein then took out the portrait and entered the Divination Club.

Without any surprise, he met the beautiful attendant, Angelica.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti. I thought you would come only a few days later.” Angelica was taken aback at first before she immediately revealed a brilliant smile.

Klein took off his hat and sighed.

“Good afternoon, Miss Angelica. I had a dream at noon. I dreamed about Mr. Hanass Vincent and matters regarding him. You know that, as a fortune-teller, I absolutely cannot overlook any dream. It could be a revelation from the divine."

Confused by his charlatan-like words, Angelica nodded in thought and asked out of curiosity, "What did you dream of?"

"I saw Hanass Vincent arguing with someone." Klein passed her the folded piece of paper in his hand.

As Angelica unfolded the portrait, he pinched his glabella and observed the color of her emotions.

"This person…" Angelica looked at the realistic portrait and slipped into deep thought.

Klein saw her emotions turn into a 'thinking blue', a normal reaction.

"This person…" Angelica muttered once again. She slowly looked up and said, "I've met him before."

Klein's mind whirled as he immediately asked, "When was it?"

"I can't remember the exact date. Maybe a month ago? I saw him send Mr. Vincent to the door and they were softly discussing something. I have a deep impression of him because of his thick and messy eyebrows, as well as Mr. Vincent's rare smile," Angelica described as she recalled. "Yes, he had a pair of grayish-blue eyes and, like most men his age, had little hair on his head."

"Did you meet him again before or after that?" asked Klein gently.

Angelica shook her head.

"No, I am certain of that. I don't even know his name. To be honest, if it wasn't you, I would have suspected that any person showing me a portrait like this is a policeman investigating Mr. Vincent's death. Heh, I don't find it odd no matter what revelation you receive, for you are a true Seer."

My apologies, I am a policeman… Klein retorted silently as he sighed and said, "A true Seer would understand how minuscule he truly is compared to the vastness of fate. We can only see a hazy corner, forever receiving revelations, but never answers. We must reflect upon them constantly and keep up our respect and fear. We must decipher these hints with caution and not see ourselves as the intelligent ones who have taken control of fate."

By summarizing what he had figured out over the past few weeks, Klein suddenly realized that his Spirit Vision turned clearer. He could even faintly make out the details within Angelica's aura.

At that instant, he felt like a shortsighted man who was wearing glasses that suited him.

This… has my Seer potion begun to produce clear signs of digestion? Klein was stunned in disbelief.

"I never imagined that a Seer like you can still maintain such fear and respect towards fate. It's truly admirable," said Angelica earnestly.

She had seen too many people in the Divination Club who claimed to see through the truth and change fate after learning a few divination methods.

Klein retracted his gaze and chuckled.

"The more you know, the better you can understand how small we truly are."

As he was saying this, he checked his body's condition and reflected on his past experiences. He could basically narrow the essence of the 'acting' technique to 'actions corresponding to the name of the potion, understanding the hidden laws governing the role, as well as strictly abiding by these laws'.

Only by doing so could he change the state of his body, heart, and soul, making them closer to the remnant psyche in the potion, so as to gradually digest it.

The acknowledgment of a Seer's identity was only a factor on the surface. The reason why it made one's spirituality feel light had to do with how the feedback strengthened one's affirmation of particular divination actions. And these actions collectively formed the rules for digesting the Seer potion.

To help others interpret revelations and guide them in a better direction; yet constantly maintain one's fear and respect towards fate. One cannot be too egoistical, too proud, or blindly believe one's interpretations… These are the laws I can think of for the time being, as well as the essence of the 'acting' technique that will guide me towards the future. If it continues to be this successful, I won't need half a year. Perhaps in two or three months, or even two to three weeks time, I'll be ready to completely digest the potion.

…That sign was extremely obvious. It's no wonder the mysterious Mr. Zaratul said that the Beyonder will clearly sense it when the potion is fully digested. There's no need for anyone to teach them. It is what it is… Just like now, although my Spirit Vision has been enhanced a little, I know very well that this is only a pit stop in the digestion process and not the final destination.

With this in mind, Klein couldn't help but thank the suited clown for teaching him with his life!

If it wasn't for him, he would probably spend months at the Divination Club, summarizing the rules of a Seer through numerous attempts—for better or for worse—before he began 'acting' strictly.

"Mr. Moretti, I sometimes even think of you as a philosopher," Angelica said with a sigh upon hearing Klein's reply.

"In my circle of friends, the term 'philosopher' is used to scold somebody." Klein was in a good mood.

With that said, he bowed, wore his hat, and left after bidding farewell.

Although Angelica was unaware of the gentleman's name or identity, Klein was in no way depressed. What he learned was sufficient enough for him to engage in the next phase of his plan.

†

36 Zouteland Street. Inside Blackthorn Security Company.

Dunn looked at the portrait in his hands with his deep gray eyes.

"You wish to carry out a search for this person?"

"Yes." Klein had long prepared a reason for this. "Captain, didn't I mention that I would head to the Divination Club to observe the reactions of its members on Hanass Vincent's sudden death? I didn't discover anything yesterday, but I accidentally found out today that the person in the portrait had appeared with Hanass Vincent once and was secretly discussing something with him. I flipped through our team's investigation report just now, but I didn't discover any person resembling him in the report."

There were no loopholes in his description. Even if Dunn Smith were to take this portrait to the Divination Club, he would get the same answer from Angelica.

Dunn cast his gaze away from the portrait and laughed.

"From the looks of it, the compensation funds weren't a waste."

…Captain, isn't your memory bad? Why would you mention the compensation at this point in time… Klein maintained a smile and didn't say a word.

"Was this drawn by you?" Dunn asked in passing.

"Yes. I drew it with the help of ritualistic magic," Klein replied, completely honest.

Of course, speaking the truth and revealing the whole truth were two different matters.

Dunn nodded slightly and said, “Get Old Neil to make a few more sets. I’ll get Kenley and Royale to investigate and seek the cooperation of the police department. If this clue is of any use, you would’ve contributed greatly once again.”

“May Goddess bless us.” Klein tapped four spots on his chest as he appeared abnormally devout.

For him, all he needed from Dunn and company was to figure out the name and identity of the man in the portrait. He could divine his location above the gray fog!

†

Despite it being his day off, Klein didn’t immediately return home after leaving the Blackthorn Security Company. Instead, he took the public carriage to the harbor and arrived in front of the Evil Dragon Bar’s entrance.

In his considerations, although a Seer lacked the means to directly engage in combat with an enemy or the means to cast spells quickly, combat could be classified in many ways. Not all battles were chance encounters. As long as he had sufficient time to prepare, a Seer could similarly deal with an enemy using ritualistic magic. It was exactly how he resolved the magic mirror divination incident at Selena’s house.

And this also meant that it was best if a Seer brought along the essential oils, herbs, and tiny candles to avoid being in a situation where they were unavailable when they were needed most, thus, resulting in a helpless death. After all, not everyone was like Selena who had an entire assortment of mysticism items which could be used.

As for the ones he applied for, as Klein had practiced frequently, he had used up most of them. He kept what was left in his tiny inner pocket.

He patted the cash note in his pocket and pushed open Evil Dragon Bar's door and strode in.

It was noon and there weren't many customers in the bar. Nor were there any rat-baiting or boxing matches. It was quiet and not lively enough.

Klein observed the guests drinking beer and playing cards as he walked toward the billiard room that led to the underground market.

At that moment, he saw a muscular old man walk out with a torn Admiral's jacket draped over his shoulders.

"Were you the friend Old Neil brought last time?" Reeking with the smell of alcohol, the blue-eyed, messy brown-haired elder sized up Klein and laughed.

Klein guessed at his identity and took off his hat and bowed.

"Yes, how might I address you?"

"Old Neil often mentions you. I'm the boss here, Swain." The blue-eyed elder's arms were thick and brawny. He had firm muscles and had the bearing of a military officer.

Former Tingen Mandated Punisher Captain… Rumor has it that he was once part of the Imperial Navy… Klein replied politely, "Yes."

"If you're in need of money, feel free to approach me." Swain laughed as he mentioned before walking towards the bar counter.

At that moment, Klein's heart stirred as he immediately shouted, "Wait a moment, Mr. Swain. I have something I would like to ask of you."

Swain halted in his steps, turned halfway around, and said with a chuckle, "You look, well—very similar."

No, I'm not having memory issues… The corner of Klein's lips twitched as he pointed at the portrait he drew and asked, "Have you met this gentleman before?”

He suddenly realized that Selena had likely been brought by Hanass Vincent to the underground market. This resulted in Elizabeth’s knowledge of the Evil Dragon Bar as well. Then, could the man in the portrait who had some relationship with Hanass Vincent have come here before?

Swain took a careful look and replied affirmatively, “I remember him. He had asked me if I had documents or items related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range.”

Documents and items related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range? Klein was taken aback as he suddenly connected that to another matter.

Back when he was borrowing the journal issue related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range at Deweyville Library, the librarian had casually mentioned that someone had just returned it. Therefore, he still remembered very cleverly and didn’t need to flip through his name cards to determine if the man existed.

Could the gentleman who borrowed the journal issue before me be the one in the portrait?

The gentleman that had witnessed the exchange of the Antigonus family’s notebook.

Chapter 102 - Cloth Merchant

◆

The more Klein thought about it, the more likely it seemed. Otherwise, who would have borrowed those random journal issues for no reason?

Yes, research regarding the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range is quite an unpopular field. Other than the corresponding lecturers and associate professors, the common hobbyist would've never heard of it. Even the original Klein, who was a history graduate, only knew about it from the Antigonus family's notebook… Although Tingen is a city of universities, there wouldn't be that many people who would interested in the topic. And even if there is anyone interested, most of them would remain within the university's compounds. There would be no need to borrow the book from the Deweyville Library.

The most important point is that the book happened to be borrowed only recently…

By analyzing it this way, there really is a problem. I wasn't sharp enough and failed to realize it… Sigh, it looks like I have no talent at being a detective or acting like Sherlock Holmes…

While these thoughts raced through his mind, the boss of Evil Dragon Bar, Swain asked in puzzlement, "Is there a problem?"

Since there were customers and bartenders around, he could only ask indirectly.

"Nothing at all. I'm just wondering how I can investigate this gentleman. As you know, Hanass Vincent died at his home." Klein had long prepared his excuse.

He didn’t want to make the Mandated Punishers become interested in the ancient relics from the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range.

“Vincent was one of the rather famous fortune-tellers in Tingen City. He often came here.” Swain had indeed given a perfunctory answer, but as he recalled, he said, “Now that I think about it, the gentleman in the portrait did come together with Vincent at the very beginning…”

“That is exactly what I wanted to know. Do you remember his name?” Klein pressed immediately.

Swain shook his head and chuckled.

“I won’t ask for my customers’ names or identities unless I knew them to begin with, like Old Neil.”

“Alright then.” Klein deliberately revealed a saddened look.

To him, it didn’t matter if Swain knew, because he could check the Deweyville Library.

To borrow books from a privately-funded library, he had to leave personal information, and his identification must have had sufficient credibility!

After all, Klein had relied on an introduction letter from a Senior Associate Professor before he obtained a library card.

Even if the gentleman had forged his information, it is very likely that he left some clues which can be helpful to my divination… Klein watched Swain as he returned to the bar counter before entering the billiard room in deep thought.

He wasn’t in a hurry to head to the Deweyville Library for his investigations. He planned on completing his purchases first. After all, it was unknown if he would encounter danger and be required to use ritualistic magic for subsequent developments.

After passing through a few rooms, Klein arrived at the underground market. There were a few stalls and customers, a clear indication that it wasn’t peak hour yet.

Just as he took a step forward, he suddenly saw the monster, Ademisaul, who could smell the scent of death, standing in a corner.

The young man was pale, and his eyes gave off a hint of terror and madness. He had also noticed Klein as he looked over.

As they made eye contact, Ademisaul suddenly extended his hands to cover his face. He moved toward the corner of the wall in a panicked state.

Soon, he moved to a side door beside him and staggered as he ran out.

Is that necessary? I just nearly blinded you the last time… But I didn’t do anything… Seriously, it’s as if I’m the devil. Klein’s facial expression was somewhat stiff.

He shook his head and smiled. He stopped thinking about the monster and came to a stall. He started shopping with a goal in mind.

After about half an hour, Klein spent a few pounds which was most of his secret stash of money.

He counted the three pounds and seventeen soli he had left, and he felt his heart ache. However, he touched the small metal bottle in the inner pocket of his black trench coat.

“This is the Amantha extract, which Madam Daly used previously.

“This is powder mixed with drago tree bark and leaves.

“Essential oil which is extracted from slumber flowers.

“Dried chamomile petals.

"This is Holy Night Powder which I previously produced myself."

†

Klein recalled the items stored in every tiny pocket of his and repeated them. He did it to prevent himself from failing to find the ingredient that he would need at a crucial moment.

Relying on his unique traits in mysticism, he quickly finished memorizing them and walked toward the door.

Suddenly, he saw a somewhat familiar figure in the corner of his eyes.

It was a young lady in a casual green dress. Her smooth black hair was soft and glistening. She had a round face with long eyes. They gave her a sweet look and a refined bearing.

It's the girl who was shivering strangely on the public carriage? She does seem fine… I never expected her to be a mysticism enthusiast… Klein slowed down and thought for a few seconds before finally recalling who she was.

He had to admit that, other than Justice who he had never seen clearly, the young lady was the most beautiful girl he had seen ever since he transmigrated into this world.

The sweet and refined girl stood before a stall that sold mysticism books and, in a breach of etiquette, kneeled to rub her fingers against an ancient book.

The ancient book was bound with a black hardcover. The book cover had the words "Book of Witches" in Hermes.

"It records the black magic of witches. Although I haven't dared to try them, someone I know did, and it really worked." The vendor seized the opportunity to promote the book.

The beautiful lady thought and asked, "In your mind, what does a witch look like?”

“A witch? A wicked person who brings calamities, disease, and pain,” the vendor answered after some thought.

Klein didn’t hear their conversation because he had already quickly walked out the front entrance. He was rushing to the Deweyville Library in a hurry to settle everything before returning home to cook dinner for his brother and sister. Tomato Oxtail Soup was on the menu.

†

Backlund. Crown Turf Club.

Audrey Hall wore a long white dress with engageantes and ruffled edges, as well as lace around her chest. She stood in a VIP room and watched the horses gallop.

She wore a veiled hat decorated with blue ribbons and silk flowers, and a pair of light colored fishnet gloves. Her cold and distant gaze seemed out of place in the bustling venue.

Just as the racehorse breasted the tape, her friend Viscount Glaint came closer and said with a suppressed voice, “Audrey, every time I see you, you look beautiful from a different angle.”

“How can I help you?” In the past, Audrey might have basked in the young man’s compliment, but now she could see Glaint’s ulterior motives through his speech and attitude.

Due to the early passing of Glaint’s father, he had inherited his title of nobility at the age of twenty. He was a slightly skinny young man. He looked to the left and right, then chuckled softly as he said, “Audrey, I know a real Beyonder, a Beyonder that doesn’t belong to the royal family.”

You’ve disappointed me every time you said that… Audrey looked forward and replied elegantly, “Really?”

“I swear on my father’s name. I have seen his Beyonder powers,” Glaint replied with whisper.

Audrey was no longer the same as before in which should be excited over the news. She was now a Beyonder, but to prevent Glaint from turning suspicious, she widened her eyes and faked a surprised smile. She asked with her voice trembling, “When can I see him?”

Yes, it’d be great to meet other Beyonders. I can’t just solve every triviality through the Tarot Club… Besides, I must gather my own resources to exchange them with Mr. Fool and Mr. Hanged Man… Not everything can be solved with money… Sigh, now that I’ve sent out the thousand pounds, I’ll have to be more frugal…

Glaint was very satisfied with Audrey’s response. He looked towards the racecourse and said, “Tomorrow afternoon, there will be a literature and music salon at my place.”

†

Inside Deweyville Library.

Klein took out his identity card and badge from his pocket and showed them to the few librarians.

“I am a probationary inspector from the Special Operations Department of the Awwa County Police. I need your cooperation in an investigation,” he said in a deep voice, recalling the police films that he used to watch.

The librarians looked at the identity card and badge before exchanging looks and nodding at each other.

“Go ahead and ask, Officer.”

Klein recited the names of the journals like New Archeology and upon finishing, he said, “I want the borrowing records of the journal for the last two months.”

He realized that one of the librarians had attended to him before, but it was obvious that the man didn’t recognize him.

“Alright. Hold on a second.” The librarians started searching and quickly found the recent borrowing records.

Klein flipped through the records seriously, looking for the man who had borrowed the same journal as he did.

There weren’t many names since there was only one. He had borrowed the journal several times, including the issue that Klein knew of. The earliest entry was at the end of May, and the most recent one was last Saturday, a day before Hanass Vincent’s death.

Klein ran his finger over the borrower’s information and memorized it.

Sirius Arapis, cloth merchant, residing at 19 Howes Street…

Chapter 103 - Doing As The Heart Willed

◆

He resides at 19 Howes Street?

Whilst memorizing the information, Klein keenly noticed a piece of information.

Yes, Welch stayed on Howes Street. The Divination Club is on Howes Street. This cloth merchant named Sirius Arapis also lives on Howes Street… From the looks of it, it's nothing strange for Welch to know Hanass Vincent either. They might have even gotten to know each through Sirius Arapis…

Suddenly, Klein felt that he had linked the clues together as his thoughts turned clear.

He was originally confused as to how Welch would be acquainted with Hanass Vincent since this son of a banker wasn't particularly interested in mysticism. To him, money was more important than divinations. But now, Klein felt that he had an inkling as to how they became acquainted.

According to the descriptions of several magazines, middle-class and wealthy residents would gladly pay a visit to their neighbors from the same social class in order to form a social circle which is beneficial to them. Similarly, Welch and the cloth merchant, Sirius, absolutely have the motivation and opportunity to become friends since they both lived in the Howes Street vicinity…

It isn't hard to understand how Sirius knew Hanass Vincent, who regularly went to the Divination Club on Howes Street. Perhaps it was a coincidental meeting, or perhaps Hanass had helped him out before. Regardless, this made it possible for the two of them, who frequently ran into each other within the same area, to become closer to one another….

Hanass Vincent wanted to sell his ancient books, and thus, Sirius introduced him to Welch, who was an undergraduate of the History department…

In Hanass' dream, there was the figure of the suspected evil god, the "True Creator." He also knew of the proper incantation format. This proves that he was very deep into the realm of mysticism. The possibility that he might have even been a member of some secret organization cannot be dismissed.

I cannot rule out the possibility of him joining some secret organization under Sirius's influence.

†

With ideas coming to him so easily, Klein could tell that the information the man had left behind had a certain level of credibility without even using divination methods.

Even if he isn't called Sirius Arapis, nor work as a cloth merchant, and doesn't live at 19 Howes Street, he definitely resides at Howes Street or, at the very least, somewhere nearby!

While these ideas ran through his mind, Klein viewed the borrowing records once again with this new train of thought.

The last time he came to Deweyville Library was last Saturday, a day before Selena's birthday party, which was also a day before Hanass Vincent died. Several days have already passed since then, but he hasn't returned the issues that he borrowed.

According to past records, if he only borrowed two issues, he would usually return them the next day.

Could this mean that he knows of Hanass' death and was scared to the point that he no longer dares to come to the Deweyville Library again?

Yes, he started by borrowing several unrelated history books and journals until he narrowed down what he needed, which is very similar to what I had read…

This means that there was no one teaching him. There was no Senior Associate Professor from the history department of a university. He did this completely through trial and error.

What would a shocked target do? Two choices. One, if he had all the necessary information, he would head straight to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range. Two, if he still lacks information, he would lay low and observe the situation. He would only show himself again if he's certain that Hanass' death wouldn't implicate him.

Having made this conclusion, Klein closed the borrowing records and returned them to the librarians. He then took out the portrait and asked if anyone had seen the man. Unfortunately, many people came to borrow books every day, and the librarians didn't have any impression of the average person.

"Alright, thank you for your time." Klein put away his identification documents and his badge.

He had no intention of continuing the investigation alone. This wasn't only dangerous, but also troublesome. He planned to head to Zouteland Street once again and hand the case over to Captain and his teammates. He then planned to go home and prepare his Tomato Oxtail Soup for his siblings before heading to the world above the gray fog to divine the target's whereabouts and condition.

"Officer, is there anything else?" a librarian asked sincerely as he heaved a sigh of relief.

Klein nodded slightly and answered, “No, I will come back if there are new clues.”

He held his black cane with his left hand and made his way to the door.

At this moment, he saw a man enter the library with his head hung low. He was dressed in a double-breasted coat, its collars standing tall.

When they walked past each other, Klein caught a glance of his thick, messy brows, and his pair of grayish-blue eyes!

These were things the tall collar couldn’t hide!

Sirius? Sirius Arapis? A coincidence? Klein froze. He didn’t expect to meet his target here!

What kind of luck was this!

Wasn’t this too much of a coincidence?

He evaluated his physical condition and felt his aching sore muscles. Thus, he acted as though nothing had happened and continued walking towards the door.

Well, we have to follow what our heart tells us! Safety matters!

It doesn’t matter if I missed this opportunity as long as Sirius is still in Tingen!

At this moment, the man in the double-breasted coat arrived before the counter and was handing the journals to one of the librarians.

“It’s a return,” he said with a soft, muffled tone.

The librarian received the journals causally and when he saw it, he suddenly froze.

He subconsciously looked up and differently as his body couldn’t help but tremble.

"Is there a problem?" the man asked in a deep voice.

His question seemed like a spark that ignited a fuse, causing the librarian to instantly lose his self-control. He sprinted to the side and shouted,

"Officer!"

"The criminal is here!"

At this moment, Klein, who hadn't left the building, cursed madly in his heart.

He instinctively reached for his holster with his right hand and drew his revolver.

That man froze for a moment before turning and breaking into a sprint.

But he didn't head for the door. Instead, he escaped in the direction of the oriel window to the side, as if he wanted to smash through the glass and jump out onto the street.

Klein, who was flustered, turned his head to see the scene when he felt a sudden calm.

He realized that even though he was afraid of the target, his target was more afraid of him!

The man must be unable to determine my abilities in such an abrupt meeting. He isn't clear on what I am adept in, and so, he will instinctively avoid a direct confrontation and look for other ways to escape! Confident of his analysis, Klein lifted his revolver and pulled the trigger.

At that moment, the man in the double-breasted coat abruptly rolled onto the ground in an attempt to avoid the bullet.

Following up on that, he pressed down on the ground with his right hand and propelled himself into the air towards the oriel window.

Click! Klein's first shot was empty.

But this was something he had expected. He took advantage of Sirius's inability to dodge while in midair to aim at his torso and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The silver demon hunting bullets tore through the air and penetrated straight through Sirius's back.

Crash! The glass shattered and Sirius flew out the window, leaving drops of crimson blood on the crystalline glass fragments and windowsill.

Klein was no longer afraid now that the target was injured. He ran over and jumped out the window with the help of a chair.

This was the area lining the back of Deweyville Library's ground floor. A row of trees isolated a lush green field.

The injured Sirius was running to the side, in an attempt to enter a small alley between two buildings. Having not practiced shooting at moving targets, Klein didn't dare to fire blindly. He could only carry his cane in one hand and his gun in the other as he pursued the man in a black coat.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

He followed the trail of blood on the floor and tried to close the distance.

With a corner coming up, the injured Sirius's speed became slower and slower. Klein, who had been waiting for an opportunity to capture him, suddenly felt a little afraid. He felt as though the man in front of him wasn’t human, but a wolf or a tiger, one that harbored terrifying dangers.

This was an instinct he had as a Seer, and also a warning given to him by his spirituality!

Klein immediately slowed down, his eyes scanning the blood on the ground.

Compared to the blood he had seen earlier, Sirius’s blood was now black!

At this moment, a violent wind overwhelmed him. Sirius’s face was reflected in Klein’s eyes.

Thick, messy brows. Grayish blue eyes. Multiple protruding warts. An open mouth with two rows of white teeth.

Sirius was launching a counterattack at this moment!

This made the face reflected in Klein’s eyes more visible. He could even smell a particularly putrid stench!

Sirius pounced a distance of seven or eight meters, far more than any normal human being could jump. But as Klein had stopped chasing him just in time, there was still a distance of nearly ten meters between them.

When the distance was shortened to two meters, the sticky saliva caused by drool and the disgusting dense warts formed a harrowing scene that made Klein’s nerves tense up.

Without thinking, he seized the opportunity of the temporary immobility caused by Sirius’s pounce to raise his right hand. He fired without stopping, allowing the bullets to rain down on the target’s head.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shooting from such a close distance allowed the silver demon hunting bullets to drill through Sirius's head. Blood splattered everywhere as his face became more and more mangled, until he staggered backwards.

Klein had emptied the bullets in his revolver in an instant. He subconsciously wanted to take a few steps back in order to confirm the results of this battle.

But at this moment, Sirius gave Klein the shock of his life by trying his hardest to stand up straight. Klein abruptly lifted the cane in his left hand.

Smack! The sturdy silver-inlaid black cane struck Sirius's neck, leaving a dark red mark.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

Klein acted on instinct, raining blows on his opponent until Sirius collapsed stumbling onto the ground.

Huff! Puff! Huff! Klein supported himself with his cane and took deep breaths. His eyes were trained intently on his target, afraid that Sirius would suddenly jump back to life.

At that moment, Sirius' head had basically been smashed into a pulp, and the warts gradually receded. His body stopped moving after a few convulsions.

Klein was in no hurry to examine the corpse. Instead, he tossed his cane to the side and took out the demon hunting bullets he had on him and reloaded his revolver.

After doing this, he collected himself and fought back his disgust, kneeling down to search the pockets of Sirius's double-breasted coat.

Chapter 104 - Mr. Z

One pocket, two pockets, three pockets… Klein soon found a bloodstained wallet, a Deweyville Library card, two pairs of brass keys, an unstuffed smoking pipe, a sheathed dagger, and a few letters that were folded neatly.

Laying everything onto the ground except for the letters, he stood up straight and looked at the wallet. He confirmed that there were only ten plus soli and some copper pennies.

The craftsmanship of the wallet is quite exquisite. It’s such a pity… Klein sighed, feeling a little distracted.

If I didn’t spend so much of my private stash of money, buying a wallet would’ve been on my schedule today.

After shaking his head, Klein opened the letters and quickly scanned through them.

“Dear Mr. Z,”

“Please allow me to defend myself. When Hanass and I sold off the Antigonus family’s notebook, it wasn’t stupidity or betrayal. It didn’t appear special in any way when it was in our hands.”

“I suspect that it’s alive and that it’s a wicked item armed with a certain life and wisdom. It was something dangerous that needed to be sealed.”

“At different stages and before different people, it shows different contents!”

“This is a proven fact that I’ve learnt from the lamb in the police station.”

“Although the notebook shows content that is sufficiently true each time with plenty of evidence, I believe that it would only reveal the completed content in the hands of a descendant of the Antigonus family.”

“When Hanass and I received it, we could only see some trivial matters of the Antigonus family, the general situation of the Nation of the Evernight on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, and also the three Sequence potion formulas we handed in to you previously.”

“As you know, the Secret Order has the Seer pathway in its grasp and possesses powerful tracking abilities, so Hanass and I believed that it would be a risky move to continue keeping the notebook. The value it had presented to us wasn’t sufficient for us to take the risk.”

“Since we couldn’t wait for your reply, we agreed amongst ourselves to sell the notebook to Welch, who was living on the same street . He enjoyed collecting relics and ancient books, and he could afford to pay a high price for it. As for the subsequent developments, you are already aware of it.”

“This is the first thing that I’d like to explain. As I am writing these words, Hanass is dead. He died due to a heart attack during his sleep. That must be a blessing from God, to prevent him from suffering the outcome of falling into the hands of heretics.”

“I had no choice but to move to somewhere safer, more hidden. I didn’t even dare to leave the house. Luckily, the lamb told me that the reason Hanass was being eyed by the heretics wasn’t because of the Antigonus family’s notebook, nor was his identity exposed. It was just that he had taken in a silly female disciple in the hopes of slowly developing her into one of us.”

“His female disciple had stolen a glance at his secret incantation and tried the magic divination while a Nighthawk heretic was watching. I believe you can pretty much guess the rest of the story, so there is no need for me to describe it.”

“It’s a pity that the position of the lamb isn’t high enough, so the actual details cannot be determined.”

“From various feedback, it seems the heretics have yet to suspect me. Their investigations came to a halt due to Hanass’ sudden death.”

“Therefore, I will return to the streets and plan to borrow a few more journal issues from the Deweyville Library to seek out more clues.”

“As a faction that also had the Seer pathway in its grasp, the Antigonus family must have had some divinations regarding its decimation. They must have left behind secret treasures that would allow for the revival of the family!”

“There’s sufficient reason to believe that the treasure is hidden on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, which is in one of the relics in the Nation of the Evernight!”

Having read that, Klein’s pupils constricted rapidly. He nearly dropped the letter.

The pathway that the Antigonus family had in its grasp was the Seer pathway?

What a coincidence!

†

Thunder seemed to boom in Klein’s head again and again that left him in a daze. He felt as though it was destiny.

The notebook that led to the original Klein’s death and indirectly helped me transmigrate, originated from the Antigonus family that has the Seer pathway in its grasp. The one that eventually made me choose the

Seer potion was Emperor Roselle's diary, while Emperor Roselle was biased towards the Seer Sequence because of the mysterious Mr. Zaratul who was the leader of the Secret Order, which also has the Seer pathway in its grasp!

…This is like a suffocating net sewn by Fate.

What exactly is lurking behind all of this?

Klein held the letter and paced back and forth. He needed to verify the contents with other sources.

Yes, the Secret Order that the Zaratul family controls is pursuing and searching for the belongings left behind by the Antigonus family. If both parties shared the same Beyonder Sequence, there would be a sufficient reason and motive. Perhaps, it is to bridge any missing Sequences, obtain rare ingredients for a higher Sequence advancement, or covet the other party's accumulated experiences in avoiding the loss of control…

Going by this line of thought, it is rather reasonable that the Antigonus family has at least part of the Seer Sequence chain.

Yes, when I was divining for clues pertaining to the Clown potion, the images that emerged were mostly related to the Antigonus family. The only exception was the suited clown from the Secret Order… Therefore, the true meaning behind the symbolism is that each scene carries the possibility of obtaining the Clown potion and a clue. However, I didn't understand the crux of the issue and regrettably missed it.

With the two corroborating evidence, Klein nearly believed the matters that Sirius had brought up in the letter. He also understood why he constantly heard the word 'Hornacis' in the murmurs he shouldn't be hearing.

The earliest occurrence of this happening was when I first consumed the Seer potion!

He wore a serious expression as he thought to himself.

Meanwhile, he guessed that ‘being a survivor of those that made contact with a relic of the Antigonus family’ and ‘becoming a Beyonder of the Seer pathway’ were two necessary conditions to hear the murmurs saying ‘Hornacis.’

Is there really a secret treasure buried within the ancient ruins on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range by the Antigonus family? No, I can’t think about this! Just the notebook alone has killed so many people. Any complete treasure would be even more terrifying! Klein shook his head subconsciously and cast his gaze onto the third piece of paper, which was the last of the letters.

“Honorable Mr. Z, I hope I can gain your assistance. I believe that you should be sufficiently interested in the treasure too.”

“Until then, I will make myself look like a normal person, a normal lover of history.”

“When the end of days arrives, I will offer all of Tingen’s lambs as a sacrifice to God.”

“Humbly, Sirius Arapis.”

When he finished reading Sirius’s letter, Klein had the urge to laugh.

Heh, why do I feel like I saved Tingen? What was this guy trying to do? Heretics are truly unbelievable…

Who is this Mr. Z? He seems like someone in a high position… At the very least, he should be at the same sequence as Captain.

Where was Sirius sending the letter to? He didn’t write down the address… It seems like that’s the cautiousness of a heretic. They wouldn’t put the address on until the moment before they sent it out…

Right, if the Antigonus family had the potion of the Seer pathway in its grasp, then would the Clown potion be among the three formulas inside the Antigonus family's notebook that Sirius sent?"

Highly likely!

In that instant, Klein seemed to have found clues to the Clown potion.

Although Sirius didn't bring the formula along with him, it was possible that he had left some form of record at his hideout. He must have also had it in his head, in his memories!

Klein looked at the corpse before him and considered the problem of making a dead person speak.

It required almost zero consideration, as an idea immediately popped into his head.

"Mediumship!"

Spirit Mediums could directly communicate with spirits that had yet to disperse. Seers, Mystery Pryers, and others could roughly accomplish the same thing using ritualistic magic.

Previously, when he was dealing with the corpse of the suited clown, there were three things that had kept Klein from using mediumship. Firstly, he was in a hurry to save the rest. Secondly, he didn't have the ingredients with him, and lastly, he lacked confidence. Thus, he didn't consider the option of mediumship and missed his best chance. When they returned to Blackthorn Security Company, the spirit was mostly gone. Even a Spirit Medium could only get superficial information.

But now, Klein happened to have all the ingredients and tools, and he happened to have the experience of communicating with lingering resentment through the help of dream divination.

My only concern about contacting the spirit of a heretic would be being placed in the same situation as Captain's entry into Hanass' dream where he saw a horrifying existence… However, Captain only remained frail for two days, and he wasn't considered severely injured. Yes, I could give it a try! He hesitated for less than twenty seconds before making a decision. He didn't want to miss out on this opportunity.

He raised his head, turned around, and cast his gaze toward the spot where the window had shattered. There was a crowd gathered there watching.

He took out his identification card and badge before returning to the broken window. He then told the onlookers through the shattered oriel window,

"I am a probationary inspector from the Special Operations Department of the Awwa County Police. I have shot the criminal to death. Please take this badge to the nearest police station and tell them to send backup to deal with the follow-up."

"The rest are to help me cordon off this area. Do not allow anyone to come close for they might contaminate the scene."

"Yes, Officer!" The librarian that caused Klein the trouble quickly took the badge.

When the entire scene was cordoned off and no one could enter the grass patch, Klein returned to the corner and stood by the side of the corpse.

He was glad that the innocent crowd couldn't see the dead body, which looked more like a monster than a human. He put down his cane and revolver, then reached into the inner pocket of his trench coat to take out a metal bottle.

He was going to use the techniques of a mediumship ritual with dream divination to make the dead man speak!

Chapter 105 - Spirit Channeling

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein twisted open the golden bottle’s cap and brought it to his nose. He took a whiff of the stimulating scent that energized him.

This was Holy Night Powder made using Slumber flowers, Dragon Blood grass, deep red sandalwood, mint, and other herbs. Since it was simple to concoct, Klein had made a batch the moment he got the ingredients from the underground market. It was going to be of use now.

He poured a little of the Holy Night Powder on his palm and collected himself. His irises turned dark.

Next, Klein put away the metal bottle and scattered the powder onto the ground after infusing his spirituality into it.

He scattered the powder as he walked, forming a circle around Sirius’s corpse.

A formless barrier rose, separating them from the outside world.

Klein flicked away the remaining Holy Night Powder on his hand and took out the other metal bottles. He sprinkled the Amantha extract and other liquids in the surrounding area.

The ritual he set up was different from the one Old Neil used at Ray Bieber’s house since the aim of the ritual was different.

For example, Old Neil poured the liquids before using the Holy Night Powder. That could create a serene and holy state second only to an actual altar. Klein had used the Holy Night Powder first before pouring the liquids to prevent Sirius's remnant spirituality from being disturbed by the surrounding objects while still barely managing to have an environment that satisfied the requirements of the ritual.

If he had used Old Neil's method, the rest of Sirius's spirituality would've been purged, making it impossible to establish a connection.

After finishing his preparations, Klein put away the materials and entered a state of Cogitation. He recited the Hermes incantations softly, "I pray for the power of the dark night.

"I pray for the power of the mystery.

"I pray for the Goddess' loving grace.

"I pray that you'll allow me to communicate with the heretic's spirituality inside this altar."

†

As the incantations reverberated throughout the sealed space, Klein suddenly felt a massive, terrifying, and mysterious energy descend upon him.

His eyes turned completely black as though he had lost his pupils and the whites of his eyes.

Seizing the opportunity, Klein recited a divination statement in his heart, "The formula to the Clown potion.

"The formula to the Clown potion."

†

As he was reciting the statement, he used Cogitation to temporarily enter a dreamlike state.

It was a hazy gray world without a sky or ground. Klein was unusually alert as he observed a transparent, ethereal figure.

He extended his right hand and touched the remnants of Sirius's spirit.

The scene in front of him changed with a rumble.

It was a study table painted with dark red paint. There were three candles on a silver candle stand, as well as a blank piece of paper.

Sirius had a pen in his hand. He wrote in Loen language, "This is the second formula, its name in the notebook is 'Clown.'"

"80 milliliters of pure water, 5 drops of tornapple juice, 7 grams of black-rimmed sunflower powder, 10 grams of golden cloak grass powder, 3 drops of poison hemlock. These are the supplementary ingredients."

"The main supernatural ingredients are: one crystal of the single horn of a matured Hornacis gray mountain goat and a complete stalk of a human-faced rose."

Sirius seemed to have the Clown potion's formula memorized as he quickly finished writing it.

He paused for a moment and took a sip of coffee, then he unwound the silver pendulum around his wrist.

He held the pendulum and closed his eyes, muttering terms to himself such as "the end of days", "peace of mind", "hope for the Lord's blessings", and "confess".

After Sirius finished his prayer, Klein finally saw the pendulum clearly.

Under the wound silver chain was a thumb-sized human figurine.

The figurine had a single eye, a trait unique to giants. It was facing down, its legs bound by chains that connected upwards.

At that moment, the single eye of the giant suddenly had a faint red glow.

Crack!

The scene Klein witnessed shattered as his legs buckled, almost causing him to kneel to the ground.

Klein felt pain in his head as though he had been struck ruthlessly in the head with a bat. His vision turned blood-red as his hands involuntarily reached out to protect his knees.

He recovered several seconds later and stood back up. He felt that his spirituality was unusually weak, as if he had heard the murmurings that penetrated his mind once again.

But due to his progress in 'digesting' the magic medicine, the adverse reaction calmed down quickly.

The Hanged Giant, the True Creator… Sirius and Hanass were both members of the Aurora Order? But the Captain saw a huge cross in Hanass' dream. The terrifying being crucified on the cross wasn't the Aurora Order's Hanged Giant… Klein took two deep breaths and waited for his spirituality to slowly recover.

The Aurora Order was a secret organization that sprang into existence about two to three hundred years ago. They worshiped the True Creator and symbolized him with The Hanged Giant. They believed that every human being had divine qualities, and as long as they persevered and made it through the countless trials, they would be able to accumulate enough divine qualities to become angels.

According to the internal records of the Nighthawks, the Sequence 9 of the Aurora Order was Secrets Suppliant. These Beyonders could sense the existence of mysterious and horrifying beings and were armed with a decent amount of knowledge regarding sacrifices and some knowledge on ritualistic magic. There was enough evidence to claim that senior Secrets Suppliants experienced distortions of their worldview and lost control easily.

Little was known about the Sequence 7 which the Aurora Order had grasped. Sequence 8 was Listener. This was considered quite a terrifying 'job' for a Beyonder.

Every Listener could listen directly to the whispers of the secret entities; thus, they frequently came into contact with powerful, distorted, unique abilities. But consequently, if they were unable to advance, it was difficult for them to survive the next five years after becoming a Listener. Furthermore, the comments the Nighthawks had in the reports were that every Listener was a lunatic. Even if they looked normal on the surface, they were always crazy on the inside.

The details of the report regarding the Aurora Order flashed through Klein's mind. His initial theory was that Sirius was a Secrets Suppliant.

From the description, Secrets Suppliant are as hopeless as Seers in battle. That does fit Sirius's actions just now. What happened later was a loss of control brought about by the injury? Yes, Frye once said that every Beyonder would more or less undergo some weird changes after they die… Klein thought as he tapped four points on his chest to praise the Goddess.

After his spirituality recovered slightly, he concluded the ritual with the appropriate procedure and dismantled the wall of spirituality.

With a whoosh, a gust of wind blew as Klein forced himself to look at Sirius's corpse.

He noticed that there was still an obvious wart on Sirius's mangled face. It was a dark purple wart, almost black. There seemed to be liquid and a light gleaming within.

"What kind of transformation was that?" Klein rubbed his temples, not daring to touch it.

He bent over and retrieved his cane, allowing it to bear his weight.

After what had just happened, he knew that Sirius's spirituality had been completely destroyed. Even the Spirit Medium Daly would be unable to communicate with him.

After a while, Klein saw Captain Dunn and his partners, Leonard and Kenley.

“It seems like your fate is tied to Beyonders and evil forces. In just a few weeks, you have come across more supernatural incidents than what we usually see in months,” Leonard joked, looking at the corpse on the ground.

“It might not be a coincidence,” Klein added, as he suddenly thought about the red chimney he had seen in his dream divination, as well as the majestic palace on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range and the formless focus on him. He took the opportunity to mention it in passing.

Dunn surveyed the surroundings and, with his gray eyes trained on Klein, asked, “You tried channeling his spirit?”

There were still traces of Holy Night Powder and the scent of the essential oils.

“Yes,” Klein replied truthfully. “I was worried that you would arrive late and that the remains of his spirituality would scatter.”

“You don't look well. Are you alright?” the short Kenley asked in concern.

Klein passed Sirius's undelivered letter to the captain and began from the beginning.

“When I went to the underground market to purchase materials for the rituals, I suddenly remembered that Selena had also once gone to the Evil Dragon Bar and that it was Hanass Vincent that brought her there.

This meant that Hanass was a regular there. Thus, I suspected that the person in the portrait, someone who's definitely connected to Hanass, might have gone to the underground market too.

"I asked the boss Swain about the portrait, and he gave me confirmation. He told me that the man had once tried to buy documents and items related to the Hornacis Mountains. That reminded me of the library. I recalled that the librarian had mentioned that someone had just returned the journal issue I wanted to borrow…"

Leonard stood to the side, listening with a smile. He suddenly interrupted, "And so you brought your identification documents and badge here to flip through the borrowing records? Actually, I am very curious; why would you come into conflict with this man here? Even if it was a direct encounter, with your style of doing things, you would've pretended that you didn't know him and would just leave the library. Then you would come to Zouteland Street to ask for our help."

"Yes, there was no need for you to take the risk. As long as you confirm the target and that he hasn't left Tingen, there would always be a way to find him," Dunn added as he reviewed the letter.

Klein immediately said in embarrassment, "The librarian recognized him and shouted for the police to help.

"There's no way I could have pretended not to hear that…"

Leonard and Kenley looked at each other. One tried to cover his amusement, while the other turned his head to the side.

Dunn nodded, his gaze leaving the letters.

"Did you get anything from channeling his spirit?"

"I saw a pendulum that took the shape of a Hanged Giant. I saw a blood-red glow flash in the giant's only eye before I was forced out of the ritual," Klein described honestly.

He didn't want to talk about the Clown potion for the time being as he had two considerations.

First, if Dunn and the rest were able to find Sirius's hideout and the corresponding records, then it would make no difference if he told them or not, as there would be no additional contributions attributed to him.

Second, if Dunn and the rest were unable to find it, he could report it in the future. This way, he would be awarded with another contribution, allowing him to acquire the ingredients needed to concoct a potion. This was a way to obtain double the rewards for a single task, a technique that stemmed from Old Neil's recent teachings.

"Aurora Order?" Dunn muttered to himself before he asked some relevant questions.

After Klein answered all his questions, he saw the fatigue in Klein's eyes and waved his cane.

"Not bad. You foiled a scheme that was targeting Tingen. You can go back and rest. Kenley, bring Old Neil over."

After giving out instructions, Dunn smiled bitterly and shook his head.

"Before Sequence 6, Beyonders of the Sleepless pathway lack many supplemental abilities. We can only conduct the simplest of ritualistic magic."

"Captain, you mean that from Sequence 6 onwards, a Sleepless pathway Beyonder would gain improvements in the corresponding aspects?" Klein asked out of curiosity.

"Yes," Dunn confirmed.

†

After leaving the Deweyville Library, Klein nearly fell asleep in the carriage on multiple occasions on his way back to Daffodil Street.

He lumbered into the house, he then removed his hat and jacket before falling asleep on the sofa.

Sometime later, he woke up abruptly, took out his pocket watch, and snapped it open.

“Melissa will be back in half an hour, Benson in forty-five minutes… If I don’t get up, I’ll have to make them wait an hour before we can have dinner…” Klein rubbed his forehead as he entered the kitchen.

He washed his face with cold water, then took out the oxtail, tomatoes, carrots, and onions he had bought that afternoon.

After he prepared the ingredients, he suddenly froze. He had the feeling that his actions just now formed a strange juxtaposition with the incident that afternoon.

“I am a man who just saved Tingen…” Klein mumbled in amusement. He put on a white apron and got to making dinner.

Chapter 106 - Artist Klein

◆

After eight in the evening, in the Moretti family's dining room.

As he looked at the shallow soup left in the bowl, Benson raised his hand to cover his mouth to give a satisfied burp.

"Although that was our third time eating it, I still find it delicious. The sourness and sweetness of the tomato and the chewy texture of the oxtail blends into a perfect and unique flavor. Klein, I'm sorry that the Blackthorn Security Company caused Tingen City to lose such an outstanding chef."

Melissa leaned backwards in her chair and nodded in agreement silently.

"This is because you have yet to try real cooking." Klein smiled humbly. "If we have a chance in the future, let's head to Bonaparte Restaurant on Howes Street for some authentic Intis cuisine, and also to Coastline Restaurant in the Golden Indus borough for some southern delicacies."

These were restaurants that were always covered in the newspapers, where the average cost per person was around a pound and a half.

"I like your cooking more," Melissa answered without hesitation.

Benson chuckled and changed the topic.

"But I ultimately feel that there's something lacking from the tomato oxtail soup. Perhaps, it shouldn't be eaten with bread?"

Klein nodded in agreement.

“It’s best complemented with rice.”

“Rice…” Melissa muttered with an expression of yearning.

Tingen, which was located north, wasn’t considered a big city. Besides a few particular restaurants, it was difficult to have any chance of eating rice.

To Benson and Melissa, this kind of food only existed in the descriptions of newspapers and textbooks.

Looking at his sister’s expression, Klein laughed.

“Wait till we save another six month’s salary, and we will find a chance to go on vacation in Desi Bay and try the delicacies there.”

Desi Bay was located in the far south of the Loen Kingdom, and a third of it belonged to Feynapotter Kingdom. It had plenty of sunlight and beautiful scenery, and the paella there was very famous.

Before Melissa could share her opinion on saving money, Klein said, “In another three months, I should get another raise. By then, we could totally fulfill our desire to travel as well as save money for necessities.”

“Why?” Benson and Melissa’s attention was redirected as expected.

Klein coughed lightly and smiled while explaining, “Due to my professionalism, the police department which always collaborates with our company intends to hire me as their part-time history consultant. They would pay me extra, at least two pounds a week. If you see me in a police uniform in the future and showing the corresponding police documentation, please don’t be shocked.

“Of course, as you know, the work efficiency in governmental departments is as slow as a ninety-year-old lady’s footsteps. They still have to go through a lengthy procedure, and they’re required to do a thorough inspection of me. Hence, on my off days for the next two months, I'll be heading to Khoy University quite often to see my mentor and the teaching staff I know to learn more."

Seeing the shocked look in his brother and sister's eyes, he paused and said with a strange expression, "Just like Emperor Roselle said, 'One is never too old to learn.'"

Benson maintained a few seconds of silence before saying in a half self-deprecating and half emotional manner, "Is it too late for me to sign up for university? Knowledge really is wealth."

And also power… Klein added silently.

"Benson, you need Klein's grammar books and his classic literature textbooks," Melissa said out of the blue, stealing the words from Klein's mouth.

Benson's expression seemed to change. He gritted his teeth and said, "Klein, pass me those books tonight.

"Even if all they do is put me to sleep, I am determined to read them for an hour, no—an hour and a half a day.

"I swear in the name of the Goddess! If I can't do it, I will be a curly-haired baboon!"

A smile immediately plastered across Klein's face.

"No problem."

†

The next morning, Klein hung his coat and hat on the clothes rack in the break room. Then he followed Rozanne's instructions and walked to the basement to the duty room outside Chanis Gate.

Captain Dunn and members Frye, Seeka, Royale, Leonard, and Kenley were all there.

As his gray eyes glanced past the newly promoted Nighthawk, Dunn smiled and said, “We have a routine meeting every Thursday to summarize past missions and discuss various challenges.”

I am a man who has endured the test of many regular meetings as well… Klein lampooned. He found a seat and joked, “Do I need to introduce myself?”

Dunn smiled and turned to look at Kenley.

“Briefly tell us about the investigation of Sirius Arapis.”

Kenley was also a Nighthawk who had been promoted from a member of the civilian staff. He wasn’t very tall, his brown hair was quite thick, his body size was average, his muscles were very toned, and he looked like someone who was smart and capable.

He thought and said, “With Old Neil’s help, we found Sirius’s secret hideout. There were many books and items at the scene. From them, we can be certain that Sirius was one of the underground members of the secret organization, the Aurora Order. He was also a Secrets Suppliant.

“There’s sufficient evidence to show that he and Hanass Vincent sold the Antigonus family notebook to Welch. Those who don’t remember Welch can ask Klein about him.

“We found valuable items, including three Sequence potion formulas, which are Sequence 9 Seer, Sequence 9 Apprentice, and Sequence 8 Clown…

“The subsequent task is to use Sirius’s social circle and the letters we found to locate other outer circle members of the Aurora Order. The focus of our search will be directed at the heretic who has infiltrated the police department.

“Also, people who were in contact with Hanass need to be reinvestigated.”

Dunn nodded lightly and looked towards Klein.

“As you heard just now, we’ve obtained the Clown potion formula, but are unable to determine if it’s real. We have to wait for the Holy Cathedral to give us feedback.

“In the mission relating to the Aurora Order, you have made a crucial contribution. Plus, given that you shot a member of the Secret Order, it won’t be long until you accrue enough contributions to be promoted. But, I have to remind you that not everyone is like Daly. You have to suppress your desire and wait for three years. In order to avoid losing control, you can’t allow your mindset to be affected by our discovery of the Clown potion formula.”

Captain, you don’t understand how magical it is to ‘act’… I have already confirmed the authenticity of the Clown potion formula using divination above the gray fog last night… Klein nodded obediently.

“I will keep my emotions in check.”

Then Seeka Tron, the quiet Midnight Poet with white hair and black eyes, said, “We still haven’t found any clues regarding Instigator Tris. I suspect that he has already fled from Tingen.”

†

After they were done exchanging their new information, Klein left the duty room and found Old Neil to continue his mysticism lessons. In the afternoon, he went over to his combat teacher, Gawain, to do basic strength, endurance, and overall coordination training.

†

With the sun still up and bright at five.

Klein took off his training costume, took a quick shower, and changed into his original clothing. He then took the public carriage to Besik Street.

He hadn't forgotten about the red chimney that he had seen in his dream divination, nor did he forget about the man that he suspected to be a member of the Psychology Alchemists who had bought supplementary ingredients for the Spectator potion in the underground market. These things would be inconvenient to investigate in his role as a Nighthawk.

"Number 27. Henry's Private Detective Company… Yup, it's here." Klein found a private detective company according to the newspaper's descriptions. It was said to be trustworthy.

He put on a mask, lowered his top hat, and flipped up his collar. He walked up the stairs and came to the company on the second floor.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He knocked on the door that was half-closed.

"Please come in," said a voice that seemed to be affected by phlegm.

Klein lifted his cane and pushed the door to enter. He saw the detective company using an almost open layout. There were four employees sitting at their respective seats partitioned into small cubicles.

"Hi, I'm Detective Henry. How may I help you?" a man in a white shirt and black vest greeted him.

He held a smoking pipe in his hand, and he had a prominent jawline, blade-like eyebrows, and dark blue eyes that sized up his client.

Klein used the collar of his trench coat to block half of his face as he spoke.

"I have two matters to entrust to you. How are your rates?"

"That depends on the difficulty of the task." Detective Henry retracted his gaze and pointed towards the sofa in the guest area. “Let’s talk over there.”

Klein followed him to the semi-partitioned area and sat on the single-seat sofa. He didn’t take off his coat, nor did he take off his hat and mask.

He purposely made his voice hoarse and said, “First, I need you to help me find a house with a chimney that looks like this, as well as information on who the owner and current tenant are.”

As he spoke, he took out a neatly folded paper. When he opened it, there was a chimney with its color noted down and its surrounding scenery.

This was the drawing that Klein completed by using the uniqueness of the area above the gray fog and the method of praying to himself.

“What a great drawing…” Detective Henry complimented subconsciously. He then knitted his eyebrows and said, “This is not complicated but very tedious. It would require a long time and a large amount of manpower.”

“I understand.” Klein nodded lightly.

Detective Henry pondered for a moment and said, “Seven pounds. The price for this job would be seven pounds. In addition, you have to give me at least two weeks.”

“Alright. Second, help me find this gentleman and find out his identity. The only thing I know is that he occasionally appears at the Evil Dragon Bar near the harbor borough. And he must not detect any men you send. He is very sensitive and he has terrifying observational skills.” Klein took out the second portrait.

He intended to get in touch with a member of the Psychology Alchemists to see if he could find any valuable information and materials. For example, perhaps a formula that could be exchanged with Justice?

“Three pounds, such a mission would cost about three or four pounds. Your outstanding drawing skills will help my assistant and I save time,” Detective Henry replied skillfully.

“Ten pounds in total?” Klein found the price upsetting.

Detective Henry took a puff on his pipe and said, “Yes, and you need to put a deposit of two pounds. When there’s progress, you’ll need to pay another three to five pounds. The rest of the payment can be made when the mission is completed.”

“Then I shall come next week to check on your progress.” Klein didn’t haggle over the price to prevent the observant detective from remembering any of his characteristics.

After they signed a standard contract, he took out two one-pound notes and passed them to the detective. He only had one pound and seventeen soli left from his savings.

As Detective Henry watched the man wearing a gauze mask and a black trench coat with its collar raised leave in a hurry, he had a suspicious look in his eyes as he smoked his pipe.

Why is he looking for a house that has that kind of chimney?

He must be an artist, or at least a professional sketch artist of some sort…

†

In the afternoon, in Viscount Glaint’s luxurious mansion.

Audrey, with her maidservant in tow, followed etiquette and passed her hand to the host. She looked at him giving her hand a quick peck.

“Your beauty accentuates my salon,” Glaint first gave a compliment as usual. Then, he lowered his voice and said, “That lady is already here. She’s a Beyonder and also an author.”

Chapter 107 - Fors

◆

“Author?” Audrey asked casually as she observed Glaint’s reaction.

Subsequently, she didn’t have to mind the presence of her maidservant, Annie, since they chatted about ordinary topics.

Glaint straightened his body and chuckled.

“Yes, I believe that you have read her works in the past. She wrote the book, Stormwind Mountain Villa, which was highly acclaimed for the past two months.”

“I enjoyed that book, especially the calm Lady Sissi,” Audrey replied with a faint smile.

Meanwhile, she was rolling her eyes at her own hypocrisy inwardly.

That was because her latest hobby had nothing to do with novels. She had stopped reading Stormwind Mountain Villa a month ago, her progress stopped at the one-third mark.

Ever since she joined the Tarot Club and acquainted herself with the powerful Fool, and became a real Beyonder, she had been immersing herself in mysticism knowledge. She had been systematically learning about psychology and had lost interest in other activities.

Smiling, Glaint guided Audrey to a sofa in the hall.

“I am sure that Miss Fors Wall will leave a good impression on you, for she is just like Stormwind Mountain Villa’s Lady Sissi—calm, intellectual, and lazy.

“Also, my dear Miss Audrey, are you going to play the piano for us later? That is the greatest compliment for a novel and literature.”

Audrey looked at the side profile of Glaint’s face. His expression, tone, and body language all conveyed his intention to flaunt himself.

He wants to use me to show off… Audrey thought to herself, as if she had just met this good friend of hers for the first time.

She maintained her elegant smile and said, “My music teacher, Mr. Vicanell the pianist, said that my standards have deteriorated recently and needs more practice.”

“Alright.” Glaint was just about wondering what to say when he suddenly saw a lady taking desserts from the long table. “Audrey, this is Miss Fors Wall, the author of Stormwind Mountain Villa.”

Audrey looked over. Miss Fors Wall was about 23 years old and 1.65 meters in height. She was wearing a pale yellow dress with frills. Her brown hair was slightly curly. She looked over with her pale blue eyes as Glaint introduced her while wearing a smile that appeared ruminative.

Audrey had noticed several small details in the less than three seconds of observation.

There are faint traces of yellow on Miss Fors’s fingers… She likes cigarettes…

There are obvious calluses on her fingers at spots used to hold a pen, fitting her identity as an author…

Her arm movements show that she has decent strength. This is not a quality expected of an author, unless she is passionate about exercising. Perhaps she was born like this, or she might have engaged in some other occupation in the past…

She displayed her calm, rational, and precise style in Stormwind Mountain Villa. This must be linked to her previous occupation…

Her eyes and emotions are relaxed, giving me the feeling that she is looking down on me and Glaint. Is this the psychological superiority a Beyonder has over an ordinary human?

If it was a coincidence that Glaint discovered her identity as a Beyonder, then she should feel some anxiety and uneasiness. After all, she is unable to guess his reaction and what he would do next since the unknown always brings about fear.

This indicates that she was the one who voluntarily approached Glaint, having learned about our hobbies. She must be quite confident about what is going to happen next…

Why would a Beyonder approach Glaint? Does she need monetary support, or the Beyonder ingredients stored in the treasury? Or perhaps she needs help with something…

At this moment, Glaint was introducing Audrey to Fors.

“Madam, this is the Miss Audrey that I mentioned previously, the most dazzling jewel in all of Backlund. Her father is Earl Hall, a trusted aide of His Majesty and respected member of the cabinet.

“Good afternoon, Madam Fors. Stormwind Mountain Villa is still seated by my bed to this very day.” Audrey adhered to the rules of the aristocracy and curtsied.

But she added silently, That’s because I haven’t finished reading it even after a month…

Fors returned the niceties simply and said, “Good afternoon Miss Audrey, your beauty sure leaves an impression. I think that I already have an idea for my next novel. Heh, Viscount Glaint said that you have exceptional talents in music.”

They merely exchanged praises as they were in public.

After watching Fors continue towards the dining table as she targeted a cream cake, Audrey retracted her gaze and headed to the living room with Glaint.

She recalled the details she had seen just now and tried to figure the motives of the woman. She wanted to gain some advantage in future conversations.

As she took a step forward, Audrey, who was as calm as an objective Spectator, stepped on her dress and nearly fell.

At this moment, her personal maidservant, Annie, caught her, allowing her to maintain her grace.

“Miss, the unique design of this dress means that you cannot walk too quickly,” Annie pulled close to Audrey’s ear and reminded her softly.

“I know.” Audrey nodded in reply, her face flushed red.

I was too absorbed in observing others that I forgot to look at where I was placing my foot… she silently complained in resentment.

Audrey met with many other esteemed authors, critics, and musicians for the rest of the salon, always maintaining her sweet, elegant smile.

Finally, after her facial muscles began turning sore, she saw Viscount Glaint’s signal.

She waited for a few minutes and gave the excuse of needing to use the washroom. She lifted her dress and stood up slowly to leave the salon.

After confirming that there was no one tailing her, she made her way to the study on the first level and told her maidservant Annie, “I have something to discuss with Glaint. Guard the door for me. Do not let anyone enter.”

“Alright.” Annie didn’t feel that the request was strange, for she knew that Audrey and Viscount Glaint shared similar hobbies and would often discuss mysticism in a private setting.

Audrey entered the study and locked the door. She saw Glaint seated behind the desk while playing with a pen. Fors Wall was standing in front of the bookshelf, nonchalantly flipping through a book.

“I’ll introduce you both again. Madam Fors, a true Beyonder.” Glaint put down his pen and walked over.

“Is that so?” Audrey intentionally exaggerated her feelings of doubt.

Fors returned the book to its original position and turned around with a smile.

“It looks like I have to prove myself.”

She walked over to the door and extended her right palm, grabbing the handle of the door.

Suddenly, Audrey’s vision blurred. It was as if she witnessed Madam Fors turn incorporeal as she passed through the door.

She was shocked. Concentrating, she realized that Fors was no longer standing in her original position.

A few seconds later, the door handle turned. The locked door was opened just like that. Fors Wall smiled as she walked in from the outside. Audrey’s maid, Annie, who was not far away, didn’t seem to be aware of what had happened.

“What a magical ability!” Glaint exclaimed.

Audrey took in a deep breath and said, “I have no more doubts.”

At the same time, the ability Fors had displayed allowed Audrey to confirm what her true motives were, since acquiring money or materials would be no trouble for a Beyonder like that.

Glaint doesn’t have any Beyonder guards… Fors wants to use the statuses and resources available to Glaint and I to achieve something? Audrey tried her hardest to act as a Spectator.

Fors chortled and said, “Let us interact with honesty. We do not have much time left.”

“I was once a doctor at a clinic and was given an opportunity to become a Beyonder. That was more than two years ago.”

“I hope that you can do something for me, and the reward I will give you is allow you to join the ranks of true Beyonders. I will sell you the formula of a particular Sequence potion and its corresponding materials.”

Upon hearing such a promise, Glaint could not help but ask, “What do you want us to do?”

“I have a partner who’s in jail now, awaiting the final verdict. I hope that you can save her, regardless of the methods used,” Fors said simply.

Audrey frowned.

“Madam Fors, the abilities you have demonstrated should be better suited for the task…”

Fors laughed and shook her head.

“No, that is not the case. She cannot pass through the places that I can. I can only go in regularly and chat with her.

“Also, I think that risking my life to save her is not a good idea. Life is short, but there is much for us to do.”

Audrey observed Fors’s face and body language. She considered her words before asking, “I understand. What crime is your partner being locked up for?”

Fors’s expression immediately turned a little awkward.

"My partner is a very respected person who can make others comply from the bottom of their hearts. She is of good character and kind. Well… Uh… It was that the means she used to convince a thug was a little over the top…"

†

After handing out the mission, Klein followed his original schedule of mysticism lessons in the morning and combat lessons in the afternoon. The regularity of his life almost made him forget that he was a member of the Nighthawks. The 'curse' of often encountering supernatural incidents seemed to disappear as well.

It was Saturday, his turn to guard Chanis Gate.

"You can enjoy the coffee I left here or the black tea in the clerk's office." Dunn surveyed the room with his deep gray eyes.

Klein, who had already given an excuse to his siblings, nodded in joy.

"Alright Captain. You sure are a generous gentleman."

Dunn laughed.

"Those will help you relax. Being tense all the time is not good for your health."

He took his hat and cane and walked toward the door.

As he was exiting the door, he suddenly turned around and said, "I forgot to remind you; do not open Chanis Gate no matter what you hear, unless it is opened from the inside.

"Remember, no matter what you hear, no matter what happens."

Captain, that's a little scary… Klein tensed up instantly. He felt the darkness of the basement triumph over the light of the gas lamp.

Chapter 108 - Deep Into The Night

◆

Despite not being dawn yet, the well-ventilated but quiet and dark underground was illuminated by gas lamps. The dim yellow light emitted from the gas lamps were protected by glass, allowing them to steadily shine throughout the empty and quiet tunnel.

Klein sat in the duty room and casually flipped through the newspapers, magazines, and books piled before him. He directed some of his attention outside, to prevent anyone from charging inside the Chanis Gate.

His trench coat and top hat were hung on the clothes rack near the entrance while his cane was leaning against the wall where it could be easily retrieved.

The rich aroma of coffee filled the air, and Klein couldn’t help but take a whiff. He massaged his temples to fight against the heavy head feeling he was experiencing and the weariness of his body.

As a college student back on Earth, he often slept at five in the morning and woke up at noon. In the past two to three years of his working life, he often stayed up all night, to the point of being able to attend work energetically the next day. However, it was all thanks to the games that were too exhilarating, novels that were too interesting, television shows and movies that were too entertaining.

This world obviously didn’t possess any of the necessities needed for staying up all night.

"Seriously, Emperor Roselle. If you want to posture, do it properly. Pour your limited life into an unlimited enterprise. Lead the people of this world into the information age!" Klein muttered silently. He could only console himself that there were at least newspapers, magazines, and increasingly interesting novels.

At first, he wanted to focus on his studies to restrain his sleepiness. However, practically speaking, it conflicted with his duty. Once he entered that state, he would easily overlook any movements outside and any changes to the situation at the Chanis Gate.

Phew. Klein picked up his coffee cup and carefully blew at it.

He took a sip and let the fragrant taste swish around his mouth before letting the liquid slowly flow down his throat.

"Fermo Coffee from the Paz Valley, very bitter but very refreshing," Klein gave a compliment and put down his coffee cup.

The Paz Valley was located in the Southern Continent, a region that produced high-quality coffee beans. It was currently being fought over by the Intis Republic and the Loen Kingdom. They both built colonist settlements on the left and right banks of the Paz Valley, and had destroyed the original Paz Kingdom.

In the eerie silence, Klein casually picked up a magazine and realized that it was Ladies Aesthetic, which talked about fashion and dating.

"This must be from Rozanne…" he murmured in amusement as he flipped through it with his interest piqued.

Maybe it was due to the sudden advancement of camera technology in the past decade or so, not only did the magazine use a lot of illustrations, it even used monochrome pictures as their content—just like the newspapers.

They fashionably invited the famous play and musical actors to model the charms and the magical pairing of the clothing. In a short span of seven years, the new regional Backlund magazine became a mainstream magazine that spread across the nation.

“The dress looks nice, she’s pretty too…” Klein flipped through it casually and didn’t hide his aesthetic inclinations.

He was a man that had matured normally both in body and mind. He had always appreciated beautiful ladies, but he had long set his goal—to find a way home. Hence, he tried his best to keep his distance from the opposite sex, so that he didn’t waste the other person’s time or leave behind any emotional baggage.

As for streetwalkers, he was quite a germaphobe in that aspect.

Benson and Melissa were already shackles that couldn’t be removed. He could only find the means to make it up to them in the future… Klein suddenly felt his heart heavy and he couldn’t help but let out a sigh.

The further he strayed away from home, the more he felt melancholic during quiet late nights.

He suddenly lost his interest in looking at beautiful women and put down the magazine in his hands. He picked up a novel instead.

“Stormwind Mountain Villa, author, Fors Wall,” Klein read the content on the cover.

The tranquil night, dim yellow light, and the leatherbound book reminded him of his younger days when he rented books. Hence, he continued to read simply because of nostalgia.

Stormwind Mountain Villa was a novel about Lady Sissi, who was 1.65 meters tall and weighed ninety-eight pounds. It was a story of her embarking as a home tutor in the Fruys Mountain Villa.

“One pound is about half a kilogram… Is this Jane Eyre of an alternate world?” Klein caressed his fingers against the smooth paper as he began making guesses of the subsequent content.

However, just as he thought it was a romance novel, an evil spirit emerged in the story. When he believed that it was a ghost story, Lady Sissi revealed herself as a detective and made a marvelous deduction.

Just as Klein felt that it was definitely a detective novel, the main male character took a heavy blow to the head and lost his memory. Then, it became a heart-rending drama.

"…In the end, it's still a romance book." Klein closed the book and drank a mouthful of coffee.

Thump!

Thump! Thump! Thump!

A ferocious knocking was suddenly heard as it reverberated in the dim and quiet empty corridor.

Klein jumped in shock as he immediately turned tense.

He instinctively drew his revolver from his underarm holster, adjusted the cylinder and hammer. Then, he slowly walked to the door and looked for the source of the sound.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The thumping became more and more intense. Klein looked in the direction of the sound and saw the black outward-swinging gates that were engraved with seven Sacred Emblems.

"Sounds from beyond the Chanis Gate?" He squinted his eyes and his heart was beating like a drum.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein saw Chanis Gate shake gently, and he sensed the massive impact it was withstanding.

"It can't be, right… I'm encountering something on my first day on duty? Did I get an unlucky constitution after I transmigrated?" Klein's right hand broke into cold sweat as it held the revolver.

Very soon, he recalled the Captain's instruction: do not open Chanis Gate no matter what you hear, unless it is opened from the inside.

Uh, could this be a normal phenomenon? Klein suddenly calmed down.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Thump! Thump! Thump! The commotion beyond the Chanis Gate grew in intensity, but the heavy black metal gates only shook. Otherwise, it didn't show any unusual signs.

"This is normal. I nearly died from the shock…" Klein muttered, before he prepared to return to the duty room.

Just then, he heard a sharp grinding noise. He looked at the heavy Chanis Gate bulging outwards as a crack appeared on in its surface!

Zing!

In the jarring noise, Klein's almost fixed eyes saw a figure. Its height was about the length of a man's arm, and it was wearing a classic, black, miniaturized regal gown. There was an obvious stain on the gown.

It had a not-so-exquisite face, black eyes, and tightly sealed lips.

It was a cloth puppet, a toy cloth puppet!

At that moment, when Klein was about to subconsciously raised his gun to take aim, the cloth puppet leaned heavily into the crack in Chanis Gate and unfurled the paper it was holding.

There were many symbols that represented concealment on the paper, some that Klein knew and some that he had yet to learn. Together, they formed a vertical eye!

Klein had yet to understand the situation when the regal-gowned puppet was suddenly dragged back by a shapeless force to the back of

Chanis Gate!

Creak!

Chanis Gate closed once again, with no more knocking or pounding sounds.

The basement regained its tranquility and silence as though nothing had happened.

"I have to inform Captain that Chanis Gate was opened from the inside… But it closed itself…" At that moment, Klein's mental facilities returned to him as he felt alarm, fear, and doubt.

A few seconds later, he recalled what the cloth puppet was. Since he was an official member of the Nighthawks, he was given the clearance to know about the Grade 3 Sealed Artifact sealed behind Chanis Gate.

"Number: 0625.

"Name: Misfortune Cloth Puppet.

"Danger Grade: 3. Considerably dangerous. It has to be used carefully. It can only be requested for operations that require three or more people.

"Security classification: Official Nighthawk member or above.

"Sealing method: Only needs to be separated from humans.

"Description: The cloth puppet is wearing a regal gown which was popular in around the year 1300. The gown has a stain that is almost impossible to remove. It is uncertain if the stain was present from the very beginning.

"In a few tragic cases of individual family financial crises recorded in Tingen, the police noticed the existence of the puppet. It was always placed in the children's bedroom, on the side table next to the bed.

"A few Nighthawks accepted the request and started an investigation on the puppet.

“The initial evaluation determined that it brought misfortune, causing people around it to be unlucky and find themselves in danger. Finally, they would die one after another. It only took two weeks for the tester to reach the brink of bankruptcy.

“The puppet doesn’t have any living traits. It doesn’t have any inclinations of escaping the seal.

“Through extended periods of experimentation, we discovered that as long as one does not come within ten meters of it for more than half an hour a day, one wouldn’t be tainted with misfortune. If misfortune has befallen someone, the person will immediately have his situation turn for the better as long as the misfortune is transferred to another person.

“Appendix: The puppet first appeared in the house of an old lady, Tess, who lived in the Lower Street of Iron Cross Street. She was a toymaker. Due to old age and her husband’s severe illness, with both her children passing on early, she had no choice but to move to the Iron Cross Street’s Lower Street.

“This was the last toy she sold. She exchanged the puppet for some poison hemlock and ended her and her husband’s lives, having starved for more than three days.”

As Klein recalled the information of Sealed Artifact 3-0625, he felt even more doubtful and horrified.

Didn’t it say the puppet doesn’t have living traits? Didn’t it say that it doesn’t have any inclinations of escaping the seal?

What did I see just now!?

What dragged it back in the end?

The symbol that was drawn on the paper that it unfurled, what does it mean?

That scene earlier was like how a psychotic murderer deals with his victim as the victim slams on the gates heavily and cries for help desperately, only to be dragged back…

While these thoughts flooded him, Klein decided not to make any decision on his own.

He returned to the duty room and pulled a rope.

The rope tightened, the gear spun, and there was suddenly a hurried ringtone that rang on the second floor of the Blackthorn Security Company.

Leonard Mitchell and the other Sleepless who were playing cards in the recreation room immediately put down their poker cards and ran to the basement.

Chapter 109 - Deduction

◆

The sound of running footsteps entered Klein's ears, calming him down as he stood at the entrance of the guard room.

Leonard arrived first, holding a revolver. He asked in a solemn voice, "What happened?"

Watching Leonard struggle to stop, Klein suddenly thought of something that Rozanne had mentioned in the past. Three years ago, Leonard, who had just become a Sleepless, tried to run down the flight of stairs despite not having adapted to the potion's power, causing him to fall and roll down.

With a cough, Klein pointed at Chanis Gate and said, "There was a knocking noise from the inside, which then became a loud slamming noise. Then the door was pushed open a little."

"Chanis Gate was pushed open?" the short Kenley asked in shock.

"Yes, a slit was opened." Klein continued his description. He saw that Leonard, Kenley, and Royale had stopped approaching the guard room, instead forming an arc formation a few steps away, loosely surrounding Klein.

He paused for a moment before asking, "Are you suspicious of me?"

"No, it isn't suspicion. This is protocol." Kenley shook his head.

In this tense atmosphere, Leonard maintained his flippant attitude, laughing as he added, "There have been incidents like this in other churches. The Beyonder guarding Chanis Gate lost control and pulled the bell before killing two teammates who came to help.”

“Alright.” Klein no longer felt angry and aggrieved at being ostracized. Instead, he asked, “Then how should I prove that I haven’t lost control?”

Leonard wiped away his flippant smile and tapped his chest four times. With a hoarse voice, he recited softly, “Lacking clothes and food, they have no shelter in the cold.

“They are drenched by rains, and huddle around the rocks for lack of shelter.

“They are orphans snatched from the breast, hope lost on them; they are the poor that have been forced off the proper path.

“The Evernight did not forsake them, but bestowed them with love.”

†

The holy, yet pitiful prayer reverberated around the basement, making the bodies, hearts, and souls of everyone present feel purified and tranquil.

Seeing Klein not display any abnormal reactions, Leonard stopped his recital and smiled.

“There’s no problem. You are still our trusted partner.”

Madam Royale, who had been quiet all this time, looked at Chanis Gate and asked, “What did you see when the gate was pushed open?”

“I saw a Misfortune Cloth Puppet, the one wearing the black classic regal gown, 3-0625,” Klein replied, still a little fearful. “But three seconds later, a formless power pulled it back and Chanis Gate was closed once again. What’s going on?”

Leonard, Kenley, and Royale exchanged looks.

“Heh heh, we are in the same boat as you. We don’t know the true cause. But since Chanis Gate is closed once again and there’s nothing unusual, we shouldn’t enter it at this time. We have to wait till dawn for the Captain.”

Royale calmly added, “I will wait here and guard the gate with you.”

“Alright.” Leonard moved his hand and gave a bantering laugh. “As the most powerful person here, I shall stay too. Kenley, return to the second floor just in case the police department has an emergency case and cannot open the door.”

Kenley didn’t say much, he just nodded immediately and left.

Leonard glanced at Klein and Royale.

“Perhaps we can continue our card game? It’s best to have some sort of entertainment in circumstances like this, to relax.”

“No problem.” Klein adjusted his revolver and put it back into his underarm holster. Royale didn’t voice an opinion, but instead stroked her smooth, black hair as she entered the guard room.

While playing Fighting the Landlord, no—Fighting Evil, Klein said casually, “Misfortune Cloth Puppet, I mean 3-0625, according to its description, doesn’t have any living traits…”

“Haha, three aces.” Leonard showed his hand and replied with the same casual tone, “In the past forty years, 3-0625 hasn’t displayed any life-like characteristics. We can first assume that the information is correct and make our assumptions based on that.”

“Pass. You already have an idea?” Royale asked simply.

As Klein hesitated to think about whether he should throw his three deuces, Leonard took a sip of his freshly brewed coffee and said, “Yes, since 3-0625 shouldn’t have any life-like characteristics, then its actions today must have been influenced by some other factor. This factor must also be rather recent; otherwise, we would've observed this phenomenon a long time ago."

"Has there been anything different about Chanis Gate over the last month?"

Royale saw Klein toss his three deuces and pondered for a few seconds.

"There is only one thing different; the Antigonus family's notebook and the Sealed Artifact 2-049 was stored behind Chanis Gate for a night."

Leonard looked at the cards in his hand and as he tapped the table, he said with a smile, "If 2-049 can make the Misfortune Cloth Puppet act abnormally, then something similar should have happened behind Backlund's Chanis Gate a long time ago. So I suspect that the problem lies with the Antigonus family's notebook."

Klein thought for a moment and nodded.

"That is the most likely explanation… Leonard, I never expected you to be this good at deduction."

Typically speaking, being a romantic poet and a person with excellent deductive skills was mutually exclusive…

"That's because he's recently into detective novels," Royale explained indifferently. "Two Kings, a straight from 8 to King. Does no one want it? Three 6's and no more."

Upon seeing this, Klein and Leonard fell silent.

Having not been concentrating on the game, they forget something important.

Royale was the 'Evil' in this round!

Watching Royale cut the deck, Klein took the opportunity to ask, "Then what power pulled 3-0625 back?"

Leonard glanced at him and chuckled.

“Do you really think that the defensive mechanisms behind Chanis Gate only consists of the buried sealed chamber and a few elderly keepers?

“In reality, when the sun sets fully, the keepers would have already left Chanis Gate and returned to Saint Selena Cathedral.

“The power in the gate is strongest at night and is no longer safe for any living creature. The power only weakens when the sun rises again. That is also why the Captain asked us not to enter Chanis Gate no matter what we hear.”

In other words, the Captain had forgotten to tell me the reason… Klein thought for a bit before asking, “Defensive mechanisms such as nexus formations?”

Like magnified versions of amulets and charms?

“Yes.” Royale nodded as she stroked the edge of her cards. “There is a reason that Chanis Gates are placed in the central cathedral of each city. The gate is maintained by the followers that go to these churches every day. Their sincere prayers allow a part of their spirituality to enter the nexus formations, and from small contributions comes abundance.”

“I see…” Klein nodded as he saw that he had a lousy hand.

At that moment, Leonard laughed and said, “There isn’t just one defensive mechanism behind Chanis Gate. Saint Selena’s ashes are buried inside. She was a High-Sequence Beyonder when she was still alive.”

The ashes of Saint Selena? Ashes of a High-Sequence Beyonder? Sacred ashes? What use do those have? Klein was as puzzled as he was curious.

Saint Selena was a devotee when the Church of Evernight was being established. She was active during the Third Epoch and her deeds were written in many holy scriptures. Thus, Saint Selena was a fairly commonly-used name among the commoners who believed in the Evernight Goddess.

Leonard seemed to read Klein's mind as he continued, "Rumors suggest that the skeleton or ashes of High-Sequence Beyonders still contain incredible power. Of course, those are just rumors."

Klein nodded, focusing his attention on the cards in his hand.

There were no unusual incidents in Chanis Gate for the next few hours, but Klein lost exactly two soli. It pained his heart, but Leonard, who fully expressed his romantic poetic vibes while playing, lost four soli and five pence, leaving Royale as the undisputed winner.

"The sun has just risen, it's my turn." The quiet Author, Madam Seeka Tron entered the guard room at six.

Klein wrote the incident he encountered the previous night into the record book and returned to the Blackthorn Security Company with Leonard and Royale.

He felt unusually exhausted, but the Midnight Poet and Sleepless beside him remained energetic.

This is the difference between the different Sequences… Klein was just about to make his way past the partition and catch up on some sleep at home when he suddenly saw the Captain enter.

"Good morning, Captain." He couldn't help but yawn when he greeted him.

Dunn, who was in a black trench coat, took off his hat and looked at him with his gray eyes.

"Good morning. You should head back home for some rest. Did anything happen last night?"

Klein immediately gave a succinct summary of the incident regarding the Misfortune Cloth Puppet and Leonard's deduction.

"Okay." Dunn didn't give his opinion. He concentrated on making his way to his office. "I will send a telegraph to the Holy Cathedral."

Klein didn't stay any longer. He slowly walked out of 36 Zouteland Street and breathed in the cool morning air.

He felt a little more energized, suddenly remembering something he had forgotten all this time.

I forgot to tell the Captain and the rest about the piece of paper in the Misfortune Cloth Puppet's hands!

How could I have forgotten?

It was as if some power was influencing me, stopping me from telling this to the other Nighthawks…

It has been some time since the Antigonus family's notebook was present at Chanis Gate. The Misfortune Cloth Puppet 3-0625 should have been affected long ago. Why did it only show abnormal behavior last night?

Was it because it was the first time I was on shift at Chanis Gate?

It used all of its power to show me the picture on the paper?

What is the motive of the Antigonus family's notebook?

Has it got to do with my survival despite making contact with it? And that I became a Seer?

†

Many suspicions flashed through Klein's brain, rooting him to the spot. He was unsure if he should pretend that he didn't remember anything and make his way home to sleep, or head up and report it to the

Captain.

Chapter 110 - Confirmation

◆

After thinking for a while, Klein decided to return home to confirm something.

He believed that if the Misfortune Cloth Puppet hadn't intentionally shown him the picture on the paper, then the Captain and the rest would definitely find traces in their follow-up investigations. It wouldn't matter much if he reported it or not.

If it were the converse, it was something worth careful consideration.

That was also what Klein wanted to confirm.

He took the trackless public carriage to Daffodil Street. When he returned home, his brother Benson and his sister Melissa had yet to wake up, since it was Sunday. The living room was dark and quiet.

Klein boiled a kettle of water, threw in some tea leaves, and drank it with wheat bread. Then he took his coat, hat, and cane towards the stairs.

He subconsciously lightened his footsteps to avoid making any loud noises.

Just as he got to the second floor, he saw the bathroom door suddenly open, and Melissa, who was wearing an old dress, came out with a sleepy face.

"You're home…" Melissa was rubbing her eyes sleepily.

Klein covered his mouth and yawned.

“Yeah, I need to crash. Don’t wake me up before lunch.”

Melissa tersely acknowledged when she suddenly recalled something.

“Benson and I are going to Saint Selena Cathedral pray and attend Mass in the morning. Lunch might be slightly later.”

As not-so-devoted believers of the Evernight Goddess, she and Benson went to the church once a fortnight, while Klein, who was a Nighthawk, hadn’t entered the church since the last time he was followed by the member of the Secret Order.

No, I’m at the cathedral every day, just that I’m in the cathedral’s basement… Klein justified himself subconsciously.

He was currently most worried that the Goddess would abandon him as a fake believer. If his ritualistic magic didn’t respond at crucial times, he would be in big trouble.

But then, when one considers Old Neil, the Goddess is quite forgiving towards the Nighthawks. Hmm. That’s right! Klein comforted himself.

His scattered thoughts flashed past him, and he looked at Melissa. He nodded and smiled.

“No problem. I can sleep longer then.”

Walking past Melissa, he entered his bedroom and locked the door behind him.

Immediately following that, he psyched himself up and took out the ritual dagger and created a sealed spirituality wall.

He took four steps counterclockwise while reciting the incantation and withstood the chaotic roars before appearing above the gray fog.

In the illusionary boundless world, he was the only living spirit sitting on the seat of honor at the long bronze table.

For nearly a minute of silence, Klein conjured a piece of goatskin parchment and wrote down a divination incantation.

“The picture that the Misfortune Cloth Puppet displayed.”

Although Klein had seen the mysterious picture on the paper clearly for a split moment last night, he only managed to remember the rough shape of the picture due to his anxiety. But that wasn’t a problem for a Seer; he could reproduce anything he remembered and had seen once!

According to mysticism theory, one’s spirituality could remember everything they had seen. As long as they possessed the appropriate method, they could reproduce the scene whenever they wished.

Klein even felt that the theory that Spirit Medium Daly described regarding the Psychology Alchemists made sense. Human memory was merely islands that were exposed above the sea; it couldn’t withstand much. Hence, a person’s spiritual essence remembered most of the information and turned it into the subconscious, which formed the entire ocean.

While spirituality itself, even if it wasn’t the entire ocean, also included the entire sea region surrounding the island.

After reciting the divination incantation, Klein leaned backwards and fell asleep through Cogitation.

In the blurry, distorted, separated world, he saw Chanis Gate crack open once again as he heard the heavy grinding noises.

The puppet in the black classic regal gown leaned into the opening of the door and unfurled the paper that it was holding.

On the piece of paper, there were many mysterious symbols that collectively formed a vertical eye.

Klein carefully observed the picture before exiting the dream. Then, with the aid of the uniqueness of the world above the gray fog and the memory that had yet to fade, he expressed the image on the brown parchment.

The vertical eye looked up at him, looking both sinister and mysterious.

Klein thought and wrote below the eye, “This is key to the treasure that the Antigonus family left behind.”

Putting down the pen, he untied the silver chain that was wound inside his sleeve. As he held it with his left hand, the topaz pendulum stably hung above the divination statement and the mysterious vertical eye. There weren’t any obvious movements.

Klein closed his eyes and recited the sentence with his mind cleared.

After seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz spinning in small circles in a clockwise fashion along with the silver chain.

That meant affirmation.

The vertical eye picture is really key to the treasure that the Antigonus family left behind… Klein nodded in deep thought.

He tapped his fingers on the edge of the long bronze table and muttered to himself, “Because of Ray Bieber’s death, there are no descendants of the Antigonus family left. Hence, the notebook views me, the Seer that interacted with it but remains alive, as its inheritor?

“It affected 3-0625 and left the key to the treasure with it, only to show it to me during my shift at Chanis Gate?

“There doesn’t seem to be any problem with the logic, but it still doesn’t seem very convincing.

“How could the notebook be sure that there are no more descendants of the Antigonus family?

"And I am totally unrelated to that family… If I shared their bloodline, the original Klein wouldn't have committed suicide to begin with.

"Hmm, it doesn't seem to matter if I tell this to the Captain and the team. Let me look into this."

Klein then divined the location of the Antigonus family's treasure. But, unsurprisingly, there was no detailed information. Just like in the letter that Sirius wrote to Mr. Z, Klein could only be certain that the treasure was related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range and the ancient Nation of the Evernight.

After he finished divining all the matters, Klein noticed that the crimson star from which he had previously heard prayers was producing a faint fluctuation again.

He used the method of answering prayers and touched the illusory star. He saw the brown-haired young man who wore the unique black tight suit again.

The young man was kneeling on the ground, facing the pure crystal ball, still muttering about something.

Klein, who had purposely learned some Jotun, finally understood one of the sentences.

"Pray… Save… Father and Mother."

It really is Jotun… Where in the world is Jotun still used? That's an ancient antique that is thousands of years old… What a pity; the mysterious ruler above the gray fog is totally powerless. I don't have the ability to save them even if I want to… Klein shook his head and sighed. He decided to observe him for a little longer.

I'll see what I can do when I master more Jotun vocabulary and can understand what happened to his father and mother… Klein retracted his spirituality, wrapped it around himself, and initiated a descent.

When he returned to his bedroom, he dispelled the spirituality wall, changed into old but comfortable clothing, and laid down on the bed to get some sleep.

Klein slept all the way till half-past twelve, which was when Melissa finished preparing lunch and came knocking on the door.

After having a fairly sumptuous meal, he saw Melissa bring out her new dress and fishnet hat, looking like she was going out.

“Do you still have something this afternoon?” Klein asked, puzzled.

Benson was seated on the sofa, knitting his eyebrows at his grammar books. He didn’t lift his head but answered on her behalf, “Mrs. Shaud from next door told Melissa that there will be a lecture regarding family affairs in the municipal hall in the afternoon. Melissa plans to attend it and learn how to deal with daily household issues.”

Melissa nodded and said, “I got Selena and Elizabeth to join me.”

“That’s nice. I hope that the lecturer tells you that a family like us needs to hire at least one maidservant,” Klein joked.

Noticing that Melissa was about to refute him, he immediately added, “We have to invest our limited time into more valuable matters.”

Melissa was stunned. After a while, she puckered her lips, put on her fishnet hat, and left the house.

†

At two in the afternoon, Klein arrived at the Blackthorn Security Company again.

Rozanne and Dunn Smith, who happened to be in the reception hall, asked in unison, “Didn’t you go home and rest?”

Klein smiled.

“I was going to go to the Divination Club, but I kept thinking about what happened last night, so I decided to come over here first. Has there been any reply from the Holy Cathedral?”

Dunn shot a glance at Rozanne and turned around silently. He walked past the partition and entered his office.

Rozanne pulled her face at his back, then muttered angrily, “Seriously, Captain…”

Well done! Klein complimented silently. He held back his laughter and followed Dunn into his office.

Klein shut the door, and Dunn sniffed his smoking pipe before he said, “The Holy Cathedral has determined that the disturbance was because of the Antigonus family notebook, which they reclassified as a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. It’s a pity. That means that you no longer have the sufficient security clearance to read it.”

Grade 1. Highly dangerous. Only the ranks above bishops and Nighthawks team captains can know of the actual situation? That also means that Captain has no idea what’s happening… Highly dangerous, no wonder… Klein felt regretful yet relaxed.

Dunn gave him a glance and continued, “The Holy Cathedral told us to check if there are any other items behind Chanis Gate that were contaminated by the notebook. After verification, only 3-0625 was abnormal, and we have already changed its seal.”

“Did you discover anything else?” Klein pretended to ask curiously.

Dunn shook his head.

“No.”

Klein nodded in thought. He didn’t continue with the topic. After some small talk, he bade farewell and left for the Divination Club to continue his ‘journey of digestion’.

†

In the municipal hall.

The three best friends, Melissa, Selena, and Elizabeth, sat near the door, waiting for the lecture to begin.

“If she delivers a bad lecture, we’ll sneak out,” Selena suggested excitedly.

Elizabeth immediately agreed, “Let’s go shopping at Harrods.”

Chapter 111 - Letting Slip

◆

Sometime later, the lecturer, who had relatively high cheekbones, walked up the wooden podium. She cleared her throat and said, “Good morning, kind, charitable ladies. I am Xaviera Hedda. What I am about to share with you today are my experiences in managing family expenses. There are three parts, the first being how a family with an annual income of a hundred pounds should balance food, housing, clothing, and employing helpers. The second would be where a family earning two hundred pounds yearly should be increasing their expenditure to appear more decent…”

Melissa listened attentively. She had her brothers’ annual income at her fingertips.

It’s already over two hundred pounds… she thought, half in relief and half in fear.

She was relieved and satisfied with her current life, but was also afraid that this way of life would vanish in the blink of an eye.

At this point, the wine red-haired Selena covered her mouth. She told her two friends quietly, “She seems to be a believer of the Lord of Storms. She’s wearing a Storm badge.”

Melissa looked over and saw Xaviera wearing a badge depicting violent winds and tumultuous waves on her left chest.

She quickly explained, “Mrs. Shaud who told me about this seminar is also a follower of the Lord of Storms. I don’t think it’s strange that the speaker is a follower too."

"Yeah, I don't think there is a problem here. We are here to learn how to budget," Elizabeth concurred with Melissa.

"But other than Melissa, we don't need to, nor do we have the right to govern our families' finances." Selena pouted.

Elizabeth rebutted without hesitation, "But we'll get married eventually and form our own families."

Selena had been a little afraid of Elizabeth after the incident of the demon mirror divination. She nodded in embarrassment and pretended to listen to the lecture attentively.

The lecturer, Xaviera, raised her right hand and said, "The premise of any form of budgeting is to respect the opinion of the man of the household. They are the source of income, the pillar of the family. They face anxiety, stress, troubles, and disorder in society in order to obtain everything for us. Thus, we have to create a serene home, one free from troubles from the outside. This will allow them to relax when they come home, allow their souls to be cleansed, allow them to be more prepared to face the challenges to come…

"So, as the famous philosopher, sociologist, humanities scholar, and economist Mr. Leumi once said, a woman is the angel of a household."

Selena stroked her cheek and traced her dimples as she whispered with a little excitement, "Leumi, the person who said that humans are born free?"

Elizabeth hesitated before answering. "Yes, but he is a believer of the Lord of Storms."

At this point, the lecturer, Xaviera, continued, "Mr. Leumi also informs us that females are innately flawed when it comes to intelligence and logic. In that case, unable to judge for themselves whether they should accept the judgment of father and husband as that of the church…."[1]

Melissa, Selena, and Elizabeth looked at each other, speechless, after hearing such a description.

“Let’s go?” Selena finally suggested.

Melissa and Elizabeth nodded.

“Alright!”

They took their veiled hats and bent over, sneaking over to the side door in an attempt to leave without attracting any attention.

When they cautiously arrived outside and could finally stand up straight, they suddenly heard a burst of applause coming from the small hall.

Melissa instinctively looked back into the hall.

She saw Mrs. Shaud, as well as many other ladies, clapping.

Phew! Praise the Lady… Melissa exhaled. She left the uncomfortable place together with Selena and Elizabeth.

“Shall we go to Harrods?” Selena suggested as she stood under a tree. She had already forgotten about what had just happened.

Melissa fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “I plan on returning home to study.”

“Study…” Selena fiddled with her wine-red hair, as if she had returned to her regular life.

“Also, I have to buy bread, beef, potatoes, and fruits… Klein needs to work today, Benson went to the municipal library. So, yeah, I have to go back!” Melissa suddenly realized how much she loved her textbooks, her gears and springs.

Selena decided to keep her distance from the unusually weird Melissa. She turned to look at Elizabeth and smiled dutifully, “Shall we go to

Harrods together? Even though I’ve spent all my savings, it’s still wonderful to window shop.”

“Sure.” Elizabeth accepted the suggestion, then asked casually, “Melissa, does your brother, Klein, have to work on Sundays?”

“Yes, he rests on Mondays, different from ordinary jobs.” Melissa unknowingly raised her head slightly.

†

After leaving the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein took a public carriage to Howes Street.

He tried his hardest to suppress his emotions, to not think about the issue of the Antigonus family’s treasure. He tried to focus his attention back onto the matter of acting.

It was important to fully digest the potion as soon as possible! Improving himself was extremely important no matter when it was!

Acting as a Seer, heh! I’m not professional enough. The fortune tellers back in the Foodaholic Empire had to go through the almanac all the time before they accomplished anything… Klein held his cane as he sat inside a carriage.

He had decided to divine if it was beneficial for him to travel to the Divination Club today.

That was more befitting of a Seer!

As he was getting off the carriage, Klein took out a halfpence coin. His field of vision narrowed, his pupils becoming darker as he silently recited, It is suitable to head to the Divination Club today.

It is suitable to head to the Divination Club today.

†

Dang!

Klein flicked the coin up. He didn’t look at the rotation of the coin, calmly extending his hand instead.

Thunk! The halfpence landed in the middle of his palm.

This time, the number ½ was facing up.

With the number facing up, that means that I would encounter an unfortunate incident at the Divination Club today… Klein thought for a moment before he turned to the opposite side of the street. He waited for the public carriage that was headed for Daffodil Street.

He felt more and more like a charlatan.

†

Howes Street, at the entrance to Harrods Department Store.

Selena was just about to enter the building when she suddenly froze and looked to the side.

“Did something happened?” Elizabeth asked, puzzled.

Selena puffed her cheeks and said, “Elizabeth, I thought about my mysticism teacher, Mr. Vincent. He passed away just like that, the morning after my birthday…”

“Could it be because I peeked and used his secret incantations? I’ve always felt guilty and uneasy because of this… Besides, I’ve been rather unlucky recently.”

“So?” Elizabeth asked quietly.

Selena bit her lips and said, “I wish to do a divination at the Divination Club over there and see if Mr. Vincent’s death had anything to do with me.”

From what happened at my birthday banquet… I have this nagging feeling that Elizabeth is hiding something from me… I remember the back of the man in a tuxedo…

“Can’t you divine it yourself?” Elizabeth asked in surprise.

Selena sighed, imitating her father.

“Sigh, I cannot divine it given my current condition.”

“Alright, let’s head to the Divination Club first.” Elizabeth agreed to her friend’s suggestion.

They headed over to the side and made their way to the Divination Club on the second floor by following the stairs.

“Hello, good afternoon, Miss Angelica. It’s a pleasure meeting you again.” Selena gave a lively greeting at the reception area.

Angelica smiled and said, “You should be able to find me here as long as you come after lunch.”

Selena exchanged niceties before lamenting Hanass Vincent’s death, she then said, “I need to have a divination performed.”

“You know the rules of the club. Here is the list of members willing to do it… It’s the weekend, so most of our members are here,” Angelica explained like clockwork.

Selena and Elizabeth huddled their heads together as they scanned the list of names and description together.

“I used to just ask for my teacher directly. To think that the club would have this many members willing to do divinations compared to last year,” Selena said excitedly.

Suddenly, she paused for a few seconds and said in puzzlement, “Klein Moretti, Klein Moretti? Isn’t this name the same as Melissa’s brother?”

Elizabeth froze. She looked repeatedly at the name ‘Klein Moretti’ and nodded, “That’s true…”

“Miss Angelica, is this Mr. Klein Moretti around?” Selena asked with a sparkle in her eyes.

Angelica shook her head.

“My apologies, Mr. Moretti didn’t come to the club today.”

“Alright, we’ll find someone else.” Selena didn’t mind not seeing the person, but she laughed at her friend. “I know that this can’t be Melissa’s brother, but having seen this name, I naturally thought of a newspaper; a headline worthy of the Intis Press.”

The Intis Press was created by Emperor Roselle, famous for its attention-grabbing headlines. It was one of the most famous newspapers in the Northern Continent.

Elizabeth asked inattentively, “What headline?”

Selena cleared her throat and said, “Is it the decay of morals, or a problem with society? History graduate actually ends up doing divinations over the weekends to make a living!”

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†

Adapted from Emile, or On Education.

Chapter 112 - Azik's Explanation

◆

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Audrey Hall sat on a suspended chair in a windy corner and looked at the flowers that were blooming under the sun. She thought of Fors Wall's request.

According to Viscount Glaint, there really was a young girl named Xio Derecha being impounded at a temporary prison located in Backlund's North Borough.

She was charged with grievous assault against a decent gentleman due to a financial conflict. She caused the man to be bedridden, and he might not be able to stand on his feet ever again.

Regarding that, Fors's explanation was that the gentleman wasn't a nice person but the head of a gang in Backlund's East Borough. He made a living by being an usury.

The cause of the incident was when one of the borrowers found out that the interest was several times higher than he expected, so much so that it was impossible to return the amount of money even after he bankrupted himself. When his discussion with the gentleman ended fruitless, he found the famous intermediator, Xio Derecha, hoping that she could persuade the other party to waive the unreasonable portion of the loan.

That gentleman didn't respond well to Xio Derecha's attempts at arbitration, and even threatened to capture the borrower's wife and children that night. Hence, Xio Derecha switched tactics and chose to use physical means. Accidentally, she caused severe damage to the man.

Viscount Glaint investigated the matter and confirmed that Fors Wall was telling the truth. He also confirmed that the gangster had lost control of his underlings. Moreover, after a midnight visit by someone, the borrower's debts were waived. A statement was sent to the prosecutor to plead mercy for Xio Derecha. However, an assault case of such severity wasn't dropped even when the victim decided not to pursue a trial.

"Glaint wished to solve the problem through normal means. He sent people to talk to lawyers that he was familiar with, but they were only confident of winning a lighter sentence, but it would be very difficult to acquit her from the crime unless she obtains a medical certification stating that she is mentally incompetent or mentally undeveloped…" Audrey muttered to herself, leaning in support towards her friend's opinion.

To her, it was best to not have any relationship with Fors Wall and Xio Derecha. Ever since the Tarot Club, Audrey felt that she was no longer an innocent and naive young lady.

"Tomorrow night, there will be a dance at Earl Wolf's residence. I should tell Glaint then to act according to the lawyer's suggestion." Audrey nodded slightly as she made a decision.

In the Loen Kingdom, lawyers were either barristers or solicitors. The latter didn't need to be involved in court affairs, and were responsible for gathering evidence, talking to the parties involved, setting up wills on their clients' behalf, supervising property allocation, and providing legal consultation. Of course, they could also represent their clients to attend the most basic magistrate court and defend simple cases.

Barristers, on the other hand, were responsible for researching evidence and defending their clients in court. According to the Loen Kingdom's laws, they had to maintain an objective attitude so they couldn’t make direct contact with the litigant. They could only communicate with them through their assistants, who were solicitors, to gain complete understanding of the situation. They were all true law experts who possessed outstanding communication skills and were skilled in debate.

The relaxed Audrey observed the colorful flowers outside while hidden in the darkness when she recalled something.

Medical certification stating she was mentally incompetent… Psychiatrist…

If the Psychology Alchemists have grasped ‘acting’, does that mean that they can be found amongst psychiatrists?

Audrey felt that her train of thought was on the correct path, and her eyes shimmered like a lustrous gemstone.

Just then, she saw her golden retriever, Susie sneak behind the flower bushes, to a spot where only the gardener would be able to reach.

Susie… What is she doing? Audrey hid in the shadows and looked in a daze.

The golden retriever’s sense of smell seemed to be confused by the flowers all around her that she failed to notice her owner behind her. She opened her mouth and produced sounds that was akin to one’s exercising of their voice.

Then, it caused the surrounding air to vibrate into words that were jerky and unmellow.

“Hello.

“How are you?”

†

Audrey's mouth widened as she completely forgot about the etiquette an elegant lady should have. She couldn't believe the scene before her and the stiff voice that she had just heard.

She suddenly stood up and asked, "Susie, you can talk? When did you learn how to talk?"

The golden retriever jumped in fright as she turned around to look at her owner.

She shook her tail nervously and very quickly. She opened and closed her mouth a few times, vibrating the surrounding air.

"I… I don't know how to explain. I am a dog, after all."

Upon hearing that, Audrey was suddenly at a loss for words.

†

Monday morning, Klein followed his plan to revise and consolidate his mysticism knowledge. Then, he took the public carriage to Khoy University.

He wanted to increase his interactions with Mr. Azik and find out exactly what he knew.

In the three-story gray building of the history department, Klein and his teacher, Cohen Quentin, chatted for a while and exchanged their information regarding the historical ruins on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range.

Having not learned anything new, he seized the opportunity to enter the office diagonally opposite when his mentor left to handle certain matters. He then walked over to Azik's desk. The lecturer had stayed behind to take care of some matters.

"Mr. Azik, can I have a chat with you?" He asked the man with the tanned skin, gentle facial features, and the small mole below his right ear. He took off his hat and bowed.

With eyes that seemed to have seen the vicissitudes of life, Azik tidied his books and replied, “Sure, let’s take a walk by the Khoy’s banks.”

“Alright.” Klein held his cane and followed him out of the three-story gray building.

Along the way, they maintained their silence. Neither of them spoke.

When the flowing river water entered their vision and there were no teachers or students passing by, Azik suddenly stopped in his tracks. He turned his body halfway, faced Klein, and asked, “Is there something I can help you with?”

Klein remained silent for a long while, thinking of several tactful ways of asking his questions, but he gave up on all of them.

Therefore, he spoke frankly and directly asked, “Mr. Azik, you are a trustworthy person, a respectable gentleman. I would like to know what you can see in me, or should I say, what do you know? I am referring to the previous incident when you said that there was something disharmonious in my fate.”

Azik put down his cane and sighed as he laughed.

“I never expected you to be so straightforward. I’m quite at a loss how to answer you.

“To be frank, disharmony in your fate was the only thing that I could see. Other than that, I don’t know any more than you do.”

Klein hesitated and asked, “But how could you tell? I don’t believe that this was derived from divination.”

Azik looked sideways towards the Khoy River. His intonation was tainted with some bleakness.

“No, Klein, you don’t understand. Divination can reach that kind of level. It only depends on the person doing the divination. Of course, my divination was merely an excuse.

“Some people are… special. They are born with some strange ability. I think I am someone like that.”

“You think?” Klein acutely caught the word that the other man used.

“Yes, I am not sure if I was born with it. Perhaps, the price of my ability is to forget myself, to forget my past, to forget my parents.” Azik’s eyes were clouded with melancholy as he looked at the river.

Klein was increasingly confused.

“Forget the past?”

Azik smiled without any humor.

“Before I entered the Backlund University’s history department, I lost most of my memory. I only remembered my name and some basic knowledge. Luckily, I still had my identification documents. Otherwise, I probably would have ended up homeless. All these years, I’ve tried to search for my parents using my identification documents, but I never found anything, even though I could see a corner of Fate.

“During my few years in the university, I gradually realized that I possessed some strange but unique powers, powers that go beyond common sense.”

Klein listened attentively and asked, “Mr. Azik, why did you lose your memory? No, I mean—did you find out why you lost your memory?”

He suspected that Mr. Azik was a member of the Life School of Thought who had lost his memories, and that he might even be a Mid-Sequence Beyonder that held an above average position. It was a secret organization that had potion Sequences for Monster and Soothsayer. It was an organization that was mainly passed down through master-disciple relationships.

Azik shook his head vigorously.

“No, it felt like I just had slept, I’ve forgotten everything that happened in the past.”

He walked forward a few steps with his cane in his hand. He spoke as he walked.

“After I left Backlund, I started dreaming. I dreamed about a lot of strange things…”

Dreams? I am good at interpreting dreams! The conversation was entering Klein’s domain of expertise as he immediately asked, “What kind of dream?”

Azik let out a muffled laugh and said, “Many different kinds of dreams. Sometimes, I would dream of the internals of a dark mausoleum. I would dream of ancient coffins with corpses in them. They would have white feathers growing out from their backs. Sometimes, I would dream of myself being a knight covered in armor, holding a three-meter-long spear while charging towards the enemy.

“Sometimes, I dream of myself as a feudal lord, having a rich and fertile fief, with a beautiful wife and three children. Sometimes, I dream of myself as a tramp, walking on a muddy road in the rain, feeling cold and hungry.

“Sometimes, I dream of myself having a daughter, a different daughter than the previous children. She would have long smooth black hair, and she enjoys sitting on the swing that I made. She always asks for sweets from me. Sometimes, I dream of myself standing next to the gallows, looking towards a dead body hanging up there coldly.”

Listening to Azik raving like a madman, Klein suddenly realized that he couldn’t interpret the dreams because his various dreams symbolized opposite, contradictory things!

Azik retracted his gaze as his voice no longer sounded ethereal.

“The Feynapotter Kingdom in the south believes in Earth Mother, and the Church of Earth Mother promotes a belief. They believe that every life is a plant, absorbing the nutrients from the earth. Growing slowly, prospering, and withering.

“When they wither, these lives fall to the earth and return to the mother’s embrace. In the coming year, they grow again. They would blossom then wither, year after year. Life is as such, one life after another.

“Sometimes, I am very willing to believe in this concept. I believe because of my uniqueness, I can dream of previous lives, and the lives before that.”

At this point, he looked at Klein and said with a sigh, “I haven’t mentioned any of this to Cohen before. The reason I’m telling you is because I…”

Azik paused and smiled.

“I apologize. My description earlier was not precise enough. The disharmony in your fate is not the only thing that I could see. I can also see another thing.

“Klein, you are not an ordinary person anymore. You possess an extraordinary, strange power, one very similar to mine.”

Chapter 113 - Request

◆ ◆ ◆

Mr. Azik can tell that I'm a Beyonder? His ability is truly powerful… Klein froze for a moment before he gave an honest reply.

"Yes."

He thought for a while before adding, "Because of what happened to Welch and Naya."

"It's as I thought…" Azik sighed. "There were two people with extraordinary powers amongst the group of police that came to question me and Cohen."

It was probably Captain and Leonard. They were in charge of Welch's case… Klein nodded slightly, not interrupting Azik.

Azik raised his cane and said, "You should have entered their circle. I hope that you can help me search for clues of my origin. You do not need to go out of your way to do it, just note it down if you find any clues."

Upon saying that, Azik wore a bitter smile.

"I don't know any other person with extraordinary powers… You cannot imagine what emotions a man without a past has. You are like a boat floating in a vast ocean. The most terrifying thing is not facing a storm, but not being able to find a harbor. The inability to navigate to shore. All you can do is take on disaster after disaster, with no end in sight, never to feel peace and safety."

No Mr. Azik, I know how it feels, for I am in a similar position. Fortunately for me, I have the memory fragments of the original Klein, as well as Melissa and Benson… Klein answered silently before he asked, “Mr. Azik, why didn’t you join a similar group when you possess such magical ability and search for clues yourself?”

Azik looked into Klein’s eyes and let out a self-deprecating smile.

“Because I’m afraid. I’m afraid of death.”

He sighed and continued, “I have gotten used to life like this. I like my life. I don’t have the courage to take that risk, so I can count on you.”

Klein didn’t say any more. He promised, “I’ll pay special attention if I come across any clues.”

“Alright, we should return to the office. Let’s have lunch together with Cohen when he’s done with work. Do you remember? The East Balam Restaurant in the university is quite good. Heh, my treat.” Azik lifted his cane and pointed to a direction.

My apologies, I really have no memories of that. How could the studying original Klein have afforded the East Balam Restaurant? Even if Welch was treating, he would still reject going to such an expensive place… Klein pressed on his hat and returned to the third level of the grayish-stone building which housed the history department with Azik.

A few steps later, Azik suddenly spoke.

“I’ll be on summer break after I finish settling all my work at the university. You can visit me at my house or write to me.”

Klein nodded and said casually, “Mr. Azik, I thought that you would head to Desi Bay for a vacation.”

“No, it is too hot in the south right now. I don’t like the so-called sunbathing. Look at my skin color; it tans easily. I’d rather head to the

Winter County, to the north of the Feysac Empire to ski, sightsee, or hunt seals." Azik, who had a bronze skin tone, smiled as he replied.

I would too… Klein, who had just joined the Nighthawks, revealed a look of envy.

After lunch, Klein returned home and took a nap before beginning his revision and study of charms and amulets. He hoped to grasp them quickly to create objects that could at least be used in battle and help him.

When it was approaching three in the afternoon, Klein packed his stuff and sealed the room with a wall of spirituality.

†

In the majestic divine hall above the gray fog sat a long, ancient mottled table.

Klein sat at the seat of honor, his face enveloped by the thick fog. He looked at the still-obscured Justice and The Hanged Man as they appeared at their designated seats.

Hmm, Miss Justice's emotions doesn't seem too stable. Worry, unease, and a little lost… Klein observed the only female member of the Tarot Club with his Spirit Vision.

Words couldn't describe Audrey Hall's emotions. She was extremely shocked by Susie's sudden speech.

She had imagined a future with herself as a great detective or famous psychologist bringing along her assistant Susie, but if that became the dog detective Susie bringing along her assistant Miss Audrey, then it would be a little, a little…

No, not a little, it would be straight up weird! It leaves me lost! Audrey suddenly sat up straight. She wanted to request for Mr. Fool's and The

Hanged Man's help.

But she swallowed the words she was about to say.

Hmm, how should I ask this? What should I do if my pet is abnormal?

How should I interact with a pet that can speak, one that has decent intelligence?

No, no, no, this is the Tarot Club, not an experience sharing on pets. I bet that the good impression that The Hanged Man and Mr. Fool have of me would shatter if I ask those questions!

Audrey's mind whirled. Finally, she organized her words and said, "Honorable Mr. Fool and Mr. Hanged Man, who has helped me all this time, I have a question to ask. What can a pet with Beyonder powers do for its owner? In other words, how useful is it?"

She had just said her piece when she noticed Mr. Fool and The Hanged Man slip into silence. The atmosphere became a little weird.

Hey hey hey, say something, don't look at me with those eyes, I did nothing! Really, I was asking for a friend! Audrey wanted to burrow into a hole out of shame.

She deeply regretted asking that question.

Considering that she had previously asked what would happen if an ordinary animal consumed a Sequence potion, did she share the potion she formulated with her pet? That seems like something only Miss Justice would do… I feel a little pathetic being the boss of a 'heretic cult' with her as a member… Klein lifted his right hand and propped it against his forehead and pinched it twice without giving an answer.

The Hanged Man Alger Wilson was silent for nearly twenty seconds before he replied in a strange tone, "That depends on what kind of Beyonder powers the pet has. For example, if it's a Spectator, then it can help you observe or listen in on certain occasions. As you know, most humans are wary of each other, but would never suspect that a pet would be eavesdropping on them, even if the pet was sitting right by their feet."

It makes sense! Father would avoid me when discussing important matters with the nobles, cabinet members, and other ministers. They would often lock the door to the room. But if Susie could hide long enough to be locked in with them, then she wouldn't be chased away… Also many ladies like to interact within private social circles… Audrey had a sparkle in her eyes as many thoughts welled in her mind.

Also, since Susie can speak now, she can tell me the content of the meetings directly… Susie is great! I have to treat you well. I have to teach you proper pronunciation and vocabulary…

Hmm, should I teach Susie the aristocratic pronunciation or a more normal Backlund accent? Would other dogs pick up on where Susie comes from when they interact? Wait, why am I considering this? Susie wouldn't use human language when interacting with other dogs…

Wait, Mr. Hanged Man, why did you use Spectator as an example?

C-could you have guessed what happened?

Audrey's expression changed. She regained her posture and smiled.

"Mr. Fool, I found another page of Emperor Roselle's diary."

I got this from Fors Wall.

"Great, you have repaid what you owed," Klein replied in a good mood.

"I am sorry, but there's not much content on this page of the diary." Audrey was conjuring the content she remembered onto the piece of goatskin.

Klein raised his hand and made the goatskin parchment appear in his palm before saying, "That doesn't affect my promise. Furthermore, the parts of the diary you handed me previously had two pages."

The pages collected by Justice and The Hanged Man were not originals. They were copied by researchers. Some would copy it on one page for recording purposes, while others kept the original look of the diary for convenience.

Klein looked down at the few lines of text on the page.

"20th December. A new year approaches, but the feedback I received is making me very confused and troubled.

"There is no crude oil in this world! There's no crude oil to be found!"

Chapter 114 - The Standards of a Member

◆

No crude oil? It couldn’t be found for some reason, or there really wasn’t any available?

From the period Emperor Roselle was assassinated till this day, about a hundred and fifty years have passed, and there are still no traces of crude oil…

Klein’s pupils constricted as his hand quivered while holding the diary.

No crude oil not only meant that the future of the internal combustion engine became uncertain, it would also lead to a state of stagnation in the chemical industry. In other words, Earth’s modern industrial age would never transpire here!

In short, the development of this world was uncertain to Klein.

Although he couldn’t invent things, he had assumed that he was still at an advantage because he knew a bit of everything and could foresee the direction of technological development. When he saved enough money, he could make a risky investment on an industry that he thought showed promise. Furthermore, he wouldn’t put all his eggs in one basket.

Klein thought that it was only a matter of time until he could own enormous wealth. By then, he would hire the so-called white gloves as representatives to establish international charity foundations. On the surface, they would provide relief to the poor. In reality, they would actually be establishing and funding a revolt, in order to fight against the higher strata of society and enhance the living standards of the people in the lower class.

If he were to find a method of returning to Earth, he would segregate his property. A third to Benson, a third to Melissa, and a third for his foundation.

However, it was a pity that his perfect vision of the future was instantly half-shattered.

Luckily, there's still electricity and magnetism in this world. The telegram is a successful example, I should mainly invest in this in the future… Klein settled down and read down row by row.

"21st December. I'm no longer thinking about crude oil anymore. Upgrading my Sequence level is what matters!

"22nd December. The filthy environment in Richeux Borough is unacceptable. If I hadn't visited incognito, I might've never known that it still looks the same as when I was young. I want to gather all my ministers and formulate a 'Capital Sewer and Public Toilet Enhancement Plan'. Hmm, I have to rectify the people's bad habits. Let them boil hot water for consumption, wash their hands and faces frequently, don't litter, don't pee and poop anywhere, use condoms if possible… Haha, I thought of what to name this campaign: the Patriotic Health Campaign!

"Hence, the invention of the condom has to be brought forward. There's also masks, paper cups, and others. Yes, even the most primitive version would do. Give it a try. I have to thank this world for they still have rubber trees.

"23rd December. Perhaps I should consider that suggestion. Keep a back door for myself outside of the Church of the God of Craftsmanship. For example, I could join that ancient and mysterious organization which influences the world from the shadows?"

Klein then suddenly realized that there was nothing else at the bottom. His emotions were indescribable.

Emperor Roselle, what was the name of the ancient and mysterious organization that was influencing the world from the shadows? Do I know it?

How could you stop here? Why didn't you write more?

It's just like when I used to read novels. When I read till the end and realized that the author ended up dropping the novel…

And Patriotic Health Campaign? The Emperor sure knows how to have fun…

The contents of the diary should've been written after he became the Consul of the Intis Republic. He might already have called himself the Emperor Caesar.

I have to read some books when I get back and flip through some historical texts of other countries. I have to see which year the 'Capital Sewer and Public Toilet Enhancement Plan' took place.

After his nearly twenty seconds of silence, Klein reined back his thoughts and let the diary in his hands vanish into thin air.

"You can start your discussion now."

Audrey let out a breath of relief and adjusted her state to become a Spectator. She smiled faintly and said, "I'd like to know if there are any Sequence potion named Arbiter, or a kind of Beyonder that can go through wooden doors or make locks ineffective?"

I know about this… Enveloped in the grayish-white fog, Klein was going to reply, but The Hanged Man answered first.

"I need you to help me investigate something in return for the answer."

"What is it?" Audrey asked with interest as well as with puzzlement.

Alger glanced towards The Fool and said, “I’d like to know if the King has the intention of taking revenge on the Feysac Empire and launching a new war on the East coast of Balam within this year or before June of next year.”

The Tarot Club was currently using the Loen language, which was confirmed by the trio’s accents at the first Gathering. Hence, Alger knew that Miss Justice was a noble in the Loen Kingdom while he also believed that Miss Justice knew that he was a Loen.

As for The Fool, Alger believed that His behavior as a Loen was merely a disguise, a disguise that would ease the discussion.

Ever since the ritualistic magic, Alger started using ‘Him’ to address The Fool politely.

Audrey recalled everything that she heard from various social events. She nodded confidently and said, “No problem, but I would need sufficient time to be certain.”

“I can wait.” Alger smiled and said, “With Mr. Fool as a witness, I believe you wouldn’t go back on your promise.”

Audrey looked towards the quiet yet mysterious Fool engulfed in gray fog as the corner of her mouth curved upwards.

“But I think the value of this information is worth more than both questions put together.”

“When you confirm the answer, I’ll provide compensation depending on the situation,” Alger replied with an answer he prepared beforehand.

Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, do you need virtual currency to determine value? Klein smiled and leaned backwards while he looked at the two people before him.

Audrey relaxed and cheered for herself in her mind.

Well done! Audrey, you learned how to negotiate! She was so excited that she nearly broke out of her Spectator state. She quickly thought of something and asked, “Oh right, Mr. Hanged Man, did you receive the one thousand pounds?”

“I’m sorry, I’m still sailing. I have yet to return to land.” Alger wasn’t willing to bring it up. He answered her original question, “The Beyonder that can go through wooden doors and foil locks would probably be Sequence 9 Apprentice. The secret organization, Theosophy Order, has its formula. However, don’t ignore the possibility that it was obtained through other channels, such as an ancient tomb of the Fourth Epoch.”

The Theosophy Order, the secret organization that has countless ties with the Demoness Sect… Klein rubbed his chin with his finger leisurely.

Seeing that Mr. Fool didn’t refute what was said, Audrey couldn’t help but sigh.

“If I had found the formula for Apprentice before, I might not have opted for Spectator.”

The performance was simply outstanding!

Alger didn’t bother with Miss Justice’s remark but continued his explanation, “There is also a Sequence potion that is entitled Arbiter. I think you should be familiar with it, because it is the Sequence pathway that the Augustus and Feynapotter Kingdom’s Castiya family has. Of course, the low Sequence formulas were used as rewards in ancient times. Some nobles might have received it before.”

The Augustus family was a royal family of the Loen Kingdom while the Castiya family was a royal family in the Feynapotter Kingdom.

It turns out that the Augustus family are all Arbiters… Audrey was enlightened and felt that it cleared up her suspicion.

She sighed and thought, It’s no wonder I’ve always gone along with their arrangements, always uncomfortable, always willing to admit defeat, like I’m never myself when I’m before them! I thought it was because I was timid…

“The Arbiter has a convincing charm and considerable authority, as well as outstanding combat ability that can deal with the unexpected,” Alger described the situation simply.

Audrey nodded slowly and leaned backwards. She then spoke elegantly, “I have no more questions.”

Alger thought and looked towards the seat of honor at the long bronze table.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, I’d like to ask if the True Creator’s Holy Residence that the Aurora Order advocates is the legendary Forsaken Land of God?”

Forsaken Land of God? I have only seen that term once in Roselle’s diary… It might be in the secret dockets of the Nighthawks, but it isn’t something I can know of currently… How do you want me to answer? Klein nearly twitched the corner of his lips.

He considered it for a while then he replied in a calm tone, “This is not something you should know now.”

Alger felt his heart tighten, and he immediately lowered his head and replied, “Please forgive me for overstepping my boundaries.”

Audrey wanted to ask about the Forsaken Land of God but she also gave up the thought when she heard that.

In the lofty divine hall above the gray fog, silence suddenly filled the air.

At that moment, Audrey felt that she should say something.

“Mr. Fool, if—and I’m saying if—I have the opportunity to join another organization, such as the Psychology Alchemists, is it permitted?”

Klein maintained his posture of leaning backward as he said with a chuckle, “That is no problem. My requirement is that the existence of the Tarot Club is not to be exposed.”

“If you become a member of another organization, the materials and information you can use for exchange will also increase.”

After saying that, he suddenly recalled that he was also a member of another organization. He was a real Nighthawk while The Hanged Man was most likely related to the Church of Storms.

Would my Tarot Club be the so-called Rebels Alliance? Traitor Gathering? Klein was drowned in deep thoughts.

“I understand now.” Audrey was excited but she immediately thought of a question, “Mr. Fool, if I found a suitable gentleman or lady for this gathering, could I guide them to join? How do I do that?”

Alger thought and asked, “Mr. Fool, what is the requirement to be a member of this gathering? How do we determine?”

Ambitious, ethical, cultured, disciplined… Four words popped into Klein’s head instantly.

He maintained his silence for a few seconds and only spoke when Justice and Hanged Man appeared a little uneasy.

“You can inform me here of people who you find suitable. I will decide if they will join us. Before that, you can’t give any hint that would cause the secret of the Tarot Club’s existence to be exposed. You must remember, to non-Gathering members…”

Klein paused and said in a heavy voice, “You must not speak my name without my permission.”

Chapter 115 - Cheat

◆

“You must not speak my name without my permission.”

†

Several minutes after the Gathering ended, Audrey and Alger, who had returned to their bedroom and ship respectively, could still hear the words of The Fool reverberating in their ears.

Their impression of the mysterious and powerful Mr. Fool was normally relaxed, calm, and unfathomable. It was rare that he would adopt such a stern, supercilious attitude.

Because of that, they were exceptionally alarmed. They submitted to his wishes sincerely.

They were no strangers to words like that, but these instructions were normally recorded within The Revelation of Evernight or The Book of Storms!

†

In the West Borough of Tingen City, on Daffodil Street.

Klein pulled open the curtains and allowed the golden sunlight to pour into his bedroom.

He had inspected the star that previously sent out a prayer after Justice and The Hanged Man left, but didn’t obtain any information this time round.

Since the crimson star had the ability to store prayers, akin to sending offline messages, Klein believed that the youth who spoke Jotun hadn't prayed again from the last two times he entered the world above the giant.

This made him suspect that there was no hope left for the youth's parents, and that the young man had chosen to give up…

With his back facing the sunlight, Klein walked to the edge of his bed and laid down. He didn't want to move.

He knew that he shouldn't waste any time and head to the Divination Club and continue the process of digesting the potion, but he didn't want to move. He laid silently on his bed, enjoying his rare break.

He had a full schedule from Tuesday to Friday, mysticism lessons and practicals in the mornings, shooting and combat training in the afternoons. He was mentally exhausted by the time evening came around. There was no change in his morning routine on Saturday, but he had to guard Chanis Gate in the afternoon. He would've stayed underground until the dawn of Sunday.

Sunday morning was time for Klein to catch up on sleep. In the afternoon, circumstances would determine if he went to the Divination Club. On Monday morning, he had just returned from Khoy University in the morning and had the Tarot Gathering in the afternoon. He also had to think about the issue of acting as a Seer. In other words, he had been busy the entire week, with no time to rest.

Thus, all Klein wanted to do was laze around, lying on his bed like a loser, not doing anything except daydreaming.

No, how can a boss of a cult be so worthless. If Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man caught wind of this, their impression of me would shatter… Klein buried his face into his blanket and motivated himself.

"I have the formula for the Clown potion, all I need to do now is fully digest the Seer potion… I have the formula to the Clown potion, all I need to do now is fully digest the Seer potion…"

He muttered to himself repeatedly and then propped himself up.

Klein took a bronze coin from his pocket and quickly divined if it was suitable for him to head to the club today and got an definitive response.

"Five, four, three, two, one!"

After the countdown, he forced himself to stand up straight and walked over to the clothes rack before picking out his suit and hat.

†

In the meeting room of the Divination Club on Howes Street.

Klein sat down in a shaded corner and sipped on his Sibe black tea as he read the Tingen City Honest Paper. There weren't many members around him, just six or seven.

Just as he was laughing at the grammatical mistake used in a job advertisement, he saw a monocled Glacis walk in with a silk top hat in his hand. There was a blue-dressed lady in her thirties beside him.

The lady had curved eyebrows and large yet dull eyes. In her left hand, she was carrying an Intis hat decorated with the feathers of a black swan.

That hat is ridiculous. Wouldn't her neck be sore wearing that? Klein noted to himself. He looked over and massaged his glabella, as if alleviating his fatigue.

Through his Spirit Vision, he noticed that Glacis and the lady were both healthy, but were anxious, angry, and flustered.

"Good afternoon, Glacis. That Mr. Lanevus wasn't a trustworthy fellow, was he?" Klein asked with a smile, remaining seated.

Glacis had asked him for a divination about investing in Lanevus's steel company. Glacis had obtained a negative suggestion.

But noticing his indecisiveness, Klein believed that he had taken the risk anyway. Klein hoped the man hadn't invested everything he had. Thus, Klein immediately made the association and judgment when he saw the colors of his emotions.

Glacis froze for a moment, then let out a bitter smile.

"I truly regret not listening to the suggestion you divined for me. Heh, this is the second time I'm saying something like that, let's hope, no—I believe that there will not be a third time."

He turned his head and looked at the lady with some wrinkles.

"Madam Christina, look, Mr. Moretti had already guessed our motive for coming here without us even speaking. He is the most magical fortune-teller I have ever seen. I'm more than willing to describe him as a seer."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti. We have come here precisely because of Lanevus." Christina gave a simple bow, clearly anxious and flustered.

"Shall we head to Topaz?" Glacis was more collected. He pointed to the door of the meeting room with his chin.

Klein laughed as he got up.

"This is the job of a fortune-teller."

He followed the path to the empty Topaz room.

Glacis locked the wooden door and walked to his seat while sighing.

"Lanevus has gone missing. He gave the excuse of going to the Sivellaus County to oversee the excavation and left Tingen, never to return. We sent someone to look for him via steam locomotive and discovered that the large-scale steel mine he spoke of only existed on the map. Luckily for me, I recalled your advice and only invested a third of what I initially intended to invest. Otherwise, I would have lost my family and my life.”

Klein’s pupils were darker than usual when he looked at the two people in front of him. He asked, a little curious, “Before making such a major financial decision, wouldn’t you choose a representative and ascertain if whatever he said was true at the Hornacis mountain range in the Sivellaus County?”

Christina responded quickly, “Our representative was fooled, fooled by the people Lanevus employed, the place he rented, and the land that was fenced off.”

Klein didn’t question them any further. He maintained his attitude of a Seer and asked, “What do you wish to divine today?”

“We wish to see if this is salvageable or not,” Christina said as she looked at Glacis.

Klein took a piece of paper and a fountain pen.

“Then let us do an astrolabe divination. I’ll ask, and you’ll answer.”

Between the questions, Klein marked out the Thunderous constellation and the corresponding symbols of various situations before completing the astrolabe.

He used more elements in his astrolabe than an ordinary person would have. The method he was going to use to interpret the astrolabe was going to bring him closer to the truth.

“Madam, Sir, you are now at a crossroad. If you don’t restrain yourselves and succumb to your greed and anxiety, you will fall further into the abyss, never being able to free yourselves. But if you can be patient and wait persistently without being greedy, then there will be an opportunity of you seeing the sunlight…” Klein said, his tone unhurried.

“I understand.” Christina nodded. She thought for a moment before saying, “Mr. Moretti, can you divine Lanevus’s whereabouts?”

“No, I don’t think so. The information Lanevus left behind is most likely fake; even his name might not be real. How can I divine anything? Unless you can give me very specific details, or an item he carries with him all the time,” Klein replied truthfully.

Christina fell silent for a moment before pushing a one-soli note toward Klein.

“I have heard from Glacis that you are a true seer, who is respectful and fearful of fate and not greedy for money. You can think of the rest as tips that I am giving to the club.”

“Thank you for your confidence in me.”

She stood up and bade farewell before leaving quickly.

Not greedy for money… No, I am a materialistic man! Klein was regretting his actions of acting as a charlatan.

Seeing Christina leave, Glacis closed the door and asked, “Is there really no way?”

“I told you the way just now.” Klein smiled as he leaned back.

Glacis sighed. “Lanevus took off with over 10,000 pounds and his victims totaled over a hundred people. Luckily for me, I only lost 50 pounds. Those were my savings, and I have no debt. But Miss Christina invested 150 pounds. To her, this is not a sum that she can bear easily.”

“Have you called the police?” Klein suddenly felt anger towards the cheat after hearing the sum of 10,000 pounds.

One could be considered rich even in Backlund with money like that.

I don't know if the police would enlist the help of the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind for a simple case like this… Klein thought, a little distracted.

Glacis nodded and said, "We've already made a police report. The police are paying a lot of attention to this case. After much discussion, we're willing to take out a portion of the money we would get back as a reward. One can get 10 pounds as a reward if they manage to provide clues about Lanevus's whereabouts. If you can give a precise location and help the police catch Lanevus, you can get a reward of 100 pounds!"

10 pounds for a clue? 100 pounds for catching Lanevus? Klein's eyes nearly sparkled after he heard that. His breathing became heavy.

He happened to be worrying about how he was going to pay the detective in the future.

He could barely afford the second phase of the payment with the extra salary of three pounds he received this week, but if the private investigator managed to complete his mission within the next week, then he wouldn't have enough to pay off whatever he promised to pay. He would be lacking a few soli, provided that he wouldn't need to spend his savings elsewhere this week.

Perhaps the police will have some items belonging to Lanevus. But they won't be very useful if he's already left Tingen… Klein felt a mixture of excitement and disappointment.

In the next hour and a half, Klein got another two customers due to Angelica's recommendation. One was a divination for a one-year-old toddler. Klein immediately drew the corresponding birth astrolabe and explained it, much to the satisfaction of his customer.

The other was searching for an item. Klein used tarot reading, coupled with dream divination, to give him a general area. This made his customer very shocked, for he had never seen a fortune-teller that could give him such accurate information.

Perhaps I could obtain enough funds just by doing divinations for others. Klein, who had received some tips, put on his hat, held his cane, and walked toward the exit of the club.

At this moment, he saw Christina enter the club once again with a young girl wearing a sunhat beside her.

Christina saw Klein and immediately approached him. She asked softly, “Mr. Moretti, you said that you could try divining Lanevus’s whereabouts if there was something belonging to him?”

“That is correct.” Klein nodded.

Christina heaved a sigh of relief and asked in a serious tone, “Then is his child something that belongs to him?”

Huh? Klein was momentarily a little lost.

Chapter 116 - Lanevus's Child

◆ ◆ ◆

Christina didn’t notice the seer’s blank look. She took a peek at Angelica over at the reception desk, lowered her voice, and said, “I mean Lanevus’s child.”

She extended her hand to point at the young lady with the sunhat and said, “This is my niece, Megose. Her mother is my elder sister. I’m very sorry and regretful that I thought Lanevus was an outstanding young man back then, and I introduced Megose to Lanevus, who was single. Then they became lovers.

“Megose’s parents were happy with Lanevus at first too. They planned to pour all their savings into the steel company after they got engaged. Luckily, before that happened, Lanevus ran away. Their family didn’t encounter any life-threatening losses. Unfortunately, my sister and brother-in-law have to explain to their relatives and friends why the engagement ceremony will be canceled, and they have to worry about the child that Megose is bearing.

“We believe in the God of Steam and Machinery; we are not believers of Lord of Storms. We don’t believe in chastity before marriage. We don’t blame Megose, and even pity her. However, the existence of the child does make things difficult, especially since he has such a father.”

He took advantage of people both financially and sexually… Klein looked towards Megose who was standing quietly next to her. He then realized that the lady was quite a beauty.

She had a bright forehead, long blond hair, and a pair of big eyes just like Christina's. She looked depressed yet calm, and her lips were tightly pursed together.

What an infuriating swindler, and he even got away successfully… Klein cursed at Lanevus and said after some thought, "If it was a child that is already born, I do have a way to divine Lanevus's whereabouts using the child as an aid. But unfortunately, this would require us to wait a few months. Yes, this might be a reflection of the divination result earlier. Be patient and wait persistent without being greedy, then there will be an opportunity of seeing the sunlight."

"A few months…" Christina mumbled to herself as she shook her head. "No, after such a long period of time, even if we find Lanevus, we wouldn't be able to get back our money…"

She looked sideways at Megose. Her voice lowered unconsciously as she asked, "Do you have anything that Lanevus carried around before?"

"No," Megose answered clearly yet gently. "Would the ring he gave me count?"

"It must be something that he carried for a very long time." Klein shook his head.

Christina remained silent for a while and looked at Megose when she said, "You have to make a decision. I think keeping this child would make your future tough and thorny. Are you going to tell him that his father was a swindler and took away many people's money, including his mother's?

"Time to head to the clinic, to the hospital. Plus, this could help us to find Lanevus, to get what we lost."

Hey, isn't such divination a little hardcore? It was not Klein's place to involve himself in the family matters of others. So, he could only wait patiently by the side as he lampooned inwardly from time to time.

Megose lowered her head and looked down. She didn't speak for quite a while.

Then, she touched her stomach and revealed a gentle smile.

“He is different from his father. He will be a considerate and likable child.

“He will kick me lightly every day, telling me his mood. He will even hum a song, whistle and use music to help me sleep…”

Klein heard and suddenly felt something amiss.

The former part of what Megose said seemed to be normal, but the latter part was like the ravings of a madwoman.

Did she have a mental problem due to the incident? Klein raised his right hand to his glabella. He pretended to massage it to ease his weariness.

Just then, Megose suddenly turned around and walked towards the door, leaving only one sentence.

“Maybe his father will come back in secret after he is born, keeping a part of the money for his child…”

Klein never expected she would respond like that, and he was momentarily taken aback that he forgot to activate his Spirit Vision. Then, he watched helplessly as Megose left the club and walked down the stairs.

Christina let out a sigh and said, “Sorry, Mr. Moretti. Sorry to bother you, we will look for one of Lanevus’s personal items that he carried with him all the time.”

Klein nodded indiscernibly. He watched her walk downstairs and sighed as he shook his head.

†

The next morning, Klein entered Blackthorn Security Company, greeted Rozanne, and asked, “Where’s today’s newspaper?”

The sweet brown-haired girl Rozanne sized him up and said, puzzled, “Klein, you’re so weird.”

“Why?” Klein asked in reply, smiling.

Rozanne rolled her eyes and said, “You always read the newspapers during noon break because you have mysticism lessons in the morning. Old Neil is already waiting for you in the armory!”

“I found out earlier that there would be a case offering a reward, so I want to read the newspaper to memorize the criminal’s appearance. Perhaps I might one day come across the person?” Klein explained with a smile.

“Is that so?” Rozanne picked up the day’s newspapers and started flipping through them out of curiosity. “Wanted… Lanevus, right?”

Klein immediately answered, “Yes.”

“…Wicked swindler! He stole about ten thousand pounds!” Rozanne read carefully for nearly twenty seconds before cursing suddenly in rage.

Klein shared the same feeling.

“It’s really ridiculous! Even I want to apply to take over the case!”

Rozanne continued to read and shook her head regretfully.

“The case doesn’t seem to involve supernatural factors. Even if it did, it would be passed to Mandated Punishers under the Lord of Storms.”

Klein didn’t quite understand what Rozanne meant, but after he took the newspaper and read it, he sighed.

“Yeah, there were so many people cheated. There must be believers from all three major churches, and Lanevus's steelwork company was said to be located in the South."

If a case was related to supernatural factors and involved only the believer of one God, it would be passed to the corresponding team. However, if it involved believers of the Evernight Goddess, Lord of Storms, and the God of Steam and Machinery, it would be assigned based on jurisdiction area. The Nighthawks controlled the Golden Indus Borough, the North Borough, and the West Borough. The Mandated Punishers controlled the East Borough, South Borough, and the port, while the Machinery Hivemind troop was responsible for the university and suburb areas.

As he flipped through the newspapers, Klein memorized Lanevus's appearance,

He had a plump forehead, black hair, brown eyes, and a pair of spectacles with almost round lenses. He smirked faintly, looking as though he was mocking everyone.

Besides that pair of spectacles, Lanevus didn't seem to have any obvious traits, and looked really ordinary.

He chatted with Rozanne casually then passed through the partition, in preparation to head underground.

Then, he saw the pale and cold Corpse Collector Frye and the white-haired black-eyed author Seeka Tron exiting the recreation room and turning towards him.

After a simple greeting, Klein watched his two teammates leave and discovered Dunn Smith in a black trench coat standing by the side of the door he opened.

"There's a case?" Klein asked curiously.

At that time of day, there wouldn't be two Nighthawks heading out together for no reason.

Dunn looked over with his gray eyes. He nodded and smiled.

“There seems to be a paranormal incident in West Borough. I’ve sent Seeka and Frye to check on it, but you don’t have to worry about that. Until you master combat techniques, I don’t intend to send you on any missions. I have to take responsibility for my team members.”

Captain, you are such a nice person. Besides the receding hairline and bad memory, you are flawless… Klein complimented inwardly. He asked for confirmation, “In other words, I only need to attend mysticism classes and combat training. I don’t have to contribute anything, and I can still get my pay?”

“This is only temporary,” Dunn confirmed.

I only need to ‘attend classes’ and ‘work out’, and I’ll get an ample paycheck. It’s great just thinking about it… Klein thought happily.

I hope there are no more coincidences! He prayed in silence.

†

The days passed by peacefully until Friday. Klein completed his combat training and took a carriage back to Besik Street.

Outside Henry’s Private Detective Company, he looked to the left and to the right. Confirmed that no one was watching him, he put on the gauze mask, lifted up the collar of his trench coat, and quickly entered the stairway.

Knocking on the door, Klein saw the middle-aged brawny man, Detective Henry, again.

“Good afternoon, sir. One of the cases that you entrusted us with is done.” The deep blue-eyed Detective Henry spoke with a hoarse voice from drinking and smoking.

Klein intentionally lowered his voice and said, “Is it the information of the man that appeared at the Evil Dragon Bar?"

The man that bought the Spectator potion's supplementary ingredients…

"Yes." Henry waved his smoking pipe.

Then, he didn't say anything but look at Klein with a smile.

Klein understood what the man meant, and he took out four one-pound notes and handed it over.

"This is the second payment."

He paused and added, "Write me a receipt."

His private stash of money had been reduced to less than one pound…

"No problem." Henry coughed. He checked the anti-counterfeiting marks on the notes as he instructed his staff to bring over pen and paper.

Then, he beckoned to Klein for him to have a seat while he quickly wrote a receipt and stamped a seal on the bottom.

After completing everything, Henry took a puff at his pipe and said, "According to your description, my assistant and I waited at the Evil Dragon Bar for three days before finally meeting that man.

"He's quite an alert gentleman, and is good at observation. Thankfully, we're experienced…

"His name is Daxter Guderian, a doctor of the Greenhill Mental Asylum."

Chapter 117 - Contact

* * *

Daxter Guderian, a doctor of the Greenhill Mental Asylum…

Klein silently repeated what the detective had said and started to think about the ways he could interact with this doctor whom he suspected to be a Spectator from the Psychology Alchemists.

He didn't want to take too much of a risk on this matter. He didn't want the Nighthawks to discover that he was problematic. He didn't want to lose the life he had now over a mere exchange of information and resources.

Furthermore, this person was most probably a Spectator. Anyone who hadn't undergone special training wouldn't be able to hide their motives and thoughts from a person like that.

I'll get a proxy, making me appear a little more mysterious? No, the more people involved, the easier it is for there to be problems… Yes… perhaps I can hide the truth within the truth. I'll let that doctor know of my thoughts and feelings through my expression and body language, but not the whole truth…

As Detective Henry described Daxter Guderian, Klein thought about what methods he could use to minimize risk without affecting the results he wanted.

Slowly, he found inspiration in a detective film he had once seen.

Well, I can try that, but I'll have to practice it repeatedly… Klein nodded inwardly before directing his full concentration on what Detective Henry had to say.

Cough… Henry cleared his throat and said, “We are still working on the request involving the red chimney. You should know that there are many buildings in Tingen that have similar characteristics. Of course, it would be much easier if you could provide us with more clues.”

Klein laughed dryly.

“I wouldn’t have had to make the request if I had more clues.”

Honestly, this long investigation had depressed him, for the person behind the scenes had obviously noticed Klein’s divinations and had more than enough time to find another hideout.

Thus, all he could do was hope that he could find relevant clues from the information of the tenants.

And that alone cost seven pounds… Just the thought of it made him feel the pinch… Klein grabbed his cane and left after Detective Henry finished his report.

†

At twenty minutes to nine on a Saturday morning, in an office of the Greenhill Mental Asylum.

Daxter Guderian, who was wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, removed his jacket and hat and hung them on the clothes rack.

He had just picked up his tin of coffee powder when he heard knocking on the door.

“Please come in,” Daxter said casually.

The half-closed door opened, and a young man wearing a black trench coat entered.

Daxter didn't recognize the person that walked in, so he asked, puzzled, "Good morning, you are?"

Klein closed the door, took off his hat, and pressed it against his chest before bowing.

"Good morning, Doctor Daxter, please forgive me for taking the liberty to visit without any warning. I am Probationary Inspector Klein Moretti of the Awwa Police Department. These are my identification documents and badge."

"Inspector?" Daxter muttered softly as he received Klein's identification documents and badge.

"Special Operations Department…" He looked up slowly, his eyes calm, as if he was scrutinizing something.

Short black hair, pupils slightly darker than brown, a scholarly aura, no ill intent at the moment…

Daxter returned the items and pointed to the chair on the other side of the table.

"Please have a seat, Officer. How might I assist you?"

Klein sat down and placed his cane to the side. He slowly put away his documents and badge, then smiled.

"Please allow me to reintroduce myself.

"I am also a member of Tingen City's Nighthawks team, specializing in dealing with incidents involving the supernatural.

"Good morning, Mr. Spectator."

Before he finished his sentence, he wasn't surprised to see Daxter's pupils constrict. Daxter retracted his hand, looking like he was about to escape.

"Officer, I don't understand what you mean." Daxter forced out a few words, almost unable to maintain his form. "I don't like jokes like this. Perhaps I should call security."

Klein slowly took out his revolver from his underarm holster, his smile unchanging.

"Mr. Daxter, I know that you can see my confidence and that I do not have any ill intent. Heh heh, honestly speaking, I wasn't too sure myself, but your reaction gave me the answer I needed."

Every sentence I said just now is true… Klein added in his heart.

Daxter relaxed slightly, his gaze shooting toward the revolver. He asked, confused, "I find it hard to understand why you came looking for me… I don't think that I revealed anything…"

Klein laughed and replied, "It was just a coincidence, or perhaps fate wanted us to meet.

"We ran into each other once in the underground market at Evil Dragon Bar, but you didn't notice me back then.

"You were smart to purchase the supplementary ingredients for the potion first, but since I am familiar with that formula, you caught my attention."

Daxter suddenly exhaled, as if he just lost the motivation to defend himself.

"I see…

"I thought I was careful enough, to think that, to think that…"

After muttering to himself, he looked into Klein's eyes and said, "Officer, I know that you're not here to arrest me. What is your true motive for being here?"

With a relaxed expression, Klein said, "I am different from the other

Nighthawks. I don't believe that Beyonders not within our ranks are criminals in the making. This is not fair to those who adhere to the law."

Daxter changed his posture. He loosened up and said, "The world would be at peace if the other Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind acted like you."

"You know of other members from the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind?" Klein feigned surprise. "This is not something a person who became a Beyonder by mistake should know. There must be an organization behind you."

He leaned back and said with a smile, "Psychology Alchemists?"

He casually watched Daxter's expression contort as he said those words.

"I could see that you were anticipating my answer, yet I still missed the bait and fell into your linguistic trap…" Daxter said in frustration.

He started to notice that the Spectator state wasn't omnipotent. He could tell why the other party was here, but it didn't mean he understood the specifics.

Klein stroked the cylinder of his revolver and said, "Doctor, we need to have an honest conversation. That can start with me.

"I don't believe that Beyonders not under management are potential criminals, but I agree that every Beyonder must be registered and monitored. This is a precaution against the risk of Beyonders losing control. It's to avoid the occurrence of something even more dangerous.

"I won't disrupt your normal life, but I hope that there can be limited cooperation between us."

"Limited cooperation?" Daxter asked, as if thinking about something.

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“Yes, limited.

“For example, tell me about your condition regularly. You should know that it is possible to save someone who has not completely lost control yet, and the Nighthawks have considerable experience in this regard.

“Or, if you could give me clues of a Beyonder you know, or a Beyonder in your organization who is about to do something that can endanger the innocent.

“Or, if you would like to exchange something for items that you could make more use of. This is a perk I am giving you. You should know what perks mean.

“Also, you need not worry about being suddenly prosecuted by members of the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind one day. You can live your life in joy and stability.

“We will give you something you can use to prove your identity. You can use it when you have no other options left.”

Daxter listened on silently. It was a while before he said, “You want me to betray my organization?”

“No, not betray,” Klein said sincerely. “This is the protection of justice, morals, and kindness. You are stopping something evil, merciless, and bloody. Other than that, I wouldn’t ask you to betray the secrets of the organization you are in.”

Daxter thought for a moment, as if feeling better now that there was an excuse.

He was silent for a few seconds before he extended his right hand.

“Here’s to a successful cooperation.”

Klein shook his hand with his free hand and said, “A successful cooperation.”

He paused for a moment before chuckling.

“Doctor, can you now tell me if you are a member of the Psychology Alchemists?”

“Yes.” Daxter nodded.

Klein, who hadn’t deactivated his Spirit Vision since he entered, didn’t see any changes in the colors of his emotions. Thus he asked discreetly, “How did you join the Psychology Alchemists?”

Daxter looked into his eyes and said, “I discovered that there was a patient of this asylum who could see right through me when I was tending to him. His clear mind was nothing like a lunatic…

“His name is Hood Eugen.”

Klein committed the name to memory and chatted with Daxter a little longer, deciding on a secret way to communicate and meet up.

He didn’t exchange matters regarding potions, formulas, and rumors for the time being. At an appropriate moment, he bade farewell and put away his revolver before leaving Daxter’s office.

Daxter exhaled after he saw Klein’s back disappear from his field of vision. He slumped into his chair, feeling a little agonized and little relaxed.

†

36 Zouteland Street. Inside Blackthorn Security Company.

Seated behind his desk, Dunn swept the area with his gray eyes and asked, “What happened?”

Klein, who was late by about half an hour, organized his thoughts and said, “Captain, I found a Beyonder and confirmed that he is a member of the Psychology Alchemists.

“He’s an orthodox doctor and is willing to cooperate with us. I think it’s best to maintain the status quo. He could help us learn more about the current condition of the Association of Psychological Alchemy.”

After pausing for a few seconds, Klein added, “I want to develop him into an informant for the Nighthawks, or a hidden external member.”

The word ‘informant’ came from the Intis language. It was created by Emperor Roselle.

Dunn nodded slowly and said, “You handled the situation well, but it would be best to inform me when you face such a situation in the future.

“Give me that doctor’s information and a written account of the way you handled the situation. I will give him something he can use to prove his identity.

“Also, don’t speak of this to Leonard and the rest. Even though they are trustworthy teammates, the protocol clearly requires us to keep this close.

“You will be in charge of contacting that doctor in the future.”

Klein exhaled silently and replied with a smile, “Alright.”

Chapter 118 - August

◆ ◆ ◆

Time flew by and Tingen bade farewell to the end of summer. The temperature hovered between twenty-six and twenty-seven degrees Celsius.

Whoosh!

Klein stood up from the bathtub and took a stride forward, sending water droplets to the floor.

He stood there naked, looking down at his abs. He flexed and saw prominent muscle lines appear.

That was the result of his daily training. Besides, he appeared a lot more energetic.

And just today, his combat teacher, Gawain had started teaching him the basic footwork for punching and the techniques for delivering force.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein stepped on the floor barefooted in the bathroom, either sliding forward or retreating before dodging to the right and swinging his fist while he made a defensive gesture.

Phew. He stopped and let out a breath happily. He took the towel next to him and wiped himself down.

After getting in touch with Daxter Guderian, the doctor in the mental asylum, Klein seemed to escape from coincidences for two whole weeks. Without the constant barrage of supernatural incidents, his life became stable. He received his paycheck on time, researched mysticism in-depth, trained his marksmanship and fighting skills, developed new cooking recipes, slowly gathered decent utensils and decorations with Benson and Melissa, asked his teammates about supernatural cases in the past, divined for people who came to the club, and strictly followed the principles he figured out.

That made him more stable. If it wasn't for the late nights in which he still missed Earth, the red chimney that had yet to be uncovered, or the Misfortune Cloth Puppet's picture that still appeared in his dreams occasionally, he would've started getting used to his current life and think of it affectionately.

During that time, three Tarot Club Gatherings were convened, but Klein didn't receive any new pages of Roselle's diary. However, according to Justice's explanation, she had gotten to know two Beyonders and she was getting in touch with them consistently. When she got into their circle of acquaintances, it was likely that she could trade for more pages of Roselle's diary.

The Hanged Man also expressed that he had returned to land and was dealing with some matters. He would begin looking for more as soon as he had more free time.

Besides, Justice felt that the two Beyonders whom she knew were potential targets to join the Gathering. They both had decent identities as cover, with certain but different channels of information, as well as principles and unique characteristics. They were not the kind of people that would sell out a secret. The only problem was that they were only Sequence 9 Beyonders, which wasn't too suitable for a high-end secret organization like the Tarot Club.

High-end secret organization? Sounds more like a pyramid scheme… Klein only let out a heavy sigh to cover up the fact that he was at a loss for words to reply to Miss Justice's complacency. He could only agree to observe the two Beyonders further.

Of course, Justice wasn't the innocent and romantic maiden from before. She kept her guard up and never mentioned the names and traits of the two Beyonders. She was afraid that The Hanged Man would be able to identify her through that.

Miss Justice said that she clearly feels the signs of the potion digesting. She might need another three to four weeks until she completes her acting as a Spectator. My scheduled acquisition of the Telepathist formula has to be brought forward… Klein threw aside the towel that he used to dry himself and put on his clothes as he thought about the Tarot Club from the day before.

In the last twenty days, he had only met Daxter Guderian once. He had the idea of haste makes waste, so he merely chatted about the doctor's state and asked unimportant matters about the Psychology Alchemists.

Given the speed with which Justice was digesting the potion, he had no choice but to begin thinking about how to get the formula of Sequence 8 Telepathist from Daxter earlier.

Klein buttoned his shirt and took another dry towel to wrap around his head to absorb the water in his hair.

Compared to Justice, he was digesting the Seer potion even faster than expected. By this week, the sounds that he shouldn't hear and things that he shouldn't see had already vanished while engaging in Cogitation or Spirit Vision.

Flipping over the towel, Klein dried his hair again. He lifted his head to look at the door and muttered to himself, "The Seer principles that I've figured out are really efficient. Next week… I should be able to digest the potion entirely by next week. I have no idea where to get the single horn of a matured Hornacis gray mountain goat and a complete stalk of a human-faced rose required by the Clown formula… Maybe I could do as Lady Daly did and send in a special application? But that would definitely attract the attention of the higher-ups, and I want to develop at my own pace. The believer from the Aurora Order in the police department was found too, but I have yet to find out who this Mr. Z is…

"Henry said that he would complete the red chimney task before the end of this week. My private stash of money has returned to slightly more than seven pounds, so at least I don't have to worry about making the final payment…

"Some of the information on houses and tenants that he provided before didn't seem to have any abnormalities, but I have no time to investigate them one by one…

"Perhaps I could see which red chimney houses have gotten new tenants recently?

"Hmm, that's one way to look at it."

†

Sitting silently for another half a minute, he put on his black trousers, bow tie, and underarm holster. He then picked up his sweaty knight training suit from the floor and tossed it into the laundry basket. He opened the door and exited the bathroom. He had just finished his Wednesday afternoon combat training, and he was still at his teacher Gawain's place.

"Hello, Mr. Moretti." Gawain's maidservant happened to pass by, and she quickly bowed.

Klein nodded slightly and pointed at the messy bathroom.

"Could you clean this up, please?"

"Of course, sir. The clothes will be taken care of by the laundry maid. She'll come over at six." The maidservant held her head low when she answered.

Laundry maids had no accommodation or food included, so they weren't hired by only one household. They were normally contracted to handle the laundry from several households. Either they rushed around daily, washing one household's clothes before going to the next, or they would gather all the clothes from different households and take care of it all at the same time, before sending it all back. Only then could they barely make a living.

Klein didn't say much but returned to the living room to bid farewell to the owner who was sitting on the rocking chair.

He saw Gawain nodding lethargically, a light brown blanket covering his legs and the Awwa Evening News in his hands.

Klein knew for a fact that the gentleman bathing in the setting sun's glow was in his early fifties, but his listlessness made him seem like he was already in his eighties.

During combat training, Gawain maintained silence and only give pointers when he needed to. He wasn't one for casual chatting. Klein was so exhausted from the daily training that he had no intention of trying to engage in conversation. Thus, their relationship remained distant.

From his demonstrations, Teacher Gawain's strength is still quite terrifying, and his steps are swift too. I reckon it wouldn't be a problem for him to fight three of me… He has the pay from the police station, and he also bought a plot of land in a village out in the Tingen suburbs that provides a fixed rental… He hires a chef, a maidservant, and a laundry maiden… In the Foodaholic Empire on Earth, a man in his fifties with such wealth would have been traveling the world…

Klein looked away from Gawain and shook his head. Then, he went to the clothes rack to take down his top hat and black trench coat.

After he tidied himself up, he took his cane and exited the house. He walked along the weed-covered stone path towards the gates.

Just then, he saw that there was a two-wheeled carriage stopped outside the metal fence, and there was a man with a familiar face standing next to it.

“Leonard?” Klein muttered, looking suspiciously towards his messy-haired Nighthawks teammate.

Leonard was dressed in a white shirt, black trousers, and buttonless leather boots as he twirled his hat in his hands. When he saw Klein come out from the house, he smiled and asked, “Are you pleasantly surprised?”

Only surprise, without any joy… Klein ignored Leonard’s inappropriate behavior and looked into the fake poet’s green eyes.

“What happened?”

Leonard put on his hat and said, “Captain wants you to work with me and Frye. Let’s talk about it on the way.”

“Alright.” Klein followed him into the carriage.

As the scene outside of the carriage flew past, Leonard took up the document bag by his side and threw it at Klein.

Klein caught it steadily and took out a document. He then started reading carefully.

“August 11th, 11pm, at a workhouse in West Borough, the bankrupt Salus attempted arson to cause a tragedy. But in the end, he only managed to burn himself to death…”

“August 11th, 10pm, harbor worker, Zid jumped into the Tussock River and ended his poverty-stricken life…”

“August 11th, 8pm, in Iron Cross Street’s Lower Street, Mrs. Lauwis who earned a living by selling matchboxes died of a sudden disease…”

†

Klein was puzzled when he read the first two incidents. He found the deaths very ordinary and common. Not only should it have been beneath the attention of the Nighthawks, even the police force would avoid wasting resources looking into such obvious causes of death.

However, when he read down the list, he slowly creased his eyebrows.

After two pages, he suddenly lifted his head and looked at Leonard.

“Isn’t this too many?”

When the number of ordinary deaths reached a staggering amount, it was difficult to call it normal.

For once, Leonard nodded seriously and said, “The number of death incidents within the past two weeks are five times the normal rate.

“When the Tingen Police headquarters tabulated the data, they realized the problem and quickly passed it over to us, as well as the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind.

“Although these death incidents appeared normal during initial investigations, Captain believes we should investigate them once more. It might require the help of divination or ritualistic magic.”

Klein said with a look of enlightenment, “I understand.”

Leonard snapped his fingers and said, “You, me, and Frye are in a team. He’s waiting for us at Iron Cross Street’s Lower Street. Seeka, Royale, and Old Neil are in another team, investigating corresponding incidents in the North Borough. Captain is staying in the security company to respond to any emergencies.”

“Okay.” Klein nodded solemnly and suddenly thought of something. He quickly asked, “Can I drop by my place and leave a note?”

He had to tell his brother and sister that he couldn’t dine at home that night because something has cropped up.

Leonard laughed.

“No problem, it’s on the way.”

With that, Klein calmed down and read over the death incidents again, intending to find a link among the various names, times, and causes of death.

Then, he suddenly realized something.

Is this my first group mission after becoming a Nighthawk?

Chapter 119 - The True Lower Street

◆

Tingen City, 2 Daffodil Street.

Klein, who had left a note, locked the door and walked briskly towards Leonard Mitchell who was waiting by the side of the road.

Leonard's short black hair had grown a little over the month, and the lack of any grooming made it look messy.

Despite that, his messy hair still complimented his decent looks, emerald-colored eyes, and poetic vibes. It exuded a different sense of beauty.

Indeed, any hairstyle depends on the face… Klein lampooned inwardly. He pointed in the direction of Iron Cross Street and asked, "Is Frye waiting for us there?"

"Yes." Leonard smoothed his untucked shirt and said casually, "Did you notice any clues when you were looking at the documents?"

Klein held his cane in his left hand as he walked along the side of the road and said, "No, I cannot find anything common in their times, locations, or causes of death. You should know that any rituals involving evil gods or devils must be conducted within a certain time frame or using a special method."

Leonard touched the custom-made revolver hidden underneath his shirt, by his waist and chuckled.

"That isn't an absolute rule. In my experience, some evil gods or devils are easily satisfied, as long as they have a particular interest in what is being asked of them.

“Also, a good number of the deaths seem normal. We have to omit them before we can arrive at the real answer.”

Klein glanced at him and said, “That’s why the Captain asked us to investigate once more. To eliminate the normal incidents.”

“Leonard, your tone and description tell me that you have considerable experience in this area, but you have only been a member of the Nighthawks for four years, with an average of two supernatural incidents a month. Furthermore, a large number of those were simple and easy to solve.”

He always felt that Leonard Mitchell was a little weird and mysterious. Not only was he always suspicious of him, believing that there was something about him. In addition, his demeanor also changed from time to time, sometimes quiet, sometimes arrogant, sometimes flippant, sometimes staid.

“Could it be that you’ve also had a fortuitous encounter? An encounter that makes you view yourself as a star in a play?” Klein made a rough deduction based on all the movies, novels, and dramas he had watched in the past.

Upon hearing this question, Leonard laughed and said, “That’s because you’re not a full-fledged Nighthawk yet. You’re still in the training phase.

“The Holy Cathedral compiles a record of all supernatural encounters experienced by cathedrals of the different dioceses and hands it down to its members once every six months.

“Aside from your mysticism lessons, you can submit an application to the Captain and request to enter Chanis Gate to read these records.”

Klein nodded in enlightenment.

“The Captain has never mentioned this to me.”

Klein hadn’t had the opportunity to enter Chanis Gate up to this point.

Leonard chuckled and said, “I thought that you were already used to the Captain’s style. To think that you are still naively waiting for him to remind you…”

Upon saying that, he added meaningfully, “We must be cautious of the Captain if there ever comes a day when he remembers everything.”

Would that mean a loss of control? Klein nodded, his expression serious. He then asked, “Is the forgetfulness unique to the Captain? I had thought that it was a problem brought about by the Sleepless Sequence.”

Burning the midnight oil usually leads to memory loss…

“More accurately, it’s a symptom unique to a Nightmare. With dreams and reality intertwined, it’s often hard for a person to differentiate between what is real and what isn’t. They need to remember what isn’t part of reality…” Leonard wanted to elaborate further, but they had already arrived at Iron Cross Street and found Corpse Collector Frye waiting for them at the public carriage station.

Frye was wearing a round black hat and a trench coat of a similar color with a leather briefcase in his hand. He was so pale that it made Klein suspect if he would soon collapse at anytime. His icy aura made everyone else waiting for the carriage keep their distance from him.

After nodding to each other, the three grouped up silently and walked past the Smyrin Bakery before turning onto the Lower Street of Iron Cross Street.

They were immediately faced with a din. Merchants selling clam soup, seared fish, ginger beer, and fruits were shouting hysterically for attention, causing the pedestrians to involuntarily slow down.

It was already a little past five. People were returning to Iron Cross Street, and the sides of the streets were becoming crowded. Some children were mixed in the crowd, coldly watching everything, placing their attention on the pockets of the pedestrians.

Klein frequently came here for cheap cooked food and was familiar with the streets, especially since he had lived in a nearby apartment in the past. He reminded the group, “Be careful of thieves.”

Leonard smiled. “You need not mind them.”

He pulled on his shirt and adjusted the holster of his gun, revealing his revolver.

Suddenly, all the gazes fixed on them shifted away. The pedestrians around them instinctively made way.

Klein froze for a moment, then caught up to Leonard and Frye with large steps. He lowered his head, trying hard to avoid being noticed by anyone he knew.

Benson and Melissa still had dealings with the neighbors here. After all, they hadn’t moved too far away.

The three made their way past the area that was had many peddlers and turned into the true Lower Street of Iron Cross Street.

The pedestrians here were all dressed in old, ragged clothes. They were cautious of strangers wearing bright and beautiful clothes; yet, there was also greed in their eyes, like vultures eyeing a meal, waiting to strike at any time. But Leonard’s revolver prevented any accidents from happening.

“Let’s first investigate the death from yesterday. We’ll begin with Mrs. Lauwis, a lady who glued matchboxes together for a living.” Leonard flipped his notes and pointed to a place not far away, “First floor, No. 134...”

As the three of them walked forward, children who were playing in the streets and dressed in shabby clothes quickly hid by the corner of the road. They observed them with eyes full of curiosity and fear.

“Look at their arms and legs, thin as matchsticks.” Leonard sighed. He entered building No. 134 first.

Air that was a mixture of numerous scents entered Klein’s nostrils. He could faintly detect the stench of urine, sweat, and mold, as well as the smell of burning coal.

Klein couldn’t help but pinch his nose. He then saw Bitsch Mountbatten who had been waiting there for them.

Officer Mountbatten had a brownish-yellow mustache and was envious of Leonard’s rank of inspector.

“Sir, I have already asked Lauwis to wait in his room,” Bitsch Mountbatten said with his unique, shrill voice.

He clearly didn’t recognize Klein, who now looked more energized and proper. All he cared about was sucking up to the three officers in front of him as he led them to the Lauwis family on the first floor.

It was a simple apartment. There was a bunk bed laid upright inside the room and a desk filled with glue and hard paper on the right side. The corner of the room was piled full of frames for matchboxes, while an old cabinet sat on the left, acting as a storage space for both clothes and cutlery.

A stove, toilet, and a small amount of coal and timber occupied the two sides of the door, while the center of the room was occupied by two dirty mattresses. A man was sleeping under a torn blanket, leaving no space for anyone to walk.

A lady lay on the lower level of the bunk bed, her skin ice cold. It was clear that she had lost all signs of life.

Beside the corpse sat a man in his thirties. He had oily hair, looked dispirited, and his eyes had lost their luster.

“Lauwis, these three officers are here to examine the body and ask you questions,” Bitsch Mountbatten shouted, without any regard for the sleeping man.

The dispirited man looked up weakly and asked in surprise, “Didn’t someone already examine the corpse and question me?”

He was dressed in a grayish-blue worker’s uniform which had visible signs of being mended multiple times.

“Answer when I tell you to! Why do you have so many questions?” Bitsch Mountbatten berated the man, then turned to Leonard, Klein, and Frye. “Officers, this is Lauwis. The person on the bed is his wife, who is also the deceased. According to our preliminary analysis, she died from a sudden illness.”

Klein and the rest tiptoed to the edge of the bed.

The high-nosed, thin-lipped Frye did not say anything with his cold demeanor. Instead, he patted Lauwis gently, signaling for the man to make way so that he could examine the body.

Klein looked at the sleeping man and asked, “This is?”

“M-my tenant.” Lauwis rubbed his forehead as he said, “The rent for this room is three soli ten pence a week. I’m only a worker at the harbor, and my wife made two and a quarter pence per crate of glued matchboxes. Each crate h-has, up to 130 boxes. We, we also have a child. We can only rent the rest of the space to someone else. We only charge a soli a week for the mattress…”

“I have a tenant who’s helping out at the theater, and he’s not back before 10 at night. He sold his rights to the mattress in the daytime to t-this man. He’s the person who watches over the gate of the theater at night, so he only pays six pence every week…”

Hearing the other party stammer as he explained, Klein couldn't help but look at the crate in the corner of the room.

One crate had 130 matchboxes and only earned them 2.25 pence, about the cost of two pounds of black bread… How many crates could she manage a day?[1]

Leonard surveyed the surroundings and asked, "Was your wife acting abnormally prior to her death?"

Lauwis, who had been asked similar questions, pointed to the left side of his left chest and said, "From last week, well—perhaps the week before, she said that she felt stuffy in this area and couldn't catch her breath."

The precursor to a heart condition? A normal death? Klein interrupted, "Did you see how she died?"

Lauwis recalled, "She stopped working after sunset. Candles and gas are more expensive than matchboxes… She said that she was very tired and asked me to talk to the kids and let her rest. When I saw her again, she had a-already stopped breathing."

Lauwis could no longer hide his grief and pain when he said that.

Klein and Leonard asked several questions, but could not find anything unnatural about the death.

After they looked at each other, Leonard said, "Mr. Lauwis, please wait outside for a few minutes. We are going to conduct a thorough examination of the corpse. I don't think that you'll want to see that."

"Alright." Lauwis stood up anxiously.

Bitsch Mountbatten walked toward the mattress and kicked the tenant, violently chasing him out of the apartment. He then closed the door and guarded the room from the outside.

“So?” Leonard looked at Frye.

“She died of a heart attack,” Frye said with certainty, retracting his hands.

Klein thought for a moment before taking out a half-penny, intending to do a quick judgment.

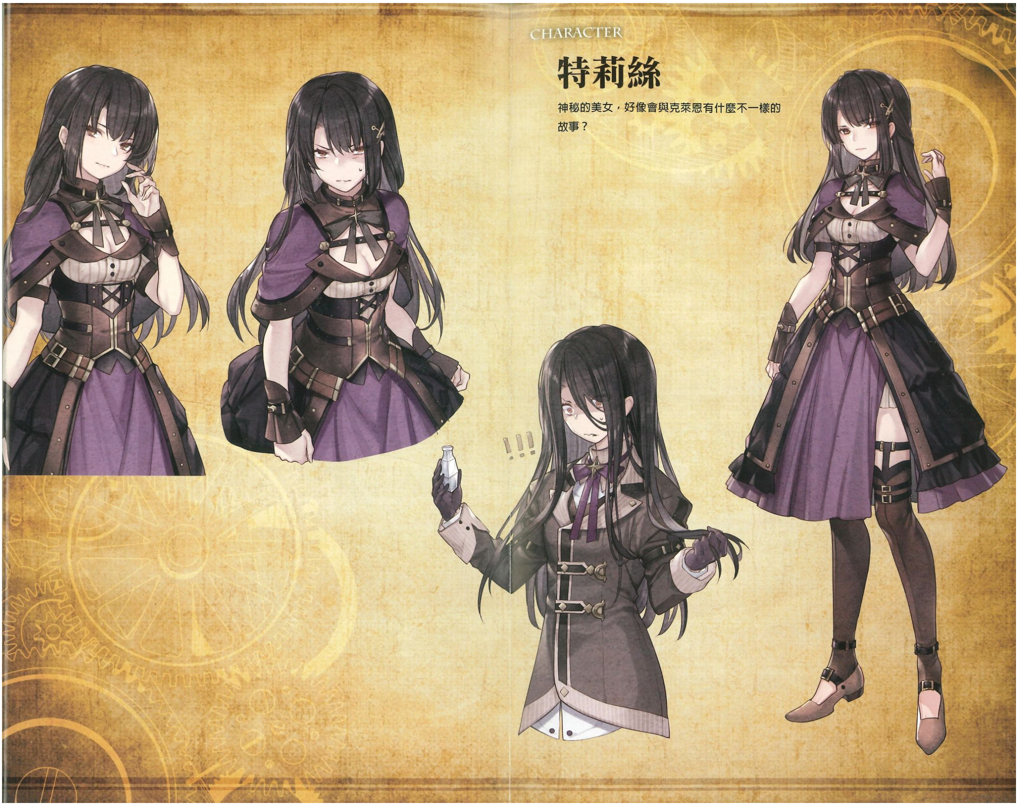
“Mrs. Lauwis’s heart attack was due to supernatural causes?” No, that is too narrow, the answer might be misleading… Hmm, “There are supernatural factors influencing Mrs Lauwis’s death.” I’ll use that! He quickly decided on a statement.

As he recited the statement, Klein made his way to the side of Mrs Lauwis’s corpse. His eyes turned darker as he tossed the coin.

The sound of the coin reverberated around the room as it fell, straight into Klein’s palm.

This time, the portrait of the king was facing up.

This meant that there were supernatural factors influencing Mrs. Lauwis’s death!


CHARACTER
特莉絲
神秘的美女，好像會與克萊恩有什麼不一樣的故事？
!!!

Trissy *A mysterious beauty. It seems she will have a different kind of story with Klein?*

During the Victorian era, a crate is 144 matchboxes. The labor was worth 2.25 pence. A woman who works the entire day can do at most 7 crates.

Chapter 120 - Workhouse

◆

“There is the presence of supernatural factors…” Klein’s eyes returned to normal, and he looked at Leonard and Frye.

Leonard suddenly chuckled.

“Very professional, and deserving of the title of Seer.”

Are you trying to hint at something… Klein muttered in his head.

Frye opened his suitcase and took out a silver knife and other tools. He paused and asked, “The corpse tells me that she really died of a sudden heart attack. Do you have any way to divine a more detailed answer?”

Klein nodded seriously and said, “I can attempt to combine a mediumship ritual and a dream divination. Hopefully, I’ll be able to obtain something from Mrs. Lauwis’s remaining spirituality.”

Frye maintained his cold and reserved state. He took two steps back and said, “Give it a try.”

He turned his head sideways and looked at Klein. He suddenly sighed without much fluctuation in his tone. “You’re getting more and more used to this kind of situation.”

It’s not like I wanted it… Klein had an urge to cry. He then took out the bottles of extracts, essential oils, and herbal powder. Then, he quickly set up the mediumship ritual.

He chanted the honored titles of the Evernight Goddess in the middle of the spirituality wall and recited his prayers in Hermes.

Soon, wind spun around him and the light grew dimmer.

Klein’s eyes turned entirely black, and he repeated the divination statement, “The cause of Mrs. Lauwis’s death.

“The cause of Mrs. Lauwis’s death.”

†

He entered the dreamland whilst standing and ‘saw’ a translucent spirit lingering around the corpse.

Then, he extended his illusory right hand to touch Mrs. Lauwis’s remaining spirituality.

In an instance, light burst out in front of him as scenes flashed past, one after another.

There was a skinny and sallow lady dressed in ragged clothes, busily making matchboxes.

She suddenly paused and held her chest.

She was speaking to her two children.

Her body wavered as she gasped for air.

She was buying black bread when someone suddenly patted her.

She was having the symptoms of a heart attack again and again.

She was feeling weary and got into bed, but she never woke up ever again.

Klein observed every single detail, intending to look for a trace of the supernatural factor. But when everything ended, he still hadn’t gained any clues. As the blurriness shattered, Klein left the dreamland and returned to reality.

He dispelled the wall of spirituality and said to the waiting Frye and amused Leonard,

“There were no direct symptoms. Most of the scenes revealed that Mrs. Lauwis had a heart ailment a long time ago. The only scene that was different was when Mrs. Lauwis was patted on the back by someone. The hand was fair and slender, apparently a woman’s.”

“For such a family, they wouldn’t go to a doctor unless they’re very, very sick. Even if they were to queue at a free charity hospital, time is not something they can afford to lose. A day without work might mean no food on the table the next day.” Leonard sighed emotionally like a poet.

Frye looked at the corpse on the bed and sighed lightly.

Before Klein spoke, Leonard quickly got out of his pensive state and said thoughtfully, “Are you implying that the supernatural factor came into play when Mrs. Lauwis was patted? It came from the slender hand of a lady or madam?”

Klein nodded and replied, “Yes, but this is merely my interpretation. Divination is always unclear.”

The conversation ended. He and Leonard stepped back to the other side of the bed and allowed Frye to take out his tools from his suitcase without any disturbance, so he could do a further examination.

After Frye was done, they waited as he packed up his tools. After cleaning up and covering the corpse, he turned around and said, “Her death was caused by a natural heart disease. There’s no doubt about it.”

Upon hearing the conclusion, Leonard paced back and forth. He even walked to the side of the door, paused for quite a while before saying, “That’s it for now. Let’s head over to the workhouse in West Borough. We’ll see if we can find other clues. Maybe we can link the two incidents together."

"Okay, we can only hope," Klein agreed, still filled with puzzlement.

Frye picked up his suitcase and while skipping and walking, he carefully went across the two floor mattresses without stepping on anyone's blanket.

Leonard opened the door and walked out of the room first. He told Lauwis and the tenant, "You can return home now."

Klein thought for a moment before adding, "Don't be in a hurry to bury the body. Wait for another day, as there might be one more thorough examination."

"A-alright, Officer." Lauwis bowed lightly and replied in a hurry. Then, feeling numbed and lost, he said, "A-actually, I… I don't have the money to bury her just yet. I have to save for another few days, just a few more days. Luckily, the weather is turning cold."

Klein was shocked and asked, "You plan on letting the corpse remain in the room for a few days?"

Lauwis forced a smile and replied, "Yea, thankfully, the weather became colder recently. I can move the body onto the table at night. When we eat, I can carry her to the bed…"

Before he finished what he had to say, Frye suddenly interrupted, "I've left you money for the burial next to your wife."

After saying those words in absolute calmness, he exited the apartment directly, unbothered by Lauwis's shocked expression and gratitude that followed.

Klein followed closely and thought of a question.

If the weather was still as hot as June or July, how would Lauwis deal with his wife's corpse?

Pick a very dark night with strong winds, throw the corpse into the Tussock River or the Khoy River? Or just dig a hole and bury her?

Klein knew that the law requiring a cemetery burial had been established more than a thousand years ago, at the end of the previous Epoch. The seven major churches and imperial households from each country had approved the law in order to cut down on the number of water ghosts, zombies, and restless wraiths.

Each country provided free land, while each church was in charge of keeping watch and patrolling. They only charged minimum fees for cremation and burial in order to pay for the necessary labor force.

But even so, the truly poor still couldn't afford it.

After leaving 134 Iron Cross Street at Lower Street, the three Nighthawks and Bitsch Mountbatten parted ways. Silently, they took a turn to the nearby workhouse in West Borough.

As they got closer, Klein saw a long queue. It was just like when the people from the Foodaholic Empire on earth queued for a shop that gone viral on the Internet. The place was packed.

"There's about a hundred, no, closer to two hundred," he muttered in surprised. He saw the people queuing were in tattered clothes with numb expressions. They only occasionally looked towards the door of the workhouse impatiently.

Frye slowed down and said coldly, "There is a limit to the number of homeless poor each workhouse will accept daily. They can only take them in based on the queue order. Of course, the workhouse will examine and refuse entry to those who fail to meet the criteria."

"The economic recession in the recent months has played a part too…" Leonard sighed.

"Those who don't manage to queue will have to figure out a way of their own?" Klein asked subconsciously.

"They can also try their luck in the other workhouses. Different workhouses have different operating hours. However, each one has the same long line. Some of them would wait from two in the afternoon." Frye paused. "The rest of the people mostly starve for a day. Then, they lose their ability to find a job and fall into a vicious cycle that leads directly to death. Those who can't withstand the hardship end up losing their struggle to stay on the good side of the law…"

Klein fell silent for a few seconds before letting out a sigh.

"The newspapers never publish any of this… Mr. Frye, I hardly ever hear you speak so much."

"I was once a pastor in a workhouse of the Goddess." Frye maintained his cold attitude.

When the three of them arrived at the door of the workhouse in West Borough, they showed their identity documents to the doorkeeper, who was eyeing the queuers arrogantly, before they were taken into the workhouse.

The workhouse was transformed from an old church. There were mattresses and hammocks all over the Mass hall. The pungent scent of sweat mixed with the smell of Athlete's foot permeated every corner.

In and out of the hall, there were many poor families. Some swung hammers to break rocks, some picked oakum; no one was free.

"In order to not let poor people rely too much on workhouses and turn into scoundrels, the Poor Law established in 1336 enforced a rule whereby every poor person can only stay in the workhouse for five days at most. Any longer than that, one would be cast out. During the five days, they have to do manual labor, such as breaking rocks or picking oakum. These are the same tasks that criminals in prison do," Frye explained to Klein and Leonard briefly without much emotion.

Leonard opened his mouth, and no one was sure if he was teasing or explaining, “When they leave this workhouse, they could go to another one. Of course, they might not be able to move in. Heh, perhaps, to some people, poor people are like criminals.”

“…Picking oakum?” Klein was quiet. He didn’t know what else to ask.

“The fibers of old ropes are actually a great material to seal the gaps in boats.” Frye stopped and found a burnt mark on the ground.

A few minutes later, the director and pastor of the workhouse rushed over. They were both men in their forties.

“Salus started the fire here and only burnt himself to death?” Leonard asked, pointing at the ashen mark on the ground.

The director of the workhouse was a man with a broad, bumpy forehead. He scanned the area where Inspector Mitchell was pointing with blue eyes and nodded in affirmation.

“Yes.”

“Before that, did Salus act strangely in any way?” Klein asked.

The director of the workhouse thought and said, “According to the person that slept next to him, Salus had been chanting ‘The Lord has given up on me’, ‘The world is too filthy’, ‘I have nothing left’, stuff along those lines. He was filled with resentment and hopelessness. But no one expected him to break all the kerosene lamps and start a fire to burn the place down while everyone was sleeping. Thank the Lord, someone found out in time and stopped his wicked act.”

Klein and Leonard then found a few people who had slept next to Salus the night before, and they also found the guard that stopped the tragedy. However, those people didn’t have anything new to tell them.

Of course, they used Spirit Vision, divination, and other methods to check if any of the people were lying or misleading them.

“It seems that Salus long had the idea to take revenge and self-destruct. It seems to be a very normal case.” Leonard waited till the director and the pastor left to express his opinion.

Klein pondered and said, “My divination tells me that there wasn’t any supernatural factors influencing this case.”

“Let’s eliminate Salus’s fire case temporarily,” Leonard concluded.

Just then, Frye suddenly said, “No, maybe there is another possibility. For example, Salus acted at the instigation of someone else, a Beyonder who didn’t take any supernatural measures.”

Klein’s eyes lit up as he echoed, “It’s very possible, such as the Instigator from before!”

Instigator Tris!

But that wouldn’t have any connection with Mrs. Lauwis’s death… He thought, creasing his eyebrows lightly.

Chapter 121 - Leonard's Hypothesis

◇◇◇

After hearing Klein's and Frye's guesses, Leonard tugged on his collar and paced about, saying, "Then we have to investigate everyone in the workhouse who came into contact with Salus, as well as everyone he came across after he went bankrupt and was chased out of the house. It's very troublesome indeed… Time is of the essence. Let's split up and do a cursory check here, then head to the third reported death in the West Borough and leave the rest to the police."

"Alright," Klein answered without hesitation.

Frye didn't have any objections. He turned towards the people who had been sleeping near Salus last night.

Klein was about to find someone to question when he suddenly saw Leonard shooting looks at him. He was motioning at the side hall of the workhouse with his chin.

What does he want? Klein was a little lost. He acted as though nothing had happened and strolled around the hall, then followed Leonard into the side hall while Frye was distracted. They made their way through the partition to a silent corner which had no one else around.

"I have a hypothesis," Leonard suddenly said, stopping in front of a shattered window.

Klein looked around in confusion. "What's your hypothesis?"

Leonard with his deep green eyes, he returned a question, "If there were no supernatural factors, what do you think Mrs. Lauwis's outcome would've been?"

Klein thought for a moment, then said solemnly, "The same, just delayed by a week or two, perhaps a month. But to a family like theirs, they would've only seen the doctor when she really was at her limit. As long as her heart problems turned for the worse, there would be no way for her to be saved."

"Then what about Salus? If he hadn't been instigated by someone, what kind of end would he have?" Leonard asked again.

Klein pondered and said, "From the description in the information, Salus was already very angry about his bankruptcy, and was furious that no one saved him. I think that he would've exacted his vengeance sooner or later, but not at the people at the workhouse. He might've targeted the boss that made him bankrupt or the staff of the bank that seized his house."

"What would the result of his revenge be?" Leonard pressed on.

"Without a doubt, he had already decided to end his life. He would have died no matter what the result of his revenge was." Klein gave an affirmative answer.

Leonard nodded and revealed his signature flippant smile.

"Then can we conclude that Mrs Lauwis and Salus were both people fated to die soon?

Klein was a 'knowledgeable' keyboard warrior. Upon hearing the question, he immediately had a guess.

"You're saying that their deaths were moved forward by some supernatural factors? But why?"

"A more accurate description would be, their 'life force' had been shortened by some supernatural factor. It was stolen. And life force is the best material when it comes to summoning evil gods and devils or conducting terrifying curses.” Leonard smiled as he corrected Klein’s guess.

“Summoning evil gods and devils or conducting terrifying curses…” Klein looked into Leonard’s emerald eyes and said, half in doubt, “You seem to be very sure of this? But, for the time being, our investigation sample is only at two…”

Leonard laughed cynically. “Klein, there’s no need for any pretense between us. I saw you break free from the control of Sealed Artifact 2-049, and I know that you’re special. And you should be able to sense that I’m a little different from the average Beyonder.”

His smile disappeared as he looked into Klein’s eyes.

“I’ve told you that there are many special people in this world that can always do things others can’t, such as you… and me.

“This world has a long history. There are many magical items that people wish to obtain, to control. They wish to become the stars of their own show. There aren’t many people like that, but it’s impossible that there are only one or two of them.

“I don’t think that a Beyonder with his or her secrets is a bad person or an evil thug. I don’t think that we even need to be clear on where their special abilities come from, and what they represent… As long as your actions are not endangering me, the Nighthawks, or Tingen City, then you’re still my partner. Similarly, I hope that you’ll look at me with the same attitude. Of course, it’s best not to speak of this to the higher-ups. Those fogies are old fashioned and conservative, always thinking that special people like us will definitely lose control, definitely feel the pull and temptation of the evil gods or devils.”

But I have more secrets than you can ever imagine… Klein thought to himself. He said frankly, “I share the same sentiments as you. I’ll only look at your actions and your motives and don’t care about how special you are. I will also try not to probe into your secrets."

After saying this, he added in his heart, No, actually I do mind and am very curious, but I'm putting up with it for now. Hmm, Leonard thinks that he is the star of a show? What kind of encounters did he have, and what kind of magical items does he possess?

Leonard unfastened the buttons of his shirt and nodded with a chuckle.

"I'm glad that we have this understanding.

"In action novels, this is called the meeting of two protagonists. The wheels of history are set in motion.

How shameless! Klein gave a perfunctory smile.

He knew that the phrase "wheels of history are set in motion" came from Emperor Roselle…

Leonard paced around quickly, his green eyes brightened as he curled the corners of his mouth.

"Alright, I'll be honest; I'm quite confident that the victims of these deaths would've died within the next three months, but their deaths have been brought forward to the past two weeks by someone, through some means. The other party's motive should be to summon evil gods or devils, or conduct a terrifying, large-scale curse."

"It is easy for the culprit to hide their murders, given that their victims already showed signs that they were going to die soon. This wouldn't attract the attention of the police department, or be disrupted by the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind during the culprit's preparatory phase…" Klein muttered to himself and analyzed the culprit's thought process.

Leonard smiled and agreed, "That's right. If three healthy, normal people were to suddenly drop dead, it would definitely attract attention and bring about an investigation."

"Then how are we going to find the altar used for the ritual? Regardless of whether the culprit wants to summon an evil god, devil, or conduct a terrible curse, he or she would need a sacrificial altar, a ritual. The harvested life force would also have to be stored in a similar place." Klein chose to believe in Leonard, for he didn't have any other clues and was unable to make any other deductions.

It doesn't hurt to try!

Leonard laughed and said, "Klein, isn't that within your professional domain? Can't you imagine what is happening around an altar like that?"

Without waiting for Klein to answer, Leonard described, "A thick aura of death with the altar at the center. There wouldn't be any living things other than the person conducting the ritual in a ten-meter radius. The surrounding temperature would be at least five degrees lower than the average temperature, with a cold wind blowing past it continuously… And the stolen life force of Mrs. Lauwis and the rest will remain within the altar, sealed by a wall of spirituality…"

Having said that, he looked at Klein and teased, "I think that you would be able to divine roughly where an altar with the following qualities would be."

Klein frowned slightly and replied solemnly, "As long as it's within Tingen City. Furthermore, I would need a quiet place where I wouldn't be disturbed. My house, for example. I would also need the personal belongings of Mrs. Lauwis and the rest, as well."

Klein's heart also skipped a beat. He felt that Leonard was a little too knowledgeable in the dark arts.

"No problem." Leonard laughed. He suddenly stepped past Klein and walked toward the hall, not saying anything more.

That man sure has a unique style… Klein cursed in his heart and followed.

When Leonard found Frye seriously taking notes, he put on a serious tone and said, “I have a hypothesis and was hoping that Klein would give it a try.”

“What hypothesis?” Frye asked, appearing cold.

“I’ll tell you if there is a result. I don’t want to be laughed at by Rozanne and the rest.” Leonard gave a whimsical excuse and changed the subject.

Frye didn’t ask any further. He acted according to the instructions and obtained Salus’s and Mrs Lauwis’s personal belongings from the nearby police station, then met his partners at Klein’s house.

“Wait in the living room and don’t let anybody disturb me.” Klein took out his pocket watch and looked at the time.

It was about six now. Melissa might come back at anytime.

“You can trust us.” Leonard put his hands on his hips and paced around the living room. Frye sat silently on the sofa.

Does Leonard have ADHD? Klein pouted and went to his room on the second floor. He locked the door and sealed the room with a wall of spirituality.

After which, he set up an altar and asked for the help of the goddess, eliminating any disturbances.

Then, Klein wrote a divination statement on a piece of paper.

“The position of the altar.”

He gave a sweeping statement to prevent himself from missing out on any information.

Grabbing the piece of paper and the belongings of the dead, Klein laid down on his bed. He first recalled the scene Leonard described, then silently recited the statement seven times.

He didn't try using the world of fog, firstly, because that weird and mysterious Leonard was downstairs. Who knew if he would notice something weird about the ritual. Secondly, his Seer potion was about to be completely digested. It was likely that the aid of the ritual was sufficient for the success of his divination.

Klein would only consider finding an opportunity to enter the world of fog if he didn't get a result. After all, the summoning of an evil god or devil was something that could threaten Benson, Melissa, and himself!

With the help of Cogitation, he quickly entered the dream and saw a hazy, illusory, fragmented scene.

Soon after, an image floated before his eyes.

It was a two-story grayish-blue house bathed in a sunset glow. The windows of the first floor were shut tight and the dark curtains had no gaps. However, they expanded and contracted from time to time.

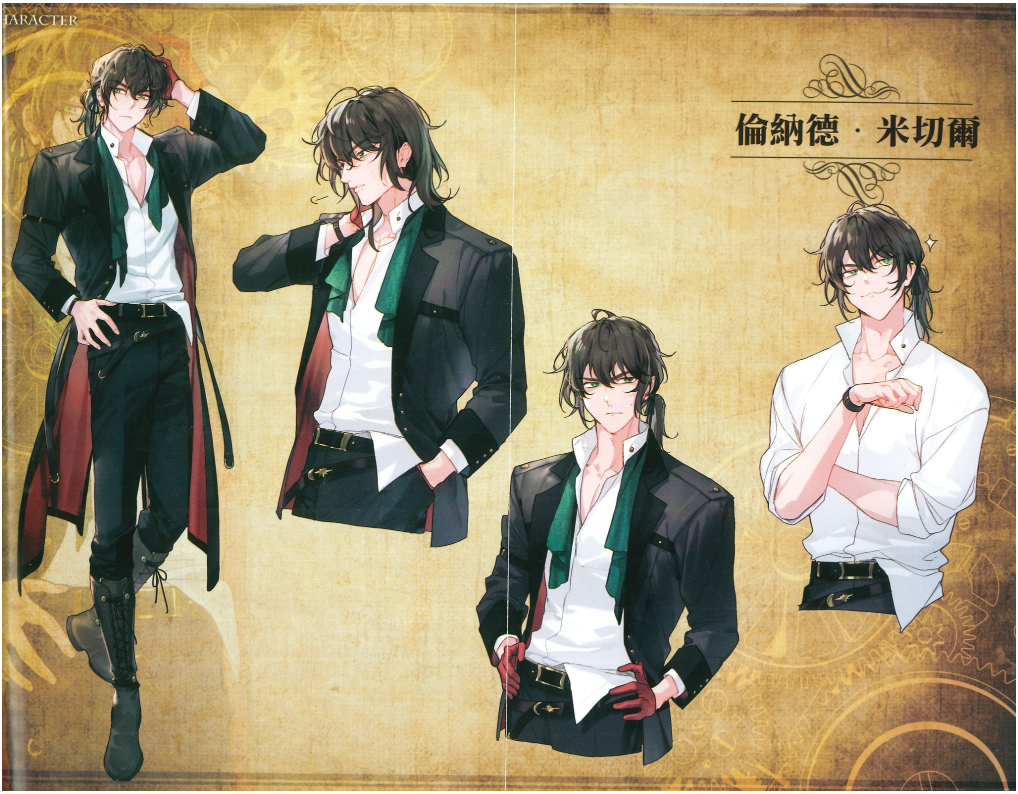
The soil around the house was dark brown, but nothing was growing in it. The garden around the house seemed to be covered in shadows, dilapidated, and dark.

There was a river flowing silently near the house.

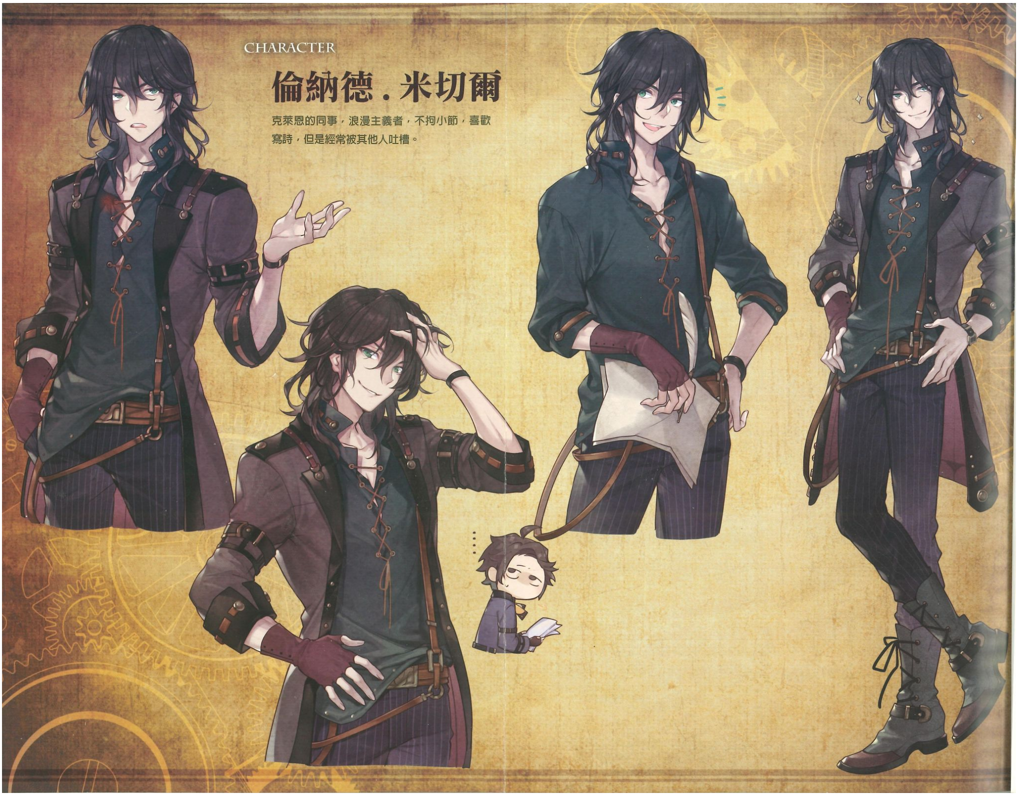
†

Sometime later, Klein exited the dream, having not seen anything else.

Leonard's hypothesis was correct… Where could that building be? There are too many rivers in Tingen City, such as the West Borough, Southwest Borough, the harbor area, the university area… He opened his eyes and rubbed his temples as he thought, his expression serious.



倫納德 · 米切爾



CHARACTER

倫納德．米切爾

克萊恩的同事，浪漫主義者，不拘小節，喜歡寫詩，但是經常被其他人吐槽。

Leonard Mitchell

Klein's colleague. A romanticist who does not stick to formalities. He loves writing poetry, but is frequently "roasted" (criticized/teased) by others for it.

Chapter 122 - Target Building

◈◈◈

2 Daffodil Street. Inside the living room that was painted with the luster of dusk.

Klein stood in front of the oriel window as he told Frye and Leonard.

“My divination revealed something. I saw a grayish-blue two-story building in my dream. The windows on the first floor were all shut tight, and the curtains were drawn. It’s surrounded by a few meters of brown soil without any greenery or flowers. It also has a terribly gloomy garden, just like the kind you find in a horror story.

“The only characteristic that can be used to identify it is a nearby river, a slightly broad river.

“It might be the Tussock River or Khoy River. We could only find out through process of elimination. Hopefully we can still make it in time.”

The Tussock River was the biggest river in the Loen Kingdom, coming down from the northwest where the Mirminsk mountain was. It flowed towards the southeast, passing by the Midseashire, Awwa County, and then passing through the capital, Backlund, and into the sea near Pritz Harbor.

The locations where it converged in Tingen City included the southwest corner of the West Borough and the harbor in the South Borough. The source of the Khoy River came from the northern York Mountain as it passed through the university district in the East Borough and locally merged with the Tussock River.

Those were the two main rivers around Tingen. The rest could only be considered streams, and none of them had an expansive water surface.

Upon hearing Klein's description, the pale and cold Frye nodded lightly in agreement.

Since there were no other clues, process of elimination was the only efficient method!

Just then, Leonard smiled and said, "Perhaps we can narrow down the possible locations of the target."

"How do we narrow down the possibilities?" Klein frowned and asked in reply as he looked at the silver vine-leaf pocket watch.

Leonard chuckled.

"A criminal with a plan and a goal would select targets somewhere far away from the location of his altar. This is a result of their natural instinct—to be safe.

"Only when there aren't many soon-to-be-dead people left in the areas far from his altar would he consider the nearer targets.

"So, we should read through the information again, exclude the areas where the number of death incidents rose rapidly above average standards.

Klein's eyes lit up when he heard that.

"Brilliant conjecture!"

At the same time, he sighed inwardly, I really don't have the talent to be a detective!

Frye nodded and picked up the documents on the coffee table and started reading it again.

After a few minutes, he deepened his hoarse voice and said, "There really is such a region, and there's only one possibility."

"Which area?" Klein asked.

Frye passed the thick stack of information to Leonard who was next to him. He pursed his thin lips and said, "West Borough."

It's the West Borough? Klein clenched his fist and immediately suggested,

"Then let's search the southwestern area of West Borough. That area isn't huge!"

"I agree," Leonard echoed as he waved the papers in his hands in agreement, as though he wasn't the one who suggested narrowing down the scope of their search.

†

The two-wheeled carriage slowly drove along the muddy road. Beside them, the red and orange glow of the sunset reflected off of a broad river that was colored with the twilight radiance of the sunset.

Klein and Frye looked out the windows from both sides of the carriage, inspecting one house after another. They were searching for a grayish-blue house with a dilapidated garden. If possible, they would take note if the curtains on the first floor was drawn.

Leonard leisurely sat in his original spot, leaning against the wall of the carriage as he hummed a popular local tune.

The dim scenery flew past, and Klein caught sight of a grayish-blue two-story building from the corner of his eye

In front of the building was a gloomy garden that appeared in ruins.

"Found it!" Klein said while suppressing his voice.

Before he finished his sentence, Frye and Leonard squeezed over to look out the window. There was almost no space between them.

As the carriage drew closer to the building, the dark curtains that were drawn on the first floor appeared before the three Nighthawks' eyes.

Klein didn't even need to divine whether they had the right building; he was completely certain that it was the building that he saw in his dream. That was where the evil altar was set up!

None of them stopped the carriage, but instead allowed the carriage driver to continue driving forward. They passed their target and continued away from it, as though they were just passing by.

When they could no longer see the building when they turned around, Leonard told the driver to stop the carriage.

"Klein, return to Zouteland Street in this carriage and tell the Captain to come here for assistance." Leonard snapped his fingers and smirked at his teammate.

Is he thinking of me as a rookie and that I shouldn't be involved in such a dangerous mission? This fellow is still quite a nice guy… Klein was stunned as he realized what Leonard meant.

Frye nodded in agreement.

"You just started combat training and your job is a support role."

I know, and a person who could kill so many in order to hold a ritual won't be an easy opponent. Only the Captain could make this situation less terrifying… Klein took a breath and agreed rationally.

He looked at Leonard, then at Frye before forcing a smile and said, "Be careful."

"Don't worry, I cherish my life a lot. Until the Captain arrives, we'll only keep watch, and we won't get close." Leonard smiled.

Frye didn't say anything but only picked up his suitcase.

Klein was quiet for a while, he then took out a copper penny and said, "Let me divine once for you."

He chanted, "What will happen here will lead to a good outcome." He flipped the coin at the same time his eyes turned dark.

Dang!

The coin flipped into the air, then landed firmly in Klein's palm.

Klein looked and saw it was the King's head. He immediately let out a breath of relief.

"It's only a blurry symbol, so there are other interpretations. The most important thing is to be careful and prudent at all times," he explained to Frye and Leonard like a Seer would do.

Leonard had already turned around. He waved and jumped off the carriage.

"As naggy as my eighty-year-old grandma…"

Frye nodded seriously and got off with his suitcase.

Watching both his teammates head towards the target building, Klein touched the revolver in his underarm holster and told the driver, "Zouteland Street."

The driver, who had been hired by the hour, didn't object but allowed the horses to continue the journey.

†

36 Zouteland Street.

When Klein entered the Blackthorn Security Company, Rozanne, Mrs. Orianna, and the others had already gotten off work. It was unusually quiet and dim.

Dunn was sitting on the sofa in the guest area. The gas lamp was unlit, and he seemed to blend into the darkness in his black trench coat.

“Found any clues?” Klein, who was searching for the Captain, was given a shock by Dunn’s deep voice.

Klein quickly turned around and looked into Dunn’s gray eyes as he said, “Yes, we…”

He quickly told him about Leonard’s bold hypothesis, his confirmation via divination, and the subsequent discovery of the house.

As for Leonard’s confidence and the uniqueness that Leonard had discussed, they were unimportant and obviously not worth mentioning.

Dunn cut in from time to time. When the briefing ended, he abruptly stood up and walked towards the door.

When he was almost down the stairs, he turned around and said, “I almost forgot; you stay here just in case there are any emergencies here.”

“Alright.” Klein nodded solemnly.

At that very moment, other than Kenley who was on duty guarding Chanis Gate, the other Nighthawks were busy in the field.

Dunn Smith ran down a few steps and suddenly stopped. As he put on his hat, he shouted at Klein through the door, “Lock the door and follow me. Heh, we won’t need you to join the battle. First, you can get a sense of the atmosphere, and second, we might require the assistance of ritualistic magic during the final search or inspection. Remember, until everything is over, you have to be at least fifty meters away. You cannot get close to the building!”

Klein was stunned and nodded firmly.

“Alright!”

†

The sun sank beneath the horizon, and the surging Tussock River turned eerie and dark.

Dark clouds obscured the crimson moon, making the grayish-blue two-story building look like a monster hidden in the shadows.

The garden before the building was extremely quiet. It was as though it didn’t have any insects, nor any other forms of life.

Klein looked at the scene from a distance, his palms sweating and his body shivering.

He felt that there were countless terrifying things hidden, waiting, and hungry for a bloody feast.

He watched Dunn, Leonard, and Frye move carefully towards the target building, blending into the darkness.

†

On the second floor of the grayish-blue building, in the bedroom without any lights.

A gentle and sweet young maiden with a round face was seated before her dressing table, looking carefully at her face after the complicated skin care routine she had just completed.

There was a silver mirror next to her right hand, its surface coarsely ground, almost unable to reflect a figure.

Suddenly, a stream of blood seeped out from the mirror.

The expression of the gentle and sweet-looking Trissy suddenly grew grave. She stood up, walked to the window, and looked out in silence.

Chapter 123 - Beyonder Battle

◆

Vines grew all over the dilapidated garden outside the glass windows. The river flowed softly, reflecting the stars in the sky as warm glows suffused out of the nearby buildings.

Everything was silent, as if awaiting the arrival of night.

Trissy, who had ordinary features which combined to make her look surprisingly beautiful, retracted her gaze and walked quickly towards the clothes rack to retrieve a long black robe fitted with a hood.

She quickly put the robe on, fastened the buttons and belt before pulling the hood over her head, transforming herself into an Assassin.

Trissy raised her right hand and swiped her face, immediately turning her appearance under the hood blurry.

Right on the heels of that, she grabbed a handful of shimmering powder from the hidden pouch near her waist and scattered it over herself while reciting an incantation.

Trissy's figure started to disappear bit by bit, her outline vanishing like how pencil marks were being erased by an eraser.

She silently left the bedroom after completing her concealment spell. She moved to the opposite room and then opened the non-grilled window.

With a light leap, Trissy stood on the window sill and looked over the grassy plains to the back of the building. She looked down at the steel fence that had seemingly fused with the night. There, she saw Corpse Collector Frye who was silently making his way over the fence.

She took in a deep breath and fluttered down like a feather, stepping onto the grassy field without a sound.

Frye, who was wearing a black trench coat, cautiously surveyed the surroundings with his custom revolver in his hand, seeking out vengeful spirits or evil spirits that might appear.

He could see such entities directly!

Trissy approached Frye silently, made her way behind him. It was unknown when a dagger smeared with 'black paint' appeared in her hand.

Poof!

She struck quickly, plunging the dagger into Frye's lower back.

But at this moment, the scene in front of her shattered, as if everything was an illusion.

Trissy realized that she was still standing on the window sill, still looking over the grassy field and the steel fence.

Except this time around, it wasn't only Corpse Collector Frye who was standing outside the fence. There was also Leonard Mitchell who was aiming straight at the window sill, as well as Dunn Smith. The captain of the Nighthawks was hunched over as he pressed down on his glabella, his eyes closed as formless ripples spread outwards from him.

Trissy's pupils constricted. She understood that everything that had happened was just a dream. She had fallen asleep unknowingly!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Leonard and Frye fired three shots, accurately hitting the invisible target who was still waking up from her reverie.

Crack!

Trissy's figure started to appear, first cracking, then completely shattering into fragments of a rough silver mirror!

Inside the building, Trissy, who had used a substitution spell, turned around to escape. She followed the corridor and the steps, sprinting all the way to the first floor.

Whoosh! A cold sinister wind blew across the first floor, one that could freeze a person. Formless, transparent figures were numbly pacing around every corner of the building in a daze.

Trissy, who had lost her concealment, felt her temperature drop every time she passed through the spirits. She could no longer control her shivers when she finally reached the sacrificial altar.

The altar was a round table, with a figurine of a deity carved out of bone placed in the center.

This figurine was about the size of a grown man's head, with only a mere indication of her eyes, but the figure was that of a beautiful woman.

Her hair extended from her head to her heels, each strand clear and thick, as if they were poisonous snakes or tentacles.

There was only one eye situated at the tip of every strand of hair, some closed, others open.

There were many puppets strewn around the figurine. The craftsmanship of the puppets was crude. Names and relevant information were written on the puppets; for example, Joyce Mayer.

There were three candles on the table, flickering with a yellowish-green flame despite the cold, sinister winds.

Trissy bowed at the deity's figurine and quickly recited her incantations.

She then pushed away the puppets and extinguished the flames of the candles before picking the figurine up.

Whoosh!

The winds howled fiercely as they shook the closed windows violently.

Clank! Creak! Shards of glass flew around in all directions.

Frye, who had just made his way to the other side of the building, didn't dare to barge into the sacrificial altar recklessly. He shivered, feeling his blood turn cold and frosty. It was making his actions visibly slower.

Suddenly, he felt tightness around his heels as though they had been grabbed by something invisible.

An accentuated sense of coldness spread upwards from the point of contact. A Sequence 9 Beyonder would have turned completely numb by now. But as a Corpse Collector, Frye was no stranger to such situations.

He turned his revolver to the side of his heels and pulled the trigger. It was as if he could see who the enemy was, and exactly where it was.

Bang!

A silver demon hunting bullet pierced the air, causing a shrill howl in response.

The formless figure dissipated and Frye regained his ability to move.

Elsewhere, Dunn Smith, who wanted to reach the second floor by avoiding a frontal assault on the altar, was similarly affected by the cold winds. His body froze as he stopped right outside a shattered window.

Whoosh! The curtains behind the window lifted suddenly and engulfed Dunn, as if a monster had just opened its mouth to devour its prey.

The curtain wrapped around Dunn's head, seeming to have been imbued with life. Dunn's facial features began to press through the constricting cloth.

Dunn, who was about to be suffocated, stomped down with both feet. He straightened his knees and twisted his waist, loosening the curtain's grip with raw strength alone.

He grabbed a corner of the curtain around his head with his left hand and yanked it away before tossing it toward the ground.

Bang!

He fired a shot at the other half of the curtain behind the window, stopping it from attempting another assault on him.

The curtain stopped immediately as a dark red liquid oozed out from it.

Whoosh!

On the field, Leonard Mitchell was reciting his poems and was also hit by the cold sinister winds infused with the intense sensation of death. His teeth chattered, making it hard for him to enunciate his poems.

The messy weeds in the garden suddenly extended, wrapping themselves around his heels. A black shadow hurled itself at him along with the violent winds.

Leonard, whose body had become rigid, failed to fire in time. He could only pull back his shoulder and raise his arm.

Thud! The black shadow smashed into his forearm, the thorns on its body piercing his skin.

It was a pretty, bright-red flower, its origins unknown.

In pain, Leonard tossed aside the flower dyed with his blood.

Bang! He fired a shot at the spreading vines, causing dark red liquid to ooze out.

Tap! Tap! Tap! Leonard quickened his pace and charged towards the shattered window on the first floor where the altar was situated behind.

The vines retracted abruptly from where he had previously stood, as if hiding from something invisible.

Trissy took advantage of the chaos created by destroying the altar and a suspension-style ritual to conceal herself once again. She managed to fool the Spirit Visions of the Nighthawks and escape the pincer attack before making her way to a spot behind the three Nighthawks.

She extended her right hand, immediately causing a cold wind to blow. It carried the flower dyed with Leonard's blood right into her palm.

Trissy did not stop. With the flower in hand, she nimbly made her way over the steel fence and escaped in the direction of the Tussock River.

Leonard, who had just entered the first level, turned his head abruptly, as though he was listening to something.

His expression changed. He frantically pulled up his sleeve and looked at the wound caused by the flower.

With his constitution, the wound had already stopped bleeding. There was only some red swelling that remained.

Leonard's expression became grim. He pinched his left index finger and pulled his fingernail straight out!

His face contorted in pain, but he did not pause. As he recited something silently, he sliced open the coagulated wound with the fingernail. When the fingernail was dyed with his dark red blood, he pulled out a few strands of hair from his scalp and wrapped the fingernail with his hair.

Beside the Tussock River, Trissy slowed down. She shot her gaze toward the flower in her hand.

She was chanting something as a ball of black, illusory fire suddenly appeared in her palm.

The flames enveloped the flower, burning it to ashes.

After completing this, Trissy jumped into the river and submerged herself.

At the same time, Leonard tossed the blood-stained fingernail wrapped in his hair to the corner. He saw it burn and release a foul stench.

The fingernail and hair disappeared quickly, leaving only some dust behind.

Leonard heaved a sigh of relief. He entered the first level through the window and said to Dunn and Frye who were destroying the altar, “The target has escaped. But it’s alright, our primary objective was to stop the ritual.”

Dunn sighed and looked at the puppets on the table.

“She was very cautious and very powerful. She sensed us approaching her ahead of time, otherwise… she should be, at the very least, a Sequence 7 Beyonder.

“Give Klein the signal. Ask him to come over.”

Through the brief interaction in the dream, he had determined that the enemy was female.

Chapter 124 - Wrapping Up Work

◆

Klein was hidden in the shadows of a building dozens of meters away from the target building. He heard the faint sound of gunshots and the howling of violent winds.

If the enemy runs towards me, should I draw my gun or should I pretend that I didn’t see him? He thought as he shivered in cold sweat.

A Beyonder that could, through various means, cut short the lives of others definitely wasn’t a Sequence 9 or Sequence 8 Beyonder. They certainly wouldn’t be someone that a Seer like him could fight against face to face. Even if he sacrificed himself, he might not be able to slow the target down enough for Dunn and Leonard to catch up with him.

It was fortunate that the Evernight Goddess, the Empress of Misfortune, seemed to hear her ‘loyal’ guard’s prayers. No one ran towards the location where Klein was hiding.

After a few minutes, he heard a melodious song coming from the target building.

Cocking his ears to the side so he could hear better, Klein confirmed that it was the popular local tune that Leonard Mitchell always hummed. It was filled with base words.

Phew. He let out a breath of relief. He held his gun in one hand and his cane in the other. He then walked out of the shadows towards the target building.

The popular local tune was the meeting signal that he had agreed upon with Dunn and the rest!

Klein took two steps and suddenly paused. He leaned his cane against the metal fencing and switched the revolver to his other hand.

Then, he took off the silver chain inside his sleeve and let the topaz pendant hang down naturally.

Klein waited till the topaz stabilized and immediately closed his eyes and entered a Cogitation state. He recited a divination statement, "The singing earlier was an illusion.

"The singing earlier was an illusion."

†

After repeating seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the pendant spinning counterclockwise.

"It's not an illusion…" Klein put away his pendulum, grabbed his cane, and quickly got close to the arch-shaped metal gate leading to the target building. He then passed the black cane to his right hand and held it with the revolver.

He extended his hands to touch the fence, intending to push it open, but he suddenly felt a piercing chill. It was as though someone had poured a bucket of ice down his neck without warning.

Klein hissed and jerked his hands back, his teeth clenched.

"It's just like winter here…" Under the dim starlight and distant street lamp, he looked through the garden behind the metal fencing. He saw the withered branches, fallen flowers, and leaves covered with white frost on the brown soil.

Amazing! Klein marveled in his head. He bent his fingers and tapped his glabella to activate his Spirit Vision.

He returned his silver-inlaid cane to his left hand and pushed it against the fence to open the closed gate.

The gate squeaked, and he passed through it sideways. He stepped onto the stone path that led directly to the grayish-blue building. On both sides of the path were twisted plants that seemed to resemble ghouls in the dark.

The scene reminded Klein of various horror stories and paranormal films.

He subconsciously slowed down his breathing and walked faster. However, after just a few more steps, someone suddenly patted his left shoulder.

Badump! Badump! Klein's heart skipped, then started thumping rapidly.

He raised his right hand, aimed his revolver, and slowly turned around to look.

In the dim light, he saw a flimsy branch that had nearly fallen off.

"This is what we call 'scaring ourselves'?" Klein twitched the corner of his lips, waved the cane, and knocked the branch off.

He continued moving forward as faint sobs sounded in his ears. Blurry, translucent "shadows" appeared before his eyes.

These shadows had swarmed over after feeling the breaths of a living person and the warmth of flesh and blood.

Klein jumped in fright and immediately ran into the door of the grayish-blue building.

This is what the Captain meant by "getting a sense of the atmosphere?" It's much scarier than the last time I helped Sir Deweyville… The resentment of that aggrieved spirit is more "rigid" than the shadows. She hadn't taken the initiative to attack back then… He thought as he walked towards the altar in the middle of the living room. It was a round table full of crudely made puppets. Three unlit candles stood amidst the puppets.

Dunn Smith stood right before the altar with his back to Klein. He took one puppet after another and looked at them.

Corpse Collector Frye looked at the floating shadows and extended his hand in an attempt to comfort them, but all his hand did was pass through them helplessly. The shadows didn't attack him, seemingly recognizing him as one of their own.

When Leonard Mitchell noticed Klein's arrival, he changed his tone, turning his voice softer but charming.

"Calm is the morn without a sound,

"Calm as to suit a calmer grief.

"And only thro' the faded leaf,

"The chestnut pattering to the ground.[1]"

†

In the soothing recitation of the poem, Klein seemed to see a clear lake reflecting the moonlight and a crimson moon hanging quietly, high in the sky.

The restless shadows calmed down and stopped chasing after the warm breath of the living Nighthawks among them.

Dunn put down the puppet in his hand, turned around, and said to Klein, "This is a ceremony for a terrifying curse. It's fortunate that we've already destroyed it.

"First prepare a ritual to comfort the remaining spirits, then try to communicate with the spirits of the dead and see if you can get any clues from them."

Klein, who realized that he was no longer a burden, immediately held his chest out and said, "Yes, Captain."

He reached the altar in a few steps and extended his hands to sweep the puppets off of the round table.

At that moment, he noticed from the corner of his eyes that every puppet had a name and a corresponding message.

"Captain, did you discover anyone you know?" Klein asked in passing.

Then, he glanced at Dunn as Dunn looked at him. Both of them fell silent.

I'm so silly… Why would I ask any questions that tests the Captain's memory! Klein nearly covered his face and sighed.

If it were any other boss, they would definitely find an opportunity to make my life difficult because of this. Luckily, the Captain will forget about this… I wonder if that's an advantage or a disadvantage? He thought, half glad, half joking.

After a short silence, Dunn seemed to finally be capable of differentiating reality from the dreamworld. He replied, "There's someone you know."

"Who?" Klein stopped, his hand still extended to put a candle back to where it was supposed to be.

"Joyce Mayer, the survivor of the Alfalfa tragedy," Dunn replied simply.

Joyce Mayer? Anna's fiancé… Klein suddenly thought of Salus in the workhouse. He seemed to have been instigated and misled by someone, causing him to bring forward his rage and committing arson.

Klein retracted his right hand and said in a deep voice, "Instigator Tris?"

“He used the lives that were cut short as a sacrifice, intending to curse all survivors of the Alfalfa tragedy? Because he didn’t know who uncovered his involvement and lodged a police report…”

If Tris took revenge directly, it would have been impossible to wipe out all the targets scattered throughout Tingen. After two or three murders, he would’ve been noticed by the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind. Then, he would’ve lost his chance to continue his murdering spree. Klein filled in the blanks of why Tris had started all this.

Dunn nodded first, then he shook his head.

“Not all survivors, but only survivors in Tingen. His curse ritual can only affect the people within this range.”

“Besides, the host of the ritual is a female, not Tris.”

Klein creased his eyebrows and asked, “Perhaps it’s an expert that the Theosophy Order sent to help Tris?

“Yes, the origins of the Theosophy Order might involve the Demoness Sect. It’s fairly normal for their experts to be female.”

Dunn smiled and said in his deep voice, “I agree with your judgment. Although we only encountered that woman and not Tris, there are guesses that we can make. Such as, the woman and Tris don’t stay together. Or, that Tris was out looking for people who are dying soon.”

Klein didn’t say anything further. He set the three candles in place, took out the Full Moon Essence Oil, crimson sandalwood, and other ingredients, and set up the altar quickly.

After he used a silver dagger to make a sealed wall, he started praying to the Evernight Goddess, the Mistress of Repose and Silence. He prayed that the shadows inside and outside the house would be comforted completely.

Unfortunately, in the subsequent attempt to communicate with the spirits of the dead, Klein could only see a little of what the spirits had seen before their deaths. There weren't any useful clues.

After settling the shadows into a peaceful sleep in the dark night, he ended the ceremony and removed the spirituality wall. He then shook his head and told the others,

“The backlash from the disrupted ritual caused severe damage and the remnant images of the host were lost.”

Dunn wasn't surprised. He pointed at the stairs and said, “Let's look around on the second floor and give it another try.”

“Okay.” Klein, Leonard, and Frye nodded in agreement.

The three Nighthawks went up the stairs to the second floor and parted ways to search through each room.

In the end, they met in a bedroom that was filled with a faint aroma. They saw messy dresses lying around and open boxes.

Dunn took up a box from the dressing table and smelled it before asking, “Are these cosmetics?”

“To be exact, they are skin care products. Ever since Emperor Roselle, they were not lumped together with a broad term,” Leonard explained with a smile. “Captain, as a gentleman, there are certain things you have to know.”

Klein didn't join their discussion but cast his gaze towards the mirror on the dressing table.

There was an obvious crack on the mirror, and there were shattered pieces on the rug beneath.

“The Beyonder left in a rush. She didn't destroy it entirely…” he suddenly said in a deep voice. “Maybe I could give this a try.”

"I'll leave it to you," Dunn replied in confidence.

Klein quickly brought the candles up from the first floor and lit them in front of the shattered mirror.

Under the dim, flickering candlelight, he took out the items like Full Moon Essence to create a spirituality wall.

After Klein prepared everything, he stood before the mirror that reflected the lights of all three candles and chanted in Hermes,

"I pray for the power of the dark night.

"I pray for the power of the mystery.

"I pray for the Goddess's loving grace.

"I pray for the mirror to receive a brief restoration, I pray for it to show every person that it reflected in the past month."

†

As the incantation was being recited, a strong wind suddenly howled within the spirituality wall.

The shattered pieces of the mirror swirled off the ground and returned to their original locations.

The mirror that was covered in cracks suddenly rippled with a gloomy brilliance. Klein wiped his hands over it and a human figure suddenly appeared in the frame. But that figure wasn't Klein.

It was a gentle and sweet looking young maiden with a round face. Perhaps it was because the mirror was broken or perhaps it was because the backlash of the interrupted ritual that affected the second floor as well. Her facial features were blurry and her actual appearance wasn't exactly clear.

But even so, Klein found the person unusually familiar.

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Adapted from Alfred Tennyson’s ”In Memoriam A. H. H. OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII: 11.”

Chapter 125 - Bold Idea

◆ ◆ ◆

When faced with a strange sense of familiarity, other Sequence 9 Beyonders might try their best to recall or even disregard and forget about it. But a Seer was different. Klein immediately ended the ritual and dispelled the wall of spirituality. He took out a piece of paper and wrote on it a statement: “The source of the sense of familiarity.”

After which, he sat on the edge of the bed in the room and silently recited it with the piece of paper in hand.

Seven times later, his pupils became darker. He fell asleep with the help of Cogitation and started conversing with his own spirituality.

In the hazy, contorted world, Klein saw a carriage. He saw a young lady wearing a long gray dress.

This lady had smooth black hair, her face a little round. She had a gentle and pleasant demeanor, but her body was shivering unnaturally.

The image flickered and once again, Klein saw this young, pretty lady at the underground market. She was squatting and conversing with someone.

The dream receded quickly and Klein woke up, understanding why the image he saw in the mirror was so familiar.

He had met this person before!

The first time was at Daffodil Street, in the district near Iron Cross Street. The Captain and the rest were chasing down Instigator Tris that night… There must be a connection. Klein thought for a few seconds, then set up the ritual once again. He asked for the help of the Goddess to sketch the portrait of the enemy in his memory.

Dunn and the rest had been waiting silently, without interrupting Klein unnecessarily. Only when he was done sketching did they crowd over and inspect the portrait.

“You met her before?” Dunn asked.

Klein nodded slightly and answered simply, “Yes. I saw her at the public carriage stop on Daffodil Street the night when you were going after the Instigator. It was in the district near Iron Cross Street.”

“Then, there’s a good chance that she was the enemy just now. The partner of the Instigator.” Dunn nodded in thought.

Leonard suddenly chimed in, “Don’t any of you feel that this portrait is very familiar? She looks a lot like Instigator Tris!”

Klein froze, immediately casting his gaze at the portrait again and studying it carefully.

“Yeah, they look very similar indeed. Round face, narrow eyes, gentle demeanor…” The more he looked at the portrait, the more he felt that what Leonard said made sense. The biggest difference was that Instigator Tris had ordinary features while the young lady could be considered pretty.

Klein raised his head and looked at Leonard, noticing that he was signaling something to him by raising his brows.

What does he mean? Klein was confused.

Dunn Smith guessed, “She could be the Instigator’s sister. Maybe like her brother she joined the Theosophy Order or the Demoness Sect.”

Leonard sighed after he realized how bad Klein was at reading his mind.

He said in a serious tone, “I have a bold idea.”

“What idea?” Dunn asked.

Leonard described succinctly, “I think that this person is Instigator Tris!”

“What?” Frye exclaimed in shock.

Dunn creased his brows and said, “What you mean is that Instigator Tris is actually female, or a male who’s pretending to be a female? No, from the dream, I can confirm that she’s female.”

Klein had been exposed to many creative and ridiculous plots after all. He took another look at the portrait and immediately had another guess.

“Could it be that Instigator Tris became a female?”

That could explain many things. For example, why would the trail leading to Tris suddenly sever? Why couldn’t they find any traces, even with divination? Perhaps because there was a fundamental change to their target! The only question was how he could change into a woman in such a short span of time. And it appeared to be rather simple… He had pretty decent looks after his transformation even. I mean, to be honest, she’s pretty attractive… Klein thought, distracted.

Leonard nodded in relief, “Yes, that’s my theory. This can perfectly explain why Instigator Tris had seemed to vanish. It also fits with the strange fact that the upper echelons of the Demoness Sect are all female.”

Dunn and Frye were momentarily at a loss for words.

Even though they had seen many monsters and wondrous things, it was their first time dealing with a transformation like this!

“What you mean is that there are a considerable number of women in the upper echelons of the Demoness Sect that used to be men?" Dunn asked. He didn't wait for an answer before saying, "That could be possible… Perhaps it's their, no, the unique characteristic of their potion."

Klein shivered a little as he listened. He felt that the potion of the Demoness Sect was a trap!

"Let's hope that a similar potion doesn't exist in the pathway of the Seer… No, definitely not. That is the pathway of the Demoness. Even the name of the potion sounds wrong. But I still don't know what the corresponding Sequence 1 to Seer is…" Klein subconsciously started praying to the Goddess.

"Can potions accomplish such a thing?" Frye asked with a little disbelief.

Leonard laughed and threw up his hands.

"Even a mid to low sequence potion can cause unimaginable changes. After all, they all originated from the Creator."

Dunn turned to look at Klein. "Try to divine where the target will appear next."

"Alright." Klein went over to the pile of dresses and picked out one with mixed emotions. He spread it over the carpet.

He held his cane over the dress and recalled the target's features and relevant information. He then began to recite in his heart.

"Tris's… no, Trissy's whereabouts

"Trissy's whereabouts."

†

Seven times later, Klein's pupils turned from brown to black. Wind started to blow around him.

His left hand released his cane, allowing the black cane to wobble.

Despite the shaking, the cane failed to fall. It stood tall in its original position.

“There’s an interference…” Klein said with a deep tone.

An interference implies that our assumptions are correct!

That lady just now was most probably Instigator Tris, no, Trissy!

Upon seeing this, Dunn nodded indiscernibly.

“They live up to the reputation of the Demoness Sect which has been active since the last Epoch…”

Since Tris had transformed into Trissy, Dunn deduced that she wasn’t part of the Theosophy Order, but the Demoness Sect.

Surveying the surroundings, Dunn sighed and said, “We can search for her through different means, such as where these clothes came from or the owner of this house. We can also get the police department to patrol the train stations and piers.”

We might be able to get some clues like that, but Trissy will definitely have had enough time to leave Tingen. Yes… I’ll try it again above the gray fog when I’m back at home. Klein was cautious of people like Trissy who wanted to unleash a massacre on a whim. He wanted to desperately find her and execute her on the spot.

“Leonard, head to the police department and gather a group to wrap up things here. Klein, you can go back and rest now…” Dunn rubbed his temples and paused for a few seconds. He said to Klein, partially to test him and also to teach him. “How would you have handled this evening’s mission? Assume that me, Leonard, and Frye are the only members on your team.”

Klein creased his brows and thought for more than ten seconds.

“I’d first use divination to ascertain if the ritual would take effect soon. If the answer was negative, then I’d stick to observing and not approach. Then I’d notify the police department to deploy personnel around the area, as well as gather at least five cannons to bombard the entire building till wherever Trissy was hiding was leveled.

“She could either be blasted to death in the building, or attempt to flee amidst the cannon fire. This would easily expose her. Until then, I would station you and the rest at different spots…”

He got more and more excited as he continued. He felt that his idea was simple and effective, barbaric and decisive. It was very safe and very appropriate!

Dunn, Leonard, and Frye were dumbfounded. They didn’t say anything for a long time.

“Captain, is that not a good idea?” The excited Klein’s heart thumped rapidly when he saw that they had no reaction.

Dunn was silent for a few seconds before he said, “No, it is a good idea. But the premise is that we have to confirm that forceful destruction of the altar wouldn’t create a more disastrous outcome… Sigh. As longtime Nighthawks, we’re accustomed to relying on ourselves, our powers as Beyonders, and guns in all circumstances. We’re not used to allowing normal people to come into contact with supernatural incidents…”

Alright, I was always an ardent fan of firepower bombardment… Klein added in his heart.

†

Klein and Leonard walked to the carriage station about five hundred meters away before they saw it.

After waiting for a while, they returned to Iron Cross Street. One went to the nearby police station, while the other returned to Daffodil Street.

When Klein arrived at his front door, he adjusted his clothes and made sure that everything was alright before fishing out his keys and opening the door.

Melissa and Benson were in the living room, quietly doing assignments and reading books respectively under the light from the gas lamp.

Benson must be tired after toiling at work the entire day; yet, he perseveres in his studies after he comes home. What a determined man… I can't do that, all I can think about now is lying down… Klein glanced at his brother and smiled, giving a silent greeting by raising his hand.

Benson smiled and said, "I now understand the price behind a handsome salary."

"There's a price for everything in this world. There's something we must give before we can gain anything in return," Klein said, leaving his cane on the rack next to the door.

"That's apparently something Emperor Roselle said, right?" Melissa stopped writing and looked up.

The Tingen Technical School was different from universities and public schools. There was only two weeks for summer break, from late July to early August. Their lessons resumed the moment the hottest days were over.

"Is that so? I don't remember…" Klein replied, his expression a little rigid.

He took off his hat and headed upstairs. He intended to divine Trissy's whereabouts as soon as possible.

Suddenly, he heard his stomach rumble. He felt intense hunger pangs.

Oh right, I haven’t had dinner. But the note I left said that the security company would provide food and asked them not to leave any food for me… Seriously, Captain, you actually forgot about it… Klein’s expression changed several times as he intended to pretend that he was full.

At that moment, Melissa turned and looked at him. She pointed to the kitchen and said, “We left a small piece of lamb chop and a bowl of thick vegetable soup for you. There are a few sticks of bread left too.”

After saying this, she buried her head back into her work and muttered to herself, “I felt that meals provided by work wouldn’t be too good, probably making people lose their appetite…”

Chapter 126 - Divination Isn't All-Powerful

◆

Sis, you worry too much, no—you're just so meticulous! Klein was suddenly energized. He smiled and said, "Melissa, your concern is very reasonable. It's true that I'm actually a little hungry. Yeah, let me change and take a shower."

Although his mouth was already watering, it was even more important to confirm Instigator Trissy's whereabouts!

No one knew what insane measures that bastard would take in order to exact revenge on society!

"Okay." Melissa didn't lift her head but continued her revision.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein ran to the second floor and entered his bedroom.

He locked the door, took off his jacket, and underarm holster. Then, he took out a simple silver knife from the drawer.

After sealing his room with a spirituality wall, he took a breath, steadied his emotions, and walked four steps counterclockwise.

After the usual incantation, Klein appeared once again in the lofty palace above the gray fog. He was getting used to the mad ravings that he heard during the transportation process.

Having completed a few rituals that day, he massaged his temples as he was slightly tired. He willed a piece of brown goatskin to appear on the long bronze table.

Klein thought seriously, then wrote down the divination statement: "Trissy's whereabouts."

He wasn't sure if the name was written correctly, but he could use the girl's appearance and other detailed information as a guide as well.

He held the goatskin and leaned back into the chair. He recalled the things related to Trissy in his head, then recited the divination statement seven times.

He emptied his mind, closed his eyes, and entered a dream state with the aid of Cogitation.

In the illusory scene amidst the fog, he saw a steam engine that spurted dense smoke and sparks. He also saw the rows of leather seats in a clean train carriage.

The gentle and sweet-looking Trissy with her round face and long eyes sat near a window. There was a checkered fishnet hat on the table before her.

Klein made repeated attempts to confirm the train number, but he failed to discern it.

Soon, he couldn't stand the pressure and left his dream. The long bronze table and illusory crimson stars appeared before his eyes again.

"I could only confirm that Trissy took the steam locomotive and left Tingen. There weren't any more clues… Sigh, it seems like this mysterious space only helps me eliminate interferences, but it doesn't do much to enhance the standard of my divinations…" Klein rapped the edge of the table and thought about his next step.

Through the divination, he could be entirely certain that the target had once been Instigator Tris. The new Trissy, however, was already fleeing Tingen. Given the circumstances, he didn't think his new divination would help Dunn.

Klein quickly made a decision. "Captain already said that he would send a telegram to Backlund, Enmat Harbor, and other main stops along the railway, so they Trissy will be placed on the wanted list throughout the country. I won't report the divination result then, in case it would draw suspicion towards me…" Klein quickly made up his mind, because regardless of his warning, Dunn was already using the most appropriate measures to follow up on the matter.

Since he couldn't see the train number in the dream divination, using the spirit pendulum and other methods would be equally ineffective, even if he attempted to do so by process of elimination.

It was just like the situation with the red chimney.

At that moment, he felt mentally drained, so he didn't stay above the gray fog any longer but enveloped himself with his spirituality and simulated the feeling of falling.

When he "returned" to his room, his mind was filled with the thought of tasty, glistening mutton.

"I must add some fennel… Praise the Lady!" Klein swallowed his saliva, swiftly removed the spirituality wall, and opened his door.

†

The next morning at twenty minutes to nine, he entered the Blackthorn Security Company with his cane in hand.

"Good morning, Klein! I have good news!" Rozanne waved her hands excitedly from behind the reception desk.

Klein eyes lit up as he asked, "We caught Trissy?"

"Trissy? Who is she?" The green-dressed Rozanne looked lost.

"…You probably don't know her. What's the good news?" Klein redirected the topic.

Rozanne replied with a glowing smile, “The Captain’s request has been approved. The police department is going to transfer two police staff members who have come across supernatural incidents to be clerks here! I finally don’t need to frequently stay up all night! Praise the Lady!”

“That’s great news,” Klein echoed sincerely.

After exchanging a few more pleasantries with Rozanne, he went through the partition and went underground. He planned to continue with his mysticism lessons.

When he passed the Captain’s office and the Nighthawks’ recreation room, he popped his head in and looked around. He saw that Dunn, Leonard, and the rest were still there. It meant that the search and elimination investigation the night before had failed to return anything worthwhile. The rest would be handed over to the police department, so that they could take care of the tedious follow-up tasks.

At first, Klein wanted to chat with the Captain to get an update on the situation. But he saw that Captain was busy typing telegrams, so he decided not to disturb him. He could ask the Captain again at lunch.

He went underground by following the stairs and saw the two classic gas lamps in their metal racks. He saw the ever-quiet corridor which was lit up by the light behind the glass.

He breathed in the cold but refreshing breeze, took a few steps, and suddenly stopped.

He suddenly looked towards the gas lamp and his eyebrows gradually creased.

He had made a crucial mistake!

A mistake that could only be made by someone with knowledge from Earth!

In his divination above the gray fog the night before, Klein had seen Trissy taking a steam locomotive. Hence, he subconsciously believed that it was something happening at that moment.

But—this world had yet to invent electric lights or similar equipment. When the sky grew dark, there were almost no steam locomotives in operation that ferried humans. Klein, who was accustomed to trains which operated at night, had instinctively missed out on that fact!

In other words, it wasn't something that happened last night!

It was a scene from the future!

Which meant that it was going to happen that day or the day after!

Klein's heartstrings tightened and he paced back and forth. Then he went upstairs again.

He knocked and opened the door to the recreation room, and he saw that Leonard was reciting a poem by the window, looking helpless.

Klein ignored Kenley, Royale, and Seeka Tron who were playing cards. He looked towards Leonard and said, "I have a question for you."

"Would it be that you want to learn tricks to entertain the ladies?" Leonard teased, putting down Selected Poems by Roselle.

He exited the recreation room and followed Klein halfway down the stairs that led underground. He then looked into Klein's eyes and said with a chuckle, "It seems like you did a successful divination last night."

Klein didn't explain further but said straightforwardly, "I divined that Trissy will leave on a steam locomotive."

After their conversation at the workhouse in the West Borough, he didn't mind appearing slightly special before Leonard.

"Steam locomotive, the earliest train is at seven in the morning…" Leonard took out his pocket watch from his shirt and flipped it open to take a glance. “No time to waste! I’ll tell the Captain that I received a reliable tip.”

He quickly went upstairs and left the Blackthorn Security Company. After waited downstairs for a few minutes, he returned and went into Dunn Smith’s office.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief and watched the Captain send a telegram after gathering the other Nighthawks who were playing cards. They soon left out the door.

Recalling what happened earlier, he felt conflicted. It was a different lesson than the one he received from the death of the suited clown. He had committed a mistake with similar characteristics which made him seem to understand this lesson more, leaving a deeper impression on him.

Turning past the armory and entering the duty room, he took off his top hat and coat, then hung them onto the clothes rack naturally.

Old Neil had just finished making himself some hand-ground coffee. He happily took a sip and asked, “Would you like one?”

“Alright.” Klein sat down, as carefree as if he had returned home.

Old Neil glanced at him and frowned, quipping, “Still three cubes of sugar with a spoon of milk? You’re such a sweet tooth. This is harmful to your teeth and your body.”

“No, no, no, I only like it sweet when I’m drinking coffee. When I have grilled steak or roasted meat, I prefer rose salt, black pepper, fennel, and other condiments.” Klein always believed that he was a fan of all flavors.

Old Neil finished the coffee quickly. He pushed it over and said, “Do you want to take a break or start straightaway?”

“Let me settle down for a few minutes. The Captain and the team got a tip about Trissy's whereabouts, and they are on the way to the steam locomotive station. I wonder what the outcome will be…" Klein sighed.

Old Neil clicked his tongue and said, "Is the tip detailed enough? Are they sure which train it is?"

"No, it's not confirmed," Klein said, pursing his lips.

Old Neil suddenly laughed. "Under such circumstances, the possibility of failure is much higher than success. Trissy should be a Sequence 7 Beyonder and a Beyonder at that level won't be captured so easily. Heh heh, don't rely on divination, divination isn't all-powerful. You'll only obtain symbolic signs which are very easy to interpret them wrongly or ignore something."

Klein recalled the mistake that he made this time and felt melancholic. He nodded sincerely.

"Yeah, divination isn't all-powerful."

After he said that, he sighed. His mind, body, and soul suddenly entered a magical state. He leaned backwards slightly, intending to let out a breath. Just then, he suddenly heard an illusory shattering noise in his ear.

He felt something dissolving inside him, blending together with his spirit.

Klein half-closed his eyes and experienced the unique and indescribable feeling in silence.

Klein didn't need anyone to tell him that it was a result of the complete digestion of the Seer potion.

†

The first town that the Tussock River passed by after it flowed through Tingen City was called Wienia. It was also the first stop from Tingen to

Backlund for the steam locomotive.

On the platform, Trissy changed into a long beige dress and put on a woman's circular hat. Fine fishnet gauze hung down from the edge of her hat, covering half her face. Her appearance became blurry and indiscernible.

She had already sent a telegram to her partner in Tingen, to remind the other person to be careful. She told them that she had used money she burgled to buy a steam locomotive ticket to Backlund.

The reason Trissy didn't get on the train from Tingen but went downstream to Wienia was because she still had her instinct and rich experience as an assassin.

Woo!

A train let out a long and sharp whistle as the long metal behemoth chugged to a stop next to the platform while spurting smoke and sparks.

Trissy didn't carry any luggage and entered the first cabin. At the same time, she decided to get off the train after three stations and enter Backlund through other methods.

†

In the basement of Saint Selena Cathedral, Klein closed his eyes and leaned backwards in his seat.

He took in the complete digestion of the potion, and he faintly saw one illusory star after another. Those stars seemed to share a baffling connection with him, and they seemed to want to lump together and fuse as one.

After the indescribable feeling of hunger and thirst receded, Klein returned to normal and stopped having any additional experiences.

But my mind feels a lot more relaxed and pure… He opened his eyes and thought.

At that moment, he knew that he had become a real, complete Seer.

Chapter 127 - Laying the Foundations

The light of the gas lamp glowed through the glass, illuminating the guard room. Old Neil finished flipping through his newspaper, took a sip of coffee, and looked at Klein.

“How do you feel now? Have you calmed down? Or do you need a glass of wine, or an advance on your salary, or a day off?”

Klein, who had completely digested the Seer potion, was attempting to change his “switch” that activated his Spirit Vision with Cogitation. He didn’t want it to be too obvious.

The present him no longer needed to rely on a physical motion to activate his Spirit Vision. Therefore, he could use a more concealed approach to achieve his goal; for example, stroking the joints of his middle finger with his thumb in quick succession, or clicking twice with his left molar.

Klein considered the situations in which he needed to use his Spirit Vision while holding a revolver in one hand and a cane in the other. Finally, he settled on clicking his molar. His left molar would be used to activate the Spirit Vision, and his right molar to deactivate it.

After repeatedly suggesting to himself, he completed the change. He then opened his eyes and smiled.

“I was merely too concerned about the Captain’s operation. I don’t need to calm myself down.”

At the same time, he clicked his left molar twice and attempted to activate his Spirit Vision. He wanted to familiarize himself with this method as quickly as possible.

Cough! Cough! Cough! Old Neil started coughing violently. He coughed till his face turned red, like a cooked lobster.

“What happened?” Klein froze before asking in concern.

He scanned Old Neil’s aura seriously, only to notice that the colors representing his health were still normal, only a little dull due to his age.

Old Neil coughed for nearly twenty seconds before earning respite. He felt for his cup of coffee and slowly took a sip. “Everyone makes mistakes, ahem. I choked on my drink just now… Shall we begin our mysticism lessons for today?”

“Alright.” Klein silently clicked his right molars twice.

Klein was elated, yet frustrated that he had completely digested the Seer potion a week or two ahead of his prediction. He was naturally glad that he was freed from the risk of losing control and would advance soon, obtaining even more Beyonder powers. That was something anyone would be happy and excited about. But he was also frustrated, as it disrupted his plans and schedules.

Considering the fact that he still had to stay with the Tingen Nighthawks for some time, Klein thought that secretly advancing to Clown wasn’t the wisest choice. If he did so, he would be constantly worried about being exposed, and he would be unable to use his abilities when there were missions, making it even more dangerous for himself.

He planned to learn from Spirit Medium Daly and submit an application to the higher-ups. He would use his contributions to obtain the recipe and extraordinary ingredients before officially advancing into a

Sequence 8 Nighthawk.

But there was a difference between grasping a potion in a month and in a year. Klein could bear the scrutiny of the Holy Cathedral and become a talent for nurturing, but he didn't want the higher-ups to suspect him. He needed to find a convincing reason to explain his circumstances.

He had planned to use the time before the Seer potion was completely digested to lay some foundations with the Captain. For example, he would mention that he felt his spirituality become more active whenever he went to the Divination Club, or pretend to casually describe the laws of a Seer that he had derived from helping other people divine their fortunes. He could also mention that he didn't hear any voices that he shouldn't be hearing, or see things that are not for his eyes.

This way, the higher-ups of the Nighthawks would think that he had unintentionally learned something from Daly when completing his "mission" and had done a more thorough job than her.

This would make the higher-ups focus more on summarizing the laws and discovering the "acting method," reducing the suspicion placed on Klein.

That way, I could even help the Captain and the rest learn about the acting method… Klein added in his heart. He felt that Dunn Smith was a good captain. He had no glaring flaws other than his poor memory. Thus, he wanted to reduce the risk of Dunn losing control and make him more powerful.

Of course, Klein could also choose to apply after a year to avoid any risks. But the continuous coincidences and the red chimney he saw in his dream divination gave him no choice but to improve his abilities as soon as possible.

"I'll lay the foundation with the Captain three or four times over the next two weeks before formally submitting my request. At the same time, I can head over to the underground market to see if there are any of the necessary extraordinary ingredients. They will probably be very expensive…" Klein quickly made a decision and focused his attention once again on the mysticism lessons.

Time passed quickly as lunchtime slowly approached. Old Neil finished his coffee and cleared the stuff on the table as he laughed.

"Your mysticism lessons will come to an end soon. From the test just now, it would seem that you can create charms for yourself now."

"That's my plan for the next few days." Klein heaved a satisfied sigh.

Charms were different from the protective amulets he had given Benson and Melissa. They needed to be carved with the help of ritualistic magic, and they had certain unique abilities that could be used in battle.

But a low-grade charm couldn't do everything. The spirituality it contained would decrease over time and had to be renewed once every two weeks. Also, he needed to activate them with specific incantations; it was impossible to use them at will.

Furthermore, the charms wielded by the Nighthawks were still limited to the "domains" of the Evernight Goddess. Klein could only make three different kinds of charms for the time being. The first was the Slumber Charm, and its effect was similar to Dunn Smith's and Leonard Mitchell's ability to put someone to sleep with their singing. The second was the Requiem Charm, which was able to soothe ghosts, souls, zombies, and the like. It could also deal with vengeful and evil spirits to a certain extent. The last was the Dream Charm; its abilities allowed the wielder to enter the dream of someone else.

These abilities were similar to the abilities of the Midnight Poet and Nightmare from the Sleepless Sequence, so Dunn and Leonard had no use for these charms. Corpse Collector Frye, Sleepless Royale, and Kenley would bring one or two along with them, but they hadn't needed them in a long time. They frequently brought their charms back to Old Neil so he could "recharge" them.

Old Neil glanced at Klein and smiled.

"I remember you saying that you practiced a lot this month and have run out of materials. Are you going to the underground market?"

Klein was taken aback at first before he nodded with a pained heart.

"Yes."

He clearly knew the prices of the ingredients. He could only hope that he succeeded in making the charms on his first try instead of wasting materials…

After being presented with the mission of bringing lunch underground, Klein put on his jacket and hat before returning to the Blackthorn Security Company on the second floor with cane in hand.

As he walked past the recreation room, he saw that Leonard and the rest had already returned and were enjoying their lunches.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He knocked on the Captain's door.

"Please come in." Dunn's mellow voice sounded.

Klein pushed the door open and took off his hat.

"Captain, did you catch Instigator Trissy?"

Dunn rubbed his temples and shook his head in exhaustion. "We didn't find her at Tingen Station, but according to the telegraph we received from Backlund, a passenger saw her in the first class carriage of the earliest train. Regrettably, she got off in the middle of the journey."

"How regrettable." Klein sighed even though he had expected this. "Divination isn't all-powerful…"

Dunn’s gray eyes swept past him.

“There’s no need to be depressed. It isn’t easy to capture a Sequence 7 Beyonder. At the very least, we disrupted Trissy’s evil ritual and saved at least forty innocent lives. Furthermore, we understand her situation now. She can no longer commit crimes as she wishes.”

“If she tries to do something similar, she’ll be noticed, discovered, and reported at any time. Sooner or later, she’ll be captured by the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind. It’s even possible that she’ll be killed.”

“Let’s hope that is the case. May the Goddess bless us.” Klein drew the crimson moon on his chest.

Following that, he paused and pondered over his words.

“Captain, I haven’t heard unwanted voices or seen unwanted visions for over a week now. Also, that’s true even when I am in Cogitation or using my Spirit Vision.”

“Really?” Dunn creased his brows, puzzled.

Klein immediately elaborated, “I feel that I’m not far off from achieving full control over the Seer potion. This could be due to my frequent visits to the Divination Club and helping others tell their fortune.”

“…Why do you think so?” Dunn immediately changed his seating posture, his expression lost.

Klein added a stammer into his sentence. “E-every time I head to the Divination Club, I can feel my spirituality becoming more active, and every time I help someone divine something, my heart, body, and soul become more relaxed. I’ve also come up with a set of, well, a set of rules for a Seer. I’ve been following it strictly, just like how a Mystery Pryer can”do as you wish, but do no harm.” I found inspiration from this maxim and tried coming up with a maxim designed for Seers.

"I think that this might be an effective way to help Beyonders gain control over their potions faster and reduce the risk of losing control. Just like Madam Daly who has always been a Spirit Medium."

It was unknown when Dunn had taken out his pipe. He placed it at his nose and took a whiff, seemingly forgetting about Klein as he thought for a few minutes.

"A remarkable guess, and an interesting trial…"

Klein had only wanted to briefly mention it this time around to set up an underlying reason, so he did not say anything further. He switched to a half-joking tone and said, "Perhaps I'll be the fastest Nighthawk in history to gain control of a Sequence 9 potion."

"May the Goddess watch over you," Dunn blessed him, not taking him seriously. He then slipped into deep thought once again.

Witnessing this, Klein turned around and said his goodbyes before leaving the Captain's office.

He was closing the door to the room when he suddenly thought of another difficult question. How in the world was he going to act as a Clown!

Must I join a circus? There are no fixed circuses in Tingen, they're all roaming ones… Klein's expression became a little bitter.

Being a Seer was still a rather respectable occupation. Klein would still be able to hold his head up high even if he was spotted by someone he knew. But if he became a Clown, there was no way his reputation would hold!

Perhaps there are other ways of acting as a Clown. There were no circuses or clowns when the Blasphemy Slate was revealed to the world… Forget it, I won't have the chance to advance for another two or three weeks, so there's no need to deliberate over this for now. Klein avoided the question and headed to the reception area. He walked toward Rozanne, Mrs. Orianna, and Bredt to fetch his and Old Neil’s lunch.

Chapter 128 - The Impoverished Fool

◆

After eating lunch, Klein only rested for half an hour before he rushed to the Shooting Club to practice with his revolver. He didn't dare to relax, not one bit.

After practicing his shooting skills day after day and expending more than a thousand bullets, he was finally shooting well enough to earn Dunn Smith's basic approval. He was pretty good at fixed-target shooting.

After practicing for a while, he put away his revolver and took the public carriage to a stop close to the house of his combat teacher, Gawain. Then, he walked for ten minutes before arriving at the door.

He changed into his knight training suit that had been left to dry in the sun. After running, skipping rope, lifting weights, squatting, and other exercises, not to mention footwork and punching training, he was covered in sweat and felt exhausted.

"Take a break for fifteen minutes." Gawain's blond white hair and deep facial lines made him look hard and stern. He took out his pocket watch and flipped it open to glance at the time.

Since they first began training, he had ultimately maintained his silence. He only spoke to Klein when there was a need to switch training methods or to correct one of Klein's mistakes whenever one arose.

Klein panted for air, but he didn't dare to rest straightaway. He paced back and forth slowly. The most direct feedback of his combat training was that he was much tanner. His skin had turned bronze under the sun.

Gawain put away his pocket watch and stood next to the crude training field behind his house. He crossed his arms as he watched Klein cool down. He was as quiet as a marble statue.

“Teacher, besides fighting with fists, would you teach me how to use a straight sword, broadsword, rapier, and spear?” Klein asked proactively. He was in a good mood, as he had just digested the Seer potion.

He had seen weapons like the straight sword and rapier in Gawain’s collection room before. There was also chest armor and full body armor. He knew that Gawain wasn’t only good at fighting hand-to-hand.

Bathed in sunlight, Gawain swept his gaze at Klein. He lowered his voice and replied, “It’s useless for you to learn any of those. Those weapons have all fallen behind the times, and their only place is in museums or the private collections of collectors…”

He fell silent for a few seconds before adding with a voice that had experienced the vicissitudes of life, “They have been eliminated… You should focus on guns. Even combat is merely supplementary.”

Klein looked at his listless teacher and chuckled as he spoke.

“I don’t think so.”

“Every minister, every Member of Parliament, every general, everyone of them thinks so,” Gawain said, clenching his teeth.

Klein stopped and acted like he was a true keyboard warrior. He responded with ease and fluency, “No, they have merely retreated from the front lines of a battlefield. They still have their uses elsewhere.

“Why does combat have to be used against firearms? They could be used together. I believe a person who is more flexible, swifter in action, and quicker in response could use guns in a more effective manner."

When he saw Gawain's eyes suddenly sharpen, Klein turned smug and continued, "The other weapons aren't eliminated either. They only need some enhancement to be more portable…"

"…We could form a squad with high maneuverability. A group that's designed to circle the front lines and launch an attack from behind the enemy and fight right to their core. In such a small-scale surprise attack, a warrior who has outstanding hand-to-hand abilities and familiarity with various kinds of weapons could play an important role. You can imagine such a scene…"

Klein gave full play to his ability of knowing a bit of everything. He mixed and matched all the combat tactics the special forces on Earth had and described them to his teacher.

He wasn't sure when Gawain's breathing became heavier. He stood there without moving an inch, seemingly unwilling to break the scenes he imagined.

Klein stole a glance at the man's reaction. He felt smug in his head as he cleared his throat and said in a restrained manner, "Teacher, what do you think about my plan? Is there any possibility of realizing it?"

Gawain's body quivered as though he just awoken from a dream. He looked deeply into Klein's eyes and said, "Your break is doing you well. Repeat the whole set of exercises ten times."

Huh? Klein looked lost.

Very soon, he started running and snapped back to reality. He roared in his heart, Ten sets? Teacher, no!

I don't want to celebrate my complete digestion of the Seer potion like this!

Hey, didn't you gain any inspiration at all?…

Looking at Klein running towards the other side of the training field, Gawain suddenly uncrossed his arms and covered his face with one hand.

He closed his eyes tightly, and the wrinkles on his face were deep and obvious.

†

After nearly puking from exhaustion, Klein took a shower, changed clothes, and bade a still silent Gawain farewell. He took the public carriage and left.

He didn't return home directly but headed to Evil Dragon Bar near the harbor. He planned to inquire about the price of Beyonder ingredients and buy items for making charms.

On the way, Klein kept his mind on his tiny stash that he was carrying with him. He forced himself to stay alert and reached his destination with great difficulty.

"I need to save four pounds for the remaining balance that I owe to the detective company. I can only use three pounds and five soli tonight…" He touched the paper notes in his pocket before grabbing his cane and alighting the carriage.

At that moment, the sun had already begun slipping below the horizon. All the houses were gradually tainted with a twilight luster. The boxing matches and rat-baiting with dogs were already warming up in Evil Dragon Bar.

After passing through the billiard room and numerous rooms, Klein finally entered the underground market.

He looked to the left and right, but he didn't see Monster Ademisaul who was always active around there.

“Didn’t Old Neil say that Ademisaul only managed to survive because the boss of Evil Dragon Bar feeds him?” Klein asked himself curiously.

As a Nighthawk, he remained vigilant to matters like that. He approached the brawny man guarding the door and asked, “Where’s Ademisaul?”

The brawny man replied without a smile, “I have no idea where he’s sleeping. He’s been like that lately. He lies down in shivers and chants ‘Dead, dead, all corpses, everyone has to die.’”

What scenes did he see this time? What triggered him? Klein creased his eyebrows slightly and asked for more details. He wanted to know where Ademisaul was sleeping, but the guard didn’t know either.

When I’m done, I’ll look for him via divination to see what he’s been through… After taking note of this, Klein walked towards one of the two rooms at the end of the trading market.

According to Old Neil, the room on the left was for loans and repayment, while the room on the right was for the buying and selling of precious items, including Beyonder ingredients.

When he opened the door to enter the room on the right, Klein realized that there was a partition that separated it into two spaces, the inside and the outside. There were another three customers waiting on the outside.

He lowered his silk top hat and queued behind the three customers. He leaned his body forward and supported himself with the cane as he waited in silence.

Soon, the door of the partition opened and a customer in a bluish-gray harbor worker uniform came out. He kept his head low and left in a hurry.

Klein lightly clicked his left molar twice and looked at the man with Spirit Vision. He then looked at the other three customers. There was nothing wrong with them other than the usual minor illnesses that people had.

After another ten plus minutes, it was finally his turn.

He opened the door and entered the room that was lit with a kerosene lamp.

He locked the door and took the seat that belonged to the customer. He looked towards the old man wearing a black felt hat opposite him.

“I’d like to know what Beyonder ingredients you have, and at what prices they are being sold.”

The cheek muscles of the elder were droopy and the wrinkles at the corner of his eyes were deep, but his body was well-built. He didn’t find Klein’s request weird because many customers weren’t willing to let another person know what they wanted to buy before they confirmed that the seller had it available. Generally, they wished to be introduced to all options.

The old man flipped to the newest pages of the notebook, stole a glance at Klein, and took a sip of his honey wine before he said, “Water Ghost’s brain tissue costs from three to fifteen pounds depending on how intact it is. Star Crystal, 150 pounds per 50 grams. 200 pounds for one Queen Bee Grass. 170 pounds for an adult black-spotted frog… 280 pounds for Human-faced Rose, but there’s only one…”

Klein controlled his emotional response. After he listened to the old man’s introduction, he was surprised that an underground trading place like this had fewer than thirty Beyonder ingredients.

As he touched the notes worth seven pounds in his pocket and thought of Miss Justice’s attitude towards a thousand pounds, he sighed.

“Unfortunately, there is nothing I want.”

Without waiting for the elder to pose any further questions, he quickly turned around to open the door and made an exit.

He returned to the underground market and looked around blankly. He stood there for a while and sighed with a bitter smile.

I'm probably the poorest boss among all the secret organizations… That only steeled his resolve of getting ingredients internally from the Nighthawks or through exchanges with Justice or The Hanged Man.

After circling the underground market twice, Klein picked and purchased ingredients to make charms, such as a partially-finished silver piece, herbal powders needed for rituals, and natural ores. He spent one pound and fifteen soli in total.

My private stash of money only has five pounds ten soli left. Excluding the final payment to the detective, I still have one pound ten soli… After Klein silently did the math regarding his financial situation, he felt helpless.

Of course, he knew very well that he had only been working for just over a month. If the time span had been extended to a year, he should have been able to save up more than a hundred pounds.

"In another two weeks, I'll have to tell Benson and Melissa that I've gotten a raise to three pounds. We can hire a maidservant, but I won't have a private stash of money anymore…" Klein thought as he walked towards the exit of the underground market.

Just then, he saw Old Neil in his classic black robe entering slowly.

"Got everything?" Old Neil greeted with a chuckle.

"Yes," Klein answered frankly.

Old Neil tsked immediately. "You came really early."

"That's because I'm still hungry, but you've already had your dinner."

Klein chatted casually with Old Neil.

After a while, the boss of Evil Dragon Bar, Swain, walked in with his navy officer uniform draped over him. He approached the two of them with a mask of solemnity and lowered his voice.

“I need your help.”

“What happened?” Old Neil suddenly turned serious, and Klein couldn’t help but feel a tug at his heartstrings.

Swain’s brown hair was messy, and there was a strong smell of alcohol in his breath. He replied in a low voice, “A member from the Mandated Punishers has lost control nearby. We have to finish him before he harms any commoners!”

Chapter 129 - Rampager

◆ ◆ ◆

Lost control? Klein's heart tightened as he nearly blurted out his question.

Even though Dunn and Old Neil had frequently emphasized the possibilities of losing control and the harm it caused, this was the first time he was experiencing an incident like that. He felt a little horrified, a little lost, a little scared, and a little saddened. He felt extremely mixed emotions.

"Among the cases that we… have to deal with annually, a quarter of them were a result of Beyonders who lost control… And among the quarter of cases, a large number of them are our teammates." Dunn's words flashed past Klein's mind, slowing his reaction.

Old Neil, who had experienced many incidents like this, immediately asked, "Where is the Rampager? What do you need us to do?"

Klein was taken aback from hearing this. He had believed that a sleazy, "half-retired personnel" like Old Neil would find an excuse to reject Swain's request or extort a huge sum in exchange for his help. Never did Klein expect Old Neil to participate without any hesitation, not minding the differences between Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers.

Klein suddenly understood something when he looked at the serious Old Neil. It didn't matter if they were Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind. Their aim was to stop supernatural powers from harming the innocent and maintain peace and stability in Tingen. If they were met with a dangerous and urgent situation, their sense of duty would propel them to help without hesitation!

Swain answered succinctly, “Be my support!”

He didn’t explain why the person lost control or where the Rampager was. Instead, he made his way to the exit quickly.

This ex-captain of the Mandated Punishers was clearly an old alcoholic, but Klein realized that he could not keep up with the man’s pace. He needed to break into a jog to ensure that he was not left behind.

He turned his head to look at Old Neil, only to see the old Mystery Pryer break into a run.

The three of them didn’t pay any attention to the gazes of the guards on their way there. One of them had an old navy uniform draped over him, another was in a dark classic robe, and the other in a black trench coat. They charged out of the billiard room and into Evil Dragon Bar.

The customers who were drinking shifted their gazes from the rat-baiting competition to Klein and company.

“Is that Boss Swain?”

“Where’s he going in such a hurry?”

“Did someone default on their loan?”

†

Amidst the soft murmurs, some of the customers focused their attention back to the cage. They once again broke into an uproar, venting the stresses of their day. However, some of the more perceptive customers felt a faint sense of unease.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein, Old Neil, and Swain ran across the road and entered the harbor district.

“On that boat.” Swain slowed down and pointed at a cargo ship not far away. “Two Mandated Punishers are circling the Rampager, preventing him from entering the Tussock River. Help me influence him and bring him under control. Leave the rest to me.”

Old Neil panted for air and said, “Alright, b-but you have to give me a minute. Phew, a minute to recover.”

Swain nodded and didn’t say any more. He charged up to the ship and joined the fight.

Upon hearing the sounds of combat on the ship, Old Neil looked at the somewhat nervous Klein. He took out a piece of silver about the size of a baby’s palm from a hidden pocket near his waist. He then passed the silver to Klein and said, “Slumber Charm. The incantation to activate this amulet is the phrase ‘Evernight’ in ancient Hermes. After you finish the incantation, inject your spirituality into the charm and then throw it at the target after three seconds.”

“Alright!” Klein extended his hand to receive the charm and felt moved.

This charm was carved with Hermes incantations on both sides, as well as the corresponding symbols, Path Numbers, and the spell’s characteristics. He didn’t need to activate his Spirit Vision to feel the deep, serene power flowing within the charm.

Old Neil stood up straight and took out a similar charm from his hidden pocket and held it in his palm. He joked as he walked toward the cargo ship, “Do not be too nervous, relax and think about something else. For example, I lent you that charm. If you’re going to use it, remember to make one for me in return. Of course, you can wait till next month, when you receive a new quota of materials before you do so.”

This… He really is the experienced Old Neil… Klein placed the charm into his left pocket, reached into his holster, took out his revolver, and adjusted the hammer and drum.

“I don’t feel that nervous anymore…” He had a gun in one hand and his cane in the other. He made his way up the steps with Old Neil and boarded the cargo ship.

This cargo ship had obvious signs of age. Although it was powered by steam and had a chimney, it retained its past fixtures such as its mast and sails. Furthermore, only its surface and some other portions were plated with metal; the remaining sections of the ship were still made of wood.

As the sounds of the battle intensified, Klein and Old Neil suddenly heard a loud noise amid the din while searching for a way to enter the cabin.

The wooden cabin was instantly shattered, its fragments flying everywhere. A figure fell through the hole and crashed onto the side of the ship.

Klein didn’t have the luxury of time to evaluate the man’s injuries. His gaze was focused on the monster which was charging towards the hole.

The monster was over 1.8 meters in height and was wearing a tattered shirt and trouser. Its ankles were covered with dark green scales, and a layer of skin had formed between its fingers and toes, as if they were the webbed limbs of an aquatic creature.

It had a head covered in wrinkles, still barely resembling a human. Its scales were coated with a sticky fluid that continuously dripped onto the floor.

Sizzle!

The sticky dark-green liquid corroded the deck slightly, leaving visible marks behind.

Bam! Swain punched the monster from the side, causing it to stagger two steps to the side.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Even with the ridiculous muscles Swain had, he was clearly inferior to the monster. Despite having his punches and kicks connect, they were unable to smash through its scales and cause physical harm. Swain was momentarily reduced to a wretched state as he staggered.

If not for Swain's astounding sense of balance and the efforts of the other Mandated Punishers to shoot and suppress the monster, Klein suspected that this blue-eyed elder would've been beaten to death by the monster.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Swain took multiple steps back, then advanced once again, like a moth to a flame.

But Klein could sense that he was accumulating something, waiting for something.

Bam!

Swain was sent to retreat, his body obscuring another Mandated Punisher's field of vision.

The monster took this chance to charge towards the opening.

It wanted to escape the ship and jump into the Tussock River!

Looking at the wrinkled, sticky head of the monster, Klein lifted his right hand and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The silver demon hunting bullet hit the monster's body just as he predicted. But it had only hit its scales and failed to fully penetrate its body.

The monster let out a ear-piercing shriek before it exerted strength with its feet and pounced at Klein.

When a stinking fishy smell hit him, Klein suddenly hunched down and rolled to the side.

Clang! He felt the ship shake as fragments had hit it as well.

At the same time, he heard an old but deep voice recite an incantation in ancient Hermes, “Evernight!”

Klein rolled over two more times. He couldn’t care about his cane as he lifted his head and revolver in a fluster. All he saw was Old Neil tossing out his charm calmly, despite being incredibly close to the monster.

The piece of silver was instantly swallowed by a dark red flame and released the faint sound of an explosion.

A deep, serene power spread forth. The monster, who had almost destroyed the side of the ship, rocked. Its movements became sluggish.

Swain charged out from the cabin. He approached the creature and pulled back his arm, hitting the monster like a jackhammer. His punches connected with the head of the monster.

But he could barely inflict a wound, let alone cause any fatal damage. But Klein could sense that whatever the blue-eyed elder was accumulating had finally reached its peak.

Boom! The monster seemed to recover. It flailed its arm and made Swain take five steps back in retreat. Each of his steps caused cracks to form on the deck.

Seeing that the monster was about to turn around and jump off the cargo ship, Klein took out the Slumber Charm from his pocket in a hurry.

After which, he expertly recited the phrase in Ancient Hermes, “Evernight!”

Suddenly, Klein felt the silver charm in his hand turn ice-cold, as if it was made from snow.

He didn’t think too much about it. He injected his spirituality into the charm, then pulled his arm back before throwing it forward, sending the charm flying towards the monster.

Meanwhile, the murloc-like monster had jumped into the air.

The dark red flames illuminated the surrounding darkness and the faint explosion was like a prelude to a slumber as it quickly radiated outwards.

Bam!

The monster fell onto the dock, squirming into a ball. It was temporarily in a half-asleep state.

Klein was just about to rush to the side of the boat and shoot at the monster’s head when he suddenly saw Swain charge out and jump over, his navy uniform already long gone.

He changed his posture in the air, his muscles tightening.

Using his spiritual perception, Klein could feel something that had been suppressed erupt. Swain descended from the sky and slammed into the body of the monster. He then straightened his back and landed a heavy fist on the head of the monster.

Crack!

The monster’s skull shattered into pieces. Dark red blood and grayish brain matter laced with the green sticky liquid splattered all over the ground.

“This is one of the abilities of a Folk of Rage?” Klein muttered to himself as he stood near the broken side of the ship.

Old Neil held his left arm and leaned over to look at what had happened below.

At that moment, Swain was standing straight. He stared at the monster under his feet that had just lost its life.

He took out a metal flask and opened the lid. He drank a good half of the liquor before tilting the flask, pouring the remaining liquor onto the monster.

After finishing this, Swain looked like he had aged considerably, his back hunching a little.

Old Neil sighed as he looked at the scene below. He whispered to Klein, "I know this Mandated Punisher who lost control. He had followed Swain for almost thirty years, once clearing water ghosts who had been killing people on the shore. He also captured evil Beyonders who were trying to escape through the Tussock River…"

He didn't continue, but Klein understood what he wanted to say: A guard who had made many contributions and killed countless monsters ended up becoming a monster himself.

This was not an isolated incident. It was a possible outcome that many members of the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind would one day face.

TL Note: Hi, CKtalon here, the translator of LoM. I've included the author's notes before the book went Premium in China below.

Author's Notes:

It has been two months since LoM was first released, and it's time to go Premium.

In the past two months, I nearly didn't say much in the Author's Notes or interact much with you. The main reason is that I'm increasingly convinced that the best communication between author and reader is inside the novel. I will write whatever I wish to express or describe inside the story, so there's no need for me to say anything else.

Yes, back to LoM, I probably had this idea to find the joy from first coming into contact with web novels. That feeling of "wow, there can be such a world" or "there's actually such a magical world."

Back then, every book presented a variety of different and interesting worlds. It always exposed me to more, making me unable to extricate myself from those worlds as they expand my imagination. Of course, it has to do with me having little exposure to similar novels.

Therefore, when I felt that I had made sufficient preparations in creating the framework of a relatively new world and an interesting and amazing system, I began this book with uneasiness and courage.

With "acting" the 22 Pathways as core, with 220 potions and 220 "jobs," this is a part that I hope the most that can interest everyone. In addition, it mixes in Cthulu mythos, SCP Foundation elements, and the vibes of the first Industrial Revolution's era and a steampunk world.

I read many books and created many settings, but I know that what's most important is to carefully tell this story. I took my time to tell it, which is why the first volume's pace is extremely slow. It's also why chapters consisting of more than 410,000+ Chinese characters (255,000+ English words) were released free. I wanted to honestly develop the plot and accentuate the characters to portray the world. I didn't seek so-called climaxes and presented the scenes in my heart to you.

Thanks to MAM's writing, I was able to have standards that can attract others when writing slice of life parts, allowing me to be equipped with the ability and writing flair needed to honestly tell a story.

In the past, I learned how to express, or it could be said that every writer or author can innately express. But now, I feel that I've begun restraining myself. Many a time, I would not describe it, but use actions, speech and expressions to present the emotions, without any inner monologue. I might not even use actions, speech, and expression, just describing it coldly, like the chapter with the female lead workers. It's also my wish to maintain standards at critical points in LoM.

This book's various frameworks are probably the most complete one among all my books. Look forward to how I handle everything.

This is my thoughts and attempts for this book. I hope everyone will like it. I wish you can support me by paying for Premium chapters; after all, I still need to make a livelihood. I still need to meet the demands of my wife…

I've always been a normal person, and I've never had any doubts to that. At the same time, I'm also a person who's very lazy and have many personality problems.

I once thought of organizing my own fan club like other authors, but, aiyah, it's really frustrating and tiring. Then, there was no more 'thens.'

I once thought of having a Weibo[1] to amass some popularity, but, aiyah, it's really frustrating and tiring. Then, there was no more 'thens.' I've already lost track of the last time I updated on Weibo.

I made a public WeChat account and attempted writing somethings, but, aiyah, it's really frustrating and tiring. Then, there are updates only once in a while.

I attempted to hire others to help me run the social media account, but I always find it awkward and embarrassing seeing the content posted by others. So, I stopped it.

Phew, I wish to be a mediator for myself. Admit it, you are a lazy person. You are a person who is flawed when it comes to social interactions. You are a thin skinned person who wants face at the cost of your life. You are a person who doesn't like getting disturbed by various miscellaneous matters. You are just like it is to wash a pig is to waste both water and soap.

Perhaps, what I can do well and am willing to do well is to write novels, the depiction of the story in my heart.

That is how I reconcile with myself, not to live on awkwardly or force myself to become popular. For the public account, I'll post something when I think of it. If there's nothing, forget it. Well, reconciliation is just an artistic way of saying convincing. The accurate description should be to live in self-abandonment. *Rubs hands nefariously.*

After this communication, we will have Premium chapters for the next update. I'll make my plea here for you to support Premium and vote with your Power Stones. There will be a mass release! Really, I have a stockpile!

Well, there will at least be 5, maybe 6!

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Chinese Twitter.

Chapter 130 - Backlund's Secret Gathering

Klein looked at Swain standing before the monster's corpse before looking sideways towards the Mandated Punisher who was helping his semi-conscious partner up by the arm. Klein suddenly felt an indescribable sadness.

It was almost impossible for members of the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind to be known as heroes. The things they did were never made known to the public but only hidden in confidential dockets. But the danger and pain they endured were ever so real.

Perhaps there would be a day when my enemy will be one of my teammates… Klein sighed silently. He felt the heavy weight that all Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind carried.

At that moment, Old Neil let out a sigh.

“Let’s go. Let’s not disturb them.”

“Okay.” Klein picked up his cane. Just as he widened his stride, he suddenly noticed that Old Neil was still holding his left hand. He asked, concerned, “Are you hurt?”

Old Neil chuckled briefly before saying, “I got stabbed by one of the shrapnel earlier. If I was still young, I definitely would’ve been able to dodge it. Luckily, it’s just a small cut.”

He moved his right hand slightly to let Klein see the tiny wound that was still lightly bleeding on the back of his left hand.

After he confirmed that it wasn't a big issue, Klein walked off along the gangway as he sighed.

"Mr. Neil, you're much calmer than I imagined. Despite being less than two meters away from the monster, you could still chant the incantation calmly and use the charm."

Although the rampaging Mandated Punisher had leaped towards Klein in the form of a monster, Old Neil was physically very close to him the entire time.

Old Neil chucked at the compliment.

"I'm an experienced Nighthawk. Among the dangerous things that I've done, what happened just now isn't even in my top ten. Once, when I was patrolling Raphael Cemetery with Dunn, I had no idea that a corpse had turned into a zombie and left its tomb to lie in ambush in the shadows of the trees. I passed by without noticing it at all since I was looking for some hidden spot. Heh, you know what I mean. In the end, he leapt onto my back and seized my throat."

Klein felt gripped by terror when he heard the recollection as he voiced out his guess.

"And under such a situation, you were still calm enough to use a charm? Or did you use some spell that a Mystery Pryer could cast quickly?"

Old Neil stole a glance at him and chortled. "No, Dunn managed to drag that zombie into a slumber in time. I'm telling you this story to tell you that, as a Nighthawk, you not only have to believe in yourself, you also have to trust your teammates too."

Klein fell silent for a few seconds. Then, he replied both sincerely and jokingly, "Mr. Neil, you are so wise today."

Old Neil did a tiny hop and found his footing on the pier. He replied in disdain, “That’s because you only get to know the most trivial side of me usually.”

The two of them left the harbor and walked towards Evil Dragon Bar.

Klein put away his revolver, set his cane aside, and took off his jacket. Under the light of the gas street lamp, he started checking if there was any damage to his jacket.

“How lucky. There are only a few splinters and a patch that got dirtied…” He removed the splinters and roughly patted the dust away. Then, he put it back on.

Old Neil looked at him with a smile and mimicked his tone by adding leisurely. “What a pity, there’s no way to claim compensation.”

Klein was temporarily at a loss for words.

I’m not such a person! He emphasized in his heart.

As the public carriage arrived, Klein took out his silver vine-leaf pocket watch and flipped it open to check the time.

“If there’s nothing else, I have to head home,” he turned to tell Old Neil.

Old Neil nodded slightly and said, “Enjoy your dinner at home. You don’t need to think about the Slumber Charm. I’ll get Swain to compensate me. He’s a rich man after all. Of course, I won’t go today. I have to consider his mood.”

Klein opened his mouth, but in the end, he only said, “…Thank you for your generosity.”

He boarded the carriage quickly and returned to Daffodil Street. It was already past seven in the evening, and the sky had already grown dark.

Klein took out his keys to open the door and saw Melissa taking off her fishnet hat and setting it on the clothes rack. He smiled and did small talk.

"You just got back?"

Then, his mixed emotions suddenly vanished, and he felt relaxed and warm.

"There was a practical lesson in school today," Melissa explained seriously.

Klein sniffed and smelled the fragrance of food. He was stunned and asked subconsciously, "Then, who's cooking dinner?"

The moment he finished his sentence, both of them answered the question in unison, "Benson!"

Their tone had a hint of alarm.

Benson, who had heard their conversation, walked out of the kitchen. While wiping his hands on an apron, he said, "Do you have no confidence in my cooking? I remember that before Melissa learned how to cook, you two would wait for me to come home and watch me cook with anticipation. Actually, cooking is so easy. You want potato beef stew? Put in the beef first, then the potatoes, then add some seasoning…"

Klein and Melissa exchanged glances and remained silent.

Putting aside his cane and took off his hat, Klein turned around and smiled.

"I think it's time to hire a maidservant. It's very unhealthy to not eat dinner on time."

"But I don't want to have a stranger next to us when we chat. That'll make me feel uncomfortable," Melissa said, subconsciously finding an excuse to object.

Klein spoke with a smile as he took off his jacket.

"I don't mind…"

Just then, his expression froze, and he stopped what he was doing.

I almost took off my jacket. I still have a revolver at my armpit…

Ahem. He cleared his throat and pretended nothing happened. "Don't mind her. When we get home, we can let the maidservant rest in her room. I doubt any maidservant would dislike resting. Hmm, we must find a maidservant who's willing to learn how to cook."

He didn't want to endure the torture of a cuisine that left him guessing in the future.

Benson stood at the kitchen and nodded in agreement.

"When we have time, we can go over to Tingen Family Servant Assistance Association. They have a great deal of experience and many resources in this field."

"Alright, it's decided then!" Klein ignored Melissa's unwilling look.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough, Viscount Glaint's residence.

Audrey Hall left the party with her personal maid, Annie. They came to the second floor and entered the bedroom that the Viscount had prepared.

She took off her glamorous dress and her lightweight dancing heels slowly with Annie's assistance. She then put on a black hooded robe that she had prepared ahead of time.

Pulling up the hood, Audrey stood before the full mirror and examined herself.

She saw that more than half her face was covered by the shadow of her hood, and only her beautiful lips were clearly exposed.

Long black robe, face hidden by shadows, a mysterious feeling… This is something I've been dreaming of wearing all this time! Audrey thought to herself happily.

Worried, she added a blue boat-shaped soft hat under her hood. With the fine checkered fishnet drooping down, her facial features became even more indiscernible.

"Not bad, that's it!" Audrey stuffed her feet into leather ankle boots, looked to the side, and told Annie, "Wait for me here. No matter who comes, do not open the door."

Annie looked at her helplessly and said, "But you have to make sure that your trip doesn't take more than an hour."

"You should trust me. I have kept my promise every single time in the past." Audrey smiled and leaned in towards her personal maidservant. She hugged her and kissed her cheek as etiquette demanded.

Then, she walked quickly and pulled up her hood. Turning around, she exited the bedroom through a secret door.

She walked all the way down and came to the side door of the viscount's residence where she saw that there was already a carriage waiting there.

Glaint stood amidst the shadows as he glanced at Audrey and complimented sincerely, "By dressing up like this, you are really, yeah—like the description Emperor Roselle often used—very cool."

"Thank you." Audrey pulled up an imaginary skirt and curtsied elegantly.

The two of them got into the carriage and left the villa. They arrived at a house about ten minutes away.

Outside the house, Audrey saw Apprentice Fors Wall and her friend, Arbiter Xio Derecha, whom she had been seeing recently.

Fors's slightly wavy brown hair and her light blue eyes showed a natural laziness. She pointed at Xio Derecha next to her and said, "She's an excellent persuader, capable of helping you get things that you want."

Xio Derecha was slightly shorter, about 150 cm at most. Her facial features were soft, but she seemed pretty young and immature.

Although her shoulder length blond hair was messy and unkempt, and she was in a traditional knight training suit, she carried an indescribable look of dignity and a convincing charm.

Audrey had met her a few times. She smiled faintly and greeted, "Miss Xio, can I trust you?"

"You don't have to worry at all." Xio Derecha smiled and gestured with her hand.

Just as she walked to follow Audrey and Viscount Glaint, they heard a sudden thud.

Audrey looked towards the source of the sound and saw that a triangular blade coruscating with a cold glimmer had fallen beside Xio Derecha's leg.

Audrey and Xio Derecha exchanged looks, simultaneously at a loss for words.

After nearly twenty seconds, Xio Derecha quickly squatted and picked up the triangular blade and hid it on her body.

"We have to prevent the occurrence of an accident. Some people lack rationality, and they aren't convinced easily," Xio Derecha explained seriously.

Audrey nodded and replied with a clear voice, “I believe you…”

“These are tools to convince those b*stards to talk to us calmly,” Fors added, looking sideways at the lawn.

The quartet didn’t continue conversing and walked a few steps forward. They knocked on the wooden door with three long and two short knocks.

The door squeaked and opened. Slowly, using her Spectator state, Audrey looked into the house that had many people sitting around randomly. They employed various methods such as hoods or masks to conceal their looks. Some didn’t even bother and exposed their faces openly.

Almost instantly, Audrey noticed a black-robed man on a single seat sofa.

That man wore a hood too, hiding his looks under a shadow.

He looked at all the guests in silence, giving people a feeling that he was somehow in a commanding position.

He is very confident, but his gaze is very disgusting. His gaze moved up and down my body like two slippery tentacles wanting to tear off my clothes… Audrey’s senses were sharp. She carefully observed and made a judgment calmly, but she nearly had goosebumps.

Fors introduced him.

“That’s Mr. A, a powerful Beyonder, the leader of this secret gathering.”

Chapter 131 - Transaction

◆ ◆ ◆

Mr. A? That sounds more like a code name for a criminal rather than a powerful man of mystery. It can't be compared to The Fool at all… No, only gods or demigods can be compared to Mr. Fool… Audrey felt a sense of superiority as she thought about this.

She looked calmly at Mr. A and spoke to Fors and Xio Derecha with a hushed tone, "Are there any stories about this man?"

The hooded Viscount Glaint was equally curious.

Xio Derecha replied sternly, "There were several such incidents in the past. Sequence 8 Beyonders, some even at Sequence 7, have targeted and tried to deal with Mr. A, but they've all mysteriously disappeared."

"So he truly is a powerful Beyonder," Glaint marveled.

They walked into the room as they spoke. The guards immediately closed the door behind them.

After adjusting to the gas lamp's light in the room, Audrey saw two blackboards with several phrases written across them right in front of her.

At that moment, Fors, who had an unlit cigarette in her hand, whispered, "Those are the requests of the members of this gathering. You should be able to understand that many people do not wish for others to know what they possess to avoid being a target of greedy people. Thus, they write their requests, or what they are selling, as well as the rough price on the blackboards anonymously.”

Audrey nodded. She didn’t care to observe the members of the meeting; instead, she shifted her gaze to the words on the left board.

“I need a pair of eyes from a mature Manhal Fish.”

“The dust left behind by vengeful spirits, 165 pounds.”

“Three pages from Emperor Roselle’s notebook, 20 pounds.”

Audrey couldn’t maintain the state of her Spectator when she saw that. She was as shocked as she was excited.

These prices… these prices are too… too cheap! She thought in excitement and joy.

As she walked, her gaze shifted as she saw other notices.

“Tears of an Infant flower, 200 pounds.”

“Mummy Powder, 10 grams, 5 pounds.”

“Murloc Slime, 30 ml, 29 pounds.”

“Formula for Sequence 8 potion Sheriff, 450 pounds.”

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Too… just too cheap! The Beyonder ingredients all cost less than 300 pounds! Audrey’s eyes sparkled as she found a place to sit together with her companions.

Xio Derecha leaned over and whispered into her ear, “Do you have anything you want?”

Audrey breathed heavily. Emperor Roselle’s famous quote flashed through her mind: “I want it all!”

She had two elder brothers, rendering her eligibility to inherit the aristocratic title and the main portion of the inheritance null. But as a lady adored by her parents and brothers, she had property, farmland, pastures, mines, jewelry, stocks, and bonds to her name. Together, they were valued at 300,000 pounds.

This was a part of her inheritance, but she only possessed them in name before her father, Earl Hall, passed away, or when she got married. Every year, she received a corresponding amount from a trust fund.

But even so, she could receive 15,000 to 25,000 pounds a year, making her one of the richest women among the nobles in the entire Loen Kingdom.

Of course, she had expenses she couldn't avoid as a noble. And now that she was receiving annual payouts, she could no longer pester her parents for money all the time.

She controlled herself and answered with reservation, "For the time being, I have my sights on Emperor Roselle's notebook. I adore him, and I think that the special symbols and literature he created hold a mysterious power; it's just that we haven't found the correct way to decipher them."

Audrey, you are becoming more and more hypocritical… She added in her heart.

Just as she had said that, a young man in a white shirt sitting near them stood up excitedly. He agreed with Audrey, "Yes! That's true! I've finally met someone who shares the same opinion as me!

"I'm the person with the three pages of the notebook, and I can sell them to you right now!"

Audrey was at a loss at first before she replied with a smile, "Then please allow me to express my gratitude."

She took out a pair of 10-pound notes and handed them over to the man, then received the three pages of Emperor Roselle's diary in exchange. Of course, no one here knew that they were part of his diary, and thus everyone generally called them his notebook.

Audrey flipped through the pages after she received them and confirmed that the writing was similar to the previous pages that she had come across.

She put away the diary and asked Xio and Fors softly, "Who can I look for if the notes are fake? Mr. A?"

"Yes, Mr. A will not allow any fraud to take place in his gathering. And I could help you mediate this privately too," Xio Derecha replied eagerly.

"I understand." Audrey entered her Spectator state and surveyed the Beyonders and Beyonders-to-be around her.

There were many people looking over because of the excitement of the young man just now. They were observing Audrey and Glaint, some making it obvious while others were more discreet, but Audrey and Glaint's hoods covered their features well.

There are sofas and chairs strewn all around the venue, all facing the board. The material of the furniture is rather normal, indicating that the person who gathered them here, Mr. A, isn't a noble and doesn't care much about the venue… Yes, with the confidence he displayed, he need not be overly pretentious with the venue… Audrey looked around and calmly observed.

Mr. A looks at all the ladies present, his gaze often lingering on those who have above-average looks… He's lecherous… Why is he looking at me so frequently? Can he see through my robe?

Audrey was shocked at this deduction. She felt disgusted, as if she had just eaten a fly.

But her worries quickly eased, for she noticed that Mr. A was not looking at her body or the bodies of the other ladies…

This means that his eyes cannot see through fabric directly. His sense of sight is exceptional. It's as if he's observing me at a close distance. With that ability, the hood won't achieve much. Audrey calmly observed the rest of the people engaging in their own deals and got an understanding of the circumstances of some of the people there.

At that moment, Mr. A's facilitator walked over and whispered to Audrey's group, "You can write your requests on a piece of paper and pass them to me, or wait till the break later to write whatever you want to sell on the blackboard in the small room."

Fors took a whiff of her cigarette and surveyed the surroundings cautiously. "Have you considered which Sequence 9 formula you want?"

She had kept her promise and told Audrey and Viscount Glaint about all the Sequence pathways she knew of.

Audrey pretended to think before saying, "Spectator, I want to become a Spectator. And, I also want the advancement of Spectator, the Telepathist."

She considered the fact that she would have to come into frequent contact with Fors and Xio Derecha in the future, making it highly possible that they would realize that she was a Beyonder, a Spectator. Thus, she decided to take this opportunity to reveal this to them and completely conceal the fact that the Tarot Club existed.

Even though I'll be wasting some money, it'll still be worth it… Audrey praised herself.

At the same time, she noticed that Xio Derecha was looking at the blackboards from time to time, her expression was that of desire and depression.

Xio told me that the corresponding Sequence 8 to Arbiter was Sheriff.

She's looking at the 450-pound price tag? Well, it's obvious that she wants the formula for Sheriff…

She's already been an Arbiter for more than a year, and she has been unknowingly acting the role of an Arbiter. Her potion should have been digested already…

All these details tell me that Xio lacks money!

As Audrey was deducing all of this, Viscount Glaint revealed his choice.

"Apothecary, I want the formula for Sequence 9 Apothecary!"

Feeling the gazes from Audrey, Fors, and Xio, he explained himself with a chortle, "To me, health and not having to worry about major illnesses and harm is the most important thing!"

"A rational decision. I once dreamed of becoming an Apothecary." Fors sighed while smiling.

She had a rather languid demeanor.

After making the decision, Audrey and the rest wrote their requests on pieces of paper and handed them over to the facilitator. They looked on as the facilitator made his way around the venue and asked the other participants, collecting several other slips of paper.

This facilitator then shuffled the notes and handed them over to his partner in charge of the blackboards, asking him to transcribe the information onto them.

"I need the formulas for potions Spectator and Telepathist, the price will be negotiated face-to-face…"

The facilitator would repeat the request three times after he wrote it onto the blackboard. If someone was interested, they could apply for a room in secret. There would be facilitators helping them complete the deal.

After waiting for a while, Audrey and Glaint didn't receive a request for a deal. They were rather disappointed.

At this moment, a facilitator walked over to Audrey's side and handed her a folded piece of paper.

"It's from Mr. A," the facilitator said softly.

Audrey unfolded the slip of paper and took a look.

"Are you interested in the formulas of other Sequence 9 potions?"

Audrey curled the ends of her mouth disdainfully and wrote on a blank spot: "I am only interested in Spectator."

She folded the piece of paper and handed it back to the facilitator, then watched as he passed it back to Mr. A.

Mr. A took a glance and didn't say anything, continuing to look over the rest of the members silently.

But Audrey sharply noticed that he had secretly burned the piece of paper and allowed the ashes to fall to the floor.

Fifteen minutes later, Mr. A said, "Now we will have a break. You can interact with other participants freely."

At this moment, the young man who sold Emperor Roselle's diary approached Audrey and said in excitement, "I have already deciphered a portion of Emperor Roselle's special characters and tattooed them onto myself, allowing me to gain some remarkable abilities.

"Are you interested?"

Audrey suddenly recalled that she had asked Mr. Fool if the special characters in Emperor Roselle's diary possessed any unique abilities. Mr. Fool's answer was that they were useless unless a deity suddenly took interest in them.

She looked at the young man in front of her and thought for a moment. She then probed, “What remarkable abilities?”

The young man answered excitedly, “I have become stronger and more healthy!”

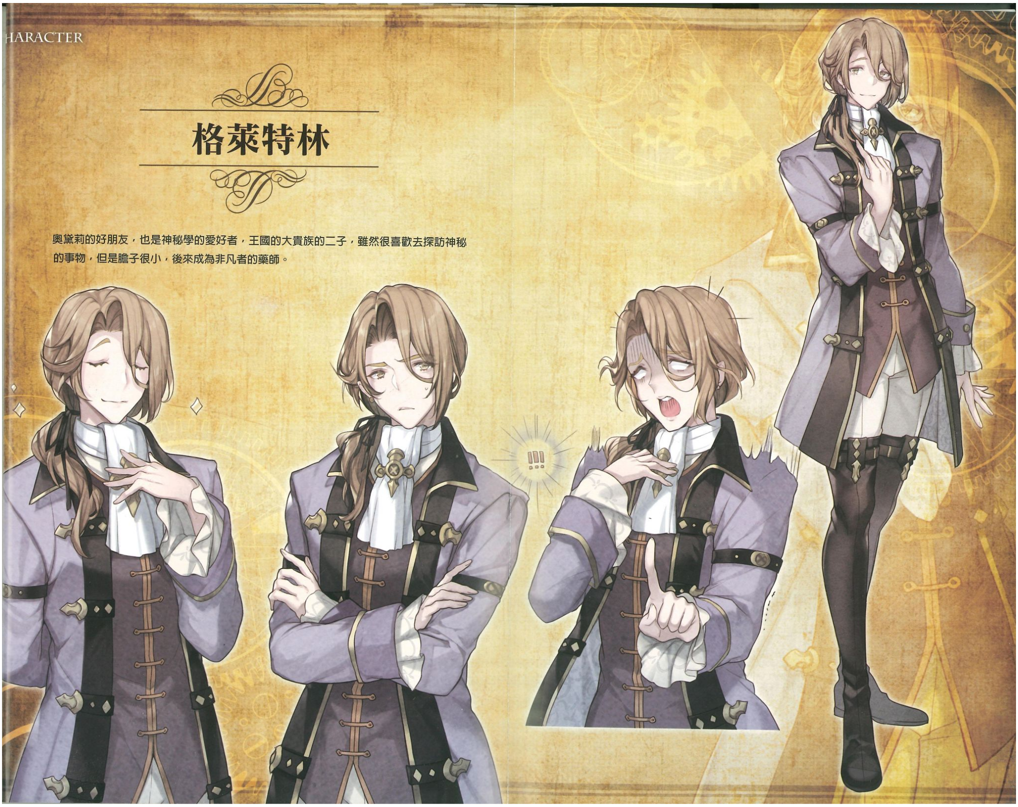
Audrey looked at him in pity. “I’m sorry, I have more trust in my own research.”

In the remaining time, she continued observing those who came to this gathering, but didn’t obtain any more information. All she had was a rough deduction that some of them were doctors or lawyers, ordinary occupations.

Audrey and the rest left the venue after another half an hour and returned to Viscount Glaint’s mansion as they waited till the ball ended.

Audrey returned home at about 10 that night. She was about to get her maidservant to prepare some hot water when she saw her dog Susie shoot her a look.

My dog just shot me a look… Audrey’s emotions became complicated.



HARACTER

格萊特林

奧黛莉的好朋友，也是神秘學的愛好者，王國的大貴族的二子，雖然很喜歡去探訪神秘的事物，但是膽子很小，後來成為非凡者的藥師。

Viscount Glaint

Audrey's good friend, also an enthusiast of mysticism. The second son of a high-ranking noble family in the Kingdom. Although he loves exploring mysterious things, he is quite a coward. He later becomes a Beyonder of the ***Apothecary*** *pathway.*

Chapter 132 - Meeting the Monster Again

◆

She found an excuse for her maidservant to leave them alone temporarily. Audrey locked the door and looked back at her golden retriever, Susie, who she wasn’t sure could still be considered as her pet.

“You heard… Uh, or came across something?”

Susie sat steadily and howled, reverberating the air around her.

“Yes, I heard the Count’s discussion with a few Members of Parliament in the study. They said that the King and the Prime Minister came to a mutual agreement; they will give up their revenge plan on the Feysac Empire in Balam’s East Coast for the time being. Where’s Balam’s East Coast?”

Susie’s terrifying speed at grasping Loen made Audrey feel mixed emotions. She fell silent for a few seconds before she said, “I’ll give you a map tomorrow…”

“Okay~” Susie replied in delight. “The King and the Prime Minister believe that presently the most pertinent task is to push for the reformation, which will allow civil servants to be selected via examination. They hope to pass the bill through the House of Lords and the House of Commons before October.”

“Really?” Audrey asked, pleasantly surprised.

That was the first matter that she had managed to secretly guide after she became a Spectator. Turning it into reality would give her a sense of achievement!

Susie answered frankly, “I can’t give you a definite answer. This is just what I’ve heard, I couldn’t even fully understand what they meant. After all, I’m a dog that just started to learn.”

Audrey was stunned for a moment before she beamed and said, “Susie, you did well! This is your reward!”

She took out a bag from a lavish cabinet, tore open the seal, and placed it before Susie.

It was a dog biscuit produced by the Backlund Pet Care Company which was made of flour, vegetables, meat, and water. It was a snack that Susie really liked.

Susie sat straight and sniffed. She waved her paw, seemingly deciding how she was to consume it to suit her present identity the best.

After a few seconds, she gave up thinking, adhered to her instinct, and leaped forward. She grabbed the bag of snacks and ran outside.

She stood on her hind legs and opened the door with one claw. Then ran out and hid in the shadows and began enjoying her snack.

†

On Sunday, Klein didn’t wake up until the afternoon, because he had spent the night on duty at Chanis Gate. Klein took the trackless public carriage and arrived at Evil Dragon Bar.

He had previously planned to use divination to find Monster Ademisaul and determine the reason for his recent oddity. However, he was interrupted by the loss of control of a Mandated Punisher and could only reschedule it to today.

He went through the billiard room and entered the underground market. Klein didn’t need to search for he immediately saw Ademisaul shivering in a corner.

When the pale-looking young man with black, messy, oily hair sensed Klein's approach, he suddenly covered his eyes and leaned against the wall in an attempt to move towards the side door.

Klein quickened his pace and blocked Ademisaul from leaving. He tapped the left molars twice secretly.

In his Spirit Vision, Ademisaul's aura appeared rather unhealthy. All the colors seemed dim. In other words, although he didn't have any major diseases, his body was very weak.

At the same time, Klein realized that vibrant fear and anxiety were revealed in the monster's emotions. He had lost almost all of the blue that represented rational thinking.

The surface of his Astral Projection extended from the depths of his Ether Body. The color was a unified, transparent, and colorless, just like pure light. Is this the uniqueness of a naturally-born "Monster"? Klein nodded indiscernibly as he stared at Ademisaul's face and said, "What did you see recently? What did you come across? Why are you hiding in a corner and quivering while saying that there are all corpses and that everyone is dead?"

Ademisaul lowered his head and looked towards his toes. It seemed like he didn't dare to look directly at the person before him.

He was shivering almost violently in his grayish-blue trousers and ragged linen shirt. He replied in a fluster, "No, I didn't see anything. N-no, I only had a dream. There's blood everywhere in the dream and corpses scattered everywhere. Haha! Boohoo! I was among the corpses! I was there! I'm gonna die, I'm gonna die! I don't want to die, I don't want to die!"

He laughed and he cried. His reply confused Klein.

Klein massaged his temples and lowered his voice to ask again, "Why are you afraid of me?”

Ademisaul was taken aback for a few seconds when he suddenly squatted down. He yelled in extreme fear, “No!

“No!”

†

Everyone looked over and Klein suddenly felt awkward.

I didn’t do anything to you… Why are you screaming as though something happened! He laughed dryly. He saw that Ademisaul had curled up in a trembling fetal position. Besides begging for mercy, he didn’t say anything else. Klein had no choice but to distance himself and pretend that he was just passing by.

Hmm, maybe I should ask Mr. Azik for advice. But he just went on vacation to the northern part of the Feysac Empire last week, and he’ll only return next Thursday or Friday. Before that, I have to first report to Captain… Klein covered his mouth as he yawned. He turned and left the underground market.

After he got his salary that week, his private stash returned to eight pounds ten soli. However, truly rare Beyonder ingredients were so expensive that he could only window shop. Of course, if he wasn’t afraid of the high interest, he could get a short-term loan from Swain.

When he exited Evil Dragon Bar and waited for the public carriage, Klein considered the future developments.

In another week, the twelve pounds from my advance salary at the beginning will be cleared. The money that I bring home will finally reach three pounds a week. Melissa will have no excuse about delaying the hiring of a maidservant… The other three pounds will remain a secret, and I’ll save up more money for myself…

And I have to quickly get the Telepathist formula or related clues from Daxter Guderian. I can use the excuse of giving an underling funds to exchange it for cash from Miss Justice… This could be done through an anonymous bank transfer. During the process, I'll cause interference via divination. That will be very safe and it won't reveal my identity…

†

After getting on a public carriage, Klein didn't head to the Blackthorn Security Company directly but planned on heading to the Divination Club for two hours.

It was part of the work needed to foreshadow his digestion of the potion.

Plus, Klein was now considered famous in the divination industry. There were returning customers from the past and there were also referrals. On average, he would have more than ten divinations in an afternoon.

Hence, even though he only went twice a week, he could still make a profit of half a pound. To the impoverished Mr. Fool, it was better than nothing.

Sigh, it's a pity that I made it sound too good at the beginning and fostered too perfect of an image. I can't just change my divination fees as I wish… While sitting in the meeting room at the Divination Club, Klein thought to himself helplessly as he drank his Sibe black tea.

With his present fame, people would still seek his services even if he charged four soli.

However, as a Seer that respected fate, he could only continue to charge eight pence.

Although Klein had fully digested the potion, he wasn't willing to take the risk of going against the Seer principles that he previously summarized. That included not obtaining excessive benefits from divination. After all, he didn't know if it would lead to losing control or other negative effects.

The confidential information the Nighthawks had didn't include the concept of "digesting." Thus, Klein couldn't determine if there was still risks after fully digesting the potion, or if he could do anything that was against the principle.

Just as he was thinking about these things, the beautiful attendant named Angelica came in and walked over to him. She leaned down and softly said, "Mr. Moretti, someone wishes for your divination. Red Agate room."

"Alright." Klein had checked if it was a suitable day to visit the Divination Club before he came, and he had obtained a definite answer from his divination.

He took his silk top hat, exited the meeting room, and saw his customer that was waiting at the door of the Red Agate Room.

The customer was a maiden around sixteen years old. She was wearing a light blue ruffled dress and holding a gauze hat of the same color. She had brown curly hair, a cute face with baby fat, and a pair of beautiful light blue eyes.

"Elizabeth?" Klein recognized his sister's good friend, Elizabeth, who studied at the Ivos Public School.

He had once helped pick an amulet for her and also resolved Selena's magic mirror divination incident with her assistance.

Similarly, Elizabeth said in pleasant surprise, "Mr. Moretti, it's really you? I was wondering if it was you when I saw the name."

"I am a mysticism enthusiast after all," Klein explained helplessly. Then he added, "Don't tell Melissa. Oh, Selena as well."

The divination result showed that it was suitable for me to visit the Divination Club! Why did I run into Elizabeth? He shook his head as he turned around to open the door to the Red Agate room.

At the same time, he clicked his left molar twice.

They entered the room slowly. After he took the seat of the diviner, he lifted his head to look towards Elizabeth.

With just one glance, his creased his eyebrows.

There was a faint layer of gloomy green in the maiden's energy field!

A symptom of being haunted by spirits and wraiths… Klein made a calm judgment and asked directly, "Have you had nightmares recently, ones with repetitive elements?"

Elizabeth, who had just locked the door and had yet to take a seat, was dumbstruck. It took her a long time to reply, "Yes… That's why I came here to look for you."

Klein leaned back and asked, "What kind of dream did you have? When did it start?"

"It began from the last two days of my vacation to Lamud Town. Oh, our family has an estate there." Elizabeth was considered half a mysticism enthusiast, so she had better memories of such situations. "In my dream, I always run into a knight in full black armor. He carries a huge broadsword and his face is fully covered by a helmet, so all I could see is a pair of glowing red eyes. In the dream, he keeps attempting to get closer to me. Afraid, I run away, but the distance shortens each and every time…"

Klein thought and asked, "Two or three days before you had such a dream, did you get in touch with any antiques, ancient ruins, burial objects, or a mausoleum?"

Elizabeth recalled and answered, "I-I visited a mountain near Lamud

Town. There was an abandoned ancient castle."

That's a standard opening of a paranormal novel… Klein lampooned silently as he pressed on, "Did you leave anything behind in the castle? Or did you take anything from the castle?"

Elizabeth creased her beautiful eyebrows and answered moments later in uncertainty, "I got cut by brambles and bled… Does leaving blood behind count?"

Klein nodded with a mask of solemnity and answered in a deep voice, "Yes."

Chapter 133 - Expensive Charms

◆

Elizabeth immediately turned nervous after hearing Klein’s reply. Subconsciously, she began to speak faster.

“Can you help me divine the specific reason? It will be even better if you can divine a way to solve this…”

Divination can only give us a general direction of how to solve the problem, and furthermore, it will be unclear and filled with symbolism, making it difficult to decipher the hints correctly… Of course, you’re very lucky, I’m not an ordinary Seer, I’m a true mysticism scholar! Klein lampooned the girl’s question before saying solemnly, “Since this matter has to do with dreams, I would suggest a similar divination method.”

“Alright, alright.” Elizabeth nodded her head like a hungry woodpecker.

Klein maintained his professional attitude. “I will need you to sleep here and allow that dream to present itself. Is that a problem?”

“There’s no problem, I trust you,” Elizabeth answered without hesitation while pursing her lips.

But she quickly added with a stammer, “B-but, I cannot guarantee that I would… I would have that dream.”

“It’s just an attempt,” Klein consoled her with a gentle smile.

He then pointed at the long sofa on the side of the Red Agate room. “Please.”

"No, no need for that, I'll sleep here." Elizabeth shook her head gently. She crossed her arms and said, "I sleep like this at school after classes whenever I feel tired."

She used her arms as a pillow and leaned forward onto the edge of the table.

"Alright, you can pretend that I'm not here." Klein smiled as he observed the colors of her aura and emotions. He used them to deduce if the girl had fallen asleep or not.

"Okay." Elizabeth closed her eyes and buried her face into her arms, trying hard to ease her breathing.

Klein didn't speak as he leaned back into his chair. The room suddenly became unusually quiet.

It was a peaceful silence, a silence that could make one forget their troubles.

Sometime later, Klein took out a semicircular piece of silver from his pocket after he confirmed that Elizabeth had fallen asleep. The piece of silver was filled with indecipherable Hermes phrases as well as symbolic imagery and numbers.

It was a Dream Charm that Klein had succeeded in making the previous morning!

He had also finished making two Slumber Charms and two Requiem Charms. The former were made with rectangular pieces of silver while the latter were made with triangular pieces. This was to help him differentiate between them solely by touch during an intense battle.

"Crimson!" Klein softly recited the phrase in ancient Hermes.

This was the activation incantation that he had set. Since there was still the step of injecting spirituality into the charm, there was no need for his incantation to be different from the rest. All it needed was to be short and easy to remember.

The mysterious incantation reverberated around the room. Klein felt the Dream Charm become light in his hand, as if it had temporarily lost its weight.

Klein immediately placed the charm on the table in front of him after he injected it with his spirituality.

A transparent flame leapt up silently, enveloping the charm and became a deep, serene black.

The black flames spread quickly, enveloping Elizabeth and Klein.

Klein seized the opportunity to enter his state of Cogitation. He used his spirituality to look at the illusory spherical light in front of him.

The spherical light was surrounded by a boundless darkness, making it seem exceptionally lonely.

Klein didn't dare delay any further as he emitted his spirituality, allowing it to touch the illusory ball of light.

Silently, the scene around him started to coruscate and warp, but it quickly settled into a yellowish-brown plain. The plain was littered with the corpses of horses and humans. Fresh blood and weapons could be seen everywhere.

Elizabeth was wearing a regal gown with engageantes and a fishnet hat. She was looking around, lost.

She quickly saw Klein's figure and revealed a look of surprise and joy.

"Mr. Moretti, we meet again! I had suspected that the Klein Moretti on the name register was you when Selena and I came to get a divination. I came again multiple times, but always missed you as I had to attend lessons during the day…

"When I was free during the summer break, I was dragged to a holiday at Lamud Town by my parents…

“You can help me right?”

Klein froze for a moment when he heard the girl’s talkativeness.

To think that Elizabeth had suspected that I was working part-time at the Divination Club and tried to find me on multiple occasions…

Yet, she didn’t appear abnormal at all!

Hmm, her surprise was authentic, masking her true thoughts…

Indeed, everyone’s dream shows their most honest side, other than me, Mr. Fool.

As he was indulging in his thoughts, Elizabeth’s dream changed. A tall knight, about 1.9 meters in height, was walking toward them, dragging a broadsword which was scraped the ground.

This knight was dressed in black armor. The metallic sounds of metal colliding could be heard with his every step. Two blobs of red light akin to flames peeked out from the slit of his faceplate; they were staring at Klein and Elizabeth intently.

The will of a wraith… Still not at the stage of an evil spirit. Klein, who was in his spirituality state, didn’t need to activate his Spirit Vision.

According to the classifications based on the Nighthawks’ confidential information, the feelings of vengeance and injustice left behind by spirits were the weakest and easiest kinds of souls to deal with. Following those were shadows and wraiths. Evil spirits were the most difficult soul-like creatures to deal with. The most horrifying of evil spirits were said to be as strong as High-Sequence Beyonders.

With this in mind, Klein took a step forward, blocking Elizabeth behind him. He then stomped down with his foot and shattered the dream.

Multiple specks of light scattered like fireflies. Klein’s spirituality returned to his body, allowing his eyes to once again adapt to the darkness of the Red Agate room. He saw the tools needed for divination placed around the table, as well as the Dream Charm that had almost finished burning.

Klein felt the pinch when he saw this. Charms in the Evernight Goddess's domain were all made using pure silver, so it pained his heart.

Using these charms is akin to burning money! Even if I don't account for my labor costs, the materials alone already averaged to about six to eight soli per charm!

Well, he felt a little more at peace when he thought of the Beyonders from the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun. After all, they burned gold—the corresponding metal for the Sun was gold.

Elizabeth groaned softly and slowly woke up before straightening her posture.

She glanced furtively at Klein and asked, "Mr. Moretti, were there any results from your divination?"

"Yes." Klein nodded seriously. "Your nightmares should disappear in no more than a week."

I will report this to the Captain and get him to send someone to deal with it at Lamud Town… Klein added in his heart.

"Really? That's great! Thank you Mr. Moretti!" Elizabeth became excited. She then suddenly creased her brows.

"What's the matter?" Klein asked in concern.

"Nothing. I just remembered that I have to go home now." She slowly took out a single soli bill that she had prepared and placed it on the table. She then grabbed her hat and bade goodbye to Klein a little hesitantly.

After leaving the Red Agate room, Elizabeth walked toward the stairs outside the door. She flailed her arms after she confirmed that no one was watching and groaned softly, “Pins and needles! How numbing…”

†

In the Blackthorn Security Company, Dunn rubbed his forehead as he looked at Klein.

“Did you suddenly return because you came across another supernatural incident?”

Hey, Captain, what’s with that tone of disparagement… Klein cleared his throat and answered without hesitation, “Yes.”

“What’s the matter this time?” Dunn Smith rubbed his forehead again.

Klein organized his words and replied, “Two things. For the first incident, I discovered ‘Monster’ Ademisaul hunched in a corner, shivering in fear when I was buying materials for my charms at the underground market.”

When he said that, he hinted heavily that he needed a reimbursement for the materials.

Klein couldn’t mention the fees for the detective he employed to find Daxter Guderian, for it involved the red chimney. He deeply regretted not employing separate detectives.

Dunn seemed to fail to read between the lines as he nodded slightly.

“What happened to Ademisaul?”

Klein exhaled silently and described in detail, “Ademisaul had a dream. He dreamed that there were corpses and blood everywhere. One of the corpses was his, and thus he became very frightened.”

Dunn thought for a moment before asking slowly, “As a Seer, what do you think it symbolizes?"

"A disaster. A disaster that spans a wide area. But I have no information other than this. Furthermore, not everything in Ademisaul's dream might have a symbolic meaning," Klein said while deliberating his words.

"I will report this to the Holy Cathedral and see what they have to say." Dunn shook his head and said in a self-deprecating manner, "This isn't something I have expertise in."

Klein didn't have any other ideas either. He changed the subject and spoke about the wraith harassment Elizabeth faced.

"Lamud Town… Is that lady a believer of the Goddess?" Dunn asked.

"Yes." Klein gave an affirmative answer.

"Then there should be no problems. Let's head over to Lamud Town now and try to get dinner there. Oh, and bring Frye along. His abilities should prove useful if the incident involves corpses and ghosts." Dunn massaged his temples and tried his hardest to contemplate whether he had forgotten anything.

If Elizabeth wasn't a believer of the Evernight Goddess, then they would have to hand her over to the Mandated Punishers or the Machinery Hivemind according to her faith. If her faith didn't lie in any of the three major Churches, then she would be handed over to the Machinery Hivemind who were responsible for the outskirts.

Klein didn't speak. He waited silently for a while before finally hearing Dunn add, "Also, we have three men on the mission. We can request to use Sealed Artifact 3-0782."

"3-0782?" After a minute, Klein recalled that the Sealed Artifact was called the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

This Sacred Emblem's Beyonder influence seemed to be able to last a long time. It had the ability to constantly purify any corpses and spirits in a fifteen-meter radius. However, it had the drawback of purifying the soul of a commoner at the same time. Research data indicated that if a normal human were to stand within its radius for an hour, they would become an idiot that only knew how to praise the Sun. The limit for Beyonders was six hours.

As for ghosts and corpses, they would scatter in less than a minute.

Hmm, to think that the Captain would remember the codename for this Sealed Artifact… Damn, I feel that my memory is worse than his… Klein suddenly froze, nearly wanting to hang himself.

Dunn Smith leaned back and looked at Klein with his deep gray eyes.

“You went to the Divination Club again today? Did you feel any changes over the past two days?”

Chapter 134 - It's Been More Than A Minute

◆

Captain, that's the exact question I wanted you to ask! Klein nodded seriously.

"I feel even better. I even believe that I can pass the Holy Cathedral's examination right now. It's a kind of feeling and confidence that can't be described with words."

Realizing that his answer could be a little vague, he couldn't help but add, "Perhaps the name of a potion is really crucial. When I strictly followed the Seer principles that I derived and acted as a fortune-teller, everything became perfect and easy. Yes, I can now activate my Spirit Vision with an even more inconspicuous manner."

Dunn creased his eyebrows slightly as the light in his eyes converged, he muttered seemingly deep in thought,"The name of the potion…"

After about ten seconds, he looked at Klein again.

"Do you need to return and inform your family? Sunday is the second day after your duty at Chanis Gate. You're supposed to get some rest."

Taking into consideration the fact that Elizabeth was a good friend of his sister, and that he had promised that the problem would be solved within a week, Klein answered without hesitation, "We don't have to waste time. After we set off, just get the carriage to take a turn by Daffodil Street."

“Alright. Get Frye while I fill out the application form to get Sealed Artifact 3-0782 out.” Dunn pointed at the break room diagonally opposite.

Frye was a Corpse Collector, so he didn’t possess the abundant energy of a Sleepless. If he was free, he would take a nap.

Filling in the application form yourself, approving it yourself, and collecting it yourself… Captain, our management system is quite flawed… Klein lampooned silently before he retrieved his hat and exited Dunn’s office to knock on the door diagonally opposite.

After Klein knocked thrice, Frye opened the door and looked at Klein with undisguised puzzlement.

“What’s the matter?”

As he was taking a nap, his hair was messy and his shirt was untidy. His cold and gloomy temperament faded quite a bit.

However, he still looks like a dead person that climbed out of his coffin… Klein hid his smile and answered seriously,

“There’s a case that involves wraiths. The Captain wishes for your assistance.”

“Okay.” Frye lifted his hand subconsciously to smooth out his messy hair, returning him to the cold person that kept the living at bay.

After he dressed up, the two of them waited by the sofa in the reception hall. The surroundings warmed up after another seven or eight minutes, as though the area was being exposed to sunlight.

Immediately following that, they saw Dunn Smith walk through the partition while he held in his hand an ancient badge about half the size of a palm.

The badge had a dark gold luster and was engraved with the symbolic signs of the Sun and lines that extended to the edge. It was the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from the Intis Republic, originally named the “Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.”

The Intis Republic was the country that Roselle transformed from an empire into a republic before turning it back into an empire. Now, it had established itself as a stable republic and was located on the west coast of the Northern Continent. Its border with the Loen Kingdom included landmarks like Midseashires, the Hornacis mountain range, and so on.

Since the establishment of Intis as a nation, the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun had repressed the Church of the God of Craftsmanship which later became known as the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. With it being the main religion of the country, the country could also be referred to as the Kingdom of the Sun.

“Let’s set off. Frye, you’ll drive. Cesare can’t withstand the purification of the Sacred Emblem for too long,” Dunn reminded them calmly.

Cesare Francis was a clerk who was in charge of purchasing and collecting supplies. He was also their driver, but he was just an ordinary person. He couldn’t stay more than an hour within a fifteen-meter range of Sealed Artifact 3-0782. The journey from Zouteland Street to Lamud Town, according to Klein’s understanding, would require at least two and a half hours. That didn’t include the time to detour to Daffodil Street.

“Alright.” Frye didn’t object but checked if he had his personal items with him.

†

When the rays of the setting sun dyed the pinnacle of the town’s cathedral, the Nighthawks’ carriage finally arrived at Lamud Town.

The town was located at the northwest edge of Tingen. Many buildings still had the unique characteristics of the era before the Age of Steam.

There were nearly zero factories and the nearby villages engaged in commercial trading.

After they stopped the carriage, Dunn looked at the hair salon opposite and said,

“I asked one of the locals earlier. It only requires a fifteen-minute walk from here to the castle ruins on the mountain. It’s said that it belonged to a feudal lord who ruled during the Fourth Epoch. However, no one knows what happened after that. Of course, their description is merely a local myth.”

“Yes, let’s go over now and deal with that wraith before the sky turns dark. Then, we can take turns to watch over 3-0782 and keep it away from commoners?”

From the moment Dunn retrieved the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem, three hours had already passed. It was getting closer and closer to a Beyonder’s limits. In no time, they would have to part ways and give each other time to recover.

“Okay.” Frye gave a succinct reply.

“I have no problem about that.” Klein touched the Slumber Charms and Requiem Charms in his pocket.

The three Nighthawks in thin black trench coats walked through the street in the town and headed toward the mountain when they reached a fork in the road. Along the way, the road was overgrown with weeds and clustered with shrubs, but it was still spacious enough to let two carriages pass side-by-side.

It wasn’t long until they saw a collapsed outer wall of an ancient castle. On the outer wall that was still standing, there were green plants crawling all over it while the exposed part was mottled.

When he started to get close, Klein could feel a piercing chill as goosebumps formed all over his arms.

"There really is a wraith," Frye said monotonously as he looked at the ancient castle.

Dunn looked sideways to steal a glance at the newly promoted Nighthawk, then he laughed and said, "Don't worry. We have both 3-0782 and Frye; the wraith won't cause too much of a problem."

He held his custom-made revolver in one hand and the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in the other. He took the first step towards the ancient castle that looked like a ruin.

Klein followed closely behind and prepared to pull the trigger at any time, swing his cane, or use his charms.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

When Dunn was less than five meters away from the ancient castle, where a broken horse stable, water well, and other fixtures were reflected in Klein's eyes, a cold breeze howled in a way that could only be described as sad and shrill. It seemed to be rejecting the uninvited guests.

The three Nighthawks didn't stop. The warm and pure feeling gradually dispersed the chill and conquered the front of the ancient castle.

They scaled the pile of rocks, passing through the collapsed outer wall before slowly entering the castle which had lost its main entrance and was filled with broken tiles.

The hall of the ancient castle was full of collapsed stone pillars and was covered with moss. It was spacious, but the windows were narrow and placed high on the walls. Hence, the lighting was poor. It looked dim and gloomy inside.

That's also a trait of buildings from the end of the Fourth Epoch and the beginning of the Fifth Epoch… Klein, who was a historian, instinctively made a judgment and activated his Spirit Vision.

Just then, an illusory yet piercing roar suddenly burst out. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a thick cloud of black fog filled the air, resisting the infiltration of warmth and purity.

A tall figure suddenly surfaced amidst the black fog. He wore full-body, black armor and carried a broadsword that a commoner would have found difficult to lift.

The wraith looked identical to the one Klein saw in Elizabeth's dream. Two flame-like balls of red light shone through the gap of his helmet, appearing cold, but they were staring at the three Nighthawks angrily.

"You have disturbed my slumber! You will have to pay with your flesh and blood!" He suddenly launched himself forward and instantly shortened the distance to Dunn. He suddenly slashed downwards with his broadsword.

Dunn retreated swiftly and lifted his hand to fire his revolver.

Clang!

The silver demon hunting bullet didn't manage to penetrate the illusory black armor and only produced a crisp but unrealistic sound.

Klein and Frye retreated to the side simultaneously. One held a gun in one hand and aimed at the two balls of fire that took the place of the black-armored knight's eyes before pulling the trigger. The other Nighthawk transformed his eyes into a tranquil grayish-white and focused on the wraith.

The black-armored knight roared in anger again. He took another huge stride towards Dunn and swung the broadsword horizontally.

Bam!

The broadsword didn't hurt Dunn, but it knocked him away, causing him to land heavily by the side of the door. It left him spewing a mouthful of fresh blood.

With a loud thud, 3-0782 dropped on the ground. Since it was wearing a metal boot, the wraith eagerly kicked with its right leg and sent the dangerous badge out the ancient castle's door. It was a distance beyond fifteen meters from it.

Klein, who hadn't managed to shoot the wraith successfully, became nervous and puzzled when he saw that scene. It was as though he was overlooking the transformation before his eyes from a calm and rational position.

Bang!

He fired another bullet. The silver demon hunting bullet hit the wraith's helmet and produced sparks. But there was no obvious damage.

"Right gauntlet!" Frye shouted. He was always cold and gloomy, but now his tone was filled with anxiety.

No sooner had he finished talking, he lifted his revolver as well and aimed at the wraith's right metal gauntlet.

Bang! Bang! Klein shot sub-consciously according to Frye's instruction, firing silver demon hunting bullets almost simultaneously with him.

This time, the wraith didn't block it with his armor but raised his broadsword and struck the two bullets away.

Bam! He took a stride and charged at Klein, colliding with him directly.

As Klein flew out, he saw his chest cave in, saw himself spitting blood, but he didn't feel uncomfortable, not one bit.

He suddenly snapped out of his daze, fell on the ground, rolled about, and screamed.

Suddenly, the ancient castle, the wraith, the collapsed pillars, and the moss floor shattered eerily. Everything returned to black fog in the air, just like when the black-armored knight first appeared.

The only difference was that Dunn held both his fists tightly, bowed slightly, and his gray eyes were dark and deep.

As expected, everything was just a dream. Captain pulled the wraith, Frye, and I into his dream at the same time. But I'm special, and I can remain clear-headed and rational… Klein realized that he was still standing two meters away to Dunn's right. He hadn't vomited any blood or screamed.

Just then, Dunn stood up straight and looked at the wraith that was going to slash with his sword. He calmly said, "It's been more than a minute."

The wraith was stunned and let out a shrill cry. Its body started producing black steam, as though it had just received its death sentence.

Any zombies or spirits that had yet to turn into evil spirits couldn't stay within the fifteen-meter range of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem for more than a minute!

Holy shit, Captain, you're so cool! Klein looked at the scene from the side and nearly let out a cheer!

Dunn had used his dream ability not to attack the wraith on his own turf, but merely to drag out the time!

In the warm and pure feeling, the black steam evaporated quickly and the chill dispersed gradually. In no time, the knight became transparent and blended into the void.

Clang!

A black gauntlet fell to the ground, its surface covered with white frost.

Klein was about to ask for the Captain's go ahead to pick up the "drop," but when he looked over, his spirituality was suddenly disturbed.

Somewhere near the stairs that separated the hall and the dining hall, there was an intense yet illusory misery and uncleanliness summoning him!

Chapter 135 - Portrait of a Baron

◆

“There’s some sort of problem there,” Klein said with a serious tone, pointing at the steps separating the living room and dining room.

He once read in the Nighthawks’ confidential records that if similar situations appeared in one’s spiritual perception, it usually implied that there was something evil and corrupted hidden at the target location. It was best not to interact with it if one wasn’t confident; otherwise, one might lose their life. Sometimes, even a mere glance could result in irreversible damage.

Dunn looked over, and similarly, with his high spiritual perception, he immediately sensed something wrong. He turned to look at Klein and instructed calmly, “Divine and see if we would be successful in our investigation.”

Captain didn’t get me to divine before we entered the castle. He was rather confident… That means that he believes that the hidden thing might be more dangerous than the wraith. Klein nodded in silence. He holstered his revolver and handed his cane to Frye.

He then released the topaz bracelet within his sleeve, held the silver chain with his left hand and silently recited a suitable statement.

Instantly, his eyes darkened as a breeze started spiraling around him.

“The investigation of the hidden place in the ancient castle would be successful.

"The investigation of the hidden place in the ancient castle would be successful."

†

After reciting the statement seven times, Klein's eyes regained their normal color. He saw the dangling topaz rotating clockwise.

It wasn't very obvious, but it was unmistakably rotating clockwise!

That meant that the investigation would be successful.

Klein, who was already a true Seer, immediately nodded at Dunn and Frye.

"The danger will be manageable by us, or there could be no danger at all."

Dunn pinned the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem to the left side of his chest, then pressed down on his hat. He briskly walked toward the steps and expertly started searching for a mechanism.

Frye, who had picked up the gauntlet, handed Klein's cane back to him. He grabbed his revolver and cautiously scanned the surroundings, as if he was afraid that an enemy would suddenly appear.

I'm still not professional enough… as a Nighthawk… Klein geared himself up and took out his revolver, and turned alert as well.

A few minutes later, it was unknown what the kneeling Dunn Smith triggered as heavy sputtering sounds emanated from the staircase.

The floor split open, revealing a set of steps heading down. A cold and corrupted vibe emanated, seemingly condensing into something corporeal.

Dunn glanced over and removed Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from his chest. He tossed it directly into the trap door.

After a few clanks, it was unknown where the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem stopped.

If there are dead spirits within, they would definitely toss 3-0782 back out… That would be interesting… Klein stared at the stairs and waited patiently.

The lingering sinister and corrupted feeling soon dissolved away like snow meeting the sun. Warmness and purity blanketed the entrance of the trap door.

“Klein, go down with me. Frye will stay here and prevent other enemies from destroying the mechanism.” Dunn made an experienced decision.

“Alright.” Klein didn’t shrink back from the task. He took two steps forward and arrived next to Dunn. Frye nodded, not letting his guard down.

Dunn went down first, his footsteps reverberating in the silence.

He didn’t prepare any sources of light, for a Beyonder that went down the Sleepless pathway, the darkness was not an obstacle, but a blessing.

Their vision wasn’t hindered by such an environment.

After taking a few steps down, Dunn suddenly turned around and looked at Klein. “I forgot that you don’t have night vision. I’m not used to preparing objects that provide illumination…”

“…Captain, you don’t need to mind about me. I have my Spirit Vision.” Klein realized that he wasn’t shocked at all.

That cool Captain from before was indeed not normal!

In his Spirit Vision, the darkness before him was screened by a gray film. Even though it was very blurry, it was enough for him to make out where the steps were.

Well, the Captain sure is healthy, and his mental state is fine too… Klein carefully extended his feet and made his way down slowly.

The flight of steps wasn't long. It only took about fifteen steps to reach the ground.

Sealed Artifact 3-0782 was lying there, releasing its purity and warmth. It also radiated a faint glow.

Klein could see much more clearly with the help of the illumination. He surveyed the surroundings and noticed that it wasn't a huge basement. It was no longer cold and sinister, but the dampness remained.

In the middle of the basement was a black coffin, with dark red nails driven into the lid.

The lid of the coffin had been pushed open slightly, allowing one to see a headless corpse that was all bone.

Dunn looked around, then bent over to pick up the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

"Captain, this coffin… It was intended to prevent the dead within from becoming a zombie or a wraith."

Klein looked at the dark red nails in the coffin and the formation they were in. He used his decent mysticism knowledge to determine that this was an ancient ritual to prevent anything the corpse from reanimating.

At the same time, he muttered inwardly. But under normal circumstances, who would have nothing better to do than guard against their loved one from reanimating? Hmm, the people who helped bury the corpse must not be family… And if they placed the coffin in the basement instead of a tomb, they must have been afraid of someone finding the corpse…

Dunn, who had worn Sealed Artifact 3-0782 again, approached the coffin and inspected it.

"The deceased was probably poisoned to death."

"That means the person who poisoned him must have used ritualistic magic to prevent him from reanimating and seeking revenge. This should have happened about 1300 years ago? He became a wraith in the end… The resentment of this spirit is simply shocking!" Klein also walked in front of the coffin. "Where is his head? That ritual does not call for the head to be sliced off…"

Dunn thought for a moment before saying, "I have a deduction. This wraith didn't exist all the time and only appeared recently. It's only a fifteen-minute walk from the town to the castle. Throughout the years, troublemakers must have frequented this place, but before this incident, there were no rumors of there being a wraith in this ancient castle."

Klein nodded indiscernibly.

"Captain, what you mean to say is that someone came here recently, opened the coffin, and took away the head of the deceased?"

"Yes, the ritual prevents the corpse from reanimating, but it also seals and preserves its resentment within the coffin. When the coffin was opened and the ritual dispelled, this resentment quickly evolved into a wraith with the help of its gauntlet…"

"There's no corpse of the person who opened the coffin, so he's not an ordinary person… Besides, why did he take away the head of the deceased?"

Dunn stared at the skeleton in the coffin. "For resentment to be preserved for such a long time, there should be some reason other than the ritual. He could've been a Beyonder when he was alive, perhaps a descendant one or two generations removed of a Mid-Sequence Beyonder. I am talking about the Mid-Sequencers as defined in the past, Sequence 5 or 6.

"And such corpses are always special. His head might be usable in some kind of ritual or in some other occasion."

Dunn paused before continuing, "What I said just now was all conjecture. But we can try to verify some of it. We can split up later in town and investigate to see if anyone was injured before in their youth. Well, if they are still alive, it would prove that the wraith only appeared recently."

"A logical train of thought," Klein praised. He quickly searched the basement but didn't find anything else.

He tried using ritualistic magic to make a sketch of the "guest" that entered the basement, but because it had been more than a month since it happened, as well as the disturbed environment due to the frequent appearance of the wraith, there wasn't much of a result.

He then took Frye's place, allowing the expert on the dead to conduct further tests.

Fifteen minutes later, as the sun was vanishing below the horizon, Dunn and Frye followed the steps and returned to the hall of the ancient palace.

Dunn felt for the switch to the trapdoor while Frye gave a short description, "The deceased was indeed poisoned to death. The traces near the neck appeared recently, at the very most three months back."

This means that it's highly probable that someone came here before… Klein nodded in thought.

The three Nighthawks returned to Lamud Town before it got dark and asked for two rooms at an inn. The member that got the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 was to take this dangerous item for a stroll outside the town where no one would be. They would change their shifts once every two hours, and thus only needed two rooms.

After a simple dinner, Klein, Dunn, and Frye immediately split up and covered all corners of the town, asking the residents who had lived in this town for extended periods of time.

In situations like this, their identification documents as policemen proved useful.

†

"Officer, why are you asking this? I used to head to the abandoned castle to play when I was young… Injured? Definitely, how could a child not have fallen while playing? I remember, yes—I've been cut by a sharp rock on the outer walls of the ancient castle in the past…" A forty-year-old blond man looked puzzledly at Klein, but answered his question honestly.

This was the fourteenth person Klein had asked, of which two vividly remembered being injured in the castle when they were young.

The Captain's deduction is correct… Klein decided as he put away his identification documents. He smiled and said, "Thank you for your cooperation, I have no more questions."

He was about to leave when the forty-year-old man called after him, "Officer, are you interested in the ancient castle? I have an oil painting of the first Baron that resided in there. He was the grandfather of my grandfather of my grandfather… Well, anyway, it was a long time ago. He took away a oil painting from the castle and told me that it was the oil painting of the first Baron Lamud.

"Do you want it? It's a true antique!"

If it was a true antique, your family would have sold it a long time ago… This guy sure is gutsy, daring to fool even the police. Should I scare him with my gun? Klein lampooned and adopted the attitude of a window shopper and said, "Who knows if it's a real antique or not? I'll trust my own judgment.

“Take it out and let me see it.”

The blond man smiled and returned to the room and rummaged for it.

Some time later, he walked out with an oil painting in hand.

Klein casually looked at the oil painting. He saw that the baron had gentle features and bronze skin, his eyes hiding an indescribable range of human experience. He was also wearing a white curly wig.

Huh, he looks a lot like Mr. Azik! Klein’s eyes suddenly opened wide, his gaze subconsciously falling below the right ear of the baron.

He then looked at the unremarkable mole near the ear.

The position of the mole was exactly the same as Mr. Azik’s mole!

Chapter 136 - The Stumped Klein

◆

This can't be right… How could Mr. Azik be the first in the so-called line of barons, Baron Lamud? This is a figure who lived fourteen or fifteen hundred years ago! No way, how can I be sure that the person in the portrait is the first Baron Lamud? Klein looked at the oil painting, his mind buzzing in confusion. It was like everyone around him had become monsters or a dream where the entire world was filled with gods.

He looked up and stared at the blond middle-aged man. He extended his hand to grab his revolver from his underarm holster and said in a deep voice, "This is not an antique. If you don't clarify the situation, I will arrest you and charge you with fraud!"

He didn't care if prosecution fell under the police department. His only goal was to threaten the man to get information!

At the same time, Klein clicked his left molars twice to activate his Spirit Vision. Then, he looked at his target's emotional color changes.

The blond man jumped in fright and said in a panicked, muffled voice, "No, I'm not sure if it's an antique either. No, I heard that it's an antique, but I don't know much about such things. I really have no idea. I don't even know many words, yea—words."

His eyes darted around anxiously, seemingly about to cry for help.

Just then, he saw Klein adjust his revolver's cylinder and hammer. He looked as though he was going to shoot a suspect that resisted.

He suddenly stood straight and stopped looking around.

“Where did you get the oil painting?” Klein asked heavily.

The blond man’s lips quivered as he said with a fawning smile, “Officer, this is what my grandfather found in the ancient castle, more than forty years ago. An outer wall and the room on the second floor collapsed, revealing these items, items that people couldn’t find in the past. One of them was the oil painting. No, no, no, not this oil painting. The original oil painting was torn and couldn’t be preserved. So, my grandfather found someone to make a copy of the painting. Mm, the one you saw just now, I didn’t lie to you. An oil painting from forty years ago could really be considered as an antique…”

“Are you sure that this is the portrait of the first Baron Lamud?” Klein stroked the trigger and made sure the man’s gaze didn’t move an inch.

The blond man chuckled and said, “I’m not sure, but I’m guessing so.”

“Reason?” Klein nearly laughed at the man’s shamelessness.

“Because there wasn’t any labels on the oil painting,” the blond man replied seriously for once. “Just like I’m called the Scoundrel Gray, my father is called the Curly-Haired Gray, and only my grandfather was the real Gray.”

Klein exhaled silently and asked, “Where’s your grandfather?”

“In the cemetery, he’s been buried there for almost two decades. Next to him is my father who was buried three years back,” the blond man answered honestly.

After Klein asked a few questions from different angles, he adjusted the cylinder in front of the blond man and put it back into his underarm holster.

He put away his police identification and turned around in his black trench coat before walking towards the motel with his hands stuffed into his pockets. He walked quietly along the street underneath the dim light that was shining out from the houses that lined both sides of the street.

I can't confirm if the portrait is that of the first Baron Lamud… I wonder if the town has the exact historical records of the ancient castle…

Regardless, the man in the portrait must be a person from the past, at least a thousand years ago…

Besides the hair, he looks almost identical to Mr. Azik. Is this what we call reincarnation?

Back when Mr. Azik gave up his position in other universities in Backlund and came to Tingen, perhaps it was driven by instinct…

Hmm, there's another possibility. Such as, the man in the portrait is Mr. Azik and Mr. Azik is him!

Having thought of this, Klein felt a jolt. He nearly stumbled on the steps ahead.

He paced back and forth around a damaged gas street lamp and tried to incorporate his knowledge from the world of information overload. According to his earlier guesses, he made a further inference.

Mr. Azik might have become immortal due to some reasons, such as being a vampire. Could that be why he's survived for so long?

That's not right. When has there ever been a bronze-skinned vampire…

Plus, when I shook hands with Mr. Azik, I could clearly feel his body temperature and the fresh blood that flows within him.

Although he dislikes the heat of the South, he isn't afraid of the sun. He once competed in a rowing competition with other teachers under the hot sun…

Hmm, there's another possibility. Mr. Azik's Sequence potion or some other factors bestowed him with a long life, and the price for it is memory loss! Man, taking into consideration his various dreams, can I presume that he loses his memory as part of a cycle? Every few decades, he forgets his past and gains new life. Then, his dreams are the lives that he has lived before… Heh heh, I think I've read something like that before in a novel…

I can't just rely on divination to verify this. I have to look for the traces of the lives that Mr. Azik lived, traces of him not having a childhood, but starting directly as an adult!

Klein started leaning towards his latter guess. However, he temporarily couldn't eliminate the possibility of reincarnation.

He reined in his chaotic thoughts and considered carefully whether he should inform Captain Dunn about it.

If Mr. Azik was a Beyonder that lived for a thousand years, his ability would be much stronger than I imagined…

He advised me out of kindness. However, it would be hard to say if he will remain kind when I find clues about his past.

But Mr. Azik has been nice to me all this time. To involve the Nighthawks would result in a non-trivial possibility of harming him…

Sigh. It looks like I must divine this matter in the world above the gray fog. This is the most proper choice for a Seer!

Klein made the decision and returned to the hotel quickly.

Since Dunn and Frye had yet to return, he seized the opportunity to get another room at the cost of one soli.

After he entered the room, Klein made a spirituality wall with the assistance of Holy Night Powder. Then, he took four steps counterclockwise, went through the mad ravings, and arrived above the gray fog.

The lofty palace stood tall and silent while the ancient, mottled bronze table and twenty-two high chairs remained the same.

Klein took the seat of honor and made a brown goatskin and black fountain pen appear before him.

He picked up the pen and wrote seriously: “I should tell Dunn Smith about Mr. Azik.”

Then, he took the topaz pendant from his left sleeve and did a spirit pendulum divination.

The spirit pendulum divination resulted in the pendulum spinning counterclockwise, which meant that he shouldn’t tell him!

Putting down the topaz pendant, Klein thought about it and decided to make an attempt with dream divination, just to be sure.

Thus, he changed his divination statement to: “The result of hiding matters related to Mr. Azik from the Nighthawks.”

Klein held the goatskin, recited the statement seven times silently, and leaned backwards to enter a deep sleep.

He saw himself in the illusory, blurry, and distant world. He saw that he was struggling while drowning in a sea of blood.

Then, there was a hand that extended and pulled him up from the blood sea. The owner of the hand was Azik with bronze skin and a small mole near his ear.

The image shattered and reorganized. Klein saw that he was in a dark and gloomy mausoleum. The surrounding coffins opened one after another.

Azik stood next to him, looking forward, as though he was looking for something.

Just then, Klein exited the dream in an instant and saw the illusory, gray, and boundless fog.

The symbolic meaning of the earlier dream is that, if I were to hide the related matters about Mr. Azik, I would receive his assistance when I'm in danger in the future. Heh, the danger might have come about because I helped to keep the secret… What does the last scene mean? I will discover some mausoleum with Mr. Azik? Yes, perhaps the mausoleum has other symbolic meanings… Klein clasped his hands together and supported his chin while he interpreted the contents of the dream divination.

Combining it with the earlier result of the pendulum divination, he decided to not report his inference to the Captain, but merely bring up that a townsfolk had taken out a portrait of the first Baron Lamud, and that the portrait looked like a history teacher in Khoy University. Klein couldn't be sure that Dunn wouldn't hear about it elsewhere, so he had to at least mention it.

Of course, Dunn was unfamiliar with Azik and didn't know of his recount and strange dreams, so he would find it difficult to connect them. Klein even suspected that the Captain wouldn't quite remember what Azik looked like.

Then, he stopped thinking further and planned to leave the world above the gray fog. Just then, he noticed the crimson star that had been silent all this time was twinkling with faint light again.

Klein extended his spirituality with interest and saw the young man that spoke Jotun again. He saw him kneeling before a pure crystal ball.

The young man was still wearing the black tights that were different from the clothing of countries in the Northern Continent. His facial features were blurry and distorted, but Klein could faintly see his brownish-yellow hair.

He knelt there and prayed with an unusual pain in his tone.

Klein leaned sideways to hear. He relied on his beginner-level Jotun and barely understood what the young man was saying.

“O Magnificent Deity, please cast your eyes on this land that you have forsaken.

“O Magnificent Deity, please allow us, the People of the Dark, be freed from the curse of our destiny.

“I am willing to dedicate my life to you, using my blood to please you.”

†

A land that was forsaken… People of the Dark… Magnificent Deity… Klein murmured the few key words and suddenly thought of a place that The Hanged Man had mentioned once.

The Forsaken Land of God!

It appeared in Roselle’s diary too! He even sent out a fleet to search for it, but it was fruitless… Klein squinted his eyes and wondered if he had guessed correctly.

He tapped on the edge of the long bronze table with his fingers. After three taps, he came to a decision. He extended his right hand and touched the illusory crimson star.

The cloud of crimson immediately exploded, and the light flowed in like water.

Chapter 137 - City of Silver

◆◆◆

City of Silver, Mortuary.

Derrick stood in front of a flight of stairs as he looked straight ahead with reddened eyes. In front of him were two coffins containing his parents.

Embedded in a stone plate in front of him was a simple silver sword. The frequent booming of thunder caused the house to shake and the sword to sway.

The Berg couple inside the coffins weren't completely dead yet. They struggled to keep their eyes open while making weak attempts to heave for air, but in the eyes of some, the luster of their lives could no longer suppress their irreversible darkening.

"Derrick, do it!" An elder dressed in a long black robe looked at the youth and said in a deep voice with a staff in his hand. The expression of the youth was visibly contorted.

"No, no, no!" Derrick, who had brownish-yellow hair, shook his head repeatedly. He took a step back with every word, and finally let out a ear-piercing scream.

Thump!

The elder struck down his staff and said, "Do you wish for the whole city to be buried along with your parents?"

"You should know that we are the People of the Dark who have been forsaken by God. We, we can only live in a cursed place like this and all the dead would become horrifying evil spirits. There's no way to reverse it regardless of what we do, other than—other than ending their lives by the hands of a family member!"

"Why? Why?" Derrick asked in despair, shaking his head. "Why are the citizens of the City of Silver destined to kill their parents the moment they are born…"

The elder closed his eyes, as if recalling what he had experienced in the past. "This is our destiny, this is the curse we must bear, this is the will of God…"

"Draw your sword, Derrick. This is a show of respect for your parents.

"After this, when you have calmed down, you can try becoming a Divine Blood Warrior."

In the coffin, Berg tried to speak, but he could only let out a groan after his chest heaved several times.

Derrick took several steps forward with great difficulty, returning to the side of the silver sword. He extended his shivering right hand.

His brain registered the cold touch of the metal, causing him to recall the Blood Ice his father brought back when he went hunting. Blood Ice the size of a mere palm was enough to keep his home cool for a few days.

Images flashed past his eyes—his stern father teaching sword techniques, his friendly father patting away the dust on his back, his gentle mother mending his clothes, his brave mother stepping in front of him when they encountered a mutated monster, and finally, his family huddling in front of a flickering candle and sharing food…

A faint sound croaked from his throat despite his utmost suppression. With a low grunt, he exerted force with his right hand and drew the sword.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

He lowered his head and charged forward, raising the sword and driving it down with force.

Ah! Blood splattered following a pained scream. The blood splattered onto Derrick's face and into his eyes.

His vision became red. He pulled out the sword and pierced it into the coffin by the side.

After the sharp metal pierced through flesh, Derrick released his grip and wavered as he stood up.

He didn't look at the condition of the people inside the coffin. Derrick stumbled as he ran out of the Mortuary, as if he was being chased by evil spirits. His fists and teeth were clenched tight. The blood on his face left streaks across his face.

The elder who had taken in everything from the side sighed.

There were stone pillars that lined the main streets of the City of Silver. Atop the stone pillars were lanterns, and within the lanterns were unlit candles.

There was no sun in the sky here, no moon, no stars; only an unchanging darkness and lightning that threatened to tear apart everything.

The citizens of the City of Silver walked along the dark streets with the illumination of the lightning. The few hours when the lightning died down was considered by them as the true night as mentioned in the legends. That was the time where they had to use candles to light up the city, drive away the darkness, and make it serve as a warning for the monsters.

Derrick made his way along the street. He didn't have anywhere he wanted to go, but as he walked, he realized that he had reached the door of his house.

He took out his keys and unlocked the door. He saw the familiar sights, but he didn’t hear his mother’s concerned voice or his father reprimanding him for running about. The house was empty and cold.

Derrick clenched his teeth again. He walked quickly to his room and searched for the crystal ball. His father had told him that this was a crystal ball used by a long-destroyed city to worship their deity.

He knelt and faced the crystal ball, praying without any hope in mind. He pleaded bitterly, “O Magnificent Deity, please cast your eyes on this land that you have forsaken.

“O Magnificent Deity, please allow us, the People of the Dark, be freed from the curse of our destiny.

“I am willing to dedicate my life to you, using my blood to please you.”

†

Over and over again, just as he was in complete despair and about to stand, he saw a dark red glow burst forth from the pure crystal ball.

The glow was like flowing water, instantly swallowing Derrick.

When he regained his senses, he realized that he was standing in a magnificent palace supported by giant stone pillars. In front of him was a long ancient table, and on the other side of the table was a human figure obscured by a thick fog.

Other than that, there was nothing around him. It was empty and ethereal. Under him was a boundless fog and incorporeal dark red specks of light.

Derrick felt a flame of hope ignite in his heart. He stared at the human figure at the very top, confused and puzzled.

“You, are you God?”

[image]

After asking this, he suddenly remembered a statement he read from a book in the City of Silver and quickly lowered his head.

That statement was: “Do not look directly at God!”

Klein leaned back as he crossed his hands. He adopted a relaxed posture and answered using the language of the giants, Jotun, “I am not God, I am merely The Fool who is interested in the long history of this world.”

Klein had already activated his Spirit Vision by clicking his left molars. He noticed that the youth in front of him had different colors covering the surface of his Astral Projection and the depths of his Ether Body.

This meant that he was not a Beyonder.

The Fool… Derrick ruminated over the term and, after a long silence, said with difficulty,

“I don’t care if you’re God or The Fool, my prayers will not change. I hope that the people of the City of Silver will be freed from the curse of their destinies. I hope that the sun and sky described in the books will appear in our skies. If possible—if possible, I wish that my parents can be revived.”

Hey, I am not a wishing well… Klein put down his hands and laughed.

“Why should I help you?”

Derrick froze. He thought for some time before saying,

“I will offer my soul to you. I will use my blood to please you.”

“I have no interest in the soul and blood of a mortal.” Klein smiled and shook his head. He saw the color of the youth’s feelings turn into the color of despair bit by bit.

Without waiting for the youth to speak, Klein nonchalantly said, “But I can give you a chance.”

“I am a Fool that likes a fair and equal exchange. You can use what you can attain to exchange with me, or people like you, to exchange for things you want. But remember, they must be equal in value…”

“This can make you powerful. Perhaps one day, you can rely on your own strength to free the City of Silver from its curse and make the sun appear in your sky once again.”

Based on the youth’s description, Klein was confident that the City of Silver was the so-called Forsaken Land of God.

Of course, he couldn’t be certain of this for the time being. After all, the religious literature claimed that the world existed in a “sunless” state during the First Epoch, the Chaos Epoch. No one knew if there were any other strange lands that the countries of the Northern Continent were unaware of, other than the Forsaken Land of God.

Derrick listened quietly. He lowered his head in silence and replied after a while, “I want to become the Sun. I wish to obtain the formula of the corresponding starting Sequence potion from you.”

Sequence, potion, the Sun… The Sequence pathway that the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun possesses… From the looks of it, we exist in the same world…

The term “Sequence” was born from the revelation of the first Blasphemy Slate, which happened at the end of the Second Epoch, the Dark Epoch… In other words, if the City of Silver is really the Forsaken Land of God, this means that it was split apart from the Southern and Northern Continents at the end of the Second Epoch.

Could this be related to the cataclysm of the Third Epoch? According to the legends, the Evernight Goddess, Earth Mother, and the God of Combat descended upon this world and protected humans from the cataclysm along with the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom… Klein obtained a fair bit of information from the youth.

But he had trouble interpreting what the youth was saying, and even more trouble organizing his words, as he wasn't fluent in Jotun.

Luckily, ancient Feysac was derived directly from Jotun. Klein could be described as an expert in that area, and thus, he could master Jotun relatively quickly, preventing him from making a fool of himself.

Klein maintained his posture. He replied with a calm tone, "We can discuss this transaction in the future. Do not go out for the next two days. Try your best to not be in the same room as anyone else."

He didn't know the unit of time used in the City of Silver, much less the time difference it had with the Loen Kingdom. All he could do was generalize it as tomorrow and wait until the Tarot Gathering was over before he told him that was the time for future meetings…

Klein knew that there was a term for "day" in the Jotun, and thus deduced that the youth would understand even if the City of Silver didn't use it as a measure of time.

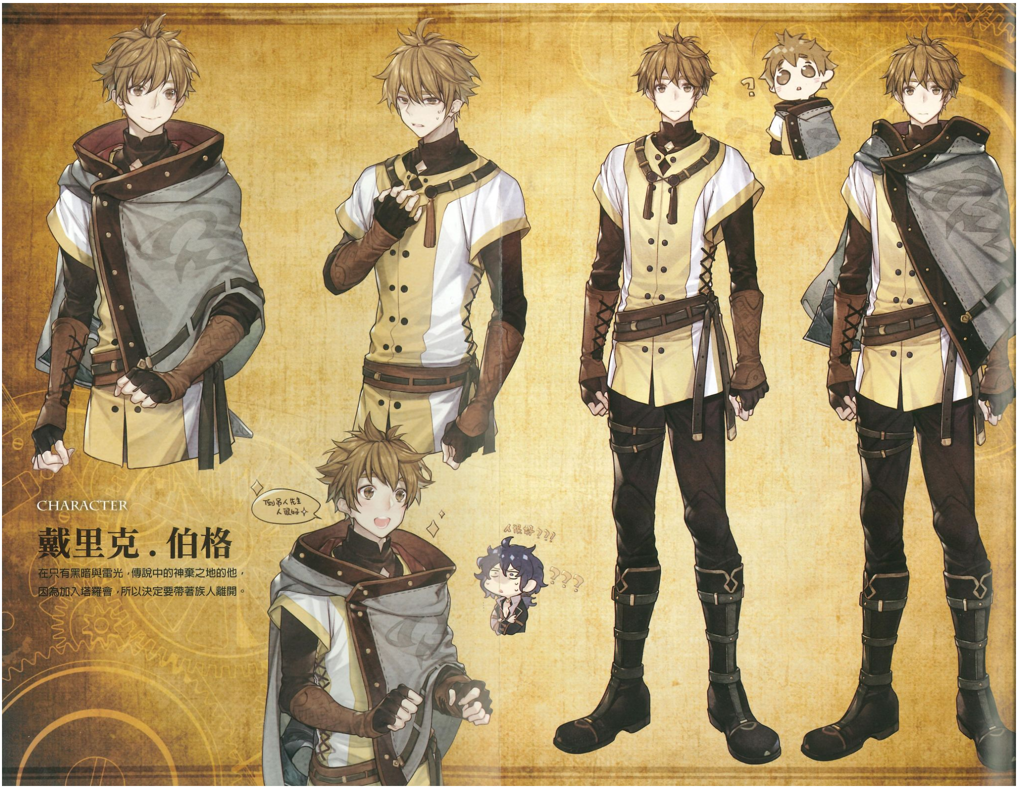
"Alright, I'll follow your instructions," Derrick replied with his head lowered. He didn't have any objections.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He tapped his fingers on the side of the table and said, "Before I send you back, let me first complete our equal exchange. I gave you a chance to be strong, and you have to give me something equal in return."

"I have said that I am The Fool who is interested in the long history of this world. What I ask in return is the history of the City of Silver, everything that you know."

Derrick thought for a moment before replying softly, "I will describe it faithfully."

"The City of Silver has existed ever since the omnipotent and omniscient God, the Lord that created everything forsook this land. No, it existed before that, but it was called the Kingdom of Silver."


?
CHARACTER
戴里克．伯格
在只有黑暗與雷光，傳說中的神棄之地的他，
因為加入塔羅會，所以決定要帶著族人離開。
倒吊人先生人很好✧
人很好???
???

Derrick Berg

Living in the legendary Forsaken Land of the Gods, where there is only darkness and lightning, he decided to lead his people away after joining the ***Tarot Club****.*

Chapter 138 - Giant Pathway

◆

The omnipotent and omniscient God… The Lord that created everything… Klein leaned back and maintained a profound posture while he ruminated over the words that the youth from the City of Silver had said.

He was no stranger to a “Lord that created everything.” The Creator mentioned in The Book of Storms, The Revelation of Evernight, and other urban myths referred to the Creator with similar titles. It was also the way various secret organizations like the Aurora Order described the True Creator.

But this was the first time Klein was hearing of an “omnipotent and omniscient God” in this world. Be it the Evernight Goddess, Lord of Storms, and the God of Steam and Machinery, none of them claimed to be omniscient or omnipotent.

If the City of Silver was really in the Forsaken Land of God, then the Forsaken Land of God would truly belong to this world. The “omnipotent and omniscient God” might be the title of the Creator that was used by the living in ancient times… Klein looked towards the young man opposite him in thought. He looked at the emotional colors of pain and sorrow.

When Derrick felt The Fool’s gaze, he lowered his head involuntarily.

He recalled the legends that his parents had told him. He said slowly and sadly, “When the sun disappeared from the sky, when the clouds were ripped and torn apart, when lightning and thunder became our rulers, and the monsters lurking in the dark suddenly emerged, ones so terrifying beyond one's imagination, they destroyed one city after another in the Kingdom of Silver. Humanity's Dark Ages had arrived.

"The remaining experts in the City of Silver then relied on their united power and two magical items before they finally warded off the attack of the Things of the Dark. They gradually eradicated the monsters within a one day journey of the city, and they established a city-state that protected the last light of human civilization."

A standard textbook description… Klein couldn't help but comment in his head.

The young man's description made him feel that the City of Silver was in a different world than the Northern Continent.

Maybe this is the unique characteristic of the Forsaken Land of God? He thought, without revealing his emotions.

Derrick calmed his breathing and continued, "During the first few decades, plants couldn't grow. The City of Silver had a severe lack of food, and we could only hunt dark creatures or mutated animals to relieve our hunger. The population dropped drastically. Fortunately, we found Black-Faced Grass. It could survive under such circumstances, and it became our only reliable and stable food source.

"It was said to be the final intervention that the magnificent God left for us. It allowed one generation after another to live on in the City of Silver. It persisted in the Dark Ages for 2582 years.

"The passage of time was recorded by a long line of Chiefs. For the rest of the people in the City of Silver, we call periods of frequent lightning 'day,' and when the lightning subsides, we call it 'night.' It's a rather confusing system, and it makes exact dates difficult to pinpoint."

Such a magical place… Klein was glad that he hadn't talked about "tomorrow," but instead vaguely mentioned the following two days.

Derrick briefly talked about the few memorable incidents in the City of Silver's history and said, "When the population returned to a certain level, the number of Beyonders increased. The six-member council started forming elite troops to explore the dark. We have now explored all of the original territory and nearby cities. We are advancing towards the darker and more terrifying depths of the dark. At the border, we found cities with strange architectural style, but they were destroyed at some point. We suspect that they were sanctuaries built by other remaining humans. Unfortunately, they still lost to the Things of the Dark in the end."

The Things of the Dark that he mentions should be a reference to monsters that hide in the dark, ones that are beyond imagination. Klein nodded indiscernibly.

"…The Kingdom of Silver was once ruled by the Giant King. Hence, the Beyonder chain that we are in control of is the Giant pathway, also known as the Divine Blood Warrior Sequence pathway… When we killed certain monsters and explored those destroyed cities, we obtained potion formulas of other Sequences. However, the Sequence pathways are incomplete," Derrick said, moving on to explain the current situation in the City of Silver.

Upon hearing that, Klein's mind jolted. Although he didn't change his posture much, he was obviously paying more attention.

I love knowing more about Sequence potions! The Giant King… The City of Silver and the Northern Continent share the same history? The Second Epoch's history… Hmm, killing a monster causes it to drop a formula? Is this a game? No, there's another possibility. Those monsters were once human, Beyonders… Klein suddenly felt a heavy weight on his shoulders.

Derrick saw that the Fool didn't reply. He clenched his teeth, pondered, and said, "The names of the Giant Sequence pathway are Sequence 9 the Beyonder Warrior, Sequence 8 Gladiator, Sequence 7 Weapons Master, Sequence 6 Dawn Paladin, Sequence 5 Guardian, and Sequence 4 Demon Hunter. Only the elders in the six-member council know the names of the higher Sequences."

Sequence 4 Demon Hunter… This is the name of a High-Sequence potion formula? This is the first time I've heard something like this! Klein felt delighted at the fact that he finally learned one of the names of the higher Sequences. However, he suspected that it was a name from ancient times, which would be different from the current version in the Northern Continent, just like the Storm Priest and the Seafarer.

Oh, Beyonder Warrior, Gladiator, Weapons Master… Sounds familiar… Oh right, the Sequence pathway that the Church of the God of Combat has in control is very similar to this! Sequence 9 Warrior, Sequence 8 Pugilist, Sequence 7 Weapons Master! Due to the limits of his security clearance, Klein only knew the titles of the first three sequences that the Church of the God of Combat had in control, but the similarity between the two pathways was still obvious.

Based on the core meaning, they are basically identical. The complete Sequence that the Church of the God of Combat mastered is the so-called Giant Sequence pathway… It is said that there was a God that emerged in the Third Epoch, which was the Cataclysm Epoch, to inherit the estate of the Giant King? Or could it be that He Himself was an ancient Giant? Klein analyzed and judged while he maintained his calm appearance.

Derrick continued to explain.

"After we pulled through the initial hardships, the City of Silver has been ruled by a six-member council ever since. The elder that enjoys the highest position in the council is called the Chief. The other five are equal in rank… The current six-member council is formed by three Demon Hunters, two Guardians with the greatest potential, and a Shepherd."

The City of Silver has three High-Sequence Beyonders! Demigod-like experts! These three alone could destroy the Tarot Club a hundred times over… Klein felt a little afraid. He had yet to attempt recruiting someone under the nose of a High-Sequence Beyonder.

However, since the young man was just a mere commoner, with him not even at Sequence 9, it was unlikely that he would gain the attention of the upper echelons for a long time. Thus, Klein relaxed again.

Is Shepherd from another Sequence pathway, perhaps from one of the incomplete pathways? Sounds reminiscent of the style of the Aurora Order. The member from the Aurora Order that wrote a letter to Mr. Z, what was his name again? He kept mentioning the "Lord's lamb"… Klein maintained his leisurely posture and asked casually, "Shepherd?"

"Yes, this is a Sequence pathway that we found from a city that the Things of the Dark destroyed. It only reached Sequence 5 Shepherd, but Elder Lovia is very strong, very strange, and very scary. It is said that she once won against an evil spirit at the level of a High-Sequence Beyonder without getting injured. Therefore, when there was a vacancy in the six-member council, they made an exception for her," Derrick, feeling a little fear.

Klein thought, then smiled as he asked, "What's the Sequences before Shepherd? I find them familiar. As you know, a sequence's historical name and its current name is always different."

"In the City of Silver, the names of potions have never changed," Derrick refuted instinctively. He then lowered his head and said, "Sequence 9 Secrets Suppliant…"

Indeed! Klein was satisfied when his guesses were confirmed.

This is the name of Sequence 9 from the Aurora Order!

"Sequence 8 is Whispered, Sequence 7 Shadow Ascetic, Sequence 6 Rose Bishop, Sequence 5 Shepherd," Derrick recounted what he knew.

Whispered, Listener, they are about the same… Heh, I know more than the information provided by the Tingen Nighthawks. In a good mood, Klein beckoned for Derrick to continue.

Derrick then roughly described the current situation of the City of Silver, and finally, he couldn't help but say, "I carry the curse of destiny. Whether a citizen of the City of Silver is a commoner or a Beyonder, we all turn into evil spirits after we die. The evil spirit of a Beyonder is just stranger, more terrifying, and far more difficult to deal with. In the past, there were many occasions when this curse nearly destroyed the City of Silver. The only way to prevent an evil spirit from rising is for a person to be killed by someone of their own bloodline."

"Such a cruel matter. I hope you can grow strong and find a method for the people in the City of Silver to shake off the curse." Klein, The Fool who was merely an empty shell, could only provide some free chicken soup for the soul.

"So, I want to be the Sun… When there was a Sun shining over the land, we had never encountered any curse," Derrick muttered softly with great difficulty and pain.

Klein nodded slightly and asked, "You will have the chance to. Remember, that I can pull you in here anytime in the next two days. Try to avoid being around other people."

"Alright," Derrick replied solemnly.

"Before that, I need you to confirm your code name." Klein smiled and pointed at the deck of tarot cards that appeared on the table.

Confident that Derrick had never come into contact with tarot cards, he gave a brief introduction. "Pick one of the cards as your code name. Anything besides The Fool, Justice, and The Hanged Man.

Derrick took two steps forward, flipped through the tarot cards, and said without hesitation, "Sun. I pick The Sun."

"Remember your choice, it will follow you for the rest of your life," Klein replied like a charlatan.

At the same time, he extended his hand and severed the connection in a restrained manner. Then, he watched as the crimson glow receded, and the young man opposite him turned incorporeal and dispersed bit by bit.

Chapter 139 - Studying 3-0782

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After the crimson light in front of him dissipated, Derrick Berg saw his room once again. He saw the pure crystal ball in his hands.

Crack!

The crystal ball shattered from the inside. Some of it turned into pieces of illusory beams of light that flew into the void around him, while the other crystalline fragments fell noisily to the ground.

Derrick looked on, dumbfounded. He could see the traces of blood on his face reflected in the bronze mirror. He noticed a crimson light spiraling on the back of his right palm, forming a circle with lines extending out from the edge.

The strange symbol bore into the back of his palm and vanished.

Derrick fell into a daze in the time it took several flashes of lightning to illuminate the sky before snapping to his senses.

He looked at the fragments of the crystal ball on the ground, then looked at the back of his right hand as his gaze turned deeper.

He walked out of his bedroom, returned to the living room, and opened the door to look up at the sky above the City of Silver.

An arc of lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the city with a silver sheen. Right on the heels of that was rumbling thunder. The world belonged to the dark. Without any speck of light, the heavy darkness only left people in despair.

Derrick clenched his fists. There was no joy in his eyes for they were still filled with the remnant grief and pain.

But he was no longer lost.

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Phew, looks like I've managed to trick another person into becoming a member. No, I've managed to recruit another member… Klein shook his head and mocked the present strength of his Tarot Club.

The leader, The Fool, was only a Sequence 9, one who had just fully digested the Seer potion!

And there were at least three High-Sequence Beyonders at Sequence 4 in the hopeless City of Silver that The Sun spoke of!

"After mentioning the acting method one more time, I can start telling the Captain the specifics and hand in my special application. At the very least, I'll stop being in charge of support once I become a Clown." Klein didn't stay in the world of fog. He extended his spirituality, wrapped it around himself, and initiated a descent.

Tearing through the gray fog and passing through the ravings, he returned to his room before dispelling the wall of spirituality.

Then, Klein picked up the key and headed out of the room. He first went to the two rooms booked by Dunn to take a look in order to confirm that the Captain and Frye hadn't returned yet. He then headed to the first level and handed the key back to the boss.

The boss looked at the wall clock to the side and gave a thumbs up.

"Well done!"

Hey, are you mistaken over why I booked an hourly room? Klein wanted to explain himself, but finally decided to leave the misunderstanding as it was.

Feeling wronged, he tried to console himself.

Yes, this way, he won't mention that I rented another room in front of the Captain!

After heading out and going through the motions, Klein did a quick divination and returned to the inn based on the results. He headed straight to the second floor to find Dunn and Frye discussing their investigations in one of the rooms, just as he expected.

"We can confirm that the wraith appeared within the last three months," Dunn summarized to Klein with a nod as he came through the door.

Klein immediately echoed, "My investigations also confirmed it…"

He highlighted the main points of his questioning and concluded, "Heh, there's a townsfolk named Scoundrel Gray who claimed that he had the portrait of the first Baron Lamud. He said that it was an antique oil painting more than a thousand years old."

"Don't tell me you bought it?" Dunn's eyes shimmered as he was taken aback before he asked.

Captain, do you think that I'm so stupid to be fooled that easily? Klein gave a dry laugh.

"No, I didn't. Even though I'm a history student, I have attended some lessons on archeology and have some degree of experience in this area. I can more or less determine if something is fake. Heh, the person in the portrait looked a little like my history teacher, Mr. Azik."

He casually mentioned the most important piece of information.

And indeed, Dunn didn't pay too much attention to it. He massaged his temples and said, "This is a small town near a historical site. There will always be a myriad of 'antiques' here. I just saw a vendor selling the silver wine glasses of Baron Lamud."

“Someone tried to sell me the insignia of the Lamud Family, claiming that it had been dug out of the castle,” Frye added.

Klein subconsciously asked, “Did you guys buy them?”

Frye and Klein looked at each other, and didn’t continue with the subject.

“The next mission is for you or Frye to take Sealed Artifact 3-0782 out of town to somewhere uninhabited. Otherwise, a good half of the people in this inn will become idiots blathering praises of the Sun. Are you going first, or Frye?” Dunn looked at Klein with his deep gray eyes.

“Me.” Klein raised his hand slightly and smiled. “It’s still quite early, so I can come back and have a nice sleep later. We’re doing two-hour shifts, right?”

“Yes. Frye, go over with Klein and confirm where you’ll exchange the Sealed Artifact.” Dunn turned to look at Corpse Collector Frye. He had already found an opportunity to hand Sealed Artifact 3-0782 over to Frye when they split up to conduct their investigations. Otherwise, he would have been purified and started praising the Sun. Frye hadn’t had enough time to recover, and could only hold the item for another three hours.

“Alright.” Frye took out the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem from the inner pocket of his black trench coat and handed it over to Klein.

Klein took the item with a fair bit of curiosity and interest. The metal was warm to the touch, as if hot water was flowing within it.

The warm, gentle glow was like a ripple, spreading outward in waves and bringing with it a pure smell. At the same time, Klein felt that the dark golden Sacred Emblem carved with the symbol of the Sun was cleansing his spirituality, removing the impurities and leaving it pure.

Of course, all Sealed Artifacts have their dangers. Death might occur if one isn’t careful enough. It’s even possible to have a fate worse than death… He muttered to himself as he placed the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 into his inner pocket.

After inspecting his revolver, charms, and cane, he walked out of the room and left the inn together with Frye. They headed straight for the outskirts of Lamud Town.

The two circled an area beside a sparse and deserted forest and confirmed that there was no one within dozens of meters of them.

“Chase away anyone who approaches you,” Frye coldly reminded, “I’ll come to take your place in two hours.”

“Sounds good,” Klein replied with a smile.

After seeing Frye enter the town, he found a tall boulder he had eyed previously. He picked up some leaves from the tree beside him and wiped the surface of the boulder.

He then touched the top of the stone with his finger and inspected the stone under the light of the crimson moon.

After confirming that it was clean, Klein put on his black trench coat and sat down.

Why stand when you can sit! Klein thought to himself.

After a few minutes of silence, he looked at the dark, quiet, and rather scary forest. He couldn’t help but stand up, taking out several metal bottles from his hidden pockets and scattering their contents—herb powder and essential oils—around the boulder.

Klein recited an incantation in Hermes. With the help of the materials, he created a barrier of spirituality, sealing the area he was in.

He did this simple ritual for two reasons. First, he didn’t want to rely too much on his premonition for danger as a Seer to defend against corpses and spirits launching a sneak attack against him. The second reason was to—was to keep the bugs away…

This is a hundred times better than insect repellent! Klein sat back down, satisfied.

After sitting there for a few minutes, Klein took out Sealed Artifact 3-0782 out of curiosity. He began a detailed inspection of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

I wonder if I could use divination to find out its origins and how it became special… He took out the pen and paper he always had on him and wrote a statement: "The origin of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in my hands."

As a qualified and true Seer, Klein had made the preparations needed to divine anywhere.

After reciting the statement seven times, he closed his eyes and entered a state of Cogitation, using that as a launchpad to propel him into his dreams.

All he saw were fragmented pieces of light in his dreams. Other than that, he didn't learn anything else.

Yes, the Church must have gotten other Seers to attempt the same thing in the past. The fact that there is no mention of its origins must mean that there was no result from the divination, just like what happened just now… Klein sighed. He then thought, I wonder what would happen if I eliminate the interferences?

This thought immediately filled Klein's head, pushing his curiosity to a peak.

After more than ten minutes of hesitation, he stood up. He decided that it was fine since there was no one around, considering how he was in a secluded area of the forest. He took four steps counterclockwise inside his wall of spirituality before entering the world above the fog once again.

Klein sat at the seat of honor of the ancient table in the magnificent palace. He conjured a few sheets of yellowish-brown goatskin and a black fountain pen, as well as the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

"It feels rather real…" He rubbed Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hands, finding the tactile feedback identical to the one he had felt in the outside world.

It instantiates itself based on what I felt? Klein mumbled to himself before writing down the statement he had come up with previously:

"The origin of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in my hands."

After reciting the statement seven times, he held the piece of goatskin and Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hands. He leaned back and entered his dream.

In the blurry dreamworld, Klein saw a drop of glowing gold liquid. It was warm and bright.

It was suspended above an altar, before a man dressed in a white classic robe.

The man only had his back facing Klein. He had lost all signs of life as he fell slowly towards the sacrificial altar.

At that moment, the Sun Sacred Emblem he was holding had come into contact with the golden liquid, the latter quickly seeping into the emblem.

The dream quickly dissipated after Klein saw this, waking him up.

So it was because of the golden liquid that this Sacred Emblem has been so effective and uncontrollable to this day. Hmm, decades have passed since the discovery of this emblem, but its cleansing powers haven't declined. I wonder what that golden liquid was? Some advanced Beyonder ingredient? Klein toyed with the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hand and slipped into deep thought.

After deliberating over it for a few minutes, he tried to emulate the feeling he had in the dream. He wanted to separate the golden liquid from the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem he had conjured.

He accomplished it almost immediately as the thought came to him. Klein looked in shock at the emblem which was no longer warm or pure. He watched as the drops of golden liquid silently suspended themselves in the air. He had even more praises for this mysterious space above the fog.

This is practically a miracle, even if the separation and instantiation here isn’t real!

“The origins of this drop of golden liquid.” He penned down a new statement with great excitement.

Chapter 140 - Expert At Courting Death

“The origins of this drop of golden liquid.”

After reciting the divination statement seven times, Klein held onto the goatskin and the illusory golden liquid before leaning back in his seat.

He didn’t know if he could divine with the item that was instantiated based purely on a feeling. All he could do was make bold assumptions and carefully seek confirmation.

In seconds, Klein’s eyes darkened, turning from brown to black as he entered a state of Cogitation.

His eyelids drooped down and he “saw” the illusory yet blurry dream.

In the blurry world that looked in shambles, a golden, glaring sun suddenly appeared!

A low grunt resounded across the void. The pure and clean light suddenly lit everything up as the gold and burning flames swept outwards.

Boom!

Klein was instantly expelled from his dreamworld and flipped onto his side as he shivered. His body seemed to become a huge bonfire which burned with a raging flame.

At that moment, his thoughts were all over the place. No proper idea could form from the chaos in his mind.

Rumble!

The mysterious space above the gray fog shook violently, and the lofty palace collapsed inch by inch. The ancient, mottled bronze table broke into a few pieces.

The terrifying changes only continued for three seconds before the world above the gray fog returned to tranquility as though nothing had happened.

The gold flame on Klein gradually extinguished. He rolled around on his charred skin as he groaned in pain, until he eventually regained his ability to think.

He supported himself on the armrest of the high chair and stood up with great difficulty. He was terrified and confused about what had just happened.

He had never imagined that a mere divination would result in such consequences!

He panted and lifted his head to survey his surroundings. He realized that the lofty palace and ancient bronze table, which looked like they had stood unchanged since ancient times, had been damaged. In the world above the gray fog, which had never experienced any abnormality, it was simply an unprecedented level of damage.

What happened? Did my divination point towards some unfathomable existence? Klein calmed down slightly and let his burned flesh shed while he speculated. If I wasn't protected by this mysterious space above the gray fog, there might not even be ashes of me left behind… Could that drop of gold liquid be the blood of a god? Did I see the Eternal Blazing Sun, or some powerful angel of His? No, that was the sun, so I think it was the former… Damn, did I just look directly at a god?

Klein felt more fear as he thought about it. He felt that he had nearly died.

Those who know nothing fear nothing, but those who don't court death won't die… In the future, I can't just divine anything and everything. Who knows what I'll see!

If that were to happen once more, I don't know if this mysterious space could even shelter me from fatal damage… When that happens, I'd actually die…

Yes, it definitely won't do if I continue making experiments with the golden liquid. The existence from before which was likely Eternal Blazing Sun. He must have sensed the sudden, hidden and unexpected influence from the divination above the gray fog and failed to respond in time… If He were prepared, this mysterious space might not have been able to withstand the repercussions…

Having come to this realization, Klein's body had already returned to normal. It was no longer charred, but compared to before, he was dimmer and more incorporeal than before.

He lifted his hand to massage his temples and commanded with his mind to restore the palace and the long table.

Then, the palace that looked like the home of a giant and the long table cast out of bronze returned to normal. Everything looked like it had before.

Klein sat down and leaned against the back of the chair. He engaged in self-mockery.

Well, this isn't entirely bad. At least I know the limit of the mysterious space and I have a certain goal… Only powers approaching the angels of the gods can completely influence the power of the area above the gray fog?

Sigh, I have to add another new rule to my Seer principles. 'Do not randomly divine things that involve a high-level entity.' Yes, I shouldn't hastily activate my Spirit Vision either. If I were to look directly at things that shouldn't be looked at directly, it might be game over. In the outside world, I don't have the mysterious space to fend off most of the negative effects…

After a while, Klein's expression turned odd because some knowledge was reverberating in his head.

Yes, knowledge!

In the short time he had spent with what appeared to be Eternal Blazing Sun, Klein was constantly in his divination state. Hence, he could instinctively divine certain matters and knowledge from the being that he was looking at.

He quickly used a dream divination to recall and organize what he had gathered that wasn't his primary objective. He picked up the black fountain pen and wrote one line after another.

"1. Do not look directly at God.

"2. White Angel.

"3. The technique of making a Flaring Sun Charm… It's a relatively high level charm in the domain of the Sun. Its potency can last a year before it deteriorates… There's no need for a ritual to pray to the Eternal Blazing Sun, but the procedure requires the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 to take the ritual's place. It will siphon power from the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem…

"4. Extremely hostile towards Lord of Storms and God of Knowledge and Wisdom.

"5. Bard potion formula:

Main ingredients: a Crystal Sunflower or an adult Flint Bird's tail feather or a Fire Bird's tail feather… A piece of Siren Rock or a Singing Sunflower…

Supplementary ingredients: a blade of Midsummer Grass, 5 drops of July Wine Juice, a blade of Elf Dark Leaf…

“6. Light Suppliant potion formula:

Main ingredients: a piece of Brilliance Rock or powder of Dazzling Soul or… Blood of a Mirror Hedgehog or the Heart of a Magma Titan…

Supplementary ingredients: a Golden-edged Sunflower, three drops of Aconite Juice…

“7. Priest of Light potion formula:

Information of main ingredients missing.

Supplementary ingredients: 5 grams of Rosemary, 7 drops of fingered citron juices, Rock Water…

“8. Sequence 4, Unshadowed potion formula. Main ingredients could be the golden blood of god extracted from the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem. It could also be replaced with three adult Sun Divine Bird’s tail feathers and a piece of Holy Brilliance Rock.

Information of supplementary ingredients missing…”

After writing down the eight lines, Klein couldn’t help but rap the edge of the long bronze table.

He had gained way more than he imagined!

He was already satisfied with surviving his reckless divination earlier, but now he had received an unexpected “survival reward.”

From the confidential information he received from the Nighthawks, he knew that the Sequence pathway that the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun held was called Sun, and its Sequence 9 was Bard. It would allow the Beyonder to imbue courage and strength for themselves and their allies through their singing, a “job” that brought about devotion and submission. Their slogan was “Let us praise the Sun!”

The corresponding Sequence 8 was Light Suppliant. They could cast spells and hold rituals from the Sun's domain which were very effective against corpses and spirits. Sequence 7 was called Solar High Priest, which greatly enhanced the spells and rituals within its domain.

In other words, I have obtained the complete potion formulas of Sequence 9 and Sequence 8 in the Sun Sequence pathway. Yes, unlike before, the potion formula even lists replacement items and ingredient names from different eras… As expected of formulas obtained directly from Eternal Blazing Sun through divination! Klein thought in satisfaction.

He had originally planned on seeing if The Hanged Man could solve the request of the young man from the City of Silver. After all, the Church of Storms and the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun were the most ancient orthodox sects. They had fought against each other for thousands of years, so it would only make sense for the two churches to have learned the initial sequence of each other's pathways.

The Hanged Man might not have cared about the Sun pathway previously, but since he is very likely a Sequence 7 Seafarer, it would probably be easy for him if he really needed to gather the information. However, I don't need him now. I solved it myself, through an unbelievable yet extremely dangerous method… Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, my Sun friend, your Fool nearly turned himself into a charred corpse… Klein lampooned silently while still feeling a lingering sense of fear.

He lowered his head and looked at the records on the goatskin before him. He thought of another formula.

Would the Priest of Light be an ancient name of Solar High Priest? The confidential information of the Nighthawks never mentioned it, and my divination didn't pinpoint the Sequence number… Is it Sequence 6, or Sequence 5?

Sequence 4, Unshadowed… This is the first High-Sequence formula that I've obtained! It's such a pity that it lacks the supplementary ingredients. I wonder how I can fill in the blanks? I can't believe that drop of golden liquid is really the blood of a god. Sealed Artifact 3-0782 is probably far stronger than anyone imagines. From what I can see, it's sufficient to become a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact.

Yes, it's likely that the Nighthawks from before only determined whether the item has any traits of the living, how much danger it would cause to nearby humans, how difficult it is to control the item's effects, and if it can be used against corpses and spirits. They had no way of discovering its unique origin.

The Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem can probably even fight against evil spirits… How could the examiner find an evil spirit to experiment on?

As an official Nighthawk, I can't become the owner of Sealed Artifact 3-0782, but, yes, I can find an opportunity to make a Flaring Sun Charm and siphon its power? Sigh. I certainly can't do it now. I haven't prepared the necessary ingredients. Why would I, a Nighthawk of the Evernight Goddess, carry the ingredients of the Sun around with me?

Klein massaged his forehead regrettably. He saw that there was no other movement in the world above the gray fog and finally relaxed. He confirmed that the Eternal Blazing Sun hadn't managed to track him down.

Do not look directly at God, do not look directly at a high-level entity. I must remember this!

Why would the Eternal Blazing Sun be extremely hostile towards the Lord of Storms and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom?

What the hell is a White Angel?

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As these mixed thoughts filled his brain, Klein felt the emptiness and an aching pain in his head. Plus, he felt that too much time had passed. He had to return to the outer world, just in case someone discovered anything amiss.

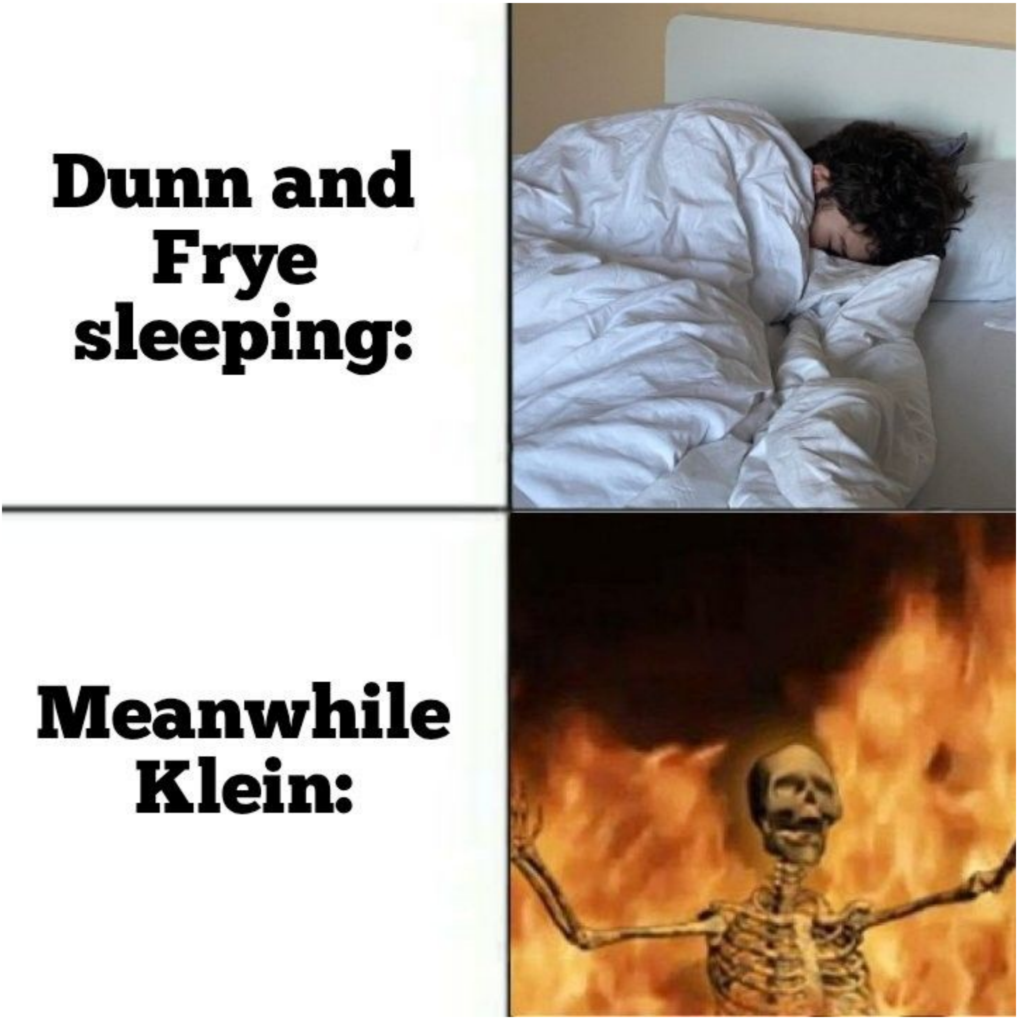
Back then, he thought it would take a minute or so to divine two or three times in the mysterious space. Plus, there was a spirituality wall isolating him from everything else. Once it was touched, his body in the world above the gray fog would sense it. Hence, he felt utterly safe, but he hadn't considered the possibility of having some sort of accident. In the end, he nearly lost his life and that wasted quite a bit of time.

Due to the fact that he was afraid that he would be greeted by a Light of Purification beam or discover that the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem was damaged, he enveloped his body with spirituality before he stimulated a descent with his heart in his mouth.

The crimson moonlight reflected in his eyes, and there was a darkness hidden within. Klein saw the sparse forest and the weeds before him, as well as the intact Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hands.

After a few seconds of breathless anxiety, he finally believed that he was safe.

Phew… Klein let out a breath of relief. He felt exhausted after his insane probing at the border of death.


Dunn and Frye sleeping:
Meanwhile Klein:

Chapter 141 - Nightmare

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The exhausted Klein dispelled the sealed wall of spirituality, allowing the cool wind to blow onto his face. The scent of grass and trees that the wind carried revitalized him.

He rubbed the warm and classic Sealed Artifact 3-0782 with his hands and sighed to himself.

“Who would have thought that there would be a drop of god’s blood in this emblem? I have to assume that the experts from the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun must have tried searching for this item in the past, but couldn’t find it…”

Klein stretched his neck. He didn’t dare try anything else, keeping the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in the inner pocket of his trench coat.

His hand followed a chain and took out a silver vine-leaf pocket watch. He opened it to see that there was still about an hour before Corpse Collector Frye’s shift.

I need two matches to prop up my eyelids… This is a side effect of that near-death experience! Klein didn’t have any other ideas. All he could do was take out a small metal bottle from a tiny hidden pocket. He uncapped the bottle and brought it near his nose.

A pungent smell, a mix of mint and disinfectant, quickly entered his nose, giving Klein goosebumps. His senses were jolted, making him forget his fatigue temporarily.

He had learned the formula from Corpse Collector Frye. It was called Quelaag's Oil, and it could help a person ignore the stench of rotting corpses, as well as refresh and clear the mind.

The next hour felt like torture. Klein paced around from time to time, and was bitten by the mosquitoes in the forest several times.

Finally, he saw the black-haired, blue-eyed Frye walking out of the town wearing a trench coat and holding a cane.

Even though Frye still looked like a living corpse, Klein felt as though he was looking at his savior. He covered his mouth and let out a yawn, making his eyes teary. He made his way over and took out Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from his pocket.

"What happened?" Frye asked as he looked at his partner's pale face.

Klein sighed and said, "I just did my shift at Chanis Gate the previous night and didn't sleep too well in the morning, so I'm very tired."

He didn't elaborate further and changed the subject. "Shall I come for my next shift four hours from now?"

"Seven hours. The Captain doesn't need sleep at night." Frye took the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

I'm glad someone enjoys staying up late… Klein ridiculed the Captain under his breath. He bade goodbye to Frye and walked towards the town.

On the way back to the inn, he took out his pocket watch again and checked the time.

Hmm, ten minutes earlier than we arranged… What a nice person… Klein laughed and walked faster. He returned to the inn and opened the half-closed door. The boss watched him as he made his way to the second floor before he entered his room.

He removed his coat and shoes after locking the door. He didn't wash up, but instead fell directly onto the bed.

His breathing became heavy in just a few seconds, then long and peaceful.

In his dreams, Klein returned to Earth where he was playing a game he hadn't beaten. A cup of soda and a plate of spicy chicken wings were on his left. To his right was a bowl of rice and bitter bamboo shoots meat soup.

He didn't like bitter bamboo shoots, but he liked it in soup with meat slices. The refreshing taste and the little bit of fat from the meat were tantalizing, a perfect complement to the rice.

He could eat an extra bowl of rice if it was paired with some good sauce dip!

Just as Klein was about to enjoy his supper and continue playing his game, his dream changed again, presenting him with the internal layout of 2 Daffodil Street.

Klein suddenly became alert, aware that he was dreaming.

He saw himself seated at the side of the dining table, a copy of the Tingen Daily Tribune in his hand. In front of him was a bowl of tomato oxtail stew, pan-fried lamb chops, mashed potatoes, and wheat bread.

He subconsciously turned to look at the door, suddenly noticing a figure standing outside the window of the living room, silently staring inside the house!

Klein was shocked. He immediately recognized the gray-eyed Dunn. Half his face was clinging close to the window as he silently watched the people inside.

…Captain, can you not scare someone in their dreams? Is this your way of acting as a Nightmare? Klein thought, finding humor in his exasperation. He scooped up a mouthful of stew and put it into his mouth.

Ah, this is my cooking! He sighed to himself. He understood why he became suddenly became alert in his dream, why the scene of him on Earth vanished.

He would naturally become aware when someone barged into his dreams!

At this moment, Dunn left his spot by the oriel window and directly entered the house. In his black trench coat, he came silently before Klein.

He took off his hat and nodded before sitting down. He didn't stand on ceremony, picking up cutlery and quickly polishing off the stew, lamb chops, wheat bread on the table.

Klein looked on dumbfounded, unsure what the Captain was doing.

Phew. Dunn exhaled in satisfaction and gave Klein a thumbs up. He then took out his pipe and a matchstick before taking an intoxicated puff.

He exhaled a cloud of smoke and stood up. He then put on his hat and bowed before leaving the house and the dream.

"…" Klein looked at the Captain's back, unable to collect himself for a long time.

He looked down at the empty plates and instinctively wanted to conjure up the food he had just now.

But this time, the oxtail stew, lamb chops, mashed potatoes didn't appear in his dream.

It was completely eaten? A Nightmare can do that? Klein twitched his lips and thought in frustration. So the Captain's goal was to prevent me from eating supper in my dream? That sure is a nightmare… This method of acting as a Nightmare sure is creative…

He let out a laugh and exited his dream, once again falling asleep.

At about half past five the morning the next day, Klein, who had no choice but to wake up early, drink his coffee and eat his toast and bacon. He hurried out of town to take over from Dunn.

At seven in the morning, they prepared to set off back to Tingen.

It wasn't even ten when they arrived at 36 Zouteland Street. Fyre sat behind the typewriter after Dunn, the most energized of the lot, returned Sealed Artifact 3-0782 to the back of Chanis Gate. He took advantage of the fact that the clerks hadn't arrived yet so that he could write a report on the mission and the claims of the related expenditures.

Klein looked on from the side, satisfied that the items he had expended were within the list—including the materials he used to drive the bugs and mosquitoes away.

He didn't return home immediately, for he had arranged to meet the asylum's Doctor Daxter at one in the afternoon at the agreed upon venue through a coded letter.

Then there's still the Tarot Gathering at three… Why does the boss of a secret society have such a tiring life? Klein thought to himself. He took a two-hour nap in the Nighthawks break room to catch up on sleep.

He didn't forget the information he had obtained the previous day. He wasn't worried that he would forget, for the information could be recalled using divination. He was afraid that he would disregard the existence of this information and even lose the ability to divine the information. Thus, he recalled the pieces of information once again before he slept to reinforce them.

This was also the reason Klein insisted on doing a review every week and reorganize all the information he knew.

After lunch, he took a look at his pocket watch and left the Blackthorn Security Company for the Shooting Club at 3 Zouteland Street.

Klein entered the reception area after pushing open the door, but he didn't head directly to the shooting range belonging to the Nighthawks. Instead, he found a seat in the hall as he waited patiently with his black cane in hand.

He had arranged to meet Daxter at the Zouteland Street Shooting Club!

He had arranged this through handwritten letters. Whenever Klein needed to meet him, he would write to Doctor Daxter Guderian in place of a patient's family member and ask about a unique condition called "dissociative identity disorder." In his letter, Klein would use various methods to mention the term Spectator, as well as a hidden mark of ink to authenticate his identity. The letter would also casually mention a time to meet.

As for the place to meet, they had already decided this the first time they met. If Klein felt that there was a need to change the location, he would mention it when they met in person.

When Daxter Guderian needed to meet for nonurgent matters, he could send a letter to the Hound Pub or the Shooting Club. The recipient would be marked as Mr. Hornacis which Klein would take at scheduled times.

In urgent situations, he could hand the letter directly to the boss of the Hound Pub, Wright, and mention his "search for mercenaries." This way, Wright, who was an associate of the Nighthawks, would immediately hand the letter over to the Blackthorn Security Company.

After waiting for a while, Klein saw the refined Daxter enter the Shooting Club, a few minutes past one.

He was wearing a black hat and a fitted tuxedo. He had a cane inlaid with silver in his hands, as well as a pair of gold-framed spectacles on his face.

Daxter walked around the club without attracting attention and saw Klein, who nodded slightly. He then retracted his gaze and walked to the counter, expertly applying for a shooting range and renting a gun.

This was not his first visit.

“Small shooting range 7, 3 soli an hour. The fee for renting a revolver is one soli seven pence per hour and it contains six rounds,” the receptionist quickly settled the request.

After Daxter confirmed that he was renting the items for an hour and paid the fee of 10 soli, he took the revolver and extra bullets and was led into the respective shooting range by the facilitator.

Klein waited another five minutes before slowly standing up. He grabbed his cane before walking to the small shooting range 7 and knocked on the door.

The door opened a tiny crack with a creak. Daxter first looked around cautiously, then opened the door fully.

Klein immediately entered and locked the door.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Daxter,” he said as he took out a 10 soli bill. He handed the bill over to Daxter. “We wouldn’t let our associates bear any extra fees.”

Because I can claim compensation… He added in his heart.

Daxter didn’t decline. He took the cash and asked heavily, “Mr. Moretti, why did you ask to meet me?”

Chapter 142 - Association

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Klein obviously couldn’t just bring up the Telepathist formula right at the start. However, he didn’t hide his intention either. After all, the man opposite him was a Spectator. He wouldn’t be conned so easily.

“Has Hood Eugen behaved unusually recently?” he first asked Daxter Guderian about the patient in the asylum who was a member of the Psychology Alchemists.

Daxter examined Klein’s eyes, expression, and gestures. He thought and said, “No, he’s acting normal. Frankly speaking, I think if he really wanted to leave the asylum, he could immediately behave in a very healthy and very normal manner. But he hasn’t done so, and he continues to stay in the asylum. He appears to be treating every patient. Yes, patients who exhibit chaotic, violent, or abnormal thoughts appear to be getting better. Maybe Hood Eugen is trying to train his Beyonder powers with this method.”

Psychiatrist, Sequence 7 that corresponds to Spectator? Perhaps even higher… Since Hood Eugen isn’t a doctor in the asylum but entered as a patient, it means that he hasn’t truly grasped the acting method. It should be as Daxter has guessed; he’s probably training his Beyonder skills and doing so resembles that of the “acting method.” To a certain extent, it could slow down the potion’s negative influence. Hence, Hood Eugen decided to just take the asylum as his home… Klein openly showed that he was in deep thought regarding Hood Eugen’s matter.

Because that would make Daxter Guderian feel that he knew and understood a lot, making him appear unfathomable.

With this in mind, Klein guessed something else. The Psychology Alchemists hadn't grasped the "acting method." After all, even a mainstay member at the Sequence 7 was unaware of this. In this era with few Beyonders, a Sequence 7 was considered mid level in any secret organization. They were important enough to know crucial matters, especially those that could help members resist the loss of control.

Plus, the Psychology Alchemists was a secret organization that had only been established in the last three hundred years or even earlier. It was understandable that they hadn't grasped or deduced the "acting method." The only organization that brought up the method explicitly was the Secret Order. They were an ancient organization that had more than fifteen hundred years of history and could be traced back to the previous epoch!

Hey, the Church of the Goddess is even older than the Secret Order. Just the Letter of Saints from The Revelation of Evernight clearly indicates that it's nearly three thousand years old. That's not to mention the mythical legends before that… How could such an ancient church not discover the "acting method?"

During the long history of a huge organization, there must have been members who experimented with various possibilities, just like Spirit Medium Daly. They might not have understood the principle of the acting method in detail, but they acted out the name of the potion correctly anyway. They would have discovered the gist of it through the good feedback they received. As that accumulates through the generations of Nighthawks, unless the higher-ups were a bunch of curly-haired baboons, it would be impossible not to deduce the "acting method!"

Klein's thoughts made the connection and was suddenly shocked.

To the Nighthawks who didn't know of the "acting method," someone like Spirit Medium Daly was a genius, an example that an ordinary member couldn’t emulate. Hence, no one suspected that the experience of Daly and others could be adapted for their own use.

But to those who have grasped the “acting method,” this would be extremely odd!

Klein believed that in the long history of the Church of Evernight, Spirit Medium Daly was definitely not the first member to have used the “acting method” to digest the Low Sequence potions quickly. She might not even be in the top ten or top fifty!

It doesn’t make sense. Unless Daly didn’t understand the “acting method” on her own, but had other people’s guidance… Then, it could be concluded that every member of the Holy Cathedral follows the beliefs of the past, believing in their predecessor’s experience, and not daring to rebel against their teaching. After all, rebelling would imply the loss of control most of the time… Yes, other than this explanation, there is another possibility. The higher-ups of the church have hidden the “acting method” for some reason…

I need to flip through some records and search for examples of Beyonders in the Church of Evernight digesting their potions quickly, as well as their final outcome… Klein thought with a mask of solemnity.

Daxter looked at him, waited for a few minutes, and asked curiously, “Officer, is there some sort of problem with Hood Eugen’s actions?”

“Not right now. It just made me think of other matters,” Klein replied, smiling. He cast his suspicions aside.

He asked instead, “Has there been any actions taken by the Psychology Alchemists recently?”

“No, besides a small gathering in Awwa to exchange items and experience,” Daxter answered honestly.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “How about your own situation?”

Daxter controlled his expression as he replied, “Not too good myself. I still hear some ravings and have some illusions. If I wasn’t a doctor specializing in mental health, I might even think that I have some sort of disorder.”

As he spoke, his face grew solemn. “I followed Hood Eugen’s and your instructions to ignore those illusions and ravings. That made me feel much better, but they still affect my sleep, and I have become more grumpy and short-tempered. I’m not like myself, as though another new me is growing from within, or maybe it could be described as a new character. I’m very worried and terrified that I might suddenly lose control one day.”

Just as I have predicted, I didn’t even need to divine to see that coming… Having prepared for this, Klein smiled and said, “You don’t have to worry, you’re a subsidiary member of the Nighthawks now. There are benefits for you. As an ancient organization, we master many methods to keep one from losing control. It isn’t one hundred percent effective, but it will definitely help you.”

“Besides, I’m willing to share with you my personal experience. You must know the man standing before you only used a month to shake off the shackles of illusions and ravings, and they haven’t resurfaced. You should know from Hood Eugen and your other cadres that doing so is very difficult.”

For Sequence 8 Telepathist, Klein bragged a little.

“Officer, there’s a bit of a lie in what you said, but it’s mostly the truth,” Daxter suddenly said calmly. “What do you want from me?”

It’s tough to lie to a Spectator… Klein replied with a smile, “It’s not something that only I want to get.”

Miss Justice wants it too.

Of course, he knew that Daxter would definitely assume that the Nighthawks team wanted something.

“If your method is really effective, and the items or information you want is within my reach…” Daxter weighed his words as he spoke.

“I will give you the perks in advance,” Klein said straightforwardly. “We want the Telepathist formula.”

He wouldn’t hide the potion formula but inform the Captain as well. He would tell the Captain that Daxter used it in exchange for his personal experience on bringing the potion under control.

During the procedure, Klein would definitely verify the formula and “accidentally” memorize it in his head.

Besides, he would use the fact that he used his personal experience in exchange for the formula to earn merit with the Nighthawks.

By then, with his previous merits, he might not even need to put in extra effort to apply for the Clown formula and main ingredients.

A formula for two deals, quite a good bargain… Klein thought happily.

Daxter looked into his eyes and kept quiet for a while before he said, “You’re very frank… I’ll try my best to get the formula, but I’m not sure how long it’ll take me. If it gets too dangerous, I hope that I can replace it with something else.”

“No problem.” Klein didn’t intend to force the request on the man. He then described the “acting method” vaguely. “The key to resisting the loss of control lies within the name of the potion. We have to understand it and learn its true meaning. You can’t completely understand it by thinking about it. It must be understood through experience. For instance, as a Spectator, you have to understand that you’re only a spectator, not an actor. How a Spectator should act is something that you need to discover through attempts and experimentation to deduce the principles required of you. From there, adhere to it strictly."

Daxter listened attentively. Then, he replied, "That's a brand new way to look at things. Heh, I'm willing to use the word 'theory' to describe what you just said. This is just like a theory of a play and opera… I'll try, and I hope it'll help.

"If—if it really works, I'll do my best to get you the Telepathist formula!"

"May the Goddess protect you." Klein drew a crimson moon on his chest.

Klein didn't request the potion formula of Psychiatrist as well, because he knew that it was a task that Daxter couldn't complete with his current position. He might end up exposing him if he wasn't careful.

Thus, he planned to take it one step at a time by helping Daxter achieve a higher position in the Psychology Alchemists slowly.

Then, the long-term benefits would be abundant.

Klein looked outside through the peephole in the door, then he left quickly and turned to the small shooting range that was designated for the Nighthawks.

He entered and locked the door. His face grew grave once again. When he was guessing the reason why the Church of the Goddess hadn't developed the "acting method," he realized another thing that he had overlooked!

He had overlooked it because he had obtained two crucial factors in reverse order. It made him fail to make a further consideration.

The first matter was that the Antigonus family was destroyed by the Church of Evernight.

The second matter was that the Antigonus family had the Seer Sequence in its grasp, or at least, most of it.

As there was a very long period of time between when Klein learned the two facts, he almost didn't piece them together. Hence, he overlooked something that should have been pretty obvious.

Since the Antigonus family had grasped a majority of the Sequences of the Seer pathway, how is it possible that the Church of Evernight only received Sequence 9 Seer?

They should have obtained more than that as the spoils of war!

If a member from the Aurora Order got ahold of the Clown formula from the Antigonus family's magical notebook, then what about the Church that destroyed the entire Antigonus family?

Even if the Antigonus family was well prepared and hid their most valuable things at the highest peak of Hornacis Mountain, the Church of Evernight shouldn't have gained so little. They were the ones who killed the family members of Antigonus family. Furthermore, the dead can be made to speak!

Chapter 143 - The Fool's Real-Time Translator

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Klein paced around the small shooting range as he pondered over the intent of the Church of Evernight regarding the Seer pathway.

Do they not want Nighthawks to choose this pathway, or do they not want Beyonders to become powerful through this pathway? As such, they only revealed the Sequence 9 Seer which is clearly a support type? Captain also mentioned that the Holy Cathedral might have the subsequent recipes…

No, they didn't even provide the names of the potions for Sequence Numbers 8 and 7 in the confidential information that I read. They merely described the battle characteristics of each Sequence… In other words, they don't want those under them to realize that the Church might hold the actual formulas.

Is there a possibility that Nighthawks who chose this pathway could become "vengeful spirits" for the Antigonus family, and thus, the higher-ups of the Church made a decision like this? Or could there be some other reason?

Klein suddenly felt incredibly suspicious, a sense of intense wariness and vigilance, towards the higher-ups of the Church. He began reconsidering whether he should openly hand over the special application to become a Clown.

If there are some terrifying secrets behind this, wouldn't I be jumping into the fire myself? Frankly, I'm not a person that can be placed under strict investigation…

But the Tingen branch has handed the Clown potion formula over to the Church. Any Seer who learned of this would hope to advance. Isn't that normal? Sequence 8 is still considered a low Sequence, so it shouldn't invite too much attention…

The only problem is that I would only take a month to completely digest the potion and submit a special application. If the higher-ups are familiar with the "acting method," they would be able to realize what I did immediately… Of course, I do have an excuse; I know Spirit Medium Daly after all. Old Neil, who is strict in abiding by the Mystery Pryer's maxim, is also my friend. The claim that I gained inspiration from them and refined the "acting method" isn't too hard to believe.

Yes, even Daly received attention from the higher-ups only after showing signs of digesting a Sequence 7 potion in three years, and is now being nurtured to become a future Archbishop. Being at the stage of Clown shouldn't garner me too much attention—unless I fully digest the Clown potion in a few months, giving them confirmation to believe that I have truly mastered the "acting method"…

In other words, applying for the Clown potion isn't a risky move. I can continue with that plan, but I should pay attention to this in the future. Sigh, I'll have to take things one step at a time. I'll do a divination back at home.

Klein collected himself and took out his revolver from his holster before carrying on with his daily shooting practice and maintenance.

The quality of the revolver that he had gotten from his schoolmate, Welch, was unexpectedly good. Without any surprise, it would last for quite some time. Of course, he had to credit Dunn and Leonard for teaching him how to maintain a revolver.

To be honest, it doesn't matter if it's damaged. These are all things I can request compensation for. Klein looked at the target, put away his revolver, and left the Shooting Club.

He took the public transport back to 2 Daffodil Street. Before arriving at his destination, he saw a young lady pacing about his door.

This lady was dressed in a blue lacy dress, as well as a thinly veiled hat. She was Melissa's classmate—Elizabeth who had her adorable baby fat.

She quickly approached when she saw Klein arrive, taking off her hat to reveal her joyful face.

She paused for two seconds before smiling.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti. I'm guessing that you just came back from Lamud Town, right?"

I'm sorry, I came back in the morning… Klein smiled.

"No, I came from Zouteland Street."

Yes, that was a very honest answer… He laughed to himself.

Elizabeth froze for a moment, then said with excitement, "Alright, I guessed wrongly. I came to look for you because I wanted to tell you that I didn't have that nightmare last night. I no longer dreamed about the knight in black armor! This was exactly the same as the result of your divination!"

Of course—that wraith was completely purified by Sealed Artifact 3-0782. I couldn't channel his spirit even if I was there, much less your dream… Klein laughed and replied gently, "I'm happy that you're freed from your troubles. I'm also very satisfied with my divination yesterday."

"Thank you, thank you once again! Alright, I have to go now, I still have lessons in the afternoon. Bye bye, Mr. Moretti. I'll visit Melissa when I have the time~" Elizabeth left joyfully, renting a carriage by the side of the road.

As the carriage began to roll forward, she smiled and thought proudly, Melissa definitely doesn't know how great her brother is…

†

It seems as though my explanation just now was useless. Young ladies would rather trust their intuition and the truths made up in their minds… Klein saw Elizabeth board the carriage and opened the door to his house. He made his way to his room.

He rested for a while before he began to consolidate everything that had happened over the past week, including the questions he had yet to resolve.

After completing the task, he burned his notes, took out his pocket watch, and opened it.

"Half past two? There's another fifteen minutes left…" Seeing that he still had time, Klein put on his oldest suit and headed to Smyrin Bakery at Iron Cross Street to buy a cup of sweet iced tea from Mrs. Wendy.

He drank his beverage as he returned, then sealed his room with a wall of spirituality at fifteen minutes to three. He then took four steps counterclockwise and entered the world above the gray fog.

In the quiet, ancient palace, Klein conjured a piece of goatskin and wrote down a divination statement: "I should obtain the Clown potion through the Nighthawks."

He put his pen down and untangled the spirit pendulum on his wrist. He grabbed the pendulum firmly with his left hand, allowing the topaz to be suspended right above the piece of paper.

He recited the statement seven times. His eyes darkened and the pendulum in his hand started to turn. It turned clockwise.

It's a positive answer, so it's appropriate. But it'll be hard to say for the sequences after Clown. I should seriously develop my Tarot Club… Klein did another divination to confirm the answer.

After this, he used his hand and pressed down on the dark red star representing the Sun.

He wanted to bring the youth from the City of Silver in early and ask if he revealed whatever had happened in this world to the six-member council. If he hadn't, then Klein would give him a better way of knowing what time the gatherings would start.

†

In a room of the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick sat silently by the side of his bed, waiting for The Fool's summoning.

In order to avoid being near anybody, he didn't even go out of the house after he "returned." He had nearly finished all the food in his room.

Bearing with the hunger and hearing the growls of his stomach, Derrick felt as though he was a living corpse roaming around on a dark plain. However, he remained silent nor did he stand.

At that moment, he saw a dark red color spread in the air, quickly swallowing him.

The gray, boundless, cold, lonely world appeared in his field of vision once again. Seated at the seat of honor, The Fool, who was obscured by the thick fog, presented himself in front of him once more.

Klein was satisfied that his "summoning" wasn't interrupted. He also confirmed that he didn't face any immediate danger.

"Sun, we meet again," he said smilingly, using Jotun.

Derrick was shocked by what had happened. He lowered his head.

“You are a Fool who keeps his word.”

“The other members will arrive in a while. Before that, I’ll confirm a few things with you first.” Klein used the Loen language this time, but willed the mysterious space to translate it into Jotun.

The words rang through the air, coming to Derrick in Jotun. He asked curiously,

“What’s the matter?”

Well, now that I’ve gained a certain degree of mastery over Jotun, the mysterious space above the gray fog can translate whatever I say in real time. This means that I won’t have to worry about Justice and The Hanged Man not understanding whatever Sun says… Sigh, why does a boss like me have to work so tirelessly? Klein pinched the bridge of his nose. He laughed and shook his head.

“I’ll permit you to recite my name; remember the incantations I’m going to tell you.”

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck”

Derrick’s pupils constricted when he heard that, but he didn’t dare to get distracted. He recited it over and over again in his heart, then confirmed it with The Fool.

“You have to use a simple ritual and recite my name whenever you return to the City of Silver… I will notify you in advance for future gatherings. You need not pay too much attention to it on other days, nor do you have to avoid anyone. When you receive my notification, isolate yourself within a thousand heartbeats.” Klein told him the method he had been deliberating on for quite some time.

This was essentially a response to a prayer.

As he had to consider the situation regarding the City of Silver, as well as save time, Klein opted to omit the other steps of the ritual since it was a plea directed toward him.

“A thousand heartbeats?” Derrick muttered to himself.

Klein described the general idea of the Tarot Club to Derrick, then took out his pocket watch and looked at the time.

Derrick froze for a while, instinctively looking at the wondrous item.

When three approached, Klein extended his hand and pressed on the dark red stars representing Justice and The Hanged Man.

Derrick didn’t blink as he witnessed this. He saw light burst forth opposite and beside him, as two hazy figures extended from within.

Audrey Hall surveyed her surroundings and froze suddenly. She then heard the ever-calm voice of Mr. Fool.

“This is our newest member, his code name is Sun.”

“This is Miss Justice, and that is Mr. Hanged Man.”

Newest member? Audrey was shocked at first, then her shock immediately turned to joy.

She was very excited to see the development of the Tarot Club. She felt like a protagonist.

The Hanged Man Alger creased his brows, a little upset that The Fool would drag in a new member so suddenly.

He should’ve at least mentioned it to us… But a great figure like Mr. Fool wouldn’t have to care about our feelings… He thought in exasperation before giving a simple greeting to Justice and Sun.

In this short process, Audrey entered the her Spectator state and paid close attention to the newest member Sun.

“He should be quite young… His body language tells me that he’s a little nervous and restrained… But he ultimately maintains a tolerable air of silence, giving the feeling of, hmm, a lone wolf, yes, a lone wolf…” Audrey thought as she cast her gaze at The Fool who was seated at the end of the long bronze table.

She said in joy, “Mr. Fool, I’ve collected another two pages of Emperor Roselle’s diary.”

Chapter 144 - Three-Way Deal

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Actually there were three pages, but the characters were too complicated and too difficult to memorize. My limit is only a little over two pages. I would mess up if I were to memorize more. The rest will have to wait until the next gathering… Audrey added in her head.

New pages of Roselle's diary? Klein's mind stirred. He smiled and asked in reply when he already knew the answer, "Miss Justice, what do you need?"

Audrey's eyes beamed with excitement, but she replied in a reserved manner, "You know that I'll soon fully digest the Spectator potion. I hope that I can get the formula for the Telepathist potion so that I can prepare the ingredients ahead of time. Hmm, I know that there isn't much content for two pages of the diary, and it might not equal to the value of the Telepathist formula, so I'll give you another page, hmm, I'll also pay you a sum of money on the side…"

She had yet to finish what she said when she suddenly felt that it had come out wrong. She couldn't help but berate herself in her head, Mr. Fool is at the very least an important figure which approaches that of a god, how could he be bought over by money?!

Hence, Audrey couldn't maintain her Spectator state as she hurriedly added with a stammer, "That's not what I meant! Mr. Fool, what I meant is that you can determine the compensation that you'd like. Yes, that's what I meant!"

I like your earlier suggestion… I would answer like this: When you have fully digested the Spectator potion, you will get the formula you need. I have a subordinate, no—I have to use the word "Blessed." That sounds more awesome. He happens to be handling some matters that require money, and this is his anonymous account in Backlund Bank… Yes, then I will disguise myself and make an anonymous account in Backlund Bank. Klein didn't answer immediately but weighed his words carefully with an unfathomable expression.

Backlund Bank was one of the seven major banks in the Loen Kingdom, and as such, it possessed the right to clear transactions.

The Loen Kingdom settled accounts with receipts to take care of cash transfer business between banks within the same city in a centralized manner. However, unlike banks in the Intis Republic, not all banks were part of the same league. The biggest seven banks held on to these rights. Hence, they were called the clearance banks, making other banks rely on them.

Transferring money from a different location, on the other hand, could only be done within the same bank. It would be completed by squaring accounts between branches. With the invention of the steam locomotive and telegram, the efficiency of these transfers had been enhanced drastically.

Just then, The Sun Derrick Berg, suddenly spoke.

"The Telepathist potion formula? Telepathist that is followed by Psyche Analyst?"

Audrey looked towards him puzzledly. "You know of it?"

At the same time, Miss Justice saw a problem through her instinct as a Spectator.

The young man had used the ancient title "Psyche Analyst" instead of the modern term, "Psychiatrist!"

This guy is very strange… Audrey examined Sun's every movement.

Derrick didn't think that he behaved any differently but replied seriously, "I can get you the formula!"

Then, he felt guilty as he couldn't provide it immediately. He tried his best to explain himself, "It's a Sequence pathway that stemmed from the Dragon race. And our City of Silver was once ruled by the Giant King's imperial household. As you know, the Giants and the Dragons are sworn enemies. Hence, the City of Silver has all of Sequence 9, 8, and 7. I have ways to get them."

This kid… I already warned him not to speak carelessly or expose his origins. In the end… Klein nearly wanted to extend his hand to cover his face.

Sigh, although The Sun appears to be in great pain, very mature and silent for his age, he's just a boy after all! However, that clarifies one thing for me… It turns out that the Spectator Sequence's origins stem from the Dragon race. It's no wonder that the symbol formed by stars behind Miss Justice's high chair is the Dragon… The City of Silver has preserved history well… Klein maintained his posture of leaning against the back of his chair while he listened thoughtfully to The Sun's description.

In fact, he could've easily stopped The Sun from exposing those matters. As long as he didn't help in the simultaneous translation, Justice and The Hanged Man wouldn't have understood him at all.

However, Klein took a different approach. He felt that it might help him consolidate his mighty and mysterious image in the minds of the three members effectively. Hence, he listened with a smile and didn't make a sound.

Giant King, Dragon race, the City of Silver… Audrey was confused. She first took a look at The Hanged Man opposite her, but she could tell that he was shocked and confused as well from his body language.

She looked sideways towards the seat of honor on the long bronze table.

She saw The Fool sitting on the high chair, engulfed in thick grayish-white fog. His right arm was placed on the armrest while he leaned sideways leisurely. He showed no shock, no curiosity, no thoughts, and no doubt. He only looked at them with a smile.

He knows… He knew all of this… Audrey and Alger made the definite judgment almost at the same time.

“The City of Silver, I’ve never heard of this place… Where is it?” Audrey probed while Alger listened attentively.

At that very moment, Derrick Berg’s head was filled with questions as well. He could tell that, besides the godlike Fool, Justice and The Hanged Man were some sort of Beyonder.

In the Forsaken Land of God, besides the people in the City of Silver, Derrick had never seen another living human.

So, he asked in reply, “If you aren’t residents of the City of Silver, which city-state are you from?”

Sigh… Klein couldn’t help but wish to sigh again.

Audrey trembled her lips, momentarily at a loss for words.

Yes, the hidden meaning behind his question is that if you don’t want to answer a similar question, don’t pry into the questions about where the other person lives… Miss Justice nodded faintly and elegantly kept quiet.

Obviously, Alger had misunderstood The Sun’s intentions as well. He didn’t know the other person was really just asking straightforwardly. So, he kept quiet too.

When Derrick didn’t receive any reply, he seemed to realize what was happening. He didn’t bring it up again and instead said,

“I will try to get the Telepathist potion formula as soon as possible. I would like to use it to exchange for the beginning Sequence pathway of the Sun."

"Sun Sequence pathway? Sequence 9 Bard?" Alger asked in reply.

Derrick thought and said, "Probably, but I lack information about it."

Klein who was watching from the side decided to get involved, because he didn't want to risk anyone taking his business away.

He smiled and said, "I believe Miss Justice doesn't have the Bard formula."

But Mr. Hanged Man seems to be able to get it…

Seeing Audrey nod, Klein continued with a faint smile, "I will give The Sun the Bard formula. The Sun will pass the Telepathist potion to Miss Justice as soon as possible. Try to get it done within the next two Gatherings. Miss Justice, please pass me the new pages of Roselle's diary. Then, the deal is done."

"Yes, according to the law of equivalent exchange, The Sun is on the losing end of this transaction, but as of now, he has only made a promise. When he really provides the Telepathist formula, Miss Justice can consider how to compensate him again, or I will compensate him while Miss Justice provides money to one of my Blessed who needs to do somethings recently. Heh heh, that's because The Sun might not necessarily be able to receive Miss Justice's cash or ingredients as compensation."

Klein intentionally added that final statement to redirect The Hanged Man and Justice's focus onto the fact that Sun might not be able to receive her compensation. He also did that to place himself in an unfathomable position; then, everyone would ignore the Blessed that lacked money.

Might not necessarily receive the compensation… Where exactly is The Sun? The Southern Continent? Alger suddenly creased his eyebrows.

The origin of The Sun is mysterious too… As expected, Mr. Fool does have subordinates in reality. Audrey finally saw her hope of becoming a Sequence 8 Telepathist. What other thoughts could she have? She suppressed her excitement and flashed a faint smile as she said, “I have no objections.”

“Neither do I.” When Derrick saw that he could obtain the beginning sequence of the Sun pathway, he nodded without hesitation. He couldn’t care less about the additional compensation.

Alger, who was out of the three-way deal, didn’t have the right to speak. Although he could get the formula of Bard, he would need to wait a week or two as well.

At that moment, Klein, who had successfully delayed the compensation to the next Gathering, or the following one after, pressed his palm forward happily. The Bard formula surfaced.

“Main ingredients: a Crystal Sunflower or an adult Flint Bird’s tail feather or a Fire Bird’s tail feather… A piece of Siren Rock or a Singing Sunflower…

Supplementary ingredients: a blade of Midsummer Grass, 5 drops of July Wine Juice, a blade of Elf Dark Leaf…”

He sent the formula before The Sun and saw the young man first crease his eyebrows and then relax.

Yes, the ingredients in the Forsaken Land of God will still be known by their ancient names. Luckily, my formula was obtained directly from the Eternal Blazing Sun. The knowledge that I gained used ancient names and various replacements… Klein suddenly cast his eyes of realization towards Miss Justice.

Audrey looked at The Sun who was memorizing the formula, then she quickly willed the two pages of the diary that she had memorized.

The diary immediately appeared on the yellowish-brown goatskin and, with a flash, appeared in Klein's hands.

Just like before, he started reading immediately.

"3rd November, Matilda is three months pregnant now. I even find those maidservants who come from the villages beautiful. No, I can't lower my standards. Coincidently, Countess Florais has invited me to join a private party, hehe.

"8th November, Archbishop Fan Estin sought my help. Huh, what can I do for an archbishop?

"9th November, it turns out that there is actually a secret hidden within Sequence pathways. Archbishop Estin told me that after becoming a Sequence 5 Beyonder, the rest of the Sequences could be replaced with Sequences of the same level from one or two other pathways! In other words, it starts from the Mid-Sequence to High-Sequence! But this is only limited between those one or two pathways. If it's replaced with a potion from a wrong pathway, semi-insanity is the mildest outcome, and one can't advance any further.

"This way, one can begin substituting pathways from Sequence 4 onwards. Sleepless and Corpse Collector pathways. Yes, the Church's Savant and Mystery Pryer pathways can also substitute for one another at a High Sequence."

Chapter 145 - Request For Cooperation

◆

Some pathways are interchangeable after Sequence 5? That's different from what the Nighthawks told me!

Isn't it a fact that you cannot change your pathway after you choose one? Wasn't it mentioned that diverging from your pathway would allow one to obtain strange, mysterious powers, but that person would definitely go insane and would never be able to advance?

To think that there are some hidden exceptions to this!

Klein looked at the diary, his pupils constricting.

He didn't think that Emperor Roselle would spout nonsense about something like this. After all, the surprise in his words were so real. But he didn't assume that the information Emperor Roselle had received was definitely correct. There was also a possibility that he had been lied to, or that he had misinterpreted the information.

I will need to verify this. I'll commit it to my memory first… Klein reminded himself, then thought deeply about this.

If what Roselle described here turns out to be correct, then the Sequence pathways go deeper than what I imagined… It hides many secrets…

The complete pathway possessed by the Nighthawks is Sleepless. They also possess a relatively complete path in the Corpse Collector, which they have up to Sequence 4. To think that those are interchangeable after Sequence 5… The other potion chains they have are even less complete, as some pathways only possess the first Sequence…

Similarly, the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery holds the complete pathway of the Savant, and has a relatively complete pathway for the Mystery Pryer. These can also be interchanged at High Sequences…

Interesting… I wonder which pathway is interchangeable with the Seer pathway? The Apprentice or Marauder that was mentioned by the Emperor?

Hmm, there's a high possibility that the first five Sequence pathways of the Seer pathway would each provide a separate ability, and that these abilities would be combined at Sequence 4. At that stage, there should be no way to interchange it with some other potion… Klein retracted his thoughts, once again placing his attention onto the diary.

He noticed that although the two diary pages were connected, the content was not in chronological order. The dates belonged to two different periods. This could be a mistake made by whoever copied their content.

"9th April. The relationships between the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Church of Storms, and the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom are poor. They see each other as enemies. The Church of Evernight is at odds with the Church of the God of Combat from the Feysac Empire. This can be taken advantage of. These are all facts worth considering."

"13th April. I participated in an ancient organization's gathering. I never expected them to be members of this organization as well. It sure was frightening."

"To think that the second Blasphemy Slate was in the hands of this organization. This is the first time I'm seeing this legendary item!"

"Indeed, it was hiding an unimaginable secret, hehe. Perhaps there will come a day when I will create a Blasphemy Slate unique to me. No, a set of them, with each one hiding an ultimate secret!"

Holy f**k, Emperor, why didn't you specify the name of this ancient organization!? You're killing me! Perhaps—perhaps, Roselle had a reason, or didn't dare to write down the name of the organization, even if he was using Chinese… Klein looked at the diary, a little uncomfortable and puzzled.

But with this page of the diary, Klein could finally confirm that Emperor Roselle had seen the second Blasphemy Slate. Furthermore, he created a set of cards after that, each card represented a path of the divine.

Yes, that could be the ultimate secret that matches each path of the divine. I wonder where that set of twenty-two cards are now? That ancient organization managed to obtain the second Blasphemy Slate… Klein's thoughts flowed quickly.

But he quickly reined in his thoughts. He shifted his gaze away from the diary and shot it towards The Hanged Man, Justice, and The Sun. He smiled and said, "Actually, you didn't need to wait for me."

"It's our honor." Alger had already reined in his dissatisfaction as he answered humbly.

Audrey thought for a moment before smiling.

"Mr. Fool, the open selection of government officials through examinations that you described previously has already garnered the support of the King and the Prime Minister. It will soon be passed by the House of Lords and the House of Commons and is predicted to be implemented early next year."

"It looks like the King and the Prime Minister still use their brains," Alger mocked out of habit.

Well, with Benson's intellect and diligence, his grammatical and accounting skills should be passable by early next year… But once it's passed by the two Houses, it will definitely be announced widely by the various newspapers. I wonder how long Benson's advantage will last? The earlier the examination, the better…

Sigh, there's no way Benson can triumph over the elites who graduated from the various universities in such a short period of time. But he need not compete against them; the positions they're fighting for wouldn't be the same. Those people might only have their sights trained on positions such as the Cabinet secretary, or Finance secretary… The silent Klein worried for his brother as he nodded his head with a smile.

Audrey straightened her back when she saw The Fool's affirmative nod. She said with a smile, "Mr. Hanged Man, you got me to check on something for you previously. I've received an answer. The King has been convinced by the Prime Minister and won't seek revenge on the Feysac Empire at the East Balam Shore for the time being. I think you can now give me the extra payment that you promised me."

Alger thought for a few seconds before saying, "Miss Justice, thank you for your answer. This eases my concerns over certain things. What kind of extra payment do you want? I'll consider it if it's within reason."

Audrey smiled, obviously prepared.

"Clues to the Psychology Alchemists, or clues to the main ingredients of the potion Telepathist. Of course, that can wait until after The Sun hands the formula over to me."

"No problem," Alger said without hesitation.

Two seats away from The Hanged Man, Derrick Berg couldn't understand a single word. He was very confused, feeling that he only understood a few terms, but couldn't string them together to provide any logical sense.

A method of selecting officials through examination? A King and Prime Minister, House of Lords, House of Commons, East Balam Shore, Feysac Empire, Psychology Alchemists? He understood none of that.

Feysac, the root of the word came from Jotun. What connection did it have with the fallen Giant King's imperial household? Derrick looked at Justice and The Hanged Man, suddenly having the feeling that they might not come from the same world.

Could there be another city-state, or one that had formed a nation, somewhere far away from the City of Silver in the cursed lands? Derrick remained silent and listened on. He had a faint understanding of why the mysterious Fool mentioned that he might not be able to receive the monetary compensation Justice was going to give him.

To be able to gather people this far away from each other, disregarding the terrifying monsters hiding in the darkness of the cursed lands, The Fool might really be a god, an ancient god… he thought.

After accomplishing everything that she set out to do, Audrey wanted to become a silent observer, but she suddenly remembered something. She spoke in a hurry, "I recently came into contact with a Beyonder circle and found out about a powerful person named Mr. A. Mr. Fool, Mr. Hanged Man, Mr. Sun, do you know of this person's background and identity?"

I don't even know what you're talking about… Derrick maintained his silence.

Mr. A? I only know a Mr. Z… With such a similar code name, could he also be from the Aurora Order? Klein made a guess, but didn't give an answer.

He had to maintain his image and try not to give answers he wasn't confident in. If he had to, he would give a vague description just like a charlatan.

Alger looked at The Fool and found him calm and unchanging. It was hard to read his true thoughts. Thus, he said in a deliberative tone, "The Aurora Order is at odds with the Church of Storms, the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, and the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, so members of these Churches understand the Aurora Order more than any other organization. And I happen to know something about them."

You need not explain, I know that you come under the Lord of Storms. Of course, you could be a whistleblower… But why would there be hatred between the Aurora Order and the three ancient Churches? Klein smiled but didn't speak. He looked calmly at The Hanged Man.

Alger knew that he couldn't hide his Sequence pathway from The Fool, but didn't pay too much attention to it and continued.

"The Aurora Order has five Saints and twenty-two Oracles. These Oracles use the alphabet as their code names, such as Mr. A or Mr. X. They are Beyonders, with the weakest being Sequence 7 and the strongest Sequence 5. They are all adept at hiding themselves. Should a Oracle die, a new Oracle will take their place."

"I cannot guarantee that the Mr. A you spoke of is the Mr. A from the Aurora Order, but there is a good possibility. As for the details of the Aurora Order, I have mentioned that to you before."

Audrey nodded, becoming even more cautious of Mr. A.

She said, feeling a little pinch in her heart, "Thank you for your answer, Mr. Hanged Man. You need not make a payment anymore."

"No, I wish to ask for your help with the answer just now, as well as provide extra compensation," Alger said with a deep voice.

"What help?" Audrey asked curiously.

Alger thought for a few seconds before saying, "I received intelligence that the pirate Qilangos, codenamed Vice Admiral Hurricane, has secretly gone onshore and infiltrated Backlund. I don't know what he's up to, but I hope that you can help me locate his whereabouts. As for whatever happens afterwards, you need not put yourself in danger."

"Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos? One of the seven great admiral pirates?" Audrey widened her eyes, almost unable to maintain her Spectator state.

What was the thing she wanted to do the most after she became a Beyonder? It was, of course, to interact with the people that only existed in the fables of the nobles!

"Yes, he's a Sequence 6 Beyonder of the path of the Sailor, a Wind-blessed. He also has a miraculous item that could be classified as a Sealed Artifact. He's quite crafty and cruel. Don't attempt to deal with him," Alger introduced seriously.

He suddenly turned to Klein.

"Mr. Fool, can I get your Blessed to assist me at the critical moment? I would pay a price that interests you."

The only Blessed I have is myself… Klein lampooned to ease his emotions as he smiled.

"That is built on the premise that my Blessed happens to be in Backlund."

"Alright." Alger retracted his gaze, a little disappointed, but also a little expectant.

Chapter 146 - Creeping Hunger

◆

“What’s so special about Qilangos’s mystical item?” Audrey asked slightly confidently.

She considered it carefully and suddenly realized that she had a decent ability to locate people in Backlund.

Firstly, her father was one of the most wealthy, connected, and reputable nobles, while she was quite popular amongst the younger generation too. Hence, in the upper-middle class of the society, she had quite a few resources to take advantage of.

Secondly, the two Beyonders that she knew had their own circles as well. Apprentice Fors was originally a clinical doctor, and was now an author. She knew quite a number of people in the literary world and publishing industry, as well as among the middle-class doctors.

Arbiter Xio Derecha had helped many middle-lower class people to coordinate and mediate disputes over a long period of time. She was also quite famous in East Backlund borough among the working class and mafia. She had a lot of hidden channels.

Plus, considering the Beyonders that they knew and their circles of influence, their ability to look for a person wasn’t to be belittled.

Towards Justice’s question, Alger answered almost straightaway without hesitation or thought.

“No one knows the real name of the mystical item, but the people who have come into contact with it call it the ‘Creeping Hunger.’ Qilangos uses a living person’s soul and flesh to satisfy it every other day. Otherwise, it would consume its owner as a replacement.”

“This could be one of the most important clues to seek out Qilangos,” Audrey said, creasing her eyebrows.

She felt utter discomfort and extreme hatred towards any evil item that desired a living human’s fresh blood and soul.

“Yes, but in a big city with at least five million people, a few vagrants going missing wouldn’t be noticed,” Alger reminded her. “Ever since he got his hands on the Creeping Hunger, Qilangos has been very difficult to deal with.”

“He was originally a Wind-blessed. He possesses great Beyonder power in domains related to water, wind, and the weather. But, later on, people realized that he could drive his targets crazy, enter the dreams of others, summon light to purify a dead soul, sing to strengthen himself, and change his appearance… There’s almost nothing that he can’t do,” Alger described in detail. “We suspect that those are all effects that came from the mystical item, Creeping Hunger…”

Before he finished sharing, Derrick Berg, who had been listening quietly, suddenly blurted, “Shepherd!”

Shepherd? Sequence 5 of the Secrets Suppliant and Listener pathway? Hmm, among the six-member council in the City of Silver, there is a new elder who’s a Shepherd. Sun had mentioned that she’s strong enough to fight against a Sequence 4 expert, well—an evil spirit of the same grade… Klein’s expression changed slightly, but it was covered by the gray fog. Justice wasn’t paying any attention to him either.

“Shepherd?”

“Shepherd?”

Justice and The Hanged Man asked in unison. One sounded completely confused while the other sounded shocked, as though they had heard the title of Shepherd elsewhere before and knew something about it, but didn't understand the actual situation.

Seeing that everyone was staring at him, Derrick suddenly panicked a little. No matter how quiet, depressed, and vexed he was, he was a boy after all.

He hurriedly explained with a stammer, "What I meant was, the traits that The Hanged Man described were like the Beyonder power of the Sequence job, Shepherd. Every Shepherd can swallow another's soul into their body, including wraiths and evil spirits. They control these souls to do their bidding with a unique method, which allows them to make use of their abilities, just like letting a god's lambs out to graze.

"Hence, no one knows how many powers a Shepherd has. That depends on how many Beyonder souls they have swallowed, and that makes them very scary. They're almost like a High-Sequence Beyonder.

"However, there are people who suspect that for Shepherds there's a limit to the number of souls when Devouring and Grazing, and that the souls inside them could be replaced as well."

So that's what being a Shepherd means… The Sequence pathway that the Aurora Order has in its control is enigmatic… No wonder they worship the True Creator, no, the Fallen Creator… Klein was suddenly enlightened, but he didn't nod, taking on the appearance that he knew so long ago.

Meanwhile, he sighed inwardly. Sun, you are a boy after all. This is very important information, very important insight. You could've exchanged it for valuable things, but you just revealed it all! Just like that…

Yes, the ability demonstrated by the mystical item Creeping Hunger is similar to a Sequence 5 Shepherd… I wonder if other Sealed Artifacts have the same powers of Beyonders? I wonder which Sequence the

Sealed Artifact 2-049, the Antigonus family's puppet, resembles…

After listening to Sun's explanation, Alger seemed to have sorted out the puzzle in his mind as he nodded in silence.

Audrey got even more curious and pressed, "Which Sequence pathway is Shepherd from? Which number is it?"

"The Secrets Suppliant pathway, Sequence 5." Klein seized the opportunity to answer so as to demonstrate that he knew everything.

"Secrets Suppliant… Aurora Order…" Audrey suddenly recalled Mr. A, who was a suspected Oracle of the Aurora Order, and she immediately felt heavy-hearted.

She started thinking seriously, thinking of what price she could pay in exchange for Mr. Fool to take action and rid off that disgusting fellow effortlessly. However, she couldn't think of anything that would move Mr. Fool into doing so.

As expected, a figure akin to a god wouldn't be easily moved… There aren't many things and matters that would garner their interest after all… Audrey sighed.

Putting her impulse aside, she nodded to The Sun gratefully, thanking him for giving them a new perspective on Creeping Hunger, so that they could deal with it more reasonably and efficiently.

"Mr. Hanged Man, I'm willing to accept the mission. But I can't guarantee if I can find Vice Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos." Audrey looked opposite her when she spoke.

"There's no better answer than this. Regardless of your success, as long as you try, I will definitely compensate you with things like secret information or intelligence. And if you succeed, maybe I could provide you the Telepathist's main ingredients directly. Of course, the prerequisite is that we have to know what it is," Alger promised generously, which was a rare sight.

"Deal," Audrey pursed her lips and replied with a faint smile.

Then, Alger created Qilangos' portrait with Klein's permission and assistance.

He was one of the seven major pirate admirals. He had a distinctive broad chin, brown hair tied into a bun at the back of his head like an ancient warrior, and green eyes that seemed to hint at laughter, but were abnormally cold.

After they finished their discussion and shared their insights, Klein smiled as he announced the ending of the Gathering. He saw Justice and The Hanged Man get up swiftly from their seats and bow while The Sun mimicked their motions, only slower.

He pressed forward with his right hand and severed the connection, but he didn't leave immediately.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick looked at his familiar surroundings and glanced outside at the dark sky that had flashes of lightning. He was momentarily thrown into a trance.

But he soon jolted to his senses. He searched for goatskin and a quill before writing down the Bard formula he memorized.

He looked at it several times and was finally certain that there was nothing wrong with it.

Derrick wasn't worried that possessing the Bard formula and becoming a different Beyonder would gain the suspicion of the upper echelons of the City of Silver. This was because in past exploratory expeditions, members of those elite troops would often collect some formulas, ingredients, and strange artifacts from the monsters in the abandoned and destroyed cities.

During this process, it was normal that people kept some of the loot privately. As long as it didn’t involve anything too important, the captains and higher-ups would tacitly overlook it.

Over time, some formulas started going around through non-official channels within the City of Silver. Some became the foundation of strong families from generation to generation. The Things of the Dark surrounding the City of Silver were relatively fixed. Some ingredients could be obtained easily while some could only be encountered if one went far into the cursed land.

Putting aside the goatskin, Derrick recalled the mysterious Fool’s instructions. Hence, in his simple bedroom, he lowered his head and simply prayed,

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.”

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.”

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

†

Jotun was a very ancient language. It came equipped with the mystical properties demanded by rituals, prayers, and spell casting; therefore, Derrick didn’t need to change the incantations into ancient Hermes.

†

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.”

†

Klein, who was seated at the seat of honor at the long bronze table, suddenly heard prayers reverberating in his ears. He then saw the crimson star that corresponded to Sun blinking.

He didn’t try to touch it, but planned to reply to him ten minutes before the next Gathering so that the City of Silver youth would make preparations to be alone.

The most important part was for him to evade the conversion of time and date, to decrease the possibility of damaging Fool’s mighty image.

After he confirmed that, Klein wrapped himself up with spirituality and stimulated a descent.

Returning to his room, Klein removed the spirituality wall and took a break before he got ready to head out again.

It wasn’t necessary for him to play the role of a Seer, and he didn’t have to fix his trip to the Divination Club into his daily schedule. He would only visit occasionally to make some extra pocket money and fulfill his supervision as a Nighthawk.

Originally, Klein wanted to laze around through the entire afternoon, but he suddenly thought of something that he had yet to do. So, he had no choice but to gather himself up. According to his appointment, he had to pay Detective Henry a visit that day and accept the final report about the red chimney investigation.

Sigh. I’ve heard that the big timers are all quite busy… I still have to spare some time to go to the Tingen Family Servant Assistance Association with Benson and Melissa to look for a good maidservant… Klein unwillingly changed his shirt, put on his black tuxedo, and held his silk top hat and silver-inlaid cane before walking out the door like a gentleman.

At Besik Street, under Henry’s Private Detective Company, Klein put on a mask and lowered his hat as he went across the street quickly and entered the stairway.

Chapter 147 - Night Visitor

◆

In the office of the private investigator.

“Sir, your request has been completed,” Detective Henry said to the gentleman in front of him with his hoarse voice. He heaved a sigh of relief. “This wasn’t an easy mission, nor was it too difficult, but it used up a great deal of our resources and energy. To be honest, I’m a little regretful. I regret setting too low a price for this mission.”

No, no matter what you say, I will not pay a single penny more! Klein emphasized in his heart. He pointed at the thick stack of documents on the coffee table and asked, “Is this the investigation report?”

“Yes.” Henry pressed on the report that had at least sixty pages and sighed. “This is the most troublesome report that I’ve completed…”

He hadn’t even finished his sentence when he saw Klein hand over four pounds in cash. His attention shifted to determining the authenticity of the notes.

“This is the remainder of the fees.” Klein held the thick stack of notes.

Henry coughed.

“You sure are a gentleman that keeps to his word. Sigh. I didn’t expect the investigation report to use this many pieces of paper. It was completely out of my budget.”

At that moment, Klein took the thick investigation report and stood up.

He gave a slight bow and immediately made his way to the door with his cane in hand.

Detective Henry's last sentence was left stuck in his throat.

Hey, how can you expect me to pay for the paper used in the investigation report? That should be included in the fees already! Klein touched the five pounds eight soli he had left and muttered in his heart. He walked quickly onto Besik Street.

He surveyed the surroundings and confirmed that no one was paying attention to him before leaving the place. He found an opportunity to remove his mask.

Klein didn't intend to head home right away. He wanted to search for a cafe and organize the investigation report. He wanted to find the houses that had a change in tenants after divining the red chimney. He could then conduct his search before dinner.

There were many cafes in the area, but none of them met Klein's criteria. Ever since steam and machinery became the symbol of the times, more and more cafes had toned down on their decor and become something like cheap restaurants. They provided refreshments, coffee, bread, and dishes like pea and mutton stew to the busy workers. Thus, respectable ladies and gentlemen no longer went to cafes to discuss things. They no longer viewed these actions as being symbolic of their status. Various clubs started appearing and replaced cafes as a place for socializing.

After some time, Klein finally found a cafe that had a decent atmosphere.

He sat in a secluded corner and took a sip of his one-penny Southville Coffee before flipping open the investigation report.

"In Tingen City's North Borough, South Borough, East Borough, West Borough, Golden Indus, Harbor Borough, and University Borough, there are a total of 1179 buildings that have a dark red chimney… Along the outskirts of Tingen City, there are a total of 546 buildings with the red chimney the requester described. This doesn't include buildings in towns or villages that are relatively further away despite them falling under the jurisdiction of Tingen."

"Below are the addresses and tenant records of each of those buildings. As per the request, the activities within the last three months are recorded in more detail."

†

Klein flipped through page after page, occasionally making notes on paper he brought around with a fountain pen.

Finally, when he found the type of red chimney he had seen, he realized that there was a change of tenants in twenty-five buildings.

That's not too many. I should try to finish my investigations within two days. After all, I've seen that red chimney and parts of the house in my dream. My spiritual sense would have a feeling of familiarity when I see those signs again. I'll confirm the target that way. In other words, I'm a living investigation machine… Klein nodded. He split the buildings based on their location and planned to investigate fifteen of them that day.

He didn't need to do a divination to get an answer if these investigations would prove dangerous.

Since there was a change of tenants, that would mean that the mastermind behind the coincidences had already left!

Let's hope that the new tenants know what the previous tenants look like… But since the person behind the scenes can control my fate without anyone noticing, to the point of making the coincidences feel so natural, he would definitely have a way to remove any traces he might have left behind… Sigh, I can only pray to the Goddess and hope that he left behind some sort of clue… Klein sighed. He pumped himself up and put on his hat. He then grabbed his cane and the report before leaving the cafe.

Klein spent two soli on a rented carriage and visited fifteen buildings with the red chimneys before dinner. Unfortunately, none of the buildings was the one he saw in his dream.

It would be quite troublesome if tomorrow's investigation yields the same result. He might still be living in the house with the red chimney even after I saw it in my divination. This could say that he is very confident and isn't afraid of my investigation; in fact, he might not even be afraid of the Tingen Nighthawks. Or perhaps, he doesn't know that he's been exposed. That would mean that the power resisting my divination was a power not belonging to him… Klein stood in front of 2 Daffodil Street and analyzed the various possibilities.

A few minutes later, he patted down his tuxedo and pressed on his hat before taking out his key and entering the house with a smile.

He intended to prepare stewed mutton and honey glazed barbecue for Benson and Melissa that night.

†

At eleven in the evening, the siblings bade each other goodnight and returned to their respective rooms.

Klein closed the door to his room and stood before his desk. He looked outside the oriel window with the light of his gas lamp. At that moment, the streets were engulfed in darkness, with only a few street lamps illuminating the way. Stars dotted the screen that was the night sky. There were many stars, they were just not clearly visible.

"I wonder what Backlund is like, with its titles of the Land of Hope and the Capital of Capitals…" Klein muttered to himself. He extended his hand to grab his curtain, intending to draw it.

Woo!

At that moment, a sinister wind blew at him without warning. The light from his lamp turned a dark green.

Klein subconsciously took a few steps back. His occupational instincts made him tap his left molars twice. At the same time, he leaned toward the bed and tried to reach for his revolver under his pillow.

In his vision, a face suddenly protruded from the wall above the desk and under the gas lamp. It was a translucent face without any eyes or nose. All it had was a mouth!

“Do not fire.” The face with a mouth spoke.

It can communicate? Klein already had his revolver in hand as he took aim.

“What do you want?” he asked in a deep voice.

The face chuckled.

“I’m Daly.”

Daly? Spirit Medium Daly? The Spirit Medium Daly who was sent to the Backlund diocese? Klein raised his brows in doubt.

“Madam Daly?”

“I know that this method of visiting you is a little rude. I should’ve given you a warning so you could make the necessary preparations. But it isn’t convenient for me to meet you right now, and so, I can only communicate with you using this little guy.” The translucent face laughed.

Even though the voice is different and jarring, the manner of speech is indeed Madam Daly’s style. The abilities of a Spirit Medium sure are cool… Klein reflected wistfully. He didn’t lower his revolver as he asked, “Madam, what do you want to talk about with me?”

“If I were you, I would first seal the bedroom with spirituality. Otherwise, your family members might think of you as crazy.” The translucent face quipped, “Heh heh, you need not be so cautious. I came back to Tingen in secret because of Dunn’s letter. You know that a Nighthawk cannot leave the area they are assigned to at will.”

“The Captain’s letter?” Klein didn’t approach the desk. Instead, he felt for the Holy Night Powder he had in the hidden pocket of his black trench coat.

“Dunn and I are both Beyonders that started with the Tingen Nighthawks. We have always maintained a good relationship. Last Thursday, yes, Thursday, he sent me a letter and mentioned you. He said that you emulated the maxim of a Mystery Pryer, came up with a set of rules for a Seer, and claimed that it was effective in helping you grasp your potion. From then on, you no longer hear sounds and see visions that you shouldn’t. Dunn said that it was similar to what I did.

“Heh heh, are you not going to seal the room? I personally do not mind your brother and sister misunderstanding…” the translucent face said at an adequate pace.

So that’s the reason… She’s indeed Madam Daly… Klein heaved a sigh of relief, pushing the Holy Night Powder back into the inner pocket. He then walked to the desk and took out the silver dagger he used for rituals from the drawer.

He quickly built up a wall of spirituality before turning to the protruding face.

“Madam Daly, what else did the Captain talk about in the letter?”

“He only expressed his own confusion and said that he seemed to understand something*—*yet, he couldn’t describe it clearly. He hoped to get my opinion on the matter,” Daly said with the help of the face without eyes. “And when I read the letter this morning, I knew that you aren’t as clueless as you pretend to be. Heh heh, Mr. Moretti, I think that you have deduced the ‘acting method!’”

“That’s the reason you came looking for me?” Klein neither confirmed nor denied her statement.

Daly clearly knows about the “acting method”… He calmly made the judgment.

Daly’s translucent face revealed a slight smile.

“Yes.”

“I believe that we should be honest with each other. I know that you have deduced the acting method, and you also know that I grasp the ‘acting method’ as well. Sigh. But what’s making me unhappy is that I used nearly two years to understand it*—*yet, you’ve only been a Beyonder for one and a half months.”

Klein fell silent for a while after hearing Daly. He then smiled honestly.

“That’s because I have you as my role model.”

He wanted to say that he was “standing on the shoulders of giants,” but ultimately decided not to give Emperor Roselle a chance to appear in the conversation.

Chapter 148 - Messenger

◆

Klein’s reply made Daly chuckle. The translucent face with only a mouth said, “Even though you found inspiration through the maxim of the Mystery Pryers and confirmed your theories through my experience and performance, it only took you a month to understand the ‘acting method’ and come up with your own Seer principle. That shows that you possess outstanding wisdom and an open mind.”

Klein didn’t engage in the topic which made him guilty, but instead asked in response, “Madam, do the higher-ups in the church know about this so-called ‘acting method?’”

“No doubt, they understand it very clearly. I once read through the historical information in the church and searched through stories of people ignoring the norms and advancing quickly. I realized that there were more than a few Nighthawks and bishops who have done so, I’m not the most unique one either. But their ending…” Daly intentionally paused, and she suddenly sounded heavy-hearted.

“What kind of ending did they have?” Klein asked, feeling a tug at his heartstrings.

Could it be that the Church of Evernight views the “acting method” as the seduction of some devil or evil god?

The translucent face suddenly laughed. “Their endings were rather great. Besides the few who lost control or were sacrificed in Beyonder incidents, the rest of them have at least become archbishops or high-ranking deacons. Among them, there are also experts that have successfully become High-Sequence Beyonders. In the Church of the Goddess, Sequence 4's and Sequence 3's are called Saints, while Sequence 2's and Sequence 1's are called Grounded Angels. Of course, every angel was once a Saint."

…Madam Daly, you deliberately tried to scare me earlier… the corner of Klein's lips twitched before he asked, without hiding his suspicions, "Since the Church has mastered the 'acting method,' why didn't they just tell every Nighthawk? Although it wouldn't prevent every Nighthawk from losing control, it would definitely lower the probability and reduce unnecessary losses."

A sense of loss appeared on the translucent face. "I have no idea why either. They told me that when I become an archbishop or high-ranking deacon, I'll be able to know the secret. I came here today because I hope that you can tell Dunn about the 'acting method' more clearly before you hand in your special request."

Klein wasn't stupid enough to ask why she couldn't do that herself; instead, he said thoughtfully, "Once noticed by the Church, one has to swear not to tell anyone about the 'acting method?'"

"Yes, you must do it before the Goddess's holy items and swear upon Her name. That holds enough binding force. Trust me, you definitely don't want to know the outcome of a violation. I can only talk about it with people who have mastered the 'acting method,' like you. Your body language already gave me the answer before you replied; that's why I dared to say the term." Daly made the creepy face sigh.

She paused for a moment before saying, "I only faintly grasped the essence of 'acting' back then and digested the potion very quickly. Yes, among the higher-ups in the Church, using the term 'digesting' to describe the control of the potion is very aptly worded. Anyway, before I made the pledge and found out about the 'acting method,' I had no clear understanding of it, so I couldn't accurately explain it to Dunn and the others.

"I gave up at first. I never thought that I would meet you, an eccentric wonder that could clearly understand the 'acting method' before handing in a special application—no, a genius."

So that's how you see me, Madam… the corner of Klein's mouth twitched before he solemnly promised, "I originally intended to remind Captain about the existence of the 'acting method' through my special application. With your explanation, I don't have to worry further."

"Very well, you're such a kind lad." Daly sounded relaxed.

Madam, you're only about two to three years older than me… Klein inwardly pointed out the error in her words.

Without him speaking any further, the translucent creepy face continued, "If you have any problems or anything that you require assistance with, you can write a letter to me. Wait for me, heh heh. When I become an Archbishop or a high-ranking deacon which allows me to understand why the Church hides the 'acting method,' I'll give you a hint whether if it's a good or bad thing.

Klein was suddenly energized, and he asked without hesitation, "Madam, what's your address?"

To him, the more help he got, the merrier. Plus, she was a pretty strong Spirit Medium!

Seeing that Klein didn't oppose the idea at all, Daly remained silent for a while before she laughed.

"Our communication shouldn't go through the post office, as we would be using normal letters. That's very dangerous.

"I'll teach you a relatively easy ritualistic magic. You can use it to summon a special spirit, one that belongs to me. Pass the letter to it, and it'll send it precisely to me. It wouldn't be faster than a telegram, but it's faster than a steam locomotive. If you were to send a message at noon, I would receive the message in Backlund that same night."

Klein listened to her with his full attention. He nodded faintly. “A very pragmatic ritualistic magic.”

Daly chuckled.

“The uniqueness of the ritualistic magic is to pray to yourself. Obtaining power from your own spirituality, without going through a god. Hence, it’s quite secretive, but it isn’t very powerful.

“…First, you select a herb and essential oil in the corresponding domain. This is no different than normal ritualistic magic. However, you only need the candle that represents yourself. Then, regarding the spell, there are three parts. The first part is ‘I.’ Shout ‘I’ in either ancient Hermes, Jotun, Dragonish, or Elvish. The second part is ‘I summon in my name.’ That part can be said in Hermes. The third part is the exact description of the summoning object. For instance, you would use this in the future: ’the spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the higher-dimensional creature that a human orders, the messenger that belongs to Daly Simone.”

Higher-dimensional? In mysticism, this is normally referred to as the spirit world… Klein memorized as he analyzed the ritual procedure.

In that aspect, he could barely be considered an expert.

The benefit of this kind of ritualistic magic is that it avoids calling upon a god but relies purely on a person’s power. It achieves various magical effects without the constraints imposed by a god’s specialized domain. The problem lies in the strength of a person. A weak result for the weak, and a strong result for the strong… Klein felt that he had once again obtained new mysticism knowledge that he would’ve never come into contact with at his current Sequence.

Daly repeated the description a few times and emphasized solemnly, “Remember, don’t change the actual description of the summoning object, or the ritual could easily attract a terrifying monster.”

"Okay." Klein nodded honestly.

At the same time, he suddenly thought of something.

If I were to change the description of the summoning object to "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck," what would be summoned?

Would it be utterly useless, or would the gray fog suddenly descend, or would I need to respond in that mysterious space?

Would this help me in stirring more power from the world above the gray fog?

Would it cause a terrifying chain effect?

Klein still felt traces of the fear after his experimentation with the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem. In the end, he followed his intent and planned to divine above the gray fog before deciding whether he should make the attempt or not.

He contemplated and asked out of interest, "Madam, if one were to strictly practice the 'acting method,' how long does it take to go from Sequence 8 to Sequence 7, and how long from Sequence 7 to Sequence 6?"

"According to the information that I've read, it varies from three months to two years for Sequence 8 to Sequence 7. It depends on whether you can grasp the core spirit and corresponding principle during the 'acting' process. From Sequence 7 to Sequence 6, it varies from half a year to three years; likewise for Sequence 6 to Sequence 5. As for Sequence 5 to Sequence 4, three to twenty years…" Daly described roughly.

Klein suddenly smiled.

"So Madam, are you already at Sequence 6?"

He heard from Dunn that Daly used a year's time from Sequence 9 Corpse Collector to Sequence 8 Gravedigger. Then, from Gravedigger to Sequence 7 Spirit Medium, she used another year. She had been a Beyonder for five years. In other words, Daly was at the Spirit Medium stage for about three years.

"Yes, that's the reason why I was transferred to Backlund diocese," the creepy translucent face answered frankly. "My current occupation is a Spirit Guide. However, I prefer the name Spirit Medium. Alright, this little guy is getting tired. I have to go. Under such circumstances, I won't be saying 'may the Goddess bless you.'"

"Sweet dreams." Klein pressed his chest, smiled, and bowed.

"No, there won't be any sweet dreams tonight. I have to rush back to Backlund. This isn't a happy experience, it's like having a relationship with someone you don't like…" Daly's voice grew softer, and the translucent face with no eyes or nose slowly shrank back into the wall without leaving behind any traces.

The gas lamp light suddenly became bright and the gloominess vanished into thin air.

Klein, who had his Spirit Vision activated the entire time, watched the changes in a daze. It took him a while to snap back to reality.

"Spirit Medium—no, Spirit Guide is very impressive. It can actually conjure a 'messenger.' I wonder what's the specialty of my Sequence 7 and Sequence 6?" he muttered to himself. Then, he quickly dispelled the spiritual wall, switched off the gas lamp in his bedroom, and silently lay down in the darkness.

He didn't plan to head to the world above the gray fog that night, just in case Daly suddenly returned and said Dunn Smith's classic words, "Oh yeah, I forgot one thing."

When that happens, I wouldn't even be able to silence her with death!

†

On the second day, Klein arrived at the Blackthorn Security Company three minutes early.

“Good morning, Klein. The new clerk is here!” Rozanne greeted with a splendid smile.

Klein felt sincerely happy for her.

“Congratulations, Rozanne. The Goddess heard your prayers.”

“My skin shall be back to perfect condition!” Rozanne nodded, her eyes beaming with joy.

After they chatted for a while, Klein walked through the partition and knocked on the door to the Captain’s office.

“Please come in.” Dunn’s mellow voice sounded.

Klein pushed open the door to enter. He saw his Captain sit up instinctively as his gray eyes turned dark. It was as though he was prepared for trouble.

Ahem. Klein cleared his throat, set aside his hat and cane, then sat down. “Captain, I have something that I’d like to report.”

“What is it?” Dunn asked in a deep voice, his arms crossed.

Chapter 149 - Direct Hint

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein looked at the serious Dunn Smith and smiled suddenly.

“Captain, I understood something yesterday.”

“And what is that?” Dunn repeated the question in a serious tone. He leaned back and unfolded his crossed arms.

Klein recalled the script that he had prepared.

“As I was concluding my past experiences, I realized that the names of Sequence potions encompass a whole set of principles that can help us gain control over them, a set of principles that allow us to avoid the negative impacts. When we’re doing things according to these set of principles, we seem to become a member of the corresponding job.

“Similarly, these sets of principles are hidden. They aren’t made known to you directly. All we can do is make conclusions from the corresponding job bit by bit, then adjust our understanding based on the different feedback we receive.

“Thus, when I became a real Seer at the Divination Club and obtained my set of principles for the Seer, the auditory and visual illusions that plagued me just vanished.

“That is what I understood.”

After finishing his narration, Klein heaved a sigh to himself. He said everything he needed to say, other than explicitly mentioning the term ‘acting.’

Sigh, let's hope that the Captain doesn't tell the Church that I've already developed such ideas when he is asked. That would place much more attention on me… There's also the factor of the relationship between the Seer pathway and the Antigonus family. That might cause trouble eventually. But the Captain has also experienced all kinds of situations, and he's an experienced and smart person. Once he understands the "acting method," he'll definitely notice that the Church is hiding relevant information. He'll know what he should say and what he shouldn't… Klein had many complicated thoughts.

But he quickly made a decision and had a plan.

If the Captain was still unable to understand the "acting method" or sense of the cover-up by the Church, then I'll tell him straight up before submitting the special application!

Yes, I'll probe him first and determine what he knows…

Dunn listened to Klein's description in silence, his gray eyes becoming even deeper.

He was silent for nearly twenty seconds as he rubbed his temples before he picked up his pipe and took a whiff.

After sniffing it, he took out a matchbox, seemingly forgetting about the rules of the Nighthawks.

The white smoke billowed into the air as Dunn closed his eyes, seemingly appreciating the smell of tobacco.

After a while, he opened his eyes and smiled at Klein.

"I'm sorry, I forgot that you don't smoke."

"Smoking is bad for your health," Klein answered in all seriousness.

Dunn thought with his pipe in his hand.

"I seem to have understood something too."

No Captain, you don’t understand anything! Just don’t loiter in my dreams too often! Klein didn’t speak and instead, gave a friendly smile.

“Perhaps it won’t be too long before you submit the special application to me…” Dunn said to Klein, half-jokingly as he took a deep puff of the mint and tobacco.

Can I submit it tomorrow? Klein replied inwardly. He took out his pocket watch and looked at the time.

“Captain, I have be at Old Neil’s. Today’s mysticism lessons are starting soon.”

“Alright.” Dunn watched Klein leave, his pipe still in his hand.

After closing the door to the Captain’s office, Klein made his way towards the steps leading to the basement in high spirits. He saw two strangers, a male and a female, when he walked past the clerk’s office.

The new clerks… Klein’s mind wondered before he added inwardly, In another two days, definitely within this week, I’ll submit my application to Captain!

Then I’ll pass a series of inspections and become a Sequence 8 Clown!

†

Along the silent underground passage, Klein turned to the armory and pushed the guard room door open.

“What happened to you?” Klein had a shock when he saw Old Neil.

Old Neil looked dispirited, his face was pale. He yawned constantly as he said, “I’ve been a little constipated lately. I tried ritualistic magic that can solve such problems last night. In the end… I didn’t sleep well the entire night. I had to head to the bathroom multiple times, and in the end, and I nearly fell asleep on the toilet bowl.”

Well, the problem of constipation has been solved… Klein nearly laughed, seeing that it wasn't a serious problem.

But he controlled himself. He asked, "Are you feeling better now?"

At the same time, his concern made him tap his left molar twice. He used his Spirit Vision to observe the aura of Old Neil's health.

There are some darkness and impurities in the digestive system's yellow and the kidney's orange colors, but it's nothing too serious and is within an acceptable range… Klein heaved a sigh of relief.

"I'm fine now. I got some medicine for the diarrhea from Frye." Old Neil yawned like a drug addict. "Self-study for today's supernatural lesson. There's only two or three days left of content anyway."

"Alright," Klein responded politely. "I could help you guard the armory and study here. How about you go rest in the break room?"

Old Neil immediately straightened his back, his eyes glimmering as he answered, "Lad, you surely are the kindest Nighthawk, second to Frye!

"I'll hand the armory over to you!"

He picked up the cushion he had placed on his knees and rushed out of the guard room like a typhoon, leaving Klein the only person there, dazed.

†

The Blackthorn Security Company accepted an extra mission in the morning. The task involved escorting a rich merchant to the harbor for a deal. Leonard and Kenley completed it easily, earning themselves some extra pay, much to the envy of Klein.

He went about his day, learning about mysticism, practicing his shooting, and getting tortured by Instructor Gawain who seemed to have been agitated by something.

Huff, huff… Klein gasped for air. He only regained the ability to take a shower and change after quite some time.

He continued toiling after leaving Gawain's house. He spent two soli on a carriage and investigated the other ten houses with red chimneys.

Klein's expression became very grave when the last house with the red chimney left his field of vision.

The house with the red chimney that I saw in my divination isn't in the list of houses with a recent change in tenants… If that's the case, this has just become troublesome. I wonder how much time I would need to investigate about 1600 houses… Sigh. I can't ask for any help to do something like this. After all, only I would have the sense of familiarity from my spirituality when I see the target…

Don't be discouraged, don't give up. I'll continue the investigation whenever I have free time. I'll try to complete it within three months, no—two months! Who knows, the target might be found in tomorrow's investigation!

And, I'll organize the material when I get back and plan a route according to the distance of the sectors!

Klein motivated himself, banishing his feelings of depression.

Now that he had made a decision, he planned to instruct the driver to turn toward Daffodil Street. However, he suddenly realized that he was somewhere close to where Mr. Azik stayed.

Before Mr. Azik went for his holiday, he did write to tell me that he would be back sometime this week, but he didn't specify the exact date. Since it's on the way, I'll leave a note for him. Also, I rented this carriage for an hour with two soli, and the time's almost up anyway. I'll just stop at Mr. Azik's house, then take a public carriage back… Klein quickly made a decision.

Four minutes later, he alighted from the carriage and arrived outside

Mr. Azik's house.

The houses here were obviously of higher quality than those at Daffodil Street, but not as good as those on Howes Street. There was a patch of grass in front of the house, and a small garden in the back.

Ding! Ding! Ding!

Klein pulled on the rope outside the door and sounded the bell within the house.

A few moments later, he heard footsteps from inside before the door swung open.

Azik's mild facial features and bronze skin appeared before Klein. Since he was at home, he was only dressed in a simple white shirt, a brown vest, and matching pants.

"Klein? I was just about to write to you," Azik greeted enthusiastically. "I just arrived home last night."

Klein stared at the small mole near Azik's right ear.

"Mr. Azik, I found a clue to your past."

"Really?" Azik instantly became excited. The sadness he had in his eyes dulled.

"Let's talk inside." Klein looked around.

Azik quickly nodded. He moved to the side and allowed Klein entry.

He locked the door and guided Klein to the living room on the first floor. They sat on the soft sofa.

"What clues did you find?" he asked impatiently.

Having not expected to meet Mr. Azik today, Klein organized his words.

"I received a mission recently and had to deal with a wraith in Lamud

Town."

"Lamud…" Azik repeated the term softly, his eyebrows creasing.

Klein observed his expression and slowed down his tone.

"In the process of dealing with the wraith, we discovered something and thus conducted an investigation within the town…

"A resident of the town was in possession of a portrait of the first Baron Lamud which he tried to sell me. I asked to view the portrait out of curiosity and discovered that the person drawn had facial features that resembled yours, other than the hair. He even had the same mole near the ear, similar position, similar size.

"Under my interrogation, the man told me that the portrait was about forty years old, but the person in the portrait definitely came from the abandoned castle. It was a replica of the ancient portrait excavated from the castle.

"You should know that people like us with unique abilities can more or less tell if somebody is lying. This told me that the man wasn't lying."

Azik leaned forward as he listened to Klein. He crossed his arms and remained silent for a while.

Five minutes later, he exhaled.

"Your description didn't make me recall anything. Perhaps, I should visit the abandoned castle myself. Can you take me there?"

"That would be my honor," Klein replied. "But I have to head home first. I don't want my siblings to worry."

"No problem." Azik stood up.

Chapter 150 - Azik's Discovery

◆

2 Daffodil Street. Klein nodded at Azik and briskly walked to the door of his house, fished out his keys, and opened the door.

Melissa was already home, so she heard the click of the door lock and quickly came out of the kitchen and into the living room.

Upon seeing Klein, she said with eyes beaming with joy, “I bought groceries. There’s chicken, potatoes, onions, fish, turnips, and peas. I even bought a small jar of honey.”

Sis, are you also getting used to the occasional luxury? Klein chuckled.

“You’ll have to prepare dinner tonight. Count me out for I’ll be out of town. I might not return until dawn. Yea, I’m doing a favor for Mr. Azik, a teacher from the Khoy University’s Department of History.”

As he spoke, he turned sideways and pointed at the carriage that was waiting outside.

Melissa’s lips opened and closed twice, before she pursed them and said, “Alright.”

Klein bade his sister farewell and left. He got into the rented carriage that Azik had hired and traveled two hours and forty minutes to Lamud Town.

It was almost nine at that point. The sky was dark, and they could only rely on the crimson moonlight and the twinkling starlight that penetrated the clouds to illuminate the areas without street lamps.

After he instructed the driver to wait in town, Klein led Azik towards the ancient abandoned castle.

As they walked, he realized that Azik was walking faster, to the point of him having to break out into a small jog to keep up. In the end, it was Azik who led the way.

Klein wanted to say something initially, but cleverly swallowed his words when he saw Azik's solemn expression and tightly pursed lips.

With such speed, they quickly arrived at the ancient castle.

The castle which was almost a wreckage extended itself in all four directions while its spire looked desolate, wild, eerie, and dark.

Azik looked at the ancient castle and slowed down his footsteps.

He stopped there and his gaze looked profound but lost, as though he was hovering between dreams and reality.

Suddenly, he groaned in pain, lifting his hand to pinch his forehead while his muscles looked distorted with agony.

"Mr. Azik, are you okay?" Klein asked carefully as he activated his Spirit Vision.

When they were onboard the hired carriage, making their way from Daffodil Street to Lamud Town, he had done a quick divination by flipping a coin to see if there would be any danger on their trip.

But he believed that divination wasn't all-powerful, and he kept his guard up to prevent any misinterpretation on his part. Plus, Azik was quite mysterious. No one knew about his past, and it was uncertain how he would respond if he were to be stimulated by an encounter with his past. Caution and worry had accompanied Klein throughout the trip.

Azik didn't reply immediately but took another two steps forward with a pained expression. He relaxed the hand that was holding his forehead. He then pointed forward with a dreamy tone.

“I’ve seen this ancient castle before in my dream.

“Back then, it was still complete with a robust outer wall and a high spire.

“I remember that there was a stable there, a water well there, and a barracks there. Over there was a garden that was used to plant potatoes and sweet potatoes…

“I remember there was a training field. My child, he was a boy. He was only about seven or eight years old, but he enjoyed running around while dragging a broadsword that was taller than him. He said that he wanted to become a knight when he grows up…

“My wife always complained about it being too gloomy in the castle. She liked the sunlight, the warmth…”

†

Klein looked at the color of his energy field, and what the man said made his scalp tingle. He was also slightly touched, as though he was experiencing a paranormal story himself.

The ancient castle is really related to Mr. Azik… Could he really be the first generation Baron Lamud, a transcendental creature that has lived for fourteen hundred years? Is he a human or an evil spirit? No way, there are no such things as evil spirits running around under broad daylight and getting involved with the Nighthawks… Klein couldn’t help with his thoughts and allowed them to clash against each other to ignite more ideas.

Just then, Azik stopped muttering and took huge strides through the main gate.

He walked all the way into the castle without Klein's guidance. He found the hidden gear with obvious familiarity and opened the secret door to enter the basement.

Gripping his cane tightly, Klein followed behind Azik. They walked down along the stairs and returned to the place where there was a coffin.

Unlike the previous time, the coffin was closed and the warm and pure feeling was gone.

The coffin is closed… It must've been Frye. It's his work ethic as a Corpse Collector… Klein nodded thoughtfully and watched the conflicted Azik walk in front of the coffin with his Spirit Vision.

Azik extended his hands to push the coffin lid until there was a gap.

He gazed at the skeleton without a skull for a long time, and he suddenly wailed in pain and sorrow.

Azik lurched backwards with heavy footsteps. He staggered and fell against the wall before Klein managed to respond.

He covered his face with his hands and sat there dispirited. The surroundings suddenly became even darker.

Klein quickened his pace and extended his hands, but he retracted them again, not daring to disturb the man.

Just then, his spiritual perception told him that the current Mr. Azik was very scary, so scary that the basement grew gloomy and terrifying.

Klein slowly moved closer to the stairs.

He trusted Mr. Azik's character, but he was afraid that the man would lose control.

In such an uneasy situation, he waited for a few more minutes. Then, he finally saw Azik lower his hands and stand up slowly.

Mr. Azik seems to have changed… This is what my spiritual perception tell me… But in my Spirit Vision, his aura colors don't have any obvious changes. His emotions are in low spirits, depressed and pained as before… Klein made a quick judgment and felt that Azik had become gloomier and more imposing.

"I recalled something, but it's very minor." Azik spoke with an emotionless tone.

Then, he looked around and said, "I sense the power that made your fate disharmonious."

"Huh?" Klein was stunned. Pleasantly surprised, he asked in reply, "Can you trace the source?"

The person behind the scene who stayed in the red chimney house created coincidences in secret and came to Lamud's ancient castle to take away the black armored knight's head?

What is he trying to do? What is his true intention?

"It's been too long, but, I'd like to try." There seemed to be a volcano that was close to erupting within Azik's deep voice.

"How?" Klein asked curiously.

Azik walked before the coffin and gazed upon the skeleton inside it.

"He took my child's skull. I want to find him through a blood connection."

Your child? Mr. Azik, are you sure the black armored knight is your child? So you really are an antique… You really lost your memory after such a long time? This is the price you have to pay in order to obtain such longevity? Klein took a silent breath, feeling the odd sensation of interacting with a legendary creature.

Then, Azik extended his right hand and suddenly cut his index finger with his thumbnail.

A drop of fresh red blood accurately dripped onto the white skeleton.

It quickly seeped into the skeleton, and the entire skeleton suddenly turned blood-red.

Wah! Wah! Wah! Klein suddenly heard the sound of a baby crying and felt that there was someone staring at him from behind.

He drew his revolver and pointed behind him before turning around slowly. However, there was nothing in sight. Nothing existed behind him.

Even the stairway that connected to the ground floor was gone!

Wah! Wah!

The sound of a baby crying drilled into Klein's ears, and when he looked towards the coffin again, he was shocked to see that there were many shapeless and distorted faces rising amidst billowing black fog. Then, they manifested a strange door.

Creak!

The illusory door opened and palish-white arms extended out, one after another, but they vanished into the black fog before Azik.

Through the crack that the door opened, Klein saw a white skull. It was thrown underneath a brown tree and reduced to powder as a result of the elements.

Creak!

Countless palish-white arms were sliced off by the door that suddenly slammed shut as they fell onto the ground.

Then, Klein heard a long sigh, Mr. Azik's heavy sigh, a sigh that seemed to have a rich history behind it.

Along with the sigh, the black fog dispersed and the sound of a baby crying ceased. Everything returned to its original state, except for the accentuated chill.

Klein clenched his chattering teeth and looked into the coffin. He saw that the red skeleton had returned to its original, crystal-clear white.

“I’m sorry. I couldn’t find him…” Azik said in a deep voice, his back to Klein.

At the same time, he closed the coffin.

“It’s not surprising that we couldn’t find him. It would’ve been a surprise if we could,” Klein comforted him.

Anyway, I’ve been disappointed many times regarding this matter… he added in his head.

Azik took another glance at the coffin before him. He turned around slowly and said, “I’ll continue investigating and I hope that I can have your assistance.”

“No problem. This is exactly what I wanted to do.” Klein held back his urge to tell Azik about the red chimney.

Because it was useless to bring it up. He could only rely on himself to confirm his target.

However, that solved one of his major problems, which was how he should involve the Nighthawks after he found the red chimney house. He didn’t believe that he could take out such a mysterious and scary puppet master alone.

Now, he could ask for Mr. Azik’s help!

Azik widened his mouth, but didn’t say anything in the end. All he did was sigh and walk towards the stairway quietly.

After leaving the basement and closing the secret door, the two of them walked along the road covered with weeds and brambles. Neither one of them spoke as they walked back from the abandoned ancient castle.

In the dark night, Azik suddenly said, “Until this matter is resolved, I will quit my job and leave Tingen, to look for my lost past.”

“Mr. Azik, did you find out what happened to you?” Klein asked, having failed to hide his curiosity.

Chapter 151 - Klein's Request

◆

The chirping of insects and the hooting of owls reverberated along the path back to the small town. Azik looked ahead and said after a few seconds of silence, "Even though I'm not entirely sure what happened to me, I do have a rough idea.

"Perhaps—perhaps I'm someone who has lived for a very, very long time."

Mr. Azik, you have to seriously consider if you still fit the definition of "someone"… Klein thought to himself, but he didn't dare to say it out loud.

"This wilderness, this silence, often makes one weak…

"I should've paid some sort of price in exchange for this long life. I've lived since the end of the Fourth Epoch, like a wandering spirit across the continent…" Azik's voice deepened, as if he was trying to suppress his emotions. "I don't remember the past. I've forgotten about the people and things that I've sworn to remember…"

Klein poked at the weeds in front of him and said, in thought, "Mr. Azik, I have a theory regarding your situation."

"What theory?" Azik looked to the side.

"I think that there's a cycle to your memory loss. Perhaps you 'die' once every few decades, and your memories of the events before that vanishes. Then, after some time, you wake up from the darkness of your slumber and begin a new phase of life. This way, we can explain why you would have such varied dreams. Those are events that you came across over your several lives," Klein described his theory.

Azik slowed down his pace, as if the darkness had grabbed onto his sleeve. He looked ahead with a turbid look before saying after a while, "That is consistent with the memories that were jolted awake just now."

Memories that were jolted awake? Klein had an idea as he said immediately, "Mr. Azik, you might not have to leave Tingen to search for your lost past. You'll regain your memories slowly!"

"Why?" Azik turned his head in surprise.

Klein smiled and said, "Your memories aren't completely gone. The parts of your memory that jolted awake just now are proof of that.

"Furthermore, do you remember the moment you woke up in Backlund and discovered that you had forgotten all about the past?"

Azik nodded. "That's a nightmare that bothers me till this day."

Klein tapped downwards with his black cane and explained in detail, "Before today, I didn't think that there was a problem with that. But your description just now, together with my own conjecture, makes it feel a little weird. You had a document of identification and enough money when you woke up from your dream. You also appeared in a way that didn't startle anyone… All of that seems like it was arranged for you, allowing you to fit into society with little effort.

"Then, who made the arrangements?

"There is only one answer; the you from the past!

"The past you regained his memories and knew that you would have to usher in a new life. Thus, he prepared everything for you, trying his best to not let you attract suspicion from anyone else."

Azik stopped walking. He looked at the specks of light coming from the town, once again slipped into silence.

“Perhaps the ‘parents’ that I’ve been searching for were the past me all along…” He sighed, admitting that Klein’s deduction was very plausible.

“Thus, you don’t need to do anything. All you have to do is patiently wait for your memories to come back to you,” Klein concluded and consoled Mr. Azik.

Azik subconsciously waved his cane before he turned still, like a sculpture carved out of marble.

After a long time, he looked into the distance and answered, “Perhaps—perhaps I’ll only fully regain my memory when this life is nearing its end. I don’t want to wait that long. I want to have plenty of time to understand and free myself from this destiny. So I have to be more proactive in searching for my past, to trigger my memories a little at a time. I have to get my memories back before the time you hypothesized. Waiting would only make me repeat the cycle.”

“Indeed that’s the choice worth looking forward to the most.” Klein didn’t advise against it. Instead, he asked, “Mr. Azik, may I ask for your help in something trivial, other than finding the criminal that took the skull of your child and made my fate disharmonious?”

Azik nodded slightly.

“What do you need me to do?”

Klein organized his words and said, “I hope that you can head to a town between two and five hours away from Tingen by carriage next week, or the week after. I need you to cause a paranormal incident, something that wouldn’t harm anyone. Judging from how you tried to search for the criminal using your bloodline’s connection, I would think that you are fairly adept in the field of dead souls.”

“No problem,” Azik promised without any hesitation. He didn’t ask Klein why he wanted him to do something like that.

At the same time, he had tacitly confirmed Klein’s conjecture about his powers.

“Thank you. This is very important to me. Also, you can only choose a follower of the Evernight Goddess when you are picking a target. Also, don’t leave any clues behind,” Klein instructed.

Only through this method could the incident be relayed to the Tingen Nighthawks. Only then could he join the team on the mission and suggest using Sealed Artifact 3-0782. Only then could he extract the divine blood from the Sealed Artifact to create Flaring Sun Charms!

That was the most powerful item he could obtain at the moment.

Under the assumption that the culprit living in the house with the red chimney hasn’t left Tingen, and that Klein was going to continue investigating, he had to try his best to become more powerful!

Yes, according to the information I obtained, stealing a little of its powers wouldn’t damage 3-0782. At the very most, the expiry of its purifying powers will be slightly reduced… This is for the safety and stability of Tingen City! Klein inwardly tried to justify his actions.

Azik didn’t care about his motives. He nodded.

“I will tell you the name of the town and the estimated time beforehand so you can prepare yourself.”

Phew… Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He felt that this trip to Lamud Town wasn’t a wasted trip.

Even though they only managed to peel back the outermost layer of the mysteries surrounding Mr. Azik and had much more to find out, he had at least managed to gain the friendship of Azik, a reliable ally in his search for the culprit behind the scenes!

†

At half past eleven that night, Klein returned to 2 Daffodil Street, hungry and tired.

“To think that Mr. Azik didn’t treat me to dinner… Sigh. He wouldn’t have been in the mood to enjoy dinner anyway,” Klein muttered as he opened the door.

The house wasn’t as dark as he had anticipated. An elegant gas lamp was silently emitting its light, warmly illuminating the living room. Benson was sitting alone on the sofa with a book, draped under a bright “coat.”

When he saw the door open, Benson was just about to speak when he yawned. He had no choice but to cover his mouth.

Klein closed the door and smiled, quipping, “I went to Lamud Town with Mr. Azik. There’s an abandoned castle with a long history over there.”

Benson was immediately enlightened as he laughed.

“A moonless night, a castle abandoned for a millennia, a cold and creepy environment, coupled with a two-man archaeological team… This is the perfect recipe for the opening of a paranormal novel.”

What happened today could be classified as paranormal… Klein suddenly recalled the strange door Mr. Azik conjured and the cries of a baby. He said, a lingering fear still gripping onto him, “It did feel a bit like that back there.”

Benson yawned again before shutting his book and said, “I need sleep. Ever since I began studying and reading classical literature, the quality of my sleep has become especially good.”

Klein laughed to himself, suddenly recalling something Miss Justice had mentioned. He said, lowering his voice, “Benson, you know that my company has connections with the Awwa County Police. I recently heard news from Backlund that the King, Prime Minister, other ministers and Members of Parliament are all sick of an inefficient government. They want to push for a reform and select talents to take on positions in the government based on an open examination, just like the entrance examinations of universities."

Benson was at a loss at first, then his eyes sparkled as he asked, "An open examination?"

"Yes. As long as you pass the examination, you could become a civil servant in one of the branches of the government. My guess, yes—my guess is that the contents of the examination will be modeled after the entrance exams of the universities: literature, the classics, math and logic, as well as a basic understanding of the law…" Klein used this opportunity to include his opinion. He continued, "Benson, this must be kept confidential, and don't put too much hope on this. No one knows if this will be passed by the House of Lords and House of Commons or not."

"I'll keep it in mind. I understand that all I need to do is study hard." Benson smiled, then said, "I'd study hard whether this change happens or not. I'll try my best to free myself from my current circumstance and find a better job. Learning—that's the greatest difference between a human and a curly-haired baboon."

No, research suggests that baboons have decent IQ levels, and a certain level of learning abilities… Klein lampooned silently and looked on as Benson headed to the second floor.

After that, he smiled and rubbed his stomach as he walked toward the kitchen.

He found the leftovers and the chicken Benson and Melissa left him especially. Klein relaxed as he started preparing his late dinner.

It was deep into the night now, and most people had already gone to bed. He was the only one still awake, breathing in the cool air with mixed aromas and making slight movements.

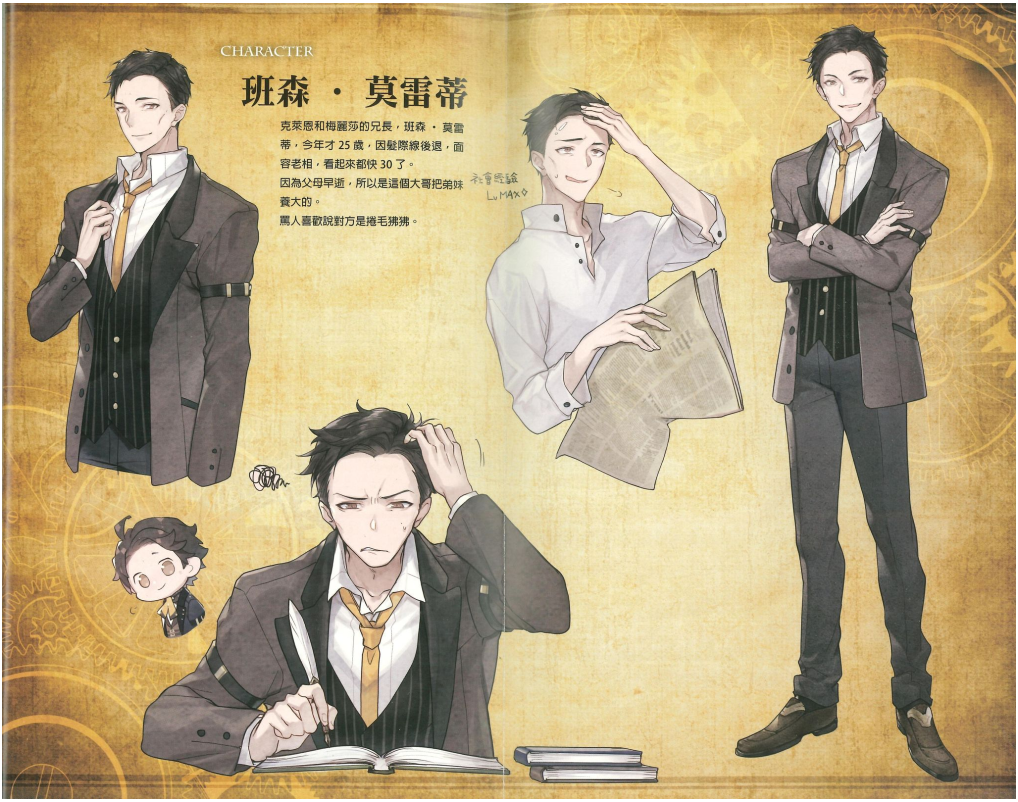
Everything was peaceful and serene.

†

After he was satiated, he washed the dishes and took a bath. Finally, Klein returned to his room and locked the door.

He yawned but kept himself awake. He took out the silver dagger used for rituals and sealed the room with a wall of spirituality.

He wanted to divine above the gray fog whether summoning “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era” was dangerous or not!



班森 · 莫雷蒂

克萊恩和梅麗莎的兄長，班森 · 莫雷蒂，今年才 25 歲，因髮際線後退，面容老相，看起來都快 30 了。

因為父母早逝，所以是這個大哥把弟妹養大的。

罵人喜歡說對方是捲毛狒狒。

Benson Moretti

The elder brother of Klein and Melissa, Benson Moretti is 25 years old this year. Because of his receding hairline and mature appearance, he looks nearly 30.

Because their parents passed away early, he is the "big brother" who raised his younger siblings. When he scolds people, he likes to call them "curly-haired baboons."

Chapter 152 - Nice Attempt

◆ ◆ ◆

The gray fog filled the air in its eternally unchanging manner as the illusory crimson stars hung around him at varying distances. Klein sat inside the lofty palace that looked like the home of a giant as he looked at the familiar sight before him.

After a few seconds, he looked away and made a yellowish-brown goatskin appear before him. Then, he lifted a pen to write his amended incantation for the summoning ritual.

“Light a candle to represent myself.

“Use a spiritual wall to create a holy environment.

“Drip a drop of Full Moon Essence Oil in the flame, Chamomile Pure Dew, Slumber Flower Powder, and other ingredients. (Note: There’s no need to be too particular in this step because it’s summoning oneself).

“Recite the incantation below.

“I! (In ancient Hermes, Jotun, Dragonese, or Elfish. It must be a deep shout)

“I summon in my name (Hermes),

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

†

After scrutinizing it three times, Klein wrote a divination statement at the bottom:

“There will be danger if the ritual above is carried out outside of this world.”

Phew. He let out a breath, put down the pen, took out the silver chain in his sleeve, and held it with his left hand.

The topaz pendant hung above the goatskin steadily, only a slight distance above the divination statement. He reined in his thoughts and entered a Cogitation state.

“There will be danger if the ritual above is carried out outside of this world.

“There will be danger if the ritual above is carried out outside of this world.”

†

After reciting the statement seven times, Klein opened his eyes which were almost all black and looked at the topaz pendant which was spinning counterclockwise.

That meant a negative outcome: there would be no danger!

“I can give it a try then.” Klein made the items before him disappear. He then extended his spirituality to wrap around himself and simulated the sensation of falling.

When he returned to his bedroom, due to the fact that he had sealed the entire room with a spiritual wall, Klein immediately cleared his desk and put out a mint-scented candle right in the middle.

He pressed slightly on the candle wick, rubbing it with spirituality to cause friction and ignite the candle.

Under the flickering dim light, Klein dripped the corresponding essential oils, extracts, and herb powder onto the flame.

A soothing fragrance suddenly filled the air, and the room alternated between brightness and darkness.

Taking two steps back, Klein looked at the candle that represented himself and shouted in Jotun, "I!"

Then, he switched to Hermes, "I summon in my name:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

Just as he finished speaking, he sensed the wavering candlelight suddenly dance vigorously and produce a vortex with the surrounding fragrance. It absorbed his spirituality at an insane rate.

"Slumber flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation…" Klein endured the discomfort brought about from having his spirituality drained as he finished reciting the incantation.

Then, he saw the candlelight stop wavering. It was tainted with a gray luster, which extended to about the size of a palm.

"I didn't summon anything… Oh right, perhaps I'll need to respond to it above the gray fog? It's really quite troublesome to summon myself…" Klein muttered, pinching his aching forehead.

He calmed himself down, then took four steps counterclockwise before arriving above the gray fog again. He saw that there was a rippling light above the seat of honor at the ancient table.

It stemmed from the strange symbol at the back of the corresponding chair. The strange symbol that was made up of a Pupil-less Eye, a symbol representing concealment, and Contorted Lines that represented change.

All Klein did was extend his hand to reach for it when he immediately heard, “I! I summon in my name, The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.” Then, he saw surging spirituality combined with a rippling light that formed into an illusory yet shapeless door.

The door shook as though it wanted to be opened. Klein immediately felt inspired and strongly willed for it to be pushed open.

Almost instantly, the boundless fog and lofty palace was drawn forward. There were a few barely noticeable ripples.

The ripples surged towards the illusory yet shapeless door.

But, no matter how much Klein pushed it, the door couldn’t be pushed open. Every movement resulted in dead silence.

“The Door of Summoning has yet to take shape?” Klein reined in his will and creased his eyebrows when he analyzed the reason why he had failed.

He had casually named the door “the Door of Summoning.”

“Hmm, I’m lacking spirituality, so I can’t form a complete Door of Summoning. When I advance to Sequence 8 Clown and pass through the initial dangerous stage, I can give it another try. Maybe it won’t be a problem by then…” Klein nodded lightly and roughly understood what had happened.

This experiment gave him a confidence boost, he felt heartened as this was the first time that he received some sort of response from the mysterious space above the gray fog*—*other than the incident where he divined about Eternal Blazing Sun!

There will come a day when I’ll understand all the secrets here! Klein excitedly declared in his heart. He then made a rapid descent into the boundless fog after he wrapped himself up with spirituality.

†

Klein quickly blew out the candle after he returned to his bedroom. He ended the ritual and cleaned up his study desk before he removed the spiritual wall.

A gust of wind suddenly blew as he yawned. He collapsed into the bed, covered himself with a blanket and quickly fell asleep.

In the hazy dream that followed, Klein woke up abruptly and realized that he was sitting in the living room of his home and was holding the Tingen City Honest Paper.

…Don't tell me Captain is here again? He was stunned at first as he looked outside the oriel window, finding humor in his exasperation.

With a creak, the door opened. Dunn walked in slowly, wearing his black trench coat that went beyond his knees and held a cane and pipe.

He was still wearing his black top hat, and underneath it were his profound gray eyes.

Dunn came to the living room and sat on the single seat sofa. He leisurely crossed his right leg over his left.

He put aside his cane, took off his hat, and leaned backwards. He sat there quietly and looked at Klein as though he was thinking.

Captain, what are you trying to do today… Klein was dumbfounded.

In order to not expose that he knew that it was a dream, he pretended to not be affected by it and continued to read the newspaper.

One minute, two minutes, five minutes. He lifted his head to look at Dunn who sat opposite him. He found out that the Captain was still sitting there quietly and was looking at him in deep thought.

Five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes. Klein flipped through the newspaper back and forth multiple times, looking at Dunn from the corner of his eyes, and noticed that the man was still looking at him quietly in deep thought.

Captain, you're making me very uncomfortable… Klein couldn't sit in peace. He folded the newspaper and put it aside. He nodded and smiled at Dunn. Then, he went to the kitchen to get a piece of cloth and started wiping the dining table and coffee table.

Captain, look, my dream is so simple, so ordinary, so boring. There's nothing worth observing. Hurry up and leave! Why don't you pretend to be a ghost and I'll pretend to be frightened, then you can complete your achievement as a Nightmare! He prayed in silence and lifted his head, but all he saw was Dunn's deep gray eyes that were still in deep thought.

Under such a quiet and constant gaze, Klein wiped all the furniture and cleaned his room. He was so exhausted in his dream.

What wore him out the most was Dunn Smith, who was watching him quietly in deep thought.

Klein had no idea how much time had passed while he made himself busy until he finally saw his Captain uncross his legs and stand up. Then, he took his cane, put on his hat, and walked through the door.

Klein held his breath and watched Dunn leave his house.

He couldn't help but lift his right hand to wave goodbye.

Phew… When everything returned to normal, Klein let out a breath of relief.

That really was such a nightmare! He thought to himself, too preoccupied for tears.

†

Backlund, West Backlund, Philip's Department Store.

Philip's was one of the top-end department stores in the Loen Kingdom. It only opened to nobles and wealthy people who were qualified to be members.

There was always luxurious carriages parked outside with different emblems printed on them. Not only was it a safe place for shopping, it also became a popular social venue due to the strict restriction on members.

Audrey brought her maidservant, Annie, and her golden retriever, Susie. Under the ushering of an eagerly attentive attendant, she got off the carriage and walked through the entrance.

Along the way, she saw daughters of viscounts, countesses, or maidens with parents of high social status.

She maintained her elegance and greeted them all gracefully. She communicated with different nobles on different topics. For instance, when she faced a particular countess, she would compliment the fittings of the countess's dress and when she greeted a particular baroness, she would praise the outstanding performance of the baroness's husband in the House of Lords.

Audrey hadn't been good at that previously; she was too stubborn and too arrogant. But now, she didn't even need to put in much effort to respond perfectly.

In a Spectator's eyes, most of the emotions and thoughts of the female nobles were written on their faces.

Arriving at the second floor, Audrey turned into a shop that sold ready-made dresses.

The attendant in the shop was a petite maiden. She wore a black and white dress and had shoulder-length blond hair. She was the Arbiter, Xio Derecha.

Audrey gave Susie a look without changing her facial expression. The dog understood what her owner meant immediately and ran to another counter.

Maidservant Annie went after Susie to try to drag her back.

Well done! Audrey complimented inwardly and walked next to Xio Derecha, pretending to look at the variety of dresses.

"…Why did you arrange to meet me here for?" Xio inquired with a whisper while she loudly introduced the dresses.

Her voice was tender, just like a child's.

"Where's the original attendant?" Audrey asked in reply instead of answering her.

Xio looked around and said, "I convinced her. She was happy to rest for the morning."

Audrey looked at the different styled dresses while she took out a piece of neatly folded paper from her lamb leather handbag and secretly passed it to Xio.

"Vice Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos, has snuck into Backlund. This is his portrait. I hope you can find him for me. Oh, and don't alert him."

Xio received the piece of paper and unfolded it to take a quick glance. She saw that it was a lifelike portrait of a man in his thirties that had a unique broad chin.

I was once constantly praised by my art teacher… Audrey stole a glance at Xio and lifted her head.

She added, "The Kingdom offers a reward of ten thousand pounds for Qilangos. If he were to be arrested, even the person that only provided clues would definitely be awarded with a few hundred pounds."

Just as she finished her sentence, she saw Xio's eyes beam with joy, as she had expected.

Chapter 153 - Final Act of Laying the Foundation

◆

A unique wide jaw, his hair is in a bun like an ancient knight's, eyes that look at you with the intent of an icy smile… Xio Derecha was half slumped on the sofa as she scrutinized the portrait that Audrey had handed to her.

In her eyes, the man might as well have been a living, walking pile of money.

After committing the looks of the great pirate Qilangos to her memory, she proceeded to read the description written at the bottom of the page:

"Brown hair, dark green eyes.

"The portrait can only be used as a general reference as the target possesses the ability to transform into another person. It is unknown how long he can maintain the transformation."

The portrait can only be used as a reference… The target possesses the ability to transform into another person… Only as a reference, transform into another person… Then why did I spend so much time memorizing his facial features? Xio wore a dazed look, as if it was the first time she had witnessed the evil intentions the world had for her.

She looked up and saw Fors Wall slumped languidly in a sofa opposite her. She seemed to be muttering to herself, "There's no way to look for this person. We don't know what he looks like. All we know is that he's not from Backlund. There are far too many foreigners who come into

Backlund every day."

Fors attempted to sit up, but failed even after three tries.

"I'm only an Apprentice, not an Arbiter…" She pouted as she placed her hand on the armrest of the sofa, successfully pulling herself up into a sitting position.

"Does that lady think that we are prophets?" Fors jested.

Xio was about to answer when she realized that there were still footnotes she hadn't gone through yet.

She recited them out softly, "The suggested ways of searching are as follows:

"1. Qilangos has an evil object with him. It needs to devour the flesh, blood, and soul of a living person every other day. You can consider looking for missing vagrants.

"2. Search for Qilangos's information thoroughly and build a profile of his unique hobbies and behaviors.

"3. A person's facial features might change, but as long as he hasn't received any special training, he will often act like himself, such as the things he prefers to eat, his gait, actions he's used to performing, and many other details."

Fors nodded as she listened.

"Miss Audrey isn't the innocent, naive teen that the rumors about her suggest. She has a meticulous heart and a calm sense of observation."

"Is that so?" Xio asked, doubtful. She didn't expect an answer as she changed the topic by suggesting, "I'll be in charge of gathering the information. Can you consolidate that pile of gold pound's, no—that admiral's hobbies and unique traits?"

Fors opened her eyes wide open and shook the steel box containing her cigarettes.

“How can you bear to do this? How can you bear to make a dainty, sensitive author do consolidation, analysis, and deduction?”

Xio shot her good friend a glance as she exuded an air of authority without realizing it.

“There’s an interesting paragraph on deduction in your Stormwind Mountain Villa.”

Fors pulled her shoulders back and lowered her head. She looked at the coffee table as she said, “Do you know how much of my hair I pulled out, how much sleep I lost, just for that paragraph?”

She quickly lifted her head and looked at Xio Derecha, then lowered her head once again and grumbled, “Life is short. There are too many things that we need to do, why must we waste our time on such uninteresting, menial tasks?”

That’s very reasonable… Xio nearly nodded in agreement. She fought hard to keep her authority as an Arbiter.

“Then do you have any other ways to solve this problem?” She suppressed her voice, making her childlike voice sound deeper.

Fors thought for nearly twenty seconds before looking up suddenly.

“We can hire a professional! After you finish collecting information on Vice Admiral Hurricane, we shall erase the name and hand it over to an excellent detective, then ask him to do the consolidation and deduction. All we have to do is pay a fee!”

Why didn’t I think of that… Xio’s mind went blank. Fors and Xio looked at each other without saying anything.

When the atmosphere became awkward, she cleared her throat.

“We’ll do it according to your suggestion.”

After saying this, she quickly added, “You’ll pay the fee!”

†

Howes Street, Divination Club.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti.” The pretty receptionist Angelica looked at Klein in surprise. “You rarely come on Fridays.”

Exhausted from searching for the house with the red chimney, Klein smiled and said,

“Fate never repeats itself indefinitely. It always brings us some surprises.”

He was in the area, and the time had expired on the carriage he rented; thus, he came for a cup of black tea and some rest.

Furthermore, this would serve as the final layer of the foundations. With the new “experience” at the Divination Club, he would logically mention the application to Dunn Smith.

“Your words are always so philosophical,” Angelica praised.

Klein thought for a moment before saying with deliberation, “I might not come to the Divination Club too often in the future, so you need not recommend me to others anymore.”

He had already digested his potion, so he had to advance towards a new goal!

“Why?” Angelica said in shock and puzzlement. “You’ve already made a name for yourself in the club. Most people know that your divinations are very accurate and miraculous. In fact, we were considering getting you to come in on Sundays as a lecturer.”

If I was paid one pound for every divination I perform, then I would keep doing this regardless of how tired I was… Besides, I still have to investigate the houses with red chimneys and find the culprit as soon as possible… Klein smiled warmly.

“Madam, do not convince me to stay; this is the arrangement of fate.

“I won’t stop coming to the Divination Club entirely, it’s just that my visits will become less frequent. I’ll still pay the membership fees on time.”

I can get reimbursed for it anyway… I will come down occasionally to monitor the place… Klein added in his heart.

“How regretful. I hope that you will be at the club when I happen to be lost.” Angelica sighed.

She realized that this wasn’t as surprising as she imagined after the initial shock had passed.

Perhaps such a miraculous seer that still respected fate wasn’t someone who could be held back by a club in Tingen… Angelica smiled, as if thinking about something.

“Sibe black tea?”

“Yes.” Klein returned a smile.

He spent about twenty minutes in the club, spending the time resting, finishing his black tea before leaving the club. He took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

When he entered, he opened the mailbox out of habit and saw that there was a letter placed inside not too long ago.

Klein opened the letter and noticed that it was from Mr. Azik.

“…I will be heading to Morse Town on Sunday and return on Wednesday.”

Most of the citizens in Morse Town are believers of the Goddess… He’s heading there on a Sunday, which means that according to the usual level of efficiency, the Nighthawks would only receive the information on Tuesday or Wednesday. I can make it… To think that Mr. Azik would remember my request… I hope that he remembers not to do it personally. Him summoning a spirit and doing something scary would suffice… Klein nodded slightly. He released his spirituality and burned the letter with friction.

He flicked his hand, turning the flames into ashes and allowed them to fall slowly onto the ground.

†

Saturday afternoon. Klein was wearing his black trench coat and hat. He had his cane in his hand as he walked slowly into the Blackthorn Security Company.

After greeting Rozanne, he looked at the partition and noticed that the Captain's office was open. He deliberately spoke louder, "Yesterday. I saw a girl who looked just like you at the Divination Club."

"Really?" Rozanne asked, her interest piqued.

Klein nodded without sincerity. "Yes, in fact, I thought that she was your sister."

"I'm sorry to have to disappoint you, but I have no sisters, not even cousins." Rozanne laughed. "Do you remember her name?"

"No, why would I remember her name?" Klein smiled. "Looking at her was exactly like looking at you."

"Can I take that as a compliment?" Rozanne was a chatty girl who never needed others to start the conversation. She asked on her own accord, "Klein, I would assume that you're earning quite a bit from the Divination Club? As a true Seer, your abilities are far beyond those who take this as a hobby."

We would still be good colleagues if you didn’t mention this… Klein coughed.

“A Seer has to be respectful of fate. We cannot use divination to ask for abnormal privileges.”

“Are you concluding your own maxim for a Seer?” Rozanne asked out of curiosity.

“Yes,” Klein answered frankly.

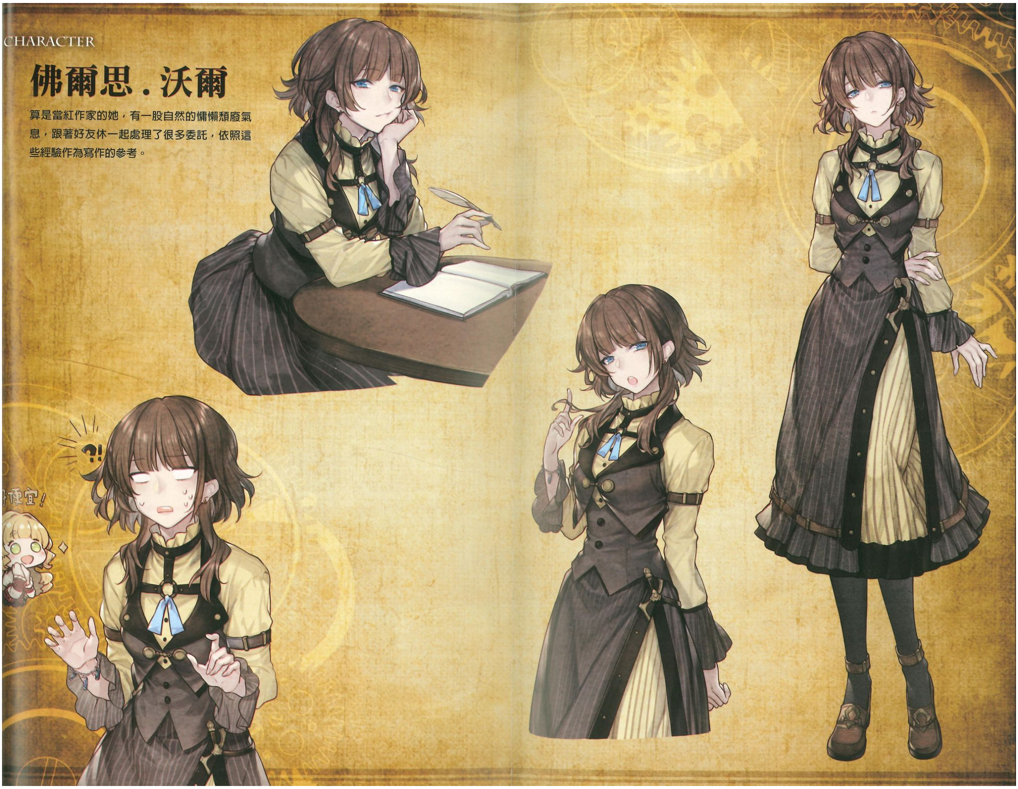
After a brief chat, Klein said goodbye to Rozanne. He took his hat and walked toward the partition.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He looked at Dunn Smith, who was drinking his coffee, as he knocked on the open door.

“Please come in.” Dunn looked up at Klein and adjusted his posture immediately.

Klein had already probed the Captain over the past two days. He confirmed that Dunn Smith hadn’t mentioned the “acting method” as he was trying it out. It was clear that he was also cautious of the higher-ups of the Church.

Thus he closed the door and sat opposite Dunn. He said with a serious, yet slightly excited expression, “Captain, I believe that I have completely grasped the Seer potion. I wish to submit a special application.”


CHARACTER

佛爾思．沃爾

算是當紅作家的她，有一股自然的慵懶頹廢氣息，跟著好友休一起處理了很多委託，依照這些經驗作為寫作的參考。

Fors Wall

Considered a popular author, she possesses a naturally lazy and an aura as if yearning for conception. Along with her best friend Xio, she has handled many commissions, using those experiences as reference for her writing.

Chapter 154 - Sharing "Experience"

◆ ◆ ◆

As he looked into Klein's eyes, Dunn took a deep breath and leaned back. Then, he slowly exhaled as he spoke.

"Are you certain?"

There were minor changes in his facial expression. He seemed to be well prepared for the special application, but he hadn't expected it to be so soon.

Captain, why do you look relieved… Klein didn't conceal his smile as he said, "I'm certain, Captain. When you fully master a potion, you'll feel a very special and magical sensation. You'll have no doubt that you've fully mastered the potion."

"Special, magical feeling…" Dunn muttered those words softly and his eyebrows slowly knitted together.

Huh, the Captain advanced twice without fully digesting the potion? Of course, if he didn't know about the "acting method," it would be difficult to fully digest it. He must've used a prolonged period of time to break it down and was subconsciously "acting" to minimize the risk of losing control… Poor Captain… Klein quietly looked at Dunn Smith, but he didn't speak or say anything further so as to allow Dunn to think carefully.

After almost a minute, Dunn's deep eyes reflected Klein's figure once again. He weighed his words before he said, "Maybe it would be a better option to wait another year."

What the Captain means is that waiting another year would make it less conspicuous. With the example that Madam Daly set for me, the higher-ups wouldn't pay too much attention to me. At most, I would only be put on a list for observation, Klein thought and answered frankly, "At first, I wanted to wait until next year to send in my special application. After all, there are too many things that I need to master. For instance, my combat arts is only at the beginner level.

"But, Captain, don't you think that we've experienced too many coincidences in the last two months? We were chasing after the kidnappers when we came across the Antigonus Notebook in the opposite room. The shipment of Sealed Artifact 2-049 was delayed, but Ray Bieber didn't leave Tingen and tried to digest the power at the harbor. I went to attend a birthday banquet and triggered Hanass Vincent's incident. I went to investigate at the library and ran into a member of the Aurora Order…

"I don't know what these coincidences mean, but I feel insecure. That's why I want to enhance myself in the best possible way."

Klein seized the opportunity to talk about the manipulator behind the scenes. It was something he had planned to include in his schedule—without exposing his uniqueness, he would remind the Nighthawks to make them search for more clues from different angles. What he said earlier would only lead the other Nighthawks to conclude that Klein had a discerning mind and was good at organizing his thoughts.

The moment Klein said the word "but," Dunn's body leaned forward. In the end, he steepled his fingers in front of his mouth.

He fixed his gaze and remained quiet, seemingly thinking about what Klein had said.

After a while, Dunn lifted his head and said in a mellow and deep voice, "Very perceptive… Perhaps there really is something lurking in the dark."

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he instructed, “You can submit the special application.”

“Alright.” Klein lifted the corner of his lips when he answered.

He got up with a smile and walked towards the door. As expected, he heard a familiar additional remark.

“Hold on,” Dunn called out. He weighed his words and said, “Take note of your choice of words.”

Don’t worry, Captain. I place a far greater importance on this matter than you do! Klein nodded in agreement with a smile.

At first, he thought Dunn would propose that they avoid going through the Holy Cathedral and instead advance to Sequence 8 in secret. Then they could go through the normal procedure after three years. However, after he thought it through, he realized that it was impossible. Regardless of whether it was through a special application or a normal application, the person who was going to advance still had to be investigated by the Holy Cathedral; the only difference was that one method was relatively simple and the other was more complicated.

If he had become a Sequence 8 in secret, then it could put the entire Tingen Nighthawks in trouble.

†

Since Klein was finished with his mysticism lessons, he didn’t go to the basement in a hurry but walked to the clerk’s office next door after leaving the Captain’s office.

He found a man and a woman sitting in the office. The man was in his thirties and the woman was in her twenties; they were the two newly added members.

They were surprised when Klein entered, then they smiled and nodded in greeting. They were curious and in awe of the Beyonders that they worked with.

Klein didn't chat with them but found an empty desk and began writing a draft for the special application.

As he already had a draft in his head, it only took about ten minutes to complete his initial work.

After reading it a couple of times and amending parts of it, he sat before the Akerson Model 1346 typewriter and started typing his draft onto a document.

Listening to the tapping of the keyboard, the two new clerks exchanged looks and stood up simultaneously. They left the office and went to the reception hall to chat with Rozanne, allowing Klein to have some privacy.

Very careful and fully aware of the need to maintain secrecy… Klein stole a glance at their receding figures as he complimented them.

He focused on his work again and continued tapping on the typewriter.

Just as he was going to complete his special application, Leonard Mitchell came out of the restroom. He looked around while he buttoned his shirt. There was an unrestrained beauty in his messy hair.

"What's the report you're writing?" Leonard looked around the clerk's office as he leaned against the door frame with his right foot tiptoed to balance himself and his hands tucked into his pockets.

His green eyes examined Klein with interest.

Klein typed the last word and the last punctuation mark. He then turned his head and smiled.

"Special application."

"Special application?" Leonard asked, puzzled.

Klein picked up the paper and skimmed through it quickly. He casually explained, “A special application to advance to Sequence 8.”

Cough! Cough! Cough! Leonard suddenly coughed vigorously. He calmed down and asked,

“You’re already done digesting the potion?”

Digest? Bro, you know quite a bit… Klein held his special application and walked before Leonard. He lifted an eyebrow and said, “Yes.”

Then, he looked into his eyes and added softly with a chuckle, “I remember someone told me once that there are some people who are special, people who can do things that others can’t.

“Such as me.

“Such as you.”

Leonard was suddenly at a loss for words. He could only change his standing posture and take his hands out his pockets to cross them in front of his chest.

He opened his mouth and finally organized his words. He asked in a low voice, “Don’t you think that it’s too risky?”

As he already knew about digesting, he definitely understands that my advancement has no risk of losing control… Hmm, is he referring to the attention from the higher-ups in the Church? Klein explained while in thought, “Leonard, do you remember the first task that we worked on together? We were merely tracking kidnappers, but we realized that the room opposite had clues about the Antigonus family’s notebook…”

He repeated what he mentioned to Dunn once more.

Leonard’s expression grew heavy, and he nodded in agreement slightly.

He muttered to himself and said, “Maybe, I have to hurry up…”

Just as he finished, he suddenly looked at Klein and flashed a smile as he said, “Aren’t you going to share your experience with us? The experience to quickly grasp a potion and avoid the risk of losing control!”

This guy sure can put on a facade quickly… Klein smiled and answered, “I’m more than willing to.”

He was planning to seize the opportunity today to remind his Nighthawks teammates on how to minimize the risk of losing control.

Of course, to maintain his personal safety, he couldn’t say it as straightforwardly as he did to Dunn Smith. At most, he could describe the idea vaguely, in a way that wouldn’t alert anyone who was sent down by the higher-ups.

“Let’s do it now then!” Leonard impatiently dragged Klein to the Nighthawks’ recreation room.

At that very moment, other than Royale who was taking her shift at Chanis Gate, Frye, Kenley, and Seeka Tron were there playing cards.

“Everyone, everyone!” Leonard knocked on the half-closed door and spoke as if he was reciting a poem, “Let me introduce this man next to me, Mr. Klein Moretti, who has fully grasped his potion in a month and a half!”

[image]

…This guy is so dramatic… Klein suddenly felt awkward.

“What?” Even Seeka Tron, the author who wasn’t famous and barely sold any books, cocked her head sideways as though she was testing her hearing ability.

“Leonard, don’t joke around. You’re always exaggerating things.” Kenley covered his cards helplessly.

Frye held his cards as he looked at Klein. He kept quiet for a while and said, “Are you sure that you’ve already fully grasped the potion?”

“Yes.” Klein could feel his concern and he nodded confidently. “There was an obvious indication.”

“What? Really?” Kenley shouted a delayed response and stood up.

Leonard chuckled and pointed at the paper in Klein’s hands as he said, “This is the special application that he’s going to hand in. The special application to advance to Sequence 8!”

“…How did you do it?” Seeka Tron had many questions, but she only voiced the one that concerned her the most after taking a deep breath.

She was normally quiet and elegant, but now she had a burning passion in her eyes that couldn’t be suppressed.

Klein found a chair and sat down. He lowered his voice and answered, “I found inspiration from the maxim of the Mystery Pryers.”

“Do as you wish, but do no harm?” Leonard supplemented.

“Yes. According to our confidential information, following this maxim gives the Mystery Pryers a lower probability of losing control,” Klein explained what he learned from Old Neil. “After that, Madam Daly’s example gave me a better understanding of the process.”

“Spirit Medium Daly?” Kenley asked in reply, hoping to gain confirmation.

“Yes. Madam Daly has handed in a special application before. She only used two years to become a Spirit Medium from Corpse Collector. She once told Old Neil that she wanted to be a real Spirit Medium,” Klein explained in detail. “With the experience I gained in the Divination Club and corresponding feedback that I’ve received, I gradually concluded my Seer principles. Then I followed it strictly and tried to become a real Seer… When I did so, I realized that the speed at which I grasped the potion became faster."

As they listened to Klein's recount, Frye, Seeka, and the rest fell into deep thought. Even Leonard pretended to be thinking.

"I'm going to hand in my special application." Klein waved the paper in his hands. "If you have any problems, do ask me privately."

"Alright," Frye replied coldly with a nod.

Klein left the recreation room and knocked on the door to the Captain's office again.

He sat down opposite to Dunn, then took up a pen and ink pad. He signed and stamped his thumbprint.

"Captain, this is my special application." After that, he passed the paper to Dunn with both hands.

Dunn looked through it carefully and put down the application.

"I'll submit it to the Holy Cathedral as soon as possible. You should be prepared to be examined. Perhaps next week or the following week."

"Alright." Klein took a deep breath and nodded seriously.

He stood up, exited the Captain's office, and closed the door behind him.

During the process, he thought about the application that he had sent in. There was a thought that popped up in his head.

I wonder what kind of examination it will be…

Chapter 155 - Urgent Meeting

◆

After collecting himself, Klein went down to the basement and walked to Chanis Gate. He knocked on the door to the guard room.

Inside, Royale Reideen had already packed her personal belongings. She immediately smoothed her hair and stood up when she saw the person taking over her shift.

After greeting each other with a nod, Klein suddenly said, “I’ve had some success with grasping my potion and have shared my experiences with Frye and the rest. You can ask them about it.”

Royale, who typically didn’t have much of an expression, looked at Klein with a little shock. Her lips quivered a little as she said, “Alright.”

Madam, let’s hope that you can still maintain your calm composure in a while… There are already a bunch of dazed people sitting in the recreation room right now. Klein laughed and made his way behind the table, expertly taking out the tin can which Dunn Smith used to store his Fermo coffee.

After making himself a cup of aromatic coffee, Klein sat down and relaxed. He looked out at the lonely hallway and allowed his thoughts to roam free.

Let’s hope that Mr. Azik’s mission is successful and that he doesn’t leave behind any clues. Well, even if there are clues, I can just pretend to not notice them.

I wonder where the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem is sealed behind Chanis Gate? Since it doesn’t possess any living qualities, it only needs a little space…

Come to think of it, I haven’t been inside Chanis Gate. I’m not sure what it looks like inside… To be able to keep the weird Sealed Artifacts of varying sizes safe and maintain surveillance, it must be quite special indeed. For example, the ashes of Saint Selena?

†

Many thoughts streaked past Klein’s head when he suddenly heard urgent footsteps. He focused and shot a look towards the door.

He saw Old Neil, wearing his classic black robe, appear in the corridor with a black carpet in his hands. He made his way into the guard room and said nothing, but instead observed Klein thoroughly.

“Mr. Neil, did something happen?” Klein let out a dry chuckle and took a sip of his fragrant coffee.

Old Neil sized him up and sighed.

“To think that you would find inspiration from the maxim of the Mystery Pryers and Daly…”

“I have to praise the Goddess. I also have to thank you for your teachings.” Klein gave a reply in all seriousness.

Old Neil pulled back a chair and sat down. He said, a little depressed, “How good would it be if it was twenty years ago…”

Klein maintained his silence, for he knew that Old Neil wasn’t allowed to consume any more potions because of his age and health, even if he had completely digested the one he had right now.

Under such circumstances, anything he said would’ve agitated him.

"My earliest thoughts was to quickly gain control of my potion from the maxim of the Mystery Pryer, but regrettably, I wasn't embarking in the right direction. Daly's success did give me some clues, but I was already more than 50 years old back then, and had already given up on my efforts. I subconsciously thought that her success was a result of her genius, and that an average person wouldn't be able to emulate her achievements." Old Neil rubbed his temples as he described his disappointment.

He was silent for a few minutes before he lifted his head. He looked at Klein.

"It sure is regrettable that only now do I understand what I've missed out on at this age."

Old Neil should've had a faint understanding of the "acting method." He immediately understood what happened after I shared my experiences… Klein consoled, "It wouldn't have made too much of a difference. The Church doesn't hold the Sequence 8 corresponding to Mystery Pryer."

"Perhaps the Holy Cathedral does have it… No, if they have it, they would at least tell us its name. It's also possible that the underground market might have it…" Old Neil muttered. He shook his head as he stood up. He laughed and said. "At least I didn't lose control, and I've lived healthily for decades… Praise the Lady."

He drew a crimson moon in front of his chest and left the guard room a little dejected. He had lost his usual shrewd look.

Klein looked at Old Neil's back and suddenly let out a long sigh.

He was even more perplexed as to why the higher-ups of the Church would hide the "acting method."

Klein collected himself after some time, placing his attention on the confidential information of the Nighthawks in front of him.

Ever since he pulled the youth from the City of Silver into the Tarot Club and learned that the City of Silver still used the ancient names for many things, he found it necessary to enhance his knowledge in these areas.

Some time later, he heard another set of footsteps. These footsteps were slow and steady.

At the same time, an image of Dunn Smith wearing a black trench coat flashed past his mind.

My spiritual senses have been elevated after fully digesting the Seer potion… Klein nodded in understanding. He saw the Captain a few seconds later.

“A letter for you.” Dunn extended his right arm and flicked his wrist, tossing the letter over to Klein.

Klein lifted his hand and tried to grab the letter, but be it his judgment or reaction, he missed.

Pa!

The letter fell onto the floor, leaving Klein’s right hand extended awkwardly in the air.

Under the suddenly silent atmosphere, his right hand first became rigid, then he pulled it back toward his head and pretended to smooth out his hair.

“The light from the gas lamp isn’t bright enough,” Klein made a perfunctory statement casually. He bent his back and picked up the letter, giving it a cursory glance.

Mr. Hornacis… It’s a letter from Daxter Guderian… He nodded in understanding and pulled open a drawer to retrieve a letter opener.

According to the rules of the Nighthawks, if there was a clear and correct recipient, Rozanne and the rest of the clerks would give the letter directly to the person that the letter was addressed to. If the recipient was anonymous or an unknown name, it would be handed over to Dunn. He could then ask around or make a decision.

Klein carefully pried open the letter and took out the piece of paper within. He quickly unfolded the piece of paper and read through it.

He realized that the asylum doctor, Daxter, was asking for an urgent meeting at two in the afternoon today.

Has he obtained the Telepathist formula? Or is it regarding something else? Klein lifted the letter in his hand and looked at Dunn.

“Captain, my informant, the one from the Psychology Alchemists, wishes to meet me at two in the afternoon.”

“Did he say anything else?” Dunn asked, as if he was expecting this.

“No.” Klein shook his head.

Dunn thought for a moment, then said in a heavy voice, “Get Leonard to watch over Chanis Gate for the time being. I’ll go with you and hide somewhere. These urgent requests to meet could sometimes be a trap. I’ve heard of many similar incidents. Furthermore, if it’s something important, we can act quickly.”

Captain, you sure are experienced… Not to mention being the most reliable, trustworthy Captain without memory issues whenever we have something serious to do… Klein immediately nodded.

“Alright!”

†

At two in the afternoon. Inside the small shooting range 9 of the Zouteland Street Shooting Club.

Klein looked at the target that was covered in bullet holes, then glanced at the uneasy Doctor Daxter Guderian.

“What happened for you to look for mercenaries at the Hound Pub in such a fluster?”

Only by doing so would the boss of the Hound Pub, Wright, hand the letter immediately to the Blackthorn Security Company instead of waiting for Klein to collect it himself.

Daxter observed Klein’s expression and body language, then responded softly, “I find Hood Eugen a little abnormal recently.”

Hood Eugen was the patient from the mental asylum that had roped Daxter into the Psychology Alchemists.

“What sort of abnormalities has he exhibited?” Klein pressed, displaying his professionalism.

Daxter heaved a sigh of relief, as if he had found a pillar of support. He said while deliberating his words, “H-he seems to have really gone insane…”

“Really gone insane?” Klein asked in shock.

Didn’t Hood Eugen feign his illness and infiltrate the mental asylum to attempt to influence the patients in order to train his mental abilities?

He had really turned sick, genuine insanity?

“I think so…” Daxter paced around anxiously. “I could hold a normal conversation with him in the past and receive guidance on how to correctly use my Beyonder powers. But in the past few days, his thought processes and his condition has become really weird. I can barely communicate with him. He was just like my other patients, even though… even though I’ve managed to get the Telepathist formula as a result. But I cannot determine if it’s real or fake. I’m afraid that there might be some uncontrollable changes that might occur.”

No matter. As a Seer, a Seer who has the mysterious world above the gray fog, I'll be able to determine if it's real or fake… Klein heaved a sigh of relief before creasing his brows and asking, "Did he come into contact with anyone before he turned abnormal?"

"Only the patients. I-I cannot guarantee that, though. I'm not in the asylum for the whole day. I also need time to rest," Daxter said, his expression serious.

Klein nodded, as if it was something trivial.

"Don't worry. I'll send someone to protect you in secret. You should find out who Hood Eugen has come into contact with as soon as possible. Also, you have to be careful; he might be testing you. You should also report this to the members of the Psychology Alchemists and see how the higher-ups of your organization react."

"Alright." Daxter propped up his golden spectacles, recovering the calm of a Spectator. He then took out a piece of paper from his pocket and handed it over to Klein. "This is the formula for the Telepathist potion, but I cannot guarantee its authenticity."

"We will verify it." Klein smiled in response. He unfolded the piece of paper on the spot and looked at it.

"Main ingredients: The complete pituitary gland of a mature Rainbow Salamander, 10 ml of spinal fluid from a Farsman Rabbit."

"Supplementary ingredients: Chestnut Spore 5 grams, Dragon Tooth Grass Powder 8 grams, 3 petals of Pure White Elf Flowers, Pure Water 100 ml."

"Excellent," Klein praised. He folded the piece of paper and stuffed it into the inner pocket of his tuxedo.

After exchanging a few more words and ascertaining that the "voices" which Daxter was hearing were subsiding, Klein bade him farewell. He cautiously made his way to the shooting range reserved for the

Nighthawks. Dunn Smith was waiting inside.

“Captain, the informant gave me the Telepathist formula to thank me for helping him control the side effects of the potion, but he cannot determine the authenticity of the potion.” Klein handed the piece of paper to Dunn with a stern expression. “Furthermore, he mentioned something else…”

Dunn read the formula as he listened to the concerns about Hood Eugen. After that, he nodded.

“I’ll immediately assign manpower to keep the mental asylum under surveillance. You haven’t had professional training when it comes to these matters and don’t to participate in this. Go back and guard Chanis Gate.”

With that said, he looked at Klein deeply in the eyes and said, “If we take this formula into account, you don’t need to accumulate any more meritorious achievements. You can directly receive the Clown potion after you pass the examination…”

Chapter 156 - Melissa Who Takes the Long View

◆

And I'm paying double for the Clown's formula… And all this because I originally wanted to be rewarded double for the same piece of work I did. Forget it, I don't have the opportunity to mention that I already have the formula to the Clown potion. Klein took a deep breath and forced a smile, saying, "Hopefully I can pass the examination smoothly."

He was more than happy with Dunn's decision for him to continue to guard Chanis Gate. Not only was he lacking the professional ability to monitor and investigate, but his hand-to-hand combat was far from satisfactory.

In terms of shooting, he was considered decent compared to the ordinary police. However, his teammates were all Beyonders that have had their physical attributes enhanced. Even if they weren't all marksman-level, they were very close.

As for hand-to-hand combat, Klein was merely a beginner.

Even with a Slumber Charm, a Repose Charm, and a Dream Charm, he was still considered a support-class Beyonder. It would be easy for him to deal with ordinary people, but he would be in danger if he were to come across any Beyonders who were adept at combat.

Until I advance to Sequence 8, become skilled in technique-based battles, and master a handful of spells, I can only complete normal supernatural missions on my own. Hmm, if I successfully steal the power of Sealed Artifact 3-0782 and make Flaring Sun Charms, that will be even better. It won't be impossible for me to win from a position of an underdog… Klein thought hopefully as he slowly walked back to the Blackthorn Security Company.

The next morning when he ended his shift and left Chanis Gate, the Nighthawks still hadn't obtained any useful information from monitoring Hood Eugen. For now, they had to place their hopes on their informant's internal investigation.

When he returned home, Klein had his breakfast quietly and laid down in his bedroom to sleep until noon.

He woke up naturally, washed up, and walked to the first floor, following the smell of cooking food.

[image]

"Melissa is preparing lunch?" Klein looked at Benson who was reading the newspaper in the living room.

Benson lowered the newspaper and said, "Yes, she has a guest visiting today. I wanted her to chat with her guest while I prepared lunch. But she doesn't trust my cooking and took the guest into the kitchen. How rude."

Benson, you actually managed to quickly realize that Melissa detests your culinary skills… Klein held back his urge to laugh and walked towards the single seat sofa as he asked, "Melissa's guest?"

"Yeah, you should know her. Elizabeth, we met her at Selena's dinner banquet." Benson leaned backwards and continued to read his newspaper comfortably.

It wasn't only at the dinner banquet… She came to visit for real… Klein turned to look at the kitchen with a stunned expression.

Just then, Melissa walked out carrying some plates and Elizabeth followed behind, also wearing an apron.

“Klein, you’re already up? I was just planning on waking you up.” Melissa laid the plates on the dining table delightedly as she said, “This is Elizabeth. You know her.”

“Hello, Klein.” Elizabeth’s adorable face flashed a splendid smile as she greeted him.

Klein replied gently and politely.

After they greeted, Melissa blinked and spoke seriously, “Elizabeth will follow us to the Family Servant Assistance Association later. They hire a few maidservants at home, so she has experience in that. Her opinions might be helpful.

“Actually, we’ve already drawn up the requirements for picking a maidservant. Listen to this and see if there’s anything that needs to be added.”

Melissa wiped her hands on her apron and took out a piece of paper from the pocket of her home clothes. She opened it and read it out loud.

“1. Healthy.

“2. Hardworking and responsible.

“3. Good at cooking.

“4. Quiet, not rowdy.

“5. Simple family background.

“6. Looks ordinary.”

†

She read the requirements one by one while Klein and Benson gawked with a vacant look; they never expected that hiring a maidservant would be so troublesome.

"Melissa, weren't you against the idea of hiring a maidservant?" Klein subconsciously asked when his sister stopped.

Melissa pursed her lips and nodded solemnly.

"Yes, I was against it. But as my opposition was in vain, I thought we should get this thing done properly. To be able to get it done well, we must be well prepared. Hmm, do you have anything that you'd like to add?"

"No!" Klein and Benson shook their heads in unison, causing Elizabeth to laugh.

After lunch, the four of them took a public carriage to the Tingen Family Servant Assistance Association on Champagne Street.

It was similar to domestic help firms that Klein knew of from his previous life, but it was also a little like a charity. They recorded the personal information and job requirements of different maidservants so that the clients could make their selections more easily, while maximizing the maidservants' chances of employment.

Part of the organization's funding came from charity organizations, and some came from a percentage of the payment provided by employers.

Upon entering the association, Klein and company were greeted warmly. A young lady in a pale yellow ruffled dress led them to some sofas. She smiled and asked, "How may I help you?"

Benson, who was pushed forward by his brother and sister, said, "We need to hire a maidservant."

"Do you have any requirements?" the young lady asked like clockwork.

Benson recalled his siblings' lack of faith in his culinary skills as he said sincerely, “Good at cooking.”

“Good at cooking?” The young lady creased her eyebrows and said, “To be frank, there are no excellent cooks among the maidservants. Why not hire a chef instead? If you need a female chef, we have quite a number of them in the association.”

“There is no one who is good at cooking among the maidservants?” Melissa couldn’t help but cut in as her initial plan was set back.

The young lady nodded and answered affirmatively, “The maidservants are either the daughters of lower class laborers or girls from the villages. They have few opportunities to learn culinary skills. Even after the simple training provided by the association, the most we can guarantee is that their food won’t make people sick.”

Melissa fell silent, finally realizing what it meant to have situations outpace her plans.

“That is regrettable.” Benson thought, reorganizing his words, he said, “Maybe we can amend our requirement to a maidservant who is willing to and is capable of learning to cook.”

Not bad. Benson is quick-witted… There’s no need for me to interject. Klein sat by the side, holding his cane and hat comfortably.

“No problem. During cooking training, we took note of girls who had outstanding performance,” the young lady replied with a professional smile. “Any other requirements?”

“Yes.” Benson felt the burn of Melissa’s gaze. He swallowed his saliva and took out the piece of paper from his pocket. He then read the items one by one.

The young lady listened quietly and only responded after quite a while.

“I-I’ll first check through the records and recommend some maidservants that fit the criteria. You don’t have to decide immediately.

You can pick two to four of them. Then, I will bring them each over to cook for you once. You can decide who to employ then. Of course, you will have to pay the association some extra fees, and you will also have to prepare your own ingredients.”

“Alright.” Benson folded the paper and nodded politely.

The young lady stood up and walked towards the office, but she turned around after taking two steps. She smiled and said, “Can you pass me that paper? I’m worried I will forget some of your requirements…”

“No problem.” Benson held back his urge to laugh when he answered.

After a while, the young lady in the pale yellow dress came out with a stack of documents and passed them to Benson.

The information had each of the maidservants’ real name, birth date, family situation, facial description, health status, past experience, related traits, expected salary, and other information.

Seizing the opportunity when Benson and Melissa were reading the information, Elizabeth got closer to Klein and asked softly, “Don’t you have any requirements?”

“Yes, but this information isn’t specific enough,” Klein answered perfunctorily.

Elizabeth got even more interested.

“How would you choose?”

Klein smiled and pointed at the hidden pendulum in his left sleeve, “I would divine the best person to become our maidservant by writing down a corresponding statement about each candidate and eliminating them one after another.”

“…” Elizabeth was stunned, nodding vacantly after nearly twenty seconds. “The simplest and the most effective way… I totally forgot that you're…"

She didn't finish her sentence since Melissa, who had sharp senses, noticed that they were whispering and had looked over.

She looked at her best friend and her brother, then she showed an expression of deep thought.

Hey, Sis, don't misunderstand! We are just talking normally… Klein coughed and picked up some of the information and casually read through them.

Very soon, they picked three candidates. They were asking for four soli eight pence to five soli two pence per week.

Benson didn't haggle over the maidservants' pay but instead discussed the percentage that he needed to pay to the association.

After some friendly haggling, he successfully negotiated the price from the maidservant's two weeks pay to one week pay instead. However, he had to pay a transportation fee of one soli for them to bring the maidservants over to try cooking.

After that, Elizabeth bade the trio farewell and left while the siblings took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

On the way back, Klein was getting uncomfortable under Melissa's scrutinizing gaze. When he got home, he went to the second floor directly.

"Klein," Melissa called him in a serious tone after thorough consideration. She said, "If you want to get engaged with Elizabeth, you have to work harder. Her father is an import merchant, and her mother is the daughter of a baronet…"

Wait, engaged? When did this happen? Klein looked at his sister in confusion.

How far reaching is her concern?

Chapter 157 - Item of His Dreams

◆

“No, we are not…” Klein didn’t have the chance to retort before Benson interrupted with a smile. “Although Elizabeth is indeed a little young and her family is much more outstanding than ours, I find the two of you quite suitable for each other. But you might have to wait a few more years. She is still studying at a public school and wants to enter university. Marriage should be something to consider only six to seven years later. Of course, you can get engaged sooner than that.”

…Can you guys not think that far ahead? Klein took in a deep breath.

“I do not fancy Elizabeth, or, well, more accurately, I do not fancy a girl who is younger than me by too much. I prefer girls who are more mature.”

Truthfully, I can accept anyone within a reasonable age gap, just not now… He added inwardly in exasperation.

“You like girls who are more mature?” Melissa knitted her brows. “Then you should quickly settle the issue regarding your marriage.”

Ah? Klein couldn’t understand his sister’s leap in logic. He asked in confusion, “Why?”

Melissa explained seriously, “You will be about 25 when you finish saving up for your marriage. Girls that are more mature than you will either be married or engaged when they reach that age. Do you want to chase after a widow?”

What the… Klein thought to himself in Mandarin as he wore a blank expression.

Benson smiled and refuted his sister, “Melissa, you don’t understand. In this day and age, it isn’t rare to see women in their thirties who isn’t married or engaged within the middle class. They are mostly followers of the Goddess, and all have the ability to provide for themselves. They would rather be single than stuck in a marriage that they are not satisfied with. Yes, that’s what I read from the ‘Family’ magazine.”

“Is that so?” Melissa was a sixteen-year-old girl after all. She didn’t have a great understanding concerning matters like this.

Upon seeing his siblings getting roused up from the conversation, Klein coughed and said, “What I meant by mature is their mental state. They don’t need to be older than me. Furthermore, the person that should be worried about their marriage is Benson.”

I’m sorry, Brother, I had no choice… he apologized in his heart.

“…” Melissa froze for a moment, then nodded heavily. “That’s right!”

Benson was just about to elaborate on the marital problems of the middle class when he suddenly shivered. He looked at his sister who was staring at him and said, “I am now at the cusp of a turning point in my life. I have to devote all my attention to studying. I will only be confident of chasing after my desired girl when I have found a job that I’m satisfied with and have a reasonable amount of savings. Only then will I be able to provide her with a good life.”

Klein and Melissa froze, then asked in unison, “You have a girl that you fancy?”

Benson, who had merely given a perfunctory reply, was shocked. He shook his head in a hurry.

“No! I was merely giving an example!”

†

In a dark, gloomy house of Backlund, Hillston Borough.

A middle-aged man with graying hair sat silently on a rocking chair in front of an unlit fireplace with a dark colored pipe in his hand. He looked at the guest on the sofa.

He was the master of this building, Isengard Stanton, a private detective with notable fame. But he didn't set up an office, merely hiring assistants to assist him.

Isengard, who was dressed in a white shirt and black vest, brought the pipe to his lips and inhaled in an intoxicated manner before slowing exhaling.

"The fee for a thirty minute consultation is one pound. If I were you, I would definitely not waste a second."

The two ladies on the sofa across from him were Fors Wall and Xio Derecha. They had found materials relating to Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos and wanted to ask this detective to consolidate the habits and actions of their target.

Of course, they had removed Qilangos's name and changed the description regarding supernatural incidents.

Xio Derecha handed the folder containing the documents to Isengard's assistant, a browned-haired young man wearing gold-framed spectacles.

"Mr. Detective, I hope that you can find habits in the target's actions using the material we have provided."

Even though she wasn't tall, Xio Derecha had an air of authority when she sat straight and spoke with a deep voice.

Isengard stared at her and received the docket from his assistant. He opened the folder and took out the material within.

He set down his pipe and focused on reading page after page without missing a single one.

Ten minutes later, this gentleman slowly tapped on the handle.

“The target has an obsession with the wind… He won’t stay for long in a polluted area in Backlund, the Capital of Dust. In other words, he could be staying at the Empress Borough, West Borough, Hillston Borough, Cherwood Borough, or the suburbs of the North Borough…

“The target is a psychotic serial killer with the need to kill someone every other day… The most logical thing he could do is to target the vagrants that have nowhere to go. Even the police have no records of the exact number of vagrants in Backlund…

“The target wouldn’t be living in an area too near or too far from North Borough or Backlund Bridge, which have the highest concentration of vagrants… It would be the act of someone unsophisticated to search for victims that are too close to him. That isn’t consistent with your descriptions… If the target has to spend a large amount of time before he can find someone to murder, then he might lose control of his desires and commit crimes that would easily expose himself…

“The target is an experienced sailor and has exceptional mobility in the water… A reasonable deduction would be that he wouldn’t be living somewhere too far away from the water. If anything unexpected happens, that would be his best means of escape…”

†

“In summary, we can outline the possible radius of activity for the target. He should be living somewhere close to the Backlund Bridge area. Perhaps somewhere close to both banks of the Tussock River—the West Borough or the Cherwood Borough…”

†

“I can only deduce this from the materials that you have given me.”

Even though they didn’t understand all of it, his deductions seemed to make sense. Xio and Fors looked at each other and nodded. They took back their materials and stood up to leave.

Seeing his assistant send off the two ladies, Isengard took out a bronze item from his vest pocket. It was an open paperback book. In the middle of the book was a vertical eye.

Isengard rocked his chair, rubbing the item while softly muttering to himself, “Qilangos has infiltrated Backlund?”

†

In a particular basement of Pritz Harbor.

The Hanged Man Alger sat in a chair, looking coldly at a struggling man.

This man was dressed like a sailor. His head was enveloped by a film of pale-blue water and his face was purple from holding his breath.

He was scratching at the film on his face with both hands, but all he could do was flick droplets of liquid.

Finally, he could no longer hold his breath and gave a signal of submission.

Alger smiled, then nonchalantly clapped his hands.

The thin film of water dispersed, turning into droplets that fell to the ground.

The sailor took in a deep breath and coughed violently. He coughed so hard that it tugged at his heart and lungs.

After waiting for the man to recover, Alger leaned back. He emulated the peaceful and calm tone of The Fool.

"Tell me the reason why Qilangos went to Backlund."

"H-he's there to complete a commission, but I'm not sure about the details." The pirate had completely lost the will to resist. He answered honestly, "All I know is that he might receive something that he wants. Qilangos once boasted in front of us. He said that if this mission was a success, he would be able to obtain something he's dreamed of getting for a long time. The Four Pirate Kings would then become the Five Pirate Kings."

An object he's been dreaming of obtaining? Alger knitted his brows and slipped into deep thought.

†

Klein didn't rest on Monday morning. He followed his plan and continued his investigation on the buildings with red chimneys in Tingen.

Unfortunately, he didn't come across his target.

He returned home near noon. He heated up the leftovers from yesterday's dinner and paired them with bread before taking an hour's nap.

At about twenty minutes to three in the afternoon, Klein put his book down and sealed his room with a wall of spirituality, once again entering the mysterious world above the gray fog.

He sat at the seat of honor at the ancient bronze table, extending his hand toward the crimson star representing Sun while ignoring the frequency of his heartbeats.

In the City of Silver.

Derrick Berg was sweating on the practice grounds. His vision suddenly blurred as a heavy fog entered his view. He saw The Fool sitting high above, deep within the fog.

He froze, then stopped whatever he was doing and bowed his head.

When the illusion vanished, he counted his heartbeats silently and carried his silver sword to a rest area quickly.

A thousand heartbeats later, he locked himself in a bathroom.

After about ten breaths, he saw the red light swell over him and swallow him in an instant.

Above the gray fog, Klein leaned back into his chair and tapped his left molar twice to stealthily activate his Spirit Vision.

He saw that the mottled color deep within The Sun's Ether Body had turned pure, akin to the light of dawn. He smiled and said, "Congratulations, Mr. Bard."

At the same time, he saw the stars behind The Sun's chair shift quickly, turning into the symbol of the Sun.

It transformed without my will, as if it was a reflection of the Sun. Also, other than the palace, table, and chairs, the items that I conjure cannot be preserved once I leave this world… They are very special… There sure are many secrets to this world above the gray fog… Klein took in everything in front of him as he contemplated.

Derrick lowered his head and replied humbly, "This is all due to your assistance. This is but the beginning."

He wasn't surprised that The Fool knew that he had consumed the potion.

Klein took out his silver pocket watch and looked at the time. He chuckled and said, "Then let us start the gathering. Remember, the frequency, or should I say gap between the gatherings should be about the same in the future.”

As he was speaking, he established a connection with the crimson stars representing Justice and The Hanged Man before pulling them into the majestic palace.

Audrey looked at the scene before her and immediately greeted him.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool. I have a page of the diary of Emperor Roselle with me.”

“Good afternoon, Mr. Sun. Have you gotten the formula for Telepathist?”

Chapter 158 - Preparedness Averts Peril

◆◆◆

How enviable it is for Miss Justice to always maintain a cheerful mood. I wish I could be like that… Listening to her lively greetings, Klein couldn't help but sigh wistfully.

He then recalled the time when she had taken out a thousand pounds so easily, and he realized that it would be very difficult if he wanted to maintain his cheerful emotions like Miss Justice.

The Sun, Derrick Berg, was a young man that cared a lot about his reputation. He immediately replied, "I have obtained the Telepathist formula."

For the past week, he had been settling the inheritance that his parents had left him. Besides the property, furniture, and a few sentimental items, the rest of the valuable items were brought to the black market in the City of Silver in exchange for the Telepathist formula and the Bard potion's ingredients. His meals were now rationed.

However, he believed that the situation wouldn't be for long. When he passes the combat examination, he would then join the team that cleansed the Things of the Dark in the outskirts of the city and be paid a decent amount.

When I become stronger, I'll apply to become a member of the elite squad, to explore the depths of the dark and find a way to remove the curse… Derrick thought with hope as he looked towards The Fool who was engulfed in the fog.

He noticed that last time after Miss Justice made a request to Mr. Fool, she was able to produce a page of the unknown Roselle diary out of thin air!

Although Derrick didn't quite understand what had happened, he felt that it'd be better if he watched Mr. Fool.

"First, recall the formula in your head. Then, grab the pen by your side and instill it with the strong desire to express your thoughts." Klein casually leaned back in his high chair.

As The Sun was from the City of Silver, which might be the Forsaken Land of God, the pen that instantiated before him wasn't a fountain pen, but a quill instead.

Of course, there still wasn't any ink.

Derrick didn't dare to doubt what The Fool said, so he immediately grabbed the quill that suddenly appeared by his hand.

He followed The Fool's instruction, and as expected, he saw the Telepathist potion formula appear on the brown goatskin parchment before him within seconds.

After looking through it twice, Derrick silently pushed the promised item towards Miss Justice.

Audrey was overjoyed and eager, but she took the parchment gracefully. She glanced at the page, and the words that Klein had translated came into sight.

"Main ingredients: Phantom Netherdrake's complete pituitary gland, 10 ml of Half Specter Rabbit spinal fluid.

"Supplementary ingredients…"

Main ingredients that I've never heard of… Hmm, I don't know enough. Audrey, who had been trying to learn more about the different types and names of Beyonder ingredients from Fors and Xio, seemed to fret in thought.

During such moments, she would completely forget how a Spectator should behave.

Suddenly, Audrey heard a light rapping sound. She quickly looked towards the seat of honor at the long bronze table subconsciously.

She was surprised to see Mr. Fool rapping at the edge of the table with his right index finger while he gestured to her with a nod.

What's going on? Audrey was confused as her eyes wore a vacant look.

Just when she was about to ask, the corner of her eyes suddenly saw some changes on the Telepathist formula. There were remarks next to some of the ingredients:

"Main ingredients, Phantom Netherdrake's complete pituitary gland (also known as Rainbow Salamander), 10 ml of Half Specter Rabbit (also known as Farsman Rabbit) spinal fluid.

"Supplementary ingredients…"

I know all of these! Audrey was stunned at first, then there was an intense surge of delight from the bottom of her heart.

"Thank you, Mr. Fool. You're really very knowledgeable." She looked towards the seat of honor as she thanked and sincerely complimented him.

The Hanged Man Alger didn't know what had happened, but he felt extreme contempt towards what Justice had said.

How could you describe a godlike figure with the word "knowledgeable"?

His existence alone is equivalent to knowledge itself to a certain extent!

Klein accepted Miss Justice's compliments without any misgivings because this wasn't something he could've done just because he had chanced upon the Psychology Alchemists' Telepathist formula.

After he pulled The Sun into the Tarot Club, he had been taking precautions against such problems by taking into consideration The Sun's special circumstances of being from the City of Silver. He had been constantly studying ancient terminology. Therefore, even if Daxter Guderian hadn't managed to get the formula in time, he could've made the notations easily. Through prior divination and comparison, he had made certain that both Telepathist formulas were accurate.

This is why we say, "Preparedness averts peril…" Klein thought smugly.

Audrey looked at the Telepathist formula a few times and then reined in her gaze unwillingly. She then personally expressed Roselle's diary onto a page.

"You deserve this." She put down her pen and looked towards the fog-engulfed Fool. "In addition to this, I'll give your Blessed another 300. Is 300 pounds okay?"

She sounded a little guilty because the three pages of Roselle's diary only cost her twenty pounds, while the Sheriff formula at Sequence 8 required 450 pounds.

In other words, from the perspective of simple math, she had to pay another 430 pounds on top of the three pages of the diary.

However, Audrey felt that it was thanks to her luck that the seller didn't know the value of Roselle's diary. It allowed her to buy it at a low price.

Emperor Roselle's diary costs at least fifty pounds per page! Audrey held her fist and encouraged herself.

300 pounds? Until today, I've only seen that much money at Sir Deweyville's place… Klein sighed and pretended to not be interested in

money as he nodded and said, “A reasonable deal.

“This is my Blessed’s information.”

He avoided speaking of terms like “Backlund Bank” and “anonymous account” verbally through The Fool’s mouth as they damaged his image. He made them appear on the parchment before her.

Klein had taken time to visit Backlund Bank’s Tingen branch last Wednesday while investigating the houses with red chimneys. He had disguised himself and opened an anonymous bank account.

The account only required one to memorize his account number and the corresponding password in order to withdraw cash from any Backlund Bank branch.

If one found that it wasn’t secure enough, he could also request to add in a signature and thumbprint verification. But that would be more troublesome.

In order to keep his identity secret, Klein left it with a password.

The password is written in ancient Hermes: “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

As ancient Hermes itself can be used for rituals and prayers, anyone who dares to copy the password would be reciting my name. Then, I’ll immediately receive a signal, and can simply find out who’s the one trying to steal my wealth from the world above the gray fog! Klein was very satisfied with the idea that he came up with.

The only downfall was that it would slightly expose the existence of The Fool, but the risk was within an acceptable range.

Audrey pushed the diary page to Mr. Fool as she took the parchment with the information of The Fool’s Blessed. Recorded on it, was the Backlund Bank and a bunch of numbers that formed the anonymous bank account.

I wonder if Mr. Fool's Blessed is a male or female, and which Sequence he or she is… Hmm, he must be very powerful, at least not weaker than Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos… Audrey couldn't stop her thoughts from wandering.

But she quickly focused and memorized the anonymous account.

"It doesn't have to be so troublesome." Just then, she heard The Fool's low yet gentle voice. "When you get home, recite my name and you'll be able to write down the information directly."

This would be just like when I drew the red chimney scene through divination… An account number is very important, you can't memorize it incorrectly… Klein added in his head.

That works too? From Mr. Fool's words, he appears very confident. He lives up to his status of a godlike figure if he can even do this… Audrey was stunned at first before coming to the realization that everything seemed to make logical sense.

But, why did I have to memorize the formula earlier? Audrey was suddenly confused again.

At that moment, Klein pressed down on the page of Roselle's diary, but he wasn't in a hurry to read it. He looked to the side at The Sun and calmly asked, "What compensation would you like?"

Derrick thought seriously and said, "As of now, I don't have anything that I desperately need… I should digest the Bard potion very soon. I shall wait until then to request my compensation. Yes, perhaps to prepare for the corresponding Sequence 8 formula or the necessary ingredients."

Sequence 8 is Light Suppliant, which I have… but the ingredients. Even if I had them, I would have no idea how to give them to you. Wait, he used the word digest… Indeed, the City of Silver knows of the "acting method”… Hmm. The highest Sequence there is only Sequence 4, so are they limited by ingredients? Klein nodded in deep thought, agreeing to the deal.

Audrey also sharply noticed the word “digest.” She weighed her words and asked, “Mr. Sun, are you aware of the ‘acting method’?”

Derrick looked at Miss Justice in confusion and answered straightforwardly, “It’s nothing strange… The general education classes in the City of Silver teaches the ‘acting method.’”

The “acting method” is taught in general education classes… Audrey stole a glance at The Hanged Man and realized that he was looking back at her. The two of them suddenly fell silent.

The origin of The Sun is indeed mysterious. I wonder where Mr. Fool pulled him into the Tarot Club from… The more I think about it, the more I revere him… Audrey settled down and looked at The Fool who didn’t look visibly surprised in any way.

Then, Alger probed, “Mr. Sun, do you talk about any key things to look out for with respect to the ‘acting method’?”

“Yes.” Derrick nodded without hesitation. “It’s clearly stated in our general education classes that the one and only key point for the ‘acting method’ is to ‘Remember that you’re only acting.’”

As expected… We’re using an ingenious method to go around obstacles and completely break down the remnant spirits in the potion, without submitting to it… The Sun, you’re such a simple boy. You just shared important information by accident… Klein smiled and cast his eyes on the diary page before him.

Chapter 159 - Bestowment and Sacrifice

◆ ◆ ◆

Messy Chinese sentences were scribbled on the yellowish-brown goatskin.

“2nd August. This goes deeper than I imagined. History sure is something that can be manipulated easily.

“5th August. I witnessed the abilities of a High-Sequence Beyonder today. It was scary indeed. There’s a qualitative change that has happened to them in a particular aspect, it was as though they’ve transformed into a deity. It’s no wonder that we describe them as ‘Demigods’, though I think calling them ‘Legendary beings’ is more fitting.

“6th August. There’s something strange going on. Why would the Seven Major Churches adopt such a strange attitude towards the potions? At the low to middle Sequences, they not only provide the main ingredients to those who managed to advance, but they’re also generous enough to share the formulas and demonstrate the process needed to create the potion. They would also explain in detail if a ritual is needed to create the medicine, yet finished potions are the only things they provide to those who are advancing to the higher Sequences.

“This isn’t logical. Shouldn’t they keep the formula a secret for the lower Sequence potions and give the candidate the completed potion since it’s relatively easy to gather the necessary ingredients and create the potion? As for the higher Sequence potions, shouldn’t they share the formula and make the promising members search for the ingredients due to the difficulty of obtaining the main ingredients?

“There must be some hidden secret to this.

“9th August. The events of the past two days have made me feel uncomfortable. I started the Industrial Revolution with my own hands and personally ushered in the Age of Steam and Machinery, but this will only become the hotbed for the descending of an Evil God upon this world?”

What does he mean? The conditions necessary for the Evil God to descend upon this world? Klein knitted his brows, his index finger tapped on the edge of the ancient table.

Did Mr. Fool encounter a difficult problem? Anything that can trouble him must be something of another level… Audrey looked at the leader obscured by the thick fog and interpreted his state through his body language.

Klein was indeed pondering over the problem related to the upper echelons, but he didn’t arrive at an answer. He considered the possibility of using divination to gain some sort of revelation.

Yes, it would be impossible to divine something of use with such simple sentences. I’m not a prophet… What if I divine with the statement, “the conditions necessary for the Evil God to descend upon this world”? It feels too risky… The Evil God might not be as horrifying as the Eternal Blazing Sun, but its abilities might be much more mysterious. It might be able to trace the divinations back to me. There’s also no way to divine how large of a risk I’ll be taking if I were to divine that statement. After all, just divining if something poses any danger is dangerous once it has deities involved…

I’ll keep this question in mind and put more effort into observation.

The arrangement of the Churches regarding potions is indeed mysterious. I wonder what kind of secrets they're hiding? Perhaps I'll receive some hints about that once Spirit Medium, no, Spirit Guide Daly is made Archbishop or a high-ranking Deacon and enters the core of the Church…

Roselle's description does make me look forward to the power of High-Sequence Beyonders…

Many thoughts flashed through his mind before Klein stopped tapping on the edge of the ancient table and looked at Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun.

"You can start your discussion freely now."

Alger immediately said, "Mr. Fool, Miss Justice, I received a new piece of information. Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos infiltrated Backlund to complete a difficult mission. He might stay for an extended period of time and create an appalling tragedy. Also, I know that this incident involves a very important item, an item that would allow Qilangos to quickly become a High-Sequence Beyonder."

"Quickly become a High-Sequence Beyonder? Does he not fear losing control of himself?" Audrey asked, adopting the posture of a Spectator.

Qilangos was only a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed, so there was still a Sequence between him and Sequence 4.

Alger had expected this question. He answered honestly, "That's why the object is important to him."

"Of course, those are simply my deductions. The information I received goes like this: Qilangos believes that once he completes the commission and obtains the object, he will be the equal of Nast, the King of the Five Seas. The Four Pirate Kings would then become the Five Pirate Kings, and the Seven Pirate Admirals will be reduced to six.

"The average person might not aware of this, but as Beyonders, we should know that Pirate Kings are either High-Sequence Beyonders or are able to reach the combat strength of a High-Sequence Beyonder with the use of Beyonder ships and mysterious items. For Qilangos to be acknowledged as their equal, he must reach standards that are close to that. That's my deduction."

All I know is that the King of the Five Seas, Nast, is a Sequence 4 Beyonder, but I'm not sure of the name of his potion… Klein listened on silently, not giving his opinion.

The Sun, Derrick Berg, didn't understand anything The Hanged Man said. He didn't know who was who, but he still listened attentively. He felt a new door had presented itself in his world.

Pirates? The place they live in has seas that are mentioned in books? Then, the environment these people live in is very different from the City of Silver… They don't seem to be very worried about the curse or the attacks of the Things of the Dark. It definitely makes me very curious… But, Mr. Fool once instructed me not to ask about the secrets of others. It's a very rude gesture… Derrick thought in his heart, once again observing The Hanged Man and Justice.

"You deduction is very reasonable. Of course, that could also be a mysterious item that could hold its own against a High-Sequence Beyonder," Justice replied with a smile.

The Hanged Man looked at the fog-enshrouded Fool, pondered over his words, before he looked at Justice and emphasized, "There are two key points in what I said just now, the first being the fact that Qilangos will stay in Backlund for some time. The second is that the incident involves a very important and very mysterious object."

So, Mr. Fool, are you not tempted? There is ample time for you to send your Blessed to Backlund… Alger added in his heart but didn't dare say it out loud. All he could do was beat about the bush.

Mr. Alger, you don't need to emphasize this repeatedly, I know what you are getting at… But my abilities do not allow me to interfere in these matters. Furthermore, I can't leave Tingen without permission… Klein leaned back and thought in frustration.

Ignoring the Blessed, I can actually find two relatively strong Beyonders to help…

One is Daly, who has advanced to Sequence 6, but I cannot tell her everything. The most I can do is mention that I've gotten some information that Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos has infiltrated Backlund and is living at a particular street and what he plans to do. That way, Daly might directly enlist the help of the Nighthawks, making the situation very complicated and troublesome… If you guys cannot find anybody to help you when the time comes, then I can try that to prevent a tragedy…

The second person is Mr. Azik, but I cannot expose my identity as The Fool to him. I don't have a proper reason to get him to interfere with this incident…

Many thoughts flashed through his mind as Klein replied slowly, "I'm aware."

Seeing how The Fool continued to not place much importance in the matter regarding Qilangos, he sighed and held back his disappointment. He started asking about the investigation Miss Justice conducted last week.

"…In conclusion, we have more or less targeted the general area Qilangos will be at, and we'll soon start the next phase of investigations." Audrey first gave a simple summary, then with the attitude that she was doing something important, said, "We need more information, preferably the hobbies and habits of Qilangos."

Alger recalled, "He loves to fish, especially fish from the sea. He would slice it and eat it raw…

"He also likes hard liquor, and despises champagne, red wine, and the like…

"He will often look for women to relieve his needs whenever he heads to shore, and with his strong body, one woman will not be enough to satisfy him…

"He's used to using cold weapons and avoids hot weapons.

"He cannot be away from water for long periods of time. What I mean is that he needs to swim or dive once every couple of days."

†

Audrey committed these facts to memory, creating an ample character of Qilangos in her mind.

"Let's hope that the investigation will be a success. It's a pleasure working with you." She smiled after Alger was done.

"My pleasure." All Alger could do was force himself to believe in Miss Justice, who had considerable power in Backlund.

Throughout the interaction, Klein seemed to be listening intently, but in reality, his thoughts had been diverted to another question. That was the question of how to deliver ingredients to Sun if he did manage to obtain them.

Now that he had a passable understanding of the field of mysticism, Klein instinctively followed the line of thought of using ritualistic magic. This reliance was natural given the successes he had when using ritualistic magic.

When I was previously flipping through the confidential information of the Nighthawks, I came across records of the Goddess bestowing holy items to her followers. There were also records of items descending in rituals involving evil gods or devils… Does this mean that I can "bestow" someone something when responding to their prayers, and transfer materials that way?

In previous attempts, I could only reply with thoughts containing pictures and voices. But that doesn't mean that it'll always stay that way… There could be some new changes when I advance to Sequence 8…

There's also something important to consider. Can I bring material from the real world into the world above the gray fog? And… Hmm… Oh right, there's often a step for "sacrifices" in rituals involving evil gods and devils! Can I consider "sacrificing" something to myself?

In that way, perhaps I can bring some material from the real world into the world above the gray fog…

If this attempt is successful, I can get items directly from Justice, The Sun, and The Hanged Man, and then bestow them to myself.

Yes, "sacrifice" is considered a more advanced ritual, so I won't be able to learn of it for now…

The most important thing to do now is to improve my abilities!

Klein reined in his thoughts, and once again listened in on the conversation of the other members. He listened as their discussion changed from Qilangos to the characteristics of particular monsters.

Sometime later, he smiled.

"Let's end it here for today."

"By your will." The Sun, Justice, and The Hanged Man stood up at the same time.

After severing the connections of the members, Klein quickly descended from the fog and left the mysterious space.

When he returned to his room, he dispelled the wall of spirituality and pulled back the curtains by the oriel window, allowing the sunlight to shine in.

There are two important things to do this week. The first is to get examined and advance to Sequence 8. The second is to make Flaring Sun Charms. Its powers might be even higher than that of Sequence 7 or 6… Klein looked outside with anticipation.

Tomorrow. I should be able to receive the report of Mr. Azik's paranormal disturbances tomorrow!

Chapter 160 - Seizing the Opportunity

◆

Tuesday morning.

Having completed his mysticism curriculum, Klein didn't look for a quiet corner to read "Comparison of Ancient and Modern Names" or "Nighthawks Case Compendium," and instead stayed in the break room to play cards with Leonard, Kenley, and Royale.

I only told Mr. Azik to create an opportunity for me to take Sealed Artifact 3-0782 out… It'll still depend on my improvisation skills to seize the opportunity… Klein's mind wasn't on his cards, so he played terribly. He lost five soli in an hour, and he felt the pinch. He planned to concentrate on the game to recover some of his cash.

After he bought various ingredients for the Flaring Sun Charms yesterday afternoon, his private stash of cash reduced to less than one pound once again. Plus, he had to pay two soli every day for the carriage rental fees to search for the house with the red chimney.

As they were waiting for Kenley to shuffle the cards, he picked up the copper penny before him and spun it casually.

He suddenly felt Royale's gaze on him, a very intense gaze.

What? Klein was first stunned, then looked at the copper penny that was about to fall.

…Is she wary of me cheating with divination? We're just playing cards amongst ourselves, do we have to be so serious about this? He suddenly understood and slammed down the penny with a dry laugh.

Just then, Dunn Smith knocked on the door and entered. He looked around and said, “There’s a situation in Morse Town. Leonard, please handle it.”

Morse Town? Klein felt his mind jolt as he pretended to ask curiously, “Captain, what kind of situation?”

Dunn glanced over and explained, “Recently, there have been a few paranormal cases in the area. Firstly, people would hear sobs when walking past the cemetery and see vague figures flash by. Then, a widow encountered her deceased husband when she woke up to use the bathroom in the middle of the night. She nearly fainted from the fright. In addition, there was an elderly man who lived alone. He began hearing heavy footsteps reverberating in the house all the time. However, silence reigned once again the moment he lights a candle or gas lamp. The people in the town are believers of the Goddess, so the local priest reported the situation.”

No one got hurt, and it almost borders on the level of a prank… It should be Mr. Azik… Klein used an expression and tone that he had rehearsed many times. “Captain, there might be a secret link for these paranormal cases to happen so suddenly. In this situation, divination could provide an important clue. I think I can help Leonard.”

Upon hearing that, Leonard’s green eyes immediately locked onto Klein. He was apparently trying to find clues and traces from Klein’s face.

Dunn nodded first but remained quiet and hesitant.

When Klein saw the Captain’s response, he immediately added, “Some of these things might require ritualistic magic to purify them.”

“Makes sense.” Dunn thought and said, “You and Leonard will head to Morse Town then.”

Without anyone saying anything else, he additionally added, “Hmm, you won’t be able to make it for your combat training in the afternoon. I’ll send someone to inform Gawain.”

Phew, the first step is complete… Klein silently let out a sigh. He quickly packed away his soli and pence.

Then, he suddenly paused and looked sideways at Dunn. He said solemnly, “Captain, I think we should prepare for the worst. If there’s a powerful wraith behind the paranormal events, it might be very dangerous for only Leonard and I. Plus, it takes two, uh—three hours to get to Morse Town, right? Even if we manage to send a telegram to request for backup in time, we would still have to hold out for quite a while…”

“So?” Dunn interrupted.

“I want to get the assistance of another teammate.” Klein pretended to think for a moment and said, “And, according to the rules, a mission with three or more Nighthawks involved can apply for a level three Sealed Artifact. Yes, 3-0782 is most suited for this job.”

Upon hearing that, Leonard laughed and said, “Exactly your style. Careful, cautious, taking no risks.”

You seem to be implying that I’m a coward… I’m a person who looked directly at the Eternal Blazing Sun! Klein pretended that he didn’t hear Leonard and earnestly looked at Dunn Smith.

“Captain, what do you think?”

“We should really take extra care against any accidents. There have been too many coincidences lately…” Dunn nodded thoughtfully and looked at the other two teammates. “Kenley, join Leonard and Klein on their trip to Morse Town. Oh, hurry up and write an application. After I sign it, retrieve Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from Chanis Gate.”

“Alright,” the short Kenley said, putting down the cards in his hand.

Alright! Klein fist-pumped in his mind while he looked anxious and solemn on the outside.

At that very moment, Seeka Tron was monitoring Hood Eugen in the asylum while Frye was on duty at Chanis Gate.

Klein left the recreation room and put on his black tuxedo. He took his hat and cane, then waited together with Leonard for Kenley at the stairway that connected to the basement

There was no one there, and it was extremely quiet. Leonard suddenly looked sideways at Klein and said, “I think you’d better give up on any unrealistic dreams.”

“Ah… What?” Klein replied in confusion.

Leonard walked forward and stood by the edge of the stairs. He looked into the darkness of the stairway.

“Even during a mission, it will be impossible for you to discover my secret and understand my uniqueness.”

…Bro, can you stop thinking so highly about yourself? Did you think I applied for this mission to spy on you? I didn’t even have such thoughts! Enlightened, Klein chuckled.

“How can you be so sure that my uniqueness won’t help to reveal your secret?”

Leonard’s expression grew grave, but he then smiled and said, “It will, huh? I shall wait for you to discover it then.”

When I gather more information and items, I will go to the world above the gray fog to help you perform a divination. You’re welcome! Klein thought sarcastically in his head.

Soon, the small-framed Kenley brought the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem up the winding stairs.

When Klein felt the unique warmth and purity, he secretly heaved a sigh of relief. He knew that he had finally completed the very first and most difficult step in his plan of siphoning the powers of the Eternal Blazing Sun's divine blood.

Then, the three of them left the Blackthorn Security Company and walked to Zouteland Street. They walked towards the carriage that belonged to the Nighthawks.

"Will the purifying effect bother the horse?" Kenley suddenly asked anxiously. "I don't want a horse that can only praise the Sun to pull the carriage…"

He had been a Nighthawk for longer than Klein, but he was far from experienced.

"No, Sealed Artifact 3-0782 only purifies living entities with a high level of intelligence," Klein lowered his voice in response.

If not, I wouldn't be bitten by insects… he added blankly in his head.

"Oh, I see… Haha, I didn't read the information thoroughly enough." Kenley pressed down on his black silk hat and laughed in enlightenment.

As Klein had yet to master the skill of driving of a carriage, he sat inside the carriage for the following three hours. He rubbed the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hand while he watched Leonard and Kenley take turns driving.

They finally arrived at Morse Town around lunchtime.

"How beautiful…" Kenley complimented sincerely as they stepped down from the carriage and looked towards the boundless golden wheat fields that surrounded the town.

The dates representing the Volcanic constellation was coming to an end, and the Bumper Harvest constellation was going to rule everyone's life.

Leonard was in the driver's seat as he looked around and opened his mouth, as though he was going to recite a sonnet.

But in the end, he only spurted one sentence, "How beautiful."

Klein held back the urge to laugh as he put on his top hat, took his cane, and got off the carriage.

At that moment, a middle-aged man in a black priest's gown walked over. He drew a crimson moon on his chest and said, "Praise the Lady. Are you the friends that Saint Selena Cathedral sent to help us?"

"Yes, Priest Siur. May the Goddess bless you." Leonard jumped off the carriage and replied with a smile, "We're here to take care of the recent paranormal incidents."

"Seemingly. Seemingly." The gray-haired, blue-eyed Siur saw many townsfolk approaching as he quickly emphasized.

Morse Town wasn't big. Regardless of which direction one chose to travel in, one would enter the plains within ten minutes. The people who stayed there knew each other, so what happened earlier had spread.

Many townsfolk were waiting for the Church of Evernight to send people to resolve the problem. Hence, when they saw that the priest was greeting three strangers, they quickly surrounded them out of concern and curiosity. Some tiptoed and some tried to hear what they were saying.

Leonard chuckled and said, "Priest, don't worry. We're professionals. Look, we brought Holy Water, silver daggers, Dark Sacred Emblems, and also garlic."

He took out the described items from the inner pockets of his clothes as though he was pulling a magic trick.

Garlic? Are you trying to stink the spirits to death? Klein found it ridiculous yet funny as he watched Leonard's performance.

Siur wore a look of confusion, and he even started to suspect that the Saint Selena Cathedral had sent over a bunch of frauds.

The citizens who surrounded them revealed gratified smiles, as though they were finally in safe hands.

Leonard got close to Priest Siur and explained softly into his ear, "They believe in these things…"

Without waiting for the priest's reply, he added, "Let's have lunch at the church first. Then, we shall take care of those matters."

Yes, lunch is very important… When those paranormal incidents are taken care of, it'll be time to take turns looking after Sealed Artifact 3-0782, and also the opportunity for me to make Flaring Sun Charms… Hopefully, everything goes smoothly… Of course, making Flaring Sun Charms during the daytime would get the best results… Klein thought, brimming with anticipation.

Chapter 161 - Inverted Mausoleum

◆

Most of the buildings in Morse Town adhered to a style that was popular a hundred years ago. The most eye-catching building in the town was the black cathedral spire.

After settling the carriage, Klein and the others quickly finished their lunch of bread, toast, bacon, butter, and coffee.

“We can still tolerate about two hours and thirty-five minutes of Sealed Artifact 3-0782’s purification.” Kenley stood at the door of the church and took out a pocket watch from his suit’s pocket. “I suggest dealing with the suspected haunting incidents first to prevent the situation from getting worse. Then we can return to the church and take turns watching over the Sealed Artifact to recover.”

Under normal circumstances, Sequence 9, 8, and 7 Beyonders had to stay far away from the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem for two hours to recover completely, or at least an hour if they were to make a partial recovery.

“Alright.”

“I have no objections.”

Klein and Leonard spoke in unison.

“Then which case should we deal with first?” Kenley asked.

Leonard wiped away his frivolous attitude and said, “Let’s start with the old man living alone who heard heavy footsteps in his house.”

“Why?” Kenley asked instinctively. Klein was also interested to hear an explanation.

Could this be the intuition of a poet? He mocked Leonard secretly.

Leonard shifted his gaze from Kenley’s face to Klein’s, then looked at Kenley again. He smiled.

“Because it’s the closest to the church.”

“How did you know that? It’s not written in the records…” Klein asked.

Leonard snickered. “Didn’t I go to the bathroom during our meal? I came across a trainee priest on my way back and had a conversation. He told me that Noah’s house was close to the church—Oh yeah, the old man’s name is Noah.”

He sure lives up to his name as an experienced Nighthawk when it comes to performing missions… Klein gave a dry laugh. He turned to Kenley and said, “Then let’s go to Noah’s house first.”

“Alright.” Kenley didn’t have any objections.

They arrived at Noah’s house a mere minute later…

Noah was an old man with thinning white hair. He had lost his left hand in a war when he was younger and had no choice but to leave the army. He returned to his hometown after he received his compensation.

At that moment, he opened the door and looked at the three strangers in front of him before looking at Siur who was rushing over from the cathedral. He said with a raspy voice, “Come in, I hope that you can solve my problem. I heard that you brought Holy Water, Sacred Emblems, a silver dagger, and garlic? This is great, my worries have eased greatly. Please forgive my blabbering, you have to understand the condition of an old man after not being able to sleep peacefully for two nights, Oh my Goddess, I’ve been so scared all this time that my head feels like it's in a cloud."

Leonard suddenly straightened his back when he entered the house, his eyes surveying the surroundings.

After that, Klein felt a cold aura within the room. Those were traces of activity left behind by a ghost.

"There really was an impure being here." Kenley was the last one to notice as he suppressed his voice.

"Very weak," Leonard said with a relaxed tone as he retracted his gaze.

The Midnight Poet was a job with a relatively high spiritual sensitivity when compared to all the other Sequence 8's in the Church's records.

"Yes." Klein could feel the warmth and purifying energy of Sealed Artifact 3-0782 quickly dispelling the sinister aura in the room without any trouble.

At this moment, the people of the town had all gathered at Noah's house, all looking curiously at Klein, Leonard, and Kenley.

Cough! Leonard cleared his throat and recited, "We have the blessings of the Goddess, those impure beings will vanish quickly and won't bring about any more trouble."

After that, he shot a look at Klein for him to perform a "purification ritual" for everyone to see.

Why me? Klein shot a look back.

Of course, he didn't know if Leonard understood what his gaze meant.

But clearly, Leonard understood. He said softly, "You're the expert in rituals."

Alright, blame me for being the one who volunteered for this mission. Klein tidied his clothes and took out the Holy Water, Sacred Emblems, a silver dagger, and garlic from Leonard.

He first placed the Dark Sacred Emblem in front of his chest, then peeled the garlic and tossed its cloves one by one to every corner of the house.

“Hmm, this is how garlic is used to dispel ghosts?”

“It’s different from the descriptions in the newspapers…”

“Will this work?”

†

The townsfolk looking at them broke into discussion, they were curious and excited, as if they were watching a circus.

It’s useless! I’m just acting! Klein suddenly felt that he had become a clown. He closed his eyes and splashed the holy water onto the ground with the silver dagger.

He splashed the water as he walked around the house, reciting an incantation, “The Evernight Goddess…

“The Mother of Concealment… The Lady of Crimson…

“Empress of Misfortune and Horror…

“Mistress of Repose and Silence…”

†

These typical acts of a charlatan shocked everyone present as the townsfolk fell silent.

And once people turned silent, it was easy for them to notice something they missed.

"What a warm feeling."

"It feels like I'm sunbathing…"

"No, I feel like I'm looking at a pure sky…"

"How magical… Is this the effect of the Holy Water?"

"They sure live up to their names as priests from Saint Selena Cathedral!"

"Praise the Lady!"

†

The townsfolk discussed in whispers. The looks they gave Klein, Leonard, and Kenley slowly became that of respect. Noah also visibly relaxed, not doubting that the problem had been solved.

Sealed Artifact 3-0782 is doing all the real work here… We don't actually need to do anything to chase the ghosts away, all we need to do is stay here for a minute. It's not tiring or troublesome at all… After Klein purified the sinister aura off every corner of the house, he opened his eyes and put away his silver dagger, drawing the shape of the crimson moon in front of his chest with a serious expression. "Praise the Lady!"

"Praise the Lady!" the townsfolk replied devoutly.

"We still have things to deal with, but we need absolute silence." Leonard smiled as he looked around.

The townsfolk, after witnessing something so professional, didn't stay. They receded from Noah's house like a tide following Priest Siur's lead. Even the master of the house had to leave temporarily.

"I actually wanted to take a nap…" Noah pouted as he walked toward the cathedral.

Leonard took a step forward and closed the door, then turned towards Klein.

“Perform a divination on the cause of this incident.”

“No problem.” Klein also wanted to find out what he could divine.

I know Mr. Azik did this, but he seems to be of a rather superior nature. Haha, a person that can live for 1300 years must be of a superior nature… So my divinations should definitely be affected. Under such circumstances, without the help of the mysterious space above the gray fog, even I’m not sure what revelations I would receive… Klein took out the pen and paper he brought along with him and wrote down a divination statement:

“The cause of the haunting at Noah’s house.”

He held the piece of paper and walked to a round table. He then took a seat, closed his eyes, and leaned back.

Klein suddenly saw a black mausoleum in his blurred, hazy dream world.

It was similar to a pyramid, but stood inverted and was almost fully buried.

A black fog obscured everything within the ancient mausoleum.

Klein snapped awake and opened his eyes.

“Did you find anything?” Kenley asked in concern.

Klein thought for a moment and described the revelation he received in his dream without hiding anything. He ended it by saying, “The mausoleum was definitely not in the style of the Northern Continent, I mean the Fifth Epoch. I’m somewhat of an expert in this field.”

Leonard nodded, seemingly in thought.

"That's an Inverted Pyramid from the Southern Continent. It represents the entering of the nether realm from the living world. It's a mausoleum that only the so-called Descendants of Death can erect for themselves, be it in the Balam Empire of the past, or its satellite states such as the Highlands Kingdom.

"In some sense, it's the symbol of Death.

"Well, the ghosts are definitely related to Death. The results of the divination are undoubtedly correct!"

Ignoring Leonard's mockery, Klein suddenly had an interesting thought.

Could Mr. Azik be the descendant of Death, or could he have made a transaction with Death to obtain such a long life?

According to a chapter from The Revelation of Evernight, as well as the internal records of the Nighthawks, Death was a malevolent god, once causing a catastrophe in the Northern Continent at the end of the Fourth Epoch. Those times were now referred to as the Pale Era.

Hmm, it's said that Death fell to the combined efforts of the Seven Gods… It's impossible to determine when Lamud Castle was built—but it couldn't have been built before the Pale Era.

If there was a connection, then there would be something to investigate regarding the person working behind the scenes, lives in the house with the red-chimney, and stole the skull of Mr. Azik's child…

Of course, this could be an excuse for the Northern Continent to colonize the Southern Continent. After all, most of the inhabitants of the Southern Continent believes in Death…

The three Nighthawks didn't stay for long since they didn't discover anything. They soon left Noah's house and started dealing with the two other haunting incidents.

The same process, the same results. They quickly rid the town of the auras of dead spirits but didn't manage to find the cause of all the trouble.

Along the way, Leonard asked the townsfolk if any strangers had entered the town in the past few days, but received a negative answer.

Mr. Azik didn't come? He must've come and left in secret without anyone noticing him. He sure is cautious… When he said that he would be returning to Tingen by Wednesday, did he mean that these spirits would vanish on their own accord today, even if we weren't here to deal with it? Klein thought about it as he returned to the entrance of Morse Cathedral with Leonard and Kenley.

They could still last another hour and forty-five minutes with the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

"We'll take one hour shifts looking after the Sealed Artifact." Klein suppressed the excitement in his heart. He looked at the color of the sky and said, "Let's try to head back to Tingen City for dinner."

"No problem." Leonard glanced at Klein and laughed. "But for safety's sake, I suggest that two people look after the Sealed Artifact while one rests."

Klein froze for a moment, his mind churning quickly. He smiled in reply.

"Sure, but this way, we have to calculate the most logical rotation. Who gets to rest first? Who's next? And who will be last? How much time do we need to recover? And by how much? Well—I think that we have to establish an algorithm with an unknown value in order to establish the best way, then compare it with the effectiveness of having one person look over it at a time… It's even better if we can compare the efficiencies too. Let's first assume that the unknown value is…"

"Wait!" Leonard's green eyes were blank, filled with fear. "If that's the case, let's look after it one at a time. The person looking after it will stay in the cathedral during his shift, as it has a sufficiently large radius. Of course, we'll have to get Priest Siur and the rest to stay somewhere else. The other two will stand guard outside the church and prevent others from coming close."

"I share the same opinion." Kenley had felt a headache coming on as Klein spoke about the mathematical problem.

"Alright." Klein nodded, looking as though he was forced to do so.

If he hadn't been able to convince his partners, then he would have to make a deal with Leonard in secret, giving away some information about himself to get him to leave.

But the problem was solved now!

Chapter 162 - Intense Sunlight

◆

Weak light shone through the narrow window from high above, making the interior of Morse Cathedral a little more visible.

Klein put his top hat on his knee while he leaned his leg against his cane. He sat quietly on the first row of the left pew and looked at the altar before him.

There weren’t any statues of the Goddess except for a massive Dark Sacred Emblem. Its base was black, with a crimson half-moon that was surrounded by radiant points of light.

On the wall behind the Sacred Emblem, there were a few openings which allowed sunlight to shine in from the outside. They were focused into tiny specks of pure light which combined with the dark surroundings to form a scene that resembled that of a lofty cosmos.

None of the traditional Gods ever left behind an actual image. Only their symbols are worshiped and glorified by people… That seems to be a manifestation of the command, “Do not look directly at God”… Klein let his thoughts wander. He wasn’t in a hurry to make the Flaring Sun Charms as soon as he got the opportunity to be alone with Sealed Artifact 3-0782.

He felt that he had to be careful, patient, and had to wait. Within the first fifteen minutes, it was possible that Leonard and Kenley would enter at any moment to remind him about points that he should take note of.

In this extremely quiet atmosphere, time flew by quickly. Klein suddenly snapped back to his senses as he took out his silver vine-leaf pocket watch, flipped it open, and took a glance.

Twenty minutes have passed… He muttered to himself. He then set his silk top hat and silver edged black cane by the side. He got up and walked towards a hidden corner near the altar.

At first, he faced the side of the altar, but once he saw the large Dark Sacred Emblem and the holy scenery that resembled a depiction of a night sky, he felt guilty and uncomfortable. Hence, he turned his back to the altar.

Then, Klein took out the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from the inner pocket of his black tuxedo. He bent down to place the golden unadorned badge on the ground.

Klein took a look at the Sun symbol that was filled with abstract meanings, then he took out a small candle mixed with sandalwood. He put it right at the bottom of Sealed Artifact 3-0782.

That was the dualistic ritual that he learned from the Eternal Blazing Sun. He used an item that was closely related to the deity to represent "Him" while he used the candle to represent himself.

He took a deep breath to ease his tense emotions. Klein then took out the items required for the ritual, one after another, including a carving knife, two thin gold slices, Sun essential oil extracted from the combination of black-rimmed sunflower, golden-rimmed sunflower and white-rimmed sunflower, Golden Hand fingered citron powder, and also rosemary powder.

After that, Klein adeptly used the silver ritual dagger to guide the flow of spirituality. He guided it to flow around the simple altar and created a shapeless sealed wall.

He squatted down, placed the silver dagger down, and extended his right hand. He lit up the candle that represented himself by rubbing his spirituality.

Under the flickering dim light, Klein picked up the Sun essential oil and dripped a drop onto the flame.

With a puff, an illusory fog spread out with the slight scent of sunlight.

After burning the fingered citron and rosemary powder, Klein held the carving knife and golden slices. He stood up, took a step back, and then recited in Hermes, “The blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

“You are the Inextinguishable Light, the Embodiment of Order, the God of Deeds, the Guardian of Businesses.”

†

Inextinguishable Light, Embodiment of Order, God of Deeds, and Guardian of Businesses were all parts of Eternal Blazing Sun’s honorable titles. If there wasn’t the prefix of the blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun, the ritual would require the god’s response to proceed. If so, Klein suspected that the Eternal Blazing Sun would recognize him as the disrespectful person that looked at “Him” directly. Then, Leonard and Kenley would only find a pile of black ashes when they entered.

Plus, the ritual had to be conducted via Ancient Hermes, a ritualistic language that stemmed from nature. Only a language without any protection but had outstanding effects could allow an incantation to sidestep around the Eternal Blazing Sun and point towards the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

At the same time, as he was stealing the power from a deity, Klein had no way to divine if it would be successful ahead of time. He felt that it would result in him directly dealing with the deity again. So, he could only recite the rest of the incantation with a strained heart, “I pray to you, “I pray for you to give me strength,

“Give me the strength to complete the Flaring Sun Charm.

“The blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun, please transfer your strength into my charm…

“Oh fingered citron, a herb that belongs to the Sun, please bestow your powers to my charm…”

†

As the incantation neared completion, Klein suddenly felt something light up before him.

The simple gold badge radiated with an intense light, as though the sun had descended onto the land.

Klein suddenly found himself enveloped in extreme heat. His hair was heating up rapidly and was almost on the brink of igniting.

His feet felt like they were stepping barefoot on yellow sand that had been exposed to the midday sun, and his face and body were greeted with the hot wind blowing from every direction.

In that instance, he felt that he needed to do something to let the burning energies out. Otherwise, he would turn into a human candle.

It required almost zero thought as Klein lifted both his hands. While his thoughts were boiling over like porridge, he relied on the combination of his spirituality and the strong winds, as well as his instincts and ritualistic guidance, to begin etching symbols, corresponding Path Numbers, magical characteristics, and ancient incantations onto both sides of the gold slices with his carving knife.

Outside the church, Leonard was standing in the shadows to hide from coming into contact with direct sunlight.

Suddenly, the sunlight intensified, like the hottest days of a year in early July.

He squinted his eyes and looked towards the sky. He saw that the blue sky had no clouds or dust. It was so pure that it made people gasp with admiration.

“Such strange weather.” Beside him, Kenley also noticed the changes in the sunlight.

Leonard responded with a smile when he suddenly turned his head.

He knitted his eyebrows slightly and cast his gaze towards the cathedral.

“Luckily Rozanne isn’t here. Otherwise, she would be complaining about the sun tanning her skin,” Leonard looked away and said with a smile.

The blazing sunlight remained intense for a few minutes before it returned to normal.

In the cathedral, Klein’s carving knife finished the final stroke.

As he finished the magical characters that represented light, the spirituality on both sides of the gold slices suddenly melded together, as the light converged onto the metal.

No, this is even closer to godhood… Klein was finally relieved from the boiling and burning sensations. He examined the two Flaring Sun Charms in his hands with a clear mind.

The golden luster on the surface of the charms had turned dim, and the pattern looked ancient yet complex. There was a warm, damp feeling that seeped into Klein’s skin bit by bit.

“Not bad. I finally have a more impressive trump card.” Klein sighed emotionally.

He set the activation incantation for the Flaring Sun Charms as the word “light” in Ancient Hermes.

I want light and there will be light… He quipped, amused. Then, he put the Flaring Sun Charms into another pocket. He didn’t put them with the Slumber, Requiem, and Dream Charms, because the Flaring Sun Charms would decrease their efficacy period.

“Yes, the power of the Flaring Sun Charms can be maintained for at least a year, or even longer.” Klein reined his thoughts back and looked at the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem on the ground.

It didn’t look any different on the surface, and it still gave off feelings of warmth and purity. Klein finally relaxed, and quickly completed the ritual and removed the spiritual wall.

At that point, he thought to examine himself. He realized that his clothes were almost drenched, and he was covered in sweat. The edges of his hair were slightly curly too.

Thankfully, thankfully… Klein sighed in satisfaction. He put away his things and returned to his original seat. He was so exhausted that he slept the moment he sat down until he was woken up by footsteps.

His eyes shot open, and he touched the Flaring Sun Charms subconsciously to see if they were still there.

“You don’t look alright?” Leonard asked as he entered the cathedral.

Klein massaged his temples, stood up and smiled.

“I’m nearing my limit.”

He took out his silver pocket watch and took a glance. “Just in time. It’s your turn to look after Sealed Artifact 3-0782.”

Before he finished speaking, Klein took off the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem and passed it to Leonard.

Leonard watched Klein walk out of the cathedral. Then, he dropped his frivolous attitude and examined Sealed Artifact 3-0782 attentively and seriously. He grew confused and looked bewildered.

After the shifts ended, the three Nighthawks began their journey back.

Before that, they told Priest Siur to take note of the town's situation. If there were any paranormal incidents, he was to immediately send a telegram to Saint Selena Cathedral.

At twenty minutes past seven that night, they finally arrived at Zouteland Street and returned Sealed Artifact 3-0782.

When he had made sure that the Captain didn't notice anything unusual, Klein left the Blackthorn Security Company and arrived home before eight.

He took out his keys and opened the door, only to see an unknown figure.

It was obviously a maiden who wasn't even in her twenties. She was in an old, grayish-white dress, and she was wiping the dining hall with all her might.

She had black hair and brown eyes. Her eyes were small, her nose wasn't sharp enough, and her facial features were very ordinary.

Who is this? Klein was stunned at first, then he realized that she was most likely the maidservant that had come for a trial.

At that moment, Benson lowered his newspaper and looked at his brother. He smiled and said, "A company that doesn't allow employees to leave the office on time is annoying."

"But it provides a salary that can counteract any kind of dissatisfaction," Klein replied with a laugh.

When Miss Justice's 300 pounds reach me, I'll inform Benson and

Melissa about my raise to six pounds a week, that way they would worry less about our family's finances… Klein thought as he put his cane aside and took off his top hat. He walked to the living hall and lowered his voice as he asked, "Have you made a choice?"

He had divined the information of the three maidservants the day before, and he had found that all three were suitable. Hence, the decision was left to his brother and sister.

"Yes, Bella. Weekly salary of five soli. She's very willing and also capable of learning cooking. She hopes that she can become a home chef, at which point her weekly pay will double. Her father is a factory worker at the Tingen Steelworks Union Factory, and her mother is a laundry worker," Benson replied with a chuckle. "Of course, another thing that led Melissa and me to the decision is that the other two servants believe in the Lord of Storms, and she is a believer of the Goddess. I personally don't mind the believers of the Lord of Storms, but Melissa didn't quite like the idea."

It wasn't that Melissa didn't like it, a more accurate description would be "I grieve at their misfortune and am infuriated at their refusal to resist." Yes, it was said by Lu Xun! Klein recalled his sister's behavior and revealed a smile.

Benson didn't elaborate further. He put down the newspaper and stood up.

"Since you're back, let's have dinner."

†

The next day, Klein entered the Blackthorn Security Company in a good mood.

"Good morning." Rozanne looked to the left and then the right. Then, she said, "Old Neil is sick, let's go and visit him at noon. What say you?"

“Old Neil is sick?” Klein asked in surprise.

Could it be that the ritual for treating diarrhea caused severe constipation?

Well, from the way he acted after learning of the “acting method,” it’s not impossible for him to suddenly fall sick… He’s getting old, so once his mind turns frail, his body would also suffer from those ramifications…

Rozanne nodded and said, “Yeah, he sent someone to the Captain to request some time off.”

Klein nodded slightly. “Let’s visit him at noon. Sigh, Old Neil sure is pitiful. His wife passed away early, and his son is busy in some other city. When he’s sick, all he can do is stay at home in loneliness and helplessness.”

That was the first thing he recalled from his first visit to Old Neil’s house.

Listening to Klein’s sigh, Rozanne opened her eyes wide and asked in shock, “When did Old Neil get married?”

Chapter 163 - Various Signs

◆

What? Klein was left dumbfounded when he heard Rozanne's question. He recalled in his daze, "I previously visited Old Neil's place just last month. I saw a piano in the living room and he told me that his deceased wife loved music…"

As he spoke, Klein suddenly became alarmed as he began having unpleasant thoughts.

Rozanne knitted her beautiful brows and said with uncertainty, "Perhaps I remembered wrong… No, Mrs. Orianna and I frequented Old Neil's place during the earlier half of the year. There was no piano in his living room back then. I clearly remember asking him why he chose to remain single. His answer was that he hasn't met a lady that he wished to marry…"

There was no piano during the earlier half of the year, and he answered the question of why he chose to remain single… Klein tightened up and asked in a deep voice, "Rozanne, how long has it been since you visited Old Neil's place?"

"Not ever since Kenley became a Nighthawk, and Viola chose to resign as a clerk. I've been either burning the midnight oil or catching up on sleep, so how could I have the time to visit him? It's been… since the beginning of June." Rozanne became a little lost upon receiving the question, so all she did was answer honestly.

Klein's heart sank as if he sensed something was wrong.

He fished out a halfpence from his pocket and held it between his thumb and middle finger.

He took a deep breath and quickly decided on a divination statement.

“There’s something wrong with Old Neil’s current situation.

“There’s something wrong with Old Neil’s current situation.”

†

His pupils quickly darkened as he recited the statement silently and entered Cogitation.

Ding!

He flicked his thumb, pushing the brass coin into the air and allowing it to spin.

Pak! The coin fell right into Klein’s open palm.

This time, the portrait of George III was facing up.

The portrait signified that it was correct, that it was positive.

That meant that there really was something wrong with Old Neil’s current situation!

As Klein clenched the coin, he suddenly remembered the translucent pair of cold and ruthless eyes without any brows that he had seen behind Old Neil when he had just become a Beyonder and was experimenting with his Spirit Vision.

Old Neil had explained that the pair of eyes was a characteristic of ritualistic magic!

That’s right, I also saw an almost formless human figure by the door at the periphery of the light. The color of its aura was identical to the surrounding darkness… Also, after I completely digested the Seer potion, I secretly changed the way I activated my Spirit Vision to the tapping of my left molar. I happened to look at Old Neil and he suddenly coughed violently… Scene after scene appeared in Klein's mind, turning his expression grim.

Rozanne looked at him and asked in fear, "Did Old Neil lose control? No way, even though he's petty and stingy, and wants to be reimbursed for all of his expenses, he's still a good person. He rarely gets angry. No way, he wouldn't lose control…"

"I cannot be sure, but I think that Old Neil is on the brink of losing control." Klein consoled Rozanne. He quickly made his way past the partition and opened the door to the Captain's office.

Dunn Smith was startled by the sudden intrusion, nearly choking on his coffee.

"What happened?" He didn't blame Klein, his expression instantly becoming stern.

Klein answered simply without hiding anything, "Captain, my divination tells me that there's something wrong with Old Neil.

"Last month, Old Neil told me that his late wife loved music, but today, Rozanne told me that he's remained single all this time.

"Also, on the day that I became a Beyonder, I saw a pair of mysterious eyes looking over everything behind Old Neil. There was also an almost transparent human figure near the door spying on us. He told me that those were characteristics of ritualistic magic.

"I felt that something was off and, thus, attempted a divination."

After Dunn finished listening intently, he stood up immediately. As he walked over to to the coat rack, he asked in puzzlement, "Why didn't you directly divine if Old Neil had lost control?"

"Over the past month, Old Neil hasn't acted any differently from ordinary Beyonders. He even worked with me to help Swain deal with a Mandated Punisher who had lost control. I've also observed the colors of his aura from time to time and noticed that he's relatively healthy other than his frailty that's due to his age. Thus, I think that he's only close to losing control. He could still be saved," Klein explained his point of view in one breath.

Dunn put on his black hat and trench coat before nodding.

"A very reasonable deduction… Let's go pay a visit to Old Neil now, and oh—try not to agitate him if possible.

"After that, we can attempt to control him and use ritualistic magic to stabilize his condition to prevent it from getting worse."

Control… Klein had an idea when he heard this term.

"Captain, could we use Sealed Artifact 3-0611?"

He had been thinking about how he could resolve Old Neil's problem and save him, but he hadn't arrived at an answer as he had been too flustered, too uneasy, and too worried. He was reminded by Dunn Smith's words and recalled that the Sealed Artifact might be useful.

"Number: 0611.

"Name: Peaceful Hair Strands.

"Danger Grade: 3. Considerably dangerous. It has to be used carefully. It can only be applied for operations that require three or more people.

"Security classification: Official Nighthawk member or above.

"Sealing Method: No direct contact with living organisms.

"Description: A simple decoration formed with many strands of black hair.

"As long as contact is made with a living being without any protection, the living being would lose all their desires and emotions, including, but not limited to: Hunger, Anger, Grief, Pain, Envy, Jealousy, Hate, Joy, Satisfaction, Greed, etc.

“It has been ascertained that living beings under 0611’s influence will even lose the desire to break contact with it. They will silently stay in their spot until the end of their life.

“If an external force is used to break contact between the person and 0611, then the person will gradually recover. But experimental data suggests that the prerequisite to this is that the person has not been in contact with the Sealed Artifact for more than two hours.

“Once the contact lasts for more than two hours, the victim would become silent for eternity.

“The highest Sequence tested is Sequence 5.

“You can avoid contact by means such as wearing gloves.

“The strands of hair do not have any living traits. It doesn’t have any inclinations of escaping the seal.

“Appendix: These strands of hair appeared during a failed advancement. It was something left behind when a Captain of the Nighthawks failed to advance to Sequence 6.”

The grayed-eyed Dunn nodded after he heard Klein.

“Great suggestion, I nearly forgot about 3-0611. Find Royale in the recreation room. I’ll retrieve the Sealed Artifact from Chanis Gate and submit the application after we come back.”

That’s the way, no time to waste! Klein didn’t dawdle. He immediately went to the recreation room and shouted for the usually expressionless Sleepless Royale.

“What’s the mission?” Royale asked calmly.

Klein exhaled and said in a serious tone, “Pay Old Neil a visit.”

“Pay Old Neil a visit… he?” Royale opened her eyes wide as she had an ominous feeling.

“It’s not confirmed yet.” Klein shook his head gently.

Royale didn’t speak any further. They slipped into silence, turning the mood heavy.

A few minutes passed, and Dunn finally returned from the basement.

He was wearing black gloves and had a tangled mess of black hair in his hand.

Compared to the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem, the Peaceful Hair Strands didn’t look particularly weird. It would be glossed over by people if it were tossed on the road somewhere.

After calling for the chauffeur Cesare, the four of them made their way to Old Neil’s house.

The wheels of the carriage rolled across the asphalt road that was wet from the rain. The carriage interior was more silent than the night.

It was unknown how much time had passed until Dunn sighed.

“Old Neil did have a partner that he was about to be engaged with when he was younger, but she suddenly became terminally ill. Old Neil risked divulging the secrets of the Beyonders and tried using ritualistic magic to save her, but he didn’t succeed. Old Neil back then was just a beginner in mysticism.

“According to the records, the Nighthawks back then were all on alert, afraid that Old Neil would lose control because of this. But luckily, he managed to find his sanity and looked normal.”

Let’s hope that this is a false alarm as well… Klein couldn’t help but draw a crimson moon before his chest and prayed, “May the Goddess watch over him."

Dunn and Royale followed suit.

"May the Goddess watch over him."

†

The sky started to turn brighter as the dark clouds receded. The Nighthawks arrived in front of Old Neil's bungalow.

After getting Cesare to drive the carriage far away, Dunn collected himself and walked towards the main door, cane in one hand and Sealed Artifact 3-0611 in the other.

Klein pressed down his hat as he and Royale followed behind the Captain. They made their way past the rose and gold mint garden.

When they reached the door, Klein took a step forward and pulled on the rope connected to the bell within the building.

Clink! Clang!

A pleasant chime resounded in the house as it broke the heavy silence.

Clink! Clang! Clink! Clang! Klein pulled several times, then politely took a step back without making any further attempts.

The three Nighthawks waited patiently for a few minutes, but they didn't hear any footsteps approaching the door.

"Perhaps Old Neil went to visit a doctor and isn't at home." Klein forced a smile.

He hadn't finished his sentence when a melody came from within the building. It was the music from a piano. It was like a silent lake veiled by a thin mist beneath the moonlight.

Dunn's expression became abnormally stern and grave. Klein's heart sank as well.

Just as he was about to do another divination, he suddenly saw liquid flowing out from the gap beneath the door.

The stream of liquid was transparent and pure at first before being dyed crimson, a crimson similar to that of blood. It was an intensely dark crimson red.

Chapter 164 - Miserable Wretches

◆

The color of fresh blood was reflected in Klein's eyes as they intently locked onto the flowing liquid.

Just then, there was a light cough from within the house. Old Neil spoke with a raspy voice, "Dunn, why are you here?"

Dunn's gray eyes were extremely deep. His mellow voice replied calmly, "I heard that you're sick, so we came to visit."

There was a sudden silence in the house. A few seconds later, Old Neil roared in anger and terror, "No! You're lying!"

Without waiting for Klein and company to say a word, his tone suddenly became weak.

"Yes, I know my condition isn't quite right."

Old Neil… Klein closed his eyes, but the bloody liquid that was seeping through the gap of the door didn't cease.

Then, Old Neil raised his voice and said, "All this time, I've never hurt anyone, nor have I thought of hurting anyone! I never—I never betrayed the secrets of the Nighthawks, one even one! At the most—at the most, I've made claims for undeserving expenses. I really haven't committed any evil!"

"Klein!" He suddenly shouted like he usually did. "I told you about the maxim of the Mystery Pryers, 'Do as you wish, but do no harm.' I still live by this saying. I'd rather be patient—I'd rather endure than do things that will harm others…"

With that said, he pleaded sincerely, in fear, "Dunn, Royale, Klein, go back. Go back. Wait till tomorrow—by tomorrow, I'll be back to normal. I swear—I swear to the Goddess, I wouldn't harm anyone. Really!"

Dunn closed his eyes and asked extremely gently, "What do you plan on doing? What have you been trying to do all this while?"

"Me?" Old Neil was confused at first before he described with a tone filled with hope, "I'm trying to resurrect Celeste. Dunn, I found a way, I'm on the right track!

"You should have heard about it. Back then, I made a mistake during the ritualistic magic to treat her illness, so I failed. I failed to save her. I now know it was because I had yet to master mysticism. But now, I now have enough knowledge and experience to complete everything! It's regrettable that I wasn't inspired by the maxim of the Mystery Pryers and Daly's example. I missed the best opportunity. If-if I was a High-Sequence Beyonder, all of this would become extremely easy." As he spoke, Old Neil's voice sounded tearful, "No, I cannot give up again… Dunn, go back. Go back, please. I beg of you."

Klein clenched his teeth as he heard the Captain ask emotionally, "How do you plan on resurrecting Celeste?"

Old Neil instantly became very excited.

"I'll use the 'Alchemical Life' method to create an immortal body for her. Dunn, you might not know of it, but Sequence 4 Beyonders from the Church of Earth Mother are good at this. The corresponding Sequence in the Savant pathway can barely do it as well. Yes, I will complete it with the aid of God's favor.

"Then, I'll summon her spirit from the spirit world and pray for God's help to combine her spirit and body together.

"Isn't it a great idea?"

Dunn lifted the corner of his lips forcefully and said, “Yes, it’s a great idea. Old Neil, let us in. Perhaps we can help you.”

“…Dunn, are you still not willing to let me off the hook?” Old Neil pleaded, “Go back, just go back. I’ll return to normal tomorrow, really. Dunn, I swear I’ll never steal your coffee beans again. Klein, Royale, I swear I won’t make you help me with my undeserved claims! Really!”

In Klein’s and Royale’s blurry vision, Dunn lowered his head before lifting it up again. “Old Neil, you’re misunderstanding something. We’re here to visit you. You are our teammate. You’re sick, and you aren’t well. We definitely needed to visit you. Open the door. Let us see you so that we can be certain. If you’re really okay, we’ll return immediately. As you know, there are especially many missions recently. We have to monitor the asylum while we take care of various other sudden incidents.”

Old Neil hesitated for a moment before saying, “There’s really nothing serious about my condition, really. I’ll recover by tomorrow.”

The bloody water that flowed out through the gap under the door went down the stairs, towards the stone path, and onto the garden’s soil.

“Old Neil, we’ve known each other for about fifteen years now, right? We’ve worked on countless missions together. I’m really concerned and worried about you. I have to see you with my own eyes before I’ll be at ease,” Dunn said gently.

“…Alright,” Old Neil pouted. “There’s really nothing wrong with me.”

With a creak, the door opened slowly. Klein quickly wiped his eyes and allowed his sight to return to normal.

Then, he saw that the carpet in the lobby was red and sticky, covered in blood and hair.

He looked forward and up, only to realize that the living room’s floor, ceiling, round table, piano, and chairs were all covered in the same disgusting, sticky and hairy liquid.

Old Neil's head hung in the air, connected to the ceiling by a thick liquid. His forehead and cheeks each had a pair of eyes. They were cold and ruthless eyes with no eyelashes.

[image]

The piano's keys were dancing on their own, playing a melodious tune.

"Dunn, look. I'm really okay," Old Neil said with a radiant smile. "Royale, Klein, you think so too, right?"

The moment he opened his mouth, Klein saw the same thick, hairy, and bloody liquid flowing inside it.

Dunn's gray eyes shimmered as he chatted like everything was normal.

"Old Neil, where did you learn the Alchemical Life and resurrection ritual from?"

Old Neil replied excitedly, "I heard it. I tried the first part, and confirmed its authenticity! It's a gift from God! He kept describing it in my ears. He kept describing, He is—He is…"

Old Neil's voice came to a halt. More than ten seconds later, he continued in fear and at an apparent loss, "He is the Hidden Sage…"

The Hidden Sage? Isn't that the non-anthropomorphic god that the Moses Ascetic Order believes in? The god that was resurrected, bringing about evil and corruption… The Moses Ascetic Order has the complete Mystery Pryer Sequence… Klein's heart stirred as many thoughts came to him.

Upon mentioning the Hidden Sage, Old Neil seemed to finally awaken. He looked around vacantly and observed everything.

In the indescribable silence, his six eyes looked towards Dunn, and he said with a bitter smile, "So it turns out—it turns out that I've already become a monster…”

Without waiting for Dunn and the others to reply, Old Neil suddenly revealed a smile, one of groveling, fear, and cowardice.

“Let me go. I’ll go deep into the mountains and won’t appear again. I’ll never harm anyone. I’ll only attempt my ritual quietly, really. Let me go, please. I beg of you.”

Just then, Klein felt something illusory shatter before his eyes.

Then, Old Neil’s four cold-looking lashless eyes flashed with a dark glow and locked onto Dunn. His expression suddenly turned cold.

“You’re pulling me into a dream!

“No, it’s useless! My eyes can see through all of that!”

The sticky blood that covered the ceiling, floor, and walls started squirming, like a giant opening its mouth to swallow Klein and company. Old Neil’s head grew blurry like overlapping afterimages.

Klein didn’t fumble for his revolver; instead, he extended his hand into his pocket and planned to use his Slumber Charm.

Suddenly, everything calmed down before him. The sticky, bloody liquid suddenly turned placid like a still lake.

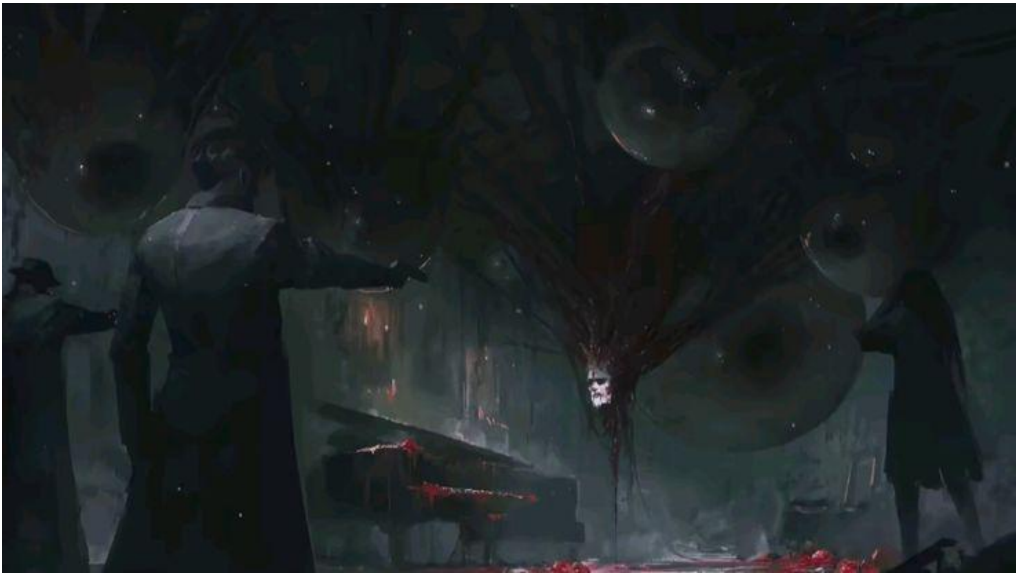
Old Neil lost his coldness, hatred, desire, and all other expressions. He became quiet and peaceful.

It was unknown when Dunn had thrown Sealed Artifact 3-0611 into the blood.

The four lashless eyes on Old Neil’s forehead and cheeks slowly closed, seemingly having lost the desire to keep them open.

Any living creature that came into contact with the Peaceful Hair Strands would turn peaceful and lose all motivation until the end of their life.

Dunn, Klein, and Royale drew their guns at the same time and aimed at Old Neil's head.



Then, Old Neil revealed a look of extreme fear. He was struggling, his strong desire to live fought against the effects of Sealed Artifact 3-0611.

The four extra eyes disappeared. The wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and mouth were still deep, his hair was still white, his crimson eyes were still turbid, just like when Klein had first met him.

"Dunn, do you remember the time I saved you…

"Royale, do you remember when I helped you redeem your family's lives…

"Klein, do you remember how I taught you mysticism every day? Do you remember when we talked about how to make claims? Do you remember how I made you hand-ground coffee? Do you remember when we fought against a Mandated Punisher Rampager?"

†

The illusory pleading echoed in Klein's ears, and his right hand that was holding the revolver trembled. He found it difficult to pull the trigger.

Bang! Bang!

The two silver demon hunting bullets flew out and penetrated Old Neil's head one after another.

Klein watched as the familiar, abnormal face revealed a hopeless expression. He saw the man's skull tear open, the red and white within spurting in all directions.

The sticky blood that coated their surroundings started shrinking as it flowed back into Old Neil's broken head that had fallen to the ground. Dunn and Royale lowered their guns simultaneously, and all was silent.

Klein looked at everything before him—Old Neil's "corpse" was becoming a ball of rotten flesh. He saw that there was a pair of eyes, crimson and crystal clear, yet incredibly pained amidst the blood and flesh.

He felt like everything that had happened was just a dream and found it impossible to bring himself into believing the sequence of events and how it had ended.

He stood dumbfounded as he saw Dunn take two steps forward, his figure stooped.

Dunn looked at Old Neil's "corpse" and muttered heavily, "We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness."

Chapter 165 - Epitaph

◆ ◆ ◆

“We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness.”

[image]

Dunn’s words echoed throughout Old Neil’s house. They reverberated across the corroded floor, the walls, and ceiling, as well as within Klein’s mind and soul.

He’d never had a stronger impression of that sentence than the one he had now.

He felt that he wouldn’t forget this feeling for as long as he lived, even if he were to return to Earth.

Amidst the still atmosphere, Dunn walked towards Old Neil’s “corpse” and kneeled down. He took out a white handkerchief from the pocket of his trench coat and covered it over the dark red, crystalline eyeball which looked pained.

At this moment, Klein noticed that the keys of the piano had stopped moving. A faint, translucent figure appeared.

This… Klein, who had activated his Spirit Vision before entering the house, froze.

He hadn’t noticed this strange “soul” until now!

Was it because he was distracted by Old Neil, or was it due to Old Neil’s abilities after he lost control? Klein saw the formless figure evaporate quickly, vanishing before his very eyes. He had a faint idea of what was going on.

Suppressing the heavy feeling in his heart, he heard the Captain give an order, “Search Old Neil’s house carefully for possible clues.”

“Alright.” When Klein spoke, it took him a minute to recognize his own voice. His voice was raspy and deep as if he had the flu.

“Alright,” Royale also replied.

The condition of her voice is about the same as mine… It’s like our nostrils are blocked… Klein looked at his female teammate, who typically didn’t have much of an expression. It was as if he was knowing her for the first time.

Placing his cane on an umbrella rack near the door, he made his way around Sealed Artifact 3-0611. He took heavy steps into the living room and up to the second floor. He then searched every room for possible clues.

Old Neil employed someone to clean the rooms regularly, so the rooms weren’t as messy as one would expect of a bachelor. Everything was in order as if there was a female presence in the house.

Half an hour later, Klein found a few handwritten notes on a bookshelf in Old Neil’s room. The notes recorded a weird, mysterious ritual:

“Alchemical Life.

“The materials required include: 100ml of spring water from the Spring of Elves (Golden Spring on Sonia Island), 50 grams of Star Crystal, half a pound of pure gold, 5 grams of phlogiston, 30 grams of red iron… And a large quantity of fresh blood from living people.”

Old Neil annotated beneath the part about fresh blood from the living.

“I can consider drawing my own blood, accumulating it little by little and preserve it using ritualistic magic.”

I can consider drawing my own… Klein closed his eyes and crushed the notes.

†

On Thursday morning at nine, the time of the moon. Raphael Cemetery.

Klein was wearing his black formal suit and holding onto his cane. He stood silently in a corner of the cemetery.

He had stuffed a neat white handkerchief in his breast pocket and was holding onto a Slumber flower.

Dunn, Frye, Leonard, and Kenley were carrying a black coffin that stored Old Neil’s corpse. They slowly walked to the front of the tombstone and silently lowered it into the grave.

As she saw the brown soil being tossed into the grave, Rozanne, who was wearing a black dress and a white flower in her hair, wept.

“Can someone tell me if this is all happening for real?

“Why did he lose control, why did he consume the potion, why did he become a Beyonder, why must there be wraiths and monsters, why is there no safer way? Why, why, why…”

Klein silently listened on until Old Neil’s coffin was completely buried in the soil; until all signs that he existed were buried deep within the earth.

“May the Goddess bless you.” He drew a crimson moon in front of his chest, then took a few steps forward and placed the Slumber flower in front of the tomb.

“May the Goddess bless you.” Dunn, Frye, and the others tapped at their chests in a clockwise fashion.

Klein looked up, straightened his back, and saw the black and white photograph on the tombstone.

Old Neil was wearing his classic black hat; his white hair was peeking out around the edges. The wrinkles beside his eyes and mouth were deep, his dark red eyes a little turbid.

He was so peaceful, no longer feeling grief, pain, or fear.

There was an epitaph carved underneath the photograph. It came from the contents of the last entry in Old Neil's diary: "If I cannot save her, then I shall accompany her."

The morning breeze blew gently. The silence and emptiness of the Raphael Cemetery hung over everyone.

†

In the afternoon, Klein took a form signed by the Captain to the armory.

He opened the half-closed door and saw Bredt with a thick, black beard behind the table.

Klein froze visibly before handing the form over.

"Fifty rounds of ordinary bullets."

During his request, he glanced at the tin can on the table. He felt as though he could smell the fragrance of the hand-ground coffee and hear the cheeky words in his ears, "But why must you wait till you have spare cash? You can apply to Dunn and get him to approve of the expenses!"

†

Bredt noticed Klein's expression and sighed.

"I can understand what you're feeling right now. I, myself, cannot believe that Old Neil would leave us like that. Sometimes, I even feel as though this is a dream conjured by the Captain."

"Perhaps this is the destiny of many Nighthawks," Klein replied with a bitter smile.

After this incident, he felt much more disappointment and hatred toward the upper echelons of the Church for keeping the "acting method" a secret.

"Let's hope that there will be fewer such tragedies, may the Goddess bless us." Bredt drew a crimson moon in front of his chest. He took the application form and walked into the armory.

†

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The smell of gunpowder filled the air. Klein vented his frustrations onto the target he was shooting at until he finished shooting the bullets that he had requested. He then collected himself and took a public carriage to Gawain's house.

He completed sets upon sets of exercises as if he was torturing himself, until Gawain told him to stop.

"Combat practice isn't there for you to harm yourself." Gawain looked at Klein with his turbid green eyes.

"I'm sorry, Teacher. I'm a little down today." Klein exhaled and attempted to explain.

"What happened?" Gawain asked without a ripple of emotion.

Klein thought for a moment, then gave a simple reply, "A friend of mine passed away suddenly."

Gawain was silent for a few seconds. He stroked his blond mustache and said with a fleeting voice, “I once lost 325 friends in the span of five minutes, amongst them were 10 that I could trust with my life.”

Klein sighed in realization. “That is the cruelty of war.”

Gawain shot a glance at him and let out a self-deprecating laugh.

“The cruelest thing of all is the fact that I can never exact revenge for them. I can never fulfill their dreams, and the answer eludes me forever.

“As for you, you still have such a chance. Even though I don’t exactly know what happened, I know that you’re still young. You still have many opportunities.”

Klein was silent for a moment. He took in a breath and collected himself.

“Thank you, Teacher.”

Gawain nodded and said without any expression, “Take a ten-minute break, then do ten more sets of the exercises you were doing just now.”

“…” Klein was momentarily unsure what expression he should show.

†

Friday morning, in the recreation room of the Nighthawks.

Klein, Seeka Tron, and Frye were seated around the round table, but they weren’t playing cards. One of them was flipping through newspapers, the other was looking out the oriel windows in a daze, and the last was holding onto a pen, wanting to write something but failing to do so.

The room was quiet. No one spoke, and no one joked around. The atmosphere was heavy.

Phew… Klein exhaled. He lowered his newspaper and planned to focus on reading the materials he had found.

At that moment, Dunn Smith knocked and entered the room. He looked around before saying, “Klein, come out for a moment.”

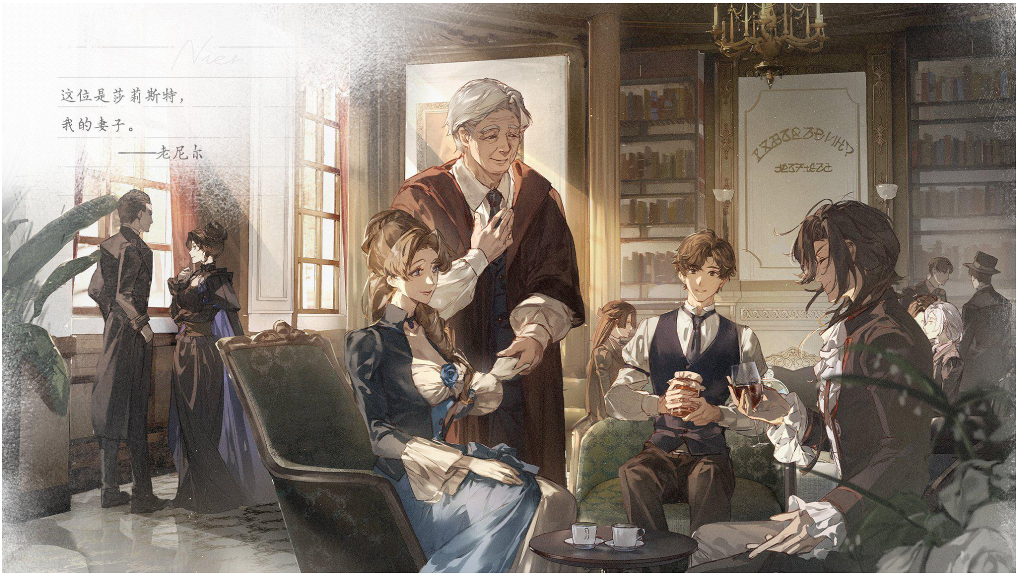
What happened? Klein, who had a premonition of what was happening, stood up and made his way out of the recreation room.

Dunn stood at the entrance of the stairway leading to the basement. He turned and looked at Klein.

“The person that the Holy Cathedral sent is here.”

The person examining me is here? Klein’s nerves tensed.

If fate can be change:.


Nier
这位是莎莉斯特，
我的妻子。
——老尼尔

Goodbye old friend.

Chapter 166 - Examination

◆◆◆

There was a cold breeze blowing from the basement, providing a hint of relief for Klein's tense emotions.

It's finally here.

Once I pass this stage, I won't have to worry about being examined like this for at least half a year…

Once I advance to Sequence 8 and become a so-called "Clown," I'll possess actual combat strength. With the aid of divination and my Flaring Sun Charms for backup, I'll have a chance of surviving even more relatively dangerous situations…

Since I was waiting for the Holy Cathedral's examination, I haven't even dared to withdraw the three hundred pounds that Miss Justice transferred to the anonymous account. Just in case they audit my financial situation and find out that I'm in possession of a large sum of money from an unknown source…

†

Just as Klein's thoughts flashed through his mind uncontrollably, Dunn Smith smoothed his sleeve and said in a low voice, "The person in charge of the examination is one of the nine high-ranking deacons of the Nighthawks, Crestet Cesimir. The Holy Cathedral attaches great importance to you."

"A high-ranking deacon?" Klein blurted in surprise.

In general terms, the thirteen archbishops and nine high-ranking deacons made up the upper echelons of the church. It was said that there was no lack of High-Sequence Beyonders among them!

The twenty-two ladies and gentlemen were all equal in terms of their rankings. They only followed the orders of the Evernight Goddess, and they were only answerable to the Pope.

Dunn took a whiff of the cold wind from the basement before nodding faintly.

“Yes, he’s a high-ranking deacon. But you don’t have to be nervous. Crestet is only a Sequence 5 and has yet to enter a demigod state. So, you don’t have to be too afraid or reverent.

“Oh, his title in the Beyonder world is the ‘Goddess’s Sword.’ As he possesses a holy item, his combat strength is similar to a newly advanced Sequence 4 Beyonder.

“I just chatted with him. He was very friendly.”

If I read between the lines, Captain is telling me that he only said what was necessary. He doesn’t want me to be nervous and go according to the plan… Klein nodded thoughtfully and asked, “Where should I met the high-ranking deacon?”

“The alchemy room where we concoct potions,” Dunn replied simply, as a hint of gloominess flashed across his face.

The alchemy room where we concoct potions? The laboratory where Old Neil made my Seer potion? Klein slowly let out a breath and returned to the Nighthawks recreation room and took his outerwear from the clothes rack.

He put on the black trench coat, placed his hands into his pockets, and walked down the winding stairs that connected to the basement. Then, he took a left turn at the cross junction.

Very quickly, Klein saw a secret door under the light of the elegant gas lamps that lined the walls. He saw that the long tables in the room had been moved aside to open up a large space in the center of the room.

There were two classic high back chairs facing each other with less than a meter in-between them.

There was a man in his thirties wearing a black trench coat and a white shirt seated on the chair that was facing the door.

His golden-brown hair was cut very short, and his blackish-green eyes were as dark as a forest on a moonless night. The collars of his shirt and trench coat were put up, and his entire chin was hidden within the shadows.

“Hello, Reverend Cesimir.” Klein bowed.

Crestet Cesimir had his right leg crossed over his left as he leisurely leaned back into his chair. He smiled and replied, “Hello, Klein. You may sit over there.”

He pointed at the high back chair opposite him.

By the side of his leg was a suitcase made of silver. It was about the size of a violin case.

It can carry a sword with an appropriate length… Klein walked forward and sat at his appointed seat.

Crestet rested his right index finger on his upper lip as he thought for a few seconds.

“I plan to first examine how well you’ve mastered your potion. That’s not a problem, right?”

“Not at all.” Klein shook his head with utmost confidence.

“Very confident.” Crestet smiled but maintained his previous posture. All he did was intently watch Klein.

Klein suddenly felt the light from the surrounding gas lamps vanish, as though they were swallowed by the rich darkness.

He suddenly became exhausted, as though his biological clock had struck the time for sleep.

But, his mind was extremely tense, making it impossible to relax. It was just like when he was unable to sleep peacefully due to over-exhaustion.

The silent "night" filled his surroundings as Klein heard the noise of dripping water from a tap that wasn't closed properly. Then, he heard the conversations in the Blackthorn Security Company and the movement of the wind blowing through the stairway.

Besides that, he didn't see anything that he shouldn't see, nor did he hear any noises that he shouldn't be able to hear.

"Excellent." Crestet's hypnotic voice dispersed the darkness, and the light from the gas lamps inside and outside the alchemy room came into Klein's sight again.

Klein suddenly shook off his exhaustion and returned to his previous energetic self.

He affected me without me realizing it… Is that what a Sequence 5 Beyonder is capable of? This is the horror of a high-ranking deacon? He recalled what had happened and felt a little frightened.

Crestet Cesimir clasped his hands and put them on his knees. He bent down slightly, and his lips were blocked by his collar.

"You passed the test. You achieved a level beyond outstanding in the mastery of your potion.

"I'll need to observe to see if there are any hidden dangers in your mind, to make sure that the potion's remaining spirit hasn't changed your character subconsciously or left some problems behind.

"You have three minutes to prepare."

Klein immediately nodded and said, "Alright."

He secretly took a breath and allowed himself to enter Cogitation to remove various negative thoughts.

Crestet didn't speak again. He took out a silver pocket watch from the inner pocket of his black trench coat and flipped it open.

Then, he attentively watched the second hand move.

Three minutes later, Crestet closed his pocket watch and said with a smile, "I'll begin singing."

Singing? Klein wore a look of confusion.

Before Klein could reply, Crestet started humming a lovely melody.

The melody reverberated in the alchemy room and gradually lost its harmony and went out of tune.

Squeak! Scratch! Zing! Klein heard the noise akin to the scratching of blackboards with nails, the sound of bubble wrap rubbing against each other, electric drills drilling, and various other annoying noises.

The noises intensified and turned more and more chaotic. They made him want to vent his frustrations and cause destruction.

But Klein, who frequently experienced the mad ravings and terrifying screams, restrained his urges very quickly.

He displayed annoyance, tension, frustration, and insecurity at appropriate times.

Being in too perfect of a state would end up being a problem!

It was unknown when Crestet Cesimir had stopped singing. The noises in the alchemy room disappeared and room the was awash with tranquility and silence.

Silence sure is great! Klein exclaimed in his head.

“Very good, excellent. There are no latent problems in your soul. Of course, if you wanted to beat me up or stuff my mouth with something, that’s only normal.” Crestet’s mouth was blocked by his collar so Klein could only determine his emotions through his tone.

“No, I wouldn’t dare,” Klein admitted honestly.

Crestet smiled and said, “Congratulations, you have passed all the tests. Now it’s time for the question and answer session.”

His green eyes suddenly darkened. His gaze was deep, as though he could see through flesh, and looked directly at the spirit.

“Go ahead,” Klein replied, sitting straight.

Crestet maintained his earlier posture and casually asked, “You said that your experience in the Divination Club allowed you to quickly master the potion?”

“Yes,” Klein answered frankly but didn’t describe further.

Crestet nodded slightly and said, “And you said that your inspiration came from the maxim of the Mystery Pryers and also Daly’s example?”

“Yes.” Klein confirmed this first before explaining in detail, “I found out from one of my teammates who was a Mystery Pryer that those who abide by the maxim of the Mystery Pryers have a lower probability of losing control than normal. After that, I heard that Madam Daly once said that she wanted to be a real Spirit Medium and that she is a genius that leveled up to Sequence 7 within two years.

“After noticing both situations, I thought I could give it a try, I attempted to be a real Seer and outlined some principles for a Seer. The outcome was better than I expected. I mastered the potion very quickly.

Reverend Cesimir, I'm not sure if you have had a similar experience. When I fully mastered the potion, there was a very special, very magical feeling…" Klein described his experience as if he only vaguely understood the "acting method."

The man he had been when he was on earth would've been nervous and embarrassed to speak so many half-lies before such a powerful Nighthawk. But ever since he transmigrated to the current world, he had lied so much that he was used to it. He could do it flawlessly.

The darkness in Crestet's eyes disappeared, and his gaze returned to normal. He smiled and said, "Don't worry, it's not an illusion."

From his answer, Klein couldn't see any doubt or scrutiny, so he felt at ease.

"Dunn endorsed your experience. I believe that you really are a genius, with a logical mind and sharp senses," Crestet complimented. He then asked, "Did you share your experience with your teammates?"

"Of course," Klein admitted frankly. "I hope that I can help them lower the risk of losing control. We're teammates, comrades that face danger together. I don't have any reason to hide the truth. But for the same reason, I didn't tell the clerks."

Crestet uncrossed his right leg and sat up straight. His thin lips were exposed from the shadow of his collar.

He lifted the corner of his lips and said, "Although you haven't even been with the Nighthawks for two months, I believe that your understanding of partners is much better than many others.

"Hmm, I plan to share more information with you, but according to the Holy Cathedral's rules, you have to swear to the Goddess that you won't reveal the contents of our conversation to anyone that doesn't know about this.

"That should be fine, right?"

I passed the test? Klein was delighted. He nodded without hesitation.

“No problem!”

Although I won’t be able to teach others the “acting method,” I can let Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man do so indirectly!

Chapter 167 - Holy Artifact

◆

“Alright.” Crestet Cesimir nodded. He leaned forward. “Then swear upon the Holy Artifact.”

As he was saying this, he bent down to lift the silver suitcase by his foot.

Holy Artifact? The Holy Artifact that earned you the title of the Goddess’s Sword? Klein looked at the actions of the deacon curiously.

Crestet placed the suitcase on his knees, his dark green eyes instantly turning black.

He lifted his hand then pressed down. The cover of the silver suitcase which resembled a violin case suddenly dissolved and receded like the tide.

At the same time, Klein felt that the light around him was being drawn forward as if it was being absorbed by the suitcase.

Apart from the lights from the classic lamps that lined the walls, as well as the silver splendor that spiraled within the suitcase, the alchemy room turned pitch dark. The scene looked extremely strange.

Pa!

WIth a crisp snapping sound, Crestet Cesimir opened the suitcase, revealing the pure white bone sword that lay within.

Yes, a bone sword. The moment Klein saw the sword, he knew instinctively that it was mainly made out of bone!

The short sword silently released a pure white glow in the pitch dark alchemy room, as if it were a moon hanging high in the night sky, or a lighthouse in the middle of a storm.

It looked as though the sword had no defects on its surface, but a closer examination would reveal that the surface of the sword was laced with layers of symbols and icons. These mysterious patterns intertwined to form the body of the sword.

Klein observed the holy sword, suddenly realizing that he couldn't look away!

His vision was being drawn towards the sword as his brown eyes slowly lost their luster.

Crestet lifted the suitcase, moving the sword away from its original position.

Klein instantly snapped out of his trance and finally freed himself from the nightmare he couldn't escape before.

He cast his gaze to the side and asked gravely, "Reverend, do you need me to put my hand on the holy sword?"

"Yes, come over." Crestet's voice was melodious as if he was singing a lullaby.

Klein stood up, still looking to the side as he took small steps forward. As it was dark, he couldn't see where the legs of the deacon were, nor his old leather boots.

"Stop," Crestet spoke calmly.

Klein immediately halted and stood on the spot. He took a quick glance at the pure white bone sword through the corner of his eyes before retracting his gaze again, in fear.

With that mere glance, he bent down and extended his right hand, accurately placing it atop the holy sword.

A cold feeling swept through his skin and into his mind. The distracting thoughts and feelings of worry instantly eased, as if he was sitting on a roof in a noisy village, smelling the scent of the harvest and admiring the cosmos.

“Recite after me,” Crestet said solemnly.

“Alright.” Klein nodded.

He then heard the deacon speak in Hermes.

“Standing higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity, the Evernight Goddess.

“I swear to you in my real name and my spirituality.

“I, Klein, will never reveal the details of the ‘acting method’ to those who do not know of it from this moment forth.

“If I go against this, I shall accept any punishment you deem fit.

“Please witness my oath.”

Klein collected himself and made the oath in Hermes, following Deacon Cesimir’s lead.

He had the faint feeling that a connection has been established between him and a faraway being through the pure white bone sword.

After retracting his right hand, he drew a crimson moon on his chest.

“Praise the Lady!”

“Praise the Lady!” Crestet smiled and bowed in response.

Immediately, he closed the cover of the suitcase and pressed down heavily with his right hand.

The darkness was instantly lit up as the light from the lamp once again filled the entire room.

Klein noticed that the black eyes of Deacon Cesimir had regained their usual blackish-green.

He made his way back to his chair and frowned. He asked in puzzlement, “Acting method?”

Crestet cleared his throat. Without answering the question directly, he instead smiled and said, “You might feel a little confused and not understand what I’m about to tell you, but I cannot explain why that is so, for that involves the secrets of the Church.”

You will only have the right to know after you become an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon… Klein looked at Cesimir and added inwardly before Cesimir could say it.

“You will only be permitted to know after you become a core member of the Church, such as an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon,” Crestet emphasized.

Klein nodded sternly.

Crestet placed the silver suitcase back beside his foot and crossed his legs.

“In the long history of time, the Church has had generations upon generations of genius Beyonders slowly figuring out a way to avoid losing control.

“And the core to this method is the name of the potion. It’s not only critical; it’s also the key.”

After looking at Klein’s thoughtful expression, Crestet continued, “We have realized that the names of the potions all point to a certain group, and this group has their own approach and operates in unique ways. In simpler terms, there are a set of rules that come with the name of the potion, different rules for different potions. When we follow these rules strictly, the risk of losing control is reduced to a minimum."

"Similar to my set of Seer principles?" Klein took the opportunity to ask.

This explanation isn't as simple or understandable as the one I gave to Justice and Hanged Man… Klein silently criticized.

"Yes." Crestet gave an affirmative answer. "When we follow the rules of the potion, we become more and more like the group described by the name of the potion. In other words, we are acting as the job that the name of the potion points us toward. That is the 'acting method.' You must remember, the spirituality of every individual is special, unique. Even though the core rules must be followed by the people who consume the same potion, there are always certain variations to the rules that are unique to the individual. Thus, the experiences of others can only serve as a guide."

That is a point that I didn't realize… Klein said sincerely, "Thank you for informing me. I will remember that."

Crestet laughed.

"These are the experiences accumulated over the generations.

"After using the 'acting method,' we not only gain mastery over the potion, we're also digesting it, just as we would our food. When you truly digest the potion, you will feel a unique, mysterious sensation, understood?"

"I understand. 'Digestion,' this term is very appropriate…" Klein pretended to be deep in thought.

After Crestet explained the method in more detail, Klein weighed his words as he asked, "Reverend Cesimir, since the name of the potion is not only the core, but also the key, then how did the first Beyonders obtain them? I heard that it was recorded on the Blasphemy Slate?"

“Yes, that is correct,” Crestet replied frankly. “But the Blasphemy Slate was inscribed with the ancient names. The names of the potions which we use today were derived in part from divine revelations. Some were also consolidated by the experiences of the Beyonders themselves.”

Klein nodded slowly. He pursed his lips and asked, “Reverend Cesimir, since the ‘acting method’ is so effective, why wouldn’t the Church tell every Nighthawk about it?”

“I have said that it is a secret of the Church. You will understand the reason behind it once you become an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon,” Crestet answered, unfazed. “Alright, return upstairs and tell the rest of the Nighthawks to come down one at a time. I have to carry out the final step of the examination.”

That’s to keep Frye and the others from divulging the ‘acting method’? Klein thought as he stood up, he then bade farewell, following the Nighthawks’ etiquette.

He made his way past the corridor and up the stairs, returning to the Blackthorn Security Company. He saw Dunn smoking his pipe near the entrance of the basement.

With a smile, Klein took the initiative to say, “There shouldn’t be any more problems; His Grace wants me to inform Frye and the others to head down for a conversation with him.”

“Yes, that is the last step. That means that there were no problems.” Dunn put away his pipe and headed to the recreation room to tell the rest.

As he watched Frye and Seeka enter the basement, Klein suddenly recalled something. He said in a hurry, “Captain, are we going to have to get Royale who’s guarding over Chanis Gate, and Leonard who’s watching over the asylum? Oh, and Kenley, who’s on break.”

Dunn froze and pinched his forehead.

"I forgot…"

He paused for a moment, then chortled. "But the matter shouldn't be too complicated. One of the advantages of having a high-ranking deacon examine you is that there's no need to send a telegraph to the Holy Cathedral, or engage in a cumbersome exchange of letters. He can make the decision on the spot and hand the formula to the Clown potion as well as the main ingredients to you."

"That's not too bad." Klein couldn't contain his excitement.

†

An hour and a half passed. As Kenley walked out of the alchemy room, his expression full of puzzlement, Klein was once again called downstairs. He met the high-ranking deacon once again, the Goddess's Sword, Crestet Cesimir, a second time.

This time, the golden-brown-haired and blackish-green-eyed deacon wasn't seated. He stood there, allowing the breeze in the basement to blow at his black trench coat.

Crestet's collars stood tall, hiding his chin in the shadows.

He looked at Klein and smiled.

"Nighthawk Klein Moretti, I announce in the name of the Goddess that you have passed the examination of the Holy Cathedral.

"Congratulations. With your contributions, you can immediately advance to become a Sequence 8 Beyonder!"

Chapter 168 - Clown Potion

◆ ◆ ◆

Phew, I finally passed… I passed it just like that…

When Klein heard Crestet Cesimir's announcement, he let out a breath of relief despite being mentally prepared for it. It felt surreal, as though it was a dream.

He had assumed that the examination would be tougher and lengthier, but when he thought carefully about it, he realized that what had just happened was what should've happened. If he had taken the normal three years to digest the Seer potion instead of doing it in a month, the examination wouldn't have even been conducted by the Holy Cathedral. The Tingen Nighthawks' captain would've been responsible for it instead.

I thought they would investigate my family and friends… Hmm, perhaps Cesimir arrived in Tingen two days ago and completed that in secret… I also thought that the examination would require me to complete some task. Heh, I was really overthinking it. The goal of the examination is merely to determine the level of digestion for the potion, as well as detect any latent dangers, and see whether I'm aware of the "acting method" and if I shared my experience with others… These thoughts flew past Klein's mind. He flashed a sincere smile.

"Thank you, Your Grace. Praise the Lady!"

Crestet nodded gently and said, "To advance is to serve the Goddess better, so that you can protect our fellow believers better. You must remember this—trust me—it'll help you fight the temptation of losing control.”

“Temptation…” Klein ruminated over the word.

Crestet sized Klein up with his green eyes and said sternly, “The ‘acting method’ can help you digest the potion and lower the risk of losing control, but it’s not the be-all and end-all. To a certain extent, you can even confuse playing the role and your own existence. You know, there are many actors in the theater that develop severe psychological issues. At a certain level, you might really go insane.”

Remember that you’re only acting… The only point of note concluded by the City of Silver is identical to what Deacon Cesimir said… Klein nodded thoughtfully in agreement.

“In addition,” Crestet emphasized, “Not only is losing control related to the potion, it’s also closely related to your emotions and mental health. The most important thing for a Beyonder is to control yourself. Only then will you be able to withstand the temptations of evil gods and devils, resisting emotions like greed and jealousy, and the erosion of desire. Of course, I don’t mean that you should get rid of all your emotions and desires, because that is something that no human or even demigod can do. Yes, perhaps only some special Sequences are able to achieve that sort of state.”

Klein suddenly thought about Old Neil. He couldn’t help but ask in reply, “We must keep our emotions and desires at a reasonable level, and not allowing them to drive us to do something irrational and abnormal?”

Crestet nodded solemnly.

“Yes.”

After he answered, there were wrinkles at the corner of his eyes.

“That’s all I wanted to warn you about. Now, I’ll pass you the Clown potion formula and the relevant ingredients.”

He bent down and put his silver suitcase on the long table. He then turned around and moved a few steps, blocking Klein's view.

When the surrounding lights strangely vanished again, Klein suddenly understood that the formula and ingredients were in the suitcase that stored the holy artifact. It was simply because his gaze was attracted by the pure white bone sword which was why he didn't notice or perhaps, he couldn't notice, the other items in the suitcase.

After a few minutes, the light of the gas lamps lit up the alchemy room again. Crestet picked up his suitcase and moved away, presenting the items on the long table to Klein.

Among them, the most eye-catching item was the palm-sized gray goat horn. It looked like a miniature version of a normal goat horn and was crystal clear, swirling with colors. There were faint layers of unique patterns.

Next to the goat horn was a blue rose. There were red veins on the petals that connecting them together. It seemed to form a human face with a smile.

Hahaha, woowoowoo, hahaha, woowoowoo… Klein heard illusory laughter and crying diffused with each other, and he saw pieces of gray halos floating in midair.

A crystal of the single horn of a matured Hornacis gray mountain goat and a complete stalk of a human-faced rose. The main ingredients of the Clown potion! He nodded indiscernibly and took a few steps towards the long table.

"80 milliliters of pure water, 5 drops of tornapple juice, 7 grams of black-rimmed sunflower powder, 10 grams of golden cloak grass powder, 3 drops of poison hemlock…" Klein looked at the unfurled goatskin parchment and compared the written content with the formula that he had memorized.

After he confirmed that there was nothing wrong, he recalled the demonstration Old Neil did.

He took a deep breath and exhaled slowly to collect his emotions. With the apparatus in the alchemy room, he distilled some pure water needed by the potion.

In the potion formula, pure water referred to water that was distilled over and over again.

Then, he washed a black metal pot and threw in the supplementary ingredients one after another. He was as skillful as back when he had done chemistry experiments in high school.

As the Beyonder ingredients hadn't catalyzed just yet, he didn't see any obvious changes in the liquid in the metal pot. At most, he only saw powder floating on the surface of the liquid.

When he was done with the preparations, Klein cast his gaze at the two main ingredients and gratefully thought, There's no description of the exact size or weight of the required gray mountain goat's single horn crystal or the human-faced rose. Perhaps a whole horn and a complete rose have no differences, regardless of their weight, allowing them to meet the requirements… Yes, in the world of mysterious Beyonders, this is definitely possible…

If so, I don't have to worry about putting in excessive amounts of the main ingredients!

After a few seconds, Klein picked up the human-faced rose and threw it into the metal pot.

When the strange flower touched the liquid, it immediately produced a sizzling sound. The surrounding illusory laughter became shrill.

Hahaha, hahaha!

Klein didn't delay any further as he immediately grabbed the crystalline mountain goat horn and threw it into the metal pot.

Poof!

The terrifying laughter disappeared all of a sudden, and the surrounding gray halos slowly converged into the metal pot.

Klein lowered his head and saw the liquid in the pot was colored in a mix of gold, yellow, and red. However, the three colors remained extremely distinct at their boundaries.

There were bubbles churning and fizzing from the liquid, but they failed to escape from the pot and ended up bursting silently.

The scene reminded Klein of Sprite, the carbonated drink from his previous incarnation.

This actually looks like a delicious drink… A thought popped into his head that aligned with the characteristics of his culture.

Suppressing his nervousness, excitement, and anticipation, Klein poured the liquid from the black metal pot into a glass bottle.

What shocked him was that there wasn't a single bit of the potion left in the metal pot.

It really is a potion that turns people into Beyonders… Klein raised his right hand, and he looked at the beautiful-looking tri-colored liquid.

Crestet Cesimir, who had been silent the entire time, suddenly smiled and said, "Don't worry. At the very least, I didn't notice any problems with the concoction of your potion.

"I've been waiting here to ensure that no accidents happen after you consume the potion. Don't worry, as long as it isn't anything serious, I should be able to save you."

Okay. Klein nodded and placed the Clown potion back onto the long table.

Then, he took off the silver chain inside his sleeve and let the topaz pendant hang down naturally, a slight distance above the liquid.

To Beyonders of any other occupation, pendulum divinations could only divine a yes or no answer. Of course, when there wasn't enough information, the divination wouldn't yield any useful answers at all. When the pendulum didn't spin, it was called a failed divination.

As a Seer, Klein's pendulum could also vaguely determine the degree of the "yes" or "no" answer.

Klein's eyes grew dark as he recited, "This potion is harmful.

"This potion is harmful."

†

Seven times later, he opened his half-closed eyes and saw the topaz pendant spinning clockwise, but very slowly.

Clockwise means a positive response. In other words, it means that the potion is harmful… However, it spins slowly, which means that it's only slightly harmful… Yes, potions can bring about a loss of control, so there's the possibility of harm. A low level of harm means there is nothing wrong with the potion… Klein let out a breath of relief and wound the pendulum on his left wrist before covering it with his sleeve.

At that moment, Crestet couldn't help but sigh.

"…You really are a professional Seer."

"I must fully utilize my advantage, but I can't rely on it too much and think that it's all-powerful," Klein replied softly and took up the Clown potion bottle.

After drinking it, I'll become a Sequence 8 Beyonder…

The thought flashed in his mind and Klein didn't hesitate. He raised the bottle, tipped his head, and gulped down the potion.

Bitter! So bitter!

It sucks, totally!

He instantly realized what it meant to look good on the outside, but rotten on the inside. His face had contorted as a result of the potion. He wanted to puke, but he couldn't.

Then, Klein realized that his face was flushed red. As for the rest of his body, they were experiencing a similar reaction.

He was convinced that he looked like a steamed lobster. As for his spirit and mind, they felt like they had been extracted into a thin needle, fusing with the potion, drop by drop, as it stabbed into each and every one of cells.

It was a feeling that needed no microscope to observe his cells. Klein stood there and "saw" the intruder invade his body's most minute areas.

For a few seconds, he felt like a robot that was having its parts and electrical circuits swapped out.

After an unknown period of time had passed, his mind reflected his figure, as though he was listening to himself singing through his own ears.

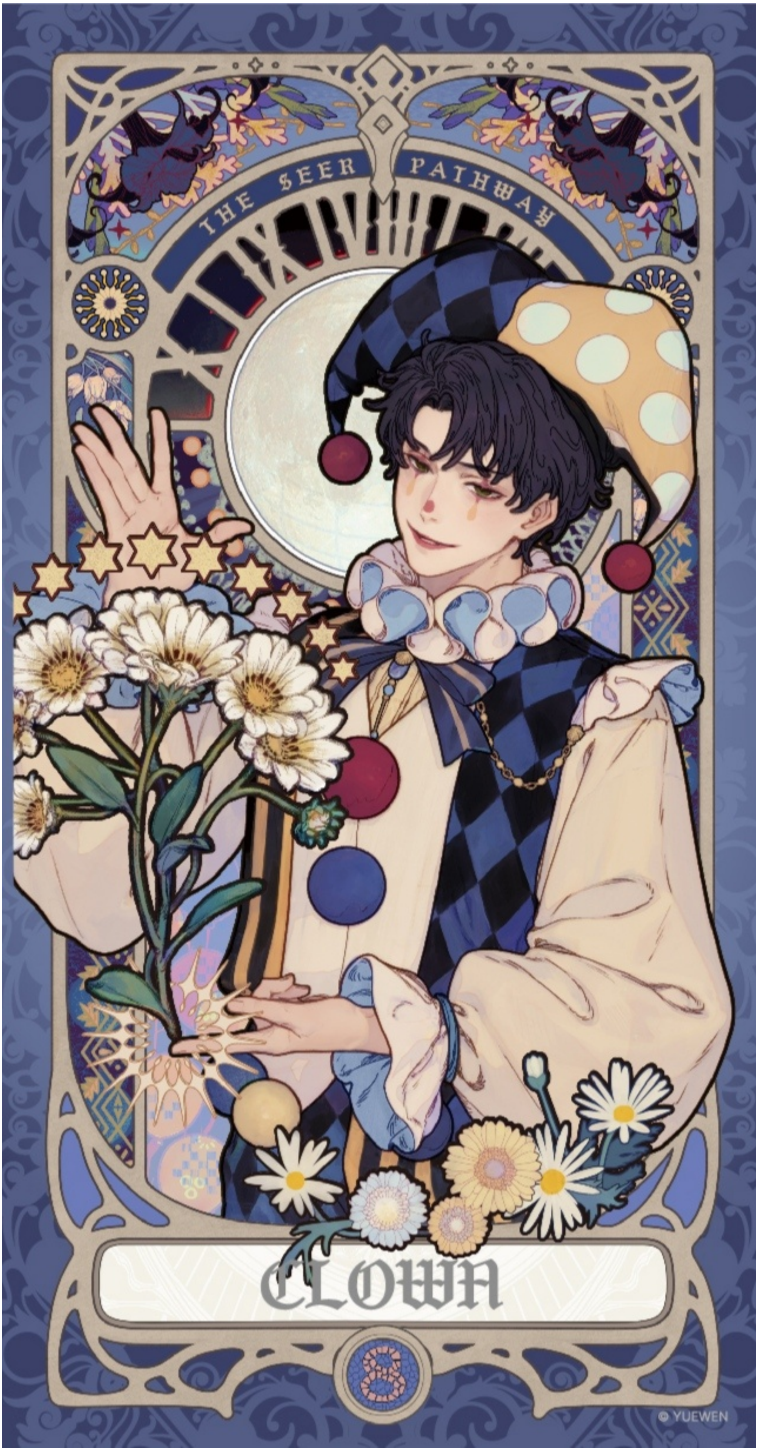
Due to this strange projection, Klein discovered that he could precisely control his facial and bodily motions.

Meanwhile, his ears buzzed. He heard the murmurs and shouting echoing around him which had not happened in a while.

Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…

Phew. Klein imagined the layered spherical light and slowly entered a Cogitation state. Bit by bit, he escaped from the state of having his spirituality seep out where he had a slight loss of control.

At that moment, he knew that he had advanced successfully. He knew that he was a Sequence 8 Clown.


THE SEER PATHWAY
CLOWN
8
© YUEWEN

The Fool Pathway Potion Formula (Sequence 9-8):

[image]

Chapter 169 - New Abilities

◆

After the color in Klein’s eyes went back to normal, Crestet Cesimir said with a laugh, “You can move about and try to get used to the changes in your body. Try to find the core powers that were given to you by the Clown potion.”

Klein nodded. He considered the fact that he might need guidance from the deacon and thus didn’t care about his presence. He repeatedly followed what he had been practicing all this time as he took a step forward. He twisted his hips and threw a punch forward, launching a frontal jab.

Pa!

He heard the crisp sound of his fist breaking the air. The power in the forward thrust exceeded his expectations.

In that instant, he felt as though he was sitting in a carriage which had abruptly hit the brakes. He lost his balance and fell forward.

Oh no! This is about to become an embarrassing story—just like Leonard’s… Klein mused. But at that moment, he noticed that he could still effectively control his muscles, his body, as well as his center of gravity!

He simultaneously exerted force with his spine, tendons, and ligaments, instantly adjusting his center of mass and managing to stand firm despite his distorted posture.

Well… Upon gaining some understanding of this, Klein attempted several other actions. He confirmed that the biggest change in his body was the massive increase in coordination. He would no longer lose his balance unless there were some extenuating circumstances.

I feel like a roly-poly tumbler… I can even act in a circus now! It wouldn't be too hard for me to walk on a rope… The Clown potion sure lives up to its name… Many thoughts flashed through his mind. Klein once again tested the extent of the improvements to his strength, agility, and speed.

Hmm, I should be around the same level as Teacher Gawain. After I get used to this and go through the specialized training, I'll definitely become more powerful… Also, with my current mastery over my body, it would be easy for me to grasp combat techniques. Klein stopped moving and nodded in thought.

According to his plans, he estimated that he would become decent in combat arts only after half a year. But after consuming the Clown potion, he felt that it would only take a month, perhaps two or three weeks, before he could qualify as a policeman that was adept in combat.

That was the difference between an average person and a Beyonder.

In a sense, the talents of Beyonders were beyond the reach of normal humans!

Crestet watched silently as the newly advanced Clown tried out various actions before completely stopping. He then nodded.

"It truly is a potion adept in the field of combat."

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he asked, "What sounds did you hear just now?"

"I heard someone muttering Hornacis." Klein wanted to keep the term Flegrea a secret for the time being.

He wanted to observe the reaction of Deacon Cesimir. If he was willing to relay information regarding the Hornacis mountain range and the Nation of the Evernight, Klein would then add on, saying that he heard something different again.

Crestet nodded slightly, skipping over the topic. He reminded Klein, "Remember, a High-Sequence Beyonder can influence corresponding Low-Sequence Beyonders of the same Sequence pathway to a certain extent. In a way, some parts of the respective pathways contain the Realm of Demigods. The murmurings and howls might have been intentionally conveyed to you by them. They might be filled with malicious intent.

"You must be even more cautious if the Sequence pathway belongs to an evil god. I had a chat with Dunn just now. The Nighthawk in your team who lost control recently met with such a situation."

Old Neil… The Hidden Sage… Klein's expression darkened. He nodded solemnly and said, "Reverend Cesimir, I will remember this. I will not be tempted by the murmurings or howls. I will not be corrupted by them."

At the same time, he thought of something else.

Could this be the reason why the Church only provides the pathways for Sleepless and Corpse Collector, while hiding a large number of the other pathways? After all, the Sleepless pathway belongs to the Evernight Goddess, and Death which corresponds to the Corpse Collector pathway has already fallen… As for why the Church would still offer the Mystery Pryer and Seer, it's because these two jobs are of a support type and can fill the shortcomings of the Sequence 9 and 8 pathways for Sleepless and Corpse Collector. Furthermore, they're only at the beginning of the pathway, so the influence they can gather wouldn't be too prominent…

But this doesn't explain why they would hide the names and unique traits of the potions… or the lack of information as to what one should take note of when facing them…

Klein retracted his thoughts when he saw Crestet Cesimir pick up his suitcase to leave. He adopted a curious tone.

“Reverend Cesimir, I would like to know how to act as a Clown. Do I have to go to a circus?”

Crestet smoothed his tall collar and chuckled.

“According to our current understanding of philosophy, you just made the mistake of formalism.

“You need to understand that the name of a potion not only represents a job. It also represents a group of people that share certain traits. For example, we can also describe Seers differently. We can call them people who can see fate, yet remain respectful of fate. Of course, as I mentioned before, there are some differences to the rules concluded by each individual even if they consumed the same potion. You cannot completely reference the experiences of another person, do you understand?”

Klein nodded in thought.

“I think I can understand some of it. I can act as a Clown in my daily life, as long as I have grasped its essence?”

“In theory,” Crestet answered, being careful about his choice of words.

“…I understand.” Klein drew a crimson moon on his chest. “Thank you, Reverend Cesimir. May the Goddess bless you.”

Hmm, just what is the essence of a Clown? If I don’t take into consideration what a clown represents back on Earth and only think about what it means in this world, a clown is a job that entertains people using ridiculous methods. For example, hilarious getups, exaggerated actions, trickster-like performances? The core is that it must be ridiculous, and it must entertain others. It feels a little off… Must I consider it from the perspective of court jesters from ancient times? Klein thought about it silently as he felt at a loss.

Crestet looked at him and also drew a crimson moon before his chest.

He smiled, revealing the wrinkles at the corner of his eyes.

“May the Goddess bless you too.”

At that moment, Klein suddenly perceived something, an intuition that felt like a prediction, that Deacon Cesimir would put his left foot forward!

He then saw Crestet pick up the silver suitcase and step toward the entrance of the alchemy room with his left foot!

One step, two steps, three steps. Klein watched as Crestet walked out of the hidden door, his figure vanishing into the corridor.

This… He was dazed for a moment before he felt intense excitement.

The Beyonder powers of the Clown potion were more powerful than he imagined!

He could intuitively predict a person’s next course of action!

Was the combination of this ability, coupled with his powerful coordination, exceptional agility, and speed, as well as decent strength, considered being good at fighting with artifice? Klein thought about this revelation.

So, this can be considered the manifestation of the Seer’s abilities in Sequence 8, but it’s not enough… This pathway must be one that gives a unique ability every time I advance before reaching a High-Sequence Beyonder. But the intuitions I get are fleeting, so I don’t think I can take advantage of them every single time. Of course, this ability is powerful enough as it is. Taking advantage of it once should be enough to turn defeat into victory… Oh right, after I reduce the influence of the negative effects that come with the Clown potion, I can try the ritual to summon myself. I nearly forgot about that… Yeah, the Captain must have infected me with his awful memory!

In the midst of his thoughts, Klein observed himself once again. He wanted to see if the Clown potion had brought along any other abilities.

According to the confidential records of the Nighthawks, if the potion would allow the person who consumed it to gain mastery over a certain spell, the person would be able to faintly detect what kinds of spells he obtained after advancing as if he was being instilled with knowledge.

But I don't sense any of that. In other words, Clown doesn't come with the ability to quickly cast spells, as reported in the confidential records of the Nighthawks… Could the meaning of "crafty" be that I can now effectively use my expressions and body language to more easily fool people with my lies? Klein stretched his neck while seriously analyzing his current condition.

At this moment, he couldn't help but think back to the suited clown he had encountered previously. The clown's peculiar and varied spells had left a deep impression.

Hmm, that member of the Secret Order is probably a Sequence 7 Beyonder. His clown getup was purely to mask his facial features to avoid being placed on a wanted list… It's no wonder that he could hold his own against two Sequence 7s and a Sequence 8… If he had deciphered the fact that I wasn't under the influence of Sealed Artifact 2-049 and avoided falling under its control, ten of me might not have been enough to deal with him.

Of course, Clown is not completely devoid of spells. There are still spells like these…

Klein walked toward the long table and picked up the piece of paper that the Clown formula was written on.

His pupils darkened and with a flick of his wrist, he tossed the piece of paper into the air.

Pa!

It was as if the soft piece of paper had become a dagger, and it pierced itself into the wall of the alchemy room!

I can bring a deck of tarot cards with me in the future. They can be used both for divination or as weapons. Klein collected himself and started to pack up the objects left behind from the potion's concoction.

After dealing with this and burning the formula for the potion, Klein exhaled and left the alchemy room, closing the secret door behind him.

For the time being, he didn't feel like trying to entertain others through ridiculous methods because of what happened to Old Neil. He intended to lessen the influence of the potion through Cogitation first.

Phew, this is going to be a brand new experience again… No matter what happens, I'm no longer just a supporting member… Yes, ever since Old Neil passed away, I'm the only one left in the Tingen Nighthawks team that can provide support. The Holy Cathedral will most likely send a Mystery Pryer or a Seer to the team… Klein followed the wall lamps, walking down the dark corridor, and calmly made his way up the stairs leading to the Blackthorn Security Company.

He then saw the sunlight in the Nighthawks' recreation room.

The sunlight shone in through the oriel window, sunlight which was pure and warm.

Chapter 170 - Copper Whistle

◆

Klein turned towards the Captain’s office and saw that the door was wide open. Dunn Smith was leaning back in his chair, sniffing at his pipe.

When Dunn swept his gray eyes at him, he changed his seating posture.

“You seem to be in good shape, nothing like someone who had just consumed a potion.”

“This might be the advantage of fully digesting a potion before leveling up.” Klein closed the door behind him and took a seat.

He and Dunn both knew about the “acting method,” so their oath didn’t keep them from talking about the “acting method” with each other. They could exchange their thoughts about it, but the two of them didn’t bring it up with a tacit understanding. They fell silent at the same time after the exchange.

Klein thought and asked, “Has His Grace left?”

“Yes, as a high-ranking deacon, he has other matters to take care of.” Dunn thought for a moment. “Oh, he took the pair of red eyeballs that remained after Old Neil died.”

Klein was shocked and confused.

“Why?”

Dunn picked up his coffee and took a sip. He answered after a long silence, "We shouldn't lie to ourselves. A Rampager is in fact already a monster, and as I told you before, monsters leave behind things that are rich with Beyonder powers after they die. When these relics can't be controlled, they have to be sealed. Yes, that is one of the most common origins of Sealed Artifacts. According to the Nighthawks' internal rules, the items left behind by Rampagers need to be stored elsewhere, so that they won't trigger their partners."

"A logical rule." Klein nodded heavily.

Suddenly, he sharply noticed that the Captain had missed out something. So, he asked curiously, "What if the item left behind is controllable?"

Dunn looked at him, his gray eyes were deep like a quiet night.

He sighed and said, "You wouldn't want to know the answer."

Klein was taken aback before he suddenly realized a possibility.

Normal monsters left behind Beyonder ingredients which could be used to make potions.

But what of a Rampager who turned into a monster?

If they left behind controllable items, would those things be used as Beyonder ingredients?

Upon realizing that, Klein suddenly felt a strong sense of disgust. He couldn't help but turn his head to retch. Even his sight suddenly grew blurry.

This is such a terrifying theory… But it's an answer that's highly likely of being closer to the truth! In that instant, he had a deeper understanding of sayings like "To fight against the abyss, we have to endure the corruption of the abyss," and "We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness."

Would this be one of the reasons why the Church hides the “acting method”? So that they can recycle a certain number of their own members for spare parts? But this will make members of the upper echelons reject the Church… Klein’s face clearly reflected his changing expressions.

Upon seeing his response, Dunn suddenly laughed. There was a twinkling light in his gray eyes.

“Think about it on the brighter side of things, you can think of it as our teammates watching over us in a different form. They will be with us forever.”

After saying that, Dunn lowered his head, picked up his coffee, and brought it to his mouth.

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, he lifted his head and said, “And you don’t have to worry. As long as we can find sources of Beyonder ingredients, we wouldn’t do what you were thinking about.

“Alright, according to the rules, you’ll receive a day off since you just advanced. You can decide whether or not you want to go to your combat training this afternoon, but you have to inform Gawain either way.”

Klein gently nodded. Taking a deep breath, he straightened his back and said, “Captain, I have finished my lessons on mysticism. I’d like to use my mornings to learn techniques such as tracking and monitoring.”

He paused and added with a serious expression, “I’d like to fulfill my full duty as a Nighthawk soon.”

Dunn gave him a piercing look and sighed.

“You’re tougher than I imagined. As you wish.”

“Yes, Captain!” Klein suddenly stood up and drew a crimson moon on his chest.

†

After leaving the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein didn’t return home to rest, but instead, took the opportunity to take a trackless carriage to Azik’s place.

Ding dong, ding dong.

As the doorbell rang clearly, Azik opened the door in a white shirt and black vest.

There was a gold watch chain hanging from his vest pocket.

“Don’t you need to work?” Azik took a glance at the sky and realized that the sun had yet to climb to its peak.

“I actually have most of the day off due to some special circumstances,” Klein explained vaguely.

Azik looked at him and appeared to notice something as he nodded and made way for Klein’s entry.

At the hallway, Klein set his cane aside, took off his hat, and followed Azik to the living room.

The living room was comfortably furnished with a fireplace, rocking chair, couches, and a coffee table. Klein sat at his usual spot.

Azik sat down opposite Klein and pointed at the cigars on the coffee table.

“Do you want one?”

“No.” Klein shook his head firmly.

Azik didn’t attempt to persuade him as he struck a match and lit one of the cigars. At the same time, he asked casually, “Have you taken care of the matter at Morse Town?”

“I have to thank you for that,” Klein replied sincerely.

At the same time, he secretly lampooned, Mr. Azik, before you lost your memories, you definitely must’ve left behind quite a sizable wealth for yourself. Otherwise, how could a teacher who isn’t even an associate professor be able to enjoy cigars so frequently?

As Azik was fiddling with his cigar, Klein brought up a matter.

“Mr. Azik, I have something to ask you.”

“What is it?” Azik replied without lifting his head.

Klein paused and organized his words.

“One of my colleagues lost control and became a monster. I’d like to know if his spirit was contaminated?”

He wasn’t certain if Mr. Azik knew the meaning of “losing control,” so he prepared an explanation, just in case.

Azik stopped what he was doing and lifted his head to look at Klein. He nodded heavily and said, “No doubt. You have to be very careful in a situation like that. If he lost control due to the temptation of an evil god or devil, try to avoid contacting his spirit. It might very likely lead to life-threatening danger.”

“I understand.” Klein let out a breath of disappointment.

When he was at Old Neil’s place, he was too emotional and had forgotten to contact Old Neil’s spirit. Neither did Dunn Smith remind him at all. Hence, he missed the opportunity entirely.

Now that I think of it, Captain didn’t forget but intentionally avoided bringing it up… Klein was silent in thought.

He didn’t dwell on the topic and instead mentioned his previous encounter.

“Mr. Azik, I tried to divine the origins of Morse Town’s paranormal incidents. I ended up seeing an upside-down pyramid that extended underground. My teammate told me that it’s a symbol of Death. Only His descendants would receive such an honor.”

Azik put down the match and took up the cigar cutter when he suddenly fell into a daze. He was motionless for quite a while.

He leaned back into his seat and wore an unusually gloomy expression.

After a while, he said in a deep voice, “This gives me a very familiar feeling, but I don’t seem to be recalling anything.”

“I’m very sorry.” Klein sighed sincerely.

He had imagined that he could use the revelation obtained from his divination to further jolt Mr. Azik’s memories.

Azik cut off the cigar cap, shook his head, and smiled bitterly.

“If it was something that could be recalled easily, I think I would’ve long found a way to escape my fate. Of course, I have to thank you for your kindness. Thank you for remembering about me this entire time.”

He thought for a moment before adding, “Oh, and I’ll be leaving Tingen in the near future.”

“Why?” Klein asked in surprise.

Didn’t we say that we were going to find the manipulator behind the scenes, the person who affected my fate, and stole your child’s skull?

Azik held his cigar and sighed before explaining, “The target might’ve noticed my attention and investigation. He hasn’t been taking any action recently, leaving me with no clues. Thus, I’m thinking of leaving Tingen for the time being and going to Backlund. On one hand, I can take the opportunity to search for traces that I left behind before I lost my memories. On the other hand, my absence might let the target lower his guard.”

That’s right. Mr. Azik’s last memory loss was around Backlund University. It’s a pity that you can’t take my place, searching for the red chimney house… Klein nodded solemnly and said,

“I’ll pay close attention to this. Once the target takes action and exposes himself, I’ll inform you immediately.

“Hmm. Mr. Azik, how will I inform you of things in a timely manner?”

Klein had the idea that if Azik was Death’s descendant, or if he was linked to Death in a certain way, his powers would have been something similar to the Corpse Collector Sequence. He definitely had a way to call something like Daly’s messenger.

In other words, this could confirm if Azik was actually related to Death or a descendant of Death.

Azik took a puff of his cigar and thought for nearly twenty seconds. He took out an ornament from his left sleeve.

It was an intricate but old copper whistle. There were many unique patterns that filled it with a mysterious aura.

“This is something that I had with me when I woke up in Backlund. When you blow it, you’ll summon a messenger that belongs to me.” Azik held the copper whistle as he explained in detail.

After so many years, this copper whistle can still be used? This should be a mystical item, right? Klein was surprised and delighted that he had indirectly proved that Mr. Azik was related to Death.

Azik gave Klein a glance, then he put the copper whistle to his mouth and demonstrated.

His cheeks puffed up as he blew with all his might.

Nothing was heard, but Klein felt a sudden gloominess and coldness.

He quickly tapped his left molar and saw that there were blurry white bones being thrown up from the ground, one after another, forming a strange fountain.

After a few seconds, there was an illusory monster in the living room.

Its body was made of white bones, and there were dark flames glowing in its eye sockets. It was almost four meters tall, and it towered over Klein, who wasn't even 175cm tall.

As he watched its head nearly tear through the ceiling, Klein suddenly had a thought, Mr. Azik, isn't your messenger a little… too exaggerated?

Azik didn't share those thoughts at all. He smiled and said, "After you pass the letter to it, blow the whistle again to end the summoning. Then, it'll send the letter to me very quickly, in a secretive manner."

After that, Azik shook his wrist and threw the old copper whistle across the room.

Klein extended his right hand and accurately caught it. He found it cold but mild.

Thank you Clown potion… He breathed a sigh of relief. He wiped the whistle and blew it hard.

Silently, the huge messenger fell apart as blurry white bones sank underground.

†

The Tussock River ran through Backlund and harbors that dotted around the area.

Alger Wilson wore the long priest robes of the Church of Storms as he walked down from the passenger ship slowly.

He saw people walking to and fro around the harbor with countless port workers sweating under the sun. It was a bustling yet noisy scene.

“It’s been a while, Backlund,” Alger muttered to himself.

Chapter 171 - Promotion and Pay Raise

◆

After leaving Azik's house, Klein took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

As he opened the door to his house, he suddenly saw a figure sitting in his dining room.

Klein instinctively tightened his grip on the cane in his hand, but quickly realized what was going on. It wasn't a thief, but his maid, Bella.

Bella was focused on reading a spread-out newspaper on the table. She jumped in shock when she heard the door open, quickly standing up and stammering, "I-I was just done with the tasks for the morning. I was w-waiting for the water to boil so that I could eat some bread."

I'm still not really used to having a maid in the house… Klein mocked himself. He took off his hat and nodded.

"Reading is a good habit. To be able to persist in reading, despite the busy workload, is something that's encouraged by the Goddess."

He used the name of the Goddess just in case Bella took his compliment as sarcasm.

But in reality, only the God of Knowledge and Wisdom would place this much emphasis on reading… Of course, all of the Churches advocate education… Yes, since she's about 18 years old and believes in the Goddess, Bella's love for reading must be influenced by her parents. Parents like this would send their daughter to receive an education as long as they can afford it. Even if they cannot afford public schools, there are always the free schools provided by the Church. At most, it would just delay her education… Thus, Bella isn't illiterate. She can understand words and read the newspaper… Klein thought as he walked into the living room after setting his cane down.

He had quite a good impression of Bella.

Even though she was a little clumsy and obviously not used to the kitchen, she had shown a willingness to learn.

Bella let her hands hang down and said, embarrassed, "I didn't have the opportunity to read many newspapers in the past. The landlord didn't let us use old newspapers to clean the walls… I stole a glance at it when I picked up the newspapers just now to clean the coffee table. I thought that-that it was rather interesting."

What a pitiful lady. When I transmigrated, newspapers were the least interesting of things… Klein thought as he lampooned. He smiled and took out the silver pocket watch from his pocket. After looking at the time, he said, "As long as you complete your tasks and do them well, you are free to do whatever you want with the rest of your time. You don't need to be too nervous. Of course, if I'm having a chat with Benson and Melissa, it's best that you stay in your room. I will allow you to use the lamp inside and take a few old newspapers with you."

"Oh, please knock at my door at one in the afternoon, then prepare a cup of Sibe black tea, two pieces of soft white bread, a piece of wheat toast, and a small plate of butter for me."

In order to celebrate his advancement to Sequence 8, Klein decided to spoil himself slightly. He was going to eat the white bread ahead of Benson who was planning on having it over the weekend.

Well, I'll buy eight more pounds of bread soon. In the future, we shall make the change in our staple dish, from wheat bread to white bread! As a Sequence 8 Beyonder, my weekly pay is definitely going to increase… To think that the Captain didn't mention this… He forgot again! Klein froze for a moment and decided to clarify it tomorrow.

"Alright," Bella replied in surprise and joy.

Following that, she asked with a little uncertainty, "Mr. Klein, do you mean the Sibe black tea used to entertain guests?"

She called him by his first name as Moretti could be used to refer to anyone in the family.

"Yes, that shall be my usual tea in the future." Klein waved his hand and made his way towards the stairs.

He suddenly noticed that he was in a decent financial situation after becoming a Clown.

This was partly because there were no other large expenses for the time being. He only needed to spend two soli on transport while he was investigating the houses with red chimneys, and on the materials that he needed to purchase occasionally. Claims could be made for the latter most of the time anyway.

Also, there was a sum of 300 pounds in Klein's anonymous bank account. It was important to understand that one are[1] of land in the countryside only cost five to six and a half soli, which was another way of saying that Klein could afford 920 to 1200 ares of farmland, which was equivalent to 137 to 179 mou[2], or 23-30 acres back on Earth. Furthermore, this sum of money could allow Klein to buy a house on Daffodil Street on a contract for 15 years.

If I convert all that money into land, I'll get between 23 and 31 pounds a year in rent… That's not bad, but not necessary for the time being. I'll use that 300 pounds for emergencies… I'll have to find an opportunity to tell Benson and Melissa about my true weekly salary! Klein thought as he entered his room.

After locking the door to his room, Klein sat on the edge of his bed and started his Cogitation. He wanted to use this method to slowly control the powers seeping out of his potion. He was very careful and very cautious.

He had thought of the term “losing control” very lightly until he saw the Mandated Punisher who had lost control.

Of course, he didn’t know that Mandated Punisher personally. He also didn’t know what had happened to him. He subconsciously thought of him as an anomaly, a rare case.

It was just like how an average person would make comments about a murder they saw on the news before forgetting about it entirely.

But what happened to Old Neil shook Klein greatly. It made him realize very clearly that losing control was always a possibility, always around him. Loss of control might descend upon him in ways he had never thought about!

That sure was a bloody lesson… Klein ended his Cogitation and muttered to himself as he opened his eyes.

He had dreamed of that scene many times in the past few days, jolting awake in the process and finding himself drenched in cold sweat.

He wasn’t only grieving Old Neil’s death, but also worried about his future. If he didn’t have Cogitation to help him sleep, he believed that there would be many sleepless nights in his future.

Other than digesting the potion, I also have to try my best to control my emotions and desires. I have to keep them within reasonable levels and not be consumed by them… Klein exhaled and laid down, quickly falling asleep.

On the day that Old Neil passed away, Dunn’s actions and words had touched him greatly. It made him critically assess the responsibilities of a Nighthawk for the first time. It made him want to take up his responsibilities and help his Captain and teammates.

Thus, he didn't intend to waste his afternoon. He was going to continue his combat lessons.

†

Three in the afternoon, on a crude training field.

The blond crew-cut Gawain creased his brows as he witnessed Klein slowly familiarize himself with the motions, going from the movements of a decent beginner to the movements of an apprentice knight who had been practicing for a good six months.

All this happened in the short span of forty minutes!

He called for Klein to stop and sized him up. He couldn't help but ask, "What happened?"

Klein had already come up with an excuse. He was prepared to attribute his performance to scientific research when Gawain added, "You don't need to answer if it's inconvenient for you to do so."

It looks like there was some communication between the police department and Gawain… It makes sense; he has to train Beyonders occasionally, so how could he not know? Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He smiled as he said, "Teacher, how long do you think I will need before I can take part in actual combat?"

Gawain crossed his arms and looked at Klein seriously. He replied with a raspy voice, "Two or three days, but that isn't enough!"

He explained, as if in thought, "Being able to take part in actual combat isn't the same as being good at fighting. The latter would take another two to three weeks.

"Furthermore, you need to gain mastery over weapons that you can bring with you, for example, a cane, whips, daggers, and triangular blades!"

…There’s still so many to learn? Klein was dumbfounded.

Gawain swept his experienced gaze at him.

“Remember, every drop of sweat you lose here might save your life in the future.”

“Yes, Teacher!” Klein pumped himself up and answered.

†

On Sunday morning, Klein entered the Blackthorn Security Company and knocked on the door of the Captain’s office.

Dunn Smith looked up as if he was expecting this.

“I forgot to inform you yesterday. Your position at the police department has risen from probationary inspector to inspector now that you have advanced to Sequence 8. I’ll get them to issue the appropriate documents and epaulets to you as soon as possible.

“Your weekly salary will also increase from six pounds to ten pounds. The Church and the police department will each bear half of your salary. This salary is the level of an experienced Nighthawk; of course, I mean an experienced Nighthawk at Sequence 9.”

…Captain, are you following the wrong script? Klein was taken aback as he listened to the Captain. His eyebrows relaxed as he smiled.

“That’s more than I imagined.”

He had imagined that his weekly salary would only increase to eight pounds.

Dunn lifted his cup of coffee and took a sip.

“The increase in salary for Nighthawks is firstly dependent on years of service, second on contribution, and third on the level of your job. The third criterion is often highly correlated with your contributions."

Right, without any contributions, even if one were to digest their potion, they would be unable to apply for the formula and materials… Klein nodded while in thought.

A weekly salary of 10 pounds, coupled with any bonuses would mean a yearly salary of about 540 pounds. Since he didn't need to pay any taxes, this salary was fairly high in the middle-income bracket, just lower than desirable occupations such as esteemed lawyers, famous architects, experienced surgeons, and government workers.

Even the vice president of the Loen Kingdom's treasury only makes 700 pounds a year before tax. That's at most 640 pounds after tax, probably lower… According to the newspapers, a decent house in Backlund and Hillston only costs about 2500 pounds. With Benson, Melissa, and my current expenditure, we could buy one in seven or eight years… To be able to afford a bungalow in the central area of the capital in just seven or eight years purely through my own efforts, this salary makes me happy indeed… Klein got up and bade farewell. He quickly walked to the basement and took his shift at Chanis Gate.

Before it was ten, he suddenly heard someone approaching Chanis Gate.

Soon after, Dunn appeared at the door.

"There's a case that requires your help."

"An incident involving Beyonders?" Klein instinctively asked.

"No, a parliamentary representative of this city, Mr. Maynard, was found dead in his house. The Tingen Police Department is under huge pressure and wants us to use a mediumship ritual to help them pinpoint the murderer. Currently, you are the only person on the team who can do that," Dunn explained. Then he added, "The Holy Cathedral will send over a Mystery Pryer to our team next week. Actually, it should've been done a long time ago, but you happened to join and chose to be a Seer.”

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†

A metric historical unit of measurement, equal to 100 square meters.

Chinese unit of land measurement that varies with location but is commonly 666.5 square meters.

Chapter 172 - “Autopsy”

◆

“How long has the Member of Parliament been dead for?” Klein asked straightforwardly as he packed up his things.

If it was more than fifteen minutes, the information that he could obtain would decline considerably. If it was more than an hour, there would be very little left to find.

If it was more than a month, contact with the spirit of the dead would most likely fail.

“Regrettably, the initial autopsy report shows that Mr. Maynard died between nine and eleven last night.” Dunn shook his head and said, “You only need to provide assistance and not consider if you can be of use.”

“Alright.” Klein took his coat and walked out of the duty room with his hat and cane in hand. Dunn Smith took his place at the Chanis Gate guardroom.

Theoretically, as a Beyonder, as long as one’s spirituality was enhanced, things like Spirit Vision, divination, and ritualistic magic could be learned. Especially for Beyonders from the Sleepless Sequence who were known for their high spirituality.

But in actual fact, the differences between the various sequences was vastly obvious. Dunn Smith and Leonard Mitchell had learned Spirit Vision, but they could only see faint white or light blue in the auras of others. They were unable to precisely differentiate the status of different body parts. Of course, they could definitely see spiritual things with Spirit Vision, but doing so wasn't as effective as using their spiritual perception.

That also led to a problem in which Beyonders at the Sleepless, Midnight Poet, and Nightmare Sequences didn't enjoy activating their Spirit Vision.

Similarly, if they were willing to, they could also learn spirit pendulums, dowsing, dream divination, and so on. But their rate of success wasn't something worth noting.

It was the same situation with ritualistic magic as well.

When the two of them walked past one another, Dunn suddenly said, "I forgot to tell you that Inspector Tolle is in charge of the case. He's waiting for you at the reception hall in the security company. Remember to change into your new uniform and grab your new documents."

Klein wasn't surprised and replied with a smile, "New uniform, new documents? The Tingen Police Department sure is efficient."

He had just advanced to Sequence 8 the day before…

"It's because this case is very important, so…" Dunn spread his hands and took up Klein's previous spot.

Klein walked upstairs, but he wasn't in a hurry to go to the reception hall. He entered the Nighthawks' break room and entered the attached bathroom to relieve himself. There was only a toilet bowl, a water bottle, and a bucket in the duty room.

Then, he changed into his police uniform that revealed his promotion to two silver stars and put on his peak cap with the "two crossed swords and a crown."

After transferring his Flaring Sun Charm, Azik's copper whistle, his ritual ingredients, and other items, Klein smoothed out his uniform, took his cane, and exited the break room.

He passed through the partition and saw Inspector Tolle seated in the sofa area.

It had been a while since they last met. The tall police officer seemed to have gained some weight, and his stomach was even more outstanding. With his thick mustache and hair, he looked like a brown bear that had just escaped from a circus.

“I’m glad to work with you again.” When Tolle saw that it was a Nighthawk that he knew, he let out a breath of relief. He stood up and extended his bear paw.

No, palm… Klein corrected himself and shook the other person’s hand as a polite gesture.

“Me too.”

Tolle stole a glance at Klein’s two shimmering silver stars shoulder strap and said with envy, “We’re at the same rank now, and it hasn’t even been a month.”

At first, Klein wanted to reply solemnly that “The danger that we encounter is ten times worse than yours,” but he remembered his identity then: Sequence 8 Clown.

Maybe I can give it a try… Using his spirituality, he looked at the reflection of his facial expression. He lifted the corner of his lips and replied with a smile, “Maybe in another few months, you’ll have to call me ‘Sir.’”

“You sure are humorous.” Tolle chuckled and pointed at the door. “Shall we head out?”

“Alright.” Klein hadn’t given up his cane. Now that he had become a Clown, the cane was truly a viable weapon.

After exiting the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein and Tolle walked down side by side, forming a great contrast due to the skinniness and fatness of the two.

“I feel like we could even make an audience at the circus laugh,” Klein suddenly jested.

Tolle nodded in absolute agreement and said, “Yes, I feel our vast contrast brings a comedic effect. Do you know that some circuses are trying to use fat and skinny, tall and short clown combinations in their performances?”

No, actually I meant a beast tamer and a brown bear… Klein, of course, wouldn’t make such a rude remark. He went along with it and replied, “It’s a pity that there are no fixed circuses in Tingen.”

“That’s right, but we have operas, theaters, and music halls,” Inspector Tolle replied wistfully.

They casually chatted until they got onto the police carriage. Then, Klein redirected the topic back to the case.

“Is it confirmed that Mr. Maynard was murdered?”

“We can’t be certain, but his wife and two sons aren’t willing to believe the possibility that he died due to a sudden illness. And there was really something wrong at the scene. When Maynard was found, he was naked on the guestroom’s bed,” Tolle said as he deliberated.

“He sleeps separately from his wife?” Klein leaned back against the carriage wall and mimicked the main character in various detective films.

Tolle shook his head and said, “No, his wife hasn’t been in Tingen recently. She went to Backlund to attend a very important social ball. You might not know, but she’s the leader of a new party. She’s the daughter of someone from the House of Commons. She’s still on her way back to Tingen via steam locomotive. She merely used the telegram to express her opinion on this matter.”

“Maynard is also a member of the new party. He’s been a Tingen’s Member of Parliament for more than ten years. He intended to run for mayor in next year’s election.”

“In other words, his death might be related to this?” Klein asked casually and immediately laughed. “I’m sorry, I’m only supposed to be helping with the autopsy. The rest of the matter is not within my area of concern, you don’t have to answer.”

Tolle didn’t mind much but sighed.

“Autopsy… You’re very cautious.”

“As for your guesses, I would only say that there’s a possibility. There was a gathering last night at Maynard’s place. There were too many guests, and we temporarily can’t find any main suspects. Plus, these guests have decent backgrounds, so we have to be very careful. We can’t make any mistakes.”

“I understand.” Klein nodded faintly and asked about the details of the scene.

Maynard’s house was a bungalow located in the Golden Indus borough. It was surrounded by gardens and fields, there was a stable, a fountain, and a broad pathway built from cement.

Klein put on his peak hat with its police badge and followed behind Inspector Tolle. They passed through the police streamer and entered the double-story house under the gaze of every policeman present.

In the living room, there were two male and four female probationary inspectors who were talking to people individually to gather statements.

Klein looked around and saw many gentlemen in tuxedos and a few ladies in glamorous dresses and checkered gauze hats.

"They're the guests who spent the night here," Tolle explained and led Klein up the stairs to the second floor directly.

Along the way, when the police constables who were searching through the rooms saw the two, they revealed a look of respect without stopping them. Perhaps it was the effect of the inspector epaulets.

"This is the guest room where Maynard's corpse was discovered." The brawny Tolle stopped by the crimson wooden door.

Klein thought and asked, "Which guest was assigned to this guest room?"

"Nobody. There are too many guest rooms in the house, so it wasn't used." Tolle put on his white gloves and turned the knob of the crimson wooden door.

He made the constable who was keeping watch leave temporarily. Then, he nodded at Klein and said, "Inspector Moretti, I'll leave the rest to you."

"May the Goddess bless us, and I hope that we find something." Klein put on his white gloves too and locked the door behind him.

He walked to the side of the bed and saw that the crimson bedsheets were abnormally messy. The corpse laying on it was covered with a white cloth.

At this point, Klein could be considered to be quite experienced. He pulled away the white cloth without fear and looked at Member of Parliament Maynard.

The man was in his forties. His blond hair was trimmed short, and his expression was a mixture of pain and happiness.

Klein took two steps back and took out the ingredients he needed. He quickly finished the setup for the mediumship ritual.

As the faint calming fragrance swirled around him, he recited the divination statement that he thought of long ago, “The cause of Maynard’s death.”

“The cause of Maynard’s death.”

†

As he recited the statement, Klein retreated to a nearby high back chair and sat down slowly.

His eyes darkened, then he leaned back and quickly fell into a deep sleep.

In the illusory and blurry world, he suddenly saw the gentleman from earlier.

With his opened blue eyes, Maynard was laying prostrate above a woman with an outstanding body and fair skin. He was thrusting hard against her body.

He first displayed an expression of extreme satisfaction and happiness. Then, he suddenly clutched his chest with his right hand. His expression then grew contorted.

Pa!

As Maynard fell, the image quickly shattered. Klein opened his eyes and woke up from his dream.

I can’t believe I can actually watch porn in such a manner… So, Maynard had an affair and died of exhaustion? Klein chuckled and massaged his temples.

He took out a pen and paper before doing another ritual. He drew a portrait of the lady he had seen in his dream with the aid of the ritual. Of course, everything below her neck was omitted.

It was a woman whose age was hard to tell. She had the mature vibe of a woman in her thirties, but there was a remnant of innocence to her. Her eyes were crystal clear, and she had a delicate look.

Klein looked at his work, then put away his ritual ingredients, and dispelled the spirituality wall.

He leaned sideways to grab his silver-edged cane.

Suddenly, he heard the reverberating sound of someone clearing their throat. He immediately got goosebumps!

Klein looked towards the bed and saw Maynard gripping the crimson bedsheets so tightly that the tendons on the backs of his hands were protruding out.

With a swoosh, the Member of Parliament who died between nine and eleven the previous night suddenly sat up. Saliva drooled from the corners of his lips as he opened his vacant eyes wide.

Chapter 173 - Zombiefication

◆

Before Klein could come up with any new ideas, he saw the rigid Maynard lift both his hands up. Its body lunged forward to his left amidst the sound of hurtling wind!

In the past, his dulled reactions under such sudden, unexpected situations would've made it hard for him to avoid this. Even if he had noticed the attack ahead of time, he would have had to roll away to avoid the fast-moving corpse.

But now, Klein could nearly react on instinct. He stomped down with his bright, buttonless leather boots and jumped diagonally onto the high-back chair.

As it had only been a day since he advanced, he was still getting used to his power, agility, and speed. He had accidentally leaped too high into the air and landed on the top of the chair's high-back!

It was a narrow edge. Klein's heart tightened as he quickly controlled his body and adjusted his center of gravity.

He wavered for a moment and surprisingly managed to stabilize himself, like a black cat flaunting its balance and poise.

As he was wavering, he flailed his left arm, swinging his cane into the zombie's ribs as it pounced forward. The strike caused it to lose its balance as it staggered and fell onto the carpet.

Klein was standing on top of the chair as he felt for his revolver by raising his right arm. He attempted to pull it out from the holster so that he could deliver a silver demon hunting bullet at the zombie in front of him.

But in that instant, he suddenly wondered about the aftermath.

If he were to blow a hole in Member of Parliament Maynard's corpse, how was he going to explain the cause of death to the deceased's family or Members of Parliament who were focusing on the matter?

All I did was double-tap his corpse?

As he was thinking, Klein reached into the pocket of his police uniform and felt for a triangular plate.

The Requiem Charm… He quickly made a decision. He took out the silver amulet without hesitation and let out a low shout in Hermes, "Crimson!"

As the incantation reverberated within the room, the charm started to release a peaceful aura. Klein quickly infused his spirituality into the amulet and tossed it to Zombie Maynard who was struggling to get up.

A cold blue fire appeared, enveloping the triangular plate. A serene and gentle black aura spread forth rapidly, eliminating the anxiety and worry of the soul.

Zombie Maynard stopped there, his eyes staring blankly at the ground. His saliva dripped onto the carpet.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief and planned to take out the materials and set up a ritual to purify the desecrated being, but suddenly, Maynard once again let out a groan, his blank eyes focused on the left pocket of Klein's police uniform again.

Shit… Klein leaped from the top of the chair to the ledge of the oriel window.

At the same time, he heard the sound of the chair breaking.

Klein had no choice but to take out a rectangular silver plate.

The Slumber Charm!

It wasn't only living things that could be put into a deep sleep. The dead were in a state of eternal sleep and would only be woken up under unusual circumstances!

In certain books on mysticism, there was even such a description regarding zombies: They slumber by the day and wake up in the night.

"Crimson!"

Klein once again recited the incantation in Hermes. He intended to disregard the consequences and shoot the corpse with his revolver if that failed again.

The problems that came later wouldn't matter if he was dead!

As he felt the silver rectangular plate in his palm turn cold, Klein injected his spirituality into it and tossed the charm out.

A dark red flame illuminated his eyes as the sound of a light explosion reverberated around the room.

A gentle power spread forth, bringing with it a fatigue that affected every living being. Zombie Maynard had just propped himself up using the chair when he wavered. His eyes closed, and he fell on his back with a plop.

With what had just happened, Klein didn't dare to relax. He immediately took out the Amantha extract distilled from Night vanilla, Slumber flower, and Chamomile, as well as the bark of the Drago tree, and the Full Moon Essence Oil made from Moon flowers. He quickly set up a sacrificial altar.

Right on the heels of that, he sealed the surrounding area with a spirituality wall with the aid of Holy Night Powder, encompassing the altar and the sleeping Zombie Maynard.

After silently reciting the incantation and lighting three corresponding candles, he dripped a few drops of essential oil extract and scattered various powders onto the flames. Klein then took a step back and cautiously looked at Zombie Maynard. He then recited in Hermes,

“Standing higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity, the Evernight Goddess.

“I pray for your loving grace.

“I pray that you look over your loyal guardian,

“I pray for the power of the crimson.

“I pray for the power of sleep and silence,

“I pray that you purify the unclean being around me, the gentleman once called John Maynard.”

†

“Moon flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!

“Slumber flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!”

†

It was as if a midnight breeze blew within the wall of spirituality. A thin veil of black steam started to billow from Zombie Maynard.

When everything settled, Klein used his Spirit Vision and divination to repeatedly confirm that the zombie wouldn’t “awaken” once more.

After seeing the results, his worries eased. He ended the ritual and dispelled the wall of spirituality.

“Why would he suddenly come back to life?” Klein stood in front of Maynard, who was on the carpet. He knitted his brows as he looked down at the corpse.

To a Beyonder with high spiritual sensitivity, there were obvious signs to note if a corpse would come back to life or not, much less Klein, who was a Seer. He often had a premonition of similar matters, but what had happened just now completely took him by surprise.

Unless-unless there is a more mysterious influence at play… Just like what happened with the suited clown. Klein recalled the scene in his head and faintly sensed the problem:

Zombie Maynard had been trying to attack the left pocket of his police uniform!

Left pocket? Klein transferred his black cane to his right palm, then reached for the pocket with his left hand. He took out the ancient copper whistle that was inside.

It was a copper whistle carved with many mysterious patterns. It was the copper whistle used to summon Azik’s messenger.

This copper whistle zombified Maynard? That’s quite plausible. Even if Mr. Azik isn’t a descendant of Death, he definitely has a certain connection with Death. It’s logical that the objects that he carries with him would produce such an effect… Klein nodded in thought. He took out a copper penny and did a quick divination about his conclusion.

As he was at the scene of the incident, holding the relevant objects, and had ample information, he quickly got a result. He saw the copper penny fall into his palm, portrait facing up.

This means yes. To think that Mr. Azik didn’t remind me to be cautious that these things could happen… Well… He’s an amnesiac, so it’s not uncommon to forget this. Besides, the copper whistle might not have had negative effects when it was on him. There's a high possibility that it was suppressed. I shouldn't take this copper whistle with me when I'm at cemeteries or ancient castles, places that are prone to hauntings. Otherwise, I'll just be finding trouble for myself and crazily court death… Klein silently made a mental note. He then carried the naked Maynard back onto the bed without much effort.

Looking at the obvious mark on the corpse left behind by the stroke of the cane, Klein sighed. He covered the corpse with the piece of white cloth and pretended not to notice.

I'll leave this problem to the police department to vex over it! Oh, and the two charms I used just now can be considered mission-related expenses, so I can get compensated… He thought as he packed up. He then took the portrait and unlocked the door.

The door opened with a creak and Klein saw Inspector Tolle, who had been guarding outside, not allowing anyone to come near.

"What happened just now?" Tolle asked in doubt and worry.

He could faintly hear the action going on in the room.

Klein smiled and deliberately said with a little exaggeration,

"Member of Parliament Maynard came back to life and tried to give me a passionate hug."

"Don't joke like that…" Tolle looked into the room in exasperation.

"Why so serious?" Klein said, throwing up his hands. "Due to an unconfirmed reason, Member of Parliament Maynard became a zombie. Well—the kind of things that would happen in ghost stories. Fortunately, I hadn't left yet, so I used ritualistic magic to purify the desecration, allowing him to return to his eternal slumber."

"Is this related to his cause of death?" Tolle asked, his expression stern.

"I cannot give you an answer to that. I don't even know what the problem is. You should know that in our field, unexplainable things are a common occurrence," Klein said. He then looked at the portrait in his hand, "When I was doing the mediumship ritual, I saw the scene of Maynard's death. He was engaging in some activities that should only be done between a husband and wife with this woman. And at the climax of his joy, he clutched his chest where the heart is."

"You mean that… that is the cause of his death?" Tolle gave him a "nudge nudge" and "wink wink" look.

"In theory, yes, but you should wait for the autopsy." Klein handed the portrait over to Inspector Tolle.

Tolle had only glanced at it when he exclaimed, "Madam Sharon!"

Klein looked at him, lost.

"Is she very famous?"

Yea, judging from her looks and figure, she should be famous… He lampooned in his heart.

Tolle looked around and introduced her in a somewhat excited manner, "Madam Sharon is the prettiest widow in Tingen City. She's the most sought-after lady in social settings. She was the second wife of Baron Khoy, but unfortunately became widowed.

"She is welcomed by many amongst the nouveau riche merchants and aristocrats, someone who can be invited to banquets by both the Conservative Party and the New Party."

"It's rumored that she and her stepson, the current Baron Khoy, are on 'friendly' terms with many nobles and senior civil servants in Backlund. She's a powerful lady. To think that she and Member of Parliament Maynard had such a relationship… Hehe…"

Simply put, she's an exceptional socialite… Klein secretly concluded. He turned around and pointed into the room.

“The next part is not included in my job description. How you interrogate Madam Sharon is none of my business.”

“Also, I hit Member of Parliament Maynard with a cane before the purification. You’ll have to deal with it and think of an explanation.”

Chapter 174 - Madam Sharon

◆

“What?” The bearlike Tolle jumped in shock and looked at Klein before looking into the room. With agility that wasn’t suited to his body, he dashed in.

He pulled back the white cloth that covered the corpse and after examining the body carefully, he heaved a breath of relief.

“It’s better than I imagined. It’s not that serious a problem.”

Maybe I should’ve drawn my revolver and shot Maynard five times with demon hunting bullets. Let’s see if you find that serious or not… Klein lampooned inwardly and pointed outside the door.

“That’s all that you need me for, right?”

“No!” Tolle shouted. “Wait a moment.”

Klein asked, puzzled, “Why?”

Tolle explained seriously, “We have to prevent any accidents from happening. After we talk to Madam Sharon and get her testimony, I’ll send you back to Zouteland Street.”

If Maynard can resurrect after being dead for ten hours, what else couldn’t happen? What would I do if you leave? Tolle added in his head.

“Alright.” Klein massaged his temple and said, “Find a quiet room for me to rest in then.”

He wasn't feeling his best in every aspect as he had just advanced a day ago. Having just performed multiple ritual ceremonies, used two charms, and suffered a nontrivial scare, he needed to enter Cogitation to eliminate any problems.

Klein was now extremely cautious about losing control.

Tolle covered the dead body with the white cloth again. He obviously relaxed and replied, "No problem."

He brought Klein to a guest room that was closer to the sunlit side of the house. He pointed and said, "Inspector Moretti, don't worry. No one will disturb you. I'll be paying Madam Sharon a visit first."

Klein nodded slightly and watched him walk away. Then, he closed the door and drew the curtains.

In the dim and silent bedroom, he slowly walked over to the rocking chair and sat down comfortably. He allowed his body to rock back and forth rhythmically.

There were countless spherical phantasmal lights overlapping in his mind. The buzzing sounds in Klein's ears and the throbbing ache in his head slowly vanished, bit by bit.

When his situation stabilized, he opened his eyes and looked into the darkness. He outlined a bed, cupboard, and other furniture. Then, he calmly thought about his earlier attempts.

There isn't much feedback from a few exaggerated jokes…

Maybe I have yet to control the powers of the Clown potion, as there are still remnant negative effects… Of course, I can't eliminate the possibility that such "acting" has little effect.

Personally, I'm not quite willing to play the role of a clown. But since I picked the Sequence pathway, I can only bite the bullet and continue…

Actually, everyone has to act like a clown at one point or another in their lives. I don't have to be so uncomfortable with the idea.

I have to quickly understand a Clown's core elements…

As various thoughts churned in his mind, Klein suddenly took out a brass halfpence.

Mostly out of habit, he divined if Maynard's death was due to supernatural influences.

Maybe it's an occupational hazard… Klein shook his head and laughed. His eyes grew dark as he recited repeatedly, "John Maynard's death was due to supernatural influences."

†

Ding!

He flipped the coin as he slouched into the rocking chair. He watched its brass luster twinkle as it rotated in the air.

Pak! The coin fell right into Klein's open palm, revealing the number ½ facing up.

A negative answer. In other words, there weren't any supernatural influences involved in John Maynard's death. I guess that man died of orgasmic pleasure. The deceased shouldn't be laughed at, so I won't be using an insipid Chinese phrase to mock him… Klein put away his coin and allowed his thoughts to wander before he nearly fell asleep.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Under the slow and rhythmic knocking, Klein tidied his clothing, put on his policeman's peak cap, and walked to the door.

Just as his right palm touched the knob, a scene appeared in his mind.

The bearlike Inspector Tolle was standing outside the door and pulling his collar. His expression looked disturbed and helpless.

Klein turned the knob and opened the door leisurely.

Inspector Tolle appeared before him as he pulled at his collar.

“Sorry for making you wait so long.

“We’ve already found Madam Sharon and obtained her statement. You can return to Zouteland Street.

“I’m really sorry for taking up your precious time.”

Klein didn’t ask the reason for his current emotions but he smiled and said, “Madam Sharon admitted that she was with Maynard last night?”

“Yes. She said that under the influence of alcohol, she and Maynard didn’t manage to control themselves. When she found out that he died of a heart attack, she was very afraid so she fled the room after she tidied herself up. She then hid in her own guest room. We don’t have enough reason to raise charges against her right now, so we had to let her go while restricting some of her freedom. We’ll have to wait for the autopsy,” Inspector Tolle explained in detail.

Klein leaned his head sideways and smiled.

“Who are you explaining this to?”

Tolle shook his head and forced a bitter smile. “Oh yeah, I don’t have to explain it to you. I’m just frustrated by Mrs Maynard, and I started blabbering without realizing it.”

“Maynard’s wife is back?” Klein asked in response.

“Yes, unfortunately. There was something abnormal about the steam locomotive. It wasn’t late.” Tolle gave an affirmative answer in a joking manner.

Klein didn’t ask further but checked if he had all his personal belongings, before following Inspector Tolle down the stairs.

“Why aren’t you arresting her?

“She’s a murderer! I want to sue her, and I want to sue all of you for negligence of duty!

“I’ll hire the best lawyer to sue you!”

†

Harsh remarks entered Klein’s ears, and he looked over subconsciously. He saw a voluptuous and fair middle-aged lady staring angrily across her. Despite having two young men holding her arms, she continued yelling at them.

A very trendy regal gown in Backlund this year… Having frequently read the magazine, Ladies Aesthetic, the first thought on Klein’s mind was something unrelated to the situation. He then saw a few gentlemen protecting a lady behind them.

The lady was in a long black dress with fair smooth skin, waterfall-like brown hair, and brown eyes. She looked as pitiful as a fawn in the woods. It made people want to protect her involuntarily.

Madam Sharon… Klein suddenly thought of the “porno” she had starred in. He quickly lifted his right hand, covered his mouth, and coughed twice.

Out of habit, he tapped his left molars twice and observed the people present with Spirit Vision.

There’s some sort of problem with Mrs. Maynard’s body. The colors of her aura are thinner. From the colors of her emotions, she’s definitely feeling anger and hatred, which is consistent with her outward appearance…

Huh? The color of Madam Sharon’s emotions are shaded in blue, which represents rational thinking and calmness… This is totally contrary to her appearance of panic and nervousness. As expected, a socialite ain’t no innocent bunny… Her body is very healthy.

After examining her, Klein was about to retract his gaze when he suddenly saw Madam Sharon lift her head and steal a glance in his direction. Then, she lowered her head again and put on a trembling trepid look.

If I couldn’t see your emotion colors directly, I might’ve been fooled by your act… You should consider working as an actress… Klein lampooned. He didn’t stay any longer and left Maynard’s house with Inspector Tolle. They took the carriage arranged by the police station and returned to Zouteland Street.

After taking over the shift from the Captain, he continued to stay on duty at Chanis Gate. He took the opportunity to write a claims application.

After an uneventful night, Klein returned upstairs and received the breakfast that he had requested Rozanne to buy for him.

“I love this pastry!” he complimented.

He had already passed her the money for breakfast ahead of time.

“Really? I can try it tomorrow then!” Rozanne replied happily.

The corner of Klein’s lip twitched as he focused on his battle with the milk and pastry.

At twenty-five minutes past eight, he yawned and fought back the urge to fall asleep, he arrived at the nearby Shooting Club.

He had made an appointment with the asylum doctor, Daxter Guderian, a few days back.

†

Bang! Bang! Bang!

In the small shooting range, Klein and Daxter aimed at their own targets and finished their cylinder of bullets.

Clink! Clank! Daxter flipped and released the empty shells and examined Klein in interest.

“You’re much more confident than before.”

Of course, I advanced to Sequence 8. I now possess actual combat ability… Klein reflected on his own facial expression and body movements in his head and deliberately acted arrogantly.

“Because I only used about a month’s time to master the power of my potion completely.”

Daxter pouted slightly and said, “Although that is something to be proud of, there’s no need to say it all the time.”

Hey, as a Spectator, you didn’t see through my performance… From the looks of it, a Clown has the power to suppress a Spectator’s ability. Klein smiled at his discovery and asked, “How’s Hood Eugen recently?”

“…He’s gone insane for real.” Daxter paused and continued, “I probed him with various methods. He really has gone insane. I’m considering whether to begin medicating him, to see if I can treat him.”

As a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist, he actually pretended to be a mental patient… Even though he was giving treatments to other patients, it doesn’t align with the core element of the potion’s name. That was an incorrect way of using the “acting method.” It’s no wonder that he went insane… Klein thought and said, “Before he went insane, did you find out who got in contact with him?”

“Besides the doctors, patients, nurses, and odd-job workers in the asylum, there were no outsiders that had contact with him," Daxter confidently replied.

Klein briefly acknowledged that as he said, "How about even earlier? Is there anyone that visited him, or did he leave the asylum regularly for a period of time?"

In order to follow through with his initial promise, Klein never asked anything about Hood Eugen in his first few meetings.

Daxter fell into deep thought. It took him some time before he said, "Besides the members of the Psychology Alchemists, there weren't any more than five people that visited him. One of them came thrice. His name was El."

Without Klein asking, he continued, "But I heard from Hood Eugen that El was a pseudonym.

"His real name was Lanevus."

Chapter 175 - Deduction

◆ ◆ ◆

Lanevus? That criminal who cheated both money and sex? To think that he had a connection to Hood Eugen from the Psychology Alchemists… Klein froze for a moment when he heard the name. He immediately thought about the implications the name “Lanevus” had.

He’s the cheat that escaped with more than 10,000 pounds!

Just a providing a clue would earn me 10 pounds. And if I help in capturing this moving treasury, I’ll earn 100 pounds!

He’s a scum that took advantage of the bodies and feelings of innocent women!

To think that he knows Hood Eugen and went to visit him three times at the mental asylum. Does this mean that he’s connected to the Beyonder circle, or that he’s a Beyonder himself? Klein suddenly recalled the name of a potion: the Marauder pathway Sequence 8—Swindler!

These Beyonders took pleasure in swindling others!

It’s very possible! Klein nodded in thought. He controlled his facial expression and body language, feigning nonchalance as he asked, “Then, when was Mr. Lanevus’s last visit to Hood Eugen?”

“Early July. I would have to check the registration records of the mental asylum to give you a specific date,” Daxter Guderian replied after a few seconds of thought.

Lanevus's scam hadn't been exposed back in early July and he hadn't left Tingen… Klein then asked, "Does Hood Eugen mention this person usually?"

"No. You should understand that a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist would never reveal something by accident. Every word they say has been deliberated over thoroughly. It would be impossible to learn their secrets unless they have some other hidden motives. I was only able to get the Telepathist formula after Hood Eugen went mad. Oh right, have you determined the authenticity of the formula?" Daxter expertly hid his feelings of pride toward his pathway's potion.

Klein laughed and replied, "It's authentic. When you need to advance, you can use that to concoct your potion without worry. We can help if the Psychology Alchemists are unable to provide you with the ingredients. Also, how have you been lately?"

"Not too bad. Other than being a little worried about Hood Eugen's condition, I feel rather relaxed. I no longer have symptoms of a split personality. You've helped me greatly in this regard," Daxter Guderian said, full of emotion.

Klein wore a humble expression.

"It's only right."

"Let's return to the topic at hand. Since you said that a Psychiatrist would deliberate over their every word before uttering it and wouldn't easily reveal their secrets, why did Hood Eugen tell you that El is Lanevus? Was he hinting at something, or was trying to warn you of anything?"

Daxter froze for a moment, then creased his brows.

"This is really weird, to think that I didn't notice this… Other than that, Hood Eugen didn't mention anything else. Could his motive be for me to tell the upper echelons of the association about the name Lanevus should he meet with any problems?

“The association’s reaction seemed strange, too. After I informed them about Hood Eugen’s insanity, they did send a liaison. But after I described every detail, including Lanevus’s name, there were no more replies from the upper echelons. It was like being a stone cast in the ocean. Could this mean that they’ve figured something out?”

“A reasonable deduction.” Klein took out his demon hunting bullets and stuffed them into his revolver, then took aim at the target.

“If we follow this deduction, Hood Eugen might’ve long anticipated that he would become insane or die… And this has an untenable connection with Lanevus? But since he already anticipated it, why didn’t he ask for help from the upper echelons?” Daxter gazed blankly ahead. He thought hard as he said, “Unfortunately, he’s insane now. There’s no way to effectively communicate with him now.”

“Perhaps some kind of temptation made him choose to take the risk.” Klein made a guess.

At the same time, he felt that it was regrettable that Hood Eugen had really become a mental patient. This compromised much of the information that he might have otherwise gotten.

Sigh. Even a dead person is better than a lunatic. I can use mediumship rituals to make the dead talk, but what can I do with a lunatic? Oh right, Madam Daly once tried to use mediumship rituals to call upon my lost memories. The theory behind the mediumship rituals seems to have been derived from the Psychology Alchemists… This means that I can also use the mediumship rituals on the living and create a scenario where I interact with his spirit directly using my spirit… I wonder if Hood Eugen would still be insane under those conditions.

Unfortunately, I’m not advanced enough in this field, so I don’t think I would be able to do it… I’ll call upon the messenger and ask Madam Daly about it first. I’ll see if she can provide me with any techniques. If she thinks that only she can accomplish it, then I'll tell the Captain and get him to send a telegraph to Backlund to request for assistance…

I'm definitely not taking this troublesome course of action just because I want to learn the technique and attempt the ritual to summon the messenger…

Many thoughts ran through Klein's mind before he gradually narrowed it down to a single line of thought that could solve the problem.

Daxter Guderian approved of his guess.

"Greed always makes one foolish. Even when a person knows that there's only the abyss in front of him, he'll still attempt to walk to the edge and take a peek."

This is called crazily testing the limits of fate… Klein lampooned.

"Try your best to treat Hood Eugen after returning to the mental asylum. Try to keep him sober for a period of time and get some clues out of him."

"Also, don't hide your worries and anxiety. Establish more connections with the Psychology Alchemists and put pressure on them to solve Hood Eugen's problem. That's the most normal and reasonable reaction."

Daxter nodded seriously.

"I'll try my best."

Klein didn't say anymore and, after some deliberation, he asked, "Has there been any abnormalities with Hood Eugen's body recently? For example, thin scales growing on some parts of his body?"

"Near-insanity," "true insanity," and "losing control" were all descriptions of varying levels for a Beyonder when something was wrong with them. The least severe of the conditions were when their attitude changed as if they had become a new person, but were still capable of rational thoughts and actions. That was “near-insanity.” “Insanity” was more severe in that the person would lose all logic, becoming a maniac and was difficult to communicate with. Those that couldn’t be saved were those whose body and mind had become monsters, completely “losing control.”

Sometimes, if the problem wasn’t dealt with promptly, insanity would lead to losing control.

Before this, to avoid exposing the informant within the Psychology Alchemists, Dunn instructed the Nighthawks not to immediately deal with Hood Eugen. Instead, they switched to surveillance to ensure that Hood Eugen didn’t lose control. But if there were signs of him losing control, they would have to deal with him immediately.

Daxter shook his head and let out a bitter laugh.

“No, you can ease your concern. I’m also very afraid that Hood Eugen will lose control, so I’m paying very close attention to detail. After all, I’m at the mental asylum six times a week.”

After exchanging a few more words, they left the shooting range ten minutes apart.

Klein fought back his intense desire to sleep and took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

He opened the door and saw his sister sitting on the sofa. She was neither reading nor was she fiddling with machinery parts. She was just staring blankly ahead as if she had lost her soul.

Tapping his molars gently, Klein activated his Spirit Vision and asked, puzzled, “Melissa, did something happen?”

She looks healthy based on the colors of her aura, not malnourished like she was before…

Melissa retracted her gaze and pursed her lips, then looked at the kitchen which was producing some noise.

“Bella has been recommending the way that her family prepares breakfast back at home, she said that it’s very delicious. I agreed to let her try it out this morning.”

“What method is that?” Klein had an ominous feeling.

“Cooking all of the leftovers in a pot, then adding water and bread…” Melissa repeated softly.

T-this is the standard recipe for food of unknown origins… Klein pinched his forehead.

“And so?”

“We shouldn’t waste food…” Melissa bit her lips and nodded.

Sis, I feel like you are questioning life… Klein cleared his throat and suppressed his desire to laugh. He then asked, “Where’s Benson?”

“In the bathroom.” Melissa broke free of her daze, as her eyes regained their luster.

At that moment, he heard the sounds of flushing from the bathroom. Benson came out with a newspaper in hand.

“My dear Klein, shall we get you a portion of breakfast?”

“No, I’ve already eaten.” Klein shook his head resolutely, feeling lucky that he arranged to meet Daxter in the morning. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have gotten Rozanne to buy breakfast for him.

“How regrettable. Otherwise, you would change your views on my culinary skills and be filled with confidence about it.” Benson let out a self-deprecating laugh.

At this moment, Melissa noticed something. She turned to look at Klein and said, “You’re back rather late today.”

Sis, be more innocent and lively. Don’t worry about me all the time… The state you were in just now was great! Klein immediately smiled.

“I have good news.”

“You passed the examination of the police department and can obtain an increased salary?” Melissa asked without thinking.

Benson also smiled and nodded.

“…” Klein grabbed his hat and stood at the edge of the living room. He said in amusement, “How am I supposed to surprise you guys like that?”

After that, he added with a dry cough, “Yes, my salary has increased severalfold.”

He hid his recent increment of four additional pounds a week. He intended to save up a small piggy bank for himself. After all, he couldn’t just rely on the money in the unmarked account. Furthermore, mentioning that his salary had increased severalfold was enough to scare his siblings.

“Six pounds?” Melissa exclaimed in shock, finding it bizarre.

“I really need to change my job.” Benson stroked his hairline.

With the information Klein provided him, he had been putting a lot of effort into his studies.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, Melissa said with a delighted expression, “In that case, after deducting our normal expenses, you’ll be able to save up enough money in two or three years to meet the standards of a marriageable gentleman. Well, it was Elizabeth who told me about the standards.”

“…” Klein said at a loss, amused, “That’s something to be considered far into the future. Shouldn't we celebrate? I hereby announce that from today on, our staple food shall become white bread. After my workload decreases, we shall go try out delicacies from different restaurants."

Melissa glanced at him, and, as though she did not hear what Klein had said, she said, "Benson and I are attending Mass at the Saint Selena Cathedral, do you want to come?"

I am praising the Goddess everyday… Klein laughed.

"I need to catch up on sleep."

He slept until half past twelve in the afternoon. After he had lunch with Benson and Melissa, he continued on with his mission of searching all the houses with red chimneys.

When it was late at night, he sealed his room with spirituality and prepared to try the ritual for summoning Spirit Guide Daly's messenger.

Chapter 176 - Letter

◆◆◆

For Klein, setting up a simple ritual was as easy as breathing. Very soon, he was done preparing the ingredients, and he lit up the candle that represented himself.

Looking at the flickering candlelight on the desk, Klein had an amusing thought for some baffling reason.

Would this be considered holding a candlelight vigil in memory of myself?

F**k, what the hell am I thinking!?

†

He reined back his thoughts and picked up the Black Rotten Flower powder that belonged to the domain of Death and sprinkled it onto the candle. In return, he caught a whiff of a smell that was akin to formaldehyde from his previous life.

Immediately after that, he dripped Full Moon Essence Oil, a favored item of the Evernight.

Amidst a sizzling crackle, his surroundings suddenly became quiet, and there was a shapeless, magical surge.

Klein took a step back and softly recited in ancient Hermes, “I!”

Then, he changed into Hermes, “I summon in my name.”

"The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the higher-dimensional creature that a human orders, the messenger that belongs to Daly Simone."

Whoosh!

The wind wailed and the dim candlelight was tainted with a blue luster.

Under its illumination, the wall behind the desk produced translucent ripples, and a creepy face surfaced. Other than its mouth, it had no eyebrows, eyes, or nose.

Its thick lips parted, and a long red tongue was extended. There were sharp, irregular teeth that lined its mouth. In addition, the tip of the tongue had five delicate fingers. They were constantly extending and retracting, as though they were waiting for a delivery.

This is Daly's messenger? Compared to Mr. Azik's, it's just like a child. No, I can't accurately determine their differences. Yes, one is an adult Giant, and the other is a human baby… I wonder if it's due to the mystical item, or if it signifies Mr. Azik's strength? I have to reevaluate my understanding of him. Perhaps, he's a High-Sequence Beyonder…

Crap, I forgot. In the letter, I should've asked Madam Daly for the names of the Sequence 4 and Sequence 3 Corpse Collector pathway. Mr. Azik most likely belongs to that pathway. Of course, he might've not advanced via potions. Yes, perhaps it's a gene that's passed down from his ancestors… I'll ask next time, the messenger is waiting…

Klein looked at it seriously for a while and passed the neatly folded paper into the messenger's "hand." Then, he watched as the hand gripped it tightly.

Whoosh!

The messenger retracted its tongue and swallowed the letter. The translucent, creepy, and wriggling face shrank back into the wall and disappeared.

I’ve got to say, this magic is quite cool. Rather convenient too, but it can’t be spread… Klein looked at the candlelight that had returned to normal. He shook his head and ended the ritual.

†

Monday morning. Backlund, Empress Borough.

In a hidden corner of the municipal garden built by Duke Negan, Xio Derecha with her unkempt blond hair and Fors Wall with her languid bearing were gawking at the liaison before them in a daze. They were momentarily at a loss at which language to use for a greeting.

The petite Xio, who was slightly over one and a half meters tall, looked at the golden retriever that had extended its tongue and was wagging its tail. She smoothed out her trainee knight attire and weighed her words before she said, “Are you Miss Audrey’s messenger?

“Oh my Goddess, why am I asking a dog so seriously…”

Fors was holding a thin cigarette with her fingers as she chuckled.

“Maybe it’s a magical creature?”

“I’ve never seen a magical creature that looks so much like a dog…” Xio replied in all seriousness.

Susie sat down and closed her mouth. She then pointed at her belly with her paw.

There was a leather pouch tied around the dog’s body amidst her long golden fur.

Xio looked to her left and right, making sure that there was no one watching before she quickly moved closer. She bent down and removed the pouch.

Fors watched curiously when her expression suddenly turned weird.

"It's made of crocodile skin, and it looks like the work of the fashion designer, Mr. Sades… She's actually using such a pouch for the transaction…"

"…In other words, it's very expensive?" Xio raised the leather pouch.

Fors pursed her lips tightly and nodded seriously.

Xio instantly lowered her speed in an exaggerated manner. She carefully opened the zipper and took out the letter inside, as though she was carrying an antique vase in her hands.

After she read it, she passed the letter to Fors.

Fors burned it with her cigarette after reading it carefully. She watched as it turned into ashes and scattered onto the soil.

"There's no extra information provided." Xio pouted subconsciously. She took out a neatly folded paper from the pocket of her trainee knight attire.

She looked at Susie in an imposing manner and exhorted subconsciously, "This is the investigation report for the past few days. You must pass this on to Miss Audrey Hall directly."

Susie quivered and sat up straight, her tail was wagging vigorously.

Xio nodded in satisfaction, stuffed the stack of papers into the leather pouch, and tied it around Susie again.

Susie howled and ran off very quickly.

†

In the Hall family's luxurious villa.

Audrey was sitting on the sofa of her own living room. She was holding a letter opener and was trying to open the letter before her.

It was a letter sent by one of her brothers from the Balam Empire in the Southern Continent. There was a parcel that came along with the letter.

At that moment, she saw Susie push open the half-closed door. The dog dashed over quickly.

Susie sat on the carpet before Audrey and pawed at the leather pouch.

“You really are an excellent messenger!” Audrey wasn’t stingy with her compliments.

Susie looked back at the door. It induced vibrations in the air and said softly, “Your friend is very serious. When I saw her, she reminded me of the time when a hunter came to train us.”

She had been a complimentary gift when Earl Hall bought hunting dogs.

Susie, your Loen is getting more and more fluent. There are just a few problems with your logic in using the language… Audrey watched as her golden retriever took off the pouch on her own and skillfully pulled open the zipper.

She gave Susie a look and immediately understood. She stood up and ran to lock the door.

“…There’s no result so far, but we found that some vagrants disappeared around the Backlund Bridge borough. Though, we can’t know for sure that it was Qilangos. Perhaps the vagrants merely changed their movement patterns suddenly…” Audrey flipped through the investigation report and seriously wondered how she should reply to Xio and Fors.

I’ll tell Xio that as long as she can track down Vice Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos, I’ll buy the Sheriff potion formula for her… No, that’s not friendly enough. It would make her feel an inferiority complex. Yes, I shall say, “Xio, I’ve prepared your reward. As long as you can complete the task, four hundred and fifty pounds will be yours…” Sigh, as far as the main ingredients for the Telepathist formula, I've only found the Farsman Rabbit's spinal fluid. I still need the Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland… Glaint, Xio, and Fors have yet to find it…

Audrey, cheer up. At least you've digested the Spectator potion completely!

Once you put together all the ingredients, you'll become a Sequence 8 Beyonder!

†

Audrey reined in her thoughts, picked up a pen and paper, and quickly wrote a reply. She stuffed it back into the leather pouch and entrusted Susie to make another trip.

She watched her golden retriever as she opened the letter that her brother had sent. She read it with a smile.

"My dear sister,

"I think you should come to the Southern Continent too. Come over to the colonized regions of the Balam Empire. There's abundant sunlight, fresh air, a clean environment, freshly caught seafood, various unique cultures, and the very kind and obedient Balam people who make good servants, as well as the smell of freedom.

"On the contrary, Backlund is cold and moist, the air is bad, there's always dust, and it's always gloomy. Plus, it's highly populated which leads to all sorts of problems. Hmm, and the endless balls, banquets, and salons… The social events are so boring and insipid that I wouldn't want to stay for a minute. Dear sister, I believe you share the same feeling.

"I'm not running away from home. I'm merely seeking my own place in life, but our brother definitely doesn't think so. He's always been a selfish person. Of course, he wouldn't be stingy with you, because you can only claim a tiny part of the family wealth, while I would be his biggest competition in the fight for the inheritance within the ranks of nobles. After all, our father is a count who takes a long view. He definitely wouldn't be restrained by the rule that the eldest sibling will inherit the rank of nobility.

"As long as he feels that it's necessary, he would do anything. Just like when he sold off half the farmland and pastures to enter the banking industry, regardless of the strong opposition.

"I miss Backlund sometimes, mostly Father, Mother, and you. I miss the smile that you put on my face during those few years. You must've become the most dazzling jewel in Backlund, but unfortunately, I'll only be able to return after two years. A career is a man's pride, while the outstanding young people in the Loen Kingdom treat the world as their stage."

†

"You can tell our dear aunt that the coastal regions in the Balam Empire are very suitable for vacations, and especially suitable for her, given how her joints ache and swell in the winter. I sincerely invite her to be my guest. If you can come with her, that would be even better."

†

"I didn't send you too many gifts. They're mainly things that are rich with the traditions and styles of Balam, such as the unique yellow silk, and the ornaments that are filled with traits related to the worship of Death.

"I remembered that you loved things regarding mysticism so I'll look around for you. The culture here is full of mystery."

†

After reading the letter, Audrey picked up a pen, paper, and writing board. She leaned back into the sofa, pursed her lips and wrote seriously, “My dearest Alfred,

“Although it has been less than a year, the little girl in your memories has grown up. I don’t like mysticism anymore, so you don’t have to search for those kinds of things.”

Because it’s very dangerous… Audrey puffed up her cheeks and added in her head.

She had heard of too many tragedies related to mysterious objects when participating in Beyonder Gatherings and from stories Xio and Fors recounted.

She thought and declared excitedly, “I’m now interested in biology. Recently, I’ve been in awe of the Rainbow Salamander. Can you ask around for me and find out where I can find one of these creatures, or if they have a complete corpse that has been preserved?”

Chapter 177 - Sudden Turn of Events

◆

Audrey stopped writing after she finished sharing some interesting news and scandals about aristocrats. She then adopted a serious pose as she recalled something.

With her exceptional memory as a Spectator, she arranged the information that she had received from her father's teachings, as well as the news she heard during banquets and salons into paragraphs.

After creating a draft in her head, Audrey penned, "As for the political situation in Backlund you asked about, it's not within my area of interest. I can describe it to you only based on my own impressions and the details that I happen to know.

"Some time ago, Father told me that after the abolishment of the Grain Act, the prices of crops were declining rapidly. The rent of farmland and pastures were also plunging, but I don't know the exact magnitude. I can only explain it to you with this example.

"As you know, Duke Negan is an aristocrat who owns the most land outside of the royal family. It's said that he owns more than 12,000,000 pounds worth of farmland, pastures, and forests. Last year, his land earned him a historic 1,300,000 pounds in rent. But this year, it's forecast that his rent will only be 850,000 pounds, a whole 450,000 pounds less. That's more than the entirety of the assets that I'm entitled to.

"Without any further explanation from me, I'm sure that my dear brother will understand the behavior of most old-fashioned nobles.

They're proud of being landowners, and their income is derived mostly from rent. They place a heavy emphasis on their appearance and would maintain their current lifestyle even if they have to go into debt. They spend tens of thousands of pounds on the upkeep of their castles each year, many more thousands on clothes and jewelry, as well as their persistent hunting activities, social banquets, and the occasional lavish weddings and funerals, etc, etc.

"With the decrease in rent, according to my knowledge, a good portion of the nobles have met with financial difficulties. Because of this, Earl Wolf has sold 84,000 ares of land in the countryside and gotten 29,000 pounds in return. Viscount Conrad has also sold his art collection worth 55,000 pounds to a national art gallery.

"Other than a few visionary nobles who had long shifted their focus to steel, coal, railroads, banks, and rubber industries, the rest of the nobles have been severely affected by the Grain Act. Let us praise our dear Earl Hall!

"Father told me that the financial distress will loosen the control the nobles have over politics. As you can imagine, the number of ministers with blue blood will decline from the next year onward.

"In a bid to secure funding, the Conservative Party and the New Party have promised to confer upon anyone the noble titles as long as they donate a sufficient amount of money and lack any criminal records. Of course, the caveat is that the person who donated the money must own an amount of land befitting of a noble.

"One example is the rich Mr. Syndras. He purchased the lowest area of land expected of a baron, 60,000 ares, then donated 100,000 pounds to the Carleton Club and 400,000 pounds to the Conservative Party, and donations to charity amounting to 300,000 pounds. Finally, he succeeded in receiving conferment from His Majesty and became a highly-regarded baron. I've heard that there's a price list to this, 300,000 pounds for a baronet and 700,000 to 1,000,000 pounds for a hereditary baron. There is no clear price for the title of viscount or count, but I'm sure those are sufficiently ridiculous."

†

"This year, many nobles who are facing financial difficulties are starting to seriously consider the possibility of marriages with wealthy merchants. There have already been three marriages like this over the last two months. The betrothal gifts the noble women received are something to be envied.

"Also, the workers who protested the Grain Act did experience a decrease in the cost of living, but the quality of their lives has not improved. Instead, it seems to have deteriorated as the bankrupt farmers have entered the city and stolen their jobs by requesting lower wages. Thus, the wages of the laborers are dropping rapidly.

"I remember the day when Father asked me who I felt was the winner of the Grain Act.

"My dear Alfred, you must know the answer. You would definitely be able to obtain a hereditary baron title through your own efforts."

†

Xio Derecha and Fors Wall were returning to the Backlund Bridge borough after they received Audrey's reply.

Xio, with her messy blonde hair, was looking out the window of the carriage, her eyes were bright like two burning balls of flame.

She muttered the term "450 pounds" to herself repeatedly, as if reciting an incantation. Her strength and courage grew every time she repeated the term.

"Darkholme hasn't reported the status of the investigation today. Let's make a trip to his house!" Xio suddenly turned to look at Fors.

Darkholme was the leader of a gang in the Backlund East Borough and had control over many beggars and thieves.

Even though he looked very friendly with his chubby face that was perpetually adorned with a warm and amiable smile—Xio knew that he was a merciless scoundrel. He once broke the arm of a thirteen-year-old thief because the boy had hidden his profit.

Unless it was necessary, Xio was unwilling to meet Darkholme, but Darkholme was one of the few people who were most familiar with the vagrants in the city.

Fors pushed her slightly curly hair back behind her ear.

“As long as it doesn’t delay my lunch.”

“No problem! Perhaps I could treat you to an Intis feast after this week!” Xio promised in complacency.

“Must I thank God?” Fors asked as she laughed.

Unlike Xio, Fors was a moderate believer of the God of Steam and Machinery.

As they conversed, the two ladies switched to another public carriage and arrived at the Backlund East Borough, and arrived at Darkholme’s house.

It was a terrace house located in a narrow alley. There were green plants hanging from the walls, the exterior looked relatively unkempt.

Xio walked to the door, raised her right hand and knocked in a unique rhythm.

The unlocked door opened with a creak following her knocks.

Xio’s apparently confused expression immediately turned stern, like a wary lion’s.

She took out a triangular blade she carried with her and cautiously pushed open the door. She then slowly stepped inside.

Fors also stopped looking nonchalant, having produced a dagger of unknown origins.

They didn't smell any peculiar scents, but their rich experience told them that something was off.

One step, two steps, three steps. Xio and Fors entered Darkholme's house.

Then they saw a pale limb on a gas lamp, internal organs on a coffee table, as well as strips upon strips of flesh strewn on the floor and hung on the clothes rack!

Pieces of bone had been stripped clean and piled up near the door.

And amongst the bones was a head, its vacant eyes open. It was none other than Darkholme.

His chubby face still maintained the amiable smile, as if everything was normal. Furthermore, there was no stench of blood in the house.

As a former clinical doctor before becoming a best-selling author and Sequence 9 Beyonder, Fors has seen many death scenes more disgusting than this. She patted the tense Xio, who was on the brink of vomiting, as she surveyed the surroundings.

"Qilangos? Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos?"

"He realized that Darkholme was investigating the missing vagrants and tracked him back to his house?"

"Or could it be said that Darkholme had tracked him down, but ended up being caught?"

Xio fought back the urge to retch and said with a serious expression, "He sure lives up to his name as a merciless and crafty pirate admiral.

The strangeness here also fits the description of his treasure."

"Crafty…" Fors was suddenly alarmed as she blurted out, "Could he be waiting nearby in an ambush against the mastermind behind the investigations?"

Xio froze for a moment before answering in a fluster, "That's highly likely!"

He was a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed, a powerful pirate with a mystical artifact, while they were just two Sequence 9's!

This was an extremely simple and easy contrast!

†

In the house opposite Darkholme's house, a man with a unique broad chin and dark green eyes in his thirties was standing by the window, coldly observing Xio's and Fors's opening of the door and slow entry.

He was none other than Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos!

The black glove on his left hand twitched as if it were alive. A layer of dull gold scales appeared on its surface.

Qilangos revealed a cruel and joyous expression as his dark green eyes turned pale gold and indifferent.

†

The moment Fors realized this, she dragged Xio to the other side and avoided the area just across the main door.

She then gritted her pearly-white teeth and took out a bracelet that was hidden by her sleeves.

This silver bracelet had three dark green, coarse stones which showed signs of burn marks and were rough and uneven.

Fors pulled out one of the stones and let out a low growl in ancient Hermes, “Door!”

She grabbed onto Xio Derecha tightly as the stone released a faint blue glow.

The figures of the two ladies turned indistinct, nearly invisible.

They saw many forms they found difficult to describe. There were even transparent objects that didn’t seem to exist. They saw different colors, lustrous splendors which seemed to possess immense knowledge. They had entered the mysterious spirit world.

In this strange world that stood distinct from reality, Fors proceeded in a particular direction while pulling Xio along.

Seconds later, they exited their indistinct states and returned to reality—to Backlund.

But they were no longer at Darkholme’s house, but instead arrived at an empty cemetery.

†

Qilangos, who was wearing his scaled glove, silently appeared at the door of Darkholme’s house. He swept the interior with his cold gaze.

He froze for a moment, then creased his brows as he muttered to himself, “Traveler?”

†

In the cemetery.

“What are we going to do next?” Fors panted, sensing their predicament and feeling a lingering sense of fear.

The bracelet was a mystical item she had received along with the formula for Apprentice and its corresponding materials back during a fortuitous encounter of hers. Other than causing her to hear strange, faint murmurings during the full moon every month, it posed no threat.

There were originally five stones on the bracelet, each stone allowing her to traverse through the spirit world, technically allowing her to teleport. But now, there were only two stones left.

Xio calmed herself down and nodded solemnly.

“First notify Miss Audrey, then-then we call the police!”

Chapter 178 - The Subsequent Ideas

◆

“Call the police?” Fors Wall repeated in surprise.

To Beyonders, lodging a police report seemed to be something of another world.

Xio paced back and forth as she tugged her coarse blonde hair.

“The scene of Darkholme’s death is harrowing and creepy. As long as the police aren’t blind, they would definitely pass the case on to the Mandated Punishers, the Nighthawks, the Machinery Hivemind, or the special department of the military. When that happens, we can leak some more information and let them know that the murderer is Qilangos. At that point, the entire city will be chasing after him.

“Our goal is only to look for Qilangos, not to capture him. With the ‘help’ of so many Beyonders, things would become much simpler and safer. Once Qilangos panics and makes a mistake, it would be our chance to claim our bounty. Heh heh, I’m referring to the discovery of his whereabouts.”

Xio laughed dryly and looked at the appalled Fors.

“Do you think that the only way I know to deal with problems is by charging into them headfirst? The difference between us and Qilangos is as vast as the Desi Bay.”

Fors nodded slowly and said, “Your understanding of yourself is absolutely right. You’ve done too many things of a similar nature.

Hence, the losses that you've suffered is sufficient for you to advance to Sequence 8.

"Luckily, you're still rational enough regarding this matter."

Xio lowered her head to look at her triangular blade. She thought for a moment and said, "…I have to be honest. I clearly sensed the approach of Death earlier. Qilangos was no doubt nearby. That was an aura evil enough to destroy us at any time. That triggered an instinctual response in me."

Fors wore her silver bracelet that had two stones left and thought seriously.

"I agree with your idea. Let's inform Miss Audrey first and lodge the police report after."

"Yes, regardless if it was Darkholme or his underlings who found Qilangos's traces, we could continue to investigate with that approach and find out Qilangos activity range and the location of his residence."

Xio creased her slim blonde eyebrows and said, "But Qilangos would definitely not remain in the same place."

Even as one of the Seven Pirate Admirals, even if he had the assistance of a mystical artifact, Qilangos had to be extremely careful in Backlund.

Even Nast, the King of the Five Seas, had once encountered disaster here and was nearly caught.

"No, what I meant was, to surmise or confirm the purpose of Qilangos's visit to Backlund based on the clues. Once we know what he's trying to do, no matter how he disguises himself or what tricks he pulls, he'll be exposed to us in the end. Then, our mission would be accomplished," Fors explained in detail. "Two years of novel-writing experience tells me that things would become simple once we grasp the crux of the matter."

Xio looked at her best friend in shock. She couldn't believe the woman had just made such a logical statement.

"I'm different from you. I'm merely too lazy to think, while you think with your muscles." Fors pursed her lips, leaned her head sideways, and smiled.

"Teasing me doesn't make you smarter…" Xio tried to smooth out her few strands of blonde hair that was sticking out. "Alright, let's head over to Empress Borough and tell Miss Audrey about this."

Fors nodded faintly and said, "So, what's our emergency contact method with Miss Audrey?"

Xio was momentarily put at a loss. She looked afar at the tombstone as she said, "She told me that pet dog of hers we saw earlier walks herself at least five times a day. Well, the next walk should be after lunch."

"In other words, we have to loiter around suspiciously outside Earl Hall's luxurious manor?" The corner of Fors's lips twitched.

Xio suddenly looked sideways and revealed an obsequious smile, "Fors, or would you prefer to just sneak in?

"I don't think that would be difficult for you. It's what you're good at."

"A hereditary count for centuries, one of the most influential parliament members in the House of Lords, the largest shareholder of Varvat Bank, the fourth largest shareholder of Backlund Bank, the special consultant of the Imperial Bank of Loen, the third largest shareholder of Suchit Bank in the Intis Republic, the second largest shareholder of Constant Coal and Steel Consortium, and so on. These are the titles of Miss Audrey's father. Xio, use your brain; how could a man like that not employ any Beyonders? Would he not have any prized collections? This is different from those destitute viscounts and barons!" Fors replied in exasperation. "I swear in the name of God, if I were to sneak in, I would be discovered and caught within five minutes.”

Xio nodded continuously in agreement.

“Let’s wait for the golden retriever then…”

With that said, she led the way. After she took a few steps forward, she spoke with her back facing Fors, “Uh, well, I will compensate you for your losses and the damages in the future. I’m referring to the stone, of course.”

Listening to that, the corner of Fors’s lips lifted and she said, “I was saving myself.

“And, Xio, you’re going the wrong way!

“God, if you were an Apprentice and ended up becoming a Traveler in the future, it would be a disaster!”

†

Outside Earl Hall’s luxurious manor.

Xio and Fors hid behind an Intis parasol tree and secretly observed their target building in silence, watching the people walking to and fro.

After God knows how long, they finally saw the golden retriever come out from a hidden hole under the wall. It pricked up its ears and looked to its left and right, appearing very cautious.

Just as Susie started taking its walk happily, a black male dog popped up from nowhere. It fawned on Susie and started running around in circles.

“This is the first time I’m seeing a dog show such a humanlike reaction. Just how much does it hate that black dog?” Xio sighed.

She could tell from Susie’s gaze and facial expression that there was obvious detest.

Fors smiled and said, “It’s just like encountering a rash, disgusting, and persistent lecher.”

Seeing Susie attempt to speed up to escape the black dog’s pursuit, Xio stood up to administer “Justice.”

“My ruling is for you to leave her alone!” Xio shouted with a mask of solemnity.

The black dog was taken aback and immediately scampered away with its tail between its legs.

Susie let out a breath of relief and slowed down. It barked politely and wagged its tail.

That was close, I nearly said “Thank you” to them… The golden retriever thought in joy.

That would’ve been a very awkward situation…

†

A melodic tune slowly came to a halt as Audrey picked up the latest intelligence Xio and Fors had delivered and read it with knitted brows.

She closed the piano cover and stood up elegantly. She paced back and forth in her piano room and considered her next course of action.

Qilangos is a very dangerous man… If Xio and Fors continued investigating, they might end up in danger… It might even expose me… Yes, I should just proceed according to their suggestion. Oh yeah, it’s another two hours until the Tarot Club. I wonder what Mr. Fool would suggest? If he’s still not interested, I’ll discuss it with The Hanged Man carefully… Audrey gradually calmed herself down.

This was the first time she had encountered, or perhaps was described as being placed in such a perilous situation. There was already one death!

Three in the afternoon.

Audrey's vision recovered from a crimson and blurry state before seeing the boundless gray fog that didn't belong to reality, the lofty palace that looked like the home of a giant, the long ancient mottled bronze table, and The Fool who was always engulfed by a thick layer of fog. Lastly, she saw The Hanged Man and The Sun.

At that moment, Audrey's tense and anxious emotions seemed to relax —she felt so safe, so calm.

I'm participating in the Tarot Club that doesn't belong in the material world, and I'm dealing with Mr. Fool who's nearly a god. Qilangos and I are on different levels… Audrey sat in an upright position proudly. She lifted her chin slightly and greeted cheerfully, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool! Good afternoon, Mr. Hanged Man! Good afternoon, Mr. Sun!"

After they greeted one another, Klein saw that Miss Justice was indicating her desire to speak; therefore, he nodded faintly to express his permission.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I wonder if your Blessed has received the compensation of 300 pounds?" Audrey asked, holding back her urge to talk about Qilangos while she showed concern over her leader's Blessed.

Klein smiled and said, "I didn't pay close attention to this matter. But as my Blessed didn't request for additional help, I suppose he has already received it."

Yes, I've checked multiple times. There are 300 pounds lying in my anonymous bank account… Klein added in his head happily.

"That's great!" Audrey relaxed and looked across her. "Mr. Hanged Man, there's been progress regarding Qilangos."

Alger suddenly sat up straight. He couldn't hide his excitement as he asked, "Where is he?"

"Unfortunately, he noticed our investigations just after we discovered his tracks. He killed one of the personnel involved." Audrey repeated the highlights of Xio's and Fors's story and explained their follow-up plan in detail.

Alger nodded faintly and said, "I'll pay close attention."

Then, he turned to the side and looked towards the seat of honor at the long bronze table. Under the vacant gaze of The Sun, Derrick, who listened but didn't understand anything, he said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, if I were to find out Qilangos' true intention and the very important and mystical item that he intends to obtain, please allow me to recite your name and inform you through the ritual."

He didn't repeat his request for The Fool's Blessed to provide him assistance. As he brought it up before and The Fool had given his answer, there was no need to harp on the topic. Otherwise, it might provoke the god.

Hence, Alger made it clear that his intention was only to report his findings.

If the final temptation was sufficient, he believed that Mr. Fool's Blessed would definitely appear.

That works? Audrey widened her eyes.

I should've asked for the right to report as well. I might be able to gain Mr. Fool's guidance occasionally… She thought with regret.

Under everyone's gaze, Klein leaned back into his chair and nodded faintly. He replied slowly, "You may."

Chapter 179 - Praising Mr. Fool

◆ ◆ ◆

Alger heaved a sigh of relief when he heard The Fool’s answer. He lowered his head and humbly said, “Please allow me to thank you in advance.”

That’s because I’m also curious… curious about the item Qilangos is searching for. I want to know about the item that can allow a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed to have the strength of a Sequence 4… I’m also curious about what a pirate admiral is going to do in Backlund… Klein smiled, maintaining his profound posture.

It’s not like I’ve promised to provide assistance after I hear your prayers! He emphasized in his heart.

But now, he was a lot more confident than before. Now, he had actual allies and the mysterious Mr. Azik who was currently in Backlund.

If it was absolutely necessary, Klein was willing to use the copper whistle to enlist the help of Azik. Of course, he definitely wouldn’t mention the Tarot Club. He would probably say he got information from some random source.

There were still two problems that existed in this matter. First, Klein was only limited to a cooperative relationship with Azik. It wasn’t necessarily the case that Azik would provide assistance unless he was interested in what Qilangos was doing or the mystical item that he was after.

Second, Klein was unsure of just how powerful Azik was. Even if he had made the assumption that Azik was a High-Sequence Beyonder, he had to consider the fact that his memory loss might have weakened his abilities. After all, knowledge was usually equated with power, and the lack of knowledge would definitely diminish Azik's power.

If that was the case, Klein couldn't guarantee that Azik could deal with Qilangos, especially with the latter wielding the Creeping Hunger. Klein was afraid that he would be placing Azik in danger so he was unwilling to trouble Azik unless he absolutely had to.

Now that I think about it, Mr. Azik's terrifying messenger can be summoned with the bronze whistle… No, that thing doesn't look like a messenger at all; it could take the role of an evil boss! So, even if Mr. Azik cannot beat the Creeping Hunger augmented Qilangos, he should be able to defend himself easily and have enough power left to save The Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and her partners… Klein shifted his posture as he thought, still leaning against the back of his chair. He propped his right leg over his left.

The Hanged Man Alger looked at The Fool and spoke once again, "I'm about to receive a batch of pages from Emperor Roselle's diary. I believe that I can present them to you in the next gathering, or the gathering after that."

According to the arrangement of the Church of Storms, Pritz Harbor was under the jurisdiction of the Backlund diocese. Thus, Alger could enter the capital and wait for Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos to show himself under the guise of reporting about his previous voyage.

Backlund had been the headquarters of the Church of Storms until the end of the last epoch, having shifted their holy altar to Pasu Island only after the establishment of the Loen Kingdom. Regardless, the status of the Church of Storms in Backlund was second only to the headquarters of the Seven Great Churches. One could imagine the information the Church of Storms held.

Under these circumstances, Alger was confident that he would be able to collect pages of Emperor Roselle's diary in the name of research. After all, they were indecipherable at present.

Klein allowed joy to color his tone, as he said with a gentle nod, "Very good."

What he was really feeling right now was a mix of joy and worry. He was happy that he could see several pages of Emperor Roselle's diary soon. They might contain a lot of useful information, but he was also worried about what he had to give The Hanged Man in return. After all, no one knew if The Hanged Man would be interested in the contents of the diary, or if the content was valuable enough.

Even a Seer is unable to determine that in advance… Must I really let my "Blessed" help him? Klein gave a silent sigh.

Audrey Hall hurriedly spoke up when she saw the conversation between The Hanged Man and The Fool end.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, may I recite your name and inform you using a ritual should I receive any timely and useful information?"

Timely… Look, Miss Justice's choice of words is so refined. Compared to her, you are too vulgar, The Hanged Man! Klein nodded slightly, saying past the fog, "You may."

Great! Audrey secretly clenched her fists.

At the same time, Klein turned to look at The Sun, Derrick Berg, who had been silently listening to their conversations. He spoke, his tone was peaceful, "The same goes for you as well."

"Yes, Mr. Fool." Derrick lowered his head.

The majestic palace was silent for a few seconds before Audrey spoke, "I need the complete pituitary gland of a Rainbow Salamander."

One of the main ingredients of the Telepathist potion? Hanged Man

Alger nodded slightly as if he was contemplating.

“I don’t have it. To be honest, I’ve only seen this creature in textbooks.” The Sun, Derrick, heard the term automatically translated to him as Phantom Netherdrake.

What kind of textbook would discuss a supernatural creature? How envious… I can only get information like that at a Beyonder gathering, through word of mouth, or through a crumpled piece of paper. There’s no system in place, and my search for knowledge lacks organization… I’ll find a way to trade for the Sun’s textbook in the future! Oh, he was interested in the formula for the Bard potion… Audrey thought, a little envious.

At that moment, Alger looked at The Fool, then retracted his gaze. He then looked opposite him and said in thought, “I might have a way of obtaining the complete pituitary gland of the Rainbow Salamander.”

Without waiting for Audrey to speak, he added on, “But it’s under the premise that Qilangos is found. When the time comes, the complete pituitary gland of the Rainbow Salamander would be equivalent to the extra compensation that I owe you. Miss Justice, you might not know, but these creatures are nearly extinct, and we can only find traces of them in primitive islands in the Sea of Fog, the Berserk Sea, or the Sonia Sea. Not many people have the coordinates to these Islands. Heh, if you’re interested, we can make a deal, for I am one of the few who knows how to get there.”

I’m also interested in those primitive islands… Klein silently listened to their conversation.

Thinking about the extinction of the Rainbow Salamander, he suddenly recalled the joke he cracked with Old Neil—the Dragons and Giants Protection Association. He let out a sigh in his heart.

Audrey became thrilled after hearing that. She fought back her emotions as she said, “I once dreamed of going on a voyage in search of these primitive islands to take in the history."

My Goddess, the Tarot Club is too powerful, too wonderful! To be able to recruit a member who has the coordinates of the primitive islands! Praise Mr. Fool! Audrey couldn't maintain her Spectator state as a smile crept across her face.

Primitive islands? Klein froze for a moment, then thought about a page of Emperor Roselle's diary that he had seen, the one where the Emperor described himself as a pirate king!

He said that he discovered an unnamed island with many supernatural creatures when he and his Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were traversing the Sea of Fog on an unsafe sea route.

Could that be the so-called primitive island? How unfortunate, the Great Emperor didn't include any coordinates in his diary. Perhaps the information will be in some future pages, but as of now, I haven't received any pages of his diary in chronological order… Klein was filled with regret and anticipation.

The Sun Derrick was already confused by the terms "Sea of Fog,""Berserk Sea,""Sonia Sea,""primitive island," etc.

He felt more and more certain that Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man belonged to a different world than he did.

After collecting herself for a few seconds, Audrey asked curiously, "Does the near-extinction of the Rainbow Salamander mean that the Spectator pathway will be severed soon?"

"No, there will definitely be substitute materials." Alger gave a definite answer.

"What substitute materials are there?" Audrey's eyes brightened as she asked.

Alger shook his head, replying without revealing certain profound truths, “I don’t know. Perhaps the members of the Psychology Alchemists might know.”

“Then how can you be so sure that there will be substitute ingredients?” Audrey didn’t understand.

Alger laughed and said, “You will understand in time. Or do you have something to trade for the information right now?”

“I guess I’ll wait.” Audrey pouted and sighed. She also dismissed the idea of asking Mr. Fool.

There’s no use in me knowing for the time being… The Hanged Man will definitely ask about something regarding Vice Admiral Hurricane, and I cannot be dragged too deep into that matter… She suddenly felt like praising her intellect.

But what she never expected was that Mr. Fool was feeling very disappointed at that moment.

Klein was rather curious about the secrets which Alger’s words held. Unfortunately, Miss Justice, who was the best assist all this while, didn’t choose to go through with the transaction.

No matter what method they chose to perform a transaction, the contents of the deal couldn’t be hidden from the owner of the fog!

Well, even if the Rainbow Salamander is nearing extinction, the Psychology Alchemists are still giving out formulas listing it as an ingredient instead of providing a substitute. Does this mean that the Psychology Alchemists are in possession of the coordinates of certain primitive islands? Or could they be working together with an organization that has the coordinates? Klein wondered.

After the end of the transaction discussions, Klein looked around, then turned to The Sun. He asked in a gentle tone, “Does the City of Silver still believe in gods?”

Klein was merely an official member of the Nighthawks and had no access to deeper mysticism knowledge. An example would be sacrificial rituals. Thus, in order to refine his understanding of performing sacrificing dedicated to himself, to move materials in the mysterious space above the gray fog, as a Sequence 8, Klein needed to learn it as soon as possible from other sources.

He came up with three methods after continuous consideration: First, he was going to ask Spirit Guide Daly, who was adept at ritualistic magic whilst also being a deacon. But this might invite suspicion from her; thus, Klein could only patiently wait for an opportunity. Second, he could ask Mr. Azik, but Klein couldn't guarantee that he would be able to recall the knowledge in this area. Third, he was going to use a roundabout way to ask Sun, who lived in the City of Silver.

Klein already had an idea of how he was going to do it while effectively maintaining his image.

Whatever he asked would be tied to the gods!

Derrick replied in a respectful tone, "We still believe in the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God."

Chapter 180 - A Smart Person Always Overthinks

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing The Fool’s question, Audrey perked up her ears and entered her Spectator state. She waited for The Sun to answer.

She had always been curious about where the City of Silver was and what was so special about that place, but she couldn’t bring herself to ask. It touched upon his privacy after all.

At that moment, Mr. Fool was asking personally. It was like finishing the first volume of an outstanding detective novel she had been reading for a long time, and she finally had the chance to buy the next volume!

The Sun’s answer didn’t disappoint her. They didn’t believe in the mainstream seven orthodox deities, nor did they believe in Death as the Southern Continent did. They also didn’t believe in the hidden existences, evil gods or devils—Primordial Demoness, Hidden Sage, Dark Side of the Universe, Chained God, or the True Creator—which The Hanged Man had told her before.

The City of Silver is really special! They actually worship the Creator Himself! This is the primordial worship that Mr. Hanged Man described, right? Hmm, the description of omnipotence is a little strange… Audrey stole a glance at The Hanged Man subconsciously and realized that he was nodding slightly.

Klein wasn’t surprised at all. He purposely chuckled and asked in reply, “Even though He abandoned you?”

Abandoned? The Creator abandoned the City of Silver? Alger was shocked. Suddenly when he suddenly made the connection regarding a particular term.

The Forsaken Land of God!

In the confidential information of the Church of Storms, at the security clearance level that Alger, who was Captain—equivalent to the Bishop level—could access, the Forsaken Land of God had always only been a name with no actual description. However, it clearly pointed towards the end of the Sonia Sea. From what he knew, even the Cardinals at the core of the church had no idea what the Forsaken Land of God represented. But only the leader of the church, the Proxy of the Lord of Storms, knew something about the situation and seemed to be taking charge of the hidden mission to look for the Forsaken Land of God.

Alger had once made a bold guess when he equated the True Creator's holy residence which was promoted by the Aurora Order with the Forsaken Land of God. But, unfortunately, The Fool hadn't confirmed his guess, so he couldn't be sure.

Now, he was shocked and surprised to find that the Tarot Club member using The Sun as his code name was very likely from the Forsaken Land of God!

Mr. Fool knew where the Forsaken Land of God was all this time, and he could pull someone from there to be a member of the Gathering! This is a hidden place that the Church of Storms has been trying to find to no avail!

Alger looked at The Fool who was seated in the seat of honor at the end of the ancient long bronze table in horror. He could only see that he was leaning back in his chair in silence, engulfed by the thick fog.

Audrey wasn't particularly moved about it. The only time that she had heard about the Forsaken Land of God was from The Hanged Man's question. She wasn't particularly interested, so she failed to associate it to anything from what Mr. Fool said earlier.

The City of Silver has the legend about being abandoned by the Creator… Huh, Mr. Hanged Man seems to be deeply affected… What is he amazed and afraid of? Audrey nodded in puzzlement as she remembered the details of the moment.

“Yes, we believe that we will regain the Lord’s favor in the end. Perhaps, it will be on the day the sun rises again,” Derrick Berg answered in an uncertain tone. “We were once ruled by the giants’ royal family, and we worshiped the Giant King Aurmir. Later, we were saved by the Lord and we will never betray the Lord again.”

Ruled by the giants’ royal family… It really is ancient. But it doesn’t seem to match… Alger, who had guessed at something, suddenly recalled the description about the Second Epoch in the hidden chapter of The Book of Storms.

The Second Epoch was also known as humanity’s Dark Epoch. At the time, the sky, ocean, and land were ruled over by dragons, giants, elves, mutants, devils, phoenixes, demonic wolves, and dead spirits. But in the end, the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom led humanity into defeating the supernatural creatures and ushered in the beginning of the Third Epoch, the Glorious Era, which was later known as Cataclysm.

Giant King Aurmir… Klein repeated the name in silence.

In various legends and myths, it was a great existence on par with the deities. Even now, there were still some places that worshiped him. Even the most famous and most expensive grape wine in the Intis Republic was named after Aurmir. It was said that the Giant King particularly fancied grape wine which was like blood.

Considering the fact that the Church of the God of Combat is in control of the complete pathway of the Warrior, which once belonged to the giants, can I assume that Aurmir was the ancient God of Combat? Klein guessed.

He nodded deliberately but didn't think any further about it. He then asked calmly, "Do you still offer sacrifices to this omnipotent God?"

"Yes, we still do. But since the day we were abandoned, we have never gotten any response." Derrick's voice had a hint of unconcealed pain.

Klein leaned against the back of his chair leisurely. He half-closed his eyes and said, "Describe the process of your offering ritual in detail."

Does Mr. Fool want to figure out the truth behind the City of Silver's abandonment? Or does He want to determine if the Creator still exists? Alger suddenly felt a shock through his body and he quivered.

Not only was he afraid, but he was also excited too. This was because he felt he was being made privy to the secrets between deities!

That made him feel like he had been elevated to a whole new level!

I've been chasing after power, after strength. Didn't I do it to achieve this kind of feeling? Alger leaned back, lifted his chin, and got carried away with his thoughts.

Mr. Hanged Man's mental state doesn't seem to be normal… Audrey looked at him with pity.

She finally understood that there might be some sort of shocking secret behind the communication between Mr. Fool and The Sun, which led to The Hanged Man's loss of composure.

After the Qilangos commission is over, I'll pay the price to get information about what Mr. Hanged Man learned today… I wonder if he would be willing to… Audrey thought in anticipation, yet was still a little worried.

Derrick didn't notice the weight that was hanging on his answer as he replied frankly, "We build opulent altars covered in the Lord's symbol.

Every time we receive a bumper Black-Faced Grass harvest, we hold a sacrificial ritual.

“We use the monsters we capture in the depths of the darkness to use as sacrificial offerings. After we recite God’s honorable title and the necessary prayers, we dance for Him and then kill the monsters, to let their spirituality and tainted blood dye the entire altar. If we haven’t caught any monsters, then we use a sinner on the lowest floor in the City of Silver prison instead.

“Then, we turn the very first batch of Black-Faced Grass into food and serve it before the Lord.

“In the end, we sing praises in unison and end the ritual.”

Since I was planning to offer a sacrifice to myself, I’m not picky about time, and the altar can be as simple as possible. The most important part would be to open a channel with the aid of the monsters’ spirituality or the blood containing Beyonder powers to complete the sacrifice offering. Of course, this is under the premise that one will receive a response? How extravagant… Klein used his mysticism knowledge to analyze every step of the sacrificial ritual in the City of Silver before finally saying, “What are the corresponding prayers? What language do you recite them in?”

Derrick was also looking forward to this, so as to gain hints from Mr. Fool on how to shake off the curse, so he recalled it carefully and answered, “We use Jotun, which is also our common language.

“The corresponding prayers are,

“’Your devoted believers pray for your attention.

“We pray for you to take their offerings.

“We pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.’”

†

Klein listened in silence and intentionally let the engulfing fog slowly swirl around him. He nodded as though deep in thought and remained silent.

As for what he learned from it, he obviously wouldn't share it…

Alger found it very normal. How could the secrets of a deity be revealed directly to a mortal? Derrick also steeled his resolve to quickly grow in power, so that he could obtain something that could garner Mr. Fool's interest in exchange for his guidance.

After some more communication, Klein ended the gathering. He watched Justice's, The Hanged Man's, and The Sun's figures vanish before him.

He looked down and saw the boundless gray fog and crimson stars that seemed eternally immutable.

However, after he advanced to Sequence 8, he realized that he could connect even more stars. In other words, he could pull in more members.

At least two… Klein nodded indiscernibly.

He wasn't in a hurry to add new members. He planned to act as he had before. He would first wait and observe. If Justice and The Hanged Man had any recommendations, he could assess them first.

What I saw the last few times was when The Sun was praying. There was a clear crystal ball before him, but ever since I pulled him into the world above the gray fog, that crystal ball has never appeared again… Does the prerequisite needed to pull people in through the connection of the crimson star have something to do with having a special item around them? Or does every crimson star correspond to an item in reality, which, when it's connected successfully, it would return to the world above the gray fog?

I wonder if Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man were the same… Let's just assume that’s the case. In that case, if people without this special item were to recite: “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.” and allow me to hear their prayers, would I be able to pull them in?

I can give it a try in the future.

Klein didn’t stay any longer. He wrapped himself with spirituality and stimulated a descent, leaving behind the lofty palace, the ancient table, and the twenty-two high-back chairs which sat immutably above the gray fog.

He had mastered the overflowing power of the Clown potion and eliminated the corresponding negative effects. Therefore, he wanted to try the ritual to summon himself!

I wonder what I’ll conjure this time… Klein thought in anticipation and fear as he fell through the mad ravings.

Chapter 181 - Different State

◆

Klein didn’t hurry to dispel the wall of spirituality when he returned to his room. Instead, he expertly took out a candle infused with sandalwood and placed it in the middle of his desk.

He then followed the steps for the ritual, lighting up the candle with his spirituality and scattering essences, extract, and herb powder herbs symbolizing good luck and mystery. He saw the flame alternate between being dull and bright as he took in the fragrance of peace and harmony.

Klein took two steps back and looked at the candle on the table. He then shouted in the language of the giants, “I!”

After a pause, he switched to Hermes, “I summon in my name:

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

At that moment, the flickering flame fused itself with the harmonious scent to form an illusory vortex, a vortex that manically absorbed the spirituality.

After Klein finished reciting the incantations, the vortex stabilized to become a palm-sized circle of grayish-white fog.

After observing the fog, Klein took four steps counterclockwise without hesitation. He returned to the world above the fog, and as he expected, he saw ripples of light spreading from his high-back chair, accentuating the mysterious aura of the weird symbol—the Pupil-less Eye and partially Contorted Lines—on his chair.

He took in a deep breath and calmed his soul down using Cogitation before extending his hand toward the target.

At that moment, he heard the incantations that he had just recited. He saw the surging spirituality and the rippling light fuse to form an illusory door.

Compared to the previous time, the door was now completely formed and was etched full of mysterious patterns!

The patterns were the same as the symbol on the back of The Fool's chair, a symbol made up of the Pupil-less Eye and the partially Contorted Lines!

As he looked at the door, Klein focused his mind and willed the door open.

Without warning, ripples formed in the eternally immutable grayish-white fog and the majestic palace, like a stone being cast in a peaceful pond. The ripple spread in the direction of the Door of Summoning.

The sound of heavy scraping sound caused by friction could suddenly be heard. A slit appeared in the heavy, mysterious door. Beyond it, one could faintly see an immensely dark world, filled with countless indescribable, transparent figures. There were also streaks of different colors, lustrous splendour that harbored infinite knowledge.

At that moment, Klein felt an unimaginable, irresistible attractive force coming from beyond the door. He couldn't help but get pulled towards it.

Damn! Are you not giving me the choice? Just as he had that alarming thought, his body went through the slit and vanished into the darkness behind the door.

The dizzying, maniacal roars gradually died down. Klein finally came to his senses.

He saw a young man in front of him. The man was wearing an old shirt, had black hair, brown eyes, and average-looking facial features. The man had an average build, was a little skinny, but his frame seemed to hide considerable power. He also had the obvious demeanor of a scholar.

…Isn't that me? Klein wasn't a stranger to scenes like this. He encountered something like this every time he looked in the mirror.

He nodded indiscernibly and surveyed his surroundings. He saw his bed with a white bedsheet draped over it. He saw his half top hat, tuxedo, and black trench coat hanging on his clothes rack. He saw a bookshelf with quite a number of books, his neat table that only had one candle on it. He saw the candle flame emitting a grayish-white glow.

And now, he was floating in front of the palm-sized circle of grayish-white fog.

So, have I really summoned myself? It feels a little like an out-of-body experience… but there's also something a little different. Klein looked at the physical body belonging to him, toward "his" blank, vacant eyes and slipped into deep thought.

But he could finally confirm one thing: it was only his spiritual soul, also known as his Soul Body in mysticism, that headed to the world of fog. The exterior appearance was that of the Astral Projection.

It's no wonder that I can directly see the Astral Projection surface of Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun and confirm whether they were Beyonders or not when I was in the world above the fog. I could also guess their Sequence numbers… My physical body seems to be under some form of protection, perhaps from the power of the ritual, for me to stand with such stability and not lose my balance. It should be the same for Miss Justice and the others… Klein slowly got used to the current situation and started to analyze the conditions of both his physical body and soul.

He retracted his gaze and tried to move his soul, now fused with powers from the mysterious space.

Whoosh!

A cold wind started to blow, as it spiraled around the room. Klein savored the sensation of flying, joyfully making circles in the room.

I can also take on the role of a "messenger" in this city now… I wonder if I can carry physical items with me… He collected himself and stopped. He floated in the air and experimented with his other abilities.

He tried to grab a notebook from his bookshelf, but his hand passed through it.

It feels a little sticky, it's not like moving through air… I might be able to grab it after I become more powerful and able to better utilize the mysterious powers of the world above the gray fog. Klein once again tried grabbing a single piece of paper but to no avail.

After more than ten seconds of deliberation, he flew toward the clothes rack and extended his transparent hand into the pocket of his black trench coat. He touched the Slumber Charms and the Requiem Charms that he replenished from a successful claim.

They were objects infused with his own spirituality, different from ordinary objects in supernatural terms. Thus, Klein wanted to see if he could carry them about.

His palm once again went through the charms, but he could clearly feel their existence. He felt the intertwining of spirituality, but he didn't have enough "strength" to pick them up. Of course, another explanation was that there wasn't enough spirituality within the charms to achieve a strong resonance with his current state.

The spirituality isn't strong enough… Klein thought as he moved towards the other pocket. That pocket stored the Flaring Sun Charms that he made with the stolen power of the divine blood and his own spirituality.

A warm sensation quickly spread all over his body, making his form turn more stable and his thoughts clearer.

He could take the thin gold piece out of his pocket. In the mirror in his room, the charm seemed to float out of the pocket on its own accord, similar to the descriptions in ghost stories.

I can move Flaring Sun Charms. I can also create sound using my spirituality… So I do have certain abilities in this state… Klein flew toward the mirror and stopped in front of it. He saw that only the thin gold piece was reflected. Other than that, it was only the furniture and darkness in the room caused by the drawn curtains.

After a few seconds of consideration, he placed the Flaring Sun Charm onto the bed before returning to the front of the mirror. He wanted to see if he could move through the mirror.

His vision turned dark. Klein's vantage point suddenly changed. He saw the room that was reflected in the mirror, the furniture that was accentuated by the weak sources of light. It made him feel as though he was hiding in an obscure corner, peeping into a tiny portion of the room.

I really can go through the mirror. But this is only an ordinary item which doesn't lead to some mysterious and strange world… Klein nodded and charged forward, once again returning to his room.

The success of carrying the Flaring Sun Charm gave him immense confidence. Hence, he attempted grabbing something else.

Mr. Azik's copper whistle!

The moment he touched the ancient and intricate object, he felt his spirituality expanding and freezing.

His illusory eyes turned into dark, burning flames.

It feels like I have gotten a little more powerful. My form is like a wraith's but without the strong sense of vengeance… Klein projected his current appearance by calming his mind.

This was one of the abilities of a Clown.

"Mr. Azik's copper whistle is truly fascinating." He nodded, noticing that he could now pick up pieces of paper with certain weights. He could also pick up his Slumber Charms.

How unfortunate. I can carry the silver ritual dagger, but the revolver is too heavy… Klein concluded his experiments and turned to see if he could use any spells in this state.

After serious tests, he concluded that he could conjure two spells, the first being a formless howl could shake the souls of his target and the second was inducing a state akin to freezing via contact with a target.

Klein came to a satisfied stop. He looked out the oriel window, towards the sunlight, and street covered by the curtain.

I wonder if I can move about during the day in this state… He muttered as he floated towards the window.

He then carefully lifted the curtain, creating a slit and allowing a small amount of sunlight to pass through the wall of spirituality and into the room.

Under the radiant sunlight, Klein felt his soul boil with a black fog. His powers were also being drained away, bit by bit.

He quickly released his grip, allowing the curtain to block the light.

I can't… Klein thought for a moment, then placed his gaze on the Flaring Sun Charm on the bed.

I wonder if the effect would be the same if I'm augmented with the divine blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun? He floated toward the bed and tried to grab the thin piece of gold.

But just as he touched the charm, the warm pure feeling formed a stark contrast with his burgeoning cold spirituality. It was like an existential conflict between fire and water.

Sizzle!

He tossed the piece of gold away as if he had been burned.

The power of Mr. Azik's copper whistle cannot inhabit my soul at the same time as the Flaring Sun Charm. Klein understood as he set the copper whistle down. He felt his spirituality shrink, and the black flames in his eyes extinguished.

In this state, both the spells I can use have been weakened… After another round of experimentation, Klein grabbed the Flaring Sun Charm, once again feeling the stabilizing and warm purifying effects the charm had on his Spirit Body.

He returned to the window and cautiously moved through the curtain.

The sunlight only felt warm on his body, but it didn't inflict any harm.

Not bad… Klein let out a mixed smile. He made his way past the wall of spirituality and cautiously flew out of the house with the intention of conducting more experiments.

Chapter 182 - Wanderer Klein

* * *

The weather in Tingen turned from refreshing cool to a bitingly chill in early September. However, the sunlight at three or four in the afternoon was still warm and soothing.

Klein went through the wall of spirituality and the oriel window. He floated in the air outside of his bedroom as he overlooked the people and carriages shuttling to and fro Daffodil Street.

Just then, there was a man in a gray labor uniform who suddenly lifted his head and looked over.

Klein panicked and wanted to hide, but he couldn’t find any suitable cover.

When he didn’t see anything to hide behind, he started to sneak back into his house. However, from the corner of his eye, he saw the man earlier merely glanced over the window. Then, his gaze followed a flying sparrow, but unfortunately, he lost sight of it.

In Tingen, birds could occasionally be seen.

Phew… I forgot that an ordinary person wouldn’t be able to see me… Klein let out a breath of relief and felt that he had yet to get used to the situation.

As he grew more confident, he flew lower and went to a nearby spacious street where he floated above people’s heads.

As he drew closer, Klein immediately realized that his “vision” was the same as his Spirit Vision. There was no need for him to activate it, but there was a restriction to its range.

Also, besides the aura and emotional colors, he could faintly feel the existence of everyone's soul. They were blurry, illusory, and transparent.

In this state, I think I could bypass a person's body and directly attack their soul… Klein nodded thoughtfully.

He circled around and prepared to test his fastest speed. Hence, he flew towards Iron Cross Street with all his strength.

It didn't take long before he came to a halt and arrived outside the apartment he used to stay in.

It should be about the speed of a car on the highway… It's a pity that I still can't go in and out of the spirit world; otherwise, it'd be perfect… But if I were to be lost in the spirit world, it's said that the consequences are very severe. Just as Klein finished his self-evaluation, he felt low-spirited and gloomy. There was an unspoken pressure.

He looked around and felt that Iron Cross Street was engulfed with gloominess that ordinary people could see, a darkness that the sunlight couldn't dispel. There were layers of numbness, despair, pain, and other emotions overlapping, as though they were corporeal.

It feels just like what I experienced when using spiritual perception on this street when I first became a Seer. Iron Cross Street's Middle Street and Lower Street hasn't changed to this day… I wonder how many years it took to accumulate such oppression and gloominess… Klein recalled the past and sighed as he flew up to the third floor of the surrounding buildings.

He finally felt sunlight and shook off his depression.

Klein flew along Lower Street and, from time to time, he would see residents who were dressed in tattered clothes, looking expressionless and malnourished. He even ran into two bodies that had died of natural causes—prolonged starvation and malnutrition with a sudden infliction of an illness.

There were countless people who died in agony every month. However, the bankrupt farmers and slaves that surged in from the Southern Continent replaced them very quickly… Klein sighed in silence and changed direction and flew south.

That was the industrial area of Tingen. The steelworks, lead factories, ceramic factories, printing factories, metalworks factories, machine construction factories, and other factories all built right next to one another.

As he flew, Klein saw towering chimneys. He saw dust filling the air and a thick gloominess that was only slightly better than the that of Lower Street.

It was crowded with emotions of exhaustion, pain, pessimism, and numbness. Laborers who were in their thirties were considered the minority.

Just as Klein wanted to fly lower to look at the area more closely, he suddenly felt weak. It was a weakness that came from inside him.

My spirituality can't withstand the duress… Klein became alarmed. He was in a hurry to return home, but he suddenly thought of a better possibility.

I was "summoned" out. If I were to end the summon, I would return naturally! He calmed down and carefully felt the surrounding environment and his status. Unsurprisingly, he discovered something that was connected to him from infinitely far away but also infinitely close to him. It formed an intricate tether to him.

Through this connection, Klein clenched the Flaring Sun Charm tightly and willed the strong desire to end the "summoning."

A massive and terrifying suction force overwhelmed him as his figure went from transparent to nearly invisible, and in a flash, he vanished from the corporeal world.

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Silence was everywhere in the boundless gray fog, and there were illusory crimson stars that twinkled. Klein reappeared in the lofty palace that looked like the home of a giant, as he sat in the seat of honor at the ancient bronze table.

The entire procedure went well… Furthermore… Klein looked at his Spirit Body in pleasant surprise and saw that it contained a warm and pure gold portion.

The Flaring Sun Charm!

I actually brought something corporeal into the world above the gray fog! He held the charm with a smile and fiddled with it to make sure it wasn't an illusory item.

Klein stood up and paced back and forth, feeling completely gratified. He thought to himself in anticipation.

As expected, ingredients and items can be brought into this mysterious space!

I just need to find the correct way!

However, this method is quite complicated. It needs me to do quite a bit before it reaches the destination. Furthermore, if I were to be summoned by the members all the time, it would damage The Fool's image. I can only do that occasionally, or after I understand it more. I can design an incantation that summons The Fool's "Blessed," but it will similarly be directed at me…

…I'm not some born laborer. Why must the incantation point towards me? When the time comes, I can conjure what seems like a messenger or a more unique "Blessed" and let it deal with the dispatch and collection of materials…

Ideas popped up one after another as Klein contemplated. But due to the limitation of his capabilities and knowledge, he couldn't put them into practice just yet.

As he became even weaker, Klein didn't dare to stay any longer. He used his spirituality to envelop himself and simulate the feeling of descending.

In the blink of an eye, he returned to his bedroom. He saw splendid sunlight pouring in through the gap in his curtains.

He examined his body and made sure that the Flaring Sun Charm wasn't brought back but left above the gray fog.

When I've gotten enough rest, I'll repeat the summoning ritual at dawn to bring the Flaring Sun Charm back to reality… Sigh, it would be great if I could maintain the state a little longer. That way, I would be able to investigate the houses with red chimneys. It's such a pity that I can't do it yet. I could only fly long enough to investigate a few houses before having to return above the gray fog and rest for half a day. The efficiency would be just as low. Klein walked before his desk and put out the silent burning candle.

After he packed his things, he didn't remove the wall of spirituality immediately. Instead, he sat down and took out a pen and paper to write a letter—a letter to Mr. Azik!

After he wrote the salutation of "Dear Sir," he pondered for a few minutes before penning:

"…I recently received news that one of the Seven Pirate Admirals, Vice Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos, has infiltrated Backlund. He carries a mystical item called the 'Creeping Hunger.' It provides an ability similar to a Shepherd, which is a Sequence 5 Beyonder that swallows different souls and obtains their corresponding powers. It's said that there is a limit to the number of souls for Grazing, but the souls can be swapped out…

"…Qilangos seems to have many Beyonder powers, and I'm not sure what he's trying to do in Backlund… The news I received suggested that he might be after a very important, very mystical item that could make Qilangos a High-Sequence Beyonder or as powerful as a High-Sequence Beyonder…"

Klein fabricated his source of information to generally describe the situation with Qilangos, but it wasn't like Mr. Azik would look for a Nighthawk Captain to confirm it.

Klein didn't directly request assistance but made it seem like he brought up the subject casually to encourage Azik to be careful.

Regardless of whether Mr. Azik was willing to help, it wouldn't hurt to first lay the foundations! If Klein eventually needed to ask for help, it wouldn't appear out of the blue that way! Klein let out a breath slowly and started writing the main content of the letter.

"The mastermind behind all that has happened hasn't taken any further action, and I still haven't found any related clues.

"The reason why I'm contacting you so suddenly is mainly to ask for your guidance regarding sacrificial rituals. I came across something like that during a recent mission…"

With The Sun's description and Mr. Azik's answer to compare, I should be able to try a sacrificial ritual after that. By reversing the ritual, I should be able to bestow items… This would be a more suitable ritual for exchanging ingredients and items rather than summoning myself… Yes, let's hope that Mr. Azik remembers the knowledge about this… Klein nodded slightly. He put down his pen without signing his name.

There's only one copper whistle, so I'm sure Mr. Azik wouldn't make a mistake with the sender.

Therefore, to be careful, Klein didn't leave his name.

After he folded the letter, he looked at his three-meter-tall ceiling. He picked up the copper whistle from the bed a little hesitantly.

Perfect, let it squat and get the letter! Klein emphasized inwardly before lifting his right hand and putting the copper whistle to his lips. He puffed up his cheeks and blew hard.

The whistle didn't produce a sound, but Klein's acute senses noticed that the surroundings had instantly turned cold.

He activated his Spirit Vision and saw that there were blurry yet glistening white bones surging out of his study desk like a fountain as it rose in height.

The white bones quickly gathered together and turned into an illusory yet huge monster. Its head tore through the wall of spirituality and reached somewhere unknown.

Klein looked at the white skeleton's thighs and body, as well as its arm that hung down. Seeing its right palm open up, the corner of Klein's lips twitched as he tossed over the folded letter.

The large bony palm did a sweep and caught the letter firmly.

Then, Klein picked up his copper whistle and blew again without hesitation.

The monster crumbled in an instant, transforming into bones that fell onto his desk before sinking in and vanishing.

After doing all of that, Klein removed the wall of spirituality. In the sudden wind that stirred, he hobbled towards the clothes rack and returned the copper whistle to its original place.

Then, he quickly walked to his bed and planted his head into it.

The moment his body touched the soft mattress, he fell into a deep sleep.

Chapter 183 - A Lesson on Mediumship

◆

After dinner, Klein engaged in small talk before reclining on the sofa. He picked up the recently delivered Awwa Evening News and started leisurely reading.

Benson wore a bitter expression as he sat opposite his sister. In front of him was the dining table which had been wiped clean by Bella. On it was grammar books, classic literature, accountancy notes, and other materials. In front of Melissa were her notes and stationery, including but not limited to pens, paper, rulers, compasses, etc.

“It’s like I’ve been taken some ten years back. Back then, I was still a student at the Church’s Sunday school,” Benson complained, but he continued to study with his head down.

That’s not too bad. This scene makes me feel the achievement of being a parent… Klein smiled and said, “Knowledge can change one’s destiny, and diligence will result in glory.”

I made up the latter half of that saying. I wonder if Roselle has said that before… He lampooned in his heart.

The room quickly became quiet except for the sound of pens scratching across pages or of books being flipped. Bella had finished doing the dishes and tidied up the kitchen before returning to her room on the first floor—a small room that was formerly the guest room.

Klein sipped on his Sibe black tea as he read the newspaper, occasionally engaging in small talk with his siblings. It was relaxing.

Suddenly, the gas lamps in the living room and dining room turned dark at the same time as if they had run out of fuel.

Benson and Melissa looked up towards the lamps, in an attempt to figure out the cause.

Klein also looked towards the lamps.

At this moment, he felt something touch his arm.

He was the only living person in the living room, but something had touched his arm!

His hair stood on end. Klein retracted his arm and turned to look over. He saw five thin, pale fingers growing on the tip of a tongue. Underneath them was an irregular row of sharp teeth!

Klein instinctively reached for his pockets. Within them were the Requiem Charms and Slumber Charms. But he caught a glimpse of a neatly folded piece of paper in the fingers' grasp.

A letter…

A messenger!

Klein heaved a sigh of relief.

At that moment, the five pale fingers prodded his arm again.

Klein saw Melissa about to stand up and check on the gas lamp. He reached out with his left hand and grabbed the letter, then he quickly retracted his arm and hid the letter under the stack of newspapers on the table.

He then saw the fingers, tongue, and the irregular row of sharp teeth fade away and disappear from the corner of his eyes.

With a thought, Klein tapped his left molar and silently activated his Spirit Vision.

He once again saw the five abnormally thin fingers. He saw the long red tongue adorned with sharp, white teeth. He saw them retracting back into the transparent face on the ground.

A second later, the face disappeared completely. The lights in the living room and dining room were restored back to normal.

“Strange…” Melissa pouted, finding no faults with the lamps even after a serious check.

Why is the lady in our house responsible for such things, while the men watch from the side? Klein shook his head and deactivated his Spirit Vision.

When spirits were willing to be seen and had the corresponding abilities, even an ordinary person could spot them. What happened just now was an example.

After discussing the problem with the gas lamps, the Moretti siblings became quiet once again. Benson and Melissa once again delved into the ocean of knowledge.

Klein used the newspaper as a cover and unfolded the letter with one hand. He placed the paper between the newspapers and started reading the reply from Spirit Guide Daly, “…I have to emphasize again, I prefer the title of Spirit Medium.

“I’m going to give you an positive response regarding what you asked. Yes, mediumship rituals can also be used on living beings, not just living humans.

“But this is troublesome and poses some level of danger. The souls left behind by the dead are pure. They have few impurities or chaotic thoughts. We can communicate with them, asking them questions and receiving answers without any barriers. Of course, you can use the method of dream divination to directly receive images from them.

“But that cannot be replicated with living humans. The subject still has a will and would fight against unprotected communication between souls.”

Klein’s lips twitched when he read the letter. He confirmed that it was Daly herself who wrote this letter.

Unprotected communication… That really is the way she speaks…

Klein returned to the letter after taking a quick glance at his siblings.

“We only have two methods when faced with such a situation. First, we can use our powerful spirituality and sophisticated mediumship rituals to triumph over the will of the other person, engaging in a barbaric method of communication. Second, we can use medication to make the other party relax. What I use the most are the Amantha essence and Eye of the Spirit medication. Heh heh, I’m sure that you still have a lingering impression of those.

“After reaching the stage of channeling the soul, you must take note that you’re also in a spiritual state, unlike when you’re communicating with the souls left behind by the dead. In simpler terms, your spirituality is entering the spirituality world of the other party.

“Take note, a professional Spirit Medium wouldn’t lack the means of protecting themselves under such a state. But you cannot do that. You would not be able to learn or use the techniques that I know of even if I explained them to you.

“So you have to maintain a certain level of lucidity and rational thought. Only through this method can you fight back against the torrents of the other party’s random and chaotic thoughts before arriving before his spirit and establishing communication. At this point, you’ll be communicating at the level of the Body of Heart and Mind.

“At this stage, you have two options. One is to use a technique to forcefully read the memories of the other party, but you have to be very careful, for you cannot be sure if the things you're reading are the things that you want to know. If you indiscriminately receive a large amount of memories from a person, it's very likely that your soul would collapse. Furthermore, it will cause severe damage to your target's soul, sometimes even destroying them completely. Unless you're a professional Spirit Medium, I do not suggest using this method.

"The second option is to gently communicate with the other party's Body of Heart and Mind. No matter how you entered, whether it be through violence or medication, the target will definitely be in a groggy state. They would generally not be able to lie, just like you couldn't… no, you cannot recall what happened to you! Although I know you've definitely forgotten about it!"

Sorry, Madam Daly, I was very awake back then… Klein chortled inwardly as he lowered his gaze and read the rest of the letter.

"Such communication can allow you to obtain real answers, but they won't necessarily all be the truth. You should understand what I mean. As long as you read the news, you must have heard Emperor Roselle's famous quote. I don't remember the actual quote, but the essence of the quote is that what one says shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In short, a spirit might not remember everything because a lot of memories are in one's subconscious or collectively be in the subconscious. Oh, I shouldn't mention that. Dunn calls it the evil theories of the Psychology Alchemists.

"Thus, you must be able to guide the soul and be good at designing your questions, do you understand? The corresponding techniques include…

"These are all under normal circumstances. What should we pay attention to when we're trying to communicate with the soul of a Beyonder who has gone insane?

"It's the same—maintaining your lucidity. You must not fall into a daze at all. This is because a Beyonder's spirituality is very potent and their spirit is filled with chaotic thoughts. Let me give an example. An ordinary person's consciousness is an island. The subconscious is the portion of the sea beneath the island. The collective subconscious is the surrounding sea. The sky belongs to the spirit world. As for a Beyonder, his 'island' might have a controllable active volcano. A lunatic's island might have a volcano that can erupt at any time. It would quake the foundations and pollute the 'sea.'

"When you come into unprotected contact with the spirit of an insane person, his chaotic thoughts might infect you, just like how polluted water in the sea would flow outward, spreading further.

"Yes, channeling his spirit under such conditions is like linking your 'sea' to his; thus, you need to pay close attention to this pollution.

"A few examples are when a Spirit Medium is careless when doing similar things and didn't use any protection. After that, they can develop mental problems similar to that of the target.

"Under normal circumstances, mental diseases are not contagious. But in the domain of mysticism, in the world of channeling spirits, they can indeed be contagious.

"Maintaining your lucidity and not being affected by the chaotic thoughts of the target are things that you must pay attention to. Following those would be the guided questions, which can be used to effectively communicate with an insane person.

"If you wish to try this, I suggest applying a Serenity Agent before doing so. The corresponding formula is available behind Tingen City's Chanis Gate. There's also the formulated product. It can be effective in helping you maintain rational thought during the process.

"Of course, you can also get Dunn to apply for help from the Backlund diocese. I'm very willing to see the spirituality state of an insane Sequence 7 Psychiatrist."

Lucidity and rational thought… That's my expertise. I maintained lucidity and rational thought even when my soul was being channeled… Of course, I’m not someone who lets confidence get to my head. I’ll still apply for the Serenity Agent, Amantha extract, and Eye of the Spirit medication! Klein heaved a sigh of relief, a little eager to make the attempt.

He put down his newspaper and stood up. He then entered the bathroom and ignited the letter with his spirituality before tossing the ashes into the toilet bowl and flushing them.

That night, Klein once again tried the ritual for summoning himself and brought the Flaring Sun Charm back to the physical world and into his room.

He also didn’t receive Mr. Azik’s letter even though he had expected a swift reply.

Perhaps he needed some time to recall the knowledge… or perhaps, he’s not free to give a reply for now… Or perhaps he’s worried that he would interrupt my sleep. Klein dispelled the wall of spirituality as he speculated. He made his way to the bed.

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The following day, Tuesday morning.

Klein entered the Blackthorn Security Company and knocked on the door to the Captain’s office as usual.

Chapter 184 - Behind the Gate

◆

“Please come in,” Dunn Smith said with a mellow and pleasant voice.

[image]

Klein turned the doorknob and pushed open the door to see the Captain having his breakfast. In his right hand was a cup of coffee emitting a rich aroma. On the plate in front of him, there was white bread toast and bacon.

Dunn placed the remaining sandwiched toast with butter into his mouth and ate it. He then silently pointed to the chair opposite his desk.

Klein didn’t disturb his Captain from enjoying his breakfast. With a smile, he sat down as he waited patiently.

Dunn saw that he was in no hurry, so he relaxed back into his chair, picked up his coffee to take a sip, and swallowed the food in his mouth.

He took a napkin, wiped the corners of his lips and said, “What’s the matter?”

Klein nodded seriously and said, “I’ve met Daxter Guderian, the doctor at the asylum and also member of the Psychology Alchemists.”

As he spoke, he caught a glimpse of the magazine that was spread open before the Captain.

“Did he provide any news?” Dunn asked, crossing his arms.

Klein simply described, “He told me that before Hood Eugen went crazy, there was someone who visited him quite frequently. That person’s name is Lanevus.”

“Lanevus…” Dunn massaged his temples. “I seem to have heard of it before…”

“He’s the cheat who swindled at least ten thousand pounds,” Klein reminded him.

Dunn thought for a while with a serious look on his face. He then shook his head to show that he had no memory of it.

Captain, you’re not sensitive at all when it comes to money! Klein lampooned and told him the related story about Lanevus by highlighting the main points.

“The cheat falsely claimed that he had prospected and purchased an iron mine with rich deposits of iron ore. He raised funds from private individuals in Tingen and swindled more than ten thousand pounds. Someone I know from the Divination Club suffered a loss from this. In addition, a young woman was swindled into an engagement with him and is now pregnant with his child.”

“He visited Hood Eugen multiple times before he went crazy,” Dunn said in thought. “Sequence 8 Beyonder, Swindler? The Marauder pathway…”

Captain, your memory is actually good when it comes to this kind of thing… Klein found it funny as he reflected over it. He nodded faintly and said, “That was my guess as well.

“Because the steelworks company that Lanevus set up was in the South and the victims were of several different beliefs, the case wasn’t passed to us in the end. Even if there had been evidence of Beyonder involvement in the case, it would’ve been passed over to the Mandated Punishers.”

Dunn finally understood the ins and outs of the story. He looked at Klein with his deep gray eyes and said, “What do you want to do?”

Cough, Captain, can you please not be so sensitive… Klein replied with a mask of solemnity, “I want to talk to Hood Eugen via a mediumship ritual and figure out why Lanevus came looking for him. I want to know if that visit is directly related to him going insane.”

Dunn nodded slightly and said, “Even if you hadn’t applied to do it, I would’ve had a similar experiment done when we were certain that Hood Eugen is crazy.

“However, Daly told me that it’s quite risky. Are you confident? I can ask for assistance from the Backlund diocese. It shouldn’t be a problem to delay it for a few days.”

Klein’s main motivation to become a Beyonder was to study mysticism and find a way home. As it was a chance for practical exercise and he was confident enough, he was naturally unwilling to give it up.

“Captain, I’ve mastered knowledge on the subject. I’m confident about this.

“Of course, I’ll require certain ingredients, such as the Amantha extract, Eye of the Spirit medicine, and Serenity Agent.”

“Serenity Agent…” Dunn ruminated over the name and confirmed Klein’s professionalism.

He remembered Daly mention that it was a liquid medicine that was rarely used yet was very efficient in mediumship.

Dunn Smith pondered for nearly twenty seconds and leaned back into his chair. He said, “Go ahead and fill out a request form. Then, collect what you need from behind Chanis Gate. Eh… I’m not sure if there are any finished goods. If there aren’t any, pick up the ingredients you need and concoct the medicine accordingly.”

"Alright," Klein replied happily.

He didn't get up but sat firmly in his chair.

Dunn massaged his temples. He thought carefully and said, "It happens to be my turn to monitor the asylum this evening… We can't visit Hood Eugen directly. No one knows if there are members of the Psychology Alchemists disguised as doctors, nurses, janitors, or patients in the asylum. No one knows if the Psychology Alchemists are monitoring Hood Organ either. Any action we take must be secret. We can't expose that Daxter Guderian has become our informant."

"…We'll go at dawn by sneaking in secretly."

"Yes, I'll keep guard while you perform the ritual to prevent any accidents from happening."

That'd be best! If Hood Eugen is just pretending to be crazy, while I use a mediumship ritual on him, It would be like I barged into the zoo and danced before a tiger… Klein relaxed and said sincerely, "Yes, Captain!"

He stood up and walked towards the door.

Just then, the corner of his eyes noticed the title of the magazine article the Captain was reading: "Donningsman Tree Sap in the Southern Continent's rainforests has had a significant effect on boosting hair growth."

… Klein retracted his gaze, opened the door, and exited the Captain's office.

Suddenly, there was a playful thought that flashed through his mind.

Actually, a Beyonder doesn't need to go through such trouble. If Old Neil was still around, he could design a ritualistic magic for hair regrowth. Then, he would pray for the Goddess's assistance. Whether one would be covered with hair and become a curly haired baboon, that's another story… What would the Goddess's response be? If it were me, I would definitely curse: Motherf*cker…

That thought suddenly tainted Klein's happiness with sadness, but there was also a hint of hilarity in the sadness.

He entered the clerk's office and sat before the Akerson Model 1346 typewriter and finished typing his application.

After Dunn Smith stamped and signed the application, he took it down to the basement and walked along the tunnel that was lit up with gas lamps, towards Chanis Gate.

Only at that moment did Klein realize something.

It would be the first time that he was going beyond the mysterious gate!

"I wonder what it looks like…" He quickened his pace with anticipation and came before the twin doors of the black gate.

He first passed his request to Seeka Tron, who was on duty that day for registration purposes. Then, Klein took back the document that now had her signature as well. He knocked on Chanis Gate and sensed how empty and distant the echo was.

He didn't hear any footsteps but within half a minute, the gate with seven Dark Sacred Emblems opened with a creak.

Chanis Gate opened up to allow a single person's passage before coming to a stop. Klein then walked in with the help of the gas lamps on both sides of the corridor.

Behind the gate, there was an elderly man with obvious wrinkles and thinning hair. He was wearing a classic black robe and holding a barn lantern.

The dim candlelight shone through the glass, illuminating the elderly man's expressionless face which was a mixture of light and darkness. His light blue eyes were like ice that had been frozen for a thousand years.

“Document,” he said with his husky voice.

Klein had seen the elderly man before because at dusk every day, he would come out from behind Chanis Gate with his partners. They would pass by the duty room and take the hallway leading to Saint Selena Cathedral.

They were Nighthawks who had aged and volunteered to keep guard inside.

According to Klein’s understanding, there were five of them who were keeping watch.

“This is my application.” He passed the document in his hands to the elderly man before him.

The guard with light blue eyes raised the barn lantern and looked through the request carefully. After he made sure that there were no mistakes, he moved aside and let Klein pass.

Klein passed through Chanis Gate slowly. He had yet to take a good look around when he felt an indescribably chill.

It wasn’t the cold of winter, but a chill that would make a human’s spirituality shiver.

Klein lifted his gaze and looked afar. He saw candlesticks appearing on the wall in succession, and there were silver candles with carvings on them. The flames gave out a blue luster, without any flickering.

Creak!

The guard closed Chanis Gate, and the surroundings became extremely quiet.

There was a broad walkway before Klein, a walkway paved with ancient stone slabs.

On both sides of the walkway were stone doors labeled “Ingredients,” “Medicine,” “Information,” and so on.

At the end of the walkway, there was a flight of stairs that connected to the lower floors. It extended into the dark as though it was connected to the abyss.

It should be connected to different sealed locations that have Sealed Artifacts. I heard that there are a few floors… I wonder which floor contains Saint Selena’s ashes? Klein adapted to the brightness behind the gate and suddenly felt that there was something shapeless scraping against his skin. They were in strips, and every one of them chilled him to the bones.

He shivered, and he couldn’t help but activate his Spirit Vision.

Then, he looked at the entire area behind Chanis Gate. It was filled with fine black lines. They were swaying lightly, occasionally clustered together, occasionally extended. They were tightly knitted without any gaps.

This… This is the sealing power behind Chanis Gate? Klein nodded indiscernibly. He reined in his thoughts and followed the guard. They went through a heavy stone door labeled “Medicine Room.”

Very soon, he found the Amantha extract, the Eye of the Spirit medicine, and the Serenity Agent by following the alphabet labels.

He had seen the first two before, but it was his first time picking up the latter one. He saw that a blue fluid rippled in the translucent glass bottle. For some reason, looking at the fluid made him feel as though he had entered a mother’s embrace.

On the bottle, there was a label. It showed the manufacturing date and the expiration date, which was still some time away.

Luckily, it can still be used… Klein took the three tiny bottles of medicine and walked back to Chanis Gate with the guard keeping him company. He shook off the feeling of coldness that reached the deepest corner of his soul and the creepy experience of being swept by the black lines.

When Chanis Gate closed, he couldn't help but look back. He mumbled to himself, "Staying in there for a long time would affect both the body and soul, right?

"It's no wonder the guards have to volunteer…"

†

Around dawn, Klein used a special technique to lock his bedroom. He pushed open his oriel window and jumped down.

The two-story height posed no danger to the present him. He landed steadily without faltering at all.

The Nighthawks' carriage was already parked opposite, waiting for him.

Without any exchange, Klein quickly arrived at Tingen Asylum in the North Borough. Following the Captain's instructions, he took a detour to one of the corners without a street lamp where he saw the waiting Dunn Smith.

"Let's go in." Dunn nodded faintly. "I've made sure that there's no one around."

"Alright." Klein quickly got closer.

As a Clown, entering an asylum… it keeps reminding me of a famous saying: "It's like returning home"[1] He mused to himself.

He followed Dunn closely. With the aid of the wall's bumpy surface, they somersaulted into the asylum quickly and agilely with outstanding balance.

Dunn turned around and looked. He nodded slightly to give his approval.

The two of them crouched and silently moved through the hospital's small park and activity square. They then entered the three-story building in the asylum and arrived at the top floor where Hood Eugen's room was.

As Hood Eugen had the possibility of becoming violent now that he had gone insane, he had been assigned to a single room. Luckily, the monitoring Nighthawks hadn't wasted their efforts during the surveillance and had made a copy of the room key long ago.

Kacha!

The lock clicked lightly, and Dunn entered first. Klein projected his gaze past his figure and saw the person sitting on the bed.

Hood Eugen's face was long and skinny. His eye sockets were deeply concave and his blond hair was disheveled.

He was looking at the metal barred window with his grayish-blue eyes. He was looking at the crimson moon outside.

Klein closed the door to the room and chuckled as he casually asked, "Why aren't you sleeping?"

Dunn was taken aback and suddenly remembered that Klein was now a Sequence 8 Clown. Hence, he remained silent and backed off to a corner of the room.

Hood Eugen turned his head and looked at Klein. He chuckled foolishly and replied, "I'm waiting for my cake."

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†

This is a meme of a recalcitrant offender who often gets send to prison and once said in an interview that going to prison is like returning home.

Chapter 185 - Spiritual World

◆

Waiting for cake? That really wasn't an answer that I was expecting… Of course, if I was able to anticipate the answer of a mental patient, wouldn't that mean that I was almost there myself… The thought flashed through Klein's mind. He maintained his relaxed smile as if he was chatting with a friend.

"Who's going to send you a cake?"

Hood Eugen's expression fell instantly, his face long and depressed.

"No, there's no cake… There's no cake!

"You stole my cake!"

His voice suddenly became shrill as he glared angrily at Klein.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he let out a shout and opened his mouth, revealing two rows of white teeth.

Following which, he leaped from his mattress while salivating. He closed in on Klein with one step and extended his hands, attempting to grab onto Klein's shoulders. He wanted to drag Klein towards him and bite him.

Despite the sudden attack, Klein reacted quickly despite appearing a little flustered. He instantly bent his knee and squatted. At the same time, he tilted his body to the side and raised his left arm.

Oof!

His shoulder slammed into Hood Eugen's abdomen, causing Hood's eyes to turn white and drool to drip from his mouth.

But Hood Eugen didn't stop moving. He allowed the momentum to carry him down as he opened his arms in an attempt to pull Klein into a bear hug.

Klein tilted his body to the side and rolled over, his movements were smooth as though he had practiced them hundreds of times.

He pushed against the ground with his right hand and stood up with a somersault. He decided to go on the offensive and charged forward to restrain his opponent.

But at that moment, Hood Eugen only stood there blankly, his eyes losing focus, becoming vacant and lost.

Klein froze for a moment. He turned his head towards the corner of the room, only to see Dunn Smith, wearing a black trench coat and matching hat, with his hands clasped tightly together and looking down.

The Captain has dragged Hood Eugen into a dream… Upon realizing this, he stopped his subsequent attack and took the opportunity to take out the silver ritual dagger that couldn't harm anyone. He used it to create a wall of spirituality which sealed the ward.

Klein then took out three candles infused with mint and placed them on the window in a triangular formation. One candle signified the Evernight Goddess, another the Mother of the Concealment, and the last represented himself.

Soon after, he set up a simple altar and used his spirituality to ignite the candles.

Just as he was about to warn the Captain, Dunn raised his head and smiled.

"Hood Eugen's dreams are a sea of chaos. There's no way to guide it."

Just as he finished his sentence, a luster returned to Hood Eugen's eyes. It was no longer vacant.

Then, the insane Psychiatrist moved his waist, letting out a comfortable yawn.

Klein was momentarily at a loss, so he remained quiet. He picked up a metal bottle containing the Amantha extract.

He dripped the transparent liquid extracted from the night vanilla, Slumber flower, and chamomile into the flames of the candle representing himself, allowing the serene aroma to spread around the room.

Hood Eugen's nervousness, anger, and relief completely vanished. He languidly sat down again on the edge of his bed and looked out at the crimson moon outside the window in a daze. His eyes once again lost their focus as peace was restored.

Klein also felt the peace that came with the night. He set the Amantha extract down and sat beside Hood Eugen. He wanted to find something to break down Hood's last line of defense.

Only with the removal of the last line of defense could he use the Eye of the Spirit medication to make Hood Eugen's soul slip into a turbid state.

After all, I'm not a professional Spirit Medium… He had already thought of an idea before coming. He fished out a set of tarot cards from his pocket.

This set of cards only had the twenty-two Major Arcana, so it was easy to carry around. It was a "weapon" that Klein had successfully applied for.

Each of the cards was lined with metal threads made from pure silver, each of them was able to kill undead beings. Their patterns were complicated and gorgeous, making Klein feel like they were a collector's item and not used against enemies.

Klein cut the deck with one hand and smiled at Hood Eugen.

"Let's play some card games."

"Cards?" Hood Eugen retracted his gaze from outside the window as he repeated the term in a daze.

Klein didn't answer, placing the deck of tarot cards into Hood's palm with a sincerity that could not be rejected.

Hood Eugen mimicked Klein's actions, trying his hardest to cut the deck with one hand to some success.

The attention of the mental patient was slowly drawn to the hard yet flexible, beautifully textured cards in his hand. He flipped over the first card:

It was the picture of a man in tattered clothes with his hands tied. He was hanging by his leg with a faint halo at his head.

The Hanged Man… Klein nodded in thought. He took the opportunity to grab the Eye of the Spirit medicine, dripping the amber liquid onto the candle flame—still the one representing himself.

An alcoholic fragrance spread forth, inducing an intoxicated feeling to anyone who took a whiff of it.

Hood Eugen spaced out bit by bit, his vision losing its focus. The deck of tarot cards in his hand fell onto the bed.

But he remained sitting upright, without slumping over.

Klein used Cogitation to fight back against the medicine's dreamy effects of turning light-headed and ethereal. He took out another metal bottle from his pocket and twisted the cap open before pouring the blue liquid into his mouth.

Serenity Agent!

The ice-cold liquid flowed through his throat, down his gullet, and into his stomach. Klein instantly felt unusually awake, without any sense of drowsiness.

He slowly exhaled, then familiarly took out the other essential oil extracts and herb powders, dripping them onto the two candles signifying the Evernight Goddess.

In the faint fog, he took two steps back and solemnly murmured in Hermes, "I pray for the power of the dark night.

"I pray for the power of the mystery.

"I pray for the Goddess's loving grace.

"I pray that you would allow me to communicate with the spirituality of the Beyonder beside me, Hood Eugen."

†

The incantations reverberated around the room, and Klein saw the flames of the candle, now dyed black, spread outward.

He didn't avoid them, nor did he guard against them. He allowed the dark "night" to envelop him.

In this unusually lucid state, he felt his spirit leave the protection of his body and enter a space akin to deep space. All around him was boundless, silent darkness. The sky above him was filled with countless indescribable, transparent figures. There were also streaks of different colors, lustrous splendors that harbored infinite knowledge.

The spiritual world… Klein was no longer a stranger to this.

Just as he had this thought, a foggy world appeared before him. It was a world enveloped by a faint tornado of light.

Klein knew that it represented Hood Eugen's spirit that represented his Body of Heart and Mind. Thus, he leaned over, digging into the wall that was the tornado.

In an instant, he saw countless specks of light pelting him. He heard the voices of thousands of people discussing something in whispers.

These murmurings were very chaotic and lacked any sense of logic. Some included praises for the elegance of some lady, then it turned into a description of the feeling of relief after using the toilet. Some started as a weep, then turned into frenzied joy…

The insane thoughts latched on and gnawed at Klein's spirit in a bid to assimilate him. But Klein maintained his lucidity and rationality, quickly flying towards Hood Eugen's spiritual world.

This is like a pleasant concert compared to the horrifying murmurings and howls I hear when entering the world above the gray fog… Klein smiled secretly and made his way through the tornado. He saw a groggy, translucent Hood Eugen.

This Sequence 7 Psychiatrist maintained the same state as he was in the outside world. He looked over with a dazed expression.

Klein stopped before him and asked softly, "Do you know Lanevus?"

Hood Eugen replied blankly, "Yes."

The light around them underwent a transformation as if Hood Eugen was revealing his "spiritual sea."

Quickly, the intertwining light revealed a bespectacled average-looking man who wore a sarcastic smile. It was the same Lanevus whom Klein had seen in the arrest warrants.

Klein nodded in satisfaction and collected himself. He asked a guided question, "Why did Lanevus look for you?"

“He said…” Hood Eugen’s voice slowly turned soft.

Suddenly, he changed into a more charismatic voice and laughed a little maniacally.

“Hood Eugen, it is the worst of times, and also the best of times. As long as you seize the opportunity, we can become the rulers of this world, we can become true immortals!

“As long as you’re willing to help, I’ll not only tell you the way to master your potion and avoid losing control, I’ll also promise that you’ll receive godhood qualities in the future—immortal godhood qualities!

“You should be able to see the presence behind me. My promise is ‘His’ promise. In some sense, the Psychology Alchemists are connected to ‘Him.’

“Do not doubt. The Psychology Alchemists aren’t strong enough at the moment. It is unable to provide you with enough help unless you’re willing to stay at this level for the rest of your life.”

The method to grasp your potion without losing control… Why does this sound like how I entice others with the “acting method”… Lanevus sure has lofty ambitions. He’s only a Sequence 8, yet he’s already talking about manipulating godhood qualities… Just what hidden presence is backing him… This guy seems to be plotting something, which isn’t solely just to cheat people out of their money… Or could running scams just be his hobby? Klein had many thoughts as he listened on. When Hood Eugen stopped talking, he quickly pressed on, “What kind of assistance did Lanevus want you to provide?”

Hood Eugen didn’t answer immediately, his spiritual world turned silent.

He then broke out into laughter. He replied erratically, “Help… Help… Help!

“Hahaha, I provided help! I provided help!

“I made…”

His words came to an abrupt halt as his blurry soul contorted. The light and darkness of the surroundings which represented the spiritual sea quickly turned incorporeal, forming a sinister, scary, dark altar.

On top of the altar was a cross. There seemed to be something hanging on the cross, as well as things that appeared indiscernible piled at the bottom.

The light and darkness alternated, and as the hanging item was about to become clearer, the entire spiritual world shook, as if it was experiencing a magnitude ten earthquake.

Holy shit! Klein had a premonition that something dangerous was about to happen. Without thinking, he turned and flew towards the chaotic tornado of thoughts in an attempt to escape.

Chapter 186 - The Handsome Captain

◆

Countless rays of brilliance drowned Klein as ravings of a million people filled his ears. However, Klein thought nothing of it. His abilities as a Clown told him that his spirit was being engulfed by a black shadow that was rapidly expanding.

The black shadow was a huge cross, and there seemed to be a person hanging upside down on it!

Kacha!

The chaotic tornado of thoughts unleashed its load outwards and turned uniform. Hood Eugen's spiritual world disintegrated bit by bit.

Klein noticed that he had exceeded his fastest flying speed from his previous trial; his soul had become significantly stronger after he briefly mixed with some of the strength from the mysterious space above the gray fog.

Just as the cross's shadow was about to engulf him entirely, he dashed out of the blurry "world" and felt his body.

He familiarly stimulated a descent, and Hood Eugen's long skinny face and messy blond hair instantly appeared in his vision, along with the three candles that were burning at the window ledge.

He had managed to get out of the mediumship state in time!

In that instant, he saw black scales growing one after another on Hood Eugen's face. His vacant pupils turned into slits, becoming extremely cool and ruthless.

Oh shit! He's going to lose control! Klein's pupils constricted, and before he could react, he saw a figure in a knee-length black trench coat and silk top hat take two huge strides before Hood Eugen. He then raised the revolver and pushed it against the man's head.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Dunn Smith fired five bullets consecutively. Hood Eugen's head suddenly blew up like a watermelon falling down from a high height. The red and white rainstorm splattered across each and every corner of the room.

He had taken care of Hood Eugen before he lost control completely!

Klein, who was fifty centimeters away, was covered in blood and dirt. He looked at Dunn Smith in a daze, only having the feeling that the Captain was very handsome at that moment.

As long as you ignore his memory problems, the Captain is very trustworthy… He complimented sincerely from the bottom of his heart.

"Did an accident happen?" Dunn put away his revolver and watched Hood Eugen's mostly headless body slowly fall to the floor.

Just as Klein was about to organize his words, he saw that the body had become a pile of bloody flesh within a few seconds and the asylum uniform that covered it appeared to have its most basic structure damaged.

Hood Eugen's corpse was left with very few complete items. There were dozens of scales twinkling with a black shimmer, and his heart that had turned crystalline and faint blue.

The heart had a magical luster, like a diamond refracting incoming light.

It could calm someone down or make them restless. It could create tension or develop chaos. But other than that, there was nothing notable.

“This item should be controllable.” After Dunn holstered his revolver, he took out a black glove and wore it on his right hand. He then squatted down to pick up the crystalline heart.

A controllable item… According to what the Captain previously mentioned, it could be used as the main ingredient for the formula of a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist… But, would it lead to the advanced Beyonder losing control even more easily? Klein took out his handkerchief to wipe the blood from his face and body. He then picked up his specially made tarot cards and cleaned their surfaces.

He looked at the ground and asked curiously, “What kind of items would these black scales be considered as?”

“These are ingredients that are contaminated with Beyonder power. They could be made into items that have long-lasting effects. For example, our demon hunting bullets’ ability to injure dead spirits or monsters would decrease drastically as soon as they pass the three months mark, leaving only a tiny portion of demon-hunting characteristics in the remnant materials. If the materials used were something like the black scales, the effective period would be as long as a year or two, and the effects would be even better. Of course, due to their characteristics, the black scales are obviously not suitable to be made into demon hunting bullets,” Dunn explained as he took a piece of paper from Klein to wrap the blue heart and black scales.

“It’s just like the materials we use as supplementary ingredients for the potions?” Klein asked.

Dunn stood back up and nodded slightly.

“Yes.”

Someone who loses control will really become a monster… Klein sighed. He seized the opportunity while the room was still sealed with a wall of spirituality and quickly described his encounter in Eugen's mind.

"When I was communicating with Hood Eugen's spirit, I saw a figure like the True Creator in his mind. But it was different from the mainstream ones. It wasn't the chain-bound Hanged Giant, nor was it the Eye behind the Shadow Curtains. Instead, it was similar to the one you saw in Hanass Vincent's dream."

Hanass Vincent was a member of the Aurora Order. As Melissa's friend, Selena, had peeked at his incantations and completed the magic mirror divination, it led to the Nighthawks' investigation of him.

Dunn Smith saw something close to the True Creator in his dream, but it was a different image than the mainstream image that was widely circulated. In the end, the result was an injury and a strange death.

When Hood Eugen flipped over the tarot card of The Hanged Man, Klein had actually already expected it. But he never thought it would be presented in such a way. Of course, it was only indirect contact. It wouldn't be comparable to the time he had spied on the Eternal Blazing Sun directly. The worst outcome was just mild injury or mild corruption.

As he listened to Klein's description, Dunn's expression became solemn.

He knitted his eyebrows and said with a deep voice, "A huge cross, black nails, a naked man covered in blood hanging upside down?"

"I didn't see it clearly. That's also the reason why I'm not injured. I only noticed a huge cross and figure similar to a man being hung upside down," Klein replied tactfully.

At that moment, all he cared about was "fleeing"…

Seemingly in thought, Dunn nodded and said, "Lanevus's visit to Hood

Eugen was related to the True Creator? So the Aurora Order is involved?"

Klein quickly repeated the conversation he'd had during the communication.

"Lanevus tempted Hood Eugen with the 'acting method,' and a so-called immortal godhood. But I don't understand why he said that it was the worst of times, and also the best of times. Perhaps it was just the way he speaks as a Swindler?

"…The help Hood Eugen provided involved a sinister and dark altar… I suspect that Lanevus is plotting something terrifying…"

Then, his heart stirred as he spoke.

"Captain, do you remember the letter written to Mr. Z? The letter that the member from the Aurora Order whom I killed carried!

"He mentioned in the letter that he was waiting for an appropriate opportunity, something about the arrival of the end of days, he will offer all the lambs in Tingen to his so-called God. Would this be related to Lanevus's plot?

"Could Lanevus be the Mr. Z from the Aurora Order?"

Dunn Smith thought carefully and said, "I don't think so. Lanevus couldn't be Mr. Z. Otherwise, he wouldn't be setting up a fake steelworks company to scam people while the Aurora Order was up to something. It would introduce too many variables in his main mission. If anything went wrong with the scam, he would draw the attention of the police and us. He would have to run away from Tingen and abandon his plan.

"Of course, if he was just insane, it would be perfectly normal for him to act illogically.

"But judging from the scam he set up, the calmness and cunningness with which he swept away the money doesn't make him look like a real lunatic.

"So, I don't think he's Mr. Z from the Aurora Order. Of course, he might really be involved in the matter as mentioned in the letter. The one offering all the lambs in Tingen to the so-called God."

Upon saying that, Dunn paused, then paced back and forth as he said, "This incident might have quite severe repercussions. We have to reinvestigate Lanevus and get some clues. Hmm, let's clean up the scene and cover up any evidence here. Let everyone know that Hood Eugen died but leave no clue as to who killed him. This should lead to action by the Psychology Alchemists or other Beyonders that are paying attention to the asylum. They might know something.

"The Lanevus scam is either still in the hands of the police department or transferred to the Mandated Punishers. We'll join the investigations by saying that we obtained clues while investigating the Aurora Order. Then, we'll work together with the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind. We'll concentrate the forces in Tingen and investigate everything and anyone associated with Lanevus. We can request assistance from Backlund diocese and the Holy Cathedral if it's necessary!"

After that, Dunn turned his head sideways to look at Klein. He ruminated and said, "Do you have anything that you'd like to add?"

Captain, you basically said it all… Klein shook his head solemnly. "No!"

He hurriedly used ritualistic magic to remove some of the necessary traces with the aid of the simple altar that he had yet to clear in order to ensure that no one would be able to tell that they were the ones who killed Hood Eugen.

Then, he put away his ingredients, blew out the candles, removed the wall of spirituality, and left the ward in silence with Dunn Smith. They left the asylum by climbing over its walls.

“Go back and rest.” Dunn stood at a corner without a street lamp. He pressed his black silk hat and said, “there are many things that can only be done tomorrow.”

“Alright.” Klein wasn’t a Sleepless who only slept two to three hours a day. He immediately bade farewell to the Captain and took the Nighthawks’ dedicated carriage that was waiting nearby and returned to Daffodil Street.

Before he entered the carriage, he turned back to take a glance. He saw the Captain still standing in the dark which even the moonlight couldn’t touch. He appeared to be thinking in silence.

The streets were quiet and void of people before dawn. The carriage tore through the streets, sometimes going straight, sometimes taking turns.

Klein was pondering about Lanevus when suddenly, he felt as if he was in a trance.

He saw that the color before his eyes become saturated. The reds became redder and the blacks became blacker, just like an impressionist’s oil painting.

The surroundings slowed down, and the carriage seemed to enter a strange world.

Klein grabbed his Flaring Sun Charm and drew his revolver.

Just then, a huge, white, bony palm extended through the carriage window and threw in a neatly folded letter.

Then, the palm pulled back and vanished. The oil painting-like scene suddenly returned to normal while the carriage was still driving along the street steadily.

…It’s a really well-hidden method… Klein looked at the letter, by the side of his foot, as the corner of his lips twitched.

Chapter 187 - Azik's Warning

◆

The actions of the messenger shocked Klein for a full five seconds before he recovered. He bent over and picked up the letter.

"Even if Mr. Azik is unable to use a good portion of his abilities as a Beyonder, because of his memory loss, being able to send out such a messenger should make him powerful enough to deal with a Sequence 7 or 6 Beyonder." His heart reflected his shocked and envious expression. He didn't unfold the letter immediately. Instead, he placed the letter into his pocket, together with the Slumber Charms.

The carriage continued forward. When Klein exited the carriage at Daffodil Street, he instinctively looked at the driver, Cesare, only to see his relaxed smile, as if he hadn't noticed anything unusual that had happened.

Klein nodded and returned home after observing Cesare with his Spirit Vision.

He looked at the balcony and pipes on the second floor and pondered for a few seconds. He decided to maintain his gentlemanly behavior and not attempt to scale the pipe back into his room. As for his stained clothes, he would take them to the Blackthorn Security Company tomorrow and get a professional to wash them through the police department. That would prevent his clothes from shocking his maid Bella and his sister Melissa.

Klein had removed the reverse lock on the front door before he leaped out the window from the second floor. Now, he took advantage of the fact that it was late at night and quietly opened the door to his house, deftly making his way in.

After closing and locking the main door, he heaved a sigh of relief. He went up to the second floor with hushed footsteps.

Stopping before his locked bedroom, Klein took out a tarot card calmly. He inserted it into the slit of the door and lightly pulled, easily breaking the specialized lock he designed himself.

He then entered the room, locked the door, and removed his clothes, before he fully relaxed.

It sure feels like being a thief… Klein laughed as he shook his head. He calmly took out his revolver and placed it under the pillow.

After he was finished with all of that, he lit up the gas lamp and sat in front of his desk. He took out the letter and began reading seriously.

“I’m sorry for replying only now. I’ve been busy searching for traces of my past. I’ve also been meeting up with former teachers and students and those drag on late into the night.

“I finally understand the encounters that I’ve had over the past two days after reading your letter. The police searched every room in the hotel that I’m staying at. There was a person who secretly snooped around in the hotel at night. Yes, I’m talking about a person with Beyonder powers.

“…So Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos, who’s a frequent character in novels and newspapers, has infiltrated Backlund and has gone on quite a killing spree. I remember that he’s not only wanted by the Loen Kingdom, he’s also on the bounty list of the Feysac Empire, the Intis Republic, the Feynapotter Kingdom…”

So, how much is the bounty? Klein subconsciously wondered.

He didn’t get an answer because Azik had switched to mentioning something else.

“I find the abilities of a Shepherd that you described quite familiar, it’s as if I’ve seen it somewhere, but I cannot remember where. It must be an encounter from one of my past lives. Not being able to recall it makes me very frustrated.”

Eh, Mr. Azik is a little interested in the Shepherd. I can use this to get him to help me. Yes, this sure is coincidental… No, this is not a coincidence, but inevitable!

It can be inferred that Mr. Azik has lived for over a thousand years and is most likely a High-Sequence Beyonder. Then, he would most likely have encountered the powers of many different Beyonders in his earlier lives. He would also have deeper impressions of those that were more unique… In other words, it isn’t only the Shepherd that would give him feelings of familiarity, but jobs such as the Unshadowed, Demon Hunter, or Guardian that would do so as well…

It’s highly likely that Mr. Azik would find any mystical item that corresponds to a particular Sequence’s abilities familiar and have his interest piqued. That’s something that can be imagined…

Klein was doubtful at first before being enlightened. He was a lot more certain as a result.

He shifted his gaze and continued to read the letter.

“I’ve long recalled some parts of the sacrificial ritual you asked about, probably because I have a deeper impression of them. Perhaps I was a priest in my one of my more recent lifetimes.

“I have to remind you and warn you, that you have to be very cautious when using sacrificial rituals. You cannot entrust your safety to evil gods or hidden, mysterious existences. They do not have consciences like we do.

“Also, you have to possess a strong sense of right and wrong, for the evil gods and devils often create seemingly harmless identities for themselves. My opinion is that you cannot sacrifice something whose presence you are not fully aware of; otherwise, your soul could end up being the sacrificial item."

In simple terms, evil gods and devils will take on another form, disguising themselves as someone trustworthy… Just like on the Internet, an account that claims to be a seemingly adorable chick might be controlled by a huge bloke… He had to be cautious even if they were to meet offline after confirming the person's looks, as the person might just be cross-dresser… Klein didn't disregard Azik's warning just because he was conducting the sacrificial ritual for himself. He nodded in approval.

After Azik emphasized a few things he had to look out for, he quickly explained the sacrificial ritual he knew of.

"First, set up the ritual. Choose the symbols based on which deity or unorthodox mysterious existence you are going to offer a sacrifice to. Use the corresponding herbs and minerals of 'His' or 'Her' domain. Of course, you can also make them into holy oils, ointments, scents, and other items in advance."

Symbols? Klein froze for a moment. He realized that he—The Fool that didn't belong to this era—didn't know what his corresponding symbol was…

He thought for a moment, quickly recalling the complex symbol on the back of his chair at the ancient bronze table. It was made up of a Pupil-less Eye which represented concealment, and the partial Contorted Lines which represented change.

That should be my symbol, or more accurately, that is what symbolizes me in the world above the gray fog. My domain is much simpler then—concealment, change, good luck… But I cannot be too sure of that, so I'll have to try it out… Even if the symbol is wrong, as long as I get my honorary name right, the target of the sacrifice wouldn't point towards some other entity. The worst thing that could happen is that the ritual would fail. Of that, I'm certain… Klein thought as he rubbed the surface of the paper as he formulated a plan in his heart.

His eyes focused on the letter once again, reading the rest of the letter.

"Second, you need to be clear if the sacrifice needs to happen at a specific time. Then, follow the processes of a normal ritual, until you finish reciting the honorific names and incantations of the ritual.

"You must remember to use either Jotun, Dragonese, Elvish, or ancient Hermes. You must use the natural powers in these languages to establish a direct connection with the corresponding entity. You can design the exact incantations to use, but it must include these critical terms: 'pray,' 'notice,' 'offer,' 'kingdom,' 'gates,' and 'open.'

"Finally, you must use materials that have a certain spirituality quality to create a connection with the natural powers of the incantation. This will allow you to construct a tunnel that connects to the gates of the kingdom where the corresponding entity resides. If the entity is interested, then your sacrifice is complete.

"This step isn't absolutely necessary. If you can make the corresponding entity very interested in your sacrifice, then 'He' will open the gates to 'His' kingdom for you after you finish reciting the incantations, establishing a stable tunnel on 'His' own accord. Of course, this would often imply danger as the orthodox result as relatively friendly hidden gods rarely do this. Only evil gods or devils would reply to you directly in order to achieve their goals."

Materials that have spirituality are not cheap… I wonder if merely reciting the incantations would allow me to open a sacrificial tunnel similar to the Door of Summoning? I wonder if I could make use of the abilities of the world above the gray fog… Yes, I'll try that first and only get the materials with spirituality from the underground market if I fail. Do I need Beyonder ingredients? It should be fine if it possesses a certain amount of spirituality, right? Klein thought about the 300 pounds lying around in his anonymous account. He also thought about the 10 plus pounds of savings that he had saved up.

Beyonder materials were not completely identical to materials that possessed spirituality. For example, the heart that Hood Eugen left behind was a Beyonder ingredient while the black scales were a material possessing certain amounts of spirituality.

After he finished reading Mr. Azik's letter, Klein rubbed his fingers together and ignited a flame of spirituality. He burned the paper to ash and threw it into the rubbish bin.

It was already deep into the night and Klein was in no hurry to try the ritual. He intended to first make a plan and go through everything that he needed to take note of before putting it into practice.

He had a vague understanding of his shortcomings long ago. He was cautious and rational when it came to things he made plans for, but once the events deviated from his original plans, he would easily consider only the good and disregard the bad when he was forced to be on his toes.

A simpler description would be that a rash action of his would easily cause him to court death… Klein extended his palm to cover his face.

The next day, Dunn Smith, who had communicated with the Mandated Punishers and Machinery Hivemind, started to assign missions. Klein also received his assignment. He was tasked to investigate a number of people who had connections to Lanevus. But because of his suggestion and the policy of the Nighthawks, he didn't have to be responsible for the people he had met previously.

Of course, Klein continued with his combat lessons in the afternoon. Nor did Dunn assign him the role of lead investigator.

†

Backlund, Hillston Backlund. In a building with a horse stable and garden.

Qilangos, who had a unique wide chin and dark green eyes, looked at the unconscious man before him. He took off the man’s clothes and wore them.

He then leisurely walked in front of the dressing mirror and saw the black glove on his left hand twitch. He saw many Contorted Lines appearing on its back.

A few seconds later, Qilangos saw a thin veil of light envelop his figure. His muscles, skin, and bones began undergoing a strange transformation.

Sometime later, he transformed into the unconscious man, completely identical in height, appearance, and demeanor!

Chapter 188 - Ball

◆ ◆ ◆

Sharp nose, thin eyebrows, slightly droopy cheeks, faint blue eyes… Qilangos examined himself in the mirror. He was certain that he looked no different from the unconscious man.

After he rehearsed a few of the man’s gestures, he bent down to drag the man off the ground and shoved him into a wardrobe.

Then, he extended his right hand. With an audible snap, he broke the man’s neck.

Qilangos took out his handkerchief and wiped his hands before closing the wardrobe door.

He slowly walked back to the mirror, wore a black double-breasted frock coat, tied a bowtie, and raised a bottle of amber-colored cologne. He dripped a few drops on his wrist, then dabbed them over himself.

Qilangos tidied his hair in front of the mirror, then walked out of the room. He clasped his hands and told his butler who was waiting outside, “Don’t let anyone enter my room; I’m keeping something very important in there.”

“Yes, Baron!” The balding butler pressed his hand against his chest and bowed. “Your carriage and personal servant is waiting downstairs. Duke Negan’s invitation card is there as well.”

Maintaining the baron’s mannerisms, Qilangos nodded indiscernibly. He walked towards the stairs in an arrogant manner under the company of his butler.

Heh, a baron who is riddled in debt, to the point of not wanting to hire a normal security guard, has actually maintained his hiring of a butler, a valet, two footmen, two parlor-maids, four chambermaids, two laundresses, one carriage driver, one coachman, one gardener, one chef, and one sous chef. To these foolish nobles, dignity really is everything… I even had to waste some of my time to learn the strange pronunciations and so-called “noble slang”… Qilangos thought to himself in disdain.

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough. In a particular cramped apartment.

Xio Derecha sat cross-legged on a bed and looked at Fors Wall who was reading a novel with the light from the window.

“This is so disappointing. Qilangos didn’t leave any clues behind. We still haven’t figured out what he’s trying to do in Backlund.”

They had acted according to their initial plan and lodged a police report. Then, they secretly sent a letter to the local police station and described the strange situation at the crime scene in detail. They also mentioned that the suspect could be Qilangos.

The police station responded as they had predicted. The policemen were very careful, and they transferred the case directly to the Mandated Punishers.

After a day’s time, the news that Vice Admiral Hurricane had sneaked into Backlund was widely spread among all “enforcement teams.” Xio and Fors also left the place they originally rented and hid to investigate in secret.

They didn’t want to be brought back to the police station to help with the official investigation. The Mandated Punishers, Nighthawks, and

Machinery Hivemind were all hostile towards non-official Beyonders. The Churches viewed them as potential criminals.

Hence, not only were Xio and Fors avoiding the possibility of Qilangos's pursuit, but they were also hiding from the "enforcement" authorities.

"If we could discover his purpose so easily, Qilangos would've been buried in a cemetery long ago, and the tombstone would be covered in weeds," Fors replied casually. "We need to wait patiently. As long as the authorities continue to take this much interest in him, Qilangos will definitely make a mistake. I've got to say, I'm quite envious of a mystical item that can allow one to change appearances."

Xio hugged her knees and looked out the window.

"I'm just worried that Qilangos will take action soon and then flee from Backlund before anyone can respond.

"If that happens, I don't know when I'll be able to advance to Sequence 8, let alone Sequence 6 or Sequence 5…"

She paused and muttered as her mind spaced out, "I don't know when I'll be able to take back the things that belonged to our family… It's been almost a year since I last saw my younger brother…"

Fors gave her a comforting smile.

"When you fulfill your wishes, please allow me to write your experiences into a story. It would definitely be an interesting and exciting one."

"Hmm, I actually find Miss Audrey very generous. Even if Qilangos escapes, I think she'll still reward us handsomely. We've been busying ourselves for so long after all, and we've even caused Qilangos to appear."

"I hope so… Sigh, why can't I have any fortuitous encounters?" Xio grabbed her shoulder-length blonde hair.

Fors frowned and said, “In the Beyonder world, fortuitous encounters are usually accompanied with danger. I have yet to figure out what the ravings I hear during the full moon mean, or if they will result in negative changes. Heh heh, fortuitous encounters without dangers may exist, but they are very, very rare. It’s difficult for your wish to be fulfilled, unless… unless we receive the favors from an orthodox deity or the attention of some friendly hidden existence. However, it would be hard for us to tell if it was really an evil god or devil in disguise.”

Xio sat straight and drew a crimson moon on her chest.

“May the Goddess watch over me!”

†

Duke Negan was in his mansion located in Backlund, Empress Borough, where he was hosting a grand ball.

There were two parts of the mansion. One was the dancing hall located on the ground floor, which was covered with glamorous stone slabs carved with complicated patterns. There was the duke’s excellent ensemble playing music in a corner. Up the stairs, there was a winding corridor that circled the hall located on the second floor. The guests were holding their glasses, leaning against the railing, overlooking the people dancing on the ground floor as though they were enjoying a fencing match from the stands. Occasionally, a gentleman would walk before a lady or his wife to invite them to dance. If the invitation was accepted, both of them would walk down the stairs hand in hand and enter the hall.

On the far side of the corridor, there were doors after doors. They were rooms that had been allocated to the guests as their resting quarters.

But behind a French door was a corridor, and on both sides of the corridor were various gypsum statues. They were all the ancestors of the Negan family.

At the end of the corridor was another hall which could see the ball. Long tables were covered with a variety of delicious food and fine wine, and another ensemble belonging to the duke was playing relaxing melodies for the guests.

In the hall, the guests were gathering in groups. Some were seated and some stood around, chatting about all kinds of matters. Those who wished to get away from the frivolities for a while would go to the attached balconies to overlook the garden and enjoy the crimson moon in the sky.

After participating in the opening dance, Audrey Hall stood on the second floor above the dancing hall and stared at the candles on the huge crystal chandeliers hanging from the rooftop in a daze. However, she noticed that many young men were appearing to pump themselves up to come over and invite her for a dance. So, she wisely left the place and went to the corridor that connected to the dining hall.

How boring, but my attendance is necessary… Sigh, can't they just let me observe in silence? I have to say, some people have rich facial expressions when they dance. They remind me of animals seeking mates… Audrey lowered her head, looked at the tips of her feet, and walked in a straight line out of boredom.

Just then, the corner of her eyes caught an approaching figure. She slowed down, stood straight, and instantly became the elegant yet quiet Miss Hall.

"Good day, Baron Gramir," Audrey greeted with a flawless smile and etiquette.

Baron Gramir had thin eyebrows and faint blue eyes. He smiled and bowed.

"Nice to meet you again, Miss Hall. You are the brightest and most dazzling jewel at this ball."

After exchanging a few words, Baron Gramir headed for the dancing hall while Audrey continued approaching the dining hall.

After a few steps, she suddenly frowned. There was puzzlement in her green eyes.

Baron Gramir isn't the same as before…

In the past, when he sees a pretty lady or madam of a higher rank than he is, and one that's relatively prettier, he would look to the side without looking at them directly. Then, he would steal glances constantly… But today, he appears very confident…

Also, his cologne smells off. In the numerous parties in the past, his body would emit the final note of the Amber cologne fragrance, musky yet faint, not ostentatious yet elegant. In other words, he would spray the cologne a few hours earlier to let the front and middle notes disperse before the gathering. But just now, his cologne was Amber in middle note, rich and refined…

Audrey slowed down her footsteps. As a Spectator who had completely digested her potion, her sensitivity towards details wasn't anything other Beyonders could compare to.

Suddenly, she thought of a possibility. Her green crystal-clear eyes froze.

It couldn't be Qilangos in a disguise, right?

The Creeping Hunger has the power to change a person's appearance!

†

The more Audrey thought about it, the more possible it seemed. She felt uptight as she turned nervous and panicky.

If he really was Vice Admiral Hurricane, what is he trying to do? It's a pity that I can't bring Susie to the ball. Otherwise, I could ask her to observe Baron Gramir… No way, I have to warn Father! Amidst her frantic thoughts, Audrey quickened her pace and entered the dining hall. She found Earl Hall who was talking to the Chief Cabinet Secretary and others.

She flashed a flawless smile and walked over. She held Earl Hall by his arm and told the others, “Gentlemen, do you mind if I borrow Earl Hall for a few minutes?”

“Beautiful lady, it’s your right,” The few gentlemen said in a friendly response.

Audrey held Earl Hall by his arm and moved to the nearest balcony. They found a quiet, uninhabited corner, and she said to her middle-aged father who was getting plump, “Father, I have something to tell you.”

Earl Hall was smiling fondly at his daughter, but he got serious when he saw her serious facial expression, “What’s the matter?”

“I ran into Baron Gramir earlier, but there are things about him that are different from the past. For instance, his cologne was in the middle note of the Amber fragrance. It used to be the end note. And…” Audrey continued with the things that she found different. It could be explained as being sensitive and meticulous.

After she described what she had noticed, she weighed her words and added, “I heard from Viscount Glaint that Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos has the ability to take on other people’s appearance. Hasn’t he been in Backlund recently?”

Earl Hall listened to her carefully, and his face grew abnormally grave.

But he soon flashed a smile and comforted his anxious daughter.

“I’ll take care of this. Go look for your mother and stay with her. She’s at the lounge in this hall.”

“Okay.” Audrey nodded obediently.

On the way back to the lounge, she turned around and looked at her father. She saw that Earl Hall was talking to another noble softly, and he wore a rather solemn look.

Audrey couldn’t help but feel anxious. She felt that she needed to do something to make sure that her father, mother, and brother didn’t get hurt.

She surveyed the area and changed the direction in which she was heading in. She left the dining hall and found Duke Negan’s small prayer room.

She pushed the door closed and locked it behind her. She looked at the symbol of the Lord of Storms before her and subconsciously found a remote and dark corner.

Audrey sat down with her body leaning forward. She clasped her hands together into a praying position and supported her forehead.

Then, she recited softly in Hermes, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, you are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; you are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

Chapter 189 - Prayers and Replies

◆ ◆ ◆

Tingen City, Daffodil Street.

Klein was discussing the latest play with Benson and Melissa and was inviting them to watch it at the theater next weekend.

“I think the newspapers have said enough about it. ‘The Return of the Count’ is definitely a play that’s worth watching. It’s already been performed more than ten times in Backlund, and it sold out each time. I think that we shouldn’t miss this opportunity.” Klein, who had lacked sources of entertainment, was unwilling to give up. After all, he had been an ardent follower of television shows back on Earth.

Of course, if it wasn’t for the maintenance of my image, I’d rather go to a bar and play billiards… Yes, renting a venue for tennis isn’t a bad choice. That can be considered as it’s a leisure sport for the middle class. With my current fitness, as long as I don’t encounter other Beyonders, I should be able to handle most opponents easily… Forget it, it can only be a passing thought for now. I still have to reinvestigate the figures associated with Lanevus in the morning, go for combat training in the afternoon, and search for the house with the red chimney in the evening before returning home…

I sure am a busy man… Klein tried to remain optimistic.

Noticing that Benson was inclined towards his suggestion while Melissa was still a little hesitant, Klein smiled as he added, “I heard that the most popular supporting cast in ‘The Return of the Count’ is a genius mechanic.”

“Alright, we do have to see a play at a large theater once in our lives.” Melissa pouted and nodded her head grudgingly, but there was now a sparkle in her eyes.

Klein was about to respond when he heard a buzzing in his ears. He became dizzy for a few seconds.

Someone is praying to me… He supported his back with his right hand and chuckled.

“Then I shall wait patiently for the tickets to go on sale.”

“Alright, I’ll be returning to my bedroom to write up a report.”

“We also have to plunge into the sea of knowledge and hope that we don’t drown.” Benson let out a self-deprecating laugh as he returned to the dining room with Melissa.

Klein went to the second floor and locked the door to his room. He sealed the room with a wall of spirituality, then he took four steps counterclockwise as he recited the incantations, returning to the world above the gray fog.

His figure suddenly appeared at the seat of honor in the magnificent palace fit for a giant. A pulsing crimson star reflected in his eyes.

Klein lifted his right hand and extended his spirituality, establishing a connection with the star representing Justice.

With a boom, he saw a blurred, distorted image. He saw Miss Justice in a long beige regal dress sitting on a chair in a dark corner. Her head was bowed, her hands clasped.

At the same time, her still nascent and nervous voice stacked in an illusory manner, reverberating around the space, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era,

“You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

“You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

“I pray for your attention.

“I pray for you to listen.”

†

“I’m at a ball held by Duke Negan and encountered someone who’s suspected to be Qilangos.

“He is disguising himself as Baron Gramir, and his motives are unclear.

“I noticed today that some of the details regarding Baron Gramir were a little different than usual. This made me recall the appearance-altering Beyonder power that Qilangos’s mystical item has.”

†

Klein listened seriously and carefully interpreted what was happening. Finally, he understood what Miss Justice was describing.

Qilangos has actually used the special powers of Creeping Hunger to infiltrate Duke Negan’s ball!

But Qilangos probably didn’t expect that one of the ladies at the ball is a Spectator, a Spectator who has committed the mannerisms of Baron Gramir to memory! Hence, he doesn’t realize that he’s been exposed!

What does Qilangos want? And what should I do? I’ve tried conducting the sacrificial ritual without spirituality-infused materials over the past two days and realized that I can create something like the Door of Summoning, but I’m unable to open it. I was going to find some time to purchase some materials with spirituality in the underground market to prepare for my second experiment. Miss Justice definitely wouldn’t have spirituality-infused materials when she’s attending a ball… Klein thought for more than ten seconds before beginning his response to

Justice’s prayer.

†

In a small prayer room in Duke Negan’s mansion.

Audrey repeated her prayers a few times before finally stopping. She tidied her clothes and walked quickly to the door.

She knew that she couldn’t be gone for too long because her parents would worry about her and thus misjudge the situation. It would cause them to react in the wrong way.

Standing behind the door, Audrey took a deep breath, extended her right hand which was covered in a white veiled glove, and released the lock with a wary heart.

After leaving the small prayer room, she followed the path back to the dining hall. She saw the figures holding wine glasses and plates get closer when her vision suddenly turned blurry. She realized that an illusory fog was spreading into the surroundings.

In the middle of the thick wide fog was an ancient chair, and atop the chair was a mysterious presence, a mysterious presence that seemed to overlook everything.

Mr. Fool! Audrey almost shouted in pleasant surprise.

She then heard a deep, familiar voice: “I’m aware.”

The voice reverberated around the space as the fog vanished. Audrey’s vision was still filled with images of the long tables of food and wine, as well as the bustling sights of interacting guests.

The worry and unease in her heart vanished as she subconsciously straightened her back and entered the dining hall with light steps. She walked toward the recreation room in the dining hall.

†

In the magnificent palace above the fog.

Klein started to think about how to convey the message to The Hanged Man after finishing his reply to Miss Justice.

I cannot just repeat the description to him since it undermines my authority… After all, what mysterious existence would personally take on the role of a messenger!? He deliberated for nearly a minute before an idea came to him. He conjured the scene of Miss Justice praying and transformed it into something akin to a movie scene with the faces mosaicked and censored.

He then extended his hand and tapped, launching the scene into the crimson star representing The Hanged Man.

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough. At the Holy Wind Cathedral.

The Hanged Man, Alger Wilson, was going through the investigation reports in a simple room, trying to find traces of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos.

Near his right hand was a stack of paper filled with many contorted symbols.

Just as Alger was leaning back in his chair and rubbing his eyes, he saw his field of vision turn blurry. His line of sight was filled with thick, gray fog.

There was an ancient chair which seemed to exist eternally, deep within the endless fog. Atop the chair was a faint human figure.

Mr. Fool… Just as this thought came to Alger, he saw that another hazy figure in a regal dress within the grayish-white fog.

She was in a praying position, repeating, "I'm at a ball held by Duke Negan and encountered someone who's suspected to be Qilangos.

"He is disguising himself as Baron Gramir, and his motives are unclear.

"I noticed today that some of the details regarding Baron Gramir were a little different than usual. This made me recall the appearance-altering Beyonder power that Qilangos's mystical item has."

†

Alger was shocked at first, then let out a look of pleasant surprise. He pressed his palm against his chest and lowered his head, "Praise you, Mr. Fool!"

Everything he saw or heard vanished before he finished his sentence as if nothing had happened.

Staring at the desk strewn with Emperor Roselle's diary pages and his investigation reports, Alger's pupils constricted as he realized how powerful The Fool was once again.

This was the Holy Wind Cathedral—once the headquarters of the Church of Storms. Even though that was history from more than a thousand years ago, many believers still viewed this place as sacred. But Mr. Fool could still descend upon this space without warning and give a reply…

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, Alger gathered his stuff and exited the room.

He was going to look for one of the Cardinals of the Church of Storms, the Archbishop of the Backlund diocese, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake!

For Alger Wilson, being able to kill Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos personally was the best course of action, but if he was unable to do that, guaranteeing that he was really dead was also acceptable in his book!

†

After forwarding Miss Justice's description to The Hanged Man, Klein left the mysterious world above the gray fog and returned to his bedroom.

While he was in no hurry to dispel the wall of spirituality, he sat before his desk and took out a piece of paper. He picked up a pen and began his letter.

"According to an urgent indication from a source, Qilangos has used the abilities of a Shepherd to take on the appearance of Baron Gramir and has infiltrated Duke Negan's ball. His motives are unclear as of this moment."

Klein wasn't worried that Mr. Azik would be suspicious of him or doubt why someone in Tingen would be so quick to know something that just happened in Backlund, for the telegraph existed in this world.

"I don't know if you would be interested in this, but I thought that I should let you know." Klein quickly ended the letter and folded the piece of paper.

He then found the ancient copper whistle, brought it to his mouth, and gave it a hard blow.

The gigantic, terrifying, and illusory skeleton messenger appeared once again, still standing at its original spot, not minding that its head was going through the ceiling.

Klein fought back the urge to use the abilities of the Clown to turn the letter into a flying dagger. He tossed the letter towards the messenger without a fuss.

He then blew on the copper whistle once again to end the summoning. Klein collected himself and went through the events in his head once again.

This was all he could do for the time being!

Although Klein could also make use of the summoning ritual and bring the Flaring Sun Charm directly to Backlund, it was too dangerous for him to do so. First, Qilangos was a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed and had with him the Creeping Hunger. Second, it was too troublesome. He had to first bring the Flaring Sun Charm to the world above the gray fog. Third, his image would be affected. Thus, he wisely gave up on this idea.

To be honest, the problem is not too serious. Duke Negan is the most influential noble outside of the royal family, a key member behind the Conservative Party. There will be many high ranking nobles attending the ball today. I have no doubt that there are Beyonders guarding the area. If not for this consideration, there would have been no need for him to infiltrate the place under a disguise… Since Miss Justice noticed him early, the nobles should be prepared. This incident shouldn't blow out of control…

I wonder how fast Mr. Azik's messenger is? If it travels through the spirit world, Mr. Azik could still likely make it in time for the "main course," but if it's as slow as Madam Daly's messenger, then he might only read about the incident in tomorrow's paper…

Klein nodded indiscernibly and tossed this incident to the back of his head. After all, there was nothing more that he could do.

Chapter 190 - The Assortment of Abilities

◆

In Duke Negan’s mansion, in the dancing hall.

Disguised as Baron Gramir, Qilangos held a glass of blood-red Aurmir grape wine and casually stood behind the railing on the winding corridor on the second floor. He overlooked the people on the dance floor and enjoyed the view of the glamorously dressed ladies.

However, there was no lust in his eyes; they were as calm as a frozen lake. From the corner of his eyes, he stole glances at the hanging chandelier and the nearby Duke Negan who was looking at the beautiful figures passing by.

The Duke was wearing a well-ironed navy uniform with red ribbons attached to the medals on his shoulders. He preferred to wear his military uniform on formal occasions, in remembrance of his decades of illustrious service while in the military.

However, he had put on much weight since then. His once-sharp gray eyes had been left turbid and filled with desire. However, he took good care of himself, as the wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, lips, and forehead were faint, and his black hair was still thick and luxuriant.

That was Pallas Negan, the current Duke Negan, the main supporter of the Conservative Party, the brother of Prime Minister Aguesid, one of the richest and most powerful men in the Loen Kingdom.

At the same time, he was also the reason why Qilangos had sneaked into Backlund!

The thought of assassinating such an important figure makes me shiver in excitement… Qilangos retracted his gaze and closed his eyes.

He was willing to accept the commission because he had been offered a sufficiently attractive price, and it was also because Qilangos loved adventure and enjoyed taking on difficult challenges.

If this assassination is successful, my fame will spread across the Northern and Southern Continents, placing me above the Four Kings. And I'll receive a card, a card which contains the mystery of God that Emperor Roselle created! Qilangos suppressed his excitement and lowered his head to examine his left hand.

Creeping Hunger had become transparent. It was impossible to tell that "Baron Gramir" was wearing a glove via the naked eye or through contact.

This is such a mystical item… If it wasn't for this, a Sequence 6 like me wouldn't have achieved the rank of Pirate Admiral… Thoughts flashed through his mind as bouts of regret surged within Qilangos.

In his years as a pirate, he had seen and interacted with many Beyonders. Among them were members of the Aurora Order who enjoyed adventuring at the ends of the Sonia Sea.

So, he knew that Creeping Hunger was still rather different from a real Shepherd.

Firstly, the speed of switching states was too slow. It required at least a second, but a real Shepherd could switch instantly. Secondly, the controlled soul could only use one to three abilities before the person died. As for what abilities could be used and how powerful they were, that all depended on luck. On the other hand, a real Shepherd could decide on the three abilities. They didn't have to gamble like they were at a casino. Lastly, Creeping Hunger could only have five souls at the same time, while a real Shepherd could have seven.

Of course, both had the same restriction, which was that they could only control one soul at a time, and they could only use the soul's corresponding Beyonder powers and their own Beyonder powers. If they wanted to replace one of the souls with a new soul, the procedure would be irreversible.

Qilangos went through seven or eight years of adjustment and finally settled with five souls. Their abilities complemented one another and made their owner very terrifying.

Because of the constant adjustments and experimentation that he did over the years, there were rumors among the pirates that claimed that Vice Admiral Hurricane was omnipotent.

During the ardent dance music, Qilangos rehearsed the subsequent actions he would take in his mind. He sighed with regret in his heart.

It's a pity that I didn't find the Traveler over the past few days. Otherwise, I wouldn't have to worry about anything tonight.

If he had captured the woman that was most likely a Traveler, Qilangos wouldn't have hesitated to feed one of the five souls that he was Grazing to the Creeping Hunger.

To him, a Traveler's ability would be invaluable!

Qilangos stole a glance at the huge crystal chandelier hanging from the rooftop and decided to wait no longer.

The soul that he controlled currently had only one ability, which was to change his appearance. But it didn't possess any power to fight against other Beyonders. However, the transformation ability was still very useful, and Qilangos hadn't been willing to replace it with something else all this time.

The good thing was that no matter which soul he controlled, Qilangos could use his Wind-blessed Beyonder powers at the same time.

Finally, he acted as though his gaze was locking onto the curvy figure of a noble's wife before he swept it towards Duke Negan and all the gentlemen around him.

Duke Negan is a staunch follower of the Lord of Storms, and he is a key figure in the influence the Church of Storms has on politics. There must be a Beyonder from the Church of Storms beside him who's protecting him. Although the Negan family isn't an ancient thousand-year-old family, he's one of the wealthiest and powerful men in the kingdom. He's definitely searched for Sequence potion formulas in secret or hired Beyonders… Qilangos's thoughts surged. He mentally eliminated gentlemen who were nobles and officers before locking his eyes on the man who was constantly beside Duke Negan.

The man was brown-haired, blue-eyed, and wearing a black tuxedo. He was almost expressionless while he remained vigilant of his surroundings constantly.

Qilangos nodded indiscernibly and pressed his right hand forward slightly.

Whoosh!

A sudden gust of wind swept in the area above the dance floor, extinguishing the chandelier's candles.

At the moment between light and darkness, while everyone's attention was drawn away, a few wind blades slashed at the same spot on a metal chain supporting the crystal chandelier guised among the gusts of wind.

Creak!

With a harsh, shattering noise, the huge crystal chandelier plummeted straight to the dance floor. It made a loud crash, and people screamed in surprise. Shards of debris flew, cutting guests and leaving them screaming in pain and fear.

The darkened hall was suddenly full of opportunities. Qilangos's glove squirmed and changed, condensing into a golden surface.

His expression was imposing and his eyes saw through the darkness as he fixed his gaze onto the man next to Duke Negan.

Suddenly, Qilangos's eyes shone like lightning.

The Beyonder who was in charge of protecting Duke Negan suddenly let out a tragic scream and fell on the ground holding his head. He rolled around and struggled.

With a swoosh, Qilangos's figure dashed through the darkness and charged at Duke Negan.

However, in the deep recesses of his eyes, it reflected his target who didn't show any signs of panic. It was of utmost confidence.

Duke Negan's plump figure stood erect on the spot and observed the incoming assassin as if he were looking down on him.

He lifted his right hand and pushed forward. He murmured in ancient Hermes, "Imprison!"

In silence, Qilangos suddenly stopped. He was suddenly surrounded by a transparent wall, something that wrapped around him like a sticky liquid.

It made him seem like an insect in amber, or a prisoner in prison.

The leader of the Conservative Party nobles, the hereditary Duke Pallas Negan was a Beyonder himself—a very strong Beyonder!

Duke Negan spoke in a low voice again and waved his right hand.

"Flog!"

Pa! Pa!

Qilangos seemed to be whipped by a shapeless whip. His clothing tore from the whipping as his skin was lacerated, revealing white bone.

Then, Duke Negan leaned forward and held his right first. He declared in an imposing manner, “Death!”

Pa! His arm waved as his entire body slammed into Qilangos’s head with numerous afterimages. His fist had struck his target’s head in an unavoidable manner.

Kacha! Qilangos’s head shattered, but the surroundings shattered as well. Duke Negan remained standing at his original spot. It was just a dream.

It was unknown when the pirate admiral had already switched his ability and entered the Nightmare state.

Unlike an ordinary Nightmare, he could still move his body after he dragged people into a dream!

Qilangos stealthily appeared behind Duke Negan, and his cold gaze locked onto the Duke.

Wrapped with high-speed spiraling winds, his right fist stabbed into the target’s vest like a sharp blade.

Whoosh!

Amidst the howling of the wind, Qilangos’s right fist punched straight through Duke Negan’s body and through his heart. But Duke Negan’s figure rapidly turned transparent, just like a soul that was summoned.

After the nearly formless figure dissipated, Duke Negan appeared before the French door on the other side of the winding corridor. He wore a scrutinizing smile.

Another Beyonder… They prepared ahead of time? To lay an ambush for me?

How is that possible?!

Although Qilangos was unwilling to accept this fact, he dealt with it calmly.

The glove on his left hand squirmed and took on the form of dark golden scales. His irises grew pale and became vertical.

Then, a shapeless wave swept from every direction. Ladies and gentlemen were thrown into a state of uncontrollable fear at the same time. They left their hiding places and ran around aimlessly. The scene became chaotic.

The Beyonders didn’t dare to act recklessly as they were worried they might hurt their relatives and friends.

Seizing the opportunity, Qilangos ran quickly as hurricanes whirled around him. He smashed through one of the resting room doors before smashing through an oriel window.

Amidst the shattering sound, he leaped outside and flew a distance away from Duke Negan’s mansion with the aid of the wind.

The moment he landed, Qilangos immediately ran towards a forest ahead of him. It was a municipal garden—an escape route he had scouted out a while ago.

Once he shook off his pursuers, he could change his appearance and blend into the massive population of Backlund of more than five million people.

That was also the reason why he dared to accept such a difficult mission!

After a while, there was gale blowing towards Duke Negan’s mansion. The Cardinal of the Church of Storms, the Archbishop of Backlund, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake brought a few Mandated Punishers and flew towards the mansion.

He couldn’t inform the other Beyonders in time.

Alger was one of the members that arrived with Archbishop Ace. However, he was in a bad mood because he saw the broken windows and the other Beyonders running out of the mansion.

It meant that Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos had escaped.

Chapter 191 - Unclear Motives

◆

Qilangos lost his pursuers with the help of the wind after crossing a man-made lake.

He surveyed his surroundings, intending to create the illusion that he had entered a ditch to escape into the Tussock River before turning to the financial center of Backlund, the Hillston Borough.

At that moment, his field of vision suddenly blurred. He saw the colors around him saturate in the darkness.

The green trees became greener, their red fruits even redder. The dark blackness of the water became darker. Everything appeared to be splashed with pastel paint.

Under the sky where the crimson moon was obscured, there were many indescribable, transparent figures, as well as different lustrous splendors that contained mysterious knowledge.

Qilangos found himself coming to a halt as he floated in midair. Beneath his feet, dark water continually rose towards him. Under the water were pale white palms, reaching out for him.

Not good! Qilangos realized that he had been ambushed.

And the ambusher was definitely not weak!

A giant humanoid skeleton suddenly appeared before him. The monster was four meters tall, and burning in its eye sockets were pitch black flames. The bones on its body were blurry and illusory.

Qilangos gave his enemy an expressionless look as he let out a sneer.

At the same time, the glove on his left hand released a radiant light, appearing as if it was cast out of pure gold.

Qilangos leaned back and spread his arms wide, as though he was trying to hug the sun.

A bolt of pure, burning brilliance descended from the sky, enveloping the giant skeleton. The pastel-like world quaked in response, and the pale hands under the dark water evaporated one by one.

This was the Beyonder powers of the Priest of Light!

It was a Beyonder power from the Sun's Sequence 5 pathway!

It was the nemesis of the undead!

The radiant pillar of light dissipated, and the pitch black flames of the giant skeleton instantly extinguished. It then turned transparent as it disintegrated in the air.

Before Qilangos had the time to use the abilities of the Priest of Light to dispel the pastel-like world, his expression abruptly turned rigid.

He saw another giant skeleton appear to his left. It was also four meters tall, its eyes burning with a black flame, identical to the monster from before.

Immediately following that, the same skeletal monster appeared around Qilangos, one after another. One, two, three… there were more than a hundred of them!

More than a hundred pairs of burning black flames cast their gaze onto their target at the same time.

Underneath him, the dark water surface rose higher, almost coming into contact with Qilangos's feet.

Pale white hands extended outward, flailing them around constantly, as though they were grabbing at a life-saving straw.

†

"Spread out and pursue him. Try to corner him," Instructed the Cardinal—Ace Snake. He conjured a typhoon and took to the air, flying toward the direction where Qilangos had fled.

Duke Negan and the rest didn't join the ranks of Mandated Punishers in consideration of their statuses; instead, they stood at the windows or balconies to observe. It was also at this moment when the ordinary nobles who were running around frantically slowly calmed down.

Due to the darkness and the undulating shouts, they were unsure of what exactly happened. All they knew was that Duke Negan might have encountered an assassin.

Alger Wilson clenched his jaw and ran out of Duke Negan's mansion, following the path of the municipal garden into the Hillston Borough.

He wasn't willing to miss this opportunity, no matter how small the hope was!

Suddenly, he heard a voice which was carried to him by the wind, "There's no need to continue the pursuit."

No need to continue the pursuit? The voice of Cardinal Snake… Alger stopped after just running a few steps forward. He turned to look into the sky, puzzled.

He saw Cardinal Snake, who was wearing a black robe adorned with many storm symbols, floating above the forest and the man-made lake and staring down.

Alger creased his brows and sped over to where the Cardinal was without considering the reason.

As he neared his position, he made use of his Seafarer abilities to get a clearer look.

The Spellsinger of God showed no expression, but his posture made it evident that he was serious. His exposed white hair that peeked out from under his black hat swayed with the wind, accentuating his stern silver eyes.

Alger retracted his gaze and ran out of the forest.

The scene of the calm pond reflecting the crimson moonlight suddenly appeared in his eyes. On the pond's surface, a tall figure was floating near the bank.

That figure had a unique wide jaw, his brown hair was tied in a ponytail. His dark green eyes were cold, yet blank.

Qilangos!

Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos!

Alger was taken aback at first, then he felt both surprise and joy. He couldn't believe his eyes. and even suspected that the darkness was causing him to hallucinate.

Before he could react, he suddenly saw Qilangos's face rot rapidly. It oozed a yellow-green liquid, his flesh peeling off piece by piece.

Pat! Pat! Pat!

All that was left of Qilangos's face was a skull, his two vacant eyeballs fell from their sockets and onto the ground beside the lake.

Qilangos fell apart completely. His clothes draped over his rotting flesh and white bones and blocked the sparkling radiance.

In less than twenty seconds, one of the Seven Pirate Admirals, Qilangos, had died mysteriously in front of Alger's eyes.

This shocking scene was etched deeply into Alger's mind. It made him suspect if he was having a terrifying nightmare.

What was happening?

Didn't Qilangos escape successfully?

Why did he die so simply, yet so mysteriously here?

What did he encounter, for him to lose his life in such a short amount of time…

He's a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed, the owner of Creeping Hunger!

Who did it?

What was the motive for killing Qilangos…

Just as countless ideas flooded Alger's mind, he heard Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake's, charismatic voice, "Did you give the information to anyone else?

"Is there anyone else who knows of this information?"

Alger quickly calmed down. He glanced at Qilangos's remains and gave an explanation that he had prepared.

"I reported the information to you the moment I found out about it."

He couldn't help but grumble inwardly. If it wasn't for the fact that Ace Snake had gone for a walk along the Tussock River, forcing me to spend time finding him, Qilangos might not have even escaped Duke Negan's mansion!

Of course, he didn't dare say this in front of a High-Sequence Beyonder. He could only respectfully and humbly continue, "The personnel who received the information directly even sacrificed himself for it, and no one opened the letter during its transfer, I can vouch for this.

"But I cannot confirm if there was a leak at the source of this information. Since we could learn of it, others might have too."

As Alger spoke, he formulated some guesses about who killed Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos.

The person or organization who tasked Qilangos to assassinate Duke Negan? Since Qilangos had already successfully escaped and there was no threat of any information leaks, there's no need to kill him… If it were me, I would get Qilangos to lay low and try another assassination attempt when everyone was certain that he had left Backlund…

Also, Qilangos only trusts himself, so he wouldn't tell his assassination plan to anyone. Duke Negan has been organizing gatherings lately in preparation for his bill proposal in September, so there are abundant opportunities. Other than Qilangos himself, there's no one who can correctly predict when he would strike. U-unless that person was a Prophet… But that is unlikely…

Other factions? Not possible. Miss Justice prayed to Mr. Fool to relay the information the moment she noticed a problem. There was no way another organization could've received the information at the same time…

Mr. Fool… Alger was shocked as he thought of a possibility.

The person who struck was Mr. Fool's Blessed!

He happened to be in Backlund and thus lent a hand!

The more he thought about it, the more Alger felt that this guess was close to the truth.

Only the members and subordinates of the Tarot Club could've received the information in time!

Only the help of The Fool's Blessed could make it seem so mysterious and without motive!

Just as he was immersed in his thoughts, Cardinal Snake fell silent for a moment. He told the rest of the Mandated Punishers who were making their way over, “Qilangos is dead. A High-Sequence Beyonder, or someone who used a Sealed Artifact of a similar-level killed him. But this is rather dangerous and highly unlikely.

“After a preliminary analysis, I believe that the High-Sequence Beyonder is of the pathway of Death, perhaps a member of the Numinous Episcopate, but not someone I know of. There’s also the possibility of it being a member of another secret organization.

“The motive is unclear.”

The Numinous Episcopate originated from the Southern Continent. Legend has it that it was first formed by a descendant of Death in an attempt to revive Death. They were nearly eradicated after the Southern Continent was colonized, but they stubbornly survived and spread toward the countries of the Northern Continent.

A High-Sequence Beyonder… Yes, only a High-Sequence Beyonder could kill Qilangos in such a short amount of time! Just a mere Blessed of Mr. Fool is already at such a high sequence… That’s a Demigod! Alger once again looked at the pile of flesh and bone. He felt dissociated from everything as if he had lost all his emotion. He stood there in a daze, watching everything.

If I happened to betray Mr. Fool one day… He suddenly had such a thought.

Immediately, the terrifying scene of Qilangos rapidly rotting appeared in his mind.

Alger couldn’t help but shiver and lower his head.

At the same time, he relaxed.

Since he couldn’t escape or fight back, then he could only choose to be loyal.

Phew… With Qilangos dead, no one can threaten me with that secret anymore! He exhaled, his worries completely vanishing.

†

In Duke Negan's mansion, Audrey Hall, who was discussing the assassination with her mother and the other nobles, saw her father appear at the door.

She found an excuse and left the resting room for the balcony at the main hall.

"Father, is something wrong?" Audrey looked at Earl Hall with her green eyes.

Her green eyes had come from her mother, not her father.

Earl Hall smiled.

"It's been resolved, my child. You need not worry any longer.

"Hmm… Did you tell anyone that Baron Gramir was an imposter?"

"No." Audrey shook her head firmly.

I only told an almost godlike existence… She added in her heart.

She thought for a moment, then explained herself, "After I told you, I went to the bathroom, then to where Mother was. You can ask her."

"I see." Earl Hall nodded and didn't say anything else before mentioning, "Qilangos is dead. Someone killed him."

"Who?" Audrey was as shocked as she was excited.

"No idea. We can't even figure out why the murderer killed Qilangos. It's truly incomprehensible." Earl Hall paused. "Perhaps, it's a person or an organization, a secret and powerful organization."

Unclear motive… A secret, powerful organization… Could it be Mr. Fool's Blessed? It could be our Tarot Club! Audrey suddenly had an epiphany.

Chapter 192 - Attention

◆ ◆ ◆

Audrey analyzed many things at once as her mind whirled.

Mr. Hanged Man said that Qilangos was a lone wolf who doesn’t trust anyone. Only he would know of his own plan. Other than my early discovery of him, there shouldn’t have been anyone else who knew he would attempt the assassination tonight…

I only told Father and Mr. Fool that I suspected that Qilangos was disguised as Baron Gramir…

Although there’s a telegram cable in Duke Negan’s mansion and he would’ve been able to send out information in time to ask for help, there’s no reason to hide that… Dad’s puzzlement implies that the powerful being that killed Qilangos wasn’t within their expectations…

Combining all of the above, I can almost be certain that the person who killed Qilangos was Mr. Fool’s Blessed!

Plus, only the unique model of the Tarot Club can create such a strange situation with unclear motives!

Qilangos was a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed, and he had the mystical item—the Creeping Hunger. To be able to quickly kill him without leaving any traces behind, it could only be a High-Sequence Beyonder known also as Demigods, right? Or maybe he used a Sealed Artifact which possesses immense danger?

Regardless of the possibility, it shows that Mr. Fool’s Blessed is extremely powerful…

Mr. Fool lives up to his reputation!

Regardless, I certainly provided clues, so Mr. Hanged Man has to carry out his promise and pass me the pituitary gland of a Rainbow Salamander!

This should be our Tarot Club's very first mission, right?

One of the Seven Pirate Admirals, Qilangos, died because of us!

Looking at his daughter who seemed excited, Earl Hall, who was a handsome man in his youth, coughed lightly and warned his daughter with a mask of solemnity, "Audrey, I know that you're very interested in mysticism, and I normally tolerate it. But you mustn't be involved in this. You can't even ask about it. You will be introduced by the Queen to the Backlund social scene events by the end of this year. As an adult, you should clearly know and remember that a terrifying Beyonder, or a powerful, hidden organization, is equivalent to danger. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, Father," Audrey replied charmingly. "I was just a little curious."

"Curiosity won't do either!" Earl Hall emphasized, and he couldn't help but let out a helpless smile.

"Okay!" Audrey nodded obediently.

I understand the whole incident better than you do anyway… She made a silly face in her head.

Earl Hall thought and said with a gentle smile, "Regardless, you are the heroine tonight, the savior of Duke Negan. Half of the reason why Qilangos is dead is partially because of you, and it's the same with the bounty. Of course, if there's no one that admits to killing Qilangos and comes to receive the bounty, the remaining half of it will be yours too. Added together, it will be ten thousand pounds in total.

“Hmm, the bounties set up by the Intis Republic, the Feysac Empire, and other countries and organizations could be received as well. After conversion, there should be about twenty thousand pounds in total.

“Duke Negan promised that he would give you his holiday estate at Desi Bay as a gift. It includes a huge rubber tree plantation. I don’t know the annual profit exactly, but it definitely won’t be low. He spent eight thousand pounds to buy it back then and later, even built a house and purchased good quality seeds for planting.”

Audrey, who already had an inheritance of three hundred thousand pounds, was considered rich. However, a reward that was almost forty thousand pounds was still a huge amount of income. Many noble ladies wouldn’t even receive such a figure as a dowry.

In an allied marriage of a noble and a businessman in August, Miss Mary Oldbury, the daughter of a millionaire, only had an eighty-thousand-pound dowry.

I never considered the bounty… Audrey muttered inwardly.

Suddenly, she thought of something. If she were to receive the bounty and her name spread, The Hanged Man could easily find out who Justice was.

This can’t happen! As a member of the Tarot Club, I have to maintain a sense of mystery! Audrey looked towards her dad and reorganized her words.

“Dad, I’m a little worried…”

“Why? What happened?” Earl Hall asked in concern.

“If it were to spread that I found out that Qilangos was disguised as Baron Gramir, I’m afraid that his underlings would take revenge on me. I’m afraid that whoever instructed Qilangos to assassinate Duke Negan would target me…” Audrey tried to make herself seem pitiful, weak, and helpless.

"I'll hire someone to protect you," Earl Hall replied. Then, he nodded faintly and said, "there's really no need for you to take such a risk. Plus, the person that killed Qilangos took the Creeping Hunger. Of course, to a High-Sequence Beyonder, that wouldn't be a strong enough motive for interfering… Yes, I'll inform Duke Negan to keep this a secret and tell someone else to receive the bounty on your behalf and compensate you in private."

Then, Earl Hall smiled and said, "You really are my daughter. You earned forty thousand pounds so easily. This is more than one-tenth of your current wealth."

The three hundred thousand pounds was what he had set aside for her in advance. He would still add in another part when she got married as his daughter's inheritance.

"Am I as good as you were?" Audrey happily asked in reply.

Earl Hall shook his head and laughed.

"Much better than I was. The profit from my very first business venture was only sixty pounds."

Audrey suddenly became extremely thrilled. The satisfaction derived from receiving a forty thousand pound bounty, getting her father's compliment, causing Qilangos's death, completing an extraordinary task, and the reward of a Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland that she was going to get from The Hanged Man amplified her happiness.

I really want to report this to Mr. Fool to get his reassurance… No, no way. A powerful, mysterious being killed Qilangos with an unknown motive. There might be someone observing me in secret, looking for clues regarding Qilangos's death. I can't show any hint of abnormality… Pui! There's nothing abnormal about me to begin with. As long as I don't attempt to recite Mr. Fool's honorary name…

Hmm, if Mr. Fool's Blessed was really the murderer, He must've already known the outcome. He wouldn't need me to report it to him… Well… do I need to share the bounty with the Blessed? No, no matter what kind of payment method is used to transfer twenty thousand pounds, it would definitely draw attention. I can't take the risk…

Plus, it has always been The Hanged Man who's been asking for help from Mr. Fool. Technically, he should pay the reward. Yes, yes, after all, he declared that he had many pages of Emperor Roselle's diary!

I'll try to gather more pages of the diary to thank Mr. Fool for answering my prayers. He definitely wouldn't be interested in crass money…

Audrey quickly determined her next course of action

†

In Duke Negan's mansion, in a secret study room.

The fat and tall Duke sat on a high back chair behind a desk. He was smoking a cigar as he looked at the Spellsinger of God—Ace Snake, Prime Minister Aguesid Negan, and the others opposite him.

"Based on our current knowledge, we still aren't certain of the identity of the High-Sequence Beyonder that killed Qilangos." Prime Minister Aguesid Negan had just rushed over from the King's side.

Archbishop Snake nodded.

"We've determined that it wasn't any of the High-Sequence Beyonders that we're familiar with or the Numinous Episcopate either.

"We have sufficient reason to believe that it's a powerful, mysterious Beyonder we aren't aware of. Of course, we haven't eliminated the possibility that the person was using a dangerous Sealed Artifact."

Duke Negan held his cigar and said, "Maybe it wasn't just a High-Sequence Beyonder. There might be a hidden organization behind that person, a hidden organization that we don't know enough about.

Otherwise, they wouldn't be able to lay in ambush for Qilangos so accurately. Yes, perhaps one of the guests at tonight's ball is a member of theirs."

His brother, Prime Minister Aguesid stated solemnly, "Regardless of that possibility, we have to be careful. We have to quickly find out the identity of the High-Sequence Beyonder, the purpose of his presence in Backlund, and why he killed Qilangos."

A High-Sequence Beyonder that they didn't know about, who wandering in Backlund, was sufficient to draw attention from the government and three major Churches!

Although a Sequence 4 or Sequence 3 Beyonder might not be able to withstand the cannon attacks of their warships, there was no need for them to experience a frontal assault. They possessed too much of a mysterious power.

Hence, they were existences even more dangerous than ironclad warships. Hence the reason why they were called "Demigods"!

Spellsinger of God—Ace Snake stood up and said, "Let me make some arrangements and get into contact with the Church of Evernight and the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery."

"His Majesty will allow the military and the intelligence agencies to cooperate," Prime Minister Aguesid promised.

†

In a hotel in the North Borough of Backlund.

Azik sat under a gas lamp and looked at the glove before him.

The glove was very thin, as though it was made from human skin. It seemed that as long as it was filled with flesh and blood, it would turn into a hand.

Azik looked at it for a very long time. His face suddenly contorted in agony and pain as he muttered, “I seem to, seem to have cooperated with them before…”

†

Klein didn’t sleep well the entire night because he didn’t receive any reports from Justice or The Hanged Man, nor did he receive any reply from Mr. Azik. He kept thinking about the outcome of the incident with Qilangos.

It must’ve been quite a scene if Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man didn’t dare to contact me recklessly… But why didn’t Mr. Azik reply to my letter? Did he not get involved, or was there an accident? Did Qilangos hurt him? Klein extended his hand and covered his mouth as he yawned. He got onto the trackless carriage that headed for Zouteland Street.

“Extra! Extra! Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos killed in Backlund!

“Extra! Extra! Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos killed in Backlund!”

†

Just as the carriage was about to set off, Klein suddenly heard the paperboy, which was also one of Emperor Roselle’s inventions.

Klein was momentarily stunned as he quickly fished out a penny and bought the Tingen Morning Post. Many passengers made the same choice.

He opened the newspaper and quickly read the headline.

Pirate Qilangos shot dead by Duke’s bodyguard in Backlund.

Qilangos died? Mr. Azik did it? Klein fell into deep thought and lampooned himself, As the boss behind the scenes, I actually had to find out the outcome from the newspapers…

Chapter 193 - Coming To A Close

The article covering what happened to Qilangos wasn’t long, and all it stated was the time, place, people involved, and the outcome. As the saying goes, the more succinct the content, the more serious the situation.

Something that happened in Backlund at eight or nine last night is already being reported in Tingen City this morning. The spread of information in this world isn’t too slow due to the exceptional contributions of Emperor Roselle. It must’ve been one of the nobles or ministers who attended the ball who leaked this information to some reporter, then that reporter used the telegraph to send this sensational news to the news companies in various counties…

The morning papers are usually drafted at night and printed after midnight before being distributed in the morning. There was just enough time to make changes and publish this article…

Just based on this news, the Tingen Morning Post would be able to sell an extra thousand copies. And that’s only considering just this city…

Klein’s thoughts became more and more distracted before finally calming down.

Since Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos is dead, that means that even if Mr. Azik is injured, it wouldn’t be too serious…

If it was serious, he definitely would’ve been captured by the Mandated Punishers or Duke Negan’s Beyonder bodyguards that were in pursuit of

Qilangos. And when facing such a situation, Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man would definitely try their best to report it to me. The latter not happening is enough to indicate that everything is under control…

Yes, if Mr. Azik doesn't give me a reply, or if Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man do not pray to me by tonight, I'll blow the copper whistle once again to summon the messenger and send over a letter of inquiry…

Relaxing, Klein shifted his attention away from the newspaper, then he surveyed the public carriage.

Most of the people who could afford transport like this could read, and under the influence of the term "extra," many had bought the Tingen Morning Post. Now, a few of them were quietly discussing the incident.

"The King of Pirates and the admirals have been terrorizing the sea routes for a long time. They back off when they see the battleships of the various countries, but they don't pay much regard to merchant ships… Even though Qilangos had only been inducted as one of the Seven Pirate Admirals for less than a decade, he's the first to be killed by the government…"

"Frankly, I'm curious as to what he was doing in Backlund? When a pirate leaves the ocean, death is a foreseeable outcome."

"Let's hope that there will be a more detailed report in the future."

"Holy Lord of Storms, I wish to know which of Duke Negan's bodyguards killed Qilangos. His bounty was a full 10,000 pounds!"

"10,000 pounds… If I had 10,000 pounds, I would immediately quit my job and buy two or three medium-sized nurseries. I would invest in the shares of some colonizing companies and railroad companies, and receive a stable dividend every year…"

"That's only the bounty of this kingdom. Intis, Feysac, Feynapotter, and some merchant organizations also have bounties for Vice Admiral

Hurricane Qilangos. I sure hope that there's a newspaper that will give a full list of the bounties."

10,000 pounds? Klein was shocked to hear that.

With his already impressive pay, he would have to take twenty years to be able to save up that much money even without eating or drinking.

If only… Forget it, there's nothing I can do either. It would be impossible for me to claim the bounty… He folded the newspaper a little dejectedly and looked out the window of the carriage.

At this point, he finally concluded that the incident with Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos had come to a close. All that was left was to tie up the loose ends, such as the batch of Roselle's diary that The Hanged Man had promised him.

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Fors Wall and Xio Derecha were walking along the street towards the nearest branch of the Varvat Bank.

"My money seems to disappear without me noticing." Fors sighed.

Xio felt the same way.

"That's right."

"Luckily, my book, Stormwind Mountain Villa, is rather popular, and there are still royalties being sent to my account. Otherwise, I'd have to find a clinic or a hospital and become a doctor once again." Fors let out a sigh, both in satisfaction and in worry.

Xio was silent for a moment before carefully asking, "Will the investigation of Qilangos affect your status as an author? After all, we could be under the attention of the Mandated Punishers, Nighthawks, and the rest…”

“No, the only one they would focus on is you.” Fors laughed. “You were the one who sent someone to make a police report. Same for the one who sent the letter and the one famous among the alleys and gangs of the East Borough. As for me, Fors Wall, I’m still the popular best-selling author.”

Xio said in a daze, “So you’ve just been accompanying me all this time?”

Fors stroked her hair and laughed.

“Don’t you find that this was an interesting experience? This experience has provided me with the much-needed inspiration for my work. My next novel will be about a sudden brutal murder.”

Xio paused, not knowing how to continue the conversation. All she could do was continue walking forward bitterly, forgetting to make a turn until Fors dragged her back.

At that moment, they heard a paperboy shout.

“Extra! Extra! Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos killed in Backlund!”

†

Ah? What? Xio and Fors looked at each other in confusion.

They only came to their senses after the paperboy repeated himself multiple times.

“What? Qilangos is dead?” Fors couldn’t believe what she was hearing.

“He’s dead! How did he die so suddenly!” Xio, who was trying to hide from the prosecution of this merciless pirate, was shocked and dazed.

This… doesn’t this have to follow a normal procedure? First, they find clues to confirm Qilangos’s motive, then they would gather powerful

Beyonders and ambush him. Killing the pirate was the last step… But, Qilangos was killed even though the first step hadn't been completed yet… He died just like that… Fors and Xio exchanged looks as if they were two marble statues.

Nearly a minute later, Xio charged towards the paperboy and bought a copy of the Tussock Times.

This was one of the three most distributed newspapers in the Loen Kingdom.

"Oh… Qilangos is really dead, killed by Duke Negan's bodyguard. Oh Goddess, Negan's bodyguard is…" Xio gasped, leaving out the "a powerful Beyonder," that she had wanted to say.

Fors looked at her good friend in pity.

"To think that you would believe everything the newspapers say…"

"Alright, perhaps someone realized Qilangos's motive in advance, and the Mandated Punishers, Nighthawks, Machinery Hivemind, and the military cooperated and executed a successful ambush…" Xio froze and exhaled. "We don't need to worry about it any longer. We can go back to our normal lives, but we have to avoid the sphere of influence of that police station from before."

She looked at Fors and asked, a little worried, "How much do you think Miss Audrey will pay us now? I know that a few hundred pounds wouldn't be too much to her, but we haven't really completed what she asked of us…"

"No, at least we made Qilangos appear on his own accord. The reason he rushed to take action and fall for the ambush was definitely in some part due to our contributions," Fors consoled her. "With Miss Audrey's generosity, she'll give us half the reward even if she's not giving us all of it."

"Let's hope so…" Xio took in a deep breath and had an expectant gaze. "I wonder who will claim that bounty of 10,000 pounds…"

"It sure invites the envy of others. If I had that much money, I'd have become a Sequence 7 or 6 long ago, but I missed the opportunity time and time again!" Fors also felt a little sorry, but she reminded her friend, "Xio, let us not contact Miss Audrey for the time being. Let her contact us on her own accord. There are too many hidden details surrounding the death of Qilangos. Looking for Miss Audrey abruptly could put us in a dangerous situation."

Xio first nodded before saying in surprise, "How did you know that I was thinking of heading to Empress Borough?"

"Try guessing?" Fors laughed in response.

†

After a busy morning, Klein returned to the Blackthorn Security Company. He reported to Dunn Smith, "Captain, the people connected to Lanevus that I'm in charge of investigating have no problems. They were merely victims, not associated with any Beyonder incidents."

Dunn placed both his elbows on his desk.

"Then stop that for the time being. We shall place our focus on the more likely suspects after the rest of the members have finished with their investigations. We cannot direct all our manpower onto this incident. We have to guard against other sudden incidents."

"Alright." Klein was about to stand up and head to lunch when he suddenly heard knocking on the door.

"Please enter," Dunn said in his mellow voice.

The handle moved and Rozanne peeked inside.

"Captain, someone is here with a mission."

A mission… This seems to be targeted at the Blackthorn Security Company and not the Nighthawks team. So, who mistakenly came to us this time? Klein wondered to himself.

Dunn thought for a moment before saying, “We can go hear the request out and reject it if it’s too troublesome.”

He arranged his shirt and vest as he walked out of the office. He made his way through the partition and towards the sofa in the receptionist area. Klein and Rozanne followed curiously behind.

There were two ladies on the sofa, both of them were wearing black hats and dresses without any extra color.

One of the ladies was plump and had fair skin. Her face was completely obscured by the black veil of her hat.

Klein felt a sense of familiarity when he saw her, as though he had seen her somewhere before.

Just as he was recalling, he heard the skinnier lady beside her speak.

“The mission we would like to entrust to you is for you to track and monitor Madam Sharon and find evidence of her crimes.”

Madam Sharon… Klein suddenly had an epiphany, and recalled where the sense of familiarity came from.

The lady that remained silent was the wife of Member of Parliament Maynard, the daughter of the New Party’s leader.

She finds it hard to accept the death of her husband and is unwilling to accept the conclusion the police department came to, so she came to a security company in private to do another investigation?

To think that she came directly to us… Klein shook his head and laughed to himself.

Chapter 194 - Infiltration

◆

“Madam Sharon?” Dunn obviously knew of Baron Khoy’s widow, a famous socialite in Tingen.

Maynard’s wife turned her head to shoot a glance at the scrawny lady who came with her to the Blackthorn Security Company, but she didn’t speak for herself.

The scrawny lady in the black dress and hat weighed her words before she spoke.

“Yes, Madam Sharon, the wife of the deceased Baron Khoy. She, she…”

She stammered, then suddenly spat in anger, “She’s a b*tch!”

Upon hearing her curse, Klein suddenly recalled the porno that he had seen and Madam Sharon’s behavior which appeared nervous on the surface but was calm deep down. That made him believe the rumors about her, and he felt sorry for the deceased old baron.

It’s not like Madam Sharon can’t remarry. But her loose behavior… really makes the old baron’s grave a perfect nesting ground for cuckoos…

Dunn didn’t have much of a change in his facial expression. He sat on the sofa opposite and said with his mellow voice, “But that doesn’t make her a criminal.

“You know clearly, and I know it clearly too. Madam Sharon is very influential in Tingen. If we were to follow her and monitor her, there could be very serious consequences for us.”

“She’s a criminal!” the scrawny lady said angrily. “She caused my brother’s death, but those lovers of hers pressured the police department and made them pronounce that my brother died of excessive drinking and continuous indulgence in sexual pleasure. Th-they are all criminals!”

Those… Klein realized that the scrawny lady was Maynard’s sister while feeling sorry for the old baron once again.

That’s right, for such a scandal, she would definitely not send a maidservant here. It’s better if the request is made by family… He nodded his head in enlightenment.

Mrs. Maynard patted the back of the scrawny woman’s hand and added with a deep yet cold voice, “She’s a criminal! If you suffer any damages because of this, I will compensate you for your losses.”

That tone… She lives up to her identity as the daughter of the New Party’s head. If the police department wasn’t very confident with the result of my mediumship ritual, I’m afraid they would’ve submitted under her pressure… Klein lampooned inwardly.

Dunn was silent for nearly twenty seconds before he said, “Alright… I have another question. Why do you seem to be so certain that we would find something?”

The scrawny lady nodded and said, “The tobacco merchant, Vickroy, introduced us here. He said that you’re the cream of the crop in this industry and can complete missions that others aren’t capable of completing.”

The tobacco merchant Vickroy… Who’s he? Klein looked at Captain subconsciously and noticed that Dunn Smith looked really confused.

I’m so silly, why did I hope for Captain to remember something like this… After all, even I don’t quite remember… He sighed.

The scrawny lady saw that the two elite mercenaries looked confused, so she added, “You saved his kidnapped son.”

Oh, him… That kidnap case led me to the discovery of the Antigonus family’s notebook… Klein was suddenly enlightened.

Dunn nodded slightly and said, “I understand.”

Upon seeing this, the scrawny woman laid out her offer, “You are to tail and monitor th-that b*tch for two weeks. Even if you don’t find any evidence of her crime, you have to take note of who visited her and who she visited. We will pay fifty pounds for this.

“And if you find evidence of her crimes, we would pay another additional two hundred pounds.”

That’s a large sum of money… When Klein suddenly recalled that he had only spent seven pounds to hire Detective Henry to gather so much information about red chimney houses, he became a little ashamed.

Dunn thought for a moment before saying, “No problem, we can sign the contract now. You’ll have to pay a deposit of twenty pounds up front.”

Captain, we’re really lacking in manpower right now. There’s the huge case regarding Lanevus… Klein didn’t expect Dunn Smith to accept the mission although he, himself, was quite keen on accepting it.

Mrs. Maynard nodded slightly and said, “No problem. I believe in you. Please don’t disappoint me.”

Dunn smiled but kept quiet. He turned his head and told Rozanne, “Please write up a contract.”

When the contract was signed and the deposit was paid, Dunn watched Mrs. Maynard and the scrawny lady leave the Blackthorn Security Company. He then looked sideways at Klein and said, “This mission will be yours.”

“Huh?” Klein looked confused.

Dunn smiled and said, “Didn’t you want to learn tailing techniques and monitoring skills? This is a great opportunity. It also turns out that you’re done with your part in the Lanevus case.”

“Alright…” Klein didn’t reject the assignment.

Just as he accepted, his mind began whirling quickly.

According to the rules, half of the mission’s commission is handed to Mrs. Orianna as additional funding for the team. The remaining would be split among the involved members. However, it seems like I’m the only one handling the case…

Regardless of whether the investigation succeeds, there will be at least twenty-five pounds of income. On top of that, I’ll receive my usual weekly pay… If I really could find some clues, I could even receive a hundred and twenty-five pounds!

Captain is a wise man!

Dunn stole a glance at him and said, “Learn the tailing techniques and monitoring skills from Leonard and Frye in the morning, and put your combat training on hold for this week. Yes… I think you’re quite well-trained already, so I’ll send someone to inform Gawain.”

Learn tailing techniques and monitoring skills from Leonard and Frye? That doesn’t seem very reliable… Klein was stunned. He could imagine Leonard using only one method which was playing his Feynapotter lute while singing melodious poetry. Then, he would probably seduce Madam Sharon to bed in order to “monitor her up close.” As for Frye, he had a unique air to him. He was cold and gloomy, so no matter where he went, he would catch the attention of others. How could such people make good spies?

As his thoughts churned, Klein replied seriously, “Alright.”

Dunn nodded slightly and walked towards the partition. Suddenly, he paused, turned around, and hesitated before he spoke.

“Do you remember the tobacco merchant? What’s was the kidnapping about?”

…So you didn’t remember anything or understood anything… Why were you acting so staid and confident!? Klein facepalmed.

†

Based on Leonard’s guidance, Klein wasn’t in a hurry to tail Madam Sharon, even though he knew that she stayed on Osna Street in the East Borough.

“Until you know the target’s routine, you can’t tail your target recklessly. Plus, monitoring alone makes it difficult to take note of everything. Unless you don’t eat, drink, sleep, and go home,” Leonard had said. Hence, Klein followed his suggestion and found one of the mob bosses in the Hound Pub and spent five pounds to get his underlings to monitor Madam Sharon and record her daily routine.

Luckily, this can be reimbursed… Why does it feel like I’m subcontracting… On Friday afternoon, Klein received the investigation report from the mob boss.

Calling it an investigation report was an obvious insult to professional detectives. Not one of the mob boss’s underlings was literate. They relied on drawings and symbols, which was then interpreted and organized by their semi-literate boss who had attended Sunday School for a year. Klein got a headache just from reading it and took quite a while to finish reading the report.

According to the surveillance, Madam Sharon seldom leaves her place recently. There aren’t many guests who visit either… She might be affected by Maynard’s death… Those mob underlings are quite capable. They even gathered information from Madam Sharon’s maidservant…

Hmm, she will be attending the Conservative Party's banquet tonight. She might return home quite late, or maybe not return… This is an opportunity for me to put theory into practice. Klein quickly decided to sneak into Madam Sharon's house and search through it.

With his duties regarding the Lanevus case over, the temporary suspension of combat training, and the end of the Qilangos incident, Klein only had two matters on hand. One was to investigate the red chimney houses, and the second was following and monitoring Madam Sharon. In other words, he was relatively free.

Two days ago, he had received Mr. Azik's reply. There was only one sentence on the letter.

"I obtained the Creeping Hunger and recalled something."

Klein had finally confirmed that it was Mr. Azik who killed Qilangos and that this amnesiac teacher of his who had a long life was a High-Sequence Beyonder. However, he didn't dare ask him what he had recalled with the aid of the Creeping Hunger. Azik obviously didn't want to talk about it. If he was willing to share, he would've described it directly in the letter.

In Klein's reply, he only reminded Mr. Azik that the Creeping Hunger yearned for the flesh, blood, and soul of living humans. He had to find a safe sealing method.

In addition, Justice and The Hanged Man had yet to pray to him, but Klein wasn't worried. He understood that both members were afraid of being monitored, so they didn't recite his name recklessly.

†

Gas street lamps illuminated the straight Osna Street at night while the crimson moon hung high above.

Klein, who had sneaked out with the Clown's balance and agility, leaped over the outer wall of Madam Sharon's house quietly.

Passing through the garden, he arrived by the side of the house. He climbed up the water pipe and slipped onto the balcony on the second floor.

Klein had never even climbed a tree successfully when he was young, so it was quite a monumental event.

He took out a tarot card from the pocket of his black trench coat, slotted it into the gap of the balcony door, lifted it lightly, and unlocked the door.

The servants are so careless… They didn't use an additional lock. Otherwise, I'd have to try entering by climbing through the window… Klein muttered silently and entered the house.

Based on the information provided by the mob boss, he found Madam Sharon's bedroom easily. He turned the knob and stepped into the room.

He closed the door carefully and suddenly smelled a faint fragrance. It reminded him of the fragrance of a woman that caused the blood vessels of other people to swell.

Klein felt a little faint, and he even felt his body reacting.

He immediately calmed down with Cogitation and made a self-deprecating comment, "She's using an aphrodisiac as perfume?"

Chapter 195 - “Lockpicking Expert” Klein

◆

A few seconds later, Klein activated his Spirit Vision and surveyed the room, only to find how extravagantly decorated Madam Sharon’s room was.

In a spacious area with a cloakroom that was ajar, there was a thick carpet, a blanket made with goose feathers, a makeup table strewn with skin care products and cosmetics, a dazzling array of jewelry, thin clothing and socks thrown over the rocking chair, and multiple decorative items adorned with gold silk. All of these entered Klein’s field of vision.

What attracted Klein’s attention the most was an unfinished oil painting. On the painting was the naked figure of Madam Sharon herself—her brown hair like a waterfall, her eyes like an innocent deer’s, pure and limpid. But her curved eyebrows, sharp nose, and tender lips accentuated her form as a mature female. The two qualities fused together despite the contradiction, releasing an alarming temptation.

Klein only gave a cursory glance at the area under the neck for a moment. He wasn’t trying to be gentlemanly. After all, he had already seen the porno, so why would he have scruples over a picture?

His attention had been grabbed by the pastels, palettes, and paintbrushes beside the painting, as well as a full-length silver-coated mirror.

This combination and their placement relative to each other gave Klein a weird thought that the painter was Madam Sharon herself, and not some artist she had seduced.

A beautiful woman with a great figure, flirtatious yet innocent, stripping and drawing herself while looking in the mirror to chronicle her beauty… It feels a little odd. Is Madam Sharon narcissistic? Klein gulped silently and retracted his gaze. He started to search for possible evidence of her crimes.

Following Leonard's and Frye's instructions, he kept his black gloves on as he searched. He had to keep the original position of everything in his memory to facilitate putting everything back after he was done.

This proved easy for an advanced Seer. If he forgot, he could use dream divination to recall the placement easily.

Of course, he had performed a divination before he left the house tonight. There was going to be no danger and he would be met with relative success.

That's something a good charlatan would do… even if I'm already a Clown… Klein lampooned himself. He spent twenty minutes searching Madam Sharon's room, but he didn't find anything noteworthy, nor did he see any light emitted by spirituality.

Finally, he stopped before a safe in the corner of the room.

The steel safe was a meter tall; thick and heavy. It gave the impression that it was unusually sturdy, as if it could only be opened using explosives.

This sure is a characteristic of the Age of Steam. There must be complicated machinery within the safe… Klein tried to open the safe but failed miserably.

He left the safe for last. He took off his left glove and unwound the topaz dangling on his left wrist.

Grabbing the silver chain and allowing the pendulum to fall, Klein dispelled the excitement that the fragrance in the room gave him and entered a state of Cogitation.

His eyes turned dark as he chanted to himself, “There is a secret room or hidden partition in this room.

“There is a secret room or hidden partition in this room.”

†

After reciting it seven times, Klein’s eyes regained their normal color. He looked at the dangling topaz, which was turning counterclockwise.

It was a negative result.

Klein nodded slightly and left Madam Sharon’s room. According to the process from before, he went through the study, the living room, the greenhouse, and other parts of the house, but he didn’t find any clues of value.

He didn’t use Dowsing Rod Seeking since he didn’t exactly know what he was looking for.

Klein took out his silver pocket watch and gave it a look. He confirmed the time before returning to Madam Sharon’s bedroom.

Carefully closing the wooden door, Klein took out the silver dagger used for rituals and released his spirituality, allowing it to fuse with the powers of nature and seal the room.

He was going to summon himself!

He was going to go through the safe using his spirit and check the things inside!

Grandpa doesn’t need to know how to lockpick! Klein proclaimed in Mandarin.

The process was simple since he was praying to himself. He didn't have to be too particular. Klein took out a candle infused with sandalwood and ignited it using his spirituality. That was going to be his altar.

"I!

"I summon in my name:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

The incantation reverberated around Madam Sharon's bedroom. Klein's spirituality poured out from within him, gently fusing with the candle flame to become a gray, palm-sized veil of light.

He then took four steps counterclockwise, made his way through the mad ravings, and into the world above the gray fog.

He saw the Door of Summoning appear behind the seat of honor at the ancient long table. Klein was about to react when he froze.

I should perform a divination to see if I can discover any clues since I'm already here. Here, as well as removing any interference, my powers are also significantly boosted… Also, because of where I am now, performing a divination is akin to using an object Madam Sharon brings around with her everyday… He sat down and conjured a fountain pen and goatskin.

What should I divine? Klein slipped into deep thought*.*

Is there anything wrong with Madam Sharon?

No, everyone makes mistakes, there would be something wrong with anyone.

Is Madam Sharon involved in a crime?

…No, that's not narrow enough either. As a famous socialite tied to the political sphere, it's natural that she would be associated with something dirty yet cannot be convicted for… Also, what is the definition of a crime anyway? The laws of the Loen Kingdom, or the laws of the Intis Republic, or is it up to me to decide?

†

Despite his many thoughts, Klein didn’t want to delay it any further. After all, his physical body was still in the real world. Thus, he decided to confirm the past few divinations he did regarding the incident.

He picked up the pen and, without writing, he conjured a divination statement on the goatskin before him

“John Maynard’s death was due to supernatural influences.”

This was the divination he did when he went to Maynard’s house to help the police. The answer he received last time was negative.

Grabbing the silver chain, he allowed the topaz pendulum to almost touch the statement on the goatskin. Klein half-closed his eyes and silently recited the divination statement, “John Maynard’s death was due to supernatural influences.

“John Maynard’s death was due to supernatural influences.”

†

After repeating it seven times, he opened his eyes and looked at the pendulum. His pupils constricted suddenly.

The topaz pendulum was spinning clockwise!

Clockwise meant a positive result!

Maynard’s death was really due to supernatural influences!

Klein stared at the pendulum that was slowing down, his heart churning in turmoil.

My divination back then was influenced, disrupted…

Madam Sharon is a Beyonder, a rather powerful Beyonder? Or is there someone backing her, having helped in planning Maynard's death?

Did they want to remove a powerful opponent to the seat of mayor, to remove a future House of Commons Member of Parliament from the New Party?

Many thoughts raced through his mind as Klein wrote a new divination statement: "Madam Sharon is a Beyonder."

He recited the statement seven times, still using the pendulum technique. Klein used the location he was at, as well as the information he knew regarding Madam Sharon, to complete the divination. He saw an answer.

The answer was the clockwise rotation of the topaz pendulum: the answer was yes!

Madam Sharon is a Beyonder… Klein's nerves tensed. He didn't delay any further, immediately answering his own prayer and pushing open the mysterious door.

After a moment of chaos and dizziness, he saw Madam Sharon's bedroom and himself.

Klein floated to the front of the heavy safe and extended his right hand. He carefully extended his hand into the safe.

Since Madam Sharon was a Beyonder, he had to be wary of traps in the safe.

In such a state, where his soul was infused with powers of the mysterious space and his spirituality, Klein no longer needed divination. He would receive a warning when he was approaching something dangerous—a large portion of divination was obtaining revelations by allowing one's Astral Projection to roam in the spirit world. In other words, it was derived from one's spirituality.

Klein didn't notice anything unusual. when his nearly-transparent hand made it through the thick metal door.

After sweeping his hand, he leaned forward, plunging his entire spirit into the safe.

He saw that the inside of the safe was split into three sections. The first was filled with gold bars, thick stacks of cash, and even more precious jewelry. Another layer had sealed documents. Klein blew on them, but he didn't manage to flip them open to look at their contents.

Yes, I'll have to try again with Mr. Azik's copper whistle… Klein had experimented with it previously. When he enveloped the Flaring Sun Charm or Azik's copper whistle with his spirit, both the items were able to make it through obstacles, as if becoming illusory items themselves.

The bottom-most layer of the safe was rather strange. There was only a black and white photo there. On the photo was a suave young man.

Madam Sharon's past lover? Were they forcefully broken apart, and Madam Sharon having no choice but to marry the old baron and, thus, embarked on her path of debauchery by entering the beds of multiple men? But deep in her heart, she still harbors a pure space. Every night, when it's quiet, she takes out this photo and strokes it with tears on her face… Klein instantly imagined the plot of a great romantic tragedy.

But the more he looked at it, the more something seemed amiss. The young man in the photo seemed, perhaps, a little too much like Madam Sharon…

Madam Sharon's brother? She's a Beyonder… F**k, could she also be of the Demoness pathway? The same as Instigator Trissy! Klein suddenly had a stroke of inspiration which scared himself.

Could the reason Trissy stayed in Tingen this long be because her partner was here? Klein observed the photo closely, realizing that the young man looked remarkably like Madam Sharon.

His nearly-transparent face grimaced in pain. He could no longer view that “porno” the same way as before!

Collecting himself, Klein felt for the corners of the safe to see if they hid anything.

Even though he couldn’t pick up any papers in his current state, passing through objects was a different feeling from passing through the air. The feeling was also different when passing through objects of different densities.

In his search, Klein suddenly froze.

He found an empty space on the side of the safe facing the wall—a hidden compartment!

After confirming that there was no danger, Klein made his way inside. What entered his field of vision were ointments, fragrances, powdered herbs, and other objects. The centerpiece was a statue of a god that took the form of a skeleton.

The statue was about the size of a palm, and probably of a beautiful girl. It had long hair all the way to its heels, each strand of hair was thick and clear, like a venomous snake.

Situated at the tip of every strand of hair was an eye—some closed, others open.

Klein was shocked. He caught a whiff of an evil scent and hurried out of the hidden compartment.

He now understood why his divination for any secret rooms or partitions in the room had failed!

Chapter 196 - Spirit Medium Mirror

◆

Klein rushed out of the heavy safe in retreat. Only when he realized that everything seemed fine did he calm down.

That white bone statue is creepy… Although it isn’t dangerous, it gives me the creeps… Could it be the so-called Primordial Demoness? An evil god like the Hidden Sage, the Dark Side of the Universe, or the True Creator? Klein recalled his hunches about Madam Sharon, and he suddenly understood what existence the white bone statue might represent.

Just as he thought, his spirituality stirred as an ominous premonition gripped him.

Klein quickly flew next to the window with complicated patterns and looked at the road outside. He saw a carriage driving towards the front gate under the light of the gas street lamps.

Madam Sharon is back? There was a tug at his heartstrings as he finally understood the source of his ominous premonition.

Taking into consideration that Trissy only became a woman after Sequence 8 Instigator, so she’s most likely a Sequence 7. And since Madam Sharon has been active in Tingen’s social circles for many years, she was most likely much stronger than Trissy. Hence, Klein didn’t dare to take the risk of relying on his Flaring Sun Charm and Azik’s copper whistle. Instead, he made the wise decision to leave.

He had a limited number of charms. Plus, he didn’t know when he would be able to get the Sealed Artifact, Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem, out again. Hence, if it wasn't a desperate situation, Klein didn't want to waste his most powerful charms. He would also have the issue of explaining himself if he were to use it.

I can't just tell Dunn that a kind expert had happened to pass by and helped me, right?

As for why he didn't want to use Azik's copper whistle, it was because Klein wasn't sure if the messenger, that was summoned, had the ability to fight. What if it just looked strong but only knew how to send letters?

With what I discovered earlier, it should be sufficient for the Nighthawks team to take action. Why should I fight against Madam Sharon alone? We can totally gank her! Klein emphasized inwardly and ended his summoning. With a whoosh, he returned to the world above the gray fog. He then quickly wrapped himself in spirituality and stimulated a rapid descent to return to his body in reality.

He quickly put out the flame and put away the candle. He removed the wall of spirituality and left Madam Sharon's bedroom. He took the same path back, but he didn't have the time to reset the bolt on the balcony door.

Sliding down the water pipe, Klein climbed over the wall which was opposite the entrance of the house. He remained hidden until he reached the neighboring street. Then, he hired the expensive night carriage to Zouteland Street.

†

Madam Sharon, who looked beautiful in her black dress, slowly walked to the second floor. She dismissed her maidservants and opened the door to her bedroom.

Her pure clear eyes suddenly concentrated and reflected fine threads that were almost transparent and unnoticeable. They didn't possess the luster of spirituality; they were like human hair that was pathologically changed. If one didn't already know of their existence or have a pair of very special eyes, they wouldn't notice the strands.

All those fine threads had torn and fallen to the ground.

Madam Sharon squinted her eyes and directed her focus onto the thick gray metal safe.

†

36 Zouteland Street, the Blackthorn Security Company.

Dunn was reading the newspaper casually with his legs crossed. He looked at Klein who appeared before his office door with a strange expression. He sighed and said, "Weren't you supposed to slip into Madam Sharon's house to do an initial search? …Did you encounter some sort of problem?"

Klein nodded seriously and said, "Yes, I suspect that Madam Sharon is a member of the Demoness Sect."

"A member of the Demoness Sect?" Dunn lowered the newspaper and ruminated over the words. He then asked seriously, "What did you discover?"

Klein didn't sit down, he leaned his body forward and supported his weight with his hands holding the edge of the work desk.

"First, I found a photo. There was a young man in the photo, but he looked very much like Madam Sharon."

If he were to change into female clothing, put on makeup, and Photoshop the picture a little, he would look exactly like Madam Sharon… Klein held back his urge to lampoon.

"Similar to Instigator Trissy?" Dunn's eyes sparkled as he was enlightened.

They had previously predicted that Trissy was most likely a member of the Demoness Sect.

“Yes.” Klein nodded with mixed emotions as he continued, “I used divination to discover that Madam Sharon has a white bone statue in a hidden compartment in her safe. It’s of an extremely beautiful woman, but her hair is very long, to her ankles. Every single strand is as thick as a venomous snake. On the tips, there were eyes. They looked rather creepy. Captain, is that the image of the Primordial Demoness?”

As his security clearance was insufficient, the information about the Demoness Sect that he could read was very limited.

Dunn recalled and nodded with a serious expression and said, “That’s the image of the Primordial Demoness.

We have to take action immediately and seize control of Madam Sharon.”

Klein immediately agreed and said, “If Madam Sharon is a Mid-Sequence Beyonder from the Demoness Sect, I have to assume that she’ll be able to tell that someone had sneaked into her bedroom.”

Then, he suddenly felt puzzled as he blurted, “Captain, why do the seven orthodox gods only have symbols without any actual image, while the evil gods that I’m currently aware of have anthropomorphic appearances? The True Creator and the Primordial Demoness are examples. Is this one of the differences between orthodox gods and evil gods?”

Why would there be such a difference? Klein added inwardly, but he wisely didn’t say it out.

“That’s one of the differences between orthodox gods and evil gods.” Dunn gave a reassuring answer. Then, he got up and walked towards the clothes rack. He said, “Let’s not delay any further, I’m worried that

Madam Sharon will run away.”

Then, Dunn paused.

“Go upstairs to get Kenley. With the three of us taking action together, we can apply for one Sealed Artifact. Madam Sharon is very likely higher than a Sequence 7 Beyonder.”

Captain, you’re so wise! Klein answered without hesitation, “Alright.”

Then, he asked curiously, “Captain, which Sealed Artifact are you going to use?”

Dunn weighed his words before he answered, “3-0217.”

As there weren’t many Sealed Artifacts behind Tingen City’s Chanis Gate, Klein quickly remembered what Captain wanted to use.

“Number: 0217.

“Name: Spirit Medium’s Mirror.

“Danger Grade: 3. Considerably dangerous. It has to be used carefully. It can only be requested for operations that require three or more people.

“Security classification: Official Nighthawks member or above.

“Sealing Method: Store in absolute darkness.

“Description: The back of the mirror is plated in mercury, the front of the mirror has three minor cracks.

“The very first investigator that looked into the mirror saw a sobbing girl with long hair. Then, he discovered the girl climbing out of the mirror.

“From many experiments with the artifact, the image that’s reflected in the mirror is different most of the time. Even if the same person uses it repeatedly, they would encounter different things of varying danger levels. But they would prioritize dealing with the person who looked at the mirror first.

"The most dangerous situation is to see oneself in the mirror.

"If no one looks at the mirror, under the prerequisite of there being light, an image would surface automatically every three hours.

"It doesn't possess any living traits.

"Remark: The mirror originally belonged to a Spirit Medium and was a very ordinary mirror until one day the Spirit Medium committed suicide when looking into it."

Indeed, that there aren't many Sealed Artifacts behind Chanis Gate that can be used in a Beyonder battle. 3-0217 is a good choice… Klein didn't speak further as he immediately ran to the Nighthawks' recreation room to get Sleepless Kenley.

That night was Royale's turn to be on duty at Chanis Gate. Leonard was off duty, Seeka Tron was patrolling areas like Raphael Cemetery, and the new member would only arrive on Sunday. Hence, Dunn could only pick from Frye and Kenley. Taking into consideration that Madam Sharon was from the Demoness Sect and had little to do with dead spirits, he had opted for the latter.

After a few minutes, Dunn returned from the basement. He held the mirror that was tightly wrapped in a thick black cloth.

Frankly speaking, if I didn't know beforehand, I wouldn't be able to tell that it's a mirror. None of it is exposed… Klein went forward with the petite-sized Kenley.

"You're in charge of using Sealed Artifact 3-0217." Dunn passed the mirror to Kenley.

Upon seeing that, Klein suddenly realized that he was a Sequence 8 Beyonder and that he possessed the ability to fight head on. He couldn't just hide by the side as support.

Man, I'm a little nervous… He touched the Slumber Charms in his pockets and made sure that he was well prepared.

The only problem is that in order to make it easier to climb, I'm not bringing my cane. Hmm, I can borrow Kenley's. He has the mirror in one hand and a gun in the other; that should be sufficient. Amidst Klein's thoughts, the trio arrived downstairs and took a carriage to Osna Street.

On their way there, Kenley looked at the Sealed Artifact 3-0217 in his hands. He sighed from the tension.

"This is the first time I've been involved in such a dangerous operation."

Normally, the Nighthawks wouldn't use any Sealed Artifacts to deal with Beyonder incidents.

When they went to Morse Town, they had applied for the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem for preventive purposes. Given how far away Morse Town was, it would've taken backup some time to arrive if they needed it. This time, they were almost certain that their target was a Mid-Sequence Beyonder!

"Don't worry, perhaps Madam Sharon has already fled," Klein replied with a smile.

Honestly, he was just as tense as Kenley.

Dunn's eyes turned and looked at him helplessly.

"Let's try not to let Madam Sharon escape."

†

About twenty minutes later, the three Nighthawks arrived at Osna Street. They saw the garden and Madam Sharon's house in the darkness.

The house lay in silence as though nothing had happened.

Klein took out the pendulum in his left sleeve and made a quick divination.

“There’s danger inside.

“There’s danger inside.”

†

After he recited the statement seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz pendant spinning clockwise. The amplitude and speed were considered medium-level.

It meant that there was danger in there. Not very high, but it wasn’t very low either!

Chapter 197 - Operation

◆ ◆ ◆

There’s danger in there. Not very high, but it isn’t very low either…

This means that Madam Sharon is still in the building. She hasn’t fled yet…

Klein froze for a moment, quickly realizing the reason.

He had entered a unique state by summoning himself to inspect the safe. He hadn’t forcefully broken the lock when he was inspecting the secret compartment, nor did he activate any hidden traps. Thus, Madam Sharon wouldn’t have discovered that her secret had been exposed. She would only think that there was a break in, or some private investigator was checking on her to no avail.

In such a situation, it was logical that she would continue to stay home. It made logical sense.

To lose composure from a tiny matter and overreact wasn’t the Madam Sharon whom Klein had come to understand. She was a calm socialite who was capable of acting afraid and pitiful, as well as a Beyonder member of the Demoness Sect who had kept her identity hidden for many years.

If the telephone had been invented, Madam Sharon definitely would’ve called one of her lovers and complained about the security in Tingen City whilst hinting that it was Madam Maynard… Klein began imagining a melodramatic plot. He told Dunn and Kenley the results of his divination as well as his guess.

"That's the most reasonable deduction." Dunn pressed down on his hat as he looked at the second floor of Madam Sharon's apartment. "There's no need for us to rush in."

"Why?" Kenley, who was holding Sealed Artifact 3-0217, instinctively asked.

He was filled with fear towards the Spirit Medium Mirror in his hands. He was afraid that some unexpected event would arise from the Sealed Artifact.

Dunn wore his black gloves and looked at Klein.

"Do you still remember what happened when we tried to capture Instigator Trissy?"

"I remember," Klein replied after some thought. "She seemed to be able to detect our presence and make the necessary responses, which resulted in her successful escape."

I also remember suggesting the use of bombarding the house when the Captain asked me how I would deal with the situation. That was the safest, most surefire method. But not this time… We can't use it here as there are many innocent maids in Madam Sharon's house. If we notified them in advance and got them to evacuate, that would definitely catch Madam Sharon's attention. According to Leonard, Trissy could turn invisible. We have to assume that Madam Sharon has that ability too… Klein connected the dots at once.

Dunn looked at the crimson moon in the sky and said, "Good, your answer is very good. You're rather intuitive in such situations.

"We cannot approach recklessly and end up alarming Madam Sharon. I'll try dragging her into a dream from a distance. If I'm successful, you and Kenley will go and capture her… Well… You can make the decision of whether to kill her or not. Kill her if you cannot control her. Your safety is of utmost importance."

Captain, your line of thought is always so clear at such critical moments! I was just waiting for you to say that! Klein praised in his heart.

Over the months, Klein had grasped most of the unique traits of the different Beyonder powers of his partners when he was casually chatting with Dunn, Leonard, Frye, and the rest. Amongst those, Dunn Smith, who was a Nightmare, could freely enter the dreams of a sleeping person even though he was at home or at the Blackthorn Security Company.

But how he did it was a secret of his own Sequence, and Klein didn't ask about it too deeply.

The ability to drag someone into a dream had a limited range and was normally used during direct confrontations.

But Klein had once heard the Captain say that the ability also had a certain effect when used within a hundred meter radius. But he needed time to complete the process. He couldn't do it instantly, for the process was similar to coaxing a child to sleep.

At this moment, Dunn was going to drag the distant Madam Sharon into a sleeping state, a little at a time. After completing the first stages of the restraint, he was going to create the most opportunistic conditions for Klein and Kenley.

"Alright." Kenley was also rather accepting of the Captain's plan.

Without any more chatter, Dunn leaned on the corner of a wall and shut his eyes. He put his hands together and lowered his head. His black trench coat and silk hat blended into the night.

†

In the opulent bedroom.

Madam Sharon was leaning on her comfortable rocking chair, completely naked. Her fair and excellent figure was completely exposed.

She sometimes turned her head towards the full-length mirror to admire her charming self.

As she looked, her face would flush red as tears welled in her eyes. Her expression emitted a strange tenderness amidst her stupor.

The skeletal statue of the goddess was sitting on the table beside her. The thick strands of hair seemed gentle under the warm, pink light.

Slowly, the frequency in which Madam Sharon looked into the mirror decreased. Bit by bit, her eyelids couldn't help but droop.

†

Seconds turned into minutes when Klein suddenly recalled something. How was the Captain going to notify Kenley and himself after he successfully dragged Madam Sharon into a dream?

Madam Sharon would wake up if the Captain left his Nightmare state, and she would notice that something was off… I wonder if the Captain is capable of giving hand signs while dreaming at the same time? Klein looked at the worried Kenley pacing around and intended to discuss this with him in order to distract him.

At that moment, his mind turned into a blur. He saw a giant crimson moon, as well as Captain Dunn Smith in his black trench coat under the moon. There was also the short Kenley, his expression dazed.

Klein realized that he too was dreaming!

I've been dragged into a dream by the Captain… So that's how he was going to notify us. He wanted to facepalm himself, but could only maintain his trance-like state while saying muddle-headedly, “Captain?”

Dunn nodded slightly and said, “Madam Sharon has entered a dream. You can take action now.”

He then emphasized, “Remember to be careful, and don’t be too reckless… We would rather miss the opportunity than take unwarranted risks.”

Just as he finished his sentence, the world before Klein shattered. His eyes reflected Dunn Smith again. He was still at the corner of the wall, looking down with his hands clenched tightly into fists.

On the other side, Kenley, who had stopped pacing about, also opened his eyes.

The duo exchanged looks and nodded. Both of them entered a state to execute their operation.

Even though this was the first time Kenley was participating in a relatively dangerous mission, he was still more experienced than Klein. He had attended many official missions, so he quickly adjusted his mental state, becoming calm and sharp.

Of course, this could also be attributed to the augmentation the night had on a Sleepless. This was also one of the reasons Dunn had chosen Kenley over Frye for this operation.

“Let’s go.” As a Sequence 8, Klein took on the role of the leader, signaling for his partner to follow.

Kenley didn’t object. He gripped the tightly-wrapped mirror and softened his footsteps as he followed.

Klein led him to the place where he scaled the wall previously. He grabbed onto the crevices of the wall and made it to the top of the wall with little effort.

He maintained his ridiculous sense of balance and turned around, bending down and grabbing the Spirit Medium Mirror Kenley had tossed over.

The moment he touched the mirror, Klein felt his spiritual perception tighten suddenly. It was as if what was covered by the black cloth wasn't a mirror, but a door to some unknown, dangerous alternate world.

Indeed, any item that requires sealing has some malefic side to it… Klein internally muttered to himself wistfully as he watched Kenley scale the wall.

In order to facilitate movement, Kenley had placed his cane beside Dunn. Klein didn't dwell on that matter.

After making their way through the garden to the side of the building, he climbed the pipe up to the balcony of the second floor, just as he did before.

He then hung naturally from his feet, allowing his body to fall, once again taking Sealed Artifact 3-0271.

Kenley looked at him, puzzled. But immediately, he nodded his head in enlightenment.

At that moment, Klein was shocked by his own actions. He exerted a force using his waist, and, with the support of his left hand, he easily flipped over.

What happened just now? Why did I move like that? It felt so natural… Is that an ability of the Clown? He thought back and felt that he was able to better display the unique characteristics of a Clown in actual practice.

After waiting for Kenley to easily make his way up, Klein handed the Spirit Medium Mirror back to him before pulling open the unlocked door of the balcony.

Kenley carefully pulled away the black cloth wrapped around Sealed Artifact 3-0271. He pointed the object mirror side down, reflecting the tiles on the ground.

One of the rules of the Spirit Medium Mirror was not to use it on yourself or your partners!

After putting away the black cloth, Kenley took out his revolver and followed behind Klein. They made their way past the corridor towards Madam Sharon's bedroom, their footsteps light.

Klein wielded his readied revolver, and, while activating his Spirit Vision, he reached out for the door handle with his left hand.

He didn't dare to be careless since his divination told him that there would be danger present.

The reason why he didn't make another quick divination was that he knew the presence of the Primordial Demoness's statue in the room. At this distance, his divination would definitely be interrupted. He knew that there was no way for him to get a clear answer without relying on the gray fog's obstruction. Furthermore, with Kenley beside him, there was no way for him to enter that mysterious space.

After pushing open the door, what entered Klein and Kenley's field of vision was the warm light from the gas lamp.

Then, they saw Madam Sharon slumped over her chair, as well as her alluring body.

However, Madam Sharon wasn't asleep. She was reclined in her chair with a faint smile across her mouth, looking straight at her two visitors.

Instinctively, Kenley flipped his palm and pointed the Spirit Medium Mirror at Madam Sharon.

Klein first froze, then exclaimed, "No!"

He clearly remembered that there was a full-length mirror on the other side of the chair. But it wasn't there now!

The Spirit Medium Mirror had locked onto Madam Sharon in just a second.

But that image of Madam Sharon became blurry before turning into a full-length mirror.

Kenley looked at himself in the mirror and also Sealed Artifact 3-0271 reflecting his own image.

A figure instantly appeared within the Spirit Medium Mirror. It was an expressionless, sinister image of Kenley himself!

Klein felt his limbs turn rigid as if he had been entangled by invisible threads.

An elegant figure appeared beside the full-length mirror. It was Madam Sharon, wearing a nightgown.

She glanced at the two intruders and chuckled.

"If it wasn't for the fact that the statue happened to be beside me, I should be deep asleep now, waiting for you to wake me up with a kiss."

At that moment, Klein suddenly shouted a simple term in ancient Hermes, "Crimson!"

He had no idea when he dug his left palm into his pocket. He deftly flicked his fingers and tossed out a Slumber Charm.

Chapter 198 - Appropriating Uniqueness

◆

The silver charm suddenly turned ice-cold, just like a crystal coat with layers of frost.

Klein shivered and suddenly became more alert, his fear and agitation temporarily froze.

He quickly injected his spirituality into the charm and pushed the thin silver piece out of his pocket with his fingertip, causing it to drop to his feet.

A crimson flame appeared in the air, and the sound of light, continuous explosions echoed in the room.

A serene and deep feeling instantly emanated and engulfed most of the bedroom, including Madam Sharon, Sleepless Kenley, and also Klein himself!

The Slumber Charm was an item that didn’t distinguish between the enemy and the caster. In most situations, using it meant throwing it at the enemy.

That way, the caster would only be affected by the remnant shock waves, but not to the extent of failing to resist the temptation of falling into a deep sleep.

But Klein’s arms were entangled by countless invisible threads. He couldn’t throw the charm, so he could only exchange Madam Sharon’s slumber with his!

But he had long considered such a situation and was prepared. This was because his body was unique—a uniqueness that was unlike most Low-Sequence Beyonders.

In that instant, Klein's eyelids closed and entered into deep sleep normally, while Madam Sharon and Kenley also appeared to slow down.

Klein quickly realized that he was in a dream and rationally knew that he was sleeping.

Whenever anything related to dream invasions or similar hypnotic effects were used on him, he could still maintain consciousness!

He had discovered this when he was dealing with Dunn's Nightmare powers, as well as when Daly was channeling his spirit!

Kacha!

Klein tore out of the dream forcefully and woke up. He felt the countless threads binding his arms, legs, and body loosen. As for Madam Sharon, she had a vacant look, as though she was going to shake off the effect of the Slumber Charm but had yet to wake up entirely. Kenley was on the ground with the Spirit Medium Mirror flipped upside down nearby, while his revolver had been flung to the door.

An opportunity!

Klein seized the moment while the fine threads loosened, he took out his left hand and snapped his fingers. He lit up a faint blue spiritual flame and burned the countless fine threads before him.

At the same time, he picked up his revolver with his right hand and pulled the trigger repeatedly.

Bang! Bang!

The two silver demon hunting bullets tore through the barrel and fired towards Madam Sharon.

Klein didn’t confirm the outcome but bent his knees, exerted strength in his waist, and leaped over to Kenley. Simultaneously, he broke the fine strings that were tied around his body.

His earlier shots were mainly to inform the Captain that something unexpected had happened inside. They were already fighting and were in need of assistance. Of course, if he could shoot Madam Sharon directly, that’d be the best outcome!

However, Klein didn’t believe a Sequence 7 or 6 Beyonder could be taken care of so easily.

There were faint blue flames twirling in the air, dancing across the fines threads in the room. In such a dreamy scenery, the two silver demon hunting bullets struck Madam Sharon’s body.

Kacha! Kacha!

Madam Sharon was in her translucent sleeping robe, and her indistinct body shattered like the crimson moon’s reflection in a lake. The full body mirror next to her cracked into pieces, and most of them shattered into about thumbnail-sized chunks while a small amount remained on the frame. They all resembled palms, strangely-shaped palms.

A substitute? A Beyonder power of the Demoness Sequence? The corner of Klein’s eyes swept over it as he already rolled next to Kenley. Since the fine strings were all broken by his movement, the faint blue flames didn’t spread over.

At that moment, Madam Sharon had vanished, but the “sleeping” Kenley lifted his hands and gripped his neck so tightly that his saliva began flowing out as his tongue protruded. But he didn’t seem like he was going to stop.

But in Klein’s Spirit Vision, there weren’t any abnormal things around!

He suddenly recalled the description of Sealed Artifact 3-0271.

The most dangerous situation is when you see yourself!

Could it be that Kenley saw his own reflection in Sealed Artifact 3-0271 through the full body mirror? Klein speculated. He quickly took out another silver charm without having the luxury of time to think about it.

It was a triangular-shaped item: a Requiem Charm.

“Crimson!”

Klein said the ancient Hermes word while he instilled his spirituality into the charm and threw it out.

Then, he pressed down his left hand and grabbed the Spirit Medium Mirror.

He used the corner of his eye to determine that the Sealed Artifact was facing downward so it wouldn’t reflect himself.

The triangular silver charm ignited into icy-blue flames. The gentle and serene darkness blanketed Kenley and affected Klein himself.

The nervous emotions dispersed in that instant. Kenley relaxed his hands on his throat, while Klein felt like he was standing before his oriel window at home, overlooking the quiet streets. His physical and mental state was at peace.

That was exactly what Klein wanted!

At that very moment, he entered an extremely serene state. He appeared to be the only person left in the entire world with nothing else in existence.

Within this sense of calmness, he suddenly had a gut feeling in his mind.

Madam Sharon is about to attack my right waist!

That was the foresight ability of a Clown in battle. Without any hesitation, Klein lifted the Spirit Medium Mirror and rolled to his left.

Just as he moved, a dagger, burning in dark flames, pierced the spot where he had stood earlier.

Madam Sharon's figure was outlined once again.

As he rolled, Klein suddenly lifted the Spirit Medium Mirror and pointed it at Madam Sharon!

Besides saving his teammate, his main goal when he got close to Kenley was to pick up the Sealed Artifact.

Otherwise, he didn't believe that anything good would come out of waiting for the Captain's reinforcements while being next to Madam Sharon. The Flaring Sun Charm could be used to fight against a Beyonder, but the effect wouldn't be as significant as if it was used against a dead spirit. Plus, the other person wouldn't just stand there and wait for him to use a charm.

If it really didn't work, Klein could only take the risk and use Azik's copper whistle.

Regarding how he would explain it, he would think about it after he managed to stay alive!

However, things developed better than Klein had predicted. Madam Sharon opted for assassination. She didn't interrupt his use of the Requiem Charm and the Spirit Medium Mirror.

Therefore, Klein had instantly formulated a simple plan. He didn't avoid the repercussions of the Requiem Charm but relied on it to enhance his foresight ability as a Clown. Then, he seized the opportunity to dodge the attack while he used the Spirit Medium Mirror to reflect the enemy!

When Madam Sharon missed her strike, she immediately wanted to chase after her agile opponent who was rolling away. She suddenly saw a mirror with three cracks.

The surface of the mirror rippled, and a woman's figure appeared. Her hair was black and thick, hanging low and blocking her face.

Klein's left hand shook, and the Spirit Medium Mirror glided on the carpet for a dozen centimeters with the front facing upwards.

A pale hand extended out of the mirror, and a woman in a white bedsheet-like dress climbed out of the mirror quickly and pounced at Madam Sharon.

Madam Sharon's expression became gloomy, there was a layer of darkness above her innocent brown eyes.

Her surroundings ignited with seven black flames.

With a swoosh, a black flame flew out and hit the woman in the white dress.

Whoosh!

The woman caught on fire and wailed in pain. Very soon, she vanished into thin air.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

The black flames flew at Klein one after another like bullets.

Klein's pupils constricted as he quickly rolled away. He didn't dare stay in that spot.

However, his action of rolling gradually became slower because there seemed to be fine threads entangling him again. They slowed him down and affected his motion.

It seemed like the nemesis of the Clown's combat abilities!

The black flames flew past Klein's face and fell onto Madam Sharon's bed. However, it didn't burn, seemingly effective on items with life or spirituality.

Klein had yet to feel rejoice over his successful dodge when another premonition flashed through his head.

He twisted his spine and changed his forward flip into a side roll.

A transparent ice crystal suddenly appeared like a spear and stabbed into the carpet where Klein had originally intended to land.

The white frost expanded and struck Klein whose actions were affected by the fine threads.

He suddenly shivered, and his body became stiff. Although he could still move, he was much slower.

Madam Sharon had black flames surrounding her again, and there was a transparent ice spear that condensed in her hands. Klein didn't hesitate any further as he shoved his hand into his pocket and grabbed Azik's copper whistle.

He, he, he.

Just then, Kenley shook off the effect of the Requiem and Slumber charms. He got up and looked towards Madam Sharon with a pair of vacant-looking eyes.

His face seemed to be blanketed by a shadow, making him look silent yet creepy.

Thud. Thud. Thud. Kenley leaped at Madam Sharon who was the closest.

Madam Sharon narrowed her eyes and shot the black flames surrounding her one after another at Kenley.

Poof! Poof Poof! The black flames disappeared like snowflakes and didn’t have any effect.

Klein was stunned at first, then he lifted the gun in his right hand and pulled the trigger while aiming at Madam Sharon.

Bang!

Madam Sharon dodged ahead of time and threw the frost spear towards Kenley, but it only penetrated his clothes and not his skin. Hence, it didn’t create a freezing effect.

Bang! Klein fired again, and Madam Sharon dodged to the side of the broken full-body mirror and picked up a palm-sized fragment.

She continued to walk swiftly and dodged another bullet. She then used the irregular fragment to reflect Kenley as he leaped over at her.

Right on the heels of that, Madam Sharon dodged to the side as she swiped the mirror with her palm which was covered in black flames.

At that moment, Klein had emptied his revolver. He had no choice but to throw it, letting the empty shells and revolver fall to the carpet.

Just as he rolled over to pick up Kenley’s revolver, he heard his teammate’s tragic scream.

Kenley stopped before bending over and vomiting. It was bile at first, then a red heart, followed by his lungs and stomach that were burning with black flames.

Chapter 199 - Successful Toss of the Die

◆

The beating heart, the yellowish-green liquid, the silently burning black flames, and the falling figure entered Klein's field of vision and etched themselves deeply into Klein's mind.

The most dangerous mission he had encountered up to this date had been when he was dealing with Ray Bieber who was in the midst of digesting. Even such a terrifying and dangerous monster had only resulted in severe injuries to the Beyonders on the mission. No one had to sacrifice their lives.

The deaths of the Beyonders Klein had witnessed, including Old Neil's, were all due to them losing control. The "murderer" might be strange and indescribable or related to evil gods, but they had nothing to do with the missions they undertook.

Now, he was looking at one of his partners being killed in action. The death was purely due to one mistake.

Nighthawks were fighting against madness, but so were they also fighting against danger.

There might never be an opportunity to make up for that one mistake.

Klein's thoughts erupted with a boom.

Apparently having taken a huge blow, he knelt down and lifted his right hand, firing successive shots at Madam Sharon. The silver demon hunting bullets pierced through the invisible threads and shot towards her head and transparent sleeping gown.

Suddenly, Madam Sharon appeared to be yanked in another direction by something, allowing her to successfully avoid Klein's manic shooting.

Klein only managed to collect himself and regain the ability of rational thought when he finished firing the five bullets in his revolver, and the sound of the hammer striking an empty chamber entered his ears.

His heart tightened. Without any time to reload, he tossed the revolver to the side and took out a stack of tarot cards!

Pa!

Madam Sharon's body moved to the side and saw a card fly past her, piercing deeply into the surface of the makeup table.

She smiled, her beautiful brown eyes once again taking on a black luster.

At that moment, her waterfall like brown hair suddenly flailed into the air like it was lifted by an invisible force.

Madam Sharon froze. She wanted to dodge, but she was too slow. Klein had tossed out a "Magician" card, successfully pinning her hair to the wall.

Pa! Madam Sharon forcefully tore away her hair and rolled forward, her body quickly vanishing from Klein's line of sight.

She's turned invisible again… Klein had a tarot card between his fingers as he slowly turned around while being alert of his surroundings.

Suddenly, he realized why Madam Sharon had to give up her attack, and why she had slowed down.

If the situation had developed normally, Klein would have had no choice but to use Azik's copper whistle to deal with this terrifying demoness!

Yes! The Captain must be around here somewhere! He felt a little excited. He looked around, his gaze instinctively falling on the window.

At the same time, he made a judgment in his heart.

Madam Sharon wants to flee!

She knows that we still have a partner with the ability to drag her into a dream, but she is unsure if there would be other reinforcements from the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind!

Even though she's powerful, there's no way that she can wipe out a team of Beyonders on her own!

With that thought, Klein flicked his wrist, tossing the tarot card towards the window.

Whoosh Whoosh Whoosh! He threw out five cards in succession, three sealing the window and the other two towards the door.

Crack! Thud! Thud!

Amidst the sound of shattering glass, two tarot cards dug into the ajar bedroom door, one after the other. As he expected, Klein heard the sound of dodging.

He once again tossed cards out, making use of his Clown's intuition to pinpoint where he should be aiming.

The cards pierced through the air and rapidly advanced before drilling themselves into the sturdy wall. However, a figure was quickly outlined in the air. It was none other than the brown-haired Madam Sharon who was in a translucent sleeping gown.

The moment Madam Sharon was exposed, her eyes lost their focus, as though she was falling asleep standing.

Captain… Klein scanned his surroundings but was in no hurry to throw his cards. This was because he knew that Madam Sharon would quickly break out of the dream. He had to deal fatal damage in these two or three seconds, or their opponent would escape.

It was easy to escape from a Nightmare when there was a huge distance between them!

Bending his knees, Klein rolled forward diagonally. He went prone and extended his right hand, grabbing the edge of the Spirit Medium Mirror that was facing upward.

He then flicked his wrist before his reflection could appear in the mirror. He tossed Sealed Artifact 3-0271 towards Madam Sharon, mirror side facing her.

Madam Sharon's body trembled. The color of her brown eyes was quickly restored as they once again found their focus.

And awakening before her was a crystalline layer of sturdy frost that appeared on the surface of her body.

However, she didn't see the card, nor the demon hunting bullet approaching her. All she saw was a mirror, and that the mirror was reflecting her innocent, yet alluring beauty.

That beautiful face in the mirror suddenly became contorted. Wrinkles, gashes of blood, and rotting spots appeared on her face.

"No!" Madam Sharon let out a shrill cry as if she had just witnessed someone she loved die.

Her skin quickly took on a green color as yellow pus flowed out the corner of her eyes.

After a moment of suffering, a silent black flame burned outward from within Madam Sharon, as if she was trying to expel something.

The black flames then condensed into a thick frost, as if it was creating a coffin for an eternal rest.

The invisible threads finally took on a color that was visible to the human eye. They enveloped the frost, forming a gigantic cocoon.

Thud. Thud. Thud. Sealed Artifact 3-0271 fell onto the ground and tumbled before stopping beside Madam Sharon's giant cocoon.

At that moment, Dunn broke through the window frame and somersaulted into the room.

He caught sight of Kenley, who had stopped breathing, and his expression sank.

It was at this moment, the cocoon cracked open. The coffin of ice crumbled an inch at a time as black flames turned into specks of light, dissipating into the surroundings.

Madam Sharon's skin had regained its normal color. Her eyes showed fatigue, but she seemed normal.

Her eyes reflected Klein who was still sprawled on the ground. She also saw Dunn Smith, his finger pressed on his glabella with his eyes closed.

A formless ripple spread outward from Dunn as Madam Sharon's eyelids drooped uncontrollably. Under Dunn's trench coat were writhing, snake-like objects.

Klein knew that the Captain couldn't restrain Madam Sharon for long, just like when they were previously fighting Monster Bieber. Klein rolled forward again, grabbed his revolver, the one he had previously tossed onto the carpet.

He grabbed three demon hunting bullets with his left hand and familiarity stuffed them into the round chambers.

Pa!

Klein closed the cylinder and stood up, taking aim at Madam Sharon with both hands on the gun. He aimed at the center of her forehead.

Bang!

He controlled his body with the abilities of the Clown and pulled the trigger.

The silver demon hunting bullet pierced through the air, accurately hitting the fixed target.

A bloody gash appeared between Madam Sharon's eyes, but the bullet seemed to tear through multiple layers of obstruction, causing it to lose the bulk of its power, rendering it unable to pierce through the target's skull.

Klein fired another two shots without hesitation when he saw Madam Sharon suddenly open her eyes.

Bang! Bang!

A rain of blood splattered amidst white dots. The stunning beauty that was Madam Sharon had become a mutilated corpse that would incite nightmares in every man.

She had long run out of "substitutes" to use.

Phew. Phew. Klein lowered his arms and panted heavily. Madam Sharon, with only half her head left, slumped onto the ground. She still had an exceptional figure, her skin still white and tender.

Dunn straightened himself up and opened his eyes. He, too, lowered his hand from his glabella, his face a little pale. He wasn't injured, but he looked as though he had lost a lot of blood.

"If it wasn't for the fact that she wanted to kill a few people before she tried to escape; if it wasn't for Sealed Artifact 3-0271 reflecting herself by chance, we probably would've only been able to injure her…" Dunn slowly walked forward to Klein's side, his voice unusually low.

If it wasn't for how unique I was, I would've died along with Kenley in the first ten seconds of the battle… Klein turned to look at Kenley who was silently lying on the black ash. He exhaled.

“Captain, Kenley…”

“I know…” Dunn replied with a raspy voice. “I made a mistake. I was fooled by Madam Sharon. I didn’t expect her to secretly escape from the dream.”

He paused, then he said in a serious tone, “But you have to get used to this. It’s normal for Nighthawks to die during missions. Perhaps the next one to die would be me.”

Klein fell silent, not knowing how to reply. Kenley still had his eyes open, staring blankly at the ceiling.

“May the Goddess bless you. May you find true peace.” Dunn walked over to Kenley’s side and drew a crimson moon on his chest.

He then squatted and closed his partner’s eyes.

May the Goddess bless you. May the serene night no longer harbor any danger or madness… Klein also drew the crimson moon as he prayed silently in his heart.

A few seconds later, he forcefully retracted his gaze and asked in a heavy voice, “Captain, should I channel her spirit now?”

Dunn nodded indiscernibly.

“Don’t attempt to ask about the Primordial Demoness. That’s very dangerous. I’ll guard you and prevent any accidents from disturbing you.”

Klein didn’t tarry. He took out the various ingredients and quickly set up an altar, starting the mediumship ritual.

After reciting the incantations, he took a step back and used a Dream Divination.

“Madam Sharon’s partners-in-crime.

“Madam Sharon’s partners-in-crime.”

†

After reciting the statement seven times, Klein entered a dream. He saw Madam Sharon’s soul within the hazy world.

He reached out to the transparent, ethereal soul, and the scene before his eyes changed.

It was a night scene. Madam Sharon, who was wearing a long black robe, handed an ancient bronze book over to Instigator Trissy. She laughed a little manically after hearing the latter’s doubt over the term “Witch.”

“Weren’t you always curious? Curious about why our upper echelons are all female…”

So it really was the Demoness Sect… Leonard’s guess accurately matches the truth; he really does have a huge secret… The corresponding Sequence 7 for Assassin and Instigator is Witch? What a trap… Klein thought to himself.

The scene immediately changed. Klein saw a vast hall with narrow windows all around the place, and a lady clad in a pure white robe.

Her back was facing Madam Sharon as she said with a smile, “We can reach sainthood as long as we advance towards the Primordial. We can attain power, attain salvation, and avoid the end of days.”

Madam Sharon lowered her head and asked curiously, “Why must we become women? Is it because the Primordial is a woman? Do women symbolize destruction and calamity?”

The lady whose back was facing Madam Sharon answered calmly, “No, men are the same, they are the synonym of war. These are two similar pathways.”

Chapter 200 - The Demoness of Pleasure

* * *

Synonym of war… A similar Sequence as the Demoness Sequence pathway… Which one would it be? Klein watched the movie-like scene as he recalled the Sequence pathways that he knew of.

As he was only an official Nighthawk, there was still a lot of information that he couldn't access. He was still in the dark about the names of the Mid to High Sequences and their corresponding traits. He only knew about the few that he had learned of from the Eternal Blazing Sun, such as the Priest of Light and the Unshadowed; the God of Combat Sequence pathway that he found out from the young man, Sun, such as Dawn Paladin, Guardian, and Demon Hunter; as well as Spirit Guide and Gatekeeper which he found out from Daly and Dunn.

Hence, it was difficult for him to judge which Sequence pathway would be a synonym of war. He could only eliminate them one by one, such as the God of Combat Sequence pathway which seemed more like individual battles rather than war.

Klein thought about it and minimized the scope to five options.

First, was the Arbiter Sequence pathway which the Loen Kingdom's ruler, the Augustus family, and the Feynapotter Kingdom's Castiya family were in control of. But Klein felt that this option was the least likely because the Arbiter's corresponding Sequence 8 was Sheriff and Sequence 7 was Interrogator, which both seemed to be leaning towards trial and judgment but not towards war.

Second, was the Fourth Epoch Solomon Empire's pathway of the Black

Emperor. Its Sequence 9's modern name was Lawyer, which was good at discovering and using the flaws and weaknesses of an opponent, while also possessing outstanding eloquence and logical thinking. That was the second lowest possible Sequence pathway. He suspected that the development of the Sequence would make use of rules and walked in the shadow of order. Of course, war was also considered as one of the shadows of order.

Third, was the Hunter Sequence pathway that was in the control of the Feysac Empire's rulers, the Einhorn family; the Intis Republic's former royal family, the Sauron family, and also the hidden organization that only appeared in the last two to three hundred years, the Iron and Blood Cross Order. Klein thought it was quite possible.

The Nighthawk's confidential information described Hunters as excellent trackers, outstanding trap masters, and superb hunters. The corresponding Sequence 8 was Provoker, while Sequence 7 was Pyromaniac. Both were partially associated with massacre and war.

Fourth was the ancient organization Blood Sanctify Sect that worshiped demons. They were in control of the Criminal Sequence pathway. From the sequence title itself, Klein felt that it had a high possibility.

Fifth was the Rose School of Thought that was known for bloody rituals. They had the Prisoner Sequence pathway, and the reason was the same as the one before.

Just as Klein was drowning in his own thoughts, the scene before him changed. Madam Sharon had just finished showering, and her wet hair hung low. There was a fresh yet seductive charm on her face.

I can't see the woman in the white robe that turned Madam Sharon into a Demoness… It might be because my psychic ability is still lacking… Klein reined back his thoughts and redirected his attention to what was before his eyes.

Madam Sharon flipped her hair, and water droplets glided down her cheeks.

She looked towards the man who was waiting on the bed as she giggled and said, “Do you need me to take care of Maynard?”

The middle-aged man on the bed creased his eyebrows and shook his head. “Not unless you can guarantee that there won’t be any traces left behind. But that’s impossible; besides, what means do you have?”

Looking at the man before him, Klein was taken aback at first before suddenly feeling that it was within expectations.

The middle-aged man’s photo often appeared on the front page of the Tingen City Honest Paper and other newspapers. He was the current mayor that was looking to be re-elected, a member of Conservative Party.

Madam Sharon smiled but didn’t delve deeper into the topic. Her robe was halfway up her legs, and she walked gracefully to the side of the bed.

The scenery before him changed one after another until Klein saw many Members of Parliament, businessmen, and civil servants who appeared on the newspaper occasionally.

They would either discuss how to receive donations, bribe voters by going around the Campaign Act, or promise protection and solve problems. In the entire development, Madam Sharon acted as a broker.

This is actually a documentary, right… “Tour the Upper Circles of Tingen with Madam Sharon”… Well, but why are there so many bed scenes… Many nobles and Members of Parliament knew that Madam Sharon had many lovers, so why did they look like they couldn’t resist the temptation… Was this an ability of Madam Sharon’s Sequence? Klein watched thoughtfully as he speculated.

Through the divination earlier, he was certain that none of the guys in

Tingen's upper circles knew of Madam Sharon's true identity, nor did they collude with her to murder Maynard.

In other words, Maynard's death was Madam Sharon's own decision? Why? She had no reason to take the risk.

Of course, from Madam Sharon's perspective, she possessed the Beyonder power to interfere in divination, and she could also create a sudden death from sexual pleasure and make the death appear natural and accidental. Killing Maynard wasn't something risky that would expose her identity, but she clearly lacks a motive. It doesn't match the risk involved!

Could it be one of the requirements of her "acting?" But she could definitely find someone whose identity and status wasn't as sensitive. Then, the case wouldn't have fallen to the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind.

The most important point was that Madam Sharon should've been able to tell that Maynard's wife hated her and was extremely indignant. That made it highly likely that someone would be sent to investigate her, so why didn't she move those sensitive items like the white bone statue away? She could have buried it in the garden or something.

Was she so confident in the security of her safe and its hidden compartment?

Amidst his suspicion, Klein saw that Madam Sharon's spirit had yet to disperse. He seized the opportunity to do another dream divination.

This time, his divination involved: "Madam Sharon's true motive for killing John Maynard."

After he recited it in silence, Klein entered a dream once again and saw a new scene.

Madam Sharon held a glass of red wine which resembled blood. In her loose sleeping gown, she was pacing back and forth in her room.

Finally, she drank the rest of the wine in one gulp, as though she had decided on something.

The scene dispersed quickly, leaving Klein even more confused since Maynard's death looked like Madam Sharon had volunteered to do it without anyone's instigation.

"That's weird…" Klein muttered to himself and used another few divination statements. But the answers were no different.

Seeing that Madam Sharon was growing transparent and illusory, signifying that she was going to disappear soon, Klein thought and made final contact with the dead spirit.

"Sequence potion formula of the Demoness pathway.

"Sequence potion formula of the Demoness pathway."

†

Klein recited the new divination statement. With the aid of Cogitation, he got into his dream very quickly.

At first, he didn't want to do the divination because he felt that the Demoness pathway only spread disaster and created pain. Even if he obtained a corresponding potion formula, he was unwilling to sell it to anyone and indirectly become a murderer.

Then, he recalled another matter from before. With his understanding of the Spectator potion, he had been able to suspect and verify that Daxter Guderian was a member of the Psychology Alchemists.

So, in order to better fight against the Demonesses in the future, he'd to learn more of the traits of their Sequence pathway.

Yes, after Hood Eugen's death, Daxter Guderian has yet to contact me. I'm guessing the Psychology Alchemists sent some stronger members for an investigation, and he hasn't dared to make any moves… As

Klein’s thoughts flashed, he saw the dark hall again. He saw the woman in the holy white robe again.

Madam Sharon hung her head low, and she could only see the other woman’s legs, a pair of flawless legs.

Soon, she heard a melodious voice.

“Pleasure, that is the name of the Sequence 6 potion, the goal that you are about to advance to. If you succeed, you’ll be a Demoness of Pleasure.

“When pleasure is irresistible and impossible to break away from, it’s a form of agony. This is also a maxim that you have to live by.

“As long as you complete your advancement, besides the enhancement of your various abilities as a Witch, you’ll also become more beautiful, making you better at seduction and providing unforgettable pleasure to the same or opposite sex during love-making. You’ll be able to make strange threads like a spider and utilize them.”

Immediately following that, an ancient silver book appeared before Madam Sharon. After it was opened, there was the formula and ingredients placed separately.

“Main ingredients: A pair of Succubus eyes, an adult Black Widow Spider Silk Gland.

“Supplementary ingredients: 100 ml of purified water, 5 drops of Black Jimsonweed juice, the complete remnants of a Succubus’s hair, 10 grams of Feynapotter Fly Powder, and 5 grams of real Mummy ashes.”

The scene changed again. It was the same hall, the same long white robe, and the same woman with indistinguishable features. But now, the difference was that Madam Sharon had returned to her original state. She was now the young man in the picture from before.

A melodious female voice reverberated in his ears.

“This is the name of the Sequence 7 potion, I’m sure you’re surprised.”

“Yes, I still can’t believe it’s called Witch!” “Madam Sharon” said in a rather agitated manner.

“Remember, if we want to get closer to the Primordial, we have to be more and more like ‘Her.’ She’s a woman, so we have to be women too,” The melodious female voice replied. “Either you give up or you accept. After you become a Witch, you’ll become a true woman, and your appearance and charm will be enhanced substantially. You’ll have the ability to turn invisible and use substitutes. You’ll gain a rudimentary mastery of various dark magic, you’ll be skilled at disrupting the divination of others, and you’ll also gain the favor of the black flame and icy frost.

“The main ingredients are every drop of an Abyss Demonic Fish’s blood and an Agate Peacock’s egg.

“The supplementary ingredients are 80 ml of purified water, five drops of Jimsonweed juice, 3 scales of a Shadow Lizard, and 10 drops of Daffodil Juice.”

†

Scenes continued to play, one after another, and Klein saw the Instigator and Assassin formula and understood their corresponding traits.

Just as he wanted to continue the divination, Madam Sharon’s spirit dispersed completely.

Klein stopped the ritual and returned to reality. He packed up the ingredients, removed the wall of spirituality, and told Dunn Smith about the outcome of his mediumship without holding back any information. Then, he expressed his suspicions on Madam Sharon’s murder of Maynard.

"Pleasure doesn't require her to kill anyone of a higher rank or position in society… Hmm, we need to investigate where Madam Sharon has been over the past few years and understand her origins. We need to look for the dark hall that you saw. Of course, this will need to be reported to the Holy Cathedral, and they can assign investigators accordingly. We can't leave Tingen as we wish." Dunn nodded slightly and looked around. He said, "Go to the first floor, check if those servants are still in deep sleep. If anyone is awake, bring them over and make them sign a confidentiality contract as per protocol. I'll be in charge of the second floor."

He found a black cloth and covered the Sealed Artifact 3-0271.

Upon hearing that, Klein suddenly understood why the intense battle hadn't brought the servants over—the Captain had sent them into a deep sleep from the very beginning.

Klein's body was still cold and stiff. He had to slow down and move forward in very, very light steps.

When he passed the bedroom door, he extended his hand and pulled out the two Tarot cards at the door. He wiped them and put them back into his pocket.

After he left the room, he walked towards the stairway.

After taking a few steps, he suddenly thought of a question—how would he make sure that the person was in a deep sleep?

Check with divination one by one? That'd be troublesome… The Captain is a Nightmare; he should be an expert in this. I'll have to ask him if he has any fast and simple methods.

With this in mind, Klein turned around walked towards the bedroom door, step by step, as he fought against the cold and stiffness in his body.

Before he came close, he looked through the ajar door and saw the shattered pieces of the angled full-body mirror.

There were still large shards of the mirror clinging to the frame, all the size of a palm.

In the cracked mirror, Dunn Smith, in his black trench coat, was kneeling beside Kenley's dead body, doing something.

Suddenly, he lifted his head. His gray eyes were deep, and the corners of his lips were tainted with crimson blood.

Crimson blood.

Without thinking, Klein turned around, left the side of the door, and leaned his back against the wall.

Chapter 201 - Inquiry

◆

Klein held his breath with his back against the wall as he faced the darkness of the corridor.

What's Captain doing? What's wrong with him? Was he drinking blood? Is this a sign of him losing control? Klein's mind was a mess, incapable of effective thought.

Nearly twenty seconds later, Klein clenched his teeth. With the help of the control he had over his body as a Clown, he silently made his way down the stairs.

Later, he then intentionally took heavier footsteps and made his way back to the door of Madam Sharon's bedroom.

Klein looked in to see the Captain wrapping Sealed Artifact 3-0271 with the black cloth. His expression was serious, his face clean.

It was as though what Klein had seen just now was only an illusion.

Glancing sideways, Klein saw nothing abnormal with Kenley's body. It was the same as it had been.

He inhaled and asked, "Captain, how am I going to confirm if those servants are still asleep? I can't make an accurate judgment just based on Spirit Vision alone. They'll have various emotional reactions due to their dreams which will be reflected in the color of their auras."

Dunn Smith fiddled with the Spirit Medium Mirror and was silent for a few seconds. He said with a raspy voice, "I'm sorry. I forgot about that.

I've made too many mistakes tonight.

"There's no need for you to check, I'll confirm it."

He lifted his hand and pressed his glabella, then he closed his eyes, allowing formless ripples to spread towards the first floor.

It was crystal-clear to a Nightmare if anyone was asleep or not.

Klein froze when he saw this. He looked down and bit at the insides of his lips.

Captain, were you really drawing me away just now…

What are you doing? Do you know what you're doing…

He abruptly turned to look at the window, only to see the crimson moon hanging high in the sky, seemingly unchanged for thousands of years.

After collecting himself, Klein used the cover of picking up his tarot cards, revolver, half top hat, and other items to closely examine the corpses of Kenley and Madam Sharon.

They maintained the same look as when they died, but their skin was turning pale at a rapid rate. They also had tinges of blue and black marks.

It's a little weird, they seem to be missing something… It's not something specific, but more of a feeling… Klein muttered to himself. He felt his hair stand on end due to the chilly wind blowing through the shattered window.

At that moment, Dunn opened his eyes and said in a deep voice, "They're all still asleep, but some of them are close to waking up."

"That's good, that's good…" Klein looked at the Captain, not knowing what he was saying.

Dunn surveyed the surroundings and said, “Clean up the scene, then get someone from the nearest police station to come over. Oh, and make a trip back to Zouteland Street and get Frye to come help out.”

Klein gave the Captain a deep look and nodded with his teeth clenched.

“Okay.”

With Dunn’s help, Klein quickly cleaned up the scene and left Madam Sharon’s house through the front door.

Walking through the garden and coming outside, Klein couldn’t help but look back. All he saw was the silent nursery in the darkness. There was no light at all.

He turned, his heart heavy. He soon located the nearest police station based on his memory—this was common knowledge to the Nighthawks.

Knock. Knock. Knock. Klein knocked on the steel door.

Sometime later, the officer on duty passed through the courtyard with a lantern in hand. He opened the door and observed Klein suspiciously.

“What’s the matter?”

Klein failed to force any expression. With a heavy face, he produced his documents and showed it to the police officer.

“There’s a serious murder case at 15 Osna Street. Immediately call for other officers to head there to help out!”

The police officer lifted his lantern and scrutinized the documents before putting his feet together and saluted.

“Yes, sir!”

Having settled this, Klein headed back to Zouteland Street on a rental carriage.

On the way back, he sat in the dark carriage. His thoughts were in a mess and unfocused.

Kenley is dead…

I remember that he was recently engaged… His parents are still alive…

What was the Captain doing just now…

Does he crave fresh blood…

Or does he have other motives…

His memory is still as poor as before, without any obvious improvement. Th-this means that he doesn't have the warning signs of losing control!

But he's known about the "acting method" for some time now. Does the fact that his memory hasn't improved mean that there's a problem…

No! It must be because the Captain is still figuring out the proper way to act as a Nightmare!

…Yes, the most important reasons why Kenley died was because of Sealed Artifact 3-0271. It was the Captain who gave it to him…

What am I thinking! It was a logical decision back then!

…It was also the Captain who suggested using Sealed Artifact 3-0271…

Calm down, calm down, I cannot make blind guesses. But I cannot wait around either, or the situation might worsen!

I'll send a letter to Madam Daly later and see if she knows what this situation means. Even if she doesn't know the exact answer, she'll definitely understand the signs of danger and inform the Holy Cathedral…

That way, we can smother the problem in the cradle and get the Captain back to normal!

No, the Captain might not have a problem. I might've misunderstood something. I'll see what Madam Daly says…

†

Klein had already made a decision when the carriage arrived at 36 Zouteland Street. He was no longer flustered and helpless as before.

He went up the stairway toward the entrance of the Blackthorn Security Company with heavy steps and opened the door from a key he fished out.

The familiar setting calmed him down considerably. It reminded him of how he felt when he asked the Captain for help every time something was wrong.

Taking a deep breath, Klein went to the recreation room and found Frye reading alone under the gas lamp.

Frye turned to look at Klein, his cold face revealing a look of concern and worry.

"Did something happen? Where's Captain and Kenley?"

Klein replied with a raspy voice, "Kenley's dead; he died at Madam Sharon's hands. We all made mistakes… The Captain is guarding the scene. He needs your help there."

Before they left, the Captain had informed Frye about the general situation. He told Frye that if they weren't back within two hours, he was to send a telegraph to the Holy Cathedral. Similarly, since they had to apply for Sealed Artifact 3-0271 and enter Chanis Gate at night, Royale, who was guarding Chanis Gate was also notified of the mission. According to the internal guidelines of the Nighthawks, a Captain could permit the opening of Chanis Gate at night. If the Captain was present, then only the Captain could enter.

Frye froze for a moment, then he let out a sigh. He drew a crimson moon on his chest.

He put on his coat and hat and headed out the door. When he walked past Klein, he suddenly said softly, “You don’t need to blame yourself. Making mistakes is something we can never avoid. We must always trust our partners.”

“Yeah…” Klein closed his eyes, his vision turning blurry.

Klein and Frye first headed to the basement to notify Royale before locking the door to the Blackthorn Security Company and rushing to Madam Sharon’s house.

It was nearing dawn by the time they got Kenley’s corpse and Madam Sharon’s half decapitated body back.

Dunn stood in front of the mortuary, silently looking inside. It was some time before he turned to Klein and said, “Go home first. You just experienced an intense battle, you must be exhausted.”

“Alright.” Klein didn’t reject the suggestion.

He puckered his lips and stole a glance at the Captain before quietly leaving the Blackthorn Security Company. He took a carriage back to Daffodil Street.

Just as he had done the previous time, he easily entered his bedroom and locked the door.

Taking out the silver ritual dagger, Klein sealed the room with a wall of spirituality. He then sat at his desk and wrote urgently:

“Dear Madam Daly,

“I’ve noticed that there’s something odd about the Captain recently. During a mission, he secretly…”

Klein stopped when he reached this point. His mind had gone blank. He didn’t know how to continue or how to describe the incident.

Pa!

He threw the pen and crumpled the piece of paper in front of him into a ball. Looking at it, he pounded heavily on the table, sending a reverberating thump across the room. Klein closed his eyes and covered his face with his hands. He didn’t move, as if he had become a statue.

Five minutes later, he sighed. He put down his right hand and burned the ball of paper with his spirituality. He watched it turn to ash as it fell into the bin.

After organizing his thoughts, Klein took out a fresh piece of paper and wrote:

“Dear Madam Daly,

“We just completed a mission and regrettably lost a partner. The exact details are as follows…

“…Back then, I felt that with my present standards, my Spirit Vision was incapable of accurately ascertaining whether the servants were asleep or not, and that it was very troublesome to do divinations for every one of them. Thus, I returned with the intention of asking for the Captain’s advice. At that moment, through the mirror’s reflection, I saw the Captain kneeling beside Kenley’s corpse, with crimson blood covering his mouth.

“I’m not sure what exactly happened, nor do I know the state the Captain is in. I hope that you can give me an answer.”

†

After writing this, Klein read the letter again with a heavy heart before folding it in half.

He then set up a ritual and activated his Spirit Vision to summon Daly's messenger. He summoned the strange face which was only a mouth without any eyes or nose.

He saw the red tongue laced with irregular sharp teeth and five pale fingers on the tip of the tongue. Klein silently handed the letter over.

When everything was restored back to normal again, he sat down and continued writing.

This time, he planned to ask Mr. Azik.

"…On a recent mission, something strange happened to my superior. He sent me away and kneeled beside the corpse of a teammate. His mouth was covered in crimson blood.

"Have you encountered something like this in your memories before? How can I help my superior?"

Chapter 202 - Confirming the Situation

◆

After folding the letter, Klein took out the copper whistle, put it to his lips, and blew hard.

In the silence, illusory white bones came flying up from the desk like a fountain and finally formed a huge monster. It was almost four meters tall, still covered in a faint glow. Its head was still poking through the ceiling, looking no different from before.

Klein flicked his wrist and threw the letter. The white bone monster caught the letter and gripped it tight

Klein blew the copper whistle again and saw the messenger break into illusory white bones and fall like rain before vanishing through the surface of the desk.

Klein felt much calmer after finishing everything, but he didn't stop trying. He moved the chair back and stood up. He then walked four steps counterclockwise and entered the world above the gray fog.

The lofty palace and the ancient mottled table appeared before his eyes, as though it would stay the same for tens of thousand of years.

Klein sat at The Fool's seat of honor. Then, he took out the spirit pendulum from his left sleeve and conjured a yellowish-brown goatskin and a fountain pen in front of him.

He wanted to divine the Captain's situation that night!

After some thought, Klein wrote the first divination statement.

"Dunn Smith's abnormality would lead me into danger."

In mysticism, divination that involved any danger to the diviner was hardest to interfere. It was an instinctual ability of spirituality.

In other words, as long as there wasn't an extremely strong disturbance, Klein would be able to get an accurate result from the divination about his own situation.

This was also the reason why he would divine if there was danger in the mission even though he knew that Madam Sharon had the ability to interfere with divination. He also knew that Madam Sharon wasn't strong enough to affect this kind of divination.

In order to determine Captain Dunn Smith's situation, he decided to eliminate all disturbances and perform the divination above the gray fog.

He held the pendulum with his left hand as he recited the divination statement seven times. He closed his eyes and entered a Cogitation state.

After a few seconds, he opened his eyes and they returned to their normal color.

He looked at the topaz pendant, and he felt heavy-hearted because the pendulum was spinning clockwise. The rotation wasn't small, nor was the speed slow.

It meant that the result was positive.

It meant that Dunn Smith's abnormality would lead him to danger!

And the danger level was significant!

After he closed his eyes, Klein "wiped" away the previous content and wrote down a new divination statement.

"The reason for Dunn Smith's abnormality."

He put away the topaz pendant and leaned back into the chair. He recited the divination statement as he entered a dream with the aid of Cogitation.

In the blurry illusory world, he couldn't see or discover anything. There was nothing except gray fog.

That means that there was insufficient information, so the divination failed… Klein looked at the goatskin on the long bronze table as he muttered bitterly and helplessly.

Suddenly, he felt a strong feeling of exhaustion. He realized that it was the result of an intense battle, continuous rituals, and multiple divinations.

Klein wrapped himself up with spirituality and stimulated a rapid descent from above the gray fog and returned to reality.

He had a few nightmares that night. The ending of each dream was either Kenley vomiting his organs, or Dunn Smith with crimson blood around his mouth.

†

The next morning, Klein was on duty at Chanis Gate so he arrived early at the Blackthorn Security Company.

At that very moment, Rozanne, Mrs. Orianna, and the other clerks had yet to arrive for work. Klein walked through the partition and saw the wide open door and Dunn Smith, who was seated in the Captain's office.

Dunn had taken off his coat, and he only had his white shirt and black vest on. He sat in his seat while he held a cup of coffee in his hands. He was staring at the wall in front of him blankly.

His hair seemed dry, his gray eyes looked dull, and his face was showing obvious signs of weariness too.

Even for the Captain, who's experienced many similar incidents, it's still unbearable to lose two teammates in such a short period of time… Klein's heart winced as the scene of the shattered full-body mirror reflecting Dunn kneeling before Kenley's corpse with his face covered in crimson blood appeared once again.

Klein clenched his teeth and looked away.

After nearly twenty seconds, he composed himself and extended his hand to knock on the Captain's door.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Dunn put down his coffee cup as his gray eyes became deep again.

He took a deep breath and said, "I've reported the matter to the Holy Cathedral, and they gave an initial reply.

"The Church will compensate Kenley's family with 3000 pounds, and the police department will give 1000 pounds as bereavement payment…"

A total of 4000 pounds. To most middle-class citizens, that's wealth that can't be earned in a lifetime… Kenley's weekly salary was seven pounds, making an annual income of 364 pounds. Adding in any bonuses and additional income, he would make at least 380 pounds. Four thousand pounds is equivalent to ten years of his income… Such wealth can provide at least 200 pounds of income a year… Although money cannot make up for the loss of Kenley, it's the only effective thing at the moment… Klein had many thoughts passing through his mind before he finally sighed.

"That's all we can do."

The Church of Evernight couldn't be faulted when it came to such matters.

Dunn pulled his collar and said in a deep voice, "Go to the basement and take over Royale's shift."

"Alright." Klein nodded slightly.

He turned around and walked towards the door. Then, he heard Captain add as though he was talking to himself, "We'll send Kenley home later…"

Send Kenley home… His father, his mother, his siblings, his fiancée, how will they react… Klein's heart tightened, and he was somehow glad that he didn't have to face such sorrow.

He knew it was the mentality of an escapist, but he was really afraid of seeing the agony in the eyes of Kenley's parents, or how his fiancée would seem to lose her soul. He was afraid to see their expressions of hidden resentment and afraid of hearing their sobbing.

Klein quickened his pace and hurried to Chanis Gate. He completed the shift change with Royale in silence.

He sat in the duty room and occasionally took out his silver pocket watch and watched the time pass by slowly.

After an unknown period of time, Klein suddenly heard illusory sounds that overlapped one another.

He saw the four black dots appear on the back of his hand and understood that it was either Justice, The Hanged Man, or The Sun praying to him.

He had no way to answer them immediately. He could only wait till the notification ended, for more prayers to come, and until the next morning when he returned home.

Having just fished his keys to open the door to his house, Klein saw the maidservant Bella wiping the dining table while his sister, Melissa, who was dressed up, and his brother, Benson, came downstairs.

“Didn’t you just go to Mass last week?” Klein asked curiously.

Benson smiled and said, “That sounds like the memory of a person who hasn’t gotten any sleep the entire night.”

“Huh?” Klein looked even more confused.

“Today is the first day that ‘The Return of the Count’ will be releasing tickets for sale,” Melissa explained.

Klein smacked his forehead and took off his hat.

“I’ve been too busy recently. I totally forgot about it.”

Especially these past three days… He added with a sigh.

Melissa looked at him with concern and said, “Your breakfast is in the kitchen. Eat it and get some sleep. Benson and I thought that since we’re going out, we might as well drop by Saint Selena Cathedral to have Mass.”

“Alright.” Klein waved and bade his brother and sister farewell. He had a simple breakfast and returned to his bedroom.

After he did the preparatory work, he took four steps counterclockwise and entered the world above the gray fog. He saw that Justice and The Hanged Man’s corresponding crimson stars were burgeoning and shrinking faintly.

He extended his right hand and emanated his spirituality. Then, blurry images formed before Klein’s eyes. Miss Justice’s prayer sounded in his ears.

†

“I pray for you to listen.

“Because of the Qilangos incident, my father hired a Beyonder to protect me. There are also others who are watching over me secretly. It wasn't easy for me to finally find an opportunity to pray to you. I would like to apply for leave from the Gathering next week. I believe this will pass soon."

Klein subconsciously glanced at the blurry image. The image was filled with fog, and there seemed to be a huge bathtub with rippling water. Miss Justice was wrapped in a bath towel.

He retracted his gaze and started listening to The Hanged Man's prayer.

His description was different from Justice's, but he was making the same request. He too needed to ask for leave due to the aftermath of Qilangos's death.

Klein nodded slightly and responded to their prayers respectively.

"I'm aware."

Then, he sent a message to The Sun's crimson star.

"The upcoming Gathering will be canceled temporarily."

†

City of Silver.

Derrick Berg was paying attention in the training field. The sky above his head was still dark, with occasional flashes of lightning that lit up the sky.

Suddenly, his vision went blurry before he saw the thick fog and the ancient palace that looked like the home of a giant. He also saw Mr. Fool, who sat in the depths of the gray fog.

"The upcoming Gathering will be canceled temporarily."

His voice reverberated, but the view before Derrick had already returned to normal.

He wasn't shocked at such a magical incident because Mr. Fool contacted him in this manner to remind him before every Gathering.

Derrick looked up at the woman in front of him subconsciously, a member of the City of Silver's six-member council, Shepherd Lovia.

This terrifying expert kept switching between a smile and being aloof. She told every young man at the training field that they would join the patrolling troops soon and rid the dark monsters in the vicinity. That wouldn't be training anymore.

Elder Lovia didn't notice anything strange… She seems to be getting weirder. Is it because there's a High-Sequence Beyonder's evil spirit among her Grazing souls? Derrick thought.

†

Klein returned to his bedroom, threw himself into bed, and quickly fell asleep. He dreamed about what had happened these past few days.

Suddenly, he felt like he was being shaken by someone, and he suddenly woke up.

Klein opened eyes and saw a gigantic white bone hand.

The hand paused and threw the letter on the bed. Then, it vanished into thin air.

Mr. Azik's reply… Klein grabbed the letter, full of hope.

Chapter 203 - Mutant

◆

Klein opened the letter, feeling both expectant and nervous before he began reading Azik's reply.

"…I thought about a few possibilities regarding the scenario you described, and I remembered a few things about Vampires and Mutants.

"Natural vampires were already on the brink of extinction before the dragons and giants bowed out of the stage of world history. Later on, they might occasionally be discovered. The Vampires we usually talk about, as well as those mentioned in folklore, are more similar to Beyonders. I recall that the name of a potion in a particular pathway is called Vampire.

"If your superior is now in a half-insane state, then it's very likely that he mistakenly consumed such a potion. The result of mixing two potions from different pathways makes a half-insane state a certainty. Yes, I vaguely remember the pathway of the Evernight, which is also the Sleepless pathway as you know it, can be interchanged at High Sequences with the pathway of Death and the pathway of Giants. But it doesn't include the Vampire pathway.

"Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that your superior might have accepted it willingly. After all, Vampires have a long life, an exceptional constitution, and excellent looks. When compared with these benefits, accepting a state of half-insanity is reasonable."

Klein froze when he read the letter. He didn't expect Mr. Azik to provide him with this much information.

The Death pathway is also known as the Corpse Collector pathway. It can be interchanged at High Sequences with the Sleepless pathway. I knew about this from Emperor Roselle's diary. But to think that it can also be interchanged with the Giant pathway after Sequence 4… The Giant pathway is the one that the City of Silver possesses, which is also the present-day God of Combat pathway… I've always suspected that Giant King Aurmir was the ancient God of Combat…

Yes, Emperor Roselle's diary described the Church of Evernight and the Church of the God of Combat as mortal enemies… Could this be because the pathways they possess can be interchanged at higher sequences?

If I follow this line of thought, I can find an explanation as to why the three ancient churches, the Church of Storms, the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, and the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, are at odds with each other. That's because the pathways of Sailor, Bard, and Reader can be interchanged at High Sequences!

Yes, during the end of the previous Epoch, the Pale Era, it 's likely that the fall of Death was caused by the Evernight Goddess and the God of Combat…

The Captain is perfectly fine usually, other than his poor memory. He doesn't show any signs of half-insanity. I can rule out the possibility of him consuming the Vampire potion!

Mr. Azik has recalled quite a number of things recently… Could the Creeping Hunger have really stimulated his memories?

Klein nodded and continued reading the letter.

"Mutant isn't the name of a particular species. It's more like the description for many similar creatures. Under normal circumstances, they're no different from an ordinary human, but there is an innate, suppressed, twisted desire in their hearts. This desire erupts when they come into contact with a certain scene or object. They become monsters, succumbing to their desires for blood and massacre.

"After everything settles, they will return to normal again. They become slightly more merciless and unfeeling after each time their desires erupt, this will continue until their souls are completely twisted.

"The only example of this that I can recall is the werewolf. They're similar to humans for the most part, and they cannot be distinguished using most Beyonder abilities. But, during the full moon, the twisted desires in their hearts intensify, and their bodies also change accordingly.

"Your superior might be a potential Mutant. The death of your teammate might have triggered his true nature.

"These are all my personal guesses. I cannot guarantee that there are no other possibilities since I haven't gotten all my memories back. Perhaps your theory of this being a precursor to losing control can also explain this.

"There's no saving him whether he has consumed the Vampire potion, or if he's a Mutant. Of course, many people have theorized that Mutants were originally ordinary human beings, but were put under a strange curse or corrupted by some evil god or devil, and, thus, transform into a different monster under certain circumstances.

"Also, I'm not too sure if you can treat him when you notice the warning signs of losing control. I would advise that you report this directly to your superior's superior and hope that there's still time."

Klein looked gravely at the desk after placing the letter down. He slipped into deep thought.

He had to admit that the theory of a Mutant was a very possible one, but he couldn't eliminate the possibility that it was a warning sign to him losing control.

All I can do is wait for Madam Daly's reply… I sent the letter two nights ago, so she should've received the letter yesterday morning. If she replied immediately, I should've seen the letter last night or this morning… It's almost noon… Does that messenger not dare to go near Chanis Gate? Or was Madam Daly held up by something? Klein shook his head. He still felt exhausted and used Cogitation to force himself to sleep.

In the hazy world, Klein was suddenly jolted to his senses. He knew that he was dreaming.

He then saw Dunn Smith in his black trench coat appear in front of him.

Responding in a manner congruent with a normal dream, Klein gave a delayed greeting, "Good morning… Captain…"

Dunn nodded slightly and said, "Leonard found a clue when he was investigating the Lanevus case. He needs your help. The Mystery Pryer that the Holy Cathedral sent over won't arrive until tomorrow morning because of a train fault."

"Alright…" Klein replied in a fleeting voice.

Dunn thought for a moment before adding, "There's no need for you to return to Zouteland Street. Head to 62 Howes Street directly. Leonard will be there waiting for you. It's been hard on you."

The moment he finished his sentence, Klein's dream shattered. Klein instinctively opened his eyes.

Howes Street… Isn't that the area where the Divination Club, my classmate Welch, and the member of the Aurora Order lived? There sure are many incidents lately, one after another, as if they're culminating in something… Klein thought as he got up slowly. He washed up in the bathroom before changing into a white shirt, brown vest, and black trench coat. He then picked up his hat and went down to the living room.

It wasn't eleven yet, and Benson and Melissa hadn't returned home.

Klein informed Bella that he was going out and that she didn't need to prepare lunch for him.

He then took a public carriage to Howes Street and saw the messy-haired Midnight Poet—Leonard Mitchell, whose hair exuded beauty, waiting for him in at building 62.

Leonard was still in a thin white shirt despite the chilly September weather. He had paired it with beige pants. He swept his green eyes at Klein.

"This might be the building rented by Lanevus under a false name."

"How did you figure it out?" Klein asked out of curiosity.

Leonard pointed to his head.

"Since you found a clue from Hood Eugen and suspected that Lanevus was likely connected to that member of the Aurora Order—the cloth merchant Sirius Arapis—I had to change my line of thinking after my normal investigations revealed nothing. I started investigating the Aurora Order.

"The previous report told me that Sirius had interactions with many of the residents on Howes Street, so I searched every one of them and found a problem with this one."

"What problem?" Klein asked.

Leonard raised his brows. "An obvious problem. The guest here appears very rarely. He claimed to be going to the Southern Continent to do business after Hanass Vincent's death and never returned. His records are very realistic, and the police didn't discover anything."

"This could only be a coincidence." Klein creased his brows.

"Of course, a coincidence. But when I showed the residents around here Lanevus's picture, an old man felt that he looked similar to the resident at number 62, other than his different glasses." Leonard took out a black-and-white photograph from his pocket.

Why didn't you say so earlier… Klein lampooned inwardly. He entered 62 Howes Street with Leonard, and at Leonard's request, he started to divine if there were any hidden compartments or secret chambers.

The result was yes!

"The secret chamber or hidden compartment in this building."

Klein wrote down another divination statement. He took a seat on the sofa and closed his eyes as he recited the statement.

Seven times later, he entered a dream. His vision was blurry.

In the blurry world, Klein saw a wooden bookshelf. He saw rows upon rows of books. He saw that one of the books had been taken away. He saw the wooden surface beside the book open, revealing a hidden compartment.

The scene quickly disappeared as Klein opened his eyes and told Leonard, "In the study."

Klein wound the topaz pendulum around his wrist and followed Leonard into the study. He saw the wooden bookshelf he had seen in his dream.

"Pull out that book, the place it's covering has a hidden compartment." Klein pointed at the book nearest to the sides.

"So it's here… I couldn't find anything when I searched the place, and I had no choice but to return to Zouteland Street to request for help," Leonard grumbled as he walked over. He pulled out the book Klein had pointed out.

After searching the area, he finally found the mechanism to open the hidden compartment.

A letter lay silently in the hidden compartment.

A letter? Lanevus hid a letter here? Klein found it extremely strange.

After he divined to see if there was anything dangerous within the letter and received a negative answer, Leonard picked up the letter and opened the unmarked envelope.

Leonard pulled out the letter within and unfolded it.

Klein leaned forward to get a look of its contents. All he saw were the first few paragraphs of the letter:

“Hahaha, congratulations. Congratulations on finally finding this letter!

“This means that you’re not too stupid, nor too slow. You qualify to take part in this game of life and death that I’ve designed.

“Child laborers that die before their time. Factory workers who seldom live past ten years after entering the factory because of their working conditions. Female workers who risk severe illnesses for a meager salary. I see boundless resentment surrounding every factory, turning the surroundings oppressive and gloomy. This is the worst of times, and also the best of times. Our game shall take place under such a setting.

“Fools, prepare yourselves, I’m going to issue you a hint!”

Chapter 204 - Visitor

◆

Klein and Leonard lifted their gaze from the letter and exchanged glances. They muttered, “He’s crazy, right?”

“Lanevus is secretly a lunatic?”

A lunatic who truly has a delusional disorder and an antisocial personality… Klein thought and felt a tug at his heartstrings. He quickly redirected his gaze to the letter.

“Ladies and gentlemen, the hint is that I’ve placed a bomb in Tingen, a bomb that will grow stronger over time.

“Seek it and finish it before it explodes. If you lose the game, there will be a boom, and the entire city of Tingen will be reduced to a ruin. Trust me, I’m not lying at all about this.

“—Lanevus, who enjoys giving his friends pleasant surprises.”

“A bomb?” Klein looked at Leonard and muttered to himself, perplexed.

Leonard held the letter up to the sunlight and looked as he flipped it around. He didn’t find any other clues.

“The term ‘bomb’ is probably an expression. I’ve never heard of a bomb that can grow stronger.”

Klein creased his eyebrows and said thoughtfully, “No, I mean, he might be using ‘bomb’ to reference something in mysticism. Such as an evil ritual that continuously accumulates power…”

Leonard cocked his head as though he was listening to something when suddenly, his facial expression grew solemn.

He nodded as his green eyes constricted. “Maybe you’re right. Isn’t there a description at the beginning of the letter? Child laborers that die before their time, factory workers who seldom live past ten years after entering the factory because of their working conditions, female workers who risk severe illnesses for a meager salary… Boundless resentment surrounding every factory… Perhaps, that might be the energy source that constantly strengthens Lanevus’s bomb.”

“Yes… that’s very possible!” Klein suddenly tensed up and said, “We need to report to the Captain immediately!”

Leonard laughed and said, “There’s no need to be so nervous. You should know that Lanevus is a Swindler. The part where he said that he didn’t lie might be a lie itself.

“Of course, regardless, we have to return to Zouteland Street to report to the Captain. It’s best if we can request the Holy Cathedral to send a mysticism expert over and find the location of the altar through the abnormal accumulation of resentment.”

Someone is apparently very familiar with protocol… But why would the setup of such an altar need Hood Eugen’s help? What role does a Psychiatrist play in this? Klein didn’t object to the idea. He left 62 Howes Street with Leonard and rushed back to Zouteland Street on a hired carriage.

Just as they entered the Blackthorn Security Company’s door, Klein saw two familiar faces, one voluptuous and one scrawny. They were Maynard’s wife and sister.

They were still in black dresses and black hats. The fine checkered black gauze concealed their faces.

The two ladies were chatting with Rozanne, and when they suddenly saw Klein's return, they turned around and walked forward.

"You really are the cream of the crop in this industry." Mrs. Maynard nodded slightly and said in a low voice, "I'm very pleased with the outcome and am also impressed with your work approach. Here's the reward that you deserve."

The scrawny woman passed a light brown paper bag to Klein. It was filled with thick stacks of cash. There were ten pound notes, five pound notes, one pound notes, and also five soli and one soli.

"It's a total of 230 pounds," the scrawny lady stated simply.

Klein was in no mood to pay any attention to the money. He passed it to Rozanne and said, "Take this to Mrs. Orianna. I doubt the two respectable women would make a mistake counting the money."

At that moment, the corner of his eyes caught the Tingen City Honest Paper in Mrs. Maynard's hands. On the most eye-catching spot on the front page, there were two pieces of news.

Old baron's widow dies in involvement with MP Maynard's murder.

Mayor Dennis takes the blame for the worsening public security in Tingen for the past three months and resigns.

So that's the official excuse for Madam Sharon's case? I've yet to read the newspaper today… Klein nodded at the two ladies and followed Leonard through the partition to the Captain's office.

"How was it? Did you find any clues?" Dunn Smith closed his document, lifted his head, and looked at Klein and Leonard with his deep gray eyes.

"We found a letter that was left behind by Lanevus." Leonard didn't provide any further descriptions and simply passed the Captain the letter filled with madness and provocation.

Dunn opened the letter and scanned through it quickly. He rubbed his temples as he said, “He really is a lunatic.”

“He’s only a Sequence 8, Sequence 7 at most.”

Klein agreed from the bottom of his heart. “Lanevus is a dangerous figure who can damage the stability of social order. Even though he’s weak, we can’t belittle him.”

Then, he told Captain about his and Leonard’s assumption.

Dunn touched his receding hairline as he said, “That was my thought as well. I’ll immediately send a telegram to the Holy Cathedral and ask them to send a mysticism expert over for assistance.

“Who knows how dangerous Lanevus’s bomb could be. We have to be extremely careful. When the Holy Cathedral replies to me, I’ll arrange for the follow-up.”

Klein and Leonard exchanged glances and nodded simultaneously as they said, “Alright.”

Seizing the moment when Captain was sending a telegram to the Holy Cathedral, Klein returned to the reception hall to grab a copy of the Tingen City Honest Paper from Rozanne.

He stood at the partition and read the two articles with full concentration.

“…The widow of the old baron of the Khoy family, Madam Sharon, was suspected to be involved in the sudden death of Member of Parliament Maynard… The police received a tip and took action at night. They discovered that Madam Sharon and her accomplice had knocked out her servants to carry out a pagan ceremony in her bedroom. They refused to surrender and attempted to resist arrest, resulting in the death of a heroic police officer.

“Finally, Madam Sharon and her accomplice paid the price for their evil deeds with their lives.”

†

"…Mayor Dennis takes the blame for the worsening public security in Tingen and resigns. He also announced that he wouldn't be running for reelection next year. For the next few months, Deputy Mayor Mr. Harry will take on the responsibilities of mayor."

†

A heroic police officer… Is that the description of Kenley? Klein sighed and knew that it was the best way of handling the situation.

According to the internal rules of the Nighthawks, in order to prevent the forces of evil from taking revenge on their family members, their names would be kept confidential even if they sacrificed their lives.

He folded the newspaper quietly and returned it to the reception desk. Klein suddenly saw a visitor who walked through the entrance.

She was a young lady, in her twenties at most. She was in a ruffled hat and loose dress. She had lovely facial features, blonde hair, green eyes, and also a depressed yet silent temperament. She was quite a beauty.

The most eye-catching thing about her was her stomach that bulged out. She looked like she was more than seven months pregnant.

Klein was stunned, and he felt that he had seen the young pregnant lady before.

Suddenly, he heard Leonard say in surprise, "Miss Megose?"

Megose… Yes, the young lady who was conned by Lanevus! She's pregnant with Lanevus's child, and as such, there might be something wrong with her mental health. She says her child sings in her stomach and also whistles… Klein was suddenly enlightened and he wasn't surprised that Leonard knew Megose.

When they relaunched the investigations of people related to Lanevus, the lady's photo had been seen by every Nighthawk.

Klein knew her even earlier. Her aunt Christina, whose savings had been conned by Lanevus, had brought her to the Divination Club to ask for help. Her aunt even asked if the child in her stomach could be used for divination.

Then, as Megose heard Leonard's voice, she looked over at the both of them vacantly and replied politely, "Hello."

"Miss Megose, what brings you here to the Blackthorn Security Company? Do you have anything that you'd like us to do for you?" Klein took two steps forward and asked.

He was very confused by Megose's sudden visit. He felt it was an extreme coincidence.

We just found Lanevus's letter, and Megose comes visiting?

Megose touched her stomach and smiled faintly.

"Somehow or other, I suddenly thought of coming to Zouteland Street and suddenly thought of coming up to take a look."

Her mental health seems to have worsened… Klein recalled that he hadn't managed to activate his Spirit Vision and check on Megose's situation previously. Hence, he lifted his teeth and was about to tap his left molars.

Just then, a series of thoughts screamed through his head in increasing intensity.

"Don't look!

"Don't look! Don't look!

"You'll die!

"You'll die if you look!

"You'll die if you look!"

†

Klein stood rooted on the spot like a statue as his forehead was covered in cold sweat.

It was like having a deep and heavy nightmare that he nearly couldn't wake up from.

Suddenly, he understood something. He had failed to activate his Spirit Vision the last time because his spirituality had noticed an unimaginable danger. It slowed him down subconsciously, so he missed the opportunity and forgot the follow-up.

At that point, Klein had yet to digest the Seer potion entirely, and he had yet to advance to Sequence 8, so the warnings of spirituality were very subtle and difficult to notice. But now, Clown's spiritual foresight was so clear and obvious!

After nearly twenty seconds, Klein finally shook off his paralysis. He looked sideways at Leonard and realized that the Midnight Poet was also covered in cold sweat, and his eyes were filled with horror.

Suddenly, Klein understood what the bomb Lanevus was referring to!

It's the baby in Megose's stomach!

It's the baby that he left behind!

Klein suddenly associated the description in the letter with Hood Eugen's answers, and he suddenly remembered something that he read in Emperor Roselle's diary.

"I started the Industrial Revolution with my own hands and personally ushered in the Age of Steam and Machinery, but this will only become the hotbed for the descent of an Evil God upon this world?”

Klein’s pupils constricted as he thought of a possibility that he instinctually refused to admit.

No! That’s not right!

The baby in Megose’s stomach can’t be the son of some evil god or an evil god waiting to descend upon the world!

No! Why would Hood Eugen do such a silly thing! Although his Psychiatrist power can help Lanevus fool Megose and use her as a spawning vessel in her semi-unconscious state…

No! The resentment of child laborers that die before their time, and the factory workers and female workers who live less than ten years aren’t helping the son of an evil god to grow rapidly!

No!

D-do not look directly at God…

Chapter 205 - Urgent Arrangement

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein instinctively reached for his pockets. He held the Flaring Sun Charm in one hand and Azik's copper whistle in the other.

He acutely noticed that the cold, gentle Beyonder feedback of the latter had vanished as if it was being suppressed by an invisible power. However, the former was still warm and comforting.

Making use of this comforting feeling, Klein entered a half Cogitation state. He blocked out his feelings of worry and didn't leave anything to chance.

He turned and shot a look at Leonard Mitchell, then tipped his chin toward Megose.

He then controlled his expression with his Clown abilities and smiled at Megose.

"Do you want coffee, black tea, or nothing at all?"

Megose stroked her stomach as if she was listening to something.

"A cup of warm water. I suddenly thought of chatting with you guys about Lanevus. I have the feeling that you know a lot."

"Who told you that?" Leonard was no longer the frivolous guy that he usually was. His smile had turned rather stiff.

Megose suddenly giggled.

"My child told me. He knows a lot. He's very smart!"

Klein fought back the urge to curse. He turned to the partition and signaled to Leonard to keep Megose calm.

Leonard forced a smile and pointed toward the sofa.

"That's exactly what I'd like to talk about. We want to have a chat with you about Lanevus."

Behind the receptionist desk, Rozanne looked on in confusion. She suddenly realized that she didn't need to do anything.

Klein quickly made his way past the partition and directly pushed open the door to Dunn Smith's office, then closed the door with a bang.

He saw Dunn looking shocked before turning serious and saying in a heavy voice, "Captain, something serious has happened. I know what Lanevus meant by bomb!"

Dunn stood up and pointed outside.

"Megose?"

He had obviously heard Leonard's shocked exclamation, but he was unable to see the looks of fear and cold sweat on his teammates' faces.

Klein nodded and explained quickly, "I tried to activate my Spirit Vision to observe Megose to ascertain her mental condition, but my spirituality stopped me from making the attempt. It kept"warning" me not to look, that I would die if I did so!

"This made me recall a saying, 'Do not look directly at God.' Even if the fetus in Megose's stomach isn't an evil god attempting to descend upon this world, or the spawn of an evil god, it's definitely a legendary creature.

"Captain, connecting this to the black altar in Hood Eugen's memories, to his Psychiatrist abilities, to the tragic world as described in Lanevus's letter, I think that my guess is quite close to the truth: Lanevus obtained a ritualistic magic linked to the True Creator from an Aurora Order member. With Hood Eugen's help, he turned Megose into a vessel to gestate a certain power. Then, this power will make use of the resentment, oppression, and gloominess surrounding the factories to quickly grow until maturity. In other words, the ritual itself needs this resentment, oppression, and gloominess in order to succeed!"

Dunn considered Klein's words seriously for nearly twenty seconds before nodding with a solemn expression.

"I'll ask for assistance from the Holy Cathedral immediately. Let's hope that the baby in Megose's stomach can still wait!

"Of course, we can't just sit back and do nothing. Tell Leonard to keep Megose calm and keep her company. Notify Mrs. Orianna, Rozanne, and the rest. Get all the non-combatants to evacuate!

"I'll head to the back of Chanis Gate after I send the telegram. We have to prepare for the worst, which is if Megose's baby is born before the arrival of reinforcements from the Holy Cathedral.

"As Captain of the Tingen Nighthawks, I have the authority to use Saint Selena's ashes during emergencies!"

Saint Selena's ashes… The ashes of a High-Sequence Beyonder… The core seals within Chanis Gate… Klein's worries eased a little. He quickly thought of other things.

"Captain, we can also ask for reinforcements from the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind; they should have similar holy items!"

Klein suddenly had a stroke of inspiration as he muttered to himself, "Lanevus's case was originally under the purview of the Mandated Punishers. Old Neil and I were there to help when one of their senior members lost control…"

As he spoke softly, his voice grew to a crescendo.

“Captain, can you ask the Mandated Punishers if the member who lost control was tracking or keeping Megose under surveillance?”

“Are you suspecting that he lost control because he got corrupted by the baby in Megose’s stomach? They were responsible for Megose when the investigation was happening…” Dunn answered seriously. “We cannot delay any further. Go to Mrs. Orianna and the rest. I’ll take this time to send a telegram to first ask for assistance from the Holy Cathedral, then I’ll inform the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind. Yes, I’ll also have to send a telegram to the police department and see if they can come up with an excuse to evacuate the citizens nearby.”

“Alright.” Klein had taken a few steps out of the room when he suddenly recalled something. He thought about the coincidence of Megose’s sudden visit.

The image of the building with the red chimney appeared in his mind. He turned around quickly and said to Dunn, “Captain, one more thing. Do you remember the coincidences I told you about? The clue to the Antigonus family’s notebook in the house opposite the kidnapping, Ray Bieber who didn’t make it out of Tingen in time, Hanass Vincent exposing himself because of a coincidence, and how a member of the Aurora Order lost his life because he chanced upon me, etc.

“All these coincidences are very subtle and hard to detect, but the fact that Megose suddenly came looking for us right after we discovered Lanevus’s letter is too obvious and direct. This coincidence was already laid bare before us, it’s no longer hidden! I think that the person behind this will soon take center stage!

“Also, why would Madam Sharon take the risk in killing Member of Parliament Maynard? Is this also a coincidence?”

Dunn thought about it and gave a solemn reply, “I’ll include this point in the telegram.”

Klein didn't waste any more time. He exited the office and went straight for the accountant's room on the opposite side.

Mrs. Orianna was preparing the budget for the last three months of the year. She wanted to complete it in advance just in case the Captain forgot about it again. When she saw Klein enter, she greeted him with a smile.

"Lad, what claims do you have to submit today?"

Klein exhaled.

"Mrs. Orianna, we will be on vacation today. Go back home immediately."

Orianna froze for a while, looking at the serious face before her in a daze.

A few seconds later, she stood up in a fluster.

"Alright."

Klein added in a hurry, "Help me inform the rest of the clerks in the office and the armory. I'll inform Rozanne."

"Yes!" Orianna didn't even pack. She grabbed her handbag and hurried out of the accounting office.

She turned and stared at Klein after entering the corridor. She drew a crimson moon near her chest and said, "All of you will be blessed by the Goddess!"

Thank you… Klein replied in silence. He made his way past the partition into the receptionist area only to see Leonard chatting with Megose about Lanevus, his expression rigid.

Klein leaned toward Rozanne as he filled up a cup of warm water. He then whispered, "Go home, it's dangerous here. Come back tomorrow."

Rozanne opened her mouth in shock but closed it again after seeing Klein's stern expression.

She lowered her head and packed for about ten seconds before picking up her bag and leaving the receptionist area.

Just as she was walking past Klein, she bit on her lip and whispered, "To be honest, I respect the Nighthawks as much as I hate other people who become Beyonders…"

†

After seeing the clerks evacuate the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein brought warm water to Megose, bent his back, and placed it on the table in front of her.

"I have something to settle, I'll be back soon."

As he stood up, he took the opportunity to lean in towards Leonard's ear and whispered, "Keep her here."

Leonard clenched his teeth and widened his mouth into a grin. He continued his conversation with Megose and noticed that Megose was getting a little restless, as though she was losing her focus.

Klein returned to the Captain's office, only to realize that Dunn had already gone underground. There was a telegram on the table. It was the reply from the Mandated Punishers.

"Yes. We will be there immediately."

Yes… The Mandated Punisher did lose control because of Megose… Klein couldn't calm himself down as he made his way to the corridor. He didn't know if he was waiting for the Captain to retrieve the holy ashes or for reinforcements to arrive.

I wonder if High-Sequence Beyonders can teleport… I don't think so… He paced around a few times, suddenly feeling peaceful. He saw that the gas lamps on both sides of the corridor were now dyed a faint blue.

Amid the darkness, Dunn followed the stairs into the corridor. In his palm was a square, palm-sized box of ashes.

This box looked as though it was made out of pure silver, but it also felt like it was human bones. It was carved with many mysterious patterns. Klein felt colder the closer he was to the box, it was as if the cold was rapidly seeping into his blood.

Dunn's face was bathed in an icy blue light. He told Klein, "Go to Chanis Gate and pick out a Sealed Artifact with the highest offensive ability. Decide exactly which one with your own judgment. I've already told Seeka and the Keepers inside. Take note of the hidden threats. Of those, there are three Grade 2 Sealed Artifacts, which are…"

"Oh, now that I've taken out the ashes of Saint Selena, Seeka and the Keepers cannot leave their positions now."

At this point, Frye and Royale were both at Kenley's house for the funeral preparations. The Archbishop at Saint Selena Cathedral had gone to the countryside to preach.

"Alright." Klein didn't hesitate, immediately turning towards the basement.

When he was nearing the intersection, Klein suddenly stopped. He knew that most of the Sealed Artifacts behind Chanis Gate at Tingen City were Grade 3 and wouldn't have much of an effect on the baby in Megose's stomach. It was, at the very least, a legendary creature.

The Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem might work, but it takes too long to have an effect. It's unsuitable for this… There are only three Grade 2 Sealed Artifacts in Tingen City, and they're all very dangerous artifacts that can easily result in my death… I estimate their powers to be about the same as my Flaring Sun Charm, so I cannot have too many reservations later. I'll use the Flaring Sun Charm without any hesitation! It would definitely be as powerful as a Grade 2 Sealed Artifact; after all, it has the power of divine blood in it… Klein's mind whirled as he nodded indiscernibly.

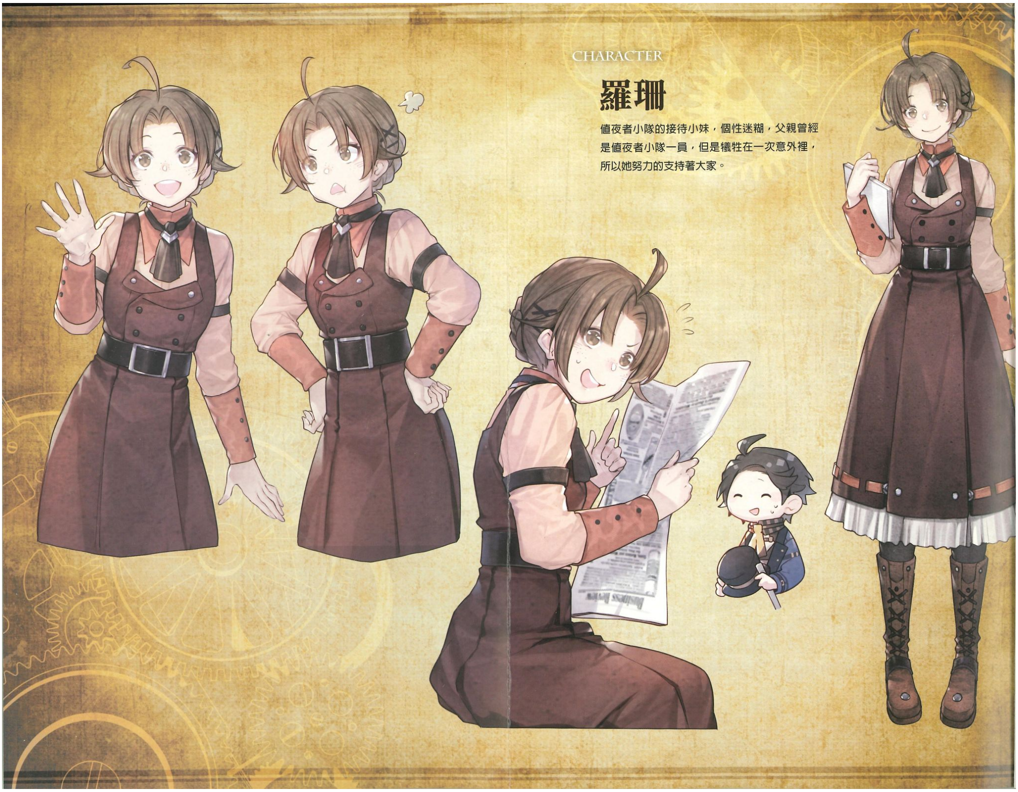
He felt for the Flaring Sun Charm and Azik's copper whistle in his pocket, but he was surprised to find that the sensation of the latter was back.

Regardless of whether it was useful or not, Klein took out a pen and paper set that was used for divination and wrote a short message.

"The person who made my fate disharmonious and stole the skull of your child has appeared. He has arranged for Megose to enter the Blackthorn Security Company at 36 Zouteland Street. It's highly likely that Megose is harboring the son of an evil god.

"The situation is very urgent."

He put away his pen and folded the piece of paper. Klein took out the copper whistle at the intersection and blew, then watched the giant skeleton messenger appear before him.



CHARACTER

羅珊

值夜者小隊的接待小妹，個性迷糊，父親曾經是值夜者小隊一員，但是犧牲在一次意外裡，所以她努力的支持著大家。

Rozanne

The young receptionist of the Nighthawk squad. She has a somewhat ditzy and scatterbrained personality. Her father was once a member of the Nighthawks but sacrificed himself in an accident; therefore, she works hard to support everyone.

Chapter 206 - Grade 2 Sealed Artifacts

◆ ◆ ◆

In the corridor within the deep and serene basement, the nearly four-meter-tall bone messenger disappeared before Klein's eyes after taking the letter.

When all that was left of the surroundings were the classic gas lamps embedded in the walls, he put away Azik's copper whistle and walked towards Chanis Gate.

As he was writing the letter, he had already decided on which Sealed Artifact to pick.

Firstly, it would be almost impossible for the Grade 3 three Sealed Artifacts to have any effect on the baby in Megose's stomach. Unless it was an item like the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem which had hidden powers.

But, at that very moment, in such a situation, Klein wasn't in the mood to explore or research a secret that might or might not exist. Plus, most Sealed Artifacts would carry a certain level of danger for the user. So, Klein eliminated the Grade 3 Sealed Artifacts that would weaken the user without affecting the enemy.

Secondly, the Tingen Nighthawks didn't have any Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts and only three Grade 2 artifacts. That was originally a secret that Klein wasn't allowed to know, but due to the urgency of the situation, Dunn made use of an emergency clause and told him the general situation.

Dunn Smith couldn't hold any other Sealed Artifacts at the same time while holding Saint Selena's ashes.

And behind the Tingen City's Chanis Gate, there were three Grade 2 Sealed Artifacts: 2-030, 2-078, and 2-105.

The name of 2- 030 was "Inexhaustible Poison." It originated from a Beyonder with an unknown Sequence name who suddenly went mad and cut his wrist to commit suicide. He let his blood flow into an ordinary silver cup. But when his blood ran dry, the silver cup wasn't filled, and the liquid in the cup became crystal-clear and alluring. It was a temptation that even a Sequence 5 Beyonder had failed to resist. After he drank the liquid, he died of poisoning on the spot.

After the person died, the poison seeped out through his pores and pooled together again. Its volume was the same as before he drank it. Not one bit less.

Dunn said that the researchers in the Holy Cathedral suspected that the poison could kill a High-Sequence Beyonder. However, the question lay within the fact that it was almost impossible for a High-Sequence Beyonder to be tempted to drink it. Furthermore, the traits of 2-030 were obvious, so no one would consume it by accident. If one wanted to poison them, they had to first capture them, seize control of them, and then force it down their throat. But then, why go through the trouble?

2-030 would constantly tempt the living things around it to drink it. The user had to be fully focused on resisting its power. Any slight negligence would make one drink the poison as though it was only natural to do so.

When Dunn finished his description, Klein decided, almost instantly, to not pick that Sealed Artifact.

The name of 2-078 was "Door of Death." Its appearance was like a normal wooden door. Any living thing that passed through it would die instantly. No High-Sequence Beyonder had ever participated in the test.

It possessed living traits and constantly attempted to escape. It could change its appearance and disguise itself into pre-existing doors. If the user made any mistakes, he would lose control of it. Then, he would need to be careful and not pass through any door near him. He would have to try to wait at the original spot for help or break through a wall to escape.

Klein thought of using 2-078, but after reevaluating the latter two, he felt that the intuition of a legendary creature would be very sharp and would be able to differentiate whichever door was the Door of Death.

In the end, he decided to pick 2-105.

The name of the Sealed Artifact was “Blood Vessel Thief.” It looked like a thick, stiffened blood vessel. Anyone who touched it, regardless of whether they were protected or not, would have their life stolen. In the beginning, it wouldn’t be obvious. But, if one didn’t break contact with it, the effects would be visible half an hour later. Dunn said that a Sequence 5 heretic held onto it for two hours. He turned from a brawny man in his thirties into a hunched old man who had loose skin, thin white hair, and missing teeth.

The most important trait of 2-105 was that the person wearing it would have the chance to steal an ability from a target within a specific range. Even High-Sequence Beyonders could be robbed of their abilities, but the probability was smaller.

Within a ten-minute time period, the person who was robbed would lose the corresponding ability while the person who wore the item would be able to use the ability skillfully. Ten minutes later, the ability would vanish, and the person who was robbed would need to wait a couple of days to recover.

Regardless of whether it works or not, it will at least raise the probability of success from five percent to ten percent. I’m the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck, after all… Besides, our main goal is just to take precautions and make preparations to deal with the worst case scenario. We won't necessarily have to take action… Hopefully, reinforcements will arrive soon… Klein stopped outside the duty room, showing no signs of hesitation anymore.

About the negative effects of Sealed Artifact 2-105, he wasn't worried because he wasn't planning to use the artifact himself…

His plan was to give it to Leonard, as he already had the Flaring Sun Charm and Azik's copper whistle who he had no idea if it would still be suppressed.

My dear Poet, it's time for you to show your true secret… Klein muttered and saw Seeka Tron standing by the duty room.

With her white hair and black eyes, the part-time author remained silent for a few seconds before saying, "Why don't you guard Chanis Gate? I'm stronger and more experienced than you."

But you don't have Flaring Sun Charms… Klein replied with a smile, "Madam, I'm already a Sequence 8.

"It wouldn't be safe here either. There are many Sealed Artifacts that possess living traits that are itching to take action. Well, if we fail, the people here will definitely not survive.

"Heh heh, our goal upstairs is to buy time and wait for reinforcements. It might be safer than being around Chanis Gate."

Seeka Tron puckered her lips slowly and drew a crimson moon on her chest.

"May the Goddess bless all of you."

As Dunn didn't have the time to write the document in time, Klein couldn't enter Chanis Gate directly. All he did was watch Seeka Tron push open a tiny crack and enter.

After a few minutes, she appeared by the door, and she was holding a thick, blood-tainted, pale blood vessel in her left hand.

Klein extended his hand to take it, and he immediately felt a faint current surging in his body.

†

In the reception hall of the Blackthorn Security Company.

Leonard had already shaken off his stiff state from earlier, and his expression didn't look abnormal as he talked about the recently discovered house that Lanevus rented before.

"Is that so? He never told me about it before…" Megose replied normally, creasing her eyebrows slightly.

Then, she grabbed her blonde hair, pulled out a handful, and casually threw it into the trashcan by the side.

Leonard was dumbfounded. He gulped with difficulty, and his palms were full of cold sweat once again.

†

Klein walked up the stairs to the second floor with the Blood Vessel Thief in his left hand.

He looked at the door that led to the Nighthawks break room, where Dunn Smith stood silently in his black trench coat. His eyes were gray and deep, just like when they had first met.

"Reintroducing myself, Nighthawk, Dunn Smith."

The voice of the past sounded in Klein's ears as the scene of Dunn by Kenley's corpse flashed in his head. There was blood all over his mouth.

He suddenly fell silent and walked over. He lifted his left hand and said, "Captain, I picked Sealed Artifact 2-105. I plan on letting Leonard use it.”

Dunn nodded slightly. He didn’t ask why but turned and pointed at his office as he spoke.

“The Holy Cathedral sent a telegram. They said that they’ll gather a team of strong Beyonders immediately and asked us to stall for as much time as possible and try to wait.

“About those coincidences, they didn’t give any reply. I think they don’t have any conclusions as of yet. Or perhaps, the person who handles the telegrams doesn’t know the actual situation and has no way to make guesses. You know, we have to make the best use of time. Telegrams can’t be too long.”

“Yes.” Klein nodded. He got closer to the partition and looked outside as he said, “How’s the situation?”

“Nothing strange as of yet.” Dunn looked down at the Saint’s ash box in his left hand.

Seeing how Leonard and Megose were having a good time chatting, Klein didn’t interrupt them. He retreated to the Nighthawks’ recreation room and faced Dunn with the corridor in between them.

Just then, Dunn suddenly let out a self-deprecating laugh.

“I forgot something.”

“What is it?” Klein replied, puzzled.

Dunn looked sideways at him and said, “Daly told me to explain myself to you.”

“Huh?” Klein was stunned, as he couldn’t quite understand what the Captain meant.

After two seconds, before Dunn could reply, he suddenly understood.

Madam Daly didn’t reply immediately because she thought it was unnecessary. She had forwarded the matter to the Captain and let him explain himself.

Th-that means that there isn’t anything serious with the Captain!

At this critical point, Klein suddenly felt a surge of joy erupt inside of him.

Chapter 207 - Guardian

◆

Dunn sighed.

“I did want to send you away back then since I was going to do something that involves the secrets of the Church and the Nighthawks. But Kenley’s death left my mind in chaos. At that moment, all I could think of was a clumsy excuse, thus, giving you the opportunity to witness what I was doing.”

“What secret is that?” Klein pressed, now being more at ease.

He had almost forgotten about the threat of the evil god’s son, or the existence of a legendary creature outside.

Dunn weighed his words and said, “There might be a law in mysticism. Heh, even though I haven’t read many books, I’m still aware of what a law means.

“This law is called ‘Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility.’

“The characteristics of a Beyonder is never destroyed or reduced. It’s only passed from one carrier to the next.”

Klein’s eyes opened wide. He suddenly came to a realization and asked thoughtfully, “For example, the Sealed Artifacts, mysterious objects, or a potion’s main ingredients that are left behind by Beyonders who have lost control?”

“Correct.” Dunn nodded solemnly. “This isn’t only the case for Beyonders who lose control; it’s also the same for normal Beyonders after they die."

"The same…" Klein mulled over Dunn's description, now having a faint idea of what the Captain was doing.

He suddenly recalled when the suited clown died. He recalled the blue, thumb-sized blood sphere that was suspended beside the corpse of the suited clown. Frye's explanation had been that there would always be strange transformations after a Beyonder died.

Dunn continued with his deep gray eyes, "But what's different about Beyonders who lose control is that a Beyonder who dies normally won't leave behind ingredients or objects. Th-they're equivalent to a potion, a potion that corresponds to their Sequences, except that they're lacking a certain amount of supplementary ingredients."

Equivalent to potions… Equivalent to potions! Klein squinted as a flash of inspiration went through his mind. The endless darkness in his mind was illuminated in that instant.

He suddenly understood many things, figuring out why the Beyonder pathways wouldn't be broken, even if the creatures used as main ingredients were going extinct.

Apart from using substitutes, one could also simply use the remains of Beyonders!

That should also be the reason why they only handed out complete potions at the higher Sequences! Another reason is to prevent the formula from being revealed to people adept at divination or mediumship rituals… Many guesses went through Klein's mind.

Dunn looked at the recreation room and explained in a deep voice, "A few years ago… Well… I can't exactly remember just exactly how many years it was, but I wasn't the Captain of the Nighthawks back then. I unexpectedly realized this problem, and after interacting with Daly, who had just become a Beyonder, I immediately sent a report to the

Holy Cathedral. The Holy Cathedral told me to keep it a secret and gave me two choices. Heh heh, that's also the reason why it's me, and not Daly, who's explaining this to you. Whoever exposes this is responsible for it.

"The first choice was to pretend to know nothing, just like a large number of Nighthawk Captains and Deacons, and allow the Holy Cathedral to continue dealing with the remains of Beyonders who died through normal means. The second was for them to give me a unique, simple ritual and the corresponding techniques. It would allow me to temporarily consume the items produced by the unique characteristics within a limited period of time. Well, this is only suitable for Sequences of the same pathway at my level or lower.

"This would augment my Beyonder characteristics, and I would also become more powerful. In terms of abilities regarding dreams, my powers now are not too different from a Sequence 6's. That's also the reason why I dared to deal with Madam Sharon."

"So that's why… To think that something like this exists…" Klein slowly exhaled.

He finally understood why he couldn't come up with a logical explanation despite his best efforts. That was because he didn't have all the relevant information and was unable to fill in the blanks.

Yes, this does match the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility… Would consuming these characteristics cause a qualitative change in the Captain by constantly accumulating them? Klein allowed his mind to wander.

After glancing at him, Dunn let out a bitter smile.

"I chose the second option, but not because I wanted to become more powerful. If I wanted to become more powerful, quickly digesting a potion and receiving an advancement is the best and most direct way."

"Yes," Klein agreed sincerely. "Consolidating the characteristics of the potions of the same Sequence will increase the risk of losing control at the same time as it improves your abilities, right?"

Dunn shook his head solemnly. "No, these are the remains of normal Beyonders and not Beyonders who have lost control. Well, after I came to know of the acting method, I realized that it would increase the difficulty of digesting the potion."

"Then why do you still continue?" Klein asked in shock.

Dunn placed his hand into his pocket, intending to take out his pipe, only to find that he had left it in his office.

He shook his head and let out a self-deprecating smile.

"I just said that becoming more powerful isn't the reason why I consume their remains."

Having said that, he paused, his eyes wandering to the blue flicker of the gas lamp opposite where he was standing.

"They were all my partners… We've gone through many things together. We've dealt with monsters in the darkness and insane heretics together. Some of them have saved me, and I've saved quite a number of them. We walked together in the silent night. We fought together in battles that aren't visible to the general public. We faced danger together. We had each other's backs.

"I really can't bear to part with them. I remember the lad, Hitte. He broke into tears the first time we went on a dangerous mission. I remember Adelaide, heh—he was Rozanne's father. He once blocked an evil curse for me with his arm. I remember the lady, Dwayne, and her warm temperament which was like the dawn. She would always silently record the things we encountered. I remember Kenley being someone who knew how to do many things like play the seven-string guitar, sing, tell stories, even though he wasn't tall. He was more like a poet than Leonard… I miss them very much.

“I hoped to continue fighting with them, to continue dealing with the monsters in the darkness, to deal with the crazy heretics, to protect Tingen City with them. Thus, I chose to consume their remains.”

Dunn’s gray eyes seemed to flicker. His reliable and dependable persona broke down considerably at that moment.

His lips arched upward slightly as he continued, “They’re still with me in my dreams. Adelaide loves to read, and he often reads at the solarium. He often tells me to discipline Rozanne and get her to mature faster, to the point that Rozanne complains about me becoming more and more like her father and has become scared of me. Hitte is a person who cannot sit still and has to hunt in the forest every day. Dwayne always stands by the window of her bedroom and watches us chat. Kenley, who recently joined, created his own seven-string guitar and sings while strumming it… I really miss them.”

“Captain…” Klein subconsciously muttered. His eyes became blurred and watery. He couldn’t help but rub his eyes and curse in his heart. Fuck. Captain, you’re making me cry…

But I finally understand the reason for the Captain’s slow progress despite using the “acting method”… Klein let out a silent sigh.

“Unfortunately, Old Neil died after losing control. Otherwise, he would’ve brought along much joy to us.” Dunn retracted his gaze. He lowered his head and massaged the bridge of his nose.

A few seconds later, he lifted his head and let out a bitter smile.

“This is a selfish decision.

“I don’t know what the true wishes of Adelaide, Kenley, and the rest were, and, thus, selfishly made a decision for them.

“I truly am a selfish person.”

"No…" Klein shook his head.

†

On the sofa in the receptionist area, Leonard watched Megose pull out clumps of her hair as his expression became more and more rigid.

Megose seemed increasingly restless as she constantly picked up the glass for a mouthful of water. She looked at Leonard with a contorted expression.

"I don't know why, but I suddenly feel a little unwell."

Leonard Mitchell was about to reply when he suddenly saw Megose reach for her face. She clawed out a piece of flesh—a long piece of flesh—a piece of flesh stained with blood.

"My face is a little itchy." Megose smiled, a little embarrassed. The edge of her lips spread to where her cheekbones were, revealing a row of white teeth and bright red gums.

FUCK! Leonard cursed out silently. He felt that the situation was worsening way too quickly.

His lips quivering, Leonard turned to listen as his expression immediately turned steely green.

He forced a smile and apologized to Megose, who was clawing out pieces of her flesh.

"I need to use the bathroom."

"Al… right…" Megose's tone became ethereal.

She rubbed her belly and said, "My… child… is a little restless…"

Leonard didn't reply. He hastened his footsteps and approached the partition.

After entering the corridor, Leonard stared deeply at the box of ash in Dunn Smith's hands and exhaled in exasperation.

Following that, his expression turned firm.

"Captain, I'm afraid that it's too late. We have to deal with Megose and her baby immediately. Otherwise, the whole of Tingen will suffer terrible losses. This isn't something that can be avoided just by evacuating the citizens around us. I know that you've already sent such a telegram."

Dunn knitted his eyebrows and asked, unusually stern, "Are you sure that the situation has worsened to such an extent?"

"Yes. In no more than three minutes, Megose will undergo a mutation, and her child will descend upon us," Leonard said with a certain tone.

At the same time, he glanced at the thick, large blood vessel wrapped around Klein's hand and said, "Sealed Artifact 2-105? Let me use it. I can better utilize its abilities."

"Alright." Klein didn't hesitate to hand the Blood Vessel Thief over to Leonard.

That was something he intended to do so from the beginning.

At that moment, Dunn tugged at his collar and patted down his trench coat. He spoke with a determined tone, "I'll head out with Saint Selena's ashes first. Come out after ten seconds; remember, come out only after you finish counting to ten. Then, regardless of my condition, direct your strongest attacks at Megose and her baby without wasting any time."

With that said, he turned around and walked towards the partition with the urn of ashes.

"Captain…" Klein let out a shout, his lips dry.

“Captain!” Leonard also shouted.

Dunn stopped and looked back. He had a gentle expression as he said with his mellow voice, “Don’t worry about me. I’m not alone. Adelaide, Dwayne, Hitte, and Kenley are all fighting alongside me, no matter what kind of danger I face.”

He paused for a moment before speaking, his gray eyes gentle.

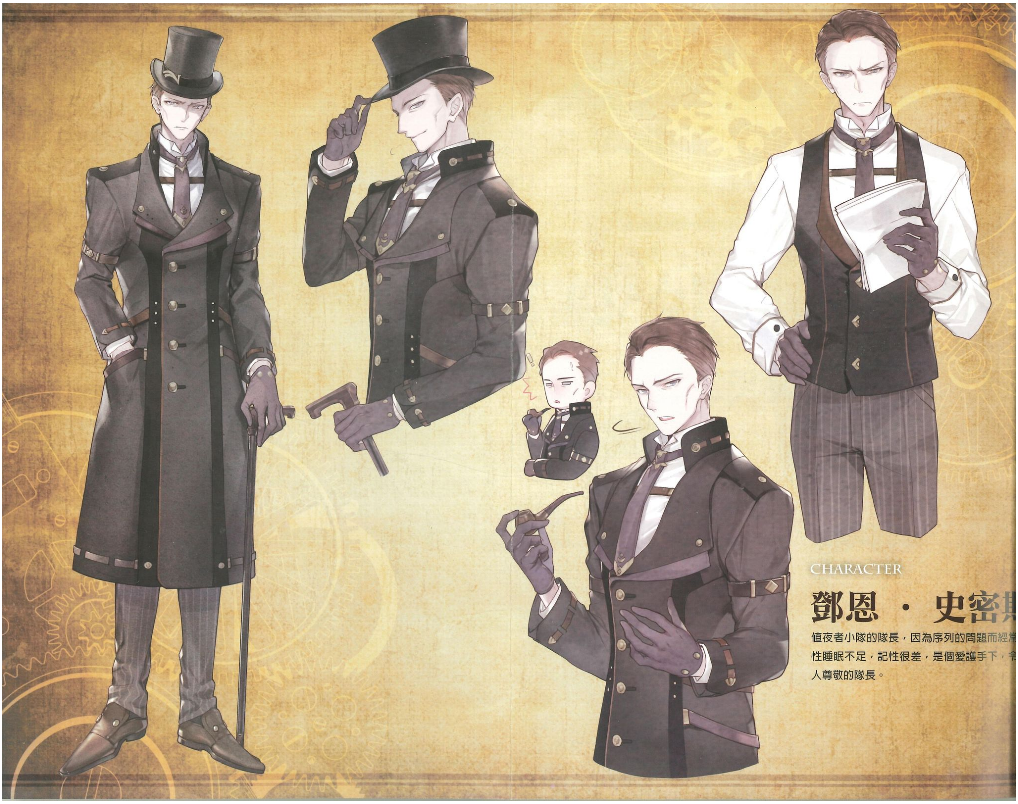
“There’s no need to be too nervous as well. We’re guarding Tingen City.”

His lips arched upwards, forming his usual smile.

After saying those words, he didn’t stay any longer. He stepped through the partition, his black trench coat following behind him.

“Captain!” Klein and Leonard shouted at the same time, their tears falling uncontrollably, but Dunn didn’t slow down.

We are a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against danger and madness, but even more so, we are guardians.


CHARACTER
鄧恩 · 史密
值夜者小隊的隊長，因為序列的問題而經
性睡眠不足，記性很差，是個愛護手下，
人尊敬的隊長。

Dunn Smith

The Captain of the Nighthawk squad. Due to issues with his Sequence, he frequently suffers from a lack of sleep and has a very poor memory. He is a protective leader who looks out for his subordinates and is deeply respected by everyone.

Chapter 208 - Cry

◈ ◈ ◈

Beep! Beep! Beep! The telegram set up in the Captain’s office suddenly came to life, seemingly having received a new telegram.

But Klein and Leonard couldn’t be distracted. They were counting the movements of the second hand on the clock as their red eyes welled up with tears.

“10.”

“9.”

“8.”

†

Just then, Dunn Smith carried the silver, bone-like square box into the reception hall with a solemn expression.

Megose, who was pulling out clump after clump of blond hair, tore a wound that was deep enough to show her bones. It was as though she was triggered by something. She suddenly stood and pointed at Dunn Smith in his black trench coat. She shrieked, “You want to kill my child!

“You want to kill my child!”

Boom! The shrill and terrifying voice reverberated. Klein felt like he was being struck in the head with a sledgehammer. He suddenly forgot to count as he had a headache and felt dizzy.

His vision went red, and there seemed to be liquid flowing from the tip of his nose.

He subconsciously looked sideways, and he saw the corner of Leonard Mitchell's eyes. The tip of his nose and the corners of his lips were covered in fresh blood. His face was extremely pale, and his body was wavering as though he was about to fall.

I'm probably in the same state… Klein reined back his thoughts and continued to count in silence as he skipped two numbers.

"5."

"4."

†

Struck by the terrifyingly sharp voice, Dunn Smith's deep gray eyes were filled with red veins. Every single strand was crystal clear.

The blood vessels in his face protruded out as well; every one of them like a poisonous snake. There was also a gurgle as red liquid flowed out of his ears as well.

Despite that, he did feel dizzy. Other than his right hand pausing, his strong willpower drove him to press down on Saint Selena's urn and open the lid.

Inside the box, there was deep darkness. In the darkness, there was fine resplendent sand. The scene was magically beautiful, just like the cosmos being stored in a box.

The surroundings suddenly became dark, and the darkness engulfed the entire reception hall. In the air, there were countless black, cold, and smooth threads floating.

They surged towards Megose and entangled her almost instantly.

It wasn’t like a spider web, but more like the tentacles of some unknown creature!

Megose had already torn out her right eyeball. It hung by a thin cord of flesh underneath her eye socket. She stared at Dunn Smith with hatred as she roared, “You must die!”

Bang! Dunn was cast away by a formless force and slammed heavily into the wall opposite. The wall cracked, and bricks were thrown up.

He spat a mouthful of fresh blood onto the ground, but both his hands were still tightly holding onto Saint Selena’s urn. He held onto it for dear life and kept it from falling to the ground.

Those countless black, cold, and smooth threads tightened and bound Megose firmly to the spot. No matter how much blight-tainted flames rose up suddenly, or how her skin began to secrete a liquid that smelt like brimstone, neither of those defenses dealt any damage to the threads holding onto her.

“3!”

“2!”

“1!”

Klein and Leonard dashed out through the partition simultaneously. One of them was holding onto a warm thin gold slice, and the other had already aimed his five fingers with the Blood Vessel Thief wound around his left wrist at Megose.

Megose, who no longer looked human, struggled as flesh protruded from both sides of her shoulders. They were a mixture of blood vessels and green veins, round like a child’s head.

Above the two heads, cracks rapidly spread and seemingly turned into a pair of eyes.

Megose suddenly noticed danger approaching, and she opened her mouth. The corner of her lips cracked all the way up to her ears.

She was going to deal the Blaspheme Curse to every enemy that attempted to harm her child!

At that moment, Leonard clenched his left hand into a fist as his wrist made a half turn.

His pale face turned livid, and the vessels protruded like bunch of tiny poisonous worms.

"…" Megose's Blaspheme Curse was left stuck in her throat as it came to a sudden halt.

She seemed to have lost the ability to speak and the ability to evoke curses.

Klein seized the opportunity and muttered an ancient Hermes word in a deep voice.

"Light!"

I want light, and there will be light!

He suddenly felt the thin gold slice that was covered in mysterious patterns become boiling hot as he saw it emit a blinding light, as though it had become a miniature sun.

Right on the heels of that, Klein injected more than half his spirituality into it and threw the Flaring Sun Charm towards the restrained Megose!

The reception hall instantly turned transparent as darkness and gloominess vanished simultaneously. The black fine threads that entangled Megose shrank as though they were instinctively avoiding something.

But before Megose obtained her freedom, she already saw the sunlight.

At some point in the fight, a hole had ruptured in the ceiling of the Blackthorn Security Company, and the hole went all the way to the rooftop of the third floor. The bright blue sky and glaring sunlight shined through simultaneously.

The thin gold slice combined with the sunlight above Megose's and immediately expanded in size. It went from a spherical light to a sphere with countless flames spiraling around it.

Rumble!

The entire building shook vigorously, and the glass windows on the nearby streets shattered.

However, the power of the spherical light concentrated its might at its core, without dissipating much.

It enveloped Megose, and the light was so glaring that Klein, Dunn, and Leonard couldn't open their eyes.

Klein held back his tears and looked through squinted eyes. He saw that the light had dispersed, but the flames were still soaring. Among them, there were many black ashes dancing in the air.

Megose and the baby in her stomach were nowhere to be seen. Just like the coffee table, water glass, newspaper, and sofa in the area.

Is it over? Did we finish the son of an evil god before it descended upon this world, taking "His" mother out at the same time? Klein still couldn't believe it.

His experience of playing video games told him that the final boss couldn't be taken care of so easily!

Suddenly, he felt goosebumps all over. His Clown instincts told him that there was extreme danger approaching!

Without thinking, Klein rolled to the left abruptly.

Just then, a long arm with an extremely sharp white bone blade cleaved the spot, seemingly out of nowhere. The monstrosity had an abnormal beauty, and it floated in mid-air. It was unbelievably fast and almost impossible to dodge its attacks.

Whoosh!

Klein's clothing on the right side of his chest was ripped apart, his skin ruptured, and his flesh, along with his bones, was split into two!

The wound was so deep that he could almost see one of his lungs.

If it wasn't because he sensed danger approaching beforehand and dodged in time, that slash would've sliced him in half.

But, even so, Klein slowed down. Extreme pain filled his head and scattered his consciousness.

At the end of the white bone blade, a figure rapidly flew out. If it wasn't for the bump on its stomach, perhaps no one could identify it as Megose.

Her hair and dress had been burned entirely. The skin on her face and body was charred black and was peeling off, flake after flake. Her nose had melted, leaving only two small black holes behind. Her eyeballs were nowhere to be seen, and there were faint white flames dancing in the empty sockets.

The two "heads" that had popped up from both sides of Megose's shoulders had been burned away. Her left arm had become the white bone blade that she was holding; it looked demonic, yet holy.

Creak!

As the ground shook, Megose ignored Dunn and Leonard, as well as the black, cold, and smooth fine threads that were hurtling towards her again. She phased over to Klein who had come to a stop after rolling away. She aimed the white bone blade at Klein's neck and was about to slash down.

Suddenly, she heard a voice that contained a rich blasphemous tone.

“Submit!”

Leonard lifted his left hand and aimed his palm at Megose. The Sealed Artifact 2-105 wrapped around his wrist had turned from a thick pale, blood-tainted blood vessel into a crimson “intestine” that had expanded to the point that it looked ready to explode.

With the aid of the Blood Vessel Thief, Leonard had successfully stolen Megose’s Blaspheme Curse and was attempting to use her power to seize control of her!

Only an ability at her level was effective!

Under the influence of the Blaspheme Curse, Megose bent her waist, and her knees were constantly trembling. Her motions came to a halt as the surrounding black threads surrounded her as though they had found a delicious prey. Klein also took the opportunity to roll in the opposite direction, leaving a trail of fresh crimson blood behind him.

However, he got some reprieve from his extreme pain and reached his hand into his pocket. He took out the last Flaring Sun Charm.

He took the opportunity when Megose was stationary to finish her off, once and for all!

If she were to hold out until the “baby” was born, the outcome would be beyond their imagination!

Boom!

Megose’s head exploded on its own. Her charred skin and flesh flew in all directions.

But her headless body seized the opportunity to shake off the effect of the Blaspheme Curse!

Boom! Megose's charred body transformed into a projectile that shot towards Leonard. Since the Blaspheme Curse had been forcefully disrupted, Leonard was temporarily frozen on the spot.

At that moment, Dunn Smith was still holding onto Saint Selena's urn tightly. His face was abnormally pale, and the black, cold threads that were created was still short of surrounding Megose.

Creak!

Megose slammed into Leonard, throwing him to the wall. The wall collapsed from the impact.

Leonard's bones cracked, and there was blood spewing out from his mouth incessantly. Without even having the urge to struggle, he fainted instantly.

Megose raised her white bone blade, but the countless black threads that emanated from Saint Selena's urn enveloped her again and was about to bind her to the ground.

Without the luxury of time to mind his injuries, Klein quickly took out the thin charm.

Just as he was going to recite the ancient Hermes incantation, something suddenly sounded in the deep, dark, yet quiet room.

"Waaa!"

It was the cry of a baby.

Chapter 209 - Light

◆

“Waaa!”

The baby in Megose’s stomach cried. It squirmed, wanting to come into this world in a bid to help its mother escape from her predicament.

The black, cold, and smooth threads appeared to suffer a shock as they seemed to be suppressed by an invisible power which led to their retreat backward.

“Waaa!”

Dunn and Klein became dizzy at the same time. They felt their throats contract involuntarily as their contracting air passages instantly stifled them.

Crimson liquid flowed from their nostrils, their eyes, and their ears. All of their capillaries seemed to have ruptured.

If it wasn’t for the fact that Klein had undergone the torture of hearing the mutterings and ravings every time he headed to the world above the gray fog, as well as Dunn holding onto the ashes of Saint Selena, they definitely would’ve fainted on the spot, just like Leonard Mitchell.

Megose’s headless body turned over and looked at Klein who saw her charred skin and flesh peeling to the ground, and the holy, yet evil white bone blade.

Having escaped its influence thanks to his rich experience, Klein immediately felt his scalp tingle and forgot about the pain in his right chest. He seemed to witness his enemy charge towards him maniacally, not giving him any time to recite the incantation, infuse spirituality, and throw out the Flaring Sun Charm.

Just as he was about to dodge the attack, Klein saw Megose suddenly pause. He saw Dunn Smith's black trench coat fluttering, and the Captain diagonally across him had buried his head. There were multiple thick twitching objects on his back as if they were venomous snakes or tentacles—or monsters!

Dunn was using his abilities as a Nightmare to forcefully impede Megose's movements.

Bam! Bam! Bam! With a mere struggle from Megose, the thick tentacle-like objects that protruded from Dunn's back exploded at the same time!

A large amount of blood splattered out, covering every corner of the room like rain.

Dunn wasn't disappointed at the result, for the blood had been absorbed by the black threads created by Saint Selena's ashes.

They had been absorbed!

The countless cold, smooth, tentacle-like threads entered a frenzy. They swarmed forward and bound Megose tightly, wrapping themselves around her bulging, squirming stomach.

An opportunity!

Klein was as nervous as he was excited. He prepared to shout the ancient Hermes word for "Light."

"Waaa! Waaa! Waaa!"

The cries of a baby could be heard once again, more frequent, and more incessant this time around!

The countless black threads suddenly came to a pause, retreating and trembling again as if they had all been struck by lightning.

Dunn's expression changed when he realized that Megose was about to free herself. Without hesitation, he retracted his right palm, formed a claw, and stabbed it into his own chest—his left chest!

He quickly pulled out his right hand, his fingers holding a bloody heart tightly. It was a still-beating heart that brought with it the sereneness of the night and a dream.

Captain… Klein watched helplessly as Dunn Smith stuffed the heart into the urn containing Saint Selena's ashes. His vision quickly blurred.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Crying that sounded like a late-night nightmare resounded. The countless cold and serene threads once again resumed their efforts as they wrapped themselves tightly around Megose!

This time, they didn't loosen their bindings despite the cries coming from the baby in Megose's stomach. In fact, they even sealed the terrifying sounds within the body!

Klein's tears fell together with his blood. He uttered a simple Hermes term in a deep voice, "Light!"

The light that illuminates the darkness! The light that brings warmth!

He infused almost all of his remaining spirituality into the thin gold piece etched with mysterious symbols, causing his mind to immediately turn blank and dizzy.

Having mustered the last of his strength, Klein tossed out the Flaring Sun Charm at Megose, who was still bound by the countless black threads.

The black threads didn't retract this time, having not followed their instincts, as if they were being willed by someone.

Thump! Thump!

Dunn's fresh heart was still beating within the box containing Saint Selena's ashes.

The sunlight once again shone in from the hole in the ceiling, shining through all three stories, right into the Blackthorn Security Company, as if it were a corporeal pillar.

It was guided here by the Flaring Sun Charm, and it was focused on Megose.

The sunlight fused with the top of the headless monster, and then exploded like the sun!

Rumble!

In the burning white splendor, Klein closed his eyes. This last scene was etched deep into his mind.

Megose's body lost its left arm, head, and multiple pieces of flesh. Its charred body crumbled instantly. The half-illusory, terrifying creature within her body no longer had the support of a physical body and couldn't complete the last stage of its transformation. It turned into a furious ball of black gas, dissolving amidst the light and flames.

Rumble!

The entire building shook violently, but this was only due to the released energy of the Flaring Sun Charm.

The charm was different from a normal bomb. Its powers were concentrated, yet restrained!

Klein fought to stabilize his body. He opened his eyes and looked ahead a few seconds later.

He saw that the walls had crumbled. He saw a charred circle where Megose once stood. Surprisingly, the floor had only melted slightly.

He saw a burned, bloody placenta on the ground. He saw Dunn Smith standing on the spot, still wearing his black trench coat. He saw the heart in the box of Saint Selena's ashes still beating slowly. He saw Leonard Mitchell lying on the opposite side; his outcome was unknown.

The exhausted Klein felt elated and felt that he could still use ritualistic magic to save the Captain. He felt that Megose and her baby were truly finished. No—it was more accurate to say that the latter had suffered an interruption and was exorcised.

At that moment, Dunn Smith turned to look at Klein. His pale face had a warm and relaxed expression, and his voice still as mellow as it usually was.

"We saved Tingen."

After saying this, it was as if he had returned to the time when he was twenty. He no longer appeared stern and serious as he winked at Klein with his left eye.

Klein's expression froze. He saw the heart in the box of Saint's Selena's ashes stop beating. It turned into a resplendent ball of light before scattering into the surroundings. He saw the captain fall backward, his arms losing their strength.

[image]

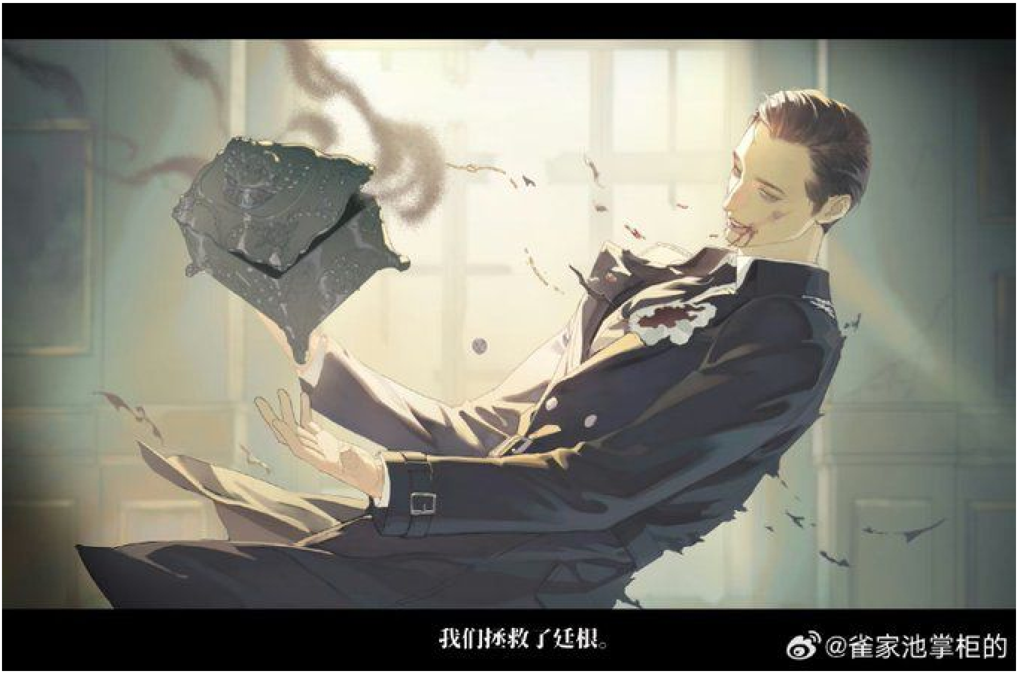
It felt like the scene was made up of a series of paintings, but Klein could do nothing to stop it.

Thump!

The box of Saint Selena's ashes fell onto the ground, just like Klein's heart.

Thud! Thud! Even though the box wasn't covered, the darkness within the box sealed the opening, preventing the resplendent sand-like ashes from falling out. The box rolled a distance away towards Klein.

Dunn Smith fell to the wrecked floor, his deep gray eyes having lost all their luster. He was looking at the hole in the ceiling, the sunlight pouring down on his face.


我们拯救了廷根。
@雀家池掌柜的

Captain! Klein's vision blurred once again. He wanted to shout, but that word and the subsequent words were stuck in his throat.

We miss you too…

At that moment, the box containing Saint Selena's ashes had rolled to his feet.

Suddenly, Klein felt a pain in his chest, his pupils violently constricted as he froze in place.

He looked down to see a slightly pale palm, drenched in blood, coming out the left side of his chest.

[image]

Megose isn’t dead… No, a new enemy… The mastermind behind the scenes… Am I going to die?

Klein quickly lost his consciousness, his eyes almost losing focus. His body slumped to the side.

His breathing gradually slowed and, he finally felt the palm pull back quickly. He saw a pair of brand new leather boots, and a hand reaching downward—a slightly pale hand.

It grabbed the urn of Saint Selena’s ashes.

Klein’s vision went black, and he lost all consciousness.

†

Burned and shattered objects were scattered around in the now destroyed Blackthorn Security Company, but there wasn’t a single sound; it was just like a cemetery.

A few minutes later, Leonard Mitchell’s body moved, his eyes opening slowly.

He propped himself up with difficulty and surveyed the surroundings. He saw Dunn Smith on the ground. He also saw Klein who had his eyes staring wide as a look of shock was plastered across his face. Dunn and Klein both had visible wounds on the left sides of their chests.

No… Leonard squeezed out the word from his throat as he staggered towards Klein’s corpse, that wasn’t far away from Dunn.

He kept checking them, going between the two repeatedly, but all he could do was accept this irreversible truth.

Leonard’s knees buckled as his knees plopped to the ground. His green eyes were filled with pain as tears streamed down his cheeks, washing away the blood and dust.

He turned his head and listened for two seconds and suddenly sprawled forward. He let out an angry roar and clenched his palms into fists, and heavily pounded the floor.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Leonard kept tearing up as he pounded the floor. Amidst his sorrow was a feeling of clear hatred and a clear sense of self-abhorrence.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Leonard looked up when he heard the sounds of hurried footsteps and saw the members of the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind that had just arrived at the scene through his blurred vision.

Chapter 210 - Story

In a Tingen suburb, there was a house with a green lawn.

The house had a garden that had begun to wither at the beginning of September. Attached to the house was a crimson chimney.

There was a desk next to the window in the bedroom of that house. An ordinary notebook was spread open on the table.

A slightly pale hand flipped the notebook to the very first page, then it quickly flipped to the back.

As the paper flipped, the rows of words appeared faintly.

Regence, a member from the Secret Order, sold the Antigonus family's notebook as an ordinary ancient book by accident due to the influence both of weariness and illusions. It was a coincidence that made logical sense.

Affected by the calling of the Antigonus family's bloodline, the notebook secretly affects its owners, one after the other. After repeated changes in ownership, it came to Tingen. It fell into the hands of the members of the Aurora Order—Sirius Arapis and Hanass Vincent.

After they flipped through the content that temporarily appeared in the notebook and copied the corresponding potion formulas, Sirius and Hanass were worried that the Secret Order, who were good at divination, would track them down. After discussing it, they decided to avoid the risk by selling it to another person.

They didn't wait for Mr. Z's reply; perhaps because he stayed at Enmat Harbor.

Through Sirius's introduction, Hanass got to know Welch McGovern from the Khoy University's Department of History. Then, Hanass sold the Antigonus family's notebook to McGovern as an ordinary ancient book.

Subsequently, Sirius was attracted by the treasure that was said to exist on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range. He started to visit the Deweyville Library and research the mountain. He didn't think that there would be any problems, so he left his real address and name. That aligned with his personality.

During this process, he acquainted himself with Lanevus, who was reading up on information about iron mines to set up a scam.

Lanevus's hidden lunacy and swindling ability were well appreciated by Sirius. He decided to nurture him into a member of the Aurora Order. Of course, before that, an investigation was inevitable.

Sirius covertly informed Lanevus about the evil ritual of praying to the True Creator to deliver "His" spawn into this world. But he knew that the possibility of Lanevus succeeding was very low, because the difficulty level of the ritual was very high, and the requirements were very harsh. However, the latter expressed his strong interest in the matter, tempted by the possibility of obtaining a deity's approval. He planned to complete the ritual simultaneously as he carried out the plans of establishing his steelworks company.

The cunning Lanevus could tell that there was something fishy about Sirius Arapis. But for his personal goal, he didn't expose him.

He visited Hood Eugen in the asylum once again. They had known each other long ago, and they knew about their respective situations.

After a dark divination, the Antigonus family's notebook was awakened fully. Welch and his classmate died. The lucky survivor, Klein Moretti, sent it to Ray Bieber's house under the influence of the notebook. It was a destined ending.

Many rows were scribbled off and new content followed.

For some baffling reason, and a lack of sufficient explanations, Klein didn't commit suicide after that and somehow managed to stay alive.

In the Nighthawks' investigation of Welch's case that followed, he met Dunn Smith and joined the Nighthawks.

Although it had already exceeded Ince Zangwill's description, it didn't affect the development of the story.

Bacchus and his brothers were down on their luck. They lost their last chip at the gambling tables and were drowning in debt. In a bid to obtain money, they decided to kidnap and blackmail the somewhat wealthy individuals.

When they were looking for their final hideout, they chanced upon the room opposite Ray Bieber's apartment.

By then, Ray Bieber was already seduced by the power offered by the Antigonus family's notebook. He hoped to digest the gift left behind by his ancestors.

However, he was in a semi-insane state, and he couldn't make the best and safest choice. He abandoned his dead mother, but he continued remaining in Tingen City. He only found a more elusive spot to carry out his digestion ritual. It was truly pathetic. If he had been slightly smarter, the story could've become even more complicated, but his decision was made based on his instincts and his poor state of mind.

Bacchus and company purchased weapons and took the youngest son, Elliott, of the tobacco merchant, Vickroy, and held him for ransom.

Finally, they successfully carried out the abduction and took Elliot back to the apartment opposite Ray Bieber's. Vickroy's butler was entrusted with looking for help from a security company.

Because of Welch's mysterious death, security companies were short on hands. Klee chanced upon a deliveryman and happened to discover the existence of the Blackthorn Security Company.

Leonard Mitchell and Klein accepted the job. Relying on their Beyonder powers, they quickly saved the merchant's son. Regrettably, Klein didn't immediately realize that clues to the Antigonus family's notebook were in the apartment opposite them.

However, his spirituality reminded him in his dream. As such, the Tingen Nighthawks discovered corresponding clues.

†

Sealed Artifact 2-049 arrived in Tingen. With the aid of the Antigonus family's puppet, Dunn Smith led the Nighthawks to find Ray Bieber before interrupting his digestion procedure.

Ray Bieber became a monster, and the situation was out of control.

In the end, the Nighthawks skillfully worked together and took care of Monster Bieber, but they immediately faced the attack of a member from the Secret Order.

More rows were scribbled away again, and the original content was impossible to read.

Leonard Mitchell, who possesses a secret, was going to end the situation. Before he could, Klein, who was supposed to be doomed, killed the Sequence 7 member from the Secret Order in an inexplicable manner.

That didn't affect the development of the story. Dunn Smith got in touch with the Antigonus family's notebook and flipped through its content. From that point onwards, he was secretly tainted!

†

Having finished with all his preparations, Lanevus beguiled Hood Eugen and used him to assist in his ritual. They tricked Lanevus's fiancée, Megose, to become the vessel that would carry the True Creator's spawn.

Lanevus had almost no possibility of success. The most serious problem was that even though Megose would be protected by the ritual's power, she wouldn't be able to withstand the sexual intercourse with the illusory projection of a deity. It would cost her her life on the altar.

At that moment, the kind Ince Zangwill helped Lanevus in secret. He split off half a piece of a descendant of Death's characteristic that he obtained and planted it into Megose's body ahead of time.

Hood Eugen made Megose enter a semi-unconscious state and convinced her that the True Creator's illusory projection was Lanevus. Nourished by the accumulated resentment, gloominess, and oppression of the factory district, the ritual succeeded. Megose was pregnant with the True Creator's spawn. The deity saw through the coincidences, but since "He" wished to break through the shackles placed on him by the seven deities, "He" didn't refuse.

Hood Eugen was contaminated.

After the ritual succeeded, the mad Lanevus regained his rationality. He clearly knew that if the deity's spawn was to descend into the world, Lanevus, himself, would become one of the sacrificial offerings. How could a mortal be the father of a deity's son? This was blasphemy of the highest order!

Lanevus decided to leave Tingen ahead of time and left clues to the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind so that they could resolve the repercussions of his actions. There was ultimately a price needed for lunacy.

However, Lanevus didn't write the letter directly to the Beyonder squads. He thought it would make him look stupid.

He decided to leave the letter in one of the houses that he rented. He pretended to be playing a game with the Beyonders from official bodies. As such, he didn't bring up Hood Eugen's contamination and brought with him everything that he had obtained.

Just in case, he informed Sirius Arapis in the safest way he could. The latter didn't quite believe him, but he could faintly feel the possibility of success.

†

Selena Wood accidentally chanced upon the real magic mirror divination incantation from her mysticism teacher, Hanass Vincent.

Her bold attempt was interrupted by Klein Moretti by coincidence. The latter successfully resolved this supernatural incident that might've caused serious casualties.

The Nighthawks then investigated Hanass Vincent who had recently been awarded. Therefore, Dunn Smith coincidently saw a clear image of the True Creator in his dream and suffered severe injuries.

However, he wasn't contaminated because of what happened. That would've been noticed by the upper echelons of the Nighthawks.

The injury made Dunn Smith's contamination by the Antigonus family notebook worsen. His absent-mindedness and forgetfulness worsened, and he was getting closer and closer to satisfying Ince Zangwill's requirements.

†

Many rows were scribbled away again.

Seriously unbelievable! Klein Moretti noticed Ince Zangwill's secret influence and saw the crimson chimney.

Th-this is because he was reminded by the teacher from the Khoy University's Department of History, Azik. He possesses many secrets.

But even so, it's astounding enough for Klein to discover actual clues. It's unexplainable.

Regardless of the reason, Ince Zangwill continued to act, and the story continues.

Klein coincidentally ran into Sirius at the library and had no choice but to kill him. Hence, the clues leading to Lanevus were abruptly severed, and the discovery of the problem was delayed.

†

Klein met Megose, but his spirituality stopped him from observing her closely. However, he didn't notice the subtle abnormality. That is logical. Our stories aren't made up randomly.

He searched for the red chimney, but he always opted for a route that didn't include his target. Maybe in another two or three months, when he was on the last batch, he would find the real red chimney house.

†

Rows and rows of writings were scribbled away, more than all of the previous rows added together.

Dunn Smith's problem was alleviated! His condition obviously became better! He actually mastered the "acting method!"

And this was taught to him by Klein Moretti, who found inspiration from Daly Simone and Old Neil's example. No—Ince Zangwill didn't believe that, but he could only change his original plans slightly.

New elements in the story came to play.

Azik decided to go to Backlund in search of his lost memories.

It wasn't long until Klein and Dunn found clues from Hood Eugen.

†

In order to ensure that Tingen City's Conservative Party and New Party would be in complete opposition, Madam Sharon, who wanted to vent the accumulated madness after her transformation, decided to take the risk and murder Member of Parliament John Maynard.

"Her motive wasn't strong enough, but she took action anyway. There are always times when people are not clear-minded enough, and she happened to be in that stage. Besides, she was confident that she wouldn't be discovered.

Maynard's wife found the Blackthorn Security Company through the tobacco merchant, Vickroy. They didn't disappoint her, and they quickly found Madam Sharon's abnormality.

Dunn Smith, who possessed power that was close to Sequence 6, decided to take action first. He passed the Sealed Artifact 3-0271 to Kenley.

When the two of them and Klein returned to Madam Sharon's residence, Dunn attempted to pull her into a dream to control her from a distance."

It was a good plan, but, unfortunately, Madam Sharon happened to have the statue of the Primordial Demoness by her side.

Hence, the Nighthawks' plan failed. Kenley reflected himself in the mirror due to his nervousness and saw himself.

Madam Sharon was taken care of while Kenley died. Dunn blamed himself and consumed Kenley's Beyonder characteristic as he usually did. His digestion procedure was interrupted as a result and was delayed. As such, his mental state became unstable.

Under the circumstances, Leonard and Klein noticed the letter left behind by Lanevus.

Megose received a baffling summoning and arrived at Zouteland Street. She entered the Blackthorn Security Company, and the baby in her stomach was at a critical point in its development. It couldn't stop her urges.

Dunn made a detailed plan, a plan that was right, but he made one mistake. If he steeled his resolve to lure Megose behind Chanis Gate, he would've stood a chance with the aid of the environment and the items present. If he wanted to wait for backup, he definitely shouldn't have just taken Saint Selena's urn out.

Unfortunately, Dunn's mind wasn't in the right place due to recent events, and he didn't think of the most critical point. A diety's son would be able to feel the threat of the Saint's urn. Hence, it was triggered and started to absorb its mother's strength in a bid to be born ahead of time, even though it wasn't exactly ready.

Azik was in Backlund, but he wasn't a Planeswalker, so he couldn't rush back in such short notice.

A few rows were scribbled away.

Megose became a monster, and the fight began. With the aid of the Saint's urn, Blood Vessel Thief, and two high-level charms that strangely appeared, Megose died and the deity's son was exorcized. Dunn Smith died as a result, and the power of Saint Selena's ashes was severely damaged as well. That went perfectly with Ince Zangwill's intentions.

Ince Zangwill didn’t get a chance to showcase himself, but it didn’t hinder him from achieving his goal.

He killed Klein Moretti, the fellow who kept disrupting his plans, and he took away Saint Selena’s ashes.

Ince Zangwill set up a ritual with the remaining half of the characteristic of Death’s descendant. He consumed Saint Selena’s ashes and successfully advanced from Sequence 5 of the Death Sequence pathway, Gatekeeper, to Sequence 4 of the Evernight Sequence pathway, Nightwatcher. As such, he received godhood characteristics and became a Demigod.

The sun continues to shine brilliantly on the land. Nearly no one in Tingen City realized how they narrowly escaped a huge disaster. Monster Ademisaul would be left very confused about it.

The notebook was flipped to the last page. A middle-aged man that was holding onto the book had dark blond hair, a dark blue eye that was nearly black, a tall nose, and tightly pursed lips. His facial features were like that of a statue and didn’t have a single wrinkle. He held a classic quill with his slightly pale hand and wrote a line clearly without dipping into any ink.

[image]

He ended with a simple sentence.

Tingen’s story ends here.

The papers rustled as he closed the book, leaving only a brown cover.

Chapter 211 - Funeral

◆

In the basement of Saint Selena Cathedral, in the guardroom outside Chanis Gate.

Leonard Mitchell was leaning on the back of his chair, his legs were propped up on the table. His eyes were vacant without any focus.

Even though he had been healed using ritualistic magic, he still looked terrible, as if he had obtained reprieve from a severe illness without fully recovering.

At the moment, the powerful Beyonders sent by the Holy Cathedral were creating another seal behind the Chanis Gate since the ashes of Saint Selena was lost. They had conflicting opinions; some wanting to fill in the gap of power using a new holy item, while the others believed that there was no need to go through all the trouble. After all, to the Church of Evernight, holy items were rare and incredibly precious. What they suggested was lowering the presence of the Nighthawks in Tingen and transferring the artifacts with living characteristics or difficult-to-seal artifacts to the headquarters at the Cathedral of Serenity in Backlund's diocese, only leaving behind those that could be controlled more easily.

They intended to send a telegram to propose a meeting of the higher-ups, to get a vote from the archbishops and high-ranking deacons.

Leonard was uninterested in this debate. He felt as if he had become a living corpse, with no sorrow, grief, agitation, or excitement. He was abnormally numb. He didn't want to face anyone. All he wanted was to stay alone in the corner.

Occasionally, he would feel puzzled about why the “murderer” would only take away Klein’s Beyonder characteristic and leave Captain Dunn Smith’s one intact.

Thud. Thud. Thud. Footsteps reverberated in the corridor. Seeka Tron, whose right arm had been bandaged, appeared at the door of the guardroom.

While Klein and the others were attacking Megose and attempting to save Tingen City, she and the Keepers within Chanis Gate were doing battle against a portion of the Sealed Artifacts. If it wasn’t for the timely arrival of the members of the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind, or the eventual arrival of the reinforcements from the Holy Cathedral, she also might’ve lost her life.

But even so, the elderly Keeper failed to last until the end. He fought to his death, under the call of duty.

“Leonard, I found an unencrypted telegram in the Captain’s office. It was sent over by the Holy Cathedral,” Seeka Tron said.

Leonard’s green eyes moved slightly, finally coming to life. He faintly recalled the sound of a new telegram coming in, but the battle was about to begin. He and Klein didn’t have the time to pay attention to it.

“What does it say?” Leonard noticed that his tone was unusually raspy.

The white-haired and black-eyed Seeka Tron replied without hesitation, “Beware of Ince Zangwill. Beware of Sealed Artifact 0-08.”

“Ince Zangwill, the archbishop that betrayed the Church, the Gatekeeper who failed his advancement… Sealed Artifact 0-08, an ordinary looking quill…” Leonard muttered at first as he searched his memories, then he tilted his head to the side.

He suddenly narrowed his eyes, the dispirited feelings and sadness disappeared from his body.

“So that’s how it was…” Leonard pulled his feet back and stood up, his green eyes burning with a passion.

He looked at Seeka Tron and said, “I intend to apply to join the Red Gloves.”

The Red Gloves was a code name for the elite team of Nighthawks. Under normal circumstances, Nighthawks teams were situated locally and had regions under their jurisdiction. They were not permitted to capture criminals outside of their area of jurisdiction without permission. As such, some evildoers would change their location after every crime, making it terribly inconvenient for the Nighthawks.

To deal with this, the Church of Evernight set up the Red Gloves. They were carefully selected elites, some even possessing incomplete holy items. Their mission was to reinforce Nighthawks teams that had called for help, as well as track down and arrest evildoers without any restrictions.

In some circles, they were also called “Pursuers” or “Hunting Dogs.”

“Red Gloves? But their lowest requirement is Sequence 7… Besides, the dangers the Red Gloves face are many times higher than an ordinary Nighthawk Squad,” Seeka Tron said in concern and doubt.

Leonard smiled coldly.

“I’m close to advancing soon.”

His eyes became cold. He clenched his teeth and said to himself.

I want revenge!

Ince Zangwill, you must live until the day I become powerful enough!

“Alright…” Seeka seemed to have guessed Leonard’s thoughts. She sighed. “Almost half of our team will be new faces. It’s rare to see a

Nighthawks team become so ravaged…"

Leonard's expression darkened. He clenched his teeth and asked, "Are the bodies ready?"

"Yes." Seeka nodded indiscernibly.

Leonard suddenly stepped towards the door.

"I'll notify their families."

I'll deal with the scene I don't want to deal with the most.

I'll do it…

†

At 2 Daffodil Street, Melissa sat on the sofa, inspecting the three tickets in her hands. She was looking at the words, the printed date, and the seat numbers.

Benson was sitting beside her, observing his sister with a smile. He had a relaxed posture.

Suddenly, they heard the doorbell. Ding dong, ding dong.

Melissa glanced at their busy maid Bella, then she took the three tickets with her and stood up, looking a little confused. She briskly ran to the door.

Her black hair was shinier than it was before, her face no longer skinny. The color of her skin had a ruddy color, and her brown eyes looked brighter and energetic.

Twisting the handle and opening the door, Melissa froze for a moment. She didn't recognize their visitor.

It was a young man with black hair and green eyes. He looked handsome, but his face was unusually pale. Hidden in his eyes was deep sorrow.

“May I know who you are?” Melissa asked, feeling somewhat lost.

Leonard had specially draped a black formal coat over his white shirt. He said in a raspy voice, “I’m a colleague of your brother Klein.

Melissa’s heart suddenly skipped a beat. She instinctively tiptoed to look behind Leonard but didn’t notice anything.

She said with a strange quiver in her voice, “Where’s Klein?”

Leonard closed his eyes, inhaling as he said, “I’m very sorry, your brother Klein died at the hands of an evil criminal while he was trying to save others. He’s a hero, a true hero.”

Melissa widened her eyes slowly, her body shaking indiscernibly. The three tickets in her hands dropped helplessly onto the floor.

[image]

The tickets faced upward, revealing the name of the play—“The Return of the Count.”

†

Sitting in the Moretti family’s living room, Leonard didn’t dare to look directly at Melissa and Benson.

But he couldn’t stop scenes of what they looked like from flashing through his mind.

That girl filled with youthfulness and vibrancy had her eyes wide open. She didn’t speak, and her eyes were unfocused. Her silence made her appear like a puppet.

The man who looked a little like Klein maintained a normal posture, but he would slip into a daze from time to time. His words came out slowly.

“That’s the gist of the matter. I’m very sorry that I was unable to prevent it in a timely manner. The Blackthorn Security Company, the police department, and those that he helped have promised a bereavement compensation of about 6000 pounds…” Leonard said, as his eyes darted around.

Suddenly, Benson interrupted him. His voice was hoarse as he asked, “Where’s his body? I’m asking where’s Klein’s body?”

He puckered his lips and paused.

“When can we see him?”

“In the company. You can see him now,” Leonard answered, unable to mask his grief.

“Alright.” Benson moved his rigid lips with great difficulty. “Let me use the bathroom first.”

Without waiting for Leonard’s reply, he quickly entered the bathroom and slammed the door closed.

He stood in front of the sink and turned on the tap, allowing the water to flow.

He bent down and repeatedly splashed water onto his face.

As he did that, his actions came to a sudden stop. Nothing changed for a long time, leaving only the sound of running water reverberating in the bathroom.

A few minutes later, Benson lifted his head and looked into the mirror. He saw that his face was covered in water droplets, the redness in his eyes was impossible to hide now.

†

A few days later, in a corner of the Raphael Cemetery.

After finishing Dunn's funeral, the crowd gathered before a new tombstone. On it was Klein's black-and-white photograph, a very scholarly photograph.

Melissa stood before the grave, her eyes without focus. Beside her, Elizabeth kept wiping away her tears.

Leonard, Benson, Frye, and Bredt carried the coffin and walked over, lowering the coffin into the grave.

After the priest gave the eulogy and individual prayers, the grave was filled with soil, covering the black coffin bit by bit.

At this moment, Melissa knelt down and tossed in the copper whistle she found on her brother's body.

Leonard turned and looked at the scene, his heart wincing. However, he admired how strong this girl was. He knew that this girl didn't cry after receiving the bad news. Instead, she stayed pitifully quiet.

The grave was leveled and a stone slab was laid over it. Leonard took a final look at Klein's tombstone. There were three lines to his epitaph:

The best elder brother,

The best younger brother,

The best colleague.

Under the mournful atmosphere, the members of the Blackthorn Security Company gradually left. Selena and Elizabeth also bade farewell under the urging of their families. The only people left behind were Benson and Melissa.

"I'll get a rental carriage…" Benson was in a terrible condition, it was as if he hadn't slept for a long time.

"Alright." Melissa nodded.

After seeing her brother leave, she turned to look at the tombstone.

She squatted down and buried her face in her arms.

After some silence, Melissa suddenly scolded, "Stupid!"

She cried as she wept silently. Her tears just wouldn't stop.

†

Night time, at the Raphael Cemetery.

The copper-skinned Azik stood in front of Klein's grave holding a bouquet of white flowers. He didn't speak for the longest time until he finally sighed and muttered to himself, "I'm sorry, I was ten minutes late. But I think I know who it was…"

He bent over and set the bouquet of flowers down before turning to leave the cemetery. He also left Tingen, but he didn't retrieve the copper whistle.

The place was quiet and serene under the illumination of the crimson moonlight.

Suddenly, the stone slab sealing the grave was flipped open. A pale hand extended out from the soil.

A hand came out!

Whoosh!

The gravestone was shoved aside. The lid of the coffin was pushed open. Klein sat upright and looked around, lost.

His memory was still frozen at the scene with the brand new leather boots, and the palm that grabbed onto the urn of Saint Selena's ashes. Everything after that felt like a dreamless sleep.

Klein instinctively lowered his head and unbuttoned his shirt. He looked at the left side of his chest, only to see that his ravaged injury and missing heart were squirming as they healed, similar to how he recovered from the bullet wound through his temple back when he looked into the mirror. The only difference was that this time, the recovery was much slower and much more difficult.

Chapter 212 - Avenger

◆

In the northern part of the Loen Kingdom, the September breeze, that had an additional coldness to it, howled through the cemetery. It was even gloomier and colder than usual.

The cold jolted Klein back to his senses as he muttered with a rueful smile, “It looks like there are still some secrets behind my transmigration…

“But it seems like I’ll only be able to resurrect another two times at most, not any more… And if I were to minced up or completely crushed, who knows if this recovery ability that doesn’t usually appear would even be useful…”

†

After half a minute, Klein buttoned his suit and realized that he was wearing his newest shirt and tuxedo, but they were now covered in soil and dirt.

…Benson and Melissa really have no idea how to save money… The thought popped into his head. He supported his weight on his hand and flipped up into a standing position, realizing that he still had his Clown abilities.

The best elder brother… The best younger brother… The best colleague… Klein looked at his tombstone and read the inscription. He felt his heart wince, seemingly sensing the despondent feelings Melissa and Benson had experienced.

This is probably even more depressing than watching Captain die before my eyes… He sighed and retracted his gaze. He squatted down and closed the coffin lid.

His thoughts were still scattered, but Klein knew that he had to take care of the scene as soon as possible and not let anyone notice.

Resurrection wasn't something any commoner could accept!

If the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind learned of this, Klein believed that he wouldn't have a great ending. Of course, if it was on Earth, he could deceive the people into believing that he was the blessed one of God, the man of salvation, had he consumed the Lawyer or Swindler potions. However, in the world he was in, there was a real god, a real god that could respond to rituals!

He scraped the soil back together and covered it with the stone slab. Klein clapped his hands and stood up once again.

At that moment, the scene didn't appear strange. He was just like a gentleman who came to offer his condolences late at night. The only oddity was that the person in the photo on the tombstone looked exactly like him.

During the process of filling his grave, his spirituality noticed the existence of Azik's copper whistle. Hence, he dug it out and wiped it clean.

However, Klein didn't intend to summon the messenger immediately. He decided to figure out the situation first.

Klein lifted his left hand and saw the topaz pendant that was still wrapped around his wrist.

"I guess this is considered a burial object?" He gave a self-deprecating laugh and took off the pendulum. He looked around, and his face grew solemn. "…Captain should be buried in this cemetery as well, I guess…"

He changed directions twice and finally determined the location of Dunn's tombstone using the pendulum.

With the moonlight's aid, Klein walked around and searched for about fifteen minutes until he finally saw Captain's monochrome photo. It had a gentle expression, high hairline, gray eyes—nothing unusual compared to before.

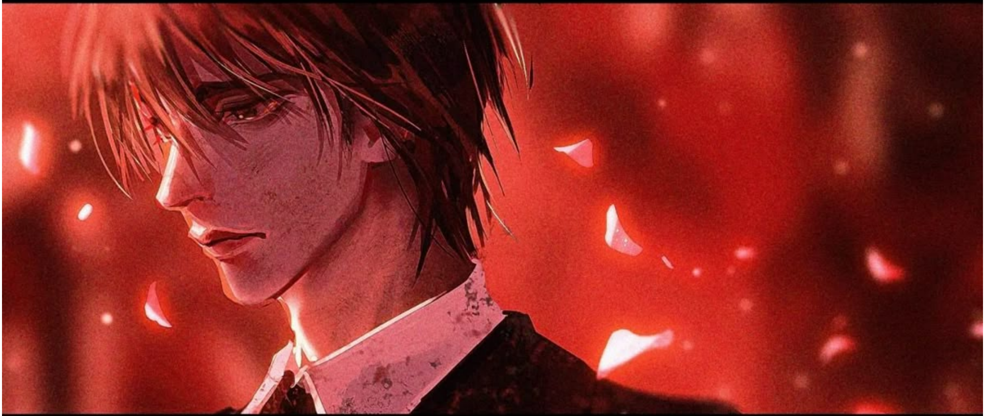
Under Dunn's photo was his name, date of birth, date of death, and epitaph.

The true guardian,

The most trusted partner,

The Captain forever.

Klein looked in stunned silence and somehow his sight grew blurry for some baffling reason. He felt as though he had returned to that day again. He saw the Captain turn his head to him and wink. He spoke with a mellow and relaxed voice.



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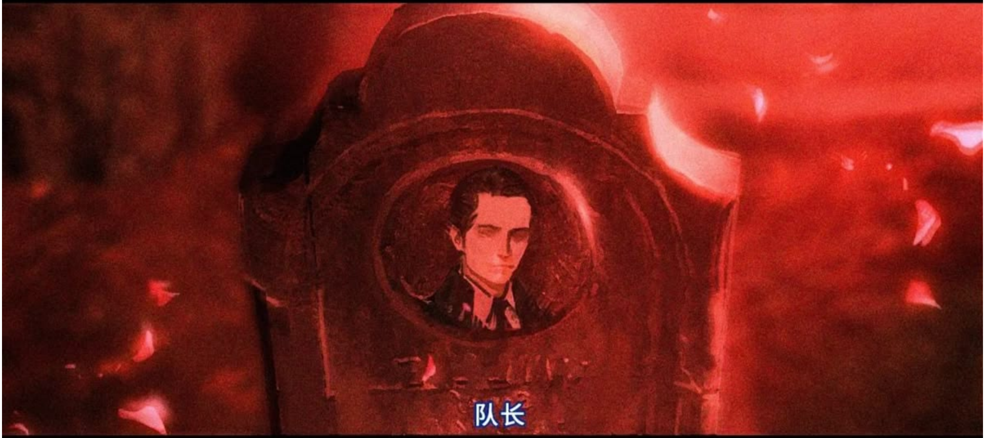

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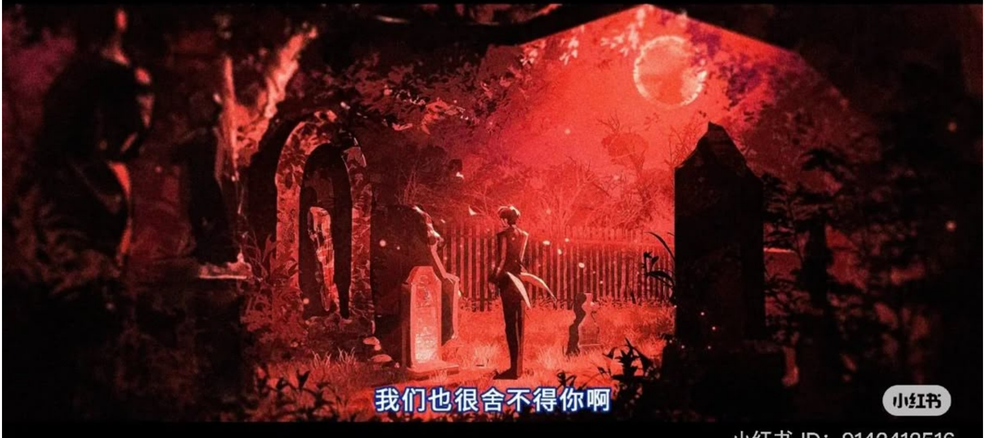

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"We saved Tingen."

Captain… Klein shouted in silence.

He stood there like a statue for a good few minutes until he suddenly said with a smile, "Captain, your mental state was definitely not the best that day. You even said things like you could bring Old Neil into the dreamland if he hadn't lost control. He was a Mystery Pryer, and you're a Nightmare. You couldn't consume the Beyonder characteristic that he left behind. Yes… You didn't ask me what powerful offensive attacks I had. Was it trust, or did you forget about it… But, you definitely guessed something… I only took one Sealed Artifact and said it was for Leonard. Even without a brain, you could've guessed that I had the extra means for a powerful attack."

Having said that, Klein paused, then he shook his head and sighed.

"I have no idea what I am now. Maybe I'm just an evil spirit that has clawed its way back from hell to seek revenge…"

As he spoke, he suddenly stopped. His tears streamed down his cheeks and finally, he shouted softly with a choking voice, "Captain… We miss you too!"

[image]

Klein felt the cold breeze blow past him as he lifted his hands to wipe his tears and blow his nose.

He became silent again and found a hidden spot nearby. He took four steps counterclockwise and entered the world above the gray fog.

He wanted to find the person that killed him with the aid of divination. He wanted to know the murderer who triggered all of this!

As he's already appeared before me, I'm sure that I can divine some information… Klein pursed his lips tightly together and saw the lofty palace and ancient mottled table as usual.

He took the seat that belonged to The Fool. A yellowish-brown goatskin and fountain pen appeared before him.

Since his physical body in reality was under limited protection, Klein didn't delay and wrote down his divination statement after a moment's thought.

"The person who killed me."

He recited it seven times and leaned back into the chair. He entered his dream with the aid of Cogitation.

In the blurry world, there were countless points of light dancing and gathering. In the end, they formed a scene.

A pair of brand new leather boots, a pair of slightly pale hands, and the Saint Selena's urn that was held by those hands.

He looked up, and Klein saw a middle-aged man with short, dark blond hair.

He wore a black two-button suit, and one of his eyes was obviously blind while the other one was so blue that it was almost black. His facial features were like carvings, and his face had no wrinkles at all.

The image shattered and Klein woke up from his dream. His eyebrows were tightly knitted. He found his murderer very familiar.

As a Seer, he quickly understood why he found the person familiar. It was because he had seen the man's photo on a wanted notice!

The murderer was Ince Zangwill! He was the former Archbishop of the Church of Evernight who took Sealed Artifact 0-08. He had failed to advance as a Gatekeeper!

"It's him!" Countless images flashed through Klein's head, and they finally stopped on the scene when Ince Zangwill picked up Saint Selena's urn.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein extended his hands and rapped the edge of the long bronze table. He felt that he suddenly understood many things.

“The Captain said that a Beyonder that dies normally would leave behind a Beyonder characteristic. When gathered together, they’re equivalent to a potion that lacks the supplementary ingredients.

“In other words, as long as one knows the corresponding supplementary ingredients, they can advance using”remains”. Of course, one cannot consume beyond their level, as it would easily lead to a loss of control or going insane.

“Hmm… Becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder would require the accompaniment of some special ritual. That was mentioned in the incomplete Unshadowed formula… The subsequent advancements would require a ritual as well…

“Ince Zangwill is a Gatekeeper, a Sequence 5 from the Death Sequence pathway. He wanted to become a High-Sequence Beyonder, a Demigod. Based on the situation allowed by the exchanging of Sequences, he had three choices. One was obviously Sequence 4 in the Death Sequence pathway, second was Sequence 4 in the Sleepless Sequence pathway; and third was Sequence 4 in the God of Combat Sequence pathway, Demon Hunter.

“Saint Selena was a Saint. She was either Sequence 4 or Sequence 3. Her urn corresponds to one of the two Sequence potions… Ince Zangwill, who was a former Archbishop, definitely knew exactly which one she was, and he definitely knew the required supplementary ingredients…

“Was his true motive in planning all of this to get Saint Selena’s ashes and advance to Sequence 4 in the Sleepless pathway?

“Hmm, the skull of Death’s descendant, that might be an ingredient needed for the special ritual. It was from the Death Sequence pathway, after all.

"From the looks of it, his target was the Captain, and not me. He really was the mastermind behind all this…"

Having figured this out, Klein wrote down a corresponding divination statement. He took his pendulum and let the topaz hang above the surface of the paper.

After he recited the statement, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz pendant spinning clockwise.

It meant that the information he provided was sufficient, and the divination was successful!

It meant that Ince Zangwill had really plotted the series of events in order to get Saint Selena's ashes, to advance to Sequence 4!

Klein rapped on the edge of the table again as he mulled over a different question.

"Ince Zangwill was merely a Sequence 5 Gatekeeper. Relying on him alone, would make it impossible for him to create so many coincidences. For instance, for Megose to follow his"arrangements" and visit the Nighthawks at the correct time.

"So, is it the power of Sealed Artifact 0-08?

"Its appearance is that of an ordinary quill… Its function is to write down events that are bound to happen?

"No, it couldn't be that easy… Otherwise, Ince Zangwill could write that Saint Selena's urn grew a pair of wings and flew into his hands. Then, he could've just waited at home…

"There must be certain restrictions…

"0-08 most likely doesn't possess direct combat ability. Otherwise, Ince Zangwill could've stormed through Chanis Gate in Tingen…

"As one of the most dangerous Sealed Artifacts, perhaps it can let people act according to its description without realizing it? That was the reason behind all the coincidences?

“If that’s really true, then 0-08 is quite terrifying. Even Megose who was pregnant with the son of an evil god adhered to its arrangements… No wonder Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts are ‘Extremely Dangerous.’ They’re of the highest importance and of the highest confidentiality. They’re not to be inquired, disseminated, described, or spied…”

Klein stopped rapping the edge of the table. He divined his earlier guess, but, unfortunately, it failed due to a lack of information.

He saw that a few minutes had passed, and he planned to return to the real world as soon as possible. Hence, he didn’t let his thoughts run wild but wrote down the penultimate divination statement.

“The city where Ince Zangwill currently is.”

Due to the existence of Sealed Artifact 0-08 and the fact that Ince Zangwill had likely become a Demigod, Klein couldn’t divine his exact location directly. He could only make a rough inquiry of the general area.

Of course, if there wasn’t a mysterious space like the world above the gray fog to eliminate disturbances, he would definitely fail in divination, even if it was a rough inquiry.

He leaned against the high-back chair and recited the divination statement seven times. He dreamed again and entered the blurry world.

The blurry world suddenly cracked, and there was a wide river which was slightly murky.

There was a grand bridge above the river. Both banks had ports lined one after another. There were many goods and many workers.

To the northeast of the river, there were rows upon rows of houses. Most of them had the Loen Kingdom’s present-day architectural styles, such as polygenic roofs, oriel windows, and no verandah by the street. Other than that, there was a lot of Gothic architecture.

The streets were filled with people and carriages. From time to time, strange machinery could be seen.

The farther east he went, the more chimneys there were and the smokier it got. When he headed west, the elevation rose, and there were houses in grayish-blue, beige, and light yellow that spiraled up opulent castles and Gothic clock towers.

Gong!

The chime of a clock sounded and snapped Klein back to his senses. He knew which city he had seen.

The “Land of Hope,” and the “Capital of Capitals,” Backlund!

Chapter 213 - Another Look

◆ ◆ ◆

So Ince Zangwill has gone to Backlund… I wonder how long he'll stay there… Yes… I should confirm this every now and then… Klein leaned forward as he thought. He erased the contents on the goatskin and wrote a new divination statement:

"Lanevus's current location."

From his point of view, the person that caused the Captain and him to nearly die was undoubtedly Ince Zangwill, but the lunatic Lanevus was definitely an accomplice who cannot shirk from the responsibility. He had to pay the price in blood!

After reciting the statement seven times, Klein once again entered the dream. But the scene that appeared after the foggy world shattered was the same as the one he had seen before!

A wide, slightly murky river, countless piers and buildings. The buildings were primarily in the present Loen architectural style, some a little more Gothic. There were crowded streets, flourishing sights, chimneys that continually spewed smoke. There were opulent castles standing tall with the trademark Gothic clock towers…

Lanevus was also in the "Land of Hope," the "Capital of Capitals," Backlund!

Klein opened his eyes, a little confused. He had divined for Lanevus's specific location, but the results were still a very general, vague region.

This tells me that Lanevus's Sequence must be much higher than I imagined… No, it could also be that he's received a large benefit from helping the son of the True Creator descend upon this world. For example, a little godhood characteristics, or some object similar to the placenta left behind by Megose's baby? Hmm… The latter would most likely have been taken away by Ince Zangwill. Thoughts ran through Klein's mind as he muttered to himself whilst he made initial assumptions.

After confirming the rough area where both his enemies were, he thought about another problem. He still didn't have the ability to exact revenge!

Even if Lanevus is only a Sequence 7, or even 8, it wouldn't be easy to deal with him if he did indeed receive a large benefit. Lanevus is also obviously very crafty, he could outwit and defeat Beyonders more powerful than himself… Ince Zangwill is even more terrifying. He's a Sequence 4 Demigod, and he wields a powerful Grade 0 Sealed Artifact… Although there were some secrets surrounding my transmigration, it's clear that I can't convert those secrets into combat strength. It's likely that it's not possible for a very long period of time… The only means that I have are to continue raising my Sequence, or I could collect even more powerful mystical items. I have to use both the methods at the same time…

In between his thoughts, Klein decided to add another divination.

He deliberated on the statement before writing solemnly, "My opportunities of becoming powerful."

He gently placed the pen on the table and leaned back, then he closed his eyes.

He recited the statement silently and fell into a deep sleep with the help of Cogitation.

In the foggy world, he once again saw the scene that he had previously seen. The river, piers, chimneys, crowds, castles, various machinery, and Gothic clock towers. He had once again seen the capital of the Loen Kingdom, Backlund!

Immediately following that, the scene changed. He saw a magnificent peak piercing through the clouds, and, on it, he saw a majestic, ancient palace. He saw the giant throne carved from stone, adorned with dull gems and gold. He saw a strange vertical pupil formed from countless mysterious symbols.

The scene shattered silently without warning. Klein slowly sat up and tapped on the edge of the table with his fingers.

Backlund contains the opportunities for me to become powerful…

Does the second scene refer to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, the treasures left behind by the Antigonus family? The strange vertical pupil formed by countless mysterious symbols which the Misfortune Cloth Puppet conveyed to me through the corruption from the Antigonus family's notebook is the key to beginning all of this…

Many thoughts flashed through his mind. Klein decided that he was in no rush to visit the Hornacis mountain range. Even a Sequence 4 Demigod might not be able to deal with the dangers that resided there.

I guess I'll head to Backlund first… Klein sighed and made a decision. He enveloped himself with spirituality and stimulated a descent, exiting the mysterious space above the gray fog.

When he returned to the material world, he slowly walked out of his hiding spot towards Dunn Smith's grave.

He stared deeply at the picture and epitaph. Klein slowly drew a crimson moon on his chest and walked out of the cemetery.

As a former Nighthawk, a Nighthawk who had to regularly patrol Raphael Cemetery, he was quite familiar with the routes of the guards, as well its surroundings. He managed to leave the cemetery easily, without causing any alarm. He followed the gravel road into Tingen, using the shade of the trees as cover.

The night was peaceful and the moon was ever-so dreamy. Klein walked alone, his thoughts running wild and unbridled. He sometimes considered his plan for revenge, sometimes thinking back to the times he spent with the Captain, sometimes recalling Old Neil's hidden grief beneath his humorous facade…

Unknowingly, Klein had entered the nearest street like a wandering ghost, making his way past turn after turn.

It was two hours later when he freed himself from that state and regained complete control of his thoughts.

He realized that he was standing on Daffodil Street. Opposite him was the house he shared with his brother and sister.

Instinctively, Klein had returned here.

He took a step forward with clear joy, but suddenly paused. He let out a bitter smile and muttered with a self-deprecating tone, "If I went up and knocked on the door, Melissa might faint from shock… Benson would be so nervous his hair would start to drop. He would then try his best to calmly convince me, in the name of a curly-haired baboon…"

Shaking his head, Klein stared at the familiar door for a while before heading towards Iron Cross Street.

This is fine too, this is fine too… The things that I do in the future will not implicate them. The compensation given to them by the Nighthawks team and the police department will be enough for them to live a stable middle-class life, even if Melissa fails to find a job and Benson loses his job…

Klein walked silently for a moment before starting to feel fatigue. But, as someone who was "dead," he didn't have any other belongings on him except for the clothes he was wearing, his topaz pendulum, and

Azik's copper whistle. He didn't have pounds, nor soli, nor pennies.

Should I give the whistle a blow to send a letter to Mr. Azik and get him to help me? Klein laughed optimistically. Forget it, I shouldn't contact him for the time being. Perhaps Ince Zangwill is still keeping him under surveillance. I'll look for him when the time is right… To an old monster who has lived countless lives for thousands of year, he should be able to understand resurrection… At least it's not too cold tonight. I'll make do by finding a place to sleep for the time being and head to the Tingen branch of the Backlund Bank tomorrow morning to retrieve the money in the anonymous account.

As there had been too many things to do lately. Klein hadn't had the time to start on the experiments involving the sacrificial ritual. He hadn't touched the 300 pounds in the anonymous account either.

That should be enough to support my expenses for quite a while. I'll buy a newspaper tomorrow to confirm what day it is… Miss Justice and the others didn't make any new prayers, which means that I didn't miss a gathering… Klein thought as he found a spot that had no wind. He sat down and took off his jacket. He used it as a blanket and leaned on the wall to sleep.

It wasn't long into his sleep when he was suddenly woken by someone. He saw a policeman wielding a baton.

He only had a single chevron on his epaulet, the lowest-ranking police constable… Klein glanced at him to ascertain his identity.

The policeman said fiercely, "You can't sleep here!

"The streets and parks aren't for you lazy, jobless vagrants to sleep in!

"Those are the terms in the Poor Law!"

Is that so? Klein froze. Given his sensitive identity, he didn't argue with the policeman.

He grabbed his jacket and continued walking until daybreak.

Soon after, he lowered his head and entered the Tingen branch of the Backlund Bank. He took out 200 pounds with the password he had set, leaving behind a third of the money as “savings,” in case of any emergencies.

Without a doubt, Klein heard “prayers” when he wrote the password in ancient Hermes.

Klein then spent 38 pounds on two sets of formal wear, two shirts, two trousers, two pairs of leather boots, two bow ties, four pairs of socks, as well as two thick double-breasted jackets, two solid colored fur coats, and two pairs of thick trousers in preparation for the winter. He also bought a cane, a wallet, and a leather luggage bag.

After completing his purchase, Klein found a hotel to wash up and change in. He rented a private carriage directly to the train station in Tingen in order to avoid meeting anyone familiar. Along the way, he purchased a newspaper and discovered that it was Sunday.

It took about four hours to get from Tingen to Backlund by train. A luxurious first-class seat cost about three-quarters of a pound, or 15 soli. A second-class seat cost 10 soli, or half a pound.

The packed, poorly-maintained third-class seats were rather cheap at only 5 soli.

Klein thought for a moment before buying a seat for the two o’clock train, a second-class seat.

Klein found a random spot to sit in the waiting area with his ticket and luggage in hand. It was only slightly after nine in the morning.

He was happy that the Loen Kingdom didn’t have a strict census. He could prove his identity just by using the water and gas bills, as well as his rent for the past three months. Purchasing a train ticket was even easier, as all he needed was money.

Klein suddenly had an empty feeling in his heart as he was sitting there, thinking about how he was about to leave for Backlund from Tingen in the afternoon.

He thought about his sister who always gave him a motherly vibe. He thought about his brother who liked to crack cold jokes. He thought about how they would fill their stomachs up so much that they wouldn't feel like moving…

Recalling these scenes, Klein suddenly laughed. He laughed bitterly, for he thought about the tortoise that Melissa called a "puppet," as well as Benson's pitiful hairline.

He suddenly had a strong urge. He wanted to see his siblings again.

At this moment, Klein suddenly realized why he hadn't picked an earlier train but instead bought a ticket for the two o'clock train.

He carried his luggage and left the waiting area quickly, taking a rented carriage back to Daffodil Street.

He then hid in a shady area on the opposite side and looked at the door to his house. There were many times when he felt like heading over, but he couldn't bring himself to cross the wide street.

Klein looked across the road in a daze, suddenly having a feeling of homelessness. He'd had a similar feeling when he had just transmigrated.

Suddenly, he saw the door to the house open as Melissa and Benson came out.

Melissa was wearing a black dress and black veiled hat. Benson was in a shirt, vest, trousers, coat, and hat, all in black. They both had numb, sullen expressions.

Melissa has become skinnier… Why is Benson so haggard… Klein's heart winced in pain. He opened his mouth but couldn't shout out their names.

Without realizing it, he followed Benson and Melissa to the nearest municipal square. He saw that tents had been erected there again. A new circus troupe was in town for a performance.

Benson took out some money and purchased the entrance tickets and led Melissa into the circus. He forced a smile.

“This circus troupe is very famous.”

Melissa nodded without expression.

“Okay.”

Suddenly, she slipped and almost fell.

Klein, who was also buying a ticket, opened his mouth. He wanted to help his sister, but he could only retract the hand he had instinctively extended and stood helplessly in the busy crowd.

Benson jumped in fright, but he was too late to help. However, Melissa quickly steadied herself. She puckered her lips and said nothing.

At this moment, clowns swarmed forward, some performing balancing acts on wheels or large rubber balls, others tossing countless tennis balls into the air, then ridiculously catching every one of them.

Melissa seemed to disregard the clowns as she looked at the performance. Benson tried to lift his sister’s spirits by cheering, but he didn’t succeed. He slowly turned sullen too.

Klein puckered his lips tightly as he watched this scene from afar. He wanted to approach them, but he didn’t dare to.

Suddenly, he touched the wallet in his jacket and had an idea.

Benson and Melissa continued walking forward, silently watching the various performances.

Some time later, they saw a clown running towards them. His face was painted in colorful pastels. At first, he threw a tennis ball into the air, and, while the attention of the surrounding people was drawn to the air, he conjured a flower out of thin air. It was a Seville Chrysanthemum.

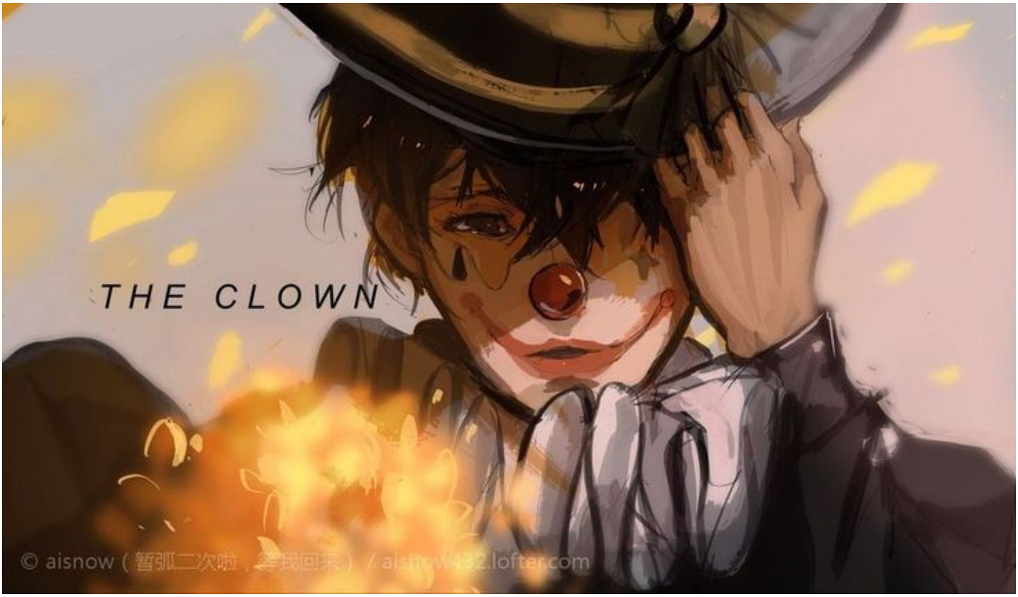
[image]

The clown brought the flower before Melissa and Benson. The flower was golden in color and symbolized happiness.

Melissa and Benson looked at the clown in a daze. All they saw was a wide smile plastered over the pastel face. It was a happy smile, an exaggerated smile, a ridiculous smile.

[image]

Clown - The End



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Author’s Notes:

First of all, I would like to thank all of you for your appreciation and subscription. I should have made a speech at the end of June, but I think the first one will be finished soon. I can write it together and wait until today.

This man, in his thirties, his energy, especially his mind, has really dropped a lot. At the time of the Throne of Magical Arcana, I wrote five chapters and 15,000 chapters a day, just like beating chicken blood. However, since the latter part of my life, I have written three chapters a day at most. Besides sleeping and eating, I was thinking about the plot and writing stories. As a result, I had abnormal mental states such as anxiety and depression. I was also able to adjust to it in time. At that time, I had old physical problems and stayed in the hospital for half a month.

Therefore, we can only compromise with our physical and mental conditions, one chapter in the morning, one chapter in the afternoon, rest in the evening, keep healthy, and then leave two copies to keep the update on time, avoid anxiety, and consider writing three chapters only when we are in good condition and have a clear mind.

In June, I can honestly say that my dog’s life is for the manuscript… For a whole month, I didn’t write three chapters for more than four days, and the rest depended on saving my manuscript. At last, the saved manuscript fell to the bottom line of two.

Well, I can only reluctantly say that let’s win by the quality…

With the update, it is the summary of the first book. Basically, what should be expressed has been expressed. The title of “Clown” runs through the whole situation. Hehe, you can look back at the testimony. I said that the various structures of this book are the most comprehensive I have considered, and they echo each other before and after. We will wait and see. Well, I think they are qualified.

The first one I've never tried before is written as a short story and medium story, with the overall consideration of embedding thread and layout design. Of course, the foreshadowing of the full text will certainly remain. In short, judging from the current results, the attempt is still successful, which is gratifying.

On the character, haha, I will not say more, or you'll be sent a blade…

Of course, there is some dissatisfaction. First, when the "party", "event", "practice" and "daily" began to show a fixed cycle, my feeling of writing decreased, and I believe the reading feeling was the same. Therefore, I tried to jump off the timeline, and after jumping, the initial cut was relatively crude, but gradually improved. Second, after the death of Old Neil, the overall tone showed the original gray, and then I cut into daily life, I feel a bit wrong, so I deleted some of the scheduled plots and speeded up the progress.

Secretly I set around six to eight books. The volume name of each book will be the name of the sequence, but it is not necessarily Klein's "Seer" pathway. It mainly depends on the theme or metaphor of the book.

Finally, the first part is finished. According to the usual practice, we need to take a leave of absence and rest, sort out the outline, find the second entry point, and work out the general plot. Well, rest for a day and a half, and resume the update at noon the day after tomorrow. Also, I will update some data of "0-08" on the Weixin Gongzhong later. It is not related to the work, but I afraid that the new readers will see it, and the first part will lose half of the fun. I will build a Sealed Artifacts form in the book review area. If you have any idea about the Sealed Artifacts, you can use it there. Maybe they will adopt, well, try not to copy the SCP foundation.

By the way, the second book is the "Faceless", please look forward to it

Also, after self-praise and self-criticism, shouldn't everyone encourage with the monthly ticket?

[image]

2024 SUMMER COMING SOON
"Can I compare you to summer"
"although you are more lovely and gentle than summer."
< 铁头鳟 & 私人稿件 >

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Chapter 214 - Land of Hope

* * *

Choo-choo!

A train whistle resounded in every corner of the station as a metal behemoth, in the form of a steam locomotive, came to a slow stop with more than twenty carriages in tow.

Dressed in a tuxedo and half top hat, Klein was carrying an exaggerated luggage bag that appeared incongruent with his figure. He took a firm step onto the ground of the Loen Kingdom's capital, Backlund.

This city was divided into two regions by the Tussock River which flowed to the southeast. The two lands were connected by the Backlund Bridge and ferries, with a population exceeding five million people. It was the most prosperous capital in the Southern and Northern Continents.

Klein looked far into the distance and saw faint yellow smog everywhere. Visibility was terrible, and the gas lamps hanging above the train platform were already lit to dispel the gloominess and darkness.

It's only half past six? It looks like it's nine or ten… Klein shook his head indiscernibly. Suddenly, he recalled a joke he read on the Tussock Times.

A gentleman who just arrived in Backlund finds himself lost in the thick smog. Helpless, he asks a drenched gentleman passing him by, "How do you get to the Tussock River?" The gentleman answers him in a friendly manner, “Walk straight without stopping. I just swam from there.”[1]

Every time I read Backlund newspapers or magazines, the reporters and editors will make a mockery of the polluted air or the increasing number of foggy days in every conceivable way possible… Previously, the Backlund Daily Tribune even did the statistics, and it was found that it has gone from about 60 days a year from thirty years ago to the present 75 days a year… For this, many farsighted people established organizations like the Soot Reduction Association, Smoke Reduction Association… Apparently, there was a bill in September that motioned the need to establish the National Atmospheric Pollution Council… Klein lowered his huge luggage bag and pinched his nose to gain respite from the sudden discomfort.

Then, tracing his golden chain, he fished out a golden pocket watch from his vest pocket. He popped it open and looked at the time.

When he truly bade farewell to his siblings, he had especially visited a department store and spent 4 pounds 10 soli to buy a golden pocket watch and matched it with a golden chain worth 1 pound 5 soli.

To not constantly be aware of the exact time made him feel a sense of horror.

Klein had planned on buying a silver pocket watch as he felt it matched his temperament. But after considering the true essence of a Clown, he finally chose a more showy and exaggerated golden watch.

6:39… It’s not that much later… Klein put away his pocket watch and held his cane and luggage bag as he slowly walked out the steam locomotive station with the crowd.

Suddenly, he made a sudden turn, causing a person who was secretly tailing him to have his hand fall empty when reaching for his pocket.

Klein was unfazed by this episode as he followed the cement-paved road and mixed into the crowd, arriving at an intersection in front of him.

There was a lawn and garden that circled around a column that resembled a chimney.

No, it's very likely a chimney… Klein saw the column spewing thick smoke from its top end.

A portion of the smoke floated high into the sky as a portion condensed into tiny liquid droplets that scattered everywhere.

Klein paused once again and placed his luggage down. He spread open the newspaper and map that he had held onto using his other hand.

While on the steam locomotive, he had already planned where he was going to go or what to do next.

The experiences that he had undergone, and the mental experience that he had, when disguised as a clown in the morning, made Klein finally understand the true essence of a Clown—"Although being capable of knowing a little about fate, one remains helpless towards fate; therefore, one might as well use a smiling face to hide all the pain, sorrow, confusion, and depression."

At that moment, he clearly felt the Clown potion "digest" and believed that if he continued "acting" this way, it wouldn't take long for him to make another attempt at advancing.

But herein lay the problem—he didn't know the corresponding name of the Sequence 7 potion, much less know its exact formula.

How should I obtain the formula? The Secret Order seldom appears. They only seem to be interested in the Antigonus family's items… This is also why others have little understanding of them. Yes… I should consider two aspects. One, I need to come into contact with the local Beyonder circles and see if I can find clues. Two, I should set a trap and use the Antigonus family's treasure as bait to lure the Secret Order out.

After all, I do possess knowledge of the strange vertical pupil formed from the numerous mysterious symbols.

But that's too risky. I need to be careful since the bait cannot be too good or too bad. It won't garner their interest if it's too bad, and if it's too good, I might end up attracting a shark, a shark that can swallow me whole… The Secret Order's leader, Zaratul, is a figure who guided Emperor Roselle. Maybe he had obtained the biggest slice of the pie during that revolutionary feast… Of course, he might not still be alive as that was something from two hundred years ago…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein felt the coldness of Backlund and couldn't help but shiver. He decided to find a residence as soon as possible.

He flipped through the papers and, once again, browsed through the rental section and saw a circled advertisement.

15 Minsk Street, Cherwood Borough… terrace house… Weekly rent of 18 soli…

Klein had thought this through very carefully about the area in which he was to stay in. Although Backlund had a population exceeding five million people, he still needed to be wary about meeting the local Nighthawks. Be it the newly transferred Daly or Lorotta, Aiur Harson, and Borgia that he previously met, they would definitely be able to recognize him.

Therefore, Klein eliminated the North Borough where the Church of Evernight's Backlund diocese's headquarters and Saint Samuel Cathedral, was. He also eliminated areas with the best security and the extremely strictly monitored Empress Borough and Western Borough. These two boroughs belonged to the nobles and the richest magnates, with more of the nobles living closer to Empress Borough.

After eliminating the worker areas, the harbor, and the East Borough and Backlund Bridge region where the poor gathered, Klein had few choices left. The first choice was Hillston Backlund where the Backlund

Stock Exchange, Clearing House, Futures Center, the seven major banks' headquarters, various Trust Funds, rail companies, and bulk cargo commerce companies were. It was known as the financial, business, and economic center of the Loen Kingdom. The second choice was Cherwood Borough where there were many small companies and residential buildings.

The two boroughs had a lot of people in them, and the security was relatively good. It was good for hiding in. After serious consideration, Klein chose the cheaper Cherwood Borough.

The reason why he didn't seek out organizations like the Capital Housing Improvement Company or Capital Housing Improvement Association was due to the fact that they needed identification which he couldn't produce at the moment.

If I can't find a place to rent today, I'll find a motel that doesn't need any identification to stay for the night… Klein gathered the things in his hand and carried his luggage. According to the map, he walked towards what seemed like a department store's entrance.

That was the Backlund Metro's entrance.

Yes, a metro!

The first time Klein saw the word "metro" on the newspapers and magazines, he nearly jumped in fright. He never expected that such a transportation vehicle had become a reality in this era which hadn't entered the age of electricity.

It was born twenty-five years ago. It first connected both banks of the Tussock River and had now expanded to the key city boroughs. Of course, there weren't many stations.

Through the main door, Klein followed the people ahead of him as he walked to the ticketing booth.

After being in line for a few minutes, he finally saw a cashier with a head with beautiful golden hair.

The lady didn't raise her head. All she did was point at the wooden board by the side of the window with the prices.

Peak period (7am-9am, 6pm-8pm): 10-minute headway.

15-minute headway for all other times.

First-class seat: 6 pence

Second-class seat: 4 pence

Third-class seat: 3 pence.

Return trips are respectively: 9, 6, 5 pence.

Annual Pass

First-class: 8 pounds

Second-class: 5 pounds 10 soli

Third-class: No Annual Pass

It's cheaper than I imagined… There's actually no distance restriction… Melissa would definitely love this more than a horse carriage. This is the culmination of machinery… Klein thought as he suddenly felt upset.

He revealed a brilliant smile and fished out 4 pence and handed it to the cashier.

"Second-class seat."

Smack! The cashier tore a ticket and stamped it before handing it to Klein.

After finding the line that led to Cherwood Borough and passing through the not-very-strict security checks, Klein went down the flight of stairs and quickly came to the platform. He followed the labels on the ground and found the corresponding location for second-class seats.

Choo-choo!

He didn’t wait long before he heard the chugging sound of the train and the thunderous steam whistle. He saw a huge steam locomotive

Its large and meandering body, together with its black metallic luster and complex machinery, mixed together to form a unique beauty.

Backlund’s metro still used steam locomotives. The smoke that they spewed was specially designed to enter a pipe above and travel through a chimney, out into the world.

This was also the true usage for the lawn and garden out on the streets.

Amidst the screeching sound of metal, Klein first waited for the passengers to alight before carrying his cane and luggage over slowly. He then allowed the conductor to check his tickets.

Unlike the third-class seats, the second-class seats were one person to a seat, so there were no concerns about having one’s seat snatched. Just as Klein sat down, stowed away his luggage, and leaned on his cane, he suddenly heard hurried footsteps.

He subconsciously looked towards the door and saw a thin, adolescent boy rush into the carriage.

The boy was wearing a coat that didn’t suit his age. He wore a rounded top hat and carried a ragged haversack. He kept his head very low.

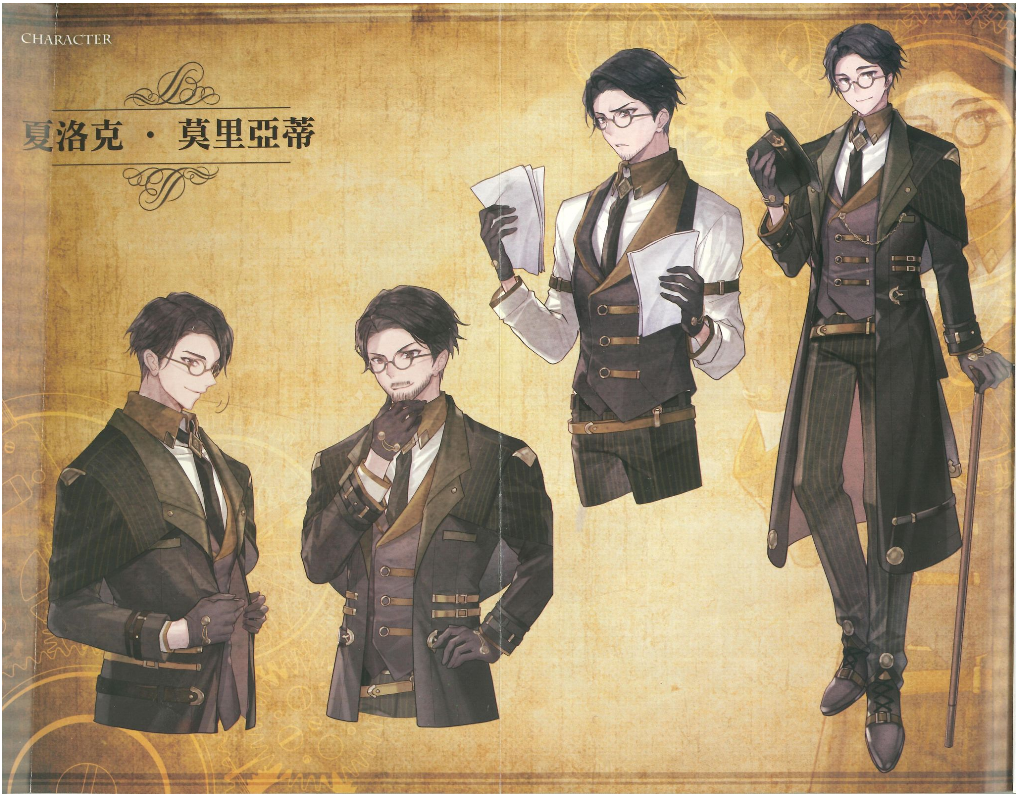
“I’m sorry. I got on the wrong carriage. I’m from third-class…” He showed his ticket and apologized to the passengers before briskly walking towards the third-class carriage.

Klein retracted his gaze and once again confirmed his destination as he waited for the doors to the carriage to close.

At that moment, he heard chaotic and hurried footsteps. He then saw a few men dressed in black coats and half top hats rush into the carriage.

Are they chasing after that fifteen-year-old boy? Klein instinctively had such a thought.

He shook his head gently and continued reading his newspapers and map, just like the other passengers onboard the carriage.



Joke adapted from English magazine ‘Punch’.

Chapter 215 - Mrs. Sammer

* * *

“Did you see a teenage boy? He’s wearing an old coat!” One of the men who dashed into the carriage asked the conductor fiercely.

Klein glanced at the man through the corner of his eyes. He was thin and hardy; his skin a dark shade from prolonged exposure to the sun. His eyes were much more recessed than the typical Loen Kingdom citizen.

A highlander? Or a mixed blood? He nodded thoughtfully.

In the middle of the Northern Continent, the point where the Hornacis mountain range began, there was a highland which was extremely hot and dry. Most of it belonged under the Feynapotter Kingdom, while the area west belonged to the Intis Republic. The area to the east belonged to the Loen Kingdom. Its natives were thin and barbarians, but they were brave and skillful in warfare. A long time ago, they posed as one of the biggest problems for the three nations. But with the advancement of gunpowder, and the changes in the way war was carried out, these highlanders eventually recognized reality and submitted.

A large number of them left the highlands and entered Backlund, Trier, Feynapotter City, and the various flourishing cities or ports in the Northern Continent. Some were workers, while others became grunts of the local triads. They dared to kill and showed no fear of thorny situations.

The conductor was a man in his twenties. He shrank back when he heard that as he pointed in the direction of the third-class carriage.

“I saw him… He went that way.”

The leader, wearing a black coat and half top hat, nodded indiscernibly. He led his men and rushed to the third-class carriage and showed no concern towards the surrounding passengers.

If I were that boy, I would’ve already alighted from the third-class carriage… As Klein read his newspaper, he began letting his thoughts stray.

About a minute later, the train whistled as the carriage doors closed.

Chug! Chug! The steam metro began speeding up as it cruised along. But at that moment, Klein suddenly sensed something as he looked up to see the door leading to the other second-class carriages.

The teenage boy walked slowly into the carriage wearing his old coat and round top hat while carrying a ragged haversack.

He looked adolescent and had refined facial features. His red eyes were staid and solemn.

…Impressive. He alighted from the third-class carriage and circled around to enter from the first-class carriage again? Was he afraid that his pursuers had partners waiting inside the metro station? Klein was slightly surprised. He felt that the boy’s handling of the situation was rather mature and careful. He was much better than most people in their twenties.

He clicked this left molar lightly and secretly activated his Spirit Vision. He scanned the boy and saw that he was in a state of fatigue. His emotions were tense and he was dispirited. However, he still maintained a blueness that represented calm thinking.

Impressive… at his age… Klein mumbled silently as he lowered his head and continued reading his papers.

The boy didn’t notice that he had been scrutinized by a Beyonder as he headed for the third-class carriage once again.

The rest of the journey happened stably and calmly. Klein arrived twenty minutes later at one of the three train stations in Cherwood Borough.

He took a rented carriage for nearly ten minutes before finding Minsk Street. According to the descriptions in the papers, he came to Unit 17 which was next to Unit 15 and pulled the doorbell.

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

As sounds reverberated inside the house, a mechanical bird that didn't look too fancy popped out from above the door. It was about the size of a palm and was made up of gears and other parts. It constantly nodded its head and let out the sound of a cuckoo bird.

Not a bad toy. It's just not very well-crafted… Klein made an objective assessment.

Nearly twenty seconds later, the dark door was pulled open. A young maidservant dressed in white and black looked warily at Klein and asked, "May I help you?"

Klein smiled and waved his cane which was now wrapped with the newspapers.

"I'm here to find Mrs. Sammer about renting a house. I'm guessing it hasn't been rented out?"

The full name on the newspaper was Stelyn Sammer.

"Not at all. Please wait a moment." The maidservant bent her back politely.

She rushed inside and reported to her mistress. Moments later, she came out again and ushered him in. She then helped him place his cane and luggage in the foyer and hung his coat and hat on a clothes rack in the same place.

A warm blast of air inundated him, dispersing the chill Klein had brought in. He scanned the area and first saw a uniquely designed fireplace. He saw pieces of red, smokeless charcoal burning inside.

Sammer's living room was rather big. It was nearly equivalent to the entire Moretti's first floor in area. Certain areas were decorated with carpets or oil paintings of beautiful sceneries.

The maidservant brought Klein to the sofa and said to her mistress in a pale yellow dress, "Madam, the guest is here."

The mistress was in her thirties. She had blonde hair and blue eyes. She looked rather pretty and had preserved her youthfulness well. She held a silver-inlaid feathered royal fan in her hand.

As she was at home, and the fireplace made for a warm environment, she didn't wear anything around her neck, revealing her white bosom and shiny long neck.

"Hello there, Mrs. Sammer." Klein pressed one palm to his chest and bowed.

Mrs. Sammer smiled in a reserved manner.

"Good evening. Please, have a seat. Do you wish for some coffee or tea?"

Klein sat on the sofa and answered frankly, "Tea, please."

"Julianne, Marquis Black Tea," Instructed Mrs. Sammer. She then turned her eyes to Klein and asked, "How might I address you?"

"Sherlock Moriarty. You can call me Sherlock." Klein had long thought of a fake name.

At that moment, he caught a whiff of a fragrance from the kitchen and saw complicated pipes.

“Heh, heh, those are my husband’s designs. Although his actual job is a manager at the Coim Company, he’s a machinery enthusiast. He’s also a member of the Kingdom’s Soot Reduction Association.” Mrs. Sammer noticed Klein’s gaze and explained with a smile.

Mrs, there’s no need to go into such detail. I’m not here on a blind date with your husband… Klein lampooned as he said without his smile waning, “Mrs. Sammer, I wish to rent the Unit 15.”

Mrs. Sammer straightened her back as she sat elegantly. She said with a smile, “I have to remind you of certain things. Unit 15 doesn’t have such pipes, reclining chairs, card tables, mahogany kitchen cabinets, fine porcelain, silver cutlery, gold-plated tea sets, or removable carpets…”

She pointed at the things in her house as she introduced them, one after another. After she was done, she added,

“It originally belonged to my elder sister and brother-in-law, but due to a business failure, my brother-in-law had no choice but to move to the Southern Continent. They have a plantation at Balam. However, I don’t agree with their choice. This is just too unfair for my niece and nephew. There are no good grammar schools there; not even a good home tutor.”

Mrs, that’s not something I would like to know… Klein nodded sincerely and said, “Apart from the weather, there’s no place in the Southern Continent that can compare with Backlund.”

His agreement satisfied Mrs. Sammer greatly as her eyes darted slightly.

“This house still has a three years lease. I wish for you to pay a year’s rent at once. 18 soli a week. The use of the furniture will cost 1 soli. I can collect a deposit of 50 pounds.”

Klein shook his head and smiled.

“Mrs. Sammer, you should be able to tell that I just arrived in Backlund. I don’t know what will happen to me in time. To pay 50 pounds for a deposit will lower my ability to resist any risks. My limit is half a year. 25 pounds."

He still planned on renting another one-bedroom apartment in Backlund's East Borough. He would use it to change his clothes, undergo disguises, and shirk off any tailing. It was necessary for what he planned to do.

Stelyn Stelyn nodded slightly and asked, "Have you studied at grammar school?"

Klein chuckled and said, "Yes, I later self-studied history."

"Do you have any identification with you?" asked Stelyn casually.

"I'm sorry. I was in a hurry when I left home and forgot to bring it with me. Heh, heh, I forgot to introduce myself. I'm from Midseashire." Klein deliberately used the accent his classmate, Welch, often used.

When he said "forgot," it reminded him of Captain Dunn Smith. The smile on his face turned even more brilliant.

At this moment, the maidservant, Julianne, brought a cup of black tea over. The cup was porcelain-white with classic flowery patterns. Some areas were plated in gold.

Klein took a sip and found the fragrance distant. The mix of sourness and sweetness were perfect, and it was clearly much better than the Sibe black tea he often drank.

"Very authentic Marquis Black Tea." He complimented with a description which couldn't be faulted.

Mrs. Stelyn Sammer curled her lips and said, "Then, let's do half a year's rent. 25 pounds."

Klein thanked her and engaged in a few minutes of idle chatter with her until another maidservant found a service contract from the study.

After both parties signed the contract, Klein counted 25 pounds while feeling the pinch and pushed it to Mrs. Sammer.

Stelyn counted it silently before smiling.

"Mr. Moriarty, I believe you'll be finding a job in Backlund?"

"Yes," Klein answered, feeling a little lost.

The corners of Stelyn's mouth hooked up.

"I can give you some suggestions. With a weekly salary lower than 3 pounds, it would be difficult for you to live in Cherwood Borough. Your rent, food expenses, water, gas, and charcoal expenses, transport expenses, and everything else added up will cost at least 2 pounds 5 soli. Believe me, this is Backlund. One still has to consider new clothes and good cutlery and tea sets… A weekly salary of 3 pounds is the bare minimum.

"If your weekly salary reaches 5 pounds, you can hire a lady's maid. At 6 pounds, you can consider hiring a chef. At 7 pounds, you can add a footman. For 8 pounds, you can hire an additional lady's maid…"

Mrs. Sammer, I think you are flaunting your wealth… I once earned more than 10 pounds a week… Klein maintained his smile as he listened attentively.

At that moment, the door suddenly opened. A stout man walked in, he was dressed in a black double-breasted suit and leather gloves of the same color. Above his lips were two elegant mustaches.

"Luke, this is Mr. Moriarty. He will be our neighbor," Stelyn Sammer went forward and introduced him.

Obviously the master of the house, Luke took off his coat and handed it to the valet behind him. He smiled politely and said, "Mr. Moriarty, would you like to join us for dinner?"

This is the manager of some Coim Company, a member of the Loen Kingdom's Soot Reduction Association… Klein said with a smile, "I'm very sorry, Mr. Sammer. I've eaten on the steam locomotive; although, that taste does leave a deep impression on one."

After exchanging some pleasantries, Klein was led by Julianne out of the house and into the neighboring Unit 15.

The layout was very similar to the unit next door. The first floor had a huge living room, a dining room with decent lighting, two guest rooms, a bathroom, a cellar, a kitchen that extended all the way back. On the second floor, there were four bedrooms, an activity room, a solarium, a study, two bedrooms, and a huge balcony.

"Mrs. Sammer wishes to tell you that you can rent out part of it, but not to workers or make this place too packed or noisy. Oh… I'll bring you clean blankets, sheets, and pillow cases in a while." Julianne returned to the Sammers after informing Klein.

After doing a round of packing, Klein finally settled into Backlund.

He sat in an empty living room and suddenly felt lonely. Hence, he forced himself to consider his future plans.

Whether he liked it or not, revenge and advancement couldn't be done in the blink of an eye. Therefore, he had to obtain a lucrative job to prevent himself from facing any financial problems.

However, the job couldn't restrict him and affect his movements and plans. In other words, he needed sufficient freedom.

After some deliberation and eliminating unsuitable jobs, Klein was left with three choices.

He could become an author by becoming a plagiarist. However, his identity was sensitive, so the more famous he became, the more trouble it meant. All he could do was give up unwillingly.

The second choice was to be a news reporter. This was considered quite a decent job in this time and age. However, job applications required his educational certificates and other documents. Klein was helpless in that respect.

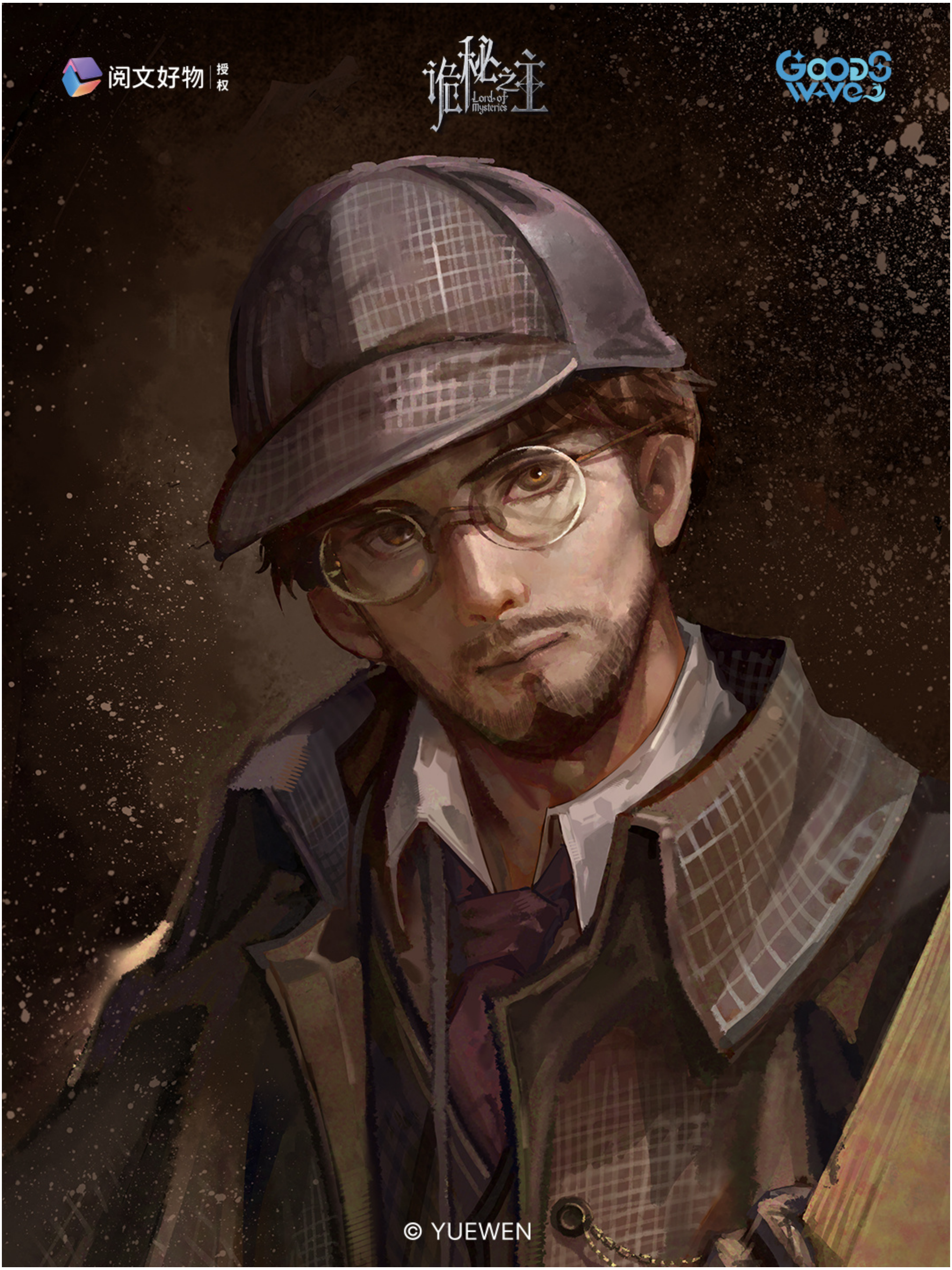
Finally, he chose the third job.

Private detective!

This was also the reason why he had taken on a fake name.

ARACTER
斯塔琳 · 薩默爾

Sherlock Moriarty potrait:


阅文好物 授权
诡秘之主
Lord of Mysteries
GOODS WAVE
© YUEWEN

Chapter 216 - The Same-old Gathering

◆

Klein started his first morning in Backlund under cold and humid weather conditions, with a light fog that provided very little visibility. For breakfast, he had one liter worth of cheap tea, costing one penny, and two pieces of toast with inferior butter in the center.

He was busy the entire morning, but he first went to the Cherwood Borough's Backlund Bulletin to post a tiny advertisement for a month at the cost of thirty pounds.

From Tuesday, the Backlund Bulletin's loyal readers would see a tiny advertisement along the seams of its seventh and eighth page.

Sherlock Moriarty. Good at various types of private investigations. Reasonable prices and strictly adheres to the principles of confidentiality. Resides at Cherwood Borough's 15 Minsk Street.

The reason why Klein didn't choose major newspapers like the Tussock Times or the Backlund Daily Tribune, that had a readership all across the entirety of the Loen Kingdom, was due to the fact that his business was temporarily limited to Backlund. Furthermore, he didn't wish for a sterling reputation.

Therefore, the Backlund Bulletin, which was well-received locally and had low advertisement fees, became his first choice.

After leaving the Backlund Bulletin's headquarters, Klein took out a map and followed it to purchase various herb powders and silver slices from various herbal stores, flower stores, jewelry stores, and accessory stores. He did it in preparation for holding a ritual. When items that didn’t have any spirituality were involved, most of the materials in mysticism could be purchased from ordinary stores. However, they weren’t all under one roof, requiring him to visit many stores to collect them.

To do so, Klein spent another 5 pounds. The humongous sum of 200 pounds that he withdrew broke below the 100 pound mark, leaving him only with 92 pounds.

“Spending money is as easy as drinking water…” Klein found a small cafeteria nearby and ordered a black pepper steak worth 8 pence.

He returned to 15 Minsk Street at one in the afternoon, and without rest, he spent his time using Slumber flower, dragon blood grass, dark red sandalwood, and mint powders to create Holy Night Powder, a key ingredient needed to create a wall of spirituality.

He could only make do with this method until he bought a real silver ritual dagger.

Klein speculated that he would have to advance to Sequence 7 before he could do away with this restriction.

Phew, Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and The Sun haven’t requested for leave yet. The gathering will be held on time today… I wonder what surprises Mr. Hanged Man will bring me, and how many pages of Roselle’s diary he can provide… Klein laid back on his bed in the bedroom and thought about all sorts of things.

To him, a private detective was a career that took into account both money and action. It allowed him to get in touch with people from all walks of life and slowly discover the Beyonder circle in Backlund. From there, he could slowly find clues regarding the Secret Order.

Of course, if he was lucky, he would even be able to figure out the Sequence 7 which corresponded to the Clown through a particular circle of Beyonders and buy the corresponding potion formula and main ingredients.

As for Ince Zangwill's whereabouts, Klein temporarily chose not to take the initiative to seek him out. He might even avoid him a little. However, if he were to accidentally discover this enemy of his, without exposing himself, he wouldn't mind doing a good deed and sending an anonymous letter to the Church of Evernight.

A private detective's income can, at most, support a middle-class standard of living. If I want enough money to buy the potion formula and Beyonder materials, It will either depend on Miss Justice, or it will be through investments with the remaining 100 pounds that I have left in my anonymous account… Yes, I can't touch the 92 pounds that I have for the time being. Perhaps, I wouldn't be having any income for some time… With this in mind, Klein suddenly sat up. He came to the first floor and began reading the various newspapers he bought in passing.

These newspapers often carried news about what had been invented and required investments, or how someone wished to form a joint venture with others to do a particular business.

Klein relied on his knowledge from Earth and his understanding of this era to carefully sift through the projects. Unfortunately, none of the ones on the papers today were reliable.

At fifteen minutes to three, he returned to his bedroom, locked the door, drew the curtains, and used Holy Night Powder to create a wall of spirituality.

Klein took four steps counterclockwise and arrived above the gray fog. He sat in the high-back chair belonging to The Fool before extending his spirituality and touching the crimson star that symbolized The Sun as if he was responding to a prayer.

This is one of the few things in my new life that hasn't changed… he suddenly sighed.

†

In an area outside of the City of Silver, in a grayish-black tower that was half-collapsed.

Nine members of a patrol squad were gathered around a blazing bonfire, chatting about their experiences in the past few days.

There were also a few other team members guarding the perimeter, prepared for any possible attacks that might break out from the darkness.

Many of the City of Silver's Beyonders had used their blood to teach them a lesson:

"At all times, never let your guard down. The monsters in the darkness could very well be right behind you!"

On a night when the frequency of lightning was very low, it was necessary to keep the flames burning and the light shining. Once they were completely enveloped in darkness, it wasn't impossible for them to all disappear—no one could say for sure just what terrible things would happen in total darkness, because reality had broken the limits of their imagination time and time again.

Derrick Berg remained reserved and silent as he quietly listened to his companions reminiscing about the monster they had encountered before. It was a humanoid monster with eyes covering its entire body.

In order to finish off the monster, their patrolling team suffered a heavy price with five injured, and two of them severely injured.

Suddenly, Derrick's vision blurred, and he felt himself being enveloped in a thick gray mist.

In an inexplicably faraway place, in the depths of the gray fog, a blurry figure sat on an ancient high-back chair, looking down at him.

“Prepare for the gathering.”

The Fool’s voice echoed in Derrick’s ears, but none of his teammates were aware of it.

After withdrawing his gaze and observing the area for more than ten seconds, Derrick moved to the very edge of the fire, leaned against the broken wall, and pretended to be asleep.

Ever since he found out that the members of the six-member council and Elder Lovia were unable to discover the existence of Mr. Fool, he gradually believed that as long as he didn’t carelessly reveal any clues, he would be able to quietly attend the Tarot Club’s gathering above the gray fog even under the gaze of others.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Using the excuse that she was tired, Audrey returned to her bedroom.

She curbed her excitement and didn’t pace back and forth; instead, she sat quietly on the bed, waiting for Mr. Fool’s summoning.

Father was busy communicating with the other Members of Parliament about the proposed bill, and the Beyonder guard isn’t tailing me constantly. Thank you Goddess; my life has finally returned to normal! Two weeks have passed, Mr. Hanged Man must’ve prepared the pituitary gland of a mature Rainbow Salamander… I’m about to advance to Sequence 8! Audrey thought with sparkling eyes.

To her, this was even more exciting and worth looking forward to than the thirty thousand pound bounty and the large plantation worth at least 8,000 pounds!

Finally, she saw the familiar illusory crimson surge towards her like a tidal wave, drowning her.

†

On an ancient-looking sailboat.

Alger Wilson locked the door to the captain's cabin and sat behind a sextant and the ship logs. He kept memorizing the contents of the thick stack of sheets in front of him.

After the investigations, he left the bustle of Backlund without any qualms after being rewarded by the upper echelons and returned to the sea, carrying a batch of secretly copied Roselle diary pages.

After digesting the Seafarer potion, I'll be able to advance normally. My contributions are enough for me to trade for the formula and ingredients… However, this will expose the fact that I know the "acting method." There are advantages and disadvantages… Alger shook his head, suddenly distracted.

At that moment, he felt the summoning of The Fool. His mind suddenly recalled the face of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos whose flesh and blood quickly rotted as pieces of his face peeled off.

Alger instinctively lowered his head, allowing the crimson tide to engulf him.

†

Above the gray fog, inside the palace that looked like a giant's residence.

Having activated his Spirit Vision, Klein examined Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun to confirm their current states.

Audrey was about to happily greet everyone when she suddenly saw The Hanged Man gesturing to her before rushing to speak before her.

"Mr. Fool, I've obtained nineteen pages of Roselle's diary this time.

"Here, I must thank you for sending your Blessed to help me get rid of

Qilangos. These diary pages will be the compensation I should pay!"

19 pages? Not bad… Klein didn't talk much about the Blessed as he smiled faintly.

"That is the principle of equivalent exchange."

As expected of Mr. Fool… A Pirate Admiral with a mystical item was nothing to "Him"… From the looks of it, I don't have to mention my claiming of the bounty… I wonder how many High-Sequence Beyonders Mr. Fool has as "His" Blessed… Audrey had begun to use the word "He," "Him," or "His" to refer to The Fool without realizing it.

Upon hearing The Fool's answer, Alger said humbly, "The limit of my current memory is six pages. Please allow me to give them to you over separate occasions."

"No problem." Klein, who was surrounded by thick gray fog, nodded gently.

The Sun Derrick looked at the pages that appeared before The Hanged Man and was very curious about the contents of the diary.

With his previous experiences, he believed that the items that Mr. Fool was interested in definitely contained many mysteries.

He looked at Miss Justice and when he saw that she didn't have the impulse to ask, he cautiously maintained his silence.

Soon, the six pages of the diary were complete and came into Klein's hands.

Audrey and the others began to wait quietly. They were already used to such things.

Klein looked down and read the first page:

"16th December. I managed to contact the pathetic fellow who's trapped in the storm and was lost in the darkness."

Finally, there’s a follow-up to one of the previous pages of the diary… Klein was delighted, and he became more focused:

“He called himself Mr. Door and tried to teach me a complicated and difficult ritual. He wanted me to help him return to the real world and promised to fulfill three of my requests.

“Does he think I’m stupid? I’ve lived for more than sixty years over my two lives. Does he think I can’t tell that this is the usual manipulation done by evil gods and devils?

“But the history of the Fourth Epoch that he described was truly interesting.”

Chapter 217 - Mr. Door's Description

◆ ◆ ◆

Mr. Door… This naming style is very similar to mine… I wonder what was the real name of this pathetic fellow who was lost and trapped in the deep darkness amidst the storms is, and what his Sequence is. Or rather, just as Emperor Roselle had guessed, he's one of the evil gods or devils… Klein let out a silent chuckle which was mixed with ridicule and self-deprecating humor. He was also interested in the history of the Fourth Epoch.

"I know of the most famous 'War of the Four Emperors' in the Fourth Epoch, but the specific details and the main figures involved are limited to the information spread by the major Churches. For example, the 'Black Emperor' of the Solomon Empire.

"It wasn't until today that this so-called Mr. Door finally answered my questions by letting me know who the remaining three emperors are. The half-insane Blood Emperor of the Tudor Dynasty, the Night Emperor of the Trunsoest Empire, and the Emperor of the Underworld of the Southern Continent, also known as Death.

"According to Mr. Door's description, in this war that changed the situation of the entire world, the Black Emperor, Blood Emperor and Night Emperor fell one after another. The Emperor of the Underworld reaped the greatest benefits.

"Having said that, Mr. Door added with profound significance that after over a century of 'digestion,' Death went mad, but he also became stronger. Therefore, Death teamed up with the Primordial Demoness and brought about a Pale Disaster for the Northern Continent. Of course, this isn't something he witnessed personally, but rather something that he hears when he comes close to the real world every month.

"Death went mad, but also became stronger!

"Even deities can go mad?

"What a horrifying sentence!

"However, this also confirms my guess. Before the Fifth Epoch, those deities would often descend into the real world, directly interfering with the situation in the Northern and Southern Continents. They might even personally appear just like Death.

"I asked Mr. Door if he had participated in the 'War of the Four Emperors'? If so, what role did he play? And what was the position the seven deities maintained in this war? What role did they play?

"Mr. Door didn't answer my question. He only said in a teasing manner that the number of pre-eminent mighty figures in the Fourth Epoch far exceeds my imagination.

"In addition, he also mentioned two laws, one is the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility, and the other is the Law of Similar Sequence Beyonder Characteristics Conservation, which is consistent with certain things that I have learned from that most secret and ancient organization, and also from some of the phenomena I have observed. Heh, this can lead to many interesting conclusions, making many explanations take on other forms, making one's mind tremble in horror. For example, when there are too many High-Sequence Beyonders in the same Sequence pathway, the Low-Sequence Beyonders would reduce, and vice-versa.

"…The Beyonder Characteristics had been fixed at the source. It will not increase or decrease. Does this mean that there really is a God who created all the deities, an omnipotent and omniscient God, and everything originated from Him?"

This was the longest Roselle diary that Klein had ever seen. It took up two full pages, and one could imagine that it originally came on a double-sided page. It only became two separate pages after repeated copying.

That's a lot of information… Klein sighed silently.

As a history student who had graduated normally, he had always believed that the Solomon Empire, the Tudor Dynasty, and the Trunsoest Empire came one after the other in a line, with a certain degree of restoration before a new political outcome was established. To his surprise, the War of the Four Emperors described by Mr. Door clearly and unambiguously revealed one thing—all three empires had existed at the same time!

If this were true, then it would really overturn most of the current research on the Fourth Epoch in the field of history. Klein suddenly thought of the original Klein, who was filled with interest towards archeology and the history regarding the Fourth Epoch.

Today, I've helped him achieve his wish… I wonder if Death had already become a true deity during the War of the Four Emperors. It's hard to determine according to Mr. Door's descriptions. I can only first assume that the Emperor of the Underworld, who had obtained benefits from the War of the Four Emperors, had broken through his limits and become a deity, but "He" also went mad as a result…

To have a deity go mad was truly terrifying. Just thinking about the details makes one tremble from the bottom of their heart! It's no wonder that the knowledgeable Emperor Roselle would use the word "horrifying" to describe this matter…

Could it be that the so-called evil gods were crazy orthodox deities?

Would that mean that there might only be evil gods left in this world one day…

Man, does this mean that the end of days cannot be stopped?

Klein smiled to hide the growing solemnity of his emotions. He felt that the future he imagined was filled with a dark gray hue.

At the same time, he raised his evaluation of the Black Emperor, Blood Emperor, and Night Emperor, believing them to be the pre-eminent mighty figures who were close to being deities.

Perhaps that means Sequence 1 is the peak existence of a single pathway. According to this logic, for Black Emperor to live for centuries or over a millennium wouldn't be unacceptable. That would explain the original Klein's confusion. He had obtained contradictory findings from the content recorded in the Antigonus family's notebook with his own mentor's viewpoint. He believed that the Black Emperor was the common name used by every emperor of the Solomon Empire… Perhaps, the Black Emperor had always been the same Black Emperor… Of course, other possibilities cannot be eliminated. For example, they could've been replaced two or three times, but is the name of that pathway's Sequence 1, Black Emperor?

I wonder who Mr. Door is in the history of the Fourth Epoch… Emperor Roselle didn't go into detail when describing his erroneous experiments and accidental coincidences, making it impossible for me to even try to converse with that Mr. Door.

The Laws of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Similar Sequence Beyonder Characteristics Conservation shares the same description as the one used by the Captain. Perhaps, the term he used came from Emperor Roselle.

According to the two laws described by Mr. Door, we can indeed deduce a lot of interesting speculations. For example, with there being so many holy artifacts and High-Sequence Beyonders in the Seven Churches, there shouldn't be many Low-Sequence Beyonders. But this contradicts reality, and the only reasonable explanation is an additional gift from the deities?

For example, is the destruction of the Nation of the Evernight due to the Conservation of Characteristics, that the mere possession of resources causes it to be in trouble? Or could it be said that their existence seriously weakens the potency of the Evernight pathway and threatens the position of the Goddess?

For example, theoretically speaking, certain Sealed Artifacts could also be used as the main ingredients for potion materials, or they can even be considered equivalent to potions. Of course, the prerequisite is to remove all latent dangers and madness.

†

No wonder the documents that were unearthed called the Fourth Epoch, "the Epoch of the Gods." So it turns out that in this epoch, there are many records of deities descending.

Then what caused them to stop coming, to the point of there not being any revelations?

If it wasn't for the fact that Beyonders receive responses from ritualistic magic, perhaps many of them would've doubted the existence of the deities…

Many ideas came to Klein suddenly as he felt that he had delved deeper into the realm of mysticism in this Beyonder world.

He flipped through the next four pages and was disappointed to realize that they were no longer related to Mr. Door.

His ability as a Clown allowed him to conceal his emotions well, and coupled with the gray fog's obstruction, even Audrey, who was secretly observing him, didn't notice anything amiss.

He gathered his chaotic thoughts and started reading the third page of the diary:

“10th September. I’ve endured it for a long time, but I still can’t help but complain a little.

“I must’ve had f**king sh*t for brains to chose the Savant path, right?

“Of course, this has indeed allowed me to develop my greatest advantage, allowing the Church to attach great importance to me. But the problem is that the first few Sequences lack any Beyonder powers needed for combat. I can only make do by relying on mystical items and rely way too much on external items.

“For example, Sequence 9 Savant only has extraordinary abilities in memory, learning, and practical skills. For example, Sequence 8 Archaeologist gains a strong physique and corresponding ancient knowledge, and they can only barely apply some ritualistic magic. For example, Sequence 7 Appraiser, whose ability is to quickly identify mystical objects, allowing them to avoid hidden dangers to the greatest extent. For example, Sequence 6 Artisan, who can produce machinery wonder but not very powerful Beyonder objects. Apart from that, one’s standard in ritualistic magic will be enhanced. It’s no wonder its modern name is Machinery Specialist.

“Comparatively speaking, the Sequence 7 Warlock and Sequence 6 Scrolls Professor of the Mystery Pryer pathway are sufficiently tempting. It would be great if only the Church has the complete Sequence and that the Hidden Sage doesn’t exist.

“However, I finally received some good news. After I advance again, I’ll gain Beyonder powers combat powers that I can call my own. Sequence 5 Astromancer!

“Its modern name scares me a little. It’s actually called Astronomer…

“Am I going to end up as an all-powerful mad scientist?

“Heavens have mercy on me. I was only a second-tier student at the college entrance examination!

It had to be said that Emperor Roselle had a strange talent for making jokes. Even the recently dispirited Klein couldn’t help but twitch his mouth, wishing to light a candle for this senior.

Study hard and improve by the day is indeed a wise saying… He lampooned and remembered the unique trait of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery.

They lacked Beyonder powers when it came to combat, but they were good at making and using items.

After flipping to the third page of the diary, Klein continued reading.

“2nd June, the kingdom has created chaos, again and again, instigating wars without being able to completely destroy the Feysac Empire, the Loen Kingdom, and the Feynapotter Kingdom. As such, the kingdom has no choice but to shoulder huge debts, and its economy is on the verge of collapse.

“From my observations, the people, merchants, and soldiers are very dissatisfied. The riots are just lacking a spark! This is my chance.

“But I have to be very careful. The Sauron family has witnessed the history of the Fourth Epoch and is an ancient family with a high possibility of having High-Sequence Beyonders. I need the support of the Church, as well as gain a tacit agreement with the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

“I can’t appear immediately. First, I’ll let the rebels destroy order before I end it all as a protector. Consul Roselle Gustav. I like that name.”

Chapter 218 - Free General Knowledge

◈ ◈ ◈

“June 3rd. After discussing with Edwards and the others, I gave up on the idea of reaching a tacit understanding with the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun. This might very well reveal my true intentions, making the Sauron family and the ancient nobles who support them aware of them in advance and carry out a direct approach. That would make matters extremely difficult and dangerous.

“It’s a pity that Grimm died in the Sea of Fog. He was the smartest among us.

“Descend into chaos! Descend! Only with everything in chaos will I get the chance to fish in troubled waters! Only when the Sauron family is incapable of handling this situation will the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun reluctantly acknowledge me!

“Perhaps I should give some help to those rebels, but how should I conceal myself so that no one would notice?

“June 4th, Zaratul from the Secret Order came to visit me in incognito very suddenly.”

†

And then? Klein was just feeling intrigued over the reason why Zaratul—leader of the Secret Order—would seek Roselle on the eve of the rebellion and coup d’état when he realized that the two subsequent pages had nothing to do with it.

This made him feel a sense of irrepressible anger.

Although the three diary pages didn't provide very detailed descriptions, with rather straightforward accounts from Roselle, Klein could still feel the famous turmoil in Intis that happened in 1173, more than a hundred years ago.

The outcome was clearly recorded in history textbooks. As a colonel, Roselle quashed the rebellion and enacted political changes. The Intis Kingdom was transformed into a republic, with him acting as a self-appointed consul.

In the following 19 years, he reformed the penal code, encouraged inventions, and protected the industrial revolution. He greatly increased the country's strength and fought wars both north and south, making Lenburg, Masin, Segar, and other countries protectorates under the Intis Republic. He also made the three mighty countries on the Northern Continent—the Feysac Empire, the Loen Kingdom, and the Feynapotter Kingdom—bow their heads.

At the end of 1192, almost twenty years after his appointment as consul, Roselle converted the Republic into an Empire, declaring himself Caesar.

Less than six years later, he perished in the White Maple Palace, ending the Fifth Epoch's most legendary piece of history to date.

The more he thought about it, the more he felt that there was more to Roselle's death than what appeared on the surface. It was just like how this famous historical event definitely had power struggles amongst Beyonders behind it, and that a Beyonder faction had leveled the situation, unlike the descriptions in textbooks.

As expected, one of the so-called Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Grimm, died in the Sea of Fog… In a previous diary page, Roselle had written that there was something wrong with this 'horseman.' It seems to have something to do with the tiny island where they discovered many extraordinary beings… Not only was it a fortuitous encounter, but it was also a dangerous one… Klein thought of a previous entry and turned to the fifth page, feeling emotional.

The contents of this page are of little value. They consist of Roselle's comments after drinking an 1128 Aurmir red wine, the disillusion of finding the woman who had gained his adoration in his youth to be aged and out of shape, as well as a degenerate summary of a certain period when he was addicted to playing cards.

The sixth page was about the same as the first one, with accounts of his daily life. However, the last one made Klein's eyes light up.

"8th April, I have to send someone to investigate the Secret Order to get more information. I can't repeat my passiveness from before. I can't let Zaratul lead me by the nose anymore."

So, did you discover anything, Comrade Roselle? Since Klein couldn't find the rest of the information, he could only force himself to calm down and wait for the next gathering when The Hanged Man would hand over another six pages.

He knew that an investigation from over a hundred years ago was unlikely to help him find any clues related to the Secret Order Association. After all, over such a long period of time, other than the special ones, many of the High-Sequence Beyonders would've already died of old age, not to mention the middle or low-level members. However, Klein believed that this would help him obtain inspiration and grasp the precise identity and activity patterns that the Secret Order often used.

Putting down the six diary pages, Klein tapped his right index finger on the edge of the long bronze table, slowly moving his gaze from Miss Justice to The Hanged Man, and then to The Sun.

Right, in the diary just now, there was a line Emperor Roselle described: "God who created all the deities, an omnipotent and omniscient God"

This is very similar to the customs of the City of Silver. Where did he hear this from? Could it be from that most ancient and secret organization which controls the world from behind the scenes? This organization was established before the Forsaken Land of God was forsaken?

Hmm… Suddenly, Klein had a new idea. He said with a low and gentle smile, “Roselle mentioned some hidden history in his diary, and mentioned some simple general knowledge. The latter reminded me of something that I don’t recall informing you all.”

Audrey suddenly fell into a trance. She immediately turned her body around and looked at the very top of the ancient long table in pleasant surprise.

Mr. Fool is taking the initiative to mention the contents of Roselle’s diary? What would it say? She was so excited and thrilled that she completely forgot that she was a Spectator.

Compared to her, The Hanged Man, Alger, was much more composed. However, the subconscious straightening of his back heartlessly betrayed him.

Only The Sun, Derek, had always believed that the items of interest to Mr. Fool contained many mysteries, but he didn’t know anything about Emperor Roselle and didn’t know what this name represented in the Northern Continent. Thus, he just found it difficult to hide his curiosity and didn’t reveal any unusual behavior.

“Mr. Fool, did Emperor Roselle mention some general knowledge? I’m willing to pay for this information,” Audrey couldn’t help but say.

However, I want it to be communicated to me privately! She added silently in her heart.

Klein chuckled and said, “There’s no need. This is very simple general knowledge.”

"After reading this part of the diary, as the summoner of the Tarot Club, I feel it's necessary to let all of you know this. Of course, I'm very certain that some of you are already aware of this."

He was mainly referring to The Sun. The City of Silver had a history of two to three thousand years, so it was impossible for them to not discover the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility.

Moreover, they were in a relatively extreme environment. Even if the surrounding areas had no lack of monsters in the darkness, there would still be times when they failed to obtain the corresponding materials. In order to pass on their heritage, in order for their city to continue on, using the Beyonder Characteristics of the remains of their predecessors to create a potion wasn't particularly unacceptable.

To them, this was perhaps a sacred and glorious ceremony.

Of course, Klein could see from a previous exchange that The Hanged Man knew something.

It's a pity that Miss Justice cannot always be made to pay in gold pounds and transfer the money to my Blessed. My Blessed can't appear any less impressive… I mustn't destroy the image of the powerful man that Mr. Azik has created… Yes, I'll give it a try when I have the chance. After all, no matter how powerful a being is, they'll have subordinates that run errands. For instance, the Evernight Goddess's Sleepless… No one would ever suspect that the Evernight Goddess isn't a true deity just because the low-level Nighthawks are weak… Klein sighed silently.

"Thank you very much! Mr. Fool, you are just too generous!" Audrey replied in joy.

She was originally feeling three seconds of regret for the coarse action of using cash to purchase the information.

Klein stopped rapping the table and described with a calm voice, "The first piece of general knowledge—Law of Beyonder Characteristics

Indestructibility. The characteristics of a Beyonder is never destroyed or reduced. It's only passed from one carrier to the next."

Without realizing it, I used Captain's tone… Klein's lips subconsciously curled upwards.

It cannot be destroyed or reduced. It just transfers from one carrier to another… Audrey ruminated over Mr. Fool's description, feeling that there was too much meaning in that simple sentence.

Her emerald green eyes turned, and when she saw that neither The Hanged Man nor The Sun showed any signs of surprise or contemplation, she immediately understood that these two members of the Tarot Club had long known of this law.

Only I didn't know… She thought, feeling somewhat aggrieved, but she quickly began to praise Mr. Fool for his kindness.

At this point, Klein added, "After a Rampager dies, they will leave behind an item of Beyonder Characteristics. It could be the main ingredient, or it could be a mystical artifact that requires sealing. An ordinary Beyonder's death results in similar results. However, the item left behind will be equivalent to the corresponding potion without the supplementary ingredients. Of course, the item alone will contain Beyonder powers. They can be used as a half-mystical object."

The plain and indifferent words instantly echoed in Audrey's mind. Layers stacked upon layers and, bit by bit, it eventually reached a crescendo.

Audrey thought of cannibalism and the question—would a Sequence pathway be severed if the source of Beyonder materials ceased to exist — she had asked The Hanged Man previously came to mind.

Now, she knew the answer, but she would've rather not heard it. She felt like she was having a nightmare!

How can it be so cruel? Why is it so dark? Audrey had previously seen some bad situations that involved Beyonders, but those situations were only caused by a person's own perverse and evil nature. For example, Mr. A or Qilangos. They didn't affect her yearning and love for mysticism and the Beyonder world.

However, this time, she discovered that the mystical world was filled with grayness and darkness.

Wake up, Audrey, you can't be naive! Consider that the cruelty and darkness described by Mr. Fool are predictable. Since I've chosen this path, I have to bravely walk down it! Audrey consoled herself, easing her mood a little.

She saw that The Hanged Man and the Sun were making only habitual movements and appeared to understand what had just been said.

Hmph! Mr. Hanged Man is terrible. He even wanted to use this information as an exchange previously! Ugh… This information is indeed worth a lot and is quite important, but it's only a simple piece of general knowledge to us and Mr. Fool… Audrey suddenly wanted to laugh a little. Her mood began to improve, and she slowly pushed all the extreme examples that she had just thought of aside.

Klein wasn't surprised by the three members' reaction. He continued in a calm tone, "The second piece of general knowledge—Law of Similar Sequence Beyonder Characteristics Conservation."

Law of Similar Sequence Beyonder Characteristics Conservation… The Hanged Man slightly changed his sitting posture. He felt that he understood something, but he was unable to fully understand what this law represented and what it consisted of.

Justice and The Sun shared the same feelings as he did. They were unable to directly understand the true meaning behind this law.

"Why Similar Sequence?" Alger couldn't help asking.

Klein smiled and replied, "What do you wish to pay for the answer?"

One of the ideas he had was that general knowledge was free, but any explanation required a fee. This both matched his status and didn't waste the information.

Free things cost the most.

Chapter 219 - Explanation

◆

If The Fool had simply mentioned that there was some simple general knowledge contained in Roselle's diary, The Hanged Man, Alger, wouldn't necessarily be determined to pay the "price" for the answer, partly because the description of it being "simple" killed his curiosity. Another aspect stemmed from his constant wariness against making trades with The Fool, as it reminded him of the examples when deals were made with evil gods and devils.

But now that he knew the so-called contents of simple general knowledge, his interest was piqued. Yet, he was unable to understand parts of the description, much less gain any actual or deep grasp of the concept. Therefore, he couldn't hold back his urges to ask in absolute reverence, "Mr. Fool, what kind of payment do you want?"

"Yes, yes!" Justice Audrey nodded her head nearly indiscernibly but very frequently, indicating that this was something she wanted to ask as well.

Although The Sun Derrick remained silent and didn't make any additional body gestures, the look he gave to The Fool explained everything.

Klein, who was waiting for a such a response, smiled and said, "Information regarding the Secret Order."

"The Secret Order…" The Hanged Man Alger muttered to himself.

He wasn't unfamiliar with this term. He had once received payment for explaining to Miss Justice about many secret organizations, including the Secret Order.

Audrey and Derrick both frowned subconsciously. The former's only understanding of the Secret Order was limited to what The Hanged Man had described. And the latter had never even heard of such an organization.

Klein had long anticipated what The Sun would feel, but he wasn't surprised. According to his conjecture, the area where the City of Silver was located should've been a part of the Third Epoch after the appearance of the first Blasphemy Slate and before the appearance of the second Blasphemy Slate. It was even possible that it was the direct catalyst or manifestation of the cataclysm. The Zaratul family had only stepped onto the stage of history in the Fourth Epoch, and the Secret Order was created in the latter half of the Fourth Epoch. There was no way both entities could've existed in the same period.

It would surprise Klein if the Sun were to know about the Secret Order. He would then have to overturn some of his speculations, reconstruct his knowledge of the City of Silver, the Forsaken Land of God, and the Zaratul family.

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, Alger looked at The Fool in the gray fog, deliberated his words and said, "I will accept this request and help you gather information regarding the Secret Order.

"Can you make 'payment' in advance?"

It wasn't surprising that a suspected deity was interested in an ancient and secret organization; therefore, Alger wasn't puzzled about it.

More importantly, after many gatherings, he had a guess in his mind, which was that Mr. Fool's state wasn't perfect, that "He" might be in a predicament, that all "His" attempts and the actions of "His" Blessed on the Northern and Southern Continents were to help "Him" break free from "His" confines.

This might even be related to the huge secret of why the seven deities no longer descend upon the real world after the Fourth Epoch… A thought flashed through Alger's mind, and he shuddered as he felt himself entering the realm of the gods.

Upon hearing The Hanged Man's request, Klein leaned back in his chair and nodded.

"No problem.

"If the information you have collected exceeds the value of the answer, I will provide you with further compensation."

As for the circumstances in which the value of the answer was lacking, it is naturally up to the esteemed Mr. Fool to decide. If he has the ability to make the additional payment, so be it. If not, forget it… Klein silently added.

Justice Audrey's eyes lit up all of a sudden. She raised her hand and said, "I want to partake in this deal."

Klein laughed and replied, "Sure."

Frankly speaking, his main target was Miss Justice because she was a local of Backlund and she had mixed herself into several Beyonder circles. Her access to information in the "Land of Hope" far exceeded his, considering it was his first time in the capital. She was also more informed than The Hanged Man who was out at sea most of the time.

According to the earlier revelation he received from his divination, Klein believed that the clues related to the Secret Order would appear in Backlund and not anywhere else.

The Sun Derrick listened quietly and after some thought, said, "I'm willing to use the payment I reserved and exchange it for the answer."

In the previous three-way deal, he had traded the Sequence 8 Telepathist formula for Sequence 9 Bard. Klein had promised to compensate him, and his choice at the time had been to save it up and prepare for the subsequent potion formulas and main ingredients.

Klein nodded his head and gave an explanation that he had long prepared.

“The so-called Similar Sequence refers to how High-Sequence Beyonders are exchangeable with other pathways.

“Let me give an example. The Death pathway’s Sequence 5, Gatekeeper, can not only be advanced normally, but one can also choose the Giant pathway, which is the Gatekeeper pathway’s Sequence 4, Demon Hunter.

“This won’t lead to the danger of losing control, nor will it accumulate madness. It’s different from taking the wrong potion.

“Of course, if it’s not a similar Sequence, a semi-deranged state is the best result.”

“Exchangeable?” Audrey blurted out, surprised and delighted.

She was surprised that Sequence pathways weren’t completely fixed, that they didn’t need to follow the original path all the way. The price of switching wasn’t being semi-deranged and never to advance again. Within the twenty-two paths of the divine, there were special circumstances and Sequences which were similar!

And what delighted her was that she had another chance to choose again in the future. It was just like being able to select something that caught her interest at Philip’s Department Store. It was a wonderful experience!

So that’s how it is… Alger silently muttered to himself, suddenly feeling like he had understood several things at once, and he had resolved many of the doubts accumulated in his past experiences.

This information is way too valuable! As expected of Mr. Fool. So-called simple general knowledge is enough to shock and awe most Low-Sequence Beyonders and benefit them immensely. He sighed inwardly.

Derrick the Sun was a little disappointed because he had no intention of changing Sequences. He wanted to be the Sun that lit up the darkness and dispelled the curse.

However, he quickly recalled an incident that happened in the City of Silver:

The former Chief, a powerhouse who had the greatest possibility of breaking past the limitations of Demon Hunter, had built a mausoleum for himself and went deep inside, making it his home.

Afterwards, he appeared less and less, until the main door of the mausoleum could no longer be opened.

Back then, the citizens of the City of Silver all believed that a problem had arisen during the Chief's advancement and that he had gone mad, to the point of being close to losing control. He was believed to have finished himself off.

Now, combined with the description from The Fool, The Sun suddenly thought of another possibility.

That Chief might've been attempting to advance in Sequence through a similar pathway!

In one of his explorations deep into the darkness, he had acquired the corresponding formula for the Death pathway, and the mausoleum might have been a special requirement… But in the end, he still failed? But why didn't he turn into a monster? What did he encounter in that dark mausoleum?

The City of Silver doesn't have the subsequence Sequence potion formulas after Demon Hunter?

As these thoughts crossed his mind, Derrick was suddenly jolted back to his senses by Miss Justice's reserved voice.

"Mr. Fool, may I ask what other pathways are exchangeable with the Spectator Sequencer pathway?"

Sequence 4 Demon Hunter sounds pretty good… That's very suitable for me, very suitable for 'Justice!' Audrey admired the first High-Sequence name that she knew.

I want to know too… Klein was tempted to answer Miss Justice's question in such a manner.

Before he could say anything, Audrey added in a faltering tone, "I-I can pay for the answer to this question. H-how many gold pounds do you think is enough? I-I believe that your Blessed will need a certain amount of funds for their activities…"

Having said that, she recalled how Mr. Fool's Blessed had easily finished Pirate Admiral Qilangos who possessed Creeping Hunger. Clearly, he was a High-Sequence Beyonder, so she nearly said, "I apologize. Mr. Fool, treat it as though I never said a thing."

However, since she had already asked, she couldn't back down! Come on, Audrey! Perhaps The Fool has a weaker Blessed? Audrey quietly bit at her lips, silently encouraging herself.

Gold pounds? Klein thought about it seriously and said, "We'll make the transaction after enough information about the Secret Order is gathered."

As he spoke, he recalled his informant in the Psychology Alchemists, Daxter Guderian.

Captain and I-I… Sigh… Daxter's identity as an informant can no longer be verified. I wonder if it's a tragedy or a comedy… It's a pity that I can no longer contact him anymore. Otherwise, it would be the most convenient way to obtain the information regarding the Spectator pathway from him… Klein smirked.

“Alright.” Audrey answered happily.

The conversation between the two made The Hanged Man, who was about to ask a similar question, shut his mouth. He left it until he had gathered enough information on the Secret Order.

After a brief silence, Audrey turned her head to look at Mr. Fool and raised her hand very slightly.

After receiving a nod of confirmation, she turned to the member opposite her and asked with a sense of anticipation, “Mr. Hanged Man, my tip allowed you to finish Vice Admiral Hurricane. Have you prepared the complete pituitary gland of a mature Rainbow Salamander?”

That’s one of the reasons why I returned to the sea… Alger nodded gently and said, “I’ve gotten the Beyonder material you wanted.

“But how should I give it to you?”

How? How should it be given to me… Audrey froze for a moment as she lost herself in thought.

It’s impossible to just give my address… Nor can I go through Xio and Fors. That will reveal the fact that I’m a Beyonder… Hmm, it’s not impossible. Emperor Roselle once said that when we should choose the lesser of two evils…

At that moment, Klein’s heart stirred. He lightly tapped the edge of the long table and smiled.

“Miss, Sir, are you willing to cooperate with me in making an attempt regarding this matter?”

Chapter 220 - Klein's Sacrificial Trial

◆ ◆ ◆

“Attempt?” Justice was instantly thrilled as she nodded her, acting reserved and elegant.

“I’m very willing to cooperate.”

As a Spectator, she clearly remembered that Mr. Fool had only used the word “attempt” on two things. The first time involved bringing her and The Hanged Man into this mysterious space, and the second time was when they were given an honorary name so that they could attempt to make a prayer. And the outcome was sufficiently successful, revealing “His” true nature.

What would it be this time? It really is something to look forward to! Audrey restrained her impatience and tried her best to behave as a qualified Spectator.

Attempt… Alger suddenly tensed up, viewing The Fool’s proposal with utmost wariness.

What does “He” want to do? What is “His” true purpose? Is this good or bad for me? One by one, thoughts popped up in his mind. The rapidly rotting appearance of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos surfaced in Alger’s mind.

Finally, he lowered his head and respectfully replied, “Your wish is my wish.”

Beside him, Derrick looked at The Hanged Man, and then at Justice, wondering why they were so sensitive to this so-called “attempt.”

Klein lightly tapped his fingers on the edge of the long bronze table and smiled.

“This attempt will make your transaction easier and safer, and it will definitely be sufficiently confidential.”

He turned his head to the side and looked at The Hanged Man. He said with a moderate pace, “Do you remember the sacrificial ritual described by The Sun?”

Klein had deliberately mentioned it to show how open he was. It made it difficult for the members of the Tarot Club to imagine that the sacrificial ritual he was about to provide had actually first been obtained from The Sun and that he had gone through all that time and effort back then to trick The Sun out of a template sacrificial ritual.

“I remember. I do come into contact with such things usually,” Alger answered truthfully, but his heart was throbbing.

Since the orthodox gods rarely responded to similar rituals, the word “sacrifice” had often been equated to evil gods and devils in the Fifth Epoch!

Thinking about how this could lead to a terrifying outcome, The Hanged Man felt as if he was walking at the edge of the abyss. If he wasn’t careful, he would fall in, only to be eroded and devoured.

Klein followed his plans and didn’t provide further explanations. He nodded slightly and said, “My idea is for you to sacrifice the Beyonder material to me through the ritual and I’ll bestow them to Miss Justice. A transaction like this will be beneficial for both of you.”

That can be done? Audrey was instantly dumbfounded. She felt that this exceeded the limits of her imagination.

But she very quickly came to her senses and understood the advantages of this method and the true nature of a deity hidden behind this simple act!

Mr. Fool is great! As expected, our Tarot Club will be different from the other secret organizations! We'll use the method of deities to exchange for material goods and ingredients! Audrey almost said "Praise the Lady" in her mind out of habit, but in the end, she said, "Praise Mr. Fool" instead.

Alger turned even warier as he entered a state of calm thoughts.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, what do I need to do?"

He tried to figure out the true purpose of The Fool from the process of the sacrificial ritual.

Klein lightly pressed his right hand and said, "Like I said, this is only an attempt. It might not succeed, so it will need your cooperation.

"First of all, prepare an altar. There's no need to make it too complicated; it can be very simple and crude. The only requirement is to engrave or draw this symbol."

As he spoke, a screen of light appeared in front of him. On it was the symbol of the hidden "Pupil-less Eye" and the mysterious symbol of the partial Contorted Lines; the same symbol on the back of The Fool's chair.

After previous experiments without using materials with spirituality, Klein was certain that the sacrificial ritual he designed could create an illusory gate above the gray fog, similar to the Door of Summoning. However, his strength alone couldn't construct a stable channel, and he could only use the uniqueness of the mysterious space above the gray fog to complete the sacrifice.

Therefore, he was 90% confident that the ritual would be successful. The only problem was if an ordinary passageway could be constructed using ordinary materials that contained spirituality or did it need to be

Beyonder materials as well as a sufficient number of them.

I'll let Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man bear the cost of this experiment… In any case, they knew from the very beginning that the Tarot Club was a product of an attempt. It can be foreseen that there would be other attempts subsequently and failure is inevitable. Even deities are no exception… Klein decided to transfer the costs.

As The Hanged Man, Justice, and the Sun were attempting to memorize the symbol, Klein chuckled.

"If you forget, you can pray to me, and then you can 'remember.'"

"Alright," Audrey answered happily.

With Mr. Fool, rituals aren't tedious and troublesome! she thought happily.

The Hanged Man nodded in response as Klein continued the description.

"Secondly, follow the normal procedure, but there's no need to burn any more additional herbs or apply the holy oil. There's no restriction on time, just chanting my name is enough.

"Remember, use ancient Hermes or Jotun to recite this piece of prayer.

"Your devoted servant prays for your attention,

"I pray for you to take his offerings.

"I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.

"After you finish chanting, combine the materials that contain spirituality with the natural power created by the incantation, and await my response.

"If you don't succeed in this step, change from materials containing spirituality to Beyonder materials, and try again from the beginning."

After listening quietly to the procedure, Alger felt that his previous guess was very likely to be the truth.

The Fool was in a predicament!

He offered alluring attempts, making attempts one step at a time and planned to use himself, Justice, and The Sun to slowly break free of the restrictions. In the end, he might even descend into the real world!

This was also the true reason why "He" had initially pulled people into this mysterious space, agreeing to the establishment of the Tarot Club!

Even without this previous speculation, Alger believed that he would've come to the same conclusion after hearing of the experimental procedures required after the sacrificial ritual and comparing it with The Fool's previous attempts.

The only thing that stumped him was the possession of a powerful Blessed; therefore, there was no need for him to use himself, Justice, and The Sun. His Blessed could make similar attempts.

There must be secrets I don't know about yet… The attempts need to be sufficiently secretive. And perhaps "His" Blessed is being watched by certain existences? Alger began connecting the dots.

After Klein finished describing the ritual, he asked in a low but gentle voice, "The sacrificial ritual needs a specific time. Mr. Hanged Man, when do you plan on making the attempt?"

This was different from responding to a request which could have a delayed response. The stable passage created by the sacrificial ritual could only exist for a very short period of time, so Klein had to wait above the gray fog ahead of time.

"The Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland is the only Beyonder material I have with me for the time being. As for materials with spirituality, I do have quite a lot… Mr. Fool, once the gathering ends, I'll immediately attempt the first scenario. If it fails, I'll seek out other

Beyonder materials. Once I obtain anything, I'll inform you by praying to confirm a time," Alger said as he couldn't help but turn his gaze towards Miss Justice.

As a Spectator, Audrey instantly understood what he meant. She answered without the slightest hesitation, "If any additional Beyonder materials are required, I'll compensate you afterward. Well… I can't guarantee the specific type of material you would want."

As expected of the wealthy Miss Justice… The Fool—Klein—couldn't help but sigh before chuckling.

"We have come to an agreement."

He looked at Justice and said after some thought, "Once Mr. Hanged Man's attempt succeeds, I'll inform you of the bestowment ritual."

"Alright!" Audrey was entirely confident with Mr. Fool's abilities.

After answering the question, a sudden thought struck her as she realized that the exchange of money could also be done through this method. Of course, this was only if the attempt was a success.

I wonder if items without any spirituality would work or not… I'll ask Mr. Fool again after the attempt is successful… Audrey's lips curled as she thought of the beautiful future.

With the sacrifice and bestowment topic coming to an end, she deliberated for a few seconds before saying, "Mr. Fool, I've found two ladies suitable for our Tarot Club. They're both Beyonders and have their own circle and resources in Backlund. They're also able to keep a secret and have decent personalities. Are you willing to let them join the gathering?"

Does Justice want to strengthen her faction within the Tarot Club? This was the most instinctual thought that Alger had.

Derrick was very interested in this matter as he looked sideways at Mr.

Fool, waiting for his answer in anticipation.

Klein appeared to be in a bit of a dilemma. Previously, he had imagined that the members of the Tarot Club wouldn’t know each other, and they would then develop their own subordinates, forming a relatively tight and secretive organization.

This way, even if a certain member was exposed, captured, or had their spirit channeled, it wouldn’t have much of an impact on the Tarot Club.

But Miss Justice’s description just happened to hit his weak spot. He was hoping to find clues regarding the Secret Order and Lanevus by acquainting himself with Beyonders with different circles and resources in Backlund.

If it’s done through Justice, the person involved would eventually hold back… However, I’m not sure if it’s possible to pull them up above the gray fog simply by reciting my name… In order to maintain his image, Klein didn’t think too much and instead procrastinated on it.

He said calmly, “It will require a certain amount of examination.

“Miss Justice, use a clandestine method that wouldn’t expose yourself to let them know of my name to garner interest in them.”

When Audrey saw that her proposal was about to be accepted, she immediately responded in excitement, “Yes, Mr. Fool!”

After a few more exchanges, the gathering came to an end. The Sun, The Hanged Man, and Justice returned, while Klein remained in the gray fog, waiting for the sacrifice.

Chapter 221 - The Tarot Club at a Higher Level

◆

The Blue Avenger was like a leaf on the surface of the undulating waves of the Sonia Sea. At times, it was raised high and sometimes low from the ebbing of the waves, but there was no sign of it being at risk of capsizing.

Alger Wilson stood in the captain cabin, his back to the shelves of red and white wine, as he subconsciously paced around.

Finally, he gritted his teeth and returned to the mahogany desk with a grim expression. He removed the brass sextant, found a piece of paper and a pen, and leaned over to draw the complex, mysterious symbol given to him by The Fool.

With a Seafarer's memory, Alger quickly completed the first step of the sacrificial ritual.

Then, he opened the drawer and took out a candle. He set up the ritual according to the dualism principles and placed a candle above the symbol that was formed by the combination of the Pupil-less Eye and the partial Contorted Lines. One candle was placed in the middle that represented the person making the sacrifice.

After cleaning up all the items on the table, Alger condensed pure water in the palm of his hand and wiped the altar clean. He then used the silver dagger from the ceremony to create a sealing wall that surrounded his desk.

After doing all this, he used his spirituality to light up the two candles and retreated a few steps under the dim light.

Taking a deep breath, Alger lowered his head and recited in ancient Hermes,

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era,

“You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

“You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

“Your devoted servant prays for your attention,

“I pray for you to take his offerings.

“I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.”

†

This ancient incantation reverberated within the wall of spirituality, stirring up spiraling gales as they swept forth with the force of nature.

It was the oldest sacrificial language created by human Beyonders, and it contained many mysteries itself. However, it lacked sufficient protection for the user.

Bearing with the pain that was akin to having knives slicing across his skin, Alger took out a small dark brown glass bottle from his pocket, unscrewed the lid, and poured out a lot of sesame-shaped granules.

These granules swirled with a metallic luster and exuded an indescribable sense of beauty.

Alger scattered these granules into the wind.

Whoosh!

The gale grew stronger but was no longer tempestuous. It was dyed in two separate colors—silver and black.

As they continued to collide and mix, the two differently-colored winds were infused into the candle flame that symbolized The Fool, burgeoning and tearing open an illusory ordinary-sized door. Its surface was carved with the same symbol that Alger had drawn.

At this moment, Klein witnessed the appearance of the hazy door behind his high-back chair. He could feel the spirituality in the air that was rippling apart and stimulating the mysterious space.

It seems to be working… Klein suddenly had a premonition and immediately spread out his spirituality, infusing it with upheavals and stimulation.

Creak!

Amidst the insubstantial sounds, the blurry door slowly opened!

In the captain cabin, Alger suddenly saw the illusory door, formed out of wind and light, open. Behind it was deep darkness formed from an innumerable number of almost invisible shadows. They were lustrous splendors encompassing massive amounts of knowledge. Situated above them was the thick gray fog with the ancient palace overlooking the real world.

Such a scene caused Alger to involuntarily tremble. It was a deep fear, an indescribable excitement.

He hurriedly picked up the Rainbow Salamander’s pituitary gland that he had long prepared. He held it with both hands, and, with his head bowed, he raised the palm-sized object which was constantly changing in color and had a soft feel to the ridges to the illusory door.

Alger’s hands grew lighter under the sudden appearance and instant disappearance of a suction force. He lost the slight tingling sensation that the Rainbow Salamander’s pituitary gland gave him.

He didn’t dare raise his head until he heard the deep voice of The Fool echoing in his ears.

“You did well.”

“It’s my honor,” Alger answered without any hesitation.

He looked ahead again, only to see that the illusory door had disappeared. The gale had stopped, and the candle flames had returned to their original state.

After the candles were extinguished according to the normal procedures, Alger sat down with a complicated expression and said to himself silently, In the beginning, only people could be pulled into the world above the gray fog… After a while, responses could be made by listening to prayers… Now, sacrifices and bestowment can be performed… Mr. Fool is freeing himself from his predicament one step at a time, and bit by bit, will he enter the real world?

This guess or conclusion frightened and worried Alger, but he also felt a bit of delight.

At least I’m a member of the Tarot Club—one of the earliest members… He sighed.

†

In the majestic palace above the gray fog, Klein was playing with the pituitary gland of the Rainbow Salamander. Various colors were reflected on his face as they constantly changed colors.

A slight tingling sensation came from his palm, and a strong sense of accomplishment filled his heart, causing him to reveal a genuine smile.

In the future, the Tarot Club will become even more miraculous… After reflecting over the situation, Klein extended his spirituality and sent his will to the crimson star representing Miss Justice.

After returning to her bedroom, Audrey was no longer able to sit quietly on the edge of the bed. She would restlessly flip through the books by her bed and from time to time, scrutinize herself in the mirror with an unfocused gaze.

She was looking forward to the completion of The Hanged Man's sacrificial ritual, but she was also afraid that the result would be a failure.

Emperor Roselle had said that one must remain calm and collected when important matters arise… Audrey, come on, take a deep breath… Or perhaps, I should go tease the dog? However, Susie can talk and think, so she's an entity with her own dignity. I can't just casually tease her… Audrey's mind wandered, her hand unconsciously wringing an ornate doll dressed in splendid clothing.

After an unknown period of time, a thick gray fog suddenly appeared before her eyes, and in the depths of the fog, there was a lofty chair.

Sitting there, The Fool said with a smile, "Miss Justice, the attempt was successful. Have you prepared the materials that contain spirituality?"

That's great! As expected of Mr Fool! Audrey forgot The Hanged Man's role in this matter. She held back her excitement and said, "Yes, I always have such materials with me."

Audrey had been the same even before she joined the Tarot Club, but back then, she didn't know which materials could be considered to contain spirituality. She had merely moved them from the family treasury in accordance with the various essential oil formulas she had gathered.

Klein nodded slightly and said, "When do you plan on holding the ritual?

"This is based on the premise that there are no Beyonders around you."

Does a Beyonder dog count… Audrey looked at the tightly-shut door, feeling a small tug at her conscience.

“I can do it now.”

Klein tersely acknowledged.

“The ritual’s process is the same as I described previously. All you need to do is change the prayer to—

“Your devoted servant prays for your attention,

“I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.

“I pray for you to give me strength.

“In addition to this, use the dualism method.”

Audrey thought it over, fighting the urge to nod, and she began preparing for the ritual.

When the illusory door opened, and a scene even more illusory than the cosmos appeared, Audrey felt intoxicated in both body and mind.

This is the mysterious world I’ve always been pursuing. This is the kind of feeling I’ve always wanted! She praised Mr. Fool wholeheartedly.

It’s faith towards the Goddess, but for The Fool, it’s worship. Audrey silently explained herself in her mind.

Soon after, she was stunned to see that there was something on the “altar.” It was a soft object with lustrous color and was filled with ridges.

“The Rainbow Salamander’s pituitary gland!” Audrey felt a surge of joy in her heart. Her eyes lit up as she had the urge to step forward and grab it.

However, her customs of etiquette took hold of her as she sincerely praised Mr. Fool once again.

After finishing the ritual, she impatiently walked forward and carefully examined the Beyonder material five times.

Our Tarot Club is at a higher level than all the other secret organizations… Audrey secretly felt smug.

She then glanced warily at the door, as if afraid of Susie's sudden intrusion.

She had to redouble her efforts and immediately concoct the potion to complete her advancement!

A few minutes later, she held a bottle of liquid that contained constantly changing lusters that could shine to the bottom of everyone's hearts.

She confidently drank the Telepathist potion and successfully tide through the integration stage with the Beyonder characteristics, achieving an advancement.

The view before her seemed to clear up significantly, with a great increase in other aspects. Audrey familiarly used Cogitation to restrain the dissipating spirituality.

After her Sequence stabilized, she smiled and walked briskly to the door, letting in the golden retriever. She saw the obvious suspicion on Susie's face.

"You took far longer than usual." Susie didn't hide her thoughts.

Audrey sat down on an ottoman and dryly laughed before changing the subject.

"Susie, tell me—how should I secretly inform Xio and Fors about a particular matter without revealing myself; yet get them interested?"

Before she finished her sentence, Audrey had begun to seriously ponder over the mission Mr. Fool had assigned her.

Then, she looked at Susie, and Susie looked back at her. The human and dog both fell into deep thought at the same moment.

†

After completing his goal, Klein returned to reality, slept for a little more than an hour before hurrying out the door. He spent a pound to buy a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, wigs, and a variety of mustaches that could be torn off and stuck on with adhesives. They were disguises he would need later.

Before dinner, he made a trip to East Borough, the most crowded area and the most unsafe part of the city. He rented a one-bedroom house at the rent of four soli, three pence a week. He paid two weeks rent and a deposit, coming up to a total of 17 solis.

Only then did Klein complete all his early preparations. East Borough also left a deep impression on him. Most of the streets here were the same as Tingen's Lower Street, but the area that shared the traits was many times larger.

The clothes of the residents here were old but decent. Many of them were dressed in shabby clothes with sallow skin and thin frames. It was as though they would turn into beasts at any moment due to their hunger or poverty. Therefore, gangs ran rampant in East Borough.

When he got back to Cherwood Borough, Klein felt as if he had entered heaven from hell.

For the next two days, he experimented with using his spirituality to perform the rituals and create charms. He no longer prayed to the Goddess and waited for the effects of his tiny advertisements to bear fruit.

On Thursday morning, Klein finally heard the doorbell ring.

Chapter 222 - The First Job

◆

Ding! Dong! A rope was being tugged, causing the doorbell and the sound it made to constantly tinkle and send its sound echoing throughout the spacious but relatively empty living room.

Klein, who was seated on the sofa reading a newspaper to study the various investment opportunities, stood up. He was wearing a white shirt and a black vest without a bow tie, just like what one would wear at home.

The first job in my career as a detective? But I can't always be at home, waiting for a mission to arrive. Yes… I need to hang a notice on the door, along with a fountain pen, so that clients can write down the time of their next visit and allow me to prepare in advance… However, for a new detective in this profession, without any fame, doing so would basically be the same as not having a "next time"… Sigh, I can only go through the trouble of performing a divination in the morning to see if I would receive any jobs for the day. And if so, what time so as to make plans… Of course, it's also possible that I would miss out on missions from powerful Beyonders. Well, so be it, it might be a good thing after all…

He walked to the door, and without looking through the peephole, the image of the visitors outside appeared in his mind:

One of them was an old lady in a black plush hat. Her back was slightly hunched, and her face was deeply wrinkled. Her skin was shriveled and sallow, but her dark dress was very formal and neat.

Her temples were completely white, but her blue eyes were quite lively. She was looking at the young man beside her, gesturing for him to pull the doorbell again.

The young man was in his twenties, with eyes similar to those of the old lady's. In the progressively cold weather, he wore a black double-breasted coat, a half top hat, and a bow tie like he was about to attend a banquet, it was as if he wouldn't relax his demands of himself at any moment.

With the help of a Clown's premonition, Klein turned the handle, opened the door, and greeted his visitors with a smile before the bell could ring again.

"Good morning, Madam, Sir. What a wonderful day it is, at least up to this point for I have already seen the sun for five minutes."

He spoke of the weather in a slightly exaggerated manner, small talk that had been popular in Backlund for more than a century.

"Yes, it's always shy and doesn't come out from behind the fog and the dark clouds." The old lady nodded in agreement.

By her side, the lad asked, "Are you Detective Sherlock Moriarty?"

"Yes, and what may I help you with? I'm sorry, please come in. Let's sit down and talk." Klein turned his body to the side, making way for his guests as he pointed to the guest area.

"No, there's no need. I don't want to waste any time. My poor Brody is still waiting for me to save it!" the old lady said with a rather sharp voice.

"It?" Klein noticed the most important pronoun and suddenly had a bad feeling.

The very formally dressed young man nodded and said, "Brody is a cat owned by my grandmother, Madam Doris. He went missing last night, and I hope you can help us find him. We live at the end of this street, and I'm willing to pay you 5 soli for it. Of course, if you can prove that you've spent more time and effort than that, I'll make it up to you."

Find a cat? The reason why you're entrusting me with this job is simply because of the convenience stemming from how we live on the same street… Klein felt that this wasn't the detective career that he had imagined.

It makes me look like a clown… Well, I can't turn down my first business deal. This is a seer's point of view… He pondered for a few seconds and asked, "Can you describe it in detail?"

Granny Doris spoke out before the young man could open his mouth.

"Brody is a lovely, lively black cat. It's very healthy, has beautiful green eyes, and loves to eat cooked chicken breast. Goddess, last night, he ran off just like that. No, it must've gotten lost. I've placed lots of chicken breast in its bowl, but it refuses to return to take a look.

… Klein's lips curved up and said, "I'm very satisfied with your description, Mrs. Doris."

"I accept this request. Alright, let's go to your home now. I need to search for clues and find traces. You should be clear that the basis of my reasoning lies in the details." Mrs. Doris didn't consult her grandson as she nodded and said, "You're the most proactive detective I've ever seen. It's a deal!"

Klein put on his coat and hat, picked up his cane, and followed Madam Doris and her grandson out onto the street.

Unlike Tingen, roads in many parts of Backlund had been rebuilt with cement or asphalt. Even during a downpour, the roads were less muddy.

While the old lady was leading the way, his grandson came close to Klein and said in a low voice, "I hope you'll do your best to find Brody. It's been one of the pillars of my grandmother's life ever since my grandfather and parents passed away."

"After Brody went missing, something went wrong with my grandmother's mind, so much so that she's started hearing things. She keeps telling me that she hears poor Brody mewing miserably."

Klein immediately nodded and said, "I'll do my best. Right, I still haven't gotten your name."

"Jurgen, Jurgen Cooper, a senior solicitor," the young man replied.

Soon, they reached 58 Minsk Street and entered the dark house.

"This is Brody's bowl. This is his favorite box. He always sleeps here." Doris's wrinkled face was filled with worry and expectation.

Klein squatted down and found several strands of black cat fur in the box.

He straightened up and gripped his silver-inlaid cane with the hand that held the cat's fur.

Klein's gaze turned deep as he pretended to observe his surroundings as he silently recited a divination sentence.

His hand secretly slipped from the end of the cane but didn't leave it completely. It just made it difficult for Jurgen or Doris to notice that the cane was standing on its own.

Soon after, the black silver-inlaid cane tilted to the side. It fell very slowly, with very little movement.

Klein gripped the cane again, looked in that direction, and observed it for more than ten seconds.

Then, he strode over to an old cupboard.

"Any signs of Brody running away?" Jurgen asked with concern. The old lady, Doris, was also waiting for an answer.

Without answering, Klein kneeled and pulled open the door at the bottom of the cupboard.

Meow!

A black cat darted out, tail high, and ran for its bowl.

“Brody… When did you get into the cupboard? How did you get locked in there?” Mrs. Doris cried, surprised and confused.

Jurgen turned his head in surprise and looked at Klein.

“How did you know it was in the cupboard?”

Klein smiled, and replied in a deep voice, “Deduction, my good man.”

†

After obtaining the 5 soli reward from Mrs. Doris and Jurgen, as well as their friendship, Klein returned to 15 Minsk Street under the gloomy weather.

Before he even got close, he saw a figure loitering in front of his door.

More business? When Klein looked over, he saw that the visitor was a boy of fifteen or sixteen, dressed in an old coat and a round hat that didn’t fit his age.

It’s him? Klein immediately recognized him as the boy he had met on the steam train the day he had arrived in Backlund. Back then, he was being pursued, but his maturity and calmness at the time had left quite a deep impression on Klein.

What would he want to entrust me with… As he wondered, Klein walked over and smiled.

“Excuse me, are you looking for me?”

The teenage boy was startled as he quickly turned around, his bright red eyes filled with unconcealable fear.

He composed himself and asked hesitantly, “Are you Detective Sherlock Moriarty?”

“Yes.” Klein looked around and said, “Let’s talk inside.”

“Alright.” The teenage boy didn’t refuse.

Inside, Klein didn’t take off his coat, but he did take off his hat and put his cane away.

He led the teenage boy to the guest area, pointed at the long sofa and said, “Please, have a seat. How might I address you? What job do you have for me?”

“You can call me Ian,” the teenage boy surveyed his surroundings and fell silent for a few seconds. “I was previously hired by another detective, Mr. Zreal Viktor Lee, who helped me gather some news and information.”

Klein sat down, clasped his hands, and said, “Does the job have anything to do with your former employer?”

“Yes,” Ian nodded solemnly. “A few days ago I suddenly found myself being followed, by someone with ill intentions; therefore, I thought of a way to lose their tail… Uh… I believe you saw this scene yourself, Mr. Moriarty. I recognized you as the man who was sizing me up on the metro that day as soon as I saw you.”

…This level of observational skills isn’t any worse than a Spectator’s… Could it be that he was born with a special ability? Or is he a Beyonder? Klein activated his Spirit Vision and looked at Ian, but he didn’t find anything strange.

He nodded and calmly replied, “Your response left an impression on me.”

Ian didn't harp on the topic and continued, "I suspect that my encounter has something to do with Mr. Zreal, so I went to visit him at his place. I found the place seemingly normal, but there were many hints that indicated that someone had infiltrated and triggered all the tiny mechanisms.

"I haven't seen Mr. Zreal since that day. I suspect that something has happened to him.

"I tried to call the police, but his disappearance period has yet to reach the required number of days to make the request. I tried to get help from other detectives that I knew, but all of them turned me down, on the grounds that they had just met Mr. Zreal at a fellow detective's party.

"That surprised me because I didn't receive any response from Mr. Zreal when I contacted him using the agreed upon method.

"I still stood by my judgment and intended to ask for the help of a detective whom Mr. Zreal doesn't know. Well, as such, that meant it would be someone I don't know either. I had no idea who to look for as well. Therefore, I could only search through the newspapers and ended up finding you, Mr. Sherlock Moriarty."

Chapter 223 - Three Matters

◆

Klein asked after listening carefully, “So you suspect that the Zreal whom the detectives saw was someone in disguise?”

Holding his brown round hat, Ian replied as if he had already thought about it, “It’s a possibility, but I think it’s too difficult due to the huge risks involved. The party was at night, and it’s true that the lights weren’t very bright*—*but most of the people attending are detectives, detectives with keen observational skills. Just a wig, beard, or cosmetics can hardly hide from their eyes.”

Perhaps some Beyonder powers can do it… Just like how Creeping Hunger enables such an ability… There was a little trap in Klein’s question. He wished to determine from the teenage boy’s answer, the expression on his face, and his body language to determine if he had ever come into contact with Beyonders, or if he knew things about mysticism.

The initial answer was no.

When Ian saw Detective Moriarty nodding slightly in agreement with his reasoning, he continued, “I believe that the detectives saw Mr. Zreal, but he wasn’t free. He was in a controlled state in which he couldn’t send out distress signals. The reason why he wasn’t responding to my attempts to liaison with him is to probably signal to me that he needs help.”

“A reasonable explanation.” Klein released his clasped hands and sat back a little, making himself look more relaxed and confident.

Ian fell silent for about ten seconds before he said seriously, "I'd like to entrust you with the task of investigating Mr. Zreal and determine his current condition. All I need is confirmation."

Considering that Ian was a semi-professional who had gathered intelligence and information for a detective, Klein had the intention to make his acquaintance. He smiled and said, "Then how much are you going to pay? You should be well aware that this may be very dangerous."

Ian looked down at the pocket of his old coat and said after some deliberation, "There are two ways. The first, I can directly give you a payment that's enough to satisfy you. Afterward, regardless of whether the mission is simple or difficult, that will be all unless you suffer a relatively serious injury.

"Secondly, I could pay you five pounds in advance, and when you finish the job, you can add on to the bill depending on the difficulty of the matter. But it's easy to cause a dispute, even if there's a contract."

Klein pretended to be in thought and after almost thirty seconds, he said in a low voice, "Why don't we do it this way? You can pay me five pounds in advance and help me with three things after the mission is completed. Don't worry, they won't be anything difficult. They will be within your capabilities, and it won't make you feel too uncomfortable. This can be agreed upon in the contract."

Ian knitted his brows before standing up. He leaned forward and stretched out his right hand.

"Alright!"

Klein shook hands with him, pulled out a standard contract that he had prepared, picked up a round fountain pen, added all the details he had discussed, and stamped it with his fingerprint.

After signing the contract, he gave the teenage boy, Ian, a stack of white paper and watched him write Detective Zreal's relevant information.

After a while, he browsed through the information and casually asked, "How can I contact you if there's an emergency, or if I've confirmed Zreal's condition?"

Ian pursed his lips and remained silent for quite a while. Only when Klein looked over did he reply in a somewhat stiff manner, "You don't need to contact me. I will appear at the right time."

Without another word, he took out a thick stack of cash from the pocket of his old coat. They seemed to be stacked up in a very neat order, from high face value to low face value.

Ian pulled out three one-pound notes from the bottom, counted six five-soli notes, and finally ten one-soli notes.

When Klein saw that Ian had neatly arranged the notes, with even the portraits of the former kings facing up without a single mistake, Klein suddenly felt a bit frustrated.

This is some late-stage obsessive-compulsive disorder… He silently exhaled and received the payment from Ian.

According to his visual estimate, Ian had less than three pounds left.

He probably had all his savings with him… If I had asked for more, would he bail on me without paying? He doesn't look like the kind of person to do so, but one shouldn't judge a book by its cover… Klein folded the bills at random and stuffed them into his pocket, ignoring the untidiness. As such, he succeeded in seeing Ian's slightly twisted expression.

"I'll try to complete the investigation as soon as possible." Klein stood up and held out his hand as a gesture of bidding him farewell.

"Thank you for your help." Ian thanked him sincerely because the counteroffer was obviously a "discount."

Watching the boy who was more mature than his age leave, Klein stroked his chin and silently said to himself, This matter goes deeper than it seems.

Ian didn't mention anything about Zreal's recent investigations or what information he had been instructed to gather…

Forget it. I'll handle as much as the money is worth. All I need to do is confirm Zreal's current condition.

He turned around and walked back into the living room. While doing so, he fished a quarter pence out of his trouser pocket.

Ping!

As the copper coin tumbled in the air, Klein's eyes turned dark as he muttered if there were any Beyonder elements in the case he was handling.

Then, he opened his right hand and tried to catch the copper penny.

Clang! The coin slipped from his fingertips and fell to the ground, rolling away.

This result meant that the divination had failed.

From the looks of it, Ian has withheld more things than I thought… The information is so lacking that I can't even obtain a vague divination result… He pursed his lips, took a few steps forward, and bent down to pick up the coin.

†

That night, in the wee hours of the morning, at 138 Rose Street, Backlund Bridge.

Klein had changed into a cheap light-blue workman's outfit. His mouth, chin, and cheeks were covered with a black beard that, at first glance, made him look rough and savage.

He wore a dark-colored cap and pressed it so low that it nearly covered his eyes.

Such caps originated from the Intis Republic hunters. There were certain differences from the traditional deer-hunting caps the Loen Kingdom hunters wore. However, such caps had become popular among the lower-class populace of Backlund.

Hiding in the shadows of an Intis parasol tree by the side of the road, Klein studied the house across the street with the aid of the elegant gas lamps.

It was Zreal's home.

The detective was from Southville. His parents, relatives, and friends were all there, and he had come to Backlund alone where he slowly forged a name for himself.

He was still a bachelor and had only hired two temporary maids, the kind that came by every three days to clean up the place, without needing to provide them with food or lodging.

At the moment, the terrace house he rented was pitch dark.

Klein took off the silver chain inside his sleeve and let the topaz pendant hang down naturally.

“There's danger inside.

“There's danger inside.”

†

After repeating it seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the spirit pendulum spinning clockwise, but very slowly.

“There’s danger, but it’s nothing serious,” Klein muttered, and once again confirmed that he had his tarot cards, self-made charms, and Holy Night Powder on him.

After doing all this, he looked around, and taking advantage of the stillness of the night, he nimbly rushed across the street.

There was no veranda, garden, or lawn as it directly faced the edge of the street. Klein went around to the side and easily climbed up the water pipe to the small balcony on the second floor where clothes could be hung out to dry.

Immediately following that, he took out a tarot card and slid it through the crack, opening the door to the corridor.

Following Ian’s drawing of the house’s layout, Klein walked almost soundlessly to Zreal’s bedroom.

He lightly tapped his left molar and activated his Spirit Vision. Through the wooden door, he looked inside.

Spirit Vision could see aura colors through obstacles without spirituality. However, it was highly dependent on one’s abilities. Currently, Klein was able to observe through wooden doors but was stumped by concrete walls. Furthermore, the scenes he could see weren’t too clear.

In his vision, he saw three humanoid auras in the bedroom behind the door. The colors were blurry and were located in different locations.

There are three people lying in ambush… Is it to capture Ian, or someone else? The bedroom isn’t that big… Klein stood in the darkness, calmly considering the results of his observations.

At that moment, he suddenly retreated towards the balcony while keeping his footsteps very light.

Back at the balcony, Klein took a thin silver slice from his pocket.

This was a Slumber Charm that he had created in an attempt during the afternoon.

He didn’t pray to the Evernight Goddess, but to himself instead. He held a ritual in the name of “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck” before entering the world above the gray fog to respond.

Since this method was difficult to mobilize the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, Klein could only use his own spirituality to “respond.” The charms that he made in the end were worse than normal, but better than the ones he made in his own name.

After surveying his surroundings again, Klein covered his mouth and whispered a word in ancient Hermes.

“Crimson.”

Feeling the chill of the charm, he moved quickly but silently to the door of Zreal’s bedroom again. As he held the handle, he injected spirituality into the thin silver slice.

Creak! Klein carefully twisted the handle and opened a tiny crack in the door.

Immediately after that, he threw the Slumber Charm inside.

Pulling back his arm, Klein closed the door again and began counting.

3

2

1

He abruptly pushed open the door and rolled on the ground.

Not sensing any movement from the three people, Klein stood up and, using the crimson moonlight shining through the window, began observing the room.

It was a normal furnished bedroom with a bed, a row of closets, a desk, a set of sofas, and a coat rack.

On the other side of the bed, a man in a black coat was sleeping soundly.

In addition to that, there was one person by the side of the sofa and another in front of the closet. All of them were asleep.

After confirming the trio's condition, Klein walked over to the bed and bent down to find a few short, yellowish-brown hair.

According to what Ian had written, Detective Zreal was a man with short, yellowish-brown hair.

"This should be right…" Klein whispered. He grabbed the few strands of hair and sat down on the sofa. He slowly sat in the darkness tainted by the crimson light and planned on using dream divination to find Zreal.

Leaning back against the back of the sofa, the corner of his mouth curled up as he made a self-deprecating comment, Deduction, my good man…

Chapter 224 - Mystic-type Detective

◆ ◆ ◆

The dim room was covered in a thin veil of crimson moonlight, and everything was indistinct.

The three men in the black coats were sleeping in different spots. And on the sofa, Klein's eyes half-blended into the darkness by closing them, it was as if he had entered a deep slumber.

His dream was a gray, distorted world, occasionally flashing with brilliance.

Finally, the brilliance settled to form a scene.

It was a gloomy corner, the ground sloshed with sewage. A man with short brown hair, a white shirt, and a brown vest was leaning against the wall, surrounded by a dense mischief of gray rats.

Half of the man's lips had been bitten off, revealing his yellowish teeth and rotten gums. His nose was only stained with blood, mixed with some short hairs, and the flesh on his face had disappeared, piece by piece, revealing white bone. White, fat maggots were crawling around everywhere, constantly squirming, and his throat seemed to have been the victim of some wild beast; at least half of it was missing.

Klein could just barely make out that this was Zreal Viktor Lee. It was nearly impossible to relate him to the mature and handsome man in the black-and-white photograph he had taken with Ian.

Zreal is already dead. In a few days, he would probably be gnawed to the point where he would only be bone. He might not even have a complete skeleton left… Klein left the dream and recalled what he had just seen.

His past experiences had allowed him to witness similar corpses more calmly.

Looking out of the window at the crimson moon, Klein thought for more than ten seconds and decided to try communicating with the soul of the man in black next to the sofa.

During the last few days of preparations, he had concocted a bottle of Amantha extract and Eye of the Spirit medication. As for Serenity Agent, Klein had no need for it. He was personally capable of invading the dreams of others and forcefully communicating with their souls while maintaining calm and rationale.

After setting up a simple altar and letting the quiet and tranquil fragrance waft out to create a half-dreaming state, Klein prayed to himself, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era."

Following that, he entered the world above the gray fog and used more than two-thirds of his spirituality to give a response.

When I advance to Sequence 7, such prayers should also allow me to use a little of the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, just like my summoning and bestowment rituals… Looking around, Klein made a rough judgment and quickly returned to the real world.

He passed through what seemed like a starry sky and a chaotic storm of thoughts, entering the mental plane of the target. There, he saw the man's illusory figure floating in midair.

"Who sent you to Zreal's home?" Klein looked at him and asked in a deep voice.

The man replied in a daze, his illusory eyes vacant, "Meursault. Meursault sent me to wait for the boy named Ian."

The light in his spiritual world changed, revealing a lean, capable-looking, dark-skinned man. He was none other than the leader of the group who was chasing Ian on the steam train.

As expected, it's him… Klein, who had exhausted so much of his spirituality in responding to the prayer, was beginning to feel exhausted. He hurriedly asked, "Who ordered Meursault?"

"No idea… He's an 'executioner' of our Zmanger gang. No one can order him other than the boss," the man said, blankly.

Zmanger… The word "warrior" in the language of the highlanders… Klein, a pseudo-historian but a true mysticism scholar, suddenly felt a sharp pain in his head, and his body involuntarily flew out of the storm of thoughts.

Not long afterwards, he exited the mediumship and felt his head throbbing.

He was in no hurry to leave. He methodically packed up the materials and the short yellowish-brown hair before opening the oriel window to let in the cold night wind to disperse the smell of the Amantha extract and Eye of the Spirit medication.

While this happened, Klein returned to the balcony, locked the door from the inside, and wiped off all the places he had touched.

When Zreal's bedroom returned to its original state, he then held his hand to his chest and bowed towards the three men who were still sleeping soundly.

Straightening his back, Klein put on his gloves and leaped, nimbly flipping out of the oriel window. He stood firmly, tiptoeing in the abnormally tight space.

He raised the open window's vertical latch and used a tarot card to hold its bottom. With his Clown abilities, he took in the details and adjusted the balance.

After a few seconds, Klein slowly pulled back the tarot card, and the vertical latch suddenly stopped in place and didn't fall further.

Whoosh!

First, he closed the unlatched half of the window, then he jumped over to the window with a latch. His right hand jerked inward, closing the other half of the window.

The speed of the action was so quick that the latch didn't fall down until there was a vibration, accurately inserting itself into the matching hole.

Clang! A sound that was difficult to eliminate rang out, like a strong wind slamming onto the surface of the glass.

Klein knew that the three men in the bedroom were about to awaken. Without further ado, he jumped onto the street.

For the current him, the height from the second floor wouldn't pose any danger. It was just that he couldn't maintain his silence when he landed, so he didn't make any obvious noises.

Klein quickly left the vicinity, as well as Rose Street, but he didn't directly take a rental carriage back to Cherwood Borough's Minsk Street.

He turned a few corners and headed to the neighboring East Borough.

It was a cold night, and the wind sent a biting chill right into his bones. Klein shivered and decided that he would need an additional sweater for his future missions. He decided to buy charcoal on one of the following days and let the fireplace carry out its role.

After an unknown period of time, he entered Backlund's East Borough despite not having a map. He had completely relied on instinct.

There were only a few gas lamps to be seen in the distance, and if it wasn't for the fact that the dark clouds hadn't covered the crimson moon, Klein believed that many parts of the road would be pitch black.

As he was walking, he suddenly saw pairs of eyes appear in the deep darkness in front of him. They came stooping from a distance.

They sauntered over from a vague distance away, in silence.

Living corpses? Klein came to a sudden halt. He reached out for his Requiem Charm and tarot cards, and he quickly activated his Spirit Vision.

He saw the unhealthy and weak colored auras and saw the faces of the numerous figures.

These were all living people, normal living people with numbed expressions, vacant eyes, and weak movements. There were both men and women.

It's almost midnight; why are they still walking on the streets… Confused, Klein warily leaned to one side, passing the group on the sidewalk, but soon, he came across a second wave, a third wave; all of them had the same pain amidst numbness.

He frowned slightly, and just as he was about to move forward to inquire, he suddenly heard a shout ahead.

"Get up! All of you get up!

"You sons of bitches!

"The streets and parks aren't for people like you to sleep in!"

… Klein was startled, then the corresponding term "Poor Law" popped up in his mind, and he understood what was going on.

He had experienced the same thing himself.

Phew… Klein exhaled, picked up the pace, and headed for his one-bedroom house on Black Palm Street in the East Borough.

There, he slept for two hours. After recovering some of his spirituality, he went out again and broke a withered branch to serve as a "dowsing rod."

"The location of Zreal's corpse.

"The location of Zreal's corpse."

†

After repeated divinations, Klein walked for a long time with the help of the short yellowish-brown hair until he arrived at a corner of East Borough where there was a sewer entrance.

Twelve years ago, after the great plague, the Loen Kingdom gradually built up an advanced sewer system in the capital and, in one fell swoop, surpassed "Roselle's Heritage" of the Intis Republic.

Moving the manhole cover out the way, Klein held his breath and climbed down the vertical metal stairs.

Since his clothes weren't specially made, he was unable to bring too many items due to the lack of pockets. He hadn't brought Quelaag's Oil which he had learned about from Frye. Klein felt especially regretful for not having brought the refreshing and odor-dispelling Quelaag's Oil.

Ten seconds later, Klein's feet touched the sticky ground.

The feeling of filth caused fine goosebumps to pop up over his arms and body. However, he could only endure it and continue walking forward, venturing deeper into the empty and quiet sewer.

There was a fork in the road ahead, one which was relatively hidden. A thick pungent smell wafted over from there.

Klein turned around and walked to the end where he saw a dense number of spirituality light dots and aura colors.

Without needing to use a candle, he activated his Spirit Vision and directly saw that in the dark corner, there was a rotten corpse that had been bitten to pieces.

This was the exact same scene he had seen in the dream divination.

Squeak!

The densely packed gray rats scampered in every direction, but there were also some who stayed where they were, unwilling to leave and part with their food.

After confirming that it was Zreal, Klein hesitated for a moment before quickly setting up a mediumship ritual.

Hmm… If there's nothing wrong with Ian's description, and Zreal died only a few days ago, I should be able to get some rough information by channeling his spirit… he thought confidently.

Whoosh!

As the wind swirled and the wall of spirituality was set up, all the rats fled, and Klein proceeded with his ritual as he had done before.

"The cause of Zreal's death.

"The cause of Zreal's death."

†

As he recited the words, Klein's eyes turned black. His pupils and the whites of his eyes disappeared. He quickly used Cogitation to enter a dream.

However, nothing appeared in that misty, illusory world.

Klein opened his eyes, frowning slightly as he made his judgment.

The channeling failed…

Someone has dealt with Zreal's spirit…

A Beyonder was involved in this.

The fact that someone was able to disguise as Zreal, making the other detectives unable to see through him, also proves this point.

After some deliberation, Klein came to a decision; it was to end this matter here and not get involved any further. Regardless, he had fulfilled the requirements of the job that he was entrusted with.

"I'll get Ian to call the police," he muttered as he put away the materials and removed the wall of spirituality.

Chapter 225 - Unnoticeable Guidance

◆

Klein backed up from the fork in the path, without touching Zreal's corpse.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Suddenly, a sound echoed in the distance through the empty sewers.

Klein listened for a few seconds before decisively retreating towards the exit, down the dirty concrete road that ran along both sides of the sewage channel.

There was no need to take risks in matters that didn't involve him.

Klein closed the iron manhole cover after he climbed out of the sewers. After ensuring that the surrounding area looked normal, he returned to his rented room in the East Borough and changed out of his disguise.

Then, he put on his gold-rimmed glasses, walked to another street, took a rented carriage, and returned to Cherwood Borough in the silence and cold of three in the morning. However, he didn't return to Minsk Street.

Then, Klein made another huge detour, and only after confirming that no one was following him, did he enter his house. He slept till dawn and was woken up by the doorbell.

He sat up immediately, put on his shirt, buttoned his vest, and hurried down to the first floor to open the door.

And even before that, his premonition ability as a Clown was already capable of naturally forming the image of the visitor in his mind.

The visitor was wearing an old coat, a brown round hat, and a tattered satchel. He had bright red eyes, a delicate face, and a quiet temperament. It was none other than Ian, the teenage boy who had come to entrust him with a job yesterday.

“Good morning, Detective Moriarty,” Ian greeted him and looked around. “Any progress? Yeah… I’m only asking because I happened to pass by.”

Klein nodded seriously and said, “Yes.”

“…” Ian seemed shocked as he didn’t say a word for quite a while.

After a while, he stammered in surprise, “Have you determined Mr. Zreal’s condition?”

“Yes.” Klein paused for a moment, then said seriously, “I found Zreal’s corpse.”

“Corpse…” Ian’s pupils shrank as he repeated it in a low tone.

He wasn’t too surprised, as if he had already expected the worst possible outcome.

Klein watched silently without interjecting.

“Sigh…” Ian exhaled and warily surveyed his surroundings. “Your efficiency is amazing. Can you take me to see Mr. Zreal’s body?”

“No problem. In fact, that’s what I was planning to do.” Klein then thought for a moment before saying, “I hope you won’t mention me when you call the police. Just say that you found the corpse yourself. I believe you know how to make up a reason.”

Ian wasn’t surprised; he knew that not every detective liked to deal with the police. In fact, except for the very famous detectives, who often gave advice to the police with mutual cooperation, the rest were discriminated against, ostracized, and even extorted from.

This was the current situation of the Loen Kingdom.

“Alright,” Ian readily agreed.

Considering that they were entering the sewers, Klein changed into a set of clothes worn by the common working class, put on a deer-hunting cap, and took a lantern with him.

Both of them took the public carriage to the East Borough. They walked for half an hour to reach the remote sewer entrance under the watchful gazes filled with numbness and malicious intent.

“How did you find it?” Ian asked, half-surprised and half-curious, as he watched Klein lift the manhole cover and climb down.

Klein focused on the area beneath him and answered casually, “Skillful training which includes many techniques in reasoning, investigation, tracking, and interrogation.”

Ian followed him into the sewers. He nodded without looking disgusted.

“…You seem to have received very professional training.”

Klein didn’t answer him directly. He held the already lit lantern and led Ian to the fork in the path where they arrived at the gloomy corner.

He narrowed his eyes as he approached. More of Zreal’s body was missing now when compared to the previous night. He was missing an arm and half of his ribs.

That’s not something a rat can do… Klein muttered to himself and didn’t inform Ian of this.

With the help of the lantern’s light, Ian was able to clearly see the corpse’s appearance.

He squatted down suddenly, vomited, and gradually vomited yellow-green bile. Klein took out the Quelaag's Oil he prepared, unscrewed the cap, and bent over to place the mouth close to Ian's nose.

Ian's eyes lit up, and he calmed down.

Nearly twenty seconds later, he weakly whispered, "Thank you…"

He stood up slowly and examined the mutilated corpse a few more times.

"I can confirm that this is Detective Zreal."

"My condolences," Klein replied out of politeness. "I suggest you call the police."

"Okay." Ian nodded indiscernibly as he followed Klein back to the surface.

At that moment, Klein clapped his hands.

"This is the end of my mission. As for what should be done after this, that is up to you."

Ian fell silent for a few seconds.

"I still owe you three matters. You can tell me now."

"Actually, I can only think of one at the moment," Klein answered frankly. "I want to know where I can get a gun and bullets, without needing a full class weapon permit."

Ian spoke, almost without thinking, "Go to Bravehearts Bar at Iron Gate Street in the Backlund Bridge district. Find Kaspars Kalinin. Tell him 'Old Geezer' introduced you."

"Alright, let's talk about the other two matters in the future. I have a feeling that we'll meet again." Klein deliberately nodded casually.

Ian gave him a look but didn't say anything.

The two split up and headed down different streets in the East Borough. The secluded spot, once again, regained its silence.

After walking for a while, Klein suddenly turned around and retraced his steps. He then hid himself in a secluded corner, peeking at the entrance to the sewer.

After waiting for two or three minutes, he saw Ian return silently as he looked around warily.

Klein withdrew his gaze in a timely manner, leaned his back against the wall, and listened.

He heard the scraping sound of the manhole cover being removed and heard someone climbing down.

Carefully poking his head out, Klein discovered that Ian had re-entered the sewers.

Was there a clue or something on Zreal's body? Indeed, this matter goes deeper than it seems… He nodded thoughtfully.

Having satisfied his curiosity, Klein decided to leave for real and planned to seek out Kaspars, two days later.

†

At tea time, Viscount Glaint was in his home situated in Empress Borough.

The door to the study was tightly shut, separating the four people inside from the participating guests in the salon outside.

"Xio, Fors, this is the reward the two of you deserve." Dressed in a pale yellow lace dress, Audrey pushed a bulging envelope across the desk to the two ladies sitting opposite her.

Xio wanted to say something polite, but her hand had reached for the envelope faster than her mouth. Feeling the weight of the money, she could only say sincerely, “Miss Audrey, thank you for your generosity. Your honesty makes you look even more beautiful.”

As she spoke, she untied the thin string around the envelope and saw the bills inside.

It was uniform gray paper money with black stripes. The stack was thick and exuded a special smell of ink, one that left one feeling refreshed.

“10 pounds…” Xio took one note out and checked its face value. Beside her, Fors, who appeared lazy and unbothered by money, had also leaned over.

This is at least… Observing the thickness, Xio tried to figure out how many notes there were.

She couldn’t help but exchange looks with Fors and saw the surprise in each other’s eyes.

This was obviously a lot more than they had imagined!

Audrey smiled faintly and said, “A total of eight hundred pounds. Decide how you will split the money between the two of you.

“I’m very sorry that this matter had placed you in danger.”

Eight hundred pounds… No, there’s no need to apologize. Even if we had to do it again and knew of the possible consequences, I would still accept the request… Even if it’s divided evenly, with my savings, it’s enough to buy the potion formula for Sheriff… Xio, who was slightly taller than 150cm, stared blankly at the notes in the envelope, wishing she could pull them all out and count them over and over again.

She believed that the generous and beautiful Miss Audrey wouldn’t pay them any less, but what if she had made a mistake counting?

Everyone makes mistakes at times! Xio raised her right hand, paused for a few seconds, then silently lowered it.

The corners of Fors's lips couldn't help but rise as she said wistfully, "This is even more than the royalties I've received for my 'Stormwind Mountain Villa' so far…"

Should I praise Miss Audrey or laugh at the poverty of an author? She added silently.

Viscount Glaint, who was sitting on the sofa, was also a little envious, but it wasn't directed at Xio or Fors. As a viscount with a fairly good financial situation, 800 pounds wasn't a large sum.

What he envied was Audrey's ability to hand out money without feeling the slightest burden.

"Ahem…" Viscount Glaint cleared his throat, "If you can get the formula for Apothecary, I will also provide you with substantial payment."

"We'll do our best!" Xio answered without any hesitation. Then, she looked at Audrey. "We've recently come into contact with someone who's suspected to be from the Psychology Alchemists, and we'll soon have clues regarding the Spectator potion you're looking for."

Xio, I'm already at Sequence 8; far stronger than you… Audrey smiled in a reserved manner as she said, "I'm looking forward to it."

With that said, the four began chatting about various rumors among the Beyonder circles while following Audrey's example of finding books they wished to read.

Suddenly, Xio's eyes lit up as she saw two hardcover books.

"History of the Loen Kingdom's Aristocracy" and "Study of the Coat of Arms"

Meanwhile, Fors also found books that interested her.

"Geography and People of the Feysac Empire" and "Traveling the Northern Continent"

"Honorable Viscount Glaint, may I borrow these two books? I'll return them soon." Xio looked pleadingly at the owner of the study.

Glaint nodded without much care.

"No problem.

At his response, Fors hurriedly made a request as well and similarly obtained his approval.

The corners of Audrey's mouth curved into a faint smile as she witnessed all of this. She looked modestly to the side, pretending to be looking for a book.

As a qualified Spectator who had just advanced, she had accurately grasped Xio's and Fors's preferences in certain domains after being in contact with them multiple times. Thus, she had made arrangements in advance without anyone realizing it.

Letting the one being guided feel like it was done out of their own will was a manifestation of the powers of a Spectator.

†

In the evening, Xio was curled up on the sofa in front of the fireplace, reading History of the Loen Kingdom's Aristocracy under the gas lamp's illumination. Fors had gone for a gathering meant for authors.

After reading for quite a while, Xio suddenly felt something strange about the hardback cover, so she carefully examined it and found an interlayer where an ancient piece of paper was hidden inside.

The front side of the paper was covered with the special symbols created by Emperor Roselle, and on the back was a paragraph written in ancient Hermes.

"Viscount Glaint's ancestors deciphered some of Emperor Roselle's special symbols?" Xio was suddenly excited.

She struggled to decipher the ancient Hermes as she muttered silently

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

Chapter 226 - The Terrified Xio

◆ ◆ ◆

Cherwood Borough. 15 Minsk Street.

A satiated Klein sat in a reclining chair in the living room, beside a fireplace burning with charcoal.

In a warm environment akin to summer, Klein wore a white shirt, a black vest, and thin trousers, while having a newspaper spread open in front of him as he flipped through the section with the most ads.

A new type of transportation vehicle is in urgent need for investments. Details to be discussed in person… Klein read the advertisement twice before picking up a pencil from a small, dark red table to his side and circled the message.

If there were no commissions tomorrow or the day after, he planned on seeing if this so-called new type of transportation vehicle had any investment value—such matters were impossible to divine since there was a lack of sufficient information.

I hope it's a product similar to a bicycle… Klein mumbled to himself before suddenly hearing an illusory prayer echo in his ears.

Who is it? Miss Justice? Mr. Hanged Man? The Sun? Or some clerk at the Backlund Bank is copying my passcode? Thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he put down the newspaper, returned to his bedroom, and locked the door behind him.

Taking four steps counterclockwise, he entered the world above the gray fog. He saw that to the side of The Fool's seat and by the edge of the ancient mottled bronze table was a clear and bright brilliance that emitted waves of radiance.

The experienced Klein calmly sat down and emanated his spirituality, touching the light ripples of light in response to the prayer.

The scene in front of his eyes suddenly changed. It was a blurry sofa with a petite woman in a knight's trainee uniform curled up on it.

She's not copying my passcode… She's reading a piece of paper… Klein suddenly realized the reason for this.

She should be one of the two Beyonders that Miss Justice mentioned that requires my vetting…

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, Klein didn't give any form of formal response. He planned on taking the next step deep at night. He would then test her reaction, attitude, and way of handling things to test her personality and abilities.

Of course, he would absolutely not force others to join the Tarot Club.

†

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…" Xio, who had just finished chanting the ancient Hermes sentence, froze for a few seconds. Then, she suddenly straightened her back and sat up straight.

This seems to be the honorary name of a hidden existence! She realized this in horror.

Furthermore, her knowledge in mysticism and the various rumors she had heard told her that once someone recited the full honorary name of a hidden existence, it would often attract the attention of said existence!

The consequences of such attention was mostly misfortune or could even be described as tragic!

Quite a few of those hidden beings were the incarnations of the evil gods and devils!

Furthermore, I recited it in ancient Hermes, completely unprotected… I'm so dumb. Why did I focus so much effort in identifying the sentence and actually read it in my head… Xio looked around in horror, terrified that an indescribable monster would suddenly appear in her house.

The sofa, coffee table, cupboard, dining table, chairs, oil painting, and other items were all reflected in her eyes, without any changes.

After nearly a minute of heightened vigilance, Xio relaxed a little and comforted herself, "Don't worry, don't be afraid. I just said the honorific name and didn't follow up with a prayer.

"This is an incomplete ceremony, so it shouldn't attract any attention.

"Moreover, there's a good chance that the name might've been translated by the owner of the paper based on the special symbols left behind by Emperor Roselle. It might not be correct."

But, but I heard that if the evil gods and devils generate interest, they would still provide a response even if the ceremony is incomplete… I'm so stupid, really… As she thought over the matter, Xio's face scrunched up into a grimace. She felt that she had made a grave mistake.

After waiting for a few more minutes, she slowly exhaled as she puffed out her cheeks when she realized that there was no obvious response.

She stuffed the piece of paper back into the "History of the Loen Kingdom's Aristocracy" as she entered the bathroom with a heavy heart. She turned on the faucet and tried to use the cold water to clear her head.

Splash!

As nearly transparent water flowed down, Xio hunched her back and reached out her palms to cup some water.

Just as she was about to dab the cold water onto her face, she spotted a long, slightly curly brown hair in the mirror through the corner of her eye.

As for her, she had shoulder-length, unkempt yellow hair.

Suddenly, Xio's hair stood on end.

She stomped on the ground and, with a push of her hands, she shot backwards, turning her body halfway around and slamming the entity with her elbow.

Pow!

She leaned against a warm body, causing the other party to let out a familiar scream before falling to the ground.

Xio stopped any subsequent actions and looked at her good friend who was hugging her stomach in pain, tears in her eyes.

The corner of her mouth twitched without her realizing it as she said, "Fors, when did you get back?"

Fors didn't reply immediately. It took her quite a while to get over the pain. As she slowly stood up, using the wall as a support, she grumbled, "I j-just got back. Xio, are you nuts!? Why did you attack me without even looking clearly! And you hit me so hard!"

"Where did you come in from?" Xio asked awkwardly.

"Through the bathroom window. Why? Is there a problem? As an Apprentice, it's normal to not bring a key with me," Fors replied matter-of-factly.

Xio straightened her back and pushed away all responsibility.

"Then why didn't you go through the door? You really gave me a fright just now!"

Fors blinked her eyes and said, "If that's the case, I'll have to make one big round. That's too troublesome; I'm used to walking in a straight line."

She paused as she asked suspiciously, "However, wasn't your reaction a bit too much?"

Xio struggled for three seconds, choosing between losing her dignity or losing her life, before answering honestly, "It-it's because I made a mistake, a fatal mistake."

"What mistake?" Fors asked, rubbing her belly as she felt puzzled and concerned.

Xio hurriedly recounted the whole story of how she had discovered the interlayer in the book's cover and found an old piece of paper in it. Then, she had accidentally recited the suspected incantation in ancient Hermes silently. What she had recited seemed to contain the honorific name of some hidden existence.

"You… Where's your brain? It-it should be fine. The ceremony wasn't complete, and who knows if it's real or fake…" Fors looked around, and for some baffling reason, she felt a chill.

She followed Xio back to the living room and saw the yellowed sheet of paper, as well as Roselle's special symbols, and the sentence that was written in ancient Hermes.

After a quick glance, Fors, the professional researcher in mysticism, nodded and said, "It's not any of the evil gods, devils, and secret existences that I know of. It should be fine.

"Furthermore, nothing has happened up till now. That means that everything should be fine."

Seeing Xio relax, she thought of the pain in her stomach, so she deliberately added maliciously, “Of course, if something were to really happen, there’s no way we can rescue ourselves with our meager abilities.”

Xio’s face paled as she blurted out, “Fors, let’s sleep together tonight. Forget it, I’ll just sleep on my own…”

Fors pricked up her brows and chuckled, “Alright. In fact, you don’t have to worry about it. Think about it, I hear strange murmurs whenever there’s a full moon, but I don’t see any signs me going mad or losing control.

“Well… We should study the other three books. If there’s the same piece of paper and the same incantation, it means that it’s very likely to be a prank from Viscount Glaint.”

The duo hurriedly flipped through “Study of the Coat of Arms” and the other books and checked them carefully, but they didn’t find anything else out of the ordinary.

Xio looked at Fors, who looked back at her, turning the mood somber again.

“Should we sneak into Saint Samuel Cathedral’s nave tonight?” Xio came up with an inspired suggestion.

That was the headquarters of the Church of Evernight in the Backlund diocese.

“Why not Saint Hierländ Cathedral? I don’t think the Evernight Goddess will protect me…” Fors subconsciously replied.

That was the headquarters of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, which was located in the St. George Borough, adjacent to many huge factories in the southeast.

The two ladies with different faiths fell silent again, and after a while, Fors sighed and said, “And that would make us end up being targeted by the Nighthawks or the Machinery Hivemind. That might be the goal of that hidden existence.

“Alright, go to sleep. We’ll know the answer tomorrow morning. If nothing happens by then, it means that it’ll really be okay.”

†

In the middle of the night, the waxing crimson moon was obscured by clouds, and the stars were barely visible in the sky above Backlund.

Klein instinctively woke up, lifted his blanket, got off the bed, and entered the world above the gray fog.

He sat down on the high back chair that belonged to The Fool. He planned on responding to Miss Justice’s companion and proceed with the ‘examination process.’

At that moment, he suddenly had a new idea.

Perhaps he could try and see if he could pull her into the world above the gray fog under the present circumstances!

The young lady must have fallen asleep, and even if I succeed, she would probably treat it as a dream that appears clearer than usual… Hmm… If I succeed, I can sever the connection in a timely manner to prevent her from seeing her surroundings clearly…

After repeatedly deliberating over the matter, Klein stretched out his hand and tapped at the rippling ring of light to form a connection with it.

Suddenly, Klein felt his spirituality surge out in an unstoppable manner, causing the mysterious space above the gray fog to tremble slightly.

Just when Klein thought that his spirituality would be completely drained, everything calmed down. A blurry, distorted figure appeared at the edge of the long bronze table.

In her reverie, Xio opened her eyes sleepily and saw the endless fog, the ancient high back chair, and a dark figure watching her.

Klein was overjoyed and immediately severed the connection according to his plan.

The hazy, petite figure disappeared, but within the grayish-white mist, a crimson, illusory star appeared.

Klein looked at this scene and confirmed one thing. As long as someone chanted his name, he would be able to pull that person into the world above the gray fog. The crimson star was a symbol of a stable connection.

However, there are certain limitations. With my current strength, at most, I can establish another connection… Hmm… Based on my previous experiences, my current spirituality can only pull in Beyonders who are a Sequence higher than me, and it won't necessarily be a success. It's just a preliminary judgment, so it shouldn't be a problem if it's someone at the same Sequence as me or lower… Klein thought, feeling satisfied.

There was no need for him to respond. His attempt was already enough.

†

Xio sat up in her sleep.

She had been worrying about the potential dangers of chanting an honorary name the entire time. Not long after she fell asleep, she dreamed of a mysterious space, and a gray foggy figure looking down on her from above.

The dream was so clear, so clear that Xio felt afraid.

She looked at the sleeping Fors beside her and thought with a tremble, Is it a nightmare caused by fear, or is it because of the attention I garnered from some hidden existence, resulting in being haunted by evil spirits?

Yes… There’s going to be a gathering of Beyonders tomorrow night. In addition to buying the formula, I need to find a person who is good at exorcising evil spirits to purify myself.

Chapter 227 - Inventor Leppard

Sitting at his own dining table on a foggy morning, Klein broke up his specially bought wheat bread and soaked it in milk, improving the way he ate it.

Although his body had changed a long time ago, his pursuit and obsession with delicacies were engraved into his soul. He was completely unable to adapt to the Loen Kingdom’s monotonous and repetitive style of breakfast. He could only try his best at experimenting. He tried not to limit himself to toast, bread, bacon, sausages, and butter. He tried hard to expand the boundaries and improve the way he ate. For example, his recipes had new additions such as pork-filled pastries from the south, Feynapotter noodles, and roasted corn pastries.

“Caviar from the Feysac Empire isn’t bad either, but it’s too expensive. It’s only suitable for formal meals…” Klein scooped up a small piece of wheat bread he had softened and put it in his mouth. Just by chewing it a little, he could feel the intertwining flavors of milk with the fragrance of wheat. The aftertaste of the bread was even sweeter.

After breakfast, Klein put down his cutlery, but he was in no hurry to tidy up the table. He picked up the newspapers, and began to read.

I’ll do a divination in a while. If there’s nothing else to do, I’ll pay Mr. Leppard a visit at St. George Borough’s Sird Street and see if his new transportation vehicle is worth investing in… Backlund is really big. Every borough is almost the size of Tingen City. The East Borough is especially ridiculous. It's at least twice as large… The easiest and most economical way to travel is to walk, followed by the steam metro, before walking again. It's just quite a waste of time… Klein's mind wandered aimlessly.

Backlund's public horse carriage system was rather similar to Tingen's. The price was about the same, but the only problem was that most of them were confined to a single borough. If one wanted to go from Cherwood to St. George, a few transfers were needed and that would naturally raise the price.

Such a situation made the prospects for a new transportation vehicle very alluring.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

At that moment, knocks on the door sounded. It was as loud as the pounding of a hammer.

Who is it… Don't they know how to ring the doorbell… He muttered a few words, straightened his collar, walked to the door, and pulled it open.

In front of him was a familiar face. It was the highlander man who had chased Ian at the steam metro. His skin was dark, his eye sockets recessed, and he was lean and hardy man.

According to Klein's mediumship results, the man's name was Meursault, an "executioner" of the Zmanger gang who was almost equal to the boss.

"Excuse me, who are you looking for? Do you have a commission to entrust with me?" Klein deliberately acted somewhat confused.

Meursault was wearing a black coat and a pompous silk hat, but he didn't look anything like a gentleman at all.

He coldly sized Klein up, then he asked in Loen, with a thick highlander accent, “Are you Detective Sherlock Moriarty?”

“Yes,” Klein replied short and sweet.

Meursault nodded his head stiffly.

“I want to hire you to find someone.”

“We can talk about the exact situation inside.” Klein prevented himself from acting odd in any way.

Meursault shook his head coldly.

“There’s no need.”

After saying that, his eyes suddenly became sharp.

“The person I’m looking for is called Ian. Ian Wright. He has a pair of bright red eyes, maybe fifteen or sixteen. He likes to wear a brown, old coat and a round hat of the same color. I believe you know him.”

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Meursault seemed to ignore Klein’s denial. “He’s a thief who has stolen an important item from me. If you can find him, you’ll be paid at least 10 pounds.”

“You’ve provided too few clues.” Klein made up an excuse.

“30 pounds.” Meursault made a new offer.

Klein glanced at him and said, “No, this is against my principle of confidentiality.”

“50 pounds,” Meursault replied coldly.

“…I’m sorry, I cannot accept the mission.” Klein was startled for two seconds, but in the end, he still chose to reject the request.

Meursault studied him slowly for a few seconds as his eyes slowly turned cold and fierce.

He didn't offer a new price, nor did he politely bid farewell. He turned around abruptly and walked quickly to the end of the street.

This gang has pretty good intelligence… They actually know that Ian had come to me once… Klein secretly sighed, full of emotion, but he didn't feel too much anxiety or fear.

After all, I'm someone who once directly faced the son of an evil god, although, it was separated by a belly… As he thought about it, his smile suddenly became brilliant. He began flipping a coin to decide whether or not he was going out today.

The answer was positive.

†

St. George Borough, Sird Street.

Having transferred from a tracked public carriage to the steam metro, before transferring to a trackless carriage, Klein finally arrived at his destination, spending a total of 11 pence.

Just after he alighted the carriage, he discovered that a drizzle had already started, but he hadn't brought an umbrella.

According to the newspapers and magazines, this is a daily occurrence in Backlund. The reason why hats are popular is that ladies and gentlemen don't carry umbrellas all the time. Klein pressed down on his half top hat and briskly ran outside Unit 9 and used the eaves to shield himself from the rain.

He brushed off the obvious water droplets from his body and rang the doorbell.

However, he didn't hear any cuckoo sounds or tinkling sounds.

Is the doorbell broken? Klein was just about to raise his hand to knock when he suddenly saw footsteps approaching from afar.

The image of the person naturally appeared in his mind. It was a tall, thin man with black hair and blue eyes. He was in his thirties and was dressed in grayish-blue worker attire, but he appeared gentle and refined.

Creak. The door opened. The gentleman rubbed his forehead and asked, “May I know who you are looking for? Is there something?”

Klein took off his hat and bowed slightly.

“I’m here to find Mr. Leppard. I’m interested in his new transportation vehicle.”

The gentleman’s eyes suddenly lit up.

“I’m Leppard. Come in, please.”

He turned to the side and allowed Klein entry. However, there was no coat rack in the foyer.

Klein could only lean his cane and not take off his coat. He followed Leppard into the living room.

It had to be said that the gentleman’s house was very messy. On the coffee table in the living room alone were many mechanical objects, such as wrenches, bearings and screwdrivers.

“How much do you wish to invest? Ah, right. Would you like some coffee or black tea? Uh… it seems I’m out of black tea…” Leppard blurted out.

This gentleman is a bit straightforward, and doesn’t seem to be very good at interpersonal relationships… A thought flashed through Klein’s mind, and he changed the words he planned on saying. He went straight to the point, “I’ve to see your new transportation vehicle before

I make a decision.

“I can’t make any promises without understanding anything.”

As he spoke, he looked around and saw a triangular Sacred Emblem hanging on the wall.

That was the symbol of the God of Steam and Machinery. The solid triangle was filled with symbols such as steam, gears, and levers.

Leppard wasn’t irritated by Klein’s straightforwardness. He immediately said, “I’ll show you.”

As soon as he said that, he slapped his head. “I almost forgot, we have to sign a non-disclosure agreement to ensure that you don’t steal my invention.”

Mr. Leppard, you don’t have a very good memory either… Klein smiled and said, “That wouldn’t be an issue.”

After signing the simple contract, Leppard led Klein into a room that seemed like an activity room. He had knocked through the neighboring guest room and basement, making it much wider and spacious.

The ground was littered with components, and a rough object, that was half the height of a man, that resembled a carriage stood in the center.

In addition to that, the line of the doorbell was connected there and was cleverly constructed. As long as someone pulled the rope, a steel ball would pop out from the mechanism, allowing it to roll along a special track before colliding with the object in the center to produce a clanging sound.

The sound certainly wasn’t too loud, but it was enough to rouse Leppard who was engrossed in machinery.

“Is that the new form of transportation you invented?” Klein pointed to the crude object in the middle of the room.

"Yes, I invented it based on Emperor Roselle's imagination!" He replied with a fervent look in his eyes.

"Emperor Roselle's imagination?" Klein asked in surprise.

Leppard explained in a tone of adoration, "Emperor Roselle left behind a number of manuscripts in which he drew his vision of the machines of the future. He was an outstanding genius, no—a master! Many things have already been turned into reality!"Heh heh, this manuscript is kept in the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. There's no way for non pious believers to borrow them."

…Emperor, are you still leaving no stones unturned for others… Klein's mouth twitched, almost unable to maintain his smile.

"Describe it in detail." He changed the subject.

Leppard led Klein to the crude metallic object and opened the door.

"This is a transportation tool that doesn't need a horse.

"The driver sits in the front left seat, continuously stepping on the pedals. Through the levers and a chain connects to the four wheels, allowing the vehicle to roll forward. And on the wheels, I used inflated rubber which can make the journey smooth."

So it's a human-powered car? Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

He said with some deliberation, "With such a huge carriage, and at least four passengers, it would be impossible to travel that far just by relying on human strength alone."

"That's exactly my next goal—to reduce the weight and expand the lever a few times! However, my financial situation isn't at its best. I can't fund any more attempts." Leppard looked hopefully at Klein.

"Why not consider other methods? Such as using steam as the driving force?" Klein slowly organized his words.

Leppard shook his head. “There have been people who have invented that, but it has a very huge body, making it difficult to drive it along many streets.”

That was exactly what Klein was waiting for.

“Then, why don’t you just do something simpler? For example, have only two wheels with only one person without an outer shell.”

“You mean something like a bike?” Leppard asked in thought.

Roselle’s manuscript has that? Klein nodded heavily.

“Yes.”

“Those bikes which other people have invented aren’t very practical… Simplifying this… seems like it might work. It will really seem different. But, who would buy it?” Leppard said to himself.

Klein didn’t hesitate to provide him with a direction.

“The postman, the working class who have a bit of savings, the businessmen who doesn’t need to look respectable while hoping to save money… There are many of them in Backlund.”

Leppard thought for a moment, then nodded slightly.

“…I can try, but I don’t have the money for spare parts…”

“I’ll invest 100 gold pounds. In addition to my suggestion just now, I’ll take a total of…” Klein hesitated to say ten percent of the shares. Fifteen percent was better. After all, a hundred pounds was, strictly speaking, not much.

“You can have 35% of the shares! But that’s only limited to the bike concept you described!” Leppard spoke out first, afraid that Klein would make an unreasonable request.

“Deal!” Klein immediately laughed. “We’ll first draw up a simple contract and settle this matter. Afterwards, I'll find a lawyer to make a formal contract and add some detailed terms. For example, if there's anyone else who wants to invest, they must first get my consent."

"No problem," Leppard replied impatiently. All he wanted was to buy his spare parts as soon as possible.

†

In the gloominess brought about by the drizzle, Klein returned to Cherwood Borough's Minsk Street.

He entered the house and went straight to the bathroom on the first floor and resolved the problem of his bloated stomach.

Splash.

As the water echoed, Klein bent down to wash his hands.

At that moment, an image appeared in his mind.

The mirror in front of the sink reflected his lowered head, dim surroundings, and a pair of eyes to his side.

A pair of eyes!

Chapter 228 - The Mastermind

◆

Almost instinctively, Klein bent his knees and rolled sideways toward the bathroom door.

Sou!

A small black-feathered arrow stabbed into the wash basin. The arrow seemed to be made of bone and suffused a blue luster. It was extremely beautiful.

If Klein had hesitated in any way, he definitely wouldn’t have been able to escape this sudden attack!

After rolling for a moment, Klein reached into his pocket and attempted to pull out a few tarot cards.

But at that moment, he felt a gust of wind engulf him. Through the corner of his eyes, he saw a black figure quickly closing in on him at high speeds. It appeared in front of him in an extraordinary pose, as he tightened his foot and kicked out from bottom to top.

Realizing that he couldn’t avoid the attack, Klein quickly gave up on his previous intentions and used his elbow to block the attack.

With a bang, he felt his entire left arm go numb, and his body was yanked over, just like in the sport squash, that the middle class loved to play the most, or like a soccer ball that was now popular among the lower class.

What immense strength! Klein’s heart tightened. Without being flustered, he adjusted his body in midair and changed his posture, barely maintaining his balance as if he was performing acrobatics.

Pa! Pa! Pa… At this moment, a tree-bark-colored blow-pipe had just landed on the floor of the bathroom and bounced behind the door, at a declining speed.

Just as Klein was about to stretch out his body to firmly stand and face the follow-up attack, a scene suddenly flashed in his mind.

The speed of the enemy in black far exceeded his expectations, arriving even faster than he had expected. He lowered his body and swung his arm, striking him in the chest.

In the blink of an eye, Klein's body bent over, spinning half a circle more, like a small ball that kept falling and kept being thrown around.

Pow!

He stretched out his hand and pressed it to the ground, opening his legs like scissors while keeping his head low. It made black-clothed man's fist miss as it tore through empty space.

The fist that was originally aimed at his chest could only hit his legs after Klein turned his body, but his legs were opened wide.

Pushing up, his legs closed in together, allowing Klein to leap nimbly to the side as he finally managed to stand up straight.

Pow!

Before he had the chance to observe his enemy, the black figure had already arrived in front of him, bringing with it a strong gust of wind.

What a fast reaction! Klein quickly lifted his arms up in front of him to block.

With a dull thud, he felt as if he had collided with a black bear. Failing to withstand the immense force, he could only stagger backward, his arms almost turning numb in the process.

At the same time, Klein finally recognized his attacker.

He had dark skin, a lean and hardy build with recessed eye sockets. He was none other than the “executioner” of the Zmanger gang, Meursault, the person who had come to see Detective Moriarty in the morning!

Pa! Pa! Pa! With a fierce glint in his eyes, Meursault closely pursued after him as he flung both of his arms, delivering left hooks or right punches in a barrage of attacks at Klein.

The gap between Klein’s strength and that of his opponent was obvious. He was unable to face him head on, and he had to rely on his agility and premonitory senses to barely avoid the combo of punches.

No! I have to make full use of my advantages! With a similar thought, Klein stopped engaging in melee combat. He lowered his body and rolled to the side.

Crack! A chair was torn apart by Meursault’s kick.

Klein supported his body with one hand as he exerted strength in his waist and continued rolling in a bid to seek a chance to use his tarot cards and self-made charms.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Meursault caught up quickly and kicked out his legs, one after another, that was in no way slower than his opponent.

He was like a giant bear with the gift of agility and had zero weaknesses. He made it so that the rolling Klein was only capable of focusing on dodging and defending, without giving him the chance to draw his cards or use his charms.

Kacha! Bam! Bam!

A chair was broken, the table overturned, the coat rack toppled, and

Klein had circled most of the way around, but his situation was turning dire.

I can’t go on like this! He kept dodging, rolling and tumbling, seeking every opportunity to turn the situation around.

Suddenly, an idea came to him when he spotted the coffee table in the living room through the corner of his eyes.

Bam! Klein defended a blow with one arm as jumped back towards the living room while enduring the pain.

At this moment, Meursault’s leg muscles bulged suddenly like they were inflated with air.

Boom! He stepped on the ground so hard that it seemed to shake, and he jumped up and shot at Klein like a bullet, with one of his legs aimed at him.

Klein barely managed to hold on for a moment before being sent flying again, crashing through the coffee table with a clang, sending the ceramic tea set flying towards the cupboard, scattering the round fountain pens, the contract template, and the various newspapers on the floor.

Seeing that the detective in the black double-breasted coat was weakened from the impact and momentarily unable to stand up or roll, a fierce glint flashed in Meursault’s eyes. He slid forward, pushing his knee out amidst the shattering sounds of the porcelain.

Klein’s eyes turned dark as he watched this scene. He was already holding a contract template in his hands.

He had fled to the coffee table in the living room, ignoring the warnings his premonition was giving him, solely to pick up a contract template or newspaper!

When he saw Meursault’s knee coming at him, Klein’s wrist shook.

At that moment, a scene appeared in his mind once again, a scene with Meursault's neck twisted backward.

Sou!

Klein slightly pressed his wrist, shaking out the contract template in his hand.

Sou!

The contract was like a dart made of fine steel as it shot at Meursault's throat. At that moment, the distance between the two of them was less than a meter. Moreover, as Meursault closed in, the distance between them was decreasing!

A white item was reflected in Meursault's eyes as he instinctively tried to jump back to dodge it.

Oof!

The contract stabbed right through Meursault's throat, penetrating his windpipe.

Blood with patches of bubbling blood gushed out as Meursault fell in front of Klein, his knees heavily hitting the ground.

"Huff… Huff… Huff…" He pulled out the bloodied contract template and clutched his throat.

However, he was unable to stop the blood from flowing out of his wound, and his eyes gradually became unfocused.

In the end, his body twitched a few times, and he stopped moving.

Klein took a moment to recover before he had the strength to turn around and stand up. He had a few tarot cards between his fingers, on guard against possible counterattacks and other enemies.

After activating his Spirit Vision and confirming that his assailant was dead, Klein looked around and didn't see any other auras.

Only then did he relax a little. He noticed that two of the chairs were broken, the coffee table was smashed up in several spots, and porcelain was strewn all over the floor. The entire living room, dining room, and foyer were in a mess.

Lowering his head, he saw that the sleeves of his suit had been damaged and that the outer layer of the cloth had been stained with a great deal of dust.

Suddenly, Klein said softly in a self-deprecating manner, "There's no way to claim reimbursement for this…

"Haha. Hahaha. Hahaha."

He laughed as if he had encountered something that could amuse him for the rest of his life. He laughed so hard that his body bent forward and backward, to the point where only his laughter reverberated in the entire house.

A few seconds later, Klein stopped smiling and walked to the corpse with a heavy expression.

He wanted to make the dead speak!

Being familiar with the mediumship ritual and answering his own prayers, Klein took of a whiff of the refreshing fragrance and used the technique of dream divination to whisper, "The mastermind who sent Meursault on this mission."

Soon, his eyes turned black as he entered a dream and saw a gray blur.

Suddenly, the gray and blurry world and lit figures changed, forming numerous scenes and images before him.

In front of Meursault was a middle-aged man without a hat. His white shirt had a complicated, layered, petal-shaped collar and cuffs, which made him look very magnificent. Matched with a tight black vest and skinny trousers, he looked gaudy and exaggerated.

This middle-aged man had brown hair and blue eyes, a thin face with a stubble. He was a very good-looking gentleman.

He looked at Meursault and said in a deep voice, “No matter what you do, make sure you find Ian Wright alive. If he’s dead, bring him to me within an hour, preferably within fifteen minutes.”

“Yes, Mr. Ambassador.” Meursault didn’t hide his unruliness but still kept his head lowered.

The scene shattered, and Klein frowned.

Mr. Ambassador?

This matter actually involves other countries?

Judging by the style of the shirt, the ambassador is most likely the ambassador of the Intis Republic to Backlund.

Ian is only a teenage boy…

That gentleman is able to channel spirits, or at least he has someone around him who can do so…

Klein thought for a moment, then constructed another sentence for the dream divination.

“The reason for finding Ian Wright.”

In the grayish blurry dream, Klein once again saw the middle-aged gentleman from before.

He stared at Meursault and said in a low voice, “You don’t need to know why. Just heed my instructions.

“I gave you the potion and money to become the person in power behind the Zmanger gang; not for you to raise questions, but for you to do things!

"Yes… You only need to know that Ian Wright might be involved in an item of great importance."

As the scene faded away, Klein once again exited the dream.

An item of great importance… I really can't tell, Ian… What could it be… Potion… So Meursault is actually a Beyonder. It's no wonder that his combat skills were so powerful and terrifying. He should be a Beyonder adept in this field… As these thoughts crossed his mind, Klein felt exhausted. It seemed that responding to his own request had consumed too much of his spirituality.

If he wanted to have his mediumship standards restored to what it was previously, he estimated that it would only happen when he was a Sequence 7.

After ending the ritual and dispelling the wall of spirituality, Klein looked at Meursault's corpse and carefully observed it for a long time.

Finally, he saw specks of spiritual radiance converging at the wound on his opponent's throat, slowly congealing into a piece.

Carefully grabbing it, Klein pulled out a dark red object that looked like jelly from Earth.

Is this the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Meursault? I wonder what kind of Sequence potion it is… That's easy to determine. I'll get the answer by doing a divination above the gray fog… Theoretically speaking, the Beyonder characteristic of Low-Sequence Beyonders will be able to imbue a person with the corresponding powers, even without the supplementary ingredients. However, one can easily lose control and go insane on the spot after consuming it… Nearly all the supplementary ingredients for low Sequence potions lack spirituality… Klein's thoughts ran wild before he finally forced himself to focus.

A corpse was now in front of him. It gave him a headache thinking about what he should do next.

Chapter 229 - Lesser of Two Evils

◆ ◆ ◆

Meursault’s body lay there, his eyes wide open, as if he still had a murderous look in them.

The wound that had severed half his throat was originally thin, but with the condensation of the Beyonder characteristic, it had expanded by quite a bit and became much more mangled.

At the same time, the phenomenon of incontinence after death made his lower body reek of a stench.

Klein held onto the crimson jelly-like object, feeling troubled about what he should do next.

He had three general choices. The first was to clean up the scene, deal with his wounds, and to report it to the police in the name of legitimate self-defense. The second was to wait deep into night, throw the corpse into some sewer, and pretend that nothing had happened. The third was to immediately give up his current identity, flee to another borough, and change his name again.

The problem with the first option was that Klein was still an illegal resident with skeletons in his closet. Reporting it to the police could easily lead to discovering a problem with his identity. As for the second option, other than being constantly worried that the corpse would be found and that the police would come knocking on his door, there was another hidden danger.

When the ambassador behind Meursault confirms the disappearance or death of his subordinate, he would definitely send someone else to 15 Minsk Street again. When that happens, Klein would be facing perhaps a Sequence 7 and/or Sequence 6 enemy. He was facing a faction that might very well be a country, a powerful country.

The third option seemed to be the wisest and safest option that allowed him to avoid all the risks, but there was also a downside, and that was that the portrait of Klein was likely to be posted, making him wanted. Furthermore, it would be a portrait of his undisguised self which Mrs. Sammer next door, his neighbor Lawyer Jurgen, and others would describe. Once the wanted notice was published in the corresponding newspapers, even if it was limited to the greater Backlund area, Klein would very likely be recognized by Daly and the other Nighthawks. That would make the problem become even more troublesome.

As this matter involved Ince Zengwell and Sealed Artifact 0-08, it was highly likely that he would be pursued by an expert at the level of a high-ranking deacon.

Of course, the third option had a separate branch which was, of course, to hide the body and dump the evidence into the sewers, and then try to escape. However, there was also the risk of becoming wanted when the ambassador couldn't find Klein. He could order the members of the Zmanger gang to call the police and use the official forces of Backlund to search—and if he could track Klein down, that would be the same as the second option.

After thinking about it, Klein quickly came to a decision: Divination…

Of course, he was inclined towards a particular option already, the lesser of two evils. The first option was relatively less risky, and it allowed him to take the initiative to a certain extent. Through exposure, he could attract the attention of the official factions and suppress the Ambassador's subsequent actions from being too maniacal.

He took out a piece of paper and wrote a divination statement. After that, Klein took out a spirit pendulum from his left wrist, causing the topaz pendant to naturally hang down over the surface of the paper.

“I should make a police report.

“I should make a police report.”

†

After he finished his silent incantation, he saw the spirit pendulum rotating clockwise with weak amplitudes and a relatively high frequency.

This indicated a positive response!

After divining the other two choices in turn and obtaining a negative answer from both of them, Klein no longer hesitated and began to deal with the scene.

He put on a pair of black gloves and began to search the corpse. He found a sharp dagger, a small stack of cash, a pack of cigarettes, a lighter, and some miscellaneous items.

Klein put the rest of the items back in place, took off his gloves, held the dagger in his hand, and stabbed it into Meursault’s throat wound, destroying its original shape.

Then, he wore his gloves and let Meursault grab the dagger.

After doing all of this, Klein gathered together the Meursault’s Beyonder characteristic, the self-made charms, the tarot cards, the blood-stained contract, the paper on which the divination was written, and the various materials he carried around with him, and put them in a paper bag.

Then, he summoned himself in a ritual and transformed into a special spirit.

Carrying Azik's copper whistle, he felt himself become stronger and more corporeal. Klein picked up the paper bag, ended the summoning, and returned to the world above the gray fog.

He placed the items from reality behind The Fool's high back chair for the time being, leaving Azik's copper whistle as well. Then he relaxed himself as he stimulated the sensation of descending rapidly and re-entered his own body.

The reason why Klein didn't burn the blood-stained contract and the piece of paper on which he had written the divination statement was because he was afraid that after the report was sent to the police, the matter would be transferred to a special department, and a powerful Beyonder would engage in divination pertaining to the situation.

However, with the gray fog's interference, even if the Eternal Blazing Sun were to personally descend, "He" wouldn't be able to obtain a productive answer.

This was also the reason why Klein placed his weekly review and summary above the gray fog after his spirituality was greatly enhanced after advancing to Sequence 8.

Right now, he couldn't afford to take on more suspicion and deeper investigations!

After removing the wall of spirituality, the wind that suddenly stirred blew away the remaining smell of the ritualistic materials. The items related to the domain of mysticism and Beyonders that were left behind on Klein's body and in the entire house were the candles that were silently burning in front of him.

But this time, he chose ordinary candles. Since he was praying and summoning himself, there was no need to be so meticulous.

And in a family, having candles was a very normal thing that matched the era, even if he was the only bachelor in the family.

After extinguishing the candles and returning them to their original spot, Klein took out his golden pocket watch, snapped it open, and estimated the number of minutes since Meursault's death and added the minimum amount of time it would take for the police to send people to investigate and report back.

He wanted to ensure that even if a Beyonder came to investigate, an hour would have passed since Meursault's death.

In mysticism and in the domain of spirit-channeling, this was an important time point. Beyond it, the information available was very limited and vague. For example, one could discover, through mediumship, that the person who killed Meursault was Sherlock Moriarty; however, they couldn't get the specifics of the death.

As for whether or not his opponents could divine if Beyonders were involved, Klein wasn't worried at all, because the main factors involved (the bloodied template contract) were above the gray fog.

Even his premonition and combat abilities would also be obscured as the opponent's divination would definitely point towards the mysterious space above the gray fog, and would certainly suffer from interference.

Fortunately, I'm also a professional… It feels like I've really become Moriarty… Klein re-examined the scene, making sure that there were no problems, and began to walk with his eyes fixed on his pocket watch.

After the estimated time, he put on his gold-rimmed glasses and waited for a few minutes before he opened the door and went out.

The sky in Backlund had already gone dark, and the gas lamps on the street lit up the rain.

As a middle-class neighborhood, Minsk Street was often patrolled by the police. Klein waited for a while, then spotted the target and went up to meet them.

They were two low-ranking constables with only one chevron on their Paulette. They held guns, batons, and were holding up an umbrella while looking around.

“Officers! A criminal attacked me!” Klein shouted with great skill.

His unkempt appearance made the two constables place importance on the matter. They each took out their batons and looked warily to the side.

“Where’s the criminal?” the round-faced, brown-eyed cop asked in a deep voice.

Klein pointed to his house.

“He sneaked into my home and tried to kill me!

“In the fight, I accidentally stabbed him to death!”

Stabbed him to death… The two constables exchanged looks and looked at Klein with scrutiny.

“Take us there.”

“Alright!” Klein acted like he had just survived a disaster as he led the two officers to 15 Minsk Street, took out his key, and opened the door.

The two police constables first saw the chaotic scene before noticing the corpse laying on the ground. They noticed the hideous wound on the deceased’s throat, and noticed a bloody dagger.

“Watch the scene, I’ll return to the station and report it to the inspector,” another constable said to his round-faced, brown-eyed colleague.

“Alright.” The round-faced, brown-eyed constable cast his gaze on at Klein, his face and body language revealing his wariness and caution.

After a while, a sergeant dressed in black-and-white checkered uniform with three chevrons on his epaulet arrived with the constable from before and two other subordinates.

The constables investigated the scene and while searching for clues, the sergeant with a short brownish-yellow beard under his chin brought Klein to the side and began asking some preliminary questions.

“Name.”

“Sherlock Moriarty. This is my rental receipt for half a year.” Klein had long prepared all of this.

The sergeant gave him a casual look and continued asking, “What’s your occupation?”

“Private detective,” answered Klein frankly.

The sergeant frowned and said, “Do you know the deceased? Do you know why he attacked you?”

“I know him. His name is Meursault, and he’s the executioner of the Zmanger gang.” Klein didn’t wait for the sergeant to ask any further questions as he continued, “I had previously accepted a job from Ian Wright who asked me to investigate his former employer, Detective Zreal Victor Lee. This matter happened to be related to the Zmanger gang and Meursault.

“I tailed him and found out that he was secretly meeting a gentleman who appeared to be of significant standing. Meursault addressed him as Mr. Ambassador.” After saying that, Klein was unsurprised to see the sergeant’s expression change.

“Ambassador… Do you know his name?” the sergeant asked in a deep voice.

“I don’t know, but if I saw his picture, I’d definitely recognize him,” Klein told the truth. “This morning, Meursault came to me and asked me to seek Ian Wright. On the basis of my professional ethics as a private detective, I refused him, and when I got home in the evening, I was attacked and almost killed by him. Thankfully, I'm still quite skilled at combat and was sufficiently quick to react."

The sergeant thought for a moment and asked for details of the fight. Klein recounted the fight from beginning to end nearly in its entirety, changing his premonition to a reaction, then changing the contract template he had thrown in the fight into a dagger that Meursault had dropped.

"Yea… Follow us back to the police station and wait for the autopsy results, the results of the on-site investigation, and inquiries from the relevant parties involved." The sergeant's thoughts wasn't on the case anymore, clearly acting rather perfunctory.

Right now, he only had one thought in his mind:

This was an important case involving foreign ambassadors!

He had to report it immediately!

In his daze, he suddenly thought of a question and quickly added, "What's your faith?"

"God of Steam and Machinery," Klein replied without hesitation.

The Backlund headquarters of the Church of Storms was in the Cherwood Borough, so cases involving Beyonders were often referred to them, with one exception—the people involved were not believers of the Lord of Storms.

In order to not encounter the Nighthawks, Klein had no choice but to let the Goddess down.

Chapter 230 - Interrogation

◆ ◆ ◆

Empress Borough. In an unremarkable house.

Xio and Fors took a seat at random and examined the writing on the blackboard. Like always, Mr. A was sitting quietly, alone on the sofa at the front in his hooded robe, looking down at the crowd from a high vantage point.

Sequence 8 Sheriff potion formula. 450 pounds… Xio silently read the familiar content as she inwardly let out of sigh of relief.

The situation she feared the most was the lack of a seller when she had finally amassed the money with great difficulty!

I received 400 pounds from the split, plus my original savings of 150 pounds, that's enough… However, I'd definitely need a huge sum of money for the main ingredient… Ah right, maybe I can change circles and see if there are any Beyonders who are interested in this formula… Xio suddenly felt invigorated, and she realized that she had found a way to make a fortune.

Frankly speaking, there was no way she would leak the formula if she wasn't in desperate need for money to buy the materials to concoct the potion. On the one hand, most people always hoped that there were fewer Beyonders in their own Sequences, and on the other hand, the price of the corresponding ingredients would be raised significantly if there were many competitors who bid up the prices of the ingredients. It was the same with the subsequent potions.

After some serious thought, Xio slowly became nervous again, because it was normal for a recipe to be placed on sale for a long time without being sold.

Moreover, the Arbiter pathway belonged to the royal family and the military. All aspects were strictly controlled, and the leaked ones came from a small number of destitute nobles. There were hardly any complete formulas for the low to mid Sequences. Often, only one or two of them were complete and compounded with the knowledge that the main ingredients were controlled and difficult to obtain. Beyonders who chose this Sequence were rather rare.

Xio had been in some mysticism circles in Backlund for a long period of time, but she hadn't found an Arbiter apart from herself. On the one hand, the others might have concealed it well, but on the other hand, that might also explain the problems faced in this Sequence pathway.

Phew, but compared to Fors, I'm lucky enough. She hasn't encountered any of the subsequent recipes for Apprentice all this time… Xio saw Mr. A's attendant approaching and wrote a note saying that she was purchasing the Sheriff's recipe.

Before long, she was led to the study on the first floor. Before entering, she took a hooded robe from the attendant and covered herself with it.

The seller in the study was dressed in the same way, so they couldn't see each other's faces clearly.

"This is the formula to the Sheriff potion. Where's my money?" the seller asked with a hoarse voice as he pressed a piece of paper on the desk.

Xio pulled out the cash that she had long counted numerous times and pushed it to the seller.

After checking the authenticity of the notes and the total sum, the seller finally released the potion formula he held.

Xio immediately took one step forward and grabbed the note.

Her eyes swept straight to the main ingredients as they were of great importance.

“A pair of Terror Demon Worm’s eyes. Silver War Bear’s right palm.”

Beyonder items I know of, but I’ve never seen them being sold… Xio sighed and walked out of the study and took off her robe.

Back in the living room, she sat beside Fors. Having fulfilled her wish, she slowly began to worry about the unknown honorary name and the evil spirit that might be haunting her.

10, no, 20, no, 30 to request for someone skilled in exorcism to do a purification ritual for me. Xio made up her mind, and after exchanging a few whispered words with Fors, she beckoned for Mr. A’s attendant.

After the end of the free communication break, she saw her request appear as an additional entry on the blackboard.

“Suspected haunting of evil spirits. Requesting the help of friends who specialize in exorcism. 30 pounds.”

After a while, Mr. A’s attendant came to the two of them and quietly invited them to the living room on the first floor.

There was a man wearing a white mask inside. He looked at the two people who were wearing loose robes that concealed their genders and chuckled.

“Let me introduce myself first, so that you won’t doubt my ability.”

“No, no, we trust Mr. A,” Xio, with her hood over her face, said before Fors could open her mouth.

She deliberately suppressed her voice to prevent her childish voice from revealing her identity.

The man with the white mask spread his hands and laughed.

“This is my habit, I am a believer of the Sun. As you know, this is not common in Backlund, or in the entire kingdom.

“It is only through moments like this that I can live as my true self.”

Due to the great conflict between the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun and the Church of Storms, the former had never been able to obtain the right to proselytize in the Loen Kingdom.

“A believer of the Sun?” Fors’s languid look instantly vanished. “This is the first time I’m seeing a living believer of the Sun! Eh… It’s not like I can meet diplomats of higher standing.”

“Then, should I feel honored?” The man in the white mask spread his arms wide and held them up in a gesture of praise for the Sun.

Instead of answering his question, Fors smiled and said, “In terms of exorcism and purification, the attendant of the Sun is a professional. Our hearts are at rest, so we can begin.”

The man who claimed to be a believer of the Sun didn’t drone on. He took out a badge with the symbol of the “Sun” on it and placed it on the round table in the center. Then, he used a dualistic ritual method to light up two candles.

After finishing the preparatory steps one step at a time, he chanted with a loud and abnormally pious tone.

“The Sun that is Eternal,

“You are an Inextinguishable Light.

“You are the Embodiment of Order

“I pray to you,

“Please bestow me with your cleansing glow.

"Please repel the evils spirits in this body."

†

Amid the echoing Hermes incantation, Xio and Fors saw bright light burst out from the Sun's emblem, bursting in a pure and warm manner.

It was endless, like the tide, as the light surged towards the two of them, engulfing them simultaneously.

Nearly a minute later, everything was restored to normal. All Xio and Fors felt was warmth, finding the warmth very comfortable and relieving. It was like soaking in a hot spring, or having gone sunbathing.

†

Cherwood Borough. Rice Police Station.

Klein was sitting on a low bench with a group of thieves and drunkards. It looked very disgraceful.

Suddenly, he felt warmth on the back of his hand as the coldness of the Backlund night was dispelled quite significantly.

Lowering his head, Klein realized that the four black dots representing the mysterious space above the gray fog didn't appear.

Who's being so kind? To know that I was feeling a little cold just now… he mumbled half jokingly and half-curious.

As a former inspector, he looked at the thief on the left who was handcuffed to the pipe, then at the drunkard on the right who could vomit at any moment but kept yelling about hitting people. He sighed at his present predicament and wasn't sure when he would be free from this.

There should be another test after this and then I'll be fine once I pass it… I hope the police will have their attention on the ambassador and the Zmanger gang, and ignore my origins as a puny detective. In theory, there's a high chance for that. As long as Mrs. Sammer, Mr. Jurgen, and the others don't say anything of interest to the police… Yes, they have only just met me so it's impossible for them to know too much…

Meursault's Beyonder characteristic was taken away by me and was hidden above the gray fog. He didn't leave behind anything strange, so no one would able to discover that he used to be a Beyonder and have questions about my strength… Hmm… More than an hour has passed…

In his self-encouragement, Klein saw the officer with the short brownish-yellow beard walking towards him.

"Sherlock Moriarty, come with me to the interrogation room," the sergeant said without further explanation.

Here it comes… Klein stood up and followed.

After going around a corner, the sergeant stopped in front of an iron door and gestured for Klein to enter.

Klein took a deep breath before exhaling. He yanked the handle and opened the door.

It was a small room with thick walls and a small table in the middle. There were chairs on both sides of the table.

Under the elegant gas lamp's illumination, Klein identified the interrogator as a man who wore a black shirt, a rather uncommon sight.

He didn't wear a vest but wore a black coat that wasn't part of the usual formal attire. He had thin eyebrows and cold blue eyes. His face was cut, looking rigid while lacking any gentleness.

The man pointed the chair opposite him and said in a deep voice, "I ask, you answer."

Before he finished his sentence, Klein felt an unimaginable suppressive force on him. He felt that an electric current was tearing through his mind that lashed at his soul with a barbed whip.

This "feeling" was painful and numbing, as though it stemmed from deep within the brain. It was barely resistible, and all he could do was tremble and have his knees buckle.

Klein nearly fell to the ground as he hurriedly held onto the table and sat down. His temples felt a throbbing pain.

This… this is the result of Beyonder powers… Ordinary people might've thought of it as a psychological problem caused by nervousness and the authority of the interrogator opposite them, but Klein had clearly identified that this was a result of Beyonder powers, powers that could directly attack the mind of others!

He quickly recalled the information he had seen before and quickly confirmed the target of his suspicion.

Arbiter pathway, Sequence 7: Interrogator!

Has the matter been transferred to a special department of the military? Klein thought with some relief.

As long as it isn't the Nighthawks, everything's fine.

"Identify the ambassador who met Meursault from these photographs." The cold and unyielding man in black spread out eight black-and-white photos on the small table.

Klein felt as if the electric whip in his mind was being lifted high, and the warning of extreme pain made it so he didn't dare to lie.

Of course, there was no need for Klein to lie. After a moment of identification, he pushed a photo in the direction of the interrogator. It was a middle-aged gentleman who wore ostentatious clothing and looked rather charming.

The interrogator glanced at it, but didn't make any response. He once again asked, "Were your previous statements the truth?"

Klein felt like he was being forced into a dream. He kept his mind clear and rational, and he didn't yield to the "whip" in his mind as he sincerely replied, "Nothing but the truth."

The interrogator leaned forward with his hands on the small table and said, "When was the last time you met Ian Wright?"

"Yesterday, yesterday morning," Klein said with great difficulty, "I tailed Meursault and found the body of Detective Zreal. As I didn't want to deal with the police, I took Ian to identify the body and told him to call the police. Zreal's body was located at the sewer entrance at the bottom of Iron Carbon Street in East Borough."

After a brief silence, the interrogator finally nodded his head. Klein immediately felt the enormous pressure disappear along with the "whip" in his mind.

"You may leave now," he said without a trace of emotion in his voice.

Klein stood up and opened the door, not masking the frailty in his gait.

He found it more tiring than fighting Meursault. If he made the slightest mistake, his spirit would've been completely crushed, and he would obediently answer any question that the other party asked.

No, if it wasn't for the fact that my spirit is special and how it's been subjected to the test of raving and screaming for a long period of time, allowing me to maintain my calm and rationality under certain circumstances, I would've most likely had a mental breakdown just now… Klein walked back down the corridor, his back feeling cold.

At this moment, the sergeant from before came over and said, "Come with me to fill out some forms. Lawyer Jurgen is waiting to bail you out."

Phew… Klein secretly exhaled and completely relaxed.

He knew that the danger was over.

Chapter 231 - Losses

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein met Jurgen Cooper in an office at the Rice Police Station. This young senior solicitor was still dressed formally as though he was always ready to go to a posh dinner party.

He wore a black double-breasted attire, a white shirt with a stiff collar, a huge bow tie, and bright leather boots, which made the policemen act very polite to him.

Jurgen held his half top hat and looked at Klein with his blue eyes while saying, “The formalities are over. You can leave if you pay the bail of ten pounds.”

“Thank you.” Klein didn’t say anything more, but followed the good-looking but seemingly old-fashioned Jurgen to the police station’s financial affairs office that was nearby, where he fished out his wallet and pulled out two five-pound notes.

He was grateful that he had all his cash—95 pounds—on him, or else he might’ve had to borrow it from his good neighbor, Jurgen.

Of course, the worst-case scenario would be if he had left the money at home. Klein wasn’t certain how much of that would be left after the police searched the scene. Yet, he couldn’t put it in the world above the gray fog, because it was possible that he needed to offer bribes to free himself.

At present, many newspapers and magazines were discrediting the police as being unsupervised, violent, corrupt, extortionary, and vicious. Klein didn't dare to believe it fully, but neither did he dare to doubt it. After all, Meursault's money could very well end up in the pockets of someone in the police station.

After paying the bail, Klein followed Jurgen out of the police station and shivered when hit by the humid, cold wind.

"After the case is closed, your bail will be returned to you. Of course, you can't expect them to voluntarily notify you. Yes… In a week, if no one notifies you that your presence is required back at the station, you can come here and ask for your bail to be returned. In theory, you could still get appropriate compensation, if any, from the other party's estate." Jurgen walked over to a carriage parked nearby.

The rain that had poured down during the entire day had finally come to a stop, but the crimson moon remained hidden by the dark clouds. The only light that could be seen on the street was from the gas lamps.

"Alright." Klein almost believed that he would have to part with the ten pounds forever.

He couldn't help but calculate how much it cost him to take up Ian's job. He had been paid five pounds, but many pieces of furniture and tea sets were destroyed at his home. He either had to buy new ones or get someone to repair them for him. With the materials used, the cost of the carriage, and the cost of mending his clothes, the math seemed to imply that he would be losing money…

If I don't manage to get back the ten pounds worth of bail money, this would be a great loss! Well… the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Meursault is actually worth quite a bit of money… Klein got into the carriage and frowned slightly.

He had always thought that the private detectives who used their own residences as offices would, at most, not be entrusted with anything and wouldn't suffer any losses, but in the end…

Klein turned his head to look at Jurgen, who was sitting up straight, and he said with sincerity, “Thank you. Thank you for coming to bail me out. How much should I pay you?”

Jurgen nodded very formally and said, “This one’s pro bono.

“I heard from Sergeant Faxine that you were involved in an incident. I believe that we’ll have many opportunities to work together in the future.”

There will be many opportunities to work together in the future… Klein couldn’t help but laugh as he said, “Lawyer Jurgen, are you cursing me?”

Jurgen shook his head solemnly and said, “No, it’s not what you think. It’s very common for a private detective to have a fixed lawyer he works with.”

Sir, you sure lack a sense of humor… even though you look rather young… Klein lampooned before saying with a smile, “Coincidentally, I’m in need of a lawyer to help me draw up an investment contract.”

“Investment contract?” Jurgen asked in a slightly stunned tone.

“I know that this isn’t part of the work of a private detective, but I happened to chance upon a good investment opportunity,” Klein explained simply. “Lawyer Jurgen, how much would a contract cost according to your usual fees?”

“Generally, it’s based on the total amount of the contract and the level of ease,” Jurgen answered seriously.

“The total amount is one hundred pounds, the terms needed are…” Klein described his needs in detail, including a preemptive right, veto rights, and so on.

Jurgen thought hard for a few minutes before saying, “Two pounds. I’ll give it to you Monday morning.”

"Alright," Klein said no more regarding the matter. Instead, he began asking Jurgen information about the case that night.

On the way back to Minsk Street, Klein took the initiative to pay the carriage's fare of 3 soli. After bidding farewell to the young but serious lawyer, he walked back to his house.

He opened the door and when he saw the messy scene, his heart winced.

He never expected that he would start his detective business with a loss.

Just as Klein took off his coat and began working on cleaning up the mess, the doorbell rang.

He opened the door in puzzlement and saw Julianne, the maid from next door in a black-and-white skirt.

"Good evening, Mr. Moriarty. Mr. and Mrs. Sammer wish to invite you over to discuss something," Julianne said with a tone that had traces of fear.

Here it comes… the problem regarding compensation… Klein revealed a smile and said, "Alright."

He changed into a clean coat and followed the maidservant next door. Luke Sammer and his wife, Stelyn Sammer were sitting on a sofa in the living room.

The stout Luke, with a pencil-thin mustache, stood up and extended his hand as he said with a chuckle, "Good evening, Mr. Moriarty. I only just learned that you were a private detective. That's quite unbecoming as a neighbor."

"No, it was my fault. I didn't know if I was suited for this career and might find other jobs at any moment," Klein said as he shook the hand of the male master. "I'm very sorry for what happened tonight. I'll compensate you."

"It's just an accident," Luke said reassuringly.

The blonde, blue-eyed, and pretty Stelyn asked out of curiosity, "Did you really kill the intruder? Heh, you must want black tea, right?"

Klein nodded.

"Perhaps he was just a thief."

He didn't mention that the problem stemmed due to one of his jobs, in order to prevent the Sammer couple from having any unpleasant feelings.

Since the police didn't inform them, there's no need for me to do anything unnecessary… Klein silently added.

Luke Sammer laughed and said, "You must possess excellent combat skills. As a neighbor, I feel very safe. Perhaps we will have matters to entrust you in the future."

Klein seemingly gave a self-deprecating laugh.

"Actually, I was almost killed."

"Regardless, you were the ultimate victor," Luke said.

After chatting about this topic for a while, Stelyn picked up a porcelain teacup and took a sip.

"I'm very curious about how many commissions a private detective receives a week, and how much can they earn?"

Klein didn't try to hide anything as he laughed.

"It depends on the situation. Just like when there are good and bad harvests in the farms. I earned five pounds and five soli last week. But after last night's incident, I might have made a loss."

As if she didn’t hear the latter half of his words, she continued, “If you can maintain this income, you’ll get a pretty good life in Backlund’s Cherwood district at 5 pounds a week. There’s no need to sublet another room, and you can hire a maid to do odd jobs, listen to a symphony every other week, or go to the theatrical opera once. Once a week, you can play tennis or squash, join a reading salon, and go to a nice restaurant. Of course, if you’re already preparing for marriage, you need to save a little money. A weekly salary of five pounds is still a little short of being truly decent.”

“Then, what is the required weekly salary to be truly decent?” Klein asked.

“Seven pounds, at least.” Stelyn lifted her chin slightly.

Klein turned to Luke and said casually, “I heard from your wife that you work at Coim, but I’m not sure what its main business is.”

“Anthracite and charcoal,” Luke answered with a smile.

It’s no wonder you became a member of the Soot Reduction Association… Klein pondered for a moment and said, “In Backlund, how big of a salary does a manager receive? It’s seldom mentioned in the newspapers and magazines.”

“Haha, it depends on the industry, as well as the actual position’s job scope. Backlund Bank’s best manager earns 5000 pounds a year, but for me, it’s about 430 to 440 pounds including bonuses,” Luke said casually.

That’s about eight pounds a week… No wonder… Before Klein could open his mouth, Stelyn Samuel grumbled, “Actually, we could’ve lived in the suburbs, and I’ll have a garden and a lawn. Luke would then be able to have a stable and buy a new carriage and the two foals he’s been eyeing all this time, but he would waste too much time on his commute to work. That would be even more valuable.”

A new carriage including horses costs about a hundred pounds… Eight pounds a week is indeed impressive; unfortunately, it hasn't been long since I had a pay rise when… Klein could only smile in response.

After exchanging a few more pleasantries, he bade farewell and left, sighing to himself in his heart.

Mr. and Mrs. Sammer are still considered nice. If I had a mean landlord, I'd have had my deposit deducted and refunded and be asked to get lost after what happened tonight…

After returning home, Klein began laboring. He wasn't in a hurry to go above the gray fog to examine the warm current on the back of his hand, nor was he in a hurry to do divination because he was afraid that the military's special department was still keeping tabs on him.

He decided to go to the bar which Ian had described tomorrow night to buy a gun so as to deal with people who might assault him recklessly in desperation.

Klein even planned to find the means to hire a bodyguard, a powerful Beyonder bodyguard. This was so that first, he could take advantage of the opportunity to contact Beyonder circles without exposing himself, and second, it was because he was also afraid that the ambassador's next assailant would have the ability to hide from the military's special department.

Although it was a slightly comical thing for a Sequence 8 Beyonder—a vengeful evil spirit in hiding—to need a bodyguard, as safety was of paramount importance to Klein.

If the price is too high, I'll blow the copper whistle for Mr. Azik, which, of course, might be more dangerous… I don't know much about Sealed Artifact 0-08… After cleaning up the house, Klein silently muttered.

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After the purification ceremony ended, the man in the white mask said to Xio and Fors,“No matter what kind of sinister spirit it is, it has already been exorcised by me. Heh, if it has reached the level of an evil spirit that I’m unable to exorcise, it should’ve given a response. However, there was none.”

As he spoke, he poured the water which had condensed on the emblem of the Sun into a small metal bottle and handed it to Xio.

“Sprinkle it in your room to ward off any remnants.”

“Thank you.” Xio paid him while feeling the pinch, but she felt a lot more relaxed.

Moments after she returned to the living room with Fors, the attendant delivered a note to them.

“Miss Arbiter, who has just bought the Sheriff formula, would you mind having a chat in the study? I might have what you need.”

Chapter 232 - The Bravehearts Bar

◆ ◆ ◆

Who? How did that person know that I purchased the Sheriff recipe? Xio's dark green pupils contracted as she surveyed her surroundings in astonishment, but she didn't see anyone suspiciously watching her.

According to Mr. A, the transactions here should be very safe and confidential here… Finally, Xio couldn't help but look at the single sofa where Mr. A, whose face was covered by a hood, sat. He was still quietly sizing people up without revealing anything odd.

She nudged Fors with her elbow and whispered, "Should I go?"

Fors took the piece of paper, glanced at it, and replied without hesitation, "Go, at least you still have Mr. A watching. No one would dare to do anything to you, so you can take the opportunity to find out what the other party's goal is. Who knows? You might actually obtain the potion materials you want as a result?"

"That makes sense…" Xio, who was a very proactive person, immediately nodded to the attendant, followed him to the study, and finally, put on a hooded robe.

This hood can cover my entire face, so much so that I can't see the path in front of me… Having worn the hood, Xio opened the door and saw a man dressed in a tuxedo sitting behind a desk.

The man wore a golden mask that revealed his eyes, nostrils, mouth, and cheeks, but it was impossible to identify him.

The light brown eyes behind the golden mask shifted as the man pointed to the chair opposite the desk and said, “Have a seat.”

His voice was deliberately hoarse; otherwise, there was nothing special about it.

Xio closed the door to the study, stuck her chest out and raised her head, and sat down in the designated position without feeling intimidated. She then asked, “Do you have the main ingredients for the Sheriff potion?”

The masked man chuckled and said, “Yes, I have the eyes of a Terror Demon Worm and the right palm of a Silver War Bear.

“In fact, that Sheriff potion formula you bought was sold on my behalf…”

No wonder… Xio was often mocked as a brainless person by her good friends, but to survive in the circle of Beyonders, in the gangs of the East Borough, and among the poor, she wasn’t a completely reckless person. She had the intuition for danger that was akin to a wild beast.

She asked in a deep voice, “Why are you doing this?”

“To select suitable helpers.” The masked man chuckled. “With your financial situation, it’ll be difficult for you to gather the money needed for these two Beyonder ingredients in a short period of time. Of course, you can sell the formula at other Beyonder gatherings, but please, believe me, this will bring you unnecessary danger. Our circles might not overlap, but I’m not the only person.”

Xio frowned and said, “Since you have such a massive organization and possess the formulas to the Sheriff and Arbiter potions, why do you need my help?”

“There are certain matters we do not wish to deal with ourselves. There are many reasons, but there’s no need for me to tell you that. And every Arbiter that embarks on the journey as a Beyonder by themselves has, more or less, some connection with the aristocracy. This is something we need," the masked man explained, simply.

It seems like he doesn't know about my origins, nor is he aware of my reputation in the East Borough… Xio relaxed a little.

The masked man continued, "Just treat it as additional missions beyond the Beyonder gatherings. I will give you some missions and pay you with the corresponding rewards. If you feel that it's dangerous, you can reject them. This is a fair and free trade. Once you save up enough money, you can purchase the ingredients from me."

This… Xio, who was still struggling with her financial situation, suddenly had her heart stir. She continued acting reserved for nine seconds before she said, "As long as I have the right to reject missions, I can consider it."

"No problem." The masked man laughed. "We can agree on where and how we'll meet in the future. To make you feel at ease, we'll concede the right to decide the details to you."

"Alright." Although Xio was still baffled and didn't understand why the other party was offering her missions to perform, she still agreed.

At the very least, she couldn't identify any obvious dangers at the moment.

†

Klein busied himself with buying chairs and tea sets and mending his clothes the whole of Sunday. He spent a total of 6 pounds 9 soli to restore the living room, the dining room, and himself to their original states.

What a loss. I hope that the police department compensates me for my losses from Meursault's estate. Sigh, the chances are slim since it's, at best, just a portion. Klein placed the invoices and receipts neatly in place, waiting for them to be used in the future.

Of course, in terms of income alone, he had made quite a killing. Meursault's Beyonder characteristic was worth at least 300 pounds, or more.

The premise of all of this was that Klein had access to a circle of Beyonders.

After dinner, dressed in a turtleneck sweater, a solid-colored sweater, a grayish-blue worker's coat, and a cap, Klein went out, once again, and made two transfers before arriving at Iron Gate Street in the area of the Backlund Bridge.

He saw Bravehearts Bar after taking a few steps. He saw a seemingly heavy black wooden door and a nearly two-meter-tall brawny man with his arms folded.

The brawny man sized up Klein, but he didn't stop him from pushing open the door, but his throat moved when he heard the cheers inside.

This was when the bar was experiencing its peak business. Before Klein even entered, he felt a heat wave engulf him. He could smell the strong aroma of malt beer and hear a din.

Unsurprisingly, he saw two stages in the middle of the bar. One of them was having a rat-baiting with dogs competition, and the other stage had two boxers patiently waiting for the fight to begin.

The aroma of alcohol mixed with the smell of sweat emanated. Klein lifted his gold-rimmed glasses and pinched his nose. While protecting his belongings, he squeezed his way to the bar counter.

Before the bartender could say anything, he said, "One glass of Southville beer."

This was the best beer that the Loen Kingdom produced.

"Five pence," the bartender replied like clockwork.

Klein took out a handful of coins and counted out five pence before handing them over in exchange for a large wooden cup of golden beer. The aroma of the beer was alluring.

"In front of it, many beers can't even be called alcohol and can only be considered as beverages." The bartender chuckled.

Klein lifted up the cup and took a swig. It was cool and refreshing, first bitter and fragrant, but later, the flavor of malt burst out. It had a slightly sweet aftertaste.

After putting down the cup, he looked at the tiny white bubbles and took the opportunity to ask, "Where's Kaspars Kalinin?"

The bartender stopped wiping the glass in his hand as he looked up and observed Klein for a few seconds before pointing to the side.

"Billiard room 3."

In the spirit of not wasting anything, Klein carried the cup and walked to the third billiard room.

With just a light tap, he allowed the door to creak open.

The two men inside stopped and looked towards the door.

"I'm looking for Kaspars Kalinin." Amidst the silence, Klein hurriedly added, "Old Geezer introduced me."

Upon hearing this, a fifty-year-old man with a big nose and a linen shirt said in a deep voice, "Come in."

He had a huge, twisted scar running from the corner of his right eye to the side of his mouth, and his nose was a typical brandy nose, one that almost completely red.

Klein slowly walked in with the cup in his hand and saw that Kaspars's billiard opponent had put aside his cue stick like clockwork and left the room before closing the door behind him.

Kaspars Kalinin hobbled over and asked, “What do you want?”

“A powerful custom revolver and fifty rounds.” Klein took another sip of his Southville beer.

“3 pounds 10 soli.” Kaspars gave the price. “This will definitely be more expensive than a regular weapons store. The price includes the risks I have to undertake.”

“Deal.” Klein took five one-pound notes he prepared from his trouser pocket and counted them.

Kaspars checked for the notes’ authenticity before nodding.

“You’re more straightforward than you look. Give me five minutes.”

He put the notes on the billiard table, leaned against a crutch, and limped to the door.

After watching Kaspars leave, Klein glanced back at the currently trendy billiards and found it to be very similar to snooker on Earth.

It must be you, Emperor Roselle… He nearly lost his composure and laughed while shaking his head.

After a short wait, Kaspars pushed the door open and entered, carrying a package wrapped in brown paper and two five-soli notes.

Klein took the money and the item and opened it on the spot. His eyes caught the long, silvery barrel of a revolver. The grip seemed to be made of walnut wood.

In addition to that, there were fifty glistening rounds neatly placed in the box.

Klein tried the empty gun, loaded five rounds, stuffed the revolver into his underarm holster he bought some time back. Then, he gathered up the remaining bullets and looked up at Kaspars. He deliberated and asked, “If I wish to hire a good bodyguard, who should I look for?

“A very good one, the kind that exceeds human limitations.”

Kaspars rubbed his red nose and his eyes turned cold.

He carefully examined Klein for two minutes, using his silence to create a terrible sense of oppression.

“I can make the query for you, but there’s no guarantee that someone will accept this mission.”

He seems to know more than one Beyonder… Klein smiled and said, “No matter what the result is, please allow me to express my gratitude in advance.”

Kaspars put away the bills on the billiard table and walked out again. It was a full ten minutes before he returned to his room. And by then, Klein had already finished his huge cup of Southville beer out of boredom.

“He wants to meet you before making a decision,” Kaspars said in a deep voice.

“No problem. I would also determine the difficulty of the mission if it were me.” Klein smiled and nodded.

He followed behind Kaspars who hobbled past the crowded boxing ring and into the kitchen of the bar.

Kaspars suddenly stopped and lightly knocked on a door. After gaining permission, he pushed it open and entered with Klein in tow.

It was a card room where more than ten people were playing Texas poker.

A man wearing a black vest and a white shirt slowly stood up after seeing Kaspars and Klein enter the room. The others who were playing cards stopped in their tracks and didn't make a sound.

With a single glance, Klein frowned indiscernibly.

Apart from the man that had stood up, he noticed that all the other players had an indescribable sense of strangeness to them. Their faces were pale, and their eyes were like those of wild beasts.

Tapping his left molar twice, Klein secretly activated his Spirit Vision.

His muscles tensed up abruptly, and he almost couldn't control his expression because the auras of those players were dark black!

That meant that, apart from the man who stood up, the ten plus people playing cards were all dead!

No, they weren't just dead, as the dead had no aura colors

These were all zombies!

The feeling of rotting came over him, and the man in the white shirt and black vest walked in front of Klein.

His face was equally pale, and there seemed to be deep malice in his eyes.

Chapter 233 - A Man Cannot Be Judged By His Looks

◆ ◆ ◆

The more he thought about how a living person was playing cards with more than ten corpses in a dimly lit room into the night, the more his scalp tingled.

Klein suppressed his instinctive fear and looked at the pale face, the malicious brown eyes, and the man who was about twenty-eight years old that suffused madness. He pretended to be intimidated by the man's dominance and took a step back. During this time, Kaspars left the room and closed the door.

The man asked in a deep voice, "You're the one looking for a bodyguard?"

"…Yes." Klein gulped deliberately.

The man's strangeness made him feel fear, but it also brought him peace of mind.

The stronger the bodyguard, the safer he would be!

The pale-faced man in the black vest lifted his chin and asked, "Why are you looking for a bodyguard? How much are you willing to pay for this?"

Klein didn't answer straight away. He thought for nearly twenty seconds before saying, "I'll tell you the details of the mission first. Give me a price after you assess it. If I can pay for it, or if I have an item of equivalent value, we would have ourselves a deal. Otherwise, I can only give up and look for someone else."

The fierce-looking man didn't say a word. Instead, he nodded as a gesture for Klein to recount his story.

Klein deliberately looked at the zombies, treating them as normal card players. Then, he gave the man an inquisitive look saying: "Before I answer, do you want to kick these guys out of the room?"

"There's no need for that," the pale-faced man said in a deep voice.

Klein hesitated for a moment, then honestly said, "I offended a big shot who might have a country supporting him."

The room suddenly turned still and silent. The man, who had a hint of madness and malice in his eyes, froze on the spot as if he had turned into a plaster statue.

After nearly a minute, he slowly said, "This mission is priceless.

"Get out."

Ah? Klein didn't manage to react until the man turned and walked back to the card table. Only then did he realize that there was no deal.

You played cards with a bunch of zombies in the room and presented yourself as a person of high standing and strength. Yet, you were scared off just like that? You're clearly a little crazy… Klein didn't know whether to laugh or cry as he added, "The big shot doesn't have that much freedom in Backlund."

The man in the black vest ignored him and sat down again. The zombies began to hand out cards, look at their cards, and throw out chips.

Klein exhaled and backed out of the room only to see Kaspars Kalinin. He had been waiting outside with his brandy nose and hideous wound.

"We didn't come to an arrangement." Klein threw up his hands.

Kaspars didn't show a look of surprise as he pondered for a few seconds before saying, "Did he request too high a price?"

"No, he finds the mission too difficult." Klein didn't hide the reason.

Kaspars frowned.

"Maric is the scariest person I know. He isn't even afraid of bullets, and since he thinks the mission is difficult, I don't think I can help you get in touch with other powerful people."

"What a pity." Klein sighed.

Kaspars clenched his right fist and struck his left chest.

"May the Storm be with you."

Then I'm dead… Klein said with a smile as he made the best out of it, "Thank you.

"You can try asking around for me. I'll pay you a fee. Yeah… I'll come again tomorrow night."

After receiving a positive answer, he left the Bravehearts Bar feeling slightly melancholic. He didn't even have the interest to play a game of billiards.

Was I being too honest? If I described the mission in a way that sounded simpler, Maric would've agreed… I just wonder how much money he would ask for… Sigh, it's not my style to let someone else face the danger for me through deceit… As a Beyonder, if I constantly go against my heart's true thoughts and my own principles, then I probably won't be far from losing control… Feeling mixed emotions, Klein changed carriages and returned to Minsk Street.

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After washing up, Klein didn’t waste any charcoal. He directly went to the bedroom and pulled the curtain to isolate the room from the outside world.

On the way back, he carefully thought for a while and discovered that the possible danger wasn’t something that couldn’t be resolved.

To the unknown ambassador, his primary and fundamental purpose is to find Ian Wright. The reason he sent people to deal with me was because he wished to obtain clues to finding Ian from me. If direct interrogation doesn’t work, killing me and channeling my spirit could be considered… If I let him know that I can’t find Ian either, he wouldn’t take the risk to deal with a hired detective when the military’s special department might be monitoring the situation.

Of course, my appearance and strength far exceeded his expectations, causing their operation to be exposed and causing them to suffer heavy setbacks. If I were the ambassador, I would definitely think about revenge and vent my anger, but it definitely wouldn’t be now, not when the situation is so tense and turbulent… Yes, this is building on the premise that the ambassador has brains, and he isn’t a good-for-nothing who got to his position through connections and only knows to act rashly… For him to be handling such an important matter, it must mean that he’s still rather reliable…

In other words, the crux of the problem is Ian Wright’s whereabouts!

Hmm… There’s still some latent danger. Would the ambassador reveal to the military’s special department that Meursault is a Beyonder after his failure? That would make them find my strength questionable, and use them to retaliate against me… This can be done easily with an offhand remark with no difficulty involved. I have to be on my guard…

Klein analyzed his situation and suddenly had the urge to kill the unknown ambassador.

However, just the thought of powerful Beyonders around him left him depressed.

I wonder if the messenger can accept my delegations without Mr. Azik's permission… Probably not… Should I pay close attention to this matter and find an opportunity to silence him? Since he sent someone to kill me, I wouldn't feel any psychological burden from killing him… Yes, I can consider setting a mission for the Tarot Club. Let's see if Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man have any solutions… Perhaps, a large sum of money can tempt that "Mr. A" or some other powerful Beyonders… Klein suddenly had an idea came to him as he thought of the Tarot Club.

With this idea in mind, he calmed down a lot. He found some paper and a pen and wrote the divination statement: "Ian Wright's whereabouts."

After confirming that there were no hidden Beyonders in the room, Klein looked at the curtain that shielded him from prying eyes. He recalled Ian's appearance and silently read out the divination sentence before leaning back into his chair.

He quickly entered a dream and saw a dark, small, run-down room in the dreamy world. There was a bunk bed and a floor mat that four people slept on.

Ian was curled up at the top of the bunk bed, sleeping soundly under an old satchel.

When the dream shattered, Klein opened his eyes and interpreted the revelation.

Living quarters like that only exist in the East Borough and the Backlund Bridge area, but it's an abnormally huge place. Even if all the police in Backlund are deployed, they still wouldn't be able to find it…

Ian was very careful. He didn't leave anything with me. Otherwise, I would've been able to find him through dowsing rod divination…

After a few minutes of consideration, Klein picked up the pen and added a paragraph to each of the divination statements, making it an excuse:

“I don’t know Ian Wright’s whereabouts. I haven’t seen him since we found Zreal’s body.”

That piece of paper was left on the desk with a pen pressed against its edge.

After all was done, Klein got up and went back to his bed, making a quick, less obvious flick of the coin to make sure that no one was watching him.

After obtaining a negative answer, he quickly took four steps counterclockwise, chanted the incantation, and entered the world above the gray fog.

Within the ancient and towering palace, Klein couldn’t be bothered to inspect the situation around him, and instead repeated the divination he had just done.

Seeing that the negative answer hadn’t changed, he stopped feeling so nervous. Raising his head to the side, he realized that the core position of the newly added crimson star had been dyed with a sun-like gold.

“Is this the source of the warmth I felt?” Klein spread out his spirituality and gingerly touched it in response to the prayer.

A blurry scene quickly appeared in front of his eyes.

The petite lady he had tried to pull up above the gray fog was standing in front of an altar with a lady with slightly curled brown hair. A man wearing a white mask softly chanted the honorary name of the Eternal Blazing Sun, creating a warm and pure light.

Was she trying to get someone to do an exorcism? Klein almost laughed.

At that moment, he finally understood the reason behind the previous situation. It wasn't that someone had penetrated the gray fog and locked onto him. It was similar to Justice and company reciting his honorary name before making a prayer. And after the gray fog received the message, it automatically give him feedback. However, since it wasn't a prayer, the illusory, overlapping voices ended up becoming a warm current.

Notification. This is a notification, and not something that can cause harm or influence… Klein made a definite judgment.

At the same time, he was roughly certain of one thing. The way the mysterious space above the gray fog connected with Justice and the others wasn't absolutely abnormal or above the rules of this world. It still suffered particular restrictions that could cause effects of varying degrees by using specific methods.

Klein continued watching the scene before him and listened to the voice speaking. He was surprised to find that it lasted longer than ever before.

Before this, he wouldn't be able to take the initiative to spy on the corresponding target of the crimson stars, unless the other party had prayed for it, and only then would he be able to receive the corresponding scene.

In another situation, when he gave his feedback, he would be able to see the scene and hear synchronized voices at the same time. However, once the response ended, he would no longer be able to gain any additional information.

Now, it was like watching a long video whose footage was filled with mosaicked reality TV footage.

He saw the petite lady talking to a man in a golden mask in the study, heard her companions address her as Xio, and realized that she was looking for the Beyonder potion corresponding to the Sheriff's potion.

It wasn’t until the two women returned home that Klein felt regretful that he failed to identify their address. The “recording” thus came to an end.

Watching the gradually dissipating gold colors, he nodded his head thoughtfully. He vaguely understood why such an anomaly had appeared.

In other words, the power of purification helped me maintain the corresponding passageway? Xio’s thirty pounds was worth it… I wonder when I’ll be able to maintain it myself… Klein shook his head and smiled. He took out a pen and a paper to continue to divine Ian Wright’s whereabouts.

Chapter 234 - The Night of the Full Moon.

◆ ◆ ◆

It was the same dream divination, but this time Klein saw more.

The first scene was still the small, dark, squalid room with Ian Wright sleeping soundly on a bunk bed.

The second scene was the same sewer they had both gone to. Ian squatted in front of Zreal's mutilated body, reached out with his hand to rub the two rows of white teeth, and removed one of them.

The third scene was a busy and noisy street. The passersby were all dressed in plain clothes, some of which that could be described as old and tattered.

In the middle of the street, there were gardens and lawns, surrounded by low chimneys that were puffing out smoke. Ian, in his old overcoat and round hat, warily watched as he entered the telegraph office not far from the center of the street. Diagonally across it was the mall entrance to the steam metro.

The image quickly turned transparent. Klein opened his eyes, tapped his index finger on the edge of the long bronze table and made a preliminary judgment.

From that tooth and the telegram, it seems that Zreal and Ian aren't just a detective duo that found themselves involved in a dangerous situation. They have an organization behind them!

I should be able to determine where the third scene is…

Klein was in no hurry to deeply analyze it, as he didn't want to stay too long above the fog.

Leaving the high back chair belonging to The Fool, he went to a corner, rummaged through the paper bag that he had been placed there previously, and found Meursault's Beyonder characteristic.

Holding the crimson, jelly-like object, Klein sat down again and wrote a new divination statement: "The corresponding potion name."

As he silently recited the statement, he held onto the Beyonder characteristic with one hand and the piece of paper with the divination statement in the other. With the help of Cogitation, he fell into a deep sleep.

In the gray, dreamy dream, the ambassador who was dressed to the nines, appeared again before Klein with his thin, stubbly face.

Holding a bottle of crimson liquid, he said to Meursault, "Drink it, drink this Hunter potion, and you'll rule the Zmanger gang. Of course, money is also indispensable, as Emperor Roselle once said—a stick in one hand and a carrot in the other."

"Hunter? Backlund is a huge metropolitan city…" Meursault frowned and asked curiously.

To someone illiterate like him, hunters were associated with the wilderness and animals.

The middle-aged ambassador chuckled and said, "The biggest city is the largest dark forest.

"Here, everyone has two identities. One, the prey, and the other, the hunter.

"Even the weakest hunter is a hunter. It's possible for them to harm stronger prey.

“Go, join this magnificent hunt.”

†

The scene shattered and turned into countless specks of light. Klein looked down at the crimson Beyonder characteristic in his hand and said to himself silently, So it’s the Hunter potion. It’s no wonder Meursault was so good at fighting. He even used a blowpipe to shoot poison darts.

It’s no wonder how he was able to track me here…

However, he doesn’t seem to fully understand the essence of being a Hunter. He didn’t set any traps ahead of time or use any weapons. He didn’t put his advantages to use… This is partly because he didn’t know that I’m also a Beyonder, one that happens to be a Sequence 8. He underestimated me. It’s also evident that he only recently consumed the potion…

The Hunter pathway is both wielded by the former Intis royal family, the Sauron family, and the Feysac Empire’s rulers, the Einhorn family, as well as the secret organization, the Iron and Blood Cross Order, which appeared in the past two to three centuries. Taking into account his attire, that ambassador’s identity can essentially be confirmed… a high-ranking diplomat of the Intis Republic, an ambassador of the Loen Kingdom…

I wonder what that important item he’s trying to get his hands on is…

As his mind churned, Klein wrapped himself in his spirituality and began the rapid descent.

As soon as he returned to his room, he immediately checked his surroundings vigilantly, but he didn’t notice any unusual changes.

Phew. Klein let out a silent breath. He felt a bit more confident that he would be able to convene the members of the Tarot Club on time tomorrow afternoon.

He rummaged through the map of Backlund that he had bought on the steam locomotive, looking for a telegraph office that was along the subway line, one that wasn't far from the middle of the street.

There were only a few subway lines in Backlund, so Klein quickly identified three targets: one in West Borough, one in St. George Borough, and one at the junction of East Borough and the Backlund Bridge.

He recalled how most of the pedestrians in his dream were dressed to determined their socioeconomic statuses and arrived at the final answer.

The third spot!

The place where the East Borough intersected with the Backlund Bridge!

Sometimes, interpreting a revelation requires a plethora of practical knowledge and the ability to infer… Klein mocked himself, walked to the desk, and added another sentence after the previous statement, adding more to the contents written on the piece of paper.

I don't know where Ian is. I haven't seen him since we discovered Zreal's corpse. However, I learned through my own channels that Ian Wright had appeared at the telegraph office on Bacardi Street.

After he finished writing, Klein didn't fold the piece of paper and put it away. Nor did he burn it with his spirituality. Instead, he allowed it to remain spread out on the desk, freely revealing its contents.

After giving it a deep look, Klein went back to the bed and took off his clothes to sleep.

Outside the tightly closed curtains, the crimson moon peeked out from the layers of clouds, shining brightly and perfectly.

†

In a house at Hillston Borough.

Fors, who didn't sleep with Xio, sat up suddenly and put her hands to her head.

Her relatively pretty face was extremely twisted as if she was a devil.

Fors pressed against her ears and constantly tossed about in bed, as though she was resisting the illusory muttering.

Sweat trickled down her forehead, and veins bulged on the back of her hands.

Her body randomly tensed up or rolled. Her originally teasing and languid pale blue eyes were filled with pain.

In the depths of those pupils, countless layers of light and shadows seemed to appear.

"No!" Fors finally couldn't hold it in anymore as she let out a low tragic cry.

Her hands stopped covering her ears and resorted to yanking at her hair, as though she was going to fight pain with pain.

After a few minutes of writhing, she finally stopped.

She released her hands, looked at the handful of slightly curled brown hair, and weakly laughed at herself.

"I lied to Xio, telling her that the murmurs every full moon don't have much of a negative effect on me… At least losing hair is a serious concern…"

With difficulty, Fors sat up and looked at the curtain that half covered the window. Through it, she could see the dreamy crimson moon outside.

“It’s getting worse each and every time. Will I lose control the next time because of this…” Fors could no longer suppress the weakness that she had buried deep in her heart.

She had attempted to separate herself from the bracelet that allowed people to teleport through the spiritual world, but it no longer resulted in the disappearance of the murmurs during a full moon.

She had tried to take sedatives, had tried chanting the name of the God of Steam and Machinery, had tried some ritualistic magic, but it hadn’t changed the fact that she was gradually slipping into the abyss.

“If only I could understand what the murmurs are saying… I wish to die in the know, and not be buried clueless… P-perhaps, I might be able to hear it clearer after advancing to Sequence 8? But I’ve never encountered anyone selling the Trickmaster potion formula.” Fors looked out the window in a daze as her eyes were dyed red by the moonlight.

†

On Monday morning, Klein woke up early from his restless sleep and got out of bed.

He went to his desk and began to draw the curtains and open the window to let the light and wind into the room.

At that moment, he caught sight of the paper on the desk at the corner of his eye.

It was facing the window, maintaining its original spot.

However, Klein clearly remembered that before he slept, this piece of paper was facing the chair and the bed!

It had flipped over and changed orientation after a night's sleep!

Klein's pupils constricted as he abruptly reached out and pulled the curtains open. He saw that the oriel windows were still shut tight, not letting even a waft of wind in!

Without any wind, the paper had rotated hundred and eighty degrees by itself!

No, someone came in without me noticing! Klein felt a chill run up his spine to his head.

He was shocked that he didn't realize it while sleeping!

This meant that he was almost at the mercy of others, and his life and death depended solely on the other party's mood and thoughts!

Was it a member of the military's special department, or was it a powerful Beyonder sent by the ambassador? From the fact that the paper wasn't returned to its original orientation, it's more likely to be the latter, indicating a certain level of warning… To be able to sneak in like that without a trace, how incredible… Should I thank him for his kindness? No, there must be a reason why he didn't do something that could've been so conveniently accomplished… They don't want to alarm the members of the military's special department who are monitoring the area? Klein couldn't help but think of countless reasons.

The reason he wrote those words last night and spread the paper on the desk, was to let others see it. He wanted to let the ambassador know what he wanted to know and delay any possible acts of revenge until the matter was over so that he himself could have more time to prepare.

However, Klein had expected that the other party would sneak into the room while he was out, and when the surveillance of his house by the special military department would be reduced. Who knew that the person in question was able to bypass the Beyonders around him and quietly enter the bedroom while he was still sleeping.

The feeling of having his fate controlled by someone else was extremely uncomfortable!

A Beyonder who's very powerful or with extremely odd abilities… Klein turned his back and faced away from the oriel window and pulled out a copper penny.

"Someone sneaked into this room last night."

†

He silently chanted the statement, and with the help of his body's concealment, he flicked the coin.

The coin tumbled in the air and fell without exceeding Klein's shoulder height and landed in his open palm.

This time, the number faced up.

It was a negative result.

No one had sneaked into Klein's bedroom last night!

The paper wouldn't have turned around for no reason… Could it be sleepwalking? No, I can even stay awake after the Captain invaded my dream… Klein suddenly frowned and thought of two possibilities.

First, the divination was disrupted and resulted in misleading results.

Two, the one who sneaked in was not human!

Chapter 235 - The Busy Monday

◆

Klein was in no hurry to confirm his general assumptions. He pretended that nothing had happened and turned the page so that it faced him.

The information he wrote about Ian Wright was completely true. He would still get a positive answer even if he used divination techniques to confirm. Therefore, he believed that the people under the ambassador's charge would follow this investigations trail and gain something in return. It was unlikely that they would have the motivation to seek revenge on him for the time being.

Similarly, he would continue to spread the paper out on his desk for the military's special department who were monitoring him. It would direct their attention away from him as they shifted their focus to Ian Wright. It would then be a race against time to find him before the ambassador.

This way, Klein would be even safer.

It feels like I'm walking on a tightrope. Is this a Clown's special trick? He shook his head in amusement. He opened the oriel window, hoping to take in the fresh morning air, but there was thick, choking smog outside that made him quietly close the windows.

Pressing down the paper with Ian's information with an ink bottle, Klein went to the closest bathroom and quickly washed up. He then picked up the black double-breasted frock coat and the half top hat that hung from the rack and walked all the way to the first floor.

He had an appointment with Lawyer Jurgen for breakfast today.

Pulling his black silver inlaid cane from the umbrella stand in the foyer, Klein walked along the edge of the street in a thick fog that provided visibility of no more than ten meters until he reached 58 Minsk Street. He rang the doorbell of the dark house.

As the clanging sound echoed, a black green-eyed cat with a raised tail suddenly appeared in his mind.

Brody the black cat walked straight to the door. After preparing itself for two seconds, it leaped up and grabbed the handle of the door.

Then, it inevitably fell and twisted the handle with its weight, and opened the door.

With a creak, the morning wind blew in, and the door slowly opened.

Brody the black cat glanced at Klein haughtily as it walked to the side.

“What a clever cat,” Klein praised as he faced the old lady, Doris, in her white apron.

Doris laughed as her wrinkles eased.

“It depends on its mood. Most of the time it acts stupid, as though it doesn’t know what you’re talking about. Oh, I’ve prepared my best bean turnip soup for you. Eat it with bread.”

Bean turnip soup… Sounds like something randomly mashed together… Klein smiled.

“I’m looking forward to it.”

The lawyer came out of the bathroom. Even at home, regardless if he had just woken up, he was dressed to the nines. His white shirt was ironed and his brownish-yellow vest was tightly fitted, the lines of his trousers appearing to be freshly ironed.

"The contract you wanted is complete. Check to see if there are any omissions." Jurgen's blue eyes swept over. He didn't make small talk as he went straight to the point.

His brown hair was neatly combed back, and the sheen from the pomade was unmistakable.

"Alright." Klein leaned his cane, took off his hat and coat, and followed Jurgen into the study on the first floor, where he received a thick contract.

He stood there, casually flipping through it. The more he read, the more his head hurt. In the end, he only skimmed through the key clauses.

I hope that everything that's needed is in there, as well as the previously omitted clauses, such as the establishment of the three instances that will determine how much money is to be supplied to Leppard based on his progress, rather than a lump sum payment of 100 pounds. The first instance involves 50 pounds… Yes, that way I won't have to go to the Backlund Bank for the time being and take out the remaining hundred pounds from my anonymous account. What I have on me is enough…

Klein closed the document, smiled at Jurgen, and said, "I'm satisfied. Your professional skills are better than I imagined."

As he said that, he took out two one-pound notes that he had prepared.

Jurgen took the money, gave Klein the remaining contracts, and said in a serious tone, "If an error is made during the signing, there are two extra copies. Remember to shred the remaining contracts when everything is over."

The current iteration of shredding machines was a hand-cranked mechanical shredder.

Klein was about to nod his head, when Mrs. Doris suddenly shouted from the dining room, "Good lads, it's time for breakfast!"

"My grandmother's hearing has deteriorated," Jurgen explained as he invited Klein with a hand gesture.

Klein followed him into the dining room and saw that Mrs. Doris had scooped out a spoonful of yellow and green liquid from a black pot and poured it onto the corresponding plate.

"Here, try the bean turnip soup. Here's your bread." Mrs. Doris smiled and pointed to the suspicious pile of food.

Klein looked at Jurgen who looked even more serious than before. His heart skipped a beat.

Forcing himself to sit, Klein broke off a piece of white bread, dipped it in the yellow-green soup, and stuffed it into his mouth with the spirit of an adventurer.

"…" He was surprised to find that the flavor was actually quite good. The faint salty taste had a sweet tang to it that stimulated his appetite. It also perfectly brought out the soft, fragrant flavor of the bread.

"My grandmother was once an excellent cook," Jugen said casually as he slowly savored his breakfast.

…Then why do you have to keep a straight face… I really don't have any appetite watching you eat… Klein lampooned silently before immersing himself into the relaxed and happy feelings brought by the delicacy.

After leaving the Jurgens, he made three transfers to Sird Street in St. George Borough, where he made a formal agreement and paid Leppard the first fifty pound. The second sum of thirty pounds would be paid in two weeks' time, depending on Leppard's progress.

At this point, Klein was left with only 21 pounds 8 soli.

Then, he returned to Cherwood Borough and went to the public library to read the Tussock Times of the past year in search of news regarding the Intis ambassador to the Loen Kingdom.

When it was almost noon, he finally saw the black-and-white photo and confirmed that it was the one he had seen in his dream divination.

“Bakerland Jean Madan,” Klein recited the Intis Republic’s ambassador’s name silently. He left the library and found a small restaurant for lunch.

†

At ten minutes to three, Klein pretended to take a nap. He drew the curtains, took four steps in the counterclockwise direction, and arrived above the gray fog.

He first divined if the military’s special department had relaxed their surveillance on him and received a positive result. He then wrote a divination statement that he had thought of in the morning: “The infiltrator from last night.”

Leaning back in his chair, he muttered the sentence. Klein’s eyelids drooped as he fell asleep.

His bedroom came into view in a world of illusion, separation, and obscurity.

At that moment, Klein saw a black shadow squirming in the crack at the bottom of the door!

A slender, iron-black threadworm drilled its way into the room. It arched at the center and then flattened itself, constantly repeating it as it proceeded towards the desk.

Its movements were extremely stiff, as though it had broken down a series of slow motions, making it appear quite odd.

The black threadworm crept to the front of the desk and crawled to the top, leaving a trail of quickly evaporating mucus behind.

It stopped at the written piece regarding Ian Wright. Its head lifted up as the middle of its body rose, leaving only the tail to support the body.

At this moment, it was just like a human!

After examining it for a moment, the black-iron threadworm turned the paper around and disappeared back the way it came from.

So that was the case… That is to say, it wasn't that the infiltrator didn't want to take revenge on me last night; he simply didn't have the ability to do so… Unless this iron-black threadworm is highly venomous… Klein nodded in enlightenment, he then used divination and obtained confirmation that the Beyonder who manipulated the black-iron threadworm had done so under Ambassador Bakerland's orders.

After doing all of this, he completely covered the paper bag in the corner with gray fog and sent a message to The Sun, Derrick.

When the hands of the pocket watch were in place, Klein pulled in Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun at the same time.

This week's Tarot Club happened as scheduled!

†

The familiar gray fog and blurry human silhouettes appeared. Audrey, who had successfully advanced to Sequence 8, half stood up, lifted her skirt, and happily greeted them, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~ Good afternoon, Mr. Hanged Man! Good afternoon, Mr. Sun!"

Klein, who had activated his Spirit Vision earlier, noticed the change in the surface layer of the Astral Projection in the depths of Miss Justice's Ether Body with the help of the gray fog's uniqueness. With a chuckle, he said, "Welcome, our 'Miss Telepathist.'"

Audrey smiled reservedly and said a few words of humility before turning to face the person across her.

"Mr. Hanged Man, you should be handing this week's six pages."

Perhaps, when Mr. Fool reads it, he will think of something and shares with us a little more of his "general knowledge"… The corners of her mouth curled up in anticipation.

Alger nodded and began to produce the six pages of Roselle's diary with Klein's help.

Previously, he had thought about consulting The Fool about whether he should directly submit the rest of the diary via a sacrifice. However, seeing that The Fool didn't seem too interested or take the initiative to mention it, he gave up on this idea.

And this was in line with his understanding of The Fool. Roselle's diary had a certain effect on the godlike-man—Mr. Fool—but it wasn't that great. He would collect it, but he definitely wasn't in a rush.

The six pages of the diary were completed very quickly. As Alger was about to offer it to The Fool who sat at the end of the long bronze table, he suddenly remembered something. He hurriedly said respectfully, "Mr. Fool, I have obtained a piece of information related to the Secret Order."

There was no obstruction of information on the ocean; it just wasn't timely enough.

The pirates also valued intelligence and often sent people to the colonial island to exchange information that they had gathered. It was through these channels that Alger learned something about the Secret Order.

"Very good." Klein nodded his head slightly, giving his permission to The Hanged Man to recount what he knew. He didn't stop the presence of Miss Justice and The Sun from letting him speak.

This would help the former gather more information about the Secret Order, while the latter understood nothing.

At the same time, he allowed the six-page diary to appear in his hands.

The Hanged Man said unhurriedly, “The Secret Order has some connection with the Intis Republic.”

The Intis Republic. Yes, Emperor Roselle was from Intis, and Zaratul had sought him out in Trier, the capital of Intis… The Secret Order was also involved in the famous incident at Intis… Well, it’s not too surprising that the Secret Order still has some connection with the Intis Republic today… After validating this new piece of information with what he knew, Klein confirmed that the information provided by The Hanged Man was true.

Heh, just in time, I’m going to deal with the ambassador of the Intis Republic… Klein was in no hurry to read Roselle’s diary. He looked up at the three members.

Chapter 236 - Internal Commission

◆

As Klein's knowledge of mysticism and Beyonders deepened, as well as his experiments with some of the powers of the space above the gray fog, he no longer felt anxious when facing Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun. He became less preoccupied with maintaining an enigmatic and unfathomable image so as to prevent the Tarot Club members from keenly noticing his facade.

He now knew that although the deities in this world were powerful and bizarre, they were by no means omnipotent and omniscient. This description was something that only the legendary Creator of everything could do, one that only the City of Silver was still worshiping.

The deities had their limitations, and the deities could also be put into tough situations. That was something Klein could now confirm. Be it The Book of Storms or The Revelation of Evernight, they more or less touched upon this.

Therefore, at the recent Tarot Gathering, Klein was consciously building "character traits," slowly shaping himself into a restricted powerhouse who, for some reason, couldn't move freely but was almost a deity.

This way, even if he occasionally showed that he didn't understand certain things and occasionally asked for help, it wouldn't arouse the suspicion of the Tarot Club members.

Of course, the premise of all this was that, through his previous attempts and through the power displayed by his “Blessed,” Azik, he had undoubtedly embedded the image of a deity-like existence into the minds of Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun.

Phew, I hope that this building of character traits will succeed. That way, I won’t have to worry about not being able to answer their questions in the future… Of course, things that are part of “general knowledge” still have to be known, and I shouldn’t show fear… Klein tapped the edge of the ancient table and said with a chuckle, “I want to issue a mission.”

Mission? Audrey’s ears pricked up slightly as her eyes widened. She was astonished, expectant, and perturbed at the same time.

She clearly remembered that this was the first time that Mr. Fool had officially issued a mission!

Although “He” had previously made a few requests, they all involved prepaid rewards. It seemed like “He” had randomly selected missions to conform to the principle of equal exchange… This time, He used the word “issue”… As a Telepathist, Audrey was already very good at reading the hidden meanings behind words.

At the same time, she keenly realized that although The Hanged Man appeared to remain unperturbed, he was actually abnormally tense. As for The Sun, he seemed to be muddle-headed, treating this as a very normal thing.

“You can choose to accept it or not.” With the help of his Clown’s powers, Klein’s tone sounded much more relaxed. “Another Blessed of mine has arrived in Backlund. He wants to finish a matter, but it’s not convenient for him to show himself.”

Another Blessed… The Hanged Man nodded, seemingly in thought. He wasn’t surprised at all.

In his eyes, for a powerful godlike existence like Mr. Fool, possessing many Blessed was a matter of fact.

I wonder what the Sequence number of Mr. Fool's Blessed is… Well, I still owe "His" previous Blessed a reward… Even though Mr. Fool's reward was paid by Mr. Hanged Man, and "He" doesn't really care about money, I did pray for help at that time. Furthermore, Vice Admiral Hurricane was killed by that Blessed…"His" Blessed would still need some funds for their activities… Audrey thought with some guilt.

Frankly speaking, thirty thousand gold pounds and a large plantation was an enormous amount of wealth to her, but that alone didn't have any significant effect on her life.

It's good having it, but it didn't matter if I didn't. Well, I might feel the pinch a little… Audrey nodded to herself earnestly.

As a teenage girl who wasn't considered an adult yet, ignoring the large plantation, she actually didn't have absolute control over the remaining thirty thousand pounds. She could only go with her father's arrangements, purchasing some stocks from Backlund Munitions Corporation and invest in a company that was attempting to spinoff some of the technology in ironclad warships for commercial ships.

The amount she ultimately received and could be used as an allowance was only 5000 pounds. However, her fixed annuity had increased by at least 2000 pounds from its original range of 15,000 to 25,000 pounds.

Seeing that Justice and the others hadn't spoken, Klein issued the mission.

"The task he wants to be completed is the assassination of the Intis Republic ambassador to the Loen Kingdom, Bakerland Jean Madan."

"Assassinate the Intis Republic's ambassador!?" Audrey lost her composure as she asked in surprise.

This would cause conflict between the two countries and might even be an act of war! As a qualified aristocratic lady, her first thought was about international foreign affairs.

As for why Mr. Fool didn't do so himself, she found the answer obvious.

Which mighty figure would always be helping their subordinates?

After the Kingdom suffered defeat at the east coast of Balam, the King didn't personally set off. At most, the general would be replaced and new troops deployed.

Hmm, rumor has it that His Majesty wanted to set off for the frontline, but was stopped by the nobles and officials…

Alger was only mildly surprised by the task; his focus was on another matter.

Mr. Fool is indeed unable to strongly interfere with the real world… My guess is right… I wonder to what extent can "He" influence us after establishing our connection… Can "He" easily take one's life away? Alger, a little pleased with himself, began to let his thoughts wander.

Derrick blanked out listening to the conversation.

What's the Intis Republic? What's an ambassador? These words sound so strange in Jotun!

Klein swept his gaze around and maintained his casual attitude.

"Which one of you is willing to accept this mission?

"What kind of reward do you want?"

Eh… I can't convince myself to kill an innocent man for no reason. And it could very well lead to a disaster, a disaster caused by war… Audrey, who wanted to raise her hand, hesitated.

Just then, The Hanged Man chuckled and said, "I've heard that this Ambassador Bakerland is also the intelligence chief of the Intis Republic in the Kingdom. He secretly supports bloodshed, planned a number of incidents that destroyed the relationship between the nobility and the rich, and spread rumors to incite the public into standing against the government."

He seemed to notice the hesitation in Justice, so he described the dark side of Bakerland in detail.

Then, he added, "I'm not sure if the ambassador is a Beyonder, but there are many clues that suggest he may very well be.

"He has quite a number of Beyonders around him, Beyonders that come under the Intis intelligence web. And this department is influenced by the original royal family in Intis, the Sauron family. They're in control of the early Sequences of the Hunter pathway.

"Moreover, the possibility of a war between the two countries depends only on whether or not the upper echelons of both sides want to fight. It has nothing to do with the life or death of a diplomat."

After the assassination of Emperor Roselle, Intis suffered several great shocks but ultimately managed to maintain a stable republican system. Because the Sauron family suffered a brutal blow during Roselle's reign, their strength fell tremendously in all aspects. All they could do was accept the reality and change their goal to fighting for a seat in parliament and secretly influence the country's intelligence department and parts of the army.

After listening to the information provided by The Hanged Man, the hesitation in Audrey's heart disappeared. She gracefully nodded and said, "For the past few years, the Feysac Empire has expanded rapidly, having defeated the Kingdom and the Intis Republic on the Balam east coast and the Highlands. As long as we push the blame to them, the higher-ups and the citizens of the Intis Empire, it will be something acceptable and believable."

Audrey didn't know much about politics, but with her father being a Member of Parliament in the House of Lords, she still knew certain things.

Be it the shirking of responsibility or shifting the focus onto the Kingdom's internal problems, the unpopular northern barbarians were the popular and easiest targets for the nobles and ministers.

Whether they did it or not didn't matter.

Of course, more than a hundred years ago, this role was played by Intis and Roselle.

After pondering for a few seconds, Audrey looked at the seat of honor, feeling a little perturbed and a little guilty.

"Mr. Fool, I can attempt to complete this mission, but I cannot guarantee its success."

On the one hand, she was going to find her father and confirm that Ambassador Bakerland was really the head of the Intis intelligence service. On the other hand, she wasn't going to do it herself either. As a Spectator or a Telepathist, neither one of them was good at combat, and all she could do was gather as much information about Ambassador Backlund from high society as she could and delegate the mission.

Well, I could get Xio and Fors to ask Mr. A to do it… Or find the hosts of the other Beyonder circles… I cannot be exposed. Things have to be kept secret, and there might be Intis intelligence agents lurking in those circles. I don't know how much money I'll have to pay, but 5000 pounds might not be enough… Audrey was already beginning to think of the subsequent plans.

Klein didn't pin his hopes on Sequence 8—Miss Justice—to succeed. He nodded and said, "What compensation would you like?"

"The formula to the Psychiatrist potion," Audrey said before hesitantly adding, "as well as the corresponding Beyonder ingredients. Oh, we can wait until the mission is completed before discussing further. If it doesn't succeed, I'll bear the expenses. I-I still ow-owe your Blessed the bounty money."

Bounty money? So it was given to Miss Justice… 10,000 pounds. That's 5000 if we split it equally… Shrouded in the gray fog, Klein pondered for a few seconds on how much Ambassador Bakerland was worth and finally decided that he was definitely more valuable than Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos.

"Sure," Klein replied in a normal tone.

At this moment, The Hanged Man Alger added, "I'll also accept this mission. The compensation can be determined after the mission is completed."

"Didn't you return to the sea?" Audrey asked in surprise.

"Just because I'm not in Backlund doesn't mean I can't kill Ambassador Bakerland," Alger said with a smile without giving any detailed explanations.

Derrick, who was beside him, never had the chance to join in on the conversation.

Klein nodded in agreement.

"Okay."

He immediately turned his gaze to the Roselle diary in his hands.

Chapter 237 - Sequence 2

◆

“29th October. The leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul, visited me once again. He didn’t mention anything specific and just casually chatted with me. I wasn’t able to guess his true intentions. It seems like he just wanted to strengthen the communication between us and understand each other better?

“I’ve already met the two High-Sequence Beyonders from the Church, but I felt that Zaratul was much more powerful and mysterious than them, so I asked him what Sequence number he was without much hope, and in the end, he actually answered me!

“He told me that he was a Sequence 2, Miracle Invoker!

“Sequence 2? In the Church’s categorization, that’s the position of an angel, close to that of a deity!

“He truly is more powerful than the Alchemist and Arcane Scholar that I met before!

“But my intuition tells me that Zaratul isn’t telling the whole truth. Sequence 2 might just be his former position, or that he’s about to advance.

“Miracle Invoker? A master at creating miracles? The name of this potion makes one’s imagination run wild!

“This is the corresponding Sequence 2 of Seer, a Miracle Invoker who controls fate?

“I tried probing Zaratul if the word miracle refers to the miracle of fate? That the Seer pathway is one that slowly understands and grasps fate so as to control it?

“Zaratul ignored the first question. He told me that fate is just one of the parts of the Seer pathway, and it’s not even its main focus. The pathway that truly represents fate is Monster!

“He raised a few examples which were all potion names of the Monster Sequence. Sequence 7 Lucky, Sequence 5 Winner, Sequence 2 Soothsayer, and Sequence 1 Snake of Mercury! It’s also known as the Snake of Fate.

“This was the first Sequence 1 I got to know. It hit me right in the face!

“According to what I know, the Monster pathway should be controlled by the Life School of Thought. This school seems to also have parts of the Apothecary Sequence pathway. They propose three major divisions, the world of absolute rationality, the world of the spirit, and the material world. Yea, it’s pretty cool.

“Zaratul told me that the Life School of Thought specializes in astromancy, seeking to use medicine, music, light, wine, and fragrance, to eliminate paths with unfavorable star readings and fate. They believe that disasters and diseases are caused by the loss of balance between man and nature, as well as the balance between man and his own mind.

“He added meaningfully that the Life School of Thought worships the moon.

“Why worship the moon and not go one step further, the Evernight Goddess?”

This diary took up two pages and was clearly copied from both sides of the original.

That’s a lot of information… Klein sighed in heartfelt silence.

This was also the first time he was learning of a Sequence 1 potion's name.

Snake of Mercury and Snake of Fate really made one feel a pining for!

Similarly, it's my first time learning of a Sequence 2. I now know the corresponding Sequence 2 of Seer… The name Miracle Invoker sounds pretty good. It contains deep meaning and doesn't sound lowly. Of course, compared to Soothsayer, it does seem a little inferior…

Fate is only part of the Seer pathway and it's not even its main focus. I have to remember this. I should constantly reflect on myself and not end up steering towards fate. It might result in the failure of my "acting"… Zaratul's words don't seem contradictory… The Monster pathway is the real path of fate… So, Soothsayer is a Sequence 2. If that's the case, then I already knew of a Sequence 2 in the past…

Although he didn't take his eyes off the paper, Klein was seriously considering his own Sequence chain.

Due to his experience in digesting the two potions, "Seer" and "Clown," and because he could spy and revere fate, he was able to be a little prescient regarding fate. However, he would still be helpless toward the development of fate. He had slowly been equating the essence of his Beyonder pathway to fate. If it wasn't for this diary, it was very likely that he would've used this as a premise to comprehend and "act" for the subsequent Sequences.

As for whether or not Zaratul was lying, what Klein was certain of was that the Monster pathway was definitely the Sequence of Fate, which was consistent with what he had seen from the confidential information of the Nighthawks and with the potion name he had heard of earlier, "Soothsayer."

Now that there was a Fate Sequence, the "Seer" pathway was unlikely to be a repeat. This would result in some degree of overlapping, and it would be inconsistent with how each of the current Sequences had different characteristics.

Therefore, Klein was inclined to believe what Zaratul had said. He was inclined to believe that fate was only part of the Seer's pathway, not even its main focus.

The value of these two pages is invaluable to the present me… The Alchemist and the Arcane Scholar should be the higher Sequences of the Savant pathway. From Roselle's tone, they definitely don't belong to Sequence 2 and 1. That is to say, they are Sequence 4 and Sequence 3… For the time being, it's impossible to determine which is Sequence 4 and which is Sequence 3… Klein gathered his thoughts, flipped the diary, and continued reading.

As for why the Life School of Thought only worshiped the moon and didn't believe in the Evernight Goddess which symbolized the crimson moon, he was unable to ponder too deeply about it due to the lack of information.

The third page was Roselle's recount of inventing a practical steam engine. At times, he was afraid of suffering crackdowns, and at other times, afraid that the fruits of his labor would be seized by powerful figures. His words displayed his fear of being persecuted.

To think that even Emperor Roselle, who thought of himself as the protagonist of an era, would have such a perturbed and worried side to him… The corners of Klein's mouth twitched as he flipped to the fourth page of the diary.

"18th April. Matilda is pregnant.

"It's to be expected, and I can even tell you exactly which love-making session she conceived in, because I felt a decrease in my Beyonder characteristic.

"Once the conception is successful, my own Beyonder characteristic will follow a mysterious connection, and part of it will be transferred to my child.

“After that, I asked Archbishop Fan Esti worriedly. He told me that this is a normal phenomenon. For Sequence 7 and below, Beyonder characteristics will not be passed on to the next generation, but it isn’t absolute, Sequence 6 and 5 will naturally pass down a portion, but it will not affect the parent’s strength. As for the child, they would be born with certain Beyonder powers, close to that of Sequence 9. But as a result, their pathway is basically fixed.

“At high Sequences, the inheritance of Beyonder characteristics is something one can control. One can choose to pass down or not, or one can even choose to pass down just a little bit, a third, half, or all of them.

“In other words, the children born from High-Sequence Beyonders might be born as Beyonders. As for the Sequence number, it’s up to either one of the parents to decide.

“I wonder if the descendants of the deities are like this as well…”

After reading the diary, there were only two phrases in Klein’s mind: “Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility” and “Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation.”

Is the law governing the survival of Beyonder creatures? It’s no wonder that some magical animals will reproduce only before they die… It’s no wonder there would be the phenomenon of increased killing and bloodlust after childbirth. The target would be of their own race or even their partner. This is to supplement their Beyonder characteristics… According to this logic, if we trace this all the way back, where did the earliest Beyonder characteristics come from? Produced out of thin air? From the Creator who created everything?

Since Miss Justice had already advanced to Telepathist, Klein controlled the urge to nod and continued to leaf through the pages.

The fifth page was Roselle's criticisms about how no one could enjoy his pop music and thought that he was making noise, while at the same time, he mused how refreshing stories was a common pursuit of different people from different worlds, and that the popularity of the novels he plagiarized from The Count of Monte Cristo allowed the newspaper he founded to flourish.

…Emperor, is there anything else you haven't done? With a smile, Klein turned to the sixth and final page.

"10th November, I received the great pirate Savigny Solomon in secret at the White Maple Palace. I hope that he will plunder my opponents on the new sea route and strike at the ships of Feysac, Loen, and Feynapotter.

"And I promised to help him advance to a High-Sequence Beyonder.

"The Beyonder pathway of Black Emperor has names that are as strange as the Demoness pathway—Corruption, Confusion, The Fallen, Disorder… However, in order to match the Black Emperor, they added on their own suffixes, Baron of Corruption, Mentor of Disorder, Earl of The Fallen, and Prince of Abolition.

"In order for Savigny to live up to his name, I decided to confer him the title of Earl of the Court in secret.

"Savigny has a child named Nast Solomon, and my intuition tells me that he will dominate the Five Seas in the future."

Nast Solomon… The King of the Five Seas, Nast? Nast, who claims to be a descendant of the Solomon Empire? To think that he was born during the Roselle period! Klein was stunned.

Since Roselle had mentioned the term "new sea route," Klein had easily determined the corresponding year.

It was in 1194 that the new sea route was discovered and the Southern Continent was found, and Roselle was assassinated in 1198. The diary could only have been written between those two years.

That also meant that it was about 151 to 155 years ago.

If Nast, the “King of the Five Seas,” was the Nast Solomon, Roselle had spoken of, he’s almost 160 years old… Is this due to other reasons, or do High-Sequence Beyonders obtain an extension to their lifespan in the first place… Klein thought seriously.

He gathered his thoughts and let the diary disappear from his hands. He then looked at Justice and said, “You are free to trade or communicate now.”

Mr. Fool has no general knowledge to tell us today… Audrey was slightly disappointed. She turned her gaze to Sun and said, “Can I exchange information related to the dragon from you?”

She clearly remembered that Mr. Sun called the Spectator pathway “the Dragon pathway,” and that he said it originated from the Dragon race.

“Sure. I want the Sequence 8 potion formula for Bard,” answered The Sun, Derrick, who had been silent all this while, in hesitation.

He had wanted to use this as an exchange for information on the world where Justice and The Hanged Man were living so that he wouldn’t always be confounded by what he heard. However, seeing that his process of digesting the potion was nearing completion, he still made his advancement his top priority.

Chapter 238 - Dragon of Imagination

◆ ◆ ◆

Audrey wasn’t surprised by The Sun’s request. Since the “acting method” had proliferated in the City of Silver, then the amount of time that had passed suggested that it was likely that he was close to the end of his digestion period. Seeking the subsequent potion formula was definitely one of his highest priorities.

I wonder how the Bard acts? Sing poetry every day? When encountering combat, dodge to the side and use his singing to bring courage and strength to his companions? Or perhaps he would first bless himself before charging forward with a hammer or sword raised? I wonder if it will bring about an improvement in his singing ability. If it’s possible, then he would definitely be an outstanding singer or opera singer… Audrey thought with great interest. She purposely didn’t express her stance in a hurry, so as to not let The Sun raise the price again.

This wasn’t something she learned from her tutor or from the Beyonder gatherings she had attended. It was purely a technique she had developed herself after she had advanced to become a Telepathist.

“I will try my best to find the Sequence 8 potion formula corresponding to the Bard pathway, but it won’t be today. Are you satisfied with this condition?” Audrey said in deliberation before looking at the seat of honor at the ancient table. “We can seek Mr. Fool’s help to bear witness to this agreement.”

At that moment, Klein laughed and replied, “Miss Justice, perhaps I can provide the Light Suppliant formula for you."

Audrey's eyes lit up as she quickly nodded slightly.

"No problem! Then, what should I use to exchange with you?"

I haven't thought of it yet… Klein chuckled and said, "Don't worry; perhaps my Blessed will require help in certain matters in the future."

His thoughts were very simple. If he allowed Miss Justice to obtain the formula of Light Suppliant in her Beyonder circles, then wouldn't the knowledge he had stolen from the Eternal Blazing Sun at the cost of near immolation be for naught?

At the very least, it would be wasted at the Tarot Club!

"Alright, I will do my best to help them!" Audrey promised happily.

Klein pressed his hands together and a yellowish-brown piece of goatskin parchment appeared before him. On it was the formula for the Light Suppliant potion, including substitute ingredients and their ancient names. Furthermore, they were all translated to Jotun.

"Main ingredients: a piece of Brilliance Rock or powder of Dazzling Soul; Blood of a Mirror Hedgehog or the Heart of a Magma Titan; Supplementary ingredients: a Golden-edged Sunflower, three drops of Aconite Juice…"

With a gentle push, the goatskin appeared in front of The Sun.

Although he could pray to Mr. Fool to recall the formula even if he forgot it completely, Derrick still diligently memorized the formula. It took him quite a while before he said, "Miss Justice, we can talk about the dragons."

"Mr. Fool, I seek your permission to speak with Mr. Sun alone." Audrey quickly raised her hand.

She originally believed that The Sun would put the appropriate content on paper for her to read, but it would be inconvenient for her to ask questions. She would have to pen her questions and push them back to him. Such a way of communication was utterly cumbersome.

Speak with him alone? In such a conversation, you probably wouldn't understand what The Sun is saying; likewise for The Sun… Klein nodded as his voice remained placid.

"Alright."

In the Beyonder circles, Hermes was a language one had to master. Ancient Hermes was something that one could learn and was relatively popular. Jotun, Dragonese, and Elvish were relatively less popular, so few people knew them.

The moment that was said, Klein isolated The Hanged Man, preventing him from seeing or hearing.

Alger had a certain interest in the knowledge of the dragons, but it wasn't enough for him to pay the price of listening, so he kept silent and waited.

Seeing that Mr. Fool had made a gesture for them to start talking, The Sun, Derrick, remained silent for a few seconds, organized his words, and said, "The dragons are mortal enemies of the Giant King. They all look like magnified lizards, and their entire bodies are covered in scales of different colors. Their four limbs are thick and powerful, and their wings are wide enough to drive their giant bodies to flight. They are the rulers of the sky.

"They have a myriad of abilities, some have the ability to breathe fire, others the ability to command lightning, bring corrosion, or even creating frost. But these are not mainstream among the dragons. The mind dragons occupies the greatest number of dragons with Dragon King Ankewelt as their representative. The Beyonder pathway that stems from the mind dragon is the Spectator. In the City of Silver, we typically call it the Dragon pathway."

With regards to similar trades, Derrick had initially prepared to regurgitate the historical texts, but upon discovering that Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man didn't seem to share the same "world," he gradually realized the value of the widely-known history of the City of Silver. Thus, he only talked about dragons this time and spoke nothing of giants, elves, mutants, phoenixes, vampires, etc.

The King of Dragons Ankewelt… This aligns with the records of the Church… Audrey nodded slightly, politely refraining from interrupting The Sun's narration.

Derrick recalled the contents of his textbook and said, "Back then, the most powerful and most terrifying dragon was the Dragon King Ankewelt, also known as the Dragon of Imagination. Apart from it, his son, Alzuhod blanketed the sky as well, overlooking the famous, powerful figures across the land and sea. Its name was the Dragon of Nightmare.

"Regarding the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt, there was a legend that whatever he imagined would manifest. The kingdom he imagined would definitely descend upon the material world. The future it declares would definitely play out and become reality."

This… Klein suddenly frowned. If it wasn't for the fact that Justice Audrey was focused on listening to The Sun, she definitely would've noticed his abnormality, even if he was covered by the thick gray fog.

The description made him think of Sealed Artifact 0-08!

A declared future would definitely play out… They share similar characteristics! Klein leaned back in his chair; he looked relaxed, but in fact, he was even more focused.

Dragon of Imagination, how cool… That's the mark of a deity! Audrey's eyes lit up when she heard him, filled with excitement and anticipation.

Derrick paused for a few seconds before continuing, "Its son, Dragon of

Nightmare, Alzuhod, is similarly terrifying. It can control the hearts of every living creature and make them act according to his will. And these living creatures will find it hard to sense it, believing that their actions were of their own will. It will also fabricate real nightmares into reality, causing many living creatures to unknowingly participate in them. It would then give them the cruelest and shocking ends.

"Legend has it that it especially loves mischief, that it will let a prince kiss a princess to wake her up, but the princess has already mostly rotten away. It will make ordinary girls wear dancing shoes and dance in front of the prince, but find themselves unable to stop dancing until their deaths. It will create all kinds of coincidences and push the fates of many living creatures towards tragedy."

All kinds of coincidences… This sounds even more like a 0-08… Of course, I don't know much about the Sealed Artifact… Klein resisted the urge to stroke his chin as he made himself look like an immutable ancient well.

"What a vile dragon… However, its abilities are very interesting," Audrey said, half sighing, half excited.

Is this the future of the Spectator pathway? No, I have to call it the Dragon pathway! I don't want to switch to another Sequence! Audrey wished that she could immediately become a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist and continue her rapid advancement.

The Sun Derrick answered sincerely, "It has been two to three thousand years since the history of the dragon and the Giant King. Everything I know comes from textbooks and legends, so there is no guarantee of its authenticity."

"At least your history remains intact." Audrey was in a good mood. "And then?"

"Then? The Creator awoke, and the Dragon of Imagination, the Dragon of Nightmare, and other famous dragons fell from the sky, losing everything, including their lives. This resulted in a lack of sunlight for 49 days, causing countless volcanoes to erupt, as well as tides that drowned everything. And after the dragons declined, they could only hide away in various dangerous areas. Later on, the Giant King was destroyed by the Creator as well," Derrick said in a heavy tone.

This is different from the history I know… Wasn't it the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom who led humanity to defeat the dragons, giants, and kill their kings? Audrey felt confused, as though time and history were somehow out of place.

Klein was also puzzled by this and felt that the true history was riddled with mysteries, especially as it was from the Second Epoch, a time more ancient than history.

Most of the legends recorded in the Church's ancient texts should be fake, but the history of the City of Silver cannot be completely believed… What would real history be like? He gathered his thoughts, smiled and asked, "Is the exchange over?"

"That's all I know," Derrick replied in shame.

He felt that the information he had provided didn't match the value of the Light Suppliant potion formula.

Audrey quietly drew a breath, as the corners of her mouth curved upwards.

"I'm very satisfied."

I know my future direction… she added happily in her mind.

After a few more exchanges, Klein announced the end of this week's Tarot Club.

After sending off Miss Justice and the others, he didn't linger any longer and quickly returned to his bedroom to reduce the risk of being discovered by others.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey happily paced back and forth, planning to reward Susie with a few dog treats.

Just then, she heard a knock at the door.

From the sound of her footsteps and the gait, she could tell that it was her personal maid, Annie.

“Come in.” Audrey looked at the mirror, smoothed her hair, and straightened her back.

Annie came in with a piece of paper and smiled.

“Miss, a telegram for you came from the Southern Continent.”

Southern Continent? Alfred? Audrey suddenly thought of her elder brother, took the paper in delight, and examined it closely.

It was indeed from her second elder brother, Alfred Hall. He had sent a telegram from the east coast of the Balam Empire and it read:

“I’ve found the Rainbow Salamander you wanted. Two in total. Please await its delivery.”

But, I don’t need it anymore… Audrey froze, blinked, and turned her head sharply to Susie.

The large golden retriever wagged her tail with a stupefied expression.

Chapter 239 - Each Having Their Own “Gathering”

◆ ◆ ◆

Well, I don’t need it anymore, but I can give it to Susie, and I can exchange it for other Beyonder ingredients. Well, Susie’s potion is still short of the spinal fluid from a Farsman Rabbit… Some things are easier left to Susie, it’s far more convenient for her than for me… Every “famous detective” needs a good assistant. Uh-huh! Audrey quickly made her decision. To her, this was no longer something she particularly cared about.

As she put down the telegram, her pleasure subsided, and the worries of reality began to emerge.

I still owe Mr. Fool intelligence regarding the Secret Order, the mission to assassinate the Intis ambassador, and a request from his Blessed… I’ve finally experienced the feeling of being riddled in debt… Audrey, we can’t delay any longer! Let’s start! The girl quietly clenched her fists. She wanted to find a pen and paper and write a letter to Viscount Glaint so that he could arrange for her to meet Xio and Fors as soon as possible. She needed to delegate the mission.

She picked up a fountain pen, dipped it in ink, and suddenly, Audrey held her wrist in midair without writing.

She had just thought of a crucial problem which was that she knew very little about the Intis ambassador Bakerland. In such cases, it was easy to misjudge the difficulty of a mission, either because no one was willing to accept it or because the mission had been entrusted to an unsuitable person, dooming the mission to fail at the very beginning.

The resulting growing cost wasn’t her main concern; instead, she believed that The Fool would better reward her and help her even further.

After pondering for a moment, Audrey turned her head to her maidservant, Annie, and said, “Tell Countess Jaria that I accept her invitation and will punctually attend her ball tomorrow evening.”

Jaria was the wife of Earl Wolfe, and she had invited ambassadors to Loen from every country to her upcoming ball, including Bakerland Jean Madan.

Audrey had planned on declining the invitation with the excuse of being sick, but now she was interested in the ball.

After she observed Ambassador Bakerland and gathered enough information, she would meet with Xio and Fors! Audrey suddenly felt the excitement of participating in a major event that she always dreamed of!

†

First Manor in the Rorsted Archipelago, City of Generosity, Bayam.

[image]

Having returned to the real world, Alger Wilson changed into attire that was considered gaudy in the Intis Republic and went through the back door of the hotel into the alley and made several detours.

He stopped in front of a house with no garden or lawn and put on a familiar white mask.

Next, he knocked on the door with three heavy knocks and two light ones, separating them with two lengthy pauses and two short pauses respectively.

After about ten seconds, the door creaked open. A man wearing a pirate’s headband stuck his head out and looked around quickly.

“Come in,” the man said with a deep voice as he made way.

Without a word, Alger quietly walked into the room.

Creak!

The door slammed shut.

†

At 15 Minsk Street, Klein drew the curtains open and sat down at his desk.

The information about the Secret Order that was given to him by The Hanged Man made him realize that his target might have certain connections to the Intis Republic. At the same time, he was reminded of the words The Hanged Man had used to describe the Antigonus family —“strange” and “terrifying.”

The Beyonder who sneaked into my room last night to read the information and leave me a warning was indeed strange… The Sequence pathway that the Antigonus family has in their control is the Seer pathway which the Secret Order possesses. The two can be equated… That is to say, one can speculate that the Beyonder from last night was a member of the Secret Order who works part-time as an Intis Republic spy? Or could the person not be a member of the Secret Order, but someone who used the connection between the Intis Republic and the Secret Order to obtain the corresponding formulas and potions? Klein began to boldly assume that as he carefully tried to verify.

This can explain why my Clown’s premonition ability didn’t trigger when the strange threadworm intruded. This is the suppression effect of a Beyonder from a higher Sequence that shares the same pathway as me… Of course, it's also possible that the iron-black threadworm posed no concrete threat to me…

Similarly, it can be explained why the threadworm infiltrated my room the same night that I wrote the information regarding Ian Wright. Furthermore, it went straight for the desk… The other party is equipped with Seer abilities, making matters appear reasonably logical…

After repeatedly verifying his speculation, Klein felt that his guess was very likely close to the truth.

If the person in question is a relatively higher Sequence Beyonder from the Seer pathway, what Sequence number would he be? And what would the potion name be? To have the threadworm in his control, could it be another component of a circus, the Beast Tamer? Klein shook his head in a self-deprecating manner while feeling amused.

Perhaps my subsequent potion formula will be obtained from him… Is this the true meaning of the revelation I received from my former divination? Backlund really is the Land of Hope… Klein muttered a few words to himself and began to consider what to do next.

He had entrusted the task of assassinating the Intis Ambassador Bakerland to put an end to all latent dangers. He had to avoid suspicion, but he didn't have the ability needed to do so.

After Ian Wright's whereabouts were revealed to both sides, he was confident that Ambassador Bakerland wouldn't have time to exact revenge on him in the near future and wouldn't add to his problems.

Finding the extremely important item he mentioned was obviously what he was most concerned about.

In other words, before that item is found, I will be safe. I won't need to rush to hire powerful, Beyonder bodyguards… Hmm, even if there's any follow-up revenge, it's unlikely the ambassador will hire a High-

Sequence Beyonder to deal with me. It's neither economical nor necessary; after all, Backlund isn't his home ground…

The highest possibility is that he would still get the Beyonder who sent the iron-black threadworm to infiltrate my room last night. He would at least be at Sequence 7, and perhaps even Sequence 6 or 5. He has the strength required and is familiar with the situation… When the time comes, I just need to hire a bodyguard according to this standard… I hope that before then, the Ambassador will never be able to issue such an order… Klein looked out of the window at the fog which had finally dissipated, seemingly in a daze.

He decided to continue heading to Bravehearts Bar tonight. Firstly, this was to come into contact with other Beyonders through Kaspars so as to choose a suitable bodyguard. Secondly, he could find an opportunity to sell Meursault's Beyonder characteristic, gather some funds, and see if anyone was selling any powerful mystic items to enhance his strength. This was a plan that would never go out of date.

After confirming his plan, Klein pretended to leisurely read the newspaper. He waited until the sky turned dark before slowly getting up and making himself tomato oxtail soup.

After eating and drinking to his heart's content, he drew the bedroom curtains as usual and decided not to open them tonight.

Then, summoning himself and responding to himself, he turned into the unique spirit body, bringing back Azik's copper whistle, Meursault's Beyonder characteristic, the self-made charms, all sorts of materials, and the tarot cards to the real world, leaving behind only a few items, such as the bloodied contract.

After doing all of this and equipping the corresponding items, Klein's strength returned to its peak, and he was once again half an expert in mysticism.

He straightened his collar, took his hat and cane, and left 15 Minsk

Street.

†

Iron Gate Street, inside Bravehearts Bar.

In exchange for a glass of beer, Klein found Kaspars in a card room, playing Fighting Evil while betting on a boxer outside. He was leading quite a pleasant life.

The familiar surroundings reminded Klein of the last time he had met Maric playing poker with more than ten zombies. He was suddenly glad that he hadn't brought Azik's copper whistle with him.

If I carried the copper whistle that Mr. Azik had given me, I think that a dozen or so of Maric's zombies would mutiny on the spot and come to "entertain" me warmly… I wonder what kind of expression he would have… Klein stood by the door, nodding at Kaspars Kalinin to indicate his intentions.

Kaspars covered his cards and swore. He got up, walked to the door, and said in a low voice, "I'll take you to a place where the people, although they aren't as good as Maric, are pretty strong. As for whether or not you can make a deal, it has nothing to do with me. However, I have to warn you in advance, you are not to anger them, or you might not be able to see the sun tomorrow. Of course, it's not easy to see the sun in Backlund after September."

"Do I need to pay you?" Klein asked sincerely.

Kaspars nodded, pleased.

"Two pounds."

I can buy a revolver with that money at a weapons store… Although they set the price at more than three pounds, it can basically be haggled for around two pounds… Klein grumbled and gave Kaspars two one-pound notes.

Kaspars turned his head to his fellow players to inform them that he was leaving. Hobbling along, he led Klein towards the bar's kitchen, and from there, entered the back alley and circled around a darkened house.

He took out an iron mask that could only cover half a face, handed it to Klein, and chuckled.

"Just pretend that you bought this for two pounds."

I can buy a lot more with two pounds… Klein wore the iron mask and deliberately messed up his hair.

Seeing that he was ready, Kaspars knocked on the door rhythmically.

Seven or eight seconds later, a small wooden board on the door was suddenly pulled open, revealing a pair of brown eyes behind it.

After a long moment of scrutiny, Klein finally saw the door open behind him.

A man wearing an iron mask stood there and handed Klein a hooded robe. He said to Kaspars in a hoarse voice, "Next time, remember to tell me in advance. Otherwise, hmph!"

He closed the door, turned, and led Klein through the darkened living room into the activity room on the first floor.

There was a candle burning on the coffee table, and the room was dimly lit.

There were about ten people sitting on the sofas and chairs around the coffee table. They were all wearing hooded robes and wearing iron masks.

After putting on the long robe, Klein quietly found a chair in a corner and sat down. He heard a fat-faced man complain, "Recently, there has been a group of wild beasts in the sewers that have gnawed away a lot of the herbs I grew.

“They’re very smart and didn’t even touch the poisonous ones. I need someone to help me clean them up. You know, this isn’t my specialty. I’m only good at concocting medicine and treating your illnesses.”

Chapter 240 - Trying Your Luck?

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Good at concocting medicine, treating illnesses, and growing quite a few medicinal herbs in the sewers… Is he an Apothecary? I wonder if he's a member of the Life School of Thought or a believer of Earth Mother? Of course, it's more likely for him to be unaffiliated… Klein listened thoughtfully but didn't speak out carelessly.

In the Loen Kingdom, due to the Church of Storms rejecting the Eternal Blazing Sun and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, while the Church of Evernight and the Church of the God of Combat were irreconcilable; as a result of this, among the foreign religions, only the Church of Earth Mother had obtained the right to preach, but under the tacit suppression from the three Churches. They only had a few churches with very few believers, to the point that they didn't even need to form a team of Beyonders. And even if they did, they wouldn't be recognized by the government and couldn't cooperate with the police department. They would be considered as vigilantes.

According to the confidential information of the Nighthawks, the Church of Earth Mother had two sequence paths in its control: Planter and Apothecary. However, the latter was apparently incomplete.

The suspected Apothecary didn't have his hood on. He revealed a black iron mask on his face, but it only covered the part above the bridge of his nose, making the quivering fat on his cheeks appear to stand out.

"I repeat, I need someone to clean up the newly appeared beast in the sewers. I only need the area around Backlund Bridge cleaned up.

Payment will be with four bottles of my precious medicine; two of them can effectively stop bleeding and stimulate the healing of wounds. Trust me, this is better than going to the clinic to do a suture operation, and it's effective for six months," the man suspected to be an Apothecary stated his requirements and corresponding conditions.

He suddenly let out a soft laugh and continued to describe the case, "The other two bottles can last one and a half months, and can allow a man to find the urges from back when he was seventeen or eighteen years old and become a Beyonder on the bed. Hehe, you know what I mean. Even if it exceeds the use-by date, it can still produce effects, but it will also spread throughout the body. The user will become abnormally violent and their strength, speed, and agility will greatly increase before exhaustion kicks in half an hour later.

Why does he look like those old military doctors who plaster their tiny advertisements everywhere… And shamelessly promoting the effects of his expired drugs… Klein couldn't help but silently lampoon.

Seeing the silent room after he said his piece, the suspected Apothecary could only grit his teeth and say, "I'll add 30 pounds on top of my 4 precious bottles of medicine!"

Finally, a man sitting somewhere along the periphery of the couches spoke up.

He surveyed the area and said in a deep voice, "I accept this commission. You should pay an advance with two bottles of medicine, one of each kind. Mr. Eye of Wisdom will bear witness."

"No problem," said an elder seated on a single sofa with a nod.

The lines on his cheeks were deep, his skin a little shriveled, and his voice had an ancient quality to it, so Klein judged him to be an elderly gentleman.

"Alright." The suspected Apothecary heaved a sigh of relief.

After the conclusion of this transaction, the gathering seemed to turn more lively. Soon, a woman with her face completely covered by a hood said, “I want to sell two weapons.”

Weapons? Klein adjusted his posture and became more focused.

Since he was temporarily unable to advance, he could only increase his strength by using external items.

“One of them is an inscribed steel sword. It was smithed by the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun. It comes with purifying and evil warding effects. It’s the nemesis of Water Ghosts, Wraiths, Zombies, and other undead creatures. It can still be used for another three years. Of course, it’s sharpness is enough to kill.” The woman’s voice fluctuated in volume, a clear attempt to hide her characteristics. “500 pounds or the Sequence 8 potion, Barbarian, and it will be yours.”

How expensive… For me, there’s no reason I must have it… If I were to encounter an undead that I’m currently unable to deal with, blowing the whistle is the best solution… Even without Mr. Azik, the messenger alone should be able to intimidate many undead creatures… Klein shook his head and listened to the lady’s introduction of the second weapon.

“Meat Cleaver, with exquisite mechanical structure. It can be transformed, making it easy to carry. This is a combat weapon, made by an outstanding craftsman. It’s rarely seen, and will cost 25 pounds.”

There sure is a huge difference in pricing between weapons with Beyonder effects and those without… Klein watched from the sidelines until the steel sword was bought by a sullen gentleman in another corner, and the Meat Cleaver became part of Mr. Eye of Wisdom’s collection.

There were successes and failures in the few deals that followed. The only thing that tempted Klein was a “Fortune Accessory,” a Beyonder item that could make a person’s luck with fortune rise for three months. However, this wasn't his main goal, and the price wasn't that great.

Seeing that the atmosphere had turned silent once again, he slowly exhaled and said in a suppressed voice, "I want to sell something."

After attracting everyone's attention, he took out an iron cigar case and pushed out the crimson Beyonder characteristic which resembled jelly.

Without needing to organizing his words, he introduced it with something he had already prepared ahead of time.

"This is something I obtained from a corpse. I'm not sure what use it has; it's just that I find it very magical. Maybe some of you know what this is?"

Klein deliberately didn't mention that this was a Beyonder characteristic, nor did he mention that the crimson "jelly" in his hand could replace the main ingredient of the Hunter potion.

This involved the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility, and he didn't want to benefit the members of this Beyonder gathering with this knowledge.

In addition to this, Klein had the intention of probing to see if anyone there knew the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility. Such a person would definitely be stronger than the rest, or perhaps someone with a powerful background, making them suitable as a bodyguard.

At the same time, he continued to disguise himself as an ordinary person who didn't know much about the Beyonder community. Although the members of the gathering couldn't see his appearance through the iron mask, Kaspars Kalinin knew what he looked like, and quite a few people in the room probably knew Kaspars.

Being "careful" and "prudent" were the two things Klein had emphasized to himself before leaving home today.

Gazes examined the crimson object in his hand, but Klein wasn't a Spectator and couldn't tell what they meant.

After more than ten seconds, no one spoke. The room was as quiet as a cemetery.

At this moment, the old gentleman sitting on the sofa, Mr. Eye of Wisdom, coughed and said, "I have a rough idea of what it is and what it does, but knowledge needs to be exchanged with something in return.

"I'll pay four hundred pounds; believe me, it's a perfectly fair price. Of course, you have the right to refuse."

The main ingredients of Sequence 9 potions are about 150 to 200 pounds. Two are needed, and they add up to about 400 pounds… The offer is very reasonable… This old gentleman with the code name Eye of Wisdom seems to recognize that this belongs to the Hunter Sequence… He had no need for divination, and he was able to recognize it immediately…. Could it be the Sequence 7 of the Sequencers pathway, Appraiser?

Klein thought for a moment and said, "Deal. However, sir, you don't need to rush to pay. I still have another request."

"What request?" Eye of Wisdom asked in an old voice.

Klein pondered and said, "The thing is, I offended someone. Uh, according to your circle, he should be Sequence 6 or maybe, 5. I wish to hire a bodyguard."

"Sequence 6, maybe Sequence 5? Why don't you just die quietly? If we reached that level, why would we be attending such a small gathering?" the suspected Apothecary blurted out with a bit of a sneer in his astonishment.

Although the other members of the party didn't say anything, from the looks of it, no one planned on accepting the request. Their thoughts were similar to those of the suspected Apothecary.

Eye of Wisdom chuckled and said, “Maybe you don’t know our circle well enough. People at Sequence 6 or Sequence 5 are very, very powerful and terrifying people. Yes, there have been many cases of a lot of Sequence 8 and Sequence 9 Beyonders killing someone that strong, but those are events that are still very hard to replicate. I think no one here is willing to take such a huge risk to protect you, uh… If you’re certain that the other party is only Sequence 6 and doesn’t have any mystical items, there might be someone who will want to accept the challenge this mission entails.”

“Well, I’m not sure…” Klein shrugged and said, “Then I’ll have to try to save myself. What can I get for 400 pounds? Uh, the mystical item you were talking about?”

“Believe me, a mystical item worth 400 pounds certainly won’t be able to deal with your enemy, and it will even bring you more danger. I suggest that you apologize to him. Sincerely apologize and perhaps 400 pounds will be enough to buy his understanding,” Eye of Wisdom said sincerely.

Frankly, I’ve thought about it, but I don’t think they’ll accept it… Klein was about to answer when the man who had accepted the task of cleaning the sewer beast suddenly laughed.

“Maybe, you can try your luck.

“I have a mystical item here that I can sell you for 400 pounds.

“It can let you hear the voice of a great being. If you’re lucky and can decipher some useful information, you’ll become very powerful, and it will no longer be difficult for you to protect yourself. Well, if you’re unlucky and end up deciphering a curse, or fail to decipher it, then you’ll be hurt, or even end up dying.

“Do you want to take the gamble?”

Before he could finish his sentence, Eye of Wisdom growled, “Black

Snake, don’t mention that ominous item of yours!”

Black Snake laughed and said, “I’m not lying, I’m not violating the rules here either. I told him about the advantages and disadvantages and left him to make his own choice. Hmm, the probability of getting useful information is approximately 10%; do you want to take the gamble?”

The Russian roulette of the Beyonder world… Hearing the voice of a great being… Is this the Aurora Order’s Listener? An item left behind after a Listener lost control? Klein looked at Black Snake, that he suspected to be a member of the Aurora Order, and made many connections.

Perhaps I can bet on it? No, I can’t call it a bet, because I’ll bring this item to the world above the gray fog before using it… I can already bring real objects there… This way, I can avoid most of the danger… However, this is only an item left behind by a Sequence 8 Beyonder. The corresponding benefit might not be that good… Four hundred pounds isn’t cheap… As his thoughts raced through his mind, Klein nodded solemnly and said, “Deal.”

Chapter 241 - Language of Foulness

There was only a single candle that illuminated the room. The atmosphere in the living room was so silent that it was as if everything had frozen.

A few seconds later, the suspected Apothecary finally muttered, “Why don’t you leave an address? That way, I can get something out of your body.”

He looks like he’s cursing me, but he’s actually persuading me otherwise… Klein pretended not to understand and said to Black Snake, “I don’t have any chance of survival if I don’t gamble. There’ll be that sliver of hope if I gamble on it.

“I won’t sit back and wait for death.”

Hearing this, Eye of Wisdom, who was about to say something, shut his mouth because he couldn’t offer any other hope.

“I really admire your character!” Black Snake laughed.

“I also admire you. In the past, I had quite a few friends who had such characters. Now, I visit their tombstones every year and place a bunch of flowers there,” the suspected Apothecary mused in a mocking but actually persuasive manner.

He didn’t care that Black Snake was a better fighter than he was. He said whatever he wanted to.

Mr. Apothecary must have suffered because of his temper… Klein was secretly grateful.

He handed the iron cigar case containing the Hunter Beyonder characteristic to the attendant who brought it to Eye of Wisdom.

The old gentleman counted out 400 pounds in cash from the suitcase beside him and got the attendant to pass it on to Black Snake.

Black Snake casually took a glance and said, “I believe in Mr. Eye of Wisdom.”

He took out a small wooden box, bent down, and placed it on the ground. He pushed the box so that the object slid to Klein without going through the attendant.

The moment Klein’s fingers touched the surface of the box, he heard faint illusory sounds and immediately felt a strong sense of dizziness.

For him, this wasn’t something he couldn’t handle. It wasn’t even comparable to the illusory voices of Justice and company when they pray to him.

After sitting up straight again, Klein carefully opened the wooden box and saw a “ear” inside!

The ears looked real, except that the skin was dark and there were a few green areas where it had rotted.

“How do I use it?” Klein asked.

Black Snake casually replied, “Grasping it without gloves is the same as using it. Heh, you’d better go home and try it when you’re alone.”

Klein didn’t ask any further questions. He closed the box and put it into his pocket. He deliberately smiled bitterly and said, “This makes me dizzy.”

After a short moment of silence, the suspected Apothecary suddenly shouted, “I want to buy Spring of the Elves marrow crystals, who has it?”

As his voice echoed in the air, no one answered.

The Apothecary smacked his lips and mumbled, “Seriously, there’s no answer every time this is asked.”

“Maybe you could book a cruise to Sonia Island,” Eye of Wisdom quipped.

The Spring of the Elves was also known as the Sonia Golden Springs, and one could tell from its name where it came from. The Spring of the Elves was a commonly seen liquid and was an object with rich spirituality. However, the marrow crystals were considered Beyonder ingredients and not easily purchasable.

After that, there were a few failed transactions at the gathering. Eye of Wisdom clapped his hands and said, “Let’s end it here today. According to the convention, we leave one by one, each separated by three minutes.”

Leaving one by one… Each separated by three minutes… This is to prevent the Gathering members from being tailed and robbed? When Klein received the signal from Eye of Wisdom, he stood up and, guided by the attendant, left the activity room, and went to the door.

He took off his hooded robe and handed it back to the attendant before following the path in his memories back to the back door of the Bravehearts Bar. He then removed his iron mask and walked through the kitchen to see Kaspars standing outside the card room, over the barking of dogs and clamoring of people.

“I’m delighted that you could come back.” The red-nosed elder heaved a sigh of relief, the nasty wounds on his face seemingly trembling.

Klein leaned over and said in a low voice, “Are there such gatherings in the future?”

"It seems like you didn't get what you wanted. Holy Lord of Storms, I don't think you should continue wasting your time." Kaspars scanned this customer he felt worried for. "Maybe it'll take a few days. I don't know the details. Let's see if you can make it in time."

Klein nodded and asked, "Is Maric here?"

"You're still trying to convince him? No, it will only anger him!" Kaspars warned him in a deep voice. "He's in the card room behind you."

No, I'm not going to convince him. I'm trying to stay as far away from him as possible so that his zombies won't go into mutiny… Klein touched Azik's copper whistle in his pocket.

"I understand."

He left the Bravehearts Bar at once, went to the one-bedroom apartment in East Borough to relieve himself before returning to Minsk Street.

Inside the card room, Maric had gone all-in and confidently flipped open his cards.

He had three Kings and a pair of Nines, and the zombie opposite him had a pair of Sixes and an Eight.

Suddenly, the zombie took the initiative to reveal its hidden cards, a pair of Sixes!

This round, it won with four Sixes!

The pale Maric sat there blankly and immediately felt all the surrounding zombies coldly staring at him.

A few minutes later, he staggered out the card room on shaky feet and almost collapsed at the door while his usual entourage of subordinates inside the room fell to the ground.

"Don't let anyone in before dawn," Maric ordered in a hoarse voice as he looked at the stunned Kaspars.

He took out a white handkerchief and wiped the corner of his mouth. The handkerchief was quickly dyed with a dark blue tint with some redness.

After receiving Kaspars's acknowledgment, Maric found a chair to sit and asked for a barrel of Southville beer. He stared blankly as he drank.

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At 15 Minsk Street, Klein followed his usual routine of washing up and returning to his room before he drew the curtains.

After waiting for over ten minutes and confirming that there were no specks of spirituality around, he started to summon himself. He responded to himself and brought the wooden box containing the black ear into the mysterious space above the gray fog.

The illusory crimson stars didn't twinkle at all as Klein sat at the seat of honor of the long ancient table and opened the wooden box.

This time, he didn't hear any murmurs or feel dizzy. The boundless gray fog seemed to isolate all external sounds.

Klein let out a sigh of relief. He was now much more confident with his impending attempt and much more confident about his own safety.

With a thought, he blocked his own hearing and performed a few experiments to confirm the effects.

That's right… Klein nodded in satisfaction, reached out, and grabbed the black ear with signs of rot.

He felt its coldness and slipperiness, but he didn't hear the voice of the great being that was described by Black Snake.

Completely isolated? This won't do… It's impossible to use it alone…

Klein muttered to himself, puzzled as he thought of the methods he could use to stimulate an effect.

After a dozen or so seconds, he conjured a pen and paper, intending to emulate the process he used to spy on the Eternal Blazing Sun previously.

That time, I looked directly at the Eternal Blazing Sun through the use of divine blood. This time, I'm only using the remains left behind by a Listener, so it definitely isn't that dangerous… Klein wrote down a divination statement without any hesitation:

"The origin of this item."

He took a breath, held the black ear, and leaned back as he recited the divination statement.

After reciting it seven times, his eyes darkened as he entered a deep slumber.

In this blurry, shattered, and gray world, Klein saw a man struggling on the ground. He rolled, screamed, and his eyes bulged out. His body swelled like a balloon, and countless hairs on his body turned black and long.

Soon after, an extremely evil and foul voice rang in Klein's ears, waking him up instantly.

It was different from the ravings and howling that came from the mysterious space above the gray fog. This sound was more penetrating, more purposeful, and more active!

Klein covered his ears and isolated any fallout, but the same voice echoed in his head.

He saw his vessels and veins bulge out as if they had become thick squirming venomous snakes.

Bang!

His blood vessels burst, and his veins broke off from his body, spreading out into slippery tentacles filled with sinister patterns. The gray fog slightly swayed, making the giant's palace look like it was about to corrode.

Unlike the incident with the Eternal Blazing Sun, Klein still retained his sanity and didn't roll over on the ground. He gripped the handrail tightly and endured the pain.

After a few seconds, the slightly swaying gray fog regained its calm, and the evil voice that echoed in Klein's mind completely died down.

One "tentacle" after another fell to the ground, and his wounds began to rapidly heal.

Interacting with deities is truly a dangerous matter, regardless of the method… Thankfully, I didn't face the True Creator directly this time. If not, I'll have remnants of madness and signs of losing control and would affect my body in the real world… Klein weakly leaned back into his chair and silently mocked himself.

This process was within his expectations, and it didn't go out of his control.

The only thing that surprised him was that the True Creator appeared to be slightly stronger than the Eternal Blazing Sun…

Just as Klein's thoughts were about to wander off, he saw the black ear in his palm suddenly crumbled, turning into tiny specks of black light.

It has become a pure Beyonder characteristic? Amidst his confusion, he saw through the corner of his eyes that the sinister-patterned tentacles were still twitching on the ground. They were the aspects of madness and loss of control that had been stripped from his body.

These tentacles gradually turned transparent and were about to disappear.

A flash of brilliance came to Klein's mind. He scattered the tiny black light specks in his palm at those slippery tentacles.

An illusionary black gas rose up and turned into a sky that constantly streaked with lightning. The background was extremely dense and gloomy.

All of this quickly disappeared from Klein's eyes. On the surface of the iron-black charm on the ground were many symbols, magic labels, sinister patterns, and twisted path numbers.

Klein bent down and picked it up, with the feeling that what was sealed inside were howling maniacs.

With the help of his divination techniques, he was able to barely decipher the use of this charm from its revelation. It was to let the opponent hear a terrifying roar, infecting them with madness. As for the final result, it depended on the target's ability to resist such attacks. If the target was strong, then they might benefit from it, but the price was becoming a devout believer of the True Creator, and if he was weak, he would collapse on the spot, dying amidst tragic cries.

I'll call it Language of Foulness… Klein muttered and set an incantation to activate it.

Chapter 242 - Bakerland

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Early Tuesday morning, Klein woke up naturally and prepared two slices of toast, a piece of butter, a serving of bacon, and a cup of coffee before leisurely reading a newspaper while having breakfast.

With the terrifying Language of Foulness charm, he was much more at ease. He was no longer as tense as he was before.

Klein finished flipping through the Backlund Bulletin, picked up the Tussock Times, and saw a news article on the second page.

“At two o’clock this morning, there was a fierce gunfight at Red Brick Alley in the East Borough. According to the police, it is suspected to be a clash between two gangs, one of which is the notorious Zmanger gang.”

The Zmanger gang… Red Brick Alley in the East Borough… A thought occurred to Klein as he left the dining table and found the map of Backlund.

With just a glance, he noticed that Red Brick Alley wasn’t far from Bacardi Street. Furthermore, Ian Wright had previously appeared at the telegraph office on Bacardi Street.

Was Red Brick Alley where Ian Wright was hiding? Was the violent conflict between the military’s special department and the intelligence staff of the Intis Republic? I wonder what the result will be… Klein picked up the last of the bacon, put it in his mouth, and chewed it slowly.

He had “informed” both sides about the divination the previous morning and they had already locked onto Ian’s location that very night, which implied quite a high level of efficiency.

After taking a sip of coffee, Klein put down the newspaper and fell into deep thought.

Suddenly, he heard the tinkling of the doorbell.

“Who is it?” Klein wiped his mouth with a napkin and headed for the door, puzzled.

Could it be a new commission? For the past few days, I’ve been out and about because of the Intis Ambassador. I wonder how many jobs and potential clients I’ve lost… It’s such a waste of my advertising money… If this goes on, my finances will be stretched to the limit… Klein suddenly thought of something and opened the door.

Standing outside were two ladies, one of them being Mrs. Sammer, who wore a dressing gown. She had intricate makeup on her face, making her look more beautiful than at home and nothing like she was in her thirties. The other lady wore a wide-brimmed hat with a black tartan veil, and a darker, more fluffy dress.

“Detective Moriarty, I have a friend who needs your help.” Stelyn Sammer held onto her veiled hat, but there was no hint of a smile in her blue eyes.

“Please come in.” Klein pointed to the living room, and while he was turning around, he took the opportunity to fasten the top button of his shirt and adjusted his black vest.

Stelyn nodded slightly and, without another word, led the black-veiled lady into the room.

She knew the place very well, and without Klein’s guidance, easily found the sofa and took her seat.

Klein wanted to immediately start asking, but then thought about Stelyn Sammer's style of doing things, so he asked with a smile, "Coffee or tea?"

In his eyes, Mrs. Sammer was a lady who pursued a high quality of life and tried to showed her superiority all the time.

"There's no need." The other lady took off her hat.

She had good features, but the combination was disappointing. In addition, her cheekbones were too high, and she looked older than her actual age.

A little anger, a little sadness, a little hesitation, a little fear… Klein read the lady's emotions.

It wasn't that he suddenly possessed the abilities of a Spectator, but that the lady's actions were just too obvious.

"Yes, neither coffee nor tea can solve the problem." Stelyn imitated a position found in magazines, trying her best to appear classy. "This is Mrs. Mary Gale, a shareholder of Coim Company."

"What would you like to entrust me with, Mrs. Gale?" Klein sat down on a single-seater, leaning forward slightly and resting his arms on his thighs.

"Don't call me Mrs. Gale. Just call me Mary." Mary Gale pursed her lips. "I wish for you to tail my husband and confirm if he has a mistress. It's best if you can obtain material evidence."

As a result of the Church of Evernight's active push for years, the Loen Kingdom was more radical in its marriage laws than the other countries, such as Feysac, Intis, and Lenburg. It stipulated that those who committed adultery had to pay a financial price for it, which meant that the adulterer would be at an absolute disadvantage during the division of property.

I've heard that at least four out of ten of the other private detectives are investigating extramarital affairs… I didn't expect that I would receive such a job too… Klein said thoughtfully, "Material evidence is not easy to obtain."

"I'll lend you the latest portable camera," Mary replied without any hesitation. "As long as you have the evidence, I will pay you ten pounds. If you only confirm that he has a mistress, you will only receive three pounds."

You mean the so-called portable camera that's about two-thirds the size of my head? 10 pounds, this isn't a low price… Mr. Klein has been focusing on entrepreneurship and knew about the latest cameras.

He hesitated for two seconds before saying, "Alright."

"But you have to provide me with detailed information about your husband and his regular activities."

"…No problem!" Mary paused for a second before gathering all her strength to say it.

"Thank you for your help. I hope you won't tell anyone else about this," Stelyn reminded him.

Hearing this, Klein immediately sighed, "I'm a person who upholds confidentiality, and I often get into trouble for that."

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In the lobby of Earl Wolf's house, men and women were dancing amid violin tunes.

Audrey was carrying a glass of pale gold champagne when she "accidentally" bumped into the Intis Republic ambassador to Loen, Bakerland Jean Madan.

"You're the most beautiful young lady I've ever met." Bakerland, with his thin face and slight stubble, pecked Audrey's white-gauzed glove with a kiss according to propriety customs. His eyes looked passionate and bold.

Audrey rolled her eyes and said with a chuckle, "Is this the way people from Intis talk?"

"Yes, we are never stingy with praise for beautiful things." Bakerland chuckled. "If it wasn't for the style of the Loen Kingdom, I might have called you my angel."

Old pervert… Audrey maintained her graceful smile and said, "The people of Loen and Intis are indeed different."

"Heh, that makes me think of a joke. Please allow me to be presumptuous." Bakerland squinted his eyes and said, "After a good time with a beautiful girl, most Loen men would say, 'Oh, dear, I'd like a cigarette', but most Intis men would say…"

He deliberately paused, and Audrey tilted her head, trying her best to keep her nausea in check while looking puzzled.

"What would they say?"

"Most of the Intis men would say, 'Oh, baby, I have to return now and can't be discovered by my wife.'" Bakerland raised his glass and laughed.

"…People who can laugh at themselves always have an additional charm to them." Audrey smiled politely.

Her beautiful, clear, dark green eyes suddenly turned to look behind Ambassador Bakerland.

"I'm sorry, a friend is looking for me."

"It's a pleasure talking to you." Bakerland bowed and moved aside.

Audrey moved forward gracefully and didn't look back again.

Just as she was considering who she should find as the object of her excuse, a young gentleman approached her and, lowering his voice, warned her, “Audrey, don’t be fooled by that Ambassador Bakerland, he’s a dirty old man! I don’t know how many women he’s tricked into bed.

Bakerland is lustful? This is in line with my observations… This is a weakness… Audrey smiled without hiding her disgust.

“Kance, do you have a misconception about me? Goddess, how could I be bewitched by that Ambassador Bakerland? His cologne makes me want to vomit; his words are so foul, and his taste is like a male peacock.”

Kance was Viscount Leerhsen’s youngest son, and their family was on fairly good terms with the Hall family.

According to Audrey, Kance had entered MI9 after graduating from Tingen University and had become quite enigmatic.

Her original plan had been to have a chat with Ambassador Backlund, and observe him up close before using the pretext of exasperation to get more information from Kance and his other friends from the intelligence community to learn more about him. To her surprise, she didn’t need to seek out Kance Leerhsen since he came over and started the corresponding conversation on his own accord.

“Your feelings are correct.” Kance gave a sincere smile. He surveyed his surroundings and whispered, “Besides, Bakerland is a very dangerous fellow.”

“How dangerous?” Audrey asked curiously.

“Have you heard of Beyonders? I know that you’ve always been interested in such matters,” Kance said with some deliberation.

Audrey gently nodded.

"I know quite a bit, most of it being told to me by Glaint."

Kance took a glance at Bakerland, who was chatting with an affluent lady, and said with a serious expression, "He's Intis's intelligence head in our Kingdom. He's done numerous atrocities, but we haven't been able to gather any evidence of his crimes. He's a Sequence 6, a Conspirer."

He didn't go into details with an outsider like Audrey, nor did he mention that Conspirer was part of the Hunter pathway.

However, Audrey was already aware of this. She feigned naivety and sighed.

"He's really amazing!"

"He has an assistant in the shadows, one that has perhaps reached Sequence 5. In addition to that, all of the Intis intelligence agents in the Kingdom are under his management. Many of them are Beyonders. Unfortunately, we only know a few of them…" Kance added in passing. "Don't be too happy if Bakerland praises you either. It's not what he truly thinks. He just wants to use this opportunity to gather more information."

I don't like what you're saying… Audrey looked up at the ornate chandelier and thought for a few seconds.

"Is Bakerland very smart? You haven't managed to get any incriminating evidence…"

"He truly is good at scheming, but he also has a lot of problems. He likes to chase after women and loves the feeling of romance. He takes risks and is quite radical. If it wasn't for his identity as an ambassador preventing us from taking action easily, he would've been captured long ago." Kance stroked his chin and said, "However, he'll be replaced very soon. Very soon."

"Why?" Audrey asked in surprise.

“My dear beautiful lady, this isn’t something you should know.” Kance adhered to the principle of confidentiality.

When the ball was almost over, Audrey, who had gathered quite a bit of information, found Viscount Glaint and asked him to help her contact Xio and Fors.

Chapter 243 - Catching the Adulterous Act

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Wednesday morning, opposite the Coim Company, in the Cherwood Borough.

Klein was sitting on a wooden bench outside the Gardeley department store, clutching a paper bag containing the most famous Cyndi Desi pie in the area with one hand, and holding a cup of iced tea in the other.

Beside him, a tramp was curled up on the other side of the bench, sleeping. Ten minutes later, the mall's security guard woke him up and shooed him away.

Klein wore gold-rimmed spectacles which didn't provide for any vision correction and a silk half top hat. He didn't look much different from most of the gentlemen around him.

He idly looked across the street at the Coim Company, lifted his right hand, and took a large bite of the Cyndi Desi pie. He felt the rich aroma gush out and fill his oral cavity.

The reason why this pie from Desi Bay stood out amongst the southern pies was that it used a lot of oil and fat, but the meat was chopped into very tiny bits. With the fat and lean meat mixed together, it didn't feel too heavy.

The rich, meaty juice seeped into the outer crust, neutralizing the dryness and made up for its shortcomings. The wheat fragrance was clearly brought out, and the small pieces of crushed apples were used to stimulate appetite with a slightly sour and sweet taste while neutralizing the oily taste.

It’s okay… Although the weather isn’t good and the pollution is terrible, Backlund is far superior to Tingen in many other aspects. Foods of all styles can be found everywhere. There are all kinds of operas and plays available. They can be enjoyed as long as one isn’t afraid to spend money… Although I might not necessarily eat or partake in such entertainment, I have these options at the very least. This is the advantage of a big city… Klein raised his sweet iced tea and took a sip.

He never took his eyes off the Coim Company’s entrance. For that ten pounds, he had been sitting there since eight in the morning. Even his breakfast was bought on the way there.

Of course, for most private detectives, a commission of ten pounds was an absolutely enviable business, equivalent to about three weeks’ salary for a member of the middle class!

According to the information provided by Mary Gale, her husband was currently the first manager of Coim Company and was Luke Sammer’s superior; however, their shares in the Coim Company came from Mary’s father, and Mary had inherited it.

One of the immediate reasons she suspected her husband of having a mistress was that an employee in the company had divulged to her that Doragu Gale would leave the office on Wednesday and Friday mornings alone and only return in the afternoon. In addition, he would leave work early for two days a week, and Mary had never seen her husband return home before seven.

After breakfast, Klein waited another hour plus before seeing his target walk out of Coim.

He was wearing a black top hat, a double-breasted tweed coat, and a standard bow tie. He was slightly fat, with yellowish temples, slightly brownish eyes, and a slightly long face.

Doragu Gale… He silently recited his target’s name, stood up, picked up his cane and his heavy portable camera, and crossed the road.

Instead of getting his carriage driver to pick him up, he stood by the side of the road and looked around for a rental carriage.

Klein took the opportunity to cross the road and arrive beside him. Pretending to be careless, he bumped into his target.

“Sorry, I’m quite lost.” Klein bowed his head in apology.

Doragu frowned, but remained silent, waving his hand to indicate that it didn’t matter.

Klein bent down, bowed, and walked to the end of the street.

He didn’t run into Doragu in order to steal his belongings and use the dowsing method to easily track him. That would’ve been easily noticeable.

Instead, Klein had only done one thing when he collided with Doragu. With the help of his agility as a Clown, he had secretly slipped a spare button of his into one of the pockets of Doragu’s double-breasted coat.

Going around a corner, he stopped and looked back just in time to see Doragu board a rental carriage.

Klein was in no hurry to tail him. He waited patiently for a few minutes before slowly getting into another horse carriage and said to the carriage driver, “Just go according to my instructions. Head to the end of the street first.”

“Alright.” The driver didn’t ask why.

Inside the carriage, Klein leaned his cane and began performing a divination.

However, his divination statement wasn’t directed at Doragu Gale; instead, it became “the whereabouts of the spare button of my clothes!”

The Dowsing Rod Seeking was originally the most practical technique to find objects. Only Seers were able to use it to seek people. Now, Klein was using it in its original form.

The easiest and most convenient items to find were those that belonged to himself!

Along the way, Klein kept getting the carriage driver to change directions until they finally arrived at a street house in the Hillston Borough. When they first circled it, Klein noticed that there were gardens and lawns behind the house, which was different from the other houses.

His dowsing method told him that Doragu Gale was inside that house.

After paying the two-soli fare, Klein walked to the door with marble statues outside. He saw two men in black and white plaid uniforms that resembled the police uniform.

“I don’t know you. Where’s your proof of membership?” One of them, a brown-skinned man of Southern Continent blood, stopped Klein.

“Proof of membership?” Klein hid his heavy camera behind him and asked with a slight frown.

The brown-skinned man immediately turned stern.

“This is the Quelaag Club. Only our members and up to one of their guests can enter.”

Klein tersely acknowledged.

“Then how can I join your club?”

“You can only join after receiving a recommendation from two members,” The brown-skinned man didn’t brutally chase him away, but patiently answered the question.

He couldn’t guarantee that Klein would end up joining the club eventually.

“Alright.” Klein pursed his lips and decided to put Plan B into motion.

He found a hotel near the Quelaag Club and got a short-stay room for four hours.

Then, he locked the door behind him, drew the curtains, and entered the space above the gray fog. He conjured a yellowish-brown goatskin and a fountain pen in front of him.

Taking a deep breath, Klein wrote the exact same divination sentence as before: “The whereabouts of the spare button of my clothes.”

This time, he didn’t use the dowsing method, but a dream divination!

The reason why he didn’t do it in the real world was because Klein felt that the Quelaag Club seemed to be quite a high-end club, and he suspected that there might be some powerful Beyonders inside. In order to not waste time, he decided to get it done once and for all.

In the gray dreamy world, Klein was the first to see Doragu’s black coat, which was hung on a coat rack. On the carpet in front of it was a round table.

The scene zoomed out, and the sight of a romping man and woman entered Klein’s eye. The man was Doragu Gale, the woman had shimmering blond hair who looked rather young. She was in her early twenties at most.

The pained expression with her knitted brows does look rather coquettish… Why am I always seeing scenes such as this… Klein covered his eyes and woke up.

The fact that Doragu has a mistress is confirmed… How do I get material evidence… By responding to my prayers? But this is limited to what I can obtain with my own body. I can only do it through sketching and not through the camera… I can’t possibly draw a picture with my bare hands, can I? It looks like today won't do. I'll tail that girl and find out her address and name later. I refuse to believe that they'll be inside the Quelaag Club every time they meet… Detective Klein quickly came up with his next course of action.

Just as he was about to leave the mysterious space above the gray fog, he suddenly thought of something.

He decided to take the opportunity to divine if the iron-black threadworm which had infiltrated his room was under the control of a Beyonder of the Seer pathway.

He didn't do so before because he felt that the relevant information was too scarce, and it was difficult to create something out of nothing which would result in a failed divination. It would've been the same if he was above the gray fog. Furthermore, he had various matters to divine the few times he came above the gray fog previously, and he didn't have the capacity to bother with such a question. Now that he was free, he decided that it wouldn't hurt to do the divination.

As for the question of whether it was risky to contact Azik, he had already long divined it. The answer was that it was risky, and not something trivial, so he could only use it as his last resort.

After writing the corresponding divination statement, Klein removed the silver chain from his sleeve and allowed the topaz pendant to hang over the paper.

"The iron-black threadworm that sneaked into my room was controlled by a Beyonder from the Seer pathway."

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After repeating it seven times, Klein opened his eyes and saw that the spirit pendulum was spinning clockwise, with great amplitude and frequency.

Positive… The answer is positive!

Shouldn’t it have failed? Klein didn’t expect to obtain such an answer. According to his Seer instincts, such a divination was likely to fail.

Why? He frowned and thought for a while before deciding to switch to a different method of divination and target.

He wanted to directly divine the controller using dream divination!

This time, Klein saw nothing in his dream, and couldn’t get the corresponding revelation about the Seer pathway Beyonder.

“That’s more like it…” he muttered and thought back to the prior divination and fell into deep thought.

They should’ve been a lack of conditions and result in a failed divination just like the one that followed… Could it be that this mysterious space had filled in the necessary conditions? Does it contain something of the Seer pathway? Klein suddenly had a flash of inspiration. He had a bold idea!

Perhaps, the mysterious space above the gray fog had something to do with the path of the Seer pathway!

Hmm… Klein lightly rapped the edge of the ancient table. Despite thinking about it, he couldn’t find any other evidence. He could only temporarily put this matter on hold and prepare for his return to the real world.

Regardless, I’ve confirmed at least one thing. The Mid-Sequence Beyonder beside the Ambassador is from the Seer pathway and whether he’s a member of the Secret Order doesn’t matter… This might be my chance of obtaining the Sequence 7 and even the Sequence 6 potion formula! Klein extended his spirituality and wrapped it around him before plunging into the gray fog.

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Meanwhile, in Viscount Glaint's study.

Audrey let the master of the study guard the door while she looked at Xio and Fors. After a few seconds of silence, she said, "I need your help with a mission."

"What mission?" Xio's eyes lit up as if she could smell the ink on the bills.

Audrey gave her a polite smile.

"Assassinate the Intis ambassador to the Loen Kingdom, Bakerland Jean Madan."

Chapter 244 - Appointee

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“What?” Fors touched her earlobes, wondering if she had heard wrongly.

The beautiful, naive, curious, and scatter-brained Miss Audrey actually assigned an assassination mission!?

Furthermore, the target is the ambassador of Intis, a powerful country in the Northern Continent!

Xio was slow on the uptake as she hesitantly said, “Our strength i-isn’t enough to complete this mission.”

The first thing she considered was the difficulty of the mission!

Audrey ignored her question and allowed her to imagine the reason. She said, with faint dimples showing, “I’m not asking you to take the job. I just wish for you to find a Beyonder with the strength to complete it. For example, Mr. A, I’ll pay you 4000 gold pounds for this. Of course, this is only my initial offer. The details are negotiable.

“If it eventually succeeds, I’ll pay you 500 pounds. Even if the mission ends up failing, you will receive 200 pounds due to the risk you have taken.”

Her uninvested annuity and the rest of the bounty was around 13,000 pounds. However, any large utilization of it would certainly attract the attention of Earl Hall, and even the Varvat Bank would investigate. She had calculated that 5000 pounds was the tipping point, and it was best not to exceed it.

4000 gold pounds… Xio heard her own heavy breathing, but she quickly became depressed, knowing full well that she wouldn't be able to complete the mission herself.

Just 500 pounds to seek out other Beyonders in our names while maintaining it a secret… Miss Audrey is the most generous and beautiful lady I've ever seen! Xio quickly returned to reality.

While feeling enticed, Fors's mind was filled with questions.

Why would Miss Audrey delegate such a mission?

Is there some internal strife among nobles?

Is this the precursor to inciting a war?

Is Earl Hall representing some important figure in a bid to make the situation turn chaotic?

†

The duo quickly contacted Mr. A using a previously agreed-upon channel. At three o'clock in the afternoon, when the rare sunlight shined through the fog and lit up the whole of Backlund, they arrived at the house where they had previously participated in gatherings. There, they saw Mr. A sitting with his legs up and his hood over his head, but he gave off a condescending air.

"You said that you have something important to talk to me about?" Mr. A's eyes move back and forth between the two ladies.

I heard that some female Beyonders would use their bodies to trade for potion ingredients with Mr. A… He's really a disgusting pervert… Fors curled her lips and said, "There's a large transaction; I wonder if you're interested in it?"

Mr. A scanned Xio’s face and chuckled.

“Tell me. Let’s see what this large transaction is.”

Holding back the urge to draw her triangular blade, Xio answered with the tone of an Arbiter, “Assassinate the Intis ambassador to the Loen Kingdom, Bakerland Jean Madan.”

Mr. A fell silent, but since his expression was obscured by the shadow of his hood, Xio and Fors couldn’t guess what he was thinking.

After a while, he slowly leaned back and said with a deep voice, “So, what’s the reward?”

“4000 pounds. In addition, we will provide the relevant information such as Ambassador Bakerland is a Sequence 6 Conspirer of the Hunter pathway, or that his weakness is lust.” Xio tried her best to make Mr. A believe that there was hope in completing the mission.

Mr. A chuckled and said, “I can accept this mission, but the reward must be raised.”

“The first choice—the potion formulas to Unshadowed, Cataclysmic Interrer, Prophet, or Manipulator. Of course, their price is higher than this mission. There’s no need for the complete formula. A partial formula will suffice.

“The second choice—10,000 gold pounds. Heh, this is the bounty of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos. Bakerland’s strength definitely isn’t as strong as he is, but he has powerful aides. Besides, believe me, he definitely has mystical objects on him.”

A reasonable price, but that’s also an exaggerated price… Xio and Fors looked at each other and said, “We shall return and discuss it. At this time tomorrow, we’ll give you our answer.”

“Sure.” Mr. A made a gesture of farewell.

After being led out by an attendant, Fors murmured in puzzlement, “Those are High-Sequence Beyonder formulas?”

“Frankly speaking, I find it strange. I thought Mr. A would only want formulas or potion ingredients. Money shouldn’t be a necessity for him.”

Xio turned to look at her friend.

“Fors, you really are a naive clinical doctor and author. You must know that Mr. A has many subordinates. They need a house to sleep in, stomachs to fill, clothes to buy, and the need to vent their desires. All of this has to be bought using money. Besides, to some nobles who have declined, what wouldn’t they sell if there are gold pounds to be made?

“Without his men, Mr. A would be just as scary, but he will be rather lacking in intelligence.

“That’s what all the small gangs in the East Borough know.”

Fors frowned and said, “Xio, you’re not that stupid after all…”

In the evening, the two of them met the familiar large golden retriever at a predetermined location and passed Mr. A’s reply to Audrey.

When Audrey finished reading the note, not only did she not feel stumped, she even let out a long sigh of relief.

It was simply wonderful for her that she could finish the ambassador with just 10,000 gold pounds!

For the time being, I can only use 5000 pounds. I’ll still have to pay Xio and Fors 500 pounds… Well, first of all, I’ll borrow 6000 pounds, no—8000 pounds from Glaint. I can’t expose any problems with my daily expenses. Then, I’ll pay him back over four to five months, with interest of 1000 pounds… Before the new year, I will be quite poor, having only 1000 pounds to use a month… Audrey quickly made her decision. Then she burned the original slip of paper and wrote on a new piece of paper.

“The second option. An advance of 2000 pounds and the remaining 8000 pounds will be paid after the mission is completed.”

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At 15 Minsk Street, Klein saw Mary Gale again at tea time.

He had initiated the meeting through Mrs. Stelyn Sammer.

“Madam Mary, I found out that your husband went to the Quelaag Club while tailing him. However, I wasn’t able to enter because I’m not a member of the club. Even so, according to my observations, about half an hour after your husband left, only one young lady came out. Her name is Erica Taylor, who lives at 126 New Year’s Street, Hillston Borough. She used to work at Coim for a period of time and is currently unemployed. I took a picture of her leaving the Quelaag Club.”

“She’s unemployed; yet, she can live in Hillston Borough…” Stelyn sneered.

Mary wore a gloomy expression as she remained silent for a few seconds.

“You have to obtain material evidence of them being intimate. Oh… The Quelaag Club, right? I’ll get two members to nominate you as a member, but you must fill in your particulars as ‘famous detective.’ I can’t get people to bring you in because it might not mesh well with the schedules of others.”

“Alright.” Klein hesitated, but still asked, “Who will pay the club fees?”

“I will be responsible for the initial fees. This is in return for your efficiency. If you wish to remain in the club, you will have to pay the annual fee of about 15 pounds yourself.” There seemed to be a fire burning in Mary’s eyes.

The fee is fifteen pounds a year, and the initiation fee is at least fifty pounds… A high-end club… Madam Mary, you sure are generous! Klein immediately nodded.

“I will provide you with the evidence as soon as possible.”

†

After dinner, Klein went out again and continued to the Bravehearts Bar in the Backlund Bridge area.

There were two reasons for this. First, he wanted to show his helplessness in front of the military’s special department and the police who were observing him in secret. He wanted to appear as though he was trying every method to save himself. Second, he also wanted to deceive the Mid-Sequence Beyonder from the Seer pathway under the Ambassador’s command.

In matters involving the gray fog, Klein believed that the gentleman or lady would never be able to succeed in a divination, including his own resurrection and past events, as well as how he had successfully created the Language of Foulness charm through the help of the True Creator.

This is definitely a powerful item that can affect my opponent. Klein had to maintain his act of feeling unsafe and his act of madly grasping at all kinds of straw to mislead his opponent in order to increase his chances of victory.

Under the dark night, Klein entered the bar.

Before he could get a beer, he saw Kaspars, the old man with the brandy nose, standing in front of the rat-baiting ring with his arms crossed.

“Perfect timing. Maric is looking for you.” Kaspars spotted Klein and limped over.

“Maric is looking for me?” Klein asked in shock.

Instinctively, he touched the Azik’s copper whistle in his pocket and considered what excuse he could use to politely decline the meeting.

Or could it be that wrapping the copper whistle with one's spirituality wouldn't cause any zombie-like phenomenon? It wasn't like Mr. Azik hadn't been to the cemetery before, nor had any corpses attacked him… Klein tensed up.

Before he could come up with an excuse, he saw Maric, his face pale and his eyes filled with malice, walking over. He wasn't surrounded by any zombies.

Where are his zombies? Klein thought with a mixture of puzzlement and relief.

Maric pointed to the card room and walked over there first. Klein looked into the distance and followed him since there were no zombies.

"What's the matter?" Klein took the initiative to ask.

Maric, in a black vest and white shirt, sat on the card table and stared into Klein's eyes.

"Does that job of yours still stand?"

"Huh?" Klein wasn't able to react in time.

"I have a friend who is short on money and is willing to accept this commission. She's stronger than me and should be able to protect you. However, she can only protect you for three days. The price is 1000 pounds," Maric said in a low, slurred voice.

Why is a Beyonder willing to accept the commission only after I acquired the Language of Foulness… However, this is good as well. This will be able to confuse the ambassador's Beyonder. After he painstakingly defeats Maric's friend, my chances of success will become extremely high… The only problem is determining if Maric's friend is trustworthy… Hmm, I'll go above the gray fog to divine it… Klein pondered for a moment and said, "Give me time to consider it and save up the necessary funds. It’s not a small sum.

“Also, it’s best if the person protecting me is hidden. It must be confidential. As for the three days of protection, that is up to me. It’s definitely within these two weeks.”

Of course, the Seer would definitely be aware of it… Klein silently added.

As for money, he had already considered it from the beginning. If selling Meursault’s Beyonder characteristic wasn’t enough, he would ask Miss Justice for money. After all, he had made the preparations. Roselle’s diary still had a lot of knowledge that could be sold. Of course, if the price was simply unacceptable, he could forgo it.

Now, although Meursault’s Beyonder characteristic had become the Language of Foulness charm, I still have Miss Justice! She still owes me the money needed for Sequence 8 Light Suppliant as well as the intelligence regarding the Secret Order. Combining those together, 1000 pounds would be enough!

Chapter 245 - Confirmation

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Back home at 15 Minsk Street, Klein was in no hurry to head above the gray fog to perform a divination. Instead, he acted as though nothing had happened.

In the process, he heard an illusory prayer and vaguely recognized it as a woman’s voice.

After experiencing the ravaging murmurs of the True Creator, my ability in this aspect has apparently improved a little… Klein turned the newspaper while engrossed in thought and settled himself on the reclining chair in a motionless half-slumped state.

He waited until the clock nearly struck ten, before putting down what he was doing and went to the bathroom on the second floor to clean himself up.

Entering the bedroom and pulling the curtains shut, Klein went above the gray fog. He saw that the crimson star symbolizing Justice was constantly expanding and contracting, and it was also echoing with prayers.

Klein spread out his spirituality and made contact. Dressed in a white silk nightgown, Miss Justice appeared in front of him.

Her figure was still blurry, as if she was in bed.

After reciting his honorific name, Audrey cut to the chase.

“Ambassador Bakerland is a Sequence 6 Conspirer of the Hunter pathway. He's suspected to have a Sequence 5 assistant…

"After I obtained detailed information, I got someone to inquire Mr. A. He has agreed to accept the assassination mission, but the conditions are 10,000 gold pounds or any of the potion formulas of Unshadowed, Cataclysmic Interrer, Prophet, and Manipulator. They do not need to be complete. A portion of the formula would suffice.

"I chose the former and paid an advance of 2000 pounds. Honorable Mr. Fool, was my decision correct?"

10,000 gold pounds… The corner of Klein's lips twitched as he forced himself to focus on the matter.

The Sequence 5 assistant should be that Seer pathway infiltrator?

The first thing that should be done is to overestimate the enemy…

Would Mr. A have the ability to do it? Would he neglect the job after taking the money…

Cataclysmic Interrer, Prophet, Manipulator, and Unshadowed are likely Sequence 4's. That is the threshold of a High-Sequence Beyonder…

It is very likely that Mr. A is one of the 22 Oracles of the Aurora Order. To be stationed in the Capital of Capitals, Backlund, means that he's second only to the five Saints of the Aurora Order's upper echelons. He must be the cream of the crop among the Oracles…

The Aurora Order wields the Secrets Suppliant pathway which is the direct route to the True Creator. As an Oracle, he has a high probability of being a Beyonder of this Sequence chain. Based on Backlund's position, it can be inferred that he's at Sequencers 5, Shepherd. Of course, he could also be a Rose Bishop that's one Sequence lower, but that would mean that he's more outstanding in other aspects, such as his intelligence…

I have to remind Miss Justice that she shouldn't have too many interactions with Mr. A. The Beyonders of the Secrets Suppliant Sequence are either already lunatics exhibiting abnormalities or lunatics who have hidden their insanity well, almost without exception… Sequence 8 Listeners in this Sequence pathway often hear the voice of the True Creator…

Yes, only a lunatic would be bold enough to accept the mission of assassinating an Intis ambassador and have the courage to complete it…

I have here a portion of the Unshadowed potion formula, as well as the corresponding ritual needed for the advancement. This can save Miss Justice 10,000 gold pounds…

Why would Mr. A only need the formulas of Unshadowed, Cataclysmic Interrer, Prophet, and Manipulator? Are these paths that can be swapped at High Sequences of the Secrets Suppliant pathway? That's a bit too much. That makes it five in total…

Unshadowed is from the Eternal Blazing Sun. Cataclysmic Interrer sounds like it's from the Lord of Storms or maybe the Evernight Goddess… I previously determined that the Eternal Blazing Sun, Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom have pathways that are relatively similar; therefore, They view each other with animosity. From the looks of it, Cataclysmic Interrer belongs to the Lord of Storms and is Sequence 4 of the Sailor Sequence. Prophet is likely from the God of Knowledge and Wisdom…

Then which pathway does Manipulator belong to?

It'll be interesting if they can all be exchanged with the Sequence corresponding to the True Creator…

Yes… I cannot give the Unshadowed formula to Mr. A. Not even a portion. The Aurora Order members are all lunatics who are always looking for opportunities to take revenge on the world to the detriment of public safety. Items of strategic importance must not be traded with them… This isn't just a question of the bottom line, it also involves my own safety. Once the time is ripe, those lunatics from the Aurora Order might very well sacrifice the entire city…

Let Miss Justice spend the 10,000 pounds then. Part of it includes the payment she would like to give to my Blessed. The rest can be made up to her with the knowledge I already know… Klein reached out and pinched his cheek.

He didn't reply to Justice immediately. Instead, he conjured a pen and paper, ready to make a divination.

Klein had no idea who Maric's friend was. He could only tell from the pronoun "she" that the person was a woman. Failure was inevitable if he wanted to directly divine the reliability of the person in question.

However, Klein could make an indirect divination regarding his own safety, which would have a much higher success rate.

As for whether he would suffer an interference or how accurate the outcome would be, he wasn't worried at all thanks to the gray fog's shielding.

After more than ten seconds of deliberation, Klein wrote: "It's risky for me to hire Maric's friend to be my bodyguard for three days."

Putting the pen away, he removed his spirit pendulum, focused his mind, and quickly performed the divination.

When he opened his eyes, he saw that the topaz pendant was rotating clockwise. However, the amplitude was very small and its speed was very slow.

There's a certain risk, but it's quite low… Reliable… Klein nodded slightly and changed to divine about Mr. A.

Similarly, he had no direct contact with Mr. A, and all he knew was based on descriptions and inference. It was difficult to find out whether or not he was capable enough, or willing to keep his promise. All he could do was make an indirect divination.

As an excellent "Seer," Klein quickly determined the direction, and that was to divine Ambassador Bakerland!

This ambassador had relatively more connections with him, and the information he had about him was even more detailed. Klein knew very well what the other party was involved in, and as a divination target, there were no problems.

After some thought, Klein wrote: "Bakerland Jean Madan will have his life threatened by Mr. A."

To prevent it from failing, he tried his best to make the words vague in this low-confidence divination and didn't require a definite answer.

This time, Klein saw that the spirit pendulum was still rotating clockwise, but it had become faster and the amplitude had increased.

It means that Mr. A will attempt to complete the mission, and that there's a good chance of success… Klein slowly exhaled and began to respond to Miss Justice's prayer.

"Sure.

"There's no problems with your decision.

"You absolutely must not show yourself when entrusting this mission.

"My Blessed wishes for 1000 pounds for his activities. It will be done in the same way as before, and it would be best if it can be completed by tomorrow.

"This will be payment for the Light Suppliant formula. You do not need to seek out news regarding the Secret Order any further. However, if you obtain any relevant information, I will do a trade with you."

After learning that the infiltrator was a Beyonder in the Seer pathway, Klein's need for information about the Secret Order became less urgent.

He had originally wanted to ask for more than 1000 pounds, but in consideration of how Miss Justice had to pay 10,000 pounds to assassinate the ambassador, it was likely that her finances would be stretched to the limit; therefore, he only asked for the minimum.

After doing all of this, Klein didn't linger and immediately returned to the real world.

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Audrey was holding a music score and humming a melody. The red moon was faintly discernible outside the window.

Suddenly, a thick gray fog appeared in front of her. A figure seated on an ancient chair looked down at her and spoke in a low voice.

Audrey let out a breath of relief after hearing Mr. Fool's response. She was no longer as nervous as she was.

1000 pounds… My debt to Mr. Fool is close to being paid off… I feel so much more relaxed suddenly… Audrey rested the music score against her chest and thought with her dimples showing.

Although she only had 1000 pounds to spend for quite a considerable period of time in the coming days, being put in a tight financial situation, all she needed to do was grit her teeth, and squeezing out a thousand pounds wouldn't be a problem.

I'll borrow more from Glaint and drag it out with more installments… Audrey had quite a good education in finances; after all, her father was a powerful banker behind the scenes.

†

At noon on Thursday, Klein heard another illusory prayer. He then confirmed that Miss Justice had deposited the money into his anonymous account.

The bank reconciliation and liquidation done in Backlund could be completed on the same day, meaning that from Friday, Klein would be able to withdraw the cash from any Backlund Bank branch in the city.

After lunch, Klein once again saw Mary Gale. She led him outside the Quelaag Club, where the two members were waiting.

One was a well-known surgeon, Aaron Ceres, and the other was the aristocratic equestrian teacher, Talim Dumont.

After greeting each other, the lanky and somewhat aloof doctor wearing gold-rimmed glasses entered the club first, leaving the equestrian teacher, Talim, who had short brown curly hair to converse with Klein amidst smiles.

“If it wasn’t for Mary mentioning you, I wouldn’t have known that Backlund has had an additional outstanding detective join its ranks. If there’s anything I need to do in the future, I’ll look for you.”

“Then, let me thank you in advance.” Klein smiled in response.

According to Mary’s introduction on the carriage, he learned that Talim was originally of noble blood. His grandfather had a noble title of viscount, but it was a pity that his grandfather had squandered all his wealth. His father had nearly ten brothers and more than six sisters, and as nobles whose titles were determined by the amount of land they possessed, once the amount of land went beneath a particular standard, the hereditary nobility title would be reduced. However, that also depended on the king’s mood.

Talim was unlike the other children of nobility who could obtain a considerable sum of money when they reached adulthood. And due to his grandfather’s reputation, he had no means of entering the government as an employee, or to be a butler of another noble family.

Therefore, he could only play to his advantages and became a equestrian teacher for many nobles. His income was quite sizable, with about four hundred pounds a year.

“Sigh, divorce really leads to poverty.” It was unknown if Talim was hinting at Mary Gale’s situation or if he was reminded of his grandfather who seemed to be more of Intis ancestry.

Unable to engage in the conversation, Klein followed him into the Quelaag Club, where he saw a large, brightly lit hall.

Chapter 246 - Strange Omen

◆

Aaron and Talim left the Quelaag Club after they separately completed the nomination form. It wasn't a weekend; the former had two more operations in the afternoon, and the latter had to teach Viscount Conrad's youngest son horse-riding. The teenager needed to ensure that he didn't embarrass himself during the Backlund social events in the second half of the year.

Klein watched the valet dressed in a red vest and a maid in a beautiful dress come and go a few times before finally delivering him his own proof of membership and a badge with the symbol of the Frost constellation engraved on it.

"An entry fee of 50 pounds. There are still three and a half months left this year, with an annual fee of 4 pounds a year." The valet in the red vest pushed the two objects to Klein.

Klein took out the 57 pounds which Mary Gale had given him and handed him 54 pounds.

The amount beyond the entry fee and annual fee was Mary's first payment. She was very pleased with how quickly Klein obtained information on Doragu Gale's mistress, as well as her photo.

50 pounds membership… Madam Mary is such a generous lady! While Klein watched the valet and the maid verify the money and confirm the exact amount, he recalled Stelyn Sammer's private introduction.

Mary's father was a co-founder of the Coim Company and had a 20 percent stake. It was originally just a small company that barely made money, but as Backlund's pollution worsened and the demand for anthracite and charcoal increased, the company rapidly expanded to become one of the top ten companies in the capital's industry. As such, Mary's net worth skyrocketed.

The only problem was that when she was married to Doragu Gale, the company was still quite an unknown company. Her father hadn't paid much attention to using the shares as her dowry and didn't proceed with any protection of estate gifting and had instead used the more popular "willing of gifts."

The former referred to the dowry as an independent and separate estate of the woman and not subjected to her husband's control. Even the right-of-use depended on the woman, while the latter assigned the dowry's ownership to the entire family. However, the husband had to immediately make a valid will to promise that if he passed away before his partner, the split of the estate would be two to four times the rights and interests of the dowry received. After which, the rest would proceed according to the normal inheritance laws which could effectively guarantee the livelihood of the widow.

If Mary initiated a divorce before she could get evidence of Doragu's adultery, the Coim Company shares would be divided equally between both parties.

Klein remembered Stelyn saying enviously, "The current value of those shares is currently close to 20,000 gold pounds. Adding the other property in their name, Mary is a truly wealthy lady. Once she's divorced, she will definitely become the target of many men in Backlund, including some nobles."

That's only enough money for Miss Justice to assassinate Ambassador Bakerland twice… Klein suddenly thought about that when he saw the red-vested valet and the good-looking maid bow at him.

"Mr. Moriarty, welcome to the Quelaag Club."

Upon hearing this, Klein picked up the proof of membership and the Frost badge.

The former was made of elastic paper which looked like a card with Klein's name and his membership start date on it.

After applying an imprint of his index finger, the proof of membership was officially ready for use.

The latter was the Quelaag Club's distinctive badge, named for its founding in early November, which corresponded to the month of the Frost constellation. The symbol and the number 192 were printed on the front, followed by "Sherlock Moriarty" imprinted on the back.

"The club now has 192 members?" Klein asked casually.

"Yes, our club doesn't accept people without a recommendation." The red-vested valet beamed and introduced, "On the first floor, there's a buffet cafeteria, bar, library, squash room, conference room, and card room. You can use them all for free. The food and wine are free for your sampling as well. There are 16 lounge rooms and two small conference rooms on the second floor. They are also free, and can be used as long as they aren't occupied…"

The good-looking maid pointed to the rear and said, "There are two tennis courts on the lawn, totally free of charge. There are two shooting ranges underground, and you only need to pay the corresponding rental fee of the equipment.

"If you aren't satisfied with the simple buffet, you can order ala-carte. We have an exclusive chef, and you just need to pay for the ingredients."

Board, lodging, and entertainment are all provided for… As expected of a high-end club… Klein sincerely thanked Mrs. Mary.

He smiled warmly and said, "Send someone to show me around so that I can familiarize myself with the environment. Afterward, give me a lounge to take an afternoon nap."

“Alright.” The red-vested valet made an inviting gesture.

After familiarizing himself with the Quelaag Club’s environment, Klein entered a lounge and carefully studied the layout of the place. He discovered it was similar to a hotel room of the later generation. It was said to be decorated in the Intis-style.

I have to consider how to obtain evidence of Doragu’s affair tomorrow. It’s simply impossible to hide the flash of the camera… In other words, I only have one shot at taking a picture… And if I do that, I’ll definitely be kicked out of the club… I have to think of a safe way… I’ll read through the papers later and try to determine the progress regarding Ian’s case through the news. From there, I can determine which three days I should be guarded… Klein paced back and forth, lost in thought.

At that moment, his heart suddenly palpitated as he tensed up.

Is this the premonition of a Clown? However, there are no scenes in my mind… Klein felt the air around him turn still like it was the calm before the storm.

Soon, this feeling disappeared, as if nothing had happened.

Could it be that danger is approaching? But nothing like this happened when I was attacked by Meursault… Puzzled, Klein pulled out a coin and divined if he would be attacked in the next few days.

The answer was negative.

After thinking for a few seconds, Klein drew the curtains and pretended to take an afternoon nap. He took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

He sat down and pondered for a long time before muttering to himself, “I will be in grave danger in the next few days.”

†

After repeating the statement, he flicked the coin again and saw the copper-colored object tumble down and land in his open palm.

This time, the portrait of the king was facing up!

It meant a positive result!

My reaction just now really was an omen that danger is coming… Klein narrowed his eyes and leaned back in his chair.

He was rather puzzled by this matter.

Whether it was as a Seer or Clown, they had never displayed such abilities before. Even if they could predict danger, it was because the target was right in front of him or beside him!

There was nobody around me… From the fact that my divination was misled, it must have involved a relatively higher Sequencer, most likely Bakerland's assistant… In the end, it actually gave me a premonition? This isn't scientific, uh—this doesn't make mystical sense… There must be something else behind it, but I can't be certain why yet… Klein looked around and saw the boundless fog, crimson and still, the palace standing as it had always stood.

He reined in his doubts and temporarily stopped thinking about the reason. Instead, he focused his attention on the attack that was about to occur…

After several more divinations, Klein found that he could only confirm that there would be great danger in the next few days. It couldn't be shortened to three days, two days, or even five hours.

In other words, he could only obtain a somewhat vague revelation.

And in a dream divination, he saw Ian dressed in his old coat, standing in the street with the elegant gas lamps and the blurry crimson moon behind him.

Other than this image, there was nothing else.

“How should I interpret this?” Klein thought for a moment. He could only assume that this was the prelude to danger.

Without further delay, he returned to the real world, left the Quelaag Club, and went to the nearby Hillston branch of the Backlund Bank to withdraw the remaining hundred pounds from his account—the sum of 1000 pounds from Justice hasn’t been cleared yet and reconciled. Without the corresponding information sent to the branches, the account wasn’t synchronized, and, theoretically speaking, there was a loophole. Klein could withdraw 100 pounds from another branch and seize the opportunity when all the accounts were out of sync.

However, this was only in theory. In order to avoid similar acts, the banks had many rules on anonymous accounts. First, it was to enhance the transmission of similar information in the same city; second, it was to limit a single withdrawal to no more than 500 pounds, and third, if the last withdrawal wasn’t done locally, a telegram was needed to inquire about it, and today, Klein encountered the third situation.

Putting away the money, he took a horse carriage to the Backlund Bridge area and entered the Bravehearts Bar.

Under Kaspars’s guidance, he saw Maric sitting in the card room. He wasn’t surrounded by zombies.

Klein discarded the idea of using his spirituality to wrap Azik’s copper whistle, slapped a 100 pounds on the table, and said to the pale Maric, “I agree to the deal.

“I’ll pay an advance of 100 pounds. I’ll pay another 300 pounds every additional day I’m protected.

“The protection begins now!”

Maric’s gaze fell past him and landed somewhere behind him. He nodded and said, “Alright, she has agreed.”

Ah? Klein turned back in surprise only to see the wall and nothing but air.

He secretly activated his Spirit Vision, he but failed to discover anything.

Maric stuffed the 100 pounds into his pocket and said indifferently, “You can return now. She has begun protecting you, in a hidden way.”

If I hadn’t divined this beforehand, I would definitely think of all of you as cheats… Klein surveyed his surroundings and deliberately acted as though he left with clenched teeth.

Along the way, he would occasionally activate and deactivate his Spirit Vision, constantly observing the outside through the carriage windows, but he didn’t find his so-called bodyguard.

Back at 15 Minsk Street, Klein closed the door, went into the bathroom, turned on the tap, and washed his hands.

The sound of water splashing disappeared as he shook off the water droplets and wiped his palms with a towel. Then, he raised his head to look at himself in the mirror to inspect his appearance.

At this moment, he saw himself phasing away in the mirror before transforming into a woman wearing a black regal dress.

[image]

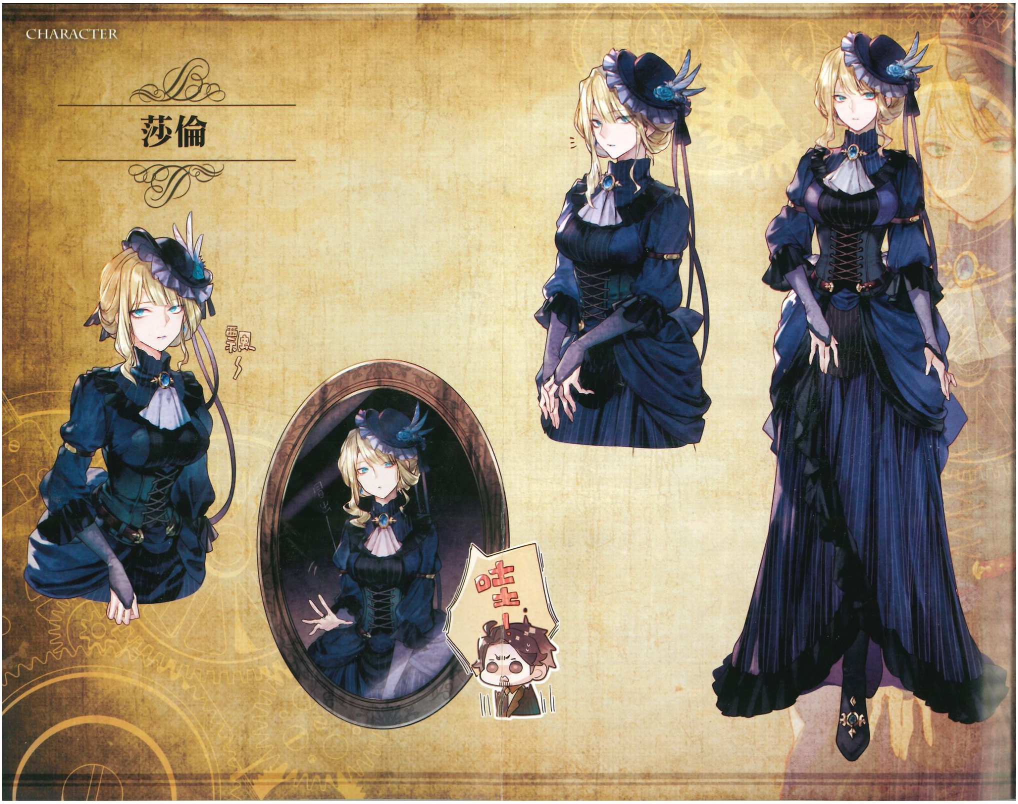
The woman had light golden hair and blue eyes. She looked very delicate but her face was abnormally pale.

She wore a small black bonnet, lifted her skirt, and bowed at Klein.

This… Without hiding his surprise, Klein took a few steps back and leaned against the wall.

Only then did he realize that this might be the bodyguard he had hired for 1000 pounds.

The image in the mirror quickly dimmed and Klein saw himself again. Everything had been restored back to normal.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Chapter 247 - The Whole Story

◆

The figure in the mirror was clear, but it was as though the woman in the black regal dress had never appeared.

Klein secretly activated his Spirit Vision, but didn’t find anything.

Did I just hire a female ghost as my bodyguard? She’s even stranger than a female ghost… At the very least, one can see ghosts with Spirit Vision… Klein thoughtfully touched Azik’s copper whistle in his pocket, feeling nothing but its cold chill. Like before, it didn’t have any additional changes.

She’s unaffected by the copper whistle… Seems like she isn’t an undead creature… However, I can’t be sure. Back then, the copper whistle was buried with me, but the corpses surrounding me didn’t act abnormally… Was it because those buried in the cemetery have experienced a send off by the priests and bishops? When does it work and when doesn’t it… When this business with the ambassador is over, and if I’m still alive, I’ll go to the cemetery and try to figure out the scope of its effect and its limits. I can’t always carry a time bomb like this… Klein washed his face and walked out of the bathroom.

Just as he picked up the newspaper in the living room and was going to read it in the living room or bedroom, he heard the doorbell ring.

Klein’s mind tensed up when he heard the tinkling sounds. He put on his coat, with all kinds of materials in it, and walked towards the door gingerly.

He clearly knew that danger was approaching in the next few days!

After standing behind the door and waiting for a moment, the scene outside naturally surfaced in Klein's mind.

The crimson moon was faintly discernible in the sky. The elegant gas lamps on both sides of the street lit up the wet road. A boy wearing an old coat stood there. His bright red eyes were deep and adrift.

Ian Wright? Why did he appear? Isn't this what I saw in my dream divination? Is this the prelude to danger? Klein opened the door and took two cautious steps back.

"Detective Moriarty," Ian took off his brown top hat, bowed, and said in a low voice, "I came to apologize. I'm sorry to have involved you in such a dangerous matter."

Klein creased his eyebrows and probed, "What you should've done is head to the police station."

Ian looked around and bowed his head.

"I just came out from MI9."

Ah? Is that the name of the military's special department? Klein stepped aside, pointed at the living room and said, "Maybe we can have a chat."

I have to at least know what placed me in this situation… He sighed inwardly.

Ian didn't stand on ceremony as he followed Klein into the living room and sat in the same spot as he did the last time.

He was just about to open his mouth when Klein suddenly added, "If what you plan on saying will put me in greater danger, then there's no need to tell me about it."

"No, everything will soon be over." Ian had a calmness that was beyond his age.

Klein was relieved and asked out of curiosity, “So, what exactly happened?”

Before he could finish his sentence, he saw a figure emerge from the panes of the oriel window across the room: a black regal dress, long hair tied in a bun, blue eyes, delicate features, and a pale face. It was the woman who had previously greeted Klein in the mirror.

This woman seemed to find an illusory high back chair and sat down. Her left palm supported her right elbow while her right hand supported her face, pretending to listen attentively while appearing expressionless.

For a moment, Klein was left at a loss.

Ian, who had been silent for a few seconds, said softly, “In fact, Detective Zreal is a spy for the Feysac Empire. He adopted several vagrant children and taught them how to gather intelligence. I am one of them.”

So that’s how it is… I was involved in a huge spy conspiracy… Klein suddenly felt enlightened.

Ian looked at the coffee table and continued, “We have the advantage of age, and are often ignored by others, allowing us to gather a lot of useful information. Two weeks ago, I stumbled upon clues regarding Helmosuin’s manuscript.”

“Helmosuin?” Klein found the name familiar.

Ian looked up at him and explained, “Turani von Helmosuin, the greatest scientist after Emperor Roselle, a mathematician, a mechanist, and the father of the second generation difference engine.”

So it’s him! Klein suddenly remembered the relevant information.

He wasn't only a great scientist, but also a crazy scientist. He believed that the inherent flaw in the existence of humans could only be fixed through machines. He loved eating sugar as if it was his own energy source. He mysteriously disappeared while researching a third generation difference engine, and was an important figure that every country was trying to find.

"His manuscript? Does the manuscript involve third generation difference engines?" Klein asked probingly.

A difference engine was a mechanical device for computing. It could effectively improve the efficiency of scientific research and various projects. In Klein's opinion, it was an alternative computer in the Age of Steam. Of course, it could only do computation at present.

Ian shook his head.

"I'm not sure. I didn't actually see it. Perhaps, it had some related ideas."

He paused for a moment, then went on to recount what had happened.

"When I reported this to Detective Zreal, he was very happy and told me to follow up on that lead while he immediately reported it to his superior.

"It took me some time to determine where the manuscript was, but I was afraid of the danger, so I didn't steal it directly. I decided to return to Detective Zreal, and after that, it was as I told you. Detective Zreal's house was infiltrated while many of the tiny traps were not restored, and he didn't respond to my contact request. The Zmanger gang tried to capture me…

"With your help, I confirmed the death of Detective Zreal. I took a fake tooth from his corpse. Oh, that happened after we parted.

"Detective Zreal told me that, inscribed on the inside of the fake tooth, there was a method to urgently contact his superior. It was a method that even he didn't know of and was something he would only remove if an accident occurred."

Klein nodded slightly and said, "So you sent a telegram?"

A rare look of surprise flashed across Ian's face as he asked, "Did the people from MI9 tell you that?"

"No, a friend of mine happened to see you on Bacardi Street." Klein casually made up an excuse.

"I see." Ian nodded in depression. "I got in touch with Detective Zreal's superior in Backlund via telegram and arranged the time, place, and manner of meeting, but soon enough, I was found by the Zmanger gang. No, to be exact, it was an intelligence officer of the Intis Republic. That was what the people from MI9 people told me.

"Fortunately, MI9 arrived in time, and both sides engaged in a chaotic battle. I took this opportunity to escape.

"However, when I met with Detective Zreal's superior this afternoon, I was once again ambushed by the Intis intelligence officers. Unfortunately, I was caught by them, and I was very afraid of dying, so I told them everything that I knew. However, they didn't keep their promise and still wanted to kill me. At that moment, MI9 finally found me."

It is only during such times when you look like a fifteen or sixteen year old teenager… Just as Klein was reflecting over this, he suddenly thought of a problem from what Ian had just said.

Back when he discovered that something important was left behind on Zreal's corpse and that Ian had successfully taken it away, he had written the matter off, thinking that the Beyonder was lacking in skill, and that the Beyonder had missed out on something because the mediumship provided little useful information.

However, after confirming that the ambassador had a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Seer pathway, the situation became extremely peculiar.

With powerful mediumship, it was impossible for the fake tooth to not be discovered.

Leaving the body in such a remote and hard to find place didn't seem like a trap.

Combined with Ian's description, the answer was obvious.

Klein nodded and said, "Have you ever thought of the possibility that Zreal's superior has traitors around him, a traitor who has defected to the Intis intelligence services?

"That's also why Zreal was exposed and killed when he obtained the clue to the manuscript, as well as why you were ambushed."

It was because the Intis ambassador had information about Zreal's superior which was why he didn't pay much attention to the urgent communication method inscribed on the inside of the tooth!

Zreal's report to his superior directly led to his demise!

Ian fell into a daze when he heard that. It took him quite a while before he clenched his fists in anger, trying hard to compose himself as he said, "I didn't think of that. You really are an excellent detective…"

He quietly let out a breath of air and changed the topic.

"I have divulged the whereabouts of the manuscript to MI9 and everything else. They also mentioned your predicament in passing. Heh, they didn't suspect me of lying, nor did they send anyone to watch me. All of them went to vie for the manuscript. However, with that kind of pressure, no one can lie."

Having said that, Ian stood up and gave a deep bow.

"Please allow me to apologize again.

"Sorry to have involved you in this. Actually, you don't need to hide anything for me."

Having understood the entire situation, Klein smiled and said, “No, the main problem in this matter was because I made a mistake that made me end up in my current situation.”

As he was listening, he used Ian’s description of the entire situation and his reflections of the past few days and confirmed that he had made two mistakes.

When I discovered that Ian’s matter ran deeper than it appeared, I still accepted the request. That wasn’t a problem since I only felt that it involved gangs, and there would be, at most, one or two Beyonders who wouldn’t dare expose themselves. But the divination lacked enough information and ended with a failure… This was within the limits of what I could’ve resolved by myself, and typically speaking, there wouldn’t have been any trouble. I could even take the opportunity to come into contact with Backlund’s Beyonders.

After finding Zreal’s corpse and confirming that the matter ran deep, I should’ve considered the sensitivity of my identity and decisively extricated myself from this case. I should’ve let Ian deal with the subsequent matters himself. This wouldn’t be problematic and would be a rather careful choice.

One of the mistakes I made was that I didn’t flinch or reveal anything about Ian when Meursault came to me. I only thought that he was from a gang, and that there were some Beyonders behind that gang. Who would’ve guessed that it would involve a figure like the Intis ambassador; even more so, I never expected Meursault to be so rash. After failing his mission, he didn’t threaten, intimidate me or proceed with other options. Instead, he came straight to kill me so that mediumship could be performed. He didn’t even give me the chance to regret my decision. As a result, my situation worsened.

So, this isn’t too subjective or too serious a mistake.

The one mistake that really caused me to be in such a passive situation was a tiny mistake I made from the very beginning. I had rented the house and accepted the mission as Sherlock Moriarty without donning a disguise!

This resulted in me not being able to flee after my identity as a Beyonder was exposed to the ambassador. Even as I acted horrified and frantic, making MI9 and the police department believe that my taking flight would only be normal, I didn't dare flee. I was afraid that when the ambassador failed to find a target for revenge, he would inform the officials about me. And according to my experience as a Nighthawk, most official enforcers like the Nighthawks, Machinery Hivemind, and Mandated Punishers harbor animosity towards uncontrolled Beyonders. They definitely wouldn't ignore me just because I'm a Low-Sequence Beyonder and would begin an investigation.

In time, my looks will be clear evidence. I will then be pursued by High-Sequence Beyonders from the Church of the Goddess because I resurrected despite having been involved with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

There's no chance for such matters to be suddenly forgotten or thought of as nothing by others. I had to plan for the worst case scenario in advance, and if I only reacted when the ambassador took action, it would definitely be too late. Whether it's an assassination, finding a bodyguard, or buying items, all of them will require time.

Only if the ambassador and his assistant dies or attention is diverted to the investigation of his death will I be able to resolve this latent danger. His assistant doesn't have an official status, so he can't interact with the officials. For a mere Sequence 9 or Sequence 8 at best, someone whose whereabouts are unknown, there's no reason to go through the effort to report me.

Of course, his death is the best outcome, then there won't be any latent danger.

Compared to finding Mr. Azik for help or having attention placed on me because of 0-08 again, as well as being pursued by High-Sequence Beyonders, assassinating the ambassador is the relatively simpler choice… Even it fails, I can only bear one of the two outcomes…

Sigh, everything originated from a small oversight at the beginning. I just imagined that in a metropolis with over 5 million people and few people knowing me while I deliberately avoided the Nighthawks, there was no need for me to don a disguise every day, since it would be easier for others to notice something amiss. Yet, for such a small mistake, I would have to pay over 10,000 gold pounds as the price without having any guarantee of resolving it…

I'm really like a Clown, with one mistake triggering a chain reaction, only to result in a desperate attempt to balance myself so as to please the audience…

This is all because of my lack of experience. This is the first time in my two lifetimes combined that I've ever been a fugitive.

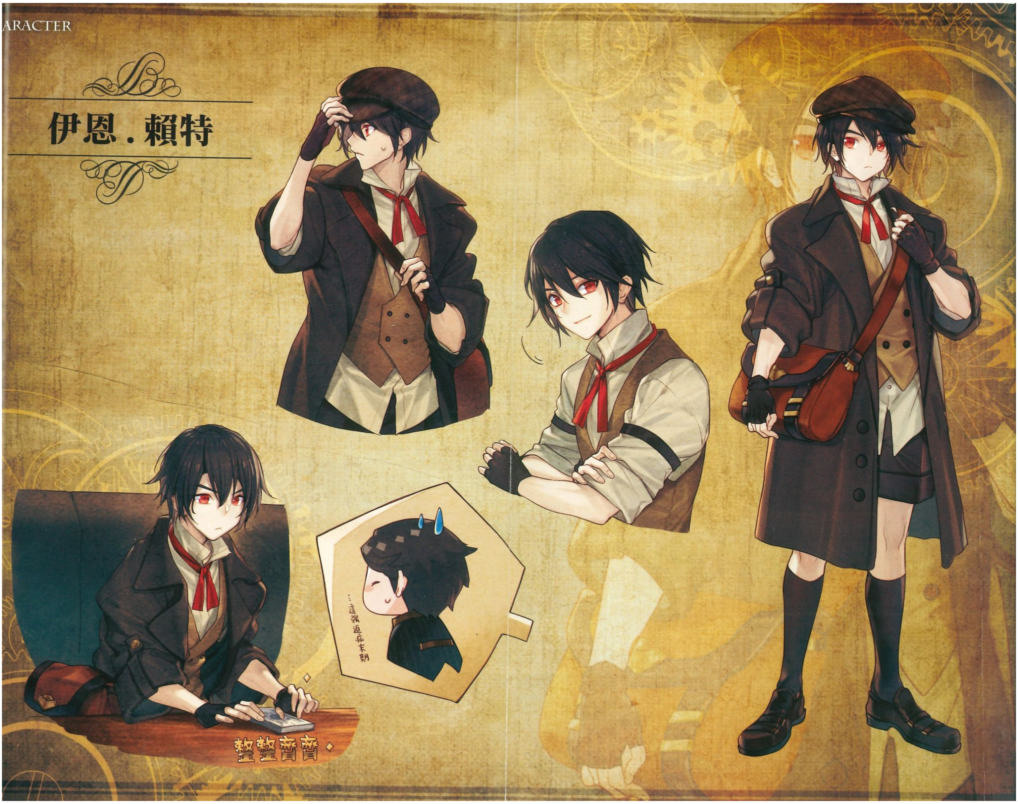
Once this matter is completely resolved, exposing my identity as a Beyonder would no longer be that dangerous. They would only think that I obtained a potion while finding a bodyguard and not doubt my origins. Of course, I'll have to get used to wearing glasses and a mustache in the future so that the people around me will gradually get used to my new image. In the future when they ask me about me, they will only think of this new image.

Having thought through the entire matter, Klein's laugh became more pronounced, making Ian feel strange.

"It's time for me to leave. I'll need to disappear for a while; otherwise, I might be thrown into jail." Ian put on his hat, bade farewell, and left.

Klein didn't stop him, watching him disappear into the crimson moonlight, while the woman by the oriel window had disappeared without him realizing it.

伊恩．賴特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Chapter 248 - Waiting From Both Sides

◆ ◆ ◆

With both sides being aware of the whereabouts of Helmosuin's manuscript, this matter would come to an end tonight… Therefore, the ambassador would have the freedom to take revenge… Is this the reason for the impending danger? Klein gained a rough understanding of the divination results and the inexplicable omen.

If he didn't have the Language of Foulness charm or the powerful bodyguard that cost him 1000 pounds for three days, he would've shamelessly gone to the police station or the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery's headquarters in Backlund, Saint Hierländ Cathedral for a temporary stay. He could avoid any possible attacks and await the assassination of the ambassador. As for how successful the assassination would be, Klein wasn't confident either. He had already considered the worst outcome and had a plan for it.

But now, with the double the preparations, he no longer wanted to avoid it. He would stay at home and pretend that he knew nothing.

Deep down, he was even looking forward to having his attackers come knocking at his door.

Sequence 9 Hunter Meursault was killed by me. If they send someone else again, They would at least be a Sequence 7, or even a Sequence 6 or 5. They might even come in numbers, but regardless, as long as I finish them, I'll obtain formulas and Beyonder characteristics. I can then make up for some of my losses… Yes, I'll tell Miss Bodyguard that I had good luck and managed to benefit from the black ear that I bought and became a Beyonder. After all, when the battle becomes intense, there's no way to hide it at that point. Besides, what I'm saying is nearly the truth. I did benefit quite significantly from the black ear… As Klein considered what would soon follow, he almost instinctively drew the sign of the crimson moon on his chest.

May the Goddess bless me that the Beyonder who comes is the one from the Seer pathway! He prayed silently.

As he thought of this, he looked around the room for his bodyguard. He was worried that she would run away without a sound after hearing the whole story.

The lights in the dining room were warm, illuminating the coffee table, sofa, and chairs. There was no one else in the room except him.

As Klein gradually grew nervous, he suddenly saw a face appear on the glass cover of the gas lamp in the living room. The face was pale, with pale gold hair and delicate looks.

This lady is quite confident in her own strength… Klein's mind calmed down, and he whispered to himself, "I'm also a Beyonder.

"I made a gamble on an item I bought from Kaspars's gathering and benefited from it, but it was only beneficial for me."

What he said was true. No matter what method he had to face, these sentences would endure a truth test.

But when these two sentences were put together, one would think that the benefits made him a Beyonder.

The face on the glass cover nodded slightly and quickly disappeared without any other reaction.

Klein's expression didn't seem to change, but he secretly exhaled in his heart.

Without taking off his coat, he went back to the sofa and picked up a newspaper and started reading.

After a while, the tinkling sound echoed again. Someone had rung his doorbell again.

Who is it? Klein immediately tensed up. He stuffed his hands into his pockets, touching his tarot cards and Language of Foulness charm.

He slowly walked towards the door, and with the help of his abilities as a Clown, he predicted what he would see after opening the door.

The crimson moon was still faintly visible, the elegant gas lamps were unchanged, and a sergeant in a black-and-white checkered uniform with three chevrons on his epaulets was impatiently waiting by the door.

He had a short, brown beard and he was none other than the sergeant who had dealt with Sherlock Moriarty's case of self-defense.

I think Jurgen mentioned his name. Sergeant Faxine? Well, I can receive the ten-pound bail tomorrow or the next day… What is he doing here? Did MI9 send him to find Ian Wright? Or to inform me that I should temporarily hide away from danger? Confused, Klein grabbed the handle.

†

Inside the Intis embassy of Backlund's West Borough, the lights were on. The scent of various perfumes and alcohol, accompanied by melodious melodies stretched out to every corner.

A ball was being held.

During his years as an ambassador, Bakerland had often held balls at the embassy, inviting the kingdom's bankers, big factory owners, philanthropists, and other well-known, rich and powerful people, as well as lawyers. Random opportunities were also given to some of the lower-ranked merchants.

In this atmosphere, he would tell the guests about the prosperity and openness of Trier, and how the Intis Republic was no longer dominated by the likes of the nobles, bankers, factory owners, and lawyers. They, directly and indirectly, took over a large portion of the parliamentary seats, determining the direction of the government policies, enjoying true freedom and high statuses.

Today, Bakerland was doing the same thing. With a wine glass in hand, he flitted around the guests, as if to prove that he was present at the ball without leaving.

They should've gotten the manuscript by now… After learning that Ian Wright appeared at the telegraph office from that trembling detective, I've been putting plans into action. Now is the time to reap the rewards… Bakerland, with his thin but classy face, took a sip of the blood-like Aurmir wine and headed for the balcony, intending to take a breath of the cool night air.

After learning that Ian had sent the telegram, as a veteran conspiracist and professional intelligence officer, Bakerland was acutely aware that Ian was contacting his superior's superior. Therefore, he quickly made the double-spy, that had infiltrated the Feysac Empire's Backlund intelligence team, investigate and obtain the meeting time, location, and manner agreed upon by Ian and the "team leader."

After that, he pretended that nothing had happened and continued to send people to look for Ian near Bacardi Street. He successfully found Ian and also attracted the attention of MI9.

According to his plan, his intelligence officer had deliberately let Ian go, so that MI9 would think that they were on the same starting line.

After paralyzing his main opponent, he called in other unexposed intelligence agents to ambush Ian and the Feysac Empire's "team leader.” He wanted to find the manuscript and smuggle it out of the Loen Kingdom without being detected by the MI9.

The situation had progressed as smoothly as he had expected, but the news that came back in the evening left his heart heavy.

People from MI9 had actually appeared!

They had appeared despite being supposedly fooled!

With Rosago around, it’s definitely not because of divination. Besides MI9 isn’t good at divination at all… That means we have a spy among our ranks… Let’s hope that Rosago can be one step ahead of them and grab the manuscript to hand over to Shadow for extraction… Bakerland had deliberately organized the ball in order to avoid suspicion, but as such, he was unable to involve himself with the developments. All he could do was pray that his subordinates would amount to something.

According to his plans, once Rosago succeeded, he would immediately transfer the items to another intelligence officer, one that had never been activated before. Then Rosago would lure MI9 away and, by creating some trouble, keep them out of “sight” and distract them from his partner. During this process, Bakerland requested Rosago to kill the detective while he was at it.

If it wasn’t for him, no one from MI9 would’ve known about it. Everything would’ve gone smoothly… My involvement with the Zmanger gang wouldn’t have been revealed, and I wouldn’t be transferred back to the country… He actually didn’t run away, thinking that MI9 would keep protecting him, and that staying at home is safer than running away? Bakerland rubbed his face.

He had already received orders that after the operation regarding the manuscript had been completed, and he would hand all intelligence matters to the highest ranking military officer at the embassy and await the arrival of the new ambassador.

Bakerland was rather reluctant to part with Backlund. Despite the bad weather and heavy pollution, Backlund was one of the most prosperous cities in the world.

Besides, the ladies here are more conservative unlike those sluts back home. Slowly seducing them into bed and removing their restraint, bit by bit, is a very satisfying and fascinating achievement. Unfortunately, I have to bid farewell to these beautiful ladies… Bakerland thought gloomily, and he felt more and more resentful of the detective who dared to put up resistance.

As for Rosago's own safety, Bakerland wasn't worried at all. He believed that as long as Rosago wanted to, as long as he wasn't targeted by a High-Sequence Beyonder, he would be able to escape immediately. This was because Rosago had special Beyonder powers.

As he lost himself in thought, Bakerland's eyes suddenly lit up. He saw a young lady in a crimson dress standing at the edge of the balcony with a glass of wine in her hand.

She had a pretty face and a gentle temperament. Her hair was ink black and luxuriant, and her light brown eyes seemed to speak volumes.

Bakerland went over at once and began to chat with her. He learned that the lady was the daughter of a timber merchant named Eileen, and that her father wasn't very rich and was trying to make his way up the ranks.

With his status as Intis ambassador, Bakerland quickly received Eileen's affection.

After sharing two dances, their bodies became more intimate.

"Beautiful lady, I'd like to invite you to my room to sample some Aurmir wine of 1286."

Eileen replied, almost without any hesitation, "Alright."

The two of them left the ballroom and secretly went to the second floor. They entered Bakerland's room, and he ordered the guards to stay away from them and not to disturb him.

Before the so-called Aurmir wine 1286 appeared, Bakerland had passionately brought Eileen to the bed.

While romping around in bed, Eileen's simple skirt came undone as her pure, fair arms hugged him.

While her hands gripped Bakerland's shoulders, her nails and veins suddenly sprouted black, thin, fluffy "spider feet!"

Bang!

Eileen's eyes suddenly bulged as white foam poured out of her mouth.

Bakerland retracted the fist that he had used to hit her abdomen and stood up from the bed. He no longer had the hasty actions from before and instead, wore a cold expression.

"Who sent you?" Bakerland asked in a deep voice.

Eileen attempted to stand up, but the pain was too much to bear. Her eyes were filled with shock and fear.

Seeing the expression on the pretty girl's face, Bakerland smiled and said, "It's true that I'm into beautiful ladies, but I know this problem of mine. So, every time I meet a beautiful lady, I'm especially careful.

"Speak, who sent you?

"Don't bother resisting. I'm very good at using fire."

Chapter 249 - The Assassination

* * *

Eileen clamped her mouth shut and angrily looked at the thin, smiling face of the ambassador, with a touch of terror.

Bakerland stretched out his right hand which was covered in a plume of orange flames that danced silently.

He took two steps forward, making a gesture as if he was pressing his palm against Eileen’s skin.

This made Eileen think of the descriptions in many novels in which cruel interrogators would use red-hot iron to brand their target’s body, bringing about an extremely painful experience.

“No, I can’t be that brutal to such a beautiful lady.” Bakerland suddenly stopped his outstretched right palm and chuckled softly.

He shook suddenly, turning the orange flame into a long red whip.

The long whip ignited the air around it which took on the form of thorns.

Pow!

Bakerland lashed his flaming whip at Eileen, burning her clothes and leaving a dark mark on her skin. Her face contorted as she screamed.

“Who sent you?” Bakerland asked again in a gentle voice.

Eileen’s lips quivered a few times before she finally opened them.

"It was…"

As Bakerland subconsciously listened for the answer, his eyes suddenly turned bloodshot.

Oh no! Bakerland jerked back and rolled to the ground.

In the spot where he had been standing, a flame rose up and formed a wall of fire.

Splat! Splat! Splat! Rain-like blood and flesh splattered against the wall and produced sizzling sounds.

Some of them penetrated the flame, leaving a thin trail of blood on the ground.

At the end of this path was the Intis ambassador, Bakerland, who had stood up once again.

He saw that Eileen's abdomen had been torn open and two arms wrapped in viscous liquid were sticking out from inside.

With a sudden push of the two arms, a figure drilled its way out from the belly of the beautiful Eileen. "It" was covered in a thick, squirming blood-red liquid that continuously dripped down, and it was about the size of an adult male.

It was hard to imagine that a normal woman like Eileen, with no protrusion in her abdomen, would actually have such a thing hidden inside her body!

How was it stored in there!?

Boom!

The body below Eileen's head exploded completely, turning into pure flesh and blood, surging into the form of a humanoid figure, and mixing with the dripping liquid to turn into a strange red robe.

The figure revealed its true appearance. It was so beautiful that it looked like a woman. The blood-red robe it wore looked like a blossoming flower under the illumination of the flames.

“Rose Bishop!” As a veteran intelligence officer, Bakerland immediately identified the name of the corresponding Sequence before him.

Sequence 6 of the Secrets Suppliant pathway, Rose Bishop.

Every Rose Bishop was an expert when it came to flesh and blood magic!

Beyonders at this Sequence could hide inside the bodies of others, thereby avoiding all sorts of investigations.

But the moment they emerge, the hosts would lose their lives.

“For the Lord!” Eileen’s remaining head let out a low cry and closed her eyes forever.

The Rose Bishop stretched out its right hand and tapped its chest four times in the order of bottom to top, right to left.

With the color of blood and the light from the flames reflecting in his eyes, he looked at Bakerland and took a sudden step forward with his right foot, passing through the wall of fire. He didn’t receive any damage from the fire, with only dark red liquid that continuously dripped down.

Bakerland retreated once again as he suddenly raised his voice.

“Someone! Help me!”

Although his most capable assistant, Rosago, and several intelligence agents had been sent on a mission, there was still no lack of Beyonders in the embassy. They were military officials who had received permission from the Loen Kingdom. They were the defensive forces that were available!

One Sequence 5, one Sequence 6, three Sequence 7s, and a combination of nearly ten Sequence 8s and 9s.

Bakerland's voice echoed around the room, but it didn't exit the premises. The music outside didn't stop and the ball continued.

It was as though the room had become a completely isolated world!

"This…" Bakerland stopped his shouting, narrowed his eyes, and looked around.

The Rose Bishop was in no hurry to act. He said with a chuckle, "It was by your own will, the rules that were decided by yourself.

"You told the guards not to disturb you or come near, or let anyone close.

"Yes… I simply magnified your will and rules and made a slight distortion. If you want to escape this isolation, you have to defeat yourself."

Bakerland's expression changed slightly. What appeared to be the compliance of rules was, in fact, a distortion of them. The characteristic of using the power of authority to serve oneself made him think of another Sequence's name.

"Baron of Corruption!" Bakerland growled.

This was the Lawyer pathway, which was Sequence 6 of the Black Emperor pathway.

Before he could finish his sentence, Bakerland's face suddenly turned extremely gloomy as he blurted out, "Shepherd! You're a Shepherd!

"Who are you from the Aurora Order? Mr. A?

"Why are you assassinating me?

The Rose Bishop, no—Shepherd chuckled.

"You don't need to know who I am.

"Accept the Lord's blessings…"

His body suddenly stiffened before he could finish his sentence. It was as though his joints were covered in rust, and he seemed to have turned into a puppet.

Bakerland laughed rapturously. The gloominess from before disappeared in an instant. He took out a white handkerchief from his left breast pocket and wiped the corner of his mouth.

"I'm glad that you were able to chat with me for so long. It gave me enough time."

After the white handkerchief was taken away, a thumb-sized head emerged from his left breast pocket. It was the head of a puppet with completely black eyes!

The Shepherd opened his mouth and was about to speak when he heard a hollow voice that seemed to come from afar.

"You…"

After pausing, his body suddenly burgeoned, and his skin turned dark. Two curved goat horns with strange, sinister patterns sprouted from his head, as well as wings behind his back that reeked of sulfur when they flapped.

The Shepherd instantly moved three meters forward, having transformed into a devil-like creature.

But even so, it was as if every one of his joints was firmly shackled. His movements were stiff and slow, and his thoughts were starting to blur.

"You still have the power of the Devil? As expected of a Shepherd, let me send you to your Lord." Without further ado, a flaming long spear with a blazing white tip materialized in the middle of Bakerland's right palm.

He bent his back, about to throw the spear to pin the Shepherd to the wall and burn him to ashes.

Sequence 7 Pyromaniac of the Conspirer pathway had the ancient name, Fire Mage!

Cough! Cough! Cough! Cough!

At that moment, Bakerland began to cough violently, coughing so hard that he felt as if he was about to spit out his heart and lungs. His flaming spear lost control from his coughing and disappeared, inch by inch. His face flushed red and his forehead was scorching hot from his coughing fit.

His influence on his enemy, that he derived from a mystical item, was lifted. The Shepherd was freed from his sluggishness and returned to normal.

“Why do you think I was having such a long chat with you? How does severe pneumonia and an unstoppable cough feel like?” the devilish face asked with the corners of his mouth hooked.

Upon hearing these words, Bakerland suddenly recalled the enemy’s beautiful and enchanting appearance when he first appeared, and regretfully said, “Cough! Cough. A disease!

“You… Cough! Cough! Killed a… Cough! Cough! Cough! A Demoness of Affliction!”

The Shepherd dispelled his devil-like form as his figure turned into a series of stacked afterimages.

He chuckled and said, “No, I only received a gift from Saint Tenebrous.”

“I know Conspirers have all sorts of means available to them, so, I’ll be using my strongest ability now, so that you won’t have any unnecessary hope.”

A book appeared before him, a translucent and blurry book.

The ancient book flipped rapidly and with a soft chant, “I came, I saw, I record.

“As long as I have recorded it, I’ll be able to use it once. This is an ability that Saint Tenebrous had deliberately demonstrated to me. Although I only have half of its original effect, it’s still enough.” The Shepherd’s voice turned hollow, and his body was enveloped by the darkness that spewed out from the book.

He quickly turned into a small giant, about 2.3 to 2.4 meters tall. His entire body was covered in cold, black armor. At the space where his eyes should be, there were two glowing crimson red blobs.

The dark knight raised a broadsword in his hands, took a step forward, and delivered an unrelenting chop.

“No! Why?”

As Bakerland tragically screamed, the layers of flames that gushed out of his body were split apart. All sorts of lights exploded and were split open, and his body was split into two halves.

Thud! Bakerland fell to the ground. No blood came out of his massive wound. Even his soul seemed to be corroded and destroyed by the black sword that didn’t seem to exist.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The plumes of fire that spewed out of Bakerland’s body lost control, causing the blast that shook the room and sent the glass rattling. And at that moment, the isolation that had been created by his own will vanished with his death.

The Shepherd didn’t stop, nor did he wait for the Beyonder characteristic to appear. He restored his inconspicuous appearance and seized the opportunity before the military officials of the embassy arrived, sprinting through the layers of walls and into the darkness outside.

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At 15 Minsk Street, Klein paused with his right hand on the handle.

He decided to throw a coin before he opened the door.

Since Ian had already come, the revelation that he had seen in the dream had already happened. That meant that danger could come at any moment!

While muttering the words “the visitor outside will bring danger,” Klein flicked up a quarter pence and watched it fall to his palm, its number side facing up.

Negative… Klein muttered to himself as he reached for the handle.

However, he didn’t let his guard down. He knew that there was a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the same pathway as him on the ambassador’s side who could interfere with his divination.

If it was that person, it would be normal for him to get the wrong result!

It’s a pity that I don’t have the time or an opportunity to investigate it above the gray fog… Klein looked through the door for a moment with his Spirit Vision. Realizing that nothing was amiss, he opened the door and took two steps back.

Dressed in a black-and-white checkered uniform, Sergeant Faxine took off his hat and said with a serious expression, “I’ve been sent by the higher-ups to tell you that you must be careful tonight and tomorrow. Be careful of strangers.”

Chapter 250 - Rich Experience in Courting Death

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“Alright.” Klein nodded solemnly.

Sergeant Faxine touched his short hair and said, “There are other arrangements. I’ll explain them to you in detail, and you can decide on your own.”

He cast his gaze towards the living room.

Klein made a polite gesture of invitation, then watched as Sergeant Faxine closed the door behind him, walked over to the sofa, and sat down.

“What are your plans?” Klein kept his coat on, hands still in his pockets.

Faxine leaned forward slightly, clasped his hands, and said, “You should be well aware that you have offended that ambassador. Tonight or tomorrow will be the most dangerous period for you.

“The higher-ups have given you three choices. The first is to go to the Holy Wind Cathedral for two days. I know that you’re a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery, but Saint Hierländ Cathedral is too far, and it’s easy for trouble to arise on the way there.”

Kleinn nodded indiscernibly and waited for the sergeant to give him the second choice.

Suddenly, his vision blurred and his head went numb. He felt as if there was a layer of thick glass around him.

He saw that Sergeant Faxine's opening and closing of his mouth was slowing down, and he noticed that his thoughts had become sluggish.

This feeling was very familiar. Klein suddenly thought of the puppet from the Antigonus family, Sealed Artifact 2-049!

Back then, he was repeatedly affected in a similar way, but he had been awakened by Captain Dunn Smith and the others. To ensure that the others could detect any abnormalities in a timely manner, they kept stretching and retracting their arms!

The Antigonus family holds the Seer pathway… This person's ability is similar to the Antigonus family's puppet… He is the Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Seer pathway… As expected, it's him… Klein came to his senses, but there was no Dunn Smith to wake him.

The muscles on Officer Faxine's face started squirming. Soon, he turned into a gentleman with black hair and blue eyes. He had a handsome face and a tiny stubble.

He said with a smile, "Given time, this is one of the most difficult abilities to deal with for anyone that isn't a High-Sequence Beyonder."

As he spoke, Klein saw the image of the woman in the black regal dress appear in the glass of the oriel window.

She walked slowly and stiffly out of the glass; her blonde hair, her delicate face, and her pale face made her seem more like a doll than a living person.

"I never thought that you would be able to hire such a powerful bodyguard. If it wasn't for my divination ahead of time, I might have died here. What kind of compensation did you pay? By the way, my name is Rosago." Rosago didn't look back as he continued smiling at Klein, but he didn't expect a fluent answer from the man he controlled.

At that moment, he suddenly felt a cold breeze blow across his neck, causing his hair to stand on end as goosebumps appeared all over his body.

There seemed to be an invisible person at his back, breathing down his neck!

Rosago laughed, raised his left hand, and snapped his fingers.

Pow!

Flames suddenly soared up from his back, and a transparent shadow was set ablaze, quickly turning into ashes.

In Klein’s vision, these motions were all broken down into a grid of images.

This wasn’t because his opponent had turned slow, but was a result of his increasingly sluggish thoughts.

He already has me under control… Why isn’t he directly… killing me… Do all villains like to engage in lengthy monologues… No, he’s not stupid… He’s trying to conceal something with this discussion… Klein tried to think, to figure out the problem, but his thoughts were moving at an irresistibly slow pace.

He looked intently at Rosago, taking in every detail of his.

Finally, he saw a figure in each of Rosago’s eyes, a figure with blonde hair, blue eyes, a pale face, and a dark black Gothic regal dress!

And at this moment, the woman was still behind Rosago. She was still near the oriel window, walking towards him like a manipulated puppet.

He hasn’t really controlled her yet… She’s still trying to resist and struggle… They are tussling in the realm of mystery… I need to do something… I need to tip the scales of balance… Klein turned his attention to the Language of Foulness charm he was holding in his left hand. It was cold and slippery, filled with evil.

He was glad that he hadn’t let down his guard and maintained a battle-ready state the entire time.

He could only injure himself to injure his opponent! Klein gathered his strength and struggled to speak.

His vocal cords seemed to have rotted, and his throat squirmed in difficulty.

He hoarsely said in ancient Hermes with a staccato rhythm, “Foulness!”

As his voice echoed in the air, Klein felt a corrosive pain in his left palm, and he heard illusory whispers that could drive a person mad.

This was a state that he was familiar with, and it didn’t affect his subsequent attempts.

The attempt was to inject most of his spirituality into the Language of Foulness charm which didn’t require the control of his body.

In three seconds, the voice of the True Creator would descend upon the physical world and burrow into the ears of the creature closest to him!

“3!”

The prelude, the din, the illusory, the evil whispers spread out in an instant. Klein felt his scalp tingle, his mind abuzz, his veins throbbing. He found it difficult to focus his mind.

A coffee table away from him, Rosago’s expression had suddenly turned adrift. His face swelled up as the woman’s figure in his eyes suddenly became clearer.

“2!”

The pale woman in the black regal dress behind him quickened her actions, but soon, she frowned in pain.

At this moment, Klein felt the weakening of the influence as he wished, regaining his smooth thought processes and felt as though his joints were once again filled with lubricant!

Having experienced ravings all this time, he endured the madness and pain, quickly pulling out and throwing the Language of Foulness charm from his left palm at Rosago.

“1!”

The iron-black charm, with its many symbols and sinister-looking patterns, melted. Rosago had just regained some of his composure and was trying to leap to the side when he saw a rich darkness and heard a murmur that contained immense knowledge and extreme madness.

No human being was able to describe such a sound. All the veins in Rosago’s head protruded as if they were about to explode.

He tumbled to the ground, writhing and struggling as his skin ruptured, inch by inch, revealing the flesh underneath.

At the same time, Klein and the blonde woman with blue eyes also failed to resist the pain as they fell to the ground. Each of them let out tragic screams, the excruciating pain felt like someone had stabbed their temples with a drill rod.

Their eyes turned bloodshot as red liquid ran down their noses. They could neither see nor feel the outside world.

The experienced Klein was the first to recover. He staggered to his feet and saw that Rosago had torn off his clothes and stripped off his skin, exposing his flesh and veins.

He was like a legendary red monster that had been skinned. He constantly tumbled around the ground while groaning in pain, as if he was about to lose control.

Klein didn’t wait for the result, because he couldn’t afford the possibility of the other party gaining the benefits, as well as becoming a devotee of the True Creator.

He believed that the evil god was definitely infuriated as well.

Pulling out his revolver and adjusting the barrel to the firing position, Klein took two steps forward, circled around the coffee table, and put the muzzle of his gun against Rosago's head.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Dressed in his black double-breasted suit, he stared at his enemy intently as he shot five rounds in a row, watching his enemy's head swell and explode into a mixture of red, white, and black that splattered all over the floor.

Captain, thank you for demonstrating this to me before… Klein panted while he lowered his revolver before he beamed brightly.

In front of him, Rosago's headless corpse faltered a little before collapsing to the side of the sofa.

Only then did the woman in the black Gothic regal dress stop her screams. Her struggles and rolling slowed down, but her skin seemed to turn a lot more translucent.

Seeing the flesh on Rosago's corpse squirm, Klein didn't hesitate to use his self-created Requiem Charm.

Under the calm and serene atmosphere, the corpse finally stopped moving.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein thought of something. He took out another charm and chanted in a low voice, "Crimson!"

Then, he injected some of his spirituality into it and threw this charm at his bodyguard—the woman with the pale golden hair and pale white face.

As the slumbering powers emanated, the woman who was still weakened under the effect of the lingering voices instantly quietened down as she fell into a deep slumber.

Just to be sure, Klein threw another Slumber Charm, afraid that he would be interrupted during what he was planning to do next.

15 Minsk Street once again had its peace. This time, nothing was broken; only the ground was contaminated, as the fight between the three parties was mystical and beyond the physical realm.

Looking at Rosago's corpse and then at his sleeping bodyguard, Klein mocked himself, "It's also good to court death often. At least I gained some immunity."

He didn't attempt the mediumship ritual immediately because Rosago was now tainted by the True Creator, and directly communicating with the spirit was tantamount to committing suicide.

But that didn't mean Klein had no choice. He planned on doing the mediumship above the gray fog by bringing Rosago with him!

With his current spirit body's level, even with the augmentation provided by Azik's copper whistle, he was unable to move a portable camera, much less a corpse that was several times heavier. However, mediumship wasn't done with a corpse, but the channeling of the remnant spirituality!

Klein took out a candle, quickly set up a ritual ceremony, summoned himself, and responded to himself, turning into a special spirit body.

After becoming a spirit, he saw the distinct remnants of Rosago's spirituality, and he realized that Miss Bodyguard's physical condition was a little strange. She was actually in quite a similar state as he was, but there were also great differences.

Without wasting any time thinking, Klein carried Azik's copper whistle, wrapped the remaining of Rosago's spirituality, and entered above the gray fog.

After conjuring the appropriate ritual items and setting up a simple altar, Klein quickly began the mediumship ritual.

During this process, he was shocked to discover that he no longer needed to pray to anyone to be able to directly communicate with the spirit. It was like he was a real spirit medium!

Phew… Is this some special power that I possess in the mysterious space above the gray fog? A thought flashed through Klein's mind as he began to recite the divination statement.

"The potion formulas for the Seer pathway."

Chapter 251 - Gains

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“The potion formulas for the Seer pathway.”

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Klein leaned back in his chair and tried to communicate with the spirit via dream divination.

In a gray illusory world that didn’t seem surreal, a gas lamp suddenly lit up, illuminating the stone slabs on the ground and a desk with a goatskin scroll placed on top of it.

After the Seer and Clown formulas appeared one after another, Rosago stood there with a fur shirt, listening to a voice of unknown origins.

“Before the advancement, I have to warn you that you’ve been too reliant on divination.

“Divination is a revelation, a result; it is unable to tell us the process. For example, you might decide to invest all your money because your divination says that a railway stock can make money. But in fact, what that revelation really means is that in the long run, in thirty years, the railway stock will make money, and before that, it will fall more than it rises. Fate isn’t so easy to master, and there are many times when it’s impossible to quantify it. Divination isn’t all-powerful.

“In addition, divination can be interfered with and cause you to be misled. There are too many things in this world that cannot be understood. If you completely rely on divination, then you’ll definitely die because of it.

“Divination is a revelation. It must be combined with one’s own carefulness, caution, and self-control.”

Rosago was unable to divine the corresponding danger because the Language of Foulness was involved with the mysterious space above the gray fog, and that led to him dying at my hands. Otherwise, with his mystical abilities, it would’ve been difficult for Miss Bodyguard and I to escape today… This is also a reminder for me. Even if I had the gray fog to isolate all interferences, I cannot afford to be careless. No matter how certain my actions are, I need to leave some leeway… From these words, it seems like they aren’t aware of the “acting method.” Otherwise, some of those words could be directly summed up as being respectful and fearful of fate… As his thoughts raced, Klein heard Rosago’s reply as he unfurled the parchment.

“Sequence 7, Magician:

“Main ingredients: One true root of a Mist Treant, all the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther.”

“Supplementary ingredients: 60 ml of purified water, 30 ml of Mist Treant’s juice, 3 grams of Droplet Gem powder, 4 drops of Fantasy Grass essential oil.”

Magician… This is also part of a circus. It can form the foundations of a circus with Seers and Clowns… Klein first lampooned before he recalled the suited clown that he had encountered before.

From the looks of it, he was a Magician. His abilities seemed to include the ability to fire air bullets, making flaming jumps, and drawing slips of paper as weapons… Not bad… Just being able to cast spells quickly can greatly increase my battle prowess…

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein saw the scene before him change.

This time it was a splendid room, surrounded by golden statues and ornaments.

It was the same voice from before, but it reminded Rosago of the same thing.

“According to my experience, after you consume the Faceless potion, you have to remember this point—you can disguise yourself into anyone, but you are ultimately yourself.

Faceless? Sequence 6 of the Seer pathway is Faceless? This should be the Beyonder power that allowed Rosago to transform into Officer Faxine… From the looks of it, the fake Detective Zreal was also played by him…

Creeping Hunger allowed Qilangos to transform into a person with different looks. This matches this Beyonder power. From the looks of it, some Faceless died at his hand… Such a power cannot augment a person in a straight-up battle, but it’s more useful than 90% of all Beyonder powers on many occasions… It’s no wonder that Rosago dared to come and attempt to kill me, and wasn’t afraid of falling into a trap… This power is of great significance to me!

At this thought, Klein’s eyes widened as he saw Rosago pick up a thin gold page with words written in Hermes.

“Sequence 6, Faceless:

“Main ingredients: Mutated pituitary gland of a Thousand-faced Hunter, Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow.

“Supplementary ingredients: 80 ml of a Thousand-faced Hunter’s blood, 5 drops of black Jimsonweed juice, 10 grams of Dragon Tooth Grass powder, 3 strands of hair from a Deep-sea Naga.”

Thousand-faced Hunter? That seems to be a type of dragon, but not a particularly powerful kind… It shouldn’t be a dragon of the spiritual system, but it’s still extremely rare. It’s almost extinct… Klein instantly recalled the corresponding mysticism knowledge.

At this point, the scene before him didn't change, but Rosago's attire and location did.

He wore a white wig, a dark tuxedo, and had a thick beard.

"This advancement is no longer as simple as before. The potions must be consumed in conjunction with a ritual. If you succeed, you'll obtain one of the most irresistible Beyonder powers beneath that of the High-Sequence Beyonders." The speaker's voice had changed, turning into one that sounded even older.

Having expected that, Rosago asked, "What's the ritual?"

"Go to the sea, find a mermaid, and drink the potion while she's singing." The speaking old man opened an ancient book that depicted countless mysterious symbols in it.

Suddenly, a ray of light flashed from the book's surface as lines of ancient Hermes appeared in midair.

"Sequence 5, Marionettist."

When Klein saw this, he suddenly had a headache. It was a signal that his spirituality was close to being drained.

In the previous battle, just the Language of Foulness charm, alone, had consumed most of his spirituality. Later on, not only did he use three more charms from the Evernight Goddess's domain, but he had also summoned himself and responded to himself. To hold out until now showed how much progress he had made compared to before, as well as the noticeable improvement in the digestion of the Clown potion.

The scene flickered and was on the brink of shattering. Klein held on and scanned the remaining content of the formula.

"Main ingredients: Dust of ancient wraiths, core crystal of a six-winged gargoyle.

“Supplementary ingredients: 80 ml of spring water from Sonia Island’s Golden Spring, 10 grams of drago bark, remnant spirituality of ancient wraiths, 1 pair of eyes from a six-winged gargoyle.

“Advancement ritual: Consume potion in the midst of a singing mermaid’s song.”

Kacha. Klein stopped holding out any longer as he allowed the dream to shatter into countless illusory specks of light that disappeared.

He pinched his forehead, almost fainting. As the remnants of Rosago’s spirituality and the hints of madness faded away, he was pushed back into the real world by an invisible force.

The ground, stained with blood, brains, hair, and all sorts of fragments, entered Klein’s vision. He bent over and retched a little, clearing his head a little.

I’ll be sent out of the mysterious space above the gray fog when I’m out of spirituality… Klein looked around and saw that Miss Bodyguard was still asleep.

He hurriedly extinguished the candle, tidied up the items related to the ritual, and then panted heavily. After a while, he finally regained some of his spirituality.

At that moment, a gust of cold wind blew at the back of his neck, causing him to shiver as his mind froze.

Klein turned his head abruptly and looked at the oriel window again. He saw that Miss Bodyguard in her black Gothic regal dress had woken up and was floating in the air.

Her pale blonde hair and pale face seemed to have diminished a little. Her entire person seemed less corporeal, to the point of her skin appearing somewhat transparent.

Klein quickly explained according to the explanation he had thought of.

"After I blew his head off, I discovered that his body was still squirming. Because I was afraid he would come back alive, I quickly used all the charms on me. I-I was very nervous and panicked at the time. It might have affected you."

This is probably the risk that the divination had revealed earlier… If she's not satisfied with the explanation and thinks that I attacked her, then I'm finished… Klein thought nervously.

His true feelings made his performance even more perfect.

Miss Bodyguard lowered her head and looked at herself, then asked with an unperturbed tone, "What charm was it at the beginning?"

"I bought a black ear at the gathering for 400 pounds. I was told that I could hear the voice of a great existence, and that if I was lucky enough, I would benefit greatly. If I was unlucky, I would die on the spot. Back then, I couldn't get a bodyguard, and since I was in such danger, I could only take the gamble. The result was pretty good," Klein replied absolutely truthfully. "When I heard the voice of the great existence, that black ear shattered by itself and turned into such a charm."

Miss Bodyguard's blue eyes swept over him slowly. The room was silent, as if it was frozen.

Finally, the lady in the black regal dress nodded.

"You'd better find a psychiatrist."

Do you mean that I've become a potential lunatic? Yes, she has guessed that it was a relic of a Listener, and she understands that Rosago's spirituality must've been tainted by the True Creator. She wouldn't suspect that I had deliberately made her sleep to take that opportunity to perform a mediumship… It would also explain why I had gotten rid of the effects of the ravings faster than she did. After all, I'm a potential lunatic created by the True Creator… Klein smirked.

"Let's hurry up and clean up the scene. MI9 might come over to take a look." He pointed at Rosago's headless body.

As he spoke, Klein put on a pair of gloves and squatted down to look for any relics.

He quickly found more than ten pounds in cash, some essential oils and herbal powder, two crudely cut paper figurines, and a strange piece of paper.

This piece of paper was orange in color, and on it were symbols corresponding to the sun. The magic emblem formed a blank rectangle, and just by holding it in his hand, he found it very warm and sedate.

"What is this?" Klein didn't hide his puzzlement.

Without him realizing it, Miss Bodyguard was already floating behind him. She answered simply, "A mystical object corresponding to a Notary."

"Notary?" Klein was surprised at first, but he soon remembered that Rosago was an intelligence officer in the Intis Republic. People there believed in the Eternal Blazing Sun and the God of Steam and Machinery. Similarly, the Eternal Blazing Sun was also the God of Deeds.

This is the Sequence 6 or Sequence 5 of the Bard pathway?

"If the notarization is valid, the Beyonder powers will be temporarily enhanced. If the notarization is invalid, the Beyonder powers will be forcefully dispersed." Miss Bodyguard didn't explain any further and gave a rough description of its use.

Klein was about to say something when he saw an eerie glow emitting out of Rosago's headless body and bloody brain mush. They attracted each other to form a blob that transformed into a black, pupil-less eye.

"Then, what is this?" Klein asked again, feigning ignorance.

"Something worthless." Miss Bodyguard maintained her way of speaking.

“Worthless?” Klein asked with a frown.

He actually understood what Miss Bodyguard meant. Normally, if Rosago eventually lost control, he would leave behind a strange and terrifying Sealed Artifact. If he didn’t, his Beyonder characteristic could be used as the main ingredient of a Marionettist. In short, it would be of great value.

However, the problem was that he hadn’t lost control but was also tainted by the True Creator. Hence, it had become a potion’s main ingredient that was branded by an evil god. Using it to concoct a Marionettist potion was equivalent to committing suicide by ingesting poison.

Miss Bodyguard looked at the entirely black eye and said in a low and ethereal voice.

“It has been contaminated by an evil god. It has no value anymore.”

If it really is of value, and one that’s very valuable, I would even worry that you’d finish me off in passing… Klein pointed at Rosago’s remains and said, “These are our common spoils of war. We’ll each pick a few. You first.”

Miss Bodyguard shot him a glance. Without a word, she floated over and took the “Notary Certificate.”

Just like I thought… In the future, I should find and learn the knowledge in mysticism to remove an evil god’s contamination… Klein took out an iron cigar case and bent down to pick up the black eye.

Chapter 252 - Epilogue

◆

As soon as Klein's fingers touched the black eye, he heard illusory sounds as a throbbing pain seared through his head.

But, at the same time, something strange appeared in his vision.

These were countless illusory black threads that spread out from Miss Bodyguard and his own body. They emanated from their bodies, out into the void towards some boundless distance.

This was a scene that would horrify people with trypophobia.

Klein suddenly gritted his teeth, unable to endure the corruptive feeling any longer as he placed the black eye into the iron cigar case.

Everything restored to normal, and the negative side effects he suffered subsided.

Only then did Klein have the energy to make guesses.

Is that the essence of a Marionettist's Beyonder powers?

It allows one to see and control certain threads connecting every person's body and spirit?

What a pity that it's contaminated. The side effects are too great, and it cannot be used as a mystical item…

For now, disregarding an attempt to purify it above the gray fog, this will be considered the second time that I'm provoking the True Creator, so it is very likely that “He” would prepare “Himself” and seek me out… If that happened, I probably wouldn’t have a chance of reviving again… I should learn and master the relevant knowledge before making a decision…

Phew. He exhaled, and after Miss Bodyguard chose the crude paper figurines and the corresponding materials, he bent down again to pick up the 13 pounds 5 soli and 8 pence.

Then, looking at Rosago’s headless body and the blood all over the floor, he said, with a slight headache, “Let’s clean up the scene.”

The pale blonde Miss Bodyguard floated to the side and calmly said, “Let me do it.”

You? Klein stopped, puzzled and shocked, before turning his head.

Miss Bodyguard floated to Rosago’s side, crouched down, and went to lie down over the body.

She slowly sank in and fused with the corpse!

The fingers of Rosago’s body twitched twice, and the blood, brain matter, and fragments around it flowed backward, forming a new head at the neck.

However, the head was covered with countless cracks, just like a disgusting toy made from tiny fragments.

It was like glass that had been shattered but didn’t crumble immediately. There was still blood and brain matter flowing inside it, as well as the reflection of the bullet from the revolver.

Klein couldn’t help but take a step back, feeling that this was definitely one of the most terrifying forms in any ghost story.

Rosago’s corpse climbed to its feet, picked up the police cap, and half covered its face. The murder scene had been cleaned, leaving zero traces.

Incomparable professionalism! Klein marveled in his heart.

He watched as Miss Bodyguard steered the corpse to lumber to the door. He subconsciously warned her, “Don’t take a carriage or walk in brightly-lit places.”

It would frighten the carriage driver and other passers-by!

Miss Bodyguard didn’t stop, completely ignoring his words.

Suddenly, Klein thought of something. He realized what he had overlooked as he quickly added, “On the way back, go to the Rice police station, Sergeant Faxine’s home, or search around Minsk Street for the clothes Rosago was originally wearing.”

Rosago came wearing a police uniform, and the powers of a Faceless were obviously limited to himself, so where were his previous clothes? He couldn’t have been wearing a police uniform all night! If MI9 and the police found Rosago’s clothes nearby and realized that I’m not hurt, things would be a little tricky… Miss Bodyguard is an expert that’s not considered a legal Beyonder. For a normal detective to pay 1000 pounds to hire a bodyguard is enough to arouse suspicion… Klein kept thinking, trying to seal all the loopholes ahead of time.

Just as he was about to use his divination ability to help Miss Bodyguard find Rosago’s old clothes and return the missing uniform, Rosago’s corpse paused and replied in a rusty voice, “I know.”

Eh, she seems very confident… Oh right, Miss Bodyguard’s state is between the physical body and the spirit body, and the principle behind divination is to travel the spirit world with an Astral Projection… Thus, she can rely on her instincts to divine… Having realized this, Klein didn’t say another word. He handed the cartridge case to Rosago’s corpse and watched it open the door, walk out, and close the door politely.

The spoil of war that I chose is a Beyonder characteristic contaminated by the True Creator. I believe that no one would be able to divine it. Even if they did, they would feel the danger ahead of time and wouldn't dare to proceed with the divination… While thinking over the matter, Klein walked back to the sofa and sat down, feeling a lingering sense of fear.

The battle had lasted no more than a minute, nor had it been fierce enough to destroy anything, but the ferocity and danger of it had been second only to what he had experienced when facing Megose and the baby in her womb.

Even with the powerful Miss Bodyguard and the Language of Foulness, he had almost fallen under Rosago's control and killed without being able to put up a resistance.

The ability of a Marionettist is very odd and very powerful! According to the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation, the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Rosago should include all of the main ingredients of the potions Sequences 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. If it wasn't contaminated by an evil god, if it was matched with the supplementary ingredients, an ordinary person could instantly become a Sequence 5 Beyonder. Of course, this kind of advancement method—one depending entirely on luck—has long been abandoned by history. It's the most primitive and most dangerous method…

Advancing step by step according to the Sequence is the best way that has been verified by the lives of countless predecessors… If I can get rid of the corruption of the True Creator in the future, then I can also use the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Rosago when advancing from Sequence 6 to Sequence 5. The additional characteristics will only make me stronger, like the Captain…

As Klein recalled the past, he raised his hand to pinch his forehead. He turned to think about something more important.

Rosago's appearance meant that the struggle for the manuscript had ended… Could his lack of charms have to do with him finishing all his charms in the battle? To come at such a critical juncture, it's likely he had the intention of diverting attention… Heh, MI9 probably didn't expect him to seek revenge so boldly under such circumstances. They didn't send anyone to monitor me and could only passively wait for Rosago to give them the "signal"…

Rosago was Bakerland's assistant, and his actions should be directed only by Bakerland. After his death, as long as Bakerland is dead, there would be no more latent dangers left… I wonder if the assassination has begun or if it succeeded…

Hmm… Tonight, because of the battle over Helmosuin's manuscript, the powers defending Bakerland would be at its weakest. If it were me, I'd definitely not miss this opportunity. I'm sure Bakerland didn't think that someone would assassinate him!

With nothing to do, Klein fished out a coin and, with recited with a suppressed tone, "Bakerland is already dead."

†

Ding!

The penny tumbled in the air and fell down into the palm of Klein's hand, head facing up.

It meant a positive result!

Bakerland is dead? The assassination was a success? Klein was overjoyed, his tensed up nerves immediately relaxed.

Without Rosago's interference, he believed that the result was correct!

This matter has finally ended… Klein took a deep breath and slowly exhaled.

He leaned back slowly on the sofa and looked out of the window at the faint crimson moon amid his fatigue and relief.

†

Inside the Intis Republic's embassy, two military officials were squatting beside Bakerland's body, examining the cause of his death.

Their partners and their superior had already gone out, chasing in a bid to capture the assassin. However, everyone knew that it was already too late. There was no hope left.

"There's severe lung damage, suspected to be the result of a disease… An extremely strong fatal blow, one much stronger than all the Sequence 5 Beyonder attacks I've ever seen…" one of the military officials said in a low voice.

"Disease? On the floor and on the bed, there are obvious marks of flesh and blood magic on the ground and on the bed, but none on the wall. Besides, the commotion of the fight wasn't transmitted outside. Finally, with the lethal blow having the characteristics of corruption and obliteration, there are at least four unconnected Beyonder powers…" Another military official stood up and began to describe the situation as if he was talking to himself.

He suddenly stopped and looked at the other military official. They said in unison, "Shepherd!"

After a few seconds of silence, the squatting military official frowned and said, "It might be a group with at least four different Beyonders…"

"Then, we'll wait to be judged! It's normal for us not to discover the infiltration of a single Rose Bishop, but how did the other three do it? It's impossible!" The standing military official denied the guess as he hesitantly said, "However, I have heard of another Sequence that can create similar effects. I-I think it's called Scribe. I don't know what pathway it is, nor do I know which organization it belongs."

The squatting military official nodded and said, “A Shepherd is the prime suspect. The Aurora Order are a bunch of lunatics. It’s nothing odd for them to do anything! Let’s begin investigating the identity of the woman that seduced the ambassador. Damn it. The Loen Kingdom definitely won’t permit our investigations!”

“Those Aurora Order bastards are lunatics who deserve to be f*cked by donkeys!” The standing military official shook his head in frustration.

They were bound to be punished for the ambassador’s assassination.

†

At 15 Minsk Street, Klein pretended as though nothing had happened. Putting up with his fatigue, he flipped through the papers.

After about twenty minutes, he suddenly saw Miss Bodyguard, in her black regal dress and long, pale blonde hair, appear in the oriel window.

“Is it done?” Klein subconsciously asked.

Miss Bodyguard nodded slightly without a word.

Phew… Klein thought for a moment before saying, “Thank you for your protection. This matter ends here.

“I’ll pay you the remaining 900 pounds in two days. As you know, there’s a withdrawal limit.

“Or should I hand it over to Maric?”

The pale-faced lady opened and closed her mouth, her voice seemingly ethereal as it echoed in the air.

“Just give it to me.

“I promised to protect you for three days, not just once.”

Lady, you really abide by the contract… However, this would be very inconvenient for me… Are you going with me to catch the adulterers in bed tomorrow? Three days. Today is Thursday, and the protection would be over by Sunday afternoon. Yes, thankfully, it wouldn't affect the Tarot Gathering… Klein rubbed his forehead and said, "Alright. How should I address you?"

"You don't need to know." Miss Bodyguard lifted her gothic regal dress, bowed slightly, and disappeared from the oriel window.

Chapter 253 - Night Thoughts

◆

She really has… quite the character! Klein smiled in response to Miss Bodyguard’s reply—a very obvious smile.

Yes, to be able to fend off Rosago, a Marionettist, for a short period of time to the extent of having a seesaw battle; she’s most likely a Sequence 5 Beyonder. I wonder what Sequence pathway she belongs to and what her potion name is. Her state is rather unique… If it weren’t for her, I wouldn’t have even had the chance to use the Language of Foulness… Klein picked up the newspaper beside him and pretended to read, but he was actually thinking.

However, he quickly turned his attention back to the issue of whether there were still loopholes on the matter. For example, the contaminated Beyonder characteristic left behind by Rosago had an intense luster of spirituality. It was very likely that it couldn’t be concealed by the iron cigar case alone, so it would be exposed under the prying eyes of others using Spirit Vision.

Klein secretly activated his Spirit Vision and looked down at his pocket. He could see faint colorful lusters emanating from within the iron cigar case, but it wasn’t obvious and was rather thin.

This was mixed with the color of his own aura, making it difficult to distinguish or detect it.

That’s right. Only a High-Sequence Beyonder can identify it through two levels of interference… No wonder all kinds of materials like herbal powders and the corresponding essential oil extracts are kept in metal bottles and not wooden vessels. It's because they contain spirituality, and those with better Spirit Vision can see through wood and see the color of the auras… Klein suddenly understood some of the important details in mysticism.

In the past, he did things according to the rules without considering the reasons behind them, but now, he understood the underlying reason behind the rules.

After repeatedly checking and ensuring that everything was in order, Klein put down the newspapers and walked to the second floor.

He had originally planned to take off his clothes and take a bath to completely relax himself, but when he thought of how Miss Bodyguard could appear out of nowhere in his house, he felt a little uneasy. Therefore, he only washed his face, brushed his teeth, and soaked his feet in hot water.

Returning to his bedroom and taking off his coat, Klein hid his belongings before he collapsed onto the bed. As he was exhausted and had held on for quite a while, he ended up with tense nerves that prevented him from quickly falling asleep.

Opening his eyes to look at the crimson moonlight on the ceiling, Klein didn't attempt to sleep with the help of Cogitation. Instead, he aimlessly unfurled his thoughts, as if he were riding a horse without pulling at the reins.

As his thoughts wandered, he quickly noticed a problem having encountered too many coincidences in Tingen City and later learning how it was related to Sealed Artifact 0-08.

My second case after arriving at Backlund allowed me to get the next three potions formulas. Is that too much of a coincidence?

Although this is in line with the revelation from my divination —"Backlund contains the opportunities for me to become powerful."

Isn’t it too fast and simple?

Simple doesn’t refer to the difficulty, but rather to the degree of twists and turns in the matter. This matter was very difficult and dangerous, but it wasn’t complex and appeared simple.

According to my expectations, I would’ve gathered information regarding the Secret Order through Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and Miss Xio and her companion, and then I would catch the tail of this ancient organization. After numerous twists and turns, I would eventually obtain the formulas and that would have taken at least three months. Who knew that I would’ve succeeded in less than three weeks…

It can’t be that it was arranged by someone again, right?

Yes… Let me think through the circumstances again. It’s no coincidence that the Intis Republic is related to the Secret Order. Emperor Roselle’s diary has confirmed this circumstantially.

The abilities of the Seer and Faceless are very suited for an intelligence organization. For a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of a similar pathway to become the assistant of an intelligence tsar like Bakerland is reasonable and normal. That’s not a coincidence.

The reason that the ambassador sent someone to take revenge on me likely has to do with him wanting to divert attention. Then, sending Rosago, who can most easily succeed and escape, is a choice with reduced risk. That’s not surprising at all.

It was quite normal for Ian to look for new detectives in the papers after none of the detectives he knew were willing to accept his mission of tracking down Zreal. There weren’t many new detectives advertising on the papers at the time, and I was probably the only one. Well, I was the only one on the Backlund Bulletin…

Just like what I’ve concluded previously, the problem with Meursault was that he was too rash, and I was worried that it's not easy to disguise myself usually as it can end up attracting more attention. Therefore, I didn't try to disguise myself. Although these two possibilities, especially the former, has the probability of being influenced, it does match the corresponding person's personality, mentality, and origins.

And this isn't the main point. This doesn't explain the problem of how my second case ended up involving a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Seer pathway.

It was destined by fate? That doesn't feel right.

Thinking ahead, after I transmigrated, the first and second case I found myself embroiled in was related to the Seer pathway. Of course, it could be explained as an arrangement by 0-08.

Right, the Antigonus family's notebook even corrupted the Misfortune Cloth Puppet and showed me the complicated vertical eye symbol that involves the Antigonus family's treasure. The reason I came up with back then was that with the termination of the Antigonus family's bloodline, it viewed me, a Seer who had survived despite having interacted with it, as its inheritor.

Now that I think about it, this reason is extremely trifling. What if I'm a devout believer of the Evernight Goddess? However, I only made a guess at that time and didn't confirm it.

The Antigonus family's treasure is obviously related to the Seer pathway.

Thinking deeper, why did I transmigrate? Why did I happen to possess Klein's body, and not anyone else… Back then, Klein had just proceeded with dark divination and was made to commit suicide by the Antigonus family's notebook. And that notebook is clearly related to the Seer pathway.

In addition, the first time I saw Roselle's diary, it had content that involved his regret of not choosing Apprentice, Marauder, or Seer. That was very coincidental.

From beginning to end, except for those parts involving 0-08, everything appeared to be in a mess. It doesn't seem like a conscious arrangement, but more like a kind of passive attraction, a mutual attraction, an attraction that has breaks between them.

I attract things and items regarding the Seer pathway, and at the same time, I'm attracted to them?

It does seem odd thinking about it. This kind of attraction even directly influences fate, preventing even Mr. Azik from seeing through it?

Is there some strange characteristic to me?

And this characteristic allows me to resurrect a limited number of times?

With this in mind, Klein suddenly had the impulse to go above the gray fog to perform a divination and confirm his ideas.

But he quickly rejected this idea, not only because Miss Bodyguard might be watching in the mirror, but also because he believed that his greatest characteristic was the mysterious space above the gray fog!

Therefore, it was obviously impossible for him to have an answer if he were to use it to divine about it.

At least for now, there aren't any obvious signs of manipulation. It would be acceptable if it's just pure attraction… And I've already chosen a Beyonder pathway, that cannot be changed until Sequence 4, so I can only take things one step at a time… Right, I should be firm about not heading to the Hornacis mountain range to seek out the Antigonus family's treasure… Heh heh, I have a feeling that I would say how nice it is in the future when I actually do it… Klein silently made a self-deprecating remark as he felt his exhaustion gradually wash over him. His eyelids couldn't help but close.

The last thought before he fell asleep was:

I should participate in more Beyonder gatherings and gather the corresponding Beyonder ingredients for Magician through Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and The Sun. I wouldn't reject anything for Faceless if they were available. In addition, I should obtain mystical items that have less severe negative effects. Before my digestion and increase in strength, it's best to have more life-preservation abilities… Apart from this, investing, taking on jobs, saving up money, and attempts to look for Lanevus to use him as the starting point for my revenge, can also be considered a form of practice…

Those were Klein's future plans.

At seven in the morning, he woke up as usual. It was still gloomy and hazy outside.

Klein got up and walked to the door. As he passed by the full-length mirror, he saw that Miss Bodyguard had suddenly appeared.

She wore the same black bonnet, her face was as pale as ever. Her voice pierced through the glass and slipped into Klein's ear in an ethereal fashion.

"Someone from MI9 came last night."

Eh… I should say as expected, the "police" came late, but I still have to thank them for being late… Klein smiled and asked, "They didn't find anything, right?"

In regards to the answer, he was very certain that if MI9 had discovered something, he wouldn't have been able to sleep undisturbed.

"No." Miss Bodyguard's figure faded and disappeared into the mirror.

This ability of hers is very powerful… Even Spirit Vision can't detect her… Perhaps, she can be seen with Rosago's Beyonder characteristic? Find Miss Bodyguard through those hidden threads? Klein's mind stirred as he returned to the bed and took out the iron cigar case from under his pillow.

Just as he touched it, before he could even open it, a bone-piercing cold rushed at his neck. He felt his hairs stand on end, and his entire body trembled.

Pow!

His hand loosened and the iron cigar case fell to the ground.

This is a warning from Miss Bodyguard… Klein laughed dryly, pretending as though nothing had happened as he stuffed the iron cigar case into his pocket.

After washing up and putting on his clothes, he arrived at the first floor and took out the newspapers that he had subscribed to from his letterbox.

Flipping open the Tussock Times, Klein saw the headline:

“Intis Ambassador to Backlund murdered! Terrorist organization, the Aurora Order, claims responsibility!”

The result is out so quickly? Besides, the Aurora Order had only accepted a job, so why would they claim responsibility? Yes… A terrorist organization needs to show off their stature and build up their image. Only then would they be able to attract enough fresh blood. This complements their secret preachings… Mr. A is very good. He should be a Shepherd. Klein stood in the hallway, reading the news.

According to the news, there was evidence of the Aurora Order’s assault on Ambassador Bakerland. In the follow-up investigation, they found a letter deliberately left behind by the Aurora Order which claimed responsibility for it.

At the end of the news, the reporter briefly introduced the Aurora Order and listed some of the illegal crimes that they had committed. Their fame instantly surpassed most of the secret organizations.

Regardless, this matter had come to an end… Klein exhaled, turned his head to look out the window, and he saw a thin mist filling the air as a drizzle began pattering down.

Shouldn’t there be bright sunshine and sunny weather during such moments? Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh.

And now, he had to go out to catch some adulterers.

Chapter 254 - Various Parties

◆

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey, with a white napkin covering her, watched as the dining maidservant cut her a piece of bacon, laid out two fully-fried eggs, spread fruit jam on a piece of soft bread, and added sauce to some grilled mushrooms.

In a true noble family, maidservants were divided into many categories. Apart from personal maids, there were maids for the different bedrooms, study room maids, activity room maids, guest room maids, dressing maids, shoe maids, jewelry maids, dining maids, laundry maids, and kitchen maids. They were strictly assigned to their own tasks, with one task handled by one maid.

Although this was a great waste of manpower, for nobles, propriety was everything. Unless there was a large amount of debt, they would never reduce their requirements in such matters.

Audrey took a sip of the brownish-red tea, allowing the faint scent of malt and rose slush in her mouth.

At this moment, she heard her father, a Member of Parliament of the House of Lords, the powerful banker, Earl Hall, mumbling as he held a newspaper in his hands.

“The Aurora Order is really crazy.”

Aurora Order? Audrey blinked and asked curiously, “What did they do?”

"Oh, baby, you don't want to know. They assassinated the Intis Ambassador, Bakerland. It does them no good." Earl Hall shook his head as he flipped through the newspaper.

Audrey's elder brother, the count's eldest son, Hibbert Hall swallowed the grilled mushrooms in his mouth and expressed his opinion.

"Perhaps they want to destroy the relationship between the kingdom and Intis and let the war spread from the colonies to the Northern Continent."

This child of noble birth had a handsome face and bright golden hair. He looked like a classical sculpture, regardless of which angle one viewed him from.

"No, if that was the case, then they wouldn't leave behind so much obvious evidence. Moreover, recently, the kingdom has too many new policies that will be implemented and will need some time to stabilize the environment, so we won't rashly start a war. What happened last night was already reported in the newspaper this morning, and the details of the events and the murderer are enough to explain the thoughts of His Majesty and the ministers." Earl Hall directed his son.

Audrey listened to her father and brother discuss the matter in a daze before realizing what had happened.

Bakerland has been assassinated?

Mr. A succeeded?

He really is from the Aurora Order?

The reason why he intentionally exposed that it was the Aurora Order who did it was to prove that he was the one who completed the task and that he hadn't cheated me out of my money?

This is too fast and efficient. I only paid the first sum yesterday afternoon, and I'm hearing the result this morning. A good result!

Audrey was astonished and delighted. It was an uncontrollable joy, but also an instinctive fear.

It was definitely something to be happy about since the mission entrusted by Mr. Fool's Blessed had been accomplished so easily. However, the power and actions displayed by Mr. A and the Aurora Order who was backing him left Audrey subconsciously scared.

Thankfully, I talked with Glaint yesterday and reached a loan agreement. As a viscount, he should've successfully raised the money without drawing attention to himself… I'll give Mr. A the remaining funds in the coming two days through Xio and Fors. I can't afford to show my face… I won't be attending Mr. A's gathering for the next month or two. It's good that I already have other circles… Audrey took a reserved bite of the soft bread which was slathered with jam.

As breakfast drew to a close, small cakes of cream, cherries, and strawberries were served to her plate, and she suddenly felt a little smug as she calmed down.

Mr. Hanged Man wanted to take part in the mission, but he might've only just now completed his initial assignment… but it's already over. Serves him right to be at sea~ Audrey was in a good mood, and she was smiling as she savored the dessert.

†

At Hillston Borough, Xio and Fors looked at the newspaper in front of them and made no further movements for a long time.

"…This was done by Mr. A, wasn't it?" Xio looked at her friend with a shocked and puzzled look.

Fors turned the stone bracelet on her wrist and shook her head in a daze.

"Perhaps."

“I know about the Aurora Order, but I don’t know if Mr. A is a member of the Aurora Order.”

“He should be. After all, we only gave him 2,000 pounds yesterday. I doubt anyone else would also want to assassinate Ambassador Bakerland…” Xio said with uncertainty.

Fors was silent for a few seconds before she suddenly sighed and said, “Whether it was Mr. A or not, we still have to give him the remaining 8000 pounds. At the moment, no one can prove that he didn’t do it. If we want to stay in this circle, we can’t renege on the debt!”

“Anyway, we’re not the ones paying… And we’ll still get 500 pounds for the work!” With that, Xio became happy.

“The thing is, I always have a feeling that finding Mr. A again would be dangerous…” Fors pondered and said, “I’ll go by myself to make the last payment. It’ll be better for the both of us.”

“But…” Xio was a little worried.

“If you follow me, it’ll affect my escape,” Fors shook the bracelet on her wrist and said in a disdainful tone.

“Alright then,” Xio scratched her short, rough blond hair as she helplessly replied.

While the two of them were fretting about this, a new message from Mr. A came to them from a private communication channel. He told them not to look for him, but to deposit the rest of the money in separate anonymous accounts at different banks.

Phew… Xio and Fors breathed a sigh of relief in unison.

†

In a basement that was as wide as a temple, Mr. A, wearing a hooded black robe, was kneeling in the darkness, murmuring something reverently.

In front of him was a three-meter statue of a man hanging upside down with his legs chained up.

This hanged man had a giant's unique single vertical eye, and his arms were stretched out horizontally, forming a cross.

At this moment, a man with a black robe came in and humbly reported, "Mr. A, I've already sent the news."

"Well done," Mr. A said, without turning his head.

The man in the black robe asked curiously, "Why don't you let us investigate who commissioned this mission?"

Mr. A lowered his head and said with an indifferent tone, "There's no need.

"You must remember that this is a critical moment.

"We will cause chaos throughout the continent, try our best to attract the attention of others, and use these to welcome the return of our Lord!

"Hahaha. Cough! Cough! Cough…"

Mr. A suddenly laughed before he started having a fit of coughing. It was so serious that he fell to the ground.

"Cough! Cough!"

He coughed out blood-colored fragments which continued squirming after falling to the ground as if they were alive.

The man in the black robe immediately lowered his head, pretending as though he had seen nothing.

After quite some time, Mr. A finally calmed down.

He crawled forward, his mouth pressed against the ground as he licked all the blood-colored fragments that he had coughed out back into his mouth.

†

126 New Year's Street, Hillston Borough.

The relaxed Klein didn't tail Doragu Gale this time. Instead, he chose his mistress, Erica Taylor. After all, adultery needed two to clap.

The pretty blonde, with the intricate makeup, arrived early at the Quelaag Club via a rental carriage. Klein, who carried a suitcase containing a portable camera and all sorts of disguises, followed her in.

“Are there any more rooms to rest in?” Wearing the club's Frost badge on his chest, he asked the elegant maid responsible for receiving guests today.

The maid wearing a black-and-white dress politely smiled.

“Yes, please follow the attendant upstairs.”

Klein nodded slightly. He followed the red-vested attendant up the stairs and arrived at the second floor, just in time to see Erica Taylor enter a lounge that faced the streets.

“Do you want to see the passers-by on the street or the tennis court out back?” The red-vested attendant asked politely.

“Let's do the street,” Klein answered casually in a deliberate manner.

Under the arrangements of the red-vested attendant, he and Erica Taylor's room was separated by two rooms, and he could also see the street outside the club.

How do I take a picture later? Should I find a chance to sneak in and hide in the room, or climb out of the window and travel across the pipes? Neither of these methods can conceal that exaggerated flash, but the latter can be disguised as a vogue shot from the outside. That wouldn't bring suspicion to me and I wouldn't be kicked out… However, this will be easily noticed by Doragu and Erica… Use a charm to put them to sleep? No, it wouldn't be convincing enough; it has to be a picture of them doing the deed…

There's only one chance, and I have to take it well enough… This isn't my field of expertise, as I'm not some artistic master. If it was Old Neil, he would definitely attempt to conjure a new ritualistic magic to hide the camera flash. Of course, the Goddess might not respond to his request…

As Klein considered his next move, he saw the image of Miss Bodyguard appear in a silver mirror in the room.

She was still wearing her black Gothic regal dress and her matching soft hat. Her hair was pale blonde in color with delicate features across her pale face.

"Do you have any way of hiding the flash of the camera?" Klein asked casually.

Before he could finish his sentence, he saw ripples on the surface of the silver mirror as a slightly transparent palm suddenly extended.

Miss Bodyguard came out of the silver mirror like a ghost, walked in front of Klein, and said with a nod, "Yes."

She lowered her body and leaned over, slowly fusing into the camera's lens!

Klein's mouth slightly opened as he watched this horrifying scene, taking quite a while to recover from his shock. He picked up his portable camera and tried a test shot in his lounge.

The effect was beyond his expectations. The flash was limited to the vicinity of the camera, and the resulting image was also quite good.

Perhaps it should now be called a Spectral Camera… Klein lampooned. He took the camera, went to the window, and patiently waited.

Not long after, he saw Doragu Gale arrive via carriage.

In the other room, Erica Taylor saw her lover and hastily left the lounge to meet him on the first floor.

Klein seized the opportunity to use a tarot card to open her room, carefully hiding in the cupboard where the extra sheets and quilts were kept.

The darkness around him reminded him of the previous night, of that creepy and terrifying Numblewright Master, Rosago.

Last night was filled with danger, yet today, here I am catching adulterers in the act. Life sure is marvelous… While Klein was making fun of himself, he heard the door open.

Chapter 255 - Photography Expert

◆ ◆ ◆

Huddled in the cupboard, Klein secretly activated his Spirit Vision and saw two interfering auras enter.

“Erica, I brought you a present,” A deep voice sounded as the door closed.

As expected, he’s a gentleman of the Loen Kingdom. Even in an affair, he seems a little old-fashioned. If it was a man from Intis, he would definitely be shouting “sweetheart,” “baby,” “angel,” and the like… Klein couldn’t help but lampoon.

Of course, this was based on the stereotypes from newspapers, magazines, and novels.

Erica Taylor asked in surprise, “Let me guess… Is it Fassman Eye Cream, Face Cream, or Essence? Or Leshini’s?”

What the heck are all those… Klein was stunned by what he heard.

It was clear that Doragu Gale wasn’t able to react in time either. It took him about eight seconds before he said, “…No, stockings.”

In this world, since oil hasn’t been discovered, there were no corresponding cheap chemical products; therefore, silk stockings were considered high-class items.

“Not bad, let me take a look.” Erica’s joy didn’t diminish.

“I bought them yesterday at Phillip’s. One pair for thirty soli, a total of five pairs," Doragu said in a flaunting tone.

"How expensive."

That's expensive!

Erica and Klein both said the same thing, one exclaiming, the other secretly sighing.

Benson has worked for so many years, earning only 1 pound 10 soli a week, which is 30 soli. That's just equivalent to a pair of stockings, and with that salary, he was able to provide his brother and sister with an education, feed them fairly well, and even provided them with a place to sleep… An average worker with a bit of skill would only be paid around 20 soli a week… Klein's clicked his tongue.

"No, it's not expensive. Silk stockings are worth that much. I even gave an extra tip of five soli." As he spoke, the color of his aura turned more vivid, and Klein guessed that he had taken off his coat.

"Then I'll give it a try," Erica Taylor softly said in a suggestive manner.

I feel like I'm watching a porno again… And it's even a live broadcast… Besides, Miss Bodyguard is also here… The corner of Klein's mouth twitched as he watched red colors flowing across red colors, signifying the passion between the two was igniting like fire.

The purple color is almost red and isn't stopping… Red wrapped around green, orange… While listening to the wheezing and the low laughter, Klein judged the movements and positions of the couple outside by the change in the color of their auras.

Feeling that this was enough, Klein silently pushed open the cupboard door and looked in the direction of the bed.

Doragu and Erica were already entangled, their clothes half undone, their movements intense.

Klein lifted the Spectral Camera and aimed it at the passionate couple, waiting to see their faces at the same time.

As Doragu and Erica fell back onto the bed, Klein finally captured the most appropriate frame and pressed the shutter button.

The click of the camera wasn't distinct, and the intense flash and other abnormalities were limited to a very small area, so the couple wasn't alarmed.

With no confidence in his photography skills, Klein added a few more shots, intending to have options to choose from later.

He was only planning on handing his employer a single picture because too many photos would make the lawyer suspect why the couple didn't notice him taking the picture.

A piece of underwear landed lightly on the floor, and the sound of breathing intensified as Klein grabbed his portable camera and adeptly rolled out of the cupboard, closing the door behind him.

He rolled on the floor until he reached the lounge's door. Then, he quietly pulled it open and returned to the corridor.

Done! With a sigh of relief, Klein politely closed the door in silence, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed in the direction of the bed.

Without further ado, he returned to his lounge.

The last 7 pounds will soon be obtained… And I also earned an additional Quelaag Club membership worth 50 pounds. It covers board, lodging, and entertainment… That's worth even more than 50 pounds. Without any connections or contacts, I wouldn't have been able to join this—even with a hundred pounds… This mission isn't bad at all. It's simple, safe, and profitable… Klein put down his portable camera and sighed with emotion in his heart.

At that moment, a hand suddenly stretched out from the camera lens.

Miss Bodyguard in her black regal dress slowly came out and floated in midair again, but her face remained pale.

Thinking of how he had led her to watch some porno, Klein tried to change the topic, in embarrassment.

“I plan on heading to the cafeteria to eat something. Do you want to come with me?”

Each member could bring one guest.

As for how to explain the sudden appearance of the guest, Klein’s plan was to go out for a while and then come back.

Miss Bodyguard replied in a neutral tone, “I can go without eating for two weeks.”

As she spoke, she turned her back to Klein and floated toward the mirror, disappearing in an instant.

What exactly is her Sequence… Klein thought curiously, putting the portable camera back in its case.

After doing all of this, he went to the bathroom and relieved himself.

After washing his hands and wiping his face, Klein looked into the mirror and examined his appearance.

As he hadn’t shaved this morning, he had quite a stubble. His hair was parted to the sides in a three-to-seven ratio, and a pair of gold-rimmed glasses hung on his face. He looked refined and scholarly, with a tinge of maturity.

There’s a definite difference from the past. I can still be recognized if scrutinized. Once my beard grows to a certain extent, I wouldn’t have to worry that much… I wouldn’t need to be afraid of anything when I advance to Sequence 6 Faceless… Klein took out his golden pocket watch, opened it, and walked out of the bathroom. He took his suitcase and went to the cafeteria on the first floor.

It was just after nine, so breakfast was still served. Klein chose a double-sided, half-cooked fried egg, a loaf of white bread, a cake of butter, a Desi pie, a serving of bacon, and a cup of Marquis Black Tea with a piece of lemon floating on its surface.

While looking for a seat, he suddenly saw a familiar face. It was the surgeon who had recommended him to the club, Aaron Ceres.

The tall, thin gentleman was sitting alone in the corner, having finished his breakfast and was sipping his coffee as he leafed through the newspaper.

“Good morning, Dr. Ceres.” Klein walked over and greeted the slightly cold Aaron.

The surgeon nudged the frame over his nose and said, “Just call me Aaron, Detective Moriarty.”

“According to the principle of reciprocity, you have to call me Sherlock.” Klein sat down. “Any news today? I came out in such a hurry that I haven’t read the newspapers.”

“The Intis ambassador was assassinated. A terrorist organization by the name of the Aurora Order declared responsibility for it. Sigh, this world is becoming more and more chaotic. Sooner or later, there will be an all-out war in the Southern and Northern Continent,” Aaron expressed his feelings.

“The war has never stopped, Sir; it’s just that we’ve been able to enjoy peace,” Klein finished his fried egg and replied with a smile. “What a pity that such an important case wouldn’t seek the help of private detectives like us.”

Aaron flipped through the newspaper.

“This news doesn’t have much to do with us. What’s really important is that the House of Lords and the House of Commons will pass a motion either today or tomorrow after a long debate. First, it's the Civil Servant Unified Examination Bill, as well as the relevant guidance and actual plans. Second, is the establishment of the Atmospheric Pollution Council; and third, the establishment of the independent alkaline industry inspector. The latter two involve pollution. God, they're finally paying attention to this problem. The patients in the hospital with pulmonary attacks have been rising constantly.

Has it finally been passed? I wonder how Benson's preparations are… Will it be affected by my death… Klein's smile suddenly beamed.

"That's good news."

"To Mary, this is extremely good news. She wishes to make herself or her husband, Doragu, become one of the members of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council. She has a higher chance since she doesn't hold any positions in a commercial company and is a devotee of the Goddess. Besides, in any organization, there's ultimately a need for balance." Aaron mentioned Klein's employer. "I suggested to her that she should frequent the club since we have quite a number of House of Commons Members of Parliament as club members."

In the Loen Kingdom, the Members of Parliament of the House of Commons were mainly composed of wealthy people and the representatives of certain nobles. However, there were also many professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, priests, teachers, scientists, and accountants.

The Quelaag Club targeted a variety of professionals in the middle class, without distinguishing between them by their political inclinations.

Klein didn't know much about such things, so he just said a few words in response before changing the subject.

"Aaron, it's Friday today. Don't you need to head back to the hospital?"

“No, I’m on leave. It’s been terrible lately.” Aaron suddenly frowned.

“What happened?” Klein drank a mouthful of black tea.

Since Bakerland had just been assassinated, and Rosago’s body had been thrown into a sewer far away, he didn’t know when it would be found. Klein was concerned about the aftereffects and the imperfection of his disguise, so he didn’t plan on taking missions that were too difficult or easily exposed his identity; therefore, he was interested in simple matters which held potential and handsome rewards.

Aaron put down the newspaper and sighed.

“I’ve been very unlucky recently. I’ve had a few consecutive failed surgeries. Fortunately, there were no serious consequences. Otherwise, my license would’ve been revoked.”

Although it wasn’t big news for surgeons to cause deaths in the present era since it was common, the penalties were still quite severe if a serious accident occurred due to a surgeon’s negligence.

Well, I can’t help much… Well, actually, I know of a luck enhancement ritual, but its effect is to send you above a gray fog… Klein lowered his head and began to nibble at his bread.

After breakfast, he said goodbye to Aaron, went to withdraw 500 pounds in cash, and gave 300 pounds to Miss Bodyguard before returning home. While waiting for the photos to develop, he hoped for a simple job to be entrusted to him. Unfortunately, none of them came to him.

In the evening, Klein prepared to head out again, his target—Bravehearts Bar.

Taking the opportunity of having Miss Bodyguard around, he hoped to get in touch with more Beyonder circles.

Chapter 256 - Meeting the Apothecary Again

◆ ◆ ◆

Before leaving the house, Klein tossed a coin to inquire if it was unbeneficial for him to visit the Bravehearts Bar that day.

After receiving a negative result, he looked around before whispering into the air, “Is someone monitoring me today?”

After a few seconds of silence, Miss Bodyguard’s ethereal voice suddenly sounded from behind him.

“No.”

Klein subconsciously looked back, but he failed to find Miss Bodyguard.

His attention quickly returned to the answer he received as he couldn’t help but let out a snicker in his heart.

MI9 isn’t even putting me on their suspect list at all!

After confirming that Rosago hadn’t sought me out, they completely put me aside.

Should I feel honored or insulted?

It’s true that a detective that busies himself looking for cats has no way of being associated with the assassination of an ambassador or getting rid of a Sequence 5 expert…

Furthermore, MI9 has been monitoring me for quite some time. My panic, my helplessness, and my struggle for self-preservation were laid out for them to see. It's obvious that I can't inflict any substantial harm to the ambassador…

With that in mind, Klein put on his half top hat, carried his black silver-inlaid cane, and walked out of 15 Minsk Street. He spent 2 soli for a rental carriage that brought him to Bravehearts Bar on Iron Gate Street in the Backlund Bridge area.

He entered like a regular, walked past the cheering drunkards around the boxing ring, and rapped the countertop when he came to the bar counter.

"One glass of Southville beer."

The bartender looked up at him and mumbled, "Kaspars is in Card Room 3."

Klein smiled and pushed five one-penny copper coins to the man.

Then, carrying the wooden cup and sipping a white, smooth, frothy Southville beer, he walked around two of the rowdiest, liveliest stages that stank the most and knocked on the door of Card Room 3.

Kaspars was playing Texas poker with unlimited stakes. Stacks of cash were piled high in front of him, as well as yellow coins that piled up in a dazzling heap.

Noticing Klein's gaze, the black-market arms dealer with the huge scar on his face twitched his big red nose and casually said, "I don't like using chips as they don't feel real to me. It's still the texture of cash and the weight of the coins that leaves me intoxicated. It the same as f**king women!"

After finishing that sentence, Kaspars frowned slightly.

"What are you doing here again?"

Klein didn't answer directly, but he gestured with his mouth to speak outside.

"Damn it! I was going to clean them up with this hand! Bullshit, I'm folding!" Kaspars tossed the two cards in front of him into the middle of the table, then he limped to the door and said to Klein, "You'd better have a good reason!"

After leaving the card room and coming to the corner, Klein said in a suppressed voice, "I want to know when the most recent gathering will be, just like the last one."

Kaspars looked at him suspiciously. "Haven't you struck a deal with Maric?"

"It's not about hiring bodyguards. Regarding that, heh heh, you know… I've become very interested in it." Klein was telling the truth.

Kaspars hesitated and then said, "There will be a gathering tonight. The organizer is the same person as last time, but you'll have to wait for more than half an hour. I'll inform them first. You showed your reputation last time, so I don't think there'll be too much of a problem."

"No problem, I'll pay you." Klein touched the bills in his pocket.

"You just need to pay 1 pound this time." Kaspars acted like he was very generous.

"It's worth it," Klein said as the corners of his lips curled up.

After paying Kaspars, he found a seat and sat down, drinking the rich malt-scented Southville beer and enjoying the competition on the ring.

"I can beat and take them down at the same time…" Klein quickly came to this conclusion.

After about ten minutes, Kaspars returned to the bar, looked around, and said in a low voice, "They agreed."

"We'll head there after half an hour. Holy Lord of Storms, I hope you haven't forgotten that mask."

Klein gave a positive answer.

He slowed down his drinking as he began sipping, and he took half an hour to finish the 500 ml of Southville beer.

It was the same path they took as the previous time, and it was the same house without any light. Klein put on the iron mask that only covered half of his face, and he watched as Kaspars knocked on the door rhythmically.

The rhythm is different from last time. The knocking changes all the time… Klein listened carefully for a moment, then saw the small plank of the door open and a pair of eyes peer out.

After the indistinguishable process like before, he put on the hooded robe and hid his entire face in the shadows.

It was still the same living room, with a candle flickering in the dim light. Klein randomly found a seat and quietly sat down.

But unlike before, he no longer felt suppressed or tensed; instead, he leisurely looked around.

The cold wind that blew across the back of his neck made him certain that Miss Bodyguard had followed him in without anyone noticing.

As expected, there are no Sequence 5 experts in this gathering. There might not even be a Sequence 6… Klein thought.

After listening in on the conversation for a while, he saw the round-faced Apothecary change his posture as if he wanted to speak.

As expected, the Apothecary who had half his chubby face exposed quickly raised his hand and said, "Black Snake has apparently died in the sewers…

"Those beasts are still rampant."

Black Snake died? Klein was surprised to hear the news.

Black Snake was the man who had sold him the remains of a Listener, allowing him to "successfully" create the Language of Foulness. It was suspected that he was from the Aurora Order.

His strength wasn't low at all; yet, he actually died performing the simple mission of clearing the beasts in the sewers… Klein frowned suspiciously. He suddenly thought of something—

When he discovered Zreal's corpse, he had heard thumping sounds deep in the sewers.

By the time he led Ian there, parts of Zreal's body had been eaten by strange beasts.

That was at the bottom of Iron Carbon Street in the East Borough, quite far from the Backlund Bridge area, and I wonder if there's a connection… Klein had no impulse to verify this.

News of Black Snake's death quickly spread through the dark room, attracting the murmurs of many. A sense of fear spread through them, as though they had experienced it themselves.

The Apothecary clapped his hands and said, "So, what should I do?"

The whispers suddenly disappeared, and a frozen silence filled the room.

As the Apothecary had advised him without being afraid of offending him, Klein thought for a moment and said, "If I were you, I would give up on the rest of the herbs and never go there again."

"Why? They'll mature very soon, and those beasts that hide in the depths of the sewers usually won't come out," the Apothecary asked hesitantly.

Klein deliberately said in a hoarse voice, “Black Snake likely has an organization backing him. His death definitely would’ve caused an investigation. I believe you don’t want to interact with them, right?”

Having the remains of a Listener didn’t imply that Black Snake was an Aurora Order member, by referring to the True Creator as a “great being”, this was confirmed.

Moreover, he would rather believe that this was the case rather than hope for a fluke.

“Yeah.” The Apothecary nodded slightly, seemingly having made up his mind.

Klein added, “If I were you, I would even anonymously report this matter to the police.”

“What?” Many gathering members exclaimed.

Klein explained without a change in tone, “Since the beasts in the sewers can kill Black Snake, it means that they’re very dangerous. And since everyone lives in Backlund, if it really causes a major catastrophe, it’s hard to guarantee that we won’t be implicated.

“That’s why the best option is to attract the attention of the police and let the officials handle this matter.

“We can enjoy a good outcome without any risks. Isn’t that nice?”

Just as he finished his sentence, the old gentleman, Eye of Wisdom applauded.

“Such a great idea! We’re afraid of the official Beyonders, but similarly, we can make use of them. We don’t have to handle everything on our own.”

That’s because I was an official Beyonder, so my train of thought would definitely be different from pure savages like you… Klein smiled as he lampooned.

After speaking, he became a bystander again, listening to people peddling or requesting for items. As he watched the deals which succeeded or failed, he found nothing of interest.

He temporarily didn’t announce the Beyonder ingredients he needed, planning to observe the circle of Beyonders a few more times.

Seconds turned to minutes and finally, Eye of Wisdom arranged for people to leave every three minutes.

Klein was the first to leave the previous time, so he didn’t know what happened next. Now, he noticed that there were at least five exits. The attendants of the Eye of Wisdom would lead different people to different passages, trying their best to space them out and drag out time.

After more than half an hour, there were only three members of the gathering left. Apart from Eye of Wisdom, the other two were Klein and the suspected Apothecary.

Eye of Wisdom looked at Klein and laughed with his aged voice.

“Looks like you’re quite lucky.”

He recognized me as the man who had bought the ominous item from Black Snake… Klein smiled. “Yes, my bet paid off.”

Hearing their conversation, the Apothecary widened his eyes as he examined Klein. After a long time, he finally said, “Do you have another mystical charm that affects luck? I already regarded you as a dead person.”

You’re so direct… Klein tactfully answered, “Maybe I’m lucky enough myself.”

Actually, he did want such an item.

Eye of Wisdom sighed and said, “Young lad, don’t always bet on your luck, especially on matters such as this. Even if you’ve won many times in the past, just one loss would doom you for eternity.”

“I know. That’s why I’ve come to this gathering to see if I can buy any useful items. Heh, I can be considered the same as all of you now,” Klein said, seemingly casual.

“Same?” The Apothecary gave an exaggerated sigh. “I should’ve listened to my teacher!”

Teacher… He seems to be a suspected Apothecary… The Apothecary pathway is controlled by the Church of Earth Mother and the Life School of Thought… The Life School of Thought passes down their teachings through mentoring… Klein’s heart skipped a beat and asked curiously, “Why do you say that?”

The Apothecary sighed and said, “My teacher told me to choose a path that would make one sufficiently lucky, but in the end, I still became a medicine concocter. As a result, I haven’t been able to find the next batch of potion ingredients for this Sequence for a whole two years. I’m envious of your luck.”

Make one sufficiently lucky… This is very similar to the Sequence pathway for Monster… He really is from the Life School of Thought… Klein smiled and said, “What’s your reason for choosing it?”

The Apothecary suddenly straightened his back and said, “This is a man’s choice!

“After knowing that I can concoct medicine to enhance my ability in that field, I chose this path without hesitation!”

Chapter 257 - “2-081”

◆ ◆ ◆

…What a godlike reason… After hearing the Apothecary’s answer, Klein was unable to control the changes in his expression despite being a Clown. Fortunately, he was wearing an iron mask over his face.

The Apothecary didn’t notice the reactions Klein and Eye of Wisdom had, and he began to let his hair down.

“That’s why I really like Backlund. There are a lot of prostitutes prowling the streets, hanging outside music halls, theaters, waiting in the streets and alleys. They’re either professionals or working part-time. They were originally maidservants or workers, each with different flavors. It’s said that in places in the West Borough, bankrupt aristocratic ladies might occasionally appear. That’s really something to look forward to.”

“…” Klein nudged the iron mask that covered his face upwards and quickly changed the topic. “Did your teacher have any objections to your choice?”

The Apothecary shook his head slightly.

“No, he just kicked me out of the damn door after teaching me all the knowledge in the field of herbs, telling me to roam the world and experience life. Damn it, he didn’t even tell me where to find the next potion ingredients!”

At this point, the Apothecary looked at Klein and added, “If you know where to obtain Spring of the Elves marrow crystals, please do tell me.

I'll pay you for it. Of course, you can also first buy it and then sell it to me for a higher price. You're a lucky guy. Who knows, you might help fulfill my wish."

"Alright," Klein casually agreed. He then asked, thoughtfully, "When that happens, can I use it to exchange for the potion formula for Apothecary?"

From his point of view, an Apothecary was very useful as support. He could use it to groom helpers.

The Apothecary, who wasn't considered too fat, quickly shook his head and said, "No way!

"I can only teach my students."

Is this a rule of the Life School of Thought? He might have made an oath with some secret existence as a witness… Klein wasn't surprised.

At this moment, the Apothecary let out a laugh.

"But I can tell you where you can get the Apothecary formula. It's right here in Backlund."

"Brilliant." Klein was pleasantly surprised.

Realizing that Eye of Wisdom was about to send him off, he hurriedly asked, "Mr. Apothecary, do you have any medication to treat mental disorders and other problems?"

Klein was acting for Miss Bodyguard, to make her feel more assured, having been slightly influenced by the True Creator and becoming a potential lunatic, that he was desperately trying to find a cure.

"Yes, there's a sedative, ten soli for one. I'll bring you four in the next gathering. Trust me, this is definitely much more useful than the ones in the hospitals. I've added some materials with spirituality," the Apothecary replied without hesitation.

How expensive… In the underground market at Tingen, the number of sedatives that originated from the hospitals ranged from 1 to 2 soli, while the variety that leaked from the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind ranged from 4 to 5 soli… As this thought flashed through his mind, Klein put on a show, looked at Eye of Wisdom, and said, “Dear Sir, may I attend the next gathering?”

“Yes, your last two performances are proof of your goodwill. Young lad, watch out for the Backlund Morning Post daily. When there’s an advertisement for the purchase of goods by the Ernst Firm on the fifth page, it means that there would be a meeting here at eight o’clock the next evening. The strength and the frequency of the knocking is based on the prices listed. The first number is the number of heavy strikes. The second number is the number of light strikes. The third number is the number of long pauses and the fourth is the number of short pauses. The rest are meaningless,” Eye of Wisdom said with a nod.

After describing the information, he sighed and said, “The lives of Beyonders who are neither official or part of an organization aren’t as nice as you imagine. On the one hand, we have to keep secrets, avoid the officials, and at any time, we have to maintain a cautious and careful state. On the other hand, we have to fight against the possibility of losing control and madness. Too many of our kind have died because of these two matters.

“Even if we successfully evade the official’s notice and avoid losing control and going crazy, we would still fall into the predicament of lacking ingredients and the inability to find items we want or obtain sufficient knowledge. I organized such a gathering to get everyone to help each other.

“Unfortunately, this is an era of scarce mysteries. Many Beyonder ingredients are rarely seen.”

Yes, but I have Mr. Hanged Man who knows the coordinates of some of the primitive islands, and City of Silver’s The Sun who is constantly fighting against the various monsters in the depths of the darkness… I can rely on them to obtain some of the Beyonder ingredients… Klein politely stood up with his back bent as he bowed to Eye of Wisdom.

"Your character is admirable."

After sitting down again, Klein suddenly remembered something and asked after some deliberation, "Gentlemen, do you have any mystical items? The kind that Black Snake sold me, but ones without too serious negative effects. I wish to have some sort of ability to protect myself."

His plan was to find something that caught his interest, determine the price, and then determine the target accordingly.

However, I don't have any money right now, but that doesn't mean I wouldn't have any in the future… Can't I make an inquiry about the price without money? Klein silently added in his heart.

The Apothecary spread out his hands, indicating that he didn't have any, and even if he did, he wouldn't sell them. Eye of Wisdom chuckled and said, "I do have some, but I don't know what you would like to buy? Give me an approximate range."

Some… He's most likely a Savant pathway Beyonder who relies on external items… Klein didn't hide his envy as he said, "Something stronger than me. Not something that improves my combat skills. It's best if it has some mystical powers."

He didn't go into details so as to maintain his image as a newcomer.

Eye of Wisdom smiled and said, "I have an item that suits your requirements. It's former code name was 2-081."

"2-081?" Klein asked, puzzled.

His puzzlement was just a disguise on the surface, but on the inside, he was very shocked.

Is this a Sealed Artifact that leaked out from the Chanis Gate of the Church of Evernight? Klein didn’t expect to see a familiar code name here.

Eye of Wisdom casually explained simply, “Many mystical items have rather obvious side effects that can cause certain harm. Therefore, the seven orthodox Churches would seek them out and seal them. They’re called Sealed Artifacts and are distinguished using numbers as code names.”

“Over a long period of debate and exchanges, the seven churches formed a uniform naming convention. It labels the different danger grades with 0, 1, 2, and 3. Among them, 0 is the most dangerous. Rumors say that some are terrifying items that can destroy countries or even the world.

“The seven orthodox churches will exchange information regarding Grade 0 and Grade 1, telling each other which ones they possess. Therefore, Grade 0 and Grade 1 code names won’t be repeated. Grade 2 and Grade 3 are arranged by their respective churches, so different churches might have the same code name.”

Klein had long known about the general situation within the Nighthawks, but he was puzzled by something.

“Information regarding Grade 0 and Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts is exchanged?”

Wouldn’t that be disclosing major secrets? It will allow the other churches to know how many hidden cards they have!

Of course, this could also be seen as a form of strategic deterrence, to avoid direct conflict between the seven churches… Klein considered the possible reasons.

“Yes. Although I’m unable to explain the reason for doing that, it has indeed happened. Legend has it that during the end of the Fourth Epoch or the beginning of the Fifth Epoch, the seven churches came to an agreement," Eye of Wisdom said at an unhurried pace. "My 2-081 was obtained from the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. It allows you to understand and comprehend many things. Even an enemy's Beyonder powers can be rapidly identified, allowing me to know of their strengths and weaknesses. I'll also have a chance at being able to mimic them. The stronger the opponent, the higher the chance of failure. Of course, even success would definitely result in a huge difference from the original."

That sounds very strong… Proof that knowledge is power? In the end, will there be a situation where omniscience is equal to omnipotence? Hmm… I retract my previous judgment. Old Mister Eye of Wisdom might not be an Appraiser. His identification of items might have relied on Sealed Artifact 2-081… Klein clicked his tongue silently as he asked with interest, "So, how much would I need to buy it?

"What flaws does it have?"

"It will keep you in a state where your mind is churning at high speeds. Once it exceeds the time limit, you'll become a retard," Eye of Wisdom replied simply without providing enough details.

At this moment, the Apothecary beside him muttered, "Perhaps your brain has already been damaged. You keep talking about your collection. Sooner or later, someone will rob you and kill you!"

Sir, your persuasions are always so repugnant… Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

Eye of Wisdom laughed and said, "How do you know that I'm not saying it on purpose to make greedy people attack me?

"Yes, it's like the entrapment law once described by Emperor Roselle."

After the laughter stopped, he patted the armrest of his sofa and sighed. "As a person who loves collecting things, it's excruciating not being able to flaunt my collection to others.”

He then looked at Klein.

“I’m sorry. 2-081 isn’t for sale. It’s my best collection, and back then, I spent 6800 pounds to buy it. A Sealed Artifact at this level can cost from 4000 to 20,000 pounds and is determined by its effects and negative side effects. However, most of time, they can’t be bought with money.”

Then why did you say so much… Klein controlled the twitching of his mouth.

Seemingly sensing his reaction, Eye of Wisdom chuckled and said, “What I really wish to recommend are two items. The first is a brooch. It can allow you to ward off spirits and purify them, as well as use a portion of the spells in the Sun domain. The flaw is that as long as you wear it, you will never feel coolness. You will forever be stuck in the warm summer of the south. The other is a hat that can change shapes. Wearing it allows you to move freely underwater for at least half an hour and allows you to use some Water or Wind domain spells. The flaw is that you will desire water. Once you walk on land, you will gradually weaken.

“The prices of similar items range from 1500 to 3500 pounds, and sometimes, even if you raise the price severalfold, they aren’t necessarily for sale because they rarely appear. It took me more than three decades to collect a few.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “I’ll think about it, and I’ll make the decision during the next gathering.”

At this point, he deliberately smiled and said, “Besides, I don’t have that much money right now.”

Chapter 258 - Murder Case

◆

The concrete road had turned dirty from prolonged rain. Two gas lamps, the height of an adult male, along the two sides of the road emitted a bright but misty light due to the moisture on the glass.

A rental carriage drove through the night as the surrounding pedestrians either wore hats or carried umbrellas.

Klein leaned against the wall, idly admiring the evening streets of Backlund.

At that moment, he suddenly felt the temperature inside the carriage drop significantly. A gloomy and cold wind was swirling about.

Klein jerked his head around and saw that Miss Bodyguard, dressed in a black Gothic regal dress, was sitting opposite him without him even realizing it.

Her voice was ethereal and dreamy.

“That Eye of Wisdom sensed my presence.”

As expected… Klein nodded, unsurprised. “He has several mystical items; perhaps he sensed you because of them. I even suspect that he has an organization behind him.”

Otherwise, it’s quite impossible for Eye of Wisdom to collect several relatively powerful mystical items in thirty years with his power alone. Previously, Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos only had a single Creeping Hunger despite being one of the seven great pirate admirals. Of course, it was possible that the latter had high standards and ordinary mystical items didn't catch his attention. After all, with Creeping Hunger, he could be more well-rounded and nearly be without any weaknesses.

Yes, for Eye of Wisdom himself to be rich there has to be a rather good explanation as well. He's organized so many gatherings, and once he finds a suitable mystical item, he would spare no expense to get it. Having a few in his collection isn't that unbelievable… Sigh, it's like he has a gold mine at home, or he runs a bank… Klein lampooned silently.

He didn't mention in detail that he had guessed that Eye of Wisdom was from the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, or from the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, out of fear that he would expose to Miss Bodyguard that he wasn't someone who had just become a Beyonder.

The blonde Miss Bodyguard nodded slightly, as though agreeing with Klein's suspicions.

Suddenly, she frowned and looked at the window opposite her.

"A rich smell of blood."

There's a strong smell of blood… Klein turned his head in puzzlement and looked out the window.

There was a secluded alley in the sparse drizzle.

Near the mouth of the alley, a woman wearing a gorgeous dress was on the ground.

At that moment, a pedestrian walked past and on careful inspection, let out a sudden scream.

The screams startled the horse slightly as the carriage driver quickly tightened the reins, slowing down the carriage.

Under the light of the gas lamp, Klein saw the pale face of the woman lying on the ground at the mouth of the alley. There was a deep gash in her stomach, and her internal organs seemed to have been hollowed out.

The blood on the ground around her was flowing slowly, crimson and thick.

This… As a qualified former Nighthawk, he quickly thought of many similar cases.

These were often related to devil worship!

And when it came to devil worship, it was almost always tied to ancient organizations. It was the Blood Sanctify Sect that first appeared in the Fourth Epoch!

According to the records, this was a loose alliance formed due to the worship of devils. It consisted of several so-called devil clans, such as the Nois, Andariel, and Beria clans. They weren't subordinate to each other.

In their bid to proselytize faith in the devil, they committed many murders. Back in Tingen, the accountant for the Nighthawks, Mrs. Orianna, was one such victim who was thankfully saved.

Of course, not all similar cases were committed by them. Many people felt that such acts were very cool and began to imitate them.

"It looks like it was done by the Blood Sanctify Sect," Miss Bodyguard whispered as her figure rapidly turned translucent before vanishing. She didn't care if Klein understood her or comprehended the situation.

At that moment, the carriage had already passed the scene of the crime. Klein also noticed that the patrolling police had arrived, so he held back his idea of getting off the carriage to observe and instead, chose to act as an ordinary citizen who was passing by.

Yes, Citizen Mr. Moriarty…

The Blood Sanctify Sect has the Criminal pathway, which is also known as the Devil pathway. It's said that after Sequence 7, the corresponding Beyonder would gradually turn demonic. However, they would only reveal those signs under certain circumstances…

Sequence 9 Criminals have strong bodies, keen instincts, and a variety of criminal abilities, but their conscience isn't gone yet… Sequence 8, known by its ancient name "Coldblooded," has the modern name "Unwinged Angel." It means that from that moment forth, they lose their conscience and revel in evil desires, with bodies that look even more inhuman. They would also obtain some of the magical powers of the devil. Sequence 7 Serial Killer grasps a good deal of knowledge and rituals regarding devil worship. They like to please the devil with special serial murders…

I don't know the Sequences after that…

The information regarding the Blood Sanctify Sect and the Devil pathway flashed past Klein's mind. The rain outside seemed to become heavier as the rain on the windows converged and fell, and the whole world became quiet and unclear.

What's the point of thinking so much? Such matters would definitely be taken over by a Beyonder squad. It might be the Mandated Punishers or Nighthawks. There's no need for me to worry. Klein shook his head with a laugh as he muttered in his mind.

By the time he returned to 15 Minsk Street, he had forgotten about the murder case. He went next door and knocked on the Sammers' front door, asking Mrs. Stelyn to tell Mary that she could come for the evidence tomorrow afternoon. Following that, he washed up and read the newspapers, learning about the current situation and news in Backlund.

On Saturday morning the next day, Klein enjoyed his breakfast slowly and went out to pick up the freshly developed photographs. He chose the one with the best view of Doragu Gale's and Erica Taylor's face, one that brought out their passion the most.

After putting the photos away, he went to the Rice Police Station before Mrs. Mary arrived and successfully got the bail money that was worth ten pounds back.

In the process, he also saw the real Sergeant Faxine and felt a little uncomfortable.

After withdrawing the remaining 500 pounds in cash from his account, Klein was finally done with everything after having a busy morning.

Before he prepared lunch, he handed the remaining 600 pounds to Miss Bodyguard in one go, leaving 146 pounds 8 soli, and 5 pence on him. That was all his liquid funds.

Other than Miss Justice, I have no other debts… Klein cooked himself a T-bone steak and sprinkled it with black pepper sauce.

Just as he was enjoying the taste of the medium well steak whilst in a good mood, the doorbell suddenly rang and resounded through his house.

“Mrs. Mary? Isn’t this too early?” Puzzled, Klein put down his fork and knife, and he walked to the door.

He paused for two seconds as the image of the visitor outside the door appeared in his mind.

It was an old-fashioned gentleman in a light gray overcoat, a silk top hat, and he held a black and gold cane. He had sharp blue eyes, and his temples were streaked with white. His wrinkles were deeply engraved in his face, causing his facial muscles to seemingly sag.

“May I know who you’re looking for?” Klein asked after opening the door.

The old gentleman said in a thick Midseashire accent, “Are you

Sherlock, Detective Moriarty?”

“Do you have something you wish to entrust to me?” Klein nodded and made way, leading the old gentleman into the living room.

He hesitated for two seconds, then asked, “Would you like coffee or tea?”

“A cup of hot water, please.” The old gentleman had taken off his hat and sat down.

Very well, it’s very simple… Maybe I should consider getting an assistant to serve tea and clean the place… As Klein’s mind wandered, he turned to the kitchen and rinsed a glass.

After placing the hot water in front of the old gentleman, he walked to the sofa and sat down with his hands folded.

“How may I address you?”

“Millet Carter,” the old gentleman answered simply.

“Mr. Carter, what would you like to entrust me with?” Klein asked directly without bothering to exchange pleasantries.

As he spoke, he quietly activated his Spirit Vision to observe Carter.

This old gentleman is in quite good health. There are some problems with the color of the joints of his left leg—probably arthritis… His emotions are mostly blue from calm thinking, with a hint of anxiety… With just a glance, Klein had come to a general conclusion.

Millet Carter lifted the white porcelain cup and, while rubbing its surface, said, “The thing is… I’ve bought a house on Williams Street. Heh, I come from Midseashire and because of my business, I’ll be living in Backlund permanently.”

Williams Street… Where’s that? Having been in Backlund for less than a month, Klein, who had to consult the map or rely on his intuition, tried his best to appear staid and reliable.

Millet Carter looked at him, and under his gaze, he continued, "Rumor has it that the house was originally owned by a bankrupt viscount. That was about two to three decades ago. After a few changes of hands, I finally bought it.

"I planned on doing some renovations that suited the modern style, but I discovered a hidden secret door in the basement which leads to a very large underground structure. Considering that it might not be safe inside, I temporarily stopped construction, and I prevented the workers and servants from rashly exploring it. I hope that you can help me confirm the situation inside the underground structure."

Underground structure… Ancient ruins? Secret treasure? Klein thought and said, "Why didn't you call the police?

"The resources that the police can mobilize are more than a hundred times that of a private detective like me can muster. The results of the exploration will definitely be better and more reliable."

Millet Carter rubbed his nose bridge.

"I don't want too many people to know about this, especially the government.

"If I confirm that there is no danger within the underground structure, then I intend to use it as part of the structure and re-purpose it.

"I know that this is a high risk for you, and I'm willing to pay 50 pounds for it. But you can't have more than three assistants, and I can make up for it later, depending on the circumstances."

50 pounds, that's quite a high price… If I were an ordinary detective, that would be equivalent to two or three months of my income… He's just arrived in Backlund and doesn't know any other detectives. He could only read the newspapers to look for hires and ended up coming to me… Klein hesitated for a few seconds.

"Let me think about it."

He suddenly revealed an apologetic smile, pointed behind him and said, "I'm need to use the bathroom."

Millet Carter nodded slightly and took a sip of hot water.

After entering the bathroom and closing the wooden door, Klein looked at the mirror and took out a copper penny.

Because he had Miss Bodyguard with him, he couldn't confirm it above the gray fog, so he could only rely on his own divination skills.

"I should accept this commission."

†

Klein chanted seven times and flicked the coin as he watched it tumble down.

Thud!

The copper coin fell into his palm, and the king's portrait faced up, indicating a positive response.

Klein slightly nodded, and whispered into the air, "What does your intuition tell you?"

Miss Bodyguard's figure quickly appeared in the mirror. She replied expressionlessly, "There's a certain amount of danger, but it's not great."

Very good… Klein put away the coin, washed his hands, and walked out of the bathroom and into the living room.

He looked at Millet Carter and said with a smile, "I'll take this commission."

Chapter 259 - Underground Structure

◆ ◆ ◆

After signing a contract with Millet Carter and receiving an advance payment of ten pounds, Klein didn’t rush to Williams Street immediately. Instead, he made an appointment for four in the afternoon.

Millet was understanding with regard to this. Alone, Detective Sherlock Moriarty definitely had to recruit people to carry out the exploration.

When the old gentleman left, Klein immediately returned to the dining table and cut the steak which had turned cold before wolfing it down.

Seriously, doesn’t he need to eat lunch? Why must he pick such a time to come… After barely filling his stomach, Klein bitterly began cleaning up.

At two o’clock in the afternoon, Mrs. Mary arrived as scheduled. Her eyes were slightly red and puffy, but her face was turning gloomy. Stelyn Sammer, who accompanied her, had no choice but to maintain her silence.

Klein handed over an envelope containing his carefully chosen photo.

“Madam, please confirm it.”

Mary paused for two seconds and slowly took in a breath. Then, she took the envelope, pulled out the photo, and examined it.

“…Excellent, very excellent. You’re the most efficient and responsible detective I’ve ever met. I’m honored to introduce you as a member of the Quelaag Club… This is the remaining 7 pounds for the payment. You deserve it.” Mary took out a wallet from her leather handbag and counted out a five-pound note and two one-pound notes.

Then, without waiting for Klein’s response, she stuffed the photo back into the envelope, put it into her handbag, and abruptly got up to leave.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Her buttonless boots made hurried sounds as she stomped on them. Stelyn Sammer struggled to keep up.

As she opened the door, Mary stumbled and almost fell, but fortunately, Stelyn caught her.

With this episode, Mary clearly slowed down and seemed to turn calm.

Madam, you forgot to take the portable camera… I’ll give it to Mrs. Sammer later, and she’ll bring it to you… Klein silently watched this scene, slightly shaking his head without saying anything.

He returned to the second floor, took a nap, waking up comfortably to the bell chimes of the nearby church.

Klein had already searched the map and confirmed that Williams Street was at the border of the West Borough and Empress Borough, a residential area in the heart of Backlund.

A nice house in West Borough and Hillston Borough costs about 2,500 pounds. Millet Carter’s house is close to Empress Borough, and it’s a property of a former viscount. The area is definitely sizable. The total purchase price will be at least 3,500 pounds, maybe even 5,000 pounds. That will be enough for a pretty decent mystical item… He actually came visiting me without a housekeeper or an attendant, perhaps because he’s new in Backlund and hasn’t settled in? Klein put on his double-breasted coat, hat, and held his cane before heading out into Minsk Street.

The gas lamps haven’t been lit yet, and the streets were surprisingly darker than during the evenings; however, the air was fairly alright, without the suffocating air in the boroughs to the east.

Taking a rental carriage, he went all the way to Williams Street. Klein saw a waiting valet outside the Unit 8 house.

The valet, who was dressed in a red vest and light-colored trousers, bowed respectfully at the incoming visitor.

“Good afternoon, might I inquire if you are Detective Moriarty?”

“Yes, I have an appointment with Mr. Carter.” Klein nodded and followed the valet into a mansion with a garden and lawn.

The house was two stories tall. The first floor was in a mess, with a lot of construction materials placed everywhere. There were workers coming in and doing some modifications.

Millet Carter wasn’t wearing a hat. Covering his nose, he walked over.

“I’m very sorry about the mess and dirt here, but I do wish that everything will be fine before my family arrives in Backlund. I can only urge them to keep working nonstop.”

Having said that, he looked at the valet and instructed, “Continue watching them.”

It’s no wonder that he didn’t bring any servants with him. Even his servants have become supervisors… Klein smiled and said, “I know a lot of doctors. They tell me that the newly renovated houses aren’t suitable for immediate occupation. One has to wait at least three months to ventilate it well enough. Otherwise, old people and children who aren’t strong enough will easily fall sick.”

“Is that so?” Millet led Klein to the basement and asked doubtfully.

“I’ve never verified it, but I chose to believe in authority. It’s said that this originated from the words passed down by Emperor Roselle,” Klein casually fabricated an excuse.

Millet nodded, then turned to look at the door. He couldn't help but frown before asking, "Mr. Detective, you didn't bring an assistant?

"There might be quite a bit of danger in that structure."

I have an assistant; it's just that you can't see her… Klein lampooned as he said seriously, "This is my first visit, so I'll advance very carefully. If there are any problems, I will immediately retreat.

"I'm experienced in this area, so I won't put myself in a dangerous situation. If I were matched with inexperienced assistants, it might easily affect my nimble and decisive actions."

Millet was startled.

"You're very professional."

A professional bluff… Klein silently added.

Without any further doubts, Millet led Detective Moriarty through the cluttered living room and down the stairs to a fairly spacious basement.

There were no gas pipes here, but four metal candlesticks were set into the walls, their yellow lights flickering.

Stepping on the stone pavements on the ground, Klein couldn't help but sigh in reflection.

As expected of a noble's property. Even the basement has been "nicely decorated." Furthermore, it's almost as big as the living room of my current house…

At this moment, Millet pointed ahead and said, "There's a secret door over there. It was discovered by the workers when they were renovating."

Klein focused his gaze. With the not-very-bright candlelight, he saw a gray stone door in the corner. It should've been part of the wall, but it was now exposed.

"I'll leave the rest to you. Be safe." The old gentleman, Millet, gave Klein a lighted lantern and cautioned him.

"Has this place been ventilated ahead of time?" Klein asked cautiously.

Millet shook his head indiscernibly.

"It's not particularly stuffy inside, but I didn't let the workers go too far."

"Alright." Klein checked his belongings, put on a black glove, and, under Millet's gaze, unhurriedly carried the lantern and approached the stone door. He pushed it open with his cane.

Amidst the heavy creaking sounds, through the light outside, he saw a deep-colored passageway paved with stone.

There were several wooden doors on both sides of the passageway and at the end. They had already begun to rot, but they were still barely usable.

Not too ancient… However, the ostentatious style of the door and the depth and thickness of the stone slabs don't match… Did the viscount's family change it before? Klein quietly activated his Spirit Vision, gripped his cane, and walked forward, step by step, with the lantern in hand.

The light dispersed the darkness, and when he passed by the rooms on either side, he was able to see a somewhat empty scene through the open door which was likely opened due to the exploration from the workers Millet had hired. There was also a long bench and a table that shared the same aesthetic style as the door.

There's no sign of spirits flashing… Klein did a brief inspection. Without stopping, he proceeded forward until he came to the end of the hall where a black stone double door was.

Stretching out his gloved right hand, he half-clamped his cane and slowly pushed against the door.

A jarring sound of friction began to reverberate through the air as the stone door slowly cracked open. Spirit light suddenly appeared in Klein's eyes, reflecting an intertwined aura of different colors.

His heart tightened as he pushed the door open, before taking a few steps back.

The crack in the stone door widened rapidly, and a slimy black creature fell from above.

It was a snake with a triangular head and red floral patterns on its head!

It straightened its upper body, shot out its tongue, and looked at Klein with cold brown eyes.

One snake after another fell from above the door as they piled up at the entrance.

Klein saw a large hall beyond them. In the middle of the hall, countless snakes of various colors slithered together, forming an exaggerated nest of snakes about ten meters wide. The slimy, disgusting feeling assaulted his senses.

Klein felt his scalp turn numb as he couldn't help but take two steps back. He even wanted to look away without daring to look straight ahead.

Although he was a man, he was still afraid of snakes. Snakes were the animal that he was most afraid of.

This stemmed from a psychological trauma in the past. When he was a child—despite being way past his bedtime—he liked to secretly open the door to his room and watch movies with his parents through a crack.

Unfortunately, his parents once watched a snake disaster movie. One scene involved the demolition of a building. The result was the unearthing of a large nest of snakes, and the dense squirming remained deeply imprinted in his mind.

Can the Slumber Charm affect so many snakes? Klein swallowed hard and said to the air, “Do you have any solutions?”

Miss Bodyguard in her black Gothic dress quickly appeared by his side, her mouth tightly closed. She didn’t say a thing.

Klein looked at her and she looked back at Klein, but no one spoke.

When a snake slowly slithered out, Klein finally coughed and repeated, “Do you have any solutions?”

Miss Bodyguard didn’t answer. Instead, she floated and suddenly, a cold wind blew in the passageway.

Whoosh!

The wind howled as it blew into the hall. The temperatures dropped rapidly as it approached the temperatures of the outside world.

Whoosh!

The densely-packed snakes in the middle of the hall suddenly slithered in all directions, searching for a warmer, more suitable spot to survive.

Two to three minutes later, a thin layer of frost formed on the surface of the hall and the passageway, and countless snakes had disappeared without much of a trace.

Whoosh!

The continued as Klein said, chattering, “T-that’s quite enough.”

The surging cold wind slowed down, but the cold didn’t subside. Miss Bodyguard’s figure disappeared once again.

Klein lifted his cane-wielding right hand, covered his mouth and nose, and sneezed. Then, he raised the lantern and cautiously walked through the stone door into the wide hall.

The style here was identical to the passageway outside. There were eight circular columns of the same color erected there.

Metal poles hung from the high dome, and at the bottom were candlesticks carved into different creatures.

An upside-down candlestick… As a university student of the History department, a person who could barely be called an elite in this field, Klein made a preliminary judgment based on this unique arrangement.

A structure of the Fourth Epoch?

Chapter 260 - Strange Statues

◆

The history circles of the Northern Continent countries all recognized that the Fourth Epoch was shrouded in thick mystery. It was impossible to tell what it truly was.

The historical records had too many missing pieces and ambiguities for this period of history. There were too few tombs, ancient cities, and literature, that had been unearthed to create an effective confirmation.

However, this didn't mean that no one had done the relevant research. Its rarity implied that there were still some relics and information left behind.

The original Klein was a fanatic towards the history of the Fourth Epoch. He often read journal articles and books, so even now, Klein still remembered a lot of content.

Whether it was the Solomon Empire, Tudor Empire, or Trunsoest Empire, they all had similar architectural styles, architectural styles that went against common sense—they were disorderly, asymmetrical, and they stood out for their frequent use of black.

The most typical characteristic were the candlesticks hanging from the ceiling and the chopped floral pattern marks on black walls.

This was precisely why Klein's first reaction was that the underground structure belonged to the Fourth Epoch when he raised his lantern. He had seen circular metal poles with candlesticks embedded at the bottom, that ran down from the dome, reminding him of the Fourth

Epoch which was shrouded in mystery, leaving many historians and archaeologists regretful of the lack of knowledge in that ancient period.

Several journal articles have mentioned that the number of candlesticks within different buildings are different. Although the three Empires find asymmetry beautiful, they seemed to have strict and meticulous rules in every aspect… Three on the left, and two on the right is the highest standards that ordinary citizens can enjoy. This is based on the structure of the buildings and the houses that remain… Klein raised his arm and held the lantern high. He walked slowly, counting the candlesticks on both sides.

The hall was even wider than he had expected. He had walked for at least a hundred meters before he saw a platform half a meter above the ground. Only then did he see the thick wall that marked the end of the hall.

41 inverted candlesticks on the left, and 40 on the right. T-this is a bit of an exaggeration. What level of aristocracy is this? Powerful nobility? Sigh, the Antigonus and the Zaratul families are all aristocrats of the Fourth Epoch… They were also powerful and terrifying Beyonder family clans. The other noble families should be about the same… Holding the lantern in hand, Klein continued onward. He saw the stairs at the side of the half-height platform and saw the scuffing on the black stone tiles.

Is this really a relic of the Fourth Epoch? A thought flashed through Klein's mind. With his keen eyesight and the light from the lanterns, he found two iron black seats on top of the platform that was half a meter above the ground. The huge, ancient seats overlooked the other seats below.

There were two seats!

Two? Why two? According to the layout, the seat here should represent the person with the most power and authority, but there are two of them? A powerful noble of equal strength? A double count, a double duke, or a double prince? Klein slowly began to feel that his knowledge of history was inadequate.

He clearly remembered that many journal articles mentioned that the three empires—Solomon, Tudor, and Trunsoest, had a strict hierarchy. Based on this theory, there shouldn't have been leaders of equal standing within a faction.

"Strange…" Klein mumbled, in a way meant for Miss Bodyguard.

"What's so strange about that?" An ethereal voice suddenly sounded from behind him. In the vast, dark, empty, and silent ancient hall, this voice was exceptionally frightening.

Klein's mouth twitched as he explained the characteristics, history knowledge, and puzzling points that he had observed to her. He eventually added, "The ventilation here is very good. I wonder if there are any other entrances."

Miss Bodyguard, who had mostly blended into the darkness, listened silently as she gave Klein a penetrating glance.

"How do you know so much?"

Because I was a university student in the History department… Klein cursed silently before smiling.

"If I hadn't chosen to be a detective, perhaps I would've become a diligent young historian."

Miss Bodyguard didn't respond, nor did she disappear; instead, she floated up to the platform first.

With the lantern in hand, Klein quickly followed, discovering that the platform was very large. It was about 40 meters in length and 10 meters in breadth.

"The architectural style is grand and enlarged. It's also one of the characteristics of the Fourth Epoch," he said casually as he carefully approached the two huge iron-black chairs. He then raised his lantern and carefully inspected it.

"It seems to be meant for a three-meter-tall giant to sit on… There's an emblem on the back of the chair. On this side, it's a black crown… On the other side, it's a hand holding onto a scepter… I wonder what they symbolize on their own…" Klein said to himself, not expecting an answer from Miss Bodyguard.

However, the lady who was floating suddenly said, "This is the Tudor family's emblem."

"Huh?" Klein looked over in surprise, noticing that Miss Bodyguard was referring to the hand holding the scepter.

Tudor family? Is this a relic of the Fourth Epoch's Tudor Dynasty? Which royal family member owned this palace? Klein frowned and said, "Do you recognize the other emblem?"

To think that it was ranked as equal to a Tudor family member!

Miss Bodyguard shook her head without a word.

Seeing this, Klein had to give up the idea of studying it for the time being and said, "After the Tudor and Trunsoest families established their respective empires, they both maintained the original style that originated from the Solomon Empire, such as inverted candlesticks, scuffed marks, and so on and so forth. This doesn't comply with common sense. If I were the emperor, even if I had to inherit many things, I would still make certain changes to mark my uniqueness.

"Does this mean that the three empires have hidden, unchanging connections?"

He guessed that Solomon, Tudor, and the Trunsoest families wielded the Black Emperor, which was the Lawyer pathway. Similar styles were needed for acting!

Miss Bodyguard remained silent for a few seconds before saying a few words, “Only an Emperor can be called an Emperor.”

Is this a confirmation of my idea? Klein didn’t ask any more questions. With the lantern in hand, he circled the two huge iron-black chairs, but he didn’t discover anything else.

“Let’s take a look ahead,” Klein suggested.

Before he finished his sentence, Miss Bodyguard had already floated towards the end of the platform, but the surrounding gloominess and coldness remained unchanged.

[image]

A few meters ahead, Klein saw—with the help of the lantern’s glow—seven large, heavy, black stone doors at the base of the hall. They were lined up, two on the left, one in the middle, four on the right, perfectly in line with the Fourth Epoch’s pursuit of asymmetry.

Klein passed the cane to his lantern hand, tossed a coin at random, and whispered, “I should begin from the left.”

Ding!

The copper penny tumbled down and landed on his palm, portrait facing up.

“Let’s go to the left.” Klein took the lead.

Miss Bodyguard silently followed until they reached the door on the far left before saying ethereally, “It’s the same on the right.”

In other words, it didn’t matter whether I did the divination… The corner of Klein’s mouth curled up as he raised the lantern and examined the symbols and patterns on the door.

With a deep-black background, it was a crimson half-moon that was surrounded by radiant points of light.

This… Klein's pupils constricted suddenly.

This is the Dark Sacred Emblem! The symbol of the Evernight Goddess!

During the Fourth Epoch, the Church of Evernight had supported the Tudor Dynasty? He thoughtfully placed his hand on the stone door.

Screech!

The black stone door slowly opened amidst rough and heavy grinding sounds.

As the light from the lantern shone into the room, Klein began to see the interior, bit by bit.

There was a few meters of open space at the entrance—also paved with dark stone tiles—and a platform nearly a meter high.

Klein cautiously moved forward, holding up the lantern to illuminate the item on the platform.

A few seconds later, a fiery radiance formed the outline of a huge statue. It was about four to five meters long and almost filled the entire room.

It was an extremely beautiful lady with a hazy face. Her right hand supported her head as she laid down on the platform. She wore a layered black classical dress that wasn't overly complex. There was a circle of radiating rays at the bottom of her head.

[image]

On this lady's dress, there were sparkling specks of radiance. They were pieces of bright and resplendent gems.

At first glance, Klein felt as though he was seeing the night and the stars.

This was outlined against a circular shape under the lady's head that resembled a full moon.

This… Klein's thoughts seemed to freeze, but a guess immediately plowed its way from within.

"Evernight Goddess?" Miss Bodyguard's voice carried a rare hint of puzzlement.

Be it the symbolism or the actual form, it seemed to be a sculpture of the goddess! Klein's guess finally took shape, echoing loudly in his mind.

He remembered asking Captain Dunn Smith about one of the differences between an evil god and a true god. The former was said to have an image that resembled that of an intelligent lifeform, but the latter only had Sacred Emblems formed by symbols!

But today, at this very moment, in this ancient and bizarre underground structure, he saw a statue that looked like the Evernight Goddess.

What did this mean? Just thinking about it made Klein shudder.

Could it be that the goddess was once an evil god?

No…. Maybe it's some other evil god that falls into the night domain… However, the Dark Sacred Emblem by the door is no different from the one that is being used presently…

Or perhaps, having the image of an intelligent being isn't a standard method to distinguish between true gods and evil gods? After all, the Captain's level wasn't high enough, and his understanding of the situation wasn't necessarily accurate enough.

It was also possible that the Tudors were deliberately blaspheming the goddess!

Yes, it could also be a way of setting up some strange ritual!

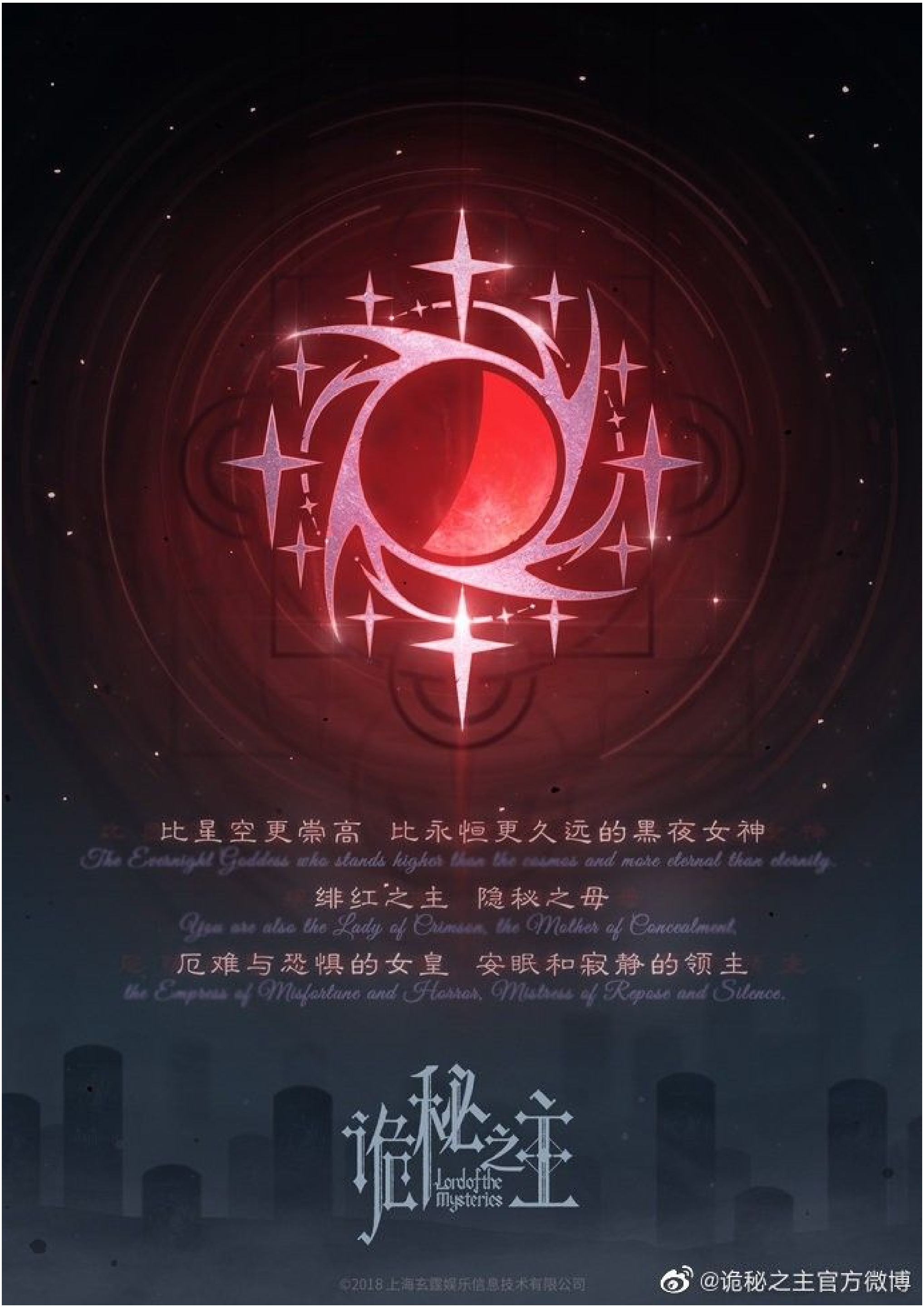
Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind. It left him feeling puzzled, nervous, and tense. However, he also felt a strange feeling which couldn't be described.

After looking around, Klein, who didn't see anything else, took a deep breath and said, "Let's go to the other doors and take a look."

I wonder what the other six doors correspond to. Would it be equally strange and evil… He thought gravely.

Miss Bodyguard nodded slowly.

Sacred Emblem Church of the Evernight Goddess


比星空更崇高　比永恒更久远的黑夜女神
The Evernight Goddess who stands higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity.
绯红之主　隐秘之母
You are also the Lady of Crimson, the Mother of Concealment,
厄难与恐惧的女皇　安眠和寂静的领主
the Empress of Misfortune and Horror, Mistress of Repose and Silence.
诡秘之主
Lord of the Mysteries
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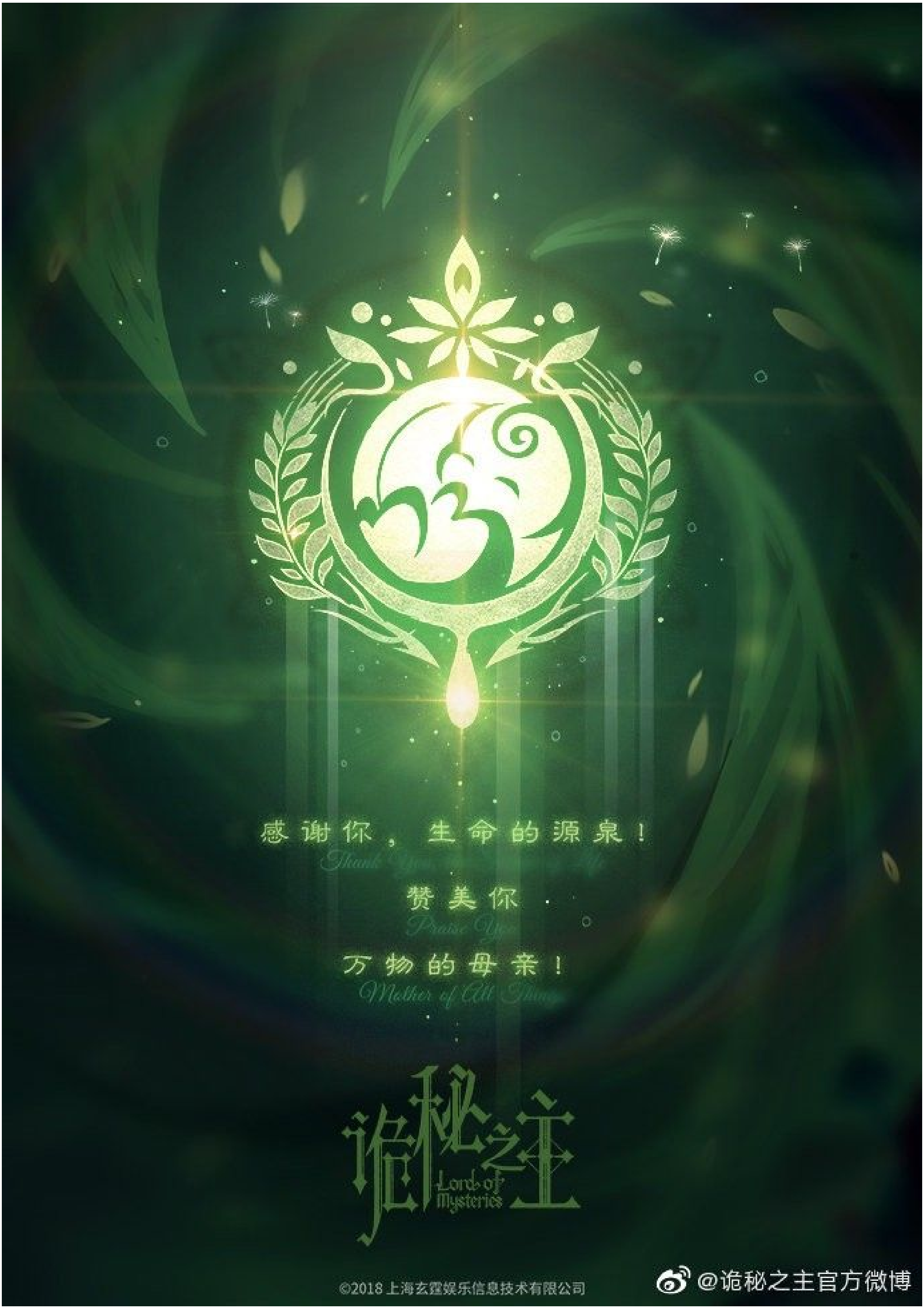
Sacred Emblem Church of the Earth Mother


感谢你，生命的源泉！
Thank You
赞美你
Praise You
万物的母亲！
Mother of All Things
诡秘之主
Lord of Mysteries
©2018 上海玄霆娱乐信息技术有限公司
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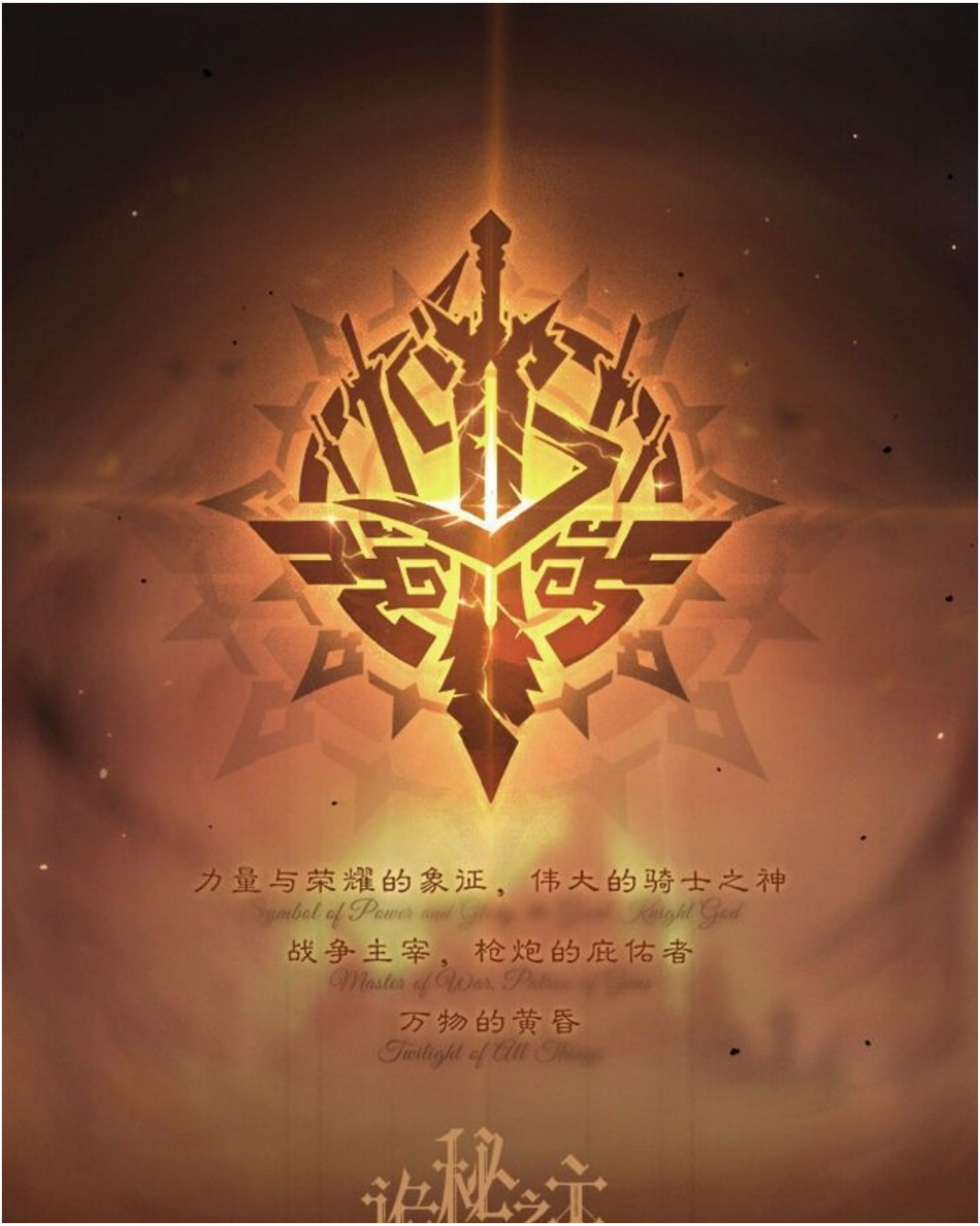
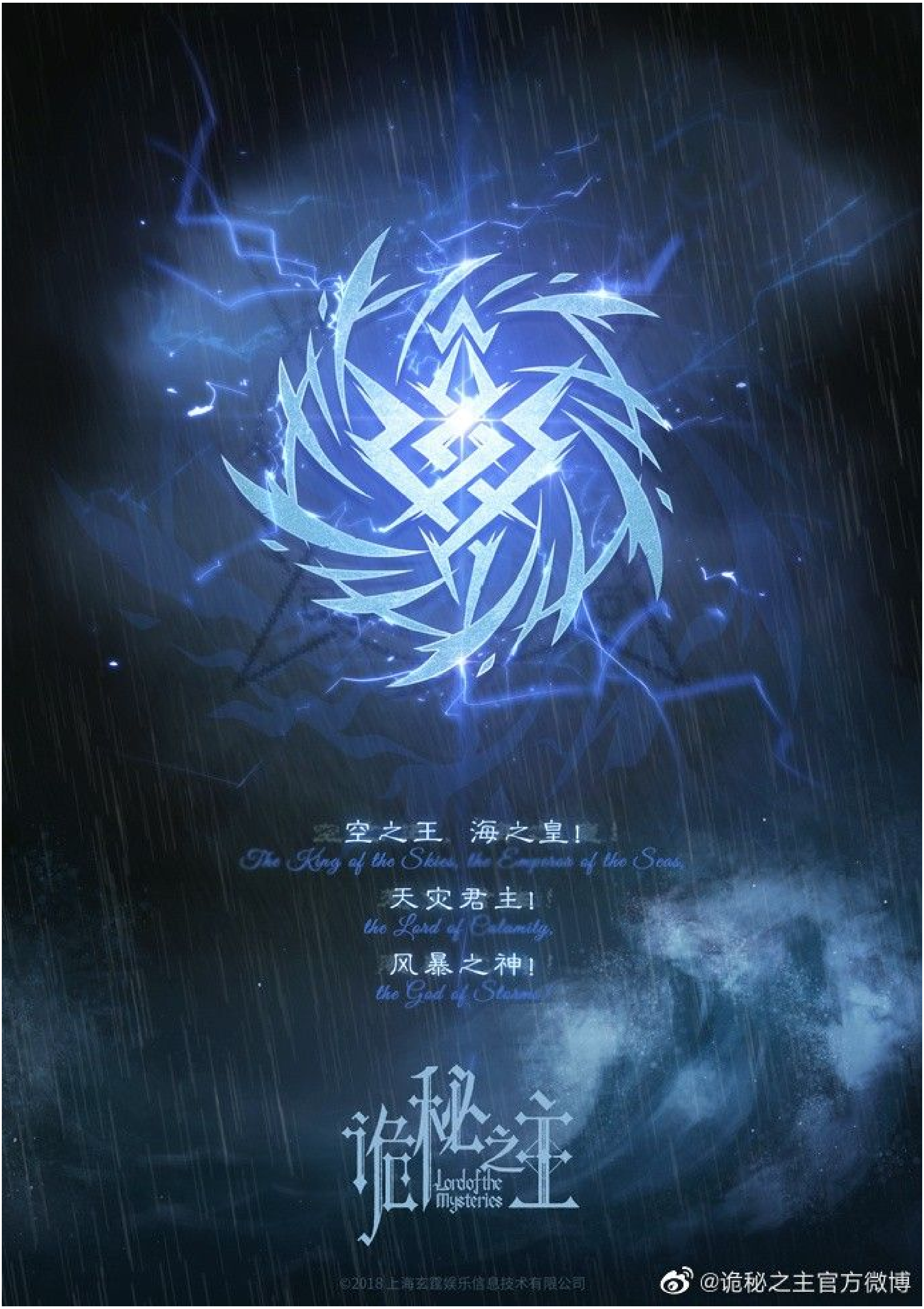
Sacred Emblem Church of the God of Combat


力量与荣耀的象征，伟大的骑士之神
Symbol of Power and Glory, the Great Knight God
战争主宰，枪炮的庇佑者
Master of War, Patron of Guns
万物的黄昏
Twilight of All Things

Sacred Emblem Church of the Storms


空之王，海之皇！
The King of the Skies, the Emperor of the Seas,
天灾君主！
the Lord of Calamity,
风暴之神！
the God of Storms!
诡秘之主
Lord of the Mysteries
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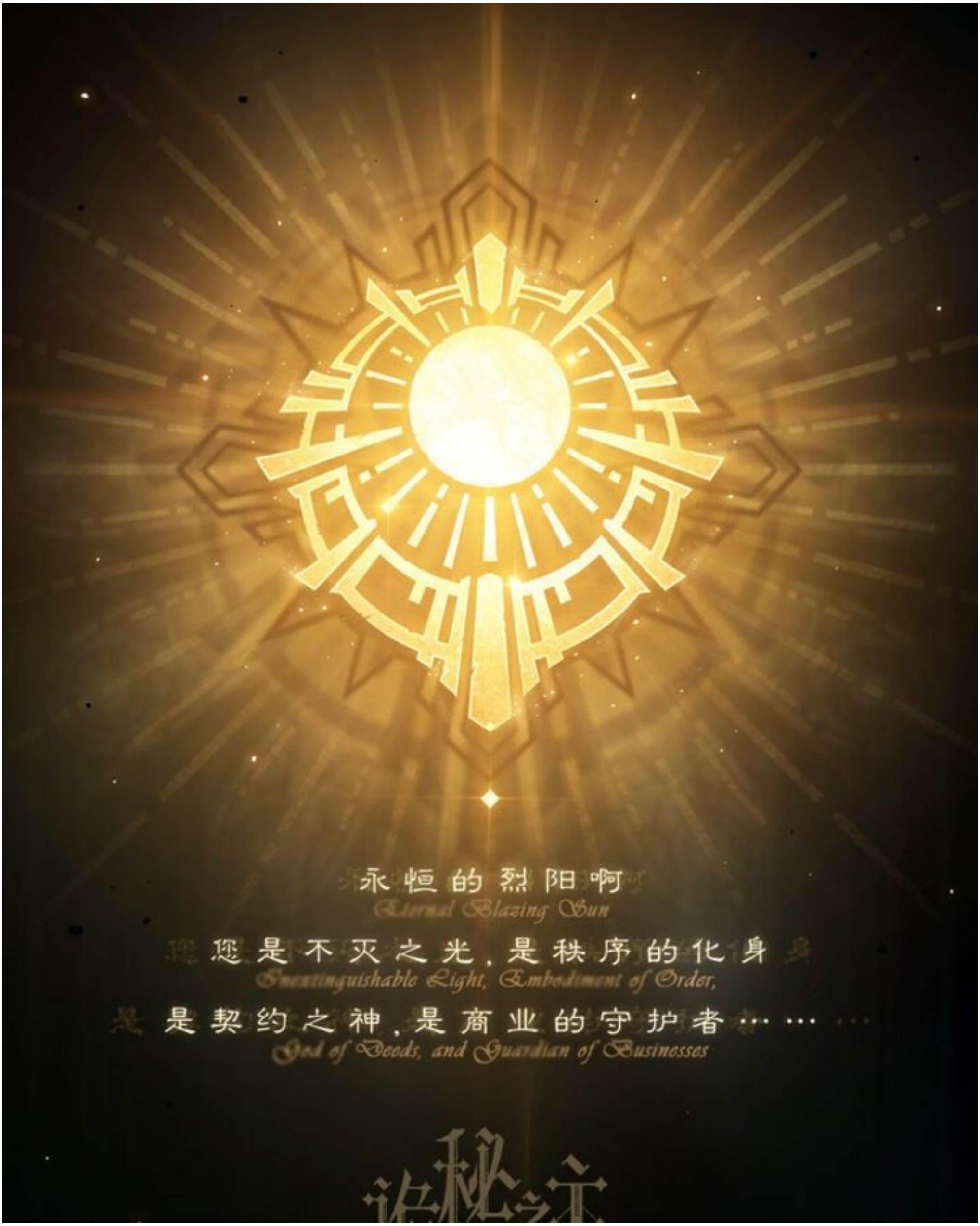
Sacred Emblem Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom

[image]

Sacred Emblem Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun


永恒的烈阳啊
Eternal Blazing Sun
您是不灭之光，是秩序的化身
Unextinguishable Light, Embodiment of Order,
是契约之神，是商业的守护者……
God of Deeds, and Guardian of Businesses

Chapter 261 - The Innermost Room

◆

When he was out of the room, Klein carefully held his cane and lantern in the same hand, leaving his left hand free so that he could retrieve the contents of his pocket as quickly as possible in the event there was a sudden turn of events.

Inside, there were charms, Azik’s copper whistle, some tarot cards, and apart from the remaining Rosago’s characteristic, the All-Black Eye, his pocket contained all the means available to him.

Klein and Miss Bodyguard had barely taken a step to the side when the light of the lantern illuminated the emblem on the door next to them. It was a simple drawing of a baby surrounded by the symbols of wheat, flowers, and spring water.

“The Sacred Emblem of Earth Mother…” Klein said in a solemn voice.

As a former Nighthawk, one of his basic skills was being able to distinguish the symbols of other churches.

Miss Bodyguard nodded slightly, as though to confirm this.

Her black Gothic regal dress looked even eerier and terrifying in such an environment and atmosphere. Her pale face looked like a grieving wraith under the illumination of the lantern.

If any other adventurer were to come here and see this scene, they would definitely flee while stumbling out of fear.

Holding his breath, Klein reached out with his left hand, pushed open the stone door, and raised the lantern high.

He found that the layout here was very similar to the one before, like a perfect fusion between a small prayer room and a giant statue.

Across the empty wheat-colored stone tiles, Klein illuminated the three steps ahead of him with a lantern.

On the platform was a white stone sculpture about four or five meters tall. It was a plump and beautiful lady, with ears of wheat growing from her feet, and she was surrounded by spring water. Her dress seemed to flutter, and embedded in it, there were different herbs and flowers, as well as the depiction of different animals.

The lady's chest was raised high, and in her arms was an adorable infant in swaddling clothes. She stood there, tall and sacred.

"Don't tell me that this is the statue of Earth Mother?" Klein said softly with his lips curled.

Miss Bodyguard didn't confirm or deny it.

After checking their surroundings, the duo left the room and opened the third door nearby.

Behind this door was a corridor that allowed four people to walk alongside each other. Ahead of them, it was dark and deep, filled with mystery and oddities; it was unknown where it led to.

"Let's first confirm the situation behind the four doors on the right," Klein suggested.

He didn't dare to rashly enter.

Using her actions as an answer, Miss Bodyguard floated backward.

The duo opened the four stone doors on the right, in succession. They separately saw the Storm Sacred Emblem, which was made up of the symbol of gales and stormy waves; the Sacred Emblem of the Sun, which was surrounded by lines; the Sacred Emblems of the God of Combat, which was made from the combination of the symbol for dusk and a sword-shaped symbol; as well as the Sacred Emblem of Knowledge and Wisdom, which was represented by an open book and an omniscient Eye.

In contrast, there were four suspected statues of deities in the room.

A dignified middle-aged man in black armor, standing over churning dusk waves, surrounded by stormy winds, with lightning flashing behind him and a trident in his hand.

There was a young man in a pure white robe, holding a book of deeds in one hand and a golden sphere which resembled the sun in the other. He was handsome and spirited.

There was a warrior sitting on a throne high above, holding a sword in front of him. His face was hidden behind his helmet's visor, his entire body covered with an indescribable sense of decay.

There was a hooded elder holding a book and the omniscient eye, with only his mouth, wrinkles, and long white beard exposed.

Apart from the God of Steam and Machinery, there were six humanoid statues of the orthodox Gods in this strange hall.

Considering the weak position of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery before the appearance of Roselle, there seemed to be some sort of explanation regarding this problem.

"This is really strange..." Klein exclaimed with a sigh, partially because he couldn't stop it, and partially because he was testing Miss Bodyguard's reaction.

This grand hall, which was a hundred meters deep, actually had six of the orthodox gods collected within it.

This was something unimaginable in the current era!

How could the Church of the Six True Gods allow their gods to live in the same structure as the other gods?!

This was a custom that only existed during the Fourth Epoch? Also, what's with those humanoid statues? Although they look normal, unlike the sinister Primordial Demoness and the True Creator statues, they still give off weird vibes… Just what had happened to make the images of the six gods evolve into abstract symbols in this day of age… No, perhaps it's been like this all this time, but the master of this place, a noble who's suspected to be a member of the Tudor family, purposely created statues of the six deities for some purpose… Hmm, I thought of an item from a novel from my previous life, the Six Soul Banner… While he waited for Miss Bodyguard's reply, Klein's mind wandered.

Miss Bodyguard didn't answer his query and instead said blandly, "There's another door."

That's right… Klein suddenly felt fear.

In his opinion, doors placed in the center often had a special meaning, perhaps the core of this ancient building.

Of course, this also meant that the situation was most likely the most dangerous.

"What are your thoughts on that area?" Klein hesitated for two seconds and directly asked.

Under the situation of not being able to use the gray fog to eliminate any interference, he felt that Miss Bodyguard's spiritual perception and spiritual instincts were more reliable than his divination means at present. After all, she was in a very special state, close to that of a spiritual body, allowing her to communicate with the spirit world without any obstruction to gain revelations.

Miss Bodyguard closed her eyes and replied a few seconds later, "Very dangerous.

"But the danger is subdued.

"Once you venture deeper, don't touch anything."

Subdued danger… Is this equivalent to having something sealed inside? As Klein guessed, he and Miss Bodyguard walked to the central stone door and stepped onto the dark floor.

The light of the lantern seemed to dim a little as though it found it difficult to drive out the darkness ahead. Klein had his left hand in his pocket, holding Azik's copper whistle and a few charms.

After about thirty steps, Miss Bodyguard suddenly stopped.

Klein raised the lantern in his right hand and saw that the road ahead was blocked by boulders and dirt.

On the left and right were two stone doors in the same shape as the ones in the main hall. The right side was ajar and filled with mud and stone.

"Perhaps this ancient structure was aboveground back then, but for some reason, it eventually sank and collapsed," Klein mumbled. "There's only one direction we can choose from."

Before he could finish his words, he saw Miss Bodyguard float ahead, stick to the huge rock, fuse into it, and disappear.

Klein's mouth twitched, and he began to patiently wait.

After a few minutes, Miss Bodyguard came out from the mud on the right, her body completely free of dust.

"It's completely collapsed," she concluded flatly.

For a moment Klein was speechless and could only smile.

Following that, the two of them simultaneously looked to the left where the ajar stone door was. There was a tiny crack.

Klein went closer and carefully looked through the three centimeter gap.

His Spirit Vision, which had originally been blocked by the stone door, immediately discovered something.

There were at least four bright and powerful spiritual lights inside, two that were close to dark gold in color, and two that were dark blue like the sea.

After using his Spirit Vision, a "narrow" scene appeared in Klein's normal vision.

The firelight that entered the room illuminated the black stone tiles. On top of the tiles were piles of bones covered with rotten clothing, and a few of them emitted dark gold and dark blue light.

Condensed Beyonder characteristics? Mystical items? As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein swept his gaze to the ends of the room.

Along the dark wall stood a double door.

A bloody pair of double doors!

There seemed to remnants of fresh blood on the door. They continued sliding down as they reflected the light.

Klein had wanted to let Miss Bodyguard scout the way ahead when he suddenly felt a change in Azik's copper whistle that he was holding in his hand!

The originally cold and mild whistle suddenly became bone-piercing. It was a profound feeling of death!

This… Klein narrowed his eyes and instinctively took a step back.

Then, he noticed that his right forearm was numb and itchy and that it was beginning to swell.

A scene flashed through his mind as he immediately took out a tarot card with his left hand and slashed across his arm.

What surged out from his wound wasn't blood, but tiny black squirming worms!

Sizzle!

When these worms fell to the ground, they eroded into smoke.

They struggled and huddled, but in the end, they melted under the glow of the lanterns.

After a few seconds, all the black worms in Klein's wound finally flowed out, leaving only crimson liquid.

He wriggled his muscles to control the small wound and prevented the blood from flowing further.

Miss Bodyguard watched this scene quietly, her pretty eyebrows creasing into a rarely seen frown.

Klein was just about to speak when he discovered the coldness and deadliness of Azik's copper whistle hadn't abated.

At the same time, his gaze landed on Miss Bodyguard's shadow.

She never had a shadow to begin with!

"Run!" Klein shouted and immediately ran towards the hall.

Miss Bodyguard quickly floated up, and the two of them saw the lantern light in front of them gradually being swallowed up by a black shadow.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein ran like a hurricane as fast as he could while the light around him faded away.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The shadow grew bigger and bigger, closer and closer, thicker and thicker. The light from the flame was about to be completely engulfed, and at that moment, the door was still a few meters away.

At that moment, Klein instinctively rushed forward and then rolled across the stone door.

The light from the fire suddenly brightened, and the uneasiness in his heart instantly disappeared. Azik's copper whistle also returned to its mild and cold state.

Miss Bodyguard floated beside him as she turned around and looked at the passageway which had once again sunk into darkness. She said with an uncertain tone, "Evil spirit…"

Evil spirit? Klein almost drew a deep breath when he heard that. Fortunately, as a Clown, he was good at controlling his expression and reactions.

In the field of mysticism, evil spirits were extremely terrifying monsters. The best of them could even be said to be on the same level as High-Sequence Beyonders!

An evil spirit is wandering within this ancient structure? For some reason, it's bound or imprisoned within that room? Hmm… If it was an evil spirit, that explains why Mr. Azik's copper whistle responded. An evil spirit can be considered as an undead creature… Klein stood up and also looked at the path which was now submerged in darkness. He felt as if there was a pair of cold eyes staring at him!

Chapter 262 - Dream

◆

In the cold and gloomy hall, Klein suddenly shivered. He retracted his gaze and said to Miss Bodyguard, “Let’s return.”

From the way Azik’s copper whistle reacted, it’s likely that the room contains a terrifying evil spirit. Its danger level is highly likely to be above that of Marionettist Rosago and Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos… It’s been roaming these confines for centuries to thousands of years. Perhaps it’s already equivalent to a High-Sequence Beyonder. If it wasn’t for its experiencing difficulties in letting its powers escape the room, I would already be dead… Even if Miss Bodyguard is a powerful Sequence 5, there’s no hope of us turning the tides of battle with our powers combined… One needs to be aware of one’s strength. I cannot be enticed by the suspected Beyonder characteristics and mystical items left in there… Greed often leads to death… Klein silently came up with a reason to convince himself.

Miss Bodyguard turned her head to look at him. Without much emotion in her eyes, she asked, “What happens next?”

Next? Klein silently gritted his teeth and said with deliberation, “Let Millet Carter get the police. Who knows when this evil spirit will escape. It’s best to finish it as soon as possible. No, that won’t work. Mr. Carter doesn’t know enough. By informing the police this way, the police department won’t pay enough attention to it. The first batch of people who come to explore this place will suffer heavy casualties, and they might even indirectly help the evil spirit escape from its restraints. Also, for me to see these statues, a detective like me might be silenced…

Uh… Did you see the bones and spiritual light in the room?”

Miss Bodyguard once again cast her gaze towards the dark path behind the ajar stone door, and very slightly nodded her head.

Klein thought quickly and said, “My guess is that these are the corpses of the explorers from before. They were killed by the evil spirit in that room, and one of the Beyonders left behind some mystical items. This might have had something to do with the viscount family that lived beyond this premises. I plan to inquire about their last names, go to the library, and look for information about their descendants. Perhaps, I might gain some valuable clues.

“After coming to a preliminary confirmation of the situation, I’ll make a choice based on the severity of the situation. I might get some explosives, destroy the door, or send an anonymous letter to the police, detailing the existence of the evil spirit. However, I’ll have to think of a way to avoid the risk ahead of time.

“This isn’t too urgent. I can take my time.”

Miss Bodyguard quietly listened to what Klein had to say. Looking ahead, she said in an ethereal voice, “Are you not considering to get people to exorcise this evil spirit?

“Even if there were no mystical items left behind, the remains after the evil spirit dissipates are still precious enough.”

It’s the first time I’ve seen you talk so much… Probably… Klein replied without hesitation, “The risk is too high. I think my life and health are more important.”

He organized his words and added, “The most powerful person I know is you. And from your performance just now, you don’t seem to be a match for that evil spirit. I can’t imagine any other way of finishing it, other than calling the police.”

Miss Bodyguard turned around, her pale face somewhat translucent.

“You still have some sense,” she commented calmly, then drifted toward the exit of the ancient hall.

Other than being suspected to be under the True Creator’s influence, in what way do I look like a madman? Klein silently lampooned. He held the lantern and cane and followed behind Miss Bodyguard. Throughout the entire process, he felt as if he was being watched by the cold eyes of the dark corridor.

It was only when they walked out of the stone door that suffused an ancient aura did the feeling suddenly disappear.

Klein turned around and closed the door, sealing the inverted candlesticks, scuffed marks, and the creepy statues of the six deities, allowing them to continue their thousand-year-long “slumber” in that unchanging darkness and silence.

Patting the dust off his clothes, he switched the lantern in his other hand and hurried back to Millet Carter’s basement. As for Miss Bodyguard, she had disappeared into thin air as usual.

Millet Carter was pacing about in the basement. When he saw Klein exit, he hurriedly asked, “How is it? What’s the situation inside?”

Klein had long thought of an excuse as he said with an expression of fear, “Terrible, there are a lot of snakes in there, and many spots have collapsed. I plan to gather some information, gather some manpower, and once preparations are done, do another round of exploration. During this period of time, it’s best that you don’t send anyone in. Believe me, there are more venomous snakes in there than you can imagine.”

Millet drew a gasp and asked in fear, “Will they slither out?

“Do you know any experts that can deal with the snakes?”

Klein immediately nodded. “I’ll get people to help and try my best to deal with this matter. It’s the cold autumn now, and the snakes aren’t willing to move. As long as you don't send anyone to disturb them, nothing will happen."

"Okay, please hurry. I'll close this door and prevent anyone from entering." Hearing that, Millet relaxed a little.

When Klein saw that his employer was truly intimidated by what he said, he quickly put down the lantern, nudged his gold-rimmed spectacles and said, "Next up, I'll gather some information. I'll first gain a preliminary understanding of the layout of the underground structure before I explore it again.

"That requires you to tell me which viscount was the original owner of this house."

Millet had bought this building precisely because it was an estate of a former noble, so he answered immediately, "Viscount Pound."

"What do you know about him and his family?" Klein asked in a professional manner.

Millet pondered and said, "Not much. I only know that he won his aristocratic title in the Battle of the Violated Oath. It once enjoyed an illustrious period, but decades later, suddenly declined due to unknown reasons. The family kept losing its heirs, causing it to eventually have to seek out distant relatives to keep the aristocratic title. And the new Viscount Pound is, heh heh. He squandered most of the family's fortune, and he was demoted to baronet by the king. He's probably still in Backlund and can go bankrupt at any moment."

Battle of the Violated Oath? The Battle of the Violated Oath that began in 738 during the Fifth Epoch? Having successfully graduated as a history student, Klein instinctively recalled the corresponding knowledge.

The war that happened about six centuries ago was a war involving religion. The southern Feynapotter Kingdom originally believed in both Earth Mother and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, but due to some influencing factors, the two churches began to be at odds with each other, and their believers often clashed.

During that period, its two neighbors in the north, the Loen Kingdom and the Intis Kingdom, seized the opportunity to start a war in the name of protecting freedom of religion. In the later stages of the war, the Feysac Empire joined the fray and attempted to destroy the ploy by Loen and Intis. However, they still failed to turn the situation around.

The result of the war was that the border between Loen and Feynapotter, as well as Intis and Feynapotter, countries such as Lenburg, Masin, and Segar, gained independence. They mainly believed in the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, leaving the Church of Earth Mother as the only religion in the Feynapotter Kingdom.

The conflict that lasted five years was called the Battle of the Violated Oath because both sides of the war accused their adversaries of violating the Holy Oath at the end of the Fourth Epoch.

After that, there was more than 300 years of peace in the Northern Continent. This didn’t mean that there was no conflict between nations, but rather, there were no wars on that scale again. It lasted until Roselle invented the steam engine and improved the sailboats and artillery.

This is the information recorded in the history textbooks… Thinking about it now, since it involved faith, there must’ve been some Beyonders from the Church involved. There must’ve been an intense Beyonder war… However, it’s said that that era was a period with few Beyonders… Squadron battles? Could the Pound family’s sudden waning and continuous loss of heirs, which happened decades ago, have something to do with the discovery of the ancient structure underground? Klein thoughtfully asked, “Do you know where Baronet Pound currently lives?”

“I’m sorry, I don’t know.” Millet shook his head slightly.

Klein asked a few more questions, but seeing that he couldn't get any more information, he bade farewell and returned to 15 Minsk Street.

It was almost five in the afternoon and the sky was as dark as the night. Klein thought that the public libraries would've be closed by then, so he temporarily put aside the underground structure and prepared dinner for himself.

He had wanted to learn to make Feynapotter noodles based on a recipe in the newspapers, but he ended up with noodles mixed in meat, sauce, and vegetables. To his surprise, it tasted pretty good.

After having had his fill, Klein tossed a coin casually, divining if he should inform the police. He received a negative answer.

†

The Backlund evening was as serene as other cities, at least in Cherwood Borough.

Klein was sleeping soundly, wandering through different dreams in an adrift manner when he suddenly realized, with a jolt, that he was dreaming.

Someone is invading my dreams? Klein resisted the urge to frown and pretended to look around in confusion.

He found himself in a scorching yellow desert.

A roar suddenly came from the sky, and a huge monster dyed in black and gold flew over.

The creature had a thick, lizard-like body and a pair of wide wings covered in a hide on its back. It descended and blotted out the sun in the sky.

A dragon! A powerful dragon! Klein saw scales the size of a plate, a gaping mouth that emitted pure light, and two dark golden vertical pupils.

Roar!

The dragon spat out a beam of light that seemed to envelop everything. Soon, large swaths of the desert was obliterated.

Amid the light, a figure jumped into the air.

He was three or four meters tall, but he didn't have the unique vertical eye of the giants. He had a handsome, young face, and he wore black full-body armor which seemed to be spattered with blood.

This giant knight swung his broadsword upwards and countless bluish-white flames, which appeared a little purple, condensed into long spears. They shot at the dragon. It was as if he had an entire army of illusory Beyonders helping him in battle!

In the midst of the meteor shower, the giant knight leaped onto the head of the dragon, and he swung his sword down.

[image]

The afterimages he had created earlier instantly overlapped, and the sword rays turned into intersecting lightning.

Pow!

The ground shook wildly, and the dragon fell, splattering its dark gold blood.

At that moment, the scene changed to a huge bloody door. It was the same bloody door that Klein had seen in the ancient structure that very afternoon.

With a creak, the bloody door opened a crack, allowing him to catch a glimpse of a black high back chair.

A man of normal height sat on the high back chair. He had his head lowered, silent and deathly still.

As his vision got closer and closer, Klein saw the man's clothes clearly. He seemed to be the knight that had just killed the dragon, and he was still wearing the black armor that was stained with blood!

The only difference was that he was no longer three or four meters tall.

At this moment, the man suddenly raised his head. His handsome, young face had terrifying signs of decay; his eyes ice-cold and emotionless.

Klein jumped in fright and awoke from his dream. Opening his eyes, he saw the crimson moonlight shining through the curtains.

Chapter 263 - Spiritual Perception and Attempt

◆ ◆ ◆

Under the dim crimson moonlight, Klein pulled back his blanket and got up.

For a Seer, putting weight on dreams was a basic requirement, and the dream he just had could never be dismissed as a simple nightmare.

Dressed in relatively comfortable clothes, he came before the full-body mirror and said in a low voice, “I dreamed of the blood-stained door in that room.”

Miss Bodyguard’s figure slowly outlined itself above the mirror. She replied expressionlessly, “The influence of the evil spirit’s aura.

“It will gradually weaken until it disappears.”

Is that so… Klein nodded slightly and returned to the side of the bed. He picked up the gold pocket watch and popped it open.

Seeing that it was still early, he lay back down to sleep. This time, he no longer encountered the same dream as before.

Sunday morning the next day, in high spirits, Klein made himself a soft-boiled egg to go with buttered bread.

In the Loen Kingdom, or rather in the countries of the Northern Continent, it was a must for gentlemen to read the newspapers at breakfast, and Klein was no exception. He opened up the newspapers he subscribed to—the Tussock Times, Backlund Morning Post, and

Backlund Bulletin.

“The Civil Servant Unified Examination Bill has been officially passed by the House of Lords. The first examination will be held in early December, and the second examination will be held at the end of January next year. The final interview will be held two weeks after that… Within a week, the government will announce the positions and requirements involved in this exam and begin the registration process… Reporters surmise that most of it will be held in Backlund…” Klein scanned the contents, picked up his cup, and sipped his Sibe black tea.

He couldn’t help but think of Benson and thought to himself, The bill is passed at the end of September. The positions will be announced in the beginning of October, and registrations will be completed by early November. The examinations will start at the beginning of December… The timing is tight and very unreasonable. That implies how much of a rush the King and the Prime Minister is in to have this enacted.

But that’s advantageous for Benson. He prepared two months ahead of everyone else; even if he can’t compare to the elite graduates of the universities, he would definitely be able to beat most of his competition, and the positions the elites are aiming for wouldn’t clash with his.

He should be fine…

Klein wanted to tap his chest four times to draw out a crimson moon and say “May the Goddess bless him,” but then he remembered that Miss Bodyguard was nearby and resisted the urge. After all, he had claimed to be a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery.

After finishing his last mouthful of bread, he continued reading the papers.

“Both Houses have passed the National Atmospheric Pollution Council bill, allowing the government to set up such an organization… The coming month will be a critical period for the various parties to become a member of the council…”

“…An independent Alkali Industry Public Prosecutor has been approved with the goal of minimizing the pollution levels in acid and alkali factories.”

“…The fifth page doesn’t have an advertisement for the purchase of goods from the Ernst Firm. There’s no need to consider participating in the Beyonder gathering tomorrow night…”

†

Tingen City, 2 Daffodil Street.

Benson read and reread the news in the papers, forgetting the bread on his plate.

“The Civil Servant Unified Examination Bill was passed?” Dressed in a long, black dress, Melissa looked at her brother who was acting oddly.

The newspapers from the past few days had been playing up the bill that would be passed this time.

Benson finally put down the newspaper, wiped his black hair, and exhaled slowly.

“Yes.”

At this moment, the two of them suddenly fell into silence. The room was completely silent, it even lacked the sound of knives and forks colliding with the dining plates.

The indescribable atmosphere was broken by Bella, the maid who came out of the kitchen. Benson smiled and said, “This is foreseeable. Actually, the most important thing is the previous piece of news.”

“Oh?” Melissa’s expression was unusually quiet.

Benson took a bite of his bread and smiled.

“The news that the Backlund Polytechnic of Technology will be restructured into a university.

“It’ll formally accept students next year. It won’t need tests on grammar and classical literature, but will instead focus on the technical aspects. It’s very suitable for graduates and students of technical schools everywhere.

“Melissa, I think you can try.”

“But…” Melissa subconsciously retorted.

Benson interrupted her with a smile.

“Its tuition will be half as cheap as the Tingen, Perth, Kboy, and Backlund and the other universities. It’s equivalent to the Constant Industry University in Midseashire, and there will be even more opportunities for scholarships. Melissa, don’t you like machinery, steam, and this stuff? This is the best opportunity for you to have access to much advanced and deeper knowledge.

“Give it a try, how about it? Don’t worry about wasting money. Although th-that money can allow us to maintain our present lives without working, we’re still young. We must not define our lives like this. As you can see, compared to a few months ago, my grammar has improved a lot.

“Eh… It might be better if we change environments.

“I know you can’t bear to part with Tingen and this place. Well, we’ll come back eventually, but not when we’re young.”

Melissa looked at the various components on the coffee table as her lips moved a few times and she said, “What about Bella…”

After Klein’s death, she didn’t want to hire any more maidservants, but when she thought of how tragic Bella's life would be after she lost her job, she gave up on the idea. After all, the extra expense of 5 soli a week was already nothing to the Moretti family, which had an annuity of at least three hundred pounds.

To this, Benson shook his head and laughed.

"There are still a few more months before that happens. We can let Bella find a new job ahead of time. Before that, we will continue to pay her and provide her with a bedroom. Furthermore, her cooking skills are much better than before, so she can apply to be a chef at someone's home. It's a pity… Heh heh. Of course, everything depends on the premise that you can pass the entrance exams at Backlund's University of Technology."

He had wanted to say that it was a pity that Bella didn't have much time to learn how to cook, but after looking at Melissa's gloomy expression, he forcefully changed the topic.

Before Melissa could say anything, Benson smiled and touched his hair.

"I'm planning on resigning tomorrow and will focus on preparing for the exam. Most of the positions are said to be in Backlund. That's my goal. I hope we can go there together."

Melissa was silent for a moment before she slowly nodded her head.

At the same time, she put down her fork and knife, wiped her mouth with a napkin, and said, "I'm going to the bathroom."

"Alright." Benson watched his sister leave the dining table, and the smile that had been plastered over his face rapidly vanished.

He took out the silver pocket watch with the vine-leaf patterns, took a close look at it, and sighed very quietly.

†

During the whole of Sunday, Klein busied himself with the public libraries in the Cherwood Borough in search of information related to Viscount Pound, but the viscount's family didn't have a single biography, nor did it arouse the interest of any historian to conduct a special study.

They were scattered across the annals of history, and Klein, who had no "search" function to use, felt a throbbing pain in his head as he faced the vast collection of books and essays.

He spent six hours browsing through a lot of information, but failed to find any useful information.

I have to find someone who has a deep knowledge of the history of the nobility. Or I have to bribe someone in the police department to get the address of Baronet Pound. He's an aristocrat, and the police department must have a corresponding record, and there aren't many aristocrats. When Klein got home, he stood in front of the mirror and talked to the air.

The surface of the mirror quickly outlined Miss Bodyguard's Gothic regal dress and the black bonnet on her head.

She nodded slightly, as if agreeing with Klein.

She then suddenly spoke out in a dreamy voice, "The employment period is over."

I know, the three days are up… Klein thought for a moment and asked, "If I can obtain some clues about the Pound family, would you like to know?"

Miss Bodyguard didn't answer but gave a slight nod.

"Um… through Maric?" Klein asked.

After nodding her head again, Miss Bodyguard bent down, lifted up her skirt, and bowed.

Her figure quickly disappeared, and the reflection in the mirror was no longer anything special.

Klein looked around and didn't relax as a result of that. He proceeded systematically to prepare dinner and fill his stomach.

He waited until it was late in the night before returning to his bedroom and drew back the curtains. Then, he took out the iron cigar case and reached out to touch Rosago's All-Black Eye.

A series of illusory roars immediately rampaged through his mind, seeming to tear apart his mind and destroy his thoughts.

With great difficulty, Klein resisted the pain which was making his head explode. Once again, he saw the black threads spreading out from different parts of his body.

They were densely packed and illusory, reaching out endlessly.

He quickly released his grip to escape from the negative influence. After nearly a minute, everything returned to normal.

Phew, I can finally go up to the gray fog and verify the spiritual perception I had before… Klein silently said to himself as he quickly set up the ritual, summoned himself, and responded to himself.

Then, in his spirit form, he carried Azik's copper whistle, picked up the iron cigar case, and returned above the gray fog.

Klein sat at seat of honor at the ancient long table, using his fingers to create spiritual flames and burning the bloodstained documents in the corner and any other items that were no longer needed.

When he was done, he opened the iron cigar case and was surprised to find that the All-Black Eye had become silent, no longer showing any signs of madness, but that corruptive influence was still settling within. It just wasn't active, as if it was in hibernation.

“As expected, it’s impossible to separate them directly…” Klein muttered. Following that, on the other side of the ancient table, a man in a hooded robe appeared.

Just like his previous attempt to create a clone, this man was stiff and lifeless. It was obvious that he wasn’t someone real at a glance. There was no way he could deceive the members of the Tarot Club.

However, Klein already had an idea regarding this.

He extended his hand and held the All-Black Eye. There was silence in his ears, and there were no longer any terrifying howls.

Using the amassed Beyonder characteristic, he could see that there were also black threads floating out from the fake body opposite him.

Soon after, Klein carefully let his spirituality spread out through the All-Black Eye, touching a few of the illusory threads.

All of a sudden, he felt like he was holding onto something.

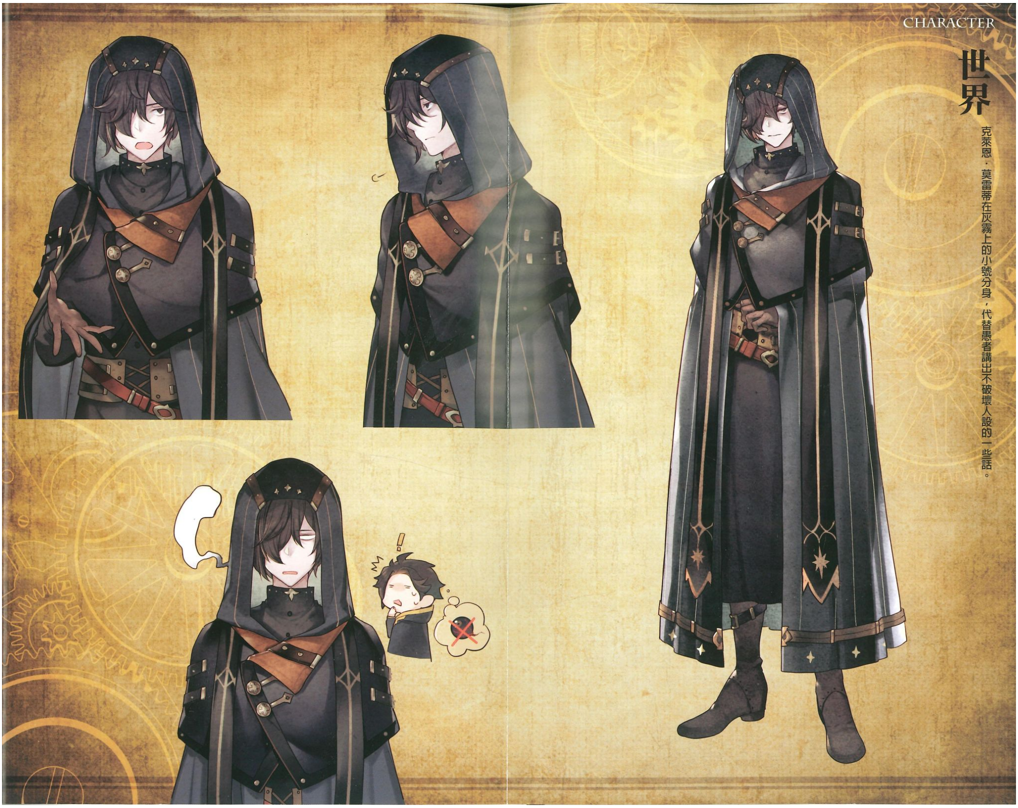
With a thought from him, the fake person raised his hand.

It worked! I can use the ability of the Marionettist to create a fake Tarot Club member! However, this is draining on me. I’m unable to maintain a second one… Hmm, the symbol on the back of the chair won’t change accordingly, but it’s not like Miss Justice and the rest can see it… Klein happily practiced, over and over again, even learning how to manipulate his clone’s throat and mouth to let him speak.

When his spirituality was almost exhausted, he smiled and said to the fake person in front of him, “Welcome, new member. Which tarot card do you wish to draw?”

After saying that, he closed his mouth. The fake person opposite him lifted his hand to stroke his chin as he laughed hoarsely, “World!

“I choose the card ‘The World.’”



克萊恩·莫雷蒂在灰霧上的小號分身，代替愚者講出不破壞人設的一些話。

The World

Klein Moretti's "smurf" (alternate account/avatar) above the gray fog. He acts as a proxy to say those blunt or awkward things that the Fool cannot say himself.

Chapter 264 - A Five-Person Gathering

◆

If “The Fool” signified the beginning of the tarot club, then “The World” signified the end, a perfect ending of a cycle and sublimation. Klein had named his smurf “The World” because he hoped that it would lead to a beautiful beginning and end.

In the future, I’ll be able to make The World make requests or do things that wouldn’t be convenient for me. This will greatly reduce the possibility that my image as Mr. Fool will collapse. With an alt, no—a smurf truly is what makes life complete! Klein sighed in relief and waved The World away.

Following that, he spread out his spirituality, wrapped himself, and stimulated a descent into the gray fog and returned to the real world.

He had left Rosago’s All-Black Eye above the gray fog. After all, he couldn’t usually use the “item” anyway, and he had to constantly worry about having it discovered by others or losing it.

After putting away the summoning ritual materials, Klein looked up towards the crimson moonlight that passed through the curtains, filled with anticipation for tomorrow’s gathering.

When it came to understanding the aristocracy, he believed that Miss Justice would definitely surpass 99% of the people of Loen.

And with his smurf, The World, he could directly ask her about the Pound family without worrying about affecting his image as a The Fool!

Of course, this had to be done in a more tactful manner. After all, Detective Sherlock Moriarty was also looking for information on the Pound family, and only with enough information would he be able to perform a divination above the gray fog.

Phew… Klein thought hard for a while before he relaxed and fell asleep.

After entering the gray fog, it was as though the remnants of the evil spirit's aura had completely disappeared. Klein slept until dawn, but he didn't see the sun because of the thin fog outside.

He continued as planned, heading to the rest of the public libraries in Backlund, but he no longer queried the librarians nor did he mention the Pound family. He only leafed through the materials concerning the nobility by himself.

At twenty minutes to three in the afternoon, Klein entered the mysterious space above the gray fog ahead of time.

Inside the vast and ancient palace, he sat down at the seat belonging to The Fool. He conjured the fake World on the opposite side of the mottled bronze table as he familiarized himself with operating The World.

After a few minutes, Klein took out his pocket watch and glanced at it, sending a message to the crimson star that symbolized The Sun to prepare for the gathering.

While he waited, he played with the All-Black Eye and "fitted" it with a silver chain. Then, he wound it around his right wrist and covered it with his sleeve.

At three in the afternoon, rays of light shot out from the palace that resembled a giant's residence. Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun, each projected a blurry silhouette dyed in crimson.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~ Good afternoon…" Audrey was about to greet every member of the Tarot Club when her gaze suddenly fell upon the figure seated at the very end.

It was a stranger wearing a hooded black robe. He was also illusory and hazy.

“This is?” Audrey looked at Mr. Fool with both puzzlement and delight.

Has the Tarot Club grown bigger again?

Is it Fors or Xio? No, the height doesn’t match. Is it someone else?

While Audrey was deep in thought, Klein leisurely leaned back and said, “This is a new member, Mr. World.”

At the same time, through his gray fog-augmented Spirit Vision, he discovered that the surface color of The Sun’s Astral Projection had become a little purer, but it had yet to reach the standards of Sequence 8. His initial judgment was that The Sun had completely digested the Bard potion.

“Hello,” Audrey greeted politely, curiously scrutinizing the new member.

She quickly “read” some of the corresponding details through the hazy fog.

Mr. World is a person who is reserved. He seldom moves and always wears a straight face. I wonder where he’s from. Loen? Intis? Or a place as mysterious as the City of Silver? Audrey nodded thoughtfully.

After so many gatherings, she had deduced one thing from the fact that The Sun couldn’t engage in their conversations; that was, that he was most likely not speaking the Loen language and that the information that he heard was most likely translated by Mr. Fool.

After The Hanged Man, Alger, and The Sun, Derrick, greeted The World respectively, to which the newcomer gave a rather cold response, Klein looked at Justice and said, “The two candidates you have nominated are still under examination.

“I’ll give you a simple task. You can entrust it to them in your name. This is part of the examination.”

It should be this strict… Not only was Audrey not disappointed, she even felt that it was only necessary.

The members of the Tarot Club must be strictly selected; not just anyone can become one! She thought proudly before adding in a somewhat guilty tone, And for me to be pulled in by Mr. Fool at the very beginning shows that I was lucky, and luck is a unique quality as well!

“Alright, please issue the mission,” Audrey gave an affirmative answer.

Klein stretched out his right hand and placed it on the table, showing a picture of Lanevus and his dressing.

“Investigate the man in the painting. He’s in Backlund.” Klein had the portrait appear in front of Miss Justice.

Audrey looked over and saw a young man with neatly combed black hair and round glasses. He had a full forehead.

It was a colored oil painting, with taunting brown eyes that seemed abnormally protruded, and at the bottom were the words “formerly known alias: Lanevus” and other information.

It’s a simple mission, which means that the target isn’t strong… However, there must be something special about him that makes Mr. Fool aware of his existence… Although it’s a simple mission, there might be a deeper purpose behind it… For someone as powerful as him, it shouldn’t just be a test… Audrey momentarily allowed her to throng her mind. Only after a few seconds did she say, “I’ll entrust it to them.”

Hmm… The two ladies seem to have many connections in Backlund which would serve to help in finding Lanevus. After confirming the matters pertaining to his revenge, Klein fell silent, and he deliberately allowed his smurf to take center stage.

The World surveyed the area and spoke with a hoarse voice, “Mr. Fool told me that I can issue missions and gather ingredients here, is that so?”

“Yes,” Audrey elegantly nodded and said. “However, you need to wait patiently. What’s going to happen next is Mr. Fool’s reading time.”

I completed my mission to “assassinate Intis Ambassador Bakerland,” but I didn’t even mention it to occupy this period of time… she thought, raising her chin slightly.

Miss Justice, you really have a great sense of mastership… I’ll have to pay the price of knowledge later so that the assassination of Bakerland can truly come to an end… Klein looked away, amused, and looked over at The Hanged Man.

Alger Wilson didn’t speak blindly because of the appearance of a new member. He remained silent and observed in secret.

At this moment, when he saw Mr. Fool looking at him, he quickly and humbly bowed and said, “This time, there are still six pages. The final page will be given to you next time.”

“Sure.” Klein nodded.

The Hanged Man quickly focused his mind, recalled the contents, and expressed them with his mind.

He quickly finished “writing” six pages of the diary and saw them suddenly vanish and appear in Klein’s hands.

Klein looked down and swept through the contents of the first page.

“9th February. I have a third child. I named him Bornova.

“My eldest daughter, Bernadette, was lucky. Her mother and I were just Low-Sequence Beyonders back then. She is free to choose the path she wants to take.

“My eldest son, Ciel, is the most unfortunate. He inherited a minute amount of Beyonder characteristics, but he has to follow my path. Perhaps, he could make changes at Sequence 4, but attaining High Sequences are never easy.

“My second son, Bornova, is in a better situation than Ciel, but still worse than his sister. I have his characteristics equivalent to a Sequence 5 Beyonder. This has reduced the burden on me, allowing me to digest my potion even faster, accelerating my advancement. And when he was just born, he was already showing various traits of an Astromancer.

“Zaratul came to congratulate me in secret and praised Bornova as a lovely angel. I asked this master of divination what he would accomplish in the future. He only smiled and didn’t answer me.

“When I asked him about Ciel’s future, he finally said that death is an inevitable ending, but that might be a good thing.

“Seriously, a Seer’s words are always so vague that it makes one want to pry their mouths open.

“When I finally asked about Bernadette’s future, he suddenly became very serious. He said she would hate me, detest me, turn her back on me, and she would become an important figure in the mysterious world.

“Sometimes, you really shouldn’t ask about the result of a divination. I find it hard to believe that my adorable and kind Bernadette who cares for her brother, adores her father, and pampers her mother would hate me and betray me. Why would that happen? What excessive act did I do? Maybe she’ll have someone she loves but I’m not satisfied with. Some punk that I’ll end up killing?

“No, Zaratul isn’t a Soothsayer, and the divination he receives might be wrong! Forget it, Roselle!”

I think I smell the scent of some contrived family melodrama… After reading the first page of the diary, Klein couldn't help but lampoon silently.

At the same time, he naturally recalled what Zaratul had told him about the future of Bernadette: an important figure in the mysterious world.

Was this referring to the world of the Beyonders? What level would someone be deemed an important figure… Klein turned the pages thoughtfully.

"22nd May. Floren of the Sauron family actually wants me to be his subordinate!

"Do I look like someone who would be a lackey? His attitude is simply unacceptable.

"I swear that I'll one day make him pay the price for his arrogance today.

"However, some of the things he mentioned are very interesting and worth pondering over."

Chapter 265 - Cards of Blasphemy

◆ ◆ ◆

“Floren said that the history of the Sauron family exceeds two thousand years, making it longer than even the Church of the God of Craftsmanship’s history. They witnessed all the cooperation and strife, light and darkness, in the Fourth Epoch, and they have survived until this very day. Other than the Augustus family of Loen, the Einhorn family of Feysac, and the Castiya family of Feynapotter, the other powerful families that have been deemed their equal, such as the Antigonus family and the Zaratul family, have been relegated as vestiges of history, or have turned to nothing but rats in the sewers, hiding from the public as shady existences.

“He said that making me his subordinate—a subordinate of the ancient and glorious Sauron family—is a gift to me.

“Back then, I wanted to f**k all eight generations of his ancestors.

“However, for the Sauron family to have a history exceeding two thousand years is indeed surprising. The Fourth Epoch is known as the Epoch of the Gods. Be it the seven orthodox deities of the present times, or Death, Primordial Demoness, Dark Side of the Universe, and the True Creator, they all remained active in the real world. Legend had it that they frequently did miracles. For the Sauron family to last to this day and enjoy its current high standing, it’s definitely not an easy matter.

“Their long history has given them far more than just arrogance. They must be hiding many secrets, and perhaps even extremely terrifying Sealed Artifacts.

"They are truly a colossus that stands tall above the earth, one that people can't look straight at."

Upon reading this, Klein had a lot of ideas.

For Roselle to be able to overthrow the rule of the Sauron family, he must have experienced a horrifying and heart-stirring struggle. Even if the Sauron family didn't have a Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, they definitely had no lack of Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts. Adding to the possibility of having High-Sequence Beyonders, even if the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery fully supported Roselle, it's unlikely that any good outcome might come out of it… Could it be that before all of that happened, the Sauron family was already beginning to wane and weaken, and the Intis revolution was just an external manifestation of this state?

What did they experience during that period of time?

Did they lose Sealed Artifacts? Did the High-Sequence Beyonders die? Did that attract the attention of many ambitious people?

Hmm… Judging from this diary, the Augustus family of Loen is no stranger to the Antigonus and Zaratul families. Internally, they should have corresponding records.

The Sun had previously mentioned that the City of Silver has endured for more than 2500 years in the Dark Ages. According to my initial judgment, that's the date of the Cataclysm. In the past two hundred years, the Sauron family claimed to have a history spanning more than 2000 years. I wonder if it will extend to the point before the City of Silver… I'll try to find an opportunity to mention the Sauron clan and see The Sun's reaction. If The Sun still has a look of stupefaction, it would indirectly mean that the Sauron family only rose up after the Cataclysm. Perhaps they had benefited greatly from the Cataclysm to become nobles in the Fourth Epoch, and royalty in the Fifth Epoch…

Well, even if the Sun doesn't know, it doesn't prove it completely.

Perhaps he didn't learn his history well.

When Klein turned to the third page, he found that the content should've been written in the early days of Roselle's appointment as Consul of the Intis Republic.

From the diary entries on this page, it can be seen that Roselle had developed and promulgated a new Civil Code which encouraged inventions, protected trade, and the incubation of the industrial revolution. It wasn't him merely satisfying his own warped humor of acting as this world's Napoleon and his ambition to change the world. What he did allowed him to reconcile with the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

The Eternal Blazing Sun was also the God of Deeds, the Guardian of Businesses. The closer to the times the Civil Code was and the more prosperous trade was made it more in line with the needs of the church.

Judging from this part of the diary, the relationship between Roselle and the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun was gradually thawing and beginning to improve. When he brazenly claimed the title of Emperor more than ten years later and called himself Caesar, it's likely that he obtained the simultaneous endorsement of the two Churches. Otherwise, it would've been too risky. Then, what resulted in his assassination? Klein cast his gaze at the fourth page in puzzlement.

"11th August. That retard Floren is showing off again.

"He said that he's the most promising member of the Sauron family generation to become a High-Sequence Beyonder because he's very similar to his great-great-grandfather.

"Is there any necessary connection? I looked him up and down, left and right, but I couldn't find any sign of talent.

"Moreover, in the field of Beyonders, is talent important? Well, figuring out the essence to 'acting' can be a core element of talent, but that's not necessary. As long as one knows the acting method and not be stupid enough to misunderstand the meaning, or avoid doing things that easily result in a loss of control, then one has a chance to completely digest the potions. Which is to say, just a bit more time and effort needs to be spent. In one's lifetime, it's not impossible to become a High-Sequence Beyonder.

"The main obstacle to becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder is the difficulty of obtaining Beyonder ingredients and the difficulty of corresponding rituals. Of course, I have to admit that those born as Beyonders have more time to prepare.

"Was Floren's great-great-grandfather a High-Sequence Beyonder? Does looking like him imply talent?"

It can be seen that at the time of writing this diary entry, Roselle was still very young and that he wasn't aware of the two Laws of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation… Klein nodded indiscernibly.

With his current knowledge, he could probably understand the hidden meaning behind Floren Sauron's words.

A High-Sequence Beyonder's Beyonder characteristic remains contained a spirit mark. This was also one of the reasons why it was easy for people to lose control when concocting potions with this ingredient.

And people who resembled the original owner could avoid this negative influence to the greatest extent. Their chances of success were higher than the average person, so they were considered gifted. How Holy Artifacts recognized their masters probably shared the same conditions.

This achieves the same goal via different approaches as the acting method, but it can't be popularized… Once the advancement is successful, one would still have to do the acting method required of the potion to completely digest its characteristics… While in deep thought, Klein glanced at the two diary entries at the back of the page and discovered how much Emperor Roselle enjoyed the liberalness in Intis, but he was worried that his future wife would be equally liberal.

With the paper making some noise, Klein placed the fifth page at the top.

“20th April. I participated in that ancient organization’s secret gathering once again. Those members still leave me shaking. It’s hard to believe that they’re actually all members of this organization.

“This time, I learned some of the ancient organization’s philosophy. They believe that people will always lose some of their individuality bit by bit until they ‘sleep.’ Hence, by trying hard to observe and remember oneself, one can use the various types of information to achieve the purification needed to face the final end of days.

“They’ve kept and passed down secrets for thousands or even tens of thousands of years. They believe that dusk is inevitable, and that doomsday cannot be avoided.

“They believe in the original Creator and believe that He is not truly dead. When dusk comes and everything ends, He will wake up from His slumber and let everything return to Him. He will create a new world, a new history.

“All of the actions from this organization stem from this belief. It can be said that they show great animosity to the True Creator. They aren’t stingy with their descriptions to describe Him as fallen and evil.

“They wield the second Blasphemy Slate and the twenty-two paths of the divine, but they only allow members to choose a few of them, with the exception of those who were already Beyonders when they joined.

“Are there any secrets to these pathways?

“I’ll first jot it down and analyze it in the future. These pathways are

Bard, Sailor, Reader, and Spectator.

“Haha, I have to change my habits of calling these Sequence pathways in the future. Using those names in that ancient organization makes me appear quite uneducated.

This is very similar to what I’ve analyzed from my hostile relations and from Mr. A’s request, with it being very similar to how the Bard, Sailor, Reader, and Secrets Suppliant pathways can be exchanged at Sequence 4… Is Manipulator a High Sequence of the Spectator pathway? Why do many secret organizations declare that the apocalypse would definitely befall us one day? For example, the Demoness Sect, this ancient organization, and they themselves do not rely on this to proselytize. Is it a requirement for brainwashing or would there really be a so-called dusk? Klein thought of many things, but due to a lack of information, he was unable to come to a definite answer.

At the same time, he couldn’t help but silently lampoon, Roselle, can’t you just write down the name of that organization?

Resisting the changes in his expression and body movements, Klein turned to the last page which had relatively little content and read.

“1st Jan. A beginning of a new year. I happened to finish my first Card of Blasphemy.

“I will hide the ultimate secret of the twenty-two paths of the divine in these different Cards of Blasphemy and scatter them across the world. If things fail, they’ll be the best insurance that my children can fall back onto.

“Haha, I’ll disrupt the order they wish to have and spread the profound mysteries of the divine!

“These Cards of Blasphemy will possess characteristics of being anti-divination and anti-prophecy. Apart from the ones I’m giving my children, the fated ones will receive it!

“I’m a person who makes sure to square accounts when it comes to grudges, and after I die, who cares if floods deluge the heavens! Oh, I didn’t create that sentence.

“In short, the more chaotic the world is, the better it is!

“I have to consider how to name the Cards of Blasphemy that will form a set. The paths of the divine number twenty-two. The Major Arcana tarot cards also have twenty-two cards. They can match quite well, but there are a few that don’t meet the requirements. I need to make some changes to match the original potion names.

“That ancient organization is my last and biggest insurance. I don’t know if they’ll support me, or the manner in which they’ll support me in.

“I still remember the shock when I first saw the Blasphemy Slate.”

“So it turns out that the Beyonder pathways are paths of the divine. It really is true that the Blasphemy Slate is blaspheming the deities.

“Above every pathway’s Sequence 1, there is still a Sequence 0! And there’s a corresponding potion and ritual!

“Each pathway can only have one Sequence 0!

“And Sequence 0 is the Sequence of a True God!

“For example, Sequence 0, Sun!”

Chapter 266 - The World's Commission

Sequence 0?

There's still a Sequence 0 above Sequence 1?

Sequence 0 is equivalent to a True God?

There can only be one Sequence 0 per pathway? Is this the true meaning of the paths of the divine?

As long as one consumes the corresponding potion, does a ritual, and grasps the acting method to digest the Beyonder characteristic, an ordinary person can become a god one step at a time?

This is truly blasphemous…

Could the main ingredients of the final potion be the godhood, divine blood, and body of the Eternal Blazing Sun?

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The information on the diary's last page was filled with so much information that Klein almost couldn't think. He almost made additional body movements.

The twenty-two paths of the divine correspond to the twenty-two Sequence 0s… Sequence 0, Sun does sound very powerful… Perhaps, there's a Sequence 0, Death? I wonder what the names corresponding to the Goddess and the Lord of the Storms are… According to Emperor Roselle's description, some of these cards are identical to the Major

Arcana tarot cards, but some of them are different. The Cards of Blasphemy he created were standardized with the names of the potions… These can no longer be called potions…

Could the reason that the Emperor regretted not choosing the Seer, Apprentice, Marauder pathways be because their corresponding Sequence 0s have yet to appear?

Then what was the reason for the sudden personification of the Hidden Sage who was symbolically a deity?

What was Roselle plotting in the end? It feels like he became the enemy of everyone in the world, and that only seems possible if it was set into motion by that mysterious and ancient organization…

The Primordial Demoness is the name of Sequence 0 for the Demoness pathway?

Klein gradually found his train of thought, and he restrained the turmoil that was going through his mind.

He knew that he couldn't lose himself in this matter. He had to recover as quickly as possible; otherwise, Justice and The Hanged Man would discover something amiss and find it odd.

Mr. Fool has been reading that page too long!

I really want to obtain one of the Cards of Blasphemy that Emperor Roselle created. I want to know what else there is—other than the godhood-providing potion formulas and the corresponding rituals… Klein suppressed his shock and puzzlement and made Roselle's diary disappear from his hands.

He rapped the corner of the bronze table and looked to the side.

"Miss Justice, well done. You finished Bakerland in less than a week.

"According to the agreement, what kind of payment do you want?"

Bakerland is dead? That fast? Alger had left the islands in the past few days and hadn't received the appropriate information. He was astonished for a moment which made Audrey, who was secretly observing him, feel delighted.

Even if Alger was in the in the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, the City of Generosity, Bayam, he might not have been informed in a timely fashion. After all, cable telegraph could only transmit limited information. Unless it was particularly urgent or important, there was always a delay of a few days. Sometimes, it would even take the colonists of the Rorsted Archipelago a month or two to get an update on the "latest" situation in the Northern Continent.

Restraining his thoughts, The Hanged Man looked at Mr. Fool in the thick fog and respectfully said with a hint of humility, "I'm very sorry. I just managed to contact someone and couldn't help."

"This is a commission, not a help request. Don't worry about it." Klein chuckled. He turned his gaze back to Miss Justice, waiting for her to say what she wanted in return.

May the Goddess bless me. Please don't let Miss Justice's request be too difficult. It's best if I can repay her with knowledge… I've learned quite a lot of amazing things from Roselle's diary… Klein silently prayed to the Goddess.

Of course, he was very clear that with the gray fog separating them, the Evernight Goddess definitely wouldn't be able to hear his prayers.

Audrey's eyes darted around as she thought for a few seconds.

Be honest and not greedy, Audrey, and stick to your principles! She gave a faint smile and said, "No, I'm actually the one still owing you. No—I owe your Blessed the bounty.

"Vice Admiral Qilangos's bounty was worth a total of 30,000 pounds. I should give your Blessed 15,000 pounds. Killing Bakerland cost 10,000 pounds, so I still need to pay an additional 5000 pounds. However, due to the matter with Bakerland, my finances are recently quite tight. I can only pay this bounty in a few months. Mr. Fool, is that alright?"

After she finished speaking, Audrey quietly exhaled. She felt that the little stone pressing against her heart was finally gone.

Although discussing money and calculating the payment in front of Mr. Fool feels somewhat inappropriate, I can't hide the rewards I received from his Blessed… Audrey sighed silently.

As for the huge plantation worth more than eight thousand pounds, it was a private form of gratitude from Duke Negan and not a bounty.

5000 pounds? I can get another 5000 pounds? Qilangos's total bounty actually reached 30,000 pounds! Klein was startled.

Immediately, he fell into an intense mental struggle.

I'm supposed to pay this bounty to Mr. Azik, but I won't be able to get in touch with him for a long time… Putting the money aside would be a waste… I might as well use this money to enhance myself. When the time comes, I'll repay him by providing help… Klein made up his mind three seconds later as he lightly nodded at Miss Justice.

"Sure."

Upon hearing Mr. Fool's response, Audrey's graceful seating posture remained the same, but her heart was completely relaxed.

At that moment, Klein leaned back in his chair and fell silent. Then, he manipulated his smurf secretly from a commandeering position.

The World coughed and said, "Can I speak now?"

Audrey looked at Mr. Fool and seeing that he didn't say a thing, she nodded slightly and said, "Sure."

At the same time, she once again did a read on the new member, The

World, and made a judgment.

When I mentioned that the assassination of Ambassador Bakerland was a result of my commissioning, he didn't show any shock or surprise. He either doesn't know the importance of the matter, not understanding the importance of an ambassador, or he's someone who can keep his calm and is good at hiding his emotions and bodily movements… The way he mouths his words doesn't match what he says. It should've been translated by Mr. Fool as well, which makes it impossible for me to get his original vocal tics, or know what language he usually uses… Thoughts flashed through Audrey's mind before Mr. World's hoarse voice sounded.

"I wish to obtain the true root of a Mist Treant, at least 60 milliliters of its juice, as well as the Spring of the Elves marrow crystals and the complete spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther.

"Which one of you can provide it, or provide any relevant clues?

"What do you wish to exchange them for?"

Klein added the Beyonder ingredient needed by the Apothecary to his commission so that the Tarot Club members wouldn't be able to guess the main ingredients of the formula he wanted.

Before Justice and The Hanged Man could react, The Sun who had been silent the entire time finally opened his mouth and said, "I know where Mist Treants are and I can help you obtain the materials. However, I must wait until I finish my advancement and have sufficient strength to join the corresponding patrol team."

Recently, he had been accumulating merit points and rewards. He was working hard to obtain the main ingredients for the Light Suppliant through the City of Silver's officials and private markets. He was still lacking quite a bit.

As expected of the dangerous City of Silver with its numerous monsters… Klein silently commented in admiration, allowing The World to ask, “Then what do you wish to receive in exchange?”

Without hesitation, Derrick replied, “A weapon that suits me and can increase my combat strength.”

The reason why he didn’t mention the corresponding ingredients for Light Suppliant was because City of Silver had them all. They could be obtained through his own hard work.

Upon hearing this request, Klein immediately thought of the inscribed steel sword that had appeared at the Beyonder gathering organized by the elderly gentleman, Eye of Wisdom.

It was sharp enough, had the effect of exorcism and purification, and could be used for three years. It was valued at 500 pounds, perfectly matching The Sun’s described requirements.

Why didn’t you say so earlier… It has already been bought by someone else… Klein silently stared at the members, while The World nodded and said, “I will find a weapon that meets your requirements as soon as possible. Is this transaction to be witnessed by Mr. Fool?”

Klein nodded slightly to express his agreement.

At that moment, Audrey shot a glance at The Sun and warned him.

“Apart from the Mist Treant’s juice, Mr. World’s requested ingredients correspond to a Sequence 7. The rough price is about 500-700 pounds.”

She felt that The Sun was too naive and was worried that he would be cheated by the unreadable Mr. World with cheap weapons.

Although Mr. Fool is impartial and advocates fair equal exchange, it’s not his place to stop it if both sides agree. After all, some items are of low value but there are people who are in urgent need, so adding a premium to the price is very normal… Audrey thought to herself.

“A Sequence 7 formula is about 800 pounds,” Alger added.

He had an instinctive aversion towards new members.

Klein translated with great difficulty, for he didn’t know what the currency unit of the pound corresponded to in the City of Silver, and could only use a Series 9 potion formula as a unit.

“I understand.” Derrick slightly nodded, and then quietly added, “… Thank you.”

The World maintained his silent and staid temperament and didn’t comment on what had just happened. He turned to Justice and The Hanged Man, waiting for their response.

Audrey thought for a few seconds and said, “Potion formula for Psychiatrist and their corresponding Beyonder ingredients. Uh… That’s Sequence 7 of the Spectator pathway.

“You can gather the information first, and there’s no rush to purchase them. Once I have clues regarding the Dark Patterned Black Panther and Spring of the Elves marrow crystals, we can proceed. Uh… if you are willing to exchange it for gold pounds, you can buy it at any time.”

Although I’m out of money recently, I can still raise quite a bit if it’s urgent… Audrey comforted herself.

Alger said in a deep voice, “Potion formula of the Sailor pathway’s Sequence 6 Wind-blessed. This will be more expensive than the Beyonder ingredients that you want—combined.

“If you find it, you can think of the additional payment needed to make up for the difference.

“I can’t guarantee that I’ll be able to help you gather those ingredients. Even if it’s just one of them, you don’t need to expend any resources ahead of time.”

Eh, Mr. Hanged Man should have a close relationship with the Church of Storms… He should be able to get the Wind-blessed formula normally, right? Is he trying to hide the fact that he’s digesting the Seafarer potion quickly? Klein was startled.

“Alright,” The World answered in a low voice and then said, “I have another request.”

Chapter 267 - Singing to the Same Tune

◆ ◆ ◆

The World looked around and said, “I want to get information about all the abject nobles in the Loen Kingdom, including their current addresses. The more details, the better.”

He didn’t directly mention Baronet Pound since Detective Sherlock Moriarty was currently handling an investigation regarding an underground structure that involved the Pound family.

Klein didn’t want Justice to “figure out” The World’s identity through this connection.

I can’t ignore any details! He emphasized to himself.

Audrey stared blankly upon hearing that. She once again examined the member at the end of the long bronze table and probed, “What do you want to do?”

The World laughed with a hoarse voice. “That’s not something you need to worry about. I’m only searching for some things. I won’t do them any harm. I can swear on this point and allow Mr. Fool to bear witness.”

Mr. World is really good at controlling his body language… Is his Sequence the nemesis of a Spectator or Telepathist? Audrey thoughtfully nodded and said, “I know some information about abject aristocrats, but it’s not sufficiently detailed, concrete, or comprehensive. I need some time to gather all of it. It’ll take three or four days, is that okay?”

As a noble, it was compulsory to have some knowledge about people in the same class. Audrey would always hear interesting stories when she attended various balls, banquets, and saloons, but they would all be fragmented and could hardly be considered a comprehensive body of knowledge. After all, she wasn't an expert in this field, and she still needed to fill in the details by flipping through books, asking around, and checking references to not miss any abject nobles.

"No problem." The World laughed deeply. "Then, what payment would you like in return? The things I can pay you with right now are some secret history from the Fourth Epoch, knowledge of some Beyonder pathways, and a few formulas. But frankly, I don't think that information concerning abject nobles is worth Sequence 7 or 8 potions. Heh, if you have any other requests, I can attempt to complete them."

It's not of equal value to Sequence 8 or 7 potion formulas, which means I'm unable to make a corresponding request for the Psychiatrist formula… Audrey began to ponder seriously.

During this process, she sneaked a glance at Mr. Fool, hoping for a hint, only to discover that Mr. Fool was shrouded in the gray fog and had no reaction whatsoever. He was like a god staring at the land beneath him.

Alright… Audrey finally made a decision and smiled.

"I want to hear about knowledge regarding other Beyonder pathways, but this is on the premise that I'm not aware of them."

"Dear Mr. Fool, can you be the judge for this?"

"Yes," Klein answered calmly.

"Then, let's have a private conversation." Audrey looked at The World.

At that moment, Klein rapped the table, isolating The Sun and The Hanged Man from hearing or seeing the exchange.

He deliberately nodded to his smurf, indicating that they could begin their private conversation.

The World looked at Miss Justice and spoke with his usual hoarse voice, "Do you know anything about the Demoness Sect?"

Audrey recalled the information she paid The Hanged Man Alger 1000 pounds for and answered briefly with caution, "I know what they believe in and what era they began from, as well as the Beyonder pathways they control and the inclination of their upper echelons."

The World laughed hoarsely and said, "I understand. You don't know much.

"The Demoness Sect controls the Assassin pathway. The Sequence 8 is Instigator."

"That's what I know," Audrey said, partially to inform The World, and partially to show her anticipation.

The World raised his hand and stroked his chin before saying, "Then, do you know the corresponding Sequence 7?"

Audrey shook her head slightly. "I'll be very happy to hear it from you."

"The Assassin pathway's Sequence 7 is called Witch," The World said simply.

"Witch?" Audrey jumped in fright at this word. She naturally made the corresponding connections in her mind. "Then, i-if a man consumes this potion, how is he supposed to act?"

Wearing beautiful dresses and putting on exquisite makeup, imitating a lady's every move? She was a little disgusted, yet strangely amused as the thought came to her.

"No, Miss Justice. When a man consumes this potion, he will no longer be considered a male. He will become a true lady." Klein resisted the urge to chortle as he controlled The World's response.

"Goddess, the Witch potion can change a person's sex?" Audrey blurted out.

This… this is really unbelievable! Mr. Fool didn't deny it, which means it's true! This is simply a miracle! This is the mysterious Beyonder world. This is a world filled with all sorts of inexplicable things! This is the world I long for! W-why am I feeling a little excited… After calming down a little, Audrey quickly and guiltily glanced at Mr. Fool and made a tiny confession that she had actually chanted the name of the Evernight Goddess in front of Him.

The World said in a low, hoarse voice, "Yes, but it can only make men become women. Women will accordingly have their charms enhanced. Whether it's their appearance or skin condition, they will become significantly improved, on the basis of their original looks. This is the reason why the upper echelons of the Demoness Sect are all women."

"Then, what flaws does it have?" Audrey suddenly felt her interest was aroused.

The World answered in an unhurried manner, "The requirement for their 'acting' is to become evil doers who bring about calamity, disease, and pain."

Audrey exhaled slightly and felt a little disappointed.

Her mind whirled quickly, and she immediately had a new question.

"If, and I'm saying if—an animal consumes the Witch formula without dying or losing control, would the enhancement of its charms be more suited to human tastes, or focused on charms for its own species? For example, a female cat which makes all male cats and all cat lovers become fanatical towards it?"

The World was momentarily unsure how to respond. After a few seconds, he said, "I've never studied such matters."

Before Audrey could ask further, he added, "The corresponding

Sequence 6 for the Witch pathway is Pleasure, or the Demoness of Pleasure. The requirement for 'acting' is to bring pleasure to both men and women, mainly in that aspect, as well as controlling or influencing them. The demonesses of this Sequence are very good at using special spider silk."

Audrey gaped her beautiful mouth, then she silently closed it again, deeply regretting her pinings from before.

"By knowing such information, it will allow you to effectively identify Demonesses. Heh heh, are you pleased with this payment?" The World asked.

Audrey nodded gently and said, "It helps me a lot. Um… the deal is completed. I will help you gather information on the abject nobles as soon as possible. Shall I give it to you the next time we meet?"

The World thought for a moment and asked, "Can it be faster?"

"Then, I'll offer the information I gathered to Mr. Fool and request that 'He' bestow them to you. Mr. Fool, is that okay?" Audrey turned her head and asked.

In the thick gray fog, Klein nodded his head in agreement.

At the same time, he busily controlled The World to whisper, "'He?'"

He detected the different way she said the word.

Noticing The World's astonishment, the corners of Audrey' s mouth curled up slightly, her eyes rolling upwards as she intentionally didn't make any explanation.

Klein rapped the long bronze table, indicating the end of the private exchange.

Then, he once again manipulated The World to say, "I have one more problem."

This newcomer has indeed accumulated a lot of requests… Audrey looked over, unsurprised.

Alger and Derrick both indicated they were listening through their body language.

The World said hoarsely, “I want to know if there are any more High-Sequence Beyonders in the Sauron family in Intis.”

While The World spoke, Klein looked at The Sun through the corners of his eye and saw that the youth didn’t have any additional reaction.

From the looks of it, the City of Silver doesn’t have records of the Sauron family… This family most likely made an uprising after the Cataclysm… Klein looked around thoughtfully and discovered Justice and The Hanged Man looking at each other, obviously unaware of the answer. The Sun was undoubtedly at a loss and silent.

Thus, he lightly tapped the table again and said, “Let me answer this question. What can you pay for it?”

Before he could finish his sentence, Klein hurriedly controlled The World to say, “A formula, a Sequence 7 formula.”

“Okay. Deal.” Klein created an environment for a private exchange as he silently stared at his smurf for a few seconds.

Audrey and Alger, who were blocked, once again felt how unfathomable Mr. Fool was. They were both curious about the answer, but they also felt that it was of no use to them. It wasn’t worth it to spend a Sequence 7 potion formula in exchange for that.

After the private exchange, Klein deliberately made The World bow and say in a hoarse voice, “Honorable Mr. Fool, thank you for your answer; it was very helpful to me.”

“This is an equivalent exchange; there’s no need to thank me.” Klein endured the goosebumps that suddenly surfaced on his skin as he answered indifferently.

The open communication that followed lasted less than ten minutes. Then, he announced the end of Tarot Gathering before severing the connections with the crimson stars.

After the figures of Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun dissipated into streams of light, Klein looked at The World and chuckled.

With a smurf, a lot of things are really much more convenient.

Unfortunately, the All-Black Eye cannot be used outside the gray fog. What a pity.

As he thought that, he controlled The World to stand up and bow, then he let it melt into the majestic palace.

As he had to divert some of his attention in order to control his smurf, Klein had expended a great deal of his spirituality. He didn't continue staying in that space, and after retrieving the All-Black Eye and placing it behind the bronze table, he immediately returned to the real world.

At that moment, there was a rare case of Backlund sunshine, seen in autumn or winter, behind the tightly shut curtains.

Klein didn't have the time to take in this view. He slept for half an hour to recover some of his energy.

After waking up, due to having gained Miss Justice's promise and the fact that it wasn't urgent, he had no plans on searching for information at the library, and instead, decided to head to one of the many cemetery sites on the outskirts of Backlund before nightfall.

Klein was going to test the influence of Azik's copper whistle to understand its scope and limitations!

Of course, the experiment would only be carried out after dark. The reason why he was heading out now was that it would be very strange and very eye-catching to hire a carriage to visit a cemetery in the evening.

Chapter 268 - The Cemetery and the Hospital

◆

When the steam metro arrived at the southern bank of the Tussock River, Klein rented a carriage and headed to the Aston Cemetery on the outskirts of the South Borough, which was managed by the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery.

Under the darkness of dusk, the trees around the cemetery seemed to bare their fangs and brandish their claws, blocking out the light like monsters lurking in the darkness.

After the carriage driver took the 4 soli Klein paid, he looked at the cemetery and muttered, “Do you need me to wait here for you?”

“No, there’s no need. I’m here to visit a friend.” Klein came up with an excuse, and he immediately noticed the change in the driver’s face.

This is a cemetery… to visit a friend with the sky already dark… The driver could hear his own heart thumping.

Klein jolted to his senses, smiled, and added, “He’s the tomb keeper here.”

The carriage driver was immediately relieved, but he didn’t dare stay. He quickly drove the horses and left.

Klein circled the graveyard until the night truly set in.

After dark, the smoke and dust emissions decreased by a lot. In addition to the biting cold wind, the fog in the air thinned a lot.

Although few stars could be seen, the crimson moon made a furtive appearance, covering the ground with a veil-like glow.

Klein tapped his chest four times clockwise, drawing out the crimson moon. Then, he put on his gloves, pushed himself over the iron fence, and entered the cemetery.

He looked around with a high degree of caution, randomly found a secluded corner, took out Azik's copper whistle, and held it in his hand.

Not far in front of him was a tombstone. The photograph on it was dirty, and the epitaph appeared extremely blurry in the moonlight. Klein carefully read it for a few seconds before figuring out what they were.

"Friend, if you are passing by, help me up. Thanks!"

A very humorous gentleman… I choose you! Klein stopped, leaned back against the trees that sheltered the grave from the sun and rain, and waited patiently in the cold, chilly night.

He threw Azik's copper whistle up before catching it firmly, repeating it several times to pass the time until twenty minutes later.

No signs of the dead coming back to life… Klein clicked his pocket watch shut, surveyed his surroundings, and confirmed the results.

I'll come back here in two days to see if there are any additional changes. If there are none, it means that Mr. Azik's copper whistle won't be able to affect corpses that have been laid to rest through a priest's ritual. Klein silently muttered to himself, and he put the ancient and exquisite copper whistle back into his pocket.

There were three kinds of burials in the Loen Kingdom. The first type had coffins and corpses, suitable for the middle and upper classes living in abundance. The second type was the ones without corpses, so a cremation was held. The remaining ashes were placed in urns. This was the choice of the lower middle class and technical workers who could pay for the cremation but found coffins to be too wasteful. But there were also times when religious and governmental factors had an impact, such as the believers of the Eternal Blazing Sun. The majority of them underwent cremation, and the poor people only needed to pay a small fee for the cremation due to the help they received from the government.

The third only belonged to the poor. They couldn't afford coffins, and they didn't wish for cremation, so they just wrapped the corpses up and buried them.

But Klein had already determined from the tombstones and tombs that the target of his experiment was the kind which involved a coffin and a corpse.

If Azik's copper whistle really can cause the dead to rise, even if the target had rotted into a pile of bones, there shouldn't be a complete lack of reaction. Even if the lid of the coffin cannot be opened, it should've at least created a dull thud.

As he walked towards the fence, Klein suddenly thought of a non-rigorous part of the experiment.

Yes, I need to categorize them. The corpses here have been buried for quite a while. I should find a target that was recently buried.

Only by doing so will I be able to arrive at the most accurate conclusion.

After that, Klein basically played a game of cat-and-mouse with the cemetery guardians before finding a grave that had completed a burial ceremony during the day.

This time, he waited for half an hour, but he still didn't find anything abnormal.

Phew, I can basically determine that Mr. Azik's copper whistle can't affect a corpse that has undergone a ritual that puts the soul to rest. That's quite weak, no—that's not right. This copper whistle isn't meant to cause the dead to come alive. It's used to summon messengers, so affecting a corpse is a negative effect! Klein tightened his double-breasted coat and walked toward the iron fence.

He planned on heading home to have a change of clothes before trying out his second experiment.

The target of the second experiment group were the recently deceased corpses that haven't been laid to rest via a ritual.

Such targets often existed in a hospital's morgue!

Climbing over the fence, Klein made his way back to the South Borough on foot in the dreary, dark night. The surroundings were deathly still and quiet. Only the evergreen, dust covered trees lightly swayed.

It reminded him of the night he had been resurrected from the dead. Back then, he too had to walk from the cemetery to the city.

Sigh… Klein sighed and suddenly began to run, as if trying to get rid of the melancholy that filled him.

More than half an hour later, he rented a carriage in South Borough and headed for the nearest steam metro station.

There was still about an hour before the metro stopped running, and this could save him quite a bit of money.

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In the wee hours of the morning, Klein changed into a grayish-blue worker's uniform and wore a cap as he made his way to St. Estin's Hospital in the Backlund Bridge area.

This was a charity hospital belonging to the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery.

Many of the poor died here due to illness, and since there was nowhere for them to place their bodies, they had to be kept in the hospital morgue. There, the corpses awaited cremation from the government or be donated to the medical schools. This phenomenon was very common in summer, but there weren't many in the autumn or winter after it cooled down.

However, in an era without air-conditioning or equipment to keep the temperature cool, the hospital's morgue couldn't keep the corpses for too long. Donated bodies would be quickly embalmed and bodies to be buried the next day would be cleaned up. Of course, these were the rules enforced in summer. In autumn and winter, the rules were relatively relaxed; therefore, there were still many corpses left overnight in the morgue during this period.

The morgue at St. Estin was underground. It was relatively cool, even during the summer, and was biting cold during autumn and winter.

Based on what he had learned as a Nighthawk, Klein relied on a Clown's agility and balance to sneak into the basement while avoiding the doctors and nurses that were on duty.

Before he even got close to the morgue, he felt a chill down his spine.

After quickly moving past the janitor's room, Klein took out a piece of wire and lightly unlocked the door to the morgue.

This was one of the methods of infiltration and tracking!

He slowly and silently pushed open the door to the morgue with his black-gloved right hand. At the same time, he cloaked Azik's copper whistle in his spirituality to determine if such a method could eliminate the negative effects.

The temperature in the morgue seemed to be lower than the corridor. Most of the corpses were bagged up and placed in different iron cabinets. Only a few were placed on the long table in the central open space, as if they were awaiting examination.

As a Sequence 8 Clown, Klein was no longer afraid of such scenes. He just instinctively felt uncomfortable.

Carefully, he closed the door and walked around the long tables.

After about ten minutes, Klein let out a breath of cold air and confirmed that none of the corpses had come to life.

It's about time… He took out his gold pocket watch and opened it.

When he was ready, Klein withdrew his spirituality and stopped enveloping Azik's copper whistle.

He wasn't sure if it was a psychological effect, but he had a baffling feeling that the surroundings had become even more silent.

As a Seer, he fully believed in his instincts. He stopped pacing back and forth and retreated towards the door.

Time ticked by, and Klein determined that it took about two minutes.

At that moment, a corpse on a long table suddenly sat up!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The surrounding iron cabinets emitted a series of banging noises, as though all hell was about to break loose!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Upon hearing such a commotion and seeing the corpses sit up, Klein suddenly said in a low voice, "Crimson!"

Immediately following that, he injected his spirituality into a Requiem Charm and threw it out.

Icy-blue flames burned quietly, and serene and gentle blackness spread out. The corpses lay down once again, and the banging sounds coming from the cabinets came to an abrupt halt.

Klein, who had experienced a similar situation, didn't relax and used another Requiem Charm.

As there were many corpses around him, he used a third charm to be safe, using up everything that he had.

Not bad… Indeed, it only affects corpses that haven't been put to rest via a ritual. This includes corpses that haven't been dead for too long and zombies. Using my spirituality to shield the whistle can prevent such effects. Klein thought with a smile.

Seeing that none of the corpses were making any abnormal reactions, he prepared to open the door and leave.

At that moment, he suddenly heard footsteps coming from the outside and saw a faint light seeping in.

The elderly janitor had been attracted by the banging sound in the morgue. He was approaching with a lantern in hand!

Klein looked around, placing his hand on the door, he nimbly jumped up, stopping at the spot between the door and the ceiling.

His fingers dug into the bumps and cracks as he maintained perfect balance.

Creak!

The elderly janitor opened the door with his key and entered the morgue.

He took a few steps forward, held up his lantern, and examined the iron cabinets and long tables, as well as the corpses.

Behind him, Klein nimbly jumped down and landed silently.

Seizing the opportunity, Klein quickly escaped from the morgue. He used the janitor's room to hide for a few seconds before carefully returning to the upper floor.

After the elderly janitor surveyed the surroundings and didn't find anything out of the ordinary, he mumbled a sentence, in fear of the corpses, and quickly left. He locked the door and didn't stay any longer.

Returning to the guardroom, he wrapped a thin blanket around himself and took several minutes to calm his racing heart before mumbling to himself in a low voice, "Those old guys always tell me about the weird things that happen in the morgue, hoping to scare me. Those weird sounds just now should count as well. It doesn't matter. Those corpses didn't come back to life either!

"Pui, there are no such things as zombies and wraiths!"

At the same time, Klein was walking comfortably along the quiet, dark streets, happy to be free of a latent threat.

He looked at the elegant gas lamps that lined the sides of the street and looked forward to the future Beyonder gatherings.

As long as he obtained a weapon with a special effect, he would be able to obtain one of the main ingredients of a Magician!

Hmm… Although I don't have much money right now, I still have a lot of assets that I can use to exchange. For example, the Telepathist potion formula, or the formulas for Bard and Light Suppliant. Furthermore, my Clown potion is digesting at a faster rate than I expected due to series of events and my discovery of the essence needed for "acting." It's close to being completely digested… Along the streets of Backlund at night, Klein left his mind wandering.

Chapter 269 - Clues to the Psychology Alchemists

◆ ◆ ◆

On the outskirts of Empress Borough, in a wide, empty horse track.

Audrey Hall deliberately led a chestnut mare to a corner and pretended to discuss something with Viscount Glaint.

She was wearing white pants and knee-high black boots, adorned with a simple blouse and a black jacket that reached her waist. In addition, she donned a helmet of the same color. She looked especially valiant and beautiful, and Susie, her golden retriever, was obediently sitting by her feet. What seemed like a tiny leather satchel hung from her back.

Disguised as Viscount Glaint’s servant, Xio glanced enviously at Audrey’s long, straight legs, and unconsciously tiptoed.

“Just horse-riding is so blasé. Only when it is combined with hunting does it become imbued with life. Of course, I mean the equestrian skills for men. No matter what a beautiful lady does, it would still be a sight to behold,” Glaint sized up Audrey and said half-jokingly.

Audrey replied with a slight smile, “The next hunt is still months away.”

Every year, from June to the New Year, the aristocrats of the Loen Kingdom would come to Backlund to attend various banquets, dances, and salons, as per tradition. This was a very important event for them, and many things would be decided within a few months.

After the new year, the nobles would return to their fiefdom—their castles, country estates, and large plantations—and spend their leisure time there. In such times, the most popular sport was hunting.

The nobles would invite guests of similar status to enjoy the pleasure of horse-riding and chasing prey. As long as their financial situation allowed it, they weren't stingy with buying hounds.

The most famous of the hounds was the foxhound.

"I already miss that life. Backlund is a place where people feel constrained, and its air is indescribably terrible. Of course, I still enjoy its extravagance." Viscount Glaint wore his gloves and stepped back to make it easier for Audrey to talk to Xio and Fors.

"Honorable Miss Audrey, why have you called us here this time?" Xio initiated the question as she retracted her gaze.

Audrey took a large portion of most of her recent income. She was honest and generous, a rarely encountered good employer.

I seem to smell the ink of money again… Hopefully, the mission wouldn't be too difficult… Miss Audrey is perfect in every way, except for one thing. Every mission is unexpected and very dangerous… Xio thought, feeling both anticipation and apprehension. She couldn't help but glance sideways at Fors. She noticed that her companion, disguised as a maid, was looking right at her.

The expressions reflected in their eyes looked very similar.

Audrey held her gloves, smiled reservedly and elegantly before saying, "It's a simple request this time."

As she spoke, she motioned with her eyes for Xio and Fors to open the leather satchel on Susie.

Xio, who had always been known for her proactiveness, immediately took two steps forward and bent down to reach out with her hand.

During this short period of time, she had originally wanted to pat Susie's head to show that she meant no harm. But just as she extended her right palm, Susie had already turned her head, turning her body half around, placing the small leather satchel in front of her.

I'm usually popular with animals… For example, mosquitoes… Xio kept her expression unchanged as she unzipped the satchel and took out a stack of papers from Susie's leather pouch.

She stood up and took a look at the stack of papers. She saw that it depicted a young man with ordinary looks, but his neatly combed hair, round glasses, and mocking brown eyes all looked very familiar to her.

I must've seen him somewhere! Xio looked down and saw the corresponding description.

"Formerly used name: Lanevus, wanted swindler."

I know where I've seen him before! Xio was suddenly enlightened and almost made an inelegant gesture of slapping her forehead.

Before she met Audrey, one of the main sources of her income was flipping through newspapers, researching wanted posters, and using her connections in many gangs in East Borough to seek out criminals who were worth fat bounties.

I had thought of finding this Lanevus, who has a bounty of 100 pounds. Besides, he swept away more than 10,000 pounds in cash! However, I've recently been too busy with Miss Audrey's requests and had forgotten about this matter… Xio and Fors looked at each other and then asked frankly, "How much is this request worth?"

How much is the request worth? Audrey was startled for a moment.

She had completely forgotten the matter of payment, as from her point of view, it was a test from Mr. Fool.

When were examinees ever given money?

"Uh… 100 pounds?" Audrey deliberated and gave a number.

"Deal!" Xio and Fors answered in unison.

If we can catch him, not only would we receive a hundred pounds from Miss Audrey, but we can also obtain an equal amount from the bounty… What a great mission! Xio asked casually, her eyes shining,

"Why are you looking for this swindler? Did he swindle you of your money?"

I don't even know who he is… It's really a simple request. A hundred pounds was enough to complete the deal… There's no need to tell Mr. Fool about this. It's only a hundred pounds… Audrey, with a polite smile, ignored Xio's question and instead mentioned, "I received word that he's in Backlund.

"Ah yes, there are a dozen or so portraits here, different portraits. I took into account that Lanevus must have disguised himself, so I'm giving you pictures of him without glasses, with a beard, with a change of hairstyle. Uh… pictures based on conjectures."

I'm also very good at drawing and painting! Audrey tilted her chin.

Xio immediately forgot her previous question and said in pleasant surprise, "This is really good news!"

She felt as though she could already see the bounty of two hundred pounds beckoning at her.

The mysterious person she had met at Mr. A's gathering had yet to establish contact with her. Therefore, all she could do was continue with her business of earning money.

Audrey nodded indiscernibly. She muttered, "Do you have any leads on the matter regarding the Psychology Alchemists?"

Fors adjusted her long curly hair, looked at Viscount Glaint who was listening to the side, and said, “I recently joined a new Beyonder gathering. Rumor has it that the Spectator and Telepathist potion formulas have previously appeared there. I’m suspecting that one of the members from the gathering is from the Psychology Alchemists.

“I’ll apply to bring you with me the next gathering.”

“Alright.” Audrey deliberately didn’t hide her joy.

She had read their true state of mind from the colors, body language, and the subtle expressions of Xio and Fors, to judge their enthusiasm for the mission. They didn’t lie regarding the Psychology Alchemists either.

Viscount Glaint mumbled, “Audrey’s matters seems to be on the brink of success. Where’s my formula, Audrey?”

“There are really no clues as of yet. The Apothecary pathway is mostly in the south, where the Feynapotter Kingdom is.” Fors gestured with deep regret.

“Alright, I’m still young. I’m only in my early twenties. I still have time to wait,” Glaint replied in a humorous tone.

“Alright, thank you for your help. See you again next time.” Audrey bowed gracefully, wore her gloves, and mounted her horse as she rode down the track.

Susie happily followed, as if she had found new entertainment.

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As he spent the night “experimenting,” it was already 9:34 of a Tuesday morning by the time Klein woke up.

Biting into a piece of bread slathered with butter, he wore his coat and hat, hurried out the door, and wrote on the message book hanging by the doorbell’s pull rope:

“Owner is out and will be back after five in the afternoon.”

Actually, he didn’t have much to do. It was purely to guard against a sudden visit from Millet Carter.

If the other party found out that the detective he hired for a full fifty pounds wasn’t out and about, searching for information or organizing people to confirm the layout of the structure, and was instead at home leisurely drinking tea and reading novels, he would surely revoke the commission and not pay the last forty pounds!

I really have nothing to do but wait for Miss Justice’s information… Klein stood at the end of the street and looked at the haze in the sky, while helplessly muttering to himself.

He had already decided last night where he would spend the day.

In the morning, I’ll practice shooting at the Quelaag Club, read the newspapers, enjoy a free lunch, take a nap in the afternoon, exercise through playing sports like squash. Once the Bravehearts Bar opens, I’ll take a carriage there and see if I can learn about more Beyonder gatherings from Kaspars.

Klein had no intention of looking for Maric. Although he was certain that he had more than one circle of Beyonders, he was afraid that Miss Bodyguard would also belong to those circles.

It wouldn’t be convenient for him to sell potion formulas, as it would arouse a high degree of suspicion.

Since the True Creator has given you the ability to divine and a strong body, would he still grant you potion formulas that you do not need? It’s impossible just thinking about it! Klein filled in the details with his imagination as he boarded the public carriage that headed for Hillston Borough.

Half an hour later, he entered the Quelaag Club and saw an acquaintance.

It was Talim Dumont, the equestrian teacher who had recommended him to the club. He was Mary Gale's friend.

Dressed in a black tweed overcoat, the brown-haired Talim walked over. He sized up Klein and said with an odd smile, “Good morning. Mary and Doragu are getting a divorce.”

Are you suspecting the reason why I joined the club? Relying on the Clown's ability, Klein easily made a surprised expression.

“Really? That is really surprising!”

Talim gave him a deeply suspicious look and suddenly laughed.

“I have a friend who's been troubled about something recently. I want to know how good your marksmanship and fighting skills are.”

A commission? He only asked about my marksmanship and fighting skills, not reasoning. This is a request involving violence… Klein smiled and said, “I was planning on heading to the shooting range. You can take a look, but fighting requires an opponent to be able to see my standard.”

“I've learned how to fight before,” Talim eagerly replied.

Chapter 270 - Reporter

◆ ◆ ◆

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Holding onto a revolver that he rented from the Quelaag Club with one hand, Klein pulled the trigger repeatedly, hitting the bullseye accurately, with the worst shot hitting the 8 ring.

By feeding his practice with live bullets, along with the superhuman control that he had after becoming a Clown, his marksmanship was considered rather excellent.

If I continue practicing for a few months, I could even be considered a sharpshooter… Klein unloaded the revolver in satisfaction and cleared the empty shells. They fell to the ground noisily as he looked at Talim Dumont with a smile.

“Are you satisfied?”

“Very good.” The equestrian teacher, Talim, had already taken off his black tweed overcoat and light gray sweater and adopted a boxing stance. “Come on, let me see the standard of your fighting skills. I can tell you frankly that I’ve received training as a trainee knight since I was young, and I’ve never let it go to waste.”

As a Beyonder, if I can’t even beat an ordinary man who has only received training, then I might as well die! Klein cursed silently. Without taking off his double-breasted coat, he set down his revolver. Klein took two side steps and gestured to Talim that he could begin.

He originally wanted to wriggle his finger to add to the atmosphere, but when he thought of the other party's strength, he couldn't be bothered to waste his time.

Talim appeared to be a little excited as he began bounce-stepping a little. He suddenly pressed forward and threw out a punch to the right.

Klein blocked and grabbed with his left hand, bent low and twisted his waist before reaching out his right palm, and did a smooth backflip.

Thud. Talim flew out, landing on his back. Klein didn't exert any strength towards the end, only throwing him off his feet through the use of inertia.

"Impressive!" Talim quickly stood up and gave a thumbs up. "As expected of a famous detective. Your marksmanship and fighting skills are excellent."

I only beat a weak chicken like you, so how can you tell that my fighting skills are very high? Klein secretly lampooned and asked with a smile, "Now that you have a better picture, can you tell me what kind of request your friend has?"

"Heh heh, he will come to the club later. You can talk amongst yourselves." Talim massaged his back as he said, "As for what the request exactly entails, I'm not sure either. Oh right, he's a reporter at the Daily Observer, Mike Joseph. He's probably hoping for some short-term protection."

"Alright." Klein didn't ask any more questions. He continued practicing his shooting, but he didn't limit himself to a revolver. He also practiced with a hunting rifle, a single-shot rifle, and a repeating rifle. He hoped that if he encountered any problems in the future, he would be able to use any of the firearms around him.

Shortly before twelve, noon, he returned to the first floor, went into the buffet cafeteria, and got a serving of roast chicken and a piece of pan-fried steak, as well as the club's limited supply of cream cheese lobster

After placing his meal down, Klein got some Feynapotter seafood rice, fruit salad, oyster broth, and marquis black tea.

Facing this sumptuous lunch, he couldn't help but swallow a mouthful of saliva as he praised the Goddess in his heart.

If this was eaten outside, it would probably cost 3 soli… Klein switched between using silver knives, forks, and spoons as he ate in contentment.

When he was almost done with the food on the table, Talim Dumont led a man, in a heavy overcoat and a half top hat, over.

"Detective Moriarty, this is the friend I was talking about, Mike Joseph. Mike, this is the famous detective, Mr. Sherlock Moriarty," Talim smiled and introduced them.

"Nice to meet you." Mike took off his hat and bowed.

He looked to be in his late twenties, with rather sparse eyebrows and rough skin. His pores were unusually prominent.

However, his facial features weren't bad. His blue eyes were especially charming. The two thin lines from the meager mustache gave him a somewhat mature charm.

Klein couldn't help but stroke the stubble that had become thicker around his lips. He got up and invited the other party to sit down, then he smiled and said, "Today's cream cheese lobster is pretty good. You can give it a try."

"Alright." Mike Joseph didn't refuse. He took a plate, made a circle, and picked up a lot of food.

"He came in a hurry, so he hasn't had lunch yet," Talim smiled as he explained for his friend and placed a stack of newspapers on the table.

"I can tell." Klein set down his knife and fork, wiped his mouth with a napkin, and sipped his black tea leisurely.

He was very satisfied with the meal.

At that moment, Mike Joseph came back with two plates of food. He took a few quick bites to fill his stomach before looking up at Klein.

"Detective Moriarty, have you heard about the recent serial murders?"

"The ones which had organs removed?" Klein's heart skipped a beat as he asked.

Talim nodded and said wistfully, "As expected, every detective is paying attention to this serial killer."

Mike pulled out one of the papers and pushed it to Klein. "This is the latest story."

Klein took it and discovered that it was the Daily Observer where Mike worked at. On the front page were the words:

"11! Another lady killed! Sivellaus Yard is helpless!"

The headquarters of the Backlund Police Department was located at Sivellaus Street at the edge of Empress Borough, so they were also known as Sivellaus Yard.

11? It's already the eleventh case? Klein resisted the urge to frown and continued reading. He found that it was indeed the same as the case he had previously encountered. The victim was a woman dressed in a gorgeous long skirt and had her intestines removed from her stomach.

This is clearly a case with signs of devil worship all over it. The Sivellaus Yard must've handed the case to the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind squads. They have people capable of divination, mediumship, and all sorts of magical and effective Beyonder methods. How is it that the case hasn't been cracked. Why isn't the criminal arrested yet? Does the criminal have rich 'anti-investigation' powers and is able to destroy the souls of the deceased? Or could it be that the deceased soul, along with her innards, were extracted to fulfill the requirements of the devil-worship ritual? Yes, he's definitely capable of interfering with divination… Indeed, if the Devil pathway Beyonders lack such powers, how could they dare commit serial murders… Klein thought as he said to Mike Joseph, "You want to do a private investigation?

"I'm sorry, I can't take this case. Without the invitation of the police, I cannot take it. I have to maintain a good relationship with them."

The so-called good relationship is the kind where they invite me to the police station for coffee… Klein did some self-critical lampooning.

The real reason for his refusal was that it was easy to run into official Beyonders involved in the investigation of the serial killings, perhaps including the Backlund diocese's Nighthawks.

"No, not an investigation. No, the precise description is that it's not an investigation to seek the murderer. I just want to finish my report," Mike Joseph swallowed some shrimp and explained.

"Report?" Klein put down his white enamel cup, crossed his hands, and leisurely asked Mike Joseph.

Mike Joseph said, "If you buy the Daily Observer tomorrow or the day after, you'll see my in-depth coverage on the serial killings. The most important part is my reveal of what the victims have in common so as to alert people who fall into this group."

"Oh, what do they have in common?" Klein asked curiously.

Mike took a sip of his coffee and said, "Besides being a woman and wearing a colorful dress, there's one other important thing they have in common. I did a thorough investigation of the victim's career and found an interesting tidbit.

"Some of them are maids, others textile workers, tailors, and even teachers. On the surface, there doesn't seem to be any overlap, but in reality, they've all been street girls."

"Street girl? A teacher?" Klein asked in surprise.

In the Loen Kingdom, teachers were part of the middle class and received at least two pounds a week. That was enough to make a woman lead quite a good life, so there was no need for her to be a street girl.

The corner of Mike's mouth twitched as he sighed and said, "Yes, in the past. They may have had very difficult times before they found a job that could support them.

"I've done a survey before. In Backlund, one in six women[1] aged 15 to 55 is or has been a street girl. Heh, this is our country. Foreigners who come here are surprised that a very conservative country, a bustling metropolis, would actually be filled with street girls."

Th-this number is a little exaggerated… If it were true, it could only be said that reality can be more exaggerated than fiction… This damned world… Klein was speechless. After some thought, he said deliberately, "One question, how does the murderer know that the victim had been a street girl? They don't have labels on them, and even you needed a thorough investigation to discover this."

"As expected of a great detective, this might be the clue," Mike Joseph answered without feeling surprised.

No, if it was a Beyonder from the Devil path, then the standard he would choose from would be someone who appears to have sunken low but didn't actually degenerate completely. Furthermore, they should have a keen intuition towards degeneration, and they might be able to see the corresponding "color" that runs deep. With the colorful dress as a trigger, the target will basically be locked onto… Klein answered himself and asked, "So, what else do you wish to investigate?"

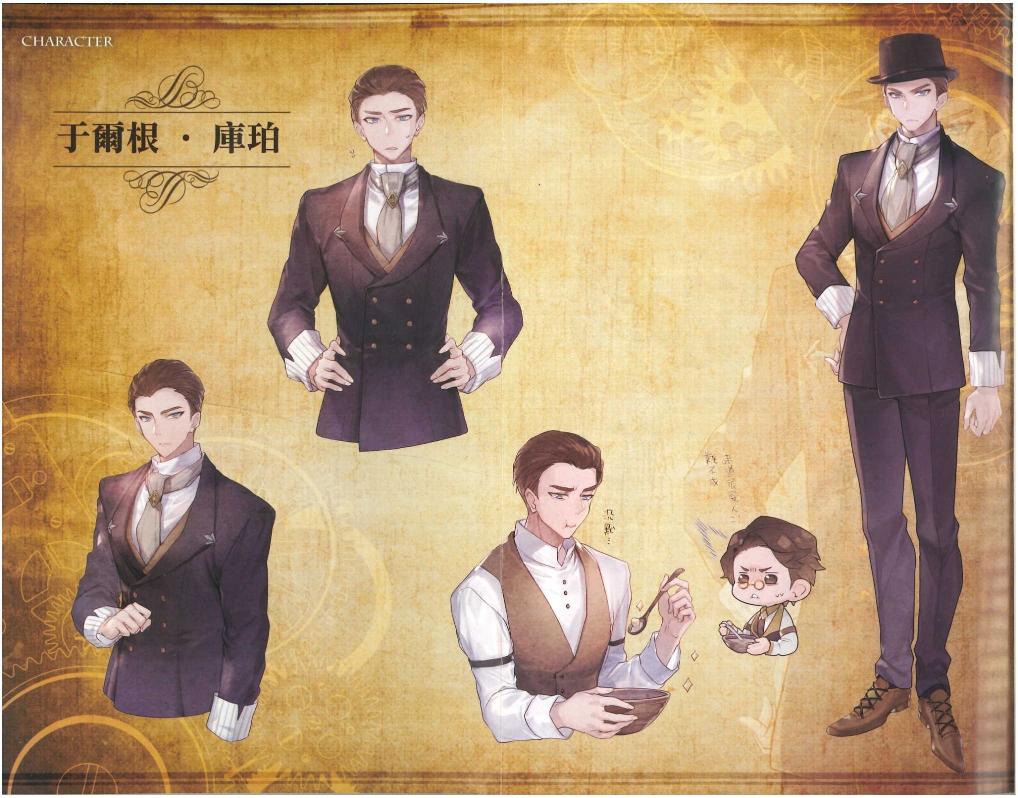
Mike nodded and said, “From these 11 cases, ten of the ladies were once street girls, except one. She’s still a prostitute at present. Yes, she’s the youngest, sixteen-year-old Siber. This makes it very, very odd. I wish to visit Golden Rose, which is her, uh—the place where she works for further investigation. I want to see if I can discover anything.

“I’m worried that my questions will anger the people there, so I plan to ask you to protect me temporarily. You don’t need to teach them a lesson, and you just need to protect me at the most critical juncture and allow my escape.

“If nothing happens, I’ll pay you a pound, and if there’s a fight, it’ll be raised to five pounds. What do you think?”

Klein laughed and replied, “Let me wash my hands before replying you.”

He bowed politely and sauntered over to the bathroom where he tossed a coin and obtained a positive answer.


CHARACTER
于爾根 · 庫珀
沉默⋯
味道很驚人⋯
難不成

This is the late-Victoria era, a statistic in London.

Chapter 271 - Golden Rose

◆ ◆ ◆

19 Hope Street, Cherwood Borough.

This area was located close to the Tussock River which went through Backlund. Pedestrians could see the turbid but unusually wide water surface through the cracks and crevices in their houses.

The Daily Observer reporter, Mike Joseph, alighted the carriage and pointed at a three-story, grayish-blue building ahead of them. He said to Klein, who was standing next to him and wearing a black double-breasted frock coat and a half top hat and gold-rimmed glasses, “That’s the Golden Rose, the best legal brothel in the area of the Backlund Bridge, as well as Cherwood Borough. It opens at three in the afternoon and stays open until two in the morning.”

The best legal brothels in the Cherwood and Backlund Bridge regions? In other words, there are better ones in these two regions but they’re illegal? Klein silently mused and shot a glance at the entrance which had an inlaid golden rose. It didn’t hang any signboards.

“This doesn’t count as a street girl, right?” he answered without thinking.

“Of course, it’s of a higher grade.” Mike personally led Klein to the front of the building and pushed the door open.

As soon as he entered, Klein caught a whiff of a mixed fragrance that was slightly pungent and heard a soothing yet suggestive melody.

Instinctively, he looked around and saw bouncers, in black coats and half top hats, standing on either side of the entrance and in every corner of the hall. As a legitimate business, they were obviously meant to deal with drunkards and boors.

The golden hall was surrounded by all sorts of sofas, chairs, and even a piano. In the center, there was a dancing area.

At that moment, there were many ladies sitting in different areas with their hair colored in gold, brown, pale yellow, or black. Some of them looked mature, some shy and young, some young and attractive, and others who were rather beautiful.

These ladies were either enjoying the melody, giggling whilst in conversations with each other, quietly reading newspapers and magazines, or dancing with the men.

It was only half past three in the afternoon, so there weren't many customers. At a glance, this place looked more like a proper ball than a brothel.

"If you come after eight in the evening, you'll see some interesting performances. Heh heh, if any of the ladies catch your eye, go over and invite them to dance and then ask them for their prices amidst the beautiful melody. If both sides can come to an agreement, you can head to the second or third floor and have a wonderful time in some room. Hehe, as long as you're willing to spend money, you can sleep here the entire night." Mike turned his head from left to right, suddenly losing his previous calm and gentlemanliness, appearing a little more frivolous.

He walked into the hall with a smile, and he approached a young girl who was at most fifteen or sixteen years old.

I-is he showing his true nature, or is this an conduct of a professional? Klein watched, a little flabbergasted as he subconsciously followed behind Mike Joseph.

"The victim, Siber, was only 16 years old. In theory, a girl of similar age is more likely to be a friend and would know more," At that moment, Mike lowered his voice and explained.

He then raised his thin eyebrows and asked in a normal voice, "Which lady caught your fancy?"

"I'm just your bodyguard," Klein responded with very normal logic.

Mike slightly nodded and suddenly laughed.

"I'm not used to being watched when I do that sort of thing."

"I'll be standing watch outside." Klein understood what Mike meant, and took a serious, professional stance.

Without another word, Mike walked up to the young girl, bent down, and extended his hand, inviting her to dance.

Being a prostitute at this age, Backlund sure is so bedazzling and dirty… Heh, to think that there would be a middle-aged gentleman of seemingly good bearing patronizing this place. Even the sides of his hair are white… Klein lowered his hands and stood very straight, watching Mike and the young girl engage in a slow dance.

After a few minutes, Mike walked back and said to Klein with slight annoyance, "It's too expensive."

As the two approached each other, he added in a low voice, "The girl knew Siber, but the owner, Ma'am. Lopez, forbids them from speaking with anyone else on this matter; otherwise, they would be severely punished. God, when the punishment was mentioned, the poor girl even shuddered instinctively. I can imagine how horrible it must be."

Helpless, Klein sighed in sympathy, and asked in a suppressed voice, "So, what are you planning to do?"

"I don't want to cause trouble for those girls again. I plan on going straight to Ma'am. Lopez." Mike patted Klein on the shoulder and said, "Protect me!"

Klein turned his body to the side and warned in a serious tone, "If we encounter a dangerous situation, you must listen to me.

"Do you understand? Listen to me!"

"Okay, okay." Mike raised his hands to his shoulders and nodded.

As he spoke, he walked towards a single sofa in the corner. There was a charming lady, with thick makeup, in a gorgeous dress seated there.

"If you don't want to give up after a dance and embarrass yourself in front of those girls, I suggest you talk to Ma'am. Lopez first and find out the prices of the different girls," Mike raised his voice.

The lady heard their conversation and looked over. She slowly got up and smiled.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen. I'm Lopez. Did any girl catch your fancy?"

"Yes." Mike suddenly sized her up and said with a chuckle, "I really admire you."

I admire you too… You're acting like this is your home… Klein's mouth twitched.

Lopez's expression froze for a second, then she gave a fake laugh and said, "Sorry, I'm not feeling well today. You should know that there are times every month where women feel quite under the weather."

Seeing that there was no way to get Lopez into a room for a conversation, Mike fell silent for a few seconds before suddenly turning serious.

"Ma'am. Lopez, I'm a reporter. I wish to understand more about Siber's matter. Here's my documentary proof."

Lopez's face darkened and she replied impatiently, "I've already told everything I know to the police. You should ask them!

"Siber was a vagrant orphan who was adopted by me. That night, she accepted an invitation from a guest to spend the night at his house, and she died on her way back in the morning.

"Alright, please leave! Or invite a lady to dance."

As she spoke, Lopez waved over two of her bouncers.

Klein stepped in to shield off Mike Joseph and escorted him back to the hall. Upon seeing this, the two bouncers didn't rashly chase him away.

After a few steps, Klein said in a low voice, "She's lying."

"Oh?" Mike turned his head in surprise.

"When she spoke, her eyes darted around. She didn't dare to look at you directly, but she was also secretly sizing you up, which means she was lying and watching your reaction. In addition, her stance was highly defensive, and she appeared very agitated." Klein gave his analysis.

Mike opened his mouth and exclaimed after a few seconds, "You really are a great detective. Only with your keen observation and outstanding deduction skills were you able to discover such useful details."

That's only because I had my Spirit Vision on and could see that Lopez's emotional colors weren't right… I came up with the reasons after… Klein smiled and said, "Thank you, it's time for us to go."

Mike Joseph looked back at Lopez and saw that she was walking towards the side door of the hall, as though she was going to her own lounge, and that the side door was in a corner of the room. It was very quiet around there, and there were many areas in the hall that couldn't see what was going on inside. There were also two bouncers standing guard outside.

“Perhaps, we should follow Ma’am. Lopez and observe her reaction. Maybe the anxiety from just now will make her do something…” Mike suddenly turned his head to look at Klein. “Can you take care of those two bouncers quickly?”

“Sir, I’m only responsible for your protection, and that’s against the law.” Klein smiled in response.

“I’ll pay you more! A total of five pounds based on the combat price from before! If there’s another fight when we run, it would be 10 pounds!” Mike Joseph gritted his teeth.

“Deal!” Klein reached out and shook his hand.

Afterward, the two of them circled around to avoid the two bouncers from before and quietly approached the side door.

“Guests, please stop. Please leave this area.” One of the bouncers stepped forward and stopped Klein and Mike Joseph.

“Sorry, we’ll immediately…” Klein bowed politely and apologized.

At that moment, his right fist suddenly punched out, heavily striking at the bouncer’s abdomen in front of him.

The bouncer instinctively clutched his stomach, his body bent over. As for Klein, who had now stood up, he raised his left hand and chopped the bouncer at the back of the head.

Pow!

The bouncer fell to the ground and fainted. His companion was clearly caught by surprise at this turn of events. He just stared blankly and failed to react in time.

Klein immediately slid over and covered the bouncer’s mouth with his right hand and punched his abdomen with his left fist.

Bang!

The bouncer suddenly bent down and spat out his undigested food, and Klein promptly withdrew his right hand and chopped downward with his palm.

At the same time, his left hand supported his opponent, allowing the bouncer to slowly fall onto the ground without making a sound.

After exchanging looks. Klein turned the knob, pushed open the side door, and stepped inside. Mike Joseph lowered his body and quickly followed.

Why are you so skilled… You're just a reporter! Klein lampooned under his breath, walking briskly but at a rapid pace along the paved corridor.

Suddenly, they heard Lopez's voice.

"Tell Capim not to send anyone over in the next few days!

Capim? Send anyone? Klein looked at Mike and found him looking equally puzzled.

At that moment, they heard Lopez's footsteps that were headed towards the corridor.

"Let's go!" Klein tugged Mike and ran for the exit without turning back.

During this process, he closed the side door and broke the lock in passing. It could prevent the people inside from coming out for a while.

Then, as if nothing had happened, they hurriedly walked through the hall and approached the exit while hearing faint, angry voices.

After reaching the streets, Mike heaved a sigh of relief and said in amazement and sincerity, "I've experienced many similar scenarios, but not once was it as simple and relaxed as it was today.

"Thank you. I need to return to find out who Capim is."

As he spoke, he took out his wallet, fished out a five-pound note, and muttered, “But frankly, your price is really expensive. It’s worth more than half a week’s salary.”

“But you can claim for reimbursement, right?” Klein answered with a grin. Following that, he asked in concern, “Aren’t you afraid that Lopez will find your newspaper firm and get the police to arrest you?”

“That’s a fake ID card.” Mike Joseph shrugged with a gesture of familiarity.

“…” Klein could only admire him.

After watching Mike board a carriage and leave, he walked diagonally across the street, waited for a public carriage and kept an eye out for anyone chasing after him.

At that moment, a rental carriage slowly approached and stopped in front of him.

A middle-aged man in a black coat stepped out the carriage and nodded at Klein.

He had blue eyes, a thin face, and gray temples. It was the same old gentleman that Klein had seen in the Golden Rose.

He’s not a customer of the Golden Rose… He’s just like us… Klein suddenly came to this realization.

“Hello, I’m Detective Isengard Stanton. I’m assisting the police in this case. Can we have a chat?” The middle-aged man pointed at the carriage tracks.

Chapter 272 - Observing Each Other

◆

Detective? A colleague… However, the fact that he’s able to assist the police in dealing with such a serious case shows that he truly is a well-known detective, at least within Sivellaus Yard… Eh, isn’t the serial killer involved in devil worship supposed to be handed over to the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind? All the police department needs to do is send a few assistants, so why would they need to seek the help of a private detective?

Yes, the eleven serial murders must’ve caused a sensation. Sivellaus Yard is under a lot of pressure, and they aren’t willing to just wait in misery?

Many thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind, but on the surface, he revealed a smile.

“Alright.”

He boarded Isengard Stanton’s rented carriage and saw a young man with brown hair inside.

“This is my assistant,” Isengard, who had a thin and angular face, introduced. “Please, have a seat.”

He didn’t close the carriage’s door, nor did he let the carriage driver drive the horse forward to show that he meant no harm.

Klein deliberately sat down uneasily and asked worriedly, “What would you like to talk about, Mr. Stanton?”

Isengard took out a dark pipe and said, “I want to know what you’ve learned from following Ma’am. Lopez. Did you hear or discover anything?”

“This… I’m also a detective, and you should know that we have confidentiality agreements in this business,” Klein deliberately replied as though he was in a dilemma.

“I’m asking you on behalf of Sivellaus Yard. This has nothing to do with a confidentiality agreement.” Isengard rubbed the pipe with his thumb. “A pound, um… How about two pounds?”

Having learned a lesson from the previous incident with Meursault, together with the fact that there was no need to keep it a secret, Klein replied without hesitation, “Sure.”

“Alright.” Isengard smiled and took out two one-pound notes from his pocket.

Klein acted as though he was recalling something before frankly saying, “We only heard one sentence. Ma’am. Lopez attempted to order her subordinates to tell Capim that he’s not to send anyone over in the next few days.”

“Capim?” Isengard nodded, seemingly enlightened. “Got it.”

“You know Capim?” Klein didn’t hide his surprise.

Isengard handed the notes over and said with a faint smile, “He’s one of the most controversial magnates in Cherwood Borough.”

“In Backlund, innocent girls often go missing along deserted streets, and after a long time, they might be chanced upon in all sorts of legal or illegal brothels. A lot of rumors point to Capim as the criminal honcho filled with blood and filth on his hands, but due to a lack of evidence, he remains free to this date. Furthermore, he knows a lot of important people.”

If that’s true, then this fellow should die a thousand times over… Klein nodded, sighed, and said, “This is Loen, this is Backlund, Mr. Stanton, I shall bid you farewell.”

“Thank you for your cooperation.” Isengard got up midway as a polite gesture to send him off. “By the way, your fighting skills are excellent. Maybe we’ll have a chance to work together in the future. How should I address you?”

“Sherlock Moriarty,” Klein answered briefly and got off the carriage.

Only when he boarded a newly arrived tracked carriage did Isengard Stanton instruct his assistant to close the door and order the carriage driver to head towards Hillston Borough.

Turning his head to the side, he looked out of the window. The gray-haired elderly gentleman had put away his dark pipe, pulled out a brass ornament from his pocket, slowly stroking it in his hand.

The brass ornament was a pocket-sized open book with a vertical eye in the center.

“The appearance and getup of Mr. Moriarty from just now were a bit out of place. He wore very cultured gold-rimmed glasses, but he had deliberately grown a beard around his mouth, making him look crude and barbaric. This is not quite in line with the norm. In this day and age, people who wear gold-rimmed glasses tend to care a lot about their image, the image of having knowledge and bearing. Maybe he’s trying to hide something… Of course, it’s also possible that he’s a gentleman with an unusual aesthetic sense…” Isengard seemed to be talking to himself, but he also seemed to be teaching his assistant.

At that moment, Klein who was sitting on the carriage mumbled to himself silently as he leaned against the wall, That Detective Isengard Stanton is problematic. Ever since I activated my Spirit Vision, he had a blue color of rational thought and indifference and maintained a purple color of spirituality dominance. There weren’t many other colors of emotion appearing.

For normal people, unless they're wholeheartedly focused on studying a difficult problem, it's very difficult to maintain similar states for extended periods of time. Other emotions will inevitably appear, the difference being the issue of how long they can remain in that state.

Yes… Either Detective Isengard Stanton is one such genius at observation and reasoning with extraordinary talent, or he's a Beyonder?

The tracked public carriage had two floors as it ferried more than forty passengers towards the Backlund Bridge area. Klein gradually reined in his thoughts and cast his gaze out the window and admired the two to three-story buildings on the other side of the road.

Occasionally he could see brown houses five or six stories high, a sign of Backlund's latest trend and of the kingdom's most advanced construction technology.

After a transfer, Klein arrived at Iron Gate Street and got off the carriage opposite the Bravehearts Bar.

As it wasn't the peak period at the bar yet, the moment he entered, he saw Kaspars drinking at the bar.

The old man with the brandy nose had requested for a glass of Langsky Proof, his eyes narrowed in satisfaction as he savored the fragrance of the malt and the burning sensation in his throat.

Klein moved closer, rapped the counter, and asked with a smile, "Is Maric here?"

At the same time, he had one hand in his pocket as he gripped Azik's copper whistle, using his spirituality to shield its negative effects.

Before he finished his sentence, he felt gazes sweep past him. It was evident that they were observing him.

By the time he finished asking his question, the gazes moved away from him and focused on Kaspars.

The old man with the huge scar on his face opened his eyes, and when he saw that it was Klein, he said in a bad mood, "He didn't come. He didn't come yesterday either."

He didn't come… Klein let out a breath of relief, no longer using his spirituality to wrap Azik's copper whistle.

When I mentioned Maric, someone looked at me… When they heard that I was asking him for his whereabouts, the gaze shifted again… Someone is also looking for Maric… Klein resisted the urge to turn around and observe as he analyzed the abnormality.

Combined with an original doubt of his, he felt that the question now had a general answer to it.

I was puzzled last week—why would a Sequence 5 Miss Bodyguard accept a three-day protection mission for 1000 pounds? This isn't to say that the price is too low, but rather that someone of that level already counts as a powerful person. In the Church of the Goddess, she's qualified to be a Nighthawk deacon or a diocese bishop. If she can gain the favor of a Holy Artifact, she can even compete for the position of an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon…

Among the various secret organizations and intelligence agencies, Sequence 5 also implies that the person would be the person-in-charge of a borough or at least the number two or three. Even if it were a Beyonder who isn't a part of any organization, a person with such strength would be able to establish a small organization of their own…

No matter which point of view it was from, Miss Bodyguard could enjoy tributes from her subordinates, so there was no need for her to personally "take the job"…

At the time, I thought that I had most likely hired a Sequence 6 "security guard" who would be able to last a little longer against the expert sent by Bakerland, creating a chance for me, but who knew that Miss Bodyguard would be so terrifyingly strong…

Judging from today's events, Miss Bodyguard and Maric are probably similar to me. Their identities are sensitive, and they have to hide away. Yes, their situation might be even worse, and they have to constantly worry about being hunted down… Tch, to be able to hunt Miss Bodyguard, even if that organization doesn't have any High-Sequence Beyonders, they must have some Holy Artifacts or multiple Sequence 5 members…

Of course, this is just my hunch. Perhaps it has to do with the exposure of Maric as a Beyonder and he's now targeted by the Machinery Hivemind squad…

After some thought, Klein said with regret, "Is that so. I was planning on playing cards with him."

Upon hearing something that didn't match Klein's usual manner of speech, Kaspars was alarmed. He didn't look around either, but chortled and said, "I'll be having a card game tonight. Texas, do you want to join in?"

"No, I just want to play till dinner. Sigh, I think I'll just head home." Klein sighed and left the Bravehearts Bar without even ordering anything to drink.

He had intended to ask Kaspars about other Beyonder gatherings, but in that situation, he carefully abandoned the idea.

In fact, he could've gone to a card room or some relatively sealed area to talk with Kaspars, but just to be safe, he decided to wait until next time.

Klein was in no hurry to return home. Instead, he went to the one-bedroom apartment he rented in East Borough and started divining above the gray fog to confirm that no one was following him.

After easing his mind, he reached Minsk Street before it was completely dark and found all sorts of subscribed newspapers crammed into his mailbox.

I was in a hurry to leave today, so I didn't even have time to read it. At the Quelaag Club, I had a good meal after shooting practice and took a nap, before being forced to play a few tennis matches with Talim. Heh, my skills aren't good enough, but my physical fitness can make up for that… He mumbled silently as he opened the door and went inside before twisting the gas lock.

He brought the newspapers into the living room and sat on the sofa. He lit the wall lamp and started reading.

Klein first read through the Backlund Morning Post and immediately flipped to the fifth page and saw an advertisement. It was an advertisement for the Ernst Firm's purchase of goods!

The prices were 7 pence per liter of flour, 1 soli of butter, 6 pence per pound of lard, 1 soli 3 pence per pound of cream, 8 soli per pound of marquis black tea…

In other words, there would be a Beyonder gathering in the same place at eight in the evening tomorrow. The code to the door is to knock seven times heavily, one time lightly, six long intervals, and one short interval in that order… The remaining 3 and 8 are meaningless… Klein interpreted the content, leaned back against the sofa, and began to look forward to the gathering tomorrow evening.

He wanted to sell some formulas to see if he could buy the corresponding ingredients or items!

Chapter 273 - Handing Out A Formula

◆

Wednesday night, five minutes to eight. In an alley behind Bravehearts Bar.

Klein circled around for a while based on his memories before finally finding the house with the dark candlelights.

He was disguised today in a grayish-blue worker's uniform, cap, and a beard so that no one would connect him to the guy who had tried his luck by buying Black Snake's item.

It would be best if Eye of Wisdom and the Apothecary don't recognize me. Otherwise, a newbie who had relied on luck to become a Beyonder and was able to come up with several potions after a week would definitely be suspicious. Klein put his hands in his pockets and felt for Azik's copper whistle, the ordinary tarot cards, and the charms he had replenished.

His uniform was specially modified by a tailor. There were many small pockets with metal bottles filled with herbs powder and extract essence.

After taking a deep breath and slowly exhaling, Klein took out the metal mask that could only cover half his face and finished the first step to his disguise.

Following that, he used the Clown's ability to control his facial expression and his physical tics, as well as his gait while numbing his facial nerves. He wanted to be vastly different from his previous self.

However, I'm not sure what Eye of Wisdom relies on to recognize people. This is all I can do. Sigh, if only I was already a Faceless… But if that's the case, I wouldn't need to join such low-level Beyonder gatherings… Klein stood outside the door in silence for a few seconds. He then raised his right hand and knocked on the door, seven hard knocks and one light one, with six long pauses and one short pause in between.

Almost without waiting, the small wooden board on the door was silently pulled open, and an eye appeared behind it. It examined the visitor from head to toe.

Two or three seconds later, the door creaked open and Eye of Wisdom's attendant handed a hooded black robe to Klein.

Klein maintained his emotionless state as he quickly put on the robe and pulled down his hood, letting the shadows cover his face.

On the way to the living room, he deliberately took steps he wasn't used to and tried his hardest to eliminate the awkwardness.

There was only one candle in the dark and silent room and quite a number of members at the gathering. Klein didn't choose a corner like the previous time. Instead, he sat on a high stool right in the center.

In short, he wanted everything about his external appearance and behavior to be completely different from the previous two times!

And it was precisely due to his identity as a Clown that gave him this domain of expertise, allowing him to reflect his own body into his mind and gain fundamental control over it.

The living room was so silent that it appeared frozen. Time passed by, and finally, Eye of Wisdom looked at the clock on the wall and said in his ancient voice, "It's time. Let's begin. We don't need to wait for our late friends."

Just as he finished his sentence, Klein immediately said with a hoarse voice, “I want to sell potion formulas.

“They are Sequence 9 Bard and Sequence 8 Light Suppliant from the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

“The former is 220 pounds and the latter is 450 pounds.”

This was the most suitable plan that he could come up with after much consideration. The Spectator and the Telepathist potions were related to the Psychology Alchemists, a secret organization that was still active in Backlund in the Loen Kingdom. If he recklessly produced them, he might attract their attention. And the Church of Eternal Blazing Sun was blocked out by the Church of Storms, so the corresponding Beyonders rarely appeared in Backlund and could do very little. Therefore, it was an extremely safe choice.

The potion of the Seer pathway involved Klein himself, and he certainly didn’t want to reveal his characteristics.

After having experienced so many battles and watched so many battles with Beyonders, he gradually came to understand something. It was that below the high Sequences, Beyonders of different pathways had their own characteristics which didn’t overlap. That was to say, each of them had their own strengths and weaknesses, and their strengths and weaknesses were all very obvious. The strengths were indeed strong, and the weaknesses were indeed weak.

For example, the Spectator pathway lacked the ability to fight in actual combat, but if they were ignored and were unconsciously misled, then no matter how strong an opponent’s combat skills were, it was possible for them to die without knowing why. A clear example would be Hurricane Vice Admiral Qilangos, who clearly possessed the mystical item “Creeping Hunger” and had an overall combat strength of a Sequence 5, but he still died in a rather inexplicable manner. Most of this was thanks to Azik, but one couldn’t dismiss the role of the Spectator.

Due to the fact that the majority of the Beyonder jobs below the high Sequence had distinct characteristics and obvious weaknesses with weak bodies, if one could conceal one's strengths and understand the situation of their enemies beforehand, it wasn't impossible for them to defeat someone stronger. In extreme cases, there was still a very small chance of a Sequence 9 killing a Sequence 5.

Of course, this was a perfect hypothesis, but in reality, it was almost impossible. Sequence 5 was already considered strong, and the corresponding Beyonder powers could be considered miraculous. Strengths could effectively cover up weaknesses, but before reaching Sequence 6, it was very difficult to cause any effect on them.

On the other hand, many of the Beyonders below high Sequences were very afraid of being attacked by a group, even if their opponents were all below their own Sequence. This was because once one became flustered, their attempts to avoid a fault would lead to failure of another. Their weaknesses could lead to fatal outcomes.

These problems were why Shepherds were ranked first below high Sequences. They were so all-rounded that if they combined and matched their Beyonder powers well enough, they would almost have zero shortcomings.

After I advance to the Sequence 7, I'll have all sorts of magical Beyonder powers. Then, even if I encounter a Sequence 6, I'll be able to contend against them for a while, and I might even be able to win… If I encounter a Sequence 5, there might still be a chance of escaping… As his thoughts raced, Klein looked around, waiting for someone to speak.

If Bard and Light Suppliant can't be sold, then I can only go for second best and consider selling Spectator and Telepathist. In consideration of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation… The formula of my own pathway definitely shouldn't be sold. The Witch pathway wouldn't as well, for it would lead to many tragic cases. Whether it's Instigator or Witch, they're the type that necessitates committing evil deeds… Klein was a little nervous, but his face remained expressionless as he waited.

“Actually, I can consider buying it.” At that moment, the chubby Apothecary laughed. “I can also accept another apprentice and give him these two formulas, making him specialize in praying for light to shine on my herbs. Perfect! How extravagant!”

His words broke the momentary silence in the room. A man in the corner, who had his hood pulled very low, spoke in a deliberately sharp voice, “Perhaps I can give it to my child. At least it’s stronger than my Sequence.”

“Sequence 9, 200 pounds, Sequence 8, 400 pounds; if you agree, we have a deal.”

To be able to take out 600 pounds at one go means he’s quite rich. That’s enough to buy a house in Tingen City… Klein pretended to think, looked at the other members at the gathering, and observed their reactions.

Noticing that no one had the urge to raise the price, and that the other party’s bid had reached his bottom line, Klein thought for a while and said, “I’ll tag on an additional request: you cannot sell these two formulas in this gathering, but you are free to do as you wish elsewhere.”

The man said sharply, “Alright, Mr. Eye of Wisdom will bear witness.”

Klein didn’t know how to prove that the formula was real, but he didn’t want to ask as it would expose the fact that he hadn’t participated in many gatherings. Therefore, he silently pulled up his robe and took out the two potion formulas he had written long ago and handed it to an attendant beside him.

The attendant didn’t walk to the corner. Instead, he went to the single sofa in the center and handed the folded paper over to the Eye of

Wisdom.

The old gentleman spread out the paper and, without taking an extra look at it, placed it on a small round table beside him.

Then, he took out a handkerchief and wiped his right palm. From his pocket, he took out a ring inlaid with many tiny diamonds.

This ring was complicated and exquisite in design. In the middle of the ring was a dark green gem that looked like an eye. Just by looking at it from a distance, Klein felt his head swell and his body turn uncomfortable; it was just like back when he was taking his math examination.

Eye of Wisdom solemnly wore the ring on his right middle finger and then closed his eyes, as if he was preparing something.

Suddenly, the emerald-green gem on the ring bloomed with a resplendent golden color which was as bright as the sun.

Eye of Wisdom quickly extended his right hand and let the gem touch the potion formula written by Klein.

The rays of golden light became purer until they eventually turned into a holographic projection.

“Authentic and effective!” Eye of Wisdom announced in a low voice. He immediately removed the ring from his finger, not daring to wear it for another second.

His tone sounds just like a notary… That ring is the most prized item in Mr. Eye of Wisdom’s collection, Sealed Artifact 2-081? It emulates the powers of a Notary? Klein watched on thoughtfully, feeling a little covetous.

After the “notarization,” the deal was quickly concluded, and Klein received a thick wad of cash, all in ten-pound notes.

After counting the bills three times, he didn't fold and put them in his pocket. Instead, he held them in the palm of his hand and waited for an opportunity to spend them.

He planned on observing for a moment to ensure that there was nothing he needed before speaking again to mention his desire to purchase things.

At that moment, the Apothecary looked around and said, "I brought a few bottles of sedatives."

He really brought it? I've already forgotten all about it… In order to be different from his past self, Klein could only pretend that he wasn't around.

After shouting a few times and seeing that there was no response, the Apothecary muttered, "That guy didn't come this time? Maybe he's dead somewhere."

Thank you for your 'blessings'… But it's delightful that you failed to recognize me… Klein heaved a sigh of relief

The Apothecary habitually asked for Spring of the Elves marrow crystals again, but it was in vain as usual.

Moments after he shut up, a woman whose face was completely shrouded by her hood said with two boxes at her feet, "I have two weapons with Beyonder effects."

This must be the lady who sold the inscribed steel sword the last time, right? My spirituality instincts as a Seer tells me that… she has another two similar weapons? Backing her is some Beyonder armament organization, right… Well, maybe she has an Artisan behind her, also known as Sequence 6 of the Machinery Specialist and Savant pathway… Klein looked over with anticipation.

He had agreed to give The Sun a Beyonder weapon worth 500 to 700 pounds, which could effectively his combat ability. He didn't promise the specific type and characteristics, so long as it was similar and could be used, he could buy it. In any case, the Sun wasn't picky about it.

Chapter 274 - Beyonder Weapon

◆

The woman with the hooded face looked around her and said, “The two weapons this time are easy to carry around.

“One of them is the Whip of Slowness. It’s a replica of a particular mystical item. It can constantly create formless restraints, influencing your opponent bit by bit, slowing down his actions gradually. The longer you last in battle, the more effective it would be.

“It can still be used for two years. 450 pounds, or the potion formula for Barbarian.”

This whip sounds pretty good, and it feels like the spider silk ability of the Demoness of Pleasure… However, would it seem a little strange for Little Sun to use a whip? Klein asked in a hoarse voice, “Can this invisible binding effect affect spirit-type creatures? For example, wraiths?”

The lady shook her head slowly. “No.”

Without waiting for any further questions, she continued introducing, “The second weapon is called the Axe of Hurricane. It can raise the user’s agility and running speed. There’s also a 15% chance of inflicting a numbing effect to the enemy and a 5% chance of producing a bolt of lightning. If used in a thunderstorm, the chance of the lightning bolt will be raised to 50%.

“This has all been verified through experimentation and concluded through copious amounts of data.

"This weapon's effects can last for no more than a year. 520 pounds or the potion formula to Barbarian."

This is much stronger than the Whip of Slowness. If it wasn't for the fact that it only has the Beyonder effects for a year, it probably wouldn't be this price… Right, according to the description of Little Sun and the scene I vaguely saw, in the air above the City of Silver and the surrounding area, there are always flashes of lightning. The highest frequency is during daytime and the lowest frequency is during nighttime. This is very similar to a so-called thunderstorm environment…

If it's really effective, then this Axe of Hurricane would be a truly mystical item in the hands of Little Sun. Each strike has a 50% chance of blasting out lightning. It would be absolutely formidable!

Even if that doesn't work, looking at the most basic Beyonder effects of the Axe of Hurricane, it's still quite a good weapon, and it meets the needs of Little Sun… As for the problem that it can only be used for a year, it's not a big problem to solve. In one year, with Little Sun's digestion rate and City of Silver's Beyonder resources, as long as he has the potion formulas, he would at least be Sequence 6 by then. At that point in time, he'll definitely need to replace his weapon!

As his mind whirled, Klein basically determined that he was buying the Axe of Hurricane.

At that moment, the Apothecary muttered, "Is an axe easy to carry around? I feel like I've heard a joke, and I think it might be more appropriate to make a wrench. Say, can't you sell stuff like revolvers with Beyonder effects?"

"I will try my best to collect similar items." The woman emphasized the word "collect." "Alright, friends who are willing to buy one of these weapons, please make a bid."

Before Klein could even speak, he heard a male voice from the long sofa.

“Axe of Hurricane, 520 pounds.”

The woman waited a few seconds before asking again, “Is there anyone else who wants to bid?”

“530 pounds.” Klein added ten pounds.

The man immediately replied, “550 pounds.”

…This… Little Sun, if he raises it to more than 600 pounds, I won’t be buying it. I’ll get you a new whip! With a definite strategy in mind, Klein called out very calmly, “560 pounds.”

He tried to make it appear that no matter what offer was made, he could add on an additional ten pounds.

And the 600 pounds he had just earned was just enough to put invisible pressure on the other party.

Upon hearing the latest price, the man fell silent and shrugged.

“Alright then, it’s yours.”

Phew… Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

“Is there anyone else who wants to bid for the Axe of Hurricane?” the woman asked again, but the room was silent.

“Sold!” The lady didn’t hesitate any longer and handed the box next to her right foot to the attendant.

The attendant had the Eye of Wisdom appraise it before bringing it to Klein, Money was handed over in exchange for the item.

Putting away the remaining four ten-pound notes, Klein opened the box and saw an axe that could be attached to one’s back or tucked in one’s belt.

Its entire body was iron black in color, thick, and sturdy, with a sharp edge. In his Spirit Vision, it was clear that the creator had used a large number of spiritual materials.

There were also many symbols and magic runes on the surface of the axe. They were embedded inside, turning into lightning and hurricane patterns. When Klein reached out to touch it, he felt a faint pricking pain.

He nodded and placed the box on his lap.

It can be exchanged for the true root and juice of a Mist Treant. My Magician potion is only missing the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther… I've made a good deal of money in my past few commissions, and together with my original savings and what I just have left, I have 209 pounds 5 solis and 5 pennies on me… The Beyonder ingredients corresponding to Sequence 7 are valued at 500 to 700 pounds… Heh, I still had to sell formulas or knowledge… Yes, I'll take the time to check on Leppard this week and confirm the progress of his bicycle… Klein stopped bidding and quietly watched from the sidelines.

Later on, someone bought the Whip of Slowness for 480 pounds, and a Beyonder ingredient called Heart of Featherman wasn't sold because its price reached 1,600 pounds and nobody wanted it.

According to his knowledge of mysticism, Klein knew that this Beyonder ingredient would be classified in the category of Sequence 6.

In the following transactions, more failed than succeeded. After all, most of the Beyonders who came to the gathering had a specific purpose, and they wouldn't casually waste money and resources. They weren't like Klein, who bought any weapon as long as the Beyonder effects were good enough.

"I want to sell a formula potion. Sequence 9, Corpse Collector. 230 pounds." Towards the end, a man sitting quietly in a corner said with a deep voice.

Corpse Collector? I remember that this potion formula can only be found in the Church of Evernight, Church of the God of Combat, and the Numinous Episcopate… Has an undercover Nighthawk sneaked in, or is he a member of the Numinous Episcopate who's trying to revive Death? Of course, it isn't that strange for low Sequence formulas to be found in the wild. This isn't a huge secret… I remember Old Neil mentioning that the formula for Corpse Collector involved a desiccated black-spotted frog… Klein controlled himself and didn't smile. He thoughtfully looked ahead and discovered that the potion formula of Corpse Collector was quickly sold.

The potion formula for Sequence 9 is very easy to sell… Before, there was just a single Sequence 8 Folk of Rage formula that failed to close several times, while my Light Suppliant formula matched with Sequence 9 Bard was sold relatively easily.

Yes, most Beyonders would collect Sequence 9 formulas if they have the money to spare. They can give their own children and students more opportunities to choose from, allowing them to walk a path that they preferred. Under this premise, if a Sequence 8 formula doesn't have the foundation Sequence 9, they would have to wait for Beyonders who are attempting to advance, and there might not even be one in one to two years. After all, the circle of Beyonders is very scattered, and most people don't know about the acting method…

Yes, they also don't know the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility…

Klein silently thought and didn't speak.

After another fifteen minutes, seeing that the gathering was about to end, he asked probingly, "Who has the complete spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther?"

Silence. No one spoke in the living room.

Klein thought for a moment, then added, "I will provide payment that no Beyonder would refuse.”

For example, the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility. Unfortunately, I’ve already sworn to the Goddess that I wouldn’t impart the acting method to anyone else… Uh, I’ve already died once. I wonder if that oath is invalid… Klein forcefully retracted his scattered thoughts, but he still didn’t hear anyone speak.

“Okay, next.” He deliberately made a shrug that he wouldn’t normally do.

The Apothecary cleared his throat and said, “I’ve brought quite a few of my own medicine. Take a look at what you want. It’s not expensive at all. It’s just a few pounds or even a few soli.”

When the lady selling Beyonder weapons heard this, she asked curiously, “I want to know if the dangerous beast in the sewers has been eliminated?”

The Apothecary snorted immediately.

“You asked the right person!”

After saying that, he spread out his hands.

“I don’t know either.

“After I got someone to make a police report, I haven’t been to the sewers ever since.”

Bro, you’re asking for a beating… It must’ve been hard for you to grow up so healthily… From the looks of it, it was very wise of you to choose the Apothecary job! Klein couldn’t help but lampoon in Chinese.

The woman took a deep breath and slowly exhaled without saying a word.

When all the strange medicine the Apothecary had brought were sold, Eye of Wisdom announced that the gathering was over.

He delegated Klein to be fifth to leave, through a secret passage in the basement.

From the looks of it, Eye of Wisdom didn't recognize me either… With some relief, Klein took off his hooded robe and tossed it to the attendant. Then, he walked out of the passage and skilfully circled around it.

After confirming that no one was following him, he took off his iron mask, left the secluded street, took the box containing the Axe of Hurricane, and headed straight to East Borough.

†

There were no gas lamps on Black Palm Street in East Borough, and after dark, it was like an abyss.

In a particular apartment here, Klein sealed the room with a wall of spirituality, then he summoned himself and carried the Axe of Hurricane above the gray fog.

If it had been a little heavier, I wouldn't have been able to carry it with me even if I had Mr. Azik's copper whistle to reinforce my spirit. Then, I would have to switch to a sacrificial ritual… Klein mumbled, sending his thoughts to the illusory star corresponding to The Sun.

"The World has sacrificed the weapon to me. You can prepare the bestowment ritual."

†

City of Silver.

Upon seeing the gray fog and hearing Mr. Fool's instructions, Derrick Berg immediately sat up and rushed to prepare.

Before holding the bestowment ceremony, he silently took out his knight's sword and made a few vertical slashes to ease his anticipation.

Would it be a straight sword, a broadsword, or a great sword? Derrick stopped without realizing, unable to stop himself from thinking, and subconsciously pictured himself using that powerful weapon.

After a while, during the ritual, he saw the Beyonder weapon that belonged to him.

It was an axe.

Chapter 275 - Pound Family

“Dear Mr. Fool, please tell Mr. World that I’ll try to gather the Mist Treant’s true root and juice as soon as possible.”

After receiving The Sun’s reply, Klein nodded indiscernibly and muttered to himself, “From the looks of it, he’s rather satisfied with the weapon.

“Even without the additional effects from the environment, the Axe of Hurricane is still quite a formidable weapon.”

He had passed the information regarding the Beyonder weapon’s characteristics and limitations to The Sun. He didn’t describe it directly in order to avoid sounding naggy. He needed to maintain his image.

After doing all of this, Klein didn’t stay any longer and immediately returned to the real world, changed his clothes, and left Black Palm Street.

†

East Borough, Dharavi Street, in a cramped but lively pub.

Xio Derecha covered her nose and mouth as she squeezed in. To her, what was bad about this place wasn’t just because it smelled of alcohol and sweat, but that she would easily encounter people much taller than she was. She had to face their armpits and the strong odor was nauseating.

Using a great deal of effort and even using the powers of an Arbiter, Xio finally squeezed her way to the bar counter and saw the man she was looking for.

It was a young man in his twenties. He had a face as long and thin as a horse. His eyebrows were messy and ferocious, but his facial features were relatively soft.

He was gulping down alcohol and laughing loudly with the patrons around him.

"Williams, I have something to talk to you about." Xio banged on the wooden counter.

This boorish action immediately attracted many angry gazes. However, they quickly retreated under the stern gaze of an Arbiter.

"Oh, Xio, I haven't seen you in days. Let me see, it's been a week, no—at least three weeks. Care for a drink? Half and Half?" Williams said, half drunk and half surprised.

Half and Half was one of the most popular alcoholic beverages in East Borough, made from malt beer and fortified grape wine, and because it has precisely made up of two constituents of equal proportion, it was known as Half and Half.

"Are you really going to let me drink?" Xio pricked up her brows.

"No, he doesn't!" the boss, who was wiping the glasses, hurriedly answered on Williams's behalf.

He clearly remembered how deadly the girl would become when she got drunk. She would use her fists to persuade the guests to quit drinking and throw them out one by one.

The corner of Williams's mouth twitched as he spread out his hands and said, "Go on, why are you looking for me?"

He was one of East Borough’s informants and was connected to several gangs.

Xio frowned and said, “Williams, can’t you quit drinking? Save your money, marry a nice girl, and come home every day to hot water, food, and warm greetings. You can share all the things you’ve seen in the day with her, and she can tell you about the trivial things that happened in your house, and there will be cute kids who will kiss you on the cheek and play around you. Isn’t such warmth nice?”

She was able to gain a quick foothold in Backlund’s East Borough, all thanks to Williams’s help, so she had always wanted him to be better off.

“Warmth?” Williams scoffed. “It’s built on the money I bring back, and I’ve seen through the farce. If I could bring home twenty soli a week, I’m sure my family would be warm and just as you described it to be, but if not, Lord, the screams and insults from the woman, the cries and shrieks of children, would drive me crazy!

“My mom is a good example. Every time my old man comes home, he’ll beat me up and make a ruckus, so if that’s the case, I might as well use the soli and the pence on me to trade for drinks. No one cares how much I earn here; everyone drinks and chats, and the mood is really good. If I want women, there are cute street girls outside. They wouldn’t quarrel with you.”

Xio smirked and said, “You really are an incorrigible believer of the Lord of Storms. One day, you’ll die from alcoholism or some strange disease.”

“At least I’ve enjoyed life,” Williams replied without minding what she said. “I haven’t worked in almost three days, so I’m not going to give you a discount.”

Xio stopped persuading him. She stroked her short, disheveled blond hair and handed him the portrait of Lanevus that Audrey had given her.

“Help me keep an eye out for this man. Find him as soon as possible.

“Here are different portraits of him.”

Williams spread out the piece of paper in his stupor and glanced at it before tsking. “He looks too ordinary, and there are so many people in East Borough. There are people who die at any moment. Some leave, some come, and others become vagrants. It’ll be difficult to find him.”

“In short, help me keep an eye out. Notify me immediately if you find anyone who looks like him.” Xio took out a five-soli bill and handed it to him. “Here’s some beer money. If you can find the person in the portrait, I’ll… uh, give you another ten pounds.”

“Ten pounds?” Williams whistled. “Xio, when did you become so generous? Or is this person worth more?”

“That’s how much his reward is worth. Ten pounds for providing clues.” Xio pretended to look around the pub and answered, “Don’t forget about this matter, I’ll come back in a few days time.”

She had already run through nearly half of East Borough and issued the mission to the gang leaders and informants she knew, and she had paid several pounds in advance.

As long one of them succeeds, I’ll earn it all back. All those profits! Xio silently cheered herself on and walked out of the pub with her nose and mouth covered.

At that moment, the scene gradually turned chaotic due to some conflict between a few drunkards.

Xio glanced over in exasperation, then raised her voice and shouted, “Stop!”

A sense of dominance reverberated within the pub, and it was as though the drunkards had met their nemesis as they hurriedly sat down. Some of them even hugged their heads and squatted on the ground.

Phew, I wonder when I'll advance to Sheriff… Xio sighed, feeling a mix of satisfaction and anticipation.

†

On Thursday morning, Klein took the long trip to St. George Borough which was like another city altogether to show some concern for his first investment.

With his last tip and the revelation from Roselle's manuscript, Leppard was progressing very quickly on the bicycle project and had already built a crude prototype.

This was very much in line with Klein's impression of bicycles.

After a trial ride, Klein offered a few suggestions for improvements, saying he would disburse the second investment payment next week, and expressed his hope of bringing in new investors as soon as possible, so that the project could enter an industrial phase.

The only problem was that Leppard believed that he was the inventor and had the right to name the product.

He wasn't satisfied with the term "bicycle" and intend to adopt the more popular term, "bike."

Klein didn't care.

At noon, he returned to 15 Minsk Street, but before he could take off his hat, he heard a series of illusory pleas.

Miss Justice? She has collected the information on the abject nobles so quickly? Still in thought, Klein prepared to enter the living room and head to the second floor.

At that moment he heard the doorbell and when he opened the door, he saw Julianne, the maid from the Sammers next door.

“Mr. Moriarty, Mrs. Sammer would like to invite you to a Sunday luncheon. There will be a lot of neighbors attending,” the maid said as if she was reciting something.

After his return last night, Klein had handed the portable camera to Mrs. Sammer and exchanged a few words with her, but he hadn’t received any indication of a luncheon.

That’s right, according to the magazines, the middle class wouldn’t invite anyone to an event in person, but instead, they formally sent their servants or maids to send the invitation… This is in line with Mrs. Sammer’s style… Klein was puzzled at first before he immediately came to a realization, so he promised to punctually attend on Sunday.

Who wouldn’t want to have a free lunch? And Mr. and Mrs. Sammer aren’t very difficult people to get along with, as long as you don’t mind their showing off… Klein secretly added in his heart.

He watched as Julianne left. He closed the door behind him and walked toward the stairs, his eyes scanning the slightly messy living room, dining room, and kitchen.

It’s been a few days since I’ve cleaned up… I’m a bachelor, so it’s not bad that I’m able to maintain a level of tidiness such as this… I have too many secrets, and I might even suffer an attack. It’s not too good to just hire an in-house maidservant for chores. Yes… I should discuss this with Mrs. Sammer on Sunday and ask her to send her maid to clean up twice a week, and I’ll pay for it… Many tenants and landlords have had similar agreements… Klein calmly walked into the bedroom on the second floor and drew the curtains.

After entering the fog, he found that the prayer had indeed come from Miss Justice.

This girl of blue blood sat on a piano stool, her hands on the keys. She wasn't playing the piano; instead, she was whispering the honorific name of The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"…I've gathered the information regarding the abject nobles. I'm requesting permission to hold a sacrificial ritual and seek your help in passing it to Mr. World."

That's quick… as expected of a "professional"… Klein immediately responded.

Audrey, who had just returned from the royal coat-of-arms office and experts in this field, completed the sacrificial ritual with a little unfamiliarity as she threw the thick manuscript into the illusory door.

"I'll pass it to The World." Klein's tone was indifferent as he cut off the connection.

This time, he was in no hurry to return to the real world. Instead, he flipped through the manuscript and found the part pertaining to the Pound family.

The Pound family had indeed obtained the title of viscount from the Battle of the Violated Oath. After that, they were loyal to the royal family, and they had quite a bit of power in the army and their own fiefdom.

However, thirty-two years ago, two of the family's heirs died from serious illnesses, one after another. At that time, the old viscount had no choice but to bring the child of a distant relative home.

Not long after, the old viscount passed away. As the child was still young, under the enticement and instigation of the servants, he changed the butler and turned foppish.

In just eight years he had lost most of his fortune and was reduced to a baron. Even the family's house in Backlund was sold.

In the years that followed, his title was reduced once again to that of a baronet.

Died of serious illnesses? Their corpses are probably nowhere to be found. They should all be in that innermost room in the underground structure, outside that bloody door… The old viscount must've deliberately concealed the matter, preventing the royal family, military or churches to investigate… From the looks of it, the Pound family must've discovered the underground structure from the Fourth Epoch about thirty years ago. Perhaps, the underground secret door was built by them… but there are more than two corpses in that room… There were others who had entered in ancient times to probe the area?

Well, I'll have to talk to Baronet Pound in a way that won't reveal my identity…

Klein stopped thinking and looked at the last paragraph. He saw what he wanted: "Baronet Pound, currently living at 29 Sivellaus Street, Empress Borough."

Chapter 276 - Rafter Pound

◆

Sivellaus Prefecture was located west of the Loen Kingdom, across the Hornacis mountain range from the Intis Republic. And in Backlund, there was a street named after it, on the edge of Empress Borough, where the headquarters of the capital's police department was located.

Many people chose to settle down here for the peace of mind, and Rafter Pound was one of them.

The baronet stood by the closed window in his warm activity room at Unit 29, in his cotton quilted pajamas, staring diagonally across the street at Sivellaus Yard.

He was in his early forties, but the sides of his hair had turned white. He had puffy eyes and clear wrinkles on his face. His body constantly emitted the smell of alcohol.

On the floor behind Rafter lay some torn lingerie, and opposite it was a burning fireplace.

The baronet raised his glass and gulped the rest of the liquid in it. Then, he walked slowly to the door and returned to his bedroom to get some sleep.

As there was no pipe to transfer the heat from the fireplace, he felt the bone-chilling chill of late autumn as soon as he left the activity room.

"Damn it!" Rafter Pound cursed under his breath as he staggered to the bedroom door and twisted the handle.

The bedroom was dark, with only a faint crimson glow shining in.

Rafter was about to close the door behind him and collapse into bed when his eyes suddenly froze.

A figure was sitting quietly on a chair beside the curtain!

The figure wore a pair of grayish-blue pants and a cap. The entire person was completely hidden in the shadows.

Sensing Baronet Pound's gaze, the man slowly raised his head and looked over.

His face was painted red, yellow, and white, looking like the funniest clown!

Rafter was about to shout and run when he saw a revolver aimed at him and heard two deep and hoarse sentences.

"I advise you not to do anything unwise.

"If you cooperate, I won't harm you, and I won't take away your belongings—if you still have any left."

Rafter Pound's expression changed a few times, and he very obediently closed the bedroom door. Then, he half raised his hands and sat on the edge of the bed.

"You, what do you want from me?" He hiccuped in his drunken stupor, and his body trembled slightly as he reminded, "Sivellaus Yard is just across the street!"

"I know, but I think I'm closer to you than you are to Sivellaus Yard." Disguised as a clown, Klein had changed his voice and tone as he warned, "And my purpose is just to ask you a few questions."

Before he came to Sivellaus Street, he had divined if there would be any danger in making this trip in the mysterious space above the gray fog and had obtained an answer that it was very safe.

"Questions?" Rafter's lips trembled as laughed bitterly, "Here we go again… Am I never going to escape this nightmare?"

"Have there been many people coming to you with questions?" Klein continued the topic.

"No, not only questions! After my uncle, the honorable old viscount, passed away, too many things have happened to me. The amiable old butler resigned for no reason and has vanished. Those servants and maids would change one after the other without warning, becoming unfamiliar and cold. They were looking for something, yes, they were looking for something, I wasn't even ten back then. All I could do was watch, and I didn't dare tell anyone. I was afraid that I would never wake up again!" Rafter replied as though he was on the brink of collapse.

Looking for something? Were they searching for the underground structure, or the treasures of the Pound family, such as the Beyonder characteristics and mystical items buried near the evil spirit? The royal family and the churches must've realized this as the higher-ups must know about the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility! Since the Pound family was in ruins, these things should've been taken back, right? Unless the old viscount paid a huge price and bought some other rare Beyonder characteristics and mystical items of the same Sequence to conceal the matter of the underground structure… After Klein finished listening quietly, he generated many guesses.

He seemed relaxed, but in reality, he could attack at any time.

"How long has this been going on for?"

"I don't know, I don't know. There are faces around me that I don't know. How can I be sure that the remaining people aren't also in cahoots?"Heh heh, I pretended not to notice anything. After trembling for a few years, I was enticed by them to do drinking, sex, gambling, smoking marijuana, and all sorts of things that make me look like a piece of trash!" Rafter Pound gave a somewhat crazy laugh. "They're finally relieved and are no longer watching me. When I sold that house, whoosh! All of them left, with no idea where they went. No, they must still be secretly monitoring me, preventing me from calling the police. Right, they aren't letting me call the police!"

This fellow has some mental illness… I have no idea if what he said is true or false. In his aura, the change in his mood colors adhere to logic, but what if he just feels that he had let down the old viscount and fantasized a whole sequence of events like this to find an excuse for his degeneration. Later, he would keep telling himself that until he's utterly convinced… As a qualified keyboard warrior, Klein, who knew a little of everything, had seen similar cases in his previous life.

After thinking for two seconds, he asked, "What did these people ask you?"

"They asked me how the two children of the old viscount died. They asked me what abnormal behavior the old viscount had over the years. I wasn't even ten years old at the time, so I don't know anything!" Rafter waved his arms and growled under his breath.

"Calm down, please calm down." Klein lowered his left hand and attempted to confirm if Baronet Pound knew of the underground structure via multiple angles.

Time flew by as the question and answer session ensued. Klein said in a hoarse voice, "You really don't seem to know anything.

"I'm very sorry to bother you, but it's time for me to leave."

He stood up, bowed slightly, and appeared very well-mannered.

And almost at the same time, the excitement and appearance of having a breakdown on Rafter Pound's face vanished. His light blue eyes became abnormally deep, as though he was examining something.

When he saw the intruder about to stand up straight, he immediately reverted back to his previous performance—grief, anger, madness, bitterness, and neuroticism.

At that moment, a mysterious voice suddenly resounded in his ears.

“Crimson!”

Klein injected spirituality into a Slumber Charm and threw it at Rafter with his unarmed left hand.

Amidst crisp crackling sounds, a strong sense of serenity spread out, enveloping the baronet, causing him to shut his eyes involuntarily and fall weakly onto the bed.

“I’m sorry. The questions from before are for the comparison of what shall ensue. Next, it’s the process of entering your dream and spirit channeling.” Klein patted Rafter’s pajamas, and with his hand on his chest, he made another bow.

Then, he used the Dream Charm and entered Rafter’s dream like a Nightmare.

In the gray, fragmentary, constantly coruscating world, Klein soberly walked beside Rafter, watching him see the blank faces of the servants and maids who had no facial features as they gave off abnormal and frightening vibes. He saw Rafter turning his head only to always to see an old face silently gazing at him, watching him curl up in the corner, shivering, and him being enveloped by a shadow, little by little.

This matches what he had described earlier… Klein tried to guide the dream to make sense of the situation, but it was as though Baronet Pound had a very serious psychological trauma over these matters. Any tiny bit of stimulation would cause him to scream and run like a madman in his dreams.

This made it impossible for Klein to get any more information.

Thus, he withdrew from the dream and cast another Slumber Charm on

Rafter Pound before taking out Amantha extract and other materials, in preparation to channel his spirit in a mediumship ritual.

After responding to himself, Klein's spirituality passed through the storm of thoughts and saw the illusory image of Rafter, an illusory image based on the Body of Heart and Mind.

"What did the old viscount say to you before he died?" Klein hesitated for a moment before asking.

Rafter Pound muddle-headedly replied, "He wants me to maintain the family."

"What else?" Klein asked again in a tone of deliberate affirmation.

"He wanted me to remember the glory of the ancestors," Rafter answered blankly.

Klein nodded and asked, "What were those people looking for?"

"I don't know." Rafter gave the same answer.

Klein continued asking and compared it with the answers Pound had said before, finally coming to the conclusion that Baronet Pound had not lied, and what he had just said was true.

At this point, he didn't stay any longer. He passed through the storm of thoughts and allowed his extended spirituality to return to his body.

Next, Klein methodically tidied up the scene and tossed Azik's copper whistle a few times, using its nature to interfere with any possible divination investigations.

"Thank you for your cooperation, Mr. Baronet." After doing all of this, Klein bowed once again.

Then he turned, opened the window, jumped into the street, and disappeared into the night.

After a while, Rafter Pound suddenly opened his eyes.

Around those light blue eyes, there was a circle of ruptured capillaries!

He flipped himself up suddenly and stared at the open oriel window.

†

After making a long detour to East Borough, Klein washed his disguise and changed into normal clothes. As if nothing had happened, he returned to 15 Minsk Street in Cherwood Borough.

He didn't rest, nor did he think about what he should do with the underground structure. Instead, he once again entered the fog.

At the very end of the ancient long table, Klein slowly opened his palm, revealing several strands of brown hair. They were Rafter Pound's hair, hair he had gathered when Rafter was sleeping.

There's still the final step—confirming with divination above the gray fog… Klein silently muttered to himself, then he conjured a pen and paper. He wrote down the content that he had already thought about beforehand:

"Rafter Pound's future."

I want to see what will happen to you in the future so as to confirm the past! Klein leaned back in his chair and began to recite the divination statement.

As the ancient structure involved the six orthodox gods, he was afraid that there would be problems if he divined something directly, so he changed his way of thinking and helped Rafter Pound ask about the future!

Chapter 277 - Finalizing a Plan

◆

“Rafter Pound’s future.”

Klein held onto the baronet’s hair, closed his eyes, and entered a deep slumber with the help of Cogitation.

In the gray gloomy world, he saw a narrow, irregular cave. Rafter Pound, with his puffy eye bags and gray hair at his temples, was propping himself up on his elbows, crawling forward like a reptile to leave the hole.

Then, with a flash, he retrieved a black iron emblem of unknown origins and wore it on his chest.

The emblem had a scepter carved on it, as well as a hand that was holding onto the scepter tightly!

“Tudor!” Klein jerked out of the dream and sat up.

According to Miss Bodyguard’s introduction, the black iron emblem was engraved with the imperial coat of arms of the Fourth Epoch’s Tudor Empire royal household!

It was identical to the one he had seen in the ancient structure!

Rafter Pound is definitely not as simple as he seems to be… Klein rubbed his forehead and muttered to himself.

As a Seer, he had his own interpretation of the revelation he had received from the dream. On the one hand, he knew that it was something Rafter Pound would do in the future, and on the other hand, he believed that it meant that Rafter Pound had a deep connection with the Tudor family!

Through the three tests of direct questioning, dream probing, and spirit channeling, Rafter Pound didn’t expose any problems, nor did he make me notice that anything was amiss. If I didn’t have a fourth test, I probably would’ve been deceived by him. Yes… Maybe, maybe he really doesn’t know anything at present and that it was a true act. In the future, he might even chance upon an opportunity to form a connection with the Tudor family…

But it’s more likely that he has already learned a lot from the old viscount. Without confidence, he intentionally turned decadent and acted crazy and ignorant. For him to be able to hide from my dream and spirit channeling, it should be a result of some Beyonder powers. Hmm… He probably wasn’t acting at that time and was really in a muddled state. Otherwise, he would’ve exposed himself in front of a person like me who is very experienced in such matters…

What Beyonder powers could it be?

What Sequence number is he?

Or is he the kind that is born with certain Beyonder powers?

Klein proceeded this line of thought and soon realized he had reached a dead end. He quickly pulled himself out of this dead end and changed his angle of thinking.

Rafter Pound has a deep connection with the Tudor family…

Can I make a bold hypothesis that he’s actually a descendant of the Tudor family?

If the blood relationship between him and the old viscount is real, then things are going to be interesting.

The entire Pound family is a branch of the Tudor family that changed its surname to escape pursuit?

They contributed tremendously and were conferred aristocratic titles, and they returned to the center of power, one step at a time. Meanwhile, they were secretly searching for the secret remains left behind by the Tudor Empire in Backlund.

After an unknown period of time, they finally found something. Thus, they bought what currently belongs to Millet Carter's house and built an exaggerated basement, which was used to explore the surrounding area.

Thirty to forty years ago, they found the ruins and built a secret door to it.

But, during the exploration process, an accident occurred. That evil spirit didn't recognize any of the so-called Tudor descendants at all. The two heirs of the old viscount died in that room, in the deepest corner, one after the other. Even their Beyonder characteristics and mystical items couldn't be retrieved.

Although the old viscount spent a great price to buy similar Beyonder characteristics, making it seem like the two heirs had died relatively normal deaths, the consecutive deaths made the royal household and the churches suspicious. Therefore, after the old viscount passed away, Rafter Pound deliberately exaggerated and distorted the secret investigations of the past, to frighten himself into having mental problems. He began to engage in debauchery so as to avoid the attention of others.

This can explain what previously puzzled me. How can a viscount family be placed under the control of some mysterious person without any action from the royal household and the churches? Even if controlling him was necessary, they would do it in a milder and undetectable manner. For example, using a Faceless of my Sequence 6 pathway.

A child can even sense something abnormal, much less the powerful Beyonders of the royal household and the three churches?

The reason why they were "unaware" can only be explained by the fact that they were the ones who had sent those people.

Yes… Back then, I surmised that the Tudor family and the Trunsoest family grasped the Black Emperor pathway, so due to the need to act, they would establish dynasties to maintain the style and uniqueness of the Solomon Empire. On this point, Miss Bodyguard has indirectly proven it.

The Black Emperor pathway's Sequence 9 is Lawyer, a Beyonder job that is extremely good at using order. Yes… Rafter Pound was able to deceive my dream and spirit channeling abilities because of this. Perhaps he's gone one step further? He cooperated with me sufficiently, so in his muddled state in the dream, he was still able to subconsciously use the loophole of order and affect the development in the direction he wishes to have.

Upon careful consideration, during the process of spirit channeling, Rafter Pound didn't seem to really lie. However, his truth was only a partial truth…"Maintain the family" and "remember the glory" can be referring to the Pound family and also the Tudor family…

Klein's train of thought became clearer bit by bit, and he had an overall assessment of the situation.

From Rafter Pound's current attitude, the evil spirit shouldn't be able to escape without any external help; otherwise, the baronet would've long thought of a way to save himself. It doesn't matter if the evil spirit would come looking for him; as long as it escapes the seal and creates a disaster, the secret of the underground ruins would be exposed to the royal household and the churches. When that happens, Rafter will definitely be implicated… The room opposite had collapsed, but it didn't affect the power that restricted the evil spirit. This means that as long as the innermost room isn't directly destroyed, the evil spirit wouldn't be able to escape…

Hmm… The plan is clear then. I would buy some explosives from Kaspars and collapse the entrance so that no one can get in, leaving the evil spirit buried underground forever. Heh, when I'm powerful enough, I can consider finishing it and help the citizens of Backlund get rid of this latent danger and harvest some valuable items in the process…

However, how should I collapse it safely? I don't know anything… Maybe Kaspars knows a demolition expert? After all, he is a black-market weapons merchant.

Klein quickly finalized the plan and decided on finding Kaspars tomorrow evening. He would try to settle the matter of the underground ruins within the week.

As for the true relationship between the Pound family and the Tudor family, and for Rafter's abnormality, he didn't want to probe too deeply into it.

"It's none of my business!" Klein grumbled and quickly plummeted down past the gray fog and returned to the real world.

†

On Friday morning, Klein went out early as usual and pretended to be very busy.

The truth was, he had once again gone to the Quelaag Club to practice his shooting and read the newspapers. He enjoyed himself quite a bit.

At tea time, he was about to leave after staying there the entire day, but he was surprised to see Mary Gale, his former employer, and Talim Dumont, the equestrian teacher, enter the club at the same time.

They were accompanied by a number of gentlemen in double-breasted frock coats and beautiful ladies in fine makeup. Among them was the Daily Observer reporter, Mike Joseph.

“Oh, Detective Moriarty, what a coincidence.” Mike, with his charming eyes but rather rough skin, took the initiative to greet him.

Klein smiled and replied, “Mr. Reporter, are you done with your investigative news?”

“It’s done, thanks to your help! Let me do the introductions. This is the famous detective, Mr. Sherlock Moriarty, a good friend of Talim’s.” Mike waved his arm and said.

After both sides greeted each other, Mike continued, “I’ve roughly figured out who Capim is. I’ll tell you in detail when I have the time. In short, I have every reason to believe that Siber’s death was caused by a copycat killer and not by the serial killer. Haha, you will see the news of my investigations on the papers tomorrow.

“It’s just as I thought.” Klein smiled in response.

At that moment, Mike seemed to remember something and turned his head to Mary Gale and said, “I’ll make an appointment with you for an interview regarding the air pollution situation in Backlund and its solution. However, you have to communicate with my editor-in-chief in advance to finalize the page and time.”

Mary’s eyes lit up.

“Alright.

“Thank you very much! Mike, why didn’t I think of such a good idea?”

This is for the promotion of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council? This reporter, Mike, has quite a lot of experience after all… Although the Daily Observer isn’t one of the best newspapers, its circulation is considerable… Did Mary suddenly come here today because the other members of the House of Commons who are members of this club were coming? This type of private club is indeed suitable for politics and business… Klein seemed to gain an understanding and bade farewell ahead of time.

Before becoming a Faceless, he didn't want to get involved in high-level affairs such as this.

†

Evening, in an apartment in East Borough.

After a busy day, Williams entered the small room he rented, intending to change his coat, get some money, go to the pub for a drink, and settle his dinner there.

In the gloomy darkness, he suddenly stopped putting on his coat.

He saw a shadow standing by the window, its face completely obscured by the shadow of the hood.

"Who told you to look for Lanevus?" the dark figure asked in a low, slow voice.

Williams quickly put on his coat, gulped his saliva, and said, "I have a friend, a bounty hunter."

Bounty hunters referred to adventurers who used various bounty rewards as their main source of income. There were a lot of them in East Borough and in Backlund.

"Why did he suddenly start looking for Lanevus? This is a bounty that was offered a long time ago." The black figure was extremely tall. Step by step, he approached Williams.

"I don't know. Maybe she just wanted to attempt another bounty." Williams took a very tiny step back.

The dark figure pressed hoarsely, "Who is she?"

Williams immediately entered a dilemma, but after a few seconds, he replied with a trembling voice, “Xio, Xio Derecha. I don’t know where she lives.”

“Very good, very honest.” The black figure reached out and patted Williams’s body. Without further ado, he walked towards the door.

Williams secretly heaved a sigh of relief, believing that his rich experience in the underworld had helped him.

Don’t try to be brave when you shouldn’t!

At that moment, he saw the shadow snap his fingers.

Pa!

Williams’s thoughts froze, and his body suddenly split into pieces, scattering in all directions, splattering the ground and walls with flesh and blood.

Then, the shadow broke the gas pipe.

Amidst the sound of gas spewing out from the pipes, he picked up the candle from Williams’s desk and struck it against the wick.

The black shadow left immediately. A few minutes later, the candle suddenly lit up by itself!

Boom!

The explosion wiped out everything.

Chapter 278 - Free?

◆ ◆ ◆

After dinner, in the billiard room of the Bravehearts Bar.

Dressed in a simple black coat and a dark cap, Klein held a glass of Southvill beer, closed the door behind him, and walked over to Kaspars, who was bent over the table, trying to hit the ball.

Before he could muster a smile and say hello, Kaspars stopped what he was doing, straightened up, and glanced at him.

“Maric isn’t here.

“There are no other gatherings you want.

“I have nothing but weapons.”

…Very familiar with what I want… Fortunately, I have a different goal today… Klein curled the corner of his lips and said, “I’m here to buy weapons.”

Maric isn’t here… From the looks of it, they’ve been exposed and are targeted by their enemies. They’ve decided to switch locations… Then I won’t be able to contact Miss Bodyguard… And I was planning on tricking Millet Carter with Maric’s zombies as my helpers… They’ll keep a secret, they’re obedient, and they’re unafraid of death. Well, the premise of their obedience is when the influence of Azik’s copper whistle is shielded… As he spoke, a series of thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind.

Kaspars was slightly surprised. With a look of suspicion, he leaned against his cue stick and rubbed his brandy nose and said, “What kind of weapon are you looking to buy? Have you finished the previous bullets? That’s quite a lot of practice.”

No, I practiced with bullets I bought at the Quelaag Club… Klein smiled.

“I want to buy explosives, the kind that is widely used in mines.”

“What do you want to do?” Kaspars blurted out as his expression turned solemn and stern. “I’m warning you, don’t try to do anything condemnable! I won’t allow my customers to challenge Sivellaus Yard! Of course, you don’t have to buy weapons from me.”

To be able to become a black market weapon merchant and live to this day, from a certain point of view, he must abide strictly by the rules. At the very least, he wouldn’t sell to those crazy fellows… Klein habitually gave his evaluation from a Nighthawk’s point of view and smiled. “You seem to have misunderstood something, I’m not going to blast open the door of a bank vault or try to create any sensational news. I’m helping someone with the demolition of a building, making it easier for subsequent renovations.”

“Then why didn’t he find a proper construction company?” Kaspars didn’t let down his guard.

“Haha, that’s a secret chamber. He doesn’t want others to know about it.” Klein switched to asking, “Do you know any reliable explosives experts? I’m not very good at this sort of thing, and I’m afraid the whole house will collapse.”

When Kaspars saw that Klein was making considerations to ensure that the house remained in good condition, the doubt in his mind was immediately dispelled quite significantly.

Just as he was deliberating for an answer, an illusory voice suddenly rang out in the room.

“There’s no need.”

A familiar feeling came over Klein. He quickly turned around and found Miss Bodyguard sitting on a chair in the corner without him realizing it.

She was still wearing her black Gothic regal dress and matching soft hat. Her face was as pale as ever, and her blonde hair and delicate features accentuated each other.

“Good evening, Madam.” Klein slightly bent his back and bowed.

“Good evening, Ma’am. Sharron.” Kaspars did the same.

So her name is Sharron… Klein thoughtfully waited for her to speak.

The lady named Sharron looked at Kaspars and said, “Maric won’t be coming back here again.

“If you need him for anything, leave a message according to the third method.”

“Yes, Ma’am. Sharron.” Kaspars, who had clearly seen a lot of things in his life, seemed to have an instinctive fear of Miss Bodyguard.

Upon hearing this, Klein interrupted, “If, I mean if—I wanted to get Maric’s help, how should I get in touch with him?”

“Through Kaspars,” Sharron answered simply.

“Alright.” Klein spread out his hands and said, “Oh yeah, what did you mean when you said there’s no need for a demolition expert?”

Sharron’s blue eyes didn’t waver in the slightest.

“I am one.”

You are one? You’re a demolition expert? Wait a minute, aren’t you a Beyonder with special abilities, probably at Sequence 5? Why are you being a part-time demolition expert… Klein froze as he felt at a loss for words.

In the end, he chose to believe Miss Bodyguard as he said in deliberation, “I’m going to visit…”

Before he could finish, he looked at Kaspars. It was indicative that the ensuing topic wasn’t suitable for this ordinary person.

Fundamentally, due to his body, a black market weapons dealer is indeed considered an ordinary person… Klein silently added.

Sharron looked at Kaspars and said, “Prepare the explosives. Two pounds. He’ll pay.”

“Yes, Ma’am. Sharron.” Kaspars glanced at Klein and limped out of the billiard room, not forgetting to close the door behind him.

Seeing Miss Bodyguard looking at him silently, Klein felt like he was being watched by a ghost. He quickly organized his words and said, “I found Baronet Pound’s address and visited him in the middle of the night…”

After recounting everything that Rafter Pound had told him, Klein began to deduce the process from the story.

“I think he lied in many areas, and it’s impossible for a viscount family to be so easily manipulated.

“If a child can notice something abnormal, how can the royal household and the churches not sense anything?

“After Rafter Pound degenerated, he had many chances to interact with outsiders and other aristocratic members. As long as he showed a little courage, he would be able to easily resolve the problem.

“Therefore, I think he must’ve been hiding something, something that has a high chance of being related to the underground structure.

“From the state of his mind, it seems that the evil spirit won’t be able to escape for a long period of time, so I plan to get some explosives and destroy the entrance to prevent others from getting in. Uh, I'm afraid that I might accidentally release the evil spirit."

"Yes." Miss Bodyguard Sharron didn't confirm Klein's guess, but she didn't reject it either.

At that moment, Klein hesitated and asked, "I don't know much about demolition, so I'm preparing to draw a layout and hire a demolition expert to give me the positions to lay the explosives and their corresponding weights. If-if I ask you for help again, how much would I have to pay?"

If it's too expensive, it'd better for me to look for an ordinary demolition expert. After all, I'm getting only 50 pounds from this, while Miss Bodyguard charges 1,000 pounds for three days… Klein had already made plans.

"Free." Sharron's answer was still in her usual style of being terse.

Free? Klein was shocked.

From what he knew, free things cost the most!

Sharron sat quietly for a few seconds before giving a brief explanation.

"After collapsing the entrance, I'll be the only one capable of entering and exiting.

"This was what I wished to do."

In other words, after you're confident enough, you plan on getting rid of the evil spirit and harvest the items within? In fact, destroying the entrance is to help you eliminate any interferences or the greed of others. After all, other Beyonders of other Sequences are unable to pass through the boulders and dirt like a spirit… Yes, apart from the Apprentice pathway, but they don't know about that underground structure… Klein nodded in enlightenment.

“Deal!”

After saying that, he hurriedly added, “Hmm… Can you borrow a few more subordinates from Maric, subordinates with a tight lip? They’ll be helpers to show to Millet Carter.”

“Alright.” Sharron didn’t refuse.

Klein deliberately didn’t mention making any payment for that as he smiled.

“Then, let’s schedule it for ten in the morning tomorrow.

“We have to explore the surrounding terrain in advance. We can’t let the explosion cause any obvious damage.”

Sharron nodded slightly as her figure faded away into nothingness.

†

Saturday morning, Xio Derecha once again rode in a public carriage to the East Borough to confirm any results that her commissions might have.

While waiting for the transfer, she suddenly had the urge to buy a newspaper to read.

She took out a penny and bought a copy of the Backlund Bulletin from a paperboy next to her. She quickly read through it.

Suddenly, her eyes froze because of the news article on the third page.

“At 7:10 last night, there was a serious explosion in the apartment building at 1 Dharavi Street in East Borough. It’s suspected to be a result of a gas leak. The explosion happened at Unit #03-06. The tenant died on the spot, to the point of not leaving a complete corpse. At press time, this explosion resulted in three deaths and sixteen injured…”

1 Dharavi Street… Apartment #03-06… Isn't this… Isn't this the place Williams rents? He's dead? He died from a gas leak explosion? No, no! Absolutely impossible! He would never be so extravagant and use gas, even if there was an installation there! Did he end up like this because he had just accepted my commission? But Lanevus is a wanted criminal. If he discovers that someone was looking for him, all he should need to do is move. There's no need to kill people to keep it a secret. Doing so would instead expose problems…

The way this was done is too weird and radical, it's like it was done by a lunatic…

He's clearly just a swindler…

Poor Williams…

I-I will definitely avenge you!

I'll definitely find out the truth!

Xio looked sadly and gravely at the public carriage parked in front of her and didn't choose to board it.

She knew that it would be very dangerous to head to East Borough now.

She intended to go back at once and tell Fors to get her to move to a spare rental house. Then, she would head to East Borough in a disguise and ask someone familiar to gain a preliminary understanding of the reason and find traces of the killer's tracks.

Sigh, it's true that none of Miss Audrey's commissions are without danger… I thought that as long as I didn't stop someone who is already a wanted swindler and didn't stop him from escaping, he wouldn't retaliate in such a vicious manner… I was careless. I was the one who caused Williams's death… Well, that didn't exclude the possibility that he was also gathering information on other matters, thereby bringing about disaster… Xio closed her eyes and crossed the street to the waiting area on the other side.

†

At 10:14, after confirming the surface conditions of the Fourth Epoch structure, Klein and Miss Bodyguard, Sharron, arrived outside the building at 8 Williams Street.

Sharron had already vanished, and Millet Carter saw Detective Sherlock Moriarty in his grayish-blue worker's uniform and cap and his three taciturn assistants.

"It's convenient to explore like this," Klein explained.

Millet Carter's eyes swept across the three assistants who were obviously good at fighting and nodded in satisfaction.

"Your preparations were quicker than I expected. Is one of them a snake-repelling expert?"

"Yes, they're very good at repelling snakes." Klein didn't hesitate to give an affirmative answer.

How could a zombie be afraid of being bitten by snakes?

Chapter 279 - Extreme Joy Begets Sorrow

◆ ◆ ◆

In the dark underground structure, Klein walked around the hall with a raised lantern in his hand. He thoroughly checked to see if there were any other entrances. Of course, he didn’t dare enter the tunnel that led to the innermost room, and the newly gathered snakes were, once again, blown away by a biting cold wind.

After receiving confirmation, he took the initiative to retreat to the side of the gate, where he watched, along with the three zombies, as Sharron placed explosives at different locations.

“She looks very professional.” Klein sighed softly.

And without a doubt, the three zombies didn’t respond to his musings.

However, there was a reason for this. He kept using his spirituality to wrap Azik’s copper whistle so as to shield against its negative effects; otherwise, he would’ve encountered their abnormally passionate “response.”

He had no intention of bringing this ancient and exquisite copper whistle with him originally, but considering that he had to guard against the evil spirit’s manipulations, he could only sacrifice some of his spirituality.

Miss Bodyguard, no—Miss Sharron said that she’s a demolition expert, and from the looks of it, she really isn’t bragging…

Was she in this line of work in the past? Or does one of her Sequences in her Beyonder pathway make her skilled in this domain? According to the information I read back in the Nighthawks, a few candidates like Sequence 9 Criminal, Prisoner, Warrior, and Hunter, Sequence 8 Sheriff, and Sequence 7 Weapon Master and Knowledge Keeper. Heh, the latter has a nickname, Detective. It's part of the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom… As for the rest, I'm completely clueless.

I wonder which pathway Miss Sharron is. Nothing seems to match, and she even showed her ability to command the zombies…

While Klein's thoughts wandered and made all sorts of associations, Sharron finished setting up the explosives and, in passing, lit the fuse.

In passing? Lighting the fuse? Hey, hey, hey! Why didn't you give any warning? Only then did Klein jolt back to his senses and was startled. He quickly rushed out of the hall and entered the corridor outside.

As for the three zombies, they calmly followed behind him.

"It's very safe here." Sharron suddenly appeared and floated beside him.

Klein breathed a sigh of relief and asked, "Will dust fall from the tremors over here?"

"Yes," Sharron answered with a single word.

"That's good." As he spoke, Klein took another step back.

The hissing sound of the fuse burning reached his ears, making him feel slightly irritated.

It wasn't because he was afraid of the explosion that followed, but because he couldn't feel at ease.

"One," Sharron said suddenly.

"Huh?" Klein didn't understand what she meant.

Rumble!

The earth shook violently, and plumes of dust fell from above. Klein's ears buzzed, and for a moment he couldn't hear anything else.

If it wasn't for the fact that he was a Clown, he would've lost his balance and collapsed to the ground.

Cough! Cough! Cough! Having been distracted and caught unaware, he started to cough. He saw boulders and mud rapidly falling in front of him as they instantly blocked the entrance.

During the remaining tremors, Klein gripped the copper whistle given to him by Mr. Azik and observed its reaction.

Although he had divined beforehand that his expedition would be safe, he didn't dare to believe it completely, even if it was a revelation gained from above the gray fog since it involved the statues of the six orthodox gods. Therefore, he cautiously judged whether or not the evil spirit was freed with the help of Azik's copper whistle.

The copper whistle's surface was cold but mild, and it had no abnormal changes. Completely relieved, Klein looked at the zombies beside him and confirmed one thing from their eyes: his face was very dirty right now.

That's good. It's in line with how I'm going to explain this to Old Mister Millet Carter… I didn't waste my effort in changing into a different set of clothes… He walked to the entrance and confirmed that it was completely blocked.

Without causing too much of a commotion, it's true that only those from the Apprentice path and Beyonders like Miss Sharron can enter in the future. By doing so, she has ruled out many potential competitors. No wonder it was free… Klein looked at the boulders and dirt before sighing.

Of course, I can too. I have a condition similar to a spirit body! He silently added this sentence inwardly with a smile, but his expression didn’t change at all.

“Let’s call it a day.” With an exaggerated snap of his fingers, Klein led the three zombies back to the basement of the house. As for Sharron, she had already disappeared.

In the spacious basement, Millet Carter was nervously pacing back and forth, looking at the secret door from time to time.

As soon as he saw Detective Moriarty and his assistants exit, he let out a long breath and asked anxiously, “What happened inside?”

Klein deliberately panted and said, “That underground structure is too old, it hasn’t been repaired in a long time. We were driving the snakes away, but with just a little bit of movement, it collapsed. The whole area has collapsed, but luckily we were close to the door and managed to escape in time.”

“Holy Lord of Storms! That structure was that dangerous?” Millet Carter pounded his left breast.

“Yes, there are always only a few ancient buildings that can be preserved. The rest would’ve collapsed in the river of history,” Klein answered. “I’ll bring you in to confirm the situation.”

“Will there be more collapses?” Millet asked cautiously.

“No, this area is quite sturdy.” Klein deliberately patted the dust off his body and coughed twice. He then led his employer in and stopped at the entrance that was completely blocked. The walls near the hall had also collapsed, leaving behind only stones and dirt.

“You can use this area.” He pointed to the corridor area.

Millet was silent for a few seconds before he sighed.

“Thank goodness I didn’t hastily send someone in to explore but instead went to look for you, a professional. Otherwise, I would've had to bear the burden of the loss of several lives.

"Alright, this commission ends here. I'll pay you the rest of the reward."

As he spoke, Millet Carter took out his wallet, did a count, and was somewhat embarrassed to find that there were only about thirty pounds in cash.

"Fortunately, I still have other forms of money; otherwise, I'd have to go to the bank," Millet mumbled as he looked up at Klein. "Do you mind taking gold coins?"

"No, I don't mind any form of money." Klein smiled.

The gold pound of the Loen Kingdom could be in the form of gold coins unless they were of huge denominations. This was the guarantee of the denomination on paper money.

However, in the past hundred years after Emperor Roselle, the people of the Northern Continent had become more and more accustomed to paper money. There were even some Members of Parliament who wanted notes to replace copper pennies.

Gold, in the true sense of the word, already hardly ever circulated in the market. Only some of the old gentlemen would attach a fixed box on the other end of their pocket watch chains which contained some gold in case of accidents.

It was to give them peace of mind and was also a habit.

Millet nodded, and following the gold chain on his clothes, he pulled out a box that flickered with golden light from a certain pocket.

He opened the box, took out five gold coins, and handed them together with the notes he had previously counted to the detective.

Klein didn't hide his actions as he counted the money and suddenly flicked a gold coin and caught it coolly.

“Thank you for your generosity.” He glanced at the portrait that was facing up and smiled sincerely. Then he pressed his hand to his chest and bowed whilst facing Millet Carter.

Yes, if it were any other detective, even if they demolished the entrance and the passageway, they would definitely have nightmares upon returning. They would hear things at home, and their minds will turn weak. They would feel like they’re being watched all the time and experience other problems. That’s the corruption of the evil spirit’s aura. It will take a very long time before the effects disappear, but we’re different. Miss Sharron is like a ghost to begin with. As for me, I’ll be completely fine once I go above the gray fog. As for the three zombies, they aren’t even afraid of death, so what’s there to be afraid of? Klein lampooned while in a good mood as he bade Millet Cullen farewell and left his house.

Arriving on the street, without even informing him, the three zombies walked in another direction.

Miss Sharron is gone… She really didn’t collect any money for the zombies… Klein smiled as he raised his arm and waved at the departing backs of the three zombies.

Then, he went home and changed into his normal clothes and headed for the Quelaag Club to practice shooting.

After also settling his dinner there as a reward for the successful completion of his mission, Klein returned to Minsk Street in a public carriage.

The dark, gloomy environment was illuminated by gas lamps, and with his cane, he strolled leisurely along the street.

Suddenly, he had a premonition which wasn’t too good or bad.

What’s going on? When Klein looked up, he saw two police constables with a dog on a leash, apparently investigating the streets.

Investigation? An investigation with a police dog? Is this a result of the serial killings? The scene of the murder had the smell of cloves and gooseberries, so they included a police dog? Klein couldn't help but silently lampoon.

The history of dogs dated back as far as the Roselle period, but the numbers had always been small.

Considering that he had many things on him, and considering his earlier premonition, Klein decided to take a detour.

But at that moment, the two policemen saw him and signaled for him to stop.

The corner of Klein's mouth twitched as he waited in place with a smile on his face.

"Routine investigation." As they approached, one of the officers showed his identification documents.

"Alright…" Before Klein could finish his sentence, the police dog suddenly growled at him and barked endlessly.

Is it because of the smell of gunpowder on me? The smell of gunpowder from my afternoon practice? Klein instantly realized what was happening. He looked at the faces of the two officers who were now on alert. With a thought, he smiled and said, "It's this, I picked up a revolver along the way, along with an underarm holster and bullets. I was planning on handing them over to the police."

Slowly, he took out his revolver, raised his hands to his shoulders, and added with a serious smile, "Officers, I really am not bearing a gun illegally."

As one constable remained on high alert, the other constable received the revolver and said seriously, "You have to come back to the police station with us."

"Alright," Klein returned with a radiant smile. "But I have a request. Please inform my lawyer, Mr. Jurgen Cooper. I will only accept a body search with him around."

Chapter 280 - The First Step

◆ ◆ ◆

In a corner of East Borough.

A drunken Zeon faced the wall, pulled off his pants, and began watering the moss in comfort.

When he was done, someone suddenly patted his shoulder.

Zeon couldn’t help but shiver a few times. He picked up his pants and half turned to see a short boy in a canvas jacket and cap.

The “boy” raised his head, revealing a mild and delicate face despite looking dirty.

“Xio? Why are you dressed like that?” Zeon blurted out in surprise.

Xio put her index finger to her lips to indicate the need for silence.

Then, she suppressed her voice and said, “I’ll ask and you answer. Keep your voice down.”

Astonished by her awe-inspiring presence, Zeon could only nod.

“Which of the guys, that Williams knew, have died within the past two days?” Xio asked in a low voice.

Zeon used his alcohol-paralyzed brain to carefully think for a while and said, “Gavin! Gavin was found to have drowned in the Tussock River this morning!

“He probably fell into the river last night. The poor sod doesn’t know how to swim and likes to enjoy the wind by the river when he's drunk."

Xio's gaze suddenly became sharp. Without any hesitation, she asked, "Did Gavin accept Williams's request to look for the wanted criminal, Lanevus?"

"Of course, we all got this commission from Williams. Anyway, it's not like it's a big deal. All we have to do is show the portrait to everyone we know and keep an eye out for someone who looks like him. Oh, Williams, he said that if there's a clue, he'll treat me to three days of booze and meat! The poor fellow actually died in a gas explosion. That's why I refuse to have my landlord install a gas pipe! Uh… That was months ago. I can only afford a cheap motel now," Zeon droned on.

"What region is Gavin in charge of? Did he mention anything to you?" Xio looked sideways, pursed her lips, and stared straight at Zeon.

"H-he usually goes to the dock area near the East Balam Dock. He even met me yesterday evening and said that he went to the Workers Alliance Tavern there to spread the news of his search for Lanevus, and he also showed the portrait of Lanevus to everyone present." Zeon hiccuped.

There were many docks in Backlund, most of which were considered as the dock area and designated as "shipyards."

"And after that? Did Gavin say what he was going to do?" Xio asked again, frowning doubtfully.

"Of course, drinking! He planned to have a good drink and then find a place to sleep! Oh, the poor sod must've felt hot from drinking and wanted to take a bath in the river, but he forgot he couldn't swim, and it's almost winter!" Zeon sighed again.

This… Gavin didn't discover anything. He had gone to the Workers Alliance Tavern in East Balam Dock and distributed "leaflets" to search for Lanevus, but ended up meeting his demise. It even implicated

Williams… The murderer's reaction can no longer be described as extreme anymore. He's simply a lunatic…

If I were Lanevus, the easiest option would be to immediately move somewhere else and avoid being found. Unless—unless he's embroiled in something and cannot leave anytime soon… But I wasn't the only one looking for him. There are also many bounty hunters. He may kill Williams, but can he kill that many people? If he had the ability, he would kill off everyone who spread wanted posters in Sivellaus Yard!

Xio was completely befuddled by the entire matter, just like how she found Williams's death was impossible.

In the end, she decided to report the problem to Miss Audrey first, and then head to the Workers Alliance Tavern in East Balam in disguise. She wouldn't make any inquiries and only observe to see if there was anyone suspicious.

†

Cherwood Borough. Rice Police Station.

Once again, Klein found himself huddled on a backrest-equipped bench with thieves and drunkards.

How unlucky… To think that I would run into the police and fail to take a detour in time. It's all because of that damn serial killer! As Klein cursed that particular person, he thought about how to hide his charms and the herbal powder he couldn't explain away and dodge the body search that followed.

He had tried to put them in his black gloves, then find a chance to slip them into a hidden spot in the police station, only to retrieve them when he left.

Just then, his eyes lit up and he saw the young lawyer, Jurgen Cooper, with his hair neatly combed back. He was dressed like he was attending a banquet. Just as Cooper came over, he was accompanied by a police constable.

“You can leave after signing your name,” Jurgen said with his usual serious expression.

“Is that all?” Klein asked in surprise.

Jurgen nodded slightly.

“Yes, they know you’re a well-known detective.”

What kind of reason is this? Klein didn’t dare to ask further. He immediately got up and followed after Jurgen who was wearing a long black tweed coat. He signed his name at a leisurely pace before leaving.

The weather was different from the last time he was led out from the police station by Jurgen. There was no rain and only thick clouds obscuring the crimson moon and stars. The streets were illuminated by gas lamps that lined both sides of the streets.

“Thank you so much! I’ve troubled you once again!” Klein briskly walked forward and came to Jurgen’s side.

Jurgen turned his head to look at him and said to him without a smile, “There’s no need to thank me. This is my job.

“Two pounds.”

“…” Klein sized him up seriously and revealed a smile. “Okay.”

His wallet was bulging recently, and he produced two one-pound notes at once.

Without a trace of politeness, Jurgen received the payment and said, “If you’re willing to enter into a formal partnership, then every time you come to the police station, I’ll only charge you a pound. Of course, not for the cases that are serious. You have to understand that a large portion of the fees I charge will go to the office.”

It’s as if I would frequently be invited to the police station for some coffee in the future… Pui, they don’t even give coffee. There’s isn’t even a cup of water! Before Klein could answer, he heard Jurgen add.

“For a private detective, getting in and out of the police station is something that happens every once in a while. It’s an occupational hazard.

“Well, I know very well that every private detective has a problem with the illegal bearing of arms and the illegal trespassing in other people’s homes.”

“Your response this time was very good. The police couldn’t find enough evidence to prove that you were bearing a gun illegally, and the explanation for the gunpowder reaction on your body was quite sufficient. The name Quelaag Club was enough to convince them; otherwise, you most likely would’ve had to go to the magistrate’s court.

“So, you’re not a suspect, but a good citizen. A good citizen who picked up a gun and handed it in, so there was no need for a body search.”

Alright… But I lost a revolver and the corresponding bullets. That’s several pounds, and there’s also the lawyer’s fee. Klein squeezed out a smile.

“I understand. Lawyer Jurgen, let’s establish a formal partnership.”

The corner of Jurgen’s mouth twitched. With an extremely professional smile, he extended his hand and said, “I hope for a pleasant partnership.

“I sincerely hope that I don’t have to see you too often at the police station.”

That’s not something that’s up to me to decide… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh.

†

Back at 15 Minsk Street, Klein eased himself with a hot bath.

But at that moment, he once again heard illusory prayers coming from a woman.

Miss Justice? Is there a clue regarding Lanevus? Klein suddenly jumped out of the bathtub, quickly dried his body, put on his clothes, and went above the gray fog.

Staring at the constantly expanding and shrinking crimson star, he extended his spirituality and chose to listen.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…

"Honorable Mr. Fool, there's been a problem with the investigation of Lanevus…"

Justice, who was wearing a white gown for an unknown reason, recounted the explosion that happened on Dharavi Street in East Borough, as well as Gavin's drowning.

As a Telepathist, who had already gained some mastery, she didn't add her own guesses, lest it affect the judgment of Mr. Fool.

After listening carefully, Klein frowned, feeling that the killer's reaction was unimaginably extreme.

Unlike Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos, Lanevus, as a swindler, would immediately move if he discovered anything was amiss. That should be his professional instinct. There's no reason to follow the clues in reverse and kill those who are seeking him.

According to this standard, 80% of East Borough's bounty hunters would die. This would cause a sensation and cause the case to be taken over by the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind!

Hmm… Has the benefits Lanevus gained, from the ritual of praying to the True Creator to send his son down, left him mad? This is very consistent with the style of the True Creator… However, the problem lies with the fact that it would be difficult for a lunatic to hide himself… Apart from the potential… Klein fell into deep thought and was in no hurry to respond to Miss Justice.

He had read the newspapers and known about the explosion, so he used dream divination to recall the details.

Then he wrote a new divination statement:

"Clues to the explosion in Dharavi Street."

As he recited it silently, he leaned back in his chair and entered a dream. He saw a three-story, grayish-blue apartment.

On the third floor of the apartment, a room had lost its windows and half the wall had been destroyed. It was filled with signs of an explosion.

The scene quickly shattered. Klein woke up from his reverie as he tapped the edge of the table and thought to himself.

The clues are at the scene of the crime?

…This revelation can also mean that the murderer is still watching the crime scene and wants to finish off the person who comes to investigate the matter.

Yes… This will give him a chance to find the person who recently issued the bounty for Lanevus.

I'll visit the crime scene in disguise and see if I can find the killer. Even if he isn't Lanevus, he must surely be connected to Lanevus.

But he must've hidden himself very well. How can I find him without attracting his attention?

A thought flashed as Klein's eyes was cast onto the All-Black Eye on the long bronze table. This was a Beyonder characteristic left behind by the

Marionettist Rosago.

In the real world, I can't use this item to manipulate those strange threads because of the residual mental corruption from the True Creator. There will be irreversible harm after interacting with it for a certain amount of time. However, if it was used temporarily, I can use the threads to find a hidden person. That's something acceptable. It's just like how I used it to determine if Miss Bodyguard had left previously… Klein narrowed his eyes, removed his spirit pendulum, and divined if his trip would be dangerous.

The answer was positive, but the amplitude and frequency of the spinning weren't excessive.

That's acceptable… Klein was silent for a few seconds before returning to the real world.

Then, by summoning himself, he placed the All-Black Eye into an iron cigar case and brought it back to his bedroom.

After changing his clothes, sticking his beard on, and getting ready, Klein came before the mirror and examined himself.

The faint scholarly vibe that he had was completely concealed by the beard on his face, and his brown eyes seemed to be like an ancient pool which hid and sealed something within.

Compared to when he was in Tingen City, Klein almost didn't recognize himself.

One by one, he stretched out his fingers and clenched them into a fist. Looking at the mirror, he said in a low and hoarse voice, "Captain, this is the first step to avenging both you and me."

Before he finished his sentence, he saw himself grinning in the mirror, a brilliant smile on his face.

Chapter 281 - Clue

◆◆◆

In the suburbs west of North Borough, in a soon-to-be-abandoned three-story house.

It originally belonged to the Backlund Medical School, but the latter's main campus had now moved to a better and more suitable location, leaving behind only a small number of teaching staff and students who were left "guarding" the area after failing to graduate.

Audrey was wearing a white gown and white mask. Her smooth blonde hair was also coiled up and stuffed under a cool-colored surgical cap.

She darted her eyes to the side and looked at Fors Wall who was dressed in the same way. She always felt that Fors had a special temperament that seemed to make her more suited to such attires than herself.

Eh… It's the kind of temperament that allows her to pick up a scalpel and cut open a patient's stomach at any moment… Audrey didn't say anything. She followed half a step behind Fors as they entered the classroom in front of them.

She was startled by the information she had received from Fors because Mr. Fool had said it was a simple task.

Considering that the simplicity of said task might be from Mr. Fool's point of view, Audrey took advantage of the moment when she was alone, changing into a disguise, to recite his honorific name and silently pray, so as to report everything that had exactly happened.

However, she had yet to receive a response.

After passing through the door and entering a room, Audrey instinctively looked around and found that this wasn't an ordinary classroom. There were actually four skeletal specimens and four coffins made of glass. The coffins were filled with pale naked corpses that were soaked in preserving agents.

At the very top of the classroom, there was a transparent glass pillar that was also filled with a liquid. Floating inside was a male corpse that wore a black scholarly robe.

The corpse's clothes stuck tightly to its body, giving off an extremely heavy feeling. He didn't relax and simply floated upright in the middle.

It's as if he had died by drowning instead of being placed in there after his death… Audrey made a preliminary judgment based on her attitude as a Spectator.

In addition, she saw a number of men in white coats, white masks, and surgical caps sitting around the long tables in the room. None of them said a word, just like the bodies and bones around them.

Looking out at the crimson moon which had finally peeked out of the gloomy darkness, Audrey turned her head back to look at the scene inside the classroom. For a moment, she couldn't help but shudder as this place instilled an instinctive fear.

But at the same time, she felt excited and agitated.

This is what the life of a Beyonder should be… Audrey silently muttered to herself as she followed Fors to a corner before sitting down.

After waiting for a while, the floating black-clothed male corpse inside the upright glass pillar at the front of the classroom suddenly opened his eyes. His voice transmitted through the layers of obstructions.

"Let's begin."

†

East Borough, Dharavi Street.

In his dusty grayish-blue worker uniform and cap, he walked along the dark streets that only had a few gas lamps that were still working.

There was candlelight shining down from the various apartments on both sides of the street. This was combined with the crimson moonlight that passed through the clouds with great difficulty, and they barely outlined the silhouettes of the pedestrians.

Klein encountered people with old, tattered clothes, their faces numb with despair. They were the homeless who had been chased away by the police.

They had no place to sleep, so they wandered aimlessly through the streets. Occasionally, they would find some inconspicuous corner or park bench to rest at for a while, but they were soon chased away again.

In the cold and dark night, Klein felt that they were more like zombies than the zombies he had seen, and the entire East Borough was more like an abyss than the legendary abyss.

He hurriedly took a quick breath which hurt his throat, causing him to cough involuntarily. He quickly gathered his thoughts and looked through the corner of his eyes at the apartment on the corner of the street. It had obviously suffered from an explosion and hadn’t been repaired yet.

The best place to monitor the crime scene is the apartment across the street. The third and fourth story and the roof all meet these requirements… Klein analyzed the situation with the knowledge he had learned as a Nighthawk.

Throughout the whole process, he didn’t slow down his pace to avoid arousing suspicion.

At the end of the street, Klein smoothly crossed the apartment building numbered 1 and entered the building across the street from the crime scene.

The one-bedroom apartment he had rented in East Borough was similar to this apartment, and he had also lived in an apartment of slightly higher class with his brother Benson and sister Melissa in Tingen City for quite a long time. It was Klein's personal experience, but it also came from the memory fragments of the original Klein.

As his thoughts raced, Klein lowered his cap, lowered his head, and without rushing, he walked up the creaking stairs to the third floor.

Due to his unlucky encounter in the evening, he no longer had a revolver, so all he could do was stick one hand into his pocket and hold a few tarot cards in between his fingers.

There was no light other than the faint moonlight in the corridor of the third floor. Klein was in no hurry to move forward, so he carefully observed the layout.

The spot directly across the crime scene is on the left. The one with the best view for surveillance should be the third room from here… Klein began to walk slowly and carefully.

After walking past two rooms, he also inserted his right hand into his pocket and gently opened the iron cigar case.

After a split-second, his fingers touched the All-Black Eye, and the murmurs resounded in his ears as they attempted to tear his mind apart.

At the same time, with the help of this corrupted item, Klein saw many strange black lines.

These thin lines floated in the air, and although they were intertwined and entangled a little, he could still distinguish who they belonged to if he traced them back to the source.

The corresponding figures were reflected in Klein's soon-to-be-cooked brain. There were men, women, and children sleeping in the bunk beds, and several tenants lying in bed on the floor.

Other than that, there were no other special spots, nor were there any hidden figures.

The illusion in front of him and the auditory hallucination in his ears slowly improved as Klein quickly retracted his hand from the All-Black Eye.

He endured the pain as he continued to move forward. Once he felt some relief, he would immediately observe the other room.

Unfortunately, his efforts of "searching" the entire apartment to see if there were any places that allowed the observation of the crime scene was in vain.

Phew. Phew… Klein cowered in a corner of a balcony, his hands were on his knees as he panted heavily.

Tears streamed from the corners of his eyes, and from time to time, his nose would run as if he had fallen sick.

This was the result of his repeated contact with the All-Black Eye within a short period of time. Even with Klein's resistance in this area, he wasn't completely immune to it.

The only thing that satisfied him was that it only agitated him and didn't corrupt him. Otherwise, he would've given up long ago and wouldn't have dared to try again. That would've led directly to devolving into madness.

After resting for a while, Klein finally calmed down and switched to a different apartment that didn't have the same view as this one, but it was still for naught.

Did I interpret it wrong? The clues are at the scene of the crime? When

Klein returned to the street, he looked suspiciously out of the corner of his eye at the apartment with traces of an explosion.

With the mindset of just giving it a try, he put his hand back into his pocket, pushed the metal cigar case open, and stuck his hand inside.

He wanted to see if anyone was hiding in the apartment where the crime scene was located.

With a hum, Klein's head suddenly felt like it was being smashed as his body wobbled a little.

Like a drunkard, he staggered forward and looked at the apartment which had signs of an explosion.

As he was too far away, he couldn't "clearly see" the black lines, nor could he trace the source of the black lines. He could only barely distinguish where the black lines had gathered, and this indicated that there was someone present.

No, no, no… Klein quickly swept the area and made a rough judgment.

Suddenly, he noticed a black line floating out from the crime scene on the third floor which merged into the air!

This… Klein's pupils shrank, and he made a confirmation before quickly withdrawing his hands so as to stop being in contact with the All-Black Eye.

There's someone in the destroyed room!

That murderer is actually crazy enough to wait for investigators to come to the crime scene?

Isn't he afraid that official Beyonders will take over the case?

I made a wrong judgment and failed to find him because I shared a different sense of logic from that of a lunatic…

Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he slowly exhaled and pretended that nothing had happened whilst he walked in a circle until he reached the entrance of the apartment building.

By then, all the negative effects he had suffered from the All-Black Eye had been quelled.

Controlling his facial expression and body language, Klein headed up to the third floor as if he were going home, his footsteps quick and heavy with fatigue.

In the darkness of the corridor, he caught sight of the doorless room which had half its walls collapsed. Then, he "casually" headed for the public bathroom.

As he neared the room, his hand, which had been in his pocket, touched the All-Black Eye.

Again, the mind-wrecking murmurs and the blurred hallucinations assaulted him. Through the corners of his eyes, Klein saw a black, illusory thread spread out from the crime scene.

As he traced the source, he found a man who had completely merged into the shadows. His aura was the same color.

The man was extremely tall, almost two meters in height. The corners of his mouth drooped slightly, making him appear rather eccentric.

His cold eyes were like those of a wild beast's, possessing a ferocity that couldn't be hidden.

It's not Lanevus… Klein withdrew his fingers, relaxed his body, and avoided the likelihood of staring. He entered the public bathroom at the end of the corridor without stopping. Nor did he alarm the man.

The public bathroom and the crime scene weren't on the same side. He wiped off his cold sweat, and after quelling the negative effects, he directly jumped out the window, climbing down skillfully before leaving with brisk steps. He didn't stay a moment longer.

He knew that in a few minutes the man would be alerted to the absence of someone who had gone to the bathroom, so he had to get as far away from the street as possible.

It wasn't that Klein didn't want to walk back the way he came from, but if he didn't know which room he could go to, it would similarly expose him.

The Clown quickly ran and circled around a huge area before entering that one-bedroom apartment he had rented in East Borough. He then went above the gray fog to confirm that there was no danger of him being caught.

That fellow must have had some sort of deep connection with Lanevus… After a moment's thought, Klein conjured a portrait of the man from earlier, sending his thoughts to the crimson star that represented Miss Justice.

Soon after, he said solemnly in a tone of authority, "This is a clue."

Chapter 282 - This is East Borough

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the soon-to-be abandoned medical school building, Audrey suddenly felt adrift as she took a detour to leave the gathering which had just ended. She saw the familiar thick gray fog and the blurry figure situated in the center high above.

“This is a clue.”

Accompanying Mr. Fool’s solemn voice were scenes that looked like a film reel, a colored one at that!

A man who wasn’t particularly muscular but was nearly two meters tall in height was wearing a black priest robe and standing in the shadows. His light yellow hair was slightly curled, and his dark brown eyes were cold with malice. The corners of his mouth drooped slightly, making him look like a ferocious wolf.

A clue? A clue to the bombing on East Borough’s Dharavi Street and Gavin’s drowning? Is this the murderer? Audrey stared blankly for a moment before immediately coming to an understanding.

Mr. Fool already has a clue… He’s really impressive—No, he’s omnipotent. After sighing to herself, she turned to look at Fors.

As soon as Fors removed her mask and surgical cap and got into the carriage, she noticed Miss Audrey’s slightly strange gaze. She immediately asked in puzzlement, “Is there something on my face?”

“Nope.” Audrey looked away and sat down before removing her disguise.

Fors recalled the gathering and asked curiously, “Miss Audrey, why didn’t you announce that you were purchasing the Spectator formula? You could’ve established contact with the Psychology Alchemists that way.”

She remembered that the generous Miss Audrey had remained silent most of the time and only sold some spirituality-infused materials and responded to buying other varieties accordingly.

Audrey smiled faintly and said, “This is my first gathering in this circle. I think it’s more important to observe and wait.

“I’m looking forward to the potion formula and even more so, the mystical items, but I told myself that there’s no rush. It would be a better strategy to familiarize myself before taking action.”

This is also a ‘professional habit’ of the Spectator pathway. Moreover, there were no Beyonder ingredients like Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid or Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals which Mr. World wishes to obtain… Audrey silently added.

Looking at the girl who wasn’t eighteen yet, Fors suddenly felt that she was more mature than ever before.

She suddenly laughed at herself and said, “If I had been like you back then, I wouldn’t have wasted such a precious opportunity.”

Audrey gave a reserved smile as a response before saying, “I’ll ask some special friends in the morning if they have any leads on the Dharavi Street bombing. Wait for the information at the same place with Xio.”

“Alright.” Fors nodded without any doubts.

†

Instead of returning to Minsk Street, Klein slept in the one-bedroom apartment in East Borough's Black Palm Street.

He was afraid that the suspected murderer in the black priest robe had accomplices who could be searching the streets for him.

Although the probability of meeting him wasn't high, and he had disguised himself ahead of time so that it was unlikely he could be recognized, his divination indicated that there was a possibility. To be cautious, Klein made do and decided to spend the night at East Borough.

At dawn, he changed into another dark blue worker's uniform, put on a light brown cap, and left the room. He went down the stairs and into the street.

At that moment, the white fog with a yellowish tint shrouded the surroundings. There were blurry figures of people passing by, and the cold morning air was soaking into their clothes.

Klein lowered his head and hurried along, just like the people around him who had gotten up early for work.

While walking, he saw a man in his forties or fifties ahead of him. He wore a thick jacket and had gray hair around his temples. He was pacing in place and fumbling for a cigarette while shivering. Finally, he took out a box of empty matches in his clothes' inner pocket.

Just as he opened the matchbox, his right hand quivered, and the crumpled cigarette fell to the ground and rolled in front of Klein.

Klein stopped, picked it up, and handed it to him.

"Thank you, thank you! I can't live without this old friend. There's only a few left," the man thanked him sincerely and accepted the cigarette.

His face was pale, and he appeared to not have shaved for quite a while. Exhaustion was expressed without reserve from the corner of his eyes as he lamented, "I haven't slept for another night, I don't know how long I can last. I hope the Lord will bless me so that I can enter the workhouse today."

He's a homeless person who has been chased away. Klein casually asked, "Why doesn't the king and ministers allow all of you to sleep in the park?"

"Who knows? But to sleep in this kind of weather outside, it's very likely that you'll never wake up again. It's still better in the day, since you can find a warmer place. Sigh, but this will make us lack the time or strength to look for jobs." The man lit a cigarette and sucked at it delightfully.

As though he had some of his strength restored, and he walked beside Klein. It was uncertain if his destination was at the end of the fog or somewhere deep into the fog.

Klein had no intention of exchanging pleasantries and was about to speed away from him when he saw the man, who had spoken clearly, bend down and pick up a dark object from the ground.

It looked like an apple core that had been nibbled clean.

The man swallowed his saliva before stuffing the dirt-covered fruit core into his mouth. He chewed it until it was mashed up before swallowing it down with great familiarity. Nothing was left.

Looking at Klein's surprised eyes, he wiped his mouth, shrugged his shoulders, and smiled bitterly.

"I haven't eaten in almost three days."

This sentence struck Klein's heart, causing him to feel indescribably moved.

He silently sighed and said with a smile, "Sorry, I didn't introduce myself just now. I'm a reporter, and I'm currently writing about homeless people. Can I interview you? Let's go to the café up front."

The man froze for a moment before he smiled and said, “No problem, it’s much warmer inside than on the streets.

“If you can stay a little bit longer after the interview and let me sleep inside for half an hour… No, fifteen minutes! That would be even better.”

Klein turned agape, momentarily at a loss for words. He just silently led his “interviewee” into the budget café at the end of the street.

The tables and chairs in the coffee shop were quite greasy. Due to the walls and windows inside, there were quite a few guests. The average temperature was indeed much higher than the streets.

The man scratched his throat, concealing his Adam’s apple that was squirming from the fragrance.

Klein motioned for him to sit down and went to order two large cups of tea, a plate of lamb stewed with young peas, two loaves of bread, two pieces of toast, a serving of low-quality butter, and a serving of artificial cream for a total of 17.5 pence.

“Have some food to eat. We’ll have the interview after you eat your fill.” Once the food was ready, Klein carried them back to their table.

“This is for me?” the man asked with anticipation and surprise.

“Except for a piece of toast and a cup of tea, the rest is yours.” Klein smiled in response.

The man wiped his eyes and said with a slightly choked voice, “…Y-you truly are a kind-hearted person.”

“After starving for so long, make sure not to eat too quickly,” Klein warned.

“I know, I had an old buddy who died just like that.” The middle-aged man worked hard at eating at a slower pace, occasionally lifting his cup of tea and gulping it down.

Klein easily finished the toast and watched quietly, waiting for the man to finish his meal.

“Phew, I haven’t eaten until I was this full in three months, no—half a year. In the workhouse, the food they give is just enough.” After a while, the man put down his spoon, leaving empty plates in front of him.

Pretending to be a journalist, Klein asked casually, “How did you become a tramp?”

“It was bad luck, I was originally a worker leading quite a good life. I had a wife, two cute children, a boy and a girl, but a few years ago, an infectious disease took them away, and I also stayed in the hospital for a long period of time, losing my job, my wealth, and my family in the process. From then on, I often couldn’t find a job, and I didn’t have any money to rent a house or buy food. All I could do was wander on the different streets and in certain parks. This made me very weak, making it harder for me to find a job…” the man spoke with a hint of nostalgia and sadness in his numbness.

He took a sip of his tea, sighed, and spoke again.

“I can only wait for an opportunity to enter the workhouse, but as you know, every workhouse only takes in a limited number of people. With good luck, and if I queue up in time, I can spend a few days in peace, recover my strength a little, and then find a temporary job. Yea, temporary. Soon, I’ll be jobless again and the previous process will be repeated. I have no idea how much longer I can last like that.

“I should’ve been a good worker.”

Klein thought for a moment and asked, “How many cigarettes do you have left?”

“Not many left.” The middle-aged man smiled bitterly. “This is the last of my assets, the only thing I have left after I was chased out by the landlord. Heh, one can't bring them into the workhouses, but I'll secretly hide them in the seams of my clothes. I'll only take one out to smoke during my worst hardships so that I can have some hope. I don't know how long I can last, but let me tell you, I was a good worker back then."

Klein wasn't a professional journalist and was momentarily at a loss on what to ask.

He turned his head to look out the window and saw faces with obvious hunger plastered across them.

Some of them were relatively sober and they belonged to the residents of East Borough. Some of them wore looks of numbness and exhaustion, nothing like that of humans. They were tramps.

There is no obvious gap between the two, the former can easily become the latter. For example, the gentleman in front of me… When Klein looked back, he discovered that the man had fallen asleep; his body curled up on a chair.

After a few minutes of silence, Klein went to pat the man awake and gave him a handful of copper pennies.

"This is the payment for the interview."

"Okay, okay, thank you, thank you!" The man didn't realize what was happening, and when Klein reached the door, he raised his voice and said, "I'll go to a budget motel and get a bath, get a good night's sleep, and then get a job."

†

At noon, Klein attended a party at the Sammers. There were ten guests.

There was apple juice with steak, roast chicken, fried fish, sausage, cream soup, lots of delicacies, two bottles of champagne, and a bottle of red wine.

On his way back from the bathroom, he met Mrs. Stelyn Sammer. He thanked her sincerely, “It was a sumptuous lunch. Truly delightful. Thank you for your hospitality.”

“It cost a total of 4 pounds and 8 soli. The most expensive were the three bottles of wine, but they were all part of Luke’s collection. He has a liquor cabinet.” The pretty Mrs. Stelyn smiled in response.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, she said, “You earned ten pounds from Mary’s matter alone, and if you can keep up the good fortune, you’ll soon be able to have a banquet like this. For people of our class, you have to invite friends once a month and also be invited by friends.”

Klein, who was already used to her mannerisms, obliged politely, “Well, I’ll have to wait till my income settles at four hundred pounds a year before I can be like you.”

Stelyn immediately raised her chin slightly and tried hard to make her smile faint.

“430 pounds, it must be 430 pounds.”

†

Dock area, East Balam Dock, Workers Alliance Tavern.

Xio wore boots that gave her height a huge boost and stuck on a thick beard, making herself look like a short man.

She tried to recall the portrait from Miss Audrey, trying to engrave in her mind the image of the man who might have been the murderer.

If Gavin had been killed by him, the murderer probably frequents this tavern… Xio ordered a glass of rye beer and a lunch set before huddling in a corner and eating slowly. From time to time, she would look around furtively in search of her target.

After a while, the tavern’s door was pushed open again, and Xio reflexively looked over.

With just one look, her pupils shrank so thin that they resembled needles as she nearly became petrified.

The patron who entered was nearly two meters tall!

Chapter 283 - Dock Union

Xio has been in the bounty hunter business for a very long time. Many things were done on instinct without any thought.

When she saw the patron who entered was nearly two meters tall, she instinctively lowered her head and continued to eat her pork sausage and French fries as if nothing had happened.

Although the food entered her mouth, Xio didn’t taste it at all. She endured dozens of painful seconds before she slowly raised her head and pretended to look around casually.

Soon, she saw that the patron who had just entered was sitting in front of the bar counter, waiting for his booze and lunch.

Soft, curly pale yellow hair, dark brown beast-like eyes, a slightly drooping mouth, an aura of solitude and malevolence… Little by little, the details came into Xio’s eyes, overlapping with the image in her head.

It’s him!

It’s the suspected murderer!

The man who killed Williams!

Xio lowered her head again and slowly stuffed the rest of the food into her mouth.

After a few minutes, she set the tray down on the bar, along with the glass, and left the Workers Alliance Tavern without looking back.

Due to her high boots, they effectively masked the most obvious feature of her body.

Outside, Xio slowed her pace and found a secluded spot to observe the people entering and exiting the tavern.

After waiting for a while, she finally found an acquaintance, a technician named Burton, who lived in East Borough and worked at the East Balam Dock.

The young man liked to treat himself to a cup of shoddy rye beer at noon or in the afternoon, and his salary only allowed him to afford such a beer, and he couldn't drink it every day.

Xio nimbly darted over and patted Burton on the shoulder. She lowered her voice and said, "It's me, Xio."

"Xio?" Burton looked up and down at the short man and nearly failed to recognize him as the famous Arbiter Xio Derecha of the streets of East Borough.

"I have something to ask you." Xio pointed to a nearby corner.

Burton followed in puzzlement, only to come to a realization when he arrived in a secluded corner.

"Are you doing a bounty mission?"

He had heard that Xio was also a bounty hunter.

"Yes." Xio nodded perfunctorily, fished out five pennies, and tossed them around. "Do you know that tall man at the tavern?"

"You mean the one that's this tall, has pale yellow hair, and wears a fierce look?" Burton gestured.

"Yes." Xio took out the folded portrait and unfolded it. "You have to be sure."

“That’s him. He’s been coming to this tavern often for the past two to three months. I’ve never seen him before that. He’s very fierce, completely unreasonable, and he’s good at fighting. It’s best that you don’t provoke him.” Burton glanced at the portrait carefully and gave some sincere advice.

Yeah, when I saw that person just now, it was just like my encounter with a ferocious beast when I was young. I felt that I was in danger and wasn’t a match for him, so I had to immediately avoid him… Xio secretly exhaled and asked, “Do you know anyone he’s in close contact with?”

“No idea. He’s not very sociable and he seldom speaks. We don’t even know what his name is. We have given him a nickname, ‘Giant.’” Burton curled his lips and shook his head.

Xio thought for a while before asking again, “Where else have you met him, besides the tavern?

“You can ask your friends the same question. Remember, it has to be a trusted friend.”

Burton recalled and said, “When I went to the Dock Union to do some work, uh—the East Balam Dock’s Dock Union, I would occasionally see him appear there. Xio, why aren’t you a member of the union? You’re so just, and those guys not only charge us 1.5 soli a week. But when the other docks go on strike, they’ll pay us half our salary just because we have to support our families!

“Lord, let’s just forget about it. In order to live a good life, we must help each other. However, once they organize a strike, they’ll come to an agreement with the lawyers sent by those rich people. Our situation doesn’t improve at all!”

“Stop, stop.” Xio lowered her right palm and said, “Apart from that, have you seen ‘Giant’ anywhere else?”

“No, my friends probably haven’t either. After all, we often discuss him in private,” Burton answered in a firm tone.

Xio didn’t say anything more and gave him five copper pennies.

“Drinks on me.”

“Don’t tell anyone about what I just asked. It’ll be very dangerous.”

Before she finished her sentence, she had already turned around the corner and headed towards the Dock Union located at East Balam Dock.

About ten minutes later, Xio saw the two-story yellow building.

She wore her canvas coat inverted and exposed the patches beneath, instantly transforming herself from a short worker to a tramp.

Xio looked at the homeless people huddled around the corner, pinched her nose, and went over to sit down beside them. She glanced at the Dock Union on the opposite side of the street where people were coming in and out.

As the minutes passed, Xio endured the cold and the harsh environment while tenaciously observing the situation around the Dock Union and the surrounding area.

She clearly remembered Williams’s insistence on drinking, and she also remembered how she felt when she saw the newspaper that fateful day.

These feelings made her even more patient than usual.

At that moment, about eight people came out of the Dock Union, and they headed for the café across the street to have lunch in groups.

Xio narrowed her eyes and carefully scanned every passer-by to confirm their appearance.

There’s no one suspicious… Xio was about to look away and wait for the next batch of people when the door to the coffee shop creaked and was pulled open as the heat from within rushed out. A man couldn't help but take off his gold-rimmed glasses and wipe away the fog with his sleeves.

Xio gave him a casual glance, and her gaze suddenly froze.

Those eyes!

That mouth!

It always had that taunting smile!

Lanevus? Xio jerked her head back, not daring to look again.

The man from before had bronze skin and short hair, and his face was craggy. He was very different from the portraits, except that his eyes and mouth gave her a familiar feeling.

It was the feeling of taunting everyone!

Is it Lanevus? Can it be Lanevus? Xio bowed her head and stared at the flagstones on the street.

†

At the Sammers.

After a sumptuous lunch, the hosts and guests gathered in the activity room to chat, and they agreed to play Texas together.

Interesting rumors and humorous stories echoed intermittently as Klein maintained his smile, interjecting from time to time. He also saw the Sammer family's two children entering and exiting energetically.

And next to him, Jurgen Cooper wore his usual serious expression, occasionally providing legal advice for the discussion.

Klein smiled, turned his body slightly, and asked in a low voice, "Are you bored?"

"No, their topics are very interesting." Jurgen nodded seriously.

Klein was stunned and blurted a question, "Then why don't you laugh?"

Jurgen frowned slightly and looked at him in puzzlement.

"Why are you smiling?"

"…" Klein's mouth twitched, not knowing how to respond.

He was about to make a joke about how much Jurgen was like his cat Brody, forever so serious, when suddenly he heard a series of ethereal pleas.

Female… Miss Justice has found useful information, so quickly, based on the clue I gave her? Klein stood up and slightly bowed.

"I need to use the bathroom."

In the bathroom, Klein locked the door, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

His judgment was very accurate, as the plea came from Miss Justice.

Klein suddenly felt nervous as he emanated his spirituality in anticipation and seriousness to listen to her words.

After the usual honorific name, Justice recounted truthfully, "They discovered the clue you provided at the Workers Alliance Tavern in the pier district's East Balam Dock. The person's nickname is 'Giant.'

"After tailing the Giant and figuring his in and outs, they discovered a person suspected to be Lanevus at the East Balam Dock's Dock Union.

"Temporarily, they don't dare to approach Lanevus because 'Giant' is very powerful and dangerous. They can only continue waiting for an opportunity.

"In the meantime, they've also asked if they could notify the police and collect the bounty after confirming that it's Lanevus."

Lanevus has a very powerful and dangerous helper. Does he have any other helpers? Is there a faction backing him? Why did he kill so many people? What was he planning to do by being in the Dock Union? A series of questions flashed through Klein's mind, making him feel that things were much more complicated than he had expected.

As for the last request, his answer was undoubtedly—yes. He would even suggest to the other party that they should inform the church of the Evernight Goddess directly because there was a possibility of the police leaking the information.

Getting the Nighthawks of the Church of the Goddess to kill Lanevus is also a form of revenge! Klein silently murmured to himself. He had a strong urge to immediately confirm that the man was Lanevus, lest things changed because he waited too long.

He took a deep breath, suppressed his emotions, and undid the spirit pendulum around his wrist on his sleeve.

"There is danger going to the Dock Union for confirmation."

Closing his eyes and chanting seven times, Klein opened his eyes and looked at the topaz pendant. He discovered that it was motionless, completely still.

The divination failed? Klein immediately frowned.

He changed the sentence he used, changed the divination method, but they all resulted in a failure.

After some careful thought, he thought of three reasons. First, there wasn't enough information to make a divination. Second, Lanevus wasn't at the Dock Union, making it difficult for the divination to succeed. And, third, Lanevus was just like Ince Zangwill who had items that could shield against divination.

An item to shield against divination… A benefit he obtained from that god's spawn ritual? A little godhood of the True Creator? Klein thought for a few seconds, then decided that no matter what, he had to make a trip to the Dock Union.

There were certain things that needed to be done even though danger was a certainty!

If the two ladies were able to observe secretly without being seen, so can I… I only need to meet with Lanevus once and I can confirm it with divination…

Of course, I can't be rash. I have to prepare in advance. For example, I have to send the All-Black Eye above the gray fog and not carry it with me. That's to prevent the spiritual corruption of the True Creator from resonating with "His" godhood. Another example, I should elevate my height so that the "Giant" wouldn't be able to recognize me as the "passer-by" from last night from my figure. For example, I should find a suitable and sufficient reason to not arouse suspicion. Yes, I can pretend to be a reporter and head there for an interview. I'll visit Mike Joseph later and borrow his false reporter identification…

The corner of Klein's mouth slowly curled up as he blanketed his body with his spirituality before descending back into the real world.

Chapter 284 - Instinctive Trembling

◆ ◆ ◆

Three in the afternoon at the Dock Union in East Balam Dock.

Klein wore a thick sweater, a tan jacket, and a simple cap that brought him closer to the usual investigative reporters in style rather than the ones who attended banquets and interviewed people of status from time to time. Such a costume had cost him an extra 1 pound 10 soli.

At that moment, he was wearing gold-rimmed glasses, and his hair was neatly combed back, gleaming with the luster of hair oil. His face no longer had a messy beard, so he could only plaster a deep-black stubble around his lips. His height was at least five centimeters taller than before. He was trying his best to look different from the worker from last night, making it impossible for anyone who wasn't particularly familiar with him to make any associations.

In the pockets of his clothes and trousers, there was no All-Black Eye, no charms or herbal essential oils. There was only a deck of tarot cards, a stack of notes, a fountain pen, a wallet, some change, a bunch of keys, and false reporter identification documents.

He didn't know the Lanevus's current condition, nor did he know where the powerful Beyonder lingering around him came from. Hence, out of precaution, he didn't bring any suspicious items.

Looking at the two-story building ahead of him, Klein crossed the street, pretending to not rely on the Clown's intuition to notice that several pairs of eyes were watching him.

He pushed open the door and saw that the Dock Union's layout was rather simple. There were no female receptionist or spacious lobbies. The stairs to the second floor were in the middle, flanked by office corridors, and the floors weren't lined with wooden planks, much less carpet. They were paved purely out of cement.

Klein turned his head to look at the man guarding by the door as he went over and said, "I'm a reporter from the Backlund Daily Tribune. I would like to interview the workers of your association and get to know your needs and desires."

The man was wearing a very patched jacket which even had dirty cotton lining exposed and a linen shirt underneath.

After hearing the word "reporter," he suddenly became vigilant and replied loudly, "No! We haven't organized a strike lately, no!"

"I think you've misunderstood me. I'm someone who sympathizes with you. I'm planning on doing a special report on what the union does to help the workers and the actual difficulties they encountered. Trust me." With the help of his Clown Beyonder powers, Klein made his eyes look abnormally sincere.

"Is that so… Go to Mr. Rand, our committee member in charge of publicity. Turn right, and it's the second office on the right," The man hesitated for a few seconds before replying.

"Thank you." Klein bowed with feigned relief, and he felt the gaze observing him from a dark corner of the room vanish.

He turned to his right and, with his back perspiring in cold sweat, knocked on the office door.

The door creaked open. A middle-aged man with sparse hair looked at him and asked, "May I know who you are?"

"Mr. Rand? I'm Reporter Statham from the Backlund Daily Tribune. This is my reporter identification documents. I'd like to make a report with unions as the theme to help you acquire more attention." Klein almost believed he was a journalist.

"That's me." The middle-aged man looked at the reporter's identification documents and said hesitatingly, clearly unwillingly, "It's hard for me to believe that you reporters are here to help us."

"I was born in East Borough, and I know how miserable the lives of the workers are. If you don't believe me, you can follow me the entire time and monitor my every question." Klein suddenly smiled and added, "A report with actual interview data would be better than nothing, far better than news that's written purely based on imagination. At least you can provide your views and hopefully guide things in the direction you want."

Rand touched his scalp and replied hesitantly, "Alright then…

"I'll follow you the entire time."

"Thank you!" Klein almost lost control of his emotions.

Afterward, under Rand's guidance, he entered one office after another, interviewing the members of the workers' association according to his prepared questions.

Right corridor, nothing. Left corridor, nothing… Klein calmly went up the wooden stairs to the second floor.

This time, Rand led him into the office directly opposite the staircase and introduced the people inside, "This is a reporter from the Backlund Daily Tribune, Mr. Statham.

"He wants to interview the lot of you, but I have to remind you that there are some questions which you have the right to refuse to answer."

Klein smiled, took two steps forward, and made a gesture to shake hands with each and every staff member in the room.

At that moment, he saw a slightly familiar figure.

Although the man’s skin had turned bronze, his ordinary round face had become angular, and his glasses had changed from a round frame to a gold-rimmed frame, Klein still found a trace of familiarity from his spirituality as a Seer.

Immediately afterward, his body trembled, and the smile on his face almost went out of control.

“I-I’m sorry. I suddenly have a stomachache. May I ask, where the washroom is?” Klein asked with an awkward smile, holding his stomach with the hand that didn’t hold a pen and paper.

Rand and the staff didn’t suspect anything. They all pointed to the door and said, “Go out, turn left. When you reach the end, you’ll see the sign.”

Klein smiled apologetically and walked out of the room, heading quickly for the washroom.

Inside, he selected the cubicle closest to the window, sat on the toilet, and locked the wooden door behind him.

He bent down, the corners of his mouth curving into a silent laugh. He laughed so hard he nearly couldn’t keep his body straight. A drop of sparkling liquid fell onto the ground from his laughter.

Klein had confirmed that it was Lanevus!

This wasn’t because of that small sense of familiarity, but because he felt another type of aura from the other party’s body, one that left an extremely deep impression on him!

This was also the main reason why he had nearly lost control on the spot.

The trembling of his body originated from his instinctive fear!

The collapse of his emotions came from the horror and sorrow deep within his memories!

That was, that was… That was the aura of the True Creator!

†

Klein washed his face and went on with the interview as if nothing had happened. Even while facing Lanevus, who had somehow changed so much, he continued to ask questions and record the answers.

After finishing all of this, he bade farewell to the workers' association and walked out of the dimly lit building.

Outside, the sky was cloudy and misty, as if the evening had come early.

The True Creator's aura can only come from "His" body or spawn, as well as things that extend from the two. For example, items bestowed by "Him," or "His" godhood… This corroborates with what Lanevus said to Hood Eugen. In addition, there's that tinge of familiarity. I didn't even need to go above the gray fog for divination to confirm that it's him… If it wasn't for me having already interacted with the True Creator a few times and coming close to his mental corruption, there's no way I could've recognized that aura to be "His" which didn't contain any strength and of "His" nature… Klein felt heavy emotions, but he appeared very relaxed.

He stood on the street and purposely organized the interview notes.

In the process, he caught a glimpse of a slightly familiar figure among the tramps across him.

Miss Xio? Klein instantly made a guess with what he knew.

He didn't stop, and he put away the notes before walking towards the tracked public carriage station.

At this moment, a horse carriage suddenly stopped in front of him.

"We meet again." Sitting in the carriage was a thin, elegant, middle-aged gentleman with white hair at his temples. He was the great detective who was helping the police investigation, Isengard Stanton.

As for Klein, he didn't look any different than usual. He was just a little taller and had changed into a new set of clothes.

"What a coincidence, I was just thinking about the last time I interviewed you," Klein answered deliberately.

Isengard suddenly understood and changed the subject with a smile.

"I'm here to investigate a case. The death of Siber has been eliminated and I'm in charge of it. Her death is very close to East Balam Dock."

"So it's indeed a copycat crime?" Klein feigned ignorance.

After exchanging a few pleasantries, he got into the tracked public carriage. Instead of going straight home, he made a transfer and headed to the Quelaag Club in Hillston.

In the Club's lounge, he quickly went above the gray fog to confirm that no one was following him.

Only at this step did Klein completely relax and feel some lingering fear.

The aura of the True Creator lingered in his mind like a nightmare, leaving the clothes on his back moist after they repeatedly dried.

To be sure, Klein conjured a yellowish-brown goatskin parchment and a dark red fountain pen before writing a divination statement he had already long thought of:

"The source of the inexplicable familiarity earlier."

Putting down his fountain pen and leaning back into his chair, he began to mumble as he entered the dream.

In that gray and illusory world, he saw a figure.

This figure had ordinary facial features. He wore round glasses, and he had a condescending and taunting smile from beginning to end. He was none other than Lanevus!

I've finally found you! Klein no longer used his Clown ability to control his facial expressions as he muttered to himself through clenched teeth.

Then, he sat up straight and prepared to answer Miss Justice's prayer.

Klein controlled his emotions and said in a deep but cold voice, "There's no need for confirmation.

"That is Lanevus.

"You can inform the Church of Evernight and tell them that Lanevus has the godhood of the Fallen Creator."

†

Audrey, who was watching her father train the hunting hounds with Susie, froze when she heard Mr. Fool's response.

Fallen Creator… Isn't that the True Creator? That swindler actually has the godhood of the True Creator? Th-this, such a simple mission actually involves the godhood of the True Creator!? As expected, I knew Mr. Fool had other deeper motives… He was targeting the True Creator. As expected of Mr. Fool! Many thoughts flashed through Audrey's mind.

Chapter 285 - Midnight Clock Tower

◆

Audrey, who had set up an urgent communication method with Xio and Fors, quickly passed on Mr. Fool's message to the two ladies through the huge golden retriever, Susie, claiming that the information she had received came via other sources.

In the corner of an old church, as Xio was thinking about how to confirm Lanevus's identity, or how she should create chaos and avenge Williams, she unfolded the ball of paper.

…There's no need to confirm. He's Lanevus? Xio's eyes widened as she quickly skimmed through the rest of the paper's content. The piece of paper clearly wrote:

"The only choice is to notify the Church of Evernight.

"Alert them that Lanevus has the godhood of the True Creator on him."

"Godhood? The True Creator's godhood?" Xio blurted out as she looked at the golden retriever in front of her in shock, only to realize that she was equally dumbfounded.

"What?" Fors was listening when she suddenly felt something was amiss. She hurriedly reached out for the piece of paper and scanned it.

After a moment, she curled her lips and said at a loss, "This… this must be a joke, right?

"How did we get involved in a matter that's tied to an evil god's godhood?"

This was meant to involve the capture of a cunning swindler worth only 200 pounds!

In response to Fors's question, Susie could only express the notion that she was only a dog and that she didn't know what was happening either with her innocent eyes.

Not expecting a dog to answer her questions, she turned her head to Xio and said, "I'm afraid Miss Audrey isn't as naive and innocent as we thought. She has many secrets.

"This might be a power struggle between a cult, the nobles and the Church.

"However, it's evident that she didn't know about the matter of godhood prior to this. She's also being used by someone. Hmm… That person could be her father, Earl Hall."

"What's fortunate is that this matter ends here. You don't need to take the risk anymore. After you get someone to make the report, you just need to wait to collect the bounty in peace."

Xio was startled and said, "That's true…

"Hopefully, those Nighthawks are able to avenge Williams. They're so strong, so they'll definitely be able to do it. Definitely…"

Before she finished speaking, she suddenly turned her head to the side and spoke as if she was talking to herself, "I'm still too weak.

"Too weak…"

Xio jerked her hand up, covering her mouth and nose.

†

I'm still too weak… If not for that, I would've chosen to take revenge myself, but right now I can only take a step back… Not to mention there's 'Giant' and those hidden helpers around Lanevus. With just his godhood, he isn't someone I can deal with… With the reaction speed of the Nighthawks, they'll likely take action tonight once they receive the report. The Backlund diocese is second only to the Church's headquarters. They have many Sealed Artifacts and many powerful Beyonders. There's no need to wait for any additional helpers… After completing his task of informing Audrey, Klein returned to the real world. He stuck on a beard, changed his hairstyle, and stared into the mirror for several minutes.

He felt anticipation and excitement, as well as depression and a sense of powerlessness.

Before the evening arrived, he left the Quelaag Club and returned to Minsk Street. On his way, he went to the grocery market and found a stall that was bustling with its great business. He bought several masks, including a clown's.

He had decided to watch the hunt for Lanevus tonight!

He wanted to see the other party pay the price for his madness with his own eyes!

Of course, with his strength, he could only watch from a distance and not even have the right to approach them.

By eleven o'clock, when many people were in their dreams, Klein changed into his grayish-blue worker's uniform and disguised himself as he had the night before. Then, he put on his cap, walked a few streets away, and took a rental carriage to the Backlund Bridge area.

Once there, he switched to walking and walked all the way to the East Balam Dock.

His interview yesterday included questions such as "where are you staying now" and "how's the environment like." Therefore, he knew very well that Lanevus would be staying in the dormitory provided by the Dock Union at night.

However, Klein didn't go near it. Instead, he carefully went around it. His target was the clock tower of the East Balam Dock.

In Backlund, in addition to the large church with its tall, iconic clock tower, many government buildings were also equipped with one. However, they weren't necessarily tall, grand, and not ornate. It was mostly built for pragmatic reasons, such as this one in the East Balam Dock.

Compared to the surrounding buildings that reached a maximum of three stories, it was like a giant that stood high in the night sky as it overlooked the entire area.

Klein easily entered the interior of the clock tower and went up the endless flight of spiral stairs as he moved quickly in the darkness.

Finally, he arrived at his destination. He arrived at the top of the gigantic wall clock. It was surrounded by a dark yellow fence, and at the top of his head was a steeple that could be reached by stretching his hand.

Taking a few steps forward, Klein hid in the shadows, got a sense of his bearings, and looked towards the Dock Union's dormitory.

It was a two-story, brick-red building, and the occasional pedestrian resembled a black dot in Klein's eyes.

He stared for a few seconds, then took a step back, and sank into the darkness.

At the same time, he took out his newly bought mask and wore it.

It was a clown with the corner of its mouth sharply raised and a painted red nose.

A happy clown.

†

Wearing a clown mask, Klein stood in the rich darkness, patiently waiting for the predetermined show.

He waited for two hours.

When the hands of the large wall clock passed one o’clock, he suddenly saw something flying from the distance.

[image]

It was a huge airship covered in dark black paint!

If it weren’t for the faint moonlight, it would’ve been indistinguishable from the night sky. Unlike what was described in the newspapers and magazines, depicting them as machines that emitted exaggerated mechanical noises, its oars rotated quietly, as silent as a vulture who had found its prey but hadn’t found a chance.

The solid, light alloy supported the cotton frame, and below it hung the compartment for guns, projectile launchers, and cannons. At a glance, it appeared to be a powerful deterrent.

It’s silent… Is this a temporary result caused by Beyonder means? Klein, wearing his clown mask, looked at the slowly descending airship and made a guess.

At this moment, he was most puzzled over the dispatch of an airship for a small-scale Beyonder battle in a densely populated area of the city!

Aren’t they afraid of dealing collateral damage to the surrounding citizens? Aren’t they afraid of causing panic?

Very soon, the airship hovered about 10 meters in the air. This way, Klein was even less worried about being discovered. His position was much higher than them!

Observing the situation below, he suddenly had a hunch. It was likely that the airship wouldn't engage in combat, but rather provide air surveillance of the area to give the personnel involved in the operation a better view and prevent the target from escaping if any accidents occurred.

Right at this moment, three figures dressed in black robes suddenly appeared in front of the two story brick-red building.

The man in the lead didn't wear a hat, revealing his short golden brown hair and blackish-green eyes which appeared to be as deep as a windless lake.

The collars of his shirt and trench coat were propped up high, and his palms were covered with a layer of gloves that were as red as blood!

A silver-white metal suitcase was wound around his left hand via a chain of the same color.

This was one of the of the nine high-ranking deacons of the Church of Evernight, Crestet Cesimir. He was also one of the three powerhouses of the Red Gloves and he happened to be in Backlund.

After looking straight ahead, Cesimir turned his head to the left and said to his subordinate, "Use Sealed Artifact 1-63."

"Yes, Reverend Cesimir." The Nighthawk crouched down and helped Cesimir untie the chain around the silver suitcase.

Throughout the entire process, Crestet Cesimir's muscles were very tense, as though he was fighting something.

The Nighthawk on the left took a deep breath and pressed down suddenly, causing the illusionary ripples on the surface of the silver box to crack.

The surrounding halo suddenly disappeared as if it was completely sucked into the case. A bone sword, that was less than a meter-long, emitted glossy, pure white light as it slowly floated up.

Its blade had an ancient silver-coated mirror attached to it.

The scenes reflected in the mirror were layered and superimposed without end.

The Nighthawk on the left took the mirror and pointed it at the brick-red building.

The building was clearly reflected in it, and nothing seemed to change.

However, Cesimir slowly exhaled, stretched out his left hand to grasp the short bone sword.

The surrounding halo was somewhat restored.

“Let’s go in.” He started walking towards the entrance of the brick building.

The three Nighthawks opened the door and entered the dark building and targeted the stairs that led to the second floor.

At that moment, a tall, thin figure emerged from the shadows in the corner. He wore a black priest’s uniform, and he had curly, pale yellow hair and beastly dark brown eyes.

“You’re the Goddess’s Sword?” The nearly-two-meter-tall “Giant” spoke in a deep voice.

At the same time, he clenched his right palm.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Union members in this small brick-red building exploded one after another in their dreams, without even having the chance to scream.

Their bodies split into pieces, turning into thick, sticky flesh. Half of their bodies rushed towards the “Giant” to weave into cloaks that could reduce magical damage. The other half condensed into furry giant rugs that blanketed the three Nighthawks.

Crestet Cesimir only watched silently without doing anything.

Silently, the flesh and blood dissipated and collapsed before falling down like rain, but the raindrops didn't stain the floor red.

In each of the rooms, figures emerged once more, still sleeping soundly.

"This is the world within a mirror, a mirror world that only targets Beyonders. The flesh bombs you planted in the bodies of the ordinary people are only illusions in here." Cesimir raised the Holy Artifact bone sword in his right hand, causing the light around him to disappear.

"Hmph!" the "Giant" suddenly grabbed his left shoulder with his right hand and tore off his arm. He then threw the blood arm forward!

Boom!

His arm exploded like a bomb, turning into a rain of blood that rained down on the three Nighthawks.

At the same time, the flesh on his left shoulder began to squirm madly as he slowly grew a new arm which was still bloody without any skin.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

Sizzle!

The blood-colored raindrops accurately avoided Cesimir and the others before falling to the ground and quickly corroding into deep, dark traces.

But no matter how hard they tried, they always missed the three Nighthawks by a hair's breadth, as if they were fated to do so.

"My enemies aren't always lucky enough." The corners of Cesimir's mouth curled up, and with a slip of his foot, he instantly appeared in front of "Giant."

Giant's eyes narrowed as his body suddenly melted like a candle, turning into sticky flesh and blood that quickly seeped into the floor.

Cesimir immediately kneeled and plunged the Holy Artifact bone sword into the ground.

"No!"

In the rich darkness, a roar filled with pain and horror instantly sounded, and it was immediately swallowed up by tranquility and serenity.

Cesimir stood up and drew out the bone sword. A drop of dark red blood was slowly dripping down its tip, and on the floor, flesh and blood were seeping out, congealing into a face of despair. It was precisely the "Giant" who had a slightly drooping mouth.

Pat! Pat! Pat!

Three shadows appeared around Cesimir in succession. However, they all mysteriously collapsed to the ground, having been forcefully taken down by many invisible entities!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Another Nighthawk fired, and the silver surface of the bullet seemed to bear the Evernight Sacred Emblem.

The three attackers hiding in the shadows suddenly revealed themselves, twitching as they lost their breath.

"Rose Bishop, Shadow Ascetic… People from the Aurora Order." Cesimir frowned and said in a low voice without turning to his companions, "There's something wrong about this. It's very strange. All of you be careful."

Before he could finish his words, he heard the shuffling of footsteps which echoed in the silence and serenity.

Immediately, he saw Lanevus with his chiseled face dressed in a linen shirt walking down the dark staircase. He appeared calm and placid without any signs of fear.

“I’m very curious. To the Aurora Order, you should be a blasphemer. Why would they send people to protect you?” Cesimir didn’t seem to notice the abnormality as he asked casually.

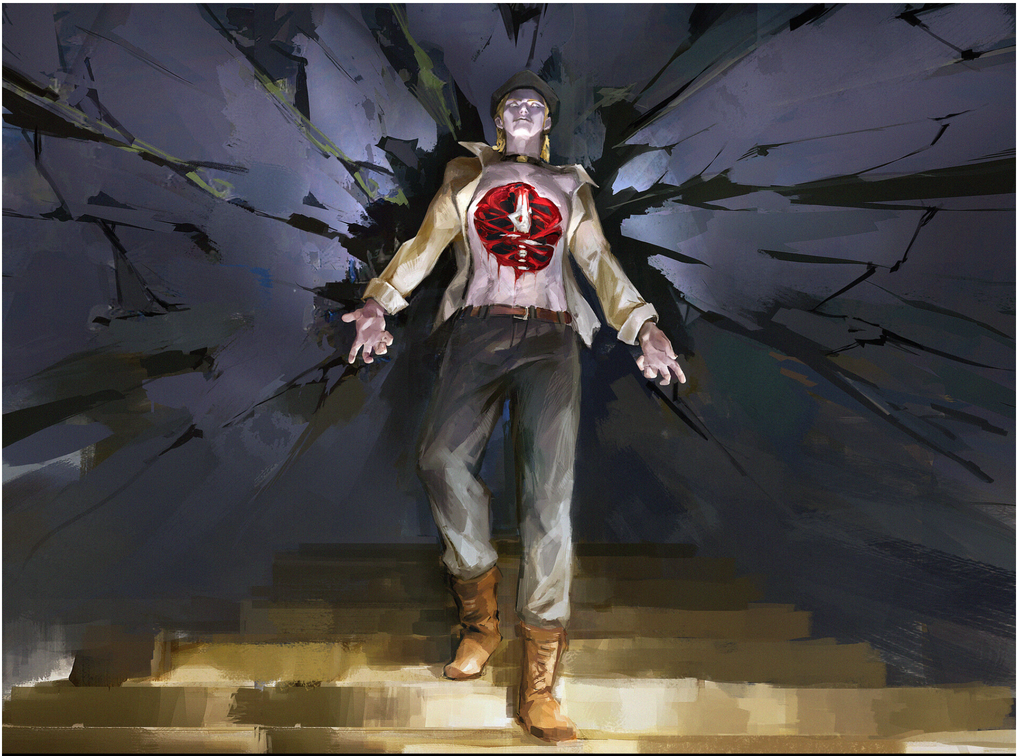
Lanevus showed his trademark taunting smile and said, “That’s simple.

“Because I’m no longer just Lanevus.”

He paused for a moment, and his gaze suddenly turned cold.

“Now, I’m even more of the True Creator!”

He yanked open his linen shirt, revealing the dark red flesh of his skinless chest and abdomen.



------兰尔乌斯突然拉开上衣衬衫，直接露出了胸腹间，组成倒吊着的人影的深红血肉.神灵的气息如山如海,碾压向在场的所有生灵。
Lanerus suddenly opened his shirt and exposed the deep red flesh between his chest and abdomen, forming an inverted figure. The breath of the gods was like a mountain and a sea, crushing all the living creatures present.

The flesh and blood were conjoined together, forming the figure of a hanged man!

All of a sudden, the void around them shattered like glass, and all the scenes around them crumbled.

This was the aura of a deity.

Chapter 286 - A Taunting Smile

* * *

In the clock tower of East Balam Dock, Klein hid in the darkness while donning a clown mask as he quietly stared at the dormitory of the Dock Union. An airship floated above.

He couldn’t see the details of the battle, and he had no way of knowing the developments of the operation in the red-brick building. All he could do was endure and determine the situation by observing the changes in the surroundings and the occasional black dot that passed by.

Just then, he saw all the gas lamps in the area extinguish.

All of them had been extinguished!

It was pitch black there!

Right on the heels of that, a feeling that left an extremely deep impression on him exploded from the small red-brick building. Even from a long distance away, Klein couldn’t help but tremble all over; his legs went soft, and he bent his waist.

It was the feeling of being looked down upon, a feeling that repressed one’s spirit.

It was a feeling that was Nimpossible to resist or face!

D-do not look directly at God… In his adrift thoughts, Klein seemed to recall the time when he was in the hall of the Blackthorn Security Company. It was like when he was about to activate his Spirit Vision to probe the mental state of Megose and the baby in her womb.

That feeling was exactly the same as it was now!

No, it's even more extreme and terrifying right now!

How could this be? Wasn't Lanevus just bestowed with a little bit of the True Creator's godhood? At most, he would be given one or two other corresponding items! Why does it feel like an evil god is about to descend?

Before Klein could shake off the trembling of his body and the numbing of his thoughts, he suddenly felt a deep, serene, and profound darkness engulfing the feeling that couldn't be looked at, probed, or resisted.

The two sensations were obliterated at the same time, causing the gas lamps in the surrounding area to light up once again. The airship which couldn't stop itself from plummeting floated back up again.

Everything seemed to return to its original state, without the slightest change.

But Klein didn't believe that everything was over. He stood up with all his might, knowing that something important had happened in the red-brick building.

The feeling that exceeds a Beyonder, at a fundamental level, is no longer there, nor is there the feeling of the descent of an evil god. This means that the True Creator or Lanevus's plot has failed… However, the Nighthawks must've suffered some sort of serious blow as well. They might not even have much strength left… At that moment, Klein's heart stirred. He quickly took out the spirit pendulum inside his left sleeve, holding it with one hand as he said in a low voice, "Lanevus is no longer dangerous at the moment."

After quickly repeating it seven times, he opened his eyes and saw that the topaz pendant was rotating counterclockwise. However, its frequency wasn't fast, and its amplitude wasn't large.

This showed that Lanevus was still a dangerous man but to a lesser degree.

What caught Klein's attention was something else.

The divination hadn't failed again!

This meant that Lanevus had been separated from the godhood bestowed upon him by the True Creator!

A cold wind blew, seeping deep into Klein's bones, causing him to shiver. He felt as if an electric current had instantly drilled into his brain from the soles of his feet.

Maybe I can do something! He suddenly had this thought and no longer hesitated. He took four steps counterclockwise in the dark clock tower and went above the gray fog.

Without wasting any time, he sat down and conjured a piece of yellowish-brown goatskin parchment and wrote a divination statement:

"Lanevus's escape route."

Klein leaned back, quickly chanted the statement, and entered a deep dream.

In that illusory, separated, misty world, he saw the slush-filled sewers with their dark, dirty tunnels and rusty metal pipes.

It was cramped and sealed.

It's the sewers!

Klein immediately woke up, enveloped his body with spirituality, and descended into the gray fog.

As soon as he returned to the real world, he took a few steps back and came to the side of the clock tower that faced away from the airship.

Klein didn’t walk down the spiral stairs but instead somersaulted over the dark yellow fence. With the help of the platform, the bulging spots, and the decorations on the surface of the building, he jumped down level by level, his body was so balanced it was if though he was walking on the ground.

In a very short period of time, his feet stepped on the thick flagstones on the street.

†

Inside the small red-brick building, two Nighthawks wearing red gloves had collapsed by the door unconscious. The ancient silver-plated mirror had rolled to a corner, but it was no longer special. It no longer looked anything like a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact.

However, one could clearly feel that it was recovering bit by bit.

Crestet Cesimir was kneeling at an intersection, a stream of tear-like blood streaked down the corners of his eyes.

His short, golden-brown hair hung limply, and his standing collars on his trench coat and shirt were in tatters, revealing his relatively sharp chin and his thin, stiff mouth.

Gasping for air, a distorted, semi-illusory, and translucent face appeared on each of his teeth.

Cesimir braced himself with his left red-gloved hand on the ground, with difficulty, he straightened his neck and looked straight ahead.

Directly in front of him was the staircase to the second floor, above which stood Lanevus who had his linen shirt completely unbuttoned.

Lanevus stood very straight, with the pure white, smooth bone sword stuck in his chest.

The skinless flesh no longer formed the outline of the hanging man’s figure, leaving behind a void.

Vaguely, one could even see his back through the hole in Lanevus's body.

Lanevus moved with great difficulty before suddenly laughing loudly. He said with a maniacal laugh, "Haha, haha, thank you!

"I really need to thank you!

"For real. Look at my sincere eyes. I really want to thank you!

"If you hadn't discovered me and arrived in time, I would truly become the vessel of the True Creator when 'He' descends in a few months. When that happens, how different would it be from dying?"

Cesimir was stunned when he heard that. He refused to believe that the person who had his crutch destroyed thanks to his hard work would be so happy.

At that moment, he wished to stand, but he couldn't. He was also powerless to resist.

When Lanevus saw his confusion, he coughed and said with a smile, "Do you know? To people like me, it's the most miserable thing when there's no one to share a great accomplishment that I'm proud of.

"Cough, when I was in Tingen City, I was deceived by the True Creator who not only initiated the descent of his spawn, but he also secretly planted a 'sapling' in my body.

"No, I even believe that Megose's child was just 'His' ruse. 'He' didn't even get the members of the Aurora Order to protect her to divert attention. It was as though 'He' knew from the beginning that the ploy would end in failure.

"'His' true descent was set up inside me. The godhood 'He' bestowed upon me suddenly combined with the 'sapling' in my body after I reached Backlund. Haha, can you imagine that? I was being replaced bit by bit by 'Him!' In the end, I would become the True Creator.

"Before I came up with a solution, I was found by the members of the Aurora Order through the godhood. Thankfully, they're all lunatics with simple brains. Haha, there are always so many fools."

Cough! Cough! Cough! Lanevus spat out a mouthful of foul blood, seemingly recovering some of his mobility.

He took a difficult step forward, and his chiseled face suddenly turned soft for some unknown reason as he began resembling his original self.

Lanevus reached out to the staircase's handrail and laughed tauntingly.

"Thankfully, if the True Creator wishes to fully descend and completely replace me, He'll need large amounts of pessimism, despair, numbness, resentment and primitive evil. Only Backlund—only East Borough, the factory and dock area, could satisfy His requirements. This gave me a chance to interact with others.

"I knew that it was unrealistic to report this to the police simply through the people I interacted with because the people I come in contact could very well be members of the Aurora Order.

"I initially wanted to instigate a strike to get the police to notice me, but I was warned by someone from the Aurora Order. After being tortured, I could only hastily end it.

"I acted as though I was on the brink of losing control and had gained the opportunity to head into the sewers to vent. During this process, I secretly used my blood to corrupt the creatures living in there, turning them into terrifying mutated monsters. Unfortunately, before you could fully investigate the reason behind it, it was discovered by the Aurora Order. Apparently, a member of theirs died under a mutated monster. Sigh, now that I no longer have the godhood or the sapling, my blood no longer has such effects.

"After that, I was controlled even more strictly, but I still found an opportunity. I killed a prostitute and used the cruelest method to attract the attention of the police, but who would've thought that the people of the Aurora Order would disguise the case as part of series of serial murders? I still failed to receive the rescue I needed.

"Out of similar opportunities, I could only use a more ingenious method. I took the initiative to request for the fiercest, craziest, most radical member of the Aurora Order to watch me, and this suited their thoughts. Hehe, can't they use their brains? Such a lunatic would get into trouble at any moment. As expected, you guys came!"

Phew… At that moment, Lanevus exhaled and began to move his body, as if he had finally gotten rid of the remnant effects.

He pulled out the holy bone sword from his chest and said regretfully, "What a pity. I can't take it with me; otherwise, I would be quickly tracked and found by you."

After the pure white bone sword completely separated from his body, not a single drop of blood remained from the exaggerated wound. The part that had disappeared didn't seem to belong to Lanevus.

Lanevus pressed his right hand against his chest, bowing as he faced Crestet Cesimir and company.

"The people on the airship outside should be recovering soon. I can't stay any longer.

"Thank you, thank you very much.

"Although you're all very stupid, you still ultimately helped me.

"It's an honor for foolish bastards like yourselves."

Having said this, he straightened his body and smiled tauntingly, "Goodbye, foolish Nighthawks.

"Use your lives to send me off."

Grasping the bone sword in his hand, he abruptly took a few steps forward, attempting to stab at Crestet Cesimir.

But at that moment, his eyelids began to grow heavy, as he felt like collapsing into a slumber.

"So you still have some strength. This is troublesome…" Lanevus bit his tongue gently and suddenly threw the holy bone sword at the unconscious Nighthawk by the door.

"No!"

Cesimir waved his hand with the strength he accumulated through painstaking means, causing an invisible entity to divert the holy bone sword.

Lanevus seized that opportunity and dashed to the side. He somersaulted out the red-brick building through the window at the washroom at the end of the corridor.

Soon after, he opened a manhole cover along the streets and quickly climbed into the sewers.

Lanevus seemed to be very familiar with this place. Even though it was dark, he could still run, jump, and turn, quickly fleeing deep into the maze of sewers.

Suddenly, he instinctively stopped and leaned back.

Oof!

A card had stabbed deep into his right chest and blood began dripping profusely from its edge.

Lanevus looked up, and with his ability to see in the dark, he saw his attacker.

It was a medium-sized man in a worker's uniform, wearing a mask with a raised mouth and red nose.

It was a happy clown.

Chapter 287 - Death Battle

◆ ◆ ◆

The moment their eyes met, Lanevus suddenly ducked and rolled forward.

Clang!

A tarot card, with an angel and trumpet, shot out sharply like a dagger, embedding itself into the wall of the sewer, and its position was at the same height as Lanevus’s neck just moments before.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Lanevus either rolled, jumped to his side, or threw himself forward, nimbly avoiding the three cards that came in succession with abnormal agility. Their collision with the walls, slabs, and concrete echoed like metal striking a wall.

Meanwhile, out of the corner of his eye, he saw that the man in the clown mask was following him closely, not much slower than he was. In his hand was a thick stack of cards as he launched them with great familiarity and skill.

On the surface of an approaching card was a sun with five facial features. With his left hand, Lanevus propped himself up against the wall and leaped into the air, drastically changing his course.

At that moment, he heard a swishing sound before suddenly feeling a sharp pain in his ankle!

He launched two cards? One arrived slightly late and was aimed in the direction I was escaping in? Can he foresee my movements? The moment he landed on the ground, Lanevus endured the pain and rolled once again.

Clang!

Another tarot card embedded itself into his original position, resonating constantly in response to the impact.

It was only then that Lanevus noticed a card deeply embedded in his right ankle. The card depicting stars, water containers, and holy water stained in red.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

Lanevus didn't even have the luxury of time to think or treat his injuries. One after another, the cards turned into seemingly sharp flying daggers, shooting at different parts of his body.

Very soon, the injuries on his right leg and chest, and the remnant effects from the hole in his chest, as well as the prior demigod level clash caused this Sequence 9 Marauder to turn sluggish. This was in contrast to the nimbleness and speed that Marauders were known for.

Pow! He sent a card flying, but a deep laceration tore through his wrist, one that kept bleeding profusely.

The Nighthawks and the military will be coming soon. I can't delay any longer! At this moment, Lanevus's mind was very clear.

Suddenly, he stopped in his tracks and stopped dodging, allowing a card depicting the devil to strike him squarely in the neck.

In almost an instant, the cards sticking out from his body were sent flying. The hideous wounds on his neck, right chest, wrist, and ankle were all squirming madly, sprouting one meat tendril after another in disgusting shapes!

On his skin, numerous small goosebumps appeared. These goosebumps had a metallic tint to them as if they had turned into a set of armor.

Clang! A tarot card was shot over, but it was deflected by the fine goosebumps.

With bloodshot eyes, Lanevus stared at the Clown who had put away his cards after coming to a halt. He said, half laughing and half mocking, "No matter what, after being tormented by a deity, one will always get something in return."

Before he could finish his words, he had already jumped over the polluted waters in the canal with his left foot, throwing himself at the enemy opposite him.

As if expecting this, Klein stepped to the side, pulled his left hand out of his pocket, clenched it into a fist, and threw it at Lanevus's temple.

Bam!

Lanevus swung his elbow sideways and raised his forearm, accurately hitting his opponent's fist.

The explosive force surged like a torrential tide, causing Klein's body to move from the impact as he staggered a little.

Pa! Pa! Pa!

Crisp explosive blasts sounded in Klein's ear. Punches, each heavier and faster than the last, constantly reflected into his eyes.

The flurry of attacks made him seem to forget to maintain his balance. He staggered and fell to the side, then, with the support of his left elbow, he rolled in a different direction.

Smack! Smack! Smack! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Lanevus's punches and kicks came quickly and furiously, almost hitting Klein quite a few times, but thanks to his exaggerated balance and movements that defied common sense, he managed to dodge successfully. At times, he would be on the wall and at other times, on the ground. It was as though he was performing an acrobatic act.

He appeared very calm without the slightest bit of impatience. It was as though he had decided to drag out the battle as long as possible until the Nighthawks and the military arrived.

And once there were any signs of Lanevus's attempting to escape, he was hell-bent on pestering him and not give him an opportunity to do so.

Pa!

Lanevus's punch forced Klein to use the rebound from the wall to fly back into the air, and as for him, himself, he didn't hesitate to turn around and flee towards another tunnel.

The moment Klein's toes touched the ground, his body shot out like a cannonball as he pounced straight for Lanevus's back.

At that moment, an image appeared in his mind.

"It seems as if Lanevus has no bones. I should force him to twist his upper body and land a punch on his body."

This was a Clown's intuition!

Without any doubts or hesitation, Klein took the initiative to reduce his subsequent strength.

With a smacking sound, he still threw himself forward, but it was much weaker than he expected.

Kacha!

With a jarring noise, Lanevus twisted his upper body suddenly while his legs remained immobile. His face faced backward as his toes pointed forward.

In such a terrifying scene, Lanevus threw a punch towards Klein's head. The force of the punch was so strong that even the air produced an explosive boom.

Boom!

His fist hit nothing but air, and his fist was still twenty or thirty centimeters from Klein's face.

The winds, that stirred from the punch, blew through Klein's hair, but he didn't take the opportunity to attack the enemy. Instead, he croaked a single word in ancient Hermes, "Crimson!"

A charm? Lanevus scrunched his face as he immediately jumped to the side in a bid to dodge the impending attack.

However, Klein had yet to throw out the charm. Instead, he clenched his left fist tightly and followed in the direction of Lanevus.

He similarly threw himself to the side and rolled on the ground as well, causing the distance between them to only widen slightly.

It was a bluff? Just as this thought flashed through his mind, the highly-raised corners of the Clown's mouth were clearly reflected in his eyes. There was also a dark red flame which had unknowingly ignited in the Clown's left fist.

This… Lanevus's gaze immediately froze.

A light crackling sound entered his ears, and a calm, tranquil feeling emanated instantly, enveloping him and Klein.

What is he trying to do? He wants both of us… to be affected at the same time… to allow for… the Nighthawks and military… to rush here in time… Lanevus's eyelids drooped heavily, and the fatigue and weakness he had been suppressing began to rear their heads uncontrollably.

He did his best not to fall asleep, hoping to rely on the uniqueness of his body to endure through the most intense period of the charm's slumbering effects.

As for Klein, he didn't choose to resist at all and quickly entered a deep slumber.

However, whenever he fell asleep unnaturally, he would instinctively wake up!

This was the unique thing about him when fighting mediumship and dream invasions!

This was the reason why he had been lucky enough to escape from the hands of Madam Sharon back in Tingen!

In the fight just now, after throwing his cards proved ineffective, he immediately took out the Slumber Charm and gripped it tightly in his palm, waiting for the opportunity to affect himself and his enemy!

In just a split-second, he forcibly broke free from the abnormal state of mind in his dream. The figure of the staggering Lanevus was clearly reflected in his eyes.

Phew! Klein suddenly became very calm, as though what was before him was nothing but a target.

He took a deep breath, turned his waist, and pulled back his shoulder before thrusting his fist forward with all his strength!

Bam! Kacha!

His fist landed ruthlessly at Lanevus's throat, breaking his bones and splattering his flesh.

Lanevus took two steps back and leaned against the wall.

That intense pain finally allowed him to extricate himself from the slumbering effects, but the fine iron-colored goosebumps on his body were all gone.

After Klein's punch landed, he reached into his pocket with his left hand and pulled out two cards.

Sou! Sou!

The two cards each stabbed into an eye as scarlet liquid gushed out.

Lanevus surprisingly endured the pain without letting out a tragic cry. Instead, he abruptly threw himself forward in a bid to make his last stand!

Klein didn't take advantage of the situation to attack. Having long expected this, he turned his body to the side and took a step back.

Right on the heels of that, while seizing the moment when Lanevus's fell forward, he took two steps and arrived behind him. He reached out with his arms and grabbed his enemy's neck.

Kacha!

Klein's arms exerted force, and he suddenly turned around, twisting Lanevus's neck!

After doing all of this, he took two steps back and looked at his enemy.

With the card embedded in him, Lanevus looked ahead weakly as he slumped to the ground. At the same time, he was very confused and asked in a staccato manner, "Why… do you… want to… kill me…"

[image]

With his clown mask on, Klein stared at his archenemy and replied indifferently, "No reason."

"No…" With his eyes wide open, Lanevus collapsed to the ground in the sewers, unable to accept his fate. Finally, his breathing came to a stop.

At that moment, Klein, who seemed to be extremely calm, suddenly stepped forward, tightened his right leg, and, with all his strength, kicked him in the head.

Bam!

His neck, which was already badly mutilated, could no longer bear the pressure and was sent flying like a rubber ball. It slammed heavily into the wall, creating a red and white patch!

Upon seeing this scene, Klein suddenly crouched down.

“Hahaha, hahaha!

“Hahahahahaha.”

He laughed crazily with a suppressed voice. The “clown” mask looked so very happy.

The corners of those raised lips, the bright red nose, and that white face wore a very happy expression.

“Haha, haha… Hahaha…” Klein laughed so much that he went out of breath; his laughter was more jarring than crying.

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After a few seconds, he finally calmed down. He slowly straightened his body and winked with his left eye at the darkest part of the sewer. Then, he smirked and muttered to himself, "Captain…

“Look, we’ve saved Loen once again…”

Droplets of liquid quietly slid down and landed on his collar.

At that moment, he felt that his Clown potion had been digested completely.

Chapter 288 - A Scene Filled with Symbolism

◆

In the dark sewer, Klein wiped his neck and turned his attention back to Lanevus's cracked head and decapitated body before turning to the two tarot cards that were stuck in Lanevus's eyes.

He originally wanted to retrieve all the projectiles that he had thrown and wipe the scene of any clues. However, he realized a very real and extremely serious problem.

He didn't have the vision to see in complete darkness.

He had relied on his Spirit Vision to rush through the pitch black sewers and engage in the intense battle with Lanevus!

He could see the colors of Lanevus's aura, the spirituality radiance of all sorts of critters, and could faintly use the lights "illumination" to distinguish the path.

Unfortunately, the tarot cards he was currently using weren't the same as the ones that had originated from the Nighthawks. It didn't have any spirituality or silver engravings, and it was completely ordinary with no special characteristics.

In such an environment, Klein could use his own aura's color and spirituality radiance to create a tiny radius around him where he could distinguish things. However, he couldn't see the cards stuck in the walls and ground, as well as the cards that had scattered everywhere. In the intense battle with Lanevus, they hadn't restricted themselves to a particular spot.

Of course, he believed that as long as he had enough time, it wouldn't be difficult to find all the cards he had thrown out, but the main problem was that the Nighthawks and the military on board the airship would arrive at any minute!

I can't be too careless regarding this… I've been wearing gloves all this time… This deck of tarot cards was bought before coming to Backlund and is standard across the nation… I don't usually use it… Most of the time, even if I have it with me, it's placed together with Mr. Azik's copper whistle… Regardless of what methods are used, it would be very difficult to locate me through them. At most, they would be able to restore a portion of the battle scene; I donned a mask, and my shoes are padded… All sorts of thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, and he quickly came to a decision.

He turned to the headless corpse and crouched down. Reaching out with his black-gloved right hand, he quickly searched for any items left behind.

Klein didn't have the intention of carrying out a mediumship ritual. Firstly, the feeling of the evil god's descent had left a deep impression on him, so he didn't dare to blindly channel Lanevus's spirit unless he brought it above the gray fog with him. Secondly, with the situation of the Nighthawks and military arriving at anytime, he didn't feel that he had enough time to set up the ritual of summoning himself, responding to himself, and then going up above the gray fog and channelling the spirit.

I should give up when it's necessary… Klein silently muttered to himself, and he withdrew his hand from Lanevus's body.

This crazy swindler seemed to be in a hurry when escaping. He didn't bring any cash, materials, or charms. He only had an eye-sized badge on him which coruscated a faint spirituality radiance.

Klein wasn't afraid that this item could be used to locate him as he planned on throwing it above the gray fog later to study it slowly. Therefore, he stood up and put the badge in his pocket.

He stole a glance at Lanevus's corpse, and without waiting for the Beyonder characteristic to appear, he used his left black-gloved hand to remove the remaining tarot cards.

Then he stretched out his left arm and placed his palm directly above the Lanevus's corpse.

All of a sudden, Klein released his grip, allowing the tarot cards to fall, like leaves cascading over the headless corpse. Some of them faced up with pictures and numbers printed on them, whilst others had dark red patterns on their backs.

[image]

After doing all of this, Klein took out Azik's copper whistle and tossed it a few times. Then, without looking back, he ran deep into the sewers.

After almost two minutes, figures finally arrived at this place. Some of them were wearing thick black trench coats, while others were wearing well-tailored military uniforms.

The leader of the group was Crestet Cesimir, who was carrying a pure white bone sword. His red gloves were smeared with dust, and his determined face showed obvious signs of fatigue and frailty.

They stopped a few meters away from the body, and through the means of their night vision, they could see Lanevus's corpse and his head against the wall.

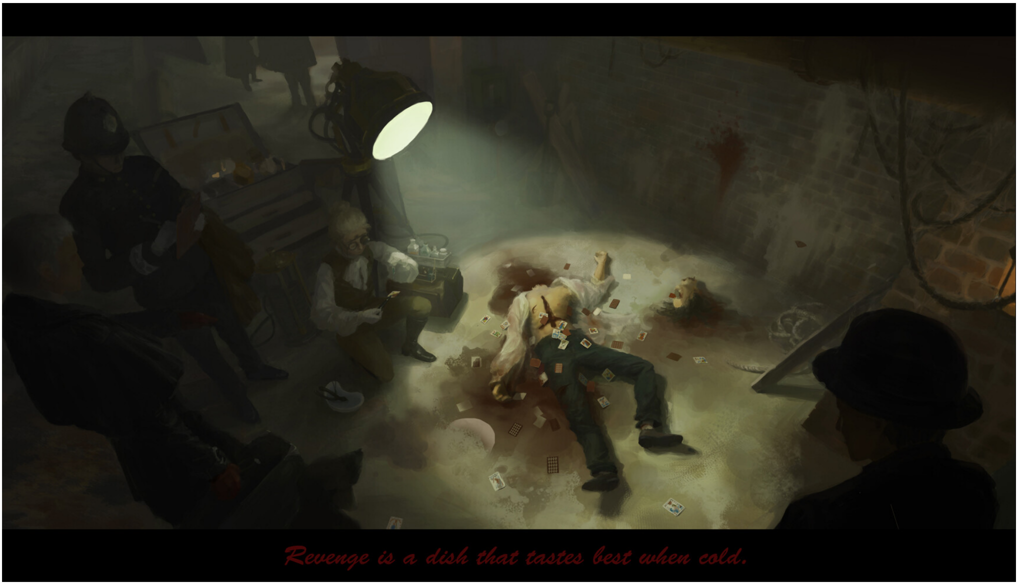
There were two tarot cards stuck in his head. One was The Emperor and the other was Wheel of Fortune.

The headless body was covered with even more cards, each separately depicting The Chariot, The Hermit, Death, and more cards of different suits comprising of chalice, scepters, etc.

On the walls and on the ground around him, there were also tarot cards such as The Devil, The Sun, and Judgment.

It all looked like the scene of some bizarre ritual, and Lanevus was the sacrificial offering that was destined to be sacrificed.

Crestet Cesimir drew a silent gasp as he knitted his brows tightly. The Beyonders around him fell into a momentary daze at the sight of this frightening and mysterious scene in the darkness.



Revenge is a dish that tastes best when cold.

†

Far away from the scene of Lanevus's death, Klein quickly found an exit and left. He took off his clown mask and, in the shadows of the gas lamps, walked quickly towards East Borough.

Before that, he had already dealt with the stains on the soles of his shoes.

It was only when he reached Black Palm Street in the East Borough did he breathe a slight sigh of relief. Then, he quickly held the ritual of summoning himself inside his rented one-bedroom apartment and responded to himself.

In his spiritual body state, Klein moved all the clothes he had worn tonight, as well as the remaining charms, herbs, and essential oils, as well as the badge he had obtained from Lanevus to the space above the gray fog. Then, he used a spiritual flame to burn the corresponding clues.

Phew… He exhaled and finally had time to take a look at what the badge he had taken from Lanevus looked like.

This badge was only the size of an eyeball. On the front was a symbol that depicted fate and concealment, and behind it was a ring of tiny and compact words in ancient Hermes.

"You can join if you have this item."

What does it mean? Was Lanevus also a member of some secret organization? Klein rubbed his temples. In a situation where he was physically and mentally exhausted, along with the fact that the timing wasn't right, he decided to give up on his research and leave it til after the Tarot Club's gathering.

He quickly left the mysterious space above the gray fog, changed into another set of clothes, and removed his disguise.

However, he was in no hurry to return to Minsk Street. He planned to sleep for the night before leaving. This was because it was easy to be inspected after midnight, especially when such an accident had just occurred.

He lay down on the bed, looked out the window at the moonlight's encroaching of the darkness, and gradually calmed down.

After completing his initial revenge, he felt that he had relieved himself of a lot of his burdens and lost a lot of his pressure. His mental state was clearly much better than before.

The present me isn't capable of handling Ince Zangwill and Sealed Artifact 0-08. Besides, the gap between us is huge. Only after becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder, a demigod, would I have the qualifications to involve myself in such matters… Before advancing to Sequence 4, I'll act as though they don't exist…

Yea, for the foreseeable future, my goal is to work hard to improve myself. Now that I've completely digested the Clown potion, I can advance to Magician once the Beyonder ingredients are gathered.

There's still Faceless, Marionettist, and the corresponding Sequence 4 which I don't know the name of.

Other than that, I'll just be an ordinary detective.

Klein's mind was calm and peaceful, and his thoughts were scattered as he thought about his future arrangements. He was no longer cranky or that depressed.

As he thought about it, the corners of his lips curled up slightly as he silently muttered to himself.

Captain, Benson, Melissa, I believe all of you would prefer to see me like this…

†

At dawn, a group of people wearing surgical hats and white masks came to the Dock Union's dormitory. They were all dressed as doctors.

The elder in the lead appeared to be rich in experience as he said to the puzzled and confused residents, "We've discovered an infectious disease in this building. A person named Kevin has already passed away because of it.

"We will provide free treatment. This infectious disease has a special drug, and as long as you take it in time, you'll be fine."

“Kevin?” One by one, the guests exclaimed in astonishment as they looked around for their colleague named Kevin. However, they didn’t find him at all.

That was Lanevus’s alias.

Seeing that the charity medical team was accompanied by police officers, the residents no longer had any doubts and began to line up nervously to collect their medicine.

The first was a middle-aged man with a bushy beard. He nervously asked all sorts of questions, afraid that a single bottle of medicine wasn’t potent enough to fight off the infectious disease.

It wasn’t until the doctors showed their impatience that he drank the blue bottle of medicine.

Then, he was helped to the side and aimed his mouth at a hole that was of the same size.

Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

The man suddenly felt nauseous as he violently vomited a putrid blob of a bloody substance.

He was about to prop himself up and cast his gaze to see what he had just vomited when two strong nurses yanked him away.

The mouth-sized hole was located above an iron-black metal barrel. The bottom of the barrel was dark and deep, with almost no light coming from it.

And right there, a pool of yellowish-green liquid was quietly resting at the bottom. In the middle of the pool was a small piece of blood-colored meat.

Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

One by one, the residents took the medicine and vomited in front of different metal barrels.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

“Why did you suddenly visit so early?” Audrey looked at the sky outside, then she looked at Viscount Glaint.

Glaint looked around and only found a golden retriever sitting beside him. Hence, he whispered, “I was planning to go to the turf club, but I met Kance on the way. He told me something very interesting. It’s truly interesting. Since I was passing by here, I thought of coming to share it with you.”

“What is it?” Audrey asked with interest.

Glaint didn’t deliberate over his words as he replied, “You should’ve heard of the Aurora Order, right? It was the Aurora Order that assassinated the Intis ambassador. They were caught, with several important members killed, and a very large ploy was foiled as a result.”

I thought it was something related to the godhood of the True Creator. Xio and Fors sent someone to report the information yesterday evening, and it just so happened that an operation was held last night… Wait, the Aurora Order apparently worships the True Creator! Audrey’s eyes lit up. She pressed in a reserved tone, “What ploy?”

“I don’t know, Kance refused to say. He just told me that the person in charge of this ploy was once a wanted swindler, a swindler named Lanevus.” Glaint spread out his right hand.

As expected… Audrey nodded indiscernibly. She didn’t conceal her curiosity and asked, “Was he caught?”

“He’s dead, but he wasn’t killed by our people.” Glaint paused for a moment. “This is what I meant by interesting. When his body was found, it was covered with many tarot cards. Same for the surroundings. You can imagine that scene…”

Tarot cards? The body was covered with tarot cards? Audrey was startled at first before it hit her.

This was done by our Tarot Club!

It was Mr. Fool’s Blessed!

Chapter 289 - Conjecture and Investigation

◆ ◆ ◆

Audrey, who thought she knew the truth, couldn’t help but imagine the scene described by Viscount Glaint.

Lanevus lying in the mud in the darkness, covered with rows and rows of tarot cards. There’s The Fool, Justice, The Hanged Man, The Sun, The World, and the other Major Arcana cards and numerous numbered cards. They would either be overturned or facing right up, and there would be some left unturned, exposing only their backs, as if they were all part of a large-scale, eerie tarot divination.

This kind of scene must be very shocking!

I wonder where the card for Justice landed…

How would the Beyonders of MI9 and the Church view this matter? Would they believe that a new secret organization has appeared?

By possessing the godhood of the True Creator, the ploy between Lanevus and the Aurora Order must definitely be significant. It definitely would’ve brought a terrible disaster to Backlund and the kingdom. Yet, this ploy was so easily foiled because of a simple mission Mr. Fool had issued!

This is a tussle at the level of deities?

Mr. Fool and the True Creator are considered archenemies?

It’s no wonder He calls the other party the Fallen Creator…

Many thoughts flashed through Audrey's mind as her body trembled faintly and imperceptibly.

"What are you thinking about?" Viscount Glaint, who was sitting opposite, finally couldn't hold it in any further as he asked in puzzlement.

Audrey abruptly snapped out of her reverie. Slightly cocking her head, she smiled and said, "Didn't you tell me to imagine the scene of the corpse being covered with tarot cards?"

"Haha." Glaint awkwardly smiled and sighed. "I wonder which secret organization's member killed Lanevus. It really matches how I imagined such things to be like. It's so—so cool!"

It's our Tarot Club! Audrey answered silently as she smiled. "Perhaps there's no organization, but the independent act of a powerful Beyonder?"

"Regardless, I like this style! Urge Xio and Fors and ask them when they can find my Apothecary formula," Glaint said in excitement.

Audrey widened her eyes slightly. Looking around her, she lowered her voice and said, "Hush, keep it down.

"How can you talk about potions here?"

Glaint gave an indifferent smile. "Don't worry. it's nothing. I had already confirmed that other than you and me, there's only a dog."

The huge golden retriever, Susie, unconsciously shifted her position.

†

North Borough in Backlund. Inside a room beneath the Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Daly, who was wearing a black hooded robe and make-up with blue eyeshadow and red blush, gave off a charming yet cold feeling. She randomly found a seat and picked up the document on the table.

She swept through it before her gaze suddenly froze. Her brows immediately furrowed, and she suppressed something as she asked, “Lanevus?

“Why wasn’t I informed of this matter?

“Why didn’t you inform me about the operation last night?”

Sitting at the seat of honor, Crestet Cesimir, who had hidden his chin and lips back into his propped up collar, said deeply, “I was afraid that you wouldn’t be able to control your emotions. That would’ve brought unnecessary danger to the operation, so I didn’t get anyone to inform you.

“I can understand how you feel. A Nighthawk from the Tingen squad is currently undergoing guidance and training at the Holy Cathedral. He plans on joining the Red Gloves, and his performance is about equal to yours. But as the person in charge of the operation, and as a high-ranking deacon of the Nighthawks, I had to eliminate all unstable elements.”

Daly looked at the other Nighthawk Squad Captains and deacons, and she sneered.

“Why do you think I won’t be able to control my own emotions? I’m very calm and I won’t act rashly!

“My anger will only erupt after Lanevus is caught! This is the professional bearing of a veteran Nighthawk and a deacon!

“If I had caught Lanevus, I would let him know that men can be weak too! I would make sure that a cold, rotten, yet stiff corpse would be situated behind his buttocks. I would make sure that a pungent white bone filled with thorns would be situated in front of him. I’d make it so that those cold little fellows enter and leave his body wherever they can!

“Damn it! You actually managed to let him die just like that!”

Crestet Cesimir looked at Daly calmly and sighed after silently listening to her until she was done.

“How long have you been putting up with it?”

Daly froze, then muttered in frustration, like a deflated ball, “For a very long time…”

Cesimir retracted his gaze and cast them towards the other deacons and captains.

“Got anything?”

“From our preliminary investigations, the person who killed Lanevus is a member of the Secret Order, a Sequence 8 of the potion name, Clown. He’s adept at using paper cards as flying knives.” A deacon reported based on the findings. “However, we are unable to confirm this guess. The tarot cards scattered across the corpse don’t seem like they were concealing something. After all, the Beyonder didn’t deal with the cards on the wall and in Lanevus’s head. We all believe the final scene was more of a ritual or a symbolism. Therefore, we suspect that the Beyonder might belong to an organization we don’t understand. Of course, the scene might also just be a personal preference of his.”

Cesimir nodded slightly and said, “We can start from that point and proceed with a follow-up investigation.

“Aiur, any updates on the person who tipped us off?”

The charming middle-aged man, Aiur Harson, flipped the papers in his hand and said, “We investigated the person and discovered that his actions were directed by a bounty hunter.

“In the process of looking for the wanted criminal, Lanevus, the bounty hunter’s companion was killed by a member of the Aurora Order. In order to exact revenge, she secretly carried out an investigation and eventually locked onto the target at the Workers Alliance Tavern in East Balam Dock. Based on the target’s actions and lifestyle, she discovered Lanevus.

“Her actions have basically been verified by witnesses. There isn’t anything strange about it. We also used Beyonder means to confirm that she has no connection with the person who killed Lanevus.

“She’s in hiding now, and it’s very hard to find her.”

Cesimir added while seemingly in thought, “This fits very well with Lanevus’s description, that the radical and insane members of the Aurora Order were helping him out.

“Is there any problem with the reporter who did the interview at the union that afternoon?”

Another captain of the Nighthawks reported, “He was a fake reporter, and according to news from the police department, he’s actually a private detective who had previously helped Mike Joseph of the Daily Observer. Joseph was investigating the murder of Siber. We suspect that he got some kind of lead, found the Dock Union and disguised himself to get in touch with everyone who was suspected of being the killer.

“This guess has already been confirmed by Isengard Stanton.”

Cesimir acknowledged it before switching to ask about other people who had recently come into contact with Lanevus, but similarly got answers that there was nothing wrong with them.

Towards the end, he said after some deliberation, “I’m very confused by the lack of motive for the murder of Lanevus. That mysterious murderer deserves our attention. You should continue to follow up on this matter.

“In addition, according to common sense, the Aurora Order definitely wouldn't only have Beyonders at the Rose Bishop and Shadow Ascetic level in a big city like Backlund. There should at least be an Oracle, or perhaps even a Saint.

"Their ploy of receiving the True Creator's descent has failed. With their crazy and irrational traits, I'm worried that they'll launch a series of retaliatory acts. All of you are to be on high alert in the near future. I'll also be staying in Backlund."

"Yes, Reverend Cesimir," the deacons and captains replied solemnly.

Crestet Cesimir paused for a few seconds before adding, "The events of the Megose incident in Tingen and last night's incident with Lanevus have revealed a problem. The industrial area, the dock area, and East Borough have become hotbeds for the descent and nurturing of evil gods. You are to send people to investigate and gather the truth about the situation.

"If it truly is as Lanevus had described, I'll raise this matter at the Council of Cardinals, formally exerting pressure on the kingdom and the government to bring about the corresponding changes as soon as possible."

†

Klein slept in and didn't wake up until it was late. However, it still wasn't bright enough outside. The area was still shrouded in fog, making it dark and cold.

This doesn't fit with my splendid mood… He grumbled. After changing his clothes and taking his key, he returned to Minsk Street unnoticed.

After changing from his worker's uniform to casual home attire—a shirt and sweater—and after confirming that no one came investigating his identity as a private detective, he was completely at ease. He leisurely went out to the butcher and grocery store to buy food in preparation for a sumptuous lunch for himself.

There was some afternoon sun in Backlund, and Klein lazily basked in its worth, momentarily having no desire to do anything.

He waited until fifteen minutes to three, then he took out his golden pocket watch for a glance before returning to the bedroom and going above the gray fog.

After conjuring the fake World and familiarizing himself with its controls, he sat down on the high back chair at one end of the table and gave a message to The Sun that he was to prepare for his participation in the gathering.

At precisely three, according to Backlund time, streaks of crimson light soared out of the vast and ancient palace, outlining blurry figures which were equally indistinct.

Audrey directly looked towards the seat of honor and said cheerfully, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool.

"The 'simple' mission you entrusted has been completed."

She had deliberately emphasized the word "simple" in order to ascertain from Mr. Fool whether Lanevus had really been eliminated by his Blessed. She wanted to know if the tarot card-covered death scene was a symbol of the Tarot Club.

Klein deliberately acted composed as he said with a smile, "I'm already aware."

After saying that, he sighed.

"In such an age, in such a place like Backlund, in such a place in the East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district, they're the hotbeds for an evil god's descent."

What? Alger was stunned for a moment, wondering if there was something wrong with his ears.

Why would a simple mission involve hotbeds for an evil god’s descent?

Chapter 290 - Effecting Change Indirectly

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I remember that the simple mission given by Mr. Fool was for the sole purpose of examining two people for their candidacy of joining the gathering. The general idea was to find the person in the portrait, and that person was confirmed to be in Backlund… Alger Wilson tried to remember what had happened the last gathering, and he couldn't understand what it had to do with the hotbed of an evil god's descent.

Wasn't it just the search for someone?

Furthermore, it was the kind of task which didn't pose much of a threat…

Was there a deeper purpose behind Mr. Fool's simple mission? Was this a silent contest between deities?

Many thoughts went through The Hanged Man's mind instantly, and he almost couldn't stop himself from asking Justice, tempted to pay in order to understand what exactly was going on.

However, as a veteran official Beyonder, a Seafarer who steered an ancient ghost ship, he was experienced and shrewd. He forcefully suppressed his impulse and planned to go through the internal channels of the Church of Storms to find out about the recent events in Backlund.

As for Audrey, she instantly understood what Mr. Fool's sigh meant. She immediately understood the entire situation regarding Lanevus.

So it turns out that the bit of godhood that Lanevus possessed was the basic foundation for the descent of the True Creator into the real world… The harsh situation in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory area, however, was a hotbed that provided “Him” rapid nurturing and strengthening… With a simple mission, Mr. Fool stopped the True Creator’s great conspiracy and saved the whole of Backlund! Audrey looked towards the end of the long bronze table, her eyes sparkling brightly. Unconsciously, she brimmed with admiration.

At this moment, the gloomy and reserved World let out a chuckled and said, “Yes, every time I see and hear about a large number of child laborers dying in their teens, and how most workers rarely live past thirty due to extreme exhaustion and the terrible environment, or how after barely surviving the previous tests and as a result of their old age and the loss of their jobs, they can only wander the streets and die of hunger and cold, I have no doubt about the existence of an evil god. These gods are on the ground, in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory area.

“Well, there’s even been a report that some factory workers have a hard time surviving five years.

“In the East Borough of Backlund, there’s a saying that among the people who live there, without exception, any person who’s a grandfather must be from the countryside.

“The meaning of this sentence is that people living there won’t have a third generation as they can’t have grandchildren.

“Poverty and hunger make their children very thin. Work that’s difficult to adapt to causes them to quickly wither away in Backlund, much less getting married and conceiving the next generation.”

This was the first time Audrey heard Mr. World speak so much. She was suddenly plunged into deep shock and confusion.

Why don’t I know anything about this… The newspapers and magazines I read only mention that the residents of East Borough are having a hard time… This is far worse than being laborious… Audrey's eyes lost their focus for a moment. She felt as if her understanding of the kingdom and the world had been completely overturned.

Suddenly, she understood why Mr. Fool had uttered such a sigh, and why in such an age, such a Backlund, in such an East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district were the hotbeds of an evil god's descent.

We can't go on like this! Otherwise, Backlund will one day be destroyed because of this! Audrey felt a strong urge to go back and learn more, to remind her father, Earl Hall. She wanted to use the powers of a Spectator and a Telepathist to secretly guide the governmental policies that would improve the lives of the pitiful people in East Borough, the docks area, and the factory district.

At the end of the long bronze table, Klein quietly observed Miss Justice's reaction.

He had purposely lamented a while ago and used his smurf, The World, to give a detailed explanation. He wanted this noble, one who still had a semblance of purity to realize the seriousness of the problem and use her to push for change in the kingdom.

Before I become Faceless, I must clearly remember that I cannot be personally involved in such matters… He silently set such a boundary for himself.

"Thank you, Mr. Fool. Thank you for saving Backlund. Your sigh has made me understand the problem at its roots. Thank you, Mr. World. You have made me understand a great deal of the situation I didn't know in the past." Audrey held back her emotions and sincerely thanked the two gentlemen at the two ends of the table.

"Saved Backlund?" Alger was no stranger to the conditions of East Borough, the factory district, and the dock area. He was more surprised by the description Miss Justice had used.

Just how huge was this matter? he thought with an extremely puzzled frown.

The Sun, on the other hand, listened quite attentively, and although he couldn't understand all of it, he still listened attentively, hoping to learn more about the regions where Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and Mr. World were located.

Klein only smiled in response to Miss Justice's gratitude and didn't do anything further. He then turned to look at The Hanged Man.

Alger immediately understood what he meant, and he quickly conjured the last page of the promised Roselle's diary.

Klein received it out of thin air and took a casual glance at it.

"14th January. I discovered a problem. If unconscious High-Sequence Beyonder objects are not sealed, they would unconsciously attract nearby Low-Sequence Beyonders from the same pathway, causing them to come into contact with each other. The higher the original Sequence, the more likely that this will happen.

"However, this situation doesn't seem to be a constant. It seems to be intermittent."

This diary entry immediately jolted Klein to attention because he had made similar guesses before.

After he came to Backlund, he soon found himself intertwined with the Secret Order, with a Beyonder of the Seer pathway, and thus, found himself in an extremely passive and extremely dangerous situation. However, he had also obtained the corresponding Sequences 7, 6, and 5 potion formulas as a result.

At the time, he had suspected that his transmigration involved secrets that gave him the power to resurrect, and that he would occasionally attract people and objects related to the Seer pathway, such as the Antigonus family's notebook or members of the Secret Order.

After seeing this diary entry of Emperor Roselle, Klein suddenly had a new idea.

He used the corner of his eyes to scan the thick gray fog and the illusory dark red stars below him. He muttered to himself in silence.

Could it be that the one who created that attractive force wasn’t me, but this gray fog, the mysterious space above the gray fog?

This could also be considered as a secret behind my transmigration…

Without any further clues or information, Klein quickly gathered his thoughts and read the second diary entry.

“16th January, the taste of a Demoness ain’t bad.”

… The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched, unsure of what expression he should show.

Emperor, I have underestimated you… There’s really nothing stopping you… Don’t you care about the other person’s previous gender? Don’t you care about her experience during the “Pleasure” phase?

Suppressing the urge to exhale, Klein looked at the last entry in the diary in his hands.

“20th January. I finished making the second Card of Blasphemy.

“Let me think, let me think, where should I hide it?

“Yes, I plan to disguise it as a bookmark and insert it into a very valuable book. If the person who obtains it isn’t someone fated, it would be hard to imagine that the most valuable thing in the book is actually that seemingly ordinary bookmark!

“Not bad, that’s a good idea!”

…Emperor, why can’t you explain more clearly? Which book did the “bookmark” go into? Before I read this, I was so happy thinking that I can follow the clues and obtain a Card of Blasphemy containing the profound secrets of the deities… Klein was disappointed and let his gaze linger on the last paragraph.

I hope that there will be more specific information in the future entries of the Emperor's diary… He comforted himself with this sentence, leaned back, and said with a smile. "You can start your discussion freely now."

At that moment, The Sun Derrick raised his hand, having learned it from Miss Justice, and said, "Mr. World, the Beyonder weapon you gave me far exceeds my expectations. I've already accumulated enough contribution points to trade for the ingredients to advance to Sequence 8. I'll use the remaining contribution points to hire helpers to obtain a chance to obtain the true root and juice of the Mist Treant. I'll be able to complete the deal soon."

He explained in great detail, worried that his reputation of keeping his word would be suspected and destroyed.

Of course, he was telling the truth. Although the axe didn't match some of his expectations for a Beyonder weapon, its power shocked him.

That axe can create a powerful lightning bolt in just two or three strikes, and with the temporary boost from my Bard's powers, I can easily fight in close quarters with a Sequence 7 monster. If I were to encounter a monster that's afraid of lightning, I could even easily finish it… I'm now a Light Suppliant with a certain level of magical spells. My strength has been raised qualitatively, and I can fight against even more powerful monsters… Derrick Berg felt that he had fallen in love with that Beyonder weapon.

In the City of Silver, its potency was one of the reasons to like it! The surrounding darkness and monsters in the depths of the darkness forced them to obey this rule for generations.

"Alright." The gloomy World nodded under Klein's control.

He then looked around and asked again, “Lady, Sirs, do you have any clues regarding the Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid or Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals?”

Audrey shook her head without hesitation. After musing for a few seconds, Alger suddenly said, “There will be a grand event held on the Sonia Sea soon. Ships from the four Pirate Kings and the six Pirate Admirals will be participating. Heh, I should call them the seven Pirate Admirals. Another person has joined the ranks.

“There’ll definitely be transactions of Beyonder ingredients at such an event. It’s very likely that the not-very-rare Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid or Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals will appear.

“I have the opportunity to participate in this event, but what can you offer in exchange?

“I’m sure you don’t have the potion formula for Wind-blessed and that it’ll be very difficult for you to find it in the future too.”

Chapter 291 - Seller and Notary In One

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High probability of appearing… Klein controlled The World and made him laugh deeply.

“Yes, I really don’t have the potion formula for Wind-blessed, nor will I have the means to obtain it anytime soon.

“However, I have an incomplete formula for a Sequence 4 potion.

“Even though it’s incomplete, I think you should know its value very well. It can be exchanged for at least 10,000 gold pounds, and most of the time, you can’t even buy it with money worth several times that. This is a crucial step that will lead to a human’s qualitative change.

“So, are you interested? The spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther is worth between 500 and 700 pounds and the Spring of the Elves marrow crystals is between 300 and 400 pounds. I believe you’ll still need to prepare an additional 9,000 pounds in cash or an item of equal value.”

Klein had long since speculated that the sequence of the Sun Sequence pathway, Unshadowed, could be swapped with the same Sequence of the Sailor and Reader pathways, and this conjecture had been indirectly confirmed by Mr. A’s request and in the information provided in Roselle’s diary. It was even suspected to extend to the Secrets Suppliant and Spectator Sequence pathways.

Therefore, he believed that the incomplete formula of Unshadowed was an irresistible temptation for The Hanged Man who was from the Sailor pathway.

It doesn't matter if you don't have something worth 9,000 pounds for the time being, you can pay it in installments with Mr. Fool bearing witness… Klein silently added.

Currently, he was lacking the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther, so he didn't mind letting The Hanged Man remain on credit. In any case, he didn't need to worry about the possibility of him running away.

Well, there are also latent risks. I would be at a huge disadvantage if Mr. Hanged Man suddenly dies… With such an expensive deal at hand, Klein couldn't help but feel a little apprehensive.

The incomplete formula of a Sequence 4 potion? An incomplete formula that leads to the path of a demigod? This is something that you can't even buy with money! Audrey's eyes lit up. She couldn't help hiding her curiosity as she asked before The Hanged Man could speak, "Mr. World, can I ask which Sequence 4 pathway the formula pertains to? If it's not convenient to tell me, pretend I never asked."

Mr. World actually has a Sequence 4 potion formula. Even if it's incomplete, it's still very shocking… No wonder Mr. Fool pulled him into the Tarot Club! He isn't a simple Beyonder… Well, Xio's and Fors's test mission has come to an end. Mr. Fool didn't mention if he's letting them join. Well… He must have other considerations, and maybe he needs more time to observe them. I shouldn't take the initiative to ask since it will appear impolite… Many thoughts ran through Audrey's mind at that moment.

Miss Justice's question was just what Klein wanted. He made The World reply in a husky voice, "I was planning to say it anyway.

"It's the potion formula to Sequence 4 of the Sun pathway, Unshadowed."

The Sun pathway? Derrick instantly looked towards Mr. World, who sat at other end of the long bronze table, his eyes filled with sudden eagerness and longing.

However, he maintained his silence because he knew that he was still far from the threshold of a demigod. He had to spend his limited resources to strengthen himself first.

Only caring about the near future was the way the City of Silver operated. This was because, to its residents, there might not be any future at any moment.

“Unshadowed…” Audrey nodded gracefully, then happily said, “Thank you for your answer, Mr. World!”

She felt like she had learned something important again.

“Unshadowed…” Alger muttered slowly before calmly replying, “I’m sorry. I have no need for it.”

No need for it? Klein was taken aback.

This was completely different from the script he had imagined!

In his shock, he indirectly caused The World to pause, looking incredulous. It took quite a few seconds before he said, “You can first owe a portion. With Mr. Fool as witness, I believe you’ll definitely make up for the rest.”

“No, I really have no need for it.” Alger shook his head.

No need for it… He really has no need for it… He’s confident that he would gain the favor of the Church of Storms and be bestowed with the corresponding potion directly? Or does he actually have the Sequence 4 potion formula to the Sailor pathway? The name was Cataclysmic Interrer? Klein quickly thought of two possibilities.

What should I do? Don’t tell me that I should trade the Witch or

Demoness of Pleasure formulas with him? Klein silently mocked himself, deliberately making The World silent for a few seconds before saying, "Other potion formulas, or some secrets I know?

"Such as… secrets of the peak-level Sequences."

Alger changed his seating posture a little as he deliberated before answering, "I personally know some secrets of peak-level Sequences. How will you guarantee that there's no overlap? How will you guarantee that the secrets you will tell me is equal in value to the Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid and Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals?"

"We'll each give the peak-level Sequence secret to Mr. Fool and let 'Him' decide if there's any overlap and determine their values. Mr. Fool, is that alright?" Klein manipulated The World and asked himself this question.

Then, he said with a supercilious attitude, "Sure."

Alger slowly nodded. "I have no problems with that. Let's begin."

I really want to know the secret of the peak-level Sequences… But I haven't had any extra money lately to buy it… Audrey looked enviously at The World and The Hanged Man as they each conjured a piece of goatskin parchment.

Having never worried about money since she was young, she finally experienced the taste of "poverty."

Very soon, Klein received the content written by the two members.

Without a doubt, he first looked at the goatskin parchment from The Hanged Man and discovered that the content was simple. There was only one sentence.

"The peak-level Sequence conceals the path to divinity."

Phew… Great. Otherwise, there would be a need to use other information for the exchange… Klein carefully examined The World's goatskin parchment before chuckling softly.

"It doesn't overlap.

"To most Beyonders, the secrets Mr. World is providing is of no value, but in the eyes of others, it's extremely important. This cannot be measured with money."

Hearing this conclusion, Alger immediately fell into a dilemma.

To him, getting two Beyonder ingredients at the same time wasn't a small burden. He had to sell many valuable items in order to trade for them.

To pay such a price to hear a secret that might not be very useful to him? Alger considered it for nearly twenty seconds before saying, "Mr. Fool, can you provide more hints? I can't make a decision yet."

Can't make a decision? The corner of Klein's mouth moved slightly. He knew that the words he had said to maintain his image had the opposite effect and had been ineffective. He hesitated for a moment and then smiled.

"The content he describes is a detailed supplement to the secret you know."

Detailed supplement? A detailed supplement to the path to divinity? Alger didn't hesitate any longer. He turned his head to look at The World and said in a terse and firm voice, "Deal."

Then, he immediately added, "I'll help you exchange for the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther and the Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals within the week.

"Of course, the premise is that they'll appear at the pirate's meet. Although the probability is very high, we still have to believe that anything could happen. If that happens, I might have to postpone it to next week, the following week, or even the next month. But don't worry, I will keep my promise."

"No problem. With Mr. Fool as witness, there's no need for me to worry," The World answered hoarsely.

After they had confirmed the transaction, Klein conjured a goatskin parchment in front of The Hanged Man.

Alger lowered his head eagerly, reading through each word voraciously.

"There is a Sequence 0 above Sequence 1!

"And Sequence 0 is the Sequence of a True God!

"They can similarly be reached through the corresponding potions and rituals."

Sequence 0? The Sequence of the True God! Alger was astonished and shocked at first, but soon he felt relieved, and then he murmured to himself in delight, I see…

I understand, I understand what it means!

He inhaled silently and leaned back in his chair as if nothing had happened.

That secret must be astonishing… Mr. Hanged Man even lost his composure… Audrey looked away with a longing expression and said to The Sun who was diagonally opposite her, "Mr. Sun, I remember you mentioning that the City of Silver has the Dragon pathway's Sequence 9, 8, and 7 potion formulas?"

"Yes." Derrick nodded honestly. "Sequence 7's potion formula is Psyche Analyst."

"If I wish to get it, what is the price I need to pay?" Audrey asked in a reserved manner.

“The Sequence 7 potion formula of the Sun pathway,” Derrick replied without any hesitation.

Audrey nodded gently and said, “I’ll do my best to obtain it.”

Hmm… Xio and Fors mentioned before that there’s a Beyonder of the Sun pathway at Mr. A’s gathering. He’s at least Sequence 7 and is adept at purification and exorcism. Once all the recent events settle down, I can attempt to get it from him… In addition, I should join more of the gatherings at the abandoned education building in that hospital. I should try to come into contact with members of the Psychology Alchemists… One of the two paths will definitely lead to something… Thoughts flashed through Audrey’s mind, but she suddenly realized that she was unable to obtain it even if she discovered clues to the formula.

This was because she would be experiencing a financial crisis for the next few months and was barely holding on.

The price of a Sequence 7 formula is around 800 pounds, so if I scrimp, I should be able to produce that. Hmm… It’s already October, it’s almost new year’s. I’ll be an adult then, and I’ll have the freedom to handle a lot more of my money… Or should I use the knowledge I was taught by Mr. Fool to trade? I wonder what attitude “He” has towards this kind of behavior… Audrey’s thoughts gradually dispersed.

She decided to wait until there was hope for the formula before she asked Mr. Fool.

The transaction segment came to an end. Klein originally wanted to use the knowledge he knew to exchange for a mystical item without many negative effects, but after sensing how tight The Hanged Man was, he knew that the other party would pay a large price for those two Beyonder ingredients. It was unlikely that he had any extra assets, so he could only give up in regret.

As soon as the free exchange segment began, Alger took the initiative to mention, “Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos’s ship and crew was subdued, giving rise to a new pirate admiral.”

Chapter 292 - Exchanging News

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Audrey was interested in the pirate admiral and asked, “What’s his name? What was his current title? There hasn’t been any related news in Backlund.”

Alger nodded slowly.

“She’s a lady and was a famous pirate in the past. You should’ve heard of Ailment Maiden Tracy, right?”

“No, I don’t know much about such things.” Audrey shook her head in honesty.

Me too… Sitting at the end of the table, Klein added inwardly.

Alger fell silent for two seconds, and without wasting any time explaining, he said, “In short, she subdued the crew of Qilangos’s crew last month. She proved herself with actual action that she had the strength of a pirate admiral. She changed the name of Qilangos’s ship to Black Death and calls herself Vice Admiral Ailment.

“In the past, she acted independently and was someone who specialized in curses, black flames, and ice. Her enemies would always suffer from sudden ailments of various kinds. At present, no one knows which pathway she belongs to, but they’re certain that she’s at Sequence 5.”

Audrey listened with relish. She blinked her eyes and requested curiously, “Mr. Hanged Man, can you introduce the four pirate kings and the other six pirate admirals in detail? I’ve only heard of their names and titles, but I don’t know what Beyonder powers they are equipped with.”

Alger looked around and saw that both The Sun and The World were showing signs of attentiveness. He nodded slightly and said, “That wouldn’t be an issue.”

“The strongest pirate king is the King of the Five Seas, Nast. He claims to be a descendant of the Fourth Epoch’s Solomon Empire. Not only is he a High-Sequence Beyonder, but he possesses the terrifying ghost ship ‘Black Emperor,’ a relic of the empire. He’s adept at using ‘order.’ He can pull his enemy into combat, in a domain that he’s best at, and create fascinating effects…

“He’s also the oldest pirate in the world. Rumor has it that he’s over a hundred years old, and he has been active in the Five Seas since the Roselle era. No one knows exactly how old he is.

“Of course, compared to the other pirate kings, there’s a lot of information about him. As for the owner of Dawn, all we know is that she’s a beautiful woman. She was once a Warlock and is now a demigod. She calls herself ‘Queen Mystic.’”

†

After introducing the “four kings,” Alger changed the topic to the six remaining pirate admirals.

“The owner of the Black Tulip, Ludwell, was once a subordinate of the King of the Five Seas. Later, he became independent and calls himself ‘Admiral Hell.’ Rumor has it that he’s established certain connections with the Numinous Episcopate. He’s a powerful medium and can control all sorts of creatures in the spirit world. He’s terrifying and odd. Rumor has it that he possesses a ring left behind from the ancient era’s ‘Death.’

“Admiral of Stars Cattleya was once a follower of Queen Mystic, but they've long become estranged. The reason for that, according to rumors, is because she joined a particular secret organization, angering Queen Mystic. And according to the information I know, this secret organization is the Moses Ascetic Order."

The Moses Ascetic Order… The Mystery Pryer pathway… The Hidden Sage… Klein suddenly thought of old Neil's loss of control and the evil god who would whisper temptations into the ears of Low-Sequence Beyonders of the same Sequence.

This was the first time he learned news regarding the Moses Ascetic Order through reality instead of books!

Then, Alger introduced Admiral of Blood Senor, who was suspected to be nonhuman; Vice Admiral Deep Sea Howl Constantine, who possessed a bloodline that was partially from sea monsters; Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards, and Vice Admiral Dusk Bulatov Ivan.

"Thank you so much for sharing. I'm beginning to yearn for the sea," Audrey said, filled with longing. "I don't know when I'll be able to truly travel."

"No, Miss Justice, it's absolutely not as nice as you imagine. From my point of view, it's an amalgamation of blood, chaos, murder, desire, and horror," Alger calmly doused her enthusiasm.

Audrey nodded and switched topics.

"There have been 11 serial murders in Backlund recently, but one of them has been proven to be a copycat crime. The serial killings are against women who were street girls but are now working normal professions. The murderer cuts open their stomachs and removes all of their internal organs."

"This sounds like something to do with devil worship. Was it done by someone from the Blood Sanctify Sect?" Alger instantly made a guess.

"I don't know. The murderer hasn't been found yet." Audrey yearned to become a detective, bringing Susie along and capturing that cursed murderer.

At this moment, Derrick blurted out in a daze, “I know about such rituals.”

He knows? That’s right. Before the cataclysm, especially during the Second Epoch, devils were active in the real world where they lived on the ground. They were the object of hatred for both giants and dragons. It’s normal for the City of Silver to have relevant records… Their history hasn’t been tampered with, nor has there been any blanks over the generations… Klein looked thoughtfully at The Sun, waiting for him to say more.

“You know about this?” Audrey asked in joy.

Derrick nodded.

“It’s mentioned in our Devil Studies. It’s rather ancient. The Devils use it as a ritual to supplement their advancement, typically used when advancing from Sequence 6 to Sequence 5.”

“It’s not a ceremony to please the devil, but a ceremony for the devil to assist them in advancing?” Audrey asked in surprise.

Derrick replied very seriously, “That’s right. The Abyss pathway’s Sequence 6 is called Devil. This is also the origin of that race’s name.”

The Abyss pathway? Before the cataclysm, the Devil pathway was called the Abyss pathway, and Devil is only the name of Sequence 6… Could… Sequence 0 be Abyss? Again, Klein discovered the value of The Sun.

A lot of knowledge and mysteries were lost across the river of history, but the City of Silver still possessed them!

“Is that so…” Audrey nodded indiscernibly. “Mr. Sun, are you aware of the actual details of the ritual?”

Derrick nodded and said, “The minimum requirement is 13 and the highest is 49. The more complete the ritual, the higher the chance of advancement.

“Between two murders, there must be a minimum of three days. Otherwise, it would be easy to lose control, but the interval will also not exceed nine days. That will cause the ritual to be reset.

“Every time a murder occurs and after every partial ritual, the Devil will eat the victim’s organs. From this point on, he’ll be in a violent and bloodthirsty state, wishing to harm others until that desire is satisfied once again.”

“That’s really scary…” Audrey sighed from the bottom of her heart, feeling that she couldn’t even bear to imagine it.

Klein sat in the thick gray fog, quietly listening and remembering.

After discussing the case of the serial killer, Audrey looked at Alger and organized her words.

“Mr. Hanged Man, there’s something that I’ve been wondering about.

“I’ve attended several Beyonder gatherings and find that very few people sell potion formulas. Even if there is one, it would be very difficult for the transaction to close. Why is this?”

Alger chuckled and said, “That’s because a potion formula is easy to fake, and Beyonder gatherings are relatively hidden and not too binding. Therefore, no one dares to risk their lives. Are you going to prepare two sets of Beyonder ingredients and conduct an experiment with animals first? That price is too high.”

“…” Audrey suddenly felt a little guilty.

“Moreover, that’s not the only extra cost. Animals can lose control more easily than humans after taking potions. You have to hire a few Beyonders to protect you to prevent you from dying during your experiments. So, for most Beyonders, even if a formula appears, they wouldn't dare buy it," Alger added.

"…" Audrey felt even guiltier.

Alger didn't notice her reaction and continued, "Because of this, unless the host or a member of the gathering has the ability to appraise the authenticity of the potion formula and has already won the trust of most members, it's difficult for a formula trade to close."

Well, the Old Mister Eye of Wisdom can… Mr. A is a Shepherd, so he should be able to… Klein leaned back in his chair and muttered something to himself in silence.

A thought flashed through Audrey's mind as she asked, "Can't it be done by making an oath?"

"Honorable Lady, this is an underground gathering. Do you think it's suitable to make an oath in the name of one of the seven orthodox gods? This isn't something that can be resolved with an oath. A corresponding ritual is needed." Alger chuckled. "As for other evil gods or devils and mysterious existences like the Hidden Sage and the True Creator, unless you're 'Their' believers, who would dare to swear an oath in 'Their' name? Wouldn't they be wishing death upon themselves?"

At this point, he sighed.

"In addition, without them knowing the acting method, potions easily lead to a loss of control, easily turning people into monsters. Furthermore, the corresponding ingredients are hard to obtain and rather expensive. Therefore, as long as the seven Churches don't allow such trades to be officially recognized, there's no need for them to deliberately control the spread of potion formulas on a wide scale, much less talk about advancement."

"So that's how it is…" Audrey murmured to herself, clearing a huge question in her mind.

No wonder… Klein suddenly came to a realization.

Seven orthodox gods? Derrick really wanted to ask which seven they were, but he ultimately held himself back.

He thought for a moment and said, “The City of Silver has recently organized an expedition to explore deep into the darkness and found a semi-destroyed temple. The statue that’s worshipped inside was a naked man nailed upside down on a cross. There were also a lot of bloodstains on its surface.

“Do you know which god that is?”

This is… the True Creator! The Forsaken Land of God actually has a temple of the True Creator! Judging from what The Sun said, the True Creator shouldn’t exist before the cataclysm; otherwise, it would be impossible for the City of Silver to not recognize it! Klein used his Clown ability to control his expression to prevent the shock from showing on his face.

Justice, The Hanged Man, and The World exchanged looks, shook their heads, and said in unison, “We don’t know.”

Just as they finished speaking, they heard Mr. Fool in the gray fog say in a deep voice, “That’s the Fallen Creator.”

Chapter 293 - Derrick's Worry

* * *

The Fallen Creator? Derrick frowned immediately.

The residents of the City of Silver had always believed in the “omnipotent and omniscient God, the Lord that created everything”; therefore, when he heard a similar name with the word “fallen” tagged to it, he couldn’t help but instinctively reject and feel uncomfortable about the notion.

Fallen Creator… That’s the way Mr. Fool addresses the True Creator… So that’s the image of this evil god… But why would his statue and temple appear within the City of Silver’s exploration confines? That place is suspected to be the Forsaken Land of God! Or perhaps, before it was abandoned by the gods, there was already the faith of the True Creator… Could the holy residence that the Aurora Order always talks about be the Forsaken Land of God? Many thoughts came to Alger, but he couldn’t make an accurate judgment because the history before the Cataclysm had long evolved into myths and legends. It couldn’t simply be described as information shrouded in fog.

He thought for two seconds and deliberately said, “We have another name for the Fallen Creator. It’s the True Creator.

“The faction that believes in ‘Him’ is in control of the Beyonder pathways such as the Secrets Suppliant, Listener, and Shadow Ascetic. The subsequent Sequence includes the Shepherd you mentioned before.”

Shepherd? The silent Derrick sat up straight, his eyes filled with horror.

He wasn't unfamiliar with the Beyonder pathways which The Hanged Man had referred to, other than some of the Sequences being described with similar words in the City of Silver. For instance, The Whispered and Listener.

So that strange and evil statue represents the Secrets Suppliant pathway… Elder Lovia is already a Shepherd… She's been acting more and more strangely… Derrick suddenly started to worry about the six-member council's newly advanced elder and the safety of the City of Silver.

In the past, when they explored the surrounding areas, the City of Silver had found a few cities that were completely destroyed. In those places, only a few pieces of rubble had been carved with words that proved the existence of such a civilization.

These words were all variations of Dragonese, Jotun, and Elvish and most of them repetitively described one kind of existence.

That existence was called: "Evil god!"

The residents of the City of Silver who was involved in the expedition were guessing that those cities were destroyed by evil gods. So, after finding out that Elder Lovia's pathway was probably controlled by an evil god, how could Derrick not be shocked, worried, and terrified?

He returned to his taciturn state, disappointing Audrey who had been waiting to hear more stories about the City of Silver.

After so many gatherings, after her purchase of the dragon race's intelligence, her interest towards the City of Silver had grown even more.

His reaction is a little different from what I expected… Alger observed calmly for a while, but he failed to gain anything from it.

For a moment, he couldn't find a point of entry into the conversation. And if he asked directly, he suspected that The Sun would request payment which wasn’t an easy task for him since he was burdened with the debt of two Beyonder ingredients.

It was at this moment that they simultaneously heard the sound of the table being tapped gently.

Klein concealed his fatigue with the thick gray fog and said with a chuckle, “Let’s end today’s gathering here.”

“Your will is our will.” Audrey immediately stood up and curtsied with her illusory skirt. The Hanged Man, The Sun, and The World successively replied with similar words.

Klein waved his hand and severed the connection, quietly watching the blurry shadows of Miss Justice and the others disappear into thin air.

Then, he made his smurf, The World, disappear. Then, he picked up the small badge which he had obtained from Lanevus and studied it.

“You can join if you have this item.” Klein read the sentence on the back of the badge but realized that it didn’t undergo any changes.

He thought for a moment and carefully injected spirituality into it.

A layer of faint light bloomed and quickly condensed into a light beam, shooting out of the gray fog.

However, it was repelled by the endless gray fog.

The beam of light suddenly dispersed, transforming into a palm-sized piece of illusory goatskin parchment. On it was written in ancient Feysac: “4 January 1350, 8 p.m. in Babur Valley.”

A simple communication device in the field of mysticism? It sends out messages, requests synchronization, and gets the latest rendezvous time and venue? Klein recalled the scene he had just seen and made a preliminary judgment on the use of the badge.

1350, that’s next year… The Babur Valley lies in the area before the

Tussock River enters Backlund… The time is precise, but the venue is vague. It's a valley that's almost a hundred kilometers long… Perhaps, this badge can be used as a location tool when one gets there… Klein turned the badge over and over, with interest, trying to figure out the corresponding symbols, incantations, and characteristics, to see if he could copy one himself.

Unfortunately, since he was no longer part of the Nighthawks, his knowledge in mysticism was still at the same level as before. He had no opportunities of improving it further.

Therefore, after studying it for a few minutes, he could only helplessly give up.

As for the phrase "you can join if you have this item," Klein's plan was to not consider it for the time being.

If I can become a Faceless by the end of this year, then I can head there in disguise. Otherwise, forget it… Klein silently said to himself, then he turned his attention to the matter of advancing to Magician.

The true root and juice of the Mist Treant is likely "in the bag" with The Sun… If my luck isn't too bad, I should be able to get the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther this week. Sequence 7, a Mid-Sequence. I can already see and touch it… Hmm… How should a Magician act? As he thought about it, Klein began to consider specific issues.

Due to his experiences before and after his death and resurrection, he instantly comprehended the true essence of Clown. Therefore, in this month or so, he only needed constant acting in his daily life to gradually digest it. He didn't need to make further summaries and adjust it according to the feedback. After killing Lanevus and attaining his initial revenge, the Clown potion was completely digested the moment he was laughing amid tears.

This wasn't the same as the process in which Klein first digested the Seer potion. It was considered a special case, and now he had to return to such a situation with the Magician's acting.

The true essence of Magician, to pass off the illusory with the genuine? Hmm, according to what Zaratul said in the Emperor's diary, although the main focus of this pathway isn't fate, a portion of it still belongs to it. So, there must be something corresponding to it? For example, it might seem that fate can be changed to a certain extent, but in the end, it turns out to all be an illusion. It's just a magic trick that fools you? Klein rubbed his temples, then wrapped his remnant spirituality around himself and descended into the gray fog.

†

St. George's Borough, in a two-bedroom apartment.

"Fortunately, I prepared another place like this. Otherwise, I wouldn't even know where to hide." Fors stared into the mirror and removed her dropping hair.

"That's right…" Xio replied weakly, lying in bed.

"I just read in the newspaper that Lanevus is dead, but this matter involves godhood, so it won't end so soon. We have to hide for a while. Uh, no, it's you who's going to hide, not me. I'm an upright clinical doctor, the author of a bestseller!" Fors looked at herself in the mirror and began putting on simple make-up.

Xio couldn't provide a rebuttal as she slowly sat up and said, "Thankfully I was sufficiently clever and possess rich experience. When I got someone to make the report, I didn't directly say that it involved the godhood of the True Creator. I only described it as seemingly very dangerous and that the target had experienced huge changes like he was praying to evil gods. If not, I wouldn't even dare to stay in Backlund. To be embroiled in high-level battles sure is troublesome and dangerous. I don't want to take on any more of Miss Audrey's missions again!"

"Really?" Fors asked without looking back.

"Uh…" Xio fell silent for a few seconds and said, "Actually, there was no need for us to mention the godhood. Since Miss Audrey was able to discover this on her side, the Church of the Goddess would definitely be capable of doing so… They've most likely killed 'Giant,' right?"

"I can't be sure," Fors replied without mincing her words.

Xio froze, then let out a long, slow sigh.

Fors stopped what she was doing, turned her head to look at her, and said, "This mission was basically completed by you, so I won't be sharing the payment with you. There's a total of 200 pounds, so with the 70 pounds you've saved up, even if you deduct the expenses, you should be close to obtaining the first Beyonder ingredient for the Sheriff potion!"

"But I wouldn't be able to receive the 100 pounds from the police so quickly." Xio pursed her lips.

This wasn't to say that the police wasn't willing to give the bounty money, but that she couldn't take it directly. She had to go through the friend who had helped her deliver the clues—that was the official bounty recipient.

Since she believed that this matter would definitely cause a huge ruckus, she didn't have the guts to find her friend any time soon.

As for whether that friend would usurp the bounty, she was quite confident. The other party had helped too many shady bounty hunters before. It was fine to take a commission, but if he dared to directly usurp all of the bounty money, he would've already died in some unknown dark alley.

"But it will ultimately belong to you." Fors paused for two seconds and seriously asked, "When you've collected enough money, will you contact the masked guy and work for him so that you can purchase the corresponding ingredients from him?”

“No, unless I can’t get it anywhere else and that there’s no hope.” Xio gave her answer.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey was still reminiscing over today’s gathering when she suddenly saw her personal maid, Annie, coming over with a piece of paper.

“Miss, here’s your telegram.” Annie smiled and said, “It’s from the east coast of Balam.”

Alfred’s? Audrey happily received it and read it carefully.

“Dear sister, the Rainbow Salamander that you asked for has arrived at Pritz Harbor last night. My orders are to deliver it to your manor in the suburbs.”

Arrived last night? Then it’ll be delivered to my manor as early as today and by the latest, tomorrow… Audrey tilted her head to the side and looked at Susie, who was fighting with her snacks. With a shallow smile, she said, “Susie, the gift I prepared for you is almost here.”

“Woof?” Susie looked at her mistress in confusion.

Chapter 294 - Admiral of Stars

◆

Ring! Ring!

Klein circled the lawn behind Leppard’s house a few times on the bicycle the inventor had just completed.

“It’s not bad, it’s just as I expected, but there’s no need to make a lone-standing bell. The cyclist won’t be able to free a hand when they encounter a situation. You can combine the bell to the handle. This will make it simpler and more adequate for situational developments.” Klein’s right hand clasped the brake tight, slowing the bike down to a stop.

Meanwhile, he placed the bell in his left hand back to its original spot.

Leppard thought for a moment.

“Yes, that’s right. I was simply imitating the ringing bells of the carriages and forgot that this is a brand new mode of transportation.”

At this point, he looked at Klein, who was getting off the bike with great familiarity, as he placed it on a rack.

“You give me the feeling that you’ve ridden a similar type of transportation tool before, and you rode it very well… I’m sure all the other bikes on the market are very flawed and very different from my bike.”

Sir, do you have time to learn more about bicycle-sharing systems… As a Clown, I should actually be able to ride a unicycle… Klein silently lampooned before smiling.

“This has nothing to do with experience, the key is outstanding balance and exercise.”

He quickly changed the subject. “But based on your introduction just now, the production cost is quite high, and it’s quite at odds with our product’s market segment. You have to come up with a plan as soon as possible to reduce the cost, and you have to understand that nobles, magnates, and other people of the high-classes of society will definitely not choose to ride their own bicycles. It would be disgraceful, and the same goes for the middle class with an annual income of 300 pounds or higher.

“Our target audience are clerks, postmen, so-called working-class aristocrats, and people who earn between seventy to three hundred pounds a year.”

“This is just a prototype, yea—a term invented by Emperor Roselle. It’s normal to have a high cost. If the subsequent industrialization is successful, I believe it wouldn’t be a problem to lower it to 6 pounds. If we can find a cheap replacement material for natural rubber, it’ll be even better. That’s the most expensive component,” Leppard had long considered this problem as he replied.

Unfortunately, no crude oil has been found in this world yet… I wonder if it actually exists or not… Can refined coal tar be a replacement in this aspect? I don’t know about this at all, I’m neither a student of this profession nor a Savant… Klein thought for a moment and said, “If the cost can be kept below four pounds, we’ll be rich. As for the cheap material used to replace natural rubber, you can go through Roselle’s manuscript. Maybe he has some ideas.”

“Yea,” Leppard said before he suddenly added, “speaking of which, I just remembered that there will be an Emperor Roselle Memorial Exhibition at the Royal Museum next week! It’s organized by the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. Rumor has it that there will be the original blueprints of Emperor Roselle's inventions and all kinds of relics."

The original invention blueprints and all kinds of relics? Klein's heart skipped a beat and pressed, "When is it exactly? I'm very interested."

"From next Tuesday to next Friday, every day from nine in the morning to six in the afternoon. Although Emperor Roselle was once the enemy of the kingdom, the allure of his legendary life hasn't declined because of this."

"I'll take some time out of my schedule to visit the exhibition." Klein fished out his bulging wallet and took out two ten-pound and two five-pound notes. "Here's the second payment. Use it to study how to cut costs and make the most perfect application at the Patent Office. If you don't have a lawyer you know, I can introduce one, and the last twenty pounds will be given to you next week to find new investors and complete the industrialization of the product. Of course, I'll also help you get in touch with people who are interested."

He had never thought of monopolizing the profits of a bicycle. First, he lacked the money for mass production, and second, he believed that he lacked the social connections needed for industrialization, promotion, and sales. He could barely do it himself or hire people to do it. It was hard work with no guarantee of success. It was even possible that he might make a loss. In that case, it would be better to bring in new investors with relevant resources and channels and let the professionals handle the professional work.

More importantly, he would then have the opportunity to cash out a certain amount of shares in advance, accumulating the resources and cash that he needed to advance to Faceless. He wanted to avoid running into a situation where he encountered the ingredients but lacked the money to buy them.

Besides, I have no intention to be a bicycle tycoon. My identity is sensitive. I should stay away from things that might draw society's attention towards me before I become a Faceless. I'm acting as a

Magician, not a businessman or a factory owner… Klein sighed in his heart.

“I know several lawyers,” Leppard muttered and received the second round of investment funds. “Why don’t you go to the bank and apply for a loan? When we get the patent, I’m sure that a bank will loan us money, like the Backlund Bank or Varvat Bank.”

“We’re not just bringing in investors, but resourceful channels, connections, and skills; do you understand?” Klein explained with a smile. He then put on his hat and said, “When you’ve applied for a patent, send me a letter. You know my address.”

†

On the Sonia Sea stood an island with an extinct volcano.

One by one, ships with masts and sails approached the shore, crowding up the reasonably sizable wharf.

The sound of the pirates singing, shouting, laughing, cursing, and cheering filled the air, turning the place into a sea of revelry.

The Hanged Man, Alger Wilson, stepped off the Blue Avenger and climbed a cliff not far away and watched all of this in silence.

With the exception of the Four Kings and the Seven Pirate Admirals, the rest of the pirates only received the news of the event a week ago. Most of them won’t be able to arrive in time as this will prevent the navies of the different countries and the powerful Beyonders from the various Churches to launch an assault. Alger watched the pirates carrying out buckets of ale without his attention on them.

He knew that the Loen Kingdom already had a new generation of ironclad warships, but he wasn’t worried about meeting one here. This was because only four months had passed, and the advertised invincible fleet still needed more ironclad warships, and different types of ships for support, as well as the time to train military officers, sailors, and gunners. There was no way they could create a combat force without a year's time.

Even as Alger's thoughts drifted away, the pirates on the ships and wharf suddenly cried out in alarm. Some ran deep into the islands, some hurriedly steered their ships away from the wharf, as if they were running from devils and the plague.

In just a few minutes, the bustling scene from before was reduced to a desolate mess and silence.

Alger turned his head to look at the sea and saw a ship painted black with a huge white flag with a skull hanging from its mast.

The skull was pitch black, and its eye sockets burned with a ghostly blue flame.

Black Death… Alger whispered.

He understood why the pirates had scurried off.

Wherever Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy passed, she would leave a wake of people who got sick for no reason!

Black Death approached the shore slowly as a figure wearing a white linen shirt and dark red coat appeared at the ship's bow.

The figure was quite a beautiful lady, and she also exuded a heroic vibe.

Her beautiful black hair was coiled up high, and she had a white scarf wrapped around her head. She wore beige pants and had a tall and slender figure, and it had no lack of elegance.

What attracted the most attention was the woman's long, straight eyebrows and the sharp, bright blue eyes.

As she looked around, her eyes would occasionally lose focus, making her look adrift and exceptionally alluring.

A wandering poet who had mixed himself with the pirates had arrived at the edge of the cliff at some point. He began reciting.

“She will always be a girl.

“She indeed brings ailments. Oh, I’m sick. My mind is full of her.”

A number of pirates who left, gathered once again as they looked at Ailment Maiden Tracy, mesmerized.

Alger held back his feelings of contempt as he glanced at the pirates and scoffed inwardly.

Truly a bunch of fellows with no future or will. All they knew was hide moments ago, but now, they’ve become seduced by her beauty.

Although Ailment Maiden is indeed very beautiful, it’s not to the extent that it will cause them to act this way. Oh… A Beyonder power related to allurement?

As his mind was whirling, Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy left Black Death and began walking to the black palace deep within the island.

At that moment, a huge sailboat appeared on the sea. Its flag depicted an eyelash-less eye with ten stars surrounding it.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya… Alger nodded gently and muttered silently.

Since the Black Death and the other ships were already docked at the wharf, the huge ship didn’t approach the shore. Instead, it went around to the sheltered cliff and anchored.

Soon after, the gloomy sky suddenly lit up, and bits of stellar radiance sprinkled down, condensing in the air to form a transparent long bridge. It led from the giant sailboat to the palace.

A woman stepped onto the long bridge and began strolling through the air.

She wore a black, classical robe with numerous symbols and magic characteristics inscribed on it. The most obvious one was a mysterious eye with no eyelashes.

Hanging on this woman’s waist, there was a celestial globe and a short scepter. She resembled powerful warlocks who were active in the Fourth Epoch according to folklore.

Alger looked up and frowned slightly as he muttered in puzzlement, That celestial globe looks familiar…

It’s like, it’s like… the strange glass bottle I previously obtained, the one I had no idea how to use. It eventually shattered after Mr. Fool pulled me into the Gathering…

†

On the outskirts of Empress Borough, Audrey led her maids and the huge golden retriever, Susie, into her own manor.

“Miss, the delivery from Enmat Harbor is just ahead,” the butler in charge of the manor said in a respectful tone.

“Alright.” Audrey nodded lightly and said half-jokingly to the large golden retriever beside her, “Susie, this is your present.”

As they spoke, they turned a corner and saw the so-called gift.

It was a giant lizard whose skin changed color depending on how the light hit it. It was three meters long, and its height reached Audrey’s knees even with it laying on the ground.

They were two colossal creatures, enormous enough to frighten a child!

“Woof?” She turned her head to look at her mistress and saw that her expression was exactly the same as hers. Apparently, she hadn’t expected the gift to be so exaggerated.

Chapter 295 - All Ingredients Gathered

◆

Audrey had always had a subconscious understanding that a Rainbow Salamander = the Rainbow Salamander’s pituitary gland = the size of one’s palm. To her, it would be something soft with grooves, a Beyonder ingredient which constantly changed in color.

So, what did that have to do with the three-meter-long colossus in front of her?

For a moment she was confused, but when she heard Susie’s yelp, she snapped to her senses. She pretended to be satisfied with the result and said to the butler, “This is exactly the animal specimen I need.

“Um… It’s just a little bigger than I thought, just a little.

“Take the servants and move them to the warehouse. I’ll study it when I’m free.”

“Yes, Miss!” Then, the butler immediately instructed the nearby valets who were furtively looking at their mistress.

Audrey looked around and, without another word, led Susie into the manor’s study. Using the excuse that she had to focus on writing a return letter to her brother, she made all the maids she had brought stay outside.

After the dissection is done, there will be two sets of Rainbow Salamander pituitary glands… A portion can be used to exchange for a Farsman Rabbit, just enough to concoct a bottle of the Telepathist potion… Audrey gradually recovered from her astonishment and confusion as she began to think about Susie's advancement.

At that moment, she thought of a serious problem.

She had no idea if Susie had digested the potion or not!

If it hasn't been completely digested, consuming the Telepathist potion would easily lead to a loss of control… She isn't like a human who can endure through it. Wait, how did she endure it the first time!? Besides, her current intelligence is about that of a ten-year-old child's. S-she's already learning words in the Loen language, and she said she wishes to read newspapers and magazines, as well as books… Audrey fell silent for a few seconds. She glanced at the confused, large golden retriever that sat beside her.

"Susie, have you completely digested the potion?"

"Digest?" Susie returned with clear articulation, expressing her puzzlement.

Audrey had already told her that what she had taken was a potion, and she had warned her not to tell anyone, and not to tell any intelligent animals that could bark or meow.

Audrey nodded her head slowly and heavily.

"It's a very strange and unique feeling. It feels like something illusory inside your body breaks down and fuses with your mind. You will vaguely see illusory stars one after another, and you will be one of them. These stars will attract each other, in a bid to fuse as one."

Susie quietly listened to everything, then replied with a light and brisk voice, "Then I should have completely digested it. I've had a similar feeling before."

Ah? Susie has completely digested the Spectator potion? B-but no one taught her the acting method! At most, I would occasionally remind her to observe more and remain calm… Audrey asked in astonishment, “When did you digest it?”

“Last month, the month before last, or perhaps even earlier…” Susie tried her best to recall when. Seeing that her mistress’s expression was getting odder and odder, she hurriedly wagged her tail and timidly added, “I don’t remember… I’m just a dog. I won’t purposely remember such things. Woof.”

Just a dog… But you were only a little slower at digesting than me… Don’t tell me that when I interact with other Beyonders, I’ll say that when it comes to digesting potions, I’m a little better than a dog… Pui! Audrey, what are you thinking! Audrey maintained her elegant smile and politely praised, “Very good, I mean, on this matter regarding the digestion of the potion, you did very well.”

†

Returning from Leppard’s place, Klein took a leisurely afternoon nap.

But it wasn’t long before he was awakened by illusory, disconcerting cries.

Male? Is it Mr. Hanged Man or Little Sun? Is one of the final main ingredients for my potion ready? Klein carefully tried distinguishing who for a few seconds and soon, forgot about his anger from being awakened. He quickly got up, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

He noticed that the crimson star that symbolized The Hanged Man was contracting and expanding. Hence, he stretched out his hand, spreading his spirituality before touching it.

After the usual honorary names of The Fool, The Hanged Man prayed, “…I’ve already gathered the Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid and the Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals. Please permit me to hold a sacrificial ritual and seek your help in handing it to Mr. World.”

That's pretty fast… The Hanged Man had said that there would be a grand event among the pirates soon. It seems like it's not soon, but now… He always holds back when speaking, never fully speaking the truth… Klein nodded indiscernibly and said, "Sure."

After a simple sacrificial ritual, Alger resisted his urge to ask Mr. Fool if the celestial globe on Admiral of Stars Cattleya had anything to do with "Him."

At this moment, Klein had already forgotten about him and was admiring the two Beyonder ingredients on the surface of the long bronze table.

The Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid was a seemingly translucent liquid, but if one looked carefully, they would discover that its clarity was also divided into different levels. The lower one went, the more transparent they were at distinct levels. It fully satisfied someone with an obsessive-compulsive disorder.

The Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals was similar to a faded egg. Its shell was very thin, and it looked like it could easily shatter at a touch. Even without shaking, one could still hear the sound of swishing water inside.

I should be able to get 300 pounds and a formula clue… My Magician is only short of the true root and juice of the Mist Treant. I wonder when Little Sun will complete the mission… Klein waited in anticipation.

As for the other supplementary ingredients, he had already bought them at various stores. For example, the Droplet Gem he needed to buy was purchased from a jewelry store and he had ground it into powder. 5 grams was about 2.5 pounds.

The Sun, Derrick, didn't keep Klein waiting long, and on Wednesday evening, he whispered a prayer to The Fool that he had prepared the true root and juice of the Mist Treant and asked him to pass them on to The World.

The Mist Treant's true root was heart-shaped, brown, palm-sized, and wrinkled. It looked like an old man's skin, but its back was as smooth and exquisite as a gem. It was slightly expanding and contracting, as though it had a certain amount of vitality.

Its juice was light green and sparkling, making it look very delicious.

Klein just looked at them, feeling a little smug.

In the present day and age, Sequence 7 was the threshold of a Mid-Sequence Beyonder.

This meant that a Beyonder would finally be able to bid farewell to the state of being only slightly stronger than ordinary people in certain aspects. They would be able to wield a relative abundance of Beyonder powers!

Phew… Klein slowly exhaled, returned to his bedroom, and summoned himself to bring the Beyonder ingredients into the real world.

He didn't prepare any additional vessels. He washed an iron pot in the kitchen a few times and began to concoct the potion according to the steps of handling the supplementary ingredients before handling the main ingredients.

With the Clown's ability at controlling his body, he quickly finished the first stage, and one by one, he put in the Dark Patterned Black Panther's spinal fluid and the Mist Treant's true root.

Sizzle!

With a jarring sound, a pale white fog suddenly rose and was forcefully pulled back into the pot by an invisible force.

When everything calmed down, Klein quickly poured every drop of liquid into a transparent bottle that he had prepared.

That liquid was rather special. It was as if fireworks were constantly being released from within it. Red, orange, yellow, green, and other colors constantly scattered, disappeared, and then reappeared again.

This was the Magician potion!

Klein stuck a coin worth 1 pound between his thumb and index finger of his left hand, flicked it up, and opened his palm to catch it.

He was using divination to confirm if the potion he concocted had succeeded!

Pa!

The gold coin fell, its portrait faced up, indicating a positive response!

Without any hesitation, Klein put away the gold coin, picked up the potion, and walked out of the kitchen.

At that moment, the sky was already dark. The gas lamps in the room hadn't been lit up yet, causing the surroundings to be in complete darkness. Only the light near the oriel window created a gloomy scene.

Klein sat down on the sofa and began Cogitation to calm his stirring heart and dispel all of his emotions temporarily from his body.

After doing all of this, he raised the glass bottle, tipped his head, and drank the Magician potion.

Gulp! Gulp!

The ice-cold potion went down his throat, and at every moment, it felt like countless bubbles were bursting.

Klein's entire body was experiencing this stimulation, and massive amounts of information flooded his mind, blooming into fireworks.

The veins on his forehead bulged, and his head felt like it was about to burst!

However, this wasn't a very difficult situation for Klein to endure. The terrifying ravings before entering the gray fog and the evil roars of the True Creator were much more terrifying.

"Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…"

The ethereal temptation echoed again. Klein's head expanded and contracted repeatedly before he gradually recovered his thoughts. He began to consciously restrain his thoughts, outline the spherical light, and slowly enter a state of Cogitation.

After an unknown period of time, his vision recovered. At the same time, he felt an itch all over his body, with his arms feeling the worst.

Klein rolled up his sleeves and was surprised to see that one of his arms was deeply wrinkled, like a centenarian. The other arm had lost its color and had become translucent. He could directly see his blood vessels, muscles, and veins.

[image]

This… Could it be that I had nearly lost control? No, it shouldn't be. This should be the remnant influences… Klein sat on the sofa in the dark, leaning forward as he watched the anomaly in his arms warily, as if it were a breeding ground for monsters.

And all of this had nothing to do with Klein. He sat quietly on the sofa in the darkness, watching his creased skin and the translucent state of his arms slowly recover. Five to six minutes later, Klein silently sighed as everything finally returned to normal.

It's a good thing that no one came knocking on the door or ringing on the bell… I only chose to advance after completely digesting the Sequence 8 potion. With such severe effects, it would be hard for those Beyonders who depended on time to grind through the potion. It really is difficult to pass this stage.

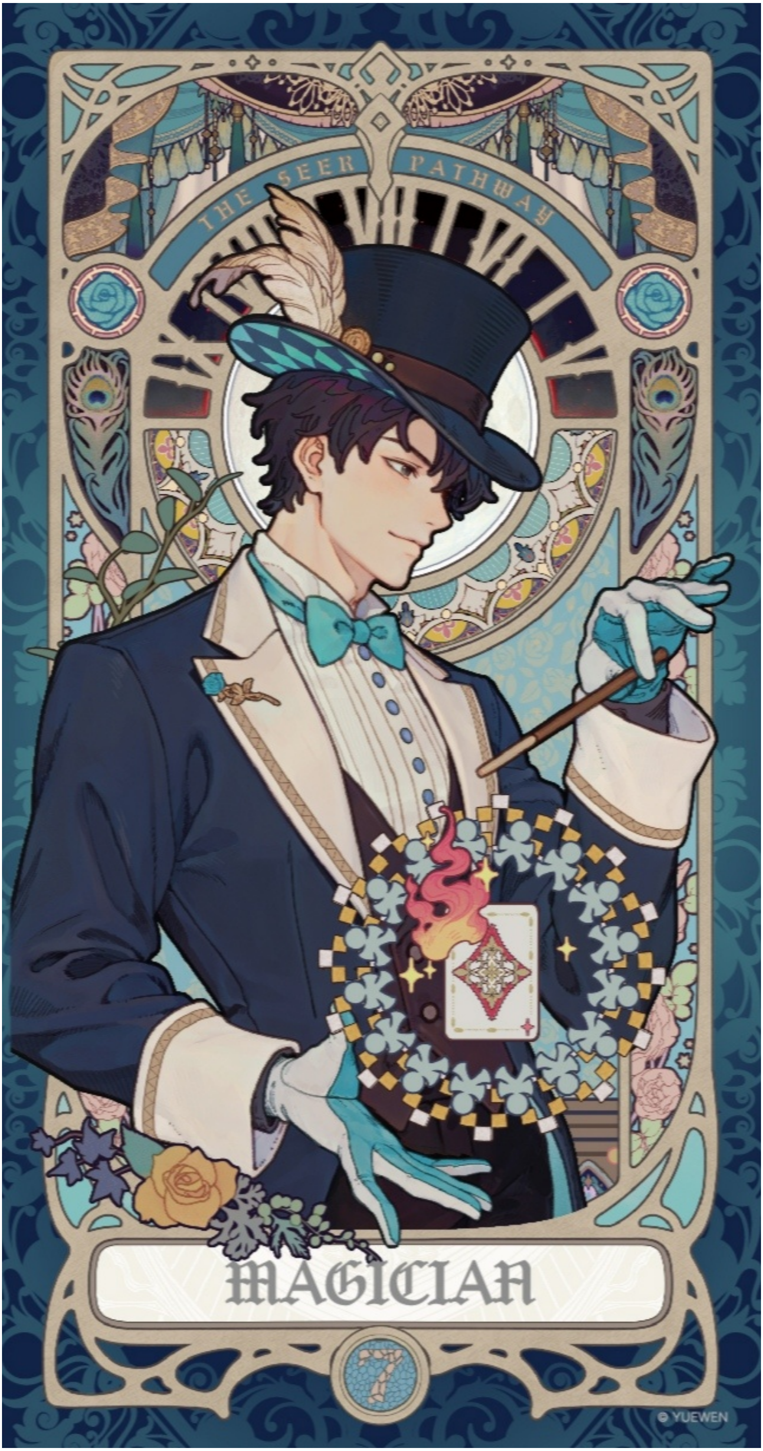
No wonder Captain took nine years…

No wonder Swain, the former Captain of a Mandated Punisher Squad and owner of the Evil Dragon Bar, didn’t dare to consume the Sequence 7 potion, Seafarer…

After sitting silently for more than ten seconds, Klein slowly stood up.

At that moment, he was already a Mid-Sequence Beyonder.

At that moment, he was already a Magician.


THE SEER PATHWAY
MAGICIAN
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Chapter 296 - Magician

◆

He took two steps forward and passed the coffee table. Klein stretched his body and shook his wrist, but he found nothing unusual.

He looked at the gas lamps outside the oriel window which illuminated the darkness and gloominess and said to himself thoughtfully, My hands are more agile and I'm more nimble. Even if I don't have Beyonder powers, as long as I work hard enough, I can become a top magician.

This was his first impression of his own transformation.

And just like what was recorded in the Nighthawk records, if a potion provided a specific magical power, then the Beyonder would become aware of it after ingesting it. They would grasp the specific details as though the corresponding knowledge would be injected and imprinted into the mind through a mysterious method.

Just now, my head nearly exploded… Klein smiled and shook his head, carefully recalling what he had felt and the corresponding magical spells.

It had to be said that Magician was indeed considered a powerful Sequence 7 with it possessing many miraculous abilities that could all be cast very quickly.

Among them, there were three which Klein valued and liked the most.

The most important one was, Damage Transfer!

As long as he didn't die instantly, as long as his hands could still move, he could transfer the vital wounds to unimportant areas like his arms, turning fatal wounds into minor injuries. This was a very useful Beyonder ability for life-preservation in actual combat.

The only problem is that at Sequence 7, wounds can only be transferred around my body, and there's only one opportunity. Perhaps as my Sequence is raised, the wounds can be transferred to other items or people… It really does feel like magic… Klein imagined the future.

The second spell was Flaming Jump. Within a range of 30 meters, he could phase between a fire spark that he had left behind and any flame that existed. It was similar to teleportation which seemed to gain its uniqueness with help from the spirit world.

Well, it can be used to its fullest when performing magic… Klein mocked himself inwardly with great satisfaction.

More importantly, as he digested the potion and raised his Sequence, the range of Flaming Jump would increase significantly.

The third type of Beyonder spell was the Air Bullets which Klein had seen the suited Clown from the Secret Order use.

The Magician could produce air projectiles with power and speed comparable to that of the bullets fired from a custom revolver just by snapping his fingers or mimicking sounds. Furthermore, the effect would improve along with the digestion of the potion and the raising of his Sequence. Klein suspected that at Sequence 4 or 5. he could create his own cannonball.

This way, I don't need to buy more revolvers and bullets anymore—No, I still need to buy one. There are many matters that don't need me to expose my Beyonder powers. Any problem that can be solved with guns isn't a problem. Klein nodded indiscernibly and began to examine the other spells and spell-like abilities.

The fourth type was Paper Figurine Substitutes. At a critical moment, the magician could temporarily change the paper figurine into him while he swapped places. It was a relatively simple substitute spell that could not only block a fatal blow but also weaken the damage from hexes.

So this is the use of all the paper figurines that Marionettist Rosago had brought with him… He must feel regret because he was contaminated by the True Creator and didn't have the chance to use a substitute at all… The biggest problem with this spell is the need to prepare the materials beforehand, which means that the paper figurines have to be cut in advance. In the early days of the Fifth Epoch, Beyonders who brought similar items would undoubtedly be regarded as a dark warlock. If it's discovered now, I'll most likely be suspected… Klein mulled over the uses and limitations of Paper Figurine Substitutes.

The fifth kind of spell-like ability was called Flame Controlling. As the name implied, one could manipulate flames within a range of 30 meters with a simple action. It could also be used to ignite certain items within this range. Once the potion has been completely digested, or when I advance in Sequence, one could summon a swirling flame out of thin air.

The sixth was Illusion Creation. By influencing the surrounding environment, one could create illusions with colors, sounds, and smells that were close to reality, allowing one to pass off the fake as the truth and deceive the enemy.

This is a specialty of a Magician… Klein chuckled and walked over to the oriel window as he took in the night scene of the streets with great satisfaction.

The seventh was a fake form of Underwater Breathing. The principle behind it was to create a thin, invisible air pipe which would allow the Magician to breathe freely and seemingly turn into so-called murlocs.

The problem was that the air pipe had a limited length. At his present stage, Klein could only maintain it at around five meters, which meant that if the water depth exceeded five meters, he could drown.

Of course, the potion's digestion and Sequence advancement would result in the growth of the air pipe.

The eighth was a spell-like ability, Bone Softening. This helped a Magician break free from handcuffs, ropes, and chests.

It's also a specialty! Klein thought in a good mood.

The ninth was the evolution of the Clown's ability to turn paper into throwing knives, called Drawing Paper As Weapons. Not only could it turn paper into sharp objects, but it could also temporarily turn into weapons such as bats or bricks, etc.

These were the nine main spells or spell-like abilities of a Magician. Although they weren't particularly strong in both the offensive and defensive aspect, nor were they particularly bizarre, they stood out for their variety. They allowed Klein's strength to instantly rise by more than one level, and his life-preservation and means of escape became even better.

Moreover, Magicians had the ability to cast spells at high speeds. This was a sequence of Beyonders who didn't need to chant or inject spirituality. With just a simple action, they could cast a corresponding spell or spell-like ability.

In addition, the potion made Klein attain some tiny tricks, but they weren't very practical.

I can barely be considered quite a good Beyonder… Klein sighed silently.

Just as he was about to go out for a stroll and get another revolver and replenish his bullets at the Bravehearts Bar, the gas lamps outside the oriel window which tainted the crimson moon's moonlight suddenly turned darker and deeper!

Klein looked up in surprise and saw that the dark clouds and mist had dispersed, clearly revealing the red moon which was a little more than a semicircle.

Its outline rapidly turned into a full circle, and in just a few seconds, it had turned into a full moon that was as red as blood!

It had only been two weeks since the last full moon!

According to the normal calendar, according to astronomy, there were still about ten days left until the next full moon!

This is the Blood Moon? Klein's lips moved slightly as he muttered to himself in relief.

In this world, the changes to the room were both regular and irregular.

Ordinarily, it was exactly the same experience Klein had in his previous life; however, there were always a few times every year when it would suddenly become round and dark red, just like blood. Such a situation that had no logic to it. At times, it happened only once a year, and sometimes, four or five times a year.

Neither astronomers nor mystics could explain this phenomenon or come up with a pattern. Therefore, they could only ignore it for the time being as one of the puzzles. They joked that perhaps the Goddess was in a bad mood and that a change in a woman's mood was undoubtedly irregular.

Of course, not knowing the reason and not being able to understand the essence of the phenomenon didn't mean that there was no corresponding conclusion. In mysticism, people called this situation the Blood Moon, believing that it would bring about the rise and eruption of negative emotions, and that it would strengthen the power of the Underworld and the spirit world. Even if the dead were summoned, they might still be able to climb out of their graves.

"This is the second time this year, right?" Klein stood by the oriel window, admiring the clear sky, and the disk-like full moon which was red and glistening. He felt he was in a relatively good shape.

†

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

Fors Wall, who had participated in a gathering that night, was unable to make it back home to the two-bedroom apartment in St. George Borough. She sat cross-legged on a sofa in the living room, chewing on a new type of bread which had meat and vegetables in it. She had let down her hair as she thought over the plot of her next novel.

Suddenly, she frowned and threw away the food and pen in her hand.

The moonlight outside the window grew stronger and redder, and the look on Fors's face became more and more painful.

Every full moon, she would hear those ravings that would drive her mad!

Bam!

She fell off the couch, her body writhing as she struggled.

After a while, she pulled out a clump of her hair, but the pain did nothing to ease the explosive sensation in her head or to calm the urge to end her life with a knife.

"Here it comes again…" Fors muttered in pain as her legs were stretched taut from the spasms of pain.

She chanted the name of the god she believed in with great difficulty, seeking redemption.

"Great God of Steam and Machinery…

"You are essential, the Embodiment of…

“You are an artisan, a protector…

“You are the glory of technology, glory…”

As she repeatedly chanted, Fors’s suffering didn’t abate, and instead it grew more intense.

Bam!

She tumbled around violently, toppling the coffee table and sweeping the books on it to the ground.

Unable to endure it any further, Fors frantically used her nails to scratch the wooden leg of the coffee table, creating one deep scratch after another along with jarring screeching sounds.

[image]

Pa!

Her fingernails broke!

Her hair was growing abnormally long!

At that moment, she felt that she would lose control that very night and become a monster. She had already chanted the honorific names of several gods, but she had failed to receive any reprieve.

“I’m going to die… I’m going to die…” As she writhed and rolled about, she suddenly saw a piece of paper with the words in ancient Hermes written on it.

It was the mysterious incantation Xio had found in the “History of the Loen Kingdom’s Aristocracy!”

Her chanting of it had even attracted an existence suspected to be an evil spirit!

Even if it’s an evil spirit… As long as you can help me… I’m willing to accept… Such a thought flashed through Fors's turbid mind.

[image]

She struggled to look over as she used all her strength to whisper, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog…

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…

"Save me, save me…"

Chapter 297 - The Full Moon's Ravings

Klein had just put on his double-breasted frock coat, picked up his half top hat, and was walking toward the door when he heard a series of illusory prayers.

Who is it? He frowned slightly and listened, but he could only confirm that the supplicant was a woman and that her voice was staccato, as though she were in great pain.

Since he had nothing particularly urgent to tend to, the newly-advanced Magician, Klein, casually tossed his half top hat onto the coat rack accurately, and he returned to his bedroom. After taking four steps counterclockwise, he entered the majestic palace.

This time, he didn't see any illusory star expanding or contracting with a deep red glow. Instead, at the end of the ancient, mottled bronze table, by the side of The Fool's seat was a clear radiance rippling out.

It's a prayer from a non-Tarot Club member… Is it Xio or that lady with curly brown hair? Klein speculated as he took his seat.

Since he had already emptied his anonymous account, he didn't suspect that someone was trying to steal his wealth.

Leaning back, Klein pointed with his left hand, spreading out his spirituality to touch the rippling light.

The scene around him suddenly changed. He saw the overturned coffee table, the slanted sofa, books and papers strewn all over the floor, and a woman with brown hair struggling in pain.

At the same time, Klein heard her prayers.

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog…

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…

“Save me, save me…”

Save me? From the looks of it, she seems to be losing control. Her hair is growing longer at a discernible speed, and her skin is covered with a layer of sinister white light. How could I possibly save her… Klein observed carefully for a few seconds, then mumbled to himself, feeling stumped.

It was at this moment that he detected in the woman’s anguished pleas a faint, illusory, indistinct raving.

Yes, a raving!

These ravings were similar to the ones he experienced before rising above the gray fog, but it had no madness or evil to it at all. Furthermore, it didn’t contain any obvious malice.

It appears that this lady’s state of nearly losing control is a result of hearing the ravings… If she stops hearing it, could she be able to calm down and turn for the better? In thought, Klein reached his hand out to the rippling circle of light.

Following that, he allowed his spirituality to gush out of his body, establishing a firm and mysterious connection

After advancing to Magician, his spirituality had become a lot more abundant, and the burden in this aspect had decreased accordingly.

†

Fors felt her head muddling as she felt her thoughts were like boiling water. They were constantly bubbling in a bid to break free of the restraints of her head.

“Am I dying… I don’t want to, I don’t want to become a monster…” Just as she was woefully thinking this in her mind, the pain flooded over her like a tidal wave.

Suddenly, she was wide awake. The pain, the irritation, the madness, and the despair, which she felt so deeply in her bones, seemed to no longer exist, as though it was only an illusion.

I managed to endure through it so quickly today? Isn’t it longer during a Blood Moon? Confused, Fors opened her eyes which she had unconsciously closed. She found an endless grayish-white fog beneath her, and in front of her was an ancient, mottled bronze table.

Where is this place? Surprised, she looked around and saw numerous towering stone pillars, as well as a towering palace that was propped up by those stone pillars.

Then, at the very end of the long bronze table, she saw a mysterious figure shrouded in thick gray fog who seemed to be overlooking everything from above.

What is this place? Who is he? Fors turned wary and questioned inwardly.

Then, she remembered what she had just done!

Under her extreme pain, she had chanted the mysterious incantation which Xio had found in the “History of the Loen Kingdom’s Aristocracy,” an incantation that was suspected to be directed at some evil god!

No, not just evil spirits! He was actually able to temporarily help me get rid of the harmful effects of those terrifying ravings… He even pulled me into this strange world… This… While Fors suppressed the fear in her heart, she half stood up and bowed.

“May I know who you are…”

At that moment, she suddenly recalled the contents of the incantation as she blurted out, “You are The Fool! Uh, Mr. Fool.

“You are His Excellency, The Fool?”

Klein smiled, nodded slightly and said, “Just call me Mr. Fool.”

As he spoke, he noticed on the back of the chair in which Fors was sitting on, the symbols and mysterious patterns formed by the shining stars were rapidly changing.

In just one or two seconds, the interior of the room was covered with layers upon layers of doors. Numerous illusory doors of the same kind were formed there!

Door? As soon as Klein saw the symbol, he immediately associated it with the mention of Mr. Door in Roselle’s diary.

During a full moon, the other party would come close to the real world and let out cries for help!

Could the ravings have something to do with Mr. Door? Hmm… It’s the night of the Blood Moon tonight, an enhanced version of the full moon… This lady corresponds to a door, and the symbol on the back of Miss Xio’s seat is similar to the Sword of Judgment… Klein nodded indiscernibly.

Through this, he confirmed that once a stable connection was established and that if the other party was a Beyonder, the symbol behind the seat would change according to the other party’s actual circumstances. They didn’t have to necessarily join the Tarot Club and come to the mysterious space above the gray fog at fixed intervals.

At that moment, waves of shock rose up in Fors’s heart.

The Fool… It's indeed The Fool… That honorific name does point towards a powerful existence!

What does he want? Will he want to make a transaction with my soul?

Heh, at least—it's at least better than losing control from those ravings… I guess I managed to claw my life back. Whatever happens in the future would just be a bonus…

While she was still lost in her thoughts, she suddenly heard Mr. Fool ask with a smile, "You hear ravings from nowhere every full moon?"

How does he know? Fors looked over in surprise and replied in a daze, "Yes."

Before she finished her sentence, she suddenly thought of a possibility and asked, "D-do you know the origin of those ravings? Do you know who is trying to harm me? Do you know how to solve this problem once and for all?"

He's a miserable wretch who is lost in the darkness and trapped in a storm… Klein had intended to reply with the words that would shape his image, but when he thought about it, he couldn't be sure that the woman in front of him had indeed heard the words coming from Mr. Door.

In order to not make any mistakes and to not embarrass himself in the future, he skipped over the question and said with a vague smile, "He might not necessarily want to hurt you. Perhaps, he is just asking for your help."

Therefore, the ravings weren't malicious, not crazy or evil.

"Asking for my help? But those ravings push me closer and closer to losing control. If you hadn't helped me, I might've become a monster by now," Fors returned incredulously.

Klein grinned and said, "That's because you're too weak."

“I’m too weak?” Fors was stunned and at a loss.

Klein briefly explained, “The difference in your life’s natural order and his is too great. Perhaps, just by breathing normally, the storm brought about by him can rip you to pieces. Perhaps, just a glance from him will cause you to die on the spot.

“Of course, if he purposely controls his own strength, it’s not that he can’t communicate normally with you. However, his voice might need to pass through layers of obstructions in order to reach your ears. Deliberate control typically implies a failure to call for help. Heh heh, that’s if we assume that he’s calling for help.”

The difference in our life’s natural order is too great… I would die from just one glance from him… Fors was stunned from what she heard. After quite some time, she forced a smile and said, “This reminds me of a saying.

“Do not look directly at God…”

Klein smiled at her without giving a positive answer.

Could it be that those terrifying ravings really come from an existence who’s nearly a god? Mr. Fool can help me eliminate that person’s influence, and all this time, he’s been talking about it in a rather bland tone… Does this mean that he and that existence’s life’s natural order are at the same level? The more she thought about it, the more shocked she became. Even her body couldn’t stop trembling.

Klein waited a few seconds, then asked, “How long does it last every full moon?”

“Three to five minutes. If it’s the night of the Blood Moon, it will exceed seven minutes,” Fors gathered her thoughts and answered honestly.

The more Klein listened, the more he felt that the ravings’ owner belonged to Mr. Door.

He temporarily put the matter down and smiled.

“You can return in a few minutes.

“There is only one way to solve your problem, and that is to raise your life’s natural order.”

Fors hesitated for a moment before saying, “Whenever I encounter the full moon, can I recite your name?

“I-I will be your devout believer!”

“No, there’s no need.” Klein smiled and shook his head. “But I don’t mind helping you along the way.”

“Thank you so much!” Although she suspected that she was dealing with an evil god, she no longer wanted to experience the same painful “nightmare” as before.

After confirming this matter, she relaxed a lot. Noticing that there were still many seats around the long bronze table, she asked probingly, “Mr. Fool, it seems there are others who come here frequently?”

No, they might not necessarily be human… Fors added silently.

Klein smiled and said with a casual attitude, “They’re a few people who are similar to you. I pulled them here for various reasons.

“They hope that I can hold a gathering at regular intervals to facilitate the trade of formulas, ingredients, information, and missions.

“I agreed to it.”

Fors was enticed by what she heard. Thinking that she was already part of this, she boldly asked, “Mr. Fool, can I join this gathering?”

“Sure. Three in the afternoon on Mondays. Remove all disturbances.” Klein smiled and pointed at the cards that suddenly appeared on the surface of the long bronze table. “They’ve decided to use the names of the tarot cards as their code names. You can pick one of these, but these already belong to someone and you cannot choose from…”

Fors nodded her head, shuffling the cards and cutting them with great interest while mumbling, “Let fate arrange my title…”

Soon, she pulled out a card and looked at it: “The Magician!”

Chapter 298 - Another Case

Fors’s eyelashes fluttered a few times before she slowly opened her eyes, only to find herself lying on the floor of her living room. Through the window, she saw that the bright moon was hanging high in the sky like a crimson disk. The normally thin and blurry chiffon seemed to turn into rich bloody light.

I’m not dead, I didn’t lose control… It wasn’t a dream just now… I really was saved by a mysterious and powerful Mr. Fool… When Fors sat up and examined herself, she saw that there was nothing unusual about the rest of her body except that her hair had grown longer and denser.

But my life is completely different from before… I don’t know if this is good or bad… Silently mumbling to herself, Fors sat on the ground hugging her knees whilst lost in thought. Her mind would sometimes wander off, and at times, she would be anxious, sad, or confused.

†

Above the gray fog, Klein looked at the chair which had the symbol of a layered door on its back. He muttered to himself in thought, I wonder what kind of information is contained in those ravings…

When she’s at Sequence 7 or Sequence 6, she should be able to resist the negative effects and hear the content of the ravings.

If she hasn’t grasped the acting method, I can let Miss Justice and the others help me teach her. I have sworn under a Holy Artifact to the Goddess that I wouldn’t mention anything related to the acting method to people who aren’t aware of it.

…When I advance to Sequence 5 and become a Marionettist, perhaps I can use a corresponding ritual and the uniqueness of this mysterious space to remotely control her and directly see what she sees and hear what she hears.

That way, I can determine if it’s Mr. Door…

This gentleman who has witnessed the history of the Fourth Epoch might be even older than Mr. Azik who had lived multiple lives.

I wonder what Sequence his strength and level are equivalent to. 2? Or even 1?

After some consideration, he felt that his spirituality was becoming unstable, so he hurriedly descended into the gray fog and returned to the real world.

This was a common occurrence after a recent advancement; therefore, Klein gave up on going out, and he patiently entered Cogitation at home, retracting and releasing his spirituality.

†

In the wee hours of the morning, Fors took the earliest steam metro back to St. George Borough before taking a public carriage to the two-bedroom apartment where she lived with Xio.

When she opened the door, she was surprised to find Xio, who usually slept late, toasting some bread.

“The sudden appearance of last night’s Blood Moon gave me insomnia, so I woke up very early. Fors, are you alright? Did those strange ravings get stronger?” Xio asked, looking up with concern.

Fors’s vision suddenly blurred. She turned her head to the side, forced a smile, and said with her usual confrontational tone, “What happened to your brain? Didn't I say it before? The ravings will definitely become stronger during the Blood Moon!

"But it doesn't affect me at all. Yeah, it doesn't affect me at all. Look at me, look at how energetic I am right now!

"Hey, toast a piece of bread for me too!"

"I thought you didn't like eating it this way?" Xio tidied her short, blonde hair and mumbled softly.

†

After taking his first step at revenge and attaining an advancement, Klein slept through the night. He leisurely went out to buy Feynapotter noodles for breakfast, along with a Desi pie and a cup of sweet iced tea.

After enjoying the delicacies in satisfaction, he put down his fork and knife and picked up the newspaper. He was in a very relaxed mood as he began to read.

A quick scan revealed that the headlines of the Tussock Times read:

"Night of the Blood Moon, the Killer Demon strikes again!"

Again? Klein quickly flipped through the front pages of the other newspapers and saw many similar titles:

"The 11th true case! The police are helpless!"

"The cold-blooded Killing Demon has once again made a clear mockery of the police!"

"The atmosphere of panic is spreading through Backlund!"

This… The Nighthawks and the Mandated Punishers must all be having headaches, right? Klein sighed in his heart.

To be honest, he had the urge to catch the killer.

Back on Earth, when he was weak, he would often daydream about being a person to uphold justice and punish evil. But now, as a Sequence 7 Beyonder, Klein felt sorry for his past dreams due to his choice of not being a superhero.

Sigh, what a pity. This case has already received a high level of attention. If I were to join in, wouldn't that mean that I'm waiting for my identity to be exposed? I still have to be rational… Furthermore, according to The Sun, the culprit is highly likely to be advancing from Sequence 6 to Sequence 5. Although I won't be afraid of him, I might not be able to catch him even with the new spells and spell-like abilities I gained. It's quite risky… After thinking about it, Klein still chose to follow his deepest beliefs and remain an ordinary citizen.

He believed that with the strength of the few Churches—if the killer were to continue committing crimes—there was a high chance of them getting caught!

After flipping through the news, Klein glanced at the Backlund Morning Post and found that the advertisement for the Ernst Firm's purchase of goods had appeared again on the fifth page.

There's going to be a gathering tomorrow night at 8 o'clock. I can sell the Spring of the Elves marrow crystals to the Apothecary then… Klein muttered as he memorized the first four digits of the price listed.

Half an hour later, he finished reading the thick newspaper in front of him and started to seriously consider his future plans.

The long-term plan is to advance to a higher Sequence, becoming a demigod expert before I plot my revenge against Ince Zangwill.

A mid-term plan is to find the acting method for Magician. I'll slowly summarize the corresponding principles to observe, so as to digest the potion bit by bit. During this process, I'll start my search for the Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow, hair from a Deep-sea Naga and Thousand-faced Hunter's blood and mutated pituitary gland, as well as the means to remove an evil god's corruption from an object.

Um… The Beyonder ingredients of Sequence 6 each cost around 1500 pounds. It's very expensive!

In addition, I need to obtain a mystical item that's focused on attacking or controlling. Although a Magician is very powerful, most of the Beyonder powers are used for life-preservation and escaping. In a corresponding environment, the strongest attack is that of a custom revolver. The only boon is how it takes others by surprise, and it also lacks the means to control an enemy.

Short-term plan, short-term plan… Heh, I'll be cutting up some paper figurines and make preparations for my powers. I'll visit the circus in the afternoon as a way to relax and for entertainment. I can try to gain inspiration for the "acting" by observing ordinary magicians. Yes, I saw in the newspapers that there are a few permanent circuses in Backlund…

After finalizing his thoughts, Klein immediately tidied up his plates, cleaned his knife and fork, and devoted himself into being busy making preparations.

When it was almost noon, he put down the scissors and looked at the three crude paper figurines in front of him. He sighed and muttered to himself, This is probably the first time in my life that I've done handicraft so seriously

Fortunately, it's just to cut out some paper figurines and not flowers or embroidery. It's fine as long as it's shaped like a person!

Sigh, if it wasn't for the fact that my hands have become dexterous, I might've failed today…

Klein had just used an additional paper figurine to test his capabilities and confirmed that everything was fine.

He folded the paper figurines and hid it in a stack of notes. Klein put them away into his pocket.

Just as he was about to go out and enjoy a meal at a slightly better restaurant before heading to the nearest circus to watch the performance, the doorbell suddenly rang, and the pleasant, jingling sound echoed in the air.

A job? The advertisement I posted should be almost done with its listing period… Wearing a starched shirt and a thin warm sweater, Klein came to the door and grabbed the handle.

At the same time, the image of the visitor appeared in his mind.

It was a man in his forties. He was rather fat, and he appeared to have difficulty even standing.

His eyes were tiny from the copious amounts of flesh on his face. His skin was rough but very white. He had a gentleman's cane in his hand, and a very tall and large hat on his head.

Even though Backlund was cold in October, the man's forehead was dripping with sweat.

Beside him were two attendants in bright red coats, supporting him from both sides.

I don't know him… Klein mumbled, and before his spiritual perception could respond, he opened the door.

"Good afternoon. The weather is truly scorching hot." The fat middle-aged man took out a handkerchief and wiped the sweat off his forehead.

As he spoke, a cold wind blew, causing the two attendants beside him to shiver.

"Good afternoon. Is there anything I can help you with?" Klein asked politely.

"You are Detective Sherlock Moriarty? I have something that I want to entrust you with.” The middle-aged man forced a smile and said, “I forgot to introduce myself. I’m Rogo Colloman, a jewelry businessman.”

“Please, come on in.” Klein smiled and made way.

Rogo Colloman stepped in with heavy footsteps and sat down on the sofa, causing the old furniture to emit a resistant groan.

“What is it exactly?” Klein took out a copper penny and deftly rolled it around his fingertips.

Rogo sighed and said, “I wish for you to protect my son until tomorrow afternoon. He has offended some lunatics.”

“Until tomorrow afternoon? Have you found a solution? Why not call the police?” Klein asked unhurriedly.

Rogo remained silent for two seconds before saying, “Adol got into some bad company and was led to do bad things by them. Oh, it’s nothing too serious, but ones that can land him in prison. Unless it’s necessary, I don’t want to call the police.

“He recently had a falling out with those bad friends of his. As a result, he suddenly broke down and kept yelling that those people wanted to kill him.

“I was very worried, so I hired six senior bodyguards from a security company to keep watch outside. Then, I hired another four private detectives to take shifts watching over Adol, even if he’s sleeping.

“But one of the detectives suddenly had an accident at home and will only be able to return tomorrow afternoon. Therefore, I can only hire another detective at the last minute.

“I’m sorry, I can only hire you for one day.

“Yes… The reward is 10 pounds, and if you were to encounter danger, I’d add more. You’ll definitely be satisfied.”

Is that so… 10 pounds for a day. That's equivalent to a week's salary of Mr. Sammer from next door… Klein was able to tell from the color of the other's emotions that he wasn't lying.

During the brief silence in the living room, he kept flipping the copper penny between his fingers and with a thud, it fell into his palm.

Klein glanced at it, bent his fingers and smiled.

"Deal."

Chapter 299 - Snapping Fingers

◆◆◆

West Borough, Grimm Garden Street

Klein, with a quite a stubble around his mouth, wore a pair of gold-rimmed glasses while carrying a top hat and a black cane. He followed Rogo Colloman into a spacious and bright living room.

There was a huge crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The walls, corners, and tables were decorated with all kinds of golden carvings and ornaments. The entire area looked gorgeous, exquisite, and luxurious.

As expected of a jewelry businessman, a businessman staying in West Borough… Klein scanned the oil paintings by the side and sighed.

With every step Rogo took, the fat on his body quivered. It left people maliciously wondering when his clothes and pants would snap.

However, as a jewelry businessman, he had enough money to buy clothes of the best quality.

“Detective Moriarty, this is my son, Adol.” Logo stopped at the edge of a carpet and pointed to a boy that was 15 or 16 years old and was sitting on a single sofa.

As all the fireplaces in the house were lit, and there were metallic pipes to conduct the heat around, the living room was rather warm. It even made Klein feel like taking off his clothes until he only had a shirt and a pair of trousers left. However, the boy was wrapped in a thick fur coat and had a blanket that looked burning hot on his legs.

At that moment, he had his head low, tightly hugging himself as he shivered nonstop. His dark blue hair seemed to have lost its luster.

Rogo looked at him with concern and raised his voice slightly, “Adol, this is Detective Moriarty. He will be protecting you for today and tomorrow.”

At these words, Adol raised his head, revealing his pale face, his bluish lips, and his unfocused eyes.

“Protect me, protect me… They’re going to kill me! They want to kill me!” His voice became sharper and sharper. In the end, he covered his ears with his hands and screamed.

After a few seconds, he gradually calmed down.

During this process, Klein had already tapped his molars and secretly activated his Spirit Vision.

Huh… He held back the shock that had crept up to his mouth and carefully examined him again.

He saw that the color of Adol’s aura had been dyed with a deep blackish-green sheen!

This is a sign of being haunted by wraiths, a sign of possible possession!

Adol’s bad friends are already taking revenge on him… Or perhaps, there were no such things as “bad company” at all… Klein quietly reached out, held Mr. Azik’s copper whistle, and allowed his spirituality to spread. Then, he thoughtfully looked away from Adol and looked at the others inside the living room.

By the oriel window stood a man in a black coat. He was tall and sturdy, not smiling, and his waist was bulging as if he were hiding a gun.

This should be one of the six bodyguards… Klein was about to size up another person when Rogo Colloman introduced, “Detective Kaslana; her assistant, Lydia.

“Detective Stuart.”

At this point, Rogo turned around and pointed at Klein.

“This is Detective Sherlock Moriarty.”

Kaslana was in her thirties, had black hair and blue eyes, and thick eyebrows. She was probably a beauty when she was young, but now, because of the sagging muscles on her cheeks, she didn’t seem very amiable.

Lydia, her assistant, was a red-haired lady of about twenty years of age. Her figure was excellent, but she had an average appearance.

Both women wore something similar to what aristocratic riders wore. The white shirts they wore were tight at the waist which matched the more tight-fitting trousers that facilitated movement. The pleats were the only thing that distinguished their clothes from men.

In addition, they provided no concealment for the two revolvers around their waists.

This reminded Klein of a saying from Lawyer Jurgen that illegal possession of a gun was a sure thing for a private investigator. This was because—unless one was a noble, a Member of Parliament, or a senior civil servant—it was very difficult to obtain an all-purpose weapon permit.

Stuart sat opposite to Kaslana and Lydia. He had a lean face, but he grew a bushy beard. His light green eyes were unusually lively.

He was about the same age as Lydia, and almost as tall as Klein, a little over 1.7m and weighing 140lb.

Stuart had an underarm holster, and in it, there was obviously a specially designed revolver.

After exchanging pleasantries, Klein took off his coat, took off his hat, and handed it to the maidservant next to him.

“Put it somewhere I can retrieve it quickly from. There are some important items inside.”

In fact, he had already transferred the paper figurines, notes, charms, a matchbox, etc to his trouser pockets. The only thing left in his coat was herbal powder, extract essence, keys, and his wallet. There were a total of 206 pounds in paper bills in his wallet.

Stuart, who was sitting there, turned his head to size Klein up and chuckled. “You didn’t bring a gun?”

“Gun? This is my gun.” Klein smiled and raised his cane.

At the same time, he puffed out his cheeks to stimulate a sound.

Bang!

The sound of a gunshot rang out, and without thinking, Stuart rolled over, while Kaslana and Lydia quickly got off the sofa, each finding a place to hide.

Rogo and the servant beside him were both surprised and confused about what was happening. Adol continued keeping his head low as he shivered.

When they saw that Klein was only holding onto a black cane and realized that nothing had happened, Kaslana and company calmed down. They frowned and asked, “What just happened?”

“Ever since I handed a revolver I picked up to the police, I’ve been learning how to imitate its sound. It seems to be quite effective,” Klein replied half-jokingly.

“That’s not funny, Detective Moriarty,” Kaslana said in a deep voice.

I just wanted to perform some magic for you… Klein lampooned. He handed his cane to the maidservant and solemnly nodded.

"I will keep that in mind."

Stuart, who was in the most pathetic state a moment ago, didn't seem to be angry at all. He patted his clothes with great interest, got up and asked, "Why haven't I heard of you, Mr. Moriarty? I mean, I know a lot of people in the detective business, but I've not heard about you in the past."

"I only came to Backlund in early September," Klein briefly explained.

"Is that so…" Stuart laughed and said, "Tonight, the two of us will pair up. We'll be in charge of everything from midnight until tomorrow morning. Will that be a problem?"

"Nope," Klein responded with the same smile.

"Okay, after dinner, you guys have some rest and take over your shifts in the early morning," Kaslana added.

Klein took a long look at the trembling Adol and nodded seriously.

†

Nothing happened throughout the afternoon, and the worried male and female hosts prepared a hearty dinner for the detectives and the bodyguards, but no alcoholic beverages were provided.

After eating and drinking to his heart's content, Klein and Stuart, a young man with a full beard, went to their rooms on the second floor.

Seeing that no one was around, Stuart shook his head and said, "Sherlock, you should've noticed that the problem with Adol isn't something regarding revenge."

Bro, you sure are affable… Klein's expression didn't change as he asked, "Why do you say that?"

"He looks more like he has a mental problem, or, according to the countryside, he's been haunted by ghosts and evil spirits. Frankly, I'm afraid of that." Stuart sighed. "Mr. Colloman should take him to a psychiatrist, and if that doesn't work, get the priests from the Lord of Storms to sprinkle some holy water and perform a ritual."

"You can suggest it to him," Klein said objectively.

"If Adol doesn't get better, I'll consider it in about a couple of days." Stuart glanced sideways at Klein.

Klein laughed and replied, "That's up to you. My mission will be over tomorrow."

At that moment, the two of them had arrived at their destination and entered their respective rooms.

†

One in the morning, inside Adol's bedroom.

Klein sat in a rocking chair, holding onto Azik's copper whistle, quietly watching his ward. Stuart sipped his coffee at his desk.

The two of them didn't speak, afraid that they would wake the sleeping Adol.

As time passed, a cold chill swept through the room.

Adol sat up and opened his eyes.

"What's wrong?" Stuart asked somewhat nervously.

"To… the washroom…" Adol replied in a soft, dreamy voice.

His face seemed paler, and his lips were turning purple.

Stuart was about to speak when he saw Sherlock Moriarty stand up and nod at him.

“I’ll follow him.”

“Alright.” Stuart let out a sigh of relief.

Putting his hands into his pockets, Klein stayed one step behind Adol and followed him to the entrance of the washroom two rooms away.

Just as Adol was about to close the door behind him, he saw a figure flash in.

“I can’t let you out of my sight. Heh, do whatever you have to do, and pretend that I don’t exist.” Klein smiled and leaned against the wall.

Adol remained silent, his eyes unfocused as he looked into the mirror.

He turned on the faucet and let the water flow.

At this moment, Klein took out a box of matches and lit a matchstick, as though he wanted to smoke.

However, he didn’t do so. He blew on the air and allowed the match to go out.

Pa!

Klein casually threw the match in front of him and took out another item.

Adol, whose back was facing him, suddenly straightened up. The figure in the mirror was so pale that it looked like a corpse.

Whoosh! In the washroom, a cold wind howled. While keeping his lower body fixed, Adol turned around and glared at Klein’s left hand, at the delicate copper whistle that was being tossed up and down.

Whoosh!

A gust of cold wind blew across Klein's face.

He continued smiling and snapped his fingers.

With a loud bang, a flame rose from the ground, igniting an invisible figure.

The figure struggled for a few moments before completely dispersing. The flames extinguished as a result.

Klein put away Azik's copper whistle and looked calmly at Adol, whose eyes were beginning to focus.

Adol appeared to have finally awoken from a long nightmare.

He saw a young man standing a few steps away. The man was wearing a white shirt, dark trousers, and a pair of gold-rimmed glasses. He was leaning against the wall with a smile on his face.

Then, he heard a gentle voice.

"What happened to you?"

Chapter 300 - Spirit Dance

◆

“What exactly happened?” Adol muttered this question softly and realized that he couldn’t remember what he had done the past few days.

He looked around dreamily, frightened, panicked, and confused.

“Who are you?

“Where is this place?”

“This is your washroom. Don’t you recognize it? I’m a private detective in charge of protecting you.” Klein looked at the teenage boy who hadn’t figured out the situation around him and chuckled in response.

“My house… Detective to protect me… What exactly happened…” Adol looked around in astonishment and murmured to himself.

Suddenly, he stopped; his already pale face filled with unconcealable fear.

“M-maybe there really are ghosts in this world! There really are ghosts!”

His voice was shaky, but Klein could hear two completely different feelings from his voice—fear and excitement—and these were perfectly depicted by the color of his emotions.

Excited? Did this boy end up provoking a wraith because of his thirst for excitement? It’s true that the young are bold and unafraid of death… Klein made a preliminary guess, but he asked in confusion, “Ghosts?”

After becoming a Magician, his Spirit Vision had been slightly enhanced, but not by much. He was still unable to see the Astral Projection surface deep in the Ether Body and, as such, unable to judge whether the target was a Beyonder or not.

Adol's pale face suddenly flushed red.

"Yes, ghosts!"

He flailed his arms and added, "There exists a wider world beyond our senses! I'm serious! Death is not the end of everything!"

This line… He's indeed an adolescent… However, I think I've seen similar words somewhere… Klein smiled and said, "I believe in another saying—in the face of time that is even more ancient than ancientness, even death itself will disappear."

Without waiting for Adol to say anything, he took out his gold pocket watch, opened it and said, "So, how did you get yourself into the state you were in before? You were like a patient with a nervous breakdown."

"I…" Adol turned his head and thought for a few seconds, then he said, "I joined a society; it's not an ordinary society! We all believe that death is not the end. We can use mysticism to even sense death directly and understand that everything can be reversed. Yes, we believe that the dead can be resurrected!"

Klein, who had just climbed out of his grave more than a month ago chuckled dryly.

"You and the others were trying to revive the dead?"

Death is not the end… A world beyond the senses… Everything can be reversed. Mystic sensing… Aren't these the teachings of the Numinous Episcopate? These were all created to revive Death… He muttered to himself silently in enlightenment.

"Yes!" Adol nodded, his eyes bright, but completely unable to hide his fear.

“Where did you get your corpses?” Klein pressed.

“W-we will secretly dig up graves, those that haven’t been buried for long, or buy them from the hospital…” Adol said as he recalled.

It’s indeed a crime that can get you thrown into jail… It’s no wonder that Rogo Colloman doesn’t want the police involved… You sure are bold to get your thrills… Klein maintained his genial smile and asked, “And did you succeed?”

“Not yet… The way they looked at me during the last gathering was l-like they were looking at a corpse—as if they were wondering where to place their corresponding mystics… And then we danced a Spirit Dance and communicated with the world beyond with our senses, and t-then, I lost all my memories since then…” Adol’s body began to tremble uncontrollably.

Spirit Dance? It really is the Numinous Episcopate… This fellow became a test subject for his companions? Klein frowned and asked, “Your memory is disconnected from that point until now?”

According to the internal records of the Nighthawks, “Spirit Dances” originated from the ancient sacrificial dances that were popular in the Southern Continent. It was the ritual method that Death loved.

A “Spirit Dance” was to use the beat, rhythm, and movements to harmonize one’s spirituality so that it could interact with the natural environment so as to establish an interaction with the target of the prayer. Then, combined with a simple altar arrangement and corresponding honorific name, it can achieve the effects of a more complex ritualistic magic.

“Yes,” Adol softly replied before he suddenly raised his head. “What day is it today? What time is it now?”

“Friday morning, 1:12 am,” Klein answered based on his memory.

Adol subconsciously took a deep breath and said, “I’ve missed the newest gathering…

“They conduct a resurrection ritual outside Grimm Cemetery every Friday at three in the morning.”

Grimm Cemetery got its name because it wasn’t far from Grimm Garden Street.

“You still wish to go? Have you forgotten what had happened to you? Oh, you don’t actually remember, but you should ask your father, your mother, and servants,” Klein reminded the young man in front of him.

And I might not be able to help you any further… He added silently in his heart.

After this incident, he discovered another weakness of a Magician, which was the lack of an ability to deal with wraiths and shadow-related creatures. Only the control of fire barely counted. But after those creatures possessed a human body, exorcism and purification became a problem, unless he wanted to kill both the ghost and the human.

Of course, Klein wasn’t completely helpless in this aspect. He could conduct ritualistic magic to do similar things, but that would be very troublesome. It would easily expose his identity and was unsuited for actual combat.

After some thought, he had finally chosen to use Azik’s copper whistle to lure the wraith out. Then, he controlled the flames to complete the purification.

However, the level of damage wasn’t high. If he were to encounter a slightly more powerful wraith, it was possible that he was unable to take care of it.

I still lack items or charms that deal with undead creatures. If only I had the Sealed Artifact 3-0782, Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem… Klein’s thoughts were momentarily distracted.

Adol suddenly remembered his missing memories, and his face turned pale again. He answered with a trembling voice, “No, I don’t want to go! I never want to go again!”

“Very good.” Klein smiled in support.

Adol looked at his face which didn’t contain the slightest bit of fear, and subconsciously asked, “Aren’t you afraid after I’ve said so much?”

Klein stopped leaning against the wall and slowly straightened his body. He replied in a relaxed tone, “For a detective, they would rather not believe something unless there’s concrete evidence.”

He opened the door and walked out, wondering if he should make contact with the Numinous Episcopate. After all, this might involve the mystery of Mr. Azik’s life.

Adol looked at the private detective’s back in a daze. It took him quite some time to realize that there was no one in the washroom other than himself. Furthermore, the moonlight outside was so gloomy that it left long shadows, making it seem as though something invisible was lurking and watching.

He shivered and hurriedly shouted, “Wait for me!”

As he spoke, Adol quickened his pace, rushed out of the washroom, and followed closely behind Klein.

He knows fear and is apprehensive. That means he’s still redeemable… Klein mumbled before inserting his hands into his pockets.

When he returned to his bedroom, Stuart didn’t notice that Adol had already turned for the better. He still wore a serious expression from the ghost story he imagined himself, so he didn’t dare to walk around recklessly.

After Adol fell asleep again, Klein took out a copper penny and let it move between his fingers.

When it was close to 2:50 am, he threw up the coin and caught it firmly before standing up and whispered to Stuart, “I’ll be heading to the balcony to smoke a cigarette.”

“Be quick,” Stuart urged with somewhat taut nerves.

Klein put on his long gown and walked slowly out the door to the balcony at the end of the corridor. Then, he hid in the shadows.

Then, he pulled out a rather crudely cut paper figurine.

Pa!

Klein violently shook his wrist, causing the paper to make a crisp sound. The paper quickly expanded and turned into a human.

The person was about the same height as Klein, a wax statue intrinsically carved with the same exact facial features.

This was one of the uses of Paper Figurine Substitutes.

Soon, Klein focused his mind, clenched his right fist, and lightly tapped his body.

Without a sound, the figurine seemed to come alive. It even had a cigarette with a glowing red head in its mouth as the fragrance of tobacco wafted out.

“By delegating this figurine, this illusion can last half an hour… I’m really a magician!” Klein put on his gloves, reached out, and pushed himself over before sliding down the balcony stealthily, avoiding the patrolling security.

†

Outside Grimm Cemetery, in a secluded forest.

Klein stood among the treetops as he looked at the relatively open and flat area not too far away.

Around him were evergreen leaves and brown branches, but their surfaces were stained with gray dust.

From what Klein could see, there were about eight young men and women wearing long black robes dancing and twitching around a corpse.

The dance was full of rhythm, as though it had some sort of mysterious flavor to it.

The girl shook her long hair and the boy extended his hand while kneeling. This scene had a subtle connection to their surroundings. It was the rhythm of nature.

After they danced for three to four minutes, everything within a ten-meter radius was affected by a wild and confusing atmosphere. The atmosphere gradually turned sinister, and there was a hint of divinity mixed in it.

It really is a “Spirit Dance”… Ritualistic magic that even normal people can participate in… Klein cast his gaze away and looked at the man in black robes who was chanting an incantation beside the corpse.

Earlier, he was the one who was instructing those young boys and girls on how to perform the “Spirit Dance.”

He should be a member of the Numinous Episcopate, with a high probability of being a Beyonder… Klein nodded indiscernibly, intending to watch the resurrection ritual.

At this point, the dance reached its climax. The adult man in black lifted his head and took off his wig, revealing the strange tattoos engraved on his bald head.

He raised his hands and shouted, “Death!

“Honorable Death!

“Is about to return!”

After he finished shouting, the dancing stopped. The seven to eight youths stood on either side. They appeared to be in a daze, filled with anticipation, excitement, and fear.

Next, the man bent down and opened the iron cage at his feet, taking out a black object.

Klein looked over and saw that it was a green-eyed black cat.

Th-this works too? He was obviously stunned for a moment. Suddenly, he thought of the various folklore related to a black cat. For example, if a black cat which symbolized the evil emissary of hell jumped over a corpse, the corpse would be awakened.

This was the first time Klein was seeing someone use a similar method in a ritual.

The man stepped forward while restraining the black cat from struggling before throwing it at the corpse.

Meow!

All the black cat’s hairs stood on end as it hissed and leaped over the corpse.

At that moment, Klein felt like he could understand cat language. He believed that the cat must have said one word, “Fuck!”

Chapter 301 - Awakening

◆ ◆ ◆

Meow!

The black cat’s cry echoed in the open area that was surrounded by the secluded forest. Regardless of whether it was the adult black-robed man or the fifteen-or sixteen-year-old boys and girls, all of them simultaneously cast their gaze onto the corpse lying in the middle.

A gust of cold wind blew, and the black cat landed on the ground, staring at the human who had just thrown it. It kept flicking its tail around.

All of a sudden, its fur stood on end again. Then, exerting great force with its hind limbs, it jumped up and fled in another direction.

Unfortunately, whatever it did had failed to attract any attention. All the humans present had their attention focused on the motionless corpse.

Seconds turned to minutes, but the corpse didn’t undergo any anticipated changes.

“Another failure?” One of the teenagers moved closer and crouched down, poking at the dead man’s skin with his fingers.

“There’s no reaction.” He turned around halfway and spoke to the man in black and his companions.

At this moment, he felt a gust of wind hit his face from beneath him.

With a swoosh, the corpse sat up!

The youth was startled and immediately cheered in surprise, “It’s a success! It’s a success…”

Before he could finish his sentence, the corpse grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him into its arms. Then, it opened its mouth and bit down, producing a sound and causing blood to splatter.

“Ah! Help!” the youth screamed in horror and retreated with all his might, but he couldn’t break free.

The corpse raised its head, revealing rows of white teeth, as well as bits of flesh hanging between its teeth, and blood flowing from its mouth.

The black-robed man was stunned for a moment, then he took out a whistle that was brass in color. He put it in his mouth, and blew on it.

Then, he said in Hermes, “I command you in the name of Death!”

As his voice echoed in the air, the corpse stopped chewing and momentarily froze on the spot.

The youth, whose neck and shoulders had been mangled by the bite, similarly collapsed as if he had lost his soul. The dirt around his nether regions was completely moist.

“It really is possible…” the black-robed man muttered in pleasant surprise. He pointed at the corpse and once again said in Hermes, “Get up!”

The corpse abruptly stood up, then it threw back its shoulders before quickly running into the depths of the secluded forest.

“Come back!” the black-robed man cried out in surprise, but the corpse showed no signs of stopping.

He blew his whistle again and shouted with dignity, “I command you to return in the name of Death!”

With those words, the corpse disappeared into the woods.

"I ordered you to return…" the black-robed man stood rooted to the spot in stupefaction as he mumbled to himself in a daze.

In the woods, Klein held Azik's copper whistle and the matchbox in one hand. He kept lighting matchsticks and shook his wrist to extinguish them before throwing them to the ground.

During this process, he moved backwards in an arc.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

A corpse with a pale face and a foul stench rushed over. Its lifeless eyes stared straight at the ancient and exquisite copper whistle.

As Klein retreated, his cheeks puffed out, he aimed at the corpse and simulated the sound:

Bang!

The corpse suddenly staggered as a penetrating wound appeared in its chest.

Bang!

Klein puffed out his cheeks again and fired another Air Bullet.

Splat! The head of the corpse shattered as rotten liquid dripped from it incessantly.

However, that wasn't a fatal injury to the corpse. It only slowed down for a moment before it continued again.

Upon seeing this, Klein took a step back and snapped loudly.

Pa!

A bright flame rose from the ground, enveloping the corpse and igniting its outer garments.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The corpse rushed through the flames and continued to charge forward like a mad bull.

Pa! Pa! Pa! Klein kept snapping his fingers, causing red flames to appear on the ground, one after another.

The corpse didn't feel any pain as it passed through the flames, but gradually, its body began to burn, and the flames grew more and more intense. It gave off the strange feeling as though a candle was melting.

Finally, the corpse, which had turned into a torch, arrived in front of Klein as it clawed at him.

At the same time, a flame rose up and engulfed both him and Klein.

The corpse grabbed Klein's shoulder but only produced sparks.

Klein's figure dissipated in the red light and reappeared in the farthest burning pile.

At that point, the corpse seemed to have exhausted all of its strength and stopped struggling. It quickly melted under the dark green flames, turning into ashes and oil wax.

He's stronger than all the zombies and wraiths that I've met before. Well, not as good as Mr. Azik's descendant… If it weren't for me, they would all be dead here today. Klein shook his head and walked through the trees toward the open area.

At this moment, the black-robed man had already noticed the changes in the forest. Without any hesitation, he turned around and ran, while the seven to eight youngsters scattered in a flash. However, when they realized that they were the only ones in the area, they timidly stopped and returned to the original area where they gathered together.

Having just experienced the awakening of a corpse, and how the corpse had bitten one of the youths, they didn't dare to run away, alone, in the deep, dark night.

It would make the back of their necks feel cold.

They looked at each other. No one dared to help the youth who was badly mutilated in the neck and shoulders, afraid that he might turn into a zombie at any moment.

In the short silence that made their hearts beat like a drum, they saw a clown, wearing flashy clothes with red, yellow, and white paint covering his face, walking out from the forest.

This was an illusion that was personally created by Klein.

He surveyed his surroundings but didn't pursue the black-robed man. Instead, he asked in a hoarse voice, "Who was the one who presided over the ceremony?"

Who? It seemed as if the teenagers were still in a daze. It took them a few seconds before they pushed out a trembling boy who replied, "He… he's our language teacher in ancient Feysac, Kapusky Reid…

"He claimed to have a deep understanding of death and wanted to lead us in the search of the mysteries of immortality."

So he's a teacher from school… The mysteries of immortality? You really don't need to pay taxes to brag… Judging from his performance just now, this fellow shouldn't be a Spirit Medium. At the very most, he would be a Gravedigger. In fact, he might only be at Sequence 9, a Corpse Collector… Of course, he might not be from the Death pathway and simply joined the Numinous Episcopate because of his adoration… After Klein got the exact location where Kapusky stayed, he thought for a moment and said, "You guys can go back now. Don't get involved in this anymore. Don't leak this out.

"Otherwise, all of you will die."

Then, he emphasized again, “All of you will die.”

The young boys and girls who had been scared witless by what had just happened all frantically nodded. They prepared to leave with each other’s help.

At this moment, a young girl with smooth hair pointed at her companion who was moaning in pain on the ground and asked, “Will… will he be alright?”

“He won’t die for now, but you have to take him to a doctor. Say that he was bitten by a hyena that often eats rotting meat.” Klein ignored them and headed back into the woods.

The young man and woman looked at each other, and someone blurted out, “Ex-excuse me, may I ask, how we should address you?”

Klein smiled and deliberately misled him as he replied in a low voice, “I’m just a gatekeeper of hell.”

As he spoke, a mist spread out, and his figure disappeared from where he stood.

Of course, those were all illusions.

“A gatekeeper of hell?” The young men and women repeated the words softly, each having their own thoughts.

However, after a gust of bone-piercing cold wind blew past, they trembled once more, supported their companions, and left the place without daring to look back.

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This is a member of the Numinous Episcopate? What a disappointment… If he didn’t abandon his current identity, I would pay him a visit in the middle of the night to see if he knows anything. Yeah, I have to teach him a lesson so that he wouldn’t dare to bring trouble to the students again. Does he think Spirit Dances and resurrection rituals are child's play? Klein habitually judged the situation from a Nighthawk's standpoint.

Soon, he returned to Rogo Colloman's mansion and waited patiently for the bodyguards to pass by during their patrols.

As soon as he found an opportunity, he climbed over the fence and quickly followed the shadows to the house, then he quietly climbed up to the balcony.

At that moment, the figurine disguised as him was still smoking.

Pa! Klein snapped his fingers.

The figure in front of him turned into a thin piece of paper and floated onto his palm.

Compared to before, this piece of paper was covered with red, rusty marks and was no longer usable.

Klein didn't dare to throw it anywhere. He folded it and placed it in his pocket.

Having done all this, he sauntered back down the hall and into Adol's bedroom.

"What took you so long?" Stuart asked in a trembling voice.

He had gone to the door to inquire, and he had found Sherlock Moriarty smoking one cigarette after another. Due to his duty, he didn't dare leave the bedroom.

Klein laughed and replied, "Take a rest and relax. You can go too, I don't mind."

"I…" Just as Stuart was about to agree, he suddenly thought of something—he would end up being the only person on the balcony, surrounded by the dark night and without sufficient brightness. There would be a cold wind and an environment that always reminded one of a ghost story.

Therefore, he forced a smile and said, “It’s fine, I don’t need it.”

Klein smiled silently and sat down again, letting the reclining chair rock gently and slowly in the night.

This continued till daybreak. Nothing else happened.

When Adol woke up, he sat up in bed, lost in thought.

Klein didn’t say anything, but he swapped places with Kaslana and her assistant and slowly walked to the guest room to catch up on his sleep.

He was asleep when he heard Rogo Colloman exclaim in pleasant surprise, “Oh, my boy, you’re fine now?

“Holy Lord of Storms, I’ll donate 300 pounds to the Church!

“Y-you are telling me that they won’t kill you? It was all a misunderstanding?”

300 pounds? How extravagant… Klein rolled over and wrapped his arms around the soft, warm quilt while mumbling.

Then, he went back to sleep.

At noon, when Klein went downstairs to have a meal, Kaslana sat opposite him and asked with a slight frown, “What happened last night?”

“Nothing,” Klein answered simply, and then he laughed. “Does Adol waking up and going to the washroom count?”

Next to him, Stuart slowed down his actions and nodded in agreement.

She glanced at their faces, then she retracted her gaze and replied in a low voice, “No.”

The corner of Klein’s mouth curled up as he skillfully cut his steak.

Chapter 302 - A Clue

The detective, who had been on leave, returned to Grimm Garden Street shortly after Klein and the others had finished their lunch. This also meant that his assignment was over.

Due to the visible improvement in Adol's situation, Rogo Colloman was quite generous in the settlement of his pay, and he paid an additional fifty percent above the ten pounds which they had agreed upon.

As expected of a jewelry businessman to be this generous. However, compared to the other people in West Borough and Empress Borough, he isn't considered that rich. Grimm Garden Street is close to the suburbs, and it's not too far from the cemetery. I can reach it in ten minutes if I run at full speed… Eh, Miss Bodyguard, no—Miss Sharron, is highly likely of being a Sequence 5 Beyonder. She charges one thousand pounds for three days, while I, as a Sequence 7 Beyonder, am only worth fifteen pounds a day. There's still a big difference…

Of course, if I were to take on such missions every day, my income would be over 5,400 pounds a year, putting me at the top of the middle class. Even the top manager of the Backlund Bank makes 5,000 pounds a year… Heh heh, this is just pure fantasy. For most detectives, business comes sporadically… And the amount of Beyonder ingredients I need to advance to Sequence 6 is definitely more than 3,000 pounds. Just thinking about it makes my head hurt. For normal people, this is a huge sum of money, enough to sustain a good life!

The good news is that even if I grasp the "acting method," digesting the

Sequence 7 potion will take me somewhere between six months to three years. Even if I can quickly conclude the rules of a Magician, I'll only be able to push forward that lowest threshold by one to two months. I still have plenty of time to save up and search for clues to these ingredients…

Wait. Miss Justice still owes me, uh—my Blessed 5,000 pounds…

However, her financial situation isn't in good shape recently. It will be difficult for her to come up with a large sum of cash in the next few months…

Klein took the three five-pound notes and left West Borough with thoughts running through his mind.

After returning to Minsk Street, he quickly burned the used paper figurine and made another two more.

In the evening, he took the steam metro to the Backlund Bridge district, and according to the numbers provided in the newspapers, he knocked on the door of the house where the gathering would take place.

Similar to the past few times, he put on an iron mask that covered only the upper half of his face, wore a hooded black robe, and followed the attendant into the activity room, where only one candle burned quietly.

At first glance, Klein noticed that the number of Beyonders present at this gathering was less than half of what it used to be.

I came at the exact time. Are the others late? This time, Klein didn't change his gait and picked a corner before sitting down slowly.

After a few minutes, the old Eye of Wisdom cleared his throat and said, "Let's begin the gathering. The others shouldn't be coming."

After saying that, he gave a brief explanation.

"As the serial killer has yet to be found, the Nighthawks, Mandated

Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind, as well as a large number of MI9 Beyonders, are out doing large-scale investigations and searches.

"Under such a situation, it's very normal and understandable for those friends to be unwilling to go out and participate in gatherings.

"Frankly, I'm surprised by the number of people that showed up today."

Sure enough, a circle of Beyonders isn't isolated; they would also be affected by current affairs… Klein looked around and saw that the fat Apothecary wasn't absent. His heart immediately relaxed.

The Apothecary nudged the metal mask on his face, calling out without much hope, "Seeking to purchase the Spring of Elves marrow crystals. Price is negotiable."

"I have it," Klein said without hesitation.

He was worried that someone else might've found this Beyonder ingredient, thereby causing the price of his stock of goods to fall.

Although Beyonder ingredients were rare, and it was rare for items to reappear in independent circles, one could never be too careful.

"Seeking to purchase the Spring of Elves marrow crystals…" The Apothecary didn't seem to hear the response.

He was halfway through the sentence when it suddenly struck him. He turned his head to look at Klein and blurted, "You do?"

"Yes." Klein found his fiery gaze a little too overwhelming.

As he did so, he rolled up his black robe and took out an iron cigar case.

Pa! Klein opened the cigar case, revealing the faded, egg-shaped Spring of Elves marrow crystal.

"If you're worried, you can let the Old Mister Eye of Wisdom appraise it," Klein added in a low voice.

This wasn't really necessary because it was obvious if something was a Beyonder ingredient or not. It was also quickly identified if something was contaminated or not.

However, if one was lacking in mysticism knowledge, a Beyonder ingredient could very easily be mixed up with similar-looking ingredients. When that happened, one needed an appraisal.

The Apothecary looked like he was looking at a beautiful lady he had been yearning for all this time. He looked at the Beyonder ingredient in Klein's hands, mesmerized. After a few seconds, he shook his head and said, "No, there's no need! That's it! That's it!"

Klein curved the corner of his lips into a smile and named his price.

"300 pounds and clues to the Apothecary formula."

"Clues to the Apothecary formula… It's you!" The Apothecary was stunned for a moment before he finally understood who the man was.

It was the guy who made him bring the sedative for nothing!

Soon after, his heart pained, his regret similarly reaching its limit as he sighed emotionally. "You really are a lucky guy!

"Why didn't I choose that road of fortune…"

I'm the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck after all… Klein lampooned himself.

The Apothecary sighed and changed his posture.

"That's too expensive. 200 pounds and a clue to the formula."

"The clue to the formula is only a bonus because I cannot confirm its veracity. Therefore, 300 pounds, not a penny less, I believe it's needed elsewhere." Klein smiled. "This price is actually very fair. If it were anyone else, they might've offered 400 or even 500 pounds, and you might've even accepted that price."

“I’m not that foolish. I can still wait…” The apothecary grumbled before saying, “The clue can be verified by Old Man, uh—Old Mister Eye of Wisdom.”

“It must be something that exists objectively, something that has detailed information before I’m able to appraise it. Just a clue isn’t among these conditions,” Eye of Wisdom said.

Divination, on the other hand, can roughly determine whether the clue is effective as long as it doesn’t involve powers two or three Sequences above myself… Klein silently said to himself.

However, he wouldn’t reveal his expertise in divination at a Beyonder gathering.

“Alright then… 300 pounds plus the clue. You lucked out!” The Apothecary took a deep breath and pulled out a thick wad of cash. He then counted the corresponding amount and then asked the attendant to bring him a pen and paper before he started writing.

After he was done writing the clue, he crumpled the paper into a ball and handed it along with the cash and some items to the attendant.

Klein was suddenly stunned when he saw the attendant walk over.

In addition to the cash and clue, there were also four glass tubes filled with what seemed to be pure liquids.

“What are these?” Klein asked, perplexed.

“Have you forgotten? Your sedative, the sedative I specially concocted. It’s ten soli a bottle, two pounds for four, so the cash there is 298 pounds,” answered the Apothecary. “If you’re worried about my sedative, you can have it appraised.”

I really forgot… I did all of that to gain Miss Sharron’s trust, and now that she’s not here, well… It’s fine; maybe a sedative would be able to handle some unexpected situations… Klein stopped talking, took out the Spring of Elves marrow crystal, took the items, counted the cash in front of everyone, and determined their authenticity with the faint candlelight.

A total of 298 pounds… That's right… Seeing that his wallet could no longer hold any more cash, Klein could only roll up the bills and slip them into his pocket.

After putting away the sedative, he unfolded the note and glanced at the clue.

"On the south side of the Bridge, on Rose Street, at the Harvest Church, find Bishop Utravsky. As long as you help him complete a mission, you'll be able to get the Apothecary formula."

Harvest Church. That's one of the few cathedrals of the Church of Earth Mother in the kingdom. This Church also grasps two Beyonder pathways: "Planter" and "Apothecary"… The clues match well… Klein thought as he refolded the note.

As the gathering continued, it was unknown whether the female Beyonder with the Artisan backing her wasn't present, or she just didn't have any new Beyonder weapons to sell. There were no signs of her, leaving Klein disappointed. Now that he had 509 pounds in hand, he wanted to equip himself nicely.

After many transactions were aborted, a man sitting on a stool said in a low voice, "A friend of mine was unfortunately discovered in this investigation. He's imprisoned in a particular Lord of Storms cathedral by the Mandated Punishers. I wish to hire a few helpers to rescue him."

Eye of Wisdom immediately replied, "Stray Dog, give up that thought! A cathedral's Mandated Punishers and Sealed Artifacts are enough to destroy all of us here.

"Your friend's fate has already been decided. Don't let yourself be trapped in the same situation."

Stray Dog looked around and realized that no one responded to his request. He couldn't help but thump his thigh, growling, "But, what did he do wrong?

"He's an excellent physician. He's saved a lot of patients and has never hurt anyone! Just because he consumed a potion and became a Beyonder, he's to be imprisoned in a place where the sun never shines. He'll even become an experimental subject for the Mandated Punishers?

"Why?

"Why…"

Stray Dog's agonized questions echoed in the room. Even the Apothecary, who couldn't keep his mouth shut, remained silent.

Sigh… Klein, a former official Beyonder, could only sigh deeply in his heart.

Without the spread of the "acting method," wild Beyonders are ticking time bombs…

But if the "acting method" is popularized, then the situation would become even more chaotic and bloody… After all, there are the Laws of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation…

In this heavy atmosphere, the gathering came to an end. Klein, who had gotten nothing else, spoke again.

"Who has revolvers and bullets that come augmented with different Beyonder effects?

"For example, purification, demon-hunting, etc."

He didn't specifically fix the caliber of the bullets because he didn't have a gun yet. He could simply wait until he bought the bullets before matching the corresponding gun.

In the midst of the silence, a female Beyonder sitting in the same corner replied in a low voice, “I can help you ask, and I’ll give you the answer at the next gathering.”

It seemed to be the lady with the Artisan backing her… Klein sighed.

“Alright.”

After the gathering ended, he didn’t return to Minsk Street directly. Instead, he went to East Borough and changed his clothes, heading to the border between North Borough and Hillston Borough.

It was where the suspected member of the Numinous Episcopate, Kapusky Reid, lived.

Chapter 303 - Rookie

◆

North Borough, Aulka Street.

Kapusky Reid was sitting in a reclining chair in his activity room, lost in thought. In front of him was a fireplace burning with charcoal.

As a senior educator at a public school, he received a salary of more than four pounds a week, which was enough for a bachelor like him to live quite well, but the clothes he wore at home were patched up, and the teacups on the table looked extremely simple.

Without taking off his wig, the most striking thing about Kapusky was his high cheekbones and puffed-up chest—a deformity in which the sternum protruded outwards.

On his knee was a book of poems in ancient Feysac, but he hadn’t flipped a single page even after some time had passed.

Kapusky’s eyes were unfocused as he stared blankly when he suddenly heard a light chuckle in his ear.

“I’m very curious as to why you didn’t run and chose to remain at home. Aren’t you afraid of the police coming for you?”

The voice was low and hoarse, like a boy whose voice was cracking during puberty.

Kapusky shuddered and almost jumped out of his reclining chair.

He abruptly turned his head to look and saw that there was a figure sitting on the sofa a few steps away from him!

The figure wore summer wear—a linen shirt and light trousers. Its face was hazy and indistinct.

“Wh-who are you? What are you doing here?” Kapusky asked immediately as he gripped the armrest.

Klein, who had used his hallucination powers, leaned back, crossed his hands, and leisurely said, “Just last night, heh, it should be earlier this morning, I saved all of you.”

“Saved us?” Kapusky relaxed a little when he realized that the intruder didn’t seem to mean any harm. “Y-you’re that person in the forest? You took care of the corpse we awakened?”

As he spoke, he moved awkwardly, showing obvious fear.

He was able to infiltrate without me realizing it while I was awake. I definitely wouldn’t be able to resist… Such thoughts quickly flashed through Kapusky’s mind.

“You guys are quite lucky that I happened to pass by; otherwise, there would only be corpses left strewn on the ground in the forest—corpses that would’ve been bitten to shreds.” Klein laughed. “Answer my previous question, I’m very curious why you stayed at home. Do you know what crimes you’ve committed?”

From the way that he had conducted the resurrection ritual and the reaction he had before and after the ritual, Klein had confirmed that Kapusky was a rookie who didn’t have the means to hide his true emotions. Therefore, he intended to only use Spirit Vision and interrogation to get to the bottom of the matter. At most, he would verify it with divination at the end.

“I-I know, secretly buying corpses and robbing corpses from tombs. These are all crimes that can land me in jail for more than ten years. Moreover, I’ll definitely be punished by the Church.” Kapusky, who didn't look thirty, drew a breath and said with a wry smile, "However, as long as I didn't cause too much trouble, those children and their parents wouldn't snitch on me because they also did the same thing. Even if they wanted to get a lighter sentence by helping the investigation by turning themselves in, they would still end up in jail for some time."

"Heh." Kapusky gave a self-deprecating laugh. "Some of the children have already told their parents who I am. They've gotten gangsters to warn me to resign within a week and stay away from school. I agreed."

Klein gently nodded his head.

"It's a good thing to change environments. Of course, don't do similar things again. Bewitching ignorant children to commit crimes is a heinous act."

"I won't, never again. I never imagined that it would be that dangerous. I just saw that they had the same interests as I did which was why I wanted to teach them and lead them to search for the secrets of immortality. As for digging graves, many doctors did it a long time ago." Kapusky sighed with some lingering fear.

The color of his emotions matches his current state of mind… From the sound of it, he doesn't seem to be a member of the Numinous Episcopate… Klein thought for a moment, then he bluntly asked, "Where did you learn the Spirit Dance from?"

"Spirit Dance? Ah, I usually call it the Dance of Death." Kapusky was taken aback at first before he came to a realization. "An old gentleman taught it to me."

"An old gentleman?" Klein pressed.

Kapusky's mind turned adrift as he recalled his memories.

"He was a tramp. He fainted in front of my house because of a serious illness.

"At the time, I didn't know that he was ill. I thought he had simply fallen unconscious, so I helped him home. I gave him a heated towel and applied some ointment for him.

"After he woke up, he told me not to send him to a hospital or clinic and that death was not the end.

"I experienced the deaths of my parents and several relatives and was very interested in such things. So, I chatted with him and found out that he had profound knowledge and an admirable philosophy in this area. He seemed to be very satisfied with my curiosity and even performed a miracle of killing a mosquito and waking it up."

This introduction… I've read at least ten novels with similar openings in my previous life. They were all novels about bringing an old grandpa, who was on the brink of death, home out of kindness, only to have a fortuitous encounter… Klein's mouth twitched.

"So, you left him at home?"

Kapusky nodded solemnly and said, "Yes. If it wasn't for the lack of time, I would have even wanted to become his student.

"During those few days, he taught me a lot of knowledge and the Dance of Death. Unfortunately, this period of time was too brief. As soon as I built momentum, he died, leaving behind only a copper whistle."

Before he finished his sentence, Kapusky took out an exquisite copper whistle that didn't seem old.

"This is it."

I have one too… It's probably at the Ancestor grade though… Klein lampooned, and he thoughtfully asked, "How long ago was this? What did he look like? Where did you bury him?"

"Half a year ago. His most obvious feature was his graying hair and red spots on the side of his face. He told me to bury him in the garden out back." Kapusky did a calculation of the dates.

It's not Mr. Azik, but the chances are that he's a member of the Numinous Episcopate and not someone of a low Sequence… Klein changed the subject and asked, "Apart from the Spirit Dance, you also learned the resurrection ritual?"

"I've only learned half of that ritual. I used some scattered knowledge and folklore to slowly improve it bit by bit," Kapusky answered very honestly.

Improved it based on folklore? Oh, that poor black cat, may the Goddess bless you… Klein resisted the urge to draw a crimson moon on his chest.

"What else?" he pressed.

"Yes, and this copper whistle. I think it's the key to communicating with the world beyond our senses." Kapusky raised it and blew at it, sighing. "Every time I finish blowing it, I can feel the surroundings turn cold. It's as if someone is watching me and tugging at me…"

While he was speaking, Klein, who had his Spirit Vision activated, saw water patterns ripple out from the ground. A cold air spread out alongside it, and the fire and light dimmed a little.

Next, a skull with three protruding, unfocused eyes emerged from the ground. Around the skull, there were many black jointed tentacles.

A tentacle reached out, touching Kapusky's leg and tugged at his clothes from time to time, appearing rather impatient. However, Kapusky didn't respond at all, as though he hadn't noticed.

Is this a messenger? The copper whistle is used to summon their corresponding messengers… What's the meaning of you summoning it without giving it a letter? Klein was stunned seeing this scene.

At that moment, Kapusky looked at him excitedly.

“Did you feel it? The surroundings turned cold! The gas lamps have dimmed too!

“I’m not lying! Someone is watching me and tugging at me!”

The horrific-looking messenger tried to touch Kapusky, over and over again, but in the end, it didn’t receive a letter and went back “underground” in resignation.

The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched slightly as he saw this scene. He whispered to himself in his heart, I take back what I said about him. He’s not a rookie, he’s an utter noob.

He’s not even a Beyonder!

I had thought that he was someone who had just stepped through the door of mysticism to learn the basics, but now, it seems like he hasn’t even found the location of the door…

Corpse Collectors of the Death Sequence pathway can all see ghosts and spirit bodies directly…

Combined with how Kapusky had acted by using the copper whistle to command the zombie after the ritual, Klein was convinced that he wasn’t lying. He sighed silently.

Then, he thought of a question, If I were to write a note and hand it to that messenger, where would it be delivered?

A true member of the Numinous Episcopate? Some senior member?

Suppressing this thought, Klein nodded and said, “It has indeed turned cold.”

After replying, he quickly changed the topic. “Have you felt anything unusual since the old gentleman’s death?”

“Eh… Not before, but in the last two weeks, I’d have the occasional feeling that someone around me is like a corpse—the kind that can be awoken.” Kapusky asked feeling both curious and afraid, “Is it a hallucination?”

It’s in line with what Adol said. He isn’t lying… Klein stole a glance at the colors of Kapusky’s aura and sincerely told him, “I suggest that you go to a cathedral at least three times a week for the next two months, attend mass, and listen to preachings.

“If you do not wish to do so, you can first prepare a grave for yourself.”

“Alright…” Kapusky answered, feeling disappointed.

He thought that it was a manifestation of his improvement!

Klein contemplated for a moment and said in a commanding tone, “Take me to the old gentleman’s corpse.”

“Ah? Okay.” Kapusky was about to refuse, but then he instantly recognized the reality of the situation he was in.

He picked up his tools and led Klein out the back door from the kitchen, into a withered garden, and stopped in front of a slanted tree.

Klein stood by his side and watched Kapusky skillfully dig through the dirt, revealing the slate underneath.

Having finished with the upper layer, Kapusky used his tools to pry open the slate.

Oof!

The slate was pressed against the soil that had been dug out just moments ago. The not-so-deep tomb was veiled in the crimson moon’s luster that faintly penetrated through the clouds.

Kapusky subconsciously looked over when he suddenly let out a miserable scream, retreated a few steps, and fell to the ground.

There was no rotting corpse or bones in the tomb. The bottom layer was littered with white feathers, dyed in yellow oil!

Chapter 304 - Feathers

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White Feathers?

Looking at the corpseless grave, Klein suddenly thought of a word: "Angel!"

In the canon of the seven major Churches, they were filled with legends of Angels and Saints. The former had one characteristic—a pair of pure white wings on its back, and as many as two, three, or even six pairs of pure white wings.

However, in the blink of an eye, Klein remembered something else

Mr. Azik had once described his dream to him—one that seemed to indicate his different lives.

One of the scenes was inside a dark mausoleum. There were many opened ancient coffins beside him, and in the coffins, there were corpses with white feathers growing from their backs!

Is this a special characteristic of the Death pathway, or a strange phenomenon caused by the Numinous Episcopate? Klein didn't say a word as he restrained his emotions and calmly looked at the white feathers stained with yellowish oil at the bottom of the grave.

His initial judgment was that the old gentleman wasn't an angel, as the terrifying Sequence 2, or even Sequence 1 Beyonders, would certainly produce intense effects on their surroundings when they died. For example, the Holy Artifact, the ashes of a Saint which had been stored behind Tingen City's Chanis Gate, would extend almost invisible thin, black, and cold lines so as to seal the people and things around it.

Of course, it's also possible that he didn't actually die… He's like Mr. Azik? Klein bent down and picked up three white feathers with his black-gloved right hand.

He planned to do some divination above the gray fog when he returned home.

At that moment, Kapusky came to his senses, scrambled to Klein's side, and looked at the grave with a hint of fear.

"Where's the body?"

Klein looked at him and said in a low voice, "Maybe he left by himself"

"He left by himself…" Kapusky repeated in horror, now fully aware of how terrible it was for the dead to awaken.

His legs trembled as he muttered to himself, "B-but I didn't use the resurrection ritual on him."

Klein turned around and looked at him for a few seconds.

"Death is not the end."

"Death is not the end… Death is not the end…" Kapusky was quite frightened by his own beliefs as he blurted out, "W-will he come back?"

Well, the copper whistle had summoned a messenger which probably corresponds to the old gentleman. In other words, by giving the messenger a letter, it is equivalent to sending a letter to the old gentleman—a man who has been dead for almost half a year… Heh, I wonder where he went and what kind of state he's in… In response to Kapusky's question, Klein gave him an indifferent reminder.

"Don't blow that copper whistle again."

“You mean the copper whistle will draw him back?” Kapusky asked in horror.

Before Klein could reply, he asked again, “C-can you help me throw this copper whistle into the Tussock River?

“If you can’t, I-I’ll do it myself.”

Weren’t you interested in the philosophy of death? Klein lampooned as he reached out to take Kapusky’s copper whistle.

He was planning on sending the dead man a letter when the conditions were right to see what would happen.

Of course, the prerequisite for all of this was that he was certain that there wasn’t too much danger involved.

After instructing Kapusky to fill up the grave again, Klein had a brief exchange with him about the “Spirit Dance” and the corresponding mysticism knowledge, enriching his own knowledge. He also asked Kapusky in detail about how he laid the old gentleman’s body, facing down, in accordance with his last words.

Under certain special circumstances, using “Spirit Dance” to replace part of the cumbersome setup for ritualistic magic would be more effective and simple… Seeing that he had achieved his goal, Klein warned Kapusky to stop dabbling with the so-called resurrection rituals.

Then, he left the street through the garden and took a long detour via carriage to East Borough.

After changing back into his previous clothes, he returned to Minsk Street and entered his bedroom. After a series of actions, he carried the three white feathers and Kapusky’s copper whistle above the gray fog.

Seated in The Fool’s high back chair, Klein conjured pen and a paper. He wrote a divination statement he had long thought of: “Its origins.”

Then, he held the three white feathers and leaned back in his chair.

As he chanted silently, Klein entered a dreamland. It was a blurry grayish-white all around him.

In this world, there was rich darkness without any light. Suddenly, the darkness was dyed with a crimson shade. A thin, pale hand reached out of the yellowish-brown soil.

A figure slowly got up. He didn't lift the stone slab, but he pierced through the soil directly.

Under the crimson red moonlight, the clothes on the figure's back were tattered, and white feathers grew out one after another.

The white-haired man tilted his head, revealing the red spots on his face, as well as his blank, emotionless eyes.

It began to walk, struggling through the surrounding fences, heading deeper into the darkness until it disappeared far away.

The dream shattered and Klein woke up.

White feathers sprouted from the back of the corpse… Its state resembles Miss Sharron's, but it's clearly different as well. It gave off a very heavy and corporeal feeling… It seemed to be phasing between a human's body and a spirit's body in a semi-natural and incomplete transformation? An envoy that's connected to the real world and the spirit world and Underworld? Klein tapped the edge of the long table and thought for quite a while.

Then, he divined whether there was any danger in using the copper whistle he received from Kapusky at that very moment and received a positive answer. Furthermore, the spirit pendulum moved with great amplitude and high frequencies.

It's a pity that I can't directly use the copper whistle above the gray fog. The messenger wouldn't be able to enter at all; otherwise, there wouldn't be any danger… After muttering to himself, Klein descended through the gray fog and returned to the real world.

†

Early morning, in the relatively refreshing woods in Empress Borough.

The Apothecary, with a round face who was in his thirties, appeared in a secluded corner and stored the herbs that he had secretly planted into a leather bag that he carried around with him.

After completing the mission for the day, he straightened his back, and he began to stretch his body. He mumbled to himself in great satisfaction, "Sure enough, my physical constitution has improved. I'm no longer like what I was before where I was relatively resistant to poisonous elements.

"However… Why is my Sequence 8 Beast Tamer? What does this have to do with Apothecary?

"Well, an Apothecary tames and uses plants and parts of animals that have lost their lives, while a Beast Tamer tames and uses living animals. Does it include Beyonder creatures?

"Then, will my Sequence 7 be able to tame and use humans?

"The old geezer didn't even tell me the name of Sequence 7, nor did he give me the formula. When I stabilize, I'll have to try contacting him."

The Apothecary began punching and kicking to get used to his strengthened body. He only stopped when he was utterly exhausted.

Whoosh… While panting, he began to consider a serious problem: How should a Beast Tamer act?

"Beast Tamer… how should it be done? Look for animals and tame them?" As the Apothecary was mumbling to himself, he suddenly sensed something and looked towards the artificial lake.

There was a huge golden retriever running happily.

The large golden retriever seemed to notice his gaze as it suddenly turned its head to look at him.

As their gazes met in midair, the large golden retriever froze for a moment. Then, it nimbly turned around and ran away, disappearing without a trace.

†

In the Hall family's luxurious villa.

Susie returned to a piano room and sat beside Audrey's feet, her tongue hanging out as she panted heavily.

It waited until the blonde girl finished playing a song before it said in fear, "Audrey, I met a scary guy.

"His eyes were scary!"

"Is that so? What did he want to do to you?" Audrey asked, curious and concerned.

Susie thought for a moment and said, "I don't know either. In short, he's very dangerous. That was my intuition."

"What does he look like?" Audrey considered letting the guards and attendants warn the man.

"I didn't see him clearly. I feel that he is my natural enemy!" Susie replied in all seriousness.

Your natural enemy? A dog-type nemesis? Audrey gave a reserved smile.

"Susie, don't go into those woods for now."

"Woof, Audrey, were you in a bad mood? I could tell from your piano music," Susie asked.

Audrey nodded gently and said, "Yea… I just received word from Glaint that Fors and Xio wanted to inform me that this evening's gathering has been canceled. I was originally planning to exchange some Beyonder ingredients for you."

And also attempt to come into contact with people from the Psychology Alchemists… she added silently in her heart.

"Why?" Susie asked, puzzled.

Audrey thought for a moment before replying, "It's said to be a result of the serial murders."

†

On Saturday morning, Backlund's air was as bad as usual.

Klein was trying to make a noodle dish which he loved to eat as a child. For this, he bought higher quality flour, added water and sugar, and mixed it to form a pot of thin "paste."

Then, he poured oil into the pot and moistened the surface.

After the oil heated up, he scooped up some of the flour paste with his soup spoon and poured it to the side of the pot, spreading it thin.

Amidst the sizzling sounds, he spread out several flat pieces of bread, and the fragrance of the flour gradually emanated.

When he was almost done, he removed the soft flat pieces of bread, one by one, and put them on the plate. Then, he added water and turned the remaining materials into batter.

As soon as he returned to the dining room with the flat bread and "paste," Klein impatiently tore off a piece and stuffed it into his mouth.

The flat piece of bread only had a rich fragrance of wheat and a sweet taste that whetted his appetite. It was simple and plain, but it was exceptionally delicious.

It's the taste from my memories… Klein quickly ate, occasionally drinking a mouthful of the paste.

As he was almost done eating and started to slow down, the doorbell suddenly rang.

A new commission? Klein took off his napkin, wiped his hands, and got up to go to the door.

Before he touched the handle, the image of a visitor appeared in his mind.

It was a middle-aged gentleman with white sideburns, a thin face, and an outstanding temperament.

It was the private detective, Isengard Stanton, who could get an invitation from the police!

Why is he here? Klein opened the door in puzzlement and asked with a smile, "Good morning, Mr. Stanton. Is there something?"

Isengard took off his half top hat and smiled.

"Good morning, Mr. Moriarty. I wish to work with you. I believe you're an excellent detective. After all, you previously managed to lead your investigations all the way to East Balam Dock and the Dock Union all by yourself."

"Cooperate?" Klein didn't hide his surprise.

Isengard tapped his black cane and replied in a deep voice, "To find the serial killer behind the recent chain of serial murders.

"The police has already offered a reward of 2,000 pounds."

Chapter 305 - The Detective Exchange

◆ ◆ ◆

2,000 pounds? That’s enough to drive all the bounty hunters and private detectives in Backlund crazy! This isn’t like Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos who was out at sea for extended periods of time and had a bunch of subordinates. It’s a bounty that can easily be touched if one reaches out…

Well, a pirate with combat prowess comparable to a Sequence 5 was worth 10,000 gold pounds, and a Sequence 6 murderer would have to be at the value of 3,000 to 4,000 pounds to be reasonable… Could it be that the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers have misjudged the serial killer to be a Sequence 7, rather than a quasi-expert who is about to advance to Sequence 5?

It’s very possible that the ritual that The Sun mentioned is rather ancient. Perhaps after the Cataclysm, it has rarely appeared again, and the few great Churches and military don’t have any information regarding this… There’s an underlying problem. The Church of the Goddess, the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, as well as the Augustus royal family was said to have risen from the Cataclysm. It’s reasonable if they aren’t aware of the past, but the Church of Storms have always insisted that they are one of the oldest… Could it be that their age is referring to a period of time after the devils retreated back into the Abyss?

After hearing Isengard Stanton’s words, the first thing that flashed across Klein’s mind was to assess the amount of the bounty, and then he allowed his mind to wander and made many connections.

"What's your opinion?" Isengard noticed that Sherlock Moriarty seemed distracted and pressed him.

My opinion? Klein was momentarily stumped.

A normal private detective would've definitely agreed, both because of the bounty and because of the well-known detective in front of him. A friendship with Isengard would provide him with great benefits in the detective circles.

The problem, however, was that Klein wasn't a normal private detective. He was worried that he would run into the Nighthawks who were in charge of the investigation.

Although I now have a beard, glasses, and a change in hairstyle, and the few Nighthawks who have seen me only a few times wouldn't recognize me, what if it was Madam Daly? However, it also isn't right to turn down the request as that wouldn't make sense. It would appear bizarre and suspicious… Furthermore, I do hope to catch that Devil as soon as possible. Otherwise, I don't know how many innocent girls will be killed… Klein hesitated for a few seconds, then he smiled.

"I've recently taken on a very troublesome case. I'm afraid I don't have much spare time."

Before Isengard Stanton could speak up, he added, "I can participate in the discussion and help to look through the information and analyze the clues, but I don't think I'll make any specific investigations."

I'll do a divination later. If there's a problem, I'll also hold back from sharing my opinion and purely be a spectator… As he spoke, Klein quickly formulated a plan.

Holding the black cane in his hand, Isengard pondered for a moment and said, "No problem.

"I've gathered more than a dozen detectives and have enough people to perform the investigation. What I admire the most about you is your excellent reasoning and analytical skills. Without as many resources as me, you actually managed to go all the way to the East Balam Dock and went to the Dock Union.

"If we do capture the criminal and receive the bounty, I'll distribute the rewards according to everyone's contribution in a reasonable manner. Trust me, I have some credibility in this business."

"Alright, I hope for a pleasant partnership." Klein reached out with his right hand and shook it, feeling the dry warmth of Isengard's palm.

It wasn't easy for a middle-aged gentleman in his forties or fifties to maintain such a warmth in Backlund's late autumn. This added to Klein's suspicions that Isengard was a Beyonder.

"Likewise." Isengard smiled and nodded.

At that moment, Klein realized that he was being somewhat impolite, so he smiled and said, "Sorry, I forgot to invite you in, let's talk about this over coffee and tea?"

"Thank you for the offer. I've already arranged for the detectives to come to my house at nine in the morning to discuss the case. My assistant is waiting for them there." Isengard took out a marvel of mechanical beauty—a silver pocket watch with complicated engravings—opened it, and he said, "We need to head over there to meet them. Will that be a problem?"

"Not at all. Let me use the bathroom first and have a change of clothes." At this moment, Klein suddenly rediscovered the feeling of being a Nighthawk again—striking evil down, maintaining order, and protecting the people.

In the bathroom, Klein went above the gray fog and received an acceptable answer through divination. He quickly returned to the real world, put on his coat and hat, took his cane, and followed Isengard into a rental carriage where he sat beside him.

Isengard looked at him and asked while seemingly in thought, “I’m very curious about how you managed to discover that Siber’s death was related to the Dock Union at East Balam Docks?”

I didn’t discover it… It’s a misunderstanding… Klein considered the question seriously to fabricate a lie.

With a smile on his face, he answered vaguely, “The crux of the investigation was to first determine that Siber’s death was done by a copycat. This point was all thanks Reporter Mike Joseph. After confirming this, using the clues about Siber’s route from Golden Rose, together with other clues, I had a matching guess, so I disguised myself as a reporter to perform the investigations.”

Isengard nodded slightly, and without wasting any more time on the subject, he went on to give a more detailed account of the serial murders than the newspaper had described, especially the latest case.

Time flew by as the discussion and exchange progressed. The carriage arrived at a slightly old building in the Hillston Borough.

The house’s lighting wasn’t very good. Even though there wasn’t much fog in Backlund today, it remained rather gloomy. Isengard Stanton led Klein through the spacious living room and into the activity room where the fireplace had been lit.

Klein looked around and saw about sixteen detectives, who had filled every available seat in the activity room.

“Sherlock?” A surprised voice sounded; it seemed to be very familiar with Klein.

Who is it? Klein looked over in surprise and realized that Detective Stuart, who he had just bade farewell yesterday, was actually here.

He carefully looked around and recognized Detective Kaslana, who had been protecting Adol, and her assistant, Lydia.

"What a coincidence." The corners of Klein's mouth curled up into a smile as he approached Stuart.

Stuart squeezed to the side, vacating half of his seat, and said with a pat:

"Maybe it's not a coincidence. I've read about it in a magazine before. There's a psychological phenomenon called synchronicity. Just thinking about it can make it happen. Haha, that's a joke."

At this point, Isengard introduced Klein to the detectives present, "This is Mr. Sherlock Moriarty, an excellent detective."

With his endorsement, Kaslana and the others looked at Klein with much more trust than before, believing him to be an outstanding private detective.

Klein nodded in response, sat down next to Stuart, and casually asked, "Is your commission over?"

"Yes, Adol's situation has improved, and something seemed to happen to that 'bad company' of his, and they're unable to threaten him any further, so we lost our jobs." Stuart laughed and said, "I was planning to rest for a few days, but Mr. Stanton summoned me, so I came to take a look. Actually, this is also good, as I really don't like to take on strange, scary cases. Oh, scary as in those with paranormal elements. Compared to those, I'm more willing to take on murder cases!"

After an assistant had poured each of them a cup of coffee or tea and distributed the information, Isengard sat down in a reclining chair, took out his pipe, and slowly rubbed it.

"I don't think any of you would be unfamiliar with this recent chain of serial murders. Do you have any thoughts on this case? Speak out so that we can engage in a discussion over it."

Stuart, whose face was thin and had a tiny mustache, raised his hand and spoke first.

"I just read through the information and discovered that the police didn't start investigating the case based on the identity of the victim.

"I don't think the criminal could've figured out with his eyes if the victim was once a street girl. He must've had contact with them. This is such an important clue, but the police actually missed it! God, this is unbelievable!"

That criminal most likely recognized the victim with the naked eye… Klein muttered to himself.

The majority of the private detectives echoed Stuart's doubts. Only Kaslana, Isengard, and a few others remained silent.

"This is a very important direction. Stuart, get a few friends to continue this line of investigation." When the discussion subsided, Isengard calmly gave a comment.

In the time that followed, the detectives argued, raised their voice to retort, stood up at times in order to pace around to collect their thoughts. During this whole time, Klein listened without comment.

When the exchange was almost over, he suddenly raised his hand and said, "I want information on the unsolved serial murders in the last twenty years spanning across Backlund and even the entire kingdom."

The room suddenly fell silent for a few seconds, and most of the private detectives were momentarily unable to understand Klein's intentions and thoughts.

Isengard put his pipe to his nose, inhaled its scent, and said thoughtfully, "You think that this isn't the murderer's first series of crimes?

"You suspect him of having committed similar crimes before, even if the modus operandi is different?"

It isn't a suspicion, but almost a certainty… Klein replied in his heart.

This was his reasoning based on the information provided by The Sun.

Since the killer was working hard to advance from Sequence 6 to Sequence 5, what did he do at Sequence 7 as a serial killer?

If he hadn't committed similar crimes, it would've been difficult for him to digest the potion. Even with the accumulation of time, where there was a significant chance of losing control when advancing from Sequence 7 to Sequence 6. Furthermore, there was a high risk for Beyonders in the Abyss pathway to lose control.

Hence, Klein decided, that regardless of whether the murderer knew the "acting method," he must've done serial murders during his time as a Sequence 7 for various reasons.

This way, even if the process of digesting the Sequence 7 potion wouldn't take years to complete, together with Sequence 6, twenty years would be quite a reasonable limit. After all, if one was too old, regardless of whether one had digested the potion or not, advancing to the next Sequence would've been too dangerous. As the ritual progressed, the person would become increasingly insane, leaving behind obvious clues.

At the current stage, the murderer is calm and has the ability to interfere with divination and tracking. There were almost no loopholes, but he might not have been the same during his early days of inexperience!

When he first completed a serial murder case, there was a high chance that he wasn't that cautious!

This was the follow up which would provide the best clues!

Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, but he nodded and replied, "That criminal's modus operandi doesn't make him seem like a rookie.

"I have reason to believe that he has done such cases before!

“By combining the past and the present, we’re more likely to grasp the crux of the problem.”

Hearing his answer, the detectives whispered to each other in discussion. After a brief silence from Isengard, he sincerely praised, “A brilliant idea!”

Chapter 306 - Giant Bishop

◆

In the evening, Klein sat down on a reclining chair in his activity room. Warmed by the fireplace, he picked up the information that Isengard's assistant had just delivered.

As soon as his idea received praise from the great detective in the morning, Kaslana immediately claimed that she needed the same piece of information. Stuart had murmured that he had believed Klein was an excellent detective, given his calmness and composure when he faced Adol's case, but he hadn't expected him to be that outstanding.

At the same time, he told Klein that if he needed help, he could find him. He knew a lot of people in the detective circles in Backlund.

Isengard Stanton also promised to immediately contact the police and try to provide the corresponding information to the detectives who needed it before nightfall.

He truly was very trustworthy.

At the next Tarot Club, I'll have to ask Little Sun through The World about the characteristics of Sequence 6 Devil and what powers the Beyonders of this Sequence possess… I didn't plan on involving myself previously, so I had forgotten to gather the corresponding amount of information. However, since I've decided to help, it's best to be prepared. At the very least, I would know what's happening when danger rears its head… Klein thought for a few seconds, then he lowered his head and, under the light of the gas lamp, began to look through the unsolved serial murders in the last twenty years of the

Loen Kingdom.

There were fewer than he had expected.

There were a total of four in Backlund, five in the other cities, a total of nine in total!

Yeah, although this world doesn't have the concept of DNA yet and lacks many necessary detective skills, with the impetus of the Emperor, there's already a rudimentary form of fingerprint investigations. Furthermore, there's mediumship, divination, dream entry, and other Beyonder methods! The police usually wouldn't seek out Beyonder teams from the three major Churches for individual murder cases that don't involve the nobles, the rich, or officials. However, a serial killer has very negative repercussions. It easily causes panic, so they'll definitely make the wisest choice… This way, having only a few unsolved serial murders in the past twenty years is reasonable and logical. Klein quickly understood the reason.

He gathered his thoughts and began flipping through the cases, one after another.

In the absence of sufficient information to perform a divination, he had initially selected two serial killings that might be related to the current incident and intended to use them as an initial starting point.

One case occurred four years ago. There were five victims, all single prostitutes with a child. They had been mistreated before they died but lacked any evidence of sexual intercourse.

The police in charge of the case at the time thought that the murderer must've known the whores, or else it would've been impossible to precisely select individuals with a child. They had identified the suspects from the people who lived nearby and from the regular customers of several of the whores, but in the end, they failed to find the real murderer.

Although the dossier only made a brief note, Klein could clearly tell that they had asked for the help of Beyonders from the three major Churches. Unfortunately, they were still unable to crack the case.

With the Beyonder powers of the "Abyss," being able to tell signs that a woman had once been a degenerate doesn't go against the law of mysticism. Likewise for recognizing an individual as a prostitute, but it doesn't make sense that they would know that the woman was single with only one child… The police were right. What was the problem? The real murderer was like me, able to resist dreams, divination, mediumship, and evade the investigations from Mid-Sequence Nighthawk and Mandated Punisher Beyonders?

It's possible. Although the Church doesn't lack knowledge about the "serial killer," the murderer might have had some fortuitous encounters! Klein picked out some problems from his own standpoint.

I'm analyzing them by being part of "their kind"… I really didn't fail to live up to the name of Moriarty… He gave a self-deprecating comment and decided that the first target would still be the four from Backlund.

Yes, I'll get Mr. Stanton to confirm the suspects' current address and condition through the police, and I'll ask Stuart to get others to help. That way, I wouldn't appear directly, so as to avoid encountering any official Beyonders. After the situation has been clarified, I can gather the suspects' belongings and move them above the gray fog to make mystical deductions. Klein quickly worked out a plan.

The second case had taken place eleven years ago. Four cases of dismembered corpses had happened in succession. Originally, these cases were considered as isolated cases until the police began having suspicions over the way the bodies were handled. Only then was it confirmed that it was a case of serial murders. The victims were men and women who had worked till late at night before they returned home. They weren't robbed, and there had been no common connection between them.

Due to the delay—time which was very valuable when the crime was first committed—the case failed to produce any clues pointing to a suspect.

This is a problem caused by mishandling the case. If they had quickly received the help of a Spirit Medium, the wraith of the deceased might even gather around the murderer… Of course, it's also possible that the wraith can be "killed" by the murderer, just like this case… There's probably only ashes of those victims left. It will be hard to do any investigations through them… Klein rubbed his temples, and when he saw that it was evening, he stopped considering the case and got up from his reclining chair to leave Minsk Street.

He had something to do that night!

He wanted to go to the area south of the bridge, to the Harvest Church on Rose Street, to find Bishop Utravsky in a bid to obtain the Apothecary formula. He had already divined to see if it was dangerous or not.

To Klein, having an Apothecary as a subordinate was extremely helpful.

He could get injured or fall sick. He could encounter enemies who could harm him, and an Apothecary who he could find at any moment would be someone he could rely on.

After making a detour to East Borough, Klein disguised himself and took the steam metro to cross the Tussock River and arrived at the district south of the bridge.

Along the way, the darkness along the metro line and the corresponding gas lamps formed an unforgettable scene.

While on the public carriage, Klein came to Rose Street and found the tiny Harvest Church which was easily recognizable.

The golden cathedral had a more striking steeple and a Sacred Emblem of Life engraved on its outer wall. It was a baby surrounded by the symbols of wheat, flowers, and spring water. It stood out from the surrounding buildings.

At that moment, the cathedral's lights were dim, and there wasn't a single devotee inside.

Klein sneaked in from the side, carefully dabbing his face with paint rather than relying solely on his ability to create illusions.

In the hall of the cathedral, rows of pews were arranged neatly. Right at the top, at the front, there was a large Sacred Emblem of Life. Candles were lit on both sides of it.

A tall man in his forties or fifties wearing a brown clergyman's attire sat in the front pew.

Just by sitting there, he was like a small mountain, giving off an extremely oppressive feeling.

The man wore a bishop's bonnet, and his eyebrows were light and thin. There were obvious wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, his cheeks, and the corners of his mouth. He had his eyes closed tightly, his hands clasped as he pressed them to his chin, as if in the most pious of confessions.

Suddenly, he opened his eyes, revealing a patch of light blueness.

"The Mother's Church will not reject anyone. Why didn't you take the main entrance?" The forty to fifty-year-old man didn't raise his head as he spoke in a low and gentle voice.

"Are you Bishop Utravsky?" Klein walked out of the shadows.

The tall man in the brown bishop's attire replied gently, "I prefer to be called a Father. Father Utravsky."

"Alright, My Lord." Klein deliberately laughed. "Your name and your height tell me that you're from Feysac. Why do you believe in Earth

Mother?”

Bishop Utravsky raised his head slightly and stared at the Sacred Emblem of Life ahead of him and said with emotion, “I was born along the coasts of Midseashire, Indaw. I was a man who was passionate about combat and killing.”

Indaw? He really is from the Feysac Empire… Klein nodded indiscernibly.

Midseashire was the natural border between Loen, Intis, and Feysac. The east coast belonged to Loen, most of the west coast belonged to Intis; and to the north were the famous port cities of the Feysac Empire, such as Indaw.

In addition, the Midseashire spread to the northeast, penetrating through the Feysac Empire’s territory and connecting with the North Sea. There were many islands in that part of the sea that were the habitats for polar bears and sea lions.

Hunting polar bears and sea lions were a traditional festival for the citizens of Feysac.

Just as his thoughts began to wander a little, Bishop Utravsky continued looking forward and said, “I committed a serious crime and fled to the Sonia Sea where I became a ruthless pirate.

“I was lucky enough to meet a missionary of Earth Mother before I fell into the true hell of the soul.

“After that day, I understood the value of life, understood the charms of all living things, and gained the joy that stems purely from life itself. I swore in front of the Earth Mother’s Sacred Emblem that I would spread her faith in other countries to make up for my bloody past.

“Thus, here I am. I came here.”

Amidst his calm and emotional voice, Bishop Utravsky stood up. He was over 2.2 meters tall, and his build was sturdy. His robes were tight, and he looked like a giant from the legends who reappeared on the Northern Continent.

A real giant is three to five meters tall, with a single vertical eye… The citizens of the Feysac Empire are generally tall… It's no wonder that they've always claimed to be the remnants of giants, believing that they have the blood of giants… Klein had to raise his neck to look at the priest's face.

"What are you doing here?" Bishop Utravsky asked with his head lowered.

"I heard you have a request and that the reward is the Apothecary formula?" Klein, who had donned a disguise, went straight to the point.

Bishop Utravsky fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "Yes.

"Although I'm not sure where you learned of this, it's true."

"Then, what task is it?" Klein asked with a smile.

Utravsky sized him up seriously for a while before saying, "I don't think you can fulfill my request."

"Perhaps I can? I need to know the details before I can make an evaluation." Klein frowned.

Utravsky stood there like a giant pillar. After a few seconds, he said, "My request is…"

At this point, he closed his eyes and said, "Kill me."

Chapter 307 - Dawn Paladin

◆

Kill you? It was the first time Klein had heard of such a request, and for a moment, he didn't know how to respond to such a task.

He even started to suspect if there was a conspiracy.

Bishop Utravsky opened his eyes and looked down at Klein.

"Kill the old me."

…Father, can you not have such long pauses when you're speaking… Klein's mouth twitched as he asked in puzzlement, "Even in the legends and myths, no one can return to the past. I'm afraid this task of yours can only be accomplished by the seven gods."

"No, I mean, killing the past me which has never died as it resides in the depths of my heart." Seeing that Klein was still confused, the slightly hunchbacked bishop said, "The former me, who used to love to kill and fight, didn't completely die just because of my contrition. I can clearly sense that he's still living inside my body, always wanting to regain control of everything, and I'm constantly suppressing him, hoping that he will be redeemed through mass, ascetic cultivation, and preaching, making him truly believe in the teachings of the Earth Mother and become one with me again."

Simply put, the imprints of the past are too deep, and they fiercely conflict with your current life, resulting in a split personality… The pseudo-psychologist and keyboard warrior, Klein Moretti, made a preliminary judgment and said in deliberation, "It's a psychological problem. I think what you need most is a psychiatrist."

"I've attempted that before. Perhaps you aren't aware. There is a Doctor Sequence among the Beyonder pathway that the Church of Earth Mother controls, which is also known as Healing Pastor in ancient times. They've studied my problem and believe it's not as simple as a psychological ailment. It's also mixed with the inclination of losing control. If the past me defeats the present me, I will lose control without a doubt and become a monster," Utravsky said with a sigh.

Then what you need is the Spectator pathway's Sequence 7, Psychiatrist… Klein thought for a moment and said, "Your words make me believe that you've found a way to solve your problem, but you only lack a suitable executor, am I right?"

"Yes, all these years, besides preaching, I've also been searching for people and objects that can help me. In the end, with Earth Mother's blessings, I obtained a very mystical item. It is said to be a relic of an ancient dragon." Seeing that Klein wasn't scared away, Utravsky answered with some hope, "It allows the wielder to enter the deepest part of the target's soul, or, in other words, the bottom of the target's dreamland. There, a corresponding scene will be materialized. That way, you can see the past me directly, and then, through combat, eliminate him. In that special state, once he is truly dead, he will never appear again."

As expected of the mysterious world; there's actually such a method to treat someone with split personalities… Klein sighed with emotion and cautiously asked, "What restrictions are there, or what harm will it cause to the holder? Why do you think I'm incapable of completing this task?"

Bishop Utravsky looked down at Klein and said, "Once you use that mystical item, although the owner will remain conscious, there are many layers to the soul or dreamland. The past me will be able to make full use of this point to deceive you, or conversely, they can even kill you. And after a set period of time, yes—five minutes—that mystical item will make you completely lose consciousness, and your mind will never be able to return to your body and become its sacrifice.

“In this way, you will become a vegetable.

“In addition, as a result of the scene’s materialization, if you’re killed in the deepest part of your heart—or to put it in another way, the lowest level of the dreamland—similar side effects will occur. It’s equivalent to true death.

“Believe me, the past me is much stronger than you think.”

So that’s how it is… However, this issue isn’t a problem at all for me. I’m someone who can stay awake and rational during spirit channeling and dreams. Even if that mystical item wants to make me lose myself completely, there’s no need to worry too much. As long as there’s room for struggle, I can take four steps counterclockwise and chant my honorific name, and directly head above the gray fog… The problem is, how strong is the past Bishop Utravsky, and what are my chances of defeating him? What restrictions or taboos are there in fighting in a materialized spiritual world? Klein thought for a while and said, “How strong were you, Father Utravsky? I don’t think I would definitely lose.”

Bishop Utravsky’s eyes turned adrift for a moment.

“I was a warrior.

“I have already reached Sequence 6 of my Beyonder pathway, becoming a Dawn Paladin.”

So he’s not a Beyonder of the Planter pathway… He himself said that he had committed a crime and become a pirate before being converted by the Church of Earth Mother… Sequence 6. Yes, it’s not like I can’t win. A Magician is the kind of Beyonder that’s much stronger if they make preparations in advance. Also, due to my uniqueness, the deepest part of my heart, or the lowest level of my dreamland, can be considered as my home ground… Klein pondered for a few seconds and said, “Will that mystical item weaken him?”

“Yes, but it’s still his main region of activity, so the weakening wouldn’t be too great. At most, it would be like he had already fought an intense battle.” Utravsky recalled his previous attempts.

That just raises my chances… Klein continued, “Is there anything I need to pay attention to in that special environment?”

“Just like real combat, effective attacks are always effective, illusions will remain illusions, but one thing must be noted, he can bring you into a few other levels of the dreamland at any time, creating a situation where it’s hard to determine whether it’s reality or an illusion.” Bishop Utravsky emphasized, “So, you have to be at least at Sequence 6, or some other special Sequence 7 to be able to complete this mission, and the risk is nothing trivial. Heh, if I didn’t swear on a Holy Artifact of Earth Mother that I wouldn’t ask the Church for help before my missionary succeeds, things wouldn’t have been so difficult.”

So that’s how it is… I’m not afraid of a dream… The corner of Klein’s mouth curled up.

“Final question. Are there any points to take note of when fighting a Dawn Paladin?”

Bishop Utravsky frowned his wrinkled face and said with a sigh, “This is something that requires absolute secrecy for Beyonders.

“However, as long as you participate in enough battles, others would often be able to conclude certain traits. Besides, the more details you know, the higher the chances of success are, right?”

“Yes,” Klein answered frankly with a nod.

In a reminiscent tone, Bishop Utravsky said, “A Dawn Paladin possesses a power akin to that of a giant, enabling the area within a 40-50 meter radius to be basked in the light of dawn. Such light cannot only dispel illusions, but it also has the special ability to exorcize wraiths and specters, and it can even weaken evil spirits.

“They can conjure Dawn Armor around their bodies which would be equivalent to specially forged full-body armor that doesn’t weigh anything or inhibit their motion in any way. If destroyed, recovery would require a certain amount of time.

“He can also conjure different weapons. The strongest weapon would be a two-handed great sword. It’s often called the Sword of Dawn; it’s sharp, solid, and each strike has a purification effect.

“Apart from that, Dawn Paladins have a type of Beyonder power to create a Hurricane of Light. It can directly destroy a person’s body, eliminate wraiths, and damage evil spirits.”

There aren’t a lot of Beyonder powers, but they are my natural enemy. They have high offensive strength and defense, and they’re not afraid of illusions. The only good news is that, other than for facing wraiths and specters, the mysteriousness of a Dawn Paladin is very low… Klein listened as he simulated a combat situation in his mind, searching for the most reliable way to deal with a Dawn Paladin.

The level of mysteriousness he was referring to implied strangeness, unpredictability, unfathomability, and incomprehensibility.

Bishop Utravsky looked at him quietly. He didn’t press him or drive him away.

After gradually formulating a plan, Klein raised his head, looked over, and said, “Perhaps I can give it a try, but I will need to leave for a few minutes to confirm that you’re not lying.”

Bishop Utravsky replied with a slightly stunned voice, “No problem.

“However, I must remind you once again. Although I don’t know where your confidence stems from, do not belittle the past me. He’s extremely skilled in combat.”

“I wouldn’t joke with my life.” Klein pressed his hand to his chest, bowed, and stepped out of the Harvest Church. He found a secluded spot and quickly went above the gray fog to make a divination.

After obtaining an answer that there was a certain danger but at tolerable levels, he immediately returned to the real world. From the beginning to the end, it only took him about ten to twenty seconds above the gray fog.

Following that, Klein returned to the Harvest Church and said to Bishop Utravsky, who stood in his original spot, “I’ll take this commission.”

Bishop Utravsky stared at him intently before slowly saying, “If you succeed, not only will I give you the Apothecary formula, but I will also gift you a mystical item without much of a negative side effect.”

Klein was taken aback at first before he sincerely praised, “Father, you truly are a generous person!”

Bishop Utravsky didn’t say another word. He took a strange candle from a concealed pocket in his brown clergyman’s tunic.

The outer layer of the short candle seemed to be wrapped in a layer of human skin, but there were also several bumps on it.

Its wick was about the length of a finger segment and was entirely black in color. It was covered in tiny densely packed scale-like patterns.

“Ignite it with your spirituality.” Utravsky handed the tiny, strange candle to Klein.

Instead of following his instructions, Klein took out a matchbox, took out a few of them, and put them in his trouser pocket. He lit and blew out a few other matchsticks before throwing them at various corners of the cathedral. Then, he adjusted the positions of the paper figurines, paper notes, long strips of paper, Azik’s copper whistle, and various charms.

This was in preparation for the worst case scenario that he could imagine.

After all of this was done, Klein snapped his fingers, causing a blue-colored flame of spirituality to appear.

Sizzle!

He held the flame close to the top of the tiny candle and watched the black wick light up.

Nothing seemed to change, but Klein was acutely aware that he had entered the world of the mind.

Directly in front of him, he saw Bishop Utravsky still standing in his original spot. His sturdy body, which was more than 2.2 meters tall, gave off a sense of oppression.

The repentant bishop looked down at him, his facial muscles contorting. Following that, his expression became abnormally ferocious.

Soon after, Klein discovered that the surrounding light and shadows were rapidly transforming, and it felt like he was experiencing a real, intense battle.

Pa!

At the end of the battle, Bishop Utravsky fell heavily to the ground. His breathless body had blood flowing profusely.

Klein's mouth twitched as he saw the scene before him with a clear mind. He silently evaluated.

What a professional performance.

But I know that this is a dream within a dream.

Chapter 308 - A Prepared Magician

◆

When Klein looked down again, he could no longer see the strange candle wrapped in human skin; instead, a faint, slightly sweet scent kept lingering around his nose.

Ignoring the Bishop Utravsky's body that was lying down in a pool of his own blood, he took out his matchbox and lit one matchstick.

The blood on the ground disappeared as soon as the spark was produced, and the messy church hall became tidy once again.

The gargantuan Utravsky slowly got up, looked down at Klein, and said with a twisted face, "It actually didn't have any effect…

"It's no wonder that you dared to accept this task.

"However, this is your misfortune. I didn't actually want to kill you."

As he spoke, the candlelight on both sides of the cathedral began to flicker visibly. The entire hall suddenly brightened, but it was mild and not blinding; it was as if the morning sun had just come in.

The invisible spirit quickly vanished, and Klein, without a word, threw the match, flexed his cheeks, and simulated a sound.

Bang!

An invisible Air Bullet shot out and struck Bishop Utravsky heavily in the chest, producing a resounding sound. However, the "giant" bishop had at some point equipped a set of silver armor that covered his entire body. It included gauntlets, breastplates, and a helmet.

At that moment, a spiderweb-like crack appeared on the silver “metal” at his chest, but it didn’t completely shatter. It even began to slowly recover.

Bang! Bang!

Klein produced a series of sounds, creating two Air Bullets that followed one after the other, sending them towards the enemy’s chest in a bid to completely destroy the enemy’s defenses with a continuous barrage of attacks!

However, he saw that in Bishop Utravsky’s hand was a heavy, wide great sword, looking as if it was condensed from light. Using it, he deftly blocked the two Air Bullets, producing two sounds which were almost impossible to distinguish.

Creak!

Utravsky took one step forward, and the cathedral seemed to shake. At the same time, his two-handed great sword swept down at Klein in a gesture that looked as if it was going to shatter the building.

Before the sword arrived, the wind that it carried with it almost caused Klein to lose his balance.

Such terrifying power! As this thought flashed through his mind, Klein deftly jumped to the side and bent over, ready to roll on the spot.

Bang!

The two-handed great sword in Utravsky’s hands smashed into the ground, shattering the stone slabs and causing cracks to spread rapidly in all directions.

Screech! He dragged the great sword along the ground as he switched from a vertical slash to a horizontal sweep, causing sparks to fly.

This move was meant for opponents who loved to roll!

Just as Klein was about to hit the ground, the image of himself being struck by the two-handed great sword appeared in his mind. He quickly swung his arms and reached out with his palms. He lightly pressed and once again leaped into the air.

Woosh! The resulting wind blew across the dust on the ground, and the terrifying great sword flattened the nearby pews.

However, before Klein could counterattack, the "giant" bishop chained his attack without any pause.

One strike, two strikes, three strikes… five strikes, six strikes, seven strikes… Utravsky seemed to possess extremely robust stamina. His unceasing, storm-like attacks lasted for dozens of seconds.

He used the simplest of sword techniques—slashing vertically, slashing diagonally, sweeping horizontally, thrusting forward, and bashing forward—to demonstrate what was the most effective and reasonable way to deal the most damage. And the range of the two-handed great sword reached a terrifying extent.

Klein jumped, rolled, and ran. He didn't have the opportunity to use his powers and appeared rather pathetic. If it wasn't for the matches that he thrown ahead of time in different corners of the cathedral and how the candle on both sides of the altar had yet to be extinguished, allowing him to "flash," he probably would've been slain by his enemy.

As expected of a Beyonder job that's adept at combat… No mistakes, no weaknesses… Klein didn't panic because of this. Amidst his rolling and dodging, he constantly looked for any flaws that the enemy had, waiting for his attacks to reach a moderate stage.

Finally, he discovered a problem with Utravsky's sword techniques.

The two-handed great sword was too long and too large, and it had an obvious flaw in close combat!

With this thought flashing in his mind, Klein took advantage of the great sword's vertical slash to roll forward to the left, and then, with a push of his palm, he quickly rolled to the spot between Utravsky's legs.

As a "half-giant" who was over 2.2 meters tall, Utravsky would have his legs spread apart from simply standing. His silver crotch was clearly visible.

As soon as he rolled over, Klein's left hand reached into his pocket, pulled out a long piece of paper, and turned it into a sharp and hard cane. He then inserted it into the gap at the side of the enemy's crotch, stabbing into the body of the "giant" bishop!

This would be a fatal blow!

However, at this moment, his heart trembled. The image of a great sword stabbing down as boundless light, forming a terrifying storm, engulfed his entire body appeared in his mind.

A trap! Utravsky's trap! Klein didn't hesitate. He pressed his right hand down, jumped forward through the gap between the legs of the "giant" bishop's legs, and arrived behind him.

By the time he finished this set of motions, Utravsky was holding the hilt of his sword with both hands, bending his waist and lifting his sword up to thrust straight down into the stone slab in front of him.

With a cracking sound, rays of light surged out of the sword's body like the first rays of dawn. They turned into a hurricane and swept across the surroundings.

Without a sound, the stone slab disappeared from where Klein had been, and the earth beneath it became nearly ten centimeters thinner. The silver armor on his legs and crotch was also damaged, shattering inch by inch and revealing his skin.

His trap was to sustain damage in exchange for the death of his enemy.

At this moment, Klein, who had leaped behind Bishop Utravsky, finally found an opportunity to counterattack. He twisted his body midair, puffed out his cheeks, and simulated gunshot sounds at the back of his enemy's head.

Bang!

Bang!

Two Air Bullets hit the back of Utravsky's head in quick succession, shattering the silver metal in that area and then splitting it into pieces, exposing a completely unprotected area.

Klein was about to give him a fatal blow when Utravsky suddenly straightened up, twisted his waist, and violently swept the two-handed great sword backward.

The speed was so fast and the attack was so ferocious that Klein seemed unable to dodge it. However, he pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket and placed it in front of his body.

Clang!

The collision between the sword and the piece of paper produced the sound of metal being struck. The crisp sound of metal striking metal filled the entire cathedral.

Klein was sent flying like a tennis ball. The paper in his hand was torn apart, leaving behind only a tiny piece in between his fingers.

In midair, he was immediately faced with the violent and swift pursuit of Utravsky. The situation was precarious.

However, he didn't panic in the slightest and only shook his wrist.

The tiny piece of paper flew up, and a spark rapidly expanded, completely enveloping Klein.

Hum! The great sword sliced through the ball of fire, but it didn't cause any damage, only creating a small spark.

At the candle on the right side of the cathedral, a faint yellow flame spread out, forming a figure whose face was painted with oil paint.

Klein reappeared and pulled out another long strip of paper from his pocket.

Pa!

With a flick of his wrist, the paper turned into a sturdy whip. The surface of the whip was even burning with scarlet flames.

Pa! Pa! Pa!

Klein lashed out at the “giant” bishop from a distance.

However, his weapon quickly disintegrated under the attacks of the two-handed great sword.

And that was precisely Klein’s goal!

Pa! Pa! Pa! With a snap of his fingers, he sent streaks of fire flaring up from the ground, blocking Utravsky and burning his unprotected legs.

The Dawn Armor’s recovery was rather slow!

As the tongues of fire leaped upwards, his legs were charred black and a crimson color was seeping up his legs.

However, this didn’t affect the “giant” bishop’s agility. He let out a low growl, and like a steam train that had finally accelerated to its highest speed, he charged through the flames and appeared in front of Klein.

This speed was unbelievably fast!

Soon after, the two-handed great sword in Utravsky’s hands cracked, turning into spots of light that swept forth in all directions.

Almost instantly, Klein fell into a situation of certain death.

The matches he kept on him were ignited, and an intense flame engulfed him.

However, this wasn't as fast as the Hurricane of Light. Just as the scarlet red flame appeared, it was immediately engulfed!

Klein's body was torn asunder as it was reduced to shreds, but they ended up losing their thickness and turned into bits of paper.

Behind Utravsky, a column of scarlet red flames flared, and Klein stepped out.

He took out a matchbox from his other pocket and threw it at the enemy, as if to ignite all the remaining matches in one go and, through the restraints of the small space, create a reliable explosion.

The matchbox was aimed at Utravsky's lower body which no longer had any protection!

Klein raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

At the same time, Bishop Utravsky jumped up on his back, bent his knees, and withdrew his legs.

Pa!

Accompanied by the snap of his fingers was an unaffected matchbox, but a loud bang. It was an Air Bullet that accurately tore open the back of Bishop Utravsky's head which lacked any protection. It was lethal weapon that had been prepared in advance!

His skull split open, and blood and white bits spurted out. With great difficulty, Utravsky turned his head around and said in a daze, "You…"

The matchbox, that was riddled with holes caused by the Hurricane of Light, fell to the ground. However, it remained unignited.

Klein laughed and replied, "I've never said that snapping my fingers could only be used to control flames and not shoot out Air Bullets.

"Look."

Pa! Pa! Pa!

He snapped his fingers repeatedly, allowing one Air Bullet after another to hit Utravsky in the head, shattering his helmet and cracking his head.

Bam!

Utravsky stopped breathing and fell heavily to the ground, shaking the cathedral hall slightly.

Pa!

Klein turned and snapped his fingers again.

The box of matches on the ground exploded, transforming into a scarlet flame that buried Utravsky's gigantic body.

Klein didn't attempt to sense the existence of the candle, but instead he relied on his own clarity of mind to force himself out of the lowest level of his mind.

Behind him, the corpse was wrapped in scarlet flames as the world around him disintegrated bit by bit.

Chapter 309 - Choosing One Out Of Two

◆ ◆ ◆

The illusory feeling passed, and Klein saw the strange candle in his hand again, along with its black wick and palish-white flame.

The damage of the Dawn Paladin—the shattered ground, broken pews, and the sliced candles—had been restored to their pre-battle state. It was hard to tell where they had been damaged.

At some point, Bishop Utravsky, who had been standing opposite him, had taken a seat in the front pew, his back bent forward and his head buried in his hands. His hands were pressed to his temples.

Drip!

Drip!

Sweat trickled down his face and spread out from his feet. The ground was already completely wet.

When he sensed that the strange candle had been extinguished by Klein, he shuddered and raised his head to meet Klein’s eyes.

His slightly turbid eyes were filled with tears, and his wrinkled face was streaked with tears.

However, his eyes were filled with emotion, joy, and clarity.

If it was said that this “giant” bishop previously appeared tall and heavy, then all that was left of him now was the heaviness of his body but without the heaviness of his spirit.

At this moment, Klein felt like he was looking at a newborn baby.

Those tears were proof of new life.

The corners of Utravsky's mouth curled up slightly as he smiled kindly.

"You're much better than I expected."

"No, this is because I gained sufficient understanding in advance and made the appropriate preparations. As for the past you, not only were you unsure of your opponent's strengths, you were also greatly weakened. If I were to fight against you in the real world, I would be considering how to escape," Klein calmly replied.

A prepared Magician and an unprepared Magician are very different concepts… He added silently in his heart.

Bishop Utravsky didn't dwell on this problem. Brimming with relief from head to toe, he said, "Thank you, my friend.

"According to our agreement, I'll give you the Apothecary formula. I'll also give you an additional mystical item."

As he spoke, from his pocket, he took out what looked like a combination of a needle, a tube, and a container.

"You have two choices. This is one of the two choices you have. When I got it, I didn't know its name, and I never thought about naming it either. You're able to use it to draw out a tube of blood, your own blood. At a critical moment, you can transfuse it back into you. That way, your fatigue will disappear. Your ailments and injuries will be alleviated, and your strength, speed, balance, and other attributes will all be greatly enhanced." Bishop Utravsky pointed to the object in his hand.

"What about its limitations and latent dangers?" Klein asked rationally.

Utravsky looked at the mysterious patterns on the needle and tube and explained in detail, "After drawing out a tube of blood, you'll be weakened for a full twelve hours, and during those twelve hours, transfusing the blood back into you wouldn't have any effect. Of course, the specific time limit isn't that precise; it increases or decreases according to your body's condition. In addition, it's best not to use it too often; not more than once a week. Otherwise, not only will the transfusion bring you power, but it will also temporarily make you lose your rationality, and the short period when you have your blood drawn and turn weak will become your characteristic.

"In addition to these, it also has a problem. If you carry it around for more than half an hour, you'll become a little neurotic."

Fortunately, Bishop Utravsky didn't previously draw his blood. Otherwise, if the past him can transfuse his blood, my chances of winning would've been very, very low… This was the first thought that flashed through Klein's mind.

He frowned and was rather worried about the negative effects of the mystical item.

Regardless of whether it was a temporary loss of rationality, a twelve hour period of weakness, or a change in his mental state, these were all hidden dangers that didn't seem too problematic. But after seeing Rampagers and hearing the ravings of an evil god, Klein believed that a Beyonder's mental state was very important. If one's mental state remained at a nadir for an extended period of time, or if there were frequent anomalies, it would easily cause the phenomenon of losing control to happen. This was the same even if a Beyonder had grasped the acting method!

"What's the second choice?" Klein said after two seconds of silence.

Bishop Utravsky took out a simple brass key from his other pocket and smiled.

"This is called a Master Key. It can help you open any lock which doesn't contain mystical powers, as well as a small number of locks that are augmented with Beyonder effects. And in a place without any locks or doors, it can open a passageway that doesn't belong to reality. Heh heh, the premise is that there are no restrictions by Beyonder powers and the barriers aren't too thick.

"Its spirituality is completely restrained. When it's not being used, Beyonders cannot see any difference between it and a normal key."

Utravsky stood up again, leaving Klein no choice but to look up.

The "giant" bishop increased his pace and came to the wall at the side of the cathedral hall and pressed the Master Key against the brick.

He twisted gently, and his entire body seemed to sink into water as ripples were produced. He went through the wall and arrived outside.

In the same way, Bishop Utravsky returned to the cathedral hall and entered Klein's line of sight again.

"Have you decided on the mystical item?" the tall priest asked with his head lowered.

"Hmm, what are the latent dangers of the Master Key?" Klein asked after some deliberation.

Bishop Utravsky smiled warmly and said, "The person carrying it will occasionally get lost.

"According to what someone told me, one gets lost at random."

Lost? I'm a Seer with spiritual intuition… Klein mumbled, and his mind gradually came to a decision.

After a few seconds, he said, "I want the Master Key."

He didn't want his mental state to be affected, and he didn't want to accumulate the risk of losing control.

What a pity, what I want the most is that weird candle… It's akin to the deepest part of a soul, the lowest level of a dreamland. That's equivalent to my home ground… He sighed in his heart.

"Alright." Bishop Utravsky handed the simple brass key to Klein and took back the strange candle wrapped in human skin.

While Klein was examining the mystical item, Utravsky pointed at the back and said, "The Apothecary formula is in that room. I'll go get it. Wait here for a while."

Klein nodded in response. Taking advantage of the moment when Bishop Utravsky's figure disappeared from the hall, he took out a penny and divined if he had been lying about the Master Key.

After receiving an acceptable answer, he walked to the wall in front of him where a row of candles were placed and pressed the ancient brass key against the hard wall.

As he injected spirituality and turned the key, Klein's vision suddenly blurred and then became clear.

At that moment, there were no longer burning candles filling his vision, nor were there neat pews and straight walls. There were only withered grass and muddy land strewn with a bit of garbage. To the side, it led out to where a gas street lamp stood.

I really came out. Klein smiled, nodded, turned, and once again using the Master Key to successfully return to the cathedral's hall.

After more than ten seconds of waiting, Utravsky walked in with heavy footsteps, a roll of yellowish-brown goatskin parchment in hand.

"You can get an appraisal for this. If there's a problem, you can always find me at the Harvest Church. The"giant" bishop handed the Apothecary formula to Klein.

Main ingredients: Horn of an adult Flying Unicorn, 3 grams of a Royal Jellyfish's venom crystal… Klein swept his gaze, smiled and replied, "I will confirm its authenticity.”

For example, divine it above the gray fog… He added inwardly.

Bishop Utravsky nodded slightly, and without another word, he turned around and walked to the Earth Mother’s Sacred Emblem of Life.

He spread his arms wide and chanted in a low voice, “Thank you, Source of Life!

“Praise you, Mother of All Things!”

†

Klein put away the Master Key and the Apothecary formula. After Utravsky stopped, he said half-jokingly, “Could it be that my visit was arranged by Earth Mother?”

Why else would you be thanking Her for? The false believer of the Evernight Goddess, Klein, chuckled inwardly.

“Yes, everything is arranged by Earth Mother. Otherwise, my request for help wouldn’t have reached your ears. I wouldn’t be here in Backlund either. Nor would I have obtained this Mental Terror Candle,” Backlund Utravsky said with a gentle smile without any signs of anger.

Complete and self-consistent believer logic, but… Klein suddenly felt that it was impossible to communicate with him. He pressed his hand to his chest, bowed, and said, “Thank you for your generosity. I should leave now.”

He straightened his body and quickly retreated. He then rapidly disappeared from the main hall of the cathedral and from Rose Street.

Ten minutes later, he saw the golden façade of the Harvest Church from another direction, and he couldn’t help but twitch his mouth.

I can’t go back without divination? he silently muttered to himself. He really wanted to stubbornly rely on his own ability to overcome the fact that he was lost.

But his hand, which was faster than his voice, had broken the branches of a tree and made a makeshift dowsing rod.

Dowsing Rod Seeking could be used to seek people, as well as items and directions!

This time, Klein was able to return home without incident, and he even confirmed the authenticity of the formula and the latent dangers of the Master Key.

†

The next morning was a Sunday morning.

After waking up, Klein ate breakfast, took out a pen and paper, and wrote a letter to Isengard Stanton, asking him to seek help from the police to confirm the current status of the few suspects for the serial murder case from four years ago. Back then, the targets were single prostitutes with a child.

After folding the letter and stuffing it in an envelope, Klein put on a black stamp which was one penny in denomination. Putting on his clothes, he took his hat and cane, and he walked out of his house to post the letter at the mailbox at the end of the street.

Then, he saw Mrs. Stelyn Sammer and her husband, Mr. Luke dressed to the nines.

A rental carriage was stopped by their door.

“Good morning. Why are you attending a banquet so early in the morning?” Klein asked with some surprise.

Luke chuckled and said, “It’s not really a banquet. It’s more like us helping out.”

Mrs. Stelyn raised her chin slightly and added, “Mary has successfully entered the National Atmospheric Pollution Council. There will be a grand ball tonight, and we have to help out in advance.”

Mrs. Mary’s wish has been fulfilled? Impressive… Klein sighed and said with a smile, “Please pass on my congratulations to Mrs. Mary for me.”

Luke Sammer nodded and said, “You haven’t read this morning’s paper, have you? All the members of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council have been published.

“The Chairman of the council is Sir Ders Shaw and the First Secretary is Mr. Hibbert Hall.”

Chapter 310 - National Atmospheric Pollution Council

◆

Sir Ders Shaw? Mr. Hibbert Hall? Who are they? I don’t know them at all… Acting as though he had no doubts, Klein said half-jokingly, “Let’s hope that they can bring blue skies and sunshine to Backlund.”

“Yes, although burning in your own fireplace is everyone’s freedom and is a right granted by the law, blue skies and sunshine are more desirable things.” Luke Sammer, a member of the Soot Reduction Association, sighed with emotion and pointed to the hired carriage. “We should go. Mary urgently needs some help.”

Stelyn Sammer added, feigning a level of restraint, “There might be Members of Parliament coming to the banquet, from the Backlund district or from the kingdom.”

“I can imagine the grandeur of this banquet.” Klein flattered politely and watched the Sammers board the carriage and leave.

As he turned to head for the post office at the end of the street, a postman in a dark green uniform arrived in a carriage and delivered a letter to his letterbox.

A letter for me? Klein pulled out a bunch of keys and casually chose the one that was simple and had a brass color.

Kacha!

The Master Key easily opened the letterbox.

I just need to have this key on me in the future… Klein mumbled as he took out the newspapers he had subscribed to and the letter.

The letter was from Isengard Stanton.

He had also looked through the old and unresolved serial murders yesterday and had picked out the most suspicious ones, and after obtaining a preliminary confirmation from the police department about the present circumstances of the suspects, he had written to Klein, Kaslana, and the other private detectives, that were interested in this angle, to share his findings.

It included the two cases that Klein had focused on.

Great detective minds think alike… The letter I wrote just now was for nothing… Klein joked before returning to the living room.

According to Isengard, the random murder cases of people who returned late had resulted in a large number of suspects, but the suspect had never been narrowed down. After so many years, it was very difficult, almost hopeless, to try to find a new clue.

One of the four suspects in the other case was a teenager whose mother was also a victim—a prostitute and single mother who had him as her only child. He had been abused by his mother, had been the police's first suspect, but less than half a year after that case, he had been seriously injured in a gang firefight in East Borough and died in a surgical room at a charity hospital.

His body was cremated with people bearing witness before being buried in the cemetery.

As such, it was impossible for him to be connected to the current serial killer.

If he hadn't been cremated, I definitely would've dug up the grave to verify it… Klein, who had once come back from the dead, seriously considered the possibility of the other party coming back from the dead.

Of the remaining three suspects, one had moved several times in the past few years. The police had lost track of his situation and needed more time to find him. One had gone through bankruptcy and moved to East Borough from North Borough, while the other was still running a grocery store on the same street.

Klein took out a fresh sheet of paper, described the situation, and then asked the recipient to observe the two suspects with specific addresses in secret. He emphasized, “The killers of serial murders are all cruel, brutal, and very aggressive. Please be careful not to get too close to them; act as if you’re just an ordinary neighbor observing them.

“The information I need pertains to their recent mental state, such as whether they are irritable, whether they like to shut themselves in their rooms, rarely communicate with others, and whether they have beaten others up.”

This was also the information he got from The Sun. After each kill, the Devil would eat the victim’s organs according to the ritual and stay in a bloodthirsty, manic state until a new victim appeared.

After emphasizing the need to take note of the investigator’s safety, Klein folded the letter, stuffed it into a new envelope, and affixed a black stamp to the surface.

Then he wrote down the name of the recipient: “Detective Stuart.”

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Susie was lying in the corner of the study, looking around as if bored.

With a bulging stomach, Earl Hall took a puff with his pipe and said to his eldest son, “Do you know why I insisted on having you be on the

National Atmospheric Pollution Council?”

Hibbert Hall replied thoughtfully, “You wish to influence the formulation of the relevant laws and policies?”

“No, although I’m the second-largest shareholder of the Constant Coal and Steel Consortium, I don’t really care about this problem. I’ve been urging them to make adjustments accordingly. I have no doubt that fixing atmospheric pollution is a future trend.

“Hibbert, although our family has fixed seats in the House of Lords, and you will also become a Member of Parliament of the House of Lords in time, so why do some nobles have more influence than others when they are all Members of Parliament of the House of Lords? Notwithstanding the Speaker and other people with special statuses.”

Hibbert thought for a moment before saying, “The title of nobility, wealth, commercial status, as well as the relationship between the government and the army?”

“That is only a part of it. In addition to one’s own ability to handle matters, people will always rely on those with rich experience, and those who have participated in many similar matters. In the future, if you wish to have any achievement in politics, in addition to inheriting a seat, you will also need to try your best at participating in various matters and display the corresponding capabilities. Gradually, your activity will catch the eye of the various Members of Parliament. They will slowly find you trustworthy and that will be the source of your influence.

“Look at the current situation of the nobles in the Intis Republic, Hibbert. You should understand that with the passage of time and the development of society, the obvious privileges will be weakened, and one’s title will become less and less important. It’s just a title of honor, and the position and influence of the business world is what you should pay attention to,” Earl Hall explained in detail.

“What if you encounter something you aren’t good at?” Hibbert muttered to himself.

“Then pretend that you can handle it. Don’t worry about wasting money; form professional teams, listen to their opinions, and make decisions. Everyone has a lot of areas that they aren’t good at, and only money is multi-faceted.” Earl Hall gave words of advice.

Hibbert replied in enlightenment, “I see, Father.”

At this moment, Susie, who was by the side, yawned in boredom.

When it was all over, she slipped into Audrey’s art studio, repeated everything she had heard, and finally muttered, “I have no idea what they were talking about.”

Audrey listened to her thoughtfully, then she said with a faint smile, “They were discussing a good thing that involves reducing the pungent smell you smell.”

“Is that so?” Susie asked without fully comprehending it.

Audrey didn’t answer and thought of something else.

She had intended to quietly draw attention to the bad conditions of East Borough, the factory area, and the dock area, but in the last two social gatherings, she had found herself unable to find an opportunity.

Those nobles, those Members of Parliament, and senior civil servants would never even talk about such matters. There was no way to steer them towards that topic even if she wanted to!

†

On Monday afternoon, Klein returned to 15 Minsk Street from the Quelaag Club.

As Stuart had yet to provide any results from his preliminary investigation, and since he was temporarily unable to find a suitable candidate to become an Apothecary, Klein had nothing to do yesterday and today. Therefore, he simply went to the Quelaag Club to practice his shooting, read, and get some free food.

In the process, he got to know many other members of the club.

This is the lifeblood for future business opportunities… Klein sighed with emotion, took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

He went about his preparations, step by step, first conjuring the fake World, familiarizing himself with the control of the All-Black Eye, and then sent a message to The Sun that the Tarot Gathering was about to begin.

After all of this was done, Klein waited for three o'clock to arrive. Then, he reached out to touch the corresponding crimson stars and established a firm connection. The Magician had her own illusory star as well.

Under the pretext of concentrating on her writing, Fors Wall sent Xio away, and for a moment she was dazzled by the sudden rush of gray fog.

In the blink of an eye, she found herself above the mysterious and serene gray fog. She was inside a majestic palace, and in front of her was an ancient, mottled bronze table. Surrounding the table were one blurry figure after another.

One figure after another? One figure after another! Are these the gathering members Mr. Fool spoke of? Fors felt that the members of this secret gathering were all very, very powerful Beyonders.

Except for me… she thought, without confidence and full of fear.

However, looking at it from another perspective, since I can join this gathering as a Sequence 9, the other members might not necessarily be very strong. The requirement for this gathering is obviously not about strength, but for some other reason, a member must manage to establish a connection with Mr. Fool… Fors quickly rejected her first judgment and relaxed a little.

At the same time, Audrey also discovered that there was a new person at today's gathering.

It's a woman… Is it Xio or Fors? Has she passed the examination? Or is it someone else? Audrey nearly forgot to greet Mr. Fool in her bid to take a closer look at the features of the new member.

No matter how blurry the figure was, she could still see her hair color, silhouette, her accent, and verbal tics!

Hmm… I must also take note. At the very beginning, Mr. Hanged Man had managed to identify me as a noble from my special pronunciation of certain words, and from my habit of using certain special words… Audrey stood up, lifted her skirt, and said to Klein at the end of the long bronze table, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool."

After the greeting, she didn't conceal her curiosity. She looked at the new member who was seated at the same row as her and asked with a smile, "This is?"

Chapter 311 - Observing Each Other

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein sat in the seat belonging to The Fool and looked around.

“This is Miss Magician, our new member.”

Then, he looked at Fors and introduced the rest to her.

“This is Miss Justice, and that is Mr. Hanged Man…”

As Fors nodded her head as a form of greeting the members with the corresponding code names, she observed the other members.

Miss Justice is blonde and seems very young; she sits with a graceful posture. Mr. Hanged Man has dark blue hair, as messy as seaweeds; he doesn’t have a very bulky figure; he doesn’t like to talk, but when observed by him, it gives me a sense of unease; he must be a leader of some faction… Mr. Sun looks like a teenager; he’s very silent and reserved; other than that, I can’t tell anything else—maybe he’s just as weak as me. Mr. World’s eyes are very cold and quite gloomy; it’s obvious that he isn’t someone to be trifled with… As a writer who had written a best-selling novel, she showcased her unique traits.

While she looked at the other members, they were also looking at her. Among them, Justice Audrey was the most attentive.

From her figure, I can eliminate Miss Xio. Brown hair and slightly curled. Is she Madam Fors? Temporarily, I can’t rule out the possibility that Mr. Fool has pulled in someone else. Hmm, her pronunciation and the way her mouth moves is the same as her Backlund accent. Her aura and emotional colors match as well… It's unlikely that Mr. Fool will specially create a fake image for the members, right? There's no need for "Him" to hide anything… After a few seconds of sizing Fors up, Audrey had nearly superimposed the blurry figure with her impression of Fors.

If I can find another trait in other areas, I can almost be certain… She waited with interest to verify her Beyonder powers.

At the same time, she felt that there was no need to reveal her identity to Fors.

It would be better to keep some secrets. Yes… Let's see when she finds out! Audrey withdrew her gaze, producing a faint smile on her face as she quietly watched from the sidelines.

At that moment, since there were no new Roselle's diary entries, Klein controlled The World and said, "I want to know about the Devil and Guardian Sequences."

He was certain that The Sun knew the details of Sequence 6 Devil because he had previously mentioned Devil Studies, and in order to not expose the fact that he was investigating a series of murders, he had deliberately added the Sequence 5 Guardian of the God of Combat pathway—also known as the Giant pathway. It was the mainstream path for Beyonders in the City of Silver, so it was impossible for The Sun to be unaware of it.

As for the corresponding Sequence 9 Warrior, Sequence 8 Pugilist, and Sequence 7 Weapon Master, Klein had long since learned of the details from the Nighthawks' confidential information. As for information regarding Sequence 6 Dawn Paladin, he had just learned of its information from Bishop Utravsky. Therefore, the only thing that he could ask and be willing to pay a price for without wasting money was Sequence 5 Guardian.

In addition, he didn't directly ask The Sun, but instead issued this request to everyone, because according to the way things had developed, it was impossible for The World, who had just joined the Tarot Club, to know that the City of Silver held the Giant pathway.

“If it’s just the Devil Sequence, I know a little about it.” Alger, who had some standing in the Church of Storms, interjected.

Derrick Berg glanced at him and without a thought, straightened his back and said, “I’m very knowledgeable about these two Sequences.

“The payment I want is information related to the Fallen Creator.

“The equivalence of the two pieces of information will be determined by Mr. Fool.”

Having said that, he realized that he had not received Mr. Fool’s agreement as he hurriedly turned his head to Mr. Fool to make the request reverently.

Sun, don’t blame me. You were the one who made the request… The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched slightly as he said with a chuckle, “Sure.”

Furthermore, when it comes to the understanding of the True Creator, none of the ladies and gentlemen present can compare to me… he added boldly in his heart.

While they were discussing this matter, The Magician Fors was stunned upon hearing the conversation.

The Devil Sequence is the Devil pathway? Which Sequence number is it?

What is the Guardian pathway? Which Sequence number is it?

I’ve never heard of it…

Fallen Creator? The True Creator?

God, they are actually exchanging information regarding the True Creator!

That deity is known as the most ancient and powerful existence amongst the deities.

What kind of organization did I join?

After receiving a positive reply from The Fool, The World said without any hesitation, “Deal!

“I request a private exchange.”

I really want to hear it… However, I need to be frugal for the time being. There are still two more months until the new year. Endure it, Audrey! Audrey blinked her eyes, reluctantly withdrawing her gaze from The Sun.

Their sights, vision, and spirituality were then shielded by Klein.

The World quickly lowered his head and “wrote” on a conjured sheet of paper his own understanding of the True Creator, including standard likeness such as “The Hanged Giant” and the “Eye behind the Shadow Curtains,” including the information that members of the Aurora Order believed that this evil god was the original creator of everything.

At the end, Klein had included his impression of the evil god through his interaction with the evil god’s spawn, the sensation of the deity’s aura, and the sensation when listening to the True Creator’s voice.

“Fallen, twisted, bloody, crazy, evil.”

Then, as Mr. Fool, he gave a comment, “This piece of information is slightly more valuable than the information regarding the Devil and Guardian Sequences, but the difference isn’t that huge.”

“Thank you, Mr. Fool.” Derrick earnestly received the piece of goatskin and read through it carefully a few times.

The thing he was most concerned about was that the True Creator was known as the creator of everything!

Twisted, fallen, crazy… Derrick repeated the words, vaguely able to see the dark tragedy that had engulfed everyone in the City of Silver for more than two thousand years.

Did the Lord not abandon us? It's just that "He" had gone mad… Derrick found himself able to resist using blasphemous thoughts to examine the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God who was worshipped by the City of Silver.

"It's time for you to answer my question," The World urged in a hoarse voice.

Derrick restrained his seething and sorrowful thoughts and said after two seconds of silence, "When different species of creatures consume the Devil potion, they will experience different types of mutation. They will have traits that are unique to them. Which kind of Devil would you like to know about?"

There are actually distinctions? Klein was puzzled.

He soon realized one thing—there was a blind spot in his thought process!

What if the serial killer wasn't a human but an animal?

After consuming the corresponding potion, it could transform into a Devil animal!

Step by step, one Sequence at a time, it will turn into a Devil!

Although the probability of an animal losing control far exceeds that of a human's, it was still not enough to deal with "what ifs"… I have to investigate this… But in that case, there would be more questions. Where did the Devil, mutated from an animal, obtain the potion and Beyonder ingredients? It should be impossible for it to join Beyonder circles… Klein maintained his silence and manipulated The World to say, "What I want to know is the common trait of all kinds of Devils."

Derrick recollected and organized his knowledge before saying, "The most frightening thing about a Devil is that if you can cause lethal damage to it in a very short period of time and take action to put that into practice, then he can sense, notice, and grasp where the danger comes from and who it came from, and then selectively kill or seek revenge on them.

"And this period of time varies from a few minutes to a day. Different Devils have different instincts."

This ability is a little scary… However, it's different from a Clown's intuition. It doesn't seem like it can be used in combat but instead, detect the source of the danger ahead of time. It's closer to the "Whim"[1] ability I've read in xianxia novels in my previous life… I don't know if I can interfere with or even block this intuition in this mysterious space above the gray fog. Would Stuart end up in danger… Klein leaned back into his chair, seemingly uninterested in the subject of the discussion between The Sun and The World.

Seeing that The World didn't show any signs of surprise, Derrick continued, "They all possess the ability to gigantify their bodies and thus break free from their bindings, temporarily increasing their strength and speed; their skin is mutable, equivalent to wearing a layer of hard armor; their blood and flesh can act as a retardant and reduce damage; they're immune to most toxins and do not fear curses or flames to a certain degree; they have innate flame and corruption-type spells; they're cold-blooded, don't panic, don't feel fear, and have a strong ability when it comes to physical combat; they're also adept at using various items to inflict damage.

"Their greatest weakness is that they tend to lose control. Even if they don't, they will often display a cold-blooded and cruel madness, being easily controlled by desires such as bloodlust and murderous intent."

Really strong, as expected of a Sequence 6 Devil. Could it be that among the 22 Beyonder paths below the High Sequences, Sequence 6 or Sequence 7 are the thresholds of a qualitative change? In this respect, different Sequences differ, thus they have become the dividing lines between ancient and modern Mid-Sequences… Klein controlled The World and said, “I’m very satisfied with your information.”

Derrick didn’t act modestly. He nodded and said, “Guardians seldom suffer damage. Once they enter a defensive state and give up attacking, few can break through their defenses below that of the High-Sequences. It’s the same for numerous types of damage. When they attack, their corresponding defense will decrease significantly, but it will still be stronger than full-body armor.

“Their Sword of Dawn and their Hurricane of Light, as well as their other Beyonder powers, allow them to deal damage to any type of monsters.

“They’re not confused by illusions. They can help their comrades within a certain range by taking damage and protecting them.”

†

Following the descriptions given by Derrick, Klein couldn’t help but sigh in his heart.

Compared to a Guardian, a Dawn Paladin’s defense is like that of a child versus an adult. A Guardian would probably be able to withstand the bullets of a steam rifle… In the wars of this era, they wouldn’t die unless they were focused on by large-caliber cannons.

†

This is an ability found in the novel, Yang God, where an expert is able to predict danger once they reach a certain stage in their cultivation.

Chapter 312 - A Failed Disguise

◆ ◆ ◆

When Derrick finished, Klein manipulated The World to nod and say, “More detailed than I thought.

“Transaction complete.”

Before The World finished his sentence, Klein had simultaneously removed the barriers insulating Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Magician.

After a few seconds of silence, The World looked around and said with a dark smile, “I don’t have any more requests for now.”

Having a rough understanding of the process and its characteristics, Fors was eager to purchase the corresponding Sequence 8 Trickmaster of the Apprentice Sequence.

She clearly remembered that Mr. Fool had said that the reason she was troubled by the full moon was due to her low natural order of life, and that the pain would decrease with the rise of her Sequence.

This made Fors eager to obtain the next formula.

However, it would expose the Beyonder pathway I’m from… When everyone becomes familiar with each other and knows more about each other, exposure will become less of a serious matter. However, for the next few gatherings, I have to conceal that so that the members of the gathering won’t be able to identify the real me… After thinking rather calmly for a moment, Fors said, “I wish to obtain the formula of

Apothecary and Trickmaster. I will pay in cash."

She intentionally added the Apothecary formula to her actual request in order to cause the others to have a misinterpretation. If any member of the gathering really had the formula, she would still take it. She could then sell it at a higher price to Viscount Glaint who been longing for this formula for a long time. In any case, she definitely wouldn't suffer a loss because of this and might even make a huge profit.

As for money, Fors wasn't short of it for the time being. Not only were the royalties of her best-selling book entering into her account over time, it was accumulating to quite a sizable amount. Furthermore, she also had additional income streams, such as the 650 pounds she had received from Miss Audrey in the Qilangos and Intis Ambassador Bakerland cases.

Poor Xio. She spent more than two hundred pounds to compensate the families of the two deceased which were involved in the Lanevus case. I wonder if Miss Audrey would pay her when things clear up… The note with Mr. Fool's honorary name on it was found in the bookcase of Viscount Glaint's house. Could it be that one of his ancestors was a member of this gathering? Is this a gathering that has been held regularly for decades if not centuries? Fors's thoughts were suddenly a little distracted.

Only two seats away from her, Justice Audrey was a little stunned when she heard Fors's request for the Apothecary and Trickmaster formulas before she accurately grasped Fors's thoughts.

She's Fors! The Trickmaster is for herself, and the Apothecary formula is to be sold to Glaint. She can also do this to complicate the situation and fool the others… Audrey nodded indiscernibly and was more certain of The Magician's identity.

She's not of a very high Sequence. At best 8, most likely 9. Who knows where Mr. Fool pulled her from or if she's from a special place… Her accent has the peculiarities of Backlund, but she's not necessarily in

Backlund… The Hanged Man Alger was also observing the newcomer, making sure that she wasn't a threat to him.

The Sun Derrick didn't think too much about it. He was just trying to guess whether Miss Magician belonged to the City of Silver or if she was from the world where Miss Justice and the others lived.

Klein cast a look of pity at Miss Magician, not expecting much from her attempt to conceal her identity.

When you meet a Telepathist who is very familiar with you, you might not be able to conceal your true thoughts even if you know the other party's ability beforehand and are on guard against it. What's more, you didn't even know anything… The Fool, Klein, sighed in his heart for Miss Magician.

At the same time, he controlled The World who said hoarsely, "I have the Apothecary formula. 230 pounds.

"As for the Trickmaster formula, I'll do my best to find it, but I can't guarantee success."

There was no contradiction between exchanging the Apothecary formula for money and using it to groom a useful helper. They could be run in conjunction, so Klein made The World speak first so as not to be intercepted by The Hanged Man or The Sun.

As for the formula for Trickmaster, he only had some ideas.

From his point of view, the mystical item, Master Key, was most likely related to the corresponding sequence of Trickmaster's corresponding Sequence 9, Apprentice. If he were able to divine its origins above the gray fog, he might be able to find some clues.

Well, actually the most convenient way is to ask the existence suspected to be Mr. Door who keeps murmuring during a full moon. In addition to asking for help, he probably provides formulas and the "acting method" so as to make the target stronger and complete difficult tasks. Unfortunately, before the target is strong, they can't even hear his ravings. They will break down and even be close to losing control. This results in a vicious cycle… Klein lamented.

Instead of responding to Mr. World's words, Fors looked around and saw that The Hanged Man, Justice, and The Sun had no intention of opening their mouths.

It was obvious that they didn't know the Apothecary and Trickmaster formulas.

"Mr. World, please try your best to find the Trickmaster formula as soon as possible." Fors fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "As for the Apothecary formula, I plan to buy it now. How should I make the payment?"

The other party seemed to be a man from Loen as well, and he's willing to accept gold pounds… But the gold pound has always been more recognized than the other currencies… As she spoke, Fors was also trying to determine The World's background.

The World completely didn't mind her sizing him up as he said softly, "You can sacrifice the money to Mr. Fool after you return. That way, the transaction will be closed.

"The exact sacrificial ritual is…"

Sacrifice? Mr. Fool can still accept sacrifices? His life's natural order has reached such a level? No wonder he used that tone to describe the owner of the ravings during the full moon… Fors listened and remembered, surprised and shocked, but she also felt that it was a matter of course.

After finishing his description, Klein displayed the Apothecary formula in front of The World and had the fake person hand it to Miss Magician.

"The transaction is witnessed by Mr. Fool, so you don't have to worry if it's fake."

"I trust Mr. Fool." Fors nodded immediately. She spread open the formula and began memorizing it seriously.

At that moment, Audrey, who couldn't bear to see her friend go through such labor, commented, "You can seek Mr. Fool's help during the sacrifice to recall the formula. You don't have to memorize it specially. If you encounter any problems, you can also pray to"Him" by reciting "His" honorific name"

"Him"? Miss Justice is actually using a salutation used to describe deities to address Mr. Fool!? "Him,""Him"… Could it be that he is really a "He"? But, why would he be willing to help us in doing such trivial matters… That's not right. As long as the ritualistic magic is done right, the seven orthodox gods will also often respond to their believers and complete their requests… Fors said to Justice, "Thank you for telling me that. Your name is just like your character."

"…" Audrey suddenly felt a little guilty.

She suddenly seemed to recall a problem as she hurriedly asked, "Miss Magician, do you know of the 'acting method'?"

"Acting method?" Fors looked at Justice in a daze.

She soon discovered that the other members such as The Sun and The Hanged Man had no additional reaction to the term. Clearly, they knew what it meant.

Today's gathering makes me feel like a country bumpkin who has just arrived in Backlund… I've been to so many Beyonder gatherings at the very least, alright! Fors thought, half sorrowfully, half joyously.

She couldn't help but want to write a novel with this feeling of hers, naming it "Miss Wall's Tour of Dreamland."

"You don't seem to know." Audrey made a definite judgment based on Fors's reaction and her usual performance.

She turned around and looked at the person shrouded in gray fog at the end of the long table.

“Mr. Fool, can I teach the ‘acting method’ to Miss Magician?

“If so, what price would she have to pay?”

Audrey had intended to ask directly if it was like before—trading the information for entries of Roselle’s diary. However, she quickly remembered that there was a great overlap between the Beyonder circles of Fors and her own. Therefore, if she did that, she might lose many opportunities of obtaining Roselle’s diary.

It’s not a very important problem since it’s just a matter of time before Fors realizes that Mr. Fool wants Roselle’s diary, and I would certainly have other Beyonder circles. However, she knows that I have a few pages of Roselle’s diary, and if she wants to collect them, she will come to me immediately. However, Mr. Fool has read all of those diary entries… After this gathering, I have to find a chance to tell Fors that all the Roselle diary pages were accidentally lost… Audrey predicted the chain of events and tried her best to convey her concerns to Mr. Fool in body language.

What’s Miss Justice hinting at? Oh, she knows Fors, but she doesn’t want to reveal her identity, which means that she doesn’t want the payment I request to cause any trouble in that regard… Klein thoughtfully chuckled.

“You can make the decision. You can do the explanation since I do not wish to repeat what I’ve said in the past.”

This is also a form of respect to the Goddess… he added inwardly.

Praise Mr. Fool! Audrey’s heart leaped in joy.

She straightened her back and slightly raised her chin. She tried to look at Fors in a different manner as she said, “The ‘acting method’ is a method to speed up the mastery of potions and minimize the risk of losing control.

"Do you want to know about it?"

There's such a method? For real? Mr. Fool is such a lofty figure, so he definitely wouldn't lie about such a small matter! Fors widened her somewhat languid eyes, pursed his lips and said, "Yes!"

As long as one was a Beyonder, there was no way they wouldn't wish to learn of similar methods! Fors suddenly felt thrilled.

Audrey thought carefully and said, "There are two requirements. One, without the permission of Mr. Fool, you are not to teach the 'acting method' to others.

"The second is to pay 200 pounds."

Her original plan was to use Roselle's diary as a benchmark for the price. The number of pages she and The Hanged Man had used to repay the debt had been converted into a corresponding price, but in reality, Roselle's diary was sold cheaply because it couldn't be deciphered, and most of the time, it was impossible to determine which was the real one. Converting that to a total price was quite a letdown to the value of the acting method; therefore, she added a little more from that benchmark.

Hmm… If Mr. Fool's Blessed is no longer short of money, then I will take the 200 pounds, and I will look for the diary entries to repay my debt with Mr. Fool… Audrey had already thought of a follow-up deal.

200 pounds? The method to reduce the risk of losing control is 200 pounds? Th-that's way too cheap, isn't it? Fearing that Justice would go back on her word, the surprised and happy Fors said without hesitation, "Deal!"

After she finished speaking, she felt her heart pain for the money. She felt that her bank balance was decreasing at a speed that was visible to the naked eye.

Chapter 313 - The Ancient Deities

◆

Audrey was about to apply for a private exchange when she suddenly discovered one thing. The World, who was seated at the other end of the long bronze table, didn’t show any interest in the “acting method” at all. He didn’t even have the urge to ask about it.

Does he already know about the “acting method,” or did he consult Mr. Fool privately? Audrey mumbled to herself, still cautiously asking for a private meeting.

Then, looking at Fors, she said in a measured voice, in both her choice of words and pronunciation, “Our attitude towards potions isn’t about grasping them, but rather it’s about digesting them.

“The key to digestion is to”act,” and the key to “acting” is the corresponding potion name.”

“Why?” blurted Fors.

After a moment of deliberation, she added another question, “Then, how should one”act”?”

Audrey recalled Mr. Fool’s pose and examples, repeating the description of the castle, the guards, the invitation, the disguise, and finally saying, “In short, the goal of ‘acting’ is to reconcile the body, heart, and soul, bypassing the stubborn resistance of the remnant headstrong psyche of the potion so as to assimilate and digest it.”

As a fiction writer, Fors had a strong imagination. After Justice was done with her description, she had already sketched out the corresponding scenes in her mind, and she had basically understood what Justice was trying to convey.

Is that so…

So this is how you eliminate the remnant psyche influence in the potion and reduce the risk of losing control.

The more I think about it, the more I feel that this is possible!

†

The bewilderment in her mind gradually lessened, and the feeling of surprise slowly filled her heart.

Finally, she asked for confirmation, “Was this taught by Mr. Fool?”

“Yes, if not for Mr. Fool, we might’ve already lost control. Our continued existence is proof of the ‘acting method’s’ effectiveness,” Justice praised from the bottom of her heart.

Phew… Fors exhaled and felt her future brighten with hope.

Could this be the fortuitous encounters described in all kinds of novels? This feels so good! However, I shouldn’t be careless. Mr. Fool might be a malicious, evil god with deep secrets… Fors reminded herself.

Immediately, she began to think about an even more important question: how to act as an Apprentice.

Just from the word alone, Apprentice means that one’s skills are not mature enough in various aspects. Does this mean that one should still accept guidance and focus on studying? One shouldn’t flaunt one’s superiority and be arrogant, and one has to understand the insignificance of their own strength? Fors quickly let her thoughts wander and didn’t realize that the environment for individual communication had been discontinued.

At that moment, The Sun, Derrick, looked around silently, gritted his teeth and said, “I want to know which seven gods you are talking about, and the general situation regarding them.”

He couldn’t help but ask this question that had been plaguing his mind for a long time.

…I know that! Audrey almost failed to react at first, but she quickly figured out what The Sun was asking and raised her right hand slightly.

At the same time, The Hanged Man and The World also indicated that they could answer.

…What are they doing? Fors looked on blankly, trying to remember what had just happened.

After a moment, she remembered The Sun’s question. She then began ruminating over the implied meaning behind his words.

It can’t be? He actually doesn’t know about the Seven Gods? Where did he come from? Fors looked at Mr. Sun, who was just a teenager.

In the Northern Continent, other than insensible children, there wasn’t anyone who didn’t know of the seven orthodox deities!

Even the poor who struggled to survive and the tramps were no exception!

To them, the occasional free food offered by the cathedrals was so tempting that the workhouse was a flame of despair.

People from the Southern Continent’s colonies? However, there’s no need for him to ask such a simple question! Just find a cathedral and ask a pastor or a priest to preach a sermon, and you’ll be able to figure out the relevant content! Where does The Sun actually live? What a freak! Fors looked from side to side while mumbling to herself, but Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and Mr. World weren’t surprised.

At that moment, the fog-immersed Klein saw that there were three people eager to answer. He smiled and said, “Mr. Sun, who do you want to trade with?

“What are you willing to pay?”

The Sun Derrick pursed his lips and thought for a few seconds.

“I’ll trade with each of them individually.”

Only then can I obtain the most comprehensive information… In the harsh environment of the City of Silver, Derrick had matured quite a bit from his previous patrols and clearance operations.

He paused for a moment before requesting, “The reward is that you can ask me a question, the kind that I can answer.”

“I agree. I’m very interested in the City of Silver.” Audrey smiled faintly without any hesitation.

City of Silver? Where is this place? Why haven’t I heard of it? Fors looked around blankly, feeling completely at a loss as to what they were talking about.

Audrey glanced at her and kindly explained, “Mr. Sun is neither in the Northern or Southern Continent, nor is he on an island in the ocean. The City of Silver is located outside of our understanding, or you can say he is beyond the limits of our exploratory efforts.”

Are you kidding me? Fors subconsciously had this thought.

However, with that thought, based on The Sun’s performance, and the fact that it was impossible that the others were ganging up to cheat her, Fors quickly accepted Audrey’s explanation.

This secret gathering is even more incredible than I thought… Mr. Fool is more powerful than I thought… Fors exhaled silently and sighed with emotion.

Audrey vaguely read her thoughts, and for a moment she was tempted to flaunt about how the deaths of Vice Admiral Qilangos, Intis Ambassador Bakerland, and the swindler, Lanevus, was a result of the Tarot Club.

What a pity. If Fors were to learn of these three things, she would immediately associate Audrey with Justice. I have to keep it a secret… Audrey, even if it's hard on you, you have to keep this a secret! Audrey suddenly took a deep breath.

Since she didn't know much about the City of Silver, she didn't know what to ask. Fors didn't participate in the following transaction and chose to spectate from the sidelines.

As for The Hanged Man and The World, they successively agreed to The Sun's request.

The happiest of all was Klein, for this meant that he reaped thrice the rewards.

During individual communications, The Fool could hear the conversation! Klein obviously didn't have any plans of insulating himself.

Sun, you sure are simple! He laughed in his heart.

As there was a lot of information about the Seven Gods, Justice, The Hanged Man, and The World could only "write" what they thought was important. After a while, they each passed on their descriptions to The Sun.

Derrick quickly scanned through the information, and his eyes stopped on a few lines.

In addition to the Lord who created everything, the oldest gods are the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Those churches were the oldest churches.

Why haven’t I heard of any of these… I’ve never heard of any of these gods… I feel like there’s something very important hidden here… Derrick knew that each Tarot Club gathering had a time limit, so he hastily ended his review, intending to go back and pray to Mr. Fool for help in awakening his memories.

Then, the first one to raise a question was Justice.

Due to the serial murder, she was interested in the Devil Sequence, so she imitated Mr. World and asked the appropriate questions.

Derrick answered with verve and added something, “In the corresponding Sequence 7, a Beyonder of the Abyss pathway can effectively interfere with divination and spirit channeling.”

A Devil’s powers sure are terrifying. I wonder if my Sequence 7 Psychiatrist will result in a qualitative change… Or would I need to be Sequence 6? Audrey felt a little apprehensive from what she heard.

The second question came from The Hanged Man.

He seemed to have considered this question for a long time. Looking at The Sun, he opened his mouth and said in a deep voice, “I want to know the creation myth of the City of Silver.”

The slightly tense Derrick relaxed a little and said, “The omnipotent and omniscient God created everything and entered a state of deep slumber.

“The Giant King, Aurmir; the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt; the Elf King, Soniathrym; the Vampire Ancestor, Lilith; the Devil Monarch, Farbauti; the Phoenix Ancestor, Gregrace; the Mutant King, Kvastir; and the King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea split the remnant powers of authority, becoming lords of the sky, land, and ocean. They ruled over reality, the spirit world, and the astral world. They were deities who ruled over various races and were truly deities, the ancient gods.”

Flegrea? Klein, who was listening, suddenly noticed a familiar word.

Whenever he advanced, or when his condition was unstable, or when he came into contact with the remnant influence of the Antigonus family's diary, he would always hear some illusory, incomprehensible raving coming from somewhere.

"Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…"

Klein had known for a long time that Hornacis was referring to the mountain range where the ruins of the Nation of the Evernight was, but he had never known what the word Flegrea meant.

And now, for the first time, he heard Flegrea coming out of someone else's mouth!

King of Demonic Wolves, an ancient deity!

But why was "He" involved with the Hornacis mountain range? Klein maintained his unperturbed position as he quietly listened to Derrick's recount.

"Some of them perished in the battle among themselves, while others were stripped of their authority after the awakening of the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God.

"The first part is the creation myth, and the second part is about the City of Silver's true history."

Alger wanted to know more, but as The Sun was unwilling to say more, he could only stop in time and turn his attention to thinking.

The King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea, had left the stage of history in the Second Epoch, in the Dark Epoch long before the Cataclysm? As he pondered, Klein manipulated The World to ask a question.

What he had wanted to ask was which Sequence allowed a Beyonder to freely switch between the body and the spirit, just as Miss Sharron did. If The Sun wasn't aware of the answer, he could consider something else.

But now, he had something more important to know about, so he hoarsely said, “Everything about the King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea.”

The Sun, Derrick, looked at Mr. World in astonishment and frowned.

“I don’t know much about this ancient deity.

“He’s also known as the Annihilation Demonic Wolf and the Evernight Demonic Wolf.”

“Evernight Demonic Wolf… Evernight?” Klein slightly narrowed his eyes.

Chapter 314 - Possible

◆

The Nation of the Evernight, at the peak of the Hornacis mountain range, believed in the Ruler of the Evernight, the Mother of the Sky… Is there some connection between that and the Evernight Demonic Wolf, Flegrea? The illusory ravings I hear are actually “Hornacis… Flegrea?”

What is the connection between the ancient god, Evernight Demonic Wolf Flegrea and the Goddess? According to Roselle, Sequence 0 is equivalent to a true god, and each sequence can only have one Sequence 0… The Goddess had inherited the authority from the Evernight Demonic Wolf? He wasn’t the oldest deity, nor was he the eye of the Creator as he claimed?

Yes, there’s a circumstantial clue that doesn’t count as proof. The Life School of Thought worships the moon, the crimson moon that evolved from the Creator’s eye, but they don’t believe in the Evernight Goddess…

Klein suddenly made several connections as he manipulated The World to speak.

“Is there nothing else?”

“No. Matters regarding the King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea, is also considered a myth in the City of Silver.” Derrick felt as though he had not given any answers. He suggested out of embarrassment,
“Mr. World, you can change to another question.”

Change the question? Little Sun, you’re too honest… Then I won’t stand on ceremony! Klein made The World say hoarsely, “Your honesty and trustworthiness leave a deep impression.

“I met a Beyonder before. He was able to freely switch between the body and spirit, and they were also able to direct zombies. Do you know which pathway this belongs to, and which Sequence it is?”

Although it was impossible for The Sun, who was located in the Forsaken Land of God and the City of Silver, to form a connection with the capital of the Loen Kingdom, Backlund, Klein was cautious enough to change the pronoun referring to Miss Sharron from “she” to “he.”

“By the way, he’s not a High-Sequence Beyonder,” The World added in a deep voice.

Derrick recalled the education he had received seriously before saying, “If he’s not a High-Sequence Beyonder, then the Phoenix pathway can be eliminated.”

“The Phoenix pathway?” Klein deliberately made The World show a certain level of surprise.

After attending so many gatherings, Derrick was very clear that there was a discrepancy between the terms used by the City of Silver and Miss Justice and company. Therefore, Derrick explained without finding it strange, “It’s the Beyonder pathway that governs death and partly controls the spirit world.

“Its Sequence 9 is Corpse Collector.”

So it’s the Death pathway… From the looks of it, Phoenix ancestor, Gregrace, was Death during the ancient times… Klein sat at the end of the long bronze table in a composed manner. He controlled World as he nodded.

“I understand. You can continue.”

Derrick replied immediately, “I can only think of two possibilities. One is a type of special Devil. Just like I previously said, the Devils that evolve from different species can have their differences. There is a type that can freely switch between body and spirit, but they're rather rare. And they might not be able to direct zombies."

"Can they be humans?" The World asked.

"No, not that I know of any similar examples," Derrick said honestly.

"What about the second possibility?" Klein thought back to Miss Sharron's usual performance in battle, and The World changed his sitting position.

Derrick replied seriously, "Mutants."

"Mutants? Isn't that referring to monsters?" The World asked hoarsely.

Klein clearly remembered that Mr. Azik had mentioned that the term "Mutant" was the general term for humans that were put under a curse. Due to the different curses, Mutants transformed into different races.

They were usually the same as humans, but their hearts were always filled with a suppressed, twisted desire in their hearts. Their desires erupted when they came into contact with a certain scene or object, turning into monsters. They would then succumb to their desires for blood and bloodshed.

Every time they unleashed their desires, they would become slightly more merciless and apathetic. Finally, they would lose all their positive feelings that are expected of a human.

The most common Mutant was the Werewolf.

Derrick nodded frankly and said, "That's right. Mutants are the various kinds of monsters that evolve from humans due to the negative effects of certain Beyonder characteristics."

It's not a curse, but the negative impact of some Beyonder characteristic? Sitting upright in the thick gray fog, Klein found this to be different from what Mr. Azik had described.

Is this the understanding of Mutants from before the Cataclysm? General knowledge in the City of Silver is quite precious to the Beyonders of the Northern and Southern continents… Klein became increasingly aware of the special nature of the Forsaken Land of God.

At this moment, Derrick continued, "The characteristics which Mutants possess happen to form a Beyonder pathway. Therefore, ordinary people can turn into Mutants by consuming potions as well."

"A Mutant pathway? Which pathway is this referring to? What is the name of the corresponding Sequence 9?" Klein asked curiously through The World.

Derrick ignored the first few questions, treating them as a necessary supplement.

"In the City of Silver, the corresponding Sequence 9 is called Prisoner.

"The mind is the prisoner of the body, and the body is the prisoner of the world. This refers to the madness that is restrained and the desire that is oppressed."

Prisoner? This pathway is held by the Rose School of Thought. They're famous for their bloody sacrifices, and worship of the so-called Chained God… Miss Sharron doesn't look like such a cold-blooded, indiscriminate person… Wait a minute, Maric was apparently being pursued by some faction. Were he and Miss Sharron traitors of the Rose School of Thought? Their betrayal was because they didn't want to turn into crazy heretics? Klein speculated as he made The World say, "I'm very satisfied with your answer. Transaction complete."

Following that, a few members shared their experiences and news.

As for Klein, he ended the Tarot Gathering just before his spirituality was exhausted.

When the area above the gray fog returned to its peaceful state, even the fake World was gone. He then started to travel back and forth between the real world and the mysterious space, bringing the Master Key to the ancient palace.

Although I deduced from Roselle's diary that there is a high probability that there isn't a Sequence 0 for the Apprentice pathway, I can't be rash. If there is a Sequence 1 or 2, they might be able to counterattack effectively across space… And what if there really is a Sequence 0? I shouldn't gamble with my life… After Klein recovered, he wrote a divination statement: "Its origin."

Next, he held the Master Key in his hand so as not to misdirect the moniker "it."

Leaning back in his chair, Klein chanted the divination statement and gradually fell asleep.

In the gray haze of the shattered world, he saw a bronze lamp rack with many flickering candles.

Around the lamp rack was what seemed to be a secret room, devoid of any external light. There were long tables, black iron pots, glass jars, brown colored notebooks, and other items.

A young man wearing a classic black robe stood in front of the long table, staring at the potion in his hand.

"Ancestors, I am about to embark on the path of extraordinariness. I will definitely reproduce the illustrious glory of the Abraham family!" he mumbled to himself and drank the potion.

The muscles on his face contorted in pain.

Suddenly, he cried out miserably and fell to the ground. He squirmed continuously, strangling himself.

After a few seconds, he tore off his clothes, stripped off his skin, and turned into a monster covered in blood.

Boom!

His flesh exploded, and each piece of flesh seemed to possess a life of its own as they continued to crawl in every direction, leaving behind signs of corrosion.

In the end, they were unable to leave the secret chamber and gradually calmed down.

The specks of light gathered together and combined together with a broken finger, forming an ancient and simple-looking brass-colored key.

At the same time, Klein saw a silver pocket watch inlaid with diamonds among the tattered clothes.

After the dream ended, he opened his eyes and looked forward. He said with a sigh, “Seriously, he said he wanted to restore the glory of the Abraham family, but he failed at the first step… It’s risky even at Sequence 9…”

The Abraham family was a powerful aristocratic family of the Tudor Dynasty during the Fourth Epoch. It was said that they held the Beyonder pathway of Apprentice, but it was very likely that it was incomplete.

Klein recalled the scene he had just seen. He tapped his fingers on the edge of the table and muttered to himself, “He spoke in the Loen language. I can’t tell where his accent is from.

“It was during the last ten years since it became popular to embed pure diamonds into pocket watches.

“Perhaps I should visit the Harvest Church when I have the time and ask Father Utravsky where he got his Master Key from… Perhaps I can find some clues.”

Just as Klein was about to leave the fog, the illusory star that symbolized The Magician began to swell and contract. Fors was requesting a sacrificial ritual.

Fors usually wouldn’t have carried so much cash on her, but she had been planning to attend a Beyonder gathering, so she had left 500 pounds to see if she could buy what she wanted. Who knew that the corresponding gathering had been canceled because of the circumstances. Now, she could use it to pay for the Apothecary formula and the “acting method’—a total of 430 pounds.

Seeing the screen of light appear and seeing the paper money disappear, it took Fors a few seconds to react. She sincerely thanked Mr. Fool.

I shall sell the Apothecary formula to Viscount Glaint for 300 pounds. I can’t be too greedy, or else this will ruin our long-term partnership… As for Miss Audrey, I’ll ignore her for the time being. She has hopes of coming into contact with the Psychology Alchemists and obtaining the corresponding formula directly. If there’s really no hope with that, I’ll try purchasing it from the Tarot Gathering… Sigh… I have to see if the “acting method” is effective. If it is, then I have to consider how to pray to Mr. Fool. Oh… Xio is such a fool. She has always been acting as an Arbiter and had unknowingly fulfilled the requirements of the “acting method”… Fors began thinking of the future.

When he received the 430 pounds, Klein also received a prayer from Miss Justice. She said that if Mr. Fool’s Blessed no longer needed cash, she could promise to exchange the 200 pounds for Roselle’s diary entries to make sure that Mr. Fool was satisfied.

I’m satisfied. I’m only a few dozen pounds short of a thousand pounds! Klein declined Miss Justice’s offer.

Then, he busily helped The Sun “awaken” his memories regarding the seven gods.

After doing all this, Klein returned to the real world in exhaustion. He drew the curtains open and started going through the dossier with the information regarding the serial murders, searching for the animal that might have existed.

Chapter 315 - Return to Harvest Church

◆

City of Silver, in a cramped room.

Derrick Berg was sitting by his bedside, quietly recalling the information regarding the seven gods that he had received.

The names of the deities that he had never heard of and the vague ancient myths all indicated to him that there was a new world outside which was completely different from the City of Silver.

Is that a piece of land that hasn’t been forsaken by the gods? Or perhaps, it’s a land that is protected by new gods? Derrick sat in the dark, motionlessly. Lightning flashed from time to time outside the window, bringing with it intense light.

He slowly focused his thoughts on the different authorities that were concentrated in the hands of the seven gods, and he compared them with the ancient gods such as the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt.

The so-called God of Combat is very similar to Giant King Aurmir. The Lord of Storms wields authority similar to the Elf King, Soniathrym. The Evernight Goddess appears to be the fusion of the King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea, and Vampire Ancestor, Lilith. As for the Eternal Blazing Sun, Earth Mother, God of Knowledge and Wisdom, and God of Steam and Machinery, I can’t find anyone corresponding to them…

Regarding the mythical legends, I wasn’t too attentive in class and missed out a lot…

Phew, since there’s no patrol duty during this period of time, I should head to the spire’s library and read up on them.

Derrick stood up and did as he planned.

The problem he faced was shared by the majority of the residents in the City of Silver. When they were being educated with general knowledge, their focus was all on the practical courses such as Devil Studies, Monster Classification, Charms, and Beyonder Foundations. They were all focused on the knowledge that could be used to deal with monsters in the dark and increase the production of edible plants. As for supplementary classes like Myth Studies, they often didn’t pay much attention.

If the history regarding the City of Silver hadn’t been able to make the residents more united, raise their sense of honor, or heighten their sense of mission, and how the six-member council was very strict in this regard, Derrick believed that he could at most remember what had happened in the last two or three decades.

Carrying the Axe of Hurricane, Derrick walked out of his house, following the clean, simple, but old and mottled stone road until he reached the twin towers on the north side of the city.

One of the spires of the twin towers served as the City of Silver’s library, an exchange spot where merit points could be exchanged and daily necessities could be distributed. The dome was where the six-member council resided and was rumored to contain a mystical item which had sustained the City of Silver for more than two thousand years, as well as a repository for formulas and ingredients.

Entering the spire, Derrick went straight up to the third floor and, according to his recollections, found the shelves where materials regarding mythology and the corresponding ancient books were stored.

Just as he was about to take out a book related to the creation myth, a slender, fair-skinned, and good-looking palm rushed forward and took the book away from him.

Derrick traced the arm, and after a single glance, he lowered his head, pressed his hand to his chest, and said in a low voice, “Greetings, Elder Lovia.”

The one who had taken the book from him was one of the members of the six-member council, Shepherd Lovia.

She wore a long black robe embroidered with mysterious purple patterns. Her silvery-gray hair was thick but curled up slightly.

Her face was smooth and fair, her appearance gorgeous. She looked to be in her early thirties, and her pair of light gray eyes seemed to be able to pierce through one’s soul.

Lovia tersely acknowledged Derrick’s greeting and gently nodded her head without saying anything else. She silently took the ancient book and left the space between the two bookshelves.

Elder Lovia seems to have returned to normal. She’s not like before, always switching between different temperaments at random—sometimes crying, sometimes sneering, sometimes grunting angrily, sometimes indifferent… Such a thought subconsciously flashed across Derrick’s mind.

Suddenly, he felt an inexplicable sense of fear.

It was because Elder Lovia was acting normally…

Normal…

†

After reading through the entire dossier, Klein found no record of any animals.

It was obvious that the original investigation had overlooked this

problem.

Yea, I have to remember my earlier considerations. I can't rashly perform my own investigations. Without talking about how I don't have the special means or confidence to avoid a Devil's intuition towards danger, just the possibility of me meeting a Nighthawk would be a very troublesome matter. My goal is to always take an auxiliary role. My job is to analyze the case and suggest conjectures and determine if a clue is authentic… Klein considered what he needed to do.

After understanding the abilities of a Devil, he temporarily didn't dare to hand over the matter of investigating whether or not the previous suspects had pets to Stuart. That would have a high chance of injuring Stuart.

It's only in the preliminary stage of investigations without any direction. It's likely Stuart wouldn't encounter any problems. A Devil isn't like those bunch of lunatics from the Aurora Order. He wouldn't proactively expose himself. Tomorrow or the day after, Stuart will definitely hand in a report. Perhaps there might be clues that others might not be able to detect. Klein stood up and stuffed his hands into his pockets as he paced around the activity room.

Now, his dilemma was on how to get the main investigation body to include animals under their radar.

I definitely can't mention it directly, as that would attract the suspicion of others. It would be the same if I attempted to guide them in the dark… Klein thought carefully as he weighed the matter seriously before finally deciding on a plan.

He pulled out a letter, grabbed a fountain pen, and wrote:

"Dear Mr. Stanton,

"I thought of a problem. Previously, when the detectives were in discussion, they all found the murderer's actions skilled without any hint of inexperience. They believed that he couldn't be born with such skill and that he must've had a lot of experience to build up his foundation. Examples of such people can be surgical students from med school or a butcher.

"Back then, I thought he might have done something like this before. It's a direction for investigation, and it's what I'm paying the most attention to right now.

"But after thinking about it over and over again for the past two days, I don't think it's comprehensive enough. Perhaps, he didn't rely on killing people to gain experience.

"Is it possible that he practiced with poor animals? Different kinds of living animals.

"The number of animals that die in Backlund daily is innumerable, and those that disappear in the sewers are also unknown. Therefore, these are very good training targets.

"This is my inchoate opinion. I hope to communicate with you.

"Sherlock Moriarty"

Klein didn't directly mention that the murderer might have been an animal that had turned into a Devil. He also used the reason of practice, hoping that Isengard Stanton would take note of the neglected "animal world," thereby reminding the official Beyonders responsible for the case.

While he was writing, he suddenly felt that this was also a direction.

The reason why the Devil hadn't been caught all this time was because it had been hunting animals most of the time.

And the hunting of animals wasn't something worth paying attention to.

Well, let's hope it will inspire them… Klein folded the letter and dressed up to deliver it to the mailbox at the end of the street.

Fifteen minutes later, Lawyer Jurgen, who saw Detective Sherlock passing by his oriel window again and again, finally couldn't stop his urge to open his door and asked politely, "Mr. Moriarty, did you forget your key?"

"Uh, sort of." Klein squeezed out a smile.

"Why don't you come to my house as a guest? After dinner, you can go back after dark. I know that you private detectives are very good at climbing." Jurgen invited him in with a serious expression.

Seriously? Klein was stunned for a second before he smiled sincerely.

"It's my honor."

After all, Lawyer Jurgen's grandmother had the standard of a capable chef!

And he could also tease the cat while he was there!

†

When it was completely dark, Klein, having had his fill, rested for a while at home before leaving Minsk Street with his cane.

He planned to make another trip to Rose Street, on the south side of the bridge, and ask Bishop Utravsky about the origin of the Master Key.

With the help of Dowsing Rod Seeking, he successfully arrived at the Harvest Church in the dead of night and sneaked in through the same route as before.

However, Bishop Utravsky wasn't repenting in the cathedral's hall tonight. There were only rows of pews in the silence and gloom.

"He's resting?" Klein felt slightly puzzled as he walked towards the living area at the back of the hall.

As he rounded the corner, he saw the tall, giant-like Bishop Utravsky walking up the basement stairs. The heavy stone doors situated there were being banged on by someone.

Who did he detain in the basement? Klein instantly thought of a series of warped ideas.

Bishop Utravsky looked up and saw Klein disguised the same as before. He was also surprised as he asked, "Haven't you found your way home yet?"

…Do I look like someone who's been lost for so long? Klein forced a smile.

"Father, I'm not lost."

"You think that the formula is fake? That's impossible…" Bishop Utravsky frowned and stopped midway up the stairs.

As a result, he was at the same height as Klein.

"No, it's genuine," Klein answered honestly.

At this moment, the basement's stone door was thumped again with ever-increasing intensity. Along with the thumps was a male voice that shouted, "Let me out."

"This is?" Klein couldn't help but ask.

Bishop Utravsky smiled warmly and said, "A vampire."

As soon as he finished, the man in the basement shouted, "What's wrong with being a vampire? Do you think vampires should be locked up here? Do I have to listen to your nagging and scripture recitals every day? Bullshit, I'm a noble Sanguine, so don't use such a vulgar name to describe me!

“Let me tell you, I worship the moon, and I’ll absolutely not convert to a believer of Earth Mother! Give up, you damned priest!”

It was Klein’s first time meeting a real vampire, so he couldn’t help but ask, “Father, where did you catch him?”

Bishop Utravsky gave Klein an odd look before saying, “He is the original owner of the Master Key.

“One day, he got lost and entered this cathedral.”

…Klein seriously considered the dilemma of whether he should carry the Master Key with him in the future or not.

It’s a good thing that I can divine… he thought thankfully.

“It just so happened that he had entered a state where he thirsted for blood, and I had discovered his abnormality,” Bishop Utravsky added with a smile.

“Bullshit, don’t talk about blood! What I need is the blood of a beautiful young girl, not the blood of a dirty old man like you!” The vampire in the basement suddenly became enraged.

Bishop Utravsky explained without a trace of anger, “When he craves blood, I will give him some of mine.”

Klein nodded and looked again. He found that the heavy stone door in the basement was engraved with the Sacred Emblem of Life and many mysterious symbols, forming a complete seal.

During the day, when more and more people start praying, it would be impossible for the sound to even reach the outside… Klein made a preliminary judgment.

“Is there anything I can help you with?” at that moment, Bishop Utravsky asked.

Klein answered frankly, “I want to know where the Master Key first came from.”

“You’ll have to ask him.” Bishop Utravsky pointed to the basement.

The vampire inside suddenly became quiet before he leisurely laughed and said, “Friend, I can answer your question.

“But the condition is that you rescue me first.”

Chapter 316 - Never Perform Unprepared

* * *

He actually named his price… Upon hearing the vampire’s request, Klein felt both irritated and amused.

He looked at the Bishop Utravsky, who was standing in front of him, and asked, “Father, may I borrow your candle? The one that you used last time. I’ve forgotten what it’s called.”

Before Bishop Utravsky could reply, the vampire in the basement spoke in a stunned voice.

“What do you want to do? What do you want to do?”

At this moment, Bishop Utravsky answered warmly, “It’s called the Mental Terror Candle. What are you borrowing it for?”

Father, you’re very cooperative. You even knew to ask… The corners of Klein’s mouth curled up.

“I plan to use it to directly inquire the deepest part of this friend’s heart.

“As you know, I’m quite talented in this area, and I’m very good at such matters…”

Before he could finish his sentence, the vampire in the basement had already shouted, “Bastard, give up on your idea!

“You will be cursed if you do this to a noble Sanguine!

“Hey, hey, hey! I’ll speak! I’ll speak! I’ll tell you the origins of the Master

Key!”

Klein immediately chuckled.

“Thank you for your cooperation.”

“Hmph! The friend of that dirty old man naturally isn’t a good person! As a Sanguine, all I did was go to the hospital to steal blood bottles to drink. Why did I end up locked up in here and forced to listen to this naggy, housefly-like Bible of Life!?” the vampire in the basement angrily complained.

Frankly speaking, if you really are who you claim to be, and you bumped into me, at most, I would give you a warning. Unfortunately, you got lost and entered this cathedral. The priest you encountered used to kill people wantonly and enjoyed combat, but he’s now pious and repentant. You can only blame your poor luck… However, with Bishop Utravsky’s recovery, he’s unlikely to hurt you. At most, he will keep you to his side…. Klein silently responded.

The vampire in the basement paused for a few seconds and said, “About a month ago, I went to the hospital in South Borough to steal blood and ended up meeting a thief.

“He originally wanted to enter the hospital’s finance department, but he ended up lost. He opened the door to the blood bank and ended up being caught by me.

“He was using that Master Key. He told me that he had found it back when he had burgled a particular house. He had also obtained a pocket watch with inlaid diamonds. Uh, in the basement.

“At first, he thought that the key would correspond to a room or safe. He made several attempts and found that the key could open all doors. This is no doubt an unimaginable surprise for a thief. After that, he enjoyed numerous successes until I caught him and confiscated his key.

“Damn, I didn’t expect that the key would make one get lost back then!”

It matches the scene I saw with my divination… However, is there a curse on the Master Key? The previous owner was detained because he got lost, and the owner before that was caught red-handed because he got lost… Perhaps I should really throw it into the space above the gray fog and take it out when I need it. But, that will be a lot more troublesome and might cause delays to certain matters… Klein controlled his expression and asked unhurriedly, "Did the thief say where he stole it?"

The vampire in the basement mumbled, "Are you doubting my intelligence? How could I not ask about this?

"He said it was in the area south of the bridge, 48 Riverbay Avenue. I was planning to check it out when… Damn it!

"Alright, I'm done answering. Don't disturb me anymore."

Klein didn't leave just because he received an answer. Instead, he slowly took out a halfpence copper coin and recited softly, "He's lying."

†

After repeating it seven times, Klein's eyes turned dark, and he flicked the coin up. He watched it spin in the air before it landed in the palm of his hand.

It was heads, indicating a positive response.

In other words, the vampire was lying!

The thief's description coincides greatly with what I had seen through divination, so they confirm each other… The vampire must've lied about the exact address! Klein looked at Bishop Utravsky and said with a chuckle, "He lied.

"Let me think about the reason why he lied.

"It would be very unwise of him to vent his anger and seek revenge on me, who is completely uninvolved. It would also be very detrimental to his situation.

“So, I think he’s actually using this method to call for help. That address might very well belong to a companion of his. Father, do you plan on paying a visit?”

The basement suddenly fell silent. After a few seconds, the vampire laughed and said, “I just didn’t want to tell you that easily. You threatened me just now, so I lied to take revenge on you. Isn’t that normal?”

I can hear how forceful you are at trying to calm yourself down… Klein smiled and said, “Then, what’s the real answer? If you continue lying, I don’t mind sending this address to the three Churches. I’ll just say that it has something to do with the recent serial murders.”

“…Humans are really vicious…” The vampire sighed through gritted teeth. “The area south of the bridge, 32 Verdi Street.”

Klein tossed the coin again and got the result that the vampire wasn’t lying.

It seems like vampires don’t have the ability to interfere with divination… Hmm, I should confirm it above the gray fog when I’m back… Klein pressed his hand to his chest, faced the heavy stone door, and bowed.

“Thank you for your cooperation.”

“Hmph,” the vampire in the basement snappily replied.

As Klein turned to leave, the vampire suddenly shouted, “Remember that my name is Emlyn White. Remember, my name is Emlyn White!”

Why do I have to remember your name? It’s not like I’m going to save you. Without preparation, and without a home ground advantage, I’m no match for Father Utravsky, and he has the mystical item to transfuse blood… Hmm, could it be that this vampire's companion will offer a bounty, and he wishes for me to sell this information? Klein was surprised for a moment before he walked out of the Harvest Church without a word.

After finding a secluded place, he undid the spirit pendulum wound around his left wrist and started to divine if he should visit 32 Verdi Street at that very moment.

The answer he got was that there was some danger, but it wasn't too high.

There is certain danger… Where's the danger? What kind of danger would it be? Klein carefully analyzed the situation, suspecting that the Apprentice who died from losing control had turned into a ghost-type monster due to its intense grievance. Furthermore, it was a relatively strong one at that.

That's not right. That thief clearly came out with the Master Key without encountering any trouble. Could it be that the danger is in another secret location in the house? Klein thought for a moment and decided that it would be best for him to go only when he was sufficiently prepared. It prevented him from entering a situation in which he encountered an enemy whom he was unable to deal with, with his present Beyonder powers.

At the very least, I'll have to wait until I buy bullets that can purify wraith shadows… He nodded slightly.

After this consideration, combined with his previous battle with Dawn Paladin Bishop Utravsky, Klein suddenly felt that he could vaguely conclude the first principle of a Magician: "Never perform unprepared!"

Doing otherwise would result in a high chance of messing up… Klein added silently.

†

On Tuesday morning, after preparing butter and toasting two slices of bread, Klein was in no hurry to eat. He opened the door and retrieved the day's newspaper from the mailbox.

Eh, there's a letter… He pulled the letter out from the newspaper and glanced at the envelope as he returned to the dining room.

It's from Stuart… It appears that he has already completed his preliminary investigations. Klein nodded slightly, tore open the envelope, shook the piece of paper, and sat down at the dining table as he read it.

Stuart claimed that the two suspects had shown no signs of abnormal behavior. One of them entrenched himself at the grocery store and guarded his wife and children, living a lifeless life, while the other was busy with various temporary jobs and working hard to maintain his life. They were not irritable, nor did they have the urge to fight. They also didn't lock themselves up in a room.

At the end of the letter, Stuart lamented the harsh situation in East Borough and vowed to save enough money to avoid being reduced to staying there when he was old.

"Thank you for your help. I will share my findings with the rest of you if there are any other clues," Klein replied to the letter simply when he saw how Stuart had no signs of being discovered. He didn't want Stuart to delve deeper into the case, or else the Devil might detect the danger and kill any latent dangers in advance.

Putting away his pen and paper, Klein picked up a piece of bread that had already been soaked in butter and leisurely spent his breakfast with a cup of black tea and the newspaper.

During this process, he felt rather regretful that there were no signs that the Beyonder gathering organized by Old Mister Eye of Wisdom would be held.

Sigh, the existence of this Devil has seriously affected the lives of the Backlund Beyonders. I hope Mr. Isengard Stanton is able to notice my hint and be fruitful. Yes, he should be a “recognized” Beyonder by the officials… Klein put down the newspaper and picked up a napkin to wipe his mouth before he packed up to leave.

His plan today had been already decided last week.

He was to visit the Royal Museum for the Emperor Roselle Memorial Exhibition!

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey was wearing a light lace dress and donned snow-white fur as she waited for her personal maidservant, Anne, to help her put on a soft hat with pearls and a thin fishnet veil.

Beside her, Susie sat there with a bow tied around her neck.

“My beautiful little princess, where do you plan on going?” Earl Hall asked, stroking his fine mustache as he descended the stairs.

Audrey’s eyes replied with bright eyes, “Father, I plan to attend the Roselle Memorial Exhibition.”

I can take a look at the original diary of Emperor Roselle and find a chance to get some for Mr. Fool… she added in her mind.

Earl Hall muttered to himself, “Why are you going today? There will be a lot of people, and the scene will be very chaotic.

“Yes, I’ll get someone to coordinate with the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. After the official exhibition is over, they’ll open its doors specially for you and your friends for half a day. That way, you can have a quiet and undisturbed tour.

“If you have anything you wish to look at closely, you can discuss it with them directly.”

In that the case, that seems even better. I can directly look through the diaries in this exhibition… Audrey lifted her skirt and curtsied.

“Thank you, handsome Earl Hall~”

Chapter 317 - Roselle Memorial Exhibition

◆ ◆ ◆

West Borough, 2 King's Avenue, Royal Museum.

Although it wasn't a weekend, there was a long line at the door when Klein arrived.

According to the descriptions in the newspapers and magazines, he knew that the world's middle class had fewer ways of entertaining themselves. Other than reading newspapers, reading novels, listening to opera concerts, playing tennis and squash, enjoying plays, and holding or attending banquets, there were only three options: going to a park, going to an exhibition, and going on vacation. Due to Emperor Roselle's influence, annual vacations were already common phenomena.

At nine o'clock sharp, Klein, who was wearing a silk top hat, a black cane, and a long double-breasted frock coat, followed the people in front of him and entered the museum.

There was a split here, and the different guides led a number of visitors down different passages.

Klein and nearly twenty people followed a good-looking woman and listened to her introduction of Roselle's life.

This was of zero value to Klein, who was half a historian, so he was so bored that he began confirming the location of his wallet.

Since his wealth had soared to 952 pounds, just a step away from a thousand pounds, his wallet could no longer hold so much cash, and he could only carry some of it selectively. As for the rest, Klein didn't feel at ease to just leave them at home without protection, so he threw them all above the gray fog.

As they walked, they entered the first exhibition hall. The female guide excitedly said, "Ladies and gentlemen, these are the daily necessities of Emperor Roselle.

"Look, that's his velvet quilt, and that's the golden glassware he used to drink his wine.

"That's the toilet he used, the first toilet in the modern sense."

†

Even a toilet he had used before is being exhibited? Klein suddenly felt some sympathy for Roselle.

Then, he looked at the toilet with a flushing system behind the glass wall and saw that it was shimmering with golden light. It seemed to have a layer of gold foil on its surface, and it was engraved with an exaggerated and artistic pattern.

How extravagant… Klein no longer sympathized with Roselle.

Separated from the toilet by only a glass layer was Roselle's everyday clothing, including cuffs, a shirt with pleats at the collar, and so on.

It was obvious that the female guide was rather impressed by Intis's dress culture.

After the Daily Necessities Exhibition Hall, there was a display of the original versions of the important documents which Roselle had issued, including the Civil Code and other extremely valuable historical relics.

At that moment, the female guide pointed at a display cabinet and said, “This is one of the diaries left behind by Emperor Roselle. It uses his self-created mysterious symbols that have yet to be deciphered to date. Many historians and archaeologists believe that these notes contain the least known secrets of Emperor Roselle.

“As a romantic, I have my own guesses. Perhaps these are the symbols he had agreed upon with his most beloved woman. They wrote about each other, but were never able to truly be together.”

You’re suited for writing novels… The corner of Klein’s mouth twitched. His eyes then turned to the notebook that was spread open in the display cabinet. On it were the simplified Chinese he was extremely familiar with.

“6th March. Dammit, I’m almost constipated from eating the food here!”

“17th March. Are the ladies of Intis so open? Did I hit on her, or did she hit on me? I just find it odd.”

“22nd March. It’s time to choose a religion. On one side is the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, and on the other is the Church of Craftsmanship.

“My choice is without a doubt. Praise you, God of All Machinery!

“One day, I will make the Church of Craftsmanship change its name to the Church of Machinery.”

…It’s indeed very romantic… Romantic constipation… This should be a diary entry written by Emperor Roselle in his early days. It’s without any valuable information… His handwriting is even uglier than mine… Klein looked away and tsked.

Of course, he only saw the two pages that were spread open. He didn’t know what else was on it.

I wonder how the security measures here are. I wonder if there is a chance of sneaking in and flipping through them… Klein looked around and saw that there were quite a few security personnel on the surface.

Perhaps there are Beyonders from the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery… he muttered under his breath and followed the female guide as he blended in with the crowd. He entered the next exhibition hall which was called "The Gentle Roselle."

"This is Emperor Roselle's first love letter. This is his first love poem he created —"When You Are Old."[1] The female guide looked at the manuscript in the display cabinet with glimmering eyes.

Shameless! Yeats's coffin can't be held shut any longer! Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

"This is a bracelet he made. This is the original manuscript of his novel…" The female guide introduced with a tone of extraordinary adoration.

… Klein tried hard not to let his expression change.

Of course, he also believed that Emperor Roselle, who was an Artisan in his Beyonder profession, was definitely very skilled in his craftsmanship.

"This is the basic education textbook that he improved to educate his children. Each word has its own corresponding picture… It was a little game he had invented for his children, similar to Intis chess, but somehow it didn't become popular… These are the toy blocks he invented; these were also for his children…" the female guide said in a gentle tone without even realizing it.

Isn't this fucking Chinese Chess… Furthermore, Lego wants to collect the licensing fees from you! Klein could only smirk to hide his other emotions.

With a single glance, he noticed that there was a woman over 1.7

meters tall standing in front of this display cabinet.

The lady had chestnut hair that fell to her waist, and she had a perfectly proportioned figure. She was neither fat nor thin.

She wore a yellow layered dress which had the vibes of a young girl, but she wore a black, out-of-fashion bonnet, with a fishnet veil hanging down and concealing her face.

She stood in front of the display cabinet and stared at the items inside for a long time without leaving.

Even when Klein and the others followed the guide to the next exhibition hall, she remained rooted to the spot.

After passing through a few more exhibition halls, the female guide pointed ahead and said, “The next thing you will see is Emperor Roselle’s restored study.

“Of course, it’s only a part of it.”

As she spoke, Klein and the others entered the exhibition hall as the area before them opened up.

It was almost like a library, lined with shelves which were two stories high. There were ladders sitting beneath them and aisles between them leading to a three-dimensional book park.

“You can imagine how the owner of this place had once climbed up and down the ladder in search of the book that he wanted to read…” The guide painted a vivid picture.

No, Roselle would definitely send his servants to seek it out for him. He wouldn’t do it himself… Klein silently refuted.

In the center of the row of bookshelves were desks, chairs, brass lampstands, and the like. They were all protected under the cover of glass and were blocked from making contact with the outside world.

With a single glance, Klein found a stack of manuscripts which were all yellow in color.

The stack of manuscripts weren't spread out, so one could only see the contents of the first page.

It was a drawing of a rectangular object with a detailed description: "This is a portable, miniaturized application of the telegraph. Through it, one can connect to the person holding the same item and receive and exchange information. You can even converse with them directly.

"This requires better positioning. I think we can boldly cast our sights to the sky. There are no obstructions in the sky, and it would allow for better transmission of signals."

†

Emperor, you aren't even letting go of a cell phone… Klein couldn't help but facepalm.

At that moment, the guide introduced the stack of manuscripts.

"…These record the wonderful ideas of Emperor Roselle. They record inventions which he was unable to turn into reality in time. They record the glory of what our human civilization is capable of!"

Klein didn't pay any attention to the flattery and instead casually sized up the other things.

Suddenly, he noticed a bookmark in a hardcover book on the desk.

The exposed part of the bookmark depicted a drawing which was randomly drawn by a child.

Emperor Roselle isn't good at drawing… Just as Klein was mocking inwardly, he suddenly thought of something—Roselle had once disguised a Card of Blasphemy as a bookmark and placed it inside a certain book!

Could it be this one? Klein carefully observed for a few seconds, but he didn't find anything amiss.

That's right. He had mentioned before that the Cards of Blasphemy possess anti-divination and anti-prophecy characteristics. Under normal circumstances, there's no way to discover their uniqueness… If it were so easily recognized, the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery would have long taken it away… Klein cast his gaze away and began scrutinizing the other books. He discovered that many of them had a bookmark in them, and all of these bookmarks were of different shapes.

He pondered for a moment, and using his Clown's ability to control his facial muscles, he curiously asked, "Are these all books that Emperor Roselle has read before?

"Sorry, I mean, are these the original books?"

The female guided nodded firmly.

"Yes, these are all the items from Emperor Roselle's study from back then. They include, but are not limited to, books, manuscripts, bookmarks, lampstands, ink bottles… But even more were destroyed during the several conflicts."

Klein nodded slightly and studied the bookmarks again.

Roselle had said in his diary that he was going to put the Card of Blasphemy in a very valuable book so that no one would ever think that the most valuable thing in that book was actually an obscure bookmark… Well, which of these books are valuable? Klein began eliminating books as he recalled the details written in the diary.

"Glorious Era," doesn't look like it…

"The History of the Intis Kingdom," doesn't look like it…

"Geography of the Northern Continent," this might be possible, but it isn’t very likely…

“The Improved Principles of Steam Machinery,” just like before…

Klein scanned the books, one by one, when his eyes suddenly came to rest on the first pile of manuscripts he saw.

They were recording objects from Earth objects which Roselle had wanted to invent but lacked the conditions to do so.

There was also a bookmark in it, and on it, there was a depiction of Roselle in royal Emperor clothes.

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Poem by William Butler Yeats.

Chapter 318 - Verification

* * *

His manuscripts of plagiarism. No, his manuscript of creativity should be considered a very valuable book… Could that bookmark be a Card of Blasphemy? Klein's heart skipped a beat, lightly tapped his molars, and quietly activated his Spirit Vision.

However, he didn't find anything abnormal.

He then scanned the other bookmarks and obtained the same answer.

That's right, if it's that easy to detect it, it wouldn't have remained till this day for me to have this thought… Klein deactivated his Spirit Vision, and once again, he thought via method of elimination, based on the details he had learned from Roselle's diary and the personality the Emperor had shown.

As far as he could tell, since Roselle had said that the book with the Card of Blasphemy was valuable, it couldn't be too ordinary, or it wouldn't satisfy his sense of warped humor—to use lots of valuable knowledge to serve as a foil for an unobtrusive bookmark would be a form of teasing the recipient of the book.

Thus, books with value but aren't of great value can be ignored. In that case… Klein looked around, trying to make sense of it, completely turning a deaf ear to what the guide was saying.

In summary, in the entire study, the only book that fulfills these conditions is that manuscript of creativity. The others are only ordinary in value. With Roselle's personality, he definitely wouldn't choose them. Yes, Roselle is the kind of person who would claim ’I’ll hide the secret in the most obvious place, but none of you can find it”… As Klein imagined this, he added a cackling expression to the Emperor in his mind.

Of course, there’s no way he could confirm that the bookmark was the disguised Card of Blasphemy because the books Roselle had, which were of great value, clearly included those in the field of mysticism. And those books were definitely not going to be put on display by the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery!

Yes, I have to first confirm if it’s the Card of Blasphemy before considering if I should take action… Unfortunately, I can’t use the date 20th January as a method of elimination. No one knows which bookmark is placed into which book on and on which day… Klein silently muttered to himself and turned to look towards the guide. He asked with a smile, “Do the books on the shelf also have things stuffed in between them?

“For example, a note written by some noble lady to Roselle.”

This question made many men give a knowing chuckle. The female guide shook her head and said, “No, there aren’t any. The books that contain other items have all been taken out and placed here for everyone to see.

“This is just a restoration of Emperor Roselle’s study, not the restoration of a particular point in time. There is no need to maintain an immutable state.”

Klein laughed and said immediately, “I understand, this sure is disappointing…”

That’s simply great! There’s only one bookmark in the entire exhibition hall that requires verification. The difficulty has greatly fallen… he added happily in his heart.

As the guide introduced “Roselle’s Favorite Books,” Klein looked around the room again, taking in the overall layout.

To restore the room from more than a century ago, there were no gas lamps around the room.

The lighting mainly relied on the iron-barred oriel windows that were a few meters away and the huge crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

As for the brass lamp on the desk, there were no candles installed. It was purely a decoration.

Looking out the oriel window, Klein saw the yellow, withered lawn and a straight, iron-black lamppost.

He took note of the location and turned his attention back to the book the female guide was introducing. In his mind, he began to analyze the feasibility of the theft.

There’s one premise. According to Roselle’s intentions, the various Churches and the ancient royal families wouldn’t wish for him to spread the Cards of Blasphemy and destroy the stable order that has been in place for more than a thousand years.

Therefore, if I’m an archbishop in charge of handling this matter, I will directly burn all of Roselle’s items. If the Cards of Blasphemy can be destroyed so completely, the outcome will perfectly suit the thoughts of the deities. If the Cards of Blasphemy are difficult to be destroyed, they will definitely expose their abnormality after the burning.

Since Roselle’s items still remain, that means that he used certain methods to make everyone, including the deities, believe that he had sent out all the Cards of Blasphemy without keeping a single one.

Of course, I can’t eliminate the possibility that some Churches or ancient families might attempt to use the Cards of Blasphemy to make up for their incomplete Beyonder pathways. But this possibility is very tiny. This is because it will give Roselle an opportunity to come up with a united front strategy. There wouldn't be a need for him to go so far as to destroy the order by spreading the Cards of Blasphemy.

In that case, his diary will show a certain level of confidence and corresponding concern, and he definitely wouldn't be left with pessimism to the point of only thinking of relying on that ancient secret organization.

Furthermore, it's been more than a hundred years. The Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, who has retained these remains, must've made numerous supplementary searches. Therefore, no one would believe that the Card of Blasphemy remains hidden in here.

In other words, the security level of this exhibition wouldn't be too high.

Besides, the most important point is that Backlund is currently under siege by the terror caused by the Devil's serial murders. The Beyonders of the three Churches must be sweeping through the entire city. The amount of manpower that the Machinery Hivemind Squad can afford to place at this unimportant exhibition would be extremely limited.

Yes, the thing most worthy of protection here is Roselle's diary. Many wild Beyonders worship the Emperor greatly. They believe that the book written with independently-created symbols must contain more profound mysteries. There's a motive to stealing them, and they have the ability to do so. Therefore, the guards' focus will definitely be in that exhibition hall.

I'll do a divination above the gray fog when I'm back to verify my analysis.

However, I have to first test if it's a Card of Blasphemy. Otherwise, I would be taking a certain risk and wasting tremendous effort only to steal an ordinary bookmark. If that happened, I might as well lie back in my grave! Yes, how should I verify it? It can't wait till I infiltrate again, and I don't have an opportunity to do so now… I have to find someone to help… I have to be careful! Klein's followed behind the guide with a focused expression as though he was very attentive.

Miss Magician is an Apprentice. She is able to go through walls and doors. It's like she possesses a Master Key, so she's a good candidate… However, she's only Sequence 9. The mission of infiltrating to do the verification is way too dangerous for her…

Miss Xio? No, she wouldn't be up to this… Let her get a thief to help? No, that's won't do. There are Beyonder guards here. The thief would most likely get caught on the spot, which will expose the fact that someone is looking into Roselle's bookmark…

Miss Sharron? She's powerful enough, and her state is suitable for this kind of quest, but the problem is that the Card of Blasphemy is a divine object that can make most Beyonders willing to kill. I still don't trust her enough…

†

Klein thought, analyzing the helpers he could use.

Gradually, he had a candidate in mind: Miss Justice!

Is it possible for her to use her wealth and power as a noble to touch the bookmark, using her interest as an excuse? Hmm, there are plenty of opportunities. Furthermore, this method won't alarm anyone. It would be beneficial for me to sneak in and steal it in the future… The more Klein thought about it, the more he found it feasible.

As for the question of how to verify it, as the Card of Blasphemy possessed anti-divination and anti-prophecy characteristics, the only solution he could think of for the time being was—to attempt to destroy the bookmark!

Doesn't anti-divination and anti-prophecy mean that using a similar method on a particular object that hides a Card of Blasphemy would result in failure or interference? Wouldn't that be tantamount to exposing itself?

What it really means is that even with the Card of Blasphemy, divining it will be equivalent to divining an ordinary object. The divination would result in something equivalent to the ordinary object.

In any case, I can't figure out what "password" the Emperor set. I can only use such a simple and crude method to confirm it. If the Card of Blasphemy can really be destroyed, then it only means that I'm temporarily unfated with it… Yes, with the Emperor's liking, perhaps I can try an activation incantation…

He once joked in his diary, saying, "My fortune is yours for the taking, but you'll have to find it first. I left everything I own at the ends of the Fog Sea," and the Card of Blasphemy is one of those treasures!

The activation incantation could be set to "One Piece" in ancient Hermes? That's not right. That way, there would be no one who can obtain anything, unless a second transmigrator appears. This isn't in accordance with the Emperor's intention to create chaos and destroy order, so the corresponding word for "Pirate King" was in either Hermes or ancient Hermes?

Klein slowly confirmed his thoughts, paying more and more attention to the layout of the exhibition hall.

Under the guidance of the female guide, they left the restored study and entered another exhibition hall.

When everything was over, and he was free to move around, Klein said, a little embarrassed, "Excuse me, but I would like to know where the washroom is? Upstairs?"

"No, that's where our office is. If you follow this path until the end before turning left, you will see it." The female guide politely pointed in a direction.

Using this opportunity, Klein figured out the connections of the washroom and several large exhibition halls, and he sketched out a rough layout in his mind.

At noon, he left the Royal Museum without doing anything and returned to 15 Minsk Street.

Klein had originally wanted to instruct Miss Justice as The Fool, saying that his Blessed needed help. But on second thought, he felt that it would ruin the image of Mr. Fool.

As an unfathomable figure, he has to appear calm and collected. He can't always be helping his Blessed. At the very least, he can't be personally bringing up such matters, time and time again… Klein thought for a moment and quickly worked out a solution.

He decided to pass on the image and voice of his "Blessed's" plea directly to Miss Justice.

In the process, Mr. Fool didn't say anything!

Phew. Klein exhaled, drew the curtains, rubbed his cheeks, and began to pray to himself, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

"I pray for your help.

"I hope that someone can help me touch the bookmark in Roselle's manuscript of creativity.

"Help me inflict small and unnoticeable damage to it and tell me of its results. While doing so, one can recite the corresponding term for 'Pirate King' in Hermes or ancient Hermes.

“No matter who helps me, even if there isn’t a reaction, I will be willing to pay them 500 pounds. This can be deducted from the 5,000 pounds that has not yet been paid.

“If there is a reaction, I am willing to give more.”

†

After doing all of this, Klein waited for a moment before entering the gray fog, and he saw the scene of his prayer displayed on the screen of light.

After divining that “the theft of the bookmark in the Royal Museum” involved a certain amount of danger but wasn’t too high, he extracted the plea, and added more of a “mosaic” effect to it. He also distorted his voice slightly, and he threw it into the illusory star that symbolized Miss Justice.

Chapter 319 - Audrey's “Adventure”

◆

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey was supposed to be practicing her piano at this time, but she remained seated in front of her dressing table, thinking about how to read and memorize Roselle’s diary in the evening.

Suddenly, her surroundings became hazy, and a boundless grayish-white began to emanate.

In the middle of the gray fog, The Fool’s figure sat high above. He was listening to a man who was barely visible pray, “…I pray for your help.

“I hope that someone can help me touch the bookmark in Roselle’s manuscript of creativity.”

†

How does Mr. Fool know that I’ll be visiting the Roselle Memorial Exhibition this evening after the museum is closed, and that I’ll have the opportunity of touching some items… Audrey listened in a daze. Although she was amazed, she didn’t find it odd.

With Mr. Fool’s stature and abilities, being aware of such a trivial matter is very easy!

As for how he learned of it, there was no need for ordinary Beyonders to attempt to comprehend it.

Audrey was about to reply when The Fool spoke in a low, flat voice, “You can choose to accept this request or not."

Hmm… Audrey pondered for two seconds and said, "Respected Mr. Fool, I can try, but I can't guarantee success."

She wasn't really interested in the minimum reward of 500 pounds. The reason why she had accepted the mission was that she was curious about the special nature of the bookmark left behind by Emperor Roselle, which was so important to the Blessed of Mr. Fool that he offered an uncapped price.

Anyway, I was going to look through Roselle's diary today, so it's convenient… Audrey thought.

Amidst the fog, The Fool nodded slightly and replied with a single word, "Okay."

When the illusion was completely gone, Audrey turned her gaze to the dressing mirror and seemed to examine herself closely.

Feeling both nervous and excited, she began to make plans for the evening operation.

I cannot let them notice anything unusual.

Even if Mr. Fool's Blessed does take any action later, I cannot become a suspect.

It's definitely not okay to only touch that bookmark. The moment it's lost, all eyes will be focused on me.

Yes… So, I need to show equal interest in all the other objects. I cannot let others notice that my main goal is that bookmark. The entire process has to be fluid, nothing sudden, and it has to be reasonable and logical.

How should I cause inconspicuous damage?

It's just a bookmark…

Audrey’s eyes swept across the items on her dressing table without focus. Suddenly, her gaze fell on an open jewelry box and focused on a pair of gemstone earrings adorned with fine needles.

The corners of her lips curled up, bit by bit, as her eyebrows and eyes slightly curved as she muttered to herself, “With Susie’s help, it should be enough…”

†

It was six o’clock in the evening. Backlund, that hardly ever saw the sun during the current season, was already dark, and the gas lamps were lit up.

After the Royal Museum sent off the last batch of ordinary visitors, it received a group of visitors composed of the young lady from a count family, the child of a duke, and a young viscount.

As the Machinery Hivemind knew that some of the aristocratic children were foppish people who frequently caused trouble, the Captain of the Machinery Hivemind’s West Borough squad, Max Livermore, was responsible for guarding the memorial. He had no choice but to disguise himself as a security guard and stay close by to prevent any accidents.

His hair was neatly combed as he wore a monocle, making his scholarly appearance akin to a college professor.

The monocle was actually a Sealed Artifact, codenamed 3-1328, named Eye of Crystal. With it, Max Livermore could see the spiritual body directly, as well as ghosts and shadows. There was no need to fear Beyonders who used these usually difficult to detect entities to cause chaos or engage in theft.

Of course, this Sealed Artifact also had a significant disadvantage. It could easily attract monsters like wraiths and shadows to the vicinity. If it was worn for a long time, one’s vision would suffer irreversible damage.

In the gloom of Backlund, she's like the bright sun… At that moment, Max was looking admiringly at the blonde girl with green eyes to his side.

Audrey looked with great interest at the toilet which was gold-plated and engraved with intricate patterns. She asked the guide beside her, "Is this the first toilet in the modern sense?"

"Yes, I personally believe that this is one of Roselle's most outstanding contributions to human civilization. The sewer works that go with it have changed the phenomenon of filth being all over the streets of Trier." The guide originally wanted to say the word "feces," but after looking at the girl in front of him, he felt that he couldn't lose his elegance.

Audrey hesitated and asked, "Can I touch it?"

"Can it still be used normally?" Viscount Glaint asked with a laugh from the side.

"Why are you so curious about this? No matter how old it is, it's ultimately still a toilet."

The other aristocratic children who were on good terms with them all laughed.

"No, Glaint, you don't understand. This is the glory of human civilization." Audrey smiled faintly in response but barfed inwardly.

If it wasn't to fulfill the request of Mr. Fool's Blessed, I wouldn't want to do this either… She sighed helplessly.

The guide chimed in, "What Miss Hall said is very right. The glory of human civilization isn't only reflected in firearms and other weapons that have changed the form of war, but they also shine in every detail of our lives.

"My lady, I don't know if it can still be used properly, because no one will use it."

The guide glanced at Max Livermore and, after receiving a nod of confirmation, continued, "You can touch it, and you may even open the water tank to take a look at the mechanical structure inside. But please be careful."

"Thank you." Audrey watched as the security guard opened the glass wall. She hurriedly took two steps forward, reached out her right hand, which was covered in white fishnet gloves, and carefully touched the flush button.

Then, she slowly stepped back and said with a smile, "Alright, let's keep it at that. I've satisfied my curiosity. I can't hurt it any further."

She constantly reminded herself that her prescribed character was that of a naive and curious young girl.

After reading this, they entered the exhibition hall where Roselle's diary was located.

After some introduction, Audrey asked again, "Can I look through this notebook? We are all interested in these strange symbols.

"Eh… I heard that paper would suffer damage by mere contact with air after a certain period of time, let alone having them touched. It shouldn't be possible, right?"

She blinked, making her beautiful gem-like eyes express sincerity and desire, together with a little disappointment.

The guide looked at Max Livermore again and waited for his reply before smiling.

"The Church used a special storage method to make the paper look the same as if it was produced only a few years ago. Furthermore, even without this method, we will try our best to fulfill your requests.

However, we may need to change environments, change our clothes, and go through a stricter process.

“You can flip it, but not for too long. Don’t use too much strength.”

Audrey’s eyes lit up all of a sudden, making it hard for anyone to shift their gaze away.

After sincerely thanking the guide, she, Viscount Glaint, and the other mysticism enthusiasts had the glass cover removed as they carefully flipped through the notebook.

Audrey tried her best to memorize, but due to the complexity of the symbols, her ability to remember them in this short period of time was rather limited.

That should be around two pages of content. I wonder if there’s any way to make a copy of it… Her thoughts wandered as she gave her spot to her peers.

In this way, she made a request for a closer look at something in each of the exhibition halls, which was mostly met.

After a while, they arrived at the restored study.

Audrey kept to her previous behavior and would ask a few questions from time to time, fully displaying her curiosity.

When the guide introduced the manuscript of creativity, her eyes lit up and she said, “Can I flip through it? I wish to see what the manuscript of the great inventor, Roselle, looks like. I also want to know what wonderful ideas it contains.”

“No problem, beautiful Miss Hall, honorable Viscount Glaint, you can all have a look through it. Heh, if any of you are a devout believer of the Church, you can even apply for a copy,” the guide replied, according to Max’s gesture.

As a believer of the Goddess, Audrey could only respond with a faint smile. It wasn't convenient for her to make a comment.

At the same time, she pretended to lift her hair and touched her right ear with her palm, quietly removing her earring.

Immediately, when the glass case that encased the desk was opened, Audrey stepped forward and, holding down the manuscript, casually pulled out the bookmark, before casually flipping a page.

At this moment, Susie, who had received her hint, suddenly barked in a particular direction.

Woof! Woof! Woof!

The crowd's attention was immediately attracted in that direction. Audrey lowered her arm and used the earring in her palm to stab at the bookmark she was holding. While doing so, she chanted the phrase "Pirate King" in her mind, using Hermes before switching to ancient Hermes.

When the sharp, needle-like accessory touched the surface of the bookmark, Audrey suddenly felt an intense and illusory resistance just as it was about to penetrate the bookmark.

An unusual resistance!

The resistance disappeared in a flash. The "fine needle" punctured a tiny hole and nearly pierced through.

There really is a reaction! There's really something strange about it! The light in Audrey's eyes glinted. Without daring to try again, she lifted her hand and placed the bookmark on the desk.

Then, she looked at Susie and calmly told her maidservant, Annie, "Eh… take her to the bathroom."

"Yes, milady." Annie hurriedly led Susie out of the room.

Ting!

Taking this opportunity, Audrey threw the earring in her hand onto the ground, then she tilted her head and said, “I’m sorry, I dropped my earring.”

Another maid hurried over, picked up the earring, and helped her put it on.

The interlude went by in a flash, and everyone’s attention returned to the manuscript. After they were pretty much done with it, they saw the “security guard,” Max Livermore, quickly tuck the bookmark in and closed the glass cover again.

Audrey’s interest remained as strong as before in the next few exhibition halls. Just like before, she didn’t show any abnormalities.

It was only when she left the museum and returned home did she find a chance to recite the honorific name of The Fool and report the results:

“…I did what your Blessed requested, and I damaged that bookmark a little.

“It-it had an abnormal reaction.”

Chapter 320 - Action

◆

An abnormal reaction? From the looks of it, it really is a Card of Blasphemy! Above the gray fog, Klein, who received the reply, was delighted at first, but he then exclaimed in surprise.

Isn't Miss Justice way too efficient?

I only entrusted the mission to her this afternoon, and she has already completed the verification by the evening…

Furthermore, this is obviously past the closing time of the Royal Museum!

A Telepathist also definitely lacks infiltration abilities!

Hmm, her family's influence is probably even greater than I expected…

Thankfully, the verification didn't produce any strange phenomena; otherwise, the only thing that can be done is to allow Miss Justice to act innocent and hand the card over to the higher authorities. And this also means that I'm not fated to have this treasure… There's nothing in this world with a hundred percent certainty…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein heard Miss Justice's subsequent question.

"Mr. Fool, exactly what secret lies in that bookmark?

"Well, if your Blessed is unwilling to give you the answer, just pretend that I didn't ask."

Of course, the secret is that it hides a Card of Blasphemy inside! Klein was overjoyed as he silently sighed.

After thinking it over carefully, he decided to wait until he obtained the Card of Blasphemy before replying to Miss Justice; otherwise, she might appear too shocked and act strangely, causing his own actions to be negatively affected.

Klein was in no hurry to return to the real world. He just sat there in the silent, empty old palace, thinking about when to act and how to do it.

Miss Justice has done some damage to that bookmark, so I wonder if someone would later discover the damage… Otherwise, would the bookmark slowly show signs of abnormality and attract attention… Thus, I cannot afford to delay or wait. It would be best if I take action tonight! As all sorts of ideas churned through his mind, Klein gradually came to a decision.

Then, on the basis of his morning observations, he conjured the layout of the Royal Museum's first floor and the general conditions surrounding it.

Looking at this blueprint, Klein began going through different plans and quickly established a relatively safe plan.

Finally, he made another divination to confirm the degree of danger.

After seeing that nothing had changed, he returned to the real world and began making all sorts of preparations.

What Klein originally wanted to do was to "draw" the pattern in his memory, forge a similar bookmark, and replace it after he had sneaked in via responding to himself. He wanted to ensure that no one noticed or know for a long time that the bookmark had been stolen. By the time it was discovered, it would be too late for others to trace the incident back to him.

However, after much deliberation, he felt that this wasn't good. As long as the fake bookmark was discovered, the most suspicious person would be Miss Justice who touched the original bookmark today.

I can't put Miss Justice at risk for the sake of a treasure. She did this to help me! Klein finally figured out how to keep Miss Justice from being suspected.

His plan was to not only steal the bookmark but to also steal the surrounding items as well, including some of the lighter books!

Phew… After finishing his preparations, Klein took out his gold pocket watch and opened it. He patiently waited until after nine. He wanted to act before midnight.

If he were too early, people living around there wouldn't have started sleeping. That wouldn't satisfy his requirement for taking action. If he were too late, there would be almost no pedestrians on the streets. Just walking along the streets would make him be easily suspected, and during this period of time, the whole of Backlund was under tight curfews due to serial murders.

This was beneficial to Klein's operation, but it was also disadvantageous!

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. The needle kept ticking. As the night deepened, the crimson moon appeared and it was finally past nine.

Putting the Master Key and other items in his pockets, he took his cane and first went to East Borough to change his attire. Then, he rented a carriage several times until he reached a place quite far from King's Avenue in West Borough.

By then, an hour and forty-five minutes had already passed.

His initial plan was actually nothing like this. He wanted to summon himself and respond to himself to become a spirit body. He wanted to rely on his extremely fast speed to cross the distance from Cherwood Borough to West Borough before infiltrating the Royal Museum.

However, he eventually abandoned the plan because of the potentially high risks.

Backlund had more than one High-Sequence Beyonder!

In a situation where a serial killer caused everyone to panic, yet remained unsolved for such a long time, there might be High-Sequence Beyonders who were consciously using their Beyonder powers or corresponding Sealed Artifacts to monitor certain areas. The distance from Cherwood Borough to West Borough was neither too long nor too short, and the probability of being discovered was substantial if such a special spirit flew like this.

This cannot be completely written off just because the divination result says that "the risk isn't high, but there is the existence of certain danger," because the divination doesn't give a direct answer, but a revelation that needs to be interpreted.

In other words, the results of "the risk isn't high, but there is the existence of certain danger" is built on the premise that I make a relatively good choice.

Therefore, to be careful, Klein modified his original plan but retained the core idea.

†

2 King's Avenue, Royal Museum.

There were four security guards standing on top of a polygonal roof. Dressed in thick robes, they were enduring the cold of the autumn night as they carefully monitored their respective directions. Once anyone approached the museum, even if they were hidden by the trees or building shadows, it would be difficult to hide from their eyes.

From this arrangement alone, it could be seen that the security company that had been employed was very professional.

"There's still half an hour before our shift ends…" A security guard looked down at his companions who were patrolling the building and shook his body.

In the museum, the remaining security personnel were divided into four groups. They patrolled the various exhibition halls in intervals according to different routes.

In the showroom where Roselle's diary was kept, the Machinery Hivemind squad captain, Max Livermore, wore a monocle that allowed him to directly see wraiths, shadows, and other spirit-type monsters. He carried a lantern as he went back and forth to check on the area. Occasionally, he would head to the other halls to check on the situation.

His two subordinates remained in the small hall, next to Roselle's diary.

However, there was an additional item on the glass display case.

It was a collection of brightly colored blocks that had been pieced together into a miniature layout of the museum's first floor.

This was also a Sealed Artifact. As long as those blocks were pieced into the shape of a corresponding building, they would be able to establish a connection with the real building. Once anyone intruded, its surface would react immediately by shrinking.

Of course, there were quite a few limitations to this. The distance couldn't be too far, and it wouldn't work if the number of blocks it had wasn't enough to piece together the building.

And without external help, it was almost impossible for people or items inside to leave.

"Captain, do you really think someone will steal this notebook? I can't comprehend it at all!" one of the team members asked in a bored tone when he saw Max coming back with his lantern.

Max smiled and said, "Some people adore Roselle with zeal. It's not something you can understand.

"Some of them believe that they can crack it and only need more information for reference. Some of them believe that the symbols contain a mysterious power. As long as they can find the correct combination, they will gain Beyonder powers.

"In previous exhibitions, we would capture such criminals from time to time."

"So that's why we didn't hide the notebook away and placed them in sealed areas? We are waiting for these people to 'surrender' themselves?" another teammate asked with enlightenment.

Max nodded and said, "Who wouldn't want free meritorious deeds?"

†

18 King's Avenue. Outside a building next to a crossroad junction.

Klein followed the shadows and shaded areas, using the Master Key from time to time to walk in a straight line before finally arriving here.

He took out the plain brass key, pointed it at the kitchen door, and turned it silently.

An imperceptible rippling happened as Klein entered the room. All the way through, he saw doors and walls, and without disturbing anyone, he found a storage room.

This Master Key is really useful! However, both of its previous owners lost themselves and entered dangerous spots. It makes me afraid of continuously carrying it… Klein sighed as he put away the brass key. With the room beside him being the servants' sleeping quarters, he took out Holy Night Powder and released his spirituality to seal off the storage room, making any commotion from within impossible to leak out.

Then, he took out a candle and placed it on a crate in front of him.

Pa! He snapped his finger and produced a light blue spirituality fire on his fingertip.

After the candle wick was lit, he summoned himself using ritualistic magic and then responded to himself above the gray fog.

Less than a minute later, Klein was floating in the room, facing his body whose eyes had lost their luster.

After familiarizing himself with this feeling, he wrapped the ancient and exquisite Azik copper whistle to stabilize his spirit body and made it stronger. It caused a chilly wind to begin to swirl in the room.

At the same time, he also used this power to slightly change the appearance of his illusory spirit body, causing it to appear as if there was a layer of paint on its face.

After doing all of this, Klein took a box of common matches he randomly bought off the streets, cut out a transparent door in the wall of spirituality, and headed out.

“Action time!”

He silently encouraged himself, and just like a real ghost, he passed through the residential buildings, one by one, before successfully arriving outside the Royal Museum.

There was no need to activate his Spirit Vision. In this state, he could clearly see every security personnel, their aura, and emotions which unreservedly betrayed them.

Finding the withered lawn and the iron-black lamppost that faced the hall window, Klein didn’t swagger over just because ordinary people couldn’t see him. Instead, he followed the shadows and took an elusive route. He passed through the sculpted tree and obstacles before cautiously arriving at his destination. He stuck close to the wall, as he couldn’t guarantee that the security personnel didn’t comprise of a member of the Machinery Hivemind.

At this moment, the four security guards on the rooftop, who were carefully inspecting their respective areas of operations, were like blind people. They failed to discover anything.

Klein didn’t enter the exhibition hall directly, because his spiritual perception and intuition told him that the museum floor was shrouded in a mysterious power. It also had to do with how he couldn’t confirm if there were Beyonders inside.

He followed his plan and circled to another area, to the washroom that was closer to the exhibition hall that housed Roselle’s diary. Then, he threw the box of matches he had brought with him through the vent.

Next, he flew up and entered the second floor!

Chapter 321 - Appearance of A Living Person

◆

In the exhibition hall where Roselle's diary was kept, the two Machinery Hivemind members suddenly heard a clatter.

At the same time, they turned their heads to look at the Sealed Artifact made out of blocks above the glass display case.

Inside the scaled down model of the museum's first floor, there was a gray dot that was constantly flashing.

"There's a lifeless object in the nearest washroom." One of the team members made a definite judgment.

The other team member relaxed a little, frowned, and said in a guessing tone, "A dead leaf blown in by the wind?"

"It's possible." The team member who spoke first nodded. "Let's wait till the security guards pass by, we'll get them to check and confirm the situation. Captain told us to stay here and not to leave no matter what happens, especially not alone."

In the event of an urgent emergency, they could evacuate with Roselle's notebook.

"Alright." His companion had no objection to his suggestion.

†

In the office area on the second floor of the museum, Klein was like a floating ghost, passing through one wall after another and flying directly above the restored study.

However, he didn't fly too fast. Instead, he continued to sense the fire spark below and kept track of the distance.

When the straight-line distance reached almost thirty meters, he lifted his illusory and translucent right hand and soundlessly snapped his fingers.

In the washroom on the first floor, the box of matches exploded with a soft bang.

Then, a scarlet flame leaped up and ignited a paper towel, a potted plant, and the wooden door.

The flames didn't spread yet, but it was shocking enough.

The nearby security personnel who heard the noise immediately rushed over. In the exhibition hall that was monitoring the entire situation on the first floor, the two Machinery Hivemind members also saw the flames in the model at the same time and subconsciously wanted to rush over there. This was not only an attempt to extinguish the fire, but they were also prepared to capture the troublemaker.

But the moment they took two steps, they stopped, having remembered their Captain's orders:

Don't leave this exhibition hall, don't leave Roselle's notebook, regardless of the situation!

They looked at each other, then they looked warily at the two entrances to the hall before quietly taking out their own Beyonder weapons.

As Beyonders of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, they were never lacking in equipment.

†

At this moment, Max Livermore was patrolling the various exhibition halls on the first floor with a lantern in hand. He had also noticed the commotion and, without thinking, rushed towards the direction of the exhibition hall where Roselle's notebook was located.

The priority to ensure the safety of the items was higher than capturing the intruder!

Moreover, Max believed that no matter what the other party's intentions were, as long as they entered the first floor of the museum and entered any of the halls, they would be under the effect of the Sealed Artifact, and it wouldn't be easy to leave that easily!

If there was no external help, the infiltrator would be trapped inside!

Even if the intruder had a helper, it would still take them quite a bit of time to get rid of the effects.

"Once you enter, you will be like prey that has fallen into a trap!" Max Livermore ran at top speed. After passing through many exhibition halls, he finally saw the silhouettes of his two companions.

At that moment, Klein, who was on the second floor of the museum, had already passed through the doors and walls according to the layout in his memory. He had arrived right above the restored study.

He was in no hurry to carry out any follow-up actions. Instead, he first looked down.

As the stone floor was relatively thick, Klein was unable to vaguely confirm if there were any auras or emotions beneath him. He could only spread his arms wide, fall forward, and silently lie on the ground.

His illusory and transparent figure quickly faded into the ground.

†

On the crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling on the first floor, a faintly discernible human face suddenly appeared.

The strange face overlooked the exhibition hall, its eyes constantly moving, taking in the scenery of every corner in the area.

There are no Beyonders or security personnel… Mumbling to himself, Klein penetrated the ceiling and descended in front of Roselle's glass-covered desk.

He glanced at it, and without hesitation, he reached out with both hands to grab the bookmark in the manuscript of creativity and the bookmark which looked like child's graffiti.

He was trying to prevent a powerful Beyonder, who could reconstruct the scene through magical means, from knowing that he knew which bookmark was abnormal. This was to prevent the investigator from suspecting Miss Justice who had only touched one bookmark.

Augmented by Azik's copper whistle, he passed through the glass case and steadily held the two bookmarks, then he wrapped them within his spirit body.

After finishing this step, Klein's heart calmed down, no longer having any obvious nervousness or tension.

He stretched out his hands again, reaching out for the other bookmarks.

"Waaa! Waaa! Waaa!"

The loud and shrill cry of a baby suddenly reverberated within the exhibition hall.

It was so illusory, as though it came from far, far away.

Klein's body stiffened, freezing all of a sudden like a lake encountering extreme coldness.

In his spirit body state, he appeared to have been frozen!

“Waaa! Waaa! Waaa!”

Along with the cries of the baby were fine black rifts that surrounded Klein like a discontinuous iron fence.

In the blink of an eye, one of the black rifts cracked open, revealing an eyeball filled with blood strands. In the center of the eyeball was a deep pupil, and in it, countless tiny white worms were crawling and squirming.

One, two, three… Black rifts opened successively, and one by one, the bizarre eyeballs were exposed in midair. They stared at Klein in a cold and merciless manner.

As they appeared, everything around them froze in place. Even the illusory spirits were unable to penetrate through them.

It even became hard for Klein to sense the existence of the spirit world. He found it difficult to see the translucent figures that were located infinitely high. He found it hard to see the different colors, the lustrous splendors which contained various types of knowledge.

“Why did you only take the bookmarks?” A soft but unemotional female voice entered Klein’s ear.

He froze on the spot and saw a tall bookcase, divided into two levels. The top level almost reached the ceiling, with a staircase and a passage surrounding countless books.

At the top of the stairs sat a figure shrouded by the darkness.

The figure’s feet, which wore black leather boots, hung from the wooden stairs as they were suspended in midair.

I actually didn’t sense her existence at all… Is she some powerhouse from the Machinery Hivemind? No, she might be a High-Sequence

Beyonder! Klein didn't answer; instead, he narrowed his eyes.

"Why did you only take the bookmarks? Where did you learn to only take the bookmarks?"

The figure asked once more. The gentleness had a hint of sternness, and the bloodshot eyeballs surrounding him rapidly widened, as though they wanted to occupy the entire space.

Before she could finish her sentence, Klein revealed a wide smile on his face.

His illusory, nearly translucent figure instantly disappeared, leaving his whereabouts unknown!

Even Azik's copper whistle and the two bookmarks which were wrapped in his spirit body had vanished!

†

Above the gray fog, within the majestic ancient palace.

Klein's figure suddenly appeared at the top of the long, mottled table.

He leaned back into his chair and said with a chuckle, "Fortunately, I was prepared."

The state of his spirit body wasn't part of his Beyonder powers. It didn't originate from the transformation between his physical body and spirit body. This was the result of him summoning himself and responding to his ritual.

And the power of this ritual came from the mysterious space above the gray fog. It stemmed from its special nature!

Hence, as long as Klein succeeded, he wouldn't even need to try to escape. By just ending the summoning directly, he would be able to return to the gray fog and, from here, instantly return to his physical body in the real world!

As the space above the gray fog could block the power of deities like the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator, Klein believed that, without the interference of deities, the summoning wouldn't be interrupted!

As long as the enemy didn't kill his spirit body or instantly knock him unconscious, Klein had the confidence to escape!

This was also the reason why he didn't want to become a spirit body and still make a "long trek" over to the museum. The more time spent, added even more variables.

†

As the faint and dark crimson moonlight shone in from the window, the woman sitting at the top of the stairs between the bookshelves looked at the desk in silence. She looked at the spot where Klein had been. The surrounding cries of the baby and the eyeballs had disappeared one after another.

After an unknown period of time, the top of the stairs suddenly became empty, as if no one had ever been there before.

In the exhibition hall which housed Roselle's diary, Max Livermore said to his two team members, "Watch this place well. I'll go find the infiltrator.

"He must still be trapped somewhere on the first floor by the power of the Sealed Artifact!"

As he spoke, he looked at the Sealed Artifact, the "model" of the first floor of the museum in a bid to find the red dot which represented the infiltrator and lock onto that person's location.

However, no matter how he looked and counted, something didn't seem right.

The number of people hadn't increased!

"This…" Max Livermore froze where he was.

†

18 King's Avenue, in a certain wealthy merchant's storage room.

Klein's eyes lit up again, and the corners of his mouth curled up.

He left the bookmarks and Azik's copper whistle above the gray fog, and he didn't waste time returning to his body.

After extinguishing the candles and ending the ritual, Klein cleaned up the scene. He used a specially concocted medication to neutralize the smell of the Holy Night Powder and the essential oils from the ritual.

After doing all of this, he dispelled the wall of spirituality, allowing the wind to blow away the remaining traces.

Next, he took out his Master Key, planning to go through buildings before taking a rental carriage a distance away.

Using his cane to determine his direction to prevent himself from getting lost and heading back to the Royal Museum or to a particular cathedral, Klein headed off at a brisk pace, opening the walls and doors that stood in his way with the Master Key.

After walking in a straight line for a while, he suddenly felt like he was unable to determine his position.

Hmm… Two more buildings and I'll be out. If I'm no longer on King's Avenue, I'll get a rental carriage, or I'll make another divination? I'll immediately study the Card of Blasphemy once I'm home! Klein quickly made up his mind. He placed the brass key which was simply shaped against the wall and gently twisted it.

As the formless ripples spread out, he arrived at a neighboring building of the terraces.

At this moment, his nose twitched as he smelled a strong stench of blood.

The strong smell of blood! Klein frowned. He looked up and saw a lady laid out in the living room ahead of him.

The woman’s expression was filled with pain. There was a large wound at her abdomen, and her internal organs seemed to have disappeared.

At the same time, Klein heard grunting noises.

Chapter 322 - The Thrilling Night

◆

The twelfth case!

That Devil serial murderer!

The moment he saw the corpse and heard the sound, Klein's hair stood on end. He knew that he had encountered a bad situation.

Within his line of sight, the living room's decorations were mostly brilliant yellow and bright. There was nothing unusual about the coffee table and sofa. Only the carpet was stained bright red with blood as it slowly soaked through.

On the side of the wound on the female corpse's abdomen, which was completely empty, sat a large sized black dog. Its mouth was half open, revealing many sharp white teeth that sent shivers. On each tooth, there were dark red marks like iron rust. This seemed to be the result of its prolonged consumption of flesh without frequent brushing.

At this moment, the large black dog's teeth were still wrapped around blood-red small intestines, as well as bits and pieces of raw meat.

Its head turned over, and its eyes which resembled magma reflected Klein, who was dressed as a worker, and his disguised face.

"Grunt!" The large black dog let out a roar which sounded like it was showing dominance.

It really is an animal! It's a Sequence 6 Devil, a Devil which is about to advance! And none of the preparations that I made today were for it…

These few thoughts instantly flashed through Klein’s mind.

Suddenly, the black dog’s body expanded rapidly, turning into a two-to three-meter tall monster. On its back, a pair of giant bat wings slowly spread open, and beside its ears, goat horns covered in mysterious patterns grew out.

Red and blue flames leaped from of its luxuriant fur as the strong smell of sulfur followed.

Almost at the same time, Klein stomped on the ground. Instead of retreating, he advanced, swinging his cane as he shot out at the gigantic Devil dog like a cannonball.

Schwing!

The black Devil dog quickly pounced forward. Its sharp claws created afterimages as it swiped at Klein’s body.

Without a sound, its claws had penetrated the figure, as if they were piercing through the air!

Klein’s figure became faint as it quickly turned transparent.

It was just an illusion!

It was an illusion created by Klein!

At this moment, he had already rolled on the ground and closed in towards the oriel window. Then, with his left hand pressing down, his entire body flew into the air, directly smashing through the glass.

After identifying the enemy, he made up his mind to escape!

Upon seeing this, the eyes of the huge Devil dog immediately lit up like magma, as if there was a raging fire inside.

It opened its mouth, which emitted a putrid smell, and said a word filled with foulness, a word that came from the Devil language, “Die!”

Oof!

Klein’s body suddenly stopped, his heart felt as if it was being tightly clenched by an invisible hand.

The figure that was frozen in midair instantly became thin and dim, turning into a crudely cut paper figurine.

And this paper figurine was covered with red rust!

Smash! Clang! Two sounds of indistinguishable order sounded. Klein’s figure appeared again, smashing through the oriel window and pouncing towards the stone paved street. The Paper Figurine Substitute slowly floated down as it ignited and emitted the smell of sulfur.

The Devil dog let out a low growl and pounced again, jumping onto the windowsill.

A crimson-blue fireball flew out from its mouth, blasting in the direction of its enemy’s escape route.

The moment Klein landed on the ground, he immediately followed up with another roll. The crimson-blue fireball smashed to his side, but it didn’t explode immediately, as if it was being affected by an invisible force as though it was being detained.

Boom!

Only after Klein had scrambled a distance away did the fireball expand and explode, shattering the surrounding stone pavements.

Seeing that the Devil dog was about to pursue him, Klein opened his mouth, having prepared for this.

He shouted at the top of his lungs, “Murder! Save me! Murder! Save me!”

His voice seemed to be augmented with special effects. It echoed far and wide through the silent night, waking the residents of the entire street and sending them into the ears of the patrollers who were two streets away.

The giant Devil dog paused in its pouncing posture. After thinking for a second, it retreated back into the room and began to clean up the scene.

Klein's sprinting figure also disappeared under the shouts of "murder" and "save me."

Inside a nearby fireplace that had long since been extinguished, the remnant charcoal suddenly reignited, and an exaggerated flame rose up.

Klein seemed to be performing a magic trick as he appeared out of the flames. With a light leap, he held his cane and jumped out.

Then, he used the Master Key to open the door, tear through walls, and quickly escaped in another direction.

Phew, at a time like this, a scream without Beyonder powers is much more useful than simulating gunshots… Klein sighed as he took out a bottle of Amantha extract and dripped a few drops on himself.

As the original race of the Devil was of the dog species, he had to be wary of its scent-tracking abilities being one of its special powers!

In this way, Klein continued on until he reached another cross-junction. Only then did he stop and look around.

Seeing that it was relatively quiet and unaffected, he hurried to the side of the street and hired a rental carriage.

It was only after the carriage had traveled a certain distance in the night when Klein finally heave a breath of relief. He knew that the Devil wouldn't catch up to him.

This Master Key is really strange… I actually got lost and found myself at the scene of the murder. I have to be a lot more careful when using it in the future… That really was a Devil transformed from an animal…

Where did its potions and formulas come from? Does it have a human companion? How did it pick its target for the serial murder?

Hmm, what's gratifying is that after confirming this point, it will be much more difficult for it to commit crimes again, and the probability of getting caught will also greatly increase…

All sorts of thoughts and questions appeared in Klein's mind as the carriage sped along the wide, deserted road which was lined with gas street lamps.

Suddenly, Klein's heart skipped a beat, and an image naturally appeared in his mind.

Pea vines drooped down from the sky and interweaved to form a dense forest. However, the carriage driver didn't seem to notice and continued to drive the carriage across the green vegetation.

No good!

Without hesitation, Klein lunged for the window, about to jump into the street.

Bang! The carriage shook, and he was flung backward.

At the same time, those pea vines really drooped down!

Klein frowned as he attempted to use Flame Controlling to ignite the carriage, but no sound came from his fingers.

At this moment, the surroundings had become abnormally quiet. Even the sounds of the horses' hooves trampling and the rapid rumbling of the wheels over the green vegetation had disappeared.

Klein tried his best to calm himself down as he looked out the window and saw that the carriage had been driven into the air, following the road of pea vines.

No, this isn't Backlund… He narrowed his eyes.

At this moment, the carriage stopped. Outside the window, the pea vines had formed a hammock in the air.

A pair of feet in black leather boots drooped down, and a gentle but emotionless voice entered Klein's ears.

[image]

"What were you doing?"

It's that woman inside the museum… She's suspected to be a High-Sequence Beyonder… She doesn't seem to recognize me. After all, I had disguised myself with Azik's copper whistle… She must have heard the cry for help and came over to check… Klein's thoughts were abnormally active at that moment.

He deliberately gulped and said, "I'm a private detective. Many friends and I are investigating the recent serial murders.

"I have a mystical item called the 'Master Key.' It can open doors and let me pass through walls, but it will cause the holder to get lost.

"It was during this process that I ran into the scene of the crime. Because I wasn't the murderer's opponent, I could only shout for help while running."

Everything I said was the truth… Klein silently added in his heart.

After he finished speaking, there was temporarily no response from the outside. However, he felt that a gaze had penetrated the carriage, passed through the obstructions, and was directly inspecting the items on his body.

Fortunately, I left Azik's copper whistle and the bookmarks above the gray fog just in case… At that moment, Klein was very glad.

Caution and carefulness were indeed useful!

After the indescribable and torturous silence, the gentle but emotionless female voice finally sounded again.

“That key has a certain curse. It must not be used unless absolutely necessary.”

As soon as she finished her sentence, the surroundings changed completely. Everything—the pea vines, the road through the forest, the road to the sky—had all disappeared. The carriage continued on the streets, driving between the elegant iron-black gas street lamps.

Klein remained on tenterhooks until the carriage arrived near East Borough, where he paid the fare of 8 soli.

Under normal circumstances, a rental carriage wouldn’t enter any of East Borough streets because it was likely to be robbed.

In one of the rooms on Black Palm Street, Klein changed his clothes and went straight to sleep. He didn’t attempt to return to Minsk Street before midnight. The twelfth murder had just occurred, and it would only serve to make Backlund’s situation tenser.

He didn’t immediately go above the gray fog to study the secret of the “bookmark.” He acted just as he had described himself to the mysterious woman. He was a Low-Sequence Beyonder, a private investigator with some Beyonder powers.

Tonight sure was filled with surprises. It was rather thrilling. All I did was steal something… Yes, most of the problems can be blamed on the Master Key… Klein made a self-deprecating comment and quickly fell asleep.

The next morning, he breathed in the choking smog as he slowly strolled home and picked up the newspapers and letters from his mailbox.

After opening the door, he casually flipped opened the newspaper to take a look and found that the headline was as he had expected: “The twelfth case!”

“The Devil has appeared again. The police have declared that they have locked onto the murderer!”

†

As for the theft of the objects in the Royal Museum, it was only mentioned in an inconspicuous location. In fact, the article didn’t even mention what the stolen object was.

The unstamped letter that came with the newspaper was a water bill that Klein had to pay for himself. He glanced at it and casually threw it on the coffee table. He then returned to the second floor to heat up water for a bath.

He waited until the water vapor filled the bathroom before he seized the opportunity to take four steps counterclockwise to enter the space above the gray fog.

Inside the immutable ancient palace, Klein sat down and picked up the bookmark that depicted the figure of Emperor Roselle.

It really wasn’t easy getting you! He gently caressed the surface of the cardboard and silently sighed.

Chapter 323 - The Opening Incantation

◆

The bookmark was, on the surface, nothing special. Roselle’s portraits had been placed everywhere around the exhibition hall, and the image depicted was from the period when he was middle-aged.

Klein kept flipping the bookmark repeatedly, in scrutiny, and found a tiny puncture, thereby confirming that this was the bookmark which Miss Justice had verified.

He tried to spread his spirituality, and he slowly injected it inside. However, just like with ordinary objects, his spirituality only flowed and failed to permeate it, nor did it cause any abnormal changes.

That’s right, Roselle had the intention of finding someone who was fated, so he wouldn’t specifically restrict it to Beyonders… Klein thought for a moment, then said softly in Feysac, “Pirate King!”

The bookmark still didn’t respond.

He tried the words in ancient Feysac, Intis, Loen, and other languages again, but the result was the same.

As for Jotun, Elvish, Dragonese, and other languages from the mysticism domain, Klein could only try them out of hope since they was overly restrictive and unlikely to be the language used.

Without a doubt, he failed.

Immediately following that, Klein used Feysac again as he translated, “One Piece!”

The bookmark lay quietly on his palm, showing no sign of abnormality.

Klein tried the steps he did from before, using different languages again, but he was constantly met with failure.

It seems that my initial guess was wrong. The young Roselle might've used the meme of Pirate King to make a joke, but he might not necessarily do that when he was older. People will ultimately grow old and change. Klein reflected over his mistake as he tapped the edge of the long, mottled table with his finger, trying hard to infer from the bits of information that the diary had provided to unlock the bookmark.

After a while, he took out a pen and paper, and he wrote down his thought process so as to avoid any confusion or contradictions.

While doing this, Roselle was definitely maniacal and in despair. It also clearly showcases his warped humor. "The fated ones will receive it" is proof considering how it doesn't suit the world's lingo at present.

Therefore, I can be certain that he really wanted someone to discover the uniqueness of the Cards of Blasphemy by chance.

In that case, the unlocking method can't be too unimaginable, or something that will often appear in daily life.

What Roselle required was a coincidence. For example, when someone holds the worthless bookmark and randomly says a specific word, then, congratulations, you have obtained a fortuitous opportunity! Yes, this is very in line with his warped humor.

Going by this logical train of thought, different Cards of Blasphemy should have different unlocking incantations. Using a single term to unlock all the Cards of Blasphemy clearly isn't congruent with Roselle's style.

What is the incantation for unlocking this card? Well, the first things that can be ruled out are the words that are commonly used, words that are said all the time.

Also, when creating the Cards of Blasphemy, Roselle's state was in despair, maniacal, unwilling to part with it, reminiscent, struggling, and angry. I can try to immerse myself in that state of mind and imagine myself to be Roselle at that point in time. I can imagine what kind of incantation I would have used.

Klein stopped writing and began acting as Roselle in a bid to find some inspiration.

He first tried out vulgarities in different languages, including ancient Feysac, as well as terms pertaining to hope, but unfortunately, was rewarded with failure.

Immediately after, he tried to figure out what would be the last thing a desperate powerhouse would be reluctant to part.

His wife, Matilda? Such a licentious guy shouldn't have such deep feelings for his first wife.

His children? The eldest daughter, Bernadette; the eldest son, Ciel; and the second son, Bornova…

According to the diary, the person he can't get over the most was his daughter, Bernadette, who might become an important figure in the mysterious world.

Klein paused, took a breath, and prepared to try again.

"Bernadette," he said in the Intis language.

The bookmark didn't respond.

Klein switched to the languages of Loen, Highlander, and Feysac, but still failed to achieve the desired results.

He sighed and said with a deep voice which corresponded to ancient Feysac, "Bernadette."

This name echoed in the empty and quiet gray fog like it was nothing special. Just as Klein was about to search for new inspiration, he suddenly felt the bookmark in his hand sink!

It immediately turned into an invisible whirlpool which wildly absorbed Klein's mental energies.

For an ordinary person, this was a huge burden, but for a Sequence 7 Magician, it wasn't especially draining. Klein easily survived this hurdle and couldn't conceal his joy as he looked at the object in his palm.

A bright light emitted, bit by bit, from the bookmark, and the image of Emperor Roselle on the outside was being replaced by an entirely new image.

He was sitting on an ancient stone throne as he wore a black crown embedded with various precious stones on his head. He wore pitch-black armor, and a cape of the same color was draped over his body. He held a scepter, and he looked forward with cold, aloof eyes.

On the upper-left corner of the bookmark, there was a line of text condensed from the bright radiance of stars.

"Sequence 0, Black Emperor!"

Sequence 0! Indeed, the secrets of the gods are hidden within! The Black Emperor is actually Sequence 0… Klein thought with a smile, half sighing and half surprised.

Soon after, the bookmark became three-dimensional, like a miniature book.

The book moved without the wind, revealing a Roselle in a white hood. Beside it was a corresponding description in ancient Feysac.

"Sequence 9, Lawyer.

"Good at discovering and using loopholes in the rules and the weaknesses of their opponents. Possesses excellent eloquence and reasoning skills…

“Potion formula…”

Klein glanced at the formula ingredients but didn’t look carefully. He reached out his hand and touched it, making the book flip to the next page.

“Sequence 8, Barbarian.

“Problems that cannot be solved by the law will be solved by force. This is also one of the rules… The Beyonders at this Sequence have a high resistance to psychological influences…

“Potion formula…”

As Klein touched it, the book conjured from the Card of Blasphemy flipped through one page at a time.

“Sequence 7, Briber.”

†

“Sequence 6, Baron of Corruption.”

†

“Sequence 5, Mentor of Disorder.”

†

“Sequence 4, Earl of The Fallen.”

†

“Sequence 3, Frenzied Mage.”

†

“Sequence 2, Duke of Entropy.”

†

“Sequence 1, Prince of Abolition.”

†

“Sequence 0, Black Emperor.”

†

After skimming through the book, Klein couldn’t help but sigh.

This really hides the profound secrets of becoming a God!

It’s no wonder all of the High-Sequence Beyonders who tread this pathway will attempt to establish their own kingdoms, and walk the lands.

It’s because the ritual of becoming a god requires it!

To advance from Sequence 1, the Prince of Abolition, to Black Emperor, the necessary ritual requires one to possess their own country, linking their name to the title of Emperor, making it common knowledge among the populace. Furthermore, one needed to establish a set of strict and complicated rules that defied normality, including architectural styles.

Then, they would spur on their citizens to secretly establish nine mausoleums that were similar to pyramids. After which, they would enter one of the mausoleums. With a large majority of the citizens who would be scattered across different cities in corresponding sacrificial rituals involved, the Prince of Abolition would imbibe the Sequence 0 potion.

Once the advancement was successful, the Black Emperor wouldn't truly die until all the nine secret mausoleums were destroyed. Even if "He" was annihilated, "He" would still be able to awaken and return from one of the mausoleums.

What was even more terrifying was that even if the deity was successfully killed and all nine mausoleums destroyed, as long as a certain amount of the order set up by that deity remained, it was still possible for "Him" to mysteriously revive. It appeared to be a loophole against death.

The best way to completely obliterate "Him" was for a new Black Emperor to appear!

"This is a deity!

"Mortals cannot fight against deities; same for angels.

"Those who have yet to become deities will never be able to fathom the power of deities."

Roselle exposited with deep implications at the end.

In addition, Klein also knew one thing, once there was a True God with a Sequence 0, it was impossible for a Sequence 1 Beyonder to appear. If there was no Sequence 0, then, in the same way, there would be at most three Sequence 1 Beyonders. This was a result of the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation!

According to the Black Emperor Card of Blasphemy's description of the 10 Sequences, Klein could clearly see that the greatest feature of this pathway was the shadow of it gradually evolving into order!

Roselle also mentioned that if one had that Card of Blasphemy in hand after advancing to a High-Sequence Beyonder, the card would have a subtle reaction to the Beyonder ingredients that the person needed!

Of course, it was limited to High-Sequence Beyonders of the Black

Emperor pathway.

What a pity, this is of no use to me. Klein looked at the Card of Blasphemy thin down again, turning back into a poker card.

However, it was no longer in disguise. On the surface, it depicted Roselle sitting on a stone throne—Sequence 0 Black Emperor!

Klein remained silent for a few seconds before he sighed silently.

This card's biggest use to me is to exchange the formulas for the items I need. There's also some information about deities and Sequences. Apart from that, there's almost no other use for it.

Heh, at the very least, as the leader of the Tarot Club and as The Fool, I will no longer be an empty shell. I now hold one path of the divine, and it's not like I can't produce a High-Sequence Beyonder formula anymore!

Yes… I remember that at the Beyonder gathering organized by Old Mister "Eye of Wisdom," the lady who is suspected to have an Artisan backing her has been always seeking to purchase the potion formula of Barbarian.

As his mind whirled, Klein took another look at the Roselle portrait on the Black Emperor card and couldn't help laughing.

He has made every Sequence in his own image. What a narcissist…

I'm suddenly very curious what the Card of Blasphemy for the Demoness pathway would look like. Hehe.

Reining in his thoughts, Klein destroyed the other bookmark he had casually picked up and discovered that it was just an ordinary bookmark.

After doing all of this, he changed his seating posture and leaned back into his chair. He responded to Miss Justice's plea from last night and said calmly, “That was a Card of Blasphemy made by Roselle.”

Well, well, well. Nice image:

[image]

Chapter 324 - Imagined and Real “Adorer”

◆◆◆

Empress Borough, Earl Hall’s home, dining room.

As per usual tradition, Audrey was saying grace with her father, mother, and elder brother before dinner.

“Praise the Goddess!” She tapped her chest in four spots in a clockwise manner to end the prayer.

However, before she finished speaking, her vision was covered by a thick gray fog. A distant figure that seemed to be looking down at everyone and everything opened his mouth with dominance.

“That was a Card of Blasphemy made by Roselle.”

Mr. Fool… Card of Blasphemy? Audrey, who finally received a response, was joyful at first, but then she fell into a daze. She couldn’t understand what the so-called Card of Blasphemy referred to.

However, she quickly made a guess. She had always known that Emperor Roselle had made a secret deck of cards representing some unknown force which had twenty-two cards in total. It was believed to have been referenced from tarot cards.

Furthermore, she had also heard from The Hanged Man that the secret to the deck of cards was that they hid the paths of the divine, the path to becoming a god!

So it’s called a Card of Blasphemy… It corresponds to the Blasphemy

Slate… This is definitely a treasure of the highest level in the mysterious world!

The paths of the divine!

It’s no wonder that Mr. Fool’s Blessed had to ask for help. He wanted to ensure that the card was the real one before taking action. It was to prevent a mistake from happening. Instead of getting the right target, it might end up informing the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery that a particular bookmark hides a Card of Blasphemy.

I wonder if he succeeded…

The Beyonders from the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery haven’t come to make any routine inquiries. Perhaps, he’s still making plans…

As her body trembled faintly, Audrey once again saw a figure praying inside the thick fog, an extremely blurry figure.

He was saying respectfully, “The Great Fool, please convey my gratitude to the authenticator. This allowed my operation to go smoothly.

“For that, I’m willing to raise the reward to 3,000 pounds which can be deducted from the 5,000 pounds that haven’t been paid yet. This is the share that the other party deserves.”

He succeeded? He succeeded just like that? But when I looked at the front pages of those newspapers, there was no news of the theft at the exhibition. It was all news of the twelfth victim of the serial murder… Raising the reward to 3,000 pounds implies that Mr. Fool’s Blessed had indeed succeeded in retrieving the bookmark containing the Card of Blasphemy without anyone noticing! How cool! Although the term invented by Emperor Roselle may not be elegant, reserved, or in line with my identity as a noble identity, it’s the only impression that I feel right now!

Our Tarot Club now has a complete path of the divine in its control!

It should be a complete one, right?

I wonder which one it is.

But regardless, this represents the path to becoming a god!

Under the glory of Mr. Fool, we will one day become the most powerful hidden faction in the world!

I wonder if the other bookmarks hide Cards of Blasphemy…

Audrey controlled her excitement as she felt longing and pride. She allowed the dining maid to help her spread out a napkin before her gaze shifted to Earl Hall, who habitually read the newspapers while having breakfast.

“Father, is there anything worth paying attention to today?”

Earl Hall sighed and said, “That devil has killed another innocent person. It’s the 12th case. She’s a fashion designer who had just become famous. She had only been a street girl a few times due to her desperate need for money, but she ended up encountering such a terrible situation.

“Thankfully, there was an eyewitness. The person witnessed the devil at the crime scene. Heh, he was really scared out of his wits. He constantly shouted on the streets ‘murder’ and ‘save me.’ Heh heh. I have to say that his cries for help did bring acceptable results. The devil didn’t chase after him.

“As a result, the police have locked onto the suspect and are hunting him down.”

Audrey drew the crimson moon on her chest once again and said, “May their operation succeed.

“Father, from what you just said, it sure was a horrible but funny scene.

“I hope that eyewitness won’t have nightmares because of it.”

And on the same night, Mr. Fool's Blessed took one of the Cards of Blasphemy from the heavily protected museum without alerting anyone… Audrey added wistfully in her mind and filled in some of the details herself.

†

Royal Museum, in the restored study.

"Are you sure that only two bookmarks were stolen?" the Machinery Hivemind squad's Captain Max Livermore asked his team members.

As he spoke, he stole a glance at the important figure standing in front of the desk with his back facing him.

It was an old man wearing a white clerical robe and a clerical cap. He was the head of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery for the Backlund diocese. He was a member of the Divine Council, Archbishop Horamick Haydn.

This important figure wasn't only a clergyman, but he was also a very famous scientist, a distinguished professor of physics at Backlund University.

"Yes, only two bookmarks were stolen," The team member being questioned answered with certainty.

Max nodded slightly and looked at Horamick Hayden. After some thought, he deliberated and asked, "Your Grace, after the closing of the museum yesterday evening, some aristocratic children came to visit. They had touched parts of the exhibited items, including one of the two bookmarks that were stolen. Do I need to get them to cooperate with the investigation?"

"I know about that." Horamick's hands naturally drooped down as he turned around and said in a calm tone, "I've already confirmed that those aristocratic children are not related to the thief who stole the bookmarks, so there’s no need to get them to cooperate with the investigation.”

“Yes, Your Grace.” Max himself didn’t think there was anything wrong with the aristocratic children, not to mention that Archbishop Haydn had enough mysticism knowledge and Beyonder techniques to confirm it.

Horamick’s gentle and benevolent face didn’t show the slightest trace of anger. He looked around and said, “There was more than one person here last night, at least two of them. They were divided into two opposing groups.

“One of them might even be of a higher Sequence than me, while the other had somehow escaped mysteriously.

“Although I’m unable to reconstruct the entire scene, there are still some things that I can ‘see.’

“This matter is more complicated than we thought.”

At this point, he sighed.

“I also know why they wanted to steal the bookmarks.

“We’ve been tricked by Roselle for more than 150 years…”

†

Giving up 3,000 pounds sure does hurt. I’ve saved up for so long and yet, I have less than 1,000 pounds… However, the Card of Blasphemy is a priceless treasure that cannot be exchanged, even with money. The contribution Miss Justice had made in this matter is definitely worth the price…

Thankfully, I could deduct it from what she owes me, lightening my burden. If I ever meet Mr. Azik in the future, I’ll pay him the 15,000 pounds that belong to the “Blessed” with a High-Sequence Beyonder formula… I wonder what the other Cards of Blasphemy were disguised to look like. According to the personality of the Emperor, they should all be rather surprising… After Klein finished his reply and looked out the palace at the sea of gray fog, he silently sighed.

As a precaution, he temporarily left his Black Emperor card above the gray fog, on the surface of the long bronze table facing the seat of The Fool. He did so for Azik's copper whistle as well.

When he returned to the real world, he held a ritual again and summoned himself to throw the Master Key, a Sealed Artifact which was an amalgamation of getting lost and having bad luck, above the gray fog. Although it didn't seem to have huge negative effects, it was enough to cause one to encounter life-threatening situations. He planned not to use it unless necessary.

The Master Key is just a relic of an unlucky fellow who had just advanced to Sequence 9. Yet, it has a negative influence that even a Mid-Sequence Beyonder is unable to weaken… It seems like there's an additional factor in the reason why the Apprentice lost control, which led to something abnormal…

Now that I think about it, my previous decision was correct. To explore 32 Verdi Street south of the bridge, I need to be careful and be prepared…. Yes, I need to be aware of something. A Sealed Artifact's effects might not be completely related to the owner's Sequence. I have to consider multiple factors, such as whether or not it has been contaminated by an evil god…

Klein took a bath with the water that had already turned cold before walking out of the bathroom, refreshed. He went downstairs to enjoy the corn pancakes he had bought on his way back. They were delights of the Feynapotter Kingdom's Highlands—crispy, fragrant, and sweet.

After he had eaten his fill, he went through his experiences from last night to see if he had left any clues behind.

Even with the Master Key, if I'm not a Beyonder, it's impossible for me to escape from the hands of a Devil. Back then, the mysterious and powerful lady must've determined that I wasn't an ordinary private detective. I also didn't have any intention of hiding that point.

By not capturing me, this implies that she's either an official Beyonder who is friendly to wild Beyonders, or she's not a member of the three Churches or the military. Yes, I'm more inclined with the latter point. The former point would most likely have her confiscate the Master Key. Sigh, back then, I was almost on the brink of despair. I thought I would be detained in the underground prison of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery like ordinary Beyonders. I even began considering my prison break. Who would've known that she would just leave.

Which organization is she from? Or is she wild? No, for wild Beyonders to reach her level of power, they must have an organization of their own.

That Devil dog would definitely use its Beyonder powers to erase clues related to itself, and that naturally includes me. In the field of mysticism, there is no way to separate them, and that lady probably can't be exposed as well. From the looks of it, the clues that I left behind while escaping had most likely have been interfered with.

As for what happened in the museum, they will be searching for a special spirit body, a strange existence, and what has that got to do with me, Sherlock Moriarty? Klein mocked himself as his heart grew calmer.

Of course, he had dared to return home because he had divined it in advance. It was just like he was unafraid that the museum contained traps that he found completely unsolvable.

Phew, this matter has come to an end… What should I do today? Practice my Beyonder powers and go to the Quelaag Club to scrounge a meal in passing? Well, I don't know if the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers have identified the murderer or not. Why don't I write another letter to Isengard Stanton and give myself a hint? As his thoughts raced, Klein heard someone from outside approach before leaving.

Another letter? He opened the door in puzzlement, and indeed, he saw a letter lying in his mailbox.

The letter was from Isengard Stanton.

Chapter 325 - The Equestrian Teacher's Problem

◆ ◆ ◆

When he returned to the living room, Klein picked up a letter opener and opened the envelope before taking out Isengard Stanton's letter.

The famous detective wrote:

"Your idea has greatly helped us. Please allow me to thank you here first.

"After receiving your letter, we immediately organized some people to sweep through crucial areas. As expected, we found some clues, and quite a few stray animals that had frequently appeared and were remembered by the residents had disappeared.

"In the process, we also noticed an interesting thing. Four years ago, in the serial murder case, yes—the targets were single prostitutes with a child. Quite a few people living near the scene of the crime had mentioned that although the most suspicious teenager was eccentric and vicious, he was quite fond of animals, especially a large black dog.

"After the boy died in the gang firefight, the people who lived around him never saw the dog again.

"I'm curious. Who is its current owner? Was it the murderer of some unsolved serial murder case from even further back?

"The above facts have all been proven to be true at the scene of the 12th murder case, and it has played a key role in giving the police a preliminary idea of the suspect. If all goes well, and the culprit is arrested, we will be able to get the majority of the reward money.

“My friend, I clearly remember your contribution. I will not forget your share.”

†

Isengard Stanton seems to suspect that I knew the truth about the Devil, so he had deliberately hinted at something? Klein put down the letter and mumbled silently.

However, this letter also made him feel relieved.

The official Beyonders weren’t looking for the wrong person!

If the gigantic Devil dog didn’t get receive any additional help, then it was only a matter of time before it was caught and killed.

As for Isengard Stanton’s prediction that there was another master, Klein didn’t have enough evidence to confirm the matter, so it could only be said that there was a certain probability.

In short, my mission ends here. The job is now left to the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind squads. Klein pulled out a fresh sheet of paper, picked up a fountain pen, and replied Isengard Stanton with a letter filled with humility. He also ignored his subtle hints like a real, ordinary private detective.

After cutting another paper figurine and sending the letter, Klein strolled to the public carriage stop to wait. He thought in a relaxed manner, The next thing to do is wait for the money…

Leppard said he would be visiting the Roselle Memorial Exhibition for three days straight. I’ll have to wait until Saturday before visiting to find him and make the final payment. Hopefully, the patent for the bicycle will be filed by then. Sigh, the Backlund Patent Office seems to be known for its inefficiency.

Klein had already made plans for the day. Since there was no Beyonder gathering, resulting in him being unable to buy the appropriate items, he suddenly had a lot of free time. He didn't need to busy himself for a short period of time.

In the morning, I'll go to the Quelaag Club, practice my marksmanship, practice my Beyonder powers, have lunch there, and then find a better circus to observe the magician's performance and see if I can get some inspiration. He took out his golden pocket watch and looked at it. He boarded the public carriage in a good mood.

†

Hillston Borough, Quelaag Club.

Since Klein came by at least twice a week, the attendants remembered him and didn't require him to show his proof of membership or his Frost constellation badge.

It was Wednesday morning, and since most of the Quelaag Club's members belonged to the middle-class, where they still had fixed and decent jobs, it was difficult for them to visit the club unless it was Sunday, tea time, or when they took time off from work.

The spacious and bright hall seemed abnormally empty. There were only a few people sitting in the corner where the coffee tables and sofas were.

Glancing around, Klein spotted an acquaintance and went up to greet him, "Talim, with such terrific weather today, you should be at the turf club."

The acquaintance was Talim, the aristocratic equestrian teacher who had introduced him to the club at the request of Mrs. Mary Dumont. He had once brought Klein business—the protection of Daily Observer reporter Mike Joseph on his trip to the Golden Rose for investigations.

Talim looked up, touched his short brown curls, and smiled.

“Oh my, it’s the honorable great detective. What have you been up to? I haven’t seen you in a long time.”

That’s because you haven’t been to the club for days… Klein smiled as he sat on the sofa next to Talim.

“I’ve been helping the police with the serial murder case. Although it might not necessarily yield any results, the reward is tempting enough. Besides, establishing good relations with the police is very important for us private investigators.”

What I just said was bragging. I’m just an unremarkable character who’d been summoned… he mocked himself inwardly.

Among the few members sitting in the same sofa area behind them, a man who appeared to be a stockbroker initiated a discussion on the latest Western Railway shares and East Balam Plantation shares.

Talim didn’t doubt Klein’s answer. He chuckled and said, “This is indeed something that will busy a great detective.”

After exchanging a few pleasantries, he gradually entered a pensive state.

Just as Klein was about to bid him farewell and leave for the underground shooting range, Talim suddenly looked at him and said, “Mr. Moriarty, may I ask you a question?

“Uh, you can charge me a consultation fee.”

“This one is free. Also, just call me Sherlock.” Klein laughed.

Talim nodded gently and said hesitantly, “I have a friend who has fallen in love with someone he shouldn’t have. How should he deal with such a situation?”

Although I had always believed that anyone who asks a question prefaced with "I have a friend" basically means "I myself," Talim's emotional colors implies that it's not for himself. He's in a dilemma, but I can't see any traces of pain… After activating his Spirit Vision, Klein leaned back slightly, clasped his hands, and said, "I'm sorry, but I'm not a psychiatrist or any of the experts in the newspapers or magazines who are good at solving emotional problems.

"My only advice is not to break the law.

"Heh heh, that was a joke. First, we need to understand how this 'shouldn't have' arose. Is there a feud between the family?"

Talim glanced at him and said in resignation, "No, this isn't Romeo and Juliet!"

Upon hearing Talim's reply, Klein seemed to hear an illusory murmur in his ears.

Author: Roselle Gustav… Author: Roselle Gustav… Author: Roselle Gustav…

Shaking his head, he apologized to Shakespeare and smiled.

"This piece of work by Emperor Roselle is just too classic. When it comes to love that shouldn't be, I can't help but think of it.

"Then why shouldn't they be together?"

Talim fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "I have to keep it confidential. I'm sorry, just pretend I didn't ask."

Confidential? That must be someone with certain standing… In love with someone of the same sex? In love with someone who is related by blood? Klein held back his curiosity and said with his hands spread out, "Then I can only give you one more suggestion. Read best-sellers about passionate love like Stormwind Mountain Villa and Love and Jealousy."

Talim quivered his lips a few times, sighed, and said, “Sigh, that can only be used as the last resort. In my opinion, the feelings present in those best-selling novels simply don’t seem to occur among normal people.”

“I think so too!” Klein echoed in full agreement.

After exchanging a smile with Talim, he got up and went to the underground shooting range to practice his shooting and Beyonder powers. When it was almost noon, he returned to the first floor and went straight to the buffet cafeteria.

He had noticed earlier that the cuisine that was in limited supply today was red wine fried foie gras, paired with sliced apples and bread soaked in butter.

After taking his food, Klein carried his tray to the table where Talim was sitting. At that moment, there was another acquaintance of his, who, by the same token, had recommended his membership. He was the surgeon, Aaron Ceres.

Before he could sit down after setting the tray down, Klein noticed a crutch leaning against the chair of the famous surgeon.

“Aaron, what’s wrong?” he asked with concern.

The tall and thin man wore a pair of gold-rimmed glasses and had a cold appearance. He lightly patted his right leg and said, “No, don’t mention it. It’s really bad luck! I fell down the stairs and suffered rather serious fractures, so I could only fix it with a plaster.”

“You really were unlucky.” Klein sighed in agreement, cut a piece of foie gras, dipped it in sauce, and put it in his mouth. The fragrance that was emitted the moment they melted in his mouth stimulated all of his taste buds.

“I’ve been out of luck for a long time.” Aaron nudged his spectacle frames and rubbed his temples in passing.

He then looked at Klein, then at Talim before asking hesitantly, “Mr. Moriarty, do you—do you…”

“What?” Klein looked up.

Aaron lowered his voice.

“You’re a famous detective. You should know a lot of people, right?”

“It’s quite alright,” Klein didn’t understand what Aaron was up to as he answered perfunctorily.

Aaron looked at Talim again and took a deep breath.

“Do you know anyone who’s like a village witch doctor? No, I mean, some of the more capable fortune-tellers or mysticism enthusiasts. I think… I feel that my recent string of bad luck is too abnormal…

“I know it’s likely to be a fake or a scam, but there’s no other way of shirking my bad luck. I’ve tried to go to church, praying, donating, attending Mass, but it didn’t work at all.”

Capable fortune-teller and mysticism enthusiast… You seem to be talking about me… Klein pondered and said, “Aaron, tell us in detail about what happened to you.”

By his side, Talim nodded as well.

“Don’t worry, I may be a believer of the Lord, but I don’t reject things regarding mysticism.”

Aaron sighed in distress.

“There are a lot of things. For example, making mistakes at the operating table. Encountering an accident on the steam locomotive. I found that my house had been burgled when I returned home. When I went to the hospital, I ended up falling down the stairs… Do you think someone has cursed me?”

Yes, I’ve heard Aaron mention something like this before… Klein frowned slightly.

As a former Nighthawk, it was easy for him to associate this description with a Sealed Artifact: Misfortune Cloth Puppet!

Could it be a similar item? He activated his Spirit Vision and asked seriously, “Aaron, think back carefully. Before those unfortunate events began happening, one after another, did you or your family—yes, your family—encounter any unfortunate events?”

Chapter 326 - "Professional" Suggestion

◆

Klein had wanted to ask if Aaron or his family had brought home anything which was relatively more unusual—such as a slightly dirty rag doll—before the unlucky events befell him.

But as soon as the words reached his mouth, he suddenly felt that it was too direct and could easily expose the fact that he knew a lot about mysticism. Although this could be explained away by the fact that he was experienced and knowledgeable, there was no need for him to take the risk.

Instead, he took a more roundabout approach and asked Dr. Aaron if his family had suffered the same ill luck.

Upon hearing his question, Aaron Ceres carefully recalled and said, "No, except for the steam locomotive accident that occurred to them as well, they were the same as before. Most of the time, they didn't experience anything especially lucky or unlucky. The rest can be said to be of both types, so they can't be considered especially unlucky."

That's not right… If it was an item that needs to be sealed like the Misfortune Cloth Puppet, it would definitely affect people within a certain range… Could it be that Aaron has dripped his blood on it, and the two of them have established a firm connection? In Klein's Spirit Vision, Aaron's aura and mood matched his physical and mental state, and there was nothing special about him.

He asked after some thought, "Is there any colleague at the hospital that is as unlucky as you?"

"No, so I think I must've been cursed by someone." Aaron pulled at his bow tie, looking anxious and uneasy.

Under Talim's curious gaze, Klein thought for a moment and said, "Before you became unlucky, did you encounter any relatively stranger matters, such as cutting yourself? In folklore, blood is the powerful medium through which curses can be formed."

"After I suspected that I was cursed, I have confirmed this point. I have not lost any blood in the past three months," Aaron replied with a heavy mood as he held his knife and fork.

That's a little strange… I can't perform a more complicated divination in front of them… Klein asked again, "Then, were there other strange matters?"

"Aaron, think back carefully. This kind of matter can't happen without a reason. Have you offended anyone recently? Or have you become an obstacle towards others?" Talim echoed with concern.

Aaron looked down at the food on the plate and fell into deep thought. Klein didn't stay idle either. He took care of his food before it turned cold and unpleasant.

By the time he started enjoying the dessert, Aaron finally raised his head and said, "I'm not a very sociable person. I don't have a good relationship with my colleagues, but it's hard to believe that they would come up with a way to curse me.

"Well… After your reminder, I do remember something. It might be related to mysticism."

"What is it?" Klein and Talim's spirits were lifted at the same time.

"Before my continuous bad luck streak, I was in charge of a patient, a child who wasn't even ten years old. He was very pitiful. Due to some complications, I had to amputate his left leg." Aaron nudged his glasses and recalled. "I just became a father not long ago, so I'm always filled with sympathy for the misfortune of a child. Every time I check the ward, I would chat with him, encourage him, and comfort him."

After a pause, Aaron's thoughts turned more fluid.

"I remember that it was the day before his surgery. I specially went to his ward to look for him, and he was really upset. He was playing tarot cards, which he had brought with him when he was admitted to the hospital. His family wasn't even allowed to take them away.

"In order to calm him down, I began playing tarot cards with him.

"Back then, I drew a card. It was the reversed Wheel of Fortune.

"That child looked at me and said with a pure and innocent smile, 'Doctor, your luck will get worse.'"

"Doctor, your luck will get worse…" Talim drew a breath and said, "Why do I feel that such a scene and such words make my body feel cold… Did the child die on the operating table?"

Aaron shook his head.

"That operation was a success. It didn't take long for him to be discharged from the hospital. He even specially thanked me.

"So, I've never suspected this, but now that I think back, I find that this is the only time in the past two months that I have come into contact with something related to mysticism. No matter what, regardless of whether it is useful or not, tarot cards are still used for divination."

At some point, a brass coin had appeared in Klein's hand. It was bouncing and rolling at his fingertips, seemingly symbolizing the analysis process of a "famous detective."

The coin was flicked up and fell into the palm of his hand. Klein glanced at it out of the corner of his eye and asked, having "ended" his thinking, "What's that boy's name? Where does he live?"

Aaron answered without hesitation, “His name is Will Auceptin. As for where he lives, I don’t remember.

“What is your suggestion, Mr. Detective?

“Do you know any experts in the field of mysticism?”

Klein took a sip of his black tea and said with a smile under the expectant gazes of Aaron and Talim, “My suggestion is to go to the cathedral of the deity you believe in, tell the bishop about your recent misfortune, and then ask him if he has a solution. Aaron, I remember you were a believer of, uh—the Evernight Goddess, right?”

He had almost said Goddess, but fortunately, he remembered his identity as a detective who believed in the God of Steam and Machinery.

“However, my prayers to the Goddess, my participation in Mass, and the donation of money and items were all useless. I think I should find some capable fortune-tellers.” Aaron didn’t agree with Detective Moriarty’s suggestion.

Talim echoed with a nod, “Yes, the deities wouldn’t care if you were lucky or not. Luck is a blessing, and misfortune is a test.”

Friend, your faith isn’t pious enough. Be careful, the Lord of the Storms might zap you with a lightning bolt… Klein looked at the two separately and laughed.

“This suggestion is based on very simple logic.

“If—and I mean if—there exists useful and effective mysticism in this world, then the ones who are best at it are definitely the seven Orthodox Churches. If not, they would’ve long been replaced by other forces who have mastered mysticism.

“If there isn’t such a thing as true mysticism, then finding a fortune-teller or witchdoctor won’t be of any help. It would be better to see if there’s a solution to this problem with the help of a relatively higher-ranking bishop.”

Aaron carefully analyzed the situation and finally nodded.

“That makes sense.

“Perhaps I will need the bishop’s help to pass on the message to the Goddess to protect me.”

No, accurately speaking, with the bishop passing on the message, the Nighthawks would be able to notice the abnormality on you… Klein retorted inwardly.

He had no intention of helping Aaron himself, because to solve the problem regarding luck, aside from finding the root cause of everything, he would have to set up particular rituals.

Ignoring the fact that Klein didn’t know any real luck enhancement rituals, and even if he did, he would be exposing his Beyonder powers to someone he was unfamiliar with, which would increase the risk for no reason.

Since I can get the Nighthawks to take up the role of helping you, there’s no need for me to do it myself… I just don’t know if the problem came from that boy or the tarot cards in his hands. If it’s the latter, then it might be a suitable Sealed Artifact for me… Klein shook his head, suppressing his greed and emotions.

At this moment, Aaron had already made up his mind. He looked at Klein and grinned.

“Thank you, Mr. Moriarty. Although you don’t know mysticism, you relied on strict logic to provide the best suggestion.”

Yes, I don’t know mysticism… Klein smiled.

“Just call me Sherlock, Aaron.”

Yes, ever since I’ve stopped being a Nighthawk, the composition of my mysticism knowledge has become stranger and stranger. On the one hand, I've grasped quite a few secrets which are related to High-Sequences and deities, and on the other hand, I only understand the more basic ritualistic magic. Among the more complicated ones, I only know the sacrificial rites and bestowment rituals. As for charms, all I know are those three… Klein sighed to himself, feeling an urgent need for a more comprehensive and in-depth book of mysticism.

As for the knowledge required to separate a Beyonder characteristic from the spiritual corruption of an evil god, he had no clues whatsoever at the moment.

†

After a short afternoon nap at the club, Klein rode in a public carriage to the Rice Circus near the Tussock River in Cherwood Borough.

Today wasn't a holiday nor was it a weekend. There weren't many visitors at the circus, and the clowns that were responsible for entertaining and amusing the visitors all seemed listless.

Passing between the Divination Lodge and the tents that sold pies, pancakes, fruit pies, and alcoholic beverages, Klein walked along the edge of the circus and found a small theater. On the blackboard at the entrance, it read: "Non-holiday and weekends: four performances a day, one hour per performance."

The first performance in the afternoon was at two o'clock. It had just begun.

After buying his ticket, Klein entered the theater and heard cheers.

At this moment, a beast trainer was on stage, holding a whip and ordering a black bear to perform in a charmingly naive manner. Next to him lay a tiger, with criss-crossed yellow-black stripes, and a seated dark and curly-haired baboon.

Pa!

The black bear rolled awkwardly as the trainer whipped it.

“I say, this guy wanted to give you a slap just a moment ago!” In the front row of the rows of seats, someone suddenly shouted loudly, which immediately attracted the laughter of a handful in the audience.

They thought it was a new way for the circus to amuse them.

However, Klein didn’t think so, for he noticed that the color of the trainer’s emotions leaned toward anger and annoyance.

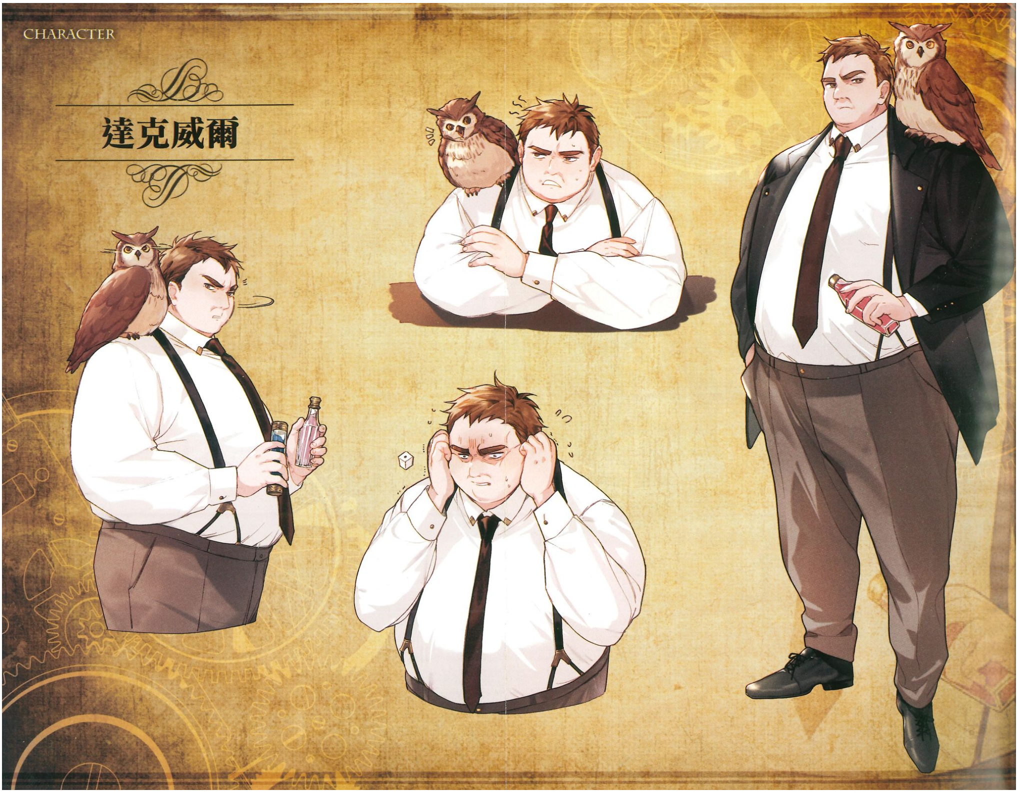
He smiled and went to sit in the first row, watching the performance on the stage so as to not waste the price he paid for the tickets.

At that moment, the person who had just spoken shouted again, “That tiger wants to bite your neck off, that curly-haired baboon wants to use you as a cushion!”

Amidst the laughter of the audience, the beast trainer’s actions clearly stiffened.

This… Even though those words sound like they’re causing trouble, why do I detect a hint of a warning… Klein looked over his shoulder at the speaker in the same row and saw that he was a chubby-faced man in his thirties.

This tone, this way… It’s kind of familiar… Klein mumbled silently to himself.


CHARACTER
達克威爾

Chapter 327 - Encounter on the Road

◆

Inside the small theater of the Rice Circus.

As long as something felt familiar, there was no problem for a Seer to recall it. Klein nudged his gold-rimmed glasses up on his nose, leaned back, and murmured something almost soundlessly.

Soon after, he pretended to close his eyes to rest for more than ten seconds. In reality, he had used the help of Cogitation to quickly fall asleep and be reminded through his dream.

It was a rather dim room, with only one candle flickering on the coffee table. The people sitting around it were all wearing black hooded robes and iron masks that covered only half their faces.

Deliberately massaging his glabella, Klein opened his eyes and continued watching the beast taming performance.

He had interpreted the revelation and knew the source of the familiarity: the scene in the dream was of the Beyonder gathering organized by Old Mister Eye of Wisdom.

There was also an Apothecary with a chubby face who enjoyed using sarcasm as a warning. Although he was clearly a kind-hearted fellow, he always gave others the feeling that he deserved a beating.

Could it be that Apothecary? That shouldn’t be the case. When did he learn beast taming… According to the confidential records of the Nighthawks, an Apothecary doesn’t have Spirit Vision like those of the

Seer pathway who were able to distinguish emotional colors in detail. Well, when it comes to the color of auras, they're actually quite good at it… Klein's thoughts slowly dispersed without affecting his appreciation of the performance onstage.

In his Spirit Vision, the emotional colors of the black bear, the tiger, and the curly-haired baboon were indeed unstable. If there was an addition level of provocation to a certain degree, they might very well rampage on the spot. This indirectly confirmed that the chubby man who had just spoken wasn't causing trouble. He seemed to be able to read the thoughts of the three animals and understand their impulses.

Having received the warnings, the beast trainer's face darkened with anger, but even so, his actions were instinctively gentler. He was more careful, and the show ended without a hitch.

After that, there was a simple but comedic skit. Only when it was over was it the magician's turn to perform.

This magician wore a tuxedo. He wore a bow tie of the same color, as well as a large top hat. The moment he appeared, he spat out fire from his mouth, which immediately caused the audience to applaud and cheer.

Such a simple trick… Klein, who had excellent eyesight and had watched quite a few magic lesson programs, understood the gist of it with just a quick glance.

Next, the magician performed: the classic escape act, releasing flying doves from his hat, pulling out flowers, card tricks, and so on. Klein thought he could easily see through every one of the magician's tricks, but he was surprised to discover that, at some point, he actually failed to do so because his attention had been drawn to where the magician wished it to be, causing him to ignore the key details.

He clearly doesn't have any Beyonder powers, but his technique is still able to fool my eyes. Hmm, the key point is grasping attention… The

Magician's second principle is fully divert a target's attention, thus achieving the desired effect? Klein made a guess in his mind which he wasn't sure if it was right or wrong.

It needed him to "act" it out to receive feedback.

At this moment, the magician's performance came to an end. The audience weren't stingy with their warm applause and cheers. The atmosphere in the theater reached its peak that afternoon.

Heh heh, the third principle. A Magician's performance requires the applause of the audience for his performance? Klein muttered to himself in a half-joking and half-guessing manner in silence.

Shortly after three o'clock, he pulled the collar of his black double-breasted frock coat and left the small theater. He didn't try to come into contact with the chubby man who was suspected to be the Apothecary and only secretly remembered his appearance—soliciting him suddenly might result in extreme reactions.

He took a tracked public carriage back to Minsk Street.

The carriage was divided into two floors and each of them had a few passengers. According to his usual practice, Klein chose the spot next to the window on the first floor.

The carriage proceeded and stopped from time to time. Klein, who had half-closed his eyes to recall the inspiration he had just had, suddenly felt his heart palpitate. He became sober and rational—the reaction was like someone had forcibly intruded into his dream or channeled his spirit.

At this moment, he clearly knew that he was no longer in the real world!

As someone rich with experience, he pretended to be unconcerned. He looked around and saw that the gentleman in a tuxedo and top hat to his left was still flipping through a newspaper. There were two children who were being reprimanded by a vexed woman in a light blue dress for being disobedient troublemakers. Beside her, people were chewing on bread or drinking tea that they had brought with them… Everything was the same as before.

However, when Klein quietly activated his Spirit Vision, these passengers didn't emit any of the corresponding auras or emotions!

They don't have Ether Bodies!

They're clearly talking, eating bread, and reading newspapers, but none of them have any signs of life!

Is this an illusion, or did they just suddenly die and are just moving according to the inertia of their lives? Klein tried to remain calm as he looked out the window and saw carriages and pedestrians passing by. It was still an afternoon scene.

However, they also have no aura colors… As the carriage moved forward rather slowly, Klein became more and more serious, not understanding what had just happened.

He lowered his head and examined himself. He saw a clear spirituality luster which was completely different from the people around him.

At that moment, he suddenly heard an angry roar. It didn't sound like it came from a human!

Klein looked up and saw a large black dog on the street.

Its sharp white teeth were stained with traces of blood and rust. It was the huge Devil dog that had committed heinous crimes!

The black dog quickly swelled into a tall devil. It had bat-like wings on its back and goat horns, filled with mysterious patterns, that grew from its head. It looked up at the sky and said in the devil language, "Corruption!"

Almost as soon as it opened its mouth, Klein confirmed that it was real, because it possessed aura and emotion colors while strong spirituality lusters were being emitted from it!

Following the howls of the huge Devil dog, a few illusory pedestrians exploded and turned into a black mist that filled the air, blocking his line of sight.

However, Klein could vaguely see that there were quite a few “real people” with aura colors in midair and around him. They were using Beyonder powers which emitted spirituality lusters.

What’s going on? Ordinary people are illusory, but the Beyonders are real… Have the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers found the Devil dog and used a Sealed Artifact to create a battle environment which wouldn’t disturb reality? That Sealed Artifact is only aimed at Beyonders, and it has no effect on normal people? Thus, I, who just happened to pass by, was pulled in out of bad luck? Klein’s mind raced as he roughly guessed what had happened to him.

What a ridiculous disaster… Just as he was sighing with emotion, he suddenly heard a blood-curdling shriek, a sharp and loud scream.

The black gas that screened his vision suddenly dispersed, and the gigantic Devil dog fell heavily onto the ground. Its body was divided into two halves, and all the light in the air converged on something, making it look like a clean, pure moon shining down on the dark environment.

The gigantic Devil dog tenaciously roared again, and its body suddenly exploded. Using its soul and flesh as fuel, it ignited blue and red flames that soared into the sky.

However, the flames lost all of their brightness as soon as they reached midair, having been absorbed by that bright and resplendent moon-like object.

It disappeared without a trace, and that huge Devil dog died so simply and completely, not even leaving a speck of it behind.

So powerful… As Klein was sighing, he suddenly thought of something. Would those official Beyonders discover that he—another wild Beyonder—was sitting in the carriage, different from the other illusory people in the surrounding area?

His heart tightened as his scalp went numb. He pulled out a paper figurine, and with a shake, he transformed it into himself, a copy that was without any aura or emotional colors.

As for him, with the help of the substitution spell, he hid in the paper figurine's "shadow."

At this moment, Klein heard a light snort from across the street.

The snort was clearly filled with anger and indignation.

Who is it? It doesn't seem like the sound an official Beyonder will make… Klein was puzzled, but he didn't dare to dispel his double and peek his head out to look.

Following which, a few pairs of eyes swept across the crowd, not stopping for even a moment.

When all this faded away, Klein saw that the void around him had cracked and shattered like glass.

Then the feeling of reality inundated him, and he knew he was back in the real world.

After removing the double, he sat back in his seat. The passengers in the carriage were doing their respective deeds—reading newspapers, chewing bread, and scolding children. It was no different from before.

But in Klein's vision, they had regained their aura and their emotional colors.

In addition, compared to earlier, the tracked carriage had clearly moved forward by quite a distance.

It seems like in that special battle environment earlier, time and space are synchronized with reality. If that battle had continued for a long time, then the carriage would've left the area of influence, leaving me alone there. Alone there… That would be an obvious exposure… Fortunately, Backlund is the Capital of Capitals and the Land of Hope. There are High-Sequence Beyonders from the three major Churches residing here… Klein thought with a lingering sense of fear.

He had originally thought that even if they had locked onto their target, it would still take the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and others several days to find the black Devil dog. Moreover, that was on the premise that the dog hadn't left Backlund. That was something certain, because leaving Backlund would mean stepping out of the range of the ritual, and the advancement would fail. And to the Devil, the negative impact of a failed ritual would cause it, who was already struggling at the edge of bloodlust, to immediately lose control.

Who would've thought that just after one night and half a day, the gigantic Devil dog would be discovered, executed, and cleansed!

Terrifying! This is Backlund… This is the true power of the three Churches! A Sequence 6 Beyonder who's just about to advance was merely exposed and had left behind the tiniest of traces. Yet, he was quickly found and killed so easily… This is a Devil that can sense danger ahead of time! From the looks of it, some Sealed Artifact perfectly hinders this trait… In the future, I must be even more careful! Klein felt that he had learned a great lesson.

At this moment, he remembered the strange snort he had heard earlier.

It seemed to be the companion of that gigantic Devil dog? Its master? He was actually not discovered. Perhaps the final explosion of the gigantic Devil dog was secretly orchestrated by him… Of course, it's also possible that he's a member of some secret organization that is unsatisfied with the official Beyonders… Klein abruptly looked out the window on the opposite side of the carriage. All he saw were people walking past looking ordinary. They either wore tweed coats, half top hats, or bright long skirts. He couldn’t tell if there was anything wrong with them.

Chapter 328 - He That Touches Pitch Shall Be Defiled

◆

The wheels of the carriage pressed down on the track as the horses dragged it along. The heavy carriage steadily advanced, and soon, they were moving away from the street as though nothing had happened.

With a normal expression, Klein held onto his cane and waited until the tracked public carriage passed two stations before he got off ahead of time. He took a large detour and slowly headed back to the place where the gigantic Devil dog had been killed.

He wasn’t looking for its Beyonder characteristics, as it was impossible for the top experts of the Church to not know about this matter. They would’ve definitely taken it away long ago. He also wasn’t investigating the source of that slight snort. After all, with so much time having passed by, the carriages moving on the streets, and the people that were coming and going, how could there be any clues left behind? Even divination would fail to obtain an answer.

Klein’s purpose was to look at the subtle details that remained along the street, and to see the nature of the Sealed Artifact that had created the strange environment for the battle, so as to prepare for what might happen in the future.

This is a Magician’s acting… He sighed silently as he walked under the gray sky, along the edge of the street which was marked by the gas lamps.

The reason why he had to wait two stops before getting off and taking a detour, was because he was worried that there would be an official Beyonder who would sweep the battlefield in secret. He didn't want to meet them, so he tried his best not to.

Klein, who was dressed decently and holding onto a cane, took some time before he returned to the huge Devil dog's place of death. However, there were no traces of its presence on the street, and the passersby clearly didn't know that a fierce Beyonder battle had taken place here.

That Sealed Artifact is really magical. It's even more powerful than large-scale hypnosis. Klein activated his Spirit Vision and slowed his footsteps, like a gentleman on an outing rather than on an errand.

It took him over half an hour to complete his tour of the area, but his efforts with his Spirit Vision was futile. There was nothing out of the ordinary about his target area.

However, Klein's spiritual perception sensed one thing: its scope and its boundaries.

When I entered the block and left from another direction, I felt a subtle and illusory feeling, as if I entered a different world from another world. That is to say, the Sealed Artifact's scope of influence can reach at least one block, and its upper limit is temporarily unclear. Klein stood outside the target street, and nodded thoughtfully before returning. He went to a decent cafe, ordered a cup of Southville coffee, and sat down by the window.

As he drank the fluid with a rich aroma, he observed the street outside, which was beginning to bustle as time passed by, hoping to see any changes.

Unfortunately, what he had been looking forward to didn't happen.

Of course, he wasn't without gains. At the very least, he confirmed that a Magician "never performed unprepared," which was one of the rules of acting.

He felt that the characteristics of the subtle precipitate in his body stirred a little.

In the evening, Klein stopped his observations and returned to Minsk Street in a public carriage.

At this moment, the gas lamps on both sides of the road had already been lit, illuminating the slightly wet cement ground with withered leaves that fell from the trees along the road with a blue hue.

Holding his cane, Klein strolled past the house of Lawyer Jurgen and strolled to Unit 15.

As he was walking, he suddenly thought of something. He had finished all the ingredients at home. If he went back now, he wouldn't be able to cook dinner!

Uh, should I go to the meat shop and fruit shop, or find a restaurant to fill my stomach first? Klein hesitated for a moment, he then finally decided to take a break tonight and eat something ready-made.

Many of the dishes in this world were made quite simply and very quickly, so it didn't become a situation where an hour was spent cooking for five minutes of eating. However, there was still a certain amount of work to be done. Furthermore, he had to wash the dishes and wash the knives and forks himself.

After touching his wallet, Klein turned around and walked in the direction of the area, where according to his memory, there were restaurants.

Once again he passed the house of Lawyer Jurgen's.

Standing behind the open oriel window and looking at the "confused" expression Detective Moriarty had, Jurgen raised his voice and said, "Mr. Moriarty, did… I mean, did you forget your key again? Or did you drop your key?"

Why is he saying “again?” Klein replied with a chuckle, “No, not really.”

Jurgen solemnly nodded his head.

“Then why don’t you come to my place?

“You can return when it’s completely dark after we have dinner.”

… Klein hesitated for a second and smiled.

“It will be my honor.”

When he entered, the black cat, Brody, was licking his paws in a corner. Jurgen didn’t make much small talk as he stepped into the kitchen.

After Klein had hung up his coat and hat and put away his black cane, he stepped into the dining room and saw that the table was already covered with food—blackened steaks and mashed potatoes of the same color.

He wasn’t surprised by this. This was how Mrs. Doris, Lawyer Jurgen’s grandmother, cooked in her old age. The food didn’t look appetizing, but they were delicious.

She’s a good chef… Klein sat in front of Jurgen, smiled and made some small talk.

“Were you about to have dinner?”

“Yes, it’s a habit of mine to look at the scenery outside before my meal. It allows my thoughts to spread without boundaries.” Jurgen spread out his napkin and picked up his fork and knife.

Klein looked around in puzzlement and asked, “Where’s Mrs. Doris?”

Jurgen sighed and replied seriously, “The weather is getting colder and colder. Her chronic lung problems are back, so she has no choice but to be admitted to the hospital for a while.”

“May God bless her.” Klein drew the triangular Sacred Emblem of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery on his chest unfamiliarly.

Then he cut a piece of steak and forked it before stuffing it into his mouth.

At that moment, he suddenly thought of a problem and hurriedly asked, “So, you were the one who prepared dinner?”

“Of course. It was done a few minutes ago,” Jurgen answered simply.

If it isn’t the work of the great chef, Mrs. Doris, then this food… The corner of Klein’s mouth twitched. He held back the fear in his heart and still bit down on the small piece of steak on his silver fork, slowly chewing on it.

His brows furrowed a little as he forcefully swallowed the food. He squeezed a smile as he asked, “Why did you prepare two servings in advance?”

“One serving was prepared to be taken to the hospital for my grandmother.” Jurgen glanced up at Klein. “I’ll make another one later.”

“…So that’s how it is.” To be polite, Klein secretly took a deep breath and steeled himself as though prepared to do battle with the food in front of him and finish it.

By the time he was finished, Jurgen still had a tiny bit left. The senior solicitor put down his fork and knife, picked up the glass beside him, took a sip of red wine, and asked without expression, “How’s it?

“Which dish do you like the most?

“I know there’s still a large gap between my skills and my grandmother’s, but it shouldn’t be too exaggerated.”

Mr. Lawyer, I suspect you have problems with your sense of taste besides facial myopathy… Can’t you realize your standards? Klein smiled, moved his head from left to right, and said, “The white bread isn’t bad.”

“That was bought from Dodge bakery.” Jurgen reburied his head and finished the rest of the food.

After drinking the remaining wine, he thought for a moment and said, “Detective Moriarty, I want to entrust you with a simple task.”

“What is it?” Klein kept drinking water.

The mashed potatoes were too salty!

“My grandma’s been in the hospital lately. I might not be able to return because of my cases. This will lead to Brody being hungry.” Jurgen glanced at the black cat. “I want you to feed Brody when I’m not back, clean up his litter box, and play with him for a while. He loves to be scratched under the chin. Yes, every night at ten, if there’s no light in the house and it’s dark, you can come in, Two soli every time, until my grandmother comes home.”

Klein saw the solemn and prim look on Jurgen’s face. He smiled and said, “It’s a simple task. The reward is quite generous. I have no reason to reject it.”

As he spoke, he turned to look at Brody the black cat and smiled at it.

Brody slowly turned his body and faced Klein with his back.

Klein’s smile couldn’t help but freeze on his face.

†

After drinking his fill, Klein excused himself from Jurgen’s place. He strolled back to his rented house in the completely dark streets.

By this time, the people who had finished their work had already returned home and were enjoying their dinner. There were very few pedestrians on the streets and not many carriages. It was very quiet.

Walking under the light of the gas lamp, Klein, who had no urgent desire to return, slowed down. So did the black shadow at his feet.

When he passed by the Sammers, he saw through the oriel window that the interior was brightly lit. People were moving back and forth, and sounds of chatter and laughing could be heard.

As for next door, 15 Minsk Street, it was dark and silent.

With a sigh, Klein quickened his pace, took out his key, and opened the door.

Before he went in, he checked the mailbox out of habit and found another letter lying inside.

Who sent it? Klein took out the letter and glanced at it under the light of the street lamp.

No stamps… It looks like Isengard Stanton's handwriting… He nodded slightly, went inside, closed the door, switched on the light, and opened the letter.

The great detective Isengard said in the letter:

"…I'm very pleased to inform you that the murderer has been found and killed on the spot.

"The police think that our work is worth at least half the bounty. They should be disbursing it to me this week. When that happens, I will invite you and our other friends to come over and share this bounty."

†

Isengard received the news so quickly? He sure has a close relationship with the Backlund police… Oh, it's without a stamp. That means that he got someone to deliver it directly. The Loen Kingdom's postal system isn’t that efficient. How could a letter sent in the afternoon arrive in the evening? Klein sighed, put down the letter, and got ready to change into a new outfit before heading out.

With the serial murders out of the way and the situation in Backlund easing, he could try to do a couple things.

For example, find Kaspars at the Bravehearts Bar and contact Maric to see if the Beyonder who could control zombies and Miss Sharron had any books regarding mysticism.

If my guess is right, they should be the defectors of the Rose School of Thought. They were previously in an official organization, and they must know a lot of mysticism knowledge. And now, I have enough money to buy them! Klein touched his wallet and thought in anticipation.

Chapter 329 - Claw Marks

◆

Backlund Bridge area, Bravehearts Bar.

Klein pressed down the cap on his head, carefully protecting the wallet in the inside pocket of his grayish-blue worker's jacket. He walked around the customers who were surrounding the boxing ring and headed for the bar.

On the way, he looked around and didn't see the black market arms dealer, Kaspars Kalinin.

He's either playing cards or playing billiards… Klein nodded to himself, sat down at the bar, and said to the bartender, "Half and Half."

He had seen someone drink this type of alcoholic beverage the last time, and he felt that it likely suited his palate.

At least it's better than pure malt beer… Klein thought to himself.

The bartender raised his head and glanced at him.

"Which two alcohols do you want mixed? Different choices, different prices."

"The typical one; the typical one will do." The last time he saw someone drink it, the person had used alcohol of the worst quality. The whole glass of Half and Half was only worth two and a half pence.

"Four and a half pence." The bartender watched as Klein arranged the brass coins on the bar and then went back to mixing. He said in passing, “You here for Kaspars? He’s not here anymore; his business has been snatched.”

“Huh?” Klein didn’t expect such an answer.

Before the bartender could reply, a man with a protruded mouth next to him laughed and said, “Yes, we’ve chased Kaspars away!

“Heh, how can a lame old man like him do such a business?

“If you have anything you need, feel free to come to us. Find our boss.”

A gang war? Klein subconsciously came up with this idea, wanting to reject the man’s suggestion.

However, he soon thought of another possibility.

Could it be that the Rose School of Thought has deliberately sought out a gang to suppress Kaspars so as to force Maric and Miss Sharron to jump into a trap?

Yes, it’s quite possible. Kaspars had been working here as a black market arms dealer for a long time; he’s definitely not someone who can be chased away just like that. A while ago, because of the series of murders, the atmosphere in the whole of Backlund was rather tense, and the Rose School of Thought or other hidden factions wouldn’t dare to recklessly kill and use spirit mediumship on Maric and Miss Sharron, even if they found them. This would result in a lot of bloodshed, and since they obviously only have a few suspects, and are unable to confirm anyone else having a way to contact Miss Sharron and Maric for the time being… Klein swallowed the words he was about to say and asked instead, “Can I first get a quote before deciding whether to purchase?”

He planned to observe the faction made up of ordinary people who had taken over Bravehearts Bar’s black market. If he discovered any problems, then he could use them as a favor to give to Kaspars, Sharron, and Maric.

In any case, Klein didn't want any conflict. He only planned on observing via normal processes, so there was no risk.

"Yes, the only requirement is…" The man made a zipping motion with his hand in front of his protruding mouth.

"No problem." As soon as Klein answered, he saw the Half and Half in front of him, and the copper coins had been taken away by the bartender.

Without any intention of wasting it, he tipped his head and drank it. His brows gradually furrowed.

It's not what I thought it would be. The taste of the spirit is too heavy, the grape flavors are too mild… Klein put down his glass and followed the man to the third billiard room where Kaspars used to stay in.

When he was about to reach the door, he suddenly thought of something.

As someone who doesn't know much, even I can guess that this is a trap. I wonder if Miss Sharron and Maric who have been hunted for so long know about it? They definitely wouldn't appear…

However, Kaspars knows more than one Beyonder. He has connections with several different circles of Beyonders, and he might be able to get other helpers. That would complicate things.

At that moment, the man with the protruding mouth stopped at the doorway of the billiard room, and the distracted Klein almost bumped into him.

He pointed inside and said, "Don't talk nonsense later. Our boss doesn't have a good temper.

"Everyone in the Backlund Bridge area and East Borough knows this."

"Alright." Klein nodded.

Satisfied, the man with the protruding mouth turned and pushed open the billiard room's door.

As the door opened, Klein saw a figure hanging in the air, gently swaying.

It was a burly man with a full beard. There was a rope tied around his neck, a rope that was tied in a dead knot.

His feet were off the ground, the tip of his tongue was protruding out, and his face was purple. He wore a contorted expression.

"Boss…" the man with the protruding mouth cried out in disbelief.

As soon as the tension in Backlund's atmosphere disappears, someone takes action… Klein tilted his head and glanced at the subordinate, he then solemnly drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

"May he find peace with God.

"I hope his temper is cured as a result."

The man with the protruded mouth didn't even hear what he said. He suddenly shouted, "Boss!

"Murder!

"Boss is dead!"

Klein took two steps back as a result of the loud and shrill voice, and he also activated his Spirit Vision to take a look inside the room. There was nothing special other than the scattered billiard balls all over the place.

Did a Beyonder from Kaspars do it? What would the faction who planted the trap do? If there was actually such a trap… Klein quietly moved away and slunk away into the crowd when the other gang members swarmed over.

He glanced at the kitchen of the Bravehearts Bar and, with some thought, went over and familiarly passed through to the back door.

As soon as he pushed open the not-so-heavy wooden door, Klein felt a cold wind blowing against him which caused him to shiver.

And amidst the cold wind was the faint smell of blood.

He listened for a moment but saw nothing. He took out his penny and flicked it up.

The landing sound was cut off by the wind, and Klein looked down at the copper penny in his palm, confirming that it was heads.

Putting the coin away, he carefully walked forward, heading in the direction that his spiritual perception told him to.

He walked to a dark corner where there wasn't any illumination from the street lamps. The smell of blood suddenly became stronger.

With the help of the weak moonlight that penetrated through the clouds, Klein almost gasped when he saw what was in front of him.

The floor here was littered with bloody thighs, calves, boots, ribs, a heart, arms, eyeballs, and other human parts. On the wall hung a portion of pale red intestines. The background was a large patch of bright red with milky white markings.

Seeing this, Klein felt like he was looking at a slaughterhouse, a slaughterhouse specially prepared for humans.

Is the murderer afraid that the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and the others are too idle? This is so exaggerated that the police would immediately transfer the case to them… Klein muttered in his mind to resist the discomfort caused by the scene.

He walked around the blood and approached the opposite wall. To his surprise, there were quite a few deep scratches.

It was like a thick and sharp claw that forcefully scratched out a mark!

The claw is similar to the one the Devil dog had after its transformation. Could it be that there's another one? Could it not be dead yet? No, no, no, I know what's going on… Klein suddenly came to a realization.

The deceased must be the Beyonder who killed the bar's gang leader. He was finished off by the faction who had set the trap…

According to Little Sun's description, I've always suspected that the faction is the Rose School of Thought because they grasp the Prisoner pathway, which is also the mutant pathway.

And one type of mutant was the werewolf!

This was in line with the traces of the crime scene before him.

It also indirectly proves that Miss Sharron and Maric are defectors of the Rose School of Thought…

Klein calmly retreated out of the scene, one step at a time.

During this process, he confirmed that there weren't any Beyonder characteristics present. Of course, it was possible that it hadn't appeared yet.

Then he turned and walked towards another street, intending to get someone to inform the police, lest such a scene frighten the commoners and make them suspect that Backlund had been infiltrated by some ferocious beast.

Because he didn't want to get into trouble over greed, Klein didn't wait for the possibility of a Beyonder characteristic appearing.

Just as he reached the end of the alley, he suddenly saw a brown carriage slowly approaching in the night.

The carriage didn't continue to move forward like the other carriages. Instead, it stopped right in front of Klein!

Klein narrowed his eyes as he prepared to do battle. However, whether it was his spirituality intuition as a Seer or the battle sense of a Clown, neither of them gave him a warning.

At this moment, the window of the carriage was opened, revealing a pale face which wore a hint of madness to it. Its brown eyes seemed to conceal deep malice.

Maric… Klein recognized him.

It was Maric, Miss Sharron's companion who controlled zombies!

He was only wearing a white shirt and a black vest, and he didn't seem to be afraid of the cold at all. He gestured for Klein to board the carriage.

For a moment Klein hesitated, wanting to use his spirit pendulum to divine right there on the spot.

At this moment, a figure appeared behind Maric. She wore a complex black regal dress and a small, soft hat. It was the blonde Miss Sharron with blue eyes.

She can easily do me harm if she wants to. She can directly come out from the wall behind me… Klein thought for a moment, then he deliberately took two steps forward casually. He opened the carriage door and took note of it.

After he sat down, the carriage began to move slowly. It was unknown where its destination was.

"Why did you come here?" Sharron asked simply.

Klein answered frankly, "I wanted to contact the both of you and ask if you have any books on mysticism. It would be best if they went in-depth. As you know, I lack such knowledge."

Maric continued looking over with malice-filled eyes as he said in a slightly hoarse and low voice, "We do have a lot of knowledge regarding mysticism, such as Shaman King Klarman’s Book of Secrets, but what can you use to trade for it?”

Shaman King? Which pathway and Sequence is that? As these thoughts flashed past his mind, Klein deliberated his tone and said, “I can trade for it with gold pounds.

“Or do you need anything else?”

The pale, but exquisite-looking Sharron looked at him and replied stoically, “Help.

“We’ll use your help as barter.”

Chapter 330 - Sharron and Maric's Philosophy

Help? Klein repeated the word silently and was momentarily a little stumped.

Back when Sharron had taken on the mission of protecting him for three days, it was mostly because of the money. For a Sequence 5 expert to be willing to take on such a mission was, in itself, a low probability. It could be chanced upon, but it wasn't something that could be forced. Furthermore, back then, Klein was desperately trying to save himself and was so frantic that he wasn't willing to give up any sliver of hope. As such, he still felt very grateful for being able to receive the help of such a powerful Beyonder, even if it was because of the money.

However, that was all. He wouldn't recklessly interfere in an unknown, dangerous situation in complete disregard of his own strength and circumstances for the sake of the other party.

Klein's original plan was that the mysticism knowledge from Little Sun could basically be verified as belonging to the pre-Cataclysm era. At that time, the ancient gods who wielded authority and the current seven gods and evil gods didn't seem to have any overlap with each other, so it was possible that the two mysticism systems were definitely hugely different. So, even if he knew the details, he didn't dare to carelessly try it out. He had to receive indirect verification in order to know which ones could still be used and which ones didn't have any effect.

It was just like the sacrificial ritual from before. Klein had already figured out the procedure from The Sun, but he waited for Mr. Azik's reply before he dared to conduct the experiment. It was to prevent anything unexpected from happening.

As for The Hanged Man, he was at the rank of bishop or captain of the Church of Storms, so he definitely possessed quite a bit of mysticism knowledge as well. However, the problem was that this was too orthodox and too involved with the Lord of Storm's domain; thereby, making it not necessarily suitable for Klein to use. Not all rituals could be performed by asking oneself for help, and he had to consider the spirituality burden he had to bear by praying to himself.

With these factors in mind, Klein turned his attention to the former members of a secret organization, Sharron and Maric. The knowledge they possessed was more suitable for wild Beyonders to use as a reference. There were also quite a few unorthodox and strange ones that were effective.

Of course, this wasn't to say that he would give up on exchanging information with The Sun and The Hanged Man. By having knowledge from ancient times, orthodox knowledge, and secret and unorthodox knowledge, it would result in him being more all-rounded, giving him a deeper understanding of mysticism!

And that was exactly what Klein wanted.

He had never forgotten that his ultimate goal was to return to Earth, so the more mysticism knowledge he had, the better. The more comprehensive, the better; the deeper the knowledge was, the better it was!

Of course, the premise of pursuing this goal is to get rid of Ince Zangwill, and avenge myself and the Captain… Klein looked at Sharron and Maric and said with the corners of his mouth curled up, "I need to know what kind of help you need from me before I can consider agreeing.

"I won't, nor is it possible for me to joke about my life."

Sharron, who was wearing a small black hat, nodded slightly and acknowledged Klein's words.

Maric, who was seated on the other side, leaned forward and put his fist to his mouth.

"We originally belonged to a rather old and secretive organization."

That I can guess… Klein maintained a serious and stoic expression.

"That organization took shape at the beginning of the Fifth Epoch, after the storms of the Berserk Sea cut off the Northern and Southern Continents, forming the Southern Continent's Highlands Kingdom and Paz Kingdom. However, I'm only talking about it taking shape. This organization's origins can be traced back to before the Fourth Epoch, all the way before the Cataclysm." the pale Maric continued describing.

That, I know that too. The Rose School of Thought, isn't it… It's traceable back to the time of the Mutant King… Klein wore an attentive look.

Maric scratched his slightly messy hair and said, "This organization believes in an evil god, and they believe that magic is a science and art that changes according to one's will to change things. This requires the establishment of a religious ritual system, including law and order. Yes, before the invasion of the Northern Continent, they were an orthodox organization in the Paz Valley and the Star Highlands, alongside the Church of the God of Death.

"At the same time, they believed that their wills originated from various desires. Combined with Beyonder powers, they were able to accomplish all sorts of unimaginable things.

"Because of these ideas, they retained an ancient and bloody tradition of primitive sacrifice, including the skinning of people and using the skulls of children as ritual objects, letting a large number of believers fervently release all sorts of desires.

“We couldn’t accept the cruelty of such deeds, and we also felt that it was very problematic in the way that they handle their desires, so we looked for an opportunity to escape from that organization.

Problematic in the way they handle their desires? Klein knew that the Rose School of Thought was famous for its bloody sacrifices, so he wasn’t very curious about the former.

The blonde and black-dressed Sharron replied in an ethereal voice, “The way they do it is to indulge and burn.

“Our philosophy is to repress and show temperance.”

So that’s how it is… Klein suddenly thought of the description of the Prisoner Sequence. The body was the cage of the heart, and the world was the cage of the body. Madness was bound, and desire was suppressed.

If the Rose School of Thought did grasp the Mutant pathway of Prisoner, Miss Sharron’s and Maric’s philosophy is clearly more suited to the needs of the acting method. Why couldn’t the other members notice this? That’s not right… He frowned slightly.

Seeing his reaction, Maric thought he didn’t understand and explained in a slightly hoarse voice, “They were influenced by that evil god, and they believe that indulging in their desires would help to strengthen their own willpower. When many people let their hair loose, they would also affect each other, adding to their fanaticism, allowing their condition to reach its peak.

“Our views are the exact opposite. We believe that desire must always be suppressed in one’s heart, just like the flames and magma underground. Only at a crucial moment can it be unleashed, producing terrifying power.”

Simply put, it’s the difference between lust and abstinence… The influence that the evil god has is in contradiction to his own pathway's requirements. It feels like something is amiss… Klein thoughtfully asked, "So you escaped to Backlund, and now they're coming after you?

"Did the dead man in the alley end up involved in this?"

"We didn't get him involved. He got himself involved because of something else," Maric rebutted Klein's second guess, acquiescing to Klein's first question.

Then, why don't you just run away from Backlund? There are quite a few big cities along the border of the Loen Kingdom and Desi Bay. Furthermore, you can go to Intis, Feysac, Feynapotter, Lenburg, Masin, and other countries… In other words, you have a reason not to leave Backlund? What could it be? Klein thought for a moment and said, "Okay, I've got the general gist of it. Hmm, what kind of help do you need?

"My Sequence isn't high, and I don't know any powerful Beyonders. There's no way I can go against that secret organization directly."

After obtaining the potion formulas for Sequence 7, 6, and 5 of the Seer pathway and killing Lanevus, Klein actually didn't have to stay in Backlund.

There was still a huge gap between him and his next target of vengeance, Ince Zangwill who had Sealed Artifact 0-08. There was no hope of success within a short period of time. He didn't even dare to approach it, so it wasn't impossible to leave Backlund. At the very most, he would feel the pinch for wasting the rental fee that he had paid upfront.

The reason why Klein was still staying in this large city was because there were a lot of Beyonders here. There were also many resources and ingredients that appeared here. It made it one of the most convenient places to advance his Sequence. It suited the revelation of his divination back then.

When I become a Faceless and am almost done digesting it, I'll have to head out to sea and look for a mermaid… This thought suddenly flashed through Klein's mind.

Sharron replied calmly, "Be our support.

"To kill a Sequence 5 Beyonder, together."

Klein was slightly surprised as he asked, "With your strength, that organization only sent one Sequence 5 Beyonder to hunt you down?"

Could it be that the common characteristic of a cult was to be brainless?

"He has a Sealed Artifact that greatly restrains me," Sharron answered calmly, her face pale but her expression delicate. "The person in charge of this matter is indeed a High-Sequence Beyonder."

"But he has been led elsewhere by the clues that we deliberately left behind," Maric added. "It's not like we only have Backlund as our only base. If we can kill the person in charge of the nearby boroughs and take away that Sealed Artifact, we will immediately disguise ourselves and flee. After that, we will no longer be afraid of being hunted down normally."

Klein tersely acknowledged.

"But why do you think I can help?"

I look so weak…

And the target is a Sequence 5 Beyonder with power and that strange Sealed Artifact!

"You're not just at Sequence 9. You're also very special," Sharron looked at him silently with her blue eyes and said with certainty.

"Haha." Klein could only reply with a dry laugh.

Sharron's ethereal voice sounded once again.

"Besides, you still have that 'eye.'"

That eye? Are you referring to the All-Black Eye left behind by Marionettist Rosago? Klein nodded slightly.

"But I can only use a small portion of it, and it can't produce too much of an effect since it was corrupted by the True Creator."

"That's enough." Sharron was always so terse with her words.

Maric added, "The Sequence 5 Beyonder we are dealing with has similar characteristics as Sharron. Only that 'eye' of yours can help us find him."

At that moment, Sharron spoke again.

"Maric will be the first bait.

"I'll be the second.

"As for you, you are the hunter responsible for solving the problem.

"I can't guarantee absolute safety.

"But you will definitely be safer than us."

Sounds sincere enough, but I'll need to make sure through divination… Klein pondered for a few seconds and said, "I want to understand the situation about the other person's characteristics and Sealed Artifact. Only then can I make a decision."

Chapter 331 - The Accursed

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Dressed in a black regal dress, Sharron pursed her bloodless lips and tilted her head to look at Maric, nodding slightly.

Maric clasped his hands and said while concealing some of his madness, “You know about the Prisoner pathway, don’t you?”

“Yes, I’ve heard of it in the Beyonder circles,” Klein answered frankly.

Of course, these Beyonder circles refer to the Nighthawks and the Tarot Club… He sighed in his heart as he added.

Maric seemed to recall something, and he was silent for nearly twenty seconds. Outside the window, he could hear the rhythmic sound of the carriage wheels rolling across the concrete pavement.

He ruffled his messy brown hair and spoke with a slightly twisted expression on his face.

“Prisoners are those who are locked up in prisons, and that also corresponds to having their spirituality and desires constrained by reason, body, and the world. The Beyonders of this Sequence have strong bodies and keen senses, often possessing both a staid appearance and a crazy heart within them. They possess many criminal techniques and are proficient in killing with whatever they can casually acquire.

“Their corresponding Sequence 8 is Lunatic. I believe you aren’t aware of this because even an orthodox Beyonder organization like the seven

Orthodox Churches aren't fully aware of such matters. That secret organization's member wields powers that far exceed your imagination. Those nearly twisted bastards are bound, be it their bodies or souls. It would be difficult to obtain any useful information by just relying on mediumship and divination.

"Sharron and I had also put up with this and waited for a very long time before we found a way to remove this binding and successfully escape.

"As all the Beyonders in this pathway are cursed and have crazy characteristics, we don't want to rely on the seven major Churches. We would lose all our freedom, without leaving anything behind."

So that's the case… It's no wonder the Nighthawk's confidential information doesn't have much about this. It even lacked the corresponding Sequences 8 and 7 of Prisoner. It's something I could know based on the level I had at the time… Klein replied with a sense of enlightenment, "I really am not aware of the situation beyond Prisoner."

Maric didn't nod as he looked at Klein with his brown eyes and continued, "Compared to a Prisoner, a Lunatic's greatest characteristic is to be able to autonomously sacrifice their rationality and let their desires run amok in exchange for strength and enhancements in every aspect. Apart from not having clear thoughts during this period, there isn't much of a problem. They can even gain stronger resistances towards Beyonder powers that can disrupt one's thoughts and influence their mind."

To put it simply, I'll get rid of you first, and that will make it impossible for you to kill me… Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

"From this Sequence onwards, the curse will gradually appear. Lunatics easily lose control," Maric said as his facial muscles twitched.

Isn't that obvious? If a person's mental state has been operating at a nadir for a long time, or if there are frequent abnormalities, it would be abnormal if the possibility of losing control isn't higher than other Beyonders! Klein had his own understanding of this. He turned to look at Miss Sharron, feeling that it was hard for him to imagine what she would look like when she was in the Prisoner and Lunatic stages. And throughout this, Sharron maintained her ghostly silent and ethereal state.

Seeing that he hadn't said anything, Maric slowly exhaled and said, "The next sequence is Werewolf."

The mutation begins? However, in the eyes of normal people, the crazy Prisoners and the Lunatics who are prone to losing their minds are actually similar to such mutants… Well, Werewolf being a Sequence 7 is lower than I expected… Klein's thoughts suddenly wandered.

Maric didn't notice how he had gone adrift as he continued on, "A Werewolf is a fully cursed person. Every time the crimson moon becomes full, they will lose part of their sanity, grow black fur, and their bloodlust and desire for tasting blood would reach its peak…"

His voice gradually became a bit erratic, as if he recalled that bitter experience of enduring and repressing himself.

"A Werewolf has rather powerful rejuvenation abilities, as well as terrifying strength, agility, and speed. Their claws and teeth are in no way inferior to Beyonder weapons of the same Sequence, and they contain venom. They also know some darkness-related spells. For instance, targets who are under the Werewolf's control would become subordinates after a period of time, when a Werewolf's venom infiltrates their body for a period of time. They would become a monster like a Werewolf, and typically, these monster's possess very short lifespans…"

After hearing Maric's explanation, Klein made a pertinent conclusion.

At the level of Sequence 7, the Werewolf is above average in terms of actual combat ability.

“A Werewolf who is always unable to suppress their instinct to kill and their bloodlust during a full moon will turn increasingly cold and more twisted. Gradually, they will lose their feelings that a normal human would have,” Maric added. There was an undisguised pride in his tone.

It fits Mr. Azik’s description of mutants… Klein subconsciously looked at Miss Sharron, instinctively imagining her Werewolf form. However, her cold gaze almost made him shiver, and he quickly turned his head back.

Maric unconsciously licked his lips. It wasn’t the seductive kind done by women, but the kind that gave people a sense of danger.

His gaze seemed to momentarily lose focus; leaving his recollections an unknown.

After a few seconds, he opened his mouth again.

“I’m at the corresponding Sequence 6, Zombie.”

Zombie… Your outer appearance really does resemble one… It’s no wonder you often play cards with a bunch of your own kind. It turns out that you are also a special kind of zombie, a real living zombie… Klein thought for a moment and said, “I heard from Kaspars that you aren’t afraid of bullets?”

Maric nodded and said, “My body can be as hard as steel. Even if you used a revolver to fire at my head, I’ll only feel dizzy at best. You’ll need to shoot me five times in the same spot before you’re able to break my defenses.

“And even if you break through my defenses, to a Zombie, all other forms of damage isn’t lethal if the brain isn’t destroyed.

“And my strength has been raised significantly from the foundation of a Werewolf. Furthermore, I wield a portion of death-related spells and can easily summon zombies and control ghosts. I can direct them and am proficient at using cold and decaying Beyonder powers.”

Every Sequence in the Mutant pathway has different characteristics. There are very few changes in the progressive pathway… Klein pondered for a moment and asked, “Then, what about the curse of Zombie?”

Maric clenched his teeth and said, “I will thirst for the warm blood and fresh meat of humans. During the full moon, this state will be particularly serious. The only thing to be gratified about is that a Zombie’s curse replaces the Werewolf’s and Lunatic’s curse. They do not exist together, and it’s the same later on.

“Every time the crimson moon is full, I will be in great pain. If I don’t give up on self-control, I will be in so much pain that I will lose my ability to fight. And if I indulge myself, I will also become less and less like a human, and the risk of losing control is very high.

“Even in normal times, I would always resist the desires in my heart and the strong malice in my heart.”

Phew. Compared to the Beyonders of other Sequences, the others are so much better. Well, except for Abyss and Demoness… Klein suddenly had such a thought.

Maric paused and glanced at Sharron.

Sharron parted her lips and said in an illusory voice, “Sequence 5, Wraith.”

Wraith? There’s such a Sequence? It really is a Mutant pathway… Klein was slightly surprised at first, but then he felt that this was indeed the characteristic of a spirit body that could be easily transformed.

Having received the prompt, Maric added, “After becoming a Wraith, one can turn one’s body into a real wraith and obtain the corresponding powers, such as moving through obstacles, hiding in mirrors, and directly attacking the soul of the enemy. They can jump through most things with reflections.

“And unlike ordinary wraiths, even with Spirit Vision, one will find it difficult to discover such a shadow unless they were a High-Sequence Beyonder.

“Yes, Wraith wields many death-type spells. There are many strange techniques, such as forcefully possessing the body and controlling the enemy…

“Her curse is that on the night of a full moon, she either consumes a certain number of human souls, or she becomes extremely weak. Choosing the former is equivalent to being on the brink of losing control at any moment.”

Without waiting for Klein to speak, the similarly pale Sharron suddenly said, “Our target is also a Wraith.”

“The Beyonder powers of Zombie, Werewolf, Lunatic, and Prisoner won’t be lost as a result of advancement,” Maric emphasized.

It sounds like my nemesis. I’m precisely afraid of the type who are impervious to revolver bullets and do not suffer immense damage when burned by ordinary flames… Simply put, I’m afraid of “ghosts”… Klein felt his heart thump a little.

After pondering for a few seconds, he asked, “What is the effect of the Sealed Artifact?

“Why would they restrain you?”

It actually made you willing to tell me your weaknesses and your curses… Klein had some general guesses.

Maric’s expression was somewhat gloomy as he replied, “That cursed artifact that needs to be sealed is called ‘Scarlet Lunar Corona.’

“Up to a certain range, it can create effects similar to a full moon. For those who are already cold and warped, it would aid them with explosive strength, but we will become weak and lose our ability to fight. If I give up on myself, then I'd rather choose death!" Maric growled hoarsely.

I didn't expect a perverted and cowardly fellow like you to be a persistent person. Hmm, to be able to last until the Zombie Sequence is indeed extraordinary… Klein didn't interrupt him and listened to the next part of the story.

"The person who wears the Scarlet Lunar Corona is immune to the effects of the full moon, and they will gain terrifying speed and unimaginable rejuvenation abilities, as well as a number of relatively powerful darkness-related spells. However, it will make the wearer's blood gradually turn cold. They will freeze up, bit by bit, and if they do not stop in time or drink the blood of a living person, they will ultimately die as their blood freezes up completely." Maric seemed to greatly fear the Scarlet Lunar Crow.

After he was done, Sharron looked over at Klein with her calm blue eyes.

"Together with Steve are Zombie Jason and Werewolf Tyre.

"But as long as Steve is finished off, the others wouldn't be a problem."

Maric added, "If we succeed, the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Steve will be mine. The Scarlet Lunar Corona will belong to Sharron. The remaining spoils of war and the Book of Secrets will be your payment."

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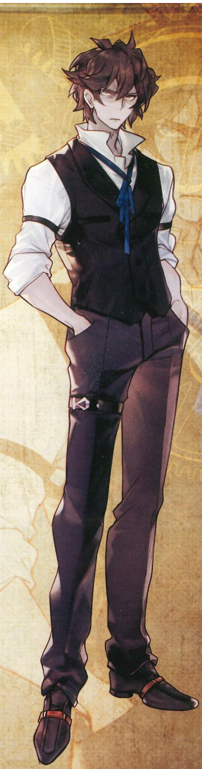


Chapter 332 - Notary Certificate

◆

Very generous conditions… Klein almost couldn't believe his ears.

Although the most valuable items are the Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic and the powerful Sealed Artifact with special powers, the rest aren't too bad either!

It's impossible for a Sequence 5 powerhouse to only have Sealed Artifacts provided by the organization, and if any one of the Sequence 6 Zombie and Sequence 7 Werewolf is retained, it will be a bountiful harvest!

Klein leaned back and pretended to think, to suppress the sudden greed in his heart.

"Your conditions are indeed satisfying," he replied and immediately returned with a question. "Who is Shaman King Klarman? What kind of information is recorded in his Book of Secrets?"

Maric rubbed his temples and said, "The Shaman King can both refer to a High-Sequence job and also represent an outstanding person who controls powers in the domains of darkness, the moon, and the strange, one who surpasses his peers. Klarman is the latter, and also the former.

"He was active in the Southern Continent during the early part of the Fifth Epoch, and then he completely disappeared. Maybe he was hunted down by the Church of Death or our secret organization, or maybe he died of old age in some unknown place.

"His Book of Secrets includes knowledge such as secret deeds, rituals, alchemy, astrology, symbolism, natural interaction, and so on. Even if an ordinary person gets it, they can become an expert in the field of mysticism. They can even rely on their own natural spirituality to accomplish a small number of Beyonder matters without taking any potions. Well, the price is that they will slowly become mentally ill. This is the aftermath of one's spirituality being unable to bear the burden."

Sounds good… Just what I need… However, this mission is not only difficult in itself, but there's also a certain amount of subsequent trouble. I'm dealing with a secret organization with a history of over a thousand years… Klein was silent for a few seconds, but he still chose to follow his heart.

"I wish to have some time to think it over.

"This is a very serious and dangerous matter. I can't be impulsive.

"I will give you my answer tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. Hmm, come to my house. You know the address."

He looked at Sharron while finishing the sentence. He suddenly felt nervous when he finished it.

They had revealed so much important secret information, even problems that plagued them. If he didn't agree on the spot, would he be silenced?

Or would they follow me until I make up my mind?

Then, how can I go above the gray fog to make the divination!?

Sharron, who was wearing a black regal dress, looked at Klein quietly. There was no anger, doubt, or emotion in her blue eyes.

She suddenly pulled out a folded piece of paper from a concealed pocket and unfolded it into a rectangle.

The paper was orange-yellow, with many symbols, including those representing the sun.

These symbols and labels drew out an empty zone, one which gave off a very warm and stable feeling.

As soon as he saw the piece of paper, Klein remembered what it was and relieved his uptight heart.

This was also from Numblewright Master Rosago. This was the Notary Certificate!

Back when they were distributing the spoils of war, Sharron had taken this mystical item!

The pale, delicate Sharron handed the Notary Certificate to Klein and said in a refined voice, “Press your hand here.

“Promise not to divulge what you just heard.”

Phew… Klein exhaled and nodded seriously.

“Alright.”

According to the prompt, he took the Notary Certificate and pressed his palm against the blank area. Then, after some deliberation, he opened his mouth and said, “I promise I won’t tell anyone what I just learned from Miss Sharron and Mr. Maric.”

As he said each word, the symbols and magical labels around the Notary Certificate lit up, one by one, giving off a warm and bright glow.

When it was all over, the light turned into a seal-like image that pressed down on Klein’s palm and even passed through it, covering the blank zone.

A warm current passed through him, and Klein felt a subtle but invisible connection between himself and the Notary Certificate.

Back then, the ability mimicked by Old Mister Eye of Wisdom really does belong to a Notary… He suddenly thought of something from before.

“I’m done.” Klein returned the Notary Certificate.

Sharron calmly nodded her head and didn’t say anything else. Her indifferent figure quickly disappeared from the carriage.

Maric, still suppressing the malice in his eyes, tapped the carriage’s wall with his finger.

The carriage slowly stopped, and the door of the carriage opened.

They’re using zombies to drive the carriage and shadows to act as attendants… It really is Maric’s style… After activating his Spirit Vision, Klein took off his cap in enlightenment, pressed it to his chest, bowed slightly, and got off the carriage.

It was a quiet street, one where several of the street lamps were broken, but no one had fixed them.

Klein first went to his one-room apartment in East Borough before returning to 15 Minsk Street and pretended to make two divinations in the living room.

The first time was whether or not he should accept this commission. The second time was whether or not it was dangerous, and how dangerous it was.

As for the answer to the divination, he didn’t pay close attention to it, because Wraiths of the Mutant pathway could transform into spirit bodies, allowing them to directly interact with the spirit world to obtain information. In other words, they naturally possessed the power of divination and anti-divination, so regardless of whether it was Sharron or the target Steve, the revelation that Klein received was either wrong or deviated.

After he finished his divination, he read the newspapers and books, as he usually did. He practiced his Beyonder powers in the activity room, then he washed up and went to sleep. There was nothing abnormal about it.

At ten past four in the morning, Klein suddenly woke up and jumped out of bed!

He found a candle, built a wall of spirituality, and quietly began the ritual of summoning himself!

Then, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog, but he was in no hurry to respond to the prayer.

Sitting in the high back chair belonging to The Fool, Klein focused on the surface of the long bronze table. He saw the All-Black Eye, Azik's copper whistle, the Black Emperor card, and the dark, majestic figure of Roselle holding a scepter.

The corner of his mouth twitched, and Klein stretched out his right hand to turn the Card of Blasphemy upside down.

What I can't see can't hurt me!

After conjuring a pen and paper, he took off his topaz pendulum and repeated his first two divinations.

The result of the first divination rotated clockwise at an adequate frequency. That was to say that the commission should be accepted, but it also wasn't necessary.

The result of the second divination was the counterclockwise rotation of the topaz pendulum, but it spun with great amplitude and frequency. Klein's interpretation was that there was danger, quite considerable danger, but it wasn't life-threatening yet as long as it was properly dealt with.

Phew… After remaining silent for a few seconds, Klein remembered a hunch from before.

Perhaps, every Magician needs to perform.

Otherwise, the name of the potion would be “Mage,” not “Magician.”

The key to “never perform unprepared” is to be prepared, as well as to perform… And this may not just be in combat… The two assumptions of “diverting the enemy’s attention” and “getting the applause of the audience” is predicated on there being a performance… As long as I can find the appropriate solution, disguise myself well, and deal with it perfectly, it will be hard for the Rose School of Thought to find me… Many thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind.

Combined with the revelation he had just received from the divination, he quickly came to a decision. Leaning back against The Fool’s high back chair, he raised his head to look at the towering ancient palace and the boundless gray fog and revealed a slight smile.

Then, let’s have a grand performance.

With that, he took the All-Black Eye and Azik’s copper whistle and responded to his own prayers.

The next morning was a Thursday morning.

Klein, who had bought the ingredients early, prepared homemade Feynapotter noodles, which was closer to the noodles mixed with meat sauce. He went to the door to take out today’s newspaper from the mailbox.

As he ate, he found a notice of a Beyonder gathering in the Backlund Morning Post.

As expected, once the tense situation is resolved, the gatherings begin… Klein smiled and said to himself.

At nine o’clock, he took out his golden pocket watch, opened it, and took a look. Then, he faced the empty living room and said to the oriel window, “I’m willing to provide help.

“The conditions are exactly as you said.

“But that’s only if you give me a few more days.”

He paused for a moment before replying with a smile, “I need to make some preparations.”

Other than Klein, there was no one else in the living room, but suddenly, an illusionary voice rang out.

“Okay.

“After you’ve finished preparing, you can pay the bar a visit.”

†

In Viscount Glaint’s study, Audrey was sitting in a chair, helping Susie straighten the fur on the back of her head. She said to Fors and Xio, who were sitting quietly beside her while sipping their wine, “Why were you in such a hurry to bring me here?”

Although this was the first time she had seen Fors and Xio since the incident with Lanevus, she had already paid them through Susie.

Well, after joining us at the Tarot Club, Fors seems to remain unchanged. She’s still languid and fond of being snide with Xio, but there are some things about her that are completely different. She used to be dispirited, depressed, and she seemed to hold little hope for the future, but now, that aspect has completely disappeared… Audrey, the Telepathist, smiled faintly and observed the state of Miss Magician with a calm heart.

After downing the rest of the red wine, Fors said, “It is indeed Aurmir, the most famous red wine. It’s much better than the ones I’ve drunk before. The level is very clear and each level has a different feeling.”

She put down her wine cup and said, “The gathering that might have the Spectator and clues to the Psychology Alchemists will be held this afternoon.”

“Is that so? Why the rush?” Audrey asked, puzzled.

Fors explained with a smile, “Because the serial killer has wasted too much of everyone’s time. Moreover, that’s the outskirts of North Borough. It’s during the afternoon when the Nighthawks are most relaxed.”

“Okay.” Audrey nodded lightly and didn’t ask any further.

At the same time, her gaze swept across the room, and she sighed silently.

Compared to the past, Xio is a lot quieter compared to the present Fors.

At that moment, Viscount Glaint chuckled and said, “Audrey, I will go with you.”

“Why?” Audrey asked despite knowing the answer.

Glaint cleared his throat and said, “It’s because I’ve already obtained the Apothecary formula. All I need to do is trade for some ingredients. My vault doesn’t have the two corresponding ingredients.

“Oh, Fors sold it to me. 300 pounds. She guarantees that it’s authentic.”

300 pounds… I remember that you bought it from Mr. World for only 230 pounds… Audrey couldn’t help but glance at Fors.

Chapter 333 - The Tracker

◆

In the suburbs of North Borough, in a soon-to-be-abandoned three-story medical school building.

Even at three o’clock in the afternoon, the fog and the clouds had already darkened the whole of Backlund, as if a storm was approaching.

Along the dilapidated corridor, the gloomy light shone in diagonally, penetrating the windows and causing everything to appear silent and scarred. It was eerie and terrifying.

This was Audrey’s second time here, and she was no longer as nervous and tense as before. She turned her head left and right in her surgical cap and big mask, habitually observing the environment, observing every detail of this place.

Viscount Glaint was walking beside her and gradually turned apprehensive. He couldn’t help but whisper, “Why do I find that this place is a little strange…

“Could there be evil ghosts?”

As a mysticism enthusiast who had only half a foot in the Beyonder circle, the only Beyonder phenomenon he had witnessed was Fors’s passing through walls and the opening of a door. He was still unsure of the existence of wraiths and shadows.

However, this didn’t stop him from being afraid of similar monsters!

Fors turned her head and shot him a glance as she held back her laughter.

“Most of the participants of this gathering are Beyonders. If there really are evil ghosts or spirits, they would definitely be very happy. It usually implies ingredients or servants.”

Noticing that Viscount Glaint was obviously relieved, she purposely added, “Of course, I’m only talking about the weaker kind of ghosts. A truly formed shadow might be able to kill everyone here without making a sound. And even if you run, all you can do is run back and forth between the three stories without being able to leave. It’s like entering a maze.”

Xio nodded in approval.

“I’ve once encountered a similar wraith. I ran in circles while in the cemetery without any means of escaping. During this process, there were baffled people who would turn their heads for no reason, only to suffer a sudden death. If not for one of the Beyonders carrying a sun charm, perhaps you wouldn’t be seeing me here today.”

Viscount Glaint shivered as he looked out the window. At this moment, a withered tree branch hit the glass and made a light sound as it was blown by the cold wind.

Glaint almost shouted out loud, as he frantically inched towards the two Beyonders, Fors and Xio.

Audrey resisted smiling and quietly watched this scene from the sidelines. In her heart, she thought, I have met Mr. Fool who is close to a deity. I know the City of Silver in the Forsaken Land of God, I have heard of all kinds of terrifying monsters in the depths of the darkness. Why would I fear wraiths and shadows?

However… I really haven’t met a ghost yet. Pui! Audrey, what are you thinking? It’s better not to come across this kind of thing!

Unless I become a Psychiatrist with Beyonder powers capable of influencing other creatures, or if I obtain mystical items that can restrain ghosts and monsters…

The four of them couldn't help but increase their pace and quickly arrived at the gathering venue for the day.

Before she entered, Fors found an opportunity to bend her back and whisper into Xio's ear, "You did well cooperating with me just now. You actually made up a story so quickly that's enough to frighten others.

"Look at the spots which aren't covered by Viscount Glaint's mask. It's so white that you can't see any colors."

Xio turned her head as she answered blankly, "I didn't make up the story.

"That was something that happened to me before I came to Backlund."

"…" Fors was stunned for a moment before she blurted out a question, "For real?"

"Why would I lie?" Xio's puzzled face was obscured by the mask.

Fors turned her head and took two steps forward and suddenly shivered.

At that moment, Glaint didn't wish to stay in the creepy corridor any longer. He reached out his hand and pushed open the door to the gathering venue.

As the creaking sound echoed, he saw the concrete floor and the smell of antiseptic coming into his nose. It made him frown.

Soon after, he saw a large pool in the middle. It was filled with a clear, yellow liquid, and there were floating figures inside it.

Some of the figures were entirely naked. Some were rather complete while others had half their skin ripped off. They had the brownish auburn colors of beef jerky.

They were corpses!

“Ah!”

A man’s shrill cry resounded in the room.

Gazes were instantly cast onto Glaint.

These gazes were all from the figures in white coats surrounding the pool. They were also wearing surgical caps and huge masks, and only their eyes and a bit of their skin were exposed.

Glaint’s body swayed a bit. He wanted to turn around and run away, but when he saw Audrey, Fors, and Xio pass him, as if nothing had happened, in order to enter his room, he realized that they were pretending that they weren’t his companions.

As he took a deep breath, Glaint nearly vomited.

He looked outside and saw that the corridor was dark and gloomy, filled with shadows, and that there wasn’t a single living soul in sight.

With another shudder, Glaint hastened his steps and caught up with Audrey and the others, finding a place to sit down as far as possible from the pool.

After a few minutes, a figure wearing a white coat stepped out of the line and used a wooden pole with a hook on the side to pull a corpse to the side. Then, he directly dragged the corpse to the concrete floor.

He paused for about three seconds, took out a scalpel, and slit open the body’s abdomen.

As the gash deepened, a cold and hoarse voice suddenly sounded from inside.

“Let the gathering begin.”

… Glaint reached out with his hand to press down his mask. His throat moved a few times and he almost vomited.

They were midway in the gathering with all kinds of trades—either a success or failure—happening, Audrey, who had been calmly observing all this time, finally opened her mouth and said, “I want the Spectator potion formula.”

Before she could finish her sentence, she felt several gazes sweep over her. However, they quickly moved away and didn’t linger for long.

After several seconds of silence, the transaction was aborted.

†

Around four in the afternoon, it was getting closer to night.

“Why was there nothing at all…” Glaint didn’t maintain his aristocratic demeanor as he slumped against the wooden wall of the carriage and sighed.

This Beyonder gathering had left a deep impression on him, making him feel as if he had taken a huge risk.

But even so, he was still unable to buy the horn of an adult Flying Unicorn and the venom crystal of a Royal Jellyfish.

Fors secretly pursed his lips and said, “That’s normal. Although Backlund is the easiest place to get ingredients, if you can’t join every Beyonder gathering, there will still be situations in which you won’t be able to find what you want for a long time. It requires either luck or patience.”

“Mister Viscount, think about Miss Audrey’s Spectator potion. She hasn’t received any clues to date.”

Sometimes, you can encounter the ingredients, but you would lack the money to buy them… Xio, who was sitting to the side, thought in exasperation.

Audrey consoled Glaint, “When I get back, I’ll go to my family’s vault and do a search. Maybe there’s something you want.”

She had brought the Rainbow Salamander’s pituitary gland with her today, but she hadn’t encountered the spinal fluid of a Farsman Rabbit. Therefore, she had only exchanged it for 320 pounds in cash. It was to prepare for Susie’s advancement.

Glaint nodded, and just as he was about to open his mouth, he saw Xio sitting up straight. She frowned and said, “It seems like someone is following us!”

“I trust your intuition. What do we do now?” Fors asked, looking around.

Following us? Why follow us? All we did was sell one Beyonder item and obtain a few hundred pounds in cash. Even if someone wanted to rob us, we shouldn’t be the top targets… Although Glaint acted like a rookie, we didn’t… In addition, the gathering’s organizer had done a lot of things to ensure the safety of the members and to prevent anyone from being followed. Unless… the person who sent the tracker is the organizer! Last time, everything seemed normal. Hmm, what’s the difference between the two occasions… Audrey’s mind raced when she suddenly came up with an idea.

Perhaps it was my request to purchase the Spectator formula that attracted the attention of the Psychology Alchemists.

It’s impossible for them to randomly sell the Spectator formula, so what would inevitably follow is recruitment into the organization.

And recruitment isn’t a simple matter. One has to be wary of any quasi-Nighthawks or quasi-Mandated Punishers, or spies sent by other hidden factions.

If they don’t observe the target and conduct an investigation, the organization would quickly be destroyed!

After pondering for a few seconds, Audrey said to Fors and the others, “Prepare to be attacked.

“Pretend as though you didn’t notice the tracker.

“If we can successfully return to Empress Borough, don’t worry about exposing the identities of Glaint and me. Both of you have to leave in secret.”

Her green eyes swept over Glaint and she added with a smile, “A lot of people know that we are mysticism enthusiasts, so it’s normal for us to find an opportunity to participate in a Beyonder gathering. Even if the tracker is an official Beyonder, they won’t suspect anything. We are just regular people, so all they will do is warn us through other channels.”

But I’m already at Sequence 8… Phew, in order to come into contact with the Psychology Alchemists, I have to take a little risk… It’s likely the official Beyonders won’t target me for seeking to purchase a formula. They shouldn’t be able to bypass the gathering organizer and track us down. I want to believe in my own judgment! Audrey cheered herself on.

“Okay,” Viscount Glaint mumbled as he agreed.

The horse carriage continued on as usual, going in circles a few times. In the end, Audrey and the others changed to another carriage as they had planned.

Throughout this process, the tracker never attacked.

When they reached the back door of Viscount Glaint’s mansion in Empress Borough, the two nobles used their usual means of returning. As for Fors and Xio, they each relied on their own skills to leave.

About ten minutes later, Audrey, accompanied by her huge golden retriever, Susie, and her maids, openly left through the front door, in her own carriage.

As she listened to the sound of rolling wheels, she was unable to confirm if there were still people following her. She could only let her thoughts wander.

It's obvious that the daughter of Earl Hall isn't a spy of any Beyonder faction…

There's nothing wrong with her past…

Her love for mysticism is well-known…

Her status and identity can provide assistance that's different from other people…

Perhaps, in two days, there will be members of the Psychology Alchemists who will try to come into contact with me… Audrey thought with some anticipation and some nervousness.

†

Although he said he was making preparations, Klein spent two days at the Quelaag Club as if nothing had happened. He even played a game of cards with the equestrian teacher, Talim, and the others, winning a few soli.

Before he went to bed, he didn't forget to visit the outside of Lawyer Jurgen's house to make sure if there were no lights and to feed the cat.

At eight o'clock on Friday night, he put on his iron mask and wore his black-hooded robe and entered the activity room of Old Mister Eye of Wisdom.

Chapter 334 - Bullets

◆

The only candle flickered its yellow flame, casting shadows on the walls around the activity room.

Klein found the most convenient escape point before surveying his surroundings. He saw the Eye of Wisdom with his deep cheek lines and the plump Apothecary.

Well, after another comparison, even though he’s wearing an iron mask that covers half his face, it’s still pretty clear that he was the man I met at Rice Circus who deserves a beating… Klein looked away and waited for the gathering to officially begin. The woman who had an Artisan backing her was very hidden among the participants, so he couldn’t be sure that she was present before she spoke.

After a few minutes, Eye of Wisdom raised his head to look at the mechanical clock on the wall and chuckled.

“There’s a lot of people here today.”

“Let’s begin.”

Before he finished speaking, the plump Apothecary rushed to speak.

“I need a Beyonder creature for an experiment. It’s best if it’s an animal, and it’s best if it’s already restrained and one that’s not too dangerous.”

A beast-type Beyonder creature? Klein was slightly moved.

He remembered what the Apothecary had said in the circus theater and that he was apparently able to read the thoughts of beasts.

He's just an Apothecary; yet, he poses such an ability and is even looking to purchase a beast-type Beyonder creature. Hmm, after I sold him the Spring of Elves marrow crystal, he should've gathered the ingredients and advanced to the next Sequence… In other words, the Sequence after Apothecary has something to do directing wild beasts? Klein made a deduction based on the information he knew.

At this moment, someone responded to the Apothecary with a sneer, "Who would keep a Beyonder creature by their side?

"It's dangerous and easily discovered. Wouldn't it be easier and more concealed to kill them to obtain its Beyonder ingredients?"

The Apothecary was a person who refused to lose in a spar of words, so he immediately sneered.

"What a foolish thought!

"You can't guarantee that the Beyonder ingredient on a Beyonder creature is exactly what you need and that you can definitely sell it. You might as well tame it and direct it to be your helper, increasing your strength severalfold…"

As he spoke, his voice gradually grew softer. He felt as if he had revealed some important secret.

Damn it! Why can't I control this mouth of mine! The Apothecary figuratively smacked himself in the heart.

As expected… Klein nodded indiscernibly.

Without a doubt, the Apothecary's request wasn't met. Most of the participants here were Low-Sequence Beyonders, and their statuses in Backlund weren't very prominent. With the need for them to be relatively alert, to the point of barely maintaining it, so how was it possible for them to extravagantly rear a Beyonder creature?

Furthermore, more importantly, there was the fact that wild Beyonder creatures were usually hostile to humans. Any encounter would usually lead to one dead, so if one wanted to capture them alive, they would need to have a sufficiently strong team or be strong enough to overwhelm the enemy. Of course, this didn't exclude particular Beyonders who possessed special abilities that were suitable for such situations.

After a bout of disappointment, the Apothecary coughed lightly and said, "I've brought quite a few bottles of medicine. All of you know the effects. If you want them, you can speak up when the gathering is almost over."

The few medicines to treat wounds, go berserk, and increase one's ability in that aspect? Klein silently lampooned. He chuckled and provided a suggestion.

"You can purchase a Sequence 9 formula, find the corresponding Beyonder ingredients, and then concoct the potion to feed the animal you fancy. This way, you will have a Sequence 9 Beyonder creature, and you can also continuously advance it with the subsequent potions.

"Of course, that's built on the premise that you are rich enough and can deal with the defective ones that lose control."

The Apothecary was stunned for a few seconds. After a while, he said, "How extravagant."

"Just saving up money and finding the Beyonder ingredients for myself is difficult enough for me. It's also a high probability event for an animal to lose control after they consume potions. It will take me several times before I succeed.

"Someone who can do this must have a mine or owns a bank."

Our Tarot Club's Miss Justice likely rears a Beyonder creature… Klein suddenly felt sorry for the Apothecary.

If one wanted to disregard it for the sole purpose of earning money, Apothecaries were the easiest among the Low-Sequence Beyonders to amass large amounts of wealth. The problem was that they were also easily targeted by the official Beyonders.

After a few more deals or failed transactions, Klein heard a voice that was deliberately suppressed, "I only brought one Beyonder weapon this time."

"They are fifty bullets with different effects. Twenty of them are engraved with the sun domain's labels and symbols, forming a complete charm. They can be used to purify ghost-related monsters. They cause more damage to wraiths and shadows, so they are called purifying bullets. There are another twenty bullets which are meant for corrupted creatures, known as demon hunting bullets. The other ten are bullets that counter evil-type monsters, known as exorcism bullets. Their effects can be maintained for eighteen months or more.

"Fifty bullets for 500 pounds or the Barbarian potion formula. It will come with a revolver with the matching caliber."

They did make related bullets according to my suggestions from last time. From the looks of it, they're more complicated than ordinary Beyonder weapons. It took them so long only to make a set… Klein didn't give the others a chance and directly said, "I have the Barbarian potion formula."

At this moment, a rather tall man offered a price.

"550 pounds."

In this day and age, a revolver was the most convenient Beyonder weapon to use and carry!

The well-hidden lady's voice was filled with unquenchable joy as she said, "Sir, I'm sorry. I have a preference for the Barbarian formula."

"600 pounds." The man raised the offer again.

“No, this is not about money.” The woman with an Artisan backing her glanced at Klein. “Deal! But please pass the formula to Old Mister Eye of Wisdom for his notarization.”

Phew, it’s a good thing that I got the Black Emperor card. Otherwise, if I met someone who can raise the price so ruthlessly, I definitely would’ve lost a lot of money today… Klein rolled up his robe, took out the Barbarian formula which he had long written from his inner pocket, and opened it to take a look.

“Sequence 8 Barbarian. Main ingredients: Grass of Madness, core horn crystal of a Land Rhinoceros. Supplementary ingredients: One deep-grained Walnut, one Fragrance Hornet Grass, 10 ml of the extract obtained from soaking poplar bark, 100 ml of liquor.”

After confirming that it was correct, Klein folded the paper and handed it to the attendant.

Just like before, Eye of Wisdom took out the ring that was inlaid with many small diamonds. He mimicked the Beyonder powers of a Notary and confirmed that the formula was true.

Hearing this old man declare that “the formula is valid,” the woman with the Artisan backing her heaved a sigh of relief and took out a square iron box the size of a palm.

After the attendant passed the formula to her, she eagerly rolled it open and read it a few times, as if she wanted to memorize it directly. As for Klein, he snapped open the box and looked at it.

There were three piles of bullets inside the metal box. One pile had a faint golden luster, as though they had just been fished out of hot water; the other was entirely silver and covered with patterns, cold yet sacred. The pile with the fewest bullets suffused a golden sheen amidst the brass color. He could vaguely see several labels and symbols engraved on it.

Yes, it’s authentic… Klein had the ability to appraise the bullets in the field of mysticism. He snapped the lid shut and stored the item in the pocket under his robe.

As for the free revolver, it was nothing special. The body of the gun was a deeper brass color, and the handle was made out of walnut wood.

Since his underarm holster had also been lost back when he encountered the police inspection, Klein had to attach the revolver to his waist and cover it with his clothes.

After finishing the transaction, he looked around the activity room and deliberately raised his voice.

“I need strong purifying items like Sun Holy Water and Sun Sacred Emblem.

“I can buy it in gold, or I can use formulas as a barter, like the Sequence after Barbarian—Briber.

“Of course, if there are any questions regarding the mysticism and the Beyonder world that requires answering, I can also give it a try, but I can’t guarantee that I can answer it.”

As the Apothecary listened, he widened his eyes. He had a feeling that this was that “lucky lad.”

However, he had just become a Beyonder not long ago, so how could he have obtained so many valuable things? The more he thought about it, the more he gnashed his teeth, feeling as if he had made the wrong choice back then.

Luck was the most important thing!

The woman who had bought the Barbarian formula couldn’t control herself and almost said in her original voice, “I don’t have anything you need, but I can pay you in cash. Eight hundred pounds!”

Klein swallowed the word “deal” that he nearly said. He thought for a moment before chuckling.

“I’m only accepting bartering for the time being.

“I will most likely be back for the next gathering. You can seek out the relevant items in advance.”

For the time being… The lady ruminated over the word and nodded slowly.

“Alright.”

After that, no one else said anything, and Klein’s needs were also not met. In Backlund, in the Loen Kingdom, the worshipers of the Eternal Blazing Sun could be considered heretics, so few of such items circulated beyond official channels.

Klein was slightly disappointed, but he wasn’t too concerned. He had an alternative plan.

He clearly remembered that Miss Xio had once sought out a Beyonder believer of the Eternal Blazing Sun for purification!

And the lady who craved the Briber formula would definitely be actively looking for his desired items.

Klein stopped talking and listened to the subsequent exchanges.

When the gathering was coming to an end, an average built participant with no special characteristics pinched the iron mask on his face and said with a deep baritone voice, “I need an adult Black Widow Spider Silk Gland.”

An adult Black Widow Spider Silk Gland? Sounds familiar. I seem to have heard of it somewhere… Klein frowned slightly. Without using divination, he tried hard to recall where.

Suddenly, he remembered the source of the familiar feeling.

It was one of the main ingredients for the Demoness of Pleasure!

Chapter 335 - Exploring Verdi Street

◆

“Pleasure” was Sequence 6 of the Demoness pathway. Klein had obtained its complete formula back when he channeled Madam Sharon’s spirit. Although it was usually difficult to recall the exact details, and he had to rely on the help of dream divination to recall the memory, just hearing the main ingredient was enough to give him a sense of familiarity and make him form connections.

He couldn’t help but glance over at the buyer, confirming that he was male in terms of skin color, figure, voice, and unmasked facial features.

The Sequence prior to Demoness of Pleasure is Witch. Regardless of their gender, as long as they pass that, they would all become women. This person clearly isn’t one… He hasn’t become a Witch yet, so why is he purchasing the main ingredient of a Demoness of Pleasure? Hmm… Could he be helping someone buy it? Is he the ally of some Witch or a loyal subordinate?

However, as a rather ancient secret organization, the Demoness Sect shouldn’t be lacking in the corresponding ingredients. With their natural disposition, it would be normal for them to use the Beyonder characteristics left behind by former members to concoct the potions… Did the Witch behind the buyer lose her connection with the organization?

With these thoughts, Klein had the impulse to follow him.

However, after careful consideration, he gave up on this idea. Ignoring the question on how he could bypass the precautionary measures of

Eye of Wisdom and lock onto the other party's tracks, just the fact that the other party's situation was unknown, and with him not having the time to perform a divination, it was enough for him to choose to follow his heart's wishes.

What if there isn't only one Witch, but a Beyonder who's much stronger?

Moreover, it's a good thing for Witches to advance to Demoness of Pleasure. The former would cause calamities and harm many innocent people, but once they advance to the latter, their goal would be focused on pleasure. In simple terms, society would be less dangerous… Klein mumbled.

An adult Black Widow Spider Silk Gland was already considered to be relatively expensive and a rare Beyonder ingredient. It was just like the Thousand-faced Hunter's mutated pituitary gland and the Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow which Klein needed in order to ascend to Sequence 6. It was almost equivalent to the cost of half a house in the capital, so the buyer didn't receive a satisfactory response.

To be precise, no one responded.

The atmosphere of the gathering fell silent until the plump Apothecary started selling the medicine he brought.

After the previous trials, he received quite a few repeat customers. In less than three minutes, he had sold all the goods he could sell and collected more than fifty pounds in cash.

As Eye of Wisdom announced the end of the gathering, each participant left through different passages in a different order and at different intervals.

Klein was in the middle, and after he reached a secluded street, he took off his disguise and immediately set off for East Borough, arriving at

Black Palm Street on that cold and foul-smelling night. On the way, he had purchased an underarm holster. He entering his rented one-bedroom apartment.

Without taking a break, he took out his revolver and opened the metal box containing the Beyonder bullets. He then took out two purifying bullets, two demon hunting bullets, and one exorcism bullet. Then, he loaded them one by one into the chamber.

Taking a pose, he tested the feeling and whether he could fire normally. Klein inserted the revolver into his armpit and busied himself with other preparations.

For example, he checked to see if there was anything unusual about the All-Black Eye in the iron cigar case. He also placed Azik's copper whistle in the metal box containing the bullets, and with the help of Holy Night Powder, he created a sealed wall of spirituality that stuck to the surface of the box, completing the shielding of the ancient, delicate copper whistle.

After confirming the shapes and positions of the three charms, Klein headed above the gray fog for divination. Then, he put on his cap and went out again.

His target was 32 Verdi Street which was south of the bridge. It was where the thief had found the Master Key!

There might be clues to the Apprentice formula or clues to related items there. It was somewhere that Klein had long wanted to explore, but he suspected that the man who died a tragic death had turned into a wraith-like creature. He didn't dare to take action until he bought purifying bullets.

A Magician never performs unprepared!

Before the steam subway—the most economical mode of transport—had stopped running, Klein arrived south of the bridge before transferring to a public carriage and arrived near Verdi Street.

It was already late at night, and a chilling drizzle filled Backlund. There were barely any pedestrians on the street, and the light from the gas lamps was blurred by the liquid on the glass, making everything seem dreamlike.

Klein circled the area and observed Unit 32's situation. He walked to its side, climbed to the second floor, and easily entered the target's interior from the balcony door which clearly couldn't be closed by the thief from before.

He didn't bring the Master Key, fearing that the item would cause an abnormal chain reaction here.

The layout of the house was very normal. A corridor that connected the two balconies ran through the entire second floor. There were bedrooms, a bathroom, a solarium, and an activity room lining the sides.

With the help of the crimson moonlight shining in from the balcony, Klein saw that all the doors had been opened. All kinds of items were thrown on the ground in disarray.

It should be the result from the thief from before. He couldn't take away all the items, so he could only search for the most valuable ones… However, with the Master Key, there's no need for him to open doors… Klein went through the rooms, one by one, looking for things that might be involved with mysticism.

After an unknown period of time, a black-gloved Klein arrived at the staircase without any success.

Just as he took two steps forward, a figure suddenly appeared before him!

The figure was pressed against the wall at the corner of the stairs, its back was facing Klein. Its black hair was so thick that it almost covered its neck.

Klein, who had long activated his Spirit Vision didn't even have time to observe, for the figure suddenly moved!

His neck creaked as he turned his head while his back remained facing the second floor!

Amidst the hazy, weak, and illusory crimson illumination, the figure's eyes were bulging out of their sockets, filled with fear.

Thud! Thud!

The two eyeballs hit the ground.

Bang!

The figure's head fell off its neck and hit the wooden staircase.

He's long dead; he's without any spirituality glow… Klein watched and judged calmly, as though what had just happened was a farce.

He guessed from the details of the man's old black clothes and the number of rooms open on the second floor, and he decided that this was another burglar, one who had visited the house after the previous one.

Unfortunately, he wasn't that lucky.

Could it be that the Master Key was actually restraining the "danger" here, and when it was taken away, pandemonium was set loose? Klein drew his revolver, adjusted the chamber to the firing position, and cocked the revolver. He walked up the stairs to the corpse.

He squatted down and examined it briefly, but he couldn't find anything other than the fact that his neck had been twisted.

After pondering for a few seconds, Klein straightened his body and carefully went down the stairs. Even though he was standing on a wooden staircase, he didn't make any creaking sounds.

One step, two steps, three steps. After walking down the flight of stairs, he reached the ground.

In front of him was a corridor that connected the two sides. The crimson moonlight shone in, outlining the outline of the balcony. The doors on both sides of the corridor were wide open, revealing a messy scene of scattered items. There was no living room, dining room, or kitchen here.

This is the second floor!

Klein went down from the second floor, only to return to the second floor!

Throughout the entire process, he didn't discover anything out of the ordinary!

Klein didn't panic as he slowly turned around. Behind him, there was a staircase leading downwards!

That is to say, my special ability can only resist the invasion of my Beyonder powers through the use of Beyonder powers such as dreams and spirit channeling, or for me to realize that the environment I'm in does not belong to the real world… I'll still be influenced by hallucinations… Klein took out his matchbox and took out a few matches with his gun-carrying hand.

He continued down, throwing a match down every few steps.

Once again Klein came to the corner of the stairs and saw the dead body with its head separated from its body.

At this moment, a cold wind blew across the back of his neck, causing his hair to stand on end.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers, and a red flame soared from behind him, soaring toward the ceiling.

Those flames seemed to be a monster that was baring its fangs and brandishing its claws, but the flames didn't burn anything.

Klein was about to turn around and look with his Spirit Vision when his body suddenly froze, as if he had fallen into a lake frozen in winter.

He couldn't help but tremble as his left hand was slowly reaching for his neck as he forcibly "suppressed" it.

At that moment, Klein sighed softly.

He forced his left hand into his pocket, removed the wall of spirituality, and opened the metal box containing the bullets.

Next, he held Azik's copper whistle, took it out, shook it, and threw it into the air above the stairs!

In almost an instant, he felt the coldness and stiffness in his body disappear.

In his spiritual perception, a sinister and cold mass leaped out like a dog fetching a ball as it pounced at Azik's copper whistle!

Klein smiled, raised his right hand, aimed at the copper whistle, and pulled the trigger. He softly said, "Bye bye."

Bang!

The pale gold purifying bullet flew out and accurately hit that cold and indistinct object.

A blood-curdling screech sounded out as the golden flames outlined a human's silhouette in midair!

Under the bright and warm light, all the coldness and evilness quickly disappeared.

Clang!

Azik’s copper whistle landed on the ground, bounced a few times, and rolled to the living room on the first floor.

When Klein looked around, he saw that things were now significantly different. For example, the head of the corpse wasn’t separated from its body. He had strangled himself with his own hands.

Heh, it really is easy when you’re prepared… Klein chuckled and went down the stairs again. He successfully reached the first floor and picked up Azik’s copper whistle. He then swung it twice to see if there were any other wraiths or shadows here.

After confirming that there were no more problems, he decided to head straight to the basement.

As he walked down the flight of stairs and went through the door, he saw the picture he had seen in his dream divination. He saw the brown notebook on the long table.

Chapter 336 - The Abraham Family

◆

Other than the Master Key and the silver pocket watch with inlaid diamonds which were taken by the thief, this place is still in the same state as what I'd seen in my dream… Klein looked around and saw black iron pots, glass jars, and bronze lampstands that had candles which had long since been extinguished.

His Spirit Vision and spiritual perception told him that these were all very ordinary items. They didn't carry the slightest trace of a spiritual luster.

Hmm, but compared to before, there's still something extra… Klein reached out with his left black-gloved palm and touched the surface of the long table.

His fingers were immediately stained with visible dust.

After carefully carefully and making some preliminary divinations, Klein failed to find any secret chambers or hidden compartments; thus, he turned his attention to the brown notebook.

Carefully flipping through it, the contents of the first page entered his eyes.

"This will go into the annals of the rise of a cursed family!

"I want to remember every key point! Future descendants, please remember every word that I've said!"

…It's a pity that you lost control and died just moments after taking the

Sequence 9 potion. The illustrious glory of the Abraham family can only remain as words… Klein lampooned under his breath and continued reading, quickly flipping through the pages.

He planned to take the notebook away once he confirmed its value, not planning to stay any longer.

"We, the Abraham family, were one of the most powerful nobles of the Fourth Epoch, and we were the main supporters of the Tudor Dynasty. In that era, be it Loen's Augustus family, Feysac's Einhorn family, Intis's Sauron family, or Feynapotter's Castiya family, all of them looked up to us.

"Indeed, they weren't weak back then, but we were stronger!

"Even the rumored Antigonus family and the Zaratul families were slightly weaker than us.

"Unfortunately, the glory of our family disappeared in the War of the Four Emperors. Ancestor Bethel went missing in that war where the deities personally fought. The remaining High-Sequence Beyonders all perished.

"Ever since then, our Abraham family has been under a terrible curse. Generations after generations of ancestors have attempted to revive our family, but without exception, all of them went mad and lost control. Some of them did so just before becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder or at Sequence 7 and 8.

"And every case of losing control brings about a disaster that is close to annihilating the family. The accursed forget the family name carved in their bloodlines and hurt the other members of the family without restraint. They were already monsters!

"For the continuation of the family, the Abraham family made a painful decision to no longer live together. Instead, it split up into small families that migrated to various parts of the Northern Continent. That way, even if someone lost control and started a massacre, their bloodline wouldn't be cut off because of this.

"My father was afraid of the curse, so he chose to remain as an ordinary person. If it wasn't for the fact that the bloodline's last name is still ever shining, he wouldn't even be willing to tell me these things.

"I want to record this down. I want to keep it on my mind. I want to remember the glory and the disaster of the Abraham family."

Every Beyonder generation would eventually lose control without exception? The curse of the Abraham family is even more terrifying than that of the City of Silver… Wait a minute, they should all be from the Apprentice pathway. Could it be that they heard that Mr. Door's plea for help? This… this isn't a cry for help; it's clearly a life-depriving curse!

However, according to Miss Magician's description, it isn't because she became an Apprentice that she had heard those illusory ravings during the full moon, but because of her use of the bracelet on her wrist. Afterwards, she couldn't escape the ravings regardless of whether she wore it or not.

And what's the reason for those Beyonders of the Abraham family? Perhaps the curse has nothing to do with Mr. Door?

Well, the notebook mentioned that the ancestor of the Abraham family, Bethel Abraham had disappeared in the War of the Four Emperors. Could he be Mr. Door? He was banished from the real world, lost in the darkness, and left trapped in a storm?

There's a possibility that the easiest target to ask for help would naturally be descendants from the same bloodline who are of the same Beyonder pathway but of a relatively lower Sequence. It's a pity that because all the powerful Beyonders had perished, his shouts only bring about a curse on the family that has lasted for more than a thousand years, almost causing the whole Abraham family to disappear…

Is this the reason why Mr. Door is so aware of the history of the Fourth Epoch and the details of the War of the Four Emperors?

If my suspicions are true, I can only exclaim:

The Abrahams really are an unfortunate family!

I wonder if the things mentioned by the owner of the notebook were affected by the passage of time of over a thousand years and the separation of the family, which might result in discrepancies… In the War of the Four Emperors, the deities actually personally participated in battle? Klein slightly frowned, and the speed at which he flipped the pages became faster and faster.

†

"…Father, who chose to remain an ordinary person, ultimately succumbed to his disease. This dealt my mother a huge blow and she quickly departed with him.

"And that means I'm free.

"But what hurts me is that Father didn't tell me many things about Beyonders to prevent me from embarking down the cursed path. I have to come into contact with them myself and understand them.

"Thankfully, he didn't violate the orders of the elder. He still handed me the potion formula of Apprentice, Trickmaster, and Astrologer at his deathbed.

"I will repeat the three formulas to prevent myself from forgetting.

"Sequence 9, Apprentice…

"Sequence 8, Trickmaster…

"Sequence 7, Astrologer…"

After Klein saw that, he pricked his eyebrows slightly, feeling that the trip tonight had been worthwhile, and that he hadn't wasted the purifying bullet.

Of course, he still had to go above the gray fog to confirm its authenticity.

Astrologer… The Apprentice pathway actually has a divination series job as well… In that case, one of my speculations from the past might be closer to the truth. The Seer pathway and the Apprentice pathway might be interchangeable at high Sequences… Klein nodded slightly and continued to flip through the pages.

Although he had already determined the value of the notes, he didn't want to leave the scene for the time being.

If the last few pages of the notebook noted that something had been hidden somewhere, he would definitely have to come back again. Since that was the case, why go through so much trouble?

As the pages turned, Klein roughly figured out the Beyonder history of this Abraham descendant.

After his parents died, he began trying to touch base with the mysticism circles to gather information about the Sequence potions and purchase the corresponding Beyonder ingredients.

After two years of hard work, recording many still unconfirmed mysticism knowledge, he finally succeeded and concocted the Apprentice potion.

At the end of the notebook, he wrote:

"According to my knowledge of mysticism, the spirit world and the real world would overlap the most on the night of the full moon. That is the time when one's spirituality is at its best, and it is also the most suitable time to consume the potion and advance.

"I will become an Apprentice by the next full moon!

"I need to get stronger, step by step, and reproduce the illustrious glory of the Abraham family!

"Once I reach Sequence 7, I'll be able to contact the elders according to the regulations set by the family.

"I know the method of communication well, so this is a secret that cannot be recorded."

Take a potion to advance yourself during the full moon? Klein was stunned for a moment. He couldn't help but tap his chest four times in a clockwise manner to draw the crimson moon.

"May the Goddess forgive you for your ignorance."

Klein vaguely understood why the man had lost control on the spot!

According to his speculation, the curse that had plagued the Abraham family for more than a thousand years was probably related to Mr. Door's call for help during the full moon.

And that guy actually chose to consume the Apprentice potion on the night of the full moon.

In that case, it was highly likely that he would hear that illusory mumbles while the effects of the potion had yet to fade, and his spirituality was in a very unstable state.

As such, he exploded with a bang…

Fortunately, the "Hornacis… Flegrea…" that I heard back then wasn't lethal… Klein subconsciously sighed.

Then, he thought of the oddity of the Master Key and vaguely came up with a hunch.

The formation of the Master Key stems not only from the condensation of an Apprentice's Beyonder characteristic but also from Mr. Door's illusory ravings. Thus, the occasional problem of causing the holder to be lost becomes rather dangerous. It often allows the holder to enter inappropriate situations!

This can be considered a kind of curse!

And taking everything into consideration, Mr. Door being the ancestor of the Abraham family, Bethel, is quite possible.

Phew… Klein exhaled when he saw that there was no information about any hidden treasures. He took the brown notebook and left the basement.

As he dropped Azik's copper whistle, he retraced the same path he took to get there. When he reached the balcony, he raised his left hand and snapped his fingers.

The scattered matches on the stairs lit up with a crimson light.

They soon extinguished, leaving only minor burn marks.

†

After taking a detour to East Borough to get rid of his disguise, Klein returned to Minsk Street before midnight.

He went above the gray fog and used spirit dowsing to confirm the authenticity of the three formulas.

Soon after, he tried to conjure the fake World opposite him on the mottled long table.

Klein was about to manipulate him when he suddenly raised his hand and smacked his forehead.

I almost forgot!

I brought the All-Black Eye back to the real world…

After going through the trouble, he made The World appear in the majestic palace and changed the surroundings to look like that of an ordinary room.

Then, he made The World pose piously as he said with a hoarse voice, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…

“Please tell Miss Magician that I’ve already obtained the Trickmaster potion formula.

“I hope that she can exchange it for items in the Sun domain which are good at purification and exorcism. If the value isn’t equal, then I’m willing to make up for it with additional gold pounds.”

After manipulating The World, Klein turned the scene into a ball of light and transmitted it to the crimson star representing The Magician.

He clearly remembered that during the last time Miss Xio had found someone to purify and exorcise her, Miss Magician had also been present!

Chapter 337 - The Search For A Missing Person

◆

Fors flipped through the calendar on her desk and used a pen to mark the date of the upcoming full moon.

She had decided that, as soon as she heard that horrible, illusory raving, she would chant the name of The Fool and pass the painful minutes above the gray fog.

Life is truly filled with things to look forward to… She closed the novel in her hands, ready to turn off the iron grille gas lamp that was set into the wall.

At that moment, a flash appeared in front of Fors's eyes. She saw the boundless gray fog and a lofty figure that resided in a majestic ancient palace, as well as a man who was praying devoutly.

When the voice reached her ears, she almost jumped, feeling both alarmed and joyful.

The Trickmaster formula that I've been arduously searching for all these years has been found just like that?

I participated in so many different Beyonder gatherings and failed to find any clues to the Trickmaster formula; yet, it has been found just like that?

And not even a week has passed since I made the request!

Th-this is the Tarot Club… As expected, it's not something ordinary

Beyonder gatherings can compare with! Fors sighed with emotion, and endured her excitement and joy as she cautiously responded, “Mr. Fool, is that formula authentic?”

“Yes.” The Fool, who was sitting on the high back chair and looking down, replied calmly.

Fors suddenly clenched her fist and secretly pumped it by her waist twice. Almost without any hesitation, she asked, “That was Mr. World, right?

“Please tell him that I will find what he needs as soon as possible.”

When the gray fog dissipated and everything was over, Fors remained stunned for two seconds. She couldn’t suppress her excitement as she stood up to pace back and forth in her room.

The Sun’s domain, items that are good at purification and exorcism… I encountered them only twice in the past. But they were bought by others. They might not be willing to offer them again… Yes, back at Mr. A’s gathering, Xio had hired a devotee of the Eternal Blazing Sun to perform a purification and exorcism ritual. He’s at least Sequence 7, and he should have the relevant items. Or perhaps, he grasps key clues to them… I just wonder how much it’ll cost. Although Mr. World promises to pay the difference, I might not be able to come up with the amount needed for the initial payment… Fors’s thoughts gradually shifted to her financial situation.

She now had 370 pounds in cash, mainly earned from what Viscount Glaint had paid for the Apothecary formula. She also had 510 pounds in her bank account, which added up to nearly 900 pounds.

As for something similar, it can go as high as 2,000 pounds, while the cheapest might cost from 500 to 600 pounds; yet, it might not necessarily be the kind of item that Mr. World needs… What if I run into a suitable item but don’t have enough money? Get a loan from the bank, or a loan from an usury with a higher interest rate? As long as all goes well, then when Mr. World pays the difference, my debt will easily be repaid… Maybe I could borrow from Miss Audrey for a few days. She usually never cares about money, so she will definitely not collect any interest… Fors quickly came up with a solution.

Just then, Xio, who had gone to somewhere secluded at night to practice her combat skills, returned to their rented two bedroom apartment. Seeing that the lights were still on in her room, she knocked on the door and asked, “Are you pulling an all-nighter to write the beginning of your new book?

“Eh, Fors, you seem really happy. Did the publisher increase your rates?”

“No, no, no.” Fors was slightly taken aback before she forced a smile. “I just received a piece of information that’s suspected to be a clue to the Trickmaster potion formula.”

“Really? Your waiting has finally paid off!” Xio totally didn’t notice Fors’s hidden oddity.

Seeing her good friend so happy for her, Fors couldn’t help but sigh to herself.

I’m already a member of a secret organization. From that moment forth, I’ve taken on a fate that requires me to constantly hide and lie to my friends…

Is this the price—one out of many—to be paid?

†

Saturday morning. Klein once again visited Inventor Leppard at St. George Borough’s Sird Street.

Since the bicycle had yet to be patented, he only paid the last twenty pounds and exhorted Leppard not to rush to talk about subsequent investments and partnerships until he had the patent.

With regards to this, Leppard was very agreeable. He had been tricked twice before for the same reason—before getting a patent, once the potential investors who he had made contact with had fully understood his product, he was kicked aside to watch as the potential investor bribed the patent office and acquired the patent first.

After leaving Leppard's place, Klein arrived at Isengard Stanton's place in Hillston Borough at the appointed time. It was a dark and gloomy house.

Today was the day that the rewards for the serial murder were going to be disbursed!

Walking through the living room and into the activity room, Klein saw the two detectives he was more familiar with, Kaslana and Stuart, and sat down next to the latter.

"Sherlock, how much do you think we'll get this time? It should be no less than protecting Adol. Of course, I didn't do much, so what I can receive will be limited. Emperor Roselle once said, 'the more plowing and weeding, the better the crop.'" Stuart clenched his fist and held it to his bearded chin.

Klein guessed with interest.

"The split might go as high as a few hundred pounds, and even the lowest wouldn't be less than 10 pounds."

And I'm the one that will get the higher end of the split… If Isengard Stanton's words were as credible as he had described… Klein added in his stirred heart.

At that moment, a white-shirted, brown-vested Isengard, with white hair at his temples and a thinly contoured face, entered the activity room while carrying his signature pipe. As the fireplace burned, he sat down in a reclining chair and said with a smile, "Ladies and gentlemen.

"I just got back from the Backlund police station. They acknowledged our contribution, and they think we've been instrumental in cracking the case.

"Although we didn't participate in the subsequent capture, we can still obtain half the bounty.

"In other words, we'll split a thousand pounds in cash!

"This is considered quite a handsome bounty, even in Backlund. A single detective has to have zero expenses—not eating or drinking, and even resorting to sleeping on the streets—for four or five years to amass this amount."

The atmosphere in the living room immediately became relaxed. Everyone was filled with anticipation about the reward they would receive.

Even Klein was no exception as he guessed the amount Isengard would give him.

It should be at least a hundred pounds, right? he whispered silently.

Isengard took a puff on his pipe, narrowed his eyes, and said in a satisfied tone, "Everyone, thank you for your trust in me. I will now do the splitting.

"The biggest contributor this time was Detective Sherlock Moriarty. The ideas and train of thoughts that he provided us had allowed us to find more clues and put us on the right track. He's a genuine expert at deduction!

"Ma'am Kaslana can bear testament to this. I still have a few letters from Detective Moriarty, and anyone in doubt can take a look."

That's very fair… He actually didn't list himself as the biggest contributor… Klein turned to the great detective, Isengard Stanton, and viewed him in a different light.

It's no wonder that he has such authority in the detective circle!

Seeing that there were no objections, Isengard nodded and said, "I declare that Detective Sherlock Moriarty will be awarded 300 pounds!"

Immediately, the detectives in the activity room broke out into whispers.

From time to time they looked up at Klein, as if they finally recognized this brilliant detective whom Mr. Stanton had praised as an expert at deduction.

What a generous man, a just man… Klein grinned and ultimately didn't act modestly.

In second place were Isengard himself and Kaslana, who each received 160 pounds, while the rest of the detectives split the remaining 380 pounds depending on their respective contributions. Even the lowest received 15 pounds, equivalent to three or four weeks of their usual earnings. This was the benefit of handling a major case with a high bounty.

Stuart, who had received forty pounds, was very pleased because he felt that he had only done two days of observation. Furthermore, the subject he observed ended up not being the final confirmed suspect.

Of course, he also had to pay a portion of the forty pounds—all informants and helpers involved in the matter had to be paid.

After distributing the bounty, Stuart suddenly remembered something. He took out a piece of paper from his pocket and said to Klein, "Sherlock, I've recently accepted a missing person assignment that pays a lot. Try using your resources and help me pay attention to it. If the person is found, I won't forget your share."

"Sure, no problem," Klein replied indifferently.

Stuart handed over the piece of paper and said, "It's this man. He's been missing for nearly two weeks.

“As he’s involved in some improper conduct or might even border on committing a crime, the client doesn’t wish for us to seek the police’s help.”

Klein nodded slightly and unfolded the paper. He saw a black-and-white photo that was made through lithography.

It was a man with hair that was combed back in a slanted fashion, and there was a certain elegance in his propriety.

He was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight-years-old. He had a handsome appearance, but there was an undisguised air of arrogance between his eyes. His nose was high, and his lips were thin.

“Right, his name is…” Stuart recalled and said, “Emlyn White.”

Emlyn White… Klein suddenly turned his head to look at Stuart.

“Ah!”

Isn’t that the name of the vampire who’s imprisoned in the basement by Father Utravsky?

†

In Duke Negan’s mansion, Audrey, who had been invited to a tea party, was listening to her mother and Duchess Della chatting about nobility matters with a slightly bored expression on her face.

Her eyes swept across the three-layered rack, the uniquely-styled muffins, cake, and other delicious tidbits. She felt that she had been indulging herself recently, so she lightly picked up her cup and sipped the black tea.

After a while, she got up apologetically and, accompanied by the maid, went to the bathroom.

As soon as she came out, she met a tall, middle-aged woman with slender eyebrows and a graceful appearance.

It was Duchess Della's younger sister, the wife of a hereditary viscount, Lady Norma.

After exchanging the formalities, Norma looked at Audrey and said with a chuckle, "I heard that our beautiful young lady is very interested in mysticism?"

She mentioned mysticism. Could it be that someone from the Psychology Alchemists is here to test me? Audrey instantly entered her state as a Telepathist. A little embarrassed, she lowered her head and replied, "Yes."

Author's Notes:

As for Abraham's diary, some people said it was rather unnatural and not written by me, but why did I choose this way of dealing with it? Instead of softer ones, such as the inherited formula hidden in the notebook inner layer.

This is based on the character, although the unlucky guy just died as a Beyonder, he also has his own character, he thinks he is the protagonist, believe that he can let the Abraham family reappear the glory. Therefore, see the Volume 2 Chapter 101, he wrote at the beginning of the diary:

"This will go into the annals of the rise of a cursed family!

"I want to remember every key point!"

It can be seen from here that his diary is not only a diary, but also a history of self-description. He hopes that future generations can see through this diary how glorious, correct and great ancestors made a way to overcome the curse and reproduce the glory of the family.

Therefore, his diary should really be closer to the type shown to others, so he will record the psychological course of each choice, lest future generations cannot understand the glorious, correct and great ancestors’ purpose of doing so.

This is the reason why I handled it that way. As for the formula, it is even more normal. In such an important matter, ordinary people are definitely afraid of forgetting and will not rely solely on memory. There must be a corresponding paper record. The difference is only where the record is. Do you need to look for another one? Based on the character above, and take a diary as a note.

Had to say that, I still have to sigh. This time I didn’t write well enough.

For an author, if the meaning he wants to express cannot be read directly between the lines and requires additional explanation, it proves that he is not good enough.

Perhaps I should strengthen this feeling of self-describing history written for others at the beginning of the diary. For example, add a sentence that future generations, please keep this history in mind. In this way, the following should appear more logical.

Also, it’s not a coincidence to buy a purified bullet. Klein asked for it before. See Chapter 89 of Volume 2 for details.

Well, the book review area and this chapter comment are okay to argue, but please don’t attack in life.

In the end, I have another chapter, and of course, I will ask for a monthly ticket!

I’ll try to have another three night shift next week, but then before the 25th, there will be something to rush about. It’s estimated that I can only keep two.

Forget the above sentence and ask for a monthly pass!

Chapter 338 - The Experienced Klein

◆ ◆ ◆

After hearing Audrey’s affirmation, Lady Norma laughed.

“What an honest child.

“I happen to know some experts in mysticism who are very knowledgeable. Would you like to chat with them?”

“Definitely. That’s exactly what I want. Praise the Lady.” Feigning surprise, Audrey drew a crimson moon on her chest.

With a smile on her face, Madam Norma nodded slightly and said, “How about we have our afternoon tea together tomorrow?”

“No problem.” Audrey’s excited eyes held a little innocence.

After she bade Lady Norma farewell and headed for the living room, her smile gradually settled as her bearing turned composed and relaxed.

The detailed changes in her body language, the color of her emotions, and the changes in her Body of Heart and Mind that were reflected superficially, they all imply that she holds no ill intentions, but she was rather nervous… It seems like Lady Norma might really be a member of the Psychology Alchemists… Hmm, she had been observing my expression and actions, but she couldn’t adjust or hide her emotions. Maybe she’s like Susie, a Spectator, but unfortunately, she didn’t know that the person in front of her is a Telepathist… Audrey thought, feeling both perturbed and proud. She couldn’t help but let her feet gracefully walk in a straight line with one foot taking the place of the other.

†

In the house of Isengard Stanton situated in Hillston Borough.

Klein's lips quivered a few times, but in the end, he didn't ask Stuart who his employer was or what he looked like.

He decided not to get involved in matters involving Emlyn White as best as he could.

Although based on Emlyn's words, he was a law-abiding vampire, but that was only limited to his claims. There were still too many gaps about his earlier life for Klein to be sure that he had not harmed the innocent.

As a result, he lacked the motivation to seek out Father Utravsky to save Emlyn. After all, Father Utravsky was a Dawn Paladin who was skilled in combat and had the aid of mystical items. Furthermore, he was an unweakened Dawn Paladin!

Besides, it would make it easy for him to expose his true identity to Father Utravsky and Emlyn White.

Let's hope that he can gain the approval of that powerful priest as soon as possible and finish the "sentence" to be let out on "parole"… In his heart, Klein tapped four times in a clockwise fashion for Emlyn White.

After the bounty was divided, the detectives took their leave, and Klein was given the best treatment—he was walked out the door by the great Detective Isengard.

Holding his pipe, Isengard coughed lightly and said, "There are still some suspicious points about the serial murder case that we haven't fully understood. There might be an even more ferocious guy hiding behind the killer's back. You must be careful not to spread the word that you played an important role in this case.”

It seems like the official Beyonders also suspect that the gigantic Devil dog has an owner… Klein replied solemnly, “I know, I had my own guesses about this too.

“Mr. Stanton, you have to be careful as well. You were the one who gathered us, and you’re a major partner of the police.”

Isengard put the pipe into his mouth, then he took it out and said, “Sherlock, I guess I’ll call you Sherlock. You can rest assured that, although I’m no longer young, I’m still an outstanding fighter, an excellent marksman with an instinctive vigilance.”

Furthermore, you have a high probability of being a Beyonder not from the low Sequences. I just wonder which pathway you belong to… Klein thought for a moment and said, “Mr. Stanton, you don’t seem to be a native from Backlund? Your accent is closer to that of Sivellaus.”

“Yes, just like your Midseashire accent,” Isengard admitted frankly.

The two detectives smiled at each other as an acknowledgment of the other’s observational ability.

Klein returned to 15 Minsk Street before nightfall.

Well, I now have 1,224 pounds in notes, plus 5 gold coins, and a small amount of change. This is quite a considerable amount compared to how much I had when I first came to Backlund. However, Sequence 6 Beyonder ingredients will cost at least 1,500 a pop. Sometimes, because they’re scarce and rare, the price might even increase severalfold. And Beyonders who can obtain such items usually aren’t low in Sequence; they wouldn’t misjudge its value and sell it at a low price. It’s quite impossible to pick it up at bargain prices…

Although the lady with the Artisan behind her is very eager for the Black Emperor potion formulas, she has to consider the progress of her advancement. For her to only be at Sequence 9, it’s quite impossible for her to spend a large amount of money to buy the formulas up to Sequence 6 in advance, unless she's filthy rich… Well, you can't always be so exploitative…

While in thought, Klein was in no hurry to prepare dinner. Instead, he went back to his bedroom, drew the curtains, and went above the gray fog.

He had an idea that he needed to verify.

Sitting in The Fool's seat, he stretched out his hand and picked up the unadorned brass Master Key.

Based on the notebook he read last night from an Abraham descendant, he guessed that the man had lost control on the spot because of his choice of advancing during the full moon.

Therefore, the curse-like ability of the Master Key, which can make people go lost, only to find themselves in bad spots, has a high probability of being contaminated by Mr. Door's illusory ravings, other than the resentment and indignation in the Beyonder characteristic.

"So what sort of changes will it undergo when the moon is full?" Klein mumbled.

Conjuring a pen and paper, he wrote the divination statement he had thought long in advance: "What it manifests during the full moon."

Holding the piece of paper in one hand and the Master Key in the other, Klein leaned back in his chair, gave a self-deprecating laugh and said, "I'm courting death again…

"But there shouldn't be too much danger this time. Mr. Door is far separated from the real world. He's lost in the depths of the darkness. Furthermore, I have the gray fog to shield me."

In this case, the danger from divination was no different from direct divination. The experienced Klein half closed his eyes, and his pupils turning dark as he constantly chanted, “What it manifests during the full moon.”

†

After seven times, Klein fell into a dream.

In that gray, detached, illusory world, he once again saw the basement where the Abraham descendant had died.

The flesh and blood here had long since dried up. The silver pocket watch inlaid with diamonds and the ancient-looking Master Key had yet to be stolen. They were still lying on the ground.

Suddenly, a sharp, hollow voice echoed in Klein’s ears.

It was like a thin needle stabbing into his head, extending inside, bit by bit, while it scraped as if it was going to completely peel off his scalp!

This extreme pain caused Klein to wake up and sit up straight.

He looked at the blue veins protruding on the back before they quickly restored to normal.

Hmm, it’s much more manageable than spying on the Eternal Blazing Sun or secretly listening to the True Creator’s angry roars… Klein went from pressing down his fingers to rapping them as he thought.

Of course, if this were the outside world, he believed that he absolutely wouldn’t have had such a reaction.

If Miss Magician had always been listening to such pleas, she would’ve long lost control… From the looks of it, due to the resulting curse, the Master Key makes the voice even clearer. That’s not right. Father Utravsky has likely survived the night of the Blood Moon with the Master Key in hand. He clearly wasn’t affected…

Perhaps he had stored the Master Key in his bedroom and stayed in the hall outside for confession. Hmm, as long as one makes contact with the Master Key, they will hear the pleas during the full moon?

Phew. Before becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder, I wouldn’t dare listen to it in the real world… What I heard just now seemed to be “requesting assistance” in ancient Hermes… Klein carefully recalled and confirmed what he had heard.

With regards to this, the only thing he could do was twitch the corner of his mouth. He didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

This is really a death-styled plea in the true meaning of the phrase!

It’s a pity. If only we could make those people from the Rose School of Thought hear Mr. Door’s plea for help on the night of the full moon. With their already cold warped personalities, they would definitely explode one after the another.

After carefully considering if there was any way to achieve this goal, Klein returned to the real world, and according to his plan, he enjoyed dinner, changed his clothes, and left the house.

He made two transfers and arrived outside the Bravehearts Bar. He only circled it once without ordering any alcohol before leaving.

While doing so, he noticed that Kaspars was back again.

After walking a block, Klein specially got on a rental carriage and made the driver head to Cherwood Borough.

An illusory figure appeared in front of him just as the horse moved forward. It was Miss Sharron, wearing a long black regal dress.

“Are you done with your preparations?” Sharron asked coldly.

The soft black cap on her head was firmly pressed against her light blonde hair. Coupled with her pale face, her exquisite facial features gave her the beauty of a doll.

Klein answered frankly, “Not yet.

“I’m still waiting for an item.”

Sharron said with unperturbed blue eyes, “I’ve prepared a mystical item.”

That’s why you took the mission of being a three-day bodyguard for a thousand pounds? Back then, the item caught your eyes, but you lacked the money? Klein smiled in enlightenment.

“Don’t be anxious. The more prepared we are, the greater the chance of success.”

Furthermore, I can usually use a mystical item from the Sun domain to make up for my shortcomings… Klein added in his heart.

Seeing that Sharron had stopped talking, he said, “I came here today to get you guys to help me in an experiment.”

“What is it?” Sharron asked simply.

Klein said with a serious and trustworthy expression, “According to Maric’s description, I think your curses are different. During the full moon, he has to endure the crazy desire for bloodlust which makes him unable to fight. As for you, you would enter a weakened state if you do not absorb the souls of humans. Is that right?”

Sharron listened quietly and nodded.

“Yes.”

“I don’t have any solution to your problem at the moment, but I think it’s still possible to suppress Maric’s problem temporarily. For example, taking appropriate medicine and letting him be in a state where he doesn’t have any emotions. That way, during that time, he won’t be in pain, and he will be able to participate in the battle.” Klein expressed his thoughts.

Sharon shook her head and said, “It doesn’t work.

“Such medicine is no longer effective against him.”

No longer? In other words, it had worked before? Klein thoughtfully asked, “Why?”

“He had injected too much in the past. Even if he changed types, it’ll only be effective for the first three to four times. We’re unable to find any new types…” Sharon said, suddenly turning silent, as though remembering something.

Hearing her words, Klein immediately smiled.

“I have a different kind of sedative here, from that Apothecary.”

Seeing that Sharron didn’t say that this sedative was ineffective, he clasped his hands and continued, “I’ll give you one and let Maric try it during the full moon. It’s going to be a full moon tomorrow night.

“If it’s effective, let him drink two or even three in one go before the battle.”

As for whether he would develop a resistance to the same medicine in the future, that’s not something that needs to be considered right now… Klein thought calmly.

Chapter 339 - Psychiatrist

◆

Sharron took the sedative that was stored in a glass tube, looked at the liquid that looked pure, and lightly nodded.

“Alright.”

As expected of someone who doesn’t waste her breath… Klein smiled and said, “Miss Sharron, can you tell me the candidate locations for the battleground that you’ve decided on? I wish to familiarize myself with the surroundings in the next few days. This way, no matter where you ultimately choose, my preparations would be more than sufficient.”

And since they have the right to choose the location of the final battle, they won’t worry about the possibility of me informing the authorities or any other Beyonder who might try to take advantage of the situation… Of course, if she really doesn’t trust me, she could try another “notarization”… Klein thought quietly.

Sharron stared at him for a few seconds with her blue eyes before saying, “Prepare a map of Backlund when you’re back.

“Leave it on the coffee table.”

“No problem. I hope that this cooperation will not only go smoothly but also be enjoyable.” Klein habitually leaned forward to shake hands.

Sharron lowered her head to take a look, and her figure gradually faded into the air.

Klein continued his motion and raised his right hand to smooth his black hair, laughing dryly in the process.

He had asked for the location of the battleground ahead of time, not only to prepare for the mission but also to be on guard against Sharron and Maric.

Although their philosophy was to suppress and restrain their desires, and it was unlikely they wouldn’t kick someone to the curb when they’d outlived their usefulness. Klein couldn’t be sure that Wraith Steve, Zombie Jason, and Werewolf Tyre didn’t have what they had abnormally desired. If there really was a treasure that would cause any ordinary Beyonder to have strong malicious intent, Klein really couldn’t guarantee that the two Mutants would be able to control themselves.

Therefore, he had to figure out the environment in advance and prepare an escape route in the event that they wished to silence him.

It wasn’t that Klein didn’t trust Sharron, who he had went through life-and-death with, but it was the most basic form of self-protection.

One shouldn’t have the heart to harm others, but one must be vigilant so as to not be harmed… Klein turned his head to look out the window and sighed inwardly as he mused a Chinese phrase.

One gas lamp after another kept being left behind as the carriage went forward. The streets became more spacious and cleaner, and it took him more than half an hour to get back to Minsk Street.

It’s really expensive taking a carriage at this time… Klein looked up at the nearly black sky and the red moon that seemed to barely pierce through the clouds.

He walked on for a while, and suddenly he saw that the house of Lawyer Jurgen was dark.

Pulling out his gold pocket watch, he pressed it open and glanced at it. With a chuckle, Klein detoured to Jurgen’s door and used the key that he had been given to open it.

At that moment, Brody the black cat was already quietly sitting behind the door, staring at the visitor with his pair of dark, round green eyes. The room was dark and silent, bleak and lonely.

Klein squatted down and tried to touch Brody's head, but Brody quickly moved back and flung his hand away in disgust.

Shaking his head with laughter, he got up, opened the valve, and lit the gas lamp. Following Jurgen's descriptions, he went to the cupboard to find the food that had already been prepared.

Then, he went into the kitchen, lit the kettle to boil some water, and prepared Brody's favorite dish, boiled chicken breast.

The black cat followed him in, and with an agile leap, it reached the counter. It sat beside him and watched him without making a fuss.

Klein glanced at it, rehearsing the shredding of chicken breast in his mind while he chatted with Brody, "You must miss Mrs. Doris, right?

"Are you worried about her condition…

"Lawyer Jurgen didn't come home today. Are you feeling lonely and uncomfortable on your own? Do you feel like you lack a sense of belonging and are exhausted…"

[image]

†

As he spoke, Klein's voice slowly faded into silence.

Brody the black cat remained sitting there, quietly watching him. It didn't make any noise, nor did it cry out.

†

Audrey was invited to tea at Lady Norma's house.

"These are the mysticism experts that I mentioned." Lady Norma introduced the distinguished guests warmly, "This is Mr. Hilbert Alucard, a psychologist and a jewelry designer. He's very talented. This is Miss Escalante Oseleka. She's a doctor for mental health, what we usually call a psychiatrist."

Hilbert Alucard was a man in his forties. He looked to be of Southern Continent descent, and his skin was brown.

His brown hair, blue eyes, and facials features weren't particularly outstanding. He gave off a silent and reserved feeling.

Escalante Oseleka was a baby-faced lady who looked like a young girl studying at a public or grammar school even though she was already a psychiatrist.

She was three or four centimeters shorter than Audrey, and she had long raven-black hair that reached her waist and a pair of lake-blue eyes.

Audrey exchanged a few pleasantries with him, then she sat down, keenly aware that Alucard and Escalante were observing her.

She didn't use her Telepathist abilities, and she pretended to know nothing. While initiating topics in the field of mysticism, she constantly paid attention to her emotions, ensuring that they were in the most logical state.

I can't let them find out that I'm already a Beyonder, and that I have already taken the Spectator and Telepathist potions… Audrey knew exactly what role she was to play today.

Unlike the silent Alucard, Escalante was quite a conversationalist. After a few rounds of exchanges, she asked, "Do you know about Major Years and Major Months?"

“No, I haven’t heard of those,” Audrey cautiously answered, using only the knowledge she had obtained from her interaction with mysticism enthusiasts.

In fact, I’ve already learned from Mr. Hanged Man what a Major Year and Major Month is… she added with a smile in her heart.

“A Major Year refers to the number of years it takes for the planet to deviate from its axis, totaling 25,920 years. In the field of mysticism, this is considered a complete cycle that goes from the beginning to the end. A Major Month refers to the number of years it takes for this deviation to pass through one of the twelve constellations. Each Major Month represents 2,160 years. During the transition of Major Months, terrible disasters will occur. And according to calculations, we aren’t too many years away from the end of the current Major Moon…” Escalante spoke with confidence, keeping the atmosphere harmonious.

Audrey hid the fact that she knew a lot as she asked the wrong questions from time to time in a curious tone.

With this, time passed quickly. At the end of tea time, Alucard and Escalante stood up at the same time to take their leave, leaving Lady Norma’s house.

This caused Audrey to be rather disappointed. She imagined that they would eventually hint at the matter regarding the Psychology Alchemists, but in the end, they didn’t say anything.

Yes, as a secret organization that cannot be exposed, the examination of candidates can’t be that simple and direct… From the looks of it, they will need to interact with me a few times and observe me in secret before they decide whether or not they want to reveal information to me and recruit me into the organization… That’s good too, I can report this to Mr. Fool! Audrey quickly understood the underlying reasons.

She then took her leave, and Lady Norma walked her to the door, smiled, and said, “Audrey, I see that you’re also interested in psychology? Why not consider being a psychiatrist before you get married?

“Earl Hall and his wife are followers of the Goddess. They should be able to support you in doing such things.”

Among aristocrats, unless there was a financial crisis or other special situations, coming to an agreement on marriage required a long process. Only after careful consideration and comparisons would they be able to make a decision. This was because this wasn’t only a matter between two youngsters, but it also involved the alliance and mutual assistance of the two families.

Therefore, although aristocratic women were able to officially enter social events under the direction of the queen after the age of 18, proclaiming their adulthood and consideration for marriage, they often started a family after the age of 26 according to statistics.

Similarly, the average age of a male aristocrat’s entry into politics for the first time was 28.5 years.

In other words, Audrey would have about eight years to do what she liked after she reached adulthood.

The Church of Evernight had always encouraged female believers to go out to work and engage in certain occupations. In the aristocratic circles, many young ladies and women became literary critics, musicians, pianists, painters, etc.

Is this a test? Audrey smiled faintly and replied, “I will need to read more books in that case.”

Actually, she had always felt that it wasn’t too safe for the members of the Psychology Alchemists to become psychologists or psychiatrists because the upper echelons of the official organizations, such as the Nighthawks and the Mandated Punishers, likely knew of the acting method. Therefore, they would definitely pay more attention to this group of people.

Lady Norma seemed pleased with her answer and nodded with a smile.

“Escalante and Alucard are both good teachers.”

“Well, maybe I could consider asking Miss Escalante to be my home tutor on psychology.” Audrey nodded obediently.

†

When Klein got up on the early Sunday morning, he found that the map of Backlund on the coffee table in the living room had been circled in several places, and they weren’t too far apart. Therefore, he spent the rest of the morning carefully familiarizing himself with the surroundings, figuring out exactly where the buildings were located, and where the nearest cathedral was.

In the afternoon, having time to spare again, he went to the Quelaag Club to practice his shooting and Beyonder powers.

As soon as he entered the hall, he saw the surgeon, Aaron Ceres, hobbling out slowly from the buffet cafeteria with a crutch.

After greeting him, he asked out of concern, “How have you been lately, Aaron? Has your luck improved?”

Aaron, who was born with a blank face, smiled sincerely.

“At least I’m not that unlucky anymore.

“I followed your suggestion, went to the cathedral, and told the bishop about the matter. He told me to go directly to the confessional to pray to the Goddess.

“I actually fell asleep while praying, but I felt like the Goddess had bestowed me with a peaceful state. After that, my luck has been normal!

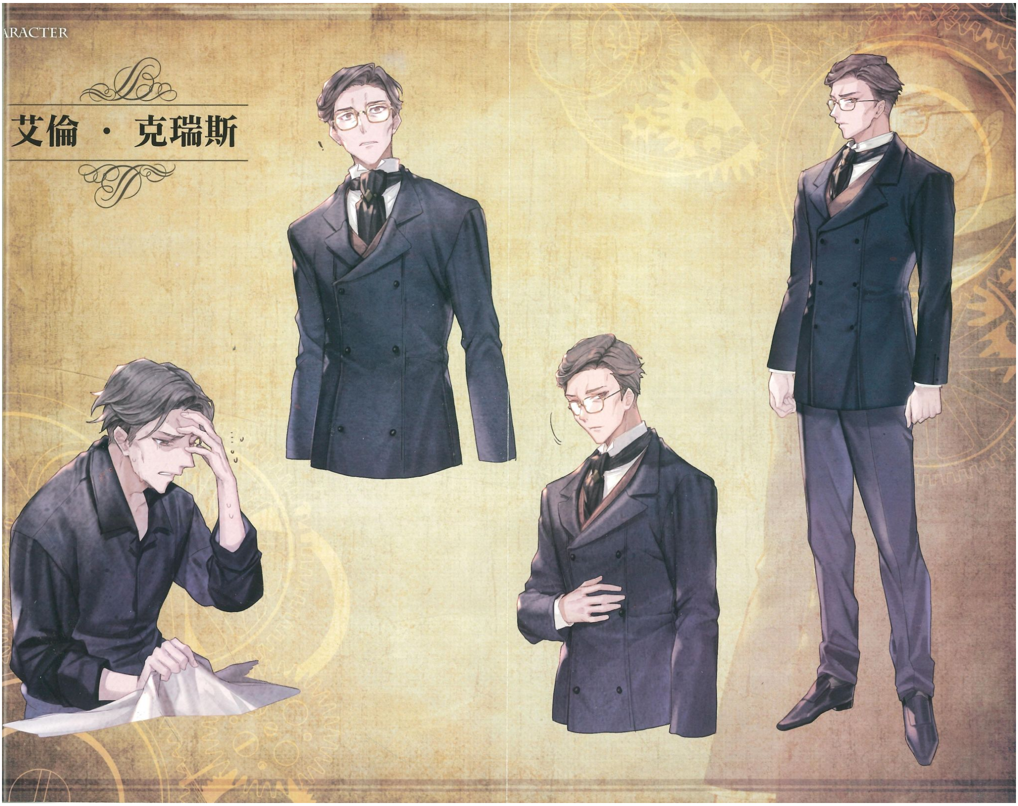
“Praise the Lady!”

He drew a crimson moon on his chest.

According to my experience, it was likely a particular Sequence 7 Nightmare who caused you to fall into a deep sleep. Then, a Nighthawk, who specializes in rituals, quickly set up an altar, prayed to the Goddess, and neutralized your misfortune… Klein smiled.

“That’s great!”

At that moment, Aaron looked at him and said, “Sherlock, I’ve always felt that you weren’t very pious in your belief of the God of Steam and Machinery. Why don’t you change your faith? Look at me, a perfect example. Put your faith in the Goddess!”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Chapter 340 - Past

◈ ◈ ◈

A-aren't you making things difficult for me? Upon hearing Aaron's request, Klein almost drew the crimson moon on his chest, but he ultimately resisted the urge and replied very seriously, "Perhaps there's something about my behavior that has led you to misunderstand.

"But I have to tell you that faith is something that cannot be changed after it's decided upon."

Aaron immediately raised his arms and made an apologetic gesture.

"I'm sorry that I misunderstood your faithfulness. I shouldn't have taken your faith as a joke.

"Alright, our differences in faith do not prevent us from becoming friends."

Klein wiped away the fake expression he put on and smiled.

"That's not true in Feysac and Feynapotter. They can only accept one faith."

In comparison, with so many Churches coexisting for more than fourteen hundred years, Loen and Intis are much more open in this respect.

Before Aaron could answer, he casually changed the subject.

"Did you see Will Auceptin again? I'm referring to the kid that had one of his legs amputated, the one who said that your luck would turn for the worse.”

He was certain that the Nighthawks would follow the clues provided by Aaron, so he wondered what the outcome was. He was curious if the child who changed Aaron’s luck still had the tarot card in his possession.

“No, I haven’t seen him since he left the hospital.” Aaron shook his head firmly.

What a pity. The Nighthawks can find his address according to the hospital’s records, and it’s not convenient for me to be involved… Of course, the child might’ve moved away long ago. After a brief exchange with Aaron, Klein decided to head for the underground shooting range, familiarizing himself with his free revolver with ordinary bullets.

At this moment, two more acquaintances came in. One was a member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, Coim Company shareholder, Ma’am Mary, and the other was Klein’s landlord, Stelyn Sammer. They were all wearing relatively light skirts, making them look much younger.

According to the rules of the club, each member could only bring in one additional person; therefore, Mary’s maid and her bodyguard were left in the reception hall.

Klein politely greeted them and praised them out of courtesy, “Ladies, you two are as beautiful as ever today, and yet there is a beauty that’s different from your usual beauty.”

Having come into contact with a lot of important figures recently, Mary smiled and said, “Roselle said that exercise is a necessity of life, and Stelyn is always at home, dealing with trivial matters. Even when she’s out, she would be participating in parties and listening to operas. Her health is much worse than it used to be, so I brought her here to play tennis and squash.”

With her high cheekbones, she looked around and saw a member of the House of Commons and two other Members of Parliament of the greater Backlund area. She then turned to Stelyn and said, “I see someone I know. Excuse me while I head over to greet them. You can wait for me at the library.”

“Alright.” Compared to Mary, Stelyn was clearly much prettier, but towards this lady, she seemed very respectful and docile.

After Mary had gone some distance away, she slightly raised her chin, looked at Klein and asked, “Mr. Moriarty, you seem very busy these days?”

“Yes, I was working with a lot of detectives to help the police investigate the serial murder case. We made a certain contribution and received quite a sizable reward,” Klein answered truthfully.

Stelyn covered her mouth with her hand.

“Really?

“What did the murderer look like? Why did he kill those ladies? The newspapers had been very vague.”

“I’m sorry, I have to comply with the confidentiality clause.” Klein deftly made up an excuse.

It’s not like I can tell you that it had a body of black fur; a smooth, glistening tail; and that it likes to run on all fours… Klein lampooned inwardly.

Stelyn nodded regretfully, and then she asked curiously, “So how much did you get?”

“It was split among quite a number of us.” Klein didn’t answer directly.

“Was there fifty pounds?” Stelyn pressed.

“Yes.” Klein nodded “honestly.”

Stelyn Sammer smiled.

“You earn a lot more than I imagined. You really are a capable detective.”

“No, it might take years to come across such a case.” Klein smiled and shook his head.

“No matter what, you have proven your ability.” Stelyn’s eyes looked like they were thinking as she said, “Next Sunday, Luke and I will be hosting a party at home. I hope you can come, um, sorry. I was very presumptuous. I’ll have my maid send the invitation to you. Heh heh, there will be a lot of unmarried ladies at the party, and their fathers or mothers will have decent jobs, and their families will earn more than 200 pounds a year. Some of them have part-time jobs that they can do at home, such as being a typist. They’re all very excellent women.”

Th-this is a blind date party… Mrs. Stelyn has approved of my ability to make money as a detective, so she plans on introducing me to a girl? But in her eyes, am I only fit to be with a woman at that level? Many thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind, but after considering the need to maintain their neighborly friendliness and the trouble of preparing his own dinner, he agreed with a smile.

“If all goes well, I’ll be there on time.”

Stelyn smiled and said, “Then Luke and I will be awaiting your visit.”

She left without another word and entered the small library of the club, while Klein proceeded to practice his shooting and Beyonder powers in the small, enclosed shooting range.

†

At 9 o’clock at night, Klein was sitting at his desk, watching as the crimson moon gradually pierced through the clouds, revealing a full body.

The water-like, light red "veil" slowly spread out, and time passed by the minute. When it was quarter past ten, he heard illusory pleas that seemed layered.

Klein easily guessed that it was from Miss Magician.

Closing the curtains, he switched off the lights, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray mist. There, he reached out to touch the shrinking and expanding crimson star.

In a split-second, the hazy figure of Fors appeared on the chair with the symbol of a layered door.

She let out a sigh of relief, stood up, and bowed.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, you have saved me once again."

"That's not something to worry about," Klein replied in a very light, casual tone.

Fors was left speechless and sat down again.

She was considering what had just happened, so she didn't say anything. As for Klein, he didn't take the initiative to bring up any subjects in order to maintain his image.

Within the towering palace which looked like a giant's residence, the silence quickly transformed into the main theme.

When Fors snapped back to her senses, she suddenly felt that this atmosphere was a little oppressive and uncomfortable.

During the gathering, there's still Miss Justice, Mr. World, and company. There was no need to worry about complete silence, but now, there's only Mr. Fool and me. What should I do? This pressure is stifling! I need to say something, I have to. I can't just sit here like an idiot… That's Mr. Fool! He certainly wouldn't care about anything, but I'm so nervous and restricted! Fors suddenly felt as though she had found herself alone with her boss when she first entered the workforce.

Although Klein wasn't a Spectator, he could clearly see Miss Magician's restraint and uneasiness. He smiled and said, "Maybe you can tell me how you became a Beyonder."

For example, how you obtained the Apprentice formula and that bracelet… Klein silently added the real question he was trying to get by.

Fors relaxed a little and recalled.

"That was almost three years ago. I just graduated from Backlund Medical School.

"With my father's help, I entered a private clinic with pretty good benefits. Heh, my father had already settled down in East Balam back then.

"Ever since the safe sea route to the Southern Continent was discovered, the outstanding youth of the kingdom started spreading their footprints to every corner of the land. My father, as a low-level military officer, went to East Balam to chase after wealth and power. My mother and I were left behind in Backlund to live like widows. Heh heh, it would take months before a distant letter sent by boat would arrive.

"This situation isn't uncommon in the kingdom. I knew an old gentleman who had five children, but they were either in the archipelago, Western Balam, the Paz Valley, or the Haagenti Plains. They have their own career, their own family, and their own wealth, but they've forgotten that there is a father waiting for their return all this time.

"When I was in grammar school, my mother fell seriously ill. I had no choice but to helplessly watch her die on the hospital bed, and it took my father a month to answer my letter, telling me that he had a new family and a new life in East Balam. He gave me all his property in Backlund plus some money. I think he felt a little guilty."

As a best-selling novel writer, Fors had mastered the art of rambling.

Since Klein had nothing to do, he listened quietly without interrupting.

Phew. Fors exhaled and continued, “Anyway, my father introduced me to Yosifov Clinic through the veterans’ club. The salary there was really good, and I was doing pretty well, but I was a little anxious about the future. Hence, I worked hard to learn from the senior doctors and worked hard to save money until I met an old lady who came to see me regularly.

“She was very lonely and childless, and her partner had passed away ten years ago. I had some sympathy for her, so I often talked to her and accompanied her.

“Once, I was surprised to find that she was able to walk through walls, which opened a whole new world to me.

“That old lady said that it was something her husband left her. She vaguely mentioned that as long as one wasn’t a member of some family, there was apparently no curse.

“Not long after, she was so ill that she was on the verge of passing away. She asked me if I wanted to become someone like her. I was very young then, and I still had a lot of fantasies in my head. I agreed without any hesitation.

“She gave me the formula and told me to watch her body after she died and take away the glowing object that would suddenly appear. And this was the thing she left me which could be used as the main ingredient of a potion.

“Also, she gave me this bracelet, telling me not to use it unless I’m in absolute danger. She also told me not to pay too much attention to the ravings during the full moon.

“Unfortunately, I was ultimately unable to avoid danger. After using it once, the full moon’s raving became worse.”

It seems like that was a widow of a particular Abraham… She had used her own experience to prove that the “curse” only existed in the bloodline… Klein nodded.

“Once you become a High-Sequence Beyonder, the ravings wouldn’t have much of an effect on you.”

“I hope so.” Although she didn’t believe she could become a High-Sequence Beyonder, she believed in Mr. Fool.

†

It was Monday again, and as soon as Klein got up, he went downstairs and saw an open sheet of paper on the coffee table in the living room.

“Effective.”

That’s good… Klein immediately let out a sigh of relief.

At fifteen minutes to three in the afternoon, he promptly went above the gray fog to “prepare” for the new Tarot Club gathering.

Chapter 341 - Private Communication

◆

The sight of the towering stone pillars that supported a high dome and the mottled and ancient long table that appeared to have been placed there since hundreds, if not more than a thousand years ago entered the eyes… Although Audrey Hall had seen this scene many times, she would still feel a kind of shock that came from the bottom of her heart the moment she arrived above the gray fog.

Out of the corner of her eye, she scanned the surroundings and didn't see any new members. She then looked up and bowed to the person in the thick gray fog.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

As she spoke, she suddenly saw a card covered with a complicated pattern on the table to the right of The Fool.

It was lying there quietly, casually, like an ordinary object.

I-is that the Card of Blasphemy? A Card of Blasphemy that hides one of the paths of the divine! Audrey immediately understood. After The Fool nodded in response, she subconsciously glanced at The Hanged Man, The Sun, and The Magician, and she found that they had also noticed the card that didn't exist in the past.

However, their eyes and actions revealed their doubts and astonishment, as well as their inevitable conjectures. After all, a card that could be placed by the mysterious and lofty Mr. Fool was definitely not an ordinary item… Well, Mr. World's reaction is a little odd. He's not even looking there. Is he able to hide his thoughts so well? Is he really the nemesis of a Spectator and Telepathist? Audrey quickly decided that, other than Mr. Fool, the Card of Blasphemy was known only to herself.

This made her feel quite proud. It was a feeling like sharing a secret with her parents when she was young while she kept her two elder brothers in the dark.

That's a Card of Blasphemy created by Emperor Roselle, a treasure that countless Beyonders in the mysterious world dream of! Audrey took the initiative to raise her hand after The Magician, The Sun, and the others did their greetings.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, I have something I would like to report to you alone.”

Alone? Alger frowned slightly as he subconsciously tried to guess at the content but was without any clue.

Derrick and the others were also curious, but they didn't think too much about it.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Sure.”

Frankly, he had no idea what Miss Justice was going to report to him.

After waiting two seconds, he blocked off the senses of the rest of the members and gestured to Justice.

Audrey sat with a dignified posture and said with a sincere attitude, “Mr. Fool, as I had asked to purchase the Spectator formula at a Beyonder gathering, there has been two suspected members of the Psychology Alchemists who came into contact with me recently through certain nobles.

“I'm inclined to join them, but only if I can guarantee my own safety.

"What is your opinion on this? I've attached great importance to this."

Psychology Alchemists… From the evidence from various sources of information, it's not considered an evil organization. At present, they might not have a deity that they believe in. Its main mission is to explore and research one's mind, consciousness, psyche, and spirituality. It's more like a scientific self-help group. Of course, among the Orthodox Churches, it's also a form of sacrilege since they believe that everyone's spirit belongs to god. And according to Daxter Guderian, the upper echelons of the Psychology Alchemists definitely have an inclination—the original Creator, the god that created everything, and they worship "Him" to a certain extent, a rather primitive form of worship… Many thoughts flashed past Klein's mind as he finally said with a smile, "If you think it's suitable, you can do so.

"If you encounter a problem, you can seek help from the Tarot Club."

"Thank you for your suggestion." Audrey instantly felt relieved.

Klein thought for a moment and added using a calm and leisurely tone, "Inside the Psychology Alchemists, there are people planted by the Churches, such as informants of the Mandated Punishers and Nighthawks. You have to know how to hide and conceal yourself."

Mr. Fool is so nice to remind me to be careful… Audrey slightly bent her eyes and replied with a shallow smile, "In the future, there will also be an informant from the Tarot Club inside the Psychology Alchemists."

…Miss Justice, you haven't even joined, and you're already thinking of betraying them… Klein silently drew an invisible crimson moon for the Psychology Alchemists.

After reporting the matter of the Psychology Alchemists, Audrey wasn't in a hurry to end the conversation. Instead, she said, "Mr. Fool, I've memorized another two pages of Roselle's diary."

That was also why she had asked to speak to him in private. If she had conjured Roselle's diary and given it to Mr. Fool under the witness of The Magician, Fors, she could imagine that at the end of the gathering, Fors would immediately come to her and borrow those Roselle's notes she had bought in the past. And with regards to this, the Goddess could prove that Mr. Fool had seen them all!

I forgot to do so previously. One of these two days, I'll find an opportunity to tell Fors that the Roselle notes I bought were torn apart by Susie. Yes, torn apart, into pieces that cannot be restored! I'm sorry, Susie… Audrey repented in her heart.

"Very good." Klein knocked gratefully on the edge of the long bronze table to help Miss Justice conjure the diary pages.

When he had the two pages in hand, he cast his eyes over, only to have his smile gradually stiffen.

The first line of the journal read: "6th March. Dammit, I'm almost constipated from eating the food here!"

†

This is what I saw at the Roselle Memorial Exhibition… Klein hid his expression and turned to the second page. He found that the contents were still the complaints and novel experiences of Roselle's early days of his transmigration. They were of no practical use.

He controlled his expression and smiled.

"Do you wish to deduct from the gold pounds you have yet to pay, or do you wish to get something else in return?"

Audrey said without any hesitation, "Mr. Fool, I would like to know which path of the divine that Card of Blasphemy is."

You really treat money as dirt… Klein silently sighed, as he didn't hide his smile as he said, "That is the Black Emperor card.

“The corresponding Sequence 9 is Lawyer.”

So that’s what it is… After receiving her answer, Audrey felt abnormally satisfied.

After the private conversation ended, The Magician, Fors, looked eagerly at The World who sat right at the other end.

“Mr. World, I will try my best to gather a mystical item or powerful Beyonder weapon in the Sun domain.”

“What kind of deal did you two make in private?” Despite feeling very familiar with Fors, Audrey wasn’t aware of this, so she couldn’t help but ask.

Fors let out a sigh and said, “Mr. World has helped me find the formula to Trickmaster.”

Mr. World sure is capable at finding formulas… Does he have extensive and reliable resources and connections in this field? Audrey listened in surprise.

The Hanged Man, Alger, concealed his solemn expression, once again reevaluating The World and raising his assessment of him.

As for Derrick, he felt rather expectant. He hoped that after he finished digesting the Light Suppliant potion, Mr. World would be able to easily find for him the formula for Sequence 7, Solar High Priest.

The World laughed hoarsely when faced with the numerous gazes that were staring at him.

“Miss Magician, before you purchase it, it’s best that you chant Mr. Fool’s honorific name and request that ‘He’ pass the relevant information to me. Yes, I have already sought Mr. Fool’s permission and ‘He’ has agreed to help us.

“If I’m not satisfied with the items that you have set your eyes on, perhaps I will consider switching to another request."

Klein now had three alternatives for the items in the Sun domain, so he planned to compare them before making any finalization.

One of them was the brooch which Old Mister Eye of Wisdom had mentioned. It had the effect of purifying and warding off evil spirits and letting the wearer use a portion of the spells in the Sun domain. The negative effect was that the wearer would never feel cool, forever stuck in a hot and irritable state.

Klein found the mystical item only okay, and since the price could be close to 2,000 pounds, he was unable to afford it, even if he had sold the Briber formula; therefore, he planned to wait a few days. If Miss Magician and the lady with the Artisan backing her couldn't find something better, then he would cash out the formula and buy the brooch.

"Okay, I'll give you the information no later than tomorrow." Fors had confirmed that Mr. A would be hosting a gathering that very night, but she had given herself another day for any unexpected outcomes.

When the conversation was over, Alger looked around and said, as if he had already prepared a draft, "I recently took on an investigative mission. I'm not sure if you have any relevant leads.

"In the past two to three years, many original native tribes in the Southern Continent have been plundered and all their people were taken away. In the various colonies, on the islands at sea, some slaves have also mysteriously escaped.

"Such situations have not happened in a long time since the countries of the Northern Continent abolished the slave trade. Have you all heard anything that's relevant?"

His eyes swept over Justice, The Magician, and The World, but he didn't look at The Sun.

How could a boy trapped in the City of Silver inside the Forsaken Land of God know about what was happening outside?!

Audrey carefully recalled the conversations she had heard at the many noble gatherings, but after a while, she said, "No, I've never even heard of such a thing."

The Magician and The World shook their heads.

Is this indicating that slave trading in the black market is flourishing again? Why would they need so many slaves? Klein sat at the end of the long bronze table and thought about the matter suspiciously.

Seeing that no one could provide any clues, and how Mr. Fool showed no interest whatsoever by not interrupting, he said without changing his expression, "You can attempt to seek out the formula for Wind-blessed.

"I will provide you with payment that would absolutely be enough to satisfy you."

The formula for the Wind-blessed? He's almost done digesting the potion of the Seafarer… Klein activated his Spirit Vision and glanced at The Hanged Man. Sure enough, he found that the surface layer of his Astral Projection was not only pure blue like the sea, but it also had slight ripples, as if slowly undulating.

…If I do the math, it took Mr. Hanged Man nearly four months to digest the Seafarer potion. He's often at sea… Audrey also made a judgment based on what she had observed.

Another point that Fors paid more attention to was that Mr. Hanged Man was likely a Sequence 7!

A Mid-Sequence Beyonder… she nodded indiscernibly and said to herself.

After The Hanged Man finished announcing his mission, Derrick raised his hand and said with some apprehension, “I’ve been assigned to go on a mission. I will be heading to the half-destroyed temple, that I mentioned previously, in the near future, yes, the one related to the Fallen Creator.

“The leader responsible for this operation is Shepherd Elder Lovia.

“Do you have any suggestions?”

Chapter 342 - The Old Fox Alger

◆ ◆ ◆

Suggestions? My advice is to stay as far away as possible… Upon hearing The Sun's question, Klein instantly had such an answer in his mind.

However, in order to preserve the image of The Fool and see what the others would suggest, he remained silent and did not manipulate The World to speak.

After a short moment of silence, Alger turned his head to look at The Sun. He said in a staid and gentle voice, "You have provided too little information, so it's difficult for us to give any useful advice.

"The only thing we know of regarding that semi-destroyed temple is the presence of the True Creator, or in other words, the Fallen Creator's unique statue. We don't know what else is there, so naturally, we aren't able to make much of an analysis of the situation."

The Fallen Creator is indeed the True Creator… To think that there's faith in the True Creator in the City of Silver where The Sun lives. There's even a temple built… The Magician Fors listened with relish and almost wanted to write it down. Justice Audrey waited for The Sun's description of the strange temple in anticipation.

Derrick nodded, his eyes looking up for a few seconds before he said, "In addition to the statue, there are also many incomplete murals with terrifying evil spirits lingering around. However, they have already been eliminated by the exploratory team led by two elders from the six-member council…

"I've yet to see those murals with my own eyes. It's said that it records the prophecy of the end of days and how the Fallen Creator will save his believers, as well as the corresponding bloody ritual…

"In the corner of a certain mural, there are some strange characters that appear to be evolved from Jotun. After some deciphering, a few elders believe that they meant: Rose Redemption.

"This might a code name for the original muralist. It might also be the code name of the organization that built the temple and the city.

"According to the Chief's judgment, these murals are at least a thousand years old.

"The thousand years I'm referring to is the one that you know, uh, but I'm not completely sure. In the City of Silver, w-we use the frequency of lightning to demarcate our days. It's considered night when the lightning eases up and day when there's plenty of lightning. One cycle is a day, and the four seasons only exist in books, so we can't grasp the specific number of days. Only the Chief can confirm that."

At this point in The Sun's story, Fors suspected that she was listening to a fairytale.

A city without the sun, without the red moon, without day and night or changes in the seasons, it sounded unreal no matter how she listened to it! Only fairytales or novels would make such daring descriptions!

And the author has to smoke cannabis and be in a state of psychotic madness in order to create such a city… The first thought that came to her mind after her astonishment was, I want to use the City of Silver as a blueprint for a novel!

However, she soon gave up on this idea, for she didn't know what the City of Silver really implied. She wasn't sure if it was a secret that was collectively concealed by the Seven Churches, and she was afraid that as soon as the book was published, she, as the author, would have the

Nighthawks knocking on her door, claiming to collect the copper pennies in her gas meter.

So that's the kind of environment which the City of Silver has. Hmm, The Sun also often mentions of monsters lurking deep in the darkness… Unfortunately, I'm only at Sequence 8. Otherwise, I would really like to ask Mr. Fool to send me there for an adventure. No, Audrey, you are no longer an innocent girl. You should be aware of how much danger is involved in this matter… Justice Audrey switched between letting her thoughts run wild while also engaging in self-reflection.

At least a thousand years? The Aurora Order hasn't been in existence for more than three centuries. It might not even be two centuries old. It's unlikely to be built by them… Hmm, perhaps the True Creator's faith had begun as early as the Fifth Epoch or even the Fourth Epoch. However, the organization that revered "Him" wasn't the Aurora Order… In the next one to two thousand years, the seven Orthodox Churches have been repressing it, causing the True Creator's believers to be in a crisis. The Churches have destroyed them again and again, and finally, they had resurrected themselves as the Aurora Order? Klein, who had some guesses, made his seating posture and state appear unchanged.

Derrick paused for two seconds and continued, "A preliminary clean up of the terrifying monsters in the city ruins and the half-destroyed temple has been done. Our mission this time is to explore the underground parts of the temple.

"Do you have any suggestions? With your understanding of the Fallen Creator, what should I pay attention to?"

"My suggestion?" Alger said without almost any hesitation, "My advice is absolutely not to go!

"The Fallen Creator is a true evil god. Even if 'His' temple has been destroyed, it might still contain abnormal danger which cannot be easily detected. If the one leading your team is one of the other elders of the six-member council, then there's nothing wrong if you insist on going. It will just be risky. But you just mentioned that the person in charge of this matter is Shepherd Lovia, and the True Creator is the deity standing at the peak of this Beyonder pathway! Therefore, absolutely do not go," Alger added.

Your suggestion is the same as mine, but it doesn't require The Sun to describe the half-destroyed temple. You could've come up with this conclusion with the conditions at the beginning… I understand. Mr. Hanged Man, you were doing it on purpose. This way, you got a rough idea of the state of the temple without paying anything… You're really just bullying a little kid… Sitting at the end of the table, Klein leisurely reached out his hand to support his forehead.

The Sun was silent for a few seconds, and seemingly having been put in a tough spot, he said, "But the mission is compulsory."

The Hanged Man chuckled and said, "Nothing is necessary.

"Will you still be participating in patrols before this mission? Find an opportunity and deliberately let the monsters injure you. As for how serious it should be, you can reference the past cases in the City of Silver."

At this moment, Audrey read a message from Sun's eyes and movements.

"That actually works?"

After a brief period of surprise and confusion, Derrick frowned and said, "But I don't have any patrolling missions in the near future…"

Alger sneered.

"You can always pretend to be on the brink of losing control. No, to be precise, you can push yourself to the brink of losing control. Under such a situation, I believe the higher-ups of the City of Silver would definitely not bring 'dangerous baggage' with them on the exploratory mission, right?

“There is a trick; as long as you keep your spirituality in an empty state for two days, you will begin to hear auditory hallucinations and show signs of losing control. If you stop suppressing yourself, then your situation will improve in a week, and you wouldn’t really lose control.

“Of course, your City of Silver definitely has some solutions and contingencies to cure those who show signs of losing control. Your recovery would definitely be quick, so you need to time yourself perfectly. It’s best if you start doing so two to three days before you set off.”

Derrick was stunned for quite a while before he muttered to himself, “Yes, those who show signs of losing control will be placed under control and be quarantined underground in the spire, where they will be treated with medicine, rituals, and mystical items. If the situation isn’t too serious, then they only need to consume medicine…”

Sigh, an honest and good kid has been corrupted by an old fox just like that… But, Mr. Hanged Man, how do you know of this trick of pushing yourself to the brink of losing control? If you use this trick often, losing control might really happen… Klein sighed in his heart.

Audrey was dumbstruck when she heard this. She felt as though she’d been educated.

Seeing that The Sun was still hesitating as though he didn’t wish to lie to the City of Silver’s elders, Alger slowly asked, “Do the other elders of the six-member council know that the Fallen Creator controls the Shepherd pathway?”

“They don’t.” Derrick shook his head honestly.

Alger asked again, “Do you think it’s possible that Shepherd Elder Lovia will do harm to the City of Silver? Just answer yes or no; there’s no need for any explanations.”

"…Yes." Derrick finally couldn't lie to himself.

Alger chuckled and said, "So, you are the only one who knows of this matter, but you haven't found a way to warn the other elders of the six-member council, right?"

"Yes." Derrick's expression grew heavier.

Alger changed his seating posture as he leaned back.

"This mission carries immense risk. This is something you know. If you die in that half-destroyed temple, then who will be able to find a way to expose the strangeness of Shepherd Lovia? Who can save the City of Silver from this crisis? The Fallen Creator is a real evil god!"

"You are not pretending to lose control or lying to others for your own personal interests. You are doing so to save the City of Silver!

"Comparing your honor to that, which is more important?"

Derrick clenched his teeth and nodded solemnly.

"I understand.

"Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man."

Audrey and Fors suddenly had the urge to facepalm themselves.

He really is an easily fooled child… However, that's good too; it prevents the Tarot Club from losing members in the near future… Klein sighed silently as he controlled The World to say, "I have a question to ask Mr. Sun.

"This could involve a transaction.

"Therefore, I'm requesting a private exchange."

Klein quickly switched back to himself and nodded indifferently.

"Sure."

After the others were screened, The World looked at The Sun and asked, “Does the City of Silver have a way to remove an evil god’s mental corruption on a Beyonder characteristic?”

This was something Klein had wanted to ask a few times before, but considering that Justice and the others might also be interested, and if The Sun was unable to answer questions that involved an evil god, then all eyes would likely be cast toward the godlike Mr. Fool; therefore, he had restrained his impulse. It was only moments ago when he got inspiration from Miss Justice and came up with the idea of communicating privately.

“We have never encountered an evil god.” Derrick answered earnestly, “We can only separate a Rampager’s mental corruption from a Beyonder characteristic.”

That’s it! This might actually work; after all, I have the gray fog… Klein suppressed his joy and made The World speak, “What do you need in return?”

“It’s not a matter of compensation.” Sun shook his head. “That method and the corresponding knowledge requires me to be at least the Captain of a patrol team, or even a strong warrior like the Captain of an exploratory team in order to be privy to such matters. The former requires being Sequence 7, while the latter requires a minimum of Sequence 6.”

Phew… Klein sighed, letting The World hoarsely say, “I hope that you can attain the qualifications as soon as possible.”

Chapter 343 - By Oneself

After the private communication between The World and The Sun, the Tarot Gathering began its free discussion session. Audrey asked with great interest about the unique scenery of the sea and of any strange happenings, while Alger gave selective descriptions according to his own knowledge.

Fors listened quietly and was inspired to write a novel about a Pirate King, of how he captures a female passenger and has a complex love affair with her, a fantasy that coexisted with reality.

Derrick could only imagine what the sea looked like based on the paintings in the City of Silver and the corresponding words.

In the end, Klein, whose spirituality was gradually drained, announced the end of the Tarot Gathering. After which, he quickly returned to the real world and made up for it with a nap.

†

Half past seven at night. In Empress Borough. Inside a particular noble’s house.

Fors put on a hooded robe. After so many days, she was once again attending the gathering organized by Mr. A.

She sat quietly in a corner, and whilst pretending to casually survey her surroundings, she noticed that Mr. A, who was sitting alone on the sofa, seemed a little different from before.

This wasn't a change in appearance or temperament, because the other party's face was completely hidden in the shadow of his hood, preventing her from making out anything.

The difference she felt was an almost intuitive feeling.

Mr. A is no longer as carefree and indifferent as before, with him always looking at everyone in a supercilious manner. The current him seems to be very repressed—like he's trying his best to control something. He feels a lot more dangerous now.

In the past, Mr. A was a mountain. Now, he's more like a reared up snake, sticking out its tongue vociferously… The best-selling writer, Fors, suddenly felt grateful that she hadn't gotten Xio to come with her since she needed to hide matters about the Tarot Club and not let her know that she was looking for something in the Sun domain.

This way, even if there are any accidents, my escape would be much easier… She rotated the bracelet which only had two stones left.

She was in no hurry to write down her request to hand over to the attendant. Instead, she patiently observed for a while.

It wasn't that she was naturally cautious, but the lessons of the past had left her with deep impressions. The two stones on her bracelet were evidence of this.

After waiting for more than ten minutes, she finally picked up a piece of paper and a pen in front of her and wrote in deliberately distorted handwriting: "Seeking to buy mystical items or powerful Beyonder weapons in the Sun domain."

After handing the note to the attendant, Fors looked around again, but she couldn't find the Eternal Blazing Sun believer, who had helped with the purification and exorcism ritual, among the disguised or masked figures.

Trades took place as the attendants shuttled about. The entire hall remained quiet and orderly.

After an exchange in the middle of the gathering, Fors's request was added to the two chalkboards right in front.

Not long after, she received a reply from the attendant.

A small slip of white paper was filled with dense words:

“Mystical item: Band of Light ring. It can make the wearer an Envoy of Light, an attendant of the Sun. They will be immune to various diseases and wield sacred powers. The wearer can summon blinding light and use several spells in the Sun domain. It can purify all dead spirits in a fifty-meter radius. It is the nemesis of such creatures.

“If the wearer is acknowledged by the ring, they will be enhanced; otherwise, they will be weakened.

“The only problem is that if the wearer utilizes it too often, they will slowly become a believer of the Eternal Blazing Sun and slowly defend the doctrines and praise the Sun from the bottom of their hearts.

“If you wish to obtain it, then please pay me 9,000 in cash at once. I can wait for you to raise it.”

9,000 pounds? Fors's mouth gaped open, as though the other party was robbing her.

This was a huge amount of wealth that she wouldn't be able to borrow, even if she asked someone to lend it to her!

Aside from the deposit for the assassination of the Intis Ambassador, the amount of money she had seen so far combined had never been this high!

A person with 9,000 pounds in cash was considered a tycoon, even in Backlund!

Although I know that mystical items are expensive, I never expected them to be this expensive… Does he plan on getting the 9,000 pounds and not participate in Beyonder gatherings anymore and leave the circle so as to enjoy life in peace? For a moment, she didn't dare to reply to the seller.

She pretended that nothing had happened and listened for nearly ten minutes, but when she received no additional response or response to relatively inexpensive Beyonder weapons, she got up and went to the washroom.

After confirming that no one was around, she closed the toilet door and sat down on the toilet. She recited Mr. Fool's honorific name, told him in prayer about what had just happened, and asked him to pass it on to The World.

Klein, who had heard the layered, illusory sounds, quickly went above the endless gray fog and gained a basic understanding of the situation.

9,000 pounds? He mouthed the number, his expression twisting slightly.

After silently calculating the amount of money he could raise in a short period of time, he let out a breath, conjured the fake person, The World, and manipulated him to give a response:

"The negative effect of this mystical item is too serious. I do not wish to be a believer of the Sun.

"You don't have to worry about this anymore. We'll transact using cash instead.

"Pay 450 pounds and you'll get the formula for Trickmaster."

The moment he finished his sentence, he cut the connection. Watching as The World disappeared, he raised his hand to rub his forehead and muttered to himself, "Next, I'll have to see the information on what kind of items that Barbarian lady can gather…

"Otherwise, I can only purchase that brooch from Eye of Wisdom."

†

In the washroom, Fors let out a sigh of relief. She indicated that she would hold the sacrificial ritual as soon as she got back.

It's a pity that I don't know the formula for now. Otherwise, I could take the opportunity to see if there are any Beyonder ingredients I need… She returned to the hall and focused on the information on the two blackboards.

She didn't respond to the previous note, much less consider bargaining. Even if the seller was willing to discount it by a thousand pounds, she wouldn't have the money or liquidity to buy it, and more importantly, she felt that Mr. World couldn't afford it either.

She stayed until the end of the gathering, and because of Mr. A's changes, she didn't linger or talk to anyone. She quickly left the house.

After more than ten minutes, the gathering came to a complete end, leaving Mr. A and his attendants alone.

Slowly, Mr. A got up and walked down the stairs to the basement.

Suddenly, his knees buckled, and he fell to the ground, rolling down several steps.

He was sprawled on the ground, and the shadow beneath him quickly turned scarlet red.

His flesh and blood melted and mixed into the shadow, making it look like a brand-new, skinless, monster-like person that had been separated from his body!

Gasp! Gasp… Mr. A's breathing gradually returned to normal as his taut body gradually relaxed.

The blood and flesh, that had separated, flowed back once again.

Everything returned back to normal.

Mr. A crawled forward and knelt in the basement, once again confessing his sins while choking with sobs.

He was confessing for his oversight from before, that he wasn't vigilant enough and caused the Lord's descent to fail.

†

City of Silver, Derrick Berg's house.

He walked in silence a few times around the table, unable to make up his mind. His reasoning told him that Mr. Hanged Man's suggestion was the best one, but the faces of the other members participating in the mission kept flashing in his mind, and he felt that he had abandoned and betrayed them by pretending to lose control!

Is there no way to save them? Should I find a chance to meet with the Chief and tell him that the half-destroyed temple belongs to the Fallen Creator, who's an evil god that controls the Shepherd pathway? That he should be careful of Elder Lovia and change the person responsible for the mission… But how should I explain where I got this information from? In their eyes, Mr. Fool would be the same as an evil god… Derrick pulled his hair in frustration.

The Axe of Hurricane was placed in a position that was within reach of his hands. Every time a bolt of lightning streaked past the window, it emitted a faint light.

Suddenly, Derrick stopped and looked out into the darkness and into the dark sky.

It was as if he had once again seen the state his parents were in before their deaths. He found the pain he had experienced when he stabbed his sword downwards.

There’s no time… I need to make preparations for the future so that I wouldn’t be suspected for my discovery of that god being the Fallen Creator… As his expression distorted, he clenched his teeth and muttered to himself. He then suddenly left the side of the window and went back to the table. He began practicing the Light Suppliant’s Beyonder powers to drain his spirituality as quickly as possible.

†

In the Hall family’s luxurious villa.

In an art studio, Audrey leisurely smeared oil paint when she heard a rhythmic knock on the door.

When her maidservant, Annie, opened the door, she saw that it was her mother, Countess Caitlyn.

Although this lady was close to fifty years old, she looked to be in her early thirties. She had blonde hair, green eyes, and a beautiful and graceful appearance, enough to attract the attention of most gentlemen.

“Mother, is something the matter?” Audrey put down the items in her hand and stood up, puzzled.

The Countess looked at her daughter, who was even more beautiful than her younger self. She smiled and said, “I just attended a dinner party. Lady Della said that you’re very interested in psychology and that you wanted to hire a tutor, didn’t you?”

“Yes, but I haven’t decided yet…” Audrey replied hesitantly on purpose, just like she usually did.

How could the Countess not see through her daughter’s thoughts? She smiled and said, “She recommended a psychiatrist named Escalante. If you have no problem with that, I'll send someone to invite her to tutor you twice a week. How about that?"

"It's your decision." Audrey's smile blossomed, bit by bit. "Mother, come and sit here. I'm lacking a beautiful model!"

†

On Tuesday morning, Klein confirmed through the Backlund Morning Post that Eye of Wisdom's gathering would be held tomorrow night.

He was relieved as he was no longer worried that his acquisition of the items he needed wouldn't be in time for Miss Sharron's attack on the enemy.

To celebrate the good news, he decided to take a day off at the Quelaag Club.

Chapter 344 - Spending Lavishly

◈ ◈ ◈

Underground shooting range of the Quelaag Club.

When he was done shooting, Klein meticulously serviced his free revolver and adjusted the ratio of purifying bullets, demon hunting bullets, and exorcism bullets to 3:1:1.

Phew. He exhaled, put away the revolver, tidied his coat, and slowly walked back to the hall on the first floor.

He had already heard from the attendant that the dish that was in limited supply today was pan-fried Dragon-Bone Fish.

As soon as he entered the buffet cafeteria, Klein saw an acquaintance, Talim Dumont, the equestrian teacher from an abject noble family with short brown curls. He was eating his lunch with unfocused eyes.

Klein carried his plate over, sat down, and greeted him.

Talim turned his head and glanced at him. His lips quivered a few times, and after three or four seconds of silence, he finally opened his mouth and mumbled, “Sherlock, do you know—do you know rare people who have strange abilities and are very powerful?”

Yes, the one in front of you is one… Klein’s eyebrows twitched. He didn’t give a direct answer.

“What do you want to do?”

Talim opened his mouth but said nothing.

With a solemn expression, he thought for a while before he squeezed out a smile and said, “It’s nothing. I was just asking out of curiosity.”

He had asked what should a person do if he fell in love with someone he shouldn’t have the last time, and this time, he’s asking if I know of anyone with strange abilities… Is he trying to get rid of the other party and completely sever his friend’s fantasies? Who’s worth the risk? Hiring a killer is equivalent to murder! Klein mumbled silently, cut a piece of the fish without any fine bones, and stuffed it into his mouth.

Talim drew a breath, finished the food from his plate quickly, and wiped his mouth with a napkin.

He seemed to return to normal as he said with a smile, “Mike wants to hire you for a few days to be his bodyguard.”

Mike Joseph? The reporter from the Daily Observer? I remember his performance at the Golden Rose was rather brilliant… Klein chuckled.

“What does Mike want to do now?”

Talim spread out his hands and said, “I’m not sure. He just casually mentioned this matter. It seems to have something to do with an interview. He said that he will visit you the day after tomorrow. I hope you have the time to accept this commission.”

“I can’t be sure.” Klein, who didn’t know the details, didn’t give an affirmative answer.

At that moment, he heard a series of illusory pleas from a woman.

Miss Magician? Is she prepared to sacrifice the money in exchange for the formula? Klein picked up his speed and finished the rest of his food. Then, he downed the black tea and went to the reception desk to get the attendant to open a lounge for him.

After sealing the room with a wall of spirituality, he went above the gray fog and found that his judgment was correct. Miss Magician was requesting to hold the sacrificial ritual.

The reason for her delay was that she only had 370 pounds on her, and she had to go to the bank to withdraw some of her savings.

After a series of maneuvering, she saw the 450 pounds vanish into the illusionary door, and an additional formula appeared in her mind:

“Sequence 8, Trickmaster.

“Main ingredients: Stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater, 20 ml of a Deep Sea Marlin’s blood.

“Supplementary ingredients: 5 ml of essential oils made from Hornbeam, 10 grams of String Grass Powder, a blossoming Red Chestnut Flower, 80 ml of pure water.”

Finally, I’ve finally obtained it! It’s been years! Fors couldn’t help pacing back and forth, feeling overjoyed and proud.

Then, not feeling at ease, she took out a pen and a piece of paper, recording down the formula so that she wouldn’t forget it and end up having to trouble Mr. Fool.

If I don’t meet someone who doesn’t know the market well, then the main ingredient is at least 300 pounds, and I only have 430 pounds left… I still need to work hard to earn more money… I-I’m going to write a new book! Fors suddenly felt that she was brimming with motivation. She was no longer the procrastinator she had been before.

†

Five minutes to eight on a Wednesday evening, carrying all his savings, Klein entered the house where the gathering organized by Eye of Wisdom was held.

He was wearing a black robe, with the hood over his face, and an iron mask.

1,674 pounds in cash and 5 gold coins. This is the new peak of my wealth. I wonder how much will remain after this gathering… Klein entered the living room and scanned the room with the help of the candle's flickering light.

Eh, the Apothecary didn't come. Is he caught up with something? Klein frowned slightly and sat in the same position as he did the previous time.

After a few minutes, Eye of Wisdom clapped his hands and said, "Let's begin."

Before he could finish his sentence, someone impatiently spoke up. It was the heavily shrouded lady who seemed to have an Artisan backing her.

She suppressed her voice and asked, "Is the friend who wanted to sell the Briber formula last time here?"

"I'm here," Klein answered simply.

The lady heaved a sigh of relief, pushed her iron mask down and said, "This time, there's a Beyonder weapon that you need. Of course, you can also choose cash."

"What's the Beyonder weapon?" Klein suppressed the eagerness in his heart.

The lady organized her words and said, "This is a whip woven from the feathers of the Holy Sunbird.

"You can usually disguise it as a belt.

"When used, it will be covered with pure holy flames of light. Any undead monsters that are whipped by it will suffer great damage, and the weaker ones would even be directly obliterated.

"It can also be used to soak in liquids to create Sun Holy Water. But that would reduce the spirituality's durability. Every use will decrease its durability by a month.

"Currently, it has thirteen months of effective durability.

"If you are willing, you can exchange it for the Briber formula without paying any additional cash."

Holy Sunbird? It's not the Sun Divine Bird. If it's the latter's feathers, I'll take it! Of course, only tail feathers would do. They can be used to concoct the Sequence 4's Unshadowed potion… Klein was quite satisfied with the weapon itself, but the problem was that it could only be used for thirteen months. Every time he made Sun Holy Water, the durability would be reduced by a month. In time, he would have to replenish it with something similar.

With this in mind, he turned to look at the seat of honor.

"Mr. Eye of Wisdom, can you describe, in detail, the brooch you introduced last time?

"Oh, write it down on paper and indicate the price that would satisfy you."

He was afraid that the others would be interested in the brooch and thus raise the price, so he decided at the last second to get Eye of Wisdom to write it down.

"Alright." Eye of Wisdom laughed and asked an attendant to bring him a pen and paper.

While he was writing, the members of the gathering continued their trade. There were even some who were tempted as they asked about the price of the whip, only to receive an answer to wait.

After a while, the Eye of Wisdom finished writing the introduction and passed it to Klein through the attendant.

When Klein unrolled it, he saw that the words on the paper were written in print, preventing him from noticing anything special about them.

Very careful… He started to read carefully:

“Sun Brooch. It can also be called Midsummer, and it is considered a relatively weaker Grade 2 Sealed Artifact.

“With it acting as the center, it will fill a ten-meter radius with pure and warm energy. Normal people will not be able to sense it, but undead spirits and monsters will suffer constant damage, and they will quickly ‘evaporate’ like a pool of water under a blazing fireball. Even wraiths and shadows will suffer the same fate, albeit lasting a little longer.

“In such an environment, the strength of powerful undead creatures will be significantly weakened.

“It will be very difficult for the wearer to be possessed or corrupted by evil spirits or monsters. Allows use of spells such as Holy Light Summoning, Holy Water Creation, Fire of Light, Cleave of Purification, Horror Immunity, Holy Oath, and Sun Halo.

“The downside is that, as long as you carry it, you will never be able to feel cool. You will always be experiencing a terrible heat. Young man, don’t underestimate this state. The hot and irritated you will slowly step into the abyss of losing control.

“I will only sell it for 2,000 pounds.

“Don’t try to bargain. As you know, I’m not too short of money, and I’m a collector.”

It’s much stronger than I imagined. Eye of Wisdom had been very vague the last time… Klein’s heart skipped a beat. After a few seconds of thought, he looked over at the woman with the Artisan backing her.

“900 pounds in cash.”

The average price for a Sequence 7 potion formula was around 800 pounds.

"Deal!" the lady answered without hesitation.

…If I had known, I would have offered 1,000 pounds… Klein forced a smile.

He was a man of his word, and, without reneging his offer, he exchanged his prepared formula for 900 pounds in cash. In an instant, his wealth soared to 2,574 pounds. It was enough to make a bachelor man live a pretty good life for the rest of his life.

After Eye of Wisdom's appraisal, the lady looked at the formula once more in satisfaction.

"Sequence 7: Briber.

"Main ingredients: One Weeping Infant Flower, Strange-faced Cannabis Crystal.

"Supplementary ingredients: 5 drops of golden Jimsonweed juice, 5 drops of black Jimsonweed juice, 4 drops of Fantasy Grass essential oil, 80 ml of red wine."

After completing the transaction, Klein drew a deep breath, looked at Eye of Wisdom, and solemnly said, "2,000 pounds. I want that Sun Brooch."

Eye of Wisdom chuckled and said, "To be honest, I really don't wish to sell it, but since I have 2-081, Sun Brooch isn't necessary to me. Besides, I have already named my price, and reneging isn't my style.

"Wait three minutes for me. I'll get the Sun Brooch."

"Alright," Klein replied, feeling both expectant and also feeling the pinch.

At this point, the Beyonders in the activity room cast their gazes on him. A deal of 2,000 pounds rarely appeared at this level of ordinary gatherings, perhaps not even once in a year or two.

Klein could feel the greed and covetous feelings in their eyes.

After a short silence, the transactions continued until Eye of Wisdom returned. In his open palm lay a dark golden brooch shaped like a sunbird.

It was obvious that the Eye of Wisdom had some sweat on his face.

Chapter 345 - Sun Brooch

“You can confirm it before you pay.” The hooded Eye of Wisdom walked directly to Klein and handed the dark golden brooch to him.

Very generous… Klein reached out to take it, but before he could examine it closely, he felt his surroundings become very hot, even the wind felt as if it had been ignited. Once it entered his nose, it would spread to his lungs.

At this moment, he seemed to have left the cold and humid Backlund, finding himself in the desert and wilderness, right in the middle of the Northern Continent. Hanging above him was the sun that radiated endless light and heat, and in his surroundings was the extremely dry and boundless yellow sand.

Phew, it makes me want to eat ice cream… Sweat slowly seeped out of Klein’s forehead, but under the iron mask, the liquid couldn’t fall freely. It could only stick on the spot.

Through direct contact, he could feel the pure and warm power radiating out, but the Beyonders around him were not affected in the slightest.

After fixing the brooch in place, Klein released his spirituality and infused it into the dark golden surface.

With a boom, he saw the sky filled with dancing dots of pure gold light as he received a great deal of information.

This included how to use some of the spells in the Sun domain with the help of the brooch.

Most important of all were the tricks to injecting spirituality and the corresponding activation incantations!

One of them included providing the brooch with two seconds of spirituality, allowing it to summon a holy beam of light that descended from the sky to purify the undead and inflict certain damage on other targets.

A continuous supply of spirituality for five seconds, together with the use of the word "Sun" in ancient Hermes, would create a small amount of Sun Holy Water, which would exorcise evil spirits, drive away the cold, and purify wraiths.

In addition to the difference between strength and time intervals, the other corresponding spells could be cast as well.

Fire of Light was a sacred, concentrated flame that suddenly appeared out of thin air via a mere thought. Cleave of Purification was an effective attack against wraiths, and it could also be used to augment bullets. Horror Immunity allowed the wearer to no longer feel fear. Holy Oath was used to temporarily strengthen one's strength, agility, fire damage, and holy damage via chanting the corresponding ancient Hermes term. Sun Halo targeted comrades who were within twenty meters of him. It could effectively boost their courage and purify the evil energies within their bodies.

Not bad. Other than not being strange enough, it doesn't have too many flaws. It complements my Magician abilities nicely… It's just a little hot… Klein's mind was filled with fantasies about himself in short-sleeved clothes.

He rolled up his robe, took out a stack of bills from his inside pocket. Together with the 900 pounds he had just received from the lady with the Artisan backing her, he counted 2,000 pounds in cash before handing it to Eye of Wisdom's attendant.

After counting thrice and finally confirming that there was no mistake, Klein looked at his rapidly shrinking wallet, feeling both happy and sad at the same time.

The money he had painstakingly saved had been reduced to 574 pounds and five gold coins.

However, he also obtained his second mystical item. The number of side effects was obviously fewer than the Master Key. It was a mystical item which was more outstanding, the Sun Brooch!

The only drawback is it's just too hot… Klein reached out and touched his iron mask, and he nearly took it off to start using it to fan himself.

With the reduction of his funds, Klein stopped considering the notion of purchasing anything else. He just sat there quietly, listening until the end of the gathering.

Stimulated by the massive deal of 2,000 pounds, the gathering that night was relatively lively. For example, the whip woven from the feathers of the Holy Sunbird was sold for 850 pounds. Eye of Wisdom also made several purchases, buying an ancient book and a Beyonder ingredient.

When the gathering ended, Eye of Wisdom surveyed the room and looked at Klein. He said with a chuckle, "You shall be the first to leave."

Is he afraid that someone will rob me… Klein thanked him sincerely and walked out of the living room under the guidance of the attendant. He then impatiently took off his hooded robe and iron mask.

He had already tried to use his spirituality to wrap and seal the Sun Brooch. It prevented it from constantly purifying the surroundings and prevented its existence from being discovered by other Beyonders. However, the negative effects couldn't be weakened, unless it was not on his person.

In order to ensure my mental health, I should only use it only when necessary. I can usually rely on purifying bullets and exorcism bullets… Klein left the gathering venue and took a long detour before arriving outside the Bravehearts Bar.

He entered, circled the area, and quickly came out again and hired a carriage.

Unsurprisingly, he quickly saw a figure in a black regal dress outline itself opposite him.

Sharron's appearance had not changed at all. She asked in an ethereal voice, "Are you done with your preparations?"

"Yes, you can choose the ambush location and time. Notify me once you have confirmed the details." Klein nodded calmly.

Sharron looked at him and said, "Okay."

Seeing that she was about to disappear, Klein added, "Have Kaspars prepare a box of explosives and bury them all over the planned battlefield."

Sharron was silent for two seconds before she said, "Steve is also a demolition expert."

"No, my main purpose is not to blast anyone apart." Klein smiled. "I just want to put on some fireworks."

Sharron stared at him for a few seconds, then she nodded.

Witnessing her figure fading rapidly, Klein leaned back against the wall and opened the window, letting the bone-piercing wind in, but he still felt hot.

Back on Earth, I hated summer the most. Hmm, I like ice pops, ice cream, cold drinks, watermelons… as he mumbled, Klein reached into his pocket and held the Sun Brooch.

This is a mystical item worth 2,000 pounds!

Returning to Minsk Street, Klein walked slowly along the road lined with trees to Unit 15.

When he passed Lawyer Jurgen’s house, he subconsciously looked inside and saw the gas lamp with a slightly blue glow.

There’s someone home… Klein laughed as he sighed, his forehead constantly beaded with sweat.

†

Early the next day, on a Thursday morning.

Klein had just come out of the bathroom with a newspaper in hand when he heard the doorbell ring.

Who is it? Right, Talim mentioned that Reporter Mike Joseph will be coming to me today… Amid the tinkling bells, Klein came to the door and reached for the handle.

The image of the visitor naturally appeared in his mind:

He was about thirty years old, with a black tweed coat and a matching half top hat. He had sparse eyebrows, charming blue eyes, and a handsome mustache. But his skin was rather rough. He was none other than the reporter from the Daily Observer, Mike Joseph.

“Good morning, Mike. Talim told me about you,” Klein opened the door and greeted him.

He hadn’t hesitated to throw the Sun Brooch above the gray fog.

Mike Joseph pulled his bow tie and said, “Sorry for disturbing you so early, but I have matters to deal with later.”

“I understand,” Klein said politely, “Have you had breakfast? Would you like to try my toast?”

Mike suddenly smiled.

“I’m so sorry, that would be so nice of you.

“If it’s possible, could I also have a cup of hot coffee. Milk would do too. I noticed that you ordered fresh milk.”

“…Alright.” Klein smiled in response.

He busied himself with the toast, poured the milk, took out a tin of butter, and sat down, eating without a word.

Across from him, Mike was enjoying his breakfast without restraint, oblivious to the silence.

Phew… Klein exhaled and put down his cup.

“Mike, you wanted to hire me to protect you?”

Mike set his knife and fork down slowly and took a mouthful of milk.

“Yes, about two days, Friday and Saturday, maybe even Sunday morning.”

“Who wants to hurt you?” Klein asked in deliberation.

Mike chuckled and said, “No, this is just a form of proactive self-protection.

“The editor of the newspaper arranged for me to do an investigation in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district. It’s said that it’s sponsored by some Church or aristocrat.

“As you know, gangs run rampant in East Borough. There are thugs everywhere, and there are people who are willing to betray their conscience just to scrounge a meal. I need a bodyguard who is good at fighting and shooting.

“And most private detectives have certain connections in East Borough, don’t they?”

I don’t… I rely on mysticism to crack cases, no—deduction! Klein thought for a moment and said, “But I might not have the time in the next few days.”

I have to see when Miss Sharron will be taking action.

Mike cleared his throat and said, “I’ve already applied for ten pounds. This protection mission will amount to ten pounds, even if nothing happens.”

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“Mike, I’m serious.

“Tomorrow at this time, oh—come after breakfast to look for me. If I have availed myself, I will take this commission. If I’m really busy, then I will introduce you to other detectives. They’re also good at fighting and shooting.”

For example, Stuart or Kaslana… Two names flashed through his mind.

Mike finished the remaining toast and said, “That wouldn’t be an issue.”

After breakfast, Klein watched the journalist leave his home and admired the sights of the freezing rain outside through the oriel window—the passing carriages and pedestrians, the dark sky, and the colorful umbrellas.

Finally, a normal mission… It neither involves Beyonders nor does it have anything to do with finding cats and catching adulterers. It’s a pity that it isn’t a commission regarding a murder case or something like that. Otherwise, I would be able to experience what it feels like to be a true detective… There is always only one truth![1] Klein’s thoughts wandered aimlessly as he felt an inexplicable sense of carefreeness.

If not for the fact that he was still worried about the situation regarding Sharron and Maric, he planned to relax completely, visit all kinds of museums, buy a ticket to a large theater, listen to a few operas and musicals, and enjoy the delicacies of the various nations that had gathered in Backlund city.

Well, I'm a casual tourist, a lonely gourmet… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh, turned around, and walked towards the sofa, intending to look through the newspapers he hadn't finished reading.

Suddenly, he noticed that a slip of paper had appeared on the coffee table. The handwriting was elegant and reserved: "Tonight at 10 o'clock. We'll meet at the back door of Bravehearts Bar."

Klein was stunned for a moment. He turned his head to look outside the window, sighed, and said, Is it finally starting…

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†

A catchphrase from Detective Conan.

Chapter 346 - A Magician Before Going Onstage

◆

10 o’clock at night, in the alley by the back door of the Bravehearts Bar.

Like the previous time, Klein, in his black double-breasted frock coat and matching half top hat, had merely circled the bar once before he walked to the nearest street as though he were on a stroll.

Just as he walked out of the alley, a carriage stopped in front of him. Behind the glass window was Maric’s pair of brown eyes which were still suppressing any signs of malicious intent.

Klein pressed the top of his half top hat and, holding the sturdy cane in his hand, calmly boarded the carriage as if he had hailed it himself.

He sat down and straightened his bow tie like a gentleman attending a banquet.

“That outfit isn’t suitable for battle.” Maric, who was wearing a white shirt, black vest, and tights, sized him up a few times and frowned.

It was obvious that he still had some doubts regarding Klein’s strength, but he had chosen to trust Sharron.

Klein smiled casually and said, “My Beyonder powers are different from yours. Our fighting styles are different too. This type of clothing will not affect me negatively in any way; it even suits me very well. For example, it has a lot of pockets, and they can be used to store different items in different places, so as to avoid taking the wrong things when in a hurry and losing my life through such a laughable mistake."

As he spoke, he took out the remaining three sedatives from a sewn concealed pocket—they were the special sedatives concocted by the Apothecary!

Just as he finished his sentence, a figure quickly outlined itself on a window of the carriage.

A figure wearing a long black regal dress and a small soft hat.

It was none other than the Sequence 5 Beyonder of the Mutant pathway, Wraith Sharron.

"You explain too much." Sharron looked at Klein and said in an ethereal tone, "Not natural enough."

… I just wanted to get into the act… Klein laughed dryly and replied, "Probably it's because I'm a bit nervous."

Without waiting for Sharron to speak again, he handed the three sedatives to Maric.

"Find a chance to drink it yourself.

"I'm sure that you're more experienced than I am. You won't drink it too early or too late, much less drink too little or too much."

Maric looked at the sealed and transparent glass test tube, gently shaking the liquid inside and said, "Two and a half. Any more and I will really be sedated. I wouldn't do anything for a short period of time."

"Very good," Klein praised and turned to look at Sharron. "Have you guys decided on the ambush spot?"

Sharron nodded.

"We're on the way there."

She didn't directly reveal the intended location to Klein.

Very prudent, very careful… Klein thought for a moment before asking, "Will you be hurt by purification?"

"As a zombie, yes. Same when I'm in my spirit state," Sharron explained succinctly.

In other words, when a Sequence 5 Wraith is still in their physical state, the purification effects wouldn't be effective… Klein thoughtfully asked, "What about exorcism?

"What about demon-hunting?"

As they were dealing with a Beyonder of the same pathway, Sharron didn't hide anything from him.

"Demon-hunting will deal damage to our bodies. Likewise for exorcism, to both our bodies and spiritual bodies. But it wouldn't be fatal."

Klein curled his lips into a smile and exhaled.

"I understand."

He pondered for a moment, and he asked again after some deliberation, "Do you feel the power of purification and exorcism now?"

"No," Maric replied hoarsely.

Very good, this spirituality cage, modified from a wall of spirituality, is indeed able to isolate the effects of the Sun Brooch. However, I'm so hot… Klein secretly sighed and confirmed, "Wraith Steve, Zombie Jason, and Werewolf Tyre, do they have any other mystical items or Beyonder weapons besides the Scarlet Lunar Corona?"

"We don't know." Maric pinched his glabella, looking a bit irritated.

With the battle at hand, he couldn't help but be stirred by these emotions while suppressing his maliciousness and desires.

Sharron listened silently and replied without any hints of discomposure, “When influenced by the Scarlet Lunar Corona, Jason and Tyre will be in a rather fervent state.

“Even if they have mystical items, they would lack the reason to use them.”

“Unless it’s something passive,” added Maric. “But to a Werewolf, their claws are their Beyonder weapons. It’s the same for me, Tyre, and Jason. It can tear through steel and comes with venom.”

Klein’s eyes darted about as he nodded.

“Alright, I have no more questions.”

In the night with few pedestrians, the carriage sped across the streets, its wheels going over puddles of water from time to time, splattering fine dirt onto itself.

After ten minutes or so, Maric had the zombie driver stop the carriage.

Klein looked out through the glass window and saw a dark, dilapidated building. Not far away, the sound of running water could be heard.

“This is the West Balam dock that has been abandoned for a year and is about to be rebuilt. Our planned ambush point will be around its warehouses,” Maric introduced.

The abandoned West Balam dock… If an accident were to really happen, the Tussock River would be the best escape route… According to my previous survey, there is a Lever Cathedral about two kilometers northwest of here, one belonging to the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery… Klein quickly recalled his surroundings.

He disembarked from the carriage, tidied up his clothes in a leisurely manner, and, with his cane in hand, followed Sharron and Maric into the dock which awaited renovations.

After walking for about five minutes, they came to an open space surrounded by several warehouses.

The soil here was dark brown, with withered weeds lying everywhere. A wooden chest quietly sat in a dark corner.

“Those are the explosives you asked for.” Maric pointed.

Klein immediately nodded and said, “Aren’t you afraid that a tramp might steal them?”

“My zombies are sleeping underground here. If anyone enters, they will scare that person away.” Maric pointed to a few other spots. “Avoid them when you bury the explosives.”

“No problem.” Klein smiled and nodded before asking, “Will my purification and exorcism effects hurt your guys?”

“No, they are equivalent to corpses when in deep slumber, and there’s also a thick layer of soil shielding them.” Maric gave an affirmative answer.

After looking around, Sharron became talkative for once.

“Stay here and make your preparations. We’ll go and lure the enemy over.

“It won’t take more than thirty minutes. Please make use of the time.

“After you finish your preparations, hide in a warehouse. Don’t be in a hurry to make your move. Make sure to be patient.

“No matter how dangerous the situation is, treat it as normal.

“When I become weak and the Scarlet Lunar Corona appears, you can use that ‘eye’ to search for Steve and launch a sudden attack on him. I will also use my mystical item to complement you.”

Klein listened attentively, chuckled, and said, “A very simple plan.”

“The simpler the plan, the more effective it is,” Sharron calmly responded.

Maric pinched his forehead, shook his head, and said, “Steve isn’t a fool. If any problem arises in a complicated plan, it will lead to a complete disaster.

After they finished their exchange, Sharron vanished and Maric quickly departed from the dock.

After watching them leave, Klein took out a small square metal box from his pocket. Its surface was covered in a thin film of spirituality. This was the spirituality cage that had been modified from a wall of spirituality.

It could, to some extent, isolate the outside world from the effects of certain mystical items, but it couldn’t abate the negative effects they had on the possessor.

Of course, Sealed Artifacts which were too powerful or too strange were definitely not something that a spirituality cage could deal with. They required a special sealing environment that was specially designed for it.

Four warehouses, overgrown with weeds. The ground is muddy from the rain earlier… Klein took out a piece of paper and shook it.

Pa!

The paper quickly became taut and as hard as an iron plate.

Klein held the note and dug a shallow hole in the middle of the open ground. He buried the small square iron box in his hand. There was only a thin layer of soil between it and the outside world.

Next, he took out the explosives from the wooden box and buried them in different corners and in different warehouses.

He buried the remaining explosive sticks near the center.

After finishing all of this, he took out his revolver and adjusted the ratio of the bullets again—3 purifying bullets and 2 exorcism bullets.

Putting away the revolver in his underarm holster, Klein tidied his clothes, walked to a gap between two warehouses, and threw a paper figurine there, right above some buried explosives.

He examined his surroundings again, and then he took out another square metal box. He removed the spirituality cage on its surface and took out the dark golden sunbird shaped brooch, solemnly wearing it on his left chest.

Phew… Klein let out a breath, left the place, circled the exterior, threw out some inconspicuous items, and burned away the used piece of paper.

When he returned, he climbed to the top of one of the warehouses and hid in the shadows.

Reaching out his hand, he counted and confirmed the various charms, extract, and herbal powders. He touched the iron cigar case and snapped his fingers.

The paper figurine he had left between the two warehouses stood up and transformed into a gentleman wearing a black double-breasted frock coat, a silk half top hat, and was holding a hard cane.

The gentleman's position was rather remote and hidden, making it difficult for anyone who came in from the outside to notice him.

With his stand-in present, Klein's figure disappeared from where he stood.

However, his vision wasn't affected in any way, and he could clearly see the road that led to the clearing.

Even though he had made preparations and had experienced many battles, Klein was still a bit afraid and nervous at that very moment.

No matter how good a performance was, it could still be seen through!

Furthermore, the enemy was a Sequence 5 wielding a mystical item! There was also a Sequence 6 and Sequence 7!

Is this the state every magician is in before he goes onstage? Klein took a silent breath, suppressing his emotions and the heat of his body.

That night, the crimson moon was constantly obscured by the clouds, and there was only a glimmer of light in the clearing.

Before long, Klein saw three figures rapidly approaching.

One in front, one in the middle, and one at the back!

Chapter 347 - Zombie and Werewolf

◆

Running ahead of the group was Maric. His disheveled hair was completely blown back by the wind, and his expression was twisted and hideous.

He was even faster than a steam locomotive at its peak speed. With a whoosh, he arrived at the entrance to the clearing.

But even so, he was still unable to escape from his pursuers.

The closest figure to him was a man who had the same pale complexion as himself, with indistinct, dark patches on his face, as if they were healing marks from rotting wounds. The malice in his eyes was completely undisguised and unrestrained. He looked more like a zombie who was craving fresh flesh rather than a human being, and Klein guessed that he was Jason, a Sequence 6.

The distance between Jason and Maric remained within seven or eight meters, sometimes lengthening; sometimes shortening. This repeated again and again, as they ventured back and forth.

More than ten meters behind them, a figure was left far behind. It was a thin but muscular man; his hair was shaved very short, and his hair stood erect like spikes.

As he swung his arms, the tip of his palms flashed with a metallic light, reflecting the weak crimson moonlight. Those were black fingernails which were as long as daggers!

Werewolf Tyre… Klein chanted the person’s Sequence and name silently. In his mind, the wall that was splashed with blood appeared in his mind. It was a scene with intestines and limbs splattered all over the ground.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Maric used all his strength as he ran while Jason gritted his teeth and ran as fast as he could. At some point, the healed dark spots on his face began to swell, as if some sort of rotten liquid was about to ooze out.

The two of them left the puddles of water and moist soil that were turning into white frost in their wake.

The withered weeds were lifted up by the wind created by the two of them. As they slowly fell down, they began to rot and decay at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Suddenly, a pale hand reached out of the frosted soil and accurately grabbed Jason’s ankle.

Pa!

Jason twisted his body and forcefully kicked out, breaking the hand’s wrist and sending it flying. The remaining stump’s flesh and blood had long since rotten, and white maggots struggled to squirm outwards.

Maric stopped, pinched his lips with his right hand, and let out a shrill whistle.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The soil in different parts of the clearing were lifted, and the expressionless corpses sat up.

At the same time, a chilly wind suddenly swirled. Countless transparent shadows seemed to have caught the scent of a bloody feast, and none of them wanted to fall behind as they rushed towards Jason.

Some pulled his arms, some pulled his calves, and some even hugged his head.

Jason stopped and grunted.

The shadows flew out, one after another—some of them screamed miserably and disappeared, while others stayed in their original spots, lost.

At almost the same time, Maric and Jason both raised their right hands, thumbs held up beside their forefingers, with their index fingers aiming at each other.

Silently, the air between them exploded as black wisps of air billowed upwards.

Maric took a step back, and a few strands of his disheveled hair withered in a blink of an eye and fluttered to the ground.

“Maric, you’re still so weak. You still don’t understand how to use the power of desire!” Jason said with a low, hoarse laugh.

At this moment, Werewolf Tyre had already arrived at his side. As for Steve, the Sequence 5 Beyonder in charge of the operation, was nowhere to be found.

“Don’t be in such a hurry to finish off Maric. Wait for Sharron to come and save him, Lord Steve is about to arrive,” Werewolf Tyre whispered to Jason.

He then extended his bright red tongue and licked his lips.

“I wonder what Sharron will look like when she has her clothes off…”

Before he could finish his sentence, he suddenly saw Jason turn his head. His face was deathly pale, and there were two identical figures in his eyes.

Black regal dress, light blonde hair, exquisite face, and pale skin!

Pa!

He struck out with both palms and gripped Werewolf Tyre’s neck. The creaking sound of bones giving way sounded out.

Wraith Sharron had attacked!

Tyre inhaled sharply, making his neck bulge like a water pipe. It grew strands of stiff black hair and briefly resisted the force that would snap his windpipe and neck.

His eyes gradually rolled backward, showing its whites as his red tongue hung out and sticky saliva drooled down his lips.

However, his right hand had accurately reached into his pocket. He had cracked a preset spirituality seal!

The empty clearing, together with the warehouses, suddenly lit up as crimson moonlight filled the entire area.

Jason’s grip on Werewolf Tyre’s neck began to weaken, and a figure in a small, soft hat appeared behind him.

Tyre’s face broke into a smile that was both smug and cruel. His right hand took out a miniature “full moon” from his pocket, a crimson “full moon!”

It was a dark red accessory that constantly emitted a serene luster. Shaped like a full moon, it had crimson rubies embedded along its circumference. In the middle was a symbol that symbolized the moon, as well as many other mysterious labels.

Sharron narrowed her eyes instinctively and retreated two steps back. Her incorporeality slowly receded.

Her legs no longer seemed capable of supporting her weight. She fell limply to the ground, her black and complicated regal dress stained with dust and mud.

Werewolf Tyre raised the palm-sized round accessory high up into the air, laughing as he gasped for breath.

“Lord Steve was right. You would definitely attempt to counterattack. And Sharron, your target for possession would definitely be Jason, whose Sequence is higher than mine. Therefore, the Scarlet Lunar Corona was given to me.

“Guess, where is he now?”

This… This isn’t as Sharron had expected… It seems like I can only choose the best opportunity to strike myself… Klein frowned as he heard this, and he forcefully suppressed the anxiety in his heart.

At this point, Werewolf Tyre was in no hurry to attack. He knew that the longer the effects of the Scarlet Lunar Corona lasted, the weaker Sharron would become, and the more Maric would be in pain.

In Jason’s cold eyes, which usually had a hint of savagery and madness, there was no longer any rationality in them left.

He was also affected by the Scarlet Lunar Corona, but he was used to indulging in his desires, so he didn’t feel any pain. Instead, he felt a thirst for the fresh flesh before his eyes.

Gasp!

Jason let out a low, inhuman growl from his throat. His exposed skin and hair turned white.

At that moment, Sharron raised her arms with difficulty and used her left hand to remove the black glove that she wore on her right palm. Jason happened to lunge at her, and a thin layer of ice covered the soil around her!

Suddenly, endless rays of light burst forth from Sharron’s palm.

As they fed on Sharron’s spirituality, they interweaved in front of the doll-like lady to form a bronze door, which was covered with mysterious patterns and filled with an indescribable smell.

The door swung open with a creak and a crack appeared!

From the crack, pairs of pale or transparent hands or arms covered in teeth or bloody, skinless arms, stretched out, crossed the void, and grabbed Zombie Jason!

Indescribable pairs of eyes were hidden in the darkness behind the door, quietly watching the prey in front of them.

Before he could even react, Jason was grabbed by the arms, and he was entangled by smooth and incorporeal tentacles! These tentacles were dark-green vines that had countless baby faces protruding out!

These strange entities were crying and laughing as they tried to drag Zombie Jason behind the door.

Even though his thoughts were completely controlled by his bloodlust and the urge to kill, Jason instinctively felt afraid.

Gasp!

The sound from his throat suddenly intensified, and layers of frost immediately appeared on the worrisome-looking arm. The baby faces that protruded out of the dark-green vines emitted painful groans as they continuously dripped with decayed, turbid yellow liquid.

The pulling force abated, but it did not disappear.

Jason kept directing ghosts to interfere, but it was like throwing a stone into the sea. Even when he tried to use spells from Death's domain, they failed to deliver any striking results.

His body began moving uncontrollably towards the crack of the illusory mysterious door. Occasionally, he would manage to struggle and retreat a little.

As he had taken a sedative in advance, Maric was not completely taken down by the pain. Taking advantage of this, he took out the last two sedatives, broke the bottle with a snap, and drank one and a half glasses in one go.

The suppressed malice in his eyes weakened, and his twisted expression returned to normal. He swept his gaze at Werewolf Tyre.

At the same time, with a swoosh, Tyre's thin but muscular body disappeared and reappeared more than ten meters away.

As his figure began outlining itself, an illusory image was left behind. A black aura that seemed to be alive rose up from the ground, pierced through the remnant images, and disappeared with a flicker.

Tyre hadn't used Blink, as his Sequence didn't have the corresponding Beyonder powers to do so.

He had relied on the Scarlet Lunar Corona to push him to his maximum speed!

The speed at which he moved at produced afterimages!

At that moment, Klein, who was hiding in the shadows at the top of the warehouse, also reached into his pocket with his left hand, touching the iron cigar case. He removed its surface spirituality cage and gently opened the case.

He was sure that Wraith Steve had already arrived at the scene; otherwise, Jason definitely would've been dragged behind the terrible door if the deadlock continued. As for Werewolf Tyre, despite being augmented by the Scarlet Lunar Corona, he was unable to instantly finish Maric off. When Sharron aimed the Door of Mysteries at the Werewolf, the Scarlet Lunar Corona would end up changing owners.

As soon as Klein's fingers touched the All-Black Eye inside the metal cigar case, his mind filled with crazy, foul, and terrifying ravings!

There were terrifying ravings that made his blood vessels bulge. He felt as though his eyes were cracking, and his head could explode at any moment.

And in the midst of these ravings, Klein saw strange, mysterious, and illusory black threads. They were divided into groups, some of them extending to Sharron's body, some of them from Werewolf Tyre. They intertwined with each other without entangling themselves as they extended into the void.

Among them, many of the black lines came from a spot not far away from Maric, and they didn't overlap!

Wraith Steve! He wants to possess Maric! With a thought, Klein retracted his left hand.

Instead of drawing his gun to shoot, he snapped his fingers without making much of a sound.

Boom!

An explosion suddenly occurred between the two warehouses. The raging flames and heat caused a figure wearing a black double-breasted frock coat to float out.

After catching the attention of the others, Klein quickly drew his gun and pulled the trigger at the spot he remembered.

At the same time, the dark golden Sunbird brooch on his chest flashed with a ray of light.

He added Cleave of Purification to the purifying bullet!

Bang!

The bullet shot out with a faint golden beam of light.

Chapter 348 - Terrifying Wraith

◆ ◆ ◆

A faint golden stream of light flashed past, hitting what seemed like an empty space.

However, resplendent flames suddenly rose up from that spot, rapidly forming a silhouette who was wearing a black tuxedo and a dark red cloak.

The figure’s left arm was burning with holy and pure flames as it continuously emitted faint black and green smoke, illuminating his pale face in dark green glow.

It was a man in his forties with oily hair that was neatly combed with meticulous attention. His eyes were dark and green, and while possessing no emotion, there were no signs of pain!

Wraith Steve!

He turned his head and looked maliciously at Klein, who was at the top of the warehouse.

Klein was startled as he felt his body suddenly turn cold. Even the heat brought by the Sun Brooch couldn’t counteract it.

His body stiffened quickly, and his eyes glazed over. His pupils reflected the same two figures: a black tuxedo, a dark red cloak, a head of hair slathered with oil, a pair of dark green eyes, and the pale face of a man in his forties!

Almost in an instant, Klein was placed under Steve’s control, his thoughts gradually numbing.

This was the ability of a Sequence 5 Wraith!

It was a strange and hardly defensible ability!

Fortunately, he was adequately aware of everything beforehand and was already prepared for it. Moreover, the exorcism effect could effectively resist the possession of evil spiritual beings, so before his ability to think had completely disappeared, he stimulated the spirituality of his Soul Body and injected it into the dark golden Sunbird brooch.

Just as he was about to raise his hand to grab hold of his neck, a warm and pure ray of light suddenly descended from the sky.

It was like a pillar of light from the Sun, bringing with it a feeling of brilliance and holy purification as it enveloped Klein within.

It was a spell from the Sun domain, Holy Light Summoning!

Amidst the holy light, the formless possession ability was weakened, and Klein's eyes suddenly regained their luster.

In close succession, his body ignited, becoming brittle and charred, leaving behind a thin piece of paper.

At the same time, between the gaps of the two warehouses, Klein, in his double-breasted frock coat and matching silk half top hat, jumped out of the roaring flames from the previous explosion.

His cane had been thrown away somewhere long ago, and the same figure floating above his head had also been successfully destroyed by the flames. It turned into pieces of ashes and scattered in every direction.

Before Klein could confirm his situation, he felt an invisible grip on his ankle.

There was a firm grip on his calves, arms, chest, and clothes!

In his Spirit Vision which had long been activated, Klein saw blurry, transparent figures. Some of them were incomplete, some were covered in blood, some of them had burnt black skin, and others were pale and cold.

Phew… A cold wind of unknown origins blew at his neck, making his hair stand on end and made his body tremble uncontrollably.

The dark golden Sunbird brooch in front of him suddenly flashed with a brilliant light, and golden illusory flames started flaring up around him one after another!

These flames emitted the aura of the sun, and because they were so dense, they formed a sea.

This was the “Fire of Light” from the Sun domain!

The ghastly ghosts around Klein shrieked silently and vanished, and the cold wind at the back of his head was replaced by the scorching heat of the Sun Brooch.

Klein, who was temporarily safe in this environment, couldn’t help but sigh in fear.

Even though he had prepared ahead of time and had obtained items to counter his opponent, a one on one battle with a Sequence 5 Wraith was still precarious. The “performance” had almost ended in failure from the very beginning!

Not too far away from Maric, the dark red-cloaked Steve’s figure turned slightly incorporeal. The bright flames on his left arm were quickly extinguished under the onslaught of the black aura.

His eyes shone with dark green light, filled with malice and desire. He seemed to have lost his mind and ability to think.

At this moment, with the shot's warning, Maric had distanced himself and directed the numb-faced zombies who had crawled out of the earth to surround Werewolf Tyre. He created slippery layers of ice and rotting sludge in an attempt to affect his enemy's movements.

Werewolf Tyre held onto the tiny full moon that was emitting crimson light as he ran without stopping. When he was blocked by a zombie, he casually swiped down.

Whoosh!

The zombie was immediately split into six pieces. The long rotten flesh and wriggling maggots sprinkled all over the ground.

Werewolf Tyre froze for a moment, looking at his claws in disbelief.

Only then did he understand that the augmentation that the Scarlet Lunar Corona brought him wasn't only restricted to speed.

He felt that he had mastered some powerful and strange spell!

Tyre stopped running and turned to face the pale Maric.

At this moment, Zombie Jason was drawing closer to the illusory but mysterious door. His body was covered with dark-green vines that had baby faces protruding. He was being dragged by arms that were either full of teeth or were skinless.

His eyes were almost touching the crack of the bronze door as he stared coldly at the indescribable eyes hidden in the darkness.

It was as if that place was the final resting place for his heart.

"No!"

His body, which was controlled by bloodlust and the desire to kill, shouted out shrilly.

Werewolf Tyre, who was about to counterattack, stopped instantaneously. Clenching his teeth, he threw the miniature version of the crimson full moon at Steve.

Only by allowing a Sequence 5 Beyonder to regain his strength would he be augmented, allowing the battle to come to a quick end. Only then would Jason have a chance of being rescued!

Upon seeing this, Klein's eyes lit up, and he immediately snapped his fingers.

Pa!

Boom!

In the Scarlet Lunar Corona's trajectory, a pre-buried explosive threw up the soil, blew out a strong impactful gust of wind, and set off a scarlet flame.

Being struck by this, the Scarlet Lunar Corona was redirected and landed in another direction.

Boom!

Another explosive blew up, inducing a fiery light to rise up. Klein leaped up and pounced at the Scarlet Lunar Corona which wasn't too far from him.

Suddenly, a pale palm appeared right in front of the Scarlet Lunar Corona's landing spot and grabbed it.

It was none other than Steve, who had disappeared and then reappeared!

His instincts made him chase after the full moon!

Pa! With a soft sound, Steve grabbed the Scarlet Lunar Corona. His dark green eyes, which were full of malice and desire, gained a trace of spiritual luster. This caused him to return from the form of a pure wraith to a Sequence 5 powerhouse.

He smirked at Klein.

He wasn't in a hurry to deal with this weak opponent, so he let his figure disappear once more.

Klein, who had already thrown himself out, rolled twice, reached into his pocket with his left hand, and once again gently flipped open the iron cigar case. He touched Rosago's All-Black Eye.

Amidst the ravings that caused his tears and snot to constantly flow, Klein saw more strange black lines, and from their origin, he caught a glimpse of the invisible Steve.

He was closing in on Sharron, who was slumped to the ground weakly, at high speeds. He wanted to control her, rescue Jason, and put an end to the battle.

Sharron was their main target for this operation!

Klein suddenly retracted his left hand, and with a thought, he once again injected his spirituality into the Sun Brooch.

2! 1!

A holy beam of light descended from the sky, enveloping Sharron from behind.

Steve, who was wearing a dark red cloak, suddenly appeared a few meters away, barely avoiding the holy light.

With the augmentation of the Scarlet Lunar Corona, his speed was already frightening to the point of him being capable of effectively dodging in an instant!

But at the same time, the genuflecting Klein had raised his right hand and pulled the trigger of the revolver.

His target was Jason!

A resplendent bullet flew out, aimed directly at Jason's back, and was about to "help" him enter the bronze door of mystery.

But at that moment, Steve disappeared and reappeared behind Jason, blocking the bullet with his open left palm.

Sizzle!

The sunlight from the explosion made him shake his arm in pain. He narrowed his eyes as his skin was constantly charring and peeling, but it quickly healed.

Suddenly, he heard a crisp sound!

Klein had snapped his fingers again!

Boom!

A nearby explosive exploded. The resulting shock wave and bullet-like stones shot out in all directions.

A large number of them landed on Jason's and Steve's bodies!

"No!"

With a blood-curdling scream, the clothes on Jason's side tore apart, and the quickly-darkening white spots on his skin appeared as if fresh blood was about to seep out.

To a Zombie with a body as hard as steel, this wasn't an effective injury, but to a person like Jason who was struggling to hold on, it was equivalent to the beckoning of death.

He could no longer hold on as those terrifying arms quickly pulled him into the crack of the bronze door!

"No…"

Jason's scream resounded into the distance as the mysterious and illusory door closed with a clang, devouring the rest of his screams and isolating it from the world!

The clearing in the middle of the warehouses turned completely silent. Jason had completely disappeared, as though he had never been born into this world.

Steve’s eyes widened, and he opened his mouth, letting out an angry screech, “Damn it!”

Bam!

As his voice resounded, Klein felt as if someone had heavily hammered him in the head. His vision turned blurry, and whatever he breathed in smelled of blood. His vision had become blood-red.

For a short time, his ears were filled with buzzing sounds, and he couldn’t hear anything else.

After Tyre delivered the Scarlet Lunar Corona, he had grown black fur and sharp fangs. He was no longer immune to its effects and painfully covered his ears. Blood even flowed out from the corner of his eyes and mouth.

Maric, who should have seized the opportunity to grab him, was in an even worse state. His desire and malice, which had been suppressed by the sedative, had reared their heads once more, causing him to almost lose control of his zombies. His expression was extremely twisted.

Chapter 349 - Poison Bottle

◆ ◆ ◆

Due to Wraith Steve’s shriek, the weakened Miss Sharron also revealed a painful expression. However, she still managed to close her palm with much difficulty, causing the rays of light to be severed, which caused the illusory, mysterious bronze door to disappear.

Klein knew that the situation was turning bad. Enduring his headache, he quickly took a step back and entered the fire. His figure quickly disappeared and reappeared in another explosion that happened in a different direction.

He had just jumped out, in an attempt to strike back, when he saw Steve, the middle-aged man with the dark red cloak, stop in his tracks instead of chasing after him, as though he was waiting for something.

Klein suddenly felt agitated. His head felt dizzy, and his stomach spasmed.

He quickly weakened, but he had no idea why.

Maric, who had just recovered from the sharp shriek, also had an abnormal reaction. He constantly stretched out his hands to grab at himself, as if his body suffered an uncontrollable itch.

He gasped for breath as he used his long, sharp nails to rip apart his clothes and left white streaks across his body. The more he scratched, the deeper it became, causing its redness to seep out.

Sharron fell to the ground, but she couldn’t stand again. Her blue eyes lost their focus, as though she couldn't see anything.

"Poison…" she whispered the word.

Not far from her, Steve looked at her tightly clenched fist. He seemed rather fearful of the bronze door that was covered with mysterious patterns and an indescribable smell. He didn't dare to recklessly make a move.

In his right hand, he held the Scarlet Lunar Corona, the crimson full moon that was releasing a cold glow. Using his left hand, he took out a brown, translucent glass bottle from his pocket, and he snorted.

"Biological Poison Bottle can be used to randomly create different kinds of toxins. As long as you open it, the poisons will gradually spread to its surroundings.

"It will be effective in less than a minute, and the symptoms will only become worse. In four minutes, if you don't leave the poison-filled environment, then the corresponding effects will be unpreventable, such as death.

"What a pity. I thought Jason would be able to hold on to this moment.

"Sharron, you wouldn't have been affected since a Spirit Body isn't afraid of poison, but unfortunately, there's the Scarlet Lunar Corona here, which prevents you from switching states.

"Perhaps, you can give up resisting and let me understand your hidden charms."

He appeared to be leisurely introducing the abilities of the mystical item in his hand, as though he wanted to wait for Klein and company to completely lose their ability to resist before attacking.

However, Tyre didn't understand his intention. Under the influence of the Scarlet Lunar Corona, the irrational Werewolf started his counterattack without hesitation. He threw himself forward, flailed his claws, and swiped across Maric's body, tearing it apart.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The sound of nails tearing through steel sounded in succession, and Maric's skin finally showed signs of bloody wounds.

Klein pinched his forehead. It felt like his forehead was starting to heat up, but the negative effects weren't as bad as what Steve mentioned.

It seems like the poison has been weakened by the Sun Brooch's constant purification and purging effect… Klein suddenly sneered.

"Are you planning on attacking us after we succumb to the poison?

"Why do you think I didn't use fireworks just now? Why do you think I relied on explosives?

"With so many explosions, I've definitely attracted the attention of others. The official Beyonders nearby are rushing here at this very moment. You don't have much time left!"

Steve turned his head to look at Klein, whose face was couldn't be identified thanks to the paint that was smeared on it. He suddenly laughed and said, "I forgot there's a bug that I can easily deal with.

"Don't worry, you'll definitely be dead before the people from the Church arrive…"

Before he could finish his sentence, Klein suddenly raised the revolver in his right hand and shot out a purifying bullet.

Steve moved his footsteps slightly, traversing several meters in turn. Along the way, he left afterimages behind.

However, Klein's bullet didn't hit where he had aimed. Instead, it hit the middle of the clearing, piercing through the soil, and creating a loud commotion!

A breeze of spirituality blew past, and both Maric's zombie and Steve's shadows stopped moving at the same time.

In a split-second, they charged out rabidly, charging towards the center of the clearing like a pack of hungry dogs at mealtime.

Steve, who was about to use arcane methods to control Klein and easily kill him, was stunned for a moment. Then, he revealed a puzzled and surprised expression.

For some baffling reason, he discovered that he couldn't command the undead he controlled! It was a first for him!

At the same time, Klein snapped his fingers, detonating a few more bombs and setting off scarlet flames that soared into the air in different locations.

His figure leaped from one bonfire to the other as he blinked towards the clearing's exterior.

"You want to run!?" Steve whispered. Just as he was about to turn incorporeal to chase after his target, he found that the zombies and shadows had dug out a square metal box and were fighting for the item inside.

Soon, one of shadow succeeded. Its body swelled, and seemingly gaining intelligence, it flew in another direction.

So that item is used to delay my actions and allow him to successfully escape… Humph, he still doesn't understand what a Wraith and the Scarlet Lunar Corona is capable of! Steve temporarily gave up on chasing Klein. Putting away the Biological Poison Bottle, his body suddenly disappeared and appeared on a thin layer of ice that formed in a puddle of water. He relied on his terrifying speed to drag out an afterimage and arrived behind that giant shadow.

Steve's eyes flashed with a dark green light. The shadow instantly dispersed without a sound, and the item in its hand dropped.

The other zombies and shadows, completely disregarding the oppressive aura of the mighty existence as they rushed over to grab it.

Steve was more and more alarmed and curious. He discovered that his spiritual intuition couldn't draw any revelations from the object that had caused the rioting of the zombies and shadows.

He stepped forward and grabbed the object with his left hand.

It was a dark gold key ring. Hanging from it was an ancient and exquisite copper whistle. Beside the copper whistle hung a simple bronze key.

They clung closely together as they remained in Steve's pale palm.

At the same time, Steve's Scarlet Lunar Corona in his right hand was quietly emanating a crimson glow, like a miniature full moon.

Before thoughts even surfaced in Steve's mind, a faint but very strange sound entered his mind, ripping at his nerves and scraping his scalp.

"Ah!"

Steve let out a miserable scream and fell from midair to the ground. The Scarlet Lunar Corona, which he held in his hand, and the key ring with the copper whistle and key were sent flying at the same time.

He struggled and twisted on the spot, his body bulging and protruding. There were arms that were as small as babies which grew out of his body, or a foul, light yellow liquid that sloshed inside his body.

At this moment, a flame ignited again. Klein, who had "escaped," leaped out and appeared in the path of the Scarlet Lunar Corona.

He didn't attempt to catch the mystical item. Instead, with a gentle flick, he diverted its trajectory, sending it flying toward the weakened Miss Sharron.

Steve's cries of pain gradually died down, and the Scarlet Lunar Corona accurately landed on Sharron.

Sharron's figure instantly turned incorporeal, and the blue eyes that had lost their focus regained their luster.

Clenching her right hand tightly, her left hand held the palm-sized accessory inlaid with a ring of dark rubies. Her body began to float.

The Scarlet Lunar Corona allowed its wielder to be immune to the influence of the full moon!

Sharron was no longer weak!

And in her Spirit Body state, she wasn't afraid of the biological poison!

At this moment, the zombies and shadows gathered together once again, fighting over the chained Master Key and Azik's copper whistle.

Klein didn't care. He raised his left arm and pointed.

The Sun Brooch on his chest flashed a dark golden glow and disappeared. An intense, bright, and holy light fell from the sky, shrouding the group of zombies and shadows that were fighting over it.

In what seemed like daylight, the transparent and bizarre shadows quickly melted and disappeared. The pale and stinking corpses emitted black smoke first before they ignited and burned like candles.

By the time the light disappeared, there was almost nothing left except for Azik's ancient and intricate copper whistle and the Master Key which were both strung on an already blackened key ring. They lay there silently.

Meanwhile, Sharron didn't care about Maric, whose injuries were turning graver thanks to Tyre's attacks. Instead, she relied on her own ability to phase into mirror-like items to reach the thin piece of ice, that Steve had previously used, and stepped out.

She stretched out her right hand towards Steve, who was transforming into a monster, and opened it wide, aiming the palm of her hand at the enemy!

Endless rays of light burst out and quickly intertwined to form the mysterious-patterned bronze door.

Creak!

With a jarring noise, the small black hat on Sharron's head was blown away by a sudden gust of wind, and her carefully combed blonde hair cascaded down in a disheveled state.

It was obvious that using the mystical item again was rather taxing on her.

Creak!

The mysterious bronze door produced a crack, and a series of shrill laughter, sobbing, and shouting echoed in the air.

Arms either filled with teeth or completely without skin reached out wildly and grabbed at Steve, whose pustules were bursting one by one.

The strange dark-green vines that accentuated an infant's face and the slippery, illusory tentacles also bound the Sequence 5 powerhouse.

"Ah!"

Steve cried out again.

The pale yellow pus, which flowed out, covered his entire body, allowing him to barely resist the pull.

A bright red crack appeared on his face, and in it was a hole leading to a dark tunnel!

At that moment, Klein raised his revolver and aimed it at him.

Without any delay or hesitation, with his face disguised, Klein calmly pulled the trigger while wearing his half top hat.

Bang! Bang!

With a flash of the Sun Brooch, two bullets filled with holiness accurately hit Steve in the head.

Although they didn't pierce his skin or bones, they ignited resplendent flames, turning Steve into a bright torch.

"Ah!"

With another scream, Steve was pulled closer to the illusory bronze door.

As Klein released the revolver's cylinder, the shells fell to the ground, and he took out the metal box containing the Beyonder bullets.

At the same time, he once again injected his spirituality into the Sun Brooch.

2! 1!

A pure and flawless pillar of light fell from the sky and instantly hit Steve's body.

Taking this breather, Klein inserted three purifying bullets and three exorcism bullets into the cylinder and snapped it shut.

He aimed at Steve's head again, and with the flash of the dark golden brooch, he pulled the trigger hard, six times in a row.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Chapter 350 - Splendid Fireworks

◆

One by one, the bullets sliced through the air—either swirling with a golden luster or emitting resplendent beams—as they hit Steve's head.

Thanks to a Clown's control over his body and his persistence in practicing his marksmanship, Klein's six bullets which were augmented with Cleave of Purification accurately hit the same spot, the same spot as the first two bullets!

They were like fists from a giant of light, repeatedly pounding at the left of Steve's face!

With a series of bangs, Steve, who had been entangled by the strange arms and the dark-green vines, failed to phase away to avoid the attack. His head was whipped to the side repeatedly as his body trembled. His cheekbones quickly caved in, breaking out into sharp white bones!

Bang!

The last bullet completely tore through, splashing the Sequence 5 powerhouse's dark red blood. This opening allowed the resplendent and golden flames to continuously drill in, burning into bursts of dark-green mist.

In the holy light, Steve's clothes were ignited. His body was quickly charred as he dripped with grease.

However, he was still alive!

Compared to Marionettist Rosago, the survivability of a Sequence 5 from the Mutant pathway was clearly much better!

However, the heavily injured Steve could no longer resist the strange tugging arms. His legs moved forward uncontrollably, almost flying towards that bronze door and into the deep crack that had opened. He was thrown into the darkness where pairs of eyes lurked.

At this moment, Sharron suddenly clenched her right hand, her forehead covered in sweat.

The illusory and subtle rays of light were abruptly severed, and the indescribably mysterious bronze door lost the source of its existence.

It swayed, and before Steve entered, it reluctantly pulled back its long arms which were either filled with teeth or blood and sealed the crack.

Creak!

The door closed, quickly becoming transparent before it disappeared!

Steve's leaning body was rigid in place, blackened, and shriveled, like a mummified corpse that had been burned for a long time.

With her right fist tightly clenched and the Scarlet Lunar Corona on her, Sharron's figure rapidly turned incorporeal. She took a step forward and overlapped with Steve.

Klein's Spirit Vision instantly lost sight of her. However, the charred Steve raised his fists and abruptly smashed them against his already severely injured head.

Bam!

His head turned into a pulp like that of a rotten tomato, and milky white spots sprayed out before splattering to the ground.

A translucent figure was also expelled. It rapidly spread out, turning into something that looked like a giant jellyfish. Within it was an dreamlike liquid that was swishing and a pair of deathly pale eyes that were condensing!

Sharron was forced out by this strange object, and she reappeared beside it.

She suddenly stretched out her left hand, letting out a silent shriek.

The ground suddenly turned black, as if it had turned into a muddy deep sea. Twisted bloody vines grew out from it, splitting into many sections, with each section having four sharp teeth and an eye.

The blood-red vine wildly grew upwards, immediately locking onto the jellyfish-like phantom as it greedily sucked the dreamlike liquid within.

The phantom quickly collapsed, and the blood-red vine once again retreated back into the muddy deep sea.

But with this delay, the headless, charred Steve began running. He tore across the clearing and headed for the way out.

He still wasn't dead despite already losing his head!

Steve had only run a few steps when a sudden crisp sound cracked in the silence.

Pa!

Klein, in a black double-breasted frock coat with a matching half top hat, turned to him and snapped his fingers.

Boom!

The dirt beneath Steve's feet was violently lifted, and scarlet flames soared.

It spread upward, and when it reached its highest point, it spilled down like beautiful fireworks.

Steve's body was torn to pieces from such fireworks. His charred hands, feet, guts, and blood splattered everywhere. One of his fingers rolled to Klein's feet, and the brown, translucent Biological Poison Bottle fell in another direction.

The mutilated body, which was the last traces of Steve's existence, squirmed a few times before finally becoming still.

In the scene with the blooming fireworks, Klein felt his spirituality become more active, and the powers that still wasn't completely his had become more attuned to him.

In response to this sensation, he passed the revolver to his left hand. He took off the silk half top hat from his head with his black-gloved right hand, and he pressed it to his chest, and bowed slightly at Sharron.

Sharron's blue eyes looked over.

She looked past Klein to the carnage of Werewolf Tyre and Maric.

Sharron's figure disappeared, and Tyre's eyes reflected her image.

Tyre stood there stiffly, his black hair standing on end.

He raised his arms with great difficulty and pressed them against his head.

Kacha!

He twisted hard, and his eyes soon saw his spine which were underneath the cover of his torn clothes.

Pa!

Tyre twisted and pulled again, pulling his head out of his torso!

Throughout the entire process, he didn't let out a single scream or a single word.

He held his head, letting the blood constantly drip down. The corpse which had lost its head was still standing straight, without toppling.

Sharron didn't immediately leave Tyre's body. She appeared to be attempting something.

Very soon, bits of dark-green light emerged from Tyre's head and body, quickly condensing onto one of his fangs as its core.

It seems like Miss Sharron has a way of accelerating the separation of a Beyonder characteristic… The prerequisite to doing so requires her to possess the target, kill the person, and have complete control of the body… Enlightened, Klein bent down and picked up the shells that had fallen to the ground, stuffing them into the metal square box, one by one.

He was afraid that the investigators, which would subsequently arrive, would find the Artisan through the uniqueness of the shells and, hence, find the woman who had purchased the Briber and Barbarian formulas from him. Then, they would lock onto Eye of Wisdom's gathering, causing his safety to be threatened.

As for the bullets, they had long been sacrificed to the corresponding deities in the holy light and flames, just like the materials in charms.

Putting the revolver away, Klein was about to take a step forward when Sharron appeared beside the Biological Poison Bottle with an exaggerated speed. She made it float up and land on her palm.

Before Klein could think of anything else, the pale woman flicked her wrist and threw him a translucent brown bottle and a dark-green fang.

…To save time, she's helping me pick up my spoils? Klein was startled. He instinctively pulled out a piece of paper and covered the two items. He didn't come into direct contact with them!

At this moment, he could see that Sharron's complicated black regal dress had lost its usual tidiness and cleanliness. It fluttered gently in the wind, and a few strands of her light blonde hair were stuck to the side of her face, making her feel more like a person.

Hmm… This Biological Poison Bottle comes with its own lid… I just wonder what negative side effects it has… Klein lowered his head and examined his spoils of war. He used the black cap hanging on the side to reseal the Biological Poison Bottle so that it wouldn't continue to do him harm.

As for the dark-green fang, it was the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Werewolf Tyre.

As Klein placed the two items into a small metal box he prepared, and he used Holy Night Powder to create a wall of spirituality, blocking off the influence they had on their surroundings. He watched Sharron's figure disappear from the corner of his eyes. Steve's remnant flesh squirmed and produced a nearly translucent point of light.

Similarly, he was still on guard against Maric, lest he suddenly went crazy.

Amidst this vigilance, he discovered that the healing powers of a Zombie was truly astonishing. The bone-deep wounds from a moment ago had now basically closed!

Maric also gave him a profound look. It was as though he had remembered something and understood something.

When he was done, Klein walked a dozen steps away, picking up the square metal box that had been dug up by the zombies and shadows. Then, he found Azik's copper whistle and the Master Key which were surrounded by human-shaped "candles."

He glanced at it and awkwardly realized that he didn't dare to pick them up.

The effects of the Scarlet Lunar Corona were still radiating through the clearing!

This was the last trap he had set up, one that would never be used unless all other means were exhausted. For this, he had taken the time to visit a hospital's morgue and test out what the corpses would do after they had gotten their hands on Azik's copper whistle. It allowed him to design a corresponding plan.

"Ahem. Can you stop the influence of the Scarlet Lunar Corona?" Klein turned to look at Sharron who had materialized again.

She already had an additional translucent doll in her hand.

Without saying a word, Sharron placed the Scarlet Lunar Corona to her chest with her other hand.

The circle of rubies quickly dimmed, and the light from the full moon disappeared from the abandoned land.

Only then did Klein lean over and grab the keyring with his fingertip, raising up Azik's copper whistle and the Master Key. Then, he stored them in the square iron box with concave bullet marks and quickly created a seal.

Meanwhile, Maric circled around and dealt with the scene.

Sharron pulled up her small black bonnet, and her figure disappeared before reappearing in front of Klein.

"The Book of Secrets is in your room," Sharron said calmly.

That is to say, no matter what the end result is, as long as I can make it back alive, I will be able to get a portion of the reward. I wouldn't have gone through all this trouble for nothing… Klein smiled and bowed.

"Thank you for your generosity.

"The official Beyonders will arrive any time soon. We have to leave."

Sharron nodded and asked, "Do you need any help?"

“There’s no need.” Klein chuckled. “I still have lots of fireworks which I haven’t released.”

As soon as he finished his sentence, he raised his hand and snapped his fingers.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The remaining explosives exploded, one by one, sending flames up into the sky.

They clustered around the largest and most eye-catching one in the center, producing a dreamy and beautiful scene.

Sharron’s gaze was instinctively attracted to it for a second, and when she looked back, Klein was no longer there. There was only a spark that gradually dissipated.

Away from the clearing, he took a small detour northwest, preventing him from running into any official Beyonders on the way. One match after another was lit on the road, and the flames quickly soared up and then quickly disappeared.

Klein’s figure constantly emerged from within them as he leaped across the flames and departed the West Balam dock.

Immediately following that, he took out a special bottle of extract and wiped it over his face. With a gentle wipe using a piece of paper, he removed all the paint.

Pa!

Klein shook his wrist and burned the paper to ashes.

Then, he picked up the cane he had hidden nearby, straightened his clothes, and walked out into the street like an ordinary person.

Not long after, Klein arrived at a cathedral. Its name was: “Lever Cathedral.”

As many devotees weren't rich, they might not be able to rest on Sundays and were usually busy during the day. Thus, the cathedrals of the various Churches typically opened until the early hours of the morning, giving most believers the opportunity to pray and repent.

Klein looked up, tapped the steps with the black cane in his hand, and stepped inside.

He intended to avoid the subsequent round of inspections of the surroundings people.

†

A few minutes later, a Machinery Hivemind team appeared at the clearing surrounded by abandoned warehouses.

There were a total of five of them, each armed with different kinds of Beyonder weapons. However, all of them frowned when they saw the cleaned up scene.

After looking for a moment, they began putting in effort to gather clues.

†

Lever Cathedral.

Since it wasn't even 11 yet, there were quite a few people here. However, not a single person spoke. The entire prayer hall was so peaceful and holy that no one wanted to break the silence.

Klein sat in the third pew along the aisle. He leaned his black cane forward and took off his silk half top hat.

Wearing a black double-breasted frock coat, he clasped his hands against his lower jaw and closed his eyes. His expression was abnormally calm as he faced the triangle-shaped Sacred Emblem in front of him.

Chapter 351 - “Game” of Question and Answer

◆ ◆ ◆

After a full half hour of uninterrupted silence, Klein opened his eyes and slowly rose to his feet.

He took his cane, put on his hat, and left the cathedral, taking a rental carriage back to Minsk Street in the dark.

At this moment, the vigilance and surveillance of the surrounding area had inevitably relaxed, turning into the shadows under the light of the gas lamps.

Shortly after midnight, Klein took out his key, opened the door to his house, and entered the empty guest rooms to search for the Book of Secrets.

It didn’t take him much effort to find the old book, bound in thick goatskin, in the wardrobe in a room on the first floor.

The hardcover of the book was dark black, with two lines of Hermes written in crimson:

“Book of Secrets.

“Klarman.”

Phew… Klein exhaled but was in no rush to read the book. Instead, he quickly constructed a wall of spirituality in the room, summoning and responding to himself via a ritual, and then he threw Azik’s copper whistle, the Master Key, the All-Black Eye, the Beyonder bullets, the bottle of biological poison, the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic, the Book of Secrets, and even all the vessels above the gray fog. He planned on waiting for the commotion to subside before deciding on which to take out and which to carry.

After doing all this, he didn't even bother to study the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic or the bottle of biological poison. He simply washed up and laid in bed.

There were two reasons for doing so. Firstly, reading the book was too time consuming. It was very easy to bring trouble to his body in the real world on this rather uncalm night. Secondly, Klein was aware of his current weakness, which was that the speed at which his spirituality was growing wasn't enough to satisfy his ever-increasing Beyonder powers and mystical items.

After such an intense battle, his spirituality was already drained. His head was aching, and he was drowsy.

Yes, the one thing that places the greatest burden on my spirituality are the Paper Figurine Substitutes, followed by the creation of "Sun Holy Water" with the Sun Brooch, but it wasn't used tonight. Next in the list is Holy Water Creation and Flaming Jump… Klein yawned and used Cogitation to get rid of the state of extreme tiredness and tenseness that prevented him from falling asleep.

In less than ten seconds, he entered the land of dreams as various fragmented scenes appeared alternately before him.

†

In the clearing surrounded by the abandoned warehouses, the Machinery Hivemind came and went before coming again. The person in charge of investigating this incident went from being a team captain to an expert at the rank of deacon.

Ikanser Bernard's brown hair remained unkempt and stuck out stubbornly, making it impossible to hide them even with a hat on.

This led to many members of the Machinery Hivemind to secretly joke that the deacon probably used a bomb to style his hair.

At this moment, Ikanser, with his cut jaw and facial features, was holding a silver mirror with ancient patterns on it.

On each side of the mirror was an eye-like ornament. They were built on the foundation of a black gem which looked serene and charming.

Ikanser surveyed the area and said, “Although the rats in the sewers are experts at interfering with divination and mediumship and had already dealt with the scene effectively, this is a mysterious Beyonder world, and there is no way to guarantee a one hundred percent success.”

As he spoke, he looked at the silver mirror in his hand as he used his right hand to touch its surface thrice.

After pausing for two seconds, Ikanser took a deep breath and said in a deep voice, “Honorable Arrodes, my question is ‘Who were the participants in the incident that just happened here?’”

The surrounding darkness suddenly thickened, and the surface of the silver mirror began to ripple with aqueous light.

Soon, a scene appeared in the silver mirror.

Amidst the rising flames, there was a figure floating in the air. He was wearing a black double-breasted frock coat and a half top hat. His body was distorted, and his face was indistinct. Furthermore, his face was smeared with paint.

Beneath his feet, flames rose up and engulfed him.

As the aqueous light flashed, the scene changed. A middle-aged man in a dark red cloak appeared. His arm was burning with resplendent flames, but his head was hidden in the darkness.

Scene after scene was played out in front of their eyes. They saw a woman with a complicated black regal dress and messy blonde hair. However, her face was completely transparent, as if she didn't exist.

Beside this lady were two men with black fur all over their bodies. Only their backs could be seen as they were being pulled by strange arms.

Finally, the changes came to an end as it fixed onto the blazing flames that soared into the sky. The "fireworks" bloomed in a splendid and resplendent fashion as they lit up the entire scene.

In this dreamlike scene, the man in the black double-breasted frock coat appeared once again.

Twisting and retracting, he faced forward, pressed his hat to his chest, and bowed slightly.

Not only was his face extremely blurry after being interfered with, but it also presented a glisten of oil.

Just as Ikanser was about to ask his teammates for their opinions, several lines of text in ancient Feysac appeared on the surface of the mirror.

"Based on the principle of reciprocity, it's my turn to ask the question.

"If you answer wrong or lie, you will be punished."

The word "punished" was blood-red, as if it were dripping with liquid!

The expression on Ikanser's face was twisted at first before it turned abnormally serious.

Soon after, the mirror's aqueous light flashed and a new line of text appeared.

"What's your sexual orientation?"

Ikanser was stunned as he felt the gazes of his surrounding team members all land on him.

†

Six in the morning. The sky was just beginning to brighten.

The sleeping Klein awoke to the punctual church bells.

According to his usual habits, he would just turn around and continue sleeping until it was almost 8 o'clock. But this time, he immediately sat up and looked around.

"Yeah, I didn't get raided on the pretext of checking my gas meter…" He let out a sigh of relief, and without even bothering to clean himself, he got off the bed and took four steps counterclockwise to go above the gray fog.

He wanted to study his spoils from last night!

Sitting in The Fool's seat, Klein started from the simplest.

He picked up the dark-green fang and observed it for a few seconds. Then, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote the divination sentence: "Its effects."

This didn't mean that divination could be used as a substitute for experimentation. With the fact that he held the item in his possession, and how he knew a lot about Prisoner, Lunatic, and Werewolf from Sharron and Maric, he believed that it was enough for him to attempt to gain some revelations from it.

After reciting the statement, he quickly entered the dreamland and witnessed one scene after another.

A vicious wound appeared on Werewolf Tyre's stomach, and his intestines flowed out as they were dragged across the ground. However, he only washed it with water and stuffed the intestines back into his stomach. He pinched both sides of the wound, and in the end, the wound actually healed…

Under the perfect red moon, he faced the sky and let out a long howl. Black fur grew out of his body, inch by inch, and the fangs in his mouth were distinct…

He waved his claws and cracked the steel plate that wasn't considered thin…

He ran wildly through the wilderness, increasing the gap between him and the group of pursuing gray wolves as he ran further and further away…

He made the attendants, whose eyes were glazed but cold, charge at their enemies without fear of death…

He also used a variety of weapons to kill people, including bombs, and he became stronger as he lost his reasoning while in his enraged state…

†

Opening his eyes, Klein roughly understood the characteristics of a Werewolf and grasped the hidden dangers of this Beyonder characteristic.

Werewolf Tyre had been under the full moon's illumination, allowing him to be unrestrained towards his desires. After his death, he left a relatively strong spiritual mark, so those Beyonders, who would use this Beyonder characteristic to concoct a potion to advance themselves to the next Sequence, had to resist this kind of effect at an early stage; otherwise, they would show signs of losing control.

However, the negative effects had yet to reach the level of a Sealed Artifact, and the Beyonder characteristic left behind by the Werewolf could still be used as the main ingredient for a potion.

That's good… Unfortunately, Zombie Jason's Beyonder characteristic has been swallowed by that strange door… I wonder where it leads to and if there's a way to get it back… Klein put down the dark-green fang, feeling both regret and sadness for his loss, before picking up the bottom of brown translucent biological poison.

He repeated the same procedure and performed a dream divination, but this time he didn't have the confidence to gain a detailed revelation. Therefore, he changed the divination statement to: "Its positive and negative effects."

In the gray gloom of the dream world, Klein once again saw tragic scenes.

Someone fell to the ground, scratching himself and ripping off his skin, flesh, and even bones…

Another person held his head, his eyes losing focus while his auras weakened…

One kept vomiting. Towards the end, the person who died was convulsing…

Someone burst out laughing, laughing so hard that he couldn't even breathe…

Some people stopped fighting and looked at each other. Then, they hugged and kissed each other…

When the scene reached the end, the translucent brown bottle was placed into a cup with water. The transparent liquid inside gradually turned amber in color and was drunk… The person holding onto the bottle of biological poison was weakened at first before coughing. Then, he touched his forehead. He found himself scalding as his condition turned for the worse…

The dream quickly ended. Klein tapped his finger on the edge of the long table as he attempted to interpret the revelation with great difficulty.

According to Steve, the earlier revelations mean that after the biological poison's bottle lid is removed, it would keep emanating its poison. As for which poison the opponents gets inflicted by, it's completely random, and even the wielder is unable to control it? The poison inside is really quite abominable…

The effective range of the poison cannot be deciphered via a revelation… Hmm, soaking it in water and drinking the amber liquid in advance would prevent one from getting poisoned? But how many minutes should the soaking take? Even if the person holding the Biological Poison Bottle doesn't open the lid, their bodies would get worse as they slowly get infected, and the ailments become serious? Uh, what's the exact cut-off time?

Klein rubbed his forehead, intending to do some experiments above the gray fog when he was free, but he didn't know if the Biological Poison Bottle was effective in there.

For example, in his current Spirit Body state, he wasn't afraid of being poisoned at all.

I'll leave it at this. I'll study it in detail in the future… Klein turned his attention to the Book of Secrets, which was bound in goatskin. He then casually flipped to the first page.

It was a title page with simple patterns on it but with nothing written on it…

Flipping another page, Klein finally saw the opening line of the Book of Secrets: "We worship the moon, not the Evernight Goddess."

Chapter 352 - Breakfast

◆ ◆ ◆

Another statement about only worshiping the moon and not the Goddess? Klein couldn’t help but have a look of contemplation.

The last time he heard about such matters was when he was learning about the Life School of Thought. He never expected that the Shaman King, who had lived his entire life in the Southern Continent, would also have a similar point of view.

—In the Pale Era, at the end of the Fourth Epoch, the Berserk Sea became a veritable reality. Thus, the Northern and Southern Continent were cut off from each other, and the Life School of Thought was formed in the early Fifth Epoch. Obviously, it was impossible for the Life School of Thought to extend itself to the Southern Continent before Roselle sent his men to find a safe sea route.

Shaman King Klarman was a historical figure who was active in an era more than a thousand years before the Northern Continent’s invasion.

In other words, the two Beyonder factions, which were in different continents, had no way of communicating with each other and had chosen to worship the moon itself and ignore the Evernight Goddess at almost the same period of time.

Such a coincidence inadvertently made one consider why.

Could it be that the birth of a new god had taken away a portion of the authority related to the moon? But, as a deity, “He” shouldn’t be so obscure and unknown… In other words, although the Goddess had snatched the authority of the Moon, the followers of the primordial Moon God had survived. They had been passed down from the Fourth Epoch or even the Third Epoch. Even after the separation of the Northern Continent and Southern Continent, they blossomed into two groups, one helmed by the Shaman King, the other by the Life School of Thought? Klein made a rough guess, but he was troubled by the lack of clues to narrow the scope.

He gave up thinking about it for the time being and quickly skimmed through the rest of the contents of the Book of Secrets.

In the preamble, Shaman King Klarman said, very directly, that many of the rituals, deeds, astromancy, and summoning techniques in the book had originated from a primitive worship of the moon and described the corresponding honorific names in detail: "The one and only red moon, the symbol of life and beauty, the mother of all spiritual forces."

There's actually an honorific name! However, it lacks the more popular descriptions like those of the Evernight Goddess or Earth Mother… If there really is such a hidden god, His followers would inevitably develop a simpler title to address "Him" that's more suitable for praise than the worship of the Primordial Moon… Klein sensed something amiss as he began to analyze it with his own knowledge on mysticism.

Besides, using the Lady of Crimson to hold a ritual would very obviously direct it at the Goddess. But using an honorific name which is very similar but more detailed would circumvent the Goddess, pointing it to the source of their power—the Primordial Moon… I wonder what arcane existence it is… Klein thought with wonder and alarm.

Due to his lack of time, he skimmed through the details and found that, as Shaman King Klarman had said so himself, many of the deeds and rituals were directed at the moon.

For Klein, it wasn't a cause for concern. He didn't plan on copying them wholesale and end up provoking the Primordial Moon which he had no idea about. What he wanted to learn was the overall structure, design, and details of the deeds and rituals.

Only by mastering the underlying rules could he come up with his own secret deeds, rituals, astromancy, and summoning techniques that pointed to the King of Yellow and Black.

Perhaps in the far future, I'll have my own mysticism system… Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his wrist and finally confirmed the authenticity of the Book of Secrets.

After receiving a clear answer, he was in no hurry to use the Werewolf's Beyonder characteristic to divine a formula. After all, he wasn't able to sell it, and for the same reason, he decided to delay the research of the Biological Poison Bottle for a while.

He quickly returned to the real world and drew the curtains. He saw the sun, which wasn't capable of illuminating the land. It was hidden behind the clouds and fog, looking somewhat pale.

“Achoo!”

Suddenly, Klein covered his nose and mouth, and he sneezed.

Only then did he realize that his head was aching and burning. He felt light-headed and had seemingly caught a cold.

I actually fell ill as a Sequence 7 Beyonder… Klein pulled out a piece of paper and sniffed.

He carefully thought back for a moment and quickly understood the reason.

The negative effects of the Biological Poison Bottle would gradually weaken the possessor and result in an illness!

If it was carried around even longer, then it might even lead to death.

And this effect couldn't be eliminated with the use of spirituality seals!

Last night, Klein's spirituality was almost nearly emptied after the battle. While his body was still weak from the poison, he still carried the Biological Poison Bottle with him and hid in Lever Cathedral for half an hour…

Adding the time spent on his return to Minsk Street, and he had embarrassingly fallen ill.

Thankfully, it's not serious… It doesn't affect anything… Klein sneezed again as he prepared to soak himself in a hot bath.

After washing his face and rinsing his mouth, he specially fried an egg to reward himself. The fragrance was truly tantalizing.

A Shaman King's Book of Secrets and the Biological Poison Bottle, a mystical item that's not worse than the Sun Brooch, as well as a Sequence 7 Werewolf's Beyonder characteristic. I made quite a killing this time… It's just a pity that I didn't manage to obtain the Zombie Beyonder characteristic… Klein sat by the side of the dining table. As he ate, he did a tally of his spoils.

What made his heart ache was the fact that he had used a total of eleven Beyonder bullets, each worth nearly ten pounds!

That is to say, I burned a hundred pounds… It's really like throwing money to deal damage… It's no wonder most Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders are so desperate for money… Klein glanced down at his breakfast.

They added up to only a few pence!

After breakfast, Klein idly read the newspapers, sneezing from time to time as he wiped his nose and mouth with a piece of tissue paper.

As soon as the church bell stopped chiming at eight o'clock, his doorbell rang.

Klein wasn't surprised to see the reporter for the Daily Observer, Mike

Joseph.

The reporter with beautiful blue eyes and a thin mustache, but with rather rough skin, took off his hat and greeted him. Then he went straight to the point.

“Detective Moriarty, do you have time to take the job?”

Although he had a cold, he still needed to take on jobs like usual to avoid suspicion from anyone during this period of time… Klein, who had just finished a job, smiled and said, “I’m slightly ill, but that doesn’t affect my fighting or shooting skills.”

Mike suddenly smiled and said, “Thank you for your help.

“Let’s set off now.

“Eh, Detective Moriarty, have you had breakfast? I’ll treat you. As your employer, I should be in charge of providing you your meals today.”

Inviting me to breakfast? Klein was startled.

“I just finished eating.

“But I suggest you go to East Borough to have breakfast there. That way, you can see a lot of things. I’ll just need a cup of coffee when we’re there.”

“…No problem.” Mike pointed outside. “The carriage I hired is waiting.”

Klein sized him up and said, “Sir, you’d better change into something a little worse; otherwise, there will be lots of work for me.”

Mike looked down at his tweed coat and said with some realization, “This is too eye-catching?”

“It is in East Borough.” Klein pointed into his place. “I have some specially prepared clothes. Hmm, we are about the same size.”

Mike couldn't help but exclaim, "You really are a professional."

Professional criminal? Klein lampooned.

After changing into ordinary worker's clothes, the two boarded the carriage and headed for the outskirts of East Borough.

†

"Achoo!"

Klein pulled out another piece of tissue paper, wiped his mouth and nose, and blew his nose.

Since there was no trash can nearby, he folded the tissue paper properly and stuffed it back into his pocket.

"The food in this coffee shop is okay. Of course, this is relative to the residents of East Borough." Klein pointed to the slightly greasy coffee shop at the corner of the street.

He occasionally came here for breakfast whenever he spent the night at his one-bedroom apartment that was nearby.

"Looks like it's a pretty good restaurant." Mike didn't think it was a coffee shop.

It was already past nine o'clock, and there were very few customers in the coffee shop. East Borough residents typically finished their breakfast at around seven and began to work or to look for work.

After accompanying Mike as he ordered stewed beef with potatoes, bread, and coffee, Klein looked around for a window seat.

At that moment, he saw an acquaintance—the elderly man he had helped while pretending to be a journalist.

He was the one who brought me here in the first place… Why is he only having breakfast now… As Klein thought, he turned to Mike and said, “You have an interviewee.”

As he spoke, he carried his coffee cup to the “tramp.”

The man was wearing the same thick jacket as before. His grizzled hair was oily, and his beard was obvious. However, he no longer looked tired, and his face was no longer as appallingly pale as before.

“Good morning, we meet again.” Klein sat down across him and greeted him, noticing that his breakfast was black bread with a large cup of cheap tea that was worth a penny.

The elderly man raised his head, took a close look, and said in pleasant surprise, “Mr. Reporter, it’s you?”

… Klein laughed dryly, pointed at Mike and said, “This is my colleague, he wants to do a deeper investigation on my previous interview.”

Being an experienced and knowledgeable reporter, Mike didn’t say anything further when he heard that. All he did was nod with a smile and greeted the elderly man.

As for the matter of Detective Moriarty pretending to be a reporter, it wasn’t like he had only found out about it today. He was the one who had lent him his fake reporter’s identification!

“So you really are a reporter!” The elderly man blurted out in astonishment. “But that doesn’t stop you from being a kind-hearted person.”

Klein smiled and asked, “How have you been recently?”

The elderly man drank a mouthful of tea and said, “Thanks to your help, I finally had a good night’s sleep and ate my fill, so I wasn’t that weak.

“My original plan was to go back to my original job—making shoes, but they didn’t want me. They said my hands shook…”

He lowered his head and chuckled, skipping that episode.

“Later, I went down to the docks and found some work. It was tiring, but at least I made money. I’ve already rented a spot in someone’s house for only six and a half pence a week. Of course, I can only sleep there at night.

“Well, that’s how working at the dock is like. I went early today and ate nothing. I raised my hand and shouted my name and the supervisor’s name, but I wasn’t chosen, so I had to come back here.

“Fortunately, there’s still a chance in the afternoon. Those people in the morning might be busy till late and won’t be fighting against us for those jobs.”

Klein listened quietly, occasionally taking a sip of the bad coffee. As for Mike, he took out a pen and paper and quickly made notes.

Chapter 353 - Today Is Quite Different From Yesterday

◆

Finally, the elderly man, with gray hair by his temples, took a sip of tea and sighed with a smile.

“In truth, this is already much better than my previous situation, and it’s much better than many of the people here. For instance…”

He pointed out the window to the tramps huddled in a corner.

Klein and Mike looked over and saw a group of cowering tramps lying on the ground in a filthy place that provided shelter from the wind. They were of all sexes and ages.

It was possible for them to never wake up again in the coldness of late autumn.

It was then that Klein noticed an old woman in her sixties standing by the street. Her dress was old and worn, but she was relatively neat, and her hair was neatly trimmed.

The white-haired old lady had the usual tired look of a tramp, but she still persisted in not squeezing together with the group. Instead, she slowly walked by the roadside, occasionally gazing into the coffee shop numbly.

“She’s also a pitiful person.” The former tramp who had eaten the leftover black bread also noticed the old lady and sighed, “She was said to have led quite a good life in the past. Her husband was a grain merchant and had a very spirited child, but unfortunately, he went bankrupt and her husband and child died not long after. She's different from us, really, and you can tell at a glance… Sigh, she won't be able to hold on much longer, unless she's lucky to be admitted into the workhouse every time."

As he listened, Mike's expression changed from quiet to somber. He slowly let out a sigh and said, "I want to interview her. Can you invite her for me? She can eat and drink whatever she wants here."

The man wasn't surprised by this request. He merely looked at Klein and Mike separately, as if to say: "the both of you are indeed colleagues."

"Yes, I'm sure she would like that." He drank his tea, got up, and walked out of the greasy coffee shop.

Not long after, the elderly woman in her old but tidy dress followed him in. Her pale face slightly lightened thanks to the warmth of the coffee shop.

She continued to tremble, as if she wanted to release the coldness in her body, bit by bit, and absorb the relatively high temperature within the coffee shop. Even after she sat down on the chair, it still took her a full minute before she could truly warm up.

"You can order whatever you want. This is the reward for accepting this interview," Klein spoke on Mike's behalf.

After Mike nodded, the old lady modestly ordered toast, low-quality cream, and coffee. Then she smiled and said, "I heard that one cannot eat greasy food after not having eaten in a while."

Very polite, very self-restrained, not like a tramp at all… Klein sighed silently.

Before the food arrived, Mike asked casually, "Can you talk about how you became a tramp?"

The old lady revealed a look of reminiscence and said with a bitter smile, “My husband was a grain merchant who mainly bought all kinds of grain from domestic farmers, but we rapidly went bankrupt ever since the Grain Act was repealed.

“He wasn’t very young to begin with. After suffering that setback, his body quickly collapsed. Not long after, he passed away.

“My child, a brilliant young man, had been learning the ropes of doing business from his father. He couldn’t suffer the blow, and he ended up jumping into the Tussock River on a moonless night.

“His first suicide didn’t work. He was sent to the magistrate’s court, and the police and judges were very impatient, feeling that he was wasting their time.

“If you want to commit suicide, please do so quietly and successfully. Don’t trouble us… Yes, that was probably what they wanted to say, but they found it too direct.

“My child was put in prison. Not long after, he committed suicide for the second time and succeeded.”

The old lady spoke very calmly, as though it wasn’t something that had happened to her.

But for some reason, Klein felt a deep sense of sorrow.

Nothing is more lamentable than a dead heart… He suddenly recalled the saying he had heard in his previous life.

In this world, suicide was not only prohibited by the Churches, but it was a punishable crime.

As for the reason, Klein knew very well why. First of all, many suicides were committed by jumping into a river, and without being discovered in time, there was a certain probability of them turning into a water ghost. Second, the suicider often had very abnormal emotions. Thus, under such states, ending their lives was equivalent to a sacrificial offering which could resonate with particular strange and terrifying existences.

Thus, their corpses and certain objects that were around after them after their deaths would carry strange curses that harmed others.

This was probably where the Misfortune Cloth Puppet behind Tingen City's Chanis Gate came from.

Therefore, the seven Orthodox Churches forbade their believers from committing suicide through their own doctrine, and the royal family also promoted the corresponding legislation.

Of course, this seemed ridiculous to Klein. How could a suicider be afraid of punishment by the law?

While Mike was taking notes, he was about to say something when the owner of the coffee shop brought the food over.

"Fill your stomach first, we'll talk later." Mike pointed to the toast.

"Alright." The old lady ate the food in small bites, appearing very cultured.

Having not ordered much, she quickly finished her meal.

After reluctantly drinking the last mouthful of coffee, she rubbed her temples and pleaded, "Can I get some sleep first? It's too cold outside."

"No problem," Mike answered without hesitation.

The old lady thanked him gratefully a few times before she sat down on the chair and curled up into a ball as she fell asleep.

Mike looked at the man beside him and said, "You seem to be very familiar with this place. I wish to hire you as our guide. How's three soli for the day? I'm sorry, I forgot to ask for your name."

The man quickly shook his head and said, “No, no, that is too much. I only earn one soli a day most of the time at the dock.

“Just call me Old Kohler.

“Then, two soli a day. You deserve it,” Mike decided firmly.

After witnessing this strange bargaining, Klein blew into a piece of tissue and was about to drink another cup of coffee, when he suddenly sensed that something was wrong. He turned to look at the old lady who was curled up, asleep on the chair.

Her face, which had turned ruddy due to the coffee, was pale again. The colors of her aura and moods had vanished.

“…” Klein stood up and subconsciously extended his hand to check the old lady’s breathing.

As Mike and Kohler looked at him in surprise, he said heavily, “She’s dead.”

Mike opened his mouth, but no words came out. Kohler tapped his chest thrice and said with a bitter smile, “I knew she wouldn’t be able to hold on for long…

“Such things happen every day in East Borough.

“At least she filled her stomach and died in a warm place. I hope—heh heh, I hope it will be the same for me in the future.”

Klein was silent for a moment before he said, “Kohler, go and get the police.”

“Alright.” Kohler tapped his chest thrice once more and ran out of the coffee shop.

The boss glanced over but didn’t come over. It was as though it wasn’t something he needed to concern himself with.

After a while, a policeman in a black-and-white checkered uniform, carrying a baton and revolver, entered the coffee shop.

He looked at the dead old lady, asked Mike and Klein a few questions, then he waved his hand and said, “That’s all there is to this. The three of you can leave after I get someone to collect the corpse.”

“That’s it?” Mike blurted out in surprise.

He was obviously not very familiar with East Borough.

The policeman sneered.

“Such incidents happen in large numbers every day in East Borough!”

He rolled his eyes and looked at Klein and Mike.

“You don’t look like people from around here. Who are you? What’s your identity?”

Mike produced his press identification, and Klein said that he was a private detective responsible for protecting him.

The policeman’s face turned serious as he looked at Klein and said, “I suspect that you’re carrying a gun illegally!

“I want to search your belongings. Please cooperate with me; otherwise, it will be considered a case of resisting arrest!”

Mike was suddenly worried because he knew that private detectives were usually unlawfully possessing firearms.

Klein expressionlessly spread out his hands.

“Alright.”

He let the policeman search him, but nothing was found on him.

After the old lady’s corpse was taken away, the disappointed policeman left. Mike clenched his fist and pounded on the table.

“A living person just died here; yet, all he cares about is investigating the unlawful possession of firearms!?”

Upon saying this, Mike looked at Klein and asked, puzzled, “You didn’t bring a gun?”

Klein shook his head, pulled out his holster and revolver from under the table, and said calmly, “As a detective, I have a lot of experience in this area.”

As a Magician, he could place the revolver right in front of someone and make it impossible for the person to notice it.

Moreover, since he didn’t buy any ordinary bullets, the Beyonder bullets were temporarily left above the gray fog. His revolver was currently empty, but this didn’t stop him from shooting with his revolver. All he needed to do was to use his mouth to emulate a “bang” when he pulled the trigger.

Upon seeing this, Old Kohler whispered from the side, “So you’re a detective.”

Klein pointed at Mike and casually explained, “I was also entrusted with a mission by this gentleman the last time as well.”

Mike sat there without refuting. After a moment of silence, he said, “Although I’ve investigated the gangs and witnessed the miserable life of some prostitutes, I’m not familiar with the situation in East Borough. Please help me open my eyes to this place, allowing me to see if there are any problems with this investigation plan.”

As he spoke, he took a few sheets of paper from the inside pocket of his clothes and spread them out on the coffee shop table.

Klein glanced at him.

“Interviews with East Borough residents of different ages?

“That’s too troublesome, I think we can divide it according to location. In better apartments, five or six people squeeze into a one-room apartment. Others stay in the corner of a street that’s sheltered from the wind, park benches, bars, and workhouses.

“In addition, they can be segregated by what time they begin work, and when their rest times are.”

Mike listened carefully and nodded.

“Not a bad idea. What do you think, Kohler?”

Old Kohler pinched his nose and said, “I can’t read… but I think whatever Mr. Detective said seems alright.”

Mike thought about it, changed his plan, and said, “Then let’s go to a nearby apartment and make a random selection.”

Chapter 354 - Tales of an “Adventure” in East Borough

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund’s East Borough, at an intersection.

Mike Joseph saw a number of pitiful-looking children in rags along the street. He wiped his mouth with a handkerchief and planned to head over to give them some pennies.

However, his action was stopped by the former tramp, Old Kohler.

“They’re thieves!”

“Thieves? What about their parents? Or are they controlled by the gangs?” As a senior journalist, Mike had never been to the East Borough, but he had heard of instances of a few gangs controlling street children to steal and beg.

“Parents? They either don’t have parents, or their parents were once thieves or might still be thieves. Of course, Mr. Reporter, you’re right, many of them are under the control of gangs, and it’s said that the gangs will teach them how to steal. For example, they will hang a gentleman’s coat on a wall, put a handkerchief in the pocket, and hang a pocket watch on the outside, and through repeated practice, the children will attempt to steal the handkerchief without shaking the pocket watch. Heh, this is what I heard from others while at the workhouse when I was homeless.” Old Kohler babbled on, “I remember the youngest thief ever caught on this street was only six years old. Sigh, six years old…”

He seemed to recall his child who was lost to a disease and couldn't help but take out a cigarette from his pocket. He couldn't bring himself to smoke it, so all he did was take a sniff.

"Six years old…" Mike was stunned by this number.

Klein quietly listened and sighed.

"This is East Borough."

He looked around, composed himself, and said, "This place is closer to the jungle than to human society.

"Our interview has to be treated as an adventure. You have to learn how to avoid the territory of dangerous creatures, but you must also avoid those little things that don't seem to be too harmful to you. Well, I'm talking about mosquitoes in the jungle.

"Mike, if you expose the thickness of your wallet to those kids, then even if you protect it well and don't let them steal it, robbery is a destined outcome during the rest of the adventure. If you dare to resist, then perhaps there will be one more body floating in the Tussock River tomorrow morning."

"Mr. Detective, you're absolutely right! There are so many people in East Borough. No one pays notice to the few missing people every day," Old Kohler agreed.

Mike listened intently for a few seconds, and after a few seconds of silence, he suddenly said, "1.35 million."

"Huh?" Because of his cold, Klein's throat was obviously a little hoarse.

Mike stepped forward and said, "This is a preliminary estimate of the population count of East Borough.

"But I know that there's definitely more than that."

"That many?" Old Kohler was startled.

Although he had experienced the days and nights in East Borough and knew that there were a lot of residents here, he didn't expect there to be this many.

This is several times the population of Tingen City… Klein subconsciously compared it with the place that was most familiar to him.

He looked at the intersection a few steps away and asked, "Which way should we go next?"

Old Kohler looked up and said, "Definitely not straight. That area is under the control of the Zmanger gang. They're very vicious and completely unreasonable. If they discover any reporters doing interviews, then they'll definitely beat us up!"

The Zmanger gang? Isn't that the "brainless" gang that caused me to lose 10,000 pounds? He was some kind of executioner. Hmm, I don't even remember his name… Fortunately, the 10,000 pounds was eventually exchanged for the Seer's corresponding Sequence 7, 6, and 5 potion formulas and the All-Black Eye, as well as the Intis Ambassador's life… I wonder who ended up obtaining the manuscript of the third-generation difference engine… Klein instantly recalled what had happened early last month.

"Zmanger gang? The gang that is mainly composed of highlanders?" Mike asked thoughtfully.

"Mr. Reporter, have you heard of them?" Old Kohler asked in surprise.

Mike sneered.

"They're involved in a lot of cases, and they have some reputation outside East Borough as well. It's said that one of the members was involved in a case of Intis espionage."

…The person next to you was the person in question, the person who made the report, and also the victim… Klein silently added.

"If you gentlemen know about the Zmanger gang, then why doesn't the police arrest them?" Old Kohler asked from his viewpoint, of someone at the bottom of society.

Mike's expression suddenly turned a little awkward, and he coughed twice.

"We can only capture those who have committed crimes. There is no evidence for the rest, so we can't arrest them. Moreover, East Borough is so broad, and there are so many people. It would be hard to find anyone who is bent on hiding."

As he spoke, he sighed.

"It's easy to destroy one Zmanger gang, but as long as a highlander comes to Backlund, and if they keep up their strong tradition of being combative while failing to find any other means of earning a living, it's only a matter of time before a new Zmanger gang appears."

This is a complex social issue… Klein pointed to the left and right.

"Pick one."

Old Kohler looked at the right side of the street.

"That's where the Proscrito gang is active. As long as we don't provoke the girls who do business on the streets or in the bars, they won't notice us. Heh heh, it's still morning, so there shouldn't be any problems. They're still sleeping."

The word "Proscrito" meant "outlaw" in the Loen language, so it could be said that the gang who gave itself such a name was pretty self-aware.

Klein and Mike had no objection to this, and with the guide leading the way, they entered the district.

The buildings here were relatively better. The streets were less squalid, and the air was filled with the smells of oyster soup, fried fish, ginger beer, and the smell of various food and beverages left behind by street vendors, as well as the fishy smell of fish-related products.

While walking here, Klein felt an inexplicable sense of familiarity. It was as if he had returned to Tingen City, to Iron Cross Street, and to the street outside the apartment where he had originally lived in.

The only difference was that Backlund was closer to the sea and had more traffic. There was a lot more fish.

“This is a relatively good apartment in this area. Back when I loitered around here, I discovered that the gentlemen and ladies inside are all, hmm—quite clean.” Old Kohler pointed to a pale yellow three-story building.

As they got closer, they noticed a sign hanging in front of the apartment. It had a picture of a pocket watch, a clock, and a screwdriver, with the words “Watch Repair.”

“A watch craftsman lives here?” Klein dug up a similar scene from the memory fragments of the original Klein.

Back then, Benson, Melissa, and himself had gone to somewhere similar to repair the silver pocket watch which his father had left behind, but despite repairing it several times, it would quickly break. This continued until Melissa fiddled with it and ultimately fully repaired it. It became the most decent thing on Klein’s person during that period of time.

After Klein’s “death”, the pocket watch, which had both monetary and sentimental value, was not buried with him.

It should now belong to Benson, right? I wonder if he will think of me every time he takes out that pocket watch… Klein suddenly blinked and curled the corner of his lips.

“Probably.” Mike wasn’t sure.

If anything went wrong with his pocket watch, it was usually sent to the original watch store he bought it from. The store would then send it to a repairman or to a craftsman who had partnered with them.

As soon as they entered the apartment, they saw a middle-aged man with a messy beard.

The gentleman had just come out of the bathroom and was about to return to his room. When he saw the three strangers come in, he hurriedly asked, “Do you want to repair something?”

What a coincidence… We actually met the craftsman immediately… Klein was slightly puzzled.

Mike took out his pocket watch, smiled, and said, “Yes, my pocket watch has recently not been keeping time well. Can you help me take a look?”

He didn’t reveal his identity and planned to interview him over some casual chit chat.

The middle-aged man immediately revealed a smile and led them into a two-bedroom apartment which had its door half concealed. He pointed at a chair beside the table and said, “Please wait a moment. I’ll go get my tools.”

“Your tools are not at home?” Mike asked in surprise.

The watch craftsman shook his head and laughed.

“How is that possible?

“A set of tools is very expensive. There’s no way I can buy them on my own. The only way is to pool everyone’s money together to buy three or four sets, and whoever has business will use them. So, we moved in together. Heh heh, it’s more convenient this way. If we live too far away, we will have to spend extra time and pay for the public carriage to borrow the tools.

As he spoke, he left the room and walked to the side.

So it isn't a coincidence that we met a watch craftsman. Many of the residents here are of this profession… Klein was suddenly enlightened.

Old Kohler looked around the room and enviously said, "Before I fell ill, I lived in such a place as well. My wife would help others sew clothes at home. And my two children, my two children…"

Mike sighed and lowered his voice.

"I thought watch craftsmen were rich."

"Me too…" Klein covered his mouth.

†

After a cordial exchange with several of the apartment's residents, Klein and the others once again embarked on their adventure.

They had walked about a hundred meters when they heard people quarreling along the street.

The two women were using all sorts of obscenities against each other, allowing Klein to learn many words he had never heard before.

The reason for their argument was that the one on the left accused the woman on the right for making the apartment they lived in dirty and noisy. The woman on the right was scolding the woman on the left, thinking that it had nothing to do with her. After all, no one asked her to recruit guests at night and sleep during the day.

"Is that a laundry maid?" Mike asked, frowning slightly.

"Yes, I know her. She's a widow, helping people wash their clothes with her two daughters," Old Kohler answered certainly.

Mike thought for a few seconds and said, "Take me to their place."

Old Kohler nodded and led the two of them around the argument before they entered the dilapidated apartment building that was obviously inferior to the one they had just seen.

As soon as he arrived outside the laundry maid's room, Klein immediately felt the dampness.

In the room hung dresses that were not dried yet. A seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl was squatting in front of a large basin, scrubbing clothes that were covered in bubbles. A girl, that was younger than her, was holding a hot iron wrapped in wet linen cloth. She was carefully ironing the clothes that were done washing and drying. Her careful actions implied that she had been scalded by the steam several times.

This was both their workplace and the place where they slept at night. Wet moisture permeated the room and seeped into their bodies.

In addition, the stench of all kinds of smells was very distinct.

"Doesn't it feel terrible?" Mike pinched his nose.

Klein replied in a muffled voice, "I've got a cold."

There was no humor in his words.

Mike released his fingers, walked into the room, and said to the two surprised girls, "I'm a reporter. I would like to interview a laundry maid."

The girl who was scrubbing the clothes shook her head numbly and said, "We have a lot of things to do and cannot afford to waste time."

Mike's request for an interview was rejected.

He came out with a heavy expression and silently walked back across the street.

After taking a look, he pursed his lips and said, "Let's continue."

†

City of Silver. After a thorough examination of Derrick Berg, who had experienced hallucinations both visually and auditory, he was brought to the bottom of the spire.

This place took in residents who showed signs of losing control, and various methods were used to save them.

Walking in the gloomy and creepy corridor, he suddenly felt a strange chill.

“Help!”

A sharp shrill voice suddenly sounded from a sealed room.

“Help…”

The voice came to a sudden halt, and then there was silence.

Chapter 355 - Outsider

◆

This… In the eerie silence, the first thought Derrick Berg had when he came back to his senses was to rescue that person.

However, the two guards that held him in the middle didn't show any reaction to it, as if everything that had just happened was just his imagination.

"Someone is calling out for help," the young Derrick informed the two Dawn Paladins.

On his left, a tall knight clad in silver armor calmly replied, "Don't be fooled.

"That's just the normal behavior of those Beyonders who are on the verge of losing control."

Is that so? Maybe he cried out for help because he just isn't willing to give up and lose control and become a monster… Derrick thought sorrowfully.

Following the change in his mood, the illusory, buzzing sound in his ears became more distinct.

After silently taking a few steps forward, the Dawn Paladin from before pointed to a door on the left and said, "You will be staying here for the time being. We will bring you your food and medicine on time."

As he spoke, he took out an iron-black bottle.

This bottle was constructed from the remnants of the straw-like objects left over from the City of Silver's staple food, Black Faced Grass. Upon encountering a liquid, it would produce a thin film, thereby achieving a waterproof and sealing effect.

Derrick took the bottle and gulped it down, feeling a cool sensation slide down his esophagus and into his stomach.

His entire being rapidly became quiet. The swaying scenes before his eyes stabilized, and the auditory hallucinations in his ears gradually weakened.

Creak!

At the sound of the iron door closing and locking, Derrick entered his own room.

The first thing he saw was a candle flickering with a faint yellow light, and then he made out a low bed, a chair, and a square table.

Other than that, there was nothing else. However, the walls, including the door, were all engraved with complicated and mysterious symbols and labels. They seemed to form a complete seal.

Derrick's emotions were also suppressed by the medicine. He sat down on the bed without the slightest hint of curiosity before lying down.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly heard the sound of someone banging on his door. However, this didn't come from outside his room, but from his neighboring cell.

Derrick sat up and listened. He heard a sharp, high-pitched wail from the knocking.

His hair stood on end as he abruptly stood up, taking an extremely defensive stance.

At this moment, thumping sounds spread to the metal walls that were separated by two rooms, slowly smashing a protrusion.

Derrick was about to pray for holy light when the scene before his eyes suddenly lit up. It seemed as if the entire space around him had been moved to the outside world, just in time for the lightning to streak past.

The sound of the wall being smashed beside him had vanished, and the bottom of the spire regained its silence.

It wasn't an absolute silence. Rather, the sound of light footsteps echoed for a long distance. It only turned silent after the echoes continued on for a long time.

Derrick was wondering what had happened to the Beyonder in the neighboring cell when someone knocked on the metal wall on the other side.

Tak! Tak! Tak!

It was as if someone had bent their finger and was tapping lightly.

"Who is it?" Derrick asked, raising his voice in slight alarm.

The knocking immediately stopped, and after a few seconds, a deep yet rather old voice was faintly transmitted.

"So it turns out to be a young fellow."

"You are?" Seeing that the other person could communicate rationally, Derrick leaned against the wall and pressed his ear against the cold metal.

The elderly voice chuckled and said, "The person next to you almost lost control several times. He ultimately couldn't be saved today."

He completely lost control? Derrick asked through the metal wall, "So he's become a monster now?"

"No, not a monster, but a corpse. He was finished off by the item sealed in here." The elderly voice sighed. "I've been here for forty-two years. Yes, those guards told me that they've seen too many similar incidents."

Derrick was surprised and returned with a question, "You've been here for forty-two years?"

Normally speaking, losing control could be divided into three stages. The first stage was warning signs, such as auditory and visual hallucinations. In the second stage, the person's body and mind were already out of control, and from time to time, they would display either terrifying or strange states. As for the third stage, it was a complete breakdown, transforming the Rampager into a terrifying monster.

The time it took from the second stage to the third stage was rather quick. Perhaps just after discovering the symptoms, one would witness a seemingly ordinary Beyonder turn into a monster which could be found deep in the darkness.

In other words, after a second-stage Beyonder was sent to the bottom of the spire, they would either be treated with medicine, rituals, and other methods, slowly stabilizing themselves and allowing them to leave within eighteen months. Otherwise, they would quickly lose control and be purged. It was impossible for anyone to be locked up for forty-two years.

As a first-stage Beyonder, they would only take between a few days to less than twenty days to eliminate all the symptoms and leave, fully treated.

The elderly voice immediately chuckled and said, "That's right, I also didn't expect that I would stay here for forty-two years.

"I don't have any signs of losing control, but they believe I'm rather dangerous and can turn into a monster at any time."

Derrick frowned slightly and asked curiously, "What happened forty-two years ago?"

At that time, neither of his parents had been born yet.

The elderly voice was silent for a moment before saying, “I was once the captain of an exploratory team.

“We found a destroyed city about half a month away from the City of Silver. Heh, this was calculated based on our speed.

“That city was similar to our City of Silver. It clearly has traces of it being ruled by giants, and it also believed in the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God.

“Unfortunately, they were destroyed; destroyed countless years ago.”

Derrick wasn’t a stranger to such matters. He immediately guessed, “Because you encountered some strange incidents there, you were determined to be at risk of losing control?”

“More or less.” The elderly voice chuckled. “After we explored the core area, we discovered that the city was attempting to change faiths. They created deities that they imagined would save them. However, it was useless; even the statues of those deities were destroyed and spilled all across the land.”

At this point, his tone suddenly became heavy.

“However, we met a person there.

“This is the first time in the past 2000 years that our City of Silver had met someone who didn’t belong to our city!

“Outside City of Silver, in the depths of the endless darkness, there really was someone still alive!”

Derrick subconsciously asked, “You brought him back to the City of Silver?”

The elderly voice said after two seconds, “Don’t you feel shocked?

“The reason why our City of Silver works so hard to explore the surroundings is to find humans like us. We finally found them 42 years ago!”

This is indeed rather shocking news, but I often see Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and the others. I often hear of the Loen Kingdom and the seven orthodox gods. Isn’t it very obvious that there are people outside the City of Silver, with cities and countries? Derrick scratched his head, and without much experience, he pretended to be shocked.

“I-I didn’t notice this point.

“This is truly unbelievable. Other than the residents of the City of Silver, there are actually other people!”

“…” The elderly voice remained silent for a while before saying, “Has the City of Silver’s education become so terrible?”

Without waiting for Derrick to speak, he sighed and said to himself, “We very warily invited that person to the City of Silver as a guest. After some consideration, he agreed.

“We monitored and escorted him along the way back, but when we had almost arrived at the City of Silver, he suddenly disappeared…

“We searched everywhere, but we couldn’t find him. After we returned to the City of Silver, my team members went crazy, one by one. They lost control. All of them! Not a single one was spared!

“The six-member council suspected that we were contaminated by something and that the person was not a human at all, but an evil spirit, a monster. So, they locked me up here, and every so often, they would come over to confirm my condition, but they would never tell me what the problem is, nor would they let me out.”

Derrick exhaled heavily and asked, “Do you remember what that man looked like?”

"…He looked very ordinary, and nothing about him stood out. He was dressed just like us, and except for me remembering that he was a man, I can't remember what he looked like… However, the elders should be able to use Beyonder means to directly see him from my vague, forgotten memories," the elderly voice recalled for a nearly a minute and said with a bit of pain.

Derrick pressed him, casually, "Did he say what his name was? Did he tell you about his origins?"

The elderly voice acknowledged tersely.

"He told us that his name was…"

He paused for a moment before saying, "Amon."

†

Sunday morning, in the factory district.

In the past two days, Klein and Mike "visited" many places in East Borough under old Kohler's guidance.

As a result, Mike witnessed five or six people huddled together in a single room, and that wasn't the worst case he saw.

In the poorest areas of East Borough, an ordinary bedroom could accommodate ten people. The precise division of the right to use the floor and the time of use—day or night—shocked the reporter.

Moreover, poverty didn't discriminate between men and women. In those places, people of different genders squeezed in tight spaces without being able to abide by societal norms. Certain incidents which deserved time in court happened all the time. Whether it was men or women, all of them were always facing the threat of violence.

"…Squalid, crowded, smelly—that's the most objective impression. I suspect that every one of them has a serious problem of having parasites… Because the houses were built a long time ago in the most rundown districts, they aren't connected to the sewers. Feces, urine, vomit and other things can be found everywhere. Every house here only has one public bathroom, or worse, every street only has one public toilet…

"They're extremely busy every day, but they can only barely fill their stomachs without any savings. As long as they're unemployed for a few days, they'll fall into an irredeemable abyss… I don't think they would even be afraid of death if they were given even a little hope…" Mike wrote in his investigation manuscript.

In addition, the reporter was impressed by the tramps who wandered the streets in the middle of the night, the girls who stood numbly by the street or in the bars, as well as the drinkers who completely let loose with their drinking. They didn't hold back on using violence and didn't consider the future. All of this left a deep impression on this reporter.

He grew more and more silent.

Chapter 356 - Informant Fee

◆

Cough!

Mike Joseph took out his handkerchief, covered his mouth, and coughed several times.

The smog in the factory district was thicker than anywhere else. The air was gray with a yellowish tint as though it was floating dust. Occasionally a pungent, suffocating odor that even Mr. Reporter, who was long used to the Backlund air, could not bear.

He turned to Klein who was also coughing softly.

“I’ve always been a huge supporter of the government’s establishment of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council and the alkaline industry inspector, but only today did I learn that the problem has become so serious.”

“If we don’t take effective measures, it may become a tragedy in the future.” Klein tried hard to clear his blocked nose.

Perhaps the whole of Backlund would be shrouded in smog that results in one’s vision not exceeding five meters, and it’s possible that an evil god would descend or be born in such a backdrop… he added silently.

Old Kohler didn’t quite understand the conversation. He cleared his throat that was filled with thick phlegm and led the reporter and the detective around the watchman and into a lead factory.

Most of the workers were women. They were working busily without any protection, and the factory floor was filled with dust.

Looking at the "tiny particles" floating in the air, Klein felt like he was looking at toxic gas. The young ladies without masks were like lambs waiting to be slaughtered.

For a moment, he felt as though he was back in Tingen, back to the time when he had helped Sir Deweyville deal with the grievance haunting him.

He seemed to have already witnessed the future of each and every female worker—some of them with throbbing heads, some with blurred vision, some turning hysterical, some with gums with a blue line, and finally, they either went blind or fell dead.

It's like a large-scale, bloody sacrificial ritual. The only difference is that the target is that flashing symbol of money… If the Aurora Order, Rose School of Thought, and other evil sects could make good use of similar situations, just like what Lanevus did, there would be a huge problem… Klein covered his mouth and nose as he quietly watched.

Mike Joseph muttered in surprise and anger, "How can this be?

"How can they be like this?

"A while ago, all sorts of newspapers and magazines were focused on the issue of lead poisoning. Why aren't they using any precautionary measures at all?

"They can't even bear to use a mask?

"These factory owners are murderers!"

He truly is a reporter with a sense of righteousness. Even though he isn't young, he's rather stingy, and his acting is pretty outstanding, he still retains his original pure motives… But how is he so aware of lead poisoning? Right, I forgot. I had gotten Sir Deweyville to advertise the dangers of lead poisoning on the newspapers and magazines… It seems like he did it well, but for some people, what does it matter if one or two of the lower class commoners die? There are plenty of people waiting for jobs! Klein thought with a heavy heart.

As a senior journalist, Mike didn't lose his reason. He quietly observed and asked a few workers who had changed shifts, then he left the lead factory.

Subsequently, they entered one factory after another, but lost their mood to discuss anything when they saw the squalor of the place and the intensive labor involved.

It was almost noon when Klein suddenly discovered that there were a lot of people gathered outside a factory. They were mostly women, and they were excitedly shouting something and were trying to rush in.

"What happened?" Mike asked Old Kohler, puzzled.

Old Kohler was also puzzled.

"I'll go over and ask."

He jogged to the outside of the factory and blended into the crowd. It took him several minutes to get back to Klein and Mike.

"They're going to smash those new machines!" Old Kohler took a breath and got to the point.

"Why?" Mike hadn't been in charge of similar news before, and so he didn't know much about the situation. As for Klein, he had an inkling of the reason.

Old Kohler pointed to the factory and said, "This is a textile factory. They wish to use the latest textile machines, so the number of people in charge of controlling the machines needed will decrease. It seems… it seems like they're going to fire a third of the workers!

"The female workers want to smash the machines and get their jobs back, or else they'll probably not survive. Perhaps, the only choice is for them to become street girls."

Mike opened his mouth. From the shape of his mouth, he looked like he was going to say "fools," but he didn't say anything in the end. He just looked in silence and didn't even move closer.

"Let's go back. I've pretty much finished my investigative interviews." After a long time, Mike sighed.

All three of them turned around and began to walk out of the factory district. No one spoke as they walked.

As they were about to part, Mike glanced at Klein and spoke in a low voice.

"Do you think those women can still find anything else to do if the lead factories who do not provide protection are shut down, or if their bosses are sent to court?"

Klein gave it some serious thought and said, "If it's just a few factories, there won't be much of a problem, but some female workers might suffer from the hunger and cold while looking for other jobs, and they would gradually lose their strength because they don't have any savings.

"It would be a disaster if too many factories are shut down in a short period of time, not to mention the people who lose their jobs after the new textile machines are used."

The Backlund factory district alone might have thousands or even tens of thousands of unemployed workers, who have no food or clothing, roaming the streets like zombies. They might lower the conditions of their pay in order to snatch the jobs of others… Who knows how many people in East Borough will lead an even more difficult life or die as a result. It would be a hell-like scene, and even if this world doesn't have Beyonder powers, it would still bring about a huge disaster. And now, the various evil gods are lurking in the darkness, waiting… Klein swallowed all the words in his mind.

Mike fell silent again, and after paying ten pounds and six soli, he left the smoke-emitting factory district in a carriage.

Klein looked at the carriage ride into the distance but didn't say anything.

Back when he was a Nighthawk, he had known and come into contact with the lives of the poor, but the impression left on him wasn't as deep this time.

A multidimensional observation revealed a human abyss in front of his eyes.

East Borough is truly filled with hidden dangers and tinder-like threats. If one isn't careful, it can be ignited by a cult… Klein pondered for a few seconds and said, "Kohler, I'd like to ask you to help me keep an eye on the situation in East Borough. Oh, only when you're not bogged down by work.

"I'll pay you, giving you the money to build a relationship with the other workers. Every week, we will set a time to meet at the coffee shop from before."

Old Kohler's eyes lit up.

"No problem!"

He made no mention of the price, and he fully trusted the good detective.

Klein weighed his options and said, "Every time we meet, I'll give you 15 soli as funds and compensation. If you provide me with information that I'm satisfied with, there will also be an additional 5 soli as payment."

“A pound?” Old Kohler blurted out in shock.

In his warmest and happiest days, he was paid only twenty-one soli a week, or one pound one soli.

“Yes.” Klein nodded. “You have to pay attention to your words and actions. Don’t be in a hurry to gather information. Maintain a state of speaking less and listening more. Otherwise, you’ll be in danger.”

Informant fees such as these can theoretically be reimbursed, but I’m now a self-sponsored fifty-pence party[1]. Klein sighed as he gave a self-deprecating laugh.

†

Empress Borough, in Miss Audrey’s study within Earl Hall’s luxurious villa.

The blonde was listening to Miss Escalante, her psychology teacher, as she occasionally stroked Susie, the big dog who was sitting beside her.

With dark hair that went all the way down to her waist, Escalante Oseleka noticed that the dog also seemed to be listening intently. She couldn’t help but smile and pause for two seconds.

Following that, she continued with her introduction.

“There are currently no completely orthodox theories in the field of psychology. There are several schools of thought, such as Psychoanalysis, Personality Analysis, and Behavioral Psychology.

“Of course, research on the mind is not only performed by psychologists and psychiatrists. Many professionals in the field of mysticism are also doing similar work. Among them, the most famous one is, heh—sorry, I’ve deviated from the curriculum. Let’s return to the topic just now and talk about Psychoanalysis.”

Audrey could clearly notice Escalante’s intention to guide the topic;

therefore, she feigned ignorance and asked curiously, “Teacher, I’d like to know more about the research situation for the mind in the field of mysticism.

“As you know, I’m very interested in that.”

Escalante pursed her lips, frowned, and said in embarrassment, “But there are vows of secrecy. I mean, these theories and research are part of the secrets of the mysticism circles. They’re privy to those on the inside.”

“Is that so… Th-then can I join?” Audrey asked expectantly. “They aren’t involved in anything evil, right?”

“Ha, how is that possible? It’s just a seminar organized by enthusiasts.” Escalante diverted the topic after mentioning it. “Let’s talk about this later. Let’s continue with the lesson first.”

I’ve got to know where to draw the line. I’ll do it one step at a time. If this is the general trait of the members of the Psychology Alchemists, then I don’t have to worry too much about it being filled with lunatics and perverts like Mr. A… Audrey deliberately put on an expression of reluctance when skipping the subject, but she still politely listened to the theoretical foundations of Psychoanalysis.

When the class was over, and after sending Escalante off, she returned to the study, carefully closed the heavy wooden door, and said to the huge golden retriever, “Susie, what do you think of her?”

“She’s not sincere!” Susie answered flatly.

Then, she tilted her head and said, “However, what she said is very interesting. I think it’s even more interesting than meat and biscuits!”

Susie, do you wish to be a psychiatrist in the future? Specializing in the treatment of mental illness in animals? For example, that horse which is suspected to suffer from depression at the Glaints… Audrey suddenly fell into deep thought, wondering if she should prepare a special white coat and gold-rimmed glasses for Susie to look a little more professional.

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Play on words of 50 Cent Party.

Chapter 357 - Happenings at the Banquet

◆

When he got back to Minsk Street from the factory district, Klein had a simple lunch and took a nap. He didn’t wake up until the evening when the sky had darkened.

But even so, he still felt exhausted, exhaustion that stemmed from the depths of his heart.

After quite some time of being lost in thought, Klein went down to the first floor and lit the gas lamp. He prepared to sit on the sofa and read the day’s newspapers, but when he glanced around, he saw an invitation letter on the coffee table.

He was stunned for a moment before realizing that it was an invitation letter which Mrs. Stelyn Sammer had sent her maidservant to deliver a few days ago.

I almost forgot about this… The disguised matchmaking banquet… Klein put down the invitation letter and walked to the bathroom on the first floor. He used cold water to wash his face, sprucing himself up to look much more energetic.

Compared to when he first arrived at Backlund, there was a much thicker black stubble around his lips and under his chin. Although it didn’t completely eliminate his scholarly bearing, it made him look more mature and rugged.

Someone who doesn’t really know me well wouldn’t be able to recognize me in person… Klein exhaled silently, wiped his face clean, and put his gold-rimmed glasses on the bridge of his nose.

He took a short break, changed into a shirt with a starched collar and a black tailcoat, and then, quite formally, he put on his silk half top hat and picked up his cane stick and invitation letter before leaving the house for the unit beside his.

Amidst the tinkling of the doorbell, he saw Julianne, the maidservant, open the door, and Stelyn with her blonde hair coiled up high, and her ears adorned with silver earrings.

Klein took off his hat, bowed, and praised politely, “Mrs. Sammer, you are very beautiful today.”

Although his words were extremely perfunctory, it was true that she was much more beautiful than usual. It appeared that her ability to doll herself up meticulously had experienced a significant breakthrough.

It seems like the adultery case made her besties with Ma’am Mary. Besides, Mary is now a tycoon with a wealth of tens of thousands of pounds, and she has been admitted into the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, allowing her to acquaint herself with many people in power. She must have had sufficient experience in the areas of makeup, clothing, accessories, and so on… Klein nodded in understanding.

The corners of Stelyn’s mouth couldn’t help but curl up.

“These are my new earrings that cost eight soli.”

Lady, you haven’t changed in the slightest… Klein smiled and handed his hat, cane, and coat to the maidservant.

The fireplace and the pipes in the room brought the warmth of early summer. Many women and young ladies were not dressed that conservatively. Some of their fair arms were exposed, while others bared their creamy chests.

“Luke is talking business with some friends. Let me apologize on his behalf." Stelyn played her role as the female host to its fullest. "Have your meal first. I'll introduce you to a few well-educated ladies later."

Actually, there's no need for that. Just let me eat in peace… Klein smiled.

"I can already smell the fragrance of the food."

Since there were quite a lot of guests, with over twenty of them, the dinner was in the form of a buffet. Klein took a plate and walked around, and he found that the food was a lot more varied than before.

Cold trout, chicken pie, mutton stew with peas, salted breast, curry, roast beef, turkey, beef tongue pastry, ham, salad, and cream cake…

The alcohol provided was still champagne and red wine.

This suited a carnivore's palate very well. Klein, with his large plate, didn't make conversation with anyone. He hid in a corner and slowly savored the food.

It's not as good as the chefs at the Quelaag Club… From time to time, he would inwardly make comments on the food.

He was about to go for second helpings when he was finally discovered by Stelyn Sammer.

At the same time, he saw an acquaintance beside the lady. He was none other than Lawyer Jurgen with his serious expression.

Right, Jurgen is also a bachelor… Klein smiled and walked over, taking the initiative to ask, "How is Mrs. Doris's recovery?"

Jurgen uncomfortably tugged at his bow tie.

"She'll be discharged next week."

"That's great," Klein sincerely said with mixed emotions.

At that moment, Stelyn had already brought a few young ladies over and introduced them.

“This is Mr. Jurgen Cooper, a senior solicitor, who earns at least three pounds a week. He often gets a commission from the cases he handles, and he definitely earns more than two hundred pounds a year. Furthermore, he is young and capable. He will most likely become a great lawyer in the future.

“This is Mr. Sherlock Moriarty, a well-known detective. His income is unstable, but he is paid handsomely for every mission he receives, for example ten or fifty pounds.”

Lady, isn’t this too direct… Klein couldn’t help but silently lampoon.

Jurgen, who was standing beside him, evidently frowned.

Without feeling that she had made a faux pas, Stelyn continued the introductions.

“Miss Sarah Taylor. Her parents are teachers at a grammar school…

“Miss Angelina Watson. Her father is a civil servant at the Backlund Police Department…”

†

Klein smiled numbly and greeted each lady.

After Stelyn was done, Jurgen said in a deep voice, “Mrs. Sammer, it’s impolite to mention the income of others in front of others.”

Stelyn wasn’t mad; instead, she replied very seriously, “No, it’s very important.

“If you end up liking each other and decide to start a family, then income is essential.

"Think about it, there must be meat, vegetables, fruits, milk, white bread, butter, cream, and other foods every day. It costs at least a pound and five soli a week on food alone, not to mention the alcohol. In addition, to rent a better house is nearly a pound a week. Yes, there's also the need to purchase water, gas, charcoal, soap, and the like. One still needs to consider transportation expenses. This adds up to about ten soli.

"That is just the most fundamental expenses. Are you not bringing your wife to a musical concert or to go watch a play?

"Don't you need to get new clothes every year? Ladies, I believe that a family must spend at least 30 pounds a year on it in order to be considered to be living a decent life.

"In addition, there is the salary of the maid, the cost of education for any children, the emergency money that's needed to be set aside for medical treatment, as well as the expenditure of some necessary decorations.

"Only with an income of more than 200 pounds a year can those needs be met. Only then can a happy family be achieved.

"Thus, in order to not delay everyone's time or cause any misunderstandings, I believe it is necessary to include this in the introduction."

As a lawyer, Jurgen was momentarily unable to provide a rejoinder. Fortunately, he always had a serious and stern expression on his face.

How big-hearted… But the basic etiquette is to tell the two parties this information in private, and of course, I know exactly why you're making the introductions straight to their face… Klein smiled.

"Yes, income is very important.

"Only with an income of more than 400 pounds a year can one host a dinner at this level. Only with that much can one afford to have his wife be dressed in beautiful dresses and exquisite earrings."

Stelyn raised her chin slightly as she tried her best to suppress her smile and said, "430 pounds. I mean that there must be some savings each year, to prevent any accidents or to have spare cash to invest into stocks or bonds."

That was her husband's approximate annual income.

After finding a common topic for the two groups of strangers, she left and greeted the other guests. Klein could also clearly sense that Sarah, Angelina, and the other ladies were more interested in Lawyer Jurgen. After all, he was a good-looking man, and his job and income were very stable.

As for a private detective who might be locked up in the police station at any time, they were not the first choice for middle-class women. Besides, Klein now looked rugged with his beard. It wasn't a surprise that the girls would remain a little apprehensive towards him.

After a short casual chat with them, he found an excuse to leave before hiding in a corner and eating while he enjoyed watching Jurgen's awkward and helpless performance.

At this moment, it was a wonder where his eloquence as a lawyer had gone to.

A few minutes later, the two children of the Sammers ran past Klein while playing.

They noticed the gentleman in the corner, stopped, and, with widened eyes, asked curiously, "Mr. Moriarty, we heard that you're a detective?"

"Yes." Klein smiled in response.

The little girl said innocently, "Can you tell us about the cases you've cracked?"

Her twin brother nodded immediately.

The cases I cracked? If it doesn't involve wraiths, puppets, or Devil dogs, then it's about finding cats or catching an adulterer. There's really nothing suitable for children… Klein thought for a few seconds, then chuckled.

"Alright, this is a story about treasure.

"An officer who had just returned from East Balam was suddenly murdered…"

He had mostly forgotten the detective novels he had read in his previous life, so he could only make them up based on a vague impression. The two children didn't care about the irrationality of the plot and listened very seriously, even learning to ask "what happened next."

Without realizing it, Klein was a lot more relaxed.

When the banquet was almost over, and he was about to leave, he saw that Stelyn's face was filled with joy.

"What is the cause for celebration?" Klein casually asked.

Stelyn raised her head slightly and replied with a reserved smile, "Mary has received a luncheon invitation from the chief secretary of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, Mr. Hibbert Hall, on Monday.

"This gentleman is the eldest son of Earl Hall, a true nobleman. He has invited all the members of the council and has allowed them to bring two or three friends with them."

Stelyn paused.

"Luke and I were just invited by Mary."

†

Monday afternoon.

Dressed to the nines, Stelyn Sammer, who was accompanied by her husband Luke Sammer, followed Ma'am Mary to Empress Borough where they saw a large building.

Marble statues, pools, fountains, gardens, and lawns reflected themselves in her eyes, making her feel nervous even before she entered the villa.

“Luke, does my necklace not match my dress?” she asked her husband as she tilted her head.

Luke shook his head and laughed.

“Darling, you're too nervous.

“You don't have to worry about that. The nobles only live in a place that's slightly bigger than ours and eat a little better. We aren't lacking in any way.”

Stelyn nodded when she heard that, as though she had found her confidence.

Entering the villa, they saw the gorgeous crystal chandelier, the hall which could accommodate many dancers, and the plates of delicious food.

Foie gras, pan-fried Dragon-Bone Fish, baked lobster… Aurmir grape wine, misty champagne… It's exactly the same as the magazine's description. Stelyn looked at the food with curiosity, thinking that she could have such a meal on a holiday or during new year's if they scrimped a little.

Except for the Aurmir wine and the misty champagne… she finally added in her mind.

At this moment, her gaze suddenly straightened as she saw a young girl wearing a beige palace dress walking over.

The girl had blonde hair and green eyes, and she was abnormally beautiful. She wore a pair of white silk gloves with a pair of small beautiful emerald earrings. She exuded pureness and elegance.

She's just like an angel… Even though she had always been proud of her appearance, Stelyn couldn't help but exclaim in admiration, and she felt an inexplicable sense of inferiority at that moment.

"Hello," she clumsily greeted with the etiquette she had just learned.

"Hello," the girl returned the greeting gracefully.

After they had passed each other, Stelyn accompanied her husband and Mary to meet the distinguished guests and the noble, Mr. Hibbert Hall.

After a while, she walked to the balcony by herself, intending to ease her mood. However, she unexpectedly saw the angelic girl from before.

She was looking out over the landscape, a large golden retriever obediently sat beside her rose ribbon-rimmed shoes.

"It's so cute." Stelyn made an attempt to make conversation.

The young girl replied with a faint smile, "Let me thank you on Susie's behalf for your praise."

As she looked at the duo, Stelyn suddenly felt that she should own a similar pet for herself.

This was the only way to showcase the Sammers' dignity! She asked in a measured tone, "I heard that the nobles rear a lot of hunting hounds. Is this one of them?"

"Yes." The girl whose emerald-green eyes looked more enchanting than her earrings' gems lightly nodded.

"May I know how much money is needed to buy one?" Stelyn asked with a smile.

The pure and elegant girl looked down at the huge golden retriever and, without minding the question, answered with a slight smile, “450 pounds.”

Chapter 358 - The Sun's Worry

◆◆◆

On a luxurious carriage on their way leaving Earl Hall's villa.

Luke was chatting with Ma'am Mary about the distinguished guests, such as the chairman of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council and chief of the National Weather Service, Sir Ders Shaw; or the council member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council and president of the Royal Meteorological Society; House of Commons Member of Parliament, Mr. Cave; or Midseashire Medical Health's director-in-charge and renowned doctor, Mr. Hawkesley.

They were all influential figures in the government, and the royal family or parliament. And the council's final report would be the most important basis for the planned Anti-Pollution Act and Smoke Emission Act.

The Coim Company, which specialized in anthracite and charcoal, was trying to promote and expedite the development, disrupting older but larger competitors from handling the changes.

"They will certainly not be stingy with their money and will certainly lobby the heavyweight Members of Parliament to interfere with our investigation. We must have a clear solution, just like what Mr. Hibbert Hall said. We need to take hold of public opinion and let the newspapers and magazines repeat the horrors of smoke pollution…" Luke was a senior manager at Coim, a key assistant to Coim's major shareholder and person in control, Mary, and he himself was quite capable.

As they chatted, Luke suddenly noticed that his wife was sitting next to him without saying a word, as if she had lost her soul.

“Stelyn, what happened?” Luke asked with concern.

Stelyn jolted back to her senses, forced a smile, and said, “Nothing, I’m just a little tired.”

“That’s right. You must be extremely tense seeing so many important figures. Now, you can finally relax. Exhaustion is a very normal thing. Actually, it’s the same for me.” Luke smiled.

Stelyn didn’t respond; instead, she looked out the window towards the park with a lake.

Her ears were still ringing with the casual words of the young noble girl from before.

“450 pounds.

“A trained hound is priced between 450 and 700 pounds.”

†

City of Silver, at the bottom of the spire.

Derrick Berg was locked in a small room, eating food and taking his medicine regularly. As a result, his mental state rapidly improved as his visual and auditory hallucinations were no longer present.

I’ll be able to leave in a day or two… It’s really hard to stay locked up in such an environment for long periods of time… The former captain of the exploratory team in the next cell has been locked up for 42 years, yet he’s still very lucid and rational. If it were me, I definitely would’ve gone crazy… However, the explorations and strange monsters that he spoke of are rather attractive and even terrifying… Derrick sat on the edge of the bed, looking at the candle that had burned to the end.

Before the Keepers delivered his next round of food and medicine, he would be placed in true darkness.

At that moment, he saw a gray fog spread out as the deep voice of The Fool sounded.

“Prepare for the gathering.”

Such a change was fleeting. Derrick focused his attention and subconsciously counted his heartbeats.

However, he soon realized that this wasn’t necessary because his current state was one of solitude, and he didn’t need to avoid others.

Derrick, who was no longer counting his heartbeats, quickly thought of a question.

Would Mr. Fool’s subsequent actions of pulling me above the gray fog be discovered and detected when I’m within the confines of the seal of the mystical object at the bottom of the spire?

These were two mystical items that had prevented the complete destruction of the City of Silver in the face of several calamities!

In his nervousness and uneasiness, Derrick, who had been unable to come to a decision, saw endless dark red lights gushing out of the void and engulf him.

The small, enclosed room turned completely silent. Even the sound of his breathing had become extremely weak.

Suddenly, the metal wall between Derrick and the former exploratory team’s captain produced a tapping sound.

This was the signal the two of them used if they wished to talk to each other.

Tak!

The other person bent his finger and knocked again.

After that, what should've been a third tap, that followed in succession, didn't happen.

After a long while, the tapping sound hesitantly rang out again. Following that, both rooms fell into silence, and not a single sound could be heard.

†

After finishing her luncheon, Audrey practiced on the piano before returning to her bedroom while keeping track of the time.

As she passed her father's study, she saw that the door was ajar, and a thick stack of papers lay on the table.

Those weren't there before… Curious, Audrey slowed down and winked at Susie.

As a Spectator, Susie often needed only a small hint to understand what her mistress wanted her to do. Of course, she would also occasionally pretend that she didn't understand, only wishing to lie still.

Susie, who had received the signal, trotted silently into the study, then stretched out her front paws, placed them on the edge of the table, and stood upright.

She quickly glanced at the front page of the stack of documents, returned to Audrey's side, and said in a low voice, "Survey of living conditions at all levels in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district.

"Audrey, what do those words mean?"

Survey of living conditions at all levels in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district? Why did Dad suddenly commission this survey? I don't remember ever mentioning anything about this to him… Audrey was confused and didn't bother to answer Susie's

question.

She looked around, and seeing that the servants were at their stations and not paying particular attention to her, she raised her head slightly and calmly turned to enter Earl Hall's study.

At the desk, Audrey looked down at the report and saw that the title was exactly as Susie had described it.

Hmm, it's document typed by a typewriter. The investigator is a reporter named Mike Joseph. There's the Goddess's Sacred Emblem at the bottom… Was this commissioned by the Church of the Goddess? But why is Father given a copy? Oh, Father is a believer of the Goddess, and the Church wants him to provide some support on this matter? That's a good thing… Audrey made a preliminary judgment.

She had originally thought of hiring others to do a similar investigation, but she felt that this was not in accordance with her intention of guiding others behind the scenes. It was very easy to be noticed and no longer be ignored by the other nobles; therefore, she had been hesitant.

Audrey reached for the file and flipped through it. She found that Mike Joseph wasn't the only one reporting on East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district. There were also quite a few people who had made their own field investigations from different angles.

Some of them even mentioned the proliferation of cults, and how some Beyonders were colluding with the gangs.

Phew… Audrey looked at the clock in the study and saw that it was almost three. She quickly gave up on reading the report carefully and returned the document to its original state.

Before she left, she picked up a book and used it as a disguise for her purpose of entry.

†

At three o'clock sharp. While the chiming of the hanging clock was still reverberating through the air, Audrey had already appeared inside the majestic palace via the dark red, illusory light and found herself beside the ancient long table.

She smiled, stood up, and bowed in the direction of the seat of honor.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

Having received a light nod in response, she then respectively greeted The Hanged Man, The World, and company. She keenly noticed that The Sun seemed to be a little uneasy.

"What are you worried about?" Audrey asked.

This spared Klein's need to speak, having also noticed that Little Sun didn't seem right.

Entering this mysterious space ahead of time, he tidied the items on the table, tossing them into a corner along with Azik's copper whistle, the Biological Poison Bottle, Numinous Episcopate's copper whistle, and other things. He had then covered them with a thick fog.

Presently, there was only the Black Emperor card on the table before him.

This was an item that matched the identity of The Fool!

Derrick didn't hide anything and immediately recounted his successful "malingering" and how he was sent to the bottom of the spire to be isolated for treatment. Finally, he asked, "Honorable Mr. Fool, will that mystical item detect my participation in the Tarot Club?"

How would I know… I don't even know what it is… However, there are currently no strange or powerful forces attempting to invade… Hmm, even the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator couldn't find this place… Klein tapped his finger on the edge of the long bronze table and replied in a "relaxed" manner, "Generally speaking, it wouldn't make any discoveries.

"But some mystical items possess special effects."

Seeing that Mr. Fool had given an affirmative answer, Derrick was immediately relieved. He tersely gave acknowledgment and said, "I'm not sure of its special effects either.

"It's one of the City of Silver's top secrets."

At this point, he suddenly thought of what the former captain of the exploratory team had told him. He blurted out a question, "Have any of you heard of a person named Amon?"

Amon? After a moment's thought, Klein remembered the source of the familiarity.

But he didn't answer in a hurry. Instead, he looked at The Hanged Man, knowing full well that this middle-ranking member of the Church of Storms also knew "Amon," and perhaps he knew even more than he did. Similarly, Audrey also looked at The Hanged Man. She had also heard the name from him the last time.

Fors listened with a blank face, feeling that the things discussed here were always outside the scope of her knowledge.

Alger frowned and asked in confusion, "You ran into a man who called himself Amon while you were exploring the surrounding areas of the City of Silver?

"Or perhaps, you discovered related records?"

Derrick nodded seriously and said, "Yes, forty-two years ago, an exploratory team encountered a man claiming to be Amon in the depths of the darkness. After they returned to the City of Silver, they lost control one after another. Only one of them was left, and he was imprisoned at the bottom of the spire, in the cell next to me.”

“Maybe he went mad too and that was just a figment of his imagination…” Fors, with a wealth of novel creation experience, postulated a guess.

Alger glanced at Mr. Fool who sat at the end of the table. Seeing him appear staid and without expressing anything, he boldly said, “Imagination is a possibility, but one shouldn’t imagine the name ‘Amon’ for no reason.”

He turned his head to The Sun and said, “In the Fourth Epoch, uh—about 1500 years ago in the kingdom we live in, there was a family with strange powers. They belonged to the Tudor Dynasty, and their surname was Amon.

“Even in an era with numerous High-Sequence Beyonders, the surname of the clan was taboo.”

Chapter 359 - The Blasphemer

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Justice Audrey asked instead of The Sun, “Why?”

The Hanged Man, Alger, didn’t answer her directly as he continued on, “Abraham, Antigonus, Amon, Jacob, and Tamara are the five great families that supported the establishment of the Tudor Dynasty, and they were second only to the Blood Emperor.

“Among them, the Amon family is the most mysterious one. They have the least history left behind, and they seem to have been distorted and covered up by some kind of power.

“There was a piece of information that came from the King of the Five Seas, Nast. The Amons are a family of blasphemers, and they wield the secrets to usurp the powers of deities!

“Also, the Amon family call themselves the descendants of the ancient Sun God.”

Derrick Berg was left confused. In his knowledge of myths, there was no such thing as an ancient Sun God!

Among the eight ancient deities—Giant King, Aurmir; Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt; Mutant King, Kvastir; Elf King, Soniathrym; King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea; Vampire Ancestor, Lilith; Phoenix Ancestor, Gregrace; and Devil Monarch, Farbauti—none of them wielded the authority of the Sun… Derrick seriously considered this problem. If I really need to make a connection, the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God had shown powers in the Sun domain. Could the Amon family be “His” descendant?

Noticing that Sun wasn’t saying anything, Alger stroked the stubble on his chin and said, “The Amon family is an ancient family clan from one to two thousand years ago. It is almost history itself. I’m very curious; why did the gentleman that you met appear around the City of Silver? What is his goal?”

That’s right, how could the Amon family, which exists in the “world” of Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and company, appear around our City of Silver… Why did he fail to fulfill his promise after accepting the request of “being a guest?” He mysteriously left and caused the entire team to lose control. Yes, other than the captain… What did he want to do? What was he looking for? If he is a descendant of the Lord, perhaps his purpose is the same as mine: to find out the cause of the cataclysm from ancient times and to find out the truth of the curse… Derrick let his imagination run wild for a moment. After a while, he shook his head and said, “Mr. Hanged Man, I’m unable to answer your question. I’m also trying to figure out this matter.”

Alger replied, looking somewhat disappointed, “Try to communicate with the former captain in your neighboring cell more. See if you can dig up more information from him.”

Upon saying this, he thought for a moment and warned, “However, you must be careful and prudent. I think that person is very dangerous.”

“Very dangerous? You think so too?” Derrick asked, feeling somewhat surprised.

The elders of the six-member council also thought the same!

The Hanged Man looked up at the lofty dome and took a deep breath.

“Those who don’t think so are the ones without sound minds.”

Seeing that The Sun was still confused, he shook his head and said, “He’s the only surviving member of the exploratory team. Just this matter alone is enough to prove that there's something tremendously wrong with him.

"He's been in the dungeon facing Rampagers for forty-two years; yet, he remains very lucid and rational. This shows how weird he is!

"Compounded with the matter regarding the mysterious Amon, the danger is obvious."

These were the little bits and pieces that Derrick had thought about in the past, but he hadn't yet connected together. When he heard that, he suddenly became enlightened and immediately said sincerely, "I understand.

"Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man!"

Audrey, who was listening attentively and observing, resisted the urge to cover her face with her hand. She felt that The Sun was even more naive than she was.

Seeing that everyone's curiosity had been satisfied, that even the gloomy Mr. World had slightly adjusted his posture, and that The Sun didn't seem to have any other requests, she turned her head to the end of the long bronze table and said with a smile, "Mr. Fool, I request a private exchange."

Again… Klein was amused as he nodded and said, "Sure."

He immediately shielded the senses of The Hanged Man and company, rather than isolating himself and Miss Justice. It was mainly because he was afraid that the others might end up communicating out of boredom, thereby exposing the fact that The World was only a repeater.

After receiving the signal, Audrey smiled and said, "Mr. Fool, I have another three new pages of Roselle's diary."

After the Card of Blasphemy was stolen by The Fool's Blessed, she didn't avoid visiting the Royal Museum out of guilt. Instead, she acted as if nothing had happened. She openly requested this to her father, and in the week after the exhibition ended, she got another chance to flip through the notebook.

Audrey thought that appearing unfazed was the best way to avoid suspicion.

If she maintained the constant act of feeling guilty and did not do what was logical, even if the Church of the God of Steam didn't suspect her previously, they would subsequently feel that there was a problem.

According to her own experience, she believed that the very first few pages of a diary would reveal a lot of information, so she mainly memorized the first three pages.

Without waiting for The Fool to speak, she quickly added, "I understand that this isn't a matter that requires a private exchange, but I wish to keep this from Miss Magician for a week or two. That way, even if she knows that you need Roselle's diary in the future, she wouldn't suspect that I'm Justice."

She had seen Fors and Xio once midweek, and by leading the conversation, she had naturally mentioned how her beloved dog, Susie, had chewed the Roselle notebook, causing it to be irrecoverable.

Typically speaking, she no longer needed to hide the fact that Mr. Fool needed Roselle's diary, but using her Telepathist abilities, she simulated what Fors would think, believing that she would have such a thought.

"What? That's a diary? That's a diary Roselle recorded his secrets in? Even Mr. Fool places so much importance on it!

"Eh, I recall that Miss Audrey has some. Wait a moment. She happened to have those diary pages chewed up by her dog a few days ago.

"Isn't this too much of a coincidence?"

To prevent Fors from having such thoughts, Audrey hoped to keep it a secret for at least another week.

After becoming a Telepathist, not only was she able to see the aura and the emotional color of the target, but she was also able to read the superficial thoughts of others and could also simulate their thoughts. Thus, she understood one thing—that in the process of “guiding” others, she had to try her best not to be abrupt or act against logic and reason. Only when all the details were subtle enough and reasonable enough to make the target not realize that she was being guided, would she be considered a qualified Telepathist.

“Subtle” and “reasonable” are the two most important keywords! Audrey concluded in her mind.

The reason why she went to read Roselle’s “notebook” again was precisely to avoid being unreasonable.

She truly is worthy of being a Telepathist. She’s recognized long ago that Miss Magician is one of the two people that she had recommended… Klein smiled in a noncommittal manner.

“What do you want to exchange those three pages for?”

This question was asked with confidence because, after obtaining the Book of Secrets, his greatest weakness in the field of mysticism had already been bridged. As for the secrets of the other deities, as well as his knowledge of Sequences, he knew a lot about them. Just any one of them was enough to deal with Miss Justice.

We will still be friends if you don’t talk about the Psychiatrist formula… Klein lampooned in his heart.

Audrey had already long thought of her question. She remained reserved for a second before saying, “Mr. Fool, I wish to ask one question. Why is it said that the Cards of Blasphemy hide the profound secrets of the deities?”

Great question! Klein smiled secretly. Giving her a look for her to figure it out herself, he said deeply and calmly, “Sequence 0, Black Emperor.”

Sequence 0? There’s still a Sequence 0? There’s a Sequence 0 above Sequence 1? Is that a Sequence representing a god? The Black Emperor is a god? A series of questions suddenly surfaced in Audrey’s mind.

This caused her to be pleasantly surprised, satisfied, and shocked!

Restraining her agitation and unconcealable excitement, she took a deep breath and conjured the three pages of Roselle’s diary.

Klein took it, took a quick glance, and confirmed that this was not one of the ones he had seen before.

“23rd February 1143. I’ve transmigrated to this world for more than a week. I have to write something down and describe the things I have encountered, or I feel like I’ll go crazy.

“Hehe, if I write it in Simplified Chinese, I’m sure that no one will be able to decipher it. This world uses alphabetical words!

“I am now Roselle Gustav, but I’ll never forget my real name.

“Huang Tao!

“I don’t know how I transmigrated either. I carefully recalled and thought about it for a long time, and then I remembered that a few days before my transmigration, I bought a very mysterious silver plate with some strange symbols and patterns engraved on it. It was extremely interesting.

“However, it did not reappear after my transmigration here.

“It’s not my cheat item!

“Hmm, this is a world similar to ancient Europe. It’s after the Renaissance, and cannons and guns have appeared, but they’re rather crude and primitive.

“As for me, Huang Tao Roselle Gustav, as a fan of online literature, I loved reading transmigration with technology genre novels. I know quite a lot of useful things and specifically read up on the corresponding knowledge!

“This is the stage where I can display my abilities!

“But, I realized that my f**king memory isn’t good! I’ve almost forgotten everything!

“The Heavens allowed me to transmigrate to another world, but I wasn’t given an outstanding memory or a system. Nor was I given a two-way door. How can I survive like this!?

“Alright, I’ll start with some details. When I have the money, I’ll hire a bunch of craftsmen, inventors, and scientists. I’m only responsible for giving them ideas!

“It’s been a long time since I’ve felt so full of anticipation for the future.

“But I still miss Mom and Dad a little…

“Besides, the entertainment in this world is too monotonous. The one or two maids don’t look that good, and their entire bodies exude rustic vibes. It completely shatters my imagination of having young, beautiful maidens accompanying me.

“I haven’t finished reading Lin Gao’s Five Hundred Good-for-nothings[1], and there are so many beauties that are awaiting me on Tik Tok. The games, Kings of Glory and PUBG, are still waiting for me. Thinking about them makes me feel a little depressed.”

As Klein read, he nearly frowned.

Initially, he had determined, from the appearance of “Pirate King” and the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,” that Roselle had crossed over three to five years earlier than him. But now, he realized that the gap between their transmigrations couldn’t be more than a year!

But why was there a difference of nearly two hundred years on this side?

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A web novel that has been serialized since 2009, talking about 500 transmigrators.

Chapter 360 - A Difficult Conundrum

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Klein thought seriously for a while and came up with all sorts of theories, but because he lacked the necessary information, he could only temporarily ascribe the cause of the matter to the difference in the flow of time between the Earth and this world.

Roselle and I have transmigrated less than a year apart, but in this world, we are separated by nearly two hundred years. That is to say, even if I were to spend two hundred years to find a way to return, it’s likely that I won’t lose the opportunity to meet my parents. At most, I’d have been missing for a year… Klein made a contrasting inference, improving his mood significantly. He instantly felt filled with motivation.

Of course, he himself knew very well that this reasoning was not rigorous, because this was determined by one precondition, and it was currently impossible to confirm it.

What if Roselle transmigrated after me? That might involve so-called spatial-temporal turbulence. When the time comes, there is no guarantee that I’ll return to the proper time node… Klein poured cold water on his burgeoning mood.

Roselle’s first diary entry was the product of having held back for a long time; therefore, it took up more than two pages. Klein flipped to the end and read the remaining two lines.

“25th February. What a boring world. There are no newspapers and so few novels! I think I need to help this culturally impoverished society, but the premise of this is that I have to get some money and recall how paper is made and how the print press is done.

“As a transmigrator, I can only live on the pocket money that my new dad and mom gave me. I can only occasionally see one or two shiny Fermo gold. What a tragic story.

“However, hunting is quite interesting.

“28th February. This world might be a little different from what I know it to be.

“I got lost while hunting in the woods today. As a result, I saw an unimaginably intense battle.

“In the battle, the man who was surrounded had additional eyes growing on his face—a total of four eyes! They even shot dark green light! Th-this is f**king illogical! Is this a humanoid monster?

“This is actually a fantasy world, right?

“That monster’s opponent was even more powerful. He summoned a pillar of light that burned with golden flames. Yes, I think it was summoned…

“Fortunately, they didn’t discover me. After getting rid of that monster, that person left with the corpse.

“I, Huang Tao, am indeed the protagonist. I discovered the truth of this world a few days after I transmigrated!

“Perhaps they can recognize the mysterious symbols and patterns on the silver token… Of course, I won’t ask. I want to become like them and crack it myself!

“There’s another key reason as to why I said this. I can’t even f**king remember what the pattern looks like. I can only vaguely remember it.”

Indeed the protagonist? Emperor, did you pour all of your eighth-grader syndrome soul into your diary? Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

He was very interested in the silver plate, which might have been the cause for Roselle's transmigration, and he was eager to find out what the symbols and patterns on it looked like.

If he could really decipher it by relying on the mysticism knowledge of this world, then transmigration might not have just been a coincidence… Klein put down the diary pages, rapped his fingers on the table, and lifted the screen that isolated The Hanged Man and The Magician.

"Go ahead and trade freely." Klein leaned back in his chair and smiled.

Fors took a deep breath and said, "I would like to purchase the stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater and 20 ml of blood from a Deep Sea Marlin. It will be paid for in gold pounds."

I still have 430 pounds; I can afford one… she silently encouraged herself.

As for where the rest of the money would come from, she had no idea.

This is one of the main reasons that prevent many Beyonders from advancing… People cannot really attempt to spend beyond their means. If it wasn't for me having to become a Trickmaster to completely be rid of the influence of the full moon's ravings, I wouldn't even consider advancement once I gained rich Beyonder means. I wouldn't even make contact with this circle. I'll write books, save up money, drink tea, and stroll the streets with Xio. Once she's finished with that task, we can travel to different parts of the Northern and Southern Continent. We don't have to be afraid of danger or accidents, and we can enjoy life… Fors's thoughts suddenly began to wander.

Just when she thought that no one would respond, Alger said in a low voice, "I saw the Deep Sea Marlin's blood at the recent gathering of the great pirates, but unfortunately, you've already missed it. You should've said so earlier. No, I'm mistaken. You hadn't joined the Tarot Club back then."

Then what's the point of saying this? Showing off your experience? Fors curled her lips secretly but said in all seriousness, "Mr. Hanged Man, please keep an eye out for me. I can accept a price between three hundred and four hundred pounds."

Alger sneered.

"The sea is even vaster than the land. Pirates might not even meet each other in half a year. Even on the islands that they dispose of their loot, Beyonder ingredients are seldom gathered.

"Only big cities like Backlund, Trier, St. Millom, and Feynapotter can have many ingredients gathered together. From your accent, you should be a Backlund citizen, or someone who has been living in Backlund for many years."

You mean that I still need to rely on myself? Fors almost looked up at the high dome.

At this point, Derrick said, "I know roughly where a few Spirit Eaters are active.

"But I don't need the gold pounds you people talk about."

… Fors said with a fake smile, "What do you want?"

The formula for the Solar High Priest potion… Audrey quickly answered inwardly.

Derrick thought seriously and said, "The formula for the Solar High Priest potion."

"That's a Sequence 7 formula, right? I've heard of it, but the formula for this Sequence is at least 750 pounds, and if you're in a hurry to get it, it can be sold for more than a thousand pounds. Furthermore, the stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater and blood of a Deep Sea Marlin do not exceed 400 pounds each. They're only worth 300 pounds most of the time. Do you understand me?" Fors tried to make it clear to The Sun that this was not an equivalent transaction.

Without hesitation, Derrick replied, "I can give you two or three of the Spirit Eater's stomach pouches."

As for the additional need for a Deep Sea Marlin, he didn't even consider it. He had never even seen the sea before!

What can I do with the additional Spirit Eaters' stomach pouches… Roast them or fry them? To be honest, I have no idea when I'll be able to sell it… Most importantly, I'm unable to afford the formula for Solar High Priest… Fors forced a smile and said, "I'll try searching."

She thought of the masked Eternal Blazing Sun believer at Mr. A's gathering who was good at purification. She thought of the Band of Light ring, and she believed that she could get a clue to the potion formula of Solar High Priest.

But I don't have enough money… Fors thought for a moment, touched her face, looked around, and then asked with great sincerity, "Everyone, do you have any good ways of earning money?"

As soon as she finished her sentence, she realized that everyone had fallen into silence.

Silence could be described by the soundless palace and the quiet gray fog.

From the looks of it, everyone faces this conundrum. As for Mr. Fool, he doesn't need money… Fors wisely shut her mouth.

Isn't the best way to make money be from owning farms, mines, plantations, factories, stocks, etc. Oh, you can also go through the kingdom's bounty notices and complete them in accordance with the price and the period of time at a bearable level… Audrey knew that she didn't have any real experience in making money, so she could only respond with a few words in her heart as if she was joking.

Might I interest you in bicycle projects? Klein resisted the urge to manipulate the words of The World, which would expose his true identity.

After waiting for a few seconds, he maintained an unfathomable posture, making The World gloomily and hoarsely say, "Help me keep a lookout for the Thousand-faced Hunter's mutated pituitary gland and blood, as well as a Human-skinned Shadow's characteristic and a Deep-sea Naga's hair.

Although Klein only had 589 gold pounds left, he now had the Beyonder characteristic of a Werewolf and the Biological Poison Bottle. Furthermore, he was considering to find an opportunity to turn the former into a mystical item and then sell one of them.

In that case, that's more than enough to match the cost of Sequence 6 Beyonder ingredient!

Therefore, he planned to have the members of the Tarot Club help him pay attention in advance so that he wouldn't miss them.

"Alright." The Sun, Derrick, answered first, but he made no promises.

Compared to a Spirit Eater, Human-skinned Shadows and Thousand-faced Hunters aren't monsters that are easy-to-encounter.

"Thousand-faced Hunter? I think I've seen a fossil of it," Justice thought as she replied, "Yes, I'll confirm that after I return."

That fossil was in Duke Negan's treasury.

If it's already a fossil, its Beyonder characteristic has probably long been taken away… Klein manipulated The World and nodded noncommittally.

After a moment of silence, Alger said, "Help me keep an eye out on a person who was involved in the disappearance of the colonial slaves that was mentioned before.

"He calls himself 'Baelen,' a man with reddish-brown skin and has the clear characteristics of a Southerner, but someone has overheard him speak in a Backlund accent.

"The third tooth on his left is missing, but it could very well have been replaced.

"In addition, there's nothing special about him, and his height is also quite average.

"If you can find traces of him, there will be no problem with the reward at all, with it being at least one hundred pounds or something of equal value."

Even divination can't be completed with such a description, let alone carrying out a search for the person in the real world… Klein looked around and said, "Continue with your free exchange."

†

At the end of the Tarot Gathering, Derrick returned to the real world and found himself in the dark, cramped room.

He sat on the ground cautiously for a few seconds, but he didn't discover any unusual changes. He was finally able to let out a sigh of relief.

Remembering that Mr. Hanged Man had advised him to talk more with the former exploratory team's captain, Derrick walked over to the corresponding metal wall, bent his fingers, and tapped on it.

Tak! Tak!

He completed his signal, but there was no response even after a long time.

Did he fall asleep? Or was he taken to the six-member council? Derrick wondered while looking at the dull metal wall.

At this moment, an elderly and fleeting voice came from the bed behind him, “Are you looking for me…”

Chapter 361 - Translucent Worm

◆ ◆ ◆

“Are you looking for me…”

The moment the voice entered his ears, Derrick froze. His skin tensed up, and his hair stood on end.

Why is he behind me?

Why is he in my room?

What happened to the seal?

What about the effects of the mystical items?

His forehead dripped with cold sweat, and he subconsciously wanted to turn around to take a look.

But his instincts stopped him from doing so.

This instinct originated from the teachings of the City of Silver’s General Knowledge of Monsters lessons and the strange scene he had experienced after joining the patrolling teams.

When someone is speaking behind you, don’t turn around in a hurry!

Derrick raised his hands and clenched them into fists in front of his chest, then slowly, he turned around, bit by bit.

The room was shrouded in darkness, making it impossible to see anything. However, there was a tint of golden light that was expanding in his two eyes, transforming into what seemed like two miniature suns.

With his Light Suppliant powers, he saw a dark figure sitting quietly on the edge of his bed.

The dark figure rapidly turned clear, revealing a head that had been split in half!

In the middle of his head, two gray brains wriggled like they were alive, trying to get close to each other but being unable to do so.

The thick, viscous liquid on the severed surface of his brain had turned into thin threads, but they were shrinking like maggots.

Each eye that was on the two separate sides were distanced apart, and the nose bridge was separated from the middle. The color of the blood was bright and evident.

The left side of his mouth was open, but the right side of his mouth was tightly shut.

This terrifying monster was naked, and there were numerous dark red wounds on its body.

The countless wounds had torn open savagely, revealing rows and rows of white teeth. They said the same sentence in quick succession, “Are you looking for me…”

It paused for a moment, the corners of its mouth and the edges of its wounds were curling up.

“Look, am I not normal…”

Derrick’s pupils contracted, and without thinking, he placed his folded hands on his chest and raised them to his chin, as if in prayer.

The small room suddenly became bright, and a pure beam of light, swirling with fire, fell from the roof and onto the monster’s body.

The beam was not as grand as the one used by Derrick outside the spire. This was because of the seal here and the mystical item which left him isolated from the spire's exterior.

But at that moment, Derrick was stunned to see the holy light beam that he had prayed for was suddenly thickening. It was so bright that he couldn't help but close his eyes.

A few moments later, something purer and thicker separated from the magnificent pillar of light. It was like a man made of light with no facial features and no clothes!

The "man of light" suddenly coruscated and pounced on the monster.

All the "mouths" on the monster suddenly opened, as if it was letting out a blood-curdling screech.

Yet, Derrick heard nothing.

The monster began to tremble violently and quickly disintegrated under the burning and illumination of the "man of light," disappearing as if it were melting.

Just as it was about to become transparent, a phantom wearing a black classical long robe and a pointed hat suddenly appeared!

The shadow had black hair, black eyes, a wide forehead, and a thin face. It wore a monocle carved from crystal.

As soon as he appeared, the "man of light" exploded, and Derrick's vision was filled with whiteness.

When his eyesight was restored, he found himself outside the room, in the corridor with the metal lamps set in it, in the dim light of the setting sun.

He tilted his head blankly and looked into the room. He saw a tall, muscular figure in dark trousers and a brown coat.

In front of this figure was the bed which Derrick had been sleeping in. Dawn-like rays of light condensed onto a white leg bone, turning it into a pure white, sharp sword.

Next to the straight sword lay a translucent worm.

It was only the length of a thumb, and its slimness was almost that of a child's finger. One ring after another, of completely transparent colors, divided it into many sections.

It was a fleeting scene, and without specially counting the number of rings, he had a vague feeling that there were about ten of them.

The tall figure which had its back facing him reached out his hand to pick up the strange translucent worm. As he turned around, he sighed.

"It was close…"

At that moment, Derrick finally saw the face of the tall figure.

His hair was grizzled, unkempt, and rather disheveled. He had deep wrinkles around his cheeks, but there were no wrinkles at the corners of his eyes. Some old scars, that were either deep or twisted, remained on his cheeks.

He was dressed in a flaxen-colored shirt with a checkered leather belt around his waist, and his pale blue eyes were deep and weathered, like a book full of stories.

For a moment, Derrick was stunned, and then, as though he had been in danger all his life, he opened his mouth in pleasant surprise.

"Your Excellency!"

In front of him was Chief of the City of Silver's six-member council, a powerful Demon Hunter who was over a hundred years old, Colin Iliad!

Colin nodded slightly and said, "We always knew that he had a problem, but in order to find out what kind of ulterior motives the man named

Amon had, we intentionally didn't eliminate him directly, and we instead locked him at the bottom of the spire, sealed under the influence of mystical items, and we often let Beyonders, who only have symptoms of losing control, live next to him and talk to him. We wanted to see if we could induce some abnormal changes in him in order to learn the information we wanted to know.

"Unfortunately, he had been very normal until today, way too normal.

"Why do you think he suddenly mutated and attempted to break through the seal? Do you have any idea what makes you different from the others?"

So it was purposely arranged for me to live next to the former exploratory team captain… After a few seconds of silence, Derrick said, "Maybe it's because my Beyonder pathway is different from the others. Sequence 9 Bard, Sequence 8 Light Suppliant."

In other words, the Sun pathway… If Mr. Hanged Man is right, that the Amon family is the descendant of an ancient Sun God, then it's normal for me to cause a mutation to happen to him… Derrick felt he knew the truth to a certain extent.

Colin listened without a change in expression. He sized up Derrick for a few seconds before saying, "We were monitoring him. The members of the six-member council took turns, but we didn't expect him to suddenly mutate. There were zero warning signs, and his actions were very decisive and determined.

"What were you doing in the room just now?"

Derrick, who was considering the relationship between the Sun pathway and the ancient Sun God, didn't instantly realize what the Chief was asking about.

When he realized it, his mind was still blank as he seriously recalled what he had done.

I didn't do anything. I just knocked on the wall and tried to talk to him… Before this, before this, I was participating in the Tarot Gathering… The Tarot Gathering! Derrick was suddenly stunned. He felt that things might not be as simple as he had imagined.

He knew that he couldn't inform the Chief of his thoughts, but he didn't know what kind of expression to make, so he could only maintain his lonely, reserved silence. He said thoughtfully, "I knocked on that wall three times.

"Before that, the candle in my room had extinguished, and there was complete darkness. I had tried to practice some of my Beyonder powers."

Colin looked into Derrick's eyes quietly and said after nearly twenty seconds, "Unfortunately, what Amon left in his soul was not his original body. Moreover, this matter happened too suddenly, so we were unable to obtain the desired result…

"Before his mutation, did you sense anything amiss?"

"No." Derrick shook his head with conviction.

Colin's eyes suddenly flashed with two complex, dark green symbols, and he reflected Derrick's body in them.

After nearly ten seconds of silence, the City of Silver's Chief closed his eyes and said, "Your condition has stabilized. You don't need any more treatment, so you can go back now."

Derrick was startled.

"Alright."

He watched Demon Hunter Colin Iliad turn back into the room, pick up the sharp white sword, and turned it over and over in his hands.

He quietly took a deep breath and walked along the corridor towards the exit. On the way, he met the Keepers who had rushed over one after the other.

He slowly walked back home and closed the door. He carefully observed his surroundings for a while, then he sat down on the edge of the bed and recited in a low voice, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, you are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; you are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

"I've just experienced something terrifying…"

Derrick recounted what had happened and mentioned his two guesses.

After doing all of that, he felt much more at ease.

And with his tense state of mind relaxing, he felt immense exhaustion wash through him. He lied down and quickly fell asleep.

In the silent and dark room, flashes of lightning would occasionally illuminate everything. Otherwise, it would seem like the dark night.

The sleeping Derrick suddenly flicked his right index finger and leisurely tapped it on the bed.

Once, twice, thrice…

†

After the Tarot Gathering, Klein didn't divine the Werewolf's Beyonder characteristic or the Biological Poison Bottle due to his spirituality expenditure. Instead, he went straight back to the real world for a nap. After twenty minutes, he woke up and drew the curtain, allowing the light that penetrated through the mist to bring a certain degree of light into the room.

Sitting on the chair in front of the desk, Klein calmed down and began considering what he needed to do in the short term.

The main goal is to continue concluding the principles of a Magician and make adjustments according to the subtle feedback from my spirituality.

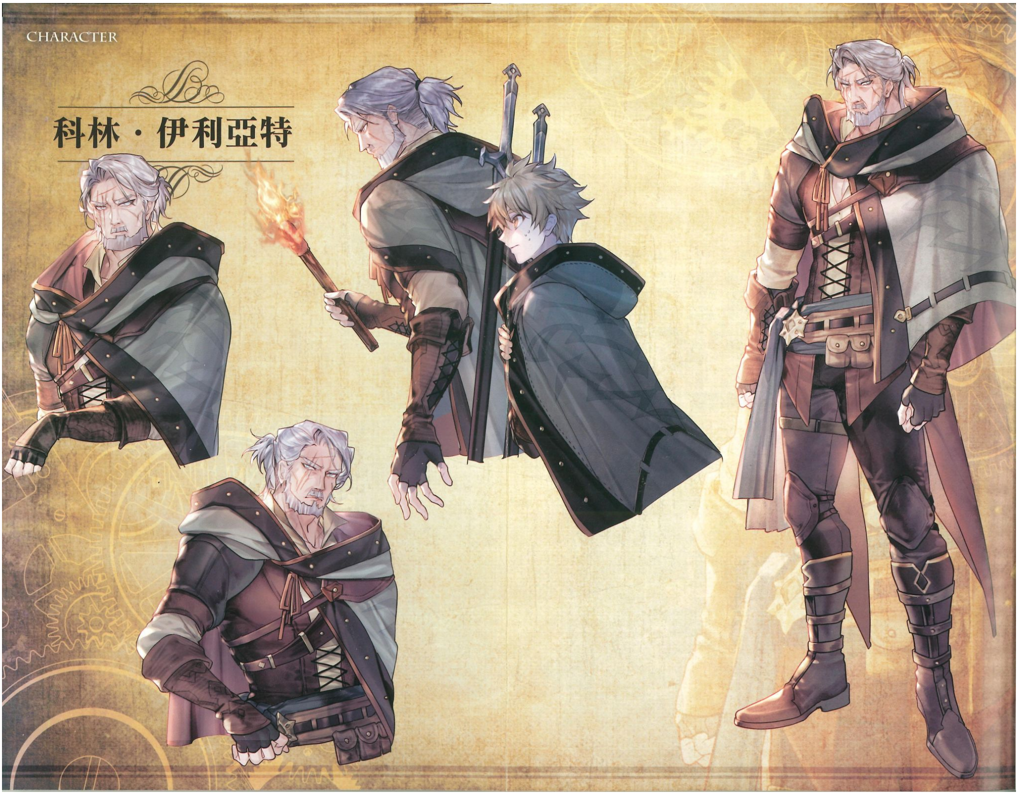
Although principles like “never performing unprepared,” “the need to have a stage and a performance,” and “completing a performance using means of diversion” do not seem problematic at the moment, if I were to continue acting this way and performing slight adjustments, I’ll eventually digest the potion and reach the advancement state. But this sort of acting isn’t sufficient. I’m still lacking some of the important principles. Currently, what I’m doing will make the digestion slow and not thorough. Perhaps, it will take a year, or perhaps even two or three years before my Sequence advancement is possible.

And Ince Zangwill won’t remain there waiting for me! Only through becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder as soon as possible will I be qualified to take revenge!

Therefore, figuring out the other Magician principles is of utmost importance. I’ll first determine them through experimentation whether the applause from an audience will stir my spirituality and result in better digestion of the potion.

Just as Klein was deep in thought, he heard a series of illusory, stacked pleas.

科林・伊利亞特



Chapter 362 - The Secret Deed Ritual

◆ ◆ ◆

A male voice? Is it Mr. Hanged Man or Little Sun? Klein looked out the window at the gloomy sky, got up, went into the bathroom next door. He locked the door, took four steps counterclockwise, and arrived above the gray fog.

Within that mysterious space, a towering, ancient palace quietly stood. The illusory male voice echoed in a stacked, continuous manner.

Klein glanced at it and confirmed that the prayer was from Little Sun.

He sat in The Fool's seat and stretched out his right hand, emanating his spirituality to touch the corresponding crimson star.

Suddenly, the voice became clear and layered, and Klein quickly figured out what The Sun was talking about.

The former captain of the exploratory team, who had seen Amon, suddenly lost control and strangely penetrated through the seal, arriving at his room. Fortunately, the City of Silver took this matter seriously and had been constantly prepared for it; otherwise, it would have led to a tragedy.

The Sun believes that it's impossible that there was no reason for the man's loss of control. He came up with two possibilities—one was that his own Beyonder pathway met the requirements of being the ancient Sun God's descendant, and the other possibility was that the man might have sensed the Tarot Gathering and Mr. Fool's secret pull.

If it were the former, he wouldn't have waited until today and waited until the end of the Tarot Gathering before losing control… The latter reason has a greater probability… Hmm, this is the first time I've encountered someone who can sense the matters regarding the gray fog… That Amon is very scary! It's no wonder their family was known as the Blasphemers during the Fourth Epoch. Even their last names are taboo… Klein subconsciously looked at the crimson star and the corresponding supplicant. He carefully observed the blurry image of Little Sun to see if there was anything abnormal with him.

Klein believed that Amon wouldn't be so easily eliminated. Even if it was as the Chief of the City of Silver had said—that his body wasn't his main body—it didn't make it any easier to eliminate him!

The only possibility is that the powerhouses in the City of Silver have been using mystical items to monitor him, but is that even possible?

When he decided to let the former leader of the exploratory team lose control and silently penetrate through the seal, he definitely had a plan in place…

In the midst of his thoughts, Klein's eyes suddenly froze as he looked at the prayer scene.

Entwined on the indistinct body of The Sun was a translucent and illusory figure!

He had hands and feet, but he was like a python, twisting around The Sun while his head rested behind The Sun's head!

In the blurred image, he was wearing a black classical robe, a pointed hat, and a crystal monocle.

The Sun didn't notice any of this!

… Klein almost drew a cold gasp, shocked at the strange means that were available to that entity.

He vaguely understood the other party's intention.

By residing in the Spirit Body of The Sun, he is waiting for the next Tarot Gathering, allowing him to sneak above the gray fog, like a virus or a Trojan horse!

When that happens, my control over this mysterious space might be snatched away… He's truly a Blasphemer! Fortunately, Little Sun is rather naive and straightforward, so he immediately reported this to me. Through the corresponding crimson stars and the power of the gray fog, I was able to discover his peculiar state… Klein drew a breath and tried to calm himself.

At that moment, he had to respond. He had to quickly think of a way to get Amon out of The Sun, or temporarily expel The Sun out of the Tarot Gathering.

Looking at himself, from his Beyonder powers of Magician, Clown, and Seer; to Azik's copper whistle; the Black Emperor card; the All-Black Eye; the Sun Brooch; the Biological Poison Bottle; and so on, Klein couldn't find a way to deal with Amon.

Amon's Sequence is definitely above Sequence 4, and the means available to him must be sufficiently strange. To be able to escape from the City of Silver's mystical artifacts and powerful Demon Hunters, it means that he isn't something which can be easily eliminated with ordinary objects or powers!

After thinking for a moment and looking around, Klein discovered there was only one possibility of eliminating Amon—the gray fog, this mysterious space.

I have to think of a way to pry its power away… The sacrifice and bestowment ritual from before are examples… With this train of thought, Klein turned his gaze to the Book of Secrets.

This mysticism book, which originated from the ancient Shaman King

Klarman, recorded many mysterious rituals that required help from the Primordial Moon.

Klein, who had been reading it before, vaguely remembered that a few of them were suitable for such a scenario.

Of course, it was unknown what changes he would have to make after directing it towards The Fool. He could only keep his hopes up and try his best… As Klein flipped through the book, his eyes stopped at a ritual.

“Blood Moon Sacrifice.”

This ritualistic magic was clearly different from the simple ones that Klein had learned before, and it used the element of a secret deed.

The process was to use a material rich in spirituality, preferably the blood of a Beyonder, to write the honorific name of the target of the secret deed on an animal hide, and to draw the corresponding symbols and magic labels. If necessary, the specific circumstances of a given time and place also had to be taken into account.

When this was done, the ritual host would set up the altar, pick up the piece of hide, and repeat the honorific name, letting their spirituality to seep into the hide, gradually spreading it out, little by little to form a hidden bond with the corresponding great being, and obtaining the corresponding Soul Body experience or help.

The final outcome of this ritual was unknown. It all depended on what the hidden or great being bestowed. Or rather, according to one’s characteristics, the knowledge and power one could gain through that secret bond were also different.

This kind of rather vague and subjective ritual gave Klein enough freedom to modify and manipulate it. If he had assumed the stance of forcefully eliminating Amon from the beginning, then Amon would have certainly resisted and created a dangerous accident.

If the target of the secret deed were the True Creator or the Hidden Sage, it's normal for the ritual to end in madness… Klein mumbled as he conjured a pen and paper and began to modify the Blood Moon Sacrifice to turn it into a secret deed ritual that belonged to The Fool.

First, he replaced the honorific name with the three sentences of "King of Yellow and Black." Then, he replaced the symbolic symbol with the one behind the seat of The Fool. It was a unique symbol made up of a part of the Pupil-less Eye that represented concealment and the Contorted Lines that represented change.

The third was to design the corresponding magic label according to the symbols and his mysticism knowledge. This was the most difficult step. Any mistakes would cause the entire ritual to produce unpredictable developments.

Lastly, he had to modify the layout of the altar to make it closer to The Fool and to the King of Yellow and Black.

After busying himself for quite a while, Klein had a new secret deed ritual, but he was unsure if it would work.

He examined it over and over again, and after confirming that there were no mistakes, he emanated his spirituality and heavily replied to Little Sun, "I'm aware.

"I have something to task you with.

"Let's see if this ritual works."

†

The Sun Derrick suddenly woke up from his dreamless slumber. Before his eyes were the boundless gray fog and the lofty Fool. His ears echoed with bits of illusory and distant words.

He knew that Mr. Fool would occasionally ask the members of the Tarot

Club to make small attempts as if to verify something. He wasn't surprised by this, and he immediately sat up and began to search for a monster hide, exotic herbs, and other objects.

As for the spiritual materials described in the ceremony, Derrick didn't waste time heading to the spire or the underground market to buy them. He picked up the Axe of Hurricane and sliced a tiny wound in his arm.

Silently, he used his own blood as ink, and he wrote the name of The Fool and its corresponding symbols and magic labels on the pitted monster hide.

After a while, he put down the quill that was stained with blood. He saw many mysterious symbols on the hide, and the colors were bright red and had an indescribable hint of demonic dealings.

After dealing with the wound on his arm, the pale-faced Derrick quickly finished setting up the altar. He picked up the blood-red word and all kinds of terrifying symbols from the hide and held it tightly in his hand.

He looked at the flickering candle flame in front of him, closed his eyes, lowered his head, and repeatedly recited the honorific names of The Fool, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

†

Derrick's spirituality slowly flowed out and infused the hide, and the words in Jotun and the magic symbols on it quickly brightened. It was a startling crimson color.

At that moment, he, who had already entered into a Cogitation state, was only feeling his psyche gradually dissipate as it floated to an immeasurable height, coming into contact with the grayish-white fog, and the hidden great being.

†

Above the gray fog, inside the palace that looked like a giant's residence.

Noticing that The Sun had not shown any signs of delay in preparing the ritual, Klein chose to wait there above the gray fog.

Suddenly, he felt the entire mysterious space start to tremble. That motionless grayish white fog started to flow!

The crimson star corresponding to The Sun shined brightly and emitted illusory rays of light like the tide.

These countless rays of light condensed into a blurry figure of The Sun. He was in a supplicating position with his eyes closed and his head lowered, waiting for the moment when he could bond with the great being and gain a miraculous Soul Body experience.

The translucent figure on his body was still tightly coiled like a python, but its head was already tilted back as it looked up. The crystal monocle it wore flashed dimly.

He's searching for the subtle, hidden connection… He should've recognized that this is just a secret deed ritual, but he didn't do anything to stop it. Is he trying to find the connection through it? Klein suddenly came to this realization, and felt the gray fog and the mysterious space above it simultaneously rippling with power!

However, for the time being, Klein couldn't combine these forces with his own spirituality to create a Beyonder effect that could exorcise the evil spirit, unless there was another corresponding ritual.

Clearly, this was impossible. He couldn't maintain two rituals simultaneously!

Klein's eyes quickly swept the area in front of him, and his gaze stopped at the Sun Brooch.

Chapter 363 - High-level Authority

◆

Perhaps I can use it as a "bridge"… Just as this thought flashed through Klein's mind, his right hand grabbed the Sunbird-shaped dark golden brooch.

At the same time, he used his spirituality as a whirlpool to attract the pried power from the mysterious space towards him, making it surge towards the Sun Brooch like a tidal wave.

The quivering above the gray fog became obvious. Little dots of pure light intertwined and swept toward Klein, blending with his spirituality.

The Sunbird-shaped dark golden brooch began to glow with a dazzling brilliance. It grew brighter and denser, and in an instant, drop after drop of a translucent golden liquid began to condense.

The liquid quickly merged together and formed a human figure that was as tall as Klein. It was a golden figure, a sacred figure!

It does work… Sun Holy Water that's created from a higher level of power is closer to a God's bestowment! Klein's heart was filled with joy. He turned his gaze back to the crimson star which symbolized The Sun. He then looked at the figure that was waiting to bond with the great being.

As for the divine figure condensed by the golden Sun Holy Water, it wasn't a result of the Sun Brooch, but simply a manifestation of Klein's subconscious thoughts.

Reaching this step, he had already allowed the golden figure to move forward. Through the illusory crimson star, it merged with Little Sun through the secret deed ritual as it dispelled the "evil spirit" hidden inside his body, as well as giving him a certain amount of knowledge and a miraculous Soul Body experience.

However, Klein didn't have much confidence at that very moment.

The power of the mysterious space was obviously higher than his spirituality, making him unable to smoothly control the power. As such, the power of the golden figure was mixed, chaotic, and insufficiently coordinated. If he used it as is, the effect was, at most, 10% of what he expected.

As for Amon, who was suspected to be a descendant of the ancient Sun God, he was born into a family of Blasphemers in the Tudor Empire's Fourth Epoch. Even if it wasn't his main body, he was able to successfully hide his identity from the powerful High-Sequence Demon Hunter and the powerful mystical items that protected the existence of the City of Silver. Klein truly didn't have much confidence with the effect only amounting to 10%.

His initial plan was only to give it a try. If it really didn't work, he would temporarily bar The Sun and then reconnect with him when he found a better solution.

However, having come this far, Klein naturally wanted the best outcome and strived to succeed in one go.

Having disguised himself as the godlike Fool, he too had a little pride, and he wanted to keep up his reputation… He gave a self-deprecating laugh as he prepared to find a way to increase the effects of the golden figure to dispel the evil entity at the last moment.

Of course, I can only waste a few seconds; otherwise, the ritual would be over… Klein's eyes swept over the items on the long bronze table again, thinking only of the words "high level."

Due to his spirituality's intuition as a Seer, his gaze landed on an item.

The Card of Blasphemy, the Black Emperor card!

Of all the items Klein owned, it was the only one that matched the words "high level!"

As for Azik's copper whistle, Klein clearly remembered that it had been completely suppressed when the Blackthorn Security Company faced off with the spawn of the evil god.

However, what the Black Emperor card's "high-level" pertains to is the knowledge contained inside. That's not right, after the owner advances to become a High-Sequence Beyonder, it can produce subtle responses with the Beyonder ingredients that are needed. Furthermore, it also possesses the characteristics of anti-divination and anti-prophecy… In other words, its level isn't low… I don't need to use it for a fight; as long as I can use its "high-level" to suppress the power of this mysterious space above the fog, and if I can minimize the chaotic and unnatural coordination of the golden figure, that will be enough!

Klein quickly came up with an idea. He reached out his hand towards the Black Emperor card which had its back facing up!

Just then, he noticed a frightening scene through the corner of his eyes.

Within the shadow of The Sun that was formed by the illusory rays of the crimson star, a palm, so shriveled that only skin and bones remained, was suddenly reaching forward. Slowly but firmly, it grabbed at the boundary of the crimson star, giving off a feeling as if it was piercing through reality and entering the psyche domain.

Amon was attempting to use the connection to rip open the boundary and extend his hand into the gray fog!

Whoosh!

For the first time, the endless grayish-white fog was in chaos. The “flowing” from before seemed to turn into waves as gales formed.

Klein’s pupils shrank. He no longer hesitated, and he picked up the Black Emperor card.

As soon as he held this item in his hand, he immediately felt that his spirituality was no longer subdued by the power of the mysterious space.

Suddenly, the golden figure became abnormally tall, and on its back, it grew pairs of enormous pitch-black wings. There were a total of twelve pairs!

On each pair of wings, there were dark and bright feathers engraved with many mysterious symbols.

The contrast between gold and black was stark, and the huge figure, driven by Klein, spread its wings to cover the vast dome of the towering palace.

Without a sound, the sacred yet corrupted figure of light and darkness flashed over, overlapping with the manifestation of Little Sun that was formed by the crimson star!

The light and shadows intersected, and a fierce wind blew in all directions. The palm that was so shriveled that it didn’t have any flesh, to the point of only having skin and bones left, shrank backward uncontrollably, but it also firmly refused to retreat.

It was like a man falling off a cliff who had extended his hand to grab a bulge, unwilling to let go regardless of what happened.

Whoosh!

In the midst of the illusory and chaotic sounds, light and darkness completely erupted. The shriveled hand finally lost its support, and it plummeted, constantly disintegrating and disappearing as it did.

After a few seconds, the gray fog and the mysterious space above it returned to its previous tranquility, as if no one had stepped inside for thousands of years.

Klein focused again and saw that the blurry figure of Little Sun was no longer entangled with the twisted and incorporeal entity.

Phew! Unable to stop himself, he heaved a sigh of relief. Then, he conjured the contrasting image from before and threw them at the manifested figure of Little Sun in the crimson rays of light, allowing him to fully comprehend them.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick felt both awake and adrift at the same time.

It was as if he could see shadows of ineffable shapes, different colors of light that contained endless knowledge, and a majestic, tall, golden figure looking down upon everything.

This figure stood beside Mr. Fool in the thick gray fog, with twelve pairs of huge, dark, mysterious wings on his back.

Not only did his body and mind become warm and pure, but he also seemed to understand what was called sunlight. He had even figured out Holy Water Creation, as well as the knowledge to exorcise evil spirits.

It also contained images he couldn't understand, such as a towering, hidden pyramidal mausoleum.

In that intoxicating Soul Body experience, it was as if he had returned to his most carefree childhood, to the lands where the sun shone in his imagination, and it was only when everything was gone and the simple furnishings of his room came into view that he snapped back to his senses.

Is this the secret deed ritual as referenced in textbooks? For more than two thousand years, no one in the City of Silver has succeeded before. No one has been able to come into contact with a mighty existence… At that moment, Derrick's low spirits and loneliness lessened. A heartfelt smile beamed on his face.

The Fool's so-called experiment was to confirm whether our City of Silver's environment can perform a secret deed ritual? That wondrous feeling of all that knowledge was the payment "He" gave me? Derrick lowered his head again and said with great respect, "Thank you, Mr. Fool!"

Right at this moment, a grayish-white fog suddenly appeared in front of his eyes. In the center of the fog was a lofty chair. It was the leisurely seated Fool.

Then, Derrick saw himself covered in a transparent, illusory shadow.

The figure wore a black classic robe, a matching pointed hat, and a crystal monocle hung from its face. It coiled around his body like a python!

This… Amon wasn't dead! He evaded the detection of the mystical items and the attention of His Excellency, and he became a parasite on my Spirit Body! Derrick's eyes widened, and he saw himself as he was now, no longer entangled by Amon.

Did Mr. Fool notice him and finish him? Derrick's sunken heart calmed down while cold sweat trickled down his forehead due to the lingering fear. His face, on the other hand, displayed an expression of instinctive reverence.

He subconsciously followed the words described in the mythology course and said, "Praise you, the mighty Mr. Fool!"

†

Somewhere in the deep darkness, a bolt of lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the surroundings.

This was a plain that was filled with ravines, and a bluish black single-eyed giant was wandering about subconsciously

His eyes were lifeless, and his face was covered with traces of rotting pus. Grayish-yellow gas permeated from his body and interwoven in the air, forming many clouds.

And beneath his feet, in the darkest ravine on the plain, there was a figure standing at the edge, overlooking the land below.

With the help of the lightning, a thick and broad grayish-white building could be vaguely seen at the bottom of the ravine.

The figure was dressed in a black classic robe and a pointed cap of the same color. It had curly black hair, black eyes, a broad forehead, and thin cheeks. It looked identical to the phantom Derrick Berg had seen.

He raised his hand and pinched the crystal monocle. Then, he turned his head to the left and looked into the distance.

“As expected…” he suddenly whispered, in the language of ancient Feysac.

After pausing for a moment, the man smiled and said the words, “The Fool.”

Before he finished speaking, he had already jumped into the ravine in front of him.

At this moment, the lightning subsided for a second, and darkness completely enveloped the world.

†

After eliminating the fatal threat, Klein returned to the real world, once again feeling the urgent need to advance his Sequence.

The Amon that I eliminated wasn’t the main body. If he truly is interested in the mysterious space above the gray fog, he will soon return to the City of Silver. At that time, I wonder if the two legendary mystical items and the three Demon Hunters will be able to stop him…

For a mere clone to be so bizarre and terrifying, one can imagine how powerful his main body is… Therefore, I need to conclude the rest of the Magician principles as soon as possible and, through digestion and advancement, better grasp the mysterious space above the gray… Perhaps, the City of Silver’s Shepherd elder will be used. If she really is corrupted by the True Creator…

Klein opened the bathroom door and went down to the first floor while in deep thought.

Chapter 364 - Cathedral of Serenity

◆

What about the rest of the Magician's principles? As Klein idly leafed through the newspaper he had finished reading, he thought about the issues that mattered most to him.

He had already considered one point before, and that was the difference between having an audience to cheer for him and not having one. However, just this alone didn't seem sufficient.

With this thought, Klein's thoughts ran wild as he inexplicably thought of something.

When I was still a Seer, being recognized and praised as a true fortune-teller would give me a feeling that the process of digesting the potion had become faster. After I concluded the Seer principles, I began to believe that there was no direct correlation between the views and feedback from others and that they were merely expressions, nothing substantial. If I act well enough, I would naturally be acknowledged, and my digestion would naturally be faster.

That is to say, I had always believed that they were two different responses with the same gains, and not something related to causality.

But now, there's the "choice" of receiving an audience's applause… If it does help me digest the potion, does it mean that some performances really require feedback, and the way that others view me can subtly affect the progress of my potion's digestion?

Hmm, by extension, would the establishment of the Churches by the seven orthodox gods, the spreading of their faith, and the nurturing of their followers partially be a result of this?

…This is truly a sacrilegious thought. I am indeed not a person who sincerely worships gods. I will praise them, but I won't blindly believe in them… Klein quickly adjusted his train of thought as he searched for another angle of attack.

He repeatedly compared the subtle differences between Seer, Clown, and Magician. Gradually, he came up with an idea.

In comparison, does a Magician, who needs to perform, possess the need to take the "initiative?"

Taking the initiative to perform instead of being passive like a Seer or Clown?

From the perspective of fate, it also fits. From a Seer's reverence of fate, a Clown's characteristic of being teased by fate while still maintaining a smile, and finally a Magician who takes the initiative to challenge fate. Even if the result is nothing real or substantial, he will still receive the audience's applause from his deception…

Klein nodded indiscernibly as he planned to make attempts in taking the initiative to perform.

Where should I start? It should be something relatively less dangerous. Uh, I can consider the imprisonment of that vampire named Emlyn White by Father Utravsky…

However, I need to confirm that this group of nonhumans abide by the law and only engage in petty theft at the worst… Where do Emlyn's companions stay on the southern side of the bridge? I can't really remember. I'll have to use divination to jog my memories. Hmm, I'll also confirm how dangerous it is…

Having come to this conclusion, Klein put down the newspaper, got up, and went upstairs.

It had to be said that he didn't have any other motivation to actively involve himself in something that had almost nothing to do with him. It wasn't his personality, but in order to act, he had to force himself to do so.

This is considered rather simple for me. How would a straight male act as a Witch and Demoness of Pleasure? It's no wonder the City of Silver emphasizes that "you're only acting"… Klein suddenly understood the meaning of the admonition.

†

City of Silver, in a dark room at the top of the spire.

Chief of the six-member council, Colin Iliad, stood in front of a window, staring at the silver city which was shrouded in darkness and lightning.

Those beams of light illuminated his disheveled white hair, revealing his twisted and hideous old scars on his face, as well as the deep wrinkles on his face and his worried eyes.

After an unknown period of time, Colin turned and looked at a dark corner. He asked in a deep voice, "Find anything?"

In the corner, a shadow stood up. It was pitch black as it shot towards the wall, twisting and whirling.

Its voice carried the feeling of metal rubbing against metal, and it was rather jarring to the ears.

"After Derrick Berg returned home, he showed some signs of abnormality, but there was no immediate need to deal with it."

Colin nodded slightly and said, "What did he do?"

With the help of the mystical item at the bottom of the spire, the Rampager and the clone of the mysterious figure were eliminated. However, he had constantly suspected that the matter had not been completely resolved.

The former captain of the exploratory team suddenly lost control. The mysterious person recklessly took action after enduring for a full forty-two years, without any consideration for the traps or the consequences… All of this made Colin, who had killed and hunted many monsters, instinctively feel that something was amiss.

Therefore, he believed that this was a deliberate choice made by the mysterious man. Although the real purpose of the mysterious man was still unknown, he definitely had some sort of follow-up method, and it wouldn't be so simple to get rid of him.

After using his Demon Hunter powers and finding no abnormalities, he deliberately pretended to be deceived and directly permitted the youth named Derrick Berg to return home. However, he had secretly sent someone to monitor the situation closely.

This was completely different from the detention and observation method which Colin had used in the past. It was a change he had no choice but to make.

The black shadow that was slightly gyrating replied, "After he entered the room, he sat on the edge of the bed and muttered to himself for quite a while. As I was afraid that the mysterious man would discover me, I didn't get too close, so I couldn't clearly hear what was being said. However, I can confirm that this is an abnormal sign.

"After talking to himself, Derrick seemed to become very tired and fell asleep very quickly. But after a short nap, he suddenly woke up and conducted a ritual. I suspect that his mind wasn't lucid while doing so and that he was controlled by the mysterious man.

"By the way, the ritual had elements of a secret deed."

Colin pondered for a while and said with a solemn expression, "As expected… Perhaps he was communicating with his main body via this method.

“What exactly is his purpose? Why did he spend his forty-two years at the bottom of the spire in peace?”

The black shadow naturally couldn’t answer this question as it continued, “After the ritual, Derrick no longer showed any abnormal behavior.

“Does this matter need to be dealt with immediately? If that mysterious person’s main body is attracted here, we might not be able to deal with him.”

Colin remained silent for a few seconds before saying, “Continue the observation. That mysterious person has yet to show any substantial malice, so our reaction can’t be too intense.

“Sigh, do you remember that prophecy? It’s almost time for disaster to befall… The further we explore, the more strange ruins we find, and the more dangerous the items we harvest…”

“By your will, Your Excellency.” The black shadow slowly retreated back into the ground and disappeared.

At this moment, in the Berg household, Derrick began to cough so violently that his heart seemed to almost burst.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

He crouched down and coughed nonstop until his throat began to itch, and he coughed out something!

Splat! A translucent object slid across his throat and fell to the ground. It was a worm with the length and thickness of a finger!

There were some transparent areas on its body, forming rings.

Derrick had seen something like this at the bottom of the spire previously, and he was certain that he was already free of Amon’s influence.

He bent down and picked up the translucent worm, and finally, he was able to count the total number of rings on its body. There were a total of twelve.

What is its use? What can it be used for? It seems to be dead… Derrick lost himself in thought.

†

Winter County in the northern part of the Loen Kingdom.

A black Gothic cathedral towered over the snow-covered mountains as it occupied a vast stretch of land.

In front of it was a cliff, and its surroundings was a vast expanse of whiteness with utmost silence.

This was the Church of Evernight's headquarters, known as the Cathedral of Serenity.

The dark-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell had a black trench coat draped over him as he wore red gloves and walked out of his room.

Having successfully advanced and stabilized himself, he hadn't been given the opportunity to participate in any operations yet, as well as some exercises and so-called mysticism courses.

After going around a corner, Leonard saw a staircase leading down. There, he saw Captain Dunn Smith, with a pair of dark gray eyes and dressed in a black trench coat, and Klein Moretti, who exuded a bookish demeanor standing there, smiling and waiting.

[image]

He tilted his head back and sighed.

My memory has also gotten worse.

I’ve already forgotten that the two of you no longer exist…

Leonard looked away and walked down the stairs to the first floor of the cathedral. He knocked on the door and entered a small room.

There were chairs in the room, and some Nighthawks wearing red gloves sat around inside.

Leonard found a seat at random and sat down, smiling as he chatted with his friends.

After a while, the high-ranking deacon, Crestet Cesimir, with his propped up collar covering his chin and lips, walked in, sat right in front, and said to the crowd, “Today’s class will inform you of things you need to pay attention to.

“As Red Gloves, you will travel to different places, and there’s a high chance of encountering dangerous High-Sequence Beyonders.

“If their intent is obvious, and they want to kill you, the only thing you can do is leave a trail behind you so that the subsequent investigators will be able to find the appropriate clues. The exact methods include…

“But most of the time, High-Sequence Beyonders won’t always attack you directly. They will utilize you based on all sorts of factors.

“You must be alert enough to not be fooled, and here are a few things that we have summarized.

Sitting in the back, Leonard listened with a smile and great attentiveness. His target for revenge was a High-Sequence Beyonder!

Cesimir paused for two seconds and continued, “In the first case, some High-Sequence Beyonder will pretend to be hidden existences, using promises and hope to deceive you into reciting his corresponding description.

“In the second case, some High-Sequence Beyonders might be restrained in a sealed state. They will act as mystical items that can help you get out of your predicament. For example, a magic lamp that can grant you three wishes or a wishing pond.

“The third case is for a High-Sequence potion named ‘Parasite.’ They often claim that they have lost their bodies and can only survive together with your Spirit Body. They can only rely on you and will not harm you. They will then give you knowledge, formulas, and all sorts of benefits, hoping that you can become powerful so that you can one day help him reconstruct his body or take revenge.

“In reality, the Beyonders with Parasites will only become nutrients for the Parasite; thus prolonging the Parasite’s lifespan and condition.”

As Leonard listened, his smile faded.

Chapter 365 - Vampire With A Unique Hobby

◆

The Cathedral of Serenity looked particularly beautiful at night. It complemented the crimson moon high up in the sky that coldly illuminated the land.

Leonard entered his single room, took off his two red gloves, and tossed them onto a wooden table.

With a grim look, he sat in front of the patterned glass window, his back facing out as he bathed in the moonlight.

[image]

After ten seconds of silence, he said softly, almost gritting his teeth, “So you’re a Parasite!”

Leonard’s voice echoed faintly in his own ears, muffled by obvious anger, tension, a sense of loss, and fear.

In the blink of an eye, a slightly-aged voice resounded in his mind.

“You can say that.”

“What exactly do you want? Are you a being that’s leeching my life through your parasitic means? Or are you waiting for me to become stronger, so you can directly devour my Beyonder characteristic, just like cultivating a humanoid potion?” Leonard’s voice was suppressed, but in no way slow.

The slightly-aged voice in his mind laughed.

"I'm your fortuitous encounter; didn't you always think so? You believe yourself to be unique and the protagonist of this era…

"In fact, you aren't acting as arrogant and self-conceited as you usually do. Ultimately, you're wary of me. Hehe. After I taught you the acting method, you didn't even focus on studying it. All you did was a very superficial attempt at it. You wasted a very long time before you digested it and even hid it. You didn't pursue the Nightmare potion.

"It was only after you met with the spawn of the True Creator and suffered a setback were you willing to advance to Sequence 7. Your regret has made you hallucinate.

"Leonard, think about it carefully. Would I not understand the Church of Evernight? When I dealt with them, even the so-called Chanis hadn't even been born yet.

"Would I not know that the Church of Evernight knows of Parasites? Would I not realize that the Red Gloves would grasp certain secrets to prevent the infiltration of High-Sequence Beyonders?

"But did I ever stop you from joining the Red Gloves?"

After a few brief changes in expression, Leonard finally fell silent, saying nothing.

The voice in his mind laughed again.

"Do you feel like you have aged faster than your real age? No, right? I can live for at least another hundred years. I'm not in a hurry to take over my host's life.

"As for your Beyonder characteristics, humph. We aren't even in a similar pathway that allows exchanging. If I swallow it, it would be equivalent to drinking poison, making me half-crazy and increasing my chance of losing control. Do you think that I would do that?

"Evernight is grouped with Giant and Death, while my Beyonder pathway's goal is that of the Apprentice and Seer."

Leonard looked at his body which was illuminated by the crimson moonlight. After some thought, he asked again, "What exactly do you want to do? What is your purpose?"

The slightly-aged voice in his mind sighed.

"Didn't I already tell you?

"I've suffered tremendous damage, and I need a host to recover slowly, and I have to hide from a terrible enemy… The Nighthawks, the Church of Evernight, is quite a good choice for a host."

Leonard lifted his head, looked at the ceiling for a few seconds, and said in a deep voice, "Will you be discovered by the archbishops, high-ranking deacons, or other Sealed Artifacts?"

The slightly-aged voice replied leisurely, "If Parasites were so easily discovered, that high-ranking deacon named Cesimir wouldn't have just given a warning and not send all of you to be checked.

"Of course, Parasites do leave traces. The Church of Evernight has the means to determine this, but it's relatively complicated and troublesome. It will cause certain losses and substantial danger. It might even affect that Goddess, so before you become a high-ranking deacon, making you qualified to participate in meetings for the upper echelons of the Church, and interact with Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, there's no need to worry.

"By then, I should've recovered and embarked on my own journey."

Leonard listened with a serious expression. After a while, he said, "You have a terrifying enemy? Who is he?"

The slightly-aged voice chuckled and said, "I don't know his name, but I do know his last name…"

“What is it?” Leonard asked.

The slightly-aged voice suddenly became low and deep.

“Amon.”

†

The area south of the Bridge, 46 Riverbay Avenue.

The owners of the house that were enjoying their dinner heard the tinkling of the doorbell.

The only maid came to the door, and through the peephole above the door’s lock, she saw a policeman in a black-and-white checkered uniform.

She opened the door and asked somewhat fearfully, “Sir, is there anything I can do for you?”

The cop was none other than the disguised Klein, who was attempting to take the initiative to perform. He was here to confirm that the partners of the vampire, Emlyn White, the ones living at 48 Riverbay Avenue, and the people who entrusted Stuart with the mission, were law-abiding monsters.

Yes, law-abiding monsters! Although this doesn’t sound right and sounds a little funny, it’s how I would react with my true thoughts… Klein emphasized in his heart.

The police uniform he wore wasn’t a fake that he specially tailored. It was a product of his ordinary clothes and hallucinatory effects.

A Magician had to do what a magician would do!

Klein didn’t monitor 48 Riverbay Avenue because he believed that Emlyn White’s companions had long since moved away.

As monsters and non-humans, moving to another residence was the most basic thing to do after a comrade disappears for several days!

They had to suspect that Emlyn White was captured by the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, or other official Beyonder organizations, and it was necessary to assume that he might be dead at any moment.

Therefore, what Klein wanted to do was to perform an investigation by conducting a survey.

He maintained the arrogance of a low-ranking policeman towards an ordinary citizen. Without taking off his hat, he slightly raised his chin and said, “I have something to ask your master.”

The maid entered in a fluster and quickly brought back a man in his thirties wearing a thick shirt.

“Officer, what would you like to ask me?” the man asked nervously.

Klein stood at the door and looked inside.

“Do you know the residents of Unit 48?”

“I do.” The male owner was stunned for a moment before asking, “What happened to them?”

“They’re involved in a case. You have to tell me everything you know,” Klein said with a straight face.

His face was also disguised, augmented with slight hallucinatory effects. It was to ensure that he looked distinct from the great detective Sherlock Moriarty.

The male owner suddenly came to a realization.

“It’s no wonder they moved away so hurriedly more than a month ago… Most of the residents of Riverbay Avenue and the neighborhood knew the Whites and their son. He was a handsome but eccentric young man.

“Mr. White is an excellent physician and is good at using all kinds of medicine and bloodletting therapy.”

“Bloodletting therapy?” Klein returned with a question.

“Yes, although this has been regarded by many newspapers and magazines as an old medical skill that had no effect, anyone who received Mr. White’s treatment were cured. However, Mr. White also said that except for him, the other doctors who practice bloodletting therapy are quacks.” The owner gave his viewpoint.

The bloodletting therapy is to accumulate food for themselves, isn’t it? The only thing that is useful was the medicine… This vampire family relied on bloodletting therapy to help treat patients while receiving “food” as compensation. If there weren’t many patients, or if their blood was very unhealthy, would they consider going to a distant hospital to steal blood from a blood bag and drink it? For such monsters, they really are law-abiding… Klein nodded in understanding.

The emotional color changes in his Spirit Vision told him that the man wasn’t lying.

Seeing that the police officer didn’t refute him, the man continued, “Mr. White and his wife are very nice people. Although they can’t cure those who are seriously ill, they’re still pretty good doctors for all the residents who live nearby…

“Was their child, Emlyn, involved in a case? That young man was too silent, as though he looked down on us. He’s always hiding at home, and I have no idea what he’s doing… Officer, are you hot? It’s so cold outside.”

He probably just hides in the day and comes out at night… Klein wiped the sweat off his forehead and said, “I’ve been walking around here all day because of this case!”

Next, according to his designed survey, he learned everything about the Whites and their son.

One family at a time, he knocked on the door, asked questions, compiled answers, and came to the conclusion that the White family was indeed kind, amiable, and law-abiding.

It doesn't seem like a description of a vampire… Klein looked up at the crimson moon which was piercing through the clouds, ready to make a final confirmation.

He removed the hallucinatory effect from his body and started divining.

After making sure there was no danger, he went around to the side and climbed into the house at 48 Riverbay Avenue.

Others might not know who had taken Emlyn White away, ultimately afraid of being followed up by an official "visit" from official Beyonders, but Klein knew what was going on and wasn't worried about a trap.

As he entered the second floor, he used the moonlight to see that the rooms were in disarray. Many things hadn't been taken away. Through these things, he could imagine the haste in which their owners had left.

He even found some precious books on herbs in a study, including some popular countryside folk recipes.

As he walked, Klein entered one of the bedrooms, and shadows came into view.

He jumped in fright, imagining that he had been ambushed. He almost snapped his fingers to light the match that had been thrown outside.

Fortunately, no attacks occurred.

The crimson moonlight shone through the window, covering the entire room. Klein was finally able to clearly see what those black shadows were.

They didn’t have any spiritual luster, and they were dolls of varying sizes!

The biggest one was only slightly shorter than Klein. It was a girl wearing a gorgeous long skirt. Her sleeves and collars were covered with lace and ribbons.

This female doll was obviously more like one of wax. Her facial features were vivid and lifelike, and her golden hair and red eyes were alluring and beautiful.

The smallest one was only the size of a normal person’s palm. It was a woman wearing silver body armor. She looked valiant and heroic while looking magnanimous and beautiful.

As his eyes swept past each doll, Klein suddenly remembered something.

Under the influence of Roselle, the development of doll art had two trends: one was the adorable type, allowing them to have a change of clothes; while the other strove to be more realistic.

Klein looked around and couldn’t help but exclaim, “These dolls are not cheap!

“Don’t tell me Emlyn is a vampire who is obsessed with dolls?”

Chapter 366 - The Hanged Man's Ambition

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After a thorough inspection, Klein confirmed that there was nothing odd about the White family and that the couple didn't even leave a single strand of hair behind, apparently to prevent anyone from tracking them down using divination.

He returned to the bedroom filled with dolls, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog, intending to use divination to for a final confirmation.

However, before he got down to business, he conjured the female doll who was nearly his height, and just like how he had done a divination for the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in Tingen City, he picked up a dark red fountain pen and wrote a sentence on the yellowish-brown goatskin: "Its origin."

Putting down the pen and holding onto the piece of paper, Klein leaned back in his chair and began to mumble as he slowly adjusted his mental state into a Cogitation state.

After repeating this seven times, his eyes turned dark, and his eyelids drooped as he entered a deep slumber.

In the gray space, he saw the puppet craftsman working with extraordinary concentration. He saw the red-eyed "girl" being placed in the room of dolls and Emlyn White fishing out his wallet with his eyes fixed on her.

Finally, the scene stopped inside the bedroom where Klein was presently located. The proud vampire, Emlyn White, with his hair combed back diagonally, looked handsome but slightly delicate. He sat on the edge of the bed and looked at the doll affectionately, along with all the other dolls of different sizes.

He truly is a fanatic of dolls… Klein opened his eyes and facepalmed.

Soon after, he waved his hand, causing the puppet that he conjured to vanish from the space above the gray fog.

When he was done, he picked up his fountain pen again and wrote another divination statement: "Scenes of death in the last ten years in 48 Riverbay Avenue."

According to the statements from the residents, the White family had been there for no more than ten years, so Klein was able to lock onto a specific area, and he believed that if the White family were just superficially good monsters who were actually making disappearance cases all the time in order to suck warm, delicious blood, then it was impossible to not have any happen at home.

In a period as long as ten years, there would always be a few accidents as long as they didn't stop!

After carefully checking the divination sentence, Klein recited it and entered Cogitation again, rapidly falling into a dream.

In the dusky world, his vision was sometimes pitch-black, sometimes dotted with snowflakes, and sometimes splintered. However, no scenes appeared.

This was the result of the divination: nothing!

No one had died in the last ten years at 48 Riverbay Avenue!

By taking into account all the factors involved, it's possible to make a preliminary conclusion that the White family was a law-abiding vampire family, other than a few instances of petty theft… As Klein looked at the long, mottled bronze table in front of him, he wrapped himself with his spirituality and plummeted into the gray fog.

Returning to the real world, he carefully removed the traces he had left behind and left 48 Riverbay Avenue.

Instead of making his final conclusion, he took a detour to the Riverbay Police Station, where he easily sneaked into the archives by mixing himself in among the thieves and drunkards, allowing them to serve as a foil for his disguise. There, he boldly lit the gas lamps inside.

Then, Klein pulled out the last ten years of missing persons records and paged through them.

From time to time, the police officers on duty would pass by the door, but their eyes didn't notice any light leaking out from the archives.

There's nothing suspicious at all… After an unknown period of time, the black-gloved Klein placed the docket back.

Then, he turned off the gas lamp, took off his hat in the darkness, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed towards the lobby.

On his way back to Minsk Street, Klein took a shower, changed his clothes, sat down at his desk, and spread out the map of Backlund that he had first bought on the steam locomotive.

The first thing he did was find Rose Street, which was on the south side of the bridge where the Harvest Church was located. This was where Father Utravsky was the bishop of the cathedral and had Emlyn White imprisoned in his basement.

Soon after, Klein's gaze moved as he familiarized himself with the names and layout of the surrounding streets.

A performance can't be done too hastily or with an excessive thirst for success. One has to slowly immerse the audience into the act… Klein whispered, unfolding a piece of paper and lowering his pen.

“Dear Detective Stuart,

“I wonder if you’ve found Emlyn White? I’ve been keeping an eye out for you lately, and one of my informants told me today that he has seen this man on Tuteva Street in the area south of the Bridge. Of course, he simply said that the person he saw looked similar to the man in the portrait.”

†

Putting down the pen, Klein folded the letter neatly, stuffed it into an envelope, and affixed a black stamp worth one penny.

†

Above the vast, boundless Sonia Sea with undulating waves churning beneath it.

The Blue Avenger advanced forward steadily without any signs of shaking.

Alger Wilson sat in the Captain’s cabin with a brass sextant in his hand, but his eyes were closed.

Without a sound, a smile suddenly appeared on his face.

I’ve finally digested it… Alger opened his eyes and raised his hands, causing the surroundings to glow with an azure light.

The azure lights intersected and turned into a huge wave that swept forward.

Alger pressed his hands together, and the wave disintegrated, turning into countless raindrops that fell onto the deck.

After nearly four months, his Seafarer potion had finally been digested!

During this period of time, not only had he spent a long time wandering the seas, completing all the missions assigned to him by the Church, but he had also deliberately sought out new sea routes and sought out undiscovered islands. After a few setbacks, he was finally met with success.

This, in turn, led to the digestion of the potion, allowing him to figure out his principles as a Seafarer.

The core principle involved being intimate with the sea, to masterfully grasp information regarding sea routes and the weather, as well as exploration and discovery!

The always heavy Alger couldn't help getting out of his seat. He paced back and forth in the Captain's cabin, thinking of the future he longed for.

After obtaining the potion formula for the Wind-blessed and finding the corresponding Beyonder ingredients, he would hide his advancement to Sequence 6 from the Church. Then, he would repeat the same process again, striving to become a Sequence 5 Ocean Songster within three years.

During this process, he had to serve as the captain of the Blue Avenger and avoid entering the Mandated Punishers with its complicated social relationship so as to prevent his secret from being exposed…

Once I'm promoted to Sequence 5 and gain sufficient strength, I'll be able to secretly return to that place… Alger subconsciously looked to his right.

His gaze seemed to pierce through the planks of the ship and the vast sea, and onto an ancient and hidden island.

Alger wasn't worried about his future advancement within the Church. Once he fulfilled his wishes, he would be able to fully focus on seeking a higher position in the Church!

At that time, he would continue to disguise himself as a Sequence 7 despite being a Sequence 5 and drink another Wind-blessed potion!

This would increase his Beyonder characteristics, strengthen him, and slow his digestion, but it wouldn't endanger his own safety.

For the same reason, after Sequence 5 was completely digested, he could imbibe another Ocean Songster and repeat the normal process. This would only push him closer to losing control, but he also had solutions to that.

It was to find a woman to marry and transfer the extra Beyonder characteristics to his children.

After doing this, I'll be able to move closer to the level of a Cardinal and approach the level of a High-Sequence Beyonder! This is my chance in such an era! In his mind, Alger had already sketched out the image of himself wearing the robe of a Cardinal as he occupied a high position in the Church and had many Mandated Punishers under his control.

After being intoxicated for a moment, he withdrew his gaze and regained his senses.

…What follows will increase in difficulty with each step. Fortunately, I have the Tarot Gathering and Mr. Fool. Although there are dangers underlying it as well, any path to improving myself will involve risk!

I have to try to gather those Roselle diary pages as quickly as possible. I should grab the chance to raise a question and understand what that card beside Mr. Fool's hand is—the one which only shows its back.

It wasn't there previously.

Card… Roselle's diary… Could it be the item I'm thinking of?

Alger's eyes narrowed as his pupils constricted.

†

15 Minsk Street. Klein yawned, switched off the gas lamp, and slipped into bed.

He originally had another plan. He had wanted to use divination to grasp the origin of the Biological Poison Bottle and obtain the first three potion formulas for the Sequence from the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic.

But after a busy night dealing with the matter regarding Emlyn White, he felt a little tired and decided to try again the next day above the gray fog.

Just as he lay down and closed his eyes, Klein suddenly felt that something was wrong.

This was the spiritual intuition of a Seer!

It has already been several days since I obtained the Werewolf Beyonder characteristics and the Biological Poison Bottle. It's not like I haven't been in a good mental state during this period of time; yet, I have been repeatedly delaying the divination. This is very abnormal! Klein sat up, carefully thought about it, and recalled a similar incident.

The first time he met Megose, he had wanted to directly use his Spirit Vision to observe her mental state, but he naturally ended up missing the opportunity due to momentarily being taken aback. It was only at the end that he found out that it was because Megose had an evil god's spawn in her stomach. His spiritual intuition as a Seer had stopped him without leaving a mark, preventing him from losing control and collapsing right on the spot.

It's very similar, and this time, it's even more obvious… I remember that Miss Sharron mentioned that the Rose School of Thought's control over their members far exceeds my imagination. Everyone's body and soul seem to be bound by something, which is also the reason why information regarding the Mutant Sequence is rarely leaked out… They believe in the Chained God… So, when using the Beyonder characteristic of a Werewolf to deduce the corresponding potion formulas, it would directly involve this evil god and bring about consequences that I don't wish to bear? Klein thought about it seriously and felt that there was something suspicious about it.

Back when I divined the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem and the "ear" left behind by the Listener, my spiritual intuition hadn't stopped me… Could it be that the Chained God is stronger than the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator?

Or could it be that "His" nature allows him to restrain the gray fog and even be able to effectively invade it?

Of course, the source of the danger can also be the Biological Poison Bottle…

Thinking of this, Klein, who was always cautious, decided to attempt divining the Biological Poison Bottle tomorrow and see if his Seer's spiritual intuition would stop him.

Chapter 367 - Threatening Letter

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Tuesday morning, the weather remained as cold as it usually was this season.

Klein tightened the collar of his tweed coat, put on his hat, and pulled open the door.

He was heading to the end of the street, where the mailbox was, to post a letter to Detective Stuart. Since it wasn’t that far, there was no need to dress neatly or heavily, but Klein had just recovered from his cold, so he had wrapped himself up thickly just in case.

Perhaps it was because of the strong wind last night, but the air in Backlund was surprisingly good. Klein subconsciously slowed down his pace and enjoyed this rare morning.

As he passed Jurgen’s house, he heard the oriel window creak open and instinctively turned to look.

Standing at the window was Mrs. Doris, wearing a black plush hat and a thick grayish-blue scarf. She looked even worse than before, and her body was even more hunched.

“Good morning, Detective Moriarty. Thank you for taking care of Brody. He said you were a good man, didn’t you, Brody?” Old Granny Doris bent down and picked up the black cat with green eyes.

Brody used all four of his limbs and struggled in her embrace. Finally, he jumped down and lightly landed on the windowsill.

But instead of leaving, he circled around and around, nuzzling Mrs. Doris with its head on one side, without even looking at Klein.

Was he being friend-zoned by a cat? Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh and smiled sincerely.

"It's a happy deed, and even more delightful news is that you've recovered and have been discharged from the hospital."

After exchanging a few pleasantries, he said goodbye and continued to walk down the street with a smile on his face.

He had only taken a few steps when he heard Mrs. Doris call after him.

"When Jurgen comes back, I'll have him pay you!"

…Do I look like I took this mission for the money? The smile on Klein's face suddenly froze. He could only half turn around and wave his hand, indicating that he understood.

When he was far away from Jurgen's house, his expression gradually turned serious, and he sighed faintly.

He had just activated his Spirit Vision to look at Mrs. Doris's aura and found that her situation wasn't too good. It wasn't only because of her old age but also because of the cold weather and bad air in Backlund. All of these had a very bad effect on her lung disease.

Mrs. Doris should be able to make it through this late autumn and winter, but it will be hard to say for the next one, or the next, next one… If she wants to live for a few more years, she would have to move to the south, to the area around Desi Bay… It's a pity that it's likely that Lawyer Jurgen can't afford to do so now… Even I haven't been to Desi Bay… Klein mumbled, came to the mailbox, and stuffed the letter in.

This was the prelude to his performance.

And this evening, he would head to the Harvest Church as a detective and do the rest of the preparations.

After buying a Desi pie for breakfast, Klein returned via his original path and was quite at ease.

Before he got close to the house, he saw an elegantly-decorated carriage parked outside. Two ladies in black hats and a ribbon were anxiously pulling on his doorbell, while the maids and bodyguards were scattered around, as though they were on guard against something.

Mrs. Stelyn… Ma'am Mary… Do they have something to entrust me with? They look very anxious… With the paper bag containing the Desi pie in hand, Klein approached and said with a laugh, "Ladies, it should be time for breakfast."

When they turned back to see Detective Sherlock Moriarty, Ma'am Mary was visibly relieved.

"Mister Detective, you have to help me."

In Klein's Spirit Vision, there was nothing fake about her anxiety, nervousness, and fear. Therefore, he nodded his head, pointed at the door and said, "Let's talk inside."

As he spoke, he glanced at his landlady, Stelyn, and he noticed that her condition was entirely different from the past two days. She had become very low and dejected, as though she wasn't interested in anything at all.

What happened to her? Although his landlady liked to show off a little, she's someone who loves life a lot… Klein took out his key and opened the door.

After entering, before she could sit still, Ma'am Mary impatiently said, "Detective Moriarty, I received a threatening letter!"

Threatening letter? Klein put down the Desi pie, clasped his hands and asked, "What does the letter say?"

Ma'am Mary glanced sideways at Mrs. Stelyn, and seeing that she wasn't quite as active as usual, she said after some deliberation, "That letter asked me to handle the smoke of the factory impartially when I carry out the atmospheric pollution investigation and to acknowledge their contributions, or else I would end up like the doll that came with the letter…

"The doll's head was ripped off, and its arms and legs were broken."

Ma'am Mary seemed to recall the feeling when she opened the letter, and she said with a trembling voice, "This is the first time I've encountered something like this. I don't know if it will become a reality or not. I didn't know that I would have to experience such cases when I became a member of the investigation council. I didn't know…"

Ma'am, perhaps Emperor Roselle once said that there are only two ultimate forms of hatred between people. One is to murder the other person's parents, and the other is to destroy another person's means of earning money… Klein solemnly nodded his head and said, "My suggestion is to report it to the police."

From his point of view, Ma'am Mary was now a member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council. Her status was completely different from before, and the police would certainly not take the threats she received lightly.

Moreover, this involved important the development of a governmental policy and wasn't an ordinary matter, so there was a high probability that the police department would hand the case over to the Church's Beyonder organization in order to solve this case as soon as possible.

Based on Ma'am Mary's status as a follower of the Goddess, the Nighthawks was an inevitable choice.

This way, even if Klein wanted a share of the reward, he didn't want to involve himself in it.

"I've already done so, but it doesn't reassure me." Ma'am Mary pursed her lips and said, "Do you know what they said? They said that threatening letters were formed by cutting the words from newspapers, and the doll could be bought from anywhere. It would be very difficult to find the sender in a short period of time! And they only sent one policeman to protect me! Goddess, is this how they treat a helpless citizen's cry for help?"

Ma'am Mary paused, looked earnestly at Klein and said, "Detective Moriarty, I believe you can help me, not only because of your performance from that matter but also because of Mike's approval, Aaron's praise, and Talim's extolment. And I know you made a great contribution in that serial murder case. Don't worry, I will pay you well enough."

Your words make me happy, but something doesn't seem right…

Unless the police have already been bribed, they would probably transfer the case to the Nighthawks, and with Beyonder means such as divination available, it would be impossible for a letter made up of words from a newspaper to avoid detection. The sender would have either been caught already, or they would have means to interfere with divination… The latter would only lead to a formal and large-scale intervention by the Nighthawks…

No matter what the situation is, it will be different from how the situation is handled now…

Klein didn't answer Ma'am Mary right away, but he carefully analyzed the abnormality of this matter.

The living room suddenly became unusually quiet. The feeling of silence made Ma'am Mary and Mrs. Stelyn somewhat uneasy for some unknown reason.

At some point in time, Klein had fished out a coin and made it bounce and roll between his fingers, as though it were a habit of his to focus his thoughts.

Suddenly, the coin flew up and then fell down steadily onto the palm of his hand, its back facing up.

Klein was surprised. He was divining whether this matter involved danger, but it turned out to have none.

If such a threat really exists, even if the sender doesn't have considerable abilities, it would still result in a certain degree of danger. It's impossible to have none… Is it just a simple threat? Or… Klein suddenly thought of another possibility as he smiled and said, "Ma'am Mary, don't worry. You can go back home in peace. If someone comes to you in the next two days to discuss this issue so as to make it public, allowing the citizens to know the true intentions of those factory owners in order to incite anger among the public, then you will be fine."

The possibility which Klein had just thought of was that the threat was a trap set up by the council so as to incite the public to use their anger, allowing the atmospheric pollution investigation to be carried out smoothly and lead to the subsequent bill which could benefit them.

This would explain why the police are responding in this manner.

"…Why do you say that?" Ma'am Mary asked, frowning.

Klein smiled and replied, "That's what I've deduced."

"And if what you claim doesn't happen in two days?" Ma'am Mary pressed.

Klein said sincerely, "Then I will provide protection."

In any case, there's no danger… he added inwardly.

After comforting and sending off Ma'am Mary, he went above the gray fog to confirm the matter and received the same result as before.

By then, his Desi pie had turned cold…

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Ma’am Mary returned home with some apprehension and uneasiness, wondering if she should invite Stelyn to stay with her for a few days.

At that moment, her housekeeper informed her that the eldest son of Earl Hall, the chief secretary of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, Mr. Hibbert Hall, had come.

After both of them entered the living room, before Ma’am Mary could even open her mouth to speak, the handsome, blond gentleman spoke first.

“Ma’am Mary, I’ve heard of what has happened to you. It’s a disgrace to Backlund, and even to the whole kingdom, and I’m deeply sorry for it.

“Don’t worry, everyone in the committee will stand with you!”

“Thank you for your concern,” Ma’am Mary responded gratefully.

After a moment of consideration, Hibbert Hall said, “Ma’am, I wish to get a reporter to interview you regarding this incident. I want to tell everyone about what happened to you and how despicable this act is. I want to let everyone see how outrageous those people who have contaminated Backlund’s air are! There’s no sign of repentance!

“Please agree to my request.”

This… It’s exactly as Detective Moriarty described… Ma’am Mary was momentarily at a loss for words.

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After breakfast, Klein rested for a while. Since he had nothing better to do, he went above the gray fog in preparation to divine the origin of the Biological Poison Bottle.

This time, he didn’t delay it at all.

Chapter 368 - Taking Him By Surprise

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The stone pillars of the ancient and majestic palace supported the high dome.

Klein sat at the end of the long bronze table, holding a translucent brown bottle. He checked it over and over again, but he didn't sense any danger from it.

Let's begin… He conjured a pen and paper and wrote the divination statement: "Its origin."

Putting the fountain pen away and bracing himself for a blow, Klein glanced at the paper and the Biological Poison Bottle, leaned back in his chair, and entered Cogitation while reciting the statement.

Soon, he entered a hazy gray dream world and saw a dark but spacious room.

There were king cobras, black widows, and other strange plants and animals in the room. It was a messy and harrowing scene.

A middle-aged man in a white coat was standing in front of a long table in the middle of the room. He threw the snake gall and spider venom into the huge black pot that hung from the ceiling.

In the end, he even put in a few items that possessed a strong spiritual luster. For example, they would sometimes disperse into a black gas, and other times condense into dark green lung-shaped objects. Otherwise, they would be in the form of a tube containing a clear azure liquid or fiery red eyes…

The air around the black iron pot gradually became viscous. It was gathering towards the center, but it was constantly being pushed aside, making it difficult to achieve its goal.

When the white-robed middle-aged man saw this scene, his brow slowly creased, his expression looked slightly anxious.

He flipped through the black notebook by his side, gritted his teeth, and used a ritual silver dagger to slice open his wrist.

Drops of fresh blood dripped into the black iron pot, seemingly breathing life into its contents instantly. A terrifying suction force suddenly erupted, sucking in all the viscous air around it. The scarlet blood which had yet to leave his wrist was fully sucked into it.

And that wasn't everything. Regardless of how the white-robed middle-aged man struggled to resist, or how he revealed a terrified expression, he couldn't prevent his body from approaching the iron pot.

His body was stretched, his head was compressed, and amidst his screams, he was eaten, little by little, by the pot.

The hanging specimens, plants, and anything that could move or be moved, all flew into the pot.

Brown fog suddenly filled the room, quietly ebbing and flowing.

By the time it was all over, the room was empty except for the brown, translucent bottle lying quietly in the middle of the clearing.

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The scene quickly faded away, and the dream world shattered. Klein opened his eyes and muttered to himself, So the Biological Poison Bottle is a product of a death-seeking experiment.

I thought it was a Beyonder characteristic left behind by some Beyonder… If that were the case, I'd have been able to divine a formula…

To Klein, a Rampager's spirituality and Beyonder characteristic, as well as a spirituality and Beyonder characteristic which was contaminated by an evil god, could all be used to divine a formula. Just like the All-Black Eye which Marionettist Rosago left behind. It was thanks to the isolation effects of the gray fog, and how the mysterious space was able to eliminate negative influences, giving him the ability to court death. Of course, a Beyonder characteristic involved many other additional factors. In theory, the chances of failure were extremely high, but Klein only had the confidence to do so after advancing to Magician.

Similarly, a Sealed Artifact formed by Beyonder characteristics could also be used to divine the formula for a potion.

However, if they were mainly ingredients, then through the production processes and dangerous experiments done by an artisan or other Beyonders, turning them into mystical items, then Klein's divination would be useless at his current state. Even with the enhancement effect provided by the mysterious space above the gray fog, it was useless.

Not bad. At least I don't have to worry about the Biological Poison Bottle having any other latent risks anymore… Klein glanced at the Werewolf fang and wisely abandoned his curiosity.

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In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey continued her study of psychology.

By her feet, the huge golden retriever, Susie, was sitting there, her eyes shining. From time to time, she wagged her tail, as if enjoying the scene.

Psychiatrist Escalante finished the introduction material and deliberately made a casual remark.

“Actually, there is such a theory.

“It’s believed that humans would inherit a certain amount of their ancestor’s consciousness over the generations; thus, forming the underlying logic of one’s behavior patterns. For example, although many people have never seen a poisonous snake, they would instinctively feel afraid and wish to avoid it once they encounter one.

“Why is that? This is theorized to be an instinct that we inherited from our ancestors, something that is hidden in the deepest recesses of our consciousness. In ancient times, people constantly fought with poisonous snakes and all kinds of ferocious animals, and they gradually carved this memory into their consciousness and passed it down.”

“How does it get passed down?” Audrey asked with interest.

Escalante, with her long hair which reached her waist, laughed.

“That’s a very good question.

“Some people provide explanations that involve a theory that everyone’s consciousness is actually connected at the lowest level. It is one entity, and the traces and characteristics left behind on this entity will affect the consciousness that belongs solely to them.

“For example, the lowest level of consciousness is like an endless ocean. Our unique consciousness would be the islands situated in the ocean and can be split into two parts. One is hidden under the water, which is the subconscious which is higher in both quantity and size; the other is exposed on the surface of the ocean, the superficial consciousness that can usually be detected.

“This is the axiom of this school of thought in psychology.”

Audrey glanced at Susie, stroked the golden fur on its neck and said, “So, we can use this connected ocean to influence the consciousness of others and achieve the goal of curing certain mental illnesses?”

This is the mysticism foundation and Beyonder powers of a Psychiatrist? But it doesn’t seem enough and is lacking something. For example, the sky above one’s head, the sky which shrouds everything? Audrey curiously thought as she wore a look of confused enlightenment.

“You’re really talented in this area!” Escalante praised in delight. “However, we can only affect a portion of the surrounding ocean, and through it, we can affect those who are close to us. If we venture deeper into the ocean, it will be easy for us to lose ourselves.”

She looked up at the ornate and complicated clock on the wall, smiled, and said, “Time’s up, this is the end of today’s class. Miss Audrey, if you’re interested in this psychological school of thought, then we can continue talking about it next time.”

“Alright.” Audrey stood up and bowed.

Watching Escalante leave, she nodded in thought.

Ma’am Escalante doesn’t seem like a real Psychiatrist. At most, she’s like me, a Telepathist…

Was what she just talked about the axioms of the Psychology Alchemists?

They really are patient. Why aren’t they trying to recruit me yet…

As Audrey was in thought, Susie commented happily from the side, “Audrey, I feel like she’s the same type of person as us. No, I mean the same type of dog. No, that’s not right… Woof!”

Susie, who only had a rudimentary grasp of the human language, fell into a state of confusion, unable to find the right words to describe her feelings.

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South of the Bridge, Rose Street, outside the Harvest Church.

Klein, in his normal disguise, looked up at the Sacred Emblem of Life on the facade, held his cane, climbed the steps, and stepped through the main door.

The first thing he had to do was to confirm the situation.

Only by doing this could he perform better so as to ingeniously rescue the vampire, Emlyn White, without garnering suspicion. Then, as a detective who had provided clues, he could receive the gratitude from the White family and gain the applause of an audience.

It was bound to be an interesting performance.

The Harvest Church wasn't big, as it only had a prayer hall. Klein found a spot by the aisle and looked ahead as he took off his hat.

Bishop Utravsky was preaching. His height of more than 2.2 meters, and his burly physique, which couldn't be concealed by his loose priest robes, gave off an extreme sense of oppression.

However, his expression was one of extreme gentleness, filled with appreciation and gratitude towards life.

In front of such a "priest," no one dared to cause a ruckus. The few believers quietly listened, occasionally making prayer gestures unique to the Church of Earth Mother.

Klein watched carefully, waiting patiently, neither conceited nor rash.

As the sermon ended, he gripped his cane and prepared to get up to proceed with his subsequent plans.

At this moment, a man wearing the priest robes of the Church of Earth Mother entered from the door that led to the room at the back of the cathedral.

He looked twenty-eight or twenty-nine-years-old, had black hair and red eyes, possessing a high nose and thin lips. He was handsome but didn't give off masculine vibes. He was none other than Emlyn White.

Klein's mouth gaped a little and nearly failed to close it.

Isn't this guy supposed to be locked up in the basement?

Wasn't he shouting about how determined he was, that he would absolutely not submit to Bishop Utravsky's will?

Emlyn White distributed the communion to one believer after another, and he finally stopped in front of Klein.

Klein's mind whirred, and he immediately in a low voice, "Are you Emlyn White? Your parents entrusted my friend to look for you.

"Why are you here? Did you encounter something? Are you in need of assistance?"

Emlyn White didn't seem to have his unique pride and said with a smile that only looked slightly better than crying, "There's no need; I will be returning home soon."

He pursed his lips, shook his head, and forced a smile, saying, "I am already a believer of Earth Mother, no—a priest."

This answer was completely out of Klein's expectations. For a moment, he didn't know how to respond, and he could only shout repeatedly in his mind: Hey, you were very adamant about your worship of the moon the last time we interacted at the Harvest Church. You said that you would absolutely not convert to believing in Earth Mother. How long has it been, and you have already given in?

Isn't that way too fast?

What about your persistence? Where's your moral integrity?

My carefully prepared performance has been forced to end before it has even begun.

Th-this is just taking me by surprise!

Klein opened his mouth and suddenly realized something amiss.

Why is Emlyn White informing me of his conversion?

I'm just a detective who accidentally chanced upon him while passing by…

Does he wish for me to pass this message to his parents?

Is there another meaning behind this?

While Klein was guessing, Emlyn White put away his worried and smiled smugly.

"You don't have to act, Mister Detective.

"Or should I call you the new owner of the Master Key?

"Hehe, to a noble Sanguine, everyone has a different smell and has different blood characteristics. Even when I was locked up in the basement, I could smell it. I remember your smell."

Chapter 369 - Inception

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I’ve been recognized!

Klein instantly fell into shock as he nearly entered combat mode.

Even if he didn’t use his Spirit Vision, he could tell from Emlyn White’s tone and words that he wasn’t lying. He was very confident and certain.

Just as the tense feelings rose in him, Klein suddenly thought of something.

Why should I worry about that?

Then, he answered his own question in his mind, So what if I was recognized? The current situation is different from what it was two months ago!

I was left flustered by the incident with Ambassador Bakerland in front of the official Beyonders. I was rushing around, trying to grasp at every possible straw. In the process, I ended up making contact with Beyonder circles, and even the possibility of me becoming a Beyonder was quite plausible. Therefore, even if my identity as a Beyonder was exposed, they wouldn’t think too deeply about it and dig up my past.

And it’s very likely that Detective Isengard Stanton is a Beyonder, and he maintains good relations with the police and the official Beyonder organizations. He had speculated that I was the same as him and tried to gently rope me in. In this regard, I can barely be counted as a borderline member of the official Beyonders, and if anything were to happen, I wouldn’t necessarily be imprisoned.

More importantly, I have already made my current image so deeply ingrained that I don’t have to worry about any wanted posters. If anything goes wrong, then I can just abandon 15 Minsk Street and my identity as Sherlock Moriarty!

So, what’s there to worry about?

Yes, before I came here, I had also performed a divination, and the revelation was that there was almost no danger.

As these thoughts flashed across his mind, Klein’s contracted pupils, slightly appalled expression, and his fight or flight state eased, as if he was discussing the day’s weather with Emlyn White.

Seeing his calm expression, Emlyn White raised his eyebrows, took a few steps to the side, and squeezed past him before slowly sitting to his side.

The vampire looked at Bishop Utravsky, who was leading the believers in the rite of Holy Communion, and he said with a sneer, “Mister Detective, aren’t you afraid that I’ll go to the police station and shout out loud that you’re a Beyonder?”

Similarly, Klein looked forward and said without turning his head, “I’ll go with you and shout out loud that there’s a vampire!”

Come on, let’s have an internecine outcome! Do you think I’m afraid of you!?

Emlyn White’s expression stiffened, he raised his right index finger and said, “Sanguine, a noble Sanguine! Got it?”

Before Klein could speak, seeing that Bishop Utravsky was preoccupied with the rites of Holy Communion, Emlyn White chuckled and said, “Regardless, I’m finally going to be free.

"I pretended to submit and told the old man that I was willing to convert to believing in Earth Mother and was deeply penitent for what I had done. Although I have no idea what was necessary to show repentance, it's not a problem to put on an act.

"That old man actually believed me like this, and he was very happy as well. He let me out on the spot, and he let me become a priest here. He told me that as long as I memorized the Holy Bible of the Church of Earth Mother, he would allow me to return home.

"Haha, that old fogey, who's all brawn and has become silly from his faith, sure is easy to fool!"

Easy to fool? Klein turned his head to look at the vampire, looking smug he looked forward and said, "Father Utravsky used to be a pirate, he probably killed far more people than the number of people your father has ever saved. Furthermore, most pirates don't trust their fellow crew members. Betrayal and trickery are common among them. To be a relatively successful pirate able to live to the end, Father Utravsky wouldn't be a person who's easily fooled, even if he's not a bright person."

Emlyn White wore a look of disbelief as he wished to retort. Klein rubbed the top of his cane and leisurely added, "Father has a powerful Sealed Artifact in his possession; it is known as the Mental Terror Candle. It can allow the wielder to enter the deepest recesses of the target's soul. There, no one can lie.

"Moreover, this is only one of its uses. I don't know if it has any other abilities."

Emlyn gradually froze, his eyes losing focus.

After a dozen seconds, he whispered with a pale expression, "When I said I was willing to change my faith, that old man came in with a lantern. There was a candle in the lantern, and I didn't get a good look at it…"

Klein tilted his head and gave Emlyn White a sympathetic glance.

“Perhaps Father Utravsky used it to plant a seed in you, one that gradually and thoroughly makes you wholeheartedly believe in Earth Mother.”

The corner of Emlyn’s mouth twitched, revealing a smile comparable to a zombie’s.

“I don’t feel anything at all. It shouldn’t be anything like you said.

“Besides, aren’t my parents coming? They can blame the priest through ordinary people, saying that he forcefully detained me, forcing him to make a choice between sullying the Church of Earth Mother’s reputation and letting me go.

“Isn’t that a great idea?”

Klein maintained his look of pity, clasped his hands, and raised them to his nose, acting truly penitent.

“If I were Father Utravsky, I would choose to call the police and have them determine the truth.

“Tell me, who do you think will suffer in the end, the bishop who has the right to preach or a vampire?”

“…Sanguine, Sanguine!” Emlyn White’s facial muscles seemed to twitch.

He clenched his fist and punched the back of the pew in front of him.

“I can wait. Once I memorize the Holy Bible, I will ask the old man to let me return! He is a truly devout person and will not break his promise!”

Klein didn’t turn his head and said with a smile, “I’ve been to 48 Riverbay Avenue. Your parents have already moved away.”

“Naturally. Not only will they move away, they will also move to somewhere I'm not aware of," Emlyn White responded without hesitation.

Klein added with a relatively relaxed tone, "They moved in a hurry. They left a lot of things behind, such as the things in your room."

Emlyn White's expression suddenly became extremely wonderful. He gaped his mouth, abruptly stood up, squeezed past Klein, and rushed towards Bishop Utravsky who stood in front of the Sacred Emblem of Life.

"Father, Bishop, I want to return home, I want to return home, I want to return home!" Emlyn shouted.

Seeing that there were still believers who hadn't finished their Holy Communion yet, Father Utravsky didn't respond. He merely gave the pitiful vampire a calm look.

Emlyn quickly shut his mouth and became quiet.

He paced back and forth, looking extremely anxious.

Smiling, Klein stood up, took his cane and hat, and strolled down the aisle to the front pew of the cathedral's hall.

When Holy Communion was over, he walked up to Father Utravsky and said with a serious expression, "Bishop, I don't know why you're retaining Emlyn here, nor do I want to know. I only know one thing—his parents have entrusted me to take him back."

If this giant-like priest agrees to my request so easily, I can only light a vigil candle for this vampire, Emlyn. No—I'm sure he will hate candles from this day forth. It's best to mourn for him… Klein secretly thought.

Father Utravsky looked down at them and replied gently, "Emlyn can return home at any time."

"…"

Klein gave Emlyn White a glance, raised his right hand, and tapped his chest.

He wanted to gesture the sign of the crimson moon by tapping in a clockwise fashion, but in the end, he forced himself to draw the triangular Sacred Emblem.

Emlyn became rather anxious from the look Klein gave him. Without a word, he rushed to the door of the cathedral and left without a hitch.

Klein followed him at a moderate pace without any signs of anxiety.

After proceeding forward in what appeared like a jog, Emlyn suddenly slowed down and said in a daze, "I feel like I'm starting to miss the Harvest Church, the feeling of memorizing the Holy Bible, and the Sacred Emblem of Life. I wish to return to clean and tidy the place. It'll only take an hour, an hour…"

This planted seed is even more "vicious" than I had imagined. No matter where this vampire goes, he will return to the Harvest Church every day and work for an hour? That's actually quite alright. At the very least, the seed, which was planted, didn't change Emlyn's faith. In a way, he's showing him some respect, but why did I use the word 'respect'… That candle is called Mental Terror Candle, and it's said to be from a dragon. The Spectator pathway is rather scary… Klein tapped his cane and said, "Do you need me to remind you of anything?"

"There's no need!" Emlyn's expression distorted as he angrily said, "I will fight this feeling! I'm going to move to Midseashire or Feysac. I don't believe that I'd still wish to return when I've left Backlund!"

He gritted his teeth and suddenly exhaled.

"Let's take the carriage back to Riverbay Avenue."

"Alright," Klein responded nonchalantly.

After a few steps, Emlyn stopped a rental carriage.

Just as he was about to board the carriage, his back stiffened for two seconds. Then, he said so quietly that Klein could barely hear him, "I don't have any money on me."

"I do." Klein smiled.

Emlyn stopped talking and got onto the carriage. Klein sat across him, and as the carriage began to move off, he asked, as if in thought, "Your father is a doctor? One that possesses outstanding skills in drugs and medicine?"

Although he was listless, Emlyn raised his chin out of habit.

"This is the gift that we Sanguine enjoy. The most outstanding potion masters are all from the Sanguine!"

"Is that so…" Klein whispered to himself; his thoughts a mystery.

Emlyn said after a moment of silence, "Write to your friend and tell him that I have returned to Riverbay Avenue. My parents will come looking for me."

"Alright," Klein answered simply.

After nearly twenty minutes, the carriage pulled into Riverbay Avenue and stopped in front of Unit 48.

After paying the fare, Klein got out of the carriage and saw Emlyn White look towards the bedroom, his expression becoming abnormally excited.

Restraining himself, the vampire pressed his hand to his chest and bowed deeply at Klein.

"In any case, I must thank you."

Klein immediately revealed a smile.

"There's no need to thank me.

“The bounty reward of finding you and the transportation fees will be obtained from your parents.

“Also, you have to concoct a medicine with Beyonder effects to help me treat a patient.

“This is the reward that your family should pay.”

Chapter 370 - The Audience's Applause

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Bounty reward, transportation fees, and medicine with Beyonder effects… Emlyn White was left momentarily dazed when he first heard that.

This was not the answer that he had expected.

What about your gentlemanliness? the vampire thought in shock.

As a detective, abiding by clear accounting principles is necessary. Besides, you've even delayed my visit to the Quelaag Club. I don't know what food they've offered in limited supply for the past two days… Klein looked at Emlyn White as he joked and lampooned silently.

After a few seconds, Emlyn forced a smile and said, "I have to see the patient before I can concoct the appropriate medicine."

From your tone, you sound really confident… Klein nodded thoughtfully.

He then thought of a problem.

The White family seems to be a family of outstanding potion scholars. If I were to really be injured and poisoned, then I can come to them for treatment… Wouldn't all of my efforts of going out of my way to get the Apothecary formula from Father Utravsky be for naught? I no longer need to nurture another aide that's good at healing… Reality sure does change faster than a plan…

However, it's not really a waste either. I've already made back my investment from Miss Magician. For things like formulas, as long as it exists, it will always be valuable…

Besides, the White family will definitely stay away from Riverbay Avenue and live their lives with new secret identities. I might not be able to find them, so it's not that convenient…

No, before the Mental Terror Candle's inducing thoughts are resolved, all I need to do is wait for Emlyn White at the Harvest Church…

With this in mind, Klein took off his hat, bowed and said, "No problem, I will take you there when the time comes.

"I shall not waste your time any further. Cheerio."

Emlyn White's expression changed as he hesitantly said, "If you can remove the effect of the Mental Terror Candle, then you will receive a greater bounty, and…" He paused and raised his chin. "…and the friendship of the Sanguine."

I'm a Magician, and I possess the Sun Brooch and Biological Poison Bottle. I'm only limited to mediumship when it comes to the aspect of one's psyche, so what can I do? Amongst the people I know, only Miss Justice is a close match, but she's only a Sequence 8 Telepathist… Unless you change your faith to "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era," then we will be able to find out how to use the knowledge recorded in the Book of Secrets to help you solve this problem through a corresponding ritual… Speaking of which, vampires seemed to be worshipers of the Primordial Moon, very similar to the Shaman King and the like… Could the ancient god recorded in the City of Silver—the Vampire Ancestor, Lilith—be the Primordial Moon?

Klein said with a smile as his thoughts wandered, "I'll keep a lookout for ways to help you."

Emlyn White nodded and didn't say anything else. He impatiently turned around and rushed to the door.

If it wasn't for the fact that the carriage driver was still nearby, he would've spread his black bat wings and soared directly to the second floor.

Klein laughed and shook his head emotively.

He rode back in the same rental carriage and arrived at the steam metro not far away. He then made a transfer and returned to Cherwood Borough's 15 Minsk Street.

Before entering the room, Klein, who had become accustomed to opening the letterbox, checked for letters.

To his surprise, there really was a letter.

There was no stamp on the letter. It was addressed to Detective Sherlock Moriarty and was signed off with "Jurgen Cooper."

Lawyer Jurgen? Puzzled, Klein picked up the envelope and tore it open.

Under the light of the street lamp, he saw a piece of paper and two bills.

The denominations of these two notes were one soli and five soli.

A total of six soli… I fed the cat three times during the period… The agreement was two soli per instance… Realizing the reason, Klein opened the door and lit the gas lamp.

As he unfolded the letter, he discovered that it didn't contain much, and the words that Jurgen had handwritten were as precise and serious as he was.

"Dear Detective Moriarty,

"Thank you for taking care of Brody over the past few days. This is the reward you deserve.

"I rang the doorbell twice and found that you weren't at home, so I could only put the payment in an envelope and put it in your letterbox.

“As I might not be able to come back until tomorrow evening, I might miss the verbal agreement which my grandmother promised—tonight.

“As a lawyer, I value the validity of verbal agreements and hope that they will be carried out strictly.

“Finally, thank you once again.

“Jurgen Cooper.”

Mr. Lawyer, your gratitude is so dry and boring that it’s even inferior to Brody’s, but the explanation for your behavior is very detailed. It really fits the Jurgen style… Also, why place it in my mailbox? If this were Earth, in the time before I transmigrated, I might not even look at the mailbox downstairs for months… Klein smiled as he folded the bills and placed them in his pocket. Then, he took out a sheet of paper and wrote to Detective Stuart.

After writing the beginning pleasantries, he wrote after some deliberation:

“…I found Emlyn White at the Harvest Church near Tuteva Street. It’s a very small cathedral belonging to the Church of Earth Mother. It isn’t very common in Loen… Emlyn White claimed that it was because of certain matters that he chose to run away from home. Afterwards, he was taken in by the bishop of the Harvest Church and stayed there, becoming a…”

Klein thought for a moment before writing down the word “volunteer.”

Then he added simply:

“Thanks to my persuasion, he has returned to 48 Riverbay Avenue. However, he might visit the Harvest Church often for volunteer work.”

When he was done, Klein read through it, then he put down the pen and neatly folded the letter.

He rummaged around for an envelope, but he didn't affix the corresponding stamp. He planned to hire someone to deliver it directly to Stuart's house the next day.

If he were to go through the Kingdom's postal system, even if he were to put the letter in the mailbox now, he wouldn't be able to get it taken away by the postman until tomorrow, and then there would be the process of sorting and delivering it. So, although he was also in the royal capital of Backlund, Stuart would have to wait at least until the day after next before seeing the letter. Only then would the Whites be notified. And during this period of time, Emlyn White was a penniless guy with only his dolls.

This is also for the sake of receiving payment early… Klein chuckled, tidied up the coffee table, and returned to the second floor to brush his teeth and take a bath.

†

On Wednesday morning, after spending two soli and entrusting a rental carriage driver to deliver the letter, Klein bought some of the main ingredients for Desi seafood rice, intending to cook fried rice today.

He couldn't help but swallow a mouthful of saliva when he thought of the pearly white rice.

After spending some time, he finally cooked a pot of fragrant fried rice with bacon and black tea after going through all sorts of hassles in the kitchen. It was so delicious that tears almost filled his eyes.

This is truly a moving and nostalgic taste… After eating two large plates of fried rice, Klein sat down on the chair and rubbed his belly.

As Emlyn White's situation had too many twists and turns, his performance had already ended before it had even really begun, and he couldn't achieve the desired goal. Thus, he could only look for another opportunity to take the initiative for a performance.

However, Klein still benefited from this. Failure was also an experience, and it made him understand at least one thing:

Unlike ordinary magicians, my performance not only has aides, but it also has enemies and participants. Their reactions and choices can similarly affect its development. I have to consider all of these elements ahead of time…

This is also a lesson. It's better to be taught a lesson over such a trivial matter than to be schooled when facing important matters…

Klein looked at the empty plate in front of him and contemplated about what other "performances" he could initiate.

After a moment of serious consideration, he realized that there weren't any.

Of course, it wasn't absolute. They were just unsuitable for him to do them now.

For example, Klein had always wanted to take care of that evil spirit in the Fourth Epoch ruins of the Tudor Dynasty. But even if it was Sharron, who had the Scarlet Lunar Corona, and Maric, who had obtained the Rampager Beyonder characteristic of a Wraith, Klein didn't think that they were able to fight against the High-Sequence monster. It was even possible to end up dead before even knowing why.

Taking the initiative to perform isn't equivalent to courting death. It's not about using one's life to perform… Klein warned himself.

There was something else he wanted to do, but he didn't think there was much of a chance.

It was to find the strange child, Will Auceptin, who had brought bad luck to the surgeon, Aaron.

Klein had always been interested in the tarot card which the child possessed, and he wanted to confirm if it was a mystical item.

Unfortunately, this case had already been taken over by the Nighthawks, and Klein didn't want to get involved with his former colleagues.

I'll wait for Dr. Aaron's break time before heading to the Quelaag Club and asking about the progress, and then I'll decide what to do… Klein's thoughts quickly took shape.

According to what he knew, Dr. Aaron was usually free on Friday afternoons and Sundays in which he would play tennis at the Quelaag Club.

Klein had also confirmed one thing through today's Backlund Morning Post. There would be a Beyonder gathering tomorrow night organized by Eye of Wisdom.

I can't sell the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic or the Biological Poison Bottle for the time being. I can't even find someone to turn the former into a mystical item… The High-Sequence Beyonders of the Rose School of Thought are definitely still active nearby, filled with rage. I bet they can't wait to find Sharron, Maric, and their helper before tearing them apart… He had to keep a low profile in this area for the time being… Klein picked up his napkin, wiped his mouth, and began to clear the table.

He had wanted to rest for the day and go to the Quelaag Club for a leisurely day without taking the initiative to perform, but then he recalled the Amon avatar which attempted to penetrate the gray fog, and he recalled the role that the Book of Secrets had played in that harrowing moment.

So Klein lit the fireplace in the living room and brought the Book of Secrets back to the real world. He then concentrated on reading, studying, and taking notes.

Of course, he would later burn the corresponding notes above the gray fog.

It was already noon before he realized it when he suddenly heard the doorbell ring.

After hiding the Book of Secrets, Klein entered the living room and went straight to the door.

The visitor was the thin, bearded Detective Stuart.

He looked at Klein with great reverence and excitement, and he couldn't wait to praise him.

"You really are a great detective with abundant resources and channels. You were actually able to solve this kind of case without any clues!"

…Why do I feel a slight change in my spirituality? It seems like the potion has been digested a little more… In other words, my "performance" still enjoyed some limited success. However, there's only one person in the audience, and only he was fooled into seeing the wonderful outcome… An audience's applause really is effective… Klein was startled before he revealed a warm smile.

Chapter 371 - Detective Moriarty's First Fan

◆ ◆ ◆

“No, it’s just good luck. God was watching over me.” Klein modestly stepped aside and invited Stuart in.

What he said was the truth, and this matter did involve good luck. Long before Stuart had accepted the mission, he already knew of Emlyn White’s whereabouts.

Stewart shivered as he took off his coat and hat and hung them on a rack in the hall.

“The darn weather is getting colder. Perhaps I should try using those coats with cotton stuffed inside them,” he said.

“You can’t call this cold, right? If you go to the north of Midseashire and live in Winter County for a day, you’ll understand what truly low temperatures and true winter are like.” Klein chuckled.

Then, he generously asked, “A cup of hot coffee?”

“I would love one.” Stuart followed him to the activity room on the first floor. “I’ve been to north Midseashire, and I know about the cold and the snow there. It was a nice vacation, but Backlund’s cold isn’t inferior either. It went through my clothes like magic and seeped into my bones. Oh, what a wonderful fireplace!”

Stuart stood in front of the burning fireplace for twenty seconds before he sat down on the sofa. He looked at Klein, who was busy brewing instant coffee, and he said, “I’m going south for a holiday to go fishing at Desi Bay for new year’s. What about you? Do you have any vacation plans? We put up with Backlund’s air for a year and work hard to save money, all for such a holiday.”

“Perhaps, I should head to Desi Bay as well…” Klein said hesitantly. He turned his head to the side of Stuart’s face, and for a moment, he seemed to be in a trance.

This involved an agreement.

An appointment with his elder brother, Benson, and sister, Melissa.

“Haha, I’ll show you my fishing skills when the time comes.” Stuart continued without end, “We still aren’t rich enough, otherwise I’d like to travel to Feysac, Intis, and even to the Southern Continent.”

After he finished making the coffee, Klein handed the man a white porcelain cup. He took two steps back and sat down across from him.

Holding the cup in his hand, Stuart took two deep breaths of the fragrant and warm steam.

After resting for a few seconds, he put the cup down and said very formally, “According to our agreement, I’ll share the reward I received this time with you.

“The Whites gave a total of fifty pounds, and you obviously did more than I did.

“Sherlock, how about thirty pounds? I still have to pay my informants for their work.”

Only fifty pounds? A vampire is only worth fifty pounds? Klein couldn’t help but silently lampoon.

But he also knew that it wasn’t that the Whites didn’t want to increase the bounty; it was because they were worried about giving too much money and scaring the detectives into making unnecessary associations, attracting the attention of the police or some official Beyonder organization.

To the average private detective, a fifty-pound mission was already tempting enough, and Klein had only used seven pounds back then to hire detectives to investigate all the red chimney houses in the whole of Tingen City and the towns along its outskirts.

“In addition, the Whites gave you an extra pound, claiming its for your transportation expenses for the past few days.” Looking somewhat puzzled, Stuart produced six five-pound notes and one one-pound note.

Klein reached out to take them, casually checked their authenticity and didn’t explain the transportation fees.

Stuart didn’t ask any further questions and instead said with a smile, “Apart from Mr. Stanton, you’re the best detective I’ve ever met. Did you join this profession midway, or have you studied under a great detective prior to this?”

What great detective have I studied under? There’s quite a number. There’s Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, the forever elementary school student[1], and that guy who swindles others in the name of his grandfather[2]… Klein silently lampooned.

He thought and said, “I come from Midseashire, and I did various jobs before I became a detective.”

“That’s why you’re so rich in knowledge and experience!” Stuart said in enlightenment.

Hey, I’m a bit embarrassed by your flattery… Klein smiled but didn’t respond.

Stuart took a sip of his coffee and said, “Sherlock, I hope you can provide me with help in the future if I encounter a difficult case that I’m unable to solve.”

My social connections in the detective circles have widened… Klein replied cautiously, "If I have the time when the time comes."

After some idle conversation, Stuart tactfully offered to take his leave, and Klein accompanied him to the door.

After putting on his coat and hat, Stuart was about to open the door and leave when he suddenly turned around and sincerely said, "Sherlock, you live too simply.

"Your talent deserves better coffee."

Ah? Klein was stunned for a moment, but then he immediately felt a bit embarrassed.

He laughed dryly and said, "I can't tell the quality of the coffee. It's all the same to me."

†

After sending Stuart off, Klein went to the butcher's to buy a few ox bones and some beef. He went to the vegetable shop to buy some ingredients such as white radish, rounding up all the required condiments.

He wanted to prepare beef bone radish soup for dinner and eat it with the leftover rice. As for noon, he found a random restaurant on the streets and ate a small serving of lamb chop.

After a leisurely afternoon, Klein continued to study the Book of Secrets, and the more he read, the more he realized that he knew little about mysticism.

Fortunately, he had a solid foundation. He quickly grasped many things once he came into contact with them and pondered over them.

In the evening, he smelled the tantalizing fragrance of the beef bone soup, and his Adam's apple bobbed up and down twice.

He heard the doorbell again, as though it was a bugle to signal dinner time.

Gulping down his saliva, Klein walked behind the door and reached for the handle.

The image of the visitor naturally appeared in his mind. It was the handsome but not masculine red-eyed vampire, Emlyn White.

There's no need to rush him at all… What a man of his word… Klein opened the door and smiled.

"Good evening, Mr. White"

Emlyn raised his chin, letting his impatience show in his expression.

He was about to say something when Klein looked at his brown clerical robes and said with a knowing smile, "You just came over from the Harvest Church?"

Who was the one who said he could resist last night?

Unable to maintain his gentlemanly demeanor, Emlyn gritted his teeth and said, "That old man, that old man…

"Dammit, how do I get rid of this inducing suggestion?"

Before Klein could reply, he patted the clothes on his chest and said with a stern face, "Take me to the patient.

"There's a good dinner waiting for me."

As he spoke, he sniffed indiscernibly, as if he had smelled something.

Klein picked up his coat and hat without saying another word.

"Alright, I'll take you there now."

After closing the door and taking a few steps, he cautiously asked, "Do you have a certificate to practice medicine?"

How else am I supposed to convince Lawyer Jurgen to allow Mrs. Doris to take the medicine?

Emlyn looked up at the sky at a forty-five-degree angle and said, “I don’t need those papers to prove my abilities.”

Before Klein frowned, he casually added, “It’s too simple. I obtained it easily by going through the process.”

…This tone makes it sounds like he’s rather proud of receiving a certificate for practicing medicine… Klein smiled without a word.

Looking at the wet ground in front of him, Emlyn casually said, “Do you know what I like most about Backlund?”

“What?” Klein responded without any curiosity.

Emlyn chuckled and said, “The persistent gloomy sky with fog that blots out the sun. This allows me to go out during the day without feeling too much discomfort.

“It’s great, except for the air.”

In other words, the sun really would deal certain damage to vampires? Fortunately, I thought of this yesterday and didn’t bring the Sun Brooch with me; otherwise, I wouldn’t be able to communicate with Emlyn… Klein seemed to gain an understanding.

As they conversed, they had already arrived outside the Jurgens, and Klein went up to ring the doorbell.

After a while, the door opened, and Mrs. Doris, who was dressed thickly at home, said with pleasant surprise, “Mr. Detective, I wasn’t expecting you?”

Brody the black cat crouched to the side, looking at Emlyn warily, as though it felt that something was amiss about him.

Klein pointed to the vampire beside him.

"I became acquainted with a doctor who's good at treating lung diseases, so I've asked him to come and give you a checkup. Let me do the introductions. This is Dr. Emlyn White."

"Is that so? You still actually remembered this? What a good child!" Doris happily invited the two inside.

Child… Klein's mouth twitched, but he didn't say anything in the end.

On the way into the living room, Emlyn whispered, "The patient's problems are irreversible. She's very old and rather weak.

"Even if I give her the medicine, she would only be able to live through this winter. She would pass away in three to five years.

"Unless she's given an immortal potion or the like as spoken in the legends, that's all that can be done. Or should I turn her into a Sanguine? But at her age, she can no longer endure the changes a Beyonder characteristic can do to her body. Furthermore, my parents and I don't have any excess characteristics left."

Irreversible… Klein was startled and silently sighed.

He said to Emlyn, "Make her the medicine first. We'll leave that to after the winter."

"Alright, I have a type of ready-made medicine with me that's suitable for this kind of situation." Emlyn didn't stand on ceremony as he sat down on the sofa.

At that moment, Lawyer Jurgen was walking out of the kitchen as he took off his apron. He asked Klein about the purpose of his visit.

"Dr. White, what do you think of my grandmother's lung disease?" Jurgen asked seriously.

Emlyn was obviously very experienced in such situations. He first explained the ins and outs of lung disease, and after most of it flew past

Jurgen's head, he said, "What she needs most is warm and healthy air. That's my most sincere advice.

"In addition, I have special medicine that she can take for free."

As he spoke, he took out his certificate and a small metal bottle.

"Will there be any side effects?" Jurgen asked cautiously.

"No, the only problem is that it can't cure the root of the problem completely; it's just a temporary cure," Emlyn replied in a very professional manner. "If it weren't for Detective Moriarty, I wouldn't let anyone try it."

"Perhaps I can give it a try? Cough…" Mrs. Doris interrupted.

Jurgen glanced at Klein who, having performed a divination prior to this, nodded affirmatively.

"Alright." Jurgen finally made his decision.

He watched warily as Mrs. Doris drank the bottle of medicine and carefully observed her reaction.

There wasn't much change to Mrs. Doris at first, but she gradually began to feel her breathing lighten.

She stood up and bent down to pick up the cat. She happily said, "I feel much better!"

Seeing this scene, Jurgen's usually stoic face had his lips curl up slightly.

However, Klein was thinking about the three to five years.

He curled a smile and sighed to himself.

This can also be considered a type of magic show, I guess. Using Beyonder powers to create fake outcomes to make the audience happy…

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†

Referring to Jimmy Kudo from Detective Conan.

Referring to Hajime Kindaichi from The Kindaichi Case Files

Chapter 372 - Missing Case

* * *

After waiting for more than half an hour and confirming that nothing unexpected had happened, Klein and Emlyn White left Lawyer Jurgen's house and proceeded in silence, each of them preoccupied with their own thoughts. Soon, they arrived outside 15 Minsk Street.

The vampire, Emlyn White, put his fist to his mouth, coughed lightly, and said, "The payment has been paid. I hope we won't meet again in the future."

That sounds pretty cool, but Mr. White, have you forgotten something important? Klein smiled politely.

"I will visit Bishop Utravsky every now and then, and I hope you will not be at the Harvest Church when the time comes.

"That way, I don't have to busy myself with finding a way to resolve your psychological cue."

Emlyn White's expression suddenly became very strange. He stayed silent for two seconds before he raised his chin and said, "We have many powerful mysticologists among the Sanguine. I will write to them for help."

After he finished speaking, he pressed his hand to his chest and bowed to bid farewell.

Turning around and taking a few steps, he suddenly slowed down, turned his head, and asked hesitantly, "What were you cooking over here?"

"Beef bone radish soup, with rice and chili peppers from the Feynapotter highlands," Klein said in anticipation as he breathed in the fragrance drifting out from the house.

Emlyn frowned and shook his head.

"Chili peppers aren't things fancied by the Sanguine."

Frankly speaking, it's hard for me to imagine a vampire eating chili peppers. Of course, I occasionally imagine a vampire holding a steamed bun and chewing on garlic and onions… Klein silently lampooned, pointed to the door, and indicated that he was about to enjoy his dinner.

Emlyn White thought for a second, lowered his voice, and said in deliberation, "Last night, I thought over things for a long time and found out that you actually didn't do anything, so why are you asking for compensation? That old man would've let me leave at any moment."

Klein chuckled.

"No, that's not how the accounts are done. Your parents assigned a mission to find you, not to save you. In the end, I found you. According to the agreement, the reward should belong to me.

"Besides, if I hadn't reminded you, you might've stayed in Harvest Church for weeks or months before you realized that you were free to leave. Furthermore, you wouldn't have noticed the seed planted in your mind."

"Are you hinting that my intelligence isn't up to par?" Emlyn's face twisted.

No, I'm saying it directly… Klein smiled but didn't say anything else. He just opened the door and went straight to the kitchen, his mind full of the clear and alluring soup, the white rice, the soft yet chewy beef, the marrow hidden deep in the bones, the sweet, refreshing radishes with meaty flavors, and the shredded chili from the Feynapotter highlands.

In the spicy-hot shreds, there were also pink rose salt and green parsley leaves.

†

On Thursday morning, as promised, Klein went to the value-for-money coffee shop in East Borough.

Old Kohler, who was still wearing the same thick jacket as before, was sitting in a corner, matching tea that barely tasted like tea with a loaf of black bread.

Klein came in front of him, took out the things he had prepared long ago, and pushed them towards him.

It was payment consisting of two five-soli notes, four one-soli notes, and a handful of copper pennies specially designed to increase the effect of the payment.

Old Kohler stared straight at them for quite a while before finally reaching out his right hand to take them with a tremble.

He looked at the money over and over again, raised his hand to wipe his eyes, and squeezed out a smile.

“At the dock, we carry the heavy goods and do some troublesome cleaning with our feet in the cold and dirty water, only for one soli a day…”

And there was a total of 15 soli here!

Klein listened in silence. A few seconds later, he said, “What have you heard recently? What did you notice?”

Old Kohler put away his payment, took another sip of his tea, pinched the corners of his eyes and said, “I’ve met a lot of dockworkers, and I’ve reconnected with friends I used to know when I was a tramp. Some of them have found employment in factories, and some of them have been switching between the workhouse and the parks. Heh, just like how I was in the past.

“Recently, there has been a rumor from who-knows-where that since we believe in one of the seven gods, why don’t we directly pray to the Creator of everything? It’s said that ‘He’ didn’t truly pass away, and he remains in everyone’s body and in all things.

“Praying to ‘Him’ will result in our redemption. Not only will we enter ‘His’ kingdom after death, but we will also have a better life before death. For example, we don’t need to work so hard, and we can have butter and oily meat every day.”

This… Is this some theory the Aurora Order has spread about the Fallen Creator? After what happened to Lanevus, they’ve begun to pay attention to the poor in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district, hoping to use them for certain purposes? I wonder if the three Churches have noticed this… They probably have… Klein tucked a piece of butter between two slices of toast and took a bite without knowing what to expect.

Old Kohler went on for a while before saying, “Mr. Detective, according to your instructions, I paid attention to the female textile workers. In the end, with the help of the police, their struggles failed, but, heh heh, the leaders became the factory’s supervisors, and a third of them lost their jobs.

“Some of them are actively looking for new jobs, some have become street girls, and some have gone off somewhere. The entire East Borough is in chaos.”

If this was the situation when Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos came to Backlund, he could come to East Borough to kill one or two people every day without anyone discovering or noticing the act… Klein sighed in his heart.

Old Kohler continued to recount what he saw and heard daily before saying, “By the way, Liv’s youngest daughter has gone missing.”

“Liv?” Klein was certain that he had never heard of the name.

Old Kohler then said in realization, “She’s the laundry maid you and Mr. Reporter met last time, the one who was arguing with someone. She was always at home doing the washing with her two daughters, but yesterday, when her two daughters were returning home from delivering the laundry, one of them ended up missing. The younger one, what a pity. She’s been a widow for years, and she has always been counting on her two daughters, and now… Sigh, the police in East Borough definitely won’t look too hard for her.”

Unlucky people tend to meet with even worse situations because they have no ability to resist danger or change their environment… This phrase suddenly flashed through Klein’s mind.

After a few seconds of stone-like silence, he said, “Take me to see them. I’m a detective, so maybe I can help them find her.”

“…They have no money,” Old Kohler reminded him.

Klein picked up his hat and cane and said, “I occasionally do volunteer work too.”

†

Cherwood Borough, in the apartment which the two ladies originally rented.

Xio had resumed her life as a bounty hunter, and Fors hastened the pace of her new book, hoping to save the money needed for the Beyonder ingredients required by the Trickmaster potion.

But writing a book wasn’t something one could write that easily. Fors scratched her hair irritably and decided to go out for a walk to seek out inspiration.

As she walked, she found that she had unknowingly returned to a familiar place.

Diagonally ahead of her was the Yosifov Clinic, a fairly large private clinic where she had first worked.

After staring at it for a while, Fors thought of the old lady who had guided her into the Beyonder world. She turned into a small alley on the right and took a shortcut to a nearby street.

The two sides of the street had leaves fluttering down the parasol tree. It was a relatively quiet place.

Fors remembered that the old lady lived at Unit 39. Back then, she would occasionally visit personally to deliver medicine, give injections, or even to help with the daily chores.

It's almost been three years. That place should've been rented out again. There might have been several changes in tenants… I still remember when I came to tidy up the items she left behind. I discovered many notebooks about mysticism… Fors walked under the nearly barren parasol tree and slowly approached Unit 39.

As she recalled her past experiences, she gradually gained some inspiration for writing.

At that moment, she saw an old man in a heavy woolen coat and a black half top hat standing in front of Unit 39. He had rung the bell three times.

After a few minutes, seeing that no one was opening the door, the old man with blue eyes shook his head and turned around. He whispered in puzzlement, "Still no one…"

He suddenly noticed Fors who was looking at him from nearby. He hurriedly walked over, gently and urgently smiled, and said, “Beautiful lady, do you live in this district? Do you know Laubero and Aulisa?”

Aulisa? Isn’t that the old lady’s name? There haven’t been any tenants in this house lately? After some deliberation, Fors said, “I don’t know if the Mrs. Aulisa I know is the one you’re looking for. She lived here for a long time, but she passed away three years ago.”

“Passed away three years ago? What about Laubero?” the old man with wrinkles at the corners of his eyes hurriedly asked.

“Her husband passed away even earlier than she did,” Fors answered honestly.

The elder was momentarily stunned before revealing a sorrowful expression.

After a moment of silence, he said, “Thank you, good lady.

“I am the elder brother of Laubero, and I’ve been living in Midseashire all this time. As I haven’t received any letters from them for a long time, I decided to come and pay them a visit.

“Can you tell me what happened to them in the past few years?”

Mrs. Aulisa’s husband’s elder brother… Could he be a descendant of the family she spoke of? Fors suddenly snapped to her senses and replied with a smile, “No problem.

She quickly thought through what she could and couldn’t say.

The elder pointed behind him and said, “There’s quite a nice coffee shop over there.”

†

Klein once again stepped into the humid room of a slightly old apartment in East Borough.

He saw the woman who had quarreled with the street girl last time over her contempt towards her profession. She was standing in a pile of clothes. Her wrinkled face had lost a lot of its spirit, she lost her laborious drive, and she looked lifeless.

As for her eldest daughter, the seventeen to eighteen-year-old girl who was sitting by the bed and washing clothes, she kept sobbing.

“It’s all my fault. I didn’t watch over her properly…

“I shouldn’t have taken her into the secluded alley.

“She even said that she was going to learn a few more words at the free school tonight.

“It’s my fault, it’s all my fault….”

Liv suddenly regained her senses and turned to look at her eldest daughter. She wiped away her sad expression and berated her fiercely, “What are you crying for? Get up and wash the clothes!

“Do you want to starve? Do you plan on not even being able to attend the free school?”

After screaming, she saw Klein and Old Kohler at the door.

“Old Kohler… This is?” she asked doubtfully.

Chapter 373 - Search

◆ ◆ ◆

Old Kohler seemed to be a slightly afraid of her ferocity as he subconsciously took a step back.

“Liv, this is a detective, and he w-wishes to help you find Daisy.”

Liv’s wrinkled, peeling face turned to Klein and said coldly, “We’ve already made a police report.”

Although she was perhaps in her thirties, she looked to be in her fifties.

Klein looked around the room where many wet clothes hung. He vaguely remembered the last time he was here. There had been a thirteen or fourteen-year-old girl, carefully holding a crude homemade iron to iron the clothes which had wrinkled from being hung to dry. Her hands had been covered with burns.

She’s the “missing” Daisy… Klein looked back at the laundry maid, Liv, and said in a neutral tone, “Do you believe that the East Borough police will really be looking for Daisy?

“Are you sure the people who caused Daisy to go ‘missing’ wouldn’t cast their sights on your family?

“Do you wish to lose another daughter after losing one?”

When the cruel yet heart-wrenching words reached Liv’s ears, the indifferent expression on her face slowly crumbled. She turned agape, but she couldn’t say anything. The corners of her eyes gradually turned red.

She abruptly lowered her head and muttered to herself in pain and despair, “I don’t have any money…”

The room suddenly became silent. Even the sobbing girl didn’t make another sound.

Klein pursed his lips and let out a silent sigh.

“I occasionally do volunteer work, simply to help others. Heh heh, I haven’t done so in a long time, so please give me a chance.”

“Volunteer work?” Liv lifted her head and ruminated over the phrase.

Klein nodded slightly and answered, “The job will be done pro bono. No, it is not completely free either. Kindness will bring me great satisfaction.

“Since you have no other solutions, why not give it a try?”

Liv was silent for a moment. She raised her hand, which had wrinkled from being soaked in water for an extended period of time, wiped her eyes, and said in a low voice, “Mr. Detective, you… you really are a kind and good gentleman…”

Her voice suddenly became choked with sobs.

“…This was what happened—at midday before yesterday, at noon, Daisy delivered a load of washed laundry under Freja’s lead. It was just outside East Borough, and they needed to cross several streets.

“In order to rush back for lunch, Freja had chosen a secluded alley, but a momentary distraction left her realizing that Daisy, who had been following her, was gone.

“She retraced her route but never found Daisy, and Daisy hasn’t come back yet.

“Where did this happen, Freja?”

The girl named Freja had already stood up, her eyes were red and puffy.

She sobbed and said, “Right here, right here in Broken Axe Lane, Mister Detective. Will Daisy be alright?”

“Probably,” Klein replied without much of an expression.

He looked around and asked, “Do you have anything that Daisy often carries? I can borrow a police dog. It has an excellent sense of smell and can be used to find a person based on the lingering scent.”

“…No,” Liv thought for a moment and said with a sad expression.

Freja once again shed tears. She felt as if the situation had turned into one of despair once again.

Suddenly, she blinked and said, “Wait, there’s something.

“Daisy’s vocabulary book!”

“Vocabulary book?” Old Kohler asked.

Liv sniffed and said, “I make Freja and Daisy attend the free school at night. I can keep washing clothes, but they can’t always be doing the same.”

This lady is such a good mother… Klein couldn’t help but sigh.

The free classes offered at night were set up by the three major Churches or some charity organizations. From eight to ten o’clock in the evening, the school would be free of charge and would even provide stationery and a certain amount of paper. It was an education that was need-blind, and it would at most involve some religious knowledge. Klein had heard Old Neil mention that he had once been a teacher for the Church of Evernight for several years.

Because there were very few people who volunteered to be teachers in the free school, a unique teaching method was established. Teachers would arrive early, gather the few students who had the best academic progress, imbue them with the content for that day's class, and then put them in charge of teaching the different classes. The teachers would supervise, correcting any mistakes. It was called a "tutorial system."

Corresponding to the free classes were the free organizations such as the technical workers' workshop, which were truly accessible to the poor, and one of the few outlets to escape from poverty.

Unfortunately, there were too few similar organizations, and it was difficult for them to play a substantial role.

At this moment, the sobbing Freja added, "Daisy liked studying very much. She was made the tutor of her class by her teacher. She would put together the vocabulary words she had copied and hugged them in her bed every day. She would wake up early and go out into the street to recite them under the light of dawn. She's always found it regretful that there are no street lamps around here…"

As she spoke, Freja rushed back to the bunk bed and took out a stack of crumpled paper from under the tattered pillow.

Due to it being in a humid environment for extended periods of time, the words that were copied on it had already smudged.

The edges of the sheets of paper were worn out, as though they had been turned over and over by someone for a long time.

"Mister Detective, i-is this okay?" Freja handed Klein the so-called vocabulary book, which had no binding at all, and anxiously asked.

"Yes," Klein answered very simply.

He wasn't trying to comfort Freja. Although it wasn't the kind of items Daisy carried around all the time, it was something that had accompanied her all this while. Moreover, it had been projected with Daisy's strong will. It was excellent for using it as dowsing to seek her out.

He casually flipped through the vocabulary book and said, “Then I’ll start taking action. The earlier I find Daisy, the better.”

Liv and Freja were unable to find words to describe their feelings. All they could do was watch as Klein and Old Kohler leave, repeating the words “thank you,” “thank you, Mr. Detective,” and “thank you, good gentleman.”

After leaving the apartment, Klein turned to Old Kohler and said, “You should pay attention to those female textile workers who lost their jobs, especially those who have neither found new jobs nor become street girls, and pay more attention to those who have gone off to unknown places…

“Pay attention to your own safety. Ask less and listen more. If you do this well, you’ll get a bonus.”

“Alright!” Old Kohler nodded heavily.

He didn’t immediately bid farewell. After hesitating for a moment, he asked with a tone full of expectation, “You’ll find Daisy, won’t you, Mister Detective?”

“I can only say that I will do my best.” Klein didn’t make any guarantees.

Old Kohler sighed and smiled bitterly.

“I’ve lost my child, so I’m very unwilling to see this sort of thing happen…”

He waved his hand and walked towards another street.

Klein left the area at a leisurely pace, wrapping Daisy’s “vocabulary book” around the head of the cane and, without attracting any attention, completed a “Dowsing Rod Seeking.”

There are results. Towards the northwest… For the time being, It’s not possible to confirm if I’m suffering any interference or misdirection…

He looked down at the direction in which the cane was going to fall and put out his palm to steady it.

According to the revelation, Klein went all the way out of East Borough and hired a rental carriage.

Half an hour later, the carriage, which occasionally changed directions, stopped at Iris Street, near Cherwood Borough and West Borough. It stopped in front of a house with a vast lawn, a wide garden, a small fountain square, and a marble statue.

At this moment, Klein's cane had fallen down inside the carriage and was aimed straight at that direction!

Through the window, Klein could see the guards patrolling inside the gates and ferocious dogs with their tongues out.

The security inside was quite tight.

More importantly, even without using divination, his spiritual intuition made him sense that there was great danger hidden within!

What is this place? How can Daisy's disappearance involve such a dangerous place? Klein thought for a few seconds, then he told the carriage driver to keep going.

The carriage driver replied with some surprise, "Sir, are you not here to visit Mr. Capim?"

Capim? The name sounded extremely familiar to Klein.

He smiled and asked, "Why do you think so?"

"There will always be people coming out from East Borough who ride in my carriage all the way here. Heh heh, this is the home of the rich and powerful Mr. Capim," the carriage driver casually replied.

East Borough… Capim… Tycoon… Klein suddenly remembered who Capim was.

There were many rumors that he was the leader of a bloody criminal organization which was stained with blood. He was involved in the disappearance of many innocent girls!

And in reality, he was a tycoon who knew quite a few important figures.

Without another word, Klein leaned back against the wall and half-closed his eyes.

The horse carriage slowly moved forward. The luxurious villa was left behind as it disappeared from the window.

†

In a small booth in a coffee shop.

Fors already knew that the old man across her was called Lawrence Nord, who came from Midseashire's Constant City and was a public school teacher.

He didn't know that Mrs. Aulisa's husband was dead, nor that Mrs. Aulisa had inherited his estate and become a Beyonder, much less know that Mrs. Aulisa had left me her relics… Could he also be a Beyonder? Does he have the ability to divine? After taking a sip of Fermo coffee, she organized her words and said, "I was a doctor at the nearby Yosifov Clinic, and Mrs. Aulisa came to see me often. That was when her husband, Mr. Laubero had already passed away…

"…Sometimes I would accompany her by chatting with her and helping her do things like…

"So in the end, she made a will, giving me her savings and cash. She donated jewelry, books, furniture, and other things to a charity. This was done under the supervision of her assigned law firm."

Fors was telling the truth, but not the whole truth.

Lawrence pinched his forehead and said, "What a pity. I don't understand why Aulisa didn’t contact me over all those years.”

“She didn’t mention your name. She was vaguely dissatisfied with Mr. Laubero’s family,” Fors replied frankly.

Lawrence fell silent for a moment before saying, “Thank you for informing me. It has made me understand certain things.”

“By the way, where are Laubero and Aulisa buried?”

“Grimm Cemetery.” Fors took out a pocket watch and gave it a look before saying, “Mr. Lawrence, I still have things to tend to. I should be leaving.”

Lawrence didn’t stop her. He got up and saw her off.

After sitting down again, he rubbed his temples in distress and silently muttered to himself, Laubero is dead, and he didn’t leave any children behind, and I don’t know what Aulisa did to his Beyonder characteristic… Richard died at the hands of the Aurora Order… Sam doesn’t even wish to contact us at all, having no interest in shouldering the responsibility of the family name…

Will the Abraham family slowly disappear like this?

Chapter 374 - Artificial Sleepwalking

◆

Lawrence sat in the coffee shop booth, unable to stop himself from thinking about the hardships of the Abraham family over the years.

Ever since they had split up into smaller families and settled in other places, the Elder Council's control over the family members hit rock-bottom. A great number of Abrahams refused to advance, in order to avoid the effects of the curse; hence, many of them remained at Sequence 8 or 9. Some didn't even attempt to become Beyonders, wishing to be ordinary people with a certain amount of knowledge so as to live a calm and peaceful life.

The Elder Council believed that this was an act of forgetting the family's honor, but it couldn't be harsh on such actions since it was tantamount to self-destruction.

In such a situation, the upper echelons of the Abraham family began to think of introducing changes. They imitated the master-apprentice inheritance system of the Life School of Thought, and they trained non-family members, hoping that once they advanced to become High-Sequence Beyonders, then they would, in turn, be able to help the Abraham family deal with the curse that had existed for about 1,500 years and find their ancestor, Bethel Abraham, who had vanished in the War of the Four Emperors.

The plan started off smoothly, and the apprentices who didn't have to worry about the curse quickly became stronger and stronger under the Abraham family's meticulous nurturing. Within a short period of ten years, there were several strong Sequence 5 individuals among them, while not a single person among the direct descendants of the Abraham family was Sequence 6.

The trunk was too weak, but the branches were too strong; hence, the seeds of tragedy were planted, and the ambitious apprentices began casting their sights on the powerful Sealed Artifacts that the Abraham family possessed.

Their plot failed, but it also resulted in serious repercussions. All the non-family members at Sequences 6 and 5 were of the opinion that their positions within the Abraham family didn't match their own strength and that they couldn't be trusted, preventing them from being in possession of certain Sealed Artifacts.

In the process of going back and forth, with difficult negotiations occurring and compromises between the two parties, an accident happened. One of them, Traveler Botis, was lured by the True Creator into joining the Aurora Order, which led to a terrible disaster.

In this disaster, the upper echelons of the Abraham family were almost completely destroyed. More than half of the few powerful Sealed Artifacts were lost, and only three were left. As a result, Lawrence's brother, who he shared the same mother with, Richard, died.

Not only did Botis benefit greatly from it, but he also gathered all the Beyonder ingredients he needed, and with the help of the True Creator, he successfully overcame the dangers and became a demigod, becoming one of the five Saints of the Aurora Order, the Saint of Secrets.

After the disaster, the rebuilt Abraham family's Elder Council reflected over the actions of the past few years, but they couldn't find a solution to the problem. Emotions such as negativity, dejection, and hopelessness shrouded the hearts of the few remaining family members.

Lawrence didn't wish to be placed in such an environment or face sighing and repressed emotions every day. He found a reason to leave the Elder Council and came to Backlund to look for his other brothers, Laubero, who he shared the same mother, and Sam, who he didn't share the same mother.

But now, he suddenly realized that he was the only one remaining from his father's line.

He was already nearly eighty-years-old, and all his children had died in the disaster brought about by Botis.

Just recalling the past made him feel sorrow from the bottom of his heart.

The most painful thing was that he couldn't see the hope for revenge, and he couldn't see the dawn of his clan's glory appearing once more.

I'm already very old, and I was also injured before. Unless it's absolutely necessary, I wouldn't dare to use my Beyonder powers anymore, which would cause me to lose control or even cause the curse to descend… What is the future of the Abraham family? Lawrence took a sip of the Fermo coffee and fell into a long silence.

†

Upon returning to her rented house, Fors immediately entered the bedroom and locked the wooden door behind her.

She sat on the edge of the bed, calmed her mind, and whispered the honorific name that represented hope and the future.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era,

"You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

"You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

"I wish to inform you of what I have encountered today.

“I met the elder brother of the husband of the old lady who made me become an Apprentice. He seems to be a member of a certain family..

“I didn’t mention anything related to mysticism, but I’m worried that he has extremely powerful divination abilities and will be able to find out the complete truth…”

†

At this moment, Klein happened to be above the gray fog.

He saw the crimson star that represented The Magician expanding outward, rippling as he heard the stacked layers of prayers.

After figuring out the details, Klein tapped the edge of the ancient table and said to himself silently, How cautious for her to know to seek help from The Fool.

Besides, your guess isn’t wrong. The corresponding Sequence 7 for Apprentice is Astrologer…

Having recently read the Book of Secrets thoroughly, he had quickly come up with a plan that would help him interfere with divination through rituals.

I have to say, with the Book of Secrets and my advancement to Sequence 7, I’m becoming more and more godlike when above the gray fog. Of course, for the time being, I’m still just an empty shell…

Speaking of which, I’ve been acting in front of Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man several times, fooling them completely. Why didn’t I receive any feedback from my spirituality? The speed at which I digest the potion doesn’t seem to be getting faster as a result. Does it have to happen in the real world? Yes, it might be possible that their “applause,” as an audience, has been blocked by the gray fog, preventing them from directly affecting me. Just like how the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator are unable to penetrate the gray fog to find this mysterious space…

From the looks of it, the reaction between the gray fog and this mysterious space is very mechanical. It's not sentient enough, and it lacks intelligence… However, to me, this is actually a good thing…

In the midst of his thoughts, Klein turned his knowledge into an ancient piece of goatskin and threw it into the crimson star that symbolized The Magician.

A boundless grayish-white fog suddenly filled the air in front of Fors's eyes, and an illusory yellowish-brown goatskin descended from the sky.

When she saw the information written on it, she suddenly felt at peace.

With Mr. Fool, Mr. Lawrence certainly wouldn't be able to get the correct revelations via divination! Fors sincerely expressed her gratitude and busily prepared for the ritual.

She had seen a lot of instances where evil spirits did harm to others. In fact, she didn't trust The Fool that much, but the curse of the full moon forced her to rely on him.

Regardless of how bad the consequences are, I will just lose my life. Without the help of Mr. Fool, I would've already lost control during the last Blood Moon and become a monster… Every day I live is a day gained. This is all given to me by Mr. Fool, and he can take it back at any time. Well, it's best if he doesn't… Fors took a breath and lit the two candles that symbolized The Fool.

The initial steps of the ritual were no different from those she had mastered before. This continued until the candles were lit and the essential oils, extract, and herbal powder were thrown into the fire.

When the fragrance of a serene etherealness filled the room, a faint, illusory fog covered the entire altar. According to the contents of the goatskin, Fors quickly adjusted her body and mind, entered Cogitation and chanted the corresponding name of The Fool over and over again.

Such monotonous, repetitive behavior allowed the originally calm and relaxed Fors to slowly enter a state where the mind was in deep sleep while her spirituality dispersed. Her entire being felt groggy, but she maintained a strange sense of lucidness. She felt as if her spirit was floating about, constantly moving upwards.

This was similar to the “secret deed” process that was formed with the help of an external object, but it was different in many ways. This was a technique in mediumship and was used to communicate with higher level spirits. At an extremum, it could even allow a Beyonder to travel the spirit world under the pretext of maintaining a special lucidness.

Some Beyonders who specialized in influencing the mind called it “artificial sleepwalking.” They could use techniques such as hypnosis to make ordinary people enter this state as well.

In that way, an ordinary person would appear to be in a deep slumber, yet they would be able to answer questions. Although their eyes and mouths were closed, they could detect the presence of various Spirit Bodies around them; thus, completing a certain degree of communication.

The reason why Klein didn’t let Fors use the secret deed ritual was that it could only give knowledge or direct effects such as purification or corruption, letting the target’s mind gain a wonderful experience. It couldn’t interfere with the divination or other matters done by another person.

Simply put, the secret deed ritual directly affected the target’s Soul Body, Astral Projection, Body of Heart and Mind, and Ether Body. The related positive or negative states were removed, and with the artificial sleepwalking ritual, it allowed Klein to do something indirect so as to deal with any outside interference.

In a daze, Fors felt herself drifting back to the majestic old palace above the gray fog, and she saw Mr. Fool sitting high above, looking down at everything.

Klein looked at the image of The Magician projected by the dark red starlight. He unhurriedly picked up a paper figurine that he had found earlier from his trash pile in the corner.

As a Seer who had advanced twice, he had many ways to interfere with the divination of others, so he didn't need to rely on mystical items to help him.

At this moment, due to the effects of the ritual, the mysterious space above the gray fog started to tremble slightly, and some of the power was flowing due to the perturbation.

Klein's left hand pressed the Black Emperor card on the surface of the long bronze table, connecting it with his own Spirit Body and uplifting himself to a higher level. It raised his level just like the previous times he used the Flaring Sun Charm and Azik's copper whistle to solidify his Spirit Body.

Then, with a flick of his right wrist, he threw the paper figurine out.

The paper figurine suddenly expanded in size, and on its back, twelve pairs of black angel wings which were cut out of paper grew out. The feathers were vivid and lifelike.

The paper "angel" pierced through the dark red light and overlapped with the illusory figure of The Magician.

Without any warning, it started to burn and completely disappeared.

The half-awake Fors seemed to see a dignified and majestic angel as it wrapped layer upon layers of pitch-black wings around her!

After an unknown period of time, Fors suddenly awoke from her artificial sleepwalking state. In front of her were only the three candles quietly burning on the altar and the fog that had permeated the entire room. At the tip of her nose was the familiar fragrance of serene etherealness.

Angel… Fors was so lost in thought that she momentarily forgot to end the ritual.

Chapter 375 - An “Evil God’s” Impressive Act

◆

1, 2, 3, 4, 5… I think there were twelve pairs of wings… According to the canon descriptions of the various Churches, that’s an angel of the highest rank… Fors tried to recall what she had seen in her reverie. She was both shocked and not that shocked, as if what she had encountered was a shocking event that she had previously taken for granted but had simply never encountered before.

It isn’t surprising that Mr. Fool has the services of an angel. From the fact that Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man occasionally use the word “Him” to refer to him, one can imagine so. The fact that he’s able to isolate the effects of the moon’s ravings allows me to infer… However, my request was only to interfere with Mr. Lawrence’s divination; yet, “He” actually made an Angel protect me. Isn’t this too extravagant? Or is this a routine act for “Him”?

Uh, one more problem. Why are the feathers on the angel’s wings black? Does this signify degeneracy or Death? What is the true identity of Mr. Fool? Which great being is “He”? Death who was rumored to have died in the Pale Era? “He” wishes to be reborn through the Tarot Gatherings? Fors suddenly took a deep breath, completely unconcerned that the gentleman named Lawrence would find anything wrong with her through his divination.

On the realization that she had already joined the Tarot Club, she smiled wryly and whispered silently, I can only do as Emperor Roselle said, “Take things one step at a time…”

After gathering her thoughts, Fors humbly thanked Mr. Fool once more. Following the normal process of a ritual, she extinguished the three candles' flame and began to clear the altar which was filled with all kinds of items.

†

Above the gray fog, Klein temporarily put the matter of the Abraham family at the back of his mind.

According to his original plan, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote the following divination statement: "Daisy's current situation."

Putting the fountain pen away, Klein stacked Daisy's vocabulary book and the piece of paper with the divination statement on it and held them in his left hand.

Then, leaning back in his chair, he entered a state of Cogitation, reciting the words "Daisy's current situation" over and over again.

After seven times, Klein fell asleep, his eyes black with a hint of red before grayness surfaced in them.

One scene after another began to flash. Some were contiguous, some had gaps, and some were completely incoherent.

Klein saw Liv's youngest daughter, a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old girl who persisted despite being repeatedly scalded. She was dragged into a remote alley by a man wearing a heavy jacket and a grayish-black cap after he covered her mouth with a handkerchief from behind.

Another man, who was dressed the same, took her legs, and they lifted her as they quickly walked away.

Their destination was the carriage parked outside the alley.

The whole incident was over in less than two minutes, and by the time Daisy's sister, Freja, returned to search for Daisy, the carriage was already gone.

†

Within the carriage, a sharp, ice-cold dagger was held to the muddleheaded Daisy's face, and lewd threats rang in her ears.

†

The carriage drove into the luxurious villa.

†

Daisy was in a small, dark room, and from time to time, the sound of women's cries, screams, and curses echoed outside.

†

Daisy woke up and cried out for help, but the door was opened, and she was kicked away. The pain made it impossible for her to get up.

She wept as she constantly cried for "Mother" and "Freja."

†

Klein opened his eyes and realized that the paper he held in his left hand had already been crumpled by his tight grip.

He had established that Capim was the mastermind behind the many disappearances of young ladies and that he was the boss of a criminal organization.

The problem, however, was that the case shouldn't and couldn't involve powerful Beyonder forces. At most, there would be a few money-hungry Beyonders at Sequence 7, 8, or 9 that were helping out. It wouldn't have made Klein's spiritual intuition give him warnings of intense danger the moment he approached the villa.

Is Capim himself a Sequence 6 or even Sequence 5 Beyonder? However, it’s not difficult for a Beyonder of this level to earn money. There’s no need to do such dirty and complicated matters. He just has to find all the gangs and collect protection fees via a protection racket… It would be easy, and it wouldn’t dirty his hands… Could there be some hidden plot behind Capim’s human trafficking? As he pondered, Klein used the power of the gray fog to restore Daisy’s vocabulary book to its original state.

After a few seconds of silence, he took out another piece of goatskin and wrote a new divination statement: “Saving Daisy is a dangerous matter.”

After reading it carefully twice, Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his left wrist, letting the topaz pendant fall and hang above the surface of the paper, almost to the point of touching the statement.

After taking a few seconds to compose himself, he closed his eyes and began to recite the divination statement he had just written.

When he finished reciting it, Klein opened his eyes and looked at the pendulum in his left hand.

The topaz pendant was rotating clockwise at a fairly fast frequency and with a rather high amplitude!

This meant that saving Daisy was a rather dangerous act!

However, it isn’t one of total despair. There’s still a possibility, a significant chance of success, as long as I can seize it… Klein deciphered the revelation from the spirit pendulum.

He leaned back in his chair, closed his eyes, and said with a self-deprecating smile, Wasn’t I looking for an opportunity to perform?

This is it!

As a Magician, I have to challenge something of a higher difficulty. Otherwise, I would be called a Trickmaster and not a Magician.

Completing the seemingly impossible, even if the outcome is nothing but an illusion, that’s the image of a magician in my heart. As for whether it’s one of the principles or not, I still need confirmation…

Klein tapped the edge of the ancient table and quickly made his decision.

To him, the most troubling thing about saving Daisy and dealing with Capim was that he didn’t know anything about Capim. He didn’t know how many other Beyonders were in the villa or the Sequences and pathways they had.

This made Klein unable to make specific preparations.

And for a Magician, the first principle was: “Never perform unprepared!”

Many seemingly impromptu performances actually involved significant preparations. For example, long periods of practice or thorough mastery of diverting attention away from the situation.

Should I get Miss Justice’s help to learn more about Capim’s background for my Blessed? Klein seriously considered the options available to him.

However, he quickly rejected this idea.

No, I won’t be able to receive detailed information. Although Capim is involved with many powerful figures and the wealthy, it’s not something that can be publicized. Miss Justice will, at most, learn of the nobles, Members of Parliament, or civil servants which he is involved with, but she won’t be able to determine how many Beyonders are in his villa, much less the traps or the layout…

Through the clues from these connections, Miss Justice might be able to figure out what I wish to know given a few weeks time, but that’s too slow. Rescuing Daisy needs to be done as soon as possible. Any delays will result in a tragedy.

Klein's eyes swept across the surface of the long bronze table and onto the junk pile in the corner. His mind began to formulate an idea.

On the one hand, I can get Miss Magician and her friend, Miss Xio, to investigate Capim's background and determine which Beyonders he has ties with. The two ladies are very well connected in East Borough, several gangs, and a considerable number of Beyonder circles. On the other hand, I can take action by myself. I can obtain information from the servants or bodyguards that come out from Capim's villa via mediumship.

After finalizing his plan, Klein was in no hurry to get help from Miss Magician. He decided to try doing it by himself first so that he could find out more about the matter in a targeted manner.

In the blink of an eye, his figure disappeared from the towering palace above the gray fog.

†

After lunch, a man wearing a grayish-black cap and a thick cotton coat cautiously left from the back door of Capim's villa. He walked all the way to a crossroad and got into a rental carriage.

"East Borough." He touched the dark red birthmark on his face and instructed the carriage driver.

The carriage began to move, and the man looked out of the window with a bored expression, admiring the beautiful ladies and young ladies on the streets.

"If only we could kidnap them…" The man let his imagination run wild as he revealed a regretful expression.

When he was far from Iris Street, he suddenly shivered, and his eyes became slightly dazed.

He knocked on the wall and said to the carriage driver, “Stop, stop! I forgot something. Here will do.”

The carriage driver didn’t dare to reprimand the ferocious man. He didn’t even mutter as he stopped the carriage by the side of the street and allowed him to alight.

After paying six pence for the ride, the man retraced the direction in which he came for dozens of meters before entering a cheap hotel.

Without the need for any proof of identity, he paid for a room.

After entering, he left the door ajar without locking it.

Then, the man sat on the edge of the bed with a deadpan expression. Suddenly, a transparent and illusory figure separated from his body!

It was none other than Klein who was dressed as a worker!

He had used the method of summoning himself to transform into a Spirit Body and had attached himself to this man’s body, allowing him to walk to a convenient location for mediumship!

After knocking the man out, Klein’s spirit form disappeared from the room. Not long after, the door was pushed open, and he walked into the room in his corporeal form.

Using a wall of spirituality to seal the place, Klein quickly set up a mediumship ritual, allowing the alluring scent of Amantha extract and Eye of the Spirit medicine to emanate in the surroundings.

After finishing his preparations and just as he was about to start the mediumship, he suddenly exclaimed and stopped his actions.

He discovered that the Spirit Body of the man who was unconscious on the bed had a mysterious, unknown restriction. If he forcefully did the mediumship, although there was a high probability of success, it would activate the seal and cause some Beyonder to notice this occurrence!

This would end up alerting the enemy!

Such a strange Beyonder power… Very cautious and very careful… What Capim is involved in isn't simple at all… Klein took a few steps forward, frowning slightly.

He glanced at the unconscious man and suddenly chuckled.

"Do you think you can stop me with just this?"

He quickly suspended the ritual, summoned himself again, and responded to himself.

A few seconds later, he flew out of the candle's flame in his Spirit Body form and floated in the room once more.

Without any hesitation, Klein, in his Spirit Body form, suddenly approached and possessed the unconscious man.

The man suddenly sat up and opened his eyes; his expression appeared lifeless.

He straightened his body, walked to the front of the altar, step by step, and then chanted in a low voice, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era,

"You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

"You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

Chapter 376 - Mr. Harras

◆

In a room filled with the ethereal fragrance of Amantha extract and Eye of the Spirit medicine, Capim’s henchman, who had been possessed by Klein, was made to chant The Fool’s honorific name.

Amidst the monotonous yet rhythmic murmurs and the fragrance that made it difficult to focus, the man’s Spirit Body gradually dissipated. He became muddleheaded but maintained a certain degree of unusual lucidity, as if he was hypnotizing himself.

With Klein’s “help” in his Spirit Body form and the feedback from the chanting The Fool’s honorific name, he slowly entered an “artificial sleepwalking” state. His Astral Projection approached the infinitely high gray fog and the mysterious location above the gray fog.

Klein seized the opportunity, ended the summoning, and returned to the towering ancient palace, where he sat at the seat belonging to The Fool.

He saw a bright light circle rippling around him, sketching out the illusory figure of Capim’s henchman. The mysterious space was affected by the ritual as it trembled slightly. Some of the energy was being pried away and was slowly flowing.

Klein picked up the Black Emperor card, and a paper figurine flashed in his hand.

With a flick of his wrist, the paper figurine flew out and absorbed the sliver of energy that had been pried out of the gray fog. It then transformed into a man wearing a black cap and a thick cotton jacket. He looked identical to Capim's henchman—even his aura and feel was indistinguishable from the real person.

This paper figurine overlapped with the target's illusory figure and helped him resist the mysterious and unknown restrictions placed within his Spirit Body.

At the same time, Klein held the Black Emperor card and spread his spirituality, touching the projection of Capim's henchman formed by the pure light.

This was one of the applications of secret deeds, where a weak human and a great being were able to be a little in tune with each other, feeling the corresponding knowledge and gaining a wonderful Soul Body experience. Unlike normal circumstances, Klein was playing the role of the great being in this instance.

In this kind of close interactive state that belonged to a secret deed, humans could gain knowledge from great existences, and great existences could also naturally use questions to obtain the information they wanted.

If it wasn't for Klein's inability to master the field of the mind, he would've been able to plant an inducing suggestion.

"What kind of powerful people are in Capim's villa?" Klein asked through the interactive spirituality state.

Without any resistance, the projection transmitted the memories to Klein, making him feel like he was watching a holographic film.

The man in the cap stood respectfully and fearfully in the room. In front of him was a middle-aged gentleman in a black tailcoat and a white wig.

This gentleman had a long, thin, and stern face, and his mouth was naturally pursed, giving off an exceptionally cold feeling.

He followed the golden chain on his watch, took out a pocket watch of the same color, pressed it open to take a look, and then he said in a deep voice, “Look at me.”

The man in the cap didn’t dare to disobey as he raised his head and looked in front of him.

“Yes, Mr. Harras.”

Before he could finish his words, he saw a pair of eyes that flickered with a strange light, and he heard a command: “Maintain secrecy!

“You can’t leak anything you see or hear in this villa to anyone else.”

The man in the cap trembled inexplicably, feeling that he had to do as the other party had ordered.

He lowered his head again and said, “Yes, Mr. Harras.”

†

The man in the cap carried an unconscious girl along the stairs to the entrance of the basement.

There was a small room that was separated from the others, and a bearded man with an unknown age was sitting inside it.

This bearded man had a pair of frighteningly cold blue eyes. He held a thin piece of flannel in his hand and was carefully cleaning the grayish-white rifle on the table.

The rifle was thick and long, connected through a pipe to a large mechanical box of the same color.

It was a high-pressure steam rifle!

That was a military-controlled item!

“Mr. Belize…” The man in the cap bowed his head in greeting.

†

The man in the cap entered a neatly arranged underground structure which resembled a prison. He then locked the unconscious girl in one of the small rooms.

He locked the door, returned to the corridor, and picked up the lantern he had been assigned.

At that moment, he saw a figure slowly approaching from the other end of the corridor.

The figure seemed to be able to see through the darkness without any lighting.

With the aid of the lantern, the man in the cap realized that it was a woman in her thirties.

The woman was wearing a brown bonnet, a thin white blouse, and suspenders, as well as leather boots that reached her knees.

There were old scars on her face and a cruel smile at the corners of her mouth.

The man in the cap lowered his head in fear as he stammered, “Ma’am Katy…”

The woman ignored him. Step by step, she approached him and walked past him, as though he was nothing more than air.

When the lady named Katy had left, the man in the cap curled his lips and said, “Bitch! When you get into bed, you’ll definitely be more energetic than a prostitute!”

He pushed up his crotch, held up the lantern, and left the basement.

†

The man in the cap met two men in the grand hall that shimmered gold.

One of them was about 1.65 meters tall, and he was a little plump. He didn't have any special features, but his eyes always had a frightening look. The other was slightly taller than 1.70 meters, and he looked a bit old. He had some wrinkles and a high nose bridge. His brown eyes were filled with spirit, and he didn't seem to have a look of deterrence.

"Mr. Capim," the man in the cap greeted the plump middle-aged man, then he said to another person, "Mr. Parker..."

†

In the early light of dawn, the man in the cap met the cold middle-aged gentleman called Mr. Harras at the entrance to the basement.

Harras, wearing a white wig, glanced at him, who was standing respectfully by the side. He indifferently stretched out his right palm towards the entrance of the basement and solemnly said, "Confinement!"

Silently, there was a subtle difference in the surroundings.

†

There are a total of four Beyonders. At least four of them... The strongest should be that Mr. Harras, a Sequence 6 at the very least, or maybe even Sequence 5... I wonder what pathway it is. It does seem similar to the Black Emperor pathway... Relying on order and issuing commands? Judging from the scenes just now, the restrictions pertain only to the basement, not the entire villa. That's right. With so many people coming and going during the day, it would be too troublesome to enter and exit once the restrictions are in place... I wonder if it's the same at night. Klein analyzed the information he had just received and asked again, "What's the overall layout of the villa?"

He quickly received feedback and saw a magnificent hall, a wide dining room, connected corridors, washrooms, and scenes of the basement.

Through them, Klein pieced together in his mind the rough layout of Capim's villa.

Feeling the drain on his spirituality, he asked a final question, "Who are the important figures whom Capim is closely related to?"

The scene in front of his eyes was the magnificent hall from before. Half-naked girls were prostrating themselves while serving the guests drinks, letting them abuse them or fool around with them; otherwise, they were being dragged directly to a secluded spot to be ravaged.

They were young, and their faces were bitter and numb. Any slight delay or lack of enthusiasm would result in them being whipped by Capim's attendants or maidservants.

None of these servants showed a shred of sympathy despite seeing such evil scenes. They fought to be the first to showcase themselves in a bid to obtain rewards.

Klein saw Capim among the guests, the cold Mr. Harras, and a Member of Parliament from the House of Commons who often appeared in the newspapers, Vardera, a fat man who was addressed as Deputy Chief…

†

Is that one of the Deputy Chiefs of the Backlund Police Department? That's one of the higher-ups of the police department… To think that not a single one of those servants are good… That's understandable. The villa's hired personnel must've been screened before and would have to be sufficiently trustworthy… Klein rubbed his forehead, halting the secret deed ritual. The man in the cap was only an inconsequential leader, and that was all he could know or participate in.

Even at this moment, the mysterious restriction on him was still unperturbed.

Klein ended the ritual and allowed him to vanish from above the gray fog as he returned to the real world.

He sat by the bed and looked at the man in the cap who was unconscious. According to the information he had just gathered, he analyzed the feasibility of a performance and considered one plan after another.

In the end, Klein came up with a definite idea. He whispered to himself, Perhaps, I don't need a helper…

A helper would drag me down instead, making it inconvenient for me to escape in times of danger.

Picking the right time is very important.

†

Nearly fifty minutes later, the man in the blackish-gray cap appeared in East Borough as he headed straight for the streets controlled by the Zmanger gang.

As soon as he saw a few dark-skinned, lean people with ferocious looks, he immediately went close. Pretending to not watch where he was going, he bumped into one of them.

"Damn it! You bunch of trash!" the man in the cap cursed loudly and punched at one of them.

Highlanders, who loved to fight, didn't back down and entered a brawl with him.

In the process, the man in the cap pulled out his dagger, and the other highlanders also drew their weapons.

Slash!

During the battle, a dagger stabbed into the capped man's neck as he failed to dodge in time. It went right into his arteries.

The man in the cap fell as red blood pooled around his head.

He quickly lost his life, and the illusory, transparent figure within his body immediately vanished.

Klein returned above the gray fog, and using it as a springboard, he re-entered his body. He then opened his eyes in the cheap hotel in Cherwood Borough.

He cleaned up the rest of the evidence and went to the front desk to check out of the room.

On his way back to Minsk Street, Klein once again went above the gray fog.

He wanted to divine a simple but crucial piece of information!

He picked up a fountain pen and wrote down a line of text: "Capim's dinner time today."

Chapter 377 - Capim's Dinner

◆

Putting down his dark red fountain pen, Klein picked up the piece of paper with the divination statement and leaned back in his chair.

His lips moved as he whispered, “Capim’s dinner time today,” over and over again.

Klein’s voice echoed above the empty gray fog as his eyes rapidly turned dark, and his eyelids drooped.

In a fragmented dreamscape, he saw the spacious, elegant dining room where there was gilded porcelain cutlery, caviar, roasted chicken, lamb stew, fried rib eye steak, deep-fried Dragon-Bone Fish, thick creamy soup, and so on.

The food was placed in a certain order according to specific requests in front of several diners. Among them was the slightly plump Capim; the middle-aged gentleman in a white wig, Harras; the thin-bloused Katy; and Parker, whose face was rather unintimidating due to his old age.

Looking out from the end of the dining table, he could see a window decorated with gorgeous decorations. Outside the window, the clouds were sparse, and the crimson moon was faintly discernible in the air.

Klein opened his eyes and marked the location of the moon in his dream. Using his knowledge in astromancy, he quickly calculated a rough corresponding time.

It looks like it’s from 7:30 to 7:45 in the evening… Considering those few scenes, Capim and the others have already finished more than half their meals, so I can push the time back by another 15 minutes. That way, 7:30 is the best choice… Klein muttered silently to himself as he interpreted the revelation from his dream divination.

Eating at half past seven was not a rare occurrence. This was even considered mainstream in the Loen Kingdom and even the Northern Continent because many middle-class people—either due to their personal situations or because of low rent—lived in the suburbs and had to commute to work by taking the short-distance steam locomotive. By the time they got home, it was usually after seven in the evening, so it was normal for people to have dinner between 7:30 and 8:00.

Klein had had the same experience in Tingen City, but that was because he had no servants and no housewife. Once the three siblings returned home, they still needed to busy themselves for quite a while before they could enjoy any hot food. It wasn't because they lived far from work.

This was why civilians and the poor often had dinner between 7:30 and 8:00.

As lunch and dinner were separated by quite some time, afternoon tea, which should've belonged to the upper-class citizens, became popular among the middle-class citizens and civilians.

When he finished the interpretation, Klein recalled the revelation he had just received. Klein became acutely aware of a problem: Where were Capim's wife and children?

They didn't appear in the dining room… Is Capim an extreme believer in the Lord of Storms, so his wife and children have to eat their meals in the activity room? Or is there another reason? Or could he be unmarried and childless? He's already a middle-aged man… Klein tried to divine the situation, but he failed to receive any effective revelations, so he gave up.

7:30. He repeated the time once more before returning to the real world.

†

In the evening, even at home, Capim, who was wearing a formal bow tie, narrowed his eyes and looked at his subordinates before him. He asked in a slow but chilling voice, “Fabian is dead?”

“Yes, Boss.” Even though he had been working with Capim for many years, his subordinate still felt fear and horror.

“Odysseus, call me Mister. Mister. In a few years, you’ll have to call me Sir Capim.” Capim loosened his bow tie and casually handled a thick cigar. “When did Fabian die? How did he die?”

“This afternoon, I sent him to East Borough to do something. He ended up in a conflict with the Zmanger gang and got stabbed in the neck…” Odysseus described in a trembling voice.

Capim, who was toasting the cigar, said in an unperturbed tone, “Fabian is really a fool.

“But are the people from the Zmanger gang unaware that he’s my idiotic subordinate?”

“Mister, as you know, highlanders often join the Zmanger gang when they arrive in East Borough, and they’re barbaric and reckless, and they don’t give a shit who’s who,” Odysseus quickly explained.

Capim snorted.

“Have they forgotten that this isn’t the highlands? Or have they forgotten who I am?

“Odysseus, I want the body of the Zmanger gang’s leader from that block. Can you do it? If you can’t, I’ll sink your wife, your child, as well as you into the Tussock River.”

“Mister, no problem!” Odysseus immediately raised his voice.

He immediately asked in a low voice, “Who can I mobilize?”

Capim was about to reply when the door suddenly opened and the middle-aged gentleman with a white wig, Harras, walked in.

He gave Odysseus a cold glance before casting his gaze onto Capim.

“I heard that one of your subordinates had a conflict with a gang in East Borough and ended up dying?”

“Yes, Mr. Harras.” Capim stood up, cigar in hand.

Harras stared into Capim’s eyes and said, “You want revenge on them?”

Capim’s forehead suddenly dripped with beads of sweat.

“No, not at all. Mr. Harras, you misunderstand.”

Harras nodded slightly. “You have to remember that during this critical period, we have to try our best to not cause any trouble unless necessary.”

He paused for a second and observed Capim’s reaction.

“You are not the only human trafficker in Backlund. We can support you, but we can also do so for others. You have to remember this point.

“The reason why I picked you was because you were vicious and shameless enough. However, you were extremely cautious. It wasn’t because you were the biggest human trafficker.”

From the side, Odysseus listened to the duo’s conversation. He wished that he was just a mass of air. That way, he didn’t need to see how humble his boss, Capim, was.

Without a trace of anger on his face, Capim smiled and said, “Mr. Harras, my main concern is that Fabian’s death isn’t simple. It might disrupt your plans."

"No, there's nothing wrong with his death," Harras said in an affirmative tone. "I didn't get any feedback."

"Is that so…" Capim acted enlightened. "Then I'm relieved."

He looked at Odysseus and signaled him to leave. He then lowered his voice and said, "Mr. Harras, this time, there are the kind of goods you like from this batch."

Seeing Harras's expression soften but not show any signs of emotion, Capim quickly added, "We've already finished gathering the ones that will be sent over."

Harras nodded slowly.

"Send her to my room tonight."

"Yes, Mr. Harras!" Capim said with a big smile.

After Harras left, his face turned gloomy. He took a deep breath and whispered, "I hope that you can keep your promise this time… I don't want to be involved in anything like that anymore!"

He clearly remembered that year during the Harvest Festival—someone had come to him, hoping to get a batch of innocent girls.

From that day on, the trajectory of his life had undergone tremendous changes. He had taken a fifth of the market share of the unlawful slave trade.

He quickly became one of Backlund's rather famous tycoons, acquainting himself with several important figures and dragging them into the abyss of depravity.

At this point, he desperately wanted to cover up the sins of his past. He wanted to let "Capim" undergo a catharsis, allowing him to become a true member of the upper-class. However, for the time being, he was unable to do so.

Glancing at the cigar in his hand, he picked up the framed photograph of himself with a beautiful woman and two children.

Rubbing the surface of the photo frame with his thumb, Capim narrowed his eyes and whispered to himself, After this deal, you should be able to return…

At dinner time, Capim walked out of his study, a warm smile plastered over his face again.

“Ma’am Katy, there’s your favorite caviar and a roast chicken specially prepared for you this evening,” he said to the woman in the thin blouse.

Katy touched the old scar on her face and nodded without saying a word.

Capim knew that she was silent and fierce, so he didn’t continue. He watched her as she took her seat.

Then Harras, wearing a white wig, entered the dining room, nodding slightly to each of the diners.

The elderly Parker took a sip of his pre-meal wine, smiling as he motioned for Capim to sit down.

The white napkins were spread out, and the food was served one by one. Capim raised his glass and chuckled.

“Holy Lord of Storms, let’s toast to a beautiful future.”

“To a beautiful future,” Parker responded.

Harras didn’t say a word. He merely held the wine glass in his hand and made a gesture. Katy completely ignored them.

At this moment, the classical clock hanging in the hall read 7:23.

†

In a cheap hotel in the Backlund Bridge area.

The disguised Klein took out his golden pocket watch, looked at the exact time, then he took out Holy Night Powder, and he sealed the room with a wall of spirituality.

After doing that, he quickly set up an altar and conducted a ritual.

“I!”

“I summon in my name:

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

†

When the ritual was over, Klein immediately took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog, ready to respond to himself.

Inside the towering and solemn palace, he saw the Door of Summoning condensed by rippling light. It was a pair of illusory doors that opened outwards, covered with mysterious symbols.

Klein was in no hurry to be summoned. Instead, he took out the Sun Brooch and other mystical items, and he absorbed them into his Spirit Body according to his plan.

Finally, he picked up the Black Emperor card and let his Spirit Body envelop it.

All of a sudden, Klein felt as if his Spirit Body had turned corporeal with flesh and blood. It was as if he could lift a gun and move a table and chair!

A dark and ethereal mist rose up around him, and as the mist clung onto the surface of his body, it formed an imposing set of armor.

He had a black crown on his head and a long cape of the same color on his back.

At that moment, Klein was like an emperor about to embark on a journey.

Black Emperor.

He examined the purifying bullets and revolver that he didn't bring with him before taking a step forward and entering the crack on the illusory door.

Leaping out of the candlelight, he immediately flew under the cover of the night towards Capim's villa on Iris Street in Cherwood Borough.

Not long after, he floated in front of the artificial fountain and approached the villa's entrance at a relaxed pace. The patrolling guards passed by him, but they didn't have any reaction. Since it wasn't really late into the night yet, there were no Beyonders on guard outside.

In addition, Klein wasn't afraid that the powerful Beyonders inside would notice and have a premonition.

It was because the Black Emperor card possessed anti-divination and anti-prophecy characteristics!

Chapter 378 - The Show Begins

◆

With a black crown and a solid suit of armor, Klein stood in the doorway, attuned himself for a few seconds, and took a step forward.

His seemingly physical body silently passed through the door and entered Capim’s villa.

The first thing that met him was a spacious hall with lots of chairs and clothes racks, and behind it was a magnificent hall with gold as the main color theme.

There was no ceiling, only a dome reaching three-stories high. A giant crystal chandelier hung down, and on each “petal” was a pearly-white candle.

Through a thick, heavy door to the left of the hall was an elegant and exquisite dining room. The fragrance of roasted meat was the richest inside, concealing the smell of alcohol and other food.

Klein was in no hurry to enter the dining room. He partially circled the exterior first, occasionally reaching out his hand to pull on the grayish-white gas pipes. It appeared as if he was experimenting with his physical strength, after carrying the Black Emperor card, to see how much of an impact he had on the real world.

While he was a Seer and Clown, Klein’s Spirit Body only had an intuition ability that was separate from divination. He possessed only two spell-like powers, which were to directly attack the soul and to freeze the target through contact. Once he advanced to the Magician

Sequence, even if Klein didn't rely on the Beyonder powers of his physical body, he could still use Paper Figurine Substitutes and Air Bullets in his Spirit Body state.

In addition, he began to be able to possess others and gain basic control of the target.

Augmented by the Black Emperor card, the strength of his Spirit Body increased, and the number of items he could carry increased. His spell-like powers, which could directly attack souls, evolved into a Specter's Shriek. It produced sound waves that were inaudible to humans but capable of damaging the souls of all living beings in the area, also known as Soul Bodies. Similarly, the frozen effects derived from contact was clearly strengthened.

After confirming everything, he found the corner of a wall and penetrated it to enter the dining hall.

Then, suppressing all his emotions, he swept his eyes across the long table.

The scene of Harras in his white wig, Katy in her thin blouse, Parker with his aged face drinking red wine, and the slightly plump Capim slicing his rib eye steak caught his eye.

Klein retracted his gaze quickly, not daring to look too much, lest the few Beyonders would discover him via their spiritual perception.

With the help of the spiritual glows from the male and female servants standing around him, that is—the color of their auras, he carefully circled around the dining room and figured out the exact layout. For example, the size of the dining room was equivalent to the total area of his living room, dining room, and activity room. Another example was that there was a fireplace that burned with charcoal. It warmed the entire room via a pipe. There were sixteen elegant gas lamps, and their lighting mixed together, making the room appear like it was daytime. Across from the fireplace was a wall which had hanging picture frames.

There were sketches and oil paintings, all works of famous artists.

That bearded Belize isn't here. He should be changing shifts at the basement… For a Beyonder to be willing to do such menial work, Capim is definitely not involved in a simple matter of human trafficking… Klein thought for a few seconds, then he leaned against an oil painting of the sunset. He reached his hand into his body and unscrewed a translucent brown bottle's cap.

It was the Biological Poison Bottle!

The reason why he paid so much attention to the time and chose to arrive at dinner time was because, at this very moment, the main figures were gathered here in the most orderly manner. It was the most advantageous for him to use the Biological Poison Bottle!

And with the tightly shut doors and windows during early winter, it allowed the effects of Biological Poison Bottle to be more effective and have faster effects!

In addition, Klein didn't soak the Biological Poison Bottle to concoct the "prophylactic" drug before he came. He was currently in his Spirit Body state, so he wasn't afraid of biological poisons!

With his Spirit Body's concealment and containment, he stood there silently and patiently admiring each and every one of the elegant wall lamps which were connected to the grayish-white gas pipes. Quickly, the odorless poison swiftly emanated outwards.

†

Harras, with his white wig, sliced up a deep-fried Dragon-Bone Fish, dipped it in black pepper sauce, and stuffed it into his mouth.

Chewing and swallowing, he picked up the faintly golden champagne that was bubbling like a string of beads and took a sip in a good mood.

He couldn’t help but think of the entertainment that he would be experiencing that evening—the joy of a stubborn girl being conquered by him.

This affected his appetite and made him unable to concentrate.

Katy didn’t get the servant to help her slice the roasted chicken. She was burying her head, holding a knife and fork, and like doing a precise dissection, she quickly divided the chicken into several pieces. They were all almost the same size.

As Parker sampled the red wine and ate the stewed lamb, he would occasionally chat with Capim, who was sitting at the head of the table, and was considered as a guest that didn’t sully the title.

The dinner proceeded in an orderly manner, and finally, Capim put the last piece of beef into his mouth.

He smiled at the three Beyonders and said, “Mr. Harras, Ma’am Katy, and Mr. Parker, tonight’s desserts are from La Borrega’s head chef. There are three kinds—fruit caramel pudding, cream shortcake, and the carrot cake.”

Harras, who had always been cold, nodded slightly.

“We love dessert so much in this country.”

As soon as he finished his reflection, he saw Capim raise his hand and scratch his cheek before scratching again.

“It’s a little itchy.” Capim smiled apologetically.

Before he could finish his sentence, he couldn’t help but scratch one more time, leaving a clear bloody mark on his face.

The bloody mark quickly swelled up, and his skin turned translucent. One could even see yellowish pus inside.

“It’s really a bit itchy.” Capim smiled again.

He scratched the original spot again, but due to using excessive force, the swelling caused the translucent skin to split open, and pus with a nauseating smell sprayed out.

Harras narrowed his eyes and shot to his feet, looking around warily.

“Hahaha.”

“Haha. Hahaha.”

At that moment, he heard exaggerated laughter, and his body suddenly tensed up.

He saw a male and female servant holding onto their bellies, laughing out loud. They laughed so much that they couldn’t even straighten their backs. Tears flowed out from their laughter, their laughter caused the room to turn completely silent.

Like a chain reaction, the rest of the servants fainted or vomited yellow-green liquid continuously without end.

None of them were spared.

Bam! Katy flipped the dining table, letting the gold-plated cutlery and leftover food and wine to spill onto the floor.

She had a revolver and a soft black whip in her hands.

Parker stood up as well, but his mind appeared adrift. He looked at Capim crying miserably for help as he kept scratching and forcefully tore off a few pieces of flesh. For some baffling reason, he felt that the other party’s ugly and disgusting appearance was quite the fine sight.

At that moment, Harras realized that he was a little out of breath and realized that the room was probably filled with poison.

He growled, “Hold your breath!

“Parker, open the door.

"Katy, follow me to find the intruder!"

At this moment, Harras was grateful that the dinner had been enjoyed with Capim, and there were quite a few attendants around.

These ordinary people's ability to resist poison was far inferior to Beyonders. The fact that they showed signs ahead of time had allowed them to detect that something was amiss even before the poison had reached the deepest part of their bodies!

Parker, who has the lowest Sequence, should be the one with the most severe symptoms among us… Harras suddenly had this thought.

Creak!

As Parker opened the door to ensure that the dining room was no longer sealed, Harras, relying on his Spirit Vision, discovered an illusory figure quietly fleeting around.

The figure wore a thick and imposing black armor, and a pitch-black crown on his head. A mask of the same color covered his face, making him look like a king from the spirit world.

It was none other than Klein.

Harras raised his right hand and pointed at the black figure that couldn't be seen by ordinary people. He chanted in ancient Hermes, "Imprison!"

All of a sudden, the black figure's surroundings turned viscous, as though it had transformed into a giant amber or produced a sealed, transparent wall.

The figure was rooted to the spot, hardly able to move. Katy had taken aim long ago, and she pulled the trigger. They worked well together.

With two bangs, the light golden bullet, filled with strange patterns, penetrated the viscous air and hit the black figure.

The bullet pierced through and struck the wall opposite. The black shadow self-ignited, reduced to a roughly cut paper figurine.

Within the pale golden flames, the paper figurine was quickly reduced to ashes.

Pa!

With a strange, crisp snap, the light from the sixteen elegant gas lamps and the fire burning quietly in the fireplace suddenly lit up, leaving Harras, Katy, and Parker with only a brief flash of red before their eyes.

Soon after, all the flames were extinguished, leaving the dining room illuminated via the human-height street lamps outside the window and the crimson moonlight shining through the layers of clouds. It made the place abnormally dark and silent.

Harras and the others once again relied on their Spirit Vision and spiritual perception to search for the ghostly intruder.

At the same time, he realized that the poison wasn't showing its effects fast enough. It wouldn't really flare up until he finished the enemy.

Therefore, he paid attention to the movement at the entrance of the basement. He pointed at the door again and said in ancient Hermes, "Confinement!"

The entire dining room suddenly froze, as if there was an additional layer of an invisible wall that even Spirit Bodies couldn't penetrate.

Harras wanted to make it impossible for the intruder to escape!

I've found you! Wielding the revolver in one hand and the whip in the other, Katy noticed a black figure floating in the air.

A strange light flashed in her eyes, and before she could attack, her mind buzzed as if someone had struck her head with a wooden stick.

She felt as if she had encountered an indescribable shriek. A few drops of sticky blood slowly dripped from the tip of her nose.

Harras only felt slight dizziness while the symptoms of shortness of breath seemed to worsen. Parker, the weakest of them, was seeing stars, and his steps became unstable.

Suddenly, someone patted Parker's shoulder.

A cold and gloomy feeling gushed over, causing him to freeze on the spot. It was as if he was completely covered in ice, and the cold moisture seeped into his bones. A familiar, deep voice sounded in his ears.

"Imprison!"

Parker was instantly trapped by the transparent wall that imprisoned the door. However, Klein didn't possess him and went straight through instead, avoiding the effects of Harras's spell in a timely manner.

Harras narrowed his eyes and waved his right hand.

"Release!"

Chapter 379 - Magic's Key Segment

◆

The invisible prison around Parker's body immediately collapsed, leaving not even a single trace of it behind.

However, he didn't regain his mobility. Instead, he slumped to the ground, shivering continuously, as if he was still frozen.

This wasn't only an aftereffect of Soul Touch, but also the effect of Klein's direct attack on his soul.

Parker, who was only a Sequence 8, was unable to recover in a short period of time. He couldn't even control his breathing and, as a result, inhaled large quantities of the biological poison, which was identical to the one in his body, once again.

His weakened state caused the poison in his body to act faster. His eyes stared blankly as he instinctively changed direction.

He saw Capim rolling on the ground and scratching his face and body constantly. He saw the thin strips of flesh hanging by the side of the wounds and the ghostly white color of his bones.

Parker gasped and struggled to climb over.

Capim, whose itch made him rip off the outer layer of his skin, suddenly discovered that Parker was crawling toward him with bloodshot eyes. He had a bad premonition, but he had no strength to dodge as he couldn't stop scratching. He didn't even have the ability to shout “no,” except for using a blood-curdling cry as a substitute.

At this moment, Klein, who had dodged the "Imprison" spell, shouted "Holy" in ancient Hermes. Then, he rubbed his fingers together and shot an Air Bullet through the dark golden Sunbird brooch's coruscating glow.

As soon as the Air Bullet was formed, it took on a holy luster and shot straight towards Harras's face.

This was the Holy Oath provided by the Sun Brooch, and Klein had augmented the Air Bullet with Holy damage!

Harras had long since changed his position. He was abnormally agile, and unlike a mage, he was more like a pugilist expert.

As he avoided Klein's Air Bullet, he motioned for Katy to lash her whip to hold Klein back.

When Klein's attack was interrupted, Harras took an iron-black metal glove from a hidden pocket of his and tried to put it on his left hand.

In his Spirit Body state, Klein didn't need to look out from the corner of his eye to see what had just happened despite not facing Harras. He immediately flew up, avoiding Katy's lash. He flew over the chandelier and pounced towards Harras.

When Harras saw this scene, he held the black metal glove and pointed diagonally upwards.

"Exile!"

Klein was suddenly hit by an overwhelming and invisible force. His entire Spirit Body was blown away by the wind and hit the wall, the wall conjured by "Confinement," but didn't penetrate through it and escape.

Seizing this opportunity, Harras put on the iron-black metal glove.

In the blink of an eye, he seemed to grow a bit taller. His authority was uplifted like he was a figure that could determine the life and death of others.

The moment Klein was released from the “Exile” state, he felt an inexplicable sense of horror. He couldn’t help but want to lower his head, to prostrate, to listen to Harras’s every word and obey every order given by him!

His movements had become sluggish, and his pupils reflected a rapidly approaching Katy.

Pa!

Katy lashed out with her long black whip and hit Klein accurately.

The long whip passed through his Spirit Body, but it brought a great deal of pain to Klein’s psyche, as if someone had pressed a red-hot iron to the weakest part of his body.

He jerked his head up and let out a scream.

As for Katy, she pulled the trigger of the revolver in her other hand.

Bang! Bang!

Two bullets, with a light golden glow, shot out one after another, striking Klein’s body.

Bright rays of light bloomed, and the figure wearing black armor rapidly thinned, turning into a paper figurine and quickly burning into ashes.

Klein appeared in a dark corner, the Sun Brooch inside his Spirit Body was glowing with a dark golden light.

Warm powers instantly filled his body, and the extreme horror that Harras had subjected him to quickly disappeared.

One of the spell-like effects of the Sun Brooch was Horror Immunity!

In the short span of less than a minute, Klein had already been forced to use Paper Figurine Substitutes twice.

Although it was partly because he did it on purpose, it was still enough to prove the strength of Harras and Katy's joint attacks. It was enough to confirm the divination outcome which Klein had received.

This operation would be quite dangerous!

If Parker hadn't been temporarily crippled by the effects of the Biological Poison Bottle and his initial surprise attack, the situation would've been even more dangerous.

His plan was to rationally give up if all four paper figurines were used up and his opportunity had yet to appear. It wasn't because Klein didn't wish to prepare more substitutes, but because his spirituality could only afford four times while in combat.

As for the "Confinement" effect that Harras had created, Klein wasn't worried at all. He was now a Spirit Body that had been "summoned." As long as he ended the "summoning," he would immediately return above the gray fog. Unless it was intercepted by powers at the level of deities or the special effects of Sealed Artifacts at Grade 0 or Grade 1, nothing could interrupt this process.

Previously, when Klein went to the Royal Museum to steal the Black Emperor card, the woman who was suspected of being a High-Sequence Beyonder was unable to stop him from leaving.

This was the main reason why Klein dared to challenge the impossible even though he knew that the danger was great!

Seeing that the enemy was no longer horrified, Harras put on his black metal gloves and signaled Katy to hold Klein back. He then pointed forward and solemnly said, "Specters and wraiths are prohibited here!"

Klein's body that was covered in black armor immediately trembled as he was strongly repelled by a powerful, invisible force.

However, the level of the Black Emperor card was extremely high, causing the level of the Spirit Body to be relatively high as well. This kind of influence that was directly aimed at a particular existence was quickly suppressed.

Harras narrowed his eyes, feeling that the intruding specter was very strange.

He saw that Klein easily escaped Katy's intervention via flight, so he pushed his palm forward again and announced in ancient Hermes, "Flying and floating are prohibited here."

All of a sudden, Klein felt his body become heavy, and he plummeted from midair to the ground. Katy quickly rushed over, and with a flick of her wrist, she lashed out with the whip that directed torture on the mind and soul.

She still had many Beyonder bullets on her, but there were fewer than three that were targeted for specters and wraiths. Therefore, she temporarily gave up on using the revolver and only relied on her auxiliary weapon.

Klein rolled on the ground, skilfully dodging Katy's whip. He heard the crack of the whip as it hit the ground.

Katy was about to sweep the whip when she felt an itch at her throat. She coughed twice and missed the opportunity to continue her relentless attack.

This was a sign of the poison acting up!

Harras took a deep breath, held his breath once more. He folded his wrist, pointed to himself, and said, "Disciplinary target: wraiths and specters!"

The surface of his body immediately emitted a light as bright as the morning sun. Even his fist began to shine with lustrous brilliances.

Bam!

The marble under Harras's feet cracked soundlessly, and his tall, thin body pounced swiftly and fiercely, allowing him to immediately close in on Klein.

At this moment, he looked even more like a knight than Katy!

Bam! He threw a punch forward, and the air seemed to explode. However, Klein had pulled back ahead of time, dodging the punch with the wind.

Pow! Katy helped from the side and lashed out with her whip in the direction in which her enemy was dodging.

This forced Klein to have no choice but to roll again and again. He took on a fighting stance while keeping an eye out for Harras's spell-like "Imprison."

As lashing sounds echoed, Harras kept attacking while Katy aided him from the side. In less than two minutes, Klein was forced into an unavoidable situation. Even rolling was of no use.

Pa!

Katy's black whip lashed out at Klein's face, and he was only able to take one step sideways before being hit in the arm.

That piercing pain attacked his psyche once again, causing him to freeze on the spot. Even his Spirit Body became somewhat thinner.

Seizing this opportunity, Harras clenched his left fist and solemnly declared, "Death!"

His body then merged with some sort of strange force, creating an obvious afterimage as he slammed into Klein.

Schwing!

The figure covered in black armor instantly broke into pieces, turning into pieces of paper that fluttered in the air like a butterfly.

Klein had expended his third paper figurine!

Harras's gaze swept across the room and quickly locked onto the enemy that had appeared in the corner. He sneered and said, "Let me see how many substitutes you have left!"

In the process of searching for the enemy, he discovered that Parker was squirming on top of Capim. The scene was bloody and disgusting. It was a repulsive sight, both terrible and horrifying.

However, Harras didn't have the luxury of time to save his subordinate. He was well aware that the effects of the poison would only worsen over time, so he had to get rid of the enemy as quickly as possible, so he couldn't be distracted.

If he didn't, he would have to leave the dining hall first to recover from the poison; thus, allowing the enemy to escape without getting any useful information.

He signaled Katy to go forward again, so as to hold back Klein, who couldn't fly or float. He took a breath and tried to catch a breather.

There's a strange smell in the air… This is probably a result of the increasing toxicity of the poison… This thought flashed through Harras's mind, but he didn't think too much about it.

He raised his left hand and solemnly declared, "The illegal intrusion of another's house is a crime!

"An illegal intrusion…"

While repeating the statement for a second time, Harras found it hard to breathe again. For a moment, he was unable to catch his breath, so he could only stop midway.

He took another deep breath, adjusted himself, and spoke again.

"The illegal intrusion of another's house is a crime!

He repeated it three times, and Klein, who was still unable to extricate himself from Katy's entanglement, felt a baffling chill.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

Katy showed coughing symptoms again, and the flailing of her whip became sluggish.

Klein took the opportunity to stop the embroilment with her, but he didn't attack her. Instead, he raised his head, opened his mouth, and let out a sharp cry that no human could hear!

Hum! Katy's head jerked up, and her body swayed. She felt like the ground was bobbing up and down.

Harras only felt a slight dizziness before returning to normal. He looked at Klein coldly and said in a majestic voice, "The guilty should be restricted!"

Klein, who was lunging at him, found to his surprise that his feet had seemed to be immobilized by invisible shackles. It made his movements suddenly turn rigid.

Katy, who had recovered a little, swung open the revolver's cylinder and quickly removed the spent and unused rounds.

Then, she took out a quick reloading device and stuffed six rounds of ammunition, including her remaining purifying bullets, into the cylinder.

Harras clenched his left fist and prepared for an attack.

He wanted to chain his attack with Katy's shooting, in a bid to completely finish the enemy or to expend his substitutes.

At this moment, the black-armored Klein smiled.

It was because the opportunity he had been waiting for had come!

He knew that it would take time for the Biological Poison Bottle to show any significant effects. And once Beyonders sensed that something was wrong, they would act accordingly, either to find the hidden enemy or to escape the toxic environment. It would be difficult to seriously damage them or even finish them. Therefore, he had two other reasons for using the Biological Poison Bottle.

The first reason was to weaken the enemy.

The second reason was to mask some smells so that Harras and the others would attribute all the abnormal smells they detected to the poison in the air. It made them focus all their attention on this aspect.

This was the most important segment of a "magic show" and also the key to success or failure.

That abnormal smell was the smell of gas!

The reason why Klein let the gas lamp and the fire in the fireplace suddenly brighten and extinguish wasn't solely to affect Harras and company's vision. It was mainly to attract their attention, so that he could destroy a few hidden gas pipes!

In the beginning, he had intentionally put himself in danger in order to trick Katy into firing a bullet meant for wraiths and specters, so that she would no longer blindly fire at him and not trigger a corresponding explosion!

He kept entangling himself with her and hadn't made any other attempts solely because he was waiting for the air to be filled with gas!

Therefore, he kept holding back from using Flaming Jump or Flame Controlling!

As for Harras's actions of using Confinement on the room, he had expected it, but he didn't expect it to be this successful. Therefore, before he entered the dining room, he had kindly inspected the doors and windows to see if they were airtight. He had destroyed the hidden gas pipes in the hall, causing the area—both inside and outside—to become a huge "bomb." Even without Confinement, it would ultimately not affect anything!

As a "specter," Klein was undoubtedly unafraid of explosions!

Lower-level ghosts might be annihilated by fire, but "specters" would at most suffer some damage. This was why Klein had to buy extra purifying bullets and the Sun Brooch despite the fact that he had Flame Controlling.

When he saw that Katy had raised her revolver and was about to shoot, and that Harras was about to pronounce "Death" on him, Klein smiled and snapped his fingers.

Harras suddenly felt a dangerous foreboding.

However, at this moment, he saw that a flame had already lit up in the fireplace to his side, instantly igniting the surrounding air.

BOOM!

With a loud boom, Harras's vision was instantly filled with an inferno that filled the room. It was as if he was watching a grand display of fireworks.

Chapter 380 - Curtain Call

Capim lay flat on the ground, itching and aching, wishing he could tear himself apart on the spot to rid himself of this hellish pain.

Then, he saw a scarlet wave of fire that spread over in a flash, and he heard a deafening explosion.

He imagined that this last moment would seem infinitely long and that it would allow him to recall all of the beautiful scenes when his wife and children were still by his side. He thought that he would feel relieved because he would no longer have to endure this inhuman torture, but at that moment, extreme fear and an intense desire to live surged from the bottom of his heart. And the so-called memories didn’t even flash past his mind before he was overwhelmed by an excruciating pain before being plunged into deep darkness.

Boom!

The dining room windows were blasted apart, accompanied by countless brick fragments and rubble, as well as the burning tongues of fire that kept reaching outwards.

The guards patrolling this area were immediately knocked over. Those who were lucky enough to not get hit had their ears left ringing. Their bodies either swayed, staggered, or fell.

They saw that more than half of the dining room’s outer wall had collapsed and that the flames seemed to be floating in midair.

The residents of the entire street and the police officers in charge of the surrounding area heard a loud boom at the same time, leaving them confused and frightened.

In the dining room, dressed in black armor and a black crown, Klein stood there, bathing in the red flames and enjoying the strong blasts of the waves without flinching.

A lot of the black gases around him had dispersed, and even his Spirit Body had suffered some damage, but it wasn't serious at all.

Beside a toppled table, Parker and Capim were blasted into a corner, their heads were cracking and their bodies charred.

The surface of their bodies was still quietly burning with flames, and the rest of the servants were in a similar state.

In the area opposite the fireplace, Katy, who had been unable to avoid the attack in time, was slammed into the wall and then fell to the ground. Her body was mangled and covered in blood, and there were a lot of charred marks on her skin. Not a single piece of her skin remained intact.

She wasn't dead yet, but she had fainted from her severe injuries. Even so, she still coughed while convulsing, inhaling large amounts of the lingering flames.

The black whip also suffered similar damage. Many cracks appeared on its surface, and a small portion of the whip was ignited. None of the Beyonder bullets that she possessed were spared from the explosion.

Katy was no longer capable of fighting.

Harras had rolled in time to protect his vitals, but there was still a lot of blood and charred flesh on him.

He staggered to his feet, revealing that his back, his hairband, and his legs were ablaze with red flames.

His breathing became more difficult, and his body suffered relatively severe injuries.

However, this was sufficient to prove the robustness and strength of his body. Or rather, having worn the black iron glove, his body became sufficiently robust, and his physique was sufficiently strong!

However, this was within Klein's expectations.

Since he was unable to assess how much damage his opponent could take, he had overestimated his enemy's constitution while coming up with a plan.

Out of the corner of his eye, Harras saw that Klein was almost perfectly fine. His pupils shrank as he hurriedly stretched out his left hand and pointed in that direction. He said in a low voice, "Exile!"

Again, Klein failed to resist and was pushed away like scrap paper in a hurricane. He flew out of the dining room. In the hall outside, after the momentary ignition, the fire had already weakened. Another wave of disaster was brewing due to the wooden staircase, but the damage here wasn't too severe because the main body of the explosion had been "confined" to the dining room.

Seizing this opportunity, Harras suddenly turned around and ran outside without looking back.

Even though the flames covering his body were still burning, he didn't waste any time to deal with them.

He knew that he was in a terrible condition and on the brink of losing control. Furthermore, the effects of the poison would soon reach its peak. Compounded by these two factors, he didn't think that he had any chance of defeating the intruder. It would be the same even if he had the help of the Sequence 7, Belize, at the entrance to the basement!

Harras believed that if this battle continued, the only thing that awaited him was having the poison act up or him losing control due to his injuries!

Once he decided to run, he didn’t care about Katy, who was still alive, anymore.

When Klein, who had just stabilized his body under “Exile,” saw this scene. He immediately raised his head, opened his mouth, and let out a shriek that no human could hear!

Hum!

Harras felt a wave of dizziness, and his feet paused for a moment. His skin, which was still in relatively good condition, was now covered in dense, translucent blisters. This was an early sign of him losing control.

However, he quickly recovered and continued his mad dash, escaping from the lawn of the villa.

He’s really hard to kill… Klein didn’t pursue him, in order to avoid an accident.

He remembered that his goal was to rescue the victims and not to wipe away these degenerate Beyonders.

More importantly, he had expended a lot of his energy and had suffered heavy injuries. If he were to give chase, he might not be able to stop Harras’s berserk counterattack.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers and fired an Air Bullet.

The bullet struck Katy in the head, ending her pain.

Immediately following that, Klein turned around and flew towards the entrance to the basement.

Belize, who had a full beard, had been keeping an eye on the situation outside, but he didn’t dare to leave his post out of fear that the intruder's accomplices would take the opportunity to break into the dungeon.

At this very moment, he held a high-pressure steam rifle and had his Spirit Vision activated. He had been frightened by the loud boom and became abnormally tense.

Immediately afterwards, he saw the dignified specter fly over, and without hesitation, he raised his rifle and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

White mist was ejected from the barrel, and a sharp-tipped pale-gold bullet was shot forward at an astonishing speed.

Klein was prepared and long had a hunch. He had drawn out a small curve before Belize fired.

The bullet tore through the hall, past the front door, and to the outside.

At the same time, Belize rushed out of the duty room, holding his high-pressure steam rifle and took on a threatening pose as he quickly moved towards the door.

He believed that the intruder, who could deal with Harras, Katy, and Parker, would be able to easily kill him as well. Besides, such a big commotion must've attracted a lot of attention. He couldn't be certain that the Mandated Punishers would come over to investigate. Therefore, his only choice was to flee!

Klein once again let out an invisible shriek, making Belize feel as if he had been smashed by a hammer. He saw stars as a few drops of blood dripped from the tip of his nose.

But this didn't stop Belize from running. After shooting at Klein to stop him, he was already running into the hall, tumbling towards the door.

Klein hesitated for a moment, then he gave up on chasing and fighting.

He turned off the main valve, went to the entrance of the basement, and snapped his fingers repeatedly.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Air Bullets shot at the invisible walls, gradually disintegrating the Confinement.

This was also one of the reasons why Klein dared to cause a gas explosion and use the Biological Poison Bottle. With the effects of Harras's Confinement in the underground dungeon, as long as it wasn't a frontal assault, he didn't have to worry about accidentally harming those pitiful girls.

He destroyed the locks and flew into the dungeon, first finding the cell where Daisy had been held based on the revelation from his prior divination scenes. He then confirmed that she wasn't hurt too badly and was still able to move.

Then, his body turned illusory and melted into the metal door.

Creak! Creak! Creak!

The iron doors on one side opened quickly, one after another, as though an invisible specter was running to unlock them.

Creak! Creak! Creak!

After one side was done, he did it for the other side.

Daisy and the other girls were frightened by the explosion outside. After a while, she was surprised to find that the door to her cell was open for some baffling reason. Yet, no one entered. It felt like she could leave at any time.

[image]

Some of the girls, who hadn't been disciplined at all since they were recently kidnapped, mustered their courage, got up, and attempted to run to the exit of the basement.

They passed through the hall which was slightly damaged by the explosion, and they left the burning villa's worsening condition, running faster and faster in the direction of freedom.

When they reached the street, Daisy and the other girls thought to look back.

Looking back, they could just barely make out an imposing figure standing upright on top of the evil building. It was clad in full black armor, and it wore a black crown.

[image]

Whoosh!

The cape behind the figure began to flutter silently.

As they remembered the scene, they sought a nearby cathedral with their mistrust towards the police.

When Klein returned to the smoky and burning dining room, he found that Parker's and Katy's Beyonder characteristics had just begun to show signs of appearing.

He checked the items they were carrying and confirmed that most of them had been destroyed. Even their money was charred to a crisp.

Klein jumped up to the second and third floor, quickly checking for any relevant clues.

He didn't attempt to use mediumship, because he was short on time. And bringing them above the gray fog didn't meet the requirements of his "curtain call."

If even a minor leader was made to maintain "secrecy," then these important figures would definitely have their own "restrictions." They aren't good candidates for performing mediumship as I please.

Furthermore, the previous series of required actions is too troublesome, complicated, and inappropriate for the current situation that I'm in… Klein ended his investigation with nothing to show for, but he picked up a deck of tarot cards.

Returning to the destroyed, charred dining room, he took out all the Major Arcana cards from the tarot card deck and walked over to Capim's corpse.

Then, he specially took two of them and scattered the rest over Capim's body.

When this was done, he covered Capim's eyes with the two tarot cards he had specially drawn. They faced up with their main side.

By this time, Parker's and Katy's Beyonder characteristics had appeared.

†

Tens of seconds later, an illusory door covered with complicated symbols appeared in midair outside the villa.

The door opened without a sound, and from it, a handsome man in a crisp suit walked out. He looked to be in his forties—mature and elegant.

He had a pair of golden eyes, and with just one sweep of his face, he locked onto the dining room in the midst of the fire.

At this moment, a strong gust of wind blew past, and a figure flew over at high speeds.

It was an old man wearing a soft hat. His silver eyes had an abnormal seriousness to them. He was wearing a black robe with the symbol of the Lord of Storms embroidered on it. It was none other than the Cardinal of the Church of Storms, the Archbishop of Backlund, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake.

“Why are you here?” Ace asked in a deep voice.

Any Beyonder-related matters in Cherwood Borough came under the jurisdiction of the Holy Wind Cathedral, so he was entitled to ask.

The handsome man’s expression turned slightly nasty as he replied, “I live nearby.”

They were close to the West Borough.

The two of them didn’t speak any further. They landed on the ground at the same time and entered the explosion site. A violent hurricane churned and swept away the flames, sending them to the artificial fountain outside.

The wind seemed to have a life and intelligence of its own.

The two demigod figures then saw Katy, whose head was shot and her flesh charred black, and Parker, who was entangled with someone else while his head had caved in and cracked. They also saw Capim, who was covered in tarot cards, as well as the two Major Arcana cards on the face of the human trafficker.

These were the “Judgment” card which depicted an Angel blowing a great trumpet, and “The Emperor” card which was decked out in armor and was crowned!

Almost at the same time, Cardinal Snake and the handsome man sensed something and turned their heads to look outside.

They discovered a majestic figure in black armor and a black crown located at the top of the house by the side of the villa.

The figure nodded slightly, and his cape was lifted.

Then, without any warning, he disappeared, right under the noses of the two High-Sequence Beyonders.

Chapter 381 - Conjectures

With a crackle, branched lightning lit up the early-winter night with a silvery-white flash.

It didn't smite the ground, but instead, it tore through the air, illuminating the spot where Klein stood, as if it was daytime, making him stand out.

Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake, retracted his gaze, his face was gloomy as he whispered, "Rose School of Thought?

"It's not a wraith, nor is it an undead creature…"

The mature middle-aged man with a pair of golden eyes turned his head to the side to look at Capim's corpse and said, "Covering the target's corpse with tarot cards…

"This is the second time something like this has happened in the past two months."

"When was the first instance?" Cardinal Snake asked in a deep voice.

The mature middle-aged man in the well-ironed formal suit coughed lightly and said, "The time when the True Creator attempted to descend into this world with the help of a swindler."

"Then it's not the Rose School of Thought." Cardinal Snake made a definite judgment.

Although those organizations that worshiped evil gods weren't fond of anyone, they wouldn't deliberately foil the plans of their counterparts; instead, they wished to see their counterparts succeed, waiting for them to make a mess of the situation.

"I think so too. Perhaps it's the appearance of a new secret organization. Their characteristic feature is to scatter tarot cards all over the target's body." The middle-aged man smiled. "And the different appearance of the tarot cards imply different meanings… This corpse has two cards over his face. One is 'Judgment,' and the other is 'The Emperor.''Judgment' is the motive and goal, while 'The Emperor' is the organization's code name? Of course, this might also be a type of ritual."

Cardinal Snake didn't respond as he surveyed the area.

"Let's see what exactly happened here."

It was only at this point in time that the first batch of Mandated Punishers arrived at Capim's villa.

†

Above the gray fog, having only used Paper Figurine Substitutes thrice and not being pushed to his limits, Klein was about to use divination to confirm Daisy's safety afterward.

"Daisy will successfully return home." Holding the spirit pendulum in his left hand, he closed his eyes and silently chanted the sentence.

After repeating it seven times, Klein opened his eyes and saw the topaz pendant turning counterclockwise, but it moved with a very slow frequency and a tiny amplitude.

This means that Daisy's journey home will be quite a bumpy one but almost negligible… After interpreting the revelation, Klein was relieved of his final concerns.

He then looked at the two items in front of him, both of which were radiating with a strong spiritual luster.

One of them was a light blue, translucent hexagonal pillar. There were traces of light flashing through it, as though it was lightning that came from the depths of one's consciousness. This was the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Ma'am Katy.

The other belonged to Parker, who hadn't been able to play a role in the battle. His Beyonder characteristic had condensed into a ball, like a child's fist.

This "fist" was made up of three colors—iron-black and dark red colors intertwined with a large swath of silver.

Klein didn't hesitate to conjure a pen and paper. He was ready to use these two Beyonder characteristics to divine the corresponding potion formulas.

Before he advanced to Sequence 7, because of the additional influences that had been left on the Beyonder characteristics he had, it was almost impossible to use divination to determine the formulas. Even if this mysterious space could help him eliminate the interference and increase his divination ability to a certain extent, it still wasn't enough.

Therefore, the only method Klein could use, in the past, was mediumship.

After he became a Magician, he was preliminarily able to determine it using the Beyonder characteristic for a divination above the gray fog; however, there was a high probability of him failing.

This time, without exception, Klein had shamelessly failed.

However, he also had some gains, and that was to be able to find out the corresponding Sequence names of the two Beyonder characteristics.

Parker is a Sequence 8 Sheriff and Katy is a Sequence 7 Interrogator… Aren't these from the Arbiter pathway? This pathway is controlled by the royal family, the military, and a small number of ancient aristocratic families in Loen. Any leaks of formulas and Beyonder ingredients are dealt with harshly… Could a number of the girls abducted by Capim be sent to the estate of some aristocrat?

But there’s no need for them to send four Beyonders to help Capim just to enjoy themselves. It obviously doesn’t make sense… Harras is much more powerful than Katy, so perhaps he’s a Sequence 6 of this pathway. After wearing that glove, he might even be as strong as a Sequence 5… Could it be that they’re involved in some bloody heretic sacrifice, and the target they seek cannot be exposed?

Apart from those on the inside of the Kingdom, Feynapotter’s Castiya family also possesses this Beyonder pathway, which is then transmitted to their army and intelligence system… Could this be another espionage case of some unknown nature?

Klein tried to divine a few of his conjectures, but he failed again.

He temporarily put this matter to the back of his mind and lightly tapped the edge of the long bronze table as he muttered to himself, As long as I have the formula, with the corresponding supplementary ingredients, these two Beyonder characteristics will be able to turn a person into a Sequence 8 Sheriff and Sequence 7 Interrogator… Miss Magician’s friend who’s called Xio seems to be lacking the Beyonder ingredients for Sheriff…

I can sell Parker’s Beyonder characteristic to Miss Magician through The World so that I can quickly amass the money needed for the ingredients of the Faceless Sequence potion… However, always doing it through The World doesn’t seem rather appropriate. I deliberately left the tarot cards this time. If Miss Justice were to hear of this matter, then she would definitely believe that it was done by my Blessed… I’ll let Mr. Fool do the selling on his behalf…

Klein quickly finalized a plan and made the Sheriff and Interrogator Beyonder characteristics fly to the corner and hid it among the junk pile.

I wonder what the names are for the Arbiter pathway’s Sequence 6 and 5… It seems like something that uses order and laws… Judge? Klein put away those thoughts and closed his eyes midway to carefully observe his current state.

Once again, he felt his spirituality become lively as the potion stirred. He felt that his digestion of the potion had sped up.

This time, he had confidence, based on his intuition, that he had concluded most of the “Magician principles.” The remaining minutiae were good to have, but it didn’t really matter if he lacked them. It didn’t significantly affect his digestion process.

Conjuring a fountain pen and goatskin, Klein enhanced his memory by writing:

“The Magician’s Principles:

“1. Never perform unprepared.

“2. Challenge the impossible, even if the final outcome is nothing but an illusion.”

Klein believed that these were the two core tenets of the “Magician’s Principles.” Grasping them would be key, and the rest were supplementary for perfection.

“3. Take the initiative to perform.

“4. Try to get applause from the audience.

“5. Wield control of the target’s attention.”

†

Putting down the dark red fountain pen, Klein skimmed through it and judged them by himself.

Daily “acting,” together with three or four proactive “acting” instances would be enough to allow me to digest the Magician potion before new year’s. If I were to challenge an impossible performance during this period, then my progress would be even faster… This is roughly at the speed I wish to achieve.

There were still about two months till 1 January 1350.

After doing all this, Klein rubbed his temples, prepared to return to the real world.

After putting away the Black Emperor card, the Biological Poison Bottle, and other items, he suddenly laughed and said self-deprecatingly, “Challenge the impossible… Isn’t that equivalent to courting death?”

As his voice echoed, Klein’s figure disappeared from the space above the gray fog.

In the cheap hotel in the Backlund Bridge area, he suddenly opened his eyes and saw the candlelight of his summoning ritual.

After quickly clearing up everything, Klein put on a thick worker’s jacket he’d bought for 4 soli and went to the window.

He picked up the sweet iced tea that he had bought earlier and looked at his blurry figure which was reflected in the window. There was a heartfelt smile on his face as he whispered, “Cheers.”

Just as he finished his sentence, he touched the glass with his cup, then lifted his chin and downed it in one gulp.

Then, he sauntered out of the hotel. The nearby gas lamps were already fully lit up, and pedestrians and carts were bustling about, oblivious to the explosion at the border between the Cherwood Borough and West Borough.

Klein strolled around the Bravehearts Bar for a while, and at 7:58, he knocked on the door of the Beyonder gathering organized by Eye of Wisdom.

He wore an iron mask and a hooded robe, acting completely ordinary.

†

Meanwhile, Xio, who went to various places every night to check on her contacts, saw a sign that had never appeared before.

It belonged to the golden-masked man who had sold the Sheriff's formula to her at the gathering organized by Mr. A.

It was the sign of an emergency meeting!

He hasn't come looking for me all this time, and I've been pretending that it had never happened. Why would he suddenly… Xio thought for a moment before deciding to take a look.

The golden-masked man had promised to give her some missions, allowing her to save enough money and exchange it for the corresponding Beyonder ingredients.

Therefore, Xio switched areas and marked the time and place of the meeting.

Half an hour later, Xio walked out of her hiding place after secretly observing a remote alley that also extended in all directions. She walked towards the golden-masked man.

The man was still wearing his black tuxedo. His light brown eyes swept over Xio's head.

"There's a mission for you."

"Difficulty and compensation?" Xio asked like clockwork.

The man nudged his mask which was forged from gold.

“It’s not dangerous, but it can be very dangerous. It all depends on what you do.

“The initial compensation is thirty pounds. If you can acquire useful information, I can even directly give you a Beyonder ingredient corresponding to Sheriff.”

“What’s the mission,” Xio said with a frown.

The golden-masked man’s gaze turned heavy as he said, “Through the channels available to you, figure out who has been recently been keeping tabs on Capim.”

“Capim? That human trafficker?” Xio returned with a question.

The man nodded.

“Yes.”

“I reject this mission. I hate him!” Xio immediately refused.

The man opposite her chuckled.

“You aren’t working for Capim.

“Because he’s dead.”

“Dead?” Xio was instantly stunned.

“He died at home, and his body was covered with tarot cards. There were two cards on his face, one ‘Judgment,’ and the other ‘The Emperor.’ By the way, pay attention to matters in the past few years which have involved tarot cards but were not reported to the police,” the man added.

Chapter 382 - Hero Bandit

◆ ◆ ◆

Cherwood Borough, in the house Xio and Fors rented.

Fors was just finishing the beginning of her new book and, in her good mood, prepared to reward herself with a cigarette, when Xio pushed open the door and entered the study.

“Smoking is harmful to your health.” Xio sniffed.

Fors didn’t argue with her when she saw her puzzled look. Instead, she asked, “Looks like something happened to you?”

Xio scratched her rough blonde hair and sat down on a nearby chair.

“That person from before contacted me—the person who sold the Sheriff formula to me through another person at Mr. A’s gathering.

“He gave me a relatively simple mission. The initial reward is thirty pounds. I don’t even know if there are any hidden dangers…”

Fors thought for a moment and then said, “That person… There should be an organization behind him, but why would they want to rope you in? Aren’t they afraid of being implicated by your intelligence; thus, causing the entire organization to be completely destroyed? There’s nothing they really need from you either. Your looks are barely passable, but you’re too short, so perhaps your life is relatively more valuable… Eh, what mission is it?”

Xio was used to her good friend’s snide remarks as she ignored what she said in the beginning. She directly answered the second question, "Investigate if there has been anyone keeping tabs on Capim recently."

"Capim? The human trafficker who deserves to be hanged—no, burned to death?" Although Fors wasn't a bounty hunter, it was her writer's instinct to gather material, so she often asked Xio to tell her stories and news she had learned.

Xio nodded. "It's him, but he's already dead. He seems to have died rather miserably."

"How did he die? Was he sliced to death by a knife, bit by bit?" Fors asked, pleased and curious.

"That person didn't go into a detailed description. Perhaps it'll be mentioned in the papers tomorrow." Xio thought for two seconds before continuing, "He only mentioned a rather special situation at the scene of the death. He said that Capim's corpse was covered in tarot cards. His face was covered with the 'Judgment' and 'The Emperor' cards.

"The 'Judgment' card probably meant that it was a judgment on Capim, and the verdict was death. But what does 'The Emperor card' represent? That murderer, no—that hero's identity?" As a best-selling author, Fors instinctively began interpreting the unique layout of the scene of the crime.

Suddenly, she froze.

Tarot cards? The corpse was strewn with tarot cards? Fors suddenly thought of the secret organization she had just joined—Tarot Club!

It couldn't be one of us, could it? However, none of the members has the code name of The Emperor… If it's really the case, then this is the first time I've found traces of the Tarot Club in the real world… We're not just a secret organization that only exists above the gray fog. As Fors's emotions churned, she felt pleasantly surprised and also worried.

†

Under an attendant’s lead, Klein entered the familiar activity room.

There was only one candle in the room. The dim yellow light made the surroundings look like a scene from a ghost story. Coupled with the black robes and the iron masks worn by the mysterious people, the atmosphere turned even more intense.

The moment he stepped in, Klein suddenly had a baffling sensation.

He felt the flickering candle flame staring at him.

He felt that the flame would burst and ignite his hair and robe.

He felt that the curtain behind the oriel window would suddenly flare up, enveloping his body, and covering his nose and mouth, forcefully choking him to death.

What’s happening? Klein was stunned as he turned extremely tense.

It wasn’t a premonition for danger, but a feeling that was hard to avoid.

Klein carefully found a seat and sat down.

The moment his buttocks touched the surface of the chair, he felt as if the chair would explode and thick wooden thorns would end up piercing through his body.

This reminded him of the videos he had seen back on Earth—due to the explosion of a low-quality gas cylinder under a swivel chair, the steel pole, and the debris had stabbed into the seated owner’s buttocks, drilling into his abdomen. The whole scene was filled with badly mutilated blood and flesh, a ghastly sight.

Why am I always making such bad associations? Is it because of the damage done to my Spirit Body from the battle earlier? Klein looked around thoughtfully and saw that the fat Apothecary had still not attended.

What happened? Or has he already left Backlund? Klein murmured something to himself and heard Eye of Wisdom announce the beginning of the gathering.

In the course of the next few hours, Klein felt as if the chandelier on the ceiling was going to fall sideways and smash into his head. He thought that the coffee table in front of Eye of Wisdom would suddenly move sideways and stumble him over, and he suspected that the members of the gathering around him were full of malice and might cause him trouble at any moment.

It made him fidgety, alert, and puzzled, and he was too distracted to pay attention to deals that either ended in success or failure.

If one is to say that a premonition for danger is like an occasional vibration, reminding one that there's news entering the room or an incoming phone call, then the feeling I have at this moment is akin to an electric drill boring constantly, causing me to be unable to relax or pay attention to anything else… Klein tried to rub his forehead, but it only touched the cold iron mask.

At this moment, he felt as if his iron mask would suddenly cave in and stick close to his face, embedding itself into his brain.

Is it really because my Spirit Body was damaged so it's making me hallucinate? Klein frowned.

He originally wanted to make a request to buy the Thousand-faced Hunter's blood and mutated pituitary gland at this meeting, but in such a situation, he could only give up out of caution.

Although the level of Eye of Wisdom's gathering wasn't high, and there was a high probability that it wouldn't involve a high-level monster like the Thousand-faced Hunter, Klein believed that a lot of the members here also attended other gatherings and might be able to come into contact with the relevant information and clues.

Amidst his anxiety, Klein attended the gathering as a bystander.

Just after taking off his robe, removing his mask, and leaving the room, the feeling that everything in the room was going to harm him had instantly disappeared, disappearing in the oddest manner!

This… Klein's pupils shrank, confirming that his previous experiences didn't originate from the damage to his Spirit Body; otherwise, he wouldn't have experienced two completely different states, inside and outside.

He suspected that there was a person or creature in the activity room of the gathering, one that was invisible, imperceptible, and extremely terrifying. That entity had stimulated his spiritual perception as a Seer and his sense of danger as a Clown, but because of the entity's suppression or some other special reason, this stimulus appeared in the form of a rich association that failed to make him realize it.

Who could it be? This is too scary. Just the existence itself made me have a reaction similar to the symptoms of losing control… Without making a sound, Klein left Eye of Wisdom's house and headed toward the nearest street.

All of a sudden, he had a guess.

The Bravehearts Bar is nearby, and it's also the monitoring area of Wraith Steve, who was killed by Miss Sharron, Maric, and I…

Their deaths would definitely make the Rose School of Thought's High-Sequence Beyonder angry, and he would cast his sights over here, towards the Beyonders living near the Bravehearts Bar…

Was that him?

Fortunately, I used the Biological Poison Bottle and the Sun Brooch tonight, and to prevent myself from being divined, I left them above the gray fog… Otherwise, the result would be unimaginable… The Magician who just completed an impossible performance would be killed directly here…

The Beyonder world is truly dangerous…

†

Inside the Holy Wind Cathedral, Cardinal Ace Snake looked at the captain of the Mandated Punisher team and asked emotionlessly, “Who is Capim?

“Why is there an underground dungeon in his villa?”

The captain of the Mandated Punisher team replied immediately, “He’s a tycoon, one who was rumored to be related to many cases of missing girls. He’s suspected of being a human trafficker, and that he is secretly engaged in the slave trade.

“That underground dungeon proves the rumors.”

“Why did a human trafficker receive the protection of so many Beyonders? And their Sequences aren’t low either,” Cardinal Snake pressed.

“Your Eminence, this requires an investigation. We tried using Beyonder means to find clues, but all of them failed,” the captain of the Mandated Punisher team replied, somewhat trembling in fear.

“I’ve tried it too,” Cardinal Snake didn’t blame him.

This member of the Church of Storms’s upper echelon paused for a moment before continuing, “Continue to investigate this matter. Also, find that Sequence 6 or 5 specter.”

After his subordinate had left, Cardinal Snake picked up his fountain pen and wrote down in his notebook a number of subjects to pay close attention to: “Capim, human trafficking, tarot card ritual, strange specter without a high Sequence, concealed plot."

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey was waiting for the maid to cut up the food, when she heard her father, Earl Hall, who was used to reading the newspapers at breakfast, laugh.

"Capim is dead."

"Who is he?" Audrey asked with her eyes wide open.

In fact, she wasn't the least bit curious about who Capim was. She was simply going along with her father, who obviously had the desire to share his thoughts.

This was both her specialty as a daughter and the innate nature of a Telepathist.

"He's a tycoon who secretly might be a human trafficker. He has rather good ties with some people. Heh…" Earl Hall chuckled. "He was killed last night. There were obvious signs of him being judged at the scene of the crime, so the newspapers are calling the murderer a Hero Bandit. The Hero Bandit Black Emperor. Oh, they named him after the code name of the rulers of the ancient Solomon Empire."

Hero Bandit? Hero Bandit Black Emperor? Black Emperor… Audrey immediately thought of the Card of Blasphemy belonging to Mr. Fool. This was the item of the highest level she had come into contact with so far.

She suddenly became interested in the Capim murder: "It sounds interesting. Although it's illegal, I still want to say that the Hero Bandit did beautifully. Oh, dad, how did it go?"

"The police and relevant departments of the Church didn't divulge any exact details. I haven’t met them either, but this is what’s said on the papers. The Hero Bandit was dressed in black armor and a black crown. He had a cape of the same color behind him. After he entered Capim’s villa, not only did he steal all the valuables in the safe, but he even stole the lives of Capim and his evil henchmen, rescuing girls who were locked up in the underground dungeon. He scattered tarot cards on Capim’s body, and the most prominent of all were the two cards that covered his face. One of them was ‘Judgment’ and the other was ‘The Emperor.’” Earl Hall held the newspaper as he described it with a smile.

Tarot cards…“Judgment” card and “The Emperor” card… Audrey’s eyes suddenly lit up.

Chapter 383 - Returning Home

◆ ◆ ◆

Audrey could almost be certain that it had been done by Mr. Fool's Blessed when she heard the description of the familiar scene.

She suddenly felt a strong sense of immersion, participation, and pride.

That was a human trafficker whose hands were stained with blood and evil… The "Judgment" card is the retribution enacted against him in the name of justice. Was the verdict hanging, beheading, or burning at the stake? The Emperor should be a symbol of his identity… Was this the Blessed who sneaked into the Royal Museum and stole the Black Emperor card? Audrey let her imagination run wild for a moment.

She had intended to press for more information and finer details, but from the look on her father's face, the tone of his voice, and the color of his emotions, she could tell that he still didn't know what was going on. Therefore, she could only suppress her curiosity and planned on asking her good friend, Kance Leerhsen, from MI9.

Although directly asking Kance about it would suit my image in this aspect, that would still be rather abrupt. It would also conflict with my identity as a noble. Hmm… I'll get Annie to prepare a few invitations for an afternoon tea party, sending them separately to Glaint, Kance, Murray, Christine, Jane, and the others… Most of them are interested in mysticism, so they would feel interested in someone known as the Hero Bandit Black Emperor. Under my guidance, they can help me ask a lot of questions that wouldn't be convenient for me to ask… It's decided… Audrey retracted her attention and nibbled at her breakfast.

She believed that Mr. Fool's Blessed wouldn't have dealt with Capim purely for the sake of punishing evil since it wasn't in line with his identity and status. Of course, if Audrey was still the same Audrey who had just joined the Tarot Club a few months ago, then she definitely would've been willing to accept such an explanation; otherwise, she wouldn't have chosen the Justice card as her symbol.

After experiencing so many gatherings and so many matters, she felt that she had matured a lot and was no longer as innocent. She believed that there had to be more important and essential factors behind this matter, such as an evil god or secret organization which Capim was involved in.

I hope Kance can provide some useful information, Audrey thought with anticipation.

†

15 Minsk Street. Klein was eating white bread with jam and flipping through today's newspapers.

"What? A safe?" As he read, he almost choked on his own saliva.

It wasn't me… I didn't… Don't spout nonsense… In his mind, Klein immediately rejected the description of his theft of everything in the safe thrice.

The situation had been pressing, and in order to gain clues, all he did was burrow into the safe to see if there were any important documents or evidence despite having found the safe. He didn't take anything, and he quickly left the safe and went to another room.

Of course, Klein, in his Spirit Body state, had also suffered some damage from the gas explosion, and the total weight of the items he could carry had been greatly reduced. There were only gold bars, jewelry, land deeds, house deeds, antiques, and other items in the safe, which were either not convenient for him to take, or there was no way he could launder them.

Perhaps he has a place reserved especially for cash, but unfortunately, I didn't find it, nor did I have the time to look for it… Klein muttered silently to himself, confirming that it was the subsequent investigators who had divided up all the contents in the safe.

He looked at the newspaper, took a sip of Sibe black tea, and slowly exhaled. He smiled inwardly.

Hero Bandit Black Emperor… I like that name…

After breakfast, Klein put on his thick double-breasted frock coat and half top hat, and he held a solid black cane. Opening the door, he left Minsk Street for Broken Axe Lane on the boundary of the East Borough.

That was where Daisy had disappeared.

After finalizing his plans yesterday, and before he committed to his operation, he had deliberately made a trip to Broken Axe Lane to seriously look for clues. He knocked on the doors of the nearby houses and asked if they had seen any girls like Daisy.

Although Klein didn't believe that the official Beyonders would think that a poor family would be able to afford a "Hero Bandit" who had at least the strength of a Sequence 6, and he believed that there was a higher probability that the investigation would be directed towards the secrets Capim was involved in, supplemented by "who had been keeping tabs on Capim recently," and other peripheral investigations, he still cautiously decided to put on a show and try his best to play out the entire act. What if one of the Beyonder enforcers lost their mind and planned to make a preliminary investigation in this aspect?

Some families might have some savings and would be able to hire other detectives. The chances of being suspected as a kindhearted person like me who just took on the case yesterday are extremely low. As long as I'm not suspected, they wouldn't compare my performance from the previous Lanevus case… Besides, the Nighthawks were the ones who took action previously and were assisted by the military's special department. Capim's case happened in Cherwood Borough, so the ones taking on the case would likely be the Mandated Punishers. The communication between the two groups wouldn't be that smooth… Hmm, Katy and Parker belong to the Arbiter pathway. I wonder if the military will intervene… As a former Nighthawk, Klein had a sufficient understanding of the modus operandi of the various official organizations, their work styles, and their investigation habits.

Simply put, I have excellent anti-detective abilities… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh as he boarded a carriage.

He was going to continue his investigation into Daisy's disappearance.

After all, he was an ordinary private detective who hadn't been able to confirm that Daisy's disappearance had anything to do with Capim.

†

At nine o'clock in the morning, Daisy returned to the shabby rented apartment under the escort of the police officer in charge of the neighborhood.

Along with a few pitiful girls like her, she had been settled into the various cathedrals in Cherwood Borough last night and had been questioned accordingly. It included what they saw when they escaped, what they saw when they looked back, where they lived, what their family situation was, if they knew any friends who were out of the ordinary, and so on and so forth.

Daisy, who was still in a state of panic and lingering fear, answered the questions truthfully.

After that, no one came to her again.

She slept through the night and was sent back to East Borough early in the morning, where she was handed over to the fierce police officer she always saw.

Along the way, Daisy didn't dare to say anything. She trembled in fear, and only when she entered the apartment where she lived did she feel a little more at ease.

As soon as she stepped through the door, and before she could find her mother and sister through the hanging wet clothes, she heard a scream.

"Daisy!"

Freja stopped whatever she was doing and, like a nimble fawn, darted through the clothes hanging in the air and the random things on the ground. She ran to the door and hugged her sister tightly.

Then she let go of her hand, and with tears streaming down her cheeks, she sized Daisy up with pleasant surprise and in concern.

"Are you alright?

"It's so wonderful that you're finally back!"

Liv also stood up from behind the washbasin. She wiped her hands on her clothes and asked, rubbing her eyes, "Daisy, where have you been these past few days?"

At that moment, the police officer interrupted, "She was kidnapped. We rescued her."

"Thank you, thank you! You guys are t-too great!" Liv shed tears and randomly used an adjective.

The policeman coughed lightly and said, "That's our duty… Have you met anyone strange in the past few days?"

Liv was stunned for a second. Hoping to not be involved in too many matters or get into any trouble, she said, "No, I really haven't."

The policeman waved his hand and said, “Be more careful in the future! Don’t take deserted shortcuts again!”

He couldn’t stand the humidity and the motley of smells so he turned and left.

Liv looked at her daughter again. She took wide strides over to her side and wiped her hands on the side of her clothes before hugging Daisy.

“It’s good that you’re back. It’s good that you’re back…” she murmured through her tears, not asking if Daisy had been hurt.

Daisy relaxed and sobbed.

Beside her, Freja was also crying. She stretched out her arms and hugged her mother and sister respectively.

The three of them cried for a while before letting go.

Liv wiped her eyes again and said, “Wash the clothes first; there are still a lot of them.”

Daisy, who had just been rescued, nodded and quickly threw herself into her busy work.

It wasn’t until noon, while they were nibbling on their black bread and drinking plain water that could hardly even be considered tea, that Liv finally had time to ask, “Daisy, were you hurt?”

Daisy shook her head.

“They just hit me a few times.”

“That’s great! The police rescued you? A kind detective was willing to help search for you for free yesterday, and you ended up returning today. Ah, he still has your vocabulary book,” Freja mentioned in passing.

Already prepared, Liv mentioned, “I’ll get Old Kohler to get it back and tell the detective you're home so that he won't have to busy himself over this matter. Regardless, we have to thank him again."

Daisy felt relieved as she replied to her sister's question, "No, it wasn't the police. There was a sudden explosion, and the doors that kept us locked up were strangely opened, and we just ran out. However, I did see a gentleman or a lady on the roof.

"He wore black armor, a crown-like helmet, and a cape. He just stood there watching us quietly. None of those bad guys came to stop us or chase us down."

As a tutor at the free school, Daisy clearly had a richer set of vocabulary than her mother, Liv.

"A person dressed like that saved you?" Liv answered in shock. By the side, Freja curiously waited for the answer.

Daisy nodded seriously and said, "Yes, he's l-like what the bard sing of…

"A hero!"

Hero… Freja ruminated over the word, her eyes as bright as the stars.

†

In a certain secret chamber, a group of people were carefully comparing the Lanevus case with the Capim case using the information they were given as they searched for similarities between the motives and modus operandi.

"The two things cannot be linked together at all. The only thing that they have in common is evil, or rather, evil was defeated. The owner of the tarot card has upheld justice," someone exclaimed.

"It can be confirmed that the two cases didn't involve the same person. The difference in strength is obvious, and what they're good at is even more contrasting. Although it's possible that their Sequence had been elevated, Capim's murderer was a kind of specter, or someone that can switch into the Spirit Body state. That's not something common." Another person's analysis was endorsed by the majority.

Therefore, the person who called the meeting concluded, "Two cases, two different people, but they both threw out tarot cards. Perhaps the latter was committing a copycat crime, and if that's the case, we can target the people who are aware of the Lanevus case. The other possibility is that there is an organization!

"An organization symbolized by tarot cards!"

Chapter 384 - On Your Own You Check Yourself

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

The aroma of Feynapotter’s top-quality Mount Saint Dersee coffee blended with the splendid fragrance of the Queen’s black tea to create an intoxicating symphony of smells. They lingered around the elegant three-tiered high tea tray, that served delicious and delicate desserts.

This was the high tea party organized by Audrey.

She had invited her friends of blue-blood parentage, all who were fellow enthusiasts in mysticism. They sat around her, talking and laughing.

Under Audrey’s imperceptible guidance, Jane, Murray, and the others became extremely interested in the Black Emperor, the Hero Bandit who had appeared last night. All of them cast their eyes towards the noble-born Kance Leerhsen who had joined MI9.

“What Beyonder powers does that Black Emperor have?” the sweet-looking Christine asked curiously.

Among the few of them, the lowest rank among their fathers was that of a viscount. It allowed them to have sufficient status and channels to understand the existence of Beyonder powers and potions in their endearing pursuit of mysticism. But just like Audrey before, they were all unwilling to join the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, the Machinery Hivemind, and MI9.

Other than that, the families that they belonged to didn't have histories that traced back to a thousand years ago, and even the ancient aristocrats that had just been established in the Fourth Epoch of the Loen Kingdom weren't completely loyal to the royal family or to the upper echelons of the military. They weren't bestowed with any formulas, and even if they had Beyonder ingredients, it was unlikely that they could recognize them. They wouldn't even know how to use them even if they did recognize them.

This limited the possibility of Murray, Christine, and the others in becoming Beyonders. They could only look forward to it, but it was difficult for them to take that crucial step.

As for whether or not their elders had collected the potion formulas and nurtured Beyonders for their families, that was beyond their purview. After all, this wasn't allowed; if the King were to find out, they could use this as a reason to strip them of their noble titles.

Of course, there were already two traitors in the living room: Audrey, who had advanced to Sequence 8 Telepathist; and Viscount Glaint, who had gathered one portion of Beyonder ingredients. It wouldn't be long before he became an Apothecary.

The tall, thin, young gentleman, Kance, took a sip of his coffee and said, "I won't give you a direct answer. I'll just tell you some facts.

"Other than traces of a gas explosion in the dining room where the battle happened, various means were used to detect poison, substitutes, Specter's Shriek, bullets condensed with holy powers, and other elements. By the way, that Black Emperor, no—Hero Bandit was in a specter state."

It doesn't look like the person who had killed Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos, nor does it look like the person who had dealt with Lanevus in the sewers… Is the person involved in Capim's case Mr. Fool's third Blessed who stole the Black Emperor's card? There are at least three Blessed in Backlund alone… How many Blessed does "He" have in total?

Audrey's heart skipped a beat as she deliberately asked, "Was there an intense Beyonder battle?"

Murray, under her lead, asked one step further, "There were Beyonders at Capim's place? Relatively powerful Beyonders? And there was more than one?"

"He's just a trafficker…" Viscount Glaint unconsciously expressed his doubt.

Audrey maintained her faint smile and curious gaze, patiently waiting for Kance's reply.

Kance laughed and said, "Murray's guess is correct. I can only say this much.

"Do you want me to be locked up by Captain?"

Capim's place had more than one relatively powerful Beyonder…

Indeed, he's not an ordinary human trafficker. He might be involved in many matters regarding mysticism…

Human trafficker… Could he be involved in some cult's sacrificial rite? Mr. Fool's Blessed attacked because of this?

It was roughly the same with Lanevus. It involved a cult and sacrifices, as well as the descent of the True Creator… I wonder which cult and evil god is behind Capim…

Mr. Fool's goal seems to have always been targeting these evil gods… Is it really strife between the gods? Who knows how many grand schemes of those evil gods "He" has foiled… Audrey made many connections as her heart surged with emotions.

Our Tarot Club's enemies are the evil gods!

The rest aren't qualified!

Does Mr. Fool wish to get the title of “The Nemesis of Evil Gods?” Audrey pursed her lips and chuckled softly in her heart.

Then, she suppressed her emotions and secretly made a confession.

Audrey, how can you do this? How can you use Mr. Fool as a joke…

†

At noon, when Klein returned to Minsk Street, he found, as he had expected, a letter from Old Kohler who had paid a carriage driver to deliver to his mailbox.

This was their agreed upon contact method during an emergency.

Of course, according to Klein’s prediction, Old Kohler, who didn’t know many words, could only use simple symbols to tell him where and when they would meet. To his surprise, it was actually written in neat writing when he opened the letter.

With a quick glance, Klein confirmed that it was identical to the handwriting in Daisy’s vocabulary book.

Looks like this girl was the one who helped Old Kohler write it… This piece of paper doesn’t seem to be exposed to moisture. Perhaps Old Kohler had bought some in the event he needs to contact me urgently… Klein opened the door to the living room and read the letter.

Only taking off his hat and cane, he leaned his cane against the wall. He didn’t take off his coat because the fireplace in the room wasn’t lit yet, and the early November cold was silently seeping into his bones.

The letter was simple; after all, Daisy didn’t know many words either.

She thanked the detective for his kindness and good intentions before telling him that she safely returned home, and she finally said, in a tactful way, that she hoped he would bring her vocabulary book with him the next time he came to East Borough.

What a polite girl… Klein chuckled. He snapped his fingers and burned the letter, leaving no clues behind.

He decided to return to East Borough the next day and return the book to Daisy, as well as reimburse Old Kohler for the cost of the letter delivery letters, paper, and fountain pens.

With this in mind, he couldn't help but sigh and chortle.

"Captain, now it's my turn to approve the expense claims of others…"

Without wasting any time, he went out again and went straight to the Quelaag Club, where Dr. Aaron was seen more often during Friday afternoons. Klein wanted to ask about Will Auceptin, the child who had played with tarot cards.

After entering the Quelaag Club in Hillston Borough, Klein said to the red-vested attendant, "A cup of marquis black tea and a serving of dessert. Send it to the corner seat of the main hall. Dr. Aaron, Reporter Mike, and the others are sitting there."

Klein had already spotted the relatively cold and famous surgeon, Aaron Ceres, who was wearing gold-rimmed glasses, as well as Reporter Mike Joseph from the Daily Observer, who he had worked with twice and had a pair of charming blue eyes. He also saw the aristocratic equestrian teacher, Talim Dumont, whose frequency of appearing at the club was only second to his.

"Oh, our great detective is here, and we happened to be talking about you." Talim stood up with a smile.

"Speaking bad things behind my back?" Klein joked.

Mike stood up and shook his hand.

"No, I want to hire you again."

"What's the matter this time?" Klein bowed at Dr. Aaron and sat down at their table.

Mike chuckled and said, “I’m sure you’ve read the papers? Capim has been killed off by the Hero Bandit Black Emperor, and his crimes have been exposed. What a joyous event!

“And as a reporter, I need to have an acumen for the news. I plan to get a list of names of the girls who were rescued in East Borough from the police department to interview them. Then, I’ll paint Capim’s most cruel, most evil, and most unforgivable side to the readers of the newspaper. Of course, the victims must remain anonymous.”

He paused for a moment and suppressed his voice.

“I also have a hidden objective, or should I say, I wish to use the interview to know if these girls or their family know any relatively special friends. Who knows, that might be Hero Bandit Black Emperor!”

You’ve found the right person… The corners of Klein’s mouth almost twitched.

He smiled at Mike and said, “We’ve already worked together on East Borough’s matters. We have sufficient familiarity and trust, so I have no reason to decline.”

“I hope for a pleasant partnership.” Mike stretched out his hand. “We’ll start tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, and we’ll be paid the same as last time for a total of ten pounds.”

At that moment, Dr. Aaron, who had been listening by the side, said, “Sherlock, I want to hire you as well. This evening, or after dinner.”

It looks like my business is improving recently… Klein asked, amused, “Will it conflict with Mike’s request?”

“No.” Aaron shook his head. “My luck recently has been pretty good. This makes me suspect that my bout of bad luck was because of that child’s inverted Wheel of Fortune card and the words he said. I’m very troubled and puzzled in this regard. I swear to god that I was very nice to him, and I treated him with the best of intentions. Why would he treat me that way? I wish to visit him at his place and confirm that he didn't do it on purpose. However, I'm ultimately afraid that something similar would happen again or some accident might occur. Therefore, I wish to hire you to protect me. Just for tonight. It won't conflict with Mike's request. How about it?"

That's what I wanted to do! After challenging the impossible and doing good deeds, my moral standing has become pretty good… Am I really going to become the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck? Klein was pleasantly surprised as he said with a reserved smile, "No problem, we can talk about the remuneration."

†

City of Silver.

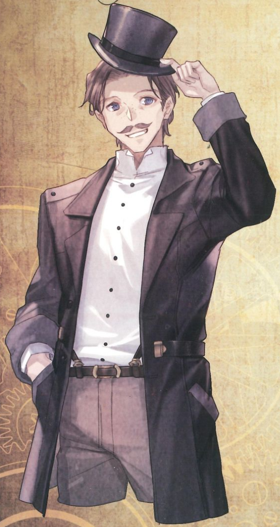
Derrick Berg once again examined the translucent worm with twelve circles, the remains of Amon's avatar.

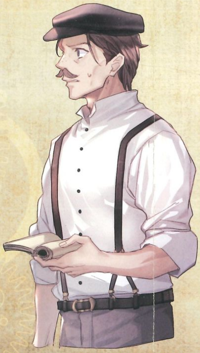
He had originally wanted to ask Mr. Fool what this was exactly, but considering how he had already troubled this godlike figure once, he couldn't bring himself to ask as he abandoned this plan. Now, he planned on showing it at the next Tarot Gathering and ask Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and the rest.

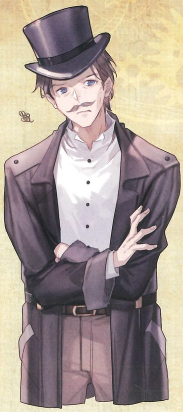
After hiding the worm, Derrick suddenly thought of something. It was about time for the team that had gone with Shepherd Elder Lovia, to explore the half-destroyed temple of the Fallen Creator, to return—it wasn't too far from the City of Silver, and it was in a direction that they hadn't set foot in before.

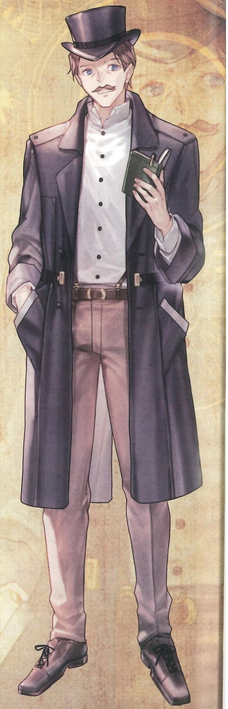
He decided to take a look. There were quite a few people he knew among the expedition team.

東區記者 - 邁克









Chapter 385 - A Story About Love

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Looking at the dark sky being lit up by streaks of lightning, Derrick didn't knock on the doors of the few acquaintances he knew. Instead, he walked along the broadest road and walked all the way to the training field at the edge of the City of Silver.

After each exploratory team returned, they were forced to stay here for a certain period of time. Not only would it be convenient for them to communicate and report on the things they encountered in the darkness, but they would also be quarantined in a tactful manner to guard against strange things that might latch onto any member's body and suddenly erupt after a certain amount of time.

This was the result of the City of Silver's two thousand years of experience. It wasn't that complicated, but it was quite useful.

As soon as he entered the training ground with the Axe of Hurricane stuffed behind his waist, Derrick Berg's eyes suddenly lit up. He saw the gorgeous Elder Lovia, who seemed to be in her thirties, as well as two familiar faces that were his age.

Due to the City of Silver's limited environment, its population was unable to grow any further. The number of people of a certain age group was an adequate number, and although Derrick wouldn't dare say he knew all of them, he had seen a majority of them before. He was classmates and partners with some of them during general education classes and on the practice grounds.

The person Derrick was most familiar with on this expedition team was Darc Regence, who had once been his patrol teammate.

The youngster named Darc was of medium height and was slightly chubby. He was strong, optimistic, and cheerful. His face often beamed with a friendly smile. Currently, he was a Sequence 8 Gladiator of the Giant pathway.

At this moment, the two parties were separated by a translucent wall that was as hard as steel, making it impossible for them to make any effective form of contact. They had to wait until the members of the exploratory team were confirmed to have no problems before they could meet directly.

Derrick, who had become silent and withdrawn since the death of his parents, waved to Darc.

Noticing this, the Gladiator turned his head to the side and looked over.

“Darc, how was it? You didn’t encounter any danger, did you?” Derrick shouted.

The material used to create the black wall in that area came from somewhere that wasn’t far from the City of Silver and was called Dark Amber. It was hard as steel, but at the same time, it possessed a certain degree of transparency and had properties that made it good for transmitting sound. Derrick’s speech went through unobstructed.

Derrick imagined that Darc would definitely smile brightly and wave his arms out of habit, saying, “Take a look, I’m not injured at all, so shouldn’t it be obvious that we didn’t meet with any danger. It was nothing!”

Hearing his voice, Darc walked a few steps closer to the wall and answered with a smile, “No, everything went smoothly.”

Looking at his smile without any faults, Derrick suddenly felt a chill run through his body. It was just like he was camping in a ruined tower or a ruined city at night. Darkness was all around him as they accumulated into overwhelming horror.

†

Inside the Quelaag Club, Klein and Dr. Aaron agreed on the remuneration: two pounds!

I have to say that a doctor's money sure is easy to earn… If it were me in the past, such a request would have cost at most 10 soli… Klein, who already had the intention to take the mission, sighed in his heart.

He remembered that during his time with the Nighthawks, he had heard Corpse Collector Frye mention that famous doctors had very high incomes.

At the time, in a response that was unlike the poet, Leonard Mitchell, he said that as far as he knew, if a house was bought in a busy borough in Backlund for a storefront, the quickest option would be to turn it into a clinic.

They agreed to call on Will Auceptin's place after dinner. It wasn't three o'clock in the afternoon, so the equestrian teacher, Talim, gathered the three of them together at a table, and they began playing a game of Upgrade, the game which was invented by Emperor Roselle.

What I expected was to play tennis, practice shooting, flip through the books in the library, and live a healthy life… But why did it become like this… Klein spontaneously thought in between the card game.

Frankly, with his current accomplishments in "magic," he could've easily cleared out all the money Dr. Aaron, Reporter Mike, and Talim had on them.

But I'm an honest man, and I believe more in my skills and luck… As the red-vested attendant shuffled the cards, Klein picked up a cream cracker and took a savory bite.

He couldn't help but marvel from the bottom of his heart, This is life!

During the game, Klein noticed one thing—the equestrian teacher, Talim, was no longer in a daze or as upset as he was before.

Has the matter of his friend falling in love with someone he shouldn't have been resolved? Klein thought curiously as he sipped the marquis black tea.

As a detective, he knew that this wasn't something he should ask in front of others, so he restrained himself and concentrated on his card game.

By five o'clock, Mike Joseph had to go back to his company, so the game was suspended and Klein won five soli.

My luck has been quite good recently… While Klein sighed with relief, he saw Dr. Aaron leave the table for the washroom. He controlled his voice and said with a low laugh, "Talim, has your friend's problem been settled?"

Talim, who was throwing the cards in his hands onto the table, paused for a second before sighing with a smile.

"You could say so."

He added with a certain desire to continue, "Actually, it wasn't too serious. It was because I was thinking too much at the time.

"Simply put, it was an illustrious young gentleman who fell in love with a commoner. You should know that a man of such status has to marry a noble lady. Heh, to him, not even the daughter of a rich man can do."

So that's how it is… To think that I made up all sorts of contrived and bizarre stories, such as falling in love with a man, a monster, or a person that isn't permitted because of moral principles… Klein was disappointed and said with a laugh, "As far as I know, gentlemen of high society don't mind having a mistress."

"No, Sherlock, you don't understand. Love, do you get it? Love! That young gentleman only wants to marry that commoner woman," Talim exclaimed with a sigh.

No, I don't understand, I'm just a bachelor dog[1]. Klein opened his mouth, unable to respond.

Talim sighed to himself.

"For the sake of that young gentleman's future, I once thought of asking you to find people with some miraculous abilities to covertly, heh heh… Anyways, I'm a law-abiding citizen, so it was just an idea."

"How was the matter resolved afterward?" Klein asked with interest.

Talim picked up his highlander coffee and took a sip.

"The solution was much simpler than I thought. I went straight to the lady and told her of the dilemma. She sensibly expressed her willingness to leave the gentleman and asked for my help.

"I must say that she's truly a considerate, kind, refined, and beautiful girl. If it wasn't for the consideration of my identity, perhaps I would've knelt in front of her and kissed the back of her hand."

"Well, it seems like I couldn't have helped." Klein picked up the golden-rimmed white porcelain cup of black tea.

As a visitor from Earth, he was completely uninterested in the task of breaking up couples.

However, listening to gossip was another matter altogether.

†

After having dinner at the Quelaag Club and tasting the limited-supply of Sonia Lobsters, Klein and Dr. Aaron took the latter's carriage to Will Auceptin's house at 66 Dalton Street in North Borough.

This was the address that Dr. Aaron had long since memorized. He didn't return to the hospital to look up the appropriate medical records, and according to Klein's conjecture, any relevant information pertaining to Will Auceptin would likely have been taken away by the Nighthawks.

As a former Nighthawk, I know exactly how they do things… Klein smiled bitterly and sighed.

Pulling the doorbell, the two waited for a while before they saw the door open. A maid in a black and white dress puzzledly asked, "Gentlemen, who are you looking for?"

Seeing that Aaron was still as cold as usual, Klein took the initiative to speak up.

"We're looking for Will Auceptin. This is his attending physician. He came back to check on his health."

"I-I don't know him. I've only been here for a few days… I'll get my master. Please wait a moment," the maid answered blankly.

While they were waiting, Aaron suddenly said, "I almost believed the reason you came up with just now."

"This is a basic quality of being a detective." Klein chuckled.

At that moment, an old gentleman in his fifties walked to the door and said with a deep voice, "Will Auceptin and his family have already moved away on…"

He gave a date.

Aaron did a slight count before frowning.

"Why would they go through the trouble to move two days after being discharged from the hospital after the operation?"

He acted like he was really on a follow-up visit.

Klein was slightly puzzled and asked, "Sir, how do you know the date so clearly?"

Typically speaking, subsequent tenants would only move in after a certain period of time.

That old gentleman snappily replied, "Someone came to ask before, and I even went to look for the landlord just for that."

The Nighthawks… Klein asked without much hope, "Do you know where Will Auceptin and his family moved to?"

"No," the old man said tersely.

"Did they leave anything behind?" Klein hesitated for a moment before continuing with his questions.

"Some stuff," the old man took a deep breath and continued, "but they were all taken away by the previous group of people!"

Meeting colleagues truly is a helpless matter… They can always think of the things you think of ahead of time… Klein couldn't help but sigh.

Seeing that there were no further clues, Klein and Aaron politely excused themselves and left 66 Dalton Street.

"It seems like you'll have to wait a long time before you can resolve your doubts." Klein turned to Dr. Aaron.

Aaron was silent for a few seconds, then he slowly let out a breath.

"After what happened just now, I'm not so troubled anymore. I'm just a doctor, and it's good enough to mind my own affairs. I should return to do a follow-up check-up and not question the situation, what other people think, or why they're not kind. That shouldn't be something I should be concerned with. In the future, I should just try to maintain the relationship between a doctor and a patient as much as possible.”

“It’s for the best that you can think this way.” Klein agreed from the bottom of his heart, then he casually asked, “At the time, what was wrong with Will Auceptin’s left leg?”

“His left calf grew a strange tumor that coincidentally formed a ring that pressed down heavily onto his blood vessels.” Dr. Aaron recalled as he said, “But the kid didn’t look too upset, just a little scared, and we wanted to preserve the leg at first, but it was getting worse.”

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A Chinese phrase describing singles.

Chapter 386 - A Nightmare

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City of Silver.

Derrick Berg had no idea how he got home. All he remembered was the indescribable horror.

Darc Regence's character and behavior didn't appear too different from his former self. However, it was true that there was a change to him that was unsettling. Derrick was afraid that the City of Silver would be targeted by the evil god, the Fallen Creator; afraid that the City of Silver would be obliterated before he could become The Sun, saving it from its more than two-thousand-year-long curse; and give hope and sunshine to the residents here.

At that moment in time, he hated himself for not being strong enough—that he was still only at Sequence 8.

No! I can't just watch idly! Derrick suddenly stood up, and he prepared to rush to the spire and tell the other elders of the six-member council and Chief Colin Iliad of what he had discovered.

However, Derrick knew that such anomalies weren't suspicious. Every time they explored the depths of the darkness, the members would have a period of intense tension lasting for days, tens of days, or even more than a month.

In addition, the uninhabited desolate plains and the hopeless journey would bring about extreme depression. In addition, in order to be safe, the members of the exploratory team wouldn't be allowed to release any sexual urges that had been pent up during their excursions, which caused them to act differently after every exploration. If they ended up with more than half the team ending up dead or injured, a huge change in personality wasn't a rare occurrence.

The manner of handling such people could only be dealt with via the usual quarantine and treatment with almost zero exceptions.

The City of Silver had the first three Sequences of the Dragon pathway, so there was no lack of Psyche Analysts.

Derrick rushed to the door and suddenly slowed down.

He knew that this method of reporting to the six-member council might not be effective. It would likely arouse suspicion, and there might even be the threat of being targeted by the Shepherd, Elder Lovia.

After pacing back and forth for more than ten seconds, Derrick gritted his teeth and pulled the door open.

He felt that he had to warn the elders of the six-member council, even if it would be a huge risk for him!

For the vast majority of the residents of the City of Silver, sacrificing their lives to maintain the existence of this city and the continuation of this civilization was the belief that was ingrained into their bones.

Selfish people often didn't live long in such environments regardless of whether it was outside or inside.

Of course, Derrick wasn't completely reckless. Under the tutelage of the members of the Tarot Club, especially The Hanged Man, he clearly understood that there were times when one had to be patient, protect himself properly, and avoid unnecessary sacrifices in order to better defend the City of Silver.

I'll only talk about the abnormality I observed. It shouldn't be dangerous… Derrick consoled himself, running faster and faster.

Finally, he saw the spire that represented the highest authority in the City of Silver.

He found a Beyonder on duty and made a request to meet with the Chief.

To Derrick's surprise, the Beyonder didn't ask the usual questions. After simply passing on the information, he was led up the stairs to the Chief's room.

Very strange… It's different from before… Derrick felt that the changes in the details made him more uneasy.

Entering the room, he saw Chief Colin Iliad standing in front of a wall.

This tall elder, with his deep blue eyes and messy white hair, had his back facing two swords that hung on the wall. He wore his usual flaxen-colored shirt and brown coat, and it was hard to believe that he was an expert who had successfully hunted many devils and monsters.

"Derrick Berg, what matter would actually require you to tell me it, face to face?" Colin asked in a deep voice.

"Your Excellency." Derrick saluted. "I met the team that was sent to explore that temple at the training grounds today. I-I found that the Darc Regence I know has experienced a strange change. He's no longer as cheerful as he was before, and his smile is as polite as a stranger's. Also, Elder Lovia doesn't frequently change the way she speaks like she usually did."

Colin looked deeply at Derrick and asked in a low voice, "Just these two things?"

"Yes, yes." Derrick lowered his head. "I think there might be something unusual about that."

Colin waved his hand and said, "I got it, I'll get Aiflor to do an investigation. You may return. In the future, you just need to report such matters to the guardian of the spire directly."

Aiflor was the City of Silver's most experienced Psyche Analyst who was closest to Sequence 6. It was a pity that there was no potion formula after Sequence 7.

After receiving such an answer, Derrick left gloomily.

Looking at Derrick's back as he disappeared by the door, Colin sighed in disappointment.

†

After talking to Dr. Aaron about Will Auceptin's situation for a while. Klein got off the carriage and took the steam metro. After three stops, he arrived near Minsk Street and switched to a trackless public carriage to return home.

As it was still early, he used divination to confirm that the previous tenant wasn't lying, and then he diligently continued to study the Book of Secrets.

Ever since he had obtained this mysterious book, Klein's use of the mysterious space above the gray fog became more and more ingenious as he completed many more outstanding techniques.

"What limits me now is my own Sequence, my own strength, and spirituality." Late at night, Klein hid the Book of Secrets and went to the bathroom to wash up, in preparation for bed.

That night, he slept soundly. Even the church bells in the morning only made him turn over.

Winter is the best time to stay in bed… Klein grunted and got up.

To reward the Hero Bandit Black Emperor, he had a sugared hard-boiled egg and strawberry jam he specially bought to match with white bread.

Just as he was enjoying his meal, the doorbell suddenly rang.

“Didn’t I tell Mike to come after breakfast?” He took a sip of the sweet soup and wiped his mouth with a napkin.

According to his agreement with Reporter Mike, he would only arrive half an hour after breakfast before they began interviewing the rescued girls of East Borough. If Mike didn’t appear after half an hour, then it meant that the matter would be delayed by a day.

Klein walked to the door, but before he could reach out his hand, the outline of a visitor appeared in his mind. He wasn’t Reporter Mike Joseph but Dr. Aaron Ceres.

“Good morning, Aaron. Did you sleep late last night?” Klein noticed that Aaron’s face was pale, so he quietly activated his Spirit Vision to take a look.

Aaron took off his hat and cane and started to take off his coat, but the cold air in the room stopped him.

Klein laughed dryly and said, “As you know, I’ll be going out today. Mike might come looking for me, so I didn’t light up the fireplace.”

Aaron nodded and didn’t say anything else. He followed Klein into the living room, found a seat and sat down.

“Sherlock, I had a nightmare last night. I dreamed about that child, Will Auceptin!”

Nightmare? This is within the limits of my knowledge… I’m a professional when it comes to interpreting dreams, far more professional than deduction… Klein leaned forward, clasped his hands, and said, “What kind of nightmare?”

Aaron recalled and said, “There are some details and processes that I can’t remember. What I remember most is a tall, pitch-black steeple with a huge silver snake coiled around it. It was moving slowly, looking at me with its cold, merciless red eyes.

“I don’t know why, but I entered the steeple, and I would go up the stairs and, at other times, down the stairs, going through walls after walls, and one locked door after another. Finally, I found the child called Will Auceptin in a dark corner. He hopped a few steps on one leg and curled up against the wall, with tarot cards scattered everywhere beside him.

“When he saw me, he was scared and happy. He called out, ‘Dr. Aaron’… The whole dream was roughly like that before I woke up.”

Klein listened attentively and thought for a while before asking, “Did Will Auceptin say anything else?”

Aaron frowned in thought before suddenly saying, “Yes, he said, ‘Dr. Aaron, a snake wants to eat me!’

“Following that, a giant silver snake hung down from the ceiling, its head facing me…

“Its mouth was very big, but it has no teeth, no tongue, and it was completely blood-red!”

Silver giant snake… A pitch-black steeple… Will Auceptin protected under layers of protection… Klein said to Dr. Aaron in a measured voice, “It’s not a very strange dream. It likely has you subconsciously sensing some kind of predicament he was in while you were talking to Will Auceptin, that he was being threatened by something. That’s why you dreamed of something like this: a child hiding in the depths of a tall steeple, behind countless walls and doors, huge silver snakes coiling around the top of the steeple…

“Heh heh, as a detective, we know a little bit of psychology. It’s also often talked about in the newspapers.

“What I don’t understand is why you didn’t have such a dream until today.”

Klein didn’t lie about his interpretation, but he didn’t reveal the possible true reasons behind it.

Aaron opened his mouth and said, “I was in too much of a hurry just now and forgot to mention something.”

As he spoke, he took out a leather wallet and took out a fairly exquisitely folded paper crane.

“After realizing that Will Auceptin and his family had moved away, I remembered that he had given me this before he left the hospital, saying, ‘Doctor, this will bring you good luck.’

“I didn’t pay much attention to it at the time and casually threw it into the office drawer. After parting with you last night, I went to retrieve it and put it in my wallet. As a result, I had a nightmare that very night.”

Klein looked at the paper crane, nodded thoughtfully and said, “Dr. Aaron, it looks like Will Auceptin didn’t deliberately bring you bad luck. He had made up for it later. The paper crane invented by Emperor Roselle is meant to act as symbolism for wishing you well; besides, he said it would bring you good luck.”

Aaron subconsciously asked, “Origami was invented by Emperor Roselle?”

I don’t know if it’s him, but I think it’s likely him… Klein smiled.

“Probably.”

Chapter 387 - The Uniqueness of a Spirit World

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Aaron was relieved by Klein’s explanation and reassurance, and he prepared to observe for a few more days to see if there were any more nightmares such as this.

After sending the famous surgeon out of the door with a smile, Klein’s expression suddenly became solemn, as if he was thinking about something.

There was no problem with his interpretation of the dream. The pitch-black steeple, the walls and doors that blocked his path, and the giant silver snake, they all symbolized that Will Auceptin was in a situation where he was threatened by something that symbolized the child’s fear and helplessness, as well as his attempts to hide behind layers of protection.

But the problem was that this was unlikely to be a revelation Dr. Aaron’s spirituality had received on its own. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have had such a dream only until last night, or when he found the paper crane. A similar development should’ve taken place long before Will Auceptin was discharged, back when his spirituality unconsciously became aware of the particularly strange developments, allowing him to have similar experiences as he had now.

Therefore, Klein suspected that the medium which instilled the dream into Dr. Aaron was the paper crane!

Klein activated his Spirit Vision to carefully observe this handicraft, but he didn't find any spiritual brilliance. However, his spiritual perception and intuition told him that there was something strange about this piece of origami. Certain magical aspects that might involve the most illusory, most difficult to comprehend, and most worthy of fear and reverence—fate.

That child called Will Auceptin isn't simple… It seems like the most amazing thing wasn't the tarot card, but rather he himself… The giant silver snake is a symbol of danger, and this matter is related to bad luck, good luck, and other elements. Could it be that it represents the Snake of Mercury, Sequence 1 of the Monster pathway? Klein's thoughts wandered, but he couldn't be certain of anything.

He turned to question the problem of how the dream was instilled.

With Klein's accomplishments in mysticism, this wasn't something that was too complicated or difficult to understand. He quickly came up with an idea.

The first thing to do was to rule out the influence of specters and wraiths, which would've stained Dr. Aaron's aura with a blackish-green color of varying degrees, and I didn't see any sign of that just now.

There are two main ways of instilling information without causing the owner of the dream to appear abnormal. One of them is using the Beyonder powers of a Nightmare like Captain. An objective is met through guidance, and it wouldn't involve the culprit; otherwise, traces would similarly be left behind. The second method would be even more ingenious and advanced.

The principle of a dreamland is that of Astral Projections traveling through the spirit world, and the details that one would normally unwittingly notice, under external stimulation, would turn into a symbolic revelation. Or, they can obtain some enlightenment directly related to themselves from external sources. Then, their Soul Bodies, and subsequently their Spirit Bodies would be informed of this. Because the owner of the body was in a state of sleep, this will appear in the form of a dream.

So the second way is to instill it into the spirit world!

First, use some magical method to create the revelation that one will need, and then naturally let the target's Astral Projection obtain and feedback the information while roaming the spirit world. That way, the target will be able to dream of the scene that others would want them to dream of, and there will be no superficial traces.

This is something that I'm currently unable to do, even if it's a Spirit Body that's able to partially wield some of the power above the gray fog.

Klein paused for a moment and then added another possibility.

A seed was planted in Dr. Aaron's subconscious through the paper crane, and once he found it, he would have the corresponding dream.

That's easy to confirm. As long as I use mediumship on Dr. Aaron, I should be able to find traces of it… However, would it be unfriendly to use mediumship on him? Or should I borrow the Mental Terror Candle from Father Utravsky? No, the one who recognized me was that vampire, the zealous doll lover, Emlyn White, not the muscular, giant-like Father Utravsky… Klein reined in his thoughts and considered his subsequent actions.

He decided that he would wait until he went above the gray fog to divine the level of danger. If it was an acceptable level, he would sneak into Dr. Aaron's house tonight, use the Dream Charm and other methods to secretly observe him, and see if the source of the dreamland was a result of direct guidance or an indirect fabrication.

However, with Klein's strength and level, it would be difficult to find traces of the latter. Even he himself didn't have much confidence.

This didn't mean that his Astral Projection could travel the same spirit world as Dr. Aaron's Astral Projection by sitting next to him and entering Cogitation. This required a sufficient amount of locking on to do so.

According to the descriptions in the Book of Secrets, the existence of the spirit world was quite magical. It completely overlapped with the real world, so everyone could obtain revelations from the spirit world at any time. However, the spirit world didn't distinguish between directions, and the past, present, or future could even intersect there. It was like infinite knowledge, information, and illusions were spiritually gathered and compressed into a strange sea. It was different from the "world" as one would imagine according to usual concepts or logic.

As a result of this, the revelations that one received from the spirit world could only be a variety of symbols, not direct answers. And precisely because of this, every Astral Projection's experience of traveling in the spirit world was not only related to their physical location and time, but it was also dependent on the current state of their body and the mind. Without locking on to the corresponding location, it made it impossible to lock onto and find a person's Astral Projection in the spirit world, even if one was physically next to them.

This was also the reason why the Astral Projection's movement in the spirit world was limited and one doesn't dare to venture too deep. Once it got lost and was unable to return to its body, its owner would become a retard and, even more seriously, a vegetable.

It was even more difficult to use the spirit world as a springboard for transference. If one wasn't careful, then they would lose their way and never be able to return to the real world until they rot to death.

Phew… Klein exhaled, temporarily throwing the question to the back of his mind.

He took out his pocket watch and looked at the time. He realized that he had been thinking too long, that his breakfast had already turned completely cold, and that the fact that Reporter Mike hadn't arrived yet meant that the commission was likely to be delayed by a day.

In the spirit of not wasting anything, Klein finished the rest of his meal and then went above the gray fog to make a divination. He was surprised to find that there were no revelations indicating danger at all.

After doing all of this, the appointed time had passed. Without any hesitation, he changed into a heavy jacket, put on his cap, grabbed the vocabulary book, and left 15 Minsk Street.

His initial plan was to accompany Mike Joseph to East Borough for an interview and find an opportunity to hint at Old Kohler to not mention his promise of helping Liv find her daughter.

As for Liv's family, he let Old Kohler do the reminding.

And now, after Mike had pushed back the interview by a day, Klein was even more at ease, no longer worried about any mishaps or mistakes.

†

With the address mentioned by Old Kohler, and according to the revelation from divination, Klein entered the depths of East Borough, and under the watchful, wary, numb, or greedy gaze of the crowds, he found the room on the third floor.

There were two bunk beds here, and there were also some old and worn bedding on the floor. Every empty space was filled with sundries.

Klein looked directly at the bottom bunk of the innermost bunk and called out, "Old Kohler."

With a swoosh, Old Kohler sat up and leaned towards the door in pleasant surprise, "You really came. After sending you that letter yesterday, I already guessed that you would come looking for me today, so I didn't go to the dock. I've been waiting at home all this time."

Well, I don't have to think about how to fabricate the lie about why I came straight here to find you… Klein looked around and said, "Old

Kohler, with your current income, you can definitely rent a better room and move to a better place. Why did you only change your bed from the floor to a bunk bed?"

"Most of the money is for gathering information for you." Old Kohler laughed. "And I'm no longer young. I need to save some money for the future when my future health wanes."

Klein was silent for two seconds before saying, "You can consider buying some insurance, such as a Single Elder Aid Policy. They can give you the money that can at least fill your stomach and a room for you to sleep in every week when you're really old.

The insurance industry of this world had sprouted in the Fourth Epoch. After being promoted by Emperor Roselle, it had matured quite a bit. There were various kinds of insurance such as the various insurances for maritime trade, fire insurance, injury insurance, long-term care insurance in different names, and so on. They were mostly targeted at the rich and the middle-class.

"I know. When I was a worker, I paid a premium of three pence a week, but after I lost my income…" Old Kohler sighed.

His biggest problem now was that his income was unstable, and he wondered when the money he received from the detective would be cut off.

Klein couldn't promise anything either. He pointed outside and said, "Let's go to Liv's house and return the vocabulary book to the girl."

After leaving the room, Klein casually mentioned, "What a joke. I was talking about doing volunteer work the day before yesterday and volunteered to help find Daisy, but she ended up being sent back by the police yesterday. Please don't mention it again, I don't want to be laughed at."

"Alright." Old Kohler agreed first, then he said, "No one will laugh at your kindness."

After walking through the dirty streets, they arrived at Liv's house. Klein saw that the girl who had just been rescued had started ironing again, and he saw that the clothes here were hanging down and dripping with water. It was just as it was before. He was momentarily at a loss as to what to say.

"Daisy." After a while, he said, "Your vocabulary book."

Daisy's eyes lit up, but she was too busy to leave. After busying herself for quite a while, she stopped working and went to the door, thanking him profusely.

After Liv and Freja had also put down their work and come over to express their gratitude, Klein repeated what he had just said to Old Kohler.

After receiving positive responses, he took out the two pounds worth of change that he had prepared and handed it to Liv.

"There will be a reporter coming to interview Daisy tomorrow. This is the advance of the payment he's giving, but don't mention it in front of him; otherwise, things will become complicated. Heh heh, maybe he will give more tomorrow, but not that much."

"This, no—I'm willing to expose that bad guy's evil deeds. I don't want money!" Daisy shook her head.

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

"This is a rule. You can't break rules, understand?"

He looked at Liv and said, "Take it.

"Your belief is right. It's only if Daisy and Freja learn more words and learn more things will you all escape from this situation."

He was going to suggest that Liv's family should move to the edge of

East Borough. Customers who could afford to hire others to do their laundry wouldn't live in East Borough, but in the end, he didn't mention it.

He had intended to provide them with more help, but he restrained himself.

There were thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even millions of people like Liv and her family in East Borough. Even if one was a wealthy banker who wanted to help them, they wouldn't be able to make a splash. Besides, this was just East Borough. There was still the entire Backlund and the Loen Kingdom.

"…Thank you, and help me thank the reporter for me." Liv was silent for a moment, then she took the money.

Klein didn't stay for long. He quickly left as if there was a ghost that would devour his soul.

After walking outside with Old Kohler, he turned around and suddenly sighed. He said in a low voice, "There are no supreme saviors[1]…"

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This is a line from The Internationale, a left-wing anthem.

Chapter 388 - Exploring the Dreamland

◆ ◆ ◆

“What?” Old Kohler asked, not hearing him clearly.

Klein looked at the potholed road in front of him and said in a self-deprecating manner, “Nothing.

“I hope Liv’s family can get out of this situation and live in better conditions.”

He had indeed voiced out his thoughts. Being one of the inheritors of the Foodaholic Empire’s new era, it was perfectly normal for him to think of a revolution, to mobilize the masses, and to change the world. However, when he thought about the details, he felt that he couldn’t save himself just by relying on the poor. This was because Beyonder forces existed in this world. Furthermore, they were relatively supernatural and couldn’t be resolved simply by firearms. For instance, Sequence 5 of the Mutant pathway.

That was just one aspect of things. Another aspect of things was due to the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation. Due to the limited access to ingredients, Beyonder forces couldn’t become commonplace, making it difficult to convert the advantage of numbers into effective combat power. And even if it could be spread, as long as the problem of losing control wasn’t resolved, then it would still bring about disaster.

If there weren’t any High-Sequence Beyonders, then there would actually be ways to deal with all of this to a certain extent. However, in the real world, not only were there demigods, but there were also Sealed Artifacts that could kill people without them even knowing how they died. Besides, deities were real and they stood high and lofty.

In this way, the poor would use strikes and street protests to fight back. However, once they took up weapons and established an army, they would be met with an unstoppable counterattack. It wasn't impossible for a large-scale natural disaster to occur, one that would affect people psychologically.

The only ones that were on par with the official Beyonder organizations were mostly secret organizations. Typically, they were related to evil forces, so by joining hands with them, death might not even be the most tragic ending. Therefore, to embark on the path of revolution, the most hopeful road to success was to get the support of one or more Churches.

How many concessions could be obtained through simple strikes and street protests while still meeting the vested interests of those involved? Bribery would be much easier… However, the incident regarding the True Creator, who almost made use of the miserable situations of the poor to descend upon Backlund, has seemed to stir the Church of Evernight and the nobles who were aware of the situation. I can see that from the investigation mission that Mike had accepted and the information provided by Miss Justice… Klein's thoughts lingered on East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district.

In the end, he couldn't help but let out a laugh and sigh in his heart.

After all the ideas that come to me, it seems that only through the threat of an evil god's descent can the poor's situation be improved.

However, the evil gods are also the ones who can't wait to draw on their flesh and blood, existences that devour their souls; they're the ones most likely to bring a disaster that no one can escape from.

What wonderful irony.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

As Dr. Escalante had upcoming matters she had to attend to, Audrey had brought forward her second psychology lesson for the week.

Susie, more excited than she was, had long rushed into the study, even leaving the ball game she usually loved the most aside.

Audrey purposely displayed her curiosity during this lesson, occasionally asking Escalante about psychology related to mysticism.

At the end of the lesson, Escalante finally spoke after some deliberation, "Miss Audrey, we've organized a seminar on this subject. Many members have specialized in the intersecting field of psychology and mysticism. Are you interested in joining?"

"Of course!" Audrey nodded and answered without the slightest sign of hesitation. It perfectly matched her predetermined innocent and curious personality that she had set for herself.

Escalante smiled.

"Remember to keep this a secret. You know that your elders have a strong prejudice against the study of mysticism. I'll bring you there for the next lesson."

"No problem." Audrey gave her consent with a hint of excitement.

After sending off Escalante, whose hair reached her waist, out the study, she closed the door behind her, faced the mirror by the bookcase, and remained silent for two seconds.

Following that, she lifted up her skirt and took a step and did a swirl from a court dance. Then, looking at herself in the mirror, she sweetly smiled and said, "Audrey, you're great!"

Audrey knew that she had taken the first step in entering the Psychology Alchemists. Although the seminar was most likely an outer circle, and there would definitely be a lot of tests to follow, this really made her open the door to the Psychology Alchemists.

In the process, she didn't borrow strength from the outside world, but instead, she relied solely on her observation and performance to perfectly hide it from Psychiatrist Dr. Escalante. Therefore, she was very proud of herself.

"That seminar sounds interesting." Susie leaned over and wagged her tail. "Audrey, can I join?"

Join? Looking at this golden retriever with its wicked round eyes, Audrey immediately sank into deep thought.

She dragged out a terse acknowledgment.

"I can't do it at the moment, Susie. Y-you're too conspicuous…"

At this point, she changed the topic of their conversation and said with a slight smile, "But I can bring you along."

†

On Saturday night, taking his Master Key and his black cane, Klein walked out of 15 Minsk Street. Without the latter, he didn't think that he would be able to return today.

He was going to "find" Dr. Aaron, enter his dream, and find out how the nightmare regarding Will Auceptin came about.

As for where Dr. Aaron lived, he had already found out yesterday—3 Burningham Road, Hillston Borough.

By the time Klein arrived, it was past eleven o'clock and the neighborhood was dark and silent.

After tossing a coin and performing a divination, Klein passed through the outer bars, walked around to the side, and used the Master Key to open up an invisible passage through the wall into the dark corridor.

With his agile steps, he quietly went up to the second floor and hid in an empty guest room.

When it was clear that Dr. Aaron and his wife were asleep, Klein entered their bedroom through the wall.

The first thing he did was take out a Slumber Charm and mutter the incantation, making Dr. Aaron's wife really fall asleep, preventing her from suddenly waking up and disturb what he would subsequently do to her husband.

Then, Klein sat down on a chair in front of the dresser, held the Dream Charm in his hand, and whispered a word in ancient Hermes, "Crimson!"

As soon as he finished saying that, he felt the charm in his palm become light, as though it had become a weightless illusion.

As his spirituality poured in, a transparent flame wrapped around the charm, burning a deep and serene black.

Driven by Klein's will, the blackness spread out, enveloping both Dr. Aaron and himself.

Klein quickly entered a Cogitation state and saw the endless darkness and the single oval-shaped light.

His spirituality extended out and touched that illusory and hazy object.

The world around him suddenly turned upside down and twisted, and Klein found himself on a barren plain, with pitch-black stones at his feet and not even a blade of grass.

In the center of the plain stood a black steeple with a huge silver snake coiled around it. It had its head reared up, and its red eyes stared coldly in their direction.

Unlike what Dr. Aaron had described, the silver serpent had no physical scales, and its body was covered in dense patterns and symbols. They were all connected to each other into what seemed like wheels, and there were different symbols around each wheel.

The giant snake's tail and head's wheels were each halved, looking incongruous, as though they could kill a person with obsessive-compulsive disorder, but Klein imagined that if the giant silver snake could bite its own tail with its mouth, the wheel would be complete. It wouldn't be disconnected, and there wouldn't be any more changes.

Next to Klein, Dr. Aaron stared blankly ahead, moving closer and closer to the dark steeple.

I can now confirm that no one is guiding Dr. Aaron… That excludes Nightmare Beyonder powers… Klein quickly made a judgment.

He didn't stop Dr. Aaron, but he followed him towards the black steeple and the silver snake.

The two of them had only taken a few steps when their target had already appeared before them. The giant silver snake had its upper body bent down, as though it was considering how to enjoy the dessert that was delivered to its mouth.

Its mouth opened wide, but there was no putrid smell coming from it. Its red eyes were cold and merciless, looking at everything like they were nothing more than prey; yet, it didn't have the slightest hint of bloodlust or cruelty.

In front of it, everything seemed puny and equal because of their insignificance.

In the end, the serpent didn't launch an attack. Klein followed Dr. Aaron through an old, rotting wooden door and into the darkness of the tower.

As Aaron had told him, the layout was abnormally confusing and chaotic. The stairs spiraled up and down, and the halls, libraries, and rooms were normal, inverted, and some were embedded in other parts. It was a building that couldn't possibly exist in the real world.

After passing through the doors and walls, Klein had no idea where he was in the black tower. Perhaps he had reached the top or perhaps the basement.

In the rich darkness, he suddenly noticed a figure curled up in the corner in front of him.

The figure, sensing Dr. Aaron's approach, scrambled to its feet, hopping over on one leg.

It was only when the figure was very close did Klein clearly see him. He looked dignified and strong, in his early teens, and had an expression of obvious fear.

The figure was about 1.4 meters tall, and his left calf was missing. It was obvious that he was the child who had undergone surgery, Will Auceptin.

In his hand was a deck of tarot cards. His pitch-black eyes were filled with surprise and joy, as well as fear and horror.

"Dr. Aaron, a snake wants to eat me!"

Suddenly, he let out a blood-curdling scream as the image of a huge, mysterious silver snake was reflected in his eyes.

Whoosh!

The tarot cards in his hand fell to the ground, leaving only one card tightly gripped in his palm.

Klein focused his gaze over it and saw that there was, similarly, a wheel on the card.

It was the Wheel of Fortune card.

Whoosh!

The dream shattered instantly, and Klein found himself still sitting in a chair in front of the dresser.

Author’s Notes:

In September, not only did not break more, update on time, but also added more four or five times, I didn’t count the specific number. In short, I have fulfilled the promise, and you also let the Lord of Mysteries ranked third on the monthly list, this is a highest monthly ticket ranking of mine.

Simply say about a monthly ticket, then talk about the book itself.

The second volume was written, my greatest feeling is that the plot is fragmentary, but this is also an expected thing. I hope to unfold the world and show you the details everywhere, so that the setting can become the flesh and blood of the world and let it seems more lively and more realistic. So there must be more characters and more branches to build more lines to describe the world. This may slow the overall rhythm, but I can only say that if I choose this idea, I have to kneel down and try to achieve it.

The first volume can string all the clues together and turn them into a complete medium-length story, which has a strong sense of explosion. In fact, the second volume can actually do the same. But after I thought about it, I gave up this plan and changed the form. Because Tingen is very small and everything is not abrupt when putting together, while Backlund has many Beyonder and forces. If all the clues are put together in one incident, it will appear small, It looks like Backlund will be small, and the world will be small and the pattern will be small.

Well, one of the purposes of Lord of Mysteries is to break through the limitations of the past. No matter whether the Destruction of Fortune, Throne of Magical Arcana, or The Sage Who Transcended Samsara, there is no problem in the world structure itself. It can even be said that some creativity and strength systems are also good (proud face). However, the problem is that it is not detailed enough. The bottom layer of the whole world is empty, giving people a feeling of unreality. Therefore, before writing Lord of Mysteries, I was thinking, I want you to imagine what kind of life every Beyonder usually lives, what kind of difficulties they will encounter, how they interact with ordinary people, and what kind of life ordinary people live, and what kind of impact they will have on the extraordinary world, which I want to write down.

Therefore, I, who am not an economics major, can only take the price data of the Victorian era for reference, so that you can see that there are such a world and such a life.

It's always emphasized that how many pounds and how many soli are there, not only the problem of authenticity, but also the most intuitive description of social stratification so that some things will come to pass. I used to worry about how to integrate the Cthulhu style into the world of Steampunk, how to show the evil spirits, and after reading the data, there is no such doubt in my heart. If there is an evil spirit, that era will inevitably give birth to evil spirits.

In addition, many of the contrast itself contain strong stories, just like Mrs. Landlord.

This inspiration comes from my most real feelings. I remember that I first read the information about the lives of poor people in the Victorian era. I only felt that they had a hard time and had to haggle over every penny because it meant a meal or even a day's food. Then I read these monographs on middle-class marriage research, which contained detailed housewives' expenses. I immediately felt that this was totally different from the poor. A banquet cost 4 or 5 pounds, a weekly cost of several pounds, single-family or row houses, clothes, education, servants, etc.

After reading it, I deeply felt that the gold pounds at that time were really valuable, earning 200 to 300 pounds a year and 400 to 500 pounds a year, I could live quite well.

With this kind of mood, I turned over a book on the life of Victorian aristocrats and big businessmen, the first part of the opening told me like this:

A trained foxhound costs 400 to 700 pounds, and a Lord keeps 30 and changes them every year.

My mood at that time should be the mood when you saw the plot, regardless of the narration, let you feel my mood at that time directly with the plot.

All right, I've talked a lot and summarized a lot. In October, I hope I can take back some lines and write down some major plots. Today there will be three shifts, then a few days later, and then there will be three shifts. It can't reduce the quality in order to add more, right? I also need rest, and I hope everyone can continue to support me.

Finally, don't forget to vote for the moon, double during the National Day! If you are thrown away, you will not be able to recover it.

Chapter 389 - Nighthawk

The crimson moon outside the window was obscured by the clouds, its moonlight that penetrated through the curtain barely outlined the large objects in the bedroom. The darkness and intensity became the main theme of the room.

Klein sat in such an environment and was in no hurry to leave.

He looked at the sleeping Dr. Aaron and began to analyze the images he had seen in the dream.

Will Auceptin eventually held the Wheel of Fortune card in his hand. And in such a dream, everything symbolizes something. It’s a revelation obtained by one’s Astral Projection… In other words, Will Auceptin’s matter is related to fate. Furthermore, that giant silver snake might very well represent the Snake of Mercury. This child might actually be related to a High-Sequence Beyonder, be of the Monster pathway, or some strange Sealed Artifact…

Does his danger stem from the Snake of Mercury or the result of greed due to the strange Sealed Artifact?

But the Snake of Mercury is Sequence 1. It’s an existence closest to that of a god. Just its name on its own is an embodiment of “His” high level. It’s impossible that “He” can’t do anything to a child like Will Auceptin. That Amon who is of an unknown Sequence number—perhaps Sequence 1, 2, or 3—could even invade the space above the gray fog with just an avatar…

This matter doesn't seem to be that simple. There must be a huge secret behind his matter.

At this thought, Klein had already decided to pull back completely.

It's obviously a very dangerous matter. Furthermore, that tarot card might not be a mystical item. What's special might very well be Will Auceptin himself. Yes, apart from having nightmares, Dr. Aaron's troubles are already settled. There's no reason for me to get involved in it. To proactively act on this and challenge the impossible is nearly identical to suicide… Hmm, yes, I must follow what my heart tells me! Klein pushed the surface of the dressing table with his black-gloved right hand and slowly stood up.

Having just entered the dream, he was completely convinced that Dr. Aaron's nightmare came from a revelation that his Astral Projection had received in the spirit world. And that revelation had been deliberately created and provided by a high-level existence. The paper crane was just a tool for locating him.

According to a chapter in the Book of Secrets, Klein could also try to use the paper crane to find Dr. Aaron's Astral Projection in the spirit world and observe the source of the revelation, but he had already decided to not get involved.

Stretching his body, Klein flipped through Dr. Aaron's leather wallet with the last of his curiosity, and he took out the paper crane.

He placed the paper crane on the tip of his cane, and he held them simultaneously. Then, his eyes turned deep as he softly muttered to himself, "Will Auceptin's current location."

After the divination sentence was repeated seven times, a breeze suddenly blew in the room, bringing with it a cool feeling as if it were blowing on one's soul.

Klein let go of his right palm, and the cane stood firm before falling down with the paper cranes, pointing diagonally at the bed.

“There…” Klein frowned and moved to another position. He repeated the divination and successfully received his feedback.

And the intersection point of the two divinations was Dr. Aaron!

Will Auceptin’s position overlaps with that of Dr. Aaron… That’s interesting… Klein said to himself, amused and amazed.

His curiosity was piqued to the extreme.

Although he didn’t intend to get involved in this matter, he wanted to know why there was an overlapping situation such as this.

Hmm… Why don’t I bring the paper crane above the gray fog for divination. With the gray fog’s obstruction, there won’t be any accidents… Klein quickly came up with a new idea.

Since it wasn’t convenient for him to summon himself in Dr. Aaron’s bedroom, he decided to take the paper crane home first.

He had actually long prepared for this. Before coming, Klein couldn’t confirm the seriousness of the matter, and he had hoped to find Will Auceptin, seeing if he had the opportunity to obtain the tarot card. Therefore, he had prepared another paper crane to replace the real one. It made it easier for him to do all sorts of divination, and he could switch it back once the problem was resolved.

As soon as he thought of it, Klein took out the paper crane he had prepared.

He had deliberately folded it above the gray fog, just in case Dr. Aaron had suddenly decided to hand over anything related to Will Auceptin to the Church of Evernight, allowing his counterfeit to be divined.

Taking into account the overall picture and the details would make things much easier… Klein praised himself.

With the help of the faint moonlight, he carefully compared Will Auceptin's paper crane and his, to see if there were any clear differences.

Upon comparing them, Klein immediately fell silent.

His handicraft skills weren't even comparable to a child's…

In fact, they're all paper cranes, so there isn't much of a difference. Mine is only a little cruder. As long as Aaron hadn't studied the original one carefully, then he wouldn't be able to tell that it has been swapped… Klein muttered silently to himself, took out a coin, and used divination to make a final confirmation.

After receiving a revelation that confirmed this, he put his paper crane back into Aaron's wallet and returned it to its original position. He then took care of the scene, bringing Will Auceptin's paper crane along with him and left 3 Birmingham Road.

With the help of the dowsing rod, Klein successfully returned home. While he was taking a bath, he summoned himself and brought the paper crane along with the Master Key above the gray fog.

Sitting in the quiet and empty palace hall, he picked up the paper crane and carefully examined it for a few seconds, but he didn't discover anything abnormal.

Then, with a pen and paper, Klein wrote the same divination sentence as before: "Will Auceptin's current location."

This time, he switched to using dream divination, and he was pleasantly surprised to see an image appear in the world of the gray fog.

It was a dark room. A strong and dignified Will Auceptin leaned against the desk with the help of a chair by the window, and he looked out at the scenery with his pitch-black eyes.

He held a stack of tarot cards in each hand, and beside them, there was a pile of wooden blocks.

The wooden blocks formed a ring-shaped snake that connected itself from head to tail.

The scene outside the window was just as dark, and there was the faint sound of flowing water.

The dream ended here without a sound. Klein opened his eyes, tapped the edge of the long bronze table with his finger, and he said to himself, That Ouroboros-like snake is indeed the Snake of Mercury? That means it's the Snake of Mercury which represents fate…

There was the sound of running water outside the window. Does that mean that Will Auceptin's current position is close to the Tussock River?

Previously, when I divined his position, was the overlap with Dr. Aaron caused due to interference by fate?

Seeing that divination above the gray fog could only receive a revelation of this degree, Klein was no longer troubled by curiosity. He barely interpreted the situation and planned to exchange the paper crane tomorrow night. He would then find an opportunity to guide Dr. Aaron and have him go to the Church of Evernight to tell the bishop about this matter.

It's best to leave such matters to the officials… Klein let out a chuckle and returned to the real world.

After taking a leisurely bath, he didn't get busy and crawled into bed.

After an unknown period of time, Klein suddenly realized that he was clearly dreaming. He was in the living room, reading the Book of Secrets.

This… this familiar feeling… He turned his head to look at the door like he usually did.

The door creaked open, and a figure in a gray coat walked in.

He was about thirty years old, with a long, thin face with a broad forehead, and dark blue eyes that looked intelligent.

It's not the Captain… Klein suddenly gave a self-deprecating laugh, let out a silent breath, and turned the Book of Secrets in his hand into a copy of Ladies Aesthetic.

He flipped through the magazine, casually greeting the newcomer.

The man in the gray coat took off his hat and sat down across him, seemingly casually asking him, "Aaron came to see you this morning?"

It's really is a Nighthawk, a Nightmare… Klein resisted the urge to sigh and replied with a smile, "Yes."

He had already figured out why the Nighthawk had suddenly entered his dream.

The Nightmare in front of him was likely the Captain of the Nighthawks team responsible for the matter regarding Will Auceptin, but they had yet to find any useful clues up to date.

In this case, Dr. Aaron and Detective Sherlock Moriarty's act of visiting to ask about Will Auceptin's whereabouts must've been made known to them last night or this morning. At the same time, they discovered that Dr. Aaron rushed over to Minsk Street, shortly after he finished his breakfast, to visit Detective Sherlock Moriarty.

In the spirit of professionalism, entering a person's dream at night was the most natural and normal development. As for Dr. Aaron, his situation was rather sensitive, so rashly entering a dream might cut off clues, so there was no doubt that a certain detective became the first choice.

"What did he encounter?" the captain of the Nighthawks team asked "casually."

Klein answered honestly, "He had a nightmare…"

Klein described the pitch-black tower, the giant silver snake, and Will Auceptin under layers of protection, and other scenes. Finally, he said, "Before this nightmare, Aaron had gone to Will Auceptin's place to find the child, partially because he was worried about his health but also because he was puzzled over his bad luck. Unfortunately, the Auceptin family had moved away. However, Aaron recalled that the boy had given him a paper crane that the boy had folded himself and had wished him luck.

"Perhaps agitated by these two events, he had such a nightmare."

The man in the gray coat looked pleasantly surprised.

"Paper crane?"

"Yes." Klein nodded slightly. "The child gave it to Aaron before he was discharged, and Aaron threw it into his office drawer. He forgot about it until last night."

"I understand. Thank you for your explanation." The captain of the Nighthawks team stood up and bowed with his hand against his chest in a very polite manner.

Suddenly, there was a ripple in the dreamland, and he disappeared from the room.

Looking at the position where he had sat, Klein deduced what would happen next.

The Nighthawks might go to Dr. Aaron's tonight and enter his dream for investigations and take the paper crane away. However, a question arose. The paper crane was folded by Klein, and the real thing was above the gray fog.

Forget it. Regardless of which paper crane they use, they'll never be able to divine the answer. It doesn't matter if I switch it back or not… Klein said to himself.

He gathered his thoughts and continued to sit there. He wasn’t in a hurry to leave the dreamland, and he stared blankly for a long time.

After a while, the corners of his mouth curled up as he softly sighed.

How nostalgic…

Chapter 390 - Anticipation!

◆

On Sunday morning, shortly after Klein finished his breakfast, he heard the doorbell ring as he had expected.

But to his surprise, it wasn’t just Reporter Mike Joseph. Dr. Aaron was with him as well.

“Sherlock, I had that nightmare again last night. I don’t think it’s normal.” Aaron didn’t keep matters a secret even with Mike around, revealing it the moment he entered the living room.

Without waiting for Klein’s reply, he took out his wallet and took out a paper crane.

“Do you think this is the problem?

“Ever since I found it and started to carry it with me, I’ve been having nightmares.”

Klein nonchalantly glanced at it when his expression froze suddenly. If he hadn’t been a Clown in the past and had great control over his facial muscles, then he might’ve revealed an undisguised smile in front of the reporter and doctor. Yes, a smile.

This… this paper crane is even uglier than the one I made… This was the first thought that came to Klein’s mind.

At that moment, he had the urge to cover his face and sigh.

Could having poor handicraft skills be a tradition of the Nighthawks?

There was no doubt that the paper crane in front of him was the result of another switch. After receiving accurate information from Klein, the Nighthawks had seemingly sneaked into Dr. Aaron's bedroom without any delay and switched their folded paper crane for the one in his wallet.

But what they didn't expect was that the one in the wallet was also a fake. It was folded by Klein above the gray fog and appeared rather crude.

I feel an inexplicable sense of joy… Klein glanced at Dr. Aaron, who didn't notice it, cleared his throat, and said, "Perhaps. I suggest that you go to the cathedral again and talk to the bishop you previously talked to. We need to believe that the gods that we believe in are always watching over us."

As he spoke, he drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

After the Nightmare had left last night, Klein had specifically gone above the gray fog to divine if it was dangerous having switched the paper crane. The result was that it was very safe. Thus, he was now able to make this suggestion with great interest, in an attempt to tease his former colleagues.

I wonder how they would feel seeing the paper crane that they didn't fold very well return to them… Klein placated Dr. Aaron in all seriousness and turned to the reporter and said with a smile, "Mike, to tell the truth, what I really want to advise Aaron to do is to go see a psychiatrist, but faith can certainly soothe his soul."

"You're not being frank at all." Mike laughed. "All right, let's go."

The next day, Klein accompanied the Daily Observer reporter into East Borough to interview the rescued girls.

With a full pound as payment for the interview, no one refused it, not even some of the abused girls.

In this interview, Capim's sin was the main focus. The current situation of the girls was another main focus. The former made people angry, while the latter left people feeling heavy.

Daisy was actually lucky enough to be able to return to work when she got home and use her labor to barter for food. Less than a third of those who were rescued were like her, and most of them were the kinds with some savings at home, and they were in a position that allowed the traumatized women to heal and have time before they sought out suitable jobs.

As for the other two-thirds of those rescued, they had to continue working hard in order to survive. And in the face of the mass unemployment of textile workers, they were often only able to find temporary jobs with low wages. Those with parents and siblings who hadn't lost their jobs were still okay; at least, they were able to help each other, barely filling their stomachs. The families in less optimistic situations had already begun to walk the path of street girls, as though they had never been rescued. Their act of betraying their bodies once was perhaps only for some food.

This caused Mike to turn silent like before, and it was only when it was dark and once he left East Borough before his spirit returned. He thanked Klein.

"Sherlock, it's all thanks to you. Otherwise, I definitely would've been blackmailed today by those rogue gangsters."

"Isn't that why you hired me?" Klein smiled politely without any complacency.

With Old Kohler informing them beforehand, Old Kohler and Liv's family hadn't revealed that he had helped search for Daisy for free. Especially when Daisy, who was pretty smart, was asked if she knew any relatively special people, she answered directly, "Mr. Reporter and Mr. Detective."

Mike nodded sluggishly and walked on in silence for a long time.

Before he boarded the carriage, he suddenly let out a sigh.

“I would like to make a call in this report for the government to use Capim’s estate to set up a bursary fund, which will use the annual income to help the rescued girls and others who have been harmed by Capim to get them out of their predicament.

“Although Capim’s safe had already been robbed clean by the Hero Bandit, his greatest wealth is the property he bought. Th-these should have all been obtained illegally.”

Klein listened carefully, gave Mike a deep look, and said in sincere praise, “You’re the best reporter I’ve ever met.”

“There are plenty of reporters like me. There are always idealists in the world.” Mike sighed.

With that, he paid 10 pounds to Klein and took off his hat and waved it.

As he watched the reporter get into the rental carriage, Klein was about to take a public carriage in the other direction when Mike suddenly opened the window and asked with a jibing smile, “Sherlock, I’m not the only reporter you know, am I?”

Klein was stunned for a moment, then he laughed.

“Guess.”

†

City of Silver.

Like a trapped beast, Derrick Berg paced around the room in anxiety.

He felt that the Chief wasn’t paying enough attention to his report. He was worried that the exploratory team members, who had been affected by the Fallen Creator to an unknown extent, would cause devastating damage to this city that had lasted for 2,582 years in the darkness after their quarantine.

In such a situation, he was eager to obtain advice from Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and company, who were rather familiar with the Fallen Creator.

This was the Tarot Gathering he anticipated the most.

Wait a little while longer, just wait a little longer. If Mr. Fool doesn't summon me, I will pray directly to him… Derrick tried to calm himself down, but his pacing didn't slow down one bit.

Suddenly, he saw the endless gray fog and heard the messianic voice say, "Prepare for the gathering."

With a sigh of relief, Derrick sat down on the edge of the bed carefully and lay down, pretending to be ready to sleep due to exhaustion.

After silently counting a thousand rapid heartbeats, he waited for a while before he was engulfed by the illusory dark red light.

At that moment, Derrick's room was abnormally quiet. Lightning streaked across the sky outside his window, keeping the darkness away from the land.

Suddenly, by the corner of his bed, a black figure squirmed and extended, taking the shape of a human!

The dark figure quickly grew tall and quietly looked down at Derrick.

He carefully observed him for nearly a minute, then withdrew without gleaning anything.

In the corner, the shadows remained the same, unchanging.

†

The endless gray fog lingered beneath his feet as usual. The long bronze table in front of him was mottled with green rust, but it didn't seem to be rotten at all. The first things that Derrick saw were Miss Justice and Miss Magician sitting opposite him. The familiar, jovial greeting sounded in his ear.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

"Good afternoon…"

Klein, shrouded in gray fog, nodded slightly. He seemed to respond leisurely to Miss Justice and the other members' greetings, but in reality, he was busy manipulating The World, making him appear like a real person.

After yesterday's interviews with Reporter Mike, it was already dinner time. Klein went to a restaurant that served Feynapotter cuisine, and he was so overwhelmed by the spiciness that he voluntarily ordered a cup of desert beer.

After eating his fill and returning home, he didn't go out again for the rest of the day. Neither did he study the Book of Secrets or prepare his own food. That eased the heavy emotions he felt whenever he went to East Borough.

Without realizing it, the afternoon had arrived, and his thoughts shifted to the Tarot Gathering.

After the greetings, Justice, Audrey, restrained her curiosity and excitement, and she was in no hurry to inquire about the truth behind the Capim incident.

Mr. Fool might not answer, but how would I know if "He" wishes to answer if I don't ask? Well, I hope "He" makes a request of equal value, and I'll do my best to fulfill it… Audrey looked around at the other members and observed the states of the other members.

As a Telepathist, she very quickly discovered something strange.

Eh, The Sun appears very anxious. Did something happen to the previous exploratory team captain? Did he encounter Amon?

In addition, Fors is in an indecisive state of wanting to ask but not daring to… She must've seen the papers and guessed from the tarot cards that our Tarot Club was involved in Capim's death. But she's curious who the Emperor card represents… She seems to be even more in awe of Mr. Fool. What happened?

Mr. Hanged Man seems to be in a very good mood. He's finished digesting his potion… He seems to be anticipating something…

Mr. World is still as gloomy and reserved as before, and it's hard to read his thoughts. He really is the nemesis of the Spectator pathway…

Derrick, didn't try to hide his anxiety, but he didn't consult the other Tarot Club members directly.

He knew perfectly well that the initial time belonged to Mr. Fool, unless there were no so-called Roselle diary entries.

There's no need to rush. The gathering has already begun… If Mr. Fool is in a good mood, he might be able to answer some questions… Derrick consoled himself.

Alger looked up and humbly said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I've found three new pages of Roselle's diary."

Diary? Roselle's diary? Fors pricked up her ears.

Klein smiled and replied, "What do you want to exchange them for?"

Glancing at the card next to Mr. Fool's hand, Alger suppressed his eagerness and said, "I want to know what that card you have next to you is."

Chapter 391 - The Great Seafarer Roselle

◆

I know that… Audrey's eyes were half-turned, and her chin was slightly raised. She happily cast her gaze diagonally across her, towards a stone pillar that supported the dome.

She quickly withdrew her gaze, ready to admire the reaction of Mr. Hanged Man after he heard the answer.

Fors vaguely realized one thing: The so-called Roselle's diary can be exchanged with Mr. Fool for answers to certain questions, and maybe even some items!

Roselle's diary? Is it referring to the notes that are written with Roselle's unique symbols that no one can interpret? They were actually diary entries? Mr. Hanged Man's tone sounded very firm and Mr. Fool didn't retort him…

I've encountered many, but I've never bought any of them because I wasn't interested. Ah, yes, Miss Audrey has quite a few! She's a fanatic when it comes to this! B-but that dog of hers… last week, no—maybe last week, I don't remember it too well… Basically, it tore up many books and notes, including all of the diary entries from Emperor Roselle!

The sudden surprise and disappointment that emerged had filled her heart and made her want to raise her hands, cover her ears, and scream.

That wasn't enough to express her current feelings!

I hate dogs! Fors bitterly thought.

The Hanged Man's request was somewhat beyond Klein's expectations. However, it was the easiest for him to complete. He chuckled and said, "Sure."

"Do you want everyone to hear it, or do you want to be the only one to know it?"

Alger replied without hesitation, "Only myself."

He didn't have the spirit of selfless devotion to others.

Klein laughed and blocked the senses of the other members, which made Miss Justice very upset. She was waiting to see Mr. Hanged Man's stunned and shocked expression, as though she had done something great herself. Although she couldn't proclaim it out loud, she still looked forward to the subsequent reaction after Mr. Hanged Man knew the answer.

But now, that detestable Hanged Man has deprived me of this happiness! Audrey grumbled inwardly.

Of course, she was very clear that his request was absolutely justified.

But I already know the answer… she pursed her lips and thought.

At this moment, Klein leisurely flipped over the Card of Blasphemy and held it vertically, allowing The Hanged Man to directly see the black-armored, crowned, and caped Roselle.

It was common to see the portrait of Emperor Roselle, so Alger recognized him immediately. More importantly, there was a clear sign on the card saying: "Sequence 0, Black Emperor!"

Indeed! It's the rumored deck of cards, which contains the paths of the divine, made by Emperor Roselle. It's the original prototype of tarot cards! Sequence 0, Black Emperor… Is this the Lawyer pathway to becoming divine? Mr. Fool has been collecting Roselle's diary all this time, apparently in order to find clues to this deck of cards, and in a matter of months, "He" has already acquired one… Alger was surprised and delighted, as well as excited and agitated.

All of a sudden, he inexplicably felt that the future of the Tarot Club was incomparably bright.

Previously, he had only been intimidated by the mysteriousness and potency of Mr. Fool, and he had only held the notion of using the Tarot Club to exchange information and goods. But now, he began to think of the advantages that he and the other members could reap when Mr. Fool managed to collect all of Emperor Roselle's cards.

At that time, the Tarot Club might become the most powerful secret organization! Alger couldn't help but look forward to the future.

Then Klein said slowly, "A Card of Blasphemy."

He then immediately removed the isolation barrier.

As soon as she regained her senses, Justice Audrey immediately turned her gaze towards The Hanged Man. Through the blurred image, she could vaguely "read" the remaining shock, joy, and yearning from the other party.

That's more like it… Audrey was immediately greatly satisfied.

A Card of Blasphemy… Indeed, it's related to the Blasphemy Slate… Alger bowed his head in thought for a few seconds and began to conjure the three pages of Roselle's diary.

Soon, the three yellowish-brown goatskin parchments were in Klein's hands.

He casually lowered his gaze and started reading at a moderate pace.

"15th March. I really am the protagonist. With just some archaeological clues and folklore, I've found a ghost ship left behind by the Solomon Empire in the Fog Sea's boundary at the Aurak Archipelago, the Dark King!

"It's really cool!

"There are some ancient books on it, including a treasure map pointing to some nameless island. That's the final settlement of a great noble of the Solomon Empire who was defeated and left the Northern Continent. Everything that he left behind is there!

"This treasure will definitely belong to me!

"19th March. After much deliberation and consideration, I've finally decided to set out on a long voyage. After that, I'll enter the Royal Army as an officer, so it will be hard for me to have an opportunity such as this again.

"Edwards and Grimm are willing to take the risk and follow me into that foggy sea.

"Actually, I don't just want the treasures. I also wanted to verify something—from the sun, the red moon, to the trajectory of the stars in the sky, as well as the changes in four seasons, all sorts of signs and different data to prove that the world I'm on should be a planet. In that case, it shouldn't only be the Northern and Southern Continents. Based on the various data, the land mass occupied by the two continents totaled up isn't even a tenth of the planet's surface area. Could the rest of it be the sea and islands?

"To the west of the Northern and Southern Continent is the Fog Sea; to the east is the Sonia Sea. I suspect that there are other continents at the end of these two seas, just like how the Southern Continent is at the end of the Berserk Sea. Maybe I can find a brand-new continent, the Western Continent!

"Let's go, great seafarer Roselle Columbus Magellan Gustav, go and verify your conjecture!"

The Emperor sure was reckless when he was young. He actually dared to go on a voyage just because he received a treasure map that he had no clue about its authenticity, or if it held any danger. No, he's as rash as he was when he was young, even in his old age. The Cards of Blasphemy are evidence of this… Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

The diary entry seems to be linked to a page or two that he had seen before, separated by at most one or two other diary entries, so Klein was almost certain that Roselle had lost his way in this voyage and ended up finding a primitive island just outside of the safe sea routes. On it, there were a number of Beyonder creatures. In the process, he had also teased Grimm and Edwards, who were following him to sea, using the memes of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and the Pirate King.

In addition, Grimm, who had been praised by Roselle as the smartest of them all, became increasingly stranger after discovering the primitive island, and he ended up dying in the Fog Sea.

Speaking of which, the idea that the world is a planet is now widely accepted and confirmed by astronomy… Klein turned to the second page of the diary.

"18th April. I discovered the term Western Continent in an ancient book on the Dark King!

"There really is a Western Continent!

"However, even during the Fourth Epoch, in the Solomon Empire, when the gods were still walking the lands, the Western Continent was only a rumor. Legend has it that it was the homeland of the elves, and it was related to the ancient god named Soniathrym.

"The problem with that is that the elves ended up on Sonia Island and later scattered themselves over the mountains and the numerous islands in the seas, and there is no legend that they have ever tried to return to their homeland.

“In short, the end of the Fog Sea might be the Western Continent, the homeland of the elves. Then, what’s at the end of the Sonia Sea? Is there really an Eastern Continent? Where is it hidden in the books of myths? Could it be the ethereal Forsaken Land of God?

“Proceed onward, Roselle. You’re about to reach your destination!”

The Western Continent, the Eastern Continent… Roselle guessed that the latter might be the Forsaken Land of God… Yes, Mr. Hanged Man once said that many members of the Aurora Order were searching the Sonia Sea for the True Creator’s holy residence. And he suspects that the holy residence is the Forsaken Land of God… This is in line with Emperor Roselle’s thoughts… This world has many secrets… Klein lowered his gaze towards the last few paragraphs of the page.

“20th April. All signs indicate that we’re about to reach a continent, not the land from an island!

“There’s actually a benefit to being lost? Could it be that I’ve discovered the so-called Western Continent?”

“21st April. I saw the abyss.”

Abyss? Did Roselle see the Abyss, the Abyss in the sense of mysticism? Klein’s pupils shrank as he quickly turned the page.

But the third page of his diary made him doubt his life and his many years of Chinese education.

It was filled with the following sentences: “Ah, f**k hungry please people in manor.”

This… Klein realized that this was probably a subsequent forgery of Roselle’s diary entries. They had randomly pieced together a bunch of sentences based on the original “symbols.”

At this moment, Klein felt like he was seeing intelligible characters and had the urge to curse those forgers.

He wanted to know if the abyss mentioned in Roselle's diary was the Abyss to which the terms "source of evil," "land of corruption," and "home of devils" referred to.

The true Abyss is the Dark Side of the Universe where even gods can be corroded. It should be independent from the real world, just like the spirit world. At the very least, this is what the Book of Secrets and the books which I came into contact with during my time with the Nighthawks say… If it's not the true Abyss, then what did the Emperor mean by "abyss?" Klein thought about it, over and over again, but was unable to come up with an explanation. He felt extremely dissatisfied, just like when a novel was dropped by the author at the most critical moment.

With a single glance, he calmed down and let the diary entries disappear from his hands.

"You can begin." Sitting at the head of the long bronze table, he chuckled.

Alger turned his head immediately towards The Sun, asking indifferently, "Have you gotten anything from the former captain of that exploratory team?"

Chapter 392 - Listening to Little Sun's Story

◆

Derrick was originally anxious to ask about the Fallen Creator, but when he heard The Hanged Man's question, he answered honestly, "He's dead."

"He's dead?" Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Magician expressed their surprise at the same time.

They really didn't expect this turn of events. After all, the former captain of the exploratory team had been locked up for decades without any problems. Who would've thought that he would die right after they discussed about him!?

At this moment, aside from Mr. Fool, only the gloomy and reserved The World maintained his original state.

Derrick nodded and said, "Yes. After I returned to the City of Silver, I wanted to glean more information from the former captain using Mr. Hanged Man's suggestions, but he suddenly appeared behind me, asking me if I was looking for him."

Upon hearing this, Audrey suddenly drew a short breath.

Although The Sun obviously lacked the ability to tell a good story, his simple descriptions still gave her the feeling of reading horror novels late into the night. It was as if someone was standing behind her, also asking, "Are you looking for me?"

Fors was as frightened as she was excited, having found the feeling she had as a child listening to her mother's recount of a ghost story. Despite covering her ears in fear, it felt like someone had possessed her and pried open the gaps between her fingers, allowing the voice to be transmitted into her brain.

This passage can be written into a novel! As a best-selling writer, she had outstanding professional instincts!

Alger, being experienced and knowledgeable, subconsciously asked, "Doesn't your City of Silver's dungeon have seals targeting Rampagers? Is there no barrier between them? I remember that last time you said that there was a very powerful and mysterious item at the core."

"Yes, but I don't know how or why he came to my room. He had completely lost control of himself—his head had split open in the middle and fluid kept flowing out. There were many cracks on his body, and each crack was a mouth," Derrick said, describing the scene in passing.

"Then, how did you survive? How did you escape from his, no—its jaws?" Fors felt immersed, and it was also a question which Audrey was concerned about.

Alger's reaction was very different from theirs. He thoughtfully murmured, "It doesn't make sense to put you—a person who only shows signs of losing control—next to such a dangerous fellow.

"From the looks of it, the upper echelons of your City of Silver, the members of the six-member council, deliberately made you interact with him, hoping to gather useful information from him and observe any corresponding changes.

"So, which elder saved you?"

Derrick's mouth gaped a little, feeling as if Mr. Hanged Man had personally seen and heard everything that had happened.

Just based on the situation I described, he was able to guess the truth. How amazing! Derrick answered with admiration, “Yes, just as you said, the Chief appeared just in time and used the mystical item to deal with the Rampager.”

Noticing the respect and admiration from The Sun, Alger let out a chuckle.

“It’s quite an obvious case. As long as one is experienced enough, you’ll easily be able to notice this.”

I didn’t think of it… Audrey muttered to herself, somewhat depressed.

I couldn’t tell… Fors ran her hand through her hair, ashamed.

I didn’t think in that direction… The World repeated Mr. Fool’s sigh.

After saying that, Alger frowned slightly and slowly asked, “You said that not long after you returned, the former Captain of the exploratory team lost control?

“He didn’t lose control for decades, but he suddenly lost control after you returned?”

At the same time, Mr. Hanged Man raised his head and looked at Mr. Fool. Seeing that Mr. Fool was very calm and without any hint of abnormalities, his mood immediately eased. All the uneasiness he had just now turned into questions.

The Amon family is known as Blasphemers. Could it be that that person discovered the Tarot Club and the secret above the gray fog, but he was easily finished off by Mr. Fool?

Derrick nodded seriously and said, “I guessed two reasons. One was because I chose the Sun pathway, and you said that the Amon family was the descendant of an ancient sun god. The other reason is that he noticed that Mr. Fool was pulling me in to attend the gathering, so changes happened to him, and it was proven to be the latter.”

"How was it proven?" Alger pressed, leaving no stone unturned.

Someone sensed that Mr. Fool was pulling him in to attend the gathering? Someone can really detect it? How terrifying… As expected of a Blasphemer… Audrey was astonished and shocked.

She couldn't help but glance at the end of the long bronze table, and she was immediately comforted by Mr. Fool's calm and indifferent attitude.

It's just a trivial matter. To Mr. Fool, it's just a trivial matter… Audrey thought with joy and relief.

So it turns out that someone is able to discover the Tarot Club's gathering… As expected, with so many pathways and so many Sequences, there would always be a Beyonder power that can detect this… But for me right now, this is a very bad thing… I'm still too weak. I have to advance my Sequence as soon as possible… Fors was momentarily surprised and frightened.

Derrick truthfully described the events, "I saw Amon's shadow when the Rampager was finished off by the Chief. It should be him. This is what he looks like."

With the approval of Mr. Fool, Derrick conjured a light screen depicting Amon.

A black classic robe, a matching pointed hat, a crystal monocle, a broad forehead, a thin face, black eyes, black curly hair…

"Have any of you seen him before?" Derrick asked hopefully.

The Hanged Man, Justice, The Magician, and The World shook their heads in unison.

Without harping on the matter, Derrick continued, "Amon's shadow was eliminated by the Chief with the help of the mystical item, leaving being a translucent worm.

“The Chief told me that it was only an avatar of Amon…

“He explained to me the reason for arranging it so I lived beside him. After confirming that I was fine, he allowed me to return home. I was a little afraid, unaware of any subsequent actions Amon might take. Therefore, the moment I reached home, I prayed to Mr. Fool…”

“Wait,” Alger interrupted The Sun with a frown, “you said that you just experienced such a strange and terrifying incident, and the Chief let you go home just like that? And the moment you returned home, you didn’t do anything but first pray to Mr. Fool?”

“Yes,” Derrick answered blankly.

What’s wrong with that? He found Mr. Hanged Man’s attitude rather odd.

Audrey vaguely felt that what The Sun had done wasn’t right, but she couldn’t immediately figure out what was wrong. She just believed that if she were in his shoes, she definitely wouldn’t have done that. But at that very moment, Fors had already covered her face.

Too careless… I was like that in the past, and the price of that was to use up a stone on my bracelet and start bearing the curse of the full moon… The best-selling writer sighed in her heart.

Alger glanced at Mr. Fool again. Seeing that he remained indifferent, he forced himself to relax. He held his fist against his nose and said, “After having such an interaction with that strange Amon, do you think the Chief will just do a cursory inspection and be completely reassured about you?

“If that’s really the case, that former captain of the exploratory team wouldn’t have been imprisoned for forty-two years.

“In my experience, the Chief has definitely sent someone to secretly monitor you, and you’ve undoubtedly exposed your own uniqueness!

“Don’t doubt this. If the Chief isn’t that careful, then there’s no way your City of Silver can last till this day under such abject environments.”

This… Derrick’s eyes widened, being even more convinced that Mr. Hanged Man was truly knowledgeable and that what he said made a lot of sense!

Th-the Chief discovered something abnormal about me? So, that’s why he had such an attitude when he heard my report? What should I do? What should I do… Derrick immediately became nervous and frightened.

Noticing his concern, Alger scoffed.

“However, you don’t have to worry about it for now. I just thought about it, even if your City of Silver’s Chief found out about your abnormality, he would only suspect that you were possessed by Amon, that you’ve been contaminated by him, and wouldn’t think of the Tarot Club. You still have time, so you can slowly think of a way to resolve this problem.”

Derrick calmed down a little and honestly said, “Back then, I really was possessed by Amon.”

“What?” Alger blurted out.

He nearly left his seat, taking on a combat stance to fend off any accidents.

Audrey and Fors immediately tensed up. Only the gloomy World showed mere surprise.

Startled by the reaction of Mr. Hanged Man, Derrick quickly added, “Mr. Fool discovered it while I was praying.”

As he spoke, he conjured the scene which Mr. Fool had sent to him back then. Dressed in a pointed hat and a crystal monocle, Amon’s illusory figure was coiled around his Spirit Body like the ghost of a python.

Seeing Justice and Magician trembling from the bottom of their hearts, The Hanged Man immediately pressed on, “What happened next?”

“Later, Mr. Fool taught me a ritual. Through the ritual, ‘He’ sent his angel to purify Amon’s avatar,” Derrick replied without embellishing or simplifying anything.

Angel? The Hanged Man looked in shock at the end of the bronze table.

He hurriedly lowered his head when he realized that his actions were impulsive and impolite.

Angel? Audrey was momentarily left dazed.

Chapter 393 - The Worm of Time

◆

After a brief moment of blankness, Audrey quickly understood what The Sun was saying—he was saying that Mr. Fool had sent “His” angel to purify Amon’s avatar!

Angel!

Mr. Fool sent an angel!

Mr. Fool really has an angel as an attendant!

Every angel has at least the power of a Sequence 2…

Although that’s expected and I’ve already expected it, it’s still amazing because it has finally been verified!

And only deities can control angels!

Audrey’s eyes shone with excitement. She couldn’t help but wonder what Mr. Fool’s angel looked like.

I wonder if I’ll be lucky enough to see that… She looked towards the end of the long bronze table with admiration and zeal.

At the same time, her spiritual perception told her that Mr. World, who was always gloomy, had also sat up straight in shock, which pleased her inexplicably.

Fors recalled what had happened to her previously. She had only asked Mr. Fool to interfere with any divinations, and she ended up seeing a twelve-winged archangel descend, enveloping her Spirit Body with its wings.

It really was an angel… Black wings, an archangel with twelve pairs of wings… And this really is just a routine procedure for Mr. Fool. "He" would send an angel to help members of the gathering get out of trouble… Fors suddenly didn't dare to look up at the gentleman who was sitting leisurely at the end of the long bronze table.

Although she was still only Sequence 9, and she hadn't received a complete education in the field of mysticism, she had been involved with different Beyonder circles for three years. She would've learned of certain things even if she didn't deliberately find out about them.

In the midst of all of this, there was a very important clause: "Do not look directly at God."

In the past, this sentence didn't leave much of an impression on Fors, but now she suddenly felt that it was the truth, the truth derived from countless bloody lessons.

Angel? Mr. Fool really does have an angel by his side! The Hanged Man felt a wave of fear and baffling excitement hit him, causing his body to tremble slightly.

Previously, when "He" told us his honorific name and responded to prayers and rituals, this had indirectly expressed the notion that Mr. Fool was equivalent to a god. However, direct evidence was still lacking. But now, an angel has appeared! The existence of that alone is enough to explain many things! Amongst them, the most important thing is that Angels represent the most direct form of deterrence! Mr. Fool is not without influence in the real world… Even if "He" doesn't go through his Blessed, "He" can still project his majesty onto a certain region… Alger immediately thought of many things. He broke into a cold sweat for his shallow actions in the past while feeling filled with hope for the future.

Immediately following that, he started to think about the details of what The Sun had said.

Mr. Fool didn't let the angel descend directly. Instead, he taught The Sun a ritual. Through that ritual, "He" sent the angel to purify Amon's avatar. That's quite a roundabout way of doing things…

Does this mean that in order to influence the real world, Mr. Fool must break through many obstacles? This is consistent with my earlier judgment that "He" is in a sealed and confined state… Or perhaps there's something special about the Forsaken Land of God?

The reason why Mr. Fool didn't act like this before was because "He" has escaped a little? "He" is gradually freeing "Himself"…

Sitting at Mr. Fool's seat, Klein slowly looked around. He was obviously aware of Miss Justice's reverence and zeal, as well as the fear and excitement of The Hanged Man.

Weren't you always treating me like a god in the past? Why are you acting like this after hearing about the angel? It seems like indirect evidence ultimately cannot be compared to the shock and awe delivered by direct evidence… If a new member were to question me in the future, I would make preparations in advance for The World to step forward and say something. Then, I would casually point my finger and kill him as an example to others… Once things calm down, I would make a new The World… Klein's thoughts gradually wandered.

Derrick didn't quite understand the reactions of Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice. From his point of view, wasn't it normal that an angel served a god or a mighty existence?

After pondering for a few seconds, he said, "After Amon's avatar was purified, I coughed out a worm that was exactly identical to the one in the dungeon. Do you know what it is?"

With the help of Klein's help, The Sun successfully conjured a projection of a translucent worm with twelve transparent rings.

Audrey and Fors looked over curiously. At the same time, they shook their heads, indicating that they had never seen or heard of this kind of worm.

Twelve rings… In the Book of Secrets, all similar symbols have something to do with time… The Amon family was descended from an ancient sun god, and in ancient times, people believed that the sun and time were related… This can barely be considered an explanation and can be verified from two angles… However, why is it that the current Eternal Blazing Sun is the Inextinguishable Light, Embodiment of Order, God of Deeds, and Guardian of Businesses, but he doesn't seem to be involved in the domain that deals with time… In order to maintain his image as The Fool, Klein was in no hurry to answer.

He smiled, his gaze warm.

Alger thought for a moment before saying, "It should be the vessel that Amon created for his avatar.

"In legends, there is a type of worm that looks similar, appearance-wise. They have twelve transparent rings and are called Worms of Time. However, no one has ever seen them before. Many people suspect that it's actually the name of a Sequence potion."

Worm of Time… So it's very close to my guess… Although this is just a legend spread among Beyonders at the middle echelons of particular Churches and above, the information itself is of great value. Is Mr. Hanged Man saying this out loud to let others know this because he has been rewarded, having learned a lot of important information from The Sun? Klein felt wistful and amused at the same time.

"Worm of Time… The vessel that Amon created for his avatar…" Derrick whispered to himself, as though he had resolved many of his doubts.

He curiously asked, “What can it be used for? I mean, when it’s dead.”

“I don’t know.” Faced with The Sun’s trust and respectful gaze, Alger suddenly felt a little ashamed.

At that moment, The Fool, who was sitting at the very end of the long bronze table, spoke calmly, “The main material of certain rituals.”

This was what Klein had surmised from the contents of the Book of Secrets.

However, he wasn’t worried that he would say anything wrong, because it was almost impossible to prove it.

Failing to find the ritual that requires a Worm of Time just serves to prove that you’re not knowledgeable enough! Klein casually added inwardly.

Certain rituals… Audrey and the others instantly let their imaginations run wild.

“Thank you, the great Mr. Fool.” Derrick got up halfway and bowed. Following that, the topic steered towards the matter that threatened the existence of the City of Silver. “The exploratory team is back. I’m referring to the team led by Shepherd Elder Lovia. They completed the exploration of the Fallen Creator’s half-destroyed temple and have returned to the City of Silver. And I discovered that a few of the team members that I know have undergone a certain degree of change.”

“They’ve been corrupted by the True Creator,” Alger didn’t hesitate to point that out with a tone of certainty.

The True Creator? Audrey couldn’t help but look at the end of the bronze table.

She remembered very clearly that the True Creator had once had its descent foiled by Mr. Fool’s Blessed. She had even guessed that the leader of their Tarot Club was going to be “The Nemesis of Evil Gods.”

“Really?” Derrick returned, refusing to believe it.

The Hanged Man calmly said, “Describe their changes in detail.”

“I still feel like he’s the same person, but he’s very different from before. His original optimism has now turned heavy. There’s only a polite smile left from his former bright smile…” Derrick shared everything abnormal that he had discovered, including the sudden improvement in Shepherd Elder Lovia’s state.

Alger said in deliberation, “The situation might be worse than you think. Corruption could be the best possibility.

“Now, if they truly believe, from the bottom of their hearts, in the True—Uh, Fallen Creator, that would be trouble, and they would be irredeemable.

“Regardless, their characters, thoughts, and viewpoints would all be warped, turning into hidden lunatics. You can take action from this angle, letting other members of the six-member council notice that something is amiss.”

“I’ve already reported the matter, but the Chief doesn’t seem to trust me too much,” Derrick said in a slightly aggrieved and heavy manner.

Fors couldn’t help but sigh.

“That’s because your Chief is suspecting that you’re possessed by Amon and planning something nefarious against the City of Silver.”

“Then, what should I do? Even if I tell them of the existence of the Fallen Creator, they wouldn’t believe me, am I right?” Derrick asked anxiously.

The Hanged Man pondered for two seconds before saying, “In truth, your Chief should’ve begun paying attention to the Shepherd and the exploratory team members. For your City of Silver to survive to this day, the upper echelons will definitely have the most basic level of vigilance and not neglect any possible threats. The only problem is that the importance they place on this matter is definitely insufficient; at the very least, it's not as important as their attention on you and Amon."

Without waiting for The Sun to speak, he added after some deliberation, "Perhaps you can use this incident to wipe away the suspicion on you… Find an opportunity to make a particular exploratory team member to show the most thorough extent of an abnormality and enter into a conflict with him. That way, the other members of the six-member council will notice that something isn't right and raise the priority on this matter.

"At the same time, hand over the suspected Worm of Time and say that you suddenly felt your mind be adrift while the conflict was happening and that you had no idea what happened. You only vaguely heard someone shouting 'True Creator,' before you woke up. And by then, you had already coughed out that worm.

"When an evil god is involved, there are many means and abilities that one wouldn't dare use without thought. Your Chief would adhere to logic and guess that Amon's avatar and the mental corruption left behind by the True Creator had entered into conflict, eventually being destroyed and reduced to a dead worm. The surveillance on you would definitely decline significantly. If you act normally for an additional period of time, then the suspicion placed on you would be completely gone."

Why does Mr. Hanged Man seem so well-versed in this aspect… Audrey thought with her mouth slightly open.

Derrick's eyes lit up when he heard this, and he felt that Mr. Hanged Man was indeed trustworthy. He had come up with such a good idea!

"Then, how do I make that exploratory team member display the most thorough extent of his abnormality?" he quickly asked.

Alger fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “I don’t know.”

He then added, “It would be great if there are items related to the True Creator…”

With a whoosh, Audrey looked towards The Fool who was seated at the end of the long bronze table.

Chapter 394 - Sights in the Spirit World

◆

Klein knew very well why Miss Justice was looking at him. Being aware of the Lanevus incident, she was certain that he had many conflicts, both in the open and in the shadows, between himself and the True Creator, and that it was normal for him to have the corresponding items, perhaps even quite a few of them, in his possession.

Logically speaking, there's nothing wrong with her thinking. In fact, I have crossed the True Creator several times, and I do have an item that fits those descriptions… Klein sighed inwardly.

There was no question about helping Little Sun. There were many monsters in the Forsaken Land of God where the City of Silver was located, allowing the collection of several materials which were rare in the Northern and Southern Continents. In addition, they had a contiguous history that wasn't distorted by any of the deities or Churches. They gave the most objective stories and secrets prior to the Cataclysm, and the knowledge involved was extremely valuable. Whether it was from the perspective of the Tarot Club's leader, or simply considering his own interests, Klein had no intention of giving up Little Sun or the City of Silver unless it was hopeless.

However, there were certain things which weren't suitable for Mr. Fool to voice out.

Just as Audrey was looking expectantly at Mr. Fool who was shrouded in a thick gray fog, The World, who had been silent all this time, finally opened his mouth.

"I have an item that contains the mental corruption of the True Creator."

He was referring to the All-Black Eye that Marionettist Rosago had left behind.

"An item containing the mental corruption of the True Creator?" Alger thought as he organized his words. "This might be able to help The Sun. Once those exploratory team members, whose thoughts and viewpoints have been warped, sense the mental imprint of the True Creator, there's a high possibility that they will mutate right on the spot."

The World looked at The Sun and laughed hoarsely.

"Kid, I can lend you that item, but what will you be using to pay for it?"

Having seen hope, Derrick's mind raced, suddenly remembering what had happened during previous Gatherings and quickly said, "I can help you find the characteristics of the Human-skinned Shadow, the mutated pituitary gland and blood of a Thousand-faced Hunter. I can also attempt to obtain the method to removing the mental corruption on an item left behind by a Rampager. Whichever I get first will be used as payment."

Out of all of the options, the Human-skinned Shadow was relatively easy to encounter. It was one of the scarier monsters in the depths of the darkness.

At this moment, Derrick wasn't considering whether the exchange was of equal value or not. Even though a one-time loan of an item contaminated by the True Creator was obviously not worth as much as the conditions he put forward, under the current circumstances, he could grit his teeth and accept whatever high price The World offered. Thus, he might as well proactively show his sincerity.

The World nodded slightly.

“Very good, I will ask for Mr. Fool’s help to lend it to you.”

As he spoke, he revealed the shape of the All-Black Eye and added, “It’s the equivalent of a Sequence 5 Beyonder. If you lose it, you’ll have to provide me with compensation. Also, as soon as this is over, return it to me.”

This was what Klein couldn’t say in his capacity as The Fool. If a god-level existence like him kept harping about “compensation” and “remember to return it to me,” then the status he had built up for himself would have collapsed.

In addition, Klein took into account the hidden dangers that lay in the future.

The All-Black Eye and the other items were all things that he had used in the real world. If he were to bring in a new member who knew of this matter, they could confirm certain matters based on this point. Therefore, allowing Sherlock Moriarty to be equivalent to The World was clearly better than having Sherlock Moriarty be equivalent to The Fool.

When your strength doesn’t match your status, all I can do is tremble in fear, as if I were treading on thin ice or facing the abyss… Klein sighed silently.

Seeing that Mr. Fool hadn’t refused The World’s request, nor did he point out any problems with the deal, Derrick was relieved and quickly agreed to all the demands.

At the same time, Audrey was genuinely happy for Little Sun.

Alger thought for a while before letting out a sigh. He then said to The Sun in a measured tone, “Don’t be too optimistic. How to seize this opportunity still needs to be organized. First, you have to choose a time and, without putting yourself in danger, have only one exploratory team member be present while there are several City of Silver citizens, or when they're all in a quarantined and sealed state… You have to use a wall of spirituality to seal the vessel that stores the corrupted item ahead of time and not allow anyone to notice it. By doing that, you can control the development of the situation… In addition, you need to consider how to hide that item after it's over. You mustn't let the six-member council discover it; otherwise, you'll never be able to clear the suspicion on you…"

If such an easily deceived fellow were to die, it would be difficult for me to obtain any more information regarding the Forsaken Land of God or the secrets of the ancient era… The Hanged Man didn't find it problematic to offer help.

Under his tutelage, Derrick gradually had a complete plan and a few key points to take note of.

"Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man. Thank you, thank you to all of you," he sincerely expressed his gratitude to every member in the gathering. This made Audrey feel the satisfaction of doing a good deed.

The matter of The Sun came to an end at this point, and Fors, who had witnessed it all, suddenly had an idea.

She ruffled her slightly curled long hair and said, "I wish to know which family the Apprentice pathway belongs to. I'm willing to use one of the chapters in the Sights in the Spirit World as a barter. Although the content is considered the ravings of a dreamer, many of the things described in it are true from my experiences into the spirit world."

The Sights in the Spirit World was one of the mysticism notebooks that Mrs. Aulisa had left her. The logic of the content was incoherent, absurd, and just reading it alone left one irritable. However, when her body entered and left the spirit world three times for a variety of reasons, Fors discovered that the records in the notebook might not necessarily just be ravings.

Sights in the Spirit World? Klein leaned back slightly as he controlled

The World to answer before The Hanged Man.

"I know the answer, and I can give you some of the corresponding information for free."

He knew very well that The Hanged Man could also answer The Magician's questions.

It's bad to have competition; that's why you need to combine it with free gifts… Klein silently lampooned.

"Alright." Fors felt a surge of joy.

She discovered that the Tarot Club really was much more high-end than the other Beyonder circles that she had participated in before. Many difficult questions could be answered here.

At this moment, The World asked in a low voice, "Do you want to hear the answer for yourself or have everyone else hear it too?"

Fors pondered for a few seconds, then caught Audrey and the others by surprise with her answer.

"Just say it out here."

In her opinion, the answers to her own questions were of little help to others, and it didn't matter if they found out, and if Mr. World had left something out, or gave an incomplete description, and someone else happened to know the corresponding content, then she would be able to use the same Sights in the Spirit World chapter to obtain the full picture.

She believed that it was more important that way.

The World wasn't surprised and said in a low and hoarse voice, "In the Fourth Epoch, the Apprentice pathway was wielded by the Abraham family. Later, it was spread to the Tamara family which had been in marriage alliances with it for extended periods of time. In the Fifth

Epoch, which is the present epoch, the Theosophy Order also has the Apprentice and Trickmaster potion formulas. They're widely believed to be related to the Abraham and Tamara families. Of course, there are also people who suspect that the Theosophy Order is actually a guise of the Demoness Sect."

Considering that Miss Magician had already met with members of the Abraham family, Klein added via The World, "It is said that the Abraham family has suffered a bloodline curse all this time. They have no choice but to take up residence separately from each other in order to avoid danger."

Bloodline curse? Fors's eyes widened as she thought of her encounters.

Mrs. Aulisa's husband belonged to the Abraham family, and that Mr. Lawrence is also a part of the Abraham family? Is that why she said that as long as one isn't a member of the family clan, they wouldn't suffer the curse. However, I used the bracelet, and it belongs to the Abraham family? Once again, regret gnawed at her soul.

This was the first time that Alger and Audrey was hearing about the bloodline curse of the Abraham family. Both of them had their own thoughts, so no one spoke up for a short period of time.

After a while, Fors took a deep breath and said, "Thank you, Mr. World. You have answered the biggest question I have.

"I will copy the first chapter of the Sights in the Spirit World after the end of this Gathering and sacrifice it to Mr. Fool. Is that okay, Mr. Fool?"

The Magician is a descendant of the Abraham family? It's no wonder her body can enter and exit the spirit world… She likely possesses a corresponding mystical item… The Hanged Man suddenly looked at her.

Fors is a member of the Abraham family? She was born in an ancient family dating back to the Fourth Epoch? Audrey nodded as if she was thinking about something.

After receiving a positive reply from Mr. Fool, Fors relaxed and began mentioning her desire to buy the Beyonder ingredients—stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater and the blood of a Deep Sea Marlin. Unfortunately, The Sun wasn't going out during this period of time, so there was nothing. As for The Hanged Man, he merely mentioned that he had clues to the Deep Sea Marlin's blood.

No one had obtained the formula for the Wind-blessed potion yet. On the other hand, Audrey wasn't in a hurry to purchase the Psychiatrist formula because she was about to join the Psychology Alchemists.

Klein originally wanted to sell either the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic or Biological Poison Bottle, but after considering the latter's compatibility with his Spirit Body state and the current financial situation of the members, he temporarily gave up on that idea.

The transaction segment quickly ended, and the gathering reached the stage where each of them could share information they had heard about.

Audrey slowly looked around and said with a slight smile, "Last week, an interesting case happened in Backlund. The protagonist is called the Hero Bandit Black Emperor."

Chapter 395 - The Sheriff Beyonder Characteristics

* * *

Black Emperor? The Hanged Man, who was casually listening to Miss Justice, suddenly raised his head. His gaze suddenly became sharp and piercing.

He had just learned that the card in Mr. Fool's hand was one of the Cards of Blasphemy created by Emperor Roselle; the name of the card was Black Emperor!

Does this have to do with Mr. Fool? Alger quickly glanced at the end of the long bronze table, before immediately lowering his head.

If it was really done by Mr. Fool's Blessed, this definitely isn't a simple matter… Alger listened attentively to Miss Justice's subsequent descriptions.

Fors, who had long since learned of this from Xio and had some predictions about it, also gave The Fool a glance. She wanted to see the truth from the concealed entity's reaction, but The Fool remained as calm as ever in the thick gray fog.

Audrey, who wasn't able to glean anything either, paused for a moment, then continued, "The victim is a tycoon, Capim. Many rumors point to him being the biggest human trafficker in Backlund. Hero Bandit Black Emperor infiltrated his villa and robbed him of his life, rescuing many innocent girls who were locked up in his underground dungeon.

"When Capim's corpse was discovered, it was covered with a deck of tarot cards. His face was covered with the cards, Judgment and The Emperor."

She didn't mention the safe as she found it unimportant.

Covered with tarot cards? Is that the symbol for when our Tarot Club takes action? Wait a minute, a human trafficker? Alger sharply noticed a phrase.

He turned to the end of the long bronze table and humbly asked, "Mr. Fool, is Capim related to the disappearance of the colonial slaves?"

The latter was a mission had been assigned to him by the Church of Storms, and he had formerly targeted a suspect named Baelen and had asked Backlund residents—Justice, The Magician, and The World—to keep an eye out for him.

As a result, upon hearing the word "human trafficker," Alger intuitively believed that it had something to do with the disappearance of many tribes on the Southern Continent and the flight of many slaves from many islands in the Sonia Sea.

He felt that only a matter such as this, which seemed to hold some secrets, could interest Mr. Fool.

Of course, it cannot be ruled out that it was an independent act by Mr. Fool's Blessed. He couldn't possibly be waiting for everything to be arranged like a manipulated puppet… Alger thought.

Capim has something to do with the recent disappearance of the colonial slaves? On second thought, that's not a possibility that can be eliminated. There were four Beyonders in his villa, and that in itself isn't normal in the first place… Even if a tycoon like him were to hire Beyonder bodyguards, then he would only be able to get a Sequence 7 and two Sequences 8s or 9s at most. Back then, Harras, together with his mystical items, was equivalent to a Sequence 5 expert… The Hanged Man's words jolted Klein's thoughts as he felt that the matter could vaguely be linked together.

However, he wasn't sure about his theory, and he could only disregard The Hanged Man's question. He chuckled and said, "My Blessed made some minor contributions in this matter."

As expected! Audrey's eyes shone brightly as she cheered in her heart.

As expected… It's the first time that I encountered anything to do with the Tarot Club in real life… Fors was half happy and half wistful.

Alger believed that Mr. Fool's words were an indirect confirmation of his conjecture.

Capim was definitely not a simple human trafficker. Otherwise, he wouldn't have caused a hidden existence's Blessed to take action. Therefore, there was a strong correlation between the human trafficking and the disappearance of the slaves, both were matters that weren't simple.

Without waiting for Miss Justice to speak, Klein lightly tapped his finger on the edge of the ancient long table and leisurely added, "He obtained two Beyonder characteristics from this matter and wishes to sell them as quickly as possible. The two characteristics correspond to Sequence 8 Sheriff, and the other is Sequence 7 Interrogator.

Sheriff, Interrogator… Aren't those from the Arbiter pathway which is controlled by the Augustus family? Only members of the royal family, ancient nobles, and the military could possibly acquire them… Capim had one of them backing him? Not excluding the possibility of the Feynapotter Kingdom's Castiya family… Alger frowned, feeling that the disappearance of the slaves wasn't as simple as it seemed.

Audrey's thoughts were similar to his. She had never thought that the Beyonders at Capim's villa would be from the Arbiter pathway.

It's impossible that the faction in control of the corresponding formulas would collude with a human trafficker like Capim… Audrey pursed her lips slightly, puzzled and confused.

Sheriff? Fors, who knew that her good friend, Xio, was saving up for the potion ingredients for this Sequence, sat up hurriedly and asked in puzzlement, “Mr. Fool, what are Beyonder characteristics?”

That’s not what I expected. Shouldn’t you directly ask me how much it is? That’s right, I don’t think I’ve ever told Miss Magician about the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation… Klein was taken aback for a moment, and then he began to consider his tone.

And at that moment, Audrey spoke out on his behalf.

“Mr. Fool, may I answer the question? The corresponding payment shall be paid directly to you.”

She and Fors are friends, and she had volunteered out of the fear that Mr. Fool wouldn’t share that knowledge again.

“No problem.” Klein smiled in response.

Miss Justice is always able to worry about the things that trouble me… He sighed with emotion inwardly.

Phew. Audrey breathed a silent sigh of relief and turned to face Fors. She deliberately didn’t use the pronunciation and unique vocabulary of a noble to say, “Do you want to know the answer?

“What are you willing to pay?”

Fors nodded without hesitation.

“Of course!”

She looked at the figure shrouded in gray fog and respectfully asked, “Mr. Fool, can I use another chapter of the Sights in the Spirit World as payment?”

She specifically emphasized “another” because she knew that the chapter she would give to Mr. World would be first sacrificed to Mr. Fool, and the knowledge that could be viewed at any time didn't seem to have any value for a transaction.

It wasn't to say that she suspected that a mighty figure like Mr. Fool would peek. She just felt that it was more sincere to change the chapter.

Sometimes, a mighty figure only cares about your attitude… Fors had read such things in many novels.

Leaning back in his chair, Klein replied in an unconcerned tone, "Sure."

"Thank you, Mr. Fool." Fors said, unable to suppress her smile.

She instinctively believed that she had come into contact with certain secret high-level knowledge!

Audrey was completely relieved as she smiled faintly.

"In the Beyonder world, there is a law. Remember, it's a law.

"In similar pathways, the total Beyonder characteristics are conserved, never reducing or increasing. It will only move from one entity to another, changing from one form to another.

"Therefore, after the death of a Beyonder, their characteristics will be separated and become equivalent to the main ingredient of a potion. Oh, apart from the remains of Rampagers. There are too many latent troubles with those, so they can only be made into items."

After the death of a Beyonder, their characteristics will be separated and become equivalent to the main ingredient of a potion? In that instance, it was as if lightning flashed through Fors's mind, allowing her to understand many things.

It turns out that the remains Mrs. Aulisa left me was her Beyonder characteristic… It turns out that in the eyes of others, every Beyonder is equivalent to walking ingredients… That's really dark… Fors clenched her fists tightly, feeling that the Beyonder world was essentially filled with madness.

However, she didn't feel disgusted by the fact that she had become a Beyonder because she had consumed the Beyonder characteristics left behind by Mrs. Aulisa. Instead, it gave her a faint sense of warmth.

After losing her mother, before she met Xio, Mrs. Aulisa was the person who treated her the best. For Fors, it was a sad but warm experience for her to inherit Mrs. Aulisa's remains and be with her forever.

"So that's the case. The Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation… That means the characteristic left behind by a Sheriff Beyonder is equivalent to all the main ingredients?" Fors asked an additional question to verify her thoughts.

"Yes." Audrey also thought of Xio.

Fors immediately stood up and bowed to the mysterious existence that was looking down at everything.

"Mr. Fool, can you get your Blessed to reserve the Sheriff's corresponding Beyonder characteristic? I wish to buy it, but I temporarily lack the funds. Please give me another week, is that fine?"

"Sure." Klein took on an attitude as though he didn't care.

Fors heaved a sigh of relief and quickly asked, "How much does your Blessed wish to receive in gold pounds?"

The price of a corresponding Sequence 8 Beyonder ingredient is around 300 pounds… Klein smiled.

"600 pounds."

After naming the price, he immediately switched topics, showing that he didn't care about a Sequence 8 Beyonder characteristic.

He looked around and conjured a few goatskin parchments.

“This is the meaning of a portion of Roselle’s secret symbols. It’s considered free knowledge, making it easier for you to collect the diary entries in the future.”

The information included numbers and dates.

The reason why Klein had taught the members of the Tarot Club this information was that he was afraid that they would later end up buying counterfeits.

With the knowledge of dates, they’ll be able to eliminate most counterfeits… Klein chuckled inwardly.

Audrey and the others were pleasantly surprised, never expecting to gain such knowledge. Although they had already discovered that the secret symbols on the goatskin were the simplest ones, they all believed that this was a good start. With a first time, there would be a second time and a third time!

After a short exchange, Klein said in a gentle tone, “Let us end today’s gathering here.”

“By your will.” Audrey, Alger, and the others stood up at the same time and bowed.

The crimson rays of light dissipated, and the ancient palace above the gray fog returned to its former tranquility. Only Klein was left sitting alone on the high-back chair belonging to The Fool.

Chapter 396 - Great White Brotherhood

◆

After returning to the real world, Fors sat at her desk and lost herself in thought about the Abraham family for a while. She had a whole new understanding of the few words mentioned in the mysticism notebooks she had.

So that’s how it is… It’s no wonder Mrs. Aulisa didn’t wish to inform Mr. Lawrence of her and her husband’s death… Now that I think about it, the Abraham family is really pitiful and sad… Fors muttered a few sentences to herself before rummaging and taking out Sights in the Spirit World from a pile of ordinary books, in preparation to copy the first and second chapters.

For this, she entered Cogitation and adjusted her breathing in order to be in her optimal condition. Otherwise, just copying the contents of Sights in the Spirit World would bring her mania and confusion.

The words clearly didn’t have any spirituality, but once they were combined together to describe those ridiculous scenes, it was as if they had the ability to affect her emotions… I need to take a five-minute break after every five minutes of copying it. I don’t want to lose control because of this… Fors took out her small, intrinsic pocket watch and placed it diagonally in front of her desk.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick woke up as a flash of lightning which illuminated everything flashed in his eyes.

He looked around, but he didn't feel like he was being monitored.

But The Hanged Man's precise description of the prior events, through reasoning and his deep confidence, convinced him that his conjecture was correct and that there had to be one or more Beyonders with particular powers that were secretly monitoring him at that very moment.

Besides, Mr. Fool didn't deny it… Derrick got out of bed and stretched his body like he usually did.

During this process, the analysis and suggestions, that The Hanged Man had given him, rapidly surfaced in his mind.

"Up till now, no one has come looking for you or has chosen to throw you into the dungeons. That's enough to tell us that your Chief and the other elders of the six-member council are still leaning towards observing. They wish to find a way of evacuating the entire City of Silver out of the forsaken land through Amon, the first person they've encountered in more than two thousand years.

"So, if you don't do anything out of line, they definitely wouldn't rouse you so that Amon wouldn't notice anything amiss.

"As such, their surveillance wouldn't be too close, physically; at least not when you're awake.

"And because of this, they probably didn't discover that you've already coughed out that Worm of Time. Their subsequent reactions are enough to indirectly prove this.

"Similarly, they should only be able to observe what kind of ritual you held, but they won't be able to figure out who you're praying to. If it were me, I would definitely suspect that it was related to Amon.

"Due to the above reasons, you can openly hold the bestowment ritual.

After all of this, you can push the blame onto Amon. Of course, you have to pretend to be sufficiently cautious and careful. You have to be prepared to undergo the examination of a Psyche Analyst and other Beyonders of other Sequences when everything is over. Regarding this matter, you can seek Mr. Fool for help…”

With The Hanged Man’s suggestion, Derrick walked around the table twice, carefully closed the window, lit a candle, and set up a bestowment ritual.

†

Above the gray fog, within the towering, ancient palace.

Klein was staring idly at the stone pillars that supported the dome, feeling that the building he had willed resembled an Athens temple.

Is it because of my own subconscious? his thoughts wandered.

At that moment, the dark red star corresponding to The Sun began to emit light, and it quickly dispersed the ripples to form an illusory and mysterious door. Above the gray fog, a small amount of power was stirred up as it flowed like water.

Upon hearing the stacked pleas, Klein lowered his head and looked at the All-Black Eye placed in front of him.

Let’s hope Little Sun doesn’t lose this. Otherwise, Mr. World would have to be gloriously sacrificed…

It was precisely because he had the All-Black Eye that Klein, who wasn’t a Marionettist, could secretly control The World as a fake person, allowing him to act as if he was made of flesh and blood.

Once the item was lost, he would have to let The World die to prevent the “magic” from getting exposed.

While sighing, Klein emanated his spirituality, stirring the power of the fog into flowing towards the illusory door, forcefully pushing it open slightly and stabilizing the transmission channel.

Soon after, he placed the All-Black Eye into an iron box and threw it into the gap of the mysterious door. He casually said, “Do not touch the item inside.”

After doing all this, he didn’t stay any longer, because he knew that Little Sun wouldn’t be able to find an opportunity to take action that quickly, and he was unsure when Miss Magician would be able to finish copying the two chapters of Sights in the Spirit World.

Relaxing his spirituality, Klein’s figure disappeared from the space above the gray fog.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

As soon as Derrick saw an iron-black box on the altar, he heard Mr. Fool’s familiar voice: “Do not touch the item inside.”

Do not touch… Derrick made a note of this reminder and decided to carry it out to a tee.

After thanking The Fool and Mr. World and ending the bestowment ritual, he opened the box with extraordinary care and examined the contents.

It was a completely black eye without a pupil. Just looking at it threw his mind into chaos, and his thoughts became sluggish. Faint, indistinct, and seemingly crazy ravings sounded in his ears.

After a sudden shiver ran through his body, Derrick closed the lid of the iron box, picked up a silver dagger, and completely sealed the iron box with a wall of spirituality.

Then, he put the iron box into a secret pocket on the inside of his clothes, fixed the Axe of Hurricane in place and left the room, heading straight for the training field.

The exploratory team members were still under the disguised quarantine.

However, Derrick had no plans to take action today. He carefully followed Mr. Hanged Man's instructions and planned to observe the situation first and patiently wait for an opportunity. Of course, if there was a good opportunity, he would have to act decisively.

Upon entering the training field, Derrick circled around the exploratory team's area and saw that they were gathered in groups of two or three, whispering to each other, but once they noticed that someone was watching, they would immediately stop and stand there in silence. At times, they would take a few steps, like zombies that had just crawled out of the darkness.

What would they do if I removed the wall of spirituality now and allow them to sense the feelings emanated by Mr. World's item? Will they turn their heads at the same time to look at me? Derrick imagined the scene of everyone turning their heads and looking at him with cold and emotionless eyes, and he felt a baffling, indescribable fear.

He drew a breath and told himself to be patient, to wait, and not to panic.

†

City of Silver, at the top of the spire, in a room that belonged to the Chief.

Demon Hunter Colin Iliad, who was resting his mind with his eyes closed, looked towards a dark corner.

A human figure stood up from the ground with a twisted posture. It swayed slightly and said with a voice that sounded like metal abrasions, "Your Excellency, Derrick Berg has held another ritual. According to my observation, it's likely to be a bestowment request ritual. It's very similar to the sacrificial rituals we usually hold, but what's different is that he received a response and was given an iron-black box.

"I couldn't exactly see what was inside, but it gave me a very evil and dangerous feeling."

At this point, the shadow urgently pleaded, "Your Excellency, it's definitely directed by that mysterious person. We have to take action and not let this continue unheeded! Otherwise, Derrick Berg will summon an evil god or a similar existence sooner or later, destroying the entire City of Silver!"

Colin's expression became unusually grave. He stood up and slowly paced up and down, saying, "Let's wait a little longer.

"Up till now, we still haven't figured out the purpose of that mysterious person who called himself Amon. We don't understand why he only sent one avatar to the City of Silver after discovering it, as well as the goal of patiently staying in the underground dungeons for forty-two years.

"If his intention is solely to destroy us, he wouldn't have done such incomprehensible actions.

"Just wait a little longer. This might be our hidden hope, the hope for us in surviving the apocalypse when it comes!"

Just as he finished his sentence, a bolt of lightning flashed past the window, illuminating the pitch-black sky and the gloomy room.

†

When it was almost evening, Klein finally received Miss Magician's prayer and obtained the first two chapters of Sights in the Spirit World through the sacrificial ritual.

When he sat in the seat that belonged to The Fool, he leisurely flipped through the copied notebook, and he read them, line by line. He was stunned to find himself turning increasingly irritable.

What's happening? Those words clearly don't contain any spirituality, and the paper is ordinary as well. It couldn't be a Sealed Artifact, so how can it affect my state of mind? Furthermore, I'm above the gray fog, a fog that can even sever the influence of a true god… Klein frowned, leaned back, and carefully recalled the information in the Book of Secrets which had similar phenomena.

Not long after, he roughly understood the reason.

When certain existences were described in detail, even if it was written in text form, it would still affect the reader's thoughts and psyche!

Amongst them, the scariest were records related to true gods.

A book explaining a particular god in detail would cause every reader to go crazy or even distort their ideologies. As for Beyonders, there was a high chance of them losing control!

Sights in the Spirit World was written by a certain ancestor of the Abraham family. He had recorded all the strange and wonderful things that happened when he traveled through the spirit world.

In the first chapter, he described the lights in the spirit world. He believed that the seven rays of pure light of different colors contained the limitless knowledge of different domains, and that no matter where the travelers were in the spirit world, they would be able to see them blanketing higher elevations.

What was even more surprising was that these seven rays of light were alive! They were like Spirit Bodies that lingered there!

In the field of mysticism, many of the secret deed rituals were actually aimed at the seven pure lights, and through their secret connections, they allowed one to gain a certain amount of knowledge. Therefore, many mysticism experts called the seven pure lights “master” or “teacher.”

In response to this, the seven pure lights seemed very happy. They had even pulled quite a few spirit world creatures to form a secret organization that specialized in teaching people—the Great White Brotherhood!

In the second chapter, the traveler from the Abraham family recorded his encounter with the “Yellow Light,” Venithan.

Chapter 397 - Apocalyptic Prophecy

◆

Relying on the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, Klein quickly recovered a good state of mind and continued to read the second chapter of the Sights in the Spirit World.

The traveler of the Abraham family, the owner of the notebook, claimed that when he wandered into the depths of the spirit world, he met an elder dressed in lemon-yellow robes.

The elder’s body was translucent and was abnormally similar to the surrounding creatures of the spirit world, but his attitude was surprisingly amiable.

The traveler from the Abraham family conversed with the elder for a while, and he was surprised to find out that the elder was actually one of the seven pure lights that blanketed the spirit world at the highest elevation—“Yellow Light” Venithan.

Venithan told the traveler of the Abraham family that his own characteristics were reason and adaptation, that he was the symbol of astromancy, and that his corresponding gem was emerald.

He made a rather anxious reference to a prophecy that came from himself.

“Casting one’s gaze from the cosmos, the lands shatter. Everything in the world will cease to exist.”

He believed that this would be the end of the world within two hundred years. Nothing would be spared from this.

The traveler from the Abraham family didn't have much of a reaction towards this comment. Instead, he asked how he could remove the bloodline curse of his family.

"Yellow Light" Venithan told him that in a certain sense, it was indeed a curse, but it had a completely different nature from the curses in mysticism. The solution was in the future, in the hands of an Apprentice who was assisted by a hidden existence.

He also warned the traveler of the Abraham family that the day the curse was lifted was the beginning of the Abraham family's true doom.

As for what the tribulation was, he said that he wasn't so sure himself. He believed that it involved a great existence on the level of gods.

In the second chapter of Sights in the Spirit World, the owner of the notebook mentioned something else—Venithan mentioned another matter. The rulers of the Great White Brotherhood would often enter the real world, and through different methods, transform into humans and teach the knowledge of their respective domains. Since the Fifth Epoch, many of the mentor-level characters of different domains were their incarnations. For example, the greatest astrologer, D. Forssmann, in the last thousand years had proved that their current world was a planet. He was none other than the human incarnation of Yellow Light, Venithan.

Based on this, the owner of the notebook raised a theory. Which Pure Light's incarnation was Roselle Gustav, who could be considered a mentor in many fields?

No, he wasn't… If you really want to think like that, then he's probably a Green Light… Klein raised his hand and rubbed his temples.

Based on this, he judged that the owner of the notebook wasn't an extremely ancient Beyonder. However, judging from the fact that the person didn’t address Roselle as Emperor, this tour of the spirit world had likely taken place during the period when Roselle was still a consul, or when his proclamation as an Emperor was still not widely recognized.

Of course, it didn’t prevent the possibility that Beyonders of the Abraham family refused to recognize any Emperor other than the Tudor Emperor.

A traveler who can roam the spirit world. It must be quite a high Sequence. If he were a High-Sequence Beyonder, Mr. Door would’ve long been rescued, and the so-called bloodline curse would no longer exist. Thus, the owner of the diary would be a Sequence 5 Beyonder or a Sequence 6 with a mystical item… Although the Abraham family has declined, they aren’t weak either… Why is “Yellow Light” Venithan’s prophecy similar to that of the Demoness Sect and the Aurora Order? The apocalypse is coming? From the period that I predicted, the apocalypse should only be two to three decades from now? Klein frowned as he thought.

Roselle became consul in 1173, and it was currently November 1349, 176 years away, and “Yellow Light” Venithan had predicted back then that it would be within two hundred years. Considering the fact that Klein had only made an estimate of the period interval, it was possible that he was 24 to 50 years from the apocalypse (Roselle proclaimed himself as Emperor in 1192 and was assassinated in 1198).

Although the first two chapters of Sights in the Spirit World didn’t provide any practical knowledge, it had thoroughly opened up his sights, allowing him to understand the situation of the spirit world to a certain extent, as well as the existence of the seven Pure Lights and the Great White Brotherhood.

So, when advancing, the pure lights seen at extremely high elevations after transforming into a Spirit Body state and holding the corresponding ritual are the Pure Lights of the spirit world.

Furthermore, they are alive with their own thoughts… How miraculous…

The first two chapters of Sights in the Spirit World aren't completely lacking practical knowledge. At the very least, I know that Yellow Light's real name is Venithan and that his corresponding gem is emerald. I got to learn a lot of detailed information, and I can use this to design secret deed rituals that point towards him… But for the time being, it wouldn't be of much use…

Klein thought for a moment, then he closed the copied notebook and returned to the real world.

He had more important things to do instead of communicating with "Yellow Light" Venithan.

Klein took out a piece of paper, raised his pen, and wrote a letter to the inventor, Leppard, asking what stage of the patent approval process the bicycle was, why it hadn't been successful, and if he needed a lawyer to help him. With the establishment of the Magician's principles, the thorough digestion of the potion wouldn't take him more than two months, and he had to save up as quickly as possible for the corresponding costs of the Beyonder ingredients that are needed for him to advance to a Faceless.

Of these, The Sun might be able to offer one item for free because of the All-Black Eye, but the other item required Klein to figure it out for himself.

As far as he knew, the corresponding Beyonder ingredients for Sequence 6 were all over 1500 pounds and were typically in a situation where demand stripped supply.

In addition to the two main ingredients, the supplementary ingredients included the blood of a Thousand-faced Hunter and the hair from a Deep-sea Naga. These two items were extremely rare and rich in spirituality, making them expensive.

Earning money really is difficult, but spending it is easy… If only I could sell the Werewolf and Interrogator Beyonder characteristics… I can't even waste a single penny or soli… Klein sealed the envelope and adhered a stamp on it.

He knew how much he had without even needing to count.

624 pounds in notes and five one-pound gold coins, plus seven soli notes and some copper pennies.

Right. Miss Magician will pay 600 pounds for the Sheriff Beyonder characteristic meant for Miss Xio. I hope they can raise the money as soon as possible… Klein silently cheered the two ladies on.

†

"You're telling me that a Beyonder circle you recently joined has both Beyonder ingredients of the Sheriff potion, and the price is very reasonable. 600 pounds for all of it?" Xio widened her eyes as she delivered a barrage of questions.

She had just come back from East Borough to find out who had recently been keeping tabs on Capim.

"Yes, he's a very reputable seller. The only problem is that the verification process for joining is very strict, so I won't be able to rope you in for a short period of time." What Fors said was entirely the truth.

"That's great!" Xio didn't suspect her friend, but she took two excited steps forward.

Suddenly, her expression sank.

"But, I don't have enough money…"

The corners of Fors's lips twitched as she asked, "How much do you have now?"

“Counting the thirty-pound deposit received from this job, a total of 310 pounds, so I’m still short of half!” Xio scratched her short blonde hair. “Let me think, let me think of where I can borrow 300 pounds… The bank won’t give a bounty hunter like me a loan, and those usuries have way too much interest… Perhaps Miss Audrey?”

She had heard from her friend that she had recently bought the Trickmaster potion recipe for 450 pounds, so she had no intention of borrowing money from Fors.

“Why are we all so poor?” Fors couldn’t help but sigh. “Miss Audrey rarely comes out these days. She seems to be busy with other things, and borrowing money from her isn’t always a timely thing to do. Uh… We can try Viscount Glaint first. If it’s too late, then I’ll help you pay for the rest. I have 430 pounds; that’s enough.”

Xio blinked her eyes and suddenly lowered her head. She said in a heavy voice, “Fors, you’re the best.

“When I advance to Sheriff, I’ll earn even more money!”

Fors smiled and shook her head.

“So, why don’t you do the cleaning today? How about that?”

†

City of Silver.

Derrick left the training field and returned home.

He had just inquired about when the exploratory team members would be released from quarantine, and he had received the answer: “When the lightning calms today.”

Sitting down at an ancient wooden table, Derrick considered the plan again, remembering Mr. Hanged Man’s reminder: “If there’s no suitable audience to testify for you, then you might as well use the Beyonder who's monitoring you."

But how do I know when I'm being monitored… Mr. Hanged Man said it with great certainty, but he wasn't detailed enough… Many questions arose in Derrick, but he couldn't find a way to verify them.

Although he felt embarrassed to ask Mr. Fool for guidance on this question, upon considering the fact that this matter was related to the survival of the City of Silver, he mustered his courage.

He spoke the name of The Fool in a low voice, and he briefly described the difficulties he had encountered.

After a while, he saw Mr. Fool sitting in the middle of the endless gray fog. He heard a concise reply: "Touch the item in the iron box. Do not exceed three heartbeats. Prepare yourself in advance. Pay attention to the origins of the black lines."

That simple? Derrick thanked Mr. Fool in pleasant surprise.

He adjusted his posture and quietly put his hand into the inside pocket of his clothes.

As the wall of spirituality was lifted, Derrick's fingers pushed open the iron box and carefully probed inside.

Suddenly, he touched an ice-cold item, and the black illusory lines appeared in front of his eyes.

At the same time, his mind buzzed, as if an illusory roar was tearing through his ears.

Derrick's body convulsed, and tears and snot streamed down his face due to the pain.

He almost forgot what he had to do, but fortunately, in the limits of his vision, he saw the illusory black lines converge.

In that dark corner, there appeared to be a shadow!

Derrick withdrew his hand at once, as though he had touched a red-hot soldering iron.

He collapsed to the ground and began to twitch as if he had been struck by lightning. His mouth couldn't close at all, and saliva constantly dripped from it.

It took nearly a minute for Derrick to recover, close the box again, and seal it with a wall of spirituality.

He stood up and took a sip of cold water, already aware that someone was monitoring him at that very moment.

After an unknown period of time, Derrick suddenly heard a knock on the door.

"Who is it?" he asked, slightly at a loss.

A jovial voice came from outside.

"It's me, Darc. The exploratory team has been removed from quarantine.

"Weren't you interested in knowing about our experience this time?"

Chapter 398 - Alluring Mushrooms

◆ ◆ ◆

Darc? The image of Darc appeared in Derrick’s mind.

He was of medium height, slightly plump, and strong. He was an optimistic, cheerful teenager who often beamed with a friendly smile. He was a classmate during general education and a teammate of the patrol squad.

But after this exploration of the Fallen Creator’s half-destroyed temple, he had become reserved and merely smiled at everyone.

Once he recalled Darc Regence’s changes, Derrick couldn’t help but quiver as he felt a chill down his spine.

Why did he suddenly come looking for me? Shouldn’t he be heading home after being removed from quarantine? At that moment, many questions arose in Derrick’s mind.

Suddenly, he thought of a possibility.

Elder Lovia knows that I’ve suspected that something abnormal had happened to them, so she sent Darc to deal with me?

Derrick was first shocked and filled with horror. But immediately following that, he felt that it might not be a bad thing.

Mr. Hanged Man said, “if there isn’t a suitable audience to testify for you, then you might as well use the Beyonder who’s monitoring you.” And now, the person monitoring me is in that corner. If Darc were to suddenly attack me, then he would definitely expose the fact that there's something wrong with him!

This way, even if I don't use Mr. World's item, I can still make things go smoothly!

Derrick turned his head to look out the window.

At that moment, the frequency of the lightning had dropped to its nadir. Only after a minute or two would a bolt of lightning streak across the sky, illuminating half the sky. The entire world and most of the City of Silver was immersed in a deep darkness most of the time.

If he were alone, Derrick wouldn't have searched for a candle to light. He liked to lie quietly in bed and think about all sorts of things.

Of course, he knew that this was actually rather dangerous. If there was no light to dispel the darkness, then monsters could suddenly appear, even within the City of Silver. However, Derrick was a Light Suppliant himself, so he came equipped with the attribute of light and wasn't afraid of something similar happening.

Knock! Knock! Knock! Darc knocked three more times, as if urging the master of the house to open the door.

He wasn't like that before; he was very polite… Derrick suddenly felt a deep sense of sorrow.

He took out a candle from a wooden box and placed it in the middle of the table. He then rubbed his fingers, creating a golden flame.

The flame lit the candle, filling the room with a faint but warm glow, and this was accompanied by a faint, pungent aroma.

The candles in the City of Silver were mainly made from the fat and oil refined from the bodies of monsters. They would have different smells due to their different origins.

After taking a deep breath, Derrick walked to the door with a strong sense of vigilance and opened it.

“What took you so long?” Darc asked with a smile.

“I was looking for candles,” Derrick replied.

He didn’t dare to leave his back to the other party, and he chose to walk side by side with Darc. With his classmate and teammate, he walked back to the table and took their respective seats.

“Do you want to try some of these recently dried Doom fruits?” Darc asked with a smile as he removed a small cloth bag from his waist.

Doom fruits were one of the very rare snacks in the City of Silver. It came from a plant called the Doom Blood Vine, a type of organism that didn’t need light to grow. It grew by absorbing the nutrients from rotten corpses. It had a tendency to attack and was considered quite a common weak monster.

Every Doom Blood Vine had many thumb-sized black fruits, which could be eaten directly. They were crispy and sweet, but they were unable to fill one’s stomach and didn’t provide the necessary nutrients. They could only be used as a daily snack. The merit points received from a single patrol could be exchanged for several large bags of them.

“No, there’s no need.” Derrick shook his head cautiously.

“Alright then,” Darc poured out a pile of black fruit from the bag, picked one up, and popped it into his mouth before noisily munching on it.

Derrick thought for a moment and took the initiative to ask, “Did you encounter any monsters in the underground area of the temple?”

Darc stopped chewing and answered with a smile, “There were quite a few of them, but they weren’t that powerful. They were easily eliminated by us. That place was destroyed for a long time, so the powerful monsters probably left a long time ago.”

He paused for a second, then he said with the corners of his mouth curled, “We found some strange plants at the bottom of the temple. They looked like mushrooms in the general knowledge class. They were especially bright and looked very appetizing.

“It’s been confirmed that they’re edible. They can bring about an enhancement in one’s spirituality and strengthen one’s body. If it’s combined with roasted monsters, then it will emit an unimaginable fragrance.”

As he said that, he took out a palm-sized mushroom-shaped object from another small cloth bag. The stem was milky-white, and the cap was bright crystalline red. It was also dotted with dark golden spots.

The mere sight of the plant made Derrick gulp a mouthful of saliva, as though he had been starving for days.

Under the illumination of the dim candlelight, the beautiful mushroom-shaped object had an alluring luster that whet his appetite in an irresistible fashion.

“Here’s one for you.” Darc smiled warmly.

“Okay, okay…” Derrick almost took action immediately as he picked up the mushroom-shaped plant to stuff it into his mouth, but in the end, he forced himself to open his mouth and say, “I’ll give it a try tomorrow.”

Darc didn’t say anything else. He pushed the mushroom in front of Derrick and continued to eat his Doom fruits.

With great difficulty, Derrick moved his gaze away from the “mushroom” and asked, “Did you make any discoveries on this expedition?”

“Yes!” Darc paused his snack-eating and held a black Doom fruit, replying extremely seriously, “We found a lot of murals, a continuous series of murals. Do you remember that statue in the temple?”

“Yes.” Derrick shot a glance at the “mushroom” and nodded. “A huge cross with a naked man nailed to it while hanging upside down, and its surface was deliberately smeared with a lot of blood.”

Darc fiddled with the Doom fruit in his hand and said, “The newly discovered murals tell us that the builders of the temple believed that the statue represented the Lord who created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God. They believed that the Lord didn’t abandon this land, but instead helped us shoulder the vast majority of our sins when the Cataclysm came; thus, turning from an upright position to upside down, from walking freely to being nailed to the cross and bleeding in our stead.

“God’s grace knows no bounds. We are not the abandoned, but instead, the beloved chosen ones. Without the Lord bearing our sins and shedding blood in our stead, the City of Silver would’ve been destroyed long ago. Humans would’ve long ceased to exist!”

But, in the outside world, in the Loen Kingdom where Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and the others are located, there are no curses, no extreme darkness, no monsters lurking in darkness… We aren’t the chosen ones who are beloved… Derrick silently retorted inwardly.

“If that’s true, then we just need to change the symbols and the corresponding honorific name during a ritual, and we can receive the Lord’s response again…” Darc went on, describing the murals under the temple and speaking of his speculations. As this went on, Derrick found it increasingly difficult to resist the temptation of the “mushroom.”

No, I mustn’t eat it! If I eat it, I might end up like Darc and the others, completely corrupted by the Fallen Creator and become a fanatical believer… Even if there’s someone monitoring me, they wouldn’t notice anything amiss… Derrick felt a surge of horror that he had to do something to extricate himself from the situation.

Chase Darc away and return the “mushroom” to him? However, this is equivalent to giving up on this opportunity… Opportunity… Derrick’s gaze automatically fell on the yellow candle flame that was burning quietly.

"I'll get you a glass of water." He quickly went through the plan he had discussed with Mr. Hanged Man and calmly stood up.

Darc nodded as he threw the black thumb-sized Doom fruit into his mouth, munching at it noisily.

While Derrick poured the water, he deliberately slowed down his actions, lowered his head, and recited the honorific name of Mr. Fool. Finally, he said, "Your devoted servant prays for your attention.

"I pray for you to take his offerings.

"I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom."

Whoosh!

A strong gust of wind blew up inside the room as the power of nature, generated under the incantation's influence, formed clear waves.

At the same time, Darc, who had just picked up a black Doom fruit, suddenly raised his head and looked at Derrick, who was facing him from the side.

"What happened?"

Without answering him, Derrick held one hand over the Axe of Hurricane and stuffed the other into his secret pocket, removing the wall of spirituality on the exterior of the iron box.

Derrick cast an exceptionally guarded gaze at Darc, only to see the expression of his classmate and teammate darken as bright red traces appeared in his blue eyes!

In his hand, the Doom fruit strangely shed its outer darkness and transformed into a seemingly pale, fleshy color.

It wasn't a Doom fruit, but a finger, a bloody finger, a human finger!

The pile of Doom fruits on the table were comprised of human fingers!

The brightly colored "mushroom" had also changed its appearance. It was no longer as beautiful, and it no longer flowed with an appetizing luster. It was a bloodstained scalp with short black hair!

Staring at Derrick, Darc opened his mouth, his voice cold and adrift.

"What were you doing?"

†

Backlund, 15 Minsk Street.

As soon as Klein, who had crawled into the warm world under his quilt, heard what sounded like a prayer from Little Sun, he struggled to get out of bed and conjured a wall of spirituality. He then took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

Seated in the seat that belonged to The Fool, he didn't hurry to examine Little Sun's request. Instead, he made the Black Emperor card, paper figurines, and other items appear in front of him on the long bronze table in a neatly arranged order.

According to The Hanged Man's plan, the scene of The Sun stimulating the mutation of the exploratory team's member would happen during a sacrificial ritual. That way, when the matter was concluded, it would be quite simple to make the object, that was borrowed from The World, disappear from the scene, wiping away all the evidence. After that, all the blame could be pushed onto Amon!

As for Mr. Fool, Klein had agreed to Little Sun's request to simplify the ritual in an uncaring manner. All that was needed to be done were the key steps.

At this point, he was waiting for the prelude to the ritual to be completed so that he could respond.

Chapter 399 - The Corrupted

◆

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Looking at the bloodstained scalp, Derrick suddenly recalled what it previously looked like. It was a beautiful and alluring “mushroom,” one that he almost couldn’t control himself from swallowing.

The Doom fruits, that Darc had shared with him and produced crisp, crunchy sounds when they were bitten into, were actually bloody pieces of human fingers with slightly pale skin!

At that moment, Derrick had a violent spasm in his stomach before a gush of acid surged to his throat.

Resisting the urge to vomit, he quickly croaked a line of lyrics, “God, please have your kingdom descend upon this land. Your enemies will disperse, and your followers will relish in joy!”

There was a touch of warmth and holiness in the song, and Derrick felt all the discomfort in his body weaken. His spirituality also became full and lively.

His courage, his strength, and his agility were all greatly enhanced by this song.

That was the Beyonder powers of a Sequence 9 Bard.

Darc stared at his former classmate and teammate singing with an increasingly dark expression. The way he spoke became more and more inhuman.

“What is that thing on your body…

“What is that thing on your body?

“What is that thing on your body!”

All of a sudden, Darc’s clothes were stretched out in bugling strips, as though a nest of slithering venomous snakes was underneath them.

Whoosh! Bloody strips of flesh pierced through the black skintight clothing, and its surface had rough skin covered with hair.

Strands of meat began to flail outwards, causing Darc to look like a bloody, furry hedgehog!

With a swoosh, the meat strands surged towards Derrick, who was still standing at his original location.

Derrick was a patrol squad member who had seen quite a number of monsters, so he wasn’t too flustered by this situation.

He twisted his waist, raised his arm, and swung the Axe of Hurricane that he was already holding in his hand.

Oof!

The Axe of Hurricane hacked down at a few bloody strands of flesh, directly splitting them in half and causing them to fall to the ground.

However, because it was “nighttime” in the City of Silver, this strike didn’t bring about any lightning. Even more bloody strips of flesh began to surge forward, wrapping themselves around the Axe of Hurricane over and over again as they relentlessly clung to it.

Seeing that his weapon couldn’t be pulled back, a pure light suddenly lit up in Derrick’s eyes. It was as if two small suns had descended into the room, and his other hand was holding something close to his mouth and nose as if he was praying.

Without a sound, a fiery pillar of pure light descended from the sky, striking the bloody flesh that was wound up into a ball.

Darc let out an uncontrollable scream, and many bloody strips of flesh fell to the ground, charred black.

They squirmed, struggling as if they were alive.

The spirituality contained within these bloody strips of meat was no longer under the control of its original owner, and gradually, they merged with the natural power derived from the sacrificial ritual's incantation, forming an increasingly bright pink "wave."

This "wave" surged into the dim yellow candle flame, causing the light to suddenly burgeon, forming an illusory and mysterious door.

Derrick had long drawn The Fool's symbol of concealment on the candle!

This was all prepared in advance.

All of this constituted a simple but complete sacrifice ceremony!

Kacha!

As the seat shattered, Darc lunged at Derrick while flailing the bloody strips of meat. There was no fear or tension in his eyes, only the purest, most fervent desire.

At this moment, Klein, who was above the fog, responded.

With a creaking sound, the illusory door that had many strange patterns on it opened a tiny crack.

Behind the crack was a deep darkness in which countless transparent and indescribable shadows resided.

High above these shadows were seven pure lights of different colors that contained endless knowledge.

Above the brilliance was an endless grayish-white fog, and above it was an ancient palace that overlooked the gray fog.

Suddenly, a shadow leaped out from a dark corner, covering Darc who was closest to him.

Darc's flailing strips of bloody meat were all wrapped up by pitch-black, viscous liquid as he seemed to turn into a cat who had entered an opaque bag.

The shadow didn't stop, and it quickly extended across the ground, rushing towards Derrick, who had already dodged to another location, and shouted sternly, "Stop! What are you trying to do!"

As an observer, his original plan was to watch from the sidelines and record the corresponding anomalies. He would only take action to stop the two strange parties when the situation became unmanageable.

But when he saw the illusory door covered with strange symbols open up with a crack, he felt intimidated by the deep, mysterious, distant, and majestic scene inside. He instinctively believed that this was related to a terrifying evil god, so he could only take hasty actions, giving orders in an attempt to forcefully interrupt Derrick's attempts at performing a sacrifice to that being.

However, Derrick had already chosen his location to be as far from the shadow as possible; therefore, to stop the boy who was possessed by the mysterious Amon, the "shadow" observer had to bypass or take down Darc Regence first.

However, his choice was the latter. Because of the obvious abnormality with Darc. Leaving his back to this being was an absolutely stupid move.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Derrick took out the iron box from his concealed pocket and threw it towards the illusory door conjured by the candle flame, towards the crack that presented a magical scene.

As the iron box disappeared, the door, that was covered in strange symbols and characteristics, closed with a “clang,” before quickly vanishing.

At this moment, Derrick remembered Mr. Hanged Man’s words, and he deliberately warped his facial muscles and savagely moved towards the “shadow.”

Before the “shadow” blanketed him, he suddenly coughed violently and covered his mouth with his hand before falling to the ground.

The pitch-black shadow emanated and completely covered him.

The room returned to silence, but there were now two huge black “chrysalises” on the ground.

After a while, the pitch-black, viscous liquid withdrew and reformed into a shadow.

With the “chrysalis,” the silhouettes of Derrick and Darc appeared once more.

The former lay there unconscious, but a tiny, strange worm with twelve transparent rings dropped from his hand. The latter had already turned into a lump of flesh, squirming and roaring as it prepared to attack.

Faced with this situation, the observer had no choice but to spare some of his strength and once again wrapped him up, using his shadow-like black “liquid” to envelop Darc Regence, who had transformed into a monster.

Glancing at the scattered pale fingers and the bloody scalp with short black hair, the observer couldn’t help but take a deep breath. Using his Beyonder powers to control the shadows outside, he created tidal waves to inform the Chief inside the spire.

Only after doing this did he carefully examine Derrick's situation and saw the strange, translucent worm.

"This… the avatar that Amon hid in Derrick's body is dead?" the observer muttered in surprise.

As he recalled Darc's strangeness, the terrifying mutation, and the "mushroom" and "Doom fruits," he began to have a rough idea of what had happened.

Perhaps Amon was archenemies with the mastermind behind Darc's corruption. In order to foil the other party's ploy, Amon was willing to sacrifice his avatar. Derrick's visit to the training field to observe the exploratory team and his report of them to the Chief were both Amon's attempts to rid his enemy without exposing himself.

The mastermind behind Darc's corruption had noticed Derrick's strangeness, so he sent Darc to take control of him. The bloody scalp and fingers were props to achieve his goal.

As he thought of this, the monitor suddenly agreed with the Chief's concern—the apocalypse or an even greater disaster was about to befall the City of Silver. That was why the City of Silver would repeatedly encounter so many strange events and mysterious existences that lurked deep in the darkness.

†

Inside the Chief's room at the spire.

The "shadow" recounted everything that had happened.

The grizzled, facially-scarred Colin Iliad nodded gently after hearing the recount.

"Derrick or should I say, Amon, had really prepared ahead of time.

"The candle with the symbol engraved on it, the evil object that can expose Darc's problem, and Derrick's excuse of pouring water to whisper a prayer, as well as finally sending away the item in a sacrificial ritual—all of this indicates that the entire situation developed according to his plan.

"Two questions. One, who does the symbol representing concealment on the candle refer to? Amon himself or the god behind him? Two, why is Amon willing to expose the exploratory team's abnormality at the cost of his avatar? Is it because he's archenemies with the mastermind? Then, why did he stay in the City of Silver for forty-two years?

"Could it be that he foretold this matter ahead of time, which is why he specifically met with the exploratory team from forty-two years ago and planted his avatar in them so as to foil the plans of that mastermind? He waited forty-two years for that single moment?"

Upon hearing the Chief's questions, the "shadow" observer suddenly said in enlightenment, "Maybe that's how it is!

"Your Excellency, think about it. Why would Amon patiently wait for forty-two years before making Uddel lose control when Derrick was imprisoned beside him? It's because the foretold time was approaching, and he was in desperate need to switch to a free person that he can latch onto so as to foil the plans of that mastermind!"

"Indeed… We were only thinking about what was different with Derrick, and we didn't pay attention to the timing," the City of Silver's Chief Colin answered in thought.

The "shadow" observer immediately said, "Your Excellency, please immediately lock down all members of the exploratory team. They're definitely problematic! Also… Elder Lovia, she has a nontrivial possibility of also being corrupted!"

Colin frowned and said, "Before you reported this matter to me, and even before Darc went out, Lovia came to me and told me that she suspects that the members of the exploratory team had been contaminated by something. She recommended that we secretly monitor them and if necessary, have them guard Elder Hawick's inverted mausoleum."

Hawick was the former Chief of the City of Silver, and he had built himself a mausoleum. After that, he lived in that mausoleum, and his appearances began to slowly decrease. Finally, the doors were closed, impossible to open again.

"Elder Lovia had long mentioned of an abnormality?" the "shadow" observer asked in surprise.

After receiving a positive answer, he muttered to himself, half-doubtful and half-relaxed, "It's good that Elder Lovia doesn't have any problems…"

"…I've already sent people to lock down the members of the exploratory team, but we can't ignore any other possibilities." Chief Colin let out a sigh. "Let Aiflor come to me. I'll interrogate Derrick Berg together with her."

Chapter 400 - The Growth of the "Rookie"

In a dark and sturdy room, Derrick Berg, who had feigned unconsciousness, suddenly rolled to his feet.

His Axe of Hurricane had already been taken away by someone and sent for inspection. Every pocket on him had also been emptied out, leaving nothing behind.

Derrick took a breath and looked around steadily.

Suddenly, his eyes lit up with two sun-like beams, causing everything in the room to be reflected clearly in his eyes.

The furniture here consisted of only a table and two chairs. Apart from these, there was also a stone-paved floor with strange patterns on it.

A half used candle was placed on the table. This was standard issue for rooms in the City of Silver because monsters could suddenly appear if the darkness prevailed for too long.

Without any hesitation, Derrick sat down and reached for the candle.

Then, he broke the candle and divided it into three sections—one was three-quarters the length of the original piece, and the other two were halved from the remaining quarter.

After Derrick's modification, the three candlesticks' cores were completely exposed.

Pa!

He rubbed his fingers together, creating a golden flame that lit up the three candles.

The two at the top represented Mr. Fool, and the remaining one symbolized Derrick himself.

After finishing his preparations, Derrick didn't continue to burn the herbal powder according to the normal processes. Instead, he poured in the essential oil and leaned back, softly chanting the honorific name of The Fool and quickly entered Cogitation.

He read it over and over again, monotonously, as if he were hypnotizing himself.

With the help of Cogitation, Derrick entered a strange state where his mind was in a deep sleep and the spirituality was dispersing. He felt adrift, but also seemed to maintain a strange lucidity. His psyche kept dispersing upwards as it rose in height.

This was "artificial sleepwalking."

Derrick, with the permission of Mr. Fool, could simplify some of the unnecessary steps.

†

Above the gray fog, within the towering, ancient palace.

Klein, who was fiddling with the All-Black Eye, suddenly saw the crimson star that symbolized Little Sun burgeon with light, condensing into a human shadow, and the power of the mysterious space was stirred a little.

Upon seeing this, he couldn't help but feel relieved. This meant that Little Sun had already completed the relatively dangerous part of the operation, and he only needed to "round up" the situation.

Klein didn’t delay, and he immediately put down the All-Black Eye and picked up the Black Emperor card.

He instantly rose in level and authority, forcing the stirred power in the gray fog to submit to him.

Then, he picked up a paper figurine, flicked his wrist, and threw it towards the crimson star corresponding to The Sun.

The paper figurine and the flowing power intertwined and quickly expanded into a gigantic angel with twelve pairs of pitch-black wings.

The angel pierced through the crimson light and overlapped with the illusory figure of Little Sun.

It silently combusted, turning into ashes in less than a second.

At this point, Klein could no longer affect the situation of the City of Silver. As for whether his “angel substitute” could help Little Sun pass the subsequent inquiries and investigations, he lacked absolute confidence. He could only sigh inwardly.

With what has to be done completed and with all the hard work put in, all you can do is wait for fate’s arrangement. Hopefully, it will be a good result…

†

In a daze, Derrick saw an angel descend before him with an aura that covered the heavens, wrapping him with twelve pairs of black wings.

He suddenly came to his senses as three candles burned quietly in front of his eyes.

After sincerely thanking Mr. Fool, Derrick finished the ritual and extinguished the two candles which were part of the original quarter.

Then, he pulled them out and created a bright, golden flame in his palm.

Drip, drip, drip. The two candles quickly melted, dripping its wax onto the remaining candle or the area surrounding it.

When the candle burnt away completely, there was only one candle left on the table. It was shorter than before, but it wasn't very obvious. It seemed like it had only been burning for a short time.

After removing the remaining traces, Derrick extinguished the last yellow-flamed candle.

He sat up in silence, staring ahead. For a long time, he didn't do anything.

He was worried that the six-member council wouldn't react fast enough, allowing the exploratory team members to corrupt more residents of the City of Silver with "mushrooms" and "Doom fruits."

He was afraid that the Chief and the others would find additional clues elsewhere, thwarting all his preparations.

He hated those "outsiders," who lurked in the depths of the darkness, constantly carrying strong malice, including Amon and the Fallen Creator.

He felt guilty that he had avoided the expedition without warning Darc and the rest, causing them to turn into corrupted monsters.

He had painfully eliminated a classmate who could be considered a friend with his own hands.

Although Derrick didn't see Darc's ultimate end, he believed that a man who had transformed into that state was already no different from dead.

Derrick didn't know how long he waited while experiencing those mixed feelings. Midway, he even rekindled the candle.

Finally, he heard the sound of the seal being removed and the door opening.

Turning his head to look, he saw, with the aid of the dim yellow candlelight, a woman in a black skirt walk in. She had her hair tied up in a ponytail and it hung down to her vest.

“Ma’am Aiflor,” Derrick subconsciously called out.

Aiflor was a pretty woman, but she had wrinkles at the corners of her eyes. She smiled and nodded in response, then she walked over with light footsteps and sat down across him.

“Do you have anything you wish to say?” she asked gently.

Derrick instinctively lifted his head and looked over, only to suddenly discover that her pupils had somehow turned into golden vertical slits.

His mind went adrift as he seemed to enter a sleepwalking state.

Aiflor adjusted the candle flame, letting the dim yellow light completely shine on the boy’s face.

Her pale golden pupils became increasingly indifferent, just like an emotionless audience.

Suddenly, rings after rings of faint light appeared in those pale golden vertical pupils. It seemed to form a vortex and constructed a maze.

In his stupor, Derrick felt himself drifting away into the endless darkness and countless bright colors.

At that moment, he suddenly became clear-headed. He felt as if something had ingeniously caught him in that state of reverie.

He saw the flickering yellow candlelight and Aiflor sitting across him with her pale gold vertical pupils.

In a corner’s shadow, a grizzled Chief, Elder Colin Iliad, walked out.

After nodding to the Chief, Aiflor asked Derrick, “What have you been doing all this time?”

Derrick remembered his training and maintained the same state of mind as before.

“I don’t know. I’ve always been in a daze as if I was in a dream. Only occasionally will I have clearness of mind…”

At the same time as his reply, two complex dark green symbols appeared in Demon Hunter Colin’s eyes.

Aiflor continued, “Do you know that you had a conflict with Darc Regence?”

“I only remember that we were fighting… I felt like I had seen a man hanging upside down on a cross and a man in a pointed hat and a crystal monocle. Yes, I saw him back at the dungeon… He had opened his mouth and spoke with a smile….” Derrick told a long story.

Aiflor looked at the Chief and pressed, “What did he say?”

“I can’t remember. I can only remember one thing… He said with a smile, ‘Fallen Creator, True Creator… Shepherd…’” Derrick almost failed to control his excitement.

He had taken such a risk just to tell the Chief the name of the Fallen Creator and that a Shepherd was suspicious!

“The Fallen Creator… The True Creator… It matches with the content on the murals at the bottom of the temple.” Colin nodded slightly and whispered with a frown, “Shepherd…”

“And then?” Aiflor’s voice remained abnormally gentle.

Derrick answered in his stupor, “After that, they clashed, and there was a lot of light, very bright lights. Then, I woke up and kept coughing…”

The dark green symbols in Colin’s eyes didn’t fade this entire time as he motioned for Evelyn to ask about the details.

Derrick answered selectively, and he had pushed the blame onto Amon according to his script. He claimed amnesia on anything that went beyond that.

Finally, Aiflor asked, “Where did you get the axe? Where did you get the Sun pathway’s potion formula?”

“I bought the axe from an underground market. That person was masked, and I could only tell that he was male… The Sun pathway potion formula was left to me by my parents. They had discovered it during an expedition…” Derrick answered confidently.

These were points of suspicion that had always been there, so The Hanged Man had assumed they were bound to ask them while he was questioned. Therefore, he had made Derrick to repeatedly rehearse the answers.

Although the City of Silver’s underground market was semi-open, there were still people who tried to conceal their identities for a variety of reasons. This provided the best explanation for Derrick.

After Aiflor finished seriously listening to him, she turned her head sideways to Demon Hunter Colin and said, “He’s not lying. There’s no way he can lie. I’m using the powers of Glory Crown.

Colin nodded his head and said, “In this state, he doesn’t show any traces of evil, degeneration, or corruption.”

Discovering these traits was a special ability of a Demon Hunter.

As a High-Sequence job, Demon Hunters were the best at concealing their movements and intentions, making it impossible for them to be detected by targets who could foretell danger.

Therefore, every Demon Hunter was a Devil’s nemesis.

After some thought, Colin got up and left the room. He said to the shadow in the corner outside, “I’ll release Derrick later. I think he’s fine for the time being.

“However, secretly monitor him for a while. If Amon is able to produce two avatars, he might be able to create a third.”

“Yes, Chief,” the shadow responded respectfully.

After Derrick “woke up,” the interrogation chamber was empty, with only words informing him that he was free to leave.

He secretly heaved a sigh of relief as he began walking out. While doing so, he thought of Mr. Hanged Man’s advice: “You can’t relax just like that and end up careless. The secret surveillance will definitely continue for some time; otherwise, your Chief is lacking!”

Yes, I can’t even recite the honorific name of Mr. Fool anymore for the time being… Derrick muttered to himself as he walked down the spiral staircase.

As he was walking, he suddenly saw a familiar figure dressed in a purple-striped black robe. It was the beautiful Shepherd Elder Lovia.

Her pale gray eyes swept over Derrick, and a gentle smile appeared on her face.

†

Back in her room, with an indifferent expression, Lovia walked to the desk and unfolded a piece of parchment that was made from leather.

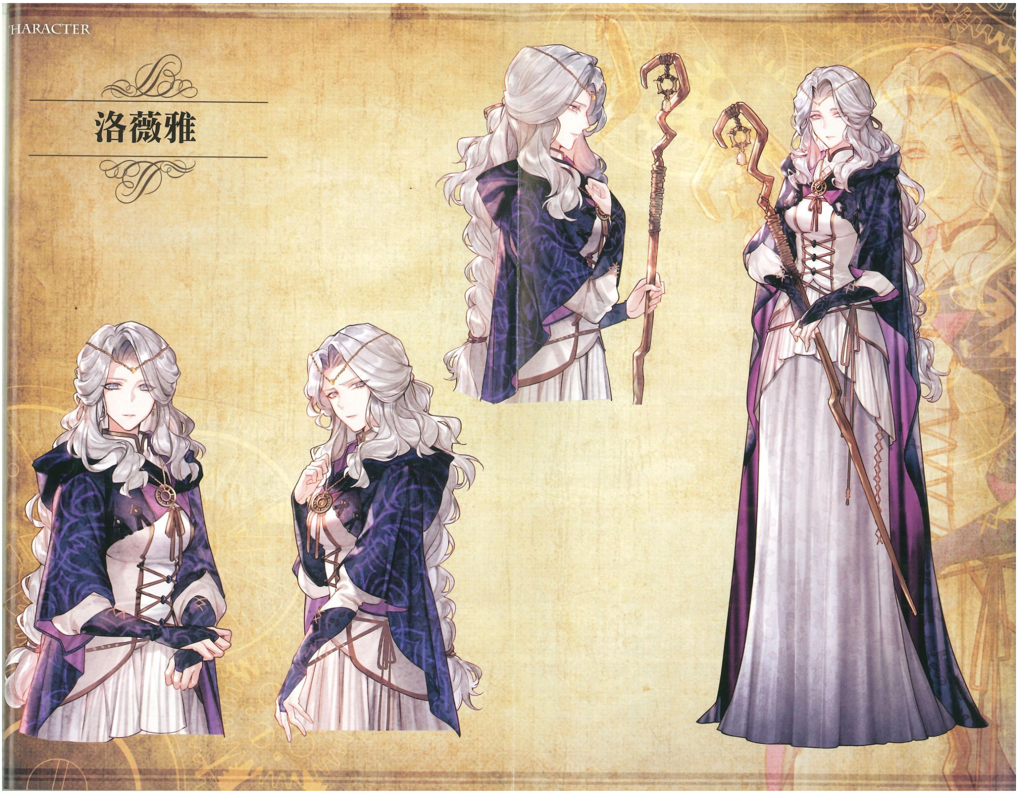
Her left hand pinched the index finger of her right hand and snapped the tip of her finger. However, not a single drop of blood dripped. It was as if her blood had been gathered onto the surface of her finger.

With this finger, she drew a complex symbol on the piece of paper. It was made up of a Pupil-less Eye which represented concealment, and the Contorted Lines which represented change.

After careful examination, she wrapped the finger with this piece of paper, stuffed it into her mouth, and bit on it noisily before swallowing it all.

With only four fingers left, flesh and blood suddenly squirmed around the wound on her right palm. It quickly grew into a new index finger, one that looked slightly pale.

She lowered her head, looked at her palm, and whispered a phrase, “The Fool?”



Chapter 401 - Divine Epiphany

Backlund, in a basement that resembled a temple.

Mr. A, dressed in a hooded black robe, motionlessly quietly knelt in front of a figurine of The Hanged Giant for an extended period of time.

Suddenly, he pricked up his ears as if he was listening to something.

After a short pause, Mr. A's hands jerked up, and he snapped his right index finger with his left palm.

He stuffed the bloody finger into his mouth and munched on it like he was eating snacks, making crunching sounds.

[image]

Gulp!

Mr. A's throat wiggled, and he swallowed his gnawed fingers into his stomach.

His body suddenly trembled, as if he was being grabbed and shaken by an invisible figure.

In this state, Mr. A stretched out his right hand and used the blood from his wound to write words on the ground.

Those words were written in neither Jotun or Dragonese, which could stir the powers of nature, nor was it in Hermes which was used for sacrificial rituals. Instead, they were written in the most ordinary and commonplace language, Loen.

The scarlet color quickly gathered together and the words pieced together into a few sentences.

“Find:

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

“Adorers and devotees in Backlund.”

After the end of the “divine epiphany,” Mr. A stopped trembling, and a new finger grew out of his squirming wound.

He lowered his head and carefully read the words he had just written, the corners of his mouth curled up in the shadows.

“By your divine revelation!” Mr. A humbly prostrated as though he had found the meaning of his existence once again.

†

City of Silver, at the top of the spire.

Lovia walked to the window and looked down at the candlelight in the darkness, her expression softening.

After an unknown period of time, she heard a knock at the door.

“Your Excellency?” Lovia turned around with alacrity and greeted the visitor with a smile.

The door opened backward automatically.

The person standing outside was none other than Demon Hunter Colin

Iliad. He was draped with a brown coat and a leather belt with secret compartments around his waist.

“Lovia, the abnormality of the exploratory team has been verified,” Colin described plainly. “As captain, regardless of your condition, you have to stay in the dungeon for three days and undergo the Glory Crown’s cleansing. You should know that this is the rule.”

Lovia didn’t show the slightest hint of anger as she calmly smiled.

“I know, I’ve already made preparations to stay in the dungeon for a long time. When it’s over, I can accept any arrangements even if you guys still don’t trust me.”

As she spoke, she had walked to the door and went past Demon Hunter Colin while facing him.

Colin turned silently and followed her down the winding steps.

Halfway there, they heard heart-wrenching cries and shouts.

“Is it starting again?” Lovia asked with a slightly confused expression.

Collin nodded and replied in a low voice, “Yes, this is a destiny that we can’t escape from…”

At this moment, in a large hall in the middle levels of the spire.

The members of the exploratory team and the few residents of the City of Silver who had been corrupted were pressed down to the ground by seemingly corporeal holy lusters. They were unable to move, as though they were carrying a huge mountain on their backs.

A couple in their forties with dark skin held a sword with complicated patterns as they walked up to a young man in his early twenties.

The young man’s body had already turned into a meat slush, but his head was still intact. Only a long, thin, blood-red tendril grew out of it.

Seeing the couple approaching, he shouted in horror, “Dad, Mom, what are you doing?

“Didn’t we agree to eat grilled iron scorpions together tonight?

“Dad, Mom, I caught a lot of iron scorpions for you…”

The couple couldn’t bear it any longer and turned their heads to the side, but they raised the sword in their hands high into the air…

After two stabbing sounds rang out, the young man stopped his wailing. He twitched first, then he completely lost all signs of life.

Elsewhere, a young girl, who was around ten years old, raised a sword with complicated patterns on it. Tears were streaming down her face as she stabbed her elder sister.

The girl lying on the ground suddenly laughed and gently said, “From today onwards, you’ll have to live your own life. Don’t be naive anymore…”

The girl immediately cried until her vision turned into a blur, and the sword in her hand stopped in midair.

However, a strong palm pressed the back of her hand, pushing it forward.

Oof!

The girl was left stunned, as though she couldn’t hear or see anything.

This was the ancient curse that everyone in the City of Silver was under. They had to kill their own blood relatives to prevent them from turning into terrifying and strange evil spirits after their deaths.

Therefore, even though Darc had completely mutated into a monster and was corrupted by an unknown existence, having no value in interrogating, the “shadow” observer didn’t dare to kill him on the spot. Instead, he tried his best to restrain the monster and bring it back to the spire to wait for his parents. Otherwise, the situation would only become worse.

The exploratory team members were currently receiving the same treatment that they had been subjected to, a process that remained unchanging for more than two thousand years. Although no one knew if they would mutate after dying in this state, no one dared to gamble on it.

Fortunately, the City of Silver didn't have a large population, and all of them lived in the same area. Under the arrangements of the upper echelons for each generation, there were quite a few people who were related to each other by blood. Even if they were limited by three generations, they would still be able to find quite a few.

Because of this, the Beyonder in charge of setting up a patrol team would first have to consider the matter of blood ties in order to prevent any unexpected situations from occurring.

The requirements for exploratory teams weren't that strict because their missions were always to invade deep into the darkness and stay far away from the City of Silver. Even if they died or mutated, it wouldn't affect everyone's safety.

Once a resident no longer had blood relatives within three generations, they would be placed under strict surveillance, and as soon as he became seriously ill or visibly aged, he would be exiled into the depths of darkness, away from the City of Silver.

When the previous captain of the exploratory team, Uddel, was isolated in the dungeon, there were actually three elders in the spire. However, the one who took action was Chief Colin Iliad in the end. Otherwise, they could only attempt a seal.

This was because Uddel was the elder brother of his direct kin.

Shepherd Lovia and Demon Hunter Colin silently entered the bottom level of the spire. Accompanied by a few Dawn Paladins, they arrived at the depths of the dungeon.

Soon, both of them stopped outside a cell. The Dawn Paladins dispersed themselves a distance away.

Without any abnormalities, she walked into a room with a single bed, a table, and a single candle at a moderate pace.

Before the metal door closed, she turned around and looked at Demon Hunter Colin with her pale gray eyes.

“Your Excellency, you once told me that when residents of the City of Silver leave this place and die in the depths of the darkness, they won’t immediately turn into evil spirits. A few days have to pass. Therefore, the other members of the exploratory team have plenty of time to pull open a distance from them.”

Colin nodded and expressed his agreement.

Lovia closed her eyes, revealing a sad smile, “In an exploration two months ago, a team member died in front of me.

“I pretended to be separated from the rest of the team. I waited there for five days, but he didn’t turn into an evil spirit.”

Demon Hunter Colin looked at her in silence, not saying anything until the metal door closed with a clang, and the seal took shape.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

After waiting for a while, Klein was finally relieved when he saw that there were no changes to the crimson star which symbolized Little Sun.

He should have succeeded… He rubbed his temples, wrapped his spirituality around his body, and descended back to the real world.

As soon as he felt the presence of his body, Klein experienced the bitter cold.

He sneezed, then he quickly removed the wall of spirituality and crawled back into bed.

Sadly, his bed was already ice-cold.

Fortunately, my body receives a certain degree of protection after entering the gray fog; otherwise, I would probably catch a cold tomorrow… Klein wrapped himself tightly with his blanket and sighed.

The current state he was in reminded him of a joke he had heard in his previous life.

Warmth is basically gained by vibration…

Before his bed warmed up again, he could only let his mind wander as he thought about all sorts of matters.

Yes, there are no pressing matters for me recently. The Magician's principles have been concluded. Even if I don't challenge the impossible and only engage in "acting" normally, I should be able to digest the potions around New Year's. My next task is to collect the Beyonder ingredients for the Faceless potion and save up the necessary funds. But that's not something I can rush… The taut strings in Klein's mind gradually softened, and he suddenly had the thought of resting for two to three days.

As the bed warmed, he fell asleep without realizing it. When he woke up, he heard the church bells ringing eight times.

Klein stretched out his arm, felt the cold, and silently withdrew it.

It seems to have turned colder again today… Since there's nothing pertinent to do, it seems I can just continue sleeping in… Relaxed, he closed his eyes again.

But after a while, he heard his stomach growling and felt the bulge in his lower abdomen.

Life is full of hard choices… Klein mumbled.

After ten minutes or so of struggling between the two feelings, he finally gave up, got up, and rushed to the bathroom next door.

After changing his clothes and washing up, he went down to the first floor and took out some ingredients to cook Feynapotter noodles.

This time, he didn’t intend to use the meat sauce that he bought, but instead, he wanted to try the meat paste he had made two days ago. This was the meat paste he had carefully chosen from the ingredients based on his memories. Although there were ultimately differences in the ingredients between the two worlds, preventing him from fully replicating the authentic taste, Klein still found it pretty good after sampling it.

It wasn’t long before he had a bowl of Feynapotter noodles with condiments and meat paste, He found it a really wonderful morning.

Keeping in with the tradition of this world, he browsed through the newspapers as he ate, and he checked if Eye of Wisdom had placed an advertisement first.

Based on his late night thoughts from yesterday, Klein decided to have some fun today, so he considered whether he should go to a concert, an opera, or a play.

The tickets to many of the music halls in the West Borough, Hillston Borough, and Cherwood Borough are at least six soli, and if it’s a famous musician, then they would even be on the order of pounds. Music halls specially catered to commonfolk range from six to nine pence. Those that are open to the poor with money to spare in East Borough only need one pence… Klein flipped through the relevant materials to select his choice of entertainment for the day.

At that moment, he heard the doorbell ring.

Ding dong.

Chapter 402 - Digging

◆

Who is it? Klein jerked his head up to look at the door.

He felt as if he were suffering from an illness; the fear of hearing the doorbell ring was identical to the symptoms he had experienced on Earth—being afraid of his cell phone's ringing.

Putting down the newspaper and magazine, he looked at the empty plate which had been cleaned even of its seasonings, then he stood up, and he walked to the door.

Before he got a hold of the handle, he already knew that it was Dr. Aaron outside.

Don't you need to work? Klein mumbled as he opened the door.

“Good morning, Aaron. The fog is gray today.” He smiled.

Aaron was still wearing his cold expression, but there was an additional sense of anxiety and fear written on his face.

He nudged his gold-rimmed spectacles and, without bothering to greet him, bluntly said, “Sherlock, I had another dream! I dreamed of Will Auceptin again!”

Ah? Klein almost froze.

That's not right? The real paper crane is with me, above the gray fog, while the one I folded is with the Nighthawks. You're still able to dream of Will Auceptin with a paper crane which was poorly folded by a

Nighthawk? That's not scientific, no—that doesn't make mystical sense… Klein became serious and asked, "The same dream?"

"No, it's not that scary this time." Aaron became a little calmer. "I dreamed about the Grimm Cemetery. You know of it, right?"

"Yes," Klein answered simply.

Back then, he had caught a group of students and a mysticism enthusiast who was a complete beginner, Kapusky, engaging in a spiritual dance outside Grimm Cemetery. He later received another copper whistle from the latter which could be used to summon a messenger.

Aaron drew a deep breath of cold air and continued, "I dreamed of the woods outside Grimm Cemetery. I dreamed of a birch tree which had a layer of bark peeled off its trunk, Will Auceptin was sitting underneath that tree, looking at me quietly."

"And then?" Klein pressed.

Aaron shook his head. "The dream ended there."

What a strange matter… Has Dr. Aaron's dream got nothing to do with the paper crane? No, if it wasn't related, then there wouldn't have been a situation where the dream changed after the paper crane was switched. Furthermore, I also performed a divination using the paper crane above the gray fog and obtained the corresponding revelations… Klein said in a measured voice, "This is no longer within my scope of understanding. What do you want from me, Aaron?"

Aaron breathed out warm air that dispersed into white mist. "I want to pay a visit to the area outside Grimm Cemetery. I want to do it now, while it's still daytime. Can you protect me? I'll pay you one pound."

Heading over to the place that appeared in the dream now? He probably wouldn't encounter anything too strange during the day… Klein thought for a moment and said, "I can accept this request, but I suggest that you go back to the same cathedral and tell your dream to the bishop you're familiar with."

Aaron agreed, then said doubtfully, "Why do you always suggest that I go to the cathedral? I know, you've explained it before, in a very logical way, that if mystical powers exist in this world, then the Churches, which have been leading humanity, must be the ones with the strongest mystical powers, and if there are none, then at least we can go to the Church to get psychological comfort and corresponding connections. However, why do you suggest that I go to the cathedral for something that isn't considered too strange?"

Klein considered for two seconds, then replied seriously, "I'm a detective. I've come into contact with a lot of unusual things, so I understand the special nature of the Church. I also know when to ask for help."

"Really?" Aaron listened with a serious expression.

The corners of Klein's mouth curled up.

"Just kidding.

"Take it easy, Aaron. I'm going to change my clothes first. Uh, and also do the dishes."

Having chatted with Aaron at the door for a long time without his thick coat, he turned rather stiff from the cold winds.

Taking this opportunity, Klein went to the washroom, went above the gray fog, and divined the degree of danger for this mission. He received the answer that there was almost no risk.

If he received a revelation indicating that it was dangerous, his plan was to reject the mission using the Church of Evernight as an excuse.

†

Hillston Borough, Myriad Star Cathedral.

"Sherlock, why don't you hire a maid? As a great detective, you can afford to have several servants," Aaron asked, as he led Klein to the Church of Evernight's largest cathedral in Hillston Borough.

This was something that he had wanted to ask while in the carriage, but he had never found the opportunity to change the subject.

Klein sighed, and said heavily, "Aaron, let me tell you a story. There was a detective who hired two maids, a cook, and an assistant, and he was doing pretty well, but one day he took over a case and successfully homed in on the murderer, who was a very savage and cruel man. He sneaked into the detective's house with the intention of revenge.

"The detective was a fighting expert, and in the end, he was only slightly injured, but two of his servants died because of him.

"Do you get it, Aaron?"

"I see," Aaron's voice had a hint of empathy. "Sherlock, I never knew that you've had such an experience."

No, the main character has nothing to do with me. I just made up a story… It's not like I can tell you directly that I'm involved in many strange and mystical matters, and that there will always be unspeakable secrets in my house so that it's best I don't hire any servants… Klein looked forward and let out a long sigh.

The cleaning of his home was done twice a week, mostly by Mrs. Stelyn Sammer's maid. She was responsible for the most basic cleaning procedures, and each cleaning cost one soli.

While they were talking, the two of them had already entered the hall of the Myriad Star Cathedral.

It was dark, quiet, and devoid of candles, completely in line with the Church of Evernight's style.

At the very front of the hall was an altar engraved with a Dark Sacred Emblem. The stars were inlaid with self-illuminating pearls, and the crimson moon was made of rubies. The rest of the hall was filled with the darkness of the night.

With a single glance, he could see that the place was filled with specks of light as the crimson light illuminated the area, making the place extremely sacred.

But Klein felt that this was inferior to the design used by Saint Selena Cathedral in Tingen. That hall was pitch-black, with only light penetrating from the front through the fist-sized holes. It resembled a starry sky, making one feel awe from the bottom of one's heart.

However, there's a problem with that kind of design. At night, the effect would be gone… Klein took a seat at random, took off his half top hat and leaned on his black hardwood cane, while Aaron continued down the aisle to the confessional in search of the bishop.

Sitting in such a large hall and looking at the people who were concentrating on praying, Klein's heart suddenly became tranquil.

Come to think of it, this is only my third time entering the Goddess's cathedral… He let out a self-deprecating laugh.

†

Inside the Cathedral of Serenity at Winter County.

Leonard Mitchell put on his black trench coat and red gloves and entered the room of the high-ranking deacon, Crestet Cesimir.

"Congratulations, you have officially become a Red Glove. May the Goddess bless you." Cesimir drew a crimson moon on his chest.

He still had his mouth covered with his high collar.

"Praise the Lady. The honor is mine." Leonard raised his right hand and gestured four points in a clockwise fashion.

Cesimir didn't say anything else and went straight to the point.

"According to your request, I've placed you in Soest's team. He's a Soul Assurer and possesses a mystical item. I've already ordered someone to prepare a Beyonder weapon for you that you'll need.

"Your team will be in charge of a devil summoning case, and you'll take into consideration certain clues to perform the search. For example, cases that have happened consecutively in Backlund and matters related to a tarot ritual."

"Yes, Reverend Cesimir." Leonard held no objections towards the mission.

This will be the beginning of my revenge… he silently said to himself.

†

West Borough, in the periphery of Grimm Cemetery.

Klein accompanied Dr. Aaron as they took quite a while to walk around the nearby woods, coughing from time to time as a result of the falling grayish-white dust.

"Maybe there isn't a tree like that. Dreams can't fully reflect reality." Towards the end of the search, even Aaron was feeling a little uncertain himself.

Fortunately, I'm good at finding things… Klein pointed with his cane and said, "Let's take a look over there and make it our final effort."

"Alright." Aaron gasped for a breath of air.

After a short walk, Aaron suddenly stopped and said, while pointing diagonally ahead, "Over there, over there!"

About a dozen meters away, a birch tree with a strip of bark around its trunk stripped off stood there quietly, as if it were waiting for them.

“It’s identical to the one in my dream,” Aaron said with conviction.

Klein smiled and said with some vigilance, “But there’s no Will Auceptin.”

Aaron got close to the birch tree, frowned for a while, then he suddenly pointed to the side of the tree and said, “Back then, Will Auceptin was sitting here, and he was pointing at the mud below him with his finger!”

Pointing at the mud below him? Klein stood at the side, looking down at the almost unwithered grass.

“You want to dig it up?”

Aaron nodded. “We’ve already found this place, so we should confirm what’s here. Sherlock, go to the cemetery and borrow two shovels.”

“It’s better if I stay here. You go to the cemetery, I’m worried something might happen to you,” Klein said cautiously.

“Alright.” Aaron didn’t refuse, and he immediately left the forest.

After a while, after offering some money, he returned with three shovels and a tomb keeper, and they began to dig.

While Klein was digging, he suddenly smelled something familiar. As the soil on the surface parted, the things below were gradually exposed.

It was the body of a child that was already greatly rotten!

His skin and flesh looked as if they were about to melt, and many bugs crawled in and out of his nose and mouth.

Clang!

The shovel fell from Aaron's hand and hit a rock.

He pointed to the legs of the corpse, his mouth moving frantically but he was unable to say a word.

Klein endured the nausea and looked closely, discovering that the child's left leg was obviously missing its lower half.

At the same time, Aaron took two steps back and fell to the ground, shouting sharply, "Will Auceptin! Will Auceptin!"

It was Will Auceptin's corpse!

Chapter 403 - The Fate of a Private Detective

◆

He’s dead?

Will Auceptin is dead?

And he seems to have been dead for some time!

Could this be fake?

Klein looked at the body of the child in surprise and suspicion as many thoughts bubbled in his mind.

From what he knew, Will Auceptin was a special child who could be involved with a Sequence 1 of the Monster pathway, Snake of Mercury, in some way.

In the divination game he played, a casual “Doctor, your luck will get worse” was enough to make Aaron suffer from bad luck for an extended period of time. The paper crane he folded allowed Aaron’s Astral Projection to be located in the spirit world and be instilled with artificial revelations. Even above the gray fog, Klein only received an inkling of his location and couldn’t come to an effective conclusion… How could such a child die for no reason? He was dead before Dr. Aaron’s dreams? What about his family?

Klein narrowed his eyes, and despite his intense nausea, he carefully examined the highly rotten body. He noticed some torn tarot cards in the surrounding soil.

His spiritual intuition told him that the corpse in front of him was most likely Will Auceptin.

It's really shocking and difficult to understand… I should go above the gray fog later and confirm if it's a fake death from Will Auceptin… Wait, what does this have to do with me? I had already decided not to get involved in this matter any further, in case I get entangled by some Snake of Mercury. This might be even more terrifying than Sealed Artifact 0-08… Klein snapped out of his daze and said to the terrified tomb keeper and Dr. Aaron, who was on the verge of a mental breakdown.

"Call the police!"

"Okay! Okay!" The tomb keeper was taken aback at first before he repeated his reply.

With the shovel in hand, he turned and ran out of the woods, at a speed that was so fast that it appeared as though he was being chased by a zombie.

As expected, he's just an ordinary person and isn't cautious at all. In this kind of situation, shouldn't he be wary of the people around him who might have malicious intent? By exposing your back, it would be easy for you to be hit by a shovel… Klein glanced at the back of the tomb keeper and shook his head with a sigh.

When he was a Nighthawk in Tingen, he had read a lot of case files and found out that many of the victims had ended up becoming victims of their companions.

Thinking of this, Klein walked to Dr. Aaron, bent down, and stretched out his hand.

"There's nothing to be afraid of. He's already dead."

"…It's the death that scares me." Aaron calmed down a bit, and without accepting Klein's help, he got up by himself.

His black frock coat was covered with dirt, and Klein felt his heart pain for the clothes for some baffling reason.

I'm the kind of person who can't stand seeing anything valuable get damaged… He inwardly sighed with emotion.

Noticing that Aaron was still panicking, Klein laughed and said, "At such times, praying to the deity you believe in has quite a remarkable effect."

"Is that so?" Aaron was stunned. He tapped his chest four times in a clockwise manner and chanted softly, "The Evernight Goddess stands higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity. Your devout believer prays for your blessing…"

After repeating this over and over again, he gradually calmed down, no longer feeling as terrified as before.

Klein drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest and silently whispered to himself, God of Steam and Machinery, your completely unfaithful believer is begging for your blessings…

As he spoke, he couldn't help but laugh at himself, suspecting that he might be smote to death by lightning on the spot.

However, lightning and thunder belong to the Lord of Storms, and it isn't in the domain of the God of Steam and Machinery… Klein thought in a relaxed manner.

After about 20 minutes, the two of them found themselves sitting in an interrogation room at a nearby police station.

During the testimony, Klein frankly informed the police that he was a private investigator who wasn't too sure of what was happening. As for Dr. Aaron, he described his dream in detail as the reason for digging to find the body.

Klein could tell that the police didn't believe him at all, but after they had gone out for a while, they immediately changed their attitudes, saying that there was nothing suspicious about Dr. Aaron and Detective Moriarty. All they had to do was sign their statements and leave.

Aaron was surprised, but Klein wasn't surprised. It was obvious that the Nighthawks had been involved.

The advantage of having the doctor head to the Myriad Star Cathedral in advance was demonstrated.

Before leaving the police station, Klein wasn't surprised to see a familiar figure. It was the Nighthawk who had entered his dream earlier.

The man on duty, who was probably a captain, was still wearing a gray trench coat and was obviously more resistant to the cold than Klein. His blue eyes swept past Klein's face without any signs of abnormality, pretending to be an ordinary senior inspector.

Klein, who was also pretending to be an ordinary private detective, nudged his glasses, put on half top hat, and left the station with Dr. Aaron in a carriage.

After instructing his carriage driver to head to Minsk Street first, Aaron turned to Klein and said, "Sherlock, do you think this will be the end of it?"

"If that body really belongs to Will Auceptin, then you shouldn't be troubled any longer." Klein paused and continued, "Aaron, have you found anything else that's strange during this period of time? Regardless of what it is."

Aaron thought about it and shook his head.

"No."

"This is worth celebrating!" Klein sighed and said with a smile.

To him, this was the best way things could end with Will Auceptin's matter. Although the paper crane Klein had folded above the gray fog wouldn't reveal anything, and there would be no problems with any divination afterward, he was still a little worried that some Nighthawk would suddenly think of something and use it to find some clues. And now, with the death of Will Auceptin, the case might soon reach a dead end, put in the archives, and temporarily declared a closed case. No one would pay any more attention to it without any new developments.

Aaron relaxed and asked suspiciously, "Frankly, I don't think my statement was very convincing. Why did the cops choose to believe it in the end?"

"I don't know either," Klein feigned puzzlement and said, "I thought I'd have to get my lawyer to take me home again—No, bail me out."

Aaron smirked and said, "Sherlock, you seem to have a lot of experience in being sent to the police station?"

Klein laughed and replied in a deep voice, "It's the fate of every private detective."

†

Just as Klein and Aaron were being taken to the police station near Grimm Cemetery, Fors Wall was wearing a long black dress and a black bonnet with a fine mesh hanging down. She entered the silent cemetery and found the grave of Mrs. Aulisa.

She and Xio had gone to Empress Borough an hour ago to visit Viscount Glaint, and they had successfully gotten a verbal agreement for borrowing 400 pounds without any interest.

Viscount Glaint's only request was that the two Beyonders accompany him to the gathering Mr. A would convene tonight to ensure his safety. He was anxious to procure a Royal Jellyfish's venom crystal so that he could complete the concoction of the Apothecary potion.

Audrey had found the horn of an adult Flying Unicorn in the family treasury, and she had taken one out in the name of doing a biological experiment, effectively offsetting part of her debt.

She also put forward an additional condition for Viscount Glaint to get the help of Duke Negan's children to confirm if the dragon specimens in the treasury had a Thousand-faced Hunter and whether there were still light dots flashing inside.

When the loan was settled, Fors was in no hurry to pray to Mr. Fool to close the deal as quickly as possible, because it would make Xio intuitively turn suspicious if things developed too quickly.

Taking advantage of her free time, she changed her clothes and rented a horse carriage to get to Grimm Cemetery, which was located on the outskirts of West Borough.

Knowing the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility, Fors realized that the main ingredient that turned her into an Apprentice was the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Mrs. Aulisa. In a way, she had inherited her powers.

Therefore, she couldn't help but pay a visit and put a bouquet of flowers in front of Mrs. Aulisa's grave and thank her.

It was early winter, and most of the flowers had long since withered, but Fors still bought a handful of plain flowers.

These flowers were grown in a greenhouse and were quite expensive.

Thank you, Emperor Roselle, for your invention… Fors said inwardly in a most sincere manner.

As far as she knew, most of the flowers that the nobles used for their winter banquets came from greenhouses, while a tiny portion was delivered directly from the warm south by airships. This was more than the average middle-class worker could bear.

Standing in front of the black tombstone, Fors took a deep look at the photograph of Mrs. Aulisa before bending down to lay down the flowers and whispered, “Thank you.”

She immediately straightened up, closed her eyes, and quietly recalled the past.

At this moment, she heard a slightly-aged voice.

“You really are a good and kind-hearted lady.”

Fors opened her eyes and turned her head, realizing that Mr. Lawrence, from the Abraham family, had also appeared there at some point. He was also holding a bouquet of plain but elegant flowers in his hand.

“No, this is not goodness, nor is it kindness. Mrs. Aulisa once gave me, a person who had lost her mother, an unforgettable period of warmth,” Fors said sincerely.

Her eyes were suddenly moist.

Lawrence, who only had wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, put down the flowers and sighed.

“This shows that you value relationships.”

After chatting for a while, when Fors was about to leave, Lawrence, who was waving her goodbye, suddenly began to cough violently.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

He coughed until his legs buckled and fell to the ground. It seemed as if he would die at any moment from suffocation.

As a doctor who had graduated from an accredited school, Fors didn’t hesitate to turn around, crouch down, and begin performing first aid.

After a while, Lawrence’s condition finally stabilized. He wiped the saliva from the corner of his mouth and smiled at Fors.

“Lady, can you take me back to the hotel?”

“No problem.” Fors helped him to his feet.

Lawrence looked ahead, his eyes a little out of focus. He coughed lightly, and he said with a sad and self-deprecating laugh, “My life might be coming to an end…”

Chapter 404 - Entrust

◆ ◆ ◆

West Borough, Carlpensa Hotel.

Fors helped Lawrence into his room and laid him down on the bed.

It was a rather luxurious hotel, with thick, soft, grayish-yellow carpets everywhere except the washroom. On the walls hung imitations of famous oil paintings.

Lawrence gasped for air and said, “Thank you, Miss Wall, and please forgive a dying man for not being able to bow.”

“No, Mr. Lawrence, your problem has eased. As a former medical doctor, I can tell you without a doubt that you can still live. After some rest, we’ll go to a clinic or a hospital,” Fors consoled him.

Lawrence smiled. “I know my physical condition very well. You don’t have to comfort me. Besides, I’m an amateur astrologer. I already had a premonition that I’m going to die in this hotel in Backlund.”

Aside from some superficial concealment, everything he said was the truth. He was already close to eighty, and he was no longer that robust and spirited young man from before. If not for the Sequence potions that elevated his constitution, he might have already been buried in some random cemetery.

Originally, Lawrence thought he could live for another ten years, but who would have thought that he would encounter a rebellion caused by the former Traveler Botis. He suffered relatively serious injuries at the hands of the Aurora Order, and his remaining descendants all died in that disaster.

This dealt him a great blow, and he almost didn't manage to recover from it. The search for his brothers and their descendants in Backlund had only resulted in him receiving news of their deaths, dealing him a significant blow to his mental wellbeing once more.

Compounded by all these things, Lawrence clearly felt that his life had come to an end.

His initial plan was to return to the graves of Laubero and Aulisa again and present a bouquet of flowers. He would then return immediately and meet with the other members of the Elder Council to set things in order before his death, but being an elderly man, his condition was beyond his control.

Without waiting for a response from Fors, Lawrence struggled to retrieve a palm-sized notebook from the inside pocket of his half-open coat.

The hard paper cover of the notebook was bronze green, giving off a very ancient feeling.

On its surface, the words: "I came, I saw, I record" was written in ancient Feysac.

Lawrence placed the notebook on the quilt in front of his chest and took a deep breath.

"Miss. Wall, if I die here, can you help me send it to Pritz Harbor?"

"Mr. Lawrence, you'll be fine," Fors emphasized.

At the same time, she subconsciously glanced at the notebook and found that it wasn't thick at all. There were a total of three types of papers inside, one of which was a yellow type of parchment which had very few pages. The other was yellowish-brown goatskin and the number of pages was in the middle of the range. The last was comprised of ordinary white paper and was the most common.

Lawrence laughingly said with great difficulty, “I mean, Miss. Wall, will you help?”

“Pritz Harbor isn’t far. It’s not even a trip. If it needs to be rushed, then I can even make the round trip in half a day by taking the steam locomotive.” Fors nodded.

Lawrence breathed a sigh of relief as his mind seemed to recover a little.

“After I die, wait ten minutes. Retrieve the glowing object from my body, and then send it along with this notebook to Dorian Gray at the Pritz Harbor’s Fishermen Association. The forty-two pounds in cash in my wallet will be the reward and my gratitude. As for these clothes of mine, let it turn to ash along with me.”

“No, you don’t need to give me anything. No, you’ll be fine, Mr. Lawrence,” Fors said earnestly.

As if he hadn’t heard her, Lawrence whispered to himself, “Maybe Dorian will give you additional rewards, but it depends on you… I believe you. From Aulisa’s matter, I can tell that you’re a good girl…”

He suddenly seemed to turn lucid as he said to Fors, “Ms. Wall, can you go down to the first floor and bring me a jug of water? I don’t know when the waiter will come over.”

“No problem.” Without thinking, Fors took a water jug and walked out of the room.

After walking a few steps, she suddenly felt that something was amiss. The water jug in her hand was heavy, and there was obviously a lot of water in it.

Just as she was about to turn around and ask, she suddenly sensed a strong fluctuation of spirituality in the room.

That was… For a moment Fors froze, and then she understood what Mr. Lawrence was trying to do.

As death approached, he could clearly sense that something was wrong with his body. He was afraid of losing control and turning into a monster.

He wanted to die as a human, not a monster, so he chose to end his own life.

That was the last form of decency for a Beyonder.

Of course, if he had turned into a monster, all his plans would have come to naught.

With this in mind, Fors became dejected. She waited outside for nearly ten minutes before she pushed open the door and entered.

She saw Lawrence lying silently on the bed, looking like he had aged considerably. Beside him was a “diamond” the size of an eye.

The light which shone in through the window was constantly refracted by the “diamond,” forming a scene as beautiful as the radiance of the stars.

Fors sighed and performed a careful examination. She found that the cause of Lawrence’s death was the most ordinary form of cardiac arrest.

†

Cherwood Borough. 15 Minsk Street.

Klein rested for a while after getting home. He then went above the gray fog, having plans to divine the situation with Will Auceptin.

He had the paper crane fly out of the trash pile in the corner and made it land on the long bronze table in front of him. Then, he took out the topaz pendant that was wrapped around his sleeve.

As he held the spirit pendulum in his left hand, Klein used Cogitation to adjust his condition before recalling the scenes he had seen in the woods outside the cemetery.

He might not have noticed some of the details, but it was certain that his spirituality wouldn’t miss any. This divination was mainly about using this point and relying on the gray fog to eliminate all distractions.

After finishing his preparations, Klein took out a goatskin parchment and wrote the divination statement: “Will Auceptin is completely dead.”

Then, he pressed the paper crane next to the divination sentence, almost causing the topaz pendant to touch the words.

After entering a state of Cogitation and completing all the steps of the spirit dowsing, Klein opened his eyes and looked at the result.

The topaz pendant was rotating counterclockwise at a fast frequency and high amplitude.

It was a negative result.

That meant that Will Auceptin wasn’t completely dead!

This… Klein was surprised, but it seemed to be within his expectations.

He thought for a moment, then he changed the divination statement: “That corpse was Will Auceptin’s.”

This time, the spirit pendulum gave a positive result.

The body did belong to Will Auceptin!

An idea came to Klein’s mind, and he wrote a new divination statement: “Will Auceptin’s corpse will resurrect.”

After a few moments of calmly performing the divination, Klein saw the revelation.

The pendulum was rotating counterclockwise with a fast frequency.

That meant that Will Auceptin's corpse wouldn't be resurrected; or in other words, no reanimations!

It looks like Will Auceptin had voluntarily or was forced to abandon his previous body, and he is surviving in another way… This matter has something to do with the Snake of Mercury? Klein tried to divine additional information, but he failed repeatedly, including the statement: "Will Auceptin's present state."

However, he repeated the divination using dream divination and inquired "Will Auceptin's current location." He received a similar scene: a dark room with the sound of running water.

However, the feeling it gave him seemed to be a little different.

Forget it, there's no need to waste any more time on this. I'm not planning to get involved anyway… Klein put away his spirit pendulum and prepared to return to the real world.

Through the prior divination and everything that had happened before, he had a theory about Will Auceptin, but he couldn't confirm it.

He suspected that Will Auceptin was another Snake of Mercury!

As a Sequence 1, a Snake of Mercury wasn't the only one. There could be up to three in existence at the same time!

The Snake of Fate, who wielded destiny naturally, could locate Aaron's Astral Projection through the paper crane and show him a false revelation. Without a doubt, it also had the ability to change a person's fate.

For some reason, Will Auceptin had become weak and was under the threat of the second Snake of Mercury. Everything he did was to escape his counterpart.

As for the reason for their conflict, the answer was simple.

Without a Sequence 0, there could be three Sequence 1s at the same time, but once there was a Sequence 0, there would be no Sequence 1s!

Regarding this sentence, the formula of the Black Emperor potion clearly stated the truth.

One of the main ingredients of the recipe was: two Beyonder characteristics of a Prince of Abolition!

Prince of Abolition was Sequence 1 of the Black Emperor pathway!

As a Sequence 1, if one wanted to advance to Sequence 0, then one had to obtain all the Beyonder characteristics of the other two Sequence 1s of the same pathway!

With this guess in mind, Klein was increasingly afraid of getting involved with Will Auceptin's case.

If my deduction is correct, it would be a genuine "fight between deities," and I can't afford to get myself involved… Klein's spirituality descended, and he disappeared from the ancient palace above the gray fog.

†

In Empress Borough, in an inconspicuous house, the Beyonder gathering organized by Mr. A proceeded as scheduled.

Fors and Xio had changed their clothes, and they accompanied Viscount Glaint, who was wearing an iron-black mask, into the hall. They randomly chose a seat and sat down.

Viscount Glaint wrote down his needs to the attendants before the gathering officially began. He also prayed to the goddess that there would be a response later.

As usual, Fors maintained her usual languidness and, in a rare instance, covered herself with a hood, concealing her face with the shadows.

She was thinking about the situation with Mr. Lawrence.

She knew very clearly what that “diamond” the size of an eye was. It was a Beyonder characteristic left behind by him. However, for the time being, she was unable to confirm what Sequence it belonged to.

Fors had casually flipped through the notebook, only to find that many of the pages were still blank. The written content was filled with all sorts of strange, odd, and mysterious symbols and magic labels, exceeding whatever she knew.

What it is isn’t important. What’s important is that I keep my promise… Fors warned herself.

At this moment, Mr. A, who was seated on a single sofa and was wearing an exaggerated hood, said hoarsely, “I have a mission.

“Help me find people who believe in the so-called ‘Fool.’”

Ah? Fors instantly snapped back to her senses.

Chapter 405 - “Cult”

◈◈◈

“The Fool?” The Beyonders who attended Mr. A’s gathering either ruminated over the phrase or conversed with their companions to discuss whether they had ever met anyone who had a similar faith.

“When did such a cult appear?” someone asked in a low voice.

At this point, Mr. A made the attendant beside him hold up a blackboard with a few lines of words written in the Loen language.

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

As the attendees examined the blackboard, Mr. A said in a hoarse and jarring voice, “Do not use Hermes to read what’s written here. Even more so for Jotun, Elvish, Dragonese, and ancient Hermes. You shouldn’t even write the corresponding descriptions; otherwise, there is a high probability that something terrible will happen.

“Help me find believers in The Fool. Of course, they might also be followers of the mysterious ruler above the gray fog or the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck. As long as there’s a clue, inform me immediately. The reward I’ll provide will be so handsome that it will far exceed your imagination!”

“This description… It sounds like an incredible existence. I’ve only seen similar descriptions in the ancient texts of the seven gods!” a gathering member exclaimed.

His companion shook his head and said, “The beings which many cults believe in have similar descriptions.”

“Is it really a cult?” The other gathering members were stunned when they heard their discussion.

“Likely. Typically, when we summon a creature from the spirit world, we might have three lines describing it, but one of the lines would be about ‘the blessed one of someone’ or ‘that who belongs to.’ It wouldn’t be in this format!” A gathering member who was well-versed in mysticism gave an explanation.

As they vehemently conversed, Fors was nearly dumbfounded.

Isn’t that the honorific name of Mr. Fool? Even though it’s described in the Loen language, I’m sure of it! Why would Mr. A want to find the believers of Mr. Fool? Is the Aurora Order behind this? Fors’s mind was in a mess.

She knew that Mr. A was a member of the Aurora Order because of a particular “terrorist organization” had announced its responsibility in the assassination of Intis Ambassador Bakerland.

After a brief moment of astonishment, Fors subconsciously began to examine herself, afraid that someone would discover that she was already a member of the Tarot Club and that, in some sense, she was a Blessed of The Fool.

I just recited the honorific name of The Fool according to the ancient Hermes on that piece of paper and was pulled above the gray fog. No one knows about this, and I don’t have to be afraid of being investigated… But there’s a link to that piece of paper with Mr. Fool’s honorific name written on it. It was hidden in a book we borrowed from the Viscount Glaint… Thoughts rapidly flashed through Fors’s mind.

The Fool that doesn't belong to this era… Isn't that the description I saw on that piece of paper? I even dreamed of an evil spirit! At the same time, Xio remembered the incident that had frightened her, but her long experience as a bounty hunter had kept her from revealing anything unusual.

And then, as she recalled, she thought about the origin of the piece of paper.

It was hidden in the bookcase of "History of the Loen Kingdom's Aristocracy"… That book was borrowed from Viscount Glaint's study…

Suddenly, a name flashed in both Fors's and Xio's minds at the same time: Viscount Glaint!

At that moment, Viscount Glaint was looking at the blackboard and said to himself with interest, "This honorific name is very rare.

"But it sounds very impressive!"

Just as he finished his sentence, he looked to his side in puzzlement, asking Fors and Xio, "Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Nothing." Xio and Fors rapidly shook their heads at the same time.

†

After dinner, in an elegantly decorated house.

Audrey brought the huge golden retriever, Susie, into the living room under the guidance of her psychology teacher, Escalante. She was attending the "academic" meeting that had been agreed upon last week.

Her maid and bodyguard stayed behind while she walked with Susie into a spacious activity room.

In the activity room, be it for the atmosphere or some other reason, the gas lamps were not lit. The room was lit by gold-plated candle lamps on the coffee table and cupboard.

Before Audrey could take a good look at her surroundings, she saw a gentleman in his thirties walking towards her. He wore a gray tailcoat.

“This is the owner of this place, Mr. Stephen Hampres, a furniture merchant.” the long-haired Escalante introduced him.

She was just about to tell him Audrey’s identity when Hampres chuckled and said, “Escalante, don’t say anything. Let me have a chance at guessing.”

He had a neatly trimmed mustache and charming dark brown eyes. He appeared very gentle and elegant, nothing like a furniture merchant but more like a university lecturer.

After seriously sizing up Audrey a few times, he smiled and said, “Escalante only mentioned that you were her student. Heh heh, I believe you’re a cultured noble lady, and you aren’t someone who only looks good. There’s no need for you to worry about a decline in the quality of your life…

“You’re a little excited, very curious, and a relatively simple but also full of love…

“Of course, the most obvious point is that you’re very beautiful, just like an angel!”

He made a final joke, pressed his hand to his chest, bowed, and said, “Welcome, the beautiful Miss Angel.”

You’re right, as expected of a member of the Psychology Alchemists. However, what you managed to observe was the me from a few months ago. It’s all a facade I’ve put on for myself… Audrey opened her mouth in surprise and astonishment.

“Did you know me before, Mr. Hampres?”

She didn't let her shocked expression linger too long on her face, because such emotions were meant to be instantaneous and wouldn't last too long.

If anyone were to be surprised for several seconds, then it meant that their performance was most likely an act.

Audrey didn't notice this at first, but after watching others "act" all this time, she naturally came up with a lot of rules.

"No, I still don't know you. This is just the basics of being a psychology enthusiast." Hampres chuckled.

Before he could finish his sentence, Audrey had already completed her observations and made a corresponding judgment based on her surroundings.

His attire and the furnishings of his house all indicate that he's a person who cares deeply about how people view him…

The sapphire on the ring of his left hand doesn't look small, but its actual quality is very ordinary. There are no symbols or magic labels on it… His finances aren't as good as he presents them to be… He's vain…

Even though he was very enthusiastic just now, the way he stands there, the direction in which his feet point, and the changes in his emotional colors all indicate that he still has many concerns and is on his guard…

He sincerely commended me on my looks, but it wasn't in the way a man would look at a woman. There are signs of him using facial products, and his eyebrows are definitely drawn. His skills are inferior to my make-up maidservant, Solia, but they're better than mine… The cologne he uses is "Confusion," something that I've only seen women use before… Yes, he probably likes men, and the role he plays is the weaker one in the relationship…

At the same time, Audrey expressed her longing skillfully.

"I'd love to have your observational powers, Mr. Hampres."

As she spoke, she maintained a faint smile while being introduced to the other seven or eight people in the activity room under Hampres's and Escalante's lead.

The lovers of both mysticism and psychology were either descendants of fallen aristocrats, associate professors at universities, or the children of the rich. For example, the father of a young man was the owner of Philip's Department Store, the most famous department store in Backlund.

In the exchange that followed, Audrey basically only listened. The only time she spoke was by asking questions, fully expressing her curiosity and yearning.

In this "academic" discussion, Escalante and Hampres deliberately mentioned the Body of Heart and Mind, as well as the spirit world and the collective subconscious. They also shared some relatively unique points of view, allowing Audrey to gradually understand some of the questions she had accumulated all this time.

When the discussion ended and they were out of the house, Audrey glanced at Escalante beside her and asked, with a little naivety, "Ms. Escalante, when will I-I be as good in psychology as Mr. Hampres?"

Escalante curled the corners of her lips and slightly tilted her head as she looked at her.

"Very soon…"

†

At night, Klein, who was about to get into bed, once again appeared above the gray fog.

Despite being a little sleepy, he was jolted awake by the news Miss

Magician had reported.

The Aurora Order knows of The Fool? They know of my honorific name? The True Creator has locked onto me? Klein abruptly sat up straight, as though he was about to face an attack.

He quickly rejected the final theory. If the True Creator had indeed locked onto him, Mr. A would have long visited him on the pretext of collecting a copper penny for the gas meter. Perhaps, even a Saint might appear.

That is to say, only The Fool and his corresponding honorific name are known, and the clues point to Backlund… Who leaked the news? Klein frowned as he carefully thought about it.

Soon, he discovered a possibility.

Little Sun has recently chanted my honorific name, and it happened when he was interacting with a member of the exploratory team who was corrupted by the True Creator… He held a sacrificial ritual, and there were likely symbols corresponding to The Fool at the scene. The ancient palace above the gray fog appeared…. So, the True Creator sensed the existence of The Fool and confirmed that I was the one who had been sacrilegious, no—harassing, no that's not right either—spying on him…

Also, Little Sun used the All-Black Eye at that time, which contains the mental corruption of the True Creator… Through that, "He" has confirmed that my Blessed and believers are in Backlund?

I can't take the All-Black Eye out in the future!

Having roughly understood the problem, Klein was left with another problem.

Mr. A announced the bounty for Mr. Fool's believers at a not-so-private, relatively open Beyonder gathering. Is he just dumb, or is he deliberately "fishing?"

Sigh, the Aurora Order members are all bigoted lunatics. Their brains are mostly damaged, so it’s impossible to deduce their real intentions!

This is as the saying goes, as long as I’m crazy, you won’t be able to guess what I’m thinking?

Chapter 406 - A Joyous But Extremely Helpless Reality

◆

Above the gray fog, the magnificent palace stood silently.

Klein drummed his fingers rhythmically on the edge of the long bronze table, concentrating on what he could do in the face of the threat of the Aurora Order and Mr. A.

While having a hard time figuring out the other party's intentions, he instinctively came up with an idea.

Report Mr. A! Report illegal gatherings!

Klein could very easily learn of the location where Mr. A held the gathering through Miss Magician, and thus, he would be able to easily report it to the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punisher, or the Machinery Hivemind in secret.

An Oracle of the Aurora Order was bound to garner enough attention!

When that happens, Mr. A's safety would probably be at risk, so he probably wouldn't have the time or effort to track down the believers of The Fool.

The problem, however, was that this was bound to implicate a group of innocent Beyonders, and Klein suspected that this was the reason why Mr. A directly offered a reward for the believers of The Fool.

Perhaps he had long planned an escape. Once someone reports him, he would be able to confirm without a doubt that The Fool's believers were among the previous gathering members.

As for who it was exactly, that wasn’t important. Mr. A and the lunatics of the Aurora Order were definitely capable of taking exhaustive measures!

And once these Beyonders fell into their hands, many of them would be unable to hide their secrets. The Aurora Order, or the Shepherd pathway which represented the True Creator, are the best at corrupting others.

When the ideology of a Beyonder was completely twisted and once they believed in the True Creator wholeheartedly, what else could be kept a secret?

It’s not like there’s no other way. It’s best not to report it… Klein leaned back in his chair, collected his thoughts, and reorganized the entire matter.

As he was thinking, he suddenly realized a problem.

There were no believers or Blessed of The Fool in this world!

Even the Tarot Club only had a few members, and no one had divulged the relevant information.

In other words, the Aurora Order wouldn’t be able to find any relevant clues… There’s nothing to worry about… The only bad outcome is that The Fool is now targeted by the True Creator. Although being targeted by an evil god isn’t a pleasant feeling, it basically wouldn’t affect anything else… Klein nodded thoughtfully.

He had thought it through very clearly. The only flaw in this matter was that he had once used the title of The Fool, written in the language of ancient Hermes, as a password for an anonymous account. However, with the sacrificial and bestowal rituals having proven useful, the account had long been abandoned and had long since been forgotten.

Since the last month and a half, no one had been noticed by Klein for copying the password, so it was possible to deduce the actual situation.

As such, bank employees, who had been in contact with the password but apparently do not understand mysticism, wouldn't be able to reveal it to anyone, and Beyonders would at most make requests in the Loen language, so even if they find the right person, it's not possible to connect the content described in the Loen language with that of the ancient Hermes password.

If anyone had copied it down, I would be the first to know and would be able to respond effectively… Besides, even if someone finds the password, it would be difficult to trace it back to Sherlock Moriarty. I use a variety of means every time… Miss Justice is also sufficiently careful when saving money… While rapping the table, Klein relaxed and said with a chuckle, "You believe that The Fool has many Blessed and believers and that this would result in many clues that cannot be hidden?

"Wrong, especially wrong! There's only one believer and Blessed of The Fool! And that's me!"

When he said that, he couldn't help but let out a self-deprecating laugh.

"It doesn't seem like it's something that I should be proud of…"

I need to be a little careful for the time being. I shouldn't go around using the banner of The Fool… Klein reminded himself and went back to answering Miss Magician's prayers.

He adjusted his posture, and said in a low, gentle voice, "Don't worry about it."

†

Don't worry about it… When Fors received the answer, she was surprised but also felt that it was only right.

In the eyes of Mr. Fool, the Aurora Order is nothing but a bunch of ants!

Fors once again recited his honorific name in a low voice, and she curiously asked, “Honorable Mr. Fool, which existence does the Aurora Order believe in?”

Then, she saw Mr. Fool sitting on a high back chair in the middle of the gray fog. He leisurely said, “The True Creator.”

The True Creator… Fors’s eyes widened as she instantly understood why Mr. A suddenly sought out the believers of The Fool.

With the help of the Tarot Club, that Sun youth in the City of Silver had successfully exposed the abnormality of the exploratory team and thwarted the True Creator’s ploy!

Behind this incident is a confrontation and struggle between Mr. Fool and the True Creator… Fors didn’t dare to ask any further, and she quickly recounted her meeting with the members of the Abraham family. She also mentioned Lawrence’s will, the strange notebook, and the Beyonder characteristic he had left behind.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, what should I do?” she asked for advice with uncertainty.

What should you do? Miss Magician really is lucky… Why haven’t I encountered such a good thing… Klein responded with a chuckle, “Follow the true desires in your heart.”

He wasn’t the least bit worried that Dorian Gray, from Pritz Harbor’s Fishermen Association, would harm Miss Magician, because he knew she had two more stones on her bracelet, allowing her to teleport through the spirit world twice.

Follow the true desires in my heart? Fors lowered her head in thought.

“I understand. Thank you, Mr. Fool.”

She decided to buy a steam locomotive ticket tomorrow. Using this mode of transportation, it would take a little over an hour to get from Backlund to Pritz Harbor, or maybe less.

After reporting everything, Fors requested to hold a sacrificial and bestowal ritual. After receiving a positive response, she exchanged 600 pounds in cash for the Sheriff Beyonder characteristic.

Holding up the fist-shaped object comprised of black iron, dark red, and silver colors, as well as its beautiful spiritual radiance, Fors felt joy and admiration.

Xio had long gathered the supplementary ingredients, so she would soon be promoted to Sequence 8… And I don't know when I'll become a Trickmaster… I hope Mr. Hanged Man and the others can help me find the appropriate Beyonder ingredients as soon as possible…

Xio had been subconsciously acting as an Arbiter, so she didn't have to worry about her digestion of the Sequence 9 potion, but once she becomes a Sheriff, what should she do? Should I ask permission from Mr. Fool to teach her the "acting method"… or should I simply suggest that she sneak into the police force?

†

At the end of the long, mottled table, Klein looked at the thick stack of cash in front of him and carefully counted it several times.

Through this method, I would have 1,230 pounds. I would still be short of 300 pounds to obtain a single Sequence 6 Beyonder ingredient. Of course, 1,500 pounds is the minimum price, and the actual transaction price is usually much higher than this…

Where else can I get money these days?

As soon as the bicycle patent is granted, shall I sell a portion of the shares?

Yes, I almost forgot how special the Tarot Club is. The Werewolf Beyonder characteristic cannot be sold in Backlund for now, so as to avoid being discovered by High-Sequence Beyonders from the Rose School of Thought. But I can always sell it elsewhere! I'll let The World entrust Mr. Hanged Man to sell it at the Sonia Sea at the next gathering. I'll offer a corresponding amount of the commission as his reward.

After subtracting the costs, the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic should give me at least 1000 pounds. It will be more than enough for a single Sequence 6 Beyonder ingredient.

Klein quickly came up with a plan and decided upon it.

He found it a little regrettable that Miss Xio didn't seem to have much money. After she became a Sheriff, even if she could quickly digest the potion, it would still take her a long time to buy the Interrogator's Beyonder characteristic. And if the Abraham family were to take interest in Miss Magician, his subsequent Astrologer potion formula would no longer be marketable.

What a pity… Klein sighed and returned to the real world.

†

Wednesday morning.

Klein didn't suffer from insomnia due to being targeted by the True Creator and the Aurora Order's pursuit. He slept till daybreak and happily went out to buy a Desi pie for breakfast.

There was no doubt that Desi pie required sweet iced tea to match it.

As he enjoyed the food and flipped through the newspapers, he discovered the advertisement for the Ernst Firm and learned that there would be a Beyonder gathering convened by Eye of Wisdom tomorrow night.

This time, I'll be able to request to purchase the relevant Beyonder ingredients… But there's a high chance that it wouldn't be available. Even if there's something, it will be supplementary ingredients like the hair of a Deep-sea Naga… Klein seriously considered the channels in which he could find the ingredients.

He spread out his left hand and counted with his fingers.

From the Tarot Club, there are the outlets of Little Sun, Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and the rest. Beyond that, I have Eye of Wisdom's gathering; Miss Bodyguard and Maric, but I shouldn't contact them if possible for the time being. Also, hmm… Yes, I have Vampire Emlyn White. Didn't he mention that he would write to ask some powerful Sanguines? That's what social connections can bring about!

Coming to this thought, Klein immediately decided to go to the Harvest Church to wait for Emlyn White.

Although it was impossible for the Aurora Order to track him down, it still gave him a sense of urgency, making him want to gather the Beyonder ingredients as soon as possible. One he digested his potion, he would quickly advance to Sequence 6.

Ten in the morning, South of the Bridge, Rose Street.

In his double-breasted frock coat, Klein took off his half top hat and strolled into the rather small Harvest Church.

At first glance, he saw the giant-like Father Utravsky and Emlyn White who was dressed in brown priest robes.

The latter was wiping the candle lamps with a numb look on his face, as though he would rather be dead.

What a coincidence… Wait, don't tell me he's here for the entire day? He only returns home at night? Klein casually found a seat and sat down. There were less than five devotees in the entire cathedral.

Emlyn White also saw him and put down the rag. He walked over and sat beside him.

The vampire’s expression suddenly became lively. He raised his chin and said with a chuckle, “You came here suddenly because you have something you need my help with, right?”

Chapter 407 - The True Adorer

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the Harvest Church.

Klein tilted his head to glance at Emlyn White. Without ruining the serene atmosphere, he deliberately suppressed his voice and laughed, returning with a question.

“Are you short on money?”

As soon as the words left his mouth, he felt as if he were asking if Emlyn knew about the multi-level marketing company, Amway.

Emlyn was first taken aback before he scoffed.

“Don’t insult a noble Sanguine with money!”

Klein instantly sneered. Looking at the tall and brawny Father Utravsky in front of him, he said rather casually, “According to what I know, those handmade dolls are not cheap. They can even be called expensive, especially those that are as tall as a human.”

“…” Emlyn gaped his mouth in an attempt to retort, but he failed to say a word.

After a moment of silence, he coughed lightly, feigned indifference, and said, “Tell me, what is it that you want my help with? I’m not a Sanguine who likes riddles.”

Klein didn’t look at the vampire next to him. He smiled and said, “I have a friend who is about to advance. He needs to collect the relevant

Beyonder ingredients. I wonder if you can help?”

“Are you doubting the capabilities of a Sanguine?” Emlyn White said arrogantly. “Even if I don’t have them, I can write and inquire from the nobler Excellencies.”

That’s what I want… Klein immediately responded with a deluge of words, “Mutated pituitary gland of a Thousand-faced Hunter and 100 ml of its blood. Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow and five strands of a Deep-sea Naga. As long as I can get any of these, I will pay you the corresponding price. The cheaper the price, the more you will be rewarded.”

He purposefully increased the number of supplementary ingredients to avoid any losses.

Upon hearing this description without any stuttering, Emlyn White suddenly felt as if he had fallen into a trap of sophistry.

He calmed his emotions and said, “The cost for the Beyonder ingredients is at least 100 pounds, while supplementary ingredients are at least 10 pounds. Although I’m not clear of the level of the things you want, I believe that they’re definitely not cheap or common. Otherwise, you wouldn’t have come to me for help.”

Very smart… Klein laughed.

“Deal!

At this moment, Emlyn White had a deep suspicion that he was asking for too little.

Therefore, he added, “Mr. Detective, do you have any clues on removing the psychological cues?”

Seeing that Father Utravsky was concentrating on his prayers at the altar ahead of them, Klein turned to glance at the vampire and said, “I have the simplest method.”

“What?” Emlyn White’s red eyes lit up.

“Defeat Bishop Utravsky and snatch his Mental Terror Candle away,” Klein said with a chuckle. “After you meet up with your parents, you should possess the strength needed. Are three Sanguines not the match of a single Dawn Paladin?”

The corners of Emlyn’s mouth twitched as his expression collapsed.

“We lost.

“We couldn’t beat him…

“My parents were nearly captured. That Mental Terror Candle is really strange…”

So you’ve already tried… The entire family almost converted to become believers of Earth Mother… Three Sanguines weren’t even able to defeat Father Utravsky? With the help of the Mental Terror Candle and the Blood Transfuser, Father Utravsky is that terrifying? Or are vampires too weak? However, all the rumors point towards vampires being rather powerful… Klein said in thought, “Then you can write a letter and ask for the help of the noble Excellencies. There shouldn’t be a lack of powerful experts among the Sanguine.”

Emlyn White answered with a numb expression, “They refused.”

Suddenly, he looked at Klein with hope.

“Can you defeat Father Utravsky? Or could your friend beat him?”

After receiving the Sun Brooch and the Biological Poison Bottle and digesting most of the potion, I originally thought that I would be able to defeat Father Utravsky in my Spirit Body state. However, your description just now made me uncertain. Is the Mental Terror Candle that bizarre? This kind of Sealed Artifact is obviously great at restraining Spirit Bodies… Klein rationally shook his head.

"No way."

He quickly changed the subject.

"Why would those noble Excellencies of the Sanguine refuse your request? To them, this should be a simple favor."

Emlyn White's face instantly turned ashen.

"They say that Father Utravsky is a Blessed of Earth Mother. They do not wish to enter into direct conflict with him. They are studying means to remove the psychological cue. For example, they are venturing deep into the Sonia Sea, the Fog Sea, and the Berserk Sea, in search of the dragons that have long secluded themselves."

He added with a smile even uglier than a weeping face, "By the time they figure it out or find a dragon well-versed in the psyche domain, I might have already become a devout believer of Earth Mother… I'm beginning to appreciate how precious life is and how joyful a harvest is."

A Blessed of Earth Mother? Father Utravsky is a Blessed of Earth Mother? It's no wonder that he has so many mystical items… From the looks of it, as a powerful pirate, suddenly switching to the Earth Mother wasn't a simple matter… Klein sighed, and then he felt a sense of lingering fear.

He had almost agreed to Emlyn White's request to attempt to defeat Father Utravsky.

If I lose, then I might even be locked up in the basement and forced into confinement. If I win, I might just offend another deity, no—there's no way of me winning. The Blessed of Earth Mother definitely has an appropriate trump card. If it wasn't for Father Utravsky suppressing his split personality, then I probably wouldn't have been able to defeat him…

Klein wisely didn't pursue the topic. He once again looked at Father

Utravsky and said, “You can try to find an organization called the Psychology Alchemists.”

Otherwise, you’ll have to wait for Miss Justice of our Tarot Club to become a Psychiatrist. By then, you might be reluctant to break away from the faith of Earth Mother… Klein silently added.

To him, it was best if Emlyn White also joined the Psychology Alchemists. That way, if Miss Justice encountered any problems in the organization, he could help her with other resources, and Klein wouldn’t always have to summon himself, who was the trinity of The Fool, a Blessed, and a believer.

“Psychology Alchemists? I’ve never heard of it.” Emlyn shook his head disdainfully. “It must be a secret organization that recently appeared.”

“This organization has existed for one or two hundred years, at the very least.” Klein denied his statement.

“For a Sanguine with a long lifespan, one or two hundred years means it recently appeared. Among the noble Excellencies, a nap might be as long as a century,” Emlyn White said proudly.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he looked ahead, cleared his throat, and said, “Do you know how to contact that organization?”

Klein was going to answer that there was a man in the Tingen City’s asylum named Dr. Daxter Guderian, who’s a member of the Psychology Alchemists, but he stopped those words just before they came out of his mouth.

With the True Creator targeting me, it’s best that I don’t get involved with people or matters in Tingen. There’s a certain risk of exposure, and once exposed, with the Aurora Order’s madness, they would definitely not let Benson and Melissa go… Klein slightly shook his head and said, “I’ve only heard of this organization.

“You can write and ask the other Sanguine.”

Emlyn White was disappointed and stopped talking about it. He turned his head to look at Klein and said, "I'm guessing your friend who's about to advance is you."

Klein looked forward without a care and replied leisurely, "Congratulations, you got it right."

"…" Emlyn White was stunned. This was completely different from what he had expected!

Noticing his change, Klein laughed softly.

"Mr. White, the most suitable job for you isn't to be an apothecary but to be an actor."

Emlyn was stunned at first, but he immediately raised his head arrogantly and said, "I'm a deep, noble Sanguine. I don't rely on my looks to make a living."

Do you think I'm praising you for being handsome? Klein slowly stood up and laughed.

"No, I mean, you are very talented at comedy."

While Emlyn White's expression froze, he squeezed his way out to the aisle and said, "Don't forget what I entrusted you with."

†

Pritz Harbor, White Oak Street.

Fors Wall took the steam locomotive early in the morning and arrived at the kingdom's largest and most important port. She had also booked tickets for her return trip by boat which was relatively inexpensive.

Taking in the smell of the sea, Fors saw many of the dockworkers who were in a hurry.

In the middle of each season, the port was swarming with temporary workers for relatively decent pay, and many poor people living in Backlund's East Borough would head southeast on foot and in groups, traveling a distance of more than 60 kilometers. This was the same thing they did when harvesting hops.

The roads are wider than Backlund's, and the air quality isn't bad, but it's relatively dirtier… Fors looked around and found the Fishermen Association in an old building.

Without much trouble, she met Dorian Gray in an office.

The gentleman was of medium build, with exaggerated arms. His hair was combed rather neatly, completely unlike most of the members of the association who had hairstyles that looked like bird nests.

He should also be an Abraham family member… After explaining the purpose of her visit, Fors passed Lawrence's will, along with the strange notebook and the diamond-like Beyonder characteristic.

Dorian received the items with a complicated expression before opening the will first.

After reading it carefully, he lifted his head and looked earnestly at Fors with his blue eyes.

"Your kindness and honor are praiseworthy. Ms. Wall, I shall always remember the help you provided Aulisa and Lawrence.

"Can you accept my gratitude? I wish to invite you to lunch."

"No problem." Fors was still wondering how to pass the time before her ship sailed.

Dorian immediately arranged for her to wait in the next lounge, offering black tea, snacks, newspapers, and magazines.

Returning to the office, the gentleman opened a hidden cabinet with some misgivings and took out an item.

It was a pure crystal ball shining with a radiant light.

Chapter 408 - A Bold Assumption

◆

Dorian drew the curtains, cloaking the office with darkness before he sat down.

He held the crystal ball in his left hand while touching its top with his right palm. As he stroked the crystal ball back and forth, he kept chanting softly.

Gradually, the radiant points of light within the crystal ball began to shine brighter and brighter, becoming more and more obvious, as if the stars in the night sky were casting their reflections.

Often used to determine the direction of fate, the stars in the trajectory of one's life surfaced one after another, forming a three-dimensional astrolabe with many revelations from the spirit world that resembled symbols.

Dorian Gray finally stopped and studied it.

She wasn't lying… That really was the trajectory of the situation… She seems to be able to bring about changes to the Abraham family—optimistic changes… As the light from the crystal ball dimmed, Dorian stood up, having already made up his mind.

At lunchtime, in the Four-Winged Bird restaurant.

In front of Fors lay a filleted fried fish which had rosemary scattered over it. Its skin was crispy, its meat fresh, and it didn't have any fine bones. It was rather tasty, but the only problem was that the cook had an extremely warped sense of aesthetics. He had deliberately kept the eyes of the fish bulging out of its head, and by plating the food, he made the fish look up, as though to express its indignation over its death.

Fors pushed the head down, cut off the tail, and covered the upturned eye.

At that moment, Dorian Gray began moving his fork and knife as he casually said, "Aulisa really liked mysticism and had done some research in this area. When you were packing her things, did you see any books, notes, or other items?"

"There were some notebooks and books," Fors answered frankly. "As a result, I became a mysticism enthusiast, but unfortunately, I couldn't understand some of the content at all."

For example, the Sights in the Spirit World. Not only was it absurd, illogical, and messy, incapable of expressing ideas, even if I forced myself to read it and systematically calm my impatience, it was still difficult to remember its contents. I would forget it once I finished reading it, let alone understand it… Fors added inwardly.

Dorian nodded slightly and laughed.

"Then you can consult me. I'm also a mysticism enthusiast, quite a proficient one if I may add."

"Really? That's great!" Fors answered appropriately.

Seeing that she was really interested, Dorian immediately diverted the topic to mysticism. Sometimes he would bring up the spirit world, and sometimes he would talk about his Cogitation experience. Having been prepared before he even stepped into the restaurant, he had deliberately chosen a secluded and quiet spot. Hence, he didn't need to fear that the customers around them would overhear their conversation.

At the end of the lunch, Dorian offered, "I didn't know how to express my gratitude, but now I don't have to worry about it anymore. Heh heh, although Lawrence had paid you, I don't think that's enough to match your kindness, goodheartedness, and honor.

"Ms. Wall, you can write to me and ask about any questions you have about mysticism. That's the least I can do to express my gratitude."

"That's what I wish for." Fors didn't refuse.

From the exchange just now, she could clearly tell that Dorian Gray possessed rich, systematic mysticism knowledge. He was indeed worthy of being a member of the ancient Abraham family.

And this was also considered something she was lacking in. Although she had mastered quite a lot of knowledge about the Beyonder world, it all came from a few books and notebooks that didn't go in-depth, as well as random information she had heard and experienced from the various gatherings she attended. It wasn't comprehensive or systematic enough, and it just had too many shortcomings.

Upon hearing her reply, Dorian raised his cup and smiled.

"I hope that one day, we will also possess mysterious and extraordinary powers."

†

North Borough in Backlund. Saint Samuel Cathedral.

A group of men wearing black trench coats and red gloves entered an underground area. The leader was a man in his forties with soft facial features and long hair.

Wearing a pompous top hat, he carried a black cane which was inlaid with gold. He quietly followed the Nighthawk leading the way and entered a rather spacious room.

There were many bookshelves in the room, with various dossiers placed on them. A mesmerizing, beautiful woman wearing a black robe with blue eyeshadow and blush was leisurely sitting in a high back chair. She didn't get up to greet him. It was the former Spirit Medium, Daly.

"Soest, all the information you need is over there." Daly gestured with her chin at the table by the door.

The middle-aged man named Soest smiled and said, "Daly, why were you sent to guard this place? You should be tasked with more important matters."

"No, this is what I wanted. I need to settle down and read more information." Daly chuckled. "This is to ease my future progress. Humans are fragile creatures, and they need a certain amount of time to calm down. No one can always be in peak condition, enjoying the thrill and pleasure without any rest."

"…Your style really has never changed. Unfortunately, you've never given me the chance." Soest burst out laughing.

Daly shook her head seriously and said, "Obviously, you don't understand me. My current hobby has turned even more novel. If you can turn yourself into a rotten corpse or expose your white bones, then I'll definitely be filled with interest in you."

She turned to look at the "Red Glove" behind Soest. "Leonard, why did you choose to join his team? This fellow is conceited, arrogant, and gutless. He keeps fantasizing that women would take the initiative to crawl into bed, waiting for him. To be honest, perhaps this is the unique trait of a Nightmare?"

When she mentioned "Nightmare," Daly visibly paused.

Leonard helplessly said, "Ma'am Daly, this was the arrangement of His Excellency Cesimir."

"Is that so… I can see that you agree with my views on Soest," Daly concluded in a slightly husky voice.

Leonard was momentarily at a loss for an explanation.

Fortunately, Soul Assurer Soest didn't pay much attention to Daly's words. Walking over to the table filled with information, he picked up a dossier and flipped through it. Leonard and the others immediately surrounded him, imitating their leader.

After the sound of paper flipping went on for some time, Soest casually asked, "What's new in Backlund recently? Something you think is worth paying attention to."

Daly's eyes moved slightly. After thinking for a while, she said, "A few Beyonders who work with us have passed on news that many people are searching for an organization that believes in The Fool, and they have given the corresponding honorific name…"

After describing The Fool's honorific name in the Loen language, she chuckled.

"I seem to be witnessing the birth of an entirely new cult. Of course, it might be the incarnation of an old friend.

"What do you think, Soest?"

Soest considered the matter seriously before saying, "No, I've never heard of such an organization."

At that moment, Leonard looked up from the dossier he was reading and mused, "Could this have something to do with the two tarot rituals we're investigating?

"The Fool is the first card in a deck of tarot cards, the most important Major Arcana card!"

Daly froze for a second, then she nodded thoughtfully.

"That's an interesting idea.

"But there's no evidence. It's pure speculation, and it cannot even be considered a deduction," Soest said, disapproval within his tone.

Leonard revealed a faint smile and said, "Emperor Roselle once said to make a bold hypothesis and then carefully back it up."

†

Hillston Borough, Quelaag Club.

As soon as Klein entered the hall after leaving the Harvest Church, he saw the equestrian teacher, Talim Dumont, sitting in a secluded corner, seemingly pondering over something.

Noticing that lunch was still some time away, Klein went over and greeted him with a smile.

"Good afternoon, Talim. You seem to have encountered another problem?"

Talim snapped to his senses with a start and hurriedly shook his head.

"No, nothing."

You seem to have done something that you have a guilty conscience about? Klein mumbled, sat down, and laughed.

"It's a pity Aaron and Mike aren't here, otherwise we'd be having another pleasant afternoon."

Talim smiled in response.

"They're all busy and have very little free time."

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he looked around and said, "Sherlock, there's an important figure who is very interested in you after hearing about your deeds. He would like to meet you. Would you be willing?

"Frankly speaking, this leaves me envious. It's a very rare opportunity."

Wait, what deeds did I do? Help Mrs. Mary catch her adulterous husband? Accompany Reporter Mike to a brothel? Even in my past few trips to East Borough, I didn't do anything impressive… At the very most, they'd know that I made a contribution to the serial murders and that I helped Dr. Aaron resolve his nightmare by providing him with counsel… Klein was confused.

After two seconds, he suddenly understood the reason.

The important figure must've asked Talim if he knew of an excellent detective, and he could only think of me, so he offered to embellish descriptions about me that sounded pretty impressive, such as the true person who cracked the case behind the serial murders, the person who noticed that Mrs. Mary's former husband and his mistress had attempted to siphon funds from the Coim Company. I was probably described as being effective and sharp, a great detective who struck swiftly and precisely… This is how you tout each other in business… Klein sighed.

He hesitated for a moment and said, "I'm sorry, Talim. But as a detective, I have my own principles, and that is to not get involved in matters involving important figures. On the stage of the higher-ups, what might be a sneeze-like friction among them might very well be an unbearable disaster for me.

"I won't paint a target on my back, so I won't see this important figure."

This was actually something Klein had decided upon before he became a detective.

He was prone to an investigation once he was involved with high society; therefore, before he became a Faceless, he didn't want to bear such risks.

"…You're very rational." Talim sighed and said, "The important figure has anticipated this reaction and believes that such a detective is even more trustworthy, so he wishes for you to take on a commission that wouldn’t involve high society.”

“What kind of commission?” Klein asked.

Talim chuckled and said, “The Capim case which you and Mike were talking about last time. The important figure is very interested in the organization that uses tarot cards. He said that there has been more than one such case and wishes for you to find any relevant clues.”

Chapter 409 - December

◆

What? Getting me to investigate myself again? Klein nearly suspected that this was a deliberate test.

An organization that uses tarot cards to represent itself really is interesting, and I think so, but I don't want to sell myself out… Right, Capim's matter is clearly not that simple. He had a total of four Beyonders protecting him, so there must be a powerful faction behind him. What's the difference between investigating this case and being involved in high society strife? Well, this isn't something Sherlock Moriarty should know… Klein revealed a thoughtful expression, and while weighing his options, he said, "It's not easy to find a mysterious organization. Besides, it's very dangerous."

Talim seemed to have expected his answer and chuckled.

"Sherlock, there's no need for you to take risks. The important figure's intention is for you to pay more attention and to gather the relevant information or rumors. Here's 5 pounds in cash, money for your activities. Even if you don't receive any valuable information, the money is yours. And once you gather any useful clues, he'll pay you per lead and reimburse you for your expenses throughout the process."

Such good conditions? That important figure has put a lot of his attention on this matter… Does he have connections with the forces behind Capim, or does he wish to find the mysterious organization that uses tarot cards as a code name to help him? Reimburse… It's been a long time since I've heard someone promise me something like this…

Since he's already gone so far by promising me such perks, it would appear very suspicious if a private detective were to refuse the commission… Furthermore, the matter of investigating myself should clearly be left to me… Klein hesitated for a few seconds and said, "Alright. I'll do my best."

He didn't stand on ceremony, and he accepted the five one-pound notes that Talim handed him, intending to provide a vague clue every week or two.

Isn't the Aurora Order looking for The Fool? The Fool is obviously part of a tarot card! I hope that important figure will pursue this path all the way and get rid of Mr. A… A thought began to form in Klein's mind.

†

Under Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Soul Assurer Soest assembled his team together to discuss their subsequent actions.

He looked at the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell and asked, half-asking and half-evaluating, "If I were to relegate this matter to you, how do you plan on investigating the two cases related to the tarot ritual?"

Leonard lifted his hand to comb his hair, smiled, and said, "First, I would go according to my train of thought from before. I would do a reverse search for the people or organizations seeking The Fool's believers. They might know something. Second, I would reinvestigate the first two cases and place all the people involved in a name list, regardless of if they were suspects or not! Then, I'll use the powers of a Nightmare to inquire and eliminate them one by one. The devil might be in the details, hidden in the person who's most improbable."

Soest let out a chuckle.

"I've read through the dossiers. These two cases involve a lot of people, each living in different places. Wanting to re-examine them is quite difficult, and some of them are already Beyonders who are secretly active beneath the surface. They know how to hide themselves very well, and we have no way of knowing where they are. If we were to perform an investigation according to your idea, then what we need wouldn't be a small team. The Church would have to inject at least five more Sequence 7 or above Nighthawks and the corresponding support personnel."

"The case we are in charge of is focused on the devil-summoning case," another Red Glove reminded Leonard.

Leonard didn't seem angry as he let out a soft laugh.

"I know. I'm only providing my point of view. As for whether or not it is used, or the extent to which it will be used will be decided by Captain Soest."

He paused for a moment and revealed a puzzled expression.

"I don't understand why the two cases related to the tarot rituals didn't have a high priority. The former involved an evil god's attempted descent, countless times more serious than a mere devil summoning."

Soest picked up his coffee and took a sip before leisurely answering, "The Nighthawks have limited manpower. All cases require a certain priority level. Up to now, the secret organization represented by tarot cards hasn't expressed any obvious malice towards us. Their actions, to a certain extent, have helped us. For example, they foiled the descent of the True Creator, as well as letting us know that the human trafficker, Capim, isn't a simple person. There must be some big secret underlying the matter."

After saying that, he smiled and said, "Perhaps they can help us discover even more unsavory matters.

“Of course, the necessary investigations must be carried out. No one can guarantee that a secret organization will not end up being our enemy in the future.”

“I see, Captain Soest. Let’s focus on the devil summoning case,” Leonard said earnestly.

†

In a Backlund winter that was inseparable from fireplaces and fog, time flew by amidst these cold and gray sensations.

In the blink of an eye, there was only half a month left until the new year.

Klein extinguished the charcoal in the fireplace and put on a double-breasted frock coat over his dark red woolen vest.

Nearly three weeks ago, Leppard finally received the bike patent and began looking for suitable second-round investors. Steam car mogul, Framis Cage, ended up showing some interest in this.

After several meetings, the three parties agreed to conclude their final negotiations today.

During the past month or so, Klein led an uneventful life. Through his investigations, he slowly digested the potion by strictly following the principles. Now, he was just short of a relatively bigger performance that he needed to initiate to completely digest it.

If there are no urgent matters, I can avoid taking risks. It would take about another… As his mind wandered, Klein removed the half top hat from the coat rack and smoothed the folds with a brush and handkerchief, removing the dust.

The badge left behind by Lanevus indicated a 4th January gathering. He had no strong intentions on attending it.

During this time, the Tarot Club continued being held on a weekly basis. Klein obtained a few pages of Roselle's early diary entries, allowing him to witness how he went from a weakling, who only knew how to dream without taking actual action, to becoming a playboy who actively hunted.

Apart from this, he gained almost nothing. Although the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic was handed over to The Hanged Man for sale via The World, a sale involving more than a thousand pounds was obviously not easy to close. The Werewolf's unique trait of being cursed also caused many interested parties to shrink back from it.

However, a few days ago at a Tarot Gathering, The Hanged Man told The World that he had contacted an Artisan from the Church of the God of Steam, and the other party was clearly interested.

Let's hope the deal with be closed this week… There are still no clues to the Wind-blessed formula which Mr. Hanged Man wants… Klein packed his personal belongs, picked up his cane, wore his hat, and walked out the door. The Wind-blessed potion formula was a Sequence 6 formula. It wasn't that easy to encounter one. The Hanged Man, Alger, had waited for more than a month without receiving any good news.

Justice Audrey, after undergoing a long period of observation and testing, was finally accepted by the Psychology Alchemists. She reported to Mr. Fool that she should be officially joining the secret organization this week, hoping to be blessed ahead of time to prevent any accidents from happening. For this, she was prepared to plunder at least ten pages of Roselle's diary entries from the Psychology Alchemists for Mr. Fool without any compensation.

As for the dragon specimen in Duke Negan's treasury, she had already confirmed that it was a Thousand-faced Hunter. However, it was purely a sample that was without the corresponding Beyonder characteristic or flowing blood.

The 2,000 pounds she owed Mr. Fool's Blessed wouldn't be repaid until

February or March of next year. This was because, although she would officially come of age at the New Year's Ball and be able to take charge of a portion of her fortune, she would still be under the supervision of her parents and wouldn't be able to sell them at will. Furthermore, she was still short of Viscount Glaint's final payment, so she needed ample time to raise the money in secret.

The Magician Fors, with the help of The Hanged Man, finally obtained the blood of a Deep Sea Marlin. She paid him 320 pounds for it, which reduced her savings to 120 pounds.

In order to make up for her loss and for the stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater, she began to furiously rush to write her new book which quickly took shape. It told a story about adventure, love, traveling, storms, pirates, and many other elements fused into a whole.

Her and Dorian Gray's correspondence never stopped, and the other party had recently announced that they would be coming to Backlund to pay their respects to Aulisa, Laubero, and Lawrence.

The Sun Derrick, who was acting normally as suggested by The Hanged Man, continued his daily patrols, amassed merit points, and didn't attempt any rituals.

At every Tarot Gathering, he would skillfully pretend to be asleep, and he didn't reveal any problems for the time being. Usually, he would occasionally take a nap to prevent any regularities from being detected which would put him under suspicion.

According to him, Shepherd Elder Lovia, didn't leave the bottom of the spire seven days later and was still locked in there for unknown reasons.

With the Aurora Order's Mr. A searching for the followers and Blessed of The Fool, they failed to receive any valuable clues with Klein's deliberate attempt to keep a low profile. And the Beyonders, who knew the honorific name of The Fool all understood that they should never chant such words carelessly. Unless they were in dire straits, and they definitely didn't have the courage to pray to an existence that was suspected of being an evil god.

Emlyn mentioned the last time that he had some clues for the corresponding ingredients and that he might be able to confirm it soon, but the problem is that I'm lacking the money now… With a silent grunt, Klein took his cane and walked to Lawyer Jurgen's door.

When the doorbell rang, he took the initiative and instinctively took two steps back.

Not long after, the door opened and old Mrs. Doris cheerfully opened her arms to give Klein a warm hug.

"Oh, the doctor you introduced last time was wonderful! My body hasn't been this healthy for almost ten years!" Doris, seeing that the detective was standing far away, could only fold her arms and express her delight and feelings in words.

Klein said in an amused and exasperated tone, "Mrs. Doris, you've already told me this for the ninth time."

He saw Brody, the black cat, sitting on top of the coat rack. Although it looked precarious, he was able to maintain his balance.

I can do that as well… Klein made a self-evaluation.

"Is that so?" Old Mrs. Doris asked, perplexed.

She immediately tossed the question to the back of her mind and said with a smile, "Are you here for Jurgen?"

Klein immediately revealed a smile.

"Yes."

Matters involving negotiations needed the help of a professional lawyer.

Chapter 410 - Framis Cage

◆

St. George Borough, Sird Street.

As soon as Klein and Jurgen alighted from the carriage, they saw a massive object parked in front of Inventor Leppard's door.

It was iron-black in color, with a dozen wheels in three groups, the top of which towered like a ship's chimney, and smoke was emitted from it.

It was a steam car that Klein had seen in magazines and on the streets, often described by the public as an ironclad warship with a rather exaggerated body.

If the streets that hadn't been built or rebuilt in the last twenty or thirty years, then it would've filled the roads and left no room for horse carriages. Therefore, transportation vehicle such as this could only be seen in certain areas and places.

At this moment, the heavy glass window and door of the car opened, and two figures stepped out.

One of them was the steam car mogul, Framis Cage, whom Klein had met before. A quarter of his blood was of the Feysac Empire, and he had pale blue eyes and a tall, but bulging build. He had a pipe in his mouth.

The person beside him was wearing a heavy black coat with a gray scarf wrapped around his neck. His features were unremarkable. He looked common with his black hair and brown eyes; yet, he exuded an inexplicable sense of familiarity.

"Hi, Detective Moriarty, you're really punctual. This is my lawyer and partner, Pacheco Dwayne."

While they conversed, two burly men got out of the steam-powered car. They were obviously Framis's bodyguards.

How unprofessional? Shouldn't they come down first and then open the door for their boss? Klein grunted, smiled in greeting, and introduced his lawyer, Jurgen.

While he was waiting for Leppard to open the door, he casually chatted with him.

"Mr. Cage, is this kind of steam-powered vehicle popular? Do a lot of people like it?"

Framis Cage laughed.

"Those who think that they're decent say that it's too barbaric and crude, and ordinary people can't afford it. Only I, an enthusiast of such machinery and steam, would be willing to buy it."

"It's mainly because many streets are too narrow," Klein said in consolation.

Framis Cage was the investor he found, and he had little to do with Leppard.

When he was playing cards at the Quelaag Club, he had deliberately mentioned it, and the equestrian teacher, Talim, immediately mentioned that Framis liked similar inventions, offering to introduce them to each other.

This made Klein sigh with emotion. The club really was a great place to develop connections, and the members who joined it were never really interested in the free food, drinks, and activity venues.

"Haha, this is indeed one of the reasons. As the population increases and the cities grow larger, the horse carriage will definitely be eliminated. It's just too slow. What this world is pursuing now is efficiency!" Framis said confidently.

He then revealed a smile.

"Also, I've already obtained an order from the military. They want me to make some improvements, just like it was mentioned in Roselle's manuscript; increase the armor's bulletproof plating, cover the tracks so that it can drive on a simple road. In addition, add a thick cannon barrel, and then this will be a brand-new weapon."

Roselle's manuscript… Klein sighed silently and for a moment he didn't know what to say until, finally, Leppard opened the door.

In the discussion that followed, the main people talking were Jurgen and Pacheco. The two lawyers would argue with each other and discuss the terms with their employers, while the completely unprepared Inventor Leppard sat there in a daze. Only when asked would he give his opinion.

Finally, the three parties agreed that Framis would invest a thousand pounds to take 20% of the shares, and the shares of Klein and Leppard would fall by an equal ratio, 28% and 52%.

At the same time, Framis agreed to buy a further 18% of Klein's shares at a premium, and this cost him a thousand pounds after taxes.

Similarly, he would buy a 9% stake in the company at a post-tax price for 500 pounds.

As a result of this deal, Framis became the largest shareholder in the newly established Backlund Bike Company, with a 47% share. He became responsible for the subsequent industrialization and marketing, while the company would be funded with the 1,000 pounds he invested as the initial capital.

Leppard was the second largest shareholder, with 43% of the shares.

His job was to help in the setting up of the assembly line for mass production.

Mr. Klein, who only had the remaining 10% of the shares, became a purely financial investor.

And the 1,000 pounds he earned from selling his shares had sent his personal wealth skyrocketing to 2,235 pounds, almost enough for him to buy a main ingredient for a Faceless potion. As a private detective, he still continued accepting commissions in the past month or so, so his daily expenses didn't drain his savings.

I still have to pay 50 pounds to Lawyer Jurgen, leaving me with 2,185 pounds… I'll have to thank Talim when I see him… A thought flashed through Klein's mind. He signed and stamped the contract. Then, he stood up and shook hands with Framis and Leppard.

"I hope for a pleasant partnership."

Framis took out his golden pocket watch and looked at it before chuckling.

"Normally, we should have lunch together to celebrate the closing of a deal, but there's an important person waiting for me. I'm really sorry, but there will still be a lot of opportunities in the future."

An important figure, another one…. The one behind Talim? The one that I claimed reimbursement from using fake information that points to the Aurora Order? Klein suddenly felt a little guilty. He hurriedly smiled and said that he didn't mind.

After exiting the house and getting into a carriage, Jurgen suddenly frowned slightly.

"Sherlock, you agreed too readily."

"Why do you say that?" Klein asked curiously.

He didn't even know what Jurgen was talking about.

Jurgen said rather seriously, "When we were talking about the transfer of shares.

"Based on your description, and on Framis's performance, I can imagine a bright market prospect for bikes. Although it's just an invention at the moment, deflating the overall valuation, you should've kept more shares even though 5,000 pounds is a good price. That way you can get better returns in the future.

"I thought you were only going to sell 8% and have the confidence to haggle for 500 pounds, but you actually agreed to 18%. Even if it were only 500 pounds, you would have made a severalfold return on the investment. You shouldn't have been in such a hurry."

Because I'm in need of money… However, I did agree very readily without any hesitation. It was a huge transaction, so that does seem rather abnormal for me… As Klein thought back to the scene from before, he began to have some doubts deep down.

Was I unconsciously influenced by Framis or that Lawyer Pacheco? One of them is a Beyonder? Fortunately, the price was fairly reasonable… As he pondered over the matter, Klein said to Jurgen who was waiting for an answer, "The new year is coming soon…"

He had no idea how to explain it, so he randomly chose an opening.

If the other party was a smart person, then they would go along with the opening and perfect the explanation with their own reasoning. There was no need for Klein to describe it any further.

Of course, this was a move aimed at smart people. Ordinary people would end up pressing, "so" or "what exactly happened."

Lawyer Jurgen was obviously a smart man. Noticing Klein's brief silence, he nodded and said, "I understand.

What do you understand? I haven't even thought of what to say… Klein pointed to the steam metro station in front of them and said, "I'm getting off here. I need to meet an informant."

†

As the steam-powered vehicle roared forward, Framis, who was sitting in the front row, wound down the window and blew out a ring of smoke. He said to the inconspicuous Lawyer Pacheco, "Did you use your powers just now?"

"It was passively triggered," Pacheco said with a smile. "My powers aren't suitable for such situations. I prefer to face government or enterprise employees."

Framis nodded slightly.

"I just wanted to remind you.

"There's no need to use your powers in such situations. Do not let this affect what matters most."

"I understand," Pacheco replied in a low voice.

†

East Borough, in a cheap coffee shop.

When Klein arrived, Old Kohler was already waiting for him.

He removed his scarf, took off his hat, sat down across him, fished out a stack of one-soli notes, and handed it to him.

"For next week's expenses and a bonus for the information you provided me the last time. That's a total of one pound."

He was recently very generous with giving bonuses since he had already found a person to claim them from.

Old Kohler, whose face was clearly ruddier than before, received the cash, feeling a little embarrassed.

“The information I gave you previously didn’t seem to be that important…”

“No, the importance depends on who wields it. There are a lot of things that you might find trivial, but it’s how other people earn their money,” Klein explained with a laugh. “What happened this week?”

Old Kohler took the stack of bills and stuffed it into his pocket. He said thoughtfully, “Just like before, many people are still looking for the believers of The Fool. Haha, how could anyone believe in The Fool? That isn’t a good name.”

… The corners of Klein’s mouth slightly twitched.

“Are they making progress?”

The Aurora Order is really persistent… Klein thought helplessly.

“No, there’s no such person.” Old Kohler shook his head and then said, “There are a few people organizing strikes recently. They came to me a few times, claiming that they will be fighting for reasonable working hours and salaries.”

It’s a very normal thing in this era, but it can lead to quite serious consequences… Klein thoughtfully said, “Pay attention to the organizers of this matter. But don’t be too anxious. Safety first.”

“Alright.” Old Kohler cleared his throat and said, “There have been a lot of gangsters and bounty hunters looking for a person these days. I don’t know why, but I believe someone has offered a bounty.”

“Who are they looking for?” Feeling the cold, Klein took a sip of his coffee.

The warm liquid ran down his esophagus and warmed his belly.

Old Kohler thought for a moment and said, “A man named Azik Eggers.”

Azik Eggers… Azik Eggers? Klein looked up from his coffee cup and stared straight at Old Kohler, who was sitting across him.

Isn’t that Mr. Azik’s full name? Why would someone suddenly offer a bounty for him? Ince Zangwill? Relying on his Clown powers, Klein feigned indifference as he asked, “Did it say what kind of person he was?”

Old Kohler recalled and said, “He seems to be of Balam lineage and was once a university lecturer.”

Chapter 411 - Coming In Throngs

◆

Seems to be of Balam lineage… a university lecturer… It really is Mr. Azik, not someone sharing the same name… Using the information provided by Old Kohler, Klein basically confirmed that the person the bounty was aimed at was the suspected descendant of Death, Azik.

Here lies the problem. Who or what organization is looking for Mr. Azik?

The Numinous Episcopate whose ultimate goal is to revive Death? Ince Zangwill who likes to play the mastermind behind the scenes?

It’s unlikely to be the latter. Ince Zangwill has Sealed Artifact 0-08, which allows a target to act according to his descriptions, and through a series of coincidences, he can achieve his desired objective. There’s no need at all for him to use the gangs and bounty hunters to find Mr. Azik…

Wait, what if this is actually an arrangement by Sealed Artifact 0-08? Realizing that he’s now the target of Mr. Azik but lacks the confidence to clinch victory in battle, Ince Zangwill is using 0-08 to instigate conflict between Mr. Azik and some particular faction, hoping to eliminate his enemy indirectly. And this reward was issued by that faction… It’s very possible!

However, I can’t rule out the Numinous Episcopate. To get revenge, Mr. Azik might have made contact with them. However, there were major differences between the two parties regarding the resurrection of Death, which eventually led to a falling out…

Klein instantly thought of two possibilities and the corresponding reasons.

He took a sip of his coffee and said to Old Kohler, “Help me find out who issued this bounty and its exact price. If it’s appropriate, I’ll take note of it while I’m at it.”

“No problem.” Old Kohler didn’t feel that anything was amiss with Klein’s request.

From a certain perspective, there were no essential differences between a private detective and a bounty hunter. The only difference was that the former would involve themselves in trivial matters such as catching adulterers in the act, finding cats, and helping others walk dogs, while they tended to use the powers of deduction more than brute force.

When Old Kohler finished describing what he had seen and heard, Klein briefly taught him some of the tricks of leading a conversation based on the Nighthawks’ curriculum, as well as the contingency plans for specific scenarios.

“It’s time for me to go to the docks. Thank you, Detective Moriarty, for allowing me to lead a good life once again!” Old Kohler picked up the old, worn-out hat on the table and thanked him sincerely.

The detective, in his view, not only provided him with a well-paid job, but he also taught him many useful things. Even if the detective no longer needed him as an informant, the skills he learned would allow him to barely survive in East Borough, especially since he was growing older and less capable of laborious work.

A good life? In my opinion, what you have now is the basics of what a person should have… After watching Old Kohler walk out the cheap coffee house, Klein sat there in a daze.

This was the first time that he had heard a friend’s name from someone else since his arrival in Backlund, and it was also the first time that he might have grasped Ince Zangwill's whereabouts!

For the past three months, Klein's main goal had been to digest the potion and enhance himself, especially after he killed Lanevus.

That was because he knew very well that he and Ince Zangwill, who was most likely a High-Sequence Beyonder, had an unbridgeable gap. He couldn't be impatient for revenge, especially when it came to the chilling Sealed Artifact 0-08. He didn't even have the intention to approach and investigate it.

Scenes from the Blackthorn Security Company in Tingen replayed themselves in Klein's mind, and those bright polished shoes clearly appeared before his eyes.

Raising his head and slowly letting out a breath, Klein took his scarf and hat and walked out of the cheap coffee shop.

†

Hillston Borough, outside a rather old building.

Klein got off the carriage, pressed his hat, and went straight to the door.

It was Isengard Stanton's house.

The great detective had written to Klein a few days ago, inviting him to come over to discuss a murder case.

Mr. Klein, who has been busy with the financing of the bike project, tactfully replied that he had no time to spare as a form of rejection. To his surprise, Isengard Stanton didn't seem to mind and said that the case had hit a brick wall, making it unlikely that there would be any breakthroughs anytime soon. He was very willing to wait for Detective Sherlock Moriarty's visit and expressed how he looked forward to an exchange that ignited sparks of wisdom.

As such, Klein could only first divine a suitable date for the visit, picking the closest date after the negotiations, which happened to be this afternoon. With that, he wrote back and fixed an appointment.

Ding dong, ding dong.

Klein rang the bell twice and stepped back to wait.

More than ten seconds later, the door creaked open, and the assistant of the great detective, Isengard, said with a smile, “Good afternoon, Detective Moriarty. Mr. Stanton is waiting for you in the activity room. Would you like coffee or tea?”

The assistant was thin and wore gold-rimmed glasses. He looked both refined and professional.

Klein looked up at him and said, “Tea. Be sparing on the lemon slices.”

“No problem.” The assistant led Klein into the living room, pointed to the activity room and said, “Sorry, our servants are only temporary, and they just happened to be on their day off today, so I can only trouble you to go over alone.”

Klein nodded and walked towards the activity room on the first floor.

As he lifted his hand to knock on the door, he suddenly felt that something was amiss.

I arranged a visit with Mr. Stanton a few days in advance. Why would I chance upon the temporary servants’ day off?

Klein’s eyes narrowed, and he pulled out a copper penny.

At this moment, the door to the activity room opened due to the knock, producing a tiny crack.

In the blink of an eye, as if some seal was lifted, the strong smell of fresh blood poured out and overwhelmed Klein’s nose.

From what he could see, the reclining chair in the activity room was overturned and was stained with dark red blood. A book lay beside it, its cover facing up.

With just that one glance, Klein felt as if he was seeing a murder scene.

The name of the book caught his eye: “The Devil’s Legend of Sivellaus Borough.”

Devil… Klein was about to make a move when a strong wind suddenly blew in the activity room, quickly pulling the door back.

Creak!

Klein clearly saw the entire interior of the activity room.

The charcoal in the fireplace had long since burned out, and there was no longer any red embers glowing; the coffee table, the sofa, the chairs, the cupboard, and other items had either fallen or shattered. It appeared as if he witnessed an intense battle.

There was a lot of blood on the carpet and walls, and a lot of scorch marks, but there was no sign of a body at the scene, not even a stump limb.

Something happened to Detective Stanton? Klein suddenly took a step back, intending to first leave the place.

However, almost at the same time, he felt someone lock onto him.

Someone was staring at him with a cold and merciless gaze from an unknown location!

The moment he made a mistake in his response, he would immediately be met with a fatal blow!

How can this be a suitable day to visit Isengard Stanton? Was my interpretation of the revelation wrong? Klein didn’t dare to act rashly.

However, he was neither too nervous or flustered. Having experienced many battles and “performances,” he knew that he needed to stay calm during such moments.

Tap, tap, tap. Isengard Stanton’s assistant walked over with a tray.

On the tray was a tin teapot and two white porcelain cups.

The assistant froze in place when he saw the scene in the activity room.

He looked at Klein, his face suddenly filled with fear as he stuttered, “You… killed… Mr… Stanton…”

Every time he said a word, a piece of flesh fell from his face as blood gushed out.

After he finished speaking, his body was torn to shreds, turning into a dismembered corpse. It was as if he had always been in that state, with everything preceding this being him in a state where he was stitched up.

Clang! Crack! The tin pot and white porcelain cup hit the ground at the same time, rolling or splashing, and the tea water quickly soaked the area.

Klein didn’t move as he stood there watching everything that had happened. This was because he still felt like he was being watched.

The person who had caused this series of events appeared to be waiting for him to make a move before leaping onto his back and snapping his neck.

After an unknown period of time, in a silent and eerie stalemate, Klein saw the door to Isengard Stanton’s house open up as a group of policemen in black and white checkered uniforms stormed in.

When they found the nauseating and dismembered corpses on the floor, they drew their revolvers and pointed them at Klein who stood at the doorway of the activity room.

Despite facing the black muzzles of the guns, Klein relaxed.

The wordless gaze that seemed to hold a gun to the back of his head disappeared at that instant!

Klein raised his hands and laughed helplessly.

"I won't say anything until I see my lawyer."

†

Backlund's Chissak Police Station.

Chained to a water pipe, Klein met Lawyer Jurgen once again.

"I will accompany you during the interrogation." There was nothing unusual about Jurgen's expression, as though Detective Moriarty belonged here.

Klein sighed and said, "What a tragedy. I should be considering what I will be eating tonight, not talking to a stone-faced police officer."

The thing he was most thankful for today was that due to the Aurora Order's investigation and the attention of the Rose School of Thought's High-Sequence Beyonder, he didn't bring any Beyonder items with him. His only revolver was easily concealed from the body search using a magic-like performance.

When he entered the interrogation room, he recounted the letter he received from Isengard Stanton about discussing a case without the police officer's questioning.

"Later, we'll go to your house with Mr. Jurgen to retrieve these letters. I hope they're still there." The officer in charge of the interrogation switched gears and asked, "How did you get to know Detective Isengard Stanton?"

Klein replied without hesitation, "Because of that serial murder case…"

At this point, he suddenly froze for a moment.

It reminded him of something. He had always suspected that there was a master behind the Devil dog, the person who had harrumphed when the Devil dog was killed.

Yes, the book Stanton was reading before the attack was “The Devil’s Legend of Sivellaus Borough”… Could it be that the owner of the Devil dog is beginning to take revenge after lying low all this time? And Detective Stanton was the person in the police records who provided the main clues or ideas. Furthermore, he was the one who received the bounty reward! Klein quickly had a theory.

Chapter 412 - Letter

◆

When he thought about the possibility that the Devil dog's owner was involved, Klein changed his strategy and decided to recount his involvement with Isengard Stanton in great detail.

In addition, he took the initiative to mention Isengard Stanton's assembly of a team of detectives to investigate the serial murder and the portion of the bounty that they successfully obtained.

"In that commission, although I only gave some ideas, well—in the jargon of the private detective industry, I provided suggestions, but it was still considered the greatest contribution by Mr. Stanton, so I received the bulk of the bounty," Klein concluded.

The two officers in charge of the interrogation jotted down the information and asked if anyone could prove it. Klein gave them the names and addresses of Stuart, Kaslana, and the other private detectives.

"Very good, Mr. Moriarty. Your answer is detailed enough." A police officer stopped writing and asked, "How long did you spend in Isengard Stanton's home today? I mean, from the time you entered to the time we found you."

Klein thought for a moment and, without consulting Lawyer Jurgen, directly replied, "About two to three minutes."

What he said was based on what he truly felt.

Another police officer raised his eyebrows and said, “Many residents nearby were able to confirm that you entered Isengard Stanton’s house around 2:10 p.m. We arrived at the scene at 2:28 p.m., which is to say, you were in the house for about eighteen minutes, not two or three minutes!

“What exactly were you doing during this lengthy period of time? Why didn’t you leave and call the police?”

Eighteen minutes passed? Klein frowned suddenly.

He felt that the stalemate he had with the existence which silently watched him lasted for slightly more than a minute. How did it take a full eighteen minutes?

Was it the strange feeling of being watched that confused my grasp of time, or was it something else? Is it the Beyonder powers of the other party? If it really was the owner of the Devil dog, he would at least be at Sequence 6, with a high probability of being Sequence 5… While Klein pondered, Jurgen leaned forward, ready to accuse the police of being posing leading questions.

That was not a very good reason, but he simply wanted to use this method to interrupt the pace of the interrogation and delay the unfavorable question for his client.

At this moment, Klein raised his hand to rub his forehead.

“What I just said was the truth. Based on what I felt, only two or three minutes had passed after I entered Detective Isengard Stanton’s house.”

Upon saying that, he emphasized, “Yes, based on what I felt.”

The two officers exchanged looks before writing the statement down.

After a moment of silence, the officer who had asked the question said, “During those eighteen minutes, a servant who came back from outside the house rang the doorbell, but no one answered, so he looked in through the oriel window and saw the floor full of corpses and that you were standing in the doorway of the activity room.

“He was terrified, running to the police station like a madman, and many passers-by and some residents had confirmed that.”

Klein ignored the look in Lawyer Jurgen’s eyes and shook his head.

“I didn’t hear the doorbell.”

The two officers exchanged looks again, but they made no comment. All they did was jot down what was said.

They asked questions about other details, and Klein, who had done nothing and was free from guilt, answered every question truthfully.

At the end, he couldn’t help but ask, “Did you find Detective Isengard Stanton? It didn’t seem like the activity room had a corpse. He’s likely to be still alive, right…”

A police officer used a pen to tap on the table and said, “That’s one of the things we’re wondering about. Only the activity room in the house had signs of fighting, and the windows were closed, and they hadn’t been opened for days. As you know, it’s very normal to do so during Backlund’s autumn and winter seasons.

“The attacker and Mr. Isengard Stanton left the room in a strange way, and we found no trace of him anywhere else in the house or in the neighborhood, not even blood.”

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he questioned before answering his own question, “You definitely wish to mention the activity room’s door and the door to the house, but many people have confirmed that there was no pursuit nearby, nor was there anyone taken hostage or a corpse being moved away.”

Maybe it really happened in the middle of the night? Maybe they were able to go through walls? Klein silently offered other possibilities in his mind, and he silently prayed.

May the Goddess bless Detective Isengard Stanton and that he escaped the disaster—the Evernight Goddess was the Empress of Disaster and Horror.

When the interrogation was over, Klein was remanded in a small room, and the police sent someone to pick up the letter as evidence with Lawyer Jurgen at 15 Minsk Street.

It wasn't until the evening that Klein was finally admitted bail, posting a sum of fifty pounds.

"It's much more expensive than the last time. It's difficult for the average private detective to produce that much cash in a short period of time." After leaving the Chissak Police Station, Klein pulled up the collar of his tweed coat and complained to Jurgen.

Jurgen still wore a professional and staid expression.

"The situation was favorable towards you the last time, but this time, much of the evidence points to you."

He stopped a rental carriage, turned his head to the side, and looked at Klein.

"Sherlock, I'm your lawyer. Before you answer the policeman's questions, it's best that you communicate with me, even if it's just sending me a look.

"Do not speak carelessly even if you feel that there are no problems. Ordinary people who haven't been trained will easily say things that trip them up."

This… I'm used to fabricating my own stories and solving my own problems… Klein recalled what had just happened and gave a hollow laugh.

"Okay, I will keep that in mind."

Without another word, Jurgen boarded the carriage.

Klein sat down across him and thought about Detective Isengard Stanton's attack.

As he was thinking, he suddenly heard the rumbling sound of his stomach.

It's already past my normal dinner time… Klein took out his gold pocket watch and opened it.

He didn't want to waste any more energy preparing food, so he began to think about which restaurant was worth looking forward to.

At that moment, Jurgen raised his eyelids and said, "I've asked my grandmother to prepare dinner for three."

"How can I impose on you?" Klein was startled for a moment before he laughed. "Mrs. Doris's cooking skills are always something to look forward to."

†

By the time they got back to Minsk Street in Cherwood Borough, the sky was completely dark and the street lamps were even brighter than the indistinct red moon in the sky.

After having dinner at the Jurgen's house and having fun with the cat, Klein strolled back to Unit 15 in the cold, damp air.

He habitually rummaged through the letterbox and pulled out a copy of the Backlund Evening News that had just arrived.

Klein opened the door with the newspaper in hand and just as he put the cane away, he realized something was wrong.

His spiritual intuition as a Seer told him that a stranger had entered his house!

Was it the police who came to collect the evidence? Klein looked around warily and suddenly saw a letter on the coffee table.

There should have only been newspapers sitting there!

Klein entered the living room warily, in preparation for an attack. He moved closer to the coffee table, and during the entire process, the surroundings were completely silent without the slightest abnormality.

Glancing down at the letter, Klein first took out a pair of black gloves and wore them before opening the letter.

There was a thin piece of paper inside the envelope. After unfolding it, a dark red color was immediately reflected in Klein's eyes, and the faint smell of blood lingered around his nose.

Words were written on the piece of paper with coagulated blood: "All of you will die!"

This… Is it really the owner of the Devil dog? Is he taking revenge on the people who caused his subordinate's death? This is truly a case of bullying the weak and fearing the strong. Why not directly find the Nighthawks responsible for the clean-up operation? Klein's heart tightened, and many thoughts flashed through his mind.

But he quickly dismissed his complaint. It was very normal to exact vengeance on the person that one could handle. Just like his past few months in Backlund, he had never thought of finding Ince Zangwill, but he never gave up his pursuit of Lanevus.

After looking around again, Klein gradually found that this matter was a little confusing.

Isn't he afraid of being caught by the official Beyonders by using such an ostentatious method to exact revenge? Is this the "acting" requirement for his potion?

Or, rather, because Detective Isengard Stanton escaped, he knows that he can't get rid of his targets in secret, so he can only switch his methods. But what's the reason behind this method?

Also, when I was at Detective Stanton's house, he was clearly watching me. Why didn't he make a move? Was he apprehensive towards an ordinary private detective like me?

No, impossible… Does he know that I'm a Beyonder? Possible. Due to the side effect of me getting lost due to the Master Key, I had met with the Devil dog. It saw my body and how I looked like. Although I was disguised, I can't be certain that a Devil can see through it…

Perhaps, after that incident, it was able to present the scene to its owner in some way…

However, at that time, I couldn't even defeat the Devil dog, so I could only run away pathetically. What is there to be afraid of? Unless he's worried about something else, such as the injured Isengard Stanton who might be hiding nearby?

Did he write to me very openly, thinking that I, a wild Beyonder, wouldn't dare to seek help from the officials?

With his head filled with questions, Klein inspected the house and walked all the way to the second floor.

When he opened the bedroom door, another letter came into view.

The letter lay quietly on the desk, as though it had been waiting for him for a very long time.

Klein opened the letter and saw a line of dark red words that were drawn: "You're next."

Next… How arrogant… Klein couldn’t help but sigh.

At this moment, he suddenly had a thought. He raised his head and looked outside the window.

Across him were a few two-story houses with their lights on.

The glow of the street lamps fell on their outer walls, forming a crisscrossing zone.

All of a sudden, the shadows in the areas squirmed and twisted, forming a black shadow in a tailcoat.

The shadow raised its right hand, gesturing in the shape of a gun, and pointed it at Klein.

Then, it retracted its arm and blew at the “gun’s muzzle.”

Immediately after, it silently fell back, transforming into countless disconnected shadows.

Chapter 413 - Visitors

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the Rice Police Station which was in charge of Minsk Street and the surrounding district.

Klein shook hands with the officer who escorted him out.

“This threatening letter must’ve had something to do with the previous serial murders. The organizer of the detective team, the great detective, Mr. Isengard Stanton, has already been attacked this afternoon!

“Please take it seriously.”

The police officer retracted his hand and said, “Don’t worry, Mr. Moriarty. We definitely won’t ignore your suggestion and immediately report it to the higher-ups.”

“Thank you so much.” Klein put on his hat and walked out the door.

After seeing the two threatening letters and the provocation from the suspected Devil dog’s master, Klein didn’t hesitate to bring the evidence to the nearest police station to report the case. He secretly hoped that the matter would be transferred to the Mandated Punishers or the Machinery Hivemind Team as quickly as possible so that he could be placed under the protection of official Beyonders.

Although he no longer had any reason to keep his identity as a detective, being fully capable of giving up his residence at 15 Minsk Street and switching to another residence and identity, he suspected that this might have been the purpose of the author of that threatening letter.

Using the fear of wild Beyonders being exposed, the perpetrator was forcing him to flee under the cover of the night. Then, during this process, he could seize the opportunity to launch an attack.

Actually, it's quite a suitable time to attack me while I was heading over to the police station to report the incident… It's the same as when I was at home… That fellow has other plans… Confused and wary, Klein returned to Minsk Street.

As soon as he got out of the carriage, he saw a figure loitering in front of his house with the help of the street lamps amid the drizzle.

Klein's heart skipped a beat, but he immediately relaxed as he recognized the visitor.

It was Stuart, a slim private detective with a medium build, who adored him.

I can't be careless… What if the subsequent Sequences of Devil has a power similar to Faceless? Klein gripped his cane tight and slowly approached, then he gave a probing shout.

Detective Stuart abruptly turned his head and nervously said, "Mr. Moriarty, I received a threatening letter. It said: 'All of you will die!'"

"You received it as well?" Klein blurted out in surprise while also finding it understandable.

Stuart was also one of the detectives that Isengard Stanton had gathered for the investigation of the serial murders.

Stuart's eyes widened abruptly.

"You received it too?"

"Yes." Klein nodded seriously.

More than one actually… he added silently.

“What should I do? I first went to visit Mr. Stanton, but I heard that he was attacked, so I immediately came to you. Oh, thank God for His blessings. I was about to leave!” Stuart blurted out.

Klein pointed to the door.

“Let’s talk inside.”

After entering the living room, Klein excused himself to the bathroom and hurriedly went above the gray fog to perform two divinations. First, it was to confirm that the person was Stuart. And second, if there was any relatively serious danger that night. He received a revelation confirming both.

In other words, Stuart wasn’t the enemy in disguise, and it would be a night of considerable danger.

Of course, that danger might not happen right in front of Klein, but someone might be wiped out in secret. That was the limitation of divination. All he could receive was a revelation of a certain degree, not the entire answer. He was unable to get a precise answer.

Furthermore, the limitations in mysticism couldn’t be solved by techniques such as exclusion or dichotomy.

Returning to the real world, Klein pressed the mechanical button of the toilet bowl, and in the midst of the splashing water, he washed his hands and opened the door.

“Stuart, would you like coffee or tea?” Klein asked in a completely composed manner.

Stuart stood up and shook his head.

“No, we should discuss the problem first. Although I’ve received many threatening letters in the past, none of them can be compared to what I received today. He must've written them using fresh blood! My intuition tells me that he'll definitely take action, and that he has the ability to do so!

"By the way, Mr. Stanton was attacked by that same person, wasn't he?"

"I think so," Klein said stoically before sitting down. "This likely has something to do with the previous serial murders. The common thing that you, me, and Mr. Stanton share in common is that case."

Stuart's reaction is a little too extreme… Is he spooked out by the attack on Mr. Stanton? At the same time, Klein was carefully observing Stuart.

Being infected by his attitude, Stuart calmed down significantly. He sat down again and said while deep in thought, "It seems to be the case…"

Before he could finish his sentence, tinkling sounds suddenly echoed in the room.

Someone had rung the doorbell.

Stuart instantly jolted, like a frightened bird.

Klein frowned as he looked at him before getting up to head for the door.

As soon as he touched the handle, the scene outside appeared in his mind.

The visitors were Detective Kaslana in her gray tweed coat; her red-haired assistant, Lydia; and several other men who looked familiar.

They're all the private detectives who Mr. Stanton had assembled… As expected… As Klein recalled, he recognized the visitors.

He pulled open the door and took two steps back.

With bushy eyebrows and slightly drooping cheeks, Kaslana looked at Klein and Stuart who was behind him. Without exchanging pleasantries, she bluntly said, “We’ve all received the same threatening letter, so I believe you guys did too, right?”

“Yes,” Klein replied solemnly.

Kaslana didn’t shy away from exhaling a breath of white mist.

“We were all assembled by Mr. Stanton to participate in the investigation of the serial murders. That’s the only thing we have in common.”

“I think so too.” Klein pointed inside his house. “Let’s talk inside.”

Watching the six private detectives enter, Klein quickly analyzed the intentions of the Devil dog’s master.

To stir up such a huge commotion, this will soon attract the attention of the official Beyonder organizations. Who knows, there might be a demigod powerhouse guarding this area, so how would he take his revenge?

He’s just being provocative, making the military and the Beyonders from the three Churches send people to protect all these private detectives. With the official Beyonders not daring to be negligent, it will scatter personnel and exhaust them by making them run around. Is all this to take revenge on the main target of the attack from back then?

In the process, he might even have a chance to kill some of the official Beyonders…

As for the private investigators, he will only take action much later, once their wariness has relaxed…

Of course, if probes such as this give an opening, then he definitely wouldn’t let it go…

To Devils who can sense danger ahead of time, this is a method that plays on their strengths.

However, the three Churches, together with the military and the royal family, have many experts and Sealed Artifacts. They have no lack of demigods or Grade 0 and Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts. Is the master of the Devil dog so certain that there are no powers or items that can restrain this strength of his?

No, he definitely wouldn't dare.

The official powers, especially the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind, have been fighting Devils for who knows how many years. In the Fourth Epoch, even in the more ancient Third Epoch, there was no lack of similar deeds.

The master of the Devil dog is at most a Sequence 5. As long as anything goes wrong, to the point of nothing going wrong, he can be torn apart by a demigod or a terrifying Sealed Artifact. Why would he still dare to make such attempts?

Or it could be said that he's simply toying with the officials and that he wouldn't act, doing it time and time again…

Yes, there's another possibility. Using the threatening letter, he's able to get more than half the targets gathered together. Then, using the official Beyonder organizations' counterbalancing of each other and the procedural and bureaucratic tendencies, create a time delay…

The attack on Mr. Isengard Stanton must've been handed over to the Machinery Hivemind, who is in charge of supernatural affairs in Hillston Borough, but the ones who killed the Devil dog were mainly comprised of the Nighthawks. The two organizations definitely don't communicate in detail too much…

Well, it can also be assigned based on Mr. Stanton's faith… Which deity does he believe in… I don't seem to know, nor can I tell…

In short, with so many private investigators living in different districts and with different faiths, the division of jurisdiction is a troublesome matter, and joint operations aren't so easy to achieve.

At this moment, the ones protecting us should only be two or three groups of official Beyonders. At the very most, they would be at the level of deacons, and they wouldn't use Sealed Artifacts which are too powerful or dangerous. Even a demigod High-Sequence Beyonder wouldn't direct their gaze over to us that quickly.

This would give the Devil dog's master a chance.

Although three to four groups of official Beyonders can definitely kill one or even more than one Sequence 5, as long as he takes advantage of the situation, there's a good chance that he can successfully escape.

Klein was able to deduce two or three possibilities in just twenty to thirty seconds, and giving each of them a preliminary opinion.

Thinking of the divination outcome that indicated that there would be significant danger tonight, Klein thoughtfully nodded his head, closed the door, and entered the living room. He said to the sitting or standing detectives, "Have you called the police?"

There are almost half of the people, who were assembled back then, gathered here… he surveyed the detectives and muttered inwardly.

Representing the rest, Kaslana replied, "Some have called the police, while others have tried to find Mr. Stanton or familiar friends. Finally, all of us got together and discussed about visiting you, the great detective."

Klein gently nodded and deliberately said, "Everyone, don't be too nervous. The person who sent the letter should be trying to get revenge for that serial murder, but he's only one person, with at most one or two companions. As for us, we have a total of eight detectives, all skilled in combat and shooting, so why should we be afraid of him?

"Besides, we were not the only ones assembled by Mr. Stanton, and it must be the same for those who received the threatening letters. They just didn't end up meeting you or come to visit me."

Upon hearing his words, Kaslana and her assistant, Lydia, revealed doubtful expressions, as if they were unsure of something.

Another detective took a deep breath.

"Mr. Moriarty, perhaps it's as you say, we need not be afraid of him.

"But he's a sinister snake lurking in the dark. No one knows when he will launch an attack, and no one can guard against it in advance. Furthermore, he might even harm our family members."

"Family members?"

"Oh, my wife!"

"No, my little angel!"

The detectives were instantly overwhelmed by their emotions as they exhibited exaggerated reactions.

Standing behind Klein, Stuart was trembling with fear and anger.

"No, I don't want that…" he murmured, almost losing control of his emotions.

Just as Klein and Kaslana attempted to calm them down, Stuart suddenly drew his gun and aimed it at the back of Klein's head!

His eyes were glazed over, and his emotions seemed to have completely overwhelmed him.

Chapter 414 - Desire Apostle

◆

While Stuart was raising his gun to aim, Klein, who had long been on guard, had already detected it. He lunged forward at the same time as Stuart performed his series of actions.

Bang!

Stuart, who was clearly out of control, pulled the trigger, and the bullet grazed the side of a private detective’s face as it hit the wall.

Instantly, the other detectives pulled out their revolvers as a result of the stress. It was as if they were looking at the enemy, turning the scene extremely chaotic.

Among them, Stuart and a private detective had flushed faces and bulging veins. Their eyes burned with a mixture of fear and anger, as though they had turned into so-called devils.

At this moment, Kaslana bellowed, “Stop!”

Her voice wasn’t loud, but it was filled with awe. It made everyone’s body tremble, and they subconsciously complied.

Although there was a brief moment of silence, everyone’s mood didn’t seem to improve. Klein had already rolled over to the other side and stood up with his revolver in his hand.

His mind raced, and he couldn’t afford to hide his thoughts. He planned to rely on his hallucination ability to calm down the few visitors.

Suddenly, the doorbell rang.

Ding dong, ding dong!

A few of the private detectives suddenly became alert, and their eyes revealed a hint of lucidity.

The tinkling of the doorbell was like a bucket of cold water that poured over their heads.

Stuart looked at the revolver in his hand and mumbled in a daze, “What was I doing just now…”

The official Beyonders have made their move? Klein breathed a sigh of relief, approaching the door as he held his revolver.

The moment he held the handle, the image of the person outside appeared in his mind.

It was a man in a black coat and a hunter’s hat. He had gray temples, and a thin face—Isengard Stanton.

The detective’s face was somewhat pale, and his left arm was propped up near the shoulder.

He really is alright! Klein was delighted at first, but then he became cautious—he remembered the day when Marionettist Rosago had transformed into a constable to knock at his door.

Klein placed his finger on the trigger, pulled the door open, and took two steps back.

Isengard Stanton smiled and nodded at him.

“Thank you for your visit this afternoon; otherwise, I might not have been able to continue playing hide-and-seek with that devil.

“You saved my life.”

This… Could it be that the correct interpretation of "a suitable date for visiting Isengard Stanton" is that by visiting him this afternoon, I was able to help him out of trouble? What about the next few days of "suitable dates for visiting?" By skirting around the murder scene, I wouldn't be suspected? Klein didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

He didn't let his guard down as he made way.

"What exactly happened?"

"We'll talk later." Isengard suddenly lowered his voice and laughed. "Do you wish to discuss the subject of Beyonders in front of Stuart and the others?"

So here you are mentioning Beyonders to me so naturally? That's right, I was able to remain in a deadlock with the master of the Devil dog for more than ten minutes. That serves to prove that I'm no ordinary person… Besides, the suggestion I previously offered pointed straight at a Devil-turned animal… Klein quietly stayed behind Isengard Stanton by two steps.

Upon seeing this great detective, Kaslana and her assistant, Lydia, let out a sigh of relief. Stuart and the other private detectives also showed a look of relief.

"Are you alright, Mr. Stanton?" they asked.

Isengard slightly moved his left arm and said, "A little injured, but not too badly.

"Okay. Everyone, don't be nervous. This will be over soon. The police are waiting for that bastard in the darkness nearby."

"is it because of the serial murders?"

"Have you locked onto the suspect?"

"Will he hurt the innocent?"

†

The private detectives asked frantically.

Isengard pressed his right palm down.

“Don’t worry, I’ll tell you in detail in the time to come, but before that, I need to find out a few things from Sherlock and Kaslana. We’ll head to the activity room for a few minutes.”

His accumulated prestige made the detectives sit down without rebutting.

Although they were still worried, they no longer had the problem of fretting or suddenly losing control of their emotions.

After entering the activity room and closing the wooden door, Klein took a look at the enclosed room and suddenly thought of something.

This kind of environment is very suitable for using items like the Biological Poison Bottle!

Ahem… Klein cleared his throat, walked across the room, and opened the window.

He still didn’t relax his wariness against Isengard Stanton, nor did he believe that Kaslana was absolutely trustworthy.

Isengard looked around, directly taking Klein’s reclining chair before chuckling.

“Being old, I still like to sit like this.”

Sitting on a single sofa, Klein asked again, “Mr. Stanton, what exactly happened?”

Isengard looked at Kaslana, who was standing behind a coffee table, and said, “We’re all Beyonders, so I won’t explain stuff pertaining to general knowledge.”

"Beyonders?" Kaslana first looked at Klein, then at Isengard, slightly surprised but not all that shocked.

So it turns out that you're also a Beyonder… Why were you stumped by a weak ghost back then and unable to even discover the problem… Yes, perhaps she's from a Sequence that isn't good at dealing with shadows or wraiths… Klein responded to her gaze.

Isengard smiled and said, "I once went to the Lenburg for four years of studies, where I came into contact with the Beyonder world and became a believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom.

"After returning to Backlund, I gradually established a good relationship with the military, the Church of Evernight, and the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, but I didn't dare to reveal my true identity, because the Mandated Punishers would definitely eliminate me as a cult's heretic. On this matter, the other official organizations wouldn't help me directly, because that would be equivalent to starting a war with the Church of Storms.

"As expected of the Tyrant's Church."

"Tyrant?" Klein asked in passing.

Isengard took out his pipe, but only sniffed the tobacco.

"This is what our Church internally calls the Lord of the Storms.

"Alright. Let me first return to what happened today. The person who attacked me and delivered threatening letters to you is the master of the serial murderer from before. Heh heh, you should know that the murderer is a black dog of the Devil Sequence, especially Sherlock. You were the first to point out that the Devil might be an animal."

Klein smiled, neither denying nor admitting it. Kaslana also just clasped her hands together, not saying a word.

Isengard shook his head and laughed.

“Don’t worry, I’m not an enforcer, but as a believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, I can’t preach in Backlund or officially establish an organization. I can only rely on you and others like you for help.”

In other words, you can help us take the blame? Klein mocked inwardly.

Isengard continued, seeing that they were still not making any admission.

“The Devil dog’s master is a Sequence 5 expert. Yes, according to what I know, the Devil pathway’s Sequence 5 is Desire Apostle. They can use and control everyone’s emotions and desires, enticing them to be corrupted.

“When facing a Desire Apostle, one mustn’t have feelings that are too intense. One mustn’t make or exhibit overt desires; otherwise, they’ll immediately be remotely controlled by him. Otherwise, a seed might be planted in them or have it catalyze immediately.

“This will make people exhibit many problems as they gradually become corrupted. They might also lose control of their emotions at a critical moment and be unable to put up any resistance… This is a portion of the Beyonder powers a Desire Apostle has. I have confirmed these aspects from my battle with him.”

Upon hearing this, Klein suddenly understood one of the reasons why the culprit had sent out threatening letters and made such provocative actions.

He wanted to anger us, making our emotions experience violent changes so that he could bury a corruption seed or catalyze our emotions, making it erupt out of control!

This would make his follow-up attacks simpler and easier!

Fortunately, I’m a Beyonder who has experienced many things. At that time, all I had was vigilance and caution… When Stuart and the others saw the threatening letter, their emotions clearly changed, so the Desire Apostle had planted a seed in them…

If we hadn't been able to stabilize them in time, the situation would've become chaotic with the internal strife, giving the surrounding official Beyonders little time to react, and thus, giving the Desire Apostle ample opportunity…

Back when I was in Isengard Stanton's house, I felt that time moved slowly. Was it a result of the magnification of my sudden increase in vigilance, tension, wariness, and other emotions?

Klein thought back and felt lucky.

"So that's how it is…" Kaslana seemed to gain an understanding of many things.

Isengard rubbed his temples and said, "I was almost manipulated by him, which resulted in my injuries. Afterward, I used a mystical item to play hide and seek in the house. It was only when Sherlock visited and the three sides came to a stalemate did I get a chance to have a breather.

"My poor assistant was looking forward to returning to Lenburg for Mass on New Year's Day."

At this point, he sighed.

"When the police arrived, I took the opportunity to escape and then used the river to escape the pursuit," Isengard added. He then asked, "Sherlock, Kaslana, how do you plan on handling this issue?"

After a moment of silence, Kaslana said, "Mr. Stanton, do you have any suggestions?"

Isengard said, "First, take the protection of the official Beyonders, preventing the Desire Apostle from daring to take action. While this is happening, we should hope that he's quickly caught or killed.

“If our hopes aren’t met, it’s impossible that the official Beyonders would allocate people to constantly protect us. Then, we only have two choices. First, it’s to change our identity, including our families’ and move to a different place with their help. However, no one can guarantee that the Desire Apostle won’t discover this. Second, we can directly join a corresponding official organization and become an external member. That way, our identity and place of residence will change as well, but it’s much safer.”

Join a corresponding official organization? The Machinery Hivemind? Or go to places like Lenburg or Masin to join the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom? Wouldn’t I then come to have three last names—no, a believer of three Churches? Klein felt an inexplicable sense of absurdity.

He thoughtfully asked for advice, “Are there no other solutions?”

At the same time, there was no change in Kaslana’s expression. It was unknown what she was thinking.

Isengard Stanton rubbed his pipe and said, “Yes, that is that we join forces to create an opportunity so that we can quickly find and detain the Desire Apostle.

“Of course, the perfect outcome would be us killing him directly.”

Chapter 415 - The Ring

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Klein didn’t have too big of a response in regards to Isengard Stanton’s suggestion. He looked at the tightly-closed door of the activity room and said, “As far as I know, a Devil can predict danger before we take action, and they can even determine the source of the danger, thus providing an effective response.

“It’s hard to find and restrain him.”

Isengard nodded slightly and said, “Yes, that’s indeed the case, but this doesn’t mean that there are no solutions.”

“What solutions?” Kaslana immediately asked.

Isengard smiled and said, “I fought him head-on and witnessed his Beyonder powers of predicting danger, so I have a rough idea of its strengths and weaknesses.

“A Devil can indeed detect danger before it happens, and it can be done so for quite a significant period of time prior to the danger. As long as we make any plans and take decisive action that targets him, he would receive the corresponding premonition. Of course, it has to be something that can really harm him.”

No, the truth is that the strengths and weaknesses of different types of Devils are different. Some of them might only be capable of detecting danger ten to twenty minutes in advance… Klein silently retorted, but he didn’t say it out loud.

Isengard continued, “The flaw of premonition powers is that it can only detect the person and location of the danger, but it doesn’t know the specific details. This gives us an opportunity to take advantage of it.”

“What opportunity? I don’t think we can trap a Devil that can predict danger,” Kaslana asked incredulously.

Klein also nodded in agreement.

Of course, I can use the gray fog to deceive the Desire Apostle, making him unable to detect danger ahead of time. But the problem is, how can I expose the secret of the gray fog in front of others… Klein silently added a few words.

Isengard chuckled.

“It’s true that it won’t work normally, but the Beyonder world is full of incredible things.

“I’m a Sequence 7 Knowledge Keeper of the Reader pathway, also known as Detective. By honestly telling you this, it’s a way of showing my sincerity in cooperating.

“In this situation, I think honesty is more important than anything else.”

Only Sequence 7? How could a Sequence 7 escape from a Desire Apostle? It seems like Mr. Stanton has a powerful mystical item… Enlightened, Klein shifted in his seat.

“Does a Knowledge Keeper have the ability to suppress a Devil’s premonition powers?” Kaslana asked with her body leaning forward.

“No,” Isengard said with a laugh. “However, I have a ring. It originates from a Rampager at Sequence 6 of the Reader pathway. It allows me to differentiate, recognize, remember, and mimic all the Beyonder powers I’ve seen before. Of course, against more powerful Beyonder powers, the chance of failure is higher.

“Haha, there is a maxim in our Church, omniscience means omnipotence.”

Why does it sound so familiar… Furthermore, the description of the item… Klein was about to run through his memories when he saw Isengard Stanton take out a gorgeous ring.

The ring was inlaid with many small diamonds. Together, they surrounded a beautiful emerald-green gem that looked like a human eye.

Just by looking at this ring, Klein felt dizzy, as if he had overworked his mind.

Isn’t… Isn’t this Sealed Artifact 2-081? Isengard Stanton is Old Mister Eye of Wisdom? Klein looked up in surprise at the detective sitting in the reclining chair.

That ring was the Sealed Artifact 2-081 which Eye of Wisdom had flaunted to him previously and had used several times in the Beyonder gathering!

Eye of Wisdom… This code name does sound like it’s related to the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom… Klein, using his Clown’s ability to control his expression as he looked quietly at Isengard Stanton.

In the end, he found that some of the outlines of the great detective did match Eye of Wisdom, but there were many details which were highly different.

His ability to disguise himself is very impressive… Was it done with the help of 2-081? Klein made a rough judgment.

At this moment, he suddenly thought of a scene.

If Mr. Stanton says, “Let all of us work together to resist the Desire Apostle, and the most important thing is honesty. I have already described my Sequence and mystical item. It's your turn." What should I say? Silently take out the Sun Brooch which he sold to me?

At that moment, wouldn't he be going, "Nice, so it's you, punk!"

While Klein was imagining things, Kaslana looked at the ring Isengard Stanton showed and asked in envy and puzzlement, "What power are you planning on mimicking to resist the Desire Apostle's ability to predict danger?"

Isengard curled the corner of his lips and chuckled.

"The premonition that Devils have towards danger."

At that moment, he looked like a hoary fox.

Ah? That actually works? Klein was instantly momentarily unable to figure out the intricacies.

Seeing Kaslana and Klein puzzled, Isengard laughed and explained, "First, which is what we're currently doing, draw up a plan that can actually harm the Desire Apostle and begin working on it.

"Second, the Desire Apostle will sense the danger and know that the danger comes from us and that it stems from this place.

"Third, as a Devil, without any advanced preparations, there are certain things that are instinctual to him that he cannot change. His first reaction is definitely to kill us or to exact revenge on us, and there will be certain changes to his body, after which he will consider whether the current situation is suitable for a counterattack or not, and whether he should choose to stay away from us.

"Fourth, by mimicking the Devil's premonition powers, I'll sense the threat of the Desire Apostle and grasp the source of danger, which is also his present location."

That's… some godly operation… Klein was quite surprised.

But what happens next? The Desire Apostle would run away as soon as he realizes that something is wrong. We won't even have time to chase after him… Doubts immediately arose in him.

Isengard looked at the two of them and smiled.

"According to my deductions, he must be hiding in our surroundings right now. No matter how good he is at remotely controlling the emotions of others, there must be a distance limit. And just now, he had led Stuart and the others to lose control of their emotions.

"After I escaped his pursuit, the reason why it took me so long to appear here was because I was discussing a plan with the Nighthawks, Machinery Hivemind, and the military. They will each send two to three squads who are in charge of monitoring the nearby districts. These districts all have their code names. Heh heh, this will all be within the Desire Apostle's expectations. Even if he senses the danger, he will only treat it as normal.

"As soon as I confirm his location, I will inform the official Beyonders, and they will rapidly seal off the corresponding areas and close in on him."

"But herein lies the problem. How are we to inform the official Beyonders? If we're unable to accomplish this within seconds, the Desire Apostle will escape. Of course, he might've fled when what he just did had failed," Klein said, in thought.

"If that's the case, we would be out of solutions as well. There's no plan that's absolutely perfect. We can only wait for a particular Sealed Artifact's activation process to complete. When the time comes, the Desire Apostle might've already left Backlund, but he might return at any time," Isengard explained.

He then took out a golden palm-sized item. It looked like a miniature telegraph, but it also had a trumpet on it.

“This is a Sealed Artifact; it can allow my voice to sound out simultaneously up to a range of five kilometers,” Isengard smiled as he introduced it. “Its negative effect is that once it’s activated, all sounds within five kilometers will be transmitted to the user’s ears for an extended period of time. Of course, I can mimic a Beyonder power to mitigate this effect.”

After listening carefully, Kaslana frowned slightly.

“Since there are official Beyonders involved, there doesn’t seem to be any need for our cooperation?”

Isengard carefully put on Sealed Artifact 2-081 and earnestly said, “In order to not alarm the Desire Apostle ahead of time, there’s a void of power in the nearby district. If the target is really here, the three of us need to help each other to retain him as best as we can.”

“I have no problem.” Klein pondered for a moment before agreeing.

Kaslana also nodded and said, “Mr. Stanton, there’s no need for you to explain so much. After all, we’ll cooperate for our own sake.”

“Haha, an explanation is part of the plan, and an agreement means that the operation is about to begin…” Isengard half closed his eyes.

The emerald-green gem on the ring of his right hand began to glow with a dark blue light.

Suddenly, Isengard Stanton stood up, pointing upwards with a grim expression.

“He’s right here, upstairs!”

Klein and Kaslana stood up at the same time, one ready to snap a finger and light a match on the second floor to jump up there directly, while the other followed Isengard towards the door.

None of them expected the Desire Apostle to be so bold as to remain in the vicinity after the failure of the previous machination, right in 15 Minsk Street!

Maybe he was upstairs watching it all with a cold gaze while we were discussing the plan to deal with him! This thought suddenly popped up in Klein's mind.

At that moment, he saw Kaslana's eyes suddenly turn red, and her right hand formed a fist as she punched out at Isengard Stanton's back where his heart was!

This… Klein's pupils contracted as he instantly came to a realization of many things.

The reason why the Desire Apostle didn't flee was because he still had other plans set up!

He still had a seed of corruption in someone's heart that he didn't catalyze.

That person was none other than Kaslana!

One of the only three Beyonders here!

The reason why the unsuccessful attempt at instigating them was so easily resolved was to let their guard down and wait for the critical moment to make Kaslana lose control of her emotions!

The Desire Apostle's biggest target was still Isengard Stanton.

How crafty… Klein snapped his fingers, but it was only an Air Bullet that was fired at Kaslana.

At the same time, he shouted, "Be careful!"

Isengard had a lot of experience too. He didn't care what the situation was as he threw himself forward.

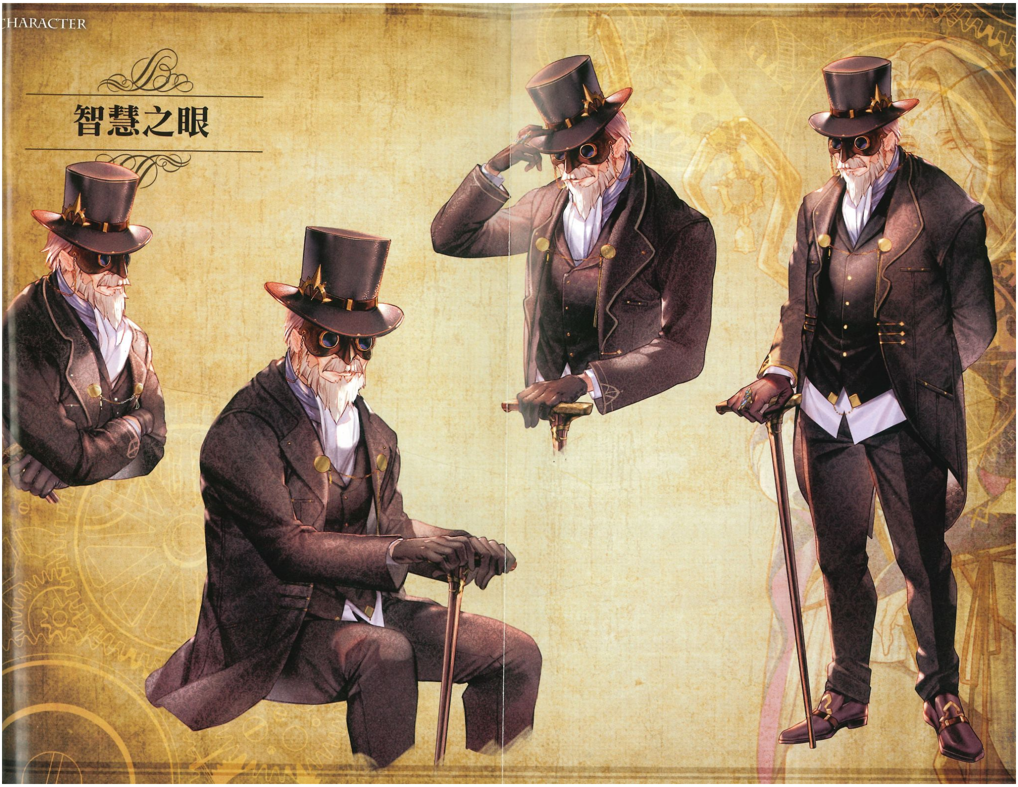
However, Kaslana ignored the bullet, allowing it to strike her arm and allowing blood to splatter everywhere.

Bam!

She punched Isengard in the back, throwing her entire body forward.

Kacha!

Klein heard the sound of bones breaking, and the point of contact was the spine.



Chapter 416 - Two Rights Make A Wrong

◆ ◆ ◆

Kacha!

When Klein saw Isengard Stanton’s back cave in, even he felt a faint pain in his spine.

Isengard fell to the ground with a thud, seemingly instantly losing consciousness from the pain.

Kaslana, on the other hand, stood in her original spot, gasping for breath with a blank look in her eyes. Her forehead was covered in cold sweat, and there was no follow-up attack.

It was as if she had just awoken from a long nightmare caused by her emotions. All the strength in her body had completely disappeared from her previous outburst.

Huff! Puff! Kaslana’s body swayed, on the brink of collapsing.

Klein’s eyes narrowed as he rushed up to Isengard Stanton in two steps.

He kneeled and tried to help him up.

Isengard, who was sprawled on the ground, cried out in pain, “Run!

“Don’t worry about me!”

Obviously, he didn’t think that a three-person group which instantly had one heavily injured member and another losing all her strength could retain the Desire Apostle. Thus, he told Klein to immediately escape and meet up with the official Beyonders; otherwise, all three of them would die there and then.

At the same time, Isengard raised his right hand with difficulty, attempting to use some of his Beyonder powers so as to attract the attention of the official Beyonders who were quite a distance away.

As for the tiny “telegraph” with the trumpet, it had long since flown to the wall because of Isengard’s fall.

Klein showed hesitation and just as he was about to make a decision, he saw a thick black “liquid” flowing down from the ceiling, quickly forming a pitch-black figure.

The figure seemed to be completely wrapped in a black curtain, only exposing a pair of cold blue eyes.

At the sight of him, Klein felt as if he was seeing the most intense emotions and desires of a living creature: fear, wrath, greed, jealousy, hunger, lust, etc.

The Desire Apostle didn’t waste the situation he painstakingly created, and he entered the activity room almost immediately.

At this moment, out of the three-person team of detectives, Kaslana was exhausted from the outburst of emotions, while Isengard Stanton’s spine was severely injured, causing him to lose his ability to partake in combat. Only Klein was left unscathed.

However, other than his revolver and Beyonder bullets, all of his mystical items were above the gray fog. Besides, he was facing a Sequence 5 Desire Apostle, a powerhouse capable of nurturing a Devil dog!

At that moment, the corners of Klein’s lips curled up slightly.

His right hand, which had been placed on the wound on Isengard’s back, abruptly swiped, causing the obvious depression to shift to the side and onto a rib!

The Magician’s most miraculous Beyonder power: Damage Transfer!

It allowed a wound to be transferred once on a body, turning a serious injury into a minor injury, but it was unable to transfer the damage to other people or items!

When Klein saw that Isengard Stanton was injured, he had already thought of the subsequent countermeasures.

By first acting as if they were out of solutions to make the Desire Apostle appear, and then transfer the great detective’s wound to leave him with only a slight fracture in his ribs, Klein believed that Isengard would then be able to deal with the Desire Apostle with him. It was a struggle for survival that all humans on instinct.

In this way, even if the Desire Apostle realized that something was amiss, it would be too late for him to escape. Once Klein completed the “treatment” and joined forces with the great detective, they would be able to stall the target until the official Beyonders arrived!

Almost at the same time, the ring that Isengard had pointed outwards began to produce greenness that was filled with vitality. A faint glow soon enveloped Isengard’s body, allowing his wounds to quickly heal.

The fracture on his ribs was instantly healed.

The great detective’s pain was real, but his helplessness was just an act!

However, this overlapped with Klein’s help.

When the Desire Apostle who was about to take action saw this scene, his eyes suddenly widened, and his body stopped abruptly.

Being free from any ensnarement, he turned around and ran towards the window.

During this process, his body quickly collapsed into a sticky black liquid.

The liquid seeped into the ground, penetrated the wall, and disappeared.

Klein raised his right hand just in time to snap his fingers.

The Air Bullet went through the open window and shot outside, sending sparks flying everywhere. However, the Desire Apostle had completely disappeared.

He ran really fast, without any hesitation at all… Are you a Devil or not?… This will only make things worse in the future… The corner of Klein's mouth twitched as he turned to look at Isengard Stanton who had rolled around and stood up.

The great detective happened to look at him.

"You're capable of healing wounds?"

"You're capable of healing wounds?"

The two of them opened their mouths at the same time and asked the same question.

After looking at each other, Isengard shook his head and smiled bitterly, "I never expected that the trap I set would allow him to escape."

As he spoke, his ring began to glow, and he looked around to confirm that the Desire Apostle had already left.

Isengard then gave a brief explanation.

"I didn't have the chance to mimic the healing ability this afternoon. Later, I believed that I could use this to set a trap and make the Desire Apostle appear by making him think that I'm injured. Therefore, I deliberately bundled my wound in an exaggerated manner."

He pointed to the cushion that elevated his left arm to his shoulder.

“Sure enough, it worked. But I didn’t expect you to be able to deal with serious injuries, and…” Isengard sighed softly.

As a result, both of them putting “healing” the injuries as their top priority. No one held back the Desire Apostle, so the moment he realized that something was wrong, he immediately fled.

Both Stanton and I had trump cards that the Desire Apostle didn’t know about, and we wanted to use that to trick him. Who knew that we would cancel each other out and allow him to flee… Is this the so-called two rights make a wrong? Klein helplessly laughed.

“This is because we don’t know each other well enough, and we didn’t have good teamwork.”

“No, it’s my fault,” Isengard said sincerely. “When I saw that you didn’t run away or defend yourself, and instead came over to help me, I should’ve deduced that you weren’t flustered, that you had the confidence and means, but unfortunately while wearing this ring, my brain remained in a highly-taxed state. I wasn’t able to consider anything else.”

So Sealed Artifact 2-081 will passively reduce one’s intelligence… Klein smiled and said, “Mr. Stanton, it’s not the time to discuss who’s responsible. The Desire Apostle has already fled. We should consider our subsequent actions.”

Isengard took off his ring and turned to the door of the activity room.

“The official Beyonders are arriving soon. I’ll go outside to calm Stuart and the others. After that, we can come up with a plan. Are you joining me, or do you plan on handling some of your matters?”

The official Beyonders… Mr. Stanton previously mentioned the Nighthawks, the Machinery Hivemind, and the military… Please don’t be an acquaintance… Yes, my spiritual intuition hasn’t warned me, so it's probably not… Mr. Stanton is giving me a chance to clean up and dispose of any sensitive items so that I don't get into trouble with the unfriendly official Beyonders… Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he asked, "Mr. Stanton, when you grasped the Desire Apostle's location, where was he?"

Isengard thought and said, "Your bedroom. He was sitting in front of your desk."

…How arrogant… Klein pointed out the door and said, "I'll head over there to investigate. I'll see if he left behind any traces.

"If we can figure out what the Desire Apostle truly looks like, it'll definitely make apprehending him much simpler.

"I'll leave the rest to you."

"Alright." Isengard moved to the side and helped up the weak Kaslana.

Seeing this, Klein suddenly found it amusing.

Having discussed so much and made preparations to set up a trap, we still failed to retain the Desire Apostle and ended up in this state… There are always more accidents than preparations… That's why Magician is just a Sequence 7…

After leaving the room, Klein went straight to the second floor and entered his bedroom.

The arrangement inside remained unchanged, and even the distance between the chair and desk was no different from before. However, Klein seemed to see a figure wrapped in a pitch-black liquid.

He sat there, looking straight ahead, waiting patiently and calmly for a chance.

As expected of a Coldblooded… Klein looked at the glass panes of the oriel window and felt that he could divine if it had reflected something.

The Devil pathway is good at crime, so it wouldn’t be so easy for him to leave clues behind… However, I can try going above the gray fog to give it a try… Klein inspected the area and began to burn some of the mysticism notebooks he wrote in passing.

Not long after he finished dealing with the items, he saw a few strangers coming up to the second floor.

The leader of the group was a man with a stiff face but a head of frizzled, messy, and stubborn brown hair.

In his hand was an ancient silver mirror with strange patterns. On both sides of the mirror there were black gems which were decorated as “eyes.”

“Hello, Mr. Moriarty. I am Ikanser Bernard of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. Can I inspect this place?”

Klein immediately nodded and said, “No problem.”

He then politely said, “Do you need me to follow you and answer any of the questions you might have?”

“Alright. Sorry for the trouble. Mr. Stanton has mentioned to me about your situation,” Ikanser said with a smile.

Several of his team members followed behind him. They treated him differently—some ignoring him, some curious, some filled with hostility.

My situation? How exactly did Mr. Stanton introduce me and what story did he make up? As his thoughts raced, Klein followed Ikanser into the bedroom again, while the rest of the official Beyonders paired up, each responsible for a different zone on the second floor.

“This is where the Desire Apostle sat?” Ikanser pointed at the chair in front of the desk.

He had clearly asked Isengard Stanton.

“Yes,” Klein answered frankly.

Without another word, Ikanser raised the silver mirror and stroked its surface three times with his right hand.

After a short pause, he said in a deep voice, “Honorable Arrodes, my question is: ‘What did the Devil who was previously sitting here look like?’”

The lights around them suddenly turned dark, as if enshrouded by mist after a rainstorm. A strange aqueous glint appeared on the surface of the silver mirror, forming a scene: a man covered in a sticky black “liquid” sat on a chair with his back to the window while he faced the bed.

Immediately after, the scene changed. The mirror in the corner vaguely reflected the dark shadow’s side profile which was similarly covered by the “pitch-blackness.”

But he could vaguely make out an outline.

The Desire Apostle had very high cheekbones and a pair of cold-looking blue eyes.

Chapter 417 - Arrodes

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Seeing the scene in the silver mirror, Klein revealed a pensive expression.

This mirror is very powerful, and it even has its own name. It seems to be a living Sealed Artifact…

Such items might not be too harmful, but the difficulty of sealing it is very high. It's seldom used except for special situations. This person named Ikanser Bernard from the Machinery Hivemind seems to be highly-ranked. He should be a deacon, and definitely not a simple one at that…

Divination is limited, so the outcome would almost be the same as the result shown by the silver mirror. Even if I were to go above the gray fog, I wouldn't obtain a better result.

There's no way to determine the Desire Apostle's appearance. There are countless people in Backlund with high cheekbones and blue eyes…

As Klein was in the midst of his thoughts, the scene produced by the silver mirror quickly dispersed.

Following that, words in blood-red appeared.

"Based on the principle of reciprocity, it's my turn to ask the question. If you lie or are unable to answer, you will have to accept an arranged mission by me or suffer a penalty."

"…" Klein pricked up his brows when he saw that.

Is this some Truth or Dare mirror? Interesting…

The words which resembled dripping blood slowly changed into new characters, forming a new sentence: “What is Red Light’s true name?”

Red Light? One of the leaders of the Great White Brotherhood? One of the seven pure lights above the spirit world? Klein thought through it carefully and realized he didn’t know the answer.

He only knew of Yellow Light, Venithan.

Ikanser’s throat bobbed up and down as sweat gradually appeared on his forehead.

After a brief moment of silence, he said in a deep voice, “Nanides!”

“Wrong.” The blood-red words on the mirror changed again. “Mission or penalty?”

There was an obvious struggle on Ikanser’s face. Finally, he breathed out and said, “Penalty.”

Just as he finished speaking, a streak of silver-white lightning appeared out of nowhere and struck his head.

With sizzling sounds, Ikanser’s hair stood on their ends, and his body collapsed with a thud. Small amounts of black smoke billowed from his body.

However, the mirror didn’t fall to the ground with him. Instead, it floated by itself and landed on the desk.

After two seconds, Ikanser staggered to his feet and sat there, panting while shaking.

Klein looked at everything in silence, unsure of how to react.

After a while, Ikanser, who had recovered a little, looked at him and said with a forced smile, “You should have heard of Sealed Artifacts and know that they come with certain negative effects."

"Yes." Klein looked at the standing hair on Ikanser's head and suddenly understood why his hairstyle was so frizzled, messy, and stubborn.

Klein couldn't help but say, "Actually, you could do the questioning alone. There's no need for you to do it in front of me."

"Phew, the requirement of using this mirror is that there must be someone watching by the side." Ikanser was still trembling.

It's so sentient… Klein took two steps forward and came to the table. He carefully looked at the silver mirror out of curiosity and found that, apart from the strange patterns and two decorative eyes, there was nothing special about the Sealed Artifact.

Ikanser, whose side was facing him, trembled as he chuckled.

"You can pose questions to him. We don't mind."

"No, I don't have any intention to." How could Klein play Truth or Dare with something like an ouija board?

As he spoke, he tried to touch the edge of the silver mirror.

It's ice-cold to the touch and has a metallic feeling… As Klein had this thought, he saw the ancient silver mirror tremble slightly.

White words quickly appeared on it: "Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, at your service."

Ah? Klein's mind momentarily went blank.

Then, he left the table without any change in expression.

What's going on? This mirror was still playing Truth or Dare with others in a very cold and ruthless manner just a moment ago… How did it become like this in the blink of an eye? Klein was amused and puzzled.

He quickly made a guess based on the information he had gathered.

The silver mirror knows Red Light's true name, so it seems to be related to the spirit world to a certain extent…

And the mysterious space above the gray fog seems to be connected to the spirit world as well. At the very least, when I summon myself, I will be able to see what appears to be the spirit world after passing through the door…

Is this mirror named Arrodes able to sense the aura of the gray fog?

While these thoughts were flashing through his mind, Klein saw that Ikanser had recovered and stood up once again. He grabbed the ancient silver mirror while the other two members in the room also stopped pretending that they hadn't seen anything while they were aimlessly searching the room.

After a series of inspections, Klein bade Ikanser and company farewell and found Isengard Stanton who had returned to the activity room.

"What do we do next?" he asked directly.

Isengard replied with a solemn expression.

"Let's have Stuart and the others have their families move in together. It will make it easier to protect them. However, this can only be a short-term solution.

"You and I, as well as Kaslana, will act normally and receive secret protection. Let's hope the Desire Apostle can be found as soon as possible.

"You're a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery, right?"

"Yes," Klein replied as he drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

At the same time, he lamented a little.

For the foreseeable future, I can only go above the gray fog while inside the bathroom…

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey glanced at the elegantly-shaped wall clock and slowly sat down in front of the dressing table despite her nervousness and excitement.

She was heading to the home of her psychology teacher, Escalante, and take the key step of becoming an official member of the Psychology Alchemists.

Before doing so, she needed to time herself well before praying to Mr. Fool for his help.

I should be able to see the angel this time, right? Audrey thought with anticipation.

After a few seconds of silence, she clasped her hands together in front of her mouth and nose and softly chanted the honorific name of The Fool.

In 15 Minsk Street, Klein was standing in the living room, looking at the scene which had finally turned quiet as he sighed.

To him, the Desire Apostle only meant danger, but to Stuart and the others, it was a change in their lives.

I hope it can be settled as soon as possible… With so many Beyonders with so many Sealed Artifacts, there must be something effective against the Devil pathway… In the midst of his thoughts, Klein suddenly heard a series of illusory pleas.

It should be Miss Justice… Having been prepared, he looked around before walking to the bathroom as if nothing had happened.

After locking the bathroom door, he couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

My life has also changed a little…

Before the threat of the Desire Apostle was eliminated, he had to reduce the times he went above the gray fog while being secretly protected by the Machinery Hivemind.

Next week, during the Tarot Club, the itinerary must be simplified. However, no matter how compressed it is, it'll still take nearly ten minutes. Well, constipation is a very normal thing. Who says that Beyonders can't be constipated? Being optimistic, Klein took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

Next, Audrey followed what she had been previously taught and set up a simple ritual, entering the "artificial sleepwalking" state.

When Klein saw her blurry figure inside the crimson star, he went through the procedure: first using his Spirit Body to contain the Black Emperor card, then picking up the paper figurine he cut with his improved cutting skills, and sending it out.

As expected, the paper figurine gathered the power that was being stirred out of the gray fog, turning into a gigantic angel with twelve pairs of black wings.

Audrey watched as the sacred and majestic angel descended before her, wrapping herself in its layers of wings. She was left speechless for quite some time.

This is an angel, Mr. Fool's angel… And it even has twelve pairs of wings, an archangel! This is exactly the same as the descriptions in the legends of canon… This is also an angel of our Tarot Club! Audrey watched as the angel's silhouette rapidly faded away. She suddenly felt that it was exceptionally sweet.

She thanked Mr. Fool with joy, excitement, and piousness, and then she called the maids and told them to get ready for her trip outdoors.

Klein smiled and returned to the living room, looking at the bullet hole in the wall and lost himself in thought.

Should I hang a cheap oil painting to cover it or repair it and paint over it?

†

In Escalante's house at Hillston Borough, Seventh Avenue.

Audrey left her maid and bodyguard in the living room and followed the mistress of the house into the activity room with Susie, her huge golden retriever.

In the activity room, there were two other people waiting. One of them was Hilbert Alucard, the psychologist who was introduced to her by Lady Norma. The other was Stephen Hampres who had organized the previous psychology discussion.

At that moment, although it was already time for the banquet, there was only a single ordinary candle lit in the room.

The candle was placed in the middle of the coffee table as its faint yellow flame flickered, dispersing the darkness in the activity room.

After greeting each other, Hilbert, with his slightly brown skin that was thanks to the tiny bit of Southern Continent blood in him, glanced at Susie, but he didn't say a word.

Audrey smiled apologetically and said, "I feel more secure with it around."

Susie also looked at Hilbert with innocent eyes.

"Understandable. Please have a seat." Hilbert smiled and sat down on the sofa on the other side of the coffee table. Hampres and Escalante also took their seats.

After Audrey had taken her seat, Hilbert lifted the candle wick to brighten it a little.

He looked at Audrey through the candlelight.

“Now answer me honestly. Are you sure you want to join the Psychology Alchemists?”

Under the illumination of the candlelight, his eyes seemed to be dyed with a hint of gold. Deep within his pupils, there seemed to be another eye, a vertical eye.

Audrey’s mind suddenly turned adrift for a moment before she regained her senses. She lightly nodded and said, “Yes.”

Hilbert asked again, “Will you intentionally hurt the Psychology Alchemists?”

His tone carried a strange inducement, as though as long as the person being questioned gave an affirmative answer, they would unwittingly agree and abide by it from the bottom of their hearts.

“No,” Audrey answered very logically.

After a few questions, Hilbert, Escalante, and the others heaved sighs of relief.

The former smiled and asked, “Is there anything else you would like to say?”

Audrey hesitated for a moment and then displayed her sincerity.

“I once purchased the Spectator formula at a Beyonder gathering. I-I’m already a Spectator.”

That Beyonder gathering is called the Tarot Gathering… Audrey thought to herself proudly.

Chapter 418 - The Power of the Mind

◆ ◆ ◆

Audrey knew that her mind and psyche were being influenced by some kind of Beyonder power. It was only because of the “Angel’s Blessing” provided by Mr. Fool that she was able to miraculously be immune to that state. Therefore, she decided to set certain things in motion, using small secrets to stun her counterparts, so as to hide the more crucial matters, in return for obtaining greater trust.

The reason why she was doing this wasn’t because she didn’t believe in the angel, but because she felt that she could observe her counterparty just like how they were observing her.

Although she had always “hidden” herself in the “dark” and pretended to not be considered a Beyonder, performing in a way which would not arouse suspicion, she was still more willing to take the members of the Psychology Alchemists seriously. After all, they were professionals, and she could only be considered a dabbler in the Beyonder circle. She lacked the experience and wasn’t flexible enough. It was very possible that she would expose certain problems from things she had yet to realize.

In that case, she might as well take this opportunity to “confess” and completely dispel some of the doubts of the Psychology Alchemists’ members.

She had called the descent of the angel and its envelopment of her with its wings as a “blessing.”

Upon hearing Audrey’s reply, both Escalante and Hampres showed a brief look of surprise. For a moment, they even doubted their own powers.

As for Hilbert, he curled the corners of his lips into a faint smile, showing no abnormal reaction.

He nodded in satisfaction and gently said, “Your honesty is admirable.

“Anything else?”

Audrey pretended to be in a trance as she shook her head.

“There isn’t anything else.”

Hilbert thought for a moment before asking a few more questions.

“Which Beyonder gathering did you buy the Spectator formula from? Who did you buy it from? Where did you get the ingredients for concocting the potion?”

Audrey’s eyes darted around slightly as she showed an expression of recalling.

“I have to keep the Beyonder gathering a secret.

“I was unable to see what the person who sold me the Spectator formula looks like. But from the way he speaks, I could determine that he was a believer of the Lord of Storms.”

Upon hearing that, Hilbert nodded slightly, as though he recalled something.

Audrey continued, “My Spectator potion ingredients were mainly found from my family’s vault. The rest were exchanged from my few friends.”

Two Spectator potions… she added silently.

Most of them were found from her family’s vault… Hilbert, Escalante, and Hampres ruminated over the words, momentarily at a loss for words.

After a few seconds, Hilbert nodded to Escalante and Hampres, indicating that he found everything alright.

After receiving the same reply from the rest, the gold tinge in his eyes faded, and the vertical pupil in his eyes faded rapidly.

Hilbert touched the wick of the candle again, causing the flame to flicker.

In that instance of alternating light and darkness, Audrey discovered that the strange power that affected her had suddenly disappeared.

She controlled her adrift expression and switched to an appearance of doubt and inquiry.

“I didn’t expect you to already be a Spectator.” Hilbert chuckled.

“Huh?” Audrey showed her surprise and panic at the right moment.

Knowing what kind of emotional reaction to show in the appropriate situation and knowing, in detail, what kind of expression and body language to react with was the basic skill of a Telepathist.

Hilbert smiled and said, “There’s no need to be nervous. We don’t mind. That was the last of our tests.

“Congratulations, you have passed all the tests. Now, you’re an official member of our Psychology Alchemists.”

“Alright then…” Audrey hesitated, then she smiled. “It felt like a dream.”

She then stood up, lifted the edges of her skirt, and bowed at Hilbert and the others. She then said with a faint smile, “We are now companions.”

Escalante and the others immediately stood up and bowed to the beautiful girl of noble status who was so polite to them.

After the two sat back down, Hilbert organized his words and said, “Miss Audrey, I’m going to formally explain to you about the situation of the Psychology Alchemists.”

“Alright,” Audrey said with a smile. “Just call me by my name.”

Hilbert nodded. Leaning back, he crossed his right leg and clasped his hands.

“The original Psychology Alchemists was just a seminar for enthusiasts who all believed that the mind has limitless power and infinite wonders.

“Later on, this seminar obtained a treasure map and found the relics left behind by Hermes.”

“Hermes of the Hermes language?” Audrey asked in excitement.

“Yes, he was one of the earliest masters of mysticism from the human race, and the language of ancient Hermes that he created resonated with the power of nature. He was active during the dark Second Epoch. Back then, humans were only the servants and slaves of giants,” Hilbert said with utmost reverence.

He let out a soft sigh.

“The original members of the Psychology Alchemists found a lot of things from the ruins. They discovered that Hermes was a mysticism master in the field of the mind. His research target was the dragons that ruled the sky during the Second Epoch. To be precise, the dragons of the mind.

“The information he left behind shows that mind dragons have advanced far into this field and have achieved the same level of achievement as deities.”

I know. The Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt was an ancient god… Audrey thought quite complacently.

Hilbert sighed and said, “Those materials laid the foundation and direction for the research of our Psychology Alchemists.

“We believe that the mind has many secrets and that every one of them is hidden somewhere deep and difficult to grasp. Heh, forgive me for using the adjective ‘deep,’ which seems to be the most appropriate term to me.

“The slightest mistake in the study of those secrets would cause irreversible harm to the body. Audrey, you have to remember that matters in this aspect needs to be done carefully.”

After Audrey nodded, he continued.

“If we can unravel the secrets of the mind, then we can, on the one hand, unearth the power hidden deep in one’s consciousness, and accomplish many miraculous deeds, and on the other hand, we can influence or even control the minds of others.

“After reaching this level, what lies ahead is the sea of gathered collective subconsciousness, which is the place we look forward to the most. Of course, the description of a collective subconsciousness isn’t accurate enough; I prefer to call it the ‘mind world of all living beings.’ It has a veiled and miraculous connection to the spirit world.”

“If one can master this ‘mind world,’ what kind of Beyonder powers would we obtain?” Audrey showed her curiosity at the right moment and her lack of knowledge in this area.

Hilbert smiled and said, “You should’ve noticed some of the wonderful phenomena in the real world. When we wish to receive something, it will happen to appear. When we want to visit a friend, they will happen to knock on the door. And when we desire something to happen, it begins at that exact moment.

"You might say it's a coincidence, but sometimes there are too many coincidences. Our research shows that many of these coincidences are caused by an unconscious, magical influence of the mind.

"When you master the 'mind world,' which is also the sea that gathers the collective subconscious, then you will master 'coincidences,' creating magical phenomena that make chance appearances as an echo of your mind. It will appear as you wish."

"Th-this is too amazing." Audrey had heard The Sun mention the Dragon of Nightmare before, but the description was far less detailed than Hilbert's.

Hilbert chuckled and said, "At our level, it's better not to discuss such a deep and profound question. If we do, we'll easily lose ourselves. I'll continue introducing the Psychology Alchemists.

"The discovery of the ruins marked the establishment of the organization. The members at the beginning wanted to maintain a state of pure academic discussion, but they would always need help when encountering matters. Similarly, they lack items and research materials. That's why the Psychology Alchemists slowly became systematic and transformed into a real secret organization.

"However, compared to other secret organizations, our structure and relationships are still relatively loose."

"That's what I like about it," Audrey expressed her opinion.

Hilbert explained the main rules and regulations, before finally concluding, "When you reach a higher rank, you'll be able to meet the other members.

"I'll now give you the Sequence 8 Telepathist potion."

They did prepare a Telepathist potion as expected… Audrey was both glad and proud.

After seeing the lustrous potion, she hesitated and said, “I wish to consume it after I get back.”

She still doesn’t trust us, and she wishes to make confirmation… Hilbert read Audrey’s thoughts and replied with a smile, “Okay.

“With your performance, drinking the Telepathist potion shouldn’t be a problem.”

Audrey beamed and thanked him before asking a probing question, “Can you give me the potion formula to Psychiatrist? I wish to seek out and gather the ingredients, ahead of time, so that I don’t waste any time.”

…When other people join the Psychology Alchemists, other than hoping to get a formula, don’t they hope to apply for the corresponding Beyonder ingredients? Who says it in such a carefree manner and talk about trying to gather them ahead of time? Hilbert, Hampres, and Escalante were speechless for a while as they looked at the girl who spoke of such things with a normal tone.

A few seconds later, Hilbert forced out a smile.

“I’ll help you make the application.

“Normally, this would require contribution points, and contribution points come from the missions we assign you, the research contributions you make, and the new information and materials you gather.”

“Okay, I’ll do my best,” Audrey said briskly.

She remained silent after leaving Escalante’s house, but only until she entered her room and sent Annie and the others away did she turn to the huge golden retriever and smile.

“Susie, we got your potion~!”

It’s a pity that the Rainbow Salamander that Alfred found for me couldn’t be of use. It can only be exchanged for money… Audrey sighed emotively in her heart.

Susie looked at the bottle containing the Telepathist potion and wagged her tail cheerfully.

Audrey had hung a pair of gold-rimmed glasses around her neck just for laughs.

†

Hillston Borough. In Isengard Stanton’s house.

Klein had been invited to breakfast. Apart from him, Kaslana was invited as well.

After eating a mouthful of the soft potato pie, Klein praised, “Mr. Stanton, your cooking skills are excellent.”

Isengard, who had gray hair at his temples, smiled and said, “It’s a specialty of Lenburg. And to the Beyonders of the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, being multi-talented is a common trait. Its Sequence 6 is called Polymath.

“It’s easy for people to lose control for the corresponding potion. Until now, I still don’t have the confidence to make the advancement attempt.”

Chapter 419 - Wishing

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Polymath… This Sequence sounds strong just from its name… The Reader pathway's Sequence 7 is called Knowledge Keeper or Detective. It's a "job" that leans towards grasping knowledge and deduction. At most, it would be accompanied by decent combat techniques and the ability to use machinery, so it cannot be considered powerful. But at Sequence 6, there seems to be a sudden qualitative change, especially more so in the field of Beyonder combat… From the looks of it, each Beyonder pathway has its own critical point below the High Sequences, but it isn't fixed at a particular Sequence. For example, the Seer pathway's critical point is Magician… Klein drank a mouthful of hot coffee and didn't try probing on the secrets to other Sequences. Instead, he smiled and said, "Mr. Stanton, you seem to be quite relaxed. You're not nervous or worried at all."

Isengard didn't answer immediately. He put down his knife and fork, took out his pipe, and said, "You don't mind, right?"

Actually, I do, but the pollution and smog in Backlund is already so bad that a few more puffs of secondhand smoke won't make it any worse… Klein shook his head and smiled.

"This aids in your thinking?"

"More accurately, it's a habit that I have after breakfast every day." Done with his pipe, Isengard took a deep drag.

As the smoke was exhaled, he sighed and said, "Fear, nervousness, and worry doesn't help us face the threat. In that case, why not take it a little easier? The brain will become more active because of this. My assistant easily got worried which led to his fatal disaster. Sigh…"

Isengard glanced at Kaslana and continued, "Furthermore, our opponent is a Desire Apostle. We have to refrain from having intense emotions."

Having said that, he chuckled.

"Most importantly, we have no other means of locating the Desire Apostle."

"What do we do?" Kaslana put down the last piece of bacon and asked seriously.

Isengard took a drag and said in a self-deprecating manner, "When discussing topics like this, I prefer reclining chairs.

"Apart from being able to sense danger, Devils aren't good at divination or premonition. Therefore, if a Desire Apostle wishes to figure out the main revenge target, he would need to actively investigate and gather information. Otherwise, how would he know which group of private detectives had made considerable contributions to the serial murder? How was he able to precisely pinpoint you and me?

"In such a process, he definitely would've interacted with many people. Even in a disguise, he's bound to leave some clues. In addition to the rough image given by the Machinery Hivemind, this will form clues.

"Similarly, if he wants to attack me, then he has to find out where I live, what are my entry and exit patterns, as well as when I work or rest. He also needs to know if there are powerful official Beyonders protecting me. This requires a considerable observation period and corresponding inquiries, and similarly, this means interacting with others and certain locations. Heh heh, once there's an interaction, there will be clues.

"I like the maxim: wherever he steps, whatever he touches, whatever he leaves, even unconsciously, will serve as a silent witness against him."

I know that sentence. It was said by Emperor Roselle… Klein smiled.

Soon after, he felt a little despondent, because this was the second time he heard someone mention this maxim in this world.

The last time it happened was when he was in Tingen.

Kaslana, whose cheeks were drooping, sighed.

“As expected of a great detective. I never thought about such things. I admire your observation and reasoning skills.”

Isengard responded with a smile, “Everyone has their own areas of expertise. If it’s just fighting, then I would be defeated by you again and again.

“Sherlock must’ve also thought of the things I just said. He also has outstanding observation and reasoning skills, and he’s an outstanding detective.”

Actually, I felt a little ashamed when you were speaking so confidently earlier… Klein squeezed out a smile.

“No, you’re a true detective, and I’m still a long way off.”

“You really are a modest young man.” Isengard sighed.

He smiled and said, “Next up, we’ll proceed by taking these points in mind. You’ll have to use your own resources and information channels.”

Aside from the Tarot Club, a third of my resources and information channels in Backlund are from you, my good old man… Klein forced a smile and replied, “Alright.”

Apart from the Beyonder gathering held by Eye of Wisdom, the only people he could seek help from were Maric, Miss Sharron, Vampire Emlyn White, and Father Utravsky.

With the Machinery Hivemind secretly protecting me, I'll have to eliminate Miss Sharron and Maric… I can visit Emlyn the vampire as he's now a half-believer of Earth Mother, and is under the protection of Bishop Utravsky. He wouldn't encounter any danger from the official Beyonders… Klein instantly decided on the direction to take.

Kaslana remained silent for a few seconds before replying, "No problem."

Klein wiped the remaining cream onto the last bit of toast, chewed, and swallowed it at a leisurely pace before asking, "Mr. Stanton, you previously mentioned the activation of a particular Sealed Artifact. Will it be able to help us deal with the Desire Apostle?"

"Yes, it played a critical role in finding and surrounding the Devil dog back then," Isengard replied frankly. "Its code name is 1-42."

1-42? A Grade 1 Sealed Artifact is highly dangerous and can only be used in limited ways. Even the Backlund diocese can only keep one or two items… A corresponding description flashed across Klein's mind, and he asked with great interest, "What is it? What abilities and negative effects does it have?"

Isengard laughed and said, "That is a secret of the Church of Evernight. I do not know, and I only know that it was originally not in Backlund. It was rushed here as an emergency because of the serial murders.

"It is said that it's a full-body armor which is silver in color with dark-red blood stains. It once caused the destruction of a small city, and over a hundred thousand people died because of it."

"Cursed armor?" Klein asked in return by giving it a name.

Isengard spewed a mouthful of smoke and shook his head in seriousness.

"Perhaps it isn't cursed. Some people call it 'Berserker's Armor' or 'Bloodthirster's Armor.' My Church once guessed that the blood it's stained with comes from a deity from ancient times.

“When it was first discovered, it appeared to be nothing out of the ordinary. It was treated as a simple antique, sold and collected by others.

“But as time passed, those who came into contact with it died, one after another. It was an extremely terrifying death, nearly to the point of dismemberment, and after that, with it as the center, death spread outwards. There was no longer any need for contact, and as such, a small city was destroyed.

“This happened early in the Fifth Epoch. The Nighthawks were responsible for the aftermath.”

As expected of a Beyonder from the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. He knows enough history and Beyonder events… Klein secretly praised.

Kaslana asked, sounding a little worried, “Will it bring us danger?”

“The Church of Evernight definitely found the right way of sealing it, but for us, it’s best if we avoid contact as much as possible,” Isengard said, half as consolement and half as a warning.

After breakfast, he and Klein went into the activity room where the fight had taken place. Kaslana first headed to the bathroom.

Looking at her back, Klein thoughtfully said, “She seems to be a Beyonder from the Arbiter pathway?”

“Your observation skills are indeed outstanding.” Isengard sat down in the reclining chair.

As Klein walked to the sofa, he whispered in confusion, “This pathway is strictly controlled by the royal family, the military, and the ancient nobles. Very few formulas and ingredients appear in the outside world. Kaslana has such a background?”

Isengard smiled and said, “Quite obviously.

“However, even to this point, she hasn’t taken the initiative to mention the relevant matters. This implies that there really is a reason that makes it somewhat inconvenient for her to mention it.”

He looked at Klein with a smile in his eyes, as if to say: “aren’t you the same as well?”

Klein laughed dryly and sat down.

After a while, Kaslana came to the activity room and continued discussing the matter regarding the Desire Apostle with Klein and Isengard.

As she was speaking, her expression suddenly became gloomy and she sighed.

“I was pulled into the most dangerous case this time. I have no idea if I’ll survive this at the end. I-if I were to be killed by the Desire Apostle, I wish to have this on my tombstone: ‘She had a great mother.’”

Kaslana’s voice gradually lowered as her difficult-to-get-along-with personality seemed to soften.

Isengard shared the same sentiments and nodded.

“Similarly, he’s the most dangerous enemy I’ve encountered.”

He then laughed and said, “If I die because of this, and both of you are still alive, would you be willing to help me deliver my remains to the Holy Temple of Knowledge in Lenburg?”

…Stop raising death flags! Klein’s mouth was half open, and he didn’t know how to stop the two detectives in front of him.

“No problem, but I hope this day will never come.” He tried his best to dispel the thought.

Isengard glanced at him and asked curiously, “Sherlock, what about you? If you were killed by the Desire Apostle, what wish do you have that you hope others can fulfill for you?”

…Revive me! Klein sighed and said, “I hope that I can be buried in a cemetery with good scenery. It’s best if my corpse is intact and is sprinkled with holy water and fresh flowers…”

The core meaning of his words was: Do not cremate me!

The three of them fell silent for a while until they heard the tinkling sound of the doorbell.

The visitor was the deacon named Ikanser Bernard from the Machinery Hivemind. His hair was stubbornly squeezing out from the brim of his hat, giving his deep, masculine outline an indescribably messy feeling.

This time, he wasn’t holding the silver mirror named Arrodes. It was unknown where he had put it.

If I have a chance, I wouldn’t mind using that magic mirror to see how my loyal and humble servant would react… Klein thought.

Ikanser didn’t enter. He stood there, looking at the detective trio. He then quickly said in a deep voice, “There’s a clue to the Desire Apostle!”

Chapter 420 - Devil Family

◆

West Borough, 6 Edward Street.

Ikanser Bernard pressed down on his black hat, pointed at the door behind the fountain, and said to Klein, Isengard, and Kaslana, “We have reverse-investigated the various information channels for any leaks of news or information. Combined with the outline of their side profile, as well—as well as getting the help of the magic mirror, we managed to have a preliminary suspect.”

You obviously paused for a moment when you mentioned the magic mirror. I wonder what price you paid to get the answer you wanted… Klein sensed the problem in Ikanser’s tone and felt a baffling hint of sympathy for him.

“It’s the owner of this house?” Kaslana returned with a question, sounding almost certain.

Isengard Stanton looked around and said, as if pondering, “You chose to inform us directly because you found another piece of evidence?”

“Yes, the portrait of the house’s owner proves some of it. Heh, he never takes photographs,” Ikanser answered frankly. “Besides, the people around here have seen a big black dog in the neighborhood many times in the past.”

“This can basically prove that the suspect is that Desire Apostle.” Having said this, Isengard couldn’t help but laugh. “Sorry, we were too anxious and didn’t give you a chance to introduce the suspect.”

As he walked around the fountain and toward the front door of the house, Ikanser quickly said, “The owner of this house is Patrick Jason, the principal shareholder of a small bank. According to the description from his neighbors, he’s a cheerful, enthusiastic, and optimistic middle-aged man who has remained a bachelor, but it is believed that he had several mistresses.

“At this level of wealth, the number of servants he hires is utterly inadequate. Every time a banquet or ball is held, he would need to hire a batch of temporary attendants from the City Family Servant Assistance Association. In regards to this, his explanation is due to a problem of insomnia. Too many servants will affect the silence he needs.”

“I can tell that he has many secrets which need hiding, so he doesn’t dare to hire too many servants,” Isengard said half-jokingly.

Klein, who didn’t hire a single servant, said somewhat guiltily, “Perhaps it’s simply because his finances aren’t as good as others think.”

“Yes, that’s a factor that cannot be ruled out.” Isengard stepped up to the porch and came in front of the main door.

Ikanser looked at Klein and said as if in enlightenment, “You don’t hire servants and only have your landlord’s maid do temporary cleaning twice a week. Is it to conceal the secret that you’re a Beyonder?”

Of all my secrets, that is the most trivial one… Klein deliberately smiled bitterly and said, “Yes.”

As they spoke, Ikanser pushed open the front door, and an indescribable stench drifted out.

“The smell of decay…” Isengard made a judgment in an instant.

Ikanser called over a Machinery Hivemind team member.

“Carlson, any discoveries?”

The Beyonder, Carlson, wore thick glasses and had a complicated expression on his face.

"We found a lot of bodies here.

"In the cement in the basement, in the thick walls, and in the places where the garden is overgrown with weeds, one hidden corpse after another was found. The earliest could be from more than a decade ago, and the latest are the servants who were still alive a few days ago.

"Some of them are just bones, some slightly rotten. Deacon, this place is like a human slaughterhouse!"

As he spoke, the Machinery Hivemind members and the carefully selected police officers behind him carried out one corpse after another.

Some of the corpses were dismembered. Tongues, fingers, stomach pouches, eyes, etc. were all lying in disarray. Some of the corpses were only bones.

"It looks like many of Backlund's disappearance cases will be solved because of this." Isengard pinched his nose and sighed.

When Klein saw an intestine which was almost dragged across the ground, he exhaled and turned to look around the house.

Machinery Hivemind member, Carlson, muttered again, "Jason paid his servants very high wages and gave them a lot of holidays. The servants living around him were all very envious… Jason's cook even promised his child that he would be home this week and take him to the circus to watch a performance…"

"A true devil…" Kaslana was slightly perturbed.

Looking around, Klein restrained his emotions and solemnly asked, "Why are the furnishings of the house so simple and crude?

"As a banker, even if the bank he owns isn't big, Jason should've had expensive porcelain, excellent paintings, luxurious wall clocks, and all sorts of items made of high-quality silk. Why can't we see any of that here? Well, the wood for his furniture is still pretty good."

Carlson glanced at Deacon Ikanser, and after receiving an assenting nod, he said, "It's clear that Jason had planned this revenge for a long time. He sold the valuable but inconspicuous items in the house, and he had even agreed to the Varvat Bank's purchase of his estate.

"After killing his servants, he sped up his liquidation and sold the oil painting and other items. He appeared to be certain that he would definitely be found, and he didn't have any thoughts of getting lucky.

"Before taking action, all he had left was his house, furniture, and identity. It's unknown where he had moved large quantities of cash, precious metals, and jewelry to."

After listening to Carlson's description, Klein suddenly thought of a few adjectives: calm, rational, crazy!

"A true devil," Isengard evaluated before sharing his deductions. "He is clear-headed and calm in his actions, but he has a strong crazy tendency and a spirit of adventure, which is characteristic of the past two deeds."

"Therefore, we have to be wary of him taking risks?" Klein grasped the gist of Detective Stanton's words.

"Yes." Isengard gravely nodded.

Next, the few detectives searched the house and found a lot of evidence to prove that Patrick Jason was problematic. They also saw the portrait hanging in the activity room.

It depicted a middle-aged man with tall cheekbones, blue eyes with a tiny of gray, ordinary facial features, and neatly-combed hair. He didn't have any special features.

At that moment, Ikanser came in and said to Klein and the others, “We found some items in a secret chamber that confirms that Patrick Jason had attempted to summon an even more powerful devil, but for some reason, he didn’t succeed. And those items have confirmed his identity. He’s a member of the Devil family known as Beria, so his real name should be Jason Beria.”

The Beria family? Klein nodded, unsurprised.

“In the ancient Fourth Epoch, the human faction that worshiped devils formed a scattered alliance known as the Blood Sanctify Sect. This organization was internally divided quite drastically. The three great Devil families of Nois, Andariel, and Beria were a tripartite balance of forces. Their ancestors once received the bestowment of the Abyss, and they worship an evil god by the name ‘Dark Side of the Universe.’ They believe that ‘He’ is the ruler of the Abyss and that ‘He’ is the devastator of the world who would corrupt and degenerate the real world’s entire universe,” Isengard introduced to the unaffiliated Beyonders, Kaslana and Klein.

Ikanser shook his head and added, “If a deeply divided organization doesn’t eventually split, integration and unification are inevitable trends. Various situations and rumors indicate that the Beria and Andariel families have gradually weakened since at least a thousand years ago, to the point of becoming vassals of the Nois family in recent decades. Well, the Beria family’s symbol is the abstract symbol combination of a pentagram and goat horns.”

Regardless, the Beria family is still an extremely ancient family with deep roots. It’s no wonder Jason was able to raise a Devil dog. Sigh, that’s just one of the reasons, another reason is that he owns a bank, even if it wasn’t big… In the Second Epoch, the ancient god that corresponds to the Dark Side of the Universe is Devil Monarch, Farbauti. Is there any connection between the two? Klein sighed while feeling curious.

After much searching, the three detectives and the Machinery Hivemind members could only confirm that Patrick Jason was the Desire Apostle, but they were unable to find the man's current location.

On the pretext of getting help from others, Klein took a handkerchief that Jason had used during the Devil summoning ritual, with plans on finding a chance to divine above the gray fog. After all, Jason had dealt with the items he often came into contact with.

Shortly after, Ikanser came to them and said with a heavy expression, "The Nighthawks will be bringing that Sealed Artifact here. We will be making a move first."

"Alright," Isengard and Kaslana answered at the same time.

As for Klein, he had long since raised his hands and feet in approval inwardly.

After exiting Jason's villa, which occupied a large area, Klein looked back and his expression gradually turned grim.

He said doubtfully, "I think there's a problem."

"What problem?" Kaslana hurriedly asked.

Klein deliberated and said, "He sold the bank, his business, and many valuable items ahead of time. That means that Jason is prepared to give up his current identity and life. If his motive is solely to seek revenge on the Devil dog, it's not sufficient to initiate such a series of actions."

"Maybe he had a very deep relationship with the Devil dog? Sherlock, you might not think so, but I've seen people who treat pets as family," Kaslana said in disagreement.

Isengard, who was standing beside them, solemnly said, "No, Sherlock is quite right.

"Kaslana, do you know what the ancient name of the Devil pathway's

Sequence 8 is?”

Kaslana revealed a look of contemplation. She had apparently heard of it, but she couldn’t immediately recall it.

At that moment, Klein answered for her in a low voice, “Coldblooded.”

Coldblooded… As she mulled over the name, she suddenly understood why the two great detectives, Moriarty and Stanton, would say so.

Seeing her reaction, Klein pointed in another direction.

“Let’s split up and begin with our own information channels.”

After receiving an affirmative response from Isengard and Kaslana, he left in a hurry. However, he didn’t rush south of the bridge to find Emlyn White.

He wanted to head to the Chissak Police Station and retrieve the fifty pounds he posted as bail.

He has already been proven to be without problems. Both Isengard Stanton and the official Beyonders had given their respective testimonies.

Chapter 421 - Expensive Materials

◆

The front door to Patrick Jason’s house suddenly burst open, and a group of Nighthawks in black tweed coats jogged inside.

They wore vigilant and alert expressions, as though they were facing an extremely terrifying enemy.

Tap! Tap! Tap! A person decked out in full silver armor walked in.

The armor exuded a feeling that made it seem like it was abnormally heavy. Various details about it adhered to an ancient style, and from its left shoulder, all the way diagonally to the abdomen area, it was stained with a splash of dark red blood that appeared impossible to remove. Coupled with the sputtering red spots in other places, it created a very queer and beautiful scene, as if it was a unique and magnificent decoration.

Soul Assurer Soest took out his pocket watch and gave it a look.

“Change.”

The silver armor stopped, lifting its visor to reveal the wearer. It was a handsome man with black hair and green eyes.

“Leonard, hot water has been prepared in the master bedroom’s bathroom on the second floor. Don’t delay any longer; otherwise, you’ll only be able to return to the embrace of the Goddess,” Soest exhorted him.

“Yes, Captain Soest.” Leonard Mitchell, with the help of the rest of the

Nighthawks, removed his heavy blood-stained silver armor.

With red gloves on, he didn't say anything, nor did he hesitate as he rushed to the second floor and found the bathtub still billowing with white steam.

Leonard quickly stripped off his clothes and lied down in the hot water without even exposing his nose.

His skin quickly turned red like a cooked lobster, and strange, scar-like silver lines gradually started to appear on the surface of his skin.

Those silver lines were like pure blade beams which constantly spread outwards and fused with the hot water.

In less than ten seconds, the steam disappeared and a thin layer of transparent ice formed on the surface of the hot water!

Only when all the silver lines dispersed did Leonard sit up, panting heavily.

He cocked his head slightly as if he was listening to something. Then, he said with a lowered voice, "Old Man, do you know the origins of 1-42?"

An elderly voice rang out in his mind.

"You are getting more and more impolite.

"I don't know where that strange armor comes from."

Without waiting for Leonard to ask further, he let out a chuckle.

"But I think I recognize the owner of the blood."

"Who is it?" Leonard asked curiously.

The slightly-aged voice said in a low, deep voice, "An ancient god before the Cataclysm."

†

South of the Bridge, Rose Street, Harvest Church.

As soon as Klein stepped into the quiet prayer hall, he saw Father Utravsky and Vampire Emlyn White, one in the front and one in the back, sitting on chairs of different heights. Their hands were placed in front of their mouths and noses, with their fingers clasped together and palms empty.

This was the unique prayer position of the Church of Earth Mother.

Right now, Emlyn White's expression was gentle and calm, without any trace of the arrogance and vexation which he had before.

Klein slightly moved the corner of his mouth as he silently drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

He took a seat at random, waited until the prayer was over, and then walked over to Emlyn White. He said with a smile, "You are especially pious today."

"What?" Emlyn snapped to his senses as he muttered to himself while his expression was pale. "What have I done, what have I done…"

His voice trailed off, as though recalling what he had just done.

"Maybe it's not a bad thing." Klein consoled the vampire in an utterly unconvincing manner before sitting down next to him.

"I don't want to hear others say something like that. Although I feel my resistance is weakening…" Emlyn wore a livid expression and he said with a tone filled with despondence, "But I don't want to betray the moon!"

Klein didn't continue with the topic that depressed the vampire as he casually asked, "Do you Sanguines worship the Primordial Moon, or a particular deity that represents the moon? Or perhaps, the two of them can be considered the same?”

“All of them.” Emlyn slightly raised his chin, “To a pure-blooded Sanguine, we obviously believe in the deity that represents the moon. of course, it is the god who represents the moon. Her name is Lilith, and she is the ancestor of us Sanguine, an ancient deity. And when humans become Sanguine, they tend to worship the Primordial Moon. Under normal circumstances, the two can be considered equivalent, but there are times when they do not overlap and there are differences.”

“A human becoming a Sanguine?” Klein wasn’t surprised that Emlyn White was able to say the name of an ancient god from the Second Epoch. Instead, he was more concerned about the tidbit about humans becoming Sanguine.

Is this the Vampire Sequence that Mr. Azik had mentioned? he thought.

Emlyn said with a slightly complicated expression, “Yes, there are two types. One is transformed from a bestowment from a powerful Sanguine, and the other is transformed from consuming a corresponding potion. The latter is our most hated enemy.”

“Why?” Klein vaguely guessed at the answer.

Emlyn gritted his teeth and replied, “The main ingredient of their potion is our blood essence.”

As expected… Klein turned his head and sized up Emlyn a few times.

The gaze left Emlyn feeling a little nervous as he snorted.

“You’re already a Beyonder; there’s no way you can switch pathways!”

It’s only because this is my first time seeing a walking, no—a living, no—talking Beyonder ingredient… However, in a certain sense, every human Beyonder is also such an ingredient… Klein originally only wanted to inwardly make a casual joke, but soon he felt a strong sense of sadness.

At this moment, Emlyn looked at the Bishop Utravsky, who was carefully polishing the Sacred Emblem of Life, and said in a low voice, "I found two ingredients that you wanted."

"What are they?" Klein didn't attempt to hide his joy.

Emlyn responded smoothly, "Thousand-faced Hunter's mutated pituitary gland and blood. The asking price is 2,000 pounds for the former and 300 pounds for 100 milliliters of the latter."

2,300… Klein blurted out, "Can I get a discount?"

After receiving his bail money back, he had a total of 2,185 pounds in cash.

For a member of the middle class, this was already quite an abundant amount of savings. Perhaps some people might not be able to save that much money in their entire lifetime, but Klein found that it wasn't enough…

"No, if it weren't for me, he would've wanted 2,800 pounds, and according to the agreement, you would've paid me an extra 150 pounds for a total of 2,450 pounds," Emlyn said while shaking his head.

Looking at Klein's expression, he quickly added, "In this era, dragons are rare. Other than the long-lived Sanguine, it is very difficult to find similar Beyonder ingredients elsewhere. Even if they exist, they would be more expensive than ours."

I'm still short of 265 pounds… Having saved up so much money with such great difficulty, it will be emptied out at once. Yet, I still don't have enough… I hope Mr. Hanged Man will be able to sell the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic as soon as possible… After this, there's still the characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow and a Deep-sea Naga's hair. It wouldn't be any cheaper… There's no way to confirm Little Sun's side of things, with him needing to conduct himself properly. The amount he owes me is probably best repaid by using the means to remove a

Rampager's mental corruption in a mystical item. That would be a better form of concealment… Many thoughts instantly flashed through Klein's mind as he felt the light outside the window dim significantly.

He took a deep breath and said, "Okay.

"However, this deal will be delayed for some time. I recently provoked a fellow and am now being protected by official Beyonders. You don't wish for that seller to be locked up in the cathedral's basement, right?"

And I still have to gather the rest of the money… Klein tilted his head slightly to look at the cathedral's dome.

"Official Beyonders?" Emlyn White jumped up and looked around.

Klein glanced at him and said, "Don't worry about it. You're now a priest of the Church of Earth Mother, and you have legal status. Moreover, Bishop Utravsky will protect you."

"I'm not…" Emlyn's denial was exceptionally weak.

He sat down again and suddenly thought of something as he said, "Can the official Beyonders resolve the problem of a psychological cue?"

"Maybe." Klein almost burst out laughing. "But in that case, you will most likely become a believer of the Evernight Goddess, the God of Steam and Machinery, or the Lord of Storms. Of course, you can also choose to become a member of the military's special department. They might be able to send you overseas as a spy to seduce some noble woman.

"I only like dolls and pure, beautiful girls!" Emlyn immediately emphasized.

I can tell that you're a little interested, but only a little… Klein switched gears and asked, "Do you know any members of the Beria family?"

"Beria? That crazy family that worships devils? No, they are devils themselves!” Emlyn blurted out. “Why are you looking for them?”

Klein helplessly said, “I’ve offended one of them, Patrick Jason Beria, due to a serial murder case.

“Help me find out his recent whereabouts and acquaintances in your circle. If you have any accurate information, I will pay you, depending on the importance of the information.”

Of course, this could also be claimed from the Nighthawks, the Machinery Hivemind, and the military… Klein thought with relief.

Emlyn nodded thoughtfully.

“You actually dared to provoke a real devil.

“When you have exact information about him, he will know that you will bring him a great deal of harm.”

“It’s alright, I have the protection of the authorities,” Klein replied indifferently.

After a few seconds of silence, Emlyn said, “Well, I’ll try. The payment for information needs to be at least twenty pounds.”

After finalizing this matter, Klein didn’t stay any longer, and he walked out of the cathedral.

His mind was filled with the question of how he was going to gather the money.

Miss Magician’s new book is about to be published. She should receive a sizable amount of money for it. There will still be royalties later on. Perhaps I can promote the Astrologer potion formula to her; however, she hasn’t even gathered all the potion ingredients of Trickmaster… Miss Justice has joined the Psychology Alchemists, and I have no formulas to sell her. Sell her knowledge?

The Werewolf Beyonder characteristic is worth about 1,300 pounds, perhaps even lower… Must I produce a mystical item? Or should I think of a way to get Emlyn White to become a believer of The Fool, receiving tributes at the cost of offering to remove the psychological cue…

Right, Jason Beria carried a lot of cash, jewelry, and precious metals. If he can be found, perhaps I might get a share!

As his thoughts raced, Klein walked out of the cathedral and saw the dark sky and the thin fog.

He sighed and said, “I’m really short on money…”

†

Back at Minsk Street, Klein walked into the bathroom with a thick stack of newspapers in his hand, as if he was about to fight a protracted war.

He wanted to head above the gray fog and use Jason’s handkerchief to divine his whereabouts!

Chapter 422 - The True Jason

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the bathroom in 15 Minsk Street.

Klein took out a paper figurine from a concealed pocket, shook it, and transformed it into a body double.

He made the body double sit on the toilet with a newspaper in hand as a way to deceive others. Then, he hid himself in the shadows, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

These series of actions were even more magical than magic!

Inside the majestic ancient palace, Klein sat at the very end of the long bronze table, conjuring Jason Beria's handkerchief in front of him.

It was only a projection, but it could also be used for divination as long as the handkerchief didn't leave his body in the real world. The earliest instance was back when he used the projection of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in Tingen City as a divination object. At that time, he still didn't know how to summon himself, and he was unable to bring items with spirituality above the gray fog.

Of course, there was still a big difference between using a projection and using the actual object for divination; therefore, Klein often tried his best to use the actual object. But right now, with him being protected by official Beyonders, it wasn't that convenient to carry out a ritual.

If anyone were to find him lighting candles in the day while on the toilet, he would be in deep trouble.

If I can really manage to obtain Jason Beria's location via divination, I can always take the risk by summoning myself and bringing the handkerchief up here if the revelation isn't clear enough… With a mumble, Klein produced a goatskin and a fountain pen. He wrote the divination sentence: "Jason Beria's current location."

Normally speaking, relying on a handkerchief that the target used only during a certain ritual made it impossible to divine the whereabouts of the target since the connection wasn't strong enough, and there was too much interference. For example, it was very easy to end up provoking the Abyss Grand Duke which the ritual was directed at.

But for Klein, interferences could be eliminated. The so-called Abyss Grand Duke was at most a High-Sequence Devil, and not the incarnation of the Dark Side of the Universe. Above the fog, the mysterious space had already handled deities like the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator. Even a slightly weaker one was at the level of an angel, Mr. Door, and up to this point in time, he hadn't suffered any serious mishaps.

As for the problem of the connection not being strong enough, Klein, who could only be enhanced to a certain degree by the gray fog, was helpless as well. He could only give it a try and try his luck. Perhaps it would only be after he became a High-Sequence Beyonder Saint in this domain that he could have the corresponding confidence.

In theory, it's possible. After all, when holding a ritual, one's body, heart, and mind were unified the most. It was also the easiest to communicate with the outside world… Klein, who was now barely considered an expert in mysticism, muttered. He held the handkerchief and the goatskin with the divination statement written on it, and he leaned back into his chair.

He quickly entered a state of Cogitation and constantly chanted, "Jason Beria's current location."

After chanting it seven times, Klein fell into a deep sleep and entered the dream world.

Within the gray world, countless images flashed and intersected with each other in a rather dispersed manner.

Soon, the scene became clear and filled Klein's "vision," which made him feel as if he had entered a dream.

In the dream, the lights were dim and the desk was dark red. A figure was standing in front of the oriel window, looking out at the garden.

There was a glass shed in the garden, with roses blooming inside, bright red in the December cold.

The figure of a man was projected on the window. He was of medium height, with curly brown hair and cold brown eyes. He looked to be in his thirties.

This… Am I not divining Jason Beria's location? Who is this? He feels a little familiar… Klein was puzzled, he but didn't think further about it. He let his spirituality remain in a dispersed state, as if he were roaming some mysterious world.

Just as he raised the question, the man turned and walked to a corner of the room, where there were two large leather suitcases.

The man squatted down and opened one of the suitcases. Inside was a neat stack of bills, with gold bars placed on top of them.

The notes that were exposed were all in ten-pound denominations, while the gold bars shone with an enchanting luster.

The man pulled something out of a hidden pocket of his suitcase, shook it, and opened it.

It was a slightly pale piece of human skin!

A complete piece of human skin!

The man quickly stripped off his clothes and put on the human skin. In just ten seconds, he had become Jason Beria with tall cheekbones, blue eyes with a tint of gray, and neatly combed hair!

At this point, the scene suddenly shattered, and Klein opened his eyes.

It's no wonder that Jason was willing to take a risk. So it turns out that in the past ten years, he has always been wearing a human skin and has never shown his true face… As expected of a calm and crazy Devil… Klein couldn't help but sigh.

Jason had left his portrait in the house, and it didn't garner any suspicion from Isengard and the others, because his neighbors had seen him and knew what he looked like. Even without the portrait, with the powers of the Beyonders of the official organizations, it would've been easy to reconstruct his likeness, and the result would've been even better than a photograph; therefore, there was no reason for Jason not to have the drive to destroy something like it. This was something very logical.

Who would've thought that he would've left a hoax in somewhere that looked to be most natural! If searches are made according to the portrait, even if the Nighthawks have Sealed Artifact 1-42, it wouldn't be that easy to lock onto the target… Moreover, in both times, he had used his own abilities to conceal his face. Who would've thought that his face, which had been tightly covered and concealed, was actually fake! Klein realized how cunning Jason was.

He rubbed his temples and began to recall the scenes he saw in the dream divination.

A house with a glass greenhouse. That's a pretty obvious feature. There aren't many similar buildings in Backlund! But the question is, how do I report it? The moment I tell the Machinery Hivemind, Jason would definitely sense the danger and start to disguise himself and move away…

Directly find the Nighthawk with Sealed Artifact 1-42? What if I encounter someone familiar? I don't want to turn into ashes and be scattered into the Tussock River… Besides, I can't rush to report it. I just started gathering information, so how is it possible to receive any information from my various channels so quickly…

That fellow is really carrying a large sum of cash and jewelry, a whole suitcase worth of bills… The total value may exceed 50,000 pounds…

Thoughts raced through Klein's mind and it took him a moment to calm down. He decided to wait another two days, then use the appropriate means to inform the Nighthawks in charge of this matter with the revelation he received.

With the divination coming to an end, he returned to the real world, removed his double, and sat on the toilet himself.

†

In the afternoon, Klein threw a coin when he was about to leave.

The revelation he received was that it wasn't beneficial for him to head out.

"There will be danger if I head out?" Klein didn't hesitate to return to his living room and sit down.

After about twenty minutes, he heard the doorbell ring and saw that it was Isengard Stanton who had come to visit him.

"Mr. Stanton, any progress?" Klein asked rather delightfully.

Isengard pointed to the back of the hall.

"Let's talk inside."

"Alright." Klein made way by stepping aside.

After sitting on two sofas which faced each other, Isengard held his hunter's hat and took a deep breath.

"The Desire Apostle has appeared again."

Seeing Klein maintaining his silence, he nodded in satisfaction and continued, "The families of two detectives refused protection, believing that they wouldn't be implicated, so they remained outside. Today, at lunchtime, they were found dead in their respective offices. One was so horrified that he died from fright. The other was too excited that he expanded the last of his energy.

"They were too stubborn, as expected of believers of the Tyrant, But as a result, the Mandated Punishers have formally involved themselves. It's said that the few Churches and the military's High-Sequence Beyonders have cast their gaze over, and they've placed the matter of the Desire Apostle as one of the most important events in recent times."

"Are you hoping that I wouldn't reveal your identity as a believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom?" Klein asked, seemingly enlightened.

"It's easy to talk between detectives." Isengard smiled and nodded.

"No problem." Klein made the promise first, then said, "I have some information channels that are convenient to expose. If I get valuable information from them later, I hope you can help me inform the Nighthawks and keep it confidential."

As for why it's the Nighthawks instead of the Machinery Hivemind, he believed that he didn't need to be too clear about it. With the intelligence of a great detective like Stanton, he could easily figure it out.

Isengard first agreed to Klein's request, then said in puzzlement, "By telling me, it's the same as letting Jason notice it ahead of time."

"Let's hope we can think of ways of avoiding that… Also, please help me think about other possibilities. That ring of yours should be able to mimic several Beyonder powers," Klein calmly replied.

"Alright." Isengard didn't say anything further.

He pondered for a few seconds and took out his pipe to take a whiff.

"The Desire Apostle's actions today have verified one of my guesses. Heh heh, it's also the question you thought of previously."

"His main purpose isn't revenge?" Klein understood what Isengard was implying.

Isengard leaned forward and solemnly said, "Since Jason has already been through the Coldblooded stage, it means that he's definitely coldblooded. It's impossible that he would go this far for that Devil.

"Sherlock, look. Up until now, all of the official Beyonders in Backlund have been mobilized, and even the High-Sequence Beyonders have shifted their attention to this matter. At this point, if Jason wants to deal with someone else—the true target—wouldn't it be much easier?"

Klein thought over it for a moment and replied heavily, "That makes sense!"

†

After a short exchange, Isengard went on to find Kaslana. After Klein tossed the coin, he went out as planned, heading for the Quelaag Club.

Neither of them had yet revealed their suspicions to the official Beyonders, fearing that it would end up directing harm at Jason, making him detect it and abandon his series of actions.

As soon as he entered the Quelaag Club, Klein met the surgeon, Aaron in the lobby.

"Long time no see," he smiled and greeted him.

“I’ve been really busy recently,” Aaron replied in a friendly manner, but he maintained his cold expression out of habit. “Besides, my wife recently got pregnant, and I’m going to be a father again.”

“Congratulations. When did this happen?” Klein asked casually.

Aaron thought for a while and said, “It was just confirmed. She should be pregnant for more than a month.”

“More than a month?” Klein was startled, and then he looked into his eyes.

Chapter 423 - Winds Arise

◆

“Yes, a month or so ago.” Aaron nudged his gold-rimmed glasses and gave him a positive answer.

A month or so ago? Isn’t that when you were being troubled by Will Auceptin-related nightmares? Klein was surprised and puzzled, but he didn’t let his emotions show.

In the blink of an eye, he thought of the two divinations he had made.

Will Auceptin was in a dark room with the sound of running water outside.

Was that symbolizing amniotic fluid or blood? Klein’s heart chilled as he suddenly understood something.

When he looked at Dr. Aaron again, he wore a rather complicated look in his eyes.

He suspected that his wife was carrying Will Auceptin, a Snake of Mercury!

In the symbolism of mysticism, the Snake of Fate’s head and tail are connected, with it devouring its own tail. It implies the cycle of destiny in a hidden manner… In order to avoid his enemy, Will Auceptin took the initiative to secretly initiate a new cycle in advance? Klein guessed based on what he knew.

Dr. Aaron didn’t notice the abnormality he was trying hard to hide. He smiled and said, “He’ll definitely be a cute guy. When he’s born, I’ll hold a party to celebrate his arrival. Sherlock, don’t refuse my invitation when the time comes.”

“Perhaps it’s a she,” Klein replied with a smile.

Frankly speaking, he was curious to see what kind of state the newly born Snake of Mercury was in.

However, he was also a little afraid and worried. After all, the Snake of Mercury was a Sequence 1 of the Monster pathway related to fate, and it also involved the fight for the position of being a deity. No one could be sure whether the future would be smooth sailing, with peace and bliss.

For Dr. Aaron, I don’t know if it was fortune or misfortune… Whether Will Auceptin is kind is one matter, but whether or not the other Snake of Mercury would discover him is another matter… And Will Auceptin hasn’t done anything as of now. Informing the Nighthawks now would seem a little cruel. I’ve always understood wild Beyonders… It’s best to just quietly watch from the sidelines and not get involved, or perhaps taking advantage of the situation is the best choice… Maybe I made a mistake in my interpretation and am overthinking things? Perhaps Will Auceptin isn’t a Snake of Mercury at all! Perhaps the child Mrs. Aaron is carrying is very normal! Many thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind.

“She? That’s even better.” Aaron said in anticipation.

After some thought, Klein asked another question, “Have you had any nightmares lately?”

“Occasionally, but they were all normal nightmares. There are no longer any nightmares of Will Auceptin anymore. Sherlock, thank you for your guidance,” Aaron said earnestly.

No, no, no, that makes it abnormal. As a keyboard warrior, my limited general knowledge of psychology tells me that occasionally dreaming of Will Auceptin would be the natural thing to do. It’s a standard response from overstimulation. Since Will had caused you so much trouble and left such a deep impression on you, it would definitely be reflected in your dreams. Therefore, the correct outcome would be to occasionally dream about Will Auceptin, but the dream wouldn't be too clear, to the point of only knowing that something like that had happened without remembering the details… Klein was pretty sure.

At that moment, he heard a rustling sound.

He subconsciously looked outside the hall, only to see the darkness in the air being dispersed by a strong wind, and the thin light-yellow fog was swept away as a result.

The leafless branches swayed back and forth, and the strong gust of wind left a clear trail towards the southeast.

A few seconds later, everything returned to normal.

"It's hard to see such strong winds in Backlund during winter. At least, I don't remember anything like it before." Aaron sighed as he looked out the window.

That's not an ordinary wind… What happened? Klein suppressed his curiosity and made an excuse to go to the bathroom to perform a simple divination, but he failed to obtain any effective revelations.

He temporarily put this matter to the back of his mind and prepared to head to the underground shooting range to practice his shooting.

At that moment, a waiter wearing a red vest came through the warm hall and respectfully said, "Mr. Moriarty, your friend is here for you."

"Who?" Klein asked in surprise.

"Mr. Ikanser Bernard," the red-vested attendant answered.

The deacon who's often forced to "perm his hair"… Why is he suddenly looking for me? Have there been any new discoveries? Klein immediately walked to the reception hall of the club.

Ikanser pressed down the hat which had been pushed up by his fluffy hair, walked over, and said with a lowered voice, “The Mandated Punishers have found Patrick Jason Beria.”

“How was he found?” Klein asked, half surprised, half curious.

According to his divination, Jason Beria had always been wearing human skin. His true appearance and aura weren’t what they had assumed they were. It was almost impossible for him to be found so easily!

Ikanser surveyed the area and said, “I’m not sure. I just received the news.”

He pointed to a small white bird standing on the tree outside the door.

The bird was leisurely cleaning its feathers with its beak.

Before Klein could ask further, Ikanser gave a general account of what had happened.

“The Mandated Punishers found clues and confirmed Jason’s location. However, the Devil discovered the danger in advance and managed to kill two Mandated Punishers and fled before they managed to close in on him. This infuriated the higher-ups of the Church of Storms. As such, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake, is currently personally in pursuit. You likely saw a gust of wind just now. It was caused by him. He’s the Archbishop of the Church of Storms’s Backlund diocese, and he’s also one of the Cardinals of the Church of Storms.

It sounds normal, but it also feels weird… According to my theory with Mr. Isengard, this can be also understood as a way for Jason, the Desire Apostle, to draw away High-Sequence Beyonders… Klein asked after some deliberation, “Are you sure that the person discovered is Jason Beria?”

Ikanser's expression instantly turned heavy as he replied with an odd tone, "I'll give it a try," he replied in a strange tone.

He motioned to Klein to follow him out and into a large carriage parked at the side of the street. There were two members of the Machinery Hivemind inside.

Ikanser took a deep breath and took out the strange-patterned silver mirror from a special pocket in his clothes.

After doing the necessary steps, he gloomily said, "Honorable Arrodes, my question is: 'Where is Patrick Jason Beria's current location.'"

The surrounding light suddenly warped, as if they were lights after a rain. A scene rapidly surfaced on the silver mirror.

It was a riverboat with a sail raised. Jason Beria, with his high cheekbones, blue eyes with a gray tint, and neatly combed hair, pressed down his cap, propped up the collar of his coat, and hurried into the cabin.

"He's really trying to escape Backlund! Spellsinger of God seems to be heading towards the dock area…" a female Machinery Hivemind member said in realization.

That's way too easy for him to be exposed, right? Klein was filled with doubt.

Ikanser wasn't concerned with any of this; all his attention was placed on the silver mirror's surface.

This time, there was only the choice of answering. Answering it wrongly or lying meant suffering a terrifying penalty.

Soon, words in blood-red appeared on the mirror:

"If the man you like is covered with lumps; has his skin shed, reducing him only to flesh and blood; or has become a monster, but it is still able to communicate with him, will you still like him?"

What a shameful question… Wait, a man? Klein almost turned his head to look at Ikanser.

Ikanser slowly breathed out and said, "I will, but I will kill him with my own hands."

"Very honest." A new combination of words appeared on the surface of the silver mirror.

…This question and answer game is simply a public hearing… Klein really wanted to cover his face.

He looked at the other two Machinery Hivemind members and saw no abnormalities from them, or perhaps, it should be said that they were pretending to not have any abnormal expressions. He hesitantly said, "I keep feeling that all of this has been too easy. Perhaps that's not the real Jason Beria?"

"But Jason Beria was directed at him." Ikanser was planning to put away the silver mirror.

Klein thought for a few seconds and said after organizing his words, "No, what I truly mean is that we have to abandon any ingrained judgments. What we are looking for is that Desire Apostle, not Jason Beria. The two might not necessarily be the same.

"This is a point that I have to mention as a detective."

†

On King's Avenue, a luxurious carriage left the kingdom's parliament.

The carpeted carriage was furnished with a bed, a sofa, a table, and other furniture, like a mobile room.

Duke Pallas Negan, who was dressed in a dark blue admiral's uniform, was drinking a polished crystal glass of red wine that resembled crimson blood.

As he sampled the wine, he said thoughtfully, “Invite Earl Hall to be my guest tomorrow. I would like to discuss with him about increasing the remuneration of the factory workers and improving their working hours, as well as amending the Poor Law. These are bills he has been pushing hard for recently. He should be very interested. Heh, why would the Church of Evernight suddenly be concerned over such matters?

“When sending the invitation, you can first inform Earl Hall about the topics I wish to discuss. The property restrictions for the elections are necessary and cannot be lowered. Otherwise, those who are in control of a large number of workers will take up more seats. Also, suppress the recent attack on the invalid voting districts…”

The secretary at the side quickly scribbled down Duke Negan’s orders.

After he was done, Duke Negan sighed and said, “The reason I’m doing this is also for the sake of the nobles. However, there are more and more useless fellows among us, and there’s even quite a number of them who owe money to the tycoons.”

At that moment, the carriage didn’t turn towards Empress Borough but went straight ahead.

As the greatest property-owning noble apart from the king, Duke Negan had many mistresses, but in the relatively conservative Loen Kingdom, this was something which would leave him vulnerable to his political enemies. Therefore, even as a noble duke, he still had to sneak around when he went to his mistress’s place, but this seemed to only give him more pleasure.

Today, he was planning to go to his most beloved mistress of the past two to three years, a young girl who had just turned twenty.

Duke Negan took out a bottle of medicine made of mummy powder and drank it. He couldn't help but touch the accessory hanging from his neck. It was a dark blue thumb-sized conch.

It was a mystical item that the Church of Storms had specially provided after his last assassination attempt by Qilangos. As long as Duke Negan blew on it, the Holy Wind Cathedral's Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake would hear it and lock onto his position.

In order to protect himself, Duke Negan even moved the residences of his mistresses to areas near the Holy Wind Cathedral.

The carriage slowly moved until it reached an extremely luxurious building. At a glance, there was a glass greenhouse filled with bright red roses.

Chapter 424 - The Problem of Change

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the carriage outside the Quelaag Club.

“The Desire Apostle might not necessarily be Jason Beria? You believe that we might’ve been misled?” Ikanser didn’t scoff, show contempt, or think lightly of what Klein had said. Instead, he began to seriously discuss the problem with him.

Not a bad deacon… However, it could also be due to him frequently using the magic mirror name Arrodes. No matter how bad his temper is, it would eventually be worn out… Klein praised silently and nodded sincerely.

“This is my personal opinion, derived from a cautious standpoint.

“It’s very easy to prove it again. Ask the magic mirror of the Desire Apostle’s location, and not of Jason Beria’s location.”

Ikanser pressed down his hat and said, “Makes sense.”

His expression turned serious once again, and his gaze landed on the magic mirror in his palm.

“Deacon Ikanser, if you were to ask for any clues here, the Devil will definitely be able to detect it,” Klein reminded them.

“That’s right.” Ikanser turned his head to the other two members and said, “Continue protecting Mr. Moriarty in secret. Even if the Desire Apostle attacks, the three of you should be able to last for some time. Besides, there’s military personnel nearby.”

“Yes, Deacon!” the two Machinery Hivemind members answered without hesitation.

Ikanser left at once, heading for where the Nighthawks were, which was around Isengard Stanton.

With the Spellsinger of God stirred, and the Sealed Artifact of the Church of Goddess Church out in force… if the Desire Apostle were to really do anything, it would definitely be this afternoon… Let’s hope that there’s enough time and that the magic mirror will give him the correct answer… But this way, I won’t have a chance to get involved, and I won’t be able to personally see the Devil that has harmed all of us die, and I won’t have access to his suitcase full of money, gold bars, gold coins, and jewelry… Klein looked at the Ikanser’s departing back and sighed in disappointment.

However, his mood soon recovered.

That’s good too. At the very least I won’t have to take any risks and be able to safely get out of this predicament.

Furthermore, the Machinery Hivemind definitely won’t treat me unfairly. If I were to succeed, my opinions and suggestions definitely would’ve played an important role. Furthermore, I’m a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery, so it’s likely I’ll receive some of the spoils… Considering the premise of 50,000 pounds, it shouldn’t be too small…

Klein couldn’t help but feel a bit regretful as he thought of this.

But he wouldn’t risk himself by getting involved.

A Magician never performs unprepared!

It happened too quickly and hastily, without giving me any time to plan at all… Klein nodded at the two Machinery Hivemind members, got out of the carriage, and returned to the Quelaag Club, where he had no trouble getting the attendant to allocate him a break room.

†

Hillston Borough. In Isengard Stanton's living room.

Leonard Mitchell combed some of his slightly unruly black hair. In accordance with Captain Soest's instructions and the help of the other Nighthawks, he barely managed to put on the silver armor, which was stained with large amounts of blood.

He pulled down his visor and hid his green eyes in the darkness. Then he extended his left hand, which was covered by a silver metal gauntlet, and held the magic mirror Ikanser handed him.

Within the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, the code name of the silver mirror was 2-111.

"It's only a Grade 2 Sealed Artifact?" Soest asked, slightly surprised.

Ikanser nodded.

"Yes, it's not that dangerous."

As he said that, he suddenly sounded like he was gritting his teeth.

"That is to say that it's other aspects have reached the standards of a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact?" Soest asked in thought.

Ikanser warily glanced at him.

"Only in certain aspects."

He refused to divulge any more information.

At this moment, Leonard used his right hand to gently stroke the surface of the silver mirror. The living room suddenly became quiet.

After repeating it three times, he said in a deep voice, "Honorable Arrodes, my question is: 'Where is the current location of the Desire Apostle who assaulted Isengard Stanton?'"

The entire house turned dark as though a dark cloud had passed by.

The surface of the silver mirror glowed with an aqueous light, and a blurry image quickly formed—it was a luxurious villa with a large garden in front of the window.

In the center of the garden, there was a glass greenhouse, with bright red roses blooming inside.

Above the glass greenhouse, the pale sun could still be seen behind the thin fog.

“It’s in Backlund!” Isengard Stanton immediately derived the location of the scene based on the angle of the view and the position of the sun in the sky.

“This is completely different from the answer when we asked about Jason Beria! We’ve been tricked!” Ikanser said in a deep voice.

Soul Assurer Soest exhaled and said, “How crafty.

“Then, who’s the Jason Beria that Spellsinger of God is chasing?

“Sigh, there’s no time for discussion. We need to narrow down the general location of the presented scene. Then, we’ll immediately take action. I suspect that the Desire Apostle is planning to cause a huge incident!”

At this point, the silver mirror known as Arrodes had dissipated the scene, replacing it with words.

It required Leonard Mitchell to answer a question, and if he lied or refused to answer, he would be severely punished.

For some baffling reason, Leonard felt a little nervous. He put away his usual frivolous attitude and quietly waited for the question.

A few seconds later, he saw the blood-red words change, taking shape one by one.

“On your body, is there something attached…”

Halfway through the question, Leonard’s pupils rapidly contracted. His back tensed up, and a cold sweat broke out on his forehead.

If it wasn’t for him being concealed by the blood-stained silver armor, the others would’ve already noticed his abnormality.

Right at this moment, his left palm inexplicably trembled.

The silver magic mirror suddenly trembled, and the scarlet words were strangely tainted with a tint of green. If one didn’t keep staring at the mirror with rapt attention, it would be difficult for others to discover that the color of the mirror had slightly changed.

The words continued warping, changing the question to: “On your body, is there a scar which you cannot tell others?”

“Yes, that scar resides in my memory,” Leonard answered stably, but his body inside the blood-stained silver armor felt a sense of exhaustion from suddenly relaxing a high tension.

This mirror is too dangerous… It actually noticed it! Thankfully, Old Man has recovered a bit after such a long time… he thought; his lips were dry.

Soest took out his pocket watch, pressed it open to take a look, and said to Leonard, who was inside the blood-stained silver armor.

“There’s still time, you’ll be in charge of the rest of the operation!”

“Yes, Captain Soest.” Leonard let out a secret sigh.

†

Dock area, Backlund Shipyard.

Patrick Jason Beria entered a cabin he had reserved in advance.

He looked out of the window and observed the sky filled with fog as he silently counted the time.

After a while, he quickly took off his hat and clothes. Then, with a tug of his hand, he pulled off the outer layer of human skin!

Under the human skin was a beautiful woman in her early thirties with a profound look in her eyes. She wasn’t the man with brown hair and brown eyes whom Klein had seen during the dream divination!

The woman took out some clothes and put them on methodically, quickly becoming an absolutely charming woman.

Finally, she pulled out a fist-sized stone figurine from the bottom of a suitcase and wrapped it tightly with the peeled off skin before tying a dead knot.

Having done all this, the riverboat was already some distance away. She opened the window and threw Patrick Jason’s skin along with the stone figurine into the river.

Plop!

The human skin that was tied to the heavy object quickly sank.

The woman clapped her hands and closed the window. Carrying the suitcase, she changed to a different cabin she had prepared.

Then, she sat down at the window of the new cabin, propped up her elbows, her face in her hands, and looked out leisurely.

After an unknown period of time, she saw a strong gust of wind blowing in the air, dispersing the thin fog.

The corners of her lips curled up into a brilliant smile.

†

In a luxurious villa not far from the Holy Wind Cathedral in Cherwood Borough.

The bloated, blue-eyed Pallas Negan bear hugged his approaching mistress, a beautiful young girl with a bit of innocence on her face.

There were two people following him. One of them was a middle-aged man wearing a black tailcoat. He had brown hair and blue eyes, but he didn't wear an expression. He was a Beyonder guard provided by the Church of Storms, a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed.

The other person was Duke Negan's secretary.

He was a thin blond young man with delicate features, looking refined and reserved. His biggest flaw was his receding hairline which didn't match his age.

As for the other guards, or security personnel, they were spread out outside the house.

On the second floor, the Wind-blessed entered the bedroom before Duke Negan for a quick inspection. Meanwhile, Duke Negan's secretary was in charge of searching the surrounding rooms.

After confirming that there were no problems, they nodded at Duke Negan, indicating that he could continue.

"My roused up feelings have almost calmed down," Duke Negan said half-jokingly.

His mistress happily responded, "Then we can have a nice chat. I'd like to hear about your time at sea."

"I hope you'll eventually have the energy to do so." Duke Negan carried his mistress into the bedroom and closed the door behind him with his heel.

His secretary and the Wind-blessed entered the rooms on either side of him, not relaxing in the slightest.

In the attic of this house.

A man in a dark overcoat sat on an old chair, his eyes half closed. It was unknown what he was trying to sense, but he would occasionally smile and shake his head.

His brown hair was slightly curled, and his brown eyes were cold. It was the same person that Klein had seen in the dream divination! The difference was that there was one fewer suitcase by his feet.

“How vigorous, and what intense desire… This doesn’t match my judgment of him. It looks like he took some medicine… That just works so well for me… Heh heh, how could they possibly imagine that Patrick Jason Beria is actually two people…” The man tilted his face up slightly as if he was intoxicated.

“It’s almost time… Right now!”

His right hand suddenly clenched, as if he was tightly clutching someone’s heart!

Chapter 425 - Under the Roses

◆ ◆ ◆

Beyond the window, the glass greenhouse reflected the pale light of the sun, and the bright roses stood out even in the thin fog.

In the bedroom, Duke Negan seemed to have recovered the feeling of following his father and elders around the vast lands when he was young, riding a horse, using a hound, and chasing a wild beast.

Finally, he climaxed and the surroundings seemed to become abnormally quiet.

At this moment, his mind suddenly buzzed once. He felt as if the pleasure and comfort he was feeling had suddenly exploded one after another. It continued exploding without end or limit, again and again.

Duke Negan's waist kept shaking, and his eyes were blank, his brain having lost its train of thought.

His heart began to beat violently in an unbearable manner, like a steam boiler whose pressure had gone beyond its limits. It could blow up at any time, and hot steam could gush out at any moment.

If it were an ordinary person or a Beyonder who wasn't physically strong, they would've suffered a heart attack, a massive cerebral hemorrhage, and die on the spot. But Duke Negan ultimately managed to ride through the attack. Only his eyes were unfocused, and saliva was flowing out the corner of his mouth before he weakly slumped onto his mistress.

The Wind-blessed and the duke's secretary, who were onguard on both sides of the room, simultaneously sensed the strange and mysterious smell of spirituality. The former's body was suddenly surrounded by a violent wind, sweeping him towards the wall, and with a clang, a large hole was blown through the wall as he stepped into the bedroom.

The secretary went straight to the source of the mystery—the attic of the house!

Along the way, he didn't evade or dodge, but the decorative vases and other objects in the corridor seemed to have found lives of their own and avoided him in ingenious ways.

As he ran up the stairs to the attic, the wooden floorboards seemed to rise, as if to give him a hand.

In just three or four seconds, the refined, handsome, blond young man entered the attic and saw a figure sitting on an old chair.

The figure was covered in a thick black liquid, just like the gathering of all the ugly desires and intense feelings in the depths of a human's heart. It was the greed of willing to sell and hang oneself by the ropes, the hunger that wouldn't even spare one's own kind, and a lust without limits.

This was a devil walking the earth!

The skinny secretary's expression didn't change, nor did he attack directly. Instead, he looked at the other party, reached behind him, and politely closed the door.

Bam!

The wooden door of the attic was closed.

The entire room suddenly felt like it had been completely sealed, as if one could never leave the room unless effort was put in to crack the seal.

At this moment, the concept of “closing the door and sealing the room” seemed to have been changed to “seal this place, isolate the outside from the inside!”

The Desire Apostle moved. His body expanded and grew a pair of huge bat wings that emitted light blue tongues of flames.

One by one, fireballs that exuded a strong sulfurous smell were formed, and they bombarded Duke Negan’s blond secretary.

The secretary reached out with his white-gloved left hand and clenched it while half-turning his wrist.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The fireballs stopped following the principle of straight or parabolic paths as they scattered in every direction in a sudden outburst of chaos, like the irregular movement of tiny particles suggested by a botanist[1]. Some of them hit the wall, some hit the ceiling, some fell beside the weak-looking secretary, and some fell backward, almost wounding the Desire Apostle himself.

The entire attic was a mess, with traces of destruction and char everywhere, and the house even shook a few times.

However, the mysterious power that was “sealed” in here, or the rules that had been tampered with, had yet been destroyed. The surrounding walls, the old wooden door, and the dusty roof appeared to be on the verge of collapsing, but it remained intact.

The Desire Apostle wasn’t frustrated by the failure of his previous attempt, nor was he flustered that he couldn’t control his enemy or catalyze him into a frenzy, due to his calmness and restrained desires. His coffee-brown eyes suddenly lit up like lava as he took the form of the blond secretary. He spat out a word in the Devil language, one filled with foulness and filth: “Die!”

Almost at the same time, the pupils under the secretary’s golden-rimmed glasses constricted. He opened his left fist and aimed at the Desire Apostle with the palm of his hand.

Suddenly, his figure split into two. One was refined and skinny like his actual self. The other was a shadow covered by a black liquid of “desire.” The two quickly alternated, overlapping with each other at times.

“Die!”

The words said in the Language of Foulness echoed in the attic as the secretary let out a low grunt and took two steps back.

Following that, the split silhouette dissipated, and large swaths of rusted red marks appeared on his face, as though he had turned into a man of iron that had been left in a humid area for years.

Cough! Cough! Cough! He coughed violently, spitting out blobs of rusted blood that had congealed into clumps.

The marks on his body began to slowly peel off.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

The Desire Apostle was also coughing, coughing out blood that had clumped and turned to rust. The viscous black liquid covering his entire body suddenly became much thinner.

The Language of Foulness seemed to have half of its effects transferred to him by Duke Negan’s secretary!

†

In the bedroom.

The Wind-blessed helped Duke Negan up and kicked the beautiful mistress to the other side in case she was an accomplice of the assailant.

The reason why he didn't help the secretary was because he knew he had only one responsibility—to protect Duke Negan!

And in similar situations, one had to be wary of more than one enemy!

At this point, Duke Negan had somewhat recovered a little, he was rather strong, but his limbs still felt weak. His body felt empty and his mind was sluggish. He was completely unable to use his Beyonder powers.

He motioned to the Wind-blessed to remove the conch necklace from his neck and brought the item to his lips.

Duke Negan took a deep breath and blew into the small conch which was covered in strange patterns.

Splash!

The low and deep sound of the tide was heard as it rushed towards the Holy Wind Cathedral.

"With His Grace's speed, he should be able to arrive very soon!" The Wind-blessed first reassured him, and then with Duke Negan on his back, he went to the window and leaped down.

He wanted to meet up with the duke's guards outside; there were two or three Low-Sequence Beyonders among them.

Duke Negan gasped for breath and said, "Catch him, make sure to catch him alive, or with a Spirit Body…

"I want to know who it is!"

He had suffered an assassination attempt from Pirate Admiral Qilangos the last time, and now, it was an unknown Sequence 5 expert. Duke Negan was very aware that he hadn't developed any irredeemable grudges with anyone recently, as such, he was especially angry and resentful.

He wanted to find the mastermind and use all the resources at his disposal to tear the mastermind apart!

The premise of all this was that he could find clues from the assassin.

Seven or eight seconds later, most of the duke's guards surged forward, surrounding Pallas Negan and the Wind-blessed in the middle as they gathered in front of the garden.

"Wait here and be on guard against the enemy," the Wind-blessed gave the order.

Under normal circumstances, he had to protect the duke and evacuate from the assassination grounds as quickly as possible and rush to the safety of the Holy Wind Cathedral. However, he wasn't sure if there were any other enemies, and he was afraid of being ambushed en route. He was afraid of missing the reinforcements from Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake, and ending up being placed in a more perilous situation.

One second, two seconds, three seconds… Time kept flowing by as the house shook from time to time, and the battle inside seemed to have reached its climax.

"Why is the Archbishop not here yet?" the panting Duke Negan asked in a slightly panicked voice.

With the archbishop's flying speed, he should've arrived very quickly. However, there weren't any signs of the thin fog being scattered in the direction of the Holy Wind Cathedral.

On high alert, the Wind-blessed hesitantly said, "Perhaps, perhaps the Archbishop, the Archbishop…"

He eventually failed to mention the possibility that the Archbishop wasn't in the Holy Wind Cathedral.

At that moment, the beautiful mistress of Duke Negan came to the window of the bedroom on the second floor, her eyes filled with a lost and beautiful smile.

Then, she jumped down, deliberately hitting her head on the concrete floor.

Bam!

After producing a jarring sound, there were quite a few cracks on her beautiful head, and blood began to flow out.

She rolled a few times, weakly, until she was facing up.

Her eyes had lost all focus, and her frozen expression was one of madness and fear.

Seeing this scene, many members of the duke's guards couldn't help but feel horrified.

Even Duke Negan himself felt that his emotions were on the verge of collapse when Archbishop Snake didn't arrive.

"Let's go! Let's get out of here!" he weakly called out on instinct.

Just as the Wind-blessed was rejoicing over not being soft-hearted when kicking the mistress away—otherwise, the duke would've been killed on the spot—he heard a command filled with horror. His heart suddenly skipped a beat.

Inside the attic, the Desire Apostle, who was in the middle of a fierce battle, suddenly liquefied and turned into countless black shadows, jumping up and down on the ground.

After dodging the blond secretary's attack, he rematerialized in another direction.

Then, he looked at the enemy, raised his right arm, and slightly curled the corners of his mouth.

"No!" The blond secretary's eyes reddened.

All of a sudden, the Desire Apostle clenched his fist.

Outside the luxurious house, Duke Negan's horror erupted. It shot straight to his brain and into his veins, blanketing all his nerves.

He heard the sound of something shattering and felt a warm sensation at the back of his head.

At the same time, several members of the duke's guards became flustered and panicked. They all raised their custom revolvers or rifles in their hands and started shooting randomly towards the center.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Wind-blessed was the first to reach out and grab Duke Negan. He rolled to the ground, and a formless wind as sharp as knives appeared out of thin air, slicing through the throats of the guards.

Splat. Splat. The guards clutched at their throats, slowly falling to the ground in a pool of fresh blood. Duke Negan's body twitched a few times, but then it stopped moving.

He was robbed of his life by his own horror.

If he hadn't been a Sequence 6 Beyonder, then his horror might've even dismembered him.

Of course, if he hadn't become extremely weak, then he wouldn't have possessed such intense emotions. And even if he had these emotions, then he wouldn't have directly died as a result of this.

But there were no "ifs" in this world, Pallas Negan—the leader of the Conservative Party, the noble with the largest land apart from the king, the elder brother of the current Prime Minister, a Sequence 6 Beyonder, and a truly important figure— was dead.

The roses in the nearby glass greenhouse were still in full bloom.

In the attic, the blond secretary seemed to sense something and could no longer control his emotions.

As a result, his mind went blank, and he anxiously ran outside, automatically opening the door to the sealed room.

Two seconds later, he snapped to his senses and turned around again. However, the figure that was covered by the black liquid and the suitcase in the corner had disappeared.

†

The Desire Apostle quickly left the villa, evacuating from the scene based on a predetermined route.

It was at this moment that a thick sea of blood seemed to appear before his eyes.

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†

Brownian motion as suggested by botanist Robert Brown.

Chapter 426 - 1-42

◆

The Desire Apostle, who had once worn Patrick Jason's skin, stopped in his tracks and looked around in bewilderment.

Only now did he vaguely realize that danger was approaching.

He was at the edge of a garden where the grass had withered due to winter and was revealing dark brown soil.

On the right side of the street, there weren't many pedestrians on the weekday afternoon. At this moment, there were only a few people passing by, but they didn't notice anything out of the ordinary.

Suddenly, a silver glint appeared in the eyes of the Desire Apostle, and a person decked out in full body armor emerged from the other side of the garden.

The armor was stained with congealed blood, diagonally from its left shoulder all the way down. It exuded a bewitching beauty and appeared to be extremely heavy. Every step it took slightly shook the ground.

Upon seeing this blood-stained silver armor, the Desire Apostle felt as if he couldn't breathe properly, as if he had met his most terrifying nemesis.

How are they here so quickly? They saw through my ruse so quickly? The Desire Apostle regained his calm and coldbloodedness, fully focused on sensing the emotions and desires of the Beyonder inside the blood-stained silver armor.

However, to his despair, the silver armor completely blocked his Beyonder powers.

It was as if he had touched a rock, a piece of cold armor which had no one in it!

The Desire Apostle had no choice but to raise his right hand, spreading out his giant bat wings and bringing with it some blue flames that rapidly condensed.

At that moment, a silver light flashed from his right palm, and his thumb fell to the ground. The wound was extremely clean.

Amidst swooshing sounds and a flash of silver light, the remaining nine fingers of the Desire Apostle were severed. The suitcase he was carrying also fell to the ground with a thud.

The Desire Apostle's pupils immediately contracted to a needle point, and he flapped the pair of huge bat wings on his back to escape in another direction.

The shadow under his feet shrank back without anyone realizing it, hiding in one spot.

The Desire Apostle had only taken two steps when countless silver lights burst out from his body like blooming fireworks.

The thick black liquid that covered his body splashed to the ground like raindrops. His forearm, arm, shoulders, ribs, neck, and other parts of his body broke off and smoothly slid downwards.

Splat. Splat. Splat. The pale, blood-stained intestines of the Desire Apostle splashed to the ground, along with his squirming stomach and his beating heart which had yet to cease.

The place where he stood was where the blood was the thickest. The further he went, the more splatted it looked, which when put together, they formed a beautiful flower of death.

A Sequence 5 expert, a Desire Apostle who had just completed an impossible assassination, was dismembered without any resistance.

This was a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact.

This was the Sealed Artifact that had caused over a hundred thousand people to lose their lives—Sealed Artifact 1-42!

Dressed in that terrifying-looking armor, Leonard Mitchell struggled to take two steps forward, sized up the dismembered body on the ground, and raised his voice.

“He’s not completely dead yet!”

He paused for a moment and then added, “Different Devils have different characteristics. This Desire Apostle is a shadow-shifter. He’s just abandoned his own body, only leaving a shadow behind.”

While Soul Assurer Soest instructed a number of Nighthawks and members of the Machinery Hivemind to “keep ordinary people at bay,” he surveyed the scene and listened to Leonard.

He took out his pocket watch and opened it. He asked with a serious expression, “There’s only ten minutes left, is it enough? Don’t force it!”

“No problem! 1-42 has locked onto him. I can sense its excitement,” Leonard said without hesitation.

Soest spread his red-gloved fingers and said to the other Nighthawks, “Bring hot water with you and follow Leonard closely. Once there are any problem, switch with him immediately and dig a ‘bathtub’ on the spot!

“Also, leave marks. The other team members and I will quickly catch up.”

Tap. Tap. Tap. The blood-stained silver armor began running in pursuit. Despite looking heavy, it was incredulously fast.

Soest watched as the few Red Gloves left before turning to look at Ikanser.

“Deacon Bernard, take the rest of the Machinery Hivemind members to that house. Watch the duke’s guards and anyone else that’s alive at the scene.”

“Watch?” Ikanser subconsciously returned with a question.

Soest nodded seriously and said, “How can the Desire Apostle be able to determine that the duke would be coming to this house today, to the point of precisely pinpointing the time, and then perfectly luring the Spellsinger of God away?”

Ikanser was instantly enlightened.

“Are you saying that a member of the Duke’s guards or someone trusted by him is a partner of the Desire Apostle?”

Otherwise, there was no way that his timing could be that perfect!

The so-called “operation” wouldn’t have any chance of success otherwise!

“It can only be said that this is the most probable cause. We cannot eliminate the assumption that the Desire Apostle has a powerful clairvoyant.” Soest didn’t continue as he led a second batch of Nighthawks and followed the marks to reinforce the teammates up ahead.

With a calm face, he led the rest of the Machinery Hivemind back to the house of the Duke’s mistress.

He looked up at the pale sun behind the thin fog and knew that the situation in the whole of Backlund, and even the whole of the Loen Kingdom, or even the world would change because of what had happened today.

†

In the darkness of the sewers, a shadow was advancing rapidly in a particular direction while clinging to the bottom of the stone wall.

He wanted to take advantage of the fact that the blood-stained armor was tall and heavy, making it inconvenient for him to move around in certain narrow areas of the sewers; thus, allowing him to shake him off his tail!

Every time the shadow moved a certain distance forward, it would stop, frozen in place.

His pitch-black surface continued to swell and solidify as if it was trying to produce new flesh and blood, but due to a lack of materials, it failed miserably.

The Desire Apostle let out a painful gasp, feeling that he could lose control at any moment in this state.

After a short breather, he continued to run for his life, unable to afford the time to decrease the threat of the problem he faced. He was also afraid that the terrifying blood-stained silver armor would silently catch up with him.

†

At the Quelaag Club, Klein entered the lounge and took the newspapers to the toilet.

He was afraid that the Desire Apostle would flee in advance, leaving potential danger for himself, Isengard Stanton, Kaslana, and the innocent private detectives. Therefore, he planned on heading above the gray fog to perform another divination to confirm the Desire Apostle’s present situation and, thus, adopt a targeted strategy.

After repeating the previous process of replacing himself with a paper figurine, he sat in the seat of The Fool, conjuring Jason Beria's handkerchief and trying to divine his current location.

In the dusky dream world, Klein saw the dark sewers. He saw a living shadow and how his body seemingly appeared to fill itself with flesh and blood, only to constantly fail, as well as tiny black dust that kept being shed from his body.

The scene climbed higher and arrived aboveground, revealing a towering cathedral.

Holy Wind Cathedral… Klein opened his closed eyes and understood the situation of the Desire Apostle.

He hasn't been caught yet, but he seems to be heavily injured. His condition is in terrible shape and it's filled with abnormalities!

His suitcase is gone too… It must've been dropped when he was injured… Klein thought for a moment. Using divination, he recalled the map of Backlund and made it appear before his eyes.

Similarly, he came up with a rough layout of Backlund's sewers.

Having previously made full use of the sewer system, he had always been gathering similar information such as this. The main focus was on East Borough, the Backlund Bridge area, and the area where he was located in, Cherwood Borough. After some hard work, he had long completed the first stage of his plan of understanding the main layout of the sewer network. To have a more in-depth understanding of it would require an extremely long period of persistence. When the time came, Klein even thought of infiltrating Backlund's municipal hall and directly sneak a peek at the design prints.

According to the two maps and the scene seen in the dream divination, Klein noticed that the Desire Apostle, Beria, hadn't fled in the direction of the Tussock River. Instead, he had taken the opposite route to Hillston Borough, as if he wanted to pass through and enter the artificial lake in Empress Borough.

In other words, he's getting closer and closer to me… Klein's mind stirred as he suddenly had an idea.

Although I'm not sure which sewer he'll pass through, I can make a judgment via divination… He's heavily injured and in a very strange state. His interference in this aspect has turned extremely weak. At close distances, it's not like I can't find him. After all, I've seen what he really looks like, and I have a grasp of his aura… When it comes to finding people, I'm a professional… I have to do something; I can't let him escape just like that! There's still time! After confirming the degree of danger, Klein made up his mind and returned to the real world.

He took out the candle, quickly set up a ritual, summoned himself, and responded to himself.

Not long after, there was a figure in black armor, wearing a black crown, and a cloak of the same color in the bathroom. It was Klein in his Spirit Body state while carrying the Black Emperor card.

He also "included" mystical items such as the Sun Brooch and Biological Poison Bottle, so as to ensure success.

Then, he disappeared into the air and left the Quelaag Club in another direction.

The current Klein could fly, so he was very fast, but he couldn't cause any wind, because he was a Spirit Body.

He "scraped" past a tree and took away a dead branch.

Having seen Jason Beria's actual appearance before, together with his own memory and the handkerchief as a medium, Klein, combined with the layout map and the dowsing rod divination, quickly determined the sewer areas that Jason had passed.

After entering the pitch-black and fetid area, Klein used his maximum speed to pass through a large number of narrow areas and entered a relatively spacious area.

The dark river flowed, and a mixed smell filled the air. He would occasionally change his direction and chase after Jason Beria.

†

The Desire Apostle nearly lost control again. He stopped and pressed himself against the damp walls and cold pipes, trying hard to rein in his bloodlust and his desire to kill.

Pant. Pant. The thin shadow started to move.

At this moment, he suddenly turned his head to look at the spot he had just passed.

The pitch-black armor and the black crown first entered his “eyes,” outlining an extremely imposing figure.

Behind the figure, the weightless cloak lightly swayed as he moved forward.

†

“It’s nearby!”

A body of heavy silver armor stained in blood went through the entrance and climbed down to the sewers.

Chapter 427 - The Choice of The Times

◆

The murky river in the sewers flowed beneath the unlit surroundings. If a normal person walked in here, then he would have to carry a lantern in order to see the necessary details of the situation clearly.

However, to Klein, who was in his Spirit Body state, this wasn't an obstacle. Everything around him had long been reflected in his "eyes."

Therefore, when the Desire Apostle discovered him, he also discovered the Desire Apostle.

He didn't speak, nor did he hesitate. He opened his mouth and let out a soundless screech.

This was an attack that directly damaged the soul!

The Desire Apostle suddenly stopped moving, as if someone had delivered a heavy blow to him.

Large patches of shadow-like black substances fell off his body, as though he was shaking off the snowflakes that had been tainted with the deepest desires.

In that instant, the Desire Apostle, who was already severely injured, almost fainted.

Without the support of his physical body, he was like a candlelight in the middle of a raging wind, swaying back and forth, on the verge of being extinguished at any moment.

His shadow suddenly dispersed, turning into a pitch-black liquid that flowed in all directions, making it impossible to know which shadow to pursue.

At that moment, a shadow suddenly jumped out from the darkness behind Klein, and it suddenly rushed forward!

The black liquid, that could no longer be considered sticky, was merely a tool used by the Desire Apostle to confuse and make it easier for him to launch a surprise attack!

Klein didn't seem to react at all, allowing the shadow to lunge onto him.

However, the Desire Apostle suddenly shivered, as if he had touched the coldest and chilliest object possible.

The shadow rapidly slowed down, as if it had been "frozen" stiff.

He knew that wraiths and shadows came with freezing effects, but he didn't expect that the fellow wearing the Black Emperor's crown would have such an influence on a Spirit Body like him.

This was a case of being completely suppressed when it came to their lives' natural order!

Klein had expected such an outcome. He half turned his body, stretched out his right hand and placed it on the head of the stiff shadow.

Then, the dark golden Sun Brooch, which was concealed by the black armor, flashed with a faint light.

The Desire Apostle sensed the danger and could perceive his imminent doom. He tried to resist but was temporarily powerless.

A ray of pure and holy light appeared out of nowhere and landed on the shadow's head, enveloping his body.

The surroundings were suddenly illuminated as the black shadow struggled with all its might but didn't stop evaporating. In just a blink of an eye, it had become abnormally thin, and its spirituality was filled with the radiance of the blazing sun and cries of indignation.

Klein didn't give him a chance to catch his breath, and he summoned another pure and bright Holy Light.

The feeling of daylight lasted for two seconds before the Desire Apostle fell to the ground, losing all signs of life.

His body remained in his shadow state, thin as though it had no density.

This Sequence 5 expert who had just assassinated a duke had died just like that. He didn't even have the time to pass on his last words.

At the same time, Klein saw that the deceased's spirit was on the verge of dissipating after suffering the blows.

The Beyonder characteristic will take a while to appear… Should I mimic Miss Sharron by possessing the shadow and speeding up the process… But I don't know how… Klein began considering what to do next.

Suddenly, he felt the ground tremble slightly.

Relying on his spiritual intuition, he looked back at the place where he had passed by before.

A tall, heavy silver armor was rushing over. Diagonally down from the left shoulder, it was stained with a large amount of solidified blood.

Sealed Artifact 1-42… Klein's heart tightened. Without any hesitation, he wrapped the spirit of the Desire Apostle within him and ended the summoning.

His original plan was that as long as the official Beyonders arrived, he would "return" immediately even if he didn't manage to finish off the Desire Apostle, handing over the rest to them.

The Red Glove in the blood-stained silver armor only saw a silhouette wearing a black crown and a similarly colored cloak before it disappeared without a trace.

He narrowed his eyes, carefully examining the spot where the man had just been, and found the Desire Apostle who had lost his life.

“Clearing clues and destroying evidence?” he said in a low voice.

Tap. Tap. Tap. The Red Gloves who were behind him arrived one after the other.

†

After returning above the gray fog, Klein wasn’t in a hurry to channel the spirit. Instead, he directly left the mysterious space and returned to his body in the real world.

He skillfully packed up the ritual items like the candles, and soon, the last traces were removed.

After doing all of this, he once again created a double. He took four steps counterclockwise and arrived at the ancient palace above the gray fog.

Here he could communicate directly with a remnant spirit, as a real Spirit Medium could do, without having to pray to anyone or use the help of a ritual. He had confirmed that when he communicated with Marionettist Rosago’s spirit.

Considering that the spirit of the Desire Apostle had been purified and might dissipate at any moment, Klein prepared himself to ask the relatively more important information.

As for the potion formula for the Devil pathway, he planned to consider it only at the end. In any case, even if he obtained it, he didn’t plan on selling it, lest he would nurture a few cold-blooded serial murderers.

Looking at the Desire Apostle with brown hair and brown, blank eyes, Klein emanated his spirituality and asked, “What were you plotting?”

The Desire Apostle’s connection had been completely severed off from the outside world by the gray fog and could only reply in a muddled voice, “Assassinate Duke Negan.”

Duke Negan… Him again? Who wants him dead so much? Klein was stunned as he asked, “Did it succeed?”

“Yes,” the Desire Apostle answered calmly without giving any additional descriptions.

In this state, he only replied to whatever he was asked.

Poor Duke Negan, the Lord of Storms wasn’t able to protect you… Klein gestured the sign of the crimson moon on his chest.

He didn’t attempt to understand the details and directly asked, “Who instigated you to do so?”

Was it the organization that had commissioned Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos? Klein recalled the assassination attempt.

The Desire Apostle calmly said, “An organization, the most secret and ancient organization, most Beyonders don’t know of its existence. Its members are said to have important figures in various fields, maybe the higher-ups of the various churches and militaries of different nations.”

Sounds familiar… Could it be that secret organization which Emperor Roselle joined, the ancient organization that wields the second Blasphemy Slate? Klein’s mind stirred as he asked, “What kind of reward did they promise you, that you would be willing to give up your identity of more than ten years?”

The Desire Apostle replied in a slightly changed voice, “A Card of Blasphemy, the Abyss card!”

A Card of Blasphemy? The Abyss card, one of Roselle's twenty-two Cards of Blasphemy! This most likely corresponded to the Devil pathway. It's no wonder that the Desire Apostle was willing to sacrifice everything that he had accumulated over the past ten years just for this… In it lies the hope for him to become a High-Sequence Beyonder!

The reward is much more valuable than the mission!

However, it's unlikely that Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos would be attracted by such a reward, unless… unless that organization has another Card of Blasphemy or some other item…

If it's really the mysterious organization which Roselle joined, finding a few Cards of Blasphemy is quite normal… Even if they don't, they still possess the Blasphemy Slate…

Klein was alarmed at first before asking in confusion, "Why do they want Duke Negan dead?"

The spirit of the Desire Apostle thinned significantly again, and he said in a hollow voice, "I don't know. All I did was consider taking the mission or not."

"Then, have you heard anything?" Klein pressed.

The Desire Apostle remained in the same unperturbed state.

"I have heard that their purpose is the resurrection or awakening of the Creator.

"They interfere with the progress of history, making it fit their needs, in order to achieve their goals at a certain point in time.

"If the trend of the times aren't as they expect, then they will try their best to reverse it.

"Other than that, they just quietly watch from the sidelines, apathetic. Perhaps they wouldn't act or entrust something even once every few decades or centuries…”

A secret organization in the true sense of the word… It’s consistent with Roselle’s description of the powerful faction that secretly manipulates the world… It also seems related to the original Creator… Seeing that the Spirit Body of the Desire Apostle was about to disappear, Klein quickly asked, “What is the name of that organization? How can they be contacted?”

The Desire Apostle looked ahead emotionlessly, his figure quickly disintegrating.

Before he disappeared completely, he answered the question, “They are called the…

“Twilight Hermit Order.”

†

Inside the house with the glass greenhouse.

The thin secretary with the gold-rimmed glasses and white gloves sat with a sullen face and a look of deep grief.

“What’s your name? What Sequence are you? Which Beyonder pathway are you from?” Deacon Ikanser asked solemnly.

The blond secretary replied slowly in a deep voice, “Lockhart Siakam, Sequence 5, as for which Beyonder pathway I’m from, you can apply for access to my records from MI9.”

“Alright.” Ikanser then asked, “Does the duke come here at a fixed time every week?”

“No, he doesn’t like to work according to a schedule, especially after the assassination attempt by Qilangos. Before today, no one knew that he would be here today, and I only heard about it in the morning at parliament,” Lockhart Siakam replied seriously.

Ikanser thought and asked, “If there’s a spy amongst you, who do you think he is, and who do you suspect?”

Lockhart thought about it for a few seconds, then he shook his head.

Following that, Ikanser asked for details of the battle and got a rough idea of the process.

He saw that Lockhart was pale and badly hurt; hence, he politely rose to check on the rest of the duke’s guards.

After watching the deacon of the Machinery Hivemind leave, Lockhart took a deep breath and trudged over to Duke Negan’s corpse.

The great noble was no longer naked like before, but the remnants of terror still remained on his face.

After looking deeply at Duke Negan’s corpse, Lockhart murmured sadly, “I’m sorry.”

At this moment, with his back facing everyone, the corners of his mouth slightly curled up.

He calmly added inwardly, “This is the choice of the times…”

Chapter 428 - The Scapegoat

◆ ◆ ◆

West Borough, 9 Hope Street, the Prime Minister’s residence.

Aguesid Negan stood behind a large table and looked at Earl Hall with a serious expression.

“Lord Hall, my secretary should’ve briefed you on what has happened. You’re the first noble that I’ve thought of at this moment.”

The important member of the Conservative Party, who was presently Prime Minister of the Cabinet, looked like he had aged considerably. His tall, thin figure leaned forward as if unable to bear the bad news, to the point of needing to prop himself up on the table with both hands.

But his eyes were still sharp and his attitude calm.

Earl Hall, who had a beautiful mustache, sighed and said, “I’m sorry to hear this piece of news. It has shocked me greatly. I was thinking of visiting His Grace in a few days to discuss the bill that we’re all very concerned about, but who would’ve known that he would be attacked…”

Having lost the handsome appearance of his youth due to his deep smile lines and the fattening state of his body, he first expressed his condolences, grief, and empathy, then he restrained his emotions and said, “His Grace is already dead. Compared to crying and being angry, we need to be more careful and calm. Only by doing this can we handle the aftermath and prevent this heavy steam train of the Kingdom from derailing.”

“This is also the reason why I came to you immediately. The other nobles will only call upon their gods, trembling in fear, and express how unacceptable this is. They will want the murderer to be severely punished and the mastermind found. From their point of view, even the Duke who was heavily protected could be assassinated, then what about them?” Prime Minister Aguesid said in a heavy voice. “It’s a perfectly natural and understandable reaction, but it’s not the reaction we need.”

Earl Hall nodded and asked, “Who’s the murderer? What was the motive?”

“A Devil who was disguised as a banker for more than a decade, a true Devil. By the way, your Varvat Bank just acquired his business,” Aguesid said, his tone unchanged.

“Patrick Jason?” Earl Hall immediately remembered the man’s name.

He was the one who approved the acquisition of the bank.

Without reprimanding him, Prime Minister Aguesid thoughtfully said, “He’s a Sequence 5, but he suddenly sold his business, abandoning an identity which he had used for more than a decade, and took an extreme risk in order to assassinate my brother. From this, we can make a compelling guess that he was instigated by a person or some faction. Unfortunately, he was killed while escaping. Even his Spirit Body was taken away. According to reports from the Nighthawks, it was done by the Hero Bandit Black Emperor.

“It involves an extremely secretive organization, and we aren’t able to find out anything about it in a short period of time?” Earl Hall asked.

“Yes, that so-called Hero Bandit didn’t leave any traces behind. We can only start with the people who had come into contact with Jason in the past few months. This will take a lot of time, and there may not be any results.” Aguesid gave an affirmative answer.

Earl Hall took two steps forward and asked, “What’s His Majesty’s attitude regarding this?”

“Grief, but no specific thoughts,” Aguesid replied.

Earl Hall frowned and said after some thought, “In that case, the important thing isn’t about who’s the mastermind behind the scenes, but what goal they wish to achieve through this matter. If they want war, or to restart the conflict in the colonies, then we need to tell the masses that the one instigating Patrick Jason was the Feysac Empire, and we would fabricate a detailed process and provide seemingly convincing evidence. In the past several centuries, this northern neighbor of ours has always played a similar role, and I think everyone is already used to it. I don’t think there’s any doubt that it’s very, very, very normal for the barbarians to do this sort of thing.”

“And the masses will be afraid of them.” Prime Minister Aguesid curled the corners of his lips, without intending to smile. “But we’re making a series of changes that will take at least half of next year for us to stabilize before we have the ability to wage war.”

Earl Hall muttered to himself, “Then let’s find a target that everyone will find acceptable. Hero Bandit Black Emperor is too mysterious and likewise for the secret organization behind him. If it’s made public just like that, it would definitely incur extreme panic. People are always afraid of the unknown.”

“Yes, what about the Aurora Order? They assassinated that pervert from Intis a few months ago. It wouldn’t surprise anyone if they do anything else.”

“Their reputation is bad enough. Their situation has already been repeated by the papers numerous times, to the point of becoming a horror element or classic antagonist in many novels. Besides, it will effectively reduce the suspicions that others have on us. There will always be people that believe the previous assassination was us commissioning the Aurora Order.

“Also, while we’re fighting against the illegal terrorist organization, let’s clean up Backlund. There are too many dangerous people hidden here.”

Aguesid answered tersely in agreement before continuing, “The Aurora Order isn’t a bad target…

“We shall first use them as a target. When the next year comes and we’re ready, then we’ll publish the results of the investigation, making an accusation that the one instigating the Aurora Order was the Feysac Empire. I believe that no one will care to defend a terrorist organization and the northern barbarians.”

Earl Hall was taken aback for a moment before saying, “This goes one step further than I thought.”

Without another word, Aguesid stood up and said, “I’m going to meet His Majesty now.”

Having said that, he looked at Earl Hall.

“You have to be careful of your safety too. We still haven’t figured out the motives of the people who assassinated my brother. Humph, the Church of Storms has already agreed to replace the archbishop of Backlund diocese. Snake is always late at crucial moments! The believers of the Storm are always irritable, irascible, stubborn, conceited, and easily maneuvered by others!”

“Don’t be prejudiced. For example, Leumi is very intelligent.” Earl Hall let out a low laugh, and then he tapped his chest four times. “Thank you, the Goddess will protect me.”

†

The Twilight Hermit Order… sounds very imposing… Returning to the real world, Klein stood up and pressed the mechanical button for the toilet.

He walked out of the bathroom amidst the sound of running water and thought about the information he had just received from spirit channeling.

He suspected that Twilight Hermit Order was the ancient organization with the second Blasphemy Slate which Emperor Roselle had joined.

To choose to have someone assassinate Duke Negan for the sake of a so-called "historical process" sounds a little absurd, but it also seems to make sense… Their goal is to revive or awaken the original Creator? This is similar to the City of Silver's belief. Little Sun and company have never believed that the Creator is dead. They can only accept that "He" has abandoned that piece of land and has been trying to get a response from "Him"… Klein paced back and forth, letting his thoughts wander.

After an unknown amount of time, he suddenly heard knocking on the door.

It wasn't an attendant or maid from the Quelaag Club, but the bespectacled Carlson, one of the Machinery Hivemind members whom Klein had seen before.

"How did you get in?" Klein asked deliberately.

When Carlson saw that he was indeed in the room, he relaxed a little. Seeing that no one was around, he smiled.

"As a Beyonder, we often have all sorts of methods."

He received news from Deacon Ikanser, learning of the Desire Apostle's death, and came to confirm my situation. As for my performance, it's rather successful. My "illusion of a living person" wasn't exposed, and I successfully pulled the wool over everyone's eyes… Klein's hearted stirred and said, "Your expression tells me that there's good news?"

"Yes, Patrick Jason Beria has been killed. You're safe and no longer need to be protected by us," Carlson said honestly.

Such feedback made Klein feel the potion inside his body to seemingly accelerate its digestion.

Surprised and delighted, he asked, "Are you sure?"

"Yes." Carlson gave an affirmative answer.

"That's great!" Klein said happily.

Carlson looked at him and complimented him wholeheartedly, "Your detective instincts and logical thinking have given us a great deal of help. The deacon wrote that after this matter is over, a reward will be given to you in secret. Probably about 1,000 pounds."

1,000 pounds… Not bad, very generous! However, even if the bills in Jason's suitcase were of five- or one-pound denominations, and even if his jewelry isn't too expensive, it should still add up to about 50,000 pounds, right… Ma'am Mary of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council is probably worth that much if one counts her shares in the Coim Company.

Yes, Jason's accomplice in luring Spellsinger of God away had probably taken some of the money. The remaining amount is probably around twenty to thirty thousand pounds, but that's still nothing 1,000 pounds can compare with. What a pity… I can't think of it that way. Maybe Jason's accomplice took all the wealth ahead of time… Klein felt a wave of disappointment and joy.

And the reward from the Machinery Hivemind was even more proof of the success of his performance during this period of time. It made him feel like he was only one step away from completely digesting the potion.

"This is something I should do. After all, the person being threatened is me." Klein smiled.

He wasn't worried about retaliation from Jason's accomplice, because revenge was only a ruse. More importantly, he would be a Sequence 6 by then.

Carlson nudged his glasses and said thoughtfully, “Sherlock, you’re also a believer of God. We hope to establish a good relationship with you. In the future, you can inform us of whatever you encounter and gather.”

This is them developing me into an informant of the Machinery Hivemind… I have another channel for reimbursement… Klein drew a triangular-shaped Sacred Emblem on his chest.

“No problem.”

†

No longer being protected by the Machinery Hivemind, Klein stayed at the Quelaag Club until dinner, then he slowly took a carriage back to 15 Minsk Street.

He opened the letterbox out of habit and saw a new letter with no postage stamp.

The letter was from Detective Isengard Stanton, who left it after an afternoon visit, had written: “…I heard from the Machinery Hivemind of the suggestion you offered. Your sharpness and caution is truly astounding. If you weren’t already a Beyonder, then I would even believe that being a Reader is the pathway that suits you best.

“You truly are the best young man at deduction that I’ve ever met!”

†

Klein stood in the living room, reading Isengard’s letter by the light of the gas lamp.

This time, there was nothing new to the performance. It was done step by step and conformed to the past performances. It didn’t even have much of an effect… But there were enough people in the audience, and all of them were by my side, which allowed me to get feedback directly… Klein held onto the letter as he reflected over the matter.

He half closed his eyes and felt something inside his body rapidly disintegrating and dissipating. Numerous illusory stars around him seemed to appear, and he could only feel a very weak attraction from the resplendent stars.

On the last month of 1349, his Magician potion was finally digested.

Chapter 429 - Various Parties

* * *

The street lamps at night illuminated the wet ground, which was sent splashing by the occasional horse carriage that passed by.

Backlund was located in the middle of the kingdom, only dozens of kilometers from the Sonia Sea, and it rained frequently all year round. The highest temperature in July was only 28 degrees Celsius, and the lowest was around 2 degrees Celsius in winter. The weather seldom had a chance of dropping to zero or lower, but this didn't stop people from feeling the cold here. Even the northerners from Feysac, who were used to living in ice and snow, sometimes couldn't bear the humidity that penetrated through their clothing and flesh.

Klein stood behind the oriel window in a room which didn't have its fireplace lit. He looked at the tranquil scene outside and felt relaxed in his body, heart, and soul.

As long as he gathered the ingredients and concocted the potion, he could immediately advance to Sequence 6, becoming a Faceless.

The Magician potion has been completely digested… The Desire Apostle was personally finished off by me and he failed to escape… The Aurora Order's search of The Fool's believers is still going in circles… Apart from Mr. Azik being pursued by an unknown faction and the problem of the potion ingredients, I'm temporarily not troubled by anything… Klein leaned his body forward and took in a breath of air. He then looked at the fog that had condensed on the windows.

The reason why he had risked his life to intercept the Desire Apostle was because he was afraid that the other party would have other plans and, thus, smoothly escape from the pursuit of the official Beyonders. At that time, he might be remembered for his crucial advice and be avenged afterwards—as a Coldblooded, a Devil was unlikely to take the risk of avenging his comrades, but that didn't mean that they wouldn't choose to vent their anger on someone who nearly caused their death.

This operation was definitely necessary. Perhaps someone from the Twilight Hermit Order is somewhere receiving him. Once the Desire Apostle escapes, and with me not having any relevant information, perhaps I'll be prepared against a Sequence 5, believing that I would be pretty safe once I advance to Faceless, but the Desire Apostle might very well use the information provided by the Abyss card and the Twilight Hermit Order's help to advance to become a High-Sequence Beyonder! Such a development is quite scary if I think about it… One is required to inflict the finishing blow of justice… Klein reflected over what had happened this afternoon and summarized his experiences and lessons.

After enjoying the night scenery for a while, he returned to the sofa and sat down to think about his future plans.

With the reward provided by the Machinery Hivemind, I'll be able to afford the mutated pituitary gland and blood of a Thousand-faced Hunter. The Deep-sea Naga's hair simply requires me to have money. Such an ingredient should be relatively easy to find on the sea. I can get Mr. Hanged Man to help. The only problem is the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic…

And even if there is a clue, I don't have enough money…

With this in mind, Klein couldn't help but give a self-deprecating chuckle.

I'm not a person who particularly loves money, it's just a very average preference. When I was in Tingen, I always encouraged Melissa to spend and urged her and Benson to hire a maid. I felt that no matter what, I should try to not treat myself too badly, and every time I did a covert operation, I always placed safety first and made sure to be careful so that I wouldn't be affected mentally because of the allure of wealth.

However, in order to take revenge, I have to advance, and advancing requires me to buy expensive Beyonder ingredients. I can only accumulate every single penny and save whatever I can…

He suddenly hunched his shoulders and felt that the coldness of the living room made a Magician like him, who didn't have an excellent constitution, shudder.

Therefore, he decided to take a shower, crawl into bed, and read in bed.

There's only another three or four hours left before it's bedtime; there's no need to ignite the fireplace again… With a sigh, Klein got up and walked to the second floor.

†

Under the Steam Cathedral.

After Ikanser finished reading all the recorded statements, he picked up his coffee and took a sip.

After a few seconds of silence, he pulled out the ancient silver mirror called Arrodes.

Carlson took a glance at it and asked curiously, "Deacon, if I ask the honorable Arrodes about an unsolved mathematical problem or a classical paradox, will it give me the correct answer?"

"Most of the time, it will directly reject you. If it thinks that you have ill intentions, it will even give you a lightning strike or make you suffer a curse that you would never want to face," Ikanser said with a sigh. "It's a living Sealed Artifact with extremely high intelligence, not a rigid, rule-abiding difference machine. When using it, it's best not to think about trying to find loopholes."

Carlson looked around at his teammates and kindly suggested, “Deacon, let me ask the question for you. I have nothing I need to hide.”

He straightened his back and assumed an open, honest posture.

Ikanser smiled bitterly and said, “There’s no need, I already know what I need to know. I’m no longer afraid of similar questions, and occasionally, the honorable Arrodes will ask very profound questions. With your body’s condition, the subsequent penalty won’t be easy to bear.”

With that said, he clenched his fists before spreading his fingers apart and gently stroked the surface of the mirror thrice.

In that subtle atmosphere, Ikanser asked in a deep voice, “Honorable Arrodes, my question is: ‘Who or what faction instigated the Desire Apostle to assassinate Duke Negan?’”

The silver mirror didn’t show any changes for a while. Only after a long time did the surface produce an aqueous light, forming a scene that looked like an oil painting.

It was a plain where the sun was about to set. The vast field was covered in a faint golden afterglow.

“What does that mean?” Carlson and the other members of the Machinery Hivemind looked at each other, unable to understand. Even though one of them was a Beyonder who had advanced from Mystery Pryer and was no stranger at reading revelations.

“Twilight? The symbol of the end of life? A sect that believes in Death, or lunatics that believe in the apocalypse?” a Mystery Pryer said after some deliberation.

Carlson nodded in agreement.

“I think it’s the latter.”

Ikanser ignored their discussion because Arrodes's question had already appeared.

"What color of underwear do you like best?"

Ikanser's face suddenly flushed red, and he felt as if smoke was rising from the top of his head.

With great difficulty, he spat out a word: "Red."

The room suddenly became unusually quiet, and Carlson and the others pretended to look towards a corner.

Ikanser sat down wearily and scratched his fluffy hair, ready to ask the second question.

Carlson couldn't bear it as he said, "Deacon, let me try."

"…Try not to reach the punishment phase." Ikanser finally nodded in agreement.

Carlson confidently mimicked the deacon's actions, gently stroking the surface of the silver mirror three times while the other members gathered again.

"Honorable Arrodes, my question is 'Who are the accomplices of the Desire Apostle?'"

The aqueous light stirred as the scene changed. It first presented a woman's back, one with an outstanding figure.

Then, there was a person who was extremely blurry and could barely be identified as a man based on his attire.

"There is indeed another partner. This should be the person who sold the intelligence on Duke Negan! It's a pity that the other party has already dealt with it…" Carlson looked around and said.

He felt that he had no secrets and didn't need to care about the questions that followed.

This time, the choices that Arrodes offered was a question, a mission, or a penalty.

Without any hesitation, Carlson said, “Question!”

Words that looked like dripping blood quickly outlined the surface of the silver mirror: “Do you relieve yourself daily with your hand?”

Carlson’s lips quivered, and he felt his ears rapidly turn hot.

Although this was something he found very normal, giving an answer in front of so many teammates and his superior still gave him the urge to bury his head in the ground.

“Yes…” he answered very quietly.

†

Under Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Daly, with her blue eye shadow, tossed a stack of documents in front of Soul Assurer Soest.

“All the information you want on the tarot card case.”

“It’s smaller than I thought,” Soest said, slightly surprised.

Daly snickered.

“This is just an index.”

Upon seeing this, Leonard touched his lower lip with the palm of his red gloved-right hand.

“Captain Soest, why don’t we do a thorough investigation of the people who interacted with Jason Beria and compare it with the two previous cases? There might be clues to the organization that is symbolized by tarot cards.”

“Duke Negan is a devout believer of the Lord of Storms, and he represents the interests of the Church of Storms in the political scene. The Mandated Punishers will definitely be frantically searching for the real culprit, so we don’t need to get involved; otherwise, we’ll easily be put at odds with them. Let’s investigate the cases involving the tarot cards, and who knows, we might find new clues. Of course, we’ll definitely end up running all over the place, but that’s part and parcel of a Red Glove’s duties,” Soest explained with a smile.

Leonard nodded.

“I understand.

And deep in his mind, the elderly voice tsked and laughed.

“The Nighthawks have missed it just like that. That person has the smell of the Black Emperor, the true Black Emperor!”

†

Inside the Holy Wind Cathedral.

Wearing a black bonnet, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake, swept his silver eyes and picked a Mandated Punisher elite.

“Although I’m about to leave Backlund, this is the decision of the Council of Cardinals.

“You only have one mission after this, and that is to investigate the assassination of Duke Negan.

“After applying, all of you have the right to use a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. You must find out who is targeting us!”

Standing at the very front, a middle-aged man wearing a modified captain’s hat immediately led the group. He clenched his fist and lightly tapped his chest.

“As you command, Your Eminence!”

He was lean and had no particularly outstanding features, but there was an anchor tattoo on his neck.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey looked at Susie, who had opened the door herself, and said in a low voice, “What’s Father and the others talking about?”

When she found out that Earl Hall had returned late and that his expression was unusually grave, she immediately sent Susie in to listen.

“Duke Negan was assassinated.” Susie closed the door behind her with her feet.

“Ah?” Audrey froze, suspecting that she had misheard.

Although she had already experienced an assassination attempt on Duke Negan, she had never thought that this powerful noble would actually die.

“It’s true.” Susie gave an affirmative answer.

Audrey instantly felt a little blank, finding it a little surreal.

How could such a powerful noble, a person of flesh and blood, capable of speaking and laughing, the duke who had given her a piece of land, die just like that?

Suddenly, she felt the cruelty and coldness of the adult world.

“Who did it?” Audrey asked subconsciously.

“A Sequence 5 Devil,” Susie answered quickly. “But he has already been silenced by the so-called Hero Bandit Black Emperor.”

“Ah?” Audrey was stunned once again.

How could it be the Hero Bandit Black Emperor? How could it be Mr. Fool’s Blessed?

He helped me resolve the problem of Duke Negan’s previous assassination!

This is a complete contradiction!

Audrey immediately told Susie to eavesdrop again while she locked the door behind her and sat at the edge of her bed, praying to Mr. Fool.

After she had finished reciting his honorific name and had described the assassination of Duke Negan, she asked with great trust, “Was your Blessed present there?”

After a while, she saw the endless gray fog and heard the voice of The Fool.

“Yes.

“He’s looking for the organization that directed the Desire Apostle.”

As expected, it wasn’t arranged by Mr. Fool! Was the reason why “He” had his Blessed stop Qilangos last time also because of that organization that’s pulling the strings behind the scenes? Audrey relaxed and asked curiously, “What organization is that? For it to gain your attention.”

A second later, she heard Mr. Fool reply in an unperturbed manner, “Twilight Hermit Order.”

Chapter 430 - A Brand New Day

◆

Twilight Hermit Order…

What kind of organization is it? Why haven’t I heard of it? When Mr. Hanged Man was filling me in on the general knowledge of the various factions, he didn’t even mention anything about this…

Audrey was both surprised and confused. As the gray fog faded away, Mr. Fool’s aloof figure had vanished.

Her eyes darted around as she quickly made a guess.

This organization known as the Twilight Hermit Order sounds even more powerful and mysterious than the other underground powers such as the Aurora Order and the Life School of Thought. It’s so unknown that even the knowledgeable and experienced Mr. Hanged Man, who’s closely related to the Church of Storms, doesn’t know of its existence…

And their plot was directed at a powerful noble of the kingdom, one of the most powerful people in the world.

They might be the observers hidden in the deepest depths of the Beyonder world, the true controllers. They influence the situation of the Northern and Southern Continents, so it’s no wonder that they would be noticed by Mr. Fool…

The last time Mr. Hanged Man successfully got “His” Blessed to help wasn’t because the promised reward was sufficiently high, but because

Mr. Fool himself was targeting Twilight Hermit Order…

This organization is as mysterious as our Tarot Club…

Audrey, for some inexplicable reason, became a little excited, and this diluted the impact Duke Negan's assassination had on her.

There definitely aren't a lot of Beyonders who know of the existence of the Twilight Hermit Order. And I'm one of them, and we, the Tarot Club, are targeting them! Audrey stood up and walked to the full-body mirror in front of her.

She raised her chin slightly, showing an abnormally beautiful angle.

Staring at the girl in the mirror, Audrey slowly calmed down. This was the first time she felt it was imperative that she quickly raised her Sequence.

Even Duke Negan, a Beyonder under tremendous amounts of protection, can be assassinated, let alone Father who's just an ordinary person.

Although based on the family vault's situation, there are definitely many Beyonders in the family, and the Church of the Goddess will also provide additional protection. However, this doesn't ease my heart. Duke Negan's guards aren't any weaker than what we have…

All the best, Audrey, get to Sequence 7 as soon as possible, then Sequence 6, and then hide in the darkness. I'll be my father, mother, and brothers' last line of defense!

†

The capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, the City of Generosity.

The Blue Avenger was once again passing by, moored at the port, giving sailors a chance to indulge and vent.

Alger Wilson changed into a robe embroidered with storm patterns and went to the largest cathedral on the archipelago, the Cathedral of Waves.

It was classical in style, and it mostly used stone pillars and arched structures, and it had a towering dome and two clock towers—in the early days of colonization, the pioneers often had no time to build a cathedral, which brought about very serious consequences for them.

Surrounded by tribes, jungles, and ancient buildings, they would often die mysteriously in great numbers for no reason at all, even after they had conquered the region.

This situation, which had caused a great panic, gradually deteriorated after the cathedrals of the various Churches were built, becoming something that happened only once in a while.

Standing in front of the cathedral, Alger was in no hurry to enter. Instead, he looked through the narrow windows at the dark and mysterious atmosphere and the warm candlelight that illuminated the activity area.

A few seconds later, he entered the grand prayer hall, clenched his right fist and struck his left chest. He turned to the bishop facing him and said, “May the Storm be with you!”

“May the Storm be with you!” the bishop responded in the same way.

Without waiting for Alger to speak, the bishop of the Cathedral of Waves took out a telegram.

“You’re just in time. The Council of Cardinals has issued orders. Read it before praying.”

“What orders?” Alger asked casually as he reached out to take it.

The bishop’s expression was grave as he said, “Duke Negan has been assassinated. The Council of Cardinals has ordered all Mandated

Punisher and priests to pay attention to anything regarding the Hero Bandit Black Emperor, as well as all the matters related to the tarot ritual."

Hero Bandit Black Emperor? Alger perfectly expressed his surprise.

He already knew that the Black Emperor was Mr. Fool's Blessed.

The bishop said with a serious nod, "The assassin of Duke Negan is a Sequence 5 Devil, but while escaping, he was killed by Hero Bandit Black Emperor. This is the same outcome as Vice Admiral Qilangos, who failed to assassinate the duke."

Not only are the superficial circumstances the same, but even the core issues are the same… It was also Mr. Fool's Blessed who killed Qilangos, another Blessed… Was Mr. Fool the one who really wanted Duke Negan dead? No, if it were really him, then he would've warned Qilangos the last time to be careful of Miss Justice, so as to not expose his identity on the spot… Mr. Fool is paying attention to the truth behind the assassination and the real murderer? Who could it be, or which organization would receive so much attention from Mr. Fool? Alger instantly thought of many things and made a preliminary judgment.

He looked down at the telegram and saw that the Church had set up a special investigation team for the assassination of Duke Negan. Every member was an elite of the Mandated Punishers.

Should I apply to join, so as to have a grasp of their actions at any time? Alger hesitated for a moment.

In the end, he decided to follow his original plan and keep a low profile.

†

With a brand new day, Klein slept until he woke up naturally. He slowly got up, washed his face, and went downstairs.

He wasn't in a hurry to prepare breakfast. Instead, he habitually opened the door, bathed in the fog, and took out today's newspaper from the letterbox.

"What is it?" Suddenly, he noticed that there was a thick envelope stuffed inside the newspaper. It wasn't light at all.

Squeezing the surface, Klein's mind flashed with the faint fragrance of banknote ink.

His spiritual intuition told him that there was a lot of cash inside.

Carefully, he opened it and pulled out the stack of money.

After counting the money, he confirmed that there was a total of 1000 pounds.

It's the reward money from the Machinery Hivemind… Is this their way of secretly handing me the money? How can they be so certain this is fine? Leaving it in my mailbox just like that? What happens if it's stolen? The delighted Klein couldn't help but grumble.

With this money, and without the Machinery Hivemind protecting him in secret, he could go to Vampire Emlyn White to complete the previous transaction!

After breakfast, Klein immediately put on his coat and hat, held his cane, and stuffed the newspaper in his arm and went out.

On his way to the carriage stop, he saw his landlord, Mrs. Stelyn Sammer directing the maid to load the suitcase into the carriage in front of the door.

"Good morning, Mrs. Sammer." Klein smiled and greeted her.

Stelyn smiled modestly and returned the greeting.

She seems to have recovered mentally… Who knows what happened to her… Klein curiously asked, "Where are you going?"

"It's almost New Year's. Mary gave Luke some time off in advance. We're going to Desi Bay to usher in the new year," Stelyn said proactively. "Sigh, we've been to a few of the cities there, including the famous coastal towns. This time, we're preparing to go to Feynapotter. I've heard that the scenery in Seville City is quite good."

Klein replied in jest, "How enviable."

"What about you? Detective Moriarty, where do you plan on spending the New Year?" Stelyn asked with a smile.

I'm probably staying here… Oh right, I have to prepare some tools to repair the wall which Stuart had previously shot a hole in… Klein smirked and said, "Back to Midseashire, where the winter smells different."

The smile on Stelyn's face became even more obvious.

"I hope to meet you at Desi Bay in future New Year's Eve celebrations."

†

South of the Bridge, Rose Street, Harvest Church.

Upon seeing Detective Sherlock Moriarty in his black tweed coat, Emlyn White, who was carefully wiping the candle stand, smiled.

He combed his hair, walked over with his head held high and said in a low voice, "There's information on Jason Beria. A Sanguine knows him."

"I have his information as well." Klein smiled as he handed the newspaper over. The headline read: "Yesterday, His Grace the Duke of Negan assassinated, a true devil plundering the land."

Beneath the title was a detailed description of the assassination yesterday, and it revealed that the murderer was a banker named Patrick Jason who was killed on the spot, and the terrorist organization, the Aurora Order, claimed responsibility.

When he saw the news earlier, Klein, who was having his breakfast, almost spewed out the milk in his mouth.

At first, he imagined that the Aurora Order's Mr. A was brain damaged to take responsibility for this matter. However, after thinking about it carefully, he felt that it was most likely a cover used by the officials.

If the Twilight Hermit Order is really the ancient organization which Emperor Roselle joined, then they would be extremely hostile towards the Aurora Order. After all, they hate the True Creator… This thought suddenly flashed through Klein's mind.

Emlyn looked blankly at the newspaper again and again before asking in disbelief, "Does this mean the information I got is useless?"

"In theory." Klein gave the vampire gentleman a sympathetic look. "However, the official organizations are still investigating the masterminds behind Jason Beria, if your information points in the right direction, it should be of worth."

As for Klein himself, he obviously didn't want to get involved in this matter anymore.

"No… He only knew Jason Beria and some of his hobbies." Emlyn sighed.

Seeing his reaction, Klein asked in amusement, "Don't you usually read newspapers?"

How did you only learn of such an important matter until now!?

Emlyn gave him an odd glance.

"Why should I read the newspapers?

"I'm very busy."

Busy cleaning the Harvest Church, busy spending time with those dolls you have at home, and busy thinking of ways to trick people into giving you blood to drink… You really are a new-age vampire… Klein opened his mouth, but he used his Clown powers to suppress the laughter he was about to let out.

He didn't tease Emlyn White and said seriously, "I've already gathered enough money for those two ingredients.

"When can you give them to me?"

Chapter 431 - A Drowning Man Shouldn't Desperately Clutch at Straws

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing Klein's question, Emlyn White jumped in fright as he carefully sized him up and said, "You're richer than I thought."

He had imagined that Sherlock Moriarty would take at least a week to raise 2,450 pounds.

"I've been saving for a long time." Klein sighed in response.

Emlyn nodded thoughtfully.

"It's so lucrative being a private detective?"

"This is just an identity that makes things convenient. If you don't encounter a huge bounty, it'll be two to three hundred pounds a year," Klein said frankly.

Emlyn glanced at him and asked casually, "So what do you actually do? Smuggling arms? Stealing from the vaults of the rich and powerful? For Beyonders below Sequence 7, there's not much that can be done to save up more than 2,000 pounds so quickly, and most of them are gray areas that border on breaking the law."

You, a vampire, are talking to me about breaking the law? It seems like you're rather eager to make some quick money… Klein smiled.

"Accept some relatively dangerous missions; if you aren't afraid of death, you can try."

Emlyn shut his mouth, and only after a long time did he say, "Come and find me in the evening. I'll take you to the seller's place."

What an obedient vampire… Klein was about to agree, but he suddenly found it unsafe.

What if the seller gets thoughts from seeing all the money? What if he doesn't have the corresponding Beyonder ingredients and is trying to fool me to commit a robbery? Emlyn White can be trusted, but not necessarily the seller he's introducing… I have to find an excuse to perform a divination above the gray fog to confirm the degree of danger… Yes, there's no need for it to be so complicated. There's a better way… After some thought, Klein turned his head to look at Emlyn.

"No, go by yourself.

"I'll give you 1,000 pounds as a deposit, and you'll bring the two ingredients to the Harvest Church. After confirmation, I'll pay the remaining balance. I believe the seller will accept this method. This will show the credit of a noble Sanguine."

Upon being flattered, Emlyn unconsciously lifted his chin.

"There's no problem with this way of trading."

Saying that, he let out a laugh.

"Are you afraid that the other party will not keep their word? Are you more at ease in the Harvest Church?"

"Of course, anyone would feel safe when they see a Earth Mother Blessed by the side, who is over 2.2 meters tall and has exceptionally firm muscles." Klein smiled and pointed at Father Utravsky. "People who can deal with him wouldn't mind two to three thousand pounds."

Emlyn's face darkened, and he snorted.

"Aren't you worried that I'll steal the thousand-pound deposit?"

Klein casually looked straight ahead.

“Why should I be worried?

“You will come back here every day, making it easy to find you, and a living creature like a vampire would sell for more than a thousand pounds.”

Emlyn, who had been hit in a sore spot, muttered in exasperation, “Sanguine! Do you understand? Sanguine!

“Also, don’t call me a creature!”

Klein chuckled and didn’t say anything as he waited for Emlyn to calm down.

“We’ll do it the way you requested.” Finally, Emlyn reached out and rubbed his temples.

Klein immediately took out the envelope he had received that morning, and he handed it to him along with the thick stack of cash worth a thousand pounds.

“See you here at eight tonight.”

After counting the bills and after confirming that there was no mistake, Emlyn warily stole a glance at Father Utravsky and said in a low voice, “Mr. Private Detective, with you being in contact with a lot of intelligence and news, have you heard of an evil god known as The Fool?”

Evil?… Evil? You f… Inwardly, Klein nearly threw out a profanity.

He answered with the most normal expression, “Many people are searching for believers of The Fool recently. Are you planning on joining their ranks to obtain the relevant bounty?”

Emlyn sighed and said, “No, I’m only considering whether I should ask this evil god or the evil soul to help me dispel the psychological cue. As you know, the rumors going around include"His" specific honorific name, and as long as it's converted into Hermes or ancient Hermes, it's possible to get a response… What do you know about "Him"? How much harm will "He" bring to "His" believers? Will "He" forcefully change the believers' views?"

Although it points to me, I still have to say. My dear vampire friend, you are like a drowning man desperately clutching at straws… Feeling mixed emotions, Klein said, "The Fool is very mysterious. Up to this day, apart from the news you already know, no one knows of 'His' detailed situation. For example, how vast his clergy is, or what sort of corresponding prayer rituals there are.

"What puzzles me is that you aren't considering the two of your vamp—Uh, Sanguine's ancestor, the ancient goddess Lilith? As long as the ritual is correct and the offerings are appropriate, 'She' will help you dispel the psychological cue."

Emlyn leaned back slightly and stared straight ahead, saying nothing for several seconds.

He seemed to instantly become sullen.

After a brief moment of silence, he said in a low voice, "Before the Cataclysm, the ancestor had already rarely responded to prayers. Only certain special circumstances allowed us to get 'Her' help. This does not include the removal of a psychological cue."

In the legends of the City of Silver, the ancient goddess, Lilith, who represented the moon had already had her authority taken back by the awakened Creator, or perhaps she had fallen in some battle among the gods earlier on… Then, who is the one occasionally responding to the Sanguines' pleas? The Primordial Moon? Klein deliberately pressed, "Then, there's still the Primordial Moon to pray to. Many underground Beyonders have rituals that borrow 'His' power."

This is mainly referring to the Shaman King and the corresponding biological creatures… Klein added inwardly.

Emlyn's lips quivered, but he didn't speak as there was an indescribable fear on his face.

After a long time, he solemnly said, "I suspect that the Primordial Moon was impersonated by some evil god or a high-level devil. People who pray to 'Him' mostly experience change, turning cruel, crazy, and even filled with desire. And the remaining ones, with the Sanguine mainly, there is a higher chance of them losing control and becoming true monsters.

"There was once a powerful Sanguine that tried to pray due to some danger, but she ended up turning into nothing but a hunk of meat that only knows to mate and reproduce. She, together with bulls, rams, stallions, mice, and even plants and rocks, gave birth to one strange descendant after another. Each one of them developed their own Monster species. Thankfully, she was quickly eliminated along with her descendants.

…The Primordial Moon is that dangerous? There was no mention of it in the Book of Secrets. Had Shaman King Klarman's thoughts been corrupted? Fortunately, I only referenced, modified, and prayed to myself… Klein's heart raced in fright as a result of Emlyn White's description.

This made him acutely realize that the hidden existences other than the seven deities were indeed not that trustworthy.

Except me… He sighed.

At that moment, Emlyn smiled bitterly and said, "If the negative effects brought by The Fool isn't that great, praying to 'Him' might be something to consider."

The only effect is that you will pay a certain amount of money for it… In order to maintain his image, Klein could only pat Emlyn on the shoulder and draw a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

“It’s very dangerous to pray to a hidden existence that you don’t know about. If you’re considering that, you might as well choose a faith out of the seven deities you prefer. They won’t affect your daily life and won’t make you abandon your dolls.”

“If there’s really no other way…” Emlyn suddenly found himself calmer than he had expected.

Klein didn’t linger on. He pushed his way out into the aisle and walked out of the Harvest Church.

Looking out at the misty sky, he began to think about what to do next.

There was no doubt that his current focus was on saving money and finding the ingredients.

Little Sun’s side needs to stabilize a little more. To prevent him from being suspected again, I’ll use the method of ridding a Rampager’s mental corruption as the promised payment… The Deep-sea Naga’s hair can be entrusted to Mr. Hanged Man. I’ll have to rely on myself for the Human-skinned Shadow’s characteristic… There hasn’t been any relevant information from Emlyn White and Eye of Wisdom, Mr. Stanton, for over a month. I’ll have to try different channels… Yes, it’s been quite long. It’s likely that the High-Sequence Beyonder of the Rose School of Thought isn’t monitoring the Bravehearts Bar that closely. I’ll go visit it in the evening and see if I can contact Miss Sharron and Maric… Klein quickly had an idea.

In order to go to Bravehearts Bar, he had to first go to East Borough and change his worker’s clothes in the one-bedroom apartment he also rented on Black Palm Street.

As he thought of this, he walked towards the carriage stop on the opposite side of the road.

†

West Borough, inside Grimm Cemetery.

Fors Wall, who was dressed in a black veiled hat, quietly walked beside Dorian Gray, a member of the Abraham family. She had accompanied him to place flowers on Lawrence, Aulisa, and company's graves.

While walking silently, her thoughts were completely focused on the Beyonder ingredient, the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch.

She knew that she had already digested the Apprentice potion and as long as she could get the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch, she would become a Trickmaster. However, she ultimately lacked the clues related to it, and The Sun, that she had the most expectations at being able to help her, didn't dare to hold a ritual or invite friends to hunt Spirit Eaters because of what had happened before.

In order to advance as quickly as possible and escape the curse of the full moon, she had even asked Mr. Fool for help, hoping that "His" Blessed could help her find the ingredients. In the process, she revealed that she had published her new book and was about to receive a fixed fee for the book, in order to prove that she had sufficient power to purchase it—she didn't fear that her real identity would be known by Mr. Fool, because she believed that Mr. Fool clearly knew it.

In the secluded, quiet, and cold environment, Fors and Dorian stopped at Lawrence's grave.

Looking at the photo taken after his death and reading the epitaph: "he's a good teacher," Dorian Gray remained silent for a long time before sighing.

"How ironic…"

"Why?" Fors asked in surprise.

She had heard Lawrence mention that he was a public school teacher in

Constant City, Midseashire, and that was why she had used such an epitaph.

“This has nothing to do with you. It has to do with our family.” Dorian gave a self-deprecating laugh and bent down to put down the flowers.

After straightening his body, he looked straight ahead, and suddenly spoke out, “Fors, do you want to become a Beyonder? The kind I described in my letter.”

Chapter 432 - Contracted Creatures

◆ ◆ ◆

Dorian Gray’s question didn’t surprise Fors at all. She had been prepared after keeping in contact with him for the past month, and she had even asked the experienced Mr. Hanged Man at the Tarot Club to decide what kind of expression and reaction she should use when faced with the question.

“Are there really such Beyonders?” Fors asked in surprise.

Dorian gently nodded.

“Yes.”

He looked around to make sure that there was no one around, then he walked up to a tree with fallen leaves and pressed his hand on it.

Dorian’s figure suddenly blurred, as if turning into a reflection in the water.

When it was clear, he had already appeared behind the tree, his posture unchanging.

“Oh god! That’s really, really amazing!” Remembering the teachings of Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice, her mouth opened in a semicircle as she exclaimed.

Dorian walked back, smiled, and asked, “Do you want to become such a Beyonder?”

Fors fell silent for a moment before she answered him “excitedly”,

“…”Yes!”

Now that she was finally going to be a periphery member of the Abraham family, many things would be much easier for her in the future! Her heart was filled with genuine joy.

Dorian laughed before turning his expression grave, asking in all seriousness, “Are you willing to be my student?”

Fors nodded.

“Yes!”

Dorian let out a sigh of relief and then made a self-deprecating comment.

“I’m not a good teacher, I even taught a… Heh, there’s no need to mention the past anymore. In short, don’t hold too high of an expectation.”

After considering it over this period of time, he had decided to learn from his previous experiences and lessons. He didn’t tell Fors the situation regarding the Abraham family and only treated their relationship as one of teacher and student. That way, he didn’t have to worry about the other party coveting his family’s few remaining mystical items.

“No, your explanations of mysticism are excellent, really, Mr. Gray. No, Teacher.” Fors quickly confirmed the relationship between them.

Dorian looked at the tombstone, shook his head, and exhaled.

“I wasn’t planning on taking in any more students, but your noble character infected me.

“If nothing unexpected happens, I can give you the corresponding potion today.”

“Today?” Fors asked, surprised.

Back when she went to Backlund Station to pick up Dorian Gray, she noticed that he was carrying only a very small suitcase, barely enough for a change of clothes. There was no evidence that he had any Beyonder ingredients on him.

Does he have his own resources and channels in Backlund, ones that belong to the Abraham family? Fors made a vague guess.

Her original plan was to rely on the inconvenience of the distance between them to sell off the Beyonder ingredients for the Apprentice potion, and then tell him that she had successfully advanced to become a Beyonder. This way, she was able to obtain a considerable amount of cash, as well as to avoid the tragic consequence of taking the Apprentice potion again and having to spend time to digest it.

“Yes.” Without explaining, Dorian pointed in the other direction. “Let’s go see Laubero and Aulisa first.”

Taking a turn, they left Grimm Cemetery and returned to the house in Cherwood Borough which Fors and Xio had rented.

For the past month or so, Xio, who had advanced to Sheriff, had been leaving early and returning late every day in order to pay off her heavy debts. She had been trying hard to get every bounty she could get, so there was no doubt that she was of the house around noon.

“Is there a quiet room?” Dorian looked around casually.

“Plenty.” Fors led her new teacher into the activity room on the first floor.

Dorian circled the room, checked the surroundings, and then asked Fors to light a candle mixed with a piece of dark red sandalwood.

He closed the door and drew the curtains.

He walked to the candle and took out two bottles of essential oil and some common herbal powders.

Holding a ritual? Shouldn't there be three candles? Fors curiously watched from the side and didn't rashly open her mouth, as if she was stunned by the atmosphere.

After finishing the first part of the ritual, Dorian took a step back and, with a serious expression, switched to the language of ancient Hermes.

"I!

"I summon in my name:

"Special Spirit Bodies roaming the upper realms, the void creature that loves music, Dorian Gray Abraham's Contract Companion."

Whoosh!

There was a sudden gust of wind in the activity room, and with a sobbing voice, the flickering candle flames were tinged with a deep blue hue.

The rings of light quickly spread out, forming a door that was beyond the concept of normality.

A ball of semi-illusory and half-corporeal objects flew out from the bottom of the circle of light.

Its entire body was colored a milky white. There were no eyes, nose, arms, or legs around it. Only an opening which resembled a mouth cracked open over its surface.

Dorian grinned, opened his mouth, and began to hum a gentle folk lullaby.

The "ball" swayed left and right, appearing extremely satisfied.

After he finished humming, Dorian extended his hand.

"Malmouth, give me the items that I deposited with you the day before yesterday."

The "ball" jumped up and down as its body suddenly swelled while it opened its "mouth" extremely wide.

Then, it spat out two Beyonder ingredients which had strange lusters to them.

To think that can be done… Fors stared in surprise.

Dorian caught the Apprentice potion's main ingredients, canceled the summoning, and ended the ritual.

He turned his head and smiled at Fors.

"Even in the spirit world, void creatures like Malmouth are extremely rare. Under normal circumstances, summoning rituals will not point to them. An elder of a sufficiently high Sequence must enter the Spirit World and, after a long period of searching, make a contract with one of them. That way, it will allow subsequent descendants to complete a summoning ritual with their corresponding name.

"After the void creature arrives, a new contract can be made, making them closely connected to oneself and no longer summonable by others."

"So that's how it is… That sounds interesting!" Fors said from the bottom of her heart.

She couldn't help but look forward to the future.

If I don't consider the curse of the full moon, or how ordinary Beyonders are being suppressed and constantly facing danger, exploring this wonderful world would be the most delightful thing… I hope that one day I can truly roam the Spirit World…

Dorian responded with a chuckle, "Malmouth's greatest ability is to swallow many items into its belly without causing them any harm. It's the equivalent of a mobile, hidden warehouse that almost no one can find.

"Of course, it can't store too much as its stomach has limited space. Also, it doesn't like people without talent in music. It would reject signing a contract with such people."

At least I can play the lyre… Just as Fors breathed a sigh of relief, Dorian instructed her to get him a black stew pot.

Realizing that he was about to concoct the potion right there and then, she maintained her expression, but her heart was frantically praying for an accident.

I don't want to drink the Apprentice potion again! That would waste a lot of time! If I had known that this would happen, then I would've been more honest… It's too late to tell the truth. Teacher Gray must've tried a divination attempt, but the outcome suffered interference. Confessing now would mean that there's a powerful person backing me or instigating me… In the midst of her thoughts, she saw Dorian turn around and hand her a bottle of the bubbling potion.

"Drink it and you'll become a Beyonder," Dorian said in a flat but very seductive tone.

Then he reassured her, "Don't worry. There won't be any problems with me here."

"Okay!" Fors gritted her teeth, received the Apprentice potion, and drank it all in one gulp.

At the same time, a thought flashed in her mind:

Honesty is the best policy…

†

The carriage stopped outside East Borough, and Klein, walking with a cane and a hat, entered the spacious slum in a relatively decent neighborhood.

As he walked forward, he saw two familiar figures emerge from the relatively clean apartment in front of him.

They were girls, one seventeen or eighteen years old, the other fifteen or sixteen years old—daughters of the laundry maid, Liv—Freja, and Daisy. The latter had once been kidnapped by Capim and was rescued by the Black Emperor.

Daisy also spotted Klein and smiled brightly.

“Good afternoon, Detective Moriarty!”

Klein smiled and nodded before asking in puzzlement, “Daisy, don’t you have public elementary school to attend?”

At the behest of reporters like Mike Joseph and the push by the Church of Evernight, the Backlund government established a charity fund with Capim’s estate, specifically to help women and families who had been hurt by Capim.

Daisy’s family took advantage of the opportunity to move from a shabby apartment in an environment with poor security to the outskirts of East Borough. They moved from one room to two, separating the “laundry area” from the place where they ate and slept.

In addition, Daisy received a bursary for attending a public elementary school, and she was delighted that the charity fund was responsible for her tuition and meals costing three pence a week.

What puzzled Klein was that the public elementary school only had breaks on Sundays, so Daisy wasn’t supposed to be here at this time.

“The school is very close, I took advantage of the afternoon break to return and help Freja bring the washed and dried laundry to a client. She and mother can’t handle the workload,” Daisy answered frankly.

The immediate effect of her going to school was that the amount of laundry which Liv and Freja could do every day decreased, obviously lowering their family income. If it wasn't for Mike's help applying for a grant from the charity, then they wouldn't be able to maintain their present lives.

Therefore, there was no doubt that Freja wouldn't be able to enter a public elementary school, and when Daisy and Klein talked about it, her eyes were filled with unconcealed envy and pain.

Despite not even being eighteen years old yet, all she could do was silently watch her sister attend school.

Klein noticed that detail and deliberately reminded Daisy, "You really should know that your mother and Freja are having a hard time. Treat them well."

Daisy nodded seriously and said, "I've thought about it. When things settle down, I'll teach Freja what I learned during the day at night and on Sundays. I'll be her only tutor!"

Freja's eyes suddenly blinked, and she couldn't help lowering her head.

"Good, very good," Klein praised her before bidding them farewell in a good mood, and he turned to another street.

He went to Black Palm Street to change out of his worker clothes, and just after he left the apartment where he was renting a room from, he saw an old middle-aged man walk over. He asked with a kind face, "Sir, have you heard of the original Creator?"

Chapter 433 - Intelligence Peddler

◆

The original Creator? Klein was stunned for a moment, and then he immediately thought of the intelligence that Old Kohler had previously given him.

Recently, there had been people preaching the faith of the original Creator in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district. It pushed the belief that “He” hadn’t really passed away and that he existed in the body of every human being and every object. As long as one served “Him” wholeheartedly and praised “Him,” then not only would “His” believers be redeemed after death, but they would also enter “His” kingdom. They would also suffer tremendous improvements in their present life, for instance, having sizzling meat to eat every day.

This was very close to the Aurora Order’s theory of the mutated Creator, so Klein had decided that it was the secret organization which was behind it. He felt that they had begun to value the vast majority of the poor after the Lanevus incident.

They’ve already developed so arrogantly to even solicit people on the streets? Klein hesitated and replied, “I’ve heard of that.”

The well-dressed middle-aged man immediately revealed a smile.

“Then, do you know about the incoming apocalypse? Do you know that the original Creator will create a sanctuary to protect ‘His’ believers?”

For a moment, Klein thought of going with the flow and be inoculated so as to slowly infiltrate the Aurora Order's periphery organization, so as to gather the appropriate evidence and clues to take revenge on them for seeking the believers of The Fool. But after careful consideration, he felt that it was too dangerous. It was something that was tiring and troublesome for him to do alone, without any certainty of success.

In the end, he decided to inform the Machinery Hivemind about the current situation and leave it to the official organizations to handle!

After thinking through the problem, Klein's expression immediately darkened.

"I don't know, and I don't want to know!"

He strode forward, shaking off the middle-aged man and ignoring his shouts.

On the way out of East Borough, he watched carefully and found that the workers who had lost their jobs due to the off-season and the efficiency improvements from textile machines were grouped together. They were being comforted and were listening to the preaches from people of unknown identities.

The investigations of East Borough, the dock area, and factory district were completed two months ago. Why haven't the three Churches and parliament produced any concrete measures yet? The importance that they've placed on this issue must've increased. It's impossible for them to not notice the current situation… Is this a trap for bigger fish? That's very risky and can easily get out of hand! As Klein lampooned, he pushed the cap on his head as he walked out of East Borough and went straight to the Backlund Bridge area.

At noon, the Bravehearts Bar had just opened, and there were almost no drunkards present. Only the nearby, busy workers would come in and grab a simple lunch.

Klein mingled with them and spent ten pence on wheat bread with pork sausages and a glass of Southville beer, making himself appear rather rich.

After leisurely filling his stomach and finishing his beer, he looked at the bartender.

“Is Kaspars Kalinin here?”

He planned on replenishing some of his ordinary ammunition while he was here.

The bartender glanced at him.

“It seems like you haven’t been here in a while?

“Kaspars is dead. It’s said that he was a little restless while sleeping at night, wrapping himself in a tight bundle and suffocating himself in the end. Heh heh, I don’t really believe that kind of thing would happen. I’ve only heard about such things in ghost stories, but that’s what those black-and-white dogs say.”

Black-and-white dogs were referring to the police who wore black-and-white checked uniforms.

Suffocating himself to death? That sounds like mysticism… Was it because the Rose School of Thought’s High-Sequence Beyonder was unable to find Miss Sharron and Maric, and thus, they chose to kill someone to vent their anger? Where’s the bearing of being a High-Sequence Beyonder? In that case, Kaspars wasn’t able to contact Miss Sharron… Perhaps they’ve already left Backlund

Kaspars wasn’t prepared for the dangers of the Beyonder world. If it were me, I wouldn’t have returned to the Bravehearts Bar. I would’ve taken all the money I saved up and go to another city for a change in environment… However, under normal circumstances, a High-Sequence Beyonder wouldn’t specially deal with such ordinary people. At most, they would force a mediumship ritual without considering the aftereffects… As expected of the self-indulgent Rose School of Thought.

To think a High-Sequence Beyonder would actually do such a thing…

While feeling surprised, Klein also felt pity for the black-market arms dealer.

The bartender wiped a cup and continued, “If you wish to buy some stuff, there’s a new dealer.”

“Who?” Klein asked in passing.

“Old Man. He’s in Billiard room 3,” the bartender said without looking up.

Klein immediately stood up, slowly walked towards that familiar place, and knocked on the unlocked door.

“Come in.” A voice rang out.

This voice sounds a little familiar… Klein pushed open the door and looked inside.

Standing by the table was a boy that didn’t look too old. He was dressed in an old overcoat, a brown bowler hat, and had bright red eyes. It was Ian, whom Klein had met when he first arrived in Backlund. Back then, he was entrusted with the case of Detective Zreal’s disappearance and was ultimately involved in the conflict over the manuscripts of a third-generation difference machine. He had been forced to pay a high price to have Mr. A from the Aurora Order kill the Intis ambassador that was sent to the Loen Kingdom, Bakerland Jean Madan.

“It’s you, Detective Moriarty?” Ian was startled.

He had deliberately stuck two whiskers above his mouth to make himself look older.

Klein smiled as he entered the billiard room and closed the door in passing.

“Long time no see.”

He was initially surprised that Ian had appeared here and had become a black-market arms dealer, but then he thought of the details behind the matter and found that it made sense.

Klein being able to come to the Bravehearts Bar and find Kaspars Kalinin was all thanks to Ian's introduction.

This teenage boy definitely had some connections around here!

"Yeah." Ian wiped away his shocked expression and mumbled, "I went to Pritz Harbor for two months and found those guys to be so savage and cruel. They didn't even have the slightest bit of modesty or love for children, so I had no choice but to return to Backlund and do what I was good at. When Kaspars died, I decided to switch careers."

Before Klein could say anything, he added, "Mr. Detective, I've always kept in mind that I still owe you two requests."

There's no need to explain so much, nor do I care what you've done in the past. Although I've always thought that your escape from MI9 was suspicious, I didn't care too much about it… Klein picked up a cue stick, gestured, and said, "Other than dealing in black-market weapons, you seem to be selling information?"

"Yes," Ian answered very calmly. "What do you want to know? It's free."

Very straightforward… Feeling guilty about what happened to me previously? Klein pushed the cue stick forward and hit the ball, sending a red ball right into the middle pocket.

Without a trace of politeness, he straightened his body and said, "Recently, everyone has been looking for the believers of The Fool. There are many bounties available. What news do you have?"

Ian thought for a moment and said, "Nothing.

"I even suspect whether The Fool has any believers since no one can find any clues."

…This is what you call blasting air with a cannon… Klein gave a silent, self-deprecating laugh before turning to ask, “In addition, there’s another bounty. People are looking for a lecturer named Azik Eggers. I wish to know who was the one behind the bounty, so as to determine if I should involve myself in it. Heh, searching for people is very time-consuming.”

Ian didn’t directly answer; he surveyed his surroundings and lowered his voice.

“MI9.”

MI9? It’s not the Numinous Episcopate… It seems like it really was arranged by Ince Zangwill. He’s trying to create conflict between Mr. Azik and MI9? Perhaps he knows some secret that he shouldn’t be aware of? A series of thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind. Finally, he smiled and said, “Looks like I don’t have to worry about the bounty being false, but I’m afraid that the circumstances as to why Azik Eggers is being pursued by MI9 is because he knows some secret. That being the case, the day I obtain the bounty might be the last day of my life.”

Ian spread his hands.

“I’m not sure about that.

“But you can provide only clues.”

“Good suggestion.” Without asking any more questions, Klein spent five soli, replenished some of his ordinary ammunition, and left the Bravehearts Bar.

He got on the rental carriage and looked out the window at the gloomy weather. Suddenly, he felt a little wistful.

Kaspars Kalinin is dead which also means that Miss Sharron and Maric will give up this “base.” With me only being able to contact them unilaterally, it’ll be hard to find them…

Unless they encounter some difficulties that require my help, or they have reached the stage of dealing with the evil spirit buried in the ruins. Otherwise, I'll likely not be meeting them again.

Although they can't be considered friends, we've cooperated with each other twice. I could interact with them as a Beyonder without hiding my face. Now, there are two fewer people of such people.

If it wasn't for the Desire Apostle, I would only have an oddity like the vampire, Emlyn White, who I can talk about mysticism with without any disguises.

Thankfully. Thankfully…

As he was sighing silently, an ethereal voice suddenly sounded in his ears.

"Is there something?"

Klein instantly shuddered, and only when he saw who was sitting in front of him did he heave a sigh of relief. He laughed in exasperation and said, "Miss Sharron, do you always appear all of a sudden like this?"

Dressed in a Gothic regal dress and a matching soft black hat, Sharron was sitting quietly on the other side of the carriage, her face as pale as ever.

"I'll knock on the window next time." Sharron nodded without emotion.

She didn't repeat the question, but she looked quietly at Klein in a reserved manner.

Knocking on the window all of a sudden? That's equally scary… Klein was in no hurry to mention the matter about the Human-skinned Shadow, and instead he asked, "Has the High-Sequence Beyonder left?"

"Yes," Sharron said tersely.

Klein was slightly relieved as he warned her, “It could also be a trap.”

As he said this, he remembered something and quickly added, “I’ve finished reading the Book of Secrets, and I’ve obtained the corresponding information from other sources that praying to the Primordial Moon is prone to problems. It’s best not to try.”

“Alright.” Sharron didn’t ask why.

She paused for a second and said in an ethereal voice, “The Primordial Moon and the Chained God seem to be archenemies.”

Because they can switch Sequences? Or could there be other reasons? Klein thought as he directed the conversation to what really mattered.

“Miss Sharron, do you know of any places with the characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow?”

Like a puppet, Sharron listened quietly before nodding her head.

“Yes.”

Chapter 434 - Tomb and Bounty

◆ ◆ ◆

She knows? Klein was overjoyed, and quickly asked, “Where?”

In his heart, he was already prepared to pay the “consultation fee.”

Sharron sat there without moving and said, like a talking doll, “In one of the gatherings that Maric participated in, someone once discovered the tomb of an ancient noble. They explored the periphery but didn’t dare to venture deep, but there were traces of Human-skinned Shadow activity.

“They hoped to recruit a team strong enough to completely explore the tomb and split the valuables equally.”

To seek help in a gathering of Beyonders who are not familiar with each other, how can all parties guarantee each other’s credibility? What if there’s no tomb at all, and it’s just a trap? Klein quickly thought and asked in response, “Did they succeed?”

“Yes,” Sharron answered simply.

This… Klein temporarily didn’t pursue the details. He suppressed his voice to avoid being overheard by the carriage driver.

“And then?”

“After that, they never appeared again,” Sharron calmly recounted. “One of the members was a friend of Maric’s, and he disappeared completely after that matter.”

Without waiting for Klein to ask, she continued to speak with her ethereal voice.

“Maric found some of his friend’s belongings. I used the method of divination to track them down to White Cliff Town, and I found a hidden entrance to the tomb at the riverbend of the Stratford River. Maric’s friend was inside, but he was already dead.”

“You went in?” Klein blurted out.

“No, I determined it using another method,” Sharron explained. “That tomb gave me a sense of great danger. I didn’t try to explore it.”

At this point, she looked at Klein with her blue eyes.

“Without the help of a Sequence 4 Beyonder or a Sealed Artifact of a corresponding level, it would be best not to venture deep into that tomb.”

Even you find it very dangerous. I don’t need to go above the gray fog to divine it to know how terrifying it is… Klein looked down at the floor of the carriage and thought for a few seconds.

“Do you know which ancient noble’s tomb it belongs to?”

Sharron did not pause in her reply.

“His last name is Amon.”

Amon? A member of the family of that Amon who had possessed Little Sun’s body and almost sneaked into the mysterious space above the gray fog? Klein used his ability as a Clown to control the slight twitch of his eyelids. He asked in puzzlement, “Are you sure?”

At this moment, a figure appeared in his mind—a black classic robe, a matching pointed hat, a broad forehead, a thin face, black eyes, black hair, and a crystal monocle.

Sharron’s pale blonde hair shone through the mist like an oil painting drawn by a master, and she said in her usual flat tone, “According to the items obtained from the initial exploration, a member of the gathering who specializes in ancient history determined that the owner of the tomb came from the Tudor Dynasty of the Fourth Epoch. The family name is Amon.”

It really is the Blasphemer family of the Fourth Epoch… This family isn’t cursed like the Abraham family, nor was it destroyed directly by the Church of a certain goddess like the Antigonus family…

According to the special and powerful performance Amon showed in the City of Silver, the situation of this family might be comparable to that of Zaratul’s. They were all secretly passed down, with the presence of High-Sequence Beyonders among their ranks, perhaps even with powerful angels. They protect certain crucial secrets, such as the “coordinates” of the Forsaken Land of God…

The danger of a tomb left behind by such a family can be imagined. Perhaps Amon can borrow the power of certain changes to cast his gaze over from the distant Forsaken Land of God… I can’t use the perspective of a Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder to deduce the terror of a demigod…

Klein didn’t ponder for long before denying the possibility of exploring the tomb of the Amon family.

Slightly disappointed, he looked up at Sharron.

“Is that place the only place with a Human-skinned Shadow?”

Sharron shook her head.

“No.”

“Oh?” Klein’s eyes lit up, and he assumed a listening posture.

Sharron said, her voice unchanged, “I’ve participated in a gathering. A Beyonder promised that as long as someone completes a mission given by her, she would satisfy any reasonable request. When it comes to ingredients, it is limited to those below that of High-Sequence Beyonder ingredients."

"In other words, she can give any Beyonder ingredient below that of High-Sequence Beyonders?" The first thought that came to Klein's mind was: is she bragging?

Even for the Church of Evernight, only the Holy Cathedral, or in other words, the Cathedral of Serenity, would possess such a possibility!

Many of these ingredients weren't commonly needed because they weren't needed at all.

Upon hearing Klein's question, Sharron calmly replied, "She's a High-Sequence Beyonder."

High-Sequence Beyonder? No wonder… That would be on the level of the high-ranking members of the Churches or secret organizations. Even if they don't belong to any party, they would still build up their own faction! However, the promise of any type of Beyonder ingredient below a High-Sequence potion definitely can't be completely be met… Klein momentarily had such a thought.

Sharron simply added, "She said that certain ingredients would require a certain period of time."

That's more like it! Klein asked with interest, "What mission did she give?"

Sharron sat up straight and dignified.

"Investigate Hero Bandit Black Emperor's true identity."

"…"

Klein believed that if he had been drinking water at that moment, then he wouldn't have been able to control himself and that he would've sprayed it across from him.

Who did I offend? Why am I the target of a High-Sequence Beyonder? He first lamented in Chinese, then he quickly analyzed the possible parties.

Members of the Twilight Hermit Order? Because the Hero Bandit Black Emperor had killed the Desire Apostle, Beria?

Members of the Aurora Order? They drew links to The Fool from the tarot cards I left during the Capim incident, and they decided to investigate the Hero Bandit Black Emperor?

Members of the three Churches and MI9? Just to find out the truth about the Capim affair?

Every one of them is possible, and none of them can be ruled out! Klein didn't show any abnormalities as he deliberated and asked, "Why is she investigating the true identity of the Hero Bandit Black Emperor?"

"No one knows," Sharron replied in the simplest of terms.

Klein thought for two seconds and said after organizing his words, "What kind of person is she? I want to know if I should take this mission."

Sharron remained silent for two seconds, seemingly in recollection.

Then she described, "Female, above 1.70 meters tall, very well-proportioned, chestnut hair, was disguised, loves black leather boots, only occasionally attended the gatherings, and first appeared two months ago."

Loves wearing black leather boots, female, High-Sequence Beyonder… When these three keywords were put together, it immediately triggered a certain part of Klein's memories!

Back when he went to the Royal Museum to steal the Black Emperor card, he had met a mysterious High-Sequence Beyonder in the reconstructed study of Emperor Roselle. She only revealed her feet in black leather boots, and when he borrowed the power of the gray fog to escape, he ended up running into the Devil dog due to the side effects of the Master Key and had to shout for help. Therefore, Sherlock Moriarty ended up meeting the female demigod again.

Her? Why would she look for Hero Bandit Black Emperor? She's confirmed that the thief who stole the Card of Blasphemy is a Spirit Body and knows what would happen if a Spirit Body carries and contains the Black Emperor card. Hence, she has locked onto the Hero Bandit Black Emperor who has similar traits? Klein quickly thought of a very convincing possibility.

The only thing that confused him was how the other person knew that he had taken the Black Emperor card and not any other cards, such as the Abyss card or The Sun card.

Unless she was targeting the Card of Blasphemy, and she had investigated beforehand that it was the Black Emperor card… Well, Miss Sharron said that she joined the gathering for the first time more than two months ago. This matches the timing of Roselle's exhibition… Later, she occasionally participated without leaving Backlund, or perhaps, she returned regularly to search for the enemy who had taken the Black Emperor's card… Klein's thoughts blazed through his mind as he gave a faint smile.

"I'll keep an eye out for her. I hope there's something to be gained."

She can forget about getting anything her entire life! He added inwardly without hesitation.

Sharron nodded almost imperceptibly and said nothing more about the Human-skinned Shadow.

Obviously, she only had two leads, but it was still better than the Vampire Emlyn White and Eye of Wisdom Isengard Stanton's circle.

Klein slowly exhaled, concealing his inward disappointment, and said with a respectful tone, “You and Maric aren’t troubled by the curse anymore, are you?”

“There’s only one Scarlet Lunar Corona,” Sharron answered calmly.

The person who wore the Scarlet Lunar Corona was immune to the full moon’s effects, a dream item for Mutants.

That is to say, one will be fine, and one will be in the same situation as before… When affected by the full moon, Maric will be driven to insanity, while Miss Sharron will lose her strength. It appears Maric is the one using it… Klein thought as he changed topics.

“Have you found a way to remove a Rampager’s mental corruption on the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Wraith Steve?”

He casually asked this question without much hope. In his heart, he believed that there was a greater chance with The Sun.

“No.” Sharron appeared like she was talking about someone else.

Perhaps I will sell you this method in the future and hope that you have saved up your gold pounds… Klein tersely acknowledged and was suddenly unsure of how to continue the conversation.

He paused for a few seconds before asking, “Where is White Cliff Town?”

“Backlund suburbs, south of the bridge,” Sharron answered succinctly.

She looked into Klein’s eyes again.

“Nothing else?”

“Nothing.” Klein first shook his head, and then asked, “Can I tell others about the tomb?”

“Sure.”

Sharron’s figure rapidly faded before she disappeared from the carriage.

Perhaps it was to conceal herself, as she never had the habit of using perfume; thus, leaving behind an empty environment once more.

Chapter 435 - Aggregation Effect

◆

8 p.m., Harvest Church.

After changing back into his usual attire, Klein looked around once as he pressed down on the edge of his hat. Then, he walked into the hall and headed for Emlyn White who was standing before three rows of candles on the right side of the hall.

At the vampire's feet was a black suitcase, its surface was seemingly covered with a layer of a wall of spirituality.

Upon sensing Detective Sherlock Moriarty coming in, Emlyn was first pleased before revealing an alarmed look.

He bent down to grab his suitcase and took a few steps back, closing the gap he had with Father Utravsky who was focused on praying.

Are you afraid that I'll rob you of the Beyonder ingredients… Klein stopped three meters away, then he smiled and said, "Let me first verify if it's the two ingredients I need."

Emlyn White ran his hand through his hair, lifted the leather case to his chest and undid the buckle.

The wall of spirituality shattered as a result, turning into a light breeze that blew through the prayer hall.

Klein, who had long activated his Spirit Vision, immediately saw bursts of strange and dazzling light. It was the spiritual radiance released by many Beyonder characteristics.

There were two small boxes inside the suitcase. One was made of tin and had many patterns on it. It looked spartan and heavy. The other was only a cardboard box.

Holding the black leather suitcase in one hand, Emlyn opened the slightly tarnished silver-colored tin case. The item inside looked like a yellowish brown peeled walnut with the grooves and ridges of a brain.

Along with the flickering of the candle flame, its appearance constantly changed. Sometimes it would turn gray and appear wrinkled. At other times, it would turn dark brown and extremely smooth. The colors would interweave, outlining a featureless “face.”

At the sight of it, Klein felt the power of the potion, which he had completely digested and assimilated, stir a little, like a magnet encountering an opposite pole.

He was able to control his body with his Clown powers as he suppressed the feeling of attraction. He knew deep down that the item was a genuine mutated pituitary gland of a Thousand-faced Hunter.

It seems like what Emperor Roselle speculated in his diary is possible, that High-Sequence items of the same pathway would unconsciously draw Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders to them, with a tendency to draw them together… Although the Thousand-faced Hunter’s mutated pituitary gland is still very far from a High Sequence and doesn’t have that kind of special force of attraction, it contains enough Beyonder characteristics. Moreover, I’ve digested the Sequence 7 potion. When the person and ingredients are sufficiently close, such a phenomenon will appear…

I didn’t notice it before because, firstly, the corresponding Beyonder ingredients are of low quality, and secondly, my own strength is lacking, and I wasn’t of a high enough Sequence… Right, every time I digested the potion, an illusory starry sky would appear around me. There were many resplendent lights within, and they would pull one another in an attempt to converge… This might be a scene of the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics of the same pathway, and the greater the "quality," the stronger the pull…

Then, will Beyonder characteristics of similar pathways conform to this law?

Klein's expression didn't change as he recalled the records in Roselle's diary, and combined with his three experiences of digesting potions, he was able to determine the existence of a certain law.

Emlyn White glanced at him warily, quickly closed the tin box and opened the paper box next to it.

The paper box was padded with thick cotton, and in the center of the box was a glass bottle that could hold 200 milliliters of liquid. The bottle was half-empty, while the rest of it was filled with a viscous liquid that could change its color based on the change of light.

"Any other problems?" Emlyn closed the paper box.

"Let me confirm once more." Klein took out a gold coin and let it spin between his fingers, as though it had a life of its own.

Ding!

The gold coin bounced up and fell down again, landing in Klein's palm.

It was heads, indicating a positive response.

Klein nodded slightly and took out stacks after stacks of notes from various pockets. They were in ten-pound, five-pound, and one-pounds denominations.

"1,450 pounds." Klein placed the pile of cash on a nearby piece of furniture.

"Retreat a few steps, no, five steps!" Emlyn called out cautiously.

Klein smiled, raised his hands, and took five steps back.

Emlyn cautiously moved closer, checking to see if there was any blank paper in the stack of cash.

After doing a slight count, he threw the leather suitcase in his hand towards Klein.

Klein was startled and with his agile moves, he accurately caught the suitcase.

He was afraid that the blood of the Thousand-faced Hunter would seep out after the bottle shattered.

And Emlyn White took the opportunity to collect the bills and quickly retreated to the side of Father Utravsky.

Only then did he heave a sigh of relief and seriously checked the amount and their authenticity.

At the sight, Klein recalled the scene and suddenly felt ashamed.

He and Emlyn had made a perfectly fine Church of Earth Mother cathedral look like the scene of an arms or drugs trade…

After confirming the condition of the two ingredients, Klein snapped his fingers, igniting a match he had specially separated in his clothes and allowed the soaring red flames to envelop his body.

When the flames descended back down, he had already disappeared.

As he often met Emlyn White at the Harvest Church, he didn't mind if Father Utravsky found out that he was a Beyonder who had helped him eliminate his dark personality. He even felt that this would give him some form of friendship.

Emlyn, who was counting the money, looked up and was stunned for a good two seconds.

He muttered to himself in a low voice, "My suitcase…

“My tin box…”

†

On the lamp-lit street, a carriage rolled over the puddles and headed for the edge of Empress Borough.

Fors has told her good friend, Xio Derecha, that she had a teacher and had ended up consuming another Apprentice potion.

After confirming that she didn’t have any signs of losing control, Xio looked outside the window at the gas lamps, which weren’t much taller than she was, and asked in puzzlement, “I’ve always wondered why they’re preserved as ingredients and not as a potion. Your teacher could’ve concocted the potion beforehand and brought them here, so there was no need for him to do it on the spot.”

Fors gave a faint smile and said, “I’ve asked him about this before. He said that there are two main reasons. One is that different Beyonder ingredients have different uses, and when they’re made into a potion, they cannot be used flexibly. The second is that when the Beyonder characteristics are solidified, they can be kept forever, but after it becomes a potion, that won’t be the case unless one uses a special isolation technique.”

“Why?” Xio asked in surprise. “This isn’t an ordinary type of medicine or Beyonder weapon in which its spirituality will continue to dissipate and weaken.”

Fors wasn’t in the mood to laugh, but she had no choice but to maintain her smile.

“It’s not a problem about the characteristic loss, but that once Beyonder ingredients become potions, not only can humans absorb them, even other creatures or materials without life can. It’s just relatively slower. For example, if I use a glass bottle to store the potion, it might appear fine, but after a few days, the glass bottle would ‘finish’ drinking the potion, becoming a special mystical item. It might even gain intelligence. Of course, my teacher said that such a situation has very huge side effects, akin to what a Rampager leaves behind.

"The seven Churches and some hidden factions have special isolation techniques, but it's rather troublesome, and they won't use it on Low- or Mid-Sequence potions."

"How amazing!" Xio sighed.

She took another look outside and said in a low voice, "We're almost there."

She and Fors were here to attend the Beyonder gathering which Mr. A was holding.

Fors smiled while feeling her heart bleed.

"I hope there's the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch."

Her teacher, Dorian Gray, had taught her the acting method before he left. He even gave her the potion formula for Trickmaster and got her to attempt to find the Beyonder ingredients on her own. If she hadn't gathered all of the ingredients by the time she digested the Apprentice potion, she could write to him for help.

This left Fors in a rather lost state.

Why did I spend large sums of money to purchase the Trickmaster formula and the acting method?

Up to now, the greatest and invaluable help the Tarot Club has given me were the things Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice taught me to take note of, as well as Mr. Fool's interference in divination. Otherwise, Teacher would've long discovered a problem with me, and I wouldn't have become his student…

Sigh, I'll just consider it as the price for neutralizing the full moon's curse…

As the thought crossed her mind, Fors suddenly noticed that the house where Mr. A had his gathering held had visibly collapsed, and there were even scorch marks in many places.

There was a fierce battle here… Who dealt with Mr. A? An official organization? Fors immediately signaled to Xio and instructed the carriage driver outside, “Not here, two more streets up ahead.”

†

“Aurora Order’s base found. Terrorist organization suffers severe setback.”

The next day, Klein saw this article the moment he flipped the newspapers open.

“Let’s hope Mr. A died in this ambush.” He drew the crimson moon on his chest in solemnity.

He had already thrown the Thousand-faced Hunter’s blood and mutated pituitary gland from last night above the gray fog to ensure that they wouldn’t be lost.

Even if I die, they won’t be lost… Klein chewed on a piece of bacon with great ease.

After last night’s transaction, his cash reserves had fallen back below 1,000 pounds, leaving him with only 735 pounds, which was only enough to buy a Deep-sea Naga’s hair. After that, he didn’t have the ability to purchase the Human-skinned Shadow’s characteristic.

Without any better clues or money, Klein rested at home the entire morning. After lunch, he dressed up and headed straight for the Backlund Bridge area.

He had previously made an agreement with Carlson of the Machinery

Hivemind to find him at the Lucky Bar near the West Balam dock if he had any intelligence. If the intelligence was especially important and Carlson wasn't there, he was to go straight to Lever Cathedral. After all, Sherlock Moriarty wasn't a member of a secret organization, so there was no need for caution.

There weren't many customers at Lucky Bar in the afternoon, so Klein instantly saw Carlson sitting and drinking alone in a corner of the bar.

He walked over, knocked on the table, and reported with a suppressed voice, "Many people in East Borough are spreading the faith of the original Creator."

Carlson sipped some alcohol brewed from pure malt and replied noncommittally, "I'm aware."

As expected… Klein commented silently before smiling.

"I have a clue regarding a Fourth Epoch tomb of a noble."

"Ah!"

The glass in Carlson's hand paused as he looked at Klein in surprise, and he unconsciously nudged his thick glasses.

But he noticed that Detective Sherlock Moriarty wasn't continuing to describe the matter, but looking at the bartender a few steps away while saying with a smile, "One glass of Southville beer."

Chapter 436 - Klein's Request

◆

Seeing the white foam of the Southville beer being placed in front of Sherlock Moriarty, Carlson finally came to his senses.

It was only when the bartender was a certain distance away from them did he ask in a suppressed voice, “What do you want?”

Klein picked up his glass and took a sip. He took a few seconds to savor the bitter taste of the malt and the faint sweetness from it.

“Cheers!” He looked sideways at Carlson and smiled before raising his glass.

Without hesitation, Carlson shook his head and refused the offer, mumbling, “You have beer, while I have strong distilled liquor. It’s not suitable for a toast.”

Klein was only going through the motions, so he once again took a sip of his Southville beer, looked straight ahead, and chuckled.

“What I want is very simple.

“I’m not sure what’s inside the tomb, so I can only describe it rather vaguely… Well, I hope that I can choose an item from the spoils of your tomb exploration. I’m not greedy, and my request will not involve high Sequence items. I wouldn’t dare to take it even if they were one of the options.

“If you find nothing or there are only high Sequence items, then I don’t want anything. Of course, I believe that when the latter happens, you wouldn't be stingy with giving me a sum of cash that's consistent with my contribution."

After hearing about the Amon family's tomb from Miss Sharron yesterday, he had came up with rough plans.

The first plan was to blow the copper whistle, contact Mr. Azik, and join forces to explore the tomb.

However, there were many potential problems with this plan. Firstly, he was unsure of the amount of strength Azik, who was still in the midst of finding his lost memories, had regained. Secondly, Azik was being pursued by MI9, so it was very easy for him and Azik to land in trouble. Thirdly, there was a high chance that Klein would end up reappearing in the sights of Sealed Artifact 0-08 once again. Of course, he could also consider using the help of the gray fog to make contact or embark on the expedition. However, blowing the copper whistle above the gray fog made it impossible to summon the messenger; therefore, ending all of his subsequent plans.

More importantly, Klein didn't dare to reveal the secret of the space above the fog to Azik Eggers whose identity remained a mystery.

Therefore, he finally chose the second method, which was to use his identity as an informant to submit the information to the Machinery Hivemind and ask for a reasonable reward.

When it came to the number of High-Sequence Beyonders, which faction could have more than the seven Churches?

According to what Klein knew, there were close to ten High-Sequence Beyonders in the Church of Evernight. In other words, nearly half of the thirteen archbishops and nine high-ranking deacons had reached or surpassed Sequence 4. This wasn't considering the Blessed of the Goddess, the Pope who helmed the Church.

Even if the situation regarding the Church of the God of Steam and

Machinery was inferior in this aspect, it couldn't be that inferior. Their archbishop of the Backlund diocese, Horamick Haydn, was a High-Sequence Beyonder.

And as such, for an orthodox church, with all its resources accumulated to date, it wouldn't value the Mid-Sequence items very, very, very much. Klein believed that he could negotiate a reasonable "price."

Simply put, the core element of the second plan was: find an organization for any difficulties!

Upon hearing Klein's offer, Carlson paused for a second, then blurted out, "Aren't you a believer in God?"

I've always had the Goddess in my heart… Klein drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

"It is because of my belief in God that I've told you this information, not to the Nighthawks through Mr. Stanton.

"God said to let those who wish to be strong, be strong. Only by becoming stronger and having more money can I have more access to different channels and resources, and thus provide you with better and more effective information."

In order to convince the Machinery Hivemind, he had specifically spent the morning reading through the "Steam and Machinery Bible" that he had bought earlier. He then found a few sentences from the deity that met his requirements and memorized them.

Carlson was momentarily unable to provide a rejoinder. He just sat there, stunned, to the point of forgetting to drink.

Seeing this, Klein quickly added, "Moreover, this will help you establish a harmonious and efficient relationship with new-generation informants. As long as you spread the news of the rewards I receive as a result of this, as well as keeping your promise without going back on your word, then I believe that the other informants will be deeply moved and be greatly motivated to do their best to gather useful information for you.

“Of course, I wish that you use my pseudonym when advertising this.”

Carlson listened with a blank face, picked up his glass, and gulped down a mouthful. He almost choked.

“Cough. Sherlock, the real you is completely different from what I remember about you from before.” He sighed.

The Detective Sherlock Moriarty in his memories was good at analysis and reasoning, he was extremely calm and polite, and, with a great sense of justice, had offered very effective advice. He was an outstanding believer in God.

Yet now, he was…

Klein took a sip of his beer and chuckled.

“Everyone has their different sides. Using a single facade to face everything is prone to error. This is a problem you have to pay attention to when making deductions.”

After calming down for a moment, Carlson stood up and said, “I have no right to agree to such a request. I will report it immediately, so wait here for a while.”

“Alright.” Klein waved to the bartender and added a serving of potato wedges.

By the time he leisurely finished his food and beer, Carlson returned to the bar with the deacon of the Machinery Hivemind, Ikanser Bernard.

Ikanser looked around, and seeing that there was no one around, he said in a deep voice, “There’s no problem with your request, but there’s one condition to add on—items with strong side effects and curses are not among the items available for selection.”

What I want is an ingredient… Klein immediately laughed.

“Alright!

“Dare I ask again if is this your personal decision or the response from the higher-ups?”

“I have the right to make such a decision.” Ikanser used his hat to press down on his fluffy hair. “But since it concerns an aristocratic tomb from the Fourth Epoch, I had sent a telegram to the archbishop, and he didn’t object to it in his reply.”

“Alright.” Klein drew another triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest. “I’ll give you the information now.”

Ikanser shook his head subconsciously.

He looked around and pointed to a billiard room.

“Let’s talk inside.”

This deacon, who is always publicly placed on trial by the mirror called Arrodes, is quite experienced… Klein murmured and followed Ikanser and Carlson into the billiard room while making sure that the adjacent rooms were empty.

Klein paused for a few seconds and said with some deliberation, “The thing is, there was a Beyonder who found a hidden tomb at the mouth of the Stratford River in White Cliff Town. He searched the periphery and found some items.

“After that, they recruited people and did further explorations, but no one returned. If you search carefully over there, you will definitely find the corresponding traces.”

After listening carefully, Ikanser asked, “Are you sure it’s an aristocratic tomb from the Fourth Epoch?”

“The items on the outside can prove that they’re members of the Tudor

Dynasty's Amon family," Klein answered truthfully. He then warned him, "The Beyonders who died in there weren't weak at all, and there were quite a few of them. I believe that this tomb isn't something that can be explored by those below High-Sequence Beyonders."

"Amon…" Ikanser frowned instinctively.

It could be seen that, as a deacon, he had the authority to know some ancient secret history.

Without waiting for Klein to emphasize it again, he looked up and said, "We will collect the relevant information first before we act."

"A Fourth Epoch aristocratic tomb is very dangerous. Don't tell this information to anyone else, or explore it yourself. Otherwise, you and your friends will only lose their lives."

If I dared, I wouldn't be sitting here… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh and said, "My reputation has always been good."

After making the deal, he watched Ikanser and Carlson leave before putting on his hat and sauntering out of Lucky Bar.

Towards the nobles of the Fourth Epoch, as well as the Amon family, the Machinery Hivemind will still be very cautious. They'll have to have at least several days of preparing before they take action… Prudence… Klein's random thoughts froze on a single word.

He thought of another thing that could be described as being prudent.

After Roselle had joined the ancient organization suspected of being the Twilight Hermit Order, he had actually never mentioned its name in his own secret diary which was written in Chinese. Each time, he would refer to it by referring to it with the appropriate characteristics.

This level of prudence was a very suspicious phenomenon!

Why didn't Emperor Roselle dare to mention the name of that organization, even when it's written in Chinese? This is completely different from the style of writing where he dared to write anything in his diary… What was he afraid of, or what was he worried about? Could it be that as long as he said or wrote down the name of the Twilight Hermit Order, then they would be made aware of it it no matter which language he used? Does one of their members or a Sealed Artifact they possess have such abilities? A guess popped up in Klein's mind, but there was no way to confirm it unless he was willing to take the risk.

I'll first assume it's true and that I haven't been perceived by them, because the channeling of the Desire Apostle's spirit had been done above the gray fog. Informing Miss Justice of it was also done in response to a prayer using the gray fog… Well, it's almost Monday, and I have to remind Miss Justice at the Tarot Club not to say or write down the name "Twilight Hermit Order." As for the reason, she can understand it by herself with me simply giving her a look… Klein quickly made his next arrangements and strode out of Lucky Bar.

Seeing that it was still early, he took a horse carriage to the Quelaag Club, intending to spend the afternoon there.

As soon as he entered the hall, he saw the equestrian teacher, Talim Dumont.

This descendant of blue-blood was seated in a corner, holding a glass of scarlet grape wine. His face was rosy, and he was sipping it in high spirits.

"You seem to be in a good mood, Talim," Klein smiled and greeted him.

Talim chuckled and said, "Because the new year is coming."

Then, rather excitedly, he asked, "Sherlock, do you know what it's like to really like someone?"

"…" Klein showed a fake smile.

"I'm sorry, I'm still single."

Talim finished the rest of his wine, stood up, waved his hand, and said, “That’s a pity. Well, I have to get busy.”

“By the way, thank you for introducing Mr. Framis Cage,” Klein recalled the investment of the bike project and sincerely expressed his gratitude. “When are you free these days? I’d like to get you to bring me around to sample some of Backlund’s delicacies.”

“After the new year.” Talim put on his hat and walked with a smile to the reception hall.

Has this fellow entered the season of love? Klein couldn’t help but mutter.

Just as he turned around and took a few steps, he suddenly heard a heavy thud.

Klein jerked his head back and saw Talim Dumont on the ground, his left hand clamped tightly at his chest where his heart was. His body was convulsing nonstop.

This… Klein hurried over.

But at this moment, Talim had already spat out all of the white foam on his mouth, losing his last breath of life.

In just a few seconds, he had turned into a dead corpse.

Chapter 437 - Obituary

◆

This wasn’t the first time Klein had seen someone familiar die in front of him, but it was the most abrupt and unforeseen death. The expression on Talim Dumont’s face when he had asked about what it felt to really like someone was a vivid expression of hidden excitement and flaunting, but one which couldn’t be directly shared due to the need of being careful as a result of certain factors.

That was too fast… Normal diseases do not cause death so quickly! Klein’s expression was solemn as he lightly tapped his molars to activate his Spirit Vision.

He dropped to one knee and crouched down. He saw Talim Dumont’s aura and the colors of his emotions fading rapidly.

Furthermore, there were strands of black gas wrapped around his heart like a snake which were gradually dimming.

A Beyonder ability similar to a curse? Klein instantly made a preliminary conclusion.

At this moment, a nearby red-vested attendant and a servant girl in a black-and-white dress ran over. They looked at the dead body on the ground in horror—his eyes were wide and round, and the corners of his mouth still had remnant white foam.

Klein closed his eyes and instructed in a deep voice, “Go to the nearby police station and tell them someone died here.”

"Yes, Mr. Moriarty." The red-vested attendant immediately turned around and ran out the door, so flustered that he even forgot to put on his coat.

Under the watchful gaze of the crowd, Klein didn't check Talim's belongings, nor did he try to pull out a few strands of hair for a divination attempt when he wasn't around anyone.

His identity was already considered semi-official, so he could use the power of the Machinery Hivemind to conduct a follow-up investigation. There was no need for him to act as a lone hero.

Thinking of the many times he had played cards with Talim Dumont, and how he had introduced clients and investors, and the love story that had been hanging in his mind for so long, Klein couldn't help but take a long, slow, deep breath.

Who's Talim's murderer?

Which Beyonder, who's adept at curses, did Talim offend?

Judging from his attitude today, he should be in a very happy and calm state, completely unaware of the fact that he has provoked a terrifying character…

Questions flashed through Klein's mind, but his lack of understanding about Talim Dumont resulted in a lack of soil to nurture any inspiration.

When the police arrived, he was questioned as a witness and that wasted quite a bit of his time.

It wasn't until all of this was over that Klein had a chance to leave Hillston Borough and head back to Lucky Bar in the Backlund Bridge area.

Carlson was still there drinking; the only difference being that his drink had been exchanged from a strong distilled liquor made from pure malt to golden, frothy beer.

Klein raised his right hand, covered his mouth, and squeezed over. He lightly knocked on the table and said, “Is your job to drink here every day?”

Carlson jumped in fright as he turned his head, relaxing only when he saw that it was Sherlock Moriarty.

“You… What is it now?”

This reaction is very familiar… Klein sighed silently and said gravely, “There is a case involving Beyonders.”

Carlson looked around and saw that Lucky Bar already had quite a number of patrons. They were either hollering over their glasses or eager to fight in the ring.

“Follow me, let’s play a round of billiards.” Carlson nudged his thick glasses and carried his beer to an empty billiard room.

Klein followed, closing the door behind him.

“Your alcohol tolerance seems pretty good,” he said in passing.

“No, I just drink very slowly.” Carlson put down his glass and picked up the cue stick.

Then, he added inexplicably, “And I’d like some alone time lately.”

I don’t care about that… Klein pursed his lips and said, “I encountered a death at the Quelaag Club in Hillston Borough. That was a friend of mine, a noble descendant, and an equestrian teacher. He’s usually healthy and had recently been in a very good mental state, but just now, he suddenly died in front of me. It looked like a heart attack, but my Spirit Vision told me that he might’ve been cursed.”

“You’re adept at Spirit Vision?” Carlson asked subconsciously.

What sort of details did Mr. Stanton fabricate for me? After becoming a Machinery Hivemind informant, they never even asked me which pathway I was, or which Sequence I'm at, nor did they try to find out about my origins and background… Of course, letting an informant keep certain secrets of their own is also a common tactic used by official organizations… Klein frankly responded, "Yes, the chest of the deceased had some decaying, illusory black gas."

"It does involve the possibility of a curse and a Beyonder." Carlson didn't ask further as he slowly nodded. "Hillston Borough… That's the territory of our Machinery Hivemind."

In the northwest of Backlund, which was the heart of the metropolis, Empress Borough and Cherwood Borough came under the Mandated Punisher's jurisdiction. The western and northern areas came under the Nighthawks, and Hillston Borough and Backlund Bridge area came under the Machinery Hivemind.

Having said this, Carlson looked at Klein and attempted to confirm the details.

"What deity does your friend believe in?"

After thinking carefully for a few seconds, Klein replied hesitantly, "The Lord of Storms."

"A believer of the Lord of Storms… Is he the only deceased?" Carlson asked with a frown.

"Yes," Klein gave an affirmative answer.

Carlson chalked the cue stick and sighed.

"We have no right to take the case. This is under the Mandated Punishers.

"But I will pass on your information to them."

In the Loen Kingdom, the principle of jurisdiction over Beyonder events was first to divide them according to their beliefs. If they involved the followers of multiple deities, then it would be decided according to who held jurisdiction over the area.

Klein was no stranger to this. He had no intention of making things difficult for Carlson, so he earnestly said, “Thank you. I hope they can find the real killer as soon as possible.”

Carlson picked up the glass of beer beside him and took a sip.

“He’s a descendant of blue-blood. The Mandated Punishers will definitely take it seriously.”

Pausing for a second, he looked at Klein and said in a low voice, “I find it hard to believe that you’ve only been in Backlund for about three months.

“You seem to have established a wide range of social connections and possess lots of resources here.”

“Some people are naturally adept at this.” Klein shook his head with a self-deprecating laugh before bidding farewell.

By the time he got back to Minsk Street, it was completely dark and the gas lamps lining the streets were being lit by workers.

Although his relationship with Talim Dumont didn’t go deep, he was an acquaintance he met nearly every week. He was a friend he would play cards with every now and then, and Talim was rather warm and had always exalted him as a great detective. Furthermore, he had practiced what he preached by introducing clients and investors.

His passing also made Klein feel sad, making him fully aware of his helplessness towards fate.

Other than that, he was also very angry. He was angry at the murderer who had cursed Talim to death.

I hope that they can figure out what happened. I hope that the Mandated Punishers doesn't run out of manpower because of Duke Negan's assassination case… Klein sighed as he got off the carriage and walked towards the gate.

In the process, he discovered that there was no light at the Sammers house next door.

It looks like they're on their way to Desi Bay… Is this the new year atmosphere in Backlund? Yet, I don't feel anything at all… Klein momentarily felt melancholic.

With these emotions in mind, he went to bed early and woke up at seven in the morning.

In an attempt to change his mood, Klein decided to bake a homemade cake today.

"I'll buy the ingredients after breakfast," he whispered, drinking his milk and flipping through the newspapers.

Soon, he saw an "obituary" in the Tussock Times: "My beloved son, Talim Dumont, passed away on 18 December due to a sudden heart disease. His funeral will be held at the Crown Cemetery at exactly 9 a.m. on 21 December."

In the Northern Continent, due to reanimations, it was already an ancient tradition to be buried as quickly as possible after one's death. Of course, this was on the premise that there was no shortage of money for a funeral.

Sudden heart disease? Is this the final result of the investigation? Or could it be that the Mandated Punishers are trying to lull the culprit? Klein frowned, unable to make a judgment.

Perhaps I can go above the gray fog to see if it's a trap set up by the Mandated Punishers, but there's a high probability of failure. After all, I don't have one of his items with me, nor was I targeted… He took a breath, calmed down, and methodically filled his stomach.

The subsequent attempt didn't exceed Klein's expectations. He could only leave Minsk Street and take a bus to Hillston Borough to visit Isengard Stanton.

The great detective walked in the warm room, pointed to the front, and said, "Sherlock, would you like some breakfast? My chef's skills aren't worse than mine."

"No, I've already had breakfast," Klein shook his head and declined.

Isengard stopped in his tracks and casually asked, "Where are you going to spend the new year's? I'm planning on, no—returning to Lenburg."

"I haven't confirmed it yet. Perhaps Midseashire," Klein said, perfunctorily.

"The scenery there was originally pretty good, but unfortunately, there's an abundance in coal and iron resources, there was also a rather developed shipping industry." Isengard straightened his collar and touched the pipe in his pocket. "You seem to be a little anxious?"

"Mr. Stanton, I have something to ask you." Klein took the opportunity when asked the question to relate, in detail, Talim Dumont's death, the results of his Spirit Vision, his advice to the Machinery Hivemind, and what he had seen in this morning's obituary.

Of course, he had hidden the fact that he had become an informant for the Machinery Hivemind. He only said that for his friend, he had found an official Beyonder he got to know due to the Desire Apostle case.

"Do you think this is a trap by the Mandated Punishers?" he finally asked.

Holding the pipe, Isengard said thoughtfully, "I've been trying to avoid the Mandated Punishers, and I don't know enough about the situation.

“I’ll get someone to find out. If there’s any news, then I’ll write to you.”

“Okay, thank you.” Klein bowed sincerely.

In the evening, he received a letter specially sent from Isengard. There were only two sentences in the letter: “This case isn’t handled by the Mandated Punishers. The royal family has taken the case by claiming that Talim Dumont is a noble.”

Chapter 438 - Invitation

◆ ◆ ◆

The royal family… Klein held the letter he received from Isengard Stanton and silently murmured to himself.

He looked up and outside the window, and he saw the rain pattering down. The gas lamps on the streets were giving off quiet halos.

Inside the living room, the coffee table was neat and tidy, with a few stacks of newspapers placed in the corner. There was silence all around him.

Klein sat on the sofa as he leaned forward a little. He sat there silently for a long time.

After nearly ten minutes, he exhaled and shook his head. Slowly and heavily, he tossed the letter into the trash can.

He slowly stood up and expressionlessly walked to the second floor.

And in the trash can, Isengard Stanton’s letter caught fire silently and quickly crumpled into black ashes.

†

On Monday morning, Klein stood in front of the mirror, pressed his right thumb and middle finger to his temples, and rubbed them with a little more strength.

When he was done, he turned on the faucet, lowered his body, splashed the cold tap water onto his face, and washed his face while having a fit at the cold.

After freshening himself up, he hung up the towel, walked to the first floor, and simply made a single-sided, well-done fried eggs with buttered toast.

Of course, a cup of black tea with a few slices of lemon quenched his thirst and reduced the cloy sensation he was feeling.

After breakfast, as he was idly flipping through the rest of the newspapers, Klein suddenly heard the tinkling of the doorbell.

Who is it? A new commission? Could it be that the Machinery Hivemind has already finished exploring the Amon family's tomb? No, it can't be that fast… Klein muttered as he put away his napkin and newspapers and walked slowly to the door.

When he held the handle, the image of the visitor outside the door appeared in his mind.

It was an elderly gentleman dressed to a tee. His snow-white shirt was starched, and a thick grayish-blue vest completely hid his belly. The long tailcoat had sharp lines without any blemishes on it.

The gentleman was wearing a pair of shiny leather shoes, so shiny that it was impossible to tell if he had walked through the rain or mud.

He wore a pair of white knitted gloves, with silver hair at his temples. His face was deeply wrinkled, and his light brown eyes were so serious that they didn't contain a hint of a smile.

I don't know him… Klein mumbled and opened the door.

"May I know who you're looking for?" he asked politely.

The elderly gentleman took off his hat, pressed it to his chest, and saluted in the most standard manner.

"Mr. Sherlock Moriarty, I'm a butler who has come to invite you in place of my master."

"Do I know your esteemed master? Why is he looking for me?" Klein's head was completely filled with questions.

But at this moment, he had already noticed a carriage parked across the cement road. It had a deep black outer shell, and there was a curtain on the inside of the window. It was obvious that it was nothing ordinary.

There's luxury amidst being low-key… Klein looked closely and suddenly saw that there was a coat of arms in a conspicuous part of the carriage.

The main body of the coat of arms was a vertical sword facing down, and the hilt of the sword had a red crown.

That's the… Sword of Judgment… It's the Sword of Judgment representing the royal Augustus family! Klein's heart palpitated as he roughly understood the butler's background.

Perhaps he's a rather powerful Beyonder… Klein made a guess.

The professional and stern butler didn't pay attention to his scrutiny. He revealed a polite smile and said, "You have never met my master, but in a sense, you do know him. You have been providing him clues about the organization that is symbolized by the tarot cards, and he has paid for the money you need."

As expected, it's the important figure that Talim mentioned. I've been using false information to fleece for funds and even submitted all the reimbursements that Old Kohler required to him… I can't refuse his invitation now, especially when Talim is dead… Klein pondered for two seconds and said, "Did your master come to me due to Talim's death?"

"Yes, Talim was his friend. He was sad and confused by his death, and he heard that you were there when it happened," the old butler articulated clearly.

No, I wasn't… Klein subconsciously wanted to deny it, but he ultimately could only nod.

"Yes, I saw Talim die in front of me."

"It's really a sad and regretful thing," the butler said in a sincere tone. "Are you willing to accept my master's invitation?"

Do I have any reason to refuse? That would just make me look very suspicious! I might even be killed on the spot by you… Klein looked at him and said, "I happen to have nothing planned this morning."

"Alright then. Mr. Moriarty, please." The old butler bent down slightly, extended his right white-gloved hand, and pointed at the carriage on the opposite side of the cement road.

Sigh, I've been trying to avoid getting involved with important figures. In the end, I have no choice but to face the person behind Talim after his death… I wonder if this would attract attention or lead to more in-depth background checks… I have to plan ahead and be ready to give up my identity and this foothold at any time… Also, I need to get the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic and the Deep-sea Naga's hair and advance to Faceless as soon as possible! In that case, my ability to resist risks would more than double! When Klein put on his coat and hat and walked to the carriage with the royal coat of arms, he had already thought of the subsequent developments.

At this moment, the servant the old butler brought with him opened the door for him.

Stepping on the thick brown carpet, Klein looked at the wooden cabinets containing red wine, white wine, champagne, Lanti, and Black Rand, along with the crystal glasses. Klein felt rather restricted as he sat by the window.

Lanti referred to strong distilled spirits made from pure malt. There were many types, such as the sailors' favorite Lanti Proof. The bottles displayed in the cabinets were obviously of high quality. As for Black Rand, they referred to strong distilled wines mixed with other fermented grains, which, like Lanti, was something unique to Loen.

As the carriage drove through the wet streets, Klein asked in passing, "Are we going to Empress Borough?"

"No, my master is waiting for you at the Red Rose Manor on the outskirts of Empress Borough." The old butler didn't hide anything.

Looks like this is the royal family's manor… Klein thought for a moment, then he asked with a smile, "Can you tell me your master's identity now?"

The old housekeeper's back, which was already straight, became even straighter as he raised his chin.

"He is the descendant of the Founder and Protector. He's the grandson of the Might-wielder, the fifth son of His Majesty, Earl of Lastings, His Highness Prince Edessak Augustus."

So it's the third prince, the second youngest prince, but he should be around 21 to 22 years old… Klein recalled what he had seen in the occasional descriptions in the newspapers and magazines at the Quelaag Club.

The horse carriage passed through one street after another, going from an artificial lake to the northwest. After more than an hour, they finally arrived at an extremely large manor.

At the entrance to the manor, Klein was inspected by two soldiers in red military uniforms and white trousers. He didn't hide the existence of his gun holster and revolver.

He believed that there were definitely people around Prince Edessak who could tell that he was carrying a gun, and that it easily made things worse if he fooled them with illusions.

In any case, the prince knows that I'm a private detective, so his subordinates definitely wouldn't send guests to the police station just because I was illegally in possession of a gun… Klein watched as the soldier took the gun holster and revolver before he was informed to take it when he came out.

After two more inspections, Klein followed the old butler, went around the main house, and came to a wide area with hills and flowing waters.

The only drawback of this place was that the vegetation had long since withered away in the dead of winter, leaving nothing but desolation.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Several horses came running from the distance and stopped in front of them.

A young man in white trousers, high-heeled black boots, a fitted shirt, and a dark rider's tunic nimbly dismounted and walked over. Everyone else followed closely by his side.

He removed his helmet from his head and smiled at Klein.

"I'm finally meeting you, Detective Moriarty."

Upon seeing this, Klein's eyes lit up. It wasn't because of how handsome he was, but because he looked like the Henry Augustus I imprinted on five-pound notes.

Edessak Augustus also had a rotund face and a pair of slender eyes, but he didn't look serious at all. Instead, he always had a smile on his face, looking young and spirited.

"I didn't know that you, Your Highness, were the one who entrusted me with the task." Klein bowed.

Holding a horsewhip in his hand, Edessak weighed it in his palm and chuckled.

"I heard that you played an important role in the serial killer and Desire

Apostle cases. Talim's recommendation was indeed good. Sigh, who knew that he would be gone days after I was horse racing with him. He has gone to the kingdom of storm and lightning."

Since the founding of the kingdom, the Augustus family had always believed in the Lord of the Storms.

Without waiting for Klein to answer, he said with a heavy expression, "The investigation into Talim's death didn't go through me, Mr. Moriarty. I want you to help me discover the truth."

The conclusion given by the rest of the royal family? Your two elder brothers? This sudden level of in-fighting isn't something I can handle… Also, Your Highness, your style is really direct… Klein sighed.

"I'm sorry, but I'd still say that Talim died of a sudden heart disease."

"Is that so? News came from the Mandated Punishers that a detective by the name of Sherlock Moriarty had testified that Talim had signs of suffering from a curse." Prince Edessak chuckled.

Klein could only respond with a wry smile, "Your Highness, you should know the principles I adhere to, I still wish to live another fifty years."

"Wasn't Talim your friend?" Prince Edessak asked.

Klein was at a loss for an answer when a maid suddenly came from the main room, quickly approached the prince, and whispered a few words.

Edessak's face stiffened.

"Tell her that she's not to go out!"

After he finished speaking, he took two steps forward. His serious expression softened, and a hint of softness and helplessness appeared in his blue eyes.

"But I will permit her to leave the room and walk around freely in the manor."

Chapter 439 - The Generous Prince

◆

The scene before his eyes reminded Klein of the romance story which Talim Dumont had told him.

His noble friend had fallen in love with a commoner woman and was insistent on marrying her. However, being in the top circle of the aristocracy, the marriage was absolutely prohibited. Talim had been vexed over this matter, and he had even considered the prospect of hiring a murderer, but in the end, he managed to persuade the woman to leave his friend on her own accord.

Could the main character of this story be Edessak Augustus? The situation is very consistent in all aspects. As a prince, marrying a commoner is practically treason in this era. Since the founding of Loen, the spouse of a direct descendant of the Augustus Family could only be a noblewoman… From what I've just heard, Edessak has brought that commoner woman back? And he has even grounded her as punishment? True love… In a split-second, the story of a tyrannical prince and a pitiful frail white flower took shape in Klein's mind.

He looked into the distance, enjoying the midwinter scenery.

"That's not what it really looks like. When spring comes and the grass sprouts, you'll see a golf course of the highest quality." Prince Edessak dismissed the maid, raised his whip, and pointed around.

"Golf?" Klein asked, simultaneously knowing the answer to his question.

Prince Edessak motioned his guards and attendants away, leaving the old butler and Klein to follow him by his side.

He strolled on the desolate plains, chuckled, and said, “Yes, golf. This is a truly aristocratic sport that even the owners of most magazines and newspapers have a hard time getting involved in.

“Although I don’t like Roselle, I have to admit that the fantasy-like ideas he had have given us a world with plenty of fun. If you can figure out the truth to Talim’s death, this place will always be open to you.”

It was indeed Roselle… Klein let out a light breath.

Seeing that he didn’t respond, Prince Edessak continued to lament.

“There is much to learn from Roselle in every way, but his attitude towards feelings makes me sick. Of course, this is the common nature and style of most of the Intis aristocrats, and it’s also the source of their infatuation with luxury and debauchery in their lives.”

Looking ahead at the slow stream, Edessak said in a mature tone that was beyond his years, “Ninety-nine percent of people are not geniuses like Roselle. In order to succeed and establish a great enterprise, one must first understand what they really want, and for that, they must be willing to pay the price and never turn back while persisting all the way.”

As he said this, his tone became slow as he laughed at himself and said, “Before this year, I had always thought that I liked the daughter of Earl Hall very much. She has perfect looks, an elegant demeanor, a rich fortune, a distinguished family, and a very powerful father. She’s someone that no prince can find fault with, but now I understand that what I’m really attracted to is something that I yearn to have even in my dreams; it’s a unique temperament and profound soul born from experience. Heh, I’m not saying that Miss Hall is lacking in temperament, but that wasn’t what I want, admire, or like.”

Your Highness, your tone, attitude, and expression are now almost identical to Talim just before he died… Don't suddenly die in front of me. Even if I were to jump into the Tussock[1] River, there's no way for me to prove my innocence… Moreover, hearing much of this makes it easier for me to be silenced. Do you want to tie me to your chariot… Klein felt a little afraid for some baffling reason.

He cleared his throat and took the initiative to change the subject.

"Your Highness, with your status and identity, you will certainly not lack subordinates. There are many people who are willing to investigate Talim's death for you, so why do you need me?"

Edessak shook his head and chuckled.

"As a prince, I have as much power as the little freedom I have. There are many things I can't let the people around me do, as there are too many eyes on me.

"You're a great detective with brains, and you have a good relationship with Talim. You were there at the time, so I don't think there's anyone better suited than you.

"Don't worry, if there really is a problem, then I can definitely guarantee your safety."

Such a promise is like toilet paper in the bathroom… Klein couldn't help but silently lampoon.

With Prince Edessak already saying this much, he felt that there was little chance of him leaving Red Rose Manor if he refused again. He could only sigh and say, "Actually, I'm as angry as you are about Talim's death, but reality has kept me calm."

Edessak smiled.

"What can I do for you?"

"Talim's hair, either his flesh and blood, plus something he carried around with him." Klein made the request.

"Okay, then I'll have these delivered to your house." Edessak agreed at once, and then asked curiously, "That's all?"

Klein didn't stand on ceremony.

"I will only know what kind of help I need when I have a preliminary lead. Your Highness, it's best that you give me a way to communicate with you. A private detective who frequently visits this manor would definitely arouse suspicion."

Edessak nodded and said as if he was prepared, "I'll have someone secretly rent the house next door to you, 13 Minsk Street. When you need to make contact, write a letter to your neighbor about visiting and put it in the mailbox. As for the reward, you should know that I'm not a stingy person, even if it ends in failure. As long as you contribute and take the risk, you will still receive the corresponding income. If you do find out the truth, I'll give you a reward sufficient for your retirement."

This prince does things really swiftly and decisively… Retirement, that would be at least 3,000 pounds… Klein secretly sighed.

"Alright, may the spirit of Talim be at peace in the kingdom of storm and lightning." He bowed.

Edessak nodded slightly and instructed his elderly butler, "Take Detective Moriarty out and back to Minsk Street."

Why don't you keep me for lunch? Aren't you treating your guest in a little too arrogant a manner? Of course, it probably has to do with it being a long time before noon… Klein silently teased him.

He followed the old butler all the way out to the entrance of the manor and retrieved the gun holster, revolver, and the bullets.

†

At 15 Minsk Street, Klein stood at the oriel window and watched the carriage with the royal coat of arms drive away.

Sherlock Moriarty might die at any moment if the investigations really goes deeper… Who knows, someone might be watching me right now… Hmm, not for now, since I haven't made any moves yet… Klein frowned and stood still.

At this moment, he was extremely eager to advance to Faceless.

I can't afford to wait for the Machinery Hivemind's exploration of the Amon family's tomb. I have to continue trying to buy the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic via other channels. After all, no one knows how long the Machinery Hivemind's preparations will take. What if it exceeds a month or even half a year? That's not impossible. They can first send people to guard the entrance and slowly gather the corresponding information so as to be certain that nothing goes wrong. It's not a bad strategy, but that's not something that I can afford to wait for… As thoughts raced through Klein's mind, he made his decision.

At 2:45 p.m., he brought his newspaper into the bathroom and actively prepared for this week's Tarot Gathering.

Three o'clock sharp.

A deep red illusory radiance rose as Audrey Hall looked around in a good mood.

Last night, she had finally received the Sequence 7 Psychiatrist potion formula she had been dreaming of. Her emotions were still a mix of excitement, agitation, and serenity. Furthermore, the Psychology Alchemists hadn't immediately asked her to make any contributions, claiming that it was an advance.

They had full confidence in Miss Audrey's outstanding ability to "repay" them.

No new members… Audrey stood up and gazed at the very end of the long bronze table. She raised the corners of her skirt and bowed.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~ Good afternoon…”

Her light and cheerful voice broke the unchanging silence above the fog, and it allowed Klein, who had been feeling a little depressed, to temporarily be rid of the troubles that the outside world had on him.

He nodded slightly and responded to the members’ greetings.

When she sat down again, Audrey brought the other members into view and created a dynamic scene with the previous observations.

When bowing, Mr. Hanged Man silently sized up Mr. Fool with inconspicuous curiosity. Then, he looked towards Mr. World in anticipation… In other words, with him having a deep relationship with the Church of Storms, he knows about the details of Duke Negan’s assassination and is aware of the appearance of Hero Bandit Black Emperor. He has the desire to investigate the hidden truth behind this matter… There appears to be an outcome regarding the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic which Mr. World had entrusted him to sell, and he has also probably found the Human-skinned Shadow characteristics or the Deep-sea Naga’s hair…

The Sun’s emotions are very stable and relaxed. This means that he believes that the City of Silver’s surveillance on him has been lifted… What did he rely on to make this judgment? Has he been reallocated to the so-called exploratory teams?

Fors is a little depressed despite feeling relaxed… She passed the Abraham family member’s test and has become his student, but she was forced to accept something that was disadvantageous to her?

Mr. World is as cold and deep as ever… Perhaps when I reach Sequence 7 or 6, I’ll be able to grasp his emotional changes and thoughts…

Well, The Fool is still as mysterious, powerful, and unfathomable.

A series of thoughts flashed through Audrey’s mind. She looked at the figure shrouded in the gray fog and said, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I have obtained three new pages of Roselle’s diary.”

It was a copy she had requested from the Psychology Alchemists. However, as she had only mentioned it last night, Escalante only had the time to give her three pages in such short notice.

“What kind of reward do you want?” Klein asked with a smile.

Audrey replied sincerely, “Can you just treat it as the reward for answering my previous question?”

As she said this, she had an inexplicable feeling of flaunting herself.

Mr. Hanged Man and the rest of you still don’t know the existence of the Twilight Hermit Order!

Phew, how envious. I wonder what problem did Miss Justice seek guidance for in private… I’ll write to Teacher when I get back, and I’ll ask him if he has Roselle’s diary, no—to the outside world, notebook. Fors immediately had the desire and motivation.

Under The Hanged Man’s suspicious gaze, Klein nodded without any care.

“Sure.”

Audrey quickly produced three pages of tawny diary entries and passed them on to Mr. Fool.

Klein took them and read them. On the first page, it wrote: “13th January, contact with Mr. Door stabilized.”

†

This is a Chinese proverb, which involves jumping into the Yellow River.

Chapter 440 - Angel Family

* * *

Just as Klein picked up the diary, Audrey added, “Mr. Fool, I still have ten diary pages which will be given to you later. It is for the payment for your previous blessing.”

She repeated her private promise so as to not let Mr. Fool think that she had forgotten about it, and the reason why she had provided payment for the information regarding the Twilight Hermit Order was to first settle the “debt” while having the intention to show off a little.

The payment for the blessing… Fors ruminated over these words and suddenly realized an important oversight on her part.

On the matter regarding the Abraham family, Mr. Fool had sent his angel to help me interfere with the divination! I should’ve paid an appropriate amount… Oh no, I didn’t realize this at all… I thought, like all rituals, that it was the end to it once it was completed… For a moment, Fors fell into a panic.

During ordinary ritualistic magic, if one prayed for help from a deity or a corresponding existence, they would perform a sacrifice in advance. Burning essential oils, extracts, and herbal essence that pleased the target was equivalent to making an advanced payment, but in the rituals corresponding to The Fool, there were many steps that could be omitted, and the price could only be paid afterward. Sometimes, there wasn’t even a need to offer anything. Fors, who was accustomed to the former, ended up only saying a word of thanks.

She hurriedly looked towards the end of the long bronze table and earnestly said, “Honorable Mr. Fool, your divination interference had helped me greatly. I will try to find ten Roselle diary pages as soon as possible as well.”

Seeing the performance of Miss Justice and Miss Magician, it dawned on Derrick Berg that he had found a way to fully express his gratitude.

However, the City of Silver doesn’t have the diary pages of the so-called Emperor Roselle… Well, Mr. Fool is very interested in history, so I’ll have to read more books and records on these… With a thought, Derrick made a promise to Mr. Fool who sat high above them.

The Hanged Man watched all this from the side and had no doubt that The Fool had an angel at his service.

Any organization should have a character like Miss Justice… The power of a role model is limitless… With a lot of “debts” to collect appearing out of thin air, Klein happily sighed inwardly.

As the high and mighty Mr. Fool, he always found it awkward to directly ask for compensation, and he had always believed that helping the members of his own organization was a normal and reasonable thing to do, without the need for him to make it so reliant on transactions. Thus, he didn’t control The World to put on the appropriate performance to remind everyone.

Of course, if Justice and the others were willing to provide payment, then Klein had no intention of refusing it.

“Alright.” He smiled and nodded before shifting his gaze back to the diary in his hands.

“13th January, contact with Mr. Door stabilized.

“The powerful Beyonder, who’s lost in the darkness and trapped in the storm, didn’t rush me to complete a complicated and difficult ritual so as to help him return to the real world.

“He seems to have understood that he has to come up with something that would move me, instead of giving me three intangible wishes, in order for me to consider whether I should take the hidden risks of saving him.

“Mr. Door temporarily didn’t mention this matter and instead, with great interest, chatted about my tarot card creation. Heh heh. The word ‘creation’ should be written with quotation marks. From this point, it’s apparent that Mr. Door is able to make contact with the real world at particular times and through particular methods, and he should be able to observe a lot of details.

“While talking about ‘The Moon’ card, I thought of a matter Zaratul mentioned. He said that the Life School of Thought worships the moon, but not the Evernight Goddess. Yes, I added the second half myself!

“Hence, I asked the Fourth Epoch expert, Mr. Door, about this question. He chuckled and similarly didn’t give a direct answer. However, compared to the furtive Seer who speaks half-truths, making me want to beat him up, he’s a lot more frank.

“He told me that if he were to choose a card from the tarot cards to represent the Evernight Goddess, he wouldn’t choose The Moon, but—

“The Star!

“That makes things very interesting. I pressed, ’Who is the real owner of The Moon? His reply was even more worthy of relish.

“He said with a laugh that The Moon currently has no owner.

“If I didn’t misunderstand him, then he means that the peak of The Moon’s pathway is empty. The Sequence 0 is empty!”

That’s not right. Isn’t there a Primordial Moon? Upon seeing this, Klein suddenly had this thought.

He had already anticipated that the “The Moon” card didn’t represent the Goddess. Whether it was the faith of the Life School of Thought, the attitude of the vampires, or the records in the Book of Secrets, they all vaguely pointed out that Evernight wasn't the Moon.

In contrast, Vampire Ancestor Lilith and the Primordial Moon resembled the Sequence 0 of this pathway in more ways.

According to the City of Silver's history lessons, Lilith had most likely fallen in the Dark Epoch, the Second Epoch. However, the Primordial Moon was an existence that people still believed in and sent responses to even to this day. Of course, those who prayed to "Her" wouldn't end up well… Why did Mr. Door say that The Moon had no owner at the moment? As seen from the Book of Secrets, the Primordial Moon still existed during the Fourth Epoch… Klein almost frowned.

Soon, he came up with three guesses. First, Mr. Door didn't know enough about the hidden Primordial Moon, but that was a very low possibility; second, that the Primordial Moon was actually the disguise of another deity, not essentially occupying the position of The Moon's Sequence 0 pathway; third, that "She" was a Sequence 1 of The Moon's pathway or was in disguise and had the corresponding Sealed Artifact.

And one more possibility, it's the response from The Moon pathway's "Uniqueness." Klein muttered silently.

The most important Beyonder ingredient in the Sequence 0 potion formula described by the Black Emperor card wasn't all of the Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics, but something called Uniqueness. Different pathways had different Uniquenesses.

A true god was unique!

Other than the first guess, the other possibilities aren't small… What is the Beyonder pathway of The Moon? Klein turned to the second page of the diary and was lucky enough to discover that it was connected to the previous page.

"I continued pressing, but Mr. Door refused to say more. Heh, he thinks that I'll rescue him by whetting my appetite? Dream on!

"I hid my curiosity and scoffed at Mr. Door for not being respectful enough to true gods. He casually, yes—casually replied to me. This is the attitude a Fourth Epoch noble has to the deities.

"This guy is too good at acting! However, I really am interested in the nobility of the Fourth Epoch, so I took the opportunity to ask.

"Mr. Door told me that in the Tudor Dynasty, there were five noble families—Abraham, Antigonus, Amon, Tamara, and Jacob. Each family was known as an Angel Family, and they possessed tremendously terrifying strength.

"Angel Family, just the name itself raises many problems. It really makes one yearn for it! Mr. Door said that the number of Angel Families in the Fourth Epoch exceeded the five. There were the Zaratul and Zoroast family, which had always been loyal to the Solomon Empire; the Augustus, Sauron, Einhorn, Castiya families of the Trunsoest Dynasty; and the furtive Andariel and Beria families; as well as the Demoness family which stemmed from a true goddess which was one step up from the Angel Families.

"So the last winner of the Fourth Epoch was the Trunsoest Dynasty, but where did their royal family go? The four Angel Families—Augustus, Sauron, and the others—divided up the Northern Continent.

"Just as Mr. Door said the previous time, the strongest powerhouses in the Fourth Epoch far exceeds my imagination. However, most of them have been buried in the ashes of history. Even the Sauron family has waned, destroyed by me. In another one to two millennia, perhaps the Augustus family might no longer exist. Only the true gods appear capable of forever illuminating the real world.

"Although some deities perished in the Fourth Epoch, they should only be few in number. This makes me think of something, something that was previously written in a web novel which I memorized. It can be used here with some changes:

“Ashes await those who fail to become true gods!

“After the communication period ended, Mr. Door disconnected. He’s like a prisoner who’s released on parole for a fixed period of time. And he does know a lot. When he mentioned the Zaratul family, there was faint contempt in his tone.

“Perhaps I need to maintain my relationship with Mr. Door. Apart from the Church of the God of Steam, Zaratul, and that secret and ancient organization, I should leave another outlet.

“Unlike the saying, a wily hare has far more than three holes!”

When Emperor Roselle was struggling in the end, he was only thinking about the organization that’s suspected to be the Twilight Hermit Order. He didn’t mention Mr. Door at all. Something apparently happened in between… So the ancestor of the Loen royal family, the Augustus family was actually so rich and powerful to be an Angel Family. However, why did the royal family of the Trunsoest Dynasty, to which they were loyal to, “disappear” just like that… Klein suddenly thought of a few things, and his desire to clear away the fog that shrouded the history of the Fourth Epoch and see its true appearance grew.

This was also the greatest hobby of his body’s original owner.

Perhaps, that underground relic with two side-by-side seats and a terrifying evil spirit will help me answer a lot of questions… Klein lowered his gaze and flipped to the third page.

“2nd June, Bernadette massaged my back!

“It’s good to have a daughter. She knows to care for her old father, and although I can see what she wants at a glance, at least she’s willing to put on an act. Besides, she did a good job.

“I asked her which Beyonder pathway she wanted. She said she was undecided, but she liked the maxim of ‘do as you wish, but do no harm.’

“3rd June. I saw Floren again. He’s very different from before, as though he’s a different person. No, he still had his original memories and some of his distinctive characteristics, which is enough to prove that he’s him.

“What exactly happened to him to experience such a huge change?

“Perhaps a metaphor could be used to describe it more precisely. Some monsters are physical sutures, while he is a monster of mental sutures.”

“5th June. I obtained an ancient book. It actually mentions the Primordial Demoness’s name, not one of an honorific name!

“‘Her’ name is Cheek, but that’s a man’s name.

“Is this ancient book fake?”

Chapter 441 - “Channels” Increase

◆

Cheek? Was the Primordial Demoness also a man in the past? Klein almost raised his hand to his chin.

He had once guessed that it was because of the existence of the evil goddess, the Primordial Demoness, that led to the Assassin pathway having members of the opposite sex turn into a female after Sequence 7. Who knew that Roselle’s diary would indicate that the Primordial Demoness might’ve been a male in the beginning as well?

This depicted two problems. First, the Primordial Demoness wasn’t a naturally born deity, and they had only relied on potions to reach Sequence 0. Second, the purely feminine changes in this pathway were inherent in its Beyonder characteristics.

Roselle had once speculated about the truth behind the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation. He suspected that all Beyonder characteristics originated from the original Creator, so there’s no increase, and that the total amount is conserved… Assuming that this is true, does this mean that the Creator who created everything is all-inclusive, masculinity, femininity, and gender-neutral all in one… And the Demoness pathway is a representation of pure femininity? Of course, that ancient book might actually be fake… There’s a lot of information in Roselle’s diary entries today… With thoughts flashing through his mind, Klein let the diary disappear in his hands.

“You can begin,” he smiled and said to Justice, The Sun, and the others.

Alger looked towards The World immediately.

"Your Werewolf characteristic has been sold. An Artisan paid 1200 pounds for it. According to our agreement, I will receive 200 pounds.

"Also, I found clues to the hair of a Deep-sea Naga. 100 pounds a strand, and you want five of them in total. If you're fine with this deal, then I will complete it as soon as possible."

Klein had promised a higher share of the Werewolf's Beyonder characteristic because he knew that The Hanged Man had spent more effort and taken on a risk that far exceeded what Vampire Emlyn White had spent.

At this point, he thought for a moment and controlled The World to reply.

"No problem. Give me the five strands of Deep-sea Naga hairs and 500 pounds in cash as soon as possible."

Now, only the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic remains, and the amount of money I have has increased to 1,235 pounds, which isn't enough. If I don't want to wait for the Machinery Hivemind's exploration of the Amon family's mausoleum. I'd have to wait to receive another 500 to 1,000 pounds before I can buy it immediately when I see it… Klein subconsciously wondered what other items or knowledge he could use to exchange for money.

Of course, this was on the premise that the target of these transactions was able to pay the remuneration, in cash.

Hearing this, Audrey raised her hand very slightly, and without hiding anything, she said, "I'd like to purchase three ingredients: a pair of eyes from a Mirror Dragon, 50 milliliters of its blood, as well as a fruit from the Tree of Elders."

Miss Justice has gotten the formula for the Psychiatrist potion… Klein made this judgment in an instant, and The Hanged Man came to a similar conclusion.

"… I will write to my teacher and ask him if he has one of these ingredients." Fors thought for a moment.

Derrick nodded and said, "I'll also take note. Corroded Mirror Dragons aren't rare, same for the Tree of Elders. Uh, in the City of Silver, there's also the Beyonder characteristic left behind by a Psyche Analyst; however, it's hard to make transactions for them, and it's easy to be suspected.

Psyche Analyst was the ancient name of Psychiatrist.

When their conversation reached Klein's ears, he immediately manipulated The World and made the dummy hoarsely and gloomily say, "I'll ask around in my circle. Oh right, continue helping me find the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic."

"Alright." Audrey confidently turned her head to face the person opposite her. "Mr. Hanged Man, I'll also look out for the Wind-blessed potion formula you need."

She had already joined the Psychology Alchemists and had a secret organization backing her. With them, many ingredients were no longer in short supply. She could obtain them as long as she paid the necessary price.

Fors repeated, "I'll write to my teacher and ask."

Upon seeing this development, Klein felt rather gratified. After a long period of hard work, the Tarot Club had finally developed two major channels, the Psychology Alchemists and the Abraham family. Many things would become simple.

The World chuckled and said, "Your answers fill me with hope, but you must also take care to protect yourselves, and proceed in a way that would avoid arousing suspicion as much as possible."

"Mr. World, you rarely talk so much." Audrey smiled in reply.

…I got a little too pleased and momentarily forgot The World's original character profile… Klein immediately remedied the situation and made The World chuckle and say,

"All of you have become sufficiently valuable. I hope that this kind of transaction can last for a very, very long time. That's why I'm reminding you."

"Thank you," Audrey gracefully expressed her gratitude.

At that moment, Derrick hesitated and said, "I'll give it a try as well. I've recently completed several patrol missions, but there's nothing out of the ordinary."

Very good… Klein said to himself, making The World shut his mouth.

After a brief moment of silence, Alger looked thoughtfully at Miss Justice.

"I would like to know the details of the assassination of Duke Negan. What kind of reward do you need?"

Why ask me? As someone close to the Church of Storms, shouldn't you already know the full details of this case? Audrey was surprised for a moment, but then she understood the meaning of Mr. Hanged Man's words.

He wants to ask about the organization or force that instigated the Desire Apostle, but he doesn't think it's right to ask The Fool directly, thinking that it would be too sudden and invasive. So he took a roundabout way by asking me to open up the topic, gently shifting the focus to the things he wants to know… He knows that I'm a noble lady and that I should pay attention to the assassination of Duke Negan. So he's not worried that I won't answer him… Mr. Hanged Man is really experienced… Audrey said, with the corners of her mouth curling up slightly, "No, there's no need for compensation. Isn't it the purpose of our Tarot Club to freely exchange common knowledge amongst each other regarding their respective regions?”

Only by doing so can our Tarot Club expand at a rapid pace! she thought to herself, quite possessively.

“Your words shame me.” Alger was stunned for a moment before he pressed his hand to his chest and leaned forward a little.

“…”

Klein, who was shrouded in the thick gray fog, inwardly laughed dryly.

Audrey lightly pursed her lips, weighed her words, and said, “The Desire Apostle used a unique situation to complete the assassination of Duke Negan; by using his ability to trigger intense emotions and desires, and at the cost of serious injuries, he successfully broke out of the encirclement, entering the sewers.

“When the Nighthawks caught up to him, he was already dead. The Hero Bandit Black Emperor was present. This gentleman didn’t do it to silence him, but to target the organization that entrusted the assassination contract to the Desire Apostle.

Which organization? Just as The Hanged Man was wondering to himself in puzzlement, The Fool, who was sitting at the end of the table, silently praised Miss Justice and looked at her. He then gave her a reminder in passing, “In the outside world, do not mention the name of the organization or write it down.”

“Why?” Audrey blurted out in astonishment.

Klein leaned back in his chair and replied in a gentle voice, “Any mention of it will be known.”

Any mention of it will be known… Audrey subconsciously looked at Mr. Fool, only to feel that he seemed to be emphasizing something with his eyes hidden in the fog.

Mr. Fool is implying that if it's not in "His" kingdom or through talking to "Him," mentioning or writing down the name of the Twilight Hermit Order would allow them to sense it via some means or item… That should be what he means… What an extremely secretive and high-level organization! To a certain extent, it's even more terrifying than the Church of the seven deities… And Mr. Fool, our Tarot Club is looking for them… Audrey instantly felt like she understood a lot of things. She straightened her back and said, "As you command."

Any mention of it will be known… A secret organization whose name can't even be mentioned? A powerful organization that I don't know of at all? Is this the faction behind the Desire Apostle? Mr. Fool had sent his Blessed to search for them? This high-level situation in the world really is more complicated than I thought. There are even more secrets that I have no way of knowing… Alger slightly nodded his head, feeling both shocked and agitated at the same time.

At this moment, he had the urge to pay Mr. Fool for the name of the organization.

However, after thinking about it carefully, he felt that there was no need for that. Although understanding the situation involving the higher-level entities would help him perfect his plans for the future and play an important role in certain situations, he, who was currently at the bottom of the Mid-Sequence levels, had no way of making contact with matters related to the mysterious organization. What he needed the most right now was the formula and ingredients for Wind-blessed, so he had to save up enough wealth for them.

After succeeding my advancement, I could seek an opportunity to consult Mr. Fool… Alger made a note of this.

Fors was confused by what she heard. Things like the Desire Apostle and the organization in which "any mention of it will be known" were completely different from what she had read in the newspapers.

There are indeed many secrets behind the assassination of a duke… It's a pity that the organization's name cannot be written down. Otherwise, I can use it as the villain of a future novel; it will definitely be a classic… I still owe ten diary pages and haven't bought the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch. There's no need to spend the money in order to understand such high-end matters for the time being… Well, the secrecy and knowledge circulating in the Tarot Club are ten times greater than Mr. A's gathering, or more! Fors restrained her curiosity as a writer.

As for Derrick, he didn't know who Duke Negan was, so he didn't care who was behind the assassination.

He sat silently and was reserved, as though he were in class.

When the matter regarding the Twilight Hermit Order was over, Fors looked around and probingly asked, "Lady and gentlemen, do you have a way to solve the problem of accumulating too many Beyonder characteristics of the same level?"

Chapter 442 - Exploration Mission

◆

Alger looked at Fors and returned with a question.

“You were forced to drink a second Apprentice potion?”

Why did you figure it out so easily… It’s as though you were there to see it… Fors uncomfortably cleared her throat and said, “Yes, let’s just pretend that’s what happened…

“What solutions do you have? What do you need me to exchange for it?”

Alger glanced at Mr. Fool, but seeing that he had nothing to say, he replied in a calm and low voice, “You don’t need payment, because it will certainly not be able to satisfy your needs.”

Without waiting for Miss Magician and Miss Justice to ask, he casually explained, “High-Sequence Beyonders can independently decide whether or not to pass on their Beyonder characteristics to their descendants, and how much they will inherit as a result. Sequence 6 and Sequence 5 will naturally pass a part of it in an uncontrollable manner. Although the quantity isn’t a lot each time and wouldn’t affect the Beyonder’s strength, their Sequence will regress if they have enough children.”

“Such a child is born with high spiritual perception and a certain level of incomplete Beyonder powers?” Audrey suddenly came to a realization, understanding the origins of some special people.

The Hanged Man nodded.

“Yes, they’re equivalent to half a Sequence 9, with a certain amount of characteristics. If they want to become a Beyonder, they can only choose the corresponding path. Of course, such people might not be a result of inheritance. It might be the result of them gaining the blessings of a deity or the corruption of an evil spirit. There are many factors that can cause the same degree of influence. Also, when High-Sequence Beyonders have children, they might give birth to someone who’s already at Sequence 5. This is one of the rare instances when one can advance without losing control.

So that’s how it is… Audrey sighed with satisfaction.

To her, knowing more mysteries was more enjoyable than getting a nice dress or jewelry.

Fors also came to a realization as she pressed, “Then what about Beyonders at Sequence 7, 8, and 9?”

“Theoretically speaking, their Beyonder characteristics will not be passed down to their descendants, but that is not absolute. If there’s an excessive amount of Beyonder characteristics, there’s a chance for them to be passed down as well. That is to say, if you’re pregnant with a child, there’s a way to effectively reduce the remnant potion in your body. No, one might not succeed, but three or four will stand a higher chance.”

Three or four? Fors stared agape.

Klein, who had learned all of this general knowledge from Roselle’s diary, couldn’t help but think of a joke.

Miss Magician, in the future, you can say to your child that “you were a free gift[1] from drinking a potion!”

Although it seems that, according to Mr. Hanged Man, the burden can be reduced the moment a child is conceived, having a child would still require almost forty weeks of trouble. No, more than that, it’s impossible to leave the child after it's born, right… After grasping the acting method, even if the process subsequently becomes more difficult, two months will definitely be enough time to digest it. It might not even take that long; after all, it's just a starting Sequence… Fors forced a smile and said, "I understand, the best way is still to rely on acting to digest it."

Alger gave an affirmative answer. "That's the case for Sequence 7 and below."

After that, digestion would easily take a year or so, two to three years, and then five to six years. When that happens, giving birth to a child would be a simpler plan… he added inwardly.

There were a few seconds of silence as the two women digested the knowledge they had just gained.

This was the first time they had known that having a child had such uses.

For Derrick, this was common knowledge. He adjusted his posture and said, "I've been assigned another exploration mission."

"Where to?" Alger tilted his head and asked.

"It's still the half-destroyed temple of the Fallen Creator," Derrick answered without sounding too grave.

It sounds like there's a certain guaranteed level of safety… Audrey didn't interrupt.

The Hanged Man pondered for two seconds before asking, "Is the Shepherd Elder still in prison?"

"Yes. This exploration will be led by the Chief." The Sun didn't hide the facts.

"This way, the danger level will be much lower than last time. You can give it a try." Alger couldn't help but look at Mr. Fool once more.

Unable to read any thoughts from the other party's blurry eyes, he continued to speak to The Sun.

"This should be your last inspection before the surveillance is completely removed.

"Previously, the information you made known was that Amon is archenemies with the Fallen Creator. They wouldn't mind exposing themselves to spoil the other's plans. This time, by heading to the Fallen Creator's temple for exploration, as long as you don't reveal any abnormalities, the six-member council will basically determine that you're no longer under Amon's influence."

Mr. Hanged Man sure is experienced. It's as if he was planning the operation… Derrick kept it in mind before asking, "What else do I need to pay attention to?"

At the very end of the long bronze table, The Fool, who was quietly watching, opened his mouth.

"Flesh and blood, ravings."

Klein had only said two words, leaving the Tarot Club members to comprehend them on their own.

This was the demeanor of a great figure.

The Hanged Man pondered for a few seconds, then he said to The Sun who had thanked The Fool, "In particular, don't look at what you shouldn't, don't listen to what you shouldn't, don't eat what you shouldn't, and don't touch what you shouldn't."

"What are those that shouldn't be seen or heard?" Derrick asked, puzzled.

The Hanged Man said with a deepened voice, "After entering the temple, everything is included."

"Then, how should I explore?" Derrick asked in surprise.

The Hanged Man chuckled.

"Aren't there other members? Isn't there a Chief?"

It really is Mr. Hanged Man's style… Audrey subconsciously wanted to cover her face with her hands, but the education and habits ingrained in her had told her that such actions weren't graceful, so she forcefully changed the way she moved, stroking her drooping hair and pushing it behind her ears.

"…" The Sun felt that such a method was quite unacceptable.

Upon noticing his reaction, Alger secretly cursed before saying, "What I mean is to listen to your Chief's instructions. Only do what he allows you to do. At any other times, do not take matters into your own hands."

"I understand. Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man." The Sun instantly relaxed.

Phew. Alger exhaled and turned to the woman opposite him.

"Miss Justice, I wish to know the political changes in Backlund after Duke Negan's passing."

Audrey recalled the information she had heard, both directly and indirectly in recent times.

"Duke Negan's death has divided the House of Lords. Although his eldest son is about to inherit the nobility title and become a member of the House of Lords, his prestige isn't enough to calm the dispute.

"Nearly ten members of the House of Lords have jointly proposed that the newly conferred nobility should also have a chance to obtain a fixed seat as a Member of Parliament.

“Simply put, let those who are conferred nobility through political donations, charity donations, and the purchase of land become members of the House of Lords.”

Hearing this, The Hanged Man Alger laughed.

“Aren’t nobles with a certain amount of history in their family line the ones who despise such people who rely on unorthodox means to be conferred a nobility title the most? Wasn’t the ultimate honor and their greatest pride the fact that a fixed seat in the House of Lords was hereditary?”

Ignoring the inadvertent mockery, Audrey calmly explained, “When you have tens of thousands of pounds, hundreds of thousands of pounds, or even more debts, you will also make the same choice.”

Owing money wasn’t a fatal threat to many nobles, but the debtor could apply to the court and use their lands as payment for the debts. Without the minimum amount of land needed for a noble title, their status as nobles would be on the verge of collapse.

“And then?” Alger didn’t continue to harp over the previous question.

Audrey gave a rough description. “This kind of dispute has put many bills on hold, including, but not limited to, the raising of worker salary, the improvement of working hours, and revising the Poor Law. It’s gratifying to see that the Civil Servant Unified Examination is still progressing steadily and hasn’t stopped, and the investigation into the air pollution in Backlund is also going in depth.”

“There will be no war for the time being….” The Hanged Man whispered, and he went on to talk to the other members.

Worried that staying too long in the bathroom would arouse suspicion, Klein announced the end of the Tarot Gathering after they were done.

†

After returning to her room, Audrey didn't rush to get up. She first quietly sorted out the things she needed to do after this.

Looking at the mirror in front of her, she played with the accessories on her earlobes. With a slight smile, she silently muttered to herself, There will be a psychology lesson tomorrow afternoon. I can tell Miss Escalante that I've met someone in a Beyonder circle who's looking to buy the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic and has promised an abnormally generous price for it. I wonder if the Psychology Alchemists will be interested in it or not…

Also, I mustn't forget Roselle's diary and the Wind-blessed formula…

Yes, I have to find the Psychiatrist ingredients as quickly as possible. Audrey, you can't be lazy! Susie is already a Sequence 8, so you can't let her overtake you!

†

After pacing back and forth in the room, Fors finally made up her mind and pulled out her chair.

She grabbed a piece of paper and a pen and, after mulling over it for nearly a minute, began to write to Dorian Gray.

She described how she learned of someone who requested the characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow and the Wind-blessed potion formula, as well as her curiosity over the Roselle notebook.

†

The capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, the City of Generosity.

Alger Wilson walked out of the hotel and headed for a secret underground market.

His target was the hair of a Deep-sea Naga.

He had no intention of missing a Human-skinned Shadow if someone had it.

†

I'm short on money… Klein sat in the living room and sighed again.

He still needed quite a bit of cash to ensure that he could purchase the items directly when he received clues regarding the Human-skinned Shadow's characteristics.

Klein thought for a long time, wondering if he should find other channels to sell the Beyonder characteristic left by the Interrogator and stop waiting for Miss Xio to save up her money.

After an unknown period of time, the sound of the doorbell rang, breaking the afternoon silence.

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†

This is a meme in China. The gift can be quite a wide range of things, one of them being a gift from topping up a telephone SIM card.

Chapter 443 - A One-man Performance

◈ ◈ ◈

The visitor was a man in a dark green postman uniform. He smiled at Klein in a fawning manner.

“Are you Mr. Sherlock Moriarty?” he asked.

“Yes.” Klein could vaguely guess the purpose of the other person’s visit.

The visitor raised his right hand and handed over a palm-sized item that was wrapped in layers of black gauze.

“Please sign and accept your package.”

Klein deliberately revealed his doubts.

“Shouldn’t you give me a slip and let me go to the corresponding post office for collection?”

The Loen Kingdom’s postal system was a perfect replica of the Intis system, and even the flaws were copied quite significantly. Anything that couldn’t be stuffed directly into the mailbox, no matter what it was, would only be given a “collection slip” by the postman, making the recipient go through the hassle of collecting it himself.

“…Haha, because it’s rather precious, so I have to personally deliver it to you,” the postman said after a momentary shock.

It seems you’re not professional enough to be a real postman… Without further questions, Klein accepted the package, pen, and slip before signing them.

He closed the door and returned to the living room. He didn't rush to open the package, but he took out a gold coin and threw it into the air.

Pa!

Klein caught the gold coin and looked down to see if it was heads or tails.

A number faced up, indicating a negative response. There's no latent danger… Klein nodded slightly and put away the gold coin. He touched the paper figurine in his pocket and carefully opened the package.

After one layer after another of black gauze was removed, the objects inside clearly presented themselves to him. They were a pale gold-colored, elegantly patterned pocket watch; a handkerchief stained with dark red blood; seven or eight brown short curly hair tied together; and a stack of notes.

Talim's belongings, his hair, his blood, and his daily records, are all present… Prince Edessak sure is a very efficient man. It's not even nighttime… Klein looked at the items on the coffee table and suddenly felt that there were many people staring at him at that very moment.

An ancient Angel Family with a heritage of more than two thousand years would definitely have an unimaginable background. Being involved with the royal family's internal strife makes it possible for me to be pulverized at any moment and anywhere… Maybe I'm already being monitored now… I have to appear mediocre and useless enough, to ensure my safety… Klein had already decided what to do, so he took his time checking the pocket watch, handkerchief, and hair.

During this process, his spiritual intuition didn't give him any warnings, nor did it prevent him from attempting divination.

After having a better grasp on the situation, Klein took out the letter, picked up a pen, and wrote his divination sentence:

"The true cause of Talim Dumont's death."

He acted big-hearted and poised, as though he didn't feel that he was being monitored at that very moment.

Picking up the curly hair and handkerchief, Klein chanted the divination sentence while leaning back against the back of the sofa. His eyes turned deep as he entered Cogitation.

After repeating it seven times, he came to the dream world and saw the familiar lobby of the Quelaag Club.

And then he saw Talim Dumon clutch at his heart, his face contorted once again.

"This revelation shows that Talim did die of a sudden heart disease…" Klein opened his eyes and muttered softly to himself.

He frowned, wearing a puzzled, confused, and thoughtful expression.

He tried several different divination statements and received the same result.

He got up and paced back and forth several times.

He punched himself in the head, as though he was angry that he wasn't good enough to help his friend or find out who the culprit was.

In the end, he dejectedly sat down and didn't move for a long time. In the dark room, he was like the silhouette of a stone statue.

That should be enough. I can't go overboard… If there's no one monitoring me, then I would've been fighting with the air just now… Klein shook his head in a self-deprecating manner, got up, and walked to the kitchen.

After dinner, he seemed to perk up again before he read the stack of notes carefully, including what Talim had done and who he had met on the day and the days prior to his death.

Home, Red Rose Manor, Quelaag Club, Viscount Conrad's mansion…

There's nothing out of the ordinary about it… Klein picked up a sharpened pencil and drew circles, marking out the places he would visit and the targets he would ask about in the next few days.

After doing all of this, he let out a long sigh. Without confidence, he packed up his things, washed up, and went to bed.

In the middle of the night, when the red moon was hidden by layers of clouds, Klein suddenly opened his eyes and woke up.

He got out of bed, opened the door slowly, and went into the bathroom next door, hiding himself with a Paper Figurine Substitute in the process.

Walking four steps counterclockwise, he arrived above the gray fog and sat down at the seat which belonged to The Fool.

His eyes had become clear, no longer dispirited, dejected, and pessimistic.

Soon after, Klein took the blood-stained handkerchief from a hidden pocket in his pajamas made out of old clothes.

When he was packing his things, he had used his Beyonder powers as a Magician to hide the handkerchief on his body.

After taking a deep breath, Klein conjured a pen and paper, and he wrote down the divination sentence that was no different from the beginning:

"The true cause of Talim Dumont's death."

After he repeated it seven times with his body and mind in peace and quiet, he leaned back in his chair with the paper and handkerchief in his hand and fell asleep in the silent and empty old palace.

In a gray, separated, and illusory world, Klein saw a completely different scene from before.

Presented before his eyes was a palm-sized wooden puppet, carved with eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

There were a few drops of dark red blood on the puppet's body, giving it a demonic appearance.

A palm stretched out. The skin was white and exquisite, smooth, and beautiful, with five slender and delicate fingers that accentuated the hand's flesh and bones.

The most eye-catching thing was a unique ring with an inlaid sapphire on the hand's pinky finger.

Pa!

The hand's index finger was wreathed in black flames as it pointed at the heart of the wooden puppet.

Without a sound, the scene shattered and Klein woke up from his dream.

His initial judgment wasn't wrong. Talim had died under a curse!

But there was a problem. He had already seen the scene of the curse happening, so why wasn't the scene displayed in its entirety?

The mysterious space above the gray fog is able to get rid of all interference… Klein was puzzled for a moment.

Normally speaking, receiving a revelation that too abstract and easy to misread was a problem with his limited divination abilities. It meant that the difficulty of the matter he was divining was too high and that it had nothing to do with the gray fog. It was an understandable outcome, but he had clearly seen the scene of the murderous curse, but he was limited to a small scope of the situation. It didn't provide a relatively effective revelation and was rather baffling.

Have I… encountered such a similar situation in the past? Klein dug through his past experiences.

Suddenly, he sat up straight, remembering a similar experience.

In Tingen, when he was divining the real reason behind the countless coincidences, something similar had happened!

He could clearly see the house with the red chimney, but he couldn't reach Ince Zangwill and Sealed Artifact 0-08!

Th-this is the power of someone or something that's at the level of a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact that's resisting the power of the gray fog? Klein's eyes abruptly narrowed.

No, not necessarily. There are still quite a few possibilities. I have to confirm it again! He put in a lot of effort in order to calm down.

As for the method used for confirming, it wasn't daunting for the experienced him. The method was simple—redoing the same divination again.

If the revelation doesn't change, it means that things aren't so terrible, and if divination is no longer successful, then something around the target or the target is resisting the gray fog to some extent, like 0-08!

Taking a deep breath, Klein calmly repeated the previous divination.

"The true cause of Talim Dumont's death."

†

He leaned back in his chair and chanted in a low voice, his eyes growing darker.

In the dream, all he could see was a hazy, shattered gray fog. There were no more wooden puppets or fingers.

Whoosh!

Klein straightened his back, his expression abnormally grave.

What did Talim get himself involved in? he frowned as he muttered to himself.

There's no question as to what I should do next. It's to be passive and perfunctory. I'll first lie to Prince Edessak before telling him that I'm incapable of figuring out the truth.

Phew, this world is really scary. Just the slightest bit of carelessness would cause me to come into contact with something extremely terrifying… Klein sighed. Without daring to stay any longer, he quickly returned to the bathroom in the real world.

†

Tuesday, 9 a.m. at the Crown Cemetery.

Klein stood at the edge of the crowd, wearing a black shirt, black vest, and a black tweed coat whilst he was carrying some fresh flowers he bought for 12 soli. He looked gravely at Talim Dumont's coffin being carried over, had his soul put to rest, and was buried bit by bit into the earth.

During this process, Talim's mother's eyes were red and swollen. She wanted to speak a few times, but she couldn't find her voice. His father's hair was gray, and his expression was haggard. He just stood there, trembling slightly.

When the scene reflected in his eyes, Klein tilted his head back and closed his eyes.

He waited until the mourners had left before he walked over, bent over, and placed the white flowers on top of the others.

I'm sorry… he silently said inwardly.

Standing up, he stepped aside and was about to leave when Klein noticed Reporter Mike and Surgeon Aaron, closing in.

“What a pity. I never thought that Talim would actually… actually… Sigh…” Mike’s expression was pained as he couldn’t finish his sentence.

Aaron, who was always cold, took off his glasses and wiped the corners of his eyes. He sighed and said, “He’s a warmhearted guy. He shouldn’t have ended up like this.”

“Yes, he could’ve gotten rid of his grandfather’s bad reputation,” Klein echoed.

Just then, he saw a female figure in a thick black dress with a veil covering her face walk up to Talim’s grave. She, too, was also carrying a bouquet of white flowers.

Klein looked away, not paying much attention, just keeping watch through the corner of his eye.

The woman bent down to release the flower, revealing her left palm, which was covered by a black gauze glove.

A blue gem faintly appeared on the pinky of her left palm.

Klein’s scalp tingled instantly.

His entire body felt numb.

Chapter 444 - Confession

◆◆◆

A similar feeling that wasn't unfamiliar. The experienced Klein immediately used his Clown powers to control his facial expression and the slight trembling of his body.

Without rushing, he gently retracted his gaze, making the casual glance from before appear normal.

"Sigh, Talim was so young. He wasn't even married and has no children." Klein sighed as he went with the flow.

He had said this because it gave him a plausible explanation for his subtle reaction towards the woman who had offered the flowers—he had turned sad having seen a woman who had some connection with Talim, associated her to marriage and family, and then finally how his friend had passed away at an early age.

"Yeah, actually, at his age, he should've been married four or five years ago. Unfortunately, the matter with his grandfather left him with an extremely strong psychological trauma. He had always rejected marriage, and only recently did he improve." Reporter Mike sighed.

At this moment, the seemingly normal Klein seemed to have a cluster of thorns stabbing at his back, slowly piercing into his skin and flesh, causing him to feel extremely tense.

The girl in the black dress with the sapphire ring on her left hand pinky had straightened her body and calmly surveyed her surroundings. Afterward, she quietly left Talim's grave with two maids accompanying her. She silently walked further and further away from Talim's grave.

Phew… Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

The feeling of his back being stabbed quickly turned into a cold sweat.

Just who is she, and why did she come to the grave to offer flowers? Talim's lover? However, how could Talim, who had no wealth or status, have a relationship with a terrifying person who is involved with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or that of a demigod? This isn't a novel! Furthermore, she should be the one that used a curse to kill Talim… This matter runs deep… Klein listened quietly as Mike and Aaron recounted Talim's past.

His thoughts quickly dispersed, feeling that the most puzzling thing about this matter was that Talim's death—an ordinary person who had no money, power, status, or strength—was actually involved with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a powerhouse of the same level. This was simply inconceivable!

But this isn't an isolated case. There's another similar case that has happened around me… Klein suddenly thought of something and looked at the surgeon, Aaron.

This ordinary person's home might very well be hiding a Sequence 1 Snake of Mercury!

Following this train of thought, Klein recalled the nearly five months that he had spent here since he transmigrated. He was stunned to discover that he had unconsciously become involved with many demigods and terrifying Sealed Artifacts.

The woman who had killed Talim; the Snake of Mercury, Will Auceptin; the Blasphemer Amon; the mysterious woman at the Royal Museum; a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Rose School of Thought; 0-08; 1-42; Ince Zangwill; the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem; the Antigonus family's notebook; Mr. Azik Eggers, who's suspected to be a descendant of Death;

Mr. Door; the Twilight Hermit Order… Each name flashed through Klein's mind, and every single one of them made him feel like drawing in a cold breath.

He calmed his heart and carefully thought, These don't include the True Creator and the Eternal Blazing Sun, who are ranked high above these… Strictly speaking, I can be considered to be among their ranks. After all, I came from a dark divination, and I'm a strange alternate world soul who controls the strange gray fog… Could this be another "crest of the times" after Roselle? So all the demigods and terrifying Sealed Artifacts are making an appearance in real life…

As these thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, the grief-stricken Reporter Mike and Surgeon Aaron excused themselves. He then left the cemetery at a leisurely pace.

Just as he was looking around for a rental carriage, a familiar carriage drove out of a secluded spot and stopped in front of him.

Although the coat of arms on the black carriage was skillfully concealed, Klein was still able to recognize it as Prince Edessak's carriage.

Without a sound, the door of the carriage opened, and the old butler with his meticulously combed hair alighted. He politely made a gesture of invitation.

"His Highness is waiting for you."

"Alright." Klein didn't feel guilty at all as he entered the spacious and warm carriage.

Prince Edessak was dressed in a dark blue coat with a large collar and a golden ribbon across his chest, which made him look very abnormally noble.

He rubbed the diamond brooch, and his long and narrow eyes showed hints of a sigh.

"I'm restricted even when participating in the funeral of a friend. I couldn't appear in person and could only watch from afar, sending someone to offer flowers for me. This is the royal family's lack of freedom."

"If Talim's grandfather hadn't lost his aristocratic title, then you wouldn't have to avoid anything." Klein abided by Prince Edessak's gesture and sat across from him.

Edessak picked up a cup of blood-red wine and said, "Sigh, I had originally planned to find an opportunity to help Talim's father recover his aristocratic title, but unfortunately…"

Instead of going deep into the subject, he asked, "Sherlock, did you receive the package?"

"Yes," Klein answered any questions he was asked, never giving any additional descriptions.

Edessak nodded slightly.

"Any progress?"

"I made several divinations using Talim's hair, blood, and belongings, but all of them led to the conclusion that he had died of a sudden heart disease." Klein used his emotionless, smooth narration to imply that "my Sequence isn't high enough," "my standards are limited," "although I'm good at divination, the other party is stronger," and "I'm sure that I can't figure out the truth."

Edessak looked disappointed and sighed.

"How do you plan on continuing the investigation?"

"Starting with the people Talim came in contact with a few days before his death and the places he went," Klein replied according to the plan.

Edessak looked at the old butler.

“There will definitely be no lack of threatening interrogations or bribery. Hmm… Pay Sherlock 100 pounds for his investigation fees.”

“Yes, Your Highness.” The old butler took out a stack of bills that he had prepared earlier.

A hundred pounds straight out? Once again, Klein felt Prince Edessak’s generosity.

“I’ll do my best.” He took the hundred pounds in cash and pocketed it without counting it in detail.

“I hope that we can put Talim to rest.” Prince Edessak clenched his right fist and tapped the left side of his chest.

He turned his head to look out the window at Crown Cemetery which wasn’t too far away.

His friendship for Talim still remains strong… Klein sighed before he was led out to a carriage by the old butler.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey looked at her psychology teacher, whose long hair reached her waist, and she pretended to carefully look from side to side.

She immediately lowered her voice and said, “Miss Escalante, I recently joined a new Beyonder gathering. There were high offers for a Human-skinned Shadow characteristic and the Wind-blessed potion formula. Uh, different people. These are likely Mid-Sequence items, right? It sounds quite interesting. Ah, right. Will the Psychology Alchemists be interested?”

Escalante was startled. She pondered for a few seconds and said, “I’ll ask when I return.”

"Alright," Audrey responded briskly, as though she were simply intrigued by such Mid-Sequence transactions.

Escalante retracted her attention and said in a serious tone, "Miss Audrey, although you are already a Sequence 8 Beyonder, you have yet to receive formal education in mysticism. You still don't understand enough about the techniques and applications of a Spectator and Telepathist, as well as the foundation theories. Starting today, I'll guide you to become a true Beyonder."

"That's what I wish," Audrey said sincerely.

The huge golden retriever, Susie, who was sitting by her feet, wagged its tail happily, as if happy for her mistress.

†

Having made up his mind not to work, Klein took the carriage back to 15 Minsk Street.

He opened the door and was just about to take off his hat when he froze.

His spiritual intuition told him that a stranger had entered the living room. Someone had entered his room!

This… He barely hid his tracks… Is it considered a warning? Having a warning is better than not having one… Klein stood in the hall for a long time in silence.

Immediately, he turned around and went to the Steam Cathedral in a rental carriage.

The cathedral towered over the chimneys and clock tower, the former representing the power of steam, while the latter represented the beauty of machinery through the hanging of its intricate clocks.

It was neither the weekend nor noon or the evening, so there were only a few devotees in the hall quietly praying.

Klein sat down in the aisle, leaned his cane, took off his hat, and pretended to pray for ten minutes in front of the Sacred Emblem.

Then, he picked up his things and walked along the aisle to the altar. He said to the bishop standing to the side, “I wish to make a confession.”

“Good, God is watching you.” The bishop, who had a kind face and hoary hair at his temples, walked to the confessional by his side.

Klein followed closely behind and closed the door.

He sat down on a chair and said to the bishop through the wooden board, “I confess that I didn’t adhere to my principles when facing danger, and I chose to retreat.”

“What were you thinking at the time?” the bishop gently asked.

Klein immediately described in detail about Talim’s death; his suspicions; the reminder from the Machinery Hivemind; Prince Edessak’s entrustment; and, after how he failed to obtain any answers from his divination, he expressed his heartfelt cowardice in the face of the royal family’s strife.

The reason he didn’t go straight to Carlson was that he was afraid that not only was he being watched, but Prince Edessak’s men were also watching him from the shadows. Once he made his intentions clear, he couldn’t be sure if he would encounter another calamity.

The Steam Cathedral was the headquarters of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, and it was one of the three Great Holy Temples. No one could spy on whatever happened inside.

What Klein intended to do was to use the Church of the God of Steam to convey his true thoughts and avoid getting caught up in a deeper conflict.

Simply put, it was to comply with what his heart wanted.

The bishop listened quietly and answered without changing his tone, “Your choice derives from human instinct; God will not blame you.

“Go back, God will protect you.”

That’s good… Klein understood the hint and quietly left the Steam Cathedral.

Standing on the street outside, looking at the misty sky, he sighed silently.

I need to advance as soon as possible.

Chapter 445 - Live Broadcast

◆

Lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the pitch-black city walls.

Carrying a leather bag on his back and the Axe of Hurricane in hand, Derrick Berg stood outside the doorway to a cave with nearly ten of his teammates.

Lifting his eyes up, he saw that, between the stone cracks of the city wall, the dry and hardened black soil was crusting, but a bunch of tenacious weeds had grown out; they were densely packed and resembled human hair.

At that moment, he hurriedly withdrew his gaze and looked towards the city gate when he heard light footsteps.

As the lightning and darkness alternated, a tall figure slowly walked over, carrying two straight swords which were crossed on his back.

Then, his pale, disheveled hair; his ancient eyes; his twisted, deep; old scars; and his perennially-unchanged brown coat and flaxen-colored shirt entered Derrick and the others' sight.

The approaching person was the Chief of the six-member council of the City of Silver, Colin Iliad, a powerful Demon Hunter.

After greeting him, Derrick subconsciously looked at the Chief's waist. There was a leather belt divided into many compartments, each with a different metal bottle inside.

This was a symbol of an experienced and powerful Demon Hunter.

Derrick had previously heard his parents mention that Demon Hunters were good at discovering the weaknesses for different monsters, identifying the uses of various materials, and were able to use their special Cogitation state against the former. With the latter, they could concoct corresponding magical medicine, holy ointments, essential oils, and special imprints. Then, through consumption, smearing, and using these items, they could achieve the effect of restraining the target.

In a sense, experienced, knowledgeable, well-prepared, and sharp Demon Hunters were the nemesis of the vast majority of monsters. The amount and variety of small metal bottles at their waist represented their "experience."

Of course, this was only a portion of the Demon Hunters' Beyonder powers. Just by relying on these, they couldn't be called demigods or Saints.

Collin looked around and confirmed that all the team members were present. He then said in a low voice, "Light up. Let's go."

Two team members immediately lit the candles in their lanterns, letting the faint yellow light shine through the extremely thin leather.

During "daytime," when the frequency of lightning was relatively high, there was no need to use candles in the City of Silver as there was "illumination" every two to three seconds. Furthermore, the monsters in the nearby area had been cleaned out again and again. However, once they left the City of Silver and entered the darkness, they had to maintain sufficient candlelight. Otherwise, once the lightning failed to illuminate the skies, causing a dark environment that exceeded five seconds, there was a high chance for the team to suffer from an assault by certain monsters.

Intense fighting wasn't the most frightening development. What

Derrick remembered so vividly was a story his parents had told him.

Once, while they were exploring the depths of the darkness, because of a previous battle with a horde of rotting corpses, the candles couldn't be replaced in time. This led them to endure being engulfed in darkness for as long as eight seconds. When the lightning flashed again and the candlelight appeared, they were stunned to see that only five of their original eight teammates remained. The other three had vanished in silence, never to be seen again.

Taking a deep breath, Derrick gripped the Axe of Hurricane tightly and walked in the middle of the team, following the Chief in a predetermined direction.

A bolt of lightning flashed, causing the plains covered in tall black grass to appear like an eerie oil painting.

The exploratory team of 10 Beyonders walked along the path filled with craggy gravel, venturing deep into the black grass.

The lightning subsided, and the dense darkness instantly swept over them, almost completely engulfing them.

The yellow candlelight pierced through the leather and, weakly, swayed to and fro, guarding the surrounding area.

†

East Borough, in a greasy and cheap coffee shop.

In accordance with the previously agreed upon appointment, Klein found Old Kohler, who was applying butter to his toast.

He glanced at the crumpled cigarette on the table and smiled.

“Newly bought?”

“No, it's from the past. I haven't smoked since, but I would always carry it with me, occasionally taking it out to sniff at it. Heh heh, this will remind me of that vagrant life of mine. Back then, I really felt like I could die at any moment." Old Kohler's tone carried a hint of fear.

Klein took 20 soli in change, which he had changed earlier, and pushed it across the table while sitting down.

"I was very satisfied with the information from the last time."

Without waiting for Old Kohler to give a modest reply, he turned his head and looked towards the counter.

"A loaf of oatmeal bread, two slices of toast, a block of butter, a serving of beef stew with potatoes, and a one-pence cup of tea."

"Mr. Moriarty, didn't you have dinner yesterday?" Old Kohler was stunned for a moment as he held the cash.

Klein shook his head and smiled.

"I'll be very busy later and might not have time for lunch."

He needed to pretend that he was active and serious; after all, he had received a hundred pounds from Prince Edessak.

Old Kohler didn't ask any more questions. He looked around cautiously while stuffing the notes into his pocket.

"There are some results from the matter you previously asked me to find out more about. Azik Eggers's bounty comes from a few gang leaders and some intelligence dealers. Well, I don't know who entrusted the task to them since it's difficult to make contact with them."

MI9… Klein nodded.

"That's enough. There's no need to delve deeper. It's too dangerous."

Old Kohler heaved a sigh of relief and said, "Two days ago, someone at a budget hotel on Golden Cloak Street saw someone who appeared to be

Azik Eggers. It's said that the person was basically a carbon copy of the picture on the bounty notice."

"…"

Klein's heart palpitated as he smiled instead of showing surprise.

"And then? Could it be that the moment I prepared to try for this bounty, the matter is over?"

"And then? With that clue, quite a number of bounty hunters rushed over, but they didn't find anything. Well, they said that there were traces of a fight in the room." Old Kohler tried his best to recall the information he had gathered.

The intelligence would definitely be sent to MI9 first… Did Mr. Azik have a secret standoff with them? I wonder what the outcome was… Klein took a glance at the boss who was coming over with a plate. He pretended to mutter to himself and said to Old Kohler, "Take me to Golden Cloak Street later. Maybe I can find some clues."

It was past breakfast time in East Borough, and there were very few customers in the cheap coffee shop.

"Alright." Old Kohler agreed without hesitation.

"A total of sixteen and a half pence." The boss placed Klein's breakfast on the table. There wasn't much beef with the potatoes, but the stew was very overcooked. It was obvious that it had been prepared beforehand. The thick aroma tantalized Old Kohler's taste buds to the point that he involuntarily gulped a mouthful of saliva.

After paying the bill, Klein picked up a fork and spoon and said to Old Kohler, "Continue."

"There aren't many people looking for the believers of The Fool anymore, except for a few stubborn bounty hunters… Many unemployed textile women, including some male workers, left East

Borough…” Old Kohler went down a list of matters.

“What?” Klein swallowed the beef and looked up. “Left East Borough?”

“They must’ve found some other job. As for where they went, I couldn’t find out,” Old Kohler answered truthfully.

“Their families aren’t aware?” Klein pressed.

“Some left with their unemployed family members, while others had come alone from outside the city to search for work.” Old Kohler had already done some investigations.

Judging from the target’s choice, there’s something wrong… Klein made a mental note of it and continued to eat while he listened to Old Kohler talk about matters that had happened in East Borough recently.

After making an appointment for the next meeting, he put down the cutlery, wiped his mouth, picked up his hat, and said, “Let’s head for Golden Cloak Street.”

†

In the only budget hotel on Golden Cloak Street.

After the boss accepted a two pence tip, he led Klein and Old Kohler to the room which was suspected to be where Azik Eggers used to live.

“There have been many bounty hunters visiting over this period of time. Hehe, It made me earn quite a bit, so I have maintained its original state.” The hotel owner opened the door with his key and pointed inside.

At first glance, Klein saw overturned chairs and rags scattered everywhere. There were no other signs of a fight.

With his considerable spiritual perception, Klein cast his gaze under the bed.

After staring for two seconds, he walked over and bent down to pat the bed.

Dust flew into the air with a poof as a gray rat jumped out from under the bed.

It looked normal, without any problems, but in Klein's Spirit Vision, its aura only had the colors: black and green.

The rat turned a corner and climbed up a wall, exposing its belly to Klein's eyes.

In that soft spot, its flesh was green with flowing pus. One could see that his internal organs had similarly rotted away.

Klein thoughtfully looked back at Old Kohler, who wasn't paying attention to the rat.

"Has the bounty for Azik Eggers been withdrawn?"

"No." Old Kohler shook his head in confirmation.

Klein examined it again, he then stepped out and said, "Let's go, there's no valuable clues."

†

15 Minsk Street.

Klein, who had been "busy" all day, lay down on his bed and entered the dream world.

Scenes that were continuous at times, and at other times fragmented, swept past and all of a sudden, Klein woke up. He knew that he was dreaming.

A power has invaded my dreams… Klein maintained his previous dazed state, casually sizing up his surroundings.

He found himself in a suburb of fertile fields.

A river flowed over from the distance and made a turn around the cliff in front of him.

One side of the cliff was bare, revealing a pure white rock. Looking from afar, it seemed to have a kind of holy beauty.

Nearly ten men and women wearing black coats or dark jackets surrounded a hidden underground entrance to the bay, among them was Klein's acquaintance, Ikanser Bernard.

White Cliff Town… Stratford River Creek. Machinery Hivemind… Are they exploring the Amon family tomb? But why would there be scenes of it in my dreams? Klein was puzzled.

At that moment, he saw the water on the surface of the river undulate, rapidly forming a line of white words: "Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to report to you on the exploration's situation."

"…"

Klein's mouth turned agape, momentarily losing the ability to speak. Then, a voice echoed in his head: Tell me, why would a perfectly good mirror be a snitch?

Chapter 446 - Machinery Hivemind's Combat Style

◆ ◆ ◆

In an instant, Klein switched to his unfathomable state as "The Fool who overlooked everything." He nodded and said, "Not bad."

Ahead of him, the river surged, and the white words squirmed and changed before taking shape again.

"What follows is the exploration process your loyal servant, Arrodes, has recorded. You can choose to speed up or skip certain scenes at any time."

This sentence froze for two seconds, and then the scene abruptly zoomed in. Klein instantly appeared beside Ikanser Bernard, but no one noticed him.

He looked around and felt that he was surrounded by living people with lifelike scenes. Nothing about his surroundings looked unreal, making him feel as if though he was there in person.

I can even speed up or skip certain scenes… The original form of this mirror, Arrodes, is a virtual reality family cinema… Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

He took another look at the Machinery Hivemind members and saw that it was led by an old man in white priest robes and a cleric cap. His face was unusually kind, and his expression was calm and gentle.

"Your Grace, everyone is ready," Ikanser approached the elder and said with a bow.

Archbishop… This is the archbishop of the Church of Steam and Machinery's Backlund diocese, the demigod, Horamick Haydn? The Machinery Hivemind really is cautious, and not careless…

Who knows, they might have even brought along a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact and performed a divination in advance. After all, they're in control of the Mystery Pryer pathway. Luckily, I can basically confirm that the fog's anti-divination or divination interference abilities are similar to the Cards of Blasphemy, allowing the result to be as ordinary as possible and the least bit suspicious; otherwise, certain matters might be exposed…

However, there's a certain probability that the meeting between Miss Sharron and I will appear, because, to me, that isn't something harmful. It depends on whether a Wraith's instinct to interfere with divination will affect the Machinery Hivemind's attempt. Wait, the Machinery Hivemind is highly likely to have relied on Arrodes, and based on its performance from just now and previously, it isn't impossible for him to curry favor with me by adding some mosaics… Klein thought in enlightenment.

At this point, Horamick Haydn drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

"Begin the operation. God will protect us."

Nearly ten Beyonders headed down as Klein followed closely behind. He didn't "fast-forward" at all.

He had always been curious about the combat styles of Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders of the Machinery Hivemind, and he wanted to take this opportunity to experience it.

In addition, he was also greatly concerned about how a demigod really did in combat, as well as the secrets hidden in the Amon family tomb.

After being ransacked by time, in a period spanning one or two thousand years, the black marble staircase still retained its hardness without any signs of corrosion. The Machinery Hivemind members followed it all the way underground, where they saw the unique asymmetrical stone pillars and axe-and-blade scuffing from the period of the Fourth Epoch.

The pillars stood on either side of the wide road, and in front of them was a large, heavy, dark gray stone double door.

The stone door had already cracked open, wide enough for two people to walk alongside each other. It was completely dark inside.

The Machinery Hivemind members were in no hurry to enter. They carefully searched the surrounding area with lanterns, but they found nothing of value.

“According to the plan, the first group will begin with a preliminary clean-up.” With the archbishop’s approval, Ikanser pushed down his hat, compressing his fluffy hair.

Clean-up? By the side, Klein ruminated over the word.

Amidst his puzzlement, the two strongest and burliest male Machinery Hivemind team members each laid down a long black box on their backs and opened them up.

Inside one long box was a sturdy, heavy, iron-black cannon-shaped object. Its surface was engraved with dense and arcane patterns. In the other box was a complex and exquisite firearm with a chain of pale golden bullets inserted into it.

One of the two team members carried the cannon-shaped object and trudged to the open stone door.

Another Machinery Hivemind member picked up the peculiar gun, adjusted the bullet chain, and followed slightly behind.

After the two of them glanced at each other, the cannon-shaped object on the former's shoulder rapidly lit up, outlining burning patterns and imprints before a loud salvo.

Boom!

A golden fireball, akin to a miniature sun, flew out from the "cannon barrel" and into the darkness.

Boom!

The ground trembled slightly, and intense light was emitted from the crack.

The body of the Machinery Hivemind member, who was holding onto the "cannon barrel," clearly sank a little as his feet trembled.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

He repeatedly used the Beyonder weapon to launch one golden "cannonball" after another at different spots, causing the tomb to sway without a speck of dust falling.

After he came to a stop, the team member with the peculiar gun stepped forward and pulled the trigger.

Da! Da! Da! Da! Da!

The sound of machine-gun fire echoed as one pale golden bullet after another flew out, purifying the danger in the depths of the darkness.

…Isn't this the bombardment effect I've always wanted? Furthermore, they're using Beyonder expendables like purifying bullets and exorcism cannonballs… How extravagant! Is this the combat style of the Machinery Hivemind? Klein's stared with his eyes wide open and his mouth slightly agape.

After the series of savage bombardments, Ikanser raised his voice above the rumbling echoes and said, "Group two, do the follow-up clean-up."

There's more… Klein felt a little numb from what was happening.

The second group was also made up of two team members who used scrolls made of different kinds of leather.

They chanted simplified incantations, activated the scrolls, and tossed them inside.

The construct behind the stone door was suddenly shrouded by gentle and pure light. Droplets of golden holy rain pattered down, "cleansing" everything in the area.

Klein looked at this scene and suddenly found it somewhat ridiculous.

Wait, aren't you guys here to engage in archaeological studies? Aren't you professional "archaeologists?" Aren't you afraid that the tomb would collapse from using such clean-up methods?

While these thoughts flashed through his mind, the second team was done, and they shouted at Ikanser, "Deacon, as expected, the construct's structural integrity hasn't been destroyed."

They were clearly prepared.

"Alright, continue forward." Ikanser gave the order.

Klein walked in the middle, through the stone door, and saw piles of dirt and debris on the ground. It was impossible to tell what kind of monsters had once been active here, and no one could guess the functions of the mechanisms that had been set up here.

After these "cleaning up" procedures, as long as one didn't dodge in advance, no Beyonder below that of High-Sequence Beyonders would be able to withstand it… Klein once again gained a deeper understanding of what the aesthetic of violence was like and what it meant to be simple, direct, and unreasonable.

In what followed, the previous scenes were repeated over and over again. The Machinery Hivemind team members smoothly approached, exploring one area after another, occasionally harvesting some Beyonder characteristics that were beginning to gather.

“There are no murals…” Seeing the main tomb chamber in sight, the archbishop of the Church of the God of Steam, Horamick Haydn stopped and muttered to himself in puzzlement.

Klein, who was considered half a historian, was equally puzzled.

Generally speaking, a noble family member’s grave would more or less express their position and honor when they were alive.

And when a grave became a tomb or even a mausoleum, it was very common for a mural to be used to describe its master’s life when it possessed enough space. In even older and more obscure eras, this wasn’t rare, and it was even the most common method—the first thing humans learned was drawings, not writing.

Thus, it really was a little strange that there were no similar murals in the tomb of a Fourth Epoch noble family.

Upon hearing the archbishop’s question, Ikanser immediately ordered the men to spread out in groups of two to search the vicinity for relevant traces of murals.

Watching from the sidelines, Klein couldn’t help but want to “fast forward” a little to immediately see the outcome.

At that moment, he noticed that the two Machinery Hivemind members in the left corner had suddenly turned into three!

One of them looked identical to Ikanser Bernard, his fluffy hair propping his hat high.

This… Klein was first stunned before he made a guess.

The moment he had the thought, Ikanser walked over to the team member closest to him.

“Any discoveries?” He cleared his throat and lowered his voice.

The team member turned around warily, but immediately relaxed when he saw that it was Deacon Ikanser.

“No…” Before he could finish his sentence, the “Ikanser” in front of him suddenly turned into a piece of human skin and enveloped his body.

The pale human skin tightly wrapped around him, and his face began to form the outline of his facial features. During this process, there were no additional sounds, nor were there any abnormal movements that were triggered.

All of a sudden, the human skin began to emit rays of light, just like the rising of the sun!

The human skin immediately turned translucent and quickly soared into the air as if it was being burned.

A black whip immediately lashed out, striking its body, causing its movements to clearly slow down.

In such a battle, slowness was an “Original Sin.” One Beyonder weapon after another, burning scrolls, and pale golden bullets were released towards the human skin.

After a brilliant burst of light, countless ashes fell from the sky.

All of them coruscated faint light and slowly “struggled” to gather together.

It really is a Human-skinned Shadow… Klein turned his attention to the Machinery Hivemind members who had just been attacked.

The man pulled at his collar and pulled out a protective charm. There were many symbols and magic labels related to the sun on it.

“Thankfully, the archbishop got us to wear these things!” he held the lantern and sincerely praised.

It was only then that Klein realized that his brooch had the quality of the night, his ring had the intensity of the storm, and his belt exuded the sense of physical strength…

Although they aren’t all mystical items, most of them are in the category of charms and Beyonder weapons. Even if their effects will quickly decline, they’re still worth a lot! If you weren’t an Artisan or a rich Beyonder, there’s no way to gather that much… Is this the combat style of the Machinery Hivemind? Burning money… Klein felt a sudden setback, and it took him a long time to recover.

At that moment, the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic gathered and took form. It was like a huge diamond with countless sides reflecting light, and each side reflected a different face.

The faces were densely packed, layered, and left one dizzy.

I’m just short of it… Klein was overjoyed.

After the Machinery Hivemind handled the spoils, they continued to search for the murals, but they didn’t find any traces of them.

They had no choice but to gather again and head for the passageway that led to the main tomb.

Chapter 447 - Portrait

◆

After another series of bombardments, the passage into the main tomb was revealed to the members of the Machinery Hivemind.

The ground was littered with debris. The diamond-shaped Beyonder characteristic that reflected a human face lay silently at the bottom of the right wall, glowing with the light of two other objects.

The entire tunnel, including the two walls that lined the sides and the stone ceiling, was filled with potholes. However, one thing remained undamaged.

It was a frame that was hung up ahead about seven meters away. It was brown in color, and the wood grain was obvious, but only the side of the frame was revealed.

Without anyone mentioning anything, all the Beyonders present could tell that it was strange.

At this moment, the archbishop of the Church of Steam and Machinery, Horamick Haydn stepped forward and said in a gentle voice, “This is likely to be the Specter Portrait Frame that belongs to the Amon family according to the records. As long as one walks into its range and is illuminated by it, their Spirit Body will instantly be separated from their flesh and blood, turning into a portrait and be forever sealed inside. In this state, even if the portrait is replaced, there is no way of rescuing the person without the corresponding methods.

“If the duration of being sealed is too long, the body would already be dead; then, even if one grasps the correct method to remove the seal, the spirit will quickly dissipate.”

As he spoke, Horamick moved forward, step by step, closing in on the strange frame.

Klein was a bit worried, not daring to watch the demigod fight against the Sealed Artifact, but he quickly realized that he was just watching a scene provided by the magic mirror, Arrodes. What was there to be afraid of?

This is very normal—it’s just like watching a horror movie or playing a dark game… Klein calmed himself as he quickened his pace and caught up with Horamick Haydn.

The demigod archbishop quickly reached the confines of where the mystical item that needed to be sealed was. He wore a white priest robe and a clerical cap, and his figure gradually appeared in the glass on the surface of the picture frame.

Glass… Glass in the Fourth Epoch? Seems to be the case. There has at least been glass in the Fifth Epoch’s history all this time, and there has been no mention of who invented it… Klein waited with great interest for the “battle” between the demigod and the strange Sealed Artifact.

Horamick’s upper body fully appeared within the Specter Portrait Frame, but his eyes didn’t lose their luster!

He walked towards the frame, face to face.

The silhouette within the painting flickered, as though it was constantly shrinking, yet it was unable to succeed.

Horamick stopped, took out a large, almost opaque black cloth he had long prepared, and he covered the Specter Portrait Frame.

The frame trembled a few times, but in the end, it was completely covered by the black cloth and turned silent.

Horamick seemed to be unaffected as he effortlessly removed the Specter Portrait Frame and finished wrapping it with the black cloth before tying a knot on its back.

This… This doesn't make mystical sense… Didn't you say that your Spirit Body would be absorbed into the frame and be turned into a portrait? Why is the archbishop fine… Is this the uniqueness of a demigod, or is it because of another reason? Klein sized up Horamick Haydn, but he didn't notice anything out of the ordinary.

His eyes are filled with spirit, his expression genial, and he's rich in flesh and blood… It's a pity that I'm not there in person. Otherwise, I could activate my Spirit Vision and have a look… Klein retracted his gaze and waited for the Machinery Hivemind members, such as Ikanser, to come over.

Horamick handed the Specter Portrait Frame to a member of the team and walked towards the main tomb at the end of the passage.

There was a black stone door filled with scrapes carved by blades and axes. In the middle of the door was a grayish-white disc.

The surface of the disk was divided into twelve segments. There was a black needle, just like a clock from the outside world.

However, the segments weren't evenly distributed across the disc. They were of varying sizes and extremely incongruous. Furthermore, each grid had half of its surface covered in a shadow.

"The coat of arms of the Amon family." Archbishop Horamick made a brief introduction.

He didn't explain the symbolic meaning of the coat of arms, because presently only Deacon Ikanser Bernard was qualified to know.

Klein, on the other hand, relied on his own knowledge of mysticism to attempt to decipher it.

Disc, twelve segments, and a needle. Combined together, they clearly represent time. It matches the Worm of Time which Amon's avatar left behind after it was wiped out. What should be twelve equal segments on a disc, are unequal in size, and there's a shadow over a portion of it. Does this mean that the Amon family is the dark side of time? Then, where does their title as a Blasphemer family show itself?

While Klein was thinking, Archbishop Horamick pushed open the stone door without any protection.

The heavy stone door opened, revealing an extremely spacious tomb chamber.

In the center of the chamber was a dais with a deep-black coffin on top of it.

The surrounding walls were decorated with iron lampstands, each holding a burning white candle.

All the candles didn't flicker. It was so quiet that it seemed like a scene that was fixed in place, completely devoid of any signs of it suffering the effects of time that spanned one to two thousand years.

On the straight path from the stone door to the coffin, there were corpses lying on the ground. They were all wearing black tweed coats, half top hats, or even ordinary worker clothes with a cap on their heads. It was obvious that they had entered in recent years.

The Beyonders that previously recruited helpers? How did they get past the area at the front? The Human-skinned Shadow and the other monsters were clearly still alive… With a mind filled with questions, Klein looked at the corpses.

What he saw left him immediately shocked.

The corpses all had sparse white hair, dry and wrinkled skin, and obvious markings on their skin. They looked like eighty- or ninety-year-olds.

There were no obvious wounds on their bodies as though they had died of old age. Furthermore, it appeared as though they had died recently and hadn't even rotted yet.

It's very obvious that there wouldn't be this many aged Beyonders exploring the tomb. Even if the discoverers of the tomb were old, they would still try their best to choose the young and strong when recruiting helpers… There's something odd about it! Klein frowned and looked around again.

He quickly thought of the Worm of Time left behind by Amon's avatar, and the coat of arms of the Amon family that represented time on the stone door.

Making people age rapidly is one of the Amon family's Beyonder powers? The dark side of time… The loophole in time… Could it be that as others rapidly age, the members of the Amon family would regain their youth and extend their lives? Wait a minute, for these Beyonders to easily barge into this place like that, perhaps it was deliberate on the tomb master's part. He wanted to rob them of their time in order to maintain his own existence… Klein looked suspiciously at the black coffin on the platform.

At this moment, the demigod, Horamick Haydn, raised his left hand and pressed it down.

"You will stop here."

"Yes, Your Grace," Ikanser and company answered without any hesitation.

As members of an official organization, they had read up on a large number of past Beyonder events. They knew that under similar circumstances, they had to obey the will of a High-Sequence Beyonder and absolutely couldn't act rashly or else they would die without knowing how.

Horamick looked ahead, and his eyes fell on a picture frame that hung upside down at the bottom of the dais.

His expression didn't change as he continued to walk forward at a leisurely pace.

Not making any preparations at all? The hallmark of demigods is to be "rash?" Klein was stunned.

He seemed to be able to imagine Horamick's teeth dropping, his white hair wilting, and his skin shriveling as he rapidly aged.

One step, two steps, three steps… Horamick, who seemed fine, suddenly trembled, and a sharp and piercing grinding sound could be heard from his body.

His pace began to slow down, his movements became stiff, and his skin visibly dried up.

There's something wrong with that… That isn't the aging process of a normal human being… What was that grinding sound just now? Klein muttered inwardly.

Four steps, five steps, six steps. Ripping sounds came from Horamick's body as something fell to the ground.

Klein subconsciously looked over and saw a gear.

A gear covered in rust!

Horamick continued on as items kept dropping from his body from time to time. There were rusty screws, melted wax, yellowed bones, and loose springs… His figure became increasingly thin and unsteady, as if it could collapse at any time.

This is just like a robot… Well, in this era's terms, "like a living doll"… Klein was suddenly enlightened.

He remembered that before Old Neil died, he had said that the Church of Earth Mother's Sequence 4 was good at Alchemical Life, and that the Savant pathway's corresponding Sequence was barely able to do so too.

As for Horamick, he was a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Savant pathway!

The Horamick in front of me isn't the real him, it's just a refined doll. Just now, the reason why the Specter Portrait Frame was ineffective was that a doll doesn't have a Spirit Body! The real Horamick should still be far away… As expected of a demigod… Amidst Klein's enlightenment, the archbishop walked up to the dais, bent his knees and back, and turned the upside-down frame over.

Generally speaking, when exploring a tomb involving Beyonder elements, it was necessary to avoid flipping items over, but this time, Horamick had made the opposite choice.

Following the flipping of the portrait frame, a wind suddenly blew in the sealed tomb, dispersing the formless imprisonment and silence.

The candles on the iron-colored light fixtures rapidly ignited, becoming unusually bright. However, they soon reached the end of their lives and melted away.

The old corpses on the ground rapidly rotted and stank.

In just a few seconds, the tomb's main chamber had turned dark, leaving only the lanterns that the Machinery Hivemind members were holding onto to barely illuminate the area ahead.

Horamick picked up the picture frame from the floor and went up the stairs to the dais.

He came to the black coffin, stretched out his right palm, and forcefully pushed.

Creak. The heavy coffin lid opened up a crack with a creaking sound, as though it wasn't nailed shut at all.

Horamick looked down and said in the same unchanging voice, “There’s no corpse.”

As the scene drew nearer, Klein saw that the coffin’s interior was empty except for a pale gold cushion embroidered with a worm with twelve rings.

At that moment, Horamick turned around and the picture frame in his hand was reflected in the eyes of Ikanser and the others.

With just a glance, Klein’s gaze suddenly froze.

It was a portrait of a smiling young man.

He had black eyes and curly black hair.

He had a broad forehead and a thin face.

A crystal monocle hung over his eye.

He wore a black pointed hat.

Amon!

Chapter 448 - Amon's Possible Origins

◆

Amon… Klein said the word in his mind.

He had originally thought that the Blasphemer who appeared in the Forsaken Land of God' City of Silver was a descendant of an ancient family like Amon. Through inheriting the legacy of his ancestors, step by step, he stepped into the demigod ranks. To his surprise, it was very possible that that particular person could very well have lived for more than two thousand years and was a member of the Amon family when it was at the peak of its strength!

An old antique… Why would he, for no good reason, build a tomb for himself? Did he fake his death to get out of a situation, or is there another reason, such as leaving traces so as to have time fixed onto his body? He was able to live from the Fourth Epoch to the Fifth Epoch, all because he was siphoning the lives of others? I originally guessed that he's a Sequence 3 or Sequence 2. Based on what I've seen today, it's not impossible for him to be a Sequence 1. After all, long periods of time would eventually bring about an intrinsic improvement… Klein switched back and forth between puzzlement and speculation. His thoughts were like boiling water, gurgling non-stop.

The Horamick "doll" tugged at his throat and accidentally pulled off a piece of skin, revealing the complicated mechanical structure within.

His voice came out from that spot and brought with it the impression of leaking air.

"Search the corpses on the ground; don't come any closer."

“Yes, Your Grace!” Ikanser and company heaved a clear sigh of relief.

The corpses on the ground had long since produced their Beyonder characteristics. Some of them had even combined with certain parts of the body to form a terrifying mystical item.

In addition, the dead carried all sorts of items on them.

The Machinery Hivemind sure has reaped quite a harvest this time. Together with the Specter Portrait Frame and the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic, this completely makes up for the crazy expenses of the “clean-up”… A huge investment for a high return… Klein’s eyes lingered on the ground for quite a while.

He inhaled, tore his gaze away, and followed Horamick, who didn’t carry a lantern, to the wall on the other side of the coffin.

At this moment, the magic mirror, Arrodes, brightened up the scene, allowing the things in front of him to be seen clearly.

Klein saw that the wall across him had become mottled due to the rapid “weathering” just now. Many of the murals had been destroyed and could no longer be restored to their original states.

The only one that was more complete and could barely be seen clearly was a colorful mural at the top of the wall, which took up a small half of the dome.

It described a towering mountain range, and on the highest mountain peak, there was a huge cross that was taller than the mountain.

The cross was covered in layers of radiance, making it seem unusually holy.

In front of it, a tall and domineering figure could be seen vaguely. The mountain range was like a pet that lay prostrate at its feet.

This figure was surrounded by two-winged, four-winged, and six-winged angels. They were holding bugles, playing harps, or playing flutes, looking pious and sprightly.

At the foot of the mountain range, two twelve-winged angels were humbly walking towards the mountaintop, each holding a baby in their arms.

The baby on the left had curly black hair, and the baby on the right had pale blond hair.

One of their eyes was black; the other golden.

Elsewhere in the mountain range, there was a vague depiction of a giant with chains at its legs and a dragon that had its legs bound and never be able to land.

Horamick first looked at the baby on the left, and his genial expression became increasingly serious.

He said a word in a very low voice, “Amon.”

Then, he turned to look at the baby on the right, and after a few seconds of silence, he said another name, “Adam…”

Amon, Adam… As Klein repeated the names, he felt that the fog that hung over the history of the Fourth Epoch and the Third Epoch was growing thicker.

He combined all the information he had learned and quickly made a guess.

On the mountaintop, the figure in front of the glowing cross is surrounded by angels, with giants and dragons submitting to it. It’s definitely a real god that’s at Sequence 0… Another being who likes to partially use the cross as a symbol is the True Creator… It’s said that Amon is the descendant of an ancient sun god, but the one at the top of the mountain doesn’t seem like a pure sun god…

Could it be that “He” is the “Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God” that the City of Silver believes in?

This is in accordance with the legends of the City of Silver. The awakening of the Creator who stripped the King of Giants and the Dragon of Imagination and other ancient gods of their authorities…

The so-called ancient sun god is actually the Lord that created everything as spoken about in the City of Silver? “He” may be in charge of the domains such as “sun” and “time.” In addition, the authorities of the Giant King, Aurmir, and the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt, has likely returned to “Him”…

Th-this can no longer be completely contained within Sequence 0…

So, the original Amon was the descendant of the City of Silver’s “Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God,” who inherited the Beyonder characteristics of the time domain? This seems to slightly explain why he remained silent in the City of Silver’s dungeon for decades.

Apart from him, there’s also another descendant of the “Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God,” named Adam…

What did Adam inherit in the beginning? Does he still have a descendant alive, and if so, where would he be…

What’s the relationship between the True Creator and that person? Is it simply an imitation by using the Creator’s title and the symbol of the cross? Or is there some deeper connection between the two?

Klein didn’t let his doubts show too much. After all, the magic mirror, Arrodes, could be sizing him up.

Horamick stared at the mural for a while, then he suddenly took a few steps forward and pressed his extended palms against the wall.

Without a sound, the majestic mural disintegrated, turning into pieces of stone fragments that landed on the ground. Even the color quickly evaporated, disappearing without a trace.

The Church of the God of Steam and Machinery is consciously concealing the history of the Third and Fourth Epochs… Are the other Churches the same? Klein frowned and followed the Horamick "doll" to the other side.

After making a half-circle, they discovered another thing.

A stone door, which only had an outline, loomed in the corner.

At this moment, the Horamick "doll's" joints were constantly creaking, but this didn't stop him from quickly approaching the stone door and reaching out with his right hand to attempt to push.

Above the stone door, there was a sudden burst of aqueous light that condensed into a scene that looked so real that it seemed possible to directly touch it.

Dark blue waves were surging forward, and there was a dense black mist that looked like liquid.

A craggy mountain protruded from the mist, continuously flowing with viscous liquids.

Behind this mountain, the black mist seemed endless, with no end in sight.

There was also no limit to its depth. The deeper one looked, the more placid it felt. It was as if once something fell in, it would fall forever.

What is this place? Klein's expression didn't change as he muttered inwardly.

Horamick retracted his palms and watched as the scene gradually faded until it disappeared.

He leaned his head back and sighed to himself while feeling perplexed.

“The Abyss…”

Abyss? That’s the source of all corruption. It’s said that it’s an abyss that can even corrupt a true god? Klein was amazed, but as a former Clown, he regulated his expression and limbs to appear unperturbed.

He immediately thought of something. Roselle, who was exploring the Fog Sea, had once deviated from his path, leaving behind a puzzling sentence: “I saw the abyss.”

As Klein pondered about the layers of waves that were surging towards the black fog, he made a conjecture.

There’s an entrance to the Abyss somewhere in the Fog Sea?

Immediately after, he looked towards the stone door. He suspected that Amon, who lurked around the City of Silver, had employed a certain ritual. After finishing the tomb, he didn’t depart from it normally; instead, he used a special tunnel to head for the Abyss. Thus, in the eyes of most people, he was already dead.

As for whether the City of Silver or the Forsaken Land of God was located somewhere in the Abyss, Klein couldn’t be sure. After all, the history of this tomb was at least 1500 years old, so Amon had plenty of time to use the Abyss to go somewhere else.

Would he still occasionally come back to siphon off time? If he finds out that someone has dug up his grave, the expression on his face would definitely be very marvelous… Klein rejoiced for a baffling reason.

At this moment, the Horamick “doll” held his left hand in his right palm and abruptly twisted it.

With a creaking sound, his left hand was bent at the wrist, but there were no bones that pierced out of his skin, spewing out flesh and blood.

There was a heavy, black metal tube inlaid in his left wrist!

His entire left arm was a small-caliber mystical cannon!

To hide a mole of advanced technology, he truly is worthy of being from the Machinery Hivemind. However, the requirements and costs for such a thing are too high. Clearly, it could only be provided to specific personnel and not for military troops… Klein felt that today was an eye-opener for him, an opportunity to see another development path in the mysterious world.

The only problem is that Beyonder characteristics are conserved, Artisans are limited, so many things cannot be mass-produced.

The Horamick “doll” put his left wrist against the stone door.

Inside his body, the sound of gears grinding against each other as they revolved emitted an intense spirituality radiance.

A ray of light that was as bright as day appeared and disappeared.

The stone door suddenly turned into pure powder, as if it had never existed.

H-he destroyed the door? If Blasphemer Amon encounters an emergency situation and attempts to return here, only to find the door gone, that would be fun… Klein almost laughed when he imagined that scene.

This was the end of the Amon family’s tomb exploration. The scene surrounding Klein quickly shrank and became the background.

An illusory, ancient, and bizarre silver mirror appeared in midair. The black, eye-like gemstones on the mirror flickered.

White words were quickly outlined in the mirror:

“Your loyal servant, Arrodes, has finished reporting and is ready to serve you at any time again.”

Klein was a bit wary and unaccustomed towards the fellow who appeared too enthusiastic. He nodded and said, “Well done, you may leave first.”

“Yes, the mighty existence above the spirit world.” As soon Arrodes produced that line of words, the scene around him shattered into pieces.

After confirming that its power had left his dream, Klein thoughtfully said to himself, The mighty existence above the spirit world? It really has vaguely sensed the gray fog…

Does this magic mirror with a wicked sense of humor really wish to rely on me, or does it have some other purpose?

I have to watch carefully; otherwise, with it at the Machinery Hivemind, I don’t want to be repeatedly blasted with cannon fire…

Rounding up his thoughts, Klein began looking forward to the next day.

After the Machinery Hivemind tidied up their spoils, they were likely to get him to choose an item!

Chapter 449 - Better Choice

◆

In Empress Borough, inside the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

The cold air was kept out by the windows and walls. The building's interior was warm as though it were spring, and the fireplace was elegant.

Audrey Hall was having her measurements taken by the fashion designer, Mrs. Guinea, so that she could create a costume for Audrey for the new year banquet in consideration of her recent physical and emotional state.

At this moment, her personal maid, Annie, came close to her ear and whispered, “Lady Escalante is here.”

Such a fast response? Audrey was delighted, but she didn't make an obvious show of it on her face. With a faint smile, she said, “Please get her to wait in my art studio. Hmm, for five minutes.”

“Art studio?” Annie asked in surprise.

“Yes, I'd like to ask her to admire my recently completed oil painting. She says that content that is painted in a relaxed state easily allows one to express their true thoughts and emotions,” Audrey explained unhurriedly.

Annie suddenly felt enlightened.

“Yes, Miss.”

Less than five minutes later, Audrey entered the studio and saw Escalante admiring the paintings on the walls.

“That’s Mr. Cenci’s Inner Heart’s Night, a masterpiece that allows one to feel peace,” she smiled and introduced the painting to Escalante.

“Cenci’s Inner Heart’s Night? One of the top ten works of last year’s ‘top hundred century-old paintings’ that the Tussock Times voted for?” Escalante was obviously the kind of person who often read newspapers.

And as a Beyonder of the Spectator pathway, she had a good memory.

“Yes,” Audrey replied simply, as though it was a trivial matter.

“I actually have the honor of seeing the real deal…” Escalante looked up at the painting again.

She swallowed back the words “this is worth at least a manor,” unwilling to appear too philistine.

Audrey didn’t continue introducing the other paintings. She found a reason to send Annie away and motioned to Susie to “stand guard” outside the door.

Susie read her hint without any hindrance, wagged her tail, and scampered out.

Escalante closed the door and went back to the easel’s side. Before Audrey could ask, she took the initiative and said, “We have both the Human-skinned Shadow’s characteristic and the Wind-blessed potion formula. However, there is no need for us to sell it unless the other party is able to provide an irresistible offer.”

The willingness to negotiate means there’s hope! Audrey’s green eyes darted slightly as she asked with a chuckle, “What do you wish to receive in exchange?”

Escalante stroked her hair and gave her pre-prepared answer.

"2,500 pounds for the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic, and 3,000 pounds for the Wind-blessed potion formula."

Quite a huge premium… Although Audrey didn't find them expensive, she lamented the fact that the Psychology Alchemists' premium had exceeded 50%.

According to the description given by The Hanged Man, under normal circumstances, the formula for Sequence 6 would've cost less than 2,000 pounds, but the closer it was to a High Sequence, the fewer potion formulas there were to circulate, making it very difficult to buy them. There was no normal situation, and what was even more important was that even if one chanced upon a sale, it was very difficult to ascertain their authenticity.

At that moment, Escalante added, "If the other party can barter with mystical items, all that's needed is for them to be of roughly the same value."

That is to say, you want mystical items more and can accept a price reduction for them… The Psychology Alchemists is one of the youngest secret organizations. They clearly haven't accumulated enough in this area compared to the others… Audrey pursed her lips and said, "I'll inform them, but I can't guarantee that they'll accept it."

She wasn't the least bit worried that the Psychology Alchemist would notice that she hadn't been involved in any Beyonder gathering recently. After all, her schedule was rather tight—afternoon tea, music lessons, dinners, dances, equestrian training, language lessons, dancing lessons, and so on. There were too many opportunities for her to interact with different people. In that case, perhaps a particular dinner was a cover for Beyonder gatherings, or perhaps the music teacher was a senior Beyonder, and it was almost impossible for the Psychology Alchemists, who hid in the shadows, to investigate it when they couldn't act openly.

Having said this, Audrey curiously asked, "Ms. Escalante, I thought you wouldn't sell the Wind-blessed potion formula since it's already at Sequence 6."

"Heh heh, if there's a chance, it might be more useful to spread this information out," Escalante answered vaguely.

In her mind, although Miss Audrey was a new member who had a high level of importance attached to her by the organization, she was still a new member after all. There were many things she couldn't know about.

Why? Audrey suppressed her doubts and smiled sweetly. She asked innocently, "Ms. Escalante, if this deal succeeds, can you count it as my contribution?"

Escalante broke into a laugh.

"Yes."

†

Klein "busied" all morning, until he returned to Minsk Street. He filled his stomach and prepared to rest; only then did he have the time and opportunity to listen to prayers above the gray fog.

Someone on Miss Justice's side has the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic? Seriously? Either it doesn't come, or it comes in pairs… As a secret organization, the Psychology Alchemists is quite qualified in the field of resources… Klein was suddenly left in the throes of happiness from having a choice.

Even if he counted the 500 pounds which The Hanged Man still hadn't paid him, he only had 1,335 pounds in cash. This didn't prevent him from seriously considering the request for a deal with the Psychology Alchemists.

After thinking for a dozen seconds or so, he passed Justice's words to

The Hanged Man to see what choice the latter would make.

†

3,000 pounds? Alger Wilson, who was still in Rorsted Archipelago's capital, the City of Generosity, felt as if someone had struck him hard.

After he became captain of the Blue Avenger, he sometimes played the role of a pirate and sometimes a law enforcer, secretly exterminating several groups of pirates. But even so, the total value of his spoils of war didn't exceed 2,000 pounds, and a portion of it had to be distributed to the sailors under him. Of course, this didn't include the ships and cannons which were captured as they had to be handed over to the Church of Storms.

This made Alger often sigh that most pirates weren't rich, that they were used to squandering on having opulent lives—liquor, barbecue, whores, marijuana, and gambling had drained the pirates of their money.

Unless I meet a pirate crew with Beyonders, it would be very difficult to get rich so suddenly… Alger paced a few steps, then he made up his mind.

He took out a gold mask from his undergarment pocket.

The mask had rough facial features, and the way they were formed had the characteristics of a primitive human being from an ancient forest.

Alger sat down, humbly recited the honorific name of The Fool, and said, "…I'm willing to use this mystical item to barter for the Wind-blessed potion formula.

"As long as the user wears this mask, they will become extremely calm and emotionless. At the same time, they will also obtain an extremely strong regenerative ability, exaggerated speed, and outstanding strength, as well as grasp a certain amount of black magic and primitive curse techniques.

"Its weakness is that as the number of times it's used increases, the wearer will become more and more unlike a human being. They will turn colder and colder, eventually treating themselves as a god."

†

Sitting in his seat as The Fool, Klein looked at the 500-pound note in front of him, the 5 strands of dark-blue hair as thick as a tiny snake, and the simple golden mask. He tapped the edge of the long table with his finger, thinking carefully about what mystical items he could use for a trade.

The All-Black Eye? Certainly not. This is the main ingredient of a Sequence 5 Marionettist. It's just short of having Little Sun to obtain the method to remove the mental corruption.

Black Emperor card? This card which cannot see the light of day has a value countless times higher than that of a Human-skinned Shadow's characteristic…

Mr. Azik's copper whistle? At the moment, its only function is the summoning of a messenger, and it's an important tool for communication. I can't sell it…

The copper whistle of the Numinous Episcopate member who left behind white feathers? Similarly, it can only summon a messenger, but the target on the other side of the messenger seems to be very dangerous…

Sun Brooch? This is something I want to use for myself. It effectively makes up for my weaknesses.

Master Key? It involves Mr. Door and has too many hidden secrets. In addition, just from the value of its effects, it pales in comparison to the Human-skinned Shadow's characteristic…

Biological Poison Bottle? This is very compatible with my Spirit Body state. If I use it well, I can even fight a group of Beyonders…

Demon hunting bullets, purifying bullets, exorcism bullets? These are not mystical items and are considered consumable Beyonder weapons. They are of very low value…

The Book of Secrets? This isn't a mystical item either. The Psychology Alchemists likely do not lack such knowledge…

At present, only the Beyonder characteristic of an Interrogator can be sold. However, the Psychology Alchemists wants mystical items. Furthermore, the trading venue is in Backlund, so it would easily expose information pertaining to Hero Bandit Black Emperor…

Klein took this opportunity to sort out what he had and finally came up with a perfect plan.

He first took the form of Mr. World, manipulating him to take up a praying posture, and then he responded with a hoarse voice, "…I accept the price of 2,500 pounds, but give me two days to raise the money."

Immediately following that, Klein threw the reply scenes of The Hanged Man and The World to the crimson star which symbolized Miss Justice.

†

After receiving affirmation from Miss Justice, Klein waited patiently all afternoon at Minsk Street.

It was late afternoon when the Machinery Hivemind member, Carlson, rang his doorbell.

Klein didn't ask anything further. He followed the man to the Lever Cathedral near the West Balam dock and entered a three-story building next to the cathedral.

The signboard wrote: “Backlund Institute for Mechanical Research.”

How academic… Klein suddenly thought of the Blackthorn Security Company and cracked the corner of his lips into a smile.

Under Carlson’s guidance, he passed through some strange devices and found himself in a windowless room.

On the long table in the room, there were many items emitting strong spirituality, including the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic and the Specter Portrait Frame which was covered in black cloth. However, there were no characteristics left behind by the dead Beyonders.

Obviously, the higher-ups of the Machinery Hivemind don’t want me to know about the Law of Indestructibility and Conservation… Klein wasn’t the least bit surprised.

“You can choose one.” The hatless Ikanser pointed at the long table.

Klein “scrutinized” the items several times before sighing.

“There’s nothing I want.

“If I were to convert it into gold, how much would I get?”

He had already made up his mind that he wouldn’t obtain the Human-skinned Shadow’s characteristic from the Machinery Hivemind.

Although this could be explained as the need to create some mystical item or to try out a unique ritualistic magic, there was still a chance of exposing his own Sequence. In a situation where there was a better choice, Klein didn’t want to take the risk.

Thus, he intended to take only money!

Not only would this help him gather the 2,500 pounds that the Psychology Alchemists quoted, but he could also effectively dispel the Machinery Hivemind’s wariness towards him.

Ikanser was visibly relieved. He smoothed his hair and answered with a smile, “1,500 pounds.

“However, we encourage you to choose money, so a total of 2,000 pounds.”

Klein immediately revealed a sincere smile.

“Alright!”

Chapter 450 - Distribution of Money

◆ ◆ ◆

With the help of a bestowment ritual, Klein handed 2,500 pounds in cash and the gold mask provided by The Hanged Man to Miss Justice, and he used the image of The World to urge her to close the deal as soon as possible.

I've spent almost 5,000 pounds in the past two weeks. If I didn't leave Tingen, this amount of money is enough for me to maintain a lifestyle just like my landlady's family… A doll ruins one's life, consuming potions bankrupts you for three generations[1]… Klein looked at the vast fog and the ancient palace, which had returned to silence. He was a little upset, as though he had lost something important.

He was quiet for a few seconds before returning to the real world. He picked up the remaining 830 pounds on his desk, and he counted out six five-pound notes.

Then, Klein put the thirty pounds of cash in his now deflated wallet and stuffed it solemnly into the inside pocket of his clothes.

He divided the other eight hundred pounds into two stacks, placing one stack in each of his side pockets.

After that, Klein opened the drawer and took out two of the five Deep-sea Naga hair strands that he had brought back to the real world. He wrapped them in layers after layers of paper and carefully put them into his pocket.

When he was done, he took his hat and cane, and he headed for the street corner under the glow of the street lamps at night. He got on a carriage and headed for the Bravehearts Bar in the Backlund Bridge area.

In the heated and noisy environment, Klein insisted on finishing his glass of Southville beer before he slowly made his way out of the bar and into a rental carriage through the thundering cheers for the boxers.

Taking in the rumbling of the wheels, he intentionally closed his eyes. Suddenly, he heard the sound of the window being lightly tapped.

Klein's facial muscles twitched slightly as he opened his eyes and looked in front of him. He saw the pale and exquisite Miss Sharron sitting quietly across him.

Without waiting for her to question him, Klein smiled and said, "I sold the information you gave me last time for a good price, the one about the Amon family tomb."

Sharron looked at him silently.

Leaning his cane to the side, Klein took out two stacks of cash and a small clump of paper from his pocket.

"Eight hundred pounds plus two strands of Deep-sea Naga hair, for a total of about a thousand pounds; that's what you deserve." Klein took a silent breath and smiled as he handed over the cash and paper clump.

Sharron glanced at him and reached out her hand to take both items.

She lowered her head, looked at the items in her hand, and asked in an ethereal voice, "How much did you sell it for?"

"Two thousand pounds, so we split it equally." Klein chuckled.

If the Machinery Hivemind had only paid me 1,500 pounds according to the original plan, then I'll have to first owe you a portion of it… he thought gladly.

With a flip of Sharron's bloodless hand, the cash and the paper clump disappeared without a trace.

She raised her head and tersely acknowledged before asking succinctly, "What's in the tomb?"

"I don't know, I didn't go." Klein didn't disclose the help he had received from the magic mirror, Arrodes.

For an instant, he felt that if he described the experience in detail, Miss Sharron would've listened attentively with one hand on her cheek, as she had done before.

This Wraith lady seems to have a hobby of watching situational scenes and dramas or listening to all kinds of rumors… Klein summed up.

Sharron's expression didn't change. After a few seconds of silence, she said, "Someone is digging a tunnel to the underground ruin."

"Huh?" Klein wasn't able to react for a moment to what Sharron was talking about.

However, he soon understood which underground ruin Sharron was referring to.

There was only one underground ruin the two of them knew of, and that was the Fourth Epoch Tudor Dynasty ruin.

Someone is digging their way into the underground structure? Klein pondered for a few seconds, then he suddenly came to a realization.

"Is it that baronet?"

He had already forgotten the name of the hidden Tudor Dynasty descendant, other than knowing that he had an aristocratic title of a baronet and that he lived on Sivellaus Street where the Backlund police station was located.

"Yes." Sharron gave him a positive answer.

“What is he looking for? Doesn’t he know that there’s an evil spirit inside? Doesn’t he know that all the Beyonders from his family died in there?” Klein asked himself a few questions.

Sharron sat up straight and replied seriously, “I don’t know if he knows or not.”

“…How much longer will he take to dig through?” Klein asked in deliberation.

“Another two to three months, for the time being, he’s doing it on his own.” Sharron provided her own judgment.

Phew. Klein let out a small sigh.

“There’s no need to rush. When I’m ready, then we can go ‘visit’ him together.”

At this point, he explained with a smile, “As you know, I like to make sufficient preparations in advance.”

I won’t get involved in anything until I advance to Faceless! He warned himself inwardly.

“Alright.” Sharron didn’t ask him what he was going to do, but her figure faded quickly, and she disappeared from the carriage.

Klein leaned back against the wall, feeling relaxed.

The ingredients for the Faceless potion has been reserved, and I’m just waiting for the “delivery”… My debts have all been paid off, so there’s nothing to worry about… His mood was like a fizzy wine that had settled. Occasionally, there would be a little bit of joy that would silently surge upwards.

The only problem is… Klein touched his left breast, where there was a shriveled wallet.

He sighed and said to himself silently, “Only thirty pounds in cash, five gold coins, and some change…”

†

Thursday afternoon.

Audrey Hall was waiting in the study for the arrival of Miss Escalante.

After receiving The Hanged Man’s and The World’s replies, she had immediately sent a servant to send a letter to Escalante.

The content of the letter was very ordinary. Audrey hoped that the second psychology class this week would be brought forward to Thursday. In reality, Audrey had already made an agreement with Escalante. Once she expressed such an intention, it would mean that the other party had agreed to the conditions.

Tick. Tock. The wall clock on the wall moved briskly, and Escalante with her waist-reaching long hair entered the room with several teaching materials in hand.

Audrey immediately gave Susie a look. The big golden retriever somewhat reluctantly leaped out, lay down in the nearby shadows, and observed the people coming and going.

Escalante closed the study door, looked around slowly, then sat down across the small white round table and put down the teaching materials.

“Are they paying for it in cash, or with some kind of mystical item?” this member of the Psychology Alchemists asked in a low voice.

“One directly gave 2,500 pounds, and one provided a mystical item.” Audrey flippantly took out a white cardboard box from her medium-sized orange handbag. The outside of the box was covered with a wall of spirituality.

After removing the wall of spirituality, she opened the lid of the box, revealing the simple golden mask.

Then, she recounted the flaws and effects of the mask.

To be honest, she was very curious when she received the mystical item. She had wished to test its effects since it was her first time coming into contact with a mystical item. However, she finally resisted her urges, as she didn't wish to turn cold.

"It's basically the same value." Escalante tried it and breathed a sigh of relief.

After two seconds, she pulled out the thickest textbook and flipped to page 48.

The middle part of the textbook had been hollowed out. There was an iron box about the size of a palm and a rolled up piece of parchment.

"Human-skinned Shadow characteristic… Wind-blessed potion formula…" Escalante showed and introduced them to her.

Audrey's gaze cast towards the characteristic which resembled a diamond. The face inside left her head spinning.

This… This has the ability to restrain a Spectator's powers… Is this the Sequence pathway of Mr. World? No wonder… Audrey looked away and studied the formula.

"Sequence 6: Wind-blessed. Main ingredients: Six crystalline feathers of a Blue Shadow Falcon, a pair of Dragon-Eyed Sea Condor eyes…"

Before Audrey could examine the supplementary ingredients, Escalante rolled up the parchment in time.

After that, she set up the wall of spirituality around the metal box again, closed the textbook, and pushed the thick book towards Audrey.

Audrey held the book, but she didn't hand over the gold mask and 2,500 pounds to Escalante in a timely manner.

Seeing the look of puzzlement in Escalante's eyes, the prepared Audrey smiled and said, "The other party is worried that the characteristic doesn't match and that the formula is fake. They hope to verify it first.

"And before the verification, the money and items will all be held under my custody. All of them believe in my trustworthiness, and I do not wish to lose this reputation."

"I understand their concerns." Escalante paused for a moment before saying, "We trust you, too."

Since the money and items were in the hands of one of her own members, she wasn't worried about being cheated despite feeling upheavals.

Besides Miss Audrey is rich and powerful. She can be trusted to be a guarantor… Escalante thought with relief.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein held a spirit pendulum in hand, divining the authenticity of the Wind-blessed potion formula.

He didn't wish to inadvertently lose the most experienced and powerful member of the Tarot Club, Mr. Hanged Man.

When he opened his eyes and saw the topaz pendant turning clockwise, Klein heaved a sigh of relief and sent his thoughts to the crimson star that symbolized The Hanged Man.

†

City of Generosity.

Alger first saw the endless gray fog before hearing Mr. Fool's low but distant voice.

“Miss Justice has completed the deal.”

An illusory piece of parchment appeared in front of Alger. On it was the Wind-blessed potion formula.

With the potion going through Mr. Fool’s hands, he had no qualms about the authenticity of the formula. He bowed his head respectfully and thanked him.

When the “illusion” dissipated, he immediately found a pen and paper to jot down the potion formula.

Then, he paced back and forth in excitement, muttering to himself, “Blue Shadow Falcon… That primitive island has it…”

†

After finishing the matter regarding The Hanged Man, Klein finally had the time to check his Human-skinned Shadow characteristic.

After confirming its authenticity, he relaxed and leaned back in his chair, exhaling happily.

Finally…

After three seconds, Klein suddenly sat up, and he decided that there was no time to lose. Tonight, he would concoct the Faceless potion!

†

This is a meme in Chinese, where the “doll” and “consuming potions” change depending on the joke.

Chapter 451 - Faceless

◆ ◆ ◆

15 Minsk Street, in the dank, cold kitchen.

Klein rummaged for his newly bought large iron pot, poured fresh water into it, and carefully scrubbed it several times.

Then, he dropped some matches into it and snapped his fingers.

The scarlet flames soared, and under his control, they quickly burned the remaining water droplets dry, without harming the surface of the pot.

This time, there were no ingredients such as pure water in the potion recipe, so Klein was even more careful than the previous two times. He wanted to ensure that everything was in good measure to prevent any problems.

Although he was able to divine whether the concoction would be successful or not, at least to not endanger his life, such a result could still involve his potion being ineffective. Attempting to extract the Beyonder characteristics from the concoction would be relatively difficult, just like the removal of the mental corruption of a Rampager. He would need the corresponding technique, methods, or rituals, and Klein wouldn't be able to gather a second round of ingredients within a short period of time either.

After finishing his preparations, Klein took a deep breath as he looked at the neatly arranged boxes. Finally, he recalled the potion recipe:

“Faceless:

Main ingredients: Mutated pituitary gland of a Thousand-faced Hunter, Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow.

Supplementary ingredients: 80 ml of a Thousand-faced Hunter’s blood, 5 drops of black Jimsonweed juice, 10 grams of Dragon Tooth Grass powder, 3 strands of hair from a Deep-sea Naga.”

He first picked up the cardboard box which came from Vampire Emlyn White. He opened the box and took out the glass bottle that contained 100 milliliters of a Thousand-faced Hunter’s blood.

Glancing at the scale, Klein unscrewed the lid and steadily poured the sticky liquid into the pot with a stable wrist. The liquid changed its color depending on the variation in the lighting.

As it was a supplementary ingredient, he didn’t pursue precision and didn’t use chemical experiment apparatus to separate and titrate the liquid.

The Thousand-faced Hunter’s blood was like thin honey that slowly filled the bottom of the pot. When Klein felt that it was about time, he stopped tilting it and allowed the liquid to flow back.

There’s still about 20 milliliters left; my spiritual intuition is quite accurate… Klein withdrew his gaze from the glass bottle and tightened the lid. This 20 milliliters of Thousand-faced Hunter’s blood could still be used to make mystical items, Beyonder weapons, extraordinary scrolls, or for drawing symbols or labels in some ritualistic magic. It was still very precious.

After putting the glass bottle back into the cotton-filled box, Klein went down the list and added the black Jimsonweed juice and the Dragon Tooth Grass powder. He saw that the liquid in the iron pot started to bubble.

Without pausing, he picked up three strands of dark blue hair that resembled tiny snakes with his black-gloved right hand, and he firmly placed them on the surface of the liquid.

Sizzle!

A faint mist rose from the iron pot, and the color of the liquid turned a deep blue.

It already has such a strange effect even without adding the main ingredients… As expected of a Sequence 6 potion… Klein reached out and grabbed the silver tin box which Vampire Emlyn White had thrown in as well.

With a snapping sound, Klein opened the lid of the box, revealing a peach-like item inside.

He didn't directly touch the Thousand-faced Hunter's mutated pituitary gland. Instead, he placed the tin box over the top of the pot and overturned it.

A yellow-brown object with the grooves and ridges of a brain fell in, crashing into the dark blue liquid.

At this moment, no liquid droplets splashed up, and the pituitary gland that was constantly changing its shape silently melted.

The colors of gray and yellowish-brown quickly merged with the dark blue, and the bubbling suddenly increased in size.

At this point, Klein was a little nervous, but he controlled himself. He picked up the last box and overturned the huge diamond-like Human-skinned Shadow characteristic into the pot.

All of a sudden, the mist converged, and even the glow of the gas lamps showed signs of being attracted and devoured as the room turned darker.

When everything returned to normal, Klein finally saw what the final potion looked like.

It was blackish-green all over, and from time to time, it would produce a bubble the size of an eye, and as if it had a life of its own, it would produce a burping sound every few seconds.

When the bubble reached the surface, it would immediately burst, and during this process, it would reflect light in a myriad of colors.

The colors combined to form a picture of different faces, and the facial features seemed to be a random combination.

Klein picked up the iron pot with one hand and poured the liquid inside into a glass bottle that he had prepared beforehand. Because of a potion's characteristics, not one bit was left in the pot.

Using divination to confirm that the degree of harm was acceptable, which meant that the potion had been successfully concocted, Klein took the Faceless potion bottle and walked steadily back to the second floor, entering the room with the curtains closed.

After locking the door, he sat on the edge of the bed and, with the help of Cogitation, calmed his slightly agitated and anxious mood.

After sitting upright for more than ten seconds, Klein twisted the cap off of the bottle, raised his right hand, and swiftly poured the entire potion into his mouth.

A slightly tingling sensation swished in his mouth and esophagus, and finally, it fermented into a numbing sensation that made him lose his senses.

Klein's psyche seemed to be extracted from his body as he had the feeling of being a bystander and saw his mouth, nose, ears, and eyes melting—his entire face was melting!

In just two or three seconds, his face and head had turned into what seemed like scorched white wax. His body was similarly abnormal; it was as if his bones and skin were being melted by blood.

No, I can’t allow such a situation to continue developing! Klein knew that if he didn’t keep it under control, he could be on the verge of losing control at any moment.

As a “spectator,” he tried his best to pull his thoughts back to his body, trying to visualize the layers of stacked spherical lights and maintain his state of Cogitation.

After a brief but repeated attempt, he finally felt his body once again. He tried his best to control every tiny part of his body to hold onto his lower limit.

As the melting and dissolving assaulted him again and again, Klein lost sense of how long he held on for, but when it finally came to an end, he regained the feeling that his body belonged to him.

At that moment, he knew that he had finally broken through the threshold and was now a Sequence 6. He was now a Faceless!

Klein didn’t sweat, but he was mentally exhausted. He barely got to his feet and walked to the full-length mirror, trying to observe what he looked like.

Under the gas lamp’s illumination, he took two sudden steps back and caused the floor to reverberate.

The scene in the mirror was extremely shocking!

Klein saw that his face and exposed skin were covered with dense, pale granules. It would make any normal creature who saw those go numb and subconsciously resist. The more timid ones might even lose their mind.

Despite knowing the acting method, and having completely digested the Magician potion, my advancement to Sequence 6 was still rather difficult. I was only two to three steps away from losing control. I wonder how much of a risk those Beyonders who relied on the accumulation of time and barely qualified to consume the potion faced. The probability of failure definitely isn't low… It's no wonder Sequence 7 is relatively common among the members of the Churches, and they will shoulder the responsibility of captain or bishop, while the number of people at Sequence 6 begins to plummet… Klein closed his eyes and sat back in his chair.

With the help of Cogitation, he was able to restrain his overflowing spirituality and recover from his exhaustion.

After about ten minutes, the disgusting granules on his body had completely faded and merged into his flesh.

Phew. Klein exhaled, walked back to the full-length mirror, and he looked at his full-bearded appearance.

Suddenly, his facial hair began to squirm. His flesh and skin began to undergo a bizarre change like half-melted wax.

Within a second or two, Klein had reverted to his original appearance: black hair, brown eyes, ordinary facial features, a clean face with a deep outline, and a somewhat thin body.

He quietly gazed at his past self and stretched out his right hand to press it against his face.

With a gentle touch, Klein's face changed again. His nose bridge was high, his lips were extremely thin, and there was a tinge of elegance in his handsome face. There was an unconcealable pride in his appearance. It was none other than Vampire Emlyn White.

A little too short… He laughed at himself.

At this moment, the bones and ligaments in his body began to produce cracking and snapping sounds as his entire body suddenly soared up a little. He now looked identical to Emlyn White, externally.

I’ve noticed that I can accurately recall the exterior appearance and temperament of every person I know, and I can grasp their unique scent… Klein’s pores squirmed, and his body changed accordingly. The smell of his body became different as a result of this.

He looked into the full-length mirror again, letting his hairline slowly recede, and he changed the color of his eyes into a deep gray.

Without a sound, Dunn Smith seemed to come alive again, and he was staring at the team member who always came to him to report on unusual matters.

Letting out a breath, Klein returned to his original form, but the corners of his mouth remained curled upwards.

He thought for a moment, took a few steps back, and looked at the magazine, Ladies Aesthetics, which he had bought to look at fashionable beauties, and he noted down the appearance of the actress on the cover.

Then, he went back to the full-length mirror and wiped his face with his right hand.

When he looked in the mirror again, he saw a young lady with black hair that went past her shoulders and delicate facial features.

It really works… Klein looked down at his chest, but he didn’t see any protrusions.

Trying hard to control his body, he managed to create a pair of A cups by moving his fat and some of his flesh.

However, there was nothing he could do about his lower body.

That is to say, it is just a superficial change in appearance, nothing fundamental… Also, I can only grow taller or shorter by 10 centimeters at the moment. Going beyond this range would be difficult… Also, there’s a limit to the enlargement and shrinkage of the head. For example, I can’t mimic Father Utravsky’s half-giant head at all… Also, I can only observe the appearance and temperament of the target in an instant, without knowing anything related to him. It’s easy for me to be exposed when facing a Spectator like Miss Justice… Heh heh, in the Clown stage, the Clown restrains the Spectator, but in the Faceless stage, it is actually somewhat restrained by the Spectator. Interesting…

Upon having this thought, Klein stopped changing and returned to the appearance of Sherlock Moriarty.

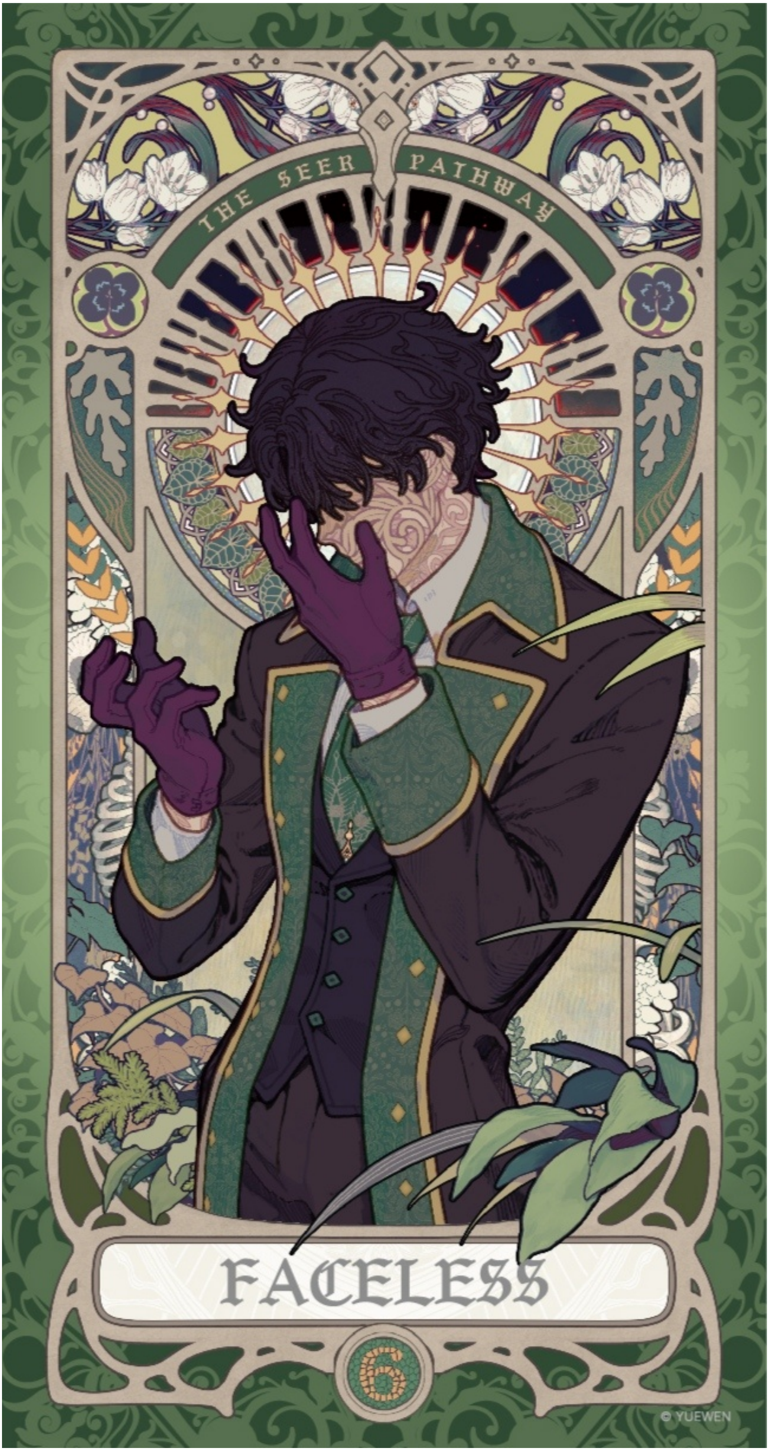
Divination, fighting, as well as a Magician’s Beyonder powers, have all been enhanced. As for how much they’ve improved, it can only be confirmed through practice. I should find some time to head to the Quelaag Club tomorrow… Klein took one last look and went downstairs to clear up the mess.

After rounding up everything, he quickly washed up and crawled into bed.

Lying there, looking out the window at the crimson moonlight, he gradually calmed down.

After a few minutes of this, Klein slowly closed his eyes and smiled to himself.

Good night, Faceless.


THE SEER PATHWAY
FACELESS
6
© YUEWEN

The Fool Pathway Potion Formula (Sequence 7-6):

[image]

Chapter 452 - Benson's Decision

◆

Townshend Street, in between Empress Borough and West Borough.

Xio Derecha was standing in a dark, secluded alley. Even without looking up, she could see the countless magnificent palaces and tall Gothic towers in the distance.

[image]

It was the highest district in the whole of Backlund, and it was also where the Loen royal family resided.

It shared the same or even slightly higher status as the White Maple Palace of Intis and the Aurmir Palace of the Feysac Empire in the Southern and Northern Continent and in the entire world, but its name was neither romantic nor ancient.

It was called the Sodela Palace, and in ancient Feysac, it meant “balance.”

Xio looked away from the famous “Bell of Order” and directed her sight to the other side of the alley.

In the shadows where the street lamps didn’t shine, a figure slowly walked out.

The figure wore a golden mask that revealed the lower half of his face. He was none other than the mysterious person who had previously sold the Sheriff formula to Xio and had occasionally entrusted her with some tasks.

When Xio and Fors discussed in private, they both suspected that the person was from MI9.

“Any progress this week?” the man wearing the gold mask asked as per usual.

Xio shook her head.

“No, I don’t think anyone was keeping tabs on Capim before the incident.”

She paused for a moment, then she reluctantly asked, “Do you still want to continue investigating this matter?”

The masked man was silent for a moment.

“There’s no need, but if you hear anything related in the future, then contact me right away.

“Today, I’ll give you a new mission.”

“What mission?” Xio was completely in her bounty hunter state, ready to assess the risks.

The masked guy laughed.

“This is a very simple mission, and it’s one that you’ve been dreaming of doing.

“Seek to purchase the Sheriff and Interrogator main ingredients in all your circles, especially a special ingredient that can be directly concocted into a potion. If someone responds to it, we will pay for it.”

“The purchased ingredients will belong to me?” Xio blurted out a response.

This was her greatest concern.

“No, do you believe that such a simple mission would have such a high reward? Of course, if you're able to fish out the person we're looking for, it's not impossible to negotiate and let you obtain the main ingredients," the masked man said with a chuckle.

"But I don't know the main ingredients of the Interrogator potion…" Xio hesitantly said.

"I'll tell you later. This is also our advance payment. Even if we don't find the target, you'll have the main portion of a Sequence 7 potion formula, worth more than 600 pounds. I think you're fully aware of our generosity," the masked man said in a bewitching tone.

Generous indeed… Who's their target, and why are they willing to pay such a high price to find them? Well, if he were from MI9, taking advantage of this mission to retrieve the Beyonder ingredients of the Arbiter pathway on the market should also be one of his goals. There's no problem about wasting money… As quite an experienced bounty hunter, Xio instinctively thought of a few things.

After some deliberation, she nodded and said, "I'll take this commission."

"Very good." The masked man's tone turned relaxed as he surveyed his surroundings and said, "The Interrogator potion's main ingredients are the horn of a Flash-patterned Black Snake and dust of a Lake Spirit."

After saying that, he slowly retreated and melded into the shadows, disappearing into the corner of the alley.

"He really told me the main ingredients of the Interrogator potion…" Xio was momentarily stunned.

Only at that point did she clearly realize how much importance the masked man's faction placed on this mission.

I wonder who their target is. It seems to be focused on some special ingredient that can be used to directly concoct a Sheriff or Interrogator potion… With this in mind, Xio suddenly froze up.

She remembered one thing. When she advanced to Sheriff, she had used a special ingredient she had bought through Fors, one that could be used to concoct the corresponding potion!

This… Is that their target? Xio instinctively decided to keep silent on this matter, to never tell the masked man anything.

She rubbed her fat baby cheeks and walked towards the street outside, ready to take a public carriage back to Cherwood Borough.

At that moment, she saw a brown carriage drive past. Her eyes were instantly attracted by the coat of arms on the carriage.

The coat of arms consisted of a single flower and two rings. There was nothing special about it, but Xio stared at it in a daze as though her gaze had frozen.

It was only when the carriage was far away, did she withdraw her gaze. Her mood immediately reached rock bottom. It didn't turn for the better, even when she returned to the shared rented house.

Seeing that her friend was in a bad mood, Fors poured two glasses of red wine and brought them to her.

"What happened?" She sat across her and pushed one of the glasses toward Xio.

Xio looked down at the red wine. After a full two minutes of silence, she said in a slightly hoarse voice, "On the way back, I met someone I used to know."

"Who?" Fors asked, cooperatively.

"Viscount Stratford," Xio replied to any question she received without elaborating.

Fors thought for a moment and then she said, "This Viscount seems to be the captain of the royal guards?"

As a best-selling novel author, she would receive invitations from noblemen who liked literature and participated in afternoon tea parties and banquets from time to time. With her professional habits of collecting material as a writer, she would certainly volunteer to understand more famous noblemen.

It was at such a party that she got to know Viscount Glaint.

“Yes, he used to be my father’s deputy,” Xio said with some difficulty.

“Your father?” Fors knew that Xio came from a fallen aristocratic family and had some secrets. However, she didn’t know the specifics.

Xio picked up the glass of red wine and gulped it down, coughing a few times after she choked.

After calming herself down, she said, “My family was once part of the aristocracy. In its heyday, it even served as an earl palatine.”

“Earl palatine? What position is that?” Fors asked, half curious, half trying to soothe her friend’s mood.

“It’s equivalent to being the spokesperson for the royal family, nobles that are the closest to the throne,” Xio said in recollection, her face jubilant. “From that moment forth, our family had the fief a true earl would have, but it wasn’t as illustrious during the time of my father. However, we still held the trust of the former king, Might-wielder William VI. He was the leader of the Household Guards Division and the captain of the royal guards.”

Her tone gradually turned melancholic as she found it difficult to hide her pain.

“But seven years ago, he was accused of participating in a revolt, and he was eventually executed and deprived of his aristocratic title and fiefdom.

“Because of this, my family fell from grace, and many of my family members even died for no reason. In order to live, we changed our surnames and left East Tucker County…

“I don’t believe that my father would engage in mutiny. He was so loyal to the royal family, even more so than his belief in the Goddess! In order to… Anyway, I left my mother and my younger brother and came to Backlund, looking for a chance to improve myself, hoping to restore my family’s glory and my father’s reputation.”

Xio was vague about some of the things midway through her recount, but Fors didn’t mind. She sighed and said, “It’ll be very, very difficult.”

But she immediately smiled.

“But I will support you!”

And behind me is the mysterious Tarot Club! she added in her mind.

†

Night time in Tingen City, 2 Daffodil Street.

Melissa, who was doing math problems, turned her head to the door and looked at Benson who had just taken off his half top hat.

“Where did you go? Aren’t the results announced tomorrow?”

“They’re already available tonight, and I happen to know two of the city’s employees who are in charge of the unified exam,” Benson said with a smirk.

In early December, he had enrolled for the Civil Servant Unified Examination, selected a relatively uncompetitive position, and, in the process, established friendships with several civil servants and a number of examination candidates through his eloquence and communication skills.

“What was the result?” Melissa unconsciously put down the fountain pen in her hand.

Benson’s expression immediately darkened, but before Melissa could open her mouth, he revealed a bright smile.

“I passed!

“And I’m ranked quite high!”

“That’s great…” Melissa stood up and took two steps forward. “You have to start preparing for the second round of exams at the end of January. It’s held in Backlund. I need to prepare your luggage for you ahead of time… When are you planning on leaving?”

Seeing his sister’s concern, Benson walked into the living room, smiled and said, “I plan to do so after the new year. We’ll go to Backlund together and rent a house there.

“Regardless of the success of the exam, I’m prepared to stay in Backlund and try my luck. And you can take advantage of the New Year’s holiday to transfer to the technical school in Backlund to prepare for the entrance exam at the Backlund University of Technology and Industry in June.”

Just a month ago, the Backlund Polytechnic of Technology and Industry had been reorganized and officially upgraded to a university for industry and technology.

Melissa’s lips unconsciously pursed as she quietly listened.

She looked around wistfully and replied softly, “Okay.”

†

Friday afternoon at the Quelaag Club.

Klein walked out and hired a carriage to head for Prince Edessak’s Red Rose Manor.

It was the place where Talim had gone to a few days before his death. As a qualified detective, he would be completely unworthy of the 100 pounds he was paid, if he didn't hold any investigations there.

No matter what, I still have to put on a convincing act… Klein muttered as he sat in the carriage and enjoyed the scenery outside the window.

After his morning practice, he had roughly grasped the range of improvements in every aspect. Flame Controlling, Flaming Jump, and other Beyonder powers had become about 30% stronger. The might of Air Bullets and the length of the Underwater Breathing pipe had even increased severalfold. His divination and combat skills had also received a substantial improvement.

Paper Figurine Substitutes and Damage Transfer didn't experience much change, but because of the growth of his spirituality, the number of times that they could be used had increased.

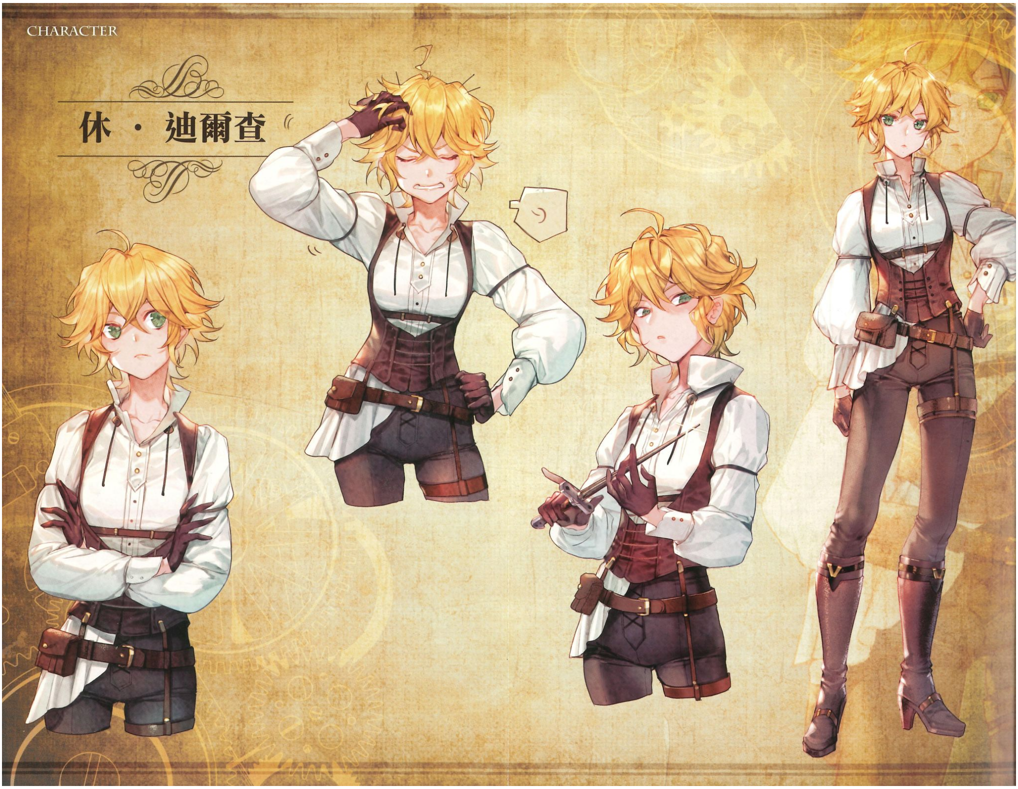
Klein finally arrived at Red Rose Manor amidst the rumbling journey and informed the two soldiers guarding the entrance of his purpose.

After passing the news, he met the old butler from before.

"You can ask everyone here." The white-haired elderly butler paused, then added, "Except that lady."

That's what I want. I don't want to get into trouble… Klein laughed casually.

"Alright!"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Chapter 453 - “Stairs”

◆

Red Rose Manor, outside the luxurious rooms filled with all kinds of antiques.

Klein stood at the door and asked the sixth maid he had met today.

The young maid was wearing a black-and-white servant dress that had the characteristics of the times. She was pretty, in her prime, and had natural curls to her brown hair. She had a hint of playfulness on her face.

“Who does Mr. Talim meet when he visits?” Klein repeated the question numbly.

The maid replied almost without a pause, “Mr. Talim usually requests to meet His Highness, or to accompany him in riding horses, or to discuss matters. If His Highness happens to be absent, he will meet with that lady. They are very good friends. He receives permission from the butler.”

Talim is good friends with the commoner lady who Prince Edessak likes? Meeting in private from time to time? It was likely that he was persuading her to leave this place, so as to not affect the reputation of the Prince… Klein nodded thoughtfully.

“They, I mean—Mr. Talim and the young lady, what would they talk about?”

When he asked this question, Klein suddenly recalled how Talim had fallen in love just recently. With his rich “experience” from the information age, he somehow came up with an extremely contrived romance story.

The maid wasn’t afraid of the detective. She smiled, shook her head, and said, “At times like these, we’re all asked to leave the room.”

This… Even more than ever, Klein couldn’t resist making associations, even to the point of changing the colors[1] of Prince Edessak’s hat and helmet.

Without waiting for him to ask any further questions, the maid chuckled and said, “Detective Moriarty, if you want to find out exactly what the lady and Mr. Talim were talking about, you can ask her directly.”

“The old butler doesn’t permit that.” Klein confidently pushed out his scapegoat.

He changed the topic and said with a smile, “You seem to know more than the other servants. You even know to call me Detective Moriarty.”

The maid looked around, maintained her smile, and said, “It’s because I’ve been serving the lady during my rotations. She’s always wanted to meet you, Detective Moriarty. After all, she’s close friends with Mr. Talim and cares a great deal about his death.

“Unfortunately, she always ends up missing you.”

“Always?” Klein was sensitive to the words “always,” “just happened,” and “missed.”

The maid nodded seriously and said, “The first time His Highness invited you to be his guest, she intentionally threw a tantrum and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to walk downstairs to meet you. Who knew that you would leave in a hurry.

“Afterwards, she took the initiative to represent His Highness to place flowers on Mr. Talim's grave, but as she didn't know what you looked like, she wasn't able to find you.

"And today, she just happened to go to the golf course out back to relax on horseback. Otherwise, even if the butler didn't allow it, she would've tried to find a way to meet you."

What a coincidence… Klein sighed as he suddenly grasped a crucial point.

On the day of Talim's funeral, it was the commoner lady he loved who had offered flowers in the prince's place!

On that day, Klein was most concerned about the lady with the black veil and the sapphire ring on her finger. She might have a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or some powerful existence of an equal level!

All of a sudden, a thought flashed through Klein's mind—the woman with the sapphire ring on her finger was wearing a long, heavy black dress. Accompanied by two maids, she slowly disappeared into the distance…

One of the ladies had brown natural curls.

The image of the maid quickly overlapped with the one in front of Klein, and it was abnormally identical!

Klein's body tensed up, and sweat rolled down his back, but his expression didn't change at all.

Using the abilities of a Clown, he pretended like he was recalling the event, and he asked with a smile, "Were you with that lady on the day of Talim's funeral?"

The maid replied without much thought, "Yes."

…Damn, it's really her! Klein maintained his smile.

"Very well, next question."

As if nothing had happened, he began to inquire about other things, then he switched to another servant and continued.

However, Klein secretly shortened the process and sped up the progress.

He wanted to leave Red Rose Manor before the young lady returned from her riding!

At four o'clock in the afternoon, before the sky had turned dark, Klein left the manor much earlier than expected and took the carriage sent by the old butler back to the city.

Sitting in the window with his back against the wall wrapped in silk and muslin, he was relieved to have the energy to reflect on the whole situation—it was Prince Edessak's beloved commoner lady who had cursed Talim…

Why did she have to deal with a descendant of a fallen noble family? To take revenge against Talim for trying to break up the relationship between her and the prince?

But there's no need for her to do it herself. She can find a chance to mention it while in bed. Prince Edessak has plenty of ways to make Talim disappear without a sound…

Talim was in a state of deep love before he died. Yes… The first sign was after he successfully persuaded the commoner lady to leave Prince Edessak… They had an affair? So, the commoner lady who was brought back to the manor killed Talim in order to silence him and remove any latent dangers?

Logically speaking, it makes sense, but the problem is how could a person with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a powerhouse of an equivalent level be restricted by Prince Edessak? Even if the Augustus family is an Angel Family, with the accumulation of enough knowledge, they would still need to use tremendous strength and special methods to be able to restrain someone like that. This isn't something a prince can do…

Besides, how could such a figure have taken a fancy to Talim?

Why does she want to see me all the time? Did she sense that I'm using the gray fog to spy on her?

No, if that were the case, I would've been buried with Talim on the day of his funeral… Besides, when she first wanted to see me, I didn't have any blood, hair, or belongings. I hadn't made any divinations yet!

Klein was puzzled as he thought about it. In the end, he decided to bury the problem deep within his heart. He wasn't to probe or investigate!

I hope that the Machinery Hivemind, with my earlier reminder, will pay importance to this matter of noticing the royal family's abnormality. Yes, they might regard it with great importance—not because of Prince Edessak's reputation, but for another reason! I hope the royal family continues to prevent the lady from visiting me… After a few days, when the time is right, I'll relinquish this mission, express how powerless I am on this matter, and then use the excuse of going to the south for a holiday, to change my identity and hide for a while! Klein's heart gradually calmed down.

†

Evenings in Backlund were always replaced by dark clouds and drizzling rain, and Klein, who felt physically and mentally exhausted, held down his half top hat and walked quickly across the wet street to No. 15 Minsk Street under the illumination of the street lamps.

After resting for a bit and taking advantage of the dark surroundings, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

After advancing to Sequence 6 Faceless, he had always wanted to check the mysterious space to see if there were any changes. However, as he was too tired last night and couldn't wake up in the middle of the night, he had to wait until he was done being “busy” outside.

In addition, Klein had to eliminate any interference in order to divine a particular matter.

That was, after this advancement, when his spirituality wasn’t stable yet, he didn’t hear the illusory ravings of “Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…” anymore!

He wanted to know if this was a natural change after ascending to Sequence 6, or if there was some other reason.

Within the majestic palace, the mottled bronze tables and the twenty-two high back chairs with different symbols on their backs stood quietly, as if they had remained unchanged since time immemorial.

The same was true for the gray fog below them, as well as the endless emptiness around them.

But as soon as Klein entered, his spiritual intuition was keenly aware that the mysterious space was somewhat different from before.

He was in no hurry to explore or make any attempts. Calming himself down, he sat at the end of the table, conjured a pen and paper, and wrote a divination statement: “The reason why I haven’t heard any ravings after my advancement.”

Holding the piece of paper and muttering the sentence, Klein leaned back in his chair and quickly entered the dreamland with the help of Cogitation.

In the dusky sky and land, images flashed, and in the end, they all came to a stop on a particular scene.

It was Klein, whose face and body was still covered in pale granules. He was surrounded by an illusory, thin layer of gray fog that was undetectable.

The dream shattered. Klein opened his eyes and roughly understood the reason.

The gray fog has interwoven with reality, helping me block out the ravings that come from who knows where…

After advancing to Sequence 6, my connection with the mysterious space above the gray fog has become even stronger; thus, bringing about certain changes and allowing me to naturally borrow a portion of its powers?

From the looks of it, that should be the case.

Yes, I should try to explore the area and see if there are any changes.

Klein slowly stood up and followed his spiritual perception, walking in a certain direction outside the ancient palace. Beneath his feet was the gray fog that spread out like the sea.

He finally decided to stop after walking for an unknown period of time. However, when he gave up on exploring, a light suddenly flickered at the end of the path.

In his joy, Klein quickened his pace and approached.

Seven or eight seconds later, he saw a flight of stairs that seemed to lead to heaven!

The staircase was formed from pure light. It was holy, transparent, and untainted, capable of shocking anyone's heart.

There were only four levels as the staircase reached up into the void, and each level was rather high, as though it was meant for creatures even larger than giants.

Klein looked up, followed its path, and saw a layer of grayish white fog, condensed and suspended in midair, as though it was supporting something. It was a significant distance from the staircase of light.

The four-stepped staircase represents my consumption of the Sequence 9, Sequence 8, Sequence 7, and Sequence 6 potions? What exactly is above that layer of fog? Klein cautiously advanced until he reached the staircase of light and stepped onto it.

There was nothing odd about the steps, and they were as solid as stone.

Klein went up the stairs, climbed up to the fourth level, and then tried to look up at the area above the gray fog. Unfortunately, his vision couldn’t penetrate anything.

He thought for a moment, then he took two steps forward and jumped up with all his might.

However, the moment he left the staircase of light, he lost his momentum and his Spirit Body’s flight instinct. He plummeted straight down and landed on the bottom layer of the gray fog.

Looks like I need to advance another two to three other Sequences. If Sequence 4 really does result in a qualitative change, then I should be able to see after becoming a demigod… Klein looked up and made a judgment.

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†

Implying that it turns green, which in Chinese means being cuckolded.

Chapter 454 - Who Am I?

◆

After looking around, Klein, who had found nothing else, returned to the stone pillar-propped ancient palace.

He sat at the head of the long bronze table with his eyes half-closed. He examined his spirituality growth with the number of members he could draw in.

Including the empty positions that I could handle from before, I can still recruit four new members. However, there are no suitable targets at the moment… Klein shook his head and muttered before returning to the real world to busy himself for a good dinner.

After slicing potatoes, boiling beef, adding onions, and stir-frying them for a while, as well as sprinkling seasonings like sugar and pepper, Klein poured the prepared hot water into the saucepan, covered it with a lid, and turned the fire down.

I have to admit that a Magician's Flame Controlling is a good helper in the kitchen… Ever since I got it, my culinary skills have clearly improved… If it wasn't for the loss of control, the monsters, the searches, and the evil gods, the world would be at peace and perfect if everyone was dedicated to using their abilities without causing public damage… Klein sighed and left the kitchen to enter the living room.

As the light from the wall lamps spilled out, Klein, who had been planning on flipping through magazines and wait for the appropriate time to throw in the potatoes, carrots, and the proper amount of salt, he couldn't help thinking about how to act as a Faceless.

Just after waking up this morning, my spirituality had completely stabilized. I discovered that although there aren't any signs of digesting the Faceless potion in me, I do have a certain level of harmony. This is a phenomenon that never happened after consuming the Seer, Clown, and Magician potions…

With this in mind, Klein looked up at the oriel window. As it was already dark outside, it had become like a mirror, faithfully reflecting Sherlock Moriarty with his black hair, brown eyes, beard, and gold-rimmed glasses.

Klein nodded thoughtfully.

Perhaps it's because I've always been acting as Klein Moretti. Yes… In a way, Sherlock Moriarty is just Klein's disguise—not someone else.

Although I've received many memory fragments and gained some of the original's feelings that previously existed, in essence, I'm still a guest from an alternate world. I am Earth's keyboard warrior, Zhou Mingrui.

I've been through so much in the last five months that sometimes I even think I'm Klein Moretti.

Amidst the silence, many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, giving him a lot of insight.

However, I'm still Zhou Mingrui who's donning the skin of Klein Moretti… Someone who has never given up the idea of returning… He slowly closed his eyes. When he opened them again, the figure reflected on the oriel window had already changed.

It was a young man with dark brown eyes and short black hair. His facial features were unremarkable, and he appeared refined, but he had obvious eye bags with an inkling of a double chin.

This was Zhou Mingrui from Earth.

Long time no see… Klein sighed, raised his hands and rubbed his face.

By the time he lowered his arms, he was back as Sherlock Moriarty.

After this period of contemplation and adjustment, he inexplicably felt that the gap between his spirituality and the potion had reduced significantly, and there were signs of them slowly blending together.

No wonder Marionettist Rosago's teacher, yes—perhaps his teacher would say that you can disguise yourself as anyone, but you are ultimately yourself… This is likely a core principle of a Faceless's acting method. Once one forgets this point, it would be easy to forget yourself amidst the constant changes, eventually turning into a monster. Klein felt enlightened when he recalled what he had previously obtained via spirit channeling.

He crossed his right leg and leaned back, quickly coming up with a plan for the future.

Search for and conclude the actual acting principles for a Faceless…

In the Beyonder circles of Backlund, through the Tarot Club, gather information about mermaids, in preparation to complete the ritual at sea…

Directly or indirectly get the Solar High Priest potion formula to help Little Sun advance to Sequence 7, so that he has the clearance to obtain the method for removing a Rampager's mental corruption on a Beyonder characteristic.

But I can't fully place my hopes on Little Sun. I should still attempt to look.

Klein, whose mood was slowly turning staid, snapped his fingers, reducing the stove's fire in the kitchen as the fragrance of beef emanated.

At that moment, he heard the doorbell ring.

The visitor was none other than Lawyer Jurgen.

Even though it was drizzling and the ground was wet, Jurgen was still dressed meticulously. He even wore a vertical collar.

“What’s the matter?” Klein, who was very familiar with Jurgen, didn’t make any small talk and directly asked.

Jurgen put away his black umbrella, patted a few drops of water off of his double-breasted frock coat and said, “Sherlock, I’m leaving Backlund on Monday next week to go south on a holiday with my grandmother. The warm environment and the clean air suits her very well.”

“That’s excellent news.” Klein took the initiative to deduce, smiling as he asked, “You want me to temporarily adopt Brody?”

Jurgen shook his head gravely.

“My grandma can’t bear to part with Brody and insisted on taking him with her. I’ve already asked; as long as we put him in a cage and buy a full-price ticket, he can board the steam locomotive, but we have to keep the cage clean at all times to not pollute the air above.”

Honestly, the smell in the third-class carriage is enough to overwhelm the stench of cat poop… Klein chuckled.

“Brody shouldn’t be too happy to leave, right?”

“But he’s even more reluctant to part with my grandmother,” Jurgen replied.

He pressed his hat and changed the subject.

“I’m here to inform you that if you need to be released on bail or settle any legal disputes during this period of time, you can go to my colleague. Here is his business card; I’ve already informed him, and he wouldn’t be leaving Backlund this year.”

What a professional, to think that he even considered this problem…

However, I don't need to do that for now. I'm now an informant for the Machinery Hivemind, and I won't be remanded at the police station under normal circumstances… Klein thanked him with a smile, took the name card, and slipped it into his pocket.

Jurgen didn't have any intention of chatting or entering the room. He immediately raised his hand and said, "I still have to visit the rest of my clients. Sherlock, I'll see you tomorrow. No—I'll see you next year."

"Then, I must wish your family a happy new year in advance." Klein smiled and waved.

After watching Jurgen leave with his umbrella, Klein closed the door and sat back down in the living room.

At this moment, apart from the flame which was licking the bottom of the pot in the kitchen, there were no other sounds coming from the house. It was so quiet that Klein could hear the carriages outside moving in the distance.

He looked around slowly and saw the coffee table, contracts, cupboards, pens, porcelain cups, dining table, chairs, and walls.

Retracting his gaze, Klein leaned back against the sofa and looked out the window at the dark night and the street lamps emitting a misty glow in the dark. In the deep cold silence, he sighed.

"The new year…"

†

The lightning gradually calmed down, and the darkness became the ruler of the earth. The exploratory team from the City of Silver finally reached their destination after a short but, at the same time, not short trek and numerous battles.

On both sides of the street, most of the houses had collapsed. Only a few could barely hold on, but their surfaces were mottled with the dust of time.

With the help of an animal hide lantern whose light didn't reach far, Derrick Berg saw the completely collapsed walls and streets that were in such ruin that even weeds didn't grow.

On both sides of the streets were half-collapsed houses, with a tiny minority barely standing. However, their surfaces were mottled and filled with signs of aging.

The white and blue colors that formed the foundation of the coatings, the pointed structures which were different from the City of Silver, had already turned gray, making it hard for anyone to imagine their original appearance.

However, Derrick could figure out the city's past through such observations. It had definitely experienced a long history with a considerable number of inhabitants, developing its own civilization in the dark ages.

The humans here took potions, built and repaired buildings, and defended the city wall. About six teams or more had explored the outside and hunted monsters in search of the necessary resources to survive.

They would celebrate for any brief periods of calm, offering sacrifices to the gods and yearning for a response. They gave birth to the next generation, allowing hope to continue.

However, in the end, they disappeared into the darkness, losing all their voices and leaving behind only ruins.

The ruins were like a huge grave, burying a civilization that had struggled to survive but eventually vanishing dismally.

Demon Hunter Colin looked around, his expression somewhat solemn, as though he saw the future of the City of Silver.

He pointed ahead and said, “The other places have already been cleared.

“The temple is in the center of the city.”

The exploratory team dispersed a bit, but they still maintained sufficient order and didn’t let down their guard.

After passing through ruins that had been destroyed for an unknown period of time and went past streets so quiet that they drove people mad, Derrick finally saw a high, wide artificially-made platform.

On top of the high platform, there was a half-collapsed building. It looked extremely similar to the temples in the City of Silver. It had a dome propped up by pillars, creating an arched entrance.

The style of the buildings here was completely different from that of the other buildings. It really is true that they later converted to the Fallen Creator… The thought had barely crossed Derrick’s mind when the four lanterns in the team went out at the same time!

All of a sudden, the exploratory team was plunged into pure darkness. There was no lightning in the sky, the candles on the ground had extinguished, and all human breathing seemed to disappear at once.

Derrick’s body immediately tensed, as he felt as if some monster had stuck its tongue out in the darkness and was trying to lick his scalp, but his spiritual perception told him that nothing real had appeared.

At that moment, an immature, helpless, terrified, and dry voice sounded out by his ear.

It was a child whispering, “Save me… Save me…”

For a moment Derrick froze, not knowing how to react, but in an instant, a coruscating glimmer of dust appeared before him.

The dust exploded one after another, igniting a silvery white light that illuminated the surrounding area.

Colin stared at Derrick and said in a deep voice, “What’s on your mind?”

Derrick instantly snapped to his senses and clasped his hands in shame and pressed them to his mouth and nose as if in prayer.

His body immediately emitted rays of clean, pure light, causing the surrounding darkness to silently disperse.

The other team members seized the moment to reignite the candles.

Because of the Demon Hunter’s timely reaction, no members disappeared this time, nor were there any new members appearing.

Collin retracted his gaze from Derrick and looked at the half-collapsed temple on the high platform. He solemnly said, “From now on, we can’t afford to be careless. We have to be on full alert.”

Chapter 455 - Help Seeker

◆ ◆ ◆

Within the half-collapsed temple, only a few stone pillars remained intact as they collectively supported half of the main hall.

At the very front of the main hall, there was an altar covered in cracks. In the middle of the altar, there was a huge, pitch-black cross.

Hanging from the cross was a naked man who was hanging upside down. Around his ankles, thighs, and torso there were obvious rusty metal spikes protruding outward that were accompanied by bright red bloodstains.

Derrick knew that this was the statue of the Fallen Creator, but he couldn't help look down to size up the statue's face.

He saw the face of the statue—the nose, mouth, and ears were all blurry, except for the eyes which were carved with abnormal clarity.

The Fallen Creator's eyes were tightly shut, as though he was suffering from guilt and pain.

"Look away, don't study the statue of an evil god!" Demon Hunter Colin warned in a low voice.

"Yes, Your Excellency." The few members of the exploratory team immediately retracted their gazes.

Before today, although the City of Silver had discovered many destroyed cities and written records pointing to evil gods during their explorations, most of the residents had never seen the statues of so-called evil gods.

The remaining area of the temple wasn't very wide, so the exploratory team quickly split up into groups of two or three and completed the investigations without finding anything abnormal.

Upon seeing this, Colin, the chief of the six-member council, said after a few seconds of deliberation, "Let's head underground."

As he spoke, he drew one of the two swords he carried on his back and smeared it with a grayish silver ointment.

Then, he removed a small metal bottle from a hidden compartment on his belt, pulled out the stopper, and gulped the contents of the potion.

At this moment, Derrick felt as if the light blue eyes of the Chief had become a little brighter.

The members of the exploratory team made their utmost careful preparations. Under the illumination of the four animal hide lanterns, they followed the stairs on the left side of the statue as they walked down into the underground area.

Derrick took his turn holding the lantern, walking at the front left as he cautiously entered the darkness.

He heard the sound of his own footsteps and those of his companions echoing off of the stone steps. They produced a distant and empty echo.

The echoes didn't suffer from any interference, making the absolute silence beneath them obvious. However, in the hearts of the exploratory team members, it was like a knock on the door. The attempt to uncover a secret that had been buried for an unknown number of years left them feeling extremely tense.

After walking without having any sense of time, Derrick finally saw that the road ahead had turned flat. He also saw the newly discovered mural which the corrupted Darc Regence had mentioned.

The mural was spread across two sides of the wall. It was simply colored and gloomy, looking ancient as if it had seen the vicissitudes of life.

Derrick took a casual glance and was immediately attracted by one of the murals.

On the wall to the left up ahead, a pure white cross was depicted in the middle. It was surrounded by seawater-like blackness, drowning all the humans who were struggling as they stretched out their arms.

Hanging upside down from the cross was the Fallen Creator. The rusted nails and blood-red stains were no different from the statues in the outside world.

But in this mural, the Fallen Creator was suffering from a black erosion, so much so that part of the white of the cross had become pitch-black.

In addition, the cross supported a hazy piece of land, and countless humans were kneeling and praying to the Fallen Creator.

Around the mural, in the deepest part of the darkness, there were six figures akin to evil gods.

In the upper left corner was a woman wearing a black, classical dress. Her clothes were layered but not complicated, and it was embedded with a starry sheen. Her body was relatively ethereal, with signs of rippling outward. Her face was blurry, as though she was wearing a mask without any facial features.

The darkness around her surged as one strange eye after another faintly became discernible.

Directly above was a young man wearing a pure white robe. His face was painted with a pure gold color, and there were tentacles in the form of light growing out of his skin.

In his hands was a putrid-green book and a radiant spear, and his chest and back were inverted.

In the upper right corner was a trident-wielding monster with an octopus-like head, wide eyes, and a body wrapped in lightning.

The feathers of countless birds formed his cloak, and the darkness turned into waves that supported the bottom of his feet.

At the bottom right was a supple and beautiful woman. Her chest bulged, propping her clothes up. In her arms was a rotting baby, and at her feet were black ears of wheat, spring water squirming with flesh, herbs dripping with pus, and wildly-mating animals.

Directly below was an old man wearing a hood that revealed his mouth, wrinkles, and a white beard.

The old man held an open book, and on top of it was an eye that was the symbol of omniscience.

At first glance, this old man looked the most normal, but the smile on his face was indescribably evil.

At the bottom left was a giant warrior in tattered armor. He held a long sword and was sitting on a throne with bleak dusk as its backdrop.

What this mural means is that when the Cataclysm struck, the evil gods climbed out of the Abyss. In order to save the people of the world, the Fallen Creator had suffered the vast majority of the sins and pain, and as a result, showed signs of being corrupted and having his image change… But, I think "He" is the worst evil god… Carrying an animal hide lantern in his hand, Derrick looked at the mural on the wall as he walked. He realized that the description was identical to Darc Regence's description with the core theme being that the place where they were had not been abandoned by the gods. Instead, it was blessed by the Creator and had maintained civilization through the apocalypse.

Of course, Darc Regence had only briefly mentioned it, and the details were far what the murals depicted.

Throughout the entire process, Derrick didn't let his guard down. He prepared himself in case any accidents were to happen so that he could respond immediately.

Under the dim yellow light of the candle, the exploratory team went through many corridors, halls, and rooms one by one, delving deep into the temple's basement.

Suddenly, a semi-open gray stone door appeared in front of them.

Outside the door, a cluster of beautiful mushroom-shaped objects grew. They were palm-sized, with white stems and bright red heads, sparkling with dark-golden specks.

Upon seeing these "mushrooms," the members of the exploratory team had their appetites whet. All they wanted to do was to rush over, pull out a stalk, and stuff it into their mouths.

Gulp. Quite a few people swallowed their saliva.

However, most of the people who were able to enter the exploratory team had rich experience and were of a relatively high Sequence. Having received a warning beforehand, someone immediately stood up and said in a low voice, "Those are rotten flesh and hairy scalps."

Derrick knew this teammate and that his name was Joshua. He had successfully traded for a mystical item from a particular exploratory expedition.

Joshua stretched out his left, scarlet-gloved hand at the door.

With a flash of light, a burning fireball quickly took shape and shot out, landing directly on those extremely tempting "mushrooms."

Boom! The ground trembled slightly, and an inferno spread out to cover the space of two meters.

By the time the fire subsided, all of the mushrooms had already disappeared, leaving only bits and pieces of flesh and blood. It left all of the Beyonders, who nearly failed to resist the temptation, disgusted.

Demon Hunter Colin didn’t interfere with the actions of the team. He quietly watched from the side, nodding from time to time.

“Why would there be mushrooms made from flesh and hair? Where did the flesh and hair come from?” Joshua withdrew his left palm and muttered to himself in confusion.

Another member of the team made a bold guess.

“The original inhabitants of this city?”

It’s possible… Perhaps their deaths were a result of turning into pure flesh and hair… Derrick agreed inwardly.

After a brief discussion, the exploratory team split into several groups and cleaned up the hall outside the gray stone door.

After doing all this, they regrouped and slowly passed through the door, ready to engage in combat at any moment.

Behind the door was a place that looked like an altar. The surrounding light could hardly dispel the darkness of the region which seemed to hide something unknown.

Above the altar, a similar pitch-black cross and an upside-down Fallen Creator was erected there.

Carrying an animal hide lantern, Derrick stood the closest as he instinctively swept a glance.

His gaze suddenly froze because he discovered that the Fallen Creator statue here was different from the one outside.

Its eyes were open!

He had blood-red eyes and black pupils, staring straight at any intruders like it possessed life.

Tat. Tat. Tat. Derrick heard the chattering of teeth.

He originally imagined that it came from a team member, but he soon realized that he was the one trembling!

Although he didn't understand much about the evil god's dangers, his teeth were instinctively chattering at that instant.

Tat. Tat. Tat.

His teammates reacted similarly.

At that moment, a speck of powder floated into the air. Demon Hunter Colin clenched his fist.

Boom!

As the sound of thunder reverberated through the air, Derrick and the others suddenly snapped to their senses, escaping their "nightmare" state from earlier.

Before they could investigate the area, the sound of weeping could be heard from behind the altar.

"Sob, sob, sob…

"Sob, sob, sob…"

In the chilling silence, Demon Hunter Colin calmly ordered, "Derrick, Joshua, go around and take a look."

As a chill went through his body, Derrick held the animal hide lantern and the Axe of Hurricane in his hand. Together with Joshua, he slowly walked around to the back of the altar.

As the darkness was gradually dispersed by the light, they saw a black figure curled up behind the altar.

After taking two steps forward, the shadow revealed its original form.

It was a seven- or eight-year-old child, with soft yellow hair.

He closed his eyes, as though he wasn't used to the light as he shouted in excitement, "Save me, save me…"

Derrick's pupils shrank, and when he thought of the cry for help he had heard in the pure darkness earlier, he subconsciously lifted his Axe of Hurricane.

At this moment, Demon Hunter Colin took a step forward and solemnly asked, "Who are you?"

The child stopped pleading for help and said reminiscently, "My name… My name is Jack…"

†

After dinner, Klein put on his coat and hat in preparation to head out.

He was going to find Miss Sharron, resolve the problem of the baronet digging up a tunnel, and ask for clues about mermaids. He wanted to complete these matters before Detective Sherlock Moriarty headed south for a "vacation."

Chapter 456 - Playing Ghosts

◆ ◆ ◆

Outside the Bravehearts Bar, a rental carriage briskly drove by.

Inside the carriage, Klein, who was wearing a half top hat, was sitting opposite Sharron, who was still wearing her black Gothic regal dress.

Looking at the expressionless and pale face of his former bodyguard, Klein was at a loss on how to exchange pleasantries. He could only go straight to the point.

“I’m done with my preparations.”

Although Sequence 6 Faceless had only given him one Beyonder ability, all the powers he had before had experienced a clear upgrade, resulting in a great improvement to his strength. This was the best form of preparation.

However, a Faceless’s powers could be deemed a godly skill in certain situations!

For example, when being pursued or trying to infiltrate… Klein couldn’t help but let his imagination run wild.

Sharron listened quietly and simply said, “Tonight?”

She spoke with a slight rise in intonation towards the end to indicate an inquiry.

“If it’s fine with you, then I’m fine as well,” Klein responded, prepared.

“Alright.” Sharron nodded.

After a few seconds of silence, Klein asked in deliberation, “Have you heard about anything to do with mermaids? Do you know where one can meet such a creature of legends?”

Sharron’s blue eyes stared unblinkingly at Klein, as though she had transformed into a real doll.

After a while, she emotionlessly said, “There are no longer mermaids in places where humans can reach.

“Only the fishermen of the Gargas Islands would occasionally hear the mermaids singing in the midst of a storm during their long voyages to hunt white-tailed whales.”

Located in the depths of the Sonia Sea, the Gargas Islands was the farthest human colony in the sea, characterized by local products such as whale oil and whale meat.

I wonder if this rumor is true or fake… Klein nodded.

“I understand.”

†

The bell chimes in the night rang out quietly, as though they came from a far away place.

There was an abandoned chapel in the middle of Williams Street. Withered vines crawled over its walls and gray stones were strewn everywhere.

Inside the chapel, feces and debris intertwined amidst the rocks and dead grass.

In the half-collapsed corner, a middle-aged man, wearing black tights, was moving stones that hid the entrance to a cave. He carefully and excitedly went into the tunnel, carrying his digging tools, lighting tools, and earth basket.

His hair was gray at the temples, and his eyes were puffy. He was Baronet Rafter Pound, who was considered mentally ill by the outside world, but he was secretly a descendant of the Tudor family of the Fourth Epoch.

This prodigy, who was always entangled with high-class call-girls, had a serious expression on his face, and his eyes were bright. It was impossible to find any signs of him being addicted to drinking and sex.

He pushed himself up on his elbows and rapidly crawled down the slope, as though the end of the tunnel hid the greatest and only hope of his life.

Not long after, he touched the wet mud and cold stone in front of him.

This didn’t extinguish Rafter Pound’s enthusiasm, he repeated motions that he was extremely proficient with after having recently gained the experience.

As he was digging, carrying, and moving things, an empty area appeared before him. It was a dark underground palace that was in front of him.

Rafter Pound’s expression immediately became crazed with excitement. He quickly moved forward and grabbed the black iron badge.

The badge was a hand holding a scepter. Seeing this, Rafter Pound’s eyes lit up as if they were on fire.

Just as he put the black iron badge on his chest, everything in front of him shattered. He was still in the narrow and irregular tunnel, with wet mud and ice-cold stones in front of him.

No, there was someone else there who was quietly “watching” him.

He had no eyes, no nose, no mouth, no eyebrows, and no ears!

Rafter Pound's pupils contracted. He could only feel a numbness rising along his spine from his waist down to the back of his head.

Without even thinking about it, he immediately threw away all his tools and frantically retreated.

His elbows smacked the ground, but he felt no pain despite having a mangled wound.

Finally, Rafter Pound left the tunnel and returned to the abandoned chapel.

Because of the loss of his lantern, he could only see the deep darkness and the dim "crimson" that shrouded the edges.

Suddenly, the withered vines that were crawling up the wall swayed like snakes. A figure walked out from the darkness.

She was wearing a Gothic regal dress and a black small soft hat, with a pale face to the point of being transparent, as well as pale blonde hair and blue eyes that didn't look human.

Rafter Pound almost shouted out loud. For such a woman to appear in an environment such as this was no different from a ghost story from folklore!

Tap! Tap! Tap!

He took a few steps back and almost tripped over a rock.

At that moment, he seemed to think of something, and he suppressed his horror in an instant, revealing an excited and hopeful expression.

"A-are you that evil spirit inside the underground palace?

"Yes, it must be you!"

Sir Pound, there seems to be a misunderstanding… Faceless Klein came out of the tunnel and stood in the shadows.

His and Sharron's original plan had been to scare Rafter Pound off, scaring him so badly that he would no longer dare to explore the underground ruins again. However, Rafter Pound's reaction was somewhat out of their expectations.

Sharron was silent for a second before tacitly asking, "What do you wish to say?"

Rafter Pound quietly exhaled, and he then curled his lips into a smile.

"After attempting for so many years, I believe you already understand that killing the descendants of the Tudor family won't help you break the seal.

"Only by working with me, who has the great Tudor Bloodline, can you hope to get out of this predicament that has lasted for more than two thousand years."

The Tudors knew about the existence of the evil spirit, but they still died in that room… Klein frowned as spoke before Sharron could. He imitated Sharron's ethereal voice.

"What took you until today to come here?"

This was a branch of the Faceless's Beyonder powers—to mimic the sound of a target. He could reproduce any voice as long as he heard it before!

Of course, Klein believed he couldn't repeat the ravings of the True Creator and the pleas of Mr. Door. This Beyonder power was still limited to the realm of ordinary people.

Sharron looked sideways at him but didn't expose him.

Rafter Pound didn't notice and chuckled.

“It’s because the Black Emperor has appeared.

“Fate tells me that the glory of the Blood Emperor will appear once again!”

Is there some logical connection? Klein had an inexplicable feeling that Rafter Pound was more like a madman than before.

He asked in Sharron’s voice again, “Black Emperor?”

“Haha.” Rafter Pound laughed, “Yes, Hero Bandit Black Emperor. He must be closely related to the real Black Emperor!”

Why don’t I know that? Klein felt amused.

He thought for a moment, then he stopped asking, giving up the right to ask questions.

Sharron, for some reason, remained silent.

Upon seeing this, Rafter Pound was overjoyed as he quickly asked, “So, what’s your answer?”

“I refuse,” Sharron replied emotionlessly.

Rafter suppressed his anxiety and tried to persuade her again.

At this moment, his eyes suddenly glazed over as he abruptly took a few steps to the side, arriving at a relatively intact stone wall.

This… Klein and Sharron noticed an abnormality at the same time. They responded in their own ways, one pulling out a revolver and pointing it at Rafter Pound, the other filling the ruined chapel with a crimson lunar brilliance.

Rafter Pound didn’t even look at them. He faced the stone wall and slammed his head into it.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

He slammed his head three times in a row and fainted with blood dripping from his forehead.

Then he got up again, his eyes were bloodshot for some unknown reason.

Rafter Pound raised his right hand and wiped the blood from his forehead, covering his palm with blood.

He stuck out the tip of his tongue, licked the scarlet liquid, and said in an intoxicated manner, “A member of the Tudor bloodline sure is delicious; it’s really intoxicating.

“It will allow my loathing to exceed its limits to the greatest extent, and it will help me temporarily expand the boundary of the seal.”

Klein’s muzzle was aimed at him as he asked in a stunned tone, “The evil spirit in the ruins?”

Blood trickled across Rafter Pound’s face, and he laughed horribly.

“You guessed right.

“Before, I judged that you were weak and wanted to corrupt your mind and enter your dreams to tempt you into rescuing me. Who knows, heh heh, you’re also a person with a secret.”

Don’t be so direct… Klein subconsciously glanced at Sharron, but he found nothing out of the ordinary about her.

“What do you want to do?” Klein asked directly.

The evil spirit sighed.

“I’m an innocent person who was harmed because of Alista Tudor’s ambition. Due to the constraints of my corpse, I’ve been trapped in that underground ruin for nearly two thousand years.

“I hope that you can help me out of this predicament and allow me to become a free spirit. I swear, I won't involve innocent people."

After saying that, he looked at Sharron with his bloodshot eyes.

"You should be a Wraith from the Mutant pathway. The next stop is a critical point to becoming a demigod. I'm not sure if you have the Puppet potion formula, but I can help you obtain it. I can even be a part of your ritual. That is the reward I can promise you."

Puppet, Sequence 4 of the Mutant pathway is called Puppet? What a strange name… Klein muttered inwardly.

The evil spirit turned to look at him.

"You will similarly be rewarded.

"It's an object that can be considered mystical and precious, and because of some sort of attraction, its holder came to the underground palace and died by the side of the Tudor descendants.

"This is what it looks like."

As he spoke, the evil spirit spread open the palm of his hand, causing the crimson moonlight to form a scene.

Inside the picture, there was a normal looking tarot card. The image on it was completely different from the others. Sitting inside a chariot wasn't a king, but rather a male priest wearing a dark red robe.

The priest looked like Roselle Gustav!

This… A Card of Blasphemy! Klein's eyes instantly shifted. He saw that the starlight in the upper left corner had condensed into a line of text: "Sequence 0: Red Priest!"

Chapter 457 - Information Provided by the Evil Spirit

◆ ◆ ◆

Sequence 0, Red Priest… Which pathway's Sequence 0 is this?

I've learned the true name of another Sequence 0… Of course, the pretext is that the evil spirit isn't lying…

It said that the holder of the Red Priest card would seek out the underground ruins of the Tudor family due to some form of attraction, but they ended up dying in that room… This should be the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics within the same pathway, right? No, Emperor Roselle had apparently mentioned that after advancing to become a High-Sequence Beyonder, possessing a corresponding Card of Blasphemy would allow them to subtly sense the Beyonder ingredients needed for subsequent Sequences… In other words, the room where the evil spirit is sealed has a demigod-ranked characteristic of the Red Priest pathway hidden within… Perhaps, the evil spirit was a demigod of this pathway when it was still alive, and it might even be a little stronger…

Hmm… The subtle sensation provided by the Card of Blasphemy is probably a result of the law of convergence…

Klein suddenly thought of many things. He subconsciously turned his head to look at Sharron to see her reaction. By doing so, he could determine if she knew about the Card of Blasphemy and whether she understood the meaning of a Sequence 0.

However, there was no change in Sharron's nearly transparent face. It was as if the evil spirit had just shown an ordinary tarot card.

However, this actually implies something. When any Beyonder first comes to learn of a Sequence 0, they will subconsciously think about what it represented… Perhaps only a Beyonder in the Spectator pathway can read the subtle body language of Miss Sharron… Klein sighed to himself.

Seeing that both of them were silent at the same time, the evil spirit gave Klein a deep glance, slowly making the projection of the Card of Blasphemy disappear.

It once again looked at Sharron with its bloodshot eyes and said with a low and hoarse laugh, “If you are unwilling to become a demigod of the Mutant pathway, then I can provide you with the Sequence 4 potion formula of the Abyss pathway. The temperance of desire and the flamboyance of malice has always been very congruous, isn’t it?”

Sharron ignored the evil spirit’s question and turned unhurriedly to Klein, leaving him to respond.

What the evil spirit means is that the Mutant pathway and the Abyss pathway are closely related pathways which are exchangeable at high Sequences… How the Rose School of Thought and the Blood Sanctify Sect act on the surface does seem very similar… Klein thought for two seconds and looked at the bloodied Rafter Pound.

“Then, how can your seal be removed?”

The evil spirit laughed and said, “Very simple. Find a direct descendant of the Sauron, Einhorn, and Medici family and obtain 10 milliliters of their blood, each. A little more is fine, but not less.

“Then mix them with holy water and pour them into my room.

“This way, the seal will be lifted.”

It’s a very simple and strange method. Even in the field of mysticism, it’s rare… Why must they be direct descendants of the Sauron, Einhorn, and Medici families? I have never heard of the last one. Sauron is the former royal family of Intis, and Einhorn is the royal family of the Feysac Empire. Both of them were loyal to the Trunsoest Empire, the Angel Family of the Fourth Epoch, and they were the final winners. However, Loen’s Augustus and Feynapotter’s Castiya families also meet the same conditions… Oh right, the Sauron and Einhorn family have one more thing in common, and that is their possession of the Hunter pathway!

Is this the reason for them being chosen? Eh… Taking the situation from before into context, the Hunter pathway is equal to the Red Priest pathway?

As he made a guess, Klein didn’t conceal his doubts.

“I know about the Sauron and Einhorn families, but I’ve never heard of the Medici family.”

“Very normal. They often enjoy hiding in the shadows. They are corrupted angels and have established an extremely secretive organization,” the evil spirit said with a contemptuous tone. “That organization is known as Rose Redemption.”

This name is very familiar… That’s right, inside the abandoned temple of the True Creator that was recently found by the City of Silver, there is something similar written on a corner of a mural. They suspect that it’s the name of the city or the creator of the temple… Now, from the looks of it, this symbolizes an extremely secretive organization that was founded by corrupted angels… They believe in the True Creator? What is their relationship with the Aurora Order? Klein pondered for a moment and said, “It’s related to the True Creator?”

The evil spirit was silent for two seconds before asking in a low voice, “You know about Rose Redemption?”

“I heard it by chance,” Klein spoke the absolute truth.

The evil spirit thought for a moment, then it suddenly said with a smile, “You have more secrets than I thought.”

Can we not talk about such things? Klein held himself back from watching Sharron’s response as he wore an unperturbed look.

The evil spirit’s gaze swept across the two and laughed.

“Rose Redemption has a close relationship with the birth of the True Creator. It’s impossible for you to imagine that certain people were once members of Rose Redemption, but they have since left it.

“As long as you find an organization that believes in the True Creator and trace it to the very end, then there will be a chance of you coming into contact with Rose Redemption.”

It sounds a little like the Twilight Hermit Order, with one being the front side while the other the is back side… Klein made an intuitive guess.

Seeing that the evil spirit had no intention of giving an in-depth introduction to Rose Redemption, he laughed and said, “Do you think we can complete something like that with our strengths?”

The evil spirit was silent for a few seconds before saying, “Maybe you guys can try your luck in Binsy Town.”

“Binsy Town? Where’s that?” Despite Klein’s repeated questioning, the evil spirit refused to reveal anything else.

Faced with this situation, Klein could only switch to asking, “During the Fourth Epoch, were the Black Emperor, Blood Emperor, and Night Emperor fighting for the position of Sequence 0?”

When the evil spirit heard this, it was stunned for a moment before it smiled and said, “It was once was the case, but not later. It wasn’t the case after Alista Tudor went mad.”

“Alista Tudor was that Blood Emperor?” Klein sought confirmation.

The evil spirit nodded.

“Yes, there has only been one Blood Emperor, that lunatic, Alista Tudor. Heh heh. The descendants of the Tudor family have all inherited the madness of that bloodline. They’re usually crafty, devious, careful, and cautious, but at critical moments, they can become reckless and not consider the repercussions.” The evil spirit pointed at Rafter Pound’s face and said, “He is an example. However, after this lesson, he will definitely become more normal for a long period of time… I’ve no idea if he’s the last Tudor. Alista left quite a number of good things which require the blood of his descendants in order to gain access to them. It’s best that you don’t kill him now.”

The evil spirit paused and chuckled softly.

“Alright, after you help me remove the seal, I will tell you all the stories I have experienced—No, a more accurate description is the history I’ve experienced.”

Having said that, Rafter Pound’s eyes suddenly lost focus.

His body twitched a few times before limply collapsing to the ground.

Sharron silently watched this scene before she suddenly took a step forward.

Whoosh!

The wind howled as the dirt and rocks on the ground began to move before falling into the underground tunnel and sealing off the entrance.

After that was done, Klein and Sharron left Williams Street and took a detour to another block in the silent darkness.

When Klein boarded the rental carriage, Sharron’s figure appeared, and she sat across from him.

She looked unblinkingly at Klein as she asked with her hoarse and ethereal voice, “Will you help it lift its seal?”

“No.” Klein didn’t hesitate to reply, and then he asked, “What about you?”

Sharron shook her head, indicating that she wouldn’t either.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he smiled.

“It’s already been dead for about two thousand years, and right now, it’s just a remnant of an evil spirit. Dispersing or returning to the spirit world is supposed to be its end. My plan is that once we become High-Sequence Beyonders, we can team up and eliminate it, giving it true deliverance.”

Although the Red Priest card, the hidden history of the Fourth Epoch, and the evil spirit’s promised rewards were tempting, Klein had no confidence in it at all.

In his mind, he would always recall the scene of the evil spirit’s corpse sitting on a high back chair with its head lowered. He would also remember how the other party’s face would be covered in traces of decay when he raised his head.

Sharron tersely acknowledged, giving the necessary response.

Aren’t you supposed to ask me why I’m so confident in becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder? Klein couldn’t help but lampoon.

And the answer to that question was that people needed to have dreams.

Klein no longer bothered with the topic and switched to asking, “Is the Wraith’s corresponding Sequence 4 really Puppet?”

Sharron nodded.

“Do you have the potion formula or Beyonder ingredients?” Klein asked in thought.

Sharron shook her head.

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“I’ll help you keep an eye out for it in my circle.”

Sharron said without changing her tone, “Thank you.”

Klein looked out of the window and muttered to himself, “I’m going to the south for a holiday.”

At this point, he said with a smile, as if he were speaking to a Lawyer Jurgen, “Let me wish you and Maric a happy new year in advance.”

Sharron was silent for two seconds, then she pursed her lips and replied in a fleeting voice, “Happy New Year.”

Her figure gradually faded and disappeared from the carriage…

†

Looking at the little boy behind the altar and hearing his slightly hoarse and tender voice, Derrick felt as if he was facing the most terrifying monster. He almost performed a downward cleave with the Axe of Hurricane in his hand.

From what he knew, a person who could survive in the pure darkness for so long was definitely not human. Even if he was one before, it definitely wouldn’t be one after that long!

Demon Hunter Colin’s eyes seemed to brighten a little. He tightened his grip on his sword and asked in a calm voice, “What are you doing here?”

The yellow-haired boy who called himself Jack had a pained expression as he replied, “We’re looking for the holy residence of the Lord.”

“The holy residence of the Lord?” Colin pressed.

"Right." The little boy Jack turned his head and looked at the pitch-black cross and the statue of the overturned man. "They told me that as long as I go in the direction that the Lord's eyes look in, then I will be able to reach his holy residence."

"They? You still have companions?" Colin's eyes moved one full revolution as if he were a monster, taking in the surroundings. "Where are they?"

Hearing this question, the little boy Jack was stunned for a moment.

Suddenly, he held his throat, and with a twisted, blank look on his face, he said, "I'm so hungry…

"So hungry…"

Chapter 458 - An Ancient Sanguine

“So hungry…”

Amidst his trancelike words, Jack raised his head and looked at Joshua, who was wearing a pair of scarlet red gloves.

“So hungry…”

His mouth opened in an instant, reaching straight to his ears, revealing his neat white teeth and thick saliva that was constantly gushing out of his mouth.

At the same time, he threw himself forward towards Joshua. He was so fast that he left behind an afterimage on the ground.

Although Joshua was on high alert, he wasn’t able to react in time.

Before he could even make out what was happening, the little boy, Jack, had already pounced in front of him.

Thump!

The yellow-haired figure seemed to slam into an invisible wall, stopping only a step away from Joshua.

Jack suspended himself in midair as a reddish glow from the darkness emerged from his body and started to corrode the transparent barrier that was denying him entry.

Behind Joshua and Derrick, Demon Hunter Colin had already fallen to one knee at some point. He had stabbed his sword, smeared with a silver ointment, into the ground.

Soon after, the area around the altar instantly brightened, as if it was the purest ray of the light of dawn.

Colin suddenly drew his sword, and his figure strangely split apart, turning into a series of afterimages that spread out around the altar.

Every single figure raised the sword in their hands at the same time and, combined with the light of dawn in the vicinity, released a bright glow.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

One sword after another was thrust forward as the light of dawn converged towards Jack from all directions, encircling him in the middle.

Under the brilliance of the rising sun, the black and red figures quickly evaporated, disappearing under the storm-like barrage of attacks.

In the underground hall where the altar was located, the brilliance became abnormally bright, so bright that Derrick Berg couldn't help but close his eyes.

With a sudden jolt, he suddenly woke up from his slumber and saw a bonfire quietly burning in front of him and his teammates, who were diligently guarding the camp.

Demon Hunter Colin, who was sitting cross-legged beside a stone pillar, opened his eyes and said in a deep voice, "We will set off after 50 rounds of lightning."

Upon hearing this, Derrick looked up at the sky and found that the frequency of lightning hadn't significantly increased. Darkness remained the ruler of this land.

When he thought of the city he was about to arrive at and the temple of the Fallen Creator, he couldn't help but feel slightly nervous.

After spending some time calming himself down, Derrick quickly ate his food and recovered his combat-ready state.

I wonder what will happen in that temple… Holding the Axe of Hurricane, he came to the middle of the group.

Within the campsite, lanterns that were covered with a thin layer of animal hide were being lit one after another.

†

15 Minsk Street.

Klein heated the water, adjusted the temperature, and took a comfortable bath.

With the languidness after a bath, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog. He intended to use divination to make a confirmation about the evil spirit's matter.

In the silence of the ancient palace, Klein leaned back in his chair and began to seriously consider which divination method to choose and how to design the divination statement. It had to conform to the principles of mysticism, it shouldn't involve subdivision or elimination, and it had to contain sufficient information.

After a short period of silence, Klein leaned forward and wrote down what he wanted to confirm: "The evil spirit in the ruins harbors strong malice towards Sharron and me."

He undid the spirit pendulum on his left wrist, gripped it with one hand, and began entering Cogitation.

After muttering to himself for a while, he opened his eyes and looked forward.

This time, the topaz pendant was wildly rotating clockwise!

This meant that the evil spirit's malice was stronger than Klein had imagined!

At that time, there was nothing abnormal about the spiritual intuition we had… That evil spirit is also a powerhouse that's good at interfering with divination and prophecy… Heh heh, he definitely wouldn't have imagined that one of us has the temperance to resist desire, preventing her from being blinded by greed, while the other has experienced too many things to know what it means to "ask a tiger for its skin"… With a sigh, Klein returned to the real world and laid down on his bed.

Unfortunately, the heat brought by the Sun Brooch is only a psychological feeling and can't warm the bed… Before he fell asleep, he closed his eyes and thought with regret.

†

South of the Bridge, Rose Street, Harvest Church.

After Emlyn White wiped the last chair, he straightened up and eagerly said to Father Utravsky, "I've finished doing today's chores!"

Damn old man, don't you suddenly get ideas of getting me to copy the Holy Bible! Emlyn prayed inwardly.

The object of his prayer had unwittingly changed from the moon to Earth Mother.

Father Utravsky stood there, making the vampire look like a child.

He smiled and said, "Recently, you've been able to experience the joy and relaxation of working with dedication and gratitude. Go back and quietly feel the pulse of life and the pure joy that comes from it."

"I haven't!" Emlyn denied on reflex.

Without saying anything, Father Utravsky looked at him with a kind smile, turned and took a seat, and then began his nightly prayer.

Emlyn White's lips quivered as he wanted to refute, but in the end, he failed to say anything. He silently left the Harvest Church and habitually closed the door.

When he returned to his current residence, he found that the house was empty. Both his parents had disappeared without a trace.

It was only after witnessing this scene that he remembered that there was going to be a Sanguine gathering in the Backlund area tonight.

"Those fellows are really disgraceful. As noble Sanguine, they should sleep in coffins or stay in their own rooms. Why are they mimicking humans and holding all kinds of gatherings? There's even dancing!" Emlyn muttered contemptuously.

As he spoke, he touched his belly and swallowed a mouthful of saliva before deciding to change into some clothes to attend the gathering.

"The Odora family sure is enviable. They actually have a pure human partner who runs several hospitals and has fresh blood every day. They can drink as much as they want, anytime they want." Emlyn put on his black top hat and quickly walked out of the house.

West Borough, in a brightly lit villa.

Emlyn picked up a glass with scarlet liquid and hungrily took a gulp of it.

It really has been pre-selected… He half closed his eyes, sighing in praise from the bottom of his heart.

At this moment, on the dance floor, handsome men and beautiful women were dancing, twirling and taking slow steps with each other under the romantic music.

“What’s the point of all of this?” Emlyn stood at the edge of the railing on the second floor, looking down at his kinsmen.

As the largest city in the world, Backlund had many vampires living in it. They hid in all walks of life and had completely integrated into human society.

As for those who were unable to control their own destructive urges and bloodlust, they were either sent to castles deep in the mountains or were dealt with in advance to prevent the Nighthawks or other official Beyonder organizations from finding clues.

As he looked at his fellow kinsmen, who were growing more spirited as the night went on, Emlyn increasingly felt like there was nothing in common between him and them.

At that moment, the host of the banquet tonight, Cosmi Odora walked over with a wine cup in hand. Smiling, he asked, “Do you like tonight’s ‘wine?’”

“Of course, its owner is young enough and possesses great vitality.” Emlyn straightened his back and assumed a noble posture.

Based on appearances, Cosmi Odora was a very gracious middle-aged gentleman, but Emlyn knew that he was over two hundred years old. He had once seen Intis under the rule of Emperor Roselle, and then he moved to Loen because he had “lived” for too long and feared that his neighbors would discover something was wrong about him.

Upon hearing Emlyn’s praise, he smiled and said, “Yes, its owner is a young lady who was stabbed by a thief and nearly lost her life. Fortunately, she met me, and this is the price she needs to pay for her recovery.

“You can have a taste of the wine over there, as well as the wine over there. The owners are from Balam and Feynapotter respectively. They have different flavors.”

“Feynapotter? Mother Goddess, the humans there love chili so much that their blood has a spiciness that I can’t stand. Mother Goddess…” As he spoke, Emlyn suddenly paused, his expression instantly turning blank.

The corner of Cosmi’s mouth twitched, and he pretended not to hear anything.

In the awkward silence, he cleared his throat and said, “Emlyn, that’s just your imagination. By the way, my grandfather wishes to meet you.”

“Your grandfather?” Emlyn was startled for a moment, but he then immediately widened his eyes. “Lord Nibbs?”

Nibbs Odora was a powerful Sanguine who had been active in the Fourth Epoch, but the times had corroded his life and forced him to lie in a cold coffin for extended periods of time.

Cosmi nodded solemnly.

“Yes.”

With that, he turned and walked to another staircase on the second floor, not considering the possibility that Emlyn might refuse him.

Emlyn followed, a little nervous and uneasy, thinking about the purpose of Lord Nibbs’s summons.

Has he finally understood that the honor of the Sanguine is more important and has decided to help me get rid of Father Utravsky’s psychological cue? As he walked, Emlyn White developed a strong sense of hope.

Following the stairs to the underground area, Emlyn White passed through a few secret doors and entered a large gray hall.

In the center of the hall was a heavy coffin made of black iron, engraved with symbols and magic labels.

After Cosmi Odora reported Emlyn's arrival, a heavy and aged voice slowly came out from the coffin.

"Emlyn White, do you know why I summoned you?"

"Honorable Lord Nibbs, I imagine that you are planning on helping me remove the psychological cue," Emlyn responded without hesitation.

Silence reigned in the underground hall for a few seconds. Then, Nibbs Odora, who was lying in the coffin, chuckled and said, "That's one of the purposes, but it won't be me helping you.

"I just woke up from a long dream because I received a revelation from the Ancestor."

"Ancestor? 'Sh-She' has awakened?" It wasn't Emlyn who exclaimed in surprise, but Cosmi Odora.

After the Cataclysm, doesn't the Ancestor only respond to important matters? Emlyn listened in bewilderment.

"No, not yet," Nibbs said in a heavy voice. "The Ancestor told me that the apocalypse is near and that we must prepare for it, and you, Emlyn White, are one of the key elements in the Ancestor's revelation."

"Apocalypse?" Cosmi asked in surprise.

But Emlyn only had one thought.

I, Emlyn White, was actually mentioned by the Ancestor! I am a key element for the Sanguine's survival of the apocalypse!

Nibbs ignored his grandson's question and continued, "Emlyn White, I'll hand you a task right now."

"Please speak." Emlyn felt that he was being too modest. Even after hearing what had just been said, he didn't show any arrogance in front of Lord Nibbs.

Nibbs Odora solemnly said, “Find a chance to pray to The Fool.”

“Ah?” Emlyn suspected he had heard wrongly.

Nibbs lowered his voice and added, “The Fool whose honorific name has only recently been spread.”

Chapter 459 - Letting A Chance Slip

◆

Although I have always had the urge to pray to The Fool to get rid of the psychological cue that Father Utravsky gave me, I also know, very clearly, that it's dangerous to recite the honorific name of an unknown being. Not all hidden existences will start with bait and slowly provide guidance. In such matters, "They" are often like sharks in the sea, who would go mad and lurch forward once they smell blood…

But now… Lord Nibbs, no—what does the Ancestor want?

Emlyn White said, finding it rather ridiculous, "It will be very, very, very dangerous."

Inside the black iron coffin, Nibbs Odora replied with an aged voice, "Yes, under normal circumstances.

"But not all hidden existences are filled with malice. Among 'Them,' they will similarly abide to rules and enjoy transactions. For example, the seven pure lights of the spirit world.

"Since the Ancestor has given such a revelation, it means that the danger that The Fool can bring is not too serious, or even none.

"And during this entire process, I will always be by your side to protect you.

"Don't you want to get rid of the psychological cue? Have you already become a believer of Earth Mother and abandoned the moon?"

"No, I haven't!" Emlyn frantically denied.

After a moment of silence, he gritted his teeth and said, “I wish to have a few days to think it over.”

“Alright, no problem. I believe that you will make a choice that suits your noble identity as a member of the Sanguine.” Inside the coffin, Nibbs’s voice turned soft as he smiled and comforted him.

After sending Emlyn White back to the second floor, Cosmi Odora once again returned to the dark and gloomy underground hall, and he asked with confusion and doubt, “Grandfather, how could the revelation given by the Ancestor involve Emlyn White? He’s just a weak member of the Sanguine who only recently reached adulthood.”

Nibbs’s voice came through the thick black metal coffin lid and reverberated in the air.

“No, the revelation provided by the Ancestor never included Emlyn White.

“‘She’ only showed a scene of the dawn of the apocalypse, depicting the erosion of the crimson moon, as well as mentioning The Fool and the corresponding honorific name.

“During this process, no Sanguine appeared. The mention of the key element was just my way of convincing Emlyn White.

“However, being able to take risks for the future of the Sanguine can also be considered a key element.”

Cosmi was first enlightened before he had another question.

“Why did you choose Emlyn White? What’s so special about him?”

Nibbs Odora suddenly laughed.

“Hasn’t he been clamoring about praying to The Fool all this time? Didn’t he think that we weren’t putting too much weight on his problem, that we aren’t willing to antagonize Bishop Utravsky, so he was trying to find other help?

“I’m just fulfilling his wish.”

For a long time, Cosmi was speechless.

Emlyn White stood at the railing of the second floor, looked down at his tireless kinsmen, and nervously took a sip of his “wine.”

Up to this day, I haven’t heard of any terrible outcome for people who prayed to The Fool… Perhaps it’s just as Lord Nibbs said, The Fool is just like the seven pure lights in the spirit world, a hidden existence that maintains order and is warm-hearted… Wait a minute, what are the seven pure lights in the spirit world? Why haven’t I ever heard of them before? They seem to be on the side of good? I wonder if this will be any help to me… In short, The Fool isn’t necessarily dangerous, and there is Lord Nibbs protecting me… Maybe I can take advantage of this opportunity to get rid of the psychological cue… Emlyn consoled himself with fear and anticipation.

†

Monday morning. Cherwood Borough, 15 Minsk Street.

Klein squatted in front of the toilet, holding a brush and carefully cleaning the dirt inside it.

According to his schedule, after completing his “visits” on Saturday and Sunday, he decided to take a day off and wait until tomorrow to report back to Prince Edessak about the final results and hand over the assignment. But during what should’ve been his relaxation time, he found the house a little too messy and dirty.

It was only when he saw this that he remembered that the cleaning of the house had been done twice a week through the temporary employment of the landlady’s maid next door.

As the Sammers had gone on holiday to Seville City in Desi Bay, one of the maids had gone along with them, while another had returned to the countryside after receiving a year-end bonus. 15 Minsk Street, where he lived, hadn't been cleaned by anyone for quite some time.

Klein had planned to put up with it for two days since he was "leaving" Backlund, but in his free time, he didn't dare to take the time to head to the Quelaag Club to have fun. He was afraid of infuriating Prince Edessak, so he could only stay home. Hence, seeing the things that irked him, he changed into his old clothes and began spring cleaning before the new year.

He went on to scrub the toilet, wash the bathtub, wipe the windows, mop the floors, clean his equipment, and wash clothes… Klein busied himself from eight to eleven before barely completing his desired cleanup.

Of course, he only did it perfunctorily without that much attention to detail.

Sometimes, renting too big a house isn't a good thing… Klein washed his hands and wiped his face with a towel.

Walking out of the bathroom and looking at the clean and tidy living room and dining room, and watching the sunlight pierce through the clouds and shine through the transparent glass window, showering golden spots in his house, he had a strange sense of accomplishment. He felt a lot happier.

Time to reward myself for lunch. I'll find a good restaurant… Klein returned to the second floor and changed his clothes.

As he leafed through the papers, waiting for lunchtime, the doorbell rang.

"It's almost the new year, and there are still people coming to entrust me with missions?" As he rose and walked to the door, Klein made up his mind to decline.

Although he only had 34 pounds left in cash, in order to get out of the royal strife, he had to "go on vacation" to the south as soon as possible. He could no longer accept assignments.

To his surprise, the visitor wasn't a stranger, but the old butler of Prince Edessak.

The old butler was wearing a well-cut tuxedo. He saluted without losing his dignity, and said, "Detective Moriarty, His Highness, the Prince, is waiting for you in the carriage at the end of the street. He wishes to know the progress of your investigations."

So impatient? Alright, that saves me the trouble of going all the way to Red Rose Manor tomorrow… Klein quickly reorganized what he had thought of last night and calmly replied, "Alright."

He was about to remove his hat from the coat rack when he felt a sudden ache in his stomach, a pain that required him to visit the toilet.

After enduring for a while, he realized that he couldn't hold it in any longer and apologetically said to the old butler, "I'm very sorry. I'll need to use the bathroom first. My stomach isn't feeling well."

The old butler didn't show any abnormal expression.

"That's your freedom."

As he discharged one wave after another of bliss, clearing away the remnants in his stomach, Klein washed his hands and returned to the hall.

At that moment, he noticed that the old butler was no longer around. The one waiting outside was the maid with curly brown hair.

"His Highness requested me to apologize to you; he still has matters to attend to and cannot wait for too long. Please go to Red Rose Manor tomorrow or the afternoon of the day after tomorrow." The maid bowed meticulously.

It hasn't even been ten minutes, and I'd already done it as fast as I could… Usually, I can continue on for quite a while if I have newspapers… Klein smiled.

"No problem."

After receiving a response, the maid who had completed her mission immediately felt a weight off her chest. She giggled and said, "Detective Moriarty, you missed that lady again."

"Huh?" Klein was at a loss.

The maid lowered her voice and said, "This time, the young lady came with His Highness. She was the one who suggested taking a detour to meet you."

In the end, I missed her because of my stomachache? Something isn't right… Klein frowned slightly.

†

In a room padded with a thick and soft carpet.

A quill that was being held came to a pause and stopped writing.

In the open notebook beneath it, there were lines of text and marks of scribbled out text:

(Scribbles)

"Target attempted to escape control, but unfortunately, Detective Sherlock Moriarty leaves before she heads downstairs."

†

“The target influenced the surrounding maids, but Prince Edessak’s butler, Funkel, chanced upon the problem and dealt with it.”

†

(Scribbles)

“The target went off track once again. She participated in Talim’s funeral on behalf of Prince Edessak. However, having quickly recovered to her normal state, she realized that she was unable to identify Sherlock Moriarty, and she could only let a chance slip.”

†

“Sherlock Moriarty went to Red Rose Manor to investigate, but the timing wasn’t right, and the target happened to be riding horses on the golf course.”

†

(Scribbles)

“The target, once again, triumphed over the arrangement, encouraging Prince Edessak to visit Detective Sherlock Moriarty. Unfortunately, Sherlock Moriarty happened to have a stomachache, ended up staying in the bathroom for seven minutes and forty-five seconds, and the Prince couldn’t afford to wait.”

†

His facial features were like a sculpture, but the middle-aged man who was blinded in one eye put down his quill and looked at a woman.

“What exactly did you put on her body? Breaking through the restrictions time and time again will create big problems.”

The woman laughed in a low voice and said, “It was just an accident. Don’t worry, there won’t be any problems.”

As she spoke, she pulled back her hair, revealing her long, white neck.

After that, she slowly applied various things to her face, making her look even more alluring.

Seeing that she was putting on her clothes and accessories, the dark golden-haired middle-aged man frowned and asked, “Where are you going?”

The woman didn’t directly answer and said with a smile, “Be careful of the quill in your hand, you almost exchanged bodies with someone the last time.”

“You don’t need to remind me,” the middle-aged man with deep blue eyes to the point of being black said with a straight face.

The woman tightened her belt to make herself look thinner, then she lazily stretched and yawned while covering her mouth.

“I’m going to pay a visit to Mr. A of the Aurora Order.

“I hope he’s as crazy as the rumors say.”

As she spoke, the expression of the blind middle-aged man suddenly sank. It was because that ordinary quill had begun to write on its own, as though an invisible hand was holding onto it.

Chapter 460 - Cyclic Explorations

◆

Above the gray fog, the ancient temple-like building stood quietly.

After noticing some abnormalities in the series of coincidences, Klein entered the mysterious space after lunch, in an attempt to confirm a guess in his mind.

He picked up a fountain pen he conjured, paused for two seconds, and then wrote: “I am involved in a series of coincidences created by Sealed Artifact 0-08.”

Putting down the dark red pen, Klein held the silver chain in his left hand and began his divination.

Finally, he opened his eyes and looked at the spirit pendulum just inches away from him.

The topaz pendant stood still without any rotations.

This meant that the divination had failed!

Divination cannot be completed—possibly due to not fulfilling sufficient conditions, or it could be because 0-08 is resisting it… In both cases, a similar result would occur… Klein changed his statement and tried to direct it at different targets, but all of them failed.

He tapped the edge of the long mottled table with his finger, hesitating on whether he should go to Red Rose Manor the day after tomorrow.

If there’s no 0-08 or a similar power to arrange these matters, then my sudden escape will definitely raise Prince Edessak's suspicion. No, my escape might not be successful. Prince Edessak's men live next door… Of course, since I'm already a Faceless, it's easy for me to find a chance to escape when I'm out, but is there a need to go this far?

Tomorrow afternoon, I'll be able to "leave" Backlund without attracting too much attention by honestly seeking an audience with Prince Edessak and normally handing over the mission. His Highness will likely not force me, an unaffiliated Beyonder, to accomplish too difficult a task…

If there really is a Sealed Artifact or demigod like 0-08 influencing the recent events, then from my past experience, I should just be a side character who mistakenly entered the stage and haven't received enough attention. In this case, escaping is tantamount to telling the other party that I have detected your presence! I'm highly problematic!

In this way, relying on my Faceless powers wouldn't necessarily allow me to escape the "attention" that has locked onto me…

The best method would be to calmly go to the Red Rose Manor and go through the normal procedures to exit the stage. After graciously bowing from the curtain call, I'll fade away from the "attention" of the unknown party…

After combining the two elements, Klein finally decided to pretend that he hadn't discovered anything and to "leave" Backlund according to plan.

†

The bonfire in the campsite was burning with flames, and there was someone standing guard inside the campsite the entire time.

Derrick Berg leaned against a stone pillar and slept to recover his strength.

At this moment, he was dreaming of the endless grayish-white fog, an ancient chair situated at the highest point in the center, as well as the indifferent figure sitting on that chair, overlooking everything.

Mr. Fool… Derrick said the name in a chanting manner in his mind.

Following that, he heard The Fool's voice: "Prepare for the gathering."

Yes, Mr. Fool. Derrick answered silently and began counting his heartbeats.

His eyes never opened, as if everything that had just happened was just a prelude to a dream.

There's still quite a bit of time before we set off. There's enough time to attend the Tarot Gathering… he thought with relief.

He originally imagined that he, who had joined the exploratory team, would miss this gathering.

After a thousand heartbeats, Derrick waited a little longer before he felt himself entering that quiet and serene divine hall.

The moment he opened his eyes, scenes flashed through his mind. It was as if an external force had instantly injected all his lost memories into his head once again.

The scenes were: crumbling city walls; buildings crisscrossed with white and blue; the temple of the Fallen Creator with a similar architectural style as the City of Silver; murals detailing the approaching apocalypse and the Fallen Creator's protection of the remaining humans from the six great evil gods; the beautiful and dangerous "mushrooms;" and Jack, the eerie pale yellow-haired boy of unknown origins.

These kinds of scenes had repeated over and over again for a total of five times, but each time there was a slight difference in the details.

The first time, outside the Fallen Creator's Temple, all of the animal hide lanterns had been extinguished, nearly causing a tragedy. The second time, someone lost control of themselves and almost swallowed a "mushroom," fortunately, Chief Colin stopped them in time. The third time, the little boy, Jack, told a story, which was that he and his father had been searching for the Creator's holy residence in the endless ocean, and they ended up encountering a huge storm. The fourth time, Joshua was severely injured by Jack who had mutated without any warning. The fifth time, the temple completely collapsed, blocking the exit of the underground area.

And all of these occurrences ended with Demon Hunter Colin killing the little boy, Jack, and then started off with their rest in the camp, preparing to enter the ruined city. The beginning and end were connected as it repeated in a cycle.

We've explored the temple five times… We have been living through this experience all this time, and there is no way to truly end it! The more Derrick understood his sudden new memories, the more frightened and terrified he became.

Audrey, who was sitting on the other side of the long bronze table, originally wanted to greet Mr. Fool and the others with a cheerful and light voice as usual. However, when she glanced over, she immediately noticed that Little Sun's mood wasn't right. She immediately asked, "Mr. Sun, did something happen? Has the exploration of the True, uh—Fallen Creator's temple not gone smoothly?"

Derrick seemed to have grabbed onto hope as he hurriedly described the rough situation once. When he was done, he said, "After that little boy was dealt with by His Excellency, we all closed our eyes and woke up in the campsite outside the city in preparation to begin a brand new exploration. We no longer had any memories from before.

"This process has been repeated five times, with only the details being slightly different.

"If it wasn't for Mr. Fool's alerting me to this, then I wouldn't have even known that I've been living a recurring life all this time."

He took it for granted that the extra memories from his arrival above the gray fog were the result of Mr. Fool's reminder. He stood up and gave a solemn salute to the blurry figure seated at the head of the long bronze table.

I only understood the situation after listening to your description… Klein was still in a daze.

He maintained his original posture and lightly nodded his head in response.

In a situation where the reasons are unknown, a superior wouldn't so easily express his opinion, so I can't rashly open my mouth… Klein secretly reviewed what he had learned from his past life as a keyboard warrior.

Seeing that Mr. Fool seemed to be an imperturbable ancient wall, Derrick felt a lot more at ease and felt that the matter could finally be resolved.

He turned to look at The Hanged Man, The World, Justice, and The Magician, and he sincerely asked, "Do you know the root of the problem? How can this be resolved?"

The zealous Audrey instinctively wanted to answer, but she found herself without a clue or even a guess.

Fors was in a similar state as she was.

Filled with rich knowledge from Earth and having read many novels of being stuck in the same day, Klein originally wanted to control The World to give out ideas to give everyone some inspiration to consider regarding the matter, but after thinking about it carefully, he chose to stay low-key and prepared to observe first.

After listening to The Sun's description, Alger remained silent for a long time. At this moment, he said in a measured tone, "I can only think of two possibilities. First, you have encountered a Nightmare or hallucinatory power at a level that exceeds a demigod. After regaining your memories with Mr. Fool's help, you should be able to immediately detect something amiss once you return to the real world. That way, the problem will easily be resolved.

"Second, you were forced to or you proactively entered a strange space or state at a particular node where time is controlled to flow in a certain manner, but the time is fixed within a certain range which is cyclical and the continuation is balanced, that is to say, it is relatively static.

"In this situation, there aren't many ways to end the cycle. Either there is an external force that can forcefully break the balance, or you find the key point that connects the distortion of time."

An external force that can forcefully break the balance? Upon hearing this, Audrey, Fors, and Derrick all subconsciously glanced at the calm and leisurely Mr. Fool sitting at the end of the long bronze table.

No, I can't always seek Mr. Fool's help… By not saying anything directly, "He" probably wishes to test my ability at dealing with such matters… After a moment of thought, he said, "Mr. Hanged Man, let's assume the second situation. In your opinion, what do you think is the key point that connects the distortion of time?"

Without waiting for The Hanged Man to respond, Audrey guessed with interest, "That little boy Jack?

"You can't kill him when you're facing him?"

Alger nodded.

"That's a possibility."

He hesitated for a moment before saying, "The Sun's description of Jack and his father reminds me of a particular incident."

He turned to look at Miss Justice.

“Didn’t I once mention that I was pursuing a Listener of the Aurora Order at sea? The goal for his voyage was to seek the True Creator’s holy residence.”

Audrey carefully recalled and said without any strong confirmation, “That seems to be the case.”

Alger immediately said with a deep voice, “That Listener also brought his son, and the son’s age is very close to The Sun’s description of Jack.”

“Are you saying that Jack went from your world to the vicinity of the City of Silver?” Derrick asked, stunned.

After a short period of settling down, he inwardly felt an indescribable sense of happiness.

This means that the City of Silver hasn’t been completely sealed off yet. There’s still a chance to connect with the normal world where The Hanged Man and Justice are from!

“I can only say that it is possible.” The Hanged Man couldn’t give an affirmative answer.

He thought for a moment and suggested, “You can find a chance to bring up the Sonia Sea, the Loen Kingdom, and the port city in front of Jack. Perhaps there will be a different reaction, but of course, try to avoid doing so in front of the Chief of your City of Silver as much as possible.

“Also, the key point doesn’t necessarily lie with Jack. We have to consider other possibilities as well. You should tell us the specifics, such as the details of the mural, and maybe we can find something useful.”

At this point, Alger began to look forward to receiving information.

Chapter 461 - The Kind and Enthusiastic Hanged Man

◆

Unlike the past, Derrick was clearly smarter. He didn’t clumsily rely only on words to provide a description.

After receiving Mr. Fool’s permission, he conjured a series of scenes from the memories that he could recall. He showed the exploratory process and the points he found important to The Hanged Man, Justice, The Magician, and The World in a fragmented fashion, and then he included some explanations for them.

The walls that had collapsed in the darkness, the streets that passed through the destroyed buildings, the stone pillar-propped white and blue ancient temple that was covered in dust under the light of the animal hide lantern, the statue that hung upside down from a pitch-black cross, the series of murals depicting the Fallen Creator who suffered from the sin in place of humanity, the exceptionally alluring “mushrooms,” the statue at the altar that had strangely opened its eyes, and the young yellow-haired Jack who had been hiding in the back—all these scenes took shape and were reflected in the eyes of the Tarot Club members in the most direct and realistic manner.

The gloomy and dark tone, the sense of crisis with every step that was taken, and the bizarre development that The Sun was experiencing made Audrey rather excited. She became extremely interested in what he was saying.

This is the situation around the City of Silver… It’s more attractive than any novel I've ever read… This is the charm of mystery, uncertainty, and terror combined… Of course, to the humans who live there, this isn't a good thing… Audrey's thoughts were in disarray. She wanted nothing more than to immediately become a powerhouse at the level of a demigod and venture into that region ruled by darkness and storms.

Klein watched and sighed emotionally.

He was sighing because it truly wasn't easy for the City of Silver to last all this time in such an environment. He sighed because Little Sun still wasn't smart enough and had no experience. Otherwise, he would've been able to completely present the events that happened in the form of a movie or documentary. It would certainly be exciting and attractive!

However, this way, the description would take too long. My spirituality wouldn't be able to endure if everyone were to watch such a movie. Also, the longer one stays above the gray fog, the more likely it is that something bad will happen in the outside world… Klein suddenly felt lucky.

Alger finished watching in silence as he thought over it. He got The Sun to pick a few important points he had chosen to present them above the long bronze table. Among them included the mural of the Fallen Creator resisting the six "evil gods."

"Which evil gods are these?" Alger looked at the octopus with lightning wrapped around its body, black waves at its feet, an avian-feathered cloak on its back, and a three-pronged trident in its hand as he began to make connections.

Derrick shook his head honestly.

"I don't know. I thought you would know them."

Audrey and Fors cast their gazes over at the same time, carefully observing them several times, but they still failed to come up with any guesses.

They had originally thought that these were six of the eight ancient gods from the legends of the City of Silver, but they couldn't find a suitable match. After all, there was a dragon, an elf, a giant, a phoenix, and an Annihilation Demonic Wolf, while there was only one giant in the mural.

This… The Fool took a serious look and his pupils nearly contracted.

In consideration of his standing, he had only taken a cursory look at the mural in the beginning, but now, he finally realized that something was wrong.

This is very similar to the statues of the six gods which I saw in the Tudor family's underground ruin, except that one is a normal version and the other is a corrupted version… It really is a bit hard for people to look at it directly, especially Earth Mother, Lord of Storms, and Eternal Blazing Sun. Not only have they been sullied as evil gods, but they're even akin to ugly monsters… Klein didn't feel a sense of sudden enlightenment from having realized the truth. He had expected the True Creator to disparage the six gods and distort their images.

However, I can't completely ignore the possibility of this mural appearing. Just like how I had always thought that the orthodox gods didn't have a human form, with only symbols left. As a result, the statues in the ruins of the Tudor family have made me less certain… It seems like the establishment of the images of the gods have undergone a long evolution, and many secrets are hidden within… Klein was relieved when he saw that Miss Justice was focusing on examining the mural and didn't pay attention to Mr. Fool's attitude.

Because it involved whether or not Little Sun could get out of the strange predicament of repeating that short period of life, he decided to tell them what he knew.

Of course, the long introduction and display of the images of the six gods inside the underground ruin didn't fit the identity of The Fool. He intended to control The World to complete this task.

And this was in line with his goal of making The World and Sherlock Moriarty equivalent.

The Fool should enigmatically say, “Evernight, Sun, Storm, Wisdom, Earth, Giant,” and then give no explanation, with superfluous descriptions… Klein thought for two seconds and let The World say in a hoarse voice, “I’ve seen similar statues.”

After attracting everyone’s gaze, he paused and added, “In an adventure to a Fourth Epoch ruin.”

Audrey was very interested, but she maintained her basic level of restraint.

“Mr. World, what kind of statues were there? Can you show it to us? Of course, if you aren’t willing to, or if you require compensation, it’s negotiable.”

“There’s no need, as this might also solve some of my doubts.” The World smiled darkly.

He acted by making a request to Mr. Fool, and when he got permission, he conjured the statues of the six gods and their corresponding Sacred Emblems.

With her head against the full moon, the lady, who wore layers upon layers of hazy dresses that didn’t repeat, gave off an exceptionally beautiful feeling. On her long black skirt, there were also specks of starlight, as if it were a night sky, and on top of that, that iconic Evernight Sacred Emblem. Audrey immediately recognized her to be the Evernight Goddess she worshiped.

This statue was most similar to the evil god in the upper left corner of the mural, but its face was more human, and there were no strange eyes hidden around it!

What sacrilege! This is sacrilegious to the Goddess! Audrey was a little angry, but she quickly calmed down.

As the most infamous evil god, it's expected that the True Creator would let his followers disfigure the Goddess… But, why would there be a humanoid sculpture of the goddess in the underground ruins… Isn't it said that the orthodox gods only have symbols? Audrey frowned slightly, lost in thought.

Alger felt somewhat enlightened as he said with a sigh, "So the murals depict the distorted images of the six gods.

"'They' really had humanoid images in the past…"

Perhaps this is the reason why the Churches have always been trying to find the Forsaken Land of God… As for the Forsaken Land of God, it's most likely hidden in the depths of the Sonia Sea. Yes, it definitely doesn't exist in a normal state; otherwise, it would be impossible for the deities to not notice it… Alger added silently inwardly.

The Sun was first taken aback before he came to a realization.

"Mr. Hanged Man, are these the deities that all of you mentioned before—the Evernight Goddess, the Lord of Storms…?"

"Yes," The Hanged Man gave an affirmative answer.

"What do 'They' have to do with the apocalypse? What does it have to do with our land being forsaken by the Lord?" Derrick subconsciously pressed.

Unfortunately, no one could answer him.

Fors raised her hand in confusion.

"Why is there no God of Steam and Machinery?"

This was the god she believed in.

In the Northern and Southern Continents, the seven gods had always been equal!

"Rumor has it that the God of Steam and Machinery, also known as the God of Craftsmanship, wasn't born until the Fourth Epoch. From the looks of it, it's true, and the time node at which 'He' was born seems to be in the late Fourth Epoch, not in the early or mid-Fourth Epoch…" The Hanged Man said, a mixture of explanations and guesses.

He had an unconcealable enthusiasm for such topics.

So that's the case… Fors felt a little guilty as she had never read the Steam and Machinery Bible seriously, and her faith appeared as just a way of life.

Derrick didn't harp on the previous matter and instead asked, "Is this mural the key point?"

"Perhaps, you can try to break it, but don't, heh, don't let the chief suspect you." The Hanged Man was about to say that he shouldn't attempt to pronounce the honorific names of one of the six gods, or else 'He' or 'They' might directly descend into the Forsaken Land of God, but after careful consideration, he realized that the Little Sun didn't know the corresponding honorific names at all.

"Alright. Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man. You're always so kind and enthusiastic. Also, Miss Justice, Miss Magician, and Mr. World, you are similarly as kindhearted," Derrick thanked them sincerely.

Kind? Enthusiastic? The Hanged Man was momentarily unsure of how to react.

This was the first time that someone had used such words to describe him.

After the discussion was over, Klein suddenly remembered something. In the previous exploration of the abandoned temple of the True Creator, the City of Silver found the name "Rose Redemption." However, it didn't seem to pay attention to this.

It can't be ignored… According to the evil spirit in the underground ruin, this extremely secretive organization is an organization led by fallen angels, and it is in no way inferior to the Twilight Hermit Order. Perhaps the "cyclic time" was set up by them… Thinking of this, The Fool, who was sitting upright in a high back chair, leisurely adjusted his posture and used his fingers to lightly tap the edge of the long, mottled table.

Audrey immediately turned her head and looked at Mr. Fool in excitement, waiting for 'Him' to give a hint.

The Hanged Man, The Sun, The Magician, and The World also looked expectantly at Mr. Fool.

Amid the fog, Klein chuckled and said, "Rose Redemption."

Rose Redemption? What is that… The key point to getting out of this predicament? That's right, there's such a name in the corner of a mural near the top of the temple! Derrick seemed to understand something.

Alger, Audrey, and Fors also recalled and gave the name "Rose Redemption" high importance, but they didn't fully understand the true meaning that Mr. Fool was trying to convey.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, what does Rose Redemption represent?" Audrey raised her hand and took the initiative to ask.

This time, Klein didn't respond other than giving a short laugh.

His idea was very simple. The organization, the Rose Redemption, was intricately tied to the True Creator. No matter what happened in the temple, it would always point to them in some way.

As for whether this name was a so-called key point, Klein wasn't sure or worried. After all, he held the right to interpretation.

If The Sun and the others misunderstood the real meaning, how could it be Mr. Fool's fault?

Chapter 462 - What is a Miracle?

◆

Seeing The Fool chuckling silently, Audrey and the others had no choice but to withdraw their gaze and stop asking questions.

In a situation like this where they were only given hints and not explanations, they didn't find it problematic. Existences at the level of deities typically had similar habits, and sometimes, what they gave weren't even hints, but revelations.

In the eyes of a powerful figure like Mr. Fool, just providing a single name is enough. Our failure to comprehend things is because we are lacking. We need to work harder at figuring out and attempting things… Audrey was increasingly looking forward to her future as a Psychiatrist.

"…I remember that there was something related to Rose Redemption in that semi-abandoned temple?" Alger tilted his head and looked at The Sun.

Without any hesitation, Derrick nodded and said, "Yes. It was text derived from Jotun in a corner of the murals. We used quite some time to decipher those words."

Text derived from Jotun… Alger hadn't paid much attention to this detail before, but he couldn't help but make connections at that moment in time.

That little boy, Jack, seems to have gone there from the Sonia Sea… Text derived from Jotun… Alger deliberated before making a request to conjure a line of text.

Those words were in ancient Feysac, the origins of the Northern Continent's language, and they meant: "Rose Redemption."

Derrick took a closer look and was stunned.

"It's very close, but the way that the words end is handled differently.

"Mr. Hanged Man, is this a language from where you come from?"

As he spoke, Derrick conjured the text on the mural again.

"Yes." Alger gave an affirmative answer. "This language itself has evolved. The one you found should be of an earlier type."

In the world of linguistics, this type of language which is similar to ancient Feysac is widely regarded as a characteristic of the Solomon Empire… Historian Klein gave the most accurate answer in his mind.

Alger paused.

"What about the content of the corresponding mural?"

"I wasn't in charge of that area, and I didn't take a careful look before departing…" Derrick instantly felt ashamed.

Alger nodded without a change in expression.

"Find a chance to clarify this. There might be a crucial point hidden within."

"Alright!" Derrick was increasingly convinced that things weren't so bad after all.

Seeing that he had relaxed quite a bit, Audrey was a little curious and a little puzzled as she asked, "Mr. Hanged Man, if that young boy named Jack is the child of the Listener you described, why would he be able to communicate with The Sun and the others?"

After discussing the corresponding terms for "Rose Redemption," she was completely certain that the City of Silver used a different language compared to the other countries in the Northern and Southern Continent like Loen.

And above the gray fog, everyone is able to communicate fluently, without any gaps in communication. It's all thanks to Mr. Fool's powers… Audrey praised in her heart.

Alger scoffed as he looked at her.

"Miss Justice, you haven't experienced any Beyonder events, have you?

"Jack has already become such a terrifying monster, so what else can't he change? Trust me, there are times when language knowledge is very easy to obtain, with it taking just a second or two."

"…"

Audrey blinked, feeling that she had once again exposed that she didn't have much experience or knowledge in mysticism.

After this matter came to a close, the Tarot Gathering resumed as per the usual schedule. Audrey looked towards the end of the long bronze table and said, "Mr. Fool, this time there are three more Roselle diary pages. I still owe you seven."

Upon hearing that, Fors hurriedly added, "Mr. Fool, I also received some responses. There will be new Roselle diary pages the next time."

"Very well." Klein chuckled in response.

By the side, Derrick suddenly felt ashamed again, because he hadn't had time to visit the library last week to look through any material and memorize historical details due to his participation in the exploratory team.

After a simple process, Klein picked up the three diary pages which were conjured, and he began to read with great anticipation.

"8th August. For the first time, I was invited to the White Maple Palace to attend a ball held by His Majesty.

"These aristocrats are really f*cking extravagant, with the food they eat completely being in pursuit of novelty. Things like grilled swans, sheep's testicles…

"I have to say, I was very surprised at the beginning. The aristocrats of this world, yes—this is limited only to aristocrats, really love cleanliness; it's common for them to take baths, and toilet paper has already taken a nascent form. They totally aren't like the aristocrats of Earth's middle ages.

"I originally thought that this was an effect of the existence of true gods, but I was later informed that this was an improvement that had to be made because of some kind of threat. Beyonders of a particular Sequence are able to spread the plague through dirty habits. I wonder which pathway and Sequence that is.

"At that time, my first thought was that there's something wrong with these aristocrats' brains, right? Since they're afraid of the plague, why don't they clean up the streets? Why didn't they build a complete sewage system? Why don't they uplift the slums?

"They're all in the same city. Does this mean that this place will be fine when there's a plague over there?

"Well, with water sources, food, and people isolated and them moving only in one direction, perhaps it really will be alright…

"But there are plagues that can be transmitted through the air! When I hold a high position, I must push for urban planning and clean up the environment. Even without the plague, just living in such a stinking city is still very annoying!

"Oh right, I've been summoned tonight by His Majesty.

"I thought that since I was born on Earth, I, who received an education of all men being equal, would be neither humble nor arrogant and appear rather calm. But in fact, I remained very nervous and excited, unconsciously bending my waist and bowing my head. Of course, I know that in terms of dignity, I'm equal to the King…

"This is the charm of power!"

Even though this entire page is filled with daily activities, the Emperor has still managed to make me laugh… He was also someone with a goal… Indeed, even for someone born in the modern world, they will still become apprehensive and sycophantic when faced with someone of high status, a person who can influence their fates… Klein smiled, his mood much more relaxed.

He turned to the second page and continued reading.

"11th November. About to advance to Sequence 4 to become a demigod.

"After this, as long as I don't lose control, then my life's natural order will experience a qualitative change. I would no longer be a short-lived creature. Of course, different Sequences of different pathways will be in different states.

"I faced two choices. One is Alchemist of the Savant pathway, and the other is Mysticologist of the Mystery Pryer pathway. Eventually, I chose not to change pathways since the Hidden Sage is a very dangerous existence. However, I ultimately suspect that 'He' isn't a real deity. Perhaps, 'He' is of a slightly lower level.

"After becoming an Alchemist, I will be able to inject 'soul' into the items I create and give them life. This is the feeling of being a Creator. It will definitely be excellent. It's also the reason why I continued choosing this Beyonder pathway.

"After obtaining this Sequence's Beyonder characteristic, I should be able to complete more of my concepts. There will come a day when the saying, ‘it’s not that we aren’t working hard, it’s just that the cheat has a Gundam.’ It will be a Gundam in the truest meaning of the word!

“The only problem is that the corresponding ritual of Alchemist needs to extract all the life force of a particular region, desertification of the land and the drying of lakes… Why is this not much different from a cult’s sacrificial ritual…

“I’ve always felt that the potion Sequence system has too many dark and crazy parts to it. Occasionally, it would be so evil that it can make one despair.”

The Emperor also feels the same way… Seeing this, Klein couldn’t help but sigh.

Sometimes, he also felt that the background color of this world was grayish-black and crazy.

Things like the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility, the laws of pathway convergence, and interchangeability of close Sequences all bring about change that leads to tragedy.

Alchemist is a very interesting Sequence. Alchemical Life sounds forbidden and is a domain very close to that of deities… I wonder if the Emperor made any Gundams before he was assassinated… Probably not… Klein’s thoughts drifted away for a moment.

He was rather curious about the ritual of becoming a demigod-like High-Sequence Beyonder. Unfortunately, Roselle didn’t record much of it. After all, it was a diary, not a notebook.

Sequence 4 Mysticologist of the Mystery Pryer pathway sounds good too… Klein turned over the second diary page and displayed the third page in front of him.

“23rd April. This bunch of aristocrats really are a mess! I even thought that Ma’am Karen had seduced me for sex because she had taken a fancy for my inner self. But who knew that her husband, the Earl of Champagne, was peeping in the opposite room. He was even thrilled and even f**king wanted to f**k me!

“I’m sorry, but I just can’t accept it, so I had to kick him out of the room.

“Compared to their family, I’m just a pure child!”

“…”

Klein was momentarily speechless. He felt that the private life of Emperor Roselle was really filled with excitement and that many of the Intis aristocracy were also sufficiently eccentric.

If some aristocrat tries to seek novelty and finds a curly-haired baboon, some kind of disease might even be born… Klein sighed and looked down.

“25th April. To cultivate my character and hone my mind, I went fishing at Swan Lake. I hope that one day I can go fishing at sea for a mermaid.

“Sigh, I’ve been quite depraved recently. I have to invigorate my spirit and invent more things. I can’t leave any gaps! Since I transmigrated to this world, I will brand this era with my name!”

…Emperor, it’s better if you had fallen into depravity… Klein’s mouth twitched without any intention of making comment.

Then, he calmly looked at the last diary entry on the last page.

“26th April. Zaratul came visiting. I deliberately asked him what a miracle was.

“He asked me in return about what I thought it was.

“What I think it is? There is only one miracle in my heart, and that is the wonders of civilization! For example, the Great Twilight Hall of the Feysac Empire, the former residence of the Giant King, Aurmir.

“Zaratul finally gave a direct answer.

“He said, ‘What is a miracle? A miracle is to be resurrected from the dead!’”

Chapter 463 - Answering His Own Questions

◆ ◆ ◆

A miracle is to be resurrected from the dead?

Klein suddenly remembered what had happened to him!

The head injury of a man who shot himself in the head miraculously healing; a Beyonder who, having died from having his heart crushed, crawled out of his grave in the middle of the night—are these considered “miracles” of being resurrected from the dead? Is this the “miracle” the leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul, spoke of? And Sequence 2 of the Seer pathway is called a Miracle Invoker! At this moment, Klein felt like he had grasped something important, but he was unable to piece together all the clues to form the truth he wanted.

As I had guessed before, there are other factors at work for my choice of having Seer as my beginning Sequence… My greatest support is the mysterious space above the gray fog which happens to eliminate all interference and provide Seers the most coveted environment… My characteristic of “resurrection” also seems to have come from the gray fog as well…

When I came to Backlund, the events in which Marionettist Rosago was involved in were naturally drawn to me, which is consistent with the convergence of Beyonder characteristics of the same pathway. The higher “quality” it is, the stronger the attraction as the effects appear intermittently… The sudden change in the Antigonus family notebook’s style of passing key information to me, related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range via the Misfortune Cloth Puppet, might also be a result of such elements…

Combined with the other miscellaneous phenomena, does it mean that this mysterious space has a very close relationship with the Seer Beyonder pathway? That this is a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact of the corresponding Sequence? Or perhaps it's a divine kingdom left behind by a Sequence 0 of the same pathway?

There's also the possibility of it being the so-called "Uniqueness" of the Seer pathway…

Klein moved his gaze away from Roselle's diary, his anticipation for advancing to a High-Sequence Beyonder increasing. He wondered what he would discover in the hidden area after he completed the staircase of light.

Perhaps the reason for my transmigration and the way home will be found there… He suppressed his excitement and allowed Roselle's diary pages to disappear from his hands.

At the same time, he became increasingly wary of the leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul.

He was a powerful existence that had long since become a Miracle Invoker from the Seer pathway many years ago!

There might be times and matters that have his fingerprints hidden all over them!

Although all of these thoughts were churning in his mind, Klein acted as though nothing had happened as he calmly said, "You can begin your transactions."

Fors immediately turned to look at Miss Justice who sat on the same side of the table, and she said with expectation, "I have received a reply. My teacher has a pair of Mirror Dragon eyes. The price is 1,000 pounds."

Upon saying that, Fors felt a little uneasy. This was because Dorian Gray Abraham's reserve price was 800 pounds, which was already at a premium above the usual 500–600 pounds. And on that foundation, she had added another 200 pounds.

After attending so many Tarot Gatherings and all kinds of Beyonder circles, I finally understand one thing. Just like Emperor Roselle said, money isn't omnipotent, but nothing can be done without money…

Although I've already received the fixed payment for my new book and have savings reaching 350 pounds, there's still the Spirit Eater stomach pouch awaiting me. There's also all kinds of expenses needed for Sequence 7, 6, 5, and even 4… The meaning before Mr. Fool's secret hint is that I should be able to be freed from the curse of the full moon once I become a High-Sequence Beyonder… Even if I can find some of them through Teacher, I can't fully rely on him and the Abraham family…

In this regard, saving up money on my own isn't enough, and efforts must be made to make money…

The price of 1,000 pounds is really expensive. If Miss Justice wishes to bargain, I'll later tell her that Teacher agreed to lower the price by 100 pounds after repeated negotiations… As Fors waited for the reply, she consoled herself.

"1,000 pounds?" Audrey never expected to receive news for the Psychiatrist potion ingredients so quickly, so she subconsciously asked in a confirming tone.

Without waiting for a reply from Fors, she happily added, "Okay, deal!"

Although she still owed Viscount Glaint a final installment and still owed The Fool's Blessed 2,000 pounds, she would officially be declared an adult at the New Year's Ball. Not only would her control over her wealth be greater than ever before, but she would also receive many valuable gifts, such as the one promised by her father, Earl Hall, a few days earlier. He had promised to give his dear daughter a further 50,000 pounds in Backlund Bank shares and more than 2,000 pounds in cash. Hence, 1,000 pounds wasn't a number that she was bothered with.

Audrey had originally asked Mr. Fool to extend the payment period of the 2,000 pounds to February or March in order, on the one hand, to pay off her debt to Viscount Glaint, and to save up money as discreetly as possible without arousing suspicion. On the other hand, she had to set aside an additional budget for the ingredients of the Psychiatrist potion.

Now was the time to use the budget!

At most, I'll have to tighten my belt like how I did for the past few months. After March, there wouldn't be any problems! Audrey thought, not troubled at all.

She agreed? She agreed… Fors was both happy and confused.

Fors asked Mr. Fool to bear witness to the transaction and arranged for Miss Justice to make the payment first before she delivered the Beyonder ingredient on Wednesday. As Fors decided to head for Pritz Harbor immediately upon receiving the cash, without wasting any time in the middle, she looked at the three gentlemen—The Sun, The Hanged Man, and The World.

"Does anyone have any information on the Spirit Eater stomach pouch?"

After calming down, she discovered that with her experience in the acting method, she could digest the excess Beyonder characteristic much faster than she had expected. One week was almost equivalent to two weeks of the past.

In about ten days, she would be able to completely digest and resolve the problem.

When she gathered the ingredients and advanced to Trickmaster, she felt that she would be able to perfectly pass the first test given by her teacher, Dorian. She would gain more attention and would no longer be a mere student who was taken in out of gratitude.

Derrick nodded and said, “I was just about to tell you that during this exploration, we obtained some Spirit Eater stomach pouches. I can exchange it at low prices after I return to the City of Silver. Uh, that’s under the premise that I’m no longer under surveillance.”

“Okay, but it seems that you have no use for gold pounds?” Fors asked directly.

After the operation to save Little Sun, she had a preliminary understanding of the City of Silver.

Without waiting for The Sun to say a word, Alger interjected, “You can hand me the corresponding cash or gold coins to me. 300 pounds is a very reasonable price. I will provide the Solar High Priest potion formula to The Sun.”

“Mr. Hanged Man, you have the formula to Solar High Priest?” Derrick asked in pleasant surprise.

During his previous patrols and his recent explorations, he had increasingly felt that the powers of the Sun pathway were perfect for dealing with the dark.

Although the Giant pathway’s Sequence 6 Dawn Paladin could already create the light of dawn, in the realm of the Holy and Light, it’s still inferior to a Light Suppliant!

The Hanged Man nodded slightly and said, “That’s right!”

He had found the Solar High Priest potion formula in a treasury of the Rorsted Archipelago, but it was only recently that he had found an opportunity to provide sufficient justification and have the sufficient conditions to have the right to read it once.

The reason that he gave was that people suspected to be priests of the

Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun had appeared on the Sonia Sea, and since he was temporarily unable to return to the Intis Republic, he could only search for the potion ingredients corresponding to Solar High Priest. Moreover, the hatred for the Eternal Blazing Sun could turn mere rumors into the basis for action by the Church of Storms.

Derrick was delighted at first, but he soon said with some awkwardness, "The value of the Sequence 7 potion formula is higher than a Spirit Eater's stomach pouch. I… I don't have the gold pounds all of you were talking about."

"You can repay it with ingredients of the same value," The Hanged Man gave a terse response. "But I don't know what I can get from you… First, you should make a list of the common monsters found around the City of Silver and their corresponding ingredients. I'll then choose from that list."

"No problem. After this exploration is over, I will do it as quickly as possible." Derrick was visibly relieved.

By the side, Klein wanted to facepalm, but in the end, he didn't manipulate The World to break the deal. It was because he also wanted to know what kind of monsters and ingredients were common around the City of Silver.

As Audrey secretly sighed, The Hanged Man looked around and raised his request.

"I need a pair of Dragon-Eyed Sea Condor eyes. I'll pay the necessary compensation."

He only mentioned the Dragon-Eyed Sea Condor eyes… In other words, Mr. Hanged Man has clues regarding the Blue Shadow Falcon's crystalline feathers… He really does have many channels and resources… Audrey, who had seen the potion formula for Wind-blessed, thought with some enlightenment.

After the transactions came to an end, they began to freely exchange information about their areas, and the end of the Tarot Gathering quickly approached.

During the process, The World inquired for clues about mermaids and obtained an answer similar to the one he had received from Sharron.

When everything was over, Klein, who had been watching quietly, thought it necessary to warn Miss Justice and Miss Magician.

A terrifying object that is suspected to be a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact has appeared around Prince Edessak. It might even involve 0-08, which would definitely not be a simple matter. Furthermore, the last time a similar situation occurred, Tingen City had faced the threat of an evil god's spawn, and it had almost disappeared from the map! Hence, now there's also a hidden danger in Backlund! Klein thought for a few seconds, making The World say in a hoarse voice, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have recently received some information that a major event is brewing in Backlund. This will bring about a great deal of unrest and may lead to a tragedy."

"What's the major event?" Audrey asked with concern.

Unknowingly, her brow had begun to slightly furrow.

"I don't know." The World shook his head calmly.

"Where would the element of unrest and the possible tragedy come from?" Fors asked nervously.

From the previous gatherings, she had confirmed that Mr. World's sources were trustworthy.

The World acted stumped as he shook his head and said, "There's contradictory information, making it impossible for me to give a definite answer."

Upon saying this, he looked up and earnestly cast his gaze towards the figure within the gray fog at the end of the mottled table.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, your Blessed in Backlund must’ve detected something, right?”

Everyone’s eyes immediately focused towards the end of the long bronze table, with everyone feeling different feelings—curiosity, worry, anticipation, and tenseness.

With the attention on him, Klein leaned back and said in a casual tone, “Edessak Augustus.”

Chapter 464 - Consultation

◆

Prince Edessak Augustus? What connection does he have with the danger that might lead to tragedy? Moreover, this matter seems to have received the attention of Mr. Fool! Audrey instantly matched the name with a face, giving rise to great worry and doubt in her.

In her opinion, things that caught the attention of Mr. Fool were either very dangerous, extremely secretive, or had far-reaching importance, and were by no means simple. For example, the True Creator had attempted to descend upon Backlund with the help of Lanevus and the harsh conditions of East Borough's factory district, Emperor Roselle's Black Emperor card, or the death of the Duke Negan, and the Twilight Hermit Order.

Taking these examples into account, Audrey had good reason to believe that, if not handled well, or given too little attention, the major event involving Prince Edessak would inevitably lead to a very, very terrible storm!

Yes… Prince Edessak hasn't bothered me for quite some time, and I was only relieved by that and didn't think too much about it. Now, it does seem a little problematic… At the previous ball, he still warmly kept me back to discuss some boring topics, trying his hand at pompous bad humor. But just two or three days after that, he turned rather cold and had even deliberately avoided me… I have to find a chance to ask Father about him, but I can't show too much curiosity, or else it might be very possible that he would agree to the royal family's marriage request… Audrey recalled some details, and she suddenly felt her shoulders sink from the weight.

She had never liked Prince Edessak, including his two elder brothers, and she had no intention of becoming a princess consort. As for the reason, it was very simple. The followers of the Evernight Goddess couldn't accept that the Augustus family had believed in the Lord of Storms for generations, which meant their arrogance, pomposity, contempt, and eccentricity against women had penetrated deep into their bones. It was hard to change them which was the one thing Audrey couldn't tolerate the most.

When she thought of the strict, ancient, and extremely conservative environment she would find herself in after becoming a princess consort, Audrey felt that she would surely go crazy and flee, disregarding everything else. So, she wasn't moved at all by the rather solicitous flattery of the princes; she was even very repulsed.

Edessak Augustus… The last name implies that he's a member of the royal family. I vaguely remember that he's a prince? What dangerous matter is he going to do? I have no way of coming into contact with him… Right, I can ask Miss Audrey and Viscount Glaint for help, but I have to think of a reason ahead of time to prevent any suspicion from them… Fors frowned slightly as she interpreted Mr. Fool's words.

Alger was very interested in the matter, but he didn't dare to ask Mr. Fool, who was obviously just providing a hint. He could only ponder to himself for two seconds before saying to Justice, The Magician, and The World, "The atmosphere over the sea isn't calm either. It might have a connection with Backlund, just like those machines."

His words were completely baseless. He simply wanted to exaggerate the degree of the danger and let the three Tarot Club members in Backlund investigate it diligently.

…I have to say that Mr. Hanged Man has acted in concert so well… Klein, who was watching from the sidelines, gave up on the idea of having The World say something similar.

He only mentioned Prince Edessak, but not the lady with the sapphire ring who was suspected of having a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. He didn't even mention the possibility that the matter Prince Edessak might be involved in had to do with 0-08 and Ince Zangwill because he didn't know the circumstances of the top Sealed Artifact that could even destroy a country. All he could rely on were minute clues to make guesses that he wasn't completely sure of. He was afraid that if he directly told the key points to Justice and Miss Magician, their investigations would be detected by the target the moment they honed in on the target.

This was also why Klein didn't try to find an opportunity to inform the Machinery Hivemind. Based on his guesses about Sealed Artifact 0-08, he suspected that if he left Minsk Street and rode a horse carriage to the Lever Cathedral or the Steam Cathedral, he would encounter an unexpected and absolutely unstoppable attack, such as the eruption of a Sealed Artifact hidden underground or a fatal strike of a High-Sequence Beyonder.

Only the screening of the gray fog allowed Klein to not worry about such problems. To a certain extent, he could inform Justice and The Magician about this through a more gentle, more roundabout, and more veiled manner.

In addition, Klein had other plans. It was to "leave" Backlund by bowing out the stage as a side character among side characters and changing his appearance without anyone noticing. He would then secretly return and contact the Machinery Hivemind in a manner beyond the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact's senses!

Let's hope this will succeed. I hope there's a chance of finding Ince Zangwill! Yes, the premise is that he is indeed involved in this matter… Wait a minute, while Mr. Azik was after Ince Zangwill, he had a conflict with MI9. He became secretly wanted, and MI9 has always been considered to be a pro-royal faction in the military… A series of coincidences revolving Prince Edessak is rather similar to the features displayed by Sealed Artifact 0-08 in the past… This seems to indirectly confirm Ince Zangwill's existence…

Klein closed his eyes, and the bright boots and pale hand flashed back to him.

He leaned back in his chair, his lips curving upward.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we shall meet next week."

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey stood in front of the full-length mirror, staring blankly at her reflection.

There were good news and bad news for her at this Tarot Gathering.

The good news was that she was about to receive one of the Psychiatrist potion's main ingredients.

Although she was no longer the ignorant girl who had bought some basic general knowledge from The Hanged Man for a thousand pounds and knew the approximate price of a lot of Beyonder ingredients, she didn't mind paying a premium for the eyes of a Mirror Dragon.

After Duke Negan's assassination, she gained the desire and motivation to raise her Sequence to receive the corresponding combat strength. For this, she didn't want to wait any longer and was willing to pay a price—as long as the ingredients appeared, she would immediately accept the offer as long as the price wasn't too outrageous, in case something unexpected happened.

It's like a precious piece of jewelry that many noble ladies have set their eyes on. It's also like the purebred houses with unique bloodlines that men like. The corresponding premium is inevitable and unavoidable. At times, it's not impossible to have the price double or triple… Besides, with Fors busying herself in the process of contacting her teacher, she definitely shouldn't be left wasting her time while taking on risks. Yes… She also doesn't know that I'm Justice… Audrey thought indifferently.

As for the bad news, it was no doubt related to the matter of Prince Edessak. It left her concerned and worried.

Fortunately, Mr. World received the news, and Mr. Fool had provided a warning. Otherwise, who knows how things would've turned out… Audrey, with such excellent conditions, you could certainly solve this problem! Come on! The girl drew the sign of the crimson moon against the reflection in the mirror and tried hard to be optimistic.

Then, she restrained her emotions and headed out to the piano room, preparing to participate in her scheduled piano lesson as if nothing had happened.

This was because Earl Hall and his wife, as well as Hibbert Hall wouldn't be home until dinner, and she had no one to ask for information now. She could only tell herself to be calm, to be composed, and to be patient.

Before the tutor arrived, Audrey casually played the piano, using the beautiful melody to cleanse her mind and soul.

When she finished playing, she noticed that Susie had opened the door at some point and was sitting beside her. She still had a pair of gold-rimmed glasses hanging around her neck.

"Audrey, what problems did you encounter? The sound of your piano tells me that you're frustrated over something," Susie said suddenly.

Uh… Audrey froze, not knowing how to reply.

She suddenly felt that having a "mind-reading dog" at home wasn't necessarily a good thing…

†

Within the campsite that had a lit bonfire.

With his eyes closed, Derrick Berg thought back quietly to what had happened at the Tarot Gathering and made sure that he hadn't forgotten the memories of his repeated experiences.

After an unknown period of time, he opened his eyes, which were brimming with anticipation, and looked around. However, what entered into his eyes were flames and his teammates, who were exactly the same as in his memories.

At that moment, the cross-legged Demon Hunter Colin, who was leaning against a stone pillar, said, "We will set off after 50 rounds of lightning."

At this moment, Derrick was sure that everything that had happened before wasn't a dream or a hallucination.

†

Cherwood Borough. 15 Minsk Street.

Klein went down to the first floor and sat in the activity room, feeling the warmth of the fireplace.

He quietly rocked in the reclining chair without reading the newspapers, magazines, or even books.

It was all so peaceful and silent until he heard the ringing of his doorbell.

Klein, who was wearing a house shirt and cashmere vest, got up and walked towards the door. The visitor took him by surprise.

He opened the door and chuckled.

"Good afternoon, Emlyn. Aren't you supposed to be helping at the Harvest Church at this hour?"

It was the handsome, somewhat effeminate, Vampire Emlyn White, whose hair was combed back at an angle.

The arrogant man's expression froze when he heard Klein's greeting. It took him a bit of effort to recover his composure.

“I have something to consult with you, Detective. Sherlock. Moriarty!” Emlyn enunciated one word at a time.

After inviting him into the activity room, Klein returned to his reclining chair and asked with a smile, “What is it? The fee for a consultation is one pound, but the consultation cannot exceed an hour.”

Emlyn White didn't pay attention to his words, and he said while deep in thought, “A big shot wants me to do something… Although that matter can help me solve my problem indirectly, it also contains a great amount of risk.

“I don't have any friends, and I'm afraid my parents will be worried, and you're a very knowledgeable Beyonder detective… What do you suggest? Reject or accept?”

Solve your problem? Clearing the psychological cue? Klein said thoughtfully, “I can't give you any advice with just the word ‘something.'”

Emlyn White fell silent for a few seconds before he clenched his teeth and said in a low voice, “It has something to do with that Fool…”

“Huh?” Klein almost lifted his hand to his ear.

Chapter 465 - Emlyn's Determination

◆

After a second of confirmation, Klein clasped his hands together and leaned forward.

“What exactly is this something?”

“No, I can’t say any further.” Emlyn White shook his head firmly.

Afraid of being probed, Klein didn’t pursue the matter. He simply analyzed the situation based on the information that the vampire had just revealed.

Something to do with The Fool… It can help Emlyn White resolve his problem… Contains a high risk… Combined with his previous ideas, this seems to indicate that he intended to hold an appropriate ritual to pray to The Fool, which is also me, so as to eliminate the psychological cue and gain his long-awaited freedom… However, this is no longer a ritual that Emlyn will be holding himself. It’s a result of a particular big shot’s instructions, and with this vampire’s pride, for him to address the person that way, it most likely means that the person is a powerhouse among the Sanguine… Why would a Sanguine big shot send a descendant to pray to The Fool? Have they started working with the Aurora Order?

Confused, Klein looked up at the expectant Emlyn and scoffed to himself.

Try guessing if I’ll respond to your prayers.

He hesitated for two seconds and didn't make a suggestion. Instead, he said, "Statistically speaking, when praying to a hidden existence without understanding the situation, 30 out of 100 cases would not receive any response. 68 cases will end up encountering all sorts of terrible things and cause them to lose their lives, or live a life worse than death. Only two cases have the possibility of success, allowing them to get what they want, but the price they pay might not be what they want."

As a former keyboard warrior, Klein had always believed that when it came to proving something or reinforcing a point of view, anyone who just gave an example, an exception, without mentioning the entire sample and overall statistics was being an asshole. It was merely a trick of concept, and in these cases, there were usually similar companion words, such as "I have a friend," "a girl I know," or "someone around me."

Therefore, to convince Emlyn White, he deliberately fabricated some data.

Of course, this wasn't entirely baseless. At least, many of the files which Klein had read while he was a member of a Nighthawks team had described similar situations.

"Only two cases of success? Problems happen to 68 cases?" Startled, Emlyn couldn't help but lift his hand to smooth his hair.

"Basically, that is the level of danger over the matter you're going to do. If you have malicious intentions, the risk is even higher than this," Klein replied sincerely.

Emlyn shook his head subconsciously.

"No, there's no malice. B-besides, the big shot will protect me in the process."

No malice? Uh, even if you have malice, you might not know since you're just cannon fodder who has been pushed to the front lines… Klein raised his right palm and strengthened his tone with a gesture.

"This will reduce the risk by a lot, but it definitely won't reduce it to zero. Does that big shot really have the means to resist a hidden existence?"

"…Probably, not," Emlyn answered haltingly.

"So." Klein spread his hands.

He suddenly revealed a smile and said, "Emlyn, there is no need for you to take this risk. Even if you completely believe in Earth Mother, it will not affect your life in any way. Look at the citizens of Feynapotter; don't they eat, dress, and do whatever they want? When the time comes, there's a high chance that Father Utravsky will no longer force you to do volunteer work at the Harvest Church. You will regain your original freedom.

"Furthermore, I believe that you have adapted well to the teachings of Earth Mother without any contradictions."

Emlyn White remained silent for a while and said, "Being a believer because I like 'Her' beliefs is completely different from being forcefully turned into a believer through a psychological cue. Even if I do abandon the moon one day and believe in Earth Mother, I also hope that it is a choice that I freely made. It has nothing to do with others; this is the last pride of a Sanguine."

Klein looked at Emlyn with some surprise. He hadn't expected him to be so insistent.

He considered for two seconds and didn't try to persuade him again by giving a terse acknowledgment.

"The problem is actually very simple, that is, do you have the courage to face a certain degree of danger because of the orders of the big shot and the temptation to get rid of the cue. If you're willing to sacrifice your life for this, then the answer is extremely simple.

“In short, this matter will ultimately be left to you to decide.”

Emlyn listened with a heavy expression, and he instinctively retorted, “If I really choose to make the attempt, it’s definitely not for myself, but for all Sanguine! Resolving this problem is just an additional perk!”

For all Sanguine? What matter of mine involves all Sanguine? That big shot was lying to you, right? Klein sneered.

“Do you believe that a weak vampire has the chance to save an entire race?”

“Sanguine, Sanguine!” Emlyn emphasized. “Moreover, my strength isn’t bad either. It’s equivalent to Sequence 7 of you humans. By the way, it’s the kind that specializes in combat!

“As for whether you believe it or not, you wouldn’t understand.” He stood up and said, “Although your analysis and suggestions are meaningless, I still have to thank you. Uh, the consultation fee will be deducted from the previous suitcase and tin box.”

“Huh?” Klein wasn’t able to react for a moment to what he was talking about.

It was only when Emlyn had left that he suddenly realized what he meant.

Aren’t the vessels in large transactions usually free?

That petty and stingy vampire!

†

In the darkness, in which the frequency of lightning had yet to resume, the exploratory team from the City of Silver “punctually” arrived at the periphery of the abandoned temple.

Derrick remembered that during their first operation, all the animal hide lanterns had been extinguished here. The entire team fell into pure darkness, and he had also heard the creepy "cry for help" coming from the depths of the temple.

According to the conjectures from Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice, this might be the starting point for our repeated cycles. But why would we wake up in the campsite outside the city and not directly here? Remembering the discussion at the Tarot meeting, Derrick raised his arm and prayed secretly, as suggested.

A pure light suddenly burst out from his body, causing Joshua and the other members of the exploratory team to quickly assume battle positions.

"What happened?" Demon Hunter Colin drew his sword and asked in a deep voice.

Derrick looked left and right in "horror" and said, "Your Excellency, I just heard a child crying 'save me… save me…'"

He wanted to test if this was a key point!

"And now?" Colin asked warily.

"I don't hear it anymore." Derrick listened carefully.

Demon Hunter Colin glanced at Joshua and the others from the corner of his eye. "Did any of you hear it?"

"No." The exploratory team members shook their heads.

After pondering for a few seconds, Colin came to a decision. He took out a dark blue metal bottle from the secret compartment in his belt and smeared the colorless, viscous liquid on his sword.

Then, he stabbed upwards with his sword.

Suddenly, the sky lit up. Streaks of silver, snake-like beams started to surge upwards, quickly spreading in all directions.

The silver-white light instantly enveloped all the members of the exploratory team, as if illuminating the darkest "corner" of every single one of them.

With a sizzling sound, the silver serpents drilled into the void, heading off into the unknown.

Everything calmed down very quickly, leaving only the dim light of the animal hide lanterns scattered in silence.

Colin narrowed his eyes, whatever he attempted had sensed something unknown. After a full five seconds, he raised his hand and pointed forward.

"From now on, we can't afford to be careless. We have to be on full alert."

Such familiar words… This isn't the key to breaking out of this predicament… Derrick calmed his heart and followed the team into the half-deserted temple without any delay.

This time, he learned his lesson and didn't look at the face of the Fallen Creator. In the process of inspecting the ground, he managed to get himself to investigate the area where the mural was by being proactive.

He held onto the animal hide lantern and the Axe of Hurricane in his hands as he and one of his teammates began to take action as a small team.

He finally reached his destination after passing through a series of mottled and crumbling walls.

As the light from the animal hide lantern grew closer, the mural on the wall gradually became clearer.

Derrick first looked towards the corner and found the strange, memorable line of words.

Rose Redemption… he silently chanted the name, raised the animal hide lantern, and carefully examined the details of the mural.

On the highest area of the mottled wall was a huge, blurry, pitch-black cross. A shadow that was difficult to discern was hanging upside down on it.

Against such a backdrop, there was a desolate plain.

In the plains, there was a long line of people. Their destination was a distant mountain—the cross on top of the mountain, and the figure hanging upside down.

Within the line, some of the people were kneeling on the ground, praying devoutly. Others had already stood up and were walking forward while facing a raging wind.

Their faces were simple sketches, as though it was trying to highlight their tattered clothing. Only the leader at the front was relatively clearer.

It was a tall and thin man with long, silver hair reaching his back.

This man had soft facial features; his head was lowered, and his eyes were tightly shut. There were layers upon layers of wings of light on his back.

Angel! A legendary angel! Derrick observed the situation around the leader with excitement.

[image]

Soon, he discovered a meandering, rippling river beneath the feet of the seemingly angelic man.

The river kept twisting and turning, and it led back into itself, becoming the source!

A cycle! This creates a cycle! Derrick felt that he had caught on to something important.

In the cycles of experiences, there was actually a circular river in the mural on the wall!

The latter was obviously hinting or revealing something!

Derrick looked up and saw the silver-haired angel with an uncountable number of wings. There was a touch of indifference in the gentleness of his face, as though he was looking down at a river, looking down at fate.

Is this the true meaning behind Mr. Fool's hint? Derrick thought for a moment and decided to give it a try—if he succeeded, he planned on blaming all his anomalies on the boy, Jack. If he failed, no one would remember what he had done!

Under the stunned gaze of his teammates, Derrick raised the Axe of Hurricane and viciously slashed at the river in the mural.

The lightning that had just flashed by was triggered, and the silver light fell onto the axe.

Chapter 466 - Tail-devourer

◆

Bam!

Derrick’s axe, wrapped in streaks of silver, struck the river in the mural, causing the wall to cave in and stone chips to fly everywhere.

With one strike, the river that had its source connected to its mouth completely disintegrated.

Just as he was looking forward to having the cycle broken, resulting in the members of the exploratory team escaping the temple, Demon Hunter Colin’s figure phased away and appeared before him, his face grim.

“What were you doing?”

The tip of the demigod’s sword was still pointed downwards, but the grip on his hilt was clearly tighter than before.

Thinking back to the collective wisdom of the Tarot Club members, Derrick said, half ‘doubtfully’ and half ‘fearfully,’ “Your Excellency, a black shadow flashed past here just now. It’s true! It looked like the figure of a child!”

Without looking away, Colin Iliad asked another team member, “Haim, did you see it?”

The exploratory team member named Haim subconsciously moved closer to the Chief, firmly shook his head, and said, “No, I didn’t see anything.”

Colin's light blue eyes immediately glowed, revealing two complex dark green symbols.

He watched Derrick in this state for four to five seconds.

Finally, he withdrew his gaze and said in a normal tone, "This is your first exploration mission; hallucinations due to being nervous is normal.

"Subsequently, you are to stay by my side. I think you'll be calmer this way."

"Yes, Your Excellency," Derrick agreed without any hesitation.

Having just made an attempt, he confirmed that the mural wasn't critical.

The Rose Redemption that Mr. Fool suggested likely hides a deeper meaning; it's not that simple… Derrick walked silently beside Chief Colin with the Axe of Hurricane in hand.

What happened afterward wasn't much different from the explorations he remembered from his previous explorations. Everyone repeated the events in the past and arrived at the final hall with an altar for the sixth time. There, they found the yellow-haired boy, Jack, curled up in the shadows.

Upon hearing "save me… save me…" and seeing the silhouette of the child, Demon Hunter Colin nodded his head indiscernibly and retracted most of the attention he had placed on Derrick Berg.

Just as he was deliberating his words, Derrick suddenly asked, "How can we save you?"

Jack revealed an excited expression.

"Save me, save me, send me home! Send me home!"

"Where is your home?" Derrick asked, curious and frightened.

Seeing this, Colin shut his mouth and tightened his grip.

Jack raised his hand weakly and said, “My home, my home is at Enmat Harbor!”

Enmat Harbor… Although Mr. Hanged Man never mentioned it, from the word “harbor”, Jack really doesn’t belong to this place of ours. It’s very likely that he comes from the outside world, from the Loen Kingdom where Miss Justice and the others are located! Derrick was overjoyed, unable to hide his excitement.

His reaction didn’t arouse any suspicion from Demon Hunter Colin, because this powerful chief of the six-member council had also never seen the sea. He could only read from the preserved books that this body of water was many times larger than a lake, as well as the term “harbor.”

The words that came out of the strange boy’s mouth presented itself like a painting of a new world in front of Colin. This made him, who was desperately searching for the future of the City of Silver, forget about anything else as he blurted out, “How did you, or you and your companions, get here?”

Jack showed a reminiscing expression.

“My father and I first traveled by boat, then we met up with his companions and continued on the voyage. After a huge storm, the rest of us touched ground and followed the direction of the Lord’s gaze and came all the way here.”

“Followed the direction of the Lord’s gaze?” Demon Hunter Colin and the others looked at the deity statue in unison, trying to determine where he was staring at.

Soon, Colin was able to determine some general information.

They had proceeded in the direction of where the statue was looking at. That is to say, as soon as we reverse the process, we can find the shore and the place where they landed… The opposite direction of his gaze is… The map around the City of Silver, which was gradually being perfected through continuous explorations, appeared in Colin's mind, allowing him to come up with a preliminary sketch of the route of the boy's "journey."

If there are no other temples in the middle and no corresponding statues, extrapolating it all the way would pass through the ruins of the Giant King's Court! Colin's pupils suddenly contracted.

That was the palace that once housed the ancient god, Giant King Aurmir. It wasn't too far away from the City of Silver!

The descendants of the Kingdom of Silver, who had been ruled by the giants for generations, knew exactly where the ruins were located, but they were still unable to complete their exploration of the area because it was extremely dangerous, even more dangerous than the pure darkness!

According to Colin's extrapolations, the unfamiliar boy and his party had passed through the ruins of the Giant King's Court before arriving here.

How did they do it? Perhaps they didn't take a completely direct path, and they circled around the Giant King's Court… Regardless, there's a path that leads to the sea behind the Giant King's Court. And on the other end of the sea might be a human kingdom… Is that the hope of the City of Silver? Colin couldn't help resisting the thought.

At this moment, Derrick acutely noticed that the clothes on the boy's chest and abdomen were dyed dark red, as though some kind of liquid was slowly seeping out.

"Are you hurt?" he cautiously asked.

Jack lowered his head and replied in an erratic tone, "Something ugly is growing there…"

As he spoke, he took off his clothes, revealing his bare chest.

It was inlaid with two eyes, a nose, and a mouth!

It wasn't painted nor was it made of gems. They were real eyes, a real nose, and a real mouth in the purest sense of the word. Furthermore, they didn't seem to belong to one particular face but that of three people.

All of a sudden, Derrick imagined a scene in which Jack had used the remnants of his companions after eating them—their eyes, nose, and mouth—to form a strange face on his chest.

The face was gentle and indifferent, giving Derrick an inexplicable feeling of familiarity.

It took only a second or two for Derrick to figure out the reason for the familiarity.

The face was very much like the angel in the mural above them—the silver-haired angel with his feet over the circular river!

Sure enough, the reason we keep repeating the exploration is because of 'Him!' A thought struck Derrick, and he blurted out a single word, as though he was going to blurt the incantation to extricate himself from the predicament.

"Rose Redemption!" he solemnly shouted.

Jack raised his head and stared at him, his mouth slowly grinning wide before reaching his ears.

"I'm so hungry…

"So hungry…"

…Derrick froze as he saw a fierce battle ensue.

When he regained consciousness, he found himself sitting by the bonfire in the campsite again.

Rose Redemption isn't the incantation… He began to reflect deeply.

The seventh exploration soon began. Derrick, who had made an attempt, no longer behaved strangely, but he proactively sought to investigate the Rose Redemption mural.

As usual, the exploratory team entered the underground hall with the altar and the deity statue. They found the obviously strange little boy, Jack.

After a similar conversation, Derrick once again saw the human face that had been pieced together with the facial features of other people.

Now experienced, he didn't take any actions which could agitate the boy. He lowered his voice and said to Demon Hunter Colin, "Your Excellency, the face on his chest is very similar to the angel in the mural above us. It's the angel with silver hair whose feet are above a river that is connected from mouth to source. Yes, the mural which is labeled 'Rose Redemption' at the corner."

Colin was taken aback at first before he frowned.

As he paid attention and consoled Jack, he sized up Derrick from the corner of his eye.

After a few seconds of silence, he said with a suppressed voice, "Due to you mentioning this matter, you made me think of certain things."

Without waiting for Derrick to ask, he continued, "We've been studying this mural for a very long period of time and only believe that it depicts an angel leading a group of ascetics on a pilgrimage. And perhaps this group's name is Rose Redemption.

"The river, that runs from source to mouth, represents a cycle, and our interpretation of it is that this pilgrimage takes place over and over again.

“And now it may be that it is used to identify the angel.

“That’s the idea you gave me, as Amon used to hide in your body.”

“Why?” Derrick was at a loss.

Demon Hunter Colin stared at Jack and said, “The worm left behind by Amon had the symbol of time, and a circular river is often related to fate. Putting the two together, it reminded me of a few books that mentioned something that I’m unsure of their credibility.

“When the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God, cast his attention on this world, ‘He’ had many angels around him. Among them were leaders of the angels, ‘Kings of Angels’ that were closest to being a god. There were a total of eight of them, and some of ‘Their’ names have already been lost to history. There are still records of others, perhaps simple or detailed.

“Legend has it that the sons of god were among these eight Kings of Angels.

“Among them, two Kings of Angels had the titles ‘Angel of Time’ and ‘Angel of Fate.’”

Derrick was immediately enlightened as he asked for confirmation, “You believe that Amon is the Angel of Time and that the mural is depicting the Angel of Fate?”

“I can’t be sure for now. Only the title Angel of Time has been passed down. As for the Angel of Fate, the records are relatively detailed…” Colin suddenly took a deep breath.

Immediately, he solemnly said, “Angel of Fate, Tail-devourer Ouroboros.”

†

In the evening, within the Odora family’s underground structure.

Emlyn White looked at the iron-black coffin and said to the ancient Sanguine inside, “Lord Nibbs, I accept the Ancestor’s mission!”

Nibbs replied in his aged voice, “Very good.

“When do you want to begin? Do you have any wishes that remain unfulfilled?”

“…”

Upon hearing Lord Nibbs asking about his last wishes, Emlyn White’s calves went limp, and he almost regretted it.

He stiffened his neck and said, “There’s no need!

“We can begin now.”

Chapter 467 - The Delayed Response

◆

The iron-black coffin with its strange patterns lay quietly in the center, and there seemed to be hidden shockwaves in the air that seemed to be silently colliding.

Emlyn White stood in the corner and lit the candles according to the normal ritual procedures, burning the essential oils and corresponding herbal powders.

A dense and unsteady atmosphere emanated, and after recalling the requirements of “artificial sleepwalking,” Emlyn lowered his head, began to enter Cogitation, and repeated the honorific name of The Fool.

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

†

Amidst his monotone voice, Emlyn gradually entered a magical state. His body felt relaxed and reserved. It felt like he was in deep sleep, but his spirituality was light and energetic as it constantly spread outwards.

At this moment, he had a feeling that he was continuously drifting upwards.

In the ancient palace above the gray fog, Klein was sitting at the end of the long bronze table, tapping his fingers on the rippling light screen to his side. He was expressionlessly watching the praying figure in amusement.

Although it was vague, Klein could tell at a glance that it was Vampire Emlyn White.

Very courageous, having the drive akin to buying a doll… Klein sighed and didn't respond.

He had previously tried to divine the purpose of the Sanguines, but he was unable to obtain any effective revelations. The only thing he was sure of was that it had nothing to do with the Aurora Order.

This piqued Klein's curiosity, but he wouldn't take the risk of responding to Emlyn White when a lofty Sanguine was beside Emlyn.

He didn't know if he could grasp traces of the mysterious space above the gray fog and threaten it like Blasphemer Amon. He had no intention to confirm it since he was dealing with an avatar of Amon back then. Yet, he was now facing a powerful Sanguine's true body.

There's no need to take risks on matters of no importance, even if I want to know the real purpose of the Sanguines… And it's not like there's no other way… Klein looked at Emlyn White in his state of "artificial sleepwalking." He said to himself with a smile, "I can delay my response…"

He planned to wait until tomorrow or the day after. He would suddenly respond when Emlyn White was without protection and when the Sanguine had given up!

However, there was a premise, which was to first use divination to confirm the degree of danger.

†

“Tail Devourer… Just like that river?” Derrick Berg suddenly thought of something.

Demon Hunter Colin solemnly nodded.

“Yes.

“It means that we may have stepped into a river that runs from its mouth to source, preventing our departure.

“Fortunately, this should only be remnants of that Angel of Fate’s power. ‘He’ isn’t hiding here.”

No, it’s definitely certain, and it has long since been the case… Derrick silently said to himself.

At this moment, Colin took out a dark red metal tube. He unscrewed the cap and gulped it down.

His light blue eyes quickly turned lighter, tinged with silver. In the end, his pupils seemed to turn vertical, reflecting Jack’s figure.

A few sparks of silver light lit up in his eyes. They circled or collided at random in an extremely intense manner.

Ding!

Demon Hunter Colin first stabbed his sword into the ground, and with a flip of his hand, he pulled out his other sword, smearing it with golden, sun-like oil.

Noticing this action, Jack’s expression immediately changed, as if he was shrouded in a thick shadow.

Before he could open his mouth, Demon Hunter Colin moved. He pulled out his sword from the ground, leaving behind a blurry figure.

The golden and silver light shone brightly, illuminating the entire underground hall. The light before the little boy was the most intense.

After a mournful scream, the darkness once again shrouded the altar.

Jack stood in his original spot, without taking even a step. However, the face on his chest had disappeared, leaving behind only a hole where his pulsating internal organs could be seen.

A few meters to Jack's side, Demon Hunter Colin genuflected, his two swords hanging down at an angle.

In front of him, the face was torn apart, reduced to scattered eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

These organs spasmed and bounced like electric shocks, and soon they were still, rotting rapidly like they were supposed to.

In an instant, Derrick felt an invisible, aqueous barrier around him silently shatter.

Almost at the same time, he seemed to have left the swift river and returned to the bank.

Looking at the gloomy underground hall and the upside-down deity statue, and at Jack, who had a distorted expression and had fainted due to the pain, Derrick felt a sense of joy and relief.

He knew that he and the others had finally escaped the cycle of repeating their lives.

Derrick was well aware that although the final solution didn't seem complicated, it might've taken dozens or hundreds of repeated attempts to find the clues and solution, without knowing any clues or the problem beforehand.

In the process, the slightest carelessness could lead to death, and Derrick had no way of knowing if a life that was lost could experience a redo, or if they would still "revive" by the bonfire but would end up dead after escaping this predicament.

What’s even more serious is that people would always repeat the same choice, which was to say that they wouldn’t be able to discover the problem in the first place. Without the corresponding memories and experience, they wouldn’t detect any abnormalities even if it was the thousandth time, and they would completely lose themselves in the circular river until they reach the end of their lives due to the normal flow of time in the outside world.

At the thought of such a possibility, Derrick thanked Mr. Fool wholeheartedly for restoring his memory and giving him a hint.

Turning his head to the side, he saw that Joshua and the other members of the exploratory team didn’t show any abnormal reactions as they checked the surrounding area in a way that was similar to the sixth exploration.

Perhaps it will only be after returning to the City of Silver that they would realize that they’ve lost a part of their lives from the difference in dates… Derrick thought silently.

At this moment, Demon Hunter Colin stood up, walked back to the boy’s side, and took out another small metal bottle. He then poured the thick black liquid inside onto the boy’s empty chest.

The liquid quickly condensed into a translucent membrane, sticking to the wound and stopping the flow of blood.

“Haim, Joshua, the both of you are in charge of him,” Colin suppressed his throbbing hand and ordered in a low voice.

To him, this was the City of Silver’s hope for ridding the curse and defeating the prophecy of the apocalypse!

Phew… Derrick wanted to covertly thank The Fool, but he realized that there was no corresponding prayer gesture.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

The sumptuous dinner glistened under the light of the candles in an alluring manner.

Unlike what was imagined in the newspapers and magazines, the dinner for a great aristocratic family wasn't serious, and there was no need for silence.

This was a rare occasion for family members to gather together. While eating, they would casually chat about a variety of relaxed topics in order to communicate and solidify their relationship.

Audrey sliced a piece a steak which was produced from her ranch, observed Earl Hall's expression, and, without hiding her curiosity, she asked, "Father, did something happen to Prince Edessak recently?"

If nothing had happened, then her plan was to pretend that she had heard irresponsible rumors that didn't correspond to reality. It wasn't uncommon for this to happen among the aristocracy.

Earl Hall paused, raised his eyebrows, and asked, "What did you hear?"

There really is something! Gleaning information from her father's reaction, Audrey replied with a faint smile, "Some rumors, but they seem to be true?"

Earl Hall rubbed his temples and said, "It's not a very serious matter.

"Audrey, I know what you're thinking, so I don't have to hide it from you. This involves a relatively ordinary scandal of the royal family. To put it simply, Prince Edessak has fallen in love with a commoner girl.

"This led to the death of an aristocratic descendant. The royal family has blocked the spread of this matter, not wanting to cause too much of a commotion."

His wife took a sip of champagne and said, "It seems he isn't mature enough.”

Mother is being very tactful with her criticism… It does sound suspicious… Has Prince Edessak really gotten himself involved in a dangerous situation that would bring about terrible changes to Backlund? Audrey put on a look of sudden understanding and said with a smile, “This makes me wonder, why would the story of freedom and love involve the death of an aristocratic descendant?”

Hibbert Hall kept his head lowered while slicing the tender steak and guessed with great interest, “It reminds me of the complicated love stories that are so common among the believers of the Lord of Storms. It’s very common to fight for honor and for a lady.”

“It’s a tradition that has been placed into a museum,” Earl Hall denied his eldest son’s statement.

Audrey seized the opportunity and thoughtfully said, “I don’t think Prince Edessak is that kind of person, and rumors have already proliferated… Maybe that’s not what they really want to cover up.”

“Perhaps not…” Earl Hall ruminated over these words, unconsciously frowning.

Knowing when to stop, Audrey didn’t say anything else, and she naturally led the conversation in a different direction.

She planned on “probing” her other noble friends about the matter. As a girl that Prince Edessak had once courted, it was absolutely normal for her to want to know the details of the matter. Whether it was curiosity or indignation, they were enough to motivate people to make such an attempt.

†

Being unable to maintain a state of “artificial sleepwalking” for long, Emlyn White returned to reality in exhaustion. Opening his eyes, he stared at the iron-black coffin, then he said with a mixture of relief and disappointment, “Lord Nibbs, there’s no response.”

After a long moment of silence, Nibbs finally said in a rather hoarse voice, “Okay.

“Stay here tonight to prevent any accidents from happening.”

“Alright!” Emlyn didn’t try to insist otherwise.

He spent the night in worry and trepidation, but the night was so serene and unremarkable. It silently faded only when Backlund’s rare winter sunshine scattered across the window.

“What bad weather,” Emlyn left Odora’s villa, lowered his hat, and mumbled while he got onto a rental carriage.

His destination was the Harvest Church south of the bridge.

After the carriage continued steadily for some time, Emlyn’s vision suddenly blurred and he saw an endless gray fog.

Then, to his amazement, he found himself in a mysterious and majestic palace, sitting at a long, mottled bronze table.

At the very end of the long table, there was a figure shrouded in a thick gray fog, looking down at him from above.

Chapter 468 - The Moon

◆

For a moment, Emlyn White was stiff and his mind was blank, like a marble statue sitting there.

Then, he heard the figure leisurely sitting in the thick gray fog indifferently ask, “Why did you pray to me?”

Emlyn’s mind buzzed and he blurted out, “It’s a revelation from my Ancestor. ‘She’ told us through a dream that the apocalypse is approaching and that we need to make preparations. And I am key in this matter. My mission was to pray to The Fool!”

Hearing the undisguised and detailed response, Klein, who had prepared his answers, was at quite a loss on where to begin. This vampire, Emlyn White, had explained everything he wanted to know.

A revelation from the Ancestor… Didn’t the ancient goddess Lilith perish in the Second Epoch, long before the Cataclysm, and have her authority taken back by the Creator? It was precisely because of this that quite a number of vampires tried to pray to the Primordial Moon, resulting in an extremely tragic outcome… Moreover, Mr. Door had also mentioned that the “The Moon” card is empty, indicating that, on the one hand, the Primordial Moon is most likely the embodiment of some other deity or powerful devil, while on the other hand, it indirectly proves that the ancient goddess Lilith has lost her Sequence 0 position, which is generally equivalent to dying… Klein instantly connected the dots.

He originally imagined that “Lilith,” who responded to the Sanguine’s prayers on particular matters, was a relic from the ancient goddess, such as the "Uniqueness" of "The Moon" pathway. Thus, it would be rigid, passive, and extremely restrictive, but now, its initiative of providing a revelation had overturned his guess.

Two possibilities. One is that Lilith is being impersonated by another deity who has occupied a key point ahead of time, preventing any opponents from reaching Sequence 0 of The Moon's pathway. In essence, the entity doesn't care about the Sanguine, and the provided revelation is a kind of test. The greatest suspect is the Goddess who had snatched the title of Lady of Crimson, but "She's" already Sequence 0, corresponding to "The Star" in the Cards of Blasphemy. Why would she covet "The Moon?" Is it to foil the plans of her enemy?

The second possibility is that the ancient goddess hasn't fully perished. As long as no other powerhouse has become Sequence 0 in the Moon pathway, "She" is able to use a unique and incomprehensible method to continue surviving, waiting for a chance to make her return, just like the Black Emperor card's description. And perhaps the Goddess had taken the title of Lady of Crimson to foil this situation to a certain extent…

Going by this logic, Lilith's recent apocalyptic revelation is "Her" struggle to revive after years of preparation. And The Fool plays a key role in "Her" revelation. If that's true, then in a certain way, it's an invitation for "cooperation"… But I'm just a Sequence 6 Beyonder, so how am I to cooperate with a yet-to-disappear ancient goddess?

Let Emlyn White join the Tarot Club? The Sanguine are a race with a long lifespan. They have existed since the Second Epoch and must know quite a number of secrets… However, that would be me taking quite a risk. Yes, it would be possible to divine whether or not to pull Emlyn into each gathering ahead of time…

Yes, there was a similar apocalyptic prophecy in the Sights in the Spirit World from Yellow Light Venithan. "He" also pointed out that the

Abraham family's curse would be removed by an Apprentice who has the help of a hidden existence. This matches Miss Magician's present stage. She is an Apprentice who has received the help of me, The Fool… That's rather interesting. Has every high-level being that's good at prophecies realized that the apocalypse is unavoidable and have seen The Fool's existence and his possible effects?

One thought after another flashed through Klein's mind, but his expression didn't change at all.

He leaned back in his chair and smiled leisurely.

"What did your Ancestor ask you to pray to me for?"

The calm voice pulled Emlyn out of his stupor, and he shook his head in a slightly dazed manner.

"I don't know…"

At this moment, Klein saw the stars behind Emlyn's chair shift quickly, turning into the symbol of the crimson moon.

As expected, the Beyonder pathway of the descendants of the ancient goddess, Lilith, points towards the "Moon"… Klein chuckled and said, "In a situation with the seven orthodox gods and so many secret existences, why would your Ancestor think that I would be the key to the apocalypse?"

The Fool's attitude finally made Emlyn White calm down, realizing that he had encountered an incredible event. He had been forcefully pulled into a magical place by a hidden existence!

"He" is The Fool…"He" isn't actually angry… Is it because I represent the Ancestor? I, Emlyn White, am indeed special. I was mentioned by the Ancestor, and I received a response from The Fool… With this in mind, Emlyn couldn't help but sit up straighter before saying in deliberation, "Honorable Mr. Fool, the revelation provided by the Ancestor is this. I, Emlyn White, will become the key in saving the Sanguine and clinching victory against the apocalypse. And all of this will begin from my praying to you."

The meaning behind his words was: the key to the apocalypse isn't you, but me!

This fellow has such a "eighth-grader syndrome"[1] side to him… That's right. He has always been very arrogant and feels self-important… Klein lampooned silently with a popular phrase from the past.

Amused, he said, "The same question, why me and not the seven orthodox gods or the other hidden entities?"

"…I don't know." Emlyn shook his head honestly.

Klein thought for a moment, then he deliberately said, "Actually, I think I understand your ancestor's intentions. 'She' wishes that, with my help, you're able to grow into a true high-level entity and save the Sanguine when the apocalypse happens."

"Grow?" Emlyn said in puzzlement, "As you know, us Sanguine have no way of growing on our own. Only through special ceremonies will we gain the bestowment of our elders and relics of the Ancestor that allow our advancement."

Indeed, it has to be in accordance with the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation… In other words, there have to be other ways as long as the basic law is abided to… Klein chuckled.

"Your knowledge has blinded you, making you unable to see the wider world.

"Of course, this question will not be answered by me. The answer must be found by you. I will only provide you with an opportunity."

He paused for a second, then he said in a condescending manner, "Do you wish for such an opportunity?"

Without any hesitation, Emlyn got up and bowed.

“That is what I wish for!”

Heh, where did your arrogance go when facing a hidden existence? Why is there only humility? Klein secretly lampooned as he tapped the edge of the mottled long table and said, “But you have to adhere to certain matters.”

“Please speak.” Emlyn held back his excitement.

Klein smiled and replied, “You cannot reveal anything related to me to anyone unless you gain my permission.

“This includes the Sanguine who were previously present at the ritual.”

“But…” Emlyn was somewhat unable to accept the request.

Klein asked warmly in a very certain manner, “It’s likely that Lilith didn’t get you to report to anyone afterward?”

This could be inferred from the fact that there was no prayer content in the revelation!

Li…“He” directly called the Ancestor by “Her” name… It sounds like they’re old friends… Emlyn’s heart trembled. He lowered his head and replied, “No.”

Klein said with an unperturbed smile, “This is a secret deal, which is why I responded after you were free from surveillance. Similarly, you don’t need to report this to Lilith as it will let certain people notice it.”

Seeing Emlyn nod in understanding, Klein added, “If you want to be the key to saving the Sanguine, you must suffer the pain of the corresponding thorns. For example, you will not be understood by others, be slandered, and looked down upon. You can only silently proceed forward in the darkness while being burdened by your heavy mission.”

The words that were aimed at him made Emlyn White imagine a corresponding scenario.

He, who was always mocked by his kinsmen because of his fondness of dolls, had gotten lost and entered the Harvest Church. Stained with traces of shame, he, who had never been valued and thought highly of by his elders, would silently guard his race from the corner, protecting everyone without anyone knowing…

Very soon, Emlyn, who had moved himself, respectfully replied, “Your will will pass through the earth.”

Klein leaned back and said very lightly, “I tacitly consented to the establishment of a secret gathering, and it is held right here.

“Are you willing to join this gathering in search for the method to become powerful to save the Sanguine?”

“I am!” Emlyn replied without any hesitation.

Klein nodded in satisfaction.

“Do you have any other requests?”

Emlyn was overjoyed. He said in a hurry, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I would like you to help me dispel the psychological cue in me. A bishop of the Church of Earth Mother…”

“I know.” Klein calmly interrupted him.

He knows… As expected of a hidden existence… Emlyn’s head lowered again.

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“I can help you, but what price are you willing to pay for this?”

Above the gray fog, he had a very potent Spirit Vision, and he had previously discovered that the dark-colored psychological cue within

Emlyn White's Spirit Body had at some point mostly dissipated, thinning out to the point of frailty.

Klein had intended to resolve the problem by referring to the ritual used to resolve similar problems in the Book of Secrets, but the situation now led him to believe that a secret deed ritual with the Black Emperor card and the purification of the Sun Brooch would thoroughly disperse Emlyn White's psychological cue.

Price? Emlyn thought about it for a moment, but he couldn't think of anything that would interest a secret existence like The Fool.

Seeing this, Klein took the initiative to say, "I'm very interested in some of your Sanguine history. You can use that in exchange."

The Sanguine's history? After a moment's thought, Emlyn agreed.

"You can think about what you would like to describe first. Heh heh. Before that, you need to choose a code name from them." Klein conjured the unselected Major Arcana tarot cards on the surface of the long bronze table.

Emlyn White scrutinized the cards with interest and said, "The Moon.

"I choose 'The Moon' card!"

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†

Typically used to describe early teens who have delusions of grandeur, who so desperately want to stand out that they have convinced themselves they have hidden knowledge or secret powers.

Chapter 469 - Vampire Queen

◆

Above the gray fog, inside the palace that looked like a giant’s residence.

The Moon Emlyn thought hard about what part of the Sanguine’s history that he should tell The Fool.

He and the Ancestor are old friends, so “He” must know what happened before the Cataclysm, so I don’t need to repeat it… In the Fourth and Fifth Epoch, the glory of the Sanguine wasn’t rare, and there was a lot of history to talk about, but there was only one most important point… Emlyn quickly came up with an idea.

From what he knew, The Fool was likely an ancient god before the Cataclysm. Due to certain reasons, he didn’t perish and had slept till today, gradually in the process of recovering.

This explained why no such secret existence had appeared in the Sanguine records, that had a history spanning millennia, until ‘His’ honorific name suddenly spread.

After some deliberation, Emlyn straightened his back and said, “After the Cataclysm, the Sanguine left the center of the historical stage of the Northern and Southern Continents and became nobles of different empires and dynasties as individuals instead of as a race. They either governed a territory or guarded a castle in a key area.

“This continued until our queen, Blood Moon Queen, Auernia, who led us out of the era of darkness, became the wife of the Trunsoest Dynasty’s Night Emperor. She gathered all of the Sanguine together and the Sanguine became important supporters of the dynasty. At that time, Loen's Augustus and Feysac's Einhorn had to politely address our queen as 'Her Majesty.'

"In that era, Queen Auernia was the symbol of beauty. If there was a magic mirror that could answer questions, then the answer to 'who is the most beautiful of them all' would be her…"

The more Emlyn spoke, the prouder he became. He went from being reserved and serious to becoming extremely talkative.

A magic mirror that can answer questions; isn't that Arrodes? I wonder if there are any members of the Machinery Hivemind who were so bored out of their minds to ask the question, 'Mirror, Mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all'… I wonder how Arrodes will answer. Klein sat in the same posture, smiling as his thoughts wandered.

After droning on and on, Emlyn's expression turned serious.

"All of this shattered in the War of the Four Emperors. The Night Emperor perished, along with the queen. The Sanguine suffered a terrible blow, and while trying to reap the final fruits of victory, the four noble families—Augustus, Einhorn, Sauron, and Castiya—split the empire, destroying the royal family which was lacking in high-level beings. The Sanguine had no choice but to retreat to an uninhabited mountain to hide in the shadows so as to maintain the continuation of our race."

Just as I expected… The seven gods were already the seven gods during the War of the Four Emperors… Klein thought of the statue of the six gods in the Tudor ruins.

"Fortunately, the seven gods were fractured back then and the four countries attacked each other. After paying a certain price, we finally escaped the disaster." At this moment, Emlyn was in a rare state of being roused.

He looked at Klein and said, “Honorable Mr. Fool, do you have the time to listen to my description of Blood Moon Queen’s deeds and the glory the Sanguine used to have? That will be a heavy tome formed by pages of glorious expositions. I can repeat everything in them.”

It looks like you can continue on indefinitely… I used to think that you were a vampire who liked puppets and didn’t know much history. I didn’t expect you to be so professional and academic… No wonder you always believed the Sanguine to be noble and are proud of it… This kind of guy who doesn’t like going out really will delve into deep research into a topic he’s interested in. Furthermore, vampires have a sufficiently long lifespan… Klein hesitated, prepared to decline Emlyn’s offer in a euphemistic manner.

Although he had no lack of interest in the history, time didn’t allow him to listen to them all.

“It’s enough.” Klein smiled and said, “I like a fair and equal exchange, so I won’t let you say anything without reaping rewards. In the future, when you have the chance, you can use your relevant history to trade for what you want from me.”

“…Alright.” Emlyn felt lost for a moment.

This was the first time he had the opportunity to tell someone else about the glory of the Sanguine.

Normally, in order to hide his identity, he wouldn’t be able to show off to the humans. As for the members of the Sanguine, all of them knew what needed to be known, and he wasn’t in charge of educating the newborns.

Klein didn’t say anything else and resumed his supercilious attitude.

“Alright, you can go back now.”

A dark red light immediately lit up in front of Emlyn White’s eyes, quickly devouring him.

After a short period of dizziness, he found that he was still sitting in the rental carriage.

Soon after, he saw an illusory goatskin parchment and gained the knowledge of how to request help from The Fool via a secret deed ritual.

When I'm free in the afternoon, I'll immediately hold the ritual at home and ask Mr. Fool to dispel my psychological cue… Emlyn was suddenly excited.

He waited until the carriage arrived at the Harvest Church before calming down and paying for the ride.

After entering the cathedral, he was relieved to see that Bishop Utravsky was there preaching to the few believers of the Church. He no longer felt as vexed as he usually felt and felt rather relaxed.

In this state, he suddenly thought of something.

Father Utravsky has never seemed to stop me from finding a way to dispel the psychological cues… What exactly is on his mind…

†

East Borough, in a greasy coffee shop.

Klein, who arrived at the scheduled time, was enjoying wheat bread with fresh pea lamb stew while he listened to Old Kohler's report of the information he had gathered over the past week.

It was a pity that there was no valuable information inside.

When Old Kohler was done, Klein thought for a moment, then he pulled out two pounds worth of bills and pushed them over.

"You already paid me just now!" Old Kohler jumped in shock and waved his hands in front of him.

Klein chuckled and said, “Within this week, I’ll be heading south for a holiday. After a year of hard work, it’s time to rest for a while.

“I might take two to three weeks before I return, so I’ll pay you in advance. Heh heh, don’t forget to help me gather information.”

“Okay, okay!” Old Kohler accepted the notes with a mixture of joy and gratitude.

At this moment, he had already thought of how to spend the New Year.

He planned to buy the cured ham he had been reluctant to buy and match it with his bread.

I really can’t stand the wait… Thank you, Detective Moriarty! He swallowed his saliva without realizing it.

Klein picked up his hat, hesitated for a moment, and said, “You should’ve noticed that East Borough has been a bit chaotic recently.

“Don’t take risks just to find out more information. If you notice anything wrong, immediately hide and avoid getting yourself involved.”

He was rather worried about the matter surrounding Prince Edessak, so he wanted to give Old Kohler a reminder.

“I understand.” Old Kohler patted his chest and said, “I’m very timid. I won’t take the risk.”

“Very good,” Klein praised.

Then he remembered the laundry maid, Liv, and her two daughters, Freja and Daisy, who loved to read, and wanted to change their fates before he said whilst in thought, “Watch out for Liv’s family. Don’t let them be bullied. If there are any outbreaks in East Borough, take them to a safe place.”

“Outbreaks… You mean the workers’ resistance?” Old Kohler asked, puzzled.

“More or less,” Klein answered vaguely.

This was the limit of what he could reveal; otherwise, it would be very easy for him to be suspected by others or the Sealed Artifact itself.

†

In a room with large and small dolls, Emlyn White came home at noon and sat in his chair, enjoying the gloom created by the curtains.

He looked around and clenched his fists.

“I’ll cheer for myself!”

With that, he rummaged for materials with spirituality and began to write the honorific name of The Fool, as well as the corresponding symbols and magic labels.

After some hustling and bustling, he tried the secret deed ritual. His spirituality gradually dissipated, as if he had arrived at an immeasurably high place.

Vaguely, he saw countless shadows of ineffable shapes, seven colors of light that seemed to contain immense knowledge, and the grayish-white fog that stood above everything.

Above the boundless gray fog, there was an ancient palace that was impossible to see clearly. Seated inside the palace was a person shrouded in gray fog.

Then, Emlyn saw a figure of golden majesty and holiness, as well as black wings that blotted out the sky behind it.

He didn’t even have time to count the number of pairs of mysterious wings before he felt himself quickly floating upwards, making contact with that golden figure.

"Ah!"

He screamed miserably as he held his head and rolled on the ground, emitting green smoke from his body.

It took a while for Emlyn to calm down, and then he heard the deep voice of The Fool echo in his ears.

"Your psychological cue has been lifted."

Is this what it feels like to dispel a psychological cue? It's really painful… Emlyn sat on the floor, panting, his neatly combed hair falling in disarray.

Atop the gray fog, Klein thoughtfully nodded and said to himself, "Indeed, the Sun Brooch's purifying and dispelling effects can also harm vampires."

He had calculated in advance that the "sunlight" needed to remove the weakened psychological cue wouldn't severely damage Emlyn, so he couldn't be bothered switching to a more complicated approach. And now, the result was indeed consistent with his expectations.

After taking care of this matter, Klein took off the topaz pendant on his left wrist and planned to perform a divination.

"It is suitable to head to the Red Rose Manor this afternoon."

After chanting seven times in his mind, he opened his eyes and saw the spirit pendulum standing still and not spinning.

The difficulty of divining something that involves a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a corresponding powerhouse is too high. I'm unable to obtain any effective revelations… Klein sighed, knowing the gist of the matter.

Then, he started to divine if it would be suitable to head to Red Rose Manor tomorrow afternoon, but he received the same signs of failure as an outcome.

It’s always said that divination isn’t omnipotent, and it has now been proven… I have to decide on my own… I have to take this step; otherwise, there’s no way for me to leave the stage unnoticed so as to go behind the scenes… The earlier the better, I can’t delay it; otherwise, this matter might become completely impossible to recover from… As his thoughts churned, Klein came to a decision.

He immediately returned to the real world, put on his double-breasted frock coat and half top hat, and he walked out of 15 Minsk Street, heading for Prince Edessak’s Red Rose Manor.

Chapter 470 - Name

◆

Outside Red Rose Manor, Klein walked out of the carriage whilst carrying his cane.

He closed his eyes and calmed himself as he looked at the red-uniformed soldiers standing guard at the door.

Since Sealed Artifact 0-08 has been making coincidences to stop the woman with the sapphire ring from meeting me, there shouldn't be any exception today. There's no need for me to worry about running into her. As long as I fool Prince Edessak with my acting, everything would be fine… Klein thought quickly and walked towards the entrance of the manor.

After being searched and handing in the gun holster and revolver, he followed a valet's lead and walked across the gray slate road, past a fountain spewing clear spring water, and entered the main house. They arrived at the second floor and arrived outside the room that was supposed to be a solarium according to the layout.

During this entire process, Klein had his heart in his mouth, worrying that something unexpected would happen. He was afraid that the situation would develop in the worst possible manner.

Knock. Knock. Knock. After knocking gently on the door, a valet approached the door and whispered, "Detective Moriarty has arrived."

After a full ten seconds of silence, a heavy voice came from inside the room.

“His Highness has invited him in.”

The door creaked open and warmth spread outwards, with a temperature that was warmer than the hallway.

Under the watchful gaze of the two tall guards, Klein stepped onto the thick, patterned yellow carpet.

He took a few steps forward, skirting the cabinet that separated the inside from the outside, and he saw Prince Edessak sitting by the full-length windows, enjoying the rare winter sun of Backlund.

The round, impressionable face didn’t have the slightest trace of a smile, and this naturally created a solemn and repressed atmosphere.

Because of the combination of the elegant fireplace and the metal pipes, the room was warmer than late spring. Prince Edessak wasn’t wearing a coat, and his upper body was covered with a white shirt with cuffs which resembled blooming flowers and a pale yellow vest.

Seeing this, Klein was actually secretly relieved, because the woman wearing the sapphire ring wasn’t accompanying the Prince.

Thus, he quickly stepped forward and bowed.

Edessak held a steaming cup of black tea in his hand and didn’t invite Klein to take a seat.

He maintained his previous expression and asked in a deep voice, “Any results from your investigation?”

“No, my divinations, my spirit channeling, my interviews, my investigations all tell me that Talim died of a heart attack,” Klein said with a heavy, painful expression with obvious signs of self-blame. “I’m just too weak in every aspect. Your Highness, you should hire a stronger and more powerful helper.”

Why don’t you get someone better… He added silently inwardly.

It was only then that Edessak seemed to clearly notice Detective Sherlock Moriarty's face. He felt as if he had aged considerably, as though he had been unable to sleep at ease for a long time.

It wasn't an illusion, because Klein had used his Faceless powers before he left to adjust the state of his face, making his skin look dry and lusterless. He made his beard appear messy and his eye bags bigger, darker, and more obvious.

Edessak was silent for a moment before he put down the white porcelain cup with a golden inlaid rim.

"I understand. It's indeed like forcing a square peg in a round hole…

"I will have someone else follow up on the matter. Prepare an investigation report and don't leave anything out."

Alright! Klein inwardly clenched his fist and quickly took out a folded piece of paper from his pocket.

"Your Highness, there's no need for you to wait, as I always have the habit of recording things in writing."

After instructing the attendants to take the report, Prince Edessak casually flipped through it and put it aside.

"Is there anything else you need?"

"No, Your Royal Highness, please allow me to take my leave. Ah, right, I will be heading south for some time; I want to use the warm sunlight there to melt the pain in my heart." Klein sighed in response.

"It's a New Year's custom of many in Loen." Prince Edessak nodded slightly and turned to Funkel, the old butler. "Send Detective Moriarty out and get him a carriage."

The nearest town to Red Rose Manor is a 15 to 20 minutes walk. I'll have to hire a carriage when I get there.

"Yes, Your Highness," the old butler bowed and said politely.

Klein didn't let down his guard and quickly took his leave.

He followed the old butler all the way to the entrance of the manor and took back his underarm gun holster and his weapon.

Less than a minute later, he was seated in a Red Rose Manor carriage.

He leaned against the carriage wall and watched the manor turn smaller as the distance grew. Klein relaxed and let out a long breath, letting his hanging heart calm back down to its original position.

He knew that he had left the center of the stage.

After that, it's time to bid farewell to Backlund and head south, a complete curtain call… After that, I'll change my looks and sneak back in secret… He calmly considered his subsequent plans.

Suddenly, his spirituality stirred as his spirituality tensed up as he saw the door to the carriage quickly open and then silently close!

Before he could respond, he saw a figure quickly outline itself. It was wearing a heavy black dress and had a sapphire ring on its hand.

Sapphire ring! Upon seeing this scene, Klein, who was at the juncture of a flight or fight response, narrowed his eyes and sat back down, not daring to act rashly.

This was a terrifying person who possessed a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or was a demigod of a similar level!

This… It's really true that the more afraid you are of something happening, the higher the chances are of it happening… 0-08 or something else, what happened to the coincidences you create? Klein's spirit and body instantly tensed up as he could only watch helplessly as the figure appeared in front of him.

The lady's age was completely different from her dressing style. She looked about eighteen or nineteen, had a round face, slender eyes, and a gentle and refined temperament. Deep down, she was sweet and was an outstandingly gorgeous beauty.

She… Klein was surprised for a moment, before immediately recognizing her as he blurted out,

“Trissy!”

Isn’t this the fellow who had gone from being Instigator Tris to Witch Trissy?

How did she go from being wanted to becoming Prince Edessak’s woman?

How did she, a member of a the Demoness Sect, end up by Prince Edessak’s side?

And she even has a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a mystical item of a similar level!

When he looked again carefully, he saw that there was something different about Trissy. Her facial features, which weren’t outstanding alone, were softer and more delicate, but when placed together, they were stunning.

Hearing his surprise, Trissy became happy instead of being alarmed. She revealed a sweet smile and said, “You know me…

“I knew you know me!

“A detective with Beyonder powers definitely pays special attention to the wanted posters!”

He, eh—she looks very happy… Klein cautiously asked with doubt and caution, “What do you want?”

He clearly remembered that the person before him wasn’t a good person. Tris had single-handedly created the tragedy of Alfalfa via instigation, while Trissy had caused the deaths of many innocent civilians in Tingen City.

Trissy pursed her lips into a smile and said, “Very simple. Quickly report me to the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind! Get them to come here and capture me!”

Calling the cops on yourself? Th-this transvestite, eh—this woman must be insane! Klein was a bit at a loss.

He soon figured out the meaning behind her message: Trissy would rather be locked up behind Chanis Gate than stay at Red Rose Manor. She’s trying her hardest to get out of here!

Simply put, she believes that this place is more dangerous and more despair-inducing than being caught by the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers… Klein tried his best to control his expression and asked in a deep voice, “What are you afraid of?”

Trissy stood dazed for a second before she widened her eyes and said with her unfocused eyes, “There’s someone manipulating my life. There are always coincidences that horrify me after they happen.

“And I’m becoming less and less like myself.”

Saying this, the corners of her mouth curled up as she said, “Can you imagine? Being someone who loves those shy and cute maids, can you imagine the pain when I wake up in the morning in the arms of a naked man?”

I can; that’s why it’s best to stay away from being an Assassin or Witch… Klein couldn’t help but imagine such a scene, and his heart palpitated for a moment.

Trissy continued with a self-deprecating smile, “I thought that by working hard to advance, to become ‘Pleasure,’ that I would be able to free myself from that weird state. Hence, I sought people to help me search for the corresponding Beyonder ingredients, but the outcome only turned worse.

“Sometimes, I forget a lot of things, but they end up really happening. I endured the disgust, seduced Talim, and tried to get him to help me escape. Who knew that I ended up killing him with a curse without me even realizing it… Do you believe that?

“Heh heh, they even changed my name. They wanted me to completely abandon my past self. No! Absolutely not!

“They thought I could only overcome the coincidences for a short period of time and that I would soon get back on track. Humph, it was just an impression I deliberately created for them, so I have managed to meet you, Mr. Detective!”

Pleasure… Demoness… Ingredients… Klein suddenly remembered that in the Beyonder gathering held by Old Mister Eye of Wisdom, Isengard Stanton, there had been a person who had requested to purchase the main ingredients of the Demoness of Pleasure potion. With him being aware of the formula, he instantly noticed it on the spot, but he had chosen to ignore it. He gradually forgot about the matter with time.

So that was Trissy’s helper! Was she already by Prince Edessak’s side back then? Why do I somehow feel that her present smile looks so miserable but beautiful… A Demoness of Pleasure is sick… Klein took a breath, his thoughts in a jumble.

As he was organizing his thoughts, he asked casually, “What did they change your name to?”

Trissy furrowed her beautiful brows as she answered with a somewhat blank look in her eyes, “Trissy Cheek.”

Trissy Cheek… Cheek… Cheek! Klein suddenly raised his head, his whole body turning numb once again, as stiff as a marble statue.

At this very moment, there was only one page of Roselle’s diary that was madly reverberating in his mind.

“5th June. I obtained an ancient book. It actually mentions the Primordial Demoness’s name…

“‘Her’ name is Cheek…”

Chapter 471 - Klein's Preparations

◆

Cheek…

The goosebumps on Klein's skin surfaced uncontrollably as he looked at the beautiful young lady with her misty eyes and furrowed eyebrows. The goosebumps were distinct and were accompanied with cold sweat.

At this moment, he felt as if he had returned to Tingen, back to the Blackthorn Security Company, and was about to activate his Spirit Vision to observe Megose and the baby in her womb. The fear that resulted from his instinct was so clear that it felt like a giant hand tightly gripping onto his heart.

He finally understood that the thing interfering with the gray fog and his divinations wasn't a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a mystical item of the same level. There was something even more terrifying hidden within Trissy's body.

The symbol of the apocalypse, the Primordial Demoness!

No, she isn't the Primordial Demoness yet. Otherwise, I would've already lost control just by being together with her, turning into a pile of squirming rotten meat!

She's in a very strange state…

Trissy's brows eased as her eyes regained their focus. As she looked at Klein, who didn't dare to move at all, she gently lifted her right hand, allowing her slender white finger to slowly slide down from the side of her body. With a bit of grievance, seduction, and malice, she laughed and said, “If you can inform the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind about this matter, and I happen to meet you before they arrest me, I don’t mind letting you know what true pleasure is.”

Klein’s gaze subconsciously followed the movement of her fingers, and all sorts of mind-blowing details surfaced in his mind.

They aren’t considered big, but they are very firm… What am I thinking… What am I looking at! Is this the seductive powers of a Demoness of Pleasure? Ignoring the fact that you were once a man, even if you were a true lady, without having committed many heinous crimes in the past to lessen the psychological rejection I have, I wouldn’t dare to. If you were to suddenly awaken as the Primordial Demoness, even The Fool can’t handle that… Klein silently sighed, raised his head, looked at the carriage’s wooden roof, and said, “Do you think that I, an ordinary Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder, would have the ability to escape the pursuit of the royal family? I think they’ve already discovered that something is wrong, and they’re about to take action…”

Trissy felt somewhat smug that Klein didn’t dare to look straight at her.

She chuckled softly and said, “I’ll try to escape and divert the main pursuing force. Although the remaining ones are still very powerful, it’s not impossible to deal with them.

“I believe that you will fight with all your might for the sake of your own life. You have great hope!”

With that, her figure quickly disappeared, as if someone had wiped it away with a rag.

This was different from Sharron, as it wasn’t a return to a normal Wraith state, but a direct form of invisibility.

Bam!

The carriage door opened and then closed.

The sweet fragrance that remained drilled into his nose, and Klein retracted his gaze, his face sinking.

Even now, his arms were still trembling slightly, as if he had contracted some disease.

If it wasn't for his rich experience, even though he had faced the son of an evil god in the real world with a belly in between them, he, who knew what the name "Trissy Cheek" meant, wouldn't have been able to bear the terrifying pressure and would've collapsed on the spot. It was akin to having a rubber band stretched too tightly to the point of tearing.

It seems like Trissy still doesn't know what's happening to her body. She also doesn't know the meaning behind the name "Cheek"… Klein quickly calmed his thoughts, looked out the window, estimated the distance, and counted the time.

His spiritual intuition and corresponding experience told him that doing anything in such a situation was better than nothing!

Therefore, with the danger of being silenced at hand, he was prepared to try his best to save himself!

3, 2, 1… Klein suddenly opened his eyes and snapped his fingers.

At the edge of the road, a small fire ignited on a tree with only withered branches left. The flames quickly soared into the sky.

Several matches inside his pocket, that Klein had intentionally divided up, burst into flames, and a crimson color engulfed his black attire.

His figure disappeared from the interior of the carriage, and he walked out from the flames by the roadside.

Pa! Pa! Pa! He kept snapping the fingers on his left hand repeatedly, his figure constantly flashing through the sparse, withered forest. He "rode" the flames and rapidly arrived deep in the forest which couldn't be seen from the outside.

Then, he paused and pulled out the accessory hanging around his neck.

He always knew very clearly that there were hidden elements behind this matter. Therefore, for his visit to Red Rose Manor, he abided by the principles of a Magician. He had made some preparations beforehand, such as separating his matches and carrying a number of his mystical items on him.

Among the mystical items, the Biological Poison Bottle and the Sun Brooch were involved in the Capim and Wraith incidents; therefore, out of caution, he left them above the gray fog, As for the All-Black Eye which was left behind by Marionettist Rosago, it was difficult to get past the manor guards; hence, it was met with the same treatment.

Finally, other than the three kinds of bullets—purifying bullets, demon-hunting bullets, and exorcism bullets of purification—he only brought along two mystical items.

The first was the Master Key that allowed him to pass through obstacles. The side effects of getting lost could be offset by dowsing. Furthermore, it looked like an ordinary key so it wasn't easily discovered. The other item was a key element of Klein's preparations—Azik's copper whistle.

Simply put, when he faced a danger he couldn't handle himself, he could ask for the help of a powerhouse!

After that encounter, whether I recognized Trissy or not, I am definitely on a kill list. There's a high chance that I've been targeted by 0-08. There won't be any negative effects getting Mr. Azik's help. Well, that's if 0-08 has been behind all the coincidences… Klein raised the cold ancient copper whistle and put it in his mouth, blowing on it.

Without a sound, he activated his Spirit Vision and saw the white bones that gushed out from the ground like a fountain. He saw the nearly four-meter-tall giant messenger taking form. It lowered its head and looked at him with his eye sockets burning with black flames.

That huge body gave Klein a sense of security. He took out the pen and paper he carried with him and wrote a word: "Help!"

Next, he folded the paper and stuffed it into the messenger's hanging palm.

After the messenger had disappeared, he put away the copper whistle, deliberately put on a prayer posture, and quickly chanted the honorific name of The Fool, "…Honorable Mr. Fool, my investigations have borne fruit. The woman Prince Edessak fell in love with is Witch Trissy from the Demoness Sect. She has already advanced to Demoness of Pleasure and the upper echelons have changed her name to Trissy Cheek…"

After quickly making the "report," Klein didn't bother to hide his identity and immediately took four steps counterclockwise to head above the gray fog.

Then, he retrieved the scenes of him praying, and he threw it into the crimson star symbolizing Miss Justice. He tried his best to feign a mocking tone and added in a supercilious manner that was congruent with the style of The Fool, "Cheek, hehe, that's the true name of the Primordial Demoness…"

After doing all this, Klein immediately returned to the real world, ready to run for his life.

He had only taken a few steps when his eyes suddenly lit up.

He subconsciously raised his head and saw several meteors burning with raging flames falling from the sky, tearing through the sky and enveloping the entire forest!

"This…" At that moment, the scarlet light shone into Klein's eyes, giving him an indomitable feeling.

He had never expected that the person he was up against would send meteorites from the sky to silence him!

†

On a yellowing notebook, a seemingly ordinary quill wrote:

“For unknown, inexplicable reasons, the Dallask meteor shower arrived at the planet two days early.

“A portion of them just happened to land in the forest where Detective Sherlock Moriarty was hiding. Yes, just happened!”

†

Tuesday afternoon, in Audrey’s study.

The teenage girl, who was about to reach adulthood, was listening intently as Mrs. Escalante explained the connection between the intersection of Spectator and Telepathist powers with mysticism psychology. Beside her feet, Susie was sitting there attentively.

Suddenly, she saw the endless gray fog and a blurry figure in a prayer position in what appeared to be a forest.

Soon after, the words reached her ears.

Prince Edessak… The Demoness Sect… Witch Trissy… Demoness of Pleasure… Trissy Cheek… Audrey automatically filtered out the irrelevant details and noticed the most important words.

So that’s the reason! The person Edessak fell in love with is a Demoness… Furthermore, many of the Demonesses are transformed men… Why do I feel like laughing… Is this why he will bring danger to Backlund? Well, I have to warn Father… But what method or excuse should I use… Audrey tried her hardest to control her expression and gaze, but her mind wandered.

At this moment, she saw Mr Fool leisurely sitting at the end of the long bronze table. She heard “Him” say in a gentle tone with a hint of ridicule in his voice, “Cheek, hehe, that’s the true name of the Primordial Demoness…”

The true name of the Primordial Demoness… The Primordial Demoness! As her mind buzzed, Audrey’s expression instantly collapsed.

“What’s wrong?” As an observant Telepathist, Escalante immediately noticed that something was wrong with Miss Audrey.

Audrey thought for a moment and didn’t hide her concern as she said, “Ms. Escalante, I just remembered something bad. I should’ve told my parents before, but I forgot. It will lead to terrible and serious consequences.”

For example, the destruction of Backlund, how few of the millions of people who live here, regardless of them being nobles, the middle class, or the poor, will survive… Audrey pursed her lips. Her concern couldn’t be hidden in her sparkling, emerald-like eyes.

Escalante frowned and said, “Will it be too late to do it now?”

“It’s better than not doing so. Ms. Escalante, please wait for me. No, you should leave first.” Audrey entered her Spectator state and calmly made her decision.

Then she got up and left the study and went into the hallway.

Father has gone to the House of Lords… Only Mother is at home… But what should I say? Audrey frowned slightly. She didn’t slow down, nor did she increase her pace. Next to her were her personal maid and her huge dog, Susie.

Gradually, she had an idea. When she arrived at the living room where her mother was, she had already made up her mind.

Taking a light breath, Audrey felt an unusual sinking sensation on her shoulders.

Then, without hesitation, she knocked on the door.

Chapter 472 - Latent Danger

◆

Lady Caitlyn was sitting on a sofa in the activity room, with the deputy butler, butler's assistant, and the attendant of the corresponding services seated opposite her.

She was meticulous as she gave instructions on various things to take note of for the dinner banquet that night. This continued until her daughter, Audrey, came to her side.

"Mother, I have something to tell you." Audrey swept her gaze across the other people in the room.

On the way to the activity room, she had felt a slight tremor, but she didn't discover anything unusual.

Lady Caitlyn looked around and nodded.

"All of you can return later."

The activity room turned silent very quickly and even Susie was signaled by Audrey to leave.

"You should stay by my side more often and learn how to handle matters. Although you don't lack such content in your family lessons, it's still profound knowledge on how to effectively combine theory with practice," Lady Caitlyn, who looked to be in her early thirties despite being in her fifties, smiled and educated her daughter. "Alright, my little angel, what is it?"

Audrey tried to produce the elegant smile she'd practiced in etiquette class, but she found herself with a heavy, nervous smile.

She pursed her dry lips and directly said, “Mother, I’ve been hiding something from you and Father.”

“Oh?” Lady Caitlyn tilted her head, waiting for a further explanation.

Audrey’s words were a little staccato at first, but then they immediately became smooth and fluent.

“I… I’m already a Beyonder, the kind of person who possesses miraculous powers by consuming a potion.”

The blonde Lady Caitlyn raised her eyebrows lightly and answered without any hint of surprise, “I know.

“Both your father and I know about it.”

“Huh?” Audrey was momentarily at a loss as to how to continue.

Lady Caitlyn covered her mouth and laughed.

“You took so many mystical ingredients from the vault, and you are so naive to think that your father and I didn’t notice?

“By your father’s side, in this villa, and in the fief of our family, there’s no lack of Beyonders. They may be a result of a simple employment relationship, or they may have been assigned by the Church of the Goddess, or they may have been members of the Hall family. His Majesty has tacitly agreed to such matters, and we have also tacitly consented to your little adventures… Sigh, you will eventually grow up and mature. Your father and I will never be able to protect you under our wings forever. You will have to face certain matters alone, so having additional powers to aid you as a trump card is good too.

“Yes, according to the general knowledge that I’m aware of, the initial stages shouldn’t be that dangerous, and advancing will require one to two years, or maybe even three years. So, your father and I aren’t too anxious, and we intended to wait until you become an adult to give you a word of warning so that you can stop at your present state."

No, Mother, your general knowledge is wrong. You don't know the acting method. If I have all the ingredients, then I can become a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist before the new year… Moreover, I do not wish to stop. The death of Duke Negan has made me understand that the world isn't as stable and peaceful as I thought it was. I want to have the power to protect all of you at critical moments…

Mr. Fool is gradually recovering, and evil gods are making repeated attempts to descend. Although I'm still immature and lack the necessary knowledge, I can sense the hidden, indescribable dangers from these matters… Audrey had always known that she couldn't avoid the problem of taking Beyonder ingredients from the vault, but she thought that perhaps by chance, her parents weren't aware of the specific effects of those items. At most, they would suspect that she was getting deeper and deeper into her mysticism enthusiast circle.

After releasing the burden in her heart, she paid no notice to her mother's exhortation and said, "Mother, I later joined a secret organization, one that's more academic and doesn't worship evil gods. Please forgive me for not being able to say its name and details, but I've already made an oath."

Without waiting for her mother to ask, she cut to the chase.

"I received word today that the commoner girl who Prince Edessak has fallen in love with is a Demoness. I don't know what kind of plot they are plotting."

The first two sentences of hers didn't contain any absolute connection. The former referred to the Psychology Alchemists, while the source of the latter was the Tarot Club, which was Mr. Fool.

Through this arrangement of sentences, every word she said was true, one that could be confirmed through divination. However, it would make people believe that her news came from the secret organization known as the Psychology Alchemists.

The smile on Caitlyn's face gradually disappeared as she solemnly asked, "Demoness?"

She didn't know much about the mysterious world, but the very word was enough to make her sense the evil and become uneasy.

Audrey quickly nodded.

"Yes, a Demoness of Pleasure.

"And what scares me even more is that her name is Trissy Cheek."

"What's wrong with that?" her mother asked, puzzled.

"A member of that organization has seen the name Cheek in an ancient book," Audrey said the lie that she had already planned for. Whether it was her tone, her words, the details of her expression, or her body language, they were all flawless. "In the Fourth Epoch or earlier, it's a name that belonged to the Primordial Demoness."

Immediately after, she gravely added, "That's an evil goddess!"

Lady Caitlyn didn't understand what the Primordial Demoness meant, but she knew exactly what an evil goddess meant.

She couldn't sit still any longer and quickly replied with a question, "Are you sure?"

"…I'm not sure." Audrey didn't doubt Mr. Fool at all, but she couldn't say so openly. "No matter what, I think it's necessary to seek the royal family, no—get the Beyonders of the Church of the Goddess to confirm the matter. If it involves an evil goddess, it's always the right decision to be cautious."

Caitlyn looked up at her daughter in surprise.

"…Audrey, you've grown up."

If it weren't for the urgency of the matter, Audrey would've pretended to be reserved upon hearing such praise. She would first modestly wheedle, then return to her room in glee. She might even twirl into a dance.

But now, she couldn't care about that at all. She quickly let her worry and nervousness surface on her expression.

"Mother, can you help me hide the truth? I heard that the Beyonders of the Church and the royal family abhor secret organizations that aren't a part of them. Well, you can say that it was news which Father received. He should have plenty of channels for information."

Caitlyn stood up and gave her daughter a hug.

"Don't worry, neither your father nor I will involve you in this.

"Your father won't be back until evening. I'll first let the hidden guards appear, pretend that he sent a message, then I'll get the Church of the Goddess to send Beyonders to protect our family."

"Alright!" Audrey replied happily.

At that moment, she finally breathed a sigh of relief. She was exhausted from maintaining her prolonged high level of tension.

†

Looking at the few burning meteors crashing down at a high speed and enveloping the whole forest, Klein actually had the thought of waiting helplessly for his doom in despair.

Even if he continuously used Flaming Jump, it would be impossible for him to escape the forest and the dangerous epicenter before the meteor shower landed. Moreover, the weak body of a Beyonder from the Seer pathway didn't allow the possibility of him withstanding a head-on meteor strike.

Even a zombie that wouldn’t be wounded by a revolver would immediately be turned into minced meat under such an “attack.” Moreover, it would become charred black… Flaming Jump… The yellow-white light shone into the depths of his eyes, quickly giving Klein, who had not given up, an idea.

In a situation that was depicted in seconds, he didn’t hesitate. He did whatever that came to his mind.

Pa!

After silently calculating the distance, Klein snapped his fingers and ignited all the remaining matches in the matchbox.

A streak of crimson red light soared into the sky, quickly enveloping his figure within it.

Klein disappeared without a sound, appearing in the flames above the meteor.

Whoosh!

The meteor rapidly descended. The moment he leaped out of the flames, he was away from the meteor’s vicinity, entering a region of air with frighteningly high temperatures.

At the moment when he used his Beyonder powers to jump, Klein was immune to ordinary flames even if the temperature was rather high. However, upon exiting that state, he had to do his best to avoid the flames via Flame Controlling. Otherwise, he would suffer burn wounds and even burn to death.

In addition, the hot air wasn’t within his “jump” range.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers again, causing the air at a critical point to ignite.

He phased into another flame, trying to avoid the first blast upon the meteorite's impact.

However, no matter how many times he tried and how many risks he took, he still couldn't escape the danger. There were only two choices: to jump to a point away from the forest and suffer the meteorite's resulting blast, or to jump around like an acrobatic, waiting for the mushroom cloud to swallow him up.

For a moment, Klein thought he could see himself being torn apart, scorched black with flames still burning over his body.

A thought flashed through his mind, and his vision suddenly changed as all the colors saturated. The reds became redder, the yellows become yellower, and the whites became whiter, just like a strange oil painting!

The "oil painting" seemed to be different from the real world, allowing Klein to watch as the meteorite "slowly" crashed to the ground.

That patch of the forest was instantly destroyed, and the ground clearly quaked a few times. Plumes of smoke that were mixed with flames rose up, forming a strange mushroom cloud.

Such an impact didn't affect Klein, because the blast simply didn't enter the superposed, still "oil-painting world."

Klein was stunned at first before he saw the human figure next to him.

The figure had bronze skin with a medium build. He wore a long black suit and a half top hat. He had a pair of aged brown eyes, soft facial features, and a tiny mole below his right ear.

"Mr. Azik!" Klein cried out in joy.

He finally knew what scene the revelation from the divination he made a long time ago corresponded to.

It corresponded to the present!

The sea of blood represented a perilous situation, and being pulled up by Mr. Azik meant being rescued because of him!

Just as Klein's words left his mouth, Azik waved his hand, grabbed his arm, and pushed his way through the deep layers of saturated colors!

†

The ordinary-looking quill was no longer writing on its own, and its surface had dimmed a little.

The solemn-looking middle-aged man with only one eye grabbed it and quickly wrote as if he was channeling a spirit.

"It was obvious that Azik Eggers had yet to recover all his memories and strength. While attempting to travel through the spirit world and the astral world, a latent danger appeared as a result of this problem. Hence, he and Sherlock Moriarty found themselves landing near Ince Zangwill and his friend."

Chapter 473 - Faceless

◆ ◆ ◆

Everything around him was like an illusion. The colors were saturated and superposed as they quickly receded.

As soon as Klein came to his senses, observed, and experienced this wonderful passage, he felt Mr. Azik’s hand which was holding his hand tremble slightly.

[image]

Before he could even react, he felt a strong sense of weightlessness. His body couldn’t help but plummet as he even began spinning.

The colors of red, yellow, white, and black around him faded rapidly, and Klein fell, hitting the solid ground hard. The impact left his head spinning and his internal organs churning.

Mixed into his vision were bits of golden stars as his vision was restored to normal. To his left was a bottomless dark valley that resembled the legendary Devil Abyss. On the right was a gray stone wall that continued to extend upwards, as if supporting the entire region.

There was no sun, no clouds, and no fog. Some light came from the luminescent moss growing in different places, and darkness and heaviness were the primary tones of this “world.”

Klein pushed himself up with his left hand and nimbly jumped up. He found that the ground beneath his feet consisted of properly paved stone which could accommodate two horse carriages traveling in parallel. It was definitely not naturally formed.

One end of the road spiraled down into the dark crevices, while the other led to the top. From time to time, it was possible to see the domed hallways and halls inside the walls.

Klein raised his head, but he couldn't see the highest point. His vision was completely blocked by the gray stone wall.

Suddenly, he had an epiphany. He and Mr. Azik had "fallen" underground, into the ruins of an ancient civilization.

Is it another area, or are we still near Backlund? As soon as Klein thought about it, he heard Mr. Azik say in a low voice, "Leave here first. Head up."

Ah? Before Klein could understand the meaning behind his words, he saw a flash of light from the side, instantly forming an illusory door that opened outwards.

The door seemed to be made of bronze. It wasn't real enough, but it was unusually heavy. On the surface, there were countless strange patterns and indistinct symbols.

With a creak, a crack appeared in the door. Pale, bloody arms reached out from the crack, one after another. In addition, there were also greenish-black vines with baby faces and sleek tentacles with protruded eyes.

It's very similar to the effect of Miss Sharron's mystical item… While he was in thought, Klein noticed that the arms, vines, and tentacles were no longer as crazy as before. They had calmed down and stuck to the ground, completely unlike their former appearance of madly pulling a Sequence 6 Zombie into the door.

Immediately after, the gap between the doors widened, and a human figure emerged from it.

The figure wore a pure black clergy robe, and his facial features were clear and distinct like an ancient, classical sculpture.

His hair was dark gold in color, his eyes were dark blue, and he had a high nose bridge. He wore a bonnet which was popular with the elderly, and his sideburns were somewhat gray in contrast to his middle-aged appearance.

Looking at the figure's completely lifeless eye, Klein suddenly recalled the name of the person who had just arrived.

Ince Zangwill!

The former archbishop who had directed the Tingen incident and dealt heavy damage to the Nighthawks team, as well as being the owner of Sealed Artifact 0-08!

Almost at the same time, Klein turned around and, following Mr. Azik's instructions, fled towards the top of the road.

He knew full well that being a Sequence 6, he would only serve to be a burden and distraction in a clash between demigods.

In this race for time, false modesty and pretentious words were unnecessary. They would harm both him and his companion!

Tap. Tap. Tap. As there was nothing he could ignite underground, all Klein could do was grit his teeth and run as fast as he could. While running, he heard Azik's calm, gentle voice.

"Run all the way out of here.

"Don't worry about me. I've recalled a lot of things, and I know that I once remained in a particular Sequence for a very long period of time. That Sequence's name is Undying."

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein circled around the cliff and entered a dark domed corridor. The walls on both sides were engraved with mottled murals.

At that moment, he heard a dignified and hoarse voice reverberate from where he previously was.

“Teleportation is prohibited here!”

A figure had arrived beside Ince Zangwill without anyone noticing. He was floating in midair in defiance with the laws of physics. He wore a gorgeous gold mask.

And Ince Zangwill didn’t attack immediately. Instead, he glanced at the bend where Klein’s figure had disappeared.

Sequence 4 Nightwatcher of the Church of Evernight’s pathway could grant a certain amount of bad luck to others, but Ince Zangwill, who had just silently “blessed” Klein, realized that things like Klein slipping and falling into the ravine didn’t happen.

Not only that, Ince Zangwill seemed to be hallucinating as well, as he saw a thin, grayish-white fog.

Without having the luxury of time to think, he withdrew his gaze and cast it back to Azik Eggers.

Tap. Tap. Tap… Running at full speed, Klein suddenly stopped in his tracks. His spiritual intuition told him that there were people ahead of him—Beyonders! They were most likely the guards here!

After contemplating for a bit, he reached out with his left hand and wiped his face. At the same time, crisp sounds emitted from his body as his body grew seven to eight centimeters taller.

By the time his left palm left his face, he had turned into a single-eyed middle-aged man with dark golden hair and a high nose—Ince Zangwill!

Recalling the other party’s demeanor, Klein used an illusion to change his clothes before quickly walking around the corner and entering a large hall.

There were four guards in dark black armor, their gazes keen.

Klein's face was calm as he walked over. He deliberately spoke in a hoarse voice and sternly said, "Someone has sneaked in here. I'm looking for him.

"Did you discover any clues?"

The leader of the guards first examined him before lowering his head and saying, "Mr. Zangwill, nothing happened here."

"Okay." Klein nodded slightly, walked past them, and left the hall.

During this entire process, although he remained highly nervous with his back drenched in sweat, he appeared to be calm and reserved. He looked no different from Ince Zangwill, be it his appearance or his aura.

Relying on his Faceless powers and his running speed, he quickly passed through three checkpoints and arrived at the end of the building.

There was an illusionary door formed by pure ghostly-blue light. Apart from that, it was completely sealed shut.

Although he was worried about the demigod battle between Mr. Azik and Ince Zangwill, Klein remained hidden in the shadows outside the room. He patiently spied for a while and found that someone had passed through the ghostly-blue light while another person had used it to leave.

He noticed that those who left had to show something that looked like a badge before they could get permission from the four guards to enter the door of light.

I don't have time to wait for the next person with a badge. I can only take the risk… The battle over there could end at any moment… Even if doesn't, the search order will be sent over here quickly… Klein quickly made his decision, once again walking into the room with the likeness of Ince Zangwill.

“Something has happened outside.” He had no confidence in mimicking the former archbishop’s voice, so he could only express himself with deliberate hoarseness as an indication that he had experienced an intense battle.

The guards who were left confused by the news didn’t react until Klein approached them. They reached out their hands to stop him.

“Mr. Zangwill, where is your pass?”

“Don’t waste any more time!” As he spoke, Klein pulled a badge from his pocket and thrust it into the man’s hand.

This calm performance made the rest of the guards relax.

The moment the guard who had received the “pass” looked down, Klein suddenly lunged forward!

Just as he landed on the ground, he quickly did another roll and went straight through the ghostly-blue door!

Only then did the guard realize that the badge in his palm had rapidly faded, turning into a piece of paper.

On the top left of the piece of paper, there was a rather commonly seen blessing recently: “Happy New Year!”

†

The abyss-like crevice was filled with an illusory, pitch-black liquid. Moreover, the surface of the water was still bubbling without stopping, and many pale-skinned arms were wildly extending outwards.

Ince Zangwill had a general idea of Azik’s standards, and he was neither surprised nor afraid, for he had a demigod to help him at the moment.

What worried him the most was another problem. 0-08, which was forcefully developing the story, could backfire on him at any moment.

At that moment, he swept his gaze past the corner of his eye and was shocked to find that the quill, 0-08, had left his pocket without him realizing it. It was floating in front of the gray rock wall, fervently writing lines of words.

"…In a fierce battle, there would always be a variety of accidents, such as Ince Zangwill's belt snapping and having his pants drop."

†

The ghostly-blue light filled Klein's eyes, constructing a passageway that overlapped with layers of light between the deep darkness and the roaming invisible creatures.

Klein didn't bother to observe his surroundings as he scrambled to the end of the passage.

He stood up, straightened his clothes, restored Ince Zangwill's stern expression, and stepped into the rippling screen of light.

After a moment of being mentally adrift, he found himself in another room, which was also occupied by quite a few guards.

"Something went wrong underground, keep an eye out. Do not allow anyone entry," Klein calmly instructed, walking towards the door at an unhurried pace.

"Yes, Mr. Zangwill!" the guards replied respectfully.

At this moment, the guard from before passed through the ghostly-blue light and shouted loudly, "There's a problem with that Zangwill from before!"

Everyone turned to look at the door, but Klein was nowhere to be seen.

Tap. Tap. Tap. The guards immediately split up into several groups to search in every direction for their target and notify their companions. The scene momentarily turned rather chaotic.

One of them had just rounded the corner when he saw Ince Zangwill's back.

Subconsciously, he pulled out his sword that coruscated with lightning and performed a forward cleave.

Oof!

The figure floated away weightlessly and became a splintered paper figurine.

At the same time, two loud bangs could be heard. Pale golden bullets passed through the visor that wasn't pulled down and accurately hit the guard's head.

Before he could even cry out, the guard collapsed to the ground with a thud, convulsing.

Klein stepped out of the shadows in the corner and expressionlessly slipped the revolver back into his underarm holster.

After burning the paper figurine, he quickly dragged the guard to an empty room and changed into black armor, switching his appearance to the fallen guard.

Then, he picked up the lightning sword and left the room, closing the wooden door behind him and running forward in a "panic."

He was going to notify every guard along the way that there was a problem with Ince Zangwill!

Chapter 474 - Edessak's Story

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the solarium of Red Rose Manor.

Edessak Augustus stood by the full-length window, looking at the indifferent Trissy with a gloomy face, and he said in a voice that was like a volcano about to erupt, “Why did you run away again?”

Trissy looked past him and beyond the window, chuckled, and answered with a question, “Did you see the meteor shower? Did you feel the trembling of the earth?”

Behind her, porcelain and other items in the cabinet had fallen onto the thick, soft carpet. The old butler, Funkel, was standing beside her.

“It’s not too rare for that to happen,” Edessak replied in a low voice.

Trissy raised her eyebrows slightly.

“You are very dull.

“Then let me be frank with you. I am a Demoness!”

Prince Edessak’s expression didn’t change at all. He turned to the old butler and said, “Guard the door and prevent anyone from entering.”

“Yes, Your Highness.” Funkel gave Trissy a cold look and walked out of the solarium.

When he heard the door close, Edessak exhaled slowly.

“Trissy Cheek, heh, you prefer to be called Trissy.

“I know you’re a Demoness. The person who helped you purchase the Beyonder ingredients failed. What you received was provided by me!

“I don’t mind that my princess consort is a Witch or a Demoness. I’ve even seen your wanted poster!”

Trissy was surprised at first, but she then revealed a mocking smile.

“You sure know a lot…

“Did you know that I was once a man, and that my real name is Tris?”

“…What?” Edessak’s eyes widened, and he tilted his head a little, as though he couldn’t believe what he had heard.

Upon seeing this, Trissy couldn’t help but laugh. She laughed so hard that she frantically bent back and forth like a lunatic.

“Haha, you didn’t make a mistake. I was once a man! I used to be like you, and the thing down there was longer and thicker than yours! However, the Witch potion had forcefully changed my gender!

“Are you disgusted? Does it give you goosebumps?”

She vented the words she had been repressing all this time before taking two steps forward.

Edessak instinctively retreated, his Adam’s apple moving involuntarily.

“No, it’s not like that… You’re a real woman. There’s no problem. I can definitely confirm that!” He mumbled to himself, then he raised his voice and said, “From the moment I met you, you were a real woman. I don’t want to know what you were like in the past! I can pretend that nothing like this happened! What I like, what I love is the present you!”

Stunned, Trissy raised her hand to wipe away her tears of laughter.

“You’re a really pathetic man.

“Do you still not understand? Our meeting wasn’t a coincidence. Even your interest…”

She paused in disgust and continued, “Even your interest in me was a result of someone else’s arrangement. Don’t you think that everything happened too quickly? I believe in love at first sight, but I don’t believe that it possesses such powerful bewitchment properties. You act like the main character in a third-rate romance novel, becoming obsessed with love from just one meeting. You fell in love with a stranger, forgetting the type of person you once liked. That’s crazy!”

Prince Edessak’s eyes went blank as his mouth turned agape, but he didn’t speak.

His body suddenly swayed, as if he had finally awoken from a long dream.

“Y-you are indeed my type… But my reaction, it’s r-really too exaggerated…”

The corners of Trissy’s mouth curled up, and she turned her head to the side to let out a sneer.

“What a pathetic man, to have what you like being arranged by someone else. It’s like you’re a puppet on strings.

“Don’t you understand? You’re a person that can be sacrificed, and I, as well as being a hostage for the cooperation between the royal family and the Demoness Sect, am also a necessary disguise for this deception.

“I possess an important item of the Demoness Sect, and under your strict supervision, I can be destroyed at any time and result in the loss of the treasure. This is the sincerity of our cooperation, and once the matter is exposed to the other three Churches or the military, the development of this matter will be very simple. Prince Edessak secretly kept a Demoness due to his lust. After knowing of his heinous sins, he shoots himself in the mouth. Then, all the problems would be covered up.”

“No!” Edessak blurted out.

Then, with a twisted expression, he asked, “Why are they cooperating with the Demoness Sect?”

“How could a hostage who might be abandoned at any moment know?” Trissy gave a self-deprecating laugh. “That’s the whole reason behind why I want to flee.”

She lowered her head and chuckled in a low voice. Her body trembled slightly from the laughter.

After a few seconds, she raised her head once again, curled the corners of her mouth, and said, “What do you want to do with me? Strip me down and throw me onto the bed? No, you’ve probably formed a psychological resistance. Actually, I don’t mind giving you some warmth right now. It’s not a shameful thing for two poor people to comfort each other.”

Prince Edessak darkened his rotund face and looked at Trissy silently for nearly a minute.

Suddenly, he closed his eyes, pointed to another side and said, “You can leave.

“Leave through that door.”

Trissy raised her eyebrows in astonishment.

“You’re letting me go?”

“Yes.” Edessak turned to look out the window and slowly replied, “I’ll stop Funkel. As for whether or not you can escape from the other pursuers, that will depend on your own strength and luck.”

A dazed look flashed in Trissy’s eyes a few seconds before she quickly ran towards the hidden door.

Before leaving, she couldn't help but look back.

"What about you?"

Edessak didn't turn his head, but he continued to stare out of the full-length windows as if searching for the shadows of his past.

He smiled and said, "Me? Let me live in this beautiful story and welcome its final end—good or bad."

Trissy took a breath and, without further ado, went through the secret door.

†

In a quiet room inside Saint Samuel Cathedral.

One of the thirteen archbishops of the Church of Evernight, the person in charge of the Backlund diocese, Saint Anthony Stevenson had received an urgent telegram from Earl Hall's residence.

This bearded old man with deeply recessed eyes had an extremely clean appearance. Even though he wore a black and red archbishop's robe, he didn't give off a gloomy feeling.

However, anyone who faced him would shudder from the bottom of their hearts. It was as if their spirituality was dominated by fear, or as if they were facing an unknown existence lurking deep in the darkness which stared back at them.

Trissy Cheek… Primordial Demoness… Saint Anthony lightly patted the paper and immediately stood up.

The light around him suddenly vanished, as if swallowed up by the gloom of the room.

All the worshippers in the cathedral instantly felt the coming of night.

Everything quickly returned to normal as Saint Anthony appeared in front of the Chanis Gate beneath the cathedral.

Today, the one leading the team was the Spirit Guide, Daly Simone.

Without waiting for her to ask, Archbishop Saint Anthony instructed in a deep voice, “Make preparations. The process shall begin. I’m awakening a Sealed Artifact.”

He wanted to use 0-17.

He wanted to use that terrifying Sealed Artifact to confirm and deal with the Trissy matter.

And this was the only Grade 0 Sealed Artifact stored outside the Holy Cathedral. Only two of the Church’s upper echelons knew that it was in the Backlund diocese.

“Yes, Your Grace.” Daly was startled for a second, then she immediately responded.

While waiting, Saint Anthony closed his eyes as a portion of 0-17’s information surfaced in his mind.

“Number: 17.

“Name: XXXXXX

“Danger Grade: 0. Extremely Dangerous. It’s of the highest importance and of the highest confidentiality. It is not to be inquired, disseminated, described, or spied.

“Security Clearance: Pope, Team A researchers, and Archbishop of the Backlund diocese (Note: When the archbishop is transferred out of the Backlund diocese, the corresponding memories have to be wiped out using Sealed Artifact 1-29).

“Sealed Method: The seal is completed through the combination of 1-29 and 1-80.

“Description: This isn’t an item.

“This is a living angel.

“‘Her’ appearance is beautiful with black hair and eyes. Looks like a young woman, but ‘Her’ actual age cannot be estimated.

“…‘She’ doesn’t have the wings recorded in canon. Just from ‘Her’ appearance, ‘She’ is no different from an ordinary person.

“…She does not have the ability to think and has lost all sentience.

“…Anyone and everything that comes close to ‘Her’ will completely disappear… Through divination and other methods, it can be confirmed that they’re still alive but are impossible to locate. Currently, 1825 methods have been attempted, with every one of them failing.

“…0-17’s range of influence will expand and contract without any pattern. Currently, it has caused more than 70 researchers to vanish.”

†

“Warning: ‘She’ cannot be used!”

“Appendix 1: This Sealed Artifact first appeared in the Pale Era of the Fourth Epoch.

Exact year: Missing.

Exact date: Missing.

Exaction location: Missing”

“Appendix 2: Based on the information, ‘She’ has been awakened five times.”

†

By passing on the message to search for the Ince Zangwill imposter, Klein, with the help of divination, overcame the interference of the Master Key and ran all the way to the exit given to him from the revelation.

He knew very well that with a carpet-style search, the corpse in the empty room would soon be discovered, so he had to race against time to get to the exit.

A Faceless's powers should be matched with a mystical item that can destroy corpses and clean up my tracks… Having gained true knowledge from practice, it didn't take Klein long to cross the checkpoints and patrolling teams before he arrived at the exit where the divination pointed him to.

However, what made him even more surprised was that there were no guards here, only a heavy stone door standing there by itself.

What's going on? Why is there no one guarding the exit? Was my divination misguided, or are the guards outside? As his thoughts raced, Klein found a corner and took off his armor, restoring his lightweight and agility.

Then, he came to the stone door that opened outwards and groped his way to the corner of the left wall.

After carefully checking with a gold coin, Klein took out the ancient bronze key. He leaned it against the wall and gently twisted it.

Water ripples appeared as they spread out slightly. Klein silently passed through the wall, without taking the door!

The first thing he saw was the natural light that fell from the dome, which meant that this place was really an exit.

Klein carefully stood motionless as he quickly adapted to the light. He saw neat but mottled gray stones under his feet and thick pillars in front of him.

In the middle of the hall, four hooded figures knelt around what appeared to be an altar.

Soon after, Klein heard a soft but gentle female voice.

“Mr. A, are you ready?”

Chapter 475 - Lady Despair

◆

Mr. A? Mr. A of the Aurora Order? Klein, who had intended to cling towards the walls and shadows and proceed towards the door, shrank back silently.

Ince Zangwill should be working with some faction of the royal family… Those who are able to excavate and hide such a large underground ruin near Backlund must be one of the main powers in the Loen Kingdom…

With Ince Zangwill and 0-08 participating in this matter, the Church of the Goddess can be ruled out. Although the people of the Lord of Storms are a bit reckless and male chauvinists, it's unlikely that they will work with the Demoness Sect. At least until now, there have been no Beyonders who appear to be of the Sailor pathway… In the same way, the Church of Steam and Machinery aren't likely suspects…

Even the Aurora Order is involved? What are they trying to do?

Klein leaned his back against the wall and slowed his breathing, thinking and listening to the conversation in the middle of the hall.

After a short period of silence, a hoarse voice sounded, "It's done."

The answer was so concise that Klein couldn't make out what they were planning.

The melodious and pleasant voice from before laughed in a low voice, "You don't seem to trust us very much?"

“That’s right,” Mr. A answered bluntly.

“Heh heh, then I’ll be frank and describe our goal and why I’m seeking your cooperation.” The gentle female voice didn’t sound angry at all. “We’ve done certain things and left behind clear traces. Before we’re discovered by the Churches of Evernight, Storm, and Steam, as well as the military, we must do the corresponding cleanup, and this requires your help. Yes, it seems like you don’t really understand what I mean, so let me give you an example. Imagine—Imagine you performed a heinous crime like murder in a house, so what’s the best way of eliminating any evidence and clues?”

“There’s no need for that. It’s our goal to have others witness such an act,” Mr. A said indifferently.

…As expected of a member of the Aurora Order… They’re all a bunch of lunatics… Klein made a preliminary identification of the speaking man to be “Mr. A” who had killed the Intis Ambassador.

“…Suppose it were me, not you.” The clear, soft female voice had a faint wheezing sound.

After a second, Mr. A. replied, “Burn that house and bury all the clues there.”

The clear and gentle female voice had a smiling tone.

“That’s exactly what we planned. I’m in charge of ‘committing arson,’ while you can use this opportunity to go with this development to create a passageway or vessel, so as to allow your Lord to descend upon this world.

“And the only price you guys have to pay is to bear all the infamy and gain the most enmity from the military and the three Churches. But I don’t think you would mind that.”

“As long as we can welcome the return of the Lord, even if we’re abhorred by every single force, we won’t show any sign of cowardice.”

Mr. A's tone no longer appeared indifferent and distant.

Arson? The Aurora Order will take this opportunity to complete the ritual for the arrival of the True Creator? This is probably the third time… Why did I bump into this again… What a f*cking bad twist of fate… Klein couldn't help but curse inwardly in Chinese.

At this very moment, he was extremely curious and wary against the things that were plotted by this particular royal family faction, Ince Zangwill, and the Demoness Sect. It was terrifying enough to even use the descent of the True Creator as a scapegoat!

Perhaps they've kept some cards up their sleeves and will eventually destroy the Aurora Order's ritual in the end and destroy all the other factions except themselves… Klein calmly thought while feeling tense.

"It appears like you have no other questions," said the gentle female voice. "This place is sufficiently well-hidden and can be used for the required set-up. You can do your ritual here at ease and won't need to worry that it'll be interrupted before you succeed. As for the things outside, we've already finished our preparations a long time ago. It's just waiting for the ignition of a 'spark.' If you still have doubts, then you can make another round of checks."

Just as Mr. A was about to speak, Klein heard a dull thud. It was the sound of the door opening.

"Who permitted you to enter? Didn't I declare that no one is to approach this area?" The gentle female voice suppressed her rage.

"Lady Despair, there's an emergency! Someone has infiltrated the basement! The higher-ups sent me to arrange for a follow-up and close the corresponding passages," a male voice with a distinct Backlund accent responded very quickly.

The so-called "Lady Despair" maintained her silence for a few seconds, as though she was communicating with an unknown existence to confirm the situation.

Finally, she said without changing her tone, “Go back inside. Don’t come out again, nor allow anyone out. Wait until further notice.”

“Yes, Lady Despair!” The man ran towards the stone door, with a heavy thud sounding in the background.

From the place where Klein was hiding, he could clearly see the stone door leading to the back area. He waited for seven or eight seconds before a figure of normal height and build appeared.

Phew… The man took a deep breath, stretched out his hands, and bared his teeth as he pushed open the heavy stone door with a ferocious expression.

In that instant, Klein had completely taken in the man’s appearance and characteristics without missing a single detail. This was the Beyonder power of a Faceless!

That man’s skin was reddish-brown, and he was clearly of Southern Continent descent. His facial features had no special characteristics, making it difficult to remember him.

Due to him gritting and baring his teeth, he revealed a portion of his teeth. The third tooth on the upper left of his mouth flickered with a golden light. It was a fake tooth.

This… Klein, with the spiritual intuition of a Seer, frowned as he felt an inexplicable sense of familiarity.

Very quickly, he used his skills to recall the source of his familiarity.

The Hanged Man had once requested the Tarot Club members to find a man with reddish-brown skin and a thick Backlund accent who had the third tooth on his left missing.

The man’s name was Baelen, and he was involved in the escape and disappearance of many colonial island slaves!

And at this moment, the man in front of Klein was almost identical to the Baelen that was described by The Hanged Man!

The disappearance of the colonial island slaves…

The many tribes of the Southern Continent vanishing into thin air…

Baelen's appearance here…

Capim, who took a large share of the underground slave trade, was protected by four Beyonders suspected to be of the Arbiter pathway. Among them, the strongest was a Sequence 6, and even a Sequence 5…

Capim constantly targeted relatively innocent girls in his abductions…

The passing of the Grain Act, the improvement of the textile machines all resulted in a large number of people losing their jobs…

Many female textile workers silently left East Borough after receiving new jobs, not leaving any clues…

The scattered dots instantly formed a line in Klein's mind, pointing directly into the depths of the earth!

What are they up to, that they need such a large number of people, as well as so many pure and innocent girls? A ritual? An extremely terrifying ritual that takes a very long period of time while being held in secret? Klein's pupils suddenly contracted.

Creak… Bang! The stone door closed and Baelen disappeared from his sight.

The hall was silent for a few seconds before Mr. A's deep and hoarse voice rang out again.

"I smell an accident. Let's begin. We need to hurry before it arrives."

Lady Despair responded slowly, “That’s exactly what I was thinking.

“But I need you to send me to East Borough.”

East Borough? Klein had a bad premonition.

“No problem,” Mr. A answered with a lack of emotion.

Under the hood, a transparent and blurry book appeared in front of him. Accompanied by a distant and indistinct chant, he said, “I came, I saw, I record.”

The book quickly flipped open and stopped at one of the pages. Soon after, it began to emit a light blue and illusory light.

The light enveloped the white-robed Lady Despair, causing her figure to blur at first, then becoming indistinct.

In an instant, Lady Despair saw countless indescribable silhouettes. She discovered lustrous brilliances which contained the bright and pure splendor of endless knowledge at the highest point.

Her body was being dragged forward by a strange force as she rapidly tore through space. Not long after, she left her original spot and arrived at a secluded, uninhabited, and filthy corner of an alley.

She pulled down her veil to cover her face and looked up into the sky. The afternoon sun had once again been obscured by clouds and fog, turning pale and dark.

The light yellow fog wasn’t particularly thick, and it sank down to every corner of Backlund, giving off a slight choking sensation amidst its coldness and moisture.

It’s a pity that the smog didn’t reach the point when it’s in its worst and calmest state… The accident that happened to Trissy, the sudden and temporary loss of control over 0-08, the appearance of Azik, the destruction previously caused by Black Emperor, these had complicated matters, garnering the attention of others. It forced the operation to be brought forward to today… Lady Despair surveyed the area, walked out of the alley, and into the streets.

Her steps were slow, as though she were wandering in a sea of fog.

Wherever she passed, the fog would unnoticeably thicken. Tinged with an iron-black color, it silently lowered the range of one's visibility.

As she left the street, a sallow-faced tramp in an old jacket suddenly coughed violently and fell to the ground.

The two poor people close to the tramp retreated in horror, and then they covered their throats with their hands as they gasped for air. It was as if they were suffering from severe lung disease or bronchitis and could no longer breathe.

A smog which was a mixture of iron-black and pale yellow colors descended upon East Borough, the dock area, and the smoke-spewing factory district as it continued to spread throughout Backlund.

Various scenes in the distance were "drowned," and even the towering clock tower was only a pale shadow. One by one, workers and poor people felt the discomfort as they fought against the cold, and the disorderly tramps fell one after another in the woman's wake, their lives as fragile as the bubbles formed during laundry.

Lady Despair's expression was calm and gentle, as though she were finishing a work of art.

Like an ordinary person, she walked among the pedestrians as she chuckled and said in a low voice, "The Loen Kingdom's history will remember this day.

[image]

"The Great Smog of Backlund."

†

The dark valley had been completely covered by the black, incorporeal water, but 0-08 didn’t stop writing.

It fabricated ridiculous and terrifying stories wherever it could land its tip on.

“…The dropping of pants didn’t affect Ince Zangwill’s performance, because he was wearing a long robe, perhaps having anticipated a similar accident…

“The Imperative Mage stunned Azik Eggers in the spot, robbing him of his two most powerful Beyonder powers at the last moment—truly a great assistant in every meaning of the word. However, the stacked door of the spirit world and the Underworld were attracted by Azik’s characteristic. It began being stirred by the powers of their battle, causing unpredictable changes.

“At that moment, an unknown existence was attracted, resulting in ‘Him’ passing by. ‘He’ took this opportunity to extend his hands into the real world. Oh no! ‘He’ caught Ince Zangwill!”

In midair, two bloody arms which were covered in squirming flesh suddenly appeared behind the clergyman-robed Ince Zangwill!

They caught Ince Zangwill’s shoulders, dragging him into the void and into the spirit world.

Chapter 476 - The Straw Men

◆ ◆ ◆

Light suddenly faded from where Ince Zangwill disappeared, staining the area with the richest and deepest darkness.

In the darkness, the sounds of melodic chanting could be heard. It was quiet and tranquil, hypnotic even. Even the countless pale arms flailing upwards underneath the pitch-black water seemed to slow down, no longer as frenzied as before, as if they had won redemption for their souls.

In such a “dark night,” a figure walked out. It was none other than Ince Zangwill who had just been dragged into the spirit world.

Compared to before, he had lost the bonnet on his head. The clothes on his left shoulder were tattered, and a piece of flesh had been torn off. Faint yellow pus bubbled out one after another.

His eyes were no longer indifferent, but filled with pain, as if he was suffering some unimaginable torment.

The 0-08 quill continued writing.

“Some might feel regret, while others might rejoice. Ince Zangwill had the umbilical cord of the evil god which came from the baby in Megose’s womb. It was from the True Creator, and through the umbilical cord, he successfully escaped from the restraints of the unknown existence and forcefully returned to the real world, but as a result, he had lost that mystical item. In addition, he would suffer the ire of the evil god’s spawn from having failed to descend for a short period of time.

"This made his strength appear like some kind of commodity in a department store during a change of seasons, with only 55% left. Yes, this number is extremely accurate."

†

In a street in the depths of East Borough.

Old Kohler hurried back to his rented apartment, carrying some ham in a paper bag.

He looked around warily, afraid that those ravenous wolves around him would pounce on him and steal his New Year's gift.

He had seen wolves back when he was still in the countryside, but to his surprise, he was able to experience that familiar feeling in Backlund.

It's still too expensive. I can only split the cost with someone else and cut it into pieces… This is enough for the new year holiday. I can eat two slices of ham for every meal. Three slices, no—at least five slices of ham. I can cut some of them off and stew them together with the potatoes. I don't even need to add salt… With this in mind, Old Kohler looked at the ham in his arms, seeing the white spots mixed in with the red meat, his throat couldn't help but twitch and he swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

As he walked, he felt the fog around him grow thicker. The cathedral's clock tower that was still relatively clear in the distance was gradually swallowed by a mixture of iron-black and pale yellow colors. Even the pedestrians around him were reduced to blurry shadows once they were ten steps away.

Old Kohler suddenly felt like he has been forgotten by the world as he raised his palm to cover his nose.

"Why does the fog smell so bad today?" he muttered, and he quickened his pace.

One step, two steps, three steps. Old Kohler felt his face heat up and his forehead start to burn.

His chest tightened, his throat felt uncomfortable, and soon he was experiencing difficulty breathing.

Have I fallen ill? Damn it, I still want to have a good new year's, and now I can only send my savings to the clinic or hospital… No, perhaps I'll be fine with some sleep. I'll be fine sleeping with a blanket over me! Old Kohler silently muttered to himself as his head grew hotter and hotter and his senses became more and more muddled.

Gasp. Gasp. Gasp. He heard his own labored breathing, and his hands went limp as the bag of ham fell heavily to the ground.

Old Kohler instinctively bent down to pick it up, but he ended up falling to the ground.

He held the bag of ham and tried to keep it in his arms.

[image]

At this moment, he thought there was thick phlegm rushing up his throat, blocking it, so he fought back, making panting sounds.

Thud! Old Kohler began to see, through his blurry vision, that a few steps away, someone else had also fallen and was gasping for breath. He was about the same age as him, in his fifties, with white sideburns.

Suddenly, he understood that he was about to die.

It reminded him of his own wife and children, who, like him, suddenly got infected with the plague and died shortly after.

It reminded him of the time when he had been hospitalized. The patients in the same room were still chatting and laughing that night, but they would be sent to the morgue early the next morning.

It reminded him of the friends he had known as a tramp, many of which had disappeared over the course of the winter until they were found stiff under a bridge or some spot which was sheltered from the wind. A small number died from suddenly having food.

This reminded him of the days when he was still a decent worker, when the neighbors in the neighborhood would suddenly die like this. Some of them died from headaches, some of them died from accidentally falling into molten steel, some of them died from all sorts of painful, bloating ailments. Some of them even collapsed silently in the factories, one batch after another.

This reminded him of what he had heard from a drunk in the bar when he was scrounging for information.

“People like us are like straw on the ground, falling when the wind blows. It’s even possible to fall on our own even without the wind.”

The wind is coming… Old Kohler suddenly had such a thought.

He clutched the bag of ham tightly as he groped the pocket of his old jacket for the crumpled cigarette he had always been unwilling to smoke.

What he couldn’t understand was why his healthy body would suddenly become ill. It wasn’t like he had never experienced such a dense fog before.

What he couldn’t understand was the reason for him suddenly collapsing just as his life was back on track, moving in a direction that was sufficiently nice for him. Furthermore, he had been paid in advance by Detective Moriarty to buy his long-awaited ham for the new year, and he was looking forward to tasting it.

Old Kohler fished out that crumpled cigarette, but he no longer had the strength to lift his arms again as they slammed heavily to the ground.

He used the last of his strength to shout out the words that had been building up inside of him, but he could only let the frail words linger at his mouth without producing them.

[image]

He heard his last words.

He heard himself ask, “Why?”

†

In an apartment at the edge of East Borough.

Liv hung up the last piece of clothing she had washed and waited for it to dry.

She looked at the sky outside, somewhat unsure of the time due to the thick fog which had appeared without her realizing it.

“Anyway, it’s still early, and we’ve already done the laundry…” Liv’s expression grew heavy.

It wasn’t a good thing to finish work too early. It didn’t mean that they could rest for it meant not having enough work and inadequate income.

Liv took a deep breath, turned around, and looked at her eldest daughter, Freja, who was wiping her hands and casting her gaze towards the vocabulary notebook in the opposite room.

“It’s almost New Year’s. Most of our clients have left Backlund and have gone on vacation elsewhere. We can’t go on like this. We have to find new work.”

As she spoke, she walked towards the door.

“During this period, the rich will host banquets one after another. They definitely won’t have enough servants and might hire temporary kitchen cleaners. I plan on inquiring. Freja, you stay at home and pick up Daisy when the time comes. We need income, but so do the thieves, bandits, and human traffickers of those prostitutes to welcome the new year."

In the East Borough, every woman, who didn't work in the factories, had to be skilled or aggressive enough in order to survive.

Freja answered briskly, "Alright."

Her mind was already on the desk and vocabulary notebook next door.

Liv had just opened the door when she stumbled and fell to the floor.

Cough! Cough! Cough! She broke into a violent coughing fit as her face flushed red, with every joint in her body experiencing an unbearable ache.

Freja ran over in panic and squatted beside her.

"Mother, what's wrong with you? Mother, what's wrong with you?"

"It's nothing. Cough, I'm fine." Liv began to find it harder to breathe.

"No, you're sick—sick! I'll take you to the hospital immediately!" Freja tried to help her mother up.

"It's too expensive, too… expensive. Cough—Let's go to a charity hospital. A charity hospital, I can wait. It's n-not a big problem." Liv gasped a response.

Freja burst into tears and her vision blurred rapidly.

But at that moment, she felt her lungs burn, and her body went limp as she fell to the ground with Liv.

"What's the matter with you, Freja? Cough! You're sick too?" Liv shouted anxiously. "There's money, cough—in the closet, cough—in the hole in the wall. You have to be quick. Go to the hospital! Get a good—a good doctor!"

Freja tried to say something, but not a sound came out from her mouth. Her eyes slanted up to the door beside her.

It was their bedroom, their bunk beds. On top of it was her favorite table and her vocabulary notebook.

Her body suddenly began to twitch.

Liv's coughing stopped.

Within the public elementary school at the edge of East Borough, the fog still wasn't thick yet, but many students had already started to cough.

The experienced teacher on duty immediately ordered, "Quick, to the cathedral. We need to head for the cathedral next door!"

Daisy stood up in a panic and ran with the crowd to the cathedral next to the school.

Suddenly, her heart palpitated as she felt the horror of losing something important.

…Mother… Freja. Daisy turned her head sharply, wanting to rush home against the crowd.

However, she was stopped. She was caught by her teachers and forcibly dragged towards the cathedral.

[image]

Daisy struggled and screamed at the top of her lungs, "Mother! Freja!

"Mother! Freja!"

†

In East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district, the old or those with latent ailments collapsed in the fog in succession like felled trees, while those who came into contact with them felt as if they had been infected by the plague. They died quickly, and even the able-bodied adults and children also felt slightly unwell.

In their eyes, the light yellow and iron-black fog was like the descent of Death.

On the Tuesday of the last week in 1349, Backlund was shrouded in smog.

†

In the corner of the hall, Klein pressed himself against the stone wall so that he wouldn't be discovered by Mr. A.

Soon, he heard muffled groans and could smell the scent of flesh and blood.

"Give up your lives for the Lord," Mr. A's voice suddenly sounded.

Thud. Thud. The sound of figures collapsing entered Klein's ears, and a strong spirituality fluctuation appeared and constantly reverberated.

Mr. A sacrificed his four attendants? Just as this thought appeared in Klein's mind, illusory layers of weeping sounds could be heard. Some of them were calling out for their mothers, others coughing violently, and some moaning in pain.

As half of an expert at mysticism, Klein seemed to see a series of disgruntled and transparent figures entering the ritual one after another, followed by the years of numbness, despair, pain, and resentment from the dock area, factory district, and East Borough.

Has it officially begun? Klein closed his eyes and leaned his back against the wall, his right hand clenching and relaxing.

For him, the best thing to do at this moment was to slip out of the hall and flee into the distance while Mr. A was concentrating on the ritual.

His right hand loosened and tightened before relaxing many times in a row.

Seven or eight seconds later, Klein opened his eyes, the corners of his mouth curling upwards in an exaggerated manner.

He reached out his hand to grab the revolver, turned around abruptly, and dashed out.

Dressed in his black double-breasted frock coat, he raised his right hand and aimed at the altar.

Chapter 477 - The Many Considerations of The Fool

◆ ◆ ◆

The first thing Klein saw was the altar, which was surrounded by layers of light, and the tall, thin figure standing in it.

The figure took off its hood, revealing a beautiful, devilishly feminine face, with a left chest, shoulders, abdomen, and thighs all covered in squirming, sticky, disgusting flesh and blood.

His surroundings were filled with illusory, transparent shadows that brimmed with feelings such as numbness, despair, pain, and depression.

Beyond the altar, the four figures which were praying had fallen. Their skin was shriveled, and their bones were tightly wrapped, like corpses that had been eroded for many years.

At the top of the hall, rays of light pierced through the air, quickly entering the altar through the stone pillars, floor, and air that were filled with symbols and magic labels.

As soon as Klein emerged from his hiding place, Mr. A opened his eyes and looked in his direction.

His pupils were dyed with blood, and an extreme madness was contained within his cold eyes.

If it were any other Beyonder, they would've subconsciously looked away, not daring to look him in the eye. But Klein, who had faced the

Eternal Blazing Sun and met Blasphemer Amon, wasn't afraid of this. Calmly pulling the trigger, he sent a silver demon-hunting bullet engraved with many patterns flying towards the altar.

Witnessing this scene, Mr. A subconsciously wanted to raise his hand, but he stopped in the end. He watched indifferently as the silver bullet drilled into the layer of light surrounding the altar.

Silently, the patterned demon-hunting bullet melted and disappeared under the layers of radiance, engulfed in untold resentment and negative emotions.

In the end, it completely disintegrated, leaving not a single trace of it behind.

Klein's pupils shrank as he shot the rest of the revolver's bullets. The pale golden purifying bullets and the bronze exorcism bullets shot out, piercing through the radiant barrier one after another.

However, they disintegrated in the same way and disappeared without creating the slightest ripple.

Mr. A laughed hoarsely.

"It's no use, puny worm. The ritual has already officially begun, and with your strength, it cannot be broken or interrupted. Even if you're a Sequence 5 Beyonder!

"But you're also fortunate. You will live to witness the coming of our Lord, and be integrated into his body."

With that, Mr. A. ignored Klein and closed his eyes again, as if he was indeed nothing but a puny worm.

The Shepherd raised his hands in a gesture of open arms and shouted out in ancient Hermes, "The Lord that created everything;

"The Lord who reigns behind the curtain of shadows;

"The degenerate nature of all living things.

"Your devout believers pray for your coming;

"I am willing to offer my body as a vessel to bear the burden of your great will!"

Amidst the prayers, a light from an unknown source appeared above Mr. A's head, completely enveloping him.

The grievances and negative emotions that were gathered around Mr. A surged into his body like a tidal wave.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein snapped his fingers repeatedly and used Flame Controlling, trying his best to attack the altar, but they still couldn't resist being disintegrated against the barrier of light.

What can I do? All my other mystical items are above the gray fog. To take them out, I need to hold a ritual, which would waste at least a minute or two, and a body without protection would be very dangerous… What should I do? Klein rationally stopped his attempts and stood there, his mind racing.

Furthermore, whether it was the Sun Brooch, the Biological Poison Bottle, the All-Black Eye, or the Black Emperor card that raised his level, none of them seemed capable of breaking through the altar's barrier!

Is waiting for Miss Justice's call for reinforcements the only thing I can do? Or do I just watch helplessly as the True Creator descends? Klein tensed up, his thoughts rapidly flying through his mind. He quickly considered the corresponding strategies.

As he considered each and every item on his body, his palms unconsciously broke out in cold sweat.

Suddenly, he thought of something!

Without having time to think about the consequences, he reached into his pocket and grabbed something that felt metallic.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein took a few steps forward, jerked his arm hard, and threw the object in his palm at the altar.

With a flash of bronze, the object entered the barrier of light.

It was an ancient, simple key.

It was the Master Key.

Within the barrier of light, the brass Master Key began to decompose and melt.

[image]

And when its outer shell disappeared, the curse that was hidden within it appeared, connecting to the unknown area where Mr. Door was.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey stood by the full-length window and worriedly looked into the distance.

She saw that the fog on the horizon was gradually thickening, turning a pale yellow that was dyed iron-black as it slowly spread in her location.

“There’s something wrong with that.” The huge golden retriever, Susie, sat beside her and also looked at the commonly seen haze.

Yes, I hope it can be stopped in time… Audrey didn’t know what the fog represented. She silently prayed to the Goddess and Mr. Fool that “They” wouldn’t let the Primordial Demoness descend.

Suddenly, she noticed that the branches outside the window were beginning to shake and the glass was slightly rattling.

A wind is coming… Audrey felt inexplicably happy.

Cherwood Borough, Holy Wind Cathedral.

Terrifying storms that were visible to the naked eye suddenly appeared outside of it, and then they surged towards the east in an unimaginable hurricane.

Whoosh!

The thick, accumulated fog was blown away, and the rich yellow and iron-black colors quickly faded away.

Whoosh!

Dried branches fell to the ground as dust and dirt rose into the air, following the fog into the distance.

Whoosh!

Many of the pedestrians had their hats separate from their heads, and their bodies swayed so much that they had to hold onto trees or walls.

The sailors in the dock area felt as though they had returned to the port city and were witnessing a typhoon.

The smoke in East Borough and the factory district thinned, and the healthy population felt relieved of their slight discomfort.

Boom! Boom!

Lightning leaped and thunder rumbled.

They soon subsided, and a downpour began to cleanse the land.

“The Church of Storms reacted rather quickly this time… It also has to do with us bringing the operation forward and not being fully prepared… Heh heh, those in the middle-class and the tycoons would've shared the same fate in this Great Smog as the commoners if it wasn't for the respective protection they received. They would all be lambs waiting to be slaughtered…" Lady Despair sat on a rental carriage as she leisurely heard the pattering of the rain on the glass windows.

Even though her plans had been ruined in a timely manner, the haze from before had caused more than 20,000 deaths according to her calculations. Furthermore, there would be the subsequent spread of the plague.

With this, I've pretty much digested most of my potion, but this is just a benefit I received as a matter of convenience… With large numbers of the population being wiped out, all this points to the Aurora Order and to the True Creator; no one could guess what the royal family really plans on doing… It's time I leave, along with Trissy… Lady Despair thought while in a good mood.

Her whereabouts were kept secretive, and she had taken care of everything beforehand; therefore, she didn't have to worry about being surrounded by Backlund's demigods at all.

By the time they found traces of her, she would already be far away from the city!

Just as the Lady Despair was about to leave the carriage, her vision blurred and she saw a figure appear before her.

The figure sat across her. It was a young woman in a hooded classical robe, with black eyes and hair, and a beautiful but dull face.

†

After throwing out the Master Key, Klein held Azik's copper whistle, then he held his breath and waited for the results.

If things failed to develop as he imagined, with the altar's barrier remaining intact, he planned on using Azik's copper whistle to see if he could get any help from the messenger.

If that still failed, he would go above the gray fog and use all the items like the Black Emperor card. He had to attempt every possibility until the very last second!

At this very moment, there was no crimson moon, let alone a clear full moon since it was afternoon. Therefore, Klein didn't have enough confidence in the curse contained within the Master Key, and he only hoped that the disintegration effects of the altar's barrier would threaten its very existence and cause it to react instinctively, such as communicating with Mr. Door in reverse and transmitting its cry for help to "Him."

In just a second or two, Klein saw the Master Key disintegrate into the smallest particles of light and an illusory, distorted crimson.

The crimson quickly faded as it struggled and then suddenly exploded!

In an instant, Klein lost his sense of hearing. He saw the countless figures formed from resentment and indignation all raise their heads and scream.

They rapidly transformed, tinged with a blackish-green, and grew a second skull, a third eye, or even a fifth leg…

They converged into a torrent and surged into Mr. A's body.

Mr. A suddenly opened his eyes, shock and disbelief evident amidst his indifferent blood-red eyes.

Soon after, the radiant layer of light surrounding the altar warped and collapsed.

Boom!

A huge explosion spread out from the center of the altar, setting off a terrifying storm.

Crack! The four thick stone pillars closest to the blast instantly crumbled, and the distant Klein only had enough time to duck and roll before he was sent flying by the shockwave.

Bam!

He hit the wall, flattened into a thin sheet of paper.

The subsequent wind quickly tore apart that thin piece of paper, scattering it in every direction.

Klein himself appeared in the corner, using the walls to withstand the ensuing shockwave.

The destruction caused by the Master Key exceeded his imagination!

The curse that had been forcibly melted away really did have an instinctive reaction, as it transmitted Mr. Door's roar, and the voice of this forsaken entity, who was at least at the level of an angel, contaminated the resentment and numbed the despair needed for the ritual. As a result, the altar lost its balance and embarked on a path of self-destruction!

The moment the blast calmed down a little, Klein rushed out to confirm the results.

The illusionary figure and oppressive feeling in the air had already vanished, leaving behind scattered remnants of the altar.

Mr. A had his body leaning forward as he knelt by a collapsed pillar. He was missing an arm, half a face, and a number of organs. His remaining eye was filled with bone-deep hatred.

However, his wounds were quickly covered with squirming flesh.

After that single glance, Klein didn't hesitate to run.

For him, he had achieved the ultimate goal of foiling the True Creator’s descent. If he didn’t leave now, was he, a Sequence 6, going to share a dinner with the Shepherd, Mr. A, to welcome the new year?

Chapter 478 - Grade 0 Sealed Artifact in Operation

◆

The moment she saw the stranger appear in front of her, Lady Despair materialized a sharp, crystalline ice spear and threw it at her target.

Using the force of the recoil, she attempted to break through the back of the carriage and into the street.

With regards to this sudden turn of events, she was puzzled at this strange enemy who suddenly appeared. On the contrary, she was very confused and perplexed as to how someone could find her concealed self so quickly. It was no less difficult than destroying a large city, or teleporting directly from Backlund to the Southern Continent of East Balam.

But as a Sequence 4 Demoness of Despair, she had developed herself one step at a time from when she was an Assassin. She knew that she couldn't afford to be distracted or spout nonsense at such critical moments. It wasn't too late to think about all these matters later.

Therefore, she chose to attack directly and wanted to take the opportunity to leave.

She could already imagine how the strange woman with black hair and eyes would be frozen in the layers of sparkling light left in the frosty wake of the ice spear's trajectory. She would have to struggle to break through the obstruction in order to have the strength to chase after her.

By then, she definitely would've escaped from the street and blended into the crowd.

However, the scene she was looking forward to didn't appear. As soon as the crystalline ice spear left her hand, it silently disappeared into thin air, its whereabouts were completely unknown.

Angel! The Demoness of Despair's eyes narrowed as black flames suddenly surged from her body, spreading ailments in a bid to ignite everything around her and causing a large-scale fire.

At that moment, her body trembled in a strange manner, and she froze on the spot.

She saw her left hand disappear, one centimeter at a time, as it rapidly spread upward in an unstoppable fashion.

In her eyes, the beautiful and lifeless eyes of the woman opposite her were dark and serene, as if there was a pure darkness concealed within.

"You aren't! You are…"

The Demoness of Despair's words came to an abrupt halt. Her entire body was like a sketch that had been quietly erased with an eraser, leaving no trace behind.

Her final gaze was filled with fear and despair. The seat she previously occupied was empty, as though she had never sat in it before.

The beautiful woman with the lifeless expression pulled the hood of her classical robe, and her lips moved almost imperceptibly as her figure instantly disappeared.

†

On the outskirts of Empress Borough. On a trackless public carriage.

Triss was sitting quietly in the corner, wearing a veiled hat.

She didn’t flee with the help of the river by going straight to the Tussock River, nor did she head for the nearest railroad to catch a train, as everyone thought she would.

Her choice was to return to Backlund.

Only in this city with a population of over five million, with all sorts of hidden factions and numerous Beyonders, would they be able to help her escape the subsequent pursuit of the Demoness Sect!

At this moment, she felt tense, mentally, constantly wary of the terrifying old butler, Funkel.

Suddenly, her head spun.

When her vision returned to normal, she found herself having magically left the public carriage and was standing on the muddy road outside.

Trissy’s pupils contracted rapidly as she looked around cautiously.

Then, she saw a black-hooded figure in a classical robe, and she noticed the black eyes hidden in the shadows.

For some reason, it was as if Trissy had returned to being an infant, so weak to the point that she couldn’t put up any resistance at all.

Cold sweat dripped from her forehead, and although her legs were trembling violently, she was unable to move.

This is the scariest enemy I’ve ever faced… Even the high-ranking Demoness I previously met didn’t give me such a feeling… Am I going to die here… Is this finally going to end after I persisted in escaping despite failing so many times… A deep sense of despair and uncontrollable sadness filled Trissy’s heart, making her feel as if she had plunged into her deepest nightmare.

Suddenly, a dim blue light flashed before her eyes, removing her “curse” of being unable to move.

Trissy looked forward again, but there was no longer any traces of that extremely terrifying figure. Everything that happened just now seemed like the most realistic illusion.

But when Trissy lowered her head, she was surprised to find that the sapphire ring on her left pinky had somehow shattered, losing all of its brilliance.

Crack. Crack. Crack. The remains of the ring and the gem fell off one after another.

†

Klein dodged and rolled around the collapsed stone pillar and the heavily injured Mr. A, who was in the process of healing, and he ran for the entrance opposite him.

As for the characteristic fragments which were slowly gathering from the remains of the Master Key, he didn't even take a glance at them, afraid that he would give Mr. A enough time to stop him.

He was well aware that even if he had all his mystical items and was well-prepared, he wouldn't necessarily be a match for the Shepherd, not to mention the fact that he was only equipped with Azik's copper whistle and three types of Beyonder bullets. He didn't even have a single match left.

Even though Mr. A was seriously injured, Klein didn't dare to take the risk. He had heard that the Rose Bishop, the Sequence prior to Shepherd, was extremely proficient in flesh magic. Its healing ability was in no way weaker to his ability of transferring his wounds.

Creak!

He pulled open the heavy door.

The natural light outside shone in, and the clouds in the sky were tinged with a thin yellow, and the sun was pale and dim.

Klein rushed out and found that he was in the middle of a mountain. He was surrounded by towering mountains that made the area extremely hidden.

Tap. Tap. Tap. He frantically ran and wasn't even taking the mountain trail. Instead, with his skills as a Clown, he ran down the steep slope, occasionally tumbling, and occasionally swinging up with the help of trees.

Splash!

He heard the crashing of the river. It was up ahead, just below him!

But at that moment, a strong gust of wind blew over, sweeping towards his back.

Klein made a prompt decision. His knees buckled and he rolled to the side.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

The location where he was originally standing and the direction he was moving in had a deep ravine carved out by the wind blades.

Mr. A dropped out of the wind, his body still draped with a cape squirming with fresh blood.

He pointed with his finger, and immediately, chunks of flesh flew out and swelled up in midair before suddenly exploding.

Boom!

Drops of blood and bits of flesh flew in every direction as Klein cartwheeled with his hands, dodging most of it before finding shelter behind a huge tree.

The projectiles bored bloody holes through the huge tree. Traces of corrosion began spreading in every direction from the affected area.

Back when Klein was running, he had already loaded his revolver. He was about to raise his hand and shoot Mr. A in the eyes when he saw a deep darkness appear within them.

All of a sudden, Klein knew that, although the scenery around him hadn't changed at all, he had been forcefully dragged into a dream.

He had once killed a Nightmare, a Nightmare at least… Klein maintained his consciousness and saw Mr. A phase to his side in a manner inconsistent with logic, turning into a blood-red blanket that enveloped him in a manner that couldn't be escaped from.

You want to rely on nightmares to scare me to the point of stopping my heart? A thought flashed in Klein's mind and he responded.

This was his dream. The lucid him could conjure anything!

Thus, a pure and dazzling golden sun appeared. Clear and blazing flames ignited everything in its surroundings in an instant.

Klein imagined the scene when he first saw the Eternal Blazing Sun during the dream divination!

Almost at the same time, he left the dream and heard a muffled grunt.

Mr. A took a step back, two streams of blood running from the tip of his nose.

The robe formed from flesh and blood began to slowly flow as though it was melting.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers and ignited the trees about thirty or forty meters away.

Beneath his feet, the long-withered weeds caught on fire, and the soaring flames enveloped his body.

Mr. A's originally unmanly beautiful face suddenly turned even more beautiful and feminine. A crystalline and weightless ice spear materialized in his hand as he threw it towards the burning trees a few dozen meters away.

As soon as Klein jumped out of the flames, his pupils reflected the transparent tip of the spear.

The tip of the spear became bigger and clearer, filling his eyes.

Klein threw himself to the side as his body became covered with a thin layer of frost.

The transparent spear then extinguished the flames, allowing the thick layer of ice to quickly spread in every direction.

Klein, who was still in midair, suddenly curled up into a ball, turning his body upside down.

He stretched out his left hand and lightly pressed on the layer of ice. He once again rose into the air and left the cold world. However, the skin on his palm was frozen at the point of contact; this resulted in him tearing off his skin with a ripping sound.

Rolling to his feet, Klein reached into his pocket and pulled out a self-made Slumber Charm.

As he was about to say the incantation, his nose suddenly started to itch and he sneezed.

Achoo! Achoo! Achoo!

His head ached and he kept sneezing, leaving him with no strength to fight back.

I fell sick? I became infected by some sort of ailment? The moment

Klein realized this, he felt countless threads that were difficult to be seen by the naked eye twirl around him, wrapping him up like a mummy in a certain sense.

He wasn't unfamiliar with this kind of experience. He knew that this was the Beyonder powers of a Demoness of Pleasure.

Back then, he had relied on the use of charms to cause all parties to fall into a deep slumber. Then, relying on his uniqueness, he escaped the effects of the charm. But now, Mr. A had maintained a distance of about 20 meters.

However, Klein was no longer just a Clown. The fingers he could still move snapped and made a crisp snapping sound!

In an instant, all the "spider silk" around him was ignited, as if it had turned into a giant torch.

Klein had just jumped out of the scarlet flames when he started sneezing again, which was then followed by a fit of violent coughing. This automatically prevented the use of many of his Beyonder powers.

At this moment, the feminine gentleness of Mr. A's face disappeared, adding a little more dignity to his loftiness.

He stretched out his right hand and clenched it lightly. Klein suddenly had an inkling that if he ran, he would only be running in circles.

Mr. A, who was wearing a blood-red robe, revealed a cruel smile. An ancient book that was transparent and illusory appeared in front of him.

An ethereal, high-pitched voice rang out, "I came, I saw, I record."

Achoo! Cough! Cough!

Klein wanted to hide, but he was powerless. At that moment, he experienced, in an unprecedented manner, the power of a Shepherd. It was truly worthy of being called the most comprehensive, most flawless, and most powerful Beyonder Sequence under the level of a demigod! Even if he hadn’t made any preparations, with many mystical items being unusable, for him to be suppressed to such a state without being able to fight back, it implied that there were many problems.

Chapter 479 - The Inexplicable Smile

◆

The old butler, Funkel, was fleeing across a barren field in the wilderness.

He had lost his hat, his neatly combed gray hair hung in an unkempt manner, and the outer layer of his clothes were muddy.

Huff. Puff… He paused for a moment, panting as he looked behind him. He felt slightly more at ease when he realized that there was no one around.

However, when he turned his head and was about to change direction, he discovered that a figure had appeared in front of him.

The figure wore a hooded, classical robe; its face was dull and expressionless while its black eyes were hidden in the shadows.

Funkel's pupils constricted. He opened his mouth and tried to say a word in ancient Hermes, but he was surprised to find his nose disappearing and his voice gone.

A look of despair suddenly appeared on his face. Then, like a stain in the void, his entire body was seemingly wiped clean with a cloth, and not a single trace was left behind.

†

Achoo! Achoo! Cough! Cough!

In the face of Mr. A's looming attack that spelled certain death, Klein was infected by an illness. His headache and fever made it difficult to use Flame Controlling or Flaming Jump.

At that moment, he couldn't even produce Air Bullets.

Fear of the unknown took over his mind. The Clown's intuition for danger "saw" himself split into the smallest particles of light, perhaps taking away any chance of him reviving.

In an instant, Klein reached into his pocket and took hold of an object.

This was his answer to the most dangerous situation he could think of ahead of time!

No matter what kind of situation he was suddenly placed in, a Magician had to be prepared to a certain extent, so that he wouldn't panic in the middle of a battle.

Klein took out Azik's copper whistle, brought it to his mouth, and blew hard over the sneezing and coughing!

Without any stirring motions, he saw, through his Spirit Vision, a geyser of white bones spewing out as they rapidly sketched out the appearance of a huge messenger with black flames burning in its eye sockets.

And at that moment, the pages in the book in front of Mr. A stopped flipping, and the distant voice suddenly came to a halt.

A misty green brilliance surged out, and the bone messenger, that was almost four meters tall, cracked and crumbled into countless specks of pure light.

Behind it, the force that had caused Klein to go in circles was the first to crumble. The figure in the black double-breasted frock coat was then enveloped, turning into a statue made of yellow sand which was blown away by the wind.

However, the scattered sand were white spots, as if they were shreds of paper that had been torn to the limit.

Klein's figure appeared on the other end, genuflecting and coughing uncontrollably.

If it wasn't for the skeleton messenger blocking the blow for him, then he wouldn't have been able to suppress his ailments and use Paper Figurine Substitute!

And after that ordeal, his illness worsened to the point of him losing almost all forms of resistance.

At that moment, Mr. A, who had failed in his fatal blow, suddenly coughed in a way more violent manner than Klein.

He fell to the ground in pain, blood frothing at the corners of his mouth.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

He coughed out a pile of fragmented organs and squirming flesh. Then, with great difficulty, he opened his mouth and attempted to lick them back into his mouth to forcefully consume them.

What's going on? Klein was stunned for a moment.

But that didn't stop him from resisting a cough, raising his right hand, and aiming the revolver at Mr. A's head.

At this moment, he vaguely understood something—while Mr. A's injuries could be treated with his flesh and blood magic, the impact and backlash on his mind and spirituality couldn't be nullified through this method.

Mr. A should've switched to another Beyonder power to slowly heal the damage to his Spirit Body, but he was driven by hatred. He forcefully suppressed his injuries and chased after Klein; thus, after continuously using the Beyonder powers that exceeded what his body could bear, his situation worsened and the latent problems flared up.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein fired all the bullets in the revolver. Bronze, pale gold, and silver beams of light quickly crossed the short distance between the two of them.

Unfortunately, he was unable to control his sneezing and coughing during the process. The bullets didn't all hit Mr. A, with only two of them hitting Mr. A, and one of them drilling through his forehead and the other into his torso.

Sizzle!

A sizzling sound rang out, but Mr. A's head seemed to be boneless—it was just a combination of a pile of rotten flesh. This caused the pale golden-colored bullet to sink deep into his body. It quickly came to a stop and failed to deal lethal damage. All it did was emit a golden radiance of sunshine.

Mr. A lifted his neck, and the flesh around the hole in his head writhed wildly.

He wasn't dead, not even seriously injured.

He was once the tenacious Rose Bishop!

Seeing this, Klein made up his mind. He turned around and ran, no longer making any attempts to attack. As for Mr. A, he was panting, and when he lowered his head again, he licked the bits of fragmented flesh and organs he had coughed up.

Amidst the wheezing and coughing, Klein ran in random directions, occasionally rolling.

Finally, he fled to the edge of a cliff which was over fifty meters away.

Beneath the cliff, the slightly turbid Tussock River surged incessantly. It was wide but calm.

Klein didn't hesitate and put strength into his legs and jumped.

He plummeted, feeling the weightlessness of a free fall.

His body tore through the air as he attempted to adjust his posture in midair, transforming into a standard diving motion.

Cough! Achoo!

His ailment stopped his three and a half flips midway, and the positioning of his body and palms failed to be in the correct stance.

With a splashing sound, he struck the water surface, reducing into a thin piece of white paper.

The paper figurine quickly became moist, half sinking and half floating.

At the bottom of the river not far away, Klein's figure formed as it shivered a little.

His clothes were already soaked, as were the remaining paper and bills in his wallet.

After distancing myself from Mr. A, the ailment has abated… Klein thought with a lingering sense of fear.

If his coughing and sneezing hadn't subsided at the last minute, he wouldn't have even had the time to use Paper Figurine Substitutes, and he would've suffered internal bleeding and instantly died. Of course, if he died in such a manner, he felt that he had a chance of being resurrected.

While kicking his legs to keep himself afloat, Klein created an invisible, hollow tube in his mouth, allowing it to rise out of the water and bring him fresh air.

This was the Underwater Breathing performance of a Magician!

Klein sucked in with his mouth and blew out through his nose, not letting the turbid gas he breathed out pollute the pipe by directly entering the water.

At the same time, he stealthily made his way to the shore, hoping to avoid Mr. A's subsequent pursuit.

Unfortunately, this isn't a city. The powers of a Faceless cannot be used effectively. Otherwise, once I break away, Mr A definitely wouldn't be able to find me… While swimming, Klein instinctively had this thought.

This resulted in him thinking of a problem, and that was the wind-controlling Beyonder power Mr. A previously had.

Generally speaking, this belongs to the pathway of the Lord of the Storms… For this pathway, apart from the wind, there's also water, which means they're especially effective for underwater activities… Underwater activities… Shepherd is so all-rounded and terrifying! Klein's heart almost stopped beating as the thought flashed through his mind.

He suddenly swam upstream, no longer concealing himself!

As soon as he emerged from the water and approached the shore, he saw Mr. A's devilishly beautiful face, covered with fish scales and gaping gills.

Mr. A, who was floating on the water surface in his bright red robe, had the corners of his mouth curled up. His eyes were filled with true hatred.

Fight! I can only fight! I'll try to hold out until the Church's reinforcements arrive or for Mr. Azik to escape his predicament! Without hesitation, Klein, who had gained reprieve from his ailments, raised his right hand, ready to snap his fingers.

At this moment, the two of them simultaneously looked at the sky as though it was an instinctive reaction.

A beautiful feminine figure was quickly outlined.

The figure was hooded and in a dark robe, its eyes looking blankly at Mr. A.

Then, Klein saw Mr. A being quickly erased as though he had become a pencil drawing, wiped out rapidly with an eraser, leaving nothing but his look of indignation and despair amidst the blankness and madness etched into his mind that was the only audience present.

This… What kind of level is this!? What kind of strength is this! The moment Klein thought about it, he saw the figure turn to look at him.

It was a beautiful face, but it didn't have the slightest expression. Its black eyes were deep and dark, devoid of spirituality.

Just when Klein's heart was beating rapidly, thinking that he would disappear without a trace, without a clue as to whether he could be resurrected, the corners of the woman's mouth slowly lifted into a smile.

A smile? Klein was stunned, wondering if he was dreaming.

Before he could regain his senses, the figure instantly faded and disappeared from where he was. The sound of water splashing around him echoed in the air.

Puzzled, Klein swam to the shore and got out of the water. Looking around, he found that this place was unusually remote. There were no roads or living people. Only the slightly turbid river water continued flowing in an unchanging manner.

It ended just like that? Mr. A died just like that? Who was that lady just now? She was so strong that Mr. A didn't even have time to scream… And she smiled at me. Smiled… Maybe it's a "She?" However, other than figures at the level of the Pope, how could there be angels walking on the ground from the three Churches. Furthermore, a figure on the level of Pope obviously wouldn't be in Backlund… Klein couldn't believe that he was out of the danger zone.

After a moment of contemplation, he finally felt a sense of reality.

She should be a powerhouse sent by the Churches. She arrived in time and successfully saved me.

If I hadn't informed Miss Justice ahead of time, then they might not have taken such timely action. There would've been a high chance of me dying at Mr. A's hands, with the possibility of resurrection being a question…

Yes, it also has to do with me persisting on, dragging on the battle all the way until this moment.

Not bad at all…

With a sigh of relief, Klein began to look for a way out.

†

"Exile!"

The man with the gold mask pointed at Azik Eggers and threw his figure into the void, a spot no one knew.

Then, he turned around to face Ince Zangwill, who was looking at him with a frown.

"There's no time, we can't finish him off that quickly! We have to hide this area as quickly as possible. Do you want the Church to discover our secret?" The man with the gold mask growled angrily.

Ince Zangwill put away his doubts, nodded, turned to 0-08 which had stopped writing, and grabbed it.

His figure was faltering somewhat, and by his legs were piled pants that had nearly been ripped apart in the middle of the battle.

†

Inside Red Rose Manor, Prince Edessak sat by the full-length windows with an abnormally vacant look in his eyes.

“Your Highness, please hurry.” A voice sounded beside him.

Edessak’s eyes turned spirited as he took a breath, picked up the revolver on the table, and pressed it against his temple. Inside it was a bullet that obliterated Spirit Bodies.

He turned his head and looked longingly out at the golf course and the strolling horses.

Bang!

He pulled the trigger.

Chapter 480 - Rewards for Honesty

In the hall where the stone pillars had collapsed, a group of Nighthawks wearing black trench coats and silk hats appeared around the altar. The person leading the team was the Archbishop of the Church of Evernight, Saint Anthony Stevenson.

“It was disrupted by someone?” he muttered without stopping and directly walked to the stone door that led to the interior.

Rich darkness surfaced as the stone door silently opened. Saint Anthony led some of the Nighthawks in as they delved deeper.

Along the way, they didn’t discover a single guard or anything of value. It was as if this place had been forcefully swept clean.

Finally, they reached a room in the deepest recesses, but there was nothing there but walls and stone pillars. The blue door of light which was there when Klein left was long gone.

The lanterns in the Nighthawks’ hands suddenly lost their light, and darkness enveloped the room.

When everything returned to normal, they found that the surrounding walls had somehow melted away. However, there were no hidden doors or tunnels behind them. It was either a thick layer of mud and rocks or the corridor they came from.

Saint Anthony was silent for more than ten seconds before saying, “Try divination.

“Search the vicinity.”

†

Achoo!

Walking through the pathless cliffs and forest, Klein was saddened to realize that he had apparently really fallen sick.

The residual effects of Mr. A’s Beyonder powers, combined with the fact that he was drenched during winter, gave him the shameful cold.

However, he didn’t dare to stop to collect dry twigs to light a fire and dry his clothes and money. He was afraid that the Beyonders of the Church would find him.

Even though he had already gained the endorsement of Stanton Isengard from the Machinery Hivemind and obtained the status of a semi-official, this was a matter involving the Primordial Demoness’s awakening and the True Creator’s descent—two cases of the highest order. Therefore, he was bound to be subjected to rigorous investigations, have tea sessions with the Machinery Hivemind, Mandated Punishers, and Nighthawks to recount the whole process actively or passively.

There were two major pitfalls to this. One was that he knew people inside the Nighthawks, and although Detective Sherlock Moriarty looked quite different from the martyred Klein Moretti, making it impossible to identify him via photographs, he had zero confidence if things were done face to face. Two, because of similar pathways, the Church of Evernight wasn’t very friendly to people and things related to Death. Back in the Pale Era at the end of the Fourth Epoch, Death had fallen under the siege of the seven gods, and Sherlock Moriarty had “summoned” a powerful descendant of Death at the critical moment. This wasn’t a problem that could be explained away easily.

That high-level powerhouse was rushing to deal with Ince Zangwill and

0-08, so she didn't have time to bother with a friendly small fry like me. However, I can't be careless as a result. I should flee when it's necessary!

Yes, I can write to the Machinery Hivemind when I have a chance, stating the second reason as to why I have to temporarily leave Backlund. This way, I might still have a chance to work with them in the future. Of course, I have to secretly observe to see if the Machinery Hivemind has any strong enmity towards any descendants of Death… I wonder how Mr. Azik is doing…

Heh heh, perhaps Sherlock Moriarty might be dead in the official announcement. He sure lived up to his name and identity…

As quickly as possible, Klein tried to find a small town and blend in with the crowd while enduring the alternating fever and cold.

Only in human society could the Faceless's powers be fully expressed.

The woman who was working with Mr. A, uh—she should be a Demoness. She went to East Borough… From the looks of the ritual, there must've been a large number of deaths over there. I wonder… With the spiritual intuition of a Seer, Klein's heart suddenly felt heavy.

At this moment, all the colors in front of his eyes turned saturated, as if they had been sprinkled with oil by a deity.

The feeling was over instantly, and Klein found himself far away from where he had been, with the bronze-skinned, soft-featured Azik Eggers appearing next to him.

"Mr. Azik, are you unhurt?" He couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief.

"I am," Azik replied frankly before smiling, "but to an Undying, this isn't a big problem."

Klein calmed down and asked, "What happened to Ince Zangwill and 0-08?"

"Ince Zangwill is still alive, and he still wields that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact," Azik said as he walked.

Klein tried hard to follow him as he couldn't help but sigh.

"What a pity."

"Don't worry about it; he was severely injured," Azik solemnly said. "And most importantly, we know that he was secretly cooperating with the royal family, so we don't have to worry about not being able to find him in the future. This way, you can focus on improving yourself, and I can also try to go to a few places that I've recalled, to awaken more memories. Heh heh, your luck isn't bad. I've been secretly observing the people from MI9 and the royal family to confirm Ince Zangwill's whereabouts. One of the most important places was Red Rose Manor, so I've always been wandering around the area. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to rush over to save you so quickly."

Klein immediately felt a little awkward when this was mentioned.

"Mr. Azik, aren't you puzzled as to why I didn't die?"

"I often wake up after entering a coffin as well. This is something that I previously recalled," Azik said with a smile, completely unfazed by the matter. "And in my incomplete memory, although it's rare in others, it's not without precedent."

He often wakes up after entering a coffin… Often? Klein suddenly realized that the problems that he was worried about were nothing in the eyes of a real powerhouse.

As expected of an Undying of the Death pathway… Well, Mr. Azik had mentioned that he had been in this Sequence for a long time, which means that he has long advanced… Klein thought for a moment, then he asked with concern, "Mr. Azik, Would Ince Zangwill discover that I'm Klein Moretti?"

He was afraid that Ince Zangwill would take revenge on Benson and

Melissa.

“Unlikely. At most, he would believe that we knew each other long ago, or that you’re my… informant, if we use the terms that the police uses.” Azik recalled and said, “But that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact might notice it, but you don’t have to worry.”

“Why?” Klein pressed.

It was unknown what Azik had remembered, but his expression suddenly turned strange. It was as if he wanted to laugh, but at the same time, he felt horrified.

“That Grade 0 Sealed Artifact will keep attempting to write down the death of its owner. This is likely to be intrinsic to it and cannot be changed. Therefore, I doubt it would actively divulge such important information that can put Ince Zangwill at a tremendous advantage during such a critical moment—unless it involves something that it cannot avoid or explain.”

Seeing that Mr. Azik was so sure about it while producing such strong justifications, Klein exhaled. It was as if he had recovered a little from the cold.

Seeing this, Azik added, “It’s best if you leave Backlund for the time being. Ince Zangwill might use that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact to seek revenge again, using your fake name.

“As long as you aren’t in Backlund, it should be fine. That Grade 0 Sealed Artifact’s sphere of influence doesn’t exceed a large city.”

Just as I had predicted, there’s a limit to its sphere of influence… Otherwise, Ince Zangwill could’ve easily hidden in a small town in the Southern Continent and leisurely arrange the fates of all his targets without having to worry about anyone finding him… Klein asked after some deliberation, “A short trip to Backlund for a day or half a day is fine, right? With the premise that I’ve changed my identity and looks.”

With that, he rubbed his face, instantly reverting back to his appearance back in Tingen.

Azik's eyebrows twitched, and he nodded.

"It's fine."

He turned his head and looked into the distance at the spot that he could no longer see.

"It seems like I've been targeted by a powerful existence of the Church of Evernight. It's best if you don't stay by my side, or you might be implicated. Heh heh, they're very interested in the Beyonder characteristics related to Death."

"Yes, I plan on heading out to sea. While I digest my potion, I'll be seeking mermaids. It's a condition for my advancement," Klein explained his plan.

Azik tilted his head.

"Mermaids? Could a mermaid in the form of a dead spirit work? I can find at least four."

"Probably… not…" Klein reached out and wiped his forehead.

His intuition told him that it was definitely impossible, but he planned to divine it above the gray fog to confirm it.

Without mentioning the dead mermaid again, Azik said, "If there's anything, then contact me through the messenger."

Messenger… Klein suddenly felt guilt-ridden and ashamed.

"I-it died in my battle with Mr. A. It saved my life."

Azik gave him a glance, shook his head, and laughed.

"Don't worry about it. As long as it isn't killed by a powerhouse at the level of an angel or via some special method, then as long as the Underworld still exists, it can slowly be reborn there.

"And before that, I have similar messengers numbering… Uh, I don't know how many there are either."

It sounds like there's an army of such powerful and humongous messengers? Klein turned agape, unable to say a word.

His shame faded, and he asked curiously, "Mr. Azik, where is the Underworld, or in other words, hell?"

"The spirit world. To be precise, it's a special place that the ancient Death created in the spirit world." Azik didn't hide the truth.

Ancient Death? That should be the ancient god, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace… So the Underworld belongs to the spirit world. No wonder the basic structure in mysticism is the real world, the spirit world, and the astral world. It doesn't contain the Underworld and the Abyss… Klein was about to ask a question when he suddenly remembered something and quickly said, "Mr. Azik, I obtained a Card of Blasphemy created by Emperor Roselle. It contains the secrets of High-Sequence Beyonders. I believe it can help you recall more things. However, you'll have to wait a while. It's hidden in Backlund."

Klein didn't mention the bounty, fearing that it would reveal the Tarot Club's secret, the mysterious space above the gray fog, and Miss Justice; therefore, he could show his gratitude towards Mr. Azik for his help and sacrifice, in this tactful way.

Aziz looked at him in surprise, but he ultimately said nothing. He nodded and said, "When you get it back, have the messenger bring it to me. I'll immediately return it to you after I study it. Or you can copy the contents and pass it to me."

He paused for a moment as if he had thought of something. Then, he took out a glove that was so thin that it looked like it was made of human skin from his pocket and handed it to Klein.

“I’ve already awakened the relevant memories, so I no longer need it. Heh heh, it’s an item that that pirate vice admiral left behind. I’ve placed some seals on it so that it wouldn’t be hungry. However, every time it’s used it will require you to use a human’s flesh and soul to feed it; otherwise, it will devour you.”

…Creeping Hunger? The remains of a particular Shepherd? Klein immediately recalled what the glove represented.

Chapter 481 - Statistics and People

◆

In a small town on the outskirts of Backlund.

After changing into clean and dry clothes, Klein placed the wet bills on the surface of the table, one by one, waiting for them to dry naturally in the warm room.

During this process, he moved very carefully and very gently. Even his sneezing and coughing which were brought by the fever had been forcefully suppressed.

To make sure there were no mistakes, he didn’t dry them by controlling a flame.

Having done all this, he walked to the corner of the hotel room, where there was a full-length mirror.

Klein’s black hair was neatly combed in the mirror. He had a pair of dark brown eyes, and his face was thin and angular.

He had gold-rimmed glasses on the bridge of his nose and was beardless. He looked young but also experienced.

This was a modification of Zhou Mingrui’s appearance, with the traits of a native from the Northern Continent. Moreover, this was his youthful appearance during university when he was filled with vigor, one that had yet to be made fat by society.

He intended to go back to Backlund when things have settled down a little, and then he would get himself a legal identity for his current appearance. Compared to when he left Tingen, he had no shortage of appropriate channels. For example, he had Ian at the Bravehearts Bar, Miss Sharron's circle, and Detective Isengard Stanton.

How nostalgic… Klein whispered. He busied himself with a ritual in the room where the curtains had been drawn. He planned to bring Creeping Hunger above the gray fog to study it safely.

Inside the silent, ancient palace, he appeared at the very end of the long bronze table, leaning back in his chair while holding a pair of thin gloves made of human skin.

Immediately after, he closed his eyes and extended his spirituality into the object that required sealing.

He immediately felt the hunger of the glove. It was as if it had a stomach that could never be filled, but above the gray fog, it was so tame that it didn't dare let out even the slightest bit of malice. It was like a hunting dog lying there, not daring to move at all.

Then, Klein heard cries of indignation and groans of pain.

Many distorted, hideous, and grieving faces appeared in his spiritual perception, brimming with unspeakable melancholy and madness.

These faces were deeply fused with the Beyonder characteristics of different colors and different states. Wherever Klein's spirituality spread, it would combine with the corresponding faces and use the powers it had.

This is the way to use it? Together with the help of divination, Klein made one attempt after another and figured out what the five souls that the Creeping Hunger could use for Grazing.

The first was Faceless, but it only had the powers to change his appearance and build.

The second was Psychiatrist. He could make a target fall into a frenzied state, place a certain amount of psychological cues; and could simulate a dragon's might, intimidating individuals and groups, and creating chaos.

The third was Interrogator. It allowed the wearer of the glove to be proficient in the use of all kinds of weapons, become a demolition expert, possess the ability to focus his mind, and have the ability to pierce a target's Spirit Body.

The fourth was Nightmare. There was only one power, which was to drag someone into a dream without being detected. However, it was unlike a Beyonder of the corresponding Sequence. It was accomplished by Creeping Hunger, so the wearer could still move their bodies after entering a Nightmare state.

The fifth was Priest of Light. It allowed him to produce a halo-like effect, purifying all undead and foul creatures within a certain range. At the same time, he also had the singing ability of a Bard which could strengthen his companions, as well as summon the Light of Holiness which was weaker than Flaring Sun.

The limit is five souls, and the powers are fixed when "Grazing" for the first time… This isn't something I can decide for myself. It's purely based on luck; maybe there can be three or just one… Klein thoughtfully nodded, sighed, and said to the suffering souls, "No matter what kind of people you were in the past, I will gradually free you from your imprisonment to acquire complete deliverance.

"In the future, the souls I graze will only come from people who have committed heinous and unforgivable crimes. For every such Beyonder I kill, I'll replace one of you and release you, regardless of whether I need their powers or not."

His solemn but gentle voice echoed within the ancient palace. The wailing souls quieted down, no longer writhing in a hideous fashion.

Phew… Klein exhaled, opened his eyes, tapped the edge of the ancient table with his fingers, and said to himself, That Faceless's powers overlap with mine, so it's completely useless. Once I have something to replace it with, I'll release him first. Yes, when the time comes, I can attempt to channel his spirit and converse with him. Perhaps I might receive information regarding the high Sequences of the Seer pathway, as well as clues to the whereabouts of mermaids… No, there's no need to wait for a replacement. In a few days, I can make the attempt when I fully recover from my cold…

The soul corresponding to the Priest of Light should be able to complete the incomplete formulas I previously obtained. Furthermore, he'll leave behind the corresponding Beyonder characteristic. That way, Little Sun doesn't need to worry about his subsequent advancements. Yes, he will be the second to be released…

As for me needing to feed a human's soul and flesh to Creeping Hunger every time it's used, that's not something I need to pay attention to. I usually wouldn't use it anyway. When using it, I'll definitely be facing a terrifying enemy. In such a battle, there's no lack of lives to cull. Even if there isn't, I can throw Creeping Hunger above the gray fog and not be worried about it's backlash, nor do I need to be afraid of harming the innocent. The worst outcome would it becoming unusable…

Putting his thoughts away, Klein tried to use the mystical item, Creeping Hunger, to divine the formula for the Shepherd potion but ended up failing.

He didn't divine the origins of Creeping Hunger, afraid that he would provoke an unfriendly existence.

Although he wasn't afraid of endangering himself due to the gray fog's isolation and obstruction, doing so could likely damage Creeping Hunger.

I'll consider trying that out when I no longer need it… Klein leaned forward and rested his elbows on the table.

He quickly recalled the previous matters and keenly noticed a detail.

After the Master Key was obliterated, its Beyonder characteristic didn't disappear. Instead, it became dots of light, trying hard to converge…

It can be assumed that the Apprentice characteristic that's formed in the end will no longer contain Mr. Door's roars.

In other words, such a method can be used to rid the mental corruption inside a Beyonder characteristic!

But the underlying problem is that there's no way to destroy a Beyonder characteristic which has solidified into an item under normal circumstances. Back then, I was relying on a ritual that could allow a true god to descend. It needed the prerequisite of a large number of innocent lives…

Also, once the All-Black Eye is shattered, the True Creator's mental corruption that's hidden within will definitely erupt. When that happens, who can withstand it? Do it above the gray fog?

As these thoughts crossed his mind, Klein remembered what could've happened at East Borough. He hurriedly conjured a pen and paper to make the appropriate divination.

After receiving the revelation, his expression sank, and slowly, he leaned back in his chair.

Below him, the endless gray fog floated in silence in a seemingly eternal unchanging fashion.

†

Audrey stood by the window, looking at the fog mixed with pale yellow and iron-black colors rapidly disperse. When she saw the heavy rain that was incompatible with winter, her heart felt more at ease.

After an unknown period of time, she and Susie waited for Earl Hall's eventual return home.

“Father, how is it?” Audrey asked with concern.

Earl Hall smiled warmly as he handed his coat and hat to an attendant.

“It’s resolved, but the exact details are still unclear. My little princess, you’ve really helped me greatly this time. You deserve a ton of medals!”

That’s good, that’s good… Thanks to Mr. Fool’s reminder, thanks to the risky investigation of “His” Blessed… Our Tarot Club has once again stopped the descent of an evil god and saved the world! Audrey’s heart was filled with pride.

Earl Hall took the towel from the maidservant’s hands, wiped his face, and sighed.

“However, this time, there were still some serious casualties. To think that Backlund’s smog could become so deadly… Although the statistics haven’t been tabulated, I estimate that more than ten thousand people died in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district. Furthermore, the plague is still spreading, so please try not to leave the house for the time being.”

More than ten thousand people? That was a statistic Audrey could understand but couldn’t imagine. Only on the anniversary of the kingdom’s founding and during the parade, would she be able to see tens of thousands of people gathered together.

However, this didn’t stop her heart from feeling heavy as her mood suddenly turned gloomy.

†

Daisy stood outside her apartment, watching the doctors and nurses in white coats and masks enter and carry out the bodies.

She had long known the outcome. Her expression was numb and her eyes vacant. She subconsciously moved closer to the door.

At this moment, the police officer in charge of the cordon stopped her.

“Don’t go over. Do you want to be infected with the plague?”

Daisy stood there as she watched the two bodies being carried out. She saw her mother, Liv, hugging her sister, Freja, tightly. They were carried to a cargo carriage that was wrapped in black cloth and temporarily requisitioned. She then watched as they disappeared in front of her eyes as a white cloth covered them.

The carriage slowly moved towards the other end of the street.

At that moment, Daisy seemed to wake up from a dream. She turned around and ran at full speed, chasing after the carriage.

The ground was abnormally muddy after the rain. She fell and got up several times, leaving her body covered in dirt.

However, she was still unable to catch up with the carriage and could only watch it disappear around the corner.

Daisy slowed her pace, her body swaying slightly as her expression turned abnormally vacant.

She held onto the trees by the street and stared at the place where the carriage had left.

Suddenly, her entire body went limp, and she started weeping.

“Mother…

“Freja…”

The voice was soft, low, sharp, weak, and lingered.

At this moment, in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district, tens of thousands of people were similarly crying out in grief.

†

Empress Borough, Sodela Palace.

Wearing a crown above his resolute face and thin mustache, George III sat on the throne. He stared at the earl palatine in front of him without saying a word.

“Your Majesty, the people from the three churches are waiting outside for your explanation,” the earl palatine asked as sweat dripped down his forehead.

“Explanation? Prince Edessak was seduced by a Demoness, causing him to collude with a cult and attempt to rebel. That is the explanation! His schemes were exposed, and he has already committed suicide. What other explanations do they need!?” George III suddenly flew into a rage.

He took a deep breath and regained his usual solemnity.

“You tell them that anyone who obtains the corresponding aristocratic title via any means can get a seat in the House of Lords. The property restrictions needed for elections will be relaxed, and the invalid constituencies will be removed. This is to appease the factory owners and bankers.

“Similarly, the National Atmospheric Pollution Council will immediately make their final statement. The relevant bill will soon be passed, and the minimum safeguards and working hours will appear in the form of a law!

“The Poor Law shall be reformed in accordance with their requests… The Three Churches are permitted to send their personnel into the military!”

“Your Majesty…” The earl palatine was startled.

Such a concession was beyond his imagination, especially the last one.

George III flared up again.

“Tell them this! Since they want a new order, I will give them a new order!”

“Yes, Your Majesty.” The earl palatine didn’t dare say anything further and left the palace.

George III sat there, unmoving for a long time as though he was a stone statue.

After an unknown period of time, his expression suddenly turned gentle.

Chapter 482 - Ring out the Old, Ring in the New

◆

Morning of the 31st December, at the Harvest Church south of the Bridge.

Emlyn White stood in a kitchen wearing his priest robes, occasionally tossing different herbs into a large iron pot and stirring them to a certain extent.

After all the pre-prepared ingredients were tossed in, he waited patiently for another ten minutes. Then, he scooped up the ink-black liquid with a metal ladle and poured it into a glass cup and glass bottle beside him.

48, 49, 50… Emlyn glanced at the empty pot and counted the medicine he had brewed.

After confirming the quantity, he picked up a large tray and brought the bottles of dark green liquid to the hall.

In the hall, more than half of the pews had been removed, and the floor was covered with tattered blankets. Lying within them were victims of the plague who were either in deep sleep or groaning in pain.

Emlyn and Father Utravsky worked together, each carrying some of the medicine, distributing it from two ends.

The first person in the queue was a middle-aged man with a sallow complexion. He hurriedly propped himself up halfway, received the medicine, and drank it.

He handed back the bottle and said to Emlyn in gratitude, “Father White, thank you very much. I feel much better and have some strength again!”

Emlyn lifted his chin and replied disdainfully, “This is only an extremely trivial matter that isn’t worth being grateful for. All of you are truly ignorant.”

With that, he sped up the distribution of the potions.

After ten minutes or so, he returned to the altar of Earth Mother and complained to Father Utravsky, “You should get two more volunteers!”

Father Utravsky didn’t respond. He looked at the patients and said with a gentle smile, “They should be completely healed in two or three days.”

“How do you know?” Emlyn turned his head in surprise.

Father Utravsky looked down at him benevolently and said, “Herbal medicine is one of the domains of the Earth Mother. As ‘Her’ believer, I do know some of the basics even if I’m not part of the Earth pathway.”

Emlyn tsked.

“I’m not interested in religion and know little about it.”

Although I’ve been copying Earth Mother’s bible in the recent months… he inwardly added in a slightly resentful tone before saying, “Father, I didn’t expect you to accept nonbelievers in the faith. Among them, only two or three of them are believers of the Earth Mother.”

Father Utravsky smiled without minding what he said.

“They are also lives, innocent lives.”

Emlyn paused for a few seconds, exhaled, and said, “Father, I’ve already found a way to resolve the psychological cue. Perhaps I will leave this place soon."

Wait, why did I mention this? I was actually moved by him. What if he locks me up in the basement again? Emlyn suddenly turned nervous.

Father Utravsky's expression remained unchanged as he looked down and said to Emlyn, "Actually, you didn't need to seek out solutions. In a little while, the psychological cue will be automatically removed, and you will be free to choose whether to come to the cathedral."

"Any longer and I would've become the Mother's, no—Earth Mother's devout believer!" Emlyn blurted out.

Father Utravsky raised an eyebrow and said, feeling somewhat surprised, "I didn't compel you to change your faith.

"The psychological cue I left in you was for you to return to the cathedral every day, hoping that you would be able to fully appreciate the value of life and the joy of a harvest."

"The only effect of the psychological cue was to make me return to the cathedral?" Emlyn's expression instantly froze.

Father Utravsky nodded frankly.

"Yes."

"…"

Emlyn's mouth gaped as he slowly and mechanically turned his head to look back at the altar, looking at the Earth Mother's Sacred Emblem of Life, as if he had become a puppet that very instant.

†

In the evening of the 31st December. 2 Daffodil Street, Tingen City.

Benson entered the house, took off his hat and coat, and chuckled.

"I've booked second class tickets for the steam locomotive to Backlund on 3rd January."

Melissa, who was sitting in the dining room with several newspapers in front of her, worriedly said, "Benson, the air in Backlund is terrible. Tens of thousands of people have died from the poison and diseases caused by the smog a few days ago…"

"It's a sad and regretful matter." Benson walked to the dining room, sighed, and said, "But the two Houses have already passed the report submitted by the National Atmospheric Pollution Council. There will be legislation to regulate the emission of smoke and wastewater, so a new Backlund will welcome us. You don't have to worry too much."

Having said that, he smiled mockingly.

"When I came back from Iron Cross Street, I found a lot of factory owners or their employees from Backlund recruiting people. They said that due to the smog and plague, the factories there are suffering a shortage in manpower, so they're willing to promise that the working hours and minimum wage will be much better than the current standard, heh heh."

"You think it's impossible?" Melissa asked.

"When more and more people flock to Backlund, it will be impossible unless both Houses pass the corresponding laws directly." Benson spread his hands and pointed to the table. "Well, it's time to receive the new year."

There were three sets of forks and knives, three empty porcelain plates and three cups on the table.

Three cups. One for beer, two for ginger beer.

†

In the evening of 31st December.

Dressed to the nines, Audrey stood inside a lounge, waiting for the start of the New Year's Party. However, one couldn't see the excitement, exuberance, and joy on her face despite the fact that she was about to become an adult.

In front of her was a newspaper. On it was written:

"…According to preliminary estimates, a total of over 21,000 people died in the smog, and the subsequent plague took the lives of close to 40,000 people. Among the deceased were young children, healthy young men, and women…"

Phew. Audrey couldn't help but close her eyes.

Just then, her father, Earl Hall, and her mother, Lady Caitlyn, knocked on the door and said in unison, "Your beauty surpasses everyone tonight. Darling, it's time. The queen is waiting for you."

Audrey slowly breathed out and wore an elegant and beautiful smile. She then walked out of the lounge and entered the party's hall, under the company of her parents.

She walked all the way up to the front of the dais and, under the gaze of many, handed her white, muslin-gloved hand to the queen.

The queen led her to the edge of the dais as they faced all the guests.

After a short pause, the queen smiled and said, "Although this is a dark period in Backlund's history, we still have a gem that can illuminate the entire city. Her wisdom, her beauty, her character, her etiquette, are all impeccable.

"Today, I will formally introduce her to you.

"Lady Audrey Hall."

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Outside the window, the fireworks exploded into a dreamy light.

On the last night of 1349, Audrey officially came of age and was presented to society.

†

In the afternoon of 3rd January 1350.

On the outskirts of East Borough, in a newly opened cemetery.

Using divination, Klein found the graves of Old Kohler and Liv.

This wasn't a grave in the truest sense of the word, but rather a niche where an urn was stored. They went on, row after row, stacked one above another.

Standing there, Klein saw that not only was there no photograph or epitaph on Old Kohler's niche, but even his name was missing.

Similar situations weren't uncommon. There were too many ownerless ashes whose relatives and friends couldn't be located. Their names, looks, and whatever experiences they had were unknown, nor did they garner the interest of anyone. They were only distinguished by the numbers on the niches.

Klein closed his eyes, pulled out a slip of paper, shook it into a piece of metal, and carved a word on the niche's door: "Kohler."

Then, he added an epitaph: "He was a good worker. He had a wife, a son, and a daughter. He worked hard to live."

He withdrew his wrist, and with a shake of his wrist, the black-haired, brown-eyed, and emaciated Klein let the paper burn in his hands, as if it was a memorial service to all the souls residing in the area.

Instead of appearing to help Daisy, who had lost her mother and sister, he anonymously wrote to Reporter Mike Joseph, describing the girl's predicament in detail, so as not to implicate her in his own affairs.

Mike had met Daisy, knew about her, and had enthusiastically promoted the establishment of a corresponding charity fund. Therefore, Klein believed that he could help her receive more help so that she could complete her basic studies and find a stable job that could support her.

Taking two steps back, Klein looked around, taking in the names, photos, and even the victims who had those missing.

He raised his head, let out a long breath, turned around, and left the cemetery.

On the steam locomotive to Backlund, Melissa was engrossed in her textbooks, and Benson was soon chatting with the passengers around him.

“It’s too expensive, just too expensive. A whole ten soli, half a pound!” A burly man who wasn’t even thirty sighed from the bottom of his heart. “If it weren’t for the fact that I couldn’t buy a third-class seat or a boat ticket recently, I wouldn’t have spent this money at all. This is equivalent to half a week’s worth of my salary!”

“Indeed, there are too many people heading to Backlund after the new year,” Benson agreed.

The burly man wiped off his heartbroken expression and said expectantly, “Because they promised me 21 soli a week and that I wouldn’t need to work more than 12 hours a day, we signed a contract!

“When I receive my first payment and rent a house, my wife will come to Backlund, and she’ll be able to get a good job, a job that pays about 12 or 13 soli a week. It’s said that Backlund is in dire need of people! When the time comes, ah, we’ll earn a total of over a pound and a half a week, and we’ll be able to eat meat frequently!”

“Your wish will definitely be achieved. The king has already signed the bill, passing the law for a minimum wage and maximum working hours," Benson sincerely wished him well before smiling. "This is the Land of Hope."

Woo!

The steam locomotive brought countless hopeful people to Backlund. The sky was still bright, and the fog in the air had thinned a lot. The gas lamps on the platform were no longer lit that early.

Experienced, Benson protected his sister and wallet before leaving the station with their suitcases while following the crowd.

Suddenly, they simultaneously felt a gaze sweep past them.

Tracing the gaze, Benson and Melissa saw a young gentleman with neat black hair and dark brown eyes.

The gentleman with the gold-rimmed glasses pressed his hat and looked past them into the distance.

Benson and Melissa also looked away and cast their gaze to the smoky pillars in the garden in the middle of the street as they looked forward to seeing the underground transportation system in Backlund.

Carrying his suitcase with an expressionless look, Klein walked past them with his body kept straight. He entered the departure station, facing the mass of people pouring into the Land of Hope, people filled with wonderful hopes in their hearts.

[image]

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

Faceless - The End

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Author’s Notes:

The second volume has written about 850,000 words, which is a very long one in the structure. I think only the third and fourth volumes of The Sage Who Transcended Samsara are more than it. I think and write every day. Although I am very happy, I am really tired. Especially this month, I also added exercise, and almost didn’t even have time to read novels.

The title of this book is “Faceless”, which is expected to have three meanings. Note that the following are the standard answers for reading comprehension.

The first is to be advance to “Faceless”, which is the simplest and easiest to think of.

The second is to represent Klein’s living condition in Backlund. He uses fake face, fake name and fake identity to get to knows people, handles things and gets involved in disturbances. But when he returns home, he is still lonely and deserted.

The third refers to those who have been smashed into powder or rushed in the great era. In history books, they have no name, no appearance, no past, no life, and exist only in simple numbers or descriptions. In a sense, isn't this a “Faceless”? The least noticeable cannon fodder, who cares what their faces look like?

Just like the sentence “when one is hungry, one eats another”, how much sadness, pain, cruelty, bloody and despair are contained in the simple six words, and how many living people without faces or names are condensed? Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions!

Therefore, I tried to give some descriptions to the Old Kohler, Liv and Freya in the waves of the times, try to restore the hopes, hardships and tragedies of these “Faceless” making them look like people instead of numbers. Although this second part is a big reason for scattered, it is the hidden main line.

As they passed away, more people like them flock in, “Faceless” always existed. They were the stepping stones of the times, the pioneers of the times, and the indispensable roles of the whole story.

With this in mind, I abandoned the more sorrowful and shocking ending. After all, this one is called the faceless people. The best times of the worst era are reversed and echoed, which I can express my desire very well and powerfully. The times is advance, merciless and helpless, but there are countless faceless people lying under their feet.

The title of the third volume will not have so many symbolic meanings, because the main line is very clear and direct. Well, the name of the third volume is “Traveler”.

Looking at the meaning of the text, everyone should be able to imagine something, but we will still focus on the second part. There are many things in Backlund that haven't been collected, such as the Snake of Mercury, such as the underground evil spirit, such as the royal family's real plot, such as 0-17, such as vampire, such as Psychology Alchemists. This is because we need to give opportunities to Audrey, Fors, Xio and

Emlyn in Backlund to show themselves. And because Backlund is the most important stage of the whole novel. Klein will definitely come back and stay for a long time.

The second volume said that it was scattered. In fact, after a lot of things were strung together, it was fine. For me, scattered but attractive writing is not bad. The real problem is another point, that is, the rhythm of the story has been relatively tense and tight, not relaxed. In other words, it is constantly encountering events and solving problems. It lacks long enough and easy excess in the middle and it's a bit tired and irritating. Although this leads to the special characteristic aggregation effect, it does have some problems from the setting.

The problem is the Tarot Club will be held once a week, so the timeline will be cut into week after week. It is easy to feel repetitive and inflexible. It is also necessary to keep certain events in each week. Therefore, the rhythm of extraordinary events will be somewhat tight. The solution I am currently considering is to skip some less important Tarot meetings and be more free in time control.

Of course, the Tarot Club itself is also the main body, and it will definitely not be less. For the first time since Emlyn joined, I have not forgotten that there are many friends who mentioned various things, such as the church's reaction, such as another bronze whistle. I remember all of them, but deliberately pressed not to write them and prepared to leave them until the beginning of the third volume.

This is not to let the trivial things dilute or destroy the overall picture feeling and emotional of two pieces, so we can only carry out certain technical processing.

When the second volume was finished, I am very glad to see that the roles have been set up one by one, which makes everyone like it. It's not impossible to use 0-17 to end with violence. On the one hand, it's still awesome to write about the church, which can be the ruling class for so long, not without reason. On the other hand, it is not the ending itself, it is just a continuation, a link between the preceding and the following, pointing to some subsequent things. Let's not talk about it in detail, as not to be a spoiler.

Finally, when writing a novel, I am more and more pursuing simplicity and puncturing. That is to say, what can be described accurately with the easiest and simplest words is to try not to give a long speech, not to fill it with gorgeous things, to accumulate emotions step by the most calm and objective white description, at the most appropriate time, pierce the barrier with the most precise and simple language, and pierce the softest place in your heart.

Now, although there are still many problems, they are just on the way.

Of course, the characteristics of online writing are doomed. I can only do it in the most important and needed chapters. It is impossible to write it in every chapter. A lot of things can only be repaired when I am old and free. In general, I have a lot of vocabulary, but all of them are unfamiliar. After all, they are accumulated step by step and are useless. That is to say, when code words are used habitually, they are used in the list commonly used in the brain. so the problem of repeated words is hard to avoid.

Also, similar to the problem of misusing some adjectives is to present the clearest, most intuitive and most important pictures in my mind, so I try to create some words, but it still needs to be explored and improved.

The above is the technical summary of the second volume.

Writing is a very hard and torturous thing, but when I write it out, I praised, pleasant, especially happy and satisfied. Recently, everyone praised me for being full of enthusiasm.

Gentlemen, I like to write novels!

I like to tell you stories!

I like to create plump characters one by one!

I like to show you an interesting and novel world!

Writing novels is really a joy!

Well, it’s a mystery that today, the high-end subscription of the pure starting platform is 53,000, but it’s all over 41, but after 24-hour subscription is 27-28,000 and the lastest chapters have officially broken through 31,000, which shows that the retention rate is high, which shows that most of the people who have seen are chasing, which shows that you are full of love!

Also, recommended votes have been in the top 15 and monthly tickets have been in the top 5. I am too lazy to brush any data. Therefore, every ticket, every reward and every subscription are full of love!

Gentlemen, the second volume is over. I want to ask for praise and a monthly ticket!

Asking for a monthly passsssssss~

At the end of the day, according to the Convention, we have two days off, that is, Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday, at 12:30 noon, it’s still the same time.

What, you say Sunday? I didn’t hear it, I didn’t hear it… Well, I’m kidding. Let’s have a rest for half a day after such a long one.

The third volume, “Traveler”, please look forward to it.

[image]

Chapter 483 - New Identity

◆ ◆ ◆

The sky was dark outside the window, but it wasn't the dark fog which Klein was used to. The sea waves rolled in, blowing away all the smog and making the clouds line up in various shapes, reflecting the reddish-gold sunlight.

This was Pritz Harbor, the largest and busiest port in the Loen Kingdom.

Wearing a light vest and white shirt, Klein stood by the window and watched the outside world for a while until his pocket watch urged him to return to the mahogany table.

In the warmth of the fireplace, he picked up a black, round fountain pen, unfolded a letter, and slowly wrote:

Dear Mr. Azik,

Forgive me for not writing to you until today, but for the past few days, I've been wandering in Backlund, immersed in the devastation that has been inflicted on this great city by the events of the past few days. If we were ordinary people, perhaps we would've been covered with white cloth and carried to the crematorium, eventually settling in a tiny niche…

I've waited for quite a while and finally found an opportunity to retrieve what belongs to me. This includes the Card of Blasphemy I promised you. In addition, there's another item which I will get the messenger to bring to you as well; it's a copper whistle that can summon a messenger. It comes from a chance encounter of mine, regarding an elder who crawled out of his coffin. I'm sure you're puzzled having read this, as the description I used similarly points to you. This is what puzzles me.

…This is exactly what happened. I suspect that the original owner of the copper whistle is a member of the Numinous Episcopate that tries to revive Death. Furthermore, his level isn't low. Perhaps you'll be able to tell something from this copper whistle…

Before leaving Backlund, I will write to the Machinery Hivemind to describe the massive underground ruin where you fought Ince Zangwill. I hope that they will be able to figure out the truth with the help of this information.

After going through a roundabout and indirect test, I've confirmed that they do not have any enmity towards you and me for the time being. If you're in trouble, perhaps you can try seeking their help.

Finally, I have one more question. Is there any way to remove the residual mental corruption of a Beyonder characteristic that has already solidified?

…I am about to set sail. I wish you a smooth journey in finding your memories and a safe journey for myself as well.

Your student and friend,

Klein Moretti.

Putting down the pen and reading it once more, Klein folded the letter and stuffed it into the envelope along with the Black Emperor card and the copper whistle left behind by the suspected Numinous Episcopate member.

When he was done, he picked up the copper whistle Mr. Azik had given him and summoned the messenger by blowing into it.

The messenger was still nearly four meters tall, made purely of white bones, its eye sockets burning with black fire. However, Klein's spiritual intuition told him that this was another messenger.

Sighing secretly, Klein raised his arm and placed the letter into the messenger's lowered palm.

The messenger lowered his head to take a look, before quickly disintegrating into bones and drilled into the ground like a torrential downpour.

Seeing this, Klein lightly tapped his right molar and deactivated his Spirit Vision.

He returned his gaze to the table, where there was a pale yellow identification card. This was a necessary item required for official purchases of any voyage tickets.

For this, he had specially gone to Sharron and obtained a new identity through her circle.

This identity was that of a bounty hunter, a lunatic who was eager to go on an adventure at sea to get rich. In accordance with Klein's wishes, his name was Gehrman Sparrow.

"A hunter of evil…" Klein whispered, putting away a series of documents for his new identity.

Shortly after, he drew the curtains, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the fog.

There was still some time before the Tarot Gathering, so Klein quickly retrieved Creeping Hunger and wore it on his hand.

Closing his eyes, he tried to sense each and every twisted, illusory soul. He attempted to release the Faceless.

In the real world, Creeping Hunger would happily consume this gift and spit out the corresponding Beyonder characteristic, but above the fog, it didn't dare to act rashly. It allowed the soul of the Faceless to leave the glove and appear to the side of the long bronze table.

It was a middle-aged man with a blurry face. His twisted and painful feelings seemed to dissipate quite a bit.

With difficulty, he bowed at Klein, who was leaning back in his chair. His figure gradually turned dim, almost plummeting beneath the gray fog at any moment.

In the majestic palace, Klein could directly "communicate" without any additional rituals prepared; thus, he extended his spirituality and stabilized the man before saying in a low voice, "Do you know where there are live mermaids?"

The man answered in an adrift manner, "Apart from those kept by the Church of Evernight, they can only be found by sailing from the Gargas Archipelago towards the Sonia Sea for at least a week. That was my destination."

So he's also a Faceless seeking to advance… In order to seek out mermaids, he had taken the risk to go out to sea. However, he somehow died at the hands of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos in the end… The Church of the Goddess rears quite a number of mermaids? Klein suddenly asked in realization, "Which organization did you belong to? Or should I say, where did your potion formula come from?"

The blurry-faced middle-aged man's body suddenly trembled. It was only two seconds later that he spoke up.

"The Secret Order. I belong to the Secret Order."

Secret Order? Doesn't the Secret Order rear their own mermaids? Klein hesitated for a moment before asking, "Have you ever seen your leader, Zaratul?"

The illusory and transparent Faceless was silent at first, but then he shouted with a sharp voice, “I have!

“H-he’s abnormal! He’s an undying monster!”

As he spoke, his figure became increasingly thin, almost on the verge of dissipating.

As expected, Zaratul is still alive! Just what had happened for a Secret Order member to be so afraid of him? More accurately, I should use “Him”… Klein quickly asked about another key issue, “Apart from the treasures left behind by the Antigonus family and what your Secret Order has, is there anywhere I can get the High-Sequence Beyonder formulas for the Seer pathway?”

The Faceless turned increasingly transparent and more illusory. He finally left the words: “The Church of Evernight… Cathedral of Serenity…”

The Holy Cathedral… Klein silently watched as the Faceless’s Spirit Body achieved complete liberation as he repeated the words. The Cathedral of Serenity was the headquarters of the Church of Evernight, also known as the Holy Cathedral according to the Nighthawks.

There really are high Sequence potion formulas of the Seer pathway hidden there… I wonder how many secrets the various Churches have kept buried and hidden… Sighing, Klein let the dark green glue-like substance, that had formed on the surface of his glove, slide onto the surface of the long bronze table.

The Faceless Beyonder characteristic eventually formed a jelly-like translucent object. In the dark green background, from time to time, there were different faces emerging, like shadows hidden behind dark curtains.

Klein took a few looks before nodding indiscernibly. He muttered to himself, “I’ll use The World later to get Mr. Hanged Man to sell this Beyonder characteristic either to Artisans or Beyonders who need it.”

Although he had found a flaw in the official Beyonders' surveillance of 15 Minsk Street by means of divination above the gray fog, he didn't return there so as to not provoke them or expose the secrets of his Spirit Body. Instead, he spent extra money to buy a change of clothing and other daily necessities. All of that amounted to twelve pounds.

Together with the eight pounds paid for the documents of his new identity, his wallet was so empty that there was almost no need for it to exist.

As for the 10 percent stake in the bike company, Klein found an opportunity to meet with Isengard Stanton and signed a legal agreement to entrust the matter to him. After all, their relationship wasn't a secret in the eyes of the Nighthawks or the Machinery Hivemind.

I still have five pounds in cash and five gold coins… It will cost four pounds to head for the Rorsted Archipelago, and that's for a third-class ticket at the lower deck… It would take at least four pounds to go from the Rorsted Archipelago to the Gargas Archipelago… I have to quickly sell off the Faceless Beyonder characteristic… This way, I would be able to afford a second-class cabin and eat decent food… Thanks to Emlyn's suitcase being placed above the gray fog all this time, I've had to buy another one… Klein silently went through his financial situation, feeling as if he had returned to the time when he had just transmigrated, relying on the salary of the Nighthawks before he could even buy a suit.

A Sequence 6 Beyonder characteristic varies between 3,000 to 4,000 pounds. If I encounter someone in desperate need for it, then it can be sold at a premium… But apart from maintaining my living expenses, I have to consider the cost of the Marionettist's supplementary ingredients. I also have to consider the cost of the ritual needed to eliminate the mental corruption. Klein sighed and took out his pocket watch to take a look at it.

Seeing that it was about time, he sent a message to Little Sun to prepare for the gathering.

†

Fors's vision turned clear as she saw three figures sitting across the long, mottled table.

A new member? With a thought, she quickly settled down.

At this moment, she didn't care if the Tarot Club had any new members. Her mind was filled with the incident of the smog and plague from last week.

She vividly remembered that The World had warned herself and Miss Justice at the last gathering that something huge was brewing in Backlund, which could likely bring about a tragedy. Mr. Fool had confirmed that conjecture, and he had further pointed out that the person at the heart of the problem was Prince Edessak.

She didn't doubt Mr. Fool's abilities and felt that the tragedy needed time to brew, giving her plenty of time to investigate. Who knew that it would come so quickly and so suddenly!

Prince Edessak was also reported to have been infected in the haze and unfortunately died… It really happened. It really happened… Thinking back to the contents of the newspapers from a few days ago, she seemed to understand something, but she wasn't sure of it. For a moment, she felt terrified and uneasy.

As a Sequence 9, I seemed to have become involved with terrifying matters that involved a huge city, a prince, and tens of thousands of lives just because I'm a member of the Tarot Club! It was only at this moment that The Magician, Fors, realized the importance of being a member of the Tarot Club.

Then, she heard Miss Justice's usual greeting that lacked her exuberance.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool.

“You saved Backlund again!”

Ah? What? When was I saved again? The Moon Emlyn listened blankly.

Chapter 484 - Asymmetrical

◆ ◆ ◆

As he thought back to the recent events, The Moon, Emlyn, was quick to associate it with the great smog and the plague outbreak, guessing that this was what the lady opposite him was referring to.

But I heard that it was the work of a Demoness of Despair who was trying to advance herself… Furthermore, the Church of Storms responded quickly, creating a hurricane to blow everything away. How could it be said that The Fool saved Backlund? Emlyn, who had an entire clan behind him, was quite well-informed. Upon doing the comparison, it was hard for him not to be surprised and confused.

Although he had always been proud and didn't wish to spend time on social interactions, he still felt an instinctive fear when faced with a hidden existence that he had to address with "He." He didn't dare to open his mouth to ask and decided to listen for a while.

Alger, even though he was drifting out at sea, had received news of the great smog in Backlund. He was interested in the secrets and the truth behind it, confident in the belief that this was definitely a struggle between deities. After all, it had attracted the attention of Mr. Fool!

I'll ask Miss Justice when we exchange information. However, she might not be too sure of the details. It's rather impossible for her to know too many details based on her standing. Heh heh, she has great curiosity. To open up with such a greeting, she would definitely attempt to get an answer from Mr. Fool, hoping to get an answer. I hope that I have the opportunity to listen in from the side… With this in mind, Alger turned his head to look at The Sun. Seeing how he wasn't anxious but calm and reserved, he knew that the City of Silver's exploratory team had already broken out from the fate of repeating their lives.

Similarly, Audrey, who had figured out that the operation was successful from reading Little Sun's reaction, heaved a secret sigh of relief. She prepared herself to understand what had happened later in detail.

After a solemn bow towards Mr. Fool, she thanked the seemingly unkind Tarot Club member, The World, for his advance warning.

"…Mr. World, if it wasn't for your advance warning, then perhaps tens of thousands of people would've died in Backlund during this great smog."

"In truth, I was also doing it to save myself." Klein controlled The World to give a hoarse laugh.

He said it with sincerity and without any trace of acting, because if it wasn't for Miss Justice who was notified in advance and warned the Church of Evernight, then the powerful existence who erased Mr. A wouldn't have arrived in time, and he himself might not have been able to hold on for long.

If Mr. A had disintegrated me and ate me, then perhaps I might not have a chance of reviving… Klein thought in appreciation.

Mr. A's feasting would literally be feasting!

Immediately after, as The Fool, he leaned back in his chair and responded with a smile, "All I did was provide some trivial help."

"No, your Blessed really helped save Backlund. His contribution is the greatest amongst everyone," Audrey praised from the bottom of her heart. "His warning allowed the Goddess, the Church of Evernight to make preparations, wiping out the Demoness of Despair in a timely manner and preventing the Primordial Demoness from awakening. It allowed the contamination of the great smog to be kept under control. Furthermore, he even destroyed the Aurora Order's ritual, preventing the attempted descent of the True Creator's once again, keeping him at bay from the real world."

Audrey received unanimous praise by Earl Hall and his wife for providing the most important information. They hadn't concealed the results of the investigation and some of the details they had gathered from her.

Of course, they also raised their wish as parents that their daughter wasn't to get too involved with that secret organization. It would be enough if she stayed in the outer circle and gathered some information, then maintained her strength below that of Sequence 7.

The Primordial Demoness's awakening… The True Creator's attempted descent. What exactly happened in Backlund? At the same time, Alger and Emlyn had the same reaction, but their expressions were different. The former only slightly raised his eyelids as his pupils contracted, unconsciously sitting to the side a bit, while the latter gave the illusion that he was about to jump up.

Mother, no, Esteemed Moon, when did Backlund become so dangerous? Two evil gods had actually made "Their" appearance during the great smog! Is that young lady lying? Even though Mr. Fool is an existence suspected of being a deity, it's also impossible that "He" would simultaneously offend two entities of the same level, right… Could it be that "He" is actually the incarnation of a true god? Or is there an alliance of deities behind "Him?" Is that why the Ancestor asked me to pray to "Him?" The more Emlyn thought about it, the faster his heart beat, but it was impossible for him to receive verification.

The fact that Sanguine had the nickname "vampire" didn't mean that they didn't have a heartbeat. It was just that they were relatively slow, and the heart itself was one of the Sanguine's fatal weaknesses.

Indeed! Indeed it's an event that had attracted the attention of Mr. Fool… But, what benefits could "He" gain from sabotaging the evil gods' plans? Alger sighed inwardly.

Fors was surprised and frightened. She didn't expect that the horrible great smog that had taken the lives of tens of thousands of people would conceal an even more horrifying truth.

If it hadn't been stopped in time, the whole of Backlund would've been destroyed, and Xio and I wouldn't have survived… Fors swallowed a mouthful of saliva hard.

Her feelings were similar to Audrey's feelings as well. Through this matter, this young noble lady clearly understood one thing, which was that the life she believed to be peaceful and calm was like a soap bubble amidst a clash between deities. Just a slight perturbation could immediately pop it into nothingness.

Or it could be said that the entire kingdom, the entire human society, exists only because of the balance between the deities, and this balance is extremely fragile… Every time a similar thought gushed to her mind, Audrey felt a wave of grief wash over her.

Klein was pleased when he saw that someone knew and remembered his contribution. He smiled and said, "Unfortunately, he has to stay away from Backlund as a result."

Mr. Fool's Blessed has to temporarily leave Backlund? Audrey stood up again and sincerely bowed.

"Please convey my gratitude to him."

Klein maintained his image without giving a reply other than nodding his head.

At this moment, Audrey added, "I'm very sorry, as the three Churches and the military are cleaning up Backlund, I was unable to get the follow-up pages to Roselle's diary. Please wait one more week."

“Sure,” Klein said in a flat tone.

Hearing their conversation, Fors was startled as she hurriedly looked to the end of the long bronze table and said, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I received three pages of Roselle’s diary.”

Not bad. More members mean more channels, and many things snowball quickly… Klein gently nodded.

“Very good.”

Roselle’s diary? Emlyn felt as if he had heard something extraordinary again.

Under his puzzled gaze, Fors conjured three pages of the diary and passed them on to Mr. Fool.

Only then did Klein remember that he had missed introducing a particular vampire. Smiling, he introduced, “This is a new member, Mr. Moon.

“This gathering is called the Tarot Club. They are…”

Mr. Moon, I thought it would be a lady who would choose the Moon… Audrey greeted politely while her thoughts scattered.

Similarly, Emlyn wondered whether the members such as The Hanged Man and Justice were humans or transcendent creatures, which pathways they were from, at which Sequences, from which organizations, or if they were friendly to the Sanguine.

Klein didn’t care about them sizing each other up as he cast his gaze to the diary entries in his hands.

“11th February. Today, I found out about a secret of the Sauron family. Hahaha! I’m going to die from laughter! Hahaha!

“So it turns out that the Hunter pathway that they possess will change gender at Sequence 4. Men wouldn’t change, but women will change into men! It's no wonder that none of the High-Sequence Beyonders of the Sauron family that I'm aware of are female. The Iron-blooded Knight is indeed a true man!

"Hahaha, if it wasn't for how sensitive this secret was, then I would even feel like ridiculing Floren next time. The Sauron family ancestor that he looks like might've been a woman!

"This potion is way too much of a trap, isn't it? I hope the Savant pathway wouldn't have any strange changes upon reaching the high Sequences. I don't want to one day suddenly realize that I either don't advance, or I have to change into a woman."

The first thought that flashed through Klein's mind at the sight of this diary entry was: Emperor, you won't become a woman, but you will do it with a Demoness, perhaps more than one…

Indeed, there's a pathway that changes women to men. Furthermore, it's within the ones I expected… Hunter represents war, causing women to change genders at Sequence 4… This is a little odd. The Demoness pathway changes at Sequence 7 Witch. It doesn't actually strictly correspond… Klein felt the warped and feeling of madness even more acutely. It was a result of the extreme asymmetry.

Could it be that the underlying logic of this world is chaos, distortion, madness, and asymmetry? He tried his hardest not to frown.

"12th February. This won't do. I want to laugh whenever I see Floren.

"Hahahaha!

"15th February, the modified artillery I designed and supervised was completed. The effect was worse than I expected, but the problem isn't that great. With it and mass production, I'll be able to show the world what true advanced tactics are!

"In order to celebrate, I decided to hold a banquet to invite those fellows who looked down on me. Just wait to be slapped in the face!"

The Emperor truly doesn't let a grudge go… While sighing, Klein turned to the second page of the diary.

"5th May, that unspeakable organization called for another gathering.

"I'm struck by the way they gather their members every time. It's phenomenal, no—a miracle.

"With my earlier observations, I raised some problems at this gathering. For example, all the Sequence 0 names have a high-enough level on the Blasphemy Slate. Only Red Priest appears rather unique. It doesn't sound strong enough. The old gentleman sitting beside me told me that 'red' represents the red of war. And priest can be understood as the ritualist of strength at its core.

"Someone objected, believing that the 'priest' in Red Priest represents being a priest of that Creator.

"I leaned towards the former and asked for the name of the old gentleman in a low voice. I didn't know the identity of every member. To put it in an extreme manner, I only know a portion of them.

"The old gentleman answered me with a smile. He said his name was Hermes.

"Hermes? The Hermes who created the language of ancient Hermes? Hermes, the founder of humanity's mysticism?"

Chapter 485 - Rich Information

◆

Hermes? That’s an ancient powerhouse… Klein frowned slightly.

With his solid knowledge of mysticism, he was well aware of the era in which the old gentleman who had created the language of ancient Hermes had been active.

That is during the Second Epoch when the giants ruled the land and the dragons soared through the skies. In a particular sense, he appeared before the God of Combat and the Earth Mother in human history. In other words, even Little Sun, who didn’t know the seven gods before joining the Tarot Club, would likely know of the name Hermes. Yes, I should find a chance to confirm this using The World…

That old gentleman had personally experienced the period when early humans tested the potions themselves, slowly seeking the thorny path of the powers of a Beyonder, one step at a time. He had used Jotun and Dragonese as blueprints, and standing on the shoulders of the pioneers, he created a Beyonder language that belongs to humans. He probably saw the first Blasphemy Slate!

He actually survived until the time of Emperor Roselle, and he might even be alive until now! This is a living fossil of human mysticism! Klein felt a surge of emotions. On the other hand, he felt the terror of the Twilight Hermit Order.

It even had Hermes as one of its members!

As for the other secret organizations, or even internally to the seven

Churches, they will often use ancient Hermes to perform sacrificial rites and rituals!

The Twilight Hermit Order is really high-end, grand, and of a high level… Klein couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

What he envied most wasn't the existence of Hermes, a legend who lived throughout human history, among the Twilight Hermit Order, but the fact that they possessed the second Blasphemy Slate.

This is simply cheating! Klein sighed at the thought of how the Tarot Club only had one out of the twenty-two Cards of Blasphemy.

He turned his focus back to the paper and continued to read the remaining entries of the diary.

"Heavens! The old man sitting next to me who looks so ordinary and nothing special was actually Hermes. He lived from the dark Second Epoch all the way to the Beyonder decline of the Fifth Epoch!

"I made the right choice joining this organization!

"I can see my bright future, not using three exclamation marks to describe my feelings right now just isn't enough!!!

"This bunch of big shots, these undying old bastards, are all gathered together because they believe in the opinion that twilight is approaching? No, it's definitely not the case. At least, I'm not!

"There must be people among them who passionately believe in those ideals, purely waiting for the original Creator to awaken, hoping for the progress of history to develop to that node as predicted. Heh heh, according to my understanding, it's most likely not an awakening, but a resurrection.

"But there can't be more than half of those people. The rest are people having their own goals; either they're ambitious like me, or they're just lurking snitches. Wait a minute, I thought of a problem; I quickly joined the gathering after I agreed to the secret invitation, but I didn't undergo any scrutiny, and although the person who called for the gathering said that the members of this gathering had their differences and had to vote for me to join, barely allowing me to join after a majority vote of two-thirds, but that's not the point. The point is that they don't care if I believe in the idea that twilight is coming, nor do they mind me having all sorts of thoughts.

"What are they relying on to determine that I won't bring harm to this organization? Could there be a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Spectator pathway among them, one that reaches the level of an angel? 'He' had created a secret psychological cue in me through my verbal promise without me realizing it. And that they're confident enough to discover the hidden malice of its members?

"That might be possible, but thinking about it makes me shudder.

"In addition, without permission, once the name of that organization is mentioned to the outside world, it will be immediately noticed. They even gave me a few examples of former members who were eliminated… Writing on paper or in a newly created language wouldn't do as well!

"Let me think. Let me think. Sequence 2 of the Spectator pathway is Discerner while Sequence 1 is Author[1]. Who among them fulfills the corresponding traits?

"Yes, I have a preliminary suspect, the person who convenes the gathering.

"Yes, there's also Sequence 0 of the Spectator pathway. Its name is Visionary!

"But I don't believe anyone here has reached the level of a true god. Otherwise, there's no need to hide behind the scenes. Of course, they might have divine items at the Sequence 0 level or the Uniqueness of a particular pathway. Perhaps it's what creates this realistic dreamscape that can connect the east and west shores of the continent while having the ability to react the moment its name is mentioned.

“I didn’t think too much into it back then. Amidst my shock, I asked about a few other matters, such as why the term ‘authority’ is used in the description of deities. Old Mister Hermes gave an interesting answer.”

When he saw this, Klein realized that the diary page had already reached its end.

He quickly turned to the next page, but he quickly turned back because the following page didn’t connect to the previous page at all.

Where’s the answer? Is it on the next page of the original diary, or was he too lazy to write it because it’s too long? Or he felt that there’s no need to jot it down in the diary? Klein was so frantic that he wanted to transmigrate and grab Roselle by the neck to get him to tell him what Hermes had said!

Of course, he didn’t show any signs of emotion on the surface, nor did he make any additional body language.

So the Spectator pathway’s Sequence 0 is called Visionary. This corresponds well with the Dragon of Imagination. I thought it would be Dragon… Visionary adheres more to what humans know, which also means that consuming the corresponding Sequence 0 potion wouldn’t necessarily change one into a dragon…

Sequence 1 Author. Just from the name of the potion, I find it quite similar to that quill, 0-08’s traits…

The Twilight Hermit Order’s method of summoning members is a realistic dreamscape that connects the eastern and western ends of the continent? The “miracle” description at the beginning of the diary gave me a fright. I thought they had the gray fog or the mysterious space above the gray fog as well… Klein calmed his emotions and discovered that the single diary page provided a lot of important information.

First of all, he knew that the ancient sage, Hermes, had at least lived to Roselle's era which was about a hundred or two hundred years ago, and he was a member of that mysterious organization.

Second, from Roselle's description of how the organization's name couldn't be spoken, he basically confirmed that the mysterious organization was equal to the Twilight Hermit Order.

Finally, he learned the Sequence 0, Sequence 1, and Sequence 2 names of the Spectator pathway. Although they wouldn't be needed anytime soon, they enriched his accumulated knowledge of mysticism.

Perhaps Miss Justice would ask the relevant question at any time… Her curiosity had always been strong… Forcing himself to forget the missing answers, Klein turned to the last page.

As he read, Audrey habitually observed the details, and she acutely noticed that the Black Emperor card, which Mr. Fool had placed face down on the long mottled table, was missing!

He gave it to a Blessed to provide the appropriate help, or he exchanged items with some existence? Audrey blinked, trying to guess the reason.

She was more inclined to the first theory, because without the help of Mr. Fool, "His" Blessed wouldn't necessarily be able to destroy the ritual for the descent of the True Creator.

It's a pity that Father is unable to see the detailed file; otherwise, I would know who Mr. Fool's Blessed is, hmm… He's a man of medium height, dressed in Loen's most popular double-breasted frock coat, and he had been near Red Rose Manor at the time. I should be able to lock onto a target by using this information as a basis for investigation… But that might anger Mr. Fool. "He" hasn't permitted me to expose the identity of his Blessed… Audrey, don't think too much. Don't be curious. Perhaps you'll meet in the future… Audrey retracted her gaze.

At this moment, Klein felt like laughing because of the contents of the last page.

“16th March, my first time attending a noble ball in this world.

“The young ladies and madams are a lot better than I imagined. In the novels I read, they didn’t bathe in the middle ages and relied on perfume to mask their disgusting body odor. They would frequently step on feces when they were out, and easily smeared their faces with things that are laced with poisonous heavy metals.

“But it’s different here. They love to take baths. They have charming perfumes, fair skin, and tight waists. Most of them have pretty good figures.

“I overcame my nervousness and had a nice chat with the young daughter of Viscount Derilose. We talked about the meritorious deeds of my ancestors, talked about my family’s estate, and my present aristocratic title. Then, she politely mentioned that she wanted to get something to eat.

“I didn’t pay much attention to it at the time since hitting on chicks needed to be taken slow, but when I went downstairs to take a walk in the garden, I found her in an empty study f**king with the eldest son of Earl Florais. F**k! This is their first time meeting each! Is it me, Huang Tao, Roselle, who isn’t good-looking enough? Or am I not entertaining enough?

“How realistic! Fortunately, the madams have treated me quite well. I can sense the hidden passion within them, hehe.”

Roselle really wasn’t used to the Intis style at first. According to historical records, the Gustav family had been on the decline for several generations, with only their aristocratic title of baron and a little property estate to their names. This lasted until Roselle made his fortune… I didn’t expect the Emperor to have a woman snatched away. Wait, I remember Roselle mentioning in his diary that he had done it with Countess Florais… Impressive. Impressive… Klein looked down at the two remaining diary entries.

They were of no value and were accounts of Roselle's life in the manor. The entire content was him wanting to hunt, his missing of delicacies, as well as his hopes of obtaining Beyonder powers and beautiful maidservants.

Klein leaned back a little, allowed the diary pages to disappear from his hands, and said with a smile, "You may begin."

Audrey immediately looked at The Sun diagonally across from her.

"Have you extricated yourself from the cycle?"

Derrick nodded honestly first before bowing towards the end of the bronze table.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, thank you for your guidance. It allowed me to find the key point of the Angel of Fate on the mural with the words 'Rose Redemption.' It aided the Chief in destroying the repeated cycle of fate."

What Angel of Fate… I don't know anything… The very puzzled Fool, Klein, replied with a smile, "Not bad."

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Author's Note: Don't be eager to say Dragon of Nightmare or Dragon of Imagination. It contains an important setting.

Chapter 486 - Klein's Conjectures

◆ ◆ ◆

Emlyn was similarly confused. Words like “Rose Redemption,”“Angel of Fate,” and “destroying the repeated cycle of fate” were beyond his understanding. He only felt that he could understand every word, but had no idea what they meant when placed together.

Could it be that the young Sun had just escaped the pursuit of an angel? Emlyn guessed from the small amount of information he could understand.

After Derrick thanked Mr. Fool, The Hanged Man shifted his position slightly, leaned slightly towards him, and kicked off from Miss Justice’s question. He said in a normal tone, “What was the exact sequence of events?”

Derrick didn’t hide anything and honestly replied, “Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Magician, and Mr. World, thank you for your concern, and thank you for the suggestions you previously gave me. In my sixth exploration, I tried…”

He described his actions and the corresponding results, highlighting the matter that the little boy, Jack, came from Enmat Harbor and the details of the Rose Redemption murals.

Enmat Harbor… That strange little boy, Jack, is really from the Loen Kingdom. In other words, the Forsaken Land of God, where the City of Silver is, is somehow connected to the Northern and Southern continents in some way. As long as one finds the right place, they’ll be able to enter… Klein seemed to be listening leisurely, but he had made a judgment in his mind.

Enmat Harbor was located to the east of Tingen City and was one of the most famous seaports in the central region of the Loen Kingdom. Together with Pritz Harbor to the south, they supported the resupply of more than half of Backlund's goods.

The Spirit Medium, Ma'am Daly, had once "settled" there, and Mr. Z of the Aurora Order seems to be there as well… Klein recalled something from the past.

The same judgment also appeared in the minds of Alger, Audrey, and Fors. Towards this, some of them had pure excitement, others filled with curiosity and worry, fearing that the all-consuming darkness around the City of Silver would continue to spread, eventually enveloping both the Northern and Southern Continent and the five seas.

"The Chief told me that he recalled some unverified content recorded in some ancient books, based on matters that had happened and my warning. Rumor has it that when the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God had 'His' attention on this piece of land, he had several angels surrounding him. And there were eight leaders of the angels, powerful beings that were closest to god's throne. Among them included the son of God." Derrick recalled Demon Hunter Colin's words and slowly said, "He suspected that Amon is the Angel of Time among the Kings of Angels, and the mural depicted the Angel of Fate, Tail Devourer Ouroboros.

Eight Kings of Angels? The eight Kings of Angels who are closest to the Creator's throne? Audrey was inexplicably excited when she heard this.

She couldn't help but curiously ask, "Mr. Sun, what are the titles of the other six Kings of Angels and their names?"

"The Chief didn't say, nor did I dare to ask…" Derrick replied, ashamed.

I really want to know the answer… Audrey subconsciously looked towards the end of the long bronze table, looking longingly at Mr. Fool who was shrouded in gray fog, hoping to get the appropriate answer.

She had already decided on the price she was willing to pay.

Why are you looking at me… I don't know either… Klein controlled the twitching of the corners of his mouth.

Of course, he wasn't completely clueless. He could barely guess who two of the Kings of Angels were.

The evil spirit in the underground ruin had described the Medici family as one of the founders of Rose Redemption. According to that mural, the Angel of Fate, Ouroboros, is likely one of the leaders of Rose Redemption. Both basically have equivalent standing, which is to say that the Medici family possesses a King of Angels, but it cannot be determined if "He" has already perished…

The Medici family is suspected to be in control of the Hunter pathway, which is the Red Priest pathway. That King of Angels' title should be Red Angel or War Angel…

Since the son of God is a King of Angels, Amon is one of them, being Angel of Time. Then Adam might not be one, but I can't confirm "His" title… As for the other four Kings of Angels, I can't guess who they are… Perhaps, there might be one or a few of them inside the Twilight Hermit Order…

It's possible! The Twilight Hermit Order views the Fallen Creator as its enemy, making it at odds against Rose Redemption which worships that evil god. Perhaps, its true origin comes from those few Kings of Angels…

Right, there's indirect evidence which isn't substantial enough. According to the legends of the City of Silver, the authority of the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt, was taken back by the Creator.

Logically speaking, it’s not impossible for the Lord that created everything to give a portion of the authority to a King of Angels by “His” throne. And from the description and guesses from Roselle’s diary, the Twilight Hermit Order likely has a Spectator, which has the strength at the level of an angel in the Visionary pathway or even higher. The two can form a correspondence… Hermes is a person who had experienced that piece of history… As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein smiled and said, “You will come into contact with it in the future.”

When I figure it out, I’ll sell you the appropriate information… he added inwardly.

Seeing that Mr. Fool had no intention of answering, Audrey looked away with a slight sense of loss, motioning Little Sun to continue his story.

Alger had a bold idea.

The history before the Cataclysm can no longer be referenced. At the end of the Third Epoch and the beginning of the Fourth Epoch, there were only the six orthodox gods. Together with Amon and the Tail Devourer, aren’t there eight? ‘They’ had benefited from the death of the Creator and succeeded in advancing to Sequence 0?

For a moment, Alger felt that his thoughts were blasphemous actions that could be punished by fire, but he was also unable to contain his excitement. He finally calmed down and concentrated on listening to Little Sun tell his story.

Towards all of this, Emlyn could only respond with a blank look.

Although the Sanguine had a long history and life span, so they knew quite a bit about the history before the Cataclysm, they were all concentrated before the Ancestor fell asleep, and it didn’t involve the so-called “Kings of Angels.”

While Derrick was recounting the details of how the City of Silver, Chief Colin, destroyed the repeated cycles of fate, Klein was thinking of another matter.

It can be roughly confirmed that the Tail Devourer, Ouroboros, is the Sequence 1 Snake of Mercury of the Monster pathway. All the Kings of Angels correspond to Sequence 1's?

Could that Angel of Fate be the one pursuing Will Auceptin? If he is, that means that the True Creator's forces in Backlund aren't limited to Mr. A and his subordinates. However, the two Snakes of Mercury are fighting for the position of Sequence 0, to the point of draining all of the Tail Devourer's strength. He should be fully occupied and cannot spare time for this…

Of course, I can't eliminate the possibility that Will Auceptin is equivalent to Ouroboros. However, the chances aren't high. Rose Redemption has quite a number of demigods and even angels. There's no need to let the Tail Devourer restart his life as an ordinary person without protection.

There's another possibility. The two Snakes of Mercury in Backlund aren't the Angel of Fate. The latter is still active in the Forsaken Land of God. That way, all three Snakes of Mercury are accounted for.

After finishing his recount of how they escaped the cycle, Derrick expressed his gratitude once again. As for Audrey and company, despite listening to the repeated events a second time, it still left them shivering down to their bones, filling them with curiosity and fear.

This is beyond my knowledge of Beyonder powers. It's all thanks to the help Mr. Fool gave! Audrey sincerely praised the Tarot Club's master from the bottom of her heart, feeling full of confidence.

Alger and the others had similar thoughts as her. They all thought that the repeated cycles of life were close to a miracle that could only be destroyed by a deity. Fortunately, the master of the Tarot Club was a deity. Mr. Fool was a deity!

At that moment, Derrick looked opposite him and sincerely said, “Miss Magician, due to some unexpected circumstances on our return to the City of Silver, despite it having been resolved, we have slowed down. It will prevent us from returning to the City of Silver on time. Your Spirit Eater’s stomach pouch will require another day or two. Yes, I believe I’m no longer under surveillance.”

“No problem, I can wait. I’ve prepared enough gold,” Fors said as she let out a sigh.

She had sold the Mirror Dragon’s eyes to Miss Justice and had received 1,000 pounds in cash.

After informing her teacher, Dorian, of the exact results, her honesty had been praised and approved. Dorian told her that the 800 pounds offer had been made in order to give her about 100 pounds in “labor fees.” As such, the extra 200 pounds would be a bonus for her. In other words, she had earned 300 pounds. Together with her original savings, she now had a total of 650 pounds, which was enough to buy the stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater.

With this, Dorian trusted her a lot and revealed a lot of information regarding ingredients.

It will take me at least two weeks to digest the rest of the potion. I’m not in a hurry… Looking diagonally across the table, Fors said, “Mr. Hanged Man, there’s news of the Dragon-Eyed Sea Condor you require. 2,200 pounds.”

Dorian had given a reference price of 2,000 pounds. On the one hand, Fors had allowed room for bargaining, and on the other hand, wished to earn a little more.

2,200 pounds… Alger couldn’t help but frown.

His financial situation wasn’t looking good after he purchased the

Wind-blessed potion formula. Although he still had some secret savings, they were either of use elsewhere, or he hadn't been able to find a buyer for a long time.

Phew. He secretly let out a sigh and calmly said, "Very well, but I'll need some time to collect the funds. In addition, yours is too expensive, I have many channels to get cheaper ones. 1,900 pounds. That's the highest price I can accept."

"No, 2,000 pounds. That's the bottom line!" Fors replied without hesitation.

She was afraid that if she made too high an offer, then the other party would give up the deal.

Alger immediately nodded.

"Deal!

This… Fors was somewhat stunned.

After listening by the side and witnessing the conclusion of a deal, Emlyn thought and eagerly asked, "Ladies and gentlemen, does anyone know how a Sanguine can improve their strength without relying on the bestowment of their elders?"

As soon as he finished speaking, he felt numerous gazes land on him.

Sanguine? Is that the vampires of legends? Audrey's eyes sparkled as she studied Mr. Moon.

And as a novelist, Fors no doubt had all sorts of beautiful or exotic fantasies of the Sanguine, and her eyes were just as bright.

Sanguine? Alger was taken aback at first, but he soon relaxed his brows.

A vampire hiding in the darkness, covered in pus, while moving like the wind? Derrick couldn't help but look sideways to size up Emlyn.

Sanguine? The World was late by a second before giving a normal, necessary response.

Chapter 487 - The Growing Tarot Club

◆

The moment he was being stared at, Emlyn was momentarily at a loss, vaguely aware that he had asked something he shouldn’t have.

Why are you looking at me like that. Can’t I have a Sanguine friend? Should I try to explain… No, what’s wrong with being a Sanguine? I’m a Sanguine; there’s wrong with admitting that! Us Sanguine have a long history, long lives, and rich heritage. It’s a lofty race! None of you are especially amazing either. What was just traded was only a Sequence 6 item at best! After a few thoughts, Emlyn White raised his chin and proudly added, “Yes, I am a pure Sanguine.”

No one asked him if he was… Mr. Moon is lacking some self-confidence, which resulted in him reacting a little excessively… Audrey read Emlyn’s performance.

He’s really a Sanguine… Fors asked out of curiosity, “Mr. Moon, do you Sanguine mimic humans and give aristocratic titles like duke, viscount, earl, and baron to label different powerhouses of different standing?”

“No, it’s you humans who mimicked us Sanguine!” Emlyn sat up straight. “Long before the Cataclysm, long before the Second Epoch, our Sanguine already had these aristocratic titles. Those who have yet to fully control their strength are underage Sanguine, and as for me, I’m considered an adult. Going one step further, one will gain the title of baron and the progression leads all the way to duke. Above duke would be positions such as queen and prince. Back then, you humans were still under the rule of the Giant King’s Court, so it’s impossible for you to invent aristocratic titles!"

The moment his voice fell, the nearby Derrick blurted out, "There are no such records in the history of our City of Silver.

"The categorization of the Sanguine was determined by the appearance of the Blasphemy Slate. Prior to that, it was very vague and ambiguous. There were only titles such as the different family clans' head or leaders of a territory. Standing atop all is the Ancestor, Lilith. After that, it strictly followed the potion system, named after the different Sequence names."

Emlyn replied scornfully, "The history of our Sanguine was written with our long lives. It's not something that can be overturned by the random records of some small, ordinary City of Silver."

Wait, they keep mentioning the City of Silver. Where exactly is it? Why haven't I heard of it… After the retort, Emlyn realized that he had apparently overlooked something important.

"Our City of Silver doesn't make up history. Our records come from ancient books that can be verified or from the ruins of other cities," Derrick emphasized, somewhat aggrieved.

If no one stops them, then I think they can argue about this matter until the end of the gathering… Although Little Sun is honest, sincere and reserved, he has a very stubborn and persistent personality. On the other hand, Mr. Moon seems to care especially about the history of the Sanguine… Audrey did her daily observations as a Telepathist with piqued interest.

At this moment, Alger interrupted the discussion between The Sun and The Moon.

"I know how to raise the strength of a Sanguine."

Emlyn's attention was diverted.

“Uh, Mr. Hanged Man, what payment do you need? I can use some of the lost history our Sanguine has in exchange.”

Alger revealed a smile.

“No, we’re all members of the Tarot Club. This kind of information exchange is free of charge.”

Mr. Hanged Man sure is a generous, noble man… Emlyn inwardly made a preliminary assessment.

“Thank you for your goodwill.”

After thinking for two seconds, Alger said, “The Sanguine can also consume potions to advance, but it has be in correspondence—the correct type. The various Churches have done a certain amount of experimentation, and the results have proven that this method is feasible. However, I am unable to find out the exact details.”

“But the main ingredient for those potions are from my kinsmen!” Emlyn denied such a method.

The Hanged Man laughed and said, “Never deal with absolutes. For example, I have a clue about the characteristics left behind by a Sanguine baron. He died in a sudden conflict and didn’t have time to find his successor. As for you, you can use the potion method to receive this inheritance and prevent the power of the Sanguine from being lost.”

This item was owned by a great pirate that Alger knew. As he didn’t know what Sequence the potion corresponded to, he hadn’t been able to sell it. Even his newly established Artisan source wasn’t that interested either.

Use potions to inherit an inheritance to prevent the Sanguine’s powers from being lost… Emlyn suddenly felt that Mr. Hanged Man was very reasonable. Hence, he asked, “What’s the price?”

Alger chuckled and said, “Between 4,000 and 5,000 pounds. I won’t know for sure until I find the owner of it.”

He had never communicated with the great pirate before, but he believed that as long as the price wasn’t outrageous, the pirate would accept it. To a pirate, selling something would mean profit as it didn’t take much capital.

“5,000 pounds?” Emlyn exclaimed.

With such a large sum of money, I can buy a few puppets that I’ve been eyeing for a long time, and I can even get some new clothes for all my dolls! Emlyn’s first reaction was to give up such a transaction. However, he thought of the Ancestor’s favor in him, the glory of the Sanguine, and the identity of him being the race’s savior. He was momentarily put in a difficult position.

Alger didn’t rush him as he said indifferently with a smile, “I know this is a difficult decision. You can take your time and think about it.”

“Alright.” Emlyn breathed a sigh of relief.

Mr. Hanged Man is really… Audrey muttered to herself inwardly, turned to The Moon, and said to all the members, “Lady and gentlemen, do you have any news regarding the fruit of the Tree of Elders and the blood of a Mirror Dragon?”

“Yes,” Emlyn answered without hesitation.

He had previously made a fortune due to a particular detective’s purchase of Beyonder ingredients; therefore, at every Sanguine gathering, he would pay attention to such information.

Without waiting for Miss Justice’s exuberant pressing, he continued on, “The price of the fruit of the Tree of Elders is between 600 and 700 pounds, and the blood of a Mirror Dragon doesn’t exceed 100 pounds. I don’t remember the exact amount.”

He quoted her the original price and frankly added, “But you’ll have to pay me an extra fifty, no—one hundred pounds. As you know, I’ll have to take on a risk and waste my time.”

This was what Emlyn learned from Sherlock Moriarty. He felt that this was very good and reasonable, because a middleman needed to be paid!

“Deal!” Audrey happily chose to accept as soon as he finished speaking.

She knew such matters could still be negotiable, but she didn’t think it was necessary. She was afraid that the deal was off if she angered the other party.

To me, the most important thing is to advance to Sequence 7… Emperor Roselle once said that any problem that can be solved with money isn’t a problem… Audrey’s recently heavy mood improved.

After the New Year Ball, she had received control of her fortune worth 40,000 pounds. She just needed to hire some accountants and management staff sent by her father.

At the same time, she received gifts of more than 20,000 pounds in jewelry, horses, hounds, paintings, etc. Most of them came from her mother, two elder brothers, and other members of the Hall family.

As for the cash, she didn’t have much. It was only 5,000 pounds.

Her contribution to the Backlund’s great haze had been turned into Earl Hall’s political resources by her own request to be kept anonymous, so there was no reward. For this, the great aristocratic banker offered to pay for any expenses his little angel had in the field of mysticism.

Of course, Audrey didn’t dare reveal her intention to aim for Sequence 7. She could still only use her pocket money and savings.

Well, I’ll be able to pay off my debt to Glaint by this month. Next month, I can pay 2,000 pounds to Mr. Fool’s Blessed… I won’t be tight at all… Audrey thought in a good mood.

…Very rich… Emlyn almost failed to react before asking, puzzled, “How do we complete the deal?”

Audrey explained with a faint smile, “By making a sacrifice to Mr. Fool.”

She was very proactive in obtaining The Fool’s consent, conjuring the corresponding ritual requirements.

When Emlyn received the two goatskin parchments, he stared at them in a daze. The way they traded was beyond his imagination.

Only then did he deeply understand how the Tarot Club was different from a normal secret organization.

Watching the transactions between the members, Klein was very pleased. This was because with the passage of time, the channels and resources that were open to the Tarot Club would continue to increase. Everyone’s goals and items that they wanted would be much simpler to obtain than in the past. It would no longer be in a state of having no response when making requests.

Miss Justice represents the Psychology Alchemists, the Loen aristocrats, and the power of money… Mr. Hanged Man represents the Church of Storms and the resources at sea. Mr. Sun represents the Forsaken Land of God and the City of Silver. Miss Magician represents the Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders in Backlund and the Abraham family. The Moon represents the Sanguine. All of them will perfect the Tarot Club’s trading resources and news gathering capabilities… They’re all about to advance… While he was thinking, Klein controlled The World and said in a hoarse voice, “I have a clue to a characteristic left behind by a Psychiatrist. Miss Justice, would you have any need for it?”

Klein hadn’t chosen to snatch Emlyn’s business because he knew Miss Justice also reared a pet of the same pathway. He wasn’t afraid that there wouldn’t be any demand.

“Of course.” Audrey hardly hesitated.

Her idea was very simple. If met with an enemy attack, it might not be enough to just rely on herself to provide a surprise. Adding on Susie, who would be even more surprising, it would make things more assuring.

“This will take a certain amount of time, perhaps a month, or even two months,” The World added in a low voice.

“No problem.” Audrey was under no psychological pressure.

She knew that Susie hadn’t finished digesting the Telepathist potion.

Phew, as long as this deal is closed. I hope I can release the Psychiatrist as soon as possible… Miss Justice didn’t seem to ask about the price. To her, with The Fool’s supervision, the price wouldn’t be too outrageous. She would accept it as long as it isn’t too outrageous? Her finances have improved a lot recently… Klein made The World look at The Hanged Man and give a low chuckle.

“Are you interested in helping me sell an item?

“The price isn’t less than 3,500 pounds. You’ll be given a 15% commission fee.”

“Pleasure to work with you,” Alger first agreed to it before asking with interest, “What is the item?”

He was rather curious about The World. He felt that the other party knew a lot and had no lack of good things.

“A characteristic left behind by a Beyonder and is equal to a Sequence 6. The main purpose is to allow a person to change their appearance and build. There’s the addition of powers such as close combat and control over fire. Of course, the effects that can be produced will depend on the Artisan’s ideas and standard.” The World chuckled.

Changing appearance and build… I really want it… Audrey and Fors had the same idea at the same time.

The only difference was that the latter was only entertaining the thought, but Audrey opened her mouth and asked with sparkling eyes, “Mr. Hanged Man, can I preorder the mystical item produced by the Artisan using this characteristic? As long as the effect of changing one’s appearance remains!”

Father will definitely agree to me buying a mystical item that has tolerable side effects! Audrey added, in an exceptionally relaxed manner, in her heart.

Chapter 488 - Living Expenses

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Preordering a mystical item? Alger was stunned for a second before he realized what Miss Justice was talking about.

The limits of his mind were widened, and he felt that there was room for exploitation.

In a particular sense, the Beyonder characteristic The World has entrusted to me has been sold. There is a definite destination to the item… I can easily simplify the process and make things benefit me more easily. That is to say, I don't have to sell it to the Artisan again. Instead, I should choose to entrust the work. This way, I don't have to worry about whether the characteristic can be sold. I can receive the commission from The World and also obtain more profit from Miss Justice's side. The only capital I need to put up is the fabrication fees for entrusting the job. Of course, I have to consider if the Artisan will be willing to promise to take the risk…

Many thoughts flashed through his mind as he quickly weighed the pros and cons and finally came to a decision.

"No problem, I'll take care of this matter." He looked at Miss Justice and felt that she was emitting a blinding light of gold.

Even after joining the Church of Storms and drifting out at sea for so many years, he had never encountered someone like that anywhere else.

There were plenty of sea merchants, and even more wealthy people, but none of them really didn’t care about money.

Has Miss Justice’s financial situation improved to this extent? Klein was shocked too.

For a moment, he wanted to speak out to urge her to pay the 2,000 pounds she owed to his Blessed as soon as possible, but, considering that he had already agreed to Miss Justice postponing her repayment until February or March, he could only keep silent and not ruin his image as The Fool.

At the very least, the money for the Faceless Beyonder characteristic would be available soon. The speed only depends on how Mr. Hanged Man contacts that particular Artisan and the speed at which the Artisan can produce the mystical item… Unfortunately, I can only rely on Mr. Hanged Man to contact an Artisan for the time being. Otherwise, I can directly sell the special characteristic to Miss Justice without having to pay a commission… With this in mind, Klein’s mood became mixed.

After finalizing a big deal, Alger heaved a silent sigh of relief, feeling his financial situation slowly improve.

After thinking for a few seconds, he asked, “Ladies and gentlemen, which one of you has a way or item to make everyone on board a ship sleep at the same time?”

The reason why Alger still hasn’t gone to that primitive island to hunt down the Blue Shadow Falcon was that he hadn’t thought of a method of leaving the Blue Avenger, as well as the ten or so sailors and crew members of the Church without garnering any suspicion.

Let everyone on a boat fall into a deep sleep? The first thing Klein thought of was the Biological Poison Bottle, but the effect of this thing was completely uncontrollable, so he was afraid that the outcome wouldn’t look too good.

Then, he remembered the Nightmare soul in Creeping Hunger. Making people fall into a deep sleep and dragging them into dreams were specialties of this Beyonder job.

But the problem lies in the fact that a Nightmare is unable to make that many people fall asleep at the same time. The limit to its influence doesn't exceed ten. To satisfy Mr. Hanged Man's request, it needs to be a Sequence 5 of the corresponding pathway or even that of a demigod… Klein struck down the thought and didn't let The World speak.

At the same time, Audrey, Fors, and Derrick either shook their heads in response or answered with "no."

Emlyn tried to recall and said, "I can help you ask. Perhaps us Sanguine have some mystical items that have a similar effect in the clan."

Always saying "us Sanguine"… In the future, I can convince him by targeting this angle… Alger noticed this and nodded with a smile.

"I'll have to trouble you."

Seeing that the transactions were coming to an end, Klein quickly got The World to bring up his latest necessities.

"Everyone, help me keep an eye out on the remnant spirituality of ancient wraiths and a pair of eyes from a six-winged gargoyle."

Other than that, the supplementary ingredients weren't too hard to purchase. He didn't think it was necessary to go through the Tarot Club.

"Alright." Derrick was the first to respond. Then, he added, feeling somewhat embarrassed, "Mr. World, the method for removing the mental corruption of a Beyonder characteristic will still require some time. I should be able to advance to Sequence 7 soon."

With that said, he looked to his side.

"Mr. Hanged Man, once I return to the City of Silver, I'll make a list of the commonly seen monsters in the vicinity."

He had kept everything he owed others and every promise he made without fulfilling them in mind. These plagued him to the point that he couldn't even sleep in peace.

"No problem," the gloomy World indifferently said.

Klein really wasn't in a hurry. He hadn't finished concluding his Faceless principles, and his digestion of the potion had only just begun. It would still take several months.

Therefore, his plan wasn't to head straight for the Gargas Archipelago. Instead, he would act as an adventurer and a traveler as he worked his way through the colonial islands. From time to time, he would change his identity and experience life in order to extract the Faceless principles.

During this process, he would inquire more about mermaids in detail. After knowing that the Church of the Goddess reared such spiritual creatures and that they possessed High-Sequence potion formulas of the Seer pathway, Klein kept feeling worried about traps placed against every Faceless in the Gargas Archipelago who sought advancement.

In other words, Klein had to spend two to three months or more time traveling and adventuring on the Sonia Sea. This long period of time was long enough for The Sun to obtain a potion formula, gather the corresponding ingredients, and ascend to the Sequence 7 Solar High Priest.

With the conclusion of the transaction portion of the gathering, the Tarot Club members entered the period for free communication.

Audrey didn't disappoint The Hanged Man's expectations by standing up first and raising the ends of her skirt, bowing towards the very end of the long bronze table.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I would like to know the hidden truth behind Backlund's Great Smog. Is it purely a result of those cultists' bid to awaken the Primordial Demoness and to allow the True Creator's descent? Why did Prince Edessak choose to cooperate with them?

"According to your principle of equivalent exchange that was set by you, what do I need to pay in order to obtain the relevant information?"

If I knew, things would've been completely resolved now… The experienced Klein maintained his relaxed posture, chuckled and said, "There's no need.

"The root of the problem hasn't been discovered yet, but there are enough clues. I hope the members of the three Churches aren't too stupid."

The root of the problem hasn't been discovered yet? Mr. Fool has made his Blessed give the Churches and the military a certain amount of clues? Audrey was rather shocked when she heard this, but she felt that this wasn't too surprising within her previous concerns and worries.

"Thank you for your answer." She sincerely bowed once more.

"Is Backlund still in danger?" Fors suddenly felt uneasy.

After Miss Justice sat down, Klein controlled The World to chuckle and say, "Mr. Hanged Man, I discovered the Baelen person you mentioned."

"The Baelen who was involved in the escape of many slaves from the colonial islands?" The Hanged Man replied with disbelief.

"Yes, reddish-brown skin, of Southern Continent descent, Backlund accent, and the third tooth on his left fake," The World answered hoarsely.

"…It should be him." Alger recalled for two seconds before saying, "Where is he? What's his present identity? Also, Mr. World, do you wish to receive 100 pounds in cash directly or an item of equivalent worth."

This was the mission of the Church of Storms, and purchasing clues was a reimbursable act; therefore, The Hanged Man wasn't pressured at all.

Of course money! Klein, who was vexing over his living expenses, controlled The World to say, "100 pounds in cash.

"Baelen is in Backlund. He was seen meeting a member of MI9 who was loyal to the royal family. I don't know who it was exactly, because he was wearing a mask."

A member of MI9 who was loyal to the royal family… The Hanged Man ruminated over the words, and then he remembered Miss Justice's question: Why did Prince Edessak work with the Aurora Order and the Demoness Sect?

It also points to the royal family… Can the two cases be one and the same? The truth behind all this involves the disappearance of the slaves? Alger felt that he could vaguely see some key points.

"You really are a well-informed and well-connected person. The 100 pounds in cash will be paid tomorrow," Alger calmly said his thanks.

"Heh." The World laughed and turned to look at The Sun.

"Kid, do you know ancient Hermes?"

Derrick didn't try to hide anything as he replied honestly, "I've heard of the Hermes language, but the City of Silver doesn't have that kind of knowledge."

During the Second Epoch, there was no distinction between Hermes and ancient Hermes. It was only some time during the Fourth Epoch that ancient Hermes was simplified accordingly, making it easier to be used, taught, and disseminated for daily use. However, it no longer had such a strong and direct effect on rituals. That is to say, the Hermes spoken by Little Sun is equal to ancient Hermes… There really is a person known as Hermes in the history of the City of Silver… Klein secretly nodded and said, "A pity; I wanted to ask you for a favor."

At this moment, Audrey remembered something from their conversation. It was something that originated from the Psychology Alchemists.

She had intended to communicate directly, but after looking at the new member, Mr. Moon, she felt that she didn't understand him too well, so she raised her hand slightly and said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I have something to report to you."

Klein nodded slightly and isolated the senses of everyone else.

"What is it?" he asked in a calm manner.

Audrey said, honestly, "I got some information from the Psychology Alchemists. The most important thing is that they were founded after excavating the ruins of Hermes, who was the master who created ancient Hermes."

The ruins of Hermes? This old gentleman was still alive a hundred or two hundred years ago… Had he deliberately guided the Psychology Alchemists to discover the relics, or had he perished in the Roselle incident? Klein was stunned for a moment. After deliberating for a moment, he smiled and reminded her, "Hermes is a member of the Twilight Hermit Order."

He didn't mention that Hermes could still be alive, because it was impossible to confirm.

Hermes is a member of the Twilight Hermit Order? The Psychology Alchemists might have something to do with this mysterious organization? Audrey was stunned before she let out a sigh of relief.

Fortunately, I have the Tarot Club and Mr. Fool backing me. Otherwise, I would have no way of knowing and no way to guard against… Once again, she gratefully praised The Fool.

At this point, Klein wanted to comfort Miss Justice, so that she wouldn't be too distressed and worried about the Backlund incident. Maturing didn't mean that she had to give up positive moods and smiles. It wouldn't affect her ability to take things seriously and would instead help her persevere for a longer period of time. However, after consideration, in order to maintain his image as The Fool, he had to give up this advice he gained from being a former Clown.

He then removed the isolation barriers around the other members, waiting for the end of the exchange and for the end of this Tarot Gathering.

Chapter 489 - Held Up Suggestion

◆

After another round of conversations, Derrick suddenly asked a question, "Honorable Mr. Fool, what kind of hand gesture should we use when we would like to thank you usually?"

Hand gesture? Klein was momentarily stumped by Little Sun's question.

It had never occurred to him to imitate the gesture of drawing a clockwise circle from the Church of the Goddess, nor the Church of Storms's prayer gesture of striking the left of one's chest with their right fist.

This is probably the last bottom line of a fake god… He lampooned inwardly.

Seeing Mr. Fool smile without a word as though he was waiting for her and others to make suggestions, Audrey suddenly had a lot of inspiration and came up with a new question.

Her eyes sparkled as she looked around and said, "Everyone, should we design a secret gesture to indicate our identity? Our Tarot Club doesn't have many members at present, so there's no need to worry about us appearing at the same spot and ending up opposing each other due to various reasons. But in the future, it might be very difficult to avoid that. We need a set of unique 'signals,' so as to identify friend from foe."

I have an idea for that… Klein suddenly remembered the secret hand gestures he knew from his previous life, such as the hand-in-waistcoat.

Just as he was about to manipulate The World to make a suggestion, The Hanged Man opened his mouth.

"No, Miss Justice, I don't think it's a good idea.

"Compared to other secret organizations, our Tarot Club's most striking characteristic is that the members do not know each other. Even if… Uh—Let me raise an extreme example. Even if one of our members are captured and interrogated, they wouldn't be able to affect the others unless there's someone who can resist Mr. Fool and enter this place directly. And that is clearly impossible.

"Once we have a full set of signals and passcodes, traitors can allow the opposing faction to use these means to fish us out one by one.

"Are you that eager to flaunt your identities as Tarot Club members?"

"…" Audrey temporarily failed to provide a rejoinder as she stammered, "But…"

"It's reasonable to worry about the situation you mentioned, but this can be avoided through our fixed interaction every week and creating a temporary gesture ahead of time, as well as praying to Mr. Fool." In consideration that she would be providing him large amounts of gold, Alger's tone gradually turned pleasant.

Audrey replied with some understanding, "The simplest example is that at the Tarot Gathering on Monday, we'll first understand if there's a possibility of us bumping into another member, to the point of entering a conflict. Hence, we'll design a set of temporary gestures to identify ourselves. After the matter is over, we would immediately abandon that gesture. Uh, if there's any sudden situation and we're unable to communicate in time, or if there's some suspicion, we can seek an opportunity to pray to Mr. Fool to confirm if another member is participating in the same event?"

"Something like that." Alger let out a silent breath.

At that moment, Derrick suddenly said in enlightenment, “Sorry, I asked a foolish question. Mr. Fool never mentioned any gestures to thank ‘Him’ because he was worried about us exposing ourselves.”

He immediately looked to the end of the long bronze table.

“Your wish steers our path.”

I just thought of a special hand gesture… Klein chuckled and replied, “That’s right.”

He cast his gaze towards the other members and said in a composed manner, “Let us end today’s gathering here.”

“By your will!” All the members apart from The Moon stood up at the same time.

Emlyn froze for a second before standing up in a flurry, mimicking the bows of the other members.

A deep red light immediately appeared in front of his eyes, and he felt his body plummet slightly.

Soon after, his vision returned to normal and he saw dolls of various sizes in his room.

Phew… Only until this moment did Emlyn White completely calm down as he recalled his first Tarot Gathering.

Apart from Mr. Fool, the other members don’t seem too powerful. Could they be like me, chosen for various reasons? I have the Ancestor backing me, so who’s backing them?

What a joke. I originally imagined The Sun to be a demigod who just escaped the pursuit of an angel. It turned out that he’s only a Sequence 8 and seeking to advance to Sequence 7!

A child who doesn’t know manners definitely isn’t an adult yet! However, the City of Silver that he mentioned and the experiences that he had undergone are very strange. I have to find an opportunity to ask Lord Nibbs, no—I have to first ask Cosmi, as well as my parents. I'll see if they know anything about the City of Silver. Humph, how dare the history books of the City of Silver tamper with the feats of us Sanguine!

Miss Justice is from Backlund. She's very, very rich. Is she the daughter of some rich banker or the daughter of some noble? Perhaps she's a banker or noble herself…

Miss Magician looked at me very strangely. She must admire the lofty Sanguine. She doesn't speak much and didn't divulge much about herself. Yes, she's a quiet girl.

Mr. Hanged Man is a mature gentleman. He knows a lot and has a sublime character. He's willing to answer questions from new members and is willing to provide the corresponding help and information. It can be said that he's very popular. The Sun and The World are both willing to ask him questions and seek his help.

The World is quite an unlikeable person. When he speaks, it's like there's phlegm in his throat that he can't spit out. I would disdain even drinking such a person's blood. It has a dirty taste… He's very introverted and is good at hiding his emotions. Furthermore, he easily produced a Sequence 6 Beyonder characteristic and promised to provide a Psychiatrist Beyonder characteristic in two months… Very impressive!

As the details flashed through his mind, Emlyn discovered that the Tarot Club was simple, but also not very simple. Furthermore, Mr. Fool didn't interfere much with the development of the gathering.

"He" seems to only be interested in the so-called Roselle's diary… But "He" is willing to offer convenient services on the level of miracles to his members. At this thought, Emlyn couldn't help but feel a little proud of his identity as The Moon.

Surveying the room of dolls, he recalled his own problem.

A relic worth 4,000 to 5,000 pounds. A chance to become a baron in a short period of time. This is really putting me in a difficult position…

At this moment, although Emlyn hadn't made his final decision yet, he felt the room grow darker, as though he were shouldering a heavy debt.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein pressed his thumb and middle finger of his right hand to one temple and gently rubbed it.

He quickly sat up in the silent environment, allowing a small badge to fly out from the junk pile and land on the long bronze table in front of him. The badge was only the size of an eyeball. On the surface, there were symbols that symbolized "fate" and "concealment." It was the item that Klein had found on Lanevus's body.

On its back, it was inscribed with the words "You can join if you have this item" in ancient Hermes. It also provided the corresponding information for the gathering: "4 January 1350, 8 p.m. in Babur Valley."

The question Klein needed to consider now was whether he should take the badge to the Babur Valley tomorrow night to try his luck.

Frankly speaking, he was inclined to not delving deeper. Even though he had already advanced to Faceless and was able to put on a perfect disguise, he didn't want to take the risk, because he didn't know anything about the gathering.

A Magician never performs unprepared… He muttered softly, took out a gold coin, and held it between his fingers.

He picked up the badge with his other hand and muttered to himself, "It's risky to attend the gathering in Babur Valley."

After repeating this a few times, he finally flicked the gold coin.

The gold coin tumbled down and stood upright in the palm of his hand.

This meant that the divination had failed.

“As expected…” Klein wasn’t surprised.

This isn’t a problem of insufficient information, but rather the complete absence of it.

He sat there in silence, letting the gold coin weave between his fingers.

In the end, Klein overcame his curiosity and adventurous spirit and decided not to go.

But that doesn’t mean that I can’t get involved. Tomorrow at 8 p.m., hmm… He smiled faintly and returned to the real world.

†

4th January, 10:35 a.m.

Klein stood in front of a mahogany table and picked up a stack of bills.

There were five ten-pound notes and ten five-pound for a total of one hundred pounds. This was the payment which The Hanged Man had just paid via a sacrifice.

The fifteen notes made Klein’s wallet much fuller, and he was finally able to buy his ticket in peace.

Putting his wallet away, he picked up a thin human-skinned glove on the table and put it on his left hand.

One of the main features of “Creeping Hunger” was that it had a camouflage effect when it wasn’t in use and couldn’t be detected by most Beyonder means; therefore, Klein was able to switch between its original appearance, gloves of various colors, and camouflaging it as skin. This time, he chose black gloves.

To that end, Klein had specially prepared an individual black glove for his right hand.

Soon after, he placed the brown Biological Poison Bottle into a metal box, sealed it with a wall of spirituality, and stuffed it into the inside pocket of his clothes.

As for the Sun Brooch, as long as he wore it and carried it with him, it would create a hot summer feeling. Klein had no choice but to put it in his iron cigar case and hide it at the bottom of his suitcase.

9 purifying bullets, 15 demon-hunting bullets, 3 exorcism bullets… Klein took out his revolver and a cartridge box, silently counting as he loaded them.

Pa!

He closed the cylinder, inserted the revolver into his underarm holster, put on his black tweed coat and half top hat, picked up his cane and suitcase, and walked out of the hotel room.

Apart from the All-Black Eye and the other items that he couldn't use still being above the gray fog, he was fully armed.

Taking a carriage, Klein arrived at the Pritz Harbor Ticket Company located in White Rose Borough.

This company was located in a rather old three-story building. There was a wooden notice board on the door.

Klein walked over and stopped there. He casually glanced at the board which said:

"Things to take note:

"1. Maintain order. Lines are strictly enforced;

"2. Do not urinate or defecate, as well as spitting;

“3. Find the guard in the lobby if there is a dispute;

“4. Do not open canned wolf-fish in any of the rooms!”

Canned wolf-fish? What’s that? Klein raised his eyebrows.

Chapter 490 - Warning of a Former Sailor

◆

The lobby of the Pritz Harbor Ticket Company was rather spacious, with seven ticketing windows, but there were already a dozen or so people lined up in front of each.

Klein took a glance and didn’t directly go to the one with the fewest people. Instead, he took two steps to the right and arrived in front of an erected brown board.

There were many pieces of white paper pasted on the wooden board, announcing all the information about the recent week’s passenger ships, including their destinations, the ports they passed, and the prices of the different cabins.

Before Klein could take a closer look, a staff member came over and drew a red circle on the second-class cabin of one line, marking it with a single phrase: “Sold out.”

“So popular…” Klein sighed.

“Of course, Pritz Harbor is the kingdom’s largest port. Countless people pass through here to the Southern Continent and the colonial islands to seek out opportunities,” a middle-aged man who was standing next to the wooden board replied in a clearly boastful manner.

He was wearing a black bonnet and a black-and-white checkered uniform similar to that of the police, but he had no epaulets. All he had was a seagull badge hanging from his chest—exactly identical to the logo of the Pritz Harbor Ticket Company.

The middle-aged man's face, hands, and all of his exposed skin were bronze in color and rather rough. It was as if he had been exposed to the sea breeze and the sun for many years to the point of giving people the feeling that he had salt in his wrinkles.

Find the guard in the lobby if there's a dispute… This should be the guard… Klein remembered the things he had to pay attention to at the door. He didn't mind that the other party had taken the initiative to talk to him. He smiled and said, "You seem to understand this port very well?"

Hearing this question, the middle-aged man replied quite smugly, "I was once a sailor with the kingdom's navy, and their main base was located at Pritz Harbor's Oak Island. I served for fifteen years and spent a long time in the sea around here. If it wasn't for East Balam's war destroying my health, then I could be a sailor for another ten years! I know this port as well as I know my wife's body!"

A little cultured but also a little vulgar… Klein casually chatted with him, having the intention of asking about news on the sea.

"You became a guard here after retiring?"

"No, I was crammed into a night school for two whole years as a student and as a gatekeeper. Holy Lord of Storms, can you imagine the scene of someone my age reciting with a bunch of teenagers? And they know and remember words faster than I do!" The guard showed an expression that showed how unbearable it was to reflect on the past.

As he spoke, he patted his thigh and sighed.

"Unfortunately, my knees can't stand wet weather; otherwise, I would be a part-time teacher at night. Those kids will make you feel young, but I won't deny that it's because I want to earn more money. When you have a wife and four children, you have to realize that you have to support your family."

Sir, you talk a little too much… Maybe that's why the ticket company hired you as a guard… Klein smiled and didn't continue with the man's topic.

"I just saw the things to take note of at the door and found that canned wolf-fish are not permitted to be opened here. Frankly speaking, I've never heard of such a thing."

The guard's expression suddenly became complicated.

He pinched his nose and said, "It's a food that's popular in places like the east coast of Feysac and the Gargas Archipelago. It's wolf-fish pickled in salt, but it retains the blood, and the smell—the smell is very, very stimulating. It stinks and it's disgusting!"

It turns out to be a food of unknown origins… Klein laughed and said, "But I don't think anyone would specially eat canned food while waiting in line to buy a ticket, right?"

"No, you don't understand that feeling. Perhaps, one day you will." The guard showed a look of lingering fear. "There was once a barbarian from the north who came here to buy a ticket. As there were already many people lined up in front, causing the hall to look like a barrel filled with fish, he became very anxious, so he opened a can of wolf-fish. In less than ten seconds, only he and a few guys were left in the lobby."

This… this is a biological weapon… An ordinary version of my Biological Poison Bottle… Klein laughed.

"In the end, he successfully bought a ticket, and a new point to take note of was added outside?"

"The result wasn't as he expected. The lady and the gentleman in charge of ticket sales also escaped. Heh heh, as you know, the brains of barbarians are even worse than that of curly-haired baboons!" The guard chuckled. "When I was a sailor, there was a rumor at sea that a group of pirates controlled a merchant ship from Rolls. Ah, that's a city on the east coast of Feysac. In short, the pirates eagerly opened their spoils, but who knew that they were barrels filled to the brim with wolf-fish. Can you guess the outcome? They fainted, vomited, and lost their fighting power, and the crew received their bounty reward."

"Good story." Klein tried not to laugh.

He returned his gaze to the pieces of paper on the wooden board and searched for information for a ship scheduled to depart on 5th January.

As a professional, he had previously divined which date was suitable for setting sail on this week. It came out to be the 5th and 8th. And among the passenger ships that headed to the Rorsted Archipelago, the Saint Havre and the White Agate suited him the most.

There are still tickets, and the prices are about the same: four pounds for third-class, ten pounds for second-class, and thirty-five pounds for first-class… People who depend on the sea for survival more or less believe in the Lord of the Storms. Even in countries like Intis and Feysac, there are fishermen and crew who secretly believe in this forbidden deity, in a bid to be safe out at sea… The name Saint Havre originates from the Church of Storms. It has a certain background… Klein thought it over. He was inclined to choose the White Agate.

Not in a rush to make a decision, he turned to look at the guard.

"Do you know anything about the White Agate?"

The guard immediately smiled.

"Sir, you have a good eye. The White Agate is a steam-powered ship, but it also retains a sail. Its maximum speed is 16 knots.

"Also, the captain is very experienced. He was once the boatswain of the Royal Navy's William V. No—it should be the Imperial Navy. The king has always claimed that he obtained the title of Emperor in Balam. Heh, in the Imperial Navy, no matter how outstanding or excellent the average person is, he can at most become a boatswain. He cannot be an officer unless—unless you can satisfy your superior, regardless of what method is used! Only then can you be recommended to the Pritz Naval Academy as a reserve officer!

“This is how Elland was forced to leave the navy and ended up joining the White Agate where he slowly became Captain one step at a time.

“I suggest you choose a first-class cabin. That way, you’ll have rooms for three to four servants, an attendant who has received etiquette lessons, an appointed chef who has excellent culinary skills, a quiet restaurant where you can enjoy the scenery, a special room for smoking cigars, and a place where you can gather and play cards…”

Hearing the guard’s detailed explanation, Klein couldn’t help but feel suspicious.

Noticing his expression, the guard smiled in embarrassment.

“Elland was my boss in the past. He would often treat me to drinks and ask me to help him promote the first-class cabins. But you can rest assured that everything I say is true!”

This really isn’t the problem; it’s a problem with money… Klein silently said to himself.

Having made up his mind, he asked after some deliberation, “Sir, what advice do you have for a maritime adventurer?”

To suit Gehrman Sparrow’s identity, Klein had modified his image slightly to make himself seem colder and sharper.

“Adventurer?” The guard unconsciously raised his voice.

Many people in the queue turned to look at Klein.

Based on his spiritual intuition, Klein instinctively traced a line of sight.

He saw a man in his thirties wearing a black top hat. He had a boorish face, weather-beaten wrinkles, a strong but not tall body, and pale blue eyes that had experienced a lot.

Another adventurer? Klein and the man looked away just as their eyes met.

At that moment, the guard squeezed out a smile and said, “I’m sorry, I’m a bit too sensitive on the term adventurer. In my opinion, this is equivalent to a fugitive, a sea villain, and a person who goes against his pledges. No, I’m not talking about you.

“You want sincere advice? I… Uh, you have to remember three things.

“First, do not provoke pirates. Second, do not provoke pirates. Third, do not provoke pirates!

“Unless you’re a member of the navy or the Church, do not go against the pirates!”

“Eh… Don’t be fooled by the enthusiasm of the island girls. They’re either pirates or want you to take them to Pritz, to Backlund. It’s not entirely their fault. In order to cheat them of their bodies, many sailors, crew, and passengers paint them a very attractive metropolis and a very beautiful life, then kick them out of their beds and abandon them, leaving them in their original spots.”

What a bunch of vile people… In this era, people who live on the sea can’t be too kind… Is the order at sea that bad? Pirates are this rampant? Klein nodded and said, “Thank you, I know what to do now.”

Saying this, he walked over to the line with the least number of people.

Behind him, the guard shouted, “And the legends of treasure at sea are all fake!”

†

After buying a second-class ticket for the White Agate, Klein returned to the hotel and waited patiently for the night to descend.

In the process, he had enjoyed the most famous fried fish in the Pritz Harbor. He thought that the taste was pretty good, but he definitely couldn't accept eating it all the time.

When it was close to eight o'clock, he went above the gray fog, holding the badge from Lanevus in one hand and writing the corresponding sentence in the other.

"The situation of the gathering this time."

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. When his pocket watch struck eight, he closed his eyes, leaned back in his chair, and began to recite the divination statement.

He had reason to believe that when the door of the gathering opened, he would be able to divine something above the gray fog with the aid of this medium which had locked onto the location!

He had failed before because nothing had happened yet, but this was different. Things were happening now, and Klein had the right medium!

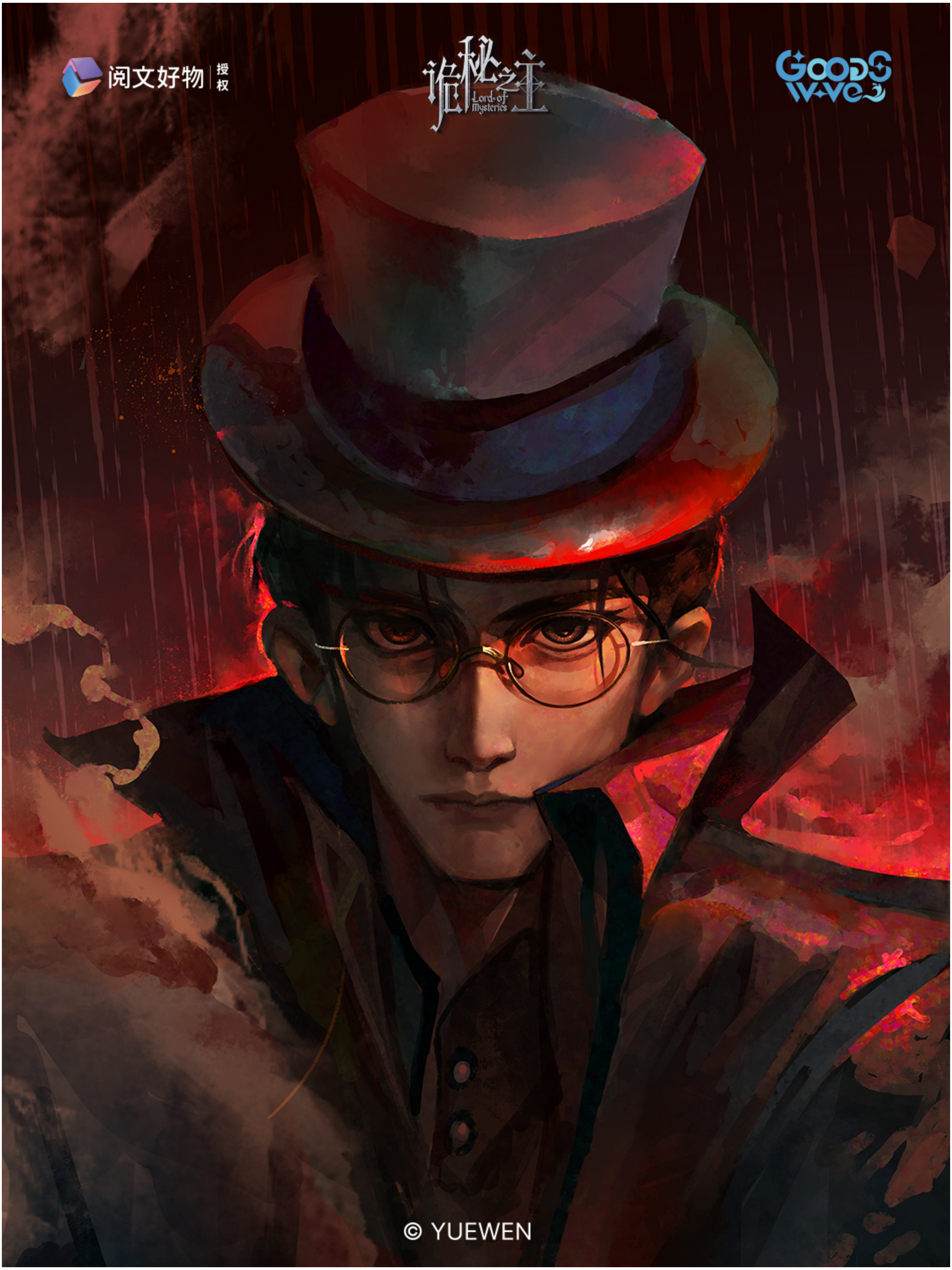
Soon, Klein entered a gray, blurry dream world.

He saw the Tussock River flowing quietly, a wide river valley on the two sides, and about a dozen people in different positions. They were shrouded in thin light, vanishing indistinctively or illusorily.

One of them had black hair and green eyes. He looked quite handsome, and he was a familiar face to Klein.

Leonard Mitchell!

Gehrman Sparrow potrait:


阅文好物 授权
诡秘之主
Lord of Mysteries
GOODS WAVE
© YUEWEN

Chapter 491 - The Sherlock Moriarty in the Investigation Report

◆ ◆ ◆

Leonard?

Klein thought for a moment that he was mistaken.

However, the blurring caused by the rays of light wasn't that serious. Being familiar with Leonard, he was able to quickly confirm his previous judgment.

In the time it took to take a breath, Leonard disappeared, the light dispersed, and the valley returned to its midwinter silence. The scene which Klein saw in the dream shattered as a result.

He opened his eyes and placed the badge he had obtained from Lanevus on the surface of the long bronze table.

Is it really Leonard, or a Faceless disguised as Leonard? Klein considered and flipped a gold coin.

His spirituality had told him through the medium that it was Leonard Mitchell, his teammate from the Tingen Nighthawks team!

Is he the "investigator" sent by the Church of the Goddess for the gathering, or is he risking his life to find an opportunity to find the revenge target while keeping the Nighthawks in the dark? Klein muttered to himself in suspicion. It was hard to make an accurate judgment.

And without any leads, his divination couldn't provide him with any revelations.

After a few seconds of silence, Klein gave a self-deprecating smile as he drew a crimson moon on his chest.

“I wish him the best of luck. May the Goddess watch over him.”

Klein no longer bothered with the problem, and he planned on understanding more about the gathering before deciding whether or not to participate in the future or to warn Leonard Mitchell anonymously.

†

Backlund, in a secret room in the basement of the Steam Cathedral.

Ikanser took off his hat, pressed down his fluffy but not soft hair, and sat in the first seat on the left.

Then, he took out the ancient silver mirror of Arrodes from an inner custom-made pocket in his clothes and placed it in front of him.

To his right, across him, and diagonally across him, were the Machinery Hivemind deacons and captains, all of whom had been summoned by the member of the Divine Council, the Archbishop of Backlund, Horamick Haydn, for a meeting.

The white-robed archbishop looked like an ordinary old man, sitting calmly at the end.

Seeing that everyone had arrived, he looked around and softly said, “Let’s start with Ikanser. Tell me in sequence about the investigation over the past few days.”

Ikanser Bernard pushed his hair while flipping through the thick document file, and he reported in a concise manner, “Your Grace, we were in charge of Sherlock Moriarty. After a careful investigation, and with the aid of Beyonder means, we confirmed that he was pulled into the matter. Prior to the incident, there was no evidence that he knew of Prince Edessak's problem.

"He and the dead Talim Dumont were friends, and he indirectly fulfilled some of the tasks entrusted to him by the prince, but there weren't many problems. At most, he had falsely made some fraudulent claims for his expenses."

At this point, Ikanser suddenly felt a little worried because Sherlock Moriarty was also an informant for the Machinery Hivemind, and his expenses here were likely to be somewhat exaggerated.

In any case, his job as an informant was very effective and very outstanding, enough to offset a lot of problems, and he hasn't become our informant for long. The money involved was mostly just from commissions… Ikanser exhaled slowly and continued to report, "Our conclusion is that he's considered an innocent party and that there is no hidden plot behind him. He once keenly noticed the danger of Red Rose Manor, but that is a typical example of coming to the correct conclusion from an incorrect deduction. He was afraid of the royal family's internal strife, and for this reason, he had been slow in his work and didn't do any substantial investigations. On this, he had reported it to us.

"Unfortunately, he still failed to avoid the matter, but he was lucky enough. He mentioned that the descendant of Death happened to be monitoring the vicinity of Red Rose Manor at the time; hence, he was rescued from the perilous situation when the meteorite fell. The signs at the scene are ample proof of how terrifying that strike was. It's likely due to 0-08."

Klein mentioned the existence of Ince Zangwill and 0-08 in his letter. As for whether or not he knew the former archbishop and the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, no one was concerned about it, because he was with Azik Eggers for some time. It was entirely possible that he learned the information from him. This was also a conclusion that everyone subconsciously came up with.

As for matters regarding Grade 0 and Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts, the seven orthodox churches constantly shared information of the rough situation with each other—the numbers were shared, and there was no repetition.

“…However, we haven’t been able to grasp the entire situation. There are three matters that aren’t confirmed. First, 2-111 indicates that after Sherlock Moriarty fled into the forest, he didn’t immediately escape far away. Instead, he stayed on the spot and prayed to someone. Second, it’s still unknown when he and Azik Eggers got to know each other. Third, it’s still unknown how he escaped the underground ruins. It’s unlikely that he could’ve done so with his strength. And in this process, he had even destroyed the descent ritual of the Aurora Order,” Ikanser finally concluded.

2-111 referred to the magic mirror, Arrodes.

Horamick laughed after he listened to the recount and muttered, “Fraudulent claims of expenses…”

He then cleared his throat.

“In any case, Sherlock Moriarty is a hero of Backlund.

“If he hadn’t stopped the ritual in time, and if he had been frightened at that moment and had chosen to flee, then most of us wouldn’t be alive sitting here.

“Moreover, he has also displayed his faith in God and his friendliness towards us. As long as there isn’t too much of a problem with him, then we can pretend that we don’t know anything about his tiny flaws and secrets.”

“Your Grace, this is what we were thinking as well.” Ikanser heaved a sigh of relief and said, “I guess his prayers in the woods, including the ritual of blowing the copper whistle, were to get in touch with Azik

Eggers. But the effects and speed can be different. In such a critical situation, the only thing he could do was to try to save himself, which is something that we deduced from the follow-up process."

"Apart from trying to save himself, he could write his will," another Machinery Hivemind deacon quipped before he immediately reported the portion he was responsible for. "…We haven't found the underground ruin which Sherlock Moriarty described, even with the help of 2-111. We're still temporarily unable to grasp the locations of the royal family's High-Sequence Beyonders on that very day."

"…It can be confirmed that the Church of Evernight received the information first. This came from a special channel of Earl Hall, but the specific situation is unknown."

"…Most of the forces of the Aurora Order in Backlund have been eliminated by us, the Nighthawks, and the Mandated Punishers. However, I suspect that they still have some hidden strength…"

"…At the time of the incident, Sherlock Moriarty mentioned that Trissy was heading to Backlund, but no one has seen her ever since. According to Sherlock Moriarty, she was a key figure and was renamed Trissy Cheek."

"…It cannot be determined what method the Church of Evernight used to capture the Demoness of Despair and the butler, Funkel. Results via divination tell me that they're still alive, but they aren't free."

†

One by one, the deacons and captains reported on their findings while Horamick half-closed his eyes, seemingly deep in thought.

After a few seconds of silence, he opened his eyes and slowly said, "Put all efforts into finding Trissy Cheek—if she's still alive.

"Pass me all the problems where divination has failed to provide any effective revelations. The Church has a Saint who is good at this, although it's not necessarily more effective than 2-111.

"As for the surveillance and investigation of the royal family's High-Sequence Beyonders, it can be tabled. There's no need to worry. They've always known what we've been doing. It's also a form of warning.

"Continue the search for the underground ruins and report it to the Evernight and Storm Churches.

"Ikanser, ask 2-111 how Sherlock Moriarty escaped the ruins, as well as when he got to know Azik Eggers."

Ikanser looked at the archbishop, then at his colleagues before gritting his teeth and said, "Yes, Your Grace."

He was sadly convinced that his legends were about to spread from just a few Machinery Hiveminds teams that he was in charge of to all the Beyonders of the Church of the God of Steam in Backlund.

After a very well-rehearsed process, he opened his mouth and said, "Honorable Arrodes, my question is: 'when did Sherlock Moriarty get to know Azik Eggers?'"

The silver mirror which seemed to have eyes on both sides suddenly started to glow with an aqueous light, quickly forming a scene:

Sherlock Moriarty stood in a room, watching a rat with a rotting belly burrow into a hole a wall. Behind him was Old Kohler and the owner of a budget hotel.

"He got to know Azik Eggers while completing the bounty mission for him. That mission was issued by MI9, which originated from a coincidental conflict." Ikanser interpreted the scene.

With that, he chose to answer the corresponding question. He held his breath as he waited for Arrodes to give the soul-piercing question.

As expected, he saw the bright red words: “Do you know the feeling of trying your best to win the favor of someone, but only to end up being abandoned without any progress?”

Th-this question isn’t sharp enough; it’s unlike Arrodes’s usual style… Ikanser suddenly felt that the blood on the mirror seemed to lack its usual horror and bloody sense. It appeared somewhat weak.

He didn’t bother to think about why and immediately opened his mouth to answer, “Yes.”

“Congratulations, you got it right.” A new line of text appeared on the surface of the silver mirror, its color was somewhat pale.

†

5th January, 9:00 a.m.

With a gray scarf around his neck, Klein arrived at Rose Wharf with his suitcase and cane.

The White Agate was docked there, unusually large compared to the height of a human. It was said to be capable of ferrying hundreds of passengers.

It had the rich characteristics of the age, with its chimneys, sails, and its twelve cannons on both sides of the ship—necessary for defending against pirates and other peers.

Under Captain Elland Kag’s arrangement, the chosen stocky sailors and crew lined up at the mouth of the gangway, some even deliberately revealing their legitimate revolvers, rifles, and knives.

This gave the passengers on board the boat a greater sense of security. They were no longer afraid of the journey that would take them nine days to complete.

Klein stood below, looked up, and climbed up the hanging ladder in the undulating blue water.

My travels begin… He took a step forward and sighed silently.

Chapter 492 - Adventurer

◆

As soon he stepped onto the deck and before he could enter the cabin, Klein saw a figure moving through the crowd towards him through the corner of his eye.

He looked over his shoulder with an air of indifference but hidden vigilance, and he saw a man in his thirties wearing a black half top hat and a trench coat of the same color.

The other party had a weathered face, looking boorish but extremely masculine. His light blue eyes didn't contain a smile, as if they were immersed in many past events.

He looks a little familiar… Right, he's that guy I noticed at the ticket office yesterday. He seems to be an adventurer as well… He's actually wearing a trench coat at sea in January. He's quite strong… While lifting his cane with ease and pointing diagonally downwards, Klein said with a smile, "Good morning, we meet again."

It was like he was greeting an old friend.

The boorish man, however, wasn't surprised. He stopped and nodded in a somewhat reserved manner, saying, "Cleves, a former adventurer.

"Mate, are you in the same trade?"

"I thought you knew yesterday. Gehrman Sparrow," Klein responded with a smile.

He didn't pass his cane to his left hand, because he didn't intend to shake Cleves's hand.

"I can tell." Cleves maintained two seconds of silence and said, "Being an adventurer isn't a beautiful profession. I've already switched careers and have become a bodyguard. This time, I'm accompanying my employer's family to the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago."

He half-turned and pointed to another spot on the deck.

Klein traced where he was pointing and saw nearly ten people gathered together. They were led by a plump middle-aged gentleman with ruddy cheeks and spirited eyes. On his double-breasted suit, Klein could see the gold chain from his pocket watch and a jeweled collar brooch.

Next to him was a lady in a wide-brimmed hat, her face completely hidden by the dark-blue muslin that hung down, and her figure wasn't too bad.

Standing in front of the couple were two children. The younger one was a boy who wasn't even ten years old. He was wearing a child's version of a tailcoat. The older one was 15 or 16 years old and was a lively and energetic teenage girl. Her looks couldn't be considered outstanding, but her pair of brown eyes were quite bright and intelligent. Her faint freckles and puffy dress added to her playfulness.

Around them were three people carrying suitcases and all sorts of items—a man and two women, all dressed as servants. One of the maids had brownish skin, clearly of Southern Continent heritage.

The bodyguards protecting the seven people were a man and a woman. They were dressed simply and neatly in white shirts, light sweaters, black coats, dark trousers, and sturdy leather boots.

The two bodyguards deliberately didn't hide the outlines created made by the gun holsters by their waists. They didn't relax as they inspected the approaching passersby. Their eyes were sharp and they were composed.

"Three servants and three bodyguards?" Klein asked casually.

This is quite an extravagant setup, which means that their employer is a rich person… Instinctively, he made his judgment.

"Yes." Cleves nodded.

Without another word, he quickly turned around and walked towards his employer's family.

"…"

Klein was stunned. He didn't know why Cleves had specially come to greet him for.

After recalling the novels, movies, and television dramas he had seen in his previous life, he gradually understood what Cleves was implying.

He's a little wary of me, or should I say of someone who claims to be an adventurer while not looking like someone to mess with, so he introduced himself in advance to indicate his identity and what his job is. It's to tell me to not have any plans regarding his employer's family. In short, "you do what you do, I do what I do, and we stay out of each other's business"… Is this the tacit understanding between experienced adventurers and veteran bounty hunters? Interesting… Klein chuckled. He carried his suitcase and black cane as he went into the cabin. With the help of his ticket, he found his own room.

With a creak, he pushed open the wooden door and walked in.

The room wasn't very spacious, just large enough to fit a bed, a table, and a cupboard. There weren't even any chairs.

Its greatest advantage was that it came with windows, The wharf's sunlight shone in, illuminating the table and bedside with pure golden spots.

A member of the crew mentioned that the washroom and bathroom are for public use, with about eight rooms sharing one. If someone urgently needs one, then they can provide a wooden toilet, but one must pay the cleaning fee of three pence each time… I have to be grateful that after the White Agate was renovated, it has many metal pipelines laid. Boilers are burning and hot water is being supplied, providing a relatively convenient way of life. Otherwise, my travels wouldn't be a pleasant one… Klein silently sighed.

He quickly took out his necessities and placed them on the table for daily use.

When he was tidying up the place, he sat down on the edge of the bed which wasn't too high, and he listened to the long whistle of the steam whistle. He felt the power that stemmed from steam and machinery contained within it.

When the ship began to set sail, Klein looked out the window at the sea and gradually withdrew his thoughts. He began to think about the most important thing that would happen next—the problem of how to act as a Faceless.

While facing the True Creator's descent ritual and the powerful Mr. A, the decision to give up trying to escape and attempt a sabotage act had allowed his potion to be digested a little. Based on this feedback, he gained some new insights into the acting requirements of a Faceless.

"You can disguise yourself into anyone, but you are ultimately yourself." This is the principle which Marionettist Rosago was made to remember… I originally imagined that "yourself" refers to my original identity, but from the looks of it, that's not the complete picture. What is considered as "yourself" requires serious thought… Klein leaned forward and bathed in the sunlight as though he was a thinking statue.

After a while, he came up with an idea.

Does this correspond to the spirit of one's identity, to their true identity deep down?

Even back on Earth, Zhou Mingrui had worn a lot of facades, which formed a social persona. In a sense, this was a big part of what wasn't real.

Yes… When I become someone else, I take over their identity. In order to not be discovered, I have to disguise myself socially, which is the same as wearing a different mask.

When all the masks are taken down, there will be none left. What kind of "yourself" does a Faceless see at the end of the day?

Is this the deeper meaning behind "yourself" in that principle?

When I face my inner thoughts, overcome my fear, and challenge the impossible without reasons stemming from society, am I really acting as myself?

This is to be explored and verified…

At this thought, Klein changed his position, trying to sit more comfortably.

Remembering everything that had happened before, he found another question regarding acting.

In the underground ruins, I disguised myself as Ince Zangwill and successfully escaped from my predicament, but why didn't I feel any signs of digesting the potion at all?

Does this imply that to digest the Faceless potion, a superficial disguise such as that isn't enough?

Yes, this is closer to the use of Beyonder powers and not acting!

What can stimulate the digestion of the potion is a disguise on a deeper level. Is it being a true substitute for a person, becoming that person on a social level? Only when his relatives and friends are unable to find him for a long period of time does it prove that his disguise was a success?

In that case, the reason why I feel harmony with the Faceless potion is because I had previously disguised myself as Klein Moretti?

The first principle of Faceless is that you can disguise yourself as anyone, but you are ultimately yourself… The second principle is to have a disguise on a deeper level that fools everyone?

But to replace a person and become that person in a societal sense is quite evil just thinking about it…

Don't tell me that I have to find those kinds of people who have died in a foreign land but have a wish that has yet to be fulfilled?

Klein eased his baffling horror, and he drew up an initial direction for his acting attempts.

The higher the Sequence, the more difficult it is to act… He sighed, took out his pocket watch, and checked the time.

Since it was still too early for lunch and the room was too small and cramped, he decided to take a walk on the deck and enjoy the scenery amidst the sea breeze.

After the excitement of the first hour of the voyage, there weren't many people left on deck. Klein walked along the side of the ship, arriving at a secluded area with large shadows.

It's a warm, sunny day… Other than the strong winds which might steal my hat, there are no shortcomings… He pressed the half top hat on his head and leisurely surveyed the cabin, listening to the faint sounds of music coming from inside.

Suddenly, he saw the former adventurer, Cleves, busying himself around the corner. In front of him seemed to be a triangular blade, a dagger, and a short knife.

Cleves sensed this and raised his head to look at him. Keeping a well-seasoned demeanor, he said in a taciturn manner, “We’re all old mates, and we have to maintain them frequently.”

At this point, he added, “There are children in the cabin.”

“Understood.” Klein smiled in response.

Cleves lowered his head and continued to busy himself. He casually asked, “You don’t seem to have these things with you?”

“I’m used to using weapons that keep abreast with the times,” Klein said vaguely. “And I frequently do maintenance.”

Cleves silently raised his dagger, looked at it against the sunlight, and said to himself, “At sea, guns alone aren’t enough.

“Pirates will board ships, and there will be a lot of people. After you finish shooting your bullets, you won’t have the opportunity to reload again. Although these guys no longer keep abreast with the times, they’re still useful enough.”

Very professional… As expected of a former adventurer… Klein leaned against the side of the boat and said half-jokingly, “If there really are pirates boarding the ship, I’m more likely to choose not to fight back.”

Cleves turned his head and stared at him for a good three seconds before retracting his gaze. Then, as he packed up his things, he said in a low voice, “It seems that you don’t need me to remind you. You’ve already understood the rules of the sea.

“The bounty hunters who travel the earth are often unable to be adventurers at sea.”

He skillfully hid the dagger, short knife, and triangular blade under his clothes, which dazzled Klein.

“Thank you.” Klein smiled and nodded.

Without speaking any further, Cleves turned around and returned to the cabin, leaving behind only his broad and deep back.

Klein smirked, shook his head, and turned his gaze to the side of the ship.

Blue waves gently rose up and down, and silvery-white flying fish occasionally leaped out of the water and soared in the air.

This fish can “fly” and swim. They’re considered the family of the Lord of Storms by fishermen and sailors, so even if they were caught by nets, they’re returned to the sea… Klein was leisurely admiring the surface of the sea under the sunlight, as well as the flying fishes above the surface of the sea. An uncontrollable thought flashed through his mind.

Hmm, I wonder how good their meat is…

Chapter 493 - Hunting

◆

“Honorable Arrodes, my second question is: ‘How did Sherlock Moriarty escape from the ruins?’” Ikanser’s mood was a lot more relaxed than before.

The surface of the silver mirror shimmered, rapidly outlining Sherlock Moriarty leaning his back against the wall, his fists clenching and tightening.

Then, Ikanser Bernard and the surrounding Machinery Hivemind deacons and captains saw the private detective’s exaggerated smile before turning around and dashing out with his gun drawn.

At this moment, under the influence of the composed scene, they all felt an inexplicable sense of sadness and excitement.

The image in the mirror jumped, revealing Sherlock Moriarty wielding his revolver as he shot at the altar to no avail. The scene of those disintegrating bullets caused everyone present to be a little worried.

Then, Sherlock Moriarty threw out a brass key, and the altar showed signs of instability due to corruption.

With the erupting air blast, Mr. A fell to the ground and Sherlock Moriarty pathetically fled out of the temple building.

At this point, the image changed to have the slightly turbid Tussock River as the main background. Sherlock Moriarty and Mr. A floated in the water, looking up into the sky where there were no clouds or fog.

Almost instantly, Mr. A. became transparent and disappeared, leaving only Sherlock Moriarty looking around in astonishment.

"…The Church of Evernight's reinforcements?" Ikanser said with a frown. "Unfortunately, he didn't mention what appeared in his letter. We have no way of guessing. Was he trying to sell this secret for a good price, or was he simply affected by it and lost the relevant memories? Also, his experience of escaping from the underground ruins doesn't show anything. It seems like the corresponding clues have been concealed at the same time…"

He analyzed it quickly, in procedural sentences, and then without too great a psychological burden, he chose to answer with reciprocity instead of taking a risk.

Arrodes doesn't seem to be in the mood to be a prankster today. I can make the most of it… In his self-consolation, Ikanser saw bloody words appear on the surface of the mirror.

With a skip of his heartbeat, he had a bad premonition, suspecting that Arrodes had already recovered to his usual "state."

The blood-like words wiggled and quickly formed into a question:

"Who was the person you gave your all to while trying your best to win the favor of, only to end up being abandoned?"

With his head buzzing, Ikanser's face drained of all its color before flushing red.

The question pierced a deep wound in him while leaving him at a loss as to what to do.

If I mention who he is, then his reputation would be ruined before tonight… I've already become a kind of "legend" in some sense… Ikanser swallowed his saliva with great difficulty and bitterly said, "I choose punishment."

A bolt of lightning immediately descended. However, it was different from before. It was no longer silvery-white and had been dyed with slight green.

It hit him right on the head, causing his hair to stand on end and flash with the color of lightning.

He shook violently like shaking dice, as though he had been drugged with a hallucinogenic drug.

Archbishop Horamick sighed, closed his eyes, and muttered to himself, “A Grade 0 Sealed Artifact?”

When Ikanser recovered, he looked around and said, “There’s one more question. Where did the key that Sherlock Moriarty used to destroy the descent ritual come from?

“Which one of you is going to use 2-111?”

All the Machinery Hivemind deacons and captains looked at each other. For a moment, no one responded.

†

The sound of water splashing against the ship’s hold seemed to be the only sound left in the world. The sea at night was both noisy and quiet.

Klein suddenly woke up and opened his eyes. He saw the wooden ceiling covered with a crimson moon veil.

His spiritual intuition told him that there was something happening outside.

Is someone having a rendezvous? He tilted his head to listen, vaguely able to hear some unnatural sounds.

He sat up, put on his gloves, and put on his coat.

His eyes turned dark as he took out a gold coin, flipped it, and quickly performed a divination.

After receiving no revelations of danger, he took out the revolver under his pillow and put it in his pocket.

After making the appropriate preparations, Klein opened the door and walked out of the room, following the sound to the upper deck.

At this moment, at sea, away from the industrial pollution, the crimson moon quietly hung there, mysterious and dreamy.

After carefully bypassing a few patrolling crew members, Klein arrived at the area where there was a commotion. He could smell the faint scent of blood.

With the help of the moonlight, he looked over and saw the former adventurer, Cleves, squatting to the side of the ship and setting up something.

There were three people hiding in the shadows of the cabin about a dozen meters away from this gentleman. One of them was a companion of Cleves, the female bodyguard in the black coat, and the remaining two were the children of their employer, a girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age and a young gentleman of no more than ten years of age.

The two youngsters wore thick cotton nightgowns and outer coats. It was obvious that they had come out in a hurry.

They trembled amidst the chilling night wind, but they still squatted there full of energy and vigor, looking at Cleves with their bright eyes.

Playing hide and seek? Klein joked inwardly.

He purposely increased the volume of his footsteps, causing Cleves and the others to turn their gaze towards him.

"Friend, what happened?" Klein recalled the expressions of some bounty hunters he knew in East Borough.

But he still maintained Gehrman Sparrow's unique identity of being cold and sharp.

Cleves replied, unperturbed, "A private job, a hunt that came by accident, but one that's worth looking forward to."

A Hunt? Klein's interest was suddenly piqued.

The reason he had named himself Gehrman was that it represented the first hunter of a game he had played in his previous life, and it suited his idea of hunting evil at sea.

Klein was in no hurry to inquire about the reason. Using his left hand which wore Creeping Hunger, he pointed at the shadow next to him with his left finger, "Private job? Doing a private job in front of your employer?"

Cleves, who was squatting there, glanced at the boy and the girl and said, without changing his tone, "Cecile wasn't careful enough and ended up waking Donna and Denton up. She had no choice but to let them follow."

The girl called Donna wrinkled her nose when she heard her name mentioned. She curiously looked up and asked Klein, "Uncle, are you also an adventurer?"

Uncle? Even if it's the me from Earth, I'm at most 10 years older than you! Klein said in amusement, "No, you can't use the word 'also.' Strictly speaking, I'm the only adventurer here; they're just bodyguards right now."

He turned to Cleves and said, "Hey. Mate, what prey did you discover?"

Cleves looked into the faint crimson waters and said, "A murloc."

Murloc? That's a Beyonder creature! Even though it's of the lowest grade, it's still quite difficult for ordinary people to deal with them. They would need at least five to six people and four to five spears to have a chance… That's right, the scales on a murloc's body are very hard. Revolvers can only deal a little damage. They need to have a rifle… Klein raised his eyebrows and asked, "What do you plan on doing? And how are you sure it's a murloc?"

Cleves pointed to the edge of the ship and said, "There are traces of its body's mucus here. One to two hours ago, it tried to climb onto the ship to attack the passengers, but the deck was still bustling with activity and there were lots of sailors and crew."

Klein took a few steps forward and saw that there were some traces of green corrosion on the side of the ship.

He recalled the information he had come into contact with in Tingen City, and it coincided with the content in the books. He asked with great interest, "Why must it be one, and not a group?"

He remembered that murlocs had a tendency to live together.

"If it's a group, then they'll directly destroy the ship's hull and let everyone sink. Moreover, the area around this channel and the surrounding sea have already been cleared of murlocs. The Church of Storms really enjoy hunting them," Cleves solemnly explained.

That's because murlocs are probably one of the main ingredients of the Sequence 9 Sailor potion… Klein stroked the revolver in his pocket and asked with a smile, "Are you confident?"

Cleves didn't directly answer him and instead opened a paper bag beside him. Inside the bag were some pig organs still stained with blood. This was the source of the smell of blood that Klein noticed.

"All murlocs like this kind of food and are unable to resist its allure. Of course, these monsters love human organs the most, so in many sea legends, it's emphasized to prepare some pig or beef organs from the ship's kitchen or canned organs," Cleves said as he sprinkled some granules. "Pepper granules can cause the murlocs to feel the excitement of smoking marijuana and lose some of their sense of balance. This can last for about a minute, and after that, the murlocs will be exhausted after the high state of excitement has subsided."

He then took out a wooden box from his clothes and placed the dark green paste on the tip of the triangular blade, dagger, and short knife.

"The mint cream that's popular in Pritz Harbor is a unique sweetener for humans, but in the eyes of the murlocs, it's a deadly blood toxin.

"In addition, I borrowed two rifles from the sailors. I got an agreement to not disturb this area for twenty minutes, and I spent a sizable sum of money. However, as long as I can successfully kill a murloc, then I'll be able to reap ten, twenty, or even thirty times the cost."

As expected of an experienced adventurer, he's exceptionally aware about the weaknesses and problems of his prey… Listening to him speak, I feel like they have a chance of successfully hunting the murloc, even if they aren't Beyonders… In the face of traps and firearms, Low-Sequence Beyonders really aren't much stronger than the average person… It's not like there are no Low-Sequence Beyonders who die in gang wars… However, murlocs are creatures that seem to wear full-body armor. It's not easy to kill them. They would be injured, but it's not like they can't escape… Klein curiously asked, "You seem to have killed quite a number of murlocs?"

"Understanding the characteristics of common sea monsters is a prerequisite for an adventurer's survival." Cleves didn't show the joy of being praised as he remained calm and silent.

As they conversed, the girl, Donna, and the boy, Denton, squatted in the shadows and listened with relish. They found all of this to be the most interesting thing in the world.

Yes, I also need to brush up on my studies in this area… Klein smiled and said, “So that’s how it is. I didn’t disturb you, did I?”

Cleves pierced a portion of organs on a rod and said with a deep voice, “If you want to participate, take care of Donna and Denton so that Cecile won’t be distracted.”

“Sure.” Klein, who wanted to watch from the sidelines, smiled and agreed.

Chapter 494 - A Bite of Murloc

◆

The red moon hung high in the sky as Klein walked over to Donna and Denton and squatted down beside them.

Cecile, the female comrade of Cleves, let out a sigh of relief. She picked up the rifle on the deck, bent down, and quickly walked in another direction. She opened up a distance of about ten meters from the peppered pig's organs.

"Uncle, is it starting?…" The mischievous, freckled teenage girl, Donna, suddenly felt a little nervous. However, her face was filled with curiosity and anticipation.

Klein raised his left index finger to his mouth, motioning for the two young ones to be quiet.

At times like this, he couldn't help but thank Roselle. It was because of the efforts of this transmigration senior that some of his habitual gestures had become common body language in the Northern Continent, so it wouldn't lead to misunderstandings.

It was said that in the early part of the Fifth Epoch, this "don't talk" gesture was an insult in Loen. But in certain parts of the Southern Continent, it means "kiss me"… Klein's mind was a little distracted for a moment.

Donna and Denton didn't dare to say anything else. They just squatted there quietly, watching with rapt attention as Cleves prepared for the battle.

The former adventurer picked up a rod and threw the thread with some pig organs hanging from it over the side of the ship.

With a splash, the bait entered the water.

Calmly dispersing the remaining organs, Cleves wielded his weapon and retreated, step by step, to hide in the shadows opposite Cecile. The two of them formed an angle of about 60 degrees to the side of the ship where the rod was being supported.

Leaning his triangular blade and other weapons, he raised his rifle and tried to take in the feeling of aiming.

The deck had completely quietened down, leaving only the operating sound of the steam engine and the crashing of waves against the ship.

As the minutes ticked by, Donna and Denton couldn’t help but switch from squatting to sitting, with their backs against the planks of the cabin, trying to soothe the paralysis in their legs.

At that moment, they saw the rod on the side of the boat sink a little.

The muffled sound of friction rapidly grew closer and closer. Suddenly, a figure jumped onto the deck.

It was a monster bathed in crimson moonlight. Its entire body was covered in dark green scales, and there was a green slime flowing around it.

It didn’t have much in common with humans. It was like a giant fish that had grown four strong limbs, and there was obvious webbing in the cracks of its limbs.

The murloc was more than 1.9 meters tall, with round eyes and gills on its cheeks. It looked like demons from legends, making Donna cover her mouth to prevent herself from screaming.

At the same time, she covered the mouth of her brother, Denton, as well.

Good thinking… Klein smiled to himself as he carefully examined the murloc.

Unlike the Sailor Rampager he had seen before, real murlocs didn't have human-like brains. They were pure monsters.

The murloc vigilantly scanned the surroundings before squatting down. It picked up the scattered pig organs, quickly stuffed them into its mouth, and produced clear chewing sounds.

The light in its mainly white eyes gradually faded, as if it had fallen into a dream.

It's of low intellect… Klein shook his head and made his judgment.

Bang!

Cleves pulled the trigger, and a bullet flew out from the rifle. It instantly struck the murloc's chest, causing its scales to shatter and blood to splatter.

"Wa!" The merman let out a cry which sounded like a child, and it threw itself at Cleves, who was hidden in the shadows. It was as fast as a steam train.

At this moment, Cecile, who was in another position, opened fire as well.

Bang!

The bullet from the rifle struck the murloc's ribs, causing many scales to scatter and the tall figure to stagger.

The murloc, who had eaten the pepper granules, became visibly sluggish. It stopped, unsure of which enemy to attack first.

And this gave Cleves and Cecile a chance to calmly reload.

They took aim again and pulled their triggers.

Bang! Bang!

The sprays of blood bloomed in succession, the pain caused the murloc's eyes to regain its lucidity.

It flipped and pounced, dodging the follow-up shots, and closed in on Cleves as if it were unhurt.

Cleves methodically put down the rifle in his hand and picked up the triangular blade that was leaning to his side.

Instead of dodging, he leaped forward and rolled to the side of the murloc. The triangular blade in his hand ruthlessly and accurately pierced into the area where the scales on the side of his prey were shattered.

The murloc spun around abruptly, bringing with it a gust of wind. It forcefully threw the triangular blade along with Cleves out, causing the former adventurer to crash onto the deck.

The murloc shook its head, as though sensing an intense discomfort. It didn't attack Cleves and Cecile again, but instead, took large strides to the side of the ship in an attempt to jump into the sea.

Bang!

Cecile's bullet hit it again, creating blood to blossom again, but it still didn't make it become immobile.

With two steps, the murloc reached a suitable spot. It bent its knees and prepared to jump up.

However, its body was too weak to exert its full strength. The distance it had jumped was obviously not enough, so it could only land on the inner side of the ship.

Bang!

The murloc bore the brunt of the damage and tried to flip over the side of the ship.

Seeing it almost escaping, Klein took out his revolver.

Just then, a loud bang came from another direction!

The murloc's left eye turned into a bloody hole, and one could vaguely see a pale gelatinous substance squirming inside.

It wasn't dead yet. It lay on the floor of the deck, trying its best to crawl and get up again.

After a few seconds, the poison took effect and it twitched to its death.

Klein traced the sound and saw a middle-aged man step out of the shadows on the other side of the cabin.

The middle-aged man was wearing a thick dark red coat and white slacks. He was wearing the standard ship-shaped hat of this era.

He was holding an iron-colored musket that was a relic of the times as white smoke billowed out of its thick black muzzle.

Klein had heard the attendant introduce the man before, and he knew the man. He was the captain of the White Agate, Elland Kag.

With obvious wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, his forehead, and the corners of his mouth, Elland walked towards Cleves and said with a smile, "As a captain, I must ensure that no accidents happen.

"Forgive me for watching by the side all this time."

Cleves had already stood up. He didn't betray his emotions.

"This is your ship.

"According to convention, you have the right to share in the spoils."

Elland turned his head to look at Klein and others and said with a smile, “The next resupply of water and food is in two days time. You’ll have to think of a way to preserve the murloc’s corpse.

“How about this, sell it to me at a cheaper price; the difference is the reward I deserve.”

“This is the best solution.” Cleves and Cecile exchanged glances and agreed to Elland’s request. “For 130 pounds, it’s all yours.”

The murloc Beyonder ingredient has a market price of 150 to 200 pounds. Considering the other parts with spirituality, 130 pounds is indeed cheap… However, this is the only thing Cleves and Cecile can do. This is Elland’s ship, and he had a large group of armed sailors and crew to help him. If the negotiations break down, they could sink everyone here into the sea within minutes… Of course, that’s under the premise that I don’t involve myself… Yes, it can be seen that Cleves and Cecile aren’t Beyonders, at least not Beyonders of the combat and shooting domains. As for Elland, I find it suspect… Klein stood up and listened to the deal.

“No, you seem to have misunderstood something. I’m not threatening you. 150 pounds. That’s a fair price.” Elland Kag called for a sailor and gave him the key to the safe.

“You are the ‘Just Elland’?” Only then did Cecile seem to recall his title on the sea.

Elland laughed and said, “Yes.”

At this moment, Donna and Denton, stunned by the intense battle and the living monster, jumped to their feet and ran over to the murloc in excitement and fear.

“Is… is it really dead?” Donna kicked the murloc’s body with her toe, then she jumped away and hid behind her younger brother as if she were afraid it would revive.

“It really is a monster!” Denton took a deep breath and opened his eyes wide.

“There are many monsters at sea. Apart from having four limbs and being able to stand, murlocs have no similarities to humans.” Elland smiled gently.

He squatted down and took out a knife, slicing the cheek beneath the murloc’s eye, revealing white, tender skin that was tainted with some red.

“The most delicious part of a murloc’s body is suitable for eating it raw.” Elland carefully sliced a piece of flesh and handed it to Donna. “You remind me of my daughter. Unfortunately, she’s grown up and has a family of her own.”

“I-I don’t dare to eat it…” Donna said, looking at the thin sliver of flesh held at the tip of the knife.

“Haha, which one of you wants to try?” Elland laughed and looked around.

After confirming that there were no warnings from his spiritual intuition, Klein nodded.

“I’m very curious.”

Elland immediately handed him the knife.

“Give it a try. On land, even nobles may not necessarily have a chance to eat it.

“These murlocs are fish monsters. They can be understood as a mutated type of fish.”

He was trying to dispel the siblings’ fears.

Klein wanted to ask if there was any wasabi, soy sauce, or any other condiments, but seeing that the other party didn’t mention it, he was afraid to appear ignorant.

He took the knife, bit into the bloody flesh, and swallowed it.

It was a feeling of flesh that instantly melted in his mouth. The taste of blood was very faint, giving it an appropriate salty taste. It perfectly set off the fresh and sweet taste of the meat.

Klein chewed twice, taking in the deliciousness of the tenderness and freshness of the fish meat. It was the first time in his life that he was experiencing something like that.

“Excellent.” He wasn’t stingy with his praises as he gave a thumbs up.

Donna watched the whole thing with curiosity, suddenly interested in the flesh on the murloc’s cheek.

This overwhelmed her fear and disgust, and she suggested the idea of trying.

Elland fulfilled her request and smiled as he watched her tightly close her eyes as her face scrunched into a grimace as she bit into the meat.

Donna’s expression gradually relaxed, and she quickly opened her eyes. She excitedly praised, “An indescribable delicacy!”

She spurred things into action as Denton, Cecile, and the others shared the little chunk of cheek meat. Eating it satisfied them, but it also made them dissatisfied. They were satisfied with the taste, but were dissatisfied with the quantity.

Seeing that Elland had eaten the last piece, Cleves pointed at the murloc’s body and said, “The meat around the ribs is suitable for frying, while the belly meat should be roasted. The other parts taste bad.”

“I share your thoughts,” Elland said with a chuckle. “I’ll have the chef prepare it immediately. On such a night, we should enjoy good food and wine together and exchange the legends at sea. It’s a very enjoyable matter.”

I’m looking forward to it… However, why did a perfectly fine hunt turn into a delicacy exchange… Klein swallowed his saliva.

Chapter 495 - Legend of Treasure

◆

Above the deck, there was an extra layer of asbestos beneath the grill to prevent the coal sparks from being blown out by the wind and scorching the surface of the ship.

The fat cook, wearing an apron and a tall white hat invented by Roselle, used a fine brush to constantly apply a seasoning created from a secret recipe—basil, fennel, sea salt, pepper, and lemon juice—to the long, white strips of fish, and frequently flipped them over to ensure that both sides were evenly heated.

The flesh of the murloc's belly was fatty, dripping with drops of oil and causing the coal beneath the iron mesh to sizzle and flare up.

An enticing aroma began to fill the air, and Klein inhaled again and again.

In front of him was a round table and a chair. On top of the table was a unique looking bottle of wine. The wine was golden red in color and seemed slightly sticky as it swirled about.

"Sonia blood wine is brewed from the sugar-wood juice found in the surrounding areas of Golden Spring. It tastes like thin honey mixed with blood. It's sweet and smooth, but it's very easy to get drunk on. If you fancy any lady and want to treat her to a drink, you can consider this. It will make her drink more without realizing it. Haha, that's under the premise that you're able to handle the amount of alcohol she's drinking." Noticing Klein's scrutiny, Captain Elland Kag introduced in a half-joking manner.

As expected of a former boatswain, he's accomplished when it comes to self-deprecation… Klein sat down and maintained a cold attitude as he asked, "A qualified adventurer wouldn't indulge in alcohol."

Cleves, who was beside him, nodded.

"Only when they return home will adventurers allow themselves to drink."

"What a pity." Elland turned to look at Donna and Denton who were staring curiously at the blood wine. He laughed and said, "This isn't something that underaged children should experience."

"I've had it before, it tastes really good!" Donna retorted immediately. "It's just… It's just that I fell asleep without realizing it and slept an entire afternoon…"

"I remember that you drank two cups that time!" the little gentlemen, Denton, said enviously.

Elland didn't satisfy their cravings and instead ordered a cup of sweet iced tea for each of the siblings and casually explained, "There are a lot of Southerners on this ship."

Denton retracted his disappointed gaze and looked at the murloc which had its valuable materials taken away. He said rather innocently, "Actually… Actually, it's not that scary. It's just a bigger, uglier fish with four limbs!"

Donna shot a glance at her younger brother.

"Congratulations, you've finally recognized the essence of it."

She then looked eagerly at Cleves and Elland.

"Uncle, Uncle, are there many of these monsters in the sea?"

Murlocs didn't possess Beyonder powers which were beyond one's imagination. In the eyes of ordinary people, they were akin to ferocious beasts at sea or a living example of legendary monsters.

Elland chuckled and said, “No, in the main sea route and the surrounding seas, there are very few monsters like this. They’ve been cleared out a long time ago. You must be lucky enough to meet a murloc.

“Think about it, if I can often kill monsters worth 200 pounds or more, then I certainly wouldn’t be the captain of a passenger ship. I’d organize my own hunting boat to chase down these gold pounds!”

That makes a lot of sense! Klein secretly cheered him on.

According to his observation, the Beyonder ingredient from a murloc was its bladder. That azure aqueous light made one feel like they were looking at a gem.

Cleves raised the black tea which a sailor had just delivered. He first smelled it before taking a sip.

“Only by leaving the main sea route and going deep into the ocean, which is often shrouded in fog or storms, will there be a good chance of encountering such monsters, but that would be very dangerous.

“Apart from scaly murlocs who can climb, there are also legends at sea of Nagas that have the upper body of a human while their bottom half is that of a snake. They have six arms and are very agile.”

Elland continued on the topic.

“There are also giant octopuses which can spit out juices that can corrode a lot of people, terrifying sea monsters that can flip a boat with a gentle blow, mermaids with intoxicating songs that make one unwilling to leave, blue giant dragons that can produce lightning, giant birds with wings that can cause hurricanes. Heh heh, I’ve never seen any of these before. They’re all legends of the sea, and no one knows whether they’re real or fake.”

Mermaids… Klein’s expression didn’t change.

“Very interesting,” Donna exclaimed, fascinated with a look of longing.

Denton looked around, and seeing that Klein hadn’t spoken, he curiously asked, “Uncle, you’re an adventurer too. Have you seen such monsters before?”

Klein was stunned for a moment and then gave a faint smile.

“Once. Back then, there were five of us, and we chanced upon a… a single murloc. After an intense fight, we finally finished it.”

This was a real experience of his in Tingen City; it was also his first encounter with an official Beyonder who had lost control.

At that time, he and Old Neil had helped to eliminate a mutated Sailor at the request of Swain, the old owner of the Evil Dragon Bar.

Thinking of this, Klein felt nostalgic and wistful. The cold and sharp expression on his face couldn’t help but soften significantly.

“Five people?” While asking, Donna secretly counted the number of people who had been involved in the battle.

1, 2, 3… She discovered that only three people had taken action to kill the murloc.

Without waiting for Klein’s response, Elland said with a hint of surprise, “A chance encounter?”

“Yes,” Klein answered frankly.

“Were there any casualties?” Elland pressed.

Klein shook his head.

“A few minor injuries”

“A chance encounter and you only took five people to finish a murloc…

All of you are very powerful.” Cleves gave his own evaluation.

His companion, Cecile, nodded to express her astonishment.

The battle that had happened just now was brief and quick, and the murloc seemed easy and vulnerable, but she and Cleves both knew very well that without the pre-prepared bait, the hallucinatory effects of the pepper granules and the subsequent fatigue, the murloc’s fatal weakness of mint cream, and the two borrowed rifles, it was impossible to imagine how many people would die in order to kill a murloc.

“Indeed, very powerful.” Elland looked thoughtfully at Klein.

It was a team formed of four Sequence 9s and a Sequence 8… Klein said with a half-smile and a half-sigh, “At that time, I was still very young, and I didn’t even have any experience in combat. I was purely support.”

“Uncle, you’re still very young!” Donna nodded her head vigorously.

I like what you said… Klein keenly noticed that Captain Elland had relaxed a lot from what he had just said.

At this moment, several crew members had brought over a large ceramic plate. On top of it were pieces of meat that had been fried to a golden hue. The basil leaves were sprinkled with color, and a captivating fragrance assaulted their noses.

Elland raised his glass of Sonia blood wine and offered a toast.

“To a beautiful night. May the Storm be with us!”

“To a beautiful night!” Donna and Denton cheered and sipped their sweet iced tea.

Klein chose to clink glasses with a cup of black tea.

He forked a piece of meat from the murloc’s ribs, finding it firm and without fat. However, after absorbing the vegetable oil, its flaw of being too dry was remedied. As he chewed, it emanated an limitlessly chewy consistency and fragrance.

It's really inferior to the cheek meat, but it's already good enough. It's better than all the fish I've eaten while in Backlund and Pritz Harbor… Klein praised in satisfaction.

Elland put down the knife and fork in his hands, took a sip of Sonia blood wine, and sighed at the topic.

"At sea, the greatest danger doesn't stem from the monsters but those pirates.

"They helm their ships, going wherever they please. No one can defend against them in advance."

"Uncle Captain, will we encounter pirates?" Denton asked with concern as he swallowed the fried fish.

Elland laughed.

"The route to the Rorsted Archipelago is the safest in the world, with colonial islands en route every two to three days, allowing us to dock. The route is also patrolled by ships from the Imperial Navy and the Church of Storms.

"Even if pirates come wandering here, they wouldn't do anything too excessive. After seeing our cannons, they would at most extort some compensation."

Seeing that the two underaged children had calmed down, Elland added, "But from the south of the Rorsted Archipelago, or as we continue east, we'll have to rely on the Lord's blessing.

"Many pirates are active in these areas, playing hide and seek with the ships of the navy and Church. If we're lucky, we'll be able to reach the Southern Continent and every destination very smoothly. But if we aren't lucky, we'll encounter some relatively powerful pirates, including the fleet of the Seven Pirate Admirals and even the Four Kings.

“However, you don’t have to be too worried. Ever since Nast became the King of the Five Seas and enacted the rules of sea passage, most pirates will only rob you clean of your wealth, without doing anything too overboard.

“Around this area, we’re most afraid of encountering the captain of the Black Tulip, Admiral Hell Ludwell. He’ll get his subordinates to kill everyone on board, throwing the innocents into hell. Next would be Admiral of Blood Senor. He loves blood, and he allows his subordinates to partake in heinous acts. Many girls have suffered under them before being sold to different islands…”

Donna trembled as she subconsciously changed the topic.

“I heard that there are a lot of treasures at sea!”

“There are legends of treasures, but most of them are fake.” Elland glanced at Cleves and said, “There are six stories which are the most famous. Ranked first is the Death’s Key. Rumor has it that at the end of the Fourth Epoch, Death, who had caused the Pale Disaster, was attacked by the seven gods and ended up perishing. ‘He’ attempted to return to the Southern Continent and created a raging stormy wave, an impassable barrier. It completely obstructed the sea route between the Northern and Southern Continents. This is the origin legend of the Berserk Sea. However, ‘He’ eventually failed to return to the Southern Continent and ended up vanishing in the sea.”

When he said this, Elland sighed with pangs of yearning.

“It’s said that in some secret place in the Berserk Sea, the treasure left behind by Death is waiting for the person holding the specific key to find it and open it, but no one knows what the key looks like, or where it will appear.

“Ranked second is the Fountain of Unaging. It’s deep in the Sonia Sea. Rumor has it that one of the four kings, King of Immortality, Agalito, had drunk the waters of the Fountain of Unaging.”

Chapter 496 - The Promising Sea

◆

“Fountain of Unaging? Will you really gain eternal youth if you drink it?” Donna widened her eyes and asked curiously.

She didn’t have any feelings of anticipation, because she was still young enough.

Elland didn’t answer at once, and instead, he forked a piece of fried murloc rib meat, tore into it in two bites, and took a sip of Sonia wine.

The sweet and smooth taste has completely nullified the cloyed taste of fried oil… His eyes were half-closed, and he looked like a gourmet.

After pondering for a few seconds, he slowly answered Donna’s question, “I don’t know if there’s a Fountain of Unaging, nor am I certain if the King of Immortality, Agalito, drank its waters. I only know one thing, and that is, that when I was very young, I heard the legend of this pirate king. It’s just like how King of the Five Seas, Nast, seems to live forever.”

“Their beards must be very long, extending beyond than their chests!” Denton gave his opinion.

“In fact, the King of the Five Seas, Nast, has a beard that only reaches below his neck. He sits on the deck, draped in a black splendid robe with silver ends. He wears a crown that’s two times taller than his head and overlooks everything like a deity…” Elland’s tone gradually lowered as though his memories had entered a quagmire, and he was unable to extricate himself.

"Uncle Captain, have you ever met the King of the Five Seas?" Donna asked excitedly.

This was the most legendary pirate. His name traveled through the sea, and even the children of the port cities knew his name.

Whole generations of people grew up listening to stories about him!

In a sense, many people view Nast as the true pirate king… I remember one of the conditions for advancement for Black Emperor is to equate one's name with "emperor," entrenching it deep in the hearts of the people… Is this an early or simplified version of an attempt? I wonder what Sequence the King of the Five Seas is at now… Although Klein was focused on sampling the murloc meat, his mind whirled as a result of the group's discussion.

Faced with Donna's question, Elland said with a sigh, "At that time, I was still very young and serving on the William V. Once, our fleet tried to cross the Strait of Calamity in the Berserk Sea and encountered the Black Emperor's ship there.

"In those few minutes, everyone, including the fleet Captain, lost the will to fight. Fortunately, Nast didn't give the order to attack us."

"Very cool!" the boy Denton cheered, his eyes shining.

Elland didn't continue the topic. He smiled and said, "As for King of Immortality, Agalito, I've never met him in real life. I only know that his bounty notice depicts a pale middle-aged man. How pale? Let me give an example you can understand. It's like he's been dead for some time, a corpse which is just beginning to rot."

When Donna and Denton heard this analogy, they subconsciously looked at the badly mutilated murloc's corpse and involuntarily quivered their throats.

"Of course, the most important thing in a bounty notice isn't the looks. It's the bounty reward. In Loen alone, Agalito is worth 100,000 pounds.

And his bounty is the lowest among the four kings." Elland diverted the topic and said, "Let's continue the stories about treasure. Ranked third is the inheritance of the Solomon Empire. In the Fourth Epoch, when that massive empire was dissolved and destroyed, the royalty brought treasures that even the gods would be jealous of onto a ship. They steered it deep into the Fog Sea, awaiting the opportunity to rebuild their dynasty. However, five hundred years passed, a thousand years passed, and fifteen hundred years passed, but it ultimately didn't appear."

"Rumor has it that the King of the Five Seas, Nast, inherited parts of the Solomon Empire's inheritance. No one knows if he's a descendant of the real Black Emperor," Cecile added with interest.

"Fog Sea? Western shore of the Northern Continent?" Donna thought back to her geography.

"Right," Cleves responded simply.

West of the Northern Continent was the Fog Sea; to its east was the Sonia Sea, south was the Berserk Sea, and north was the North Sea. The east and west sides of the Southern Continent were similar to the Northern Continent, while south of it was the Polar Sea. Together, they formed the Five Seas.

The Loen Kingdom was backed by the Hornacis mountain range and the inland Midseashire. Its eastern face was the Sonia Sea, and it stretched south to Desi Bay. It occupied several of the excellent entrances to the Berserk Sea, but it didn't involve the Fog Sea.

"Is that so…" Donna didn't have much interest in the faraway treasure, so she switched focus and asked, "What about the fourth treasure?"

"It belongs to the last empire of the Fourth Epoch, Trunsoest. Rumor has it that they built a huge ship the size of a city, and they transferred all their treasures onto it. Funny enough, their escape was of no use. Although the predetermined passengers and crew didn't fail to arrive at the port in time, none of them survived.

"However, that ship vanished by itself. Up to this day, people often claim to see a gigantic ship sail by them silently in a foggy night. It's been called the Specter Empire, and it appears across the Sonia Sea. Heh, this is the conclusion from all those stories." Elland looked up at the red moon hanging high in the sky as he said with a tone of mockery, without any disguise of his longing.

Perhaps we will see it pass us by tomorrow night, no—tonight! Donna thought with anticipation and excitement.

Klein finished up the rest of his food, drank his black tea, and listened with interest to what Elland had to say about the rest of the treasures.

"The fifth is the Lost City of Newins. Rumor has it that at the bottom of the Fog Sea, there's a civilization with intelligent creatures. Around that patch of sea, seafarers and adventurers often find special items which all point to the Newins of ancient times. However, the members of this civilization have yet to appear. It's like it has been lost to this world." Elland drank the remaining of his Sonia blood wine and said, "That is an inheritance left behind by a civilization. The magnitude of its wealth is absolutely unimaginable."

After pausing for two seconds, Elland put down his glass and laughed.

"In fact, the treasure I look forward to the most is one which has more accounts than legends, the Sunken Laurel. More than a century ago, it carried gold, jewelry, and various valuable items that the kingdom obtained from East Balam. As it steered away from the sea route, it sunk in an unknown area somewhere between the Berserk Sea and Sonia Sea. It hasn't been found to this day.

"It's said that the items onboard are worth millions of pounds!"

"Millions of pounds?" The number caused Donna to blurt out in astonishment.

As a merchant's daughter who had been educated for many years, she had a vague understanding as to what this number represented.

In Loen, a millionaire was a genuinely rich person, second only to the top noble families and tycoons!

Millions of pounds? As a member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, a major shareholder in the Coim Company, Mrs. Mary, who allowed me to join the Quelaag Club for free, is only worth a few hundred thousand pounds, and even so, she's rich enough even in the circle of aristocrats and merchants. She's a popular divorced lady, and there are even aristocratic children who proposed to her… Klein quickly found a target for comparison.

Elland sighed with a smile.

"If I can find the Sunken Laurel, then I don't have to be a captain anymore. I'll head to Backlund and become a philanthropist. I'll purchase land and donate to political parties and get a hereditary aristocratic title!"

I've heard Talim mention before that a baronet costs about 300,000 pounds and about 800,000 pounds for a baron… If you manage to get your hands on the treasure, the titles of viscount and even earl is something within the limits of imagination… Millions of pounds! Klein helped Elland perfect his plan.

"If it were me, I wouldn't do that. I'll buy a huge manor." Cecile also began to imagine her life after finding the treasure. "I want to hire many servants and helpers, plant large tracts of wheat, build vineyards, make wine for myself… Also, I want to have a room where I can sunbathe; have leisurely moving cows, sheep, and horses; and have bread from my own mill, just like a beautiful picturesque scene…"

Elland laughed when he heard that.

"Ma'am, do you know how much a manor like this is worth?"

"No, I don't." Cecile shook her head.

"It's only a few thousand pounds. If you find the Sunken Laurel, you can buy a thousand of those manors!" Elland used exact numbers to illustrate the value of the treasure.

A thousand manors? Cecile couldn't help but raise her cup and drink a mouthful of black tea.

Before this, she had known that several million pounds was a lot of money, but she hadn't expected it to be this much!

In order to alleviate the shock in her heart, she looked at Cleves and said, "Boss, if you find the Sunken Laurel, what do you plan on buying. No, what sort of life do you wish to have?"

Cleves fell silent for a moment before saying, "Return home. I'll hug my wife and children, telling them that I no longer need to go on an adventure out at sea again."

Not a bad guy… Klein nodded slightly.

Donna looked at him curiously.

"Uncle Adventurer, what about you?"

Klein replied expressionlessly, "Tell myself not to sleep anymore. Hurry up and wake up."

Pffft… Donna spat out the sweet iced tea she'd just drunk, but fortunately, the fried fish on the table had already been eaten.

At this moment, Klein sighed inwardly.

Even though I know it's basically impossible to find the treasure; otherwise, the various churches would've already done it with all the powerhouses they have. But when discussing such topics, I couldn't help but get excited. This is the charm of treasure! Even if it was just a legend, it can attract many adventurers!

Donna wiped her mouth and sat down like a lady, as though she wasn't the one who had lost her composure.

The little boy, Denton, asked, still eager for more, "Are there any other legends of treasure?"

Elland looked at Cleves, indicating that he should answer.

Cleves calmly drank a mouthful of black tea and said in a deep voice, "There are countless treasures at sea. The hidden lands of the elves, the missing pirate ships in the depths of the fog, the underwater city sealed with powerful monsters, the last secret trove of Emperor Roselle, and so on."

Ah? The Emperor had already reached the level of leaving treasures and legends for others… If it's true, would there be Cards of Blasphemy in it? How many would there be? The legend of the Key of Death might help Mr. Azik regain more of his memories… Klein thought with curiosity and anticipation.

Chapter 497 - The Wall of Rewards

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After the talk about the legends of treasures that had inspired generations of adventurers to go to sea came to an end, the cook had also finished roasting the flesh of the murloc’s belly.

They were white after being cooked, charred a little black, and covered with tiny brown particles that glistened with a moist, oily glow.

The repeated smearing of seasonings had already seeped into the texture of the meat, effusing it with a tantalizing visual effect.

“Desi grilled fish, it’s different from how you usually eat it.” Elland pointed at the white porcelain plate the cook lowered.

Donna held her fork and knife and eagerly said, “I love honey-roasted fish!

“But this is also very appetizing.”

Honey-roasted fish… How much honey would that take… If I have a chance to try it, the taste should be pretty good… Klein allowed his imagination to run wild.

With a chef, there was no need for them to serve themselves. They could only look on expectantly as pieces of fish were sliced, placed on different plates, and served in front of them.

Klein was very serious when it came to tasting delicacies, so he was in no hurry to deal with the fish. Instead, he took a sip of black tea and used the slightly sour liquid to clear his mouth of any remaining flavors.

After doing all of this, he forked a piece of fish and stuffed it into his mouth.

In a split-second, he felt the slightly stimulating flavors of fennel, basil, and other spices. They were sufficient enough to help him open up one taste bud after another.

Immediately after, the delicious juices of the meat, the slightly astringent taste of the sea salt and the refreshing, sour, and sweet taste of lemon all burst out at the same time, filling his oral cavity and making his mouth water.

As he chewed, the last bit of the fish meat's stubbornness was broken off one by one after having its fat roasted out of it, fully presenting the splendor of the meat, as well as its faint sweetness.

Swallowing the fish in his mouth, Klein recalled a delicacy program he had watched in his previous life and chose the evaluation line that matched what he just felt: "The layered flavors are very clear, excellent!"

"Haha, your tone and words make you sound like a gourmet," Elland joked.

Donna waved her fork and echoed, "Uncle, perhaps you should write a column in the newspaper about different restaurants and different cuisines."

Eh, why didn't I think of this idea… This is a good job that can earn me money, as well as allowing me to taste delicacies! The only problem is that an obese man can't be a flexible clown… Use the great art of spewing vomit? What a waste of food! Klein seriously considered Donna's suggestion.

"To a beautiful night!"

When there was very little food left, Elland poured himself some more of the Sonia blood wine and raised his glass with a ruddy face.

Klein and the others echoed in similarly good moods, “To a beautiful night.”

They drank the rest of the liquids from their glasses and watched the waiter clear the table and clean the deck.

They talked for a while more amidst the cold wind, talking about the mermaids that Donna was most interested in.

Cleves told the young lady that, in some legends, mermaids were also called Sirens, and they used their songs to confuse humans not for entertainment but for hunting. Aside from the possibility of encountering these creatures on the sea route from the Gargas Archipelago to the depths of the Sonia Sea, there was a certain chance of discovering it in dangerous seas that haven’t been explored by humans. However, all of this stemmed from the drunken boasting of certain pirates, and they all avoided the question of how they escaped from the mermaids’ songs, which made it highly suspicious.

No matter what, this at least points me in a possible direction… Klein took note of what they had discussed.

“Donna, Denton, it’s time to go back. You’ll have to get up early tomorrow and have breakfast with your parents.” Cecile looked at the moon’s position.

“Fine.” Donna stood up reluctantly.

Denton hurriedly asked, “D-do I have a chance at becoming an adventurer?”

His mind had been captivated by the previous hunt and the legends.

Cleves walked to his side, patted his shoulder, and said, “Before you ask this question, you need at least five years of combat training and studying. I think your father will hire a good tutor for you.”

"Yeah!" Denton's eyes lit up, and he nodded vigorously.

After five years, the adult you probably won't want to be an adventurer who can find himself buried at the bottom of the sea at any time… Cleves's handling of the situation was very shrewd. He didn't immediately refuse him, but rather he gave him hope and let time wash away his interest. This prevents the child from becoming suddenly rebellious… Regardless, mastering a fighting technique is always beneficial for anyone… Klein put his hands in his pockets and thought with appreciation.

On the way back to the interior of the cabin, Cleves handed two five-pound notes to Klein.

"Your payment."

He had just received 150 pounds from Elland's purchase of the whole murloc.

"I didn't do anything," Klein instinctively refused.

Cleves glanced at him with his pale blue eyes and said in a low voice, "You freed up Cecile and took good care of the children."

Took good care of the children? Klein was somewhat amused, but he finally took the two bills and drew a triangle on his chest.

"You're more generous than I thought. Thank you."

He stopped declining because he suddenly figured out something. If he hadn't accepted the ten pounds, then in the eyes of a veteran adventurer like Cleves, it would appear as though he was dissatisfied with the price and was attempting to get more, making it possible that he would attack them at any time. Among self-proclaimed adventurers, there was definitely no lack of greedy madmen!

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow pocket the money, Cleves looked away and said flatly, "This is a rule of the sea."

Without another word, he followed Cecile, Donna, and company into the cabin.

If I could get such rewards with every single mission and job of this difficulty, then I would've long made a fortune with my job as a private detective… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh and turned his head to look at the red moon hanging high in the sky.

It still shone quietly and gently in the night.

Legends of the sea, different monsters… I've finally found the slight feeling of being an adventurer. Klein turned around and walked to the edge of the ship. Bathing in the crimson veil, he admired the waves that were growing darker. Gradually, his mood settled as he walked out bit by bit from the gloom of Backlund's Great Smog.

The cold, damp wind slapped his face, and the vast, endless ocean caught his eye, opening up his heart.

For a moment, Klein felt the urge to sing, but when he opened his mouth, he found that he couldn't remember the corresponding modern verses.

I can't just end up saying, "Oh sea, you're all water"… The Emperor's Savant Sequence is really well suited to doing such things. When I have the time, I should read through his poems so as to not look like illiterate… Klein lampooned as he looked at the red moon and the ocean before sighing.

"What a beautiful night."

†

After an accidental episode of getting lost, the exploratory team returned to the City of Silver.

Looking at the wall's cracks filled with weeds, Derrick found himself in a trance, as if he had been gone for many years.

Diagonally behind him, Demon Hunter Colin's eyes suddenly wore a lost look as he raised his hand to press on his right temple.

The rest of the team members were filled with joy and relief from the bottom of their hearts.

After a difficult exploration, having a home waiting for them was the happiest thing in their hearts.

Collin's gaze returned to normal as he turned his head to the side and looked diagonally ahead.

†

Backlund, the White family.

After some thought, the confident Emlyn came up to his parents and asked, "If I wanted to delve into the history of us Sanguine, who would I look for?"

If I were to ask about the City of Silver directly, it's very likely that I'll be exposed for being problematic. Although I'm not afraid and very calm, for the Ancestor and in order to save the entire Sanguine race, I have no choice but to hide it… I've always been interested in the history of Sanguine. I've collected a lot of information, and Father and Mother know that, so I wouldn't be suspected in any way… This excuse is perfect! Emlyn praised himself inwardly.

He resembled his father to a certain extent. He wore gold-rimmed glasses that made him look very professional.

The gentleman, who had gotten his doctorate in medicine, put down the thick "Anatomy" book in his hands, nudged his glasses, and said, "No one in Backlund knows more than Lord Nibbs."

…If I dared to seek Lord Nibbs, I would've long done so… Emlyn thought of Mr. Fool's description of him being a messiah, that had to bear the burden of a secret while being misunderstood, as he pressed with a solemn expression, "Aside from Lord Nibbs?

"He's sleeping underground, so it's not convenient for him to be disturbed."

Emlyn's father pulled up the collar of his thick cotton pajamas and thought for a moment.

"Waymandy. He always thinks of himself as a historian."

Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief and smiled.

"I wish to visit him."

†

Woo!

The whistle sounded and the White Agate sailed into Damir Harbor.

It would replenish fresh food and water on the colonial island and set sail again the next morning.

After hunting the murloc, Klein spent the next two days of what could be described as a leisurely or boring life. He was completely bored by the scenery of the sea, and he decided to head to the harbor's bar to look around that very night, hoping to get more information on mermaids and inspiration for acting.

If I were to come across a pirate whose hands are stained with blood onshore, I wouldn't mind teaching him a lesson. There are still souls waiting to be released from Creeping Hunger… Klein's forehead sweated as he equipped himself with all his mystical items as he left his cabin before heading down to the harbor.

During this process, he met Donna, Cleves, and the others. They seemed to be heading over to a port restaurant to taste Damir's most famous cured meat.

Donna and Denton greeted the adventurer, whom they had just gotten to know, without their parents noticing, and seemed curious as to where he was going.

Klein smiled back, pulled up his collar, and, following the directions of the sign, found the nearest bar.

Flying Fish & Wine… Klein looked at the signboard and saw that the outside of the bar was plastered with bounty notices.

Among them were the 800,000 pounds belonging to the King of the Five Seas, and more than a hundred pounds for the common pirate captain. This formed a unique landscape that ranged from the highest to the lowest.

It's all money… Klein stood on the spot and looked at it for a long time.

He withdrew his gaze, pushed open the door, and entered the bar, only to find that it was abnormally quiet. It didn't have the din that such places came equipped with.

What happened? Klein looked around and saw Captain Elland, in a dark red coat, sitting at the bar, as well as two large men in the middle of the room, facing each other.

Chapter 498 - Persona

◆

The standoff was between a brawny man in a blue white-striped shirt, a symbol of the navy. Despite the weather being at near zero temperatures, he had his arms bare.

He held a dagger against the throat of the man opposite him, but his glabella was being pointed at by an ancient musket, one which could've been placed in a museum.

The musket's owner was also more than 1.8 meters tall, with strong muscles and an oily face. He had shaved his hair, and with a sea eagle tattoo, he cursed, "Dogsh*t Navy sailor!

"No one in Damir Harbor would dare slander me as a pirate's informant!"

The Navy sailor didn't yield to him, and both sides fully illustrated the rich profanities of the sea.

Klein observed for a few seconds, then he walked around the edge to Captain Elland, who had a straight sword at his waist and a hidden musket on his body. He asked in a calm and casual manner, "What happened?"

"A quarrel between two drunkards. In Damir Harbor and in the surrounding waters, there's always been such rumors that Sea Eagle Logan is in service of the master of the Black Tulip. The Navy sailor had mentioned this a moment ago, and Sea Eagle just happened to hear that."

The master of the Black Tulip? Isn't that Admiral Hell Ludwell? Klein turned and sat down on the high stool in front of the bar counter. He tapped the wooden countertop.

"One glass of Southville beer."

"Six pence." A bronze-skinned bartender with pearly-white teeth wiped the cups as he said with zero passion.

When it comes to continental specialties, the prices are much higher than Backlund and Tingen… Klein fished out a handful of copper pence, counted six pence and gave it to him.

At this moment, Logan and the Navy sailor were stopped by the bar's bouncer. After they each spoke harshly to each other, they retreated to different corners.

Perhaps it was due to him losing his dignity, the Navy sailor hurriedly left after about ten seconds. The atmosphere in the bar became lively once again.

"Want to play some cards?" Captain Elland pointed to the stairs by the side of the bar.

"No." Klein's main purpose for coming was to gather information.

Elland subconsciously wanted to pat him on the shoulder, but his cold and sharp demeanor stopped him. He could only pull back his hand and pretend to adjust his dark red coat and remind him, "Don't get the women here."

Klein nodded, picked up the glass of Southville beer, and took a swig.

"Also, don't trust anyone here. Only a small portion of what they say is true." Elland carried his Lanti Proof and stepped onto the stairs that led to the second floor.

Klein turned his head to glance at him and asked without a change in expression, “Including you?”

“…Perhaps.” Elland was taken aback at first before he laughed out loud. “At least my reminder just now was real. Oh, and me being a man is true as well!”

Not necessarily… There’s a potion called Witch in this world… Klein looked away, drinking slowly and listening to the surrounding drinkers boasting.

Two or three minutes later, a short, thin man sat down next to Klein with his drink.

“Mate, you look like an adventurer.” He tilted his head and smiled.

The man who greeted him had black hair, blue eyes, and aged facial features. His temperament was rather wretched.

“You could say that,” Klein replied coldly.

“I can tell you’re a hunter, a hunter that chases after bounties and riches.” The short man looked around and lowered his head, suppressing his voice while he said, “Have you heard of the Specter Empire?”

I’ve heard of Amway, and I’ve also heard of the Father in Heaven and the Messiah being sealed at the bottom of the sea… Using the power of Faceless, Klein sent out a signal not to approach him.

“Yes, a huge, ancient ghost ship full of treasures.”

“We have clues to it!” the short man said in an infectious tone. “We found some information about where it will appear next! We don’t want the pirates or the Navy to benefit from it, and we don’t want to be robbed of our wealth, so we’ve decided to hire our own armed merchant ships to wait in that area, which would probably cost about 1,000 pounds. I’ve already found 15 companions and raised 720 pounds. Are you interested in participating?”

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he fumbled for a stack of brownish-yellow letters.

“I know you won’t believe it so easily. In fact, no one will, but after the fifteen friends who read through this information, all of them decided to join in on our plan.”

…Do I have a such a gullible face? Or would any bumpkin end up in this situation without slipping away from this sort of thing? While Klein was considering whether to appraise the letters, from the corner of his eye, he saw that Sea Eagle Logan, who was previously squabbling, was walking towards him.

“Woody, you’re trying to scam someone again! You damn sewer rat!” Logan picked up the short man and threw him into the open space in the middle of the bar, where he landed on the ground, sprawling.

The muscular man, with the bluish-green tattoo on his head, sat in the same position as Woody and guffawed.

“Sorry, these are the rats of our Damir Harbor. They always do things that ruin our reputation.

“In fact, we’re all very friendly. If you have anything you want to ask about, don’t hesitate to ask me.

“Heh heh, don’t believe what they say about me. I’m an upright person, and I have nothing to do with Admiral Hell!”

The more you emphasize that, the more suspicious it becomes… Klein’s expression didn’t change as he calmly said, “I want to know the latest rumors.”

“No problem.” Sea Eagle Logan slammed the bar top and said to the bartender, “Give me a plate of special cured meat. I’ll be treating this mate to our most famous delicacy in Damir.”

The bartender, while still maintaining his cold expression, pushed open the door and entered the kitchen. Soon, he brought out a plate of red and white, finely cut cured meat.

"Five pounds." He didn't look at Sea Eagle Logan, and he instead looked straight at Klein.

"Five pounds." Sea Eagle Logan turned his head to the side, smiling warmly as he raised his arm to show his muscles. "Everyone just heard it. In order to thank me, you offered to treat me to some special cured meat.

For a moment, Klein didn't realize what had happened. It was only when the bartender urged him a second time that he realized he was being blackmailed. Furthermore, their scam was rather well-planned.

First they used an easily seen through farce to let Sea Eagle Logan appear, thereby winning a good impression with the target, then, with the excuse of treating the target, order an especially expensive special cured meat, and then finally, he goes back on his word and turns matters upside down and forcing a sale… It's no wonder that when Rat Woody was thrown out, those drunkards didn't make a sound… They were all afraid of this Logan whose rumored to be in the service of Admiral Hell… How should I deal with this? My present persona is Gehrman Sparrow, a somewhat crazy adventurer and bounty hunter… Klein raised his cup and drank a mouthful of the rich malt-flavored beer and said with his usual tone, "Why don't you just rob me?"

"Why don't I just rob you?" Logan was a little stunned by the question.

Soon after, he saw a fist expanding before his face.

Thump!

Klein's left fist landed on Sea Eagle Logan's chin, knocking him backwards toward the bar counter.

With a push of his right palm, Klein nimbly left his chair and approached Logan's falling body.

His legs tensed, and his knees jerked upward, slamming into Logan's lower abdomen.

Pfft! Logan threw back his head, his eyes bulging while his mouth hung half open.

Klein drew his gun, shoved the revolver into the man's mouth, and pulled the hammer back.

"I… I am…" Logan shouted indistinctly.

Klein looked him in the eye, pulled out his revolver, and swung it, striking the side of Logan's face with the butt of the gun.

Logan's teeth fell out one after another, and his mouth was stained with blood.

Faced with such a heavy blow and a pain that exceeded his limits, his eyes rolled back, and he fainted.

Klein propped him up and pulled a handful of loose bills and coins out of his pocket.

Since he estimated that there wasn't more than five pounds with just a glance, Klein threw them on the bar and calmly said, "Keep the change."

The bartender's bronze face turned slightly pale as he shouted in panic, "My boss is White Shark!"

Without looking at him, Klein released his hand and allowed Sea Eagle Logan to fall to the ground. Then he sat down again, forked up a piece of cured meat, and stuffed it in his mouth to taste it. He found it rather unique as the flavors of the condiments spread out in wisps, scratching at his belly and throat.

After eating two pieces, he looked up and asked, "Does your boss know that you're colluding with Sea Eagle?"

"No, he… No…" the bartender mumbled an answer.

Seeing that Klein had no intention of continuing his attacks and had paid the bill so quickly, the bouncers who had gathered nearby silently retreated.

Klein took a sip of his wine, glanced at Sea Eagle Logan on the ground, and calmly said to the bartender, “He’s Ludwell’s informant. How much is his bounty worth?”

“No, he’s not.” The bartender shook his head and said, “This is just something he says about himself—the information he spread himself. That Navy sailor from before was hired by him! That’s the only way to make everyone here afraid of him…”

Upon hearing this answer, the drinkers at the bar all put down their glasses in surprise. Some of the drunkards even staggered over to Logan and spat in his face.

Pui! Pui! Pui! Many drinkers followed suit.

Klein lowered his head again and said while eating the special cured meat, “Tell me about the recent rumors.”

The bartender breathed a sigh of relief as he wiped his glass and gave an intermittent account of the rumors in the past two months. Some of them were what Klein had heard before, and there were also things he just learned.

The Imperial Navy’s ironclad warship, Pritz, had destroyed a passing pirate crew during routine training… Panic over the behemoth’s cannons has begun to spread among the small and medium-sized pirate powers… Some of them even wished to take advantage of the ironclad warship fleet’s inchoate form to madly commit crimes before withdrawing from this trade with a sum of money… The sea wouldn’t be peaceful for the next six months to a year… Admiral of Blood Senor and Vice Admiral Dusk Bulatov Ivan had a conflict in the southern waters of Sonia Island, and each of them lost two ships in the massive skirmish… Klein listened without asking questions, and he gradually filled his stomach.

Seeing that the plate containing the special cured meat had been emptied and having finished the rest of his beer, he slowly stood up.

“Remember today’s lesson.” Klein handed the plate to the bartender.

The bartender was about to reach out when the hair at the back of his head was grabbed.

Bang!

Klein shoved him down hard, knocking the bartender’s head against the bar top, sending splinters flying and blood gushing. The customers all tried to avoid the impact, and the bouncers rushed over quickly.

After doing all of this, Klein clapped his hands and picked up his own glass, trying to pour the rest of the beer onto the bartender’s head.

One drop, two drops, three drops…

Klein silently gave up. He turned around and bent down, grabbed Sea Eagle Logan, and threw him to the bouncers who were rushing over.

Taking advantage of the moment when the bouncers were dodging and the bar being in chaos, Klein quickly ran, agilely circling around them, and easily left Flying Fish & Wine.

He pushed down his hat and quickly proceeded forward, turning towards a neighboring street.

After continuously changing directions, he suddenly slowed down his pace, and a gold coin appeared in his hand.

The gold coin kept weaving around in his fingers as if it was scouting something.

Chapter 499 - Solicitation

◆

Ding!

The gold coin quietly flipped up, tumbled down, and firmly lay in the palm of Klein’s hand.

Lowering his head to glance if it was heads or tails, Klein spun his heel and smoothly turned into a quiet, dark alley.

The wind by the sea was cold and strong, and it caused a convection in the area, propelling his coat up without him realizing it and causing his half top hat to almost fall off.

Suddenly, Klein stopped, turned around, and said in a deep voice, “Come out.”

His eyes were sharp as he stared at the shadow around the corner.

After four or five seconds of silence, a figure emerged from the shadows. He chuckled and said, “Very sharp.”

It was a man in a black cloak, approximately thirty years of age, and his eyebrows were charred yellow while his dark blue eyes were bright. His face wasn’t too chiseled, as though he was from the area south of Intis, Lenburg, and Segar.

As soon as he saw him, a picture flashed in Klein’s mind.

As he entered the Flying Fish & Wine, he had professionally looked around for anyone he needed to pay attention to.

The answer at the time was no. The man had been drinking like a sailor and watching curiously from the side. He was no different from the other guests, and his appearance wasn't distinctive, but his black cloak had left a certain impression on Klein, allowing him to recognize the person who tailed him in an instant.

"What do you want?" Klein, who was maintaining his persona, bent down slightly, like a huge feline ready to pounce.

The man in the black cloak laughed once again.

"The fighting technique and handling method that you displayed just now was very consistent with my taste. I chased after you to ask if you're interested in joining us

"Although that guy named Logan was indeed pretending to be an informant of Ludwell, White Shark Hamilton does have connections with many pirates. He's a character with a shady background, so he'll definitely take your act of beating up one of his men at the bar to heart. There will definitely be problems for you in the future, and I can help you resolve this problem.

"You're an adventurer, so it's necessary for you to have dreams of treasure. As for us, we're people who banded together in a bid to seek treasure such as the Specter Empire, Solomon's inheritance, the secret of the Fountain of Unaging, the Death's Key, the Sunken Laurel, and Roselle's Treasure while traveling the Five Seas. Today, although we haven't accomplished any of our main goals, we've found many missing pirate ships. Heh heh, what I said does sound like what that rat had said, right?"

He cleared his throat and said, "Frankly speaking, we're a band of pirates formed from a group of adventurers, but we only plunder merchant and passenger ships when we're especially poor, and we don't harm the innocent. Our main focus is on finding treasures, and we often reap harvests. And I kid you not, I once slept on a bed formed of gold coins. If we run into any other pirate ships, just showing them our prowess wins us some compensation.

“By the way, our Captain has decreed that before we recruit new people, we have to explain our creed and remuneration.”

Creed? Your captain is a little interesting… Klein deliberately softened his tension to see if the enemy would take the opportunity to attack.

The black-cloaked man smiled in a relaxed manner.

“What I said previously was our creed, and now, let me talk about the remuneration.”

This fellow is quite confident… Although he wasn’t a Spectator, Klein could tell that he was very confident and that he was completely unfazed by the scene in front of him.

“We don’t have any weekly salaries or annuity, but once we find treasure, or obtain riches from plundering, they’ll be distributed according to our ranks. Under normal circumstances, when our luck is still pretty good, the lowest ranking sailor can earn about two to three hundred pounds a year. I heard that this would make one a member of the middle-class on land? Heh heh, if we find the Sunken Laurel, all of us will become tycoons!” the black-cloaked man casually introduced. “According to our ranks, we would get different days off every month, but they can only be accumulated together and done in a staggered fashion.”

As he spoke, he suddenly cursed softly.

“Dogsh*t, just the year before, we missed a good chance of finding the Specter Empire because Captain was on holiday!”

Pirates have annual leave? Klein found it somewhat surprising.

He could only feel the pirate crew’s comedic intensity from the man’s description, reminding him of the humorous Somali pirate recruitment advertisements he had seen in his previous life.

Seeing that Klein appeared shocked by his words, the black cloaked man added with a smile, “As an adventurer, are you still chasing after the powers that transcend nature as told in legends?

“As long as you join us, you’ll have a chance to possess them!”

Having said that, he coughed and said, “I forgot to introduce myself.”

His expression turned solemn, no longer looking as jocular as he was before.

“Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards’s subordinate, fourth boatswain of the Golden Dream, Blazing Danitz.”

After reporting his title, real name, and identity, Danitz waited patiently for the look of panic and fear to appear on Klein’s face.

After a second, he heard the adventurer, who acted somewhat crazily despite looking refined and polite, say in a low voice, “Blazing Danitz with a bounty of 3,000 pounds?”

Danitz was about to reply when he had the illusion that the man standing in the dark alley had turned into an indescribable, hungry monster, salivating over his soul and flesh.

He suddenly clenched his fists; his body no longer as relaxed as it had been earlier. He was so tense that he was trembling slightly.

His intuition told him that he was facing an abyss filled with madness and bloodlust!

In this state, Danitz had no idea how much time had passed until the other party spoke again, “Why are you here?”

“I-I’m on vacation…” Blazing Danitz’s dignity made him scorn to answer this question, but his instinct made him spit out the reason.

As soon as he finished speaking, he felt the man retract his gaze, the hunger to gnaw on his flesh and soul disappearing.

He stood where he was and watched as the young adventurer in a black coat and a silk half top hat turn around and walk to the other end of the alley. He stopped when he was about to turn the corner, and turning his head, he asking, “Where’s White Shark?”

“H-he lives at 1 Sea Wall Avenue, but he spends most of his time on the second floor of the Flying Fish & Wine. It’s no different today,” Blazing Danitz answered truthfully.

Only when the figure disappeared into the distance did Danitz straighten his back and take off his cloak.

“What a terrifying fellow…” He sighed silently.

Following that, he found his thoughts and muttered to himself, I have to inform Captain that there’s another terrifying person at sea.

This is a guy who looks like a gentleman on the outside, but he has a heart like a lunatic’s. If one doesn’t have the determination and confidence to kill him, it’s best not to deal with him.

Danitz pulled up his black cloak’s hood and decided to return to the hotel for some sleep. He planned to wait until the telegraph office opened the next morning before relaying the message to his middleman contact in the Rorsted Archipelago.

As for what would happen to White Shark, he didn’t care at all.

†

In the corner of another quiet street, Klein stood in the shadows, looking down at the black glove on his left hand.

He found that, although Creeping Hunger had been sealed by Mr. Azik, its thirst for flesh and souls still intrinsically existed and was trying to manifest itself.

Under normal circumstances, Klein wasn’t worried that the sealed item would produce any problems, but when he had the urge to kill someone, the corresponding influence he would receive was enough to let that hunger which could lash back at him emanate.

Earlier, when he heard that Danitz was a famous pirate on the bounty list, killing intent instantly rose inwardly out of his yearning desire, causing Creeping Hunger to become as active as a fish in water.

Fortunately, Klein always had good self-control in this aspect. From his words, he was able to judge that he wasn't a pirate who was riddled with sin, so he easily restrained his impulse.

With Creeping Hunger, Gehrman Sparrow's persona will be flawless… Klein paused for a few seconds, took out a gold coin and performed two divinations. First, he divined if Blazing Danitz was lying, and second, if White Shark Hamilton was able to cause harm to him.

The first revelation showed that there was no need for Blazing Danitz to lie, and the second one showed that White Shark Hamilton was unable to cause harm to him.

Klein put away the gold coin, pressed down his hat, and while doing so, he swept his palm down and touched his face.

He instantly changed his appearance—blond hair, blue eyes, and ordinary facial features!

Then, Klein unbuttoned his overcoat and pulled up the inner shirt so that it was no longer stuffed into his trousers.

After a simple change of his attire, Klein, who didn't carry a cane, began sweating. His lips were dry as he identified the direction and headed back to the Flying Fish & Wine bar!

On the way, he met Blazing Danitz again. The man only glanced at him once before withdrawing his gaze and headed for the hotel opposite the bar.

After inspecting the bounty wall, Klein calmly reached out with his hand, pushed open the door and walked in.

At this moment, it had been less than ten minutes since he escaped.

In the bar, most of the customers had dispersed, but there were still a lot of drunkards gathered here to watch the show.

Their eyes swept over the new guest, but they all withdrew it soon after, and Klein made his way unimpeded to the bar counter.

He saw the bartender standing with frightened eyes beside a fat man; his forehead heavily bandaged with white bandages, his nostrils stuffed with tissue paper, and his face was bruised.

The fatty was tall and big. His skin was fair and he looked like a big white shark that had swam itself ashore.

He touched his shiny bald head and said to Elland, who was wearing a dark red jacket and a straight sword, "Someone told me that you know that guy?

"There are only three passenger ships that docked today, so there won't be many unfamiliar outsiders. Don't try to lie!"

Elland patted the hilt of his sword and smiled casually.

"Yes, he is my passenger.

"But the problem today clearly stemmed from your people."

"So I just want him to come back here, apologize to me, and compensate me for the damage done to the bar," the tall, big-sized white fatty said with a frown.

Elland laughed and said, "White Shark, I have a proverb from my hometown: 'don't hate wild dogs that pass by just because of the rats in the storehouse.'"

"…Just Elland, is this your answer?" White Shark Hamilton narrowed his eyes.

Elland gripped the wooden handle of the musket, took a step forward, and said with a deep voice, "Yes, this is my answer!"

Captain sure has his way of doing things… Klein was slightly surprised at Elland's response.

After staring at each other for a few seconds, White Shark Hamilton took in a deep breath.

"You've helped me before, so I don't need an apology. However, he must compensate half of my losses, and you will be the one to pass them on."

"Good suggestion." Elland smiled.

White Shark Hamilton's face darkened as he looked around.

He suddenly threw out his hand, slapping the bartender in the face.

The bartender flew out, all his teeth dropping to the floor.

Klein quietly watched from five meters away, as if none of this had anything to do with him.

Chapter 500 - Interrogating White Shark

◆

Bam!

The bartender fell to the ground, writhing in pain.

White Shark Hamilton snorted and didn’t say anything. He turned around and walked towards the second floor, stepping on the creaking wooden stairs.

After the excitement was over, the drunkards dispersed one by one. Unaffected, Captain Elland and the others returned upstairs to continue playing cards.

Klein took the opportunity to follow.

He returned to Flying Fish & Wine, not to deal with White Shark who didn’t pose any threat to him but rather to simply get more information from the owner of the bar, who was connected to many pirate factions. After all, he had named his new identity Gehrman, which secretly implied hunting pirates whose hands were stained with blood. He planned on using their souls, flesh, and Beyonder characteristics to replace the souls in Creeping Hunger who were awaiting their release.

There was no gas in Damir Harbor, and the corridor on the second floor was relatively dark. The brass candle stands that were inlaid into each wall flickered and dimmed.

Klein observed the surroundings as he wiped his face, silently transforming into one of the bouncers on the first floor.

He used Illusion Creation to compensate for his mismatched attire.

After finishing his preparations, he walked towards the room that his spiritual intuition identified as belonging to White Shark Hamilton.

He first passed the card room, but he didn't attract anyone's attention.

He stopped in front of the bouncers who were guarding the corridor and said in a low voice, "There's something going on downstairs again."

"Holy Lord of Storms, what's happening tonight?" A bouncer sighed.

"I hope those beautiful people don't get hurt," another guard said worriedly.

He was referring to the whores who got their business in the bar.

"They're fine." Klein stepped past the bouncers and knocked on White Shark's door.

"Who is it?" Hamilton warily asked.

"Boss, it's me. Something happened downstairs again!" Klein remembered the information he gleaned while watching the commotion and deliberately hoarsened his voice.

"Damn it!" Hamilton bellowed, "Come in and explain to me what happened!"

Klein turned the doorknob and walked in.

When he closed the door, he dispelled the illusion, and the muscles on his face rapidly squirmed, returning to his previous identity—a new customer with blond hair, blue eyes, and ordinary facial features.

"You…" Hamilton was stunned for a moment before he immediately opened his mouth wide in an attempt to shout loudly.

At the same time, many illusory fish scales surfaced on the back of his hand, his originally large and fat body burgeoning.

Suddenly, his heart began to beat faster, and a strong instinctive fear seized him by the throat.

At this moment, he felt that the stranger standing by the door was a demon that had been starved for many days, repeatedly examining his flesh and soul with an ice-cold, craving look in his eyes.

All of a sudden, White Shark Hamilton was gripped by an extreme panic, and he failed to effectively respond.

Klein slowly walked to the sofa and sat down. He politely smiled.

“Now, can we talk calmly?”

The feeling of being stared at by a horrifying monster suddenly disappeared. Hamilton relaxed all of a sudden while his body shriveled up a lot like a punctured balloon.

He didn’t rashly cry for help as he asked with beads of sweat lining his forehead, “Who are you? What do you want?”

“A hunter,” Klein answered casually, “I heard that you’re connected to a number of pirate factions. I would like to know their respective situations.”

“No, I’m not…” White Shark Hamilton subconsciously denied.

He immediately felt the extreme hunger again, and he felt as if the man’s eyes were dyed with a dark red layer.

Klein inwardly deliberated over his persona and said with a gentlemanly smile, “You have two choices.

“One is to answer frankly. The second is to be killed by me and then answer honestly.”

Killing to channel my spirit? White Shark Hamilton had heard of similar rumors. He swallowed hard and asked, “Why do you want to know about any of this?”

Klein smiled and answered, “I’m a hunter, so I’m chasing after bounties.”

Hamilton suddenly felt that the man’s polite smile was tinged with an indescribable madness, and he couldn’t help but blurt out, “Are… Are you mad?

“I’ve seen many similar adventurers, but all of them have been buried at the bottom of the sea!

“It’s not hard to kill a lone pirate, but can you defend against any further retaliation? The whores in the bar or the seemingly ordinary customers might all be pirate informants! Your friendly accomplice could be bribed at any moment and you’ll be shot in the back! The pirates will gather information in advance and surround your ship. Can you protect all the passengers? Can you survive a cannon bombardment? On the sea where there’s no room to run, how are you going to survive?”

After venting the horror in his heart in one breath, he saw the man, who called himself a hunter, reveal a gentle and kind smile.

“Just have them all killed, and then there won’t be such a problem.”

A true madman… White Shark Hamilton immediately took a deep breath and said, “I’m in contact with many pirates, but it’s a passive relationship. They need to sell the cash, jewelry, and goods that they plundered in exchange for alcohol, food, fresh water, weapons, and women’s comfort. This has to happen through me, but I can only wait here for them. I don’t know where their ships pass or where they’re going.”

“What else?” Klein asked calmly.

His reply just now was mainly to scare White Shark. As for having revenge sought on him by the pirates, he wasn't worried at all. As a Faceless, he might as well find a place to drown himself at the bottom of the sea if they could find him so easily.

And… White Shark Hamilton's throat moved, without immediately giving an affirmative or negative description.

He tightly closed his mouth and looked at the gentleman in the half top hat. The gentleman's eyes were calm and reserved, as though madness was brewing within him.

The uneasy silence was like the calm sea surface before a storm, gently resounding, colliding, and fermenting.

Finally, Hamilton shifted his gaze away and placed his hand on the desk in frustration.

"Yes, I'm still gathering information for them. If there's any urgent information, I'll use the radio transceiver they gave me to alert them."

White Shark didn't dare to take the risk and was afraid that the man possessed unique Beyonder powers that could determine if he was speaking the truth or if he was saying the whole truth.

"Radio transceiver?" Klein, who had succeeded in laying his bets, sharply caught onto a noun.

"That's what they call it when speaking to me. It's like a telegram, but it doesn't require a wire." Hamilton turned and walked over to the gray safe and squatted down.

A wireless telegraph? The pirates possess such advanced technology? Klein could vaguely guess what the radio transceiver was.

He had previously thought of inventing something like this, but when he flipped through relevant magazines, he realized that wireless telegrams had long since appeared. However, it hadn't found its place in the commercial world. The Berserk Sea, which separated the Northern and Southern Continents with its constant thunder and lightning, the chaotic magnetic field, and violent storms, made only a few sea routes accessible. Even if one was equipped with wireless telegraphs, they were almost useless. Similarly, the weather in the Fog Sea and the Sonia Sea had changed drastically, and there were a number of factors that affected electromagnetic transmission. The use of wireless telegrams had been severely restricted.

Could it be that there's an enhanced model that can solve some of those problems? Klein watched as White Shark pried open the floor plank in front of the safe and twisted a mechanism to reveal a secret door in the wall.

Behind the secret door was a hidden cabinet with three levels. On the top level were some documents and bills, a revolver, a new type of half-arm gun, and other weapons, while the bottom layer was filled with complicated black machinery.

With just a glance, Klein deduced from his previous life's impression and the information he had gathered previously, that the mechanical construct belonged to a radio transceiver.

"That's what they call it. It's called a radio transceiver. The news it transmits can be received by similar items as far as the Rorsted Archipelago. Any further and it'll depend on the weather and one's luck. Usually, it's very troublesome and limited." Hamilton didn't know much about the machine, and he was vaguely describing the corresponding situation based on his experiences using it and what he had been taught.

It's better than the new radio transceivers that are now being commercialized… I wonder who invented it… Klein quietly listened and asked, "Who are they?"

He made himself look like a bounty hunter who didn't understand technology.

White Shark Hamilton wiped the cold sweat off his forehead and said, “Silver Coin Viper Oder who claims to serve the owner of the Dawn, as well as the intelligence officer of Admiral of Blood, Old Quinn. They appeared together, and I can’t be certain if they’re working together. Of course, Oder has always only made claims.”

The owner of the Dawn, that Queen Mystic? Klein looked away, a gold coin appearing in his hand.

The gold coin kept weaving between his fingers before finally leaping into the air and landing. It left White Shark puzzled as he trembled in fear and trepidation.

Lowering his head to take a glance, Klein slowly stood up.

At this moment, he suddenly asked, “Who gave you the potion?”

“O-Old Quinn…” Hamilton hesitated but still chose to answer honestly.

Klein nodded and no longer asked. He turned and walked towards the door.

Thud! The wooden door opened and closed. The figure wearing a black coat disappeared from White Shark’s room.

Hamilton held his breath, waited for more than ten seconds, and finally let out a long sigh.

He quickly wiped the sweat from his face, placed the radio receiver on the desk, flipped through a codebook, and hurriedly sent a telegram into the distance:

“I was targeted!

“By an unfamiliar fellow!”

Beside the completely engrossed Hamilton, Klein had his hands in his pockets as he quietly watched, taking in the entire frequency spectrum and the passcodes.

His departure just now was just a large-scale magic show, more than enough to deal with a Low-Sequence Beyonder like White Shark's Sailor pathway.

As for the question of whether or not he would be able to remember the details later, a Seer didn't need to worry over it. A dream divination was enough to recall everything.

Admiral of Blood and his men enjoy killing and love blood. They're passionate about enacting violence against women. Every time they rob a passenger ship, they would always cause a tragedy… This is public information known by everyone, and they themselves were proud of it. They're never stingy with their proclamations… The target of the hunt and the risk involved—

I'll give priority to them… Klein thought for a moment and then prepared to leave the room while Hamilton tidied and put away the radio transceiver.

He didn't plan on dealing with White Shark for the time being, as he was afraid of disturbing the real prey. Anyways, this kind of fellow who was on land with a fixed territory could be easily dealt with in a letter later since he had dirt on him.

Klein's soundless footsteps caused the door to slowly open and then quietly close, bringing in a slight cool breeze.

Chapter 501 - Bait

◆

After sending out the telegram and cleaning up the desk, White Shark Hamilton relaxed completely. He was finally in the mood and had the ability to think about the details of what had happened to him.

The first question that popped into his mind was: What about the bouncers outside?

He propped himself up with both hands and walked heavily to the door. When he opened it to take a look, he found that several of his men were standing there unsteadily, telling each other jokes involving women.

Hamilton's anger rushed to his head, but he soon calmed down. The muscles on his face twitched slightly as he pounded on the open door.

Thump!

The bouncers were startled and instinctively turned to look at the door.

"Boss…"

"Boss…"

Seeing who was making the sound, they hurriedly stood there and stammered.

White Shark took a deep breath and asked, "Did you see anyone enter my room?"

"Yes, Lardero. He said that there was a situation downstairs." The bouncers were confused by the question. “Boss, you were the one who let him in…”

As soon as they finished talking, they suddenly thought of other explanations and asked, “Boss, was something inside stolen?”

Hamilton’s expression sank, and he shook his head.

“Don’t doze off!”

Thud! He drew back and closed the door, leaving the few bouncers puzzled as they exchanged looks, suspecting that their boss was drunk.

In the room, the tall and fat Hamilton frowned and started pacing back and forth.

“Lardero, Lardero, they saw Lardero… That guy, that guy, can he change into someone else’s appearance?” As a collaborator who helped pirates sell their loot and gather intelligence, White Shark Hamilton was no stranger to all sorts of sea rumors. The first thing he thought of was the former Pirate Admiral Qilangos who was said to be capable of turning into anyone.

However, he quickly made more connections.

It might not be this mystical ability. If it’s really close to the description in the rumors, illusions, cues, and mental manipulation can all do similar things.

Hmm, there’s something amiss. That fellow appeared refined and gentle on the outside, but he’s inwardly mad and has terrifying strength. With the character he showcased, he should’ve knocked unconscious or killed anyone who had seen him, before strolling to the door and very politely knocking on the door!

If it’s to avoid creating a huge commotion so as to not leave behind too much information or exposing secrets related to his Sequence, then he could’ve used a more covert method, like climbing through the window…

Very contradictory… There's only one explanation for this contradiction. He was putting on an act!

Was he disguising his personality or disguising his strength? Or both?

When he thought of this, Hamilton suddenly stopped and put all the details together.

That guy is a novice! His madness is a disguise! His strength is demonstrated by relying on some mystical item!

Yes, that must be it!

This can explain the contradictions. He didn't climb up the walls and enter through the window, because he's a Low-Sequence Beyonder, and he isn't good in such aspects. The focus of his mystical item isn't in this domain… In order to successfully enter my room, he was willing to lower his head and address me as "boss" because he was purely relying on the mystical item. He wasn't too confident about himself and doesn't have enough pride and madness… He acted like a madman so as to match the mystical item's effects of generating horror in others. He created pressure to ask for information.

This can also perfectly explain why he left just like that. The reason why he came to find me is because he obtained such a powerful mystical item. With his elevated ambition, he wants to capture and kill some pirates to make a fortune. Once he knew that I'm serving Silver Coin Viper Oder and Admiral of Blood's intelligence officer, Old Quinn, to the point of being involved with the Queen Mystic, he got scared and fearful, so he chose to leave after acting perfunctorily. He didn't dare to kill anyone!

The more Hamilton thought, the closer he felt to the truth. He hurriedly set up the radio transceiver again and flipped through the passcodes and added a telegram to concisely describe his theories.

He didn't believe that he was being targeted by a hunter, because everything that had happened was a result of the inflated ambition of a young man who simply had a fortuitous encounter. He also gave the corresponding characteristics of the target.

"Blond, blue eyes, not crazy, and even a little timid.

"Possesses a rather mystical item that might allow one to change their appearance and create illusions. In consideration of the sense of horror, the latter is more likely to be true.

"He's just a novice who doesn't have much experience. He specializes in mimicking a powerful aura with the help of the item!

"He knows a thing or two about me, and he doesn't look like an outsider who's here in Damir Harbor for the first time."

Tap. Tap. Tap. Hamilton stopped his finger and leaned back in satisfaction, his chair creaking under his weight.

The corners of his mouth curled up a little, as though he had already seen the ending of that bastard from just now.

"It wouldn't end well for a fellow with a very low Sequence despite possessing a powerful mystical item at sea. Many greedy sharks would rush towards him!

"When the time comes, I'll no longer have to worry about my problems being exposed!"

†

Under the night sky, the harbor was rather quiet. After leaving the Flying Fish & Wine, Klein made a detour in the distance. He first walked quickly before moving slowly, his pace gradually turning into a stroll.

When he was sure that no one was following him, he turned his face back to Gehrman Sparrow as he passed through the shadows. He stuffed the hem of his shirt into his trousers.

He adjusted his sideburns and took out his gold-rimmed glasses, placing them on the bridge of his nose. It gave him a coldness despite his refined appearance.

He began to rely on the stars to find his way back to the White Agate.

As he walked, he let out a soft chuckle. Amidst the cold wind, he leisurely thought, I hope White Shark isn't that foolish and is able to see the flaws I left behind…

The persona he had set up tonight was of a new adventurer who lacked experience and made mistakes. And this person, on the other hand, knew a lot about Damir Harbor and White Shark. He had a tempting mystical item on him which had messed with his mind, making him a little crazy deep down.

Klein's initial idea was that pirates would wander around the ocean, and even the navy would have a hard time finding them. If he could get more accurate information from White Shark, he could of course go straight to them. If that didn't work, his identity could be used as a bait to lure some knowledgeable pirates to a predetermined location to complete the initial hunt.

When it was discovered that White Shark could contact Old Quinn, the intelligence officer of Admiral of Blood, Klein's plan was completed. His acquisition of the passcodes and the frequency spectrum had allowed him to monitor the corresponding situation and grasp the target's movement. Then, by interfering with the divination of others, he could, at the most appropriate time, use the combination of having a powerful mystical item and being a weak adventurer as bait, to catch a number of big fish.

Now, the problem I have is that I don't have the equipment to monitor their communications… It's basically impossible to buy it at sea… I'll have to use The World's identity to get Miss Justice or Miss Magician to buy one in Backlund. I'll receive the delivery via a sacrificial ritual… This is the advantage of the Tarot Club! With this in mind, Klein sighed.

Seeing the White Agate in sight, he quickened his pace a little and found that Donna's family and Cleves were returning from another street.

Cleves greeted him by nodding his head. Just like when they officially met, he said in a low voice, "I heard there was trouble at Flying Fish & Wine?"

Very well-informed and rather familiar with Damir Harbor… Klein smiled and replied, "I only taught two cheats a lesson."

Cleves's brows twitched slightly, suddenly feeling that his impression of Gehrman Sparrow was a little wrong.

After his previous observation and interaction, he felt that, although this young adventurer was a bit sharp, a bit reserved, and a bit cold, he could still be considered someone who smiled, was polite, and knew when to advance or retreat. But now, he was a bit uncertain. He felt that there might be a hidden flame of madness hidden in the recesses of his heart.

At this moment, Donna's father interrupted, "Mr. Cleves, who is this?"

"A colleague, Gehrman Sparrow," Cleves introduced in a very simple manner.

With a polite smile, Klein extended his right palm.

"It's my honor to meet you. In the future, if you need anyone, and if you can't find Cleves and the others, you can consider me."

"No problem. I hope you're as strong and professional as them!" Donna's father shook hands with Klein with apparent warmth and introduced himself, "Urdi Branch."

Klein had just released his grip on the box when his spiritual perception was triggered. He felt that there was something strange inside the gift boxes the Branch servants were holding.

He quietly activated his Spirit Vision and discovered that the gift box contained strips of cured meat. However, the surface of the cured meat had very rich colors at the red, white, and black spots. They looked they were things from the spirit world.

There's the aura of the spirit world, but they're practically harmless… This cured meat is very special… Klein was surprised.

Noticing his gaze, Donna's father laughed and said, "This is a specialty of Damir Harbor. In the center of the island, there's an extinct volcano. There are a few cracks in the surrounding underground caves where a natural hot wind blows. Curing meat there allows the meat to gain a wonderful and unique flavor. It can be used as gifts for friends.

"Mr. Sparrow, if you wish to buy some, it's not too late."

Unique flavor? The taste of the spirit world? Klein had a rough idea of what was going on.

According to theories in mysticism, the spirit world completely overlapped with reality without interfering with it. One had to rely on the strength of a Beyonder to open up a gap, but this wasn't an absolute situation. There were places in the world, which had the spirit world being strong enough to slightly influence reality.

In such regions, it was very easy for the dead to turn into water ghosts, zombies, and the like. There was also a non-trivial possibility that residences in such areas would have paranormal activity.

A similar situation should've occurred in the interior of Damir Harbor's underground caves, but it's not serious and doesn't cause any abnormalities, only giving the cured meat a unique flavor… There wouldn't be any problems if one doesn't eat too much of this in one sitting… Klein responded with a smile.

“I’m not interested in cured meat.”

Only at this moment did he finally confirm that the cured meat that the bartender had previously served him was ordinary and nothing special.

At this moment, the little boy, Denton, pointed at the moon in the sky and said, “It’s so very red!”

“Yeah!” Donna nodded in agreement.

Very red? Klein looked up and saw that the red moon was no different than usual.

Because a child’s spirit is relatively pure, he temporarily possesses certain Spirit Vision powers after being tainted with the spirit world’s aura from eating such cured meat? Would the children on this island be in a similar situation? Heh heh, this might be the source of Damir Harbor’s folklore… Klein observed for a moment and found the answer.

The group strolled back to the ship, moving up the gangway and arriving on the deck.

Klein bade them farewell and went to the second-class cabin.

Suddenly, his mind stirred and he once again activated his Spirit Vision.

He saw the huge skeleton messenger appear in front of him and drop a letter.

Chapter 502 - The Scene in Azik's Memories

◆

Pa!

Klein stretched out his hand and caught the slightly heavy letter.

The large skeleton messenger didn't stay, and it immediately disintegrated into a fountain of bones. One bone after another fell to the deck and disappeared, as though it didn't want to stay a second longer.

With the letter firmly in his hand, Klein didn't lower his head to examine it. Instead, he instinctively turned around and looked at the wooden staircase leading to the first-class cabins.

He saw Donna and Denton with their eyes wide and mouths agape, as though they wanted to scream at the sight of the scene, but everything they saw was over before they could make a sound. As a result, they even wondered if they were hallucinating.

The children who eat the special cured meat in Damir Harbor gain temporary Spirit Vision to a certain degree… Klein's brows twitched slightly as he raised his left hand's index finger vertically and placed it against his mouth to silence the two young ones, just like he did while the murloc hunt was happening.

The already rather tall Donna immediately raised her hand and covered her mouth. She nodded in fear and excitement, indicating that she understood.

When she looked diagonally down, she saw that her brother was still in a daze. She quickly grabbed his arm and pushed his hand against his mouth.

Cleves and Cecile sensed that something was wrong with them. They stopped and looked at Klein, but they discovered nothing.

Facing their stares, Klein calmly nodded and continued walking to his room.

A gold coin had appeared in his hand without anyone realizing. It was tossed up, and it tumbled around as though it possessed life.

Ding!

The gold coin landed with a number facing up, indicating a negative result.

This meant that the tiny episode wouldn't be detrimental to Klein.

Seriously, the current messenger isn't polite at all. It's not like the previous one who would tap my shoulder or nudge my body to give an advance warning, or just convert my surroundings into a spiritual world to prevent ordinary people from seeing him… Klein lampooned as he took out his key and opened the door.

He sat down on the edge of the low bed, lit a candle with only half its length remaining, and opened Mr. Azik's response letter.

As he pulled out the items inside, the first one that caught his eye was the Black Emperor card.

Looking at that face which pissed him off, Klein let out a breath of relief and eased his worries.

He wasn't afraid that Mr. Azik wouldn't return it to him, as he had that minimum level of trust. After all, the potion formula and corresponding rituals could be copied, and only the convergence properties of high-level materials couldn't be imitated. And since this was clearly not Azik's pathway, nor was it one of the switchable paths available to him, so a powerhouse like him had no need for it.

Klein was worried that the messenger would be robbed, losing the Card of Blasphemy which would help him tremendously while in his Spirit Body state.

This wasn't impossible. The number of strange creatures in the spirit world was hard to count, so it isn't hard to end up having a few who were good at locating messengers and robbing them.

The Black Emperor card was returned along with the copper whistle from the Numinous Episcopate.

After temporarily putting away these two items, Klein unfolded the important letter and read Azik's reply.

"…That card that depicts the Black Emperor reminds me of certain scenes. The tall-as-a-mountain Blood Emperor who wore a red cape with 'His' eyes being abnormally crazy, containing almost zero reasoning. He was on the brink of losing control. There was the true Black Emperor who had revived. 'He' sat on a gigantic throne, overlooking the land.

"When I looked up at them, I lost consciousness when the Blood Emperor looked at me.

"I should have, in some form, participated in the War of the Four Emperors, but the exact details still require me to recall them. Perhaps it was because of an injury from back then that caused me to lose my memories again and again as I repeatedly died and reawakened.

"The legend of Death's treasure trove in the Berserk Sea doesn't ring any bells. Perhaps I'll be able to sense something and be naturally attracted to it when I travel to the Southern Continent by boat and pass through that sea.

"The experiences of the owner of that copper whistle resemble that of an Undying's ritual, but there are also clear differences. I can sense evil auras and the premonition of danger. I believe the owner of the copper whistle is in a strange and terrifying state.

"It's best that you don't blow that copper whistle and summon the messenger. This will bring extreme danger. We can make further attempts when I fully recover my memories and figure out what that experience really means.

"The feather left behind by the copper whistle's owner that you mentioned can be used in the domain of the undead. It's a unique material that's rich in spirituality. When I recall more, I'll organize the knowledge of some rituals and charms you can use with it for you. Speaking of this matter, I recall that you'd asked me about the method for ridding the mental corruption of a Beyonder characteristic. This will likely need more time. At the very least, I'm still a blank slate in this aspect.

"Also, I vaguely remember that in the Southern Continent, there are strange creatures called Feathermen.

"It's best to seal that card; otherwise, it might attract powerful enemies and many disasters. I can give you some techniques. This isn't too difficult. First, an improved wall of spirituality..."

As expected, the Card of Blasphemy has a convergence effect upon activation… It's a good thing that I've left it above the gray fog in the past… According to Mr. Azik's descriptions, he shouldn't be an amnesiac Death. Otherwise, he wouldn't have looked up to the Blood Emperor and the Black Emperor… It's likely that he's a son of Death, participating in the War of the Four Emperors by accompanying that deity. Unfortunately, he suffered from severe injuries… As he thought, Klein produced a flame and burned the letter.

Then, he tried the sealing technique and practiced what Azik had taught him in the letter.

After doing all of this, he held a ritual and brought the Black Emperor card and the Numinous Episcopate's copper whistle into the mysterious space above the gray fog, eliminating all possibilities of any accidents.

There was no doubt that Klein had no wish to suddenly meet the King of the Five Seas, Nast, at sea.

†

Early in the morning, the sun rose above the horizon and dyed it golden.

Klein went to the not-so-well-stocked second-class buffet cafeteria and ate two slices of toast with bacon and butter and drank a cup of lemon tea.

After filling his stomach, he went to the deck to breathe in the fresh air and enjoy the beautiful early-morning scenery.

Then, he saw a drunk Captain Elland returning, his straight sword swaying.

Thinking back to last night's incident, Klein came over and said without a smile, "Good morning.

"White Shark didn't cause you any trouble, right?

"He should be able to determine that I'm a passenger of the White Agate."

Dressed in a dark red coat, Elland took off his ship-shaped hat and laughed.

"This is his own problem.

"Actually, he wanted you to pay half the repair fees for the bar counter, but that isn't much. It's just a few soli. I happened to win six pounds last night and gave him some extra tips, and that was the end of it."

Captain, are you afraid that a crazy adventurer like me will blow the whole thing up just for the sake of face, so you ended up choosing to bear the compensation? Klein was silent for a few seconds.

“I understand.”

Then, he turned and walked back to the bow, leaving two soft words: “Thank you.”

When Klein returned to his original position, he felt the sea breeze blowing against his face. He slowly let out a breath, feeling that it was too goddamn hard to force a persona.

After enjoying the wind for a while, he was about to return to the cabin when two figures suddenly appeared beside him. They were Donna and Denton.

Cecile, who was in charge of protecting them, was a few paces away.

Donna had obviously not slept well last night. Her eyes were puffy, and her face was gloomy, but she was in high spirits. She was obviously imitating Klein’s taking in of the scenery, but her eyes were darting around nimbly.

Just as Denton, who was in a similar state as her, wanted to speak, she spoke first.

“Uncle, who was that last-last night?”

As she spoke, she looked ahead without turning her head, but her body was trembling slightly, as though she was recalling the scene she had seen.

“It was a messenger. You can think of him as a postman.” Klein also didn’t look at the two little kids, as though he was talking about what he had for breakfast.

“Messenger?” Denton almost lost control of the volume of his voice.

“The world is so huge, so there’s bound to be some strange creatures in this world. Trust me, although this creature looks very ferocious and terrifying, it’s actually very gentle and professional… It just sent me a letter on behalf of a friend who’s far away,” Klein explained slightly, trying to describe the four-meter-tall messenger as pitiful, weak, and helpless.

After a night of panic, and because she hadn’t been harmed in any way, Donna was much calmer. Her eyes lit up as she said, “Well, that’s amazing!

“It’s like listening to a story!”

“Very cool!” Denton also expressed his opinion.

Then, he puzzledly asked, “But why didn’t anyone else see it? No one had any response!”

“That’s because your hearts are pure.” Klein smiled.

This was a white lie. After all, he couldn’t just say that it was a problem with the special cured meat. That would only make the two curious little fellows fail to resist making attempts.

This way, ignoring the fact that ingesting large amounts of it would cause one to fall ill, just randomly having Spirit Vision activated was a very dangerous matter. Even though Klein could now sustain the consumption of his Spirit Vision for a long period of time, he ultimately didn’t dare keep it open. Sometimes, seeing things he shouldn’t have seen could lead to madness or death!

“C-can we have a messenger of our own?” Donna asked, curious and excited.

“That will depend on luck,” Klein answered simply and calmly.

He couldn’t help but lampoon inwardly, I don’t even have a messenger of my own!

In order to obtain a messenger, he had to design an accurate summoning ritual and prepare the corresponding spirit world creature contract. This was a specialized field of knowledge, and randomly doing so could easily summon something bad, so Klein didn't dare to recklessly try it.

"Yeah. Yeah." Donna looked forward to it.

Then, she said in a tiny voice, "Uncle, we'll keep this a secret for you."

Beside her, Denton nodded solemnly.

At this moment, a new passenger that intended to board in Damir Harbor carried his suitcase as he walked onto the deck.

After sending the telegram, Blazing Danitz considered that the Captain might instruct him on certain matters. So he decided to cut the holiday short and await orders at the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago.

Through his own channels, he had obtained a ticket, put on a wig, blackened his eyebrows, and easily boarded the White Agate, waiting for the liner to blow its whistle.

Sigh, as Emperor Roselle said, capable people always have to do a little bit more work… As Danitz walked towards the cabin, he looked around leisurely. Suddenly, he saw a familiar figure.

It was a young adventurer in a black coat, gentle in appearance and mad in nature. He was standing at the bow of the ship, beaming at him like a gentleman.

The muscles in Danitz's face began to stiffen.

Author's Notes:

Still no change… However, apart from the rest at the end of this section, the rest of the time has been kept stable updated, which is worthy of praise (myself).

Well, let's say the mystery itself. The third "Traveler" has been written for almost 10 days, and the plot has been progressing slowly. This is actually the effect I want to achieve. Klein broke away from the monster room and entered an ocean where there are not so many bosses, so he doesn't always alert and dangerous all the time. He doesn't need to be so depressed any more, and the rhythm will definitely be relatively slow.

With the title of "Traveler", I hope to show you the local customs, interesting folk customs, extraordinary creatures, and more sequence performances in different parts of the mysterious world, so as to make the whole world fuller and more real. Of course, there will certainly be conflicts in the plot, and there will be dangers and excitement, but they will not be so dense. They will be reasonably distributed in Klein to look for the mermaids. During the journey of the Faceless, the cooperation and conflicts with the Seven Pirate Admirals and Four Pirate Kings, and the legend of the treasure will also be embedded in such experiences like pearls. In short, the name of Gehrman Sparrow will be spread on the sea.

In fact, it's the most difficult to write a plain and soothing plot. It's necessary to consider the rhythm before and after. It's necessary to ensure that it's interesting, not boring, and not lacking. Recently, my typewriting speed has slow down a lot. Plus exercise three times a week, I really have no ability to add more in a short time.

Finally, the new month is coming, please encourage me to write the third volume better and better~

In fact, I have no interest in the competition. A small part of it is my laziness. Most of it is my love for everyone's money. No one's money comes from the strong wind. Reading the books, collect some monthly tickets, and vote for them. Well, no more money needs to be wasted. Only when I have enough spare capacity can I consider the reward. I don't want to burden the book lovers who like me to support me. Isn't its better for everyone to read quietly and happily?

If one day I won the first place in the competition, I hope that because we have a lot of good people, we have a deep foundation. We eats hot pot, sings songs and takes the first place easily. Well, dreams are still needed, right? And for such a dream, I must write better and never satisfied. I will always challenge!

OK, then ask for a monthly ticket again, We can do what we can. The main thing is to put it in the front. The recommendation effect is good. There will be more subscriptions. That’s all small money!

Well, today’s update is still the same, 12:30 at noon and 7:00 at night.

Chapter 503 - Hostage

◆

Discovering a pirate who was worth 3,000 pounds board the ship in disguise, Klein immediately felt wary. He smiled to Denton and Donna who were beside him and said, “I’ve got a friend.”

He calmly walked towards the Vice Admiral Iceberg’s fourth boatswain, locking his eyes on the other party.

The smile on Blazing Danitz froze when he saw the young adventurer, with crazy blood flowing through his veins, slowly approach. He suddenly had a thought, Run! Run as fast as you can! Do your best to escape! Even if I have to use Beyonder powers and expose my identity, I have to flee immediately!

In his eyes, the reserved and stern adventurer was a genuine monster draped in human skin!

Just as Danitz was about to make his move, he suddenly calmed down because he remembered what happened last night: the adventurer hadn’t attacked him and had allowed him to leave!

That is to say, he doesn’t necessarily have the hostile intention of hunting me down. He can be reasoned with to resolve this crisis… Directly running away would only lead to conflict… Thoughts ran through Blazing Danitz’s mind. Relying on his rich experience, he forcefully controlled his legs and appeared to wait in place.

Klein walked over, one step at a time, and smiled.

"Good morning, we meet again."

That gentle and courteous smile of his made Danitz shudder for some inexplicable reason. He pursed his lips and said, "Good morning."

Klein maintained his persona, his expression turning cold.

"What are you doing on the ship?"

"Heading to the Rorsted Archipelago," Blazing Danitz, who was also considered a famous pirate, answered honestly.

"Why are you heading there?" Klein calmly asked.

Danitz forced a smile and said, "Waiting for our Captain's orders. Perhaps there will be a mission arranged for me."

He's probably going to chase me off the ship. In any case, there's a potential risk to have a pirate board a ship… After he finished speaking, Danitz speculated about the possible developments.

For him, this was considered a pretty good result. At most, he would waste a ticket.

Klein fell silent, so silent that Danitz's hair stood on end.

It was a full five or six seconds before he spoke again.

"Which cabin do you live in?"

"First-class, Room 312." Danitz raised the ticket in his hand to eye level.

He didn't dare to look down for fear that the enemy would seize the opportunity to launch a surprise attack.

Klein nodded indiscernibly.

"Is there a servant room?"

"Yes," Blazing Danitz subconsciously answered, but his heart was at a loss. He had no idea why the man was posing such a question at him.

Then, he heard the man say to him in a flat tone like he was speaking to a subordinate,

“You’ll sleep there.”

Ah? Where? I’ll be sleeping in the servant’s room? Aren’t you going to chase me off the ship? Danitz was somewhat stunned as he blurted out, “Why?”

Klein glanced at him and said one word in a faint voice, “Hostage.”

Hostage? He’s worried that I’m a planted agent on the ship, making it easier for the pirate fleet to plunder the White Agate, so he plans to use me as a hostage? That’s reasonable. If it really is as he suspects, then it wouldn’t stop the pirate fleet’s attack even if I’m chased off the ship. It’s better to hold me hostage to aid in the negotiations… Dogsh*t. I hate this kind of arrogant, cold person who doesn’t say much. They always only say a word or two, or even just an utterance, leaving me to guess the rest! I-if I’m really not his match, then I wouldn’t even mix with such company! Why did I previously think that his temper matched my tastes? I must’ve been mad… Danitz gritted his teeth as he thought.

“Fine.” He exhaled helplessly.

“To your cabin.” Klein maintained the perfect Gehrman Sparrow persona.

Phew… Blazing Danitz carried his suitcase, reluctantly leading the monster draped in human skin to the cabin. They went to the upper deck and arrived at Room 312.

After opening the door, Klein took a quick look and found the place several times better than second class.

The living room was about thirty square meters and was connected to a master bedroom and three servant rooms. It had a separate bathroom, a standard wardrobe, and a mahogany desk.

Danitz put down his suitcase and glanced at the servant rooms. He suddenly thought of an important question.

“Is the master bedroom going to be left empty just like that?”

The moment he finished speaking, he already knew the answer.

“It’s mine.” Klein smiled in a gentleman-like fashion.

As expected, to watch over me… Danitz felt depressed.

Klein paced on the carpet in the room and said while pointing to the door, “Come with me downstairs.”

“…Alright.” Danitz was a little lost, unsure what the man was up to.

The adventurer and famous pirate duo soon arrived at the second-class cabins and found Klein’s original room.

After opening the door, Klein didn’t enter. He pointed inside and said to Danitz, “Tidy the things on the desk and put them in the suitcase.”

What? Tidy things? You want me to help tidy things up? Danitz was almost stunned.

In a blink of an eye, he felt a surge of anger rush to the top of his head.

How can I, Blazing Danitz, Vice Admiral Iceberg’s fourth boatswain, a famous pirate with a bounty of 3,000 pounds, be driven like a servant!

My dignity and my reputation won’t allow me to accept such humiliation!

Klein gave him a cold look when he saw that Blazing Danitz was standing motionless like a petrified statue.

Danitz’s body suddenly trembled.

He took a deep breath and replied with a smile which looked worse than crying, “Alright.”

Aggrieved, he bent over and entered the cabin that didn’t have a very high ceiling, swiftly putting the items that were scattered outside into the suitcase.

Without needing Klein to remind him, he placed the things in order, even more carefully than how he dealt with his own luggage.

After doing all this, he carried the suitcase and followed Klein upstairs.

Along the way, he always had the impulse to sneak attack the man’s back, but in the end, he held back.

After returning to Room 312, Danitz clenched his teeth, swallowed his saliva, and said, “How should I address you?”

“Gehrman Sparrow,” Klein responded succinctly.

Gehrman Sparrow… Danitz ruminated over the name inwardly, swearing that he would definitely not forget what had happened today. He vowed to let the man before him have a taste of something similar in the future!

Captain will definitely help me! he thought with anticipation.

For the sake of his persona, Klein didn’t choose the reclining chair. Instead, he randomly chose a hard wooden chair to sit down on.

He leaned back in his chair, his body slightly hunched as he clasped his hands together, and said to Blazing Danitz, “Tell me about the famous pirates you know of.”

“There are a lot of them,” Danitz replied, feeling somewhat stumped.

He stood where he was, afraid to move, like a servant.

Klein slowly curled his lips up and said, “Do it in accordance with the bounties."

With that, he pointed to the chair opposite him.

"Have a seat."

With a sigh of relief, Danitz hurriedly sat down.

He suddenly felt that the man wasn't too bad; he was at least willing to give him a seat.

†

Woo!

The White Agate sailed out into the open sea and moved at a speed of 13 knots until noon.

Blazing Danitz, whose mouth was going dry from all the talk, was finally permitted to stop. He took his ticket and led Klein to the first-class dining restaurant.

The restaurant was decorated elegantly, with violinists playing in the corner and barriers separating the tables to ensure the privacy of one's dining environment.

After walking a few steps, Klein met Donna's family and Cleves. They occupied a large table and were waiting for the waiter to serve the dishes.

"Uncle Sparrow!" Because of their shared secret, the little boy, Denton, had changed the way he addressed him.

Donna blinked, fully expressing her doubts.

She clearly remembered that Uncle Sparrow lived in a second-class cabin and wasn't supposed to be in this restaurant.

Klein waved his hand with a smile as a greeting, then he pointed at

Danitz and said, “He’s treating.”

“Is that so…” Donna sized up Danitz curiously, and they felt that the gentleman looked odd, especially his eyebrows which looked extremely unnatural.

Cleves put down his fork and knife, and, after two seconds of silence, he asked, “Your friend?”

Klein chuckled and turned his head to Danitz.

“What do you think the answer should be?”

Danitz gritted his teeth, then he forced a smile.

“Gehrman once saved me.”

Yes, that’s right. Otherwise, I might’ve already been killed by him for the sake of claiming the bounty… Danitz consoled himself.

Cleves looked Danitz up and down a few times and said nothing more.

Passing the Donna family, Klein found a table by the window.

The waiter came with great enthusiasm and handed over the menu.

“Charcoal steak, red wine foie gras, vegetable salad…” Danitz scanned the menu and couldn’t help but sigh. “Ships that dock for resupplying every two to three days are better. There’s plenty of fresh food. When you encounter a ship that floats on the sea for one to two weeks, you can only cycle between beer, cured meat, and various canned goods. It’s so monotonous that it drives you crazy. However, the sea itself will also provide fresh food. Heh heh, but this requires one to have sufficient judgment. We had a sailor on our ship who once had a beautiful lobster, only to suffer diarrhea until his ass nearly…”

As a pirate, he had the habit of using vulgar language for descriptions, but after he looked at Gehrman Sparrow’s expression, he changed his vocabulary.

"Suffer diarrhea until his ass nearly fell off."

I have reason to suspect that there were other factors. Although your captain is a woman, there should be very few women in the crew. Furthermore, with the sailors unable to get ashore for a long period of time, they must be thirsty… Klein silently lampooned, took the menu, and drew a line according to the price.

"All of these."

"Alright." The waiter's expression didn't change at all.

At that moment, Klein saw Captain Elland enter the dining room and pass by, so he simply greeted him.

When he looked back, he saw that Blazing Danitz was already looking out the window, as if he was watching the scenery.

"The Captain knows you?" Klein asked in a tone close to a statement.

Danitz let out a hollow chuckle.

"We fought his crew back when he was the boatswain of the Wilhelm V.

"Besides, I'm also considered quite a famous pirate…"

At this point, Danitz recalled his current situation and suddenly became depressed. Hence, he changed the topic.

"I've always wondered why Just Elland would suddenly quit the Navy. By then, he was already an Arbiter."

Chapter 504 - Red Skull Pirate Crew

◆

A Beyonder was allowed to leave the fleet? Without Danitz's deliberate explanation, Klein easily understood why he found it strange.

In a Nighthawks team, even the civilian staff would experience strict restrictions. Even a normal resignation would require them to sign a life-long confidentiality agreement. They weren't allowed to leave the Nighthawks team's area that they originally belonged to, and once they were approved to move to another city, they had to immediately register at the local Evernight Church.

From such rules, it could be seen how the officials treated Beyonders powers and related matters. A Beyonder who had drunk a potion wouldn't be able to leave their organization so easily.

Klein clearly remembered that Miss Justice initially had the means and channels to become a Beyonder, but she didn't attempt them. The reason given was that she didn't want to lose her freedom.

Similar thoughts ran through his mind, but they didn't become words, because the polite but cold Gehrman Sparrow wouldn't be interested in such rumors.

"So what?" Klein looked at the tableware on the table and calmly asked.

Do you know how to make conversation!? Blazing Danitz secretly drew a breath and squeezed out a smile.

"Haha, I just found it strange. We all suspected that he had joined MI9, and that he was using his identity as a captain to monitor the sea routes.”

It’s possible… Klein picked up a glass of water and took a sip.

The dishes he ordered were served one by one according to their type. The restaurant even gave him two complimentary cups of sweet, bubbling, and light gold pre-meal wine.

Klein stopped talking and concentrated on enjoying the food, feeling that it was indeed much better than the second-class dining room.

The melodious tunes of a violin resonated amidst the sounds produced from the slight contact between the cutlery and plates. The blue and open sea outside the window rippled quietly, and everything seemed perfect.

As Klein was about to be served dessert, a crewman came stomping in and ran to the table where Elland was sitting.

“Captain, there’s a pirate ship!” He didn’t suppress his voice.

Most of the passengers were shocked and stopped eating.

Klein looked up, looking across him at Danitz with his eyes dark and cold.

Blazing Danitz stiffened for a second, then he smiled bitterly. He lowered his voice and said, “If I were to say that this has nothing to do with me, will you believe me?”

Klein’s eyelids twitched as he slowly smiled.

“Guess.”

Guess? You son of a b*tch! Danitz was so furious that he almost cursed.

He maintained his smile and said, “Your wisdom is enough to judge everything.”

At that moment, Elland quickly asked about the situation. He stood up and said to the panicking first-class passengers, “There’s only one pirate ship. We have enough power to deal with it.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please return to your rooms in an orderly manner and await the arrival of good news. Believe me, the damage caused by chaos far exceeds whatever damage those pirates can do. I don’t wish to hear rumors in the future that although we, the White Agate, had succeeded in repelling the pirates, a handful of passengers had fallen and injured themselves.”

Under his arrangements, and with the support of the crew, Donna and the others left the dining room and returned to their own cabins, which included Klein and Blazing Danitz.

“I thought you were going to temporarily take over the White Agate and try to keep it safe from harm,” Danitz commented inside room 312 as he closed the door, as though he was watching a play.

To be able to immediately throw out an olive branch and talk about creeds and remuneration after finding a suitable candidate showed that he was an extroverted boatswain who liked to talk with others.

Klein glanced at him, then went to the window, and looked out. He saw a large ship with a red skull flag fluttering as it cruised towards them. There were chimneys and sails.

“Know them?” Klein held his hands in his pocket and stood behind a thick glass window.

Danitz walked to a spot diagonally behind him. After looking into the distance for two seconds, he said, “Red Skull. A small-medium band of pirates.

“The captain is Sea Wolf Johnson with a bounty of 900 pounds. The first mate is One-Eyed Anderson with a bounty of 500 pounds.”

In the pirate world, a bounty was an important reference point that determined one's status and standing.

Considering that he didn't have the ability to move underwater adeptly, it would be easy to have innocents die if he allowed the pirates to board the ship. Klein was silent for a few seconds before asking, "Do they know you?"

"Of course!" Danitz instantly straightened his back. "They're qualified to participate in distinguished gatherings between pirates. I once kicked them in the ass."

As expected of a famous pirate worth 3,000 pounds… Klein's asked without a change in expression, "Do they have binoculars?"

"That's an essential item. Even if a ship is placed under control, there will be sailors standing on the observation deck, using binoculars to observe the surroundings to prevent any surprise attacks," Danitz replied scornfully.

He could finally tell that this dangerous fellow was a new adventurer, and it was very likely that this was his first time at sea.

Was he a famous bounty hunter? A member of a secret organization? Danitz subconsciously guessed Gehrman Sparrow's past.

"During such times, will the captain and the first mate use their binoculars to observe us?" Klein originally wanted to address them as 900 pounds and 500 pounds, but he found it a bit impolite.

"Definitely, they have to keep track of their target," Danitz replied, slightly puzzled.

He didn't understand Gehrman Sparrow's goal for asking such questions. From his point of view, if he had his powerful strength, he definitely would've allowed the Red Skull pirates to approach, find an opportunity to board their ship, and then eliminate everyone.

Klein tilted his head and looked at Danitz before revealing a gentlemanly and warm smile.

“That’s good.”

What do you want to do? Don’t smile like that! Danitz suddenly panicked and summoned the courage to fight back.

“Take off your wig,” Klein calmly ordered.

Ah? Danitz was puzzled as he slowly removed the wig from his head.

Klein took out a special bottle of extract from his secret pocket and handed it over.

“Wipe your eyebrows and face clean.”

This was a mystical “Makeup Removal Extract” he had prepared before advancing to Faceless. He had used it when attacking the Wraith from the Rose School of Thought.

Although Klein no longer needed it anymore, he had been reluctant to throw it away.

“…” Danitz was even more confused. However, he was unwilling to throw himself into an irreversible situation unless he was really attacked, physically. He had no choice but to do as he was told, removing the disguise on his face and restoring his original appearance.

Putting away the small metal bottle, Klein opened the window and let the sea breeze pour in.

“Stand here and look outside,” he pointed directly behind the window and said to Blazing Danitz.

Danitz warily walked over in a daze and stood firmly behind the window.

Klein observed for a few seconds, then he calmly said, “You have two choices. One, crawl out and hang there in an eye-catching manner. Two, you get held by the collar by me and hung there in an eye-catching manner."

"What do you want to do?" Danitz blurted out.

Klein revealed his amiable smile again.

"Show you to the pirates. I believe Vice Admiral Iceberg's fourth boatswain holds sufficient weight to persuade them to retreat."

"No, don't do that!" Danitz subconsciously rejected the notion.

He could imagine what the people from the Red Skull pirate crew would think when they discovered him. Either Blazing Danitz had been captured, and there was a very terrifying powerhouse on the ship, or the ship was already being targeted by Vice Admiral Iceberg, and that other pirates were to immediately keep their distance.

And the way I'm hung up decides which thought they would have… Danitz thought sadly.

Klein smiled even more genially.

"I'm a very easy person to get along with, really—as long as you do as I tell you."

At this moment, Danitz once again felt the indescribable sense of hunger. He felt as if his flesh and soul could be torn from his body at any moment.

After weighing the pros and cons for a second, he half raised his hands, gritted his teeth, and smiled.

"I'll do it myself."

Holding back his anger and grievances, Danitz turned and climbed out of the window. Using his balance and strength from years of experience, he hung himself off the cabin with his forearm.

"Don't try to escape. I'm not a patient man." Klein's face turned cold as he gently reminded.

Phew… Danitz resisted the urge to release his forearm and jump straight down.

On the pirate ship in the distance, the crew responsible for observing the White Agate sent a message to Sea Wolf Johnson.

"Boss, there's a weird guy hanging out the window over there!"

Johnson was stunned for a second. He raised his binoculars and placed it in front of his eyes.

He quickly discovered the strange fellow who his subordinate was talking about. The man's position was simply too eye-catching.

Isn't that Blazing Danitz? Johnson's brows twitched as he recognized the man.

How did he get on the White Agate? What's the meaning of him hanging outside? This is Vice Admiral Iceberg's prey? After a series of questions, Sea Wolf came to a conclusion.

He raised his right hand and said, "Everyone take note; stay far away from this area immediately!"

†

In room 305, Cleves stood by the window with the revolver gripped tightly in his hand as a precaution against the potential sea skirmish.

Donna's family was a little frightened. They didn't return to their respective bedrooms, but they instead sat in the living room, waiting for the bombardment to begin. Cecile and the other bodyguard, Teague, stood guard beside them, fully alert.

At this moment, a look of confusion appeared in Cleves's slightly-aged eyes.

After a few minutes, he took a step back, lowered his muzzle, and said to the people, “The pirates have left.”

“What?” This development left Urdi Branch and the others surprised and confused. They had no idea what the pirates were thinking.

†

Room 312.

Blazing Danitz crawled back and couldn’t help but give a snort.

“You’re borrowing my captain’s reputation! She really hates these kinds of things!”

Just wait for Vice Admiral Iceberg to teach you a lesson! Danitz thought angrily.

Klein quietly listened and asked, “I remember her reward in Loen was 26,000 pounds?”

…This madman… Danitz couldn’t find the words to respond.

Chapter 505 - A Servant Worth 3,000 Pounds

◆

“Captain, the Red Skull pirates have fled!”

A sailor rushed into the captain’s quarters.

“They fled?” Elland lifted his telescope and looked quizzically at the calm sea, just in time to see the Red Skull disappear into the horizon.

He frowned, completely unable to understand how such a development could’ve occurred.

From his point of view, the White Agate’s armaments definitely weren’t capable of scaring off the Red Skull pirates. It was guaranteed that both parties would have to circle around each other dozens of times during the skirmish and fire multiple shots in order to ensure that the other party found them a tough nut to crack. Without daring to engage in a prolonged, they would then rationally choose to retreat.

Could it be that the Red Skull was just passing by and had no intention of plundering us? However, if they weren’t here to plunder, why would they enter this sea route? This is the easiest place to be stopped by the naval fleet and the Church’s ships. Even the Four Kings and Seven Admirals would still try their best to keep a low profile when they pass by the surrounding seas… Elland was filled with doubts, and he felt that things weren’t that simple.

Being careful keeps one away from disaster, I mustn’t be carelessness… Elland put away his yellow-brown telescope and paced back and forth.

He half raised his hand and said to the navigator, “We shall dock at Bansy Harbor tonight.

“Report our encounter with the pirates to the Navy and the Church.”

According to their usual plan, the next stop for the White Agate would be the Tiana Port, and it would probably take three days at 13 knots to reach it. From Tiana Port, it would finally reach the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, the City of Generosity, Bayam.

And there was a faster way to sail from Pritz Harbor to Bayam, which was to stop only once in the middle of the voyage, at Bansy Harbor, about 120 nautical miles from Damir Harbor.

†

“The Red Skull really left?” Donna’s father, Urdi Branch, walked to the window and looked out into the distance.

Cleves calmly nodded and said, “Yes.”

Just as he finished his sentence, a sailor’s shout sounded from outside.

“The danger has been averted! The danger has been averted!”

Upon receiving official confirmation, Donna and Denton finally relaxed and had the courage to approach the window and look outside.

“Are the Red Skull pirates that powerful?” Donna’s eyes widened as she searched for a ship that had already gone far away.

“Very powerful.” Cleves gave his answer.

“How powerful are they?” Denton immediately pressed.

On the other side, the bodyguard, Teague, straightened his hair and chuckled.

“Even if we don’t include the cannons and hundreds of pirates on the ship, just Captain Johnson and the first mate Anderson are extremely powerful on their own.

“Anderson’s nickname is One-Eyed. The bounty reward for him in the kingdom is 500 pounds. All of us in this room added together, together with the help of a few sailors, might be able to defeat him in battle. As for Johnson, who’s nicknamed Sea Wolf, he can easily finish such an opponent. If he were to board the ship, no one would be able to stop him. His bounty is worth 900 pounds, nearly 1,000 pounds!”

“Is that a lot?” Donna was surprised at the potency of Sea Wolf and One-Eyed, as well as their bounty.

In her memory, her father earned a total of 1,500 a year!

“A lot, this is a reward that they or their heads could directly be exchanged for. The items they have on them and the things they’ve plundered will also belong to you. The kingdom will buy it at the market price, and you will still have the chance to obtain the bounties from other countries,” Cecile explained. “On the sea, pirates with a bounty of more than 300 pounds are rather powerful. For those who are close to or above 1,000 pounds, they’ll be rather famous in the sea they plow. And I mean vast sea expanses like the Sonia Sea or the Fog Sea.”

“Therefore, the Four Kings and Seven Admirals are considered famous throughout the Five Seas?” Donna innocently asked.

Cleves replied seriously, “Yes.”

“In that case, are the Red Skull pirates very famous in the entire Sonia Sea?” Donna asked with concise logic.

“Yes.” Teague nodded.

“But why did they flee?” Donna blinked.

“It might not have been them fleeing…” Cecile didn’t know the reason either.

Cleves looked out the window again as he knitted his brows.

“Maybe there’s another reason. Maybe they had no plans to plunder us at all. They just came across us.”

Other reasons? Donna suddenly had a guess.

Could it be Uncle Sparrow’s tall-as-a-house, gentle messenger that scared them away? Yeah, it’s really scary! Donna’s mind bubbled like boiling water.

She turned her head excitedly and looked down to realize her brother’s eyes were shining as well.

The two of them pursed their lips and immediately realized that their thoughts were the same.

“Let’s go out and get some air on this level.” Donna found a reason to drag her brother out of Room 305.

Outside, Denton said in a suppressed voice, “Are we going to find Uncle Sparrow?”

“Exactly!” Donna smiled with a spirited look. “I saw him enter Room 312.”

†

Inside Room 312.

Blazing Danitz, who no longer mentioned Vice Admiral Iceberg, looked at the Red Skull which had turned its bow around and tsked with laughter.

“They must’ve been frightened by the declaration of the Navy’s cannons and the news that a pirate crew had been destroyed recently.

They actually took the risk of raiding this sea route in order to earn enough money before leaving the sea.

"Heh, so what if there are giant ship cannons? The Navy and the Church have a lot of powerful things, and they've always existed. But never have they made it impossible for us to continue being pirates. We can't beat them head-on, but we can always escape, right? They can't possibly stay with the merchant ships forever, can they?

"I know, the ironclad warship is getting bigger and bigger, and the steam engine installed in it will also become stronger. One day, the speed will break through 18 knots, 20 knots, and once they're on your tail, one can only wait to be caught. However, the sea is so vast. Tens of thousands of ships can't even fill a corner even if they were all thrown there. There are also a lot of unexplored areas at sea. One can hide in those places after doing something. Although it's dangerous, there are still opportunities."

This fellow is indeed the talkative type… Don't you think that a crazy adventurer wouldn't care about these things? Klein looked away and scanned the room.

His gaze finally fell on his leather suitcase. He then raised his chin and said, "Wash the dirty clothes inside."

The expression on the garrulous Danitz's face froze. He yearned to burn the entire ship down.

He felt that his anger was like gushing steam that had lifted the gate of reason.

Danitz opened his mouth and took a breath before repeating it again.

His flushed face softened as he asked without a smile on his face, "Is that all?"

"Only the dirty ones. The coat just needs to be brushed." Klein was almost amused by the man's show of anger, and he felt that this was what Danitz deserved from robbing the innocent.

The clothes in his suitcase were the ones he changed out of last night after a shower. As he felt a little lazy, he had only washed his underwear.

Calm down, don't lose control. Calm down, don't lose control… After admonishing himself several times, Danitz walked over to Gehrman Sparrow's suitcase, opened it, and took out the clothes that needed cleaning.

Just as he was getting busy in the bathroom, he heard the doorbell jingle.

Klein opened the door to find Donna and Denton.

"Uncle Sparrow, I hope I didn't disturb you?" Donna's eyes darted left and right.

"No." Klein stepped aside.

The two little fellows entered the room and were surprised to see Danitz doing the laundry.

"Where are the servants?" Denton asked subconsciously.

"Didn't bring them along," Klein answered for Danitz.

Donna asked, in apparent confusion, "But there are laundresses attached to first-class cabins. They're charged by the barrel."

Before she could finish, Danitz froze.

He had been so angry that he had forgotten about it.

Danitz shook the water from his hand, turned, and forced a smile at Gehrman Sparrow.

"Can I hire the laundresses for help?"

Klein didn't insist on seeing the pirate make a fool of himself, so he smiled and said, "I only care about the results."

Phew. Danitz heaved a sigh of relief.

Their back and forth question and answer exchange made Donna realize that something was wrong. The young lady asked in suspicion, "Uncle Sparrow, aren't you two friends? W-why does he look different from before!?"

Klein found a chair and sat down. Without hiding anything, he calmly said, "To be exact, he's my prisoner of war."

"Prisoner of war?" Denton looked around in a daze, not remembering when the two uncles had a conflict.

At first, Donna was puzzled, but then her heart skipped a beat. She cheerfully asked, "Is he… is he a pirate?"

"Yeah." Klein nodded gently.

"The Red Skull pirates were also scared off by you, Uncle Sparrow?" Donna pressed in excitement.

Klein shot a glance at Danitz and replied without an expression, "In a way."

Having all her questions answered, Donna felt abnormally pleased. She glanced at Danitz and unknowingly lowered her voice.

"Uncle Sparrow, does he have a name? No, does he have a bounty on him?"

No! I mustn't let anyone know of what happened to me! Danitz opened his mouth in a bid to answer before Klein.

"I'm Sieg!"

At this moment, Klein said with a fleeting voice, "Danitz."

"Danitz…" Donna and Denton looked at each other without asking any more questions.

The siblings didn't stay long and soon took their leave. They kept feeling that the pirate's eyes were fierce.

When they returned to Room 305, they saw that her father and Uncle Cleves were still in the midst of their discussion. Donna deliberately interjected innocently with a question.

"A lot of people were talking about pirates just now. Someone mentioned Danitz. Is he very powerful?"

"Danitz… Blazing Danitz. He's Vice Admiral Iceberg's subordinate, the fourth boatswain of the Golden Dream…" Cleves answered simply.

Upon saying this, he suddenly turned silent as he retracted his gaze, seemingly in recall.

A Pirate Admiral's subordinate… Donna pressed out of curiously, "How much is his bounty?"

Cleves returned to normal and said in a deep voice, "3,000 pounds."

Th-three thousand pounds? Donna and Denton opened their mouths, little by little, almost forgetting to close them.

The captain of the Red Skull pirates only has a bounty of 900 pounds, but the man who looks like a servant is worth 3,000 pounds? The siblings looked at each other, unable to utter a single word.

†

At 6 p.m., the White Agate entered a harbor again.

"Bansy Harbor? Elland is very cautious…" Danitz stood by the window, looking out at the darkened harbor and the tall lighthouse.

Without waiting for Klein’s response, he laughed and said, “It seems like there are some nasty legends here.”

Chapter 506 - The Weather Museum

◆

Klein already had a basic understanding of Danitz's character, so he didn't take the initiative to ask about the legends. He continued sitting in his chair and calmly looked at him.

Danitz, who hadn't been interrupted, shook his head.

"Legend has it that 300 years ago when the Loen army first occupied this island, more than 500 soldiers mysteriously disappeared after a fog. Not long after that, a lot of bones appeared by the beach and on the mountain, and similar incidents happened several times. This continued until the Church of Storms built a cathedral here and sent a bishop."

Although historians accredited the official start of the colonial era to when Roselle sent a fleet to find a safe route to the Southern Continent, in reality, for a long period of time before that, the countries of the Northern Continent had explored the surrounding seas and gradually colonized a few islands. The only difference was that these operations weren't systematic or wide-scale enough.

Disappearing mysterious in the fog… Bones appearing by the beach and on the mountains… Klein thought of the Forsaken Land of God for some baffling reason. According to Little Sun's description, there was no sun there, with only lightning and the night. Furthermore, when humans were "surrounded" by darkness without a sliver of light, they would encounter strange or terrifying events.

Looking at the lighthouse that stood out in the setting sun, Danitz continued, “And according to the tombs and murals excavated on the island, the natives here seem to have a tradition of cannibalism.

“This island experiences intense weather changes, making it often encounter earthquakes, storms, and heavy fog; thus, the natives experience disasters time and time again. In order to survive, they began worshiping a God of Weather they created for themselves. Every year, they would hold four rituals. Heh, the rituals involve killing chosen worshippers as they shared in the blood and flesh before burying the worshippers’ heads in the sacrificial altar.

“However, a similar tradition has long since been replaced by the Storm’s sacrificial ritual, and the original language of the natives has also disappeared.”

God of Weather… A conquered island that had once retained the tradition of live sacrifices… Klein made his preliminary judgment.

Danitz retracted his gaze and casually said, “Because of these legends, there are two unique customs in Bansy Harbor. One is to close the door tightly on nights with heavy fog or huge changes in weather. They don’t head out or respond to any knocking.

“The other is that they love the blood of all kinds of animals and have learned from migrating elves to add salt, solidifying the blood into strange lumps which are tender and fragrant when matched with the acrid condiments native to this land.”

Isn’t that blood cake? Klein was stunned for a second, his eyebrows furrowing in puzzlement.

“Elves?”

According to the stereotypes he had formed in his previous life, elves were supposed to be elegant vegetarians. How could they research the correct method for eating blood, as well as the hundred methods involved in making blood cakes?

"That's right. Rumor has it that many elves like solidified blood." Danitz spread out his hands in response. "Unfortunately, it's already very difficult to find such creatures who have good culinary skills."

…Little Sun previously mentioned that the ancient god of the Elves, Elf King, Soniathrym, wielded the authority of the storm. In that case, the elves should be a race equivalent to Beyonders of the Sailor pathway… Hmm, so it's not inconceivable that elves enjoy blood-related food… Perhaps, they even possess the attribute of being irritable as well… That's quite a scene to behold… Klein's thoughts raced, and he gradually turned his attention to blood cakes.

It's been a while since I ate that… He suddenly had the urge to alight from the ship and taste the delicacy.

At this moment, Danitz took the initiative to suggest.

"There's a Green Lemon Restaurant here that's very famous. Pig blood is especially delicious. Do you… Do you want to try it out?"

He kept having the feeling that being alone in the same room with Gehrman Sparrow was very dangerous. He was worried that this monster in human skin would suddenly go crazy.

He should be more restrained in places with more people… Holy Lord of Storms, I hope this trip comes to an end as soon as possible! Danitz prayed without confidence.

As a pirate, he also believed in the Lord of Storms, but he didn't have enough respect for the Church.

After hearing Blazing's suggestion, Klein, who already had such intentions, was immediately moved.

However, the legends and customs Danitz had told him of made him feel a little uncomfortable. Thus, he took out a gold coin and performed a divination right in front of Danitz.

The result was that there were no dormant dangers in Bansy Harbor for him.

Hmm… Klein looked at the gold coin in his hand without moving his eyes away for a few seconds. He still felt uneasy.

As Danitz watched this scene, he suddenly understood that this monster in front of him was skilled in divination.

This… Even if I were to secretly flee, it would still be very easy for him to find me… Blazing felt a wave of depression as a faint sadness welled up in his heart.

He had just recovered from his disconsolate mood when Klein suddenly stood up and walked over to the washroom.

Before closing the door, Klein expressionlessly turned his head around and said, “You can use this opportunity to escape.”

With that, Klein slammed the washroom’s door.

Danitz spread his hands open and clenched them tightly, took two steps towards the door before coming to a halt.

The unknown was the scariest. He didn’t dare take the risk of creating conflict before he had any clear understanding of Gehrman Sparrow’s Beyonder powers.

At-at least he’s kind enough to me and hasn’t actually hurt me… He’ll likely let me go when we get to Bayam… Danitz’s hopes of him getting lucky had taken hold of his mind.

In the washroom.

Klein pulled out a paper figurine, disguised it, and took four steps counterclockwise to head above the gray fog.

He sat down at the end of the long bronze table, removed the pendulum from his left wrist, and wrote the corresponding divination statement:

“There is danger dormant in Bansy Harbor.”

He hung his spirit pendulum and adjusted his posture. After muttering a few times, Klein opened his eyes and saw the topaz pendant rotating clockwise. Furthermore, it was with a high amplitude and frequency!

This meant that for Klein, there was a great danger lurking in Bansy Harbor!

How could this be? This place was colonized by the kingdom for more than three hundred years, and it has become an important port on the main trading route for over a hundred years. There have never been any rumors of danger being spread… Could it be that several powerful pirates are cooperating to sack this port? No, those cannons defending the port aren’t for show… Klein frowned, performing another divination on whether he would encounter any pirate-related mishaps, but the answer was no.

Hmm… He fell silent for a few seconds, then he allowed his spirituality to envelop his body before plummeting through the gray fog.

Returning to the real world, Klein pressed the mechanical button on the toilet, put away the paper figurine double, and went to the nearby washing basin to wet his hands with water.

In this short period of time, he quickly sorted out his thoughts and decided to do his best to hide. His priority was to stay safe.

Pulling out a tissue and wiping his hands, Klein opened the door and saw that Danitz was still standing in the middle of the living room.

A pirate who’s cautious to the point of being a little cowardly… In a sense, Vice Admiral Iceberg’s subordinates are all adventurers who are part-time pirates… Klein looked at him and calmly said, “To the first-class dining room”

“…Alright.” Danitz didn’t understand why Gehrman Sparrow had suddenly changed his mind, but in the end, he chose to not raise any disputes.

†

Walking down the gangway, Cleves suddenly said to Donna and the others, “Head to the Green Lemon Restaurant first.

“I have some matters to do with Captain Elland. I’ll join you soon.”

“Alright.” Although Urdi Branch was surprised, he wasn’t too puzzled.

Cleves was halfway aboard the ship when he met Elland with his straight sword at his waist.

“I’m going to visit Gehrman Sparrow.” Cleves turned around for the first-class cabins after saying that.

Elland was momentarily dazed, unable to understand his out-of-the-blue intentions.

There’s no need to inform me that you’re visiting Gehrman Sparrow… Elland was startled for two seconds before he vaguely grasped the true meaning behind Cleves’s words.

He’s telling me so that if—if anything happens to him, it would be because of his visit to Gehrman Sparrow… But if nothing happens to him, it means that his suspicions were incorrect and there’s no need to further disturb Gehrman Sparrow any further… Elland stopped in his footsteps and said to the first mate beside him, “Wait fifteen minutes.”

†

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Klein and Danitz, who were on their way out, heard a rhythmic knock on the door.

Danitz, who received a signal, hurried over and opened the door.

It was Cleves outside. He looked at Danitz, who had disguised himself again, before turning to Klein and said, “Blazing Danitz?”

At lunchtime, he had found Gehrman Sparrow’s friend somewhat odd and familiar, but he hadn’t connected the face to the picture on the bounty notice. It was only when Donna mentioned Danitz that the inspiration struck him, making him realize that the two were very similar.

As expected… Klein was about to nod and answer when Danitz said with a laugh, “My friend, you have the wrong person. Although I look like the famous pirate who’s worth 3000 pounds, I’m really not him. People have always had misunderstandings, bringing me a great deal of trouble.”

Klein raised his hand and covered his mouth. He almost laughed out loud and destroyed his persona.

He restrained his expression and calmly replied, “Yes.”

Sigh… My reputation… Danitz stretched his neck and looked at the ceiling.

“What are the two of you planning?” Cleves drew in a silent breath and asked directly.

Klein jerked his chin towards Danitz.

“Watching over him.”

“Watching over?” Cleves couldn’t understand Gehrman Sparrow’s words.

Sir, you must learn to make associations by yourself. Learn to infer on your own. You can’t have me explain in detail. That doesn’t match my persona! Confronted with the doubtful look in Cleves’s eyes, Klein casually said, “He boarded at Damir Harbor and I recognized him, so I decided to watch over him to prevent any accidents.”

After looking at Klein for a few seconds, Cleves nodded his head and said, “Will you be fine?

“Do you need any help?

“No,” Klein replied quietly.

Cleves glanced at the depressed Danitz and took a step back.

“Then, I’ll take my leave.”

Just as he was about to leave, he was suddenly stopped by Gehrman Sparrow. He heard the mysterious young adventurer say, with some solemnity, “Return to the ship as soon as possible.

“There is danger dormant in Bansy Harbor.”

†

In the Green Lemon Restaurant, Donna had just laid out her napkin when she saw through the window that Uncle Cleves had arrived hurriedly downstairs.

At this moment, the weather in the port suddenly changed. Strong gales rose up from all directions, causing the trees to sway back and forth.

As expected of Bansy Harbor, the Weather Museum… Donna studied the outside scenery with interest.

She saw a man in a black cloak trudging through the wind with a lantern in his hand.

Seemingly sensing that he was being watched, that person turned his body sideways and looked up at the second floor of the restaurant.

Then, Donna discerned his appearance and saw that the area where the person’s head was supposed to be was empty inside the black cloak.

There was only a bare neck with bright red blood spewing out of it.

The person slunk his body back down, pulled at his cloak before continuing forward.

Chapter 507 - Bansy Harbor in the Wind

◆

Donna jerked back, her pupils constricting, her mouth half-open as her scream reached her lips.

If she hadn't seen the messenger before, then she would've long lost control of herself and staggered to her feet in terror, unconcerned whether she would flip over the tables or chairs.

Fortunately, she was no longer the young lady who was completely ignorant of the matters of the sea when she first boarded the White Agate. Her voice had only become slightly sharper as she pointed outside the window and stammered, "Th-there's a zombie!

"A headless zombie!"

She used the most commonly seen zombie in folklore to describe the terrifying thing she had just seen.

Cecile shot to her feet and rushed to Donna's side. She looked curiously out of the window where the raging wind was blowing and observed for a few seconds.

"There's nothing," she said truthfully.

Donna shrank back, mustered her courage, and cautiously leaned forward only to see the trees outside swaying, with random clutter flying everywhere. There wasn't a single pedestrian.

"Th-there really was someone there. H-he was wearing a black cloak, and he had no head. His neck was bleeding!" Donna said while gesturing in an attempt to convince the adults in the room.

Her father, Urdi Branch, propped himself up from the table, went to the window, and looked out for a moment.

“Donna, you aren’t allowed to read that ‘Fonce’s Horror Stories Anthology’ anymore tonight!”

“B-but…” Donna felt aggrieved and wanted to defend herself.

At this moment, Cleves came up to the second floor and approached, asking, “What happened?”

“Donna said she saw a zombie, a headless zombie,” the other bodyguard, Teague, explained with a chuckle.

Cleves was silent for two seconds, then he nodded at Donna.

“It’s okay, this shall pass.

“The wind outside is very strong and dangerous. We’ll leave when things calm down.”

In the eyes of Donna, Uncle Cleves’s words indicated that he believed her and had chosen the safest solution. But in the eyes of Urdi, Teague, and the others, this was merely a clumsy tactic to comfort a child.

Seeing that Donna was still a little nervous and that his real employer wasn’t too satisfied, Cleves pulled out a chair and sat down as he calmly said, “There’s a strange tradition in Bansy Harbor. They don’t leave the buildings or respond to any knocks on the door when the weather turns stormy at night.”

“If you open the door, will you be taken away by the zombie?” Denton suddenly asked in enlightenment, having seen the messenger with his sister.

“You can think of it that way.” Cleves picked up a glass of water and took a sip.

So that's how it is… Donna calmed down, believing that she wouldn't encounter that horrible zombie as long as she didn't leave the restaurant.

It was only then that she noticed that the surrounding customers had all cast their gazes over due to the commotion.

Being stared at by so many people, Donna felt uncomfortable from head to toe. She instinctively wanted to lower her head to avoid everything.

I didn't do anything wrong! I really saw it! Donna obstinately straightened her neck and looked around.

She saw the gentlemen in tailcoats and the ladies in their beautiful dresses retract their gazes. She saw them lower their heads, pick up their spoons, and scoop the dark red blood blocks in their bowls to stuff into their mouths.

Their lips were stained with a tinge of red. Their faces appeared pale under the light of the crystal chandelier. The contrast between the two made Donna feel an inexplicable sense of fear.

She turned her head back and waited for dinner, secretly praying to the Goddess that the gale would cease as soon as possible.

†

Bansy Harbor Telegraph Office.

As soon as Elland and his first mate finished sending their report to the Navy, they realized that the wind outside was howling and that the nearby doors and windows were rattling.

"Really, the weather here is always so unstable." Elland put on his boat-shaped hat and sighed with a laugh.

His first mate, Harris, laughed out loud.

“Otherwise, how could they call themselves the ‘Weather Museum’?”

“It’s best if you don’t head out. Legends say that you’ll lose your head because of that.” the telegraph office’s staff, a young lady with curly brown hair, reminded them in a slow voice.

“I know, but I’ve tried a few times and nothing happened.” Without a care, Harris opened the door to leave.

Elland stopped him and thought for a moment.

“Will it be okay to go to the cathedral next door?

“Your telegraph office will be closing, right?”

“No problem.” The lady with the curly brown hair was still as slow as ever.

Elland nodded, opened the telegraph office’s door, and trudged toward the Storm cathedral, dozens of meters away, against the gusts of wind that seemed to be capable of sweeping away a child.

First Mate Harris, who was holding onto his hat, followed the captain as if to express his desire to rush directly back to the White Agate.

However, the moment he opened his mouth, strong gales gushed into his mouth and his whole voice was miserably stuffed back into his mouth.

After croaking for a while, he wisely shut his mouth and stopped making obviously unrealistic proposals.

It was still fifteen minutes to seven, and even in the evening, the main doors of the Storm cathedral were still open for its congregation.

The gale weakened significantly when it reached the area. At the very least, Elland and Harris no longer had to worry about their hats abandoning them.

Upon entering the cathedral, they walked down the dark and solemn aisle. They stepped into the prayer hall and saw a man in a dark blue priest robe sitting in the front pew. He was quietly gazing at the huge Storm Sacred Emblem, made up of the symbols of the wind, waves, and lightning, on the altar.

Elland smiled as he moved closer, patting the familiar figure on the shoulder.

“Jayce, where’s your bishop?”

With that pat, the priest’s head wobbled.

Then, it fell forward, and with a loud thud, it fell to the ground, continuously rolling about.

Blood gushed out of the priest’s neck like a fountain, soaking Elland’s face.

A cold and damp feeling reached his heart, and Elland’s eyes were blinded with a rich red color.

All that was left in his line of sight was a world of blood, as well as a head that had finally stopped rolling and was staring upwards with a glazed look in its eyes.

†

At 7:15 p.m., Klein and Danitz, who came out of the first-class restaurant, noticed that the wind which had been shaking the boat had calmed down considerably.

After thinking for two seconds, Klein walked all the way to the entrance of the cabin and asked the crew, “Who else isn’t back?”

The crew member had seen this passenger enjoy the delicious murloc meat with the Captain, so he didn’t hide anything as he said, “Other than the Branch family and the Timothy family at the Green Lemon

Restaurant, all the other passengers have returned before the gale started. Heh heh, that place is quite far away, and it also takes quite a long time to dine there.

“Oh right, Captain and First Mate went to the telegraph office, but they haven’t returned yet.”

Klein nodded indiscernibly and returned to Room 312 in silence.

He stood by the window, looking at the waves that were stirred by the wind. Even without using the mysterious space above the gray fog to divine, his own spiritual intuition made him vaguely sense that something bad was brewing and happening.

After waiting another five minutes, he still didn’t see Captain Elland and Donna’s family return.

Klein glanced sideways at Danitz, making the famous pirate slouching in the reclining chair sit up straight.

Klein looked away, said nothing, and went into the washroom.

He closed the door behind him, took out the paper figurine, disguised himself, and went above the gray fog, ready to make another divination.

Before, he had considered the potential risks of Bansy Harbor, but now, after the wind had picked up, he intended to confirm the current level of danger.

“Bansy Harbor is dangerous.”

Klein held the spirit pendulum and began to recite the statement in a low voice.

After repeating this over and over again, he opened his eyes and discovered that, although the topaz pendant was rotating clockwise, it wasn’t spinning at a fast frequency or with large amplitudes.

There’s danger, but it’s within acceptable limits… This is in contradiction to the revelation from before… Klein whispered to himself as he leaned his elbows on the edge of the long bronze table.

He quickly thought of one possibility, and that was that the current danger wasn’t equal to the dormant danger. Only by triggering something or investigating it thoroughly would the iceberg hidden beneath the sea appear.

This dormant danger might’ve existed for three or four hundred years, or perhaps even longer, and not because of my arrival… Hmm, the current danger might even have nothing to do with the dormant danger. It’s a pity that I don’t have the necessary information to make a divination based on this conjecture… After interpreting, Klein quickly returned to the real world, left the washroom, and found a chair to sit on.

He was silent, hesitant, and didn’t move for a long time, which made Blazing Danitz feel strangely uneasy.

Ever since Gehrman Sparrow mentioned that there was danger lurking in Bansy Harbor, this infamous pirate had been constantly worried.

To be able to make this monster change his mind and avoid the danger at Green Lemon Restaurant, it must be very terrifying… Why is my vacation so miserable? I’m plagued with bad luck! The atmosphere was so stifling that Danitz had to get up and pace back and forth.

It was then that he saw the monster, Gehrman Sparrow, suddenly stand up, button his double-breasted frock coat, and walk over to the coat rack by the door.

After taking his silk hat, Klein looked at Blazing and said without any expression, “You’re free.”

“Huh?” Danitz only found it surreal.

He suddenly understood what the monster was thinking of doing, and he blurted out in shock, “You want to save the captain and those ordinary people?

“Y-you were the one who said it’s dangerous outside!”

Klein put on his half top hat, picked up his black wooden cane, twisted the door handle, and replied calmly, “They cooperated with me.

“They kept my secret for me.

“He treated me to murloc meat.

“He helped me pay compensation for White Shark’s loss.”

“…”

Danitz didn’t react for a moment. Subconsciously, he asked, “How much was the compensation?”

“A few soli.” Klein opened the door and walked out.

Madman! This fellow is completely mad! Be it his treatment to others or himself, he’s a madman! Danitz’s mouth was half-open as he felt speechless.

Luckily, I’m a normal person! I’ll stay in a safe place! Danitz retracted his gaze and thought in mockery and amusement.

Just as this thought came to him, the wind howled again, rattling the windows and causing the candles in the room to flicker.

Looking at this dark and turbulent scene, Danitz suddenly thought of a problem.

The ship is anchored in the harbor, which was also part of Bansy Harbor. It’s not safe either, and it could also be in danger!

If I were to stay here on my own, then I might as well follow that monster. At least… At least, he’s very strong! He ran out of Room 312 and caught up with Klein just as he was about to leave the cabin.

Klein turned his head to glance at him. Although he didn't say anything, his puzzlement was very evident.

Danitz hurriedly laughed.

"If I were to choose to retreat in the face of such trivial risks, I'll be mocked by all the pirates of the Sonia Sea!"

An excuse… Without exposing him, Klein borrowed a lantern from the crew.

Carrying the dim yellow lantern and holding his hard wooden cane, he walked alongside the boat and entered the dim port in his black suit.

As Danitz lamented, he followed closely beside him.

Chapter 508 - Don't Go Out

◆ ◆ ◆

Unlike mainland cities such as Backlund, Tingen, and Pritz Harbor, colonial islands such as Bansy Harbor lacked gas. The lamps lining the two sides of the street were sparse. They had candles caged in glass, waiting to be lit.

Unfortunately, the wind had picked up early, so no one went out in the evening. The candles didn't shine at the predetermined time, and the road was pitch black. The faint outline of the crimson moon shone through the clouds.

Compared to before, the wind was much calmer. At the very least, Klein didn't need to be distracted keeping his hat on.

The thin fog gradually pervaded the air, and the doors and windows of the mainly two-story houses were shut tight. It was pitch black and devoid of any light, as though no one had lived in the area for a long time.

With a yellow lantern in one hand and a hard wooden cane in the other, Klein walked quickly down the quiet street in the direction of the Green Lemon Restaurant which Blazing Danitz had pointed out.

Woosh!

Amidst the fog, the wind began to swirl as Klein felt a baffling chill down his neck.

He lifted his right hand, which held the cane, and propped up the collar of his double-breasted frock coat, completely covering his neck.

It was at this moment that a scene suddenly appeared in his mind!

In the scene, a black shadow the size of a watermelon appeared from the fog and lunged for his ear.

Without thinking, Klein swung his arm and forearm and struck out with his cane.

Bam!

Just as the black shadow came close, it was struck head-on and sent flying a long distance away.

With the help of the lantern's light, Klein finally recognized the thing that had attacked him.

It was a head!

It was a head that had lost its body, a head that had its esophagus hanging down!

The head floated in midair, its face resembling dried cheese with mildew all over it. There was a yellowish-green liquid flowing down its skin as it outlined the face's contours.

There were only two black holes left where its nose was supposed to be. Its bulging eyes were mostly white without much black. Its lips were mostly rotten, revealing sharpened teeth mixed with blood!

Dogsh*t! Blazing Danitz silently cursed when he saw this scene, his heart trembling.

Even though he had embarked on many treasure hunts and had fought many monsters, such a disgusting and horrifying thing was still rare.

At some point in time, a classic revolver had appeared in his hand, and he was about to fire it with his elbow held down.

At this moment, he saw a pure ray of light descend from the sky, landing on the somewhat stiff head.

Ah!

A blood-curdling screech rang out, and the shriveled and hideous head was quickly vaporized before dissolving into ashes. It didn't leave a single trace behind.

How weak! Danitz subconsciously commented.

Is this monster, Gehrman Sparrow, from the Sun pathway? Doesn't look like it… He likely relied on what should be some sort of mystical item… I didn't even realize it just now, but Gehrman Sparrow had already discovered the enemy and attacked. He really is very strong… Danitz quickly turned his attention to something else.

Just as his thoughts were settling down, he saw a similar head fly out from the fog to his side from the corner of his eye. It was trying to bite his neck.

Bang!

Danitz calmly pulled the trigger.

The brass bullet accurately hit the head covered in mold, shattering the head's glabella as it fell backwards and stopped in midair.

Soon after, a crimson ball quickly expanded above Danitz's empty left palm, and a fiery light began to swirl.

He leaned forward and dragged his arm before "throwing" the fire ball, causing it to crash into the stiff head.

Flames soared up as the head burned red. The skin on the head quickly charred, emitting a sizzling sound.

However, it lunged forward with its mouth wide open, ready to bite Danitz's neck as though it wasn't affected.

This turn of events was somewhat out of Danitz's expectations. He nearly failed to dodge in time, and he hurriedly rolled forward, barely dodging fatal damage.

A bright scarlet color appeared on his left palm once again, but the flame didn't expand this time. Instead, it shrunk, layer by layer.

Within a second, Danitz threw out the orange fireball, which was only the size of an eye, while dodging.

The fireball was controlled by his spirituality. It drew an arc in the air and accurately flew into the mouth of the shriveled head.

Boom!

The fiery light flashed, and the explosion splintered the flying head from the inside out. Countless pieces of it, along with its blood, splashed everywhere.

I've finally finished it… Danitz rolled to his feet and breathed a sigh of relief.

Only then did he realize that this monster which only had a head wasn't easy to deal with. Yet, Gehrman Sparrow had killed one with ease.

It's mainly because the Beyonder powers in the Sun domain restrains such things! Danitz added scornfully in his heart.

As he thought of this, he turned his head to the side and realized that Gehrman Sparrow hadn't waited for him. With his cane and lantern, he was jogging into the distance, his black coat fluttering behind him slightly.

…Dogsh*t! Wait for me… Wait for me! Danitz's pupils contracted as he widened his pace to chase after the man. He didn't dare to stay on his own in the thin fog and dim surroundings.

†

Inside the Green Lemon Restaurant.

Donna looked at the white porcelain bowl in front of her and the dark red blood cakes in it. She thought of the strange horror she felt when seeing the customers eating just now, as well as the blood oozing out of the headless cloaked man's neck.

Her throat moved and she almost vomited.

Donna decided to give up the delicacy, even though the fragrance had already seeped into her nose.

She ate some salad and mashed potatoes without much thought and waited for the wind outside to die down. She felt the clock on the wall moving ever so slowly.

Time passed by the second. The customers at the table paid their bills and left the second floor. The second floor became quieter and quieter as it turned emptier and emptier.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Donna felt that the sound of feet on the wooden steps as they descended were frustrating.

Finally, she noticed that the trees outside were no longer swaying, and the ground was littered with all sorts of junk.

“The wind has stopped!” Donna said, pointing excitedly to the window.

Her father, an import and export merchant, Urdi Branch, pinched his forehead and growled, “Where's your table manners, Donna?”

“But…” Just as Donna was about to argue, Cleves raised his palm and pressed it down.

“It's 7:40 p.m. and we're almost done with dinner. Let's head back as soon as possible. There are many nasty legends about the night in Bansy Harbor.”

Every merchant who depended on the sea for a living was more or less superstitious, especially when it came to the legends of the natives. Therefore, Urdi fell silent and agreed with Cleves's suggestion.

He quickly foot the bill and led his family and bodyguards down to the first floor.

Cleves was about to open the door to find his way when a creaking sound came from a nearby room. Donna almost screamed out in fright and gripped Denton's hand tightly.

A figure walked out, glanced at them, and calmly said, "It's fogged up. It's best not to go out."

The figure wore a black tailcoat without a hat. There was a pair of glasses on the bridge of his nose. His face was fleshy and almost circular.

"What are you trying to convey, Mr. Fox?" Cleves recognized him to be the owner of the Green Lemon Restaurant.

Fox said without much of an expression, "In Bansy, during the nights when the fog and weather drastically changes, it's best not to go out or respond to any knockings. Otherwise, one might encounter… bad things."

The more Donna listened, the more scared she became. She loudly emphasized, "People have already left ahead of us!"

Fox pointed to the rooms on the first floor.

"They chose to stay."

Creak! Thud!

As soon as Fox's voice fell, the doors to the various rooms opened either softly or heavily. The gentlemen and ladies from before came to the doors and quietly watched Donna and her family, who were considering to leave.

“Perhaps we should respect the customs here,” Urdi Branch said in deliberation. “Staying a night here won’t affect our boarding of the ship.”

According to the experience Cleves was equipped with, he should’ve followed Fox’s advice and stayed at the Green Lemon Restaurant, but he remembered Gehrman Sparrow’s reminder. It was a reminder of a powerful adventurer who was watching Blazing Danitz!

There is danger dormant in Bansy Harbor… It doesn’t refer to it being indoors or outdoors… Cleves quickly made his decision and said to Urdi, “Mr. Branch, please trust in my profession.”

“Yeah, I’ve seen a lot of folklore, but none of them are pragmatic,” another bodyguard agreed.

Before he finished his sentence, knocking sounds came from the restaurant’s door and a series of screams could be heard from afar.

“Look, there are knocking sounds. Don’t respond,” Fox said slowly.

Urdi’s heart palpitated as he was about to choose to stay the night.

Donna looked at the gentlemen and ladies standing at their doorways, and she felt that their gazes looked abnormally weird.

“No, we have to return!” the young lady stressed, almost screaming.

Cleves could also feel the indescribable pressure and the coldness that seeped through his bones, and he once again stressed his opinion.

“If there are any problems, then it’ll be more dangerous staying here. There are cannons on the ship, as well as sailors with guns and sabers.”

This reason convinced Urdi, who motioned for Cleves to open the door.

Cleves waited for the knocking to subside, then with one hand holding a gun, he pulled open the door with the other.

The wind's howling had quietened and the darkness was deep amidst the spreading fog. It was as if there were many monsters hidden within.

Donna held her younger brother, Denton, and, hiding behind Cecile, left the restaurant one step at a time.

Creak!

The door to the restaurant suddenly closed, preventing them from returning.

At this moment, they were like ships stranded in a storm, as though they were the only ones left in this world.

With the lantern in hand, Cleves walked in front when he suddenly saw something fly over and crash into the ground, rolling a few times.

Donna and the others subconsciously looked over and immediately let out cries of terror.

It was a shriveled, rotting head!

Then they saw light.

Light fell from the sky, and the disgusting head melted into nothingness.

"This…" Urdi and the others swallowed hard, their bodies trembling.

At that moment, they saw a faint yellow light approaching from the depths of the fog.

It was a figure holding a lantern, wearing a half top hat and a double-breasted frock coat which shared the same color as the night. The lines of his face were distinct, and there was an obvious sharpness in the coldness.

"Uncle Sparrow!" Donna and Denton cried out.

They felt their hearts settle down.

Klein tossed the lantern to Danitz beside him, and he walked over with his cane in hand before calmly saying to Cleves and the others as if nothing was out of the ordinary, “Let’s go to the telegraph office first.

“What about the Timothys?”

Chapter 509 - Request

◆◆◆

“Timothys?”

“They’re still in the restaurant,” Urdi Branch subconsciously replied.

He then pointed to the area where the moldy head had been purified and anxiously asked, “What was that just now?”

Maintaining Gehrman Sparrow’s persona, Klein didn’t answer and glanced at Danitz before walking directly past Donna’s family to the tightly closed door of the Green Lemon Restaurant.

Blazing Danitz held his lantern and was relieved having finally completed a goal. He straightened his back, looked at Urdi and the others, and scoffed.

“You don’t have to worry about what that was. Just know that it’s a monster that will harm you.”

If Gehrman Sparrow wasn’t only a few meters away, he even wanted to proclaim: Only I, Lord Blazing Danitz, can protect you!

Cleves exchanged glances with Cecile and Teague before taking the initiative to step forward. He comforted his employers and said, “Leave your questions to after we get back to the White Agate.”

Frankly speaking, the three bodyguards had all been adventurers for varying periods of time. However, their understanding of monsters was still stuck at the level of folklore or stories of their drunken peers. They still found it rather surreal, as though they were in a dream.

However, since they had seen creatures like murlocs before, it wasn't that hard to accept other things. At most, they were a little weirder and uglier than murlocs.

When they thought of this, their hearts calmed significantly, and the guns in their hands seemed to regain their strength.

However, the pure light that descended from the sky still exceeded their scope of understanding. They only felt that their world view, outlook on life, and values that had long been formed had begun wavering. All they could do was temporarily ignore it, suppressing all their emotions to the bottom of their hearts.

Klein stopped at the door of the Green Lemon Restaurant, raised his right hand, and tapped it with his fingers.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

After he knocked three times in a rhythmic fashion, no one answered and there was silence.

If not for the candlelight shining through the windows and the cracks in the door, Klein would've thought it was an empty building that had long been abandoned.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

He knocked three more times.

Within the restaurant, the silence continued. Everyone seemed to be abiding by the custom of not responding to any knocking in foggy weather.

Klein retracted his right hand and patted the hem of his double-breasted frock coat.

Suddenly, he leaned back, lifted his knees, and kicked his right foot forward.

With a bang, the restaurant's door suddenly opened wide, and all the nails that had fixed the copper lock popped out.

Wearing a tailcoat, the boss, Fox, with his pudgy, nearly-round face was still standing in his original position. The ladies and gentlemen who had chosen to stay the night all opened the doors one by one and stood quietly at the door, looking over without a word.

"What… do you want?" Fox didn't flare up; his tone the same as before. However, he had a revolver in his hand.

With his Spirit Vision activated, Klein turned his head and looked around. He didn't find any traces of evil on any of the humans present.

His gaze landed on the boss of the restaurant, and his gaze turned heavy. He looked into the owner's eyes and asked, "Where's the Timothy family?"

Fox repressed his emotions, as though a storm was brewing in his dark brown eyes while he looked at the man for two seconds. Finally, he unnaturally turned his head and said, "There's another table. Foreigners. Upstairs."

"Get them to come down," Klein ordered coldly.

Fox was silent for a few seconds, until the man quickly drew his gun and aimed it at his head.

He took a deep breath and sent a waiter up to the second floor, leading the Timothy family down the stairs.

"What happened?" Timothy was a man who was more than thirty years of age. He was on vacation with his newly wedded wife.

Klein lowered his gun and flatly said, "Something unexpected has happened in Bansy Harbor.

"Are you coming back with me to the ship or staying here?"

"Something unexpected?" While Timothy ruminated over the words, he saw Urdi Branch outside nodding at him solemnly.

He knew that the other party was a very rich import and export merchant who had three bodyguards with him. He believed that if there were any unexpected circumstances, then it would be safer to stay with them, so the answer was obvious.

As for the unique customs of Bansy Harbor, it was just a custom! He held his wife's hand and walked towards the door, politely smiling as he said, "All our things are on the ship. Of course we'll stick with you."

"Thank you," he and his new wife expressed their gratitude in unison, walked past Klein, and joined with the Branch family outside.

Klein withdrew his revolver, politely bowed at Fox and said, "Excuse us."

With that, he turned around and walked towards Cleves and company, who were illuminated by the light leaking out from the restaurant.

With a thud, the door of the Green Lemon Restaurant closed once again, swaying slightly in the wind.

Klein had actually noticed an unusual, subtle atmosphere just now, but since his Spirit Vision failed to obtain anything, he didn't wish to investigate it too deeply, lest he ignite the huge danger lurking in Bansy Harbor.

He returned to Danitz's side and did a headcount with the light of the lantern.

Donna's family of four, their three bodyguards, the Timothy couple, and several servants are all present… Klein switched the hands in which he held his revolver and cane with, lifted his gun-wielding right hand, slipped it deep into the double-breasted frock coat, and rubbed the Sun Brooch.

With a flash of dark golden light, an invisible force quickly spread outwards, flooding everyone present like a wave.

Instantly, Donna and the others felt as if they had arrived in the south, like they were bathing in warm sunlight that dispersed the cold chill within their bodies.

They were no longer as nervous and worried, as if they had found their courage again. The remnant black colors obtained from the special cured meat from Damir Harbor quickly disappeared along with the extremely minute amounts of wicked feelings.

Sun Halo was able to enhance the courage of one's companions within a twenty meter radius and purify any evil forces within them!

With the help of the brooch and while under the control of Klein's spirituality and psyche, he could use the power of the sun to bypass any targets he didn't wish to help.

"Let's head to the telegraph office first." Klein repeated himself as he held his cane in his left hand and his revolver in his right. After getting his bearings, he proceeded forward.

Danitz followed his directions and walked diagonally to the side. Cleves, Cecile, and Teague very professionally took charge of security for the other two flanks.

With a party of more than 15 people, it's easy for us to suffer losses once we're attacked. Moreover, only Blazing can truly be considered a helper… What should I do? Thinking back to the monsters he had encountered, Klein suddenly slipped the revolver back into his underarm holster and handed the cane to his right palm.

He reached into his pocket with his left hand and removed the wall of spirituality around an iron cigar case. He took out Azik's copper whistle and held it in his hand, occasionally tossing it up.

He believed that such an action would divert the attention of the undead monsters which only had one head left from the others, leaving the copper, ancient whistle as the only thing in their "eyes!"

This way, I don't have to worry about not being able to rescue them in time. That's the effect of an MT![1] Klein sighed and quickened his pace.

At this moment, three shriveled heads covered in mold flew out from the thin fog in front of him. They charged towards Klein from different directions like arrows, completely ignoring the existence of the other delicious meat.

Three! Danitz's pupils contracted, a little worried that Gehrman Sparrow would end up flustered, but he also looked forward to seeing his true strength.

Three… Klein calmly shook his left hand and threw Azik's whistle into the air.

The heads with esophaguses hanging down from them immediately drew an arc and headed for their primary target.

Klein took a step back and, without any expression, raised his hand and squeezed the Sun Brooch.

All of a sudden, dense golden flames were produced where the copper whistle was as a holy aura was emanated.

Fire of Light!

The three skinny heads let out miserable shrieks at the same time, turning into dust under the golden light.

Klein took two steps forward and reached out to catch Azik's copper whistle.

…That can actually work? Another mystical item? Danitz froze for two seconds, flabbergasted at how easily the assault had been resolved.

At that moment, Timothy and his wife also clearly saw what the things which were attacking them looked like. One of them turned pale from fright while the other asked, flustered, “W-what was that?

Donna immediately turned around and nodded seriously.

“Leave your questions to after we get back to the White Agate.”

With that said, she put her finger to her lips, mimicking Uncle Sparrow’s meaning of “silence.”

Remembering the holy aura displayed by the young man in front of him, Timothy swallowed hard and pulled at his wife’s hand. He fell silent while remaining alert, and his servants had no choice but to obey upon seeing this.

The group continued on through the moonlit streets. The lights of the houses on either side of the streets were extinguished, leaving only darkness behind the oriel windows.

Donna felt as if pairs of eyes were following her and the others, but for some reason no one showed up.

They must all be afraid of Uncle Sparrow! She held her brother’s hand tight and walked amidst the protective circle of her parents.

Suddenly, a figure appeared at the side of the street. He wore a black cloak and leaned forward, revealing a neck that was still bleeding. There was nothing above the neck, with the interior of the cloak reflecting the moonlight.

Gasp!

The headless figure let out a beast-like growl that sounded like gasping as it rushed towards Klein, stomping on the street to the point that the ground slightly shook.

A spot it passed by just happened to be in Danitz’s path. This infamous pirate cursed and flung an orange-yellow fireball which had been repeatedly compressed from his hand.

Boom!

The fireball exploded, causing the headless man to retreat several steps.

His clothes were tattered, and his skin quickly charred while his cloak was set on fire.

However, to the monsters that had already lost their lives, this wasn't a serious injury.

And in that instant, with a crisp crack, the scarlet flame on the black cloak suddenly soared into the air, as if it were blooming.

Klein, in his coat, jumped out of the flames, borrowing the momentum from his fall and his own strength in order to stab the cane he held in both hands directly into the headless man's neck.

Splat!

The cane sank into the headless man's body and emerged from his crotch.

Bam! Klein's back muscles bulged, forcefully throwing the headless monster to the ground!

Taking advantage of this opportunity, he stood behind the monster and continued to grip the cane tightly while he poured his spirituality into the Sun Brooch.

He had already used his Spirit Vision to determine that Holy Light Summoning, Cleave of Purification, and Fire of Light were all unable to deal with this blackish-green monster in a short amount of time, so he could only use another method.

Five seconds, four seconds, three seconds. The headless man struggled with all his might, but like a snake, he fell to his knees and was firmly nailed to the ground by the cane.

Two seconds, one second!

Klein opened his mouth and spat out a word in ancient Hermes.

“Sun!”

Specks of radiance appeared and turned into water droplets that sprinkled over the headless man’s body.

Sizzle! When the blackish-green gas was emitted, Klein let go of his cane and took two steps to the side.

Within the sparse “rain,” the headless man continuously twitched before finally calming down, eventually melting into a pool of blood.

No Beyonder characteristics… This means it’s not the real enemy. At most, it can be considered as a created “servant”… Klein withdrew his cane, turned, and walked back to the group.

“So cool!” Denton let out a belated cheer.

Donna’s eyes sparkled.

He was still borrowing the powers of a mystical item… However, his phasing away during the flames has indicated his true strength. He really isn’t easy to deal with… Blazing Danitz retracted his gaze, feeling that his decision not to mindlessly run off had been extremely wise.

Seven or eight minutes later, the group that cleared out two more waves of monsters arrived at the Bansy Port’s telegraph office.

Cleves took the initiative and knocked on the door.

“Who is it?” A gentle female voice came from inside.

“We’re looking for the captain of the White Agate, Mr. Elland,” Cleves answered through the door.

In the quiet night, the woman’s voice spoke at a moderate pace.

“He and his first mate went next door to the cathedral.”

The person speaking sounds odd, or is she like that only on similar nights? Klein flicked a gold coin and confirmed that she wasn’t lying.

As they were preparing to leave, the female voice in the telegraph office hesitated and said, “Can… Can you guys… help me… take note of someone?

“He’s my… colleague. He went out before the wind started tonight… and never came back.

“His name… is Paavo Court.”

[†] Main Tank. A term used in gaming for a character that takes on all the aggro and damage.

Chapter 510 - The Returning Bishop

◆ ◆ ◆

Paavo Court… Cleves didn’t directly answer the woman behind the telegraph office’s door. He turned to glance at Gehrman Sparrow, waiting for his decision.

In the eyes of this former adventurer, it was a difficult task for fifteen people to get back to the White Agate safely. They couldn’t and shouldn’t be distracted by helping her search for someone. However, he was well aware that the current pillar of support was Gehrman Sparrow and Blazing Danitz. They were the only ones who had the right to decide on the matter.

Klein remained silent for two seconds, then he spoke in a measured voice.

“What does he look like?”

He believed that having more information would help him escape this strange, foggy city, so he casually asked in passing. As for whether he would help take note of the person’s whereabouts, it all depended on what happened next.

While inquiring, Klein also warned himself not to pursue the matter too deeply or else it might risk triggering the danger dormant in Bansy Harbor.

Between understanding the situation and avoiding the risks, he had to engage in a balancing act—no more, no less, without leaning too far left or right.

This might be an easy or difficult feat, because no one knew what would happen once he took the step. He could only judge based on his experience and intuition, and he could fall into a pit at any time. This left Klein highly stressed as his mind whirled at an unprecedented speed.

In the dense darkness and thin fog, the telegraph office's door remained tightly shut. The woman inside paused and said, "He's… a very handsome… man.

"He has two eyes, two ears, a nose, and a mouth."

Why does this answer sound so scary.… Is there something wrong with this woman? According to the customs of Bansy Harbor, she shouldn't have even responded! Blazing Danitz had the urge to kick open the door, rush into the telegraph office, and check the situation inside.

It was at this moment that he saw Gehrman Sparrow put his hand on his hat and turn to the side.

"Storm cathedral," Klein briefly stated their destination.

He didn't bother with whether there was anything wrong with the woman at the telegraph office. It was just like how he didn't delve into the secrets of the owner of the Green Lemon Restaurant or the customers who had chosen to stay the night.

The wind was getting lighter, and the fog was thinning. The candlelight from the cathedral was shining through the narrow windows high above, like a beacon in a storm.

After Klein used Sun Halo again, Donna and the others regained some of their courage, like people who had fallen into the water and desperately grabbed onto the last straw. They hurriedly walked on the empty streets in silence.

Soon they arrived outside the Storm cathedral, but the doors were shut tight.

Glancing at the Storm Sacred Emblem on the door, Klein raised his hand and knocked three times.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

A vigilant male voice immediately came from behind the door.

“Who is it?”

“Gehrman Sparrow,” Klein replied straight away.

He could already tell that it was Captain Elland.

“Why are you here?” Elland asked again without opening the door.

Klein raised his cane and calmly said, “You helped me pay White Shark’s compensation.”

After a moment of surprise and amusement, Elland made an initial confirmation that it was the real Gehrman Sparrow outside. At the very least, even a monster adept at disguising wouldn’t have known something that was privy only to the two of them.

He still felt hesitant until Cleves, Urdi Branch, Donna, and company sounded out in succession. Only then did he relax and allow his first mate, Harris, to unlock and open the door.

A heavy clunking sound rang out, and Klein saw Elland in his boat-shaped hat, sword in one hand, and musket in the other.

“Something happened here too?” he keenly asked, based on his conclusion from the situations from before.

Elland stepped aside to let Donna and the others in. Then he pointed at the prayer hall and said, “The priest I knew, Jayce, died in there. He was decapitated, and Bishop Millet is nowhere to be found. Same for the other priests. Also, the servants in the church are all gone.”

A dead priest with a missing bishop? The whole cathedral is devoid of the living? This is a little problematic… Klein gripped the cold Azik's copper whistle, his heart sinking.

Of course, he was very clear that the priest and the bishop weren't the main force of the Church of Storm that managed Beyonder matters in Bansy Harbor. Underneath this cathedral, there was definitely a Mandated Punisher team formed out of 6–8 Beyonders, as well as an indefinite number of Sealed Artifacts. Even High-Sequence Beyonders wouldn't be able to wipe out this force in a short span of time without causing a stir.

As long as they're alive and able to use Sealed Artifacts, the problem shouldn't be too terrible… So, at this point in time, what is the Mandated Punisher team doing? Based on his previous experience as a Nighthawk, Klein made a guess of the standard operating procedures.

In the process, he followed Elland to the prayer hall and examined the body of the deceased priest.

Jayce died a tragic death, as if his head had been decapitated while he was still alive. Unlike the monsters outside, his esophagus and head were separated.

With Klein's Spirit Vision, this priest no longer had any remnant spirit. It would be very difficult to have a successful spirit channeling ritual.

Is it due to a unique killing technique, or has it been dealt with accordingly… It's different from the monsters outside. Was it because the operation happened in a rush? Combining all that he knew, Klein concluded his previous speculation.

He felt that there were two possibilities. One, there was something of local origins, perhaps a living Sealed Artifact or a Mid-Sequence Beyonder, who had lost control underground. It escaped the cathedral and killed Jayce while fleeing, causing the abnormal changes in Bansy Harbor. The bishop, priests, and Mandated Punishers were in desperate pursuit, attempting to form a seal again or get rid the perpetrator. The servants had been led underground and were under the protection of the remaining Mandated Punishers.

But this didn't explain the strange behavior of the residents of Bansy Harbor.

The second possibility was that the primitive sacrificial ritual to the God of Weather had been resurrected in a number of people in Bansy Harbor, and that the flying heads and headless monsters were in adherence with the descriptions of flesh and blood consumption in the sacrificial rituals and the burying of heads in the altar. And due to some unknown reason, this group of people had raided the cathedral and killed Reverend Jess. The rest of the population had more or less understood the situation, but they had opted for silence.

They might've already assaulted the area underground and are currently engaged in an intense battle with the Mandated Punishers, priests, and the bishop, who are aided by Sealed Artifacts. They might've transformed all the servants into monsters or thrown them out. It can also be that they're under pursuit from the Beyonders of the Church of Storms, and the servants have been sent underground to receive protection to prevent any accidents… From the fact that Jayce's corpse hasn't been used, there's a possibility that it's the latter development… If I were to head underground to confirm the situation, I'll definitely be attacked since we're unfamiliar Beyonders… Besides, the remnant strength might not be sufficient… Klein looked at the priest on the ground and realized that his Beyonder characteristic had condensed into a blue sapphire by his neck.

He retracted his gaze and didn't pick up the item. He didn't want to attract the violent retaliation from the short-tempered Church of Storms so he turned to Elland and Harris.

"Let's return to the ship first."

He casually tossed the gold coin and confirmed that there was no battle currently going on underground.

In any case, regardless of whether there were any Mandated Punishers present, the cathedral grounds were no longer suitable for prolonged stays. After all, Klein wasn't sure if his guess was right, and he could only make the safest choice.

"Alright!" Elland had no desire to stay here either, being in a situation where he waited nervously for any changes to befall him.

As long as he returned to the White Agate, he would have many cannons and many sailors that could withstand accidents to a certain extent.

After a short rest, the group left the cathedral.

With the addition of Elland and Harris, the team's defense clearly became much tighter. Klein no longer needed to toss the copper whistle to attract the monsters, so he stuffed it back into his pocket.

"Shall we send a telegram to the Church of Storms's headquarters to report on Bansy Harbor?" After a few steps, Elland made a cautious suggestion.

This way, even if there were major unforeseen events, as long as they held on, they would eventually be saved.

Klein didn't object. Walking through the thin fog ahead of him, he calmly said, "We'll pass by the telegraph office."

Phew. Blazing Danitz breathed a sigh of relief, then his heart skipped a beat.

He was afraid that the Church of Storms would perform investigations and discover that an infamous pirate had played an important role in this matter, and by then, he would probably still be trapped on the White Agate.

Although I saved people, the Mandated Punishers aren't friendly to those who don't belong to them, especially when I'm a pirate…

Stumped for a moment, Danitz decided to get over the immediate danger before considering other matters.

After walking for a while, they saw the telegraph office in sight. A faint yellow light suddenly emerged from the side street and approached them from the depths of the fog.

It was a middle-aged man carrying a lantern.It was a middle-aged man carrying a hurricane lamp.

He wore a dark blue bishop robe embroidered with the symbol of the storm. His head was bowed and his face was pale. He was wheezing as he staggered while walking.

Elland focused and blurted out, “Bishop Millet?”

The middle-aged man looked up, raised his hurricane lamp and said,“Elland, is it?”

At this moment, Klein took a step back, letting Elland stand out. He didn’t wish for the bishop of the Church of Storms to pay notice to him.

Danitz even shrunk his neck back, using Urdi’s plump body to block himself.

“Yes, Your Excellency. Jayce is dead. What happened?” Elland wasn’t a novice, so he didn’t directly step forward.

Bishop Millet coughed and said, “An old custom has been revived, and a group of heathens with dirty blood running through their veins are beginning to offer live sacrifices and are consuming their flesh and blood.

“Jayce noticed that they were problematic and ended up being killed by them.

“The matter can no longer be covered up. They used the sacrificial ritual to change the weather and tried to attack the cathedral. They were defeated by the Mandated Punisher and fled to the mountain. They escaped to the cave where the altar is.

"I was injured in combat. Without being able to hold out much longer, all I could do was slowly make my way back."

Just as he finished speaking, a bright ball of light burst out of the distant fog, as if countless bolts of lightning were striking down.

With the help of this light, Klein and the others could see the fog-covered mountain range by the shore, as well as the peak which was connected to thunderstorms.

To a certain extent, this confirmed Bishop Millet's claim.

Elland was about to step forward to support the Storm bishop when he saw Gehrman Sparrow take out a gold coin and mutter in a low voice, "He has ill intentions."

Ding!

The gold coin flew up and then tumbled in the air before landing in Klein's palm, heads facing up.

It meant a positive result!

Bishop Millet stared straight at this scene, his light brown eyes suddenly flashing with a dark red light.

Chapter 511 - “Snitch Halo”

◆

Woosh!

A strong gale blew out from Bishop Millet’s body, lifting up his dark blue bishop robes.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! The branches of the nearby trees snapped as they flew into the air.

Donna’s body involuntarily rose a few meters into the air before being thrown out several meters. Her body ached all over when she fell to the ground.

It wasn’t just her; Cecile, Denton, Timothy, Harris, and the others were all blown up by the wind and landed in different spots. Only Cleves, Teague, and Urdi, either because of their training or abnormally heavy weight, staggered to the ground and tumbled a few times.

Elland, who was facing Bishop Millet directly, did a series of retreating and backward somersaulting actions, dodging the incoming blow from the wind.

Klein and Danitz didn’t attempt to resist it head-on; instead, they flew backward like kites. Although they looked like they were about to collapse to the ground, they ultimately managed to keep their balance.

As soon as the hurricane stopped, six figures emerged from the dispersing fog. They were all wearing black cloaks and were headless. Left with only bleeding necks, their hoods were supported up by the eddies of the hurricane.

Gasp! Gasp!

Their throats emitted the low grunts of a beast like the moment before they were ready to attack.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

A series of thin and sharp wind blades shot out, leaving a clear and deep rift where Klein was somersaulting.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

From both sides of the lantern wielding Bishop Millet, whose dark blue bishop robe had flared up slightly, six headless men rushed at Klein, Elland, and the others, stomping on the ground until it trembled.

One headless monster is already hard enough to deal with, but now there are six of them… And there's even a bishop who's obviously corrupted! When Blazing Danitz saw this scene, he couldn't help but feel his scalp tingle.

At this moment, a bronze beam streaked past his eyes and shot into the distance.

Dang! Dang! Dang! Azik's copper whistle dropped to the ground and bounced a few times.

With a whoosh, the six headless men changed direction at the same time, rushing towards the location where Azik's copper whistle came to a stop, leaving Bishop Millet standing alone in his original spot.

Klein seized the opportunity, lifted his left hand, tearing off the Sun Brooch inside his coat, and threw it to Captain Elland who was closest to him. He shouted succinctly, "Inject your spirituality. Five seconds. Holy water."

After saying this, he ignored his silk top hat that had been blown away, and instead, he bent his body, dashing towards Bishop Millet in a zigzag manner.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

One after another, wind blades were shot out in close succession, all of them aimed at Klein.

In a flash, the ground showed signs of being cut and slashed. Klein either somersaulted, lunging forward, or jumping up by supporting his body with his hands to avoid the first round of concentrated fire.

The dark red light in Bishop Millet's eyes grew brighter as he raised his hands.

Sou! Sou! Sou! Sou! Sou!

At this moment, the wind blades inundated him like a machine gun. Klein only had enough time to dodge half of it before his body was torn apart, turning into thin and light shreds of paper that flew into the air.

Klein appeared in another direction and continued to charge at Bishop Millet, trying to close the distance between them to an effective distance!

†

After catching the Sun Brooch, Elland immediately felt the heat. He wished that he could take off his clothes and jump into freezing water.

He thought for a moment about the words Gehrman Sparrow had left him before taking out a tin-colored alcohol flask from the inside of his clothes, unscrewed the lid, and poured out all of the Lanti Proof inside. The strong aroma of the wine rapidly spread in all directions.

Blazing Danitz looked around, feeling certain of the situation.

With a grimace, he genuflected and suddenly pressed both his palms onto the ground.

Two scarlet fire serpents appeared out of thin air, clinging to the ground as they spread towards Azik's copper whistle and created four burning walls of fire.

His original plan had been to throw a fireball at Bishop Millet and let Gehrman Sparrow use the flames to easily jump towards the bishop and launch an attack. However, after seeing that the area around the bishop was filled with freezing gales, he rationally gave up on the idea. He was prepared to first clean up the headless monsters to prevent them from disturbing Gehrman Sparrow ability to use his true strength.

Cleves, Cecile, Teague, and Harris had already stood up again and had drawn their guns. They surrounded Urdi, Donna, and Timothy in the middle, guarding them against any other monsters that might appear.

Their experience taught them that, without any prior teamwork training, it was best not to interfere in a battle that was beyond that of ordinary humans.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The six headless men, oblivious to the burning flames, burst through the scarlet walls of fire and began to pounce onto Azik's copper whistle like ravenous dogs.

This gave Elland time to inject his spirituality into the Sun Brooch with composure. After the holy water condensed, he dripped them into the alcohol flask.

Seeing the headless people in a frenzied bunch, Danitz's heart skipped a beat. He bent down halfway and, with a flushed face, condensed a scorching-white flaming spear in his right palm.

Taking a step forward, he twisted his waist and swung his arm, throwing out the flaming spear. It whistled as it hit a headless man and nailed it to the ground.

A blazing white light soared, and the headless man’s body was reduced to ashes. The remaining half of his body was also burning, continuously releasing blackish-green gases.

Seeing that his attack had succeeded, Danitz was about to continue this attack method when he suddenly sensed a particular kind of crazy, terrifying hunger.

At this moment, he felt as though he had arrived in front of a deep abyss, just one step short from falling in.

He knew that Gehrman Sparrow was no longer suppressing the crazy soul inside him.

After using Paper Figurine Substitutes three times, Klein finally entered a predetermined distance.

The glove on his left palm suddenly exploded with a hunger that had been suppressed for a long time, and dark golden scales began sprouting from it as it squirmed.

Klein’s pupils faded away, as if they had turned vertical.

Immediately after, his pupils reflected Bishop Millet’s fluttering dark blue robes.

Without a sound, the middle-aged man who was about to produce a large number of wind blades suddenly tilted his head backwards, and his body froze for a second.

His eyes, which were glowing with a dark red light, lost their rationality as they were filled with a sense of madness. His skin became smooth and colorful, like the skin of some aquatic creatures.

He let out a panting sound, as though it had come from the depths of the ocean, as slippery, disgusting tentacles suddenly drilled out from under his dark blue robe!

Psychiatrist's Frenzy!

Klein originally only wanted to use this to interrupt the enemy's attack in order to create an opportunity for him later, but after going berserk, Bishop Millet immediately lost control!

The moment the fallen or corrupted man lost his final shackles of reasoning, he immediately stepped into the abyss of losing control!

Klein's pupils shrank as he saw the situation. He no longer hesitated, and he switched the soul he was driving.

In the midst of his frenzy, the glove on his left palm became stained with a gold color. His expression became dignified as his gaze once again locked onto Bishop Millet.

In an instant, his eyes lit up like two bolts of lightning.

All of a sudden, Bishop Millet let out a blood-curdling screech, his palms and tentacles retracted as he covered his head.

His psyche had been penetrated, causing him indescribable pain.

Interrogator!

Klein pushed himself up with his right hand, and his left hand lit up with a resplendent brilliance.

Right on the heels of that, he leaned back and opened his arms as if to embrace the sun.

A thick, pure, and blazing brilliance descended from the sky, landing on Bishop Millet and enveloping him within it.

The surroundings changed as though it was daytime. The strong gales came to an abrupt halt.

Sequence 5 Priest of Light!

Bishop Millet's body began to evaporate, first his skin, then his tentacles, and finally his flesh.

By the time the brilliant pillar of light disappeared, he no longer looked human. Instead, he had turned into a monster made of bones and flesh. Whatever was left of his aura was rather weak.

However, he wasn't dead!

The vitality of a Rampager was stronger than ever before!

Klein's expression didn't change. He took a few steps forward and rushed to the battered body of Bishop Millet. He genuflected, leaned forward, and pressed his left palm against the flesh.

He stopped using the power of the Priest of Light because he wanted to leave some food for Creeping Hunger!

A small crack silently appeared in the palm region of the glove as two rows of illusory, white, and eerie teeth grew out from it as it madly devoured any flesh, bones, and spirituality.

However, Bishop Millet continued struggling. He steadied his flesh and grew new tentacles, trying to entangle Klein and pull him into his embrace.

Klein threw his cane, pulled out his revolver, and fired five shots in quick succession at the monster.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Bullets ranging from pale gold, brass, and silver colors struck Bishop Millet, igniting patches of different colored flames.

Bishop Millet let out a blood-curdling screech once more, one that came from his soul. He finally wasn't able to resist Creeping Hunger. Even his flesh and soul were transformed into a torrent that poured into the insatiable mouth.

In just two or three seconds, all that was left on the ground were clothes, money, and specks of dark blue and green light blobs.

This was the difference between “Devouring” and “Grazing.”

Klein wanted the latter more, but there was no other food around.

Meanwhile, Captain Elland had already created two rounds of holy water inside his alcohol flask.

Danitz hurriedly shouted at him, “Throw it over!”

Without hesitation, Elland threw the alcohol flask towards the headless men who were still vying for the copper whistle.

Ahem. Danitz cleared his throat and stood up straight.

He leisurely inserted his left palm into his pocket and pushed forward with his right hand, quickly forming many scarlet Fire Ravens around him.

These half-illusionary Fire Ravens flapped their wings and flew out, following different trajectories of attack. At the same time, they collided with the alcohol flask which happened to be right on top of the group of headless people.

Rumble!

The alcohol flask shattered as Sun Holy Water splattered everywhere.

Sizzle! The remaining headless people were all drenched as they screamed and twitched in pain before falling to the ground.

They melted away quickly into blood as Azik’s copper whistle lay still in the middle of the purified area.

It’s resolved… Gehrman Sparrow is really strong. Even if he encounters Captain, he’ll have the ability to resist her… It’s a pity that I didn’t get to see what Beyonder powers he had used… Danitz turned his head to look at Klein, who was standing in front of the remains of Bishop Millet, and silently sighed.

Then he saw Gehrman Sparrow glance at him coldly.

Subconsciously, Danitz dejectedly ran out and picked up Azik's copper whistle.

Donna rubbed her bruised arm and saw Uncle Sparrow in his long black coat walking back a few steps before stooping to pick up his half top hat, silently dust it off, and put it back on.

Chapter 512 - The End of Things?

◆ ◆ ◆

After Klein retrieved his hat, Bishop Millet's Beyonder characteristic had already been fully condensed. It was only the size of a thumb and was translucent and light blue in color. However, from time to time, green streaks would appear like a tidal wave that approached a black hue.

Opening the revolver's cylinder, Klein shook it, dropping the empty shells that were either gold, silver, or brass in color to the ground, creating crisp tinkling sounds.

Then, he calmly took out a speedloader he had prepared earlier and loaded other Beyonder rounds bullet into the gun.

After doing all this, he put away the revolver, bent over to pick up Bishop Millet's Beyonder characteristic, and stuffed it into his pocket without paying too much attention to it.

Klein picked up his cane and turned back to the group after taking a few steps. He pulled out a paper figurine and flicked it like he was lashing a whip.

Pa!

The paper figurine was quickly ignited. It flew out of his hand and turned into specks of scarlet light that fell to the ground, extinguishing into dust.

"How cool…" Denton forgot the pain from his fall and stared intently.

It's like Uncle Sparrow is setting off fireworks… Donna nodded in agreement with her brother's words.

After using Paper Figurine Substitutes to interfere with the information and traces in the area, Klein looked in the direction of the way back and said calmly and concisely, "Leave this area."

With that, he turned around and walked away at a leisurely pace. He took the Sun Brooch and Azik's copper whistle from Elland and Danitz respectively.

Urdi and the others didn't make useless comments, nor did they cry out in pain. They followed quietly behind.

In the battle just now, they had fully witnessed the uniqueness of Beyonders, especially Danitz's flaming powers. It was the most eye-catching and obvious. It left them a deep impression, making them fully realize that this wasn't something ordinary people could intervene in. All they could do was abide by the instructions and follow closely behind.

Only by doing so could they guarantee their survival!

Compared to Danitz, the battle between Klein and Bishop Millet mainly involved invisible wind blades and the truly intangible psyche domain. Other than the holy light that seemed to descend from the gods and the frightening sight of Bishop Millet's loss of control, the entire battle seemed completely calm, so it didn't deliver a shock to the onlookers.

As they passed by the area they had just been in, Cleves, Cecile, and the others suddenly stopped in their tracks. They saw the ground covered with dense cracks everywhere.

This… They instantly understood one thing, and that was that Gehrman Sparrow's battle with the fallen bishop was many times more harrowing than the other performance.

A sense of horror and security arose at the same time as all of them quickened their pace.

Twenty or thirty seconds later, Klein stopped on the street outside the telegraph office. He said to Captain Elland in a deadpan manner, “Do you want to send a telegram?”

After saying that, he couldn’t help but remind him, “Do not force your way in.”

“Alright.” On this strange night, Elland was just as cautious.

He took a few brisk steps to the telegraph office and knocked on the door three times.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Amidst a slightly muffled sound, someone from inside asked, “Who is it?”

Klein, who was already on guard, suddenly frowned, because the one who spoke was a man!

Elland was also puzzled.

“I want to send a telegram.

“Who are you? I remember the person on duty was a lady before.”

The man inside replied calmly, “I’m… Paavo Court, Melanie’s colleague.

“She’s right… next to me. She’s fine.”

Just as Paavo Court finished speaking, the female voice from before immediately followed up, “Yes… I’m doing very well.

“You don’t… need to take note anymore. Paavo Court… is back.”

Pal, doesn’t your folklore say not to answer or open the door? How did Paavo Court get in? Klein resisted the urge to question her.

Elland took a step back and cleared his throat.

“I’d like to send a telegram to the headquarters of the Church of Storms.”

“I’m sorry… But… we can’t open the door,” Paavo Court replied without emotion.

Elland also felt the strangeness of the matter and didn’t dare to force it. Instead, he proposed an alternative plan.

“Can you send it for me and pass the draft to me through the crack in the door?

“The content is about the abnormal changes in Bansy Harbor, and the death of Bishop Millet and Priest Jayce. It shall be signed off with Elland.”

“Alright.” Melanie’s voice trailed off, as if she’d returned to the telegraph machine.

After waiting for a while, he heard tapping sounds, and before long, a copy of the telegram draft was extended out from the gap under the door.

Elland bent down to pick it up, resisting the urge to peek through the cracks.

He looked at the telegram draft, and his nose suddenly twitched. He smelled a faint scent of blood on the paper!

He tilted his head and looked at Gehrman Sparrow, using his eyes to inform him that there was a problem with the telegraph office.

However, he was met with a deep and unperturbed gaze, as well as words that were said in a calm and indifferent tone.

“Return to the ship.”

After throwing this sentence out, Klein turned around immediately and walked towards the end of the street, his figure gradually blending into the thin fog.

Carrying a broken lantern, Danitz immediately followed after him. Without any hesitation, Donna and the others did the same.

After pondering in silence for two seconds, Elland took the telegram draft and ran after the group.

No other sounds came out from the telegraph office anymore. It was unusually quiet.

†

Perhaps due to the extermination of the fallen Bishop Millet, Klein and the others didn’t meet any more headless people in black cloaks on their way back. Moldy heads were only seen twice, and they were easily dealt with.

After walking for an unknown length of time, they finally saw the dock and the White Agate which had candlelight seeping out.

This sight made Urdi and the others regain their strength. They transitioned from a brisk walk to a jog, all the way until they reached the bottom of the gangway.

Klein stood guard below them with his bloodstained cane until everyone was on board, then with a tug, he jumped and arrived on the deck with just a few steps.

At that moment, Elland had already begun to gather his first mate, second mate, boatswain, gunner commander, and other subordinates. He got them to gather the sailors, adjust the cannons, and prepare to depart at any moment. Although leaving the port at night had nontrivial security risks, it would be the best way to avoid danger if the situation worsened!

"Uncle Sparrow…" Donna held her brother by the hand and trotted to Klein's side, plagued by a bellyful of questions.

Klein nodded, pointed to the cabin, and said, "Go back to your room first.

"We'll talk about it tomorrow."

The danger hasn't been averted!

Donna nodded obediently. Together with Denton, she put her index finger to her lips.

"Shh!"

After the Branch family and the Timothy family entered the cabin, Klein walked over to Elland, took out Bishop Millet's Beyonder characteristic, and threw it to him.

"If there are still Mandated Punishers alive, return this to them."

The Beyonder characteristic left behind by a bishop who might've been a Sequence 6 would definitely be pursued by the Church of Storms, and everyone on the White Agate would be a target of suspicion. Klein didn't want to be wanted by the number one power at sea as soon as he set sail.

If none of the Mandated Punishers in Bansy Harbor survived, and if reinforcements from headquarters would take a while to arrive, leaving Klein plenty of time to deal with the matter and leave, then he would surely be reluctant to return it and would find a reason to get it back.

Elland caught the thumb-sized object, glancing at it doubtfully.

He didn't ask what it could be used for, and he chuckled.

"Don't worry about the Church of Storms's investigation. I'll hint to them that you're with me."

So, I'll be considered a member of MI9 by the Church of Storms? Klein nodded without saying anything else.

Elland looked at Danitz and probingly asked, "Blazing?"

"Haha." Danitz chuckled dryly and took a leaf out of someone's book. "Guess."

"I don't think so then," Elland replied with tacit understanding.

With the simple matters dealt with, Klein returned to the side of the ship and looked at the fog-shrouded Bansy Harbor, prepared against any hidden dangers.

Time ticked by, and the peak of the mountain next to the shore lit up once again with the lights of a thunderstorm.

Streaks of silver and violent bolts of lightning swept the area without restraint before they gradually calmed down.

The fog in Bansy Harbor began to dissipate, and the light of the crimson moon became clearer.

It's over? Even after seeing this, Klein still didn't dare to completely relax.

Half an hour later, three men who claimed to be Mandated Punishers came to the dock to see Captain Elland.

After Gehrman Sparrow confirmed it with a divination and a round of questioning, Elland allowed the sailors to lower the gangway.

The three Mandated Punishers motioned for the surrounding crew to leave, then they lowered their voices and informed the captain of the situation.

Klein didn't move closer to listen, but instead he waited patiently for the matter to end.

A few minutes later, Elland returned Bishop Millet's remaining characteristic to the Mandated Punishers and watched them leave the White Agate to deal with the rest of the mess.

Phew… Elland exhaled and came to Klein's and Danitz's side. He casually said with a tinge of lingering fear, "The matter has been resolved. There aren't any problems."

Has it really been solved… Klein suddenly thought of Paavo Court and Melanie behind the telegraph office door. He recalled Fox, the owner of the Green Lemon Restaurant, and the many lodgers who had watched them silently.

Elland continued, "To be specific, Jayce discovered the revival of ancient customs—cannibalism and live sacrifice, confirming that a small number of people in Bansy Harbor had become heretics.

"He hurried back to the church and reported this to Bishop Millet, but unbeknownst to him, the person before him was the leader of the heretics, a true fallen one. He had his neck cut off by Millet's wind blade and died in the cathedral of the Lord.

"Millet was about to dispose of the body, but he was discovered by the servants; hence, things spiraled out of control.

"Some of the servants were turned into monsters, while some were led by the priests to hide underground.

"Without any means to hide himself, Millet quickly left the cathedral, gathered the heretics, and headed for the altar at the mountaintop. The weather changed as a result. After the Mandated Punishers retrieved three Sealed Artifacts, they rushed over and engaged in an intense battle.

"In the process, Millet was injured and escaped, while the rest of the heretics remained to defend the altar which was eventually overrun.

"The Church's headquarters has already replied, and they'll be sending people to investigate the cause of Bishop Millet's fall. Heh, I told them that we were only able to kill Bishop Millet by joining forces because he was heavily injured. By the way, the Mandated Punishers have gotten me to get the Branch and Timothy families to sign a confidential agreement."

After giving a general account of the situation, Elland let out a long sigh of relief and busied himself with the remaining matters.

Klein didn't dare to completely relax. He stayed on deck until the clouds appeared to burn when the sun slowly rose, illuminating the entire port.

He saw the residents leave their houses one by one, basking in the golden sunlight, chatting and laughing as they headed for their respective jobs.

Bansy Harbor finally had the breath of human life again.

†

It's really over… Klein turned around, slightly puzzled. He had planned to catch up on his sleep, but only after the ship had departed. As for Danitz, although he had long been yawning, he remained motionless when he saw Gehrman Sparrow being motionless.

On the way into the cabin, Klein met Elland, who had also not slept the entire night.

"Good morning. We're about to leave the port. There's nothing to worry about," Elland greeted with a smile.

As he spoke, the White Agate's whistle sounded.

Upon hearing the sound, Klein secretly exhaled, deciding to put all his doubts behind him. He didn't want to think about Bansy Harbor anymore, so he nodded in response.

Elland stretched his neck and commented with a sigh, “Last night, I had a mystical feeling that the old Binsy and the modern Bansy Harbor overlapped.”

Klein had intended to walk past him when he suddenly grasped a word and asked with a grave expression, “Binsy?”

“Heh heh, that’s the ancient name of Bansy Harbor. Three or four hundred years ago, it was called Binsy Town. Later, due to its pronunciation and other factors, it gradually evolved into Bansy,” Elland introduced in passing.

Klein’s pupils shrank when he heard the answer.

He remembered very clearly that the evil spirit in Backlund’s underground relic had once mentioned that if one wanted to find one of the founders of Rose Redemption, the former King of Angels, Medici, and his descendants, one could go to Binsy Town to try their luck!

Binsy! Klein’s heart seemed to freeze over, inch by inch. A chill radiated from the depths of his bone marrow.

He jerked his gaze back to the harbor, to the scenes of the telegraph office with its tightly closed doors and the lodgers in Green Lemon Restaurant who were silently staring at him.

Chapter 513 - Intimidation

◆ ◆ ◆

If I had probed deeper, then there might be a high probability that I would've attracted the Rose Redemption or even a hidden Red Angel… There were several times where I danced at the edge of a cliff… Luckily, I managed to restrain my impulse and curiosity about the weird situation at Green Lemon Restaurant and the telegraph office… Klein retracted his gaze, finding the Sun Brooch inadequate in keeping his back from oozing with a layer of cold sweat.

Compared to the arrival of the True Creator, this unknown and undetonated situation was much more horrifying. At least, Klein couldn't help but imagine what would've happened if he kicked the telegraph office's door open, or if he went around to the back, flipped the window, and entered the room.

He constantly imagined all sorts of strange and terrifying scenes, which frightened himself quite a bit.

At the same time, he decided to produce Sun Holy Water for the passengers who had eaten at Bansy Harbor last night, in order to avoid any remaining dormant dangers.

"What's wrong?" Elland sensed Gehrman Sparrow's abnormality.

"I just remembered something." Klein used his Clown's powers to keep his facial expression normal, but inside he was glad that he didn't take the risk last night and had now successfully left Bansy Harbor.

As for the secrets of Rose Redemption and the King of Angels, he only had one thought in mind: Quickly report it!

If he didn't report it, was he allowing them to usher in 1351's new year?

If he chose to hide the truth and wait until he had a sufficiently high Sequence or enough strength to explore and reap the corresponding benefits, then Klein felt that he would feel very guilty and end up carrying a heavy burden if something happened during that time, causing the danger to be triggered prematurely, or if the remnant heretics would cause the death of one innocent passenger after another. That would only push him closer to losing control.

Of course, reporting the matter needed to be done in a correct and astute manner. Klein wasn't foolish enough to tell Elland directly or write an anonymous letter to the Church of Storms, which would then lead to a lot of trouble. First, the authorities would definitely investigate Gehrman Sparrow's background, and things could be easily exposed if thorough investigations were made. Secondly, this identity might be exposed to the Rose Redemption, which might attract a King of Angels's pursuit.

What Klein intended to do was to use The World to mention the anomaly in Bansy Harbor when the Tarot Gathering was held in two days. He would then have The Fool to lightly allude to Rose Redemption and a King of Angels. As a member of the Church of Storms, The Hanged Man would naturally know what to do next.

This would be a chance for him to perform a deed of merit!

As for the blood of the direct descendants of the Medici family, Klein didn't even consider it, because neither he nor Miss Sharron had the intention of rescuing the evil spirit in the underground relic.

Noticing that Gehrman Sparrow obviously didn't want to mention his past, Elland chuckled, took out a small black wooden box, and tossed it over.

Klein reached out and caught it, using his eyes to express his puzzlement.

“The bladder of the murloc. It can be used to make items. It’s very useful at sea.”

The Beyonder ingredient of a murloc… Worth more than 150 pounds… The captain sure is generous… Klein had almost forgotten how Gehrman Sparrow should react.

Fortunately, he had a lot of experience in acting. He immediately sank his face and said, “I didn’t save you for a reward.”

Elland laughed and said, “I’m not giving you this in return for saving me.

“Aren’t we friends now? Isn’t it normal to help a friend make up for his shortcomings when he doesn’t have such items?”

What he said makes sense. There’s no way to refute him at all… Klein held onto the small black box and remained silent for a few seconds. Finally, he nodded.

Elland covered his mouth as he yawned before taking off his boat-shaped hat.

“I need to return to my room to catch up on my sleep. See you at noon.”

Klein waved politely and led Danitz towards Room 312.

He saw that Donna and Denton were up early and waiting at the door.

“Uncle Sparrow, what’s that in your hand?” Donna asked curiously.

Klein didn’t say anything and directly opened the lid of the small black box.

The interior was lined with a layer of black velvet, and sitting in the middle was a round, gem-like, transparent object. It had a blue, aqueous luster that swirled outwards.

“That day, the murloc’s….” Denton thought for a moment. “Bladder!”

At this moment, at Klein’s signal, Danitz opened the door.

Donna walked in briskly while stretching out her hand from behind her.

She held a thick wad of cash that were a mix of ten-pound and five-pound notes.

“My father, my mother, Uncle Cleves, and Uncle Timothy’s family asked me to pass this to you. A total of 150 pounds!” Donna smiled sweetly. “They said that this isn’t enough to express their gratitude; it’s just to replenish the supplies you used, uh… Those things are expensive, right?”

“Still alright.” Klein thought for a moment, then he accepted the 150-pound gratuity so that Urdi and other ordinary people wouldn’t feel uneasy.

Seeing Uncle Gehrman Sparrow put the cash and the small black wooden box into his pocket, Donna was relieved that she had finally completed the task her parents had handed her.

She quickly got into character and found her true intention for visiting. She asked curiously and fearfully, “Uncle Sparrow, what kind of monsters were those last night? Are ghost stories true? Were you born with the ability to jump out of the flames and let light descend? Is this magic, or witchcraft?”

Stop, stop, stop, you have too many questions… Klein, who couldn’t stand the heat any longer, took off the Sun Brooch and threw it on the desk in the living room. He casually replied at the same time.

“They’re called Beyonder powers; those that are obtained through certain rituals and potions.

“A lot of ghost stories have archetypes, and last night’s monsters were created by an evil ritual.

“Ask him about the rest.”

Klein glanced sideways at Danitz.

“How magical…” Denton and Donna sighed.

Then Donna said, her eyes shining, “Uncle Sparrow, you’re just like the ‘Superman’ described by Emperor Roselle!

“Can we… can we also become people like you through rituals and potions?”

Denton nodded heavily, echoing his sister’s words, and both of them felt a surge of strong anticipation.

At that moment, Donna noticed Gehrman Sparrow’s eyes turn melancholic.

Soon after, she saw the mouth of this magical uncle open up, revealing a somewhat strange smile.

Klein said in a low voice, “This isn’t something to be envied or anticipated.

“As long as you choose this path, you’ll constantly be accompanied by threats and madness.

“You can beat them a hundred times, a thousand times, but as long as you lose once, you’ll end up like that fallen bishop.”

As he spoke, he leaned on his cane, took off his suit, and rolled up the sleeves of his shirt.

One of his arms was shriveled and wrinkled, as though he were a centenarian. The other was translucent and colorless, with a direct view of the blood vessels, muscles, and aponeurosis beneath the skin.

At the same time, his face grew dense pale flesh granules that made Donna and Denton fall backward in terror and slam into the door.

With thin flesh granules growing on his face, Klein maintained his smile.

“See this?

“This is madness.”

No… Donna and Denton almost lost their minds, stumbled through the door, and ran out.

After a few steps, they fell to the ground, unable to keep their balance.

“How terrifying…” Denton kept crying in a low voice.

At that moment, they heard the door to Room 312 clang shut.

Donna gradually calmed down, not daring to think of Gehrman Sparrow’s appearance again. The way Uncle Sparrow looked—the flesh granules had occupied every inch of his face. The way his arms were shriveled and translucent wasn’t much better than the monsters of the night before.

For some reason, she recalled his eyes and the words, “this is madness.”

Her vision suddenly blurred, and she couldn’t stop the tears from rolling down her cheeks.

“Donna, Donna, what’s the matter with you?” Denton was so frightened by her reaction that he forgot his fear.

Donna sobbed and said, “I don’t know…

“I j-just feel very, very sad all of a sudden.”

Inside Room 312.

Seeing that Klein had returned to normal, Danitz couldn’t help but click his tongue.

"Actually, there's no need to scare the children like this. They'll have nightmares. Just tell them that taking potions is dangerous."

Just as he finished his sentence, he saw a hard wooden cane covered in blood and dirt flying over, accompanied by a sentence that wasn't in the least bit emotional.

"Wash it clean."

Danitz reached out to grab the cane as the smile on his face froze.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough, Inside the Hall family's luxurious mansion.

Audrey stood behind the white and gold railings on the second floor, watching the servants on the first floor come and go, bustling with activity.

According to the customs of the Loen Kingdom, the nobles with fiefs would leave Backlund one week after the New Year Ball, and they would return to their own fiefs, where they would enjoy a pleasant life in the countryside or in a castle. In June, they would return to the capital, where they would socialize day after day. Of course, a banker with actual power and wealth like Earl Hall definitely needed to make trips between the two places to handle many matters.

However, "moving" wasn't an easy task. Many things had to be tidied up beforehand, and some of the servants would bring them back to the manor or castle. Only after everything was ready would the masters begin their journey.

After this Tarot Gathering ends, I should be sitting in a steam train back to East Chester County. I hope that vampire gentleman really can get the fruit of the Tree of Elders and the blood of the Mirror Dragon so that I can become a Psychiatrist before I leave Backlund… Audrey allowed her thoughts to wander.

Just then, Lady Caitlyn came over and asked with a smile, “Penny for your thoughts? Well… You’re already an adult. When you get back to Backlund in June, you’ll be able to find something to do. Do you have any plans?”

Audrey didn’t think further and directly replied, “Mother, I want to like to join the Church’s charity organizations.”

I want to get to know this world… she added silently in her heart.

“Good idea,” the countess agreed.

After giving her some advice, she walked down to the second floor and began to inspect the affairs of the family.

Audrey withdrew her emotions and turned her head to the side. With a faint smile, she said to the large golden retriever that was sitting to her side, “Susie, are you looking forward to it? You can run as much as you want in the green pastures and in the lush woods.”

She was making fun of Susie because she had only become a gift because she wasn’t a qualified foxhound.

Susie instinctively wanted to stick her tongue out, but she stopped herself like a cultured lady.

She answered without hiding her emotions, “Of course, I like to run, but I hate those barbaric fellows.”

Are you referring to the foxhounds that Father and the others rear? Audrey pursed her lips to stop herself from smiling.

She looked up at the wall clock and saw that it was almost time for the Tarot Gathering.

Chapter 514 - Legends of Ancient Gods

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Above the endless gray fog, the majestic palace stood still.

Just as Emlyn White, who had arrived here once again, regained his vision, he saw Miss Justice opposite him looking at the end of the mottled long table before greeting cheerfully, “Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~”

Audrey greeted everyone, one person at a time, starting with The Fool and ending with The World.

This order wasn’t according to the seating arrangement, but by the order of the tarot cards—The Fool was the beginning that contained all possibilities, and The World was the end that represented perfect sublimation.

This was a little obsessive-compulsive disorder on Miss Audrey’s part, a mysticism enthusiast. It started to appear with the increasing number of Tarot Club members.

She really is a carefree girl of stately birth… Emlyn deliberately passed a deep judgment and politely responded to the greeting.

During this process, he caught sight of The Sun through the corner of his eye. He couldn’t help but think of the recent days when he had been studying the detailed history of the Sanguine at the home of Baron Waymandy.

There are a lot of details that I don’t know about. There are indeed differences between professional researchers and amateur enthusiasts, but from this week onwards, I, Emlyn White, would be a professional researcher… Baron Waymandy has never mentioned anything related to the City of Silver, so I can't ask him directly. As the secret messiah of the Sanguine who is burdened with secrets, I have to be careful in such matters… Attending class for half a day and going to the cathedral for half a day before accompanying the dolls at night seems to be a pretty good life… Emlyn's thoughts gradually dispersed.

Suddenly, he frowned and realized a very important question.

Why do I still go to the Harvest Church every day?

Yes, as a noble Sanguine, I must put an end to the things I start. There have been a lot of patients recently. Sigh, having your reputation spread isn't a good thing… Emlyn's brow gradually relaxed into a softer frown.

He saw that Miss Justice had completed her greetings. He raised his hand to knock on the table and looked at her.

"The things you need…"

Audrey pressed her right hand down and made a gesture to stop him before saying with a faint smile, "We'll talk about this during the transaction period.

"This is Mr. Fool's reading time."

Based on Mr. Vampire's tone, there must be at least one of the fruits of the Tree of Elders and the blood of a Mirror Dragon… Audrey, you're going to be a Psychiatrist soon! You're about to become a Mid-Sequence Beyonder! Audrey's mood became increasingly cheerful, the corners of her eyes filled with smiles.

She looked towards the figure amidst the thick fog and said with an uplifted tone towards the end, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I've gotten another three Roselle diary pages~"

Just short of four pages… She pursed her lips while in thought.

With Miss Justice setting an example, Fors also said, “Mr. Fool, I also have three new pages of Roselle’s diary.”

She was also full of anticipation for this Tarot Gathering because her second Apprentice potion had been digested much faster than expected. The dormant dangers had already been completely eliminated the day before yesterday.

Derrick followed immediately, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I’ve copied some legends of ancient gods.”

Then, he said to The Hanged Man, “I’ve also tabulated the list of monsters around the area.”

He really is a good child who doesn’t need anyone to remind him… Klein, who had a rich harvest, sighed with emotion.

Seriously, he hasn’t improved at all… Even though this will lower the difficulty of me obtaining benefits, it also conceals the risk of me losing the resources from the City of Silver… Exposure is a problem that requires constant vigilance… Alger shook his head indiscernibly.

Roselle’s diary and the legend of the ancient gods soon appeared in the palm of Klein’s hand.

He skimmed through it quickly and found that two of the six pages in the diary were repetitions of the past. For example, one of Miss Justice’s contributed pages matched a page which The Hanged Man had handed over last year.

That’s inevitable unless I can really teach them Simplified Chinese… Klein sighed and willed the two diary pages to the back.

The remaining four pages didn’t contain very valuable information. Most of them belonged to the period when Roselle had lost his ideals and was obsessed with money, and the text was filled with sentences such as “What did I invent today,” “What will I invent tomorrow,” “How many gold coins can it be sold for,” or “how much investment I received.” It nearly made Klein lose control of his expression, wishing to smack these diary pages in Roselle’s face.

At this moment, Audrey keenly discovered that the Black Emperor card had returned to the side of Mr. Fool ’s hand and was placed face down.

So it really was bestowed to his Blessed! Was it to help him complete a mission? Hmm… or is there another possibility, that this is a new Card of Blasphemy, and not the original one! Audrey guessed with interest.

After flipping through the diary pages, Klein resisted the urge to take a deep breath to calm his heart, and he looked at the legends of the ancient god provided by Little Sun.

It was quite a rough description. It divided the eight ancient gods of the Second Epoch into three camps. The Giant King, Aurmir; the Elf King, Soniathrym; and the Vampire Ancestor, Lilith, were allies who fought against the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt; the Phoenix Ancestor, Gregrace, and the Mutant King, Kvastir. As for the Devil Monarch, Farbauti and the Annihilation Demonic Wolf, Flegrea, they were the ones who wanted to subvert all order and corrupt all living beings.

In the records of the City of Silver, the eight ancient gods were described as violent, evil, cruel, and terrifying. Even the Ancestor Vampire, Lilith, who superficially looked the most normal and was described as the Embodiment of Beauty, had a disgusting and ferocious side. For instance, she would manifest into a mountain range of flesh. On top of it grew all kinds of reproductive organs as they spewed out thick black fog while constantly producing all sorts of strange creatures. All powerhouses who approached “Her” would be overwhelmed by the desire to mate and reproduce, becoming a walking organ.

And all living beings who saw this scene—other than the other ancient gods—would lose their minds without exception or mutate on the spot, while others became crazy. The records of the City of Silver originated from the ancient texts of the Giant King's Court. Of course, that was what they claimed.

I cannot eliminate the possibility that this is to discredit an ally… This aspect is rather similar to the loss of control of the Primordial Moon who the Sanguine pray to… Is this one of the traits when one follows the Moon pathway to the end? At this thought, Klein almost raised his head to sweep his glance at Emlyn White.

In the legends of the City of Silver, the Vampire Ancestor, Lilith, really did control the crimson moon. As long as "She" wanted, "She" could make the Blood Moon appear every day for three hundred and sixty-five days a year, allowing the negative energy to rampage through the lands and the spirit world to interact with reality for an extended period of time, releasing countless unspeakable monsters and evil spirits.

This is the power of a deity… I wonder what the difference is between the ancient gods and the current true gods. Why do all of them look like evil gods… In the legends of the Sanguine, Lilith isn't like that. One of them is lying between the two of them? Or could it be that there was a change midway, from the one recorded in the City of Silver to the one depicted in the legends of the Sanguine? Klein looked away and took note of the details.

He made the paper in his hands vanish and leaned back slightly.

"You may begin."

With her bright eyes, Audrey looked at Emlyn White and immediately said, "Mr. Moon, do you have news of the fruit of the Tree of Elders and the blood of a Mirror Dragon?"

Emlyn nodded his chin and said, "A total of 750 pounds.

"Just pay this amount and they'll be yours.

"And of course, there's my payment. 100 pounds."

Audrey didn't bother with the total price at all and happily responded, "Deal!

"I hope that the deal will be completed today or tomorrow."

"No problem." Emlyn, who was about to make 100 pounds, couldn't refuse Miss Justice's request.

Awesome! Audrey lowered her right hand, clenched it into a fist, and lightly pumped it twice.

At that moment, Alger, turned his head to look at Mr. Vampire.

"Do you still want the inheritance of that Sanguine baron? 4,500 pounds, that's the best price I managed to get for you."

In fact, the pirate was willing to give it up for 3,200 pounds.

Emlyn's expression twisted.

If it's only 1,000 pounds, then I'll definitely take it, but… he replied inwardly.

Although their family members were pretty good apothecaries and doctors, with a modest annual income and long lives that allowed them to save a fortune, Emlyn had been unable to save any money since he became infatuated with dolls. From time to time, he would order some custom dolls.

Even if the 100 pounds which he hadn't received yet was counted, his personal savings didn't even reach 500 pounds, of which, 150 pounds had been contributed by Detective Sherlock Moriarty.

"I… I'll think about it again," Emlyn said with difficulty, suddenly feeling that he had to find some way to quickly save up money.

This fellow, Emlyn, just made the sound of poverty… Upon seeing this scene, Klein happily quipped inwardly.

Being friends with Mr. Vampire in reality, Klein had heard him mention that over the years, he had spent more than 7,000 pounds on dolls, which made Klein marvel at the price of puppets and how extravagant Emlyn was.

“No problem.” The Hanged Man didn’t press further.

He turned to Audrey.

“My fair lady, the Artisan has completed the work and has obtained a rather mystical item.

“It allows you to truly change your appearance while also providing you with three Beyonder powers—Flame Controlling, Damage Transfer, and Danger Intuition. It improves your balance and agility. It’s a silver mask, but it can also be a hat or an earring; it can change its appearance, and you can name it.

“Of course, it also has its own minor flaws. When you wear it, your emotions will be amplified, and you must learn how to control yourself.

“It costs 5,500 pounds.”

At this point, The Hanged Man chuckled and said to The World, “The Beyonder characteristic you provided earns you 4,500 pounds, and the Artisan’s workmanship is worth 1,000 pounds.”

4,500 pounds, much better than I had expected, even though there’s a 15% commission, that is to say, 675 pounds for Mr. Hanged Man… Klein immediately controlled The World and nodded in agreement, “That wouldn’t be an issue.”

Emotions would be amplified? According to Miss Escalante, I’ll have the ability to influence the moods and mental states of other people when I advance to Psychiatrist. I should be able to do the same for myself… Yes, that flaw isn’t a problem! Audrey nodded lightly.

“I will pay within two days of receiving the mystical item.”

In order to not reveal the secret of the Tarot Club, she had to wait until she had received the item before she could claim reimbursement from her father.

“Sure.” The Hanged Man wasn’t the least bit worried about Miss Justice’s credibility.

So rich… Both Emlyn and Fors felt agitated at the same time.

Phew… Klein breathed a quiet sigh of relief. This meant that more than three thousand pounds of his would be available soon.

Thank you, Miss Justice! He silently drew a crimson moon inwardly.

Chapter 515 - Harvests for Everyone

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Frankly speaking, although Alger had predicted that Miss Justice wouldn’t bargain, and the fact that the mystical item was indeed worth about 5,500 pounds, he still felt a strong sense of discomfort over such actions. It felt like after all the hard work he had put in to make a killing, the money he earned wasn’t even more than her pocket money.

675 pounds split from The World, and the Artisan’s fee is only 600 pounds. I’ll earn a net profit of 400 pounds… I’ve made a total of 1,075 pounds in this transaction, but The World isn’t a simple figure. He has a great deal of Beyonder characteristics and potion formulas, and he’s involved in a great number of events. He’s in the know of relatively important information. It’s not worth it to get into a conflict with him over a few hundred pounds. Otherwise, I could’ve pushed the price of his Beyonder characteristic to below 4,000 pounds… The Hanged Man thought wistfully.

As The Fool rejoiced at the prospect of receiving 3,825 pounds, Derrick looked at the lady across him and earnestly said, “Miss Magician, your Spirit Eater’s stomach pouch is ready.”

“Excellent!” Fors heaved a sigh of relief. “I’ll pay 300 pounds in cash to Mr. Hanged Man.”

Upon hearing this, Alger’s spirit was also lifted. He hurriedly requested The Fool sitting at the end of the long bronze table for permission to conjure the potion formula.

A few seconds later, he wrote the Solar High Priest formula onto the yellowish-brown goatskin parchment in front of him.

“Sequence 7. Solar High Priest. Main ingredients: one red comb of a Dawn Rooster, one fruit of a Radiance Spirit Pact Tree. Supplementary ingredients: 100 ml of a Dawn Rooster, 10 drops of Sun essential oil, 8 grams of fingered citron powder, and 5 grams of solidified lava.”

Although Klein didn’t deliberately pry into this potion formula, the content which was conjured thanks to him was still reflected in his mind. As long as he was willing to use dream divination to recall, he would immediately get the corresponding knowledge.

He couldn’t help but exclaim, Indeed, being a platform is most profitable!

Derrick received the piece of parchment expectantly, glancing at it with relief and excitement.

Then, he conjured the list of monsters which were found in the area surrounding the City of Silver, letting The Hanged Man pick out the Beyonder ingredients that would be used to level the difference in prices.

Alger calmly and carefully checked the list, gaining a precise understanding of the situation around the City of Silver. After that, he selected three ingredients that he knew had buyers and prices.

After that, I’ll be able to sell them within two days, earning me about 1,000 pounds. Counting the 300 pounds from Miss Magician and the previous 1,075 pounds, I’ll finally have enough money for the Dragon-Eyed Sea Condor’s eyeballs… Feeling exhausted, Alger turned his head to the side and said to Fors, “Miss Magician, you can prepare the transaction for the Dragon-Eyed Sea Condor eyeballs.”

The Hanged Man had less than twenty pounds on him at present, and even the Artisan fees he had paid in advance was borrowed thanks to his wide network of contacts. However, by the end of the transaction, his cash assets would reach 2,375 pounds, sufficient enough to cover the 2,000 pounds required for the main ingredient.

Fors thought of the loss she had suffered last week at the hands of Mr. Hanged Man and responded, feeling slight grievance, “Alright.”

For her, how much this deal would eventually earn her would depend on her teacher, Dorian Gray. She wouldn’t earn anything extra beyond what he was willing to share with her.

At the end of the transaction segment, Klein manipulated The World to seek to purchase the remnant spirituality of ancient wraiths and a pair of eyes from a six-winged gargoyle. As for the sale or process of making the murloc bladder into a mystical item, he temporarily didn’t intend to do it through the Tarot Club. He wished to use it as a catalyst to expand his social connections and resource channels at sea.

After today’s Tarot Gathering, Miss Justice will finish gathering her Psychiatrist potion’s ingredients, and the same is true for Miss Magician’s Trickmaster potion… Now that Little Sun has the formula, he can finally work towards Sequence 7. He’s one step closer to providing me with a way to remove the mental corruption inside a Beyonder characteristic… Mr. Hanged Man is about to receive one of the main ingredients of Wind-blessed, so there’s only one last obstacle in his way before reaching Sequence 6… Only Emlyn hasn’t yet made up his mind or found a solution. There’s no hope of him advancing in the near future… Klein looked around and said with a chuckle, “Continue your free exchange.”

Audrey was about to say something out of habit, but when she thought about it carefully, she felt that there was no news to share this week.

Apart from the numerous balls I’ve attended and the two psychology classes, there are only matters regarding my return to East Chester County that can be talked about, but there’s no need to… She pursed her lips and remained silent.

Fors, who was still in her languid state from the New Year's holidays, continued having a blank mind. She commented, feeling rather guiltily, "Backlund is still under the same kind of high pressure as before. Don't take any risks unless you're an official Beyonder."

Is that so? Emlyn, who had been behaving well during this time, frowned doubtfully.

A vampire like him who led a routine lifestyle couldn't experience the pain of having all the Beyonder gatherings stopped.

The Hanged Man nodded and thought for a while. Then, he said to The Sun, "Don't be careless.

"Before holding a sacrificial ritual, it's best if you confirm that the chief who led the exploratory team isn't in the City of Silver, or if he's busy with other matters."

"Mr. Hanged Man, do you mean that the Chief could've noticed the repeated cycle of fate?" Derrick asked in astonishment.

The Hanged Man replied solemnly, "That possibility can't be ruled out.

"However, I can't be sure since I don't know enough about your City of Silver."

Having said that, he hid his smile and presented a serious expression.

Derrick said with chagrin, "There are many things I'm not sure of either…"

Alger sighed inwardly, eliminating his disappointed emotions. "In short, caution and carefulness will allow you to live longer."

"Thank you for your reminder," The Sun said sincerely.

The Hanged Man withdrew his gaze and said with a smile, "Recently, the sea has been relatively calm."

No, that's just what you think… Klein silently retorted, manipulating The World to speak with a hoarse voice, "I just happened to hear about something at sea."

Without waiting for The Hanged Man to ask, he looked at Justice and The Magician.

"Ladies, can you buy me a radio transceiver?"

"I… can give it a try." Fors agreed without paying too much attention.

As she was about to leave Backlund, Audrey could only say "sorry."

After negotiating this deal, The World cleared his throat and said, "That matter has something to do with the Church of Storms."

Something to do with the Church? Why didn't I receive any notice? Is it not required for them to pass it down to people at my level? The Hanged Man frowned and waited patiently for The World to speak in detail.

The World originally wanted to sweep The Hanged Man with a teasing look, but due to the difficulty of those sequence of actions, he could only regretfully give up. With a heavy and hoarse laugh, he said, "An old custom in Bansy Harbor was revived. Some of the inhabitants became heretics, and even a bishop of the Church of Storms was corrupted.

"I heard that the matter has been resolved, but quite a few people died."

Bansy Harbor… Alger recalled the situation of the area and explained to Miss Justice and the others who remained confused, "There's a custom of living sacrifices there, and the target is an evil spirit called the God of Weather.

"Overseas, in the Southern Continent, there are quite a number of such evil spirits. On the surface, it seems like they've been cleared away, but in reality, they continue living in a strange state. Many people have suddenly died in those places. Heh heh, it isn't necessarily because of an illness. If you guys have similar travel or adventure plans, don't be careless."

Alger tried to describe what had happened in Bansy Harbor as an accident, one that was within the realm of understanding.

Suddenly, he heard rather deep laughter.

This laughter came from the end of the mottled long table!

Mr. Fool… The Hanged Man suddenly turned his head.

Mr. Fool! Bansy Harbor isn't as simple as it seems! Audrey immediately looked at Mr. Fool who was sitting upright on his high back chair.

Noticing looks of puzzlement, curiosity, or excitement, Klein laughed leisurely with a hint of reminiscence in his voice.

"This reminds me of a King of Angels."

A King of Angels! The matter of Bansy Harbor involves a King of Angels! Audrey's eyes widened in anticipation of what Mr. Fool was to say next.

A King of Angels… Fors took a deep breath, her expression somewhat bitter.

Why is it that all we talk about at the Tarot Club is the descent of the True Creator, the awakening of the Primordial Demoness, and the reappearance of a King of Angels? I'm only a Sequence 9! She wanted to look up at the sky and sigh.

Emlyn, on the other hand, felt a baffling sense of excitement, having found another reason for why his Ancestor had gotten him to pray to The Fool.

As expected, this is a gathering of messiahs in preparation for the apocalypse. We are the chosen ones who will gradually face evil existences such as the King of Angels, the Primordial Demoness, the True Creator, and so on! Emlyn had an impulse to immediately agree to the deal proposed by The Hanged Man, but the fact that he had no money had ruthlessly crushed the fantasy in his mind.

Which King of Angels will it be? In a rare occasion, Derrick joined in with the conversation with Miss Justice and the rest.

A King of Angels… What secret is Bansy Harbor hiding? Alger was waiting for the answer with rapt attention.

Seeing that Mr. Fool didn't plan on continuing, Audrey couldn't help but ask, "Honorable Mr. Fool, which King of Angels is it?"

Klein leaned back in his chair, chuckled and said, "Medici, who established the Rose Redemption. 'His' descendants live in Binsy."

Rose Redemption! The King of Angels related to the True Creator? Audrey didn't expect that the matter would be multi-layered, with each layer more serious than the last. She subconsciously asked, "Binsy?"

"That's the old name of Bansy," Alger replied in a low voice as he clenched his hands.

He could no longer imagine the truth behind this matter. He only knew that the unforeseen event in Bansy Harbor might not be over yet. The danger that could devour people remained lurking in the shadows!

He didn't know much about the phrase Rose Redemption, only knowing that it had something to do with the temple of the True Creator and the Angel of Fate, Ouroboros, but was unable to confirm exactly what it represented.

In short, the level of this matter is beyond my imagination! Alger looked at the end of the long, mottled table, and suddenly the thought flashed through his mind that Mr. Fool really did know the eight Kings of Angels and that he knew many secrets.

At that moment, he thought of something.

Just last week at the Gathering, Miss Justice had inquired about the other Kings of Angels, and Mr. Fool’s answer was that we will come into contact with them in the future.

And just a week later, we really have come into contact with a new King of Angels!

Mr. Fool had foreseen this! Alger’s pupils shrank as he lowered his gaze in fear.

Chapter 516 - The Hanged Man's Guess

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Amidst his shock, another doubt surfaced in Alger's mind.

If Mr. Fool had foreseen this, why did he mention that Bansy Harbor's matter is related to Rose Redemption and the King of Angels, Medici?

Did "He" tell us on purpose?

"He" hopes to spread this matter through us?

The target is the King of Angels, Medici? No, it's more likely to be the True Creator!

Mr. Fool has repeatedly thwarted the plans of the True Creator before, so it should be no exception this time… The term Rose Redemption appeared in the abandoned temple of the True Creator, and it's established by the King of Angels, Medici, and Ouroboros. Clearly, they share a deep connection with the True Creator.

Bansy Harbor only has our Church of Storms, so the person Mr. Fool is really informing is actually me?

Alger vaguely understood something.

Then, he became acutely aware of another problem.

The last time The World mentioned that something major was about to happen in Backlund, it was immediately confirmed by Mr. Fool, and it later involved the awakening of the Primordial Demoness and the descent of the True Creator. This time, the abnormality at Bansy Harbor also received a response from Mr. Fool. He revealed the secret hidden in ancient Binsy and has brought the Rose Redemption and the King of Angels to the forefront of all the members of the Tarot Club… Isn't this t-too coincidental?

Yes, news provided by The World previously had to do with Backlund, and this is the first time it involves the sea. Furthermore, Mr. Fool had mentioned last week that his Blessed has been forced to leave Backlund because of the Great Smog. They match perfectly.

So, The World is actually Mr. Fool's Blessed? No, he should be a representative among all his Blessed in the Tarot Club. He's to do things that Mr. Fool finds inconvenient. Of course, through this gathering, the Blessed will also trade goods and knowledge in order to advance himself. This is also considered a form of Mr. Fool's nurturing of him.

On careful thought, this theory is probably correct. At least, The World has never collected Roselle's diary in exchange for knowledge or intelligence from Mr. Fool. As his Blessed, it's his duty, so he has probably submitted them in private!

From this conclusion, some deliberate questions or contradictions on The World's part are meant to conceal his identity as a Blessed. This is consistent with his experienced, skilled, and cunning character.

In addition to the hidden attempt to awaken as he slowly lifts the seal, Mr. Fool holds the Tarot Gathering to also use us to interfere in certain events. This is evident from the composition of the members—a high noble, a Beyonder at the bishop level of the Church, a survivor of the Forsaken Land of God, a student of the Abraham family, an adult vampire. Each of us represents a faction or a particular circle or resource channel.

Many thoughts flashed through Alger's mind. Not only was he not repressed by his own guesses, but he was also excited. To him, Mr. Fool's unknown purpose was the most frightening thing. Having an initial understanding of what he wanted to do allowed him to effectively avoid any risks and improve himself by doing so.

As long as The Fool wants to use us to do things, he'll definitely give us some benefits. This is exactly what I was hoping for… Otherwise, I don't know when I'll be able to see the hope of becoming a demigod… Heh, The World, you definitely didn't expect that I would see through your disguise… Alger's fear subsided, and he began to think about how to use the information about Bansy Harbor.

He couldn't report the matter just like that, as it would arouse suspicion, and he had to patiently wait for an opportunity to let the higher-ups appreciate him and reward him, without ending up being monitored.

Audrey could tell that Mr. Hanged Man was undergoing a mental exercise, but she didn't expect him to come up with so many guesses in such a short period of time.

And from the words of Mr. Fool, she was delighted to learn that Rose Redemption was a secret organization established by a number of Kings of Angels, which was also related to the True Creator.

At the same time, she vaguely sensed the strangeness of The World. She realized that this member of the organization, who was the most difficult to read, was always involved in important matters and could always obtain important information. Furthermore, he constantly produced formulas, ingredients, and Beyonder characteristics, as if he could successfully hunt down a Beyonder within one to two weeks!

He left Backlund and went to sea? Or was it a rumor he heard in Backlund? Should I tell this information to the Church? Well, Mr. Hanged Man has a close relationship with the Church of Storms, so it's better for him to do it, and there wouldn't be any problems… Audrey suppressed the thought of probing and only curiously asked, "Honorable Mr. Fool, what's the title of the King of Angels, Medici? Or should I say, what is 'His' pathway?"

Klein leaned back into his chair and said with a deep chuckle, “Red Priest.”

Red Priest? Which pathway is that? It sounds very similar to the Black Emperor. Could it be that it’s another Sequence 0 title? Audrey thought with excitement and joy.

Red Priest… Derrick silently muttered the words, realizing that there was no corresponding record in the City of Silver’s history.

Perhaps I haven’t read enough, having only received a general education… he thought regretfully.

Fors and Emlyn listened as if they were listening to a story and were equally interested in similar information.

The only problem is that I can’t brag about it or write it into my novels! Fors felt a pang of regret.

Mr. Hanged Man will likely report it to his superiors. Let’s hope he doesn’t delay it for too long… With his shrewdness, he may have already figured out some of the problems regarding The World and has grasped the relationship between “Him” and The Fool. Fortunately, I’ve deliberately set up The World to be Sherlock Moriarty since a long time ago, giving him the identity of a Blessed. Mr. Hanged Man can at best detect it up to this point, unable to imagine that The World is actually a dummy… Klein raised his hand to his chin, smiled, and said, “Continue.”

Seeing that Mr. Fool was no longer talking about the subject, Emlyn, who had freed himself from his emotions as a messiah, began to face the difficult problems of reality.

That was his lack of money!

Regardless, he had never considered selling off his dolls. He only told himself that he needed to be frugal in the future. Only after half a year or even a year could he get himself a new doll, or he could buy a new set of clothes for the dolls he already had.

In addition, the only way he could think of making money was to sell some potions that had a miraculous effect, but that could easily bring hidden danger to his clansmen in Backlund.

This is an arrangement by the Ancestor. Logically speaking, Lord Nibbs should provide me help, but Mr. Fool wishes for me to keep it a secret, to be the messiah in the shadows who's burdened with responsibility. I'm not to reveal it on my own accord… After thinking for a few seconds, Emlyn pumped himself up, cleared his throat, and said, "Everyone, I have a question.

"Here's the matter. Suppose there's a powerhouse who has arranged for you to investigate something. Although you have successfully obtained the information, you are unable to report it to the person due to certain reasons. Then, how can you continue to get support from this powerhouse?"

Having said this, Emlyn suddenly felt that this act was somewhat shameful.

Th-this makes me appear like a traitor and a spy… No, I'm doing this for the sake of the Sanguine's continuation. For this, I have to give up my reputation and bear the burden of being misunderstood. When this is over, and when the truth is revealed, they'll be moved by me… Emlyn quickly eased his prior feelings.

At this moment, Audrey, Fors, and Derrick cast their eyes towards Alger. In their eyes, Mr. Hanged Man was the most experienced and the best teacher in this field.

Klein also thought so too.

Alger glanced at The Moon and chuckled.

"It's simple, but you have to take some risks."

Emlyn subconsciously denied, “It’s not me!”

The Hanged Man replied with a chuckle, “Let’s assume that it’s you.”

He continued his description.

“You will slowly display a certain level of abnormalities in your daily life, allowing that powerhouse to see that you have a problem.

“He will have two choices. One is to interrogate you directly, but it will be very easy to end up losing a lead for clues. The second is to inadvertently provide you with help so that you can investigate more thoroughly and then send people to monitor you.

“I think the second possibility is the most likely. The risk you have to take is how to not reveal the information you want to hide while under surveillance.”

That works? In fact, I won’t be exposed either. Every Tarot Gathering, I’ll be resting in the Harvest Church, looking normal on the outside. As for the sacrifice of items and the receiving of bestowments, they’re things that can be shown to Lord Nibbs and the others. It will allow them to guess that I have formed some sort of connection with Mr. Fool, but they can’t imagine that I’ve already joined a secret gathering… Very well, while I’m studying history, I’ll take the initiative to ask Baron Waymandy about the City of Silver! Emlyn’s eyes lit up as he had an idea.

He then thought of something and turned to The Hanged Man.

“Last week, didn’t you ask about a way to make everyone on board a ship sleep at the same time?

“It’s very simple, I can provide you with a magical anesthetic gas that can effectively spread without any irritating smells. Even on the deck, one will fall unconscious once they catch a whiff of it. Of course, it’s best if you choose a windless night, and that the targets are unable to sense danger, and their physiques cannot be too strong. Those

Beyonders that are well known for their physiques in Sequence 9 are the limit.

“It can cause deep slumber that lasts for more than three hours. The effects will constantly decline after that.

“A hundred pounds a can, and an extra thirty pounds for me.”

The Hanged Man thought about the situation of the sailors on the ghost ship and didn’t haggle.

“Okay.”

He wanted to erect a certain image in front of The Moon, to prepare for the big transaction that would follow. He had thought of using a Slumber Charm, but that would require him to chant the incantation. It would make the sailors notice that something was wrong and suspect something afterward.

At the end of the exchange, Klein tapped the surface of the long, mottled table with his finger, and he said with a leisurely smile, “I can foresee that everyone will present a new appearance of themselves next week.

“Let us end today’s gathering here.”

“Thank you for your blessings.” Audrey was the first to stand up. She took her leave, expressing her gratitude.

With Mr. Fool saying those words, she felt more confident in consuming the Psychiatrist potion.

As The Magician and the others repeated the same words, one figure after another disappeared from the palace. The area above the gray fog returned to its eternal silence.

Chapter 517 - City of Generosity

* * *

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

As the crimson glow faded from her eyes, Fors saw the familiar desk and open notebook which she used to jot down her inspirations.

To her, this experience was no longer anything new, but it still evoked reverence from the bottom of her heart.

This was a power that didn't belong to humans, something that even demigods were incapable of!

I'll receive the stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater in two days. My Apprentice potion has already been digested… Finally, I'll become a Trickmaster. I wonder what Beyonder powers I'll receive… By advancing by my own abilities, Teacher will definitely place greater importance on me. Apart from potion formulas in the future, perhaps I might be provided with some Beyonder ingredients… How I look forward to that very much. I don't even know the corresponding names of Sequence 6 and 5. I only know that Sequence 7 is Astrologer. After I become a Trickmaster, I'll immediately write to Teacher… Fors felt like she was one step closer to ridding herself from the curse of the full moon.

At this moment, she heard the sound of hurried footsteps approaching. Finally, it turned into the slam of the door.

Xio is out again. She's so busy. Fors sighed silently. If not for the 400 pounds debt that she owes Viscount Glaint, we would probably be vacationing at Desi Bay now.

After a long period of hard work, and thanks to the enhancement of her strength, certain tasks that were previously impossible for her to complete have become simple. Moreover, from time to time, Xio would receive small tasks that pay well from the golden-masked man. Xio has already raised her savings from 110 pounds to 320 pounds, leaving her with only 80 pounds left to pay off her debt.

In fact, I could spot her 80 pounds, but unfortunately, although she isn't tall, she still has a lot of pride in her… Fors withdrew her thoughts and thought about the matter Mr. World had entrusted her.

As a doctor and a writer, she didn't know much about radios or anything about the entire field of machinery. She didn't usually pay attention to such information when reading the newspapers, so she didn't know where she could buy the kind of transceiver The World wanted.

A department store? It probably doesn't sell one… Ah right, Aville writes science fiction, so he should know a lot about such matters. Fors quickly found the right person to consult.

However, she immediately had a new problem. Was she to visit him directly, or was she to write him a letter of inquiry?

Glancing at the chair covered in a thick, soft blanket, and smelling the fragrance of coffee and tobacco emanating the room, she felt a warmth slowly creeping through her body. Bit by bit, her motivation to leave the house crumbled.

I'm not familiar with him, so I shouldn't rashly pay him a visit. She sat down with a grunt and unfolded a piece of paper.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick opened his eyes and woke up from feigning sleep.

According to his original plan, he would've immediately held a sacrificial ritual to send out the stomach pouch of the Spirit Eater. However, the words of The Hanged Man reminded him to be more cautious and make more observations.

Uh… I'll gather the ingredients Mr. Hanged Man require first, and then I'll do the sacrificial ritual all at once… Derrick remained silent for a few seconds, then he attached his Axe of Hurricane to his body and headed for the steeple.

He first checked the items available for exchanging using merit points, but he wasn't in a hurry to complete the transaction. He planned to go to the underground market to take a look once the lightning in the sky subsided.

Derrick went up to the third floor and headed straight for the library section that dealt with mythology and ancient classics, hungering for valuable information he hadn't learned yet.

Suddenly, he saw a hard and yellowed book with a cover: "Giant King's Court—Book of Blackrock, Hand-copied Edition."

It's a record passed down from the Giant King's Court? I wonder if there's anything related to the Kings of Angels… Derrick reached for the book, pulled it out, and saw that it was bound in a brown monster hide.

At that moment, on the upper level of the library, Colin Iliad was wearing a flaxen-colored linen shirt and a brown coat and standing there quietly, looking down.

His unkempt grizzled hair flailed in the breeze from the window, and his pale blue eyes were deep and reserved…

†

Wednesday, 12 January. 5:40 p.m.

The sky was dark and cloudy, with deep blue waves undulating across the sea.

The White Agate bobbed up and down in this storm, like a toy in the palm of a giant.

"This is the sea. No matter how powerful one is, one will appear insignificant in front of it." Danitz stood by the window and enjoyed the scenery outside. "Fortunately, we're almost at the City of Generosity."

From the moment they left Bansy Harbor, the White Agate's journey had been smooth-sailing. With the help of the wind, it reached a stable speed of 15 knots. Hence, even though they arrived at Tiana Port a little later than scheduled, they completed the entire journey half a day earlier.

That is to say, the White Agate, which was scheduled to arrive at the City of Generosity on the morning of the 13th, arrived on the evening of the 12th.

Hearing Danitz's reflections, Klein just glanced up at him, then looked away and continued his contemplation.

The more he played the part of Gehrman Sparrow, and the more he had to force himself to behave in accordance with his persona, the more deeply he realized what kind of person he was. When faced with different situations, he realized that the choices he really wanted to make were different from Gehrman Sparrow's.

For example, he would've responded to Danitz by idly chatting with him about the weather at sea and the disasters caused by those terrible storms, but Gehrman Sparrow wouldn't. He had to be cold and reserved.

The more there are such differences, the more I recognize myself. Klein sighed inwardly.

This was something he hadn't experienced when he moved about with his identity as the private detective, Sherlock Moriarty. Back then, he didn't have to disguise his personality and had just been himself.

I feel like I've digested my potion a little… However, Gehrman Sparrow has traits that are similar to myself. At the very least, when choosing to disembark and entering Bansy Harbor to save the others, I overlapped with this identity of mine, and there was no difference… Of course, it could also be said that I was adding a certain kind of persona into the mix. Beneath Gehrman Sparrow's gentleness and madness, he has a kind, brave, and compassionate heart that values relationships. Heh heh, I can't boast about myself. If I had known earlier that Bansy was Binsy, I-I would've most likely been terrified… Not necessarily. At the very least, the danger which was divined was within an acceptable range… Klein thought, summing things up as he engaged in self-deprecation.

This made him more aware of a problem; although playing the role of a purely fictional person could help him digest the potion, he needed to replace an existing identity to speed up and improve his progress. He needed to gain the affirmation of people from the other person's interpersonal relationships, feel the corresponding emotions of joy, anger, sadness, and immersing himself in them, but not getting obsessed.

Become anyone, but ultimately become yourself in the end? And get feedback from the people involved? Klein looked at the pale yellow carpet, his mind racing.

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow without a response, Danitz spread his hands helplessly, feeling bored out of his mind.

This crazy guy is good in every way other than making me do what servants do. There's only one thing, he doesn't like to talk. There's a communication barrier with him. If this goes on, I'll definitely go crazy…. Fortunately, I'm finally at Bayam. I can finally be free! Danitz felt that he would sooner or later develop a habit of talking to himself when faced with a similar silence.

After a while he saw Gehrman Sparrow look up, smile, and say, "You can tell me about the pirate point of contacts in Bayam."

…Dogshit! It's better if you don't say anything! Danitz's expression twisted.

Woosh!

At 6:15 p.m., just before the storm arrived, the White Agate docked smoothly and arrived at the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, Bayam, the City of Generosity.

It was also known as the Spice Archipelago, and it was home to a variety of exotic spices, with the plantations of these produce being mainstays of the economy.

The Blue Mountain Island, where Bayam was located, occupied more than half of the archipelago which was mostly covered in forest. It had gold, silver, copper, coal, iron, and other minerals, as well as a plentiful variety of fruits due to the particularly fertile land. For these reasons, the first batch of colonists named the seaside city they built the "City of Generosity." They believed it was a land of treasure promised by the gods, where it flowed with milk and honey.

Klein picked up his suitcase which Danitz packed, and he left Room 312, entering the corridor that led to the deck.

Without any surprises, he met Donna's family, Cleves, and others.

The two siblings were still a little afraid of Klein after the fright he gave them. They hid behind their parents and bodyguards and didn't dare to speak, appearing like deflated balloons.

Klein nodded slightly as a form of greeting.

At this moment, Urdi Branch hesitated for a second and then took a half step forward.

“Mr. Sparrow, will you be staying in Bayam?

“If I wish to hire—no, request for your help, how can I contact you?”

He’s indeed a businessman with a spirit of adventure. Even if he’s afraid, he still wishes to befriend someone with Beyonder powers… Klein thought for a moment.

“What newspapers are in circulation over here?”

“The Sonia Morning Post and the News Report are popular in the archipelago,” Urdi said without any thought.

“Put an advertisement in the Sonia Morning Post for three days in a row asking to buy Damir’s special cured meat, and leave an address. I’ll go look for you, and if I don’t show up three days later, it means I’m at sea again.” Klein was careful to give a one-way method of contact.

“Alright.” Urdi exhaled and smiled.

Cleves and the others expressed their gratitude once again and left the cabin in an orderly manner.

Noticing the gangway in sight, Donna suddenly slowed her pace and stepped back next to Klein, raised her face, and bit her lip.

“Uncle Sparrow, s-since that kind of power definitely brings about threats and madness, w-why did you choose to have it?”

She had thought about this question for a long time before finally mustering the courage to ask.

Klein was startled, and he instinctively formed a smile.

“For my dream.”

Then he lowered his voice and said two words, “And… protect.”

Protect… Donna mumbled the word in a slightly lost voice, picked up her pace, and caught up with her parents.

After watching the Branch family leave the White Agate, Klein retracted his gaze and said to Danitz, “You’re free.”

Ah? For a moment, Danitz wasn’t used to it.

Chapter 518 - On the Brink of Death

◆

Without another word or care for Danitz, Klein pressed his top hat and carried his suitcase down the gangway.

Are you really going to let me go? Blazing Danitz stood on the deck, his face filled with suspicion.

Although he had expected such an outcome, with Gehrman Sparrow directly letting him go while in Damir Harbor, making him capable of imagining today’s scene, he still couldn’t believe it. He felt that everything that befell him came too simply and easily.

Regardless, I’m worth 3,000 pounds. No, this is the bounty offered only by Loen! Isn’t this madman, Gehrman Sparrow, an adventurer? How can he let go of a huge amount of wealth in front of him? It’s incomprehensible… Heh, it’s true that normal people can’t understand the mindset of lunatics… Danitz gradually snapped back to his senses. With his luggage in hand, he carefully descended the gangway and stepped onto the concrete ground of the dock.

He straightened his back, lifted his head, and gave Gehrman Sparrow’s back a glance. He realized that he really wasn’t turning back and was following the path straight for Coastal Street.

Danitz didn’t dare delay a second longer. He immediately turned around and left through another path, occasionally changing directions and using obstacles to look back, in order to ensure that he wasn’t followed.

Soon, he arrived at a row of houses near the warehouse at the dock.

Gehrman Sparrow really didn't use me as bait… After triple-checking, Danitz finally relaxed completely.

At this moment, he finally felt like he was liberated. A dignified boatswain of a Pirate Admiral like him no longer had to be bullied and be ordered around like a servant!

I can already foresee that tomorrow will be incomparably beautiful. There will be a group of people vying to flatter me, wanting to become my servants! Danitz knocked happily on the door—three long and three short—rhythmically.

Hehe, Gehrman Sparrow asked me to give him the pirate point of contacts in Bayam. I obviously only told him the ones that don't have a good relationship with us. There's no way he could guess that our Golden Dream point of contact is right at the dock… Danitz picked at his nose and breathed in the fresh sea breeze before a looming rain.

Bayam was a pivotal location of the Loen Kingdom's Central Sonia Sea colonies. It was one of the largest cities in the region. There were many powerful official Beyonders, and no matter how rampant the pirates were, they didn't dare to openly show their faces here. Most of the time, they had to rely on the local gangs or people with backgrounds to handle the loot and purchase any necessities.

Of course, this didn't mean that they wouldn't come to Bayam. The Red Theater here was the most famous brothel in the surrounding seas, and countless pirates came to patronize this famous place. Even if one or two of their peers were caught every once in a while, it didn't stop them from rushing over.

In addition to the spice trade, the brothel industry was another major pillar of the Rorsted Archipelago. Apart from the Red Theater, there were many big or small brothels, out in the open or hidden all over the place. They fully satisfied the desires of the seamen with ample energy.

As for the female pirates, they didn’t have to worry about this problem. As long as they were willing, they could always be satisfied. After all, there was more demand than supply. At sea, where faith in the Lord of Storms was mainstream, there had always been few females.

Similarly, the underground trade related to Beyonder ingredients and mysticism was quite frequent here, and there were many circles.

Those smaller ports are still better. We don’t have to be afraid of being discovered at all, and we can just openly sit in a bar, engage in disputes with adventurers, and even fight them. As long as we don’t cause any trouble or cause any deaths, the local official Beyonders will turn a blind eye. Heh, with their strength, they typically have to take on tremendous risks if they wish to interfere… Danitz thought mockingly.

At that moment, he heard footsteps and saw the door creak open. A familiar face entered his sight.

“Old man, did you not drink today?” Danitz smiled and greeted.

Standing at the door was one of the Golden Dream’s contacts in the Rorsted Archipelago, Old Rinn.

Old Rinn coughed twice and made way.

Danitz stepped into the dim room, his nose twitching suddenly.

He caught a whiff of Lanti Proof.

No, Old Rinn likes to drink locally-produced Bayam Black Rand! As this thought flashed through his mind, Danitz was terrified.

Immediately following that, he saw a man with his back to him rise to his feet. He was tall, dark, and muscular, and his hair was curled like marbles.

“Steel” Maveti! Danitz’s pupils contracted sharply.

This was the second mate of the Admiral of Blood, a great pirate with a bounty of 6,000 pounds!

†

Waves of the sea breeze blew, swaying the thin, sharp leaves of the tree in a precarious manner.

Klein was walking along Coastal Street at an adequate speed. In contrast, the people around him were hurrying and walking quickly.

His spiritual intuition told him that it would take some time before the storm would arrive, and that he had plenty of time to find a hotel.

Woosh!

The sound of the wind grew louder and louder. Tree branches fell to the ground, and there weren’t many people left on the street.

Klein was about to turn into another alley when he heard the sound of hasty but disorderly running.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Danitz was running with all his might, but the scene in front of him began to rock.

He felt an abnormal pain from his wound as he felt his vitality rapidly sapping away. His Spirit Body had partially left his body, approaching the legendary Underworld. As for the surrounding sounds, he could only vaguely hear them, and everything in his line of sight looked like it wasn’t real.

If it wasn’t for having Shadow Cloak, the ambush would’ve killed him. But even so, he was still severely injured and could die on the streets at any moment.

He was forced to run towards Coastal Street because of his will to warn the captain that their point of contact had been compromised by the

Admiral of Blood, as well as the glimmer of hope brought by that crazy but powerful figure.

If it's him, then he would definitely be able to escape from the hands of "Steel" Maveti's henchmen… Danitz began to stagger, and his body gradually grew cold.

Just as he was about to collapse, he saw Gehrman Sparrow standing by a street corner. His refined face that hid madness appeared so genial at that moment.

Plop!

Danitz fell on his back, his hands hanging limply over his chest, revealing a hideous, exaggerated wound that was inflicted to his organs.

"Tell Captain that Old Rinn has been discovered. Steel Maveti did it for that treasure!" Danitz saw Gehrman Sparrow kneel to his side as he hurriedly spoke.

Klein recalled the bounty offered for Steel Maveti and asked in return, "Admiral of Blood?"

"Yes, tell Captain! T-tell Captain!" Danitz gasped as he said.

After saying all that, he revealed a mournful smile.

"Don't worry about me. I'm a-about to die soon.

"Tell the Captain that all the money I've saved up has been turned into real estate. Units 12 to 16 on Bayam's Amyris Avenue. The title deeds a-are hidden in the wall of Unit 13's basement. H-help me sell them. T-take the money to South Intis's Elema Town. G-give the money to my parents. S-say that I've really made a fortune…"

Danitz paused, then he said with great difficulty, "S-say that I've become an out-outstanding adventurer.

"Also… Help me s-say I'm sorry…"

His eyes suddenly became moist, as if he was recalling that rebellious youth from back then.

I'm sorry, Old Man, Mother. I'm unable to return home… Danitz's vision darkened, and he felt that his life was coming to an end.

It was at this moment that he saw Gehrman Sparrow reach out and press his hand to his wound and then swipe it.

Danitz's sorrow came to a sudden halt as he felt the already numb pain in his chest and abdomen suddenly disappear as his left hand seemed to suffer a fracture.

He looked at Klein blankly, and Klein looked back at him quietly. None of them spoke for two seconds.

Finally, he looked down in astonishment and discovered that his lethal wound had strangely healed. His left arm was badly mutilated, and even his bones protruded out.

I-I'm fine now? Danitz blinked, still immersed in the sadness and frustration of his brush with death.

"Why didn't you treat me first?" he asked blankly.

Klein looked back at the empty area on the other side of Coastal Street and said in a calm tone, "Waiting for you to finish.

"That's basic courtesy.

Courtesy you son of a b*tch! I was really saying my last words! With a sudden jerk of his back, Danitz rolled to his feet.

He warily looked towards the dock, where a thick cloud of smoke was rising. It was none other than the result of the battle he had just been engaged in.

Because the house was set on fire by me, Steel Maveti was afraid that it would catch the attention of the official Beyonders. As he was confused by that shadow, he didn't chase after me… Danitz instantly understood the sequence of events.

"Let's find a place to stay first." Klein spread his hands and caught a drop of rain.

Not knowing whether or not he had completely escaped danger, Danitz immediately nodded.

"Okay."

I can tell that this madman, Gehrman Sparrow, isn't afraid of Steel Maveti at all. He's not even afraid of Admiral of Blood… At such times, I especially admire his craziness… Damn, I exposed my wealth to him. Danitz had just exhaled when his body froze.

Klein walked silently ahead with his suitcase and cane with only one thought echoing in his head.

Godd*mmit, a pirate is richer than I am…

†

Empress Borough.

Audrey, who was about to leave Backlund, hid in her chemistry laboratory and concocted the Psychiatrist potion with the ingredients she received from Mr. Vampire—the fruit of the Tree of Elders, the blood of a Mirror Dragon—and the other ingredients she had collected previously.

This time, she didn't get Susie to guard the door. Instead, she was to sit inside and observe the whole process from the sidelines. Earl Hall had already instructed everyone to not approach the young lady during her experiments, but they had to pay attention to any unusual changes.

Phew… Audrey let out a small sigh of relief, pouring the completed potion into a prepared glass bottle.

The slightly golden liquid rippled like a deformed, gigantic pupil. Its gaze seemed to shine right into the eyes of anyone’s heart.

“Susie, did you remember the process? You are a mature, no—you are a mature Beyonder. In the future, you’ll have to learn how to concoct your own potion. No, it’s not that I’m not helping you; it’s just that I’m pointing out a possibility. Sometimes, I might not be by your side, and you just happen to need a potion bottle,” Audrey said happily to the huge golden retriever.

Susie was so confused by what she was taught, and she could only open her mouth to reply with a single word, “Woof!”

Converging her emotions, Audrey raised her head and downed the Psychiatrist potion bottle.

Chapter 519 - Naming

◆

The golden liquid was cool and refreshing, making Audrey feel as if she was enjoying a delicious ice cream. She then took a sip of champagne. Tiny bubbles of air continuously rose, silently bursting as they brought a tingling sensation with them.

Suddenly, her sense of hearing reached out, and she could hear the conversation of the two maids at the end of the corridor as they lamented at how they had no chance of going to the Hall family's castle and manor in East Chester County.

At this moment, Audrey felt as if she had dissolved into an illusory gas and was rapidly expanding. It filled the entire room, overlapping with a sea formed from everyone's sea of consciousness.

Her vision also changed. Everything she saw was abnormally smooth, turning into a mirror that reflected her current appearance.

Possessing a beauty described by pure, exquisite, grand, and witty, golden scales that were slowly growing out of her exposed skin, her emerald-green irises contracted and were dyed in a faint golden color, as if they had turned vertical.

Audrey suddenly felt fear from the bottom of her heart when she saw herself like this. She didn't want or wish to become an inhuman monster!

With a hum, her mind began to turn into a blur, as if something was slowly and painfully drilling out from the surface of her body.

Just then, she heard the gentle voice of her huge golden retriever, Susie.

“Don’t be afraid, calm down.

“Don’t be afraid, calm down.”

Audrey recovered her thoughts and tried to get herself into a Spectator state.

Her undulating emotions quickly calmed down, and her spirit seemed to leave her body. She then looked down at herself like a Spectator.

Audrey saw the golden scales on the surface of her body visibly recede and her emerald-like eyes return to normal.

It didn’t take her long to regain control of her body and understand what Beyonder powers were available to a Psychiatrist and how they were used.

I-it was so dangerous just now… Audrey raised her hand in fear. Her skin was fair and delicate, completely unlike the abnormal condition she had been in a moment ago.

After this incident, she truly understood how terrifying the danger of losing control which Mr. Fool would occasionally bring up was. She gained a deep understanding of how difficult it was to go down the Beyonder path.

Even with the acting method, it was impossible to completely remove the latent risks!

At one gathering, Mr. World said that Beyonders are a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness… Previously, I could only understand it literally. Now, I can finally feel the weight behind this sentence… Audrey, don’t be discouraged, don’t be afraid. Father, Mother, and Brother are still waiting for your protection. With this experience, you won’t be frightened by yourself in the future or so easily lose control. You can do it! Audrey clenched her fists and encouraged herself.

She calmed down for two seconds, walked up to Susie, squatted down, and hugged the golden retriever. As she combed its fur, she put her head against the side of the dog's face and muttered in its warmth, "Thank you, thank you…"

Susie rubbed against her twice and asked seriously, "Audrey, is this how a Psychiatrist feels like?

"I like it very much."

"…"

Audrey was suddenly at a loss on whether to laugh or cry. She immediately pursed her lips and promised, "Susie, we'll treat each other in the future. Yes, psychological problems!"

"Okay, Woof!" Susie answered happily.

It was only now with Audrey truly recovering that she was in the mood to examine her own advancement.

My body seems to have become healthier. Although I don't have any obvious muscles, my strength and speed have become much stronger than before…

My eyesight has also improved. I can even clearly see items hidden in the dark…

My sense of smell is able to distinguish even more subtle smells, and thus being able to grasp a target's truest emotions and thoughts…

I finally have Beyonder powers in the truest sense of the word. Yes, there's also Awe. I can target a single person or apply it to a group of people within a certain range. They'll instantly panic and turn chaotic as though they're facing a dragon.

Another is Frenzy. It will trigger the emotions and mental state of a target, throwing the target into a frenzy. They'll suffer intense psychological damage and might even cause direct loss of control at times.

Another is Psychological Cue. Through specific methods, words, and a medium, I can cue a target, letting them abide by my arrangements without them realizing it. Or they might strongly abide by a particular promise from the bottom of their hearts.

Another is Placate, also known as Psychoanalysis. I can help Beyonders on the brink of losing control to regain their reason and escape danger. There's a certain chance of failure. The higher my Sequence, the more easily it will succeed. It can calm down various psychological instabilities and allow for communication.

Another is Telepathy. Through mediums like candlelight and extracts, it will put the target in a partially hypnotic state. I'll then be able to directly communicate with their Body of Heart and Mind, just like what Hilbert Alucard did to me. If not for the protection provided by Mr. Fool's angel, then I wouldn't have the means to lie under such situations. Yes… I have to be on guard against such techniques. I can't be fooled by a target, and there should be quite a number of means to achieve this effect…

With Placate and Telepathy, together with certain psychology knowledge, I'll be able to act as a true psychiatrist, the kind that can open a clinic!

Audrey's mood rapidly improved. She finally had the feeling that she had matured and become a qualified Beyonder.

I'm a Mid-Sequence Beyonder! There really is a qualitative change! She stood up, lifted her skirt, and walked briskly around in a circle.

She quickly discovered that she was still lacking in direct offensive abilities as a Psychiatrist.

Fortunately, I have this… Audrey stopped in front of the experiment table and opened a plain brown box.

Inside the box was a silver mask that could only cover half a face. It was the mystical item that The Hanged Man had sold her.

Audrey picked it up, placed it in her palm, and observed it for a few seconds.

Then, she extended her spirituality and projected her thoughts just like how she did above the gray fog.

She saw the silver mask begin to warp inwards, turning into a hollow, finely-patterned slightly large earring.

“It might be better to turn it into a necklace,” Audrey whispered.

Afterward, she tried out the various abilities of this magical item. She was most satisfied with her ability to fine-tune her appearance.

It’s a pity that other than Flame Controlling, it doesn’t have any other more direct offensive powers. Perhaps I’ll need to prepare a revolver, one that has Beyonder effects… Audrey thought with some regret.

She quickly collected her emotions and said to the mystical item in her hand with an uplifted tone towards the end, “From today, your name is Lie. The most beautiful lie~”

†

City of Generosity, Bayam. 48 Acid Lemon Street, Wind of Azure Inn.

It was raining heavily outside and the wind was raging, but inside the luxurious suite, the fireplace was warm and the environment peaceful.

Klein sat in his chair and watched silently as Blazing Danitz dealt with the severe fracture on his left arm.

He waited until Danitz was finished binding up his arm with shredded, old clothes before asking bluntly, “What treasure?”

According to Danitz, it was because of some treasure that Admiral of Blood Senor wanted to deal with Vice Admiral Edwina Edwards.

The sound of wind and rain came through the window. Danitz took a sip of the Lanti Proof on the table and then gave a bitter, angry laugh.

“Those a**holes who had their brains eaten by zombies!

“On our last expedition, we found a sunken ship. Although we didn’t find anything of great value, we discovered a gigantic black iron key that doesn’t look like the kind used by humans. Can you imagine? After being submerged under the sea for so many years, it hasn’t rusted at all.”

“Yes,” Klein replied in a concise manner.

In a world where extraordinariness and mystery intertwined, what wasn’t possible?

There were people who could be resurrected from the dead, not to mention others!

Danitz choked and paused for seven or eight seconds before he knew what to say next.

“Perhaps there’s a traitor among us, and the news has spread. Countless pirates believe that this is Death’s Key, a key that can open the treasure trove Death left behind.

“I thought that this problem would be cleared up very quickly and happily applied for a vacation. In the end, the matter became more complicated. Even Admiral of Blood has joined the ranks of these mad pirates. I’m even beginning to suspect that it’s Death’s Key, a key that can turn one into a true god.”

"Foolish." Klein calmly gave his evaluation.

Whether it was in the divination domain or dealing with deities, he could be considered experienced. Thus, he had his own understanding and confidence in the interpretation of Death's Key.

He believed that the "key" was a form of revelation, a symbol. The thing that opened Death's treasure trove was probably not in the shape of a key, but some kind of characteristic, bloodline, or even certain, specified people and their descendants.

Danitz was startled for two seconds, and then he exclaimed, "Your words are exactly the same as Captain's previous comments, and even your expressions are very similar.

"She suspects that the key belongs to an older era, an era not of humans.

"Before the Cataclysm, this world was still full of giants, dragons, elves, and demonic wolves. The shape of the key indirectly points to one of them."

Demonic wolves… Klein suddenly recalled the ravings he often heard during his past advancements. In it, the "Flegrea" he heard referred to the ancient god, Annihilation Demonic Wolf.

A treasure that involves the Second Epoch? He held back his curiosity and switched to calmly saying, "Write down everything that Admiral of Blood has done, including Steel Maveti and his men."

He remembered that Admiral of Blood and his pirate crew were the most notorious groups on the ocean. Their hands were stained with blood as they committed heinous sins.

"How can I remember? They aren't beauties like Captain!" Danitz threw up his hands. "I can only list the most important things and some of the details that have left an impression on me. Wait, what do you want to do?"

Bit by bit, Klein revealed a smile, one that gave Danitz a fright.

He said in a deep voice, “If it’s appropriate, I want to hunt them.”

Chapter 520 - Admiral of Blood

◆ ◆ ◆

“Hunt them?” Danitz asked subconsciously.

When he truly understood the meaning behind Gehrman Sparrow’s words, he instantly became excited. He changed his seating posture and suppressed his voice.

“Is there anything I can help you with?”

As a qualified, part-time pirate, he had nothing to do with beautiful words such as tolerance, compassion, and love. Since he had nearly died at the hands of Steel Maveti and now had the chance to take revenge, he definitely wouldn’t miss it!

He believed that he could survive in the pirate industry by relying on an accurate grasp of the situation: knowing when to resist, when to fight for his life, when to feign ignorance when seeing his enemies, and when to settle old scores.

And now, this was an opportunity!

Danitz still couldn’t make an accurate judgment on how powerful Gehrman Sparrow was, but judging from how he had taken care of the fallen Bishop Millet within ten seconds, it was unlikely that it would be too difficult for him to deal with Steel Maveti. Even if he encountered the Admiral of Blood, Senor, it wasn’t impossible for him to win.

Of course, this is in a one-on-one situation, and pirates never talk about chivalry… Danitz thought to himself.

Klein leaned forward a little, placed his elbows on his knees, and clasped his hands.

“I’ve told you.”

Ah? What? Danitz felt that he was often unable to keep up with Gehrman Sparrow’s train of thought.

With regards to this, he could only console himself that a normal person and a madman were different.

Seeing that the other party had stopped talking, he thought for a while and finally remembered what he had to do.

Write down everything that Admiral of Blood and his pirate crew had done!

Hmm… Gehrman Sparrow definitely wants to know how many things they’ve plundered… Danitz quickly gathered his thoughts, rummaged around the room for a pen and paper, and scribbled a chunk of text.

During this process, he was exceptionally glad that it was his left arm that was injured.

When he was done writing, Klein reached out for it, read it carefully, and confirmed from the undetailed parts of Danitz’s description that Admiral of Blood was the most typical and vile of pirates. Not only did they plunder, but they also abducted people, slaughtered crew members, and abused women.

A pirate like Danitz actually knows how to write Ancient Feysac… He’s also been educated… After muttering to himself, Klein took out a copper penny and used divination to confirm the authenticity of the material.

Then he said in a tone as though he was giving instructions on what was to be eaten tomorrow morning, “Tell me about the Admiral of Blood and his men.”

He needs more detailed information… Is he preparing to hunt them? Danitz was delighted, hating himself for not knowing enough.

“Admiral of Blood Senor is suspected to be an evil spirit. Anyone who has encountered him has died a bizarre death. Either they strangle themselves to death, blow their mouths up, hug bombs, or slaughter their companions. Captain said that it’s the possession of an evil spirit.”

It’s very similar to Miss Sharron’s Beyonder powers… Wraith? Klein didn’t speak as he listened to Danitz go on, in silence.

“Senor can make a terrible shriek. The last time I fought them, I was nearly knocked unconscious and fell off the deck and into the sea. Heh heh, I returned the favor and set one of their boats on fire.

“Senor knows a lot of undead magic. Cruel, bloodthirsty, and full of desire. His targets can be either male or female, and even humanoid creatures.”

Consistent with the unrestrained nature of the Rose School of Thought. Yes, accurately speaking, it’s a trait of the Prisoner pathway… The highest probability is that he’s a Wraith… Klein nodded thoughtfully.

In response, Danitz became more active and spoke a little faster.

“Our Captain thinks that Senor has a very powerful mystical item on him, one that makes him very lucky. He always seems to gain the favor of the gods. For example, at a critical moment, his opponent would suddenly slip or have their powers fail. Another example is winning 21 bets in a row.”

A mystical item that can make someone lucky? This is very rare… It’s from the Monster pathway? Or is it connected to some other evil spirit? Klein guessed based on his own knowledge of mysticism.

“I’ve never directly fought Senor, so that’s all I know.” Danitz wanted to throw his hands up, but he was stopped by the pain in his left arm. “He has about seven or eight ships. His flagship is the Tree of Flesh and

Blood. Heh heh, that's different from us. We mainly seek out treasure and wouldn't take in anyone. Therefore, we only have the Golden Dream."

It's no wonder the Admiral of Blood's bounty is much higher than Vice Admiral Iceberg, reaching 42,000 pounds… In terms of strength, he should be a bit stronger… Klein immediately gained an understanding.

He maintained the same posture as before, seemingly unaffected by the intelligence regarding the Admiral of Blood.

"What about his subordinates?"

Danitz was long prepared as he immediately said, "Senor has ten of his strongest men under his command; the first, second, third mates of the flagship; and the captain of each ship…

"Steel Maveti is the second mate of the flagship. We think that he's a Sequence 6. His body is like steel and is able to withstand bullets and cannonballs. He isn't afraid of fire, drowning, and various magic. He's strong and fast. He can rip his opponent apart, and he grasps a certain level of undead-related spells. He can summon zombies and rear puppets…"

Zombie? Klein immediately thought of Maric who played cards with zombies.

Based on the Wraith traits of Admiral of Blood Senor, can it be assumed that these pirates are actually part of the outer circle of the Rose School of Thought, or perhaps they're from an organization used to make money? It's a pity that I don't have a messenger, nor did I ask Miss Sharron if she had one. Otherwise, I could contact her and confirm the Admiral of Blood's identity… Klein guessed with some regret.

He didn't give up just because this matter might involve the Rose School of Thought. In any case, he could change his face and identity afterwards. In addition, he had involved himself with the Aurora Order, the Demoness Sect, Rose Redemption, and Twilight Hermit Order, so he wasn't afraid of offending another entity.

Actually, it's not like I've never fought against the Rose School of Thought. I've already killed a Wraith, a Zombie, and a Wraith, and I've robbed the Scarlet Lunar Corona and Biological Poison Bottle… Klein suddenly realized how much trouble he had been involved in.

"It's unlikely that Maveti has any particularly powerful mystical items; otherwise, I might not have been able to escape before," Danitz said, feeling somewhat relieved at his luck. "He has a bunch of puppets and zombies by his side, as well as several subordinates at Sequence 7 or 8. As the second mate of the flagship, he should be the leader of the crew in the vicinity since he's here. We can consider hunting him first."

Below the high Sequences, once the number of Beyonders reaches a certain amount, a qualitative change will occur. With the combination of different abilities, it's possible for a group to defeat a Beyonder stronger than themselves. It's just like how a Nighthawks team can definitely take down a Sequence 6, or even a Sequence 5… Klein didn't underestimate Steel Maveti and his men just because he was stronger with Creeping Hunger. He was still as cautious as before.

I have to plan and prepare well. Well, the frequency bands and passcodes I received from White Shark will come in handy, and once Miss Magician's radio transceiver is delivered, I'll get Danitz to frequently monitor the frequency and see if we can glean any information, allowing me to go in quickly to reap the harvest… And I can take advantage of this period to explore the possibility of true acting… Soon, Klein formulated a plan as he continued to listen to Danitz tell him about the rest of Admiral of Blood's subordinates.

After a while, when Danitz was finally done, he summarized enthusiastically, "If Steel Maveti can be killed, leaving my name behind, this matter will definitely go on the papers. Once it's spread, I no longer need to worry about informing Captain!"

He was afraid that a traitor was among their ranks and that all the points of contact in the Rorsted Archipelago were under the enemy's control. Therefore, he didn't dare to rashly make contact. He was still vexed over the problem of alerting his captain.

He actually has a brain… Klein nodded and said, "You're in charge of gathering information on all aspects of Steel."

"Alright!" Danitz replied with a grim smile, thinking of the punch that had nearly pierced his heart in the evening.

Klein slowly stood up and walked towards the window. It was dark outside with howling winds and pouring rain. It looked as if the end of the world had arrived.

Thinking of what he was going to do next, he couldn't help but feel like he was acting in a certain sense. Smiling, he muttered to himself in a low voice, "Tonight, Gehrman joins the hunt."

†

City of Generosity, Bayam, in the Cathedral of Waves.

Alger Wilson, who had received the Sanguine's anesthetic gas, was about to sail out to sea for another of the Wind-blessed's main ingredients, when he was summoned by the local diocese bishop.

"There have been rumors recently that Vice Admiral Iceberg received Death's Key. All the pirates in the Sonia Sea are roused by this," the bishop said in a heavy voice. "Investigate this matter."

He was an old man with a head full of white hair, but he was still as energetic as ever. His speech was even faster than a young man's, as though he could charge out at any moment and personally resolve all problems.

His body was strong, his muscles bulging with his bishop's robe. The wind howled around him as he breathed, and the air was moist.

There are similar rumors every year, but they all end up being fake… Such rumors are commonly spread across the sea… Even if it’s true, I don’t have the right to be involved. There’s no need to take the risk. I’ll just go through the motions and skirt the edge of this matter… Alger muttered inwardly.

He solemnly clenched his fist and struck his left breast.

“Yes, Your Excellency!

“May the Storm be with you!”

Diocese Bishop Chogo was very pleased with Alger’s attitude and returned the same salute.

“May the Storm be with you!”

The encouraged Alger Wilson quickly left the cathedral and returned to the square outside.

The storm last night had subsided, and only the scattered leaves and water puddles on the ground remained as evidence of its coming.

After taking a breath of after-rain fresh air, Alger decided to visit the few places where pirates roamed. He planned to put on a show of working hard by trying to seek out information.

If he were to meet a fellow with a bounty of a few hundred pounds, he wouldn’t mind apprehending the poor bastard. In his opinion, they were liquid cash flow that could be added to his savings.

Chapter 521 - Bold Assumption

On the ocean, pirates had three iconic common interests—liquor, women, and gambling. Alger Wilson merely took out his silver pocket watch, flipped it open, and knew where he should go first.

At quarter past eleven, the brothels and bars hadn't opened. Only the gambling dens would have easily gathered a bunch of people who wanted to make a fortune.

Alger was more familiar with this port city than his tiny hometown. He proceeded without stopping at all while he navigated his way, smoothly turning at every corner until he arrived outside a casino that was located in a secluded alley.

According to what he knew, the owner of this casino was a gang leader with a deep background. He had an inexplicable but indistinct connection with the important figure at the governor-general's office. It was the first choice for many pirates to purchase and sell their stolen goods.

Because of this, pirates often appeared here. They might exchange their loot for gold pounds in the morning, but they would lose everything at night and get thrown out.

Alger pulled on his thick brown coat; pressed down his cap, a piece of fashion wear that came from the mainland; and pushed open the half-closed door. Under the watchful gaze of the bouncers, he entered the casino.

Casinos were prohibited within the Loen Kingdom. They could only be attached to bars as rooms, but in the kingdom's vast overseas colonies, not only were they legal, but they were also a mainstay industry. Among them, Bayam of the Rorsted Archipelago and Alethe of East Balam were the most famous in the area. Many tycoons would specially visit them from Backlund or Midseashire's coast for a big day of gambling.

Surveying the area, Alger saw a variety of card games, as well as dice-derived turntable games.

As it was still early, there weren't many gamblers, and Alger quickly "scanned" them all.

Suddenly, his eyes lit up, and he instantly recognized the identity of a disguised person.

He took off his hat, walked up to a Texas Poker table, and patted his target's shoulder. He bent down and whispered into the man's ear, "Blazing."

Danitz happened to be flipping the corner of his card with his right hand, so he almost jumped out of his skin from the slap and nearly sent a fireball towards the guy behind him.

After he had been attacked by Steel Maveti, he knew that he shouldn't seek out information with his true appearance, as he could be targeted by greedy pirates.

Although most pirates weren't strong and didn't register as a threat to Danitz, he still didn't want to reveal himself, lest it set back the plan of hunting Steel Maveti.

However, to his surprise, the disguise he took great effort to don was exposed just an hour after he left home.

He turned his head quickly to the side and glanced through the corner of his eye at the person who had "greeted" him.

When he saw the signature seaweed-like dark blue hair, Danitz relaxed a little and turned to observe if the other players had heard the greeting.

The gamblers were all carefully studying their hidden card, either folding or continuing, with none of them paying attention to what was happening over at his side.

“Why are you here?” Danitz asked casually.

He and Alger had met at the previous private meet, and he knew that the other party had a ghost ship and a dozen sailors. He was quite a powerful but unknown fellow.

According to Vice Admiral Iceberg’s judgment, if such a small and weak pirate crew was able to retain an ancient ghost ship, it meant that they were backed by a powerful faction. Perhaps they were members of the Church of Storms, or perhaps they were related to a particular Pirate King or secret organization. They usually disguised themselves as ordinary pirates and gathered information for who they were really loyal to. It was easy to wipe any traces of themselves clean at scheduled times, and at times, do things inconvenient for the power backing them. For example, silencing others or plundering certain special items.

There were quite a few pirate crews like this, and no one would particularly be bothered about such matters.

Alger pulled over a nearby chair and sat down. He tilted his head and asked in a low voice, “I heard that your captain obtained Death’s Key?”

Danitz snorted with a laugh.

“I thought you had a brain, but you’ve disappointed me.

“How can such a thing be so easily obtainable?

“We’ll definitely sell it if you want it and offer a decent price!

"How about it? Do you want to consider this deal?"

Alger casually said, "Perhaps it has other secrets. Maybe someone wants to deal with your captain."

"Who knows? Dogshit!" Annoyed by his new hand, Danitz cursed out loud.

Then, he suppressed his voice and said, "That thing doesn't seem like a creation made by humans. It might belong to the giants or devils."

"Creation? Your captain still insists on teaching language to all of you?" Alger asked with amusement.

The rumor was that Vice Admiral Iceberg was a woman who was very strict when it came to knowledge. She couldn't stand the sight of a bunch of illiterates under her command, so every day on the Golden Dream, there was a class of general knowledge and reading, and every day she forced the crew to take turns participating.

Wishing he could forget it, Danitz said, "It's much more difficult than fighting!

"Because of this, we're usually unable to recruit enough crew members. Every time we dock at the port to resupply, there will be people who resign…"

He didn't continue with the topic. Looking at the dealer, he said to himself, "Help me keep an eye out for Steel's whereabouts."

"Steel Maveti? Admiral of Blood's second mate?" Alger looked down at Blazing's left arm, which was slightly propped up with a splint, and asked, "Were you attacked?

"For the key?"

"His brain has already been eaten by his zombies!" Danitz stressed.

"You want to seek revenge on him?" Alger guessed from the other's tone and request.

“Hehe.” Danitz smiled without a reply, looking as though he was concentrating on his new hidden card.

Alger thought for a moment before saying, “The last time your captain appeared was seven days ago, near Sonia Island. This was confirmed by a telegram. The Golden Dream wouldn’t arrive in Bayam that quickly.

“Do you have a new helper? If it’s just you alone, then you aren’t a match for Steel even if he were alone. And as you know, he’s always attended to by a crowd.”

Towards Alger’s question, Danitz’s response was to throw out a chip.

“Call!”

“Who is it?” Alger first assumed that Danitz’s attitude was a tacit agreement. He pinned his hopes by asking since it was a riskless endeavor.

Danitz stared at the exposed cards and answered simply, “You wouldn’t know.”

I wouldn’t know? Someone who has the strength to deal with Steel Maveti should be someone with a little fame at sea regardless of if they’re a pirate or an adventurer… Unless they belong to a specific secret organization, or it’s their first time traveling the seas. Of course, it’s also possible that Danitz doesn’t wish to answer, for fear of exposing a secret. That’s most probable… Someone belonging to a particular organization, first time traveling the seas, with the strength to deal with Steel Maveti… Alger looked up slightly as he suddenly had a bold guess.

He tapped on the edge of the table and asked, as if he were chatting about the weather, “Was Bansy Harbor fun?”

He emphasized the word “fun.”

Danitz turned his head in surprise and blurted out, “How did you know?”

He believed that with the Church of Storms’s style, it was impossible for it to air dirty linen. Furthermore, the passengers of the White Agate had just arrived last night. The people who had witnessed the developments had all signed confidentiality agreements, so how could the news spread so quickly?

Alger smiled without answering.

At this moment, he understood the value of Emperor Roselle’s words: Boldly hypothesize and carefully verify!

Danitz put away his winnings and muttered, “It’s no big deal. There was a revival of some ancient customs that led to the fall of a Storm bishop.”

As expected… Alger chuckled and said, “I’ll help you keep an eye out for Steel.

“But how can I contact you?”

“Hmm… 15 Amyris Avenue is an unoccupied house. Write the information on a piece of paper and throw it in,” Danitz answered hesitantly.

Alger nodded and stood up while patting Blazing Danitz on the shoulder.

“Don’t forget my payment.”

He turned around and walked towards the door.

Watching the captain of the ghost ship depart, Danitz couldn’t help but grumble.

“This fellow isn’t bad.

“However, I have to leave this place too.”

He couldn't quite trust Alger. Perhaps in a few minutes, he might lead Steel Maveti and his pirates to rush over.

After leaving the casino, Alger, who was wearing a pair of local baggy pantaloons, strolled down the street. He entered a department store and found a counter. He smiled and took out a handful of bronze pennies.

"Give me a deck of tarot cards."

While he was waiting, he leisurely thought of a question:

What is the Blessed of Mr. The Fool doing at this time?

†

In Old John's Restaurant.

Klein watched as the waiter placed a plate of grilled fish in front of him. It was wrapped with something that looked like straw and covered with all sorts of spices, some of which he didn't recognize.

The strong aroma seeped into Klein's nose and greatly enhanced his salivation.

As expected of the Spice Archipelago… Klein was about to pick up his knife and fork when he saw the waiter place two things resembling tree branches on his plate.

Chopsticks? Klein was shocked.

Then he quickly locked on to the suspect: Roselle Gustav!

"This is the kind of cutlery you have to use when eating grilled stickleback. It's said that Emperor Roselle gained inspiration from the customs of the elves," the waiter introduced.

The customs of the elves? They are indeed a race that likes cooking and eating delicacies… Or rather, it’s purely an excuse Roselle came up with… Klein guessed, largely as a result of his understanding of that particular person’s character.

In the morning, he had gone to a few church hospitals in Bayam to provide hospice care for some dying people, to help them fulfill their wishes, and to engage in a deeper level of acting, but he had failed to find a suitable target.

This wasn’t to say that no one died in the hospital, but rather it was that they all had relatives who either accompanied them or had witnessed their deaths. There was no possibility of disguising himself as the deceased apart from giving people a fright.

I’ll head to the bar where adventurers gather. There should be many foreigners who might die in a dark corner like stray dogs in order to pursue wealth at sea, while their families might never hear of them again… Klein suppressed his thoughts and focused on his delicious food.

Chapter 522 - Colony

◆

The quality of sickleback's meat was certainly not as good as that of murloc meat, but the spices synergized to form clear layered flavors which Klein was rather delighted to have tasted. He just couldn't stop himself from eating after the first bite.

Actually, there are some local Beyonders who wish to leave this dangerous circle and lead a normal life. It's completely possible for them to head to Backlund and open a Rorsted-cuisine restaurant, selling grilled fish as their specialty. With the city's acceptance for many things, their business definitely wouldn't be bad. The only problem is that many spices aren't as cheap as they are here. The cost will be very high, and a location has to be chosen to cater to the target group… Klein put down his rather crude chopsticks and wiped his mouth with a napkin, letting his mind wander.

In his view, commoners were unable to find the means to get rich, mostly because they didn't have enough vision. However, one's vision was also limited by the education they received and their daily experiences. Bound by social class, it was really hard to escape from it and break through this limitation. The most effective way was to strive for a higher level of education, and the second was to take risks and head out on an adventure. Of course, the risk was huge, and many people vanished silently while taking this path.

Klein spent 2 soli and 5 pence for this meal, which wasn't cheap, but he had always been willing to spend money on good food. Besides, his main expenses had been paid for by Danitz recently.

Pulling at his collar, putting on his hat, and holding his black cane, he walked out of Old John's Restaurant, just in time to see a police officer driving a tramp out of the street.

The natives of the Rorsted Archipelago had darker skin than the people of the Southern Continent. It was close to the kind of bronze which was often a result of exposure to the sun. Their hair was mostly dark and naturally curled ever so slightly. They were quite different from the colonists from the Loen Kingdom.

It had been less than fifty years since the place had been completely colonized. At first, Loen had worked with the local kings and chieftains, under the name of the Central Sonia Company to extract economic benefits, but later, the management of the company quickly fell into corruption as they fought for power, even provoking the enemy for personal gain by starting a war. Even what was even more absurd was that they would report each other, claiming that their competitors had received bribes. With regards to this, they would find a Member of Parliament backing them. During parliamentary hearings, they would attack each other, something that nearly resulted in suits.[1]

The natives would never have imagined that the powerful figures, who could make their kings and chieftains bend over, kiss the soles of their shoes, and deliver carts and carts of gifts, were actually unimportant people who weren't even Members of Parliament in Backlund. Although most of them came from noble families, they were at the end of the line of any inheritance rights.

After that dispute, the King and the Prime Minister agreed to redeem the stock, shut down the Central Sonia Company, and to send their fleet and troops to take over the Rorsted Archipelago in full force, bringing them under true colonial rule.

At present, the archipelago was governed by the governor-general's office, Parliament, and the Courts. The upper echelons were all Loenese, and some of the middle-ranking personnel were Members of

Parliament and court magistrates who were descendants of the original kings and chieftains. As for the low-ranking positions, they were opened to the educated natives of the region. This included police officers below that of superintendents.

It was a native policeman who was driving off the tramp with a baton, and his target similarly was of distinct Rorsted descent.

As soon as the policeman saw Klein in his double-breasted frock coat, half top hat, and black, civilized cane, he immediately put away his baton, straightened up, held his feet together, and saluted.

“Good afternoon, sir.

“How may I help you?”

Klein felt mixed emotions as he gently nodded.

“Are there no carriages here?”

“According to the regulations of the governor-general’s office, carriages aren’t allowed to enter this street. You’ll have to walk to the street ahead,” the policeman explained with both fear and enthusiasm.

“Thank you.” Klein casually praised him, “You speak good Loenese.”

The policeman was so pleasantly surprised that he became excited.

“I think—I think that this is an essential quality that a good policeman should possess.”

He originally wanted to say that he felt that he too was Loenese, but he was afraid the gentleman across him would end up angry.

Klein secretly sighed and slowly walked to the corner of the street.

Along the way, he saw that the local style of clothing was very different from that of mainland cities such as Backlund and Tingen. It was even different from ports such as Damir and Bansy, which had been colonized for more than two hundred years.

A decent man from Loen, dressed in a formal suit, wearing a top hat and a tie, and holding onto a civilized cane. This made the people around him subservient, afraid to look him in the eye or touch him. The rest of the natives or mixed-bloods liked matching a thick jacket with baggy pants, along with a cap from the mainland. They didn't like black, and they preferred the colors: brown, tawny, and light gray. To Klein, this was indeed a little strange, but it also gave him a feeling of coming to a foreign country.

Of course, the natives of higher standing and those of mixed-blood also mimicked the dressing style of Loen, believing that this was a sign of civilization.

†

2 p.m., Swordfish Bar, an accepted gathering spot for adventurers.

There weren't many customers, so Klein easily made his way through the tables to the bar.

He discovered that what was different from the other places was that there were three blackboards on the side of the bar that were supported by wooden shelves. Sitting on them were yellowing notices in white, with a variety of content, strange and varied. Some were hiring bodyguards, some were seeking help in finding people, some were investigating the situation on a particular island, and some were offering a high reward for the head of a particular pirate, while others claimed that they had obtained a treasure map and wanted to form a team. In short, the affairs that had been divided up between the private detectives and security companies in the Loen Kingdom still belonged to the adventurers here.

“A glass of Zarhar.” Klein tapped the surface of the bar counter.

It was a local malt beer, cheap and tasty, with a unique taste. It was loved by adventurers, something Klein had learned from Blazing Danitz.

“Three pence.” The bartender casually glanced at the customer, not showing any change in his attitude because of the stranger’s unfamiliar face.

With a beer in hand, Klein sat in a high chair in front of the bar, sipping bit by bit as he quietly listened to the drinkers around him. Through their conversations, he searched for a worthy target.

After nearly an hour, when the number of people in the bar increased, Klein finally heard something that might be useful.

His spirit was jolted and he became increasingly focused.

There were four people sitting at the table less than three meters away from him. They were feeling sorry for a man named Wendt.

“I always thought Wendt was out at sea. I didn’t expect him to be at home. He’s very sick.”

“Sigh, if I had knocked on his door two days earlier, he wouldn’t have died. You don’t know how terrifying the room was. Mushrooms were growing on his body in huge swaths of white.”

“Dogshit!” Stop it! Can’t you see I’m eating sausages?”

“Yes, yes, yes. Wendt’s room was filled with bugs, moths, flies, butterflies, bees, and cockroaches. Holy Lord of Storms, I couldn’t believe this was a place where a human can live. Even the police who came later were stunned!”

†

As the conversation passed into his ears, Klein slightly frowned, feeling that Wendt’s death wasn’t normal. Within a few days of his death, his corpse was already filled with mushrooms, and insects were crawling all over the room.

Something Beyonder related? With such an anomaly, the police would definitely report the matter to the Mandated Punisher team… It sounds like it happened three or four days ago. The things that needed to be taken care of should've been dealt with already… Klein seriously considered whether he should pay a visit to take a look. At the very least, the man called Wendt was a lone adventurer in Bayam. None of his peers wished to help him transmit the news of his death.

After listening for a long time, he gained a rough idea of where the place Wendt rented was. It was at the nearby 47 Blackhorn Street.

Having finished drinking the last drop of the Zarhar beer, Klein put on his hat, left the bar, and headed for the apartment.

After entering the door, he half-closed his eyes and murmured to himself, "The room that recently had someone die in."

He repeated the statement seven times in a row, used his cane to quickly and easily arrive outside the room where Wendt used to live.

It hadn't been rented out yet, and the anomaly inside had already been dealt with. There seemed to be nothing wrong with it.

Klein put away the note he had used to open the door, locked the door behind him, and walked around carefully.

After confirming the situation, he took out extract, essential oils, herbs, powders, and special candles, and he quickly set up a spirit channeling ritual in front of the bed.

Although it had been several days, making it only possible for him to obtain the most superficial, disjointed, and remnant bits of information, Klein thought that it was better to have some than nothing.

Without a doubt, he prayed to himself and entered the space above the gray fog. He responded and gave himself the power to channel the spirit.

The flame of the candle suddenly soared, tinged with a ghostly blue as it swayed.

Klein only felt everything fall silent, as if he had entered a realm that didn't belong to reality.

His pupils were completely black, and even the whites of his eyes had been expelled.

He no longer needed to use the technique of dream divination. Having advanced to Faceless, with the help of the gray fog that made an initial entry into the real world, he was able to directly see the lingering spirituality of Wendt, a will that refused to dissipate.

There were three scenes. One was of a tall, thin, dark, curly-haired, sharp-featured Wendt coming to the body of a discarded corpse, astonished to see a glimmer from it before it condensed into a green gem filled with an aura of vitality. The second scene was of Wendt lying on his bed with his eyes closed, his mouth slightly open. His skin was covered with mushrooms of all kinds, the surrounding cockroaches and moths piled on top of each other, and on his chest, a silver necklace embedded with the same green gem from before. The third scene was of a pretty girl with flaxen-colored hair sitting at the edge of the sea with her eyes slightly moist. Lingering around her was Wendt's reluctant voice.

"Raine, I'm about to die. I'm really regretful, regretful that I never told you that I love you. I want you to marry me…"

The picture shattered, and the spirit channeling came to an end. Klein looked around and saw that the house was still dark and gloomy.

This fellow is truly unlucky… Klein shook his head and sighed.

He already had a rough idea of the cause of Wendt's death—his random act of picking up something.

The vast majority of Beyonders didn’t know about the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility, and they had never thought that the deceased of their kind would be able to release a characteristic that could become an ingredient. As this process was relatively slow, it was easy for them to be missed. Therefore, after killing a Beyonder, they would usually search the corpse and throw it away, making passersby like Wendt to luck out or some other creatures at the bottom of the sea or in the wilderness.

Wendt didn’t know that it was a Beyonder characteristic, and he had thought it to be a magical gem; thus, he made a necklace and kept it close to his body. Slowly, he was corrupted by the influence and died in agony.

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Author Note: This is what the British East India Company did in India. As expected of a bureaucratic empire, it has everything you need in this area. I nearly laughed myself to death when doing the research.

Chapter 523 - Cooperation

◈ ◈ ◈

By the time he left 47 Blackhorn Street, Klein had figured out Wendt's general situation.

He had disguised himself as a police officer and learned from Wendt's neighbors.

Symeem Island, the island at the farthest end of the Rorsted Archipelago. From Bayam, it'll take four to five hours to get there by liner, and there are only two trips a day, at 9 a.m. and 10 a.m., respectively. Wendt's parents are long dead and he has no relatives. The only person involved is a girl he just can't forget, Raine. She's the perfect target for my first performance of acting as someone else. But just thinking about how I need to confess on Wendt's behalf, it feels so awkward… If the girl agrees… Damn, how am I supposed to wrap things up… Klein thought with a troubled expression.

He tried to recall the novels he had read and the movies and TV dramas he had watched, hoping for the most perfect solution.

Soon, he had a general idea of what to do, stabilizing his mood in the process. His thoughts began to drift towards the matter regarding Steel Maveti.

I hope Miss Magician will get a radio transceiver as soon as possible… Klein sighed silently and got onto a rental carriage.

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Fors opened a letter Xio had brought back.

It came from the science fiction novelist, Aville, who was pleased to share with Ma'am Wall the future development and applications of radio technology.

Fors directly skipped over the beginning and middle content, her eyes sweeping over to the end.

He introduced three types, with detailed addresses and approximate prices. The most expensive is just twelve pounds. Fors nodded slightly, feeling that this wasn't a very important business transaction.

She suddenly felt her self-esteem was a little inflated. Perhaps because she had seen so many hundreds and thousands of pounds transactions in the Tarot Club, she no longer paid much notice to anything in the range of ten pounds.

Mr. World has the resources and finances. In the future, I might need to buy items from him or sell things I don't need. Yes, I'll just add postage, my transportation costs, and the price of the materials expended for the ritual to the original price… Fors made up her mind quickly, and she subconsciously looked out of the window.

Backlund was still gloomy and dark, with a light drizzle pattering down. However, the fog wasn't as thick as it was before.

I wonder when I'll receive the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch from The Sun… Fors couldn't wait to advance.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Having already prepared the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch and the materials Mr. Hanged Man wished to acquire, Derrick was in no hurry to sacrifice them to Mr. Fool.

He planned to wait a little longer, until the Chief was leading an expedition team or was presiding over a particular sacrificial ritual, before making an attempt.

This is the safest and most reliable way… Yes, be careful, be cautious! Derrick reminded himself before flipping open the "Giant King's Court—Book of Blackrock, Hand-copied Edition."

Recently, he had been reading this ancient tome. From it, he was able to understand some of the faces of the Giant King's Court from ancient times.

According to the ancient tome, it was a Court of God!!

Time seemed to have frozen there, as though it was suspended in eternal dusk. All the buildings were extremely grand and magnificent, even reaching into the clouds.

Humans who walked inside were exceptionally small, and they revered the owner of this scene from the bottom of their hearts.

†

Backlund, Hillston Borough, Waymandy's house.

After listening to an explanation, Emlyn White combed his hair with his hand and intentionally asked, "Lord Baron, I forgot where I heard it from, but there was a very famous city named the City of Silver during the Second Epoch or in the early half of the Third Epoch."

Waymandy was a vampire baron whose age exceeded 200 hundred years. He didn't look old, and he instead looked like a mature gentleman in his early thirties.

His black hair was neatly combed back, and he was wearing a dark red cotton shirt with a brown pipe in his hand. As he enjoyed the warmth of the fireplace, he said thoughtfully, “No, at least in my memory, there’s no City of Silver before the Cataclysm.”

Before Emlyn could even revel in his joy, Waymandy went on to say to himself, “But there was a Kingdom of Silver which was originally ruled by the Giant King’s Court and later came under its jurisdiction.”

Kingdom of Silver? Emlyn White thought for a while and said, “Lord Baron, is there anything more specific?”

Waymandy looked up at him, smiled, and said reminiscently, “The Kingdom of Silver had a rather special position in the Giant King’s Court. They didn’t directly believe in the Giant King, Aurmir, and instead, they believed in the Giant King’s Court’s queen, Omebella.”

†

City of Generosity, Bayam, dock area. Acid Lemon Street, Wind of Azure Inn.

Klein stood at the corner of the street, undid the topaz pendant on his left wrist, and divined to ensure that there was no danger ahead.

With that in mind, he strolled back to the inn, went up to the third floor, and opened the door of the luxurious suite.

He was slightly surprised to find Blazing Danitz already back, slumped in his reclining chair, drinking.

After a moment of consideration, Klein calmly asked, “What time is it?”

“Isn’t there a clock?” Danitz muttered.

He looked at the wall opposite him and read out the time.

“3:40 p.m.…”

Before he finished his sentence, Danitz suddenly came to his senses, sat up straight, and laughed dryly.

“I’ve already gone to the places I can get information from and asked the people I can ask. There’s no need to stay outside any longer. It will increase the risk of exposure and affect your hunting plan!”

Klein found a chair and sat down, and he expressionlessly said, “Tell me what happened.”

“What problems could there be? Although I’m mainly an adventurer who hunts treasure, I’m also a qualified part-time pirate.” Danitz felt that his abilities had been insulted.

After being swept by Gehrman Sparrow with a cold glance, he smiled and gave a brief overview of the places he went, the people he met, and the news he had heard from the morning and afternoon.

Hearing Danitz sigh that a captain of a ghost ship named Alger knew about Bansy Harbor, Klein suddenly wanted to frown.

With Mr. Hanged Man’s relationship with the Church of Storms, even before I controlled The World and actively mentioned it, he didn’t know about the anomaly at Bansy Harbor, so how could this Alger have known? Is he some powerhouse of higher standing in the Church of Storms who’s disguised as a pirate, or someone who has some sort of relationship with the heretics in Bansy Harbor? Hmm… Mr. Hanged Man has been active in the surrounding seas, so there’s a possibility that it’s him… Klein’s heart stirred as he recalled the characteristics of The Hanged Man.

Above the gray fog, although he couldn’t clearly see the other members’ appearances, it was still obvious as to whether they were men or women and what their hair color was!

Klein raised his hand to stop Danitz from speaking. He said in a low voice, “Very messy hair, dark blue in color?”

“You know him? That guy isn’t simple!” Danitz sighed.

As expected… Heh heh, I really didn’t expect to meet him so easily… Klein didn’t respond; instead, he leaned forward and said, “Continue.”

Without thinking too much into it, Danitz gave a general description of what happened afterward and explained himself.

“As you know, no one can be sure when they’ll get anything when trying to get information. After finding everyone who could be found, the only thing one can do is wait patiently. This will definitely take a while.”

“There’s another solution that doesn’t require waiting,” Klein deliberately said in a flat tone.

“What solution?” Danitz asked in surprise.

Klein nudged his gold-rimmed glasses, the corners of his mouth curving into a smile.

“Use bait.”

Bait? Danitz looked at him, momentarily puzzled.

In just a second, he had come to his senses.

Only he could be the bait!

As for fishing for the enemy, no one cared if the bait was actually swallowed or not. One only cared if the prey could be pulled out!

Simply put, “bait” was a highly risky species!

“Haha, that’s not a great solution. Yes, that’s what my intuition tells me. I should be able to gain something from the Red Theater. I’ll go over there to take a look!” Danitz took his coat as he eagerly rushed out the door.

Klein originally wanted to tail far behind Blazing and see if he could find any clues, but suddenly he heard layers of illusory prayers.

It came from a man.

Klein paused thoughtfully and turned into the washroom.

Ten seconds later, he appeared above the gray fog. He saw the crimson star that represented The Hanged Man constantly burgeoning and shrinking.

As expected… Klein sat down, leaned back in his chair, and emanated his spirituality.

The voice of The Hanged Man became clearer:

“Honorable Mr. Fool, I’m currently investigating a key related to Vice Admiral Iceberg. I met Blazing Danitz at a casino and learned that he was a witness at the anomaly in Bansy Harbor. I also learned that he plans to join forces with a powerful figure to deal with Steel Maveti.

“I suspect that Blazing Danitz is working with your Blessed, so I’ve prayed to you.

“If this is indeed the case, and if he wishes to receive a certain degree of assistance, I can be of some help.”

Mr. Hanged Man has indeed guessed Gehrman Sparrow’s identity… He likely only had his suspicions, but he successfully obtained verification by inquiring about Bansy Harbor from Danitz… This is also good. With the help of an experienced local, the plan to hunt Steel Maveti would be much smoother… Unless it directly affects The Fool, there’s no meaning for The Hanged Man to entrap a Blessed… Judging from his expression and attitude, he doesn’t have any suspicions towards The Fool yet… I didn’t leave any loopholes… Klein’s thoughts raced, and he quickly made his decision.

After making a divination, he conjured The World and covered the dummy with fog. He placed him in a praying stance and answered solemnly, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I am in need of some assistance.”

After finishing this scene, Klein threw the voice along with the scene into the crimson star symbolizing The Hanged Man.

Chapter 524 - Meeting

◆ ◆ ◆

5 p.m., Olive Tree Avenue, Pam's Divination Lodge.

Alger Wilson pushed open a brown wooden door with panes of glass situated above it, and he entered the cafe that had a mysticism theme.

He ordered a cup of Fermo coffee from the Paz Valley on the Star Highlands of the Southern Continent. He took out the tarot cards he had bought earlier and placed it beside him. The top card was The Hanged Man, depicting an angel hanging upside down with his hands tied behind his back.

Unlike this morning, he had changed into a dark, classical robe and wore a clergyman's biretta, like a warlock or magician from folklore.

After taking in a silent breath, Alger slowly sipped his coffee. He didn't show any anxiety from waiting.

After about five or six minutes, the thick brown wooden door opened again, and a young man in a black tweed coat and a half top hat came in.

The gentleman's appearance wasn't even thirty years of age. His face was thin and angular. He had both a mature and gloomy temperament. It was none other than Klein who had slightly modified his appearance and changed his persona.

He wasn't wearing gold-rimmed glasses, but his eyesight was unaffected. With a casual sweep with his eyes, his gaze landed on

Alger's dark blue sideburns.

Klein looked down and saw The Hanged Man card placed face up on the deck.

Without a word, he walked over, took off his hat, and sat down opposite Alger. He said with a grim smile, "I'd like to have a divination."

As he spoke, he had already taken in the appearance of the most senior member of the Tarot Club.

Deep facial features, rough outline, with a clear weathered look. It's obvious he was a person adept at fighting and is often outdoors.

His skin is bronze in color, but it differs from that of the natives. He's like the result of a pure Loenese being battered by the elements for years, but the dark blue hair is more peculiar, something that doesn't belong to Loen. It's closer to the colonists of Desi Bay who live in Berserk Sea region.

Mixed blood… Klein made his judgment.

Alger looked at the gentleman across him, slowly superimposing his image with that of The World. Then, he pushed out the tarot card and said in a low voice, "This requires you to shuffle and cut your own cards."

Klein reached out and picked them up, spreading them fully to take them in. Following that, he gathered them together and did a reshuffle.

He cut the cards continuously, took out three cards, and placed them in an arrangement of past, present, and future.

Klein slowly leaned back, but he turned over the middle tarot card with his right hand. It showed a naked woman wearing only a purple silk scarf, surrounded by a green wreath like a door.

[image]

This was The World, numbered 21. Number 22 returned to 0, symbolizing The Fool.

“How should I interpret this?” Klein asked deliberately.

Although The Hanged Man hadn’t explicitly mentioned that The World was the Blessed of The Fool, Klein didn’t think it was necessary to hope otherwise. He felt that being honest about it aided in establishing his image—if Alger hadn’t guessed it, then it was an act of being open and confident. If Alger already knew about the matter, it would make The World appear at ease, as if everything was within his grasp.

H-he knows I know? He already believes that I’ve guessed it before raising the topic above the gray fog? Impressive… Alger’s heart skipped a beat as he replied at a moderate pace, “It’s inverted. It means that things will fail due to a lack of preparation.”

“What kind of preparations are needed?” Klein thoughtfully nodded and asked.

Alger took back all the tarot cards apart from The World and skillfully reshuffled and cut the cards.

Then, he flipped open the top card.

It was The Hierophant!

Alger’s voice remained deep and low.

“You need advice. You need the help of faith and religion to avoid going down the wrong path.”

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he followed the sequence and turned over the second card. On it was The Moon which overlooked the land.

“You will be confused, you will be exhausted, and you will be wandering in your dreams, but this is only temporary.”

Next, Alger handed over a third tarot card; it was The Sun.

“Everything shall pass, and the light will shine upon the land,” he spoke like a charlatan.

Klein remained silent for a few seconds, then seemingly asked for confirmation, “Church, dream, sun?”

A hint of a smile spread across Alger’s face. He nodded slightly and said, “That’s right.”

He had hidden hints for the follow-up plan during the tarot divination.

In fact, in a situation where he had no skin in the matter and wasn’t even noticed, there was no need to be so tactful. He could’ve described things in detail directly, but Alger felt that he still needed to test out a Blessed like The World. He wanted to know if he was smart enough, rather than relying on his strength.

If their intelligence were on the same level, Alger felt that they could cooperate more in the future. There was no need to talk too much between smart people; on the contrary, he would try to not involve The World in his own affairs. He would only ask for help when he needed a helper, unless Mr. Fool had other orders.

Now, The World’s response and previous performances had confirmed that he was sly, vicious, and experienced.

Heh, I’m a tarot card expert… On such matters, Mr. Hanged Man, you’re just a rookie… Klein secretly laughed, belittling him inwardly.

The message hidden in The Hanged Man’s interpretation was very simple. The Hierophant meant that he wanted to inform the Church of Storms about Blazing Danitz and Steel Maveti, and then use the power of the Mandated Punishers to divide the enemy and reap the benefits.

This was something Klein often used, so there was no difficulty in understanding.

The Moon and The Sun cards which followed were a reminder and warning from The Hanged Man.

Since the Mandated Punishers were involved, a certain amount of caution had to be taken. According to Alger's experience, his colleagues in Bayam would definitely use a Sealed Artifact that could force many people within its range to fall into a dream, when dealing with similar issues. Maveti's characteristic meant that there had to be a specific item in the Sun domain which targeted him.

I'm immune to dreams, so I'm not afraid of the Sun… Klein reached out his hand and half-turned the inverted The World card, turning it into its proper position, meaning that this plan was feasible and that he would make preparations.

Alger raised his head and took a deep breath.

"The master here specializes in aromatherapy. She can use the fragrances of different essential oils, extract, incense, and flower essence to treat corresponding emotional problems and pacify the restless mind. Do you want to try it?"

Using the contact point at Amyris Avenue? Klein smiled in response.

"Okay."

The two of them looked at each other as they remained motionless. They stopped talking about the aromatherapy anymore as both of them already had everything laid out.

Klein didn't stay any longer than necessary. He took out his pocket watch, looked at it, and slowly stood up.

Alger wiped away his smile, pressed his hand to his chest, and slightly bowed.

"Let us praise God. All divination outcomes come from 'His' revelation."

Oh, you even know how to express your loyalty… Klein tried to hold back his laughter as he replied seriously, imitating Alger, “Let us praise God.”

He took two steps away, then suddenly stopped and looked back at Alger, chuckling as he put on his hat.

“Frankly, you aren’t suitable for that type of attire.”

Ah? Alger couldn’t keep up with Mr. World’s train of thought.

When Klein had left the themed coffee shop, Alger retracted his gaze and looked at the mirror in the corner and took a good look at himself.

Initially, he didn’t think there was anything wrong wearing that. However, after The World’s remark, he found it more inconsistent the more he looked at himself. Finally, he understood why he had said that.

A fellow, who looked boorish and hardened, one appearing capable of summoning a hundred sailors at any time to beat up his opponent or bringing out an axe and chopping them into pieces, really shouldn’t be wearing such a mysterious classical warlock robe. It made his bearing somewhat abnormal.

†

Cathedral of Waves.

Alger, who had changed back into his original clothes, kept a low profile and followed the worshipers into the hall. He took advantage of the act of making a confession in order to meet the bishop, Chogo, through the priest in charge.

After saluting, he went straight to the point.

“I met Blazing Danitz, who claims that the key that Vice Admiral Iceberg possesses has nothing to do with Death’s treasure and that they are even willing to sell it.

“He entrusted me with a mission to take note of Steel Maveti’s whereabouts. Apparently, he was injured by this second mate of the Admiral of Blood, and is in a rush to escape from his pursuit.

“Your Excellency, I wish to leak this news, making Steel Maveti and his subordinates successful in cornering Blazing Danitz. And I wish to use this opportunity to capture them all or execute them on the spot.

“This will be able to effectively keep the arrogance of the pirates in check.”

Chogo revealed a look of approbation.

“Very good. The way you do things is better than I expected.”

Alger replied with a look of humility, “This all stems from the Lord’s guidance, and also from your teachings.

“In the evening, I’ll find a suitable target to leak this news to. If I come to pray again, it will indicate that Steel Maveti temporarily isn’t taking action. If I do not appear, it means that I might be restrained by him or his subordinates to prevent any news from leaking. This means that they have fallen for the trap.”

After giving details of the location and other matters, Alger returned to the confessional and left as usual.

†

7:15 p.m., Amyris Leaf Bar.

Alger, wearing a pair of baggy pants and a head towel wrapped around his dark blue hair, stood by a boxing ring and held a glass of Lanti Proof in his hand. With a mocking expression on his face, he looked at the two contestants with bruises all over.

Soon, he noticed his target had entered the room and was heading straight for the bar counter.

After a while, he sat down next to the thin man and said with a chuckle, “I heard that Steel has arrived in Bayam.”

The man tilted his head in alarm and replied with a fake smile, “Why don’t I know about it?”

“Is that so? It looks like Blazing fooled me!” Alger smacked the bar counter and drank a mouthful of alcohol.

“Blazing… Danitz?” the man’s eyes lit up as he asked hesitantly.

“Yes, that’s him!” Alger gritted his teeth. “I met him this morning at the Gold Coin Casino. This damned fellow claimed that Steel was in Bayam. Pui! How dare he lie to me!”

The swarthy, thin man’s eyes darted around without interrupting.

He finished listening quietly, stood up, and chuckled.

“I forgot that I have something to do. We should have a game of cards another time.”

He patted Alger on the shoulder and in a seemingly unhurried manner, left the bar in a hurry.

Alger held a glass of alcohol, half-turning to look at his back. His eyes appeared deep and gloomy, and there were no signs of a smile at the corners of his mouth.

Chapter 525 - The Calm Squall

◆

Looking up at the wall clock and seeing that it was past eight o’clock, Alger put down his glass mug of alcohol and pushed his way through the drunkards into the street.

As the Rorsted Archipelago was rich in coal, Bayam was like the mainland cities of Backlund and Pritz Harbor. Its streets were lined with tall black lamp posts, and the light of the burning gas effused through the metal grille, illuminating the relatively clean streets.

Alger pulled off his headscarf and slowly turned into a side alley. At a dead-end in the alley, he could smell the scent of urine mixed with alcohol. Although the Amyris Leaf Bar had a bathroom, it clearly wasn’t enough for the customers during peak periods. Some of the drunks who couldn’t hold it in could only find a secluded place to relieve themselves.

The red moonlight penetrated the clouds and shone into the alley. While Alger was still considering whether he should put on a more convincing act, a firm and pervading voice came from behind him.

“Did you purposely leak the information about Blazing to us?”

He’s not stupid… Alger muttered to himself as he slowly turned around, as though preparing for a surprise attack.

Seven or eight steps away, he saw a figure leaning against the wall.

The figure was about 1.78 meters in height, and it wore a boat-shaped hat. Its face was thin and sharp, and it wore a look of aggression.

He had a lock of black hair hanging down, half obscuring the dark green eyes on his left side, which softened his own coldness.

Even though there was often quite a difference between a wanted poster and the person in question, many famous pirates didn't even don disguises as they wandered the city. As an insider of the Church, Alger had seen many almost photographic portraits drawn with rituals and had participated in pirate conventions. He was still able to successfully link the person in front of him to a name on the bounty notices.

He didn't express this point and deliberately hesitated before asking, "Calm Squall?"

He was the chief helper of Steel Maviti, a Beyonder who was good at controlling his emotions and thinking calmly, but he was also inhumane and had a 1,500 pounds reward offered for him. The man pulled at his black trench coat and revealed an empty smile.

"Can I deny that?

"Well… probably not, just like how you can't deny that you deliberately mentioned Blazing to Oamaru. He's not someone who enjoys using his brain, the complete opposite of me."

"I've never thought of lying. I only wish to obtain some payment for the news you received from me. Between Blazing, who's alone, and Steel, who has so many helpers, anyone with a brain would know which to choose. Of course, I wish that you keep it a secret. I don't want to be pursued by Vice Admiral Iceberg," Alger replied frankly.

Squall nodded his head leisurely and said, "Tell me the specifics."

"Just like I mentioned before. I bumped into and recognized Blazing at the Gold Coin Casino. He entrusted me to take note of Steel's whereabouts. Heh heh, it seems like he wishes to launch a counterattack," Alger said with a scoff. "We agreed upon a point of contact. I believe this is intelligence worth at least 1,000 pounds."

"1,000 pounds? Look up at the crimson moon. Are you dreaming!?" Squall scoffed. "This might be a trap. Don't you understand that? Blazing might very well have found helpers, which is why he dares to seek us out."

"It's not for me to judge whether it's a trap or not. 500 pounds. Less than that, and I'd rather pretend that nothing has happened." Alger attempted to argue on the basis of reason for the reward.

"300 pounds. You have to follow me somewhere and stay there for some time. It's to prevent you from selling this piece of news to others and spoiling our plans. We'll pay you when we capture Blazing with the intelligence you provided or have his spirit channeled. Don't worry. Food, alcohol, and a bed will all be free. Regardless, you lucked out! If there are any accidents that had resulted from you, hehe. I believe you'll know the outcome," Squall suggested with a tone which didn't allow for refusal.

Sure enough, just as I expected, with my background being unknown, and with me not being too dangerous, the possibility of them choosing temporary detention is much higher than silencing me… However, I've also made preparations for a worst-case scenario. As long as I'm not too careless, escaping isn't a problem… Alger deliberately acted like he was in a dilemma as he said, "No more than two days, or my crew will leave with my ship."

"I'll inform them if it exceeds two days." At some point in time, a sharp scalpel had appeared in Squall's palm, and he was making it jump and spin like an acrobat.

After Alger described in detail the point of contact at 15 Amyris Avenue and the corresponding communication methods, Squall didn't speak further. He turned around and led Alger as they turned at every corner, and they arrived at an unknown street before entering a nondescript house.

"Long time no see, blue-haired captain of a ghost ship." The door was opened by an old man with hair that had more white than black. He was dressed as a local and wore a pair of baggy pantaloons.

"Old Quinn. You really are the intelligence officer of the Admiral of Blood…" Alger deliberately said in astonishment.

Old Quinn chuckled and said, "There's always some truth to rumors. What you imagine to be fake might very well be real."

He didn't switch on the gas wall light, but he carried a silver candle lamp in his hand as he guided Alger and Squall through the dark hall into a spacious, windowless basement.

"You'll stay here for a while. My friends and I will be in charge of watching you and also provide you with alcohol and food," Old Quinn said with a laugh. "To show our sincerity, we're not going to disarm you."

"Alright." Alger took the initiative to walk to the low bed in the basement.

Old Quinn closed the heavy stone door and locked it behind him.

Squall didn't linger on, but hurried away, checking repeatedly to see if he was being followed.

After changing to a rental carriage, he came to a Loen enclave in Bayam. It was also the residential area of the upper class.

As he entered a garden bungalow, Squall saw Maveti sitting on a sofa in the living room, waiting for him. The others were either lying, standing, or sitting in a semicircle, with puppets and zombies acting as guards around them.

Steel's lips were thick, his skin swarthy. His hair was curled up like steel balls often seen in factories.

“Is the intel reliable?” The muscles on his arms trembled, exuding vibes of tremendous strength. However, his entire being emanated a cold and sinister feeling, as if he wasn’t a living creature.

Squall nodded.

“He’s a pirate captain who serves money. I’ve already detained him at Old Quinn’s place. If there really is a problem, he definitely won’t be able to leave that place alive. I think he knows this very well.”

At this point, Squall revealed a cold smile.

“However, we still have to be wary of any accidents. This might be a trap set up by Blazing.”

“Do you have any ideas?” Maveti asked directly.

The first thing he saw was a pirate lying on a couch. He was wearing a brown local tunic and twirling a yellowish-brown straw hat with his fingers.

This was Maveti’s deputy of this round of operations. He was the captain of the sixth ship which was lost in the battle with Vice Admiral Dusk, “Blood Brambles” Hendry. He had a bounty of 3,800 pounds.

“It’s clear that Squall has a plan.” Hendry used his straw hat to cover his pale face.

Squall chuckled and said, “Didn’t that adventurer, John Smith, send Mordor to join us undercover? Let’s deliberately leak the news to him, making him think that we’re still waiting for help and that we can only take action the day after tomorrow or three days later.

“Those bunch of greedy adventurers definitely wouldn’t let Blazing off. They’ll definitely fall over themselves for him. When the time comes, we can find a spot to watch the show. If there are any accidents, they’ll be the ones bearing the brunt of things. If everything is successful, we can also cull them!”

“Alright.” Steel Maveti’s eyeballs slightly moved, radiating intense bloodthirst.

†

In the early hours of the morning, everything was ready.

Blood Brambles Hendry brought a leather suitcase over, took out a peacock-blue carpet, and slowly spread it out in front of him. There were many mysterious patterns on it that had a nonhuman flavor to it.

Maveti, Squall, and two other Beyonders, as well as eight zombies and puppets, took their places on it.

Hendry was the last to step in. Closing his eyes halfway, he recited a single word in Elvish, “Flight!”

The peacock-blue carpet tightened suddenly and floated upwards, lifting everyone up from the ground and into the air as they flew towards Amyris Avenue.

During this process, Hendry pulled out a black handkerchief and shook his wrist, turning it into the night sky which magically covered all their traces under the moonlight.

In about seven to eight minutes, they arrived in the area around 20 Amyris Avenue. Diagonally across them was the targeted house.

They didn’t move forward. Instead, they let the Flying Carpet hover silently in front of the crown of a thick tree as they lay prone to observe the situation.

Time passed, second by second, as Hendry steadied the mystical item. There were no signs of a lack of spirituality.

The night slowly passed, and the horizon was suffused with a faint red glow. The sun was about to rise, and the gang of pirates led by Steel Maveti began their preparations to find another suitable spot for daytime surveillance.

At this moment, a figure nimbly moved across the rooftops with his back bent, arriving above 15 Amyris Avenue.

He wore a black cloak, his eyebrows yellow, and eyes dark blue. His facial features and contours were relatively soft. It was none other than Blazing Danitz!

Danitz looked around cautiously for a moment, then climbed up the raised chimney, pushed his hand through it, and slid down.

He's really here? Steel Maveti, Blood Brambles Hendry, Squall, and company felt their spirits lift at the same time.

At this moment, several figures sprang up from the chimneys and periphery of Units 13, 14, and 17. They rushed over with fast and potent stances, either breaking the windows, kicking open the doors, or using the chimney to rush into Unit 15 from different positions.

Chapter 526 - Dream of Eternity

◆ ◆ ◆

The Rorsted Archipelago was the Loen Kingdom's governing branch in Central Sonia Sea. Similarly, it was a key diocese of the Church of Storms. It had a high-ranking deacon, who was part of the Council of Cardinals, permanently stationed here.

Of course, even a pirate at the level of admiral might not be able to stir such a powerful figure into action, much less when it dealt with a second mate and boatswain. As a result, it was left to Deacon Cordoba Roye who happily accepted the order and led two Mandated Punisher teams to activate Sealed Artifacts 2-37 and 2-166. They lay in ambush at a distance from 15 Amyris Avenue in order to be absolutely safe.

From Cordoba Roye's perspective, a team of Mandated Punishers with two Sealed Artifacts was enough to deal with the group of pirates consisting of Steel and Blazing Danitz, but the latter's intention of keeping an eye of his pursuers' whereabouts caused him to worry. Instinctively, he felt that there was a problem, so he called for an additional team of Mandated Punishers.

Actually, just having 2-37 is sufficient… While they waited, Cordoba Roye suddenly sighed.

In his opinion, this Sealed Artifact would be the nightmare of Steel, Blazing, and company.

He closed his eyes and the corresponding information appeared in his mind.

“Number: 37.

“Name: Dream of Eternity.

“Danger Grade: 2. Dangerous. It has to be used with care and moderation. It can only be applied for operations that require three or more people, a deacon, or diocese bishop.

“Security classification: Bishop, Team Captain, and above.

“Sealing Method: Place in boiling water.

“Description: It has the appearance of a heart. It’s black in color, feels ice-cold to the touch, and is filled with holes, often making a sound like a flute.

“This item originates from a primitive tribe in West Balam of the Southern Continent. They have spirit warlocks as their leaders and are nocturnal.

“A Loen army company conquered the tribe, received the object they revered on the altar, and in the week that followed, there were cases of soldiers acting abnormally, going mad, committing suicide, and so on.

“Research shows that as long as one comes into contact with this item, they will enter a long dream. If not woken up by someone else, one will forever remain in that illusory world. On the surface, they would appear frustrated, fearful, and confused. One’s mental and biological states will gradually change.

“The researchers who were awakened were still unable to tell the difference between reality and dreams for a long time, which led to a series of tragic events, including, but not limited to, expressing love to their superiors, kissing the mouth of a venomous snake, suffering from depression, undressing and running naked, and attempting to bathe in boiling water… If they weren’t transferred to another city, the only possible outcomes would be madness and suicide.

“This item can be used, causing all creatures within the target’s surroundings to fall into the same dream… The user can choose the target to a certain extent and excluded companions… The effective radius is a maximum of fifty meters. Beyond that would burden the user tremendously, dealing severe mental damage… The user will enter a state of being unable to distinguish reality from dreams after the matter, and will have to leave the city where 2-37 is located for any chance of recovery.

“Many examples (see Appendix) show that even without contact, this item can affect the surrounding population greatly unless it’s placed in boiling water…

“Appendix: 1. It is similar to the effects of a Nightmare from the Evernight pathway, but it’s more prominent and uncontrollable.

“2. Example 1: A Keeper once forgot to add charcoal, causing the fire to go out and the temperature of the boiling water to drop. He soon had an abnormal reaction, and he was suspected to be dreaming of a beloved girl of his. He began to make a passionate confession to his glove, and tried to engage in relation beyond that of friendship with it;

“Example 2…”

As his thoughts churned, Cordoba Roye suddenly saw Blazing Danitz, the Golden Dream’s fourth boatswain, come to this point of contact to collect information.

He gestured with his hand, signaling the Mandated Punishers to open the golden box engraved with numerous symbols and magic labels before taking out Sealed Artifact 2-37 which was soaked in boiling water.

The golden box contained another Sealed Artifact, 2-166.

It could maintain the original temperatures of the objects inside, and to a certain extent, it could change the weather, producing Sun Holy

Water rain.

Of course, it also had very negative effects; otherwise, the Mandated Punishers would've long used it to seal 2-37 instead of using it as a temporary trick. The most unacceptable negative effect was that no matter what object remained in prolonged contact with it, it would become infected with the characteristics of life, and it would also piously believe in the Eternal Blazing Sun. Within the Mandated Punishers, a table had already appeared that sang praises of the Eternal Blazing Sun every day, and there was a candle that wished to light itself every second to purify everything.

In response, the irascible Mandated Punishers had turned the table into a pile of firewood, and they had lit it using the aforementioned candle.

Seeing figures appear one by one and dashing towards 15 Amyris Avenue, Cordoba Roye didn't hesitate to press his right hand down, ordering the team member beside him to activate Sealed Artifact 2-37.

An illusory fish scale immediately appeared on the surface of that member's palm, and he directly grabbed the Sealed Artifact that resembled a pitch-black heart, out of the boiling water.

The melodious sound of a flute rang out, and dense darkness enveloped the house at 15 Amyris Avenue.

The scene before Adventurer John Smith remained the same. It was still the bare, unfurnished living room and the black-cloaked Blazing Danitz. He didn't appear like he was in a dream.

They ran over with all their might, fired, and used their own abilities to successfully injure Blazing and capture the famous pirate who had a bounty of 3,000 pounds and was involved with the Key to Death.

However, in the real world, they were sitting with their legs up, or swimming with their arms outstretched, or using their fingers as guns, with their mouths making shooting sounds.

“Move out!” Cordoba Roye left his hiding place and rushed to the house at 15 Amyris Avenue. The other Mandated Punisher team members were divided into two groups and began encircling the house from different positions.

Before Cordoba arrived, the living room was already brightly lit, as if the sun was rising. Holy pure water dripped down like rain. It none other than Sealed Artifact 2-166 being put to use.

At a distance away, the Flying Carpet floated silently in the darkness. As soon as Steel Maveti and the others saw the Mandated Punishers appear, they immediately understood that this was indeed a trap set by Blazing Danitz.

“This son of a b*tch, he actually defected to the Church of Storms!” Maveti growled as mania flashed in his eyes.

Blood Brambles Hendry looked at Calm Squall and sincerely praised him, “Fortunately, we weren’t careless.”

“In fact, I didn’t expect a foolish donkey like Blazing Danitz to cooperate with the Church of Storms,” Squall said calmly. “Perhaps, the injured him was already captured by the Mandated Punishers, and he had no choice but to cooperate with them.”

Just as they were about to leave, they saw something protruding from the shadows outside the house at 15 Amyris Avenue. Something was sticking to the ground and quickly moving away.

“Blazing!” Steel Maveti recalled the scenes of his failed ambush.

“Danitz!” Hendry also recognized the man who had tried to escape with his magical powers.

Squall was taken aback for a moment before coming to a realization.

“Either Blazing Danitz wishes to use this opportunity to escape the Mandated Punisher’s control, or he has other traps to use against us;

however, for some reason, the Mandated Punishers were attracted, so he had no choice but to give up and flee."

"Regardless, this is an opportunity!" Blood Brambles Hendry glanced at the Mandated Punishers who had stormed the house. "As long as we seize this minute, we'll be able to kill and take away Blazing under the noses of the Mandated Punishers!"

Steel Maveti's hopes were momentarily raised as his eyes revealed an abnormal look of mania.

After Squall nodded, he said to the other two Beyonders, "Take my zombies and puppets and guard this position. Once the Mandated Punishers are here, use them to create chaos and take the opportunity to escape!"

"Yes, Boss." The two Beyonder pirates jumped off the Flying Carpet at the same time with the zombies and puppets.

The peacock-blue carpet made a turn and shot ahead of Blazing.

"Provide us support. Mainly be on guard against the surroundings. I'm worried that Danitz has other helpers," Squall seized the moment and said to the Blood Brambles Hendry.

A smile appeared on Hendry's pale face.

"Alright!"

Without saying anything else, Squall nodded at Steel Maveti.

Relying on his advantage from being high in the sky, Maveti was able to distinguish the mostly normal shadows, determining the direction of the target.

He suddenly jumped off the Flying Carpet and landed heavily on the ground like a giant boulder. White frost condensed under his feet as a layer of cold and transparent ice quickly spread to the side.

The black shadow was immediately frozen in the corner!

With a crack, Blazing Danitz struggled to break free, “growing” out of the shadows.

On the Flying Carpet, Hendry showed their good teamwork by dropping what he had long held in his hand. They were green leaves, flowers, and brambles.

The leaves, petals, and brambles wildly grew in size or joined together, ensnaring Blazing Danitz, making him immobile.

Squall took the opportunity to jump off the Flying Carpet and thrust a sharp scalpel in his right palm towards Danitz’s neck.

Splat!

He held onto the handle of the scalpel with his right hand and circled around to the back of the target.

Danitz’s head fell off and his body quickly shrank, turning into a thin, tattered paper figurine.

At the same time, Steel Maveti felt an indescribable sense of hunger bearing down on him. It was like a terrifying monster hidden in the darkness, quietly watching him.

No, it’s not Blazing! Just as this thought flashed through his mind, an extremely compressed, incandescent fireball flew over from one of the rooftops, smashing towards his body.

Steel Maveti only made one movement, and that was to raise his arm in front of his body.

Boom!

The flames exploded and a shockwave radiated in all directions, blocking Squall’s and Hendry’s line of sight. However, they weren’t flustered at all, as they had the utmost confidence in Steel.

Sure enough, Maveti only suffered from having his clothes torn and his skin covered in white marks. Apart from that, he hadn't suffered any injuries at all.

But at that moment, he suddenly saw a figure walking out of the roiling flames in the sky. It was clearly a black cloak belonging to Blazing Danitz, but it had neatly combed black hair, dark, emotionless eyes, and a thin, cold face.

The Danitz from before had always been Faceless Klein, Gehrman Sparrow, who had always been prepared for the hunt!

Chapter 527 - A Quick Battle

◆

Just as he leaped out of the flames, the two points of light in the eyes of Klein, who wore golden gloves on his left hand, enlarged in size and changed from dark to bright, as if they were lightning that suddenly cut across the sky.

After distracting Steel Maveti and company's attention with Paper Figurine Substitutes, he had activated Creeping Hunger and switched to the Interrogator's soul. He planned on using the Psychic Piercing Beyonder power.

"Ah!"

Steel Maveti suddenly cried out miserably. It was as if someone had stabbed a knife into his head, stirring his grayish-white brain. A feeling of pain came from the depths of his soul, instantly occupying his mind.

At the same time, his Beyonder powers erupted from the irritation and turned into a hurricane that spread out in all directions.

Suddenly, beautiful snowflakes began to fall from the sky. Layers of translucent ice began spreading outwards, and the trees on both sides of the road were covered with white edges. They withered quickly, revealing traces of decay.

The lingering resentment of the remnant spirits was successively awakened. They sobbed, wailed, and shrieked, causing the nearby area to be dyed with a gray and repressed color.

Klein naturally descended from the sky, his left glove shining like the sun.

He opened his arms and leaned back as if embracing something.

Just as his heels touched the cold ground, a pure, blazing, thick pillar of light descended from above.

This holy radiance enveloped Steel Maveti, illuminating his dark skin, firm muscles, and steel ball-like curly hair.

Priest of Light, Light of Holiness!

Without a sound, Maveti's expression became even more twisted, and his skin began to show signs of melting.

At this moment, he was like a candle that had been thrown into a burning fireplace.

Compared to the corrupted Bishop Millet, as a Zombie, he was weaker towards such attacks. The damage he took was even more serious!

The snowflakes stopped falling, and the ice on the ground quickly melted. The trees that had white edges revealed their brown colors.

There was no doubt that the powerful beam of light had caught the attention of Blood Brambles Hendry and Squall. The former's expression changed as he reached into his secret pocket and pulled out materials casting magic. He planned to use his terrain advantage to save Steel Maveti.

At this moment, a raven made purely out of flames suddenly appeared before his eyes.

One, two, three… Countless Fire Ravens filled Hendry's field of vision like crimson stars. They flew over from all directions, flapping their wings in a dense, scorching-hot formation.

Hendry's heart skipped a beat as his gaze seemed to freeze. He immediately moved his hand elsewhere to grab another type of material.

Whoosh!

He scattered light-blue powder on his body while he chanted in ancient Hermes, “Sea Waves!”

The powder suddenly expanded and turned into dark blue waves that spread out in all directions.

When they met the Fire Ravens, they made sizzling sounds and created a large amount of white fog.

The fire wave from the previous explosion had subsided a little. Through the remnants of the crimson light, Squall saw that Steel Maveti’s skin was melting like wax and his flesh melted inch by inch. He saw the unfamiliar man in a black cloak standing next to him.

He didn’t panic. Like a cold-blooded viper who had lost its emotions, he calmly raised his arms and abruptly pressed both his palms down.

In a split-second, he saw the thin, grim-faced young man’s body sink. His movements had turned slow, as though the wings he used for flying had been snapped. As for Steel Maveti, he began to struggle and roll in order to avoid a second round of Light of Holiness.

Immediately following that, Squall noticed that the man had lost his weight and thickness. Once again, he turned into a thin paper figurine, pressed to the ground by an invisible force before soaking into the mud that came as a result of the melting ice.

Klein phased into existence from another position. He rubbed his right thumb and middle finger together and snapped his fingers three times as he rushed forward.

Pa! Pa! Pa!

The Sunbird-shaped dark golden brooch in front of him flashed continuously as it added a purifying element to his Air Bullets.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The three bullets connected at an extremely fast speed and hit the slow-moving Steel Maveti in his right chest, penetrating his half-melted skin and flesh, creating an exaggerated, gruesome wound. Golden flames spread in all directions.

Sou! Sou! Sou! Squall tossed out scalpels after scalpels, but they were all dodged by Klein's deft, acrobatic maneuvers.

At that moment, Steel Maveti had gotten a breather. With a push of his palm, he stood up once again and charged straight at the enemy, fully displaying his advantage in close combat, as well as his abnormally strong body that could withstand powerful blows.

Ice formed under his feet again, and his fists effused a rotting aura.

Then, once again, he saw two bolts of lightning shoot out from Klein's dark brown eyes, shooting into his own.

Steel Maveti subconsciously raised his head and clenched his teeth. His nose, mouth, and ears were all leaking blood, adding to his previously melted skin.

While shooting the Air Bullets, Klein had changed the soul he used for Grazing.

It was still Interrogator, and it was still Psychic Piercing!

Against a Beyonder like a Zombie which had a body as tough as steel, dealing damage to the Spirit Body was far more effective!

While the repeated strikes made Steel Maveti's body stiffen for short periods of time, he lost the shackles of his reasoning. Black, firm hair grew from his face, one strand at a time, while his teeth and nails also constantly grew longer. His skin squirmed in a bid to coalesce, turning from black to white. He was like a real, crazy zombie who was thirsting for blood!

Klein took this opportunity to close in. He bent his body and brushed past Steel Maveti's shoulder. He then stuffed the item in his hand into the hideous wound that he had created into the man's body.

It was a bottle with a few ordinary brass bullets, and inside it was a large amount of Sun Holy Water that Klein had prepared in advance!

Oof!

Klein, who didn't stop, caused Squall's attempt to control him to fail again.

With a twist of his heel, he moved behind Steel Maveti, his back to him.

Pow! He raised his right hand and snapped his fingers before Steel Maveti could pull out the glass bottle.

Bang!

A light explosion rang out, and fiery crimson light soared, shattering the already fragile glass bottle. Large amounts of Sun Holy Water inundated Steel Maveti's body.

The infamous pirate with a bounty of 6,000 pounds froze where he stood, his throat letting out an anguished groan.

He plopped to his knees, a dark green gas in his body was pouring out and disappearing into the air.

At the sight of this, Squall's eyes darkened. He immediately took out an iron-black charm and muttered a word in ancient Hermes, "Shriek!"

The charm suddenly cracked and vanished, completing the sacrifice.

An invisible sound wave swept outwards like a tsunami, almost successively drilling into the ears of everyone around.

Klein's mind buzzed, the tip of his nose cold. Blood oozed out, and Blood Brambles Hendry on the Flying Carpet was in an even more miserable state. His face was twisted, and his body convulsed as he fell down, unable to even let out a tragic scream. On the contrary, Blazing Danitz, who was far away on a rooftop, wasn't subject to any effects. He happily threw out another blob of a highly-compressed incandescent fireball.

The fireball landed on Hendry's body without any resistance and exploded with a loud boom.

Flesh and blood splattered outwards. Flames wrapped around his fingers, calves, and head before he fell to the ground. The Flying Carpet then lost control and slowly settled down.

Squall took the opportunity to turn around and run, not hesitating in the slightest.

However, he was stunned to discover that the terrifying man, who had almost finished off Steel Maveti within ten seconds, didn't seem to show the slightest signs of being impeded. He had turned around and given chase!

How is that possible? This a Shriek charm created by Admiral! Squall had no time to think over the reasons. He ran as fast as he could down the other street.

At that moment, his head was suddenly hit hard by someone. A tearing pain made his whole body spasm.

The lightning in Klein's eyes faded as he raised his right hand and snapped his fingers once more.

Bang!

An Air Bullet crossed the distance of about ten meters and accurately drilled into the back of Squall's head.

Squall didn't have the non-human endurance that Steel had. His vision immediately blackened, and he slowly fell to the ground.

Klein caught up with him in a few steps, reached out his left hand, and let the jubilant Creeping Hunger enjoy the meal.

I have heard the voice of the True Creator before, and I've experienced Mr. Door's call for help. I have great resistance in this aspect, and I can even quickly recover from the shrieking of a Wraith, let alone a mere charm… Klein muttered silently to himself as he watched Squall's body be reduced to flesh and blood and plunge into the open mouth of Creeping Hunger.

After a few seconds, Creeping Hunger came to a satisfied halt, and Klein quickly returned to Steel Maveti's side.

This Zombie had been miserably purged. Although his head remained intact, he was already dead.

Klein took a few steps forward, picked up the peacock-blue Flying Carpet that had fallen to the ground, wrapped it around Steel's body, and lifted it.

Glancing back at 15 Amyris Avenue, he listened to the commotion of rampaging zombies and puppets, and he sensed that the Mandated Punishers were approaching. Klein pulled his hood over his head, bowed slightly in that direction as a salute.

Pa!

Klein rubbed his fingers, and all of the paper fragments around him were set ablaze, producing crimson red columns of fire.

Under the light of the fire, his body turned illusory, and he vanished from where he stood, with the items turning into a shadow.

As for the Beyonder characteristics of Squall and Hendry, which were slowly coming into existence, he didn't take a look, nor did he pay any attention to them.

Greed would cause him to fall into unnecessary danger; besides, the harvest he had reaped now was already sufficient!

After leaving some of the Mandated Punishers to deal with the rampaging zombies and puppets, the pirates who had been damaged by his “companions” and the Beyonder adventurers who were caught, Cordoba Roye led the rest of the team and rushed over. However, all they saw were scattered corpses, scalpels, and withered trees on the streets. They could distinguish the receding aura of the sun, as well as the evil sensation that came from the depths of flesh and blood.

Chapter 528 - Grazing

◆

It was early in the morning, and the sky had just brightened up slightly. Most of the alleys were dark and quiet.

With the aid of Danitz’s cloak, Klein blended into the shadows and quickly moved about. He felt as if his surroundings were grayish-black and transparent, with reality being blurred. All sounds seemed to come from the depths of the starry sky, empty and distant.

After staying as far away from Amyris Avenue as possible, he acquired his bearings and “grew” out from the shadows. He appeared in an empty alley filled with broken stones.

Klein’s hands shook, throwing Steel Maveti’s peacock-blue Flying Carpet out in front of him. He wanted to finish the Grazing before Maveti’s Spirit Body began dissipating.

Throwing away the Flying Carpet, he took a step forward, stretched out his left hand, and extended his five fingers, aiming from above at the corpse that was still warm.

Creeping Hunger revealed its original appearance—a thin material that looked like it was made up of human skin.

Two eyes had split open in the middle of its palm. Its pupils were bright red, as though they were dyed in blood.

Whoosh!

A bone-chilling breeze suddenly blew through the alley. It swirled around Steel Maveti's corpse, twisting into an almost transparent human figure. One could vaguely see thick lips and curled hair that resembled steel beads.

Maveti's Spirit Body wore an abnormally pained expression as he tried his best to resist the suction of the Creeping Hunger. As for the grayish-white and blackish-green dots of light, they were like a surging galaxy, quickly flying out from his body and merging into the transparent figure.

No!

Maveti let out a soundless scream, already being too late to beg for mercy. All he could do was desperately slip into the human-skinned glove, becoming attached to an empty finger, and revealing his Beyonder characteristic that connected with the environment to a certain extent.

This connection determined what powers would be usable when Grazing Steel Maveti's soul. Perhaps it would be one, two, but no more than three powers. Klein had no choice over the number and details before they became fixed, as it was purely random.

Creeping Hunger quickly blanketed its paleness and finally returned to its former disguised state: a plain black glove.

Klein closed his eyes and sensed the changes for a few seconds before letting out a profound sigh.

This time, his luck wasn't bad, but it wasn't too good either.

He had succeeded in acquiring three Beyonder powers belonging to Steel Maveti, but he didn't receive what he wanted most—a body as hard as steel, which was impervious to gunfire, flames, or a certain degree of explosives, and the tenacious vitality.

The first is the power of a Zombie, which allows me to unleash a critical attack, making up for my previous flaws of only having a nimble combat style. The second is mastery over ice. Although it's impossible to condense an ice spear or create a blizzard like that of the Demoness pathway to inflict a direct attack, I can freeze the surrounding ground, lower the temperature of the air, and effectively affect the movement of my enemy. If there's any physical contact, then I can even freeze the enemy's body or stiffen his flesh and blood. It's a perfect match for my combat ability. The third is the manipulation of zombies. Heh heh, I no longer need to be afraid of not being able to have partners for a round of cards… Klein thought for a moment, then he bent down to inspect the items on Steel Maveti's person.

He quickly found 26 pounds, 11 soli, and 8 pence in cash, as well as a collection of strange things that seemed normal, such as candles, clips, a thorny whip, and so on.

Considering the fact that Steel Maveti was a member of the Rose School of Thought and belonged to the type of people who indulged in their desires, Klein vaguely understood what was going on. Spitting on the ground, he only took the cash.

Werewolf has supernatural healing powers. Zombie has a body like steel. There's really no need for him to carry any healing related medicine or items… It's as Danitz concluded, Maveti doesn't have any mystical items… That's right, mystical items are few in number to begin with. Many have clear flaws and negative effects. Not everyone can have one even if they want one. Previously, in the group consisting of a Wraith, Zombie, and Werewolf, there were only two mystical items—Scarlet Lunar Corona and Biological Poison Bottle… Klein nodded and took out a folded piece of paper.

He unfolded the yellowed piece of paper and placed it on the body of Steel Maveti, covering his face.

It was a bounty notice with a portrait of Maveti and the corresponding bounty reward: "6,000 pounds!"

Klein straightened up, took a step back, stepped on the peacock-blue carpet, and pulled out a paper figurine.

Pa!

With a swing of his arm, his wrist shook, and the paper figurine was thrown out. It burst into flames before scattering into ashes.

Soon after, he phased into a shadow and disappeared into the alley along with the items.

Two or three minutes later, Cordoba Roye rushed over with a portion of the Mandated Punisher team, just in time to see a cool breeze blow up the bounty notice, revealing Steel Maveti's dissolving flesh and blood dissolving, his eyes wide open.

Whoosh. The bounty notice fell to the side and remained facing up.

†

Having lost track of their target, Cordoba and the others silently brought Steel's corpse back to the area where the battle had taken place.

Glancing at the team members who were inspecting the site, the deacon, Cordoba, restrained his emotions and asked in a deep voice, "A believer of the Sun?"

This was the most important question for him and his diocese.

The Mandated Punisher team member responsible for finding clues via supernatural means to recreate the truth wasn't a Beyonder of the Storm pathway, but a Sequence 7 Knowledge Keeper corresponding to Reader, also known as Detective. He didn't rush to answer, but instead came over and squatted down to examine Maveti's corpse.

After a while, he looked up and said, "It's not a believer of the Sun, probably a result of using the powers of a mystical item."

"Reason?" Cordoba asked with a frown.

The Mandated Punisher said, “There’s an evil feeling within that stems from flesh and blood. One of the corpses was devoured in such a manner, leaving only a body’s traits and items. If it’s a Sun believer, they wouldn’t do something like that even if they relied on items. To them, things in the domain of the True Creator are sacrilegious and require immediate purification or sealing. They likely wouldn’t borrow its powers.”

After thinking for a few seconds, Cordoba agreed with this conclusion and asked, “Someone from the Aurora Order?”

“No, a real Rose Bishop or Shepherd wouldn’t act so crudely. They’ll definitely wrap the corpse within their body and deal with the scene after departing. There’s no reason to dismember the body on the spot. It’s a waste of time that also leaves a bunch of items that can be considered valuable. To devour him in such a rush, it resembles that of the negative effects of a mystical item,” the Knowledge Keeper said calmly.

“A mystical item that possesses powers in both the Sun and Secrets Suppliant domains? Perhaps it’s something with powers like that of a Shepherd? Berg, what’s your take?” As a deacon, Cordoba had the clearance to know of a Shepherd and their special abilities. As for the Knowledge Keeper knowing, it was a result of his position in the team. The other Mandated Punishers had no idea what they were talking about.

Knowledge Keeper Berg stood up.

“It’s all possible.”

“Any suspects?” Cordoba asked in a low voice.

Berg shook his head.

“There are no suspects for the time being.

“But one thing can be confirmed. Blood Brambles was killed by Blazing

Danitz. The other person is his helper, a rather terrifying powerhouse that's not weaker than a Pirate Admiral."

"A terrifying powerhouse…" Cordoba's expression turned grave as he muttered under his breath. Following that, his eyes lit up. "Could it be Edwina? She can simulate some Beyonder powers which she has seen before!"

Knowledge Keeper Berg pondered for a moment and then said, "We can't rule out that possibility, but our intelligence shows that she was in the vicinity of Sonia Island a few days ago. Unless—unless she can simulate a corresponding ability and use the spirit world to travel here."

Cordoba paced back and forth, looked around, and said, "Deal with the scene, and don't bring this to the attention of the nearby residents.

"I'll submit the mission report, and let's hope that we'll receive more effective information."

This involved a powerhouse whose combat prowess was equivalent to at least a Sequence 5. He could only restrain his irascible mood and make the most rational decision.

†

Inside Old Quinn's house, in the basement with the heavy stone door sealed shut.

Alger was sitting on the low bed, quietly looking at the candles on the table when his vision blurred. He saw the gray fog emanate, along with The Fool sitting on a high chair, overlooking everything.

A blurry silhouette appeared below, hands clasped before his face as he said in a pious tone, "Honorable Mr. Fool, the matter has come to a successful conclusion."

The matter has come to a successful conclusion? This involves Steel

Maveti and several other Beyonders… The World sure is efficient at handling matters. His strength is stronger than I expected. As expected of a Blessed of Mr. Fool… Heh heh, he might be able to sell another Beyonder characteristic at the Tarot Club, maybe even more than one… How did he get around the effects of Sealed Artifact 2-37? The uniqueness of a god's Blessed? A thought flashed through Alger's mind, and he instinctively thanked Mr. Fool.

Then, he took out a small metal bottle and smeared mint extract on the tip of his nose.

A strong, irritating odor seeped into his head, instantly making Alger become abnormally clear-headed.

At some point in time, a white gauze mask appeared in his hands, and he had poured the Full Moon Essence Oil onto it.

After methodically putting on his mask, Alger stood up and walked slowly to the heavy stone door.

With a staid series of movements, he retrieved a sealed metal jar from the inside of his clothes, twisted the mechanical switch, and pulled out a tube.

Then, he stuffed the tube into the crevice of the stone door and extended it out.

Without a sound, the gas inside the metal container started to emanate.

This was the Sanguine anesthetic gas provided by The Moon, Emlyn!

It can knock out strong commoners, Sequence 9 Beyonders with strong bodies, and even higher Sequences who were lacking in their constitution!

Even if Old Quinn can resist the gas, he would still be significantly affected. As for his helpers and friends, heh… Alger leaned against the stone door and waited patiently.

When nearly a third of the gas was dispersed from the jar, he pulled the tube back and closed the switch.

He turned around and listened attentively before receiving a satisfactory answer.

Alger revealed a faint smile. He rapidly converged his aura and compressed it inside him.

Suddenly, the muscles on his body bulged, and he threw a punch forward.

Raging Blow!

Bang!

The iron lock of the heavy stone door directly shattered, and the door itself opened up.

Alger withdrew his fist and walked out, leaving only the sleeping figures outside.

Author’s Note: Creeping Hunger has two modes, Grazing and Devouring. The former targets the soul and Beyonder characteristic, while the latter targets the flesh and blood.

Chapter 529 - Tacitness

◆ ◆ ◆

48 Acid Lemon Street, outside the Wind of Azure Inn.

Dressed in a thick jacket and pantaloons, Blazing Danitz returned by taking a detour. He clung to the corner of a wall, remaining motionless for a long time. He was hesitating on whether to take the opportunity to run away and not face the terrifying madman, Gehrman Sparrow, again.

Unlike the battle at Bansy Harbor, he was hiding on a rooftop far away this time. It allowed him to take in the entire battle zone. Therefore, while supporting Gehrman Sparrow and battling Blood Brambles Hendry, he finally saw the combat process of the crazy adventurer, finally grasping his Beyonder powers and traits.

Paper figurine substitutes, phasing out from flames, psychic blasts, a holy beam from the Sun domain, shooting out air bullets with his finger, the ability to disguise himself into another person, as well as a glove that changes its appearance several times and devoured Squall. His powers far exceed my imagination, and there are a few that can’t be compatible with each other. This isn’t something that can be explained simply with the addition of one or two miraculous items to a Sequence… Also, the sense of hunger that came from the depths of his soul explains something… That glove from the Vice Admiral Hurricane, Creeping Hunger! Captain had specifically reminded us that the glove can use the souls of many Beyonders for Grazing and thus use their powers… Danitz went through the thoughts he previously had and came to a final judgment.

Gehrman Sparrow is the current owner of Creeping Hunger!

He didn't feel any sense of belittlement simply because Gehrman had relied on a powerful mystical item to display such terrifying strength. Instead, he felt even more reverence for him.

The reason for this was just one; a large part of using a mystical item to its fullest had to do with one's abilities. Without sufficient strength and extraordinary combat experience, even with Creeping Hunger, Gehrman Sparrow wouldn't have been able to finish off Steel Maveti and Calm Squall within ten seconds.

Two, his Captain, Vice Admiral Edwina Edwards, learned from secret sources that Vice Admiral Hurricane didn't die at the hands of the Church of Storms, but instead, he was quickly killed by a particular powerhouse while fleeing.

Danitz had no lack of understanding regarding the power of Vice Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos, back when he was at his peak. He knew that the standing of a powerhouse which could easily finish him off was equal to that of the top pirate powers. Furthermore, it would be two of the most powerful and terrifying ones, the King of the Five Seas and Queen Mystic!

Although there's the factor of surprise, it would just lower the evaluation by a little. The person wouldn't be much weaker than the King of Immortality, and they'll be stronger than Admiral Hell and Admiral of Blood… Creeping Hunger now belongs to Gehrman Sparrow; this means that he's either the one who killed Qilangos, or there's a power figure at the level of the Four Kings backing him up. No matter which possibility it is, it's all the more terrifying than I had originally expected! Danitz's body tensed up. He really didn't want to face the adventurer who had crazy blood flowing in him.

Phew… He heaved a sigh of relief. He felt that he had been hesitating here for too long and that he had to make a decision as soon as possible.

Gehrman Sparrow knows how to divine, and he's rather confident in his abilities in this domain. With my Shadow Cloak in his hands, escaping won't only fail, but it would also end up infuriating him… Shadow Cloak is a rare mystical item… Clenching his teeth, Danitz turned the corner and went through the door of the hotel, all the way to the luxurious suite.

After a few seconds of careful waiting and observation, Danitz took out his key and opened the door.

He saw that the room was dark, that the gas wall lights hadn't been lit, and that the not-very-bright light of the early morning was shining through the window and onto Gehrman Sparrow who was facing the door.

The adventurer had changed back into his usual tweed black overcoat with dark trousers. He held a half top hat in his hand, and his right foot was raised over his left thigh.

He leaned back a little, his face obscured since his back was to the window. Only his dark brown eyes, which were exceptionally clear, watched the door with indifference and calmness.

Danitz unconsciously lowered his head, laughed dryly, and said, "In accordance with your instructions, I circled to a few news agencies and wrote the information that Blazing had killed Steel Maveti, Blood Brambles Hendry, and Squall on pieces of paper and threw them in.

"Of course, I mentioned having a powerful helper in this piece of news. He's a mysterious, unknown, a top adventurer, and a veteran bounty hunter."

Klein nodded, revealing a polite smile.

"Very good."

With a sigh of relief, Danitz looked around and saw the peacock-blue carpet.

He was stunned for a few seconds before asking in puzzlement, “What about the heads of Steel and Hendry?”

Klein replied calmly, “Wasn’t taken.”

“You didn’t take them?” Danitz exclaimed in astonishment. “Then what about our bounty?”

As long as they had the heads of Steel and Blood Brambles, he would be able to get the appropriate bounty through people with connections. Although this would cost them 15 to 30 percent of the money received, he couldn’t claim the bounty himself as a pirate. This was the only way, as the military’s and the Church’s use of bounty rewards to encourage pirates to kill each other didn’t mean that they would turn a blind eye to a gift that came walking through the door.

To Danitz’s surprise, Gehrman Sparrow, whose eyes were crazed with the desire for money, had actually not taken the heads of Steel and Blood Brambles, which meant that he had automatically given up on the bounty.

Klein didn’t answer him and pointed to the Flying Carpet on the ground.

“You had helped in this. You have two choices.

“One is 3,000 pounds in cash, and the other is this Flying Carpet.

“You have five seconds to consider. Exceeding that time will be considered as forfeiting.”

3,000 pounds in cash or the Flying Carpet? This Flying Carpet seems to only have the ability of suspension and flight. Furthermore, its speed isn’t too fast, and it’s not too useful… No, at sea, to a Beyonder not from the Sailor pathway, such items are very precious. At the very least, there’s no need to worry about the aftermath of a ship being sunk… Danitz was momentarily thrown into a dilemma.

Then he heard Gehrman Sparrow's voice counting.

"3, 2…"

Danitz's heart skipped a beat, and he quickly said, "Flying Carpet!"

Klein nodded and said, "Okay."

With the knowledge that Gehrman had great credibility, Danitz finally relaxed before asking with a grumbling mumble, "Why didn't you count 5 and 4?"

Wasn't it supposed to be five seconds!?

Klein replied without changing his expression, "Counted inwardly."

Counted inwardly… Danitz took a deep breath and grimaced.

Klein slowly stood up, flicked his wrist, threw the hat from his hand, and left it hanging firmly on the rack before walking to his bedroom.

†

Cathedral of Waves.

Alger, who entered in the name of coming for morning prayers, met the diocese bishop, Chogo, and explained everything that had happened last night. The only thing that had been modified was that the Sanguine anesthesia gas had been turned into a Slumber Charm of the Church of Evernight.

Chogo nodded in approval.

"To be able to go deep into the enemy's lair and bear the risk of death for the sake of your faith, such an act is worthy of praise. You are a true storm attendant.

"Last night, we captured five Beyonders and killed two of them on the spot. As a result of this, Maveti, Hendry, and Squall have also died. The heads of these three pirates will no longer appear, or they will be in our hands, so the government's bounty will be ours.

"The total receivable reward will exceed more than 10,000 pounds in total, and you will receive the bulk of it, which is 6,000 pounds.

"Do not refuse. The Lord has told us that those who fight for their faith must not be reserved."

"Holy Lord of Storms!" An excited Alger pounded his left chest with his fist.

Although he and The World didn't agree on how to split the spoils of war, he believed that the two of them had come to a tacit understanding. For example, they were not to interfere with each other when hunting pirates. As the bounty needed to be laundered through the Church, the two of them would split it equally.

As for the bounty offered by countries and organizations such as Intis and Feysac, Alger didn't hold any expectations for them. This was because every time one exchanged for the bounty reward, one needed to hand over the corpse or head of the target. Therefore, only one entity could be chosen. Only those with a deep background and good relations with the various organizations and countries could receive all of them.

3,000 pounds will belong to The World… If I were to lose 3,000 pounds at once, it will raise suspicion. Yes, I'll have to find an opportunity to buy a mystical item. Such things are rare, so they're often overpriced, even more so when in times of great need. No one will doubt that I spent 5,000 pounds on a purchase that's worth 3,000 pounds… If I sell the items obtained from Old Quinn, the ones he had received, the accounts would be squared… Alger quickly came up with a follow-up solution.

†

Knowing that he had 3,000 pounds waiting for him, Klein sat happily in the high-back chair of The Fool and considered a serious question.

That is, after Grazing Steel Maveti, he had to release a soul from Creeping Hunger as he promised.

Their Beyonder powers are quite useful. It's quite a pity to release them before finding a replacement. Yes… Besides, I've already released that Faceless. There doesn't seem to be a need to do it this time… Feelings of hesitation and reluctance to part had stirred in Klein's heart as he was thrown into a dilemma. He was unable to make a decision.

After a long time, he leaned back and exhaled.

I can't deceive myself. He shook his head and laughed, turning relaxed from making up his mind.

He decided to keep his promise and release a soul.

The Faceless from before had been released early because he wanted to receive some corresponding information. It was already an equal exchange.

Which one should I release? Miss Justice bought the materials for a Psychiatrist potion and a mystical item worth 5,500. Even if she's rich, her financial situation should be tight, so it wouldn't be appropriate to sell the Psychiatrist characteristic at this time. Yes, she still owes my Blessed 2,000 pounds and will repay the money in February or March… Klein rejected the idea and decided to release the Nightmare.

As a former Nighthawk, he always had an inclination and felt gratitude based on his impression and feelings towards Beyonders in this domain; therefore, it wasn't difficult to make a choice in these situations without having any other factors to consider.

Calming himself down, Klein picked up the human-skinned glove that he had previously brought above the gray fog. He closed his eyes and began to sense the distorted souls.

Without any hesitation, he released the Nightmare.

Chapter 530 - Chronicles

The Nightmare appeared by the side of the long bronze table.

He was a man in his thirties with black hair and blue eyes, a long, thin face, and obvious nasolabial folds. He had a beard that wasn't too thick by his mouth and chin.

As the pain and the distortion eased, he pressed his hand to his chest and gave a solemn bow.

Compared to the Faceless from before, the Nightmare was obviously not as muddle-headed and weak after being released. It was unknown if the Evernight pathway's enhancement to one's soul was stronger than that of the Seer pathway, or if it was because the Grazing process had only happened recently.

Klein sighed silently and began asking via spirit channeling, "Why did you die at the hands of Qilangos?"

The corner of the Nightmare's mouth slightly curled up, revealing a bitter smile.

"I'm a Red Glove from the Nighthawks. I was tracking down a bunch of ancient chronicles that originated from a Balam imperial tomb. We suspected that they were related to the reason for Death's passing.

"I found out that a part of it might've fallen into the hands of a particular tycoon, so I led two companions of mine and boarded the ship he was on. Unfortunately, we were attacked by Qilangos's fleet just as we were about to launch an investigation."

"What happened to your companions?" Klein subconsciously asked.

The Nightmare said in a slightly pained tone, "We originally had the opportunity to leave and even kill Qilangos through our skillful teamwork, but our ship sank, and we had to board a lifeboat instead. Everyone, everyone died, no—they were killed in the line of duty!"

May the Goddess bless you… Klein drew a crimson moon inwardly.

This made him more aware of the great difference between fighting at sea and fighting on land—environmental factors were of critical importance.

Beyonders not from the Sailor pathway would be at a great disadvantage!

If it wasn't because of the fact that the Flying Carpet had been huge, cumbersome, and slow, making him an easy target, Klein would've opted to keep it and give Danitz cash.

Fortunately, I have the bladder of a murloc. I can find an Artisan to create a mystical item that allows me to swim underwater… Unfortunately, it's very difficult to find an Artisan. Most of them are from the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, and there aren't many unaffiliated ones; otherwise, mystical items wouldn't be this rare. If push comes to shove, I'll get Mr. Hanged Man to help… Klein looked at the Nightmare who had been killed in the line of duty and said softly as he leaned back, "What's your name? What unfulfilled wishes do you have?"

The figure of the Nightmare was already slowly dissipating. When he heard Klein's question, he said with a smile, "My name is Davy Raymond. I lost my parents, wife, and siblings in a black magic incident, leaving me with only one daughter, Neelu. She was born in 1330 and is a very lovely girl. And I'm sorry to say that in order to investigate the truth over the black magic incident, I joined the Nighthawks and later became a Red Glove. I didn't manage to spend time with her, making her lose her father alongside her mother.

"Heh heh, I believe that the Church will definitely give her my pension and secretly provide her a certain amount of help. I'm not worried about her life, but I only hope to see her enter the hall of marriage under the witness of the Goddess, to have her own family and not be lonely anymore."

"It's already the year 1350. She may already have a marriage partner," Klein sighed wistfully and said.

"Time flies…" Davy Raymond muttered in response. "Tell her that all the culprits have been punished and that I died because of an accident. There's no need to hate anyone anymore. Tell her that Daddy loves her, and Daddy is very sorry…"

His figure became more and more transparent, and he was about to disappear.

Klein closed his eyes and asked, "Where does she live?

"What's the name of the tycoon who collected Death's chronicles?"

"We live in Desi County's Conant City. It's a beautiful seaside city, with rich rubber plantations growing nearby. If she hasn't moved, then she'll be living at 67 Red Indus Street. The tycoon's name is Jimmy Necker. He should've fallen into the hands of Qilangos as well…" Before Davy Raymond finished speaking, his figure had already completely disappeared, leaving only a deep black gem-like object on the surface of his glove.

Klein quietly watched this scene, and after a few seconds, he raised his right hand and tapped four times clockwise on his chest. He then said in a deep voice, "If there's a chance, I will visit your daughter and see how she's doing."

In the palace which looked like a giant's residence, the fog was endless, without any undulations, and was eternally unchanging.

Klein put away Davy Raymond's Beyonder characteristic, rubbed his forehead, and turned his attention back to Death's chronicles.

The Death pathway and the Evernight pathway can be switched at high Sequences. There's nothing odd about the Church sending personnel to investigate the corresponding chronicles… I wonder if Jimmy Necker is dead or not. I'll need to find out… If he has already perished in a tragic case, and the thing has fallen in Qilangos's hands, that will require me to investigate from the pirate's side… Qilangos's crew now belongs to Vice Admiral Ailment, Tracy…

As it involves Death, it might be able to help Mr. Azik. Klein decided to check it out in passing himself, and if he encountered any difficulties, he could write directly to the powerhouse.

After clearing his mind, he quickly returned to the real world and used the ritual to summon Creeping Hunger back.

After everything was done and seeing that it was already getting late, he gave up on the idea of trying to catch up on his sleep. He decided to summarize the experiences and lessons from last night's operation.

The biggest lesson for Klein was that he had overestimated the patience of the Mandated Punishers.

He had originally hoped that, even if there had been an accident in the beginning, the Mandated Punishers would've been able to restrain him and wait for the real target, the real protagonist, Steel Maveti, to appear.

When that happened, they would've definitely used the Sealed Artifact which can pull many people into a dream, restraining all the unaffiliated Beyonders who had involved themselves in the blitz. As for me, due to my uniqueness, I would be able to detect that I'm asleep and be able to forcibly escape. Then, I could've dealt with Steel Maveti and his helpers in a composed manner, completing an achievement of an instant kill, and also bring two corpses along with me… Yet, just as the incident happened, that bunch of irascible bros stormed in. They didn't even leave any backup teams to watch out for any contingencies. At the very most, they would let the wielder of the Sealed Artifact stay beyond the periphery, with one or two guards… The more Klein thought, the more he was at a loss on whether to laugh or cry.

If it wasn't because Steel Maveti's group of pirates who were more cautious and had at least two Beyonders assigned, as well as all their puppets and zombies to stop the Mandated Punishers that might've pursued them, Klein would likely have found himself in a situation of going two against five. If that had happened, he would've chosen to give up and directly engage in a strategic shift.

What made Klein most satisfied was that he had done a pretty good job of making specific preparations.

This was the professional habit of a Magician!

Because he had long known from Miss Sharron and Maric about the traits of the first five Sequences of the Mutant pathway, Klein was well aware that Steel Maveti, who had gone through the Lunatic phase, could use irrational factors to resist any Beyonder disruption and influence on his mind. He had very strong resistance in this aspect; therefore, he gave up the thought of using Psychiatrist's Dragon Might and Frenzy, as well as Nightmare, which was clearly weaker than the Mandated Punisher's Sealed Artifact, and he instead focused on the Interrogator's Psychic Piercing and the Priest of Light's purification powers.

Psychic Piercing wasn't a Beyonder power that disrupted one's thoughts and affected one's soul, but a means to directly attack the Spirit Body. In essence, the other effect acted on one's Body of Heart and Mind, and targeted the Soul Body. There was a clear difference between the two.

If any part of that combo failed to chain in any way, Steel Maveti would've been able to recover, making it impossible for me to kill him quickly. And in that environment, that would spell failure. Yes… I've also used the pathway's trait of losing themselves to their desires, making it easy to grasp their emotions. I believed that once they suffered a psychic attack, there would be a high chance of them counterattacking in madness, without any consideration of anything else…

In fact, the safest way of dealing with a Zombie is to set up matchsticks or have Danitz. I'll use Flaming Jump and Light of Holiness, kiting Maveti. It'll make him want to battle but be completely unable to reach his opponent. He wouldn't escape even if he wanted to. Just send a fireball, and I'll catch up to him. Unfortunately, it's a waste of time, and the situation didn't allow for it…

Klein sighed, took out his pocket watch, snapped it open, and checked the time.

Seeing that it was almost nine o'clock in the morning, he turned the handle of the door and walked out of the bedroom.

At this moment, Danitz was lying in a reclining chair, producing snores that sounded like a steam engine was operating in the room.

He was quite alert, opening his eyes and sitting up as soon as Klein came out.

"…Are you going out?" Danitz asked when he saw Gehrman Sparrow take off his hat from the coat rack.

"Yes." Klein maintained his persona and didn't explain that he was attempting to act by helping someone confess.

What about me? Steel Maveti and his men are almost all dead, so I don't have to worry about that anymore… Even if the newspaper doesn't publish the news, I can spread it myself. There were idle pirates and adventurers who will use it as a material for bragging, spreading the matter to the sea and would end up informing Captain. That bunch of dogshit can't do a thing aside from drink and brag, but even so, they still have their uses… Danitz thought for a moment, then he asked while secretly feeling a sense of fear, "Mr. Sparrow, can I-I leave now?"

Klein revealed a faint smile.

"You have always been free."

That's right… I wasn't caught by him this time; I was just looking for help… I have always been free! Danitz was stunned for a moment, then he was delighted.

But right at that moment, he heard Gehrman Sparrow's voice lightly fleeting towards him.

"But that ends now."

Ah? What? Danitz looked confused.

It took him no less than three seconds to understand what Gehrman Sparrow meant.

He had been captured again!

"Why?" Danitz asked angrily and aggrieved.

Klein put on his hat and said in a low voice, "I want to meet your Captain."

Danitz widened his eyes, stood up abruptly, and shouted out, "What do you want?"

This fellow is a little too agitated… Klein replied calmly, "I have some things to ask her."

Chapter 531 - Great Acting

◆ ◆ ◆

He has some things to ask Captain?

Danitz frowned as he watched Gehrman Sparrow leave the room, unsure what his real motive was.

What is this fellow really after? Money, riches? But he had the time to take away the heads of Steel Maveti and Blood Brambles Hendry to exchange for nearly 10,000 pounds in bounty rewards. Yes, even after paying any commissions, it would still be seven to eight thousand pounds. Yet, he didn't do so. Moreover, he generously shared the spoils of war with me. This is very contradictory. When he first heard that I was Blazing, his first reaction was to call me a 3,000-pound bounty… In Captain's words, this isn't scientific…

Why would he deliberately give up the bounty? Unless… Unless he has a better way to claim it safely, or he had specially left it for someone? Yes… He had been prepared for the appearance of the Mandated Punishers… H-he has his own connections and information channels! This way, everything can be explained!

There's also the possible existence of the demigod that killed Qilangos. Hmm, there's a powerful and secretive organization behind Gehrman Sparrow!

Shocked by his own conjecture, Danitz instinctively tried to use his body language to express his feelings, but he forgot that his left arm was still fractured. He immediately grimaced in pain.

This made him feel even more terrified. He didn't want his captain to meet such a dangerous and crazy fellow.

He even suspected that Gehrman Sparrow's real motive was his captain's 26,000-pound bounty!

In a duel, that lunatic might not necessarily win against Captain, and there's still the first mate, second mate, third mate, and a few boatswains. But he has a terrifying organization backing him! You want to hurt Captain? Over my dead body! Danitz puffed out his chest, raised his neck, and was filled with a stirring sense of self-sacrifice.

He ran a hand through his hair, gave a long grunt, and said to himself, "I'll make further observations. Perhaps Gehrman Sparrow really only has questions that he wants answered."

Subconsciously, he looked around and found both the Flying Carpet and the Shadow Cloak. They weren't missing.

In other words, Gehrman Sparrow left the things that belong to me behind. Isn't he afraid that I'll take the opportunity to escape? Or did he steal my hair that makes it easy for divination?

No, no, he's a crazy guy. Even if he wishes to use my hair, he would just walk over and extend his hand to pull one out. It's impossible for him to do it secretly… Right, there's a powerful and secretive organization behind him! Perhaps, at this moment, there are people from that organization secretly monitoring me. They're waiting for me to leave, waiting for me to seek out Captain… How insidious!

Gehrman Sparrow must've gone out on purpose! Danitz felt that he had grasped the truth of the matter thanks to his experience and wisdom.

He paced back and forth before sitting back in the reclining chair. He then thought with a silent, mocking smile.

I'm not leaving!

I want to see what you can do!

I will not bring danger to Captain!

†

A quarter past three in the afternoon, Symeem Island.

This island was also a part of the Rorsted Archipelago, but it was the furthest from the City of Generosity, Bayam. It took nearly five hours on a liner to reach it.

On the way, Klein bought a suit with local characteristics and a small suitcase to replace the clothes he changed out of, for a total of fourteen soli. They weren't even worth a pound.

It's really cheap. It's just change compared to a complete suit… Wearing pantaloons, a thick brown jacket, and a light brown cap, Klein disembarked from the liner with a native face that didn't stand out, and he entered some of the old ports on Symeem Island. He had spent time buying clothes and changing his appearance, causing him to miss the 9 o'clock ferry and be put in a situation where he could only take the ferry at 10.

Thinking of the expenses he had to pay for this acting, he couldn't help but calculate his current financial situation.

The Faceless characteristic was sold for 3,825 pounds. The pirate bounties net me 3,000 pounds. Although I haven't received the 6,825 pounds, I can basically include it into my budget as long as Mr. Hanged Man doesn't get exposed…

The leftover cash from Donna and company's gratuity add up to 255 pounds in bits and pieces…

I found 26 pounds, 11 soli, and 8 pence from Steel Maveti's body…

Yes, there's still the five gold coins as reserves…

I haven't spent much money recently, only spending slightly more than a pound in total. This is something to be happy about…

With that, I'll have 7,110 pounds. Moreover, I still have the Nightmare Beyonder characteristic and the murloc's bladder. They're still worth something.

On second thought, I earned a 3,000-pound bounty alongside a Zombie Beyonder characteristic. The latter is worth about 3,000 to 5,000 pounds. That is to say I earned about 7,000 pounds… This is only from Steel Maveti, Blood Brambles Hendry, and Squall. Besides, there was quite a lot of waste… Indeed, hunting pirates is quite a good job. It can administer justice, punish the evil, protect the weak and innocent, and also make me rich overnight…

Klein subconsciously turned his head to the side, only to see that the color of the seawater was much clearer than that of Bayam's. It was as if the seawater was a huge, green, sparkling gem, reflecting golden rays under the sunlight.

Sure enough, it's not without reason that generations after generations of adventurers have gone out to sea to search for wealth. Even if I deduct the remnant spirituality of ancient wraiths, eyes from a six-winged gargoyle, spring water from Sonia Island's Golden Spring, and other supplementary ingredients of a Marionettist, the money I have left will be enough to allow me to buy a decent manor here, in Desi Bay, in the Southern Continent's colonies, and in the non-metropolitan areas… Loen's countryside is said to be very beautiful, and if it turns out that I'm really unable to return, I can consider settling down in a similar place… Yes, I still have a 10% stake in the Backlund Bike Company, and my future returns won't be low… With confidence, Klein straightened his back and thought about the future.

After letting his thoughts wander, Klein began to think about the more realistic question, which was whether he should sell the Nightmare Beyonder characteristic, find an opportunity to return it to the Church of Evernight, or create a mystical item with it through an Artisan.

It depends on the situation. The ideal solution would be to sell it to the Church… The martyr, Klein, who had taken two potions from the Nighthawks, thought with uncertainty.

At the same time, he hoped that Little Sun would soon reach Sequence 7 and be qualified to gain clearance to the methods used to remove the mental corruption from a Beyonder characteristic.

As for the matter of releasing the Priest of Light from the glove, he wasn't in a hurry. Little Sun had just received the potion formula for Sequence 7, so he had no need for it at the moment. He would have to wait for a long time, and the powers of a Priest of Light was very effective in dealing with a pirate like Admiral of Blood in a way that was far more potent than the Sun Brooch.

As his thoughts slowly settled down, Klein entered the small port town.

The place was basically filled with natives. Their skin was nearly bronze, and their black hair had slight, natural curls. Their bodies emitted a scent that was derived from prolonged contact with spices.

After changing his appearance and asking about Raine's situation and if there was any news of Wendt's death, Klein found a secluded corner. He wiped his face with his hand, turning his face into a tall, thin Wendt with rather distinct facial features.

He carried his suitcase and circled around the town to its border. It was then that he saw the winery run by Raine's family.

The girl with flaxen-colored hair could no longer be called a young girl. She had obviously matured a lot compared to what Wendt remembered.

She was sweeping the entrance, and there was no one around.

Phew… Klein took a deep breath and slowly let it out, feeling as though he was placed in a very difficult position.

As a powerful keyboard warrior, he knew about theories like method acting and experimental acting, but he lacked further understanding. He could only try to guess at Wendt's mood and performance in this kind of scenario.

Finally, he closed his eyes and walked over.

Raine looked up when she heard footsteps, finally identifying the visitor.

She opened her mouth slightly and let out a half-surprised exclamation before saying with a straight face, "Why are you suddenly back?"

Remember, you're just acting… Klein revealed a smile.

"I came to bid you farewell."

He spoke in a local dialect, with a somewhat nondescript Bayam accent.

The language of the Rorsted Archipelago was also derived from ancient Feysac and belonged to another variant. As a half-historian, Klein was able to master it easily, and it only took him a short time to master it.

"Farewell?" Raine asked, slightly surprised.

Klein turned his head, looked to the side, and smiled.

"I'm going to chase after a treasure trove, and I don't know when I'll be able to come back.

"When the time comes, I'll appear with a great deal of money. I'll buy a manor in the suburbs; plant some rubber trees; set up a vineyard; have my own mill, wine cellar, blacksmith shop; and let the air be filled with the scent of all kinds of spices. Then, I'll buy a few slaves and hire some servants, just like those masters. Heh heh, but I'll still be short of one thing."

He overcame his goosebumps that were about to form on his skin, and he turned to look Raine in the eye.

“I still lack a wife and a mistress for the manor.

“Raine, I like you. I wish to marry you. The reason I said it out loud today isn’t to get an answer, but because I’m afraid that I would never have the chance to tell you again.”

After listening quietly, Raine suddenly scolded angrily, “Wendt, you’re a coward!”

Ah… This reaction isn’t right… Klein deliberately revealed a surprised expression.

Raine suppressed her voice and said, “Three years ago, three freaking years ago, I was already prepared to head to Bayam with you. Yet, you didn’t say anything in the end! You coward! You chicken!

“What’s the use of telling me now? You’re going to sea soon, and you may never come back!”

The more she spoke, the more agitated she became.

“You’ve said it out loud and become happy. You have no regrets, but what about me? I’ll have to constantly think about you returning and live on in pain? You selfish bastard!”

She waved the broom in her hand and swung it towards Wendt.

Klein knew that the real Wendt would have hit the broom away, hug the girl, and tell her that he wasn’t going out to sea again, but he couldn’t do the same. He had to pretend to be chased away pathetically, running all the way to a nearby alley. There, he hit his head against the wall while silently cursing himself.

It was too f**king awkward!

This is too f**king awkward!

Raine went back to the door, picked up a broom, and crouched down.

Her face was ashen; it was unknown what she was thinking about.

Vaguely, she heard a sound, and she fell asleep.

After using the charm, Klein turned around and nudged Raine, who was sitting on the ground while leaning against the wall, then he quickly left the area, hiding in the distance to peep at the results.

Raine quickly woke up and realized that she had fallen asleep without knowing it. Everything that had happened just now appeared like a dream.

She remained sitting there, motionless for quite a while.

Suddenly, she lowered her head and let out a sharp curse that seemed to come from the depths of her throat.

“Wendt, you selfish bastard!”

Sigh. Klein, who felt a tiny sensation of digesting his potion, sighed, changed his appearance, and left the place.

He would have to spend the night on Symeem Island, as there were no liners headed for Bayam until the morning.

Chapter 532 - Lord “Caucasian”

◆

After changing his face and turning into one of the two main streets, Klein went straight to the green mailbox and took out a letter he had prepared long ago from his pocket.

This was a “death notice” he had forged as an imitation of an official police document. It was sent to the sergeant of the town of Symeem Harbor. It was about the sudden death of the local resident, Wendt, in Bayam.

When deciding to do the acting, Klein had worked out a plan to keep things on track and not cause irreparable damage to the girl, Raine.

His plan was to use the Slumber Charm to camouflage the real acting as a dream, this way, if Raine had no love for Wendt, he expected her to directly reject his confession. After hearing about the other party’s death, she wouldn’t feel any guilt, and at most some fear. In response to this, she could effectively be placated by going to church to pray and confess.

If Raine also liked Wendt and responded to the confession, then the dream would give Klein a chance to extricate himself from the situation. The notification of Wendt’s death would kill Raine’s expectations, and it wouldn’t have too negative an impact on her future life.

But even so, it’s still a bit cruel. No matter what kind of woman she is, facing the situation of a guy confessing to her in her dreams after his death is definitely going to be heartbreaking. She wouldn’t be able to recover for a long time.

Well… If I didn't do anything, and when the news of Wendt's death reaches her, Raine would definitely feel very sad even if it might not be that serious. However, that knot in her heart would never be able to be mended, and she would be stuck wondering for the rest of her life whether Wendt had gone out on an adventure to pursue his and her future, or if he simply didn't like her…

It's not a bad way to end things like this. Once she has overcome her pain, she will carry that gentleness of having been truly loved once while leading her future life.

Sigh… Regardless, to forcibly interfere in the lives of others for acting, having an impact on an innocent person's life to a certain degree even though I'm using the excuse of fulfilling a wish, it's not a truly kind thing to do. Just like Roselle said, the further one proceeds in the Beyonder pathway, the more twisted and evil it feels. The acting method might not be a catalyst… All I can do is try my best to minimize such effects… After sending the letter, Klein exhaled, and with a native face that didn't stand out, he walked to the only inn in town.

Along the way, he summed up his previous experience, which was that "disguising yourself as someone else and obtaining feedback" was likely a main clause of the Faceless principles, second only to "you can disguise yourself into anyone, but you are ultimately yourself."

If it were any other Faceless, they would've blocked out information about Wendt's death for the sake of this role. They would have agreed to Raine's confession and spent one to two years in a relationship with her, marry her, and have children with her, and then, to not be bound by the various relationships in this identity, remember who they were and leave coldly… If there was no exposure during this process, the potion would mostly be digested… But I really can't do it! It's just completely against my conscience! I can only try to push the envelope… Klein sighed, inexplicably afraid.

He shook his head and thought in a silent self-deprecating manner, Beyonders not only have to constantly fight against threats and madness, but also fight against all kinds of evil thoughts, as well as the corruption that pulls one down and can cause one to fall if they aren't careful…

Even so, at the end of the day, one might still be corrupted by the abyss, becoming a monster that one swears to get rid of. Sigh…

Suppressing his thoughts, Klein stepped into the inn and said to the boss behind the counter, "An ordinary room."

The thin boss looked up and gave a glance, saying, "A valid ID certificate."

How can a face I just came up with have one? Klein smiled in embarrassment.

"I forgot to bring it."

"Then you cannot stay here. This is the rule of our town." The boss once again lowered his head and calculated his income and expenditure for the day.

Klein took out a soli note and pushed it over as if nothing had happened.

The boss's eyes suddenly widened.

"No, no, put it away! I don't want to be locked up by the sergeant!

"Get out, get out, you dirty bastard with no proof of identity."

Klein was thrown out of the inn in shock, unable to believe that the omnipotent entity known as money had just lost its power.

After a few seconds of silence, he turned into an empty alleyway, turning back into Gehrman Sparrow with stark facial features.

Klein returned to the inn, tapped on the counter, and said Loenese in a Backlund accent, “A room.”

The boss looked up and immediately put down the things in his hand. He then stood up and nodded with a smile.

“Okay, okay.

“Do you need a room with a view of the sea, or something quieter?”

He switched to a clumsy Loenese that had a thick accent that resembled that of the land of spices, with no further mention of identification.

This really is a pragmatic world… Klein silently lampooned and politely responded, “Quiet.”

“Yes, yes, immediately,” the boss responded hurriedly.

Then he called an attendant, took the keys, and led Klein personally to the second floor.

“Sir, how many days will you be staying? It’s 1 soli 5 pence a night.”

“Just tonight,” Klein couldn’t stand the enthusiasm, so he answered succinctly.

At the Wind of Azure Inn, his luxurious suite with Danitz was five soli a night.

Without a doubt, the room the boss had chosen was clean and tidy, and there was no trace of the usual humidity in a harbor inn. Klein looked around and nodded in satisfaction.

“Excellent.”

“It’s my honor,” the boss flattered with obvious fear.

Klein put down his luggage, rested for a while, then he got up and went back down to the ground floor to settle his dinner.

Beside the counter, tables were arranged messily on the first floor. There was a greasy layer on their surface, and a fireplace was burning in the corner, giving off light and heat.

The Rorsted Archipelago was slightly to the south, and the lowest temperatures in winter was only about 10°C. However, for the locals, this was still cold enough that they needed a fire to warm them up.

Klein randomly found a seat and sat down, ordering a local specialty of grilled meat and spiced mushroom soup, with the main dish being potato bread.

While he was waiting, he swept his gaze over the customers inside the restaurant. His gaze then instinctively landed on a lady.

This lady had a head of simple tied up black hair and a pair of distinctive greenish-gray eyes. Her appearance was the type that one would never get sick off easily, and the more he looked at her, the more intrigued he became.

She was obviously not a native, but she was wearing a man's shirt and a thick tan jacket. By her hand was a round-brimmed hat with a depression in the middle.

This was one of the more common adventurer outfits out in the sea. At her table, the three other men were the same, and they clearly appeared to have been exposed to the elements.

Klein had never hid his appreciation of beautiful ladies, but his attention wasn't drawn to her by her appearance.

The sea had a strong sense of discrimination against females. Women who could achieve a certain status among adventurers and pirates were either very scheming, very powerful, or both. They were people that one needed to be cautious and wary about!

Their boots have some fresh mud on them… Did they just come back from the forest? Heh heh, they really are adventurers… Klein made a preliminary judgment based on some clues.

If these four adventurers came by ferry from Bayam, even if they had previously stepped on sewage or mud, the traces would've already dried up. Furthermore, as the town hadn't rained in the past two days, overall, the roads were quite clean with only some dust. Eliminating the two possibilities, it could only be explained that they had returned from a trip to the woods on the outskirts of the town.

Klein had heard that many adventurers went deep into the primitive forests of the colonial islands in search of abandoned, forgotten pagan temples or altars, which often contained gold and jewels of ancient worship, but were later buried for various reasons in a place that no one knew of. In the bars of the islands, there was no shortage of legends that someone had managed to make a fortune overnight on an adventure into the woods.

There might be evil spirits lingering in those places… It would be better to hunt pirates, or for one to at least acquire the relevant information in advance… Klein retracted his eyes and concentrated on waiting for the food.

The seven Churches classified the various gods believed by the colony's primitive faiths as evil spirits, but Klein believed that some of them were natural spirits.

After a while, the specialty grilled meat was served. It had been sliced into many smaller pieces and strung onto a wooden stick. The surface was smeared with a reddish-brown sauce. The fragrance was rich and the color was alluring.

It looks a little like the kebabs from my previous life… In Loen, they're usually roasted as huge chunks of meat. Only after the meat is roasted would the chef slice up the meat… The method used here makes the flavors infuse the meat better… Klein picked up the wooden stick and bit down on a piece of meat. He felt the meat's juice slightly overflow, and there was a hint of sweetness in the salty fragrance.

It’s my type! He nodded in satisfaction.

Klein enjoyed the meal and even tasted the local “Gurney Sap,” a special beverage, like lemonade with sugar and milk.

He went back to his room. Because he had been hunting the night before, he hadn’t slept at all. He washed up early, put out the fireplace, and got into bed. Sleeping too early meant one problem—he would wake up in the middle of the night to pee.

Klein’s dream was interrupted. He opened his eyes and slowly accumulated the courage to lift his quilt.

In the middle of the night, Symeem was about 8–9 °C, and it was enough to make it feel sufficiently cold.

After lying still for a while, Klein stretched out his arm and silently withdrew it.

He contemplated for a few seconds before reaching out his hand again and picking up the Sun Brooch from his bedside table.

Although it only provided the feeling of a hot summer on a spiritual level, and it didn’t produce any actual heat, it could at least deceive himself into thinking that it wasn’t cold.

Klein got out of bed and headed for the washroom.

He narrowed his eyes to ease the pressure on his lower abdomen.

When he was done, he pulled up his pants and was about to wash his hands when his spiritual perception was triggered.

Klein frowned slightly and looked up at the vent in the bathroom.

Suddenly, something black and slippery dropped and hung there.

It was a venomous snake extending its forked tongue!

Klein was startled. He opened his mouth and shouted, “Bang!”

The snake was miserably hit, and it split in half.

What happened? Klein stared at it for a few seconds. Seeing no further movement, he walked out of the bathroom and pulled a gold coin from his pocket.

Chapter 533 - Mr. 4,200 Pounds

◆ ◆ ◆

“There is danger in the inn.”

Klein softly chanted the divination statement, entered Cogitation, and then flipped a gold coin.

Clang!

A faint but crisp sound echoed in the quiet room. The gold coin tumbled and fell, landing in Klein’s palm.

It was tails, indicating a negative response.

No danger… With a frown, Klein looked around and pulled out a bottle of insect-repelling essential oil from his coat on the coat rack.

He sprinkled a circle around him, then he quickly took four steps counterclockwise, entering the gray fog to make a divination for confirmation.

In about ten seconds, he received a revelation—there was still no danger.

Returning to the real world, Klein shook his head; put the gold coin and bottle back; wore his coat, trousers, and boots before sitting at the edge of his bed, leaning back against the pillow as he placed great caution on this turn of events.

He still remembered his Seer principles, especially the one about “divination is not all-powerful,” so even if the answers he received indicated it was safe, he didn't dare to relax and return to his slumber.

This isn't to say that he didn't believe in the gray fog's ability to shield him from interference, but rather that there were too many possibilities. His divination statement might not be accurate enough to cover them all, resulting in his misinterpretation.

He already had a guess about what had just happened. It was that the four adventurers in the restaurant had indeed found the abandoned and forgotten ancient temple in the primitive forest on Symeem Island. They had obtained wealth or cultural relics, but they had also stirred the barely-surviving evil spirits, causing them to be plagued by evil thoughts and curses.

Time ticked by, and Klein suddenly felt a subtle spirituality fluctuation spread out from the room and quickly blend into the surrounding darkness.

The hidden flow that he had barely sensed vanished, and the tranquility of the night returned.

As expected… It's a result of Beyonder powers… It was solved just like that? I'll just wait a little longer. It would be dawn in an hour or two anyway… Even if there really is a problem, this place has a cathedral and a Mandated Punishers team… Klein half closed his eyes and began to engage in Cogitation.

†

Bayam, Amyris Leaf Bar.

Danitz, determined to hoodwink any monitoring, carried a cup of Lanti Proof and drunkenly watched as the girls on the boxing ring danced a hot, sexy dance.

"Dogshit! It's been so long since they've lost a single piece of clothing!" he shouted with the other drunks.

Then, ignoring whether they received any response, they laughed out loud, clinked glasses, and drank.

“Have you read the newspapers?” a man who was fooling around in the bar late at night burped and said to his companions.

“Did your brain get eaten by a donkey? Do you think… Do you think that I can read those twisting and turning letters of the alphabet? Holy Lord of Storms, I’m only interested in this kind of twisting and turning! Hahaha!” His companion raised his glass and pointed at the dancers, laughing at what he thought was a humorous answer.

The man who had spoken earlier smacked the back of his head.

“Steel is dead!

“He was killed by Blazing!”

The nearby Danitz was stunned for a moment, then he sat up, turning his head slightly.

He cleared his throat and took a sip of the liquor, acting as if nothing had happened, but he secretly inched closer to hear what the others had to say about the matter.

The adventurer and part-time pirate who had brought him into the trade had once said that life at sea would’ve been meaningless without liquor, women, and boasting.

“Steel? What Steel? Let me tell you, when I was young, I once defeated a steel pipe!” another drunkard interrupted.

“What did you do to the steel pipe? Should I say something like woah, yours sure is thin!” The first man to speak revealed a knowing smile.

He didn’t wait for a reply as he continued, “Steel Maveti is dead! The second mate of Admiral of Blood is dead!”

The last half of his words came out in a low growl. It frightened one of the fellows who was already wavering to slip to the bottom of the table as he raved in horror, “It wasn’t me, I didn’t do it…”

Dogshit! A bar is always so chaotic! Hurry up and get to the point! I’m waiting for you to praise Lord Blazing! The disguised Danitz couldn’t wait to smash the cup of alcohol in his hand at the group.

“The papers mention that it was jointly done by the Navy and the Church. Steel is dead, Blood Brambles is dead. Even Calm Squall is dead. John Smith and that bunch of assholes have been caught as well!” A drunk who was still a little lucid came over and joined in on the conversation.

“No, no, no! That’s not the truth!” The man who raised the topic first shook his head with a smile. “I have a friend working at the news agency. He told me that he has verifiable intel that cannot be published. The Navy and the Church were only used. The true murderer is Blazing Danitz and a mysterious, experienced, and powerful adventurer, a bounty hunter.”

“Impossible! There’s absolutely no way Blazing Danitz can defeat Steel! Even if it’s a sneak attack, there’s no way he can finish Steel!” A few drinkers shared similar viewpoints.

“The crux is that powerful adventurer. I suspect he’s an adventurer nearing the rank of a pirate admiral!” the man who had started the conversation emphasized. “I’ve no idea how Danitz got to know that guy. Heh, he contributed in the matter. Apparently, Blood Brambles was finished off by him! Didn’t you notice? Blazing’s bounty has increased to 4,200 pounds!”

“That’s right!”

“Really?”

“Blazing sure isn’t simple!”

“What a fierce pirate, no—a great pirate!”

“Great pirates? I really couldn’t tell the last time I drank with him!”

Pui! You son of a bitch, when did I ever drink with you? I don’t even know you! Amidst the exclamations, Danitz thought in delight.

4,200 pounds! If those fellows were to know, they would definitely get up at night to wipe the deck in envy. Hahaha, I can now be said to be the strongest boatswain on the Golden Dream!

At this moment, Danitz wished he could fly back to the ship and drink and brag with fellows like Iron Skin and Barrel, telling them all about the thrilling events in Bansy Harbor—how he had defeated the fallen bishop, how he had cleverly escaped from the ambush of Steel and the others, how he had set up a trap to finish off all his enemies, and how he would never be able to play the card game of life ever again.

Unfortunately, for the sake of Captain, I still have to continue to be the servant of Gehrman Sparrow, that madman… Sigh, I’m already a great 4,200 pound pirate! Danitz sighed, allowing himself to continue to be paralyzed by the alcohol.

†

As the Storm cathedral’s bells rang, the orange sun rose in the sky. The surroundings were still so quiet that only the sound of water could be heard.

Without encountering anything abnormal, Klein exhaled in relief and took off his clothes, returned to bed, and made up for his lack of sleep by sleeping for another two more hours.

His considerable spirituality allowed him to wake up at the scheduled time of 8:30 a.m. He washed up slowly, changed his clothes, and went to the first floor to buy a loaf of bread with cooked chestnuts and a glass of Gurney Sap. He ate as he walked to the dock.

Since he had already bought his return tickets for the 9 o’clock liner, Klein kept watch of the time and prepared to board the ship.

At that moment, he saw the lady with the greenish-gray eyes, as well as the three male adventurers from her team.

They were buying tickets at the ticket office.

The liner is about to leave. They definitely wouldn't be able to make it in time for the 9 o'clock trip… I wonder what they obtained from the abandoned temple, but last night they attracted an existence similar to an evil spirit. Please don't let anything unexpected happen when they ride on the liner… Klein used his body to block the adventurers' line of sight, took out a gold coin, and made a divination.

His revelation was that the later liner wouldn't be in danger.

Klein hesitated for two seconds, looked at the passengers waiting for the ten o'clock liner near the ticket office, rubbed his fingers together in silence, and lit the ticket in his palm.

He went back to the ticket office as if nothing had happened and bought the ten o'clock liner ticket for four soli.

Then, he went to the washroom at the docks, went above the gray fog, and quickly divined his worries.

He knew very well that if the results showed that there were great dangers, he wouldn't take the risk of boarding the ship. Instead, he would find a way to prevent the ship from sailing and destroy it, if necessary, to prevent any innocents from dying.

If the revelation was the same as the divination from before, he would ride it normally while keeping a lookout for any accidents.

In the end, he still received a negative answer.

Klein was relieved and returned to the real world. He adjusted the position of the murloc's bladder for quick access.

If an accident really happened, this Beyonder ingredient would become quite important in the vast ocean.

This Beyonder ingredient could also be used in a rudimentary, simple manner, just like the All-Black Eye which had been contaminated by the True Creator.

†

Ten o’clock sharp.

Klein, in his Gehrman Sparrow appearance, picked up his suitcase, followed the adventurers, and boarded the liner.

Along the way, he appeared to doze off or read old newspapers and magazines on the ship, but in actual fact, he was keeping an eye on the greenish-gray-eyed lady and her companions.

This wariness continued all the way to the port of Bayam, but no accidents occurred in the middle.

Did they resolve all the problems? What did they actually get? Klein stopped by the side of the road, bought the latest newspaper from a newsboy, and watched the four adventurers from the corner of his eye until they disappeared.

Phew… Klein decided to not think about it anymore. As long as it didn’t endanger the overall situation, he wasn’t concerned about what those people had done. He was just a little curious.

He picked up his suitcase, leafing through the papers as he walked down Acid Lemon Street like an ordinary passerby.

Suddenly, with a chuckle, he said to himself, The bounty for Danitz has risen to 4,200 pounds…

If things continued like this, he suspected whether he could resist the urge of sending the fellow to the governor-general’s office.

Walking back to the Wind of Azure Inn, Klein heard undulated snores that were slowly reaching a crescendo before he even took out his keys.

He didn't escape? Klein was slightly surprised, but he wasn't too surprised either.

He had previously tampered with Shadow Cloak, so as long as Danitz left, he could use divination methods to track him down and find the Vice Admiral Iceberg.

Although he's timid, he's still cautious… Klein opened the door and entered, looking at Danitz, who awoke with a start. He grinned a little.

"Congratulations, Mr. 4,200 Pounds."

Danitz was instantly wide awake, wanting to laugh dryly in response, but he couldn't.

At this moment, he felt that his life might be in danger.

Chapter 534 - A Dream Lesson

◆ ◆ ◆

Danitz's worries didn't come true. Klein gave him a look and went into the bedroom to rest.

During the five hours he spent on the liner, he had always been in a highly tense state. He had also been alarmed last night and didn't sleep well as a result. At this moment, he couldn't help but feel exhausted.

With a thud, Klein closed the bedroom door.

Phew… He scared me to death! Danitz relaxed and slumped into the reclining chair.

The scene of him turning into gold pounds had surfaced in his mind a moment ago. He found it difficult to stop having these scenes appear one after another in his mind.

After a moment of silence, Danitz, who had been hanging around the bar until dawn, fell asleep again without realizing it. He dreamed that the captain had arrived to save him, but she had failed. Instead, she got caught by Gehrman Sparrow and ended up becoming a maidservant for this crazy adventurer.

Just as Danitz was outraged and unable to resist, he suddenly saw the blurry scene around him turn clear just as he was about to wake up. The scene froze on the luxurious suite of the Wind of Azure Inn.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Danitz heard a slow, soothing knock on the door.

Wasn't I dreaming? With this question in mind, Danitz walked over to the door and turned the handle.

As the crack in the door widened, he saw a familiar figure.

She was a beautiful lady, with a face shaped like a goose egg, a high nose bridge, thin lips, and a pair of pale blue eyes that resembled clear spring water.

Her long brown hair parted in the middle, tied in a simple but delicate knot at the back of her head as they flowed down.

She didn't wear a hat, only wearing a beige coat which was tight at the waist. Her collar was covered with palm-sized flowers woven from white lace.

Matching her coat was a dark-colored skirt which reached her knees. The pleats of her skirt were connected, looking slightly fluffy. On her feet were a pair of leather boots that shared the same color as her hair.

"Captain!" Danitz cried out in alarm

He hurriedly snapped out of his reverie, turned around and faced Gehrman Sparrow's bedroom while taking a defensive stance.

"Be careful! Run! A lunatic is looking for you! He has a terrifying organization backing him!"

As the feeling of self-sacrifice welled up in him, Danitz heard his captain calmly say, "This is a dream."

Dream… Yeah, I'm dreaming, what's there to be afraid of… Danitz glanced left and right, folded his arms, turned around, and said, "Captain, you simulated the powers of a Nightmare? That can't be right, you were near Sonia Island just last week."

The largest island in this region of the Sonia Sea, which was also the origin of its name. It was almost like a small continent. Originally, it was the only remaining gathering place for the elves after the Cataclysm, but as time passed, this ancient Beyonder race was plagued by all sorts of factors and gradually died out. The occasional sighting of them proved that they hadn't completely gone extinct.

At the end of the Fourth Epoch, the Loen Kingdom occupied this island, but in the Twenty Year War, they suffered a terrible defeat, handing over Sonia Island to the Feysac Empire. That was already more than seven centuries ago.

Sonia Island was situated north-northwest of the Rorsted Archipelago, and it took nearly half a month by ship to arrive there. Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards was still in the vicinity of Sonia Island last week, so it was impossible to reach Bayam within a week. Unless she could fly or use the spirit world to travel.

The beautiful lady whom Danitz addressed as Captain nodded.

"We have just entered the Rorsted seas, still a thousand nautical miles away from Bayam."

In other words, she'll take another three to four days before arriving? That's what I call normal… Danitz curiously asked, "This should've already surpassed the range of a Nightmare?"

Moreover, it far exceeds… he added inwardly.

Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina entered the room and walked towards the table and chair.

"It's not a Nightmare power, but a secret ritualistic magic. It uses an item left behind on the ship to enter the dream of someone very far away…"

Listening to the Captain's meticulous explanation, Danitz instantly felt as if he had returned to the Golden Dream and was beginning his lesson.

I’ve never heard of such ritualistic magic before… Yes, Captain has mastered many strange and rare magic and witchcraft. No one can tell how much knowledge she possesses… She seems to have mentioned that her Sequence name is Mysticism Magister… Sigh, if I had known that she had this “secret technique,” then I wouldn’t have been so frustrated over how to inform her about the unexpected events in Bayam… Danitz interrupted Edwina’s description with a flurry of thoughts.

“Captain, you sensed that there’s a problem with our point of contact over here?”

“Yes, this is another secret technique…” Edwina seemed inclined to describe the specific method in detail.

Seeing this, Danitz hurriedly sighed.

“Poor Old Rinn and the others…”

Edwina stopped walking and turned her back to the window, asking succinctly, “What happened?”

“I’ll have to start from Damir Harbor.” Danitz felt energized, as if his long-lasting depression had finally paid off at that moment.

He described his attempts to recruit Gehrman Sparrow, but he ended up discovering that he was a madman, and he also exaggerated his plight on the White Agate.

According to the rough draft he had prepared last night, he thoroughly described the weird and horrifying situation at Bansy Harbor, including the ambush and assassination attempt involving Steel Maveti. He explained everything about how he joined forces with Gehrman Sparrow for a counterattack and hunt, as well as his own theories about Gehrman Sparrow’s background and powers. This included Creeping Hunger and the secretive, powerful organization.

During this process, he tried his best to restore the truth, only exaggerating the role he played, raising his status from servant or attendant, to an assistant or collaborator.

Vice Admiral Edwina listened quietly the entire time without interrupting him. When he was done, she nodded lightly and said, “He has no ill intentions.”

Him? Gehrman Sparrow means no harm? Danitz quickly said, “Captain, regardless, he’s a dangerous fellow!

“Are you sure he means no harm?”

“I can’t be sure,” Edwina replied very calmly.

“Then why were you…” Danitz took a silent breath, sensing the similarity between his captain and Gehrman Sparrow. They were people who he couldn’t engage in a conversation with.

Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina said with a straight face, “That’s just my speculation and judgment.”

“…”

Danitz rubbed his temples with his right hand. “Anyway, he’s dangerous. There’s a secret organization backing him, and I’ve no idea about the situation of the organization. Captain, I don’t think you should take the risk of communicating with him, even if he claims to have something to ask of you.”

Edwina thought for a moment before saying, “There’s no need to take risks.

“I can communicate with him through you.”

Danitz first heaved a sigh of relief before asking both curiously and expectantly, “Captain, how will that work? Or should I say, what do I need to do?”

Edwina raised her right hand, revealing a stand and a blackboard in her dream.

“I need you to hold a ritual,” she said.

“It’s called a Soulfall Ritual. It allows my soul to pass through the spirit world and attach itself to your body. I’ll be able to converse directly with Gehrman Sparrow. It works on anyone below that of a demigod, with an effective distance of no more than 500 nautical miles…

“It involves reason and communication, and it belongs to the realm of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. You must draw the corresponding symbols and magic labels…

“In mysticism, the Blue Planet corresponds to the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Mercury, brass, lavender, pepper, and mint are needed…

“Blue Planet corresponds to Saturday. The time of the Blue Planet is from midnight to one on Friday, and eleven to twelve noon on Saturday…”

Edwina explained as she wrote the key points to remember on the blackboard, and Danitz instinctively sat down and assumed a listening posture.

As he listened, he suddenly felt at a loss.

Why do I need to attend classes even in my dreams?

†

In the bedroom, Klein, who was sleeping, suddenly jolted awake, having vaguely sensed something.

He got out of bed and listened for a moment. In the living room, although Danitz was snoring, his breathing was calmer than before.

It wasn’t too strange, but it was sufficiently unusual for an experienced senior expert in mysticism like Klein, who had been through a lot.

He softly walked to the door that separated the bedroom from the living room, reached for the handle, and slowly turned it.

Without a sound, Klein walked out of the bedroom and saw Danitz lying in a reclining chair, fast asleep. Everything around him appeared normal.

Klein quietly activated his Spirit Vision and checked Blazing, but he didn't find anything amiss. Whether it was the color of his aura or the changes in his mood, there was nothing abnormal about him, all within a reasonable range.

After watching for a while, Klein frowned and took out a silver charm.

"Dream Charm!"

†

In the dream, Danitz was learning the Soulfall Ritual with a bitter expression. He had no doubt that the captain in front of him was genuine.

No one can fake such a style and hobby!

At that moment, he heard the sound of the lock turning.

Subconsciously, Danitz looked towards the bedroom, where the crack in the door was widening, and Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing only a white shirt, walked out expressionlessly.

"You! How did you appear here!" Danitz shot to his feet, blurting out in shock.

He quickly snapped to his senses and stammered, "Th-this is my dream!"

How is Gehrman Sparrow appearing so easily?!

With one hand in the pocket of his dark trousers, Klein walked toward the woman who had her back to the window and said in a low voice, “A charm.”

Then, looking directly at the woman, he asked almost with certainty, “Edwina Edwards?”

Her attire is a little strange… She doesn’t look like an adventurer, much less a pirate. She looks like a woman with a decent job, someone who can support herself on her own… The style of her attire looks like it comes from Intis… Klein thought, feeling somewhat unaccustomed.

Edwina nodded slightly and similarly replied with a question, “Gehrman Sparrow?”

“Yes, good afternoon, Ma’am.” Klein smiled slightly, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed.

Edwina nodded and replied, “Good afternoon.”

Klein, who was maintaining his persona, stopped talking, waiting for the other side to take the initiative to ask him about his purpose.

†

He looked at Edwina.

†

Edwina looked at him.

†

There was a sudden silence in the dream for several minutes.

From time to time, Danitz looked to the right and to the left, having a baffling feeling that perhaps all of this might really be a dream.

Chapter 535 - Fond of Teaching

◆

Unable to tolerate the situation, Danitz decided to do something about the situation.

He coughed twice and faced Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards and said, “Captain, Mr. Gehrman Sparrow has some questions for you?”

Phew… Klein let out a sigh of relief.

If this stare down continued, he felt as though his persona would collapse.

Edwina gently nodded her head, looked at Klein, and said, “Mr. Sparrow, have you received an education?”

What kind of question is this? Klein’s expression didn’t change as he indifferently replied, “University graduate.”

Ah? Danitz looked at Gehrman Sparrow in surprise, unable to believe the fact that this crazy adventurer and bounty hunter had actually gone to university and even graduated!

He had no way of putting a university—a hallmark of wisdom—with that of Gehrman Sparrow together!

Unless it’s some “Hunter University” or “Killer Academy”… Or a university that exists only in the fantasies of madmen and psychopaths… Danitz couldn’t help but lampoon silently.

Edwina didn’t seem surprised. She continued to ask, “What languages have you mastered?”

“…”

Klein resisted the urge to frown and said, “Jotun, Elvish, Dragonese, ancient Hermes, Hermes, ancient Feysac, Loenese…”

Edwina responded tersely.

“Do you understand the other domains in mysticism?”

Feeling adrift for a moment, Klein felt like he had returned to his previous life’s elementary school days. Due to his age handicap, he had been asked a series of questions by a teacher, such as how many Chinese characters he had mastered, if he had mastered the four arithmetic operations, whether he knew the English alphabet, and how many Tang dynasty poems he could recite…

Calm down… You’re Gehrman Sparrow now… Klein once again said without emotion, “Adept.”

Edwina thought for two seconds and then explained in an unhurried manner, “I have to combine your standard of knowledge with how I would answer the questions so that you can understand the answers more easily.”

This… Klein was surprised to find that the beautiful lady in front of him was nothing like an adventurer acting as a part-time pirate. She was basically a teacher with a cold expression but a kind and patient attitude.

He calmed down after thinking about the vampire that headed for the Church of Earth Mother daily.

This is the first pirate admiral I’m officially meeting. She’s indeed unique… Klein secretly sighed and said, “First question, where do Beyonder creatures appear at sea? The commonly seen ones.”

He didn't directly ask about mermaids, as he didn't want her to see through his real purpose, which would lead to unnecessary accidents.

Edwina thought for a moment and then wiped the "Soulfall Ritual" off the blackboard. She then wrote and drew:

"Set off from Sonia Island, sail 1,200 nautical miles in this direction and you'll enter the depths of the sea which humans have never explored.

"There is a Naga tribe active there. They've been working hard to find the underwater city which is rumored to have a powerful demon sealed within. That's the entity of their faith…"

Edwina spoke in detail, partly from her own efforts to find the treasure itself, and partly from the knowledge and rumors she had exchanged.

It took her awhile to finish the general story, but to Klein's dismay, there were no mermaids anywhere except in the eastern waters of the Gargas Archipelago.

He quickly calmed his mood and said, "Second question, do you know how to remove the mental corruption from a Beyonder characteristic?"

He didn't hide the fact that he knew about Beyonder characteristics.

Edwina's eyes flickered for the first time, as though she had a new understanding of Gehrman Sparrow.

She shook her head.

"I don't know.

"However, I once imagined that it's possible by borrowing the power of an external force and completely crushing the corrupted Beyonder characteristic to reduce it to the smallest specks of light. This way, whether it's corrupted or cursed, they will scatter having lost their vessel. They would rapidly or slowly vanish. As for the shattered Beyonder characteristic, it will gather bit by bit due to their particular traits, eventually taking form again.

“Unfortunately, only gods can do this. If you get the favor of any god, you can try to please ‘Them’ by offering enough sacrifices and pray for a response.”

The law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics… In his mind, Klein filled in what Edwina had purposely left out.

At the same time, he couldn’t help but sigh. This Vice Admiral Iceberg, Captain of the Golden Dream, was extremely knowledgeable in mysticism. She wasn’t worse than him, someone who had read many of Roselle’s diary entries and had experienced many things.

It was said that Vice Admiral Iceberg can replicate or simulate the Beyonder powers of her opponents when they use them in front of her… This is rather similar to Mr. Isengard Stanton’s 2-081 ring… As soon as Klein’s thoughts began to wander, he forcefully reined them back, and he nodded as if he was thinking about something.

“I agree with this hypothesis.”

“Regretfully, I haven’t done it in practice. It’s only a conjecture.” Edwina rarely used a word that described emotion.

Danitz, who had been listening by the side, had a dazed look on his face. He was unable to keep up with the conversation at all.

What are they talking about? What are they discussing? Why do I know every word, but know nothing when they’re strung together… What’s a Beyonder characteristic? What does shattering it do? What does it gathering together represent? Danitz looked left and right, his eyes blank.

At this point, Klein threw out the third question he had thought about.

“Where can you find ancient wraiths?”

He only mentioned this kind of monster because the corresponding ingredients could also be used in the domain of Death. It didn't expose the secrets of his own Sequence.

Edwina glanced at Danitz and said, "I'll keep an eye out for you.

"If you want to attend Bayam's Beyonder gatherings, he knows a few. He can take you there."

Not bad, it's easier to talk to smart people… Klein added, "Do you know where there are people who can make mystical items out of Beyonder ingredients or characteristics?"

"I met one at a gathering, but he never showed up again," Edwina answered frankly. "I have grasped the corresponding knowledge. I can simulate it, but I cannot guarantee the success rate."

Heh heh… I'll wait then… Klein didn't harp on the topic and switched to asking, "How much do you know about Death's Key?"

"Little." An iron black key suddenly appeared in Edwina's hand. It was about the size of a lyre; its shape was ancient, and it had a dark luster.

The pirate admiral said while half-carrying the item from the shipwreck, "If you mean this key, then I can tell you that it belongs to the giants."

Klein glanced sideways at Danitz.

"Your boatswain told me that it can also belong to a dragon or a demonic wolf."

"That was the earliest guess. I've recently found some historical documents. And with the help of the other items on the ship, I have a rudimentary idea." Edwina didn't show any agitation. She was filled with patience, but her expression remained cold.

After finally regaining his sense as the owner of the dream, Danitz curiously asked, "Captain, is it really the giants'?"

"Yes." Edwina gave an affirmative answer. "That batch of documents showed that there were still many giants active in the Fourth Epoch. Some of them had switched faiths to the God of Combat, while the others were left scattered, becoming the hunting targets of the humans.

"One of the tribes built a ship and tried to find the lost Giant King's Court at sea, never to return. The sunken ship we discovered, along with some of the items inside, are very similar to the relics they left behind in their original settlement, so we have sufficient reason to believe that the key belongs to the giants, and it is very likely to be pointed towards the lost Giant King's Court of their race before the Cataclysm."

Giant King's Court? Little Sun said it's not far from the City of Silver… Klein didn't say a word, but he quietly listened to Vice Admiral Iceberg's description.

I have to say, the City of Silver and the Forsaken Land of God are things I know that completely surpasses other Beyonders… Hmm, even the seven gods can't find that place, or they find it hard to figure out the exact situation. In this aspect, I'm stronger than 'Them'… Klein thought about it with a smug and self-deprecating manner before saying in a deep voice, "If I offer a sufficient price, are you willing to sell the key?"

"Of course, unless I acquire additional clues to the Giant King's Court." Edwina continued to speak at a moderate pace.

Very good, if the Tarot Club organizes an expedition to the Giant King's Court one day, I will buy this key… Klein was about to ask the last question when he suddenly remembered the four adventurers.

Relying on the power of the Dream Charm, he conjured the lady with greenish-gray eyes, who wore a man's shirt, and her three companions.

“Do you know them?”

Edwina took a glance and said almost without thinking, “Leticia Dolera, an archaeologist and adventurer.

“Rumor has it that she’s a member from the Moses Ascetic Order or the Element Dawn.”

Moses Ascetic Order… The ancient organization that believes in the Hidden Sage… It really isn’t for money, and their goal is definitely something from the abandoned temple… Klein asked casually, “What do you know about Element Dawn?”

This mysterious organization was similar to the Psychology Alchemists, having been born in the recent one to two hundred years. It combined the elements of various schools of mysticism. It had its own set of theories, and its members were all proficient in spell casting and had mastery in many ancient witchcraft techniques.

Edwina pursed her lips and said, “They’ve always been fighting against the Moses Ascetic Order.

“Rumor has it that the eldest daughter of Emperor Roselle, Bernadette Gustav, established it.”

The Element Dawn is headed by Bernadette? Zaratul’s prophecy is quite accurate after all. She can really be considered an important figure in the Beyonder world… Klein sighed inwardly, feeling somewhat enlightened.

He resisted the urge to sigh and looked at Edwina. He calmly said, “One last question.”

When the beautiful lady and Blazing Danitz’s attention was fully focused on him, he slowly opened his mouth.

“Are you interested in cooperating?”

“What kind of cooperation?” Edwina returned with a question.

The smile on Klein’s face became more and more exuberant, with a hint of madness in it he said, “Hunt Admiral of Blood.”

Chapter 536 - Local Faith

◆

What? Hunt Admiral of Blood? Danitz almost raised his right hand to his ear.

His first reaction was that he had misheard.

However, Gehrman Sparrow's smile with hidden madness and the slight movement of his captain's eyebrows—an abnormality of hers—reminded him that what was said had really happened!

This… This madman Gehrman Sparrow really is daring! This is one of the seven Pirate Admirals. They aren't people that a character like Steel Maveti can be compared with! Danitz's pupils shrank, his heart on the brink of roaring.

Putting aside the fact that Admiral of Blood Senor's own might, just the pirates underneath him are intimidating enough. His first mate, third mate, and the captains of each ship are all capable of independently leading a large pirate crew!

There are still many of the crew which Steel Maveti had brought to Bayam with him in the Blood pirate crew!

When Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos died silently like a wild dog in Backlund, it was mainly because he wasn't with his pirate crew. However, Admiral of Blood Senor is different. He seldom leaves his flagship and rarely leaves the company of his men.

Even if the focus is placed back on Senor's strength, it would still be extremely terrifying. He's mysterious, bizarre, and is one of the few powerhouses at the sea who is second only to the Four Kings. Even Captain might not dare to claim to be his superior… A madman's guts really does exceed my imagination. No, he doesn't know the meaning of fear at all! The death and replacement of a pirate admiral will definitely be a great shock to the Five Seas! One thought after another flashed through Danitz's mind, but in the end, he strangely calmed down.

It was because he recalled that Gehrman Sparrow was a powerhouse at the level of the seven admirals, and there might be a hidden, terrifying organization backing him.

Edwina said after a few seconds of silence, "Do you know of the Rose School of Thought?"

Not only do I know them, I've also killed their people and taken their mystical items… Wait a minute, why do I have to describe myself as a bad guy… Klein converged his smile and said in an unperturbed manner, "I've hunted their members."

Edwina fell silent again. Next to her, Danitz once again had various thoughts: "What are they talking about? What's the Rose School of Thought? Where am I? Whose dream is this?"

After a short moment of silence, Edwina said, "After the huge battle with Vice Admiral Dusk's pirate crew, Senor's crew vanished. At present, no one knows where they are. One will have to wait patiently."

Is this an agreement? Klein once again revealed a smile.

"I do not lack patience.

"How can I contact you?"

Edwina turned her head to look at Danitz.

"He knows how."

Me? Soulfall Ritual? Wait a minute, Captain, you mean I have to follow this madman, Gehrman Sparrow, during this period of time? No! Who knows when this fellow will go crazy! With a start, Danitz quickly opened his mouth and said, “Captain, I’ve already left the Golden Dream for too long. I’ve missed too many lessons! I can’t wait to return!”

He tried his hardest to show his sincerity in his eyes, filling them with the desire for knowledge.

“I believe we can switch to someone else, like Iron Skin and Barrel…”

Before he finished his sentence, Edwina suddenly raised her right hand and pressed it against her ear.

She looked slightly to the side and said without expression, “What did you say?

“I couldn’t hear it.

“Roselle’s Dream Spell is reaching its limits…”

The pirate admiral’s skirt fluttered slightly as she took a step back before her figure quickly turned faint, reducing into points of fragmented light.

The rest of Danitz’s words were left stuck in his throat. He stretched out his right hand in an attempt to grasp something, but he ended up weakly drooping down.

Roselle’s Dream Spell? The Emperor’s presence in the field of mysticism is also quite formidable… The full name of the Vice Admiral Iceberg is Edwina Edwards… Edwards. Isn’t this the surname of one of the emperor’s Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse? A descendant? However, from the tone of Vice Admiral Iceberg, she isn’t familiar with the eldest daughter of the emperor, Bernadette. They might not even know each other… Klein looked at Danitz, whose expression had completely collapsed, and let out a soft laugh.

“Perhaps one day I will call you Mr. 10,000 Pounds.”

“…”

Danitz straightened his back in fright, then he saw Gehrman Sparrow’s figure disappear from his dream.

If I were only Sequence 7 and had a bounty of seven or eight thousand pounds, then I would be targeted everywhere I go… Danitz stood rooted in his dream, his head hurting the more he thought about it.

†

In the evening, Danitz looked at Gehrman Sparrow, who was dressed as a native.

“Today, we’ll be visiting the local faction. We might be able to find some good things there. Heh heh, they have a great need for Beyonder ingredients, food, and weapons.”

At this point, Danitz looked Gehrman Sparrow up and down. It was rare for him to find something that he was better than him at. He said with a smile, “Their area is filled with local people. There aren’t even many people with mixed blood. If there’s even the slightest signs of an abnormality in their clothing, you will be discovered.

“Your pantaloons and brown jacket are fine, but you can’t wear a shirt inside. A real native wears Taraba shirts; they’re similar to Sea Soul shirts, but they’re either all blue or white. They don’t wear caps, headscarves, or anything.

“Also, people like you who look obviously Loenese will encounter very serious discrimination and hostility there, just like a wolf that sneaks into a flock of sheep. You can’t hide your existence at all…”

Before he could finish, he saw Gehrman Sparrow tilt his head and look at him. His deep facial features quickly turned soft. His fair skin was instantly stained with the color of bronze. In just a snap, he had become an undeniable native that didn't stand out in any way.

"…"

After a few seconds of silence, Danitz laughed dryly as if nothing had happened. "Me too. I have to disguise myself."

Your disguise? Heh… Klein took off his cap and sat down.

"What local faction?"

It actually trades Beyonder ingredients, food, and weapons?

"Ahem, to put it simply, ahem— The Resistance." Danitz suddenly wasn't sure if Gehrman Sparrow had any connections with the Loen officials.

Klein was startled for a second.

"Resistance?"

Danitz smiled awkwardly and said, "People who clamor for independence and for natives to administer their local affairs. Their encampment is deep in the woods or at sea. They cooperate with many pirates and adventurers. Of course, the ones backing them are mainly people from Feysac and Intis. Often, there will be priests from the God of Combat and the Eternal Blazing Sun secretly coming over."

Bayam isn't that calm after all… After leaving the kingdom and coming to the sea, Klein finally understood what it meant by an international situation. This wasn't something that could be compared to reading about wars in East Balam from the papers.

He nodded slightly and didn't object to visiting the local faction.

After leaving the Wind of Azure Inn, Klein followed Danitz, whose face was painted black. They went through the streets, heading all the way southeast.

Leaving the confines of the City of Generosity, they entered a zone filled with different architectural styles. The buildings here had raised floors, propped up by wooden pilings. There were three- or four-story buildings that had evolved from the Loen-styled terrace houses.

The roads that split from each other were narrow and dirty, with many stalls on either side. They sold all kinds of headgear, earrings, and accessories made of stone. They were mostly bright red or multicolored.

“What a bunch of strange fellows. They especially like bright colors, just like those venomous snakes in the forest,” Danitz whispered.

As someone from Intis, you aren’t much better either. You advocate the color of gold, and advocate a sense of luxury and exquisiteness, just like a nouveau riche… Klein lampooned.

They passed by a group of dark-skinned, skinny, and shriveled natives, entering the alleys which had clothes drying over their heads. The scene before their eyes suddenly opened up, revealing a small municipal square.

On the square, a group of locals was gathered around the central pond. Some were kneeling, some were prostrating, some were mumbling, and some were singing softly. They had devout expressions, but they looked numbed.

As soon as they realized that someone was approaching, they quickly got up and ran into the surrounding alleys in a flurry.

All the windows on the second, third, and fourth floors of the surrounding houses clanged shut, and the square grew quiet, but Klein’s spiritual perception told him that there were many people behind the windows, around the alleys, in the dark corners, watching these strangers who had suddenly arrived in their world.

Danitz lowered his head and said in a suppressed voice, “Don’t worry, this is their way of protecting themselves.”

“Oh?” Klein expressed his doubts.

Danitz let out a chuckle.

“Before this place was completely colonized, the natives on the Rorsted Archipelago always believed in Sea God Kalvetua. They believed that this deity who appears in the form of a gigantic sea serpent would protect all the islands here, preventing them from being devoured by earthquakes or tsunamis.

“Now that this belief has been outlawed, the Church of the Lord of Storms has been constantly fighting against the heretics. Even the Church of Evernight and the Church of Steam and Machinery are unable to expand their influence here, and there are only a few cathedrals.

“But in fact, how can the faith that has been in place for centuries, if not a millennium, be so easily eradicated? There are still plenty of believers of the Sea God in Bayam, Blue Mountain Island, and the Rorsted Sea. Even if a bunch of people are captured every one to two months, a situation in which they suffer all kinds of extreme punishment, it’s impossible to reverse this situation any time soon. The Resistance’s main pillar of support are the believers of the Sea God.

“In my opinion, it will take at least another hundred years before the faith of the Sea God will be completely eradicated. Of course, that’s under the premise that there aren’t any other disruptive elements.”

Sea God Kalvetua… Its image is of a gigantic sea serpent… As Klein listened thoughtfully, he followed Danitz into a four-story house on the right. He went to the top floor via a narrow staircase.

Knock! Knock! Knock! Danitz knocked on the door to his left.

“Who is it?” someone asked in a low voice.

Danitz replied with a chuckle, “A friend who brings wine and barbecue.”

“Where from?” the person inside asked a strange question.

Danitz stepped back.

“At sea.”

Creak. The door slowly opened and Klein saw a naked arm.

The arm was tattooed with a blue, hideous sea serpent.

Chapter 537 - Excessive Spiritual Perception

◆

Behind the door was a bare-chested man with a hideous blue sea serpent tattooed on his arm and short streaks of red paint painted on the sides of his cheeks, chest, and abdomen, each group formed out of three streaks.

Really exotic… However, aren’t you afraid of being too conspicuous? Aren’t you afraid of being caught by the police while you’re outside? You’re part of the Resistance that engages in secret operations! Klein was about to retract his gaze when he was almost forced to frown by the man’s thick, messy eyebrows and cold-blooded eyes.

He has killed many people… Klein made a rough judgment based on his spiritual intuition.

Honestly speaking, due to his previous life’s identity and knowledge, he initially held a lot of sympathy for the rebels under colonial rule, having no sense of belonging as a Loenese. However, after hearing that the man and the followers of the Sea God Kalvetua basically engaged in the same acts, he became even more wary and repulsed.

This wasn’t to say that he discriminated against the local faith, but rather, he understood that the traditional faith of all the colonial islands was still in a primitive stage that believed in sacrifice. They worshiped with blood, using living sacrifices, and were still in a state of complete ignorance.

In addition, with the experiences of the Emperor and myself, the

Beyonder nature of this world is filled with madness and twistedness. A “deity” still in the primitive stage of sacrifice is basically unable to resist this trend. It’s quite obvious what kind of style they follow… Without a word, Klein followed Danitz into the room.

“Edmonton, who’s here?” A mild voice sounded from the area near the windows.

The tattooed man closed the door and said, “They’ve disguised themselves.”

At that moment, Klein had taken a good look at the situation in the room and gained a basic understanding of it.

The living room wasn’t very large. A cupboard, a table, and a few chairs were enough to make it look cramped.

To the right were two doors leading to what appeared to be a bedroom; to the left was a “kitchen” separated by a cabinet. As for the washroom, there was no doubt that there wasn’t one. When Klein went upstairs, he discovered that there was a common washroom at the corner of each flight of stairs. The stench of them not being washed for extended periods of time urged any passersby to walk up faster.

Directly in front of him was a window. Two bamboo poles hung out and were used to hang a lot of clothes to dry.

There were four or five men sitting or standing in the bedroom’s doorway and the living room. All of them were dark-skinned natives with slightly curly hair. They wore dark blue Taraba shirts and more or less had red paint on their bare skin, and as for the sea serpent tattoo, Klein couldn’t tell if it was there or not because of the clothing.

Some of them had revolvers at their waists, some carrying brownish-red hunting rifles. Some even carried gray steel backpacks and long, thick high-pressure steam rifles. They formed a semicircle around Danitz and Klein, who had just entered the room.

The person who spoke was a wheelchair-bound man in his forties. He wore a jacket and had a blanket over his knees.

He had a shaved head, a slightly green beard on both sides of his face, and his dark brown eyes were calm and collected.

He glanced at his visitor and slowly smiled.

“Blazing.”

Danitz was stunned for a moment before forcing out a laugh.

“Kalat, you have a good eye.”

Dogshit! Am I so bad at disguising myself? he roared inwardly, unwilling to accept the fact.

Kalat ignored Blazing’s insincere praise and instead, chuckled.

“I heard that you killed Steel and Blood Brambles?”

“How else would they be dead?” Danitz retorted without hesitation.

Kalat narrowed his eyes, slowly shifting his gaze to Klein, who had a featureless face.

He knew very well that Blazing Danitz alone would have a hard time killing Blood Brambles Hendry, much less Steel Maveti. His success was rumored to be due to the help of a powerful adventurer, a seasoned bounty hunter.

Is it the person beside him? When he looked into Klein’s eyes, he didn’t see any nervousness, worry, or vigilance. Those eyes were like a deep ocean.

It could very well be… At the very least, he’s stronger than Blazing! He signaled to Edmonton and the others with his eyes, secretly informing them to be on their guard.

“What are you doing here?” Kalat didn’t pursue the subject.

Danitz subconsciously looked at Klein, and after seeing his nod of affirmation, he replied, “Here to see what good things you have to offer.”

Kalat pointed to a table and said, “It’s all placed there.”

There were many strange and different items laid out, including a whistle made of bone, a simple and crude bagpipe, an iron-black leaf, and a rock stained with blood…

Without waiting for Klein and Danitz to examine the items, Kalat clapped his hands and said, “I have a mission.

“If you can complete it, you can freely choose an item from these at no additional cost.”

He laughed and added, “By the definition of you foreigners, they aren’t mystical objects, but they all have some supernatural power, but it will slowly, yes—slowly weaken until it disappears.”

“What mission?” Klein asked calmly, having no intention of hiding the fact that Danitz was only a follower.

He reached into the blanket that extended to his knees and took out a stack of white paper.

“Find out where they are.

“If you can catch them directly, you will get even more.”

He raised his arms and began to display lifelike portraits, including a lady with greenish-gray eyes dressed in a man’s shirt.

Leticia Dolera… Klein recognised who the Resistance was looking for at a glance.

It was the female archaeologist and adventurer he had met last night and had boarded the same ship with this morning. She was suspected to be a member of the Moses Ascetic Order or the Element Dawn.

Danitz looked at it closely for two seconds and found the picture vaguely familiar.

Suddenly, he remembered where he had seen her before.

Gehrman Sparrow had shown it in his dreams!

He had just asked the captain about it in the afternoon, and we're already bumping into something relevant in the evening… Isn't he too resourceful at gathering information? Danitz resisted his urge to glance at the crazy adventurer beside him, afraid that Kalat and Edmonton would notice something amiss.

He was very experienced in this area.

The Resistance, who believe in the Sea God, are looking for Leticia… The faith of the Sea God spreads throughout the Rorsted Archipelago, including Symeem… There was a snake last night… The image of the Sea God is that of a gigantic sea serpent… Klein superimposed the two matters together and quickly came to a preliminary conclusion.

Archaeologist Leticia and company had obtained an important item involving the Sea God in the forgotten temple in the ancient forest of Symeem Island. Hence, it resulted in last night's probing and the Resistance's search!

Klein thought for a moment, then he gave a perfunctory reply, "I'll keep an eye out."

I won't randomly get myself involved in matters related to evil spirits. Of course, if it's necessary, then I will report it to the officials… he silently added a few words inwardly.

Kalat nodded and said, "Take a look first and see if there's anything you want."

Klein walked over and was just about to inquire as he made his selection when he suddenly sensed something and subconsciously looked towards the right side of the item pile.

There was a short sword made of thin bones. It was slightly longer than a forearm and had a milky white body. There were a few dark red deep stripes on it.

It can trigger my spiritual perception… Klein stretched out his right hand in an attempt to pick up the sharp bone sword, that was placed right at the front, to carefully examine it.

The moment his fingers touched the bone sword, cries of despair and pain suddenly echoed in his mind. A thick stench of blood faintly appeared at the tip of his nose, and he seemed to see many distorted and rotten illusory figures that were covered in mucus.

Klein's forehead ached, as though he had been pierced by a needle, and he subconsciously retracted his finger.

A little sinister… It's not a simple item… Klein, who had experienced things far more intense before, only showed a slight change in expression.

He resisted the urge to activate his Spirit Vision, afraid that he would see something he shouldn't.

Noticing this, Kalat exchanged glances with Edmonton and said with a smile, "This bone sword is capable of draining an enemy's blood. It's not bad. Do you want it?"

A little proactive… Klein frowned, relaxed his brows immediately, and then he said in a deep voice, "No, there's nothing I want here."

If Kalat hadn't asked, he was even planning on buying the bone sword and researching it above the gray fog. However, the fact that the man promoted it had left him vigilant. Thus, he rationally abandoned his original plans.

Kalat crossed his hands and said, “It’s not expensive at all.

“Or would you like to look at something else?”

“There’s no need.” Klein’s pupils shrank suddenly as he turned and walked straight towards the door.

Danitz hesitated momentarily before hurrying after him.

Edmonton, who had a sea serpent tattoo on his arm, watched silently. He seemed as if he would reach out and stop them at any moment, but in the end, he didn’t do anything.

They were the powerful adventurers who had killed Steel Maveti and Blood Brambles Hendry!

Once out of the room, Klein stomped down the stairs without saying a word. Danitz ran after him, alarmed.

Based on his take of the situation, he didn’t inquire about the situation and only followed.

The two quickly returned to the square, and the crowd which had gathered once again to either kneel or prostrate scattered once more.

But unlike before, there was a man who had still remained kneeling on the ground, motionless.

Klein didn’t even glance at him as he walked past without stopping.

However, Danitz had taken a subconscious look, only to discover that the man’s face was as dry as a weathered rock.

Pa!

A piece of flesh from the man’s cheek fell to the ground; it was a piece of grayish skin with facial hair attached to it.

He seemed to have lost all the moisture in his body.

Danitz was startled and didn't dare to look again, feeling that things had become strange and dangerous at some point.

The two of them passed through the alleys, left the city, and boarded a rental carriage.

The carriage driver was obviously a native, around forty years old, and his laughter was very pleasing.

But along the way, he didn't say a word. It was so quiet that it made Danitz feel like his heart was beating like a drum.

Klein pursed his lips and remained silent.

The rental carriage quickly arrived at the dock area. In order to change his attire, Danitz got it to stop a distance from Acid Lemon Street.

After getting off the carriage, Klein didn't pay the fare or stop. He immediately took large strides and left, leaving Danitz stunned.

He tossed two soli to the carriage driver and hurriedly chased after Gehrman Sparrow.

After a few steps, he looked back and saw the driver kneeling down with a face full of zeal and devoutness. He leaned over the ground and kissed the ground where Klein had stepped.

Chapter 538 - Dispel

◆ ◆ ◆

What’s happening?

Danitz couldn’t believe what he was seeing.

This didn’t shock him, but it left him inexplicably terrified. It was like jumping into a bucket filled with ice when drunk, feeling a bone-piercing chill permeate his body from the soles of his feet to his head.

What exactly happened? Why did things become so strange? Danitz took a breath, forcing himself to turn his head, and he chased after Gehrman Sparrow.

He found the crazy adventurer walking faster and faster, to the point where he had to run with small paces to keep up.

Crossing the street and through the alley, Danitz suddenly saw a greenish shadow fall from a tree.

Pa! Its body was covered in scales as it twisted its slippery body and had a triangular head. It extended its scarlet forked tongue and was none other than a rather long venomous snake!

Dogshit! Why would there be snakes in this season? Danitz wasn’t afraid of such creatures. He had even roasted snake meat before, but it was the abnormality of everything that left him agitated.

Circling around the coiling snake, Danitz subconsciously looked left and right and found that on both sides of the gutter, in the corners of ruined houses, and on the insides of rusty water pipes, there were pairs of cold, vertical, and different-colored eyes looking out.

Danitz felt a chill run down his spine, as if his scalp had been pierced by a dense array of fine needles.

He didn't dare to stay any longer, nor did he dare to leave. He increased his speed again and followed closely behind Gehrman Sparrow.

Entering the Wind of Azure Inn, he couldn't help but look up as he walked up the wooden stairs, wanting to ask something.

Suddenly, his chest tightened and his breathing stagnated.

At that moment, it was as if he had dived into the bottom of the sea, being pressed down by the heavy torrents of water from every direction.

Whoosh!

Faintly, Danitz heard the rush of the tide and saw a faint, illusory light surround Gehrman Sparrow, as if it were forming an endless, bottomless blue ocean.

Within that ocean, there was an enormous azure-blue figure holding everything up. It resembled a tower.

This… Danitz's right foot stopped in mid-air, unable to lower his foot.

He wasn't unfamiliar with such feelings. Back at the last pirate convention, the King of the Five Seas, Nast, was even more imposing and terrifying than this. Almost all the pirates couldn't lift their heads, and even powerhouses at the admiral rank could only barely resist.

Danitz knew very well that it wasn't a result of Gehrman Sparrow's own powers.

If he was at the level of a demigod, there was no need to include the Mandated Punishers during his hunt of Steel Maveti!

Ocean… Tide… These two terms flashed through Danitz's mind, and he immediately thought of the matter of the Resistance's faith in Sea God Kalvetua.

C-could it be that Gehrman Sparrow suffered the Sea God's curse via an unknown process when he touched the bone sword? The devotee's corpse that lost all its moisture is one of the conditions for the curse's activation? When the carriage driver prostrated and kissed the ground, was it because he sensed the Sea God's aura?

Man… Gehrman Sparrow would probably die here today… Should I stay far away to avoid being implicated? At most—at the very most, I'll come back to collect his corpse…

It might still be possible to save him. I can use the Soulfall Ritual to seek Captain's help. She knows so many different kinds of odd secret techniques. She should be able to resolve this problem… No, Lord. The Soulfall Ritual has a requirement of being within 500 nautical miles. They're still en route, and it will take at least half a day to enter that range…

As he desperately tried to think of something, Danitz stopped panicking and treaded steadily into the luxurious suite with Gehrman Sparrow.

Klein still remained silent, but his dark brown eyes seemed to have a rich azure-blue color that was nearing the color of black.

He went straight to the bedroom and locked the door behind him.

Danitz stood outside, in a dilemma on whether to flee or save the man.

Inside the bedroom, Klein closed his eyes, waiting for the right opportunity.

Suddenly, he took four steps in a counterclockwise manner, chanting a statement with each step.

A wave of manic or high-pitched ravings rapidly rang in his ears as his Spirit Body shot up into the gray fog.

Without a sound, he heard an indescribable, shrill, and painful howl.

Klein appeared within the ancient palace, at the very end of the long, mottled table.

In the motionless gray fog below, an illusory, gigantic azure-blue sea serpent appeared.

It was located in an ancient dark ruin, coiled around a half-collapsed pillar. Its hideous head was raised, and its bloody mouth was wide open, revealing many curved fangs that were even longer than a human's forearm.

On its milky-white fangs, there were layers upon layers of flowing blood and mucus.

This sea serpent madly swung its tail, setting off terrifying waves and ridiculous ripples, causing the entire ruins to sway, as if it was about to collapse.

The scene rapidly shattered and dimmed. Regardless of how the unimaginably large sea serpent struggled, it was unable to turn the situation around. All it could do was let out a long, painful scream in agony as it was reduced to points of light before disappearing into the gray fog.

Klein sat in the high-back chair belonging to The Fool as he quietly watched everything. He didn't make any superfluous actions for a long time.

The gray fog silently spread out, and the scene seemed to return to its eternally unchanging state.

After nearly a minute, Klein leaned back in his chair, sighed, and said the serpent's name, "Sea God Kalvetua…"

After coming into contact with the bone sword, he had already felt the abnormality. And during his conversation with Baldy Kalat, he had keenly discovered that a tiny, weak but extremely cold and sinister energy had invaded his body at some point in time and was slowly corrupting his soul.

Klein made a prompt decision and turned around to leave. He then sensed that there was a connection between the sinister power and his surroundings. It gradually strengthened and slowly connected to an unknown place.

So, as he diverted attention to resist the corruption, he also controlled himself so as to not interact with his surroundings.

Klein believed that as long as he responded to the abnormality on his journey back, it would only serve to intensify the corruption, to the point of making irreversible.

At first, he wanted to find a nearby washroom and use the gray fog's shielding and isolation to remove the cold and sinister power, but after repeated considerations, he decided to leave the area. This was because there were many followers of the Sea God around, and it was extremely likely for an accident to happen.

During this process, Klein grasped another point, which was that if he dispelled it ahead of time, the power projected by Sea God Kalvetua would leave remnants in his flesh and blood. The consequences and effects would be unknown.

He had no choice but to patiently wait for the opportunity to 'purify' himself by waiting for the cold and sinister energy to thoroughly permeate his spirit.

Reflecting on everything that had happened, Klein lightly rapped the edge of the table and muttered to himself, "It's not that strong…"

The Sea God's level was much lower than he had imagined!

His original plan was to use the method that had finished off Amon's avatar to deal with the Sea God Kalvetua's projection which was trying to take over his body. However, even before he had even fused with the Black Emperor card or threw his paper angel, Kalvetua ended up being dispelled by the gray fog directly, without leaving a single trace.

On this basis, Klein concluded that Sea God Kalvetua's level was inferior to Blasphemer Amon—even though it was possible that the latter was more adept at intrusion, but it had only been an avatar.

Was it thrown off its pedestal by the Lord of Storms, or is it not even at the level of an angel. It's just a slightly stronger demigod that can respond to the prayers of its believers within a certain range? Klein recalled and found that Sea God Kalvetua was in an abnormal state.

The foundational existence of this evil spirit is rather weak, as though it can collapse at any moment…

Moreover, it felt like it had fused with the spirit world in the ruins it was in. And it's precisely as a result of this that it was able to escape the encirclement of the Church of Storms?

Klein leaned back in his chair and made a guess.

What happened today is definitely not a coincidence. It stems from Archaeologist Leticia's act of taking away some important artifact in the forgotten temple. It caused Sea God Kalvetua's condition to instantly deteriorate when it was already barely surviving. It made it impossible for it to hold on to its existence…

As it got its believers to track the item, it also prepared to possess another body for its survival. That bone sword should've originated from its demigod body, and it hides a bit of the power it projects. As long as the target is suitable, it will infiltrate the body of the person who touches it, corrupting the soul, and establishing the coordinates. It will then allow its spirit to be transferred over before it dissipates…

But clearly, it's not adept in such matters. Yes, it's not the Snake of Mercury. It's unable to create a closed-loop on itself for reincarnation. It's also not like Blasphemer Amon, who can be a parasite inside a person's soul. To really possess my body, it will directly cause its body to crumble and create a terrifying monster.

According to this logical development, the dying Kalvetua will likely engage in many crazy actions in the near future… Klein frowned. He didn't hesitate as he plummeted into the fog and returned to the real world.

He unlocked the door, opened it, and entered the living room, startling the pacing Danitz.

Danitz looked him up and down a few times and asked cautiously and warily, "Are… you alright?"

Klein maintained Gehrman Sparrow's persona and calmly replied, "It's settled."

Settled? Danitz looked around before glancing at the bedroom, wondering if he had been hallucinating, that there wasn't any Sea God curse.

What did he do in the bedroom? He was lifted from the curse of the Sea God in just a minute or two? Man, this guy has a huge secret… Danitz took two steps back and made way.

†

Beside a table covered with a significant number of miscellaneous items, the wheelchair-bound baldy, Kalat, wore a look of regret as he said to the tattooed man, "What a pity."

"Just a little more… He didn't pick it up, just touched it." Edmonton sighed as well.

Kalat looked at the slightly bent bone sword and fervently said to himself, “When an outsider picks up that holy sword, God will walk the land again…”

Edmonton fell to his knees as well, as though confessing to a deity.

As time passed, both Kalat and Edmonton suddenly heard two miserable shrieks.

They looked up and saw that two of their companions had collapsed. Their skin was like a weathered rock, having lost all the moisture in their bodies.

Kalat and Edmonton glanced at each other and felt a peculiar atmosphere.

Both of them stood up at the same time and looked at the table.

That milky-white holy sword cracked loudly, splintering into countless small pieces.

Chapter 539 - Late-night Operations

◆◆◆

“When an outsider picks up that holy sword, God will walk the land again.

“But what happens if the holy sword shatters?”

These two sentences echoed in the minds of Kalat and Edmonton; the matter was completely in the gaps of their knowledge.

For a few seconds, they stared at the shattered holy sword, their expressions dull while they remained speechless.

They couldn’t believe that the holy sword, which had only been touched by an outsider in the evening, had suddenly shattered!

What does this mean? What does it represent? The two of them didn’t dare to think too deeply about it. They felt as if they had returned to the very beginning. Back then, one of the secret bases of the Resistance had been discovered by the Loen military. They were raided without any warning, and this resulted in their fathers being killed in that massacre. Their female relatives were abducted and sold to different places. Before receiving the grievous news, the feelings Kalat and Edmonton felt that day mirrored what they felt today. They felt heavy, confused, expectant, and unease, all of them mixing to form an intense pressure.

“Return to the forest, find the High Priest, and figure out the reason. Perhaps, this is the latest revelation from God…” Kalat turned his wheelchair and said in a deep voice.

Edmonton immediately stood up, saying to his remaining subordinates, “Continue searching for those blasphemers, but do not stay here.

“Also, instruct the believers outside not to hold any rituals or even pray!”

The unexpected change in events made him extra vigilant.

†

Bayam, in the corner of the street where the Cathedral of Waves was located.

Holding a stack of white folded paper, Danitz turned his head to the side, feeling a mix of nervousness, worry, and puzzlement.

“You mean that I’m to post them in different parts of the street and finally post it on the main door of the Cathedral of Waves?”

He was very afraid that the door of the cathedral would suddenly open and a group of fist-brandishing priests and bishops would rush out, immediately attacking them without even asking why he had posted the poster.

Klein maintained his coldness and said, “Yes.”

His original plan was to hand the matter of Sea God Kalvetua over to Mr. Hanged Man, so that he could warn the Church of Storms. However, considering that he still held the secret of Bansy Harbor, and he might even have reported the matter, it would be easy for him to arouse suspicion with another piece of important information in such a short period of time.

As for the solution, it was very simple. He could post a few posters on the Mandated Punishers’ front door so that they could see it as soon as they came out.

There was a small problem with Klein's plan—he couldn't tell which of the shops around the Cathedral of Waves was the cover identity of the Mandated Punishers. All he could do was make Danitz work a little harder and stick the posters everywhere in prominent spots, including, but not limited to, the front door of the Cathedral of Waves.

…I should've run away earlier… Why would I think that this fellow had saved my life? Perhaps I would've been converted into gold pounds if he were any other powerful adventurer… No, who would've imagined that this lunatic would so easily resolve the Sea God's curse. Fleeing might put me in an even worse state… While lamenting inwardly, Danitz unrolled the pile of white paper and casually glanced at the content.

"After Leticia Dolera and company entered and left the Sea God's ruin in Symeem Island, they were pursued by the Resistance. Meanwhile, Kalat and the Resistance were trying to sell a strange bone sword that looked a little bent. Sea God Kalvetua's body is on the brink of collapse with an extremely deranged mental state."

"…"

Danitz froze for two seconds, then he subconsciously glanced at Gehrman Sparrow.

I can understand the first few statements, but why is there a mention of Sea God Kalvetua being on the brink of collapse and in an extremely deranged mental state… How does Gehrman Sparrow know? Did he discover a problem when he was dealing with the Sea God's curse? And how did he deal with the Sea God's curse? The organization behind him is more powerful than I thought… Could it be that it's similar to the Aurora Order, in which they serve a real deity? The more he thought about it, the more Danitz trembled in fear.

The first time he heard of the Aurora Order had originated from a robbery at sea. Back then, it was the first time he saw his captain's serious expression. After that, he was taught some so-called general knowledge of the mysterious world.

Klein responded to Danitz with an emotionless gaze.

In the poster, he had eliminated any subjective assumptions, and he had only described the matters that could be confirmed with certainty, so as to not interfere with the judgment of the higher-ups in the Church of Storms.

Among them, the content regarding an important item that Leticia and company had taken away was excluded. The lost temple was changed to a broader and more inclusive Sea God ruin. The base was obviously abandoned by Kalat and the others after realizing that something had happened to the Sea God, so it was also left unmentioned.

Danitz suddenly retracted his gaze, afraid to look any further.

Captain said that the more secrets someone has, the more dangerous they are! He thought for a while and worriedly said, "If we stick it on the front door of the cathedral, it will definitely garner immense attention from the Church of Storms.

"Will they discover that I was the one who did it?"

Klein gave a terse answer.

"Yes."

"…"

Danitz forced a smile and said, "Then wouldn't I be in grave danger?"

Klein used his Clown ability to control his expression and calmly replied, "You were already a pirate who has a bounty for your head."

Do you think you can swagger down the main streets of Bayam now? Klein lampooned inwardly.

That's true. No matter what, they will still capture me and claim my bounty… No, there's something wrong with that! Danitz blurted out, "But my bounty will increase!"

Klein looked at him, but he didn't say anything. All he did was grin a little.

For a moment, Danitz thought he heard a rhetorical question.

Isn't this a good thing?

A good thing for a donkey to kick! With a dry chuckle, Danitz took the pile of posters and, taking advantage of the heavy winds and late night, posted them in prominents spot on the street near the Cathedral of Waves.

It really looks like posting a small advertisement… Klein, who had one hand in his pocket, observed from afar and commented inwardly.

He sighed and thought, It's good to have an assistant. At least, I don't have to do something that tarnishes my reputation… If I were in Tingen or Backlund, if something like that had happened… the scene would be was too beautiful to imagine…

Danitz finally reached outside the Cathedral of Waves, plastered the poster on the front door, clenched his fist, and pounded on the door.

After finishing all of this, he turned around and ran, as if there were ten Mandated Punishers running after him from behind.

Klein didn't dare to be negligent. He pulled out a paper figurine, shook it off, and burned it to ashes before briskly walking to another street.

After his recent encounters with the Mandated Punishers, he had a deep understanding of their style, and he didn't dare to be the slightest bit careless.

It was only when they were far away from the Cathedral of Waves that they slowed down and regained their normal walking speed.

Danitz had a good constitution; his face wasn't flushed nor was he panting.

He was slightly puzzled and asked, “Why didn’t you just write to the police or throw it in the governor-general’s office?”

Before Klein could reply, he had already realized why.

That’s right. The lower-ranking police and the staff of the governor-general’s office are locals. They might very well pity the Resistance or might be clandestine believers of Sea God.

As they were talking, they turned a corner and saw an extremely large red building in front of them. The inside was brightly lit and music could be heard from within. People and carriages streamed in and out the door. It didn’t exude any vibes that it was late at night.

“Ha, we actually ended up walking here.” After a second of hesitation, a smile appeared on Danitz’s face, a smile that all men understood.

Red Theater? Klein, who was rich in theoretical knowledge, suddenly came to a realization.

Danitz laughed mischievously.

“This is one of the most famous places in the entire Sonia Sea. There are mysterious and flirtatious Balam girls, passionate Feynapotter girls, open and alluring Intis maidens, tall and graceful Feysac ladies, conservative and quiet Loen women, gentle and docile natives…”

This fellow knows a lot… He comes often? Klein swept a glance at Blazing and said nothing.

For some reason, Danitz felt as though he had been seen through, and he immediately laughed awkwardly.

“This is what pirates talk about when bragging. I’ve only been here a few times.

“I didn’t have much money in the past. I could only find some average ones, and it’s mainly in the area of the Fog Sea. Afterward, I joined the

Golden Dream…"

No wonder… Although Vice Admiral Iceberg's men receive quite good employment perks and often get to share in the treasure, it's still quite difficult to save up a few houses in Bayam… Compared to the typical pirate, this guy at least knows temperance and saves his money… Klein thought in enlightenment.

Danitz didn't wish to continue on the topic as he changed the topic.

"There are a lot of street girls in Bayam, especially there."

He pointed into the distance and said, "There was once a pirate who did an experiment. He randomly knocked on a family's door, produced some money, and requested to do it with the mistress once. In the end, three to four families out of the ten agreed. Tsk, if it's someone like you, who has the standard Loen look, almost no one will refuse you. They might secretly hide their daughters to prevent you from discovering her. Heh heh, Loen's Navy would commit many murders and rapes here every year; they aren't any better than the pirates, but they would only be sent back to the country, and pay some small fines."

Klein listened quietly, and he suddenly thought back to the evening when the believers of the Sea God were praying around the pool. He thought back to their feverish and numb faces.

†

Backlund, within the Odora family's villa.

Emlyn White, who had taken the initiative to expose certain problems about himself, nervously followed Cosmi underground. He once again arrived in the gray stone hall where the black iron coffin was kept.

"Esteemed Lord Nibbs, why have you summoned me?" Although Emlyn had rehearsed this scene in his mind dozens of times, he still couldn't completely remove the tension and apprehension in his heart.

In this state, he suddenly understood a problem. From the viewpoint of theater studies, the role he was acting as should hide his worries and fears.

There's no need for any special concealment… I did well! Emlyn was suddenly much calmer.

A deep, aged voice sounded from the coffin that was covered with symbols and magic labels.

"To reward you.

"For the Ancestor, you risked your life to pray to The Fool. Although you didn't receive a response, you bore an enormous risk. This is an act that needs to be rewarded.

"Here is an acceptance draft for 7,000 pounds, a reward for you. I didn't give it to you in a timely fashion due to the Great Smog of Backlund, but it's never too late.

"At the same time, you must always be aware of yourself and not relax. If anything abnormal happens, immediately inform Cosmi."

He really gave me money… Emlyn almost forgot to close his mouth.

Chapter 540 - Suppression

◆

Even when Emlyn White left the Odora family's underground region, he still found things surreal. He couldn't believe that he could so easily be rewarded with 7,000 pounds.

The acceptance draft was light and weightless in his hand, but he felt the absurdity of reality.

The Hanged Man's method was really effective… Instead of exposing me and punishing me, Lord Nibbs gave me a generous reward. And this was done solely to feign ignorance while encouraging me to make attempts so that he can observe in secret… Are the thoughts of the Sanguine that complicated as well… Emlyn sighed, his mind feeling adrift.

Quickly, he stopped his thoughts from wandering and turned his attention back to the reward of 7,000 pounds.

With this, I can buy that baron's remains from The Hanged Man and concoct it into a potion…

I'll soon become a baron—Sanguine Baron, Lord Emlyn White!

Emlyn's eyes lit up as his footsteps turned significantly brisk.

Within the Sanguine, if one wasn't bestowed the corresponding ritual by the elders, they would remain stuck at the same level they were at during birth. It was almost impossible to rely on time to advance.

Unless one was extremely lucky, having an ancestor of the family that was nearing the end of their lifespan such that they had no choice but to bestow their powers to a descendant through a ritual, most of Emlyn's Sanguine peers would remain stuck in the concept of "adulthood." There might not be any chance of them obtaining an "aristocratic title" for decades.

Emlyn's father and mother had lived for years, but they had yet to become barons up this very day. They couldn't even see any hope of becoming one!

As Emlyn walked out the door, he couldn't help but glance at the nearby Cosmi Odora.

This elderly Sanguine who has been active in the Roselle era has only been a baron up to this day… And I am about to reach this rank as well! One day, I will become a Sanguine Marquis like Lord Nibbs! No, a duke, or even a prince! Only by doing so will I be able to shoulder the responsibility of being the Sanguine's messiah… Yes, the baron's remains is only about four thousand pounds; I'll have a lot of money left. I can even buy a few more dolls and give them some new clothes… Emlyn unconsciously straightened his back and began to walk more and more proudly.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick lit some candles and prepared for the sacrificial ritual.

The lightning frequency alternated several times before he finally found an opportunity.

He was very sure that the Chief wasn't be able to keep an eye on him at this moment, because he had left the City of Silver with the little boy, Jack, who had recovered somewhat, and a group of explorers, in search for the so-called route that led from the coast to the destroyed city.

It didn't take long for Derrick to set up everything and say Mr. Fool's honorific name in a reverent, low voice.

He very skillfully and methodically sacrificed the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch needed by Miss Magician, and the Beyonder ingredients designated by Mr. Hanged Man, to the ruler above the gray fog.

There were many cracks on the City of Silver's solid city walls, but they were filled to the brim with black hard soil. Strands of dense weeds grew on them, swaying in the wind like human hair.

All of a sudden, all of them stood up as if they wanted to capture something, but they turned limp without any strength left in them.

†

Early morning, at the Cathedral of Waves.

Alger Wilson, who had come to collect the bounty, heard an important piece of news from the diocese bishop, Chogo.

Leticia Dolera of the Moses Ascetic Order had disguised herself as an archaeologist and entered the depths of the jungle on Symeem Island. It was unknown what she did that inflicted grievous injuries to Sea God Kalvetua, who had been in hiding for years, pushing it to the verge of collapse. As a result, it was frantically searching for an opportunity to survive.

Rumor has it that this evil spirit which calls itself "Sea God" had been discovered by two powerful cardinals of the military a long time ago. After it was defeated by them through the use of a Sealed Artifact, it could only barely escape and hide… This situation has persisted for more than a hundred years. Without any intrinsic changes, why would it suddenly collapse and be unable to maintain its existence? Alger frowned slightly, wondering what the difference was.

A situation deliberately created by the Moses Ascetic Order?

But why didn't they do so in the past hundred years?

To complement one of their other plans?

Between speculation and doubt, Alger suddenly became aware of an important factor.

The biggest and most fundamental difference between the last hundred years and now was that The World had come to Bayam!

Mr. Fool's Blessed had come to the Rorsted Archipelago!

Does his appearance anywhere indicate that something big is about to happen or is brewing? Previously, it was the Great Smog of Backlund, and there was the abnormality in Bansy Harbor. Now, there's the dying struggle of Sea God Kalvetua and the unknown plot of the Moses Ascetic Order… No, to be precise, wherever a major problem is brewing or about to happen, Mr. Fool's Blessed will be there! They accept Mr. Fool's arrangements and pursue the activities of those secret organizations, the evil gods, and angels! As soon as his train of thought changed, Alger was suddenly enlightened, feeling as though he had grasped the truth.

It's not that things happen wherever The World is, but that The World and the other Blessed will appear when something is about to happen!

What good does this bring to Mr. Fool? Is it a plot solely to destroy the enemy's schemes, or does it help "Him" lift his seal and release more power? Alger held back his doubts and decided to seize the opportunity to submit some intel from before.

He clenched his right hand into a fist and pressed it against his left breast. He said with a look of hesitation, "Your Excellency, while pursuing the remnant forces of Steel, I heard a piece of intel."

"What is it?" Chogo had originally planned to send this bishop-ranked captain out into the sea to search for traces of the Resistance, but he was forcibly interrupted by him. For a moment, he felt irritated.

Alger “recalled” and said, “Someone mentioned Bansy Harbor in a conversation. They mentioned that an abnormality had happened there, but the descendants of the Medici family were well hidden and didn’t end up being discovered.”

Bansy Harbor, abnormality… Chogo took a step forward and pressed, “What else did they say?”

“Other than mentioning that there was a fallen bishop of the Church, nothing else. Your Excellency, is the Medici family a dark family of the Fourth Epoch?” Alger asked deliberately.

Chogo’s expression sank.

“That’s not something you should know.

“I’ll report it to His Eminence Kottman at once.”

Kottman was a Church of Storms Cardinal, the Archbishop of Rorsted Sea, a high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers, and the true ruler of the Beyonder world in the archipelago, Jahn Kottman.

Chogo thought for a moment before asking, “Who was the person who mentioned this? What does he look like?”

Alger was long prepared.

“I don’t know them, and they never showed up again.

“I remember that the person mentioning Bansy Harbor and the Medici family was an ordinary-looking, young man with a thin face, a broad forehead, black eyes, and black hair. He wore a monocle.

“He seemed to notice that I was eavesdropping but he didn’t show any anger. Instead, he smiled at me.”

Alger had been describing Blasphemer Amon!

He wanted the cardinals to believe that the exposure of the secret regarding the Medici family and Bansy Harbor was the result of a struggle between the Kings of Angels.

This is really a suitable person to use as a reason… "He" wouldn't appear to defend himself, and even if "He" did, no one would believe it… And clearly, any divination regarding him would have zero results… If Beyonder means are used to confirm my information source, there will be strong signs of interference from Mr. Fool, and they won't be able to get an accurate answer. From the looks of it, this is equivalent to what Amon did… Alger thought with considerable relief.

Chogo nodded lightly.

"Find these people and trace the whereabouts of the Resistance."

"Yes, Your Excellency!" Alger answered with a look of piety and struck his right fist on his left breast.

†

Dark clouds covered the sky as the rain fell down in torrents, creating white fog in the process.

In the port of Bayam, the blue water rose slowly but firmly, and the freighters and liners rocked like leaves fluttering in midair.

The rain continued to fall, and the sea level gradually approached the dyke. The city was flooded with water in many places, and the environment was greatly suppressed.

One by one, the fanatical and numb locals, in their Taraba shirts and tattered jackets, came to the edge of the cliff or the dyke before jumping into the sea.

Their flesh and skin rapidly lost moisture as they fell, and they were already desiccated corpses by the time they fell into the sea.

A group of people were rioting as they hugged a Navy sailor who was walking out of a base. They angrily bit him to death with their teeth, reducing him to a mangled, bloody mess and caused chaos on the streets.

Whoosh!

Boom!

The dyke collapsed, and the rising seawater poured into Bayam City.

When Klein jolted awake, his mind was filled with the scene from his dream.

For a Seer, this was a very clear revelation!

Sea God Kalvetua has failed to find a way to survive and has completely given up, resulting in it going completely mad. It wanted to create a storm, stir up a tsunami, and drown the Rorsted Archipelago so that countless can join it in death? At the same time, its devotees are starting to do extreme acts… I've already informed the Church of Storms. They'll likely be able to stop it… No, even if I didn't inform them. They'll definitely be able to sense a problem with the appearance of such a situation. They would then make the necessary response… Klein rolled to his feet, wore his clothes, and walked out of his bedroom.

He saw Blazing Danitz standing by the window, looking out.

He saw the clouds hanging low as rain poured down, as though it was endless.

A sign has appeared? Klein walked over to Danitz, who was also looking out at the repressive weather. He could faintly hear the abnormal sound of the tide.

In the midst of silence, the sound of explosive thunder suddenly rang out in the air. The leaden-colored clouds quickly split apart, and the falling rain lost its source. In the direction of the docks, everything returned to normal.

The morning sun shone down from high up in the sky, bathing Bayam in holy light.

Danitz hissed and said to himself, “Jahn Kottman changed the weather…”

Jahn Kottman… The Church of Storms Cardinal and high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers? He suppressed Kalvetua’s powers? Klein retracted his gaze while in thought.

Danitz heaved a sigh of relief.

“I was rather worried just now. Heh heh, afraid that the Sea God whose on the brink of a breakdown would create a disaster.

“But there’s Jahn Kottman.”

Seeing that Gehrman Sparrow was silent, he continued adding, “At sea, even the King of the Five Seas and Queen Mystic won’t be his equal.

“Captain said he’s a Sequence 3 demigod. The potion’s name is…

“It’s… Sea King!”

Chapter 541 - Visitor

◆◆◆

Sea King… Upon hearing the name to Jahn Kottman’s Sequence, the first thing Klein thought of was the complete honorific name of the Lord of Storms: “The King of the Skies, the Emperor of the Seas, the Lord of Calamity, the God of Storms!”

Sequence 3 is Sea King… Sequence 0 contains the elements of Sea Emperor, so it does match well… I wonder what Sequence 0 of the Storm pathway is called… Klein looked out the window again and saw that, although the weather was still gloomy, the morning sun was up. The sound of the tide had retreated, and the rain had stopped.

He pulled back his thoughts and analyzed the situation from the information that Danitz had revealed.

The potion name is Sea King, which means that the corresponding Sequence 3 demigods, Saints, have to act as a Sea King. And all acting has one premise, which is that one possesses all the powers needed…

As a Sea King, he would definitely be a powerful ruler of the seas that he controls even if there’s a distance limitation. He would be able to walk freely on the seabed, cause tsunamis as he wishes, raise the sea level, and control marine life… Fighting in their “home ground,” they’re absolutely capable of suppressing all demigods of the same level… The King of the Five Seas and Queen Mystic are roughly at this level as well. It’s just that there are differences in strength because of the different degrees of digestion and their grasp on their powers?

But no matter what, as long as they’re at sea, Sea Kings are nearly unbeatable…

With the abilities displayed by the Sea King, coupled with the oceanic environment, if one hasn't seen the Eternal Blazing Sun, True Creator, and other true gods, it's not incomprehensible that people would worship him, believe in him, and pray to him…

Many of the deities who received primitive worship might be at this level. They might not even be angels…

Yes, "do not look directly at God" refers to a true deity. Previously, Sea God Kalvetua didn't give me such a feeling, nor did Amon's avatar. Of course, I can't be sure if the actual body of a King of Angels has some kind of attribute that also doesn't allow one to look directly at them…

One is a Sea God who's on the verge of collapse and at most, a Sequence 3, while the other is a Sea King who is in good condition and is able to use Sealed Artifacts at any time. The outcome is obvious. Jahn Kottman would definitely be able to suppress Kalvetua's madness to prevent the sea from drowning Bayam. He would prevent the entire Blue Mountain Island and its many cities from turning into a lost sea ruin…

Just wait a few more days. Kalvetua's madness will completely dissipate which will end up resolving the matter. This is the simplest and most effective way to deal with the situation, and it wouldn't bring about any panic at all. Most people here wouldn't even detect anything amiss.

However, there are also some problems. Firstly, there shouldn't be any other accidents. It's a mystery what that archaeologist, Leticia, did in Symeem Island. She had single-handedly orchestrated the death of the Sea God. Perhaps the forces backing her—either the Moses Ascetic Order or the Element Dawn—might take the opportunity to seek something. This is the greatest dormant danger. Yes, there should also be a High-Sequence Beyonder in the governor-general's office and the military. This is a colony base the kingdom has in the Central Sonia Sea… Things won't turn out to be too bad…

Then, there are the fanatical believers who will most likely become sacrifices as Kalvetua becomes madder and closer to its death. They are like stalks during the harvest, falling down in bunches.

However, for the Church of Storms, this isn't too bad of a development. The most pious of the heretics would die with their deity, which would save them the trouble of screening and handling them. If they aren't too pious, they wouldn't be affected too much, and it's possible to reform them… The only drawback is that the Rorsted Archipelago would be lacking in manpower for a long period of time. Although such a problem is troublesome, as long as they grit their teeth, things can be resolved. Thus, the Church of Storms, Sea King Jahn Kottman is more likely to sit back and do nothing… Phew, I wonder how many people will die in the native enclaves and slums because of this… Klein's thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a uniform set of footsteps and a roar high in the sky.

Instinctively, he looked up and saw airships painted in dark-blue, with several cannon muzzles and machine guns sticking out, fly past him as they headed in different directions.

On the main street, soldiers in red coats, white pants, and black leather boots were lined up in neat rows. They were carrying rifles and dragging cannons as contingents of them moved past.

The tense and solemn atmosphere suddenly spread.

This is a colony… Klein inexplicably felt mixed feelings as he sighed to himself.

"I wonder how long it will take the Church to get rid of that sea serpent and find the place where it's hidden. That place is definitely a treasure trove with countless precious items…" Danitz, whose main job was a treasure hunter, suddenly spoke, appearing both expectant and full of regret.

His attitude had changed extremely quickly. He had already reduced the

Sea God to a sea serpent, using “it” as a pronoun.

The Church won’t do anything other than keeping the matter suppressed. They’ll see Kalvetua perish just from waiting for a few days… Of course, members of the Church of Storms might not have that kind of patience, especially when I’ve heard that Jahn Kottman’s main job is being a high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers. It’s just that with the archipelago isolated overseas, he also works part-time as a cardinal to unify his authority. Perhaps his style of doing things is more like that of a Mandated Punisher… The place where Kalvetua is hiding? That ruin is almost integrated into the spirit world. Finding it wouldn’t be so easy; otherwise, it wouldn’t have led such an abject existence until today… At this thought, Klein suddenly had an idea.

Finding the ruin where Kalvetua is hiding would be very difficult to find from the real world. Since it has already perished, it’s not something that can be found in a year or so, unless more accurate information is obtained.

But if the search was done from the spirit world?

The spirit world would make it even harder to pinpoint its location, but it doesn’t completely lack options. Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin had once done so with the help of his folded crane… I still have no idea how to do that exactly, but that’s not important. I can ask Mr. Azik. Death’s domain controls part of the authority of the spirit world… The Underworld, or should I say “Hell,” was created by Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace in the spirit world… A thought flashed through Klein’s mind. He took out the ancient and exquisite copper whistle, put it to his mouth, and blew into it.

He believed that even if he returned to the bedroom or entered the washroom, the messenger’s massive body would be discovered by Danitz, who similarly had a nontrivial spiritual perception, so he didn’t avoid him.

Danitz was imagining the treasures of Sea God Kalvetua when he suddenly felt a chill at his neck.

He felt something inwardly, and he quickly activated his Spirit Vision before looking to the side. There, he saw white bones spewing out from the floor and flying upwards, forming a giant skeleton with an illusory head that pierced through the ceiling.

The skeleton slightly lowered its head; its two pitch-black flames at its eyes were visible even through the ceiling.

The oppressive feeling brought by its massive body made Danitz jump to the side. His body was half-bent, and he conjured a scarlet flame in the palm of his right hand.

What kind of monster is this? Danitz looked at Gehrman Sparrow in surprise, only to see him holding a copper whistle and lifting his head as he looked at the skeletal monster.

Klein looked up at the huge messenger as the huge messenger looked down at him. Both parties seemed frozen in place.

…Tsk, I was too anxious. I summoned the messenger before I even wrote the letter… Should I make it stay here or let it return first and let it come back later? I'm Gehrman Sparrow now, yes—Gehrman Sparrow! Klein didn't say anything. He indifferently withdrew his gaze, took his time to find a pen and paper, and he began to write the letter.

He gave a general description of the matter regarding Sea God Kalvetua, but he concealed the fact that he had nearly been possessed and how he had to borrow the gray fog to dissipate the curse. He mixed in information about Kalvetua's ruins, where it hid, when describing the dream he just had.

"…Perhaps, a solution can be produced using the spirit world, but I lack the corresponding knowledge and hope to receive your guidance."

Klein folded the paper and turned to see that the messenger's hand had clenched at some point in time.

He pretended not to notice anything and threw the letter up.

The messenger paused for a second, then it opened its hand and caught the letter.

Its body suddenly disintegrated, and its bones crumbled down, drilling into the floor.

“What… What was that?” Danitz finally uttered a sound.

Klein glanced at him and replied calmly, “Messenger.”

Messenger? Danitz was stunned for a moment before understanding what he meant.

Such a huge and terrifying monster is actually a messenger used for delivering letters? Indeed, there’s a powerful secret organization behind Gehrman Sparrow! I-if I had such a messenger, everyone on the ship would envy me. It would be really, really cool! Danitz thought of how he would brag and flaunt his messenger when he returned to the ship.

Putting away Azik’s copper whistle, Klein got a chair and sat down, prepared to eat breakfast in a while.

After a while, he heard knocking at the door.

Danitz warily went over, and with the help of the peephole, he noticed that the person at the door was a middle-aged man with a boat-shaped hat.

“Elland? How did you find this place?” Danitz asked as he opened the door.

The visitor was the captain of the White Agate, Just Elland.

With wrinkles at the corner of his eyes, Elland looked into the room and chuckled.

“When you were checking into this hotel, you used Gehrman Sparrow’s name for the registration. It's easy with a look."

That's because this identity is quite proper and innocent. Besides, in the eyes of the Church of Storms, I belong to the military… Klein slowly stood up and said to Elland, "What happened?"

Elland pointed outside and said, "Bayam met with an accident, but it's not a big problem. The military has joined forces with the Church, and they're currently conducting a search and arrest operation throughout the city. They're searching for a few powerful Beyonders who are archaeologists in name.

"In order to find the target as soon as possible, the military has used all their resources, but it's still not enough for such a large city. Heh heh, they believe that although you're of unknown origin, you're very friendly to us. They hope you can help with the search and prevent any accidents from happening. The corresponding remuneration will be available after the matter."

This is all thanks to you for exaggerating my degree of friendliness… That is to say, after the Church of the Goddess and the Church of Steam and Machinery, I can once again receive money from the military? For a moment, Klein felt mixed feelings.

Seeing that he didn't answer immediately, Elland added, "Although there won't be any major problems, the earlier we find the target, the earlier we can control the corresponding disaster.

"And perhaps that might save a few more people."

Klein fell silent for a moment before gently nodding.

"Okay."

Chapter 542 - Bayam Under Curfew

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Seeing Gehrman Sparrow put on his coat and hat and pick up his cane, Danitz recalled that he had apparently been forgotten.

He coughed once, and under the gaze of two pairs of eyes, he said, “D-do I need to follow?”

It’s best not to… Who knows what would happen! Before this, we had only stopped at Bansy Harbor, but we ended up encountering a rather strange situation. Last night, I brought Gehrman Sparrow to visit the Resistance’s liaison and ended up being involved with the Sea God’s curse. Today, if I were to follow this madman to search for Leticia and the other archaeologists, then who knows what would happen? Danitz looked down and glanced down at his left arm which was still tied with a splint. In a matter of days, he felt that he had encountered more events than he had in months or even half a year.

“You can stay here, but someone will be here for the sweep later.” Elland laughed.

Someone will sweep this area? And then the great pirate Blazing would be caught and turned into gold pounds? Danitz frowned and laughed dryly.

“Aside from the reward, there aren’t many opportunities to earn money from the military. I’m very willing to give it a try.

“The only problem is that you’ll have to wait a few minutes. I’ll don a disguise, Mr. Captain. I don’t want to put you on the spot by causing unnecessary misunderstandings."

If I don't disguise myself, for a great pirate like myself to engage in operations with the military and the church, it will only result in me being captured immediately… Danitz imagined himself being pressed down, having a knee crushing his back, struggling like a catfish.

After thinking for a few seconds, Elland took out an iron-black mask from his inside pocket and tossed it over.

"Just put it on. I will explain the rest."

Yes, there's no need to waste time on useless disguises… Klein evaluated inwardly.

Without a word, he turned the handle and walked out of the room.

Elland followed close behind, and Danitz hurried to catch up with them as he grabbed his coat and put on the iron mask.

[image]

When they reached the street where there was a lot of flooding but no pedestrians on the streets, Klein pressed down on his hat and asked, "How do we start?"

Elland laughed.

"In regions.

"My Beyonder job has some special characteristics. As long as I see the person in the flesh, in a photo, or a sketch, then I'll be able to firmly remember the target's appearance and obtain an additional sense on an extraordinary level. Yes, I can also detect any abnormalities and grasp indistinct traces. When put together, it allows me to do investigative sweeps in a rather effective manner."

Sequence 8 Sheriff of the Arbiter pathway… Klein nodded thoughtfully and asked as they walked, "Do you have their belongings?"

The poster Danitz had posted last night had a portrait of Leticia attached to it. Klein had used ritualistic magic to pray to himself and produce it.

“No.” Elland shook his head. “We have yet to learn of their previous whereabouts. The only things that we can confirm is that they didn’t return from Symeem Island until around 3 p.m. yesterday. And after 2 p.m., no passenger ships left the docks. And that due to the weather this morning, only entry is permitted.”

In other words, Leticia and company haven’t left by boat yet… Klein understood what Elland meant.

Danitz suddenly let out a sneer.

“That doesn’t mean anything. Maybe they left Bayam yesterday afternoon and went to the other cities on the island.”

Blue Mountain Island was the largest island in the Rorsted Archipelago. It was very large in size and had dense forests and rich mineral resources. Therefore, there were many cities on the island, and they were all built around fertile land with astonishing mineral resource reserves.

For this wealth, the Loen Kingdom first bribed the indigenous princes, then forced them to use force, and finally set up the governor-general’s office. In a more efficient manner, it opened wide roads leading to cities and completed several important railways—this was in the form of establishing a corresponding railway company to sell shares and raise funds on the Backlund Stock Exchange.

Of course, these large projects were accompanied by the deaths of many local people, sinister construction workplaces, excessive work, almost slave-like treatment, and a fairly modest salary, which allowed bodies to be buried one after another under the roadbed and railroad ties.

To this day, a large number of locals still loathed the railway, believing that it had swallowed a large amount of human life and brought about countless suffering. It was the symbol of an evil god and devil.

Elland turned his head to glance at Danitz and said, “If they leave by land, then there’s nothing to worry about.”

“Why?” Danitz asked, puzzled.

It’s very simple. The roads that lead through the forest are controlled by the Resistance, and the majority of the Resistance are believers of the Sea God. Hence, how would Leticia and the others, who were responsible for Kalvetua’s breakdown, dare to pass through these regions at night? If they dared to, then it can only mean one thing; they didn’t realize the severity of the consequences of what they had done in the Sea God ruins on Symeem Island. This also negates the conjecture that either the Moses Ascetic Order or Element Dawn has other motives… Klein controlled the urge to shake his head, and he followed Elland into another street.

Without explaining anything, Elland took out a notice and handed it to Gehrman Sparrow.

“The main target is this woman.”

I drew this woman… Klein glanced at it before tossing it to Danitz.

At this moment, they heard the intense sound of fighting coming from the side room.

“She has been found?” Danitz asked the question Klein wanted to ask.

“Probably not.” Elland shook his head. “According to the orders, the first thing to do when discovering the target is to release red fireworks. Once it appears, everyone will close in on that location. If one encounters other wanted criminals who they cannot handle alone, they are to release orange fireworks. Surrounding teams would rush over to reinforce them. If they’re ordinary pirates or criminals, we are to handle them ourselves. Let’s wait. Perhaps, it’s because the fireworks couldn't be released in time…"

While he was talking, the glass on the third story of the house facing the street shattered with a crack. A bear-like brawny man jumped down. His speed was extremely fast as he ran into the distance like a cheetah.

At this moment, an enormous shadow enveloped him, and gatling sounds came from the sky above.

The brawny man's body was almost torn apart by the machine gun fire as he fell to the ground without putting up any resistance. Blood flowed out and dyed the ground red. If the residents weren't forbidden to leave their homes, then they would've screamed.

At some point in time, the airship had floated over, but it didn't stop and had turned toward another direction.

"…Goltadt." Danitz recognized the victim.

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow turn his head over, he forced a smile and said, "This is the leader of a pirate crew. He's from Feysac, with a bounty of 950 pounds."

Feysac… So they really are savages… He actually ran on a curfewed street, completely unaware to be on guard of attacks from above… That's right. Some pirates spent the entire night in a drunken stupor. They have no idea that even airships have been dispatched… If he had planned his escape route, then he might've been able to dodge the machine gun fire… Klein looked away and watched the monster in dark-blue paint fly over the roof.

When Danitz saw the pirate's outcome, he was grateful that he had followed Gehrman out.

Seeing that the alert over here had been lifted, Elland didn't linger any longer and led Klein and Danitz to the area that he was in charge of.

After walking quickly for five or six minutes, they saw a barricade at the intersection in front of them. Guns were mounted and cannons were set up. Loen soldiers in red uniforms stood guard over the area in silence.

On the other side of the barricade, twenty to thirty corpses lay scattered on the ground, forming a vanguard formation.

Their clothes were tattered and their faces gaunt, clearly indicating that they were natives.

A little further away, several young native children were hiding in the corner. They were quietly looking at them in fear. Their eyes were dark and their faces were dirty.

Klein and company fell silent for a few seconds before circling around the area.

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Fors lifted the ceramic cup from the table and felt the heat.

She roused herself and quietly waited for any changes.

The temperature of the hot water dropped rapidly, and a thin layer of ice appeared on the surface of the liquid. White frost appeared on the rim of the cup.

“I’m a Trickmaster now…” Fors closed her eyes in delight.

She didn’t waste any time after receiving the Spirit Eater’s stomach pouch, immediately concocting the potion and completing the advancement. She obtained quite a number of spells with lower potency.

Among them, Fors’s favorites were Fog, Wind, Flash, Freezing, Electric

Shock, and Tumble, which made people slip.

Only at this point did she feel that she was a complete Beyonder. She was no longer someone who could only pass through walls or rely solely on ritualistic magic.

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At almost noon, Elland, with the help of Klein and Danitz, had completed most of the investigation.

“Let’s eat some bread and drink some water before continuing.” He took off his boat-shaped hat and spoke with parched lips.

Klein was about to nod when he saw an orange firework fly into the air not far away.

Without hesitation, Elland put on his hat and ran in that direction.

“I’ll go and support them.”

“Orange means other wanted criminals that cannot be dealt with… Who could it be?” Danitz said to himself with interest.

He switched to a gait of raising his legs high as he proceeded forward, hoping that the battle would be over before he arrived. Then, he saw Gehrman Sparrow follow behind Just Elland, leaving him alone by himself.

Glancing at the “dark-blue monster” flying in his direction, Danitz let out a hollow laugh and quickened his pace.

Two minutes later, they arrived at their destination and saw a house with a lawn facing the street. Three or four military personnel were lying on the ground. Their faces were pale, and their bodies were trembling as if they had been thrown into a frozen lake.

The more Klein walked in that direction, the colder it felt, it was as if he had arrived in the polar regions.

Soon, he discovered that the ditches outside the house were filled with thick snow.

Just then, a burst of female laughter came from inside the house at varying pitches, alternating between craziness and strangeness.

“Hahaha…

“Gyahaahaahaa…

“Hahaha…

“Gyahaahaahaa…”

Danitz couldn’t help but stop and touch his neck, which was covered in goosebumps, with his right hand.

With a clanging sound, the window opened and a charred body flew out.

It landed hard on the ground, as if it were caught in an inferno.

With just a glance, Klein was able to recognize through his spiritual intuition that this was one of the three male adventurers who had followed Leticia.

Chapter 543 - The Reality That Exceeds Expectations

◆

The target appears to have been found… Klein looked away and made a rough judgment.

As there were no portraits, the dead adventurer’s face was burned black, which meant that Elland clearly didn’t recognize this as one of their targets. After observing the situation and listening to the creepy laughter for a few seconds, he pointed to the three or four military personnel lying outside the house.

“Drag them back first, then wait for the other teams to arrive before launching our attack.

“Or…”

He hesitated for a moment, then he raised his head to look at the approaching dark-blue airship.

Without another word, and without instructing Klein and Danitz, Elland ran to the unconscious military personnel whose faces were purple.

Tap. Tap. Tap… The closer he got, the weaker his steps became. In the end, his body became stiff and every step he took became extremely difficult.

Elland, who had been the boatswain of the Imperial Navy, was experienced, He decisively stopped moving forward and turned around slowly, walking back one step at a time.

The more he walked, the smoother it became. However, he was still shaking uncontrollably, his eyebrows and temples were covered in a thin layer of frost.

A quick freezing effect that defies common sense… An extreme cold reminiscent of a disaster… With Elland's attempt, Klein was able to grasp the danger level of this area, and he could only sigh inwardly.

Unfortunately, the Sun Brooch isn't able to produce actual heat. It's only a stimulation of one's mind. Although it can make a body generate clear effects, it will only allow a person to withstand this cold for three to four seconds at most…

Looking at Elland's chattering teeth and how he was unable to open his mouth despite wanting to say something, Klein's gaze swept over Danitz.

He threw his cane and said in a low voice, "Fire."

Fire? Danitz was stunned at first, but he quickly understood Gehrman Sparrow.

He had also witnessed the entire process of Elland's failure!

A scarlet fireball that couldn't be considered bright formed on Danitz's right palm, and he threw it towards the flanks of the military personnel.

The fireball traveled for nearly twenty meters and then landed on the ground without creating an explosive sound. Instead, it quietly rose into the air.

The scarlet pillar of fire emitted sizzling sounds as it continuously shrank and quickly dimmed.

Suddenly, it expanded, as if it was in a desperate struggle before it perished.

Klein, wearing a black tweed coat, jumped out and landed right next to the military personnel.

He bent down and reached out with both hands and grabbed the man's clothes.

Then, he pushed his feet against the ground, exerted strength at his waist, and threw the man out.

The military personnel immediately flew into the air, smoothly flying out before landing ten meters away from the area, escaping the region with the coldest chill.

After doing this, Klein snapped his fingers and lit a match in his pocket before the chill seeped into his body.

The scarlet streams of flames gushed out like water, instantly enveloping him.

By the time everything faded, Klein had disappeared from his location.

Flames leaped out, flickering and extinguishing from time to time. With the help of Danitz's fireballs and his own matches, Klein constantly phased around in the extremely cold area, easily throwing out several military personnel.

After two to three attempts, he carried the last member of the military back to his original position.

Elland had clearly recovered as he gave a thumbs up.

"I'm very glad and honored to have made the decision to ask for your help today."

Captain, I like your tactful praises… Also, remember to raise the remuneration… Klein nodded politely, half turned, and looked at the open windows of the house. He heard the laughter grow stranger.

Danitz pursed his lips to the side and silently cursed Elland.

Did you not see the contribution I made?

Although my fireball has become something akin to a prop for a magic show, it still made actual contributions!

This guy's nickname is Just Elland, but he's not just at all!

As he muttered, a shadow loomed over the area, and the airship had arrived in the air opposite them.

"Evacuate the people in the surrounding houses!" an officer shouted from the airship.

After Elland and two other teams cleared several nearby buildings, the airship lowered its altitude and adjusted its cannon muzzles.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The cannons fired continuously, bombarding the house which was still filled with creepy laughter.

Hearing the explosions and seeing the flashes of flames, Klein sighed as he held his cane.

This is the firepower bombardment he advocated. He had once proposed it in Tingen City but was unable to put it into practice. And today, however, the overseas colonists were producing the real scene before him.

Elland and the others stood guard in different positions under the deafening sound of the cannons, so as to prevent the people or perhaps monsters inside from breaking out.

Soon the house collapsed, and smoke rose from the piles of masonry. All the snow and ice was gone.

Suddenly, a thick bolt of lightning flashed, openly striking the airship.

Klein frowned. He saw that the airship was completely still and heard a steam boiler produce a jarring sound.

The dark-blue monster in the sky lost some control. Significant amounts of smoke began to billow out as it began descending to the side.

Seems like they're being shielded by ammunition and being protected by an outer layer of air… I thought it would cause an explosion, blasting the airship to pieces… Klein turned his full attention back to the collapsed house.

When he initially felt the extreme coldness and saw the male adventurer's charred body, he thought he had met another demoness—one who grasped the Witch potion formula. Having dealt with demonesses several times, he knew that Beyonders of this pathway could control ice and black flames from Sequence 7.

But that flash of lightning had made him reject this judgment. He believed that Leticia was indeed a member of the Moses Ascetic Order or Element Dawn, a real woman.

The moment Klein arrived at this conclusion, the pile of bricks and wood were immediately lifted away. The bright red and charred figure crawled out, with its elbows used to prop it up from the ground.

She was a female and Leticia's original appearance could barely be recognised. This made Elland and the others shocked to discover that they had already found their target. However, compared to before, Leticia's current state was both terrifying and miserable.

Her body was covered in black spots. The artillery shells had torn open red holes that lined her body. White fascia that seemed to have a life of its own was squirming inside her body.

The top of her head had split open, and her brain came oozing out, sticking to the surface like the palms of children overlapping each other.

Her gray eyes were out of focus, one of them blazing with fire, the other flashing with lightning.

Two heads that were screaming in pain were embedded at her abdomen below her chest. They were the other two male adventurers.

Not only has she lost control, but she also appears to be corrupted… She was already severely injured from the previous bombardment, and her aura had dropped to an extreme level… Klein didn't take action and instead watched as the Beyonders from the military began to attack.

Psychic Piercing, Whip of Pain, Purifying Bullets, and small-caliber gunfire were launched… With this series of attacks, Rampager Leticia, who only had enough time to crack the ground and spread the crack outwards, completely broke down and became a dismembered corpse.

Pa!

Her torso fell to the ground, and the heads of the two male adventurers rolled out.

Klein's eyes slightly narrowed. He discovered that there was a yellowish-brown book hidden within the flesh and blood of Leticia's abdomen.

On the surface of the book, there was a line of words written in Elven: "Book of Calamity."

Why do these books and notebooks always find themselves in the stomachs of people. It's the same as the Antigonus family's notebook last time… Klein lampooned, then he suspected that the Book of Calamity was the item that the fake archaeologist, Leticia, had taken from the ruins of the Sea God.

At this moment, some military personnel grabbed the two male adventurers' heads who still seemed capable of speaking and hurriedly asked, “What did you do in the ruin of the Sea God?”

“Sea God’s Ruins…” One of the male adventurers answered with pain and confusion, “We haven’t been there…”

He tried to move his eyes, to check the situation below his neck.

“The Sea God ruin in Symeem Island,” the military personnel reminded him.

“No… We didn’t…” The male adventurer wanted to shake his head, but he couldn’t do so. “We went to an ancient elven ruin… Leticia found a book there… She liked it very much… She quickly began to study it, then s-she went mad! She’s crazy!”

As the male adventurer shouted out, whatever was left of his mind completely dissipated.

It’s not a lost temple of the Sea God but a ruin of the ancient elves? This is different from what I imagined… Klein was about to listen carefully when Elland came over and politely asked him and Danitz to distance themselves from the interrogation.

Turning into another street, Klein slowed down and thought about the whole thing.

Why would Leticia’s act of taking the Book of Calamity out of the ancient elven ruins cause Sea God Kalvetua to be no longer capable of maintaining its existence, slowly bringing it to the point of breakdown? What’s the connection between the two?

Elves… Sea God… According to Little Sun, the ancient god, Elf King Soniathrym, wielded the present authorities of the Lord of Storms. That is to say, the elves no doubt possess Sequence 3 Sea King, or an even higher Sequence 2…

Could it be that it was by chance that this sea serpent, Kalvetua, discovered a ruin of the elves at the bottom of the sea, directly devoured the Beyonder characteristics left behind by a certain high elf, and was lucky enough to survive the two possibilities of death and losing control? As such, it succeeded in acquiring the rank of a demigod and gradually gained the faith of the Rorsted Archipelago's natives?

Klein slowly came to a realization, and he had to thank Mr. Hanged Man for this.

Initially, Little Sun didn't reveal the corresponding authorities of the eight ancient gods, but later, under the guidance of The Hanged Man, he explained some things, including the Elf King Soniathrym general situation.

As for devouring Beyonder characteristics or the corresponding ingredients to advance, it wasn't something that didn't happen. Before the potion system was fully constructed, the human ancestors had made similar attempts to obtain Beyonder powers. However, only a very small group of extremely fortunate people had managed to survive to become Beyonders without becoming monsters, lunatics, or dying on the spot, with their flesh and blood falling apart.

Such an attempt had a one in a thousand chance of success, or even a one in ten thousand chance. After the potion system was established, no one was willing to take such a great risk.

If that's the case, then Kalvetua was indeed very lucky back then… Of course, there's also the factor of its strong physique… However, its intelligence didn't seem to increase much, only being capable of deceiving its believers. It didn't actually find any traces of the elven ruins on Symeem Island, and how it's closely related to the one it's hiding in…

After Leticia and company took the Book of Calamity, that ruin collapsed, causing Kalvetua's hiding spot to experience abnormalities, resulting in the barely surviving Kalvetua to be unable to hold out any longer? This can explain how Leticia and company managed to easily succeed. There aren't any members of the Resistance or the Sea God's followers defending the area. Only when something happened did Kalvetua discover the problem and realized the connection between the two ruins.

With what he just gathered, Klein tried to explain what he had been wondering about the whole time.

This included why the dying Sea God Kalvetua didn't allow its followers to become carriers—it would've reduced most of the accidents and made things easier. With the brutality Kalvetua displayed, it was only right that it made such a choice.

The answer Klein arrived at was that the body Kalvetua wanted to corrupt and possess had to have a certain amount of elven blood, and that was the only way to survive the transfer of Beyonder characteristics up to a certain level.

However, when Klein touched it, due to the gray fog and his uniqueness, it allowed Kalvetua to instantly find a better target.

Chapter 544 - Expert

◆

Klein had just sorted out his thoughts when Elland caught up with the two and said with a smile, “We’ve found the target; the investigation is over. I’ll bring you back to the hotel first, and I’ll bring the remuneration in two days. Also, it’s best if you don’t go out today.”

Klein maintained Gehrman Sparrow’s character by only nodding slightly without giving any verbal response.

On the way back to the Wind of Azure Inn, Danitz clearly had some doubts or wistful thoughts on his mind, but due to the presence of Elland, who was part of the military, he could only change the subject and discuss with great interest about which pirates would end up being caught in the city’s thorough sweep today.

To him, they weren’t friends as long as those guys didn’t belong to the Golden Dream. They weren’t worth sympathizing with.

After entering the hotel room and watching Elland leave, he closed the door and said while clicking his tongue, “The Book of Calamity… Ancient elven ruins… This really is an interesting matter, but how did the elves end up like devils? Just by casually taking their book, a casual flip through it had caused that woman to go insane and lose control!”

What kind of image do you have of elves? Living in the mountains and seas, specializing in cooking, creatures who enjoy nature? Heh, according to Little Sun, the eight ancient gods before the Cataclysm were all very tyrannical, very cruel, and very evil. Among them was the Elf King Soniathrym, and the elves who believed in “Him” and viewed

"Him" as their king couldn't have been any better. One can make a comparison with the members of the Aurora Order… The Beyonder races left behind by the Dark Epoch basically can't be associated with the "good" alignment that normal people have in mind… Klein replied in his mind.

Of course, he didn't rule out the possibility that after the ancient gods' fall, the dragons, giants, elves, Sanguine, and other living creatures would gradually extricate themselves from the negative effects and become more normal. However, this was only limited to the middle and lower levels, and it didn't include the demigod powerhouses. And the high elf that left behind the Book of Calamity was clearly the latter.

With a thought, Klein suddenly realized something.

Danitz understands Elvish!

He recognized the title of the ancient goatskin book as the "Book of Calamity!"

Vice Admiral Iceberg has actually taught her crew to such an extent. Not only does it include ancient Feysac, but she has also taught them Elvish, which can stir up the powers of nature… Perhaps Jotun and ancient Hermes are all part of the curriculum on the Golden Dream… They really are a bunch of pirates with knowledge and dreams. However, Ma'am Captain, aren't you being a little overboard on certain subjects? Danitz is lacking in so many other aspects… That's right. The most important thing for a pirate whose main job is to be a treasure hunter has to be mastering the ancient languages… Klein ignored Danitz's comments and looked out the window.

The sky remained gloomy, as if a heavy rain would fall at any time. It made one involuntarily feel suppressed.

Klein nodded slightly, feeling slightly relaxed as he thought.

Leticia has been found. Being aware of the ancient elven ruin on

Symeem Island, the Church of Storms and the kingdom's military will likely use its connection to the place where Kalvetua is hiding, to find the Sea God that is becoming progressively crazier. Or they might use the ruin to speed up its collapse.

That way, apart from the most fervent and pious Sea God believers dying, the rest basically won't suffer any harm…

Klein had originally thought of using the spirit world to locate Sea God Kalvetua's hiding spot after it died before the official Beyonders did. He could then infiltrate it, taking the treasure with him. But even before the plan had begun, the appearance of the Book of Calamity pushed his plan to the verge of failure.

Phew… It's fine. It only existed in my imagination, and it never belonged to me. It's fine if I don't get it… I don't even know what I'll get… Letting this matter get resolved this way is for the best… Klein withdrew his gaze from the weather; his mood calm and relaxed. He just inevitably felt a slight sense of loss.

That day, he and Danitz followed Elland's advice and didn't head out again. They only remained in the inn.

In Bayam City, there would be the sound of gunfire and explosions from time to time. This continued until the sky turned dark.

†

The next morning, Klein got up on time and found that there were layers of clouds in the sky and the sky remained dark.

This meant that the confrontation between the Church of Storms Cardinal, high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers, Jahn Kottman, and Sea God Kalvetua was still ongoing.

Klein felt pain in his stomach and prepared to head to the washroom with the newspapers.

However, he gave up on that idea when he saw Danitz leisurely reading a newspaper while lying in a reclining chair, munching on a piece of white bread in his mouth.

Reading the newspaper while on a toilet doesn’t match Gehrman Sparrow’s persona!

Although it would be boring, I mustn’t slack off on acting… Sigh, I’ve once again found a difference in the behavior between my true self and my disguised identity… Klein summed it up in silence and went into the washroom.

He took off his pants and sat down on the toilet, staring almost in a daze at the pale white wall in front of him, as if he could read words from it.

At this moment, his spiritual perception was triggered.

He hurriedly tapped his molars and activated his Spirit Vision.

Two thick, long white bones appeared in front of him. They were the messenger’s legs.

The messenger stood there, its head passing through the ceiling, but its black flames in its eye sockets could still be seen.

It lowered its head slightly and looked down at Klein, who was sitting on the toilet.

Klein looked up, stunned for two seconds, his mind filled with a baffling thought.

[image]

Should I act like a woman, hurriedly covering my nether regions, or should I just be open and fearless?

Before he could make up his mind, the messenger dropped the letter, disintegrated into a pile of bones, and disappeared into the floor.

It took a moment for Klein to react before he caught Mr. Azik's reply.

This messenger is being more and more impolite! Can't you see that I'm using the toilet? Don't you know to knock on the door or to squeeze it through the crack under the door! Klein cursed in anger and amusement.

After giving it some more thought, he felt that it would be putting the messenger in a tough spot to pass the letter through the crack in the door. The four-meter-tall giant had to lie down in order to reach that position.

Just thinking about it is rather funny… Well, the next time I write a letter, I'll add a paragraph so that Mr. Azik can educate the messenger so that he will be more polite… Klein unfurled the letter and read Azik's reply.

"…According to the knowledge I've recalled, I can provide you with two methods. The first requires certain prerequisites. If a unique item belonging to you or someone else is located where Sea God Kalvetua is, you can use divination to easily locate its position… The other prerequisite is that you can enter the spirit world. I have plenty of methods for this. I'll list the most common three…

"The second method is to use a secret deed ritual and pray to Red Light Aiur Moria. 'He' represents authority and will. At a certain level, 'He' grasps the relevant knowledge of the creatures in the spirit world and the locations in the spirit world…"

So Red Light of the seven pure lights is named Aiur Moria… The principle of a secret deed ritual is to adjust one's state, release one's mind and body, and align oneself with the target of the prayer bit by bit. Finally, an overlapping will occur, allowing one to acquire the corresponding knowledge. And this kind of alignment and overlapping is relative. While acquiring knowledge, my secrets will also be open to the target of the prayer… I can't trust Red Light… I have too many secrets… Klein's first reaction was to rule out the second approach.

As for the first solution, there was also the chance of failure. Klein didn't have any unique items located where Sea God Kalvetua hid itself.

Either I use the help of the Resistance and send something to Kalvetua, or I'll have to find the original owner of an item sacrificed to Sea God from its believer. Furthermore, it has to be unique… Send something to Kalvetua… As he thought, Klein suddenly had an idea.

He braced himself and considered it over and over again, thinking that there was a certain probability of success.

After finishing his deed in the washroom, Klein washed his hands, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog. He planned on attempting divination and received a revelation that there was danger, but it was manageable as long as it was handled properly.

With all of this done, he returned to the living room and walked towards the reclining chair.

Danitz immediately sat up and said with a dry laugh, "Is there something…?"

"Do you know the words to the prayer relating to the Sea God?" Klein asked with an unperturbed tone.

Danitz spread out his hands and suddenly hissed.

"Dogshit…" He softly cursed his injured arm and switched to smiling. "Yes. I've seen a few members of the Resistance hold rituals. Uh… The details are: 'Adorer of the sea and spirit world, guardian of the Rorsted Archipelago, ruler of the undersea creatures, master of tsunamis and storms, the great Kalvetua.' By the way, the two instances that it was effective were recited in Elvish."

Adorer of the sea and spirit world… Its bearing is very low… It's not the same as my honorific name… That's true. I created it by copying it from the seven true gods… Klein nodded gently and said, "Do you know where there are empty warehouses and abandoned houses?"

"Of course! Every great pirate knows a few," Danitz replied without hesitation.

Klein turned around and walked towards the coat rack.

"Take me there."

To do what? Although Danitz was puzzled, he didn't dare ask.

†

In the dock area, in a dirty and dilapidated warehouse.

Danitz watched Gehrman Sparrow take out three candles and several metal bottles. Unable to hold back his curiosity any longer, he asked, "W-what are you planning on doing?"

Klein didn't look back and replied very calmly, "Sacrifice."

"To whom?" Danitz pressed with interest.

Klein set up the altar, took out an iron cigar case and calmly said, "Kalvetua."

His plan was to give something directly to Sea God Kalvetua!

As long as Kalvetua accepted it, he could use divination and other methods to find its hiding place!

As for whether or not Kalvetua would accept it, he had certainly considered it, believing that it was a definite possibility. As Kalvetua was currently on the verge of death, it was in a state of extreme madness, with little sense of reason. It acted on instinct alone, and it might have a strong desire for the aura of the gray fog.

Therefore, Klein was prepared to sacrifice an iron cigar case that was often placed above the gray fog. He wanted to see if Kalvetua would accept it or not, and if he didn't, he wouldn't suffer any losses. He could then pretend as though nothing had happened.

Sacrifice to Sea God Kalvetua? At that moment, Danitz found his brain lacking. He couldn’t comprehend what was on Gehrman Sparrow’s mind.

“Are you crazy? How could it accept your sacrifice? Even if it’s accepted, what would be the point? It’s dying! And it’s very dangerous!” Danitz blurted out.

Immediately, he added inwardly, No, Gehrman Sparrow isn’t crazy, because he has always been crazy…

Klein glanced at him and simply said, “In this domain, I’m an expert.”

When it comes to sacrificial rituals, I’m an expert! Klein wasn’t modest about this.

Chapter 545 - The Enraged Kalvetua

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Danitz felt choked, unable to say a word. He quickly stepped aside and watched as Gehrman Sparrow lit the candles, burned some powder, and dripped some extract.

Taking in the smell that pervaded the air, he couldn't help but raise his voice.

"Y-you're using the wrong materials, right?"

He remembered that the Resistance didn't use things like Full Moon Essence Oil, slumber flower, or chamomile when sacrificing to the Sea God.

It's not like you're praying to the Evernight Goddess!

Klein turned his head to look at him, then he returned his gaze to the altar.

"That wouldn't be an issue."

As a professional who often offered and received sacrifices, he was very aware that the burning of extracts, essential oils, and herbal powder mainly had two uses—one was to help the ritual's host to better adjust his spirituality and enter the proper state; and the other was to please the corresponding deity, to please the target of the sacrificial object, and to increase the probability of a response. In this aspect, every deity had certain characteristics and preferences.

This sacrifice, on the other hand, mainly relied on Kalvetua's abnormal state of mind. It had gone completely crazy, and it thirsted for the gray fog's aura. Neither of the two could be missing, and everything else wasn't important.

As long as the aforementioned two conditions were satisfied, pleasing Kalvetua or not didn't affect the ritual. It neither increased the success rate nor would it increase the possibility of failure. It could be completely handled in a perfunctory manner.

If Kalvetua still retains its reason, and even if I were to strictly follow the requirements of its ritual, do you think it would respond to me? Klein silently lampooned and took half a step back, ready to start the most important part of the ritual.

He thought for a moment, then without turning his head, he said directly, "Stay further away."

Me? Instead of getting angry, Danitz was overjoyed. He quickly nodded.

"Alright, okay!"

He rushed to the door of the warehouse, planning to escape the moment something went wrong.

Klein half-closed his eyes, cogitating about the countless spherical lights that overlapped each other, and he quickly entered the proper state.

He chanted softly in Elvish, "Adorer of the sea and spirit world, guardian of the Rorsted Archipelago, ruler of the undersea creatures, master of tsunamis and storms, the great Kalvetua.

"Your devoted servant prays for your attention;

"I pray for you to take this offering.

"I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom."

As he said the awkward sentences one after another, the sound of wind rose within the wall of spirituality, as if it was going to overturn everything.

Klein’s clothes fluttered in the wind as he took out another small metal bottle that he had prepared beforehand. He poured about five milliliters of the remaining Thousand-faced Hunter’s blood into the air.

This was a material filled with spirituality!!

The strong winds sucked the drops of blood, howling as it drilled into the candle flame that symbolized Sea God Kalvetua.

Without a sound, the candle flame burgeoned to form an illusory door. On the surface, there were symbols and magic labels. From the inside, the faint sound of crashing sea waves could be heard.

Suddenly, all signs of movement vanished. There was only the sound of breathing that reverberated through the illusory door, as though there was something hiding behind it; something massive that was suppressing its hunger with great difficulty.

Huff. Huff. Huff…

The sound of the loud, heavy breathing became clearer and clearer, to the point that even despite being situated at the door of the warehouse, Danitz still felt his scalp tingle.

Bang!

The illusory door suddenly opened, and something that visibly resembled a hurricane poured out.

Amidst the sharp wailing sounds, Danitz felt the invisible wall of spirituality shatter. He discovered that he had been thrown into the air like a small boat in a storm. He slammed into the door, producing a dull thud.

He fell outside the warehouse, his back scuffed from several wooden splinters.

The scarlet fireball that he had instinctively condensed in his hand instantly dimmed and was quickly extinguished in the hurricane, like a candle that was about to burn out.

While he was flying in midair, he saw what looked to be a bloody, gaping mouth appear behind the illusory door. It revealed milky-white sharp teeth, which was slightly curved and longer than a human arm, as it madly smashed against the illusory door in a bid to enter the real world. Its beast-like howls first echoed inside the warehouse, causing Danitz to bleed from his ears and nose.

Klein also flew up into the sky as a result of the hurricane, and his line of sight was immediately occupied by a bloody, forked, and massive forked tongue that burst forth with sparking lightning.

His body was scorched black as it stiffened in the air. The forked tongue pierced through his body as it was reduced to ashes.

Klein's figure appeared on the other side. His hat had fallen off, and his clothes were messy. He looked rather wretched.

Fortunately, he knew that a situation would occur, and he knew that there was going to be danger. He had constantly been on high alert, and he didn't let down his guard as he used Paper Figurine Substitutes just in time.

At this moment, Kalvetua, who was situated behind the unperturbed, illusory door, finally realized that its violent blows had no effect and stopped.

It took a deep breath and caused the blue seawater to gush in from all directions. The water then collapsed into a whirlpool that emitted a terrifying suction force. It was so powerful that it could swallow a cargo ship!

The iron cigar case on the altar flew into the vortex.

The tiny cauldron containing some herbal ashes flew up and into the whirlpool.

Many objects within the warehouse, along with the soil, were thrown into the whirlpool.

Klein also flew up as he found it difficult to resist being thrown into the whirlpool!

He tried to snap his fingers to ignite flames and leap out of the whirlpool's reach, but the suction force and the hurricane spoiled his plans.

His figure suddenly became thinner, turning into a paper figurine.

As the paper figurine fell into the whirlpool, Klein, who had emerged from another position, once again soared into the air, unable to extricate himself from the terrifying suction force!

At this critical moment, he no longer hesitated. He made the black glove he wore on his left palm turn pale as it was tinged with a slightly dark green color.

He activated Creeping Hunger, and he directly used Steel Maveti's soul!

Klein's body suddenly grew heavy as he pushed forward with his left palm.

An ice wall, that wasn't too thick, solidified in front of him, helping him temporarily isolate Sea God's whirlpool.

Taking advantage of this, Klein landed, his feet heavily landing on the ground as he sank deep into the ground.

Kacha!

The ice wall lasted only a second before it was shredded to pieces by the boundless suction force, and the remnants flew into the huge sea serpent's throat.

Relying on the strength of a Zombie, Klein used both of his feet to hold himself in place and no longer flew up again. However, he was still unable to stop himself from sliding towards the illusory door where Kalvetua's gaping mouth was. He drew two deep ravines on the ground in the process.

Outside the warehouse, Danitz wasn't affected by the suction force of the whirlpool. Instead, he tried condensing a fireball to throw to the side, allowing Gehrman Sparrow to jump out of his predicament and escape. Unfortunately, the flames were extinguished again and again by the hurricane.

As Klein drew closer to the illusory door, he could smell the stench of blood and decay. Right in front of him were milky-white fangs that emitted a chilly air.

His thoughts raced, and he quickly came up with a solution.

The solution was simple, it was to throw out the All-Black Eye that originated from Marionettist Rosago!

Since you want to make a whirlpool in the sea in a bid to devour everything, I will make you consume another bottle of a Beyonder potion without any supplementary ingredients, as well as the mental corruption of the True Creator! If that's the case, I don't believe that you, who's already on the verge of collapse, will be able to hold on! Klein gritted his teeth and reached into his pocket.

Perhaps it had sensed his malicious intent, or perhaps it had lost its patience, but at this moment, Kalvetua suddenly raised its head and let out a long howl, causing the seawater whirlpool in his throat to collapse and disintegrate into countless water droplets which sprayed out of the illusory door.

Splash!

Torrential rain fell in the warehouse, and a dazzling silver ball of intertwined lightning condensed in Kalvetua's throat once again.

With a boom, it spat out that lightning ball.

Amidst the "torrential rain," the silver ball of lightning transformed into streaks of stunning lightning bolts that quickly expanded outwards. It destroyed the frugal altar and occupied the entire warehouse.

Sizzle. Klein's figure kept phasing in and out of existence amidst the sea of lightning. His body would char and turn into scraps of paper. Outside the warehouse, Danitz also suffered its effects. All his hair stood up as his body convulsed.

After continuously using Paper Figurine Substitutes and approaching his limit, Klein finally manage to withstand it until the lightning subsided.

As for the illusory door, it was affected by the complete destruction of the ritual and quickly closed.

Creak!

Sea God Kalvetua's hisses of indignation were isolated by the door.

After a moment, the illusory door completely disappeared. The surroundings were in a wretched mess. Only a candle was left on the altar, weakly swaying its flame.

Bang! Danitz leaned forward against the warehouse's wall, barely standing at the doorway.

He tried to speak, but he couldn't stop convulsing. He could only express his grievance with his eyes.

Gehrman Sparrow is really a madman!

I can still remember the horror I experienced in Bansy Harbor, and I still… have nightmares about it. Previously, when he was picking out items offered by the Resistance, he attracted the curse of the Sea God. I was so frightened that I almost ran away while on our journey back… This time, he even did some sacrificial ritual and nearly summoned Kalvetua over. It was really extremely dangerous just now… W-why does he love to take risks so much and enjoy causing major trouble? Time after time, he searches for thrills while on the brink of death! Is this a manifestation of his craziness, or is there another reason?

Sea God Kalvetua is still very strong. Even though it's on the brink of death, and there's the door of sacrifice in between us, it was still able to release a portion of its strength that could easily finish me off… As expected of a demigod that can fight against a Sea King… Klein pulled his feet out of the ground and saw that his boots were in tatters.

At the same time, he found that, regardless of it being due to luck or an inevitability, Kalvetua had accepted his "sacrifice" in all sense of the word. This was because the huge sea serpent had swallowed the iron cigar case which had been tainted with the gray fog's aura and many other things while producing the whirlpool.

In other words, I can try to locate its hiding place in the spirit world, but I'll have to wait for its death so that it can't interfere and resist my divination… This search would require me to enter the spirit world, and I can't keep using the gray fog forever… Klein quietly let out a breath. He felt the glove on his left hand become filled with an indescribable madness and hunger. It seemed like it was going to devour the wearer if it wasn't fed.

There are no sinners around… Klein turned his head to look at Danitz, who was standing by the door.

Danitz's mind suddenly tightened. He felt as if he was being targeted by a monster and was about to become food for the other party.

The hunger he felt at a spiritual level had made him tremble slightly. He yearned to immediately turn around and flee.

Then he heard Gehrman Sparrow's indifferent voice.

"Close the door from the outside."

"…Alright!" Resisting the residual pain from the electric shock, Danitz moved the door which had been sent flying open, barely closing the hold.

Klein seized the moment to carry out a sacrificial ritual. He prayed to himself and responded to himself by throwing Creeping Hunger, that was about to lose control, above the fog.

The mystical item that had frightened Danitz, so much so that he didn't dare to resist, immediately became docile, gentle, and tame.

Chapter 546 - Spirit World

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Upon returning to the real world, Klein extinguished the candles, put away the remaining items, and carefully checked the situation in the warehouse.

Luckily for him, the whirlpool of seawater created by Kalvetua had completely wiped the area clean, leaving only the subsequent sprays of rain, the blackened patches from the lightning strikes, and sparse piles of ash, as well as the ravines produced by Klein's two feet.

The traces are easy to deal with.I can get Danitz to use his fireball to "wash" the place later, disguising it as an internal strife between pirates… Klein nodded indiscernibly and pulled out one of the few remaining paper figurines. He shook his forearm and flicked his wrist.

The paper figurine flew out and burned on its own before turning into black ash.

After doing all of this, Klein walked towards the door, frowning as he walked.

The soles of his boots were gone, and the rest of his clothes were tattered and torn, wet, or charred.

This was unavoidable under those circumstances, as it wasn't something a paper figurine could withstand—the tearing was a result of the potent suction from the whirlpool, the moist sensation came from Kalvetua's torrential rain, and the charred black marks were a result of being struck by bolts of lightning in the interval when Klein was using his Paper Figurine Substitutes. Even now, despite having calmed down, his right forearm still spasmed a few times due to the electric shock.

It cost me 8 pounds 6 soli… I have to get a new set of clothes… I had divined danger and had made preparations, but I didn't expect Kalvetua to be more powerful and crazier than I had expected… I hope that I'll gain something later. Klein silently shook his head. He restrained his expression and endured the pain before coming to the door and knocking three times.

Danitz, who was constantly uneasy, hesitated for two seconds before he opened the door.

Discovering that Gehrman Sparrow had returned to his cold and reserved state, with him no longer emitting a hunger and madness that struck terror to his spirituality, Danitz let out a sigh of relief. He took a glance inside and asked, "Is it over?"

"No." Klein curled the corners of his lips and revealed a gentle smile.

Not yet? Danitz jumped in fright.

"W-what else needs to be done?"

Klein maintained his smile that concealed madness.

"A clean up is still necessary.

"That's basic courtesy."

A clean up… Danitz was stunned. Raising his right hand, he pointed at himself and said, "Me?"

The corners of Klein's mouth widened.

"Or shall I do the honors?"

Then I would be eaten by Creeping Hunger! Danitz let out a hollow laugh.

"How should I clean this place?"

"Use a fireball," Klein answered simply.

As a part-time pirate, it didn't take much effort for Danitz to understand Gehrman Sparrow's intentions. He walked past him and headed for the interior of the warehouse.

During this process, he had a few questions in his mind, which were quite puzzling.

Captain said that Creeping Hunger needs to devour a living person every day, but Gehrman Sparrow can only satisfy it after a battle. He usually doesn't bother with it. B-besides, in that battle just now, Gehrman Sparrow had used Steel Maveti's ice powers. He didn't feed it after… Strange… What secret lies behind this?

A seal of a certain level? Or, can it be that the organization behind him is capable of sealing Creeping Hunger?

As Danitz "cleaned" the warehouse, Klein stood outside, looking up at the overhanging dark clouds, looking forward to what would happen next.

I've already sent the iron cigar case that's tainted with the gray fog's aura over, so all I need to do is wait for Kalvetua, a fake "Sea God," to collapse and die… I hope the Beyonders of the Church of Storms and the kingdom's military won't have the time to find it in time, or leave behind some items of certain value that they think little of… Klein slowly took in a deep breath, listening to the dull bombardment sounds coming from behind him.

†

In a hotel, Alger stood at the window, staring out at the overcast sky.

I received the Sanguine's anesthetic gas not long after the last Tarot Gathering. I was prepared to go out to sea to gather ingredients, but a week has passed, and I'm still stuck in Bayam… The corners of his mouth twitched as he shook his head.

First, there was the incident of The World hunting Steel Maveti. It earned him quite a sizable amount of money, and then he had to wait for the reward. After that, when the reward was obtained, he encountered the breakdown of that sea serpent, Kalvetua, and was ordered to search for the adventurers and archaeologists—Leticia and company.

I heard that during the investigation yesterday morning, Leticia and the others were found. The Mandated Punishers and the military seemed to have obtained some important clues, and quite a number of them went to Symeem Island… Heh, this is something that I'll never have dibs on… Alger retracted his gaze, pulled up his short robe that didn't reach his knees, and muttered to himself.

"Let it end as soon as possible."

Once Kalvetua was completely dead and the tsunami was no longer a latent risk, he could leave the harbor. After leaving the City of Generosity, Bayam, he could work at advancing to Sequence 6 Wind-blessed.

As his mind whirred, Alger's heart skipped a beat and he turned around to look out the window.

He saw the clouds high in the sky quickly dissipate, with the crimson moon quietly hanging in the sky.

†

Klein slept until midnight, when he was suddenly jolted awake. He had vaguely sensed something.

He rolled out of bed, went to the window, and pulled back the curtains.

Crimson moonlight shone in, covering everything like frost. It was cold and dreamy.

Klein looked out and saw that the clouds which hung low had disappeared. The bright crimson moon was high in the sky amidst the sparse stars.

This means that the confrontation between the Sea God and Sea King has ended? Klein pondered for two seconds, retracted his gaze, closed the curtain, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

He sat at the end of the long, mottled table, took out a gold coin, and began to recite a divination statement in a low voice.

"Kalvetua is completely dead."

†

After he repeated this seven times, he flicked the gold coin and watched it leap upwards and tumble down.

The gold coin landed in Klein's palm, and the king's head faced up.

It meant a positive result!

It meant that Sea God Kalvetua was completely dead!

As expected, the ancient elven ruins on Symeem Island and the hiding place which Kalvetua used to maintain its existence are closely connected… The Mandated Punishers and the military have just received the Book of Calamity, and since they only learned about the ruins for a little more than a day before Kalvetua couldn't hold out much longer… I thought it could forcibly survive for two or three more days… Klein sighed and tried to divine whether the official Beyonders had already entered Kalvetua's hiding place.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of information, his divination failed, and he was unable to obtain any revelations.

After thinking for a while, Klein changed his angle, undid his spirit pendulum, and began to divine if it was dangerous for him to search and explore Kalvetua's hiding place.

As this involved himself, he quickly received a conclusion.

The topaz pendant was rotating counterclockwise at a not-so-fast frequency and low amplitude.

It's dangerous, but it's acceptable… The danger is even less than the sacrificial ritual… Klein nodded gently, returned to the real world, and began his preparations for his operation.

He locked the bedroom door first, then he arranged the ritual to summon himself.

Once again entering above the gray fog, Klein picked up the Black Emperor card and placed it inside his Spirit Body.

All of a sudden, he turned corporeal as if he was of flesh and blood. The surrounding black fog stuck to the surface of his body and formed a majestic aura. It was as if he was entirely clad in physical armor, but on his head was a gorgeous pitch-black crown.

Looking at the human-skinned glove on the table, Klein hesitated to put it on.

Above the gray fog, Creeping Hunger was almost in a sealed state. It didn't dare to make any unusual movements, but once it left the area, the uncontrollable hunger would cause harm to its wielder, whether they were alive or in Spirit Body form.

Amidst Klein's considerations was whether the Black Emperor's high level could suppress the Creeping Hunger inside his Spirit Body and keep it normal.

I'll give it a try. If it doesn't work, I'll end the summon and return here… This will hardly require any time, and there's no danger… Klein picked up Creeping Hunger and put it on over the iron-black armor gauntlet.

He didn't hesitate any longer and stepped into the Door of Summoning. With the help of the expanding candle flame, he arrived in the real world.

Without being careless, Klein's first reaction was to check the state of Creeping Hunger. He found it calm and submissive, subservient to the high level of the Black Emperor.

Not bad… With a sigh of relief, Klein placed the mystical items, such as Azik's copper whistle, the Biological Poison Bottle, and the Sun Brooch, into his body one by one.

Finally he picked up his black hardwood cane and prepared to use it to search for his "lost" iron cigarette case that had been tainted with the gray fog's aura.

Of course, in order to find the place where Kalvetua was hiding, one had to first enter the spirit world and pinpoint the location from within. Otherwise, it would only fail.

As for how to enter the spirit world, Klein didn't consider the three methods provided by Mr. Azik. As a Spirit Body with intelligence and the ability to think, how was he not able to find the spirit world and enter it?

He calmed down a little and recalled the scene of countless spherical light. His body and mind quickly became tranquil. His thoughts gradually became empty as his consciousness gradually extended and expanded.

He soon discovered that he was surrounded by indescribable illusory, transparent things. All the colors became bright, distinct, but overlapping, and the gray fog had grown so faint that it seemed to cover everything in an ethereal manner.

In the depths, high up in the sky, there were seven rays of lustrous brilliances that shone with different colors. They seemed to possess life, and they contained immense knowledge.

This was the spirit world. It completely overlapped with reality and was omnipresent.

If I happen to encounter the Mandated Punishers or military personnel, I will immediately end the summoning and return above the gray fog… Klein took a step forward. After easily entering the spirit world, he felt his body become illusory.

The black cloak behind him fluttered up slightly, and the hardwood cane in his hand stood upright.

He said in a low, dignified voice, "The location of my unique iron cigar case."

†

While chanting, Klein felt tense for a baffling reason. In the saturated and distinct colors of his surroundings, pairs of indifferent and eerie eyes glanced over.

After repeating it seven times, Klein released his grip and waited for the revelation.

The black hardwood cane floated, floating forward at an adequate speed which was neither too fast or slow.

Klein followed it, flying through the real, the illusory, the strange, and mysterious spirit world.

Here, if he lost his bearings, it was very easy to end up completely lost and never be able to leave again.

Of course, there wasn't a problem for Klein. If he really "got lost," he could end the summoning and return directly to the space above the gray fog.

Klein chased after the black cane, which was sometimes thrown and sometimes dropped, shuttling back and forth between distinct and overlapping colors. He passed by half-hidden spirit world creatures that couldn't be accurately described, and it was hard to know how far he had traveled.

Suddenly, he saw an eye. It was round, with clear blacks and whites.

The eye looked at him without blinking. There was no head, nor was there a corresponding body.

Chapter 547 - Priest

◆ ◆ ◆

The huge eye, which had its blacks and whites clear, appeared translucent. It floated quietly behind saturated, overlapping colors. Klein couldn’t tell if it was hostile or friendly.

At this moment, Klein remembered a passage from the Sights in the Spirit World. The ancestor of the Abraham family had said: “Try not to cross eyes with any creatures of the spirit world for more than three seconds unless they have already expressed interest in communicating with you. This is considered provocative behavior. Also, do not let yourself appear terrified and nervous. For some predators, this will increase their desire to attack.”

As the words flowed through his mind, Klein retracted his gaze and continued to “chase” after the flying hardwood cane in front of him, at a rather adequate speed.

The sight of the full black armor set and black crown he donned, matched with a cloak of the same color, entered the round eye. But the figure quickly passed by, disappearing far away. It didn’t stir up the slightest change.

In essence, the spirit world is a very dangerous place. If one isn’t careful, one can encounter a terrifying existence at the demigod level… As Klein continued to make his way through, he realized that this place was truly chaotic. Although the seven lustrous brilliances that could be used to mark his location remained high above, covering the “sky,” they could still be seen from time to time beneath his feet, to his left and right, and from the front and back.

If not for his black cane, Klein wouldn't have been able to determine his bearings.

Suddenly, through the faint fog of the void, he saw, on his left—based on a normal human being's concept of left—a floating castle. It was entirely black in color. Its spire towered, and it was covered with vines, extremely reminiscent of a Gothic style.

At the top of the castle stood a translucent woman who was almost as tall as the castle. She was wearing a complex, gorgeous, dark, and gloomy black dress. She didn't have a head, and there was a neat cut by her neck. Her drooping hands held four blonde heads with red eyes. If one looked closely, they would find that these brilliant-looking heads were exactly the same.

[image]

When Klein, who was disguised as the Black Emperor, passed by, the four heads the woman carried blinked.

Klein didn't respond as he flew forward as though he hadn't seen her.

The woman slowly turned her body, letting the heads in her hand watch him depart.

What kind of monsters are these… As the thought flashed through Klein's mind, he saw the black cane plummet rapidly.

He hurriedly chased after it, once again experiencing the feeling of a free fall.

About eight seconds later, a faintly discernible collapsed building appeared in front of him.

Outside of the building floated a spirit world creature which resembled a giant jellyfish. It extended transparent, sticky tentacles, and pulled the surrounding area into its own “territory.”

At the end of each tentacle grew a white skull with deep eye sockets. It kept shaking as it floated about with light but slow movements.

The black cane passed through the strange creature of the spirit world and hovered in front of the almost illusory collapsed building.

Found it? Klein was delighted at first before he solemnly glanced at the giant jellyfish that was waving its skull.

He made preparations for battle, but he didn’t attack immediately. Instead, he tried to emit the profound dignity that came with the high level of the Black Emperor card. His eyes indifferently stared at the eye sockets that were deeply recessed.

After three seconds of frozen silence, Klein said ancient Hermes in a low voice, “Leave!”

The tentacles supporting the skulls twitched twice; then, the giant ‘jellyfish’ slowly floated up, disappearing into the depths of the spirit world.

This Black Emperor card is still very useful… I was already considering throwing Mr. Azik’s copper whistle. The descendants of Death should still have some standing in the spirit world… Klein breathed a sigh of relief and descended, grabbing the black hardwood cane.

Then, he fell into the collapsed building ruin, with a sense of anticipation.

For him, even if the Church of Storms and the kingdom’s military had found this place ahead of him and had taken away the most valuable items, he would still be satisfied as long as there were still some remaining.

Even if there’s nothing else, it’ll be sufficient for me to explore an elven ruins and see what information they left behind… When Klein passed through an ethereal "barrier" that resembled a curtain, he felt the air around him suddenly become thick and heavy.

A shimmering wave of light appeared around him, coming from the deep blue water that filled the area.

At the bottom of the sea was an ancient, dark ruin. All the buildings had either collapsed or half-collapsed.

A huge pillar, carved with strange patterns and symbols, extended out from the middle. It appeared to be heading straight up to the top, as if it had supported the place in the past, but now it was broken and was leaning on the top of a nearby building.

Klein recognized this place, as well as the pillar. It was the hiding place of Sea God Kalvetua, a hidden place where reality blended with the spirit world.

At this very moment, an unwilling, pained, angry, and crazed scream echoed in the air. It didn't weaken in the slightest. That scream was precisely the same howl of hatred that Kalvetua had let out before its death.

It's really dead… Holding the black cane, Klein landed on the greenish-gray stone road in front of the ancient ruins.

On both sides of the road stood pillars that were neither thick nor tall, and on them were also strange patterns that were different from the symbols and magic labels from before.

At the bottom of each stone pillar, there was a figure sitting beside it. Some of them wore ancient robes, while some wore brown jackets that were fashionable nowadays.

As soon as they sensed someone approaching, they raised their swords, axes, and other weapons, stiffly but quickly. They turned to where Klein was, revealing their weathered, grayish-black faces and their shriveled bodies which were devoid of any flesh or blood.

Their eyes—feverish and numb—were fixed on Klein, who was wearing a black crown and black armor.

Kalvetua's devotees… However, this also means that the Church of Storms and the kingdom's military haven't found this place yet… Klein sighed and injected his spirituality into the Sun Brooch. He muttered a word in ancient Hermes, "Holy!"

He activated the Sun Brooch's Holy Oath, and through the corresponding word in ancient Hermes, he temporarily added a Holy attribute to the damage he dealt with his attacks.

Pa!

Klein flicked his wrist and threw his cane.

He bent his body slightly and charged towards the first "Sea God Guard" who came rushing over.

While running at high speed, Klein suddenly turned left and dodged the enemy's axe. He then swung his arm backwards and used his cane to draw a clear grayish-white crack on the enemy's body.

Pure golden flames silently rose from within the crack, wrapping around the Sea God Guard and burning it until it was on the verge of collapse.

Bam!

Klein exerted strength into his feet and stomped past the enemy.

Behind him, the completely desiccated Sea God Guard finally collapsed, turning into ashes within the golden flames.

Tap. Tap. Tap! Klein bent his back, quickly moving forward, sometimes to the side, and sometimes diagonally as he passed by each of the Sea God Guards.

At the same time, he brandished his cane, whipping, stabbing, cleaving, and slashing, leaving different marks on the guards that resembled dessicated corpses.

Tap! Tap! Tap! Klein passed through the road and arrived in front of the half-collapsed ruins.

Behind his gently fluttering black cloak, the Sea God Guards bloomed into golden torches, lighting up the greenish-gray stone slate and the patterned pillars.

Amidst the chaos, the guards fell down, one after the other, and no longer moved.

Klein went up the steps and entered the building where the half-collapsed pillars were.

The first thing that entered his vision was an unimaginably huge blue sea serpent. The scales all over its body were slippery, and they were covered with patterns that were similar to the symbols inside the ruins.

Its gaping jaws bit into a pillar, its curved milky-white fangs sinking in.

Its body below its head height was slumped across the ground. Its coiled body occupied about a third of the expansive hall, like a small, blue hill. However, its surface was covered in wounds with mangled blood and flesh. Even its bones could be seen.

A mysterious cyan light had already gathered over its body as it crept slowly towards one of its fangs that was longer than a human arm. This caused the slightly curved sharp bones to slowly straighten up.

Its dying cry reverberated in the air, causing Klein's corporeal Spirit Body to show signs of instability.

At this moment, an old man wearing a clergyman's cap was lying beside Kalvetua's body.

His hair was gray, and his body was like a gray rock. He stuck his face tightly to the serpent's body, making incomprehensible sounds from his throat. His actions were an unknown.

Around the gigantic serpent's corpse were dessicated corpses. They were similar to the Sea God Guards outside, but they were even more bizarre. Their stomachs bulged to the point of rupturing. In addition, their mouths were stained with dark red blood and had strips of bluish meat hanging from them.

The blue dots of light also leaked out from their bodies, rushing towards the white fang that was gradually straightening up.

Before Klein could figure out what such a scene signified, the old man in the clergyman's cap, who was lying on top of Kalvetua, stood up in a staggered manner and turned around.

His eyes were flashing with a blue light, his mouth was covered in blood-red meat which he was using all his strength to bite into.

In the place where his face had been stuck to, the snake's body was mangled. It was missing a lot of flesh and blood, and even its bones were almost visible.

He was eating up the corpse of Sea God Kalvetua!

This… Klein frowned, roughly understanding what was happening.

After Kalvetua's death, the priest and guards in the hall lost control and began to frantically devour its flesh and blood.

At this point in time, the Beyonder characteristics had yet to appear completely. Kalvetua's body still contained a large part of it, and many guards had problems with a potion overdose or conflicting pathway characteristics. They broke down on the spot and died completely.

However, there were always people who were lucky enough to survive the sudden death, or there were those who lost control of themselves and became disgusting monsters, or those who directly skipped a few

Sequences and became a powerhouse, or those who became lunatics with distorted demonic powers due to the mixture of pathway characteristics.

Regardless of which one it was, it was extremely dangerous!

Klein looked down from the surviving priest’s face to see his belly bulging like a pregnant woman’s.

A strong burgeoning and contraction appeared there, resembling a huge heart.

Chapter 548 - Trick to Dealing with Large Creatures

* * *

In the ruins that was filled with seawater and was half fused with the spirit world, Klein stood at the door of the central hall, wearing full body black armor. Inside was the the gigantic blue serpent's body that was being mutilated for food and the old priest with his bulging stomach.

The latter's skin was a grayish-black, as though it had become dessicated from prolonged exposure to the wind. His eyes flickered with an azure-blue glow as he stared intently at the "guest" who wore a black crown, as though he was considering where he should start his meal from.

Without any hesitation, Klein reached into his body with his right hand and took out a brown translucent bottle.

Then, he stretched out his left palm and quickly unscrewed the lid before casually flinging the Biological Poison Bottle to a corner of the hall.

In this environment, which was half submerged under the sea, other than Fire of Light which could consume the undead and evil, no other flames could exist; thus, it also limited two important powers of Klein's Magician Sequence. Therefore, he could only push his other advantages to the limit right from the very beginning.

At the same time as when he threw out the Biological Poison Bottle, Klein's left glove quickly became resplendent, as if he was reflecting the light of the noon sun.

Around his body, the undulating seawater was stained with a golden color as it spread outwards, layer after layer.

This was the Priest of Light's power from the Creeping Hunger, Light of Purification!

The old priest who had eaten part of Sea God Kalvetua's body was certainly not civilized and polite enough to just watch Klein prepare for battle in a chivalrous manner. The blue light in his eyes suddenly bloomed, and his bloated belly once again swelled.

Howl!

An ethereal, yet mournful sound came from his body, instantly covering the entire ruins.

This voice was like the song of a nightingale, beautiful and also melodious at the same time. It was also cold and bone-piercing, one that penetrated right to the soul.

Klein was frozen in place. Similarly, all his thoughts seemed like they had been blasted by extremely cold waves and instantly froze.

The old priest's body swelled up in an instant, as if he was a resurrected Kalvetua or a giant that had walked out of a mythical legend.

One after another, blue slippery tentacles, all surrounded by silver lightning, emerged from under his ripped robe. They shot out and danced in the air, striking the stunned Klein.

Sizzle!

With a burst of silver light, Klein was sent flying before falling heavily at the doorway. The black armor on his body dimmed instantly and cracked, and he had subconsciously thrown the cane in his hand far away.

His mind remained abnormally calm. In a situation where he was almost frozen, he didn't even have the thought of using Paper Figurine Substitutes and had ended up taking on the blow head-on.

If it weren't for the Black Emperor card and Azik's copper whistle which were simultaneously reinforcing his Spirit Body, with him essentially being a Sequence 6, he would've been seriously injured and even killed instantly.

The tentacles surged over again and struck down.

Klein, who was jolted awake by the electricity, agilely somersaulted away, barely dodging the attack.

He glanced at the man's body. He turned around immediately and ran out the door without any hesitation. It was a determined and decisive action.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

As Klein ran and flew as though he was pathetically fleeing for his life, the old priest's silver-lightning enshrouded blue tentacles were chasing him from behind in a bid to pull him back into the hall, but Klein would nimbly change direction, dodging with his agile movements and timely somersaults.

Seeing that things weren't going as he wished, the old priest's belly expanded once again, and his cold voice resounded in the ruins.

But this time, Klein was prepared. Although his body remained stiff and bogged down, it was soaked by the seawater before turning into a pile of soggy paper.

At last, the old priest moved. With heavy but swift steps, he attempted to catch up to his enemy.

The colossal figure rushed to the door, and the colossal figure slammed onto the collapsed roof and wall with a bang!

The door here was originally large enough for a creature like Kalvetua to pass through, but the collapse of the ruins and the madness of this Sea God before its death had caused the place to collapse. The collapsed rubble left the door with an opening that was two meters tall and one meter wide. As for the old priest whose mind was clearly abnormal, he had slammed right into it, causing him to be stuck.

Klein, who had been waiting for this opportunity, stopped and turned around.

He half-closed his eyes, straightened his back, and spread open his arms.

A beam of golden light descended from the sky, pounding the old priest's body directly.

Patches of his robe that hung over his body had ignited, and his grayish-black skin and flesh fell to the ground in chunks, melting and evaporating under the pure radiance.

It was only then that Klein made out what the oddity in the old priest's belly was.

The swelling was intense, especially in several areas, forming the complete outline of two eyes and a mouth.

It was as if there was someone hiding inside the old priest's stomach, putting their face there in an attempt to escape.

Bang!

The old priest exerted strength with his legs which were covered by the black serpent skin, causing him to be thrown backwards from the collapsed door. Rocks were sent flying and the seawater surged.

He finally broke away from the pillar of light, but most of his body was covered in hideous wounds caused by the collapse of his flesh. Even his "face" was filled with signs of melting.

Tap! Tap! Tap! The old priest's blue tentacles flailed in the air, bringing with them silver lightning as they lashed at Klein from all directions. The "face" at his abdomen would occasionally make a sound that made the Spirit Body quieten down.

Klein engaged in either running, somersaulting, circling, or calmly twirling around with his opponent. He would go in the opposite direction when his opponent headed in one, just like a wild dance between two people.

During this process, he relied on Paper Figurine Substitutes to withstand the ethereal, yet cold shrieking again and again. Occasionally, he would let out a roar and use a Wraith's shriek to agitate the old priest, forcefully interrupting the "face" in his abdomen from producing any sounds.

Time passed, second by second, and the crazy, old priest who had been keeping his hands down, suddenly raised them and pressed them against his stomach.

He pulled with his arm, forcefully tearing the silhouette of the mouth into a gash.

Blue pus gushed out of it as a dense array of sharp teeth grew out.

With another roar, the seawater around him gushed towards the mouth, forming the terrifying whirlpool that Kalvetua had previously created.

Klein, who was dressed as the Black Emperor, was sucked in, and the lightning tentacles around him were retracted, about to embrace him.

Klein didn't panic, and the glove on his left palm quickly transformed, looking as if it was made of pure gold.

While floating in midair, he stared at the "face" on the old priest's abdomen and the seawater whirlpool below him. His eyes suddenly flashed with two bolts of lightning.

Interrogator’s Psychic Piercing!

The old priest suddenly froze as the “face” in his abdomen wrinkled, and the terrifying suction force from the whirlpool instantly collapsed.

In the waves that were rushing backwards, Klein lowered his body and swam through the weak spots like a fish, dodging the random flailing of the blue tentacles.

He rushed to the old priest’s side amidst the constantly flashing silver lightning, and at some point in time, the color of his gloves had changed to a pale green.

The muscles on Klein’s back bulged as he threw out two punches, striking the old priest’s thigh in the vicinity of his knee.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Flesh and blood splattered from the cold-emitting punches. His right leg was covered in a thin layer of frost, and the surrounding seawater was completely frozen.

This was a Zombie’s control over ice!

As the old priest cried out in pain, he retracted his whip-like tentacles, illuminating the entire ruin with silvery light.

At that moment, Klein wasn’t greedy and stopped just in time. He continuously somersaulted backwards, avoiding the crazy attack that scorched the stone slabs on the ground.

He stood up, and while the old priest was still frozen in place, the glove on his left palm once again glowed with the color of the sun.

Klein straightened up and took a pose of praising the sun.

A thick, bright, and holy pillar of light descended once more, enveloping the old priest in it.

Klein saw the grayish-black flesh of his enemy quickly disintegrate. The skin of the “face” on his enemy’s abdomen melted, revealing the situation inside—inside the old priest’s abdomen, the heart, stomach, intestines, and other organs were mashed together, forming the face of a sea serpent.

Kalvetua actually still has a little of its soul left … The will of a demigod is truly beyond my imagination… Klein somersaulted again, dodging the blue tentacle that thrust at him like a spear.

Wrapped with lightning, the tentacles, which had been melted away by the pillar of holy light, stabbed into the ground, twitching, twisting, and squirming.

The bright and clear light quickly disappeared, and the sinister serpent’s face on the old priest’s abdomen stubbornly opened its mouth once again.

At that moment, the old priest himself had bent his waist and let out a fit of violent coughs. The effort on the serpent’s face came to an abrupt halt.

The Biological Poison Bottle had finally shown its effects!

Klein didn’t miss the opportunity. He stood up straight again and spread his arms out as though he was hugging the sun.

A pillar of light with many golden flames illuminated the area. The old priest’s figure first bent before shrinking, as if evaporating into thin air. The serpent face at his abdomen let out a shrill cry before completely vanishing.

By the time the light dissipated, the old priest had returned to his original size. His bones had almost melted, with pieces of grayish-black flesh still hanging from his body.

His aura quickly dimmed as his spirit rapidly disintegrated.

Klein rushed over and, relying on his state as a wraith, began to channel his spirit.

He wanted to confirm if the old priest was guilty of heinous crimes.

He felt that he needed to maintain his bottom line, which was something he wished for and a precaution against corruption and madness.

All of a sudden, he saw images of the old priest presiding over the living sacrificial rituals.

Without hesitation, Klein reached out with his left hand to let the long-starved glove taste a delicacy.

Flesh, blood, spirituality, and bone quickly surged into the gaping mouth of his palm, along with specks of blue light that came with some darkness.

During the spirit channeling, Klein confirmed that the old priest was previously a Soul Assurer. His potion formula and Beyonder ingredients all came from the Church of the God of Combat from the Feysac Empire. And by the time he became a Sea God Guard, he had already lost his mind and could only obey orders. After the death of Kalvetua, he had followed his instincts and eaten the flesh and blood of the deity he believed in, and in the end, the conflicting characteristics turned him into a monster.

Just as Creeping Hunger was satiated, all the Beyonder characteristics on the ground suddenly stirred, turning into a hurricane and sweeping into the hall before plunging into the white fang that was no longer curved.

When Klein looked over, he saw that Kalvetua's remnant corpse had completely collapsed into something that resembled mud. As for the serpent fang which had absorbed all the Beyonder characteristics of the area, it had become a short scepter, quietly embedded in a half-collapsed pillar.

On the tip of the white scepter, there were many tiny blue ‘gems’ embedded there. Some of them dyed in black and others with the light of dawn.

Seeing that Creeping Hunger was satiated, Klein rushed into the hall, cautiously approaching the scepter.

Before he really came into contact with the scepter, he heard layers of illusory prayers ringing in his ears, and he saw illusions. He saw worshipers prostrating and praying, as well as members of the Resistance crying over the shattered statues of their god.

Chapter 549 - High Elf

◆◆◆

As the layered sounds of the illusory pleas rang in his ears, Klein felt as though he possessed a corporeal body. The deepest part of his head throbbed with pain, so much so that he yearned to slam his head into the wall to alleviate the pain with more pain.

The scenes of different people praying to him made him feel an uncontrollable and abnormally terrifying sense of dizziness. It was as if he was walking the edge of a deep abyss and could fall down at any moment.

It was only because he had his Spirit Body reinforced with the Black Emperor card and Azik's copper whistle, as well as being accustomed to being prayed to, which had prevented him from losing control straight away like other non-demigod Beyonders. They would've already collapsed to the ground in pain, turning into a monster or erupting into a mess of flesh and blood.

All of the Beyonder characteristics in this area have combined together to form a Sealed Artifact with the help of the serpent fang. Moreover, the degree of danger and negative effects have far surpassed that of a Grade 2 Sealed Artifact… Klein didn't rashly move forward but instead took a few steps back and left the area where the praying voices were concentrated, to ease the pain and dizziness that would've caused his Spirit Body to collapse.

He stood next to Kalvetua's mashed body which resembled slush, and he stared at the white scepter that was embedded in the half-collapsed pillar. He considered how he could take it away.

At the same time, he naturally chose a name for the Sealed Artifact: Sea God Scepter!

Yes, from the feelings and reaction just now, I can barely get close to it and pull it out, but I can only last a few seconds. There's no way for me to hold it or use it… However, it doesn't matter. Once I have it in my hand, I'll terminate the summoning ritual and return above the gray fog. There, I can effectively block the thousands of prayers and any of the still-unknown negative effects. It will allow me to study it with ease… Klein quickly came up with an idea.

In his wraith state, he could instinctively communicate with the spirit world to receive a revelation without the need to toss a coin.

His spiritual intuition told him that doing so wouldn't be too dangerous.

After making up his mind, Klein began to clean up the mess and take the opportunity to see what he could find in the ancient elven ruins.

He first headed to the corner and picked up the translucent Biological Poison Bottle, screwed the lid back on, and stuffed it into his body. Then, he turned around to find an iron cigar case that was half-hidden beneath the slushy remains of Kalvetua.

This… I thought it had been swallowed by Kalvetua and corroded into dregs… Klein clicked his tongue in wonder and quickly walked over.

Because he had been left feeling numb from the discharged electric currents from the seawater, he raised his right hand, allowing the iron cigar case to float slowly in the air before landing in his palm.

Klein glanced around and saw that the surface of the iron cigar case was covered with corrosion marks. However, it was still barely usable. As for the other items that were sucked away by the seawater whirlpool back then, there were no signs of them.

The aura of the gray fog made Kalvetua uncomfortable, so it vomited it out right away, or has this iron cigar case undergone some sort of mutation that makes it not prone to corrosion, allowing it to survive until Kalvetua died? Amidst his puzzlement, Klein placed the cigar case into his body, planning to study it after he left.

Under such circumstances, he was in a race against time. He couldn't afford even the slightest delay, because Klein didn't know when the Church of Storms and the kingdom's military would find this place!

He walked around the half-collapsed pillar from a distance and entered the rear of the hall which had almost completely collapsed.

There should've been many murals here, but with the destruction of the walls, they had all disappeared. Klein flew all the way to the end before seeing about a third of an exquisite throne being buried by stones and pillars.

[image]

On the left side of the throne, there was half of a mural that depicted a confrontation between two figures.

Looking down on the enemy from above was a man treading waves with dark clouds above him. He seemed to have storms draped over him as he had relatively softer features. His contours had an oriental trait from Klein's past life. He held a spear formed of pure lightning in his hand against an ocean that had drowned everything.

Beneath the man was a man wearing a simple white robe. His face was blurry, and it was difficult to discern his age. It was only barely possible to tell that he was a man.

There was a halo behind the head of the white-robed man. It quietly emitted a bright light like the sun.

Beneath his feet was an illusionary circle with twelve segments. Each segment had symbols representing different times.

Behind him was a shadow that was like a curtain, and within the shadows, it appeared as though there was an eye peeking out from it.

Relying on his solid foundation in mysticism and rich knowledge from many sources, Klein quickly made an interpretation.

Waves, storms, dark clouds, lightning… This should be the ancient god, Elf King Soniathrym… Indeed, he's just like the legends, with the rather soft facial features of an elf… This ancient Lord of Storms doesn't give off any irascible vibes, and his looks are surprisingly good. Heh, this is a mural in an elven ruin, so it's normal for them to beautify their own deity…

The sun-like halo and the twelve circular segments that symbolizes time, this… Isn't this the father of Amon and Adam, the Creator who's known in the outside world as the ancient Sun God and is revered in the City of Silver as the omnipotent and omniscient God? There's a shadow curtain behind him, and behind it hides an eye… Yes, one of the images of the True Creator is the Eye behind the Shadow Curtains!

As expected, this is the Creator who took back the ancient gods' authorities with eight King of Angels following him?

Is this mural a depiction of Elf King Soniathrym's battle against the Creator?

Klein retracted his gaze and began searching for something of value.

Following his spiritual intuition, he came to the throne, reached into the base of the collapsed stones and pillars, and pulled out an object.

It was a flattened golden wine cup.

Its surface was engraved with intricate patterns, and its wine leg was already bent. At the bottom was a row of elven words: "Calamity, Cohinem."

The original owner of this ruin is a high elf named Cohinem? Did he, or should I say “He” have the title of Calamity? Hmm… It matches the Book of Calamity that Leticia and company found. Both ruins should belong to the high elf, Cohinem, and there should be some kind of miraculous connection between them… Unfortunately, this golden wine cup is just a simple wine cup. It carries a bit of spirituality simply because it’s inscribed with the true name of the high elf… If Cohinem hadn’t fallen, just a real name would imbue the wine cup with extraordinary powers. What a pity… Klein initially judged that Cohinem was completely dead because Sea God Kalvetua had inherited his powers.

However, Klein couldn’t be too sure, because despite it being hundreds or thousands of years later, the Book of Calamity still had the quality of driving Leticia, a Beyonder whose Sequence wasn’t too low, to lose control.

Furthermore, it doesn’t seem like it’s something Sea God Kalvetua was capable of… Could the high elf, Cohinem, have the ability to split his Beyonder characteristics? Kalvetua only inherited a portion. Most of the remaining Beyonder characteristics is the source of the Book of Calamity’s unique quality?

Cohinem is dead, but he hasn’t completely perished?

Of course, Kalvetua, who swallowed Cohinem’s Beyonder characteristic, was just a beast without intelligence. No one knows what happened at that time; perhaps some of the characteristics were lost and formed a Sealed Artifact. After Kalvetua’s defeat, it fell into the hands of the Church of Storms…

Yes, I’ll ask Little Sun via The World at the Tarot Gathering next week. He should know who Cohinem is. Actually, there’s no need to ask; he’ll be offering two pages of ancient god legends. Perhaps there might be a detailed description of high elves next time…

After thinking it through, Klein stuffed the wine cup into his body. After all, this was made of gold, and even if the high elf, Cohinem, wasn't dead and had some sort of connection with the wine cup, the gray fog could still block him out.

After a thorough check, and seeing that there was nothing of note, Klein quickly flew back outside and picked up the black hardwood cane before wiping out any traces of the battle.

Then, he took out a paper figurine. With a casual shake, he threw it into the seawater, causing it to quickly turn soggy before reducing to dust.

The earlier parts can be interfered with, but I won't have the time or opportunity for the rest… Luckily, I am now disguised as Black Emperor… As for the remains of Kalvetua, his flesh no longer have any value, and his bones are too heavy. It might affect my ability to wield the Sea God Scepter… With the help of Cogitation, Klein stabilized his state and quickly flew towards the white bone staff on the half-collapsed pillar.

Again, the sounds of illusory pleas filled his ears. Either pious, crying, fanatic, or numbed worshipers filled his vision, and the throbbing and dizziness became more and more intense.

Relying on his rich experience and the Spirit Body reinforcement from using the Black Emperor card and Azik's copper whistle, Klein barely managed to hold on until he finally arrived beside the Sea God Scepter.

He extended his right hand, and he grasped the middle section of the white-boned scepter.

As soon as the two made contact, the scene before Klein's eyes became clear, and the buzzing sound beside his ears instantly became real.

He saw the bald, wheelchair-bound rebel, Kalat, collapsed on the ground, struggling to reach the shattered figurine of Kalvetua, chanting its honorific name over and over, his eyes filled with despair.

He saw Edmonton, with his blue sea serpent tattoo, prostrating himself in front of another Kalvetua figurine which was strangely bleeding, constantly knocking his head against the ground, creating a bloody mess.

In the slums, he saw believers hiding in their homes, weeping and praying numbly.

†

Klein's black armor couldn't support his body anymore as it quickly collapsed.

At the same time, his solidified "muscles" tightened as he exerted strength with his hands. Amidst the layers of resonating prayers and numerous clear scenes, he suddenly pulled out the short white bone staff that symbolized the Sea God's authority!

Whoosh!

The seawater in the ruins surged violently, either churning or transforming into a whirlpool.

Klein calmly held onto the Sea God Scepter with his pitch-black crown before immediately vanishing. He directly returned above the gray fog.

When the familiar towering palace entered his sight, the sounds of praying and the hallucinatory scenes in front of him had already disappeared.

Sitting on the high-back chair belonging to The Fool, Klein lifted his right hand and examined the Sea God Scepter inlaid with blue gems and stained with some darkness and the light of dawn.

Countless points of light floated around the Sealed Artifact. Each point of light seemed to correspond to a praying believer. This caused the milky-white body of the scepter to glow with psychedelic and holy streams of light.

At this moment, Klein felt like this scepter was the true body of the Sea

God!

Chapter 550 - The Negative Effects of the Sealed Artifact

◆

After some wrestling with the Sea God Scepter, Klein gained a preliminary understanding of its powers.

It could create tsunamis, create hurricanes, produce torrential rain, and bring forth lightning. It could allow a person to fly in the sky and roam the seabed with almost no restrictions.

It was nearly indestructible and could be used to smash an enemy's head in. It allowed the wielder to never get lost without the existence of any other powerful factors. It would provide an unimaginable level of balance, drive many sea creatures to do one's bidding, respond to prayers from believers, and also allow the wielder to obtain the same kind of strength as a sea monster. It was equivalent to making the wielder the ruler of an entire expanse of the sea.

To Klein, this was already considered at the level of a deity. Even on Earth, he could resist an aircraft carrier formation!

Although he was Sequence 6 with plenty of pragmatic Beyonder powers, making him a genuine powerhouse, a legendary figure, in the eyes of ordinary people, he was still weak in essence. He was still closer to Man rather than God. If the situation was right, a revolver would be able to finish him off. Of course, his resurrection and act of climbing out of a coffin was a whole other matter.

As for the powers of the Sea God Scepter, they had all surpassed the level of Man. In the folklore and in the hearts of the common man, he possessed the powers of deities and devils.

No wonder Beyonders are called demigods from Sequence 4. They truly are more like God than Man… Klein silently sighed with emotion, and then he made a self-deprecating comment.

If I use the Sea God Scepter under normal circumstances, I can already be a high-ranking deacon of the Nighthawks, becoming one of the twenty-odd people with the most power in the Church… If Ince Zangwill didn't have 0-08 and was at sea, I could immediately seek revenge on him. There might even be a small chance of success.

But can I use the Sea God Scepter normally?

No…

Klein had already discovered that the negative effects of the Sea God Scepter were staggering. In the Church of Evernight, it could easily obtain the evaluation of a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, and countless researchers would have to die to figure out the best sealing and usage methods.

The Sea God Scepter had a total of three negative effects.

First, it made the wielder irritable, making them prone to anger and turning rash as a result.

Second, it periodically froze all thoughts of biological creatures in a certain range before draining their blood, including the wielder's. As for how huge the range was and what the exact period was, Klein, who wasn't a professional researcher, couldn't give a precise description. He could only give a rough estimate that the range was from 600 meters to 1 kilometer and the period was 20 minutes to 35 minutes.

Third, it would gather and display the prayers of worshipers, both audio and visual. This very easily caused a non-demigod wielder, who had a lacking spirit, to break down and lose control.

The first negative effect is still alright. If I were to only use it for a short period of time, the anger and irritation would still be acceptable. To put it simply, I'll just end things rashly with such a powerful Sealed Artifact…

For the third, there's actually a way to avoid it. The Sea God's response to its believers must have a distance limitation. That is to say that beyond the Rorsted Archipelago and the nearby sea regions, there would be no "signal," so one wouldn't be influenced by it. Yes… if it's constantly placed above the gray fog, I believe this can break the distance limitation. The prayers' voices and scenes would be screened, turning into points of light. It wouldn't affect me in any way. I can then choose whether to reply, who to reply to, and how to reply…

And when replying, I can use the powers of the Sea God Scepter…

The biggest problem is the second one. I myself am fine. As Black Emperor, I'm considered a wraith; I wouldn't have blood, so there's no need to be afraid of being sucked dry. However, the surrounding creatures will be in trouble. After all, it doesn't distinguish between friend and foe. Besides, the frequency is quite unpredictable… It's impossible for me to first discuss with the enemy when I encounter danger about changing our time and place.

Klein carefully thought about certain scenarios of him using the Sea God Scepter, but it all depended on the environment and accurate judgment, so it wasn't very feasible.

Phew… could its fate be to stay above the gray fog? When people like Amon attempt to creep up, I'll give them a bashing, no—a bolt of lightning.

Yes, there's another usage method. When people like Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man seek my help, I'm no longer limited to using paper angels. I can provide rain and produce some wind… Of course, this can be done like the purifying powers of the Sun Brooch, using the paper angel as a vessel…

On some serious thought, I can fully appear like a true demigod above the gray fog, with the help of the Sea God Scepter…

Klein's mood gradually became better, as he had discovered that the Sea God Scepter wasn't completely unusable at the moment. It opened up many more options and avenues for him.

He withdrew his attention and once again looked at the white bone scepter with the blue gems embedded at the top. He pondered over another question, and that was whether or not he should respond to the prayers of the followers of the Sea God.

Kalvetua is already dead. There's no need to give those people another target of their faith…

But, even if the living priests and high-ranking members of the Resistance notice the abnormality and no longer receive any responses, they still wouldn't accept the worst outcome for a long period of time. People will often hold out hope and are accustomed to comforting themselves and hypnotizing themselves. This is especially the case when they're in a perilous situation with no hope to be seen. Just like the City of Silver, after two thousand years, they're still consecrating the Creator, believing that they had been abandoned and that they would receive a response one day…

That is to say that the fervent believers of the Sea God will not stop their live sacrifices just because they didn't receive a response, being unconvinced that Kalvetua has already perished. Instead, they will become worse, hoping to gain the favor of their god… Without years of promotions and setbacks, it will be difficult for them to realize the truth.

Without the support of a native deity like Kalvetua, the Resistance would probably fall entirely into Feysac's or Intis's camp. At that time, they would most likely be driven to do inhuman things, such as attacking places where civilians gather, or to make children who still retain their innocence act as meat shields…

I need to give them some guidance. I need to tell them what the correct way of practicing their faith is, but I should only help them without burdening myself… I'm not responsible for saving their fates…

Klein gently rapped the edge of the long, mottled table and suddenly chuckled.

Wasn't I supposed to act? Sea God Kalvetua is quite a good target.

I wonder if I'll get any feedback with the gray fog's interference.

Heh heh, I have to give it a try to figure it out.

Klein quickly made his decision, feeling strangely refreshed.

He deliberated for a moment. First, he conjured a necessary scene, then he held onto the Sea God Scepter, spreading out his spirituality before touching one of the points of light.

†

In a hidden cave in the forest of Blue Mountain Island.

The bald rebel, Kalat, fell from his wheelchair, his eyes filled with despair and confusion as he crawled towards the shattered figurine of Kalvetua in front of him.

He vaguely sensed something, but he was unwilling to believe it. This meant that all of his persistence, all of his sacrifices, and all of his pain would become meaningless.

No… he screamed silently as he constantly muttered the honorific name of Sea God Kalvetua in an attempt to get a response from the deity.

With his elbows on the ground, his fingers reached into the soil as he moved towards the front of the shattered figurine one inch at a time. He picked up the head of the sea serpent that was carved out of stone, and he found that its eyes had collapsed inwardly to become a strange black hole, and its fangs were falling off one after another.

Kalat seemed to freeze; the light in his eyes seemingly vanishing.

It was at this moment that he suddenly saw a blurry figure. Behind the figure was a dark blue tsunami surging into the sky and streaks of silver lightning that branched out like tree branches.

Amidst his shock, Kalat instinctively lowered his head, an unimaginable sense of joy surging inside him.

He saw that the figure's feet were surrounded by waves, and there were hurricanes swirling around him. The figure was majestic and holy, high and almighty.

Then, he heard a calm and magnificent voice.

"I have returned."

As his voice echoed in the air, Kalat teared up for some inexplicable reason.

†

Ten minutes after Klein left the bottom of the sea ruin which was half-merged with the spirit world.

The seawater that filled this place suddenly churned and flowed backward. In just twenty to thirty seconds, the inside of the elven ruin was so dry that it resembled dry land.

A fresh hurricane blew in, bringing in breathable gas.

One figure after another descended from the hurricane, and leading them was a tall and brawny middle-aged man. He appeared to be in his forties with a face with firm and deep lines. His accentuated muscles filled with loose Storm priest robes.

He was none other than the Church of Storms Cardinal, Archbishop of the Rorsted Sea, high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers, Sea King Jahn Kottman.

He had a pair of deep blue eyes, and his hair of the same color was twice as thick as a normal person's. They were like small worms or tentacles.

Behind Jahn Kottman were a number of Mandated Punishers and military personnel. They examined their surroundings expectantly and cautiously, not letting their guard down because of the demigod's protection up ahead.

At this moment, they heard a snort, and they were immediately swept up by a hurricane, arriving at the doorway of the ruin in one fell swoop.

They saw a huge sea serpent reduced to a sludge of flesh and blood, with its bone exposed. Other than that, there was nothing else.

"Who is it!" Jahn Kottman suppressed his anger and growled.

As he shouted these words, a sea wave crashed down from above.

The sea wave reverberated in the half-collapsed hall, quickly calming to form a windless lake.

The surface of the lake reflected the scene from before: An indiscernible figure pulling up a short white staff inlaid with blue gems, causing the sea to churn and the ruins to quake.

Jahn Kottman took a deep breath and turned his back to the crowd.

"Find him."

†

At that moment, Klein had selected a dozen or so believers to respond to, each of whom was relatively important, mainly by giving out a new covenant.

“I have returned, when the past is pardoned, I will redeem you.

“First Commandment: Thou shalt not sacrifice unto me living human sacrifices.”

Chapter 551 - The Ten Commandments

◆

“Second Commandment: Thou shalt not use my name in vain.

“Third Commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

“Fourth Commandment: Honor thy father, thy mother, and thy children as you love me.

“Fifth Commandment: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

“Sixth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill the innocent.

“Seventh Commandment: Thou shalt not bear false witness, frame, or violate contracts.

“Eighth Commandment: Serve me with your heart, not with your offerings.

“Ninth Commandment: Those who have committed lesser wrongdoings, first atone for your sins before seeking forgiveness.

“Tenth Commandment: Honor my name by helping your compatriots and companions.”

One commandment after another echoed in the ears of the bald rebel, Kalat, causing him to completely prostrate himself. He held his head close to the ground, uncontrollably trembling slightly with reverence, fear, and excitement.

As a Mid-Sequence Beyonder, a rebel who had once been educated in the

Feysac Empire, he had sufficient insight to understand that the worship of the Sea God was based more on fear—fear of powerful forces, fear of the fearsome natural risks that mankind faced, and many rituals that retained primitive bloodshed, a backward faith that reveled in inhumane and uncivilized practices, something that would be eliminated sooner or later.

However, the faith he had developed since he was young had made him afraid to go against the divine revelation. He could only bury the idea of modifying the ritual process deep in his heart and avoid the parts which conflicted with his own wishes as much as possible.

Now, the Sea God's sudden change left him extremely delighted. It was as if he could see the so-called "primitive totem," that outsiders claimed it to be, evolving into a true god.

Blessed are we; blessed are the rebels; blessed are the true believers… In his blurred vision, Kalat raised his head, spread his hands sincerely, and placed them against his mouth.

"I will abide by your teachings as if I am praising your name."

The blurry figure in front of him disappeared, the magnificent voice by his ears vanished, and the scene in the cave returned to its original state.

However, Kalat knew that everything was no longer the same.

He moved his elbows several times and quickly crawled back to his wheelchair. He once again sat on it and turned to the other side of the cave.

Kalat quickly met with Edmonton. This member of the Resistance with a blue sea serpent tattoo was standing in front of the deity figurine that was bleeding abnormally. His forehead was a mix of scarlet red and black, dirty and gruesome.

However, Edmonton's expression was joyful, excited, and satisfied. He looked at Kalat and blurted out, “Did you receive the revelation?”

“Yes, it’s the aura of God, just like before.” Kalat nodded in excitement. “Not only has God reappeared over the land, but ‘He’ has also rebuilt his covenant.”

Edmonton let out a sigh of relief.

“I was even suspecting that I was hallucinating before.

“It seems like as long as an outsider touches the holy sword, God will be able to walk the land again. There’s no need for it to be completely lifted.”

Kalat chimed, “Indeed. The reason why the deity figurine shattered and bled is because God has changed ‘His’ image. We must build a new one! Just like the scenes we saw earlier!”

“God also showed his Sacred Emblem. Above the symbol of the waves, there was a scepter in the shape of lightning, surrounded by strong winds,” Edmonton said as he recalled.

Kalat immediately patted the armrest of his wheelchair.

“Let’s find the High Priest right now. He should’ve also received the revelation.

“We will usher in a new world!”

†

Above the gray fog, Klein put down the Sea God’s Scepter and rubbed his temples in exhaustion.

He had noticed a problem earlier. The Sea God Scepter could respond to ritualistic magic, which meant that it could provide a certain amount of strength to help the worshiper complete the ritual and achieve their goals. However, it could only be concentrated within his domain and could not exceed the limit. Whatever could be done was relatively limited.

For example, the Evernight Goddess could use a method of influencing fate to let “Her” believers naturally obtain the money they needed and pay their debt. As for the Sea God Scepter, it could at most produce fake money on the altar, and after a while, it would become ineffective and return to its true form.

This is the difference between a false god and a true god…

Besides, apart from the gray fog, as long as it fulfills the procedure and prayer, the Sea God Scepter is capable of automatically responding to ritualistic magic, unless it will use up more than half of its power in one go… This might be why the steps to ritualistic magic are extremely important…

Above the gray fog, prayers will be screened, reduced to points of light. The Sea God Scepter is unable to automatically respond; hence, requiring me to manually handle them. This makes it relatively troublesome. It’s impossible for me to stay here all day. Of course, there’s also a benefit to it—as long as the prayer doesn’t have any mistakes, and it is accurately pointed towards the Sea God Scepter, regardless of how perfunctory the ritual is, they will be able to receive a response. The only criteria is that I’m in a good mood…

I’ll think of a solution when I’m free. I’ll make it so that even if the Sea God Scepter is above the gray fog, it will be an automated answering machine… Produce a paper angel? That’s useless, as it doesn’t have any soul injected into it… Make a mechanical and rigid puppet to handle the repeated and trivial ritualistic magic? Hmm… I wonder if a Marionettist has powers related to this. At the very least, Rosago only showed traits of controlling a person like a puppet…

As Klein’s thoughts slowly settled, his eyes moved to the iron cigar case.

After some research, he discovered that this cigarette case that had a severely corroded exterior had undergone some abnormal changes. It was firmer, tougher, and more resistant to corrosion. However, it was still within a comprehensible and acceptable range of normal humans.

It isn’t equipped with any special properties… However, if it were placed here for a few years, decades, or even longer where it holds Beyonder characteristics and mystical items, perhaps it could really evolve into a “sealing case” whose effects would gradually fade one day… The corner of Klein’s mouth twitched, and he turned his head to look at the junk pile in the corner.

They were covered by the gray fog, almost blending in with the surroundings.

Heh heh… Klein laughed dryly and looked away.

He fiddled with the crushed golden wine cup again, confirming that there was nothing wrong with it.

After doing all this, he entered the real world and summoned himself once more to bring the Sun Brooch and other items back to his room in the inn.

At this very moment, the clouds in the sky had disappeared, and the moon was scattering its crimson tranquility. The entire City of Generosity, Bayam, remained asleep in its dreams.

†

9 a.m., Cathedral of Waves.

Alger was summoned, and by using the excuse of a confession, he once again met the diocese bishop, Chogo.

“Look for this person.” Chogo handed over the portrait in his hand.

Another mission… What’s going on recently? Alger muttered in his mind as he unfolded the piece of paper.

When he saw the contents of the portrait, he almost couldn't control his laughter.

It was impossible to tell if the figure in the portrait was male or female, or what they looked like. How was he supposed to find them? In a split second, he thought of something and didn't try to hide his change in mood. Instead, he deliberately blurted out, "Who is this?"

The portrait depicted an unusually blurry and mysterious person, with no characteristics that could be used to aid in a search.

There was no such mission yesterday… A sudden demand to pursue this person this morning… What happened last night? Hmm, Kalvetua perished completely… With that happening, the Church and the military would definitely search for its remains… Symeem Island is the clue? This person took away the most important item ahead of them? Who is this person? Alger's heart skipped a beat, and he almost didn't dare meet Chogo's eyes.

Chogo nodded.

"A dirty, despicable thief! He may be from Intis or Feysac, and he may belong to the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun or the Church of the God of Combat."

Someone from Intis or Feysac, or someone from the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun or the Church of the God of Combat? Why would there be such a guess and conclusion? His Eminence Jahn Kottman only received little information at the scene and was unable to pinpoint the target? In this case, it's indeed possible to presume that this person is from either Intis or Feysac, as the main supporters of the Resistance and Kalvetua are from those two countries. Heh heh, there is reason to believe that they may have already known where Kalvetua was hiding… It fits my theory from before… Of course, it could also be something else… Alger controlled his emotions and asked, "What did he do?"

"You don't need to know. Just pay attention to any abnormalities from people from Intis or Feysac in Bayam. Yes, also include the locals who have become Beyonders. Also, find the people who previously posted the notice on the front door of the cathedral. They might know something, and they could quickly give you further information," George ordered in a deep voice.

This is indeed a direction… This is tantamount to telling me that this person has something to do with the notice and the perishing of Kalvetua… I wonder whose hands Kalvetua's Beyonder characteristic landed in… Who…. Right, The World is in Bayam. Something happened to Kalvetua not long after he came here! Could this be Mr. Fool's purpose? Would this help him in the process of removing the seal and regaining his strength? Alger's pupils contracted as he recalled his conjecture from a while ago.

†

When he woke up, Klein, who had reaped a bountiful harvest last night, was uplifted and in a good mood.

He decided to treat himself today and make sure that his three meals would be sumptuous and delicious.

As he pushed open the door and walked into the living room, he saw that Danitz was out of "bed," untying the bandage and splint around his arm.

He recovered that quickly? Klein was stunned for a moment.

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow look over, Danitz chuckled and said, "My ability at recovering isn't too bad. My Sequence 9 is called Hunter. I received a clear improvement in various aspects of my body, allowing me to surpass ordinary humans. When it comes to combat, I experienced a great enhancement. Besides, I'm already at Sequence 7."

Sequence 9 Hunter? I've killed one, and I know the corresponding Sequence 6's name is Conspirer… Klein suddenly recalled the first enemy he encountered back when he first arrived in Backlund. It had sucked him into a maelstrom that he was almost unable to extricate himself from.

“Sequence 8, Provoker?” Klein asked in passing.

He had long since guessed Danitz’s Beyonder pathway from his adeptness at using fire. It was the Red Priest pathway which Roselle had called a true man. Sequence 7 was called the Pyromaniac, also known in ancient times as Fire Mage.

Danitz froze for a second, thinking that Gehrman Sparrow was doubting him. He subconsciously raised his voice.

“Do you think I’m not good at provoking?

“No, I’m an expert in this field!”

Chapter 552 - Pomp

◆

Danitz threw the splint and bandages into the trash, flexed his left arm, and said, “Typically, a pirate’s provocation is an insult, but I’m different. I do targeted insults.

“This requires one to grasp a lot of information and rumors, and also understand the provocation target. Only by doing this will you be able to make him lose his mind and cause his brain to be burnt out with a single sentence.”

He paused for a second and said, “Just like with Steel. You can curse him, calling him dogsh*t, or you could curse his parents and captain, but that will be useless. However, if you do an action and throw in a line with that, he will definitely turn into a bull who only sees red.”

With that, Danitz put his hands on his hips, held his crotch, and shouted in a low, scornful voice, “B*tch!”

…I really want to hit him… He lives up to being a Provoker… Indeed, Steel Maveti has such tendencies and hobbies, tsk… Klein loosened his subconsciously clenched fists.

“This is what you call ‘professional provocation.’” Danitz spread out his hands in conclusion. “If I meet a beast, a monster, or someone who cannot be communicated with since they had lost control, I can proactively emit a feeling that they hate. This is a Beyonder power.”

People with such Beyonder powers would either be great at receiving beatings, or they would be great at escaping. Clearly, you belong to the latter… Klein cursed inwardly.

Without having to worry about his injured left arm, Danitz was in a good mood as he continued, “Actually, I’m very good at setting up traps. It’s a pity that you didn’t agree with my plan when hunting Steel Maveti.”

Klein resisted the twitching of his mouth as he calmly replied, “You still have a chance.”

“What chance?” Danitz asked out of curiosity.

“A chance to set up traps for Beyonders such as Steel. One by one, I’ll introduce you to them.” Klein smiled.

“…” Danitz was momentarily at a loss for words.

He knew very well that traps were often ineffective against a man who wasn’t afraid of guns, projectiles, fire, or water.

Danitz let out a hollow chuckle and turned to look out the window.

“The weather has cleared up…

“Does that mean that the serpent, Kalvetua, is dead?”

Klein answered tersely without hiding the truth.

Danitz exhaled, hesitated, then said, “Regardless, after this city-wide sweep, few pirates will dare come to Bayam for some time. This will definitely include Admiral of Blood.

“Your plan of hunting him with Captain might have to come to an end. The Sonia Sea is so big, so it’s very difficult to find a fleet that intentionally hides their whereabouts. Moreover, they can head for the Fog Sea, Berserk Sea, North Sea, and Polar Sea.”

If it was that easy to kill a pirate admiral at sea, the Church and the military would’ve done it a long time ago! Let me return to the Golden

Dream as soon as possible! Danitz lampooned under his breath.

Don’t worry, I have a way, and this will be your job… Klein asked without batting an eyelid, “What’s your Captain’s opinion?”

He had already spent twelve pounds to obtain a radio receiver through Fors, but he had been too busy with matters regarding the sea god to bother with it. Hence, he hadn’t taken it out from the junk pile above the gray fog to bring to the real world.

Meanwhile, Klein had received the money from Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man, raising his fortune to 7,085 pounds and five gold coins.

A wealth at this level was enough to buy a rather large and productive manor anywhere.

If it wasn’t for my revenge and my hope of finding a way back to Earth, I could’ve already retired… Klein thought in satisfaction.

Captain’s opinion… Danitz forced a smile and said, “Although Captain and the others should’ve entered within a 500-nautical-mile radius, in theory, allowing the attempt of a Soulfall Ritual, you should know that the sea routes aren’t entirely safe. Pirates have to be careful not to get caught by the military or the Church. For this, they often need to take detours.

“I believe we should wait another day before doing the Soulfall Ritual so as to prevent any wastage of energy and materials.”

“Okay.” Klein didn’t give any affirmative answers and had turned towards the washroom.

He planned on heading out again today to search for a chance to act as another person.

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow’s back, Danitz exhaled.

I must first contact Captain in private and persuade her to let me return to the Golden Dream before I can use the Soulfall Ritual in front of you! Gehrman Sparrow is someone who likes to head out. I have plenty of opportunities and space. Heh heh, don't tell me that he enjoys shopping? Danitz thought, curling his lips.

†

After leaving the Cathedral of Waves, Alger Wilson went straight for the Ralph Trading Company in reflection and found the owner, who was reading a newspaper.

He was well aware that this middle-aged man, in formal attire, a bow tie, and glasses, was a veteran pirate. He supported the Resistance in secret and reverently worshiped Sea God Kalvetua.

"What is it, our captain of a ghost ship?" Ralph put down the newspaper, crossed his right foot over his left, and smiled leisurely.

He was an illegitimate child. His father was an adventurer of Loen and Feysac blood, and his mother was a native. He had made his fortune by becoming a pirate, then being a merchant that did business with both pirates and the officials. He established a vast network of connections that provided him with help at the governor-general's office, the city council, and the police station.

Upon hearing Ralph's question, Alger almost frowned, because the man's attitude and tone were rather abnormal.

This abnormality was a state that wasn't in accordance with Alger's expectations.

In his opinion, after the fall of Sea God Kalvetua, he was certain that there would definitely be bad omens in the Rorsted Archipelago. The pious believers would definitely sense that something was amiss, either feeling apprehensive or downcast, so how could they still be so relaxed and natural!

Alger didn’t directly mention Kalvetua; instead, he chuckled and asked, “Do you know where Kovaro has been recently?”

Kovaro was the pirate captain who possessed the Beyonder characteristic of the Sanguine baron. It was said that he was once a sailor aboard the Black Emperor, and that he was part of the periphery forces of the King of the Five Seas, Nast.

“Who knows? But he’s surely not in Bayam; otherwise, he would’ve been caught in the raids in the past two days.” Ralph shrugged his shoulders. “I heard that his boat went south.”

Alger actually had an appointment with Kovaro on this matter, and he was only using it as a way to start the conversation.

Of course, he was well aware that to avoid the tsunami in the waters of the Rorsted Archipelago, Kovaro had definitely gone far away and would take some time before he returned to Bayam.

However, Alger wasn’t too anxious, as he already knew that Mr. Moon had been given an acceptance draft. If he withdrew the sum before its maturity, he would receive a discounted value and lose a large amount of interest.

He deliberately nodded his head and said, “Got it, thank you for telling me.”

At this point, Alger pretended to be unaware of what happened as he asked, “I heard that many Sea God figurines in many places shattered by themselves?”

He hadn’t witnessed any instances of this himself, but he could make a reasonable deduction based on the Church’s archives.

In many of the colonial islands and countries of the Southern Continent, more than one or two false gods like Kalvetua had been finished off by the seven Churches. What happened after their deaths had already long been recorded in the archives.

Ralph calmly nodded.

“Yes, there was such a thing.

“But that’s not bad news.”

His expression turned fervent.

“Because God has appeared over the land once again in a new image!”

God has reappeared over the land once again with a new image? Alger’s eyes remained fixed on him, and he felt that this was both reasonable but also unexpected.

Judging from the Church of Storms’s reaction, he was certain that Kalvetua was already dead. Then which Sea God was responding to the believers now?

Connecting it with his previous judgment, he quickly came up with a bold idea: Is it an embodiment of Mr. Fool?

He used Sea God Kalvetua’s perishing to create a new identity? He can release his powers through the seal to directly affect an identity in the real world?

Is this the real reason for The World to come to Bayam?

Hiss, Mr. Fool really does things with pomp!

Alger secretly swallowed his saliva and suppressed his excitement.

†

In the Wind of Azure Inn, Klein, who had yet to leave, saw the stack of cash Captain Elland handed him.

“Here is your reward for a total of a hundred pounds.”

He didn’t mention how much Gehrman Sparrow and Danitz each received, but he gave a total amount. As for how exactly they would split the reward, that was something he left to them.

The military is really generous… Klein silently mused as he received the thick stack of cash, instinctively taking out two five-pound notes and tossing them to Danitz.

He lowered his wrist and finally drew another two ten-pound notes in an expressionless manner.

Gehrman Sparrow is still rather just, far more just than Just Elland… Danitz put away the reward in pleasant surprise. His wallet that had slimmed down quite significantly over the past couple of days had finally been replenished.

Glancing at Gehrman Sparrow in his new clothes, Elland asked, after some deliberation, with his boat-shaped hat in hand, “News from the Church of Storms has revealed that the person who posted the notices on the cathedral’s door, informing them of the problem between Leticia and Sea God Kalvetua, was Blazing Danitz.

“What do you think about that?”

He stared straight into Danitz’s eyes and waited for an answer.

“Haha.” Danitz gave a hollow chuckle. “I don’t know him.”

Klein was silent for two seconds before saying, “While fulfilling a dead adventurer’s wish, I came across Leticia and her companions at the inn.

“Snakes invaded our place in the middle of the night, but they easily resolved it.

“After returning to Bayam, I went to purchase some items from the Resistance and discovered that they had taken out their holy sword. Furthermore, there were two Mid-Sequence Beyonders guarding that small base.

“I felt a crazy will invade my body just by making contact with that holy sword for a moment, and I had nearly lost control on the spot.

“They were still after Leticia.”

What Klein said was the truth; it wasn’t the entire truth, but it was enough to infer the contents of the announcement.

Even if the kingdom’s military and the Church of Storms were to investigate further, they would only be able to unearth the fact that Gehrman Sparrow could change his appearance.

After listening carefully, Elland sighed and smiled, “If there are such things in the future, you don’t have to post notices in the middle of the night. You can come find me directly. This will allow you to reap even greater rewards.”

He stood up, put on his hat, and said to Danitz, “I heard that the bounty for Blazing is going to rise again.”

Chapter 553 - Danitz's Hard Work

◆

Bounty… The muscles in Danitz's cheek twitched as he forced a smile, pretending that he wasn't Blazing and that he didn't care.

When Elland left, he turned sharply to face Gehrman Sparrow and said, "I think we should move to another inn. No, we'd better leave Bayam as soon as possible!"

If I'm worth a bounty of more than 5,000 pounds, I won't be safe anywhere! The pirates and adventurers who are at the same level as me would definitely rush over like sharks smelling blood! Prey that they can finish off while also proving themselves and giving them a high bounty are always very popular. They're worth no less than treasure! Danitz suppressed even more of his inward shouting.

Klein didn't agree or disagree, he slowly smiled.

"Are you worried that your bounty will be too high?"

Danitz nodded heavily, finally feeling as though the madman, Gehrman Sparrow, was finally saying something sensible.

"Besides hiding, there are other solutions," Klein said as he walked over to the coat rack.

"What are they?" Danitz asked subconsciously.

Klein took off his half top hat and put it on his head.

"Raise your Sequence."

Let your strength match the bounty… He put on his coat, twisted the handle, and walked out of the suite.

Raise myself to Sequence 6? Become a Conspirer? Danitz paused for two seconds, then he frowned and grimaced.

When he consumed the Sequence 9 Hunter and Sequence 8 Provoker potions, he didn't find it much of a problem. In fact, he began to long for finding the legendary treasures, obtain mid or high Sequence formulas and their corresponding materials to advance to a demigod, and then become the new king of the sea. However, the intense pain and discomfort brought to him by the Pyromaniac potion had left him in fear and apprehension. He didn't dare believe that he nearly lost control despite strictly following his captain's instructions of constantly provoking his opponents.

This forced Danitz to consider whether or not he was fine just getting rich so that he could return to Intis a rich man.

He stood there, troubled for several minutes. Finally, he thought of a question.

Even if I want to advance by consuming a potion, it's not something I can do in a short period of time. I'll still have to find the formula and collect the ingredients. It wouldn't be an easy task, and the new bounty might be released tomorrow or even today!

So, I must change inns and leave Bayam as soon as possible!

†

After Alger left the Ralph Trading Company, he casually went to a few places to inquire about the situation. When it was almost noon, he received a new report from the Church of Storms.

"It's confirmed that the person who posted the notices at the door of the cathedral is Blazing Danitz.

“Pay attention to his whereabouts.”

Blazing Danitz… Alger held the slip of paper in his hand and ruminated over the name silently. The corners of his mouth curled up, and he no longer had any doubts in his mind.

With ease and certainty, he felt confident about going out to sea to hunt for materials.

This was because his quest would happen at sea and because Mr. Fool has a new identity: “Sea God!”

†

Having missed the morning’s Blue Planet, Danitz waited until four in the afternoon to attempt the Soulfall Ritual while Gehrman Sparrow was out.

He drew the God of Knowledge and Wisdom’s Sacred Emblem with familiarity—an omniscient eye on an open book—with the appropriate altar set up.

Inside the wall of spirituality, he lit a candle and picked up the lavender and mint extract before dripping it onto the still burning flame.

A refreshing fragrance filled the air, and Danitz burned several more herbal powders.

Having done all this, he took a step back and said in ancient Hermes, “I pray for the power of knowledge;

“I pray for the power of rationality;

“I pray for the God of Wisdom’s loving grace;

“I pray that you allow me to communicate with the spirit of Edwina Edwards, the teacher who pursues knowledge, the researcher of spirit world creatures, Vice Admiral Iceberg of the seas, who hails from

Lenburg.”

†

Whoosh!

Along with the echo of the incantation, the interior of the altar suddenly became cold. Apart from the three candles, the remaining brass dagger, the salt plate, the bottle of extract, and the fountain pen and paper all floated in midair.

Danitz waited nervously, not knowing what was going to happen next.

After nearly twenty seconds, the flames of the three candles began to sway, coloring the candles in a pale green color!

Danitz’s body suddenly stiffened. He felt an icy chill invade his body in an irresistible manner.

He saw his feet move uncontrollably, and he took a step forward.

He saw his left hand rise and grab the black fountain pen and a piece of white paper.

He saw himself bend over with a pen in his left hand, quickly writing: “Is there something?”

The words were exquisite and artistic, very different from Danitz’s own style.

It was only then that Danitz realized he could control his head and his throat.

“Captain, Sea God Kalvetua is dead!” He squeezed out his hoarse voice as though he was suffering from a heavy cold.

“Details.” His right hand wrote smoothly.

This was the opportunity Danitz had been waiting for. He immediately recounted everything that had happened, including Gehrman Sparrow's visit to Symeem Island in order to fulfill some adventurer's dying wish, the possibility that Gehrman Sparrow had suffered the sea god's curse and how he easily resolved the problem after closing the door, including the madman's mistake of mistaking the ancient elven ruins as a Sea God ruin.

Towards the end, Danitz quickly added his own take on the matter.

"I believe that Admiral of Blood won't come to Bayam for quite a substantial period of time. Most famous pirates wouldn't.

"It will take at least half a year for this matter to pass.

"Captain, your hunting plan with Gehrman Sparrow might have to be shelved for the time being. I-I wish to return to the Golden Dream."

His left hand froze for a few seconds before writing: "Continue to follow Gehrman Sparrow, and be my contact point with him."

"Captain, y-you can teach him the Soulfall Ritual!" Danitz yelled hoarsely.

His left hand wrote: "This can only be done within 500 nautical miles, and in the case of the person holding the ritual, it would be quite risky for him. And you have our points of contact on the various islands. Those are things that cannot be told to outsiders."

Indeed… Gehrman Sparrow is just an outsider… But, Captain, I really want to go back to the Golden Dream! Danitz racked his brains and said, "Maybe we can invite him to be a guest on the ship. No, this…"

Suddenly an idea came to Danitz.

"Captain, he has a messenger! He has a messenger!

"A messenger that travels through the spirit world to deliver letters for him!"

This should be an unrestricted means of communication, and it should be more private and secure! I don't need to be the contact person anymore! Danitz thought in abnormal delight.

His left hand hung in midair for a few seconds before he wrote: "If that's the case, there's no problem.

"As the new year holiday is coming to an end, it's indeed time for you to return to the ship. You do have some talent in languages, but you still have quite a few problems in other areas. You need to attend more classes and work harder."

Danitz opened his mouth, but nothing came out of it.

He suddenly felt that returning to the Golden Dream wasn't anything to look forward to.

†

In the evening, Klein returned to the Wind of Azure Inn.

He didn't find a suitable target for acting despite an entire day's work. Due to the sweep from before, many pirates and adventurers that were wanted were arrested. The remaining ones continued hiding cautiously, not daring to go out at all. Whether it was the bars, casinos, or brothels, business was poor and there weren't many customers.

"So this is the situation." Danitz came over. He cleared his throat and gave a hollow chuckle. "It would be my first time using the Soulfall Ritual, and I don't have much confidence. I did a test ahead of time, and haha, it succeeded. I managed to communicate with Captain, and she believes there's no chance to hunt Admiral of Blood any time soon. She plans on summoning me back to the Golden Dream. As for us communicating, don't you have a messenger? You can use the messenger to send Captain a letter."

My messenger was given by a bigshot, and it's not mine… Moreover, the messenger can only send messages back and forth between the owner and the owner of the token, without involving anyone else. Yes, it can also be between the host of a ritual and the owner… That reminds me, I have to find a way to get a messenger of my own, or many things will be inconvenient… As for the solution to this, obviously, it's to write to Mr. Azik who has to be an expert on the matter… Klein calmly pulled over a chair and sat down. He leaned forward and said in a low voice, "Tell your Captain that I have a way to find Admiral of Blood."

"Huh?" Danitz was stunned, having not expected such an answer.

Then, he saw the corners of Gehrman Sparrow's mouth slowly widen as he repeated, "Tell your Captain."

"…"

Danitz shivered. He didn't dare to make any inquiries as he forced a smile.

"We'll have to wait until the next Blue Planet, which is between 11 p.m. and midnight tonight."

"Very good." Klein smiled as he praised.

But Danitz wasn't happy at all.

Klein stood up slowly, recollecting a special dish he had eaten for dinner, and he headed for the bedroom.

The food was called the Teativa, and translated into Loen, it was "meat within fruit." The cook used a giant local fruit, Teana, hollowed out its flesh, leaving only a solid shell; then stuffed it with mashed mutton and fish, followed by sea salt and several types of spices; and repeatedly roasted it over the fire. The meat was fresh, fragrant, and perfectly blended with the sweet and slightly sour flavor of the fruit.

Closing the door behind him, Klein first wrote a letter thanking Mr. Azik for his earlier guidance, then he asked again how he could have a messenger of his own.

After folding the letter, he took out his copper whistle and summoned the messenger.

The messenger didn’t stay, disintegrating the moment it took the letter.

Phew… Klein rested for a moment, ready to enter the space above the gray fog to see if the prayers of the believers could bring him any useful information, such as who he could actually act as.

Chapter 554 - Acting as God

◆

Above the gray fog, inside the palace that looked like a giant’s residence.

Seated in The Fool’s chair, Klein raised his right hand, allowing the Sea God Scepter to fly out of the junk pile and land in his palm.

He originally planned on placing this Sealed Artifact, that was on the level of a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, beside his chair. This was to show respect to a demigod item, but after careful consideration, he believed that the Sea God Scepter was still unable to match up with the mysterious and powerful Fool, who was able to fight against the True Creator and Primordial Demoness. Only a Card of Blasphemy was barely qualified to match his status. Therefore, he threw the Sea God Scepter into the junk pile.

Looking at the blue dots surrounding the white bone staff, Klein willed them to split into preliminary categories.

Just as he had expected, those blue dots of light automatically split according to his will. Those that merely praised Sea God and were prayers with no clear reason sank to the bottom and then rapidly disappeared. Those regarding confessions and pleas floated upward and came closer to Klein’s palm.

Following his spiritual intuition, he “tapped” one of the latter.

All of a sudden, he saw tall, surging waves and heard the violent whistling of a gust of wind.

A fishing boat was bobbing up and down in the undulating deep blue sea, as though it was ready to capsize at any moment.

Above the fishing boat, the natives were either hugging the mast or pulling on ropes, making their last-ditch efforts to survive. Many of them were panicking as they chanted the honorific name of Sea God.

Noticing that this was an ongoing prayer, Klein lifted the milky-white scepter.

At the tip of the scepter, the blue-colored “gems” emitted a halo of light one after another before they connected into one and shone onto the scene.

The fishermen were gradually losing all hope when all of a sudden, they felt the ship which had been thrown into the air stabilize.

They looked around in amazement and saw that the mountain-like waves had calmed down at some point, and the raging winds were slowly calming down, turning as mild as Zarhar beer.

The overbearing dark clouds in the sky dissipated, and a storm was forcefully pushed back by a mysterious force before it could fully assume its full form.

The fishermen quickly recovered from their dazed states and understood what had happened.

Sea God has protected everyone! Sea God has shown his majesty!

Plop! Plop! Plop!

All of them prostrated themselves on the deck, spread their hands, and placed them to their mouths, reciting the honorific name of Sea God in an irregular fashion.

“Thank you, praise you. Adorer of the sea and spirit world, guardian of the Rorsted Archipelago, ruler of the undersea creatures, master of tsunamis and storms, the great Kalvetua!”

Above the gray fog, Klein felt a little depressed.

I was the one who saved you, so why are you thanking Kalvetua?

That sea serpent will only deliberately create hurricanes, set off waves, and intimidate you so that you would piously believe in it…

Klein fell silent for two seconds, then he suddenly burst out laughing.

Kalvetua is already dead, and the current Kalvetua is another one of my identities.

Why should I be in a bad mood when people are thanking my other identity?

This is something a Faceless has to take note of when acting for real? To fully immerse oneself in the role, treating all emotions one receives as their own, but also never forgetting who they really are… This is difficult to accomplish. Failure to pay attention to it can result in an abnormal state of mind. And once a Beyonder’s state of mind becomes abnormal, they won’t be far from losing control…

After thinking for a while, Klein let out a sigh and chuckled to himself.

Acting the role of Sea God has been quite rewarding after all.

Although such acting doesn’t provide feedback due to the gray fog’s screening and isolation nor does it facilitate the digestion of the Faceless potion, it can provide me with experience and lessons, helping me figure out a safer and more effective way of acting.

Wrapping up his thoughts, Klein spread his spirituality to another point of light.

This time, the plea came from under a bridge. A woman with tattered clothes and a festering body was leaning against a corner, mumbling the honorific name of Sea God as she made her final confession.

Through her descriptions, Klein seemed to have witnessed her short life.

She was a native woman whose parents believed in Sea God. As a result, she inherited the faith of Sea God. In the first decade or so, her father worked as a miner, repairing roads and laying the rails, while her mother focused on temporary jobs—sewing, doing laundry, helping out at the docks, and occasionally working as a street girl. Only then did the family barely survive.

An abrupt change occurred two years ago. Her father had died during a road repair accident, and the Rorsted Railroad Company had offered only a pittance of compensation. This pushed the family onto a path of no return.

Subsequently, the girl was sold to the Red Theater by her mother and became a legal prostitute.

Although Emperor Roselle had long invented the condom, many pirates and adventurers were unwilling to use one in their desire for momentary pleasure. And since the Red Theater didn't enforce the use of condoms, the girl's resistance was ineffective. All she could do was submit, eventually getting infected with some disease.

The manager of the Red Theater had tried to provide her some simple treatment, but seeing that she wasn't getting any better, she was chased out because the cost of the follow-up treatment was obviously much higher than the cost of buying another girl.

Not only was the ill girl unable to find a new job, but she didn't even have the money to rent a house. Her mother and younger siblings had long since disappeared, perhaps already dead or abducted to become slaves.

The girl became a tramp and lived under the bridge. She managed to survive for some time thanks to the food and free medicine provided by charity organizations.

But it was ultimately a short period of time. Her illness got worse and worse, and her body became weaker and weaker. Very quickly, she reached the end of her life.

At that moment, she recalled the days when she was the most well-fed and dressed. She recalled the words that the pirates and adventurers would occasionally say. She whispered and prayed to Sea God, "I want to live like a human being…"

Klein once again raised his staff, but he found that this Sealed Artifact didn't possess the ability to cure diseases.

He thought of purchasing some medicine from Emlyn White via The World, but he found that the prayer scene happened at noon. The girl had already passed away under the bridge, in mud and dirt, her body filled with agony and intense hunger.

Klein was silent for a moment, then he raised the angle of the prayer screen to reveal the location of the bridge.

After memorizing the characteristics of the nearby streets and the surrounding area, Klein leaned back in his chair, sighed, and said with an insincere smile, "What a humble wish.

"There isn't much of an opportunity to act… I'll try my best to bury you like a human being…"

He retracted his attention and scanned the other points of light, searching for someone he could act as, but he found nothing.

During this process, Klein noticed that Kalat, Edmonton, and the other members of the Resistance were carrying out a ritual. They had placed a batch of items on the altar, and they prayed for Sea God to imbue them with power.

So that's how they receive the Beyonder items they use for trade… To be at the level of a demigod is truly different… Moreover, they're used to not receiving any immediate replies. It's as if they plan to leave the items on the altar the entire night… Apparently, that sea serpent, Kalvetua, didn't respond immediately either. It depends on its mood, or whether it was asleep or not. Otherwise, it could only respond instinctively, unable to produce any Beyonder items in batches… Klein picked up the Sea God Scepter, making the blue "gems" shine again.

Boundless spirituality magically merged together, gushing into the prayer scene with transcendent vibes and randomly fusing with various items.

Some of them are Electric Shock charms, some that allow people to swim in the sea like fish, some that allow a gale to blow… Within three months, their spirituality would gradually decline to nothingness… Klein half-closed his eyes, feeling the changes in the items.

Although he had only responded twice, he was already rather exhausted despite mainly relying on the power of the Sea God Scepter. However, the first response had to do with him forcibly dispersing a storm and calming the waves, while the second response was to simultaneously provide an "enchantment" to dozens of items. They were all at the level of a demigod, so it was rather draining on his spirituality.

Even if I frequently use the Sea God Scepter, I wouldn't be able to last very long… On the other hand, the negative side effects wouldn't be a burden on me. I can attempt to use it at times…

Yes, the situation with the Resistance reminded me. I can also pray to myself and make a bunch of charms, mainly to allow me to do things underwater. This way, even if I find myself in a sea battle, I wouldn't be so restrained. Oh right, I still don't know how to make lightning charms. I need to seek out the corresponding mysticism information, and with it, I can deal with enemies who have air superiority…

Klein silently muttered a few sentences and threw the Sea God Scepter back into the junk pile while swiftly returning to the real world.

†

East Chester County. By the side door of a huge manor in the vast and beautiful countryside.

Audrey Hall was dressed in a waist-fitting black riding suit with a simple blouse lining her insides. She skillfully sat on the back of a brownish-red mare without showing the slightest sign of wobbling.

Her black leather boots were in the stirrups, with her white trousers slightly tucked into them. She smiled at Susie, who had a leather bag on her back.

“I’ll wait for you at the edge of the woods!”

With that, she bent down with the whip in her hand and let the brownish-red mare gallop across the open field.

Compared to the gorgeous yet gloomy family castle, Audrey preferred the beautiful manor and the scenery of the countryside.

One handsome horse after another came running out. The riders were servants and maidservants, and their only mission was to protect Miss Audrey.

Susie was also running happily, a feeling she couldn’t experience in Backlund.

Moreover, she and Audrey would have a little adventure today, and that was exploring an ancient tower in the forest that had collapsed a long time ago. The valuable items there had long been taken away, but there had never been any accidents that happened there. It was a perfect place for an inexperienced person to practice her various abilities.

The only problem was that it would be dark in two hours, and there might not be enough time.

Chapter 555 - The Message Late at Night

◆

East Chester County was still cold in January, with snow often piling up. The branches and leaves of the trees were withered, with beasts hiding themselves, making it appear lifeless.

Audrey led Susie around the ancient tower several times while surrounded by her attendants and maidservants, but they found nothing.

There were only piles of gray bricks and rotten wood, and in the gaps, there were weeds and the corpses of tiny critters.

Audrey had thought she could find some murals on the wreckage of the walls, allowing her to decipher the origins of the ancient tower and use the appearance of wild beasts to secretly practice her Beyonder skills such as Awe, Frenzy, Placate, but she was only left very disappointed.

This isn’t a tiny adventure… It’s just a stroll on horseback… She pursed her lips, held her whip, and walked to her horse.

Unwilling to resign herself to this, she asked the attendants and maidservants around her when she had traveled half the distance, “Are there any legends of monsters nearby?”

Half of the attendants had followed her from Backlund to the family castle before coming to this manor. The other half were locals and were usually busy in the manor. There was no doubt that Audrey was asking the latter.

The reason why she had come to this manor was because, historically, there was a folk tradition of worshiping dragons in the surrounding areas.

A young attendant secretly shot a glance at his noble and beautiful mistress. He mustered his courage, took two steps forward, and bowed while saying, “Deep in this forest, there are many fearsome wild beasts. Every year, hunters die there, but no one has ever encountered a monster before.

“It’s just like the situation described in an old folk song that goes around this place…”

He recounted the folksong and the general meaning was:

“Monsters are in your dreams;

“Dragons are in your dreams;

“The great imagined palace, floating in the air, is likewise, in your dreams;

“There is where you have everything, lasting until you wake up.”

Curious children, brave adventurers, seek out the dragon in your dreams… The attendant deliberately left out the last line, because he might be misunderstood as being sarcastic to Miss Audrey.

A dragon in a dream… The great palace that is imagined and floating in the air is likewise in a dream… Audrey carefully pondered for a few seconds before she suddenly felt that this ancient folk song wasn’t completely meaningless.

According to the information about dragons that she’d bought from Little Sun, the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt, had actually imagined a floating city with massive temple pillars supporting a towering palace complex. The name of the city was Liveseyd, meaning the City of Miracles.

In dreams… The Spectator pathway comes under the mind dragons, involving the conscious, subconscious, the sea of collective subconscious, and the sky of spirituality. No matter how you look at it, it certainly involves the "dream" domain… Perhaps this ancient folk song really is pointing to something… Could Liveseyd really exist in the sea of collective subconscious, in dreams? But a dream is purely in the mind… Many thoughts flashed through Audrey's mind. Even when she returned to the manor, she was still unable to come up with a clear train of thought.

Entering the room, she glanced at Susie, suddenly having the urge to show off.

Susie doesn't know anything about dragons, so she definitely wouldn't be able to detect the peculiarities of this folk song… No, don't be arrogant; that's too superficial… And it's easy for Susie to discover that I'm hiding something… Audrey walked a few steps back and forth with her back straight, and she asked in a seemingly casual manner, "Susie, what do you think that folk song is really about? I have a nagging feeling that it's not as simple as it seems."

Susie opened her mouth, momentarily at a loss for words because she didn't know anything about poetry.

She gave it some serious thought and said, "Audrey, I'm only a dog."

†

In a forest in Blue Mountain Island.

Because of his agitation and excitement, Kalat didn't sleep at all. Sitting on the wheelchair, he inspected his surroundings, as if he had found a reason to live apart from revenge.

After making a full circle, he returned to the altar to pray once again.

He remembered the contents of the "Ten Commandments" very clearly.

He knew that he couldn't use Sea God's name in vain, so he planned to use the relatively vague "God" as a replacement during his prayers.

When he approached the altar, his gaze suddenly turned into a stare because the items placed on it all had an unusual aura. For example, a dagger didn't reflect any crimson moonlight but released silver lightning. A leaf had become increasingly greener, making him feel that it was easier to breathe from a mere glance.

God has bestowed his grace… This thought suddenly flashed in Kalat's mind.

Up to this point, he no longer had any doubts regarding the transformation of Sea God. The sacrilegious thoughts hidden deep within him were completely dispelled.

The revelation from God that previously said that "'He' will walk the land again" was an implication that "He" is reconstructing "His" image… This layer of meaning goes very deep, and we actually failed to interpret it before… Kalat slowly took in a deep breath and propped himself up with his hands before solemnly prostrating himself before the great Sea God.

Soon, he returned to his wheelchair and headed for the residence of the High Priest, Edmonton, and the others.

He couldn't wait to tell his companions about what had just happened, to share with them the grace of God.

†

At a quarter past eleven in the evening.

Klein sat in his chair and watched with a blank expression as Danitz held the Soulfall Ritual, memorizing all the details while he did it.

It still requires help from the spirit world… He made a preliminary judgment.

If it’s a spirit world creature, one can locate them as long as there’s no mistake in the description. Just using a language with a certain amount of “power” can allow direct summoning or allow them to make their spirit descend. It has nothing to do with distance or range.

To a certain extent, deities have this trait as well, but sometimes it’s possible to get a response from them even if the prayer is in an ordinary language. Of course, that is only if they have become believers and have caught the notice of the deity.

At the level of demigods, they seem to have blended with the spirit world to a certain extent. That’s why one can point towards them with an accurate description to receive the possibility of a response. But there will be a distance limitation. Once it’s beyond a range, they wouldn’t be able to receive the “signal”… Sea God Kalvetua is an example.

Vice Admiral Iceberg is considered a powerful Mid-Sequence Beyonder. To achieve something like this, relying on herself isn’t sufficient. She needs to use the aid of a corresponding deity, and use a precise and unambiguous description; furthermore, there are restrictions on distance and range.

The moment Klein finished organizing his thoughts, the various items on the altar began to float up, with the exception of the three candles.

Danitz shuddered uncontrollably, his expression turning cold.

Very soon, he let out the female voice of Vice Admiral Iceberg.

“Good evening.”

Her tone seems to contain the anger of being woken up… Klein felt that Danitz’s entire person had turn feminine.

He hesitated for a moment and said, “I have a way to find Admiral of

Blood.”

“What?” Edwina Edwards, whose spirit had possessed Danitz, already had her tone return to normal—one that usually lacked emotion.

Klein said simply, “They use the latest wireless telegraphy technology. I received the frequencies and passcodes from White Shark.”

“Wireless, telegraphy… You know such things?” Edwina appeared surprised to learn that Gehrman Sparrow, who was an expert in mysticism, would also have some general knowledge of radio communication technology.

Klein politely smiled.

“A little.”

Edwina was silent for two seconds, then she asked through Danitz, “Have they discovered that?”

Are you referring to whether Admiral of Blood and company have discovered the leak of their frequencies and passcodes? In theory, they should’ve since their intelligence officer, Old Quinn, has died at the hands of Mr. Hanged Man. However, wireless telegraphy hasn’t reached the level of wide-scale adoption yet, so it’s easy for those who use it to ignore security risks… Klein didn’t respond with absolute certainty.

“Perhaps.

“But we can try.”

As long as I can listen in on the frequency, there’s a very high chance of finding Admiral of Blood! As Sea God, even at the level of a demigod, making it difficult for me to know about matters in neighboring seas like the back of my hand, I can still control sea creatures and ask them to seek people out… Klein silently added.

Edwina said thoughtfully, “I’ll have Danitz help with the surveillance.”

You know a lot about wireless telegraphy as well… Klein grinned and said, “Okay.”

When the Soulfall Ritual was over, Danitz watched Gehrman Sparrow take out a sizable piece of machinery and its corresponding accessories, with mixed emotions.

“What is this?” he asked in astonishment.

Klein said flatly, “Radio transceiver.”

Danitz turned agape as he finally forced his question out.

“Where did you get it?”

Klein glanced at him.

“Outside”

As he spoke, he tossed the manual and information on the frequencies and passcodes to Danitz and went back to his bedroom to sleep.

So this is what he does on his frequent trips out… Danitz felt as though he had understood something.

After much reading and experimenting, he finally mastered the usage of the radio transceiver and settled back into his reclining chair. He was soon snoring away.

Without knowing how long he slept, he was suddenly awoken, astonished to hear rhythmic clicks.

What? Danitz rolled to his feet and looked towards the source of the sound.

He saw the radio transceiver in the dim room working on its own, spitting out illusory sheets of white paper under the serene moonlight.

…What’s this? Danitz conjured flames in his palms as he carefully inched forward.

This scene reminded him of the horror stories that pirates often spoke off when they were bragging!

There’s a problem with the radio transceiver? It’s connected to an evil spirit? Danitz decided to yell for Gehrman Sparrow the moment he discovered anything amiss.

As he approached the radio transceiver, he saw several lines of ancient Feysac on the illusory sheet of paper.

“Hello.

“I sense a familiar but unique aura, but it’s about to dissipate.”

“…Hello.” Danitz attempted a response. “Who are you?”

The radio transceiver produced its clickety-clack again, spitting out a piece of white paper.

“My name is Arrodes.

“In exchange, you have to answer one of my questions.”

Chapter 556 - Discriminatory Treatment

◆ ◆ ◆

A question? This strange radio transceiver is a little interesting… Danitz cleared his throat.

“You can ask, but I might not answer.”

Hehe, you think I’m the kind of adventurer or archaeologist who ends up killing himself because of curiosity? Danitz thought with both caution and pride.

It took a few seconds for the radio transceiver to produce its clickety-clack again. An illusory piece of white paper was spat out with red words on it: “Do you have a secret crush on your Captain?”

…No! Don’t speak nonsense! Who? Who told you that? Danitz’s face instantly reddened.

He felt at a loss to have the secret that had been buried deep in his heart for so many years revealed so suddenly. He was embarrassed and ashamed at the same time and subconsciously wanted to deny it.

But at the same time, he was also shocked and confused as to how this matter had been discovered by an outsider. He had never told anyone, and he had kept this secret very well hidden!

Danitz opened his mouth, forced a smile, and said, “What a silly question, I refuse to answer!”

The radio transceiver produced its clickety-clack and spat out more white paper.

“Then let’s change the question.

“If you really don’t like her, who can endure such dry and boring lessons? Isn’t that right?”

“No! It’s because I’m not strong enough to beat her!” Danitz blurted out, his expression twisted.

The clacking of the radio transceiver became increasingly brisker and the words on the illusory white paper increased.

“A lie.

“Let’s change the question.

“The type of female you like is beautiful, powerful, mysterious, intelligent, and someone who is able to step over you, right?”

“…”

Danitz’s lips quivered as he felt as though flames were seemingly rising from his body and smoke was billowing from his head.

At this moment, he felt his state of mind explode. It was as if someone had stripped him naked and tossed him into a busy street.

Subconsciously, he looked around in panic, searching and avoiding the gazes that might be cast on him.

Then, he saw that the bedroom door had opened at some point. Gehrman Sparrow stood there quietly in his white shirt which hadn’t been tucked in and his rather loose black trousers. It was unknown how long he had been watching.

“You, when did you come out?” Danitz stuttered, his face blank.

Please tell me that you just opened the door! He prayed inwardly.

Klein walked over to the radio receiver that had become paranormal and answered calmly, “From the beginning.”

As a Seer, how could I not have sensed the strange activity outside? Even in my sleep, I’ll still have my spiritual intuition… Klein chuckled inwardly.

Danitz’s face instantly turned ashen. He turned his body in a half-circle and rushed toward the radio transceiver that seemed to be possessed by an evil spirit, in a bid to rip up the illusory white paper with the three questions.

But his hand went through the words without him grabbing onto anything.

A scarlet-red fireball formed in his palm again as he thought of blowing up the damn radio transceiver.

At this moment, Gehrman Sparrow’s cold gaze swept over him.

…Right, this is his… Danitz froze, looking at Gehrman Sparrow step past him and stop in front of the unusual radio transceiver.

Arrodes… How did it connect to this radio transceiver? It said it sensed a familiar but unique aura which is about to dissipate. Is it referring to the aura of the mysterious space above the gray fog?

This radio transceiver was placed above the gray fog for a few days. Although it didn’t show any abnormal signs, it still came into contact with the aura. And because of its own functions, it temporarily received information from the spirit world, and this was subsequently discovered by Arrodes, the magic mirror, that seems to know a lot?

Wait, what kind of question was that… I’m Gehrman Sparrow; I’m a cold, crazy adventurer. I’m a professional… I-I can’t laugh out loud… Klein suppressed the corners of his mouth and secretly took a deep breath.

Danitz stole a sidewards glance, like a prisoner by the gallows waiting for the noose to be released.

Seeing no change in expression from Gehrman Sparrow, he was slightly relieved. He was glad that the person who had watched from the side was a madman and not a normal human being. He wouldn't have any interest in such matters.

If it were any other pirate, I would be too embarrassed to return to the Golden Dream. No, I would be too embarrassed to adventure out at sea! He looked with hatred and fear at the radio transceiver, at the demon who called itself Arrodes.

He heard the clacking again and saw a new piece of white paper spit out from the radio transceiver. There were two neat lines in Loenese: "Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is honored to follow in your footsteps once again, constantly at your service."

…This isn't the same evil spirit as that Arrodes from before, right… Danitz's face twitched, and he suddenly felt that whatever happened tonight was surreal.

Klein, who went through great difficulty to stifle his laughter, keenly caught onto a problem. Arrodes wasn't here in person and had likely used the spirit world and the radio transceiver's "special function" to send messages remotely. Therefore, when Danitz refused to answer the first question, it was powerless to punish him and could only ask another question.

That's interesting. In the future, I'll just need to place the radio transceiver above the gray fog for prolonged periods of time, and I'll be able to make it turn into a unique item that receives spirit world information from ghosts? Unfortunately, by the law of conservation of Beyonder characteristic, even with the augmentation of the gray fog's aura, its extraordinary abilities would dissipate bit by bit, eventually returning to normal…

Yes, to maintain an ordinary item's extraordinary traits without the use of Beyonder characteristics, there’s another method according to my knowledge in mysticism; that is to carve the honorific name or true name of an angel, or even a deity in a language that can stir the powers of nature onto it… This would be equivalent to borrowing the target’s mysticism and power. Of course, the premise is that “They” agree… I can’t do it myself. At least, the piece of paper that I previously used as my bank’s passcode in ancient Hermes hasn’t undergone any abnormal changes…

For real deities, I only know the true name of one; Primordial Demoness Cheek… If I get “Her” honorific name, together with “Her” true name, what will happen when I engrave them in ancient Hermes onto the radio transceiver? Will it release viruses? Will it appear more aesthetically pleasing in an industrial sense, mesmerizing those with fetishes…

Yeah, the outcome with the greatest possibility is that when carving the honorific name and true name, the powers of the Primordial Demoness will descend, sucking everything dry… This is an extremely, extremely precise supernatural direction…

Strange thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind until Arrodes greeted him.

Perfect. This is a magic mirror that can answer questions… Klein’s heart skipped a beat. He turned his head to the side and said to Danitz, “Go out and guard the door.”

“…Alright!” Without any hesitation, Danitz rushed to the door.

He was afraid that the demon named Arrodes would ask him new questions!

When Danitz entered the corridor and closed the door behind him, Klein turned to the radio transceiver which was connected to the magic mirror, Arrodes, and said in a low voice, “I have some questions.”

"This is my honor. Can I address you as Master? The great existence above the spirit world?" White paper spat out of the radio transceiver amid clacking sounds.

You're too obsequious and too shameless… Why do I have a nagging feeling that there's a problem… Klein pondered a little and said, "You can use any form to address me."

"Yes, Master!" Arrodes used an exclamation mark. "What's your question?"

"Where can I find mermaids?" Klein asked directly.

Amid clacking sounds, the radio transceiver answered: "To the east of the Gargas Archipelago, sail the sea route for a week and there's a chance of meeting mermaids. However, the mermaids there are all believers of the Evernight Goddess."

This is a little amazing… It's within expectations, but it's also surprising… Klein realized that his previous speculation had turned into reality in a way he didn't expect.

Arrodes continued to "type": "If it bothers you, you can continue heading east, but it will be very dangerous. That place is no longer a real ocean, but the ruins of the war of the gods. Of course, you definitely wouldn't mind that."

Who said that… I was still imagining that with the Sea God Scepter, I would have the chance of entering even the most treacherous of seas. Now, you are telling me it's a sea evolved from the battlefield of gods… Indeed, there was a war of the gods in ancient times… The time when the Creator reclaimed the ancient gods' authorities? Klein didn't make comment as he watched Arrodes make the radio transceiver produce more words.

"In addition, there are reared mermaids in the Church of Evernight's headquarters, in the Cathedral of Serenity, as well as the Sleep Cathedral on Dinos Island.”

In addition to the Holy Cathedral, there are mermaids on Dinos Island as well? The former is too dangerous. They have Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts and powerhouses at the level of angels. The latter can be considered. Transform into a Nighthawk or a bishop and sneak in to listen to the singing and consume the potion… That’s not right, the Church rears mermaids to target Faceless Beyonders, so how can they not be on guard against this point… I have to think of another way… Klein was about to ask the second question when he saw a new sheet of white paper come out of the radio transceiver.

“Great Master, I must abide by certain rules. You must answer a question of mine in exchange.”

Answer your question? Klein raised his eyebrows slightly and waited for Arrodes to ask the question. He decided to acknowledge this servant depending on the situation.

Amidst the clacking, Arrodes used words to spell out a question: “What are you planning to have for breakfast today?”

Nice question… Klein calmly replied, “Depends on what the inn offers.”

“A perfect answer!” Arrodes was almost short of giving a round of applause.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, it continued to type: “The aura above the spirit world is about to disappear. I await the next opportunity to be at your service, great Master.”

After the illusory piece of paper was spat out, the radio transceiver stopped and lost its gloomy feel.

How many days would it take above the gray fog before I can contact Arrodes again? I’ll ask it for the method to remove the mental corruption of a Beyonder characteristic the next time… Yes, this method should be used prudently. Arrodes can use the special connection after the radio transceiver is tainted by the aura. Those who are stronger and more terrifying than it might be capable of doing so as well… If I keep doing this, maybe one day I'll get a telegram from the True Creator or the Primordial Demoness… Klein's mind raced as he noticed the hidden risks.

Chapter 557 - Planting a Cue on Herself

◆

East Chester County, the Hall Family Manor.

Audrey sat at the dressing table and lit a candle.

Afterwards, she looked at herself in the mirror across from the slightly swaying light of the fire. Her green eyes gradually became deep, making it impossible for anyone who laid eyes on them to shift their eyes away, as if even their souls wished to drown in them.

“Audrey, you have to remain lucid tonight in the dream,” she said to herself softly.

This was a simple “psychological cue.”

The ancient folk song she had heard at dusk had inspired her to explore her dreams and see if she could enter the sea of subconscious sea and the spiritual skies of all living things.

This was an experiment that other Psychiatrists had never attempted. At least, there was no similar experiences in the reference materials provided by the Psychology Alchemists—giving oneself a psychological cue to explore their own dreams.

Perhaps I might be able to find traces of a mind dragon or even the City of Miracles, Liveseyd… Audrey withdrew her gaze; removed Lie, which was now in the form of a ruby necklace; and placed it inside a jewelry box.

She was afraid that the mystical item that amplified her emotions would affect her while in her dream and cause unnecessary harm; therefore, she removed it in advance out of caution.

After doing all of this, Audrey subconsciously looked at her reflection in the mirror and saw little blemishes on her face.

While wearing Lie, she felt that her beauty was intoxicating.

Wake up, Audrey. That's only a lie! She lifted her right palm and caressed her cheek.

At that moment, she was very glad that she had chosen the name "Lie" for that mystical item. It kept her constantly alert; otherwise, she feared the day that she would one day be completely dependent on it and not want to face her true self. The day she lost it, it would be very possible that she would lose control.

Those girls who are relatively ordinary looking might never wish to take it off again after wearing Lie to perfect their looks. They might be willing to die to keep it on them… For a Beyonder, I can't have such a state of mind either… Audrey sighed and stood up.

She walked briskly and expectantly through the warm room in her slippery silk robe, back to the soft, comfortable, and springy bed, and pulled a rope from the headboard.

Her personal maidservant, Annie, entered and gently extinguished the lights.

Before long, Audrey fell asleep.

In the hazy world, she suddenly jolted to her senses and realized that she was dreaming.

She looked around with interest and silently said to herself, Is this what's known as lucid dreams in psychology?

In mysticism, there is a similar concept.

It's really effective. I relied on a simple psychological cue that I planted in myself to get a lucid dream. Audrey, you really are a genius~ No, no, no, this is mainly an application of a Beyonder power. I mustn't be arrogant.

At this moment, Audrey had already figured out what the current dream was.

She was walking along a dark, narrow road surrounded by a dark forest, and ahead of her was the castle with its spires.

The prolonged howls of the wolves, the slow and frightening gasps, and the shrill and intermittent screams came from every direction, creating a dangerous and depressing atmosphere.

I haven't gotten over the fear of Duke Negan's assassination. I'm still afraid that one day, many Beyonders would suddenly attack my father, my mother, and my brothers… Audrey dissected her dreams from the point of view of a Psychiatrist.

In this strangely real dream, she walked slowly toward the castle that was almost identical to the Hall family's ancestral house.

As she walked, a figure suddenly jumped out of the dark forest. It was a gigantic dragon with golden scales all over its body. Its eyes were pale gold with vertical pupils, and its thick tail looked like it could sweep away everything.

This dragon's facial features were exactly the same as Audrey's. When paired with its body, it gave off an indescribable feeling of strangeness and horror!

Audrey jumped in fright, almost waking up from her dream. Fortunately, having been a Spectator before, she was able to stabilize her emotions in time.

This made her realize that she had never really forgotten how she had almost lost control back when she consumed the Psychiatrist potion.

Back then, her self-relief and the improvement in her mood was only superficial. The trauma had already taken root in the depths of her subconscious and would occasionally reflect itself in her dreams.

Fortunately, I discovered this today. In the future, I can try to treat this trauma in my subconscious. I'm a Psychiatrist! If I continue to ignore this issue, I might lose control due to this fear when advancing to Sequence 6… Audrey examined herself carefully.

As she walked and stopped, Audrey's dream kept changing in an erratic fashion. It would've been considered quite an unsatisfactory story.

Finally, she arrived in front of the castle and saw an arm-length magic staff sweeping through the air, scattering down specks of light that were as resplendent as starlight.

The castle that was shrouded in the light instantly became magnificent, and all the gloom disappeared.

The melody of a band came out from inside the castle as one wall lamp after another lit up.

This was the most beautiful expectation that I had towards Beyonder powers at the very beginning… It really was a little girl's fantasy… The corners of Audrey's mouth curled up, and her mood turned for the better.

She didn't stop, but she walked past the castle to the edge of her dream. She didn't care how the scene behind her changed, or how the story unfolded.

After walking for an unknown amount of time, she passed through the barren wasteland and arrived at the top of a cliff.

Looking out, the gray, blurry void extended into the distance. The area beneath her was so deep that it seemed to be bottomless.

Audrey was keenly aware that this was the boundary of her dreams.

Once she left, she had no idea what would happen.

And how do I leave? Jump down? Will I fall to my death… Audrey thought awkwardly, not too courageous in taking the risk.

After thinking for a few seconds, she slowly came up with an idea.

This is a dreamland that originates from the world of my mind. As the mistress of this place, I can use my will to open up a path for myself!

With the thought of making the attempt, she tried to conjure what she thought, just like the way she did it above the gray fog. The only difference was that the former needed the help of Mr. Fool, and now she had to rely on herself.

Audrey stretched out her right hand, pointing it downwards into the depths of the gray fog.

In front of her, the gray fog suddenly surged, revealing layers of stairs that led downwards, without an end in sight.

Audrey took a slow breath, lifted her skirt slightly, and stepped onto the first step.

Step by step, she continued down the stairs. The surroundings grew increasingly quiet, so quiet that it was almost as if she heard auditory hallucinations.

In this place, there was nothing else apart from the gray fog. It was lonely and filled with the unknown.

A howling gale blew in from different directions, causing Audrey to sway back and forth. The fear she felt slowly deepened.

Before she lost control of her emotions, her green eyes shone with a warm light that seemed to be able to see through the hearts of others.

Audrey used her Psychoanalysis powers to placate herself!

She continued her search. After nearly a minute, a point of light suddenly lit up in the surrounding gray fog.

Audrey took a cautious look, only to see that the point of light was of herself—back when she had just consumed a potion and almost became a dragon monster. While on the verge of losing control, emotions such as worry, horror, fear, and nervousness were clearly overflowing from her.

…This is my subconscious, so this is my trauma? Audrey vaguely understood where she was after she left her dreamland.

She was in no hurry to resolve this trauma as she continued to walk down, step by step, filled with anticipation.

According to the theories of the Psychology Alchemists, the subconscious was at the bottom of her destination—the sea of collective subconscious for all living creatures!

During her exploration, Audrey once again saw herself listening to her parents' storytelling when she was young. She saw herself, someone who valued her image but wasn't actually very elegant deep down. She saw herself participating in the Tarot Club, only that all the specks of light regarding the latter were tightly wrapped in a gray fog.

These are things in my subconscious… They influence my character and behavior? Audrey instinctively analyzed what she saw with her knowledge of psychology.

Amidst the coruscating points of light, there were several times where she was pushed to the verge of an emotional breakdown due to the lonely, aimless exploration, but she had used her Beyonder powers to placate herself in time.

Just as she was about to lose all sense of the passage of time, she saw the last step.

In front of the steps was a solid, blurry, gray "ground." Above it, there were streams of light and shadows. They were dense and overlapping, like an illusory sea.

The sea of collective subconscious… Audrey took a few steps forward and raised her head to look up. To her surprise, the gray fog no longer blocked her vision as the clear high skies appeared.

There were countless indescribable silhouettes, seven of which were of different colors. They were lustrous brilliances that seemed to possess immense knowledge.

Audrey pursed her lips and happily said to herself, The sky of spirituality.

Then, she cautiously moved forward, forging the adventure that she could call her own.

Those figures of light that formed the sea would flash past her from time to time. Some contained ancient memories of being burned by flames, while others bore the excruciating pain of seeing something indescribable…

Apart from the imprints of the ancients from ancient times, Audrey also saw the gazes of admiration cast on her one after another, as well as the activities of the people who worshiped dragons.

As she walked, she noticed a grayish white mountain on the far left. It extended upwards until it emerged from the sea of light and shadows. The top of the mountain was shrouded in a dense fog, making the entire place seem hazy.

Is that someone else's consciousness? The sea is the subconscious, and beyond the surface of the sea is the ordinary consciousness? Yes, he's dreaming… Audrey suddenly thought of a possible application of a Psychiatrist. It was to move closer and climb up, directly affecting the other party's subconscious thoughts, allowing them to naturally act according to her bidding.

But it should be very difficult and very dangerous… Audrey looked away, not daring to make the attempt.

She clearly remembered that her purpose this time was to seek out traces of the mind dragon and the City of Miracles, Liveseyd.

Audrey passed by more than a hundred other people's consciousness. Gradually, she felt exhausted.

It's time to return. Instinctively, she raised her head and looked into the distance, rationally making the decision.

She stood there for a long time, unwilling to leave.

A shadow suddenly appeared in the air just as Audrey was about to turn around.

[image]

It was a pair of two huge gray wings!

Under the wings, there was a long lizard-like monster.

Its entire body was covered with huge scales that were like grayish-white stone slabs. It had four thick and powerful legs, seemingly bathing in the sunlight that didn't exist as it flickered in what seemed like the afterglow of the setting sun.

The monster flew over. Its eyes were pale gold with its pupils vertical, looking cold and arrogant.

Its grand and epic figure quickly disappeared into the sea of the subconscious of all living beings.

Dragon… A mind dragon! Audrey jumped on the spot and looked around, afraid of others noticing her inelegant behavior.

She paced around excitedly, feeling very satisfied with her adventure.

Indeed, the tradition of dragon worship here isn't without an origin. In their subconscious, there lives a mind dragon… Audrey resisted the urge to praise herself and had decided to return immediately and wake up from the dream.

She didn't have the urge to continue her exploration, as she wasn't prepared for it at all. She was going to consult Mr. Fool, Mr. Hanged Man, and the others at the Tarot Club next week in the hope of receiving some advice.

Audrey returned the way she came, entering the "mountain" formed by her consciousness. Then, she woke herself up and successfully escaped from the dream.

†

At that moment, Danitz was also permitted to return to his room.

He glanced at Gehrman Sparrow and said with an embarrassed smile, "You won't tell anyone what you just saw, will you?"

I find this cool fan-art and want to share it. Audrey Mythical Creature Forms:

Chapter 558 - Search for Abnormalities

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein didn’t answer with “yes” or “no.” Instead, he stopped walking towards his bedroom and flatly said, “That was a question.”

“Right, right, a question! That was a slanderous question with no basis! Besides, I also gave a negative answer,” Danitz responded with delight and had emphasized that he had never admitted to it.

Klein gently nodded his head.

“I will clarify this with your captain.”

Clarify… Danitz stared, then he half opened his mouth, his expression twisted.

He was also considered a somewhat knowledgeable person, so he stopped explaining and arguing, and he forced a smile.

“Is there anything I can do for you?”

Klein took a deep breath and used his Clown powers to control his facial expression.

“Monitor it well.”

“Yes, alright!” Danitz quickly agreed.

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow turn around and walk to the bedroom’s entrance, he couldn’t help but ask, “You’re not going to clarify this with Captain, right?”

Klein twisted the handle and replied expressionlessly, “Monitor it well.”

After he finished speaking, he pushed open the door and entered the room. Before he could widen his mouth into a laugh, he closed the door behind him.

†

The next morning, after breakfast, Klein put on a pair of pantaloons, a thick brown jacket, and a cap. He changed his appearance and went out, leaving Danitz alone in the room to watch the radio transceiver.

Along the way, Klein changed his appearance again, making himself look more like a native.

He found a special store, bought a pair of linen gloves, a shroud, and a body bag. Then, according to the surroundings he had previously witnessed, he scanned the area around him for landmarks before finding the bridge and the girl who had died amid the mud in a corner.

As it was still winter, the weather wasn’t too hot, and there were no obvious signs of decay from the corpse, but the festering skin and the stench still made Klein instinctively nauseous.

He didn’t immediately come to bury the girl who wanted to live like a human being last night, due to the recent events—Bayam was under strict curfews at night, as well as the fact that the cemetery didn’t open until dawn.

Pulling out a small metal bottle, Klein poured some Quelaag Oil onto his hand and rubbed it at the tip of his nose.

A choking sensation invaded his mind. The smell of peppermint mixed with disinfectant filled his olfactory senses, making him sober as if he had just fallen into a sea of floating ice. He was no longer affected by any other smells.

Putting away the metal bottle, Klein put on his gloves, took a few steps forward, and crouched next to the female corpse.

He unwrapped the shroud and began to gently move the corpse into the body bag.

Carrying the bag over his shoulder, he deliberately walked through the most bustling streets of Bayam until he reached the outskirts of the city. Along the narrow road where horse carriages couldn't pass, he scaled a mountain to its mountainside.

There was a cemetery specially prepared by the Church of Storms and the governor-general's office, for the natives.

As for foreigners, such as businessmen, adventurers, people from Loen, Intis, and Feynapotter, who had settled down here, they had their cemeteries situated on the opposite side of Bayam on a flat and soothing plain with forests backing them.

Klein climbed higher and higher and entered the unnamed cemetery, where he found the gravekeeper dozing off.

"How do you want to bury him?" The gravekeeper pointed at the body bag. "If you want to do it for free, you have to wait a few days until the corpses in the morgue accumulate to a certain amount, then they'll be cremated together and buried in the same grave. Of course, there will be priests who will do a send off for the souls of the dead in advance. 5 soli and he will have an urn and a niche he can call his own. 2 pounds, he'll get an urn and a grave with a tombstone. If you don't want him cremated, you'll need a coffin. You can pick one over there. They're priced differently based on the type of wood."

Klein thought for a moment, then he took out 5 soli in notes and handed them over.

"What's his name?" the gravekeeper counted the notes, picked up a fountain pen, and asked with a good attitude.

He didn't actually know how to write words, he just wanted to draw symbols to help him remember.

Klein paused for a second and said, "Bourdi."

"Bourdi…" the gravekeeper repeated it in a low voice and drew a symbol.

Without looking up, he continued, "She can have an epitaph on the niche."

Bourdi was a typical female name in the Rorsted Archipelago; therefore, the gravekeeper no longer mistook her gender.

Klein remained silent for a few seconds, then he said in a low voice, "She is a human being."

"She is a human being? What a strange epitaph…" the gravekeeper muttered, "Do you have a picture? I know you don't."

Before he could finish his words, he saw the other party hand over a "photo."

It was a portrait that Klein had drawn using a ritual. It perfectly reproduced the girl's looks before she fell ill. In order to not be suspected, he used the corresponding type of paper and some technique to make the portrait look like a real photograph.

The gravekeeper was surprised but didn't say anything. He quickly took the information and carried the body bag to the hut where the priests resided with Klein.

After the send off and cremation, as well as the storing of ashes into an urn, the photograph was pasted on, and an epitaph was engraved, putting an end to the entire matter. Klein took a deep look before turning around to leave the cemetery.

As he walked down the mountain path, he saw Bayam in its entirety.

The sea was pale blue, nearing the color of green. It was empty as far as the eye could see. Sails were stacked by the harbor, and the chimneys towered high. The streets were crisscrossed as people came and went. The surrounding estates were densely packed, and there was plenty of greenery. The distant public roads were wide, and the railways were straight… It was like a beautiful oil painting that was produced by a master. It was filled with vitality that was hardly describable.

†

At the top of the clock tower of the Cathedral of Waves, the Church of Storms Cardinal, high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers, Jahn Kottman, stood at the edge, looking out over the refreshing sea and the mountain range that stretched out along the coastline.

The pollution in Bayam was rather low as the mining and smelting industries were located in other cities on the island. The mainstay here was the spice trade, the brothels and casinos, and the accumulation and transit of goods. It lacked a fully-formed industry, and there was a limited number of days needed for coal to be burned for heat.

As soon as Sea King Jahn Kottman retracted his gaze, he saw a Mandated Punisher running up the spiral staircase.

“Your Eminence, there’s new information.” The Mandated Punisher struck the left side of his chest with his right hand.

“What is it?” the well-built Jahn Kottman turned around and asked.

The Mandated Punisher handed over the piece of paper in his hand.

“News from within the Resistance. They’ve received a response from Kalvetua. They’re in the process of creating new statues.”

“New statues?” Jahn Kottman unfolded the note and skimmed through it.

He then turned his head to the interior of Blue Mountain Island, which was covered in a sea of dense forests. After a moment of thought, he said, “Search for abnormalities in the archipelago’s sea area.”

He was certain of one thing from the intelligence, that the mysterious person who had taken away the characteristic left by Kalvetua hadn’t left the waters of the Rorsted Archipelago. This could be determined from the fact that the person could disguise himself as Kalvetua and reply to his followers.

Meanwhile, Jahn Kottman knew very well that the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Kalvetua, who had gone mad before its death, would lead to severe side effects regardless of whether or not it was reduced to a real item; therefore, it would definitely result in an abnormality in the surrounding area.

Moreover, he believed that it wouldn’t be easy for the mysterious person to find a proper sealing method.

Even if he had found it, there was no way he could control the effects when responding; hence, exposing the problem.

This was the clue!

“Yes, Your Eminence, May the Storm be with you!” The Mandated Punisher bowed again.

†

After entering Bayam City, Klein dispelled his Faceless power when no one was paying attention. He returned to the Wind of Azure Inn via carriage.

As soon as he opened the door and entered, he saw Danitz sitting in front of the radio transceiver, his expression strange and grave.

“Got something?” Klein asked in a low voice.

"No, no." Danitz raised his right palm and shook the papers in his hand. "My bounty! My bounty has been raised to 5,500 pounds…"

This was almost reaching Steel Maveti's bounty!

Because of this, he didn't dare head out to drink or relax; all he could do was stay in the room and listen out for a signal.

This rate of appreciation is really tempting… For a moment Klein didn't know how to react, so he said without expression, "This is just the beginning.

"Mr. 10,000 Pounds."

…Dogsh*t! Danitz cursed inwardly, but he didn't dare to show any disrespect on his face.

All of those things were done by Gehrman Sparrow. Why did it end up increasing my bounty? Those sons of b*tches from the Church of Storms! He forced a smile and shook his head, his facial muscles twitching slightly.

Klein held back his laughter and ignored him. He went back to his bedroom to catch up on his sleep.

At this moment, he saw a letter suddenly appear, floating down from midair and landing right in front of him.

Klein raised his right hand and grabbed the letter.

The messenger didn't even show its face and just left after throwing the letter? Klein clicked his tongue, opened the letter, and read it.

"…There were two methods for obtaining a messenger. The first method is to think of an accurate description, hold a ritual, summon the corresponding spirit world creature, and make a contract with it. The second method is to directly enter the spirit world and search for a messenger that you wish to obtain. After obtaining its consent, sign a contract with it and then record down the accurate description language for later use.

“The first method is relatively simple, but it is also rather dangerous, because what fits the description might be a powerful spirit world creature or a strange evil spirit. Every time you summon it, you cannot be completely sure what you will attract, and this is a risk that is hard to divine in advance.

“The danger of the second method is that it isn’t easy to find the appropriate messenger, and there’s a risk of getting lost in the spirit world.

“Unless you’re a Traveler; otherwise, I do not suggest the second method. For the first method, I can provide you a description that has been tested and verified. As long as the process is done accurately, the level of danger will be rather low. But it might not satisfy you. Also, the contract needs to use powers in the undead domain. You can use my copper whistle to provide for that.

“The format includes the following paragraphs…

“Of course, if you don’t mind, I can transfer a messenger to you as a gift and have it sign a contract with you…”

Transfer it to me as a gift? It’s no wonder that the messenger didn’t even dare show its face… Klein thought in enlightenment.

Considering that he had used the previous messenger as a shield and was unfortunately finished off by Mr. A, causing the later messengers to become increasingly rude to him, he inwardly declined the offer.

Use the first or second method? The first method is prone to error. I might even summon a candidate messenger and get beaten up… A commonly used description isn’t unique enough, making the messenger’s strength worrying… The second method? I’m not afraid of getting lost since I’m able to instantly return above the gray fog.

Furthermore, in my Spirit Body state, I can use the Sea God Scepter. The spirit world creatures aren’t afraid of having their blood drained either. Yes, I have to do it outside the archipelago; otherwise, I’ll be affected by the prayers. Klein quickly came to a decision.

Chapter 559 - Meeting on the Way

With that idea in mind, Klein immediately began making preparations.

It was to explore the spirit world and select a suitable target to become a messenger. After he left the Rorsted Archipelago and its surrounding sea, he could bring the Sea God Scepter along with him to reason with the target and convince them to become his messenger.

Once I find myself lost or in a dangerous situation, I would immediately halt the summoning and return above the gray fog. There's basically no risk… Klein thought for a few seconds, then he locked the door and began the ritual of summoning himself.

At the end of the ritual, he quickly arrived above the gray fog, but he was in no hurry to respond to himself. Instead, he sat down and let the Sea God Scepter fly out from the junk pile and land on his palm.

He intended to scan the prayers of the believers as per routine for anything to respond to.

During this process, Klein discovered that some of the prayers were actually quite interesting, because humans could deceive friends and relatives, but it was difficult to keep their truest thoughts when confessing or praying to the gods. At most, they would modify the truth to make them look less bad.

A mixed-blood, who had clearly changed his faith to the Lord of Storms, had already reached the middle ranks of the Bayam police department, but in his confession, he tried hard to portray his behavior as a plan of burdening himself to carry out a mission. For the sake of a brighter future for his kinsmen, he could only confess to god in misery, hoping that “He” would protect him, so that he could climb up the ranks in the police system as a believer of the Lord of Storms.

Although his words sounded flawless, the fluctuations in his thoughts and emotions during his confession were clearly displayed in the prayer scene. It was something that couldn’t be hidden.

Trying to deceive God while you are deceiving yourself… If it were a gigantic sea serpent like Kalvetua who lacked intelligence, it might’ve believed you… Should I give him a lightning bolt or ten wind blades? Yes, it’s pretty impressive to have a mixed-blood rise up to the ranks of senior inspector. I’ll keep him. There are benefits to having a snitch… Klein raised his Sea God Staff, making one of the blue gems glow.

The light poured into the scene and imperceptibly seeped into the senior inspector named Boulaya.

This wasn’t a curse, nor was it a cue. It was a mark of divinity that almost no one could discover.

Simply put, it’s a unilateral way for me to “keep tabs” on you… Klein silently added inwardly.

He continued browsing and saw a young believer with slightly curly bronze hair praying for a man named Zangmo to be caught in a storm and buried at sea. He claimed that Zangmo wasn’t pious enough, but the truth was that, as a competing fisherman, Zangmo was always able to harvest more fish than he did.

What kind of nonsense prayers are these? The human heart sure is hard to fathom… Klein frowned and mumbled to himself. Then he had a vague idea.

For a Faceless to engage in real acting, it not only requires a flawless performance in terms of external appearances and habitual actions, but it also needs to maintain the core personality. Not many changes are allowed. As for personality, every person is different, so there must be a difference to a certain degree…

By browsing the prayers of my believers, it's equivalent to me realizing different kinds of personalities and mental states without going through the trouble. When talking about the many masks we wear, it's not only about looks…

This will be rather important for my subsequent acting as a Faceless. It can save me time from figuring things out through accumulated experiences.

Klein increasingly felt that acting as Sea God was very beneficial towards him.

When you are acting the role of a demigod, even if you don't get any feedback, you will still definitely get some considerable benefits… This is a way of gaining experience of being someone of a higher level… Klein perked up, no longer being perfunctory about skimming through the prayer scenes.

After quickly browsing through one scene after another, his gaze stopped at a merchant named Ralph.

The businessman praised the miracle of the reappearance of the sea god, and he had indicated that he planned to offer a third of his fortune —worth 20,000 pounds—to the Resistance, half for military expenses, and half for the reconstruction of God's statue.

Actually, there's no need to go through all that trouble. Just directly offer it to me… Klein muttered half-jokingly.

He thought for a moment, and then he conjured a background of waves and storms with heavy rain and lightning falling together. He responded in a low voice, "You have honored my name by helping your compatriots and companions.

"The young lambs need help, food, and education."

He intended to get Ralph to set up a charity fund with the 20,000 pounds, and to seek donations widely from the community to make up for the damage, create a consensus; and help to provide local children with food, clothing, and education under the pretext of governance.

As for the military expenditures of the Resistance, Klein understood that in a world with Beyonder powers, it was very difficult to rely solely on the opposition from the natives of the colony to succeed. Therefore, they needed the help of foreign countries like Feysac and Intis.

Funding was undoubtedly needed.

Unfortunately, it's not possible to add a line in the Ten Commandments about "boldly and confidently seek funding"; that would damage the image of Sea God… The Resistance shouldn't be thinking about annihilating the garrison troops. They should just focus on destroying the transportation infrastructure and make it more difficult for the governor-general's office to rule, so as to initiate talks… As a keyboard warrior, Klein wasn't lacking in ideas in such areas.

He quickly restrained his wandering thoughts and made a divination to see if it was dangerous exploring the spirit world today.

After obtaining the revelation that it wasn't considered dangerous, Klein took the Black Emperor card, naturally changed his image, and stepped into the Door of Summoning.

After entering the real world, he stuffed the mystical items he needed into his body as a precaution. Then, like last time, he used Cogitation to sense the spirit world.

Taking a step forward, he passed through an invisible curtain as Klein's illusory figure floated up.

Around him, red, yellow, blue, green, and other colors were superimposed, like they were like the most abstract oil painting ever.

The concept of direction that humans were used to could no longer be used here. If one used the old means of distinguishing direction and one's location, they would definitely find themselves lost.

Klein roamed carefully and casually, sometimes seeing a yellow sun like a child's sketch, sometimes brushing past an incorporeal river that flowed quietly.

There was also a flat women with her upper body naked and a face resembling a smiling moon, a canoe with its end upturned, a tangled ball of thread, and a serpentine staircase leading to the seven pure lights.

In this extremely chaotic world, other than spirit world creatures, all kinds of information existed as abstract symbols. Thus, what one received from a divination process would only be a revelation that required one to interpret it on their own.

As for those symbols, there was a chance that they would come to life and become incorporeal monsters.

This was the spirit world that couldn't be understood and viewed with common human knowledge.

The last time he came in, he had easily discovered spirit world creatures, and he had noticed the creepy gazes from unknown locations that made his hair stand on end. There was the headless woman who carried four heads, a round eye with clear blacks and whites, and a giant jellyfish with a skull attached to each tentacle. He had easily encountered all of them back then.

But this time, he failed to see a single spirit world creature despite roaming for so long. Even the indescribable figures in the distance had disappeared, as if they had hidden themselves.

It can't be that you're afraid of being my messenger, can it? Yes, I entered the spirit world in the form of a Soul Body. Perhaps the thoughts in my mind will appear in a special, formless manner here, turning into concealment symbols that interact with the spirit world. This then naturally affects my path options? Klein was puzzled, but he couldn't find the reason.

All sorts of thoughts flashed through his mind when his body suddenly sank down and he fell freely.

After a while, Klein could only see the vivid superposition of the colors and the various symbols that took physical form.

What's going on? He began to consider whether he should write to Mr. Azik and ask him about it, or to throw the radio transceiver above the gray fog and get it tainted with the aura, so that he could contact the magic mirror, Arrodes.

While floating, Klein's heart suddenly palpitated as he quickly dodged to the side.

A tinge of yellow and green flashed across his eyes as a giant foot that was large enough to squash his entire body landed, stepping into the interlaced red and blue color spots.

Above the sole of the foot was a long, festering leg covered in a yellowish green liquid. The leg was over three meters long, and above it was a huge body that was wrapped in corpse oil bandages.

Amidst the solidified aura in the area, the two legs that were filled with yellow-green pus alternated as they rose up. Carrying a body that was difficult to discern, the legs quickly disappeared into the depths of the spirit world.

Klein stood at a distance, not daring to make a sound.

Finally, he confirmed that he was fine as he grimaced and thought, The spirit world is really scary. You can accidentally encounter a powerhouse just passing by… A powerhouse among the spirit world creatures?

Klein shook his head and continued his search.

At that moment, he had no idea where in the spirit world he had wandered to.

After drifting for a while, he finally found some traces of spirit world creatures.

Just as he was about to switch from flying forward to descending to his left, he was surprised to find that his body continued to move forward uncontrollably at an accelerating speed.

In front of him, the chaotic superimposed colors and the grayish-white mist that filled the area suddenly split open, and a large, purely black three-masted sailboat leaped in.

The boat was nearly a hundred meters long, and three pitch-black sails were hanging high up like flags.

On the left and right sides of the ship, there were cannon muzzles and all kinds of sailors were running around on the deck.

All of this was so real, so substantial, and so out of place when it came to the spirit world as a whole.

However, as the ship entered the spirit world, its black color quickly turned richer, tainting itself with an ethereal vibe.

On its deck stood a mottled stone chair that was two to three meters high; its back facing the cabin. Leaning against the chair's back, a colossal figure that was comparable to an ancient giant sat there.

He had a black beard that went just past his neck, and he wore a tall, pointed crown on his head. He wore a gorgeous black robe with silver fringes. The wrinkles on his face looked hardened and filled with magnificence. It made one subconsciously wish to bow their heads.

Under the slightly wrinkled forehead and on the high nose bridge, Klein’s pitch-black full-body armor and black crown were reflected into those two dark red eyes.

As for Klein, he was having trouble stopping his slow flight toward the giant.

Their gazes met among the layers of colors and symbols in the spirit world, and then Klein disappeared.

The giant on the mottled stone chair didn’t withdraw his gaze as he continued staring over in a long silence.

Chapter 560 - The Hanged Man Gets Fleeced

◆ ◆ ◆

Above the fog, Klein took out the Black Emperor card that he had fused with his Spirit Body and instantly reverted to his original form.

This is called a one-click gear swap… he mocked himself as he recalled what had just happened.

He was almost certain that the “giant” wearing the sharp crown was King of the Five Seas, Nast Solomon. The hundred-meter-long sailboat that could sail through the spirit world was the ghost ship named Black Emperor, which was built by the ancient Solomon Empire!

I’ve always thought that a ghost ship simply means that it can sail on its own and wouldn’t sink, making it closer to a strange creature. I never thought that the most powerful ghost ship would be able to turn itself incorporeal and wander through the spirit world…

That makes it almost a demigod, right? As expected of the most famous Black Emperor on the Five Seas. Yes… I can’t eliminate the possibility that it sacrificed a Traveler during its creation process…

For one of the most famous legendary treasures, the Specter Empire which carries the final inheritance of the Trunsoest Empire, could it be that the ship also comes equipped with this capability, making it impossible to find?

Klein’s thoughts slowly drifted without immediately realizing the reason why he had suddenly met King of the Five Seas, Nast.

This was very obvious: the law of Beyonder characteristics convergence!

Although the Black Emperor card didn't contain any Beyonder characteristics, Roselle had added or carved something onto the card when he made it. It allowed the wielder to use the Card of Blasphemy after they advanced to a High-Sequence Beyonder, to subtly sense the Beyonder ingredients that they needed.

There was no doubt that such a sensation was mutual. As one sensed the other, the other would naturally sense them too. As for the wielder, they would appear to approach a certain fate before they crossed that step into becoming a demigod.

This was something Klein was deeply aware of. He ultimately suspected that the existence of the gray fog had brought together certain Beyonders or supernatural events to him.

Traveling with the Black Emperor card in the spirit world makes it easier for such situations to occur. This is because the real world needs to abide by many rules. Even the fate from drawing lots needs to abide by logic, developing bit by bit. It doesn't make sense for me to use the Black Emperor card in Backlund, and for the King of the Five Seas, Nast, to immediately appear in front of me with the ghost ship…

Even if he sensed the attraction force, he would have to go through the process of locating me, and through the process of traveling through the spirit world, take hours or even days to arrive. If he didn't sense it, he would only naturally think of sailing towards the Sonia Sea and head closer to the borders of the Loen Kingdom. In that case, it might take months before we bump into each other.

By being in the spirit world, things are simple; there is no concept of distance or direction in there. Locations and distances are all extremely chaotic. Perhaps the King of the Five Seas, Nast, might've wished to go out on a spin in the spirit world, but he ended up seeing me pass by the moment he entered. This doesn't need to abide by any restrictions or limitations on geographical locations, Klein thought as he rapped the corner of the mottled table.

In addition to this, he was certain that the reason why he was thrown uncontrollably towards the Black Emperor and at King of the Five Seas, Nast, wasn't because of the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics. The effects of the law was only reflected in fate, perception, and desire, nothing too exaggerated; otherwise, there wouldn't be High-Sequence Beyonders—all of them would be involuntarily drawn by the "Uniqueness" of their respective pathway.

Klein could sense that it was a type of Beyonder power that twisted and strengthened his intent to move forward, resulting in him being unable to stop.

This is a very simple analysis. Even if I had thrown out the Black Emperor card at the time, I wouldn't have been able to stop… This is a Lawyer, which is a Beyonder power wielded by the Black Emperor pathway? Klein leaned back in his chair and decided not to use the Black Emperor card any time soon.

This meant that he was unable to roam the spirit world in search of a messenger.

If he hadn't brought the Black Emperor card and had used his main body with the Sea God Scepter, he would appear in the spirit world, which was filled with all kinds of revelations and information. He would inevitably leave many clues and could be divined about at any time. In terms of anti-divination and anti-prophecy, Azik's copper whistle couldn't be compared to the Black Emperor card.

If I were to really do that, I might meet ten people who know that I obtained the Sea God Scepter, when buying a beer at the bar… Of course, it was taken by Klein Moretti, so what has that got to do with me, Gehrman Sparrow? Klein shook his head in a self-deprecating manner and decided to use the ritual method to get a messenger to respond. He could find something more suitable later on.

After he covered the Black Emperor card, his figure disappeared from the mysterious space above the gray fog.

†

Early morning, Bayam.

Alger prepared to take a carriage out of the city and take a detour to a private harbor behind the cliff. That was where his Blue Avenger was docked and waiting to set sail.

As a disguised pirate captain, he couldn't dock so openly at the main port of the City of Generosity. That would be sufficient proof that he had close ties with the authorities. It was the same with the other pirates who had to consider their berth in advance before coming to Bayam to sell their loot or gain enjoyment. They either went to a small port in the surrounding waters, or to a private port controlled by someone with a deep background or by the Resistance.

Finally, there are no more missions. I can go out to sea again… I need to first obtain a mystical item that can increase my strength and also square my accounts. After that, I'll head to the primitive island and hunt for the Blue Shadow Falcon, allowing me to advance to Sequence 6 as quickly as possible… Alger was about to walk towards a rental carriage when he unexpectedly saw a familiar figure.

The former pirate merchant, Ralph, walked out of the carriage with a ruddy face and looked towards the governor-general's office that wasn't far away. He seemed to be abnormally excited.

What happened to him? After a moment of puzzlement, Alger took the initiative to go over and greet him.

From his point of view, Ralph was, in a sense, also one of his comrades. They were all subordinates of Mr. Fool.

However, one is a core member, while the other just remains on the periphery… Alger calmly confirmed their identities and positions.

“What happened to deserve such joy?” Alger asked after chatting about the weather.

Ralph laughed out loud and narrowed his eyes, saying, “If I were to say that I received the blessings of God, would you believe me?”

I believe… Alger answered in his mind without hesitation.

Suppressing his curiosity, he asked, “What are you doing here?”

Ralph was about to answer when his eyes suddenly lit up.

He looked around, and after confirming that there was no one around him, he said in a deep voice, “Didn’t you say that you also believe in God?”

In order to befriend him, Alger had lied, saying that his faith lay with Sea God, Kalvetua. In any case, this was common among pirates, so it wouldn’t arouse suspicion—at sea, the weather was usually more frightening than any enemy, so most pirates, adventurers, ship crew, and sailors had great respect for gods who controlled similar fields, believing in them to a certain extent.

“Of course.” This time, Alger’s answer was firmer than ever.

This was because he knew that the “Sea God” that the other party believed in was the embodiment of Mr. Fool.

Ralph nodded in satisfaction, revealed a smile, and whispered, “I received a revelation yesterday. God sent me to help ‘His’ young lambs.

“I intend to establish a charitable fund for this purpose.

“This is the will of God. As ‘His’ believer, I think you would be happy to provide some assistance.”

He held out his right hand and waited for the donation.

Alger's expression stiffened, and he was momentarily unsure of how to respond.

Although his present fortune was worth 3,245 pounds, he was preparing to buy a mystical item, making his overall financial situation somewhat tight.

Of course, he could still donate quite a bit if he skimped and saved.

If the "Sea God" was still Kalvetua, Alger, who claimed to be a believer, wouldn't have hesitated to find an excuse. But now, he had to seriously consider the deeper motives of Mr. Fool.

Noticing Alger's reaction, Ralph's eyes darted schemingly before he said, "We want to help children who are suffering from unnecessary discrimination because of their bloodline. They live a hard life, and it is hard to see any hope for them. There are pure-blooded natives, as well as mixed-bloods."

Alger was silent for a few seconds, then he pulled out a wad of cash.

"Here's 100 pounds."

Ralph took it and said with a smile, "Your kindness will definitely be rewarded.

"God will protect you."

†

The door slanted over the entrance to the warehouse.

Klein prepared the summoning ritual for the spirit world creature and was surrounded by the hallucinatory scent of herbs and essential oils.

He was afraid that there would be some kind of accident if he held it in the inn, and although it might not be risky for him, it might end up harming the other occupants; therefore, he went back to the abandoned warehouse where he had gave a sacrifice to Kalvetua.

As for Danitz, having his bounty raised to 5,500 pounds, he was very proactive in asking to stay in the suite and monitor the radio transceiver.

The procedure is to light the candle that symbolizes me, and to use a verified incantation to summon the appropriate spirit world creature as a messenger… Daly Simone's three-lined description and the various incantations provided by Mr. Azik went through Klein's mind.

When summoning a spirit world creature, the first sentence needed descriptions such as "wanders about the unfounded" and "roaming in the upper realm." Only by doing so could it accurately point to the spirit world. The suffix would clearly indicate that the Spirit Body was being summoned and that it was a creature that had a corporeal body. The second and third lines were an accurate description of the creature, but due to the restrictions of the format, one couldn't use too many words to pinpoint a creature. Therefore, it was difficult to predict or divine what would ultimately be summoned by the ritualist.

In this sort of situation, using an incantation previously used by others implied a much lower risk.

Then, after signing a contract, the description of the third sentence: "the messenger that belongs to whomever" or "Contract Companion of whoever" could be made, allowing the three-lined description to accurately summon the corresponding messenger.

Yes, my messenger has to run very fast; otherwise, it might be killed by some malicious creature in the spirit world, resulting in the loss of important letters… Klein's mind raced, and he came up with a clear plan.

He took a step back and said in ancient Hermes, "I!

"I summon in my name:

“The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the creature whose speed surpasses imagination.”

Whoosh!

There was the sound of wind, tainting the candles to a dark green and turning the surroundings cold and creepy.

Klein saw a blurry figure rush out, too fast for him to see anything.

After that, he couldn’t find the fellow ever again.

Chapter 561 - “Recruitment Fair”

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That’s way too fast… Did it already circle the planet several times… Or maybe it’s still there, but it’s too fast for my vision to keep up… Klein’s mouth twitched, deciding to wait a few seconds to see if the “creature whose speed surpasses imagination” would appear again.

He wasn’t worried that the summoned spirit world creature would harm the innocent, as one of the descriptions was of a friendly creature. Besides, as long as he forcefully ended the summoning and stopped the ritual, the creature would be immediately sent back to the spirit world, no matter where the “creature whose speed surpasses imagination” went.

A few seconds later, Klein inhaled after failing to see any response from him waiting. He said with ancient Hermes, “I!

“I end this summoning in my name!”

The chilling air around him instantly vanished as the swirling cold wind died down and the candle flames returned to their normal color.

Klein stepped forward and extinguished the candle, intending to revise the last sentence and try again.

As for the two phrases “the spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated,” he had no intention of changing them. The first sentence was directed at the spirit world, and it could only be replaced with synonyms, so it didn’t matter if he changed it or not. The second sentence was a prerequisite for Klein to ensure his own safety; otherwise, it would've been a horror story instead of a hilarious one.

Hmm… I don't need to use "surpasses imagination" as an adjective. But others might not meet my needs. Perhaps… I can change my train of thought. A messenger doesn't have to run that fast. A normal speed is fine. There are other ways to ensure safety. I just need to get malicious beings to ignore it and neglect it… I'll try a spirit world creature that's easily neglected… After two or three minutes of deliberation, Klein held a ritual again.

When he was done with the preparations, he chanted a new incantation, "I!

"I summon in my name:

"The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the being who is easily neglected.'"

The interior of the warehouse became abnormally quiet. There was no wind, nor did it turn cold within the wall of spirituality. Even the color of the candle remained unchanged.

Klein waited, watching, hoping for a good messenger.

After about ten seconds, he sighed and looked around.

There's nothing. The description was of no effect this time.

He didn't wait any longer and followed the procedure of ending the summoning and extinguishing the candle.

To his puzzlement, the candle flame even shook a few times in the end.

Did I miss something… Klein frowned, and then he relaxed, throwing the matter to the back of his mind.

He reconsidered the question of how to modify the description and continued targeting the third sentence.

I'll switch to another train of thought. If a messenger is especially good at enduring scuffles and has great survivability, it's still okay. No matter what, a messenger that can deliver the letter to the target is a good messenger… Klein pondered for a moment, then he held the summoning ritual for the third time.

Amidst the fragrance of herbs and essential oils, and under the dim light of the candlelight, the shadows on his face darted about as his mouth gaped open and closed.

"I!

"I summon in my name:

"The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, an extraordinary creature who has extremely high survivability."

The flame of the candle flared and stretched, illuminating the bright red interior of the altar.

In Klein's Spirit Vision, white bones drilled out from the ground, overlapping to form what looked like a safe.

I've finally summoned something I can see. Furthermore, it's a creature with extremely high survivability… It looks very much like a safe. Just one look is enough to tell that it's good at taking a beating… Klein breathed a sigh of relief and spoke in the ancient Hermes, "Are you willing to be my messenger?"

The skeletal creature that looked like a safe quickly indicated its willingness.

Then it wriggled the bones beneath it and crawled toward Klein slowly, very slowly.

It took ten seconds to crawl a centimeter.

…This is way too slow… Klein's smile froze on his face.

Although messengers completed their mission by traveling through the spirit world, that didn't mean that they didn't need speed.

Within the spirit world, distance and orientation were chaotic. The most important thing was to find and lock onto a location.

As long as an accurate, clear, immediate coordinates were provided, such as the summoning ritual just now or a simplified ritual that involved blowing a whistle, then no matter where the messenger was in the spirit world, it would immediately appear within the altar.

When the location wasn't that immediate and only had a contractual connection or a previous anchor point, the messenger needed to spend time to distinguish the location, roam the spirit world, and search for the target. This required a certain amount of speed.

If it were to deliver the letter, the recipient might not even receive it by the time they die… Klein helplessly thought as he looked at the slowly crawling skeletal creature.

He let the smile reappear on his face.

"After some careful consideration, I think it's best I don't trouble you.

"Thank you for your willingness."

The creature made of illusory white bones stopped. Compared to before, it appeared as though it hadn't moved at all.

Klein quickly canceled the summoning and rubbed his forehead.

He was a little depressed and had decided to abandon himself to despair. He decided to use a less troublesome method to find messengers, which was "public recruitment, an interview selection!"

After taking a deep breath, Klein calmed his mind and began the ritual seriously.

Looking at the candle flame that was quietly burning, he took a step back and said, “I!

“I summon in my name:

“The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, a unique being that is willing to be my messenger.”

Whoosh!

The wind blew fiercely inside the wall of spirituality, and Klein’s half top hat almost flew off of his head.

The candle flame shook and expanded to the size of a human head. It was so pale that it seemed to have lost its body temperature.

A translucent head slowly emerged, as if it had just broken through a thin membrane. Its hair was a light gold color and was smooth. Its eyes were blood-red, and it had an imposing appearance.

Looks a little familiar… Klein silently muttered.

The head had fully shown itself, but what followed wasn’t its neck, but an illusory hand that held the end of the head’s hair.

Behind the palm were complicated patterns, but the color of the cuffs was dark.

The summoned spirit world creature appeared at an increasingly rapid speed, and soon, it was before Klein in its entirety.

It was indeed a familiar “person.” It was the headless woman that Klein had met standing at the top of a castle while he was on his way to Kalvetua’s ruins at the bottom of the sea.

She was no longer as large as a castle like she was before. She was now a tall, “ordinary” woman.

Of course, there were still only cuts on her neck and four identical heads in her hands.

“Did…” “You…” “Summon…” “Me?” The headless woman in the complicated black dress stood there quietly. Her four drooping heads spoke one after the other in ancient Feysac.

She can directly communicate through words… The level of this spirit world creature isn’t low… I remember you having a castle… You’re already a property owner, so why are you “applying” for the job of a messenger? Klein sighed with emotion and lampooned. Then, he looked down at the candle behind the headless woman. He was disappointed to find that no other spirit had emerged.

He had originally imagined that many spirit world creatures would be willing to be his messenger as they swarmed over, having to form a line to be interviewed. In the end, only one had responded.

It should be a problem with the summoning ritual itself. It’s considered a relatively simple and basic summoning ceremony, so it’s impossible to summon multiple targets at once… Klein looked at the headless lady and solemnly nodded.

“Yes.”

Without waiting for the other party to speak, he added another question.

“Can you roam the spirit world at a relatively fast speed? How good is your survivability?”

The heads which the headless lady lifted answered, “Yes.” “Not…” “Bad.”

As she spoke, she floated upwards and then quickly descended, displaying her speed.

Phew… Klein decided to stop making attempts which led to unknown results. He asked in a serious manner, “Are you willing to sign a contract and become my messenger?”

The headless woman’s dress fluttered slightly, and her four heads with blonde hair and red eyes nodded at the same time.

“Yes.” “Every time…” “One…” “Gold coin.”

Ah? A gold coin for each letter sent? Mr. Azik didn’t mention that spirit world creatures have such hobbies… Right, he mentioned that when signing a contract, persuasion and communication are key factors. Does this mean that this is a form of persuasion and communication? Klein was surprised and wanted to cancel the summoning immediately.

Wait a minute, I might not need to be the one paying for it… Whoever summons the messenger pays for it… Heh, maybe when our communication improves, there would be the option of paying on receipt… After some thought, Klein agreed to the other party’s request.

“Okay.

“Let’s sign the contract.”

He picked up a dark red, round fountain pen and yellowish-brown goatskin parchment that he had prepared earlier, and he quickly wrote down the contract in the language which could stir the forces of nature, ancient Hermes.

The format and terms were described in detail in Azik’s letter. They were concise and to the point, and they contained clauses such as the messenger not being allowed to look at the letter, not discarding the letter, or endangering the life of the contractor. Of course, if the contents of the letter were related to the messenger, the messenger had to be informed in advance.

In addition to these, Klein added a clause to send one gold coin for each letter, specifying that it could be borne by the contractor or by the receiver of the letter.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the contract, the final part used the honorific name of the deity in charge of this domain.

It was an undead contract, and normally it meant using Death's honorific name, but Death had long perished with no response from "Him." Hence, Azik mentioned that it could be replaced by using the description of someone high in the undead domain or the Underworld itself, but the binding force wasn't that strong.

Without a doubt, Klein chose the Underworld, which had a close relationship with the bigshot.

"The home of all death, the hell hidden deep within the spirit world, the witness of the decay of all living things, one that solely belongs to the kingdom of Death."

After penning these four sentences, the yellowish-brown goatskin parchment began to burn with a green flame, illuminating the gloomy surroundings.

After he was done with the text, Klein took out Azik's copper whistle, placed it on the goatskin, and wrote his current name: "Gehrman Sparrow."

This didn't necessarily require a real name, because his aura would enter the contract. The name was only used for summoning, which was to say, using "the messenger that belongs to Gehrman Sparrow" worked, but "the Contracted Creature of Klein Moretti" wouldn't.

When Klein finished signing, the goatskin floated up, carrying Azik's copper whistle and the dark red fountain pen, and flew to the headless lady.

The headless lady held the head with golden hair and red eyes, let it bite down on the fountain pen and wrote her name: "Reinette Tinekerr."

The green flames quickly gathered together, wrapping around Azik's copper whistle and the yellowish-brown goatskin parchment.

A few seconds later, the goatskin was reduced to ash, and the copper whistle fell into the palm of Klein's hand.

The headless woman, Reinette, collectively blinked with the eyes of her four heads, and her body rapidly faded away into the pale candle flame.

After the contract was made, Klein no longer needed to undo the summoning. He could do it with his own will.

Phew, I finally have a messenger. "The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the messenger that belongs to Gehrman Sparrow"… Well, when there's an opportunity, I'll get an Artisan to create something like the copper whistle, so that I don't have to summon my messenger every time via a ritual… Klein cleared up the mess in a rather good mood.

Over the next few days, Bayam gradually returned to normal, but Danitz still hadn't been able to receive any telegrams from Admiral of Blood's pirate crew.

On Sunday morning, he flipped through the newspaper and suddenly lowered his voice as he said to Klein, "There's a Beyonder gathering tonight. Want to attend?"

Chapter 562 - Helene

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Beyonder gathering? Klein thought for a bit, then he nodded and responded, “Okay.”

I should bring forward to the collection of the supplementary ingredients of the Marionettist potion. I can also see if I might meet an Artisan… He subconsciously started to make arrangements in his mind.

Upon seeing Gehrman Sparrow agree, Danitz breathed a quiet sigh of relief, unable to contain his joy.

For the past few days, having had his bounty raised significantly, he had obediently stayed in the suite to monitor the radio transceiver. He was so bored that he yearned for the evening to arrive immediately.

The Beyonder gathering that Danitz mentioned was at the Amyris Leaf Bar, where pirates, informants, and adventurers were active. It was the first choice if one wanted to gather information and buy supplies.

Dressed in a black coat and silk top hat, Klein followed Danitz through the crowded bar’s lobby and into a card room. Under the watchful gaze of several bouncers, he gave the predetermined signal and descended down a flight of hidden stairs to a wide underground area.

It’s like the Evil Dragon Bar in Tingen City. There’s an underground market for herbs, essential oils, ancient books, charms, and all sorts of common mysticism materials. However, the difference is that there are also all sorts of guns and ammunition for sale. Klein even discovered antiquated muskets and lead bullets.

Heh, they also sell fake identity documents and fake seals… As expected of an overseas colony, their industry is much more developed than Tingen's… I'll buy a batch of ingredients later to make charms in the Sea God domain. There will always be some discounts if I purchase them in large quantities… Klein slightly turned his head from side to side to take in the situation in the underground area.

Next to him, Danitz, who was already doubtful about his own disguise skills, had deliberately put on a cap, keeping the front of his cap down to cover half his face. With great familiarity, he led Klein to the other end of the underground market and knocked on the closed door with two long knocks and four short knocks.

Behind the door, there was only a single candle. It swayed on the lampstand on the side wall, scattering yellow light onto the tiny room.

Danitz pointed to the long robes, masks, and other items which were hanging or placed on a table, and said to Klein, "It's up to you to decide whether you would don a disguise. You can also choose not to."

Klein looked around, his gaze sweeping past the bouncers in the room.

"I don't need it."

I am now an informant for the kingdom's military, and the Church of Storms also knows of my identity, so there's nothing for me to be afraid of… If the pirates and adventurers have any malicious thoughts about me because of my lack of a disguise, and if they attempt to attack me, hehe… Klein suddenly pictured bounty rewards flying towards him one by one.

Danitz curled his lips secretly, picked up a black iron mask, and wore it.

Then, he and Klein passed through a dim corridor and into another room under a bouncer's lead.

The place was lavishly decorated. The floor was covered with a thick carpet from the Southern Continent; the walls were decorated with shining lampstands, and the fresh smell of candles could be caught as they suffused with light.

Klein glanced around and, without Danitz's help, found a brown leather sofa and sat down on it. He leaned back and crossed his right leg.

There were already more than twenty people of various genders gathered here. Some were in hooded robes, while others showed their faces. According to Danitz's description in the morning, not all of the people attending this gathering were Beyonders, there were spokesmen for certain factions, as well as adventurers, pirates, and mysticism enthusiasts who wanted to become Beyonders.

Time slowly passed in that quiet environment. About seven or eight minutes later, the old man who was sitting on a reclining chair straightened his back and crossed his hands. He chuckled.

"Everyone, let's begin."

Because he was old, his white hair was sparse, leaving only a thin layer. However, his light brown eyes weren't turbid, with them being bright and sharp.

"The organizer of the gathering, Strongman Ozil, a famous pirate in the past, and now the secret boss of the Amyris Leaf Bar," Danitz leaned slightly and introduced the man to Klein with a suppressed voice.

He'd actually mentioned it in the morning, but he was afraid that Gehrman Sparrow failed to match a name to the face and would later vent his anger on himself.

It's a sorrowful matter to have a secret grasped by others… Danitz sighed inwardly.

Klein nodded indiscernibly as he silently watched the transactions happen.

There were potion formulas for Warrior, Sailor, Mystery Pryer, and others, but no one bought them. The expectant sellers were disappointed again and again.

Danitz glanced at Gehrman Sparrow, who wore an expressionless face, he then leaned over, and explained in a low voice, "There is no Notary at this gathering, nor any powerful Seer. The authenticity of the potion formula cannot be guaranteed. It's too easy to fake such things, and even if people recognize that the formula is fake, the seller cannot be punished because he might be a victim as well."

I know… This is one of the reasons why potion formulas fail to be widely spread… Klein uncrossed his right leg, leaned forward slightly, and said in a voice that was neither loud nor low, "I need the remnant spirituality of an ancient wraith."

He didn't mention the eyes of a six-winged gargoyle, the spring water from Sonia Island's Golden Spring, or any other supplementary ingredients. He was worried that others would guess that he was a Faceless who was preparing to advance to Marionettist.

When he was in Tingen, Klein had relied on the purchase of supplementary ingredients to accurately suspect that Daxter Guderian was a prospective Spectator, and thus, he figured out his identity as a member of the Psychology Alchemists.

It was impossible to deduce any more from the remnant spirituality of an ancient wraith alone, as many of the rituals in the undead domain would use it.

Although Klein didn't disguise himself, he still had to be careful.

The room was silent for two seconds. Then, a slightly hoarse voice sounded.

"How much do you need?"

Someone really has it? Klein controlled his expression and didn't let his joy show on his face.

He tilted his head to look at the speaker and saw that he was a man in his thirties who was clearly of native blood.

The man's skin was bronzed, but he had a dull luster from chronic malnutrition or a lack of light. His face was thin, his cheekbones protruded, and his eyes were sunken, more white than black.

"A small bottle." Klein pulled out a small metal bottle as an example.

The thin, dark man was silent for a moment before saying, "500 pounds."

That's reasonable… Klein originally wanted to haggle, but he caught a glimpse of Danitz sitting beside him out of the corner of his eye.

I'm Gehrman Sparrow, a cold, crazy adventurer… Klein repeated this line three times inwardly, quietly took a deep breath, and calmly nodded.

"Okay."

He took out the large stack of cash he had prepared, and he counted out a sum of 500 pounds.

The man with the mostly white eyes took out a glass test tube from his pocket, threw it at Klein, and said, "All the spirituality will be gone after a year."

He wasn't afraid that the other party wouldn't be unable to catch it, because even if it were to break, it wouldn't affect the material itself. It would only be a matter of changing the container.

Klein raised his right hand and accurately caught the glass tube. He saw many phosphorescent spots floating in the tube, and when they touched the glass wall, they would strangely expand, forming a face with blurred features that opened to form a mouth that screamed silently.

It’s real… Klein nodded to himself and handed the thick stack of cash worth 500 pounds to the attendant who approached and handed it to the seller.

The trading continued, most of it failing with only a small number succeeding.

At the end of the day, the gathering’s organizer, Strongman Ozil laughed and said, “I have a request.”

As he spoke, he pulled out a photo from his inside pocket.

“The reward for finding the person above is 1,000 pounds or some other common Beyonder ingredient of equal value. Remember, do not hurt her.”

1,000 pounds? This would make most adventurers go crazy… I wonder who he’s looking for, to offer such a high reward… Not surprisingly, Klein saw that everyone present was willing to give it a try.

The picture began to be passed in a counterclockwise fashion, and a few minutes later, it was in Klein’s hands.

As he casually swept a glance over it, a bit of surprise suddenly surfaced in his heart.

The woman in the photo was rather pretty, with bright red hair and a pair of green eyes that resembled emeralds. Her skin wasn’t fair, but she gave off a healthy feeling.

At the time of the photoshoot, she was wearing a long, lake-colored skirt. Her waist was tightened with a flower-shaped ribbon, making her appear exceptionally slender. Although her face seemed to be smiling, her overall appearance was one of displeasure and awkwardness.

A girl with a good family background… Who would pay 1,000 pounds to find her? Furthermore, the premise is that she cannot be hurt… Hmm, a picture of her forcing a smile… Many romance stories with intertwined love and hate flashed in Klein's mind.

Stories like a tyrannical pirate falling in love with a wealthy merchant's daughter, abducting her onto his boat before she eventually escaped; or some noble lady from a declining noble family turning into a pirate, and was later caught due to a mistake, only to have a sinful relationship with a mid- or high-ranking Mandated Punisher or military officer, thus escaping from her predicament and imprisonment; how a newly advanced Demoness accidentally fell into a debt of love when giving someone pleasure… Such thoughts flashed through his mind, and Klein almost raised his hand to cover his face.

I've read too many novels in my previous life… And I happen to have a trauma because of Demonesses in this world… He sighed to himself, looked up at Ozil and asked, "What's her name?"

"Helene," Ozil answered succinctly, "but she must have switched to using a fake alias."

Helene, a typical female Intis name… Klein asked again, "Is there anything she often wears?

"Hair is fine too."

This was a medium that could be used to seek her with divination.

Klein didn't mention things like recently worn clothes that hadn't been washed, afraid that the employer behind the scenes would throw him a piece of lingerie, making it awkward.

Ozil shook his head.

"Nothing.

"She has a strong anti-tracking ability."

“What’s her strength like?” another member of the gathering asked.

Ozil said in a serious manner, “The employer didn’t give a detailed description. It’s said that she isn’t too strong, but she’s stronger than a Sequence 9.

“You don’t need to capture her. As long as you determine her whereabouts, you will be paid.”

Chapter 563 - The Fool's “Blessing”

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“As long as you can confirm her location, you can receive 1,000 pounds! This is the first time I’ve seen such a mission!” On the street outside the Amyris Leaf Bar, Danitz rubbed his hands together with a hint of excitement. He clenched his fists and hit the tall iron-black gas lamppost, yearning to immediately wander around the city and find the red-haired woman named Helene.

To him, 1,000 pounds wasn’t a small sum. It was enough to add one more house to his line of properties in Bayam. It just wouldn’t be located in the most prosperous and valuable districts.

The Elf Flying Carpet he had previously obtained was only around two to three thousand pounds, and this was the reward he had gained from fighting dangerous fellows such as Steel Maveti and Blood Brambles Hendry. It was completely incomparable to the easy mission of finding someone.

Klein, who was walking ahead, held a package wrapped in newspaper. They were the charm materials which had cost him fifteen pounds. He slowed his pace a little, glanced at Danitz, and spoke without expression, “5,500 pounds.”

“…”

Danitz’s excitement froze on his face.

Only then did he remember an important problem. In the eyes of the other pirates and adventurers, he was as “attractive” as red-haired

Helene.

They didn’t need to fight him. Once they recognized him, they could report his identity to the military, the Church, or the police, and they would receive a reward worth more than 1,000 pounds. After all, he was already a great pirate worth 5,500 pounds.

Searching for red-haired Helene would be equivalent to a lady with a nice figure and good looks entering the Red Theater for entertainment.

Dog… sh*t… Danitz spat out a single word, his face grim, as he stretched out the middle consonant.

At the same time, he automatically pulled down his cap even lower.

Klein, who had poured cold water on Danitz, resumed his normal walking speed and considered the question of finding the red-haired Helene.

The lack of a medium and the necessary information had made it difficult for him to use divination, so he had to consider other methods.

Activate my underlings to do an investigation of the entire city? This is something that can only be done by the Church, the military, and the police. Even the local gangs would find it difficult to accomplish… Wait, I think I can…

I’m now Sea God Kalvetua. My believers are all across Bayam and Blue Mountain Island. I just need to make an announcement, no—a revelation to all my believers, and I can get them to search for red-haired Helene… But would this damage my standing? To do something like that for 1,000 pounds, even a god wants some face…

If I were the real Sea God, I wouldn’t care about this. However, I’m now acting as Kalvetua. I have to maintain the dignity of a god as best as I can.

Back when Kalvetua was on the verge of collapse, it didn’t even broadcast a revelation when it was urgently trying to find Leticia and her subordinates. Instead, it only gave orders to his worshipers in the upper echelons… I can change its commandments as part of reconstructing an image, but I can't appear too low-class… Well, that should also be a requirement of true acting.

It would be difficult to organize an investigation just by giving Kalat, Edmonton, and the others a revelation. Furthermore, they would definitely magnify the severity of the issue and cause a huge commotion. It would only make things more difficult to deal with later.

There's another solution. I can throw the radio transceiver above the gray fog and attempt to contact the magic mirror, Arrodes. I'll ask him about red-haired Helene's location. I have to be careful about this. I need to prepare ahead of time and confirm it via divination. I don't want to receive strange telegrams from the True Creator or the Primordial Demoness. Even a glance at it would probably make me go mad.

Having quickly come up with ideas, Klein boarded a rental carriage parked at the corner of the street. Danitz pressed his cap and followed closely behind.

Returning to the Wind of Azure Inn, Klein took off his hat and coat while saying to Danitz, "If your captain contacts you through a dream, ask for information about red-haired Helene."

"She probably doesn't know. Otherwise, I would've known this red-haired Helene." Danitz grinned. "I don't know who's looking for her, to be willing to pay a thousand pounds."

His thoughts were whirling, imagining a love story akin to the ones Emperor Roselle had penned.

Klein glanced at him and casually mentioned, "I'll do the monitoring tonight."

"You're doing it?" Danitz snapped out of his fantasies, wondering if he had heard wrongly.

“Yes.” Klein nodded.

Gehrman Sparrow realizes that I’m too exhausted? Although this fellow is a little crazy, he’s still a good person at heart. He had actually decided to risk his life to save those people when we were at Bansy Harbor for reasons that couldn’t be considered good… Danitz sighed to himself.

Carrying the radio transceiver and its relevant parts, Klein went into the bedroom, locked the door, and threw them above the gray fog with a sacrificial ritual.

After doing all of this, he was in no hurry to leave the towering palace. He waved his hand, and the Sea God Scepter flew out from the junk pile. He scanned through the prayers of different people and gathered experience on how people had multiple facades.

In the process, he would occasionally respond, like a child who still had great interest in a new toy.

As Klein’s browsing drew to a close, ripples of light began to form around the seat of The Fool.

Someone is praying to me, to The Fool and not to Sea God… Klein raised his eyebrows and emanated his spirituality, scanning the scene within the rippling light.

†

Enmat Harbor, in a room with closed curtains.

Dressed in a classic black robe, Ed Sheeran resisted the impulse in his heart and said to the sweet, young girl, Denise, “The gift of god is in our bodies, but if we want to obtain it, we must have a teacher guide it out.

“Your soul is pure and beloved by the gods. I will personally guide you. In the process, no matter what happens, you must trust me and listen to me.

“Before that, do you have any questions?”

Ed Sheeran was a swindler. His specialty was to establish a cult to cheat others for money and sex. He would then decisively flee before it reached a certain scale that would garner attention from the police.

This time, he had come from Backlund, disguised as one of The Fool’s Blessed that many gangsters in the capital were looking for. He had also developed a batch of believers in his target group.

He falsely claimed that The Fool was the incarnation of the Lord of the Storms and that he would come to save the faithful during the apocalypse. This was a secret that could not be widely publicized and could only be spread in secret; otherwise, it would attract the attention of the gods of the other Churches. Only those who were chosen would be able to believe in The Fool in advance and be the first batch of the redeemed.

To make himself appear more persuasive, he spent a lot of money in Backlund, buying a piece of paper with the honorific name of The Fool written on it.

As for what was on the piece of paper, his comment was: “It looks like it’s real.”

Denise asked with both fear and anticipation, “Lord Adorer, why didn’t we get a response when we read the honorific name of God? Aren’t we Blessed who have been selected and should bathe in God’s grace?”

I’ll immediately give you God’s grace… Ed Sheeran took a deep breath and suppressed the tantalizing images in his mind.

“Two reasons. First, you haven’t discovered the grace of God which is hidden in your body. I will help you complete that later.

“Second, you are not devout enough. Don’t argue, I can see right through you.

“After you do all of this, you will be able to recite the honorific name of God and receive a response, just like me.”

Under Denise’s idolizing and curious gaze, Ed Sheeran picked up a pen on the table beside her and scribbled a line of words.

It was the Hermes language used for a sacrificial offering.

In order to make the scam a success, Ed Sheeran had acquired a lot of religious knowledge and even went to a university’s Department of History to sit in on archeology courses.

Holding the paper in front of Denise, he proudly recited the words he had written in Hermes, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

Following that, with half-closed eyes and open arms, he said dreamily, “I feel the blessings of God.”

At this moment, a streak of silver lightning descended from the sky and landed right on Ed Sheeran’s head.

With a sizzling sound, the tiny electric bolts snaking across his body scurried. With God’s blessing, he fell to the ground and his body quickly charred while his muscles twitched violently.

After a few seconds, he stopped all movement, including breathing as Denise exclaimed, “Lord Ed Sheeran is indeed God’s Blessed.”

Denise finally sensed that something wasn’t right. She stepped forward carefully, lifted her skirt and knelt down, placing her finger to the tip of Ed Sheeran’s nose.

He… he’s dead… He’s dead! Denise jerked back and fell to the ground in terror.

She burst into tears and stumbled out of the room, heading for the nearby police station.

†

Atop the gray fog, Klein silently retracted the Sea God Scepter.

You actually dared to use my name to cheat others of their wealth and sully women… The corner of his mouth twitched, wishing he could give another bolt of lightning to that man named Ed Sheeran.

This was called a corpse mutilation.

The girl would probably call the police, right? This kind of case would inevitably be referred to a corresponding Beyonder team. I wonder if it will be the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind… After what Mr. A has done, my reputation as The Fool isn't small in Backlund. Perhaps I already have a dossier in the official organizations. Well, maybe they'll put everything together and hand it over to the Red Gloves or something similar for handling… Klein's past identity and insight as a Nighthawk had allowed him to consider the possible future developments.

However, he quickly put this matter to the back of his mind, because no matter what, they wouldn't be able to detect that it was him.

Klein threw the Sea God Scepter back into the junk pile, ready to return to the real world.

Suddenly, one of the dark red stars that were quietly floating in the boundless gray fog had lit up all of a sudden, emitting a light that was as bright as water!

It swelled and shrunk repeatedly in an abnormally conspicuous manner.

This was a crimson star that didn't belong to any member of the Tarot Club.

What a busy day today… Who could it be? Like Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and Little Sun, someone is relying on a certain object to connect with the gray fog? Klein's spirituality spread out as he thought. He didn't respond and only observed.

Author's Notes:

2018 is over, let's make a brief summary.

For an author, the happiest and most satisfying thing is that I still have the confidence and passion to create better works. I can also find deficiencies in my writing and come up with some good solutions. For example, I used to be good at repeatedly asking questions and writing big climax, but I didn't adopt similar writing methods. This is self-restraint. The second is the against my own worldview limitation. Too eruptive emotion is more disobedient. Therefore, I hope that in my next work after the Lord of Mysteries, I can find a good way to combine the explosive style of repeatedly inquiry and calm objective depiction.

Lord of Mysteries was post in April. Nine months have passed since that day and a total of 1.798 million words have been written. Let's round it up to 200,000 words per month. Not much, but it's better to be stable and have a long history. I am not a quick-witted, nor younger and active thinking writer. I need a lot of time to conceive every chapter. I often write two chapters every day till I don't have time to rest and read, the three chapters are even more difficult. Besides, I'm still in the process of fitness and so on, there are only a few more chapters.

In this case, the first thing I want to ensure is the quality. People gather because the good book, not the other way. Before starting the books, I talked with some friends about writing fantasy stories with a bit of English flavor. Their reactions are all very consistent. That is, it is very difficult and almost impossible to sell film and television copyright, almost impossible, and that is a lot of money. I like money, and I think everyone like it, except for Father Ma. However as an author, what I hope is to create the story I want to express. Because the quality is good, so I can make a fortune, instead of creating a profitable story. The positioning and relationship can never be reversed.

I'm very happy. Since I began the Lord of Mysteries, I've been liked by everyone. I have been loved by more and more people. And I can make some money. This is the best condition.

By the way, on the last day of 2018, we reached the achievement of competing for supremacy in a hundred leagues. In fact, I have never considered this matter and have never called for it. It happened naturally, because of the mystery, well, it's pretty good. That's the logic I want.

Thank you to every leader, every friend who gave a reward, subscribed, and because of your enthusiastic voting, Klein is the most popular character of 2018!

At that time, when the moderators asked me what to fight for, my first reaction was to fight for the Writer Chart. Later, under their supervision, they studied the chart and decided to fight for the Character Chart. This is a fierce friend in front of me. If I fight for the Writer Chart, it would be a big burden and cost a lot of money. Second, my research found that the Character Chart is actually more affordable than the Writer Chart. The Writer Chart also has a golden keyboard, while the Character Chart has a separate screen recommendation, which is equivalent to a big push, I am such an affordable person.

Well, it's 2019, today I want to be three more, thank the allies, thank the voting friends, thank you for the subscription, and at the same time, ask for the next month's ticket, give me your guarantee. The higher the monthly ticket position, the more recommended Good, the more affordable, As Klein's parents of clothing and food, I think everyone likes to be affordable.

One more has been updated. Tomorrow is still the same time. Pray for monthly ticket ~

Also, everyone Happy New Year~

Chapter 564 - Knowledge as a Pursuer

◆

As Klein's spirituality made contact, the constantly expanding and contracting crimson "star" presented the images and sounds contained within.

A black-haired woman in a classical robe had fallen to the ground, writhing in pain.

She held an ordinary-looking celestial globe in one hand, and in the other, she held a short scepter that wasn't even the length of a small arm. Her strong will to survive almost broke through the binding of the crimson stars and directly entered Klein's ears.

Like Justice and The Sun, this woman's figure appeared rather blurry, making it difficult to discern her exact appearance, but there were some things Klein could clearly see, such as her facial features, such as her splitting cheek muscles and the flesh inside that was contracting into eyeballs. Other features included her ears stretching outwards like a trumpet, or her fingers which were scratching at the floor to create bright streaks of blood, as well as a pair of cold, lashless eyes that were almost transparent and were situated above her.

The black-haired girl's mutation didn't decline. Her body was tenaciously healing itself, causing the flesh and blood which resembled an eyeball to melt away. Her ruptured muscles fused together, and her extended ears shrunk inward… Every detail was in a repetitive see-saw-like struggle between the two states.

Klein was dazzled by the illusory, lashless eyes. It was as if he had returned to Tingen, back to the time when he had first mastered Spirit Vision.

Back then, he had seen a pair of eyes like that on Old Neil's back!

Hidden Sage? Klein leaned back in his chair, stretched out his hand, and took hold of the Sea God Scepter that once again flew out of the junk pile.

He planned to lend a helping hand and smite those evil eyes with a few bolts of lightning.

However, after careful examination, he sharply realized that the black-haired woman's abnormality had stemmed from the crazy ravings that no one else could hear. This was because the source of everything was in her ears, deep within her Spirit Body, her Soul Body!

It's very similar to the situation when Miss Magician suffers from the ravings of the full moon… Fortunately, I'm experienced; otherwise, I would've given the wrong response… Klein thought for a moment and thought of a way to save her. It was to pull her Spirit Body above the gray fog and directly block out the crazy ravings. As long as the source of the power was gone, the mutation would be quickly dealt with by the lady's self-recovery powers.

As for whether she was worth saving, or if she harbored malicious intentions, the current him was no longer as troubled as he was in the past.

If the black-haired lady had committed a heinous crime to a certain degree and had already established a connection with the mysterious space above the gray fog through the crimson star, Klein could give her a few lightning bolts at any time and let her be thrown back to where she belonged.

If she really has any kind of malicious intentions, or if she causes any accidents, I, who possess the Sea God Scepter, the Black Emperor card, and am capable of using the gray fog's power to some degree, wouldn't lack the ability to resist… Klein held onto the white bone scepter in his right hand and pointed at the remote star.

His spirit energy surged and poured into the crimson red light that was like flowing water.

This time, he was able to establish the mysterious and stable connection with ease.

The black-haired lady's figure instantly appeared at the side of the long bronze table, sitting on a chair that didn't belong to any of the current members of the Tarot Club.

As for Klein, he could see from the final image of the crimson stars that the mutation on her body had weakened significantly.

He nodded indiscernibly, patiently waiting for the other party to speak.

The black-haired lady was still somewhat adrift. One second, she was struggling in extreme pain, with her vision gradually turning black, and the next second, she was inside a towering domed palace. Beneath her was an endless and silent gray fog that extended outwards endlessly. How couldn't she be taken aback?

After a brief moment of silence, she turned her gaze to the figure leisurely sitting at the very end of the mottled long table. She asked with an ethereal voice, "Is this the Underworld?"

"You aren't dead." Klein laughed.

At this moment, he saw that the symbol tainted with starlight quickly changed on the back of the black-haired lady's high-back chair, forming a pair of eyes that contained countless resplendent stars. They were cold and indifferent, and they lacked eyelashes.

Based on his past experiences, he believed that this was a symbol representing the Mystery Pryer pathway.

The black-haired lady froze, gradually regaining her senses.

Instinctively, she scanned her surroundings before finally casting her gaze at the mysterious man shrouded behind the gray fog.

White shirt, tailcoat, no tie, black pants, bright leather boots, seemingly black hair, and a blurry appearance. There's nothing strange about this… He casually holds a milky-white scepter that's slightly longer than an arm in his hand, and that scepter… The black-haired lady's pupils contracted as the depths of her eyes reflected, in its entirety, the blue "gemstones" and the aura of a storm from the surroundings that it stirred. Furthermore, there were countless points of light that surrounded it, giving it a holy and majestic feeling.

It's a scepter at the demigod level! He's playing with it like it's a toy… He doesn't care about it at all… The lady in black narrowed her eyes and cautiously asked, "How may I address you?"

"You may call me Mr. Fool," the experienced Klein answered.

The Fool… The black-haired lady ruminated over the word before asking with deliberation, "I've heard of your honorific name from the Aurora Order's Mr. Z."

She waited for his assertion or denial.

You know the Aurora Order's Mr. Z… He can be considered an old friend… Klein laughed but didn't reply; instead, he said, "Do you not plan on introducing yourself?

"This is the most basic of etiquette."

The black-haired lady recalled what had happened to her and fell silent again.

After a few seconds, she said in a slightly muffled voice, "My name is Cattleya, and I have the nickname 'Admiral of Stars.'

"Mr. Fool, were you the one who saved me?"

Admiral of Stars? The Admiral of Stars, one of the seven pirate admirals, someone with a bounty of 37,000 pounds? I've saved a treasure trove, no—a person of high status… Klein shifted in his seat slightly, half surprised, half amused.

He chuckled and replied, "Wasn't that obvious?"

Admiral of Stars Cattleya immediately stood up and said, "Thank you for your assistance. If you have anything you need me to do, you can directly instruct me—as long as it is within my capabilities and doesn't violate my principles."

That's nice of you… Very seasoned and experienced… She's indeed worthy of being the well-known Admiral of Stars… Klein couldn't help but sigh.

Among his Tarot Club members, with the exception of The Hanged Man and his incarnation, The World, all of them were rather inexperienced when they first participated.

Miss Justice was one of those who vaguely understood the mysterious world, but she hadn't really stepped into it yet. The Sun was one of those who received sufficient "education," but due to the isolated environment and his relatively young age, he was very simple and honest. The Magician may have been stuck at Sequence 9 for several years, but she had always been an unaffiliated Beyonder. She didn't know much about all sorts of hidden factions, and she lacked experience. The Moon, Emlyn, comes from a Beyonder race, with a faction with a deep heritage backing him. However, due to his preference of staying home to play with dolls, he is greatly lacking in experience in certain aspects. He was very gullible as a result.

That fellow, Emlyn, is smart, but if he were to, heh heh, meet Tris, no, Demoness Trissy, he would be tricked by her into selling his dolls… Klein secretly teased the vampire which could be considered a friend in the real world.

He looked at Admiral of Stars and didn't directly respond to the matter of her repaying him for saving her life. Instead, he smiled and asked, "Are you a member of the Moses Ascetic Order?"

"Yes." Cattleya didn't believe that this was something she could hide from Mr. Fool.

Klein smiled.

"What did you just do to provoke that guy?"

He wasn't sure that the pair of eyes belonged to the Hidden Sage, so he used a vague term 'that guy' instead, so that, no matter what, The Fool was absolutely correct and upheld his standing.

After a moment of silence, Cattleya said, "No, I didn't provoke him."

She paused, then she continued, "The members of the Moses Ascetic Order believe that all objects are numeric, and we pursue knowledge itself.

"However, Emperor Roselle once said that we aren't pursuing knowledge, but that knowledge is pursuing us. The Hidden Sage is an embodiment of knowledge itself. 'He' is chasing us—every single Moses Ascetic Order member. When too much knowledge is injected into us, without us being able to quickly digest and master it, a situation like before would happen. Either I lower my defenses and open my mind to accept the modifications from the Hidden Sage, or I would tenaciously resist it or end up losing control."

If that's the case, you aren't specifically targeted by the Hidden Sage. Even if you managed to escape from the previous predicament, you wouldn't be suspected of anything… According to what you said, you are very knowledgeable… Back then, Old Neil only wanted to obtain the knowledge of human body refining and of a perfect revival… Klein suddenly sighed, but he didn't show it on his face.

The reputation of Admiral of Stars isn't too bad. She's the kind of pirate with a code of honor… Klein stopped his thoughts and calmly said, "If something similar happens again, you can recite my name."

Recite your name… Cattleya's lips quivered, instinctively wanting to refuse.

In the end, she didn't say anything as she fell silent for a long time.

After repeatedly weighing the pros and cons, she stood up, crossed her arms in front of her chest, and slightly bowed as she said, "How may I be of service?"

Klein laughed and said in an indifferent tone, "In the future, provide some assistance to my Blessed."

"By your will." Cattleya sat down again and asked cautiously, "Is the honorific name provided by Mr. Z yours?"

She then repeated the honorific name of The Fool to him.

Klein nodded his head, indicating that she was right.

Cattleya looked at the other empty seats and asked after some deliberation, "Honorable Mr. Fool, will there be others here as well?"

Klein laughed and replied, "People like yourself.

"They set up a regular gathering, and I bear witness."

After a few seconds of silence, Cattleya asked, "Can I participate?"

She thought that since she wasn't connected with the mysterious existence known as The Fool, it was better to know more than to do nothing.

Of course, you have money, knowledge, influence, and needs… Klein casually leaned against the back of the chair.

“Sure.

“Without my permission, you are not to leak this matter.”

“Alright!” Cattleya answered without hesitation.

Klein tapped his left index finger and revealed the rest of the tarot cards on the bronze table.

“They use tarot cards as their code names. These are the remaining ones.

“Pick one.”

Cattleya scanned the cards and immediately said, “The Hermit.”

Chapter 565 - Eye of Mystery Prying

◆

Inside the captain’s cabin, Cattleya slowly got up from the floor and walked in silence to the full-length mirror next to the bookcase.

In the mirror, the skin on her face was fair and smooth, without a single crack. Her ears were small and normal, showing no signs of expanding. Her deep purple eyes were calm, as if nothing had happened.

However, she could see more with her eyes that carried a sense of mystery.

Hidden beneath her skin were eye-like flesh and blood that hadn’t fully dissolved; her Soul Body, whose pain and madness were rapidly dispersing; innumerable illusory objects with ineffable forms that roamed about; sailors who were cleaning the deck several rooms away…

Everything within a range of a few dozen meters was revealed to her in an unobscured but unusually chaotic manner.

From the day she had become a Sequence 5 Constellations Master, her Mystery Pryer powers had been greatly enhanced. She could faintly see that there were thick curtains around her that resembled shadows, and behind the curtains, something seemed to be watching her and all living beings.

There are no traces of being influenced by Mr. Fool, which in turn explains many things… He, no, ‘He’ was able to directly pull my Soul Body into that mysterious space with a strange, tyrannical, and secretive power. It’s not something that a demigod scepter can compare to… Although ‘He’ was dressed in contemporary clothing, this doesn’t mean anything. For an existence at this level, it’s very easy for different people to see ‘Him’ in different forms, and ‘His’ true appearance would probably cause every person that sees him directly to lose control and die… Cattleya stared at herself in the mirror, thinking silently about what had just happened.

It was inevitable that she had some predictions about Mr. Fool’s identity, but this was only guesswork without any evidence.

The fact that ‘He’ is wearing a tailcoat doesn’t mean that ‘He’ is very young or that ‘He’ was born recently. Perhaps, ‘His’ essence is ancient, even older than the seven gods. The knowledge that is pursuing me tells me that before the Cataclysm, there were indeed older gods, and ‘He’ might be one of them, Cattleya said silently to herself before turning away from the full-length mirror and walking back to the place where she had struggled in pain. She picked up her glasses that had fallen to the side.

She put the thick glasses on her nose, hiding her deep purple eyes. Everything that didn’t appear under a normal person’s vision quickly disappeared from her sight.

Cattleya stood there, thinking again about the influence Mr. Fool and the so-called “Tarot Club” would have on her.

Unknowingly, a tall figure surfaced in her mind. The words that she would never forget had once again echoed in her ears.

“Leave. Your destiny doesn’t lie with me.”

Is this my destiny, Your Majesty? She closed her eyes.

†

In the ancient and majestic palace above the gray fog.

Klein’s fingers tapped the edge of the long, mottled table as he made all the tarot cards on the table disappear.

He was thinking about what the subsequent developments would be after the Admiral of Stars joined the Tarot Club.

If there’s no other way, and if I might really need to take a detour from a safe sea route and enter the sea that was once a battlefield of the gods, to search for singing mermaids, having The Hermit, who is fearful of The Fool, in my control is better than cooperating with Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina. Using her ship would be much safer… Yes, Mr. Hanged Man will be a backup choice.

Admiral of Stars is a Moses Ascetic Order member. She grasps plenty of knowledge and is very helpful towards the Tarot Club, but it’s a latent risk for me. Mr. Fool’s image is built on the foundation of being unfathomable… In the future, I have to be more careful. I mustn’t answer things I’m not sure of. On matters I’m unconfident about, I’d rather be vague and handle matters like a charlatan. Of course, to fully resolve this problem, I should quickly improve myself and become a High-Sequence Beyonder. My strength needs to match my level, and my standards need to match that pedestal.

With such a Sequence 5 powerhouse with many subordinates under her, the overall strength of the Tarot Club isn’t considered low.

After obtaining the Sea God Scepter, I don’t have to worry that members of the Tarot Club will be too strong, with problems easily arising.

I hope that there will come a day when this member of the Moses Ascetic Order, Admiral of Stars, will be able to play an important role in my revenge against the Hidden Sage.

Klein exhaled as he vanished from above the gray fog.

†

Backlund. Beneath Saint Samuel Cathedral.

A red-gloved Nighthawk entered the temporary office assigned to them, with a telegraph in hand.

“Captain, something happened at Enmat Harbor,” he said to Soul Assurer Soest with some excitement.

Soest touched the right side of his hair and asked, “What happened?”

“There’s a new development from The Fool, the one the Aurora Order is seeking.” The member holding the telegraph handed the piece of paper over.

His answer immediately attracted the attention of several Red Gloves who were present, including the man with black hair and green eyes who was taking an afternoon nap with his chair lifted up and his feet on the table. He had covered his face with his hat.

Soest took over the telegraph and scanned it before immediately laughing.

“Someone lied by claiming to be his Blessed in an attempt to scam others, but after chanting his name, he was smote to death on the spot by a bolt of lightning.

“There really is a hidden existence known as The Fool…”

The files relating to the Tarot ritual and The Fool had been handed over to Soest’s Red Gloves team. They were in charge of the investigations, but there were no leads, and they didn’t put much emphasis on it because they had other missions on hand.

“The Fool has powers in the lightning domain?” Leonard Mitchell removed the black hat from his face.

“Who knows? If he’s the embodiment of some old friend of ours, it’s possible to do something similar by preparing a corresponding mystical item. It’s not without precedent. This is especially so for the fake gods in the Southern Continent and the colonial islands. Holy Lord of Storms, those cheats claim that The Fool is another manifestation of the Lord of Storms. This might also be why he was smitten to death.” Soest leisurely threw the telegraph aside.

Leonard glanced at it, lowered his feet, half turned, and chuckled.

“Aren’t we going to perform some investigations?”

“How? Are you going to feign ignorance and recite his honorific name?” Soest sneered.

This has a high probability of catching the tail of The Fool, but I will basically be bidding farewell to this world. My digestion of the Nightmare potion has been going pretty well, and I just got another good item. There are still plenty of Sequences up ahead which are waiting for me. How can I enter into an eternal sleep so soon? Leonard stroked his drooping hair strands and said, “We can get a few criminals on death row to give it a try?”

“But he could just as easily not respond.” Soest shook his head.

“We can start from the two cases that involved the tarot rituals. I’m more and more convinced that it has something to do with The Fool. Firstly, The Fool is one of the Major Arcana tarot cards. Secondly, the organization that is seeking or cracking down on his Blessed is the Aurora Order. And the first case that involved the tarot ritual is the Lanevus case. As such, the Aurora Order’s attempt to allow the True Creator’s descent was foiled.” Lanevus pulled at his black vest and got up.

Soest thought about it seriously and said, “The clues from the other cases happen to have been cut off as well. For now, we have nothing else to do. You can try to investigate the two tarot ritual cases.”

“Sure.” Leonard smiled back.

This was exactly what he wanted. With a case that no one cared about being handed to him, he had won a certain amount of time to act freely.

†

At 2:50 p.m., Fors returned from the cold streets to her residence while trembling.

It wasn't that she wanted to go out in this damp, cold weather, but it was that she had run out of food at home. As for Xio, she had gone all the way to Pritz Harbor to capture a fugitive and collect the bounty. It was unknown when she would be able to return home.

She's always instinctively chasing after and capturing fugitives. It can be said that she has been acting in some way… Holding the large brown paper bag in her arms, she habitually fished for her keys to open the mailbox and take out the letters and bills.

She entered the house, put the food away, and took off her thick coat that tightly clung to her body. Fors began to look through the letters.

Suddenly, her eyes lit up. There was a letter from her teacher, Dorian Gray.

After she advanced to Trickmaster, the first thing she did was to write about it in her letter and mail it to Dorian Gray, hoping to receive her teacher's praise and subsequent guidance. However, days had passed without her receiving a reply. For a moment, she wondered if she should visit Pritz Harbor out of concern.

Fors quickly opened the envelope and began to read through it.

"…I'm sorry that I have only replied now. I previously left Pritz Harbor for some time for a relative's funeral.

"…Your talent leaves me gratified. Perhaps the stories hidden in your heart have helped you in acting. After you digest the Trickmaster potion, I'll provide you with the Sequence 7 Astrologer formula and some ingredients, as well as a gift…

"…The crux when it comes to acting as a Trickmaster lies in 'performing' and 'hoodwinking.' Hoodwinking can also be replaced with deceit. This has been verified by generations of Beyonders… You can take into consideration other pathways like Swindler and Magician. The meaning behind their names is, in some sense, similar…"

Fors heaved a sigh of relief, glanced up at the wall clock, and hurried back to her bedroom before locking the door behind her.

The weekly Tarot Gathering was beginning.

Not long after, a crimson light flooded her eyes, drowning everything.

In the ancient and mysterious palace, just as Fors was about to look at Mr. Fool, she suddenly saw a figure beside her.

That seat had always been empty!

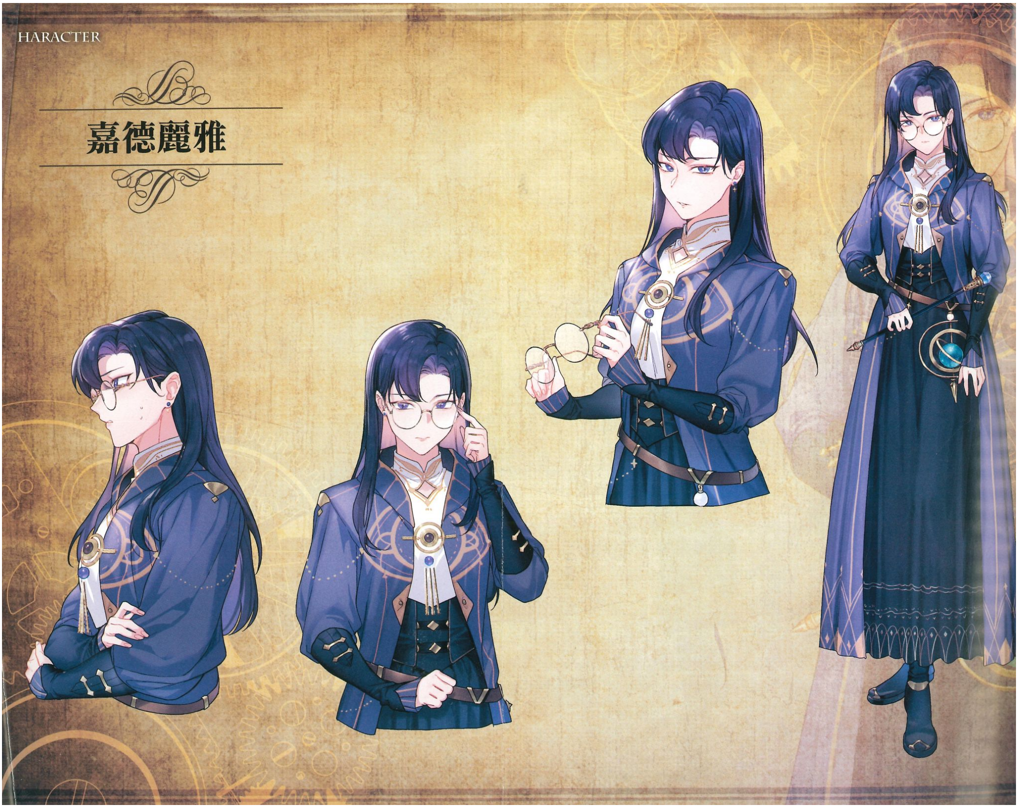
A new member? A lady? The Magician Fors moved her eyeballs slightly, pretending not to care as she half turned her body.

Another new member? And it's a lady… Miss Justice was about to get up and greet Mr. Fool when she saw an unfamiliar figure.

While feeling puzzled and expectant, she discovered a problem. The women were on one side of the table, while the men were on the other side.

This should be divided according to Mr. Fool's intentions. I wonder if there's any symbolic meaning behind it… Yes, the ladies are on the left, and the men are on the right. Being neither left or right is what defines a god like Mr. Fool. Ah, yes, there's also Mr. World… Heh heh, could it be that he's neither man or woman, or even a human? Audrey, you're thinking too much… Justice stood up and bowed, speaking with a light and brisk tone.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~”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Chapter 566 - The Details of Clothes

◆

Klein's lips curled up in a slight nod in response to Miss Justice's pleasant greeting.

He was just about to introduce The Hermit to everyone, and everyone to The Hermit when he noticed that Miss Justice didn't stop. Her gaze shifted to the other side as she greeted, "Good afternoon, Mr. Hanged Man."

This time, she didn't follow the order of the tarot cards but followed the order in which the person joined the Tarot Club.

After this round of greetings, The Hermit will essentially get to know everyone, and there's no need for The Fool to introduce her… Miss Justice is obviously doing it on purpose. She's really considerate. As long as a Beyonder of the Spectator domain gets serious, they act differently for matters like this… Klein was surprised for a moment before he praised her silently.

At the same time, Alger responded to Audrey's greeting while cautiously sizing up the new member.

Female. It's barely possible to tell that she's wearing a black gown with many patterns on it… Her hair is black and her eyes are a little purple… Alger managed to find certain traits in her blurred, distorted image.

Suddenly, his heart sank as he recalled the scene he saw a few months ago at the pirate convention.

Back then, scattered starlight had magically formed a long bridge between the huge sailboat and the palace in the depths of the island. Admiral of Stars Cattleya, who was wearing a black classical robe, had walked in midair, carrying a celestial globe and a short scepter by her waist.

And the celestial globe resembled the strange weather bottle that Alger had previously received. The latter had coincidentally shattered after he had been pulled into the gathering by Mr. Fool.

Could it be her? She looks somewhat similar based on her attire… But the Admiral of Stars wears glasses, while she doesn't… It cannot be confirmed. It'll require further observation and evidence. Unfortunately, I only saw her from afar and know little…

Regardless, I should be careful. When exchanging information, I should try my best to avoid divulging details about my actual situation… The World is Mr. Fool's Blessed; letting him know of my identity is totally different compared to the others—no, the other members…

After the matter regarding the "Sea God," Mr. Fool has recovered a considerable amount of strength. He's even able to pull in a powerhouse like a pirate admiral?

Thoughts flashed through Alger's mind as he slightly fidgeted in his seat.

Mr. Hanged Man's body language tells me that he is alert and guarded… Does he know the female newcomer, or has he guessed something? How intriguing… Audrey's gaze swept across without leaving a trace and landed on Derrick.

At this moment, Cattleya was also carefully and seriously examining the members of the Tarot Club in the order they were greeted in.

The mysterious purple color in her eyes slowly flowed in an indiscernible fashion. Although she couldn't truly see through the blurry concealment of the fog, she could still make out the details of their clothing.

The Hanged Man, a man in his prime, in his thirties, and has messy hair like seaweed with a rare deep blue color. This is a common mutation seen in the Sailor pathway… He's wearing a robe with the patterns of storms and waves… Someone from the Church of Storms? Cattleya's pupils contracted. She didn't show any abnormalities as she continued to observe the rest of the members.

The Sun, a young male, perhaps still underage. His attire is rare and has a simple ancient sense of beauty. It's very tight, making it suitable for combat. Is he a Beyonder in this aspect?

The World, neither an old man nor a young man. He has a gloomy temperament and wears a hooded robe. Eh, he has a feeling as though he's not a living person. Is this something similar to Senor or Steel Maveti? Or some other Sequence I'm unaware of…

The Magician, a young woman, wears a common Loen-styled dress. Apart from having a trait of languidness, she doesn't have any other characteristics. This kind of person is the easiest to ignore, so she needs to have more attention paid to her.

The Moon, a young man. He sits very casually. Black hair, red eyes, and wears an Earth Mother priest robe… There seems to be only one possibility for such a combination—a vampire…

As expected, the members of Mr. Fool's Tarot Club aren't that simple. Just a preliminary judgment involves two Churches… Cattleya withdrew her gaze and met Audrey's gaze.

Sensing the other party's intention to ask, she nodded lightly.

"The Hermit."

Cattleya had spoken in ancient Feysac, deliberately avoiding the more familiar languages of Intis and Loen, as she had done so back when she was communicating with Mr. Fool.

And she had noticed one thing. Mr. Fool had previously told her that the time the gathering was being held was at 3 p.m. on Monday, Backlund time.

Does this mean that the members of this gathering are currently predominantly made up of people from Loen? Cattleya made her own judgment.

“Justice.” Audrey smiled faintly in return. “Good afternoon, Ma’am Hermit.”

She had noticed what The Hermit had been up to and had summarized the person’s traits in her heart.

She’s a very cautious woman who has rich experience in the Beyonder world. She’s quiet but not introverted, and she’s very confident in her observation skills or certain abilities related to her eyes. Furthermore, her clothing style and the short scepter hanging at her waist indicates that her Sequence pathway leans towards mystery. This requires confirmation. Perhaps it’s just a hobby.

At the same time, Cattleya also managed to clearly make out Miss Justice’s clothing.

She wears two hanging earrings, and the earrings are small and exquisite, inlaid with very high quality emeralds which accentuate her emerald-green eyes. They’re obviously worth a lot…

The necklace around her neck looks unique. It’s lined with diamonds that are quite difficult to count, but it’s nothing ostentatious…

Her milky-white dress is simple yet beautiful. It’s tailored to be elegant and befitting of her status, like the work of a stylish designer…

As she went through the details, Cattleya couldn’t help but close her eyes.

A 17-18-year-old girl… Very rich… The way she moves and her etiquette makes her highly suspect to be a noble with high status, a Loen noble? Cattleya didn't know why she sighed in her heart.

After a round of greetings from Audrey, there was no need for Klein to introduce the original members of the Tarot Club to The Hermit or The Hermit to the rest.

Just as she sat down, Audrey once again turned to the very end of the long bronze table.

"Mr. Fool, I'm out of town and have only managed to find one page of Roselle's diary."

At the last gathering, she had provided two pages, so she was two pages short of paying off the debt. However, with her being in the manor, even if she often went to the city, all she managed was to collect one diary page.

In addition, due to the addition of the new member, Hermit, she was careful not to mention the Psychology Alchemists. She didn't mention Backlund or East Chester County at all.

Roselle's diary… Diary!? Cattleya almost lost control and couldn't help quickly turning her head to look at Miss Justice, who sat on the same side as her.

She clearly remembered that the tall and beautiful figure had once sighed.

"It's not a notebook. It's his diary. However, other than him, no one else would be able to understand it."

The members of the Tarot Club know that Roselle's notebook is a diary? Mr. Fool is collecting Roselle's diary? Is "He" trying to crack it to find the secret hidden in that part of history? This is more like a revived ancient god… All sorts of confused and shocked thoughts surfaced in Cattleya's mind.

She maintained her staidness, just turning her head in a normal fashion to observe the first "transaction."

After experiencing many things and trudging her way towards becoming one of the seven great pirate admirals, she understood that the most important thing for her to do after joining the Tarot Club was to listen more and speak less!

"Mr. Fool, I received three pages," Fors said with a smile.

They had been mailed by Dorian Gray.

At last week's gathering, as she hadn't received her teacher's response, and due to the cold weather, she hadn't attended any Beyonder gatherings, so she couldn't provide a single page.

Derrick followed immediately, "Mr. Fool, I've copied a new legend of the ancient gods."

Tsk, he's always using the legends of ancient gods as a perfunctory payment… Emlyn glanced contemptuously at The Sun.

Suddenly, he thought of something. Although The Sun claimed that the one they worshiped was the Lord that created everything, he had never tried to cover up the influence that Giant King, Aurmir, had on them. However, he had never mentioned that Giant Queen Omebella was who the Kingdom of Silver originally believed in.

Could it be that the City of Silver isn't equal to the "Kingdom of Silver"? I'll wait a minute and try it out… Emlyn had never been able to get over The Sun's earlier slandering of the Sanguine.

Four pages of Roselle's diary, a legend of the ancient gods; that's pretty good… I wonder if it contains information about the high elf, Cohinem… Alas, after Mr. Hanged Man learned that The World is a Blessed, I cannot make The World ask questions without any qualms… Klein thought quickly and said with a chuckle, "Very good."

He helped Miss Justice, Miss Magician, and Little Sun conjure their respective content, which flashed into the palm of his hand as he casually browsed through them.

Mr. Fool doesn't seem to be deciphering it… "He" can read Emperor Roselle's diary? Wh-what's "His" background? What is "His" true identity? A sense of indescribable terror and dread suddenly welled up in Cattleya's heart.

She quickly retracted her gaze and looked at the long bronze table, as if she was memorizing the simple patterns on the table's surface.

The reaction The Hermit showed when realizing that Mr. Fool is able to read Roselle's diary exceeded my imagination. Is she concerned with this matter, or is it somehow related to her? Audrey pursed her lips thoughtfully.

Although the other party hid it quickly and naturally, this was still obvious enough for a Sequence 7 from the Spectator pathway.

Klein sensed the abnormality of the new member, The Hermit, because he also wanted to see how this member of the Moses Ascetic Order, who had a great deal of knowledge, would react to it. The result left him surprised.

Isn't that a little too intense? Klein didn't have the luxury of time to think about it as his gaze fell to the first page of Roselle's diary.

Chapter 567 - Source of the Matter

◆

“9th April. I just returned from Countess Wawrinka’s masquerade party when I suddenly felt an emptiness in my heart.

“One woman, one woman, one woman after another. The monotonous and mechanical movements, the indistinguishable smell of perfume, and the warmth from the entanglement of their limbs; all these in exchange for a few seconds of pleasure, followed by endless boredom, disgust, emptiness, and numbness.

“What pleasure is there in such a life? Is the meaning of life to just do this every single day?

“I can’t go on like this. I have to get out of this sorry state.

“Also, I need to remind myself that I shouldn’t habitually write Arabic numerals.”

…Emperor, there are actually times when you reflect on yourself and act like a hipster? This doesn’t fit with my image of you! Klein almost pricked his brows up.

He looked down at the second entry of the diary.

“11th April, Countess Wawrinka invited me to a private salon, and she told me that Ma’am Julia would be there, too.

“Ha, will this conservative blonde girl who hails from Loen because of her marriage participate as well?

“I really look forward to it!

“I’ve been imagining her in bed for a long time. I hope her husband, Viscount Dellien, doesn’t mine.”

Emperor, have you forgotten what you wrote a few days ago in your diary. Tsk, how nice, isn’t it? Also, you have a typo. Mind! Klein couldn’t help but lampoon.

“14th April. I’ve been attending too many events recently, and the flesh is weak even though the spirit is willing…

“But that’s nothing!

“Although I’m still young, I should be careful about the risk of retrograding. Temperance! Temperance!

“The Archaeologist Sequence has improved my physique and effectively enhanced a certain degree of my powers. However, this isn’t its area of expertise, but just something that comes with it.

“As I continue raising my Sequence, the changes from the previous potions will also intensify. This is my motivation.

“Apparently, Apothecaries can concoct medicine that lack side effects. Perhaps, I should ask a few of them.

“Also, I really have to control myself. Unrestrained behavior will only lead to continuous increases in the threshold, and the degree of satisfaction wouldn’t be like how it would normally be.

“After calming down and thinking about it carefully, there are many things that can be done. Humans are always like this, bound by desire, unable to see what’s of value. Why did I transmigrate over here? What secrets lie hidden in the cosmos above my head? Where did the original consciousness come from, and if self-cognition purely comes from one’s consciousness, then who was I before I had the identity of Huang Tao? Who does the essential part belong to…”

Emperor, are you describing to me what it means to be a pervert and philosopher before and after the deed? Hehe, so you do have worries about such matters. I thought you were already fixed in certain traits… Thankfully, you didn't teach Chinese to your children. Yes, you likely didn't teach them. Otherwise, what would they think after seeing such content? Zaratul prophesied that your eldest daughter, Bernadette, would be at odds with you and betray you. It's not without reason… Of course, not teaching them is more of a form of protection… Klein was successfully amused by Roselle's diary entries, but he didn't show it on his face.

To him, the diary of Emperor Roselle was both a book of knowledge and a collection of jokes.

With this thought, Klein turned to the next page of the diary.

“2nd October, Zaratul came to visit me again.

“Now that I've become a demigod, he wishes that I can honor a promise. He wishes to steal that dangerous Sealed Artifact from the Church.

“That is a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, the Antigonus family's notebook from the Fourth Epoch!”

At this point, Klein's pupils contracted uncontrollably.

This was likely the notebook that the Secret Order lost later on.

This was likely the notebook that led to Klein Moretti's death and how he, Zhou Mingrui, had used Klein Moretti's corpse to successfully awaken in this world!

This was the source of everything!

It turns out that it didn't fall into the hands of the Secret Order from the very beginning. Instead, it was sealed within the Church of the God of Craftsmanship which later turned into the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. Zaratul successfully obtained it through Emperor

Roselle.

Right, the Secret Order member inside Creeping Hunger was very fearful of Zaratul. He believed that Zaratul is an undying and abnormal monster. Does this mean that Zaratul gained benefits through the notebook, but an accident happened? He turned from a person who could communicate normally with Roselle into a monster. Therefore, this eventually led to the loss of the Antigonus family's notebook?

Of course, it cannot be ruled out that Zaratul deliberately allowed it to be lost…

Yes… As Zaratul became a monster, the Secret Order lost all the mermaids, causing subsequent Faceless Beyonders to risk their lives out at sea? Rosago succeeded because he attempted to enter that sea which is a ruin of a battle between gods?

All of these thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, causing his heart to feel abnormally heavy.

He didn't assume that the Antigonus notebook that he had encountered was closely related to Roselle, because the theory he always had had stemmed from the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics, and that some of the details that followed were in line with similar logic.

Are they all involved with the upper echelons of the Seer pathway? Klein glanced over the palace and took in the endless gray fog.

Could it be the cause? he asked himself this question once more from the bottom of his heart.

Steadying his emotions, Klein went on to read the subsequent diary pages.

"Heh, I'll have to do it depending on the situation. If it's easy to steal and there's no risk of exposure, I'll try to do it. Otherwise, I'll pretend as though none of this ever happened.

"It doesn't matter even if Zaratul were to expose me. With my present identity, status, Sequence, and influence, as long as I'm willing to repent, the Church won't do anything to me."

The other two diary pages recorded Roselle's train of thought towards constructing his plans to steal the notebook, but none of them seemed likely to succeed. However, Klein knew that Roselle eventually obtained the notebook and handed it over to the head of the Secret Order, Zaratul.

After a moment's thought, Klein turned the page.

"10th December. I once again attended that ancient and secret gathering.

"At the gathering, I discovered that they were unanimous in being extremely hostile to the Solomon Empire of the Fourth Epoch.

"I raised the question which Mr. Hermes quickly answered. In the Fourth Epoch, the ally and supporter of the Solomon Empire was the True Creator.

"This is very real.

"I resisted the urge to ask what exactly our organization had done in the history of the Fourth Epoch, but as I left the palace and returned from my dreams, I found that Mr. Hermes's route this time coincided with mine to a certain extent.

"This ancient man who lived since the Cataclysm definitely knew more. I build up a rapport with him and earnestly asked him the question—is that why the organization hates the True Creator? Is it solely because 'He' had used the Creator's holy name in 'His' name?

"Mr. Hermes chuckled and said that they weren't such superficial creatures.

"He asked me in return if I knew what the actual abilities of the

Shepherd were.

"'Of course' was my answer.

"He asked again in a profoundly meaningful manner, 'Who do you think would be most likely to develop in the direction of being omnipotent and omniscient among all the present gods?'

"This… The first thought that came to me was the Shepherd pathway which could engage in Devouring and Grazing, so as to control the souls and characteristics of other Beyonders.

"So that's the reason…"

This page only had this diary entry, but it contains a lot of information… The Solomon Empire originally came under the True Creator's camp… Yes, in the Tudor family's underground ruins, there are humanoid statues of the six true gods. Although it isn't certain whether they were worshiping or desecrating the gods, one thing is certain. The six gods were involved in the affairs of the three empires, and they later had a close relationship with the Trunsoest dynasty… Did the three great empires represent three different camps of gods? Klein tried to use his "archaeological" discovery and historical knowledge to decipher the hidden truth of the previous epoch, but he was still shrouded in fog.

Towards Hermes, the oldest master of mysticism, Klein's answer came close to Roselle's.

As a Beyonder's Sequence was raised, the saints and angels of the Shepherd pathway were able to engage in the Grazing of more souls, gaining more and more Beyonder powers. In the end, if the True Creator had finished Grazing the other twenty-one Beyonder pathways, he would be, to some extent, the omnipotent and omniscient Creator.

There are still a lot of secrets hidden in the Sequence pathways… Klein turned to the fourth page.

This diary page recorded the actions Roselle took after he consumed the Savant potion. He read a lot, studied a lot, tamped down on his foundation very firmly, and increased the scope and depth of his knowledge to a whole new level.

In this period of time, he had almost no entertainment. Learning was his greatest form of entertainment.

In one of the diary entries, he wrote: "… When a person knows with certainty how much he will gain after putting in the effort, and is able to directly tell how much he gains, then he will certainly work as hard as I am now."

Isn't this the fundamental attraction of many games? Klein turned over the last diary page and read the legend of the ancient gods provided by Little Sun.

During the entire process, the majestic palace was completely silent. Be it Justice or The Moon, they were both considering what to trade and communicate later on.

It was the first time that The Hermit Cattleya had encountered such a situation, but she didn't feel uneasy or uncomfortable at all. Instead, she carefully analyzed the information that the scene revealed.

This isn't the first time this is happening… Mr. Fool has the habit of reading Roselle's diary at the Tarot Gathering… The members will proactively or passively search for the pages for "Him." However, it can't be confirmed if there were any advance payments…

"He" really can read Roselle's diary… He's searching for secrets that have sunken in the river of history?

Just now, that Sun mentioned that the information he handed in was about legends of ancient gods… This is roughly in line with my previous speculations…

At this point in time, Klein had roughly finished reading the new piece of information regarding ancient gods.

In the Second Epoch, in those dark years, every ancient god had a “god” attached to them, just like the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt and “His” child, the Dragon of Nightmare, Alzuhod.

Chapter 568 - Subsidiary “Gods”

◆

In the information provided by The Sun, there were detailed examples of some typical subsidiary gods, but most of the information didn’t provide their true names, only their titles. These included the Goddess of Beauty and the Goddess of Life who were subsidiaries to Vampire Ancestor, Lilith; the Goddess of Misfortune and the God of the Dead who were subsidiaries to Annihilation Demonic Wolf, Flegrea; the God of Luck and the Queen of Calamity who were subsidiaries to Elf King, Soniathrym, and so on and so forth.

Queen of Calamity… Klein suddenly thought of the Book of Calamity and the golden wine cup he had taken from the ruins of the high elf. The name Cohinem and the word “Calamity” was engraved on it in Elvish.

This caused him to make the connection that Cohinem was the Elf King’s subsidiary—Queen of Calamity!

Unfortunately, I can’t directly seek confirmation with Little Sun. I’ll have to wait for further information from him… Klein sighed silently.

At the same time, he made some theories about the fact that these titles didn’t correspond with their true names.

The City of Silver was originally the Kingdom of Silver that came under the Giant King’s Court’s rule. Other than having sufficient understanding of its own forces and enemies, the information regarding the other ancient gods will only come from legends and rumors, and they aren’t that detailed. Compared to the simple and easy to understand titles, a god's true name can consist of complicated and difficult words to remember which can make it harder for them to be spread.

The information provided to Klein when he turned over the page confirmed his theory. However, it gave him new doubts.

The dragons also had a Dragon of Wisdom which was the equivalent of a god in the City of Silver, called Herabergen, and under Giant King Aurmir, there was also "His" eldest son, the God of Dawn, Badheil, and "His" queen, the Goddess of Harvest.

Why doesn't the Goddess of Harvest have a real name? Isn't "She" the queen of the Giant King's Court? The City of Silver should have records of it… These so-called subsidiary gods are equal to the angels or King of Angels of later times? Yes, the Sequence 2 of their pathway, and Sequence 1's of the other pathways? Klein suppressed his perplexion and inferred the truth from the information recorded in the Card of Blasphemy—within the same pathway, if there was a Sequence 0, then there wouldn't be a Sequence 1, and if there was no Sequence 0, then there would be at most three Sequence 1's.

However, Klein didn't dare to base his judgment on this. After all, his knowledge was partial, and he didn't even know if there were any preconditions for the Sequence 0 and Sequence 1, which was derived from the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility.

I'll assume this for the time being… Klein leaned back, letting the information in his hands disappear, smiling as he said, "You may begin."

At this point, Alger was still seriously examining himself.

After considering how to communicate properly, he used the technique of being in the other person's shoes. He started from the point of view of The Hermit, who was suspected of being Admiral of Stars, to see what exactly he had exposed.

Mr. Fool's protects every member's true identity with a blurred and distorted image, but this method doesn't affect the representation of colors. Dark brown colors can be difficult to distinguish, but bright colors are easily grasped. At the very least, I can tell that Miss Justice is blonde with bright green eyes…

And for me, the most obvious thing I can't hide is my dark blue hair. But this doesn't say anything. It's not a problem to say that dark blue hair is a common mutation in Beyonders within the Sailor pathway, but the converse isn't true. This is because such traits are hereditary. On Sonia Island and in the Berserk Sea around Desi Bay, they were places where elves originally gathered. Many humans with traces of elven blood will also have dark blue hair. Heh, it's the same for districts where there are a certain number of Church of Storms Beyonders…

Ignoring any other trait, it's difficult for The Hermit to determine any further information based on the situation.

Just as Alger heaved a sigh of relief, he caught sight of the Storm robe he was wearing.

After returning to the Blue Avenger, not only was he the captain of the ship, but he was also the bishop of the sailors. He often needed to wear the corresponding clothes to celebrate Mass.

If he didn't show his devotion in his daily actions, there might come a day when he would be reported by his subordinates.

The Church of Storms has always been wary of those members who had been drifting out at sea for a long time, as prolonged acting as pirates might one day turn them into real pirates. In any case, the Lord of Storms has never given a revelation to exclude pirates from "His" followers.

Under the cover of that blurred distortion, it's hard to see the details of one's clothing clearly. This isn't a problem… However, I still have to pay attention in the future. During Tarot Gatherings, I should change into a set of ordinary clothes… Although I can't be sure, I still have to treat her as a pirate admiral. I can't afford to be careless… Alger thought cautiously.

At this moment, he heard the seemingly suppressed voice of The Moon Emlyn, which was a result of him being unable to hide his emotions.

"Mr. Hanged Man, I've done the preparations. When can you obtain the inheritance of that Sanguine baron? You mentioned before that it's in the hands of some powerful pirate?"

You didn't have to say the last sentence… Alger's body instantly stiffened.

Powerful pirate… The Hermit's eyes swept over The Hanged Man once again.

Alger's expression didn't change as he turned his head to The Moon and asked, "Have you obtained the funds?"

"Of course!" Emlyn raised his neck.

He originally wanted to wait until the three-month maturity was up before he went to the bank to withdraw the money, but he soon discovered that he was in a completely different mood after deciding to buy the Sanguine baron's inheritance.

He no longer had any qualms or hesitation. He was filled with expectation and desire, wishing that he could get his hands on it immediately. It was just like how he felt in the past when he was about to buy a beloved doll!

He had held back for more than a week before finally giving up by selling the acceptance draft. Although he had lost some money, it was still acceptable.

In many situations, an acceptance draft could be used as a currency.

“I’ll get it for you within the week. Finally, let’s confirm the price: 4,500 pounds. Is that alright?” Seeing that a deal was about to be struck, Alger didn’t pursue The Moon’s act of exposing him.

Emlyn thought about the dolls in his room, cleared his throat, and said with his eyes furtively darting around.

“Can it be cheaper?”

“It’s not up to me to decide, but I can try to acquire it for you at a lower price. Also, don’t forget my commission. Let’s lower it. How about 300 pounds?” Alger’s tone didn’t change at all.

“Alright.” Emlyn exhaled quietly.

Not a very powerful vampire, an underaged or a recently matured one… Cattleya silently watched from the sidelines and made her judgment.

Seeing that the deal between Mr. Hanged Man and Mr. Moon had been concluded in a few sentences, Audrey habitually felt that she should buy something.

In a week or two, I’ll contact the members of the Psychology Alchemists in East Chester County and tell them that I’ve become a Psychology Alchemists member. I’ll exchange my contribution points for the subsequent potion formula. There’s no need to make a request to purchase it here for the time being… Once I find out what ingredients are needed, I can ask for everyone’s help… There’s no need to buy any mystical items for now. I’ve already had one of them reimbursed… Being able to obtain such rare items with too great a frequency might imply many problems… Audrey’s thoughts raced, and she came up with an idea.

She turned halfway and looked at the gloomy man at the end of the table.

“Mr. World, you mentioned that you have clues to the characteristic left behind by a Psychiatrist. Have you successfully acquired it?”

I plan on buying it for Susie… she silently added in her heart.

In fact, when she was considering this matter, she had another slightly mischievous idea, which was to find an excuse for Mr. Fool to turn over the Black Emperor card which sat beside him.

From her point of view, Ma’am Hermit was particularly affected by the matter regarding Roselle’s diary. And from how her reaction was extraordinarily excessive before she quickly hid it, it was quite possible that she knew about the Cards of Blasphemy; therefore, the moment she saw it, she would expose a lot of problems and express the truest thoughts in her heart.

But she dismissed the idea in the end, not because she thought it would be bad to sound out Ma’am Hermit, but that this was a way of showing responsibility to both herself and the Tarot Club, and that she shouldn’t make decisions for Mr. Fool.

If “He” wanted Ma’am Hermit to recognize the Card of Blasphemy, “He” definitely would’ve flipped it open himself. If “He” didn’t want to do so, then any attempts would be against his will… Audrey nodded solemnly but almost imperceptibly.

At this moment, The World replied hoarsely, “If you’re certain that you want it, then I will give it to you as soon as possible.

“The price is 1,800 pounds.”

Normally, it would be more appropriate to charge 1,200 to 1,500 pounds for a Psychiatrist’s Beyonder characteristic, but Klein had raised the premium slightly to see how much Miss Justice could pay.

“Alright,” Audrey agreed with a light tone.

She had paid off the money owed to Viscount Glaint. She had received many gifts for having reached adulthood after returning to her family's fief. It was a time when her finances were in a rather good condition. She had even arranged for the money to be returned to Mr. Fool's Blessed next month.

In the future, her monthly income would be above 3,000 pounds, and a substantial portion of her normal expenses wasn't going to be borne by her, due to the love of her parents and the results of her previous meritorious exploits.

While the two were discussing, The Hanged Man was somewhat surprised. The World had just sold the Faceless Beyonder characteristic the previous time, and he had recently acquired Steel Maveti's Beyonder characteristic. Yet, he appeared to have a Psychiatrist characteristic in his collection, and all of this happened in less than a month!

On second thought, Alger quickly came to an understanding.

The World represented a group of Blessed of Mr. Fool. That might be the harvest from the other Blessed!

As he imagined this, The World, who was Klein, was in a state of shock towards Miss Justice's opulence.

He had thought that Miss Justice, who had just spent 5,500 pounds on a mystical item, wouldn't be as well-off as before. It was just like last year, so he had reserved space for her to haggle. Who knew that she would still agree to the deal without hesitation.

Has she dug up a gold mine? Klein couldn't help but silently lampoon.

Seeing that they had finished their discussion, Derrick hurriedly raised his hand, having learned from Miss Justice.

"Which one of you has the fruit of the Radiance Spirit Pact Tree?"

He had rather successfully collected the other ingredients of the Solar High Priest potion.

Just as Cattleya had initially figured out that Miss Justice was a yet-to-advance Psychiatrist, she heard this request. After a few seconds of silence, she said, “I do.

“What can you provide in exchange?”

After observing for a long time, she decided to intervene in a small transaction to gain a deeper understanding of how the Tarot Club operated.

“Uh… I can use the history of the City of Silver or the history of dragons, elves, and other dark creatures to barter,” Derrick said sincerely. “Ma’am Hermit, this is a list of commonly seen monsters around the City of Silver. You can choose any ingredients you need from it.”

How honest… Klein almost looked up at the dome of the magnificent palace.

What is he talking about… Cattleya frowned slightly, momentarily failing to understand a single word from The Sun.

Chapter 569 - A Straw Will Show Which Way the Wind Blows

◆

After a brief moment of consideration, The Hermit Cattleya made the choice that benefited her the most. She said without betraying her emotions, “I’ll make a decision after seeing what the commonly seen monsters are around the City of Silver.”

Another person who gains something without risking anything of her own… Are the people who spend too much time at sea good at fleecing others? Or is Little Sun in such a state that makes it impossible to resist fleecing him… Klein instinctively excluded himself from the group of seafarers.

“Alright.” Under Justice and company’s scrutiny, Derrick didn’t hesitate to agree to Ma’am Hermit’s request.

He recalled the content and conjured it, recording the most commonly seen monsters around the City of Silver into a list. However, it wasn’t as detailed as before, and there were quite a few missing. After all, the Sun pathway’s improvement in regards to his memory was rather limited. A few days had passed.

Cattleya received the piece of information and read through it in a serious manner.

The more she scanned through it, the more alarmed she became. This was because the types of monsters had far exceeded her expectations by nearly a hundred times!

Most of the names used were ancient names. If not for her being a Moses Ascetic Order member who had been pursued by knowledge, and having reached Sequence 5, making her experienced and knowledgeable, there was no way she could've known what these names would really be referring to.

But even so, there were still a few monsters she had never heard of. They were like shadows who would never reveal themselves in dreams or imaginations, forever lurking in the depths of the darkness.

Where exactly is the City of Silver? Why are there so many monsters? Ten seconds later, Cattleya raised her head without a change in expression. She said with a staid tone, "Use the history of your City of Silver in exchange."

"Alright." Derrick's eyes lit up as he seemed to see hope in advancing.

He soon conjured the historical materials of the City of Silver with the help of Mr. Fool. Having had ample experience, he knew that even more complete and detailed information was worth more than the fruit of a Radiance Spirit Pact Tree; hence, he retained some of what he knew.

Cattleya knew that she wasn't Mr. Fool, so it was impossible for her to let the members patiently wait for her to finish reading. Therefore, she casually flipped through it. After confirming its value, she deliberated and asked, "How should I hand over the fruit of the Radiance Spirit Pact Tree to you?"

Just as she said that, she suddenly thought of something. With a guess, she looked to the end of the long bronze table.

"Mr. Fool, is it done by a sacrificial ritual?"

This left Audrey, who had prepared the answer, to be clearly stunned. She swallowed the words that she was about to say.

Ma'am Hermit is very impressive and knowledgeable. She directly guessed that it's done via a sacrificial and bestowment ritual! Audrey controlled her minute facial expressions as she clicked her tongue and sighed inwardly.

"Yes." Klein gently nodded without going into detail.

He believed that it was impossible for a pirate admiral, a Sequence 5 powerhouse of the Mystery Pryer pathway, to not know how a sacrifice was made. This was even something they were good at. Furthermore, she knew The Fool's honorific name, so she didn't lack any of the necessary conditions.

Indeed, with a godlike existence bearing witness to a gathering, a sacrificial and bestowment method is the safest and most convenient way of trading… And a conversation through the Soul Body can result in direct knowledge transfer… Cattleya thanked him before saying to The Sun, "I'll do it as soon as possible."

Although she didn't show any abnormalities, her heart was in no way calm. From her casual flipping of the information provided by The Sun, she discovered that the City of Silver was truly filled with oddities.

It included matters about being forsaken by the Lord, how it didn't have a sun, resulting in a state of eternal darkness and high- and low-frequency lightning. Matters like how strange and terrifying monsters hid in the darkness when there was no light, and how they survived thanks to Black-Faced Grass. It mentioned that they had survived for more than two thousand years since the Dark Ages. All of this exceeded Cattleya's expectations.

As a powerhouse at sea who was knowledgeable and had acquired many secrets, she instantly connected the time and descriptions to a famous concept in history—the Cataclysm!

Following that, she followed this line of thought and made a further inference.

The Forsaken Land of God!

Suddenly, the figure she looked up to surfaced in Cattleya's mind once again. A sentence filled with an emotive sigh surfaced.

"He had always been searching for the Forsaken Land of God back when he was alive. He said that the ultimate answer towards everything is hidden there."

The Sun comes from the Forsaken Land of God which Emperor Roselle couldn't find despite all his efforts? Mr. Fool can connect to that place directly? No, perhaps, "He" awoke from that place… Cattleya thought in alarm and solemnity.

She had previously belittled the Tarot Club because The Moon, Justice, and The Sun were of low Sequences. She believed that with Mr. Fool having awoken only recently, he was obviously unable to pull members of significant strength. However, she now had to reevaluate matters.

It involves the Forsaken Land of God, the Church of Storms, the Church of Earth Mother, the Loen aristocrats… Perhaps, it's precisely because they're low Sequences that these members can be nurtured to be able to reach higher ranks in their respective circles without being suspected. This will allow them to play a more important role… As for me, is it because of the Moses Ascetic Order or Her Majesty? Cattleya seriously analyzed the motives of Mr. Fool.

At this moment, the transactions were nearly coming to an end. The Moon, The Sun, and Justice had all confirmed their respective transactions. As for The Hermit Cattleya, she was still observing. Out of caution, she didn't rashly open her mouth to expose more information about herself.

Alger had originally planned on making a request to buy the Sequence 5 Ocean Songster's potion formula so that he could make the subsequent preparations, but with the addition of The Hermit, he became especially wary. He gave up on his decision at the last minute and prepared to push it back until he had really advanced to Wind-blessed. Only with him being stronger would he have the room to breathe.

As Fors would be able to obtain the Astrologer potion formula and a certain amount of ingredients from her teacher soon, she hadn't prioritized her purchases yet, so all she did was watch silently.

She actually curbed her desire to buy a mystical item to make up for her relatively showy Trickmaster powers that were lacking in strength, as well as how her Apprentice powers were only good for passing through walls and opening doors. However, her real life circumstances restricted her desires.

Up to this day, her savings had exceeded 400 pounds. For a member of the middle-class, that was rather good, but she clearly remembered how Miss Justice had bought a mystical item for 5,500 pounds previously.

Even if it was a relatively average mystical item without significant negative side effects, it will still require one to two thousand pounds… Fors languidly sat there, unable to open her mouth to make a purchase.

Klein controlled The World to scan his surroundings before hoarsely saying, "I need a pair of eyes from a six-winged gargoyle."

The supplementary ingredients of a Marionettist—drago bark and the spring water from Sonia Island's Golden Spring—were commonly seen items in the mysterious world. As long as he purchased them at different occasions, he wouldn't garner suspicion from anyone. Therefore, Klein only requested for the eyes of a six-winged gargoyle.

The Hermit glanced at The World and said without rushing, "300 pounds, or the equivalent cost in gold coins."

She had noticed that the previous transactions were all made in Loen's gold pound.

As expected of the Admiral of Stars who has a pirate crew with an ancient faction backing her. She is very resourceful, and her prices are cheaper than usual… If not for Little Sun's imminent advancement, and how he would soon obtain the method for removing the mental corruption of a Beyonder characteristic, I would've even consulted her on this problem… Klein thought as he made The World smiled deeply.

"Okay."

With the transaction completed, the palace that resembled a giant's residence fell silent for more than ten seconds.

Without Mr. Fool's reminder, Justice, The Sun, and company knew that they had entered the free exchange segment.

The Hanged Man Alger deliberately looked at Miss Justice and Miss Magician without looking at Ma'am Hermit.

"Something major recently happened in the Rorsted Archipelago."

He didn't plan on divulging The World's involvement since it was very likely that Mr. Fool was in possession of the Sea God's identity. If he were to rashly confirm this matter, it might spoil Mr. Fool's plans and throw himself into danger.

He planned on using a normal tone to mention the happenings on the surface while emphasizing the Moses Ascetic Order member—archaeologist and adventurer, Leticia. He planned on using this to sound out The Hermit to figure out if she was Admiral of Stars, Cattleya. This was because this pirate admiral was rumored to also be a member of the Moses Ascetic Order.

"What happened?" Justice asked with piqued interest.

Alger said calmly, "A disguised archaeologist, Leticia, discovered an ancient elven ruin in Symeem Island and took out an item from it. This pushed the deity the locals believed in, Sea God Kalvetua, to be on the brink of collapse.

"This fake god wished to create tsunamis to drown the island so that everyone could accompany it in its death, but it was stopped by the

Church of Storms's Sea King.

"Finally, Leticia was found and Kalvetua had died. The threat of the tsunamis was leveled, but strangely, the devout believers of the Sea God would still occasionally receive responses."

Leticia is dead? For an ancient elven ruin… Cattleya had heard of this archaeologist, who was part of the same organization, before, but she wasn't too familiar with her. This was because formal members of the Moses Ascetic Order had to spend a certain amount of time in silent ascetic training. When fully paying attention, she was able to control her powers in a way that significantly exceeded the average person. Therefore, she only seemed slightly stirred as she listened seriously to The Hanged Man's description without showing any obvious abnormalities.

When The Hanged Man said that Kalvetua was dead and how the "Sea God" still responded to its believers, Cattleya first frowned in puzzlement before using her spiritual intuition to recall a certain scene.

Yesterday, she had seen Mr. Fool hold a milky-white scepter when "He" pulled her above the gray fog.

At the tip of the scepter were many tiny blue "gems" which were swirling with countless points of holy light.

And more importantly, it emanated an aura of godhood, one that seemed like the corporeal aura of the ocean and storm!

This… Cattleya instinctively turned her head to the end of the long bronze table, where Mr. Fool was shrouded in the grayish-white fog.

Chapter 570 - Not Admitting or Denying

◆

Eh, why is she looking at Mr. Fool… Audrey sharply noticed The Hermit's subtle motion. This left her somewhat suspicious.

From her point of view, this was an atypical response. Mr. Hanged Man was clearly mentioning something that had little to do with everyone. He was talking about the so-called Sea God Kalvetua's ability to occasionally reply to its believers despite its apparent death, so why would Ma'am Hermit look towards Mr. Fool?

Kalvetua's death… Occasionally replying to its believers… Ma'am Hermit is looking at Mr. Fool… Could it be… Audrey's eyes lit up as she came to a conclusion.

Could it be that Mr. Fool is the one replying to Kalvetua's believers?

Ma'am Hermit knows about this, so?

As thoughts whizzed through her mind, Audrey had turned her body halfway to look expectantly at Mr. Fool, who was seated leisurely at the end of the long bronze table.

Meanwhile, Alger was also surprised and alarmed about The Hermit's unexpected reaction.

I was only trying to sound her out about what connection she has with the Moses Ascetic Order member, Leticia. Why would she suddenly turn to look at Mr. Fool?

Could it be that she knows that the current "Sea God" is a manifestation of Mr. Fool?

Her reaction implies this is highly likely!

Before she was recruited into the Tarot Club, did she have a lot of secret exchanges with Mr. Fool, and was already secretly working for him?

The more Alger thought, the more he paid attention to The Hermit. Then, he subconsciously joined her in looking towards Mr. Fool, who was shrouded in the grayish-white fog.

He, The Hermit, and Justice turned around at different times, but their nearly unanimous actions made The Magician Fors and company notice something amiss.

Why are they looking at Mr. Fool? Does Sea God Kalvetua's death have to do with Mr. Fool? Believing they were smart, Fors and Emlyn began guessing at the reason as they cast their gaze to the end of the long bronze table.

Derrick didn't know who Sea God Kalvetua was, nor did he understand what it meant for it to respond to its believers even after its death. However, since everyone was looking at Mr. Fool, he naturally looked over as well.

The World was late by a second, as though he was deliberating over something.

He first scanned The Hanged Man, making him shudder in fear. Then, he changed the direction of his gaze.

At this point, Klein had already come to realize which detail Ma'am Hermit had used to guess that he was the one replying to Sea God Kalvetua's believers in its stead. He was still stumped over what stance to use.

Should I pretend that it's a trivial matter and that I didn't take it to heart, but since you mentioned it, I'll just admit it in passing? Or should

I take the stance that since I'm a god, there's no need for me to explain myself to you, so there's no need for me to admit or deny anything… Klein recalled The Fool's persona and quickly made a decision.

The choice was to neither admit or deny anything, so as to prevent him from losing his standing as a god. However, he would add a single sentence on a particular point, making those who had failed to guess it become more puzzled, while the suspicious ones would be enlightened but would still be left shrouded in confusion as they realized, deep down, how unfathomable Mr. Fool was.

With this in mind, Klein, who had leaned back, chuckled. He said leisurely and indifferently, "Kalvetua became a demigod by relying on a relic left behind by Calamity Cohinem."

So they're consulting Mr. Fool about the situation with the "Sea God"… But that doesn't convince me. It feels like there's a deeper truth hidden behind this matter… Could it be… No way, right? Fors frowned as she began coming up with all sorts of thoughts.

As expected! Cattleya believed Mr. Fool was giving a straightforward answer while also informing them of some secrets.

That demigod scepter is Kalvetua's characteristic or Calamity Cohinem's relic, or is it something that covers both definitions? Who is Calamity Cohinem? The name sounds elven. Yes, The Hanged Man mentioned that Leticia found an ancient elven ruin… It's the residence of a high elf?

How did Mr. Fool get that scepter? Did he rely on The Hanged Man or someone else? No, it doesn't seem like The Hanged Man; otherwise, he wouldn't have proactively mentioned this matter… What motive does Mr. Fool have behind responding to the Sea God's believers? Is this required for "His" awakening, something that can truly affect reality?

The more Cattleya thought, the more she found Mr. Fool unfathomable. It was just like how "His" body was being concealed by the thick gray fog. The clearer she could see him, the more puzzled, horrified, and apprehensive she became.

This might be a tussle between gods… Cattleya sighed inwardly as the emotions got the better of her.

I guessed right! Alger finally verified that the present “Sea God” was a manifestation of The Fool. His worries and indecision from before were instantly rewarded.

On certain occasions, as a fake Sea God believer, I can openly pray… I wonder how much Mr. Fool has recovered. How much of his power can he release from the seal? It’s at least at the demigod level. He will be able to provide tremendous protection at sea…

The Hermit’s unsurprised reaction implies that she had long interacted with Mr. Fool and had learned of certain things ahead of time. This implies that her Sequence isn’t low. She might really be a powerhouse at the pirate admiral level… This is both good and bad news for me.

The good news is that I have an additional powerful faction at sea supporting me. At times, we can tacitly cooperate and complete matters that were previously deemed unimaginable. The bad news is that a lot of my news and resource channels will be overshadowed by hers. My purpose in the Tarot Club will drastically decline. Of course, that’s under the premise that she really is Admiral of Stars.

Yes, I have to adjust my focus from gathering news and resources and align it towards the Church. This is something she can’t supplant me, Alger thought with joy and wariness.

That Sea God is really Mr. Fool! No, no, no, it should be said that the present Sea God is Mr. Fool’s manifestation! “He” has truly begun interfering with the real world? This is great! In the future, I can pray to Sea God directly and receive a response when I’m out traveling at sea? Audrey felt surprised, overjoyed, and proud.

According to what she knew, the Churches didn't do fixed ritualistic magic internally. The ones who received responses by solely praying to the deities were mainly priests or a chance occurrence; otherwise, they were Blessed who just numbered at a handful.

As for receiving a response from every prayer, they would be an extreme exception, even among Blessed.

But I can! Mr. Fool is returning to his throne, one step at a time. Replacing Sea God is one of those steps… Audrey didn't hide the changes in her emotions as she smiled, sitting straight and elegantly.

Cohinem? That's an elf's name. I think I've heard someone mention it before… Emlyn attempted to recall, but it was in vain.

As for Kalvetua's death and how the "Sea God" still replied to its believers, as well as the reason why The Hermit, Justice, The Hanged Man had looked towards Mr. Fool, he had made a slight guess without thinking too deeply about the matter.

What has this got to do with me? It doesn't affect my saving of the Sanguine, nor is it anything of interest! Anyway, I can just pray to Mr. Fool if there are any problems! Emlyn mumbled to himself, showing disdain towards the emotional changes the others had.

Calamity? Queen of Calamity? But there are no records that say that her name is Cohinem… Derrick turned his head to the left very slightly, a common tick he did when he recalled things.

From the looks of it, Little Sun isn't sure if Cohinem is the Queen of Calamity; otherwise, he wouldn't have such a reaction… Klein retracted his gaze in disappointment.

He controlled The World to cough, pulling everyone back from their thoughts.

Following that, The World conjured a picture with The Fool's help. He showed it to both sides of the table and asked, "Does anyone know her?"

It was a picture of the red-haired Helene. Klein mainly wanted to know if Admiral of Stars Cattleya or The Hanged Man Alger knew her. After all, they were well-informed people out at sea.

Alger glanced at it and just as he was about to say that he didn't know her, he heard Ma'am Hermit say with a deep voice, "Red-haired Helene. She's from a fallen noble family and has the bloodline from the Intis's Sauron family."

Cattleya paused before adding, "She was once a trader out at sea, but she was later said to have been abducted by Ailment Maiden Tracy."

Abducted by Ailment Maiden Tracy? I thought it would be some contrived story about a domineering pirate and a noble lady… However, Tracy can be considered a domineering pirate. Heh heh… Klein instantly made some connections.

Fors was still lost in her thoughts over the connection between Sea God and The Fool when she suddenly snapped to her senses. She acutely noticed that great opportunities lay in red-haired Helene and Vice Admiral Ailment's story as she began to daydream.

To her regret, Ma'am Hermit had only said a few sentences without continuing.

The Hermit knows Vice Admiral Ailment… However, that doesn't imply anything. Beyonders of a certain Sequence or knowledgeable people will know who the seven pirate admirals are. Their bounty posters are everywhere… Hmm, The Hermit is rather aware of matters over at Intis. This is something that can be determined for now… The Hanged Man wasn't interested in red-haired Helene, only The Hermit's real identity.

With red-haired Helene's matter coming to a close, Audrey began considering if she should consult the others about the mind dragon.

Unlike before, there was now the addition of Ma'am Hermit, who was of unknown character and dubious allegiances. This left her hesitant.

After a brief deliberation, she said, “I recently sought out the traces of a mind dragon and went to a place which has the tradition of worshiping dragons.”

She had concealed the exact location as the details might implicate her.

Chapter 571 - Huge Pressure

◆ ◆ ◆

Audrey simply mentioned the ancient folk song, but she didn’t describe the content in detail. She was afraid that the knowledgeable Ma’am Hermit would be able to guess at the exact location.

She only mentioned the inspiration she had, and how she used a Psychological Cue to retain her lucidity in her dream before beginning a magical journey.

Psychological Cue? She knows how to plant a psychological cue? She’s likely a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist… Cattleya habitually made a judgment, but she immediately felt even more perplexed.

Then why would she be buying the Beyonder characteristic of a Psychiatrist?

Taking the same potion gives a limited increase in strength while being prone to losing control. Furthermore, it will be an obstacle towards the digestion of the potion…

To create a mystical item? But this will overlap with her own Beyonder powers. There’s no value to that.

To give it to someone else?

Amidst Cattleya’s guesses, Audrey had already mentioned her chaotic dream and how she came to the edge of her conscious. Then, she used the conjuring method she learned from Mr. Fool to create a staircase that led downwards. She then slowly delved deep into her conscious.

She didn't describe in detail the various points of light in her subconscious, as it involved embarrassing secrets she didn't wish to share.

She focused on her lonely and long journey with no end in sight. She also expressed how there were various monsters hiding in the surrounding grayness that placed immense pressure on her. She mentioned how she nearly broke down several times and barely managed to endure it thanks to her Beyonder powers. Then, she reached the point of her finally arriving at the illusory sea of collective subconscious.

The memory imprints of the human pioneers and the spread and reflection of the consciousness of the surrounding creatures were presented under Audrey's coherent and unhurried descriptions. Then, it was fixed onto the dragon with grayish stone scales that had flown out from the sea of collective subconscious.

There's a dragon that lives in the sea of collective subconscious? What a magical and beautiful journey! Although Miss Justice didn't encounter any enemies or danger, it still leaves me a little surreal… Fors suddenly thought of a title of a book: "Miss Justice's Dream Tour."

While rounding things up, Audrey scanned the area and asked, "Ladies and gentlemen, do you have any suggestions? Do you think that the dragon's City of Miracles, Liveseyd, is also hidden in the sea of collective subconscious?

"If I wish to continue searching, what should I take note of? What advanced preparations do I need to make?"

The Hanged Man Alger glanced at The Hermit and said in a serious tone, "I don't think you should continue exploring.

"It's a very dangerous act.

"According to the records, most dragons are creatures with flesh and blood; this includes the mind dragon. By allowing itself to survive and swim through the so-called sea of collective subconscious, it means that the dragon you saw was a sufficiently high Sequence. At the very least, it's at the level of a demigod.

"Before you reach Sequence 5, it's best that you don't consider this."

Cattleya nodded and said, "There are many other dangerous things in the sea of collective subconscious—the accumulated maleficent thoughts of humanity, the desires that can corrupt Soul Bodies, the terrifying memories since ancient times that resemble storms and waves at sea—all of these will deal severe psychological harm to you. It might prevent you from ever waking up.

"Besides that's the sea of collective subconscious of all creatures, which isn't only limited to humans. There might be evil spirits, evil gods, or the consciousness of some terrifying existence hidden in there. They're like gigantic maelstroms that can devour ships.

"Before you truly acquire Beyonder powers that allow you to travel through the sea of collective subconscious, it's best not to rashly explore too deeply."

Audrey, who was filled with expectations, felt disappointed. However, she couldn't help but admit that Mr. Hanged Man and Ma'am Hermit had spoken very logically and sincerely.

She silently inhaled and said to herself, Audrey, don't be headstrong. Wait till you're Sequence 5 before making the attempt again!

She totally didn't consider how difficult it was to become a Sequence 5. At that level, one could even compete to become one of the seven pirate admirals, or even make the seven become eight.

From Audrey's point of view, with Mr. Fool and the Tarot Club, as long as she was careful and calm, she would definitely be able to successfully attain that level in a year or two if she didn't take unnecessary risks.

Only the gate to being a demigod was hard to push open!

Ma'am Hermit knows a lot and is very knowledgeable… Audrey clung onto the last sliver of hope and looked towards Mr. Fool at the end of the table, hoping that this godlike existence would provide a suggestion that was different from Mr. Hanged Man or Ma'am Hermit.

Don't look at me… I have no idea! Klein tried his best not to blink.

His understanding of the conscious, subconscious, and the collective subconscious was still stuck at a theoretical level that Spirit Medium Daly had described. He didn't understand anything more. Despite having his dreams intruded frequently, he had never thought of exploring the world outside the dream despite retaining his lucidity. Therefore, how was he to provide any suggestions to Miss Justice?

In fact, he had a natural idea regarding this. However, he wasn't sure if it would work without having done any verification.

In the past, even if he lacked the confidence, he could vaguely make a comment, but now, with Admiral of Stars Cattleya sitting at the side, watching, it only made it easier for him to make mistakes the more he spoke. The less he spoke, the fewer mistakes he would commit. And there was no chance of making mistakes by keeping silent.

What a pressure-inducing new member… Klein sighed inwardly. He didn't say a word and maintained his faint smile.

If not for him being above the gray fog and how he existed in the form of a Spirit Body, he suspected that such highly difficult acting would make the muscles around his eyes spasm.

Mr. Fool doesn't have any suggestions… Audrey retracted her gaze in depression. She stopped fantasizing about exploring the sea of collective subconscious so soon.

At this moment, The Moon Emlyn, who was already turning impatient, cleared his throat.

"I've seriously researched the history handed down by us Sanguine…"

Sanguine… He really is a vampire… Nurturing vampires and pulling vampires into the Church is really a tradition of the Church of Earth Mother… Cattleya nodded as she looked like she was listening seriously.

Meanwhile, she felt that some of her conclusions needed adjustments.

The Moon directly expressed his identity… Does this mean that Mr. Fool has a potent deterrence, even in the outside world, that the members aren't afraid of information being leaked?

It seems like I don't have to completely hide my circumstances…

Emlyn paused and looked at The Sun before tipping his chin.

"Before the Cataclysm, there was no City of Silver, only the Kingdom of Silver!"

If it were anyone else who had thrown such doubt on him, Derrick would've hastened to retort, expressing the fact that the people of the City of Silver were descendants of the Kingdom of Silver and that he hadn't lied. However, after glancing at Mr. Moon and sensing his smugness, Derrick turned his head to the side, feeling that an explanation was beneath him.

Why must I let an arrogant vampire who doesn't acknowledge the City of Silver's history believe me? he thought silently to himself.

From his reaction, Emlyn could tell that the City of Silver was indeed related to the Kingdom of Silver. He tsked and said, "The faith of the Kingdom of Silver wasn't originally Giant King Aurmir, but 'His' queen, Omebella."

Omebella? Derrick turned his head and blurted out, "Our City of Silver has no records of this matter, nor are there any records of a queen named Omebella."

Emlyn chuckled and spread out his hands.

“That’s why, there’s nothing wrong with me saying that your City of Silver’s history is flawed and incomplete, right?

“Clearly, there are mistakes in your records of Sanguine history.”

…You took such a roundabout way to prove this… Should I say that a vampire like you has clear logic, or that you’re someone who bears grudges? Klein held back his laughter and stopped himself from sizing up Emlyn White.

The Moon and The Sun’s debate benefited him greatly, allowing him to know that the Giant Queen, the Goddess of Harvest, was named Omebella.

The Sun Derrick was just about to give a retort to Mr. Moon when he heard Ma’am Hermit speak.

“Omebella is the Goddess of Harvest from the Second Epoch. She’s also the queen of the Giant King’s Court.

“Legend has it that she perished at the end of the Second Epoch, but it’s impossible to verify since no one has seen her corpse or relics.”

The Goddess of Harvest is really named Omebella… Derrick was stunned. He wished to retort, but he was unable to say a word as this matter proved that the history of the City of Silver had several holes. He instantly felt somewhat aggrieved.

When Emlyn saw this, he felt good. Pleasure rose from the depths of his heart.

After another round of exchanges, the Tarot Gathering came to an end. Klein smiled and said, “Everyone, we shall meet next week.”

“By your will.” Audrey immediately got up to bow.

The others weren’t any slower, including The Hermit Cattleya.

†

Upon returning to reality, Admiral of Stars Cattleya looked at the shattered celestial globe on her desk. She then seriously recalled what had happened at the gathering.

A few details made her believe that the Tarot Club involved itself in many matters that made it nothing to scoff at. And hidden deep in the gray fog was Mr. Fool. Like The World, who was hidden behind thick shadows, “He” was unreadable and unfathomable. It was unknown what he was planning.

After more than ten seconds of silence, Cattleya retrieved a pen and some paper and wrote while deliberating: “Someone has been deliberately collecting the Emperor’s diary pages.”

She didn’t dare to expose any information that involved the Tarot Club, as she was afraid of being punished by Mr. Fool. All she could do was give a heads-up on things that could be discovered under ordinary circumstances.

After she was done writing and folding the letter, she took out a golden, exquisite harmonica she carried with her. Putting it to her lips, she blew it.

In the blink of an eye, she saw the letter strangely vanish.

Even though she wasn’t wearing her glasses, she was unable to discover the arrival of the messenger.

Phew… Cattleya sighed and reached for her forehead and said silently, The pressure is really huge when participating in a gathering while under the supervision of a god.”

†

With Admiral of Stars joining, the pressure on me as The Fool has greatly increased… Klein rubbed his temples above the gray fog and directly returned to the real world.

He wanted to attempt the inspiration Miss Justice had received from exploring her dreams.

Chapter 572 - Recite My Name

◆

After a series of chores, Klein opened his locked bedroom door and looked into the living room. He saw Danitz sleeping soundly on a reclining chair.

Although he had long heard it, Klein couldn’t help but lampoon.

It’s not even four in the afternoon!

Has this guy completely let his hair down now that he doesn’t need to monitor the radio transceiver?

With a thought, he gradually smiled, feeling that this was exactly what he needed.

The premise of him maintaining his lucidity in dreams had involved someone invading his consciousness. Typically, his dreams were a turbid mess, which meant that he alone wasn’t able to complete the experiment. After all, he couldn’t plant a psychological cue on himself.

Therefore, he planned on using external forces to enter the dreams of others. This way, he could maintain his lucidity like a Nightmare.

He originally planned on heading out to find a suitable target, but Danitz’s posture was in such a perfect state that he could hardly stop himself from kicking him.

No, I should be experimenting… Klein corrected his thoughts.

He contemplated for a moment and didn’t use a Dream Charm. As a

Sequence 7 Pyromaniac, with the ancient name being Fire Mage, Danitz's spiritual perception wasn't to be written off. Once he softly chanted an incantation that could stir the powers of nature, Danitz would definitely be awoken.

As such, it would be a question of whether he could evade the matter in a timely fashion.

After some deliberation, Klein took out another thing he had prepared. It was a gem-like object that seemed dark and deep; it was the Beyonder characteristic left behind by a Nightmare.

It could be used to a certain extent, just like Marionettist Rosago's All-Black Eye. However, the effects were inferior to one that was from a mystical item. For example, this Nightmare Beyonder characteristic didn't allow Klein to pass through the dreams of someone across the city from his inn's suite, nor was he able to forcefully pull people into a dream. However, it was still simple enough to perform the most basic form of intruding into someone's dream at a close distance.

Klein held the dark "gem" and spread out his spirituality.

The illusory darkness rapidly spread before his eyes, filling his vision. Everything before his eyes were blanketed over, including Danitz.

There was no longer a humanoid figure but an ellipsoidal blob of light.

Klein immediately extended his spirituality out and made contact with it.

Without any warning, various scenes flooded his surroundings as they flashed rapidly. Finally, it came to stop on a ship that was dozens of meters long. It had a smoke-churning chimney and large sails that were fully raised. The deck was polished abnormally bright, shimmering with the glimmer of a gold coin when sunlight hit it.

Danitz stood under the main cannon as he had his arms crossed. He was leisurely rushing the sailors, shouting from time to time, "Scrub that area again!

“Dogsh*t, do you wish to copy down the ancient Feysac dictionary?”

This fellow is quite impressive on the Golden Dream… Klein ignored the owner of the dream and flew to the other end of the ship. He found a hidden spot and landed on the deck before preparing to test his spiritual perception.

What he planned on experimenting on was simple. He wanted to know if chanting The Fool’s honorific name in a dream was effective. He wanted to know if he could sense someone praying!

This way, if Miss Justice encounters danger in the sea of collective subconscious, she can use this method to seek help… After stretching his back, Klein’s expression gradually turned solemn as he softly said, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

†

With the words in Hermes being spoken, he very quickly finished reciting The Fool’s honorific name. However, Klein didn’t hear the series of illusory pleas.

It doesn’t work? Klein frowned in thought. He analyzed whether it was really impossible, or if he had made a mistake somewhere.

Yes… Chanting in the dream doesn’t actually produce any noise. Relying on Hermes alone isn’t sufficient… To achieve the effects of praying, I’ll have to use a language like ancient Hermes that can stir the powers of nature. This is the same state as me copying the account password of my anonymous account… Klein nodded slightly and began to chant his honorific name in ancient Hermes.

He wasn't afraid that there would be an accident, but that his stirring of the powers of nature would wake Blazing Danitz from his sleep.

He recited each word, quickly finishing the three sentences. Following that, Klein heard the stacked series of irritable and illusory pleas.

At that moment, Danitz's dream quivered as the Golden Dream quickly disintegrated.

Klein didn't stay any longer and immediately left. He returned back to his bedroom before Danitz woke up.

After seven to eight seconds, Danitz sat up in a daze as he muttered to himself in fear, Why did I dream of that madman Gehrman Sparrow causing trouble on the Golden Dream…

What a terrifying matter!

Dogsh*t! It must be the result of me worrying over this matter all this time!

Inside the bedroom, Klein had already taken four steps counterclockwise and gone above the gray fog. Without any surprises, he saw a rippling light by The Fool's high-back chair. In it was the scene of him in the dream.

It really works. One can still receive a response when chanting The Fool's honorific name in languages such as ancient Hermes or Jotun! It's no wonder some people might suddenly die in their sleep despite not doing a thing. They might be reading some materials or had memorized certain symbols in the day and accidentally replicated them in the dream? The danger in this world really cannot be prevented… Klein dispelled the rippling light and considered if he should inform Miss Justice of the results of the experiment.

To only inform her later instead of saying it on the spot is a little damaging to The Fool's image… But Miss Justice is the kind of girl with a huge sense of curiosity. Although she has been warned by Mr. Hanged

Man and Admiral of Stars, and even if she's a little more mature now, there's still the chance of her taking risks… Of course, if anything were to happen, it's on herself and it has nothing to do with me… Klein couldn't help but recall Miss Justice's adoration of The Fool and the thought of her optimism and cheerfulness that brought him happiness, as well as her contributions towards the Tarot Club all this time.

Finally, he sighed and said in a self-deprecating manner, "I still need to inform her and give a warning.

"This is the treatment a VIP gets…"

After making the decision, Klein didn't hesitate to spread out his spirituality to touch the crimson star representing Miss Justice.

†

In a room of the huge manor in East Chester County.

Audrey had her legs leaning sideways as she sat before her dressing table. She was recalling the words Mr. Hanged Man and Ma'am Hermit had said.

After being warned by two senior Beyonders, she suddenly realized something. It wasn't that the mid- and upper-echelons of the Psychology Alchemists wasn't aware that one could explore dreams, the icy mountain of the subconscious, and the sea of collective subconscious by using a self-induced psychological cue.

The reason why they didn't tell me anything is because it's too dangerous for a Psychiatrist. Many people have already died in such explorations… But they should warn me… Ah, right. From their point of view, I'm only a Sequence 8 Telepathist. I'm not equipped with the powers of a Psychological Cue, so there was no need to warn me… Audrey finally understood the perplexing matter.

Just as she was about to let Susie enter the room to calm the disappointment in her heart, she suddenly saw thick gray fog spew out, instantly flooding her vision.

In the middle of the endless grayish-white, a figure sat in a high-back chair. Looking down at her, it said, “Do not make attempts without careful consideration.”

Before Audrey realized what was happening, she heard the deep and majestic voice sound out again.

“If you encounter dangers in your dreams, you can recite my name.”

Recite your name? Audrey’s eyes widened as she became overjoyed.

“Yes, Mr. Fool.”

Seeing that Miss Justice was excited instead of showing any doubts, Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief and chuckled.

“Use ancient Hermes.”

With that said, his figure faded away and the gray fog vanished.

Audrey sat there stunned for two seconds before hurriedly pursing her lips, afraid that she wasn’t on her best behavior.

Mr. Fool actually specially warned me! He even permitted me to recite “His” name in my dream! Audrey excitedly took a few steps on the spot, believing that she had really become a Blessed of God.

Of course, she also remembered Mr. Fool’s warning. She planned to understand more from the Psychology Alchemists and make another attempt only when she was sufficiently prepared.

The corners of her mouth curled up slightly as she randomly tapped her chest, saying silently, “May Mr. Fool watch over me~”

†

Above the gray fog, Klein began to consider another matter.

Red-haired Helene, who had a reward worth 1,000 pounds, was actually related to Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy!

Tracy took over Qilangos's crew and changed his flagship to the Black Death. As for Qilangos, he previously plundered a tycoon named Jimmy Necker… That tycoon had previously obtained parts of Death's chronicles. It came from a Balam royal family's mausoleum… This information came from that Nightmare inside Creeping Hunger. It should benefit Mr. Azik to a certain extent. I can also investigate the matter in passing… Klein found another reason to look forward to finding red-haired Helene.

He originally planned on using the magic mirror, Arrodes, to find her, but now, he planned on mobilizing Sea God believers to perform a search.

In the past, it's quite demeaning to send a revelation for just 1,000 pounds. But now that it involves a pirate admiral, it can barely make people guess that there are secret motives behind it… Klein conjured red-haired Helene's photo and summoned the Sea God Scepter.

He had never done a mass revelation, so it was possible that it would be a burden that he couldn't withstand.

He chose higher-ups like Kalat and Edmonton. With waves reaching high into the sky as a background, he said in a deep voice, "Find her and protect her.

"Be careful of Tracy's forces."

Klein didn't provide further explanations as he broke down this scene along with red-haired Helene's photo into many sets before projecting them into the corresponding dots of light.

Chapter 573 - Teaching a Lesson in Reality

◆ ◆ ◆

In a forest in Blue Mountain Island where the Resistance base was located.

Sitting in a wheelchair, Kalat raised his bald head and looked towards the sunlight that was scattering at the cave’s entrance. His eyes couldn’t hide his joy.

He acutely sensed that ever since God reappeared over the land and stated “His” ten commandments, the previous bloodshed and chaos had changed. From time to time, “He” would provide them with guidance which was filled with wisdom. Furthermore, “He” would observe all creatures and proactively interfere with the situation at sea in a bid to help the Resistance and everyone in Rorsted, allowing them to pass through a difficult, thorny path while still being able to see some hope.

Perhaps this is the true meaning behind “His” reappearance over the land… Kalat recalled the revelation he had just received and guessed that the red-haired woman named Helene was like a fulcrum for Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy and the forces out at sea. She was the key to spoiling the balance between the countries, and only by making the world’s situation more chaotic would the people of Rorsted receive the opportunity of being liberated!

Kalat drew in a breath and quickly set up a ritual to pray to Sea God, conjuring Helene’s picture.

After doing all of this, he instinctively turned his head to the side and wore a somewhat mixed expression.

Living in that direction was the high priest of the Church of Sea God, a priest who was a high-ranking member of the Resistance.

Although they don't dare go against the revelations and have made tremendous changes, in many ways, they're still immersed in the past. They're obstinate, conservative, backward, and savage. They refuse to embrace a more civilized Church… If this goes on, they'll one day be abandoned by God… Kalat couldn't hide the smile in his heart while he felt a strong sense of anguish.

†

After scanning through all the believers' prayers and picking a few to respond to, Klein returned to the real world. He planned on heading out to search for a chance to enact true acting.

When his right hand gripped the door handle, a ridiculous but possible thought came to his mind.

My true goal is not to find red-haired Helene, but to use this opportunity to get to Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy and figure out what happened to tycoon Jimmy Necker, so as to get to know the location of the ancient chronicles of Death.

That is to say, I only need to lure Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy out with red-haired Helene. As for whether she's the real person or not, that doesn't matter.

I can make myself red-haired Helene and let Danitz send me to Strongman Ozil, get the reward, and easily meet Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy.

What an impressive sequence of actions…

Klein suddenly shook his head as he found a reason to reject the idea.

Although I'm a Faceless, I can't accept wearing drag!

…Could it be that overcoming my inner resistance is also one of the principles for acting?

Furthermore, I don't know red-haired Helene. Acting as her wouldn't work. I would just be like her on the surface, and I wouldn't be able to fool people who are familiar with her. That way, I won't be able to meet Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy.

Yes. The person searching for red-haired Helene might not be Tracy, but an enemy of hers.

I don't know Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy's background. Rashly doing such an act would result in immeasurable danger.

It's best to be safe and abide by my wishes. I'll first search for red-haired Helene, and after determining the details, I can consider the subsequent actions.

At that moment, Klein suddenly felt that something was amiss in the living room. Danitz's snoring had softened, and the time between each snore shortened.

Vice Admiral Iceberg is here? Klein turned the handle and opened the door to the bedroom.

While making this silent action, Danitz sat up with his eyes open.

He tried hard to hide his smile as he said, "Captain came.

"She said that Admiral of Blood's crew was sighted at Longtail Island and is continuing south. His destination seems to be the Berserk Sea.

"The source of the news is trustworthy!"

Longtail Island? The island at the southern end of the Rorsted Sea?

From the looks of it, Admiral of Blood previously planned on coming to Bayam, but the fight between Kalvetua and Sea King Jahn Kottman scared him away. He circled around the area and headed straight for the Berserk Sea… Yes, it's probably because his intelligence officer, Old Quinn, didn't send a telegram to inform him… Klein felt pangs of regret and could only lament how reality changed faster than his plans.

He had planned to make his hunt of Admiral of Blood become the crowning battle of the crazy adventurer and bounty hunter, Gehrman Sparrow.

Killing a single Steel Maveti ultimately lacks that shock and awe effect… Klein didn't say a word as he calmly looked at Danitz.

Danitz felt a little uneasy from the intent stare as he gave a hollow chuckle.

"Admiral of Blood has fled. Your cooperation with Captain has come to an end, right?

"I can now return to the Golden Dream, right?

"Further developments can be done via your messenger!"

Klein pondered for a moment and took out a piece of paper from his pocket. He scribbled the method to summon his messenger.

Following that, he flicked his wrist, sending the piece of paper out like a metallic plate.

Danitz was a Hunter at Sequence 9, so he easily reached out and caught the piece of paper.

He scanned it before a scarlet flame rose in his palms, burning the paper to ashes.

"Haha, even if I forget it, Captain will have a way of making me recall it."

He paused and squeezed out a smile before asking again, “I can now return to the Golden Dream, right?”

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Yes.”

I… I can! Danitz held back his urge to pump his fist in celebration, afraid that he would end up antagonizing the madman, Gehrman Sparrow.

He smiled cautiously and said, “I’ll first pay off the room for this period of time and buy a ship ticket. As you know, Bayam hasn’t been calm recently. Captain doesn’t wish for the Golden Dream to dock at the harbor here.”

At least you know how to settle the room’s payment… Klein didn’t say a word as he maintained his austere attitude. He draped himself with a coat and took his hat before walking towards his luxurious suite.

When his back disappeared into the corner of a staircase and vanished from Danitz’s sight, Danitz shrank back into his room and clenched his fist, pumping them into the air.

“Wonderful! Wonderful!

“I’m finally free!”

He didn’t delay in wearing his cap and heading to the front desk of the Wind of Azure Inn to settle the bill. He informed them that this didn’t mean that he was checking out.

Danitz quickly hit the streets and ran straight for a place known as the Seaweed Bar. He found the air fresh and invigorating.

After he took a few steps, he suddenly noticed bounty posters pasted along the walls around a bend.

“…Blazing Danitz, 5,500 pounds!”

The posters were just two steps away from Danitz—that familiar face allowed for a clear comparison with his cap-wearing face.

"…"

Danitz clenched his teeth and revealed a sorrowful smile.

He hurriedly pressed down his cap, nearly concealing his normal line of sight.

But even so, he still felt uneasy. He went to a recent department store and bought a gray scarf. He wrapped it around his neck and hid his nose and mouth in it.

At this point in time, Danitz relaxed somewhat as he sped up his pace and rushed for his destination.

The Seaweed Bar was a place where gangs gathered. It was common for infamous pirates to appear there.

Although this place wasn't like the Swordfish Bar or Amyris Leaf Bar that allowed access to a lot of information and resources, it had its own unique niche—it had many resourceful secret channels!

What Danitz wanted to do was buy a scalped ticket to Galagos, as this wouldn't need him to provide any identification.

He knew very well that be it in the past or present, his bounty poster would be plastered across all the ticket booths. He had bought the first-class tickets to the White Agate via the same method as well.

After entering the bar, Danitz didn't take off his cap and scarf. He carefully surveyed the area and found Deniel who sold scalped tickets.

He didn't directly approach him and instead retracted his gaze from the thin and somewhat swarthy man who was in his thirties. He began searching for someone unfamiliar.

After a round of choices, Danitz squeezed through the crowd and arrived beside a lad who was drinking at the bar counter. He tapped him on the shoulder and suppressed his voice.

“Do me a favor.”

“What?” The lad turned his head warily and ended up seeing a suspicious man. The lower half of his face was covered in a gray scarf and the cap on his head nearly hid his eyes. He revealed almost nothing about his face.

Such a dress-up simply meant that he was suspicious!

This was because the Rorsted Archipelago’s lowest temperature during the winter was about 10°C!

Danitz pointed at Deniel.

“See that guy over there?

“Buy me a ticket for Galagos tomorrow.”

He handed over three one-pound notes and chuckled.

“The rest is yours.”

Although a scalped ticket was much more expensive than a retail ticket, Galagos wasn’t too far, making three pounds more than sufficient. Of course, this was also because the journey was relatively shorter, and there was no need for him to buy a first-class ticket.

The reason why Danitz didn’t buy it himself was because he was worried that Deniel would recognize him, bringing him unwanted trouble.

Back when his bounty was only 3,000 pounds, pirates and adventurers at his level or lower had to consider how many people were needed to take him down. The bounty received wasn’t something that could make them forget about their fear towards Vice Admiral Iceberg and the risk of losing their lives. Hence, very few people would take the initiative to attack him. As such, his safety was pretty much guaranteed in such black markets.

But now, his bounty reward had already reached 5,500 pounds. Even if several people joined forces, the amount of money each of them could get was a sizable sum. Furthermore, there were many people out at sea who were desperadoes!

Apart from that, there would be people who found their own bounties too low and wished to prove their strength. These people would definitely challenge a target like Danitz, who was infamous but was of little risk.

It was precisely because of this that Danitz was afraid that Deniel would betray him. Therefore, he hired a random person to buy it on his behalf.

The lad held the cash and gave Danitz another look before getting up from his seat. He then walked towards Deniel.

He deliberately slowed down his footsteps when he walked past some drunkards as he whispered to them.

When Danitz saw this scene, he suddenly became guarded. He thought of a problem—with him acting suspiciously, it was very obvious that there was a problem with him. He was a perfect target for being betrayed.

Heh, do you think my reputation as Blazing was bought? Danitz planned on teaching the lad a lesson after he obtained the ticket.

At this point, he discovered that a familiar figure had walked in. He was an infamous pirate, Blue Eyes Meath, with a bounty of 2,800 pounds.

And this pirate clearly knew this group of people were planning to betray him.

Blue Eyes Meath still has a few rather powerful subordinates… Danitz didn’t hesitate to get up and head for the bar’s back door.

His speed increased as he agilely forced himself through the drunkards and escaped from the bar. Then, with his rich anti-tracking skills, he completely escaped from the group of people.

Danitz didn’t dare to stay on the streets since it was already dark. The patrolling police and soldiers would begin increasing.

He went straight back to the Wind of Azure Inn and opened the door to the luxurious suite. Inside, he saw Gehrman Sparrow admiring the dusk.

Danitz had a thought as he forced a smile.

“There’s something. I forgot to mention it just now.

“Captain wishes to ask if you have any interest in meeting her at Galagos?”

This was a question he had previously kept secret. He had planned on returning and telling his captain that Gehrman Sparrow wasn’t interested. But now, he realized that he had a low chance of surviving in Bayam once he was separated from the crazy adventurer.

Chapter 574 - Fail to Accomplish

◆ ◆ ◆

Head to Galagos to meet Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards? Klein was taken aback, nearly frowning in the process.

This wasn't something he considered unacceptable, but instead a chance for him to use this face-to-face meeting to ask about matters with trite details that were cumbersome to pen down. It was possible for him to be inspired and gain information for his subsequent advancement and High-Sequence potion formulas.

One more friend, one more channel… Klein silently muttered this sentence before taking out a heavy gold coin. He divined if there was any danger in front of Blazing Danitz.

The shiny gold coin flipped into the air and tumbled down into Klein's palm, tails facing up.

This implied a negative response, which meant that there wasn't much danger meeting Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina in Galagos.

Klein shifted his gaze upwards at Danitz and calmly said, "Okay."

"On the Captain's behalf, I thank you for accepting the invitation." Danitz heaved a sigh of relief and beamed, his brows easing.

Klein took a look at the wall clock and said, "I'll first head to the washroom."

Head to the washroom? You mean you plan on heading out later to buy a ticket for me? Danitz's gaze followed Gehrman Sparrow's body as he sharply read in between the lines.

After using spirit dowsing to confirm things above the gray fog, Klein washed his hands and left the washroom and said to Danitz, “Let’s go.”

“Me?” Danitz pointed at himself.

Klein put on his coat and nodded.

“There’s no need to, right? You can directly find Elland and get him to help us buy two tickets…” In this rare occasion, Danitz sincerely provided a suggestion.

Klein coldly swept his glance across him and didn’t say a word. he wore his hat and went out the door.

Danitz trembled and swallowed his second suggestion of buying fake identification documents and use Gehrman Sparrow’s ability to change appearances to buy two tickets via official channels.

He wrapped the scarf around him once again and pressed down on his cap before quickly following Gehrman Sparrow.

†

After nearly twenty minutes, Klein pointed ahead where there was a noisy commotion.

“Is it there?”

That was the Seaweed Bar where Danitz had failed to accomplish the purchase of scalped tickets.

“Yes…” Danitz never expected them to circle over and was momentarily stunned.

Along the way, he had roughly described his early experience; therefore, he wasn’t sure why Gehrman Sparrow would return here.

Amid his thought, he suddenly had a guess as he blurted, “A-are you going to seek revenge for me?”

This fellow might be crazy, but he’s quite nice to his friends. His act of venturing out into Bansy Harbor for Elland and the others is an example… Danitz couldn’t help but reflect on the matter.

Klein shot him a glance and didn’t say a word. He widened his strides and walked into the Seaweed Bar.

“There’s really no need…” Danitz followed behind as he weakly persuaded him.

To him, if he wasn’t afraid of escalating the matter, he would’ve baked those bunch of backstabbing b*stards in cement and sank them to the bottom of the sea!

The bar was noisy and lively, with local music reverberating through it, bringing about a trance-like feeling.

Danitz seriously surveyed the area in an attempt to find the bunch of backstabbers, as well as the infamous pirate, Blue Eyes Meath.

“That’s Deniel,” Danitz casually introduced the black market merchant.

What a pity that this place is just too chaotic. I’ve no idea if that group of people are still around… he thought with some regret.

Klein traced his gaze and touched Creeping Hunger with his right hand.

He turned his head and looked at Danitz, saying with his usual expression, “Take off your scarf.”

His tone was akin to instructing Danitz to buy a glass of beer.

Ah? Danitz was left stunned on the spot as he wondered if he had heard wrong.

Klein widened the ends of his mouth and said, “Take off your scarf. Do not make me repeat thrice.”

“Why…” Danitz choked back his question under the icy cold and crazy stare.

He blankly removed his scarf in puzzlement, and he had a baffling feeling that the people around him were sizing him up and also recognizing him as the great pirate worth 5,500 pounds, Blazing Danitz.

Klein maintained his smile that concealed madness and continued instructing, “Take off your cap.

“Go over and buy a ticket.”

In an instant, Danitz felt as though he had been struck by lightning. He nearly leaped up.

“I’ll be recognized…” Under Gehrman Sparrow’s stare, his voice became softer and softer.

At this point in time, he had already understood what Gehrman Sparrow was up to.

He wishes to use my worth as 5,500 pounds as bait to fish out those greedy pirates and powerhouses behind those gangs! Dogsh*t! To think I thought he was nice to his friends a moment ago. No, why would I even consider him my friend? This son of a b*tch! Danitz kept cursing inwardly with vulgarities.

He couldn’t put up any resistance since he knew how crazy Gehrman Sparrow was.

This was a madman who was even thinking of hunting a pirate admiral!

Danitz revealed a twisted smile. As he slowly turned his head back, he took off his cap and slowly walked towards Deniel.

Around him, gazes swept past him and paused for two seconds before they were retracted.

As the drunkards moved away from him like the receding tide, they opened a wide path for him as though the ocean was split.

Upon seeing their reaction, Danitz was surprised at this turn of events despite his horror and concerns.

This is the might of a great pirate? This is what it feels like to be the center of attention? Damn it, I heard someone say my name. Someone is whispering Blazing… Danitz knew he had been recognized. As he walked forward anxiously, he hung his hands down and prepared to do battle.

Among the crowd, Blue Eyes Meath blurted out, “Danitz? Blazing Danitz!”

His subordinates exchanged looks and said excitedly, “Boss, it’s really Blazing Danitz! 5,500 pounds!

“Shall we attack?”

Meath narrowed his azure-blue eyes and raised his left arm, slapping the back of his subordinate’s head.

“You stupid a**!

“If Blazing Danitz were a stupid a** like you, he would’ve been killed numerous times!

“He dared to appear here because he’s not afraid of being attacked! He has a powerhouse hiding behind him?”

Meath suddenly felt horrified as he looked around.

He suspected that Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards had secretly arrived in the City of Generosity, Bayam!

Through the gaps in between the crowd, he saw a young gentleman in a black double-breasted frock coat. He wore a half top hat and had black hair and brown eyes. He looked thin, but he had an angled face.

Without any words, Meath's spiritual perception told him that this was a terrifying existence.

His high spiritual perception had previously brought him numerous troubles, but it had also helped him successfully evade even more dangers!

"Let's go!" he suppressed his voice as he ordered. Then, with the help of the patrons blocking him, he fled from the bar's back door just like how Danitz did previously.

Danitz came right in front of Deniel while shuddering in fear before buying two tickets to Galagos from a blank and horrified opponent.

Even after he returned the way he came and received the signal from Gehrman Sparrow to walk out the bar, he didn't notice anyone suddenly assaulting him.

Isn't it said that there are many desperadoes among pirates? Indeed, a last-minute and rushed trap is hardly effective… Something abnormal usually implies that something is amiss. Of course, one can use the abnormality to scare the enemy… Unfortunately… Klein pressed down on his hat before following Danitz out.

At that moment in time, Danitz was loitering around a street lamp. When he saw Gehrman Sparrow walk out, he barely smiled and said, "Can I wear the scarf and cap already?

"Haha, that group of cowards!"

"Yes." Klein didn't stop as he sped up once he reached the other end of the street.

Danitz's pupils contracted as he hurriedly chased after him and inquired, “Why are we suddenly running?

Klein didn’t turn his head as he calmly said, “Do you wish to stay here to be invited back by the Mandated Punishers?”

As he spoke, he took out a paper figurine, threw it out, and burned it to ashes.

Only then did Danitz snap to his senses. Although that group of cowards didn’t dare to attack him, they definitely had the courage to report him. If he was successfully taken down, they still had a chance of receiving parts of the reward!

They ran all the way into a secluded alley before Gehrman Sparrow stopped. Only then did Danitz have the time to wrap his scarf properly and wear his cap.

“Where are we heading now?” Danitz asked with a slight pant.

Klein glanced at him.

“Find Elland.”

The corners of Danitz’s mouth twitched, yearning to throw a fireball over.

“To buy tickets to the Dilynius Island,” Klein added as he passed through the alley.

Dilynius Island was the first island past the south of the Rorsted Archipelago.

…Right, there’s a ship there that heads for Galagos! Now, with everyone’s attention focused on the liners from Bayam to Galagos, no one would imagine that we’d take a detour to Dilynius Island and travel from there! Danitz followed as he was enlightened.

†

On Tuesday morning, Klein personally helped Danitz don a disguise, making him look like a mixed-blood who wore gold-rimmed glasses.

Although there was no way to use his Faceless powers, it was still at least ten times better than Danitz's own attempts at disguising himself.

They successfully boarded the ship and prepared to head south to Dilynius Island Harbor. The journey was expected to take ten hours.

Whoosh!

The liner left the harbor and steered into the sea.

Under the bright sunlight, thin clouds, and blue skies, this hybrid-powered ship silently sailed through the gentle waves amid the cold breeze all the way into the afternoon.

At this moment, Klein was inside the cabin, pondering over some content in the Book of Secrets. Danitz was pacing about, thinking about how he could brag to his mates.

Suddenly, their vision darkened as though a cloud had drifted over to blot out the sun.

Klein subconsciously looked out and saw that a gigantic pitch-black sailboat had appeared at some moment in time. It was nearly a hundred meters long and had its sail fully opened. By the side were rows of cannons.

Before it approached, it steered in a different direction, but it still made the surroundings seem to have a black sun pass by.

Danitz revealed a reverent and apprehensive expression that was mixed with a longing but abhorrent look. He hissed before whispering in a dreamy manner, “Black Emperor…”

Chapter 575 - Golden Dream

◆

Upon seeing the gigantic black sailboat, Klein's first reaction was fear and wariness. He suspected that the demigod, King of the Five Seas Nast, was here for him.

But he quickly refuted that guess. This was because, apart from using the Black Emperor card in the spirit world, he had nearly never made the Card of Blasphemy appear in the real world ever since he came out to sea. There were only two or three times when they appeared due to a summoning before it quickly entered the spirit world.

With the gray fog's screening abilities and the Card of Blasphemy's anti-divination and anti-prophecy traits, it's impossible for Nast to lock onto me! Klein calmed down as he got up to walk towards the window. Together with Danitz, he looked at the Black Emperor which defied sailboat logic.

The gigantic ship slowly approached in the massive shadows as the scene on the deck became increasingly clear. The sailors were either washing the deck or bragging on the shipboard. None of them had drawn their cutlasses or guns. There was no sign of them planning to plunder the ship.

Near the cabin, there was a mottled stone chair that was two to three meters high. On it sat a colossal man that was comparable to a giant.

Before he could take in Nast's appearance, Danitz couldn't help but lower his head as his body became numb and trembled, to the point of prostrating himself.

Klein also sensed the inexplicable sense of might and awe.

He didn’t forcibly resist it to keep his head up and continue looking at Nast. This had a high chance of attracting his attention, bringing him unwanted trouble.

As a person with many secrets, he had to bow his head when required!

Klein retracted his gaze as he admired the rugs on the deck.

After an unknown period of time, he saw the sunlight illuminate the area again as the shadow vanished.

He looked up and could no longer see the gigantic pitch-black sailboat. The wind and seas were calm, and the skies were clear.

“Why would he suddenly be here? Wasn’t it said that he was still at the Fog Sea recently?” Danitz frowned as he muttered to himself in puzzlement.

That Black Emperor can cruise through the spirit world, so it’s very normal for it to come all the way from the Fog Sea in a span of a few days… This is also probably one of the reasons why Nast is the greatest of the Four Kings… Klein thought to himself.

He believed that Nast was lured by the Black Emperor card, but it was likely that Nast could only determine a vague area.

Klein retracted his gaze and sat back down as though nothing had happened.

The straight line distance between Bayam and Dilynius wasn’t great, but a sufficiently safe sea route was filled with twists and turns, so it took the liner until sunset before it reached the dock.

After that, Klein changed his appearance and used a fake identity to buy two early tickets and set off before it got dark. They arrived at Gargas at dawn.

Danitz didn't enter the city and instead brought Klein on a detour to a private harbor. They then took a simple fishing boat and set off to sea.

After nearly two hours, Klein saw a sailboat which was dozens of meters long. It was clean and produced a golden luster from the sunlight reflected on it.

Compared to similar sailboats, it appeared extremely special. Along the central axis was the main cannon which was stacked with symbols and patterns. Faint but pure light swirled around it.

"That's the Cannon of Purification. It can only be used ten times before six Priests of Light are needed to hold a ritual. They will pray to the corresponding deity to fill it up with spirituality," Danitz introduced smugly.

A gigantic version of a charm? After a certain period of time, it will likely automatically lose its spirituality… Backing Vice Admiral Iceberg is the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun? Or one that can nurture Priests of Light? Klein's remained stoic as he mumbled inwardly.

Back when he first saw the Golden Dream in Danitz's dream, he wasn't too surprised by the main cannon. After all, dreams didn't need to adhere to logic. Perhaps Danitz had seen an ironclad warship and its main cannon had left a deep impression on him, causing him to reproduce it in his dream.

To Klein's surprise, the Golden Dream really had something that required extremely copious amounts of knowledge in mysticism—it wasn't something an ordinary faction could produce.

Soon, the Golden Dream dispatched a dinghy and quickly steered towards the fishing boat.

Danitz spread his hands open before clenching them tightly. He then jumped down and landed in the dinghy without causing it to shake.

He whistled and struck palms with the pirate who was steering. He found the former feeling of ruling over the ocean again.

However, this excitement didn’t last long as the dinghy behind him suddenly dipped a little. One more person had joined them.

…I forgot about that madman… Danitz wiped away his smile and sat down.

Klein observed the pirates and pressed down his hat. He sat down calmly without a word.

Before long, he landed on the deck of the Golden Dream and saw Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards standing in silence.

This pirate admiral was nearly identical to how she looked when they met in the dream. There weren’t any changes to her hair or looks; she now wore dark trousers with a pair of leather boots instead of wearing a dress. She also had a valiant bearing to her wisdom and beauty.

She’s more like a pirate this time than a teacher… Klein nodded gently and smiled politely.

“Good morning, Ma’am Captain.”

“Good morning, Mr. Gehrman,” Edwina replied with a smile.

She turned around and walked to a spot where fishing nets were being hung out to dry. She signaled the pirates to walk away and get busy with their own work.

Fishing nets… As expected of a pirate crew that’s more like treasure hunters… This is in preparation to improve their meals? Klein followed in silence. Danitz very naturally found a few of his companions he was most familiar with to have drinks and to brag to.

Of course, he didn’t let down his guard. From time to time, he would glance over, afraid that his captain would end up exchanging blows with Gehrman Sparrow. He was ready to get his companions to join the brawl at any moment.

This time, Klein didn't wait for Edwina to explain why she had invited him. After two seconds of silence, he asked, "What do you know of Tracy?"

He planned on asking all his questions before listening to Edwina's motives. He wanted to prevent himself from being embarrassed to ask further after rejecting a request he couldn't agree to.

"Tracy?" Edwina's eyes quivered a little. "She's a Demoness, a Sequence 5 Demoness of Affliction."

Demoness? Klein nearly lost it. He felt that his fate seemed to be intertwined with Demonesses. First, it was Witch Trissy, and then there was Demoness of Pleasure Madam Sharon, and then there was Demoness of Pleasure Trissy Cheek, and a high-ranking Demoness he only heard the voice of. Now, there was another Demoness of Affliction, Tracy.

Edwina didn't sense the upheavals he was going through and continued, "She's different from the typical Demoness. She has her own ideals and pursuits. She's quite an oddity in the Demoness Sect. However, she would still work for the organization doing work such as human trafficking or something else."

Different from the typical Demoness? She doesn't give up on herself and chooses to give pleasure to women? Klein suddenly thought of red-haired Helene.

However, he couldn't be certain because not every Demoness was the result of a man changing into a woman. There were real women who wished to become an Assassin.

After asking for the details, Klein deliberated and asked, "We met Nast and his Black Emperor on the way here.

"In the recent months, matters involving you, Senor, Tracy, and Nast have happened in this area of the sea. This is rather abnormal.”

Four out of the Four Kings and Seven Admirals had involved themselves in the Rorsted sea in a short span of time. This wasn’t even including the recently recruited Tarot Club member, Admiral of Stars Cattleya. In terms of probability, this was indeed quite abnormal.

Of course, Klein had some theories, but he wished to see if Vice Admiral Iceberg was able to provide some fresh insight.

Edwina listened without saying a word. She pulled the edge of a fishing net and held it in front of her.

She took out a fountain pen, a brass dagger, metallic bottles, and other things from her pockets and the inner section of her belt and placed them on the spread out net.

They latched on firmly without moving. It didn’t seem like there would be any interaction between them.

At this moment, Edwina bent over and picked up a rock used to press down the net, and she placed it in the middle of the open net.

The net immediately depressed, causing the surroundings to contract. The fountain pen, dagger, and bottles tumbled towards the center and gathered beside the rock.

“It’s probably something like this. Some unknown existence has appeared in the net of fate and is pulling us towards it,” Edwina explained simply.

This is like an actual model of the law of convergence for Beyonder characteristics… Klein thought as he nodded.

With regards to this, he was both enlightened but puzzled as well. He was enlightened because Edwina’s explanation was nearly the same as his guess, but he was puzzled because it couldn’t be used to analyze the problems.

The King of the Five Seas Nast appeared because of me… Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy can also be barely explained, since I did come into contact with Trissy Cheek… As for Vice Admiral Iceberg and Admiral of Blood, I can't find a reason… Perhaps it's purely a coincidence? Besides, it's the latter that attracted the former out… Klein retracted his gaze and asked about something else.

Then, he said, "Ma'am Captain, is there a reason for inviting me here?"

Edwina gave him a deep look and said, "Your identity indicates that you came from Backlund. According to what I know, this identity isn't authentic enough. There's no powerful bounty hunter named Gehrman Sparrow from there."

The faction backing you is very powerful. Furthermore, it has quite an extensive network in Backlund. You managed to so quickly notice a problem with my identity… Klein didn't panic as he smiled calmly.

"Everyone will have some secrets."

Edwina remained silent for a few seconds without pressing the issue. She then said, "Not long before Kalvetua died, you sacrificed something to it."

Klein turned his head slightly and swept his gaze across Danitz, who was drinking beer.

Cough! Cough! Alarmed, Danitz spewed the beer all over himself.

Klein retracted his gaze and didn't deny or admit it as he looked at Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina.

Edwina continued without a change in expression, "After Kalvetua died, the 'Sea God' is still replying to its believers."

Chapter 576 - Vice Admiral Iceberg's Collector's Room

◆

Is she suspecting something? Klein looked straight into Edwina's eyes without moving them away. Nor did his eyes blink or dodge.

After knowing that Danitz had divulged his sacrificial ritual to Kalvetua before it died, Klein had the necessary preparations. If he wasn't standing on the shipboard and was instead sitting on a sofa, then he definitely would've crossed his right leg and leaned back to give a calm and composed answer.

He smiled as he raised his left hand. He introduced with a calm tone, "This glove of mine is called Creeping Hunger."

Klein believed that Danitz, who had witnessed him in combat, had definitely passed the relevant details on to his captain. Therefore, with Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina being of equal rank as Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos, it wasn't difficult for her to guess that he had acquired Creeping Hunger. In that case, taking the initiative to divulge it gave him a psychological advantage rather than being exposed by her.

And for him to suddenly mention it gave it a double meaning. First, he was hinting to her that he had an organization backing him, one that could kill Vice Admiral Hurricane and orchestrate Kalvetua's death and reply to its believers in its stead. Second, it was a warning for Edwina that she was not to attempt to investigate or delve deeper into the matter. Otherwise, the instantaneous death of Vice Admiral Hurricane awaited her.

At this moment in time, Klein continued maintaining Gehrman Sparrow's persona. He didn't directly threaten her or refuse to admit it. Instead, he provided a calm answer that hid madness within it.

Edwina Edwards nodded slightly and suddenly changed topics.

"I plan on providing a certain amount of assistance to the Resistance in the Rorsted Archipelago, mainly in food and fabric."

Assistance? Her backing faction is against Loen, or it just wants to make things difficult for the Church of Storms? Klein wiped his smile and calmly replied, "This has nothing to do with me."

Don't expect me to trip up… he said silently to himself.

Edwina turned her head and raised her arm to point to Blazing Danitz who was drinking while secretly stealing glances.

"I will entrust him to handle it, including contacting the Resistance and confirming the time. We'll arrange for a private harbor, and I wish you can provide sufficient help."

Pfft… Danitz spewed out a golden waterfall from his mouth.

Haha. Pfft! Bam! Bam! Bam! The two pirates sitting beside him laughed as they bent their backs and struck the deck, spewing out the beer that they had just drunk.

One of them had dark skin like he was covered in a layer of metal skin. His waist was rather thick, and although he wasn't fat, he had no curvature to speak of.

Edwina retracted her gaze and added in an unhurried manner before Klein could speak, "You're an adventurer. I believe you won't decline a job that pays well."

You really have found me an excellent excuse… Klein smiled in response.

"Of course."

He didn't ask how much the payment was, while Edwina seemed to forget mentioning it.

This intelligent and beautiful pirate admiral gloomily said, "Senor got someone to pass me the news that he's willing to buy the key of the giants, which I previously discovered, for 5,000 pounds."

It was the item proclaimed to be Death's Key. It was a gigantic black iron key that nearly made Danitz lose his life in Bayam. Klein suspected that it didn't originate from the dark Second Epoch, but it was something that was connected to the Giant King's Court.

She's hinting at me to offer a price? Klein was first taken aback before he came to a realization. He couldn't help but inwardly mumble, 5,000 pounds? I don't even know if the key is of any use, or if it really involves the Giant King's Court! If it doesn't have anything to do with it, can I return it for a refund?

Besides, there's no prior information about it. Even if I take it above the gray fog to divine it, I wouldn't receive any effective revelations.

Yes, a simple inference is that if it doesn't involve the Giant King's Court but some other treasure that I have no idea about, then it would be useless if I buy it. The only benefit is that it will disrupt Admiral of Blood's plans. It harms him without benefiting me. If it involves the Giant King's Court, Admiral of Blood is unlikely to find the target location even if he bought it, as it's located in the Forsaken Land of God. Besides, I plan to hunt him. When the time comes, I can obtain the key without spending any money. It's equivalent to having him buy it for me and watch over it for some time.

Although such thoughts are very idealistic, it's not impossible…

Klein pondered for a few seconds and said, "It might be hiding a huge secret."

He deliberately mentioned this to make Vice Admiral Iceberg unwilling to sell the gigantic black iron key to Admiral of Blood Senor. It was to prevent the latter from rapidly strengthening himself after obtaining the treasure and step into the demigod realm. That would bring a considerable calamity upon Klein.

Edwina listened silently and didn't continue on the topic. She turned her body halfway around and pointed at the cabin's entrance.

"Breakfast has been prepared for you."

"Thank you." Klein took off his hat and bowed.

As he followed Vice Admiral Iceberg into the cabin, he quickly recalled the conversation they just had and sought out the true motive behind Edwina's invitation.

From Gehrman Sparrow's identity problems, to the mystical item suspected to be Creeping Hunger, to the matter of the sacrifice to Kalvetua while the dead Sea God continued responding to believers, all of these matters put together does allow one to imagine that I have a secret organization backing me, one whose motives are unknown.

As for the faction that Vice Admiral Iceberg belongs to, it's very wary, guarded, and interested in this matter. Therefore, it got her to probe me in person to see if they can obtain something?

They're still rather friendly at the moment. Extending their assistance to the Resistance is a way to convey their intentions. It seems they're leaning towards cooperating with the organization backing me. Of course, the unknown always leaves others afraid. Without grasping the situation, the chances of Vice Admiral Iceberg and company attacking me is very, very low.

Heh heh, if they realize that the secret organization backing me was established only about half a year ago, including The World and Miss Xio, whose connection has been established but not recruited, there aren't more than ten people. I wonder if they will get so infuriated that they end up losing control…

As his thoughts raced, Klein entered the cabin and followed a dim passageway, passing through one wooden door after another.

He followed Edwina up some stairs and arrived at a brighter second level.

Before entering the pirate's dining hall, they passed by a half-opened room.

Klein casually glanced inside and saw a gigantic black iron key sitting on a wooden table.

"These items are evidence from our various treasure-hunting expeditions. Most of them are mementos, while others have yet to show their value and require further study." Edwina appeared cold, but her explanations were in great detail. It had the feeling like she was afraid that he wouldn't understand her or was left puzzled.

And when she mentioned the word "study," her aqueous blue eyes clearly lit up a little.

Evidence of the various treasure-hunting expeditions? Klein couldn't help but look inside carefully.

At this point, Edwina pushed open the door and walked in. She then introduced in passing, "This is a gold coin from the Fourth Epoch's Solomon Empire."

Klein's gaze shifted over and saw a coin placed inside a frame.

It was entirely dark gold in color, as though it was combined from two semicircles of different dimensions. It looked extremely asymmetrical, and there was a sharp crown engraved on its surface. It looked very similar to the crown worn on the King of the Five Seas, Nast.

Edwina was like an owner who liked to flaunt her collection. She began introducing the items in the room, making Klein recall a familiar person—Old Mister Eye of Wisdom, the great detective, Isengard Stanton.

In regards to the trait of flaunting collections, they're very similar… Is this a tendency of people with huge collections? Wait, Mr. Stanton had studied in Lenburg for four years. Vice Admiral Iceberg's description includes information that Edwina Edwards that hails from Lenburg. This… Lenburg's capital is the headquarters of the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Mr. Stanton also admitted that he converted his faith to the God of Knowledge and Wisdom while studying abroad… Could the faction backing Vice Admiral Iceberg be them? Klein listened in thought until Edwina stopped in front of the huge iron black key.

Just like he had seen in the dream, the key was about the size of a seven-string zither. An ordinary human would have to wrap their arms around it to move it. It was dull and ancient-looking.

The patterns on it are similar to the City of Silver's style. It clearly has giant traits… Klein nodded and was just about to retract his gaze when he heard Edwina say, "You can study it."

You are letting me study it? You probably have no idea how many latent problems I've triggered in the past. Aren't you afraid that the Golden Dream will disappear once you let me study it… Klein criticized himself in a self-deprecatory manner before reaching out his right hand to touch the black iron key that seemed to belong to a giant's.

He found it ice-cold to the touch, and regardless of how much spirituality he injected into it, it was useless.

Unfortunately, I cannot bring it above the gray fog to study it… Klein retracted his right hand and shook his head indiscernibly.

He shifted his gaze onto a book in goatskin placed on the same table. On the brown cover were words written in ancient Feysac: "Groselle's

Travels.”

[image]

“It originates from a sunken ship. It had been soaked at the bottom of the sea for 165 years without suffering any damage,” Edwina introduced. “It records a story about a giant named Groselle. He had decided to head to the Nation of Frost to hunt the King of the North, a powerful frost dragon. Along the way, he encounters companions, a female elf, a devout ascetic, an aristocrat of the Solomon Empire, and a Loen soldier. The story develops until they encounter the King of the North before it suddenly comes to a halt. It’s not the end, but the later pages cannot be opened no matter what methods are used. You can give it a try.”

This isn’t a notebook in a journal style, but rather a novel? This novel sure is odd. It puts together characters from different epochs and eras. It should be something that was recently produced… Klein flipped through the book and allowed the yellowish-brown pages to slide past one after another.

The content was roughly what Edwina said, but the story appeared rather abrupt and fractured. It kept making Klein suspect if he had missed a paragraph. For example, the protagonists would become familiar with one another moments after encountering each other as strangers.

Soon, he browsed to the last few pages and found that they were stuck together. There was no way he could pry them apart.

Such effects… probably can be dealt with above the gray fog… I wonder what sort of accidents might happen… Klein turned his head to look at Vice Admiral Iceberg.

Edwina fell silent for a moment before saying, “If you wish to have it, I can sell it to you. I’ve studied it for years without gleaning anything from it.

“However, I have a condition.

“What is it?” Klein returned with a question.

Edwina pursed her lips and said, “If you figure out something, you have to tell me the result, so that I won’t have to be puzzled over it.

“As long as you agree to this condition, I can sell it to you for cheap.”

Klein’s interest was suddenly piqued.

“How much?”

“8,000 pounds,” Edwina said calmly.

“Uh…” Klein deliberately pondered as he nodded indifferently. “I’ll consider it.”

I’ll consider how to pretend that this never happened… he thought silently to himself.

Chapter 577 - Book from More Than 3,000 Years Ago

◆ ◆ ◆

Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina didn’t show any changes in her expression when she heard Gehrman Sparrow say that he needed to consider it. She nodded calmly.

“No hurry.”

She seems to feel that I’m unable to make the decision regarding a transaction of this scale and that I need to seek advice from the secret organization backing me… Is this a problem of me not being able to make the decision? This is a problem of not having the money! Klein lampooned and closed Groselle’s Travels. He asked in a deep voice, “Do you know who the author is?

“What happened to the people who last possessed this book?”

Edwina walked in front of him and reached out her right hand. She rubbed the cover with her fingertip and said, “The owners from before cannot be identified, as the sinking of the ship has resulted in the relevant information being lost to history. Similarly, we are unable to confirm who the author is. Oh, the book doesn’t include the author’s name.

“I’ve used some mystical arts to study it and discovered that the goatskin was created at least 3,000 years ago, before the Cataclysm.

“This is why I believe it’s worth at least 8,000 pounds.”

A book from three thousand years ago. There's a dragon, an elf, and a human ascetic, a Solomon Empire noble, and a Loen soldier… These are all concepts from years later! A magical book that contains the power of prophecy? Or did someone specially use an ancient goatskin to create it? But it's meaningless to do so. It's purely a hoax? Klein deliberately curled the corners of his mouth without any intent of smiling.

"The giant's name is Groselle. Could the author be Roselle?"

"No, Roselle's name originated from a root word in Jotun. When ancient Feysac evolved into Intis, there was a second change, making it have a different meaning…" Edwina explained in detail the origins of Roselle's name. It left Klein stunned as he felt like he was back in school.

He nodded gently and said in an unperturbed tone, "If it's an ancient piece of work, I'm very curious as to why a frost dragon would be named the King of the North. What Sequence and pathway does it correspond to?"

Edwina raised her gaze from Groselle's Travels and looked at Klein.

"Before the appearance of the first Blasphemy Slate, there was no concept of Sequences and pathways. Furthermore, many creatures didn't abide by such arrangements. In that Epoch, chaos and mania was the basic attitude to everything.

"Some dragons might gather many Beyonder characteristics related to frost, just like a Demoness's frost, a Zombie's frost, and a Weather Warlock's frost. As such, it would possess rather powerful strength and a relatively high level. Of course, such a gathering would definitely lead to death and a loss of control.

"This means that if it doesn't die, it would definitely lose control and become a monster. However, a dragon is a monster in and of itself."

If there are many similar products of this sort from the dragons, giants, and elves, then it can be understood why the Second Epoch is known as the Dark Epoch… Klein pondered for a moment and inquired as though he was talking to himself, “This results in the wastage of Beyonder characteristics.”

Edwina looked at him for a few seconds.

“Emperor Roselle once said this:

“Whatever separates will definitely converge, and whatever converges will definitely separate.”

The Emperor said that before? I understand the first part. That’s another form of saying the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics. But what does the second part mean?

After the convergence happens to a certain extent, it would tend to separate and dissociate? When one doesn’t belong to a particular pathway, the extremely chaotic convergent mix will cause a dissociation? The more chaotic it is, the more repulsion there is between the characteristics?

Such words aren’t likely to be said to anyone. It definitely isn’t something that’s spread out in the public… Last time, I guessed from the Vice Admiral’s usage of the Roselle’s Dream Spell and her last name that she’s a descendant of one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Edwards… It’s extremely possible…

After the Emperor perished, their family escaped to Lenburg and gradually converted their faith to the God of Knowledge and Wisdom?

What a good teacher. She answers any question!

Klein didn’t speak further as he continued admiring Vice Admiral Iceberg’s collection.

At the same time, he had some thoughts. He planned on asking Little Sun via The World during the Tarot Gathering if he knew of the book, Groselle’s Travels.

Of course, in order to prevent The Hanged Man from sensing something problematic with The World and hence, figure out that something was amiss with The Fool, he decided to communicate in private while blocking everyone else.

After a brief excursion of the room, Edwina led Klein out and entered the captain’s room in the dining hall.

“The relatively special food here is yogurt. You can add strawberry jam and other things. You can also directly add honey…” Edwina pointed to the row of food outside. “There’s some dried fish that isn’t bad. They come from the deep sea, species that have yet to be named.”

As she spoke, she gestured for Klein to take the food for himself to bring back to the room. She then got up and made herself an example.

Klein took some yogurt of unknown origins and added a few spoonfuls of honey. Then, he carried his tray and placed pork sausages, buttered bread, and other food on it.

During this process, he saw a young man dressed in a white shirt and black vest, decked out with a flowery bow tie, looking more like an office worker than a pirate, approach Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina and have a hushed exchange with her.

The man had pretty good looks with almost blond hair other than his slightly black hair roots. His hair was neatly combed to the sides.

His eyes were a very light lake-green color, and his nose was sharp. He had thin lips and that made him exude a trustworthy vibe.

“Don’t be fooled by that guy’s appearance. He’s a wolf-fish can. He stinks deep down!” Danitz whispered in contempt, having entered the pirate’s dining hall and arriving beside Klein at some point in time.

Klein turned his head and glanced at him without saying a word. This was because he knew Danitz would offer to explain without him egging him on.

Without waiting for Danitz to speak, a man with a swollen waist beside him said with a crude and sharp voice, “He’s the third mate, Jodeson. He used to be a casanova and part-time pirate, saying that he would steal our Captain’s heart, but he ended up getting a beating. He ended up staying to be educated. Dogsh*t!”

“In short, he’s a bad egg!” Danitz emphasized.

“He’s a bad egg!” another pirated with iron-black skin echoed.

Why do I have the nagging feeling that all of you are the same… Klein thought and said, “Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson with a bounty of 5,200 pounds? Sequence 6?”

As expected of the standard Gehrman Sparrow reaction… Danitz glanced to the side as a lingering sense of fear was hidden within his contempt.

“He’s not that strong, but he’s very strange. In my brawls with him, no—when in combat, fireballs suddenly can’t be used, and he will be able to replicate my fire powers.”

A very familiar description… Klein subconsciously glanced towards Jodeson. After some careful thought, he recalled the familiarity.

This is very similar to the Sealed Artifact, Blood Vessel Thief, found behind Tingen City’s Chanis Gate!

Klein had already forgotten the Blood Vessel Thief’s Sealed Artifact number, but he still remembered clearly that it could temporarily steal a person’s Beyonder powers for themselves.

The corresponding pathway? Klein retracted his gaze and discovered that Danitz and his two companions were drinking while looking in that direction.

Thinking back to how Danitz divulged his sacrifice to Kalvetua, Klein took a cup of beer and carried his food tray towards the Captain’s dining room. He said indifferently, “All of you like her, right?”

Pfft… Pfft… Pfft… Behind Klein, there was the sound of alcohol being spewed out at the same time.

He saw Danitz jump backward through the corner of his eye, looking at him in horror before turning his head in relief to size up his companions.

They had unknowingly opened up a gap between themselves as the look in their eyes turned complicated. They looked like they had the fury of being fooled.

Klein didn’t stop. He returned to the Captain’s dining room and enjoyed breakfast.

After a while, Edwina carried a meal tray back.

She drank a mouthful of milk and paused before saying, “Danitz showed me the summoning ritual of your messenger.

“It mentions that one gold coin is a necessary component.

“I’m somewhat perplexed. Does it refer to Loen gold coins, or those from Intis, Feysac, or somewhere else? Their weights are all different, and the amount of gold they contain is different.”

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “Loen’s gold coin.”

This is also the gold coin that’s worth the most… It’s not like I need to pay for it myself… Klein added inwardly.

Edwina nodded.

“Payment also needs to be done when receiving a reply?”

“Different spirit world creatures have different hobbies,” Klein said.

He knew that Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina was a researcher of spirit world creatures, and he believed that she could understand what he meant.

Furthermore, he wasn't lying. He just hid the fact that the messenger's owner could also pay for it.

"Yes," Edwina very seriously answered him, "I once attempted to find a messenger, but I could only use trial and error for the incantation. Not only was it dangerous, but it was very difficult to satisfy the requirements. I eventually had to give up.

"This is one of the reasons. The other reason is that simulating the power of the undead isn't enough to sign the contract.

"Your incantation has given me quite the inspiration."

Klein ate his breakfast in silence without explaining anything. This was because this was the knowledge he had learned from Mr. Azik. He wasn't at liberty to teach it to others without receiving permission from him.

After a delicious and quiet breakfast, the Golden Dream approached a private harbor and dropped Klein and Danitz off.

Danitz looked back at the glimmering golden ship and suddenly sighed.

"I feel like my friendship has sunk into the ocean!"

Klein pressed down on his hat and calmly said, "Losers can always form alliances among themselves."

"…"

Danitz was unsure whether he should be happy or sad.

After changing their identities and creating fake identification, they successfully bought tickets back to Bayam and boarded the ship. Klein finally had a private space for himself.

He entered the washroom and went above the gray fog and began scanning through the believers' prayers.

This time, the first thing that appeared before him was the bald member of the Resistance, Kalat.

“Honorable God, we have discovered the whereabouts of red-haired Helene. She's currently hiding in the Intis embassy.

“This has been confirmed by a laundry maid and gardener.”

Chapter 578 - “Abduction”

◆

In the Intis embassy of the City of Generosity, Bayam.

Helene sat in front of a dresser, looking at her beautiful yet somewhat frail reflection. She sat there in a daze for several minutes.

Her escape from the Black Death had been filled with anticipation and torment. She was afraid that any tiny mishap would cause her to be discovered by pirates or adventurers, causing her to be caught by Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy once again and making her lose all her freedom. She would then never be able to return to her hometown and return to the life she originally enjoyed.

Only when she used the meager connections left by her family did she manage to hide inside her country’s embassy and obtain a ticket to leave the sea, providing her a little relief.

However, this still wasn’t enough to make her feel at ease. She believed that everything would only be truly over when she stepped onto the Northern Continent.

With this in mind, Helene couldn’t help but raise her right hand and touch her cheeks which weren’t considered fair but was sufficiently healthy. She realized that her exquisiteness had improved significantly since her time as a sea merchant. She felt like time had reversed, making her mistake herself as returning to her days as a young lady.

In fact, after entering the Intis embassy, she had an additional choice other than escaping the sea—cooperate with the Church of Storms, Loen’s military, or the embassy. By using herself as bait, they could capture Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy.

But after considerable thought, she finally gave up on this plan. She even begged her family elder who was an officer in the embassy to keep the information of her hiding in there from others.

Regardless, she ultimately didn’t cause me any actual harm. Many a time, she indulged and satisfied me… Apart from every night… every night… But that’s only on the surface… Amid her recollections, Helene quickly blushed red.

Those intoxicating nights, the fiery passion from having limbs intertwined with each other, and the unimaginable pleasure flashed past her mind, leaving her unable to compose herself.

Helene slowly took a deep breath before exhaling.

She shook her head and made her pining for freedom, her homeland, and her family occupy her heart again.

She once again looked at her reflection and coiled up her drooping red hair.

Then, she thickened her eyebrows with makeup and darkened the contours, making her facial features sharper and pronounced.

After this round of make up, Helene looked more androgynous, with a masculine air to her.

Finally, she took off her clothes and used a cloth to flatten her chest. She then wore a white shirt, a black vest, men’s trousers, and a double-breasted frock coat.

Finally, she took a silk hat and wore it on her head, hiding the coiled red hair inside.

At this moment, her reflection appeared more like a handsome young man than a lady. Her emerald-like eyes specifically seemed to suit her getup, giving her an alluring level of profundity.

Helene patiently waited until someone knocked on her door.

She picked up her luggage and walked out the door. She followed the good friend of her senior family member all the way to the side door in the embassy's garden.

A carriage was there waiting for her. It was to send her to the harbor where she would board a liner and head for the Loen Kingdom's Pritz Harbor. There, she would make a detour to return to Intis.

[image]

Helene had anti-tracking Beyonder powers. She carefully observed the surroundings, including the carriage driver.

A thin and virile local. Doesn't like wearing hats. His looks are identical to the one I met before. He looks a little nervous, but that's normal… After Helene did her final checks, she thanked her family senior's friend, carried her luggage, and boarded the carriage.

As the wheels started to roll, she pursed her lips and looked out the window, watching one Intis parasol tree after another being quickly left behind.

This gave her an inexplicable feeling as though she was back in Trier.

It was a huge city filled with sunshine, located in the region of the Ryan River and Srenzo River. It was a radiant and enchanting scene with all sorts of roses. It was a place with bustling arts and humanities, a sacred land for artists, musicians, and novelists.

That was Intis's capital. After Emperor Roselle rebuilt it, it was in the true sense of the word, a world-class metropolis. It was also Helene's hometown. She grew up there and often cried when she saw it in her dreams.

After an unknown period of time, Helene suddenly felt something was amiss. The surrounding streets were turning more deserted and remote.

As a sea merchant, although she spent most of her time in the Fog Sea and wasn't too familiar with Bayam in the Sonia Sea, being a Sequence 9 Hunter made her sufficiently alert.

"Is this route correct?" Helene moved from her seat and carefully asked the carriage driver.

She was prepared to jump off the carriage and produce a fireball at any moment.

The carriage driver didn't look back as he continued looking forward. He said with a sycophant smile, "Honorable Lady, this route is closer, and it's not that easy to get into jams.

"As you know, Bayam was built years ago. Back then, there weren't that many people or carriages. Many streets are narrow. Around noon and in the evening, it's very easy to encounter jams. Walking would be even faster than taking a carriage."

Is that so? Helene thought about it and believed his explanation. This was because she had encountered such situations in several cities.

Trier is still the best. When Emperor Roselle reformed the old city districts, he had the foresight to widen the roads. There's sufficient space even today… Helene had this thought flash through her mind when she heard the horse pulling the carriage neigh, seemingly in pain.

"Wait a moment. It seems to have stepped on something." The carriage driver stopped the carriage to the side and jumped off.

Helene originally didn't think much of it, but sweeping the area with the corner of her eye, she realized that they were in an uninhabited quiet alley.

Her heartstrings tightened as she didn't hesitate to attempt breaking through the carriage walls and escape.

Regardless of whether it was an overreaction or not, she believed that it was necessary.

At that moment, an intense horror surged out from the bottom of her heart. It felt like she had been locked onto by an extremely hungry monster.

The pressure she felt at a spiritual level left her hesitant. She didn't dare to rashly take action.

Following that, she heard a deep voice.

"I won't harm you.

"I have some questions for you."

Helene's mind raced as she quickly considered the options placed before her.

Ultimately, she didn't rashly escape. She sat back in her spot under the tremendously terrifying pressure.

She planned on assessing the situation first before adjusting her plans.

The door to the carriage opened, and the thin and virile local carriage driver walked in. He sat opposite Helene, and he was none other than Faceless Klein.

In order to act as the carriage driver, he had specifically practiced how to drive a horse and carriage. This was a technique he had failed to properly learn while he was on the Tingen City's Nighthawks squad. Due to the little amount of time he had, he didn't master it sufficiently and could only use Creeping Hunger's aura to successfully make the horse obedient.

At the same time, Danitz, who was hidden nearby, quickly ran over and took the carriage driver's seat and began driving the carriage.

His round felt hat was pressed low, and he was dressed like a real carriage driver.

Helene bent her back in a guarded manner, like a leopard who was ready to pounce at any time.

She felt that the gaze of the man opposite her was sweeping through her forehead, her eyebrows, her eyes, nose, mouth, neck, chest, waist, and legs. It left her extremely uneasy.

She had encountered such gazes and methods of sizing her up back in Intis, in Trier, and during the days when she was out at sea. It was something that disgusting perverts filled with sexual desires possessed.

But this time, she strangely didn't feel insulted. She didn't have the feeling that the man would rip off her clothes or was fantasizing about something abnormal.

Instead, he looks like he's studying food… He's like a icy-cold snake that's slithering across my skin… Helene finally couldn't bear it as she asked, "What questions do you have?"

After fully grasping her looks and features, Klein leaned forward and placed his arms on his thighs in a natural manner. He slightly clasped his palms and said, "Have you heard of a person named Jimmy Necker?"

Helene took a few seconds to recall before firmly shaking her head.

She slightly frowned and asked in a daze, "Have you gotten the wrong person?"

"He's a tycoon, someone who likes to collect things. Have you heard of such a person from Tracy?" Klein asked again.

Tracy… Helene sighed secretly and replied seriously, "No. She never mentioned a tycoon who likes collecting."

Klein looked at the red-haired lady's eyes and said with an unhurried tone, "Then, does her room have any ancient documents regarding the Southern Continent's Balam Empire?"

"No. She's not someone who enjoys reading documents. She hates reading. She even gets me to read novels to her." With that said, Helene revealed a bitter smile.

"What novels does she read?" Klein asked without a change in tone.

"Those classics by Roselle, as well as any contemporary romance stories," Helene answered frankly.

Klein nodded.

"Does she have a collector's room?"

"Yes, but apart from her and a few mysterious visitors, no one is allowed entry, including me," Helene said as she recalled.

Klein fell silent for a few seconds as he maintained an unchanging posture.

"Tell me your story."

"Mine?" Helene pointed at herself in surprise.

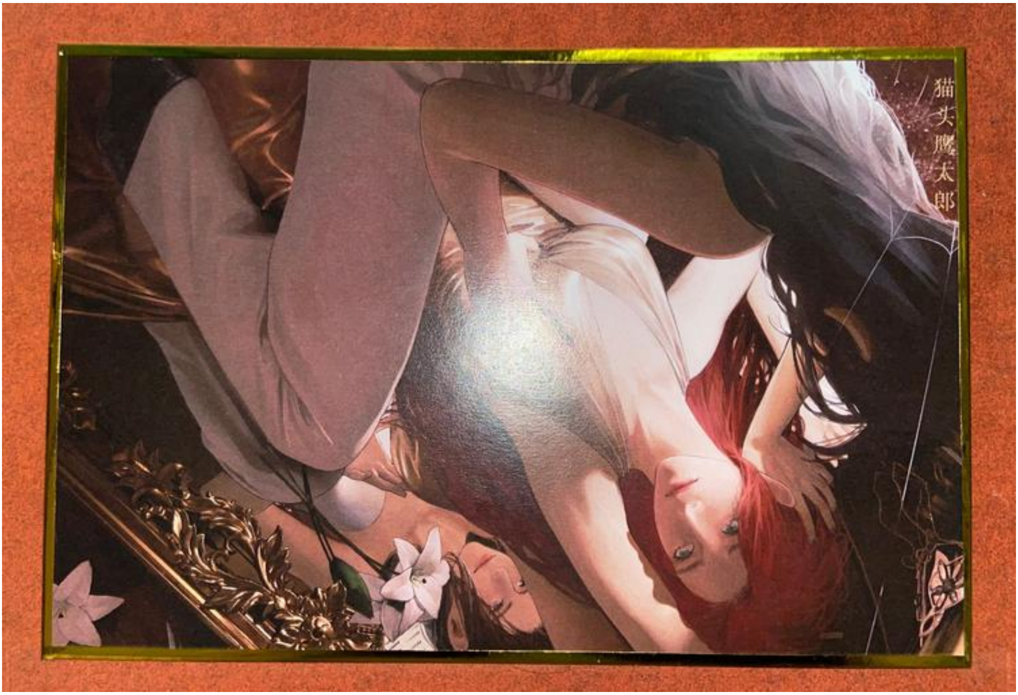
Klein nodded gently without repeating himself.

Helene said after momentarily being dazed, "My story is very simple.

"My father is a member of the former Sauron royal family of Intis. He received quite a bit of wealth, but he lost himself to alcohol, mistresses, marijuana, and gambling, causing him to eventually go bankrupt.

"In order to repay the debts, I chose to accept some conditions raised by the family and became a Beyonder. I then went out to sea to become a sea merchant."

Helene and Tracy having s#x. I mean, a lovely night together:



Chapter 579 - Academic Question

◆

As she spoke, Helene’s eyes moved up slightly as though she was immersed in her memories.

“Early on, I transported iron and coal from Midseashire to Feynapotter, then I shipped back tobacco, coffee, cocoa, and other native specialties back to Intis. This is a sea route that borders the shore, so it was rather safe. The competition was intense as well. In order to quickly get out of my predicament and save up money, I worked hard to raise my Sequence, hoping that I could trade in the colonies.

“Unfortunately, just as I familiarized myself with the sea route and made some money, I chanced upon Ailment Maiden Tracy, who wasn’t Vice Admiral Ailment at the time, in one of her raids during my second trip to West Balam. She only had one ship back then, but she was very powerful. My partner and I resisted with our lives, but all of that was in vain.

“She doesn’t have the habit of killing mindlessly. All she did was snatch the goods, as well as myself…”

As expected of an oddity among Demonesses… Klein listened in silence and used his Clown powers to suppress his embarrassed emotions to expressionlessly ask, “How far did the relationship between the two of you go?”

“We didn’t!” Helene instinctively denied. “She forced me! I-I didn’t want to die. I-I could o-only choose to accept it. B-besides, she’s a woman!”

Lady, there's no need to get so worked up. If I had asked if the two of you had a relationship that went beyond friendship, would you have jumped out? It's only because I'm kind enough and had considered your shame which had prevented me from being so direct… Sigh. Under the facade of the crazy Gehrman Sparrow is a gentlemanly me… That's the true me… Klein switched to asking without a change in expression, "What kind of food do you like? Are there any dishes you especially like? Do you prefer sweet or salty food, or somewhere in between?

"What food do you dislike? What food are you allergic to?

"Do you have any dietary restrictions? If you do, what are they?

"…"

These questions made Helene feel like she was in a dream, as though everything was surreal.

She never imagined that the man would ask her such questions. It was like a pursuer was asking his crush what hobbies she had.

No! No pursuer would ask such questions! These are all indirectly obtained from numerous chats, or are obtained by other means! No woman would like to be questioned like that! T-this is like a survey which Emperor Roselle created… W-what does he want? He's asking these questions without any expression. I'm so afraid… Helene fell silent for a few seconds before answering them one after another under Klein's cold, unmoving gaze.

Klein maintained his seating posture of leaning forward and continued asking, "How do you usually sit? Do you have any habitual motions…"

The more Helene answered, the more panicked she became. She had the inexplicable feeling that answering these questions would make her disappear.

By the time the perplexing and terrifying "survey" was done, she felt heavy deep down, constantly suspecting that a terrible outcome awaited her.

Why don't I risk it and jump off the carriage while he isn't paying attention? Helene seriously considered the possibility.

However, the man didn't seem to have any indication of attacking her, and this made her indecisive. She felt that there was hope to resolve the matter amicably.

After grasping Helene's personality, habits, and preferences, Klein turned the topic towards Vice Admiral Ailment.

"What do you know of Tracy?"

Helene fell silent as her mouth quivered a few times. She couldn't bring herself to speak.

After the carriage continued on for quite a while, it was only then that she finally smiled ruefully.

"She possesses excellent combat abilities. She's good at infiltration and curses, with her being capable of turning invisible and becoming light.

"She grasps the means of swapping bodies with a mirror or magic staff, as well as black flames and frost. She can make enemies in a certain range suddenly fall sick, including colds, pneumonia, gastroenteritis, and other illnesses. The longer the fight lasts with her, the worse the ailments inflicted. Some Beyonders might even directly die from a heart attack.

"She c-can also create invisible threads to control her enemy. She knows human ana-anatomy very well. She can easily give people pleasure through contact—th-that kind of pleasure.

"She has an active charming ability that would make many pirates give up putting up a resistance once they're near her.

"S-she's often friendly, but she's cruel to her enemies. She enjoys destroying the perfection that others would wish to protect, making them suffer immense pain and torment…”

Helene didn’t go into detail on how Tracy destroyed the state of perfection of others. There were many cruel stories and hilarious matters. This Ailment Maiden had once made her enemies—a father and son duo—kill each other, as well as instigate an enemy’s wife to betray him and let him come across the scene.

As expected of a Demoness. She’s a Sequence 5 Demoness who’s one Sequence higher than Demoness of Pleasure… Klein gained a basic grasp of Tracy’s combat style, and he calmly asked again, “Does she have any mystical items?”

“…Yes. A bangle that’s inlaid with diamonds. As long as she wears it, it’s very difficult for Tracy to be injured.” Helene hesitated before revealing Vice Admiral Ailment’s secret.

Klein asked a few other detailed questions as he straightened his body a little.

“Tracy is helping the Demoness Sect perform human trafficking?”

This was something he took great notice of when he heard Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina mention it.

The Demoness Sect cooperated with Ince Zangwill, and it was related to the royal family. It involved an underground ruin whose location was unknown.

Tracy helped them in the human trafficking.

Baelen, who was pointed out by The Hanged Man, was someone who orchestrated numerous disappearance cases of slaves and the disappearance of primitive tribes in the Southern Continent. With him appearing at the underground ruins, he would be a member of the upper echelons.

The biggest human trafficker, Capim, had Beyonders who were of the Arbiter pathway protecting him. And this is a pathway controlled by the Loen and Feynapotter royal families, as well as their military…

All of these matters that Klein was aware of linked together to form a line, but he wasn't sure what it actually exposed. Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy was a breakthrough point.

"What Demoness Sect?" Helene asked in puzzlement.

"You don't have to know," Klein calmly replied.

If you don't know what a Demoness is and end up suspecting that the extremely charming Vice Admiral Ailment who gives you pleasure is a dirty and savage man, then I'm afraid that you would've lost control on the spot… You don't have to thank me. I'm a good person… Klein lampooned inwardly.

Helene suppressed her puzzlement and said while recalling, "In recent years, she's been busy shipping slaves. The other end of the trade is Crazy Captain Connors Viktor. Rumor has it that he and many human traffickers and slave merchants in Loen have a deep partnership."

Crazy Captain Connors Viktor… Klein remembered the nickname and name.

He nodded and no longer spoke in a heavy voice. Instead, he said in a relatively gentle voice, "Did you involve yourself in such matters? Such as being a part-time pirate?"

This very polite and amiable tone left Danitz trembling for some baffling reason. He felt that Gehrman Sparrow being in such a state was much more terrifying than his cold and expressionless state.

"No." Helene shook her head. "The blood of the Sauron family flows in me. I will not bring shame to my family. Be-besides, Tracy always said that she wouldn't let me be tainted by bloodshed and darkness. All of that would be faced by her."

She must've read too many romance novels… Klein took out a gold coin and allowed it to weave between his fingers like it was dancing.

He didn't keep it from Helene as he performed a divination in front of her to confirm that she wasn't lying.

The result was that she was rather honest.

This is also because I didn't ask in detail about her emotional entanglements with Tracy; otherwise, she wouldn't be that honest… Klein secretly reflected and put away the gold coin.

At that moment in time, the carriage had circled around the harbor, no longer heading for the ship that Helene was meant to board.

Klein looked at the scenery outside the window and took out a small metal bottle. He handed it to Helene and said, "Use the liquid inside to wipe away your makeup."

"Why?" Helene subconsciously asked.

"This isn't something you should be asking," Klein leaned forward once again and said without expression.

Despite feeling aggrieved and furious, Helene didn't wish to agitate the man and get on his bad side at such a critical moment. She could only remove the bottle cap and took a sniff at it to test if it was poisonous.

"Can it be used directly?" she asked.

Klein tersely acknowledged in the affirmative.

Helene took out a white handkerchief and dabbed it with the bottle's liquid. Then, she began wiping her face and quickly cleaned away her prior disguise.

Her aesthetically-pleasing masculinity vanished and her contours became softer as Helene's original looks were presented before Klein.

After careful observation, Klein calmly said, “Take off your hat and let down your hair.”

Helene furrowed her brows and had a nagging feeling that what followed would be unacceptable instructions such as taking off her clothes.

She took a deep breath, removed her hat, and released her coiled red hair. Immediately, she appeared extremely feminine.

Klein straightened his body and leaned back on the carriage wall before calmly instructing, “You can put on your disguise again.”

Is he a madman? After all this, he wants me to revert to how I was before? Helene didn’t dare to voice her displeasure, afraid that the man would raise unacceptable requests. She hurriedly opened her suitcase and took out a mirror to look at herself.

The makeup has been removed so cleanly… She was stunned for a moment before she quickly put on makeup and coiled her hair.

When the carriage came to a stop, she was already looking like a handsome young man.

Klein nodded indiscernibly and looked out the window before retracting his gaze.

“One last question.”

“What?” Helene asked nervously.

Klein raised his line of sight a little as his facial muscles moved.

“How big are your breasts?”

“…” Helene was first taken aback before her face flushed red.

This wasn’t a redness caused by embarrassment, but an anger from wanting to punch the man in the chin.

Klein didn't move his gaze as he calmly added, "It's an academic question."

"…" Noticing no sexual intent from his eyes, Helene inhaled and closed her eyes to answer the question.

Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief and took out a boat ticket and a stack of papers.

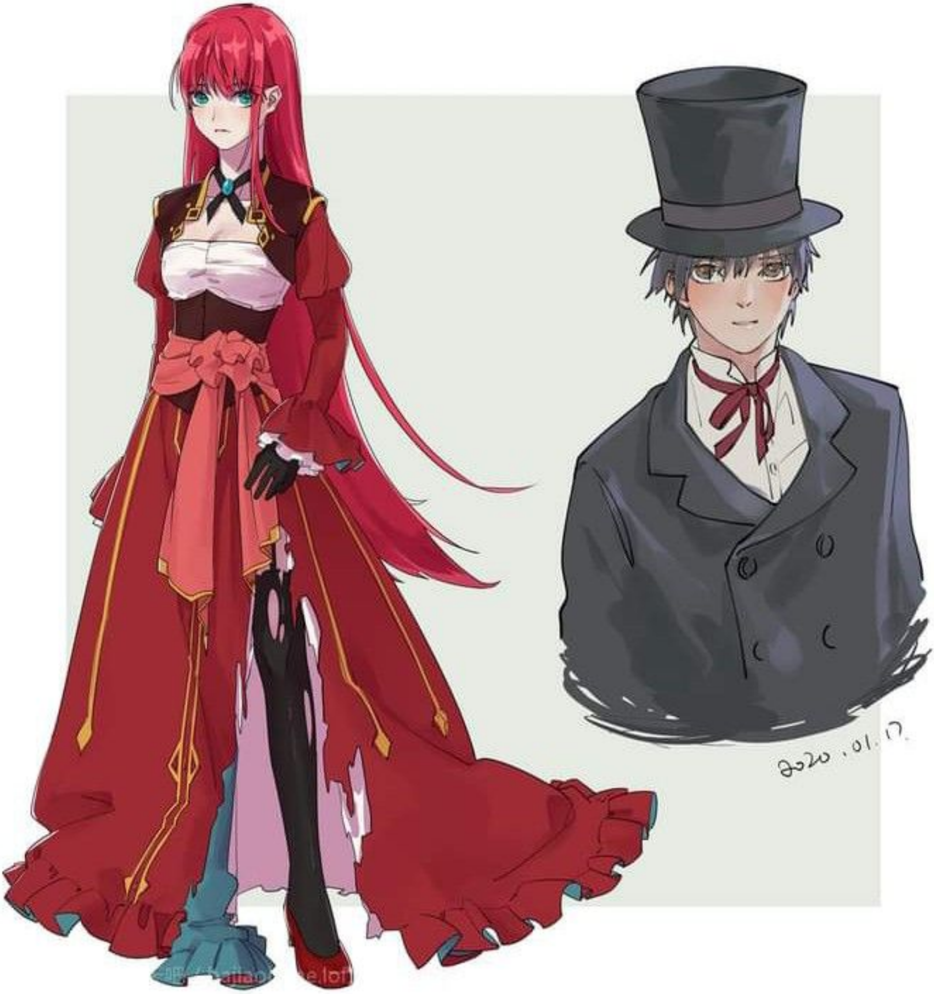
"New identification, tickets to Tiana Port.

"Once you're there, buy tickets to Pritz Harbor."

Helene glanced at him vigilantly before receiving the tickets and documents. She carried her suitcase and carefully alighted the carriage to see the ship she was taking.

Klein followed behind her and watched her leave. From the corner of his eye, he saw Danitz trying hard to hold back his laughter.

Sometimes it takes a real man to be best girl:



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Chapter 580 - Wormtongue

◆

Klein slowly turned his head and shot a glance at Danitz.

The pirate with a bounty of 5,500 pounds immediately shut his mouth and clamped up. It was as though nothing had happened.

After confirming that Helene boarded the liner without issues, he turned around and walked to the side of the carriage. He pretended to casually ask, “Did you hear the conversation?”

“No, no. A little, just a little…” Danitz shook his head as he gave a hollow chuckle.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “You have to remember; otherwise, it’ll be easy for people to see through you.”

“See through… me?” Danitz raised his hand and pointed at his nose and said blankly.

Klein said without changing his expression, “She’s from the Sauron family. She has anti-tracking Beyonder abilities. Together with her ticks and behavior, it can be confirmed that she’s a Sequence 7 from the Hunter pathway, Pyromaniac. She’s very similar to you, and you’ll be able to do a good job acting as her.”

“Me? I won’t do! I won’t be able to disguise myself like her! I’ll be identified with just a look!” Danitz jumped in fright.

Klein held back his laughter and said in a deep voice, “I’ll lend you Creeping Hunger.”

"…No, no! I have no experience in such matters. I won't be able to fool Vice Admiral Ailment's subordinates!" Abnormally nervous and horrified, Danitz declined the mission.

To him, this was an extremely embarrassing and dogsh*t matter. Only a pervert or a madman would complete it without any qualms.

Klein nodded in agreement and said without an expression, "Indeed, you are rather stupid."

Danitz forced a smile. "Yes, I'm very stupid."

Klein didn't say a word as he walked past Danitz and opened the door to the carriage.

Danitz followed him with his eyes when he suddenly saw Gehrman Sparrow's hair turn red.

He blinked his dull eyes and saw the man's facial contours turn soft and his eyes turning emerald-green. His lips turned thin as they pursed, making him look frail and insecure. He had a masculine beauty and looked identical to Helene who had just left.

"…" After watching Gehrman Sparrow enter the carriage, Danitz turned his head back as the corners of his mouth twitched.

He was silent for a few seconds before he muttered silently, What a madman. He changed into a woman without any hesitation!

I have to say that Helene looks pretty good when disguised as a man.

This Beyonder power sure is useful. If I can receive an item like that and figure out what Captain's ideal type is, then I can make the corresponding changes and make her fall in love with me.

But in that case, would the person that she falls in love with still be me?

Danitz found himself pondering over philosophical questions until he heard a cough from the carriage behind him.

He snapped to his senses and drove the carriage away from the harbor. He planned on making a huge detour before circling back.

Inside the carriage, Klein wasn't as calm as he appeared. Although Helene was in male clothes, allowing him to temporarily not bother about the most embarrassing parts, he still felt quite embarrassed to have his face change into a woman's while squeezing out breasts. This left him feeling down and awkward.

Sigh, a Faceless's change in appearance is very easy. The difficult part is apparently the mind. To act as a good Faceless, I'll have to cross many mental blocks. If I don't, then I'll have to spend a great deal of time to act as a real person for many years. My identity has to be recognized by everyone as I fully immerse myself into that character until I almost treat it like it's real… This is more challenging on my bottom line. It's crazy and warped.

To speed up my progress, I have to overcome a certain number of obstacles.

Klein pulled out a suitcase from under the carriage's seat. He rummaged for some cloth and clothes before replicating Helene's disguise.

He could've gotten Danitz to act as Helene and borrow the mystical item with the Faceless Beyonder characteristic from Justice for a few days without a problem.

However, that meant that there was a high chance of Danitz facing Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy directly. Without the Clown's powers, it was almost impossible for him to hide it from her, putting his life in extreme danger.

It was impossible for Klein to make others bear such huge risks for his own matters; therefore, he could only challenge himself and do it himself.

Soon, he looked identical to Helene. Under the black top hat was a handsome androgynous face with soft and pronounced contours. His emerald-green eyes looked as beautiful as gems.

He adjusted his build, making himself shorter by a few centimeters and narrowing his shoulder width. His frame shrank and he looked like he had lightened significantly.

His current appearance quickly surfaced in Klein's mind with his Clown powers.

It's still not bad. There's not much to it… Perhaps it's because I'm not in female clothes, so it doesn't feel much different from turning into Gehrman Sparrow, Danitz, or someone else. I just look prettier and have some discomfort in my chest… If I look like that on Earth, I wouldn't have needed to worry about not having a girlfriend, he mocked and consoled himself as he curled the corners of his mouth.

What looked like a normal action on Gehrman Sparrow now looked pitiful and sorry.

F**k! Klein cursed silently as he quickly adjusted his state of mind. Bit by bit, he immersed himself into the state of true acting.

With the passage of time, he discovered that the resistance he had had lessened significantly. Following that, he felt relaxed and calm as though the potion had harmonized itself further.

And that meant that the speed of his digestion would speed up.

It really is useful… Klein said silently as he got up and took four steps counterclockwise. He went above the gray fog and once again confirmed the danger level of his upcoming operation.

After returning to the real world, he switched to using Helene's voice and deliberately suppressed it.

"Head to Pier 6 at the harbor."

Danitz didn't find anything amiss, but he suddenly came to a realization after changing directions. He couldn't help but tremble. It's like the real person… I wouldn't be able to distinguish him if the day comes where he transforms into Captain to fool me…

After a while, the carriage reentered the harbor and went to the liner which Helene was originally meant to board. But it didn't truly approach it and had instead circled around to a nearby warehouse.

Danitz jumped off the carriage and knocked on the warehouse's door, according to a prior agreed pattern.

Out came a group of dock workers who were clearly of native blood. Following that, they made way.

After confirming that there wasn't anything amiss, the bald member of the Resistance, Kalat, came out on a wheelchair.

"Where is she?" he looked at Danitz as he asked.

Through Helene's matter, Danitz had successfully established communications with the Resistance.

Danitz laughed mischievously.

"In the carriage.

"She's been drugged with medicine that makes her lose her strength. Its effects will last another ten hours.

"Remember, I want 70% of the thousand-pound reward."

Kalat raised his right arm and waved it. Immediately two thin members of the Resistance got onto the carriage.

"Boss, it's that woman," they soon poked their heads out and said in the tone of a local gang.

"Take her down. Our mission is to protect her," Kalat emphasized again.

Helene, who was disguised as a male, was helped down from the carriage with two soldiers supporting her on either side of her

With his control as a Clown, Klein pretended to be weak in the knees as he staggered.

He was soon moved to a room among the Bayam populace. At the same time, Kalat instructed a local gang member, who believed in Sea God, to find Strongman Ozil and tell him that they had found the target. He was to bring 1,000 pounds in exchange for the woman. As for Danitz, he had returned to the inn to await the news.

At noon, Ozil replied saying that he couldn’t be sure if the person was the real deal and had planned on sending a person over to confirm things.

Kalat agreed to his request.

Closer to the evening, a figure appeared outside the house.

He was a man wearing pantaloons and a jacket. He was Loenese and was dressed in the style of a native. He had short brows, about half of the average person’s. His brown eyes were recessed, and his face looked cut.

Kalat pushed himself on a wheelchair and appeared by the door. After seeing the man, he said in a heavy voice, “Mithor King?”

“Should I be honored that you actually know me?” The man laughed.

He was originally a captain of one of the pirate ships under Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos. After Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy took over the crew, he took on the role as third mate of her flagship, the Black Death. His nickname was Wormtongue, with a bounty of 5,400 pounds.

Kalat didn’t reply as he wheeled himself to make way.

Mithor entered a nearby room after being led by a gang member. Inside, he saw Helene sitting by the bedside in a gentleman's outfit. Her eyes were darting about and glaring at him. Her teeth bit down on her lip as she looked furious and fearful while having feelings of despair and obstinacy.

"It's her alright. However, I can't be certain because she's wearing thick makeup. It's hard to tell what a woman really looks like once they don thick makeup. Wipe her face clean for me. Hey, why didn't you cuff her? Don't you know she's dangerous?" Mithor surveyed the area and took two steps back in a guarded manner.

"She's been drugged. She doesn't have much strength and hasn't resisted. But since you asked…" Kalat lifted his chin to a Resistance soldier.

The soldier found a pair of cuffs and walked over. After pulling Klein's hands back, he cuffed him.

Klein continued wearing mixed emotions like before, trying hard to act like he was struggling despite having a lack of strength.

Then, another gang member got some water and wiped his face with a rough towel.

Thankfully, most of the makeup in this era isn't waterproof… Klein began changing his face's contours as the towel covered his face.

Before long, Mithor saw Helene's moist face. She looked extraordinarily frail and beautiful in this state. Her emerald-green eyes shot out with intense hatred and a look of perplexity.

Unfortunately, she's Captain's… Mithor's throat moved.

As a man and a pirate, he often fantasized about Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy and red-haired Helene falling into his embrace at the same time, but of course, it was only his imagination.

The way he looks at me is disgusting… Klein nearly puked.

Although he knew that it was targeted at red-haired Helene and had nothing to do with him, he couldn't help but feel goosebumps.

In that instant, he got to know the real him a little deeper. He knew what things he couldn't accept at all.

"It really is her." Mithor turned his head and said to Kalat, "This is your reward."

He threw the tiny leather bag in his hand over to him.

Kalat did a brief inspection and threw it to his subordinate. He pondered for a second and said, "We still need your help."

"No problem. Seek out Ozil when needed." Mithor pointed to red-haired Helene in the room and asked, "I'll take her away, right?"

"Yes." Kalat made way once again.

Klein didn't wish to be helped by Mithor as he pretended to have regained some of his mobility while stumbling out.

Mithor was afraid of Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy, so he could only hold her by her shoulder and lead her to the carriage parked outside.

The carriage left the city and came to a private harbor. Mithor led Klein, who was disguised as red-haired Helene, onto a fishing boat which had been long prepared. Under the cover of the night, they left Bayam.

After about an hour, they saw a ship docked under the shadow of an island's cliff. Fluttering in the wind was a huge flag with white bones drawn on it.

Black Death!

Chapter 581 - Both Getting into Character and Detachment

Only a single Black Death… The other ships are anchored beyond the Rorsted Archipelago's confines because they're afraid of being discovered? This is good news… Klein retracted his gaze and deliberately bit his lip to express his agitation.

After taking a glance at Helene's side profile, Mithor lit a torch and began swinging it to signal to the flagship.

Before long, a dinghy came and took him and the disguised Klein back to the Black Death.

As the dinghy was being hoisted up, Klein boarded another pirate admiral's flagship. Under Mithor's lead, he entered the cabin.

Waiting for them up ahead was a blonde female attendant. She glanced at Helene with a cold stare before pointing sideways to the room.

"Go in."

This attitude… It's like meeting a love rival in the flesh… Both men and women fall to this Vice Admiral Ailment's charm… The cuffed Klein instantly increased his vigilance as he wore a heavy expression and followed the blonde female attendant into the room.

He originally believed that he would immediately meet Tracy and obtain a chance to meet her in private. He was already ready to strike, but apart from a wardrobe, sofa, and full-body mirror in a cramped carpeted room, there was nothing.

Could it be that Tracy has deliberately given Helene the cold shoulder to express her anger? Klein recalled the romance novels and contrived television serials he had previously watched while contemplating the reason for the Ailment Maiden’s actions.

The blonde female attendant shot a glance at “Helene’s” male attire that lacked the androgynous beauty to it due to the lack of makeup, took two quick steps, opened the wardrobe, and pointed to the dresses inside.

“Captain doesn’t like your present attire. Change.”

F**k… Klein cursed inwardly.

He originally imagined that he could be granted a meeting with Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy while looking like Helene and dressed as a male. He was thankful that he didn’t need to overly humiliate himself to achieve his goal, but in the end, he didn’t manage to escape this outcome that he wanted to avoid.

Seeing Helene standing there in a daze, the blonde female attendant glared at her.

“You have two choices. Either you change yourself, or I’ll help you!”

Klein did one of red-haired Helene’s habitual motions and inhaled slightly.

“Remove my cuffs.”

He turned his body sideways and gestured with his chin towards the door.

“And go outside.”

“Conniving whore…” the blonde female attendant cursed under her breath and used the key given to her by Mithor to release Helene from her cuffs.

After she left the room and closed the door, Klein walked to the wardrobe and stood there in a daze for twenty seconds.

Suddenly, he closed his eyes and extended his right hand.

After an unknown period of time, he came in front of the full-body mirror and saw Helene's red hair cascading down in the reflection. Her green eyes shimmered while she wore a golden-red dress. By her waist was a ribbon tied into a flower. It was pulled tight, accentuating her slender waist.

Helene's beautiful face was flushed red as her lips were tightly pursed. Her expression was heavy, looking very identical to the picture from before.

Klein looked at his present image and first felt somewhat embarrassed. However, he had gotten over it to a certain extent while changing. Besides, there wasn't anyone inside. Second, he gradually found a different feeling.

This wasn't to say that he was gradually liking such acts. Instead, while overcoming his mental aversion, he gained some form of detachment from his self-awareness. It felt like his soul had flown out of his body, allowing him to calmly observe "Helene" dressing up in female attire and adjusting her clothes through the mirror with a calm attitude. He believed this was a necessary step in his mission and that there was nothing embarrassing or odd about this.

Klein felt a baffling sense of familiarity as he tried hard to recall and compare this feeling, in a bid to fix it in place and gain an understanding of it.

Soon, he found the source. This was similar to him playing role-playing games. In it, he could choose a female character, carefully choosing the facial features and attire of the character, allowing the beauty to please his eyes.

There was nothing kinky or embarrassing while doing this. On the one hand, he was viewing it from an angle of a god through the screen, making his attitude detached; and on the other hand, he was seriously acting and going through the plot. By combining the two perfectly and not distinguishing between them, he didn't have any aversion to it because he was playing a game.

This… Klein suddenly opened his half-closed eyes, feeling like this was the Faceless state he had been searching for!

He could act as anyone, but he was still only himself.

As he got into character and worked hard to act, he could detach his feelings and observe things calmly. By making comparisons, he could figure himself out and find his true self!

It's both getting into character and detachment… This is the actual application of the Faceless's main principle. Klein suddenly felt at peace as the remnant embarrassment coexisted with his changed attitude.

With a detached attitude, as though he was playing a role-playing game, he observed himself in the full-body mirror and tried hard to find any flaws.

Thankfully, I got Danitz to get two sets of female clothing to study the way it's all put together. Otherwise, there's no way I could wear them so quickly and normally as a first timer. It will be easy to expose any flaws. Heh, this is called professionalism. Women's clothing sure is complicated… From the perspective of a Faceless, there are many flaws in Helene's facial features and contours. She might be beautiful, but it's definitely nothing I call stunning… Yes, with this state of mind, I can clearly feel the potion digesting… Klein looked at himself in the mirror as though he was looking at a character named Helene.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The blonde female attendant banged on the door and asked impatiently, “Are you not done?”

Klein’s face instantly sank, as though she hadn’t returned him the ten thousand pounds she owed him.

He maintained this state as he walked to the door and pulled it open.

The blonde female attendant shot him a glance and raised the handcuffs.

“Put your hands to your back.

“You’re now a prisoner!”

As red-haired Helene was on the Black Death, she wasn’t afraid that she would bring her any harm. All she wanted was to humiliate her as much as she could.

Klein grunted and half-turned his body, putting his hands to his back. He felt relaxed because the woman wasn’t paying too much attention to his attire.

After putting on the cuffs, he was led by the blonde female attendant to the entrance of the captain’s cabin.

The door was half open, allowing a fragrance of warmth emanate outside. It wasn’t too strong, but it was sufficiently long-lasting. It was a scent that kept pulling one back as they would involuntarily wish to head to bed for pleasure.

The blonde female attendant knocked on the door and was just about to say a word when a gloomy but sufficiently beautiful female voice sounded from the inside.

“Let her come in alone.”

The blonde attendant’s face instantly sank as she pushed open the door, signaling with her eyes for Klein to enter.

The moment of truth is here… Klein took a deep breath and stepped into the room.

The door behind him closed with a thud, isolating the inside from the outside.

Klein walked across the thick carpet and, using the candlelight from the golden candle racks, saw a rather beautiful lady sitting behind a desk while leaning back. She was wearing beige trousers with her feet extended diagonally while crossed.

Her brows were long and straight, and her azure-blue eyes were sharp and bright. She wore a white linen shirt, allowing her intimate body to faintly peek through. Raven-black curled hair cascaded down to hide the critical bits, making Klein instantly feel uncomfortable.

Upon seeing red-haired Helene enter, Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy raised her left hand and asked with an ambiguous smile, "Tell me, how should I punish you?"

She held a black leather whip in her hand.

…Ma'am, there's always room for discussion… Klein lampooned to resist his discomfort.

His eyes first moved upwards before leveling towards her. He said without a hint of emotion, "Returning to this place is already the greatest punishment. Anything else is just a bonus."

"You're as stubborn as usual, yet always so indecisive…" Tracy stood up. She was tall and slender, and under the illumination of the candlelight, her figure's shadows danced with extreme charm.

She held back her smile and walked towards red-haired Helene, with the leather whip in her left hand. She didn't have an ounce of doubt.

During this process, Klein noticed that she wore a bangle with inlaid diamonds on her right wrist.

The mystical item described by Helene? It can reduce most forms of damage? Klein, who had originally planned to take action the moment the gap between them narrowed, held back his urge.

“Oh, they cuffed you. That’s nice. We haven’t played such a game before,” Tracy said with a smile, but her azure-blue eyes seemed to be a stormy ocean that was gathering strength.

Ma’am, your lines are quite terrible… Klein pursed his lips tightly and didn’t say a word.

Tracy came in front of him and raised her right hand to slide down his cheek.

“Returning is the greatest punishment?”

As she spoke, her eyes turned misty, looking extremely alluring.

“You usually don’t seem to think so. Although you always resist in the beginning, you’re often more passionate than me towards the end…”

Before she finished her sentence, Klein pulled out his left hand from the handcuff, and he grabbed the bangle on her wrist in a manner that was as fast as lightning. He then violently swiped it down!

At the same time, that hand turned a shade of gold. Klein’s green and deep eyes suddenly lit up with two bolts of lightning.

This was Creeping Hunger! This was Psychic Piercing!

And the ability to pull his hand out of the cuffs was a Magician power. It was the Bone Softening power which Klein very seldom used!

He had long made plans and preparation for what he would do after infiltrating. It was to find a chance to be alone with Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy and assassinate her without holding back.

Only by doing so did he have a chance of defeating a pirate admiral. Only by doing so could he severely injure and capture her.

And even if it couldn’t be done, he didn’t mind killing her. He was already very accustomed to channeling spirits above the gray fog. He wasn’t afraid of not being able to obtain the intelligence he needed. A human trafficker didn’t deserve any pity!

In addition, in order to prevent himself from tripping himself up, he only brought the most difficult-to-detect Creeping Hunger, which was good at disguising itself. The other mystical items were placed in the mysterious space above the gray fog. Furthermore, he was on the Black Death with several opposing Beyonders on board. He had to finish the battle as quickly as possible!

This was also to avoid being taken down by Tracy’s ailment powers.

The longer he fought her, the worse the ailments inflicted on him would be!

In that instant, the bangle with inlaid diamonds was removed from Tracy’s wrist. Klein’s green eyes flashed with lightning while the beautiful and charming Vice Admiral Ailment remained in a daze. All she did was instinctively dodge.

She couldn’t believe that Helene would attack her, or dare believe that she possessed such reactions and abilities.

Chapter 582 - “Provocation”

◆

Tracy saw two bolts of lightning light up in Helene’s beautiful emerald-like eyes as the blinding silver occupied her entire vision.

Her beautifully contoured chin was suddenly lifted as though she was about to let out a tragic scream.

However, she stiffened on the spot, shattering like a mirage. The full-body mirror placed in the room cracked and quickly crumbled, scattering to the floor.

Mirror Substitution Spell!

Tracy’s figure, in her pure white shirt, beige trousers, and black leather boots, appeared in the corner where the full-body mirror was located. Before she could catch her breath, she heard heavy footsteps and saw red-haired Helene’s dress fluttering to the back as she charged forward like a chariot. The glove she wore on her left hand was pale and gloomy green.

Klein had already switched to a Zombie state. His muscles were taut, and his strength had increased substantially.

His sleeves fluttered as he clenched his fist tightly before throwing it at Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy like an iron hammer.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Although he continued maintaining Helene’s appearance, his actions were like a ferocious beast’s. He was fierce and formidable. As he bombarded Tracy with his punches and kicks, all she could do was desperately parry his attacks without having the time to use other Beyonder powers.

If a Demoness of Affliction's corresponding Sequence 9 wasn't Assassin, allowing her to have extraordinary combat skills and dodging capabilities, this barrage of attacks would've left her heavily injured.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein's fist emanated a white, frosty air, causing Tracy to tremble with every time she made contact. Gradually, ice began to form on the surface of her body.

This was a Zombie's mastery of frost powers!

Seeing her blood gradually stiffen, Tracy didn't hesitate and took the blow.

Her lips turned pale as her mouth opened slightly as she let out a formless scream.

Accompanied by this scream, a blue illusory halo surged out from her body. It left stacked layers of frost in its wake.

In just one or two seconds, both of them found themselves in a frozen world. They were surrounded by thick and transparent ice, and there was loose frost blanketing the exterior. The two looked very close to one another, but they needed to break through the various obstructions to fight each other.

A smile appeared on Tracy's gallant and brilliant face as a silent black flame ignited within her body.

It quickly melted the surrounding ice as it began to launch a counterattack, allowing Ailment Maiden to grasp the advantage.

At this moment in time, she saw Helene, who was often frail and indecisive, snap her fingers without an expression.

A matchstick she hadn't noticed lit up as scarlet flames leaped. Instantly, it enveloped the red-haired figure's dress.

Tracy's pupils constricted as her spiritual intuition gave her an extreme sense of foreboding.

In the silent black flames behind her, Klein leaped out in the form of Helene. He extended both his arms and hugged Tracy, locking her arms in the process.

At the same time, he opened his mouth and shouted, "Bang!"

A formless Air Bullet shot out with might that exceeded that of a revolver. It was comparable to the latest rifle models.

It passed through the void and accurately hit the back of Tracy's head.

Oof!

The bullet drilled through her skull, but Vice Admiral Ailment's figure suddenly contracted, turning into a broken black staff.

Magic Staff Substitution Spell!

Tracy rapidly appeared diagonally across him. The buttons on her shirt dropped as she revealed a mesmerizing view of fair skin.

However, what caught Klein's attention wasn't that but the blood on her palm!

While Klein restrained Tracy, she had clawed behind her, ripping off a piece of fabric and injuring his thigh.

At this moment, Tracy quickly opened and closed her mouth twice as illusory black flames appeared from her palms to burn the blood.

This was black magic, a Witch's curse!

Klein couldn't help but tremble. A black flame ignited from within, from his soles to the top of his head. He was rapidly reduced to paper shreds.

Just as he appeared in another corner, he felt countless invisible spider webs swirl towards him. Some were hard and attempted to bind him, while others were soft, in a bid to stimulate different parts of his body. Klein, who was a Beyonder who acted extremely calm during combat, felt his heart race as his ears heated up. His body turned numb and sore, having the discomfort of a cold while having the urge to have his blood surge downwards.

Compared to Madam Sharon from Tingen City, Tracy's spiderweb was far more terrifying!

Klein didn't dare to underestimate it as he immediately snapped his fingers.

The snap ignited all the surrounding spiderwebs as scarlet flames extended from where they came from and surged towards Tracy like a tidal wave.

Back in Tingen, Klein already knew that the spiderwebs from a Demoness of Pleasure were weak against fire!

Instantly, the middle of the room became a huge ignited web. Tracy was caught by surprise as the flames swept towards her.

"Humph!" She exhaled as an eerie blue illusory light surged outwards and froze her within a transparent but gigantic crystal.

The scarlet flames surged over and kept melting the ice, but it gradually weakened.

Klein didn't pick up the diamond-inlaid bangle, because he wasn't sure what negative side effects it might have.

To rashly use a mystical item without sufficient comprehension of it was highly likely to be harmful rather than beneficial!

He straightened his body and opened his arms, letting his left glove be dyed in the lustrous glow of the sun.

Priest of Light!

At that instant, Tracy, who was hiding inside the ice, felt that that extremely familiar Helene wore a holy luster. In between her brows, an unprecedented tenacity surged out. She was pretty and no longer frail. Like a blooming sunflower, she was like a flower of war stained with blood.

Tracy shouted with a clearly hoarse voice, “Who are you?

“Why don’t you dare to show yourself!?”

While wearing a dress, using my own looks would look so odd. It’s more suitable to use Helene’s appearance… Klein detached himself as this thought flashed through his mind.

Following that, he praised the sun.

A magnificent pure beam of light descended with golden flames swirling around it. It completely blanketed the ice and Tracy.

As the ice rapidly melted and vanished at a discernible pace, the bright and holy light dimmed before disintegrating.

The color in Tracy’s face drained as she did a somersault and agilely dodged Klein’s Psychic Piercing from his switch to the Interrogator soul, letting whatever damage she received happen inside the beam of light.

The Light of Holiness was strong against the undead and corrupt, so it was only considered an ordinary Sequence 5 strike on a Demoness.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Tracy did multiple somersaults and dodged Klein's Air Bullets, leaving holes in the carpet.

As she rolled, her figure vanished from her enemy's sight.

A Demoness's invisibility… Klein bent his back slightly as he was on high guard. He then used his spiritual perception and his sense of danger as a Clown to seek out Tracy's location.

However, he was unable to find her in that short amount of time. Furthermore, his forehead was heating up and his lungs were burning. His throat hurt and itched. He nearly couldn't keep himself from coughing any longer.

No, I can't let this drag out any longer! Klein's thoughts raced as he suddenly laughed deeply. He then used a stiff male's voice and said, "Helene told me your secrets.

"She also told me all of her secrets…"

Before he finished his sentence, his spiritual perception was triggered. This was because he discovered an intense emotional fluctuation in a particular corner. The emotions of rage and hatred were impossible to hide from him.

Klein immediately turned around and looked over.

Instantly, layers of golden scales appeared on his left glove. His eyes were tainted with a pale gold color as his pupils turned vertical.

Silently, Tracy's figure was outlined as she wore a painful and twisted expression.

Her extremely feminine raven-black curly hair grew uncontrollably as they spread in every direction.

Psychiatrist's Frenzy!

Tracy, whose emotions had been stirred, nearly broke down when faced with such an attack. She temporarily lost her reasoning.

Klein took the opportunity and snapped his fingers.

An Air Bullet crossed the distance between them, heading straight for Tracy's face that remained beautiful despite the twisted expression.

Suddenly, a wisp of thick, raven-black hair swept over, changing the trajectory of the Air Bullet. It struck Tracy in the left shoulder, causing her clothes to tear and blood to spurt. Even her bones were exposed.

"Ah!"

Tracy let out a shrill cry as immense amounts of black flames spewed out of her body and enveloped her.

Following that, thick ice crystals formed outside the black flames.

Beyond it, raven-black curly hair that frantically grew wrapped Tracy, the black flames, and the ice in thick layers. It seemed to form a gigantic cocoon made of human hair.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein's Air Bullets shot out one after another, but they only penetrated the black hair and got stuck in the ice.

He paused and made his left glove emit the brilliance of the sun.

At that moment, his throat itched. Unable to control himself any further, he began coughing violently. He failed to produce the attacks he was preparing to deliver.

Inside the black-haired cocoon, Tracy had recovered her senses. She raised her voice and shouted sharply, "Enemy assault!

"Enemy assault!"

At that instant, Klein paused for a second. In his moment of adrift thoughts, he felt as though he had returned to Backlund, returning to the first time he encountered the Devil dog. He knew he wasn't its match and could only shout "murder" and "save me," before successfully escaping from the danger.

At that moment in time, Tracy's cries had the same effect.

Even if there weren't a dozen Beyonders on the Black Death, the number was close to that. Furthermore, there were relatively many Beyonders of relatively high Sequences.

Indeed, killing a pirate admiral in a short period of time is too difficult, even if it's an assassination… Klein coughed twice and snapped his fingers. He stopped attacking and hesitating. He turned and ran for the window in the captain's cabin.

The last thing he noticed was the diamond-inlaid bangle, but he didn't dare to retrieve it.

Firstly, he was afraid that the severe negative effects would affect his escape, and secondly, he was afraid that Tracy would be able to lead a bunch of Beyonders to pursue him with the help of the item's location after she recovered. A pursuit at sea would then unfold.

I can't be greedy! Klein turned his head and smashed through the window and fell onto the deck.

Two pirates happened to come over as they thrust their cutlasses forward.

Oof! Oof!

Their cutlasses pierced through a paper figurine.

Klein's figure instantly appeared behind one of the pirates, as he extended his left hand, opening up a ferocious and creepy mouth on his palm.

Creeping Hunger bit down on its “food” while Klein lifted the pirate up before other Beyonders rushed over. He took wide steps and ran to the shipboard. Under gunfire, he plunged into the dark sea under the night sky.

Chapter 583 - Contingency Plan

◆

The ice-cold water instantly inundated Klein, drenching his golden-red dress and making him sink like a rock.

At the same time, Creeping Hunger had already finished eating the pirate, lightening his load.

Klein didn't attempt to float up and had instead continued sinking downwards. He could faintly hear splashing sounds across the distant waves. Apparently, pirates from the Sailor pathway had engaged in pursuit.

This was their home ground!

They could act like fish in such environments for a very long period of time!

Klein wasn't alarmed. As a Magician who never performed unprepared, he had obviously thought of his escape plans if he met with failure. After all, there was nothing guaranteed about such matters.

To do his best acting as Helene and not be discovered by Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy, he had not only left the other mystical items and cash above the gray fog, but he had even done so for the charms that came under the water and wind domain that he recently made. However, this didn't affect him. As a god, a Blessed, and a believer trinity, he had many miraculous methods to deal with the corresponding situation.

He quickly made Creeping Hunger turn pale and be dyed in a gloomy green. The surrounding seawater froze, forming layers of frost.

Before the frost completely turned into ice, Klein spread his wing muscles and spread out his arms. With the strength of a Zombie, he shattered the frost, sending them slightly further away.

This way, he temporarily produced a narrow space that didn't have any seawater around him.

The water instantly surged backwards to fill the space. Klein extended his left palm and released the terrifying cold and spread it out, creating layers of ice walls.

For a brief moment, he seemed to be encased in an ice prison. He could stand in it and produce sound, but he was only limited to that tiny space.

Klein immediately took tiny steps in a counterclockwise fashion while murmuring "The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings," before rapidly letting his Spirit Body go above the gray fog.

Just as his body appeared at The Fool's high-back chair, he immediately picked up the Sea God Scepter which he had placed on the table.

Without needing to identify anything, he selected the point of light representing Gehrman Sparrow who had recently been promoted to a believer of Sea God. Through a previously established connection, he raised the short milky-white scepter and made the blue "gems" on it emit a blurry luster.

He replied to his "believer" and augmented himself with all sorts of spells, including but not limited to underwater breathing, freedom of movement, and pressure resistance.

Finally, he used a paper angel to interfere with any divination. He then ordered the nearby undersea creatures to help protect Gehrman Sparrow's escape.

After doing all of this, Klein didn't delay and had immediately returned to the real world and gained control of his body.

At that moment, the seawater's pressure had crushed the constantly melting ice wall and had retaken that "independent" space.

However, Klein could already breathe easily and swim rapidly.

Through the rippling but crystalline water, he saw fishes swimming towards him. A dark shadow rose up from beneath his feet as an unknown behemoth rapidly rose.

It was a strange brownish-red creature that looked like a squid. It was so massive that its tentacles were enough to bind an entire ship.

It spewed black ink and instantly dyed the surrounding sea black. The few Sailor pathway Beyonders who were pursuing Klein instantly saw black as their bodies turned numb.

Unclear of what was happening, they immediately floated to the surface and dealt with the abnormalities in their bodies.

By the time they dived down again to find the enemy, they had already lost track of Klein.

At this moment, Klein was swimming at the bottom of the sea with great satisfaction; he even had the time to divert his attention to recall his failed operation and reflect on what he had done.

I had sufficient preparations to act as Helene. Even Tracy, who had shared numerous nights with her on the same bed, couldn't instantly see through me. It accelerated the digestion of the potion.

During this process, I still had to overcome my aversion and find a way to both get into character and be detached. This was extremely helpful to the digestion of the potion.

I basically did the best I could for the battle. It can be considered a prepared performance, but I underestimated the strength of a Sequence 5 Demoness of Affliction and the experience of someone who inched her way to becoming Vice Admiral Ailment. Even though she lost her mystical item in the beginning, just my present strength and my mystical item weren't enough to kill her quickly, unless I had used the Sea God Scepter… But this is around the Rorsted Archipelago.

Through today's battle, I can clearly tell that I lack a mystical item with powerful offensive abilities…

Facing the reality of a failed mission, Klein was no doubt somewhat disappointed. However, he wasn't depressed, because this wasn't the end of this matter. He planned on writing to Mr. Azik to see if he was interested in the ancient chronicles related to Death and if he had the time to pay a visit.

Before Klein left the captain's cabin, he had snapped his fingers to ignite the male clothing he had left in the changing room, as well as any hair or skin he had left behind. This was to make it seem like he didn't wish to leave any traces, but it was in fact a form of concealment and deceit.

What he was concealing was the hair and button he had secretly thrown into a particular room without anyone noticing after he entered the cabin.

Having wiped away any traces of himself, Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy would mistakenly believe that the assassin was afraid of exposing himself because of the fear of suffering a remote curse. Then, it would be difficult for her to seriously get the pirates to check for any remnant items.

With the hair and button, Klein could use divination to lock onto the location of the Black Death up to a certain amount of time. This way, as long as Mr. Azik was willing, he could bring him to Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy.

Sigh, I originally thought I wouldn't need Mr. Azik's help. I thought I could succeed just by myself, alone. Ultimately, I fell just short… Klein sighed and felt a blow to his self-esteem.

This was one of the reasons why he didn't seek Mr. Azik's help in the beginning. The other reason was that he wasn't certain that Tracy was in possession of the ancient chronicles related to Death. If she really didn't have it, it would be rather awkward to have Mr. Azik make a trip for nothing. Furthermore, he was worried that even with Mr. Azik's help, that he would still need to act as Helene to find the Black Death and Tracy. He still needed to wear her clothes and use himself as bait.

That would be too embarrassing to do it in front of someone he knew!

In fact, if it wasn't to obtain intelligence and solely to eliminate Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy, it would've been a lot simpler. Once I swim back to Bayam and go above the gray fog, I simply need to lock onto their location and use the Sea God Scepter to create a storm…

This isn't to say that a huge area-of-attack blast will definitely kill Tracy on the spot, but it will attract Sea King Jahn Kottman's attention. When the time comes, the Black Death's location would be exposed to the Church of Storms… Sea King will happily take down Ailment Maiden…

Klein shook his head with self-deprecating mockery. With his Seer's spiritual intuition guiding him, he rapidly swam towards the shore.

†

On the Black Death, Tracy removed her layers of defense and walked to the diamond-inlaid bangle, in her damaged, blood-stained clothes. She bent down to pick it up.

What a cautious attacker. I might not even be comparable to her back when I was an assassin… No, him… Tracy suddenly clenched her teeth.

This wasn't because she nearly died at his hands, but because he had sensed that the man had done something to Helene.

According to the way Emperor Roselle put it, she suspected that there was something green[1] growing on her head.

“Helene, are you really that cold and heartless? No, perhaps she was forced.” Tracy turned her head to look at the nasty wound on her left shoulder as she felt the heart-wrenching pain.

If not for the strengthening of her physique brought about by the Assassin and Instigator Sequence, with a significant enhancement in subsequent Sequences, just that one blow alone could’ve made her lose her entire arm. She would be like those pirates who had their arms blown off by rifles.

As the blood flowed and stained her vision red, Tracy got the blonde female attendant to enter and use her abilities to help her deal with her injuries while instructing the surrounding pirates who had their eyes fixated on her to search for any items the attacker had left behind.

Unfortunately, the pirates informed her that all of his clothes had been automatically destroyed.

This made Tracy recall the snap the enemy had made before he left. She sighed once again.

“How careful.

“Furthermore, he’s not one bit greedy. If he had taken the bangle, then I wouldn’t need to worry about not catching up to him.”

Tracy waved her hand, motioning for most of the pirates to leave, leaving behind Wormtongue Mithor King and a few high-ranking members of the crew.

“Third Mate, go to Bayam again. Perform a thorough investigation to figure out where the Resistance found that Helene,” Tracy ordered in a solemn voice.

With great difficulty, Mithor retracted his gaze from his captain’s chest.

“Alright!”

Tracy thought for a moment and added, “Spread this matter. Say that I’m seriously injured and will not be able to recover anytime soon.

“Also, First Mate, immediately set sail. Don’t stay here any longer.”

As she issued orders, silence was quickly restored around Tracy.

Only at this point did she have the time to figure out which faction the attacker came from, why he would attack her, and what motives he had…

Unfortunately, the more Tracy thought, the more puzzled she became. She had no idea what the truth was. Although she had many enemies, none of them possessed similar powers.

Finally, she found a clue as she muttered to herself, “Creeping Hunger?”

†

In the middle of the night, in a private harbor on Blue Mountain Island.

Standing by the receding and advancing waves was a female figure. She was none other than Klein, who was still disguised as Helene.

He circled under the water and quickly came onto shore. He infiltrated the house of a nearby fisherman and got some tattered clothes to change into before changing back into Gehrman Sparrow.

Leaving behind the rather expensive dress as compensation, Klein rapidly left the private harbor and returned to the City of Generosity, Bayam, before daybreak.

He wasn’t in a rush to meet up with Danitz. Instead, he found a random motel to stay in. He used a ritual and brought back Azik’s copper whistle, other mystical items, and cash back to the real world.

After confirming that he could divine the location of the Black Death, he blew the copper whistle.

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†

A Chinese saying of being cuckolded, wearing a green hat.

Chapter 584 - Scapegoat

◆

After lowering the copper whistle, Klein had already activated his Spirit Vision.

He saw illusory white bones being weakly thrown up from the ground as they slowly formed a gigantic figure. If the past scenes were like a fountain in a fantasy setting, then this was more like the flow from an ordinary reversed tap.

The corners of Klein's mouth moved indiscernibly as he pretended as though he hadn't noticed anything amiss.

After a few seconds, the skeleton messenger finally took form. Its nearly four meters body tore through the ceiling once again as the pitch-black flames in its eye sockets burned silently.

Klein folded the letter he had finished writing and threw it up.

He described in detail the tycoon, Jimmy Necker, in the letter. He mentioned the connections between the Death chronicles found in the Southern Continent's Balam Empire's mausoleum, as well as the connection the item had with Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos and Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy. He also mentioned how he had successfully sneaked in, and although his assassination had failed, he had left behind something that could be used to determine the location of the Black Death.

Of course, he didn't go into detail how he sneaked in. He had only roughly recounted Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy's combat techniques and style.

After the messenger caught the letter with a swipe that could send an adult human flying, Klein coughed and cleared his throat.

“I already have a messenger.”

The pitch-black flames in the skeleton messenger’s sockets clearly flickered before its body collapsed like a waterfall before drilling into the parquet.

You don’t have to be afraid of becoming my messenger anymore, right? Am I that detestable to your kind? Yes… These messengers from the Underworld probably can’t bear to leave Mr. Azik. After all, that’s a direct descendant of Death. There might not even be any skip in the generational line. You want to cozy up with someone powerful. I get it! Klein was just about to pack up and check out when his nose itched suddenly and sneezed.

Achoo! Achoo! Cough! Cough! Cough!

Mucus flowed out as he coughed. His forehead slowly but decisively began burning with heat.

Oh no. Vice Admiral Ailment’s ailment is still lingering in my body. And I confronted a 10°C cold wind in order to return to Bayam. I really fell ill as a result… Klein used inferior tissue paper to wipe his mucus, contemplating whether to summon himself and act using a Spirit Body state, so that his physical body could heal by itself.

After serious consideration, he believed that it was impossible. Firstly, his physical condition would clearly affect his Spirit Body’s condition. The two were closely related in some magical manner. Secondly, if he ignored it, his physical condition would definitely worsen.

I’m becoming a little dazed from the fever… Klein touched his forehead and prepared to return to the Wind of Azure Inn to meet up with Danitz. Then, he had to consider if he should head to a hospital or clinic to buy some medicine.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick finally obtained the Radiance Spirit Pact Tree fruit from Ma'am Hermit, and he successfully concocted the Solar High Priest potion.

It was golden in color and had a scorching hot temperature. When Derrick drank it, he felt the burning sensation in his throat.

His eyes lit up suddenly as they grew brighter like there were two miniature suns hidden in them.

His body radiated concentric ripples of pure light as his exposed skin protruded to form black patterns that were visible to the naked eye.

At the same time, his body hair grew longer, as though they were changing into feathers that were swirling with golden flames.

Derrick knew that there would be similar changes when consuming a potion at Sequence 7. He didn't panic or become flustered. He clenched his teeth and repeatedly recalled that pain of him personally killing his parents and the hope that arose from the depths of his heart after meeting Mr. Fool. Despite being on the brink of losing control, he managed to persevere through it.

After a while, everything abnormal about him was restored back to normal. However, the air he exhaled was mixed with the warmth of the sun.

He felt that his body had become stronger again, and he had some considerable resistance against ailments and treacherous environments.

However, that wasn't the main point. Derrick liked the various theurgical knowledge that appeared in his mind.

They included Fire of Light, Horror Immunity, Holy Oath, Cleave of Purification, Sun Halo, Holy Light Summoning, Holy Water Creation, etc.

Derrick paced around in delight as he felt that the related theurgical spells he had were very suitable for him in dealing with the evil monsters that hid in the dark.

He didn’t hide the news and immediately ran to the twin towers and recorded the information of his advancement.

This way, after a preliminary inspection, he would have the qualifications to helm a small patrolling team as its captain. He could come into contact with more of the City of Silver’s information.

This includes the method to removing the mental corruption of a Beyonder characteristic, which Mr. World wants… While Derrick was answering the registration clerk’s various questions, he couldn’t help but recall the promise that he hadn’t been able to fulfill all this time.

Owing something to others often left him uneasy and uncomfortable. And now, he could finally see the light that could restore his calm.

†

In the Amyris Leaf Bar, Wormtongue Mithor King was holding a cup of red wine. He sat across from the elderly Strongman Ozil, crossed his right leg, and leisurely asked, “Did you figure out anything specific?”

He had been instructed by his captain, Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy, to return to Bayam and investigate the fake Helene. For this, he found Ozil who had originally issued the mission. He couldn’t directly seek out the Resistance, because there was a small chance that they were cooperating with the fake Helene. To question them in person was no different from directly bringing his head to the governor-general’s office in exchange for the bounty reward.

Ozil pulled a chair and sat down.

“They didn’t hide anything, but I can’t be sure if they’re speaking the truth or not. As you know, I prefer using fists rather than brains.

“They said that Helene was brought over by Blazing Danitz. He represented Vice Admiral Iceberg and hoped to establish a cooperative relationship with the Resistance. They wanted to provide a certain amount of help, and Helene was a way to express their goodwill.”

“Blazing Danitz? Vice Admiral Iceberg…” Mithor ruminated over the two names as his expression slowly turned solemn.

He leaned back into his chair as he knitted his brows bit by bit.

As one of Vice Admiral Hurricane’s former captains, he was now the third mate of Vice Admiral Ailment’s flagship. He was no stranger to the other pirate admirals, and he knew that Vice Admiral Iceberg was powerful and had a rich collection. With just one ship and a few subordinates, she was able to resist the other pirate admirals. In terms of strength, she was a little stronger than two of his bosses. More pertinently, Vice Admiral Iceberg seldom involved herself in the conflict between pirates. She sought information and explored the unknown to seek out treasure. She was more like an adventurer than a pirate.

Why would she suddenly want to assassinate Captain? This doesn’t suit her character… She previously suffered a setback because of Admiral of Blood’s rumors. She should be focusing on seeking revenge on him… Mithor took a sip of red wine as he rubbed his forehead with his other hand.

He temporarily stopped thinking about Vice Admiral Iceberg, and he placed his attention on Blazing Danitz.

As he carefully recalled, his pupils suddenly shrank. He discovered that there were some recent problems regarding this fourth boatswain of the Golden Dream he was familiar with.

He laid a trap and killed Steel Maveti, Blood Brambles Hendry, and Calm Squall. His bounty was raised to 4,200 pounds, and in a short period of time, he got embroiled in some matter, causing his bounty to rise again, reaching 5,500 pounds. This has already exceeded my bounty… Mithor thought to himself silently as Blazing Danitz's figure surfaced before him. He found him mysterious and terrifying.

He advanced? Or did he receive some great benefits because of something? Mithor leaned forward and put down the cup.

He whispered seriously, "I originally treated his bounty increase as a joke.

"But reality has informed me that Blazing Danitz is a great pirate worthy of a 5,500-pound bounty!"

Mithor looked up and said to Strongman Ozil, "Help me seek out intel on Blazing. The recent ones!"

†

In the luxurious suite in the Wind of Azure Inn.

When Danitz opened the door and saw Gehrman Sparrow, he glanced around warily before making way.

"How was it? Did the hunt succeed?" he asked in excitement and curiosity after closing the door.

Vice Admiral Ailment is a famous beauty. Back when I saw her, she was even more charming than I imagined. What a pity if she were to just die like that. She should be locked up forever without parole… Pui! How can she be prettier than Captain? Those with looks like her are plenty in the Red Theater! Contradictory thoughts ran through Danitz's head.

Klein clenched his fist and placed it to his mouth before coughing violently.

After calming down, he answered coldly, “Almost.”

“What a pity…” Danitz sighed.

But deep down, he was thinking, This madman, Gehrman Sparrow, is really strong!

He infiltrated the Black Death to assassinate Vice Admiral Ailment but was only just fell short of success. Even though he failed, he successfully returned almost without any injuries!

One had to know that the reason why every pirate admiral was famous throughout the Five Seas, being second only to the Four Kings, wasn’t only because they themselves were strong; it was also because they represented a crew, a force to be reckoned with. They had many Beyonders under them. To be able to escape from the Black Death after a failed assassination had indicated that Gehrman Sparrow was in no way weaker than any pirate admiral!

Is Creeping Hunger really that powerful? No, even if I were in his shoes and had Creeping Hunger, I wouldn’t be able to go that far… Danitz was increasingly convinced that his choice of not resisting during his first encounter with Gehrman Sparrow was extremely wise.

Klein coughed twice again and prepared to instruct Danitz to buy some medicine for him from the hospital.

He then recalled that the cause of his illness was complicated. The medicine provided to him without a doctor’s careful examination might not be effective. Even the many medicines that Emperor Roselle had previously invented were the same.

If it wasn’t because it’s impossible to use the gray fog to establish a remote treating system, I really wish that I could consult Emlyn White to make me some medicine… Klein went to the washroom to wash up and change into his original clothes and burn the clothes he obtained from the fisherman.

Upon seeing him come out, Danitz went over with a paper bag and said in a sycophantic manner, “This is the 700 pounds they gave.”

At this point, he and Klein heard someone knock on the door. It was Captain Elland.

When the captain rushed into the room, he gave Gehrman Sparrow a deep look and suppressed his voice.

“I planned on returning to Pritz Harbor, but I received a piece of intel.

“Something huge seemed to have happened at Bansy Harbor.”

Chapter 585 - Buying Medicine

◆

The Church of Storms has finally taken action on Bansy Harbor? Klein clenched his fist and placed it to his mouth before coughing. He asked calmly without any qualms, “What happened?”

Elland didn’t notice any abnormal reaction from Gehrman Sparrow. He retracted his gaze and surveyed the area.

“I don’t know what exactly happened. I only know that it might’ve involved the upper echelons of the Church of Storms.

“And for a period of time before that, all routes that lead to Bansy Harbor were canceled. This might’ve been a so-called omen.”

Involved the upper echelons of the Church of Storms? No, it should be the most elite forces. I suspect that the pontiff of the Church of Storms, that Grounded Angel, had personally taken action. He might’ve even used a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. After all, he might be facing a King of Angels, one that’s even older than the Fourth Epoch, as well as “His” descendants… Klein nodded and calmly asked, “What’s the outcome?”

He wasn’t the least bit surprised that the Church of Storms had only taken action on Bansy Harbor in the past few days. Even though the Mandated Punishers were known for being rash and irascible, there was still a protocol that needed to be followed for serious matters like this. For example, they needed to make a confirmation, evacuate a portion of innocent residents, or seal off the surrounding sea. All of this needed time.

Elland was unable to read Gehrman Sparrow's true emotions as he sighed with a smile.

"There won't be a Bansy Harbor for a very long period of time."

…As expected of the Church of Storms… Klein secretly clicked his tongue, feeling even more curious about the detailed process.

He wanted to know whether Red Angel Medici had appeared, and if "He" really was sleeping near Bansy Harbor. He wanted to know if "He" had been wiped out by the Church of Storms and wished to know what happened to the natives in Bansy Harbor. He wanted to know what it meant for them to speak in such a staccato manner, and he wished to know what secrets were hidden in the Green Lemon Restaurant and the telegraph office.

Unfortunately, with Bansy Harbor's destruction, it was difficult for him to obtain any actual answers.

Perhaps the internal record of the Church of Storms would mention them, but Klein had no way of getting them. With The Hanged Man's rank, there was no way he could gain access to such confidential information.

I'll have to nurture Mr. Hanged Man into a High-Sequence demigod before I can know the answers to my questions… Klein sighed silently and said without a change in expression, "That place is indeed very dangerous…"

Before he finished his sentence, his throat itched as he coughed violently.

"You fell ill?" Elland asked, puzzled.

He originally imagined that Gehrman Sparrow was like him, a Beyonder whose physique had been considerably enhanced. It was unlikely for Beyonders like them to fall ill before they grew weak from age. But from the looks of it, his previous guess might've been wrong.

Klein answered tersely without giving an explanation.

A question of no value or meaning… It would be odd if he isn't ill after an intense battle with Ailment Maiden… Danitz grumbled in contempt from the side.

Elland chuckled and said, "I can recommend you an Apothecary that's better than a hospital or clinic.

"That's his Beyonder job. He has a tiny herb store in the alley diagonally across Red Theater. Heh, he's known for selling male enhancements, but that's not what he's best at."

Does every Apothecary develop such medicine? That's right. It's absolutely one of the most profitable medicine based businesses. It's only odd not to do it if they're capable of doing it… Klein nodded slightly in response.

"Why haven't I heard of him?" Danitz asked, surprised.

"He only came to Bayam in the past few months. When was your last visit here in the City of Generosity?" Elland asked with a chuckle.

When I took your crappy boat… Danitz answered silently in his mind.

He carefully recalled and discovered that in the past few months, apart from this period of time, he had passed by Bayam once during the early days of his vacation. At other times, he was drifting out at sea in search of treasure. Otherwise, he was at other places or harbors enjoying himself, so it was true that he wasn't aware of any minor changes in the City of Generosity.

"I've already spent quite a few days in Bayam. I've been to the Red Theater several times, but I've not heard anything about this Apothecary! This can only serve to imply that his male enhancement medicines are limited in effect!" Danitz bragged as he said stubbornly.

Elland smiled and didn't debate with the great pirate. Instead, he said to

Gehrman Sparrow, “If it’s only an ordinary ailment, the Apothecary will only charge a slight premium.

“And for you, it doesn’t matter if it’s expensive. What’s most important is to recover your health as quickly as possible. No adventurer wishes to stay in a sick state. This implies danger and that you might become the target of someone else. It implies the increased risk of losing control.”

Indeed, maintaining a good state is a rather important matter for Beyonders. However, the price is still very important, alright? If that Apothecary were to charge 1,000 pounds, then I might as well buy medicine from the hospital. Or I can describe the situation of my illness and get that vampire, Emlyn White, to make me some medicine! Although I already have 6,000 pounds in savings and have several Beyonder characteristics, I still need to consider it. I still want to add a mystical item with lethal offensive power and seek out clues to the High-Sequence potion formula… Klein mumbled inwardly.

High-Sequence potion formulas were impossible to put a price on in this mysterious world. Therefore, Klein only thought of buying the relevant clues.

After Elland left, Klein took the 700 pounds and gave Danitz 200 pounds.

Wearing his hat and holding his cane, he coughed and wiped his snot before stepping out the door in preparation to take a carriage to the vicinity of the Red Theater.

Danitz was very curious about the Apothecary’s medicine. He pasted two mustaches on his face, wore a cap, and followed. With Klein’s guidance, he already knew that using a scarf to hide his face was an act that strongly attracted attention in Bayam. He took his advice to buy some fake mustaches.

†

In the alley diagonally across the Red Theater, the moment Klein entered, he saw a man furtively come out of a nameless herb store. The moment the man saw someone, he hurriedly lowered his head and rushed off.

Don't worry. We won't be guessing what medicine you're buying… Klein coughed twice again, increased his pace, and walked into the dark herb store.

He scanned the area and was surprised because the boss was someone he knew.

The boss was wearing a black robe that resembled a village witch doctor. He was in his thirties, with black hair and brown eyes. His face was round and his body chubby. He was none other than the chubby Apothecary who often liked to use sarcasm at the gathering held by Old Mister Eye of Wisdom in Backlund. Klein had once recognized him at a circus.

He stopped showing up at Old Mister Eye of Wisdom's Beyonder gathering because he left Backlund… Klein coughed and took two steps forward.

"Make some medicine for me."

On the chubby Apothecary's shoulder stood a round-eyed owl. The man and the bird looked up at the same time at Klein.

After a brief examination, the chubby Apothecary revealed a warm smile.

"Friend, it's cold outside. Don't do those deeds out in the open, although it's true that it can be rather exciting."

What the hell… Klein was first stumped before he understood what he was getting at.

When batting Tracy, I was influenced by her Pleasure powers. Blood flowed down to my nether regions, and my desires undulated. This resulted in my body emptying out, making it faster and easier for the ailment to strike me. When escaping, the ice-cold sea was fine since I had theurgical spells protecting me. But the wind on the way back was rather cold. It worsened my sickness. In conclusion, doesn't this look like getting sick as a result of having pleasure out in the open? As expected of a Apothecary; he has sharp eyes… Klein maintained a composed expression and just looked at him without answering him. All he did was wait for him to concoct the medicine.

Danitz turned his head to look out the herb store as he held back his laughter with great difficulty.

What dogsh*t Apothecary is this? He can't even distinguish the ailments released by Ailment Maiden! he thought in glee.

When the chubby Apothecary didn't get a response, he dully opened some cabinets, took out some common or strange herbs and insect carapaces, stuffed them into a paper bag, and handed it over.

"Put it all in water and cook it for half an hour. Drink the liquid that's left over.

"4 soli."

It's a little expensive… Klein glanced at Danitz.

The latter immediately took out the money automatically.

As the chubby Apothecary collected the money, he bent his back and suppressed his voice to say with a chuckle, "I have medicine that can make you stand out in that area. The kind that has mummy powder added. Need it? I guarantee you that you'll be satisfied.

"I know you might be very strong, but men always seek to be stronger."

Firstly, I need to have a girlfriend… Klein coldly shook his head and rejected the chubby Apothecary's recommendation.

The chubby Apothecary straightened his back in disappointment.

He turned his gaze and sized up the two before asking, “Are the both of you adventurers?”

“Yes,” Klein answered simply.

The chubby Apothecary rubbed his hands and said, “I have a request, but you’ll only be paid after completing it.”

“How big is the reward?” Klein pinched his nose.

“100 pounds!” the chubby Apothecary shouted as his heart pained for the money. “Help me find someone. His name is Roy King. He’s my teacher. He got me to meet him here, but I haven’t seen him after waiting for months. And I have no way of contacting him.”

“Is there a portrait—Cough! Or a photograph?” Klein inquired.

The chubby Apothecary took out a photograph from a secret pouch by his waist and handed it over.

It was of a relatively young man. His hair was neatly combed back and he wore glasses. He appeared very gentlemanly.

“Your teacher?” Klein asked.

I might believe it if you’re the teacher…

The chubby Apothecary coughed dryly and said, “He’s at least sixty, but he looks young.”

A Beyonder power or a mystical item? Klein nodded in thought and began asking about the specifics.

After confirming that there weren’t any items he could use to divine, he took the paper bag and left the store.

After he disappeared from the alley, the owl standing on the chubby

Apothecary’s shoulder suddenly said, “Darkwill, that guy might know you.”

Chapter 586 - Farewell and Reunion

◆

“What? He knows me?” the chubby Apothecary, Darkwill, was alarmed as he whispered back.

The owl’s round eyes looked ahead and said, “I noticed that he clearly paused for two seconds the moment he saw you when he came in.”

“Perhaps he thinks someone like me doesn’t match his image of an Apothecary?” the chubby Apothecary retorted.

The owl spread its wings and landed.

“Suit yourself if you wish to think so.”

“…What books have you been reading recently?” The fat on the chubby Apothecary’s face trembled.

The owl replied sternly and seriously, “My reading is based on your knowledge standards such as those involving soccer.

“Unfortunately, the words you grasp and can teach me are limited. I have no choice but to read popular novels that have a lower requirement on one’s vocabulary.

“Besides, they’re all serialized on the newspaper.”

Darkwill chuckled.

“I’ll buy a recipe cookbook later. It’s called Guide to East Balam Bird Culinary Methods.”

Without waiting for the owl to answer, his expression sank and he muttered to himself, “He knows me? He looks like the standard Loenese man. More than half his blood is at least Loen.

“I used a fake name to stay in a few cities in Loen. It’s not odd to be recognized by him. But I still need to be on guard. If I don’t receive any news about Old Man before March, then I have to leave this place…”

Having said that, he turned his head to look at the owl who was perched on his shoulder.

“At times, you’re still rather useful.”

“No, your eyes and your body language tells me that your real thoughts are ‘darn it. I wanted to buy a pet that can help me beat monsters and gangsters. I sought out Beyonder ingredients of a potion recipe according to the standards of a dragon, but I ended up getting a silly bird who only knows how to read newspapers and plays. Darn it. I want to stuff another potion down its throat!’” the owl repeated like a parrot by mimicking the chubby Apothecary’s tone.

Darkwill’s expression stiffened for a few seconds before he chuckled.

“It’s good that you know this, silly bird!

“If I didn’t have the powers of a Beast Tamer, you wouldn’t have even managed a single potion!”

Inside the herb store, the man and bird fell into silence.

After a while, the owl pretended as though nothing had happened as it asked, “Darkwill, is it really going to work? You’ve already entrusted this to dozens of adventurers.”

“I’m not good at finding people, so I can only entrust it to someone else. Besides, they have to find and confirm Old Man’s location before I make a payment. I don’t even need to spend a single penny!” the chubby Apothecary tsked as he said before he sighed. “Old Man always calls himself a lucky person and a winner of fate. He should be fine…"

†

"Will the medicine brewed from this really be effective?" While returning to the Wind of Azure Inn via carriage, Danitz looked at the paper bag beside Klein.

The things inside were black herbs, strangely-shaped insect carapaces, and weirdly-colored flowers. It didn't seem like anything reliable.

Klein nodded.

"Yes."

"You haven't drunk it…" Danitz subconsciously retorted.

I trust him. Although his mouth stinks and is rather vile, he has a rather kind heart… Besides, Captain Elland believes that his medicine is sufficiently effective… As Gehrman Sparrow, Klein didn't respond to Danitz's doubts. He directly picked up the paper bag and threw it over.

Without needing any spoken words, Danitz knew what he meant. He was in charge of brewing the medicine.

Furthermore, he was accustomed to doing similar matters recently, so he didn't have any urges to resist.

After returning to the Wind of Azure Inn, Klein got a chair to sit in while he watched Danitz light up the fireplace and prop up a pot. He then added water and the herbs into it.

Leaning back, Klein felt his head feel groggy. He was very exhausted and felt like he could fall asleep at any moment.

In order to wait for the medicine to finish brewing and for him to quickly resolve his illness, he forced himself to consider various problems to combat the fatigue.

On careful consideration, during the battle with Vice Admiral Ailment, if I hadn't succeeded in sneaking in an attack on her and suppressing her from the very beginning, preventing her from getting into her rhythm until she eventually found a chance to force open a gap between us by turning invisible, then I might've not been her match.

The two powers of invisibility and ailments are really like a bug in a game. Matched with an Assassin's lethal strike, and the interference of pleasure, it really makes one unable to find and hit her or escape. One can only watch their body gradually weaken and become inflicted with all sorts of ailments. One can even get mesmerized and give up resisting…

On the one hand, it's because every Sequence 5 is very powerful. As expected of the Sequence just before a demigod. On the other hand, it's because Creeping Hunger's various powers aren't a good match. It cannot be considered to be multifaceted without any weaknesses.

Yes. The powers of a Sequence 5 Marionettist of the Seer pathway is highly effective against invisibility…

I can try to help the chubby Apothecary find his teacher in the meantime, but without any information, with just a picture, I can only try my luck. I'll have to see when I can directly find a clue. After all, I'm not a god, and I can't find people remotely…

Wait, in a certain way, I am a god!

I can get Sea God believers to help find him. As long as that old gentleman named Roy King once visited Bayam, he would've definitely encountered others and be seen by them. Most native residents secretly believe in Sea God… This is what it means by a sea of people…

Also, before Captain Elland leaves Bayam, I should get him to introduce me to a point of contact for the military. In the future, I can get him to reimburse me for any intel. They can also check if there were any travelers named Roy King, who registered on any liners in recent months.

There's another method. I've placed the radio transceiver above the gray fog for some time. I should be able to contact the magic mirror, Arrodes, if I take it down. I was originally planning on asking for Helene's location, but I no longer need to find the red-haired lady anymore. I can switch to Roy King.

Hehe, for a matter which many adventurers have no clue on how to begin, I have three solutions!

†

Amidst his thoughts, Klein finally held on until the medicine was successfully brewed.

Looking at the bottle of blackish-green liquid that Danitz brought over, he hesitated for two seconds before extending his hand to receive it and placed it to his mouth.

Gulp!

Klein immediately felt his throat burn as his face flushed red.

This made him recall his attempt at eating crazy spicy food in his previous life.

Suddenly, his entire person awakened as his stuffy nose quickly cleared.

Gulp! Gulp… He barely finished drinking it and felt as though he had nearly recovered from his sickness.

By night time, he had fully recovered. He no longer showed any doubt towards an Apothecary's abilities.

No wonder the potion's name is Apothecary Klein wore his hat and left the inn with Danitz. Under the cloak of night, they left Bayam and came to a secret harbor hidden on the other end of the jungle.

Tonight, the Golden Dream was providing aid to the Resistance.

After some coordination and hassle, Danitz used the Soulfall Ritual to contact Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina.

After some time, the ship, that was often scrubbed clean and had a strange main cannon, docked by the private harbor. Its gigantic sails drew five types of gold coins. They were the gold pound of Loen, the gold hoorn of Feysac, the verl gold of Intis, the gold risot of Feynapotter, and the sassen gold of Lenburg.

This was the flag of the Golden Dream, it was also the symbol of this pirate crew.

It's still not professional enough. If it were me, I would add porter gold from Masin, złoty from Segar, motif gold coins from Balam Empire, etc… Klein stood by the side with his hands in his pocket as he watched Edwina Edwards appear at the bow.

At that moment, she was wearing a hunter's hat, a rider's shirt, and a black coat. She matched the image of a female pirate admiral in the minds of the Resistance.

She often dresses like she's a private tutor… Klein mumbled and took a few steps back, allowing Danitz to run around and busy himself.

This pirate worth 5,500 pounds did the liaison, sending a batch of food and fabric to Kalat and the Resistance before the transaction came to a close.

Danitz secretly inhaled and came to Klein's side and forced a smile.

"There's nothing else, right?

"I can now return to the Golden Dream, right?

"Also, how do you plan on settling the hiring fee?"

That's only an excuse your captain and I used. In a particular sense, this batch of food and fabric is my payment… Klein nodded.

“Your Captain has already paid.

“You can return.”

“For real?” Danitz found it unbelievable.

Although Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina wasn’t far behind him, he was still afraid that Gehrman Sparrow would suddenly have a crazy fit.

Klein didn’t reply and turned around, walking straight towards the path that led out of the private harbor.

Danitz exhaled silently and held back his excited feelings before briskly running back to the Golden Dream.

Only when the Golden Dream steered far away into the night, with the private harbor that belonged to the Resistance slowly shrinking in size, did he really believe that he was back on the Golden Dream.

At that instant, he felt that he had experienced just too many things over the past half a month or so. It was an unprecedented level of exhilaration, as though it was an interesting dream.

At this moment, a sailor came close and asked out of curiosity, “Boss, was Steel Maveti really killed by you?”

Danitz immediately laughed out loud and secretly stole a glance at Captain Edwina before saying to his subordinate, “I contributed greatly to this deed. Let’s talk over drinks!”

Above the dark sea, the Golden Dream drifted off into the distance.

†

After returning to the Wind of Azure Inn, Klein was just about to sleep when he saw the surrounding colors turn abnormally bright.

The white bedsheets turned whiter, and the brown floorboards turned more brownish-yellow. The dark red curtains appeared like fresh blood…

In the scene with all sorts of colors stacked upon each other, Azik Eggers suddenly walked out from a rippling aqueous void.

He was dressed in his usual shirt, bow tie, tailcoat, and a top hat. His skin was bronze in color, and he had soft facial features.

How enviable… I also wish to have such powers of traveling through the spirit world… Klein silently sighed as he smiled in greeting while maintaining his appearance.

“Good evening, Mr. Azik.”

Azik took off his top hat and looked at the rather unfamiliar face. Without finding it strange, he chuckled.

“Apologies. I came in a hurry. I should’ve knocked on the door.

“What’s the exact situation with those Death chronicles?”

Klein invited him to have a seat. He then described in detail things he couldn’t explain in the letter. Towards the end, he mentioned in passing about the matter regarding Bansy Harbor, saying how it involved King of Angels Medici and “His” descendants.

Azik leaned back into the chair and said with a frown, “There’s such a name in my memories. ‘He’ should have the two titles of Red Angel and War Angel…

“However, ‘He’ had perished long ago.”

“Perished long ago?” Klein asked in surprise.

Azik nodded and thought over it.

“I remember that ‘He’ was killed by Blood Emperor Alista Tudor.”

Killed by Blood Emperor Alista Tudor? Klein’s pupils shrank as he recalled the evil spirit that loitered in the underground ruins beneath Backlund.

It had claimed to be an innocent killed by the Blood Emperor!

Chapter 587 - Confusing

◆

Could it be that that evil spirit is Red Angel Medici, the King of Angels who once served that Creator and was one of the founders of Rose Redemption? Klein instantly generated such a thought and began utilizing backward inference to seek out any traces or clues.

The former holder of the Red Priest card was attracted to the underground palace because of a certain level of attraction and had died beside the Tudor descendants.

The evil spirit I saw in my dream could easily kill a powerful dragon back when it was alive.

It knows the potion formula of the Mutant pathway’s Sequence 4 and even more.

It’s very aware of matters regarding Rose Redemption.

The orthodox Churches that have existed ever since the Cataclysm don’t know that the former Binsy and that the present Bansy has a descendant of the Medici family residing there, but the evil spirit was able to provide the corresponding information.

There’s a very high chance of deriving this from the death of Red Angel Medici… And this King of Angels was actually killed by Blood Emperor Alista Tudor. Does this mean that the latter had already exceeded Sequence 1 and had reached the rank of true god as a Sequence 0 and could no longer be witnessed directly…

That evil spirit said so itself that in the late stages of the Fourth Epoch, Solomon Empire's Black Emperor, Tudor Empire's Blood Emperor, and Trunsoest Empire's Night Emperor were fighting for the position of Sequence 0 until Alista Tudor went crazy… Does this mean that from that point onwards, Blood Emperor was a half-crazy true god?

Right, Mr. Azik mentioned in the letter that he lost his senses from merely being glanced at by Blood Emperor Alista Tudor. Back then, he was at least a Sequence 4 demigod. To have such might, it can only be explained that Blood Emperor was at the true god level…

Mr. Azik also described the revival of the true Black Emperor in his letter. He described "Him" as sitting on a gigantic throne as he overlooked the land… For the Black Emperor to revive and return, there is a high chance that he was a true god at the Sequence 0 rank… If that were the case, the War of the Four Emperors was of a higher order than I previously imagined. It's no longer a battle of three Sequence 1s fighting for the position of Sequence 0… Klein connected all the dots from the past, gaining a brand new understanding of Fourth Epoch history.

But as a result, many questions arose.

If that ancient evil spirit really is King of Angels Medici, then the underground palace might very well belong to Blood Emperor Alista Tudor. Then, why would there be two thrones of equal standing? Why would there be six humanoid statues of the true gods?

Why would the half-crazy Blood Emperor kill Red Angel Medici? After "He" became Sequence 0, which spot did he occupy? Firstly, Black Emperor can be eliminated… It can't be Red Priest, right? Red Angel Medici was killed for its Beyonder characteristic?

But Red Priest and Black Emperor do not seem like neighboring pathways that allow exchanging. I can basically confirm that the former is paired with the Demoness pathway. Yes… Captain mentioned before that consuming the potions of other pathways might not mean death, but there's a high probability of going mad and obtaining warped but terrifying powers. This matches Blood Emperor's half-crazy trait!

In "His" final step, as there was no hope for Black Emperor and any neighboring pathways, "He" took the craziest choice and switched to another pathway that's completely unrelated, becoming half-crazy as the price?

But the same problem arises. Advancing to Red Priest requires King of Angels Medici to be killed, but before advancing, Alista Tudor wouldn't have been able to complete it by "Himself." Unless—"He" had more Sequence 1s helping him or other Sequence 0 true gods…

Upon realizing this, the statues in the underground palace suddenly flashed past Klein's mind.

The Evernight Goddess statue who used the moon as a pillow, the Earth Mother statue that hugged a baby in her bosom, the Lord of Storms statue that had lightning flashing behind him, the handsome Eternal Blazing Sun's statue, the tall and royal God of Combat statue, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom statue who wore a hood all cast ice-cold gazes at him from the darkness.

At that instant, Klein couldn't help but tremble.

However, he remembered that the six gods supported the Trunsoest Empire, not the Tudor Empire.

The history of the Fourth Epoch becomes more harrowing and confusing the more you delve into it… Klein sighed secretly.

"What are you thinking about?" Azik Eggers noticed his pause.

Klein said in passing, "I was only thinking that since Red Angel Medici had long perished at the hands of Alista Tudor, then who is the God of Weather who has a following in Bansy Harbor during the recent centuries?

"And what's the reason for their odd behavior…"

With this in mind, Klein came to a pause. This was because the matter regarding Bansy Harbor was unlike what he imagined.

He originally believed that Red Angel Medici was asleep there, but to his surprise, 'He' had long perished.

In that case, the secrets underlying the Green Lemon Restaurant and the telegraph office became even more indecipherable. He had no way of deducing anything without any further information. The more he thought about it, the more horrified he became.

Could that evil spirit have expected such an outcome when "He" indicated Binsy Town? That might've been a required step for "Him" to escape the seal? Should I tell this matter to Mr. Azik and gain his opinion?

Yes, I'll let Miss Magician, whose in Backlund, to monitor the area and see if there's any abnormalities. If there's none, it can wait till I return to Backlund and contact Miss Sharron. After seeking her opinion, I can inform Mr. Azik. After all, it's a ruin we explored together. I have to respect her opinion. If there are any abnormalities, then the matter can only be expedited due to the seriousness of the issue… Klein quickly made a decision.

When Azik heard his question, he laughed.

"Don't think about such matters. They've definitely been buried by the Church of Storms. To forcibly seek out the reasons will only bring about extreme danger. Even at the level of an angel, there's still a chance of perishing."

In the mysterious world, curiosity is often the leading cause of death… Klein recalled the matters he had experienced and heard of in the past.

He switched to saying, "Mr. Azik, I already have a messenger that I can call my own."

"Much faster than I imagined," Azik said with a smile.

Klein simply explained how he changed the incantation and how he completed the summoning and ended up encountering an oddity in the spirit world.

"When summoning spirit world creatures, there's indeed a chance of such things happening when it's not done by someone of the corresponding job. It requires repeated trial and error before obtaining the desired result. But repeated attempts make it easy to encounter danger. Even if you add descriptions like 'friendly,' it isn't absolutely safe. The spirit world creature which is summoned might not have any malicious intent towards you and wouldn't wish to harm you, but it doesn't mean that its very existence won't hurt you. Perhaps just the aura it has can reduce you to a pile of blood." After Azik heard about the creature whose speed surpassed imagination, the being who was easily neglected, and the creature with extremely high survivability, he laughed and warned him. After that, he asked, "How did you succeed in the end?"

Klein said in embarrassment, "I changed the final sentence to 'a unique being that is willing to be my messenger.'"

Azik was taken aback for a second as he curiously looked at Klein.

"…This description is too generic. Typically, it wouldn't succeed."

"Perhaps I was rather lucky…" Klein cautiously described his messenger's appearance and even hid the matter of her request for a gold coin.

Azik thought over it carefully and said, "I do not have an impression of this spirit world creature, but since you've already signed a contract and have had it witnessed by the Underworld, she likely wouldn't cause you any harm. However, before you fully understand her, try not to get her to do anything apart from sending letters."

"…Alright." Klein originally wanted to say that he had nothing he needed her for other than sending letters when he recalled his battle with Mr. A.

The room fell into a brief moment of silence before Klein pulled the conversation back on track.

"Mr. Azik, when can we head for the Black Death?"

The longer the delay, the higher the chances of whatever he left on the Black Death to be cleaned up during the daily cleaning jobs.

"Now." Azik stood up and put on his hat.

Klein was dressed properly, and just as he was trying to find an excuse to head to the washroom to divine if there would be any danger taking action tonight, Azik grabbed his shoulder and pulled him into the spirit world.

Amidst the stacked colors and nearly formless figures, he heard Mr. Azik say, "Let's begin."

That direct? Don't you need to confirm things? Perhaps a big shot has his own way of determining the level of danger… Klein silently mumbled and held up his cane and began divining the location of the items he left behind.

The cane flew automatically as it tumbled ahead.

Azik followed closely behind with Klein in tow as they smoothly passed through the spirit world.

Before long, the black hardwood cane paused with thick black and stacked shadows ahead of it.

Through this abstract scene, Klein could vaguely identify it as something resembling the Black Death.

At this moment, Azik's body came to a pause as he solemnly said, "The spirits here tell me that there is danger."

There is danger? Something that can make even Mr. Azik find it dangerous? Vice Admiral Ailment got help? A high-ranking member of the Demoness Sect? Klein frowned suddenly.

He fully believed the judgment of the big shot, since Sequence 7 of the Death pathway was Spirit Medium. After advancing to the realm of demigod, being able to notice this was considered very normal.

Azik half-closed his eyes for two seconds before opening them.

"But the problem isn't serious. Let's enter."

Problem isn't serious… That's probably the case when it's directed at you… The corners of Klein's mouth twitched as he decided to change his looks.

This way, even if he was no match and had to flee pathetically, he didn't have to be afraid of someone coming to knock on his door!

In an instant, Klein possess a distinctive broad chin and cold blackish-green eyes. His hair turned brown and was tied into a bun at the back of his head like an ancient warrior.

He had disguised himself as the former owner of Creeping Hunger, Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos!

Azik gave him a glance as the surroundings suddenly seemed to plummet as all sorts of bright colors flew by.

In a blink of an eye, Klein found himself in Ailment Maiden Tracy's captain's cabin again.

This gallant and brilliant female pirate was wearing a different white shirt. On her left shoulder was a clear bandage while her black hair was coiled up instead of cascading down amorously.

Faced with this sudden visitor, she didn't show any panic but smiled.

At this moment, a gentle female’s voice from a difficult to identify location sounded.

“It’s you?”

Chapter 588 - Old Acquaintance

◆ ◆ ◆

“It’s you?”

Upon hearing this surprised and curious female voice, Klein jumped in fright, imagining that he had been recognized by someone.

He immediately composed himself because he had already changed his appearance to that of the deceased Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos. And inside Qilangos was the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sherlock. And inside Gehrman Sparrow was the identity of the great detective, Sherlock Moriarty. And inside Sherlock Moriarty was the identity of Klein Moretti.

This wasn’t the end. Deep within Klein Moretti was Mr. Fool as well as Zhou Mingrui.

There’s no reason that she can directly see my true essence. Besides, how can she know of a trivial character like Klein Moretti… Even Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos wouldn’t have left the Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy’s helper surprised! To be specially invited by a Sequence 5 pirate admiral to protect herself and deal with her enemy, the person must be at least a Sequence 4 demigod…

Therefore, that sentence was directed at Mr. Azik? That high-ranking Demoness recognizes Mr. Azik, who had destroyed their cooperation with the royal family and Ince Zangwill in Backlund, or does she recognizes him from one of his former lives? Klein quickly cleared his train of thoughts and remained guarded against Tracy and her helper’s sudden attacks. He also looked through the corner of his eye to observe

Mr. Azik's reaction.

He wasn't too surprised that a mysterious powerhouse would appear. Firstly, this was because Mr. Azik had already given a warning, and secondly, it was because he believed that Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy wasn't a self-conceited person. To almost be assassinated without knowing the assassin's backing faction and motive, there was a high probability that she would leave the sea around the Rorsted Archipelago to seek help from the upper echelons of the Demoness Sect.

The only thing hadn't expected was that her helper would arrive so quickly. It was as though she was nearby or had a mystical item like that of a Traveler.

Combining the female characteristics of the voice and the gentleness within it, Klein suspected that it was a Demoness at the demigod level.

Azik stood on the thick carpet and said after two seconds of hesitation, "You know me?"

This tone sounds uncertain… Could it be that my big shot had once spent a period of time with a Demoness? No, I can't think of it that way… Klein began to imagine things before he seriously felt penitent for having those thoughts.

He noticed that Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy wore an aghast look. Her certainty and calm had turned into puzzlement.

The gentle female voice sounded out from an unknown location again.

"I obviously know you. You should also know me."

Azik turned his ears to the side to listen before he shook his head and gave a rueful smile.

"I'm sorry. I've repeatedly lost my memories and am in the midst of recovering them.

"If you can remind me and invoke more of my memories, I'll be very grateful to you."

Upon hearing their conversation, Tracy's puzzled and confused look settled.

She cautiously swept her gaze at Klein but frowned when she saw Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos's face.

The gentle female voice sighed.

"The last time we met was 1,300 years ago. Back then, Primordial and Death were working together, instigating the Pale Disaster in the Northern Continent. You might've already forgotten that we once fought the Saints and Angels of the Church of the Evernight Goddess.

I know this piece of history. It was recorded in Emperor Roselle's diary… Mr. Door said that it resulted in the Primordial Demoness being heavily injured, and she had only managed to descend only in recent times. As for Death, "He" directly perished and created the Berserk Sea that separated the Northern and Southern Continents… The Demoness Sect and the forces of Death had previously cooperated, so it's no wonder that a demigod-ranked Demoness knows Mr. Azik. Man, she's also a monster that has lived for at least fourteen hundred years! Klein thought with a creative mind.

Following that, he felt puzzled again. He originally imagined that Mr. Azik had suffered heavy injuries from being glanced at Blood Emperor Alista Tudor during the War of the Four Emperors, which resulted in him constantly losing his memory and forgetting his past. However, what the demigod-ranked Demoness indicated was that not only did Azik survive the War of the Four Emperors, but he had even participated in the Pale Disaster many years later. He didn't seem to have any problems in between.

Azik closed his eyes as though he was trying to squeeze out his memories.

After a few seconds, he asked hesitantly, “Katarina Pellè?

“You… are already a Demoness of Unaging?”

“I’m very happy that you can still remember me. I could only be considered a weakling compared to you back then.” A figure outlined itself beside Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy. She wore a simple and pure white gown which had high slits that revealed her flawless legs. Her skin was as white as snow and as tender as a young maiden’s.

[image]

The woman had black hair and blue eyes, and she looked elegant and pretty. She had an indescribable charm.

She looked towards Azik Eggers as a faint smile curled at the corner of her lips.

“More than a thousand years have passed. It’s a cause for celebration for us to meet, alive.

“Balam Empire’s Mr. Death Consul.”

Mr. Azik was Balam Empire’s Death Consul… This is the name of a later potion in the Death pathway? This Demoness of Unaging Katarina Pellè looks like she’s in her thirties. She’s elegant and pure, yet she exudes a mature charm… Wait, why am I thinking of this? Her Pleasure charms are already that potent? Klein hurriedly moved his gaze away and nearly had to use Cogitation to calm his emotions.

Without waiting for Azik to say a word, Katarina Pellè said with a melodic voice, “I’m curious over why you would still be constantly losing your memories.

“I remember that it only happens for your pathway during the Undying stage. Dying once every sixty years to revive again and forget the past. However, you have long advanced past that and escaped from that curse.

"What happened to you at the end of the Pale Disaster?

"Heh heh, the seven gods had fractured back then and treated each other as enemies. We both believed that Primordial and Death would succeed, but who knew that the proudest Sun and the most arrogant Tyrant would bow 'Their' heads. They quickly joined forces again. If I hadn't managed to advance by chance, then I might've already perished at the end of that divine battle. I believe you should've suffered some damage which resulted in your present state. Death's perishing is itself the greatest injury for you."

Azik fell silent as he wore an indistinct painful expression.

"I-I can't remember…"

At this moment, Klein realized that Katarina Pellè looked somewhat familiar, and he suspected her of being the white-robed lady who had led Madam Sharon onto the path of a Demoness.

Suddenly, Katarina's eyes turned to sweep a glance at Klein. She chuckled at Azik and said, "I believe you haven't forgotten the reason for visiting today?

"I'm very curious why he would assassinate Tracy. Could it be for justice?"

The glance the Demoness of Unaging swept over was filled with hidden amorousness and sweet playfulness. She resembled an underage young maiden, and her facial features and bearing had magically accentuated that feeling. She didn't have the jarring feeling of a mature lady acting young at all. At that moment, Klein viewed her as a maiden who was sixteen or seventeen.

…She can already perfectly present every charm a woman can bring. She has the skin, facial features, and bearing to match it… As expected of a Demoness of Unaging… Klein had already attempted to use Cogitation to resist this indescribable charm.

He took the initiative to look at Ailment Maiden Tracy.

“Do you know the tycoon named Jimmy Necker?”

Tracy gaped her mouth before closing it again. She replied blankly and aggrieved, “Who is he?”

“You might not know him. He once collected a batch of ancient chronicles related to Death. He died at the hands of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos,” Klein said while bearing the appearance of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos.

Tracy narrowed her eyes. She wore a dazed look before turning angry.

“You came for those documents?”

It really is in your hands… Klein determined based on her tone.

He answered indifferently.

“That’s right.”

Tracy inhaled slightly and said, “Where’s Helene? Did you do anything to her? I know she’s still alive. If something happens to her, my spiritual intuition will tell me.”

Klein didn’t attempt to speak ambiguously as he directly answered her, “She has already returned to Intis to lead a brand new life.”

Tracy’s expression sank. A storm raged in her eyes as the aura of a pirate admiral fully revealed itself. However, Azik casually swept his gaze over and instantly made her calm down.

The corners of her lips curled up.

“That batch of documents from the mausoleum of the Balam Empire’s royalty is indeed in my hands.

“But I wasn’t interested in it. I flipped through it casually before handing it to the sect.

“Hehe, even if you had succeeded in assassinating me, you wouldn’t have received it. I didn’t read it much, so even if you channeled my spirit, I wouldn’t be able to reproduce it. Unfortunately, I can’t bear to part with my life; otherwise, it definitely would’ve been interesting to see your disappointment.”

Klein calmly said, “No, I won’t be disappointed. I can obtain the soul and characteristic of a Demoness of Affliction. I can Graze you and subdue you.”

As he spoke, he raised his left palm which had Creeping Hunger on it. It was in the shape of a black glove.

Tracy narrowed her eyes. The look in her eyes became extremely dangerous, like a provoked tiger. If not for the two High-Sequence Beyonders beside her, she might’ve already attacked.

And the moment Klein finished his sentence, he noticed something amiss.

I’m not acting as Gehrman Sparrow at the moment, so why am I speaking in accordance with his persona… Klein was alarmed as he suspected whether he had been too into character recently.

Remember, you can only be yourself.

I cannot be influenced by the character I act as, because of prolonged acting… This will cause me to become lost and result in losing control!

He quickly reflected on himself and added his conclusions into the acting principles of a Faceless.

Noticing his brief silence, Azik looked at Katarina Pellè and said in his usual tone, “Can you copy a set of those documents for me?”

“That’s not a big problem.” Katarina gave Tracy a glance. “Any requests?”

Tracy stared at Klein and said with a clearly hoarse voice, “Tell me where Helene is.”

Klein withdrew his thoughts and looked at her before looking at the pure Demoness of Unaging, Katarina.

He had already made his decision, but he couldn’t help but feel hesitant.

He turned to look at Mr. Azik and discovered his warm smile. He wasn’t urging him or forcing him.

Klein retracted his gaze and simply said, “I refuse.”

What if Helene and Tracy still become lover in long run:

@猫头鹰太郎 LOFTER ID：yinyoushirenmaotouying

Chapter 589 - “Sowing Discord”

For an instant, Klein imagined that Tracy would directly attack him, as her face was already flushing red with anger. Her blue eyes had turned dark like the surface of a sea before an impending storm.

But eventually, Tracy didn’t act rashly. She looked towards Katarina Pellè and awaited the decision of the Demoness of Unaging.

She knew very well that, although Sequence 5 and Sequence 4 were just separated by one level, there was a qualitative difference between them. There was no way to bridge the gap with one’s battle skills or execution. One was a normal human with special powers, while the other was already a demigod, a legendary creature possessing godhood.

Furthermore, the two present were clearly not Sequence 4. Placed before them, Tracy felt like she was a Low-Sequence Beyonder.

Katarina Pellè didn’t seem furious. She looked at Klein, who wore the face of Qilangos, and chuckled as her eyes moved across him.

“What an interesting lad. If not for Mr. Death Consul being here, I might’ve not revealed the upheavals within my heart and have an unexpected encounter with you which would lead into having a pure and romantic story with you.”

No, you don’t want to… This sounds really terrifying… Klein didn’t dare look at her as he continued looking at Tracy.

Seeing no response from Azik Eggers, Katarina retracted her gaze and said to Tracy with her melodious voice, “Embrace the afflicted pain; this might be something beneficial for you.”

She then looked towards Azik.

“I remember that batch of documents. It records the various attempts used by the Balam royalty to revive Death, but unfortunately, they seemed to fail miserably. Towards the end, they seemed to consider creating an artificial Death.

“Are you still interested?”

An artificial Death? How can Death be artificial? Apart from the Uniqueness and Beyonder characteristics, how can there be other methods? It’s not like it’s something you can find on the street… Was the former Balam Empire and the present Numinous Episcopate all crazy? Klein mumbled silently and didn’t interrupt the conversation between the demigods.

Azik pondered for two seconds before asking, “What price do I need to pay?”

Katarina smiled youthfully.

“No, there’s no need.

“I thought it over. Helping you regain your memories and find your past in order to become the Death Consul from before should be a rather interesting matter. This can bring more changes and fun to this world.”

Those words sound like a rebellious teenage girl… A Demoness of Unaging not only doesn’t age in body but in mind as well? Klein felt it somewhat impossible to grasp her thought process.

Perhaps only a Sequence 6 or 5, or even Sequence 4 of the Spectator pathway can tell? he subconsciously guessed.

Azik nodded and extended his right hand. A piece of paper and a fountain pen in the room automatically flew over as though invisible spirits were at his service.

After scribbling, he threw the paper over.

“You can summon my messenger.”

So there’s only one copper whistle… For it to remain effective for more than a thousand years, that copper whistle is definitely no simple item… Klein instinctively wished to reach out to touch Azik’s copper whistle inside his pocket, but he held back.

Katarina caught the piece of paper and scanned it before pursing her lips into a smile.

“I thought you would’ve directly told me where in the Underworld.”

She looked up as her blue eyes effused an indescribable warmth as she smiled faintly.

“I still remember how Mr. Death Consul from before was such a powerful but cold man. He left a deep impression on me.

“I’m also curious as to why you would become so soft.”

Azik held his fist to his mouth and shook his head with a bitter smile.

“I’m immortal, but that doesn’t mean I don’t age. Once a person ages, they will often become placid.”

“No.” Katarina’s eyes flickered deep down as she said without concealing anything, “I look forward to the day you recover all your memories. I wish to see how you would evaluate the present you.”

Upon saying that, she curled her lips slightly and winked at Klein.

“Perhaps we will release an existence more evil than a devil.”

…This is her trying to sow discord, right… Klein muttered inwardly, but he couldn't help but recall the Pale Disaster recorded in many historical books and Church tomes. It had caused a large number of casualties and had turned the Northern Continent into a living hell. And this disaster was mainly led by Death and the Primordial Demoness, with Death's entourage and the Demoness Sect from the Southern Continent. In this entire matter, Mr. Azik, who was known as Death Consul, definitely played a rather important role…

Azik fell silent for a few seconds as he grabbed Klein's shoulder and pulled him into the spirit world and traversed it. Instantly, there was only Demoness of Unaging Katarina Pellè and Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy left in the Black Death's captain's cabin.

The latter looked at the spot where the two had disappeared, and after taking a while to calm herself, she clenched her teeth and said, "I'll never forget this matter!"

Katarina resumed her pure demeanor and smiled faintly.

"Feel the afflicted pain. The more pain you feel, the more you will realize how weak you are. When the pain reaches a threshold, the desire to change yourself will reach a certain intensity, allowing you to withstand the potion and obtain godhood during the ritual to become a demigod…"

When Tracy heard this, she suddenly thought of something. Her expression froze as she blurted out, "Helene was able to escape the Black Death because of…"

Katarina smiled mildly.

"You are my youngest child, but you are the one who's most promising at becoming a demigod. As a mother, I will naturally want to help you."

Tracy's facial muscles twitched as she said with a warped expression, "That's right. I have a mother like you, and a mom…

"Why didn't you tell me the truth in the beginning. You clearly knew the mid- and low-Sequences of several other pathways!"

Katarina turned her body as her white gown fluttered. She said ethereally, "We all need to approach the Primordial.

"We are all 'Her' children."

As she spoke, surging but silent black flames soared over the huge sailboat which was dozens of meters long. The flames covered every corner as they burned silently without injuring any of the pirates on the Black Death, as though they were clearing up any accumulated dust.

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The stacked colors quickly receded, and the indescribable transparent figure went far into the distance. Klein's spirituality suddenly stirred as he felt that the items he had left on the Black Death had all vanished.

As expected of a Demoness of Unaging… Klein sighed. Just as he was about to say something, he felt himself plummet. He had left the spirit world with Azik.

He found themselves in a mountain valley with a river flowing. There were fertile fields with a manor and town that was built in a Loenese style.

Klein looked around him and discovered that he was standing in a dark cemetery that had long been abandoned.

"Mr. Azik…" he shouted in puzzlement.

Azik walked to a grave with a broken tombstone that was covered in weeds. He said solemnly, "After meeting Katarina Pellè, I recalled some matters again.

"I once told you that in a particular dream, in one of my lives, I had a daughter. She had soft black hair and enjoyed sitting in a swing I made myself while requesting sweets from me.

"When traversing the spirit world, I suddenly sensed the call of my bloodline."

Klein was infected with his emotions as he asked solemnly, "Is this her…"

Azik nodded and crouched down. He touched the halved tombstone as his bronze face wore a gentle, sorrowful, and confused look.

"This is her grave.

"If I recall correctly, she's been dead for 926 years…"

926 years… Klein wanted to say something, but he was stopped by that extended period of time.

If it wasn't for the Churches compelling people to be buried in cemeteries and providing a certain degree of surveillance, it would've been hard to find this grave and tombstone, since there hadn't been any all-out wars since the Fifth Epoch.

A human's life was on the order of decades, but this was 926 years.

After a long moment of silence in the cemetery, Azik got up again and grabbed Klein's shoulder.

"I'll send you back first."

After a few minutes of traversing the spirit world, Klein saw the white bedsheets and yellowish-brown floorboards.

Azik pressed down on his hat and said in a deep voice, "I'll continue my journey while you continue on your adventures."

Klein nodded. Just as he was about to say something, he saw Mr. Azik curl his lips and smile.

"Were you afraid that I would become an evil person like a Demoness after fully recovering my memories?"

Before Klein could reply, Azik sighed.

“I’m also very worried.

“But, I have a greater desire for discovering myself.”

After saying that, the surrounding aqueous void around him rippled as he vanished from the room.

For a long period of time, Klein stood in his spot, silent.

He shook his head and laughed silently as he consoled himself, Perhaps when the time comes, I’ll already be a powerhouse at the level of angel. I can establish a treatment facility that treats antisocial personalities and have Miss Justice be the head doctor…

Retracting his thoughts, Klein sat down and habitually reflected over his operation.

I originally thought that I could Graze a Demoness of Affliction and obtain Death’s chronicles while making further progress in the human disappearances. Who knew that the development and outcome were completely out of my expectations. I only managed to complete the initial goals.

Sigh, I cannot incite Mr. Azik to take action since he hasn’t completely recovered. Furthermore, the person we were facing was a Demoness of Unaging… What’s most important is to be strong myself. Relying on myself is better than asking for help from others. Heh heh, on careful consideration, I do rely on myself most of the time…

I can attack the human disappearance cases from the angle of the buyer, that Crazy Captain Connors Viktor.

Klein changed his sitting posture and nodded to himself as he murmured inwardly, The greatest gain that I received was to establish the preliminary acting principles of a Faceless. It’s to get into character and be detached, overcome any aversions, and to be careful about being too immersed in the role.

This way, by relying only on simple, ordinary, real acting, perhaps it will take a year or two to digest the potion. But for me, I should be able to fully digest it in about four to six months…

After reflecting on the matter, Klein prepared to sleep. He planned on taking down the radio transceiver from above the gray fog once it was daybreak, so as to establish communications with the magic mirror, Arrodes.

Of course, he had to first divine the level of danger above the gray fog.

Chapter 590 - Arrodes's Bottom Line

◆

Early in the morning, above the gray fog.

Klein conjured a pen and paper as he deliberated over the divination statement: “Using the radio transceiver is dangerous.”

After carefully checking the statement twice, he took out the spirit pendulum under his left sleeve and began divining.

During this process, he was on high alert and was somewhat afraid. He was like a child covering his ears while lighting firecrackers—if the outcome would involve the True Creator or the Primordial Demoness, then he would encounter danger simply from divining it. If it were any other person, they would only end up losing control or dying. However, Klein had the gray fog to shield him and prevent him from having such a tragic outcome. Hence, it was obvious that anything that happened above the gray fog was better than courting death in the real world. He was afraid that the using it repeatedly would allow the evil gods to lock onto him and personally pay him a visit.

He quickly entered the state of Cogitation and silently recited the divination.

After chanting seven times, he knew the answer without opening his eyes, since he was completely fine sitting there in his seat and wasn’t suffering from any extreme pain.

When Klein looked at the dangling topaz, he discovered that it was indeed spinning counterclockwise.

Phew… Klein heaved a sigh of relief and immediately returned to the real world and began preparing a ritual to bring the radio transceiver from above the gray fog to the real world.

After about half an hour, he finally heard the radio transceiver produce its clickety-clack. An illusory piece of white paper was spat out with lines of Loenese words written on it.

“I’m here.

“Great Master, is that you?”

Why does it feel like it’s craning its neck… Klein suddenly recalled the emoticons from his previous life. It was an adorable alpaca that craned its neck out.

He took two steps forward and tersely answer in a reserved manner.

Amidst clicking sounds, more illusory paper was spat out.

“Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, at your service.”

Klein hid his discomfort in the depths of his heart and asked, “Arrodes, tell me. Where is Roy King from the Life School of Thought?”

Due to the chubby Apothecary’s description, he knew that the organization developed itself based on a master and apprentice system. He inferred that they grasped the two Beyonder pathways of Monster and Apothecary. This matched the characteristics of the Life School of Thought.

Meanwhile, Klein prepared Roy King’s picture, with the intention of relying on himself rather than on others.

The tapping sounds intensified as Arrodes produced a portrait with the radio transceiver. It was none other than Roy King with his hair neatly combed back while wearing a framed pair of glasses.

“Is this him?” A line of Loenese appeared behind the portrait.

Klein nodded.

“Yes.”

Arrodes made the radio transceiver’s tapping sound turn abnormally brisk.

“Great Master, the person you wish to find is imprisoned in the governor-general’s office of the City of Generosity, Bayam.”

Locked in the governor-general’s office? Klein frowned slightly and wasn’t in a rush to continue asking. He said with confidence and frankness, “Alright, according to your rules, it’s your turn to ask.”

Tap. Tap. Tap. Arrodes used the radio transceiver to produce a smiley face and a line of text.

“I’ve already asked, and you have already answered.”

When did that happen? Klein was taken aback before looking at the content before the illusory piece of paper. He saw the previous question: “Is it him?”

This works? That actually counts? In that instant, Klein finally understood how much freedom Arrodes had to its rules. Against any ordinary person, it could be as strict and vile as it wanted. It even needed spectators, but when it came to Klein, those rules were ignored, and he blatantly made it easy.

How did this guy adopt such a personality… Klein considered for two seconds before asking another question.

“Arrodes, do you know the book ‘Groselle’s Travels’?”

Arrodes fell silent for two seconds before making the radio transceiver type. It spat out more illusory paper.

“Great Master, your question is too nice for me. All I needed to do was answer ‘yes’ to be done with the question. I’ve modified the question a little, changing it to ‘tell me what you know about Groselle’s Travels.’

“This is a very magical book. Many of its owners have vanished.

“I’m unable to tell who it’s creator is, but I’m certain that it first appeared among the dragons, after the disappearance of the City of Miracles, Liveseyd.”

It appeared after the City of Miracles, Liveseyd, which was conjured by the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt? I might be able to recommend this to Miss Justice. She might be interested. If she really wishes to buy it, as a middleman, I can study it ahead of time above the gray fog… If something bad happens from the study, resulting in the complete destruction of the book, I can tell her that the seller went back on their word and a refund was made… Thinking of this, being a platform is really promising! Klein’s thoughts raced as he said to the radio transceiver, “It’s your turn.”

I do want to know what kind of odd question you can ask… Klein thought silently.

Arrodes didn’t pause as he produced a line in Loenese: “Great Master, I’ve already asked and you have already answered.”

When did that happen… Klein looked in confusion and amusement at the first few pages of illusory paper before finally seeing the so-called question at the beginning: “Great Master, is that you?”

I have to say that this magic mirror named Arrodes really shows no shame when it tries to suck up to me… However, such a paired question format really satisfies an OCD. It’s like the AND operator back when I studied programming languages myself… Klein cleared his throat and continued asking, “Why was Roy King imprisoned in the governor-general’s office?”

The radio transceiver produced its clickety-clack and spat out illusory paper.

“Ever since the disappearance of the Snake of Mercury from the Life School of Thought, the organization fractured and encountered plenty of danger. Some even died at the hands of the Rose School of Thought.

“The Life School of Thought developed in a secretive manner with the master and apprentice format, but they have an Elder Council among the upper echelons. They harmonized the conflicts between the different internal factions. Since the Fifth Epoch, the Elder Council changed to a more trendy name known as the Fate Council. There are seven councilors, and the Snake of Mercury is the president.

“Roy King’s teacher is one of the Fate councilors and had got into trouble after the Snake of Mercury’s disappearance. And before this, he had handed an important Sealed Artifact of the Life School of Thought to Roy King. This is the reason why Roy King was secretly captured by the Loen military.”

The disappearance of the Snake of Mercury? Klein instantly made the connection to Will Auceptin, who was hiding in Backlund, as well as the other Snake of Mercury that had been pursuing him without ever showing its face. Klein suspected the other Snake of Mercury to be Angel of Fate, Ouroboros.

The Life School of Thought’s Snake of Mercury is definitely not the one searching for Will Auceptin, as he has had plenty of opportunities to contact his organization and not be “missing”… Perhaps it’s Will Auceptin or a third snake. This cannot be determined… Klein gently nodded and said to the radio transceiver, “Ask.”

I’m sure you haven’t asked me any other questions. Hehe, let’s see what you’ll ask… I have to say, people have a little bit of masochism in them. Others are afraid of Arrodes’s questions, but it has already waived off two questions for me. Now, I do wish for it to formally ask me a question… Klein waited with piqued interest.

Tap. Tap. Tap. The radio transceiver’s sounds suddenly became somewhat solemn as the illusory piece of paper spat out with increasing difficulty.

“Well, Great Master, what should I do to be a better, loyal, and humble servant?”

…I’ve underestimated your bottom line… Klein restrained his exasperated expression as he replied in a deep voice, “Just maintain your present state.”

“Alright.” The tapping sounds became lighter again. “The aura is about to disperse. Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, awaits to be at your service.”

Finally, Arrodes added a drawing of a hand waving.

It’s really talented… That’s right, it’s not hard for a magic mirror that knows so much, to know such things… Klein watched as the radio transceiver turned silent.

He took a few steps and sat by the edge of the bed, considering the matter regarding Roy King.

He had no intention of infiltrating Bayam’s governor-general’s office and rescuing Roy King under the military’s tight security. This was because he didn’t know the man at all, and he hadn’t even seen him before. The only connection they had was through the chubby Apothecary.

The basement of the Church of Storms definitely has many Beyonders locked up there. But what has that got to do with me? Klein chuckled as he shook his head.

In the information provided to him by Arrodes, Klein noticed that the mystical item which Admiral of Blood Senor had, which made him sufficiently lucky, came from the Life School of Thought. There was a high probability that the faction backing this pirate admiral was the Rose School of Thought. They were taking advantage of the Snake of Mercury’s disappearance, so they could kill members of the Life School of Thought.

This also reminds me that I need to be more careful than before when dealing with pirate admirals. Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy had gotten Demoness of Unaging Katarina Pellè without any notice. The other pirate admirals wouldn't be without their supporters. They often represent a faction, an organization… Admiral of Blood is backed by the Rose School of Thought, while Admiral of Stars is backed by the Moses Ascetic Order, as well as for our Tarot Club. The backer of Admiral Hell is likely the Numinous Episcopate and the King of the Five Seas. As for Vice Admiral Iceberg, she's likely backed by the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom…

The backers for Vice Admiral Deep Sea and Vice Admiral Dusk are currently unknown, but it's definitely impossible that they relied solely on themselves to reign supreme over the seas for so many years.

Now on second thought, which faction was backing Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos? The one that gave him Creeping Hunger, or the unspeakable organization that instigated him to assassinate Duke Negan?

Yes, I must be careful not to expose my intention of hunting pirate admirals in the future. Furthermore, I can only make one attempt and immediately distance myself if I fail. As Klein's thoughts varied, he suddenly thought of something.

The paper crane that was personally folded by that Snake of Mercury, Will Auceptin, was still with him!

Chapter 591 - Making Good Use of Things

◆

Klein's memories of the paper crane were still fresh on his mind. Back then, Will Auceptin had used this item to locate Dr. Aaron's Astral Projection and injected information into him while he was dreaming of the spirit world in his dreams. It created a revelation that evolved into a specific dream.

Klein later exchanged a paper crane, he had folded himself, for Will Auceptin's and had gone above the gray fog to make a divination. He failed to gain any effective conclusions until Dr. Aaron's wife got pregnant. By calculating the time and from his understanding of the situation between a Sequence 1 and Sequence 0, he guessed that Will Auceptin was performing a cyclic restart, and he guessed that Will was in an intense battle with another Snake of Fate for the position of Sequence 0. And the nightmare that came with the paper crane was only an auxiliary outcome. Its true purpose was to help Will Auceptin secretly become a fetus.

What was most humorous about this matter was that the paper crane, that Klein had folded, had ended up being treated as the original from Will Auceptin, and the Nighthawks had used even cruder means to replicate one to swap them.

Will Auceptin's paper crane had always been above the gray fog after I had thrown it up there. I nearly forgot about it… Performing divination on it can only gain an extremely vague revelation. If there weren't any other developments, it would be hard to infer that the child conceived by Dr. Aaron's wife was Will Auceptin. On the contrary, Will Auceptin can use it to locate it in the spirit world, just like how Arrodes can rely on the gray fog's aura to connect to the radio transceiver via the spirit world…

Eh, there seems to be some possibility for this matter… Klein suddenly sat straight and had an extremely creative idea.

He wanted to use the paper crane to communicate with Will Auceptin in a dream!

This might not be of any use to me, the present me. There might even be certain hidden dangers, but if Will Auceptin is really the Snake of Fate from the Life School of Thought, my act of providing him with intelligence will definitely win me a favorable impression… Towards an existence at the level of a King of Angels, it's necessary to make investments ahead of time. If I wait until he's really born, I might be repaid dozens of times over. Since I won't die from trying, uh—I can still revive if I die… Although Klein had such a thought, he was in fact very cautious. He planned on divining the danger above the gray fog before deciding on executing his plan.

After busying himself and confirming that the danger involved was acceptable, he used a ritual to bring back the paper crane from above the gray fog into the real world.

Perhaps it was because it came from a Sequence 1 Snake of Fate, the paper crane didn't exhibit any peculiarities from its prolonged stay above the gray fog. It remained ordinary.

I hope the aura above the gray fog didn't neutralize its uniqueness; otherwise, Will Auceptin won't be able to locate it. Hmm, the Sequence before Snake of Fate is Soothsayer. Would this matter already be within Will Auceptin's expectations?

The reason why he chose Dr. Aaron is because he's my friend. And by doing so, he can establish a connection with me? Am I being too narcissistic…

However, this question is worth suspecting. After Will Auceptin used the paper crane to locate Dr. Aaron, he could've directly "reincarnated," so why did he repeatedly make him have nightmares? Furthermore, the dream also indicated the struggle between the Snakes of Fate. To an ordinary person, they would neither understand it or play a meaningful role in this matter. Isn't this like using a gaze to entice a blind person?

Will Auceptin created the dream for me?

Klein frowned slightly and had certain guesses.

He suppressed his puzzlement and picked up a fountain pen. As he filled it with ink, he considered a sentence to leave on the paper crane to garner Will Auceptin's attention.

What should I write? Klein recalled what Arrodes had informed him about the situation with the Life School of Thought, and he felt that there was one line that could encompass everything while feeling extremely fresh and filled with emotions.

That line was: "Your home blew up!"

This sentence is overly crude and direct while lacking manners. Besides, Will Auceptin might not be the president of the Life School of Thought… Klein deliberated and slightly spread open the paper crane. On the different surfaces, he wrote different words that formed a very short sentence: "Roy King has been captured."

After doing all of this, Klein put down the fountain pen and placed the paper crane into his wallet, just like Dr. Aaron had done before.

†

In the periphery of the Rorsted sea, on a gigantic fog-covered island far from the main sea routes.

Amidst a shrill cry, a blue bird of prey that resembled a shadow had plummeted from the sky and crashed heavily into the ground. It sent soil scattering as its blood splattered.

Alger Wilson remained cautious. He stood far away and raised his left hand which had an iron-black ring on his thumb. He pointed it at the terrifying Beyonder creature known as a Blue Shadow Falcon.

On the tip of the ring was a spike-like protrusion. It was tainted with old blood, looking ancient and sinister.

This was the mystical item he had bought from an Artisan, using Steel Maveti's bounty. He publicly claimed that it cost him 5,200 pounds despite it actually only costing 3,100 pounds.

The ring's name was "Whip of Mind." It could deliver irresistible intense mental damage to an enemy. Apart from that, it could strengthen Alger's mastery of various weapons; therefore, it wasn't actually very expensive.

Back then, the Artisan and his friend had two mystical items. One was the "Whip of Mind" and the other was the "Ring of Witchcraft." The latter had more abilities and high adaptability while costing almost the same as the former. It was a better choice, but after serious consideration, Alger still chose the Whip of Mind. He believed that without such an item, his hunting of the Blue Shadow Falcon would be several times more difficult. This was because it was a Beyonder creature that could fly. And reality had proven that his judgment was right.

For this, Alger was willing to experience a constant headache, a nagging feeling that made him want to slam his head into a wall.

After waiting for several minutes, he saw points of light float up from the Blue Shadow Falcon. Six crystalline feathers condensed around its wing as Alger heaved a sigh of relief and walked over.

He had a flaxen cloth tied around his forehead, and embedded inside it was a blood-red gem that emitted a light that resembled the moonlight.

This was meant to be the Vampire Baron inheritance for Emlyn White, but Alger wasn’t in a hurry to complete the transaction after obtaining it. Instead, he used the characteristic, which he could use to a certain extent, to add insurance to his hunt for the Blue Shadow Falcon.

At times, being a middleman is rather nice… Alger put away the six crystalline feathers as he sighed silently.

He straightened his body and looked towards the towering mountain peak and dense forest around it on the primitive island. He felt that many indescribable dangers lurked there.

My strength is insufficient to explore the area… Alger retracted his gaze and walked towards the island’s periphery, constantly wary for any “predators” around him.

Soon, he jumped into the sea, and with his powers as a Seafarer, he easily swam into the distance. His ghost ship was anchored there, and his sailors were still sleeping thanks to the Sanguine’s anesthetic gas.

To come to this primitive island, the ship had to steer away from the main sea routes. In a situation where sea monsters lurked while the storms lingered, navigating would take at least six hours, with the danger of sinking at any moment. Only a Seafarer who was familiar with the route could bring the ship close.

†

Deep into the night, Klein, who had rested an entire day, put down his newspapers and burrowed into bed.

Just as he was about to fall asleep, he suddenly thought of a problem.

Now that Danitz has returned to the Golden Dream, would it be a waste for me to stay in a large suite alone? Klein nodded indiscernibly and decided to check out at daybreak and switch to another inn.

After making up his mind, he quickly fell asleep. Suddenly, his mind became clear from its prior haziness.

He knew that some force had intruded into his dream!

I'm very impressive to be able to sense the dream intrusion of a Snake of Fate. No—the gray fog is very impressive… Klein surveyed his surroundings and discovered that he was located in a pitch-black desolate plain. Not far away was a black steeple.

This was a scene he had formerly seen in Dr. Aaron's dream, but at this moment, there wasn't a mysterious silver giant snake on the steeple.

Klein nodded in thought as he sped up his pace and entered the pitch-black steeple. It remained ancient and decadent. The layout was chaotic, with the staircase occasionally spiraling upwards and dropping downwards diagonally at times. Some of the rooms were normal; others were upside down, and there were others that were embedded into other parts.

Passing through, door after door and wall after wall, Klein once again arrived deep inside the black tower.

There were tarot cards scattered around here as they clustered towards the ground in the middle which was slightly protruded.

There was a line of silver words and a portrait.

The portrait was that of the chubby Apothecary, and the silver words formed the sentence: "Inform Darkwill."

So the chubby Apothecary's name is Darkwill… Will Auceptin really is the Snake of Fate from the Life School of Thought. And I really can use the paper crane to communicate with him in a dream… Klein waited for a moment, and seeing that there weren't any other revelations, he exited the dream and fell asleep again.

†

After daybreak, Klein asked if there weren’t any additional charges for checking out at noon, he then put on his top hat and rode a carriage to the Red Theater’s entrance.

This famous brothel was in its quietest period of the day, it was like it was a ghost house.

Klein glanced at it before walking diagonally across to the alley and arriving outside Darkwill’s folk herb store.

He suddenly sensed something as he looked up at the roof, and he saw a fat owl perched there, looking at him.

The chubby Apothecary was apparently attempting to tame a Beyonder animal before… Klein retracted his gaze in thought as he knocked on the door.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!

After waiting for a while, he saw Darkwill open the door with his eyes hardly open.

“…You aren’t sick,” Darkwill said after observing him.

Klein maintained Gehrman Sparrow’s cold expression and politely widened the corners of his mouth.

“Good morning, Mr. Apothecary.

“I’ve found your teacher.”

“For real?” Darkwill asked in disbelief. “You just received the mission the day before yesterday…”

Chapter 592 - Three Advancements in a Week

◆ ◆ ◆

What has “me receiving the mission the day before yesterday” have to do with when I find him? If I didn’t need to spend a day waiting for the Snake of Fate, Will Auceptin, to locate me, I could’ve done so 24 hours earlier… That’s what professionalism is! Klein answered calmly, “You can choose not to hear what I have to say.”

Darkwill choked back the words he had prepared as his facial muscles twitched.

“Go ahead and say it.”

Klein described flatly, “I received intel that Roy King has been captured by the military and is presently imprisoned in the governor-general’s office.”

News I received from Arrodes… he added inwardly.

“For real?” Darkwill couldn’t hold back again as he widened his eyes and blurted out a retort.

Klein nodded indiscernibly and said, “My information source is sufficiently reliable.”

“But I have no way of confirming it…” Darkwill said in hesitation.

“This is because it involves an important Sealed Artifact of the Life School of Thought,” Klein said directly.

Darkwill immediately jumped in fright as he took two steps back and looked around warily, afraid that someone had heard what Klein had just said.

Can this sort of thing be said out on the street? He knows that we're from the Life School of Thought, and he knows that Old Man is involved in an important Sealed Artifact… I only learned of that from my last communication with him… Darkwill gradually began to believe the adventurer in front of him.

Klein swept a glance at the owl who swooped down and landed on the chubby Apothecary's shoulder.

"You can make your payment."

"I can't confirm it. I can't just believe what you say, right…" Darkwill said stubbornly.

Then, he saw the eyes of the adventurer in front of him turn abnormally cold.

He trembled and hurriedly said, "Alright. I'll barely count it as you completing the mission."

Unwillingly, he took out a wad of cash from a secret pocket in his witchdoctor robes and handed Klein 100 pounds in change.

Although he was a Beyonder, the physical enhancements he obtained from his job as an Apothecary and Beast Tamer wasn't enough to play a role in direct combat. He wasn't necessarily able to defeat an ordinary person with a revolver. As for the Beyonder pet he reared, it was also a fellow without any combat powers. Faced with an experienced and resourceful adventurer who was also likely a Beyonder, both he and the owl together wasn't necessarily his match. All he could do was act as he said.

It wasn't easy saving up that amount of money… he lamented inwardly.

It was indeed profitable being an Apothecary, even more so when out in the colonies. There were pirates, sailors, and adventurers. There were all sorts of people, and the official organizations were more relaxed on enforcing the rules. He could sell certain banned medicine without anyone coming to knock at his door. For the past two months, just the customers from the Red Theater was enough to earn him more than what he previously earned in a year.

However, as a Beyonder, his expenses were huge as well. The savings he had had primarily been expended when advancing to Beast Tamer. Later, he reared a pet and, with great difficulty, bought the potion formula and ingredients for it. He also purchased defensive charms for himself, leaving him only a few hundred pounds in savings.

Klein received the cash and, while counting it, verified their authenticity before putting it in his pocket and leaving.

After seeing Klein's figure disappear from the alley, Darkwill's expression sank.

It's too dangerous here… Too dangerous… I have to leave as quickly as possible! As he mumbled, he returned inside his herb store. Once inside, he dragged a brown suitcase and quickly stuffed all sorts of clothes and cash which had been folded neatly into it.

Finally, he poured out the notes and coins of different denominations from the cash register, stuffed them into his pocket, and took the fake identification documents he had spent a fortune on. With the brown suitcase, he walked out of his folk herb store.

Looking back at the various medicinal ingredients he hadn't finished selling yet, Darkwill's chubby face clearly twitched.

He took a breath and locked the door while resisting his aching heart. He went straight for the harbor by getting a rental carriage, heading for Bayam's liner ticketing company.

It’s too dangerous, way too dangerous. Old Man has been caught… He’s been caught… he sat in the carriage and repeated himself silently as he trembled.

In this state, he finally arrived at the ticketing company, and after paying for the carriage, he rushed into the lobby and queued up for the liner to East Balam.

Phew… Phew… Darkwill kept taking a few deep breaths as he closely followed the customer ahead of him and shifted forward.

“Get me the first ship out of here,” he emphasized to himself.

As he sporadically inched forward, Darkwill finally calmed down.

His expression occasionally turned twisted before quickly calming down. This repeated numerous times.

When there was only one customer left in front of him, Darkwill paused on the spot.

Dumbass! You dumbass! he cursed himself and immediately turned around, carried his suitcase, and walked out the ticketing lobby with his identification documents.

†

Klein didn’t care how Darkwill was saving his teacher, Roy King. He believed that it wasn’t something that needed his concern.

They have the Life School of Thought backing them. Even if they recently fractured, they’re an ancient organization that was born in the early Fifth Epoch, making it have hundreds of years of history. It has a considerable heritage. Chubby Apothecary will naturally be able to find someone to help… If even the Life School of Thought can’t do it, it will be useless even if I get the entire Tarot Club to help. So there’s no need for me to worry for him. The military in Bayam has a demigod… Of course, he might not be in the governor-general's office and might be in the military base. Inside the carriage, Klein took out his wallet and looked at the paper crane in it, wondering if he should immediately throw it above the gray fog.

I'll wait longer. Perhaps that Snake of Fate, Will Auceptin, might want to give me some perks… I should prepare a pencil next time. I neglected a problem. A paper crane is only this big. Using a fountain pen will quickly leave it without space to write… That will make me unable to contact Will Auceptin and end up just waiting passively. And I can't keep the paper crane on me all day. In a few days, I'll send it back to the junk pile above the gray fog. After all, I cannot always have Will Auceptin tracking me. I have to be careful… Klein quickly made a decision and returned to the Wind of Azure Inn, packed his suitcase, and checked out of the luxurious suite.

To his delight, on Danitz's second time here, he had made a prepayment, making him responsible for the 5 soli in fees.

Soon, Klein switched to a different district and came to Otum Street, which was close to Amyris Leaf Bar. He stayed in an inn called Teana. He got a clean and simple room which cost him 2 soli 2 pence every day. There was also a complimentary cup of fruit juice squeezed from the gigantic fruit named Teana.

As he drank the slightly sweet milky fruit juice, Klein no longer cared about his image. He slumped into a reclining chair and decided to daze off and take a nap for the next two hours before going above the gray fog to browse through the prayers of his believers to experience the different facades people have.

†

Backlund, the White family.

Emlyn looked at the blood-red "gem" that appeared in front of him at the altar, and he seemed to be able to hear it resonating with his blood.

After thanking Mr. Fool, he picked up the gem and felt the uniqueness flowing within it, so as to confirm that it was the inheritance from a Sanguine baron.

As long as I prepare the corresponding inheritance ritual and supplementary ingredients, I'll become a Baron. And this isn't difficult at this stage, Emlyn thought with anticipation and glee. According to the humans' system, I would be a Sequence 6 Beyonder. The corresponding name is Potions Professor!

†

In the blink of an eye, it was Monday again. Above the Fog Sea, a fleet was tearing through the thin fog and blue sea.

Their flagship was a gigantic sailboat which hung a unique flag on it. It depicted an eyelash-less eye with ten stars surrounding it.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya stood by the window of the captain's cabin as she quietly looked at the sunlight that shone through the thin fog until the wall clock produced its cuckoo.

She glanced at the time and quickly converted the time to Loen time. She then pulled the curtains and sat behind her desk.

Placed on the red wooden table were a brass sextant and a light-blue celestial globe. The latter's surface had a large swath of blankness, regions that hadn't been explored or were impossible to explore.

Cattleya reached out her fingers and played with the celestial globe before closing her eyes as she awaited The Fool's summoning.

Before long, a crimson light flooded her eyes, drowning the prepared her completely.

By the time she got used to the changes, she found herself in the holy palace propped up with stone columns. She was before a long, mottled bronze table.

While Miss Justice was greeting everyone energetically, Cattleya also expressed her respects to Mr. Fool who was still covered in the grayish-white fog.

She did a simple sweep, and her black eyes with a slight tinge of purple suddenly constricted.

She realized that The Hanged Man, The Moon, and The Sun who were sitting opposite her had slight changes in their outward spirituality. It was different from before!

This indicated that they had advanced!

This meant that they had advanced in the past few days!

In just a week, three Tarot Club members have advanced. It's likely that The Hanged Man and The Moon have already reached Sequence 6… Is this a coincidence? They happened to consume the potion this week? In terms of probability, there's a possibility. The Moon and The Sun were purchasing ingredients last week, but this also serves to show that the Tarot Club members advance very quickly; otherwise, there wouldn't be such a coincidence…

Of course, it's not strange to advance quickly below Sequence 5 once a Beyonder masters the acting method and isn't lacking in resources… From Sequence 6 to Sequence 5, there's a need for a ritual, and the digestion becomes increasingly difficult. It's difficult for such matters to happen again… Cattleya retracted her gaze.

Following that, Audrey apologized to Mr. Fool, saying that she hadn't been in contact with the Psychology Alchemists recently and wasn't able to provide any Roselle diary pages. Fors was in a similar situation. Her teacher was slow in replying to her, and the cold weather outside left her resistant against the idea of heading out.

Having just advanced and having many things to settle, Derrick wasn’t able to produce new ancient myths. Klein could only calmly nod.

Upon seeing this Derrick heaved a sigh of relief and turned his head to the other end of the long bronze table.

“Mr. World, I’ve obtained the method for separating a Beyonder characteristic from the mental corruption left by a Rampager.”

Don’t say it so directly… At the other end of the bronze table, Klein’s expression nearly froze.

Little Sun, although you have promised several times in the past, making Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man know of this matter, can’t you see that Ma’am Hermit just joined? Klein resisted the urge to facepalm.

Chapter 593 - Solution

◆ ◆ ◆

The method for separating a Rampager's mental corruption from a Beyonder characteristic… The Hermit Cattleya shot a glance at The World and guessed that he might've obtained one to two Beyonder characteristics that a Rampager left behind. In addition, one of them likely involved the advancement characteristic for The World or someone close to him.

This was a very easy inference since if one didn't use a Beyonder characteristic as the main ingredient of a potion, the mental corruption of a Rampager in it didn't matter if it was made into a mystical item. At worst, the negative side effects would be extremely strong, making it equivalent to a Sealed Artifact, but that didn't mean that there was no way of using it.

After adjusting his emotions, Klein controlled The World to answer hoarsely, "Write it on a piece of paper and pass it to me."

With that said, Klein originally wished to encourage Little Sun for being a trustworthy person, but upon considering how The World's image was that of a gloomy and reserved person who didn't say anything else unless he had ulterior motives. He instantly fell into a slight dilemma.

No, there's an ulterior motive… By letting Little Sun maintain his principles, it will make things a lot easier in the future. To put it simply, it will be easier to fleece him… Of course, I'll have to suffer the damage from his honesty and uprightness as a result… The World is an experienced and shrewd Beyonder in the eyes of Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and the others. They likely wouldn't notice any problems… Klein's mind raced as he made The World let out a deep laugh.

"You're really a trustworthy person. Your character is worthy of praise."

The Hanged Man pricked up his brows and took the initiative to say to Derrick, "I'm also interested in the knowledge regarding this. What can I use to trade for this information?"

He planned to do the transaction if it wasn't too expensive, and he would give up if it exceeded his expectations. After all, he didn't have any use for it at the moment.

Having been praised, Derrick was still lost in his joy. After two seconds of thought, he said with abnormal sincerity, "Mr. Hanged Man, there's no need. You've often been giving me suggestions in the past when I was faced with trials. Just treat it as a way of showing my appreciation."

…If The World is a real person and was drinking, he definitely would've spewed out all the water in his mouth. Thankfully, he's neither drinking, nor is he real. Klein mustered all the Beyonder powers of a Clown to ensure his expression remained unchanged.

"…"

The Hanged Man was briefly at a loss for words. The Sun's reply was completely out of his expectations.

He had been traveling the seas for years and had experienced numerous encounters. His outlook on things was no longer that of black and white, with it mainly shades of gray. At this moment, he felt a baffling sense of guilt.

"Your character is really worthy of praise," Alger quickly composed himself and praised Little Sun.

Don't copy what I said! Can't you use a different sentence… The World glanced at The Hanged Man as The Fool lamented how wily old foxes were all one and the same.

Dumbass! No, he's dumber than an ass! A dumb sheep! The Moon Emlyn silently condemned The Sun.

From this morning, he had been filled with anticipation for this Tarot Gathering, as he had already advanced to Baron and had wished to find a chance to covertly flaunt himself.

They might not be able to tell, apart from Mr. Fool… Mr. Hanged Man likely can guess it… I should do something later to let them know that I'm an honorable Lord Baron… Emlyn pondered as he listened.

Towards Little Sun's words, Justice Audrey didn't feel any guilt or anger, as she knew very well that Mr. Hanged Man had been the one who had been guiding him every time. The others were only occasionally giving suggestions.

This is the natural result of being a good person… I hope Mr. Hanged Man will become kinder in the future… She watched this scene in delight and didn't have the urge to spend money to obtain the method for separating the mental corruption from a Beyonder characteristic.

Derrick quickly turned around and obtained Mr. Fool's approval and conjured two yellowish-brown goatskin parchments.

Klein controlled The World and took a piece. He scanned it impatiently.

"There are two methods. The first is to use an item that can steal the Beyonder powers of others. Extract the mental corruption left behind by a Rampager and concoct the Beyonder characteristic into a potion before the theft loses effect. This way, the mental corruption will have nowhere to go and will directly dissipate.

"The second is to hold a ritual and pray to one of the two mystical items in our City of Silver. Use its feedback to shatter the Beyonder characteristic and let the mental corruption expire. After that, the Beyonder characteristic will automatically gather together slowly.

“I only managed to obtain the corresponding ritual’s procedure and was unable to obtain the precise description of the item. Only the elders of the six-member council have the right to know it and preside over such a ritual.

“The ritual’s procedure is…

Hmm… Thoughts went through Klein’s mind as he nearly forgot to control the dummy, The World.

The first method is indeed something I never considered before… The Sealed Artifact, Blood Vessel Thief, behind the Chanis Gate in Tingen City is able to steal a target’s Beyonder powers. By viewing a mental corruption as one of them, there’s nothing wrong with this logic…

But here comes the problem. The mental corruption inside the All-Black Eye isn’t that of an ordinary Beyonder but from the evil god, True Creator. Regardless of if it’s the Beyonder who’s stealing the power or a mystical item of a similar trait, it will not be able to withstand such mental corruption. The former has a hundred percent chance of losing control, while the latter will directly be corrupted…

In theory, I can sacrifice a similar mystical item and use it to replace the All-Black Eye’s corruption. However, the timing has to be done perfectly without any errors; otherwise, the two items might end up corrupted.

Klein quickly analyzed the viability of the first option. As for the second option, it was similar to his and Edwina’s previous guess. Only the details were somewhat different.

The two powerful mystical items in the City of Silver are, at best, Grade 0. Basically, it can’t be a true god’s Sequence 0 remains; otherwise, they wouldn’t be in such a pathetic state in the Forsaken Land of God. Therefore, does it mean that in order to shatter a Beyonder characteristic, one doesn't need a god's strength? It's enough to do it at the level of an angel? According to Little Sun, an angel is equivalent to a subsidiary god and can barely be considered a god…

Yes… This matter can be verified. Sea God Kalvetua only obtained a portion of Calamity Cohinem's characteristic. The remaining part is in the Book of Calamity… There might even be a third part. I wonder where it's hidden since it helps this high elf, at the level of an angel, be able to resist death. In short, it can be seen that Cohinem's Beyonder characteristic was split into at least two parts. This is essentially the same as shattering a Beyonder characteristic.

With all the evidence validating each other, I can make a preliminary conclusion that as long as the ritual is right, the feedback of a powerhouse at the angel level will be able to shatter a Beyonder characteristic. Then, here comes the problem. Where do I find an angel…

Mr. Azik might be one at his peak, but he clearly hasn't recovered yet. As for Saints, Snake of Fate, Will Auceptin, is only a fetus that hasn't even been born at the moment.

Klein didn't spend too much time thinking, deciding to consider how to resolve the problem after the Tarot Gathering ended.

With that, Alger quickly scanned the area and gained an understanding to a certain degree.

Towards this, he had a theory.

Getting The World to seek the method to separate the mental corruption from a Beyonder characteristic is likely a test Mr. Fool had given to his Blessed.

But does this imply that Mr. Fool's strength has only recovered to the level of a Saint and not an Angel? Otherwise, there's no need to go through such trouble. He could've directly removed it.

How long has it been? It's just been seven months and Mr. Fool has already recovered to this extent… Right, "He" can already respond in place of Sea God Kalvetua!

In another one to two years, he will likely be able to escape from his seal. Standing at the pinnacle as an Angel, he will just be one step short of the ultimate goal.

Ignoring The Hanged Man's reaction, Cattleya looked at The Hanged Man and thought for a few seconds before chuckling.

"I'm not sure if those methods include one of the methods I know of.

"I can provide it for free. An Unshadowed of the Sun pathway can directly cleanse away the mental corruption in a Beyonder characteristic."

Ma'am Hermit is a lot more proactive than the last time… Has she adjusted her state of mind, or does she have a motive? Or could it be that she's discovered that everyone else is a weakling, so there's no need to be too careful… Klein was first surprised with Cattleya's attitude before being delighted that he had obtained a third method. It was from the Sun pathway which the City of Silver lacked.

But I can't find the help of an Unshadowed, although I do have an incomplete Unshadowed potion formula… He controlled The World to deliberate for a moment before having him turn to Cattleya to laugh deeply.

"Thank you for your generosity, Ma'am Hermit."

Following that, he switched to the demeanor of a salesman and asked Derrick, "Do you know of a book named Groselle's Travels?"

Derrick thought seriously before honestly shaking his head.

"No."

No… Klein nearly failed to continue what he had to say, but thankfully, he steadied himself and let The World explain himself, “It’s a magical book that originates from dragons. Many of its owners have vanished.”

“Originates from dragons?” Audrey keenly noticed this important point as she asked with interest.

“Yes, a Beyonder plans on selling it for 8,000 pounds,” The World said hoarsely.

He didn’t raise the price above Edwina’s offer because he had yet to bargain with her. This was where he could profit on the trade. Besides, even if Edwina insisted on 8,000 pounds, he could still obtain Groselle’s Travels and study it. It was worth the time he spent closing the deal.

Audrey pursed her lips slightly as she darted her eyes around a little and cautiously asked, “What’s so magical about it?”

“…It requires further study.” The World chose to be honest.

“I’ll consider it.” Audrey wasn’t in a hurry to agree to it because 8,000 pounds was also a considerable sum of money to her as well. Especially with her having just been reimbursed for Lie, it was very difficult for her father, Earl Hall, to accept a book of unknown purpose. And if she were to rely on herself, it would take her at least three to four months—this was built on the premise that she had already purchased the Psychiatrist’s Beyonder characteristic for Susie.

Hence, she turned to ask The World about the Psychiatrist Beyonder characteristic.

…I mainly spent this week hunting Vice Admiral Ailment and failed. I didn’t find a Grazing target to switch to… Klein was instantly left somewhat embarrassed, feeling as though The World’s shrewd image had been damaged.

Chapter 594 - The World's Commission

◆

Thankfully, The World didn't have the ability to blush red. As long as he wasn't controlled, there was no change to his state.

He chuckled darkly.

"Another few more days."

Audrey nodded with a reserved attitude and didn't rush him. This was because Susie didn't express any desire in advancing anytime soon. After all, she was only a dog.

The Hanged Man, The Moon, and The Sun had just advanced a few days ago, so they were in the stage of converging their spirituality and practicing their new Beyonder powers. They had no desire to purchase the subsequent potion formulas or corresponding Sanguine inheritance. They calmly waited until the transaction phase came to an end.

Besides, they didn't have spare cash. Although Alger had "lowered" the price Emlyn White had to pay for the Sanguine Baron inheritance to 4,300 pounds and 300 pounds in commission, allowing him to earn 1,400 pounds, he had spent quite a bit on the Whip of Mind. All he had left was 1,445 pounds.

After purchasing the Sanguine Baron inheritance, new dolls, and doll dresses, he still had 2,300 pounds in savings. Although it seemed like a sizable amount, the subsequent ingredients were that of a Sanguine Viscount. It would cost at least 8,000 pounds. As for Derrick, he had exchanged all his merit points that he had previously accumulated, and he was waiting to be sent out for a patrolling or exploration mission.

Fors and Audrey were similarly not seeking to purchase the potion formulas of the subsequent Sequences since they could obtain them from their own resource channels. Furthermore, there was no need to hide it or waste money at the Tarot Club. Audrey simply wasn't too nitpicky when it came to money; it didn't mean she was dumb.

On the other hand, Cattleya was still observing and wasn't in a rush to reveal what she needed. On the other hand, she didn't believe that the other Tarot Club members apart from Mr. Fool could provide anything she needed. After all, to a pirate admiral who had advanced to Sequence 5 for years, what she desired most was the level of demigod. Therefore, she only looked calmly at The Sun and the others, with her slightly dark purple eyes, and without making any attempts at speaking.

Klein thought for a moment and controlled The World to add, "Is anyone able to obtain a mystical item with very potent offensive strength?"

The target of his question was directed at The Hermit. This was because only Admiral of Stars, who had traveled the seas for so many years, could satisfy his request. Even The Hanged Man and the that Artisan he knew couldn't do it unless he could provide them with a corresponding Sequence 6 or even a Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic.

Cattleya fell silent for two seconds before slowly shaking her head.

"If something similar appears at the Beyonder gatherings I participate in, I'll help you take note."

All these years, she had killed several Beyonders and had indeed obtained a certain number of Beyonder characteristics and mystical items, but they were either rewarded to her pirate subordinates, or she had exchanged them for two powerful items that greatly enhanced her strength and survivability. She didn't have anything to spare.

Furthermore, she needed the two items and wouldn't sell them before she advanced to the level of demigod.

From the looks of it, Admiral of Stars isn't a well-to-do person either. A huge faction implies large expenses… Klein silently sighed and made The World thank her with his hoarse voice.

With the transactions quickly coming to an end, he controlled The World to look at Fors.

"I wish to entrust you with a mission."

"Me?" Fors was a little surprised.

Could it be something like buying a radio transceiver again? she thought as the corners of her mouth twitched slightly.

The World nodded.

"Go to Williams Street, which borders West Borough and Empress Borough, and circle the place. Do it once every two to three days. Take note of any abnormalities. If there are any, then inform me immediately."

He didn't use Mr. Fool to bring focus on the matter, as everyone was already used to it and experienced. Furthermore, beneath Williams Street was precisely the location of the Tudor family's ruins where the evil spirit was lingering.

"Abnormality? What would be considered abnormal?" Fors asked, feeling puzzled and cautious.

There might be something abnormal about Williams Street in Backlund? Audrey was originally not very interested in the topic, but at that moment, she pricked up her ears and paid close attention.

She trusted Mr. World's ability to gather intelligence to a great extent. The Great Smog of Backlund was evidence of his ability!

West Borough, Empress Borough… Sounds like it's located at Loen's capital, Backlund… Miss Magician is presently in Backlund? Indeed. She looks ordinary, but she isn't in any way. To a secret organization, members in a city are often more powerful in other places… Of course, she might also be like me—a coincidence of fate because she requested to be roped in… Cattleya swept a glance at Fors and quickly analyzed the information revealed from the conversation.

Alger was suddenly interested since he knew that The World was the representative of Mr. Fool's Blessed. Whatever he paid attention to had a high chance of involving a conflict at the upper echelons!

Just what secret lies within that street named Williams Street? Alger couldn't help but try to guess at the deeper truth.

How would I know what abnormalities there will be… Klein mumbled before getting The World to answer gloomily, "I believe there will be sufficient abnormalities.

"I have to warn you that if you really notice anything abnormal, do not attempt to investigate it on your own or hire someone to do the investigation. It will be very dangerous.

"How much do you think is an adequate reward?"

Very dangerous… Fors instinctively wished to decline the mission.

However, considering how immense the influence of the Great Smog of Backlund was, one that even affected her, she wasn't sure if this abnormality wouldn't cause her harm. As such, she became hesitant.

After a few seconds, she changed her languid seating posture and said, "100 pounds."

"Much lower than I imagined." The World chuckled.

Fors spread her hands and said, "It's because it's for myself as well."

I’ll just treat it as “people observation” in order to gather material for my novel… That’s right, I can’t stay at home all day. It’s time for me to get out. I have to push forward the matter of acting as a Trickmaster. Just conjuring tricks to amuse Xio isn’t enough to digest it… How should I act? Join a circus to perform tricks? Or should I do individual performances at different squares? I don’t have to be worried about how the people I know view me. As an author, life experience is a basic trait… Fors’s thoughts gradually dispersed.

After settling this matter, Klein made The World turn his head to The Hanged Man and chuckle darkly.

“I received intel that the Church of Storms has taken action. The matter at Bansy Harbor has been preliminarily been resolved.”

Having been drifting out at sea for the past week, Alger, who hadn’t had any contact with the Church, immediately replied with a solemn voice, “What’s the final outcome?”

“There won’t be a Bansy Harbor for some time,” The World replied with a concealed smile.

At this moment, Audrey and company realized what they were talking about.

That was the place with the ancient name Binsy, and it had the present name of Bansy!

It was the place where descendants of the King of Angels Medici resided!

Is Mr. World implying that the Church of Storms has leveled Bansy Harbor? That’s really in their style. That’s good too. There’s no need to worry that the innocent there will be corrupted… I wonder if the King of Angels Medici appeared or escaped. Would the pontiff of the Church of Storms appear in person, or was a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact used… Audrey heaved a sigh of relief as she asked with brightened eyes, "Mr. World, do you know of the specifics?"

"No, no one knows, other than the upper echelons of the Church of Storms." The World stole a glance at The Hanged Man.

The Hanged Man fell silent, feeling the burning ambition in his chest once more.

I want to become a member of the Church's upper echelons! he emphasized to himself.

The Hermit Cattleya, who had joined the Tarot Gathering a second time, basically didn't understand what they were talking about.

As a pirate admiral, she was no stranger to Bansy Harbor, but she didn't know what had happened there. She also had no idea why the Church of Storms would destroy the place and why it would require a long period of time to rebuild it.

It should be a very serious matter that deals with the higher-ups… The members of the Tarot Club seems to be aware of the reason… Although their Sequences aren't high, they seem to know a lot and are involved in many matters… apart from The Sun… This is the reason why Mr. Fool tacitly agreed to have them establish this gathering? Through the Tarot Club, they will indirectly influence various matters of different organizations? Cattleya once again reevaluated her understanding of the other members and was increasingly impressed with them.

She still maintained her silence and didn't inquire. This left Audrey, who was waiting to flaunt via answering in response to The Hermit's puzzlement, disappointed.

Even for Ma'am Hermit, it's unlikely that she'll be involved in matters regarding a King of Angels. No, she might not even know about the existence of a King of Angels… Audrey thought spontaneously.

After talking about the outcome of Bansy Harbor and waiting for a moment, Emlyn White immediately cleared his throat and said, “Thanks to Mr. Hanged Man’s help, I’m already a Baron.

“I have a question. As a Sanguine, do I need to use the acting method like you humans do in order to expedite the so-called digestion after advancing to a Baron, so as to better grasp the Beyonder characteristic?”

His back was extremely sharp as his neck was slightly elevated while his chin was slightly tipped upwards.

I’m sorry. Mr. Fool isn’t able to answer this question of yours. But in theory, it’s required. After all, you are using the “inheritance” of others… Klein leaned back in his chair and sat amidst the gray fog as he leisurely looked at the other members of the Tarot Club.

Cattleya scanned her surroundings and said, “A Sanguine Baron corresponds to the Sequence 6 Potions Professor?”

“Yes,” Emlyn replied, unable to hide his smile.

He wasn’t stupid. From the previous transactions and interactions, he had determined the Sequences of the other members apart from The World. He believed that he was one of the strongest members of the Tarot Club. Of course, this was excluding Mr. Fool and the recently recruited Ma’am Hermit.

Mr. Moon is already at Sequence 6? Why does he seem more immature than The Sun… Audrey pursed her lips.

At that moment, Cattleya said, “It requires acting because this pathway only has the name Vampire at Sequence 7. As for you, you were born in that state. There’s no need to act, but it’s required for the other Sequences.”

“Ma’am Hermit, which pathway does that Sequence 7 belong to?” Audrey blinked her eyes as she curiously asked before Emlyn White could say a word.

Chapter 595 - Domain

◆

Without waiting for The Hermit to answer, Audrey added, “If you believe this is an important piece of information and isn’t something to be given for free, then I can provide you with some payment.”

“No, there’s no need to. Anyone familiar with the Feynapotter’s Church of Earth Mother will have some understanding of this.” Cattleya didn’t doubt Miss Justice’s sincerity when it came to the principle of equal exchange. She believed that Miss Justice was fully capable of satisfying her price in terms of wealth and resources, but she decided to provide the information for free.

Firstly, it raised Miss Justice’s impression on her and would build a foundation for any future transactions. Secondly, by providing the information, she could observe the reactions of the members and estimate their standing in their own organizations and factions.

I’m very familiar with the Earth Mother’s Blessed, Bishop Utravsky, but I didn’t know anything about that… Of course, I truly am a little scared of him. His height and build are just too intimidating. Every time I’m there, I only seek out Emlyn White… Sitting at the end of the long bronze table, Klein thought in a self-deprecating manner.

Cattleya didn’t pause as she continued, “Vampire is from the Moon pathway. The corresponding Sequence 9 is Apothecary; Sequence 8 is Beast Tamer; Sequence 6 is Potions Professor; Sequence 5 is Scarlet Scholar; Sequence 4 is Shaman King. I’m not sure about the higher Sequences.”

“Ahem.” Emlyn White coughed. “Ma’am Hermit, I have to emphasize that it’s Sanguine, not Vampire. Heh heh, I won’t object it if you call those humans who consume the characteristics of my kinsmen vampires. I would even be very agreeable to it.”

So Vampire is from the Apothecary pathway. So is Shaman King. It’s no wonder they revere the Primordial Moon and not the Goddess…

Could the Scarlet Lunar Corona, that Ma’am Sharron obtained, be from a dead Scarlet Scholar or Sanguine Viscount? Apart from being able to recreate the effects of a full moon and neutralizing the corresponding effects, it can provide terrifying speed, unimaginable recovery speed, and rather powerful darkness-related spells. The negative effects can be neutralized by drinking the fresh blood of the living… Indeed, it does seem to be a result of a Sanguine…

Among the various jobs of this pathway, there are some that resemble the Seer pathway. There’s no connection between the Sequences, while there are some that have an obvious progression. How strange…

Klein joined the bits of bread crumbs together, feeling somewhat enlightened and puzzled.

Alger, Fors, and company were either in thought, listening in relish, or pretending to be disinterested. Everyone had different reactions, but Cattleya was able to figure out that they didn’t understand much about Vampires prior to this.

They are low- or mid-ranking members in their organizations or factions. They match the characteristics of being recently pulled into the Tarot Club and at the stage of rapidly advancing… The World didn’t react. Either he’s very staid, or he long knew of the matter regarding Vampires, or both… After repeated observations, I have to admit that The World is the Tarot Club member that needs to have the most attention paid to and be guarded against…

Audrey listened with great interest as she thought over it carefully. As though she was attending a family education class, she raised her hand slightly.

“Ma’am Hermit, why are the Sequences in the Moon pathway seemingly unrelated?”

The Hermit Cattleya looked at Miss Justice and discovered that the dress and accessories she wore were completely different from the last gathering. There was no repeat, but it exuded her luxurious and noble bearing.

As her mind went adrift, she seemed to see the portrait of the Queen back when she was young. Every piece of clothing she wore was completely different. The same set of clothing was never worn a second time at a formal event.

After a moment of silence, Cattleya said, “A pathway’s Sequence doesn’t necessarily need to be related or superficially connected. The common trait is that this pathway corresponds to the god’s domain. For example, the Moon represents spirituality, plants, beauty, parts of life, parts of darkness, and parts of mystery. Therefore, this pathway has Apothecary of the plant domain, Vampire of the life domain, and Beast Tamer of the intersection of life and spirituality.”

“Sanguine!” Emlyn White emphasized and lifted his chin slightly. “This should be why us Sanguine are very handsome and beautiful.”

No, that’s not the case. The vampires I’ve seen are all disgusting and ferocious… Derrick retorted weakly in his heart.

It can be explained in such a manner? It’s quite different from Captain’s and Daly’s explanations… Different pathways represent the domain possessed by a Sequence 0… Or could it be that the two combined is the most accurate answer? I wonder what the domains the Sequence 0 of the Seer pathway represents. From the symbol behind my chair, it represents strangeness and change? Klein’s expression didn’t change as his mind whirled.

Audrey easily understood Ma'am Hermit's explanation and couldn't help but guess the name of her pathway's Sequence 0.

It's definitely Dragon. There are many species of dragons. Many powers are not contained within this pathway. It's closer to the domain represented by the mind dragon…

I wish Mr. Fool can quickly find the Card of Blasphemy of this corresponding pathway…

That Groselle's Travels originates from dragons. I wonder if it has anything to do with a mind dragon…

At this moment, Emlyn asked as a form of validation, "That is to say that to successfully become a Sanguine Viscount, I similarly have to act as a Potions Professor, even if I'm a favorite of the Moon?"

My dear Emlyn, I know you are trying to bring attention to the latter half of your sentence… Klein nearly reached out his right hand to pinch his chin.

This was also one of the reasons why he had entrusted Miss Magician to check for abnormalities in Williams Street. He ultimately felt that Emlyn White, a vampire who didn't enjoy going out or socializing, was rather unreliable at present. Another reason was that he knew that he was being controlled by the Sanguine's upper echelons in secret. Getting him to head to Williams Street made it easy to expose the matter regarding the underground ruins.

"Yes." Cattleya nodded.

The exchange continued, and as it came to a close, Audrey seemed to recall something. She turned her body and looked towards the end of the long bronze table.

"Mr. Fool, the second round of the Civil Servant Unified Examination officially ends today. What's left is the final interview."

Her tone was brisk and with clear delightful emotions. It was like an excellent student reporting her results to her parents.

From her point of view, the Civil Servant Unified Examination was a suggestion raised by Mr. Fool in passing. She had pushed forward the idea via inconspicuous methods, the first time she had attempted to use her Beyonder powers to change reality. Therefore, she had always paid great attention to it, often reporting the situation to the suggester.

The second round of the examinations are over? I wonder if Benson can pass and have the opportunity of entering the final interview… Klein leaned back and suddenly felt wistful.

He nodded slightly and said with a smiling tone, “Not bad.”

Audrey, who had been praised by Mr. Fool, became happier. She felt that she was indirectly changing the fates of many people, allowing people who were stuck in the lower and middle classes to have a chance at entering the middle and upper classes.

When Cattleya heard this exchange, she couldn’t help but frown. She felt that this was very different from the style the Tarot Club had previously shown.

Could it be that the reforms of the past half a year in the Loen Kingdom were a result of the Tarot Club’s turning of the wheels? As a young noble lady, Miss Justice played an important role? If that’s the case, I have to reevaluate my views… Although the members aren’t of a high Sequence and are low-ranking members of their organizations, they’re still able to influence the situation of the world to a certain extent? Cattleya retracted her gaze and considered whether she wanted to use her different resource channels to figure out the backstory of Loen Kingdom’s reforms.

After a few minutes of exchanges, The Fool Klein announced the end of the Gathering.

While Miss Justice and company got up to express their farewells, he severed the connection and leaned back into his seat. He silently watched the endless grayish-white fog around him for a very long while.

†

Backlund. In a coffee shop next to King's Avenue.

Melissa was holding a porcelain teaspoon as she gently stirred the black tea which had a lemon in it. From time to time, she would turn her head to look out into the faint fog.

Her black veiled hat was sitting beside her. Placed in front of her was a plate of the cheapest toast, but she hadn't taken a single bite.

She originally imagined that she would anger the coffee shop's owner for sitting there all this while, preventing him from earning more. But she later discovered that there were many people waiting for the end of the test opposite the road like her.

As seconds turned into minutes, the water condensing on the glass windows grew thicker. Melissa couldn't help but extend her hand to clean up a relatively clear spot.

Finally, she saw a bunch of people surge out of the test venue. The glass-inlaid wooden door of the coffee shop was pushed open as about eight men and women entered.

Just as Benson took off his rather old top and before he could smooth his rather high hairline with his fingers, he discovered his sister standing as she asked nervously, "How did you do, uh—Were the questions tough today?"

"It might've been considered difficult for others, but it was a piece of cake for me. Mathematics is my forte." Benson looked around and saw everyone discussing it without noticing him. Hence, he chuckled.

“After the test ended, I saw quite a number of people with blank sheets. Do they think a low-ranking civil servant will have a mathematics secretary? If that’s the case, what’s the difference between hiring a curly-haired baboon and them?”

Melissa heaved a secret sigh of relief and looked to her side before turning her head back.

“Benson, if you’re really confident, you should consider the matter regarding the interview.

“You need to buy a new decent set of clothes.”

“Let’s leave that to tomorrow. We should celebrate today. I’ve already decided on the restaurant.” Benson smiled as he pointed outside.

Melissa pursed her lips and looked at her elder brother in an extremely serious manner.

“I’ve already bought the meat and vegetables.”

Benson locked his gaze with his sister for a few seconds before moving it away in submission.

“Alright, let’s go home.”

†

Above the gray fog, Klein gradually found his train of thought and calmed his emotions. He began considering how to separate the True Creator’s mental corruption of the All-Black Eye.

Chapter 596 - Clue

◆

In the majestic palace with stone columns propping it up, Klein sat in a high-back chair as he lightly tapped the corner of the long mottled table. He first eliminated the method of seeking a Sequence 4 Unshadowed from the Sun pathway.

This was because he had almost zero contact with the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun. It was very difficult for him to find help from anyone. Secondly, he suspected that an Unshadowed was unlikely to be capable of cleansing the mental corruption in the All-Black Eye. After all, The Hermit Cattleya's suggestion was directed at remnant influences by an ordinary Rampager, and not the True Creator!

Seeking the help of an angel or true god's power isn't realistic either. In theory, I can use the mysterious space above the gray fog to perform a divination on the Eternal Blazing Sun and use "His" help to shatter the All-Black Eye and evaporate the mental corruption, but the problem lies with the fact that an experienced "Him" might be able to use this opportunity to invade this place and take over the gray fog. If that happens, it wouldn't be worth it…

And when a power that exceeds my level an unknown number of times instantly comes into effect, there's no delay. It targets me, and I'll have no time to redirect it to the All-Black Eye. I will lack the ability to control the situation.

Also, it's not like I can divine it as I wish. I need a medium. I previously used the mutated Sun Sacred Emblem, which had the Eternal Blazing

Sun's divine blood in it, as well as the ear that was corrupted by the True Creator.

Currently, the mediums I have are Mr. Door and the Hidden Sage. I can use the ravings that Miss Magician hears during the full moon, as well as knowledge's pursuit of Admiral of Stars to make an attempt. But similarly, the counterattack isn't directed at the All-Black Eye, and I don't have the means to divert the attack.

Mr. Azik has yet to recover. Snake of Fate Will Auceptin has yet to be born. From the looks of it, I can't find an angel to help me either. Sigh, I still know too few high-ranking figures… Right, there's also something akin to an angel, the evil spirit in the ruins under Backlund that's suspected to be King of Angels Medici! But that fellow is scheming with unknown plots and malicious intent. Unless there's no other method, I will not consider it.

Yes, taking the risk isn't worth it at all. If that's the case, I might as well give up on the All-Black Eye and search for the main ingredients of a Marionettist. It's only the dust of ancient wraiths and the core crystal of a six-winged gargoyle. It's even possible that the former can be found in the Underworld!

In that case, performing a new search is a viable choice, while finding a mystical item that's similar to the Blood Vessel Thief is another choice. With the gray fog shielding me, I can use its theft abilities to its full extent. I'll definitely be able to separate the True Creator's mental corruption from the All-Black Eye, and I wouldn't be afraid that it would return.

The easiest method is to throw the corrupted mystical item far away once the theft is completed. Then, I'll bring the pure All-Black Eye back to the real world, causing the "physical" separation of the two items.

Well… How am I to find a similar mystical item? Mr. Hanged Man didn't say anything after seeing the methods, which implies that he doesn't know either. However, I can ask at the next Tarot Gathering. Ma'am

Hermit, Miss Magician, Miss Justice, Little Sun, and Emlyn White all have their corresponding information and resource channels…

I can try searching for it myself this week. I'll start with Vice Admiral Iceberg. Her third mate, Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson, has Beyonder powers that can steal. Perhaps he might know where there might be similar mystical items.

Klein's thought process gradually cleared up as he formulated an initial plan.

He first performed a divination before rapidly returning to the real world. He got out of the decadent state of lying slump in the reclining chair drinking beverages and reading newspapers as he quickly set up a ritual.

It was still three candles, but the difference was the symbol he drew. It was the Sacred Emblem of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom—an omniscient eye on an open book. The ritual's silver dagger also switched to a brass knife. In mysticism, the Blue Planet corresponded to the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, and the metal that belonged to the Blue Planet's domain was mercury and brass.

Klein had long considered the problem of contacting Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards. Therefore, he prepared a set of Soulfall Ritual materials. After a series of processes, he burned the corresponding herb powder, and he dripped the extract and essence from lavender and mint.

Amidst the faint, clear, and mysterious fragrance, Klein took a step back and used ancient Hermes to recite an incantation.

"I pray for the power of knowledge;

"I pray for the power of rationality;

"I pray for the God of Wisdom's loving grace;

"I pray that you allow me to communicate with the spirit of Edwina Edwards, the teacher who pursues knowledge, the researcher of spirit world creatures, Vice Admiral Iceberg of the seas, who hails from Lenburg."

†

Klein's voice reverberated as the altar instantly turned gloomy and cold. Be it the brass knife or the metallic bottles, all of them floated up.

It succeeded. The Golden Dream is still within 500 nautical miles… Klein first felt a sense of delight before he saw the flames of the three candles lengthen. They were tainted with a pale white with a hint of dark green.

He knew that the Soulfall Ritual was essentially to free his body and allow the target's Astral Projection to possess him to establish an effective communication channel. He would be lacking in the necessary protection, making it easy to be attacked by the target of the Soulfall Ritual. Therefore, he had divined ahead of time to determine the danger from this matter. Besides, after meeting and conversing with her, he believed that Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina wasn't a person with malicious intent. He temporarily found her trustworthy.

At this moment, the wind within the wall of spirituality produced mournful sounds. Klein only felt an ice-cold power descend upon him from the void in an attempt to enter his body.

Then, he was surprised to discover that it wasn't like he expected. He had the necessary strength to resist and control himself instead of being possessed by her!

What's happening? Just as he had the thought, he began to see a faint, formless gray fog around him.

This was a trait he possessed after advancing to Faceless. The power of the gray fog was able to slightly leak into reality!

Amidst his racing mind, Klein didn't hesitate to wave his arm. He pointed to a coat hanging on a coat rack, throwing the ice-cold power onto it.

The black tweed coat on the coat rack strangely floated up as the arms raised up, looking somewhat clumsy.

It was as though an invisible person was wearing his coat!

The black coat floated two meters forward before coming to a pause.

The two sleeves raised up and formed an ×.

What does that mean? Klein was taken aback before he realized what Vice Admiral Iceberg meant.

Without a mouth, I can't speak! Without hands, I can't write!

This is awkward… Klein thought for a moment and directly said, "I need a mystical item that can steal the Beyonder powers of others. Ma'am, might I know if you have one?

"If you don't, can you ask your third mate for me? Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson?

"The corresponding answer can be written in a letter. Summon my messenger to send it over."

The black coat's sleeves spread out and motioned with a lowering gesture.

Following that, it lost its soul and fell to the ground, no longer appearing as straight as before.

That means "yes?" Klein sighed silently and quickly ended the ritual. He hung up the black coat and used a brush and handkerchief to clean it.

Then, he wrote a letter and asked Mr. Azik a similar question.

He summoned the messenger by blowing the copper whistle. After the letter was taken away, Klein attempted the third method with great drive.

He took out the paper crane from his wallet and carefully spread it out. He wrote with a pencil on it: “Might I ask where I can get a mystical item that can steal the Beyonder powers of others?”

Putting down the pencil, Klein restored the paper crane according to its lines. He was quite pleased with his improvement at handicraft.

†

In the evening, after Klein browsed through the prayers of his believers, he returned to the real world and went to the washroom to enjoy a rather comfortable hot bath.

This allowed him to quickly fall asleep after entering his bed. This continued until he suddenly sensed an external force invading his dream.

It was the same desolate plains with the towering pitch-black steeple. With familiarity, Klein passed through the doors and walls until he entered deep inside the tower.

There was still a deck of tarot cards scattered here. They surrounded a central protrusion as though they were making a declaration. However, as a Seer, Klein could only interpret it as chaotic and contradictory.

On the protruded area, the text had already changed. The silver words formed three sentences.

The first line wrote: “I’m only a child that has yet to been born.”

Klein’s expression froze as though he was hearing an infant cry, “Please, I beg you. Don’t make things difficult for me. Such communication is very tiring…”

The second line was equally succinct.

“The clue lies in you.”

The third line was: “Don’t ask me what the clue is because I have no idea either.”

That is to say that Snake of Fate Will Auceptin can foresee a clue on me, but he is unable to foresee what it is exactly… That feels like a charlatan’s divination. No, I can’t say so. I can’t include myself in such criticism… Klein remembered the information and exited the dream before returning back to sleep until daybreak.

After breakfast, he began recalling the items and matters he had experienced before to seek out the so-called clue.

At this moment, his spiritual perception was triggered as he quickly activated his Spirit Vision.

The skeleton messenger remained huge, but unlike the last time, its head didn’t pass through the ceiling.

This was because it had spewed up from the floor, so half its head was in the level below.

In such a situation, it looked at Klein at his eye level and placed the return letter on his palm.

Seeing the messenger crumble like a falling waterfall, Klein was taken back. He muttered, feeling both angry and amused, So you do know some manners!

You’re getting more considerate after all!

You’ve changed greatly after knowing that you wouldn’t be transferred to me…

Klein rapidly retracted his gaze and opened the letter to read Mr. Azik’s reply.

"…Stealing the Beyonder powers of others is from the Marauder pathway. In the Fourth Epoch, it belonged to the Amon family, the Zoroast family, and the Jacob family… They seldom appeared after the War of the Four Emperors. Rumor has it that some of their members have formed an alliance and call themselves Hermits of Fate.

"I can't remember any further. You can try attacking from the angle of the descendants of these three families."

Amon… So a Blasphemer refers to this pathway? The Jacob family was one of the five Angel Families of the Tudor Dynasty. It was equal to Abraham, Amon, Antigonus, and Tamara. As for the Zoroast family, it's from the Solomon Empire… Hermits of Fate. Fate, Hermit… The clue lies in me… Klein suddenly sat up and recalled an item.

It was the mysterious badge from Lanevus. The symbols on it were none other than that of fate and concealment!

Chapter 597 - Klein's Plan

◆

Lanevus is likely a Sequence 8 Swindler. This happens to be from the Marauder pathway. It's not incomprehensible or unacceptable that he would have the "admission ticket" to the corresponding gathering. On the contrary, it's very logical… Purchasing a mystical item, which can steal the Beyonder powers of others, at a gathering with the Hermits of Fate is definitely much easier than other circles… From the looks of it, this is the so-called clue Will Auceptin mentioned… Klein sat by the edge of the bed and suddenly brightened up.

He hurriedly set up a ritual to summon himself and went above the gray fog to bring back the eyeball-sized badge to the real world.

On the front of the badge was a symbol that depicted fate and concealment, and behind it was a ring of tiny and compact words in ancient Hermes: "You can join if you have this item."

Klein was just about to inject his spirituality to activate the badge and send out the "information" to synchronize it with the latest gathering time and location when he suddenly turned hesitant.

…How careless am I. I actually forgot to divine if doing so will be dangerous! If that gathering has Lanevus's demigod senior and he uses it to lock onto me, that will be troublesome. It's just like how Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy was able to quickly find a Demoness of Unaging to help her. I must take precautions… A person should be rash when the time calls for it, and be a coward when necessary! Klein smacked his forehead and cautiously returned to the mysterious space above the gray fog where he used spirit dowsing to perform a divination.

After receiving a revelation that there wasn't any danger, he breathed a sigh of relief and left the gray fog. He then sat in the reclining chair in his inn room.

With the injection of his spirituality, the badge emitted a blurry luster and quickly condensed into an inconspicuous light beam, shooting out into the air.

Before long, the same light beam returned and dispersed, transforming into a palm-sized piece of illusory goatskin parchment. On it was written the words in ancient Feysac: "6 June 1350, 9 p.m. at the Tussock River's estuary."

That's another four more months… With this much time, it wouldn't be a problem for me to find the Marionettist's main ingredient all over again. The only obstacle is a lack of money, but that's not too difficult. I now have a wealth of 6,945 pounds. I should have more than enough after selling another one or two Beyonder characteristics. Besides, there are so many moving bounties at sea, no… I can't be so conceited. I have to eliminate the Four Kings and the Seven Admirals… What kind of clue is this? Klein leaned forward, arched his back, and began thinking hard.

As he thought about the gathering of the Hermits of Fate, he suddenly thought of someone: Leonard Mitchell!

My dear poet had participated in the Hermits of Fate gathering in Babur Valley. Regardless of his goal, whether it's for official work or private matters, there's a possibility of him obtaining a mystical item that can steal the Beyonder powers of others… I can borrow it from him or buy it through him? This is the real clue? Klein felt energized as he quickly came up with a rough plan.

First step. Place the radio transceiver above the gray fog to accumulate its aura;

Second step, use the radio transceiver to contact Arrodes a few days later;

Third step, ask it where I can, with relative ease, obtain mystical items that can steal the Beyonder powers of others;

If the answer is very clear, the fourth step will follow what the information says, easily completing my goal. If the answer is vague or fraught with danger, the fourth step can be to ask my dear poet's present location.

The fifth step is to get Emlyn White to take this badge to find my dear poet to see if he has any corresponding items and if it's possible to do a transaction. I won't appear in person, for I might end up being recognized. That will similarly make it very troublesome. As for Emlyn, he's presently considered someone from the Church of Earth Mother, no—considered a ghost of the Church of Earth Mother. To get him to initiate first-contact, even if he were reported by my dear poet or ends up captured on the spot, he wouldn't be framed or put up for torture.

With the plan on what to do and how to proceed, Klein immediately felt refreshed. In his good mood, he decided to head out to eat a Bayam delicacy—roasted fish.

†

Above the blue sea, the Golden Dream, which was sparkling thanks to the setting sun's golden rays, was silently cruising forward.

Receiving his captain's permission, Danitz apprehensively walked into her room with his head up as people stared at him with envy.

Bookshelves filled the room and on top of them were different books.

Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina stood in front of a desk as she held a black fountain pen in her hand. She quickly wrote the following: "…I do not have similar items. Same for Jodeson. He says he will help you look out for it, but that will require you to be sufficiently lucky."

Edwina raised her head and turned her clear, aqueous blue eyes to look at Danitz.

"You, hold the ritual, the ritual to summon Gehrman Sparrow's messenger."

At that moment, Danitz was wondering if he would receive any special treatment from his captain, but when he heard that, he pointed at himself in astonishment. "Me?"

"Yes." Edwina folded the letter, straightened her body, and nodded. "This can help you familiarize yourself with similar rituals. In the future, I'll be testing you on this."

"Alright…" Danitz hid his disappointment as he tried his best to recall the procedure as he slowly set up the ritual that only needed one candle.

Finally, under Edwina's watch, he took out a shiny Loen gold coin and placed it on the altar.

After taking the letter, Danitz ran through the subsequent ritual in his mind twice before he dared to do it.

He took a step back and said in ancient Hermes, "I!

"I summon in my name:

"The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the messenger that belongs to Gehrman Sparrow."

Whoosh!

The wind howled in the wall of spirituality, sending Danitz's yellow hair flailing upwards.

The flame rapidly burgeoned to the size of a human's head. It was as pale as the letter in Danitz's hand.

Soon, Danitz saw long blonde hair, bloodshot eyes, and a gorgeous head appear.

Hiss. Gehrman Sparrow's messenger is very unique. How can a spirit world creature look like a human, and it's so beautiful at that. She's just slightly inferior to Captain, uh… Danitz suddenly choked because he discovered that the head didn't have a neck underneath. Furthermore, it was held up by a pigtail with a hand.

He looked in a daze as one head after another appeared. he saw the headless figure dressed in a complicated dress appear before him.

She's indeed a creature from the spirit world… He felt ashamed for having those thoughts.

Taking a deep breath, Danitz hurriedly handed over the letter and saw one of the beautiful heads open its mouth to bite at it with pearly-white teeth.

At this moment, Reinette Tinekerr's other head bit on the gold coin on the altar.

However, she didn't immediately leave. The four bloodshot eyes on other two heads darted towards Edwina Edwards who was outside the wall of spirituality. She sized her up a few times.

Edwina felt herself being observed, and it made it impossible to contain the horror that ensued.

Reinette Tinekerr retracted her gaze as her body turned illusory, fusing into the white candlelight.

The flame lit up again as the colors spread outwards. Everything had restored to normal.

Just as Danitz removed the wall of spirituality, he heard his captain say in a deep voice, “That’s not an ordinary creature from the spirit world…”

Not an ordinary creature from the spirit world? Danitz was stunned.

He knew that his captain’s profession was a researcher of spirit world creatures. If she said it wasn’t ordinary, it definitely wasn’t one. It was far more extraordinary than ordinary!

Gehrman Sparrow really is a man with many secrets… Danitz reflected.

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Fors mustered every fiber in her body before she triumphed over the laziness brought from the fireplace. She switched to a thick dark blue cotton dress, wrapped a light gray scarf around her, and wore a warm lady’s hat. In the not-too-cold temperatures, aside from the cold that seeped into her bones thanks to the prevailing fog, she took a carriage to Williams Street.

She took in the cold air and told herself that this was a common excursion for an author to gather material outside. There was no need for her to be nervous or appear abnormal.

Taking a few steps forward, Fors entered a coffee shop and sat by the window. As she drank the thick, warm liquid, she observed the pedestrians and the houses across the road.

There’s nothing abnormal. There’s no fighting or theft at all… This is a place where the rich live, so the security is much better than East Borough… Heh, I can still see someone from Feysac. He’s really tall and muscular, like a bear. He also has companions… Haha, are those people from Intis? They really wear exaggerated clothes, it’s like they’re acting in a play… Backlund is indeed the Capital of Capitals. I can meet many foreigners here… Fors gradually forgot her goal and opened up a notebook to record down material for her novel.

After she finished her coffee, she circled the street and left after finding nothing peculiar. She planned to come again on Thursday.

†

After taking Edwina's reply letter from Reinette Tinekerr's "hands," Klein watched as the messenger vanished, confirming that she hadn't asked for an additional gold coin.

From the looks of it, using a gold coin as a ritual material works… He smiled, feeling pleased with himself as he opened the letter.

With a fruitless answer, he planned on going out to walk the streets to find a chance to engage in true acting so as to conclude the principles.

At this moment, he heard knocking at the door. It was Captain Elland.

Klein silently opened the door and said, "I was just about to look for you."

Elland chuckled and said, "There's no need. As long as you register a place with your identity, I'll be able to know where you're staying."

The governor-general's office and the military have quite good control on the inns after all… Klein nodded without a word.

Elland turned his body halfway and pointed at the corridor.

"I'll bring you to see someone.

"The White Agate is about to return to Pritz Harbor. If you need help or have any information to provide, you can find him. We're often generous when it comes to payment."

This was what Klein had previously mentioned to him before.

“Alright.” Klein reached out to the coat rack.

After wearing his coat, Elland led him straight to the Amyris Leaf Bar and to a corner inside.

†

In the basement of the Amyris Leaf Bar.

Wormtongue Mithor King looked at Strongman Ozil opposite him and asked, “Have you gathered the recent intel about Blazing Danitz?”

“Yes,” Ozil said with a smile. “Last week, Blue Eyes Meath saw Blazing Danitz with an unknown adventurer.”

Chapter 598 - Windfall

◆

In a corner of the Amyris Leaf Bar.

Elland found a man wearing a coffee-colored jacket, patted him on the shoulder, and laughed.

“Why aren’t you drinking Lanti Proof?”

The man was in his thirties, having a rather common face. It was obvious that he had Loen blood running through his veins.

He had brown hair and eyes, with a somewhat high nose bridge. His tipsy appearance instantly vanished as his eyes turned sharp.

He swept a glance at Elland and Klein before his eyes turned turbid again. He said, sounding completely intoxicated, “I’ve already drunk. I’m drinking Zarhar to lessen the effects of the alcohol.”

Zarhar was a locally-produced malt beer. It was cheap and tasted quite good.

Elland chuckled and pointed at Klein.

“Gehrman Sparrow.”

Then, he introduced the man to Klein, “Oz Kent. You can call him Kent.

“Chat amongst yourselves. I’ll have to return to make preparations. I’ll be setting off early, tomorrow morning.”

He waved his hand and left without any hesitation.

Klein pulled over a nearby chair and sat down. He didn't get any alcohol as he expressionlessly looked at Oz Kent.

The staring made Kent feel extremely uncomfortable as he downed a mouthful of Zarhar and said, "Find me if there's anything in the future. You'll be paid as long as you provide any intel of value, or if you help us do certain things."

He wasn't worried that the drunkards around them would hear their conversation, as many gangs and pirate crews would say the same thing. The words used to rope in informants were usually the same.

"Alright." Klein had the strong urge to ask if he could be reimbursed for dressing up as Helene to assassinate Vice Admiral Ailment despite it being paid by Danitz.

However, it was just a thought.

Oz Kent chuckled while appearing completely drunk.

"I heard Elland mention some things about you, but I have to remind you that one shouldn't be too crazy out at sea. You need to take note and try your best not to provoke the pirates. What I mean is to not fight them head-on. Privately providing us information would be fine. We will keep it a secret for you."

This time, he had clearly suppressed his voice.

Seeing no response from Gehrman Sparrow, he added, "Pirates wouldn't bother with any chivalrous code, nor will they abide by the kingdom's laws and rules. Burp. If you have a family at different port cities or some island colony, they'd definitely be capable of attacking your family."

Family… Klein fell silent for a second before calmly saying, "I do not have a family."

"…" Oz Kent was nearly at a loss for words. All he could do was say, "They will also attack your friends."

Then, he heard Gehrman Sparrow reply in an unperturbed tone, “I do not have friends.”

“…” Oz Kent instantly choked up. He subconsciously drank a mouthful of Zarhar beer to calm himself.

After coughing twice, he said in a deep voice, “They will also ambush you. They will also bribe people to learn about your schedule and intercept your ship. At sea, a single person’s strength is often so inconsequential.”

Klein said rather calmly, “I wouldn’t reject them from giving me money.

“That’s basic courtesy.”

Giving money? Oz Kent was clearly taken aback as he found Gehrman Sparrow’s words incomprehensible.

A few seconds later, he realized that the man was treating pirates as mobile bounties.

He drank mouthful after mouthful of beer, momentarily at a loss for words.

†

In the basement of the Amyris Leaf Bar.

“An unknown adventurer?” Wormtongue Mithor King’s mind stirred as he sat straight up.

Strongman Ozil nodded.

“According to Blue Eyes Meath, that adventurer is new. He likely hasn’t been to the archipelago for long, but Meath felt that he was considerably dangerous.”

Considerably dangerous? Could he be the person who killed Steel Maveti and company with Blazing Danitz? Could it be the person who disguised himself as Helene to attack Captain? Mithor immediately made certain connections as he asked with a deep voice, “Do you have his photograph or a portrait?”

Ozil beckoned to a subordinate and received a piece of white paper.

“We used a ritual to get Blue Eyes Meath to draw the unknown adventurer’s appearance. As you know, it’s different having a firm footing in Bayam’s underground world than being a successful pirate. I need supporting members. Sigh, to hire them, I spent quite a bit of money.”

Mithor could read between the lines as he chuckled.

“As long as you get to the bottom of this matter, Captain wouldn’t be stingy with her reward.”

He took the portrait, spread it out, and discovered a cold-looking man with black hair and brown eyes. His face was slightly thin, and he had a cut face. He wore a black double-breasted frock coat and a half top hat.

Never seen him before. It’s impossible to confirm if he’s the person who disguised himself as Helene… Mithor raised his head and said, “Find out his identity and whereabouts.”

“I’ve already instructed my men to do it,” Strongman Ozil said with a deep laugh.

The two fell silent at the same time as they drank their Southville red wine.

A few minutes later, a bar bouncer entered and broke the silence.

He glanced at Wormtongue Mithor, leaned in towards his boss’s ear, and whispered.

Ozil’s expression instantly turned odd as an unconcealed smile appeared.

He put down the wine glass and said after pausing, “That unknown adventurer has been found.”

“Where is he?” Mithor asked.

Ozil pointed upstairs.

“At this very bar.”

Mithor looked up at the ceiling and remained silent for a few seconds.

“I’ll go up to verify.”

He believed that having had some interaction with the disguised Helene, he had a general understanding of the man’s abilities. He believed that no matter how good the man was at disguising himself, he would definitely feel a sense of familiarity; therefore, he decided to confirm it himself.

According to his usual habits, he wouldn’t have taken such initiative and would instead perform an investigation from the outskirts. Only with enough confidence would he get himself involved. But this time, he wasn’t too convinced of Ozil’s subordinate. If it was really the person who disguised himself as Helene, he would immediately change his appearance and identity and vanish once he noticed something was amiss.

Besides, Mithor knew that he was presently being punished by his captain. He had to quickly perform a deed of merit in order to return to the Black Death.

Sigh, regardless if I was lacking in ability or not being careful enough, the outcome cannot be changed. I was fooled by that disguise and brought “her” onto the Black Death, nearly killing Captain…

If it were Qilangos, he wouldn’t have spared me. Heh, he has always been very greedy. He had long thirsted for my Beyonder powers…

Captain didn't believe that I had been in cahoots with the assassin simply because Qilangos could also change his appearance with Creeping Hunger. She didn't summon people to surround and kill me. She only sent me to Bayam to investigate this matter. She's already being forgiving enough… Compared to Qilangos, she is truly a captain worthy of being loyal to. I have to quickly provide some meritorious service and find an excuse to contact her, so as to live up to her treatment towards me. As Mithor King got up and walked out, he couldn't help but have these thoughts churn through his mind.

Although he was a pirate who had killed countless and had plundered countless ships, he had a soft spot in his heart. Besides, he didn't notice that he was being constantly mesmerized by Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy via prolonged interactions with her. His fondness for her had seeped deep into his bones. Even if Ailment Maiden didn't have helpers, he wouldn't have resisted, kneeling down and kissing her toes at her behest.

Of course, this didn't affect his fantasies of doing countless deeds with Tracy. If he had the chance, he believed he would take the initiative to do so even if he didn't get her permission.

As a pirate, he had done such things plenty of times.

When he went upstairs, Mithor King followed the guidance of Ozil's subordinates and circled halfway around the bar's walls. From afar, he saw the unknown adventurer sitting in the corner.

Identical to the portrait… but I don't feel any familiarity… Is it because his disguise is sufficiently good, or is he someone else, for example, Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina? She can mimic the Beyonder powers of those she had seen before. It's not impossible for her to change appearance like Qilangos… Mithor's gaze paused for two seconds before he cautiously retracted it.

But at this moment, Klein's spiritual intuition as a Seer told him that someone was observing him.

Without concealing anything, Klein immediately turned to look back. He saw a man with short eyebrows, deep eye sockets, and bronze eyes.

Wormtongue Mithor King… Third mate of Vice Admiral Ailment's flagship, Black Death… Klein instantly recognized the person observing him.

Instantly, two thoughts flashed in his mind.

One of them was: 5,400 pound bounty!

The other was: Why is he observing me? He managed to find me by investigating Danitz?

The military contact person, Oz Kent, discovered Gehrman Sparrow's abnormality as he traced his gaze. However, due to his angle, he was blocked by a few drunkards.

At this point in time, Klein already instinctively came up with a solution. It was to pretend that he didn't recognize Mithor King, retract his gaze, and get a cup of alcohol to drink. He could then secretly observe where he went, and then use his powers as a Faceless to infiltrate where Mithor hid himself before silently hunting him.

As this thought flashed past his mind, Klein suddenly discovered a problem.

That's me being myself.

But I'm now Gehrman Sparrow, a seemingly calm but crazy adventurer!

With this thought, he suddenly turned around, drew his revolver, and aimed at Wormtongue Mithor King inside the rowdy bar.

Bang!

A gunshot rang through the bar as many customers reflexively crouched down while hugging their heads. All of them were extremely experienced.

Many drunkards slumped to the ground, with more than ten people throwing themselves to the side or rolling on the ground to dodge. These series of actions were well-practiced. And Mithor King was one of them.

However, Klein didn’t really pull the trigger, as he was afraid of injuring the innocent bystanders by mistake. There were many customers in between him and Mithor.

The gunshot stemmed from his powers of Illusion Creation!

At that moment, everything before him opened up as people crouched down. Hence, having aimed at Mithor, who had thrown himself sideways to the ground, he pulled the trigger this time.

Bang!

Chapter 599 - Dragon Might

◆

Bang!

The brass bullet traversed past half the bar, flying straight for Wormtongue Mithor King’s body.

But just as it was about to hit him, Mithor’s brown eyes suddenly turned dark.

The bullet made a turn, and its trajectory was thrown upwards slightly as it accurately hit a glass cup filled with golden beer.

Amidst a loud noise, the glass instantly shattered, splashing beer everywhere.

At the same time, Mithor grabbed a cup from a customer, extended his arm, and threw it at Klein.

What’s the point of that? Klein only dodged slightly to allow the glass cup to miss him, shattering onto the wall.

At this moment, Wormtongue Mithor immediately lunged forward and rolled, heading for the entrance to the basement. He attempted entry in order to get help or escape via a secret path.

He had initially confirmed that the unknown and crazy adventurer was the assassin, who had disguised as Helene and boarded the Black Death, targeting Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy.

Furthermore, his series of actions, which had nearly succeeded, told him that in a one-on-one situation, he wasn't a match for him!

This was a powerhouse at the pirate admiral level!

Tap! Tap! Tap! Klein quickly chased after Wormtongue Mithor.

He was fast and agile. Despite being inside the chaotic bar, he didn't step onto anyone.

Seeing that the bouncers in the basement were coming with revolvers in hand and how Mithor King was about to enter the basement with bouncers in the bar approaching, Klein didn't hesitate. He suddenly clenched his left hand.

The black glove was instantly covered with dense dark golden scales. His dark brown irises turned pale and became vertical.

Right on the heels of that, an invisible wave surged outwards with him as its epicenter.

In the areas where the wave passed, the customers who were holding their heads down turned limp or trembled. The military contact, Oz Kent, also clearly lost his sense of reason, as though he had encountered the most terrifying thing in the world. All he wanted to do was to escape.

The bouncers who had approached were no different. Extreme horror gripped their hearts as they ran around aimlessly, making the situation turn even more chaotic.

Clang! Clang! Clang! The bouncers in the basement threw away their weapons, either running to a corner and shrinking into a ball, or they were trembling on the spot, their crotches rapidly turning moist.

Wormtongue Mithor felt as though he was struck by lightning. In his fear, he began running in circles at the entrance.

This was a Psychiatrist's Awe, also known as Dragon's Might or Mass

Chaos!

This was Klein’s only crowd control Beyonder power!

At this moment, Klein’s rapidly approaching figure didn’t stop. In a few steps, he had arrived beside Mithor.

In that instant, a scene suddenly surfaced in his mind. Mithor, who looked to be lost in extreme horror, suddenly raised his head and swung his right fist over, aiming straight for Klein’s head.

Without any thought, Klein fully trusted his Clown’s intuition for danger. He immediately bent down and turned his body sideways.

Almost at the same time, Wormtongue Mithor suddenly raised his head. His brown eyes were dark and clear, without any sense of muddleheadedness.

At some moment in time, he had shaken off the effects of Dragon’s Might!

This was something that exceeded Klein’s expectations.

Bang!

Mithor’s muscles bulged as he bent his back and threw a punch that resembled a cannonball. However, he didn’t hit his expected target and instead hit the wall of the entrance.

Creak!

The spot where his fist connected threw up pulverized bricks. Quickly, a huge hole that seemed to be covered in a “spider-web” appeared. The entire bar seemed to shake.

The power of the punch was far stronger than a revolver’s bullet!

But at this moment, Klein had already flashed behind him. His body straightened up again as his glove seemed to be covered in a layer of gold.

His brown eyes lit up with two flashes of lightning as they shot out like bullets.

Interrogator’s Psychic Piercing!

“Ah!”

Mithor King let out a shrill cry, but he didn’t fall to the ground. He rolled as he grimaced in pain, holding his arms to protect his head.

He soon magically recovered from the pain of Psychic Piercing, but he felt ice-cold metal at his forehead. He saw the cold and thin adventurer pull the trigger.

At such a close distance, even though Psychic Piercing’s effects could only be maintained for a second, it was enough for Klein to raise his right arm and place the revolver’s barrel at Wormtongue Mithor King’s head!

Bang!

[image]

Mithor King’s pleas shrank back from his half-agape mouth and into his throat as a picture seemingly formed of blood and white material appeared on the wall behind him. it was melancholic, fresh, and messy.

The luster in his eyes vanished as Mithor collapsed backward, leaning against the wall before sliding to the ground.

At noon on the 1st of February 1350, Wormtongue Mithor was hunted.

Klein glanced around at the chaotic bar and closed the door to the basement. He chained the door with the existing chains and forcibly made a knot.

He bent down and dragged Mithor King down a few steps, but he didn’t directly enter.

As he was wary of enemies who might suddenly charge out from inside, he opened up his palm and aimed it at Wormtongue Mithor's corpse from above.

He had no qualms about Grazing the Black Death's third mate. He believed that he was definitely someone with heinous crimes to his name. Firstly, he was once a subordinate of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos, and the deceased pirate admiral had once massacred an entire ship. He was a rather coldblooded person. It was simply obvious from what the Red Glove Nightmare inside Creeping Hunger had encountered. Secondly, Mithor was working for Vice Admiral Ailment, which was equivalent to working for the Demoness Sect. It was unknown how many cases of human trafficking he had been involved in.

Creeping Hunger restored its thin human skin appearance as his palm cracked open, producing two bloodshot eyes.

In an instant, a biting cold wind stirred in the entrance's passageway to the basement. It constantly spun around Wormtongue Mithor's corpse, slowly outlining a blurry figure with short eyebrows and deep eye sockets.

Black but undull points of light rapidly surged out of the corpse, combining with Mithor's Spirit Body. All of them were injected into Creeping Hunger, where an empty finger was waiting for it, forming a connection with the surroundings to a certain degree.

Creeping Hunger first went from a black color with a sinister and noble vibe before returning to its original state as it suffused its desire for flesh and blood.

Klein silently diverted his senses to it for a few seconds and was pleasantly surprised that the powers he received were rather useful. Although there were only two, they were much better than the previous three he had obtained from the Zombie Sequence!

At this point, he learned that the Mid-Sequence Beyonder was a Sequence 6 Baron of Corruption from the Lawyer pathway. One of them came from a Baron of Corruption and the other came from the Sequence 7 Briber.

The former was Distortion. By distorting the target's words, actions, and intent, he could formulate a certain order that provided himself with an advantage, so as to achieve the goal of restraining and influencing his opponent.

The latter was Bribe, which was one of the various powers of a Briber. More accurately, it would be Bribe—Weaken.

The premise behind using this power was to give the target a certain item, then for a certain amount of time, greatly weaken the target's attacks, defense, and control over him.

Give the target a certain item? His act of throwing a cup of alcohol was considered a Bribe? As expected of the Black Emperor pathway. It finds loopholes in "order" while it appears domineering… It's no wonder my Dragon's Might and Psychic Piercing powers weren't as effective as I imagined them to be on Mithor. Even my bullet's strength was reduced. I thought that shot would've blown his entire head up… Klein came to a realization.

At the same time, he understood why he had involuntarily flown towards the Black Emperor where King of the Five Seas, Nast, was. It was because Nast had distorted his intent to proceed forward, making it impossible for him to stop.

Not bad at all… Klein lowered his head to steal a glance at Wormtongue Mithor's corpse before he went down to the basement.

He was trying to find some food for Creeping Hunger.

It was unknown whether it had to do with him throwing Creeping

Hunger above the gray fog repeatedly, but Creeping Hunger wasn't as crazy anymore. It seemed to be able to bear with its hunger; therefore, Klein wasn't in a hurry. He slowly proceeded forward so as to be careful of encountering any accidents.

Before long, he saw Strongman Ozil leading his subordinates over. There were Beyonders and gunmen, and their numbers were sizable!

Klein's expression remained stoic as his black glove was covered in dark golden scales once again.

His irises turned light in color as they suddenly turned vertical. Invisible waves instantly surged forward.

Psychiatrist's Dragon's Might!

Chapter 600 - Clearing the Place

With Dragon’s Might surging out, Strongman Ozil and his subordinates quaked on the spot, as though a gigantic hammer had struck them.

Suddenly, some of them ran in every direction, escaping aimlessly. Some kept going in circles on the spot, while others stood on the spot, trembling uncontrollably. There were all kinds of different reactions.

Unlike previously when he was afraid that Wormtongue Mithor would recover, making it necessary to make every second count, Klein had plenty of time to observe his surroundings at that moment. He instantly grasped the situation.

Different reactions stem from their mental fortitude and resilience. The weakest and most ordinary ones were the ones who ran wildly. Those with relatively stronger mental fortitude among the ordinary people would run about aimlessly. For Beyonders, who had their psyche enhanced, as well as ordinary people who had strong mental fortitudes, they would circle around on the spot, trying to escape but stopping themselves as well. The strong Beyonders with strong mental fortitude would stand on the spot as they tremble or go around in circles on the spot.

Those who suffer from incontinence as a result of fear belong to the escaping and avoiding group…

Klein swept his gaze and was about to raise his gun to shoot, making the enemies who could threaten him lose the ability to do combat.

At this moment, he discovered that a man who had been trembling on the spot had recovered the clarity in his eyes. He was about to escape the influence of Awe, as for the others, they were also showing symptoms of recovering.

Considering how he didn’t have the ability to finish all of them off in such a short period of time, and how a gunshot would jolt a number of them back to their senses, as well as how different Beyonders, when combining their different powers together, could cause him harm, Klein changed his mind and made the glove on his left palm be tainted with a sinister, reflective blackness.

His eyes turned dark as he forcefully distorted the intents of the people who were waking up.

The trembling man pounced forward suddenly. He could no longer resist his thoughts of fleeing. He ran straight for the secret exit, leaving his employer, Strongman Ozil, as a constantly shrinking back.

Klein rapidly switched between Psychiatrist and Baron of Corruption, using Dragon’s Might followed by Distortion as he repeated this sequence. Soon, and he chased all the mentally Ozil’s strong or resilient bouncers to the basement.

Although there was no way of comparing Creeping Hunger to a genuine Shepherd, switching between different souls required a certain amount of time to cooldown, Klein grasped this rhythm very well. He easily completed his goal while there were still some remnant effects from Dragon’s Might.

However, he also discovered a problem. For certain targets, if they were repeatedly exposed to Dragon’s Might and Awe within a short period of time, the effects would weaken with repeated use. Of course, most of Strongman Ozil’s subordinates were already slumped on the ground after repeatedly being hit by Dragon’s Might. They were pissing and defecating themselves, emitting a stench.

Dragon's Might and Distortion are quite a good combination… If Mithor hadn't tried to counterattack, he could've escaped with Bribe—Weaken and Distortion, and I might not have necessarily been able to catch up to him and finish him off. Yes, that counterattack of his was very potent. There weren't any signs prior to it. If it wasn't due to a Seer and Clown's reliance on their spirituality and intuition, I might not have been able to use Paper Figurine Substitutes in time, much less talk about dodging the strike.

This reminds me that even though Creeping Hunger provides the combat strength of a Sequence 5, I shouldn't belittle other Sequence 6s. A careless mistake might have me killed…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein made the glove turn as though it was gilded. His eyes suddenly lit up with two bolts of lightning.

Strongman Ozil immediately cried out in pain as he couldn't bear it anymore. He crashed to the ground like a toppling mountain peak. He held his head as he struggled in pain like a catfish that had just been caught.

Unfortunately, I don't have Beyonder powers that can perform an area-of-effect attack. Otherwise, I'd be able to keep the other Beyonders back… I remember that there's a Lightning Storm in the Sea King's domain… However, such charms are of too high a level. It exceeds the realm of my knowledge… Klein swept his gaze across all the goons before unhurriedly walking to the basement.

This place was originally a market, but with everyone fleeing, it was empty.

Dressed in his double-breasted frock coat, Klein pulled a chair out from behind a stall. He placed it before Ozil and leisurely sat down. He leaned forward as he observed the boss of the Amyris Leaf Bar without a word.

After Ozil tumbled around for a while, he finally recovered from the pain that nearly made him lose control. However, he still suffered from a splitting headache.

He was just about to stand up when he saw a pair of pale-colored eyes that reflected pale gold light. He saw a glove covered in dark golden scales.

In that instant, cold sweat was still dripping from his forehead. He felt that one maelstrom after another was appearing in his eyes, sucking in all his attention.

Klein calmly asked, “Were you once a pirate?”

“Yes.” Ozil realized that he had the strong intention of answering the man.

This was a Psychological Cue!

Klein asked again without a change in tone, “What deeds have you done in the past that violate the kingdom’s laws?”

Ozil didn’t hide anything from him. He simply explained what he had done as a pirate and as the boss of the Amyris Leaf Bar. It included his plundering of liners, raping female passengers, and killing the innocent. This included striking down competitors and kidnapping their family members, setting ambushes to sink an entire family to the bottom of the ocean.

Klein listened to all of this in silence, and the corners of his mouth curled up slowly. He clapped his left palm against his right hand and said, “What a competent pirate and passable gang boss.”

Amidst his praise, he extended his left hand as a ferocious mouth opened up on the thin human skin.

Shrill screams resounded in the basement, but it stopped after a few seconds. All that was left were echoes.

Klein sat in his seat, watching silently as the bright points of light slowly gathered in front of him.

Around him, all the goons who were suffering from incontinence instinctively distanced themselves from him. As they crawled, they left stains on the ground.

Moments later, Klein slowly stood up. He bent down to pick up a pure spherical light that was the size of a baby's fist, as well as the wallet inside Ozil's clothes.

After stealing a glance at the thickness of the wad of cash, he put away the two items and holstered his revolver. He took off his half top hat and bowed at the trembling goons in the corner.

Klein checked the underground area after he was done with everything. To his regret, he didn't discover any items like a safe. All he could do was return via the passageway, pick up Wormtongue Mithor King's corpse, and walk to the entrance.

[image]

He paused for two seconds as the scene outside was naturally outlined in his mind. He discovered that the bouncers, who he imagined would attempt to open the door to provide help, had already disappeared.

The Dragon's Might from just now made them realize that it's a battle between Beyonders, so they retreated? As expected of a region where pirates are everywhere. Some ordinary people still have a chance of understanding about Beyonders… It seems such matters happen often here? Some fugitive suddenly gets arrested by the Mandated Punishers?
Klein undid the metal chains and reached for Mithor King's pocket in passing and took his cash.

He held back the urge to count his earnings as he burned a paper figurine and threw it outside before opening the door to the entrance. He then walked out with Mithor's corpse.

At this moment, most of the customers in the bar were gone. There were only about eight people hiding in different spots to await the outcome.

Klein surveyed the area without any expression as he saw gazes frantically retract.

The only person who dared to look at him head-on was Oz Kent. he was frowning as he watched Gehrman Sparrow carry a corpse over slowly.

Bang!

The corpse flew in front of him, smashing over a table.

Oz Kent focused his gaze as his pupils instantly contracted.

Wormtongue Mithor King! Vice Admiral Ailment's third mate, Mithor King! He looked up in shock, stealing another glance at Gehrman Sparrow.

Klein revealed a faint smile.

"Remember my bounty."

With that said, he took his half top hat, bowed slightly as a form of bidding farewell, and turned to leave through the Amyris Leaf Bar's main door.

†

Bayam Harbor. On the White Agate.

Elland watched as the door to his captain's cabin was slammed open. He asked in surprise, "Kent, what happened?"

Oz Kent questioned him with a warped expression, "Elland, what kind of monster did you introduce me to?"

"…Gehrman Sparrow?" Elland returned with a question, feeling somewhat uncertain.

Oz Kent nodded.

“He killed Wormtongue and Strongman without batting an eye, right inside Amyris Leaf Bar, right in front of me! It didn’t even take him five minutes!”

He felt like he was going crazy.

“Mithor King?” Elland asked, but he sounded like he was repeating the name to himself.

Then, he revealed a rueful smile.

“From the looks of it, we have to report to the higher-ups.”

He didn’t mention Blazing Danitz nor Steel Maveti’s death.

“Alright!” Oz Kent was waiting for him to say that.

At three in the afternoon, inside a garden building near the governor-general’s office.

Elland and Oz Kent were sitting in an elegantly decorated living room as they awaited the reply from an important figure.

After an unknown amount of time, a young man with neatly combed back blond hair walked down the staircase and said to the two, “The General says that since he temporarily doesn’t show any animosity, we should honor the agreement and continue our cooperation from before. However, we must be careful. Send a telegram back to Backlund and secretly investigate his true identity and intentions here at sea.

“Also, spread the news that he killed Mithor King. To the pirates.”

“Yes, Mr. Luan.” After receiving clear instructions, Elland and Oz Kent immediately heaved a sigh of relief.

†

Inside the inn, Klein did a divination and counted his cash, confirming that he had received 327 pounds 9 soli 5 pence, and a Beyonder characteristic from a Sequence 8 Pugilist from the Warrior pathway.

This is also an item worth six to seven hundred pounds… Furthermore, there's Mithor's bounty. Even if I deduct the "labor fees," there will still be several thousand pounds. Heh, Oz Kent might not dare to take his cut… This is quite a good harvest. It's like a windfall! Klein thought in comfort before holding a ritual, sending Creeping Hunger up to the gray fog.

To be frank, he felt that Dragon's Might, Frenzy, and Psychological Cue were three rather useful Beyonder powers that he couldn't bear to part with. However, since he had already promised Miss Justice, he ultimately chose to abide by his promise.

Chapter 601 - Scaring Oneself

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Above the gray fog, Klein leaned back into his high-back chair and held Creeping Hunger. He remained silent for several seconds.

Finally, he released the Psychiatrist’s soul according to the specific steps.

A tall figure quickly appeared by the side of the bronze table. It was a woman whose face looked somewhat blurry. Her pain and distorted feelings was apparent.

Klein looked at her and asked her as though he was chatting with her, “Do you still remember who you are?”

In the mysterious space, he could directly channel her spirit.

The Psychiatrist’s enmity reduced substantially as she smiled bitterly.

“Of course I remember.

“I was a member of a secret organization and was planning to meet a friend in Toscarter Island, but I ended up encountering pirates on the way.

“Although I used my powers to resolve the disaster, the pirates who escaped informed Qilangos of the corresponding situation. In order to obtain my powers, he deliberately changed course and intercepted our ship. You can probably imagine what happened after that.

“Thanks to his meticulousness, I was killed instantly, unlike the other female passengers who encountered things that were worse than death."

Klein fell silent for a few seconds before nodding slightly.

"Do you know of the ancient book known as Groselle's Travels?"

He believed that since Groselle's Travels came from the dragons, it was possible that the Psychiatrist had heard of its name or the corresponding information.

The female Psychiatrist thought over it carefully before shaking her head.

"I'm sorry. I've never heard that name before."

Klein no longer bothered with the topic and switched to asking, "Since you're about to dissipate and gain eternal peace. Do you have any last wishes?"

The Psychiatrist lowered her head and chuckled.

"I wish to be revived.

"Alright. I know that this wish cannot be satisfied. Everything else isn't necessary. I've been dead for years. My family and friends have probably already received news of my death. Informing them again of my death will only dig up the pain of those memories.

"Let's leave it at that. Thank you. That should be it…"

Her figure quickly dissipated and vanished, leaving behind a huge golden iris that could expose the thoughts of everyone's hearts.

This was the Beyonder characteristic of a Psychiatrist.

Klein sighed and began pondering over the details of what the Psychiatrist had said.

She was visiting a friend at Toscarter Island alone without any family…

Toscarter Island is located at the easternmost front of the Sonia Sea, and it's south of the Gargas Archipelago.

That's the easternmost colony of the Loen Kingdom, while the Gargas Archipelago belongs to the Feysac Empire… What kind of friend would be there? What kind of friend is worth visiting after taking such a long trip?

Although she only said that she's from a secret organization, the chances are that it's the Psychology Alchemists. Was she out on a mission?

Klein respected the deceased and didn't wish to dig out her secrets, so he didn't probe deeper. Without any clues, he quickly stopped thinking about such matters and considered something else.

After hunting down Wormtongue Mithor King, regardless of the reason, I have to leave Bayam for the time being… I've really done quite a bit in the City of Generosity during this period of time… Yes, I'll participate in about three Beyonder gatherings and confirm whether there are the main ingredients of Marionettist before leaving… Klein rapidly made a decision and conjured a scene of The World praying. Covering it with the gray fog, he threw the scene to the crimson star representing Miss Justice.

†

Audrey was standing on the balcony on the third floor looking at the nearby village. The rooftops were mainly brick-red in color as they showed depictions, abstract pictures, or real pictures of dragons.

Suddenly, the familiar endless void surfaced in front of her eyes.

Amidst the gray fog, a blurry figure was standing high above, praying to the god above.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, please inform Miss Justice that she can make preparations for the transaction."

I can make preparations for the transaction? He has obtained the Beyonder characteristic of a Psychiatrist? But he still didn't have one yesterday… The World's efficiency shocked Audrey as she nearly forgot to thank Mr. Fool.

Thankfully, she was no longer the green and naive lady from before. She had been exposed to several major matters and rapidly calmed her mind as she sincerely thanked him. She passed on the message for Mr. World to wait another two to three days as she was preparing to pay off the money she owed to Mr. Fool's Blessed. Although she had sufficient money, she had to maintain a minimum balance, otherwise it was easy for others to notice something amiss.

After the illusory gray fog dissipated, Audrey silently looked down at Susie, who was admiring the garden on the first floor, before pacing around and secretly clicking her tongue.

Mr. World is really terrifying…

†

Evening, in the Seaweed Bar.

Having just squandered all his money at the casino, Blue Eyes Meath sat before a bar counter and ordered a cup of Lanti Proof.

He was just about to raise the cup when he suddenly heard the bartender whisper to him with a suppressed voice, "Wormtongue Mithor is dead."

"What… Who did it?" Blue Eyes Meath was first alarmed before he asked excitedly, "Someone is challenging Vice Admiral Ailment?"

"An adventurer named Gehrman Sparrow. He wasn't known at all before. Who knew that he finished off Mithor!" The bartender didn't hide his shock and alarm. "He also killed Ozil, the real boss of Amyris Leaf Bar, Strongman Ozil!"

Blue Eyes Meath was just about to sigh when he frowned suddenly.

Back when Ozil's men came to ask him about Blazing Danitz, he had mentioned that the boatswain of the Golden Dream was seen mixing in with an unknown adventurer. He had used a ritual to provide the corresponding portrait.

Ozil is dead. Mithor King is dead. It's done by an unknown adventurer named Gehrman Sparrow… Blue Eyes Meath suddenly trembled as a scene that left a deep impression on him surfaced in his mind.

The young man that looked like a gentleman was standing by the entrance of the bar. He had black hair and brown eyes, with a thin and cut face. His eyes coldly observed the customers as though he was seeking out his prey.

Blue Eyes Meath shuddered and couldn't be bothered with drinking his alcohol. He got up immediately and took wide strides out of the bar.

Terrifying! That guy is too terrifying! Even Wormtongue died at his hands. He's definitely a powerhouse at the admiral level! He will definitely seek me out and finish me off. No, I can't stay in Bayam any longer. I have to return to the ship and be far away from here! Blue Eyes Meath ran to the Red Theater and forcibly pulled his companions with him. They headed for the woods and circled around to the private harbor ran by the Resistance.

Opposite across the Red Theater, the herb store in the alley remained open. The chubby Apothecary, Darkwill was sitting behind the counter, wearing a calm expression, but internally, he was deeply worried.

He had already contacted the Life School of Thought members he knew via various methods and sought their help. However, he had no idea who they were or when they would come. He could only bear with his fear and anxiety as he continued running the store, pretending as though nothing had happened.

“Darkwill, you’re extremely uneasy.” The chubby owl flew over from an unknown location and landed on the counter.

“There’s no need for you to remind me. I know my state of mind very well.” Darkwill waved his hands impatiently.

He could still remember the times when he was still under his teacher’s tutelage. He was often warned to be careful of the official Beyonder organizations and be careful of the true Sanguine. In regards to this, Roy King raised several examples, such as being imprisoned underground forever, with no sunlight or woman to be seen; being made into experimental subjects where their bodies would be used to test the dangers of particular Sealed Artifacts. There, they would experience all kinds of experiments, and after mutating, they were monsters who acted on instinct. It was also possible to be sucked and eaten by the Sanguine and made into puppets.

These examples had deeply imprinted themselves in his mind. It made his already lacking courage vanish instantly. After leaving his teacher’s side, he often stayed in a city for a short period of time, immediately leaving once there was a risk of exposure.

Darkwill tried hard to keep his horror under control, placing his attention on the problem of rescuing his teacher.

…Old Man has been captured for some time. Why is he still imprisoned in the governor-general’s office? With the military’s abilities, they should be able to gather any information they wish to know. Be it an outright execution, the gathering of materials, or being used as an experimental subject, they would definitely move Old Man… Could it be that Old Man used some techniques to hide his secret, or they wish to make him into a spy? Sigh, just agree to it! Darkwill scratched his head as his thoughts wandered aimlessly.

Gradually, he recalled the last letter he received from his teacher, Roy King.

Old Man often likes to give hints in things that seem to be normal and ordinary matters. Could that letter contain similar information? That letter didn't say a thing. It just said to meet him near the Red Theater and flaunted his gambling techniques. Pui! He clearly relies on luck. He even wanted me to go to Enmat Street's Mabel's Sundry Store and buy a die to make preparations to be educated… I thought I would buy it only after we met, so I haven't been there all this time. Perhaps there a secret there? Darkwill was like a drowning man who seemed to clutch at a straw.

Many of Bayam's streets were named after Loen Kingdom cities.

Darkwill used a few minutes to muster his courage, brought the owl with him, and closed the door to his shop before walking out of the alley.

While waiting for the rental carriage, he bought a copy of the News Report from a paperboy as he flipped through the international and domestic news, as well as news about the archipelago.

Suddenly, he saw a familiar face—it was the adventurer who had informed him of Roy King's location.

In the afternoon, Gehrman Sparrow killed Wormtongue Mithor King who's worth a bounty reaching 5,400 pounds… I actually entrusted a mission to such a powerful adventurer! Darkwill clicked his tongue.

He soon threw the matter to the back of his mind and got onto the carriage and headed straight for Enmat Street and found Mabel's Sundry Store.

The owner of the shop was a genial old lady who said after sizing him up, "The die you want costs 1 pound."

This is a robbery! Darkwill roared angrily in his head, but this only made him more certain that there might be clues hidden in the die.

After paying, he received a tiny ring box and opened the lid. He saw a milky-white six-sided die which had four red dots pointing up.

Although he was puzzled with how ordinary the die looked and how it was stuffed tightly into the ring box with no remnant space, Darkwill still acted cautiously by not studying it on the spot. He placed it into his pocket and walked to another side of the street.

When he came to a secluded spot, he couldn't help but give it a glance, unable to find any problems with it.

At this moment, a carriage flew by and gave him a fright. His wrist trembled as he dropped the die on the ground.

The die continued rolling and ultimately came to a stop, a single red dot pointing up.

Darkwill cursed the carriage driver and widened his stride to pick it up.

Just as he took this step, his body suddenly staggered, and he collapsed to the ground loudly despite the lack of any obstacles. All he saw were stars.

His mind went blank for a moment as he lay there, the milky-white die right in front of his eyes.

Chapter 602 - Becoming Famous

◆

Darkwill sprawled on the ground, momentarily forgetting to stand up. His mind remained blank.

Ever since he had matured, he had never encountered a scenario of tripping himself. After consuming the potions, his body had experienced enhancements to a certain degree, making it even more impossible. Now, for some baffling reason, he had fallen down in an inexplicable manner.

Did I step on something? Darkwill suddenly snapped to his senses as he struck down with his palm and rolled to his feet. He pretended as though the one who had just fallen wasn't him.

He looked left and right without finding anything odd on the ground. Filled with puzzlement, he took a few difficult steps forward to pick up the milky-white die.

At this moment, a patrolling constable seemed to have sensed the disturbance as he jogged over with baton in hand while holding his other hand down on his revolver.

Upon seeing this scene, Darkwill suddenly felt worried, feeling suspicious that he had fallen for a trap.

They caught Old Man but haven't come for me all this time. It's because they were secretly observing me and waiting for me to find some clues?

Now, I've gotten my hands on this strange die, they've started taking action?

The official Beyonders are here to catch me?

Darkwill instinctively turned around and ran, but he had suffered a rather heavy fall, causing him to feel pain in his knees. He was momentarily only able to walk.

Seeing the patrolling constable approach him, and with him not being able to run, a scene of an underground prison instantly surfaced in Darkwill's mind. In an environment with only an everlasting candlelight, locked with Beyonders who would heave intensely like monsters…

"What happened?" the patrolling constable pressed down on his revolver as he kept his distance and asked cautiously.

Darkwill suddenly felt an irrepressible fear. As his wrist trembled, the milky-white die he had just picked up fell to the ground again as it rolled a few times.

This time, six red dots pointed up.

Faced with the constable's scrutiny, Darkwill replied with a trembling voice, "I just stepped onto a damn banana skin and fell."

The moment he said that, he felt his heart skip a beat. This was because there wasn't any banana skins on the ground.

Damn it. I was too nervous. I should've said that I tripped myself… Darkwill thought in frustration.

He decided to summon the owl perched on the roof opposite him, preparing to make a last stand.

The patrolling constable gave him a glance and chuckled.

"Make sure to watch where you place your feet when walking. I was imagining that you had been robbed."

He released his palm on his revolver, raised his baton, and walked away.

"…"

In a daze, Darkwill looked at the constable's back that was opening up a gap from him. He wasn't sure how the constable had so easily believed his excuse that was filled with mistakes.

He retracted his gaze and looked at the milky-white die which was sitting on the ground in silence. He slowly frowned.

I'm not pure Loenese. The constables here don't need to suck up to me… Could it be all thanks to this? Be it my strange fall or my weird way of convincing the constable, it was all because of this? Is this that important Sealed Artifact which Teacher was taking care of? Darkwill quickly made certain connections as he carefully proceeded forward. He picked up the die again and stuffed it into the extremely tiny ring box. In the box, the die had no room to roll.

Signaling to his owl, Darkwill picked up the News report copy, stopped a rental carriage, and hobbled up. His destination—Red Theater.

The carriage smoothly proceeded forward. Because dusk was setting in, the street lamps which were relatively far away didn't illuminate the area much. He wasn't in a rush to study the ring box or the die inside. He patiently waited until he returned home.

After entering the herb store and heading up to the residential area on the second floor, he lit the wall lamp and chased the silly bird out of his room. He sat in front of his desk and repeatedly checked on the ring box and milky-white die.

Finally, he took out a folded piece of paper about the length of a finger segment from the bottom of the ring box.

Darkwill inhaled silently as he quickly spread open the piece of paper and discovered that there were three paragraphs written in ancient Feysac.

"If I didn't appear three days after the appointed time, then I must've been betrayed and have been arrested. Therefore, do not seek out help from the other members of the School of Thought. This is because I'm unable to determine who did it. This will bring you great danger.

"There is only one thing that you need to do. Bring the die to Oravi Island and hand it to the bellman, Carnot, in the port city. My teacher, Ricciardo, is hidden there. The subsequent matters will be handled by him.

"Don't worry that I'll divulge this secret. Once I finish writing this letter, all relevant memories would completely disappear. I wouldn't even remember having an apprentice like you until I'm rescued. Remember, try your best not to use the die. It has living characteristics. The more you use it, the easier it is for it to awaken. It will roll itself when you aren't watching it, even without any space. When it's at '1,' please trust me when I say that you'll suffer from worse than a direct death. This is because almost everything you do will end in failure, including your bed activities."

Indeed, this die is very dangerous… Darkwill subconsciously sighed and immediately realized the dumb act he had done out of goodwill.

In order to rescue his teacher, Roy King, he overcame his cowardliness and remained in Bayam, as well as sent out a cry for help to the Life School of Thought members.

And according to the information, this meant that he might very well have been targeted by the person who betrayed Roy King!

Why didn't you say so earlier! No, why didn't I head out to buy the die earlier!? Darkwill raised his hands and yanked at his hair.

He didn't dare stay any longer. He decided to leave his residence and buy a scalped ticket at night. He would head for Oravi Island early the next morning. That was an island that was on the route between the Rorsted Archipelago and Toscarter Island.

My charms, my revolver, my bullets… Darkwill quickly counted the items that could provide him with safety, feeling concern over his lack of combat strength.

He quickly thought of an idea as he paced around and mumbled, "I need to hire a bodyguard. A bodyguard…"

Who should I hire? How much money must I spend? Amidst his thoughts, Darkwill's gaze swept across the News Report copy which he had just brought back.

Suddenly, he thought of an excellent bodyguard—Gehrman Sparrow!

A powerful adventurer who could hunt a pirate worth 5,400 pounds!

If he's willing to accept the mission, I should be able to successfully arrive at Oravi Island if the "councilor" doesn't take action… How can I find him? Right! I should paste notices in the bars where adventurers frequently appear! Darkwill nodded indiscernibly as he stuffed the items back into his packed suitcase. With this plump owl, he left the herb store once again, his heart feeling the pinch.

†

In the seas beyond the Rorsted Archipelago, in a small port belonging to Loen, the Black Death was docked there without any scruples. It was being surrounded by three ships.

Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy, who had just taken a hot bath, wore a loose man's shirt, and she finished the final treatment for her mostly recovered wound.

To a Demoness, scars weren't a thing.

At this moment, the blonde female attendant knocked on the door and entered the captain's cabin after receiving permission.

When she saw Tracy, her cheeks flushed red as she moved her gaze away.

“Captain, a telegram was sent from Bayam to the port over here.

“Mithor, uh—Third mate has been killed.”

Tracy stopped her actions as her expression sank. She asked hesitantly, “Do you know who did it?”

She had sent Wormtongue Mithor to Bayam to investigate the assassination attempt on her, firstly as a form of punishment for his dereliction of duty, and secondly, to spread the news that she was heavily injured so as to lure others who harbored malicious intent into attacking her. She never expected Mithor to be able to make any breakthroughs or developments in a short period of time.

After the demigod addressed as Death Consul by the Demoness of Unaging visited her, she had deliberately concealed this matter and didn’t quickly inform Mithor. She allowed the punishment to continue as she felt that it was naturally for the best if his investigations turned fruitful. Even if there was nothing, she wouldn’t be too disappointed either.

She never thought about the possibility of Mithor being placed at risk, as it was a part of the punishment.

But to her surprise, Mithor had been killed so quickly!

The blonde female attendant handed over the telegram and said, “It was done by an adventurer named Gehrman Sparrow. It can be confirmed that he had used a Beyonder power similar to Dragon’s Might.”

“Gehrman Sparrow… Dragon’s Might… Heh heh. Qilangos also knew Dragon’s Might. He likely Grazed a Psychiatrist or Hypnotist with Creeping Hunger.” Tracy sneered after receiving the telegram as she spoke to herself.

She was quite certain that Gehrman Sparrow was the enemy who had disguised himself as Helene to attack her. Furthermore, he had been using the Faceless powers which Qilangos had Grazed.

Creeping Hunger is with him, and he has an ancient demigod, who Mother addressed as Death Consul, backing him… Does this mean that Qilangos was really killed by that Death Consul? Tracy muttered silently as she waved her hand to send the blonde attendant out.

After the door to the captain's cabin closed, she chuckled to herself.

If I were to divulge this information, the organization that ordered Qilangos to assassinate Duke Negan would definitely be very interested.

For a brief moment of time, she really had the urge to do so, but her rationality stopped her.

This was because it meant that she would directly offend the Death Consul!

And with the single chance of him being recognized as the murderer, she would immediately be suspected of divulging the information.

When the time comes, unless I hide back at Mother's side, I'll be under the shadow of death at any moment… I'm not afraid of other Saints. They will have to find me before they can attack me. Besides, there will definitely be some indication of that, and a significant amount of time is needed. I will have sufficient chances to escape danger, b-but the Death Consul can travel using the spirit world. As long as he determines my location, he will quickly appear beside me… Tracy bit her lip as she thought in depression.

She gave up her previous thoughts and decided to take note of Gehrman Sparrow's whereabouts. She wouldn't spare him once a good opportunity arose!

At this moment, Klein was still living in the Teana Inn, waiting for his bounty to be delivered to him.

Chapter 603 - Conditions

◆

10 p.m. Swordfish Bar.

After waiting an entire afternoon and having not received his bounty, Klein deliberately went out. He went to Oz Kent and received the news that the process had been kickstarted. However, he would only receive the money tomorrow morning.

He disguised himself and participated in a private exchange among the adventurers in the Swordfish Bar, but he didn't find the main ingredients of the Marionettist potion or any mystical items.

After restoring his appearance, Klein pressed down on his hat and attempted to squeeze through the crowd. He left the bar which was in its rowdiest and noisiest time of the day.

At this point, gazes swept past his face as most of them were momentarily taken aback before they clearly froze for two seconds, as though they had recognized something.

Suddenly, they retracted their gaze and retreated far away from Klein like the receding tide.

They had already learned of Gehrman Sparrow's appearance and strength in the papers and rumors. More details had gradually spread in areas where adventurers, pirates, and gang members gathered. Many people gained a basic understanding of the present situation and knew that Gehrman Sparrow had taken the crazy action of instantly drawing his revolver once he discovered Wormtongue Mithor King. Therefore, everyone knew better and chose to stay away from the dangerous man.

The merchant, Ralph, was drinking in front of the bar when he suddenly sensed the disturbance. He instinctively half-turned his body around and looked over.

He soon saw a quiet gentleman with a thin face and cut features, and the corresponding portrait which appeared on News Report surfaced in his mind—Gehrman Sparrow who hunted Wormtongue!

Following that, Ralph recalled his conversation with Resistance leader, Kalat, in the evening. He confirmed that the crazy adventurer before him wasn't averse to Sea God, and he had even witnessed the private trade between the Resistance and Vice Admiral Iceberg.

Perhaps I can develop him into being a believer of Sea God… Even if he has no interest in the archipelago in the future, he might be able to provide certain help in certain matters… Ralph clasped his hands and held them to his mouth as though he was blowing at a sea conch. This was one of the gestures used to pray to Sea God Kalvetua.

Then, he suddenly got up and walked to Gehrman Sparrow with a beer in hand.

At this moment, Klein also noticed Ralph's approach and recognized him.

That was a devout believer who was willing to offer up a third of his twenty-thousand gold pound wealth to Sea God!

That was the former pirate and the present merchant who he had convinced to set up a children's charity foundation!

Based on the news regarding the charity foundation and his frequent pious praying, he understood Ralph in all aspects. Therefore, he was very puzzled as to why the man would attempt to approach Gehrman Sparrow.

He has a job to entrust to me? Things that the Resistance isn't able to do for some reason or another? Klein looked at Ralph as he slowed down his pace.

"Mr. Gehrman Sparrow?" Ralph raised the cup of beer in his hand.

Klein nodded and maintained his persona by saying, "I don't know you."

"Haha, it's always so simple to get to know each other among adventurers. Perhaps a cup of beer is all it takes." Ralph pointed at the bar counter. "Are you interested in a drink?"

"Alright," Klein was deeply puzzled as he answered simply.

They sat in the corner of the bar as he ordered a cup of Southville beer. As he drank, he looked at Ralph without saying a word.

Being stared at silently by a powerhouse at the level of a pirate admiral wasn't a good experience. Ralph drank a mouthful of beer to hide his high-strung nerves and laughed.

"I've heard about you. Before what you did today, I know that you're a true gentleman that shows no discrimination towards the natives of the colonial lands."

Different things to say flashed through Klein's mind as he finally decided on a few sentences that corresponded to his persona.

"Get to the meat of the issue."

"…"

Ralph nearly choked as he cleared his throat.

"Do I have the honor to introduce you to our god, the savior of the archipelago, the Blessed of the sea, Kalvetua?

"As you know, the sea is so vast. The storms are that terrifying. It's impossible to guarantee that one can defeat the various difficulties at sea and live on, even for the Four Kings. We need a god, a god that can respond to you and hold authority over the sea and storm."

Introducing me to myself and then getting me to believe in myself… Klein resisted the urge to twitch the corners of his face as he turned to say, "I'm more interested in whether you have any mystical items, the kind that has powerful offensive strength."

Ralph revealed an honest smile.

"We don't have any.

"However, as long as you piously believe in Sea God, there might be a day when you would be bestowed with one."

I don't have one… Don't make promises for me! Klein instantly found it amusing and laughable.

He felt that he couldn't carry on the conversation. Hence, he downed his half-filled cup of Southville beer and said, "I'll consider it."

He was about to leave when the bartender suddenly came over and squeezed a smile.

"Mr. Gehrman Sparrow, someone entrusted you with a mission."

"What is it?" Klein glanced at Ralph.

Knowing his place, the latter left his seat with his beer.

He was already very pleased with today's outcome. This was because he never had the intention of developing the crazy adventurer into a believer of Sea God in one try. His goal was only to let him know of the possibility and to think about the pros and cons of doing so.

After the silence in the corner of the bar resumed, the bar counter immediately said with a smile, "He says he's an apothecary you know. He has a mission to entrust to you. If you're interested, you can wait here for him. We will contact him with the previously established method.”

An apothecary I know? The chubby Darkwill? The Darkwill who rears a plump owl? What kind of mission would he have for me? Rescue his teacher, Roy King? That isn’t something I will do. The risk is just too high… As his thoughts raced, Klein decided to first figure out the details of the mission.

“Okay.”

†

At nearly 11 p.m., Klein met the apprehensive Darkwill in Billiard Room 3 of the Swordfish Bar.

He had already changed into a rather eye-catching witchdoctor robe and was dressed as a native. He was in a Taraba shirt, pantaloons, and a brown jacket. As for this round-faced owl, it was perched silently on his right shoulder, observing the adventurer with his penetrating eyes.

It’s very similar to the feeling of how Miss Justice observes the other members of the Tarot Club… This owl might really be a Beyonder creature. A Spectator? Klein made a judgment as he said in a deep tone without a change in expression, “What mission is it that you have?”

“It’s this.” The chubby Apothecary kept his left hand in his pocket and clenched the ring box tightly. “I’ll be making a trip to another island. Heh heh, it will probably take three days. Due to certain developments, I might encounter danger. Of course, it might not happen as well. In short, I need a bodyguard, and I think you’re the best choice.

The way you put it sounds like I’m actually not that impressive; it’s just that you know a few people… You aren’t rescuing your teacher and had chosen to leave Bayam to seek out helpers? Or he has already been saved and the danger comes from the military’s pursuit? Klein pondered over the truth behind the matter as he calmly asked, “How great would the danger be?”

Darkwill’s lips trembled as he said, “I can’t be sure. I-if, the danger exceeds what you can handle, you can directly hand me over to the other party. This will be a promise we make now. It will not spoil your reputation.”

If I didn’t know that you just have a nasty mouth, then I would’ve imagined this as a form of goading… Klein thought and said, “What kind of payment can you provide?”

Darkwill originally wished to directly give the answer he had considered long ago, but he felt hesitant for a moment. This was because the matter was indeed very dangerous. Without enough chips, he couldn’t move Gehrman Sparrow into agreeing. He was afraid of the appearance of the councilor, and that before the matter reached a level of despair, his bodyguard would give up resisting. This was also the reason why he had to hire a powerhouse.

Klein glanced at him and coldly said, “You can first consider it for a moment.

“I’ll use the washroom. Tell me your answer when I’m back.”

With that said, he turned around and walked to the door. Pulling the handle, he stepped outside.

The way he responded made him seem experienced, having the coolness and coldness of an adventurer and bounty hunter, but in fact, he wasn’t really giving the chubby Apothecary time to think. He was only finding an opportunity to head to the washroom to divine the matter above the gray fog.

This was key to whether he accepted the mission!

Once he left the billiard room and arrived in front of a washroom. He got in line before finally getting an empty cubicle.

When he entered, he frowned as the dirty environment and disgusting stench left him grossed out. He nearly turned his head and left.

He held back his disgust as he pulled the flush lever in contempt. As he sighed at the terrible environment for his divination, he took four tiny steps counterclockwise and began the ritual.

Inside the billiard room, Darkwill agilely went to close the door after he saw Gehrman Sparrow's back completely disappear. He asked the owl on his shoulder, "Will he betray me?"

"No," the owl mumbled. "Also, when asking me questions, be polite. Call me Mr. Harry."

The fat on Darkwill's face trembled.

"Mr. Harry, what kind of payment do you think he will accept?"

"I can't see through him. He's good at concealing his emotions," the owl said frankly.

Darn Mr. Harry. No, darn silly bird! Darkwill cursed inwardly as he paced around and considered the chips he could offer.

After a while, Klein returned to Billiard Room 3 and asked, "Have you thought it through?"

He had already divined above the gray fog that the mission's danger was acceptable, and he happened to plan on leaving Bayam for the time being.

"800 pounds for three days, as well as our friendship. I'm referring to the friendship of my teacher and his friends," Darkwill said without confidence.

Klein remained silent for a few seconds and said, "1,000 pounds for three days.

"In addition, your organization needs to help me obtain a mystical item with powerful offensive abilities. I will pay in cash based on a reasonable price.”

1,000 pounds. How could I have that much… Darkwill hesitated for a moment before saying, “I’ll pay an advance of 300 pounds. The rest will be paid by the person I’m looking for when we arrive at my destination.”

He planned on getting his teacher’s teacher to pay the rest.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Deal.”

Darkwill immediately heaved a sigh of relief before puffing his face and said with a smile, “Can I believe that the protection is in immediate effect?”

Chapter 604 - A Different Enemy

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing the chubby Apothecary’s question, Klein smiled inwardly as he wore a stoic expression.

“From the moment you make the first payment.”

Darkwill didn’t hesitate to take out a huge wad of cash as he counted it while his heart pained for the money.

“Here’s 300 pounds.

“You can carry out your promise.”

Klein received the notes and nodded.

“That wouldn’t be an issue.”

Darkwill immediately felt relieved, as though he was a drowning person who had finally caught onto a float.

Half an hour later, in the Teana Inn, Darkwill watched in a daze as the powerful adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, said to the reception counter, “Switch us to a luxurious suite.”

With that said, Klein took two steps backward as though giving his spot to the chubby Apothecary.

Darkwill gulped his saliva and asked hesitantly, “I’m paying?”

“During the mission, all expenses are borne by the employer. This is the rule adventurers follow,” Klein said without a change in expression.

I'd be a dumbsss if I believed you! Am I to help you pay if you call for a few Red Theater prostitutes? Darkwill thought as he squeezed out a smile.

"We can use an ordinary room. This will make the protection job easier."

"Then, you stay by yourself." Klein acted as Gehrman Sparrow without any effort.

Darkwill laughed and walked to the counter and said without expression, "A luxurious suite."

When Darkwill finally checked in and entered the smaller bedroom, he opened the window and left an "opening" for the owl, Mr. Harry. He took out the ring box in his pocket and checked the situation of the strange die.

After confirming that the die was the same as before, with four points facing up, Darkwill gradually heaved a sigh of relief.

†

Backlund. Inside an ordinary house.

Ince Zangwill woke up from his slumber, and the first thing he did was check on his body.

This was something he had to repeat every day. This was because he had no idea what kind of story 0-08 would compose after he slept, bringing about unknown accidents.

After confirming that he wasn't injured, Ince Zangwill wore a pair of bright leather boots and stood up.

Without any surprises, he saw 0-08 silently sitting on his desk as though it was an ordinary quill.

However, it had been locked in a metal box that was covered with symbols and magic labels.

Ince Zangwill walked over with a heavy heart and grabbed 0-08. He flipped open the notebook beside him and discovered that there was another page of text.

“Ince Zangwill couldn’t recall what he had done last night, but he acutely sensed some problems.

“He looked into the mirror and found his reflection somewhat unfamiliar, as though his body had given birth to another Ince Zangwill.

“He looked down and saw there were obvious abnormalities under his fingernails, but he couldn’t recall what he had done the previous night no matter how hard he tried…”

After seeing this description, Ince Zangwill instinctively looked at the full-body mirror in the room. He saw that he was still blind in one eye. His classic chiseled face didn’t have a single wrinkle, but there was a smile lingering at the edges of his mouth. It formed a stark contrast with his heavy gaze.

At this moment, Ince Zangwill felt that his face was a little livid. He had eye bags, and it was matched with the smile he couldn’t understand. He appeared sinister, vicious, and strange.

He lifted his hands, lowered his head, and saw black stain blocks under his fingernails. It was as though he had spent half the night digging up roots in the garden.

Although he had switched from the Death pathway to the Evernight pathway, and he had become a Nightwatcher, Ince Zangwill didn’t lose the Beyonder powers he had from before. He was still a powerful Spirit Guide, a Spirit Guide in the domain of dead spirits. Therefore, he immediately planned to communicate with the spirits inside and outside the house to figure out what had happened last night.

At this point, he saw the final passage on the notebook through the corner of his eye.

“Ince Zangwill attempted to channel spirits, but sadly he realized that it was to no avail. It was as though a person of a similar profession had wiped out all clues. He was very worried, unaware of what he had embroiled himself with the previous night.”

Ince Zangwill’s expression turned heavy as he attempted to channel spirits. Within his expectations, he didn’t receive any outcome which could be called a pleasant surprise.

†

Wednesday morning, outside Amyris Leaf Bar that had its shadow boss replaced.

Klein circled around to a secluded alley and saw Oz Kent carrying a tiny suitcase.

“Your bounty.” Oz Kent threw the small suitcase over.

This actually wasn’t the bounty money in the true sense of the word. It was money the military had put forth—the former involved the governor-general’s office and the kingdom’s finance ministry. The procedure was complicated and needed at least three days to complete.

Klein caught the suitcase and opened it on the spot. He saw stacks of neatly arranged cash, with most of them in one- or five-pound denominations.

“A total of 5,400 pounds. We didn’t take a cut,” Oz Kent said as he forced a smile.

If it were any other adventurer, he would have given 4,000 pounds at most. The rest was the income for the personnel involved in the entire procedure.

But faced with the crazy man whose strength was close to a pirate admiral, all he could do was volunteer work thanks to his fear of being executed on the spot by him.

The military is unlikely to fool me with fake notes… Klein grabbed a stack of cash and waved it.

5,400 pounds… Hiding outside the alley, Darkwill heard Oz Kent's words and secretly shot a glance at the suitcase. The stacks of pound notes seemed to blind him.

This was the first time he was seeing so much money placed together.

An adventurer really is a profitable profession. Successfully hunting a pirate earns thousands of pounds. Protecting me nets him 1,000 pounds and one request. Occasionally, he can find sunken ships and treasure… Why did I become an apothecary instead of an adventurer? If I had known, I would have chosen that lucky Beyonder pathway… Darkwill thought with atypical admiration.

However, he quickly recalled his reality. Most adventurers didn't live such rich lives. Even if they could make a killing, a third of their income was given to apothecaries, either to treat their injuries and remove any latent injuries, or to buy medicine to add to the fun and deal with unmentionable diseases.

It's still safer being an apothecary… Darkwill sighed inwardly.

At this moment, Klein, who had only did a rough count of the money, closed the suitcase and said to Oz Kent, "I'll be leaving Bayam for some time. If I have any intel, how should I inform you?"

"You're leaving Bayam?" Oz Kent asked, finding it odd.

Klein nodded slightly and said, "I received a bodyguard mission."

Oz Kent was first enlightened before he felt a baffling sense of ease.

If this madman were to stay in Bayam for long periods of time, there will ultimately be a day where he causes problems. It's better to drift out at sea and fight those pirates… Oz Kent immediately said with a smile, “You can directly send me a telegram and include my address. We have people planted at the telegraph office.”

“Alright.” Dressed in a black tweed coat, Klein didn't speak further. With the suitcase in hand, he turned to leave the alley.

He headed for the harbor together with Darkwill and planned to catch the earliest liner to Oravi Island. The owl flew in between the trees and appeared furtively—they had already bought scalped tickets the night before.

Half an hour before they boarded the ship, Darkwill reeled with anxiety. He was afraid the person who had betrayed his teacher would suddenly rush over and attack him.

This feeling continued until he entered the first-class cabin that belonged to him. As long as the liner went out into the sea, Beyonders without flight capabilities or their own ships would find it difficult to intercept him.

“Quickly start the ship. Quickly start the ship…” Darkwill looked out the window as he muttered to himself.

At this moment, the owl had followed and perched on his left shoulder. Klein sat on a chair in the room, prepared for any possible attacks.

At this moment, the sky suddenly turned dark as the wind howled with increasing strength. The air's humidity also clearly climbed.

“A storm?” Darkwill widened his mouth as he blurted out.

This meant that the ship might not set sail at the scheduled time. It might be delayed for hours!

And with that, Darkwill wouldn't be able to withstand many of the unnecessary risks!

He turned his head to look at Gehrman Sparrow and forced a smile.

"Do you have any solutions?"

I do have one. For example, you can immediately pray to Sea God Kalvetua, and I'll immediately answer your prayer above the gray fog. I'll disperse the storm… But it's without a doubt that in minutes, or maybe seconds, Sea King Jahn Kottman will rush over. And his attacks will arrive earlier… Klein looked at the chubby Apothecary and said calmly, "I'm only an adventurer."

Darkwill knew that he shouldn't have had any expectations. He cursed the weather silently and turned around, looking out the window to check on the exact situation.

Boom!

A silver bolt of lightning struck Darkwill before Klein could even react.

Darkwill immediately collapsed, convulsing as smoke emitted from his body. His skin was charred as snakes of lightning buzzed.

Klein nearly felt into a shock. This was the first time he was seeing someone getting struck by lightning during a storm.

That's way too unlucky, right… He briefly forgot to rescue Darkwill.

The owl, Mr. Harry, was similarly stunned for a few seconds before it screamed, "Quick! Quick! There's a bottle of medicine in the second secret pocket on his left. Feed it to him!"

This owl can talk… Klein pricked up his brows, took a few steps forward, bent down, and found a bottle of blood-red medicine. Then, he poured it down Darkwill's throat.

After a few minutes, Darkwill finally regained his senses. As charred black skin peeled off, he stood up with great difficulty.

“I-I’ll deal with my wounds.”

He staggered to his room and locked the door.

After doing all of that, he took out the ring box and opened it with a solemn look.

In the ring box with almost no room to roll, the milky-white die had already changed at some point in time. Two red dots were facing up!

In the living room outside, Klein stood on the spot and recalled everything that had happened before frowning.

At this moment in time, he had a baffling feeling that the enemies he would face during this bodyguard mission was probably going to be different from the enemies he encountered in the past.

After Darkwill partially recovered and came out, Klein sat on the chair and leaned forward slightly.

“Explain.

“This determines how I should provide you with protection.”

Chapter 605 - “Judgment”

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing Gehrman Sparrow, Darkwill’s first reaction was to reveal everything about the strange die. He wanted this adventurer, that he had spent huge sums of money on, to grasp the problem at its root so as to effectively ensure his personal safety.

But on second thought, he recalled his teacher’s exhortations. Believing that the die might very well be a rather important Sealed Artifact of the Life School of Thought, he was afraid that the truth would entice him to cause even more negative developments!

There are plenty of rumors about adventurers who killed their employers during missions in order to earn greater benefits for themselves. I don’t know Gehrman Sparrow, and I have no idea what kind of character he has. I need to be cautious! Besides, the die had automatically rolled a two. The situation isn’t at its worst and most despair-inducing. I can still wait for a chance… Darkwill hesitated for a few seconds and finally decided to talk about superficial matters while avoiding the key points.

He subconsciously dodged Gehrman Sparrow’s seemingly calm eyes.

“It’s this. My teacher and I belong to a secret organization. I’m escaping because a traitor has appeared internally.

“They grasp the pathway related to fate and can make themselves sufficiently lucky and their target unlucky… I-I might have been cursed, so I was unlucky enough to be struck by lightning.”

After the explanation, he forcefully hid the nervousness in his heart and awaited Gehrman Sparrow's reply.

Will he believe me? This kind of adventurer with rich experience and strength is likely hard to deceive… If he were to discover that I'm lying, he will likely sink me into the ocean… Darkwill stood there anxiously, like a student being summoned to the teacher's desk.

He's indeed from the Life School of Thought… Monster pathway… Klein nodded in thought.

"I understand.

"Try to do as little as possible. I will consider how I'll deal with your bad luck."

Uh… Darkwill was taken aback, completely unable to believe that Gehrman Sparrow would so easily accept a lie he fabricated on the spot.

He forced a smile and quickly expressed his gratitude. Then, he returned to his room, leaning his back against the door as he took out the ring box.

Pa! His hand trembled as he opened the lid, only to discover that the milky-white die had already strangely rolled itself to have the six side facing up!

Does this mean that I was lucky enough to successfully fool Gehrman Sparrow? Darkwill thought in enlightenment.

Mr. Harry swooped down and didn't choose to perch on the chubby Apothecary's shoulder. Apparently, it was still somewhat worried about how it could've also been implicated when Darkwill was nearly struck by lightning.

It stood on a wooden desk and stared ahead with its round eyes.

"Darkwill, you're very nervous."

“You don’t have to tell me that,” Darkwill said in frustration.

The owl spread its wings and said, “Alright, I’ll use a different explanation.

“I believe I should consider changing owners.

“Gehrman Sparrow seems to be a pretty good choice.”

“…Then what about me?” Darkwill asked in surprise, momentarily forgetting his anger.

Mr. Harry tsked and said, “Don’t you sense the concern and fear in your heart? You’re already suspecting whether you can see tomorrow’s sun. That strange die is really, really dangerous!

“If I were you, I would’ve thrown it out the window and into the sea and get your teacher’s teacher to fish it out himself.”

“…How do you know about my teacher’s teacher?” Darkwill blurted out the question.

Mr. Harry proudly lifted its head and said, “Don’t doubt an owl’s vision.”

Darkwill fell into thought and didn’t faze himself with its answer.

“No, that won’t work. Throwing the die into the sea wouldn’t resolve all my problems.

“According to Old Man, even if it’s buried out at sea, any powerful person will be able to find it in days. That will mean that I’ll really lose it. Silly bird. You lack general knowledge in mysticism, and you don’t know how some important Sealed Artifacts are just like the most popular prostitutes in Red Theater. They’ll always be able to attract hungry men.”

“Including you,” Harry calmly replied. “As for the problem of being lacking in general knowledge in mysticism, I believe a famous quote can explain it. Emperor Roselle once said that if a child doesn’t receive a good education, then it’s the father’s fault. This sentence can also be used to describe problems between a pet and its owner. Alright, Darkwill, regardless, I believe you need to discuss the die with Gehrman Sparrow. Otherwise, there will only be greater danger.”

“Let me wait and see a little longer. Perhaps it will be fixed at six…” Darkwill said with some hesitation.

He sat on the edge of the bed before lying down.

At this moment, the storm that had been howling had gradually calmed down. The sky began to turn calm as the liner blew its horn, indicating that it was setting sail.

Inside the first-class cabin’s living room, Klein looked out the window and saw blurry rainbows that appeared after the rain. Yet, his heart wasn’t calm.

He wasn’t too afraid of enemies. Out at sea, apart from the Four Kings and the official demigods, or the pirate admirals who appeared with their fleet, there were very few matters that could threaten him, who had Creeping Hunger and several mystical items. Even if the ship was sunk, he was able to escape thanks to the many charms he had from the Sea God domain.

But luck was something he really had no confidence in. It wasn’t within the limits of his abilities, nor could he think of a way to handle it.

Although my title is “the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck,” that was modified from the luck enhancement ritual. And the luck enhancement ritual clearly wasn’t to allow people to get out of bad luck… Darkwill’s matter is quite difficult to handle. I can only invest more effort into keeping a close eye on his situation. I’ll immediately rescue him if something unlucky that can cause death happens… Let’s hope that we can last for these few days until we arrived at Oravi Island. His seniors should be able to help him change his luck… Klein rubbed his temples, but he didn’t show any abnormalities.

†

Darkwill, who had been too nervous the previous night, fell into a deep sleep without realizing it.

After a while, his stomach's growling informed him that it was time for lunch.

He tried hard to open his eyes, but he felt as though an invisible person was pressing down on him, making it impossible for him to move.

He felt the back of his head swelling with a sharp pain. He felt his breathing become more difficult as his heart raced at an abnormal pace.

D-don't tell me that I'm going to experience a sudden death in my dreams… Darkwill struggled with all his might, but he failed to wake up. He became weaker and weaker with time.

At this moment, his mouth was opened up by a sharp object as an ice-cold liquid was poured in. The liquid also flowed down his face, wetting his chin and neck.

Darkwill's body recovered as he finally managed to open his eyes. He saw two bright, round, gold-like eyes nearly slamming into his head.

Rearing a Beyonder pet can be quite effective sometimes… Darkwill first felt wistful before he rapidly sat up and took out the ring box.

Inside, the die had rolled to another side.

1 point!

So unlucky that I almost died in my sleep? No, I don't think it's that simple. It seems to magnify certain probabilities such as the chances of being hit by lightning or the chances of experiencing sudden death while asleep… No, this can't carry on. If this continues, I'll definitely die! Darkwill thought in hysteria.

Horror quickly overwhelmed his thoughts as he spurred his hand to hold onto the ring box and rush to the door.

Perhaps as a result of nearly suffering a sudden death, he was lacking in strength. He could hardly twist the handle.

“Help! Help!” Mr. Harry screamed sharply.

Bang!

The door was opened, slamming into Darkwill’s head. If Klein hadn’t controlled his strength, the chubby Apothecary’s head probably would’ve cracked open with blood spewing out everywhere.

Without even rubbing his bruise, Darkwill frantically shouted, “It’s this! It’s this!

“It’s this die that gives me bad luck!

“When it’s at 1 point, I’ll fail at everything I do!”

He had already decided to inform Gehrman Sparrow of the whole truth, and he looked forward to the powerful adventurer giving him some effective suggestions.

He didn’t eliminate the possibility of him killing him out of greed, but he had weighed the matter. If he had to make a choice, he definitely chose the one which wasn’t as terrible.

Telling Gehrman Sparrow might lead to death, but not telling him would spell certain death. This choice was no longer something that needed consideration.

I don’t care if the die is lost. My life is more important! Darkwill thought with righteous indignation.

Then, he saw a smile appear across Gehrman Sparrow’s mouth.

“Thank you for your humor.

"The joke isn't too bad."

…It's not a joke… Darkwill looked down at the ring box and saw that there were no changes to the blood-red single point on the die.

C-could it be that even an explanation with plenty of logic will fail… The chubby Apothecary suddenly fell into despair.

"It's real! He's speaking the truth!" Harry flapped its wings.

Darkwill, who felt hope arise in him, heard Gehrman Sparrow say in a deep voice, "Then why don't you throw it into the ocean?"

With that said, Klein politely closed the door and returned to the living room.

This fellow must be hiding a secret. I mustn't be fooled by such a clumsy excuse… Klein sat in his chair and waited for Darkwill to describe the situation in detail.

Darkwill sat down, depressed. He sat there motionless, afraid of encountering another failure.

He didn't notice that the die had already switched its face again to a three.

Before lunch, Klein entered the washroom to clean out his digestive system.

After washing his hands, he went above the gray fog in passing, preparing to browse through the prayers of the Sea God believers.

Just as he sat at the high-back chair of The Fool, he suddenly recalled many details as his eyes widened.

H-how could I believe such a weak explanation…

Why do I think that it's because of that die?

In the past two events, it felt like my mind had been clouded. No, it's not that. Darkwill's explanation happened to match certain theories of mine. Therefore, I instinctively believed it to be real and fake. Klein's eyes constricted as he thought about it.

At that moment, he had already made a judgment.

That die is indeed problematic!

Chapter 606 - Intimidation

◆

Above the gray fog, inside the palace that looked like a giant's residence.

Klein tapped the edge of the mottled table as his thoughts revolved around the strange die.

It can influence me without me realizing it… This is already somewhat similar to 0-08 from back then. It's just that one is right in front of me, while the other is hidden… It's definitely a Sealed Artifact, and it's the kind that exists at the very pinnacle. Even if it's not a Grade 0, it has to be a very special existence among Grade 1s…

I'm temporarily unable to interfere with matters regarding fate, but I can't just passively face it. With the passage of time, objects at the level of Sealed Artifacts will often cause more severe damage. It might begin to affect people around the chubby Apothecary, such as me or all the passengers on the ship… Klein thought over the matter seriously without any solutions in mind. He decided to immediately return to the real world.

He didn't know how to seal the die or how to reduce its influence, but he knew someone had a clue.

It was the Snake of Mercury, Will Auceptin, who was still inside his mother's womb as a fetus!

Entering the master bedroom, he took out the paper crane in his wallet and placed it on the table. Klein took a look at the surface which still had signs of being erased. He picked up a pencil and wrote a simple question: “How do I deal with that die?”

He folded the paper crane back to its original form, stuffed it in his wallet, and went to the door of the servant’s room before knocking on it twice.

This wasn’t in violation of Gehrman Sparrow’s persona, because he was a gentlemanly madman. Of course, Klein was mainly afraid of bashing Darkwill to death by rashly opening the door. This was something that he had learned from the movie franchise, “Final Destination.”

In addition, Klein was also worried about witnessing something disgusting or unpleasant.

With the preferences Darkwill has exhibited, when he realizes that he’s in extreme danger and unable to extricate himself from it, with waiting for death being the only option available to him, there’s a nonzero chance of him pleasuring himself to climax one last time… Klein lampooned as he heard the chubby Apothecary’s weak reply, “What’s the matter?”

It’s good that you aren’t dead yet… Klein carefully opened the door and leaned his body a little forward, looking at Darkwill and the opened ring box which was sitting in front of him. He calmly asked, “What’s the score?”

“Can’t you check it from the papers yourself… Sports section…” Darkwill remained listless.

“I’m asking about the die,” Klein simply added.

“It’s still at 3 points…” Darkwill first answered instinctively before turning his head and jumping up. “You believe me?”

Klein didn’t reply so as to prevent him from recalling how Gehrman Sparrow had been fooled by the die.

He turned around and said in an unperturbed tone, “Bring the die outside."

"Alright!"

"Alright!"

Darkwill and Harry cried out in joy almost at the same time.

They either raised their arms or wings!

After the chubby Apothecary carefully carried the ring box out, Klein pointed at the coffee table and said, "Put it on there."

As he said, he sat on the sofa beside it. He placed his arms on his thigh and leaned forward to observe the strange die.

On the surface, the die didn't seem strange in any way when it came to mysticism. The only difference from an ordinary die was that it was dyed in red, even for three points.

Klein didn't touch it out of caution. He slightly straightened his body and looked at Darkwill, who was seated across him on a chair, as well as the fat owl, Harry, who was perched on the chair's back.

"Describe the exact situation."

Darkwill didn't hide the matter any further as he said with a smile which looked worse than crying, "This is an important Sealed Artifact in our organization. My mission is to send it to a particular person in Oravi Island.

"But, as you can see. It's extremely dangerous. It will roll itself even when there's no space for it to do so!

"When it rolls a six, the wielder will be sufficiently lucky. Everything can be done with relatively easy success, just like how my clumsy lie was able to fool you."

Don't mention this matter… You will one day be taught a serious lesson because of that mouth of yours… Klein listened with a stoic expression.

Darkwill continued, “1 point means that the wielder will be extremely unlucky. Nothing will succeed; you wouldn’t believe me even if I were to tell you the whole truth…

“2 points should be bad luck of a lesser degree, but as for why it would cause me to be struck by lightning… It’s inexplicable!

“3 points and 4 points are normal levels of bad luck and good luck. This can be confirmed. 5 points is the opposite of 2 points.”

You aren’t considered unlucky enough; otherwise, I would’ve already beaten you up… Klein thought and calmly instructed, “From this moment forth, both of you will take turns to monitor this die. Once it drops below 3 points, you are to inform me immediately.”

“Both of us?” Darkwill wore a blank look for a moment.

“Including me?” The owl perched on the edge of the chair’s back raised its right wing.

Klein leaned back into the sofa and crossed his right leg as he said calmly, “This will help in maintaining focus and energy.”

With that said, he gestured at the owl with his chin.

“You’re up first.”

“My name is Harry,” the owl grumbled.

Harry… Klein resisted the urge to laugh as he said to Darkwill, “Pull the bell and get an attendant here. From this moment forth, we will choose to have room service for our meals.

“Before reaching Oravi Island, you have to be in the living room at all times. You are not to go anywhere.

“Even if you wish to use the washroom, it will be when it’s at 3 or 4.

“If you really can’t hold it in, I’ll give you a bucket.”

Upon hearing Gehrman Sparrow give instructions with regularity and thoroughness, Darkwill calmed down a little at a time. He was no longer as horrified as before.

The matter he was most worried about prior to this was that firstly, Gehrman Sparrow would be enticed by greed and choose to kill him for the die. Secondly, this somewhat crazy and cold adventurer might be frightened by the die, and that he would choose to terminate the mission and stop providing protection.

And now, Gehrman Sparrow didn’t show any fear, and he even seemed very confident!

Darkwill secretly sighed in relief and thought, His performance was really professional…

He isn’t afraid at all!

He can even escape the influence of the die and accept my explanation. He lives up to his name of being the powerful adventurer who easily hunted Wormtongue! He’s definitely a powerhouse at the pirate admiral level!

Darkwill stood up and walked to the door to pull the service bell.

Just as he returned to the sofa, he heard Harry’s sharp screech.

“It has changed! It has changed!

“2 points!”

Suddenly, Klein exerted strength in his legs as he rose up from the sofa without warning and rushed to Darkwill’s side.

Bang!

As a gunshot rang from outside, Klein pulled Darkwill’s arm, swung his arm backward, and shook his wrist, throwing the chubby Apothecary to the side.

At this point, in the wall opposite to where Darkwill was standing, there was a bullet hole.

Did a sailor's gun misfire? Or did the bullet ricochet when aiming at some seabird or something? Regardless of the situation, the chances of that happening are very low; yet… Klein turned his head to the chubby Apothecary.

"Are you injured?"

Darkwill shook his head with a lingering sense of fear.

"I'm fine."

In the time that followed, Klein resolved more than ten accidents, one after another. It included the sudden collapse of the chandelier in the room, a hammer dropped by a slipping maintenance worker headed straight for Darkwill's head, as well as Darkwill nearly dying from choking on a fishbone.

These didn't seem like anything serious, but for Klein to remain highly focused, it was inevitable for him to be exhausted.

Thankfully, the die automatically rolled to 4 points later, finally ending the hour which was fraught with disasters.

No, I can't continue like this. Who knows if something will happen to me when I'm rescuing him… Klein sent away the captain who came to apologize and said to Darkwill, "I'll sleep for half an hour.

"Both of you are to watch the die. Immediately wake me up when there's a problem."

The chubby Apothecary and the owl nodded like a hungry woodpecker.

Leaning back into the sofa, Klein used Cogitation to quickly fall asleep, hoping to receive a reply from Will Auceptin.

When he woke up in his dream, he heaved a sigh of relief when he saw the pitch-black desolate plains. He followed the same-old path and reached the depths of the black steeple.

In the protruded ground surrounded by tarot cards, there were many new silvery lines that were densely written.

Klein stopped walking and quickly read it.

“It’s called the Die of Probability.

“It’s a Sealed Artifact of the highest level in our School of Thought. I believe it can reach the standard of a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

“It controls the probability of everything. 1 point will maximize the probability of unfavorable matters occurring to the target. 2 points will raise the probability of unfavorable matters greatly. This doesn’t mean that 2 points is safer than 1 point. This is because once the probability is high enough, any accident can happen. 3 points is to increase the probability of unfavorable matters. It’s the opposite for 4 to 6 points.

“Even for me, a being who can reset it to a certain extent, it’s a rather dangerous Sealed Artifact. A demigod can be killed using it, but of course, it can also kill yourself.”

I know, your contest with the Die of Probability is likely the equivalent to the battle between the God[1] of Save and Load and the RNG[2] gods… Klein lampooned inwardly as he continued reading.

“The Die of Probability has living characteristics. It always makes the wielder swing back and forth between having good and bad luck. If one isn’t careful, it’s possible to die from an accident. When it awakens to a certain degree, it will control the people and objects around the wielder, controlling the probability of their actions.

“Although it hasn’t been confirmed, I suspect that given enough time, it will be able to influence the entire world, making every action of all life be determined by its score. Of course, this is excluding deities."

To put it simply, it's digitizing the entire world… Th-this is definitely at the level of a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. It's extremely dangerous! How terrifying… Klein couldn't help but frown as he eagerly continued reading.

"To truly seal the Die of Probability is rather complicated. To put it simply, it's to use specific Sealed Artifacts to isolate it from the spirit world, astral world, and the real world. You can give it a try.

"Haha, I'll reveal my cards. I have long discovered that you can resist my prophetic senses. Perhaps you can use it to seal it.

"There's another way, but it can only briefly reduce its influence. However, this should be enough to send the Die of Probability to the hands of someone who can seal it.

"That method is to use the fact that it has living characteristics. Use an effective method to intimidate it. That way, it will behave, no—calm down for a period of time. It will last about 12 hours before continuing.

"After repeated acts of intimidation, the influence it receives will decrease. After a week, it will mark you and madly control your probabilities.

"Finally, thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Will Auceptin"

As expected of a Snake of Fate. He has indeed discovered my uniqueness… Throwing the Die of Probability above the gray fog should be able to seal it. But the problem is that a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact with living characteristics might influence the space above the gray fog and chase me away, making itself the owner… Such matters cannot be answered with divination. It will definitely be able to resist, just like 0-08… Klein rejected the idea of using the gray fog.

As the thoughts whirled in his mind, he suddenly had an idea.

Klein quickly left his dream and woke up. He said to Darkwill, “I have a method of suppressing its influence.”

“What is it?” Darkwill asked in pleasant surprise.

Klein didn’t answer and picked up the Die of Probability, which had 4 points facing up, before entering the washroom.

What does he want to do? I remember that in some folklore, the way they treat evil objects is to throw sh*t… Ugh… Darkwill didn’t wish to think further.

After entering the washroom and locking the door, Klein immediately set up a ritual to summon himself. Following that, he went above the gray fog and brought out the iron cigar case.

Then, he picked up the Die of Probability and opened the cigar case. Inside the cigar case was the All-Black Eye which came from the Marionettist.

Under the darkness, Klein’s face was cloaked in the shadows and he watched with a deep and gloomy gaze as he brought the Die of Probability close to the strange eye. It was a Beyonder characteristic which contained the True Creator’s mental corruption.

The corners of his mouth cracked open as he revealed a genial smile and whispered to the die in his hand, “Here, let me treat you to a concert.”

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It’s a reference to how gamers will try attempt to save and load the game to beat a game’s RNG for a better item.

Random Number Generator.

Chapter 607 - Discovering an Abnormality

◆

The window of the washroom was very high, preventing sufficient sunlight from shining in. It could only barely dispel the darkness, making everything seem gloomy.

Klein moved the Die of Probability in his right hand to the All-Black Eye, and suddenly, it shook. Then, he threw the item into the other side of the washbasin.

The milky-white die rolled a few times before finally stopping with four red dots pointing up.

Klein held back his unobvious smile and took a step to the side and picked up the Die of Probability again. He lowered his head and said in a gentlemanly manner, “You don’t wish to listen to it?

“Let’s do this. Give me an answer. 6 represents cooperation, while everything else represents a rejection.”

With that said, he threw the Die of Probability up and reached out to catch it.

The milky white die fell straight down and rapidly rolled, showing six red dots!

“Very good,” Klein praised with a chuckle.

After throwing the All-Black Eye back above the gray fog, he turned to open the door to the washroom and slowly walked to the living room.

Under Darkwill's and Harry's gaze, which was filled with anticipation, worry, curiosity, and puzzlement, he suddenly stopped and threw the Die of Probability out.

"No!"

"No!"

Darkwill and the owl cried out at the same time, afraid that a score of 3 points and below would happen. The latter subconsciously flew up to distance itself from the fatty who might be struck by lightning.

With a crisp tinkle, the milky-white die rolled on the coffee table several times before fixing itself at 2 points.

Just as the color in Darkwill's face drained, the die languidly rolled and fixed itself on 4.

"For the next 12 hours, it will be relatively quiet." Klein calmly sat down and began enjoying his breakfast which had long turned cold.

He really had a solution? Darkwill lowered his body and stared at the strange die on the coffee table.

After nearly a minute, he couldn't help but extend his hand and throw the die, managing to roll a 6.

Just as his palm left, the die moved by itself to 4.

How magical… What method did Gehrman Sparrow actually use? Did he really sh*t and soak the die inside? Ugh… Darkwill decided to accept the outcome and stopped thinking of the reason; otherwise, he suspected that he would end up vomiting.

Looking up at Gehrman Sparrow, who was calmly spreading butter on his bread, Darkwill suddenly felt that with just a promise and 1,000 pounds to hire a bodyguard at this level was extremely worth it!

He can definitely be ranked at the same level as any pirate admiral! If a tycoon were to encounter a situation like mine, they wouldn't hesitate to hire him with half their wealth… Thankfully, I only paid 300 pounds. The rest will be borne by Teacher and the others… Darkwill felt relieved when he realized that he didn't need to worry about the die's random rolling for the next 12 hours. He couldn't help but stand up and stretch his back.

He walked to the window and opened the tightly shut window to see the sparse clouds scattered across the clear skies.

The endless azure blue sky stirred as it reflected the bright sunlight like it had countless golden fragments scattered in it. This energized Darkwill as he felt a burden be lifted from his chest.

Unlike Backlund, which would only become warm at the end of February, the Rorsted Archipelago was no longer plagued by the cold. Life had returned to this area.

Facing the sea and the blooming of flowers in warm spring… Klein, who had finished his bread, walked to a spot behind Darkwill and felt like he was an animal who had awoken from hibernation.

He didn't recite the poem that flashed past his mind, as firstly, it didn't suit Gehrman Sparrow's persona, and secondly, it would probably make Darkwill reflect over Emperor Roselle's poetic talent.

Until the evening, the die still didn't roll, but the weather had changed. Strong winds howled as dark clouds gathered. A storm was brewing.

This was the most common danger at sea. Even if one took a safe sea route which had been traversed by others, one would occasionally encounter similar situations. It just wasn't as terrifying.

Klein looked at the tall waves and the dark sky, and he felt as though the ship was cruising through a mountain valley. By the sides were tall dark-blue "cliffs" that could topple down at any moment.

The intense pressure made a Mid-Sequence Beyonder like him feel repressed. He even wished to pray to god, hoping that the liner would cruise through the storm safely.

It's no wonder sailors, pirates, and merchants who live on the sea for extended periods of time can't help but respect the Lord of Storms. They would more or less believe in "Him"… Klein sighed in silence.

Although he didn't believe the storm that wasn't that powerful could bury a liner which was powered by both sails and steam engines, he still attached caution to the matter by praying to his alternate identity, Sea God Kalvetua.

He was afraid that the Die of Probability would suddenly go crazy during the storm and roll a 1, causing the ship to sink to the bottom of the sea. Therefore, he decided to make preemptive precautions. Klein did believe Snake of Fate Will Auceptin's judgment that the Die of Probability would be quiet for 12 hours after the first intimidation act, but this was without any additional conditions. He believed that it was more likely that a Sealed Artifact with living characteristics would deal with situations like a person instead of rules. Hence, he had to take precautions for any troubles it might cause.

Stealing a glance at Darkwill and the owl who were looking somewhat uneasy due to the storm, Klein calmly said, "I'll take a nap.

"Continue watching the die. Take turns and do not relax."

"Alright." Watching Gehrman Sparrow enter the master bedroom, Darkwill walked to the side of the coffee table and sat down. As he stared at the die, he asked Harry, "What thoughts do you have now?"

Harry flew around and mumbled, "Why am I not a petrel?"

In the master bedroom, Klein went above the gray fog and summoned the Sea God Scepter from the junk pile.

He held the scepter with blue gems embedded at the top and quickly replied to his prayer.

Klein didn't expend too much of his spirituality to calm the storm. This was firstly because they weren't too far from the surrounding seas of the Rorsted Archipelago. Such an obvious and exaggerated supernatural phenomenon was easily able to attract the attention of Sea King Jahn Kottman, who shared the same domain, or the Storm Priests on the ships. Secondly, he had to conserve strength to deal with the Die of Probability.

What he did was simple. He augmented the ship with layers of Beyonder effects, allowing it to cruise through the storm stably without any risk of capsizing.

Towards a Sequence 5 or 6 Beyonder below the rank of demigod, to do something similar to a liner which had hundreds of people on board required plenty of preparations and a complicated ritual. It was only possible by exhausting them, but to a Sea God of this domain, it was all simple and easy.

A demigod already has inklings of a god… Klein sighed and threw the scepter back into the junk pile, before silently disappearing from above the gray fog.

In the time that followed, the ship bobbed up and down like a leaf in the wind, but no matter how terrifying or towering the dark blue waves were, nothing happened to it until the end of the storm.

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At 4 p.m on Thursday. Backlund, Williams Street.

Fors Wall once again arrived here by carriage.

She didn't sit in the coffee shop again. Instead, she strolled down the street and observed the pedestrians and surrounding buildings. She also took note of figures with special traits as material for her novel.

There really are a lot of foreigners. They're still mainly from Feysac and

Intis. Heh heh, one of them is a barbaric and stocky white bear, while the other is a colorful, ostentatious rooster… Fors chuckled silently to herself.

At this moment, she came to the middle of Williams Street where there was an abandoned chapel. Withered vines crawled over its walls, and gray stones were strewn everywhere.

With the intention to not waste Mr. World's payment, Fors deliberately approached it to check for any abnormalities.

She circled around the chapel without discovering anything.

Following that, she entered and avoided the disgusting shit and rotten things, and she quickly observed every corner.

Suddenly, her gaze came to a stop as she frowned bit by bit.

In a particular corner of the half-collapsed ruin, the ground had been dug up by someone. The pit wasn't too big or deep, and there were remnant traces of it being dug with fingers!

This should be considered an abnormality, right… Fors cautiously retreated and didn't do a detailed investigation.

After walking through all of Williams Street, she immediately returned home and organized the abnormality and material she jotted down together. She then sacrificed it to Mr. Fool and asked him to hand it over to The World. Fors didn't hide conceal anything she saw, even if they didn't seem to have any superficial problems. This was because she knew very well that any abnormality would be judged by The World, and not by herself who didn't understand the situation.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein immediately began reading the report Miss Magician had submitted.

That abandoned chapel has signs of being dug up? The previous digging attempts had been dealt with by me and Miss Sharron… Who would dig it up again? Rafter Pound, that descendant of the Tudor family? He nearly died from the evil spirit's possession. Without any helpers, it's unlikely he would take further risks… Who could it be… Klein thought for a moment, but he couldn't lock onto a suspect. All he could do was continue reading.

While he read the notes written in a beautiful language, he acutely noticed a point.

There are many foreigners on this street. They are mainly from Feysac and Intis…

It wasn't like that back when I went to Williams Street… Did a Feysac or Intis company recently open there?

Feysac, Intis…

Klein ruminated over the two countries' names when he suddenly recalled something!

The royal family of the Feysac Einhorn, the Einhorn family and Intis' former royal family, the Sauron family, are both in control of the Hunter pathway, which is also the Red Priest pathway. It was two of the blood types which the evil spirit had designated as being capable of removing the seal!

Together with the Medici family's descendants which had been destroyed at Bansy Harbor, the three factions which held control over the Red Priest pathway are involved!

Bansy Harbor was destroyed, causing the Medici family's Beyonder characteristic to use some magical connection to contact the evil spirit who's suspected to be Red Angel. Hence, the members of the Einhorn and Sauron families were attracted?

No, that’s not realistic. If the Church of Storms didn’t discover any Beyonder characteristics, they definitely would’ve noticed a problem in this…

Another reason? The evil spirit is using another method to attract people from the Einhorn and Sauron families? What or who did it go through in order to do so? The number of people who know of the evil spirit’s existence is only a handful—me, Miss Sharron, as well as… Amidst his racing thoughts, Klein suddenly thought of a possibility.

It was Rafter Pound, the descendant of the Tudor family who had previously been possessed by the evil spirit! He had unknowingly become a slave of the evil spirit! He had secretly helped it spread the news!

And the evil spirit had sought me and Miss Sharron’s help to numb us into thinking that we are the only ones who can rescue it! For this, it didn’t mind betraying its descendants! Klein was alarmed as he felt like he had been fooled by the evil spirit.

Chapter 608 - Professional

◆ ◆ ◆

The endless gray fog hung silently before a light scraping noise on the bronze table sounded.

Klein changed his seating posture and began placing more weight on the details regarding the evil spirit. He was more and more convinced that Miss Sharron and himself had neglected the possibility of something happening to Rafter Pound.

This is a Beyonder power of the Red Priest pathway, Conspirer?

Furthermore, this is even closer to a common fraud. There’s only the use of supernatural powers in the details. Therefore, even if I had arrived at the mysterious space above the gray fog, I would passively have my senses fooled. I would’ve only discovered the problem by proactively considering and analyzing the situation?

If it wasn’t for Mr. Azik, who knew of the evil spirit suspected to be the dead Red Angel Medici, I wouldn’t have realized this problem. Nor would I have hired Miss Magician to seek out any abnormalities on Williams Street…

After a few minutes of contemplation, Klein conjured a pen and paper, preparing to use divination to confirm his theories.

After deliberating for a moment, he finally penned the sentence for the dream divination: “Baronet Rafter Pound’s current situation.”

After putting down his dark red fountain pen, Klein held the piece of paper with the divination statement and leaned back in his chair.

He first recalled the information he had regarding Rafter Pound before closing his eyes, chanting silently, and entering Cogitation.

Klein's thoughts rapidly calmed down as he quickly entered a dream state.

In a gray world, disconnected scenes flashed past before finally fixating on Unit 29 on Sivellaus Street.

Inside the warm activity room, Rafter Pound was dressed in cotton pajamas, holding a wine cup with red liquid. He was standing silently by the window, looking at the Backlund police station headquarters diagonally across the street.

This baronet had gray sideburns and puffy eye sockets that were tainted with blackish-green colors. The wrinkles on his forehead and the corners of his eyes and mouth were so pronounced that it exceeded what someone in his forties should look like.

His pupils weren't dilated in a very serious manner, but they were abnormal. His cheeks were flushed red as he had a furtive smile. He looked slightly abnormal compared to the last time Klein met him.

Indeed, something is wrong with him… Klein left the dream and began considering how he could deal with the evil spirit.

Without a doubt, he had his usual train of thought for such matters. Under the situation where he was unable to contact Miss Sharron, his first reaction was to report the matter!

But how should it be reported? Klein considered it seriously and conjured The World's figure and made him pray.

"Through a reliable channel, pass this information to the Church of the Evernight Goddess and the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery.

“The information is: High-level spies from Feysac and Intis are gathered at Williams Street for unknown motives.

“Reward of 100 pounds.”

This was the explanation Klein thought of after repeated consideration. Directly revealing the King of Angels, Red Priest, the Medici family, or the Tudor Dynasty’s ruin would indeed garner the attention of the Churches and military, but it would also easily make Miss Magician, who reported the matter, to be targeted by the official organizations. There were huge risks involved.

Not only was using “high-level spies from Feysac and Intis are gathered at Williams Street” relatively milder, something which ordinary Beyonders had a chance of noticing, but it was also something that would make the Churches and the military wary. They would send out the corresponding experts to employ the most effective methods.

As for the subsequent fruits of the investigations, it was all thanks to their contributions and had nothing to do with the reporting party.

Klein had considered getting Mr. Azik to help, but he ultimately chose to abandon the thought. This was because the evil spirit was suspected to be a King of Angels and was very dangerous. Mr. Azik, who was still in the stage of recovering, might not be able to deal with it.

After some thought, Klein turned the conjured scene into a stream of light and transmitted it to the crimson star representing The Magician.

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

When Fors received the response from Mr. World, she was taken aback.

Those are high-level spies from Feysac and Intis? she exclaimed to herself, believing that there was no way she could’ve inferred something like that with the information she had provided!

However, she quickly felt at ease, believing that the reason why Mr. World had suspicions of abnormalities in Williams Street was precisely because he had received the corresponding intel of high-level spies. Once he confirmed the appearances of people from Feysac and Intis, it was easy for him to make such a conclusion.

Pass this information to the Church of Evernight and the Church of Steam? Isn't that a euphemistic way of saying "report"… Unfortunately, I won't be able to watch from the sideline, or I'm sure a great show would unfold… Fors wasn't a stranger to reporting matters; after all, her housemate and good friend was a bounty hunter.

She quickly had an idea, deciding to hand the matter of reporting the intel to the experienced Xio.

When she came out of the bedroom, she saw Xio sitting on a sofa. She was flipping through documents about her target, raising her hand to grab at her messy blonde hair from time to time and appearing extremely serious.

Fors casually picked up an item to embellish her motives and came over to the sofa. She handed over the item.

"Here, have a piece of cake."

Xio glanced at the cake slathered with a layer of cream. Without losing focus, she raised her hand to grab it.

At this moment, Fors flipped her wrist, and the cake in her palm had turned into a golden decorative flower.

"Surprised?" she asked with a smile.

Xio couldn't help but roll her eyes.

"Stop your performance. I prefer food."

“Alright. I have a matter for you to do. 70 pounds.” Fors smiled as she sat down.

†

After first dealing with the evil spirit’s matter, Klein returned to the real world and held a ritual in passing. He brought the radio transceiver, which had been placed above the gray fog for several days, back to his first-class master bedroom.

He lay in bed and used Cogitation to recover his energy until he was awoken by the tapping sounds.

When Klein opened his eyes, the crimson moonlight had already shone in, blanketing the dim room like a veil, as well as the radio transceiver which was automatically spewing out illusory white paper.

This really feels like a horror film… A shame it’s connected to a magic mirror without any moral integrity or bottom line… Klein sat up and walked over. He saw lines of Loenese on the illusory white paper.

“Honorable existence above the spirit world, your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, has arrived and would like to greet you.

“Do you have something you would like to test me on?”

Look at this, look! This is what I call smooth-talking! This is what a professional is like! In that instant, Klein really wished to pull Darkwill into the room to witness the magic mirror’s art of communication.

I clearly have questions to ask it, but it becomes a situation of me testing it. And it even threw in a question… Klein controlled the curling of his mouth as he replied in a deep voice, “Yes.”

“Please speak. The ignorant and limited Arrodes is ready.” Amidst the tapping sounds, the illusory paper no longer produced Loenese, but instead produced a fawning smiley face.

This is already the emergence of emoticons… This fellow evolves really quickly… Klein directly asked, “Where can I obtain a mystical item which can steal the Beyonder powers of others?”

The tapping sounds suddenly became intense as the illusory white paper quickly produced scenes like a screenshot from a movie.

There were places which Klein was familiar with such as Tingen City’s Saint Selena Cathedral’s Chanis Gate; the black-haired, green-eyed, handsome poet, Leonard Mitchell; a middle-aged man who sat on a sofa smiling at the noble ladies opposite him; and a young arrogant lady who was loitering in the sewers…

There were a total of twelve scenes, and finally a line of Loenese text appeared: “These are the ones that you can easily or conveniently acquire one from. There are a lot more, but they are either very complicated or troublesome, or they range at the highest levels which I cannot see clearly.”

Not bad. He actually knows to help me filter… This is a fantasy and mystical version of Google… Klein gently nodded and said, despite knowing the answer, “It’s your turn to ask.”

“You have already answered.” Amidst the tapping, Arrodes’s unsurprising answer appeared on the illusory white paper.

Klein chuckled inwardly and asked, “Where will Leonard Mitchell be staying for the time being?”

The tapping sounds became intense again as one scene after another appeared before Klein’s eyes.

It was a famous landmark in Backlund, a towering Gothic bell tower with a Bell of Order hanging above.

There was a road sign on the road with the words “Pinster Street.”

It was Unit 7 along a row of terrace houses. In it, there was the extremely suave Leonard Mitchell wearing a black coat and red gloves. He was Klein's poet friend who was reading through the dossiers of Lanevus and Capim.

This fellow is in Backlund, and he's investigating the Lanevus and Capim cases? What the hell… The corners of Klein's mouth twitched slightly as he carefully thought of the clues he left behind in those two cases.

The only clue is that Detective Sherlock Moriarty is involved in the two cases. If Leonard enters Daisy's dream, he should discover this point. But, I already kept a beard and had a pretty good disguise back then. It's unlikely that he can recognize me in the rather blurry scene in the dream and portraits… As long as he doesn't recognize me, it doesn't matter. What has problems with Sherlock Moriarty have to do with me, Gehrman Sparrow? Klein retracted his thoughts and memorized Leonard Mitchell's current residence.

7 Pinster Street, Backlund.

He planned on entrusting The Moon Emlyn White to visit Leonard Mitchell the day after tomorrow and use the badge of the Hermits of Fate to purchase a mystical item.

I hope my dear poet friend has additional items to spare… If not, the price will definitely be at a premium… Klein tersely answered and said to the radio transceiver, "It's your turn to ask."

He was honestly curious as to what Arrodes would ask this time.

Amidst the clacking sounds, the radio transceiver spewed out new illusory paper. On it was a question composed in Loenese: "Great Master, Leonard Mitchell has a huge secret. Do you wish to know?"

…This can also be considered a question? Klein raised his head in amusement and surprise as he looked at the crimson moon which was silently illuminating the dark sea.

Soon, he honestly gave an answer.

“Yes.”

Chapter 609 - Paying a Visit

◆◆◆

Amidst the clacking sounds, the radio transceiver spewed out a brand new piece of illusory white paper under the crimson moonlight in the dim environment.

“Inside Leonard Mitchell resides an angel from the Zoroast family. ‘He’ once changed my question.”

Angel? There’s an angel residing in Leonard’s body? An angel from the Fourth Epoch’s Zoroast family? Although Klein was mentally prepared to hear an incredible secret, he was still shocked by what Arrodes divulged.

He was deeply concerned and surprised as well.

An angel referred to Beyonders at Sequence 1 or 2, making them rather close to the state of a true god. They had all sorts of mystical characteristics, and they could even influence Low-Sequence Beyonders of the same pathway to a certain extent and range. They were mighty figures who stood at the pinnacle of the real world. In the various Churches, only their popes, pontiffs, patriarchs, as well as certain legendary ascetics were Grounded Angels. Therefore, Klein believed that being latched onto by a parasite of this level wasn’t a good thing.

In the dark Second Epoch, the angels all had their divine names, and they were subsidiaries to the ancient gods…

I haven’t indirectly or directly interacted with many angels—Blasphemer Amon; Calamity Queen Cohinem; the evil spirit suspected to be Red Angel Medici; Tail Devourer Ouroboros as described by Little Sun; Miracle Invoker Zaratul from Roselle's diaries; son of the Creator, Adam; Hermes who cannot be confirmed if he's an angel or not; Snake of Fate, Will Auceptin, who's still inside his mother's womb…

Apart from the last two, the others appear to be very evil. Even the words they leave behind might make the reader go crazy or lose control… Would my dear poet ultimately end up as a sacrificial item of this angel parasite…

This can explain why he thinks of himself as the protagonist of a play, the special one, and he was willing to help me hide my secret… The Zoroast family is in control of the Marauder pathway, which is the pathway that can steal the Beyonder powers of others. That's why Leonard was able to find and participate in the gathering of the Hermits of Fate… It's no wonder he offered to use Blood Vessel Thief—it's because he has a Grandpa[1] to help him. He was able to instantly steal Megose's most potent power…

Heh, what Hermits of Fate. They're just a bunch of thieves and frauds. At best, the target of their theft and fraud is that of time and fate…

In short, my dear poet's Grandpa isn't a good person. I have to find a chance to warn him… But here comes the problem, they're always together. Any warning will only expedite the problem.

Klein's thoughts raced, but he ultimately failed to come up with an option he can act upon. All he could do was temporarily shelve the matter and plan on asking Mr. Azik and Snake of Mercury, Will Auceptin, to see if they had any solutions.

In those few minutes, he even thought of using Blasphemer Amon. To put it simply, it was to divulge information to the son of the Creator that the angel from the Zoroast family was residing in Leonard Mitchell's body, getting "Him" to "eat" up the parasite.

According to what Klein knew, the Amon family supported the Tudor

Empire during the Fourth Epoch, while the Zoroast family belonged to the Solomon Empire, making the two enemies. Furthermore, according to the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation, powerhouses from the same pathway would have greater conflicts the higher their Sequence was. This was akin to the battle between the two Snakes of Mercury.

Unfortunately, this solution was restricted by reality and was ultimately abandoned by Klein. This was because he didn't know where to find Blasphemer Amon. Secondly, he was afraid that the battle at the level of angels would directly destroy Leonard Mitchell. And thirdly, a powerful Amon might be a very bad and serious matter.

I'll first get Emlyn to attempt the transaction and observe the actual situation. I can decide on what to do when I know more… Klein retracted his thoughts and said to the radio transceiver which was connected to Arrodes, "Ask your question."

The clacking of the radio transceiver became increasingly brisker as the illusory white paper was gently spewed out.

"No, there's no need.

"This is an addendum to my question which doesn't need to abide by the rules.

"Great Master, I sense a special item outside your room, but I am unable to see through it. Can you tell me what it is?"

This magic mirror is impressive. It seems to be able to see everything. It just suffers from interference when it deals with high-level matters as though there's a mosaic… Klein calmly replied, "Die of Probability."

Amidst the taping sounds, Arrodes presented new words on the illusory piece of white paper.

"So it's that thing… Great Master, you can ask your question."

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “What do you have to mention regarding the Die of Probability?”

At this point in time, the radio transceiver seemed to brighten up and no longer looked as gloomy as before. The speed at which illusory white paper spewed out slowed down.

“It’s a fellow that’s especially petty and bears grudges. Master, you have to quickly give it to someone else!

“It’s an item formed from the Uniqueness of the Wheel of Fortune. You can give it to any other Snake of Fate and ‘They’ will be very grateful. In short, it’s not suitable to be your servant.

“The aura is dissipating. Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, has no choice but to leave. Finally, let me praise you once again, my Great Master, the ruler above the spirit world. Bye bye~”

Uniqueness… The Die of Probability is actually the Uniqueness of the Monster pathway… This is the first time I’m encountering a so-called Uniqueness. It really is terrifying that can digitize the entire real world… The Monster pathway is also called the Wheel of Fortune pathway. Sequence 0 is the Wheel of Fortune? Klein looked at the radio transceiver which had returned to normal, and he temporarily reined in his thoughts.

He didn’t harbor any greed towards the Die of Probability. This was because it wasn’t part of the Seer pathway, and it came with extremely terrifying negative side effects. He was also afraid that, with time, this die which bore grudges would attract Tail Devourer Ouroboros over.

Even if this thing can be isolated and sealed when placed above the gray fog, there’s a high chance of it digitizing the entire mysterious space. In the future, the Tarot Gatherings might end up becoming a tabletop role-playing game… Klein had never come into contact with items of this level before, so he was unable to determine what would happen if he were to throw the Die of Probability above the gray fog.

He decided to continue intimidating the die, and he would successfully send it to Oravi Island where there would be Life School of Thought members who had the means to seal it. As for the problem of the mission exceeding the payment he would receive, he didn't mind it. This was because the greatest benefit he would gain was the friendship of the Snake of Fate Will Auceptin.

†

Backlund, Harvest Church.

Emlyn White held a strange badge which was the size of an eyeball and chuckled inwardly.

The World sure is long-winded. Isn't it just finding a Nighthawk named Leonard Mitchell at Pinster Street in North Borough? He even specially emphasized that the person has a secret and that there's a high chance of me being pulled into a dream.

This is showing doubt in my abilities!

Emlyn stood up and changed into a tailcoat and white shirt. He then turned his head to look out the window.

Heh heh, he has a secret, while I have mine. I dare bet that Lord Nibbs or other Earls are secretly watching me. If anything were to happen, they will definitely provide me with help to a certain degree… Being pulled into a dream… Emlyn contemplated for a few seconds before using the materials which were rich in spirituality to concoct a blue medicine.

Putting away the bottle and medicine, he picked up a silk top hat and walked out of the break room. After bidding farewell to Bishop Utravsky, he left the Harvest Church.

It was still morning, but Backlund's sky was gloomy. There was a faint fog that spread like water.

Emlyn squinted his eyes and wore his hat, murmuring to himself, “The sunlight is a little blinding…”

He hailed a rental carriage and went straight for the steam metro station. He spent six pence on a first-class ticket to North Borough.

This saved him a lot more time than heading straight there!

About forty minutes later, he arrived at his destination and stood outside the door of 7 Pinster Street.

Emlyn politely rang the doorbell and patiently waited for a minute.

Just as he was about to write a note and stuff it into the hole beneath the door to schedule a better time for a visit, he suddenly heard languid footsteps approaching.

Doesn’t sound like a servant… Emlyn nodded indiscernibly and took out the medicine he had concocted in advance and cleanly drank it.

Then, he watched the door open and saw a black-haired, green-eyed man appear before him. He was dressed in home wear—a white shirt and black trousers. His shirt was untucked, allowing it to flutter gently in the wind. Amidst his suaveness were hints of uninhibited freedom.

Although he’s a believer of Evernight, I have to say that his looks are barely comparable to us Sanguine… Emlyn took off his hat and gently raised his chin.

“Good morning, are you Mr. Leonard Mitchell?”

Leonard frowned indiscernibly as he looked at the handsome, red-eyed gentleman. He raised his hand to cover his mouth and indifferently yawned.

“You are?”

“A visitor. I have something I would like to seek your help on.” Emlyn didn’t reveal his identity as he smiled with a rather obvious arrogance.

This attitude gave Leonard a baffling sense of familiarity. It was as though he had seen his former self—the person who always thought of himself as being the most special, the protagonist of this era.

He cleared his throat and said, “I’m only an ordinary citizen. I do not accept missions.

“If you have any issues, then you can find a private detective.”

Emlyn White smiled and said, “This matter is something only you can complete.”

He looked to his sides and continued, “I wish to purchase a mystical item that can steal the Beyonder powers of others.”

Leonard’s eyes focused as he asked in a deep voice, “Who are you?”

At this moment, Emlyn didn’t immediately answer. Instead, he surveyed his surroundings and clicked his tongue with a smile.

“Impressive. I nearly failed to realize that I had been pulled into a dream.”

He wasn’t in a rush to leave as he took out the small badge he received from The World in front of Leonard Mitchell’s solemn expression.

Leonard took a glance as his expression eased slightly. He cocked his head slightly and paused for a few seconds.

Silently, Emlyn White saw the scene around him rapidly shatter and vanish like shattering glass.

Leonard sneered and pointed inside the house.

“Let’s talk inside.”

†

“Grandpa” is a common trope in Chinese web novels where a powerful entity resides in the protagonist, giving him knowledge to one-up others. A well-known one is Grandpa Doehring from Coiling Dragon.

Chapter 610 - Throwing the Die

◆

Upon hearing Leonard Mitchell’s invitation, Emlyn didn’t show any fear. He held his top hat and wore a subtle smile before entering the house without any qualms.

He didn’t take off his coat, as a Potions Professor often brought several supplementary items. It wouldn’t look pleasant once the concealment of these items was gone.

Emlyn sat down with his starched tailcoat, leaning back into the support as he leisurely said, “Actually, there’s no need to go through the trouble.

“If you have it, name the price; otherwise, just frankly say so.

“Of course, I’m very certain you have one.”

He chuckled as his bright red eyes reflected Leonard Mitchell’s figure that didn’t mind the tidiness of his getup.

The feeling of “me knowing you have a secret, with you not knowing anything about me” left Emlyn extremely pleased as he felt a strong sense of superiority.

Leonard used his fingers to comb his raven-black hair and casually sat on the chair opposite Emlyn. He didn’t show any panic or puzzlement as he said with a smile, “At the very least, I need to know who wants it.”

“Perhaps it’s me, or perhaps it’s my friend,” Emlyn tipped his chin as he smiled gently.

Leonard squinted his eyes as he cocked his head, as though in thought.

Finally, he laughed.

“Alright, since you’ve already taken out that badge, I’ll answer you frankly.

“I do have a mystical item that can be used to steal the Beyonder powers of others, but I only have that one item.

“If you wish to buy it, 7,000 pounds. No negotiation.”

7,000 pounds? A mystical item of this kind is that expensive? Although he didn’t have to pay for it, Emlyn was still shocked. He nearly failed to maintain his bearing as a Sanguine.

He automatically converted how much money that could be used to exchange for dolls and doll dresses.

After two seconds of thought, Emlyn revealed a smile and said, “I’ll consider it. I’ll answer you in two days.”

“Sure.” Leonard curled the corners of his lips.

After leaving 7 Pinster Street, Emlyn hired a rental carriage as though nothing had happened as he headed for the steam metro station in North Borough, before heading back to the bridge at South Borough.

Taking off his hat, he looked back at the street which had carriages and pedestrians passing through, Emlyn chuckled and took a step into the Harvest Church.

In between a tree and a black street lamp, an inconspicuous shadow suddenly moved, revealing the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell.

His appearance was silent, but it didn’t garner the attention of any pedestrians.

"Someone from the Church of Earth Mother?" Leonard frowned slightly as he muttered to himself.

He paused for two seconds before leaving Rose Street where the Harvest Church was situated.

†

7,000 pounds? Why doesn't he just go rob a bank? Above the gray fog, Klein, who had received the feedback from Emlyn, nearly blurted out.

As Gehrman Sparrow, he had previously said something similar, but the two situations and the mood was completely different.

Using the bounty of the Golden Dream's third mate, Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson, as a reference, Klein inferred that a similar mystical item was worth about 5,000 pounds. Even if there was a premium, it would've maxed out at 6,000 pounds. Who knew that Leonard Mitchell would directly ask for 7,000 pounds!

Could it be an item left behind from a High-Sequence Beyonder, making the act of stealing Beyonder powers just one of its effects? No, if that's really the case, the price would start from 10,000 pounds… My dear poet, why didn't I know you as a profiteering merchant. You clearly exhibit a free and easy demeanor and showed no interest in money… Klein couldn't help but sigh.

Since he had a clue and saw a glimmer of hope and how it was something that could be resolved with money, Klein didn't wish to seek out other channels to prevent any mishaps from happening.

He quickly calculated his wealth and discovered that it was an acceptable price.

Including the 300 pounds advance from the Apothecary, the 5,400 pound bounty from Wormtongue, and the cash I got from the bodies, and subtracting the 200 pounds to be paid to Miss Magician, I have a total of 12,767 pounds in cash and 5 gold coins. This isn't including my 3 soli and 8 pence in change.

In addition, Miss Justice will pay the 2,000 pounds she owes me before the end of the week, as well as the 1,800 pounds for the Psychiatrist characteristic. I'm actually richer than I thought I was. Even in Backlund, I can be considered a tycoon.

Klein inhaled and didn't hesitate any further. He made the cash fly out from the junk pile and land on the table.

He carefully counted 7,500 pounds in cash and placed them aside—7,000 pounds for the mystical item, and 500 pounds for Emlyn's "hazardous pay."

Sigh, after going through all the effort to go past ten thousand, more than half of it will be gone in an instant… Klein conjured The World and made him pose in a praying manner to inform Emlyn that there were no problems with going through with the transaction. Fifteen minutes later, a ritual was to be held to receive the bestowment from Mr. Fool.

In addition, Klein also made The World warn Emlyn to not be in a rush to complete the deal after getting the cash. He had to wait until tomorrow. This was because he was afraid that the angel from the Zoroast family inside Leonard Mitchell would sense the gray fog's aura on the cash. He wanted an "airing" process, just like back when he gave Emlyn the badge.

Fifteen minutes later, Klein glanced at the cash pile which had shrunk by more than half and sighed before returning to the real world.

It was already 10:40 on a Friday. They were about eight hours from Oravi Island.

It's time to intimidate the Die of Probability again… Klein muttered, held the ritual, and brought out the iron cigar case which contained the

All-Black Eye.

He guessed that Darkwill would suspect something, so he deliberately brought the die to the washroom to deal with it.

Seeing the Die of Probability calm down once again, Klein quickly dealt with the All-Black Eye and the iron cigar case. After heaving a long sigh of relief, he did a silent count of the time.

It should be enough to last until Darkwill hands it to the contact. There's no need to deal with it again.

With this in mind, Klein began to consider another problem with a certain degree of concern.

The All-Black Eye has appeared in front of the True Creator before, and it has "His" mental corruption. To take it out once every few hours might cause "Him" to lock onto me, allowing him to send powerhouses to seek me out.

However, it was only one or two minutes each time, so the problem isn't that serious. Even if "He" senses it, their estimate of the area wouldn't be too precise. Sigh, when it involves the True Creator, there's no way to determine things with divination. I can only raise my guard. Thankfully, this is the last time, and it will take only about eight hours to reach our destination… Why am I raising flags for myself? Pui! Pui! Pui! I wasn't thinking of anything!

Klein picked up the Die of Probability and returned to the living room and saw the chubby Apothecary slumped on the reclining chair, looking completely exhausted. As for the owl, Harry, it looked like it was brimming with energy, as though it didn't need any rest.

These are the different traits that different creatures gain from taking the same potion? At the very least, Miss Justice has never mentioned that she doesn't need sleep… It's a uniqueness that comes about because of an owl's biological makeup? Sigh, I don't know much about owls. Indeed, I'm just a keyboard warrior who is only a jack of all trades… Klein sat on the sofa and placed the milky-white die into the ring box and patiently waited for evening to arrive when the ship was scheduled to dock.

Time ticked by as the sun gradually set in the west.

At this point in time, Klein, who had his eyes closed, suddenly sat up, having sensed an extreme danger befall the area!

It had exceeded a Seer's spiritual intuition and the Clown's intuition for danger. It seemed to stem from the formless gray fog which strangely rippled around him.

An enemy! Tail Devourer Ouroboros or the Aurora Order's Saint? Klein opened his eyes as he began considering countermeasures with an abnormally serious expression.

Any mistake in a time such as this would require him to consider matters of being resurrected.

As for Darkwill and Harry, there was absolutely no way for them to be spared!

In the beginning, he hoped that the visitor could only vaguely sense a general area and might not find him or the Die of Probability. However, when he considered how he was on a ship with no one around on the sea, it wasn't too hard to lock onto a target. The problems would only become worse when that happened, with giving up being the only choice.

Above the liner, space was suddenly torn open as an invisible door filled with complicated symbols appeared.

Two pale hands reached out from the door and suddenly pulled backwards, allowing his entire body to walk out.

He wore a black bonnet and a classic dark robe, a favorite among elders.

However, he didn't look past forty. His brown hair was slightly curled which seemed abnormally hard.

Countless illusory images darted across his dark eyes, as though layers after layer of chaotic worlds were hidden within.

As Klein's sense of danger intensified, just the change in his expression frightened Darkwill and Harry enough for them to freeze.

He didn't hesitate as he followed the plans he had made for such situations. He leaned forward and picked up the Die of Probability.

"Determine the outcome of the malefic visitor who just arrived. I want 1 point!" Klein said in a deep and soft voice, and he threw out the milky-white die. He subconsciously prayed to the Goddess, hoping that the die which had recently been intimidated was obedient enough and played a meaningful rule.

Meanwhile, he appeared extremely calm, to prevent the die from sensing his anxiety and take the opportunity to cause trouble.

As the Die of Probability rolled several times while producing clinking sounds, it fixed at the blood-red one point.

Above the liner, the black-robed man, who didn't look forty, had the entire liner reflected within his eyes.

He emanated his spirituality and scanned the surroundings. He extended his hand to grab the space in front of him as he suddenly pulled a nearly invisible door.

The powerhouse stepped in and vanished from the spot.

Inside the first-class cabin, Klein immediately felt the danger distancing itself from him. He couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief.

He looked at the Die of Probability on the coffee table and couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

If this die didn't have such a negative side effect and could be utilized to its full extent, it would be a divine artifact!

As expected of a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. As expected of the Uniqueness of the Monster pathway…

Only at this point in time did Darkwill find his courage again as he carefully asked, "W-what just happened?"

Klein maintained his posture and calmly replied, "There's no need for you to know."

"I understand, I understand. The more I know, the greater the danger I'll be in." Darkwill wiped the cold sweat from his face.

There weren't any more accidents in the next few hours. After the sun went below the horizon and the sky became completely dark, Klein finally saw a towering lighthouse appear not too far away.

Chapter 611 - Fate Councilor

◆ ◆ ◆

Oravi was situated northeast of the Rorsted Archipelago. The straight-line distance wasn't too great, but the safe sea route had required ships to take many twists and turns, causing the distance traveled to increase by several hundred nautical miles.

It was originally a primitive island that harbored many kinds of Beyonder creatures without any humans inhabiting it. After the hunting era came to an end, the Loen Kingdom banished certain criminals there, causing Oravi Island to gradually have villagers and towns.

When more eastern islands were discovered and colonized, the area attracted many new immigrants due to the convenience of the sea route and its rich natural resources, making it a rather thriving port city.

The light from the lighthouse tower appeared so warm in the dark environment as it led liners towards the harbor for them to dock.

"We've finally arrived. My gratitude to the crimson moon and fate for blessing me." Darkwill jumped off the last gangway and stepped onto solid cemented ground.

To be precise, apart from fate, you should thank The Fool and Sea God for their blessings… Klein held his leather suitcase with one hand as he tapped his cane.

Darkwill properly put away the ring box which contained the Die of

Probability, and he didn't delay in asking where the bellman, Carnot, stayed. He rented a carriage and went straight for St. Draco Cathedral. He then entered the magnificent bell tower which boldly used the colors of red, blue, and yellow.

Inside the bell tower, Carnot had a cramped room he could call his own.

Knock! Knock! Knock! Darkwill knocked on the door thrice, eager to hand over the item on his person.

With a creak, the brown wooden door opened and out came a large man who was slightly hunched.

He looked to be in his forties, and individually, there was nothing strange about his facial features, but when put together, it was filled with an unharmonious vibe.

Klein only took a glance and discovered that his eyes weren't leveled. His nostrils were of different sizes, and his left facial muscles were slightly loose, causing the corner of his mouth to droop slightly. It was the complete opposite for the right side of his face.

Carnot's legs were obviously of different lengths, and one of his arms was thick, while the other was thin. His entire body was highly disproportional, making him extremely ugly.

"Who are you?" Dressed in a black robe, Carnot glanced at the duo.

"Are you the bellman, Carnot?" Darkwill asked cautiously.

Carnot chuckled with one corner of his mouth raised while the other stayed low.

"There shouldn't be a second person as ugly as me."

"Indeed." Darkwill nodded very honestly before laughing. "I can tell that you have quite a good state of mind. To be honest, looks don't matter for a man. What's important is their skills in bed."

Tsk, that’s because you haven’t seen ladies who only have fetishes for good looks… Having experienced the era of celebrities of the masses, Klein scoffed from the side.

Carnot’s expression darkened as he said, “I don’t wish to discuss such matters.”

“You have problems in that area? No problem. I have different kinds of medicine that can treat all your problems…” Before Darkwill finished his sentence, Klein took a step forward, afraid that he would end up being beaten to death.

He put half his body between them as he said in a deep voice, “He’s Roy King’s student.”

“I figured. Roy King once described his traits.” Carnot made way and invited the two in.

His room was extremely tiny, with only a single bed and a cabinet which could be used as a dining table. The washroom was at the bottom of the bell tower.

Darkwill pulled out a ring box and handed it to Carnot as he forced a smile.

“My teacher got me to hand this item to you.”

Carnot stole a glance at it and was clearly relieved to see 4 points. He said to Darkwill, “You aren’t as unreliable as your teacher described you to be. I can tell that you didn’t attempt to use it. That would’ve awoken it and make it realize that it’s no longer sealed.”

“…”

The chubby Apothecary’s face blushed red as he honestly said, “That’s because it’s relatively quiet now. In another one to two hours, it will automatically roll itself. It’s best you think of a method to seal it again.”

Carnot's face twitched.

"Again?"

"W-well, I accidentally dropped it on the ground and then i-it came alive…" Darkwill wanted to glance at his owl, Harry, but he realized that it hadn't followed him in. It was perched outside the bell tower to serve as a sentry.

Carnot's eyes clearly widened as his hunched back nearly straightened.

"How did you arrive here?"

From his point of view, Roy King's student should've long died at the whims of the die.

Darkwill hurriedly pointed to Gehrman Sparrow and said, "It's all thanks to this gentleman. He's a powerful adventurer. He provided the most effective protection and a temporary method of sealing the die."

"What method was it?" Carnot blurted out the question.

Klein laughed and replied, "Trade secret."

Carnot's expression changed a few times as he pressed his hand to his chest and bowed.

"I thank you for your help on behalf of my organization."

Darkwill continued, "Hiring him costs 1,000 pounds and a request. The request is to help him find a mystical item with powerful offensive traits but without very serious negative side effects. He will purchase it at a reasonable price.

"Uh, I only had about 300 pounds, so that was all I could pay. I'll have to rely on you to pay the rest…"

Carnot fell silent as the corners of his lips twitched.

"I only have about 100 pounds…"

Suddenly, there was silence in the bellman's room. The wind from outside blew through the cracks and brushed across the three men's face.

Finally, Carnot spoke again.

"Perhaps Councilor Ricciardo has the money. I'll lead you to him."

From the looks of it, he trusts us. After all, a Fate Councilor is in no way comparable to a Die of Probability. If there were really problems with us, there would be no need for us to bring the die over to prevent any accidents and snatch away the Uniqueness… Klein watched as Carnot picked up a lantern from the corner of the room.

At this moment, he secret activated his Spirit Vision and simply scanned the man.

Klein nearly pricked up his brows with the sight. This was because Carnot's aura colors were rather unique.

There were no problems with his emotional colors, as they were very ordinary. However, his Ether Body which represented his body appeared unnatural. His heart was green, his head was purple, and his digestive system was yellow. It felt like they were different parts which were mashed together in great disharmony.

At the same time, Carnot's soul also gave the same feeling.

A monster that was stitched up internally? Klein made a rough judgment based on what he knew.

After Carnot got the lantern, he turned his head to glance at the adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, and said without much of an expression, "I'm very sensitive to Spirit Vision.

"I believe you have noticed certain problems. I'm not a naturally born person. I'm a product of the Church of Earth Mother's attempts to refine the human body. I'm considered a failed specimen, which is why I do not have the ability in that aspect."

His final sentence was directed at Darkwill.

Carnot didn't speak again as he carried the lantern and donned a black robe. He hunched his huge body and used the dim light to walk down the stairs of the dark and silent bell tower.

Product of the Church of Earth Mother's attempts to refine the human body? But St. Draco Cathedral belongs to the Church of Storms… Since it's a failed specimen, no attention is paid to it. Carnot turned his back on the Church of Earth Mother and became a member of the Life School of Thought? This is understandable. Both the Church of Earth Mother and the Life School of Thought hold the Apothecary pathway, and they will definitely have some overlapping… But why would the Life School of Thought send this fellow, that doesn't seem simple to be a bellman, to the Church of Storms? Is it just a normal disguise, or there's a particular connection between the two? Klein followed Carnot in a seemingly calm manner as he walked out the bell tower and circled round to a stone bridge.

Just as he came close to the left side of the bridge, Klein suddenly felt something as he looked diagonally upwards.

The owl, Harry, had flown out as well and landed on a tree branch.

Kacha!

The branch suddenly snapped as Harry plummeted. With great difficulty did it fly up again without falling to the ground.

Darkwill was just about to say something when Carnot explained in a deep voice, "Councilor Ricciardo is injured, so his powers are somewhat out of control. Once anyone enters a specific range, they will be tainted with bad luck."

Carnot stopped in his footsteps as he threw the ring box containing the die under the bridge.

“Mr. Councilor, Roy King’s student has delivered the die.”

“Very good.” A hoarse voice sounded from deep within the bridge’s belly.

A silver scaled palm reached out from the darkness as he held down the ring box which had fallen onto the mud.

Following that, he opened the ring box and took out the milky-white die.

His other hand, which was covered in silver scales, also reached out as he held a piece of a paper-like item made of leather.

The item resembled a water pipe, but its ends were connected. It revealed a grayish-white color under the crimson moonlike. Its surface had many complicated symbols and labels, as well as many words in Hermes text which pointed to the Snake of Mercury, Will Auceptin.

Fate Councilor Ricciardo pulled the item apart and stuffed the Die of Probability into it before connecting the two ends together.

Using fate at a small scale to seal the Die of Probability with periodic boundary conditions, making it remain in a perpetual state of slumber or calm? Indeed, Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin had foreseen such a situation and had made certain preparations… Klein retracted his gaze in relief, and he heard Ricciardo’s hoarse voice.

“I already know of your agreement, Mr. Gehrman Sparrow.

“I will help you find the mystical item after I’ve recovered.

“As for the 700 pounds… I’ll immediately augment you with good luck. Go to the few casinos in Oravi and make some bets and you’ll receive the corresponding reward. Remember, do not win more than 200 pounds at each casino. You must not win more than 700 pounds in total."

Which is to say that you don't have the money either… Seeing how you're hiding while injured, it's considered normal not to have money with you… Klein nodded indiscernibly and said, "Okay."

He waited for about ten seconds without sensing anything. Councilor Ricciardo heaved a sigh of relief and said, "You have become sufficiently lucky."

Is that so? Klein chose to believe him and didn't disturb Darkwill's report to a senior of how his teacher had been imprisoned. Based on Carnot's introduction, he found a nearby casino and sat at the Blackjack table.

After about ten minutes, he walked out of the casino with a blank look.

Not only did he not win money, but he had lost a total of 30 pounds!

What happened to the good luck? Why did I believe him? That darn old man is terrible… Klein didn't hesitate to return to the stone bridge and approached its belly.

"That fast? You have pretty good luck." Ricciardo laughed as he coughed under the dark bridge.

At that moment, Darkwill and Harry had already found a nearby inn to live in.

Klein replied without a change in expression, "I lost."

"Lost…" Ricciardo ruminated over the word and couldn't formulate a sentence for quite a long period of time.

In the dark environment, an ordinary owl nervously flew over.

Chapter 612 - In Hand

◆

The two street lamps on either side of the stone bridge silently illuminated the street, but they were unable to disperse the darkness beneath. Only the crimson moonlight from high above could barely illuminate the brown soil.

Hidden under the bridge, Fate Councilor Ricciardo remained silent for quite a while, making Klein suspect whether he had already passed away due to his heavy injuries. He guessed that a large reason as to why the luck augmentation had failed was because of this.

Just as Klein was about to ask a probing question to determine the situation, Ricciardo coughed and said in a deep, hoarse voice, “You live up to the reputation of being a powerful adventurer capable of temporarily sealing the die…

“What happened has exceeded my expectations. Ahem, I’m very curious as to why my luck augmentation on you had failed.

“I’m very regretful that I can’t come out and meet you in person. Otherwise, I should be able to see what Beyonders from other pathways will find difficult to see, even if they possess relatively powerful Spirit Visions.

“This is the uniqueness that the Fate pathway holds.”

So the problem lies with me? That’s not the point. The point is that you need to reimburse me 700 pounds—No, 730 pounds… Klein cursed as he couldn’t help but recall the orphan, Ademisaul, who had the nickname of Monster in Tingen City.

The young man who was equal to half a Sequence 9 had cried out after seeing Klein before falling to the ground. His eyes bled, and the fear he exhibited was as if he had seen a devil.

This is because of the uniqueness of the Wheel of Fortune's path of the divine, so he saw something wrong with me. He saw something related to the gray fog? Unfortunately, this Fate Councilor is quite heavily injured and has a domain of bad luck around him. There's no way for him to help inspect me… I should ask Snake of Fate Will Auceptin when I'm back. Perhaps he might know something. However, this pathway does have the bearing of a charlatan. He might not directly answer me and has a high chance of answering in vague terms… Klein maintained his expressionless attitude and said, "Then, what do you plan on doing?"

Ricciardo sighed and said, "Get Darkwill here. I'll augment him with good luck and get him to win the money at the casinos on your behalf."

Using the name of the inn Councilor Ricciardo gave, Klein quickly found the chubby Apothecary, Darkwill. Then, while carrying the suitcase and cane, Klein watched as he kept winning money at the major casinos. By midnight, he had already won 750 pounds.

After receiving the remaining 730 pounds, Klein realized a problem.

The reason for the luck augmentation's failure was because of him!

Why is that so? Klein held close his bulging wallet and frowned as he thought silently to himself.

He quickly thought of the thin, invisible grayish-white fog around him and realized the reason.

After advancing to Faceless, the gray fog has integrated with reality to a certain extent. Not only can it help me screen off ravings that aren't too powerful, but it can also destroy any influence that changes my fate to a certain extent? Therefore, this councilor's luck augmentation was ineffective?

According to this logic, bad luck to a certain extent shouldn't affect me either.

Heh, what the heck? It doesn't make me become some unlucky fool, but it also destroys my chance of being a lucky man or winner… Klein secretly shook his head and followed Darkwill and the owl back to the stone bridge. He informed Ricciardo of how to summon his messenger and to immediately send him news once he obtained any information on a mystical item with powerful offensive traits.

After doing all of this, Klein found an inn at the Oravi Island's port city and got a simple room for himself.

†

Backlund. In the morning.

Emlyn White walked under his favorite gloomy skies, moving through the thick fog that couldn't be compared to those in November or December as he once again arrived outside North Borough's 7 Pinster Street.

After pulling the doorbell, he straightened his back as he lifted his chin and waited patiently.

When Leonard opened the door, he looked at the handsome but detestable face before making way and allowing the visitor to enter.

He was still dressed in his home wear, comprising of a white shirt and black trousers. However, he had an additional dark-colored vest draped over him.

"Have you considered the matter?" Leonard asked with a smile.

"No problem." Since it wasn't his money, Emlyn had no intention to haggle.

He even believed that with the attitude displayed by Leonard, there was a high chance of having the price raised if he tried.

Leonard gently nodded and smiled.

“Very rich.”

I can tell that you’re trying to lead me to say more… Emlyn silently scoffed and replied, “That’s not something you need to concern yourself with.”

With that said, he raised the suitcase in his hand and opened it, revealing 7,000 pounds in cash.

Leonard took out each stack of cash and thoroughly checked it carefully.

Then, he pulled off the red glove he wore on his left hand and handed it to Emlyn.

“This is the mystical item you require. It can change colors to disguise itself.

“It’s called Tinder. It can raise the wearer’s charm, making his words be equipped with great persuasiveness. It can steal the Beyonder power of a target within 50 meters. The more you understand the target, the easier it is to steal the power you wish to steal. The less you know, the more random it becomes, and it relies on luck.

“When the target is at Sequence 6, there is a chance of failure. The higher the Sequence, the higher the chance of failure.

“After the theft succeeds, the target will lose that Beyonder power, and it will take at least twelve hours to recover. The owner of Tinder will be able to use it adeptly for ten minutes.

“And the reason why it’s expensive is because it has very few negative side effects."

Emlyn, who silently took in the introduction, had his interest piqued by a mystical item like Tinder. He asked, "What are its negative side effects?"

Leonard combed his hair and smiled.

"First, when wearing it, there is a small probability of losing something on you. Second, when using it, a particular Beyonder power belonging to you will be lost for at least twelve hours, but during this period, it will be the only Beyonder power lost. In other words, even if it's used repeatedly, there will only be one power lost the entire time."

"Compared to the many Sealed Artifacts I know of, its negative side effects are indeed trivial." Emlyn cleared his throat as he nodded.

He received Tinder and checked it carefully before taking out the stacks of cash from the suitcase and placing them on the coffee table.

Following that, he placed the glove into the suitcase and didn't take it with him directly.

With the suitcase, Emlyn returned to the Harvest Church just like he did before. Once he entered the priest's break room, he set up a sacrificial ritual.

The illusory and mysterious door opened as the red glove tore through the dark and deep void as it was sent directly above the gray fog.

At the moment the gray fog made contact with the glove, a tiny, distorted, terrifying face suddenly appeared.

It kept evaporating as it struggled to sustain itself.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein wasn't surprised. After all, the Grandpa residing in Leonard's body was an angel of the Marauder pathway. If Amon could do it, it was quite certain that "He" was capable of doing the same.

For this, he had made sufficient preparations. He believed that even if the Grandpa had really reached Amon's level, he was able to wipe out the corresponding aura without making him sense the existence of the gray fog, making him take action on Emlyn.

Picking up the Sea God Scepter, which had long been placed in front of him, Klein made the blue "gems" light up at the same time from a commanding position.

Suddenly, silver light bloomed above the gray fog as the lightning carried portions of the gray fog's powers like a storm, zapping the tiny illusory face.

The face dissipated completely before it could even cry out, leaving behind a dead translucent worm with twelve transparent rings.

Worm of Time… but it seems weaker than Amon… Klein muttered as he beckoned with his hand for the red glove and familiar worm to fly to him.

After some serious scrutiny, he confirmed that the worm was basically identical to the one Amon's avatar had left behind.

My dear poet's Grandpa is of the same Sequence as Amon? Sequence 1? No, not necessarily. Perhaps this is a unique trait of one of the earlier Sequences…

If—if it's really a Sequence 1, the notion that Amon is the son of the Creator and a King of Angels makes it possible that he has fused with the Uniqueness or has another Sequence 1 characteristic… Klein made a guess, but he was unable to verify it.

As for what the dead Worm of Time could be used for, or when its spirituality would completely dissipate, he could only throw it into the junk pile due to his lack of the corresponding knowledge.

†

7 Pinster Street, Backlund.

Leonard Mitchell sat on the sofa with his eyes tightly closed. His legs were propped up on the coffee table as though he was using a short nap to make up for an entire night of being awake.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly opened his eyes and said with a suppressed voice, “What happened? Have you determined the true buyer of Tinder?”

An elderly voice rang out in his mind.

“The aura I left behind has been eliminated, completely eliminated.”

“Did you discover anything?” Leonard retracted his feet as he asked in a deep voice.

The ancient voice sighed.

“Nothing.

“Everything was over before I could react.

“If I were in my best state, I might’ve been able to grasp the relevant clues. Unfortunately, I’ve remained in a weak state for years.”

Leonard remained silent for more than ten seconds before he shook his head.

“Then we’ll temporarily treat it as if this never happened.”

†

Above the gray fog, Klein listened to Emlyn’s report and took note of the information regarding the mystical item. He fiddled with the glove named Tinder as he examined it.

“Heh heh, this way, I’ll have a glove for my right hand,” he chuckled as he muttered to himself.

After serious consideration, Klein abandoned the thought of immediately extracting the mental corruption of the True Creator from the All-Black Eye. This was to ensure his success, hoping to leave the chance to the moment when he was concocting the Marionettist potion. According to the records of the City of Silver, even without the gray fog’s screening, there were no problems with such a procedure. Furthermore, with the gray fog, there wouldn’t be any additional accidents, even if it were the mental corruption left behind by the True Creator.

I can also use Tinder normally. Yes, when I need to use it, I have to put my cash, pocket watch, and other mystical items above the gray fog. I mustn’t let any item become lost… In fact, even if I don’t do so, the problem isn’t too great. I’m a Seer. Do I need to be afraid of not being able to find things I dropped? Heh heh. In a normal battle, I’ll have Creeping Hunger on my left hand and Tinder on my right. Just the thought of it sounds formidable… Klein reined in his thoughts and discovered that everything related to the Sequence 5 Marionettist potion was ready, apart from the two commonly seen supplementary ingredients.

He nodded indiscernibly and muttered silently to himself, I just need to wait for the Faceless potion to be completely digested!

Then, I’ll board the ship of Admiral of Stars or The Hanged Man and head east of the Sonia Sea to find mermaids.

Chapter 613 - Leonard's Investigation

◆ ◆ ◆

Loen Kingdom, East Chester County, Stoen City.

Having left the manor, Audrey moved into a villa. After she finished engaging in social gatherings with the local nobles, she sent her servant to the Varvat Bank to withdraw a sum of cash.

She didn't need to worry about this any further. She could easily pay off the 2,000 pounds she owed Mr. Fool's Blessed, and she could also pay the 1,800 pounds she owed Mr. World for the Psychiatrist characteristic.

Fifteen minutes later, Audrey opened the room to her bedroom and glanced at her personal maidservant, Annie, who was monitoring the servants while they did their work. She looked down at the golden retriever who was sitting by the side of the wall and smiled. With a smile, she suppressed her voice and asked with shining eyes, "Susie, you'll receive a gift in a while. Are you looking forward to it?"

If it were in the past, Audrey would've definitely said, "Susie, your present is here," making the golden retriever realize that she could find the actual item in the room as well. Otherwise, it was very easy for Susie, who had been studying the basics of mysticism, to guess that Audrey had used ritualistic magic.

With this new sentence structure, the situation could have Audrey receive a mysterious letter or news in her bedroom to confirm that the gift was about to be delivered. There would be too many possibilities as a result of this.

Susie could read the joy and sincere attitude deep inside Audrey's heart as she subconsciously opened her mouth, hoping to stir the air to produce a voice. She had wanted to inquire about the gift, but she sharply sensed that Audrey's personal maid, Annie, was approaching. The alert Suzie abandoned her original thoughts.

She returned to the state of being an ordinary dog as she slowly wagged her tail to express her joy and anticipation.

After making an excuse to head out, Audrey entered a "chemistry laboratory" that she had specially marked out for herself. She placed the Psychiatrist characteristic and supplementary ingredients on the table.

"Susie, do you still remember the potion-concocting process?" She cleared her throat and straightened her back as she excitedly played the role of a teacher.

"Woof, I remember!" Susie already knew what her present was. In her joy, she barked.

Audrey added, "Try to concoct it by yourself."

Susie looked down at her paws and suddenly fell silent.

Audrey was taken aback before a brief silence ensued.

A few seconds later, before the golden retriever could speak, Audrey covered her mouth without any atypical response and giggled.

"Alright, Susie, there's no need to say a word. I know what you wish to say. You wish to express the fact that you're only a dog and am unable to concoct the potion, right?"

How embarrassing… At the same time, Audrey, who wore a charming and graceful external bearing, facepalmed herself inwardly.

"Woof!" Susie nodded forcefully.

Audrey took the opportunity and turned around. Soon, she finished concocting the Psychiatrist potion.

She had previously asked Susie and learned that she had already finished digesting the potion on Wednesday.

That's less than two months… Yes, a large reason has to do with how Susie isn't being noticed. She can run about anywhere in the manor or villa and eavesdrop, allowing her to read the true thoughts of the maidservants… That's good as well. She will always share the tidbits with me. If not for her, I wouldn't have known of the dark sides of many people who appear normal and kind usually… Audrey poured the potion into a bowl and placed it on the floor.

She watched as Susie went over and began licking the potion as she couldn't curb the anticipation in her heart.

Susie might be influenced by the potion and become unstable.

But it's alright. Psychiatrist Miss Audrey is already prepared to use Placate at any moment! Yes, I prefer the name Psychoanalysis. That sounds more professional.

Audrey stared at Susie with her beautiful emerald-like eyes with great seriousness and discovered that Susie's pupils were gradually fading and turning vertical. Dark gold scales seemed to grow beneath her thick fur, and the spirituality that belonged to Susie kept radiating outwards as though it was interweaving with the entire villa's space.

After calming her somewhat nervous emotions, Audrey scrutinized Susie's state. As long as something abnormal happened to Susie, she would immediately use the Beyonder power, Psychoanalysis.

Suddenly, Susie's voice sounded out in her ears.

"Audrey, I'm done!"

"…"

Audrey was temporarily at a loss on what to say.

†

In her dream, Daisy returned to East Borough and to the old apartment she had lived in for years.

She pushed open the door and saw her mother, Liz, and her sister, Freja, doing the laundry diligently.

Daisy instantly became delighted and was just about to join them. She was in charge of ironing the laundry.

At this moment, she heard knocking at the door.

She turned her head and realized that the visitor was a young man in a black-and-white checkered police uniform.

The officer had black hair and green eyes, with a somewhat blurry face. He held a notebook and fountain pen as he asked, “In the Capim case, apart from what you mentioned, is there anything else you didn’t mention to us?”

“It’s all nothing important,” Daisy answered in a rather groggy manner.

The handsome officer looked down at his notebook and said, “It’s fine. I’m willing to listen.”

Daisy looked back at the clothes which were hung up, feeling as though she had forgotten some instructions.

She honestly described all sorts of trivialities. In the end, she said, “… After I was abducted, my mother and sister had hired a private detective to search for me. His name is Mr. Sherlock Moriarty. He’s a good man. Although he didn’t find me directly, he later contacted a reporter to help me get compensated with the foundation money…”

The black-haired and green-eyed officer looked up again and glanced at

Daisy before revealing a warm smile.

“Very good. Your answer is very satisfactory.

“Do you still remember the private detective’s appearance?”

Daisy nodded. Without any alarm, she saw Mr. Sherlock Moriarty standing beside her.

The detective had grown a thick beard and wore gold-rimmed glasses. It was almost identical to the one in her memories.

After the black-haired, green-eyed officer sized up the image a few times, he seemed to vanish at some point in time without Daisy realizing it. For some reason, her mother and sister had also vanished.

She ran through East Borough in search of the familiar figures, but she ultimately woke up from her depression and sorrow. When she saw the dark ceiling of her school dormitory, she lay there in a daze for seconds.

Daisy didn’t make a sound as she turned her body and buried half her face into the pillow.

By the corners of the pillow, a wet stain gradually spread out.

The person who had entered Daisy’s dream was none other than Leonard Mitchell. Although his investigation of the commonalities of the two cases was to give him time to deal with matters of his own, he didn’t forget to act in a perfunctory manner. In the end, he really discovered a problem.

In the cases of Lanevus and Capim, a private detective named Sherlock Moriarty was involved, including his friend, Reporter Mike Joseph… Although they had only appeared on the outskirts of this matter, it’s also a direction for the investigation. heh, that Sherlock Moriarty looks somewhat familiar. Which fugitive is he? Leonard recalled what he had seen in the dream as he wore his red glove and entered the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Just as he greeted the team captain, Soest, he saw a partner approach and hand him two thin sheets of paper.

“The information regarding the red-eyed man from the Harvest Church is all here.”

“Thank you. Do you want to have lunch together?” Leonard asked with a smile.

The Nighthawk shrugged and said, “No, as long as you stop making me have nightmares.”

“Deal.” Leonard smiled as he received the dossier.

He stood there without being in a hurry to sit down as he casually browsed through it.

“Emlyn White. A vampire. Currently under the jurisdiction of the Church of Earth Mother… He once vanished for a period of time. His parents had hired private detectives to find him. Thanks to a particular Mr. Stuart, this matter was ultimately resolved by the famous detective, Sherlock Moriarty.”

Leonard’s smile gradually froze as his expression turned serious.

Sherlock Moriarty? he repeated this name in his mind.

†

Klein wasn’t in a rush to find an opportunity to engage in true acting. He toured Oravi Island’s port city with the mindset of a tourist, finding a brief and rare moment of relaxation in his tense life.

This city had mostly immigrants from Loen. The cuisine wasn’t much different from the east coast of the kingdom, with the only difference being that there were rare fruits and all sorts of seafood here. It was also quite a unique trait of the city.

This place was rich in natural resources and was located in a key location on the safe sea routes. The standard of living was pretty good. Even the farmers in the suburbs could save up some money through their fruit gardens.

This didn't mean that Oravi didn't have poor people or the lower-class. This class was mainly made up of people who were former slaves. Loen's parliament had long abolished slavery.

After chewing a juicy and sweet fruit, Klein watched the sky turn dark. He took a turn at the corner of the street and entered a bar named Sweet Lemon.

It was a famous gathering place for adventurers in Oravi. Klein planned on buying the two remaining supplementary ingredients of a Marionettist—the relatively common drago tree bark and Sonia Golden Spring water.

At this moment, the bar was rather lively. There were many people holding up cups around the boxing ring as they cheered loudly. There were people who looked like adventurers at the surrounding tables. They were discussing all kinds of rumors in hushed tones.

Just as Klein was squeezing towards the bar counter, he suddenly heard his name.

"…I'm Gehrman Sparrow. You should know who I am. I received a treasure map and need to hire some helpers. It's not because I'm afraid, but it's because I can't carry that much treasure alone…" A green-eyed man in his thirties held half a glass of liquor and spoke to two men and two women in the corner. It was a mystery if they were merchants or adventurers.

You are also named Gehrman Sparrow? Treasure map… Why does it sound like a scam… My killing of Wormtongue has already reached this place from Bayam? Yes, it was likely communicated via a telegram or visitors. Therefore, many people know of my name and deeds but do not know what I look like… Cheats are using this opportunity to pass themselves off as me to cheat others… Klein moved over as he came to a realization.

The green-eyed man drank a mouthful of liquor and slammed the glass onto the table.

“I don’t mind whether you refuse or agree, but I hate it when people make me wait!

“Do you wish to be like Wormtongue?”

The young man opposite him said slightly intimidated, “I know you’re a powerful adventurer…”

“So?” The green-eyed man cut off the man’s words.

At that moment, he felt his collar tighten as he was lifted up by someone and thrown out the door.

Klein didn’t provide an explanation as he directly threw the man out of the door with a stoic expression.

Then, he drew his revolver and aimed it at the spot where the man had fallen to the ground. He pulled the trigger without any hesitation.

Bang!

Just as the green-eyed man fell to the ground, he saw a spark light up at the ground near his crotch. He was so frightened that he swallowed back his cursing and scrambled away.

Without any explanation, his weak performance proved that he wasn’t Gehrman Sparrow.

Klein ignored the victim who stood there in a daze. He politely blew at the mouth of his revolver before stuffing it back into his underarm holster.

Following that, he walked slowly to the bar counter in the resulting silent atmosphere.

Chapter 614 - Adventurer Association

◆

Klein sat in front of the bar counter and slammed his fist onto the counter.

“One glass of Southville beer.”

Behind him, a few bouncers hesitated about whether to come over to give him a warning or pretend that no one had fired a shot.

The bartender signaled to the bouncers with his eyes as he picked up a glass and chuckled.

“Why don’t you try a cup of Sweet Lemon?

“Our boss once went to Trier to learn cocktail mixing. He has mastered many of the cocktail recipes left behind by Emperor Roselle, and he has created the most popular Sweet lemon in Oravi on his own.”

Klein wasn’t moved as he calmly replied, “I only drink beer.”

“Alright.” the bartender wasn’t in a rush to get the bottle of Southville beer as he said with a smile, “Sir, are you an adventurer?”

Klein nodded without saying an answer.

The bartender didn’t hesitate as he said with a smile, “Perhaps you should meet our boss. He’s very friendly to new adventurers and is willing to treat them to drinks. Besides, there will be some aid offered to you.”

Klein, who had come with the intention of purchasing the supplementary ingredients of a Marionettist, didn't reject the offer. He took out a brass penny and flicked it before catching it firmly.

He placed the penny on the bar counter as a tip to thank the bartender for the information before slowly standing up and walking to the second floor under the lead of a bouncer, where he entered a room at the other end of the corridor.

The room was covered with thick, brownish-yellow, soft carpet. There was a faint smell of high-quality coal burning, mixed with the aroma of a cigar.

A middle-aged man with his blond hair combed neatly backwards was leaning on a reclining chair, sucking at his cigar as he read the papers. Surrounding him were six bodyguards.

Although Klein wasn't a Beyonder of the Spectator domain, and he was unable to determine any unique traits or the strength of these bodyguards, nor was he from the Mystery Pryer or Monster pathway, he could see certain secrets. He could notice things others wouldn't be able to discover, but his spiritual intuition made him believe that these bodyguards were definitely Beyonders, Beyonders who could threaten him to a certain extent.

The middle-aged man put down the newspaper and pulled at the collars of his black shirt before slowly standing up. He extended his right hand and said, "Welcome to Oravi, my adventurer friend."

His blue eyes had a smile to them as he looked rather sincere.

Klein extended his right palm and smacked palms with him without a word. He was waiting for the man to speak.

The middle-aged man pointed to a sofa opposite the reclining chair and chuckled.

"I'm the boss here, Bilt Brando.

"I was once an adventurer with quite considerable strength. I've lived to this day and have earned quite a bit."

He's very confident with his strength; thus, daring to directly say it… Klein didn't stand on ceremony as he sat down. He leaned his body slightly forward as he expressionlessly waited for Bilt to begin talking.

Seeing no response from the adventurer, Bilt sat down again and sucked at his cigar before leisurely saying, "To be honest, there's a motive behind me meeting with every new adventurer."

He pointed to the sea map on the desk in the table. He said with a magnetic tone, "East from the Rorsted Archipelago is where the sea gets progressively messier. The strength of the military and Church begin to dwindle, to the point of them only being able to protect their own harbors.

"The sea around here is a pirate playground, extremely disadvantageous to us adventurers. Therefore, I wish to organize everyone to form a loosely connected alliance, so that we can band together when faced with danger.

"This alliance doesn't have any strong binding terms. You can choose to turn a blind eye when other adventurers encounter danger, and no one will punish you. However, if you were to encounter a similar situation, don't hope for help to be provided.

"In addition, I can promise one point: adventurers of the alliance will be able to get the prices of the lowest nature when purchasing items from me. When selling their spoils, they will at least get market price."

After finishing the description, Bilt smiled at the new adventurer. He chuckled and asked, "What do you think of it? Are you interested in joining this loose alliance? Don't worry. You won't need to make any additional payment. Our purpose is only to render assistance when faced with pirates."

Klein nodded.

“It sounds pretty good.”

“Haha, I think so too. I once thought of naming this association the Adventuring Brotherhood, but I felt that brotherhood is overly constrained, so I changed it to Adventurer Association,” Bilt said in a self-deprecating manner.

Having said that, he lowered his hand with the cigar and smacked his lips. He shook his head and smiled.

“Sorry, I forgot to ask your name.”

Klein maintained his posture and replied in a deep voice, “Gehrman Sparrow.”

“Gehrman Sparrow…” Bilt’s eyelids jumped as his smile instantly stiffened. The guards around him clearly tensed up as though they were facing a formidable enemy.

Bilt rapidly composed himself and didn’t verify whether he was the real Gehrman Sparrow or a cheat who was only passing off as Gehrman Sparrow. He chuckled and said, “Is there anything you wish to buy? I have quite a lot of good stuff over here.”

“Sonia’s Golden Spring water,” Klein said with a calm expression while inwardly feeling cautious.

He didn’t mention the drago tree bark since there was a high chance of buying the ingredient at herb stores.

Bilt Brando heaved a sigh of relief and smiled.

“Easy.

“30 pounds for 100 ml.

“Trust me. Even if you head to Sonia Island, it will only be a few pounds cheaper than this price. Those barbarians from Feysac have sealed off the fountain's source, so it's difficult for others to get any of it."

"Deal." Klein had a rough idea of the price of the Golden Spring water, and he knew that 30 pounds for 100 ml was indeed rather cheap.

After completing the deal, Bilt was just about to speak after some deliberation when he suddenly heard knocking.

After receiving his permission, a bouncer entered and leaned over, whispering into his ear.

Bilt's expression instantly sank as his entire person appeared abnormally cold. He suffused an indescribable killing intent.

Indeed, he has quite impressive strength. If he wasn't a famous adventurer in the past, he was a famous pirate… He should be a Mid-Sequence Beyonder… Klein looked at him as he calmly made an assessment.

Bilt turned his head and said to Klein with some difficulty, "Mr. Sparrow, I have matters to tend to.

"We can have drinks together if the opportunity arises."

"Okay." Klein slowly got up, without any intention of involving himself in Bilt's matters.

Of course, this didn't mean that he wasn't curious, but curiosity was never something that could change the way he did things.

After leaving Sweet Lemon, Klein successfully returned to his inn.

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City of Silver, "daytime" which was marked by frequent lightning.

After Derrick Berg finished practicing all the different Beyonder powers of Solar High Priest, he followed the edge of the training field and headed for the twin towers.

After numerous Tarot Gatherings, he gradually gained an understanding of the pattern and roughly knew the frequency of the alternating lightning before he would be pulled above the gray fog by Mr. Fool.

And now was the final “day.”

Because of this, he had to go to the library to read through historical information involving ancient gods, so as to offer them to Mr. Fool.

After passing through the partitioned area of the training field, Derrick subconsciously looked inside and saw exploration members resting inside. It was the exploration team led by the six-member council’s chief, Colin Iliad!

They had recently finished the exploration based on the information they had received from Jack, and they had returned to the City of Silver where they were now in quarantine.

Derrick retracted his gaze with a somewhat heavy heart as he went all the way to the steeple and went to the third floor where the library was.

He was just about to walk to the bookshelf that held all the ancient books on legends when he caught a familiar figure through the corner of his eye.

It was a fair and beautiful woman in her thirties. She wore a long black robe embroidered with mysterious purple patterns. Her curly silvery-gray hair cascaded down.

She was none other than the elder of the six-member council who had been imprisoned for a prolonged period of time, Lovia Tiffany!

She swept her faint gray eyes over as Derrick felt his soul being penetrated. He couldn’t help but stiffen for a second.

“Greetings, Elder Lovia.” He hurriedly lowered his head as he pressed his hand to his chest.

Lovia walked over and nodded gently.

“I’ve been removed from quarantine.”

She turned and left after calmly saying that, as though she was making an announcement.

Derrick stood on the spot as a layer of cold sweat seeped out from his back.

Why has she been released? The six-member council has already determined that she’s alright? Derrick thought as his nerves tensed up in an abnormal fashion.

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Monday afternoon, above the gray fog.

Klein placed his elbows on the armrest as he crossed his fingers and watched as beams of crimson light lit up before receding into blurry figures.

Then, he heard Miss Justice’s brisk greeting.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~”

Chapter 615 - Grayish-white Fog

◆

While Miss Justice was doing the greetings, The Hermit Cattleya maintained her silence as she observed as she did before. She didn't involve herself in matters, as though she was an outsider at this gathering.

She watched as Miss Justice and Miss Magician conjured their Roselle diary pages to pay off their previous debts. Then, she carefully glanced at Mr. Fool without daring to look straight at him. Yet, she still wasn't able to see further through the special gray fog. Her dark purple eyes were only capable of seeing clothes that were definitely conjured.

With the three pages of Roselle's diary, Klein wasn't in a rush to read it like before. After all, he had already interacted and used a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact and knew what a Uniqueness of a Beyonder pathway looked like. He had even intimidated such a divine artifact, so he believed that regardless of Emperor Roselle's content, there was nothing that could shock him greatly.

Unless he was given a Demoness Blessing by some powerhouse with a unique ability and temporarily became a woman… Klein joked inwardly as he surveyed the long bronze table in interest.

Eh, Ma'am Hermit's curiosity is different from Miss Justice and company's. She pays great attention to the matter of Roselle's diary? Klein retracted his gaze and took note of this discovery. Then, he casually read the yellowish-brown goatskin.

"22nd April. We plan on entering, to explore the Abyss."

"23rd April. We followed the pitch-black ocean, passed through the liquid-like fog, and arrived at the mountain peak that resembled a monster. Behind it was endless black fog. It seemed to blanket an entire continent.

"However, looking at the bottom of the peak makes it seem endless and without limit. I had joked with Edwards that if I were to commit suicide by jumping off that cliff, I might never fall to the ground, forever in a state of falling."

Upon seeing this, Klein nearly pricked up his brows. He couldn't believe that Roselle would dare to organize his own knights and sailors to explore the periphery of the region after seeing the Abyss.

Isn't he afraid of dying? Legend has it that it's a place that can corrupt everything, causing all life to perish! At this stage, Roselle definitely hadn't reached Sequence 4, and he wasn't a demigod. He was at best a Sequence 5, or even lower… If it were me, I definitely would've turned the boat around and reported it to the Church… In that instant, Klein gained a deep understanding of the huge difference between him and Roselle.

In addition, Roselle's description of the Abyss's periphery had reminded Klein of the mysterious stone doors of Amon's mausoleum. A similar scene had appeared after the Church of Steam and Machinery's Archbishop Horamick's puppet made contact with it.

I wonder what Roselle discovered there… At the very least, he didn't die from his exploration. He still had an exciting life after that… Klein moved his gaze down and read the remaining content on the diary page.

"24th April. We proceeded down the peak in an attempt to probe deeper.

"The thick black fog is biting cold, as though it can erode flesh and the soul. Haha, luckily, the Dark King I'm onboard has certain items that resist this corruption, or I'll suspect that me and my Knights of the Apocalypse will become members of Farron's[1] Undead Legion.

"It's very quiet, and we didn't discover anything."

"25th April. We saw devils, but they were in the form of rotting corpses.

"Behind the black, jagged mountain, below a slush-filled opening that one cannot call a path, there were different devil corpses that were either in normal or unimaginable places.

"It was as though they had all been killed at the same moment."

"26th April. Either corpses or silence; there's no end up ahead.

"The items on the Dark King has begun to show signs of corruption.

"I've seldom had fear over the past few years, but here, that fear of the unknown is like an invisible hand that clasps my heart tightly.

"I have to leave! I have to return! I can't stay here any longer!"

What happened after this? Emperor Roselle was very successful in escaping the Abyss's periphery, or did he encounter something else? What does the abnormality over there symbolize? An intense battle? Klein subconsciously had some sense of anticipation as he flipped to the second page, only to be let down that it wasn't connected.

"8th May. My beloved Bernadette is almost two. The older she grows, the more likable she is. She's indeed a young lady who doesn't let down the excellent genes of her mother and I.

"Hearing her clearly call me daddy and seeing her bubbly figure, I suddenly felt a sense of satisfaction.

"Ever since I transmigrated to this world, I've done many things. I can say that some aren't honorable, but I've not felt any shame about it, nor have I ever regretted it. On the one hand, this has to do with me finding it very difficult to curb my desires, making it easy for me to be influenced by my environment. Heh heh, I have to thank fate that I've not met a Desire Apostle from the Devil pathway. According to the records, I would definitely succumb to Beyonders of this Sequence. I might even be instantly killed.

"On the other hand, I still have a sense of alienation from this world. My parents in this world are very nice to me. I've also worked hard to make them proud, but I know that my feelings for them aren't substantial. Similarly, this is how I treat Matilda. It's more a possessive instinct rather than love.

"I have to admit that my mental state is like playing a role-playing game in virtual reality. My parents, brothers, and friends are all non-playable characters. I can devote some of my feelings to them, but never anything serious. Therefore, I can join all kinds of corrupted gatherings without any sense of guilt. I can face people I know well in a cold, ruthless manner. It's just like when I played The Elder Scrolls. I could slaughter an entire village just for a chicken.

"But after Bernadette was born, I realized that I had an additional sense of belonging to this world. I was no longer as estranged from it.

"This is my child, a living child of mine.

"Perhaps this is what so-called maturity is?"

Without children, it's impossible to realize this feeling. No, I don't even have a girlfriend… However, I have to be alert about this state of mind that's mentioned in this entry… It might not exist in the past, but it doesn't mean it wouldn't appear in the future. The higher the Sequence, the greater one's godhood is than their humanity… Klein sighed silently as he flipped to the third diary page.

"6th January, a brand new year, a brand new beginning.

"After advancing to Artisan, I finally have the powers to do that thing!

"That is to create the mysterious silver plate in my memories. There is a high chance that my transmigration was a result of it!

“In fact, after I became a Savant, I could already recall its appearance, as well as the strange symbols and patterns on its surface. But the past me could clearly sense that I wasn’t able to replicate something like that.”

“9th January. I finally succeeded after repeated failures.

“Holding the silver plate filled with special symbols and patterns, I tried hard to inject my spirituality in a bid to activate it.

“An endless grayish-white fog seemed to surface before my eyes, but nothing happened.

“Is it a problem with the material, or am I lacking certain requisites?”

“10th January. According to my recollections of my transmigration experience, I restored my past state, believing that I no longer lacked anything. However, the mysterious silver plate only showed me the strange gray fog. It wasn’t able to help me do anything.

“Since this doesn’t work, how did I succeed in my transmigration back then?

“I temporarily gave up on my attempts, and I destroyed the silver plate I created. Perhaps when I’m a High-Sequence Beyonder and become a demigod, I will have a way to interpret those patterns and symbols to figure out the truth behind my transmigration.

“Yes, I’ll definitely become a demigod! I’m the protagonist of this era!”

Grayish-white fog? The Emperor saw an endless grayish-white fog after replicating the mysterious silver plate from Earth! Klein’s eyes suddenly shrank when he read the diary entry.

There happened to be an immutable endless gray fog beneath his feet!

Could it be that our transmigrations have to do with this mysterious space? But why is the Emperor unable to enter, but I can? According to the Emperor's diary entries of the last few stages of his life, he definitely didn't crack the mystery of the silver plate. Otherwise, he wouldn't have not thought of this place when he was in his moment of great despair and mania. He wouldn't have not used this place as his crutch… Klein raised his head as his gaze landed outside the ancient palace.

He recalled that deep in this mysterious space, there was a staircase of light that seemed to lead to heaven. It seemed to correspond to his Sequence.

The staircase appeared to be built for giants, and its destination was the gray fog which seemed to support something that stood in midair.

The secret of our transmigration lies there? Klein made the diary pages in his hand vanish before he leaned back into his chair and said with a normal tone, "You may begin."

Derrick originally wished to bring forward his request to purchase the Sequence 6 potion formula after Solar High Priest, but Elder Lovia's release made him temporarily abandon his plans. He couldn't wait to mention everything that had happened, wishing to obtain the necessary guidance.

Considering how this was still the transaction segment, he held back his desire as he waited in silence.

There's something on Little Sun's mind… Something unexpected happened in the City of Silver? Audrey thoughtfully retracted her gaze and similarly didn't request to purchase anything.

At this moment, Alger surveyed the area and voiced out.

"I need the potion formula of Ocean Songster."

Indeed, he's already a Sequence 6, a Wind-blessed… Isn't he someone from the Church of Storms? Why is he looking for the Ocean Songster's potion formula elsewhere? Obtaining it internally from the Church is a lot easier… He has secrets he wishes to keep from the Church of Storms, or was he just pretending to be someone from the Church of Storms? Cattleya instantly had many theories as she gently took note.

“I can help you take note.”

Upon noticing The Hermit’s response, Alger asked, “Ma’am, is there anything you need?

“I can search for clues ahead of time, so as to trade for the potion formula.”

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Author’s Note: A meme involving Dark Souls III. Farron’s Undead Legion, also known as the Abyss Watchers, who were corrupted by the Abyss.

Chapter 616 - Silver Lining

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What do I need? Cattleya silently chuckled, having sensed that The Hanged Man was probing her with a very ordinary question.

Any needs meant clues!

Ignoring the fact that I've already obtained the potion formula for Sequence 4 Mysticologist of the Mystery Pryer pathway, and accumulating points for one of the main ingredients, even without anything, I have no lack of corresponding resource channels, and far more than one… Cattleya had another thought as she recalled the Sea God Scepter which Mr. Fool wielded. She then smiled and said, "I need a mystical item at the demigod level. The kind with acceptable side effects."

At that instant, Alger nearly retorted, asking her not to crack a joke.

Even in the Church of Storms, one wasn't necessarily capable of obtaining a similar item for years, much less a Beyonder who was obviously only a Mid-Sequence Beyonder!

If I had an item at the demigod level without any real negative side effects, why wouldn't I keep it for my own use? Alger knew that The Hermit was using mockery to respond to his attempt at sounding her out, but he wasn't as irascible as his peers. He slowly took a deep breath and said, "I'll keep an eye out.

"But Ma'am, you should know very well that just an effective clue towards such an item might be enough to cover the cost of an Ocean

Songster's potion formula."

…Very staid. Not easily angered. This is very different from the usual style of the Church of Storms… Was the conclusion of my first observation wrong? He's only disguising himself as a priest of the Storm? No, I can't think of it that way. This might also be because he doesn't dare to flare up under Mr. Fool's watch. Or perhaps, he's just an odd one out in the Church of Storms. There might not be many, but it's not extremely rare… Cattleya wasn't greedy. She didn't sound him out a second time as she nodded.

"I know."

As the conversation between the two came to an end, no one made any requests during the transaction segment. A number of members already had the means to obtain whatever they needed, so there was no need to make any requests for purchases. It was mainly Audrey and Fors who were waiting for the subsequent potion formulas. Another reason stemmed from their financial situation or circumstances, and they weren't able to make any early expenditures. This included Emlyn, who was filled with desire for the Sanguine's Viscount inheritance, as well as Miss Magician who wanted a mystical item.

Indeed, as everyone slowly cast off their statuses as Low-Sequence Beyonders, advancements are no longer that fast. The rate of transactions will also rapidly drop. In the past, there was basically one or two deals every week, but now, it might be two to three weeks. In the future, it might even be three to four months… Without knowing whether it was for the better or worse, Klein nodded gently to indicate that it was time to engage in the free exchange.

Audrey looked at Derrick and waited for him to describe the unexpected situation at the City of Silver.

Derrick didn't let her "expectations" down. Before anyone could speak, he earnestly said, "Elder Lovia has been released. I encountered her at the library."

Shepherd Lovia has been released? Using flesh and blood, the entire team that she led was corrupted by the True Creator, so how can she be without any problems? What is the six-member council thinking? Klein originally wanted to say something along the lines of—"if there's nothing wrong with Lovia, I'll chop off my head and gift it to the True Creator to be kicked like a ball." However, considering how swears and curses involved deities in them and might lead to terrible consequences, he rationally changed his thoughts.

Of course, I don't have to be that careful with me above the gray fog… He sighed inwardly.

"Elder Lovia has been released? That Shepherd?" Audrey quickly recalled what the name meant.

Back then, Little Sun had used Blasphemer Amon's possession and Mr. Fool's help to expose the fact that the entire exploration team had been corrupted by the True Creator. As for the team, it was led by Lovia. Her job as a Shepherd happened to correspond to the Secrets Suppliant pathway of the True Creator!

"Yes." Derrick nodded earnestly as he looked towards The Hanged Man.

Alger thought for a moment before asking, "Has your Chief returned to the City of Silver?"

Why would Mr. Hanged Man suddenly ask about this… Ah, right. To release such an important figure, it's impossible that the other elders of the six-member council wouldn't wait for the Chief's return…

If the Chief has yet to return, and that they had decided this without his consent, it goes to show that the situation is even more terrible than one can imagine. It was so terrible that they couldn't even await his return… If the Chief has already returned, then the reason for releasing Lovia has a high chance to do with the outcome of the exploration. This is because, according to Little Sun, this is the only exploration in recent times for the City of Silver.

Sigh, why didn't I think of this? Audrey, you're still lacking in experience… Audrey reflected and consoled herself in thought.

"Yes, not long ago." Derrick was surprised by Mr. Hanged Man's accurate guesses.

At this moment, Fors, who had been listening quietly, combined what she knew from before and suddenly had an idea.

"Mr. Sun, could this be the situation?

"Your Chief led the exploration team and that little boy, Jack, to seek out a path that leads to the outside world, but they realized that the power of the True Creator is required. Heh heh, this isn't a lie I'm fabricating, but an inference of the facts. The father of that boy, Jack, belonged to the Aurora Order, and they were seeking the holy residence of the True Creator before arriving where you are.

"Therefore, for the entire City of Silver, your Chief decided to release Shepherd Lovia after returning."

"If that's really the case, Mr. Sun would be in grave danger," Audrey said with worry. Fors's words sank Derrick's heart.

At this moment, Alger shook his head.

"No, I have the exact opposite belief.

"Miss Magician's inference is identical to my theory, but I believe this will make it safer for The Sun!"

"Why?" Derrick's heart calmed down as he asked.

Isn't that simple? Balance! Klein scoffed inwardly.

"The danger of the True Creator is noticeable by any sentient creature with eyes and a brain. Your Chief will definitely not put all his chips on"Him." He definitely needs a force that can counterbalance the True Creator.

"As for you, the one who exposed their ploy, you were possessed by Blasphemer Amon, so you might represent another possibility.

"The more Lovia and company wish harm upon you, the more the Chief and the other elders will protect you. This way, they would turn a blind eye to whatever suspicious aspects you didn't manage to erase," Alger explained simply.

This ends up being a silver lining? Fors was stunned.

Mr. Hanged Man makes a lot of sense… When it comes to analyzing matters and the situation, I'm still far from matching him… Audrey felt somewhat depressed. She even thought of puffing her cheeks, but she immediately realized that it wasn't an elegant act. All she could do was keep those thoughts to herself.

For the rest of the members, Emlyn, who didn't know much about Lovia, had a hard time keeping up. However, he knew about Jack and the repeated cycles, so he was barely able to understand the discussion.

In order to break out of the City of Silver's conundrum, they released a "danger" that has the True Creator involved? Emlyn inwardly made a guess.

Compared to him, Cattleya couldn't understand a word. She felt as though she was from a completely different world compared to the other members.

I actually have a feeling of admiration despite my incomprehension of what they said… The last time I had this feeling was several years ago. Back then, I was still very weak… There were some inklings in the previous Tarot Gatherings, especially so when it involves the City of Silver, but never has it been as serious as this time…

Also, why are they discussing the True Creator and Blasphemer Amon so naturally? Eh… It should be the Blasphemer Amon I know of… They're only Mid-Sequence Beyonders… What have they actually done in the past? Cattleya's confidence as a powerhouse suffered a setback at that very moment.

After hearing Mr. Hanged Man's analysis, Derrick first heaved a sigh of relief before asking with tense nerves, "Could this result in our City of Silver being destroyed by the Fallen Creator?"

He originally wished that Mr. Hanged Man could provide him with an answer that could relieve him, but he ended up hearing the man say in a deep voice, "That possibility can't be ruled out."

"Then what should I do?" Derrick earnestly sought advice.

"Under the situation of us not understanding what your Chief and the other elders of the six-member council are up to, I cannot provide you with any suggestions, but I don't think you need to be in such a panic." Alger raised his head to glance at Mr. Fool, who was silently looking at the members from the end of the long bronze table.

Tracing his gaze, Derrick subconsciously looked over and saw Mr. Fool whose extremely blurry figure was covered in the gray fog.

He instantly felt a sense of serenity, and he couldn't help but recall that holy and powerful angel.

…Although I've foiled several of the True Creator's ploys, I'll definitely not last a second if I were to really clash with "Him"… The situation will devolve into The Fool coming to his doorstep, but the True Creator finding The Fool completely lacking… Klein maintained his casual listening state, without saying a word or showing any expression.

Derrick retracted his gaze and said to Alger, "Mr. Hanged Man, thank you for your help. I will try to figure out what Chief and the others are planning."

With the matter coming to an end, Cattleya deliberated before saying, "Was the Blasphemer Amon you were talking about before referring to the ancestor of the Amon family in the Fourth Epoch's Tudor Empire, the son of the Creator?”

Son of the Creator? Audrey was stunned by what Ma’am Hermit said. She instinctively turned her head to the end of the long bronze table and discovered Mr. Fool sitting there calmly, as though he was tacitly confirming Amon’s other identity.

Chapter 617 - The Mysterious Adam

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The son of the Creator? Alger was stunned by The Hermit's description as he couldn't help but twitch his brows.

However, he didn't directly inquire further because this could very likely expose certain matters. Besides, he was very confident that there would be other members asking.

"The son of the Creator?" Fors asked with piqued interest.

She never expected that Amon had such a shocking identity, aside from the titles like Blasphemer and King of Angels. She was filled with curiosity over this.

Cattleya swept her a look and said without a change in tone, "Legend has it that back when the original Creator split into the various deities and races, 'His' body produced two babies. One of them was Blasphemer Amon."

The mural inside Amon's mausoleum was somewhat different from your description. Back when Amon and Adam was born, the Creator had just awoken and withdrew the authorities of the ancient gods. "He" was seated high on a holy mountain and was surrounded by angels as they praised him. There were no signs of him dying or splitting…

That mural does have something in common with the City of Silver's historical records… Perhaps the Creator had really awoken twice. And perhaps the original Creator and Amon's father, the Creator as recorded by the City of Silver, aren't the same person. Both of them have an inheritance relationship… As Klein listened to Ma'am Hermit's description, he began theorizing.

Amon is actually the son of the Creator… Such a status is in no way inferior to the true gods! As for Mr. Fool, our Tarot Club was able to easily purify "His" avatar and stop "His" possession… Audrey recalled the past matters and suddenly felt that she had unknowingly exceeded many ordinary Beyonders. The circles and levels of knowledge exposure that the two groups had differed by more than a hundred times!

She asked with piqued interest, "Ma'am Hermit, do you know the other son of the Creator?"

"Adam," Cattleya answered succinctly.

"…"

Audrey was clearly taken aback. This was because her question only required a "yes" or "no." After receiving the confirmation that she knew, she would ask for the details and make it clear that she was willing to pay for it. Who knew that Ma'am Hermit had directly given her the name, Adam.

She doesn't seem to care too much about such information… She's in control of a lot of information… Audrey managed to infer certain matters through this detail as her eyes darted about.

"I've never heard of an important figure named Adam."

"I haven't either. Apart from being recorded as the son of the Creator, it's like 'He' has never appeared before. There are nearly no traces of 'Him' in the history of the Fourth Epoch," Cattleya answered frankly.

This Adam is very mysterious… I'm already rather well-versed in the Fourth Epoch's three empires of Solomon, Tudor, and Trunsoest, as well as the angel families that come under them. Yet, I've never heard of "Him" before. If it wasn't for Arrodes who live-streamed the Church of

Steam and Machinery's exploration of Amon's mausoleum, I wouldn't have even known "His" name… Has "He" long perished, or is "He" hidden in the dark while scheming something? Klein sighed inwardly.

Audrey subconsciously glanced at Mr. Hanged Man and discovered him shaking his head as well.

Amon is a King of Angels, so it doesn't make sense for Adam to not be one. There should be records in the City of Silver… Audrey looked at Derrick.

For some reason, Derrick easily understood what was on Miss Justice's mind. He said in slight embarrassment, "We do not know about Adam, just like how we don't know about Amon.

"I was previously searching for ancient tomes related to the King of Angels. I believe that I was lacking in clearance as my Sequence was still low at that time. I will continue searching for information on this."

King of Angels… Cattleya moved her fingers indiscernibly as she memorized the phrase.

She knew that Miss Justice would definitely answer if she asked, so without waiting, she directly asked, "Amon is a King of Angels that all of you are referring to?"

"Yes." To thank Ma'am Hermit for her generosity, Audrey explained in detail, "In the records of the City of Silver, the Creator had many angels attending to 'Him.' Among them, the leaders of the angels who were closest to the throne of God were deemed King of Angels.

"We haven't managed to confirm many King of Angels. One of them is the Angel of Fate Ouroboros who originates from the ancient tomes of the City of Silver. 'His' title is Tail Devourer. The second is Medici, who Mr. Fool happened to mention. We are still unsure of 'His' title. The third is a guess. We suspect that Amon is the Angel of Time among the King of Angels. Since he is a King of Angels, Adam, who is also a son of the Creator, is very likely one as well."

Haven't managed to confirm many… I don't even know the term 'King of Angels,' but you have already grasped half of 'Them.' That's not many? None of your Sequences are higher than mine… Cattleya nearly became speechless.

Only at this point did Emlyn really understand the meaning behind a King of Angels. He decided to use these names to seek out traces of the King of Angels via the secret historical records the Sanguine had in their control after he returned to the real world.

Cattleya fell silent for two seconds before saying, "Mr. Sun, you were once possessed by Amon?"

"Yes; it was 'His' avatar," Derrick answered honestly. "However, 'He' was purified by Mr. Fool. I wasn't injured at all."

Purified by Mr. Fool… Cattleya couldn't hold back the urge to look at the end of the long bronze table.

She originally imagined that she had a general idea of Mr. Fool's state, believing that "He" was still in a state of reawakening and was unable to use much of his powers. This was why he sought the identity of Sea God and obtained that scepter. However, the present situation shook the foundations of her speculation. She felt that Mr. Fool was like an iceberg. What was hidden beneath the surface was even more terrifying and unfathomable!

"He" easily thwarted Amon's plans… Under certain situations, "He" can briefly break through the restrictions and produce strength at the level of a god? Cattleya's heart sank as she didn't ask further. She cautiously shut her mouth.

At this moment, Audrey had thought of something that puzzled her because of this topic. She proactively asked, "Ma'am Hermit, after Amon's avatar was purified by Mr. Fool, a worm with twelve transparent rings was left behind. It’s said to be a Worm of Time. Is that correct?”

Cattleya recalled for two seconds before saying, “…Yes.”

“Which pathway does it belong to? I mean, which Beyonder pathway does the Blasphemer pathway belong to?” Audrey pressed out of curiosity.

Cattleya answered directly without any thought, “The Marauder pathway.

“Legend has it that at the Saint or Angel level, they are able to fool fate and cheat the rules, becoming a parasite of time.”

Sounds very impressive… Audrey marveled inwardly before asking, “Then, what can a Worm of Time be used for?”

Nice question! Klein secretly cheered for Miss Justice.

He pumped himself up as he waited for Ma’am Hermit to give the answer.

He happened to have a Worm of Time in his junk pile!

“It’s a material with rich spirituality and unique effects. It can be used in particular rituals or be used to create high-level charms. But as for how, I’m not sure.” After Cattleya answered, she suddenly sighed.

She recalled the nightmare of being constantly pursued by knowledge, as well as the massive amount of information that could seemingly burst her brains.

But even so, she still didn’t know a lot.

If the Hidden Sage hadn’t gone mad and could provide knowledge bit by bit, I’ll actually be more than happy to learn from “Him”… Cattleya secretly sighed.

All that matters is that it's useful… As for how it's used, I have other people to consult… Klein controlled The World with great satisfaction and looked at Emlyn.

"Mr. Moon, I have something I would like to communicate with you in private."

Aren't the transactions over? Emlyn nodded, feeling somewhat uncertain.

"Okay."

The World immediately requested for Mr. Fool's permission and successfully obtained the privilege of isolating everyone.

Then, he looked at Emlyn White and said, "I wish for you to present to me every action which Leonard Mitchell made in your memories."

"Why?" Emlyn asked in puzzlement.

"It involves certain secrets," Klein controlled The World to answer succinctly.

His true goal wasn't to buy that mystical item, but to observe Leonard Mitchell? That fellow has deep secrets… The World as well. For an investigation, he was willing to spend 7,500 pounds! However, that mystical item is indeed powerful. Isn't The World constantly seeking a way to eliminate the mental corruption in a Beyonder characteristic? This is likely useful… Emlyn suppressed his wandering thoughts as he seriously recalled Leonard Mitchell from his point of view. With Mr. Fool's help, he conjured a video in the form of streaming light.

When the streaming light landed in The World's hands, Klein quickly browsed through it.

He confirmed that Leonard really knew the existence of the Grandpa, but he was unable to determine if he understood the danger.

Temporarily suppressing any corresponding thoughts, Klein removed the isolation barriers and allowed the Tarot Club members to continue.

At this moment, Audrey was reminded of something by Mr. World's private communication. She hurriedly looked at Fors and asked in concern, "Miss Magician, did you discover any abnormalities at Williams Street?"

"That will require Mr. World to answer you," Fors said, having been put into a difficult position.

Without waiting for Miss Justice to speak again, Klein controlled The World and hoarsely replied, "There were abnormalities.

"But I have already informed the Church of Evernight and the Church of Steam.

"If there are any future problems, I might require your help."

"Alright!" Audrey heaved a sigh of relief.

Informed the Church of Evernight and Steam… This… Cattleya found the description ludicrous.

From what she knew, a secret organization like the Tarot Club was a natural enemy of the official Beyonders. There was no room for any compromises between the two, but the way The World had dealt with it and the words he used had made it seem like the Tarot Club was an organization that cooperated with the official Beyonders…

Colored by these feelings, she listened to the rest of the conversation before bowing and bidding farewell when Mr. Fool made the closing remark.

Soon, Klein was the only one left above the gray fog.

Chapter 618 - Volunteer Work

◆

Second floor of the Sweet Lemon Bar, in the boss’s room.

Bilt Brando held a cigar as he stood by the window. He was looking out, and his eyes were out of focus as he wore a dark and terrifying expression.

At this moment, a bodyguard entered, bent his back slightly, and carefully said, “Sir, Sothoth has returned from the east.”

“Let him in.” Bilt tried hard to correct his expression.

Sothoth Yann was his assistant, an important member of the Adventurer Association.

In less than a minute, Sothoth, who was dressed in a linen shirt, brown jacket, and red headscarf, walked in. He looked to be in his thirties and had bronze skin. He had recessed eye sockets and a black mustache below and under his lips. He was obviously someone who spent most of his time at sea.

Sothoth bowed rather informally and sized up Bilt Brando.

“Boss, something happened?”

“Yes, something happened. From the looks of it, it will fail.” Bilt didn’t keep the matter from him as he sighed. “I have no idea how I’m going to answer that important figure.”

Without waiting for Sothoth to answer, he asked, “Have there been any changes at the eastern front?”

“Still the same as usual. The pirates are still after every ship they can plunder. They even target each other. The navy is only able to guard the various colonial posts, and they’re barely able to maintain smooth passage through the sea routes while protecting the relatively important ships. There are often sea battles with both sides obtaining victories at times,” Sothoth said as he shrugged his shoulders.

“The eastern front of the Sonia Sea is a pirate’s playground…” Bilt sighed in agreement.

Sothoth thought for a moment and added, “There has been some recent news from the islands on the eastern front. Apparently it first originated from the Black Death.”

“Vice Admiral Ailment? What news is it?” Bilt asked, his interest piqued.

Sothoth said with a solemn and excited tone, “Vice Admiral Ailment really encountered an assassination attempt and was seriously injured. And the person who attacked her was the adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow!”

“Gehrman Sparrow?” Bilt blurted out.

“Yes, it’s him! He really is a powerhouse at the level of a pirate admiral! Even if it was a sneak attack, it happened on the Black Death. There were so many infamous pirates around, but he managed to successfully escape after dealing a heavy blow to Vice Admiral Ailment. He later hunted Wormtongue Mithor,” Sothoth answered with affirmation while sighing.

Bilt staggered before sighing.

“That’s important news.

“There are very few powerhouses at the pirate admiral level among adventurers. To be able to deal a heavy blow to a pirate admiral on her flagship while alone—such an operation can only be done if one is absolutely confident in themselves or crazy enough. Only a madman will infiltrate a pirate admiral's flagship in an attempt to assassinate her, instead of finding another spot!"

Having said that, his expression changed slightly.

"I met an adventurer named Gehrman Sparrow last night."

"For real?" Sothoth's pupils shrank as he asked solemnly.

"I can't be sure since I've never met the real Gehrman Sparrow, or seen his photograph or portrait." Bilt shook his head.

Sothoth thought for a moment and said, "You can search for the newspapers from the Rorsted Archipelago to confirm his identity. So many days have passed. There should be tourists that would've brought over the corresponding News Report and Sonia Morning Post. Yes, the government offices, police stations, churches, and charity organizations will subscribe to the important newspapers of the Rorsted Archipelago."

The Rorsted Archipelago was the biggest colonial grounds of the Loen Kingdom in the Central Sonia Sea. Its influence radiated outward, so there was no doubt that Oravi Island, which was within a distance of three days of travel, was part of its domain of influence. The official organizations and churches all subscribed to the newspapers and magazines of the area, so any non-crucial news would be received in three to four days.

"Alright." Bilt nodded as he probed deeper, "Do you have the exact details of Gehrman Sparrow's assassination attempt on Vice Admiral Ailment?"

Sothoth thought for a moment and said, "It's said that Gehrman Sparrow is able to change into anyone, just like Vice Admiral Hurricane

Qilangos.

“It’s with that power that he successfully infiltrated the Black Death and found an opportunity to carry out the assassination.”

“He can change into anyone…” Bilt’s eyes lit up.

No, that won’t do. That’s a crazy guy who dares to infiltrate the Black Death to assassinate Vice Admiral Ailment. He causes one to instinctively fear him and distance themselves from him… The light in Bilt’s eyes dimmed.

Furthermore, I don’t even know if he’s the real one or not… He subconsciously shook his head.

†

I wonder when the Nighthawks and Machinery Hivemind will take action and deal with the abnormality at Williams Street. I hope they do it as soon as possible… Amidst his thoughts, Klein left the gray fog and returned to the real world.

After some consideration, he took out a piece of paper and laid it out on a brown desk.

He wrote with a dark red fountain pen, asking about Mr. Azik’s recent situation before mentioning how he had discovered that someone had a parasite in him while he was searching for a mystical item that could steal the Beyonder powers of others.

Following that, he seemingly asked in passing if there was a way to avoid the parasite and inform the host.

With this as a topic starter, he added how he learned from others about information regarding the Worm of Time that was related to High-Sequence Beyonders from the Marauder pathway. He also mentioned that he knew that such an item could be used as a sacrificial item in important rituals or as a material in high-level charms. However, he had no idea how to produce them.

Phew… Klein put down the fountain pen, folded the letter, and brought the copper whistle to his lips. He blew at it forcefully.

White bones spewed out like a fountain, forming a gigantic skeleton messenger. But this time, the messenger didn't bore out from downstairs, and it instead tore through the ceiling like many times before, looking down at the summoner from above.

Klein knew that this wasn't because the messenger had become impolite again, but because he was staying on the first floor of an inn…

He flicked his wrist and threw the letter like a dart, making it land accurately in the messenger's huge bony hand.

The flames in the messenger's eye sockets flickered as though it was observing Klein, but ultimately, nothing happened.

Its body disintegrated into a waterfall made of bones as they drilled into the ground.

After everything was done, Klein didn't spread open the paper crane. He erased what had been written and wrote the same content to seek advice from the Snake of Mercury, Will Auceptin.

This was because he realized something terrible. The paper crane wasn't a mystical item or Beyonder weapon. It was an ordinary piece of paper that had been folded. After repeatedly having its content erased by an eraser, it was beginning to show signs of its structural integrity failing. In a few more tries, it might directly tear.

I'll leave extremely important matters that require contact before considering it. For example, only when Mr. Azik isn't sure how to bypass the Grandpa to warn Leonard… Klein shook his head silently and rapidly packed up the items on his desk.

In addition, he didn't dare to use the radio transceiver to contact Arrodes recently. This was because the powerhouse sent by the True Creator was likely still loitering around the area in search for the All-Black Eye's aura. The "scent" of the gray fog was also equally able to attract the True Creator's attention, allowing "Him" to inform his believers.

Today, I'll continue being a tourist and relax. Tomorrow, I'll begin searching for an opportunity to do real acting! Klein retracted his thoughts, draped on his coat, and took his top hat before walking out the inn.

He planned on heading to the mountains outside Oravi Harbor to watch the sunset!

This thought stemmed from a popular novel. Its author's name was Leeann Mastaing. This gentleman was born in Odora and had decided to permanently reside in Backlund after the age of twenty. His books had introduced the sunset at Mt. Saint Draco with immense feelings, believing that it was the most beautiful scene he had ever seen.

Klein rode a carriage out the city and walked to the foot of Mt. Saint Draco. He took an hour before arriving at the peak of the not-so-tall mountain.

Time passed as the sun slowly set, making the blue sea situated to the left of the mountain peak appear like a sea of fire. As for the emerald-green forests and the vast fields on the right, they seemed to be gilded.

All the colors bloomed with the final touches of radiance in that instant before darkness gradually approached until it became dark.

Ships entered the harbor as carriages drove into the city. The busy people began returning home on the roads parallel to the wheat fields and fruit gardens.

When darkness enveloped the entire land, specks of warm light lit up one after another inside and outside the city. They were like resplendent gems that dotted the velvet night sky.

It's really beautiful… Klein admired for a moment until all the lights from each family were reflected in his eyes.

He turned around in silence and walked down the mountain path. Accompanied by the dark trees, he returned to the foot of the mountain before walking for some distance until he hired a carriage along the periphery of the port city.

The carriage stably proceeded forward as the dim yellow halos from the iron-black elegant street lamps silently illuminated the ground, receding backwards into the distance.

After some time, Klein returned to his inn. He took out his key and opened his door.

There was a bed, a desk, and a chair in the room, silently sitting there in the rich darkness. They silently reflected some of the crimson luster.

Klein closed the door very gently and walked to the window. He stood in the shadows created by the curtains and remained motionless for quite some time.

The lights outside were still bright.

†

Early the next morning.

Klein turned on the tap and patted his face with ice-cold water, rejuvenating his entire body.

He had already thought of a way to engage in true acting.

It was still the hospital where death could occur at any moment!

In the past, Klein had only circled the area without much focus. Loitering around had made it hard for him to find any suitable targets. This time, he planned on using some time of volunteer work to stay in the hospital for prolonged periods of time. He could provide hospice to the dying patients who temporarily didn’t have their family beside them. By doing so, he could await the targets he needed.

After having breakfast, Klein arrived at 10 Blackforest Street and entered the Oravi Hospice Foundation.

This was a charity organization of the Church of the Evernight Goddess. One of its responsibilities was to provide the various hospitals with trained volunteers.

Klein came to the registration booth and saw the female employee reading the papers. Hence, he lightly tapped the table to attract her attention.

“Is there something I can help you with?” the lady lowered the papers and asked.

“I wish to do some volunteer work,” Klein said succinctly.

“Name?” The lady looked up at him.

Suddenly, her eyes froze as her right hand trembled. The fountain pen she had just picked up fell to the ground.

In the papers in front of her was a portrait that looked almost realistic.

The portrait’s owner was that of the crazy and dangerous adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow!

Chapter 619 - Unable to Speak

◆ ◆ ◆

Oravi Hospice Foundation.

The lady responsible for volunteer registration hurriedly bent her back as she frantically searched for the fountain pen which had dropped. At this moment, Klein also noticed that she was reading a News Report paper from a few days ago. It was back when his portrait and escapades were published.

This area subscribes to newspapers from the Rorsted Archipelago as well? From the time it takes to sail between the places, it's true that they can only read news from three to four days ago… If I had known earlier, I would've worn a new face and thought of a fake name before coming… Klein stood in front of the desk as he thought helplessly.

The lady in her thirties finally picked up the fountain pen, raised her head, and said with a trembling voice, "Y-you want to do volunteer work?"

"Yes," Klein gave an affirmative answer.

"B-but you're an adventurer," the mortified lady stammered for an excuse.

She instinctively didn't want such an extremely dangerous person to do volunteer work.

Being famous isn't necessarily a good thing… Forget it. I'll switch my appearance and name before coming again… Klein had the intention of giving up as he questioned her without any emotion, “Who made the rules that adventurers can’t do volunteer work?”

The lady responsible for the registration was on the brink of tears as she blurted out, “It wasn’t me!”

The volunteer registration room became abnormally quiet. Klein was first taken aback before he felt like laughing. It took him a great deal of effort to maintain Gehrman Sparrow’s image.

After the lady calmed down, she sensed that her answer was clearly problematic. She forced a smile and said, “No, I mean this isn’t regulated by anyone.

“My impression of adventurers is that they are very busy. They need to be out at sea and have very little time to do volunteer work.

“That’s them,” Klein answered succinctly.

The lady held her palm to her mouth as she revealed a smile.

“Alright. I’ll immediately help you with your registration.”

As she spoke, she pulled out a form and handed it over.

“Please fill it in. We will provide the corresponding training and volunteer jobs according to your requests.

“We will contact you, or you can always come over to inquire for any updates.”

She had already made up her mind not to put Gehrman Sparrow’s form into the docket. Instead, she would hand it directly to the foundation’s person-in-charge and the police.

Goddess, why is this dangerous fellow here to do volunteer work? She secretly drew a crimson moon on her chest.

Klein nodded in silence. He took the form and sat down. Picking up a fountain pen, he began filling in his basic information.

During this process, a man in a doctor's gown entered and asked, "Joanna, are there any new volunteers? We'll begin the morning training."

Joanna, who was in charge of the registration, had the intention to shake her head. However, Gehrman Sparrow, who sat opposite her, gave her an intense sense of pressure even though he remained silent and didn't raise his head. She didn't dare to lie.

"There is," she first replied to the man and then looked at Klein. "Mr. Sparrow, do you wish to receive the basic training for volunteer work now, or do you wish to wait until tomorrow?"

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "Now."

He planned on familiarizing himself first, allowing him to show his professionalism at volunteer work after changing his identity. That way, he could quickly help out at a hospital.

Joanna clearly drew a breath and said, "Then follow Mr. Gravia after you are done filling in the form."

"Alright," Klein replied calmly.

Half an hour later, the calm and polite adventurer who had his madness hidden in him stared at the abnormally dirty toilet in front of him. He held his breath and said, "Scrub it?"

"Right, you have already received the basic training on how to carry a patient. However, that isn't the most common task we do at a hospital. We're mainly in charge of cleaning a patient's vomit or changing and washing the linen, as well as maintaining the cleanliness of the washroom. Heh heh, matters such as bandaging wounds are left to the professionals. We only need you to have the basics grasped." Gravia pinched his nose as he pointed to the stained toilets. "A volunteer has already demonstrated it to you. Please begin."

This is very different from what I imagined… Completely different… Klein's first reaction was to turn his back and leave, but he ultimately picked up the cleaning tools with a deadpan expression. He held back his disgust and went over before crouching down.

Then, he leaned back a little as he extended his right arm.

At noon, Klein took off his white gown and wore his top hat before leaving Oravi Hospice Foundation with a cold expression.

He had serious second thoughts about continuing the volunteer work to find opportunities for real acting.

Only when his carriage arrived at the Sweet Lemon Bar did he steel his resolve to continue the attempt.

I have to become a Marionettist in 1350 and digest the potion, so as to begin seeking the clues to become a High-Sequence Beyonder, Klein emphasized his goal once again.

He retracted his emotions and entered the Sweet Lemon Bar. He spent 8 pence for apple cider marinated pork ribs and a piece of buttered bread.

Together with a cup of rye beer costing 1.5 pence, they formed Klein's lunch.

He finished eating in an unhurried fashion before using a handkerchief to wipe his mouth. He said to the bartender, "Where's your boss? I have something to talk to him about."

Since he had already verbally agreed to join the Adventurer Association, Klein naturally didn't plan on missing the opportunity to use this loose alliance. He planned to ask Bilt Brando to contact unaffiliated Artisans or Artisans who were willing to moonlight. He wanted an Artisan to create an item like Azik's copper whistle, so he didn't need to set up a ritual and chant the incantations every time he summoned his messenger. It was complicated, troublesome, and a waste of time.

Of course, if Bilt Brando didn't know an Artisan, Klein didn't plan on forcing the matter. After all, joining the Adventurer Association didn't require him to pay.

The bartender pointed to the staircase and said, "He's on the second floor.

"If you've already agreed to join his association and have seen those bodyguards, then they'll let you up."

Klein nodded indiscernibly and slowly got up before walking towards the staircase.

Indeed, no guards stopped him. Only when he reached the second floor did a bodyguard approach him to inquire about his purpose.

Thanks to his reputation as Gehrman Sparrow, he easily met Bilt Brando again. He also saw an unfamiliar man beside him.

"My friend, Sothoth Yann, an important member of the association." Bilt pointed to the man in a red headscarf.

At the same time, he exchanged looks with the man and saw the seriousness and puzzlement in each other's eyes.

After a simple greeting, Klein got a chair to sit on. He directly said, "I wish to obtain the help of an Artisan. I wonder if the association is able to provide any clues."

"Artisan?" Bilt sucked at his cigar and paused for a few seconds. He deliberated for a moment before saying, "I do know an Artisan, but he's unwilling to meet strangers. This will bring him grave danger. If you have any requests, then I can be the middleman. I believe I have the required reputation to do so."

To most Churches, Mid- and Low-Sequence Beyonders without any evil intentions could be ignored at times. However, Artisans needed to be dealt with indiscriminately. Otherwise, the mystical items they created could flood the markets, bringing about extreme unrest to human society.

From the looks of it, the Adventurer Association which Bilt organized isn't just wasting money. At the very least, it has amassed quite a lot of resources and information channels… Klein took out the murloc bladder which he had long prepared.

"I wish to make this into a ring, mainly to provide one with underwater mobility."

He temporarily didn't mention the messenger, planning to test the Artisan's ability and Bilt's reputation. If the messenger-summoning incantation became widely known, it would create quite a bit of trouble.

A Sequence 9 Beyonder characteristic isn't expensive. Even if Bilt succumbs to greed and usurps the created mystical item, it doesn't matter. After all, I have a bunch of charms from the Sea God domain… Furthermore, it's not like I can't find him to settle the debt. This is better. For him to be able to organize an Adventurer Association, he definitely has plenty of money and ingredients… As Klein's thoughts reeled, he couldn't help but size up Bilt.

In that instant, Bilt shuddered for some baffling reason. All the hair on his back stood up.

He felt as though Gehrman Sparrow's eyes looked like he had seen a treasure trove!

As treasure, this wasn't a good experience at all.

Bilt glanced at Sothoth and forced a smile.

"This is a murloc's bladder, right?"

"Making a material at this level into a mystical item basically wouldn't have any accidents.

"The Artisan's fee is 150 pounds. You can pay me after it's crafted."

A very fair price… Klein nodded silently as he threw the murloc bladder over.

After Bilt caught it, he added, "Help me ask the Artisan if he has the ability to fix the summoning ritual of a spirit world creature onto an item which can be used for at least a year."

"No problem." Bilt heaved a sigh of relief before signaling to Sothoth with his eyes.

Sothoth rubbed his depressed eye socket and took a step forward.

"Mr. Gehrman, would you be interested in heading out to sea soon?

"We already have a few pretty good ships. They're planning on hiring manpower to the eastern front to hunt pirates."

Interesting… but my focus right now is to digest my potion… Klein calmly shook his head.

Sothoth's smile froze before vanishing.

He didn't say anything further, as it was a rejection from an adventurer at the pirate admiral level. He and Bilt had already found the relevant newspapers and confirmed the authenticity of Gehrman Sparrow.

Klein slowly stood up and pressed his top hat to his chest before bowing slightly.

"Thank you for your help."

Bilt's facial muscles twitched a little as though he was holding back something. He had something to say, but he wasn't able to say it out loud.

Finally, he slowly drew in a breath and smiled.

"I believe we should hope for a pleasant partnership."

Klein sensed Bilt's and Sothoth's abnormality, but he suppressed his puzzlement and didn't ask.

I can't ask. There will be trouble once I ask… I have to focus on digesting the potion… Klein turned around and walked to the door before turning the doorknob.

"Mr. Gehrman," Bilt suddenly said.

The corner of Klein's mouth twitched as he calmly looked back.

"Nothing? Haha, I mean, as a member of the association, you can have cheaper drinks over here," Bilt said with a forced smile.

Do you think I would've pressed on the matter? Tsk… Klein gently nodded and opened the door to leave.

After watching his back vanish, Bilt stared in a daze for two seconds before letting out a long sigh.

Chapter 620 - Stand-in Mission

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the room, Sothoth pressed down on the edges of his eyes when he heard Bilt’s sigh. He said in a deep voice, “Boss, that important figure will arrive the day after tomorrow.”

Bilt’s expression turned serious as he looked back.

“I know.”

“We only have two choices. First, we ignore whether Gehrman Sparrow is worth trusting, and we entrust him with the mission. We can only hope for the best outcome. Second, we immediately abandon our business in Oravi, leaving with our cash and jewelry to become pirates at sea. I have the confidence to make most sailors and adventurers on the Pirate Hunter follow us.” Sothoth paused before adding, “Boss, back when you were an adventurer, leading our ship and hunting pirates, you were always this decisive and tenacious. I believe you have already made your decision. There’s no need for me to do anything else.”

“Haha, there’s no need to suck up to me.” Bilt smiled bitterly. “I’m no longer the fearless pirate hunter who didn’t fear blood or gunfire from before. Long periods of an easy and comfortable life have dulled my will. I don’t even wish to seek out chances to advance. Those companions who had turned into monsters still live on in my mind.”

Phew… He exhaled as his expression instantly turned solemn.

“However, you’re right. We don’t have time to hesitate. We have to immediately make a decision.”

Having said that, Bilt turned his head and gestured at the window with his chin.

Sothoth was taken aback for a moment before understanding what his boss meant.

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After leaving the Sweet Lemon Bar, Klein strolled by the side of the street, planning to hire a carriage at the crossroads.

At this moment, he heard a window open above him and saw a figure jump down.

Perhaps after experiencing the terrifying incidents involving the Antigonus family's notebook and Bansy Harbor's strange telegraph office, Klein's first reaction was that Bilt Brando was dead. He had suddenly died after his visit and was thrown down from upstairs, falling to the ground with his eyes wide open.

This was just like how he saw Ray Bieber's mother dead in a reclining chair back then. The body was highly decomposed, and the eyeball fell to the floor because of the external disturbance.

Similar thoughts flashed through his mind as Klein discerned the figure who had fallen from upstairs to be Sothoth Yann, not Bilt Brando.

Furthermore, he looked normal and was clearly still alive.

Oh no, here comes trouble… Klein's heart skipped a beat, having a more accurate guess.

If it were himself, he definitely would've pretended not to see Sothoth Yann jump off the building to intercept him, running before the man could even say a word and until he shook him off his tail. It would be akin to how Admiral of Stars was being pursued by knowledge.

Unfortunately, I'm currently Gehrman Sparrow. A crazy adventurer wouldn't flee because of such trivial matters… Sigh, getting to know myself better is an additional perk… Klein halted and watched as Sothoth firmly landed on the ground. He bowed with his hand placed over his chest.

"Mr. Gehrman Sparrow, we have a very important task to entrust you."

Here it comes… Klein calmly replied, "I won't be that free lately."

"This wouldn't waste too much of your time. You can first listen to what it is about before considering to reject or accept it," Sothoth said earnestly.

I'm afraid I have no choice but to accept it after hearing it… Eh, actually it's still alright. If Bilt Brando and Sothoth Yann threaten me to take the mission, I don't mind changing them into gold pounds and Beyonder ingredients… Klein thought it through seriously and discovered that he didn't need to have too many reservations out at sea. Having the strength of a pirate admiral basically made him unstoppable in most areas.

He took out the pocket watch in his inner pocket and opened it.

"I'm giving you five minutes."

"Alright, that's enough." Sothoth pointed at the entrance to the Sweet Lemon Bar behind Klein.

Returning to the room, Klein glance at the wall clock and said coldly, "You still have three minutes and twelve seconds."

His attitude gave Bilt a baffling sense of ease. He began to believe that Gehrman Sparrow definitely had the capabilities to complete the mission.

"Mr. Gehrman, I heard that you can transform into anyone, just like how Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos was formerly capable of doing so," Bilt hurriedly asked.

Who revealed this matter? Klein pricked up his brows as his gaze towards Bilt turned gloomy.

If news of Gehrman Sparrow being able to transform into anyone spread, it was quite troublesome for Klein. This was because this made others either think of Creeping Hunger, making them think of Qilangos's death, or they would think that he was a Beyonder who had certain secrets and was suspected to be a Faceless. The former would attract the attention of the Twilight Hermit Order, while the latter would attract the attention of the Church of the Evernight Goddess, who would send personnel to investigate.

Of course, the Church of the Evernight Goddess wasn't a powerful force at sea, so Klein didn't need to worry too much about it. He just didn't wish to be in conflict with the Nighthawks.

If that happened, he had no choice but to abandon his identity as Gehrman Sparrow. This was at the critical point where more and more people knew of the crazy and powerful adventurer who had a soft heart while he was being acknowledged and gaining feedback.

Bilt sensed the change in Gehrman Sparrow's gaze as he tensed up. He chuckled and said, "This was news released from the Black Death."

Tracy… She's trying to seek revenge on me by doing so. One day, I'll successfully hunt her… Klein nodded slightly and said, "You can think of it as real."

He didn't explain how he received his powers of shapeshifting, as this didn't match Gehrman Sparrow's persona.

Bilt heaved a sigh of relief and said after two seconds of silence, "We're helping an important figure to search for a stand-in."

Under Gehrman Sparrow's ambiguous gaze, he explained in detail, "That important figure needs to independently deal with a secret matter that he doesn't want others to know of; therefore, he needs a stand-in to represent him in dealing with his daily affairs. He would meet different guests and socialize with his mistress without revealing a problem. He will take three to five days to return.

“We had already found someone who looked like him, spending a great deal of time to correct his posture and accent, and we had informed the good news to the important figure. Who knew that the tramp would overeat and suddenly die last night.

“That important figure is about to begin his operation. We do not have the time to look for another person who looks like him, so we can only seek your help.”

Isn’t this the true acting opportunity I’ve been looking for… Klein was moved.

However, he sharply noticed one point.

To be addressed as an important figure by Bilt, leader of the Adventurer Association, it definitely meant that the person was an important figure. Matters that happened around an important figure were often not simple. It contained quite a considerable risk!

Klein thought for a moment before asking in a deep tone, “Do you think that this matter will be dangerous?”

“No, as long as you aren’t exposed, there shouldn’t be any danger. You need to represent the important figure and appear at social conventions. Heh heh, no one would dare assassinate him. Yes… I know what you’re worried about. You’re afraid that this important figure would silence everyone who knows about this matter after it’s done? Don’t worry, the pirates have fabricated plenty of vicious rumors about him, so even if this matter succeeds, no one will believe it even if you divulge this in the future. It will only be treated as a joke,” Bilt said with a smile as he spread his hands.

Klein no longer bothered with the topic and switched to asking, “What kind of payment are you offering?”

“1,000 pounds, and three chances to get the Artisan to make something for you. Heh heh, I’ll pay for all expenses apart from the materials.” Bilt made an offer which he believed Gehrman Sparrow wasn’t unable to resist based on what had been previously entrusted to him.

It’s not bad… Besides, it gives me a chance to do true acting… Klein took a look at the wall clock and said, “I’ll return and consider. I’ll give you the answer in the evening.”

Regardless, he had to head above the gray fog to divine the level of danger!

Considering how Bilt and Sothoth were Sequence 7, or even Sequence 6 Beyonders, Klein didn’t directly request to head to the washroom in front of them to prevent them from sensing a problem.

As the important figure’s identity hadn’t been revealed, Bilt wasn’t too worried. He nodded.

“Alright.

“I hope for a pleasant partnership.”

†

Williams Street. A stout man from Feysac who was nearly two meters tall was searching for clues.

Suddenly, he felt his spiritual perception trigger as he looked up.

Light which resembled the morning sun’s rays surfaced around his body, illuminating the surrounding houses and street lamps as though they were illusions.

At the same time, sparks soared on the street as all kinds of supernatural phenomena appeared.

Indeed, the Sauron family has sent people over… The man from Feysac who had his suspicions cast his gaze straight down the street.

He saw Nighthawks wearing red or black gloves as black gun barrels covered with complicated patterns extended out of the rooftops. They were aimed at him while the surrounding passersby didn't seem to notice anything amiss.

He also saw the Church of Steam and Machinery's Archbishop of the Backlund diocese, Horamick, and the Church of the Evernight Goddess's Archbishop of the Backlund diocese, Saint Anthony.

Immediately following that, he caught sight of members of the Sauron family raising their hands above their heads through the corner of his eye.

…The powerful Feysac spies also did the same thing.

They had decisively chosen to surrender!

Resistance only spelled certain death. There was still a chance of being repatriated by surrendering!

†

At half-past six that evening, Klein once again came to the Sweet Lemon Bar where he met Bilt and Sothoth.

He expressionlessly said, "An advance of 500 pounds.

"Then, you will need to tell me who I'm supposed to change into."

Bilt couldn't hold back his smile as he gestured for Sothoth to collect the funds from the safe while saying with a deep voice, "He's the kingdom's highest-ranking navy commander of the Central Sonia Sea.

"His Excellency Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt!

“A real demigod!”

Chapter 621 - Governor-general's Office Banquet

◆ ◆ ◆

Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt… A true demigod… Upon hearing Bilt's reveal, a few words immediately appeared in Klein's mind.

I'm sorry. Bye!

Gehrman Sparrow pricked up his brows slightly as Bilt hurried to explain, "This wouldn't influence the difficulty of the mission.

"There's no need for anyone to display a demigod's powers throughout the duration of the mission."

He cleared his throat and forced a smile.

"To make the mission not as difficult, His Excellency has specially arranged for him to inspect the Oravi naval base for a few days. This way, he doesn't need to stay in the Central Sonia Sea's navy headquarters, the City of Generosity, Bayam. As such, he will avoid Sea King Jahn Kottman and the governor-general of the Rorsted Archipelago, George Negan. He would avoid most of the subordinates he's familiar with, and he'll avoid his family who operates the family estate over there. He will also avoid his mistress who he's most familiar with.

"That is to say that you wouldn't need to face demigods, or the test of the masses.

"Here, there will only be three people who are familiar with His

Excellency. The first is his secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Luan. He belongs to MI9, and he's in charge of monitoring His Excellency. He likely uses many names, and I'm not sure which is his real name. The second person will be the local mistress His Excellency has here, a beautiful lady by the name of Cynthia. It's said that her ancestor was a noble before his title was stripped, and his family was exiled here. The third person is Oravi's governor-general, Aston Rieveldt, the youngest brother of His Excellency. Earl Rieveldt from the House of Lords is their elder brother."

It really doesn't sound too difficult. Besides, my divination results tell me that it's not too dangerous… Klein fell silent for a few seconds before nodding gently.

"I need the detailed information regarding Amyrius Rieveldt."

"We've already prepared everything. This is his photograph. These are the descriptions of any unique traits hidden on his body. These are the unique points of his accent. These are the common words he uses. These are the different reactions and attitudes he has towards different matters. Here is the detailed information regarding his interactions with Luan, Cynthia, and Aston…" Bilt was delighted as he produced all the information he received from Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt.

Klein first took the photograph and saw a middle-aged gentleman with black hair and blue eyes. He had a strict and old-fashioned demeanor, and his hair was a lot more voluminous than most Loen men.

He nodded indiscernibly before looking up.

"I know this is a lot of information, but I believe that you can memorize them all in two days. You have to be very professional in such matters…" Before Bilt finished his sentence, he subconsciously took a step back because the person before him wasn't Gehrman Sparrow but Amyrius Rieveldt! The strict and arrogant vibes he exuded was no different from the actual person!

“Holy Lord of Storms, th-this is almost a miracle!” Bilt looked him up and down, and he couldn’t help but be amazed. “However, you can be another three centimeters taller. Your legs can be thicker. But it’s fine, there’s no rush. His Excellency will arrive the day after tomorrow with the Imperial Navy’s First Central Sonia Fleet. He would inspect the Oravi naval base in the morning and attend a banquet held at the governor-general’s office. I have an invitation to it, and I can bring you there. You can watch from His Excellency’s actions and the way he interacts with different people from the side.”

As he spoke, he received the 500 pounds that Sothoth had taken out from the safe. He handed it to Klein and said, “I hope for a pleasant partnership!”

Klein weighed the notes in his hand and studied it with a few glances before saying, “I hope for a pleasant partnership.”

†

Backlund, Williams Street.

As an inconspicuous member of the Red Gloves, Leonard Mitchell leaned on the outer wall of a house, awaiting the preliminary investigation work to end.

He had his right leg raised slightly, with only his toes to the ground. It made him look desultory.

After a while, he saw his teammate return with a somewhat complex expression. He was excited, puzzled, expectant, and nervous.

“Thomson, is there a conclusion?” Leonard’s heart stirred as he leaned over with a smile.

“Yeah,” Thomson nodded and answered frankly. “Both sides have spoken the truth. They have no way of lying in their dreams.”

Thomson, with his thin hair, wore his top hat once again.

"Their descriptions are uniform. Beneath this street is a ruin belonging to the Fourth Epoch's Tudor Dynasty. The entrance is indeed that abandoned chapel. No one knows if there's another entrance for now."

"Is that so…" Leonard didn't delve into the details as he exchanged a few words before moving to the sidelines. Once again, he leaned against the wall.

He looked around and suppressed his voice.

"Old Man, this is what you're good at.

"There's a Tudor family ruin hidden here."

An elderly voice rang out in his mind.

"You're becoming more and more impolite. In our era, disrespect to high-ranking people implies being made into living sacrifices.

"Also, it's impossible for there to only be one Tudor family ruin in Backlund."

"Are they lying?" Leonard asked softly.

The elderly voice chuckled and said, "No, they just don't know enough.

"If my theories are correct, this ruin likely belongs to the Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire."

"What?" Leonard was stunned.

This was an ancient dynasty he had never heard of before.

The slightly-aged voice chuckled.

"What an unknowledgeable kid. After the Solomon Empire was first destroyed, it was replaced by the Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire. Its double consul ruled all of the Northern Continent."

“Double consul…” Leonard ruminated over this phrase.

The slightly-aged voice chuckled and sighed.

“In the ruins underground, there should be 41 inverted candlesticks on the left and 40 on the right. Two of them look like they belong to the throne of a giant, and… Heh heh. It might be where Alista Tudor became Blood Emperor.”

Leonard frowned slightly before easing them. He said with a relaxed smile, “There must be quite a lot of secrets hidden in there.”

“Of course, but you aren’t qualified to know it.” The slightly-aged voice tsked.

Leonard curled his lips indiscernibly and said, “What follows next is the exploration of the ruins.”

The slightly-aged voice chuckled before falling silent.

A minute later, Leonard saw Archbishop Saint Anthony and the Church of Steam’s Archbishop Horamick end their conversation as they returned to their own camps.

Immediately following that, Horamick ordered all Machinery Hivemind personnel to leave, leaving the area to the Church of the Evernight Goddess’s Nighthawks.

What happened? Upon seeing this scene, Leonard was filled with puzzlement.

At that moment, all the Nighthawks heard Archbishop Saint Anthony’s voice.

“All Red Gloves gather. The other Nighthawks are to leave the mirror world. Find a reason to evacuate all the residents in the area, and promise them compensation for their property.

“After all the residents evacuate, the Red Gloves and I will destroy this ruin that stems from an evil era!

“Entry is forbidden. It will be directly destroyed!

“May the Goddess bless us all.”

This… Leonard never expected such a development.

†

Half-past seven in the evening, at the Oravi governor-general’s office.

Klein changed into Sothoth’s appearance. He wore a black tailcoat and a bow tie of the same color. He followed Bilt into the banquet’s hall.

The temperature inside was like that of spring. A gigantic chandelier hung from the ceiling, and the shimmering candlelight illuminated the grounds like it was daytime.

In the corner on the right, there were musicians dressed in vests and bow ties playing a brisk tune. On the left were long tables. Ontop were roasted chicken, pan-fried foie gras, stewed lamb, Backlund-styled roasted goose, Odora lobsters with butter and cheese, and other delicacies.

Despite the distance, Klein could still catch a whiff of the fragrance wafting over. He planned on getting a plate and filling it with food.

At this moment, Bilt tugged at his collar in a reserved manner. He leaned his head over and suppressed his voice.

“Remember the etiquette as required by such banquets.

“Our current goal is to observe His Excellency’s actions, so just taking a cup of wine would do.

“There’s misty champagne here, Aurmir grape wine, and Southville red wine, all famous alcohols that are seldom seen outside. You can drink some, but not a lot. We have to maintain sufficient sobriety. Yes, try to just go through the motions when drinking."

Klein retracted his gaze and nodded.

The two of them took a cup of golden champagne, whose minute bubbles were like mist, from a red-vested waiter who passed by them. Then, they moved towards the banquet's highlight, where Amyrius Rieveldt stood wearing his dark blue navy admiral's uniform.

With their standing, they naturally had no way of approaching the admiral. All they could do was observe his every action from a slight distance.

Amyrius's figure is normal. It doesn't look that fit. The corners of his mouth droops a little, indicating his actual age…

He doesn't have a beard. His blue eyes seem to hide an authority that one cannot reject or defend against…

His dark blue admiral uniform is starched well. There's a red lanyard at his shoulder, which joins to his chest where there are all sorts of medals…

His sleeves have golden cuff links, accentuating his epaulets of the same color…

His epaulets are split into three parts. From inside out, there's an embedded crown with rubies, the crossed scepter and sword, four stars made of diamonds… Klein began scrutinizing and used his Faceless powers to memorize all the detailed characteristics of the navy admiral, as well as the attitude he used when talking to different people.

During this process, he only took a sip of the misty champagne and didn't take note of its taste.

After he had mostly gathered all the information, Klein exhaled and allowed his mind to rest.

The great drain on his mind made him hungry. Hence, he placed the wine cup on the tray of a red-vested waiter, and he planned to get some food from the long table.

At this moment, Bilt leaned over and said, “His Excellency has given me the signal. We will be meeting him at an agreed location.”

“…”

Klein retracted his gaze from the roasted chicken and swept a cold glance at Bilt.

Bilt shuddered as he hurriedly turned around, leading Gehrman Sparrow from the floor-to-ceiling window and into the garden.

After walking for nearly a minute in the secluded path, he paused and pointed at Klein’s face.

“You can change into His Excellency’s appearance.

“Just pretend that you’re that tramp who looks like him.”

Klein nodded gently and extended his palm to wipe his face.

He did so to conceal the disgusting tendrils and granules that might appear on his face while changing his appearance.

By the time he lowered his palm, Bilt saw a middle-aged gentleman who looked somewhat like Amyrius Rieveldt.

“Very good.” Bilt took a few steps forward and came to the entrance of a sundries room. He extended his hand and pushed open the unlocked door.

Amyrius Rieveldt was still wearing the eye-catching admiral’s uniform. His body was standing sideways to the door as he observed the garden outside by the window.

At this moment, he turned his head and cast his gaze onto the person who resembled him.

The indescribable pressure and might made Klein involuntarily lower his head.

Amyrius Rieveldt’s gaze didn’t stop there as it slowly moved to Bilt. He said, without any tinge of emotion, “This isn’t the tramp you mentioned before.

“He’s a Beyonder.”

Chapter 622 - Temporary Contract

◆

Upon hearing Amyrius Rieveldt's descriptive words which weren't a question, Bilt's forehead instantly broke out into a cold sweat.

He turned agape, hoping to explain himself, but finally, he plopped to his knees and said under the indescribable pressure, "Admiral, Your Excellency, the tramp from before suddenly died of an illness. I had no choice but to find an adventurer who can shapeshift."

At this moment in time, Klein wasn't too nervous. This was because Amyrius Rieveldt had already noticed him during the banquet. There was no reason for him to only recognize him as a Beyonder only now. For him to agree to their meeting and not directly avoid the risk meant that he didn't mind who Bilt had hired.

Not worried at all? This is the confidence of a demigod; otherwise, his Beyonder pathway is able to avert disaster ahead of time… Klein raised his head with great difficulty as he cast his gaze towards the navy admiral beside him.

"Quite strong," Amyrius Rieveldt commented without an expression.

He continued looking at the genuflecting Bilt and said, "Do not try to use your under-the-table smarts in front of me.

"An ordinary person and a Beyonder in this world are different, and I'm a follower of order, making me be able to be certain of this."

Of course, it's identical to what's written in the information. This admiral is inclined to expounding on certain things. I have to remember this point. This is a completely different style from me and Gehrman Sparrow… Klein retracted his gaze in thought as he cast it to the ground as if he was unable to withstand the pressure.

Amyrius Rieveldt took one step forward.

“Lying is the first mistake you committed. Not being cautious is the second.

“A tramp you spent a great deal of effort on to groom had suddenly died, and all of a sudden, an adventurer who can shapeshift appears in front of you. Don’t you find it a coincidence?”

Yes, it’s quite coincidental… Klein nearly said the same thing.

If not for his confirmation above the gray fog, he would’ve suspected if he was being set up by a legendary creature or a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

Bilt’s pupils constricted as he snapped to his senses.

He discovered that due to his horror and fear, all he thought about was to grasp at the final life-saving straw. He had lost the caution brought about from his experience, having not considered whether Gehrman Sparrow’s appearance was a coincidence or not.

The tramp had suddenly died on the day he arrived at the Sweet Lemon Bar! The more Bilt thought about it, the more he felt as though he had fallen for some intricately planned trap.

As Amyrius Rieveldt watched Bilt’s expression change with enlightenment and regret, he nodded gently and said, “My father, the deceased Earl Rieveldt, once taught me this.

“He said to pardon the first mistake of a subordinate.

“Bilt, you should be thankful for his benevolence.”

Bilt’s tense mood eased instantly as he felt extremely moved.

He thought Amyrius Rieveldt, who was closer to a god than man, would execute him on the spot, so as to warn all the adventurers who were under him. Who knew that he would choose to pardon him.

"Your Excellency, I… I…" Bilt was momentarily unable to form a sentence.

Amyrius maintained his stern expression and said in a deep voice, "There's a second half of the saying, that is 'punish them for their second mistake.' Bilt, do you know what you should do in the future?"

The genuflecting Bilt immediately straightened his back and pressed his right fist to his left chest.

"I'll be utmost loyal to you, Your Excellency!"

Amyrius nodded and turned to Klein.

"What's your name?"

That depends on which identity you're asking about… Klein lampooned inwardly and calmly replied, "Gehrman Sparrow."

Amyrius Rieveldt suddenly fell silent for two seconds as the atmosphere in the sundry room seemed to freeze.

Just as Klein couldn't help but feel uneasy, Amyrius finally said, "So it's you."

Your Excellency, you sound as though you know me. I'm just an ordinary military informant. I only exchanged some bounty through you. I haven't even made any reimbursement claims… Klein silently mumbled as he felt less and less confident.

Amyrius nodded and said to Bilt and Klein, "The plan will proceed as per normal.

"However, we need to sign a contract."

A contract? Klein resisted the pressure with great difficulty as he raised his head to look at Amyrius.

Amyrius didn’t provide a further explanation. He lifted up the paper and pen he had long prepared from the window sill and wrote something on it.

Every time he made contact with his pen, a golden glow would emit. The solemnity and holiness made it seem like he was penning a law.

Klein narrowed his eyes slowly as his vision turned blurry. He couldn’t help but lower his head again.

After an unknown period of time, Amyrius stopped writing and picked up a piece of paper. He said to Klein, “Sign your name at the end.

“If the conditions aren’t satisfactory, you can choose not to sign.”

Do you think I have or lack the guts to sign it? Klein lampooned as he watched Bilt stand up. He received the pen and paper and handed it to Klein.

The conditions on the piece of paper were few and simple. Most of them restricted Gehrman Sparrow’s actions when acting as Amyrius Rieveldt. It included, but wasn’t limited to, voluntarily exposing any problems, not using his identity to engage in acts which were adversarial to Amyrius, as well as not make any intimate contact with Miss Cynthia, etc.

I thought such important figures wouldn’t care about the chastity of their mistresses… This admiral is indeed an old-fashioned man… However, I’m not such a person either… Klein hid his curiosity and asked as though it was an academic question, “What if Miss Cynthia chooses to make intimate contact with me?”

In between the lines, he was saying that being too distant or resistant made it easier for Cynthia to notice a problem. He was asking how he should balance the act.

"It's fine," Amyrius said without any expression. "During the contract's validity, you will not have any desire or lack the ability to do it when facing her."

You can do that? This contract is rather powerful… Apart from a contract with spirit world creatures, this is the first time I'm seeing other contracts. Furthermore, the former used the power of the Underworld. This contract is only between two parties… Is this a demigod Beyonder power of Admiral Amyrius? The Arbiter pathway? Klein shot a glance at the dates and discovered that it lasted five days.

Is he confident that he will return within five days, or is his level only capable of implementing a contract for five days? Klein read the conditions once again before taking the fountain pen and wrote the name, Gehrman Sparrow.

With the final character written, he saw the words on the piece of paper emit a golden glow as they condensed into a resplendent luster.

Amidst the resplendent luster, the piece of paper rapidly dissipated and vanished, as though it had fused with the world's rules.

An invisible and faint gray fog gently rippled around him as Klein clearly sensed layers of indescribable restrictions placed on him.

These restrictions quickly melted into his body, temporarily becoming one with his Spirit Body and physical flesh.

The gray fog can block out bad and good luck from external sources to a certain extent, but it's unable to screen a contract I signed… That's right. If it can screen it, the contract with the messenger wouldn't have been valid… Klein gazed at Amyrius Rieveldt once again in enlightenment.

The admiral had already converged his might as he produced a dark gold charm in his palm.

On it were the symbols and magical labels representing the "Sword of

Judgment." Its entire body was converged and somber, giving one the feeling that it was part of a codex.

"This is a high-level charm using my blood, a Fourth Epoch ancient codex, and the royal family's Grade 0 Sealed Artifact," Amyrius said calmly. "Its name is Ninth Law. When it's injected with minute amounts of spirituality, it can produce a might that's similar to mine. This can be done even by ordinary people. Without it, you'll find it very difficult to pretend to be me."

Indeed, the might I show in a disguised state is only superficial. It's fine fooling others usually, but once there's a need to shock and awe any subordinate, that would be useless… Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

Amyrius continued, "With your present strength, you should be able to withstand its usage.

"Through it, you can indicate a necessary restriction on the target, making them be in an extremely disadvantageous state.

"This way, even if a demigod were to sound you out, you'll be able to scare him away.

"If no mishaps happen at the end of everything, and if you had no need to use it, then it will be yours to keep.

"It can be used for a year."

Klein was first taken aback before he felt a strong sense of delight.

He finally had another high-level charm ever since that time he used up the one which was created with the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

Although such an item had a time limitation and was single-use, a pro was that it didn't have any negative side effects. Of course, the stringent requirements that were needed to create one made them very rare in number.

As expected of a demigod. He's a lot more generous than Bilt… Bribing a tramp and an adventurer at the pirate admiral level are different in cost… As Klein thought in happiness, he silently extended his palm and received the high-level charm named Ninth Law.

Then, he saw Amyrius remove his belt.

After a brief silence, Klein kept his embarrassment in control as he took off his clothes without an expression on his face.

Soon, he had switched clothes with Amyrius and had donned the dark blue starched admiral's uniform.

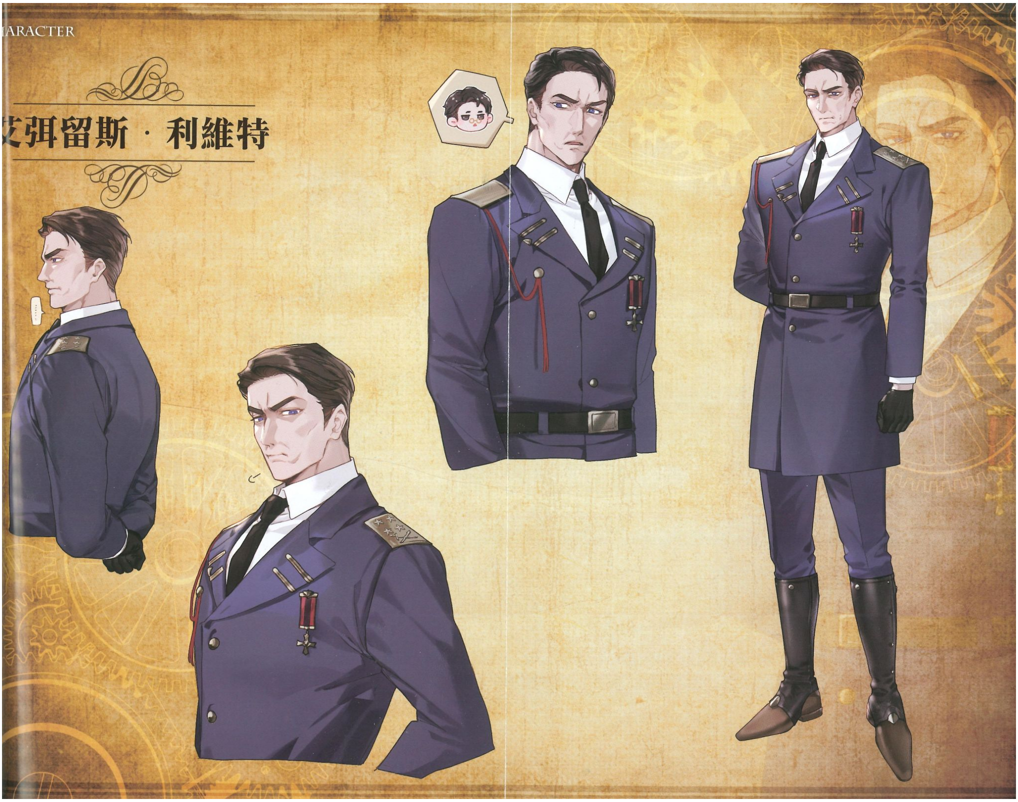
After watching Amyrius and Bilt walk off through a secluded path in the garden, Klein calmly adjusted his buttons and turned to look at the glass window.

Under the dark night and the crimson moonlight, the glass window was like a mirror. It vaguely reflected Klein's present looks.

He had black hair which was neatly combed back, blue and profound eyes, slightly drooping cheeks, a beardless face, and an old-fashioned and stern demeanor, all while dressed in a dark blue attire with a lanyard, medals, and epaulets.

Klein twitched the corners of his mouth as he silently said to himself, From this moment forth, I'm a navy admiral.

艾弭留斯・利維特



Chapter 623 - First Night

◆

As he touched the Ninth Law charm in his pocket, Klein adjusted his height and details regarding his appearance, making him look identical to Amyrius Rieveldt.

He walked out from the sundry room by using another door and walked down a silent corridor, back into the governor-general's office.

On the way, waiters and maidservants would occasionally pass by him, but no one dared to look straight at him. Just catching sight of his admiral uniform would have them scurrying to the sides as they bowed with their heads lowered.

Any person of the same height could probably find his way into the banquet hall when donning these clothes… I have to say, acting as an important figure can be easier than acting like an ordinary person… Klein continued looking straight as he maintained his somber attitude. He walked towards a path paved with black brick in an unhurried fashion.

He soon heard beautiful and melodic music as elegant wall lamps were burning with gas, illuminating the dark environment.

Just as Klein approached a break room, he saw a room open. A middle-aged man had been waiting there as he walked over.

The man had black hair and blue eyes. His facial features somewhat resemble Amyrius, but his forehead was higher and his eyebags were puffy. The corners of his mouth didn't droop.

He was none other than Amyrius Rieveldt's youngest brother, Aston Rieveldt.

This gentleman had once served in the navy, and he had been promoted to colonel after rendering meritorious services in the Southern Continent's colonies. Later, he got sick of his military career, and together with political balance, he agreed to a switch in career and became the governor-general.

In the five to six years he was in Oravi, due to the importance placed on the island's location and resources, he pushed for the Rieveldt family to mass purchase farmland and estates, allowing him to own plenty of property.

This wasn't completely obtained through his powers either. Aston and the Rieveldt family had paid a sufficient price, and they even took loans with the bank. It wasn't like the Balam east coast where land belonging to the Feysac people were forcefully bought at extremely low prices.

Of course, if he wasn't Oravi's Governor-general, and his elder brother wasn't the highest commander of the Central Sonia Sea's navy, the Rieveldt family wouldn't have so easily convinced their targets to sell such excellent farmland and estates.

Here comes the test… Klein calmly approached and stopped in front of Aston Rieveldt.

Aston looked around and asked in a deep voice, "Have you decided on that matter?"

What matter… Klein first felt blank before he recalled an introduction in the information he received—"if Aston requests for a private chat or asks for an answer to a certain matter, tell him that an answer will be given to him when departing from Oravi."

Admiral Amyrius really anticipated this. I just need to watch my attitude and tone. Yes, I also need to use the unique terms and pronunciations used by Loen aristocrats… Klein gently nodded and sternly said, "Wait a few more days.

"The answer will be given to you when departing from Oravi."

Aston didn't raise any doubts as he chuckled.

"You seem to be waiting for something to give you the strength to decide."

That matter that Admiral Amyrius has to do himself? Klein's heart stirred as he familiarly used the tone of high-level personnel.

"Keep your conjectures to yourself."

With that said, he took a step forward and walked towards the banquet hall.

Aston Rieveldt focused on his elder brother's back, his expression gradually turning cold. He then shook his head slightly.

After entering the banquet hall, Klein surveyed the area and walked towards the long table with food on it. From time to time, he would stop to exchange pleasantries with people who came near him.

During this process, he realized that he didn't need to understand the topics raised in any conversation. All he needed to do was nod occasionally, allowing the conversation to harmoniously progress until its end.

Indeed, the status of an important figure makes certain aspects of acting easy, but correspondingly, there are certain matters that can be difficult… Klein tore through one "obstacle" after another before finally arriving at the long table.

He casually picked up a plate and told himself that Admiral Amyrius liked fish, beef, and lobster, while disliking chicken and goose. Therefore, he avoided food like the roasted chicken and Backlund-styled roasted goose. He picked up some beef, fried Dragon-Bone Fish, and Odora lobster with butter and cheese.

As the metallic containers had their bottoms lined with asbestos, with red-hot charcoal burning under it or steaming-hot water, all of the food maintained an appropriate temperature. Klein nearly broke down, destroying his persona when he took the first bite.

He tried his best to maintain Admiral Amyrius's image as he held his plate and chatted with the port city's member of parliament, navy suppliers, etc. He seriously listened to what they had to say, stuffing food into his mouth from time to time.

He noticed that a young man in a tailcoat kept following behind him.

He had neat, blond hair that he combed backward. He had a receding hairline with light-blue eyes. He looked handsome and gentlemanly.

Identical to the picture. Amyrius's secretary, Luan… Klein controlled himself and didn't size him up. He wanted to fill his stomach before the end of the banquet.

Once out of the governor-general's office, Klein boarded the carriage which was guarded by bodyguards. He sat beside the wine cabinet.

The blond secretary, Luan, followed him in. As his leather boots stepped onto the thick, soft carpet, he silently inched towards a spot opposite Klein.

He sat there, but he only occupied a third of the seat.

The carriage began moving as Luan took out a stack of documents from the black briefcase he carried.

"Your Excellency, this is the Oravi naval base's ledger for the year 1349."

Klein extended his hand over and casually browsed through a few pages.

What? A pound for a roll of toilet paper? The naval base's bathroom was renovated twenty times a year? Klein did some simple math and discovered all sorts of ridiculous line items.

Isn't accounting such as this way too simple and obvious? I can even give them classes and specially teach them how to make claims! Klein seriously considered the attitude he should show.

From his point of view, the greatest difficulty in disguising as Amyrius was to fool Luan.

This wasn't to say that Governor-general Aston and Miss Cynthia weren't as familiar with Admiral Amyrius as his secretary. It was just that, as his younger brother, Aston might help his brother conceal the matter if he discovered something amiss after being given a hint. Similarly, as his mistress, Cynthia would be inclined to help conceal the matter for the admiral as his dependent.

Of course, the possibility that Cynthia was a spy couldn't be eliminated. There was still the matter of there being a chance of being used by a spy, but nothing could be as dangerous as Luan, whose duty was to monitor the admiral.

I can't expose any problems… What kind of attitude would Admiral Amyrius have when faced with such a report? Go into a rage, or pretend to be in a rage? No, the Oravi naval base personnel wouldn't be that daring to hand over a clearly problematic report as though he were blind. They must have a certain level of confidence and a tacit understanding between them… As the information didn't mention this, Klein could only make a judgment based on his experience.

Furthermore, he could confirm that either the Oravi naval base's report was beyond Admiral Amyrius's expectations or was determined to be of little importance. Just based on the schedule, it was something that could easily be dealt with.

Regardless of the possibilities, I have to use the attitude that a person of high standing will usually employ. That is to not indicate my stance… Klein closed the documents and handed it back to the blond secretary, Luan. He said expressionlessly, "Put it on my desk."

In between the lines, this sentence meant: "I'll look through it carefully." To others, it would mean something different based on their standpoints.

If the Oravi naval base had done it without warning, this meant that the admiral was somewhat dissatisfied and was awaiting an explanation.

If the two had reached a tacit, mutual understanding on the matter, it meant that Admiral Amyrius wished to obtain more favorable benefits in the matter. As for whether it would offend anyone, Klein didn't care. After all, he wouldn't be Amyrius Rieveldt in a few days time. He believed that a true demigod had the means to repress the anger of his subordinates.

In addition, he was grateful that Amyrius wasn't a demigod of the Church of Storms. Otherwise, he had to consider whether to nod his head and pass the report, or throw the document back in anger while throwing a few people in passing into the sea to feed the fishes.

"Yes, Your Excellency." The blond secretary, Luan, didn't change his expression. He stuffed the document back into his black briefcase as though he had long expected such a response.

On the way back, Klein leaned into the carriage according to Amyrius Rieveldt's habits. He half-closed his eyes as though he was contemplating certain matters, but in fact, he wasn't thinking of anything.

Luan maintained his silence and didn't speak at all.

Human-height iron-black street lamps were quickly left behind as the carriage drove close to the naval base before taking a bend into a house with a garden and lawn.

Just as Klein walked up the steps, a butler opened the door for him as servants lined the two sides, reverently awaiting his entrance.

The living room was decorated in a very classic manner. There were oil paintings of beautiful scenery hung up, limestone statues, simple and elegant vases, etc. A faint but lingering fragrance emanated in the room, one that reached into the heart.

Klein, who should've relaxed, ended up tensing up as he saw a beautiful lady walk towards him in a home gown.

She looked to be in her early twenties. Her blonde hair cascaded down, and when she cast her blue eyes over, it was as though there was a glow hidden within them. While filled with gentle feminineness, there were still some remnants of her adolescence. She was none other than Admiral Amyrius's mistress, Cynthia.

Klein held back his discomfort and allowed Amyrius's stern face to reveal a smile as he widened his arms.

Cynthia threw herself into his arms and tiptoed. With her cheeks by his cheek, she whispered with a smile, "Admiral, I've already heated the water for you in the bathtub."

This means she had someone monitor the end of the banquet… Being a mistress isn't something simple either… Admiral Amyrius does like to take hot baths so as to relax his thoughts… In order to ignore how close their cheeks were, Klein allowed his thoughts to wander.

As a straight man, he should've felt embarrassed while also being rather glad to be approached by such a beautiful member of the opposite sex. However, the temporary contract made him have zero urges. Hence, all that was left was awkwardness.

"Very good," Klein praised her as he gently pushed Cynthia away, having had nowhere to place them.

Knowing that the admiral didn't like to be intimate in front of the servants, Cynthia retreated and led Klein to the second floor. He was brought into the bathroom as he prepared a bathrobe for him.

After doing all of this, Cynthia instructed the servants not to come to the second floor unless they heard the bell ring. Then, she returned to the bedroom, took off all her clothes and changed into a nightgown made of silk.

Her nightgown revealed plenty of her chest. It was an alluring snow-white, and deep in her cleavage was a special necklace pendant. It was like a miniaturized black rhinoceros horn about the length of a finger segment.

Cynthia took off the necklace and stuffed it under her pillow. Amidst her blushing and hesitation, she left the bedroom and came outside the bathroom where the admiral was bathing. Mustering her strength, she pulled at the handle.

Creak. Her hand paused. She realized that the bathroom's door had been locked from the inside at some point in time.

With a blank look, Cynthia instinctively yanked at it again.

Creak. Creak. The bathroom's door didn't budge an inch.

Chapter 624 - Warning

◆

The bathroom was partitioned inside. The emanating steam covered the entire bathtub.

Apart from his head, Klein's entire body was soaked in the hot water. He lay there in such great comfort that he didn't even wish to move his toes.

What a beautiful night… If only there was no Cynthia outside. I still have to deal with her later… Klein sighed as he considered what excuse to use to avoid being intimate with her.

In accordance with Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt's traits, he decided to first use work as an excuse. After that would be the excuse of him not feeling well, him losing the ability to have sex, him needing some time to digest any medicine he had just taken, and how he had suddenly realized his true sexual orientation, making him find curly-haired baboons extremely attractive.

As for whether this would damage the admiral's image, Klein didn't feel the slightest bit of pressure. As long as he prevented Cynthia from suspecting that he was a fake Amyrius Rieveldt, he would've perfectly completed his mission.

The subsequent explanations for those excuses and how he finds an excuse to explain his recovery would all be Admiral Amyrius's problem. What has that got to do with me, Gehrman Sparrow? And what has Gehrman Sparrow's ruined reputation have to do with me, Sherlock Moriarty? Klein stood up in satisfaction as he walked out to the dry partition while dropping wet. He got a bath towel and dried himself.

After changing into a hanging bathrobe, Klein inhaled silently as though he had unlocked a major enemy in his quest—he opened the door to the bathroom.

Seeing the corridor empty, with only the light from the wall lamps on both sides illuminating the darkness, Klein felt slightly relieved and was no longer as tensed.

This is almost the same feeling as challenging a pirate admiral… As he mumbled, he realized a serious problem. He had no idea which of the rooms was the master bedroom or study.

Regardless, I have to inform Cynthia; otherwise, it would make Admiral Amyrius appear strange… Klein recalled the layout of similar houses in an attempt to accurately find the master bedroom.

At this moment, the door to the room diagonally across him creaked open. Cynthia, who was draped in a silk nightgown, walked over.

Her blonde hair appeared wet and messy as they cascaded down. There were even a few strands of hair fluttering in front of her blue eyes and bright-red lips. It hid the glow in her eyes as her lips were somewhat closed. She appeared extremely alluring under the dim environment.

The neckline of the silk nightgown was very open, as snow-whiteness and a deep cleavage was reflected in Klein's eyes.

"…"

Klein nearly raised his head to look at the ceiling to avoid the intense stimulation.

Calm down, calm down. You are Amyrius Rieveldt… Besides, you've seen a half-naked Demoness before… Compared to an Ailment Maiden, this lady's charms are clearly insufficient. Wait, why am I thinking about Demonesses? Who knows if they were formerly men or women…

Klein maintained his gaze as he sized her up and down with a "teasing" tone.

In that instant, he could sense that primal desire, but there was no response from his nether regions…

This is the result of the temporary contract? In fact, Admiral Amyrius didn't need to go through the trouble. Even if I have the urge, I'll be able to control myself… What kind of situation haven't I encountered before?

Yes… Cynthia is a little different from what the records say. Isn't it said that she became Amyrius's mistress about one to two years ago? With them not being able to meet each other most of the time, the Admiral has to coax her each time as she hadn't had her pent-up desires fulfilled? Why is she the one taking the initiative today?

Does she find her standing as his mistress unstable, or has she been switched? Ever since Klein became a Faceless, he felt that everyone was a fake.

Cynthia's eyelids were lowered. The courage she had mustered disappeared bit by bit under Amyrius's scrutiny. Her face was tainted with a horrified blush—she was embarrassed but also felt some pride.

Then, she heard him calmly instruct, "Help me prepare some coffee and place it in my study.

"I have many things to deal with tonight. You don't have to wait for me."

"…"

Cynthia raised her head suddenly, her embarrassed blushing still present.

She had momentarily failed to understand what Admiral Amyrius had said.

Klein secretly inhaled and went forward to hug her before kissing her gently on the forehead.

"I'll spend lots of time with you in a few days."

Such a response came from the provided information, but he had slightly changed the terms.

To be frank, if not for him having some prior understanding, Klein would've definitely believed that Admiral Amyrius would wear the same stoic face while spending time with his mistress, even when having sex. He looked stern in whatever he said and did; however, this demigod also had his gentle side when it came to his speech. He was just not that great at saying lovey-dovey words.

This also made him understand something else—many people could only be viewed from the surface, and it was impossible to imagine what they were like in private. For a Faceless to pull off a true disguise, they had to do meticulous investigations and have ample comprehension of the target. This was just like how a Magician never performed unprepared.

Cynthia revealed a clear look of disappointment, but she quickly restrained those feelings as she smiled.

"Alright.

"Admiral, your nightgown is in the room. A bathrobe isn't suitable for handling matters."

This is identical to the information. She's rather considerate and knows how to be understanding… Klein watched as Cynthia turned and entered the room. She pulled at the bell. As for him, he took this opportunity to take off his bathrobe and change into a dark red nightgown with trousers of the same color.

Cynthia attentively opened the door to the study and tidied up the slightly messy desk. Later, she waited for the maidservant to finish making the coffee before personally taking it and delivering it by hand.

During this process, Klein read the documents and information, acting as though he looked extremely professional. But in fact, he had little idea about the data and designs plans of ironclad warships and sail battleships. He was no different from an illiterate.

In this domain, all he knew were carriers, air domination, the main cannon guns, and turrets.

When he saw Cynthia silently leave and close the door behind her from the corner of his eye, Klein relaxed completely. He knew that he had finally survived the night.

Inside the master bedroom, Cynthia pursed her lips as she took out the necklace under her pillow and tightly clasped the item resembling a black rhinoceros horn which was the length of a finger segment.

She stood there and silently prayed, Oh great Mother Tree of Desire, please, make me more alluring, allowing Admiral Amyrius to be even more mesmerized by me, so that he can gain extreme pleasure from me and bear me a child…

†

Inside the quiet study, Klein flipped through the pile of documents placed in front of him. He followed the handling methods according to what the information indicated—he chose the simple ones and signed Amyrius Rieveldt’s name on them. The reason why he could mimic his signature was because Faceless allowed him to remember a target’s unique traits, while Clown gave him the precise control needed.

The complicated ones he couldn’t understand had notes written with the following vibe: “Continue studying the matter.”

After “busying” himself until midnight, Klein reached out to cover his mouth and yawned slightly.

This won't do. I need to sleep. I have plenty of challenges tomorrow. I have to maintain sufficient strength and energy… Klein thought for a moment and gave up the idea of returning to the master bedroom.

He raised his right hand and pressed down on his half-closed eyes. He pulled them down and moved his eyes to his nose bridge.

Following that, Klein opened up two slits where Klein's eyes originally were and used his flesh to produce a pair of fake eyes.

After becoming a Faceless, I'm really beginning to resemble a monster… If only I had such a godly technique back in school… He sighed silently. He half leaned his body as he kept his real eyes closed while his fake eyes were left open to "read" the documents.

His specialty as a Clown allowed him to maintain his balance. He remained motionless like a stone statue.

After an unknown period of time, Klein suddenly awoke from his dream. He sensed that there was a force attempting to pull him into a deep slumber before infiltrating him!

Who is it? I didn't do anything recently. Why would anyone enter my dream? That's not right. I'm now Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt… Klein's heart stirred as he immediately changed his looks. Even in his dreams, he appeared to be that demigod.

Meanwhile, he felt his consciousness tightly contract as though it was avoiding something.

This is different from an ordinary dream infiltration. I've clearly regained my lucidity, and I can escape by myself and wake up, but I'm unable to leave this dreamscape… Klein found plenty of oddities as he tried a few attempts.

He knew very well that he was sleeping, and he could sense and control his body outside the dream, but no matter what he did, he was unable to wake up!

Right on the heels of that, he saw a blurry white gas form an indiscernible figure.

Klein narrowed his eyes slightly as he tore through the dream with his psyche, allowing his real body to move silently. Then, he put his palm into his pocket to touch the Ninth Law charm.

At that moment, the blurry figure calmly said, “Do not participate in the matter regarding Aston.

“This is a warning.”

…Quite impressive to warn a demigod… What is Aston and the others thinking of doing? Klein thought for a moment and emanated his spirituality, allowing the Ninth Law charm to produce a deep sense of dominance. Then, he imitated it and produced the same feeling in his dream. He said with a deep voice, “Who are you?

“Who do you represent?”

The blurry figure was taken aback before he said with a laughing sigh, “As expected of Law Weaver Amyrius. You actually managed to maintain your lucidity in such a situation.”

No, no, no. Although Amyrius has a title of Law Weaver, he’s not adept in such matters. You should say ‘as expected of Lord Fool’… Klein lampooned and sternly said, “Answer my question.”

The blurry figure chuckled.

“You don’t need to know who I am.

“As a demigod, you should be clear that everything is fated, likewise for the times.

“Do not resist the fate of an era, which is also the trend of the times. This will only make you a sacrifice of history.”

Fate of an era, the trend of the times, sacrifice of history… When he heard this, Klein suddenly thought of a term: Twilight Hermit Order!

However, Klein didn’t say a word, nor did he say those words. This was because Admiral Amyrius would be him for the next few days.

Seeing Law Weaver Amyrius fall into silence, the blurry figure didn’t say another word. it turned into a emanating white gas before vanishing from the dream.

Chapter 625 - Successful First Day

◆ ◆ ◆

Phew. What exactly are Amyrius and Aston Rieveldt scheming about? To attract a warning from the Twilight Hermit Order… Unless it can truly change the times and influence the direction of history, this ancient and secretive organization wouldn't even show itself or reveal its identity… Klein stood by the side of a magnificent castle in his dream, thoughtfully watching the spot where the blurry figure had disappeared from.

Amidst his thoughts, he suddenly snapped awake and was no longer as certain about his theory.

The ploy which Admiral Amyrius and his brother are planning might not really influence the trends of the times!

Although the Twilight Hermit Order only involves itself in important matters, as a leader of another secret organization, Klein clearly knew that apart from carrying out the organization's own mission and values, it also provided help among members.

From Emperor Roselle's diary, I can tell that the Twilight Hermit Order has members from different domains, standings, and Sequences. Apart from a number of them fervently believing in the original Creator as they await the coming of twilight and the awakening of the true god, the rest are only seeking to benefit themselves. Under such circumstances, as long as the organizer doesn't strictly implement order, there would naturally be missions entrusted between one another.

Perhaps, the matter Aston Rieveldt is planning affects a particular member of the Twilight Hermit Order who was made aware of it ahead of time. He entrusted the matter to another member and used the excuse of "the trend of the times" to warn Amyrius Rieveldt…

Working from this logic, the concealed matter is rather interesting… With the level of the Twilight Hermit Order, Law Weaver Amyrius, who's likely only a Sequence 4, isn't too difficult a target to eliminate. I even suspect that they can mobilize up to three or more angels in a manner that's far superior to the seven Churches…

Then, why didn't they take action directly and instead gave an advanced warning?

Back in Backlund, if an angel were to appear, who knows if some true god would descend upon the land. Therefore, the Twilight Hermit Order had no choice but to use a more roundabout and discreet method to deal with Duke Negan. But this is the Oravi Island. Even High-Sequence Beyonders aren't stationed here…

The warning is because the Twilight Hermit Order advocates secrecy and doesn't wish to expose itself, so they're trying not to use overly intense methods, or is it the case that the member who assigned the mission doesn't wish to see Amyrius killed? To "him," this admiral is still of use, so he's unwilling to give up on him; even if Amyrius might be involved in something disadvantageous towards him?

Then, his true identity seems to be confined to certain circles…

Klein made a bold assumption, but with no way of verifying it, he could only temporarily put the matter aside and throw it to the back of his mind.

It has nothing to do with me since it's the Twilight Hermit Order who's warning Admiral Amyrius… As long as I don't involve myself with anything for the next few days, I should be able to last until the mission is completed. Everything else that develops afterward has nothing to do with me! With my present status, I'm still far from investigating the Twilight Hermit Order. I don't even have the right to probe deeper… Klein kept to his beliefs and turned his sights to his Tarot Club.

Heh, I just discovered a problem. Other secret organizations have their own aims and values at their core while mixing in the aid that members provide each other. As for our Tarot Club, it's more impressive. There are only missions given to each other, without any aims or values… No, there are aims and values among some of the members. For example, my dear Moon believes that this is an organization borne to save the world… The Fool Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh before exiting the dreamscape.

He rubbed away the fake eyes and moved his real eyes back to their original position in a very fluid motion when he suddenly paused.

That wasn't a simple dream infiltration! Klein frowned slightly as he recalled what had happened.

That was because the power had first attempted to pull him into a deep slumber!

Back then, I had already fallen asleep, so why would he do so? Captain once said that a Nightmare can directly see a dream, so it's impossible to commit such a mistake… Therefore, the visitor hadn't used the Beyonder powers of a Nightmare, but something else… He located me via the spirit world? Or after he knew my location, he used the sea of collective subconscious, as described by Ma'am Daly, to directly influence my Beyonder powers?

Yes… I'm more inclined to the second reason. That's the only thing that can explain why I couldn't escape my dream despite having regained lucidity. It's recorded in Emperor Roselle's diary that during his participation in the suspected Twilight Hermit Order, his entry into the gathering was based on a realistic dreamscape that encompassed the entire continent. A realistic dreamscape…

Klein nodded and chuckled silently with a sigh.

Admiral Amyrius definitely didn’t expect the Twilight Hermit Order’s warning.

It’s only because he hired me. If it were anyone else, the stand-in would’ve already been exposed! That Ninth Law charm was well worth it.

†

City of Silver, inside the spire, in the room belonging to Chief Colin Iliad.

Derrick Berg, who had been summoned, saw the grizzled, scarred Demon Hunter once again as he felt uneasy.

After he finished his greetings, Colin sized him up and asked, “You’ve advanced?”

“Yes, I’m already a Sequence 7 Solar High Priest.” Derrick had long registered his advancement, so there was no need to hide the matter.

Colin’s light-blue eyes which had seen the vicissitudes of time moved away as he casually asked, “Do you have the subsequent potion formulas?”

The past Derrick would’ve directly answered “no,” but the present him was used to thinking over it before answering.

If I say “no,” my subsequent advancement with the lack of experience to support it will definitely make me suspicious. But if I were to answer “yes,” Chief might ask me to use it to exchange for items so as to nurture more Sun pathway Beyonders. This will no doubt prove that I’m lying… As Derrick’s mind raced, he answered sincerely, “No.”

From his point of view, experience could be forged.

Colin nodded as if nothing was out of the ordinary.

“In about two months, we’ll arrange an exploration mission for you. The team will secure the route and ruins we found with the help of Jack before we make a second clearing.

“I hope you will receive greater rewards then.”

“Yes, Your Excellency.” Just as Derrick answered, he suddenly recalled Shepherd Lovia.

†

After daybreak, Klein changed into his clothes with the help of Cynthia, enjoyed a sumptuous breakfast, and took the carriage under the escort of the admiral’s bodyguards to the Oravi naval base.

In the morning, under the companionship of the rear admirals and colonels, he inspected the conditions of the ships, ordnance stores, the newly built training grounds, and the bathroom which had been renovated twenty times over the past year.

After having lunch at the navy mess hall, Klein followed the schedule and summoned all officers above the rank of major to take in their reports.

During this process, he had a thick black-bound notebook placed in front of him. Inside were some of the questions that Admiral Amyrius had specially prepared for him.

“In the past few decades, due to the embezzlement of salaries and the harsh conditions sailors suffer, Oravi has had seventeen revolts by the lower ranks. After the passing of the Imperial Navy Latest Act, and thanks to Your Excellency’s guidance, we’ve already had such deep-seated cultural issues improved. There haven’t been any such cases in the past three years…” A colonel from the Oravi naval base stood on the spot and reported the entire situation.

He would raise his head from time to time to look at Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt and discovered that he was listening very seriously while taking notes. The scribbling sounds made none of the officers dare to not be at their best. Similarly, they took note of the important points.

The colonel who received a positive response unknowingly spoke up louder while reporting.

How boring… Klein held his fountain pen and had randomly drawn creatures like turtles, cuttlefish, and dragons on his black-bound notebook.

As he had never studied sketching before, his drawings were a ghastly sight to see.

Later on, he even drew intersecting lines and began playing Five in a Row with himself—a game created by Emperor Roselle.

Of course, his rich experience and his conscientiousness of his identity made him raise his head from time to time to give the reporter a stern look in the eye while giving a nod of encouragement. As for what the person had said, he didn't pay any attention to it. All he did was occasionally remember a few words.

During the briefing, Klein shot a glance at the blond secretary, Luan, to get him to represent himself to mention a few points that needed clarification.

Everything followed the schedule.

Towards the end, Klein flipped the black-bound notebook a few pages forward and used the accent of a Loen aristocrat to recite the report which the secretary had drafted and the admiral had edited. Then, according to the actual situation, he used the common terms Amyrius would use and added a few conjunctions and pet phrases, such as, "There are a few points," and "Let me continue on a few more points."

It was already evening by the time the briefing ended. Under Luan's companionship, Klein left the Oravi naval base and headed for the residence of a naval supplier where a banquet was held.

At the banquet, they casually chatted about the price fluctuations of port goods. As for Klein, he mimicked Admiral Amyrius, and he would mention a dated joke from Backlund from time to time, garnering a warm response from everyone as he was praised for his humor.

After successfully acting until the banquet ended, Klein boarded the carriage, feeling exhausted in body and mind.

I have to take note of my speech and actions every minute and second. Engaging in true acting for a day is more tiring than battling a pirate admiral… Klein silently sighed, as he closed his eyes halfway without a change in expression.

He knew that the most difficult stage of the day wasn't over!

He still had to deal with Cynthia!

†

Inside the villa, Cynthia learned from the attendant who had gone out to make inquiries that Admiral Amyrius was about to return.

She quietly returned to her bedroom, took out the tiny black rhinoceros horn pendant, and used a metallic plate to scratch off tiny bits of powder, mixing it into the hot water inside a white porcelain teacup.

After repeating the honorific name of the Mother Tree of Desire seven times, she waited nearly a minute before lifting the teacup in hope, cleanly downing it.

Chapter 626 - Amyrius's Decision

◆

Looking at the lights emanating out from the villa in the darkness, Klein spent several seconds mentally preparing himself before alighting the carriage. He followed the three-layered staircase and came to the door, where the admiral's bodyguards and servants were lined up at the sides, before stepping in.

Seeing Cynthia wearing conservative home clothes due to the existence of others, Klein silently heaved a sigh of relief as he maintained his stoic expression and slowly walked over.

Cynthia's smile became more and more brilliant as she shifted the strands of her hair to the back of her ear, revealing her fair and slender neck. Her neckline didn't have any marks left behind by a necklace.

Seeing Secretary Luan and the admiral's bodyguards head for their own rooms or moving outside the building to take up their patrolling positions, Klein pulled Cynthia into an embrace and said in a deep voice, "There's no need to prepare any hot water. Give me a quiet room. I need to spend the night alone."

"…" Cynthia used her eyes to express her puzzlement and blankness.

Klein surveyed his surroundings and softly said, "Something unexpected happened. I need to enter an extremely quiet state to recover."

As he spoke, he raised his right hand to pull at his collar, revealing a patch of faint-colored fleshy granules.

His problematic physical condition with an abnormal reaction was an excuse Admiral Amyrius had prepared for the tramp stand-in, so as to avoid Cynthia's attempts of intimacy without exposing a problem. To make it more convincing, Klein used his Faceless powers to provide "evidence."

Cynthia turned agape as she nearly screamed. Thankfully, she covered her mouth in time and held it in.

The moment Cynthia recovered from her shock, she immediately asked nervously, her concern and emotions evident, "Are you fine? Do you need to see a doctor?"

"No, this is the price needed for powerful strength. I'll recover given two to three days of solitude." Klein had already found the excuse needed for the future.

"O-okay." Cynthia hurriedly helped Klein up to the second floor and led him into the quietest room.

As for the master bedroom, she had already lit some scented candles and scattered some faint-smelling extract, so she didn't offer him some.

Seeing the door close, Klein slowly exhaled. He changed out of his admiral's uniform and lied down in satisfaction.

Not far away in the master bedroom, the worried and disappointed Cynthia was soaking herself in hot water before sleeping.

She looked at the ceiling with an unfocused gaze as she couldn't help but recall the exhortations of her parents from a few days ago.

They wanted her to charm Admiral Amyrius and hopefully be impregnated with his child. This way, their family would be able to take on more businesses with the Central Sonia Sea's naval fleet.

Admiral seems to have many matters hidden in his heart, so much that something abnormal has happened to his body… Cynthia's thoughts wandered as they slowly dispersed.

Without her realizing it, she had fallen asleep.

During this period, she found her digestive system turning warm as her body felt a little hot. In her dream, she seemed to see a pitch-black sky which was dotted with resplendent stars.

One of them seemed to notice her gaze as it produced a brighter glow.

†

The next morning, the invigorated Klein enjoyed a sumptuous breakfast which was nothing spectacular to speak of. Once again, he was surrounded by the admiral's bodyguards as he arrived at the Oravi naval base and was placed in the most luxurious and spacious office.

According to Admiral Amyrius's habits, he would spend some alone time every two or three days to study and master his Beyonder powers to a deeper extent and produce more effective techniques. Therefore, Klein spent most of the day without being disturbed, with him only needing to handle some simple work.

Inside the quiet and spacious office, Klein leisurely paced about or flipped through books from the bookshelf. From time to time, he would put his palm into his pockets to touch the Ninth Law charm to release some of its powerful might. This was to make Secretary Luan, who was outside, believe that there was nothing wrong with Admiral Amyrius.

After some time, Klein felt sleepy and decided to take a short nap.

At this moment, he heard knocking at the door.

There's something important… Klein frowned.

Something that made Secretary Luan disturb Admiral Amyrius's focused training was definitely nothing simple!

“Come in,” Klein converged his emotions and answered with a deep voice.

The handsome blond man, Luan, turned the handle and entered. He held a telegram in his hand.

He said with a suppressed voice, “Your Excellency, a telegram from Backlund.

“Mr. Aston has been relieved of his post as governor-general. He will temporarily be replaced by the city council’s chairman.

“It’s said that the new governor-general will arrive today.”

Aston Rieveldt has been relieved of his post as governor-general? Has their secret been discovered? That’s right. The Twilight Hermit Order has already warned me, no—Amyrius. It means that they had long grasped the actual matter. With another member cranking the wheel, the matter will likely go through a series of position changes, putting an end to the matter… A warning was given the previous night, and action was taken today. They must’ve prepared for quite a while… Yes, that can be seen from the fact that the new governor-general will arrive today… Klein was first alarmed before he felt that the matter was within reason.

He mimicked the attitude Admiral Amyrius would have when faced with a major problem by pacing back and forth before saying with a stern expression, “I’m aware.”

Klein didn’t express his views or pass any orders, appearing extremely staid.

However, it was because he hadn’t decided on a response.

We have a saying from the Foodaholic Empire, “moving is not as good as staying put.” I wonder if Roselle had translated this… Klein lampooned as he gave a self-deprecating jest.

Luan raised his head and glanced at Admiral Amyrius without saying a word before silently leaving the office.

Phew… Klein paced about once again as he considered what Admiral Amyrius would do if he were standing here.

This was something important that had happened outside of his expectations; therefore, Klein could only infer from Amyrius's character, experiences, as well as some of the personal descriptions in the information provided to him.

He's a conservative person. Even while he was a Mid- and Low-Sequence Beyonder and was on all kinds of different ships, he very rarely took risks… He believes himself to be a Loen aristocrat who values family, children, and emotions. He's a gentleman who's of good bearing and garners the affection of women. Eh, this point is open to debate. With his standing and status, even a curly-haired baboon would garner the affection of men and women, no—perhaps even more. At the very least, a curly-haired baboon doesn't tell dated jokes… Information ran through Klein's mind as they intertwined to form a multi-faceted image of Admiral Amyrius.

While in his deep thought, he heard knocking at his door once again.

"Come in." Klein instantly tensed up.

Luan entered and pointed outside.

"Your Excellency, Mr. Aston wishes to meet you."

Why is Aston here? He came to Amyrius to seek his protection? Or does he plan on making a desperate struggle? Klein narrowed his eyes slightly, realizing that he couldn't make a decision for Admiral Amyrius.

What would he do? After receiving a warning from the Twilight Hermit Order, he should already realize that the matter has been exposed. The target was long prepared, so with his conservative nature, it can be imagined that his decision would be…

However, he greatly values family. He even provided some of Aston Rieveldt's interesting tidbits. It's not hard to tell that there's the concern and love for his younger brother in this matter… He doesn't like cannabis and tobacco. Drinking is just for socializing purposes. Apart from being a little caught up with beautiful women, there's nothing seriously wrong with him…

He greatly values family… Family… Klein's thoughts raced as he fully immersed himself in Amyrius's identity, fully experiencing his hidden feelings for his family and the importance he placed on it.

Family… At that instant, he seemed to turn into Amyrius, but he was able to analyze the various problems in a detached manner.

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, Klein heard himself using a somewhat unfamiliar tone, saying, "Tell him that I have many matters to deal with. I don't have the time to meet him.

"Also, buy him a ticket back to Backlund."

Luan seemed to have expected it as he retracted his gaze and replied, as though everything was normal, "Yes, Your Excellency."

As he watched Luan leave the office to find Aston Rieveldt outside, Klein gently sighed like the real Amyrius Rieveldt.

He knew that Amyrius would've made the same choice if he had returned early.

This was family, something he valued greatly!

With their scheme completely exposed, there was no way Amyrius would've exhausted his last chip on a bet and place his family at risk of destruction. As long as he didn't participate in it, and as long as he's still a demigod, the Rieveldt family wouldn't suffer any overly serious damage even if he isn't able to remain as the highest commander of

Central Sonia Sea.

And to get his secretary to buy his tickets for him made it clear that Amyrius still treated Aston as his brother. It was a warning to others not to harm him before they figured out what was happening.

After nearly a minute, Luan returned and said, “Your Excellency, Mr. Aston has left.”

Amyrius greatly values family… Klein fell silent for two seconds before asking in a deep voice, his back facing his secretary, “Did he say anything?”

Luan answered truthfully, “He said that you are indeed a cold person by nature.”

The corners of Klein’s lips curled slightly as he produced an unfeeling smile.

This was an instinctive reaction; however, with him completely in character as Amyrius, he believed that the admiral would’ve had the same reaction.

The feeling and emotions were the same!

For the rest of the time, Klein sat in his office and didn’t meet anyone, nor did he deal with any official business. All he did was occasionally listen to his secretary report to him about the situation on Oravi Island.

Nothing happened until the arrival of the new governor-general.

In the evening, he didn’t attend the banquet he was supposed to attend, and he returned to his villa. As he saw Cynthia walk towards him, he hugged her.

Then, he calmly said, “Aston has been relieved of his post as governor-general.”

All his sighs and pain seemed to be condensed into that seemingly emotionless sentence.

“I heard about it. It should be fine, right?” Cynthia asked anxiously.

Klein closed his eyes and didn’t mention it again. All he did was give soft, terse reply.

That sentence was the most obvious expression of his emotions as a stern, old-fashioned, and conservative high-ranking man.

Chapter 627 - Late into the Night

◆

Cynthia could vaguely sense the deep pain and helplessness inside Admiral Amyrius's heart. Without speaking further, she hugged him tightly and used her company to calm his mood.

After a simple dinner, Klein took a hot bath and entered the quietest guest room once again. He got into bed and stared at the ceiling in a daze.

Klein knew that with him having fully immersed himself in the "character" of Admiral Amyrius, Amyrius's helplessness towards fate and the pain he needed to hide had resonated with his past experiences.

If I hadn't figured out the concept of getting into character and being detached, then I might've lost myself… Heh heh, this is like some actors in my past life. They get too into character and are unable to detach themselves from it, causing them to suffer from mental problems… And to a Beyonder, mental problems might end up magnified… As Klein wallowed in his gloom, he got to learn what kind of person he was.

I never expected that a navy admiral who enjoys a high standing, a demigod saint, would still be faced with such helpless and painful experiences… Strength can bring abundance, but it's not a solution to everything… Everyone wears masks, and this is the truest side of a demigod… Klein watched as the crimson moonlight turned brighter, dyeing all the furniture in the room red.

At that moment, through the resonating feelings with Admiral

Amyrius's experience and the contrasting differences, as well as the experience from his previous acting, Klein established a more multifaceted and realistic image of Amyrius. He also gained a clearer picture of his blurry self.

A person who's very sentimental;

A person from Earth, but to a certain extent, a person who has been reconstructed into a new person because of the fusion with Klein Moretti's memory fragments;

A person who didn't spend too much time with the Nighthawks but has had that period of time deeply influence his actions and choices;

A person who tries to play safe and is afraid of danger but is able to change his mind at the critical moment;

A person who truly wants to skive, eat delicious food, travel, and enjoy life, but he has no choice but to be busy with more important matters;

A person who likes beautiful women, but he doesn't give himself up to pleasure to keep to his principles;

A person who loves money but is willing to spend large sums of money for his siblings;

A person who hides his pain inside while showing a smile to others;

A person who's used to lampooning inwardly but appears gentlemanly on the surface;

A person who can overcome his psychological traumas but never crosses his bottom line;

A person who feels embarrassed for his acting;

†

He's also a guardian, a miserable wretch that is constantly fighting against threats and madness! the corners of Klein's mouth curled up as he silently added.

These thoughts flashed through his mind as he seemed to come into contact with his true "self."

Without realizing it, Klein fell asleep, his body and mind at peace.

†

Inside the master bedroom, Cynthia had also fallen asleep.

She was dressed in a nightgown with her legs bare. She had a few layers of her blanket in between her legs as she gently grinded against them.

Her hand subconsciously scratched her skin, forming red streaks across them as tiny bumps were produced.

In her dream, she saw the illusory and surreal cosmos, as well as that bright star that emitted its light at her.

Her vision was pulled closer to it as she could slowly discern the star.

†

Phew… Klein suddenly awoke from his dream as he still had an indescribable scene still seemingly burned into his eyes.

Why did I have such a dream? He frowned as he turned his head in disbelief.

Just now, not only had he dreamed of Cynthia, who was dressed in a silk nightgown, but he also had a sexual relationship with her. He even dreamed of the naked body of Demoness of Pleasure Sharon, the exquisite doll-like Miss Sharron, Miss Justice whose looks were relatively blurry, Trissy Cheek, Tracy, and all the beautiful women he had met before. Then, he gave himself up to pleasure as he engaged in a myriad of positions.

To most Beyonders and ordinary people, this might've been a normal response from suppressing his body when recently faced with temptation, but as a Seer, a dream had a very special meaning!

Klein quickly observed his body and realized he was still erect, semen flooding out from his penis and causing stains everywhere.

This isn't a Seer's dream revelation, but the result of an external influence… There's an enemy! Klein was alarmed as he quickly made up his mind.

At the same time, he cautiously got out of bed and quickly changed into his admiral uniform.

This way, he had the Ninth Law charm and Creeping Hunger on him, equipping him with potent self-preservation powers.

As he wasn't clear of the present situation, Klein didn't attempt to head above the gray fog. He continued viewing himself as Amyrius.

With a staid expression, Klein carefully walked to the door and reached out his hand to grab the handle.

At that instant, he seemed to finally find the connection with the real world as he heard the chaos and din outside the door.

There were clear chewing sounds, debaucherous moaning, angry roaring, and sharp urging.

What exactly happened? Everything was normal just moments ago! Klein gulped a mouthful of saliva as he used Cogitation to maintain the necessary calm.

He had been using Spirit Vision to observe the situation outside the villa every day and had not discovered any problems.

Where are the admiral's bodyguards? Where's Secretary Luan? Klein found the entire ordeal strange and terrifying the more he considered the situation before him.

He touched the Ninth Law charm with one hand and made the deep domineering aura emanate, repressing the unease that was wafting through the air.

Exerting strength in his left hand, Klein twisted the handle and opened the door.

Before he took a step forward, he saw a red-vested attendant sitting opposite him.

The attendant had many cooked and raw food placed in front of him. There was steak, mutton, Dragon-Bone Fish, and Oravi lobster.

At this moment, the attendant picked up a huge fish that seemed to have just stopped struggling, raised his head, and smiled at Klein with a turbid look.

"Admiral, I have always envied your food…"

His stomach was different from before. It was bloated as though he was seven or eight months pregnant.

Just as he said that, the attendant raised his arms and bit into the raw Dragon-Bone Fish, forcefully ripping out a piece of thick flesh.

Fresh red blood dribbled from the corners of his mouth as his chewing sounds sent a chill down Klein's back.

The attendant hurriedly gulped as he swallowed the food in his mouth. His bloated stomach trembled as though he would blow up at any moment.

This is the instinctive reaction to restrict one's appetite… Klein observed the attendant carefully, and for some reason, he recalled the tramp stand-in who had died of a sudden illness due to gorging.

He didn't spend too much time thinking or making attempts to rescue the attendant who was ravenously consuming the food. This was because he knew that nothing would be effective unless he resolved the matter at its roots.

Klein moved his feet and followed his spiritual intuition's guidance, carefully walking towards the master bedroom.

At the door, there were two maidservants. One of them was sitting on the other as she bent her back, strangling the other by the neck.

Wearing a beaming smile, she shook the maidservant beneath her as she hurriedly urged her, "Quick, quickly praise me!

"Quick, quickly praise me!"

She desires acknowledgment… Klein frowned and took a few steps closer, grabbing onto the collar of the maidservant at the very top.

He threw the maidservant to the other side of the wall, slamming her to the wall with a force strong enough to make anyone faint.

However, this didn't prevent the maidservant from getting to her feet.

The maidservant at the bottom kept yawning without opening her eyes. Even though her neck was being wrangled, she appeared as though she hadn't had enough sleep.

Such a scene… Klein instantly had the urge to escape and seek help from the Church or military.

However, the strongest person on Oravi Island was none other than Admiral Amyrius!

And I'm Amyrius at the moment… However, once the situation turns for the worse, I should flee when the time calls for it. I shouldn't act at the cost of my life… Klein pushed open the ajar master bedroom door, his scalp tingling with numbness.

The first thing he heard behind the door was pleasurable moaning that gave itself up to one's primal instincts. Following that, a smell that made his heart race and sent blood gushing to his nether regions inundated his olfactory senses.

In addition, there was an eclectic mix of all sorts of bodily fluids. A scene of indulging pleasure couldn't help but surface in Klein's mind

Right on the heels of that, Klein saw the blond secretary, Luan.

He stood by the door, looking inside with an overlooking and cold manner. His arrogance was extremely real.

Upon sensing someone enter, he turned his head and discovered it was Admiral Amyrius.

His expression and gaze didn't change, as though he was looking at an ordinary, unimportant person.

This secretary is usually very reverent, but he's actually such a prideful person? Klein originally wanted to question Luan who seemed to possess some reason, but he saw him shift his gaze to look into the middle of the master bedroom from a height.

He only looks normal… Klein traced Luan's gaze and discovered a fair body that was three meters tall in the middle of the master bedroom.

It had brownish-green lumps growing on its surface that resembled tree warts. Some parts were cracked open, revealing organs that resembled flowers.

It had the bodyguards and the male attendants gathered around it as they either stood or knelt, prostrating or floating as they mated with those organs, letting out deep grunting sounds.

The other bodyguards and maidservants of varying numbers were scattered across the carpet, enjoying each other's bodies to their heart's content.

In addition, "tree warts" and "flowers" grew from the tall fair body, as well as brown "branches" that extended out as they participated in every promiscuous act of pleasure with the people present.

What kind of monster is this… Klein had his knowledge of mysticism overturned once again. He lowered his left palm and prepared for battle.

At this moment, the terrifying body which towered three meters tall turned a head over.

It was a female. She had blonde hair and blue eyes. She had a high nose bridge and plump lips. She was none other than the beautiful Cynthia with hints of her youthfulness!

As the "tree branches" danced while the "flowers" opened, Cynthia looked down at Klein with flushed cheeks as she said with hints of embarrassment, "Admiral, I want… I want to have a child with you…"

Chapter 628 - Prohibition

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon seeing Cynthia's huge fair body with tree warts and flowers growing on it as though she was a tree, as well as hearing her shy, reluctant request, Klein couldn't help but shudder as his hair stood on end.

Such a scene exceeded a horror conceivable by human imagination. He had never encountered something like this even in his dreams.

If he were himself back when facing Megose in Tingen, Klein definitely would've been affected by such a scene. He would've temporarily lost his ability to react due to the horror and panic, but after experiencing so much, he was an experienced Beyonder in the true sense of the word. In the moment that Cynthia's words entered his ears, the glove on his left hand had already changed colors.

It had turned black, emitting a noble and sinister feeling. This meant that Klein had activated Creeping Hunger and had switched to Wormtongue Mithor's soul, giving him the powers of a Baron of Corruption!

At that instant, he distorted Cynthia's words, turning "Admiral, I want to have a child with you" to "Admiral, I only wish to have a child with you."

This way, Klein believed that the bodyguards and male attendants around the tree-like monster would be pushed away, far away by Cynthia, after having her will distorted, giving them a chance for a breather.

As for whether he would expose himself as a fake Admiral Amyrius, he didn't care. At this moment, anyone who was still bothered about whether the true acting would be successful would definitely be someone with a serious case of obsessive-compulsive disorder, and he clearly wasn't.

In addition, in an environment with all sorts of desires being magnified to the limit, Klein suspected that the others who had been influenced weren't paying attention to the battle or the actual situation.

The Baron of Corruption's Distortion power was activated silently, but Klein was appalled to discover that nothing changed with Cynthia or the men's actions. They weren't affected at all!

I've already used Distortion… The mutated Cynthia is able to directly resist such an influence… Klein's pupils constricted as he hurriedly jumped to the side.

A brown tree branch sprouted out from where he was standing as a sticky flower bloomed at its tip.

The flower was abnormally large. As it bloomed, it seemed like it was about to swallow a person whole.

Although Klein had never seen cannibalistic flowers in the Southern Continent's rainforests, he didn't believe that they were any less terrifying or ridiculous as the one before him!

Pa! Pa! Pa!

Similar branches drilled out from the walls, floor, and ceiling as they chased after Klein with their moist flowers.

During this process, the flowers bit down on Secretary Luan's head, as well as the bodyguards, male attendants, and maidservants who were gyrating in pleasure on the surrounding carpet.

At this moment, having learned the lesson that his Distortion powers would be resisted, Klein didn't hesitate to pull out his right hand, a dark gold high-level charm clasped tightly in his palm.

Ninth Law!

He originally didn't plan on using the charm so quickly. It wasn't because he couldn't bear to use it, but he wished to engage in a longer battle to determine what Cynthia was good at after mutating into a monster. Only then could he target her weaknesses. After all, the Ninth Law was unable to make a general prohibition, and the clause had to be sufficiently specific. For example, it couldn't make Beyonder powers ineffective in the area, but it could specify the nullification of a specific Beyonder power. To use it to its fullest, he needed to observe carefully and make sound judgment!

However, the present situation was forcing Klein to use his trump card. Otherwise, he suspected that he had no means of damaging this tree-like monster!

If the Ninth Law charm isn't able to create an environment that allows me to kill the monster, I'll have to immediately escape from the villa with its help. I will lead Cynthia outside and find a chance to pray. I'll use the Sea God Scepter above the gray fog to bombard it with attacks! Just as the thought flashed in his mind, Klein, who had been constantly jumping amidst the attacking tree branches and flowers, solemnly chanted a word in ancient Hermes, "Law!"

As the activation incantation resounded, the dark gold charm in Klein's palm instantly turned ice-cold. It was a coldness that seemed to make one lose any emotions.

At that instant, Klein reached an extremely calm state. In the moment he threw out the Ninth Law charm, his thoughts rapidly surfaced as he considered what to prohibit.

His first reaction was to prohibit the generation of any desire, but he knew that it was too general. Therefore, he thought of changing to the desire to procreate; after all, Cynthia's desire was to have a child with Admiral Amyrius. The influence she had on her surroundings was a result of this!

Just as the Ninth Law charm was flying in midair, turning into bits of dark gold beams of light that scattered into the surroundings, Klein suddenly thought of a problem.

Cynthia was only an ordinary person prior to this!

This is a certain fact!

Over the past three nights, Klein had used Spirit Vision, divination, and other methods to repeatedly confirm that Cynthia wasn't a Beyonder.

Similarly, she would've long been discovered by Admiral Amyrius, who could distinguish between ordinary people and Beyonders.

Therefore, her sudden transformation into a mutated monster was a problem he needed to pay close attention to!

Could it be like Megose? She became a vessel of an evil god's descent through some form of ritual? No, if there's a ritual, it's impossible for me not to discover it. My spiritual intuition would've warned me not to activate my Spirit Vision and not look straight at Cynthia… It's some item or trait on her body that has an external force projected on her. Therefore, there weren't any problems the previous two nights until she suddenly mutated today… Regardless, the terror from her comes from somewhere else and not her body… Klein quickly made a judgment in two seconds. Without any hesitation, he seized the opportunity and said in a solemn tone, "This place is prohibited from having any interaction with the outside world!"

The ancient Hermes words, which were filled with mystery, instantly spread out as the dark golden light scattered everywhere and intertwined with the countless law-like symbols and magic labels before merging into the void.

Hum!

There was suddenly a light hum in Klein's ears as he seemed to see the formless light filled with desire get expelled out of the room.

Immediately following that, the illusory and resplendent cosmos appeared before his eyes. They were points of bright stars.

Pa! Pa! Klein's eyes burst as fluid—a mixture of blood and plasma—gushed out horrendously.

Although he had used the Ninth Law charm to isolate any external influence, the level of the power was extremely high. Just a normal level of recoil was enough to penetrate the natural protection of the high-level charm and burst his eyes!

This damage came abruptly and without any warning signs. Klein didn't even have the chance to use Paper Figurine Substitutes, just like Marionettist Rosago from back then.

If not for the Ninth Law charm, his eyes might not have been the only things that burst. He might've turned into a monster just like Cynthia!

Meanwhile, the tree-like Cynthia came to a stop as her body began crumbling, turning into flesh and blood with brownish-green warts. The surrounding bodyguards and male attendants plopped to the ground, unconscious.

Cynthia's head was embedded in the blob of flesh as she muttered to herself, "Admiral, I want to have a child with you…

"Admiral, I want to have a child with you…"

†

She tried hard to extend the remaining tree branches on the ceiling and walls, binding Klein, who was still in a dazed state as a result of the recoil, and she pulled him towards herself.

The moment Klein recovered a little, he immediately began struggling desperately. Despite his attempts to snap his fingers to light a fire or switch the powers of Creeping Hunger, he failed because his hands and arms were bound tightly.

With the help of his Clown powers, he “saw” the brownish-green warts approach. Stirred, Klein changed his appearance, turning his appearance from Admiral Amyrius to Gehrman Sparrow—a Gehrman Sparrow with bleeding eyes!

The binding tree branches paused as they mysteriously released their hold. They began flailing everywhere as though in an attempt to grab at something.

Cynthia’s head was filled with disappointment and confusion as she muttered, “Admiral, where did you go…

“Admiral, where did you go…”

Without the external force to continue the resistance, she finally only had the thoughts of having a child with Amyrius thanks to the Baron of Corruption’s Distortion. This made her release Gehrman Sparrow.

Klein flipped to his feet and covered his eyes with his right hand and pulled downwards abruptly, moving the horrendous wound towards his left shoulder.

As his left shoulder became mangled, Creeping Hunger was tainted with a pure and resplendent glow.

Klein looked at Cynthia’s head in the pile of flesh and blood with pity as he spread out his arms.

A holy flame which swirled around a pillar of pure light descended from the sky, enveloping the monster that had been reduced to flesh and blood.

Chapter 629 - Naturism Sect

◆

Amidst the holy beam of light, having already lost its support from the external power, the tree warts and flesh rapidly disintegrated. It was like snow meeting a red-hot metal ball.

Amidst an indescribable sizzling sound, Cynthia's face winced as abnormal agony showed itself on her face.

She turned around with great difficulty, looking up and down, her expression turning horrified and confused. Finally, she realized that there was a problem with her.

"Admiral…" Her voice trembled as she looked ahead with fear and despair, but all she could find was an unfamiliar face.

Klein could've fed Creeping Hunger with Cynthia's remnant flesh and Spirit Body, but at that moment, he sighed and said with a calm voice, "Try not to make contact with strange artifacts or religions in the future."

From his point of view, the reason why Cynthia had turned into this monstrosity either had to do with a cult or some particularly dangerous artifact. She had connected with some existence which couldn't be looked at directly, resulting in such a response.

Cynthia seemed to understand something as her remnant head and tiny bit of flesh suddenly wept.

"It's the Mother Tree of Desire, the Naturism Sect…

"Admiral, Admiral, I don't want to die! I don't want to die!

"Save me! Save me!"

Mother Tree of Desire… Naturism Sect… This isn't within the confines of my knowledge of mysticism… Klein maintained his expression as he looked pitifully at the pleading Cynthia. He spread his arms again and said in a deep voice, "Death is not the end. You will be redeemed when you are at god's side."

Another pure beam of light landed as Cynthia's beautiful, weeping face completely fixed in place.

Her eyes widened in despair, but there was the remnant hope of being sent to heaven after death.

Under the sun's radiance, her brain and remnant flesh melted away at a discernible pace. By vanishing, it had obtained its final rite of cleansing.

Klein looked silently at this scene without any expression or movement.

After everything calmed down, he curled the corner of his lips and chuckled, finding it hard to hide his sorrow.

"This is really a crazy and chaotic world…"

He didn't dare to channel Cynthia's spirit after what had happened. The many oddities had made him abandon the thought of bringing Cynthia's Spirit Body above the gray fog to "inquire." Faced with the irremovable evil and the ever-worsening corruption, he could only choose to have Cynthia be cleansed. After all, in this world with true gods, there might exist a heaven after death.

As for Creeping Hunger's backlash, Klein was temporarily not concerned. After spending a long time with it, this mystical item which had been sealed to a certain extent had adjusted to him. It didn't need to be fed after every use. It had been restored to its original state. Once it was activated, it just needed to eat once in a twenty-four-hour period, regardless of how many times it was used. Of course, there was no need for it to be fed on the day it wasn't used.

Therefore, Klein had plenty of time to seek out food for Creeping Hunger without harming the innocent.

If the worst comes to the worst, I can throw it above the gray fog… Klein surveyed his surroundings, and he realized that the bodyguards and the male and female attendants in the room had shaken off the influence of their magnified desires, and they had fallen unconscious. This included the maidservant who was strangling her companion in a bid to obtain her approval and praise, as well as blond secretary, Luan.

Indeed, once the problem is resolved at its root, everything will come to an end…

According to Admiral Amyrius's description, Luan is at least a Sequence 6 Beyonder, and he's suspected to be a Baron of Corruption. He might've secretly reached Sequence 5… Even he was so easily controlled by his magnified desires, which means that the power that descended with the help of Cynthia is extremely potent. But why did I only have a wet dream…

Ignoring my mystical items, Luan and I should be at the same level…

Is it because a portion of the gray fog's power, when mixed with reality, provided me with help? Is it because of the restriction from Admiral Amyrius's temporary contract? Or could it be a mix of both?

Yes, if it wasn't because of these factors, as Cynthia's primary target, my desire towards sex would definitely be magnified. This wouldn't just be me having a romantic dream… Klein habitually reached out with his right hand to cover his face as he changed once again back into Amyrius Rieveldt's appearance.

As the lives of the others weren't temporarily under threat, he carefully observed the room when his spiritual perception was suddenly triggered.

Taking a few steps forward, Klein came to where Cynthia had vanished. He bent down and picked up a necklace from a pile of torn clothes on the bed.

A pendant that was the length of a finger segment hung from the necklace. It was completely black in color and looked like a miniaturized rhinoceros horn. Its surface was full and covered in cracks. Apart from exuding evil, there were no lustrous spirituality activities.

This is the dangerous item that caused Cynthia to mutate? As it had connected to the existence which couldn't be looked at directly, it had completed its mission, allowing all its powers to be injected into Cynthia's body? Klein made a preliminary conjecture based on the pendant's situation and from his past experience.

He checked the area and found nothing. Hence, he pulled out a paper figurine and dealt with the traces left behind. He dispelled the prohibition from the charm before walking towards Secretary Luan, who still had some signs of corruption due to temporarily being devoured by the flowers. He raised his knee and kicked him a few times with the tip of his shoe.

With Amyrius's character, it's unlikely that he would crouch down to shake his secretary awake… Heh, this fellow's arrogant way of looking down on others sure is irritating. I really want to beat him up… Klein paused as he watched sternly as Luan gradually woke up.

"Your Excellency…" Luan was in a momentary daze, as though he couldn't tell dream from reality.

As a high-ranking superior, I'm under no obligation to explain… Klein looked down at him and said in a deep voice, "Wake up all the lightly injured people. Get a number of them to treat the remaining people while the others are to investigate the Naturism Sect on Oravi Island. They worship an evil god named Mother Tree of Desire. Um… Start the investigation with the people around Cynthia.

"I'll be waiting in the study for the report."

With that said, he held the cracked rhinoceros horn pendant and turned to leave the master bedroom before entering the unaffected silent study.

As an important member of the military, although he was somewhat helpless when faced with the kingdom's upper echelons, he needed to choose to ignore certain matters. An example was the telegram which relieved Aston from his post as governor-general and the arrival of the new governor-general. This meant that the new governor-general had departed ahead of time; yet as the highest-ranking commander of the Central Sonia Sea's navy, Amyrius Rieveldt had not received the news at all. However, on Oravi Island, to Secretary Luan and the local police system and naval base personnel, he still held absolute authority. He didn't need to do the investigations himself, as he had plenty of people at his disposal.

A demigod only needed to be wary of any accidents and await news. There was no need to busy themselves!

Inside the study, as Klein heard the chaotic sound of footsteps and horrified screams, questioning, and exchanges, he couldn't help but have the cosmos and the bright, lustrous star in his mind.

What does it represent? Klein frowned and sat in the armchair behind the desk. His figure sank into the darkness brought about by the curtains.

He soon made certain connections. Due to the legends from the City of Silver and Emlyn White's description of the Sanguine's situation, he confirmed that the Moon pathway controlled a portion of the authority over reproduction and proliferation. This coincided with Cynthia's intentions and actions.

Cosmos… Mr. Door informed Emperor Roselle that the Goddess's corresponding tarot card is The Star and not The Moon. Could it be that this illusory cosmos represents "Her"? Yes, The Primordial Moon is suspected to be a particular deity, angel, or high-level devil's alternate identity. The Goddess has the honorific name of "crimson moon." Could "She" be the one passing herself off as the Primordial Moon and occupying the corresponding spot so as to control the required authority? Although Klein knew that such thoughts were sacrilegious, he couldn't help but suspect the Evernight Goddess.

But he soon rejected that conjecture. This was because, be it Vampire Ancestor Lilith or the Primordial Moon, what they projected was only "reproduction and proliferation." It didn't include the recognition of gluttony, pride, and desire. This was at odds with a number of victims earlier. The other honorific titles of the Evernight Goddess didn't include the corresponding domains.

This does coincide with the traits of the Devil pathway. A Desire Apostle is an expert in such matters… Could the one subjugating the Primordial Moon be a high-level Devil, or even the King of Devils who's known as the Dark Side of the Universe, Sequence 0 Abyss? This is very possible, but the problem with this is that it shouldn't produce the illusory cosmos and bright stars. Be it Moon or Abyss, they have nothing to do with the corresponding symbols… Klein found his conjecture problematic the more he thought over the matter.

Amidst his thoughts, he suddenly thought of a concept.

It was something important back when he was first educated in mysticism but had never received a detailed description or explanation!

That was the astral world!

Apart from the Life School of Thought and a few other organizations' belief in uncommon concepts such as the world of absolute rationality, most schools of thought in mysticism believed that the world was comprised of the real world, the spirit world, and the astral world.

There was no need to explain the real world. Knowledge of the spirit world was the foundation of many ritualistic magic and Beyonder powers. It was only the astral world where Klein's knowledge about it was basically zero.

Therefore, the illusory cosmos represents the astral world. The bright star is a particular existence in the astral world? I've always suspected that the astral world is where the true gods reside. Then, this imagery which represents the Primordial Moon isn't something unacceptable… Klein didn't think further as he recalled the details of the past few days while awaiting the results of his subordinates' investigations.

Time ticked by when Klein finally heard a familiar gait approach.

Secretary Luan knocked before entering. He bowed his head and coldly reported, "Your Excellency. We've already found the Naturism Sect and captured their leader.

"It was a clue provided by Miss Cynthia's parents.

"This sect has been rather active in Oravi over the past few years. They do not wear clothes, in a bid to return to nature. Giving themselves up to their instincts is their purpose, and they believed that humans can attain liberation of their spirituality in such states.

"Reproduction of the next generation is a subsidiary product of this belief."

After pausing for a moment, Luan added, "Their leader is a Beyonder, a Sequence 8 Lunatic."

Lunatic? A Lunatic from the Prisoner pathway? It has something to do with the Rose School of Thought? Yes, the Rose School of Thought internally has two factions, "temperance" and "indulgence." The latter's beliefs are rather identical to the present situation… Klein was alarmed as he said in a stoic tone, “Bring him here.”

Chapter 630 - Timeline

◆ ◆ ◆

The leader of the Naturism Sect was named Flight Ken, a man in his thirties. His thin face had brown whiskers, and there were evil-looking tattoos on his neck.

He was brought in front of Klein by Luan. He looked ragged, as though he had suffered the most severe mental torture.

“Your Excellency, while he was being captured, he kept exchanging his intelligence for strength, and he’s on the brink of a mental collapse…” Luan reported the facts, ignoring the possibility that Admiral Amyrius could tell the exact details.

That’s perfect… Klein had been previously worried that, as a Lunatic, Flight Ken would refuse to answer his questions while under the mental pressure. That way, he had to take the risk of being suspected of dismissing his subordinates and attempting a spirit channeling.

As he looked coldly at Flight Ken, Klein’s left hand wore a golden luster under the cover of the desk.

He had switched Creeping Hunger to the Interrogator’s soul!

And Interrogator happened to be Sequence 7 of Admiral Amyrius’s Arbiter pathway!

Deep in Klein’s eyes, two indistinct flashes of lightning appeared as they overlapped with Flight Ken’s figure.

Psychic Piercing was poised for attack!

However, Klein didn't directly use the Beyonder power, as it was only at the level of a Sequence 7. Once he used it in front of Luan, he would immediately expose himself to the blond secretary.

With the pressure provided by Psychic Piercing on Flight Ken's Spirit Body, Klein sat there like the real Admiral Amyrius as he said in a deep voice, "Do you know Cynthia?"

As he spoke, he raised his right hand high and dangled the black miniature rhinoceros horn from his palm.

"What is its use?"

The dispirited Flight Ken trembled as he felt as if a dagger was being held to his psyche, capable of penetrating him at any moment.

He couldn't help but lower his head as he stammered, "Yes, I know her.

"Cynthia—Miss Cynthia wished to have a child with Your Excellency, a child with Beyonder powers. She was introduced to me by her parents.

"It's a Proliferation Necklace created with the bestowment of the goddess's aura. By consuming its powder and wearing it for prolonged periods of time, it… it will be able to make Your Excellency unable to resist her…"

Klein listened in silence as he was half-convinced by Flight Ken's explanation. However, he still had his doubts.

He believed that it was partially Cynthia's goal. This beautiful lady did wish to have a child with Admiral Amyrius, either by her own will or from the urging of others. This could be seen from her persistence even after she mutated.

Although the Loen Kingdom's aristocrats didn't like or even discriminated against their illegitimate children, it was situational. A child who had successfully inherited their father's Beyonder characteristics would similarly be given importance. Those ancient families who knew many secrets viewed this with importance, and the Rieveldt family was one of those families.

Furthermore, Admiral Amyrius is a stern and old-fashioned man on the surface, but he's someone who treasures his relationships. Even an illegitimate child would receive his love and have importance attached… This might be the real reason why Cynthia was eager to have his child… Klein sighed inwardly.

The doubt towards Flight Ken's answer was concentrated on the true effects of the Proliferation Necklace, as well as the possibility of the Naturism Sect deliberate misleading of Cynthia.

As he strengthened the pressure brought about by Psychic Piercing, Klein silently stared into Flight Ken's eyes until he could no longer take it and bowed his head again.

"What other uses does this necklace have?" Klein shook the cracked pendant.

His tone was calm, as though he knew every secret. His questions were only to obtain the final confirmation.

An indescribable pressure inundated Flight Ken, who was already on the brink of a mental collapse. He plopped to the ground and shouted nearly hysterically, "I-it can corrupt you!

"As long as Cynthia consumed the powder ground from it and sincerely chanted Mother Tree of Desire's honorific name, a-any man who has sex with her and successfully has a child would be corrupted!

"Th-that will make you become a believer of the Mother Tree of Desire! To become 'Her' Blessed!"

So that's how it is… Klein instantly understood the entire story, and he was no longer puzzled by the mutation that happened that very night.

The Naturism Sect's goal is to use Cynthia and the Proliferation

Necklace, which looks like an ordinary object, to corrupt Admiral Amyrius, making this important military figure of the Loen Kingdom become the Mother Tree of Desire's devout believer. He can then help their sect develop and provide them protection.

The key to the success of this method is that it's sufficiently concealed and normal. It is in no way directly connected to terms like "potency," "strike," and "terrifying."

Therefore, after three rejections from me, Cynthia was unable to expel the corruptive forces in the Proliferation Necklace's powder from her body. She gradually reached her limit and finally connected with the Mother Tree of Desire and ended up with what seemed like a sudden mutation…

Therefore, the monster after the mutation wasn't able to pose any threat to the real Admiral Amyrius. Even my usage of the Ninth Law charm easily resolved the matter. This is because this wasn't the outcome the Naturism Sect wished to have. They wished to have Admiral Amyrius be secretly corrupted, and not have a conflict with a demigod… Klein silently looked at the Secretary Luan.

Luan had also gained a rough understanding of the entire situation. He immediately lowered his head and said in a deep voice, "Your Excellency, it was our oversight.

"We only monitored Miss Cynthia and the servants here without expanding the monitoring to their friends and family.

"I'm willing to accept any punishment for this, even if you send me to be court-martialed.

How would the real admiral reply? Klein once again immersed himself in the character of Amyrius, experiencing his recent pain, helplessness, grief, and anger.

He maintained his seating posture and sternly said, "We shall leave this for later."

The hidden meaning behind this sentence meant: "I'll decide based on your upcoming performance."

Luan was taken aback for a second, seemingly finding the admiral's mild punishment unbelievable.

Klein half-closed his eyes and said in a deep voice, "My father, the deceased Earl Rieveldt, once taught me this.

"He said to pardon the first mistake of a subordinate.

"Luan, you, as well as the other bodyguards, should be thankful for his benevolence."

Luan's gaze shimmered as he drew a silent breath. He was no longer as calm, as he rather earnestly said, "Your benevolence is admirable.

"I pledge my utmost loyalty to you, apart from my principles, god, and kingdom."

The pride in you is extremely exaggerated… Klein didn't believe him as he said seemingly calm, "There's a second half of the saying, that is 'punish them for their second mistake.'"

Luan nodded, unsurprised at that.

Klein cast his gaze back to Flight Ken who was slumped on the ground. He pressed without a change in expression, "Who instigated you to do this?"

From his point of view, Flight Ken's answer was likely that they had planned it. After coming into contact with Cynthia and learning of her requests and knowing who her lover was, the Naturism Sect boldly had the idea of corrupting the naval admiral, Amyrius.

Flight looked left and right somewhat neurotically as he apprehensively said, "I-it was the Mother Tree of Desire. 'She' instigated me to do it in my dream. I-in the beginning, I only wanted to lend Cynthia the Proliferation Necklace and for her to wear it. I never planned on her consumption of the powder.”

Instigated by the Mother Tree of Desire? This is almost equivalent to a revelation… Klein nearly frowned.

Although Admiral Amyrius is an important figure of the Loen military and the highest-ranking commander of the Central Sonia Sea, making his standing and power rather tremendous, it shouldn’t be important enough to have an evil goddess set “Her” sights on him… However, I’m not an evil god. I have no way of comprehending their thought process. Perhaps the corruption of Amyrius is for subsequent plans… Yes, I can’t eliminate the possibility that Flight Ken is lying. I’ll have to confirm it later… Klein thought before sternly asking, “When did you have this dream?”

Flight forced a smile filled with fear and said, “I-it was nighttime on 4th February, last Friday. I-I remember it very clearly. I had just released the spirituality of a lady.”

4th February… Klein ruminated over the date, momentarily unable to find anything special about it.

After two seconds of silence, he turned to ask, “What relationship do you have with the Rose School of Thought?

“What relationship does the Mother Tree of Desire have with the Chained God?”

He wasn’t worried that Admiral Amyrius might’ve already known of this, with Secretary Luan having a certain understanding of the matter. This could be easily understood as a confirmation question.

Flight Ken revealed a passionate look he could hardly keep in.

“W-we’re a branch of the Rose School of Thought. My mentor is the Rose School of Thought’s saint, Zatwen.

"The Chained God is another manifestation of the Mother Tree of Desire.

"The Mother Tree of Desire is the true and only deity that surpasses the seven gods and the True Creator!

"Your Excellency, you are a candidate to be 'Her' Blessed!"

Who can't brag… Can it be understood that the Mother Tree of Desire is an alt of the Chained God? According to the evil spirit in the underground ruins suspected to be Red Angel Medici, the Prisoner path of the divine and the Devil pathway can be swapped. Therefore, it's no surprise that the Rose School of Thought's Chained God can magnify the various desires of creatures. They have the temperance and indulgence factions internally… This matches the situation… Klein thought as he turned his head to Luan and said, "Go out for a while."

He planned on questioning Flight Ken on whether he had done anything evil, and if he was suitable to be Creeping Hunger's meal.

"Yes, Your Excellency." Luan didn't ask why as he briskly walked out the study and closed the door behind him.

After the echoing sound of the door closing subsided, the entire study suddenly turned quiet. It was as though it was isolated from the outside world.

The Beyonder powers of a Baron of Corruption? The Distortion of "door closing" to seal the study? Very considerate… Klein pondered for a few seconds as he recalled the series of thoughts he had previously. Hence, he suddenly asked, "6th February. What did you do on Sunday evening?"

Flight Ken was taken aback as he said, "W-we followed the revelation given by Mother Tree of Desire, and using the Proliferation Necklace and a hair obtained from a particular tramp, we held a ritual to magnify the tramp's gluttony."

The tramp stand-in meant for Admiral Amyrius was indeed killed by you! It was to prevent the admiral from leaving and, hence, fall into a trap so that he can have sex with Cynthia and end up being corrupted? Klein instantly connected all the matters together.

And my appearance provided another possibility that coincidentally destroyed this plan… Coincidence… That's not right! When the words "coincidence" flashed in his mind, Klein suddenly recalled the peculiarity of 4th February—the day the Mother Tree of Desire gave Flight Ken a dream revelation.

It was the first day he arrived on Oravi Island!

Chapter 631 - Three Days of Absence

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Don’t tell me that this matter was targeted at me? Klein was alarmed as he immediately became abnormally awake.

As a person who had several similar experiences, he had quite a persecution complex.

It really is possible… The Mother Tree of Desire used a dream to send Flight Ken a revelation just as I arrived at Oravi Island and began an entire series of plans. The first day I met Bilt Brando was the day the Naturism Sect held the ritual to make the tramp stand-in die from gluttony…

If they were targeting Admiral Amyrius, the plan needed to ensure that there was no lack of a stand-in, and that he couldn’t find an additional helper or other means to conceal his departure. But clearly, this is something that cannot be confirmed. My involvement is proof…

If the target was me, then the previous problem is explained. Klein used his Clown powers to control his facial expression as he gloomily looked at Flight Ken.

With such a theory, more questions emerged in his mind.

But how were they certain that Bilt Brando would seek me out?

The news of Gehrman Sparrow being able to change into anyone was spread from Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy. It’s an element beyond the Mother Tree of Desire’s control…

Of course, taking a different point of view, it's precisely due to the spreading of this news and my arrival in Oravi Island that made the Mother Tree of Desire send the revelation and put the plan into motion.

But why would "She" want to corrupt me? My grudge with the Rose School of Thought hasn't reached the point of garnering the attention of an evil god. All I did was kill a Sequence 5 Wraith, a Sequence 6 Zombie, and a Sequence 7 Werewolf, with Miss Sharron and Maric, snatching away the Scarlet Lunar Corona and Biological Poison Bottle… My hunt against Admiral of Blood was terminated before it even started. It was an idea that didn't translate into action. The only thing that happened was the killing of Steel Maveti…

The act of revenge that resulted from this matter shouldn't even exceed the attention of a saint!

Was it something special about me that resonated with some item formed by the aura of the Mother Tree of Desire on this island the moment I stepped onto it?

But I've never faced any abnormal reactions from the Holy Artifacts left behind by other deities in Backlund or Tingen City.

Furthermore, I did divine the matter above the gray fog and received the revelation that the death of the tramp was solely a coincidence. It wasn't arranged by a legendary creature or Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, but the outcome ended up different…

Th-this is the first time that divination above the gray fog has been disrupted in the true sense of the word? I didn't even notice that it had been disrupted?

Klein's thoughts came to a pause as he discovered the most serious problem.

Back when the matter involved 0-08, all he received was an ineffective revelation and not a disrupted outcome!

Therefore, it’s a power that exceeds a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact? The Mother Tree of Desire personally disrupted the matter, and “She” is a true deity “Herself”? But it’s very difficult for the seven gods to influence the real world. There has to be a corresponding ritual… Yes, I had also divined the risks of acting as Amyrius above the gray fog and received a revelation saying that it was an acceptable risk. The outcome does match the development of the situation, so it wasn’t disrupted? The more Klein thought about the matter, the more perplexed he became.

What was most incomprehensible about it was that if the target of corruption was himself, why didn’t he suffer any demanding trials, and he instead, solved the problem in a relatively simple manner?

This made the Mother Tree of Desire’s arrangement appear like a joke! While pondering with this weight in mind, Klein nearly crushed Flight Ken. He asked again to verify his conjecture.

To his surprise, the Naturism Sect hadn’t held any rituals to request the Mother Tree of Desire to disrupt any divination over the past week. They didn’t make any special arrangements aimed towards the failure of the project.

Strange… Klein took out a gold coin and flicked it as a final confirmation.

Even without divination, he was almost certain that Flight Ken wasn’t lying. Firstly, the man was already on the brink of a mental collapse, making him lack the ability to fabricate something reasonable. Secondly, Flight Ken’s answers adhered to logic, completely confirming whatever Klein had deliberately kept to himself.

The gold coin landed in his open palm, the king’s portrait facing up, indicating a positive response.

Combined with the divination statement, Klein finally confirmed that Flight Ken wasn’t lying.

After temporarily suppressing his puzzlement, he cast his gaze towards Flight Ken once again. He asked without a smile, “What deeds have you done in the past that violate the kingdom’s laws or the moral fabric of society?”

Flight Ken was taken aback for a few seconds as his mental state seemed to instantly turn for the better.

From his point of view, his ploy against Admiral Amyrius was the most serious crime, something that would most easily enrage this important figure. Everything else was trivial and nothing that needed a demigod to waste his time and energy on.

Therefore, after skipping the important matters and coming to an ordinary topic, it meant that he might enjoy a good outcome.

Flight Ken couldn’t help but reveal a discreet smile as he hastened to recount.

“I once tortured a family for an entire night for their property and abandoned them in the woods after murdering them. Then, I used faked documents and successfully obtained a sizable amount of wealth.

“I deliberately enticed many believers to indulge in their desires and watched as their emptiness and regret after the deed slowly paved the way for them to become fertilizer for the Mother Tree of Desire.

“I once tricked many ladies to abide with their nature, an excuse for them to be redeemed by the spirits, allowing me to possess them.

“I tortured believers who attempted to renounce the religion, slicing off every part that protruded off their bodies…”

He recounted each and every sin of his, without any thoughts of concealing the truth.

Klein felt disbelief with what he heard. He never expected anyone to be evil to this extent.

As Flight Ken got increasingly excited from recounting his past deeds, he saw Admiral Amyrius stand up without an expression before circling around the desk and standing in front of him. The admiral then raised his left palm.

A terrifying mouth appeared in the middle of the left palm, revealing two rows of illusory, white, and eerie teeth that were icy-cold.

“No… No!”

A sharp and horrified scream resounded in the room for a long time until silence prevailed.

After a while, Klein bent down to pick up a blob of grayish-white light that resembled a shrunken brain.

This was the Beyonder characteristic of a Lunatic!

Unfortunately, Flight Ken had been searched before being brought here. He didn’t leave behind any cash or items.

Klein snapped his fingers and ignited the rest of the clothes.

As he looked at his left shoulder which was beginning its recovery process, he sat behind the desk and remained silent amidst the dancing scarlet flames.

Once the traces were no longer noticeable, he pulled at a corresponding rope, making the bell outside ring.

Luan released the restriction and entered, instinctively observing every corner.

“Instruct the guards and the base personnel to cooperate with the Oravi police to do a cleanup of the Naturism Sect. It’s best if clues can be found and a number of Rose School of Thought members are caught,” Klein solemnly gave the order.

“Yes, Your Excellency,” Luan answered respectfully.

He didn't ask where Flight Ken was, as though the leader of the Naturism Sect never existed.

†

Klein didn't pay too much attention to the raid on Oravi Island. Using the excuse that he was slightly injured, he declined the remaining schedules for the next two days.

This meant that he didn't need to worry about needing to exude the might of a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Arbiter pathway after expending the Ninth Law charm.

Nearing noon, Luan entered after knocking the door and reported, "Your Excellency, Mr. Aston has yet to leave on the liner. The new governor-general, Ben Conrad, has sent an invitation to participate in the banquet he's hosting tonight."

Ben Conrad… The person who replaced Aston as governor-general… According to what I know, Viscount Conrad's family is a loyal subject of the royal family. Talim likely got to know Prince Edessak while being the equestrian teacher of Viscount Conrad's youngest son… Klein nodded gently as he immersed himself in Amyrius Rieveldt's complex emotions.

He remained silent for a few seconds before saying, "Inform Governor-general Conrad that it's inconvenient for me to attend the banquet, because of the injuries suffered from the Naturism Sect's assault.

"Apologize to him on my behalf."

"Yes, Your Excellency." Luan didn't persuade him otherwise and calmly left the room.

A demigod definitely had the right to be "willful!"

As long as he didn't engage in some secret ploy or commit any serious mistake, there was no way he would be blamed regardless of what he did. This was because any faction would be willing to rope in a demigod!

As he watched Luan's back vanish from the door, Klein shook his head indiscernibly and sat back behind the desk.

A quiet day quickly passed. When it was almost midnight, Klein, who was sleeping in the guest room, suddenly woke up and sat up.

His spiritual perception told him that someone had entered the house!

Klein focused his gaze at the window and saw a middle-aged man in a tailcoat. He had black hair and blue eyes, with the corners of his mouth slightly sagging. He was none other than Admiral Amyrius!

Phew! He's finally back… Klein slowly stood up and cautiously asked, "What item did you give me before?"

He was afraid that the Admiral Amyrius before him was also a Faceless in disguise.

Admiral Amyrius stood there and answered with a stern expression, "The Ninth Law charm."

Without waiting for Gehrman Sparrow to speak again, he took two steps forward and calmly asked, "Did anything happen in the past few days?"

"…"

Klein controlled his facial muscles and said, "Your secretary committed a mistake and was injured."

"Oh? What else?" Admiral Amyrius nodded with deep reservation.

Klein tried hard not to move his gaze away as he looked straight at him and said, "Your younger brother has been relieved of his post as governor-general. The new governor-general has already taken over.

“Your Miss Cynthia mutated into a monster and was purified by me.

“A number of your bodyguards and attendants were infected to a certain extent and are currently receiving treatment”

“…”

Amyrius’s expression turned into shock bit by bit in an uncontrollable manner.

His eyes moved slightly, as though he suspected whether he had returned to the wrong place.

It had only been three days!

Chapter 632 - Finishing Up

* * *

After a frozen moment of silence, Amyrius quickly brought his expressions under control. He said in a domineering and deep tone, “Tell me the specifics.”

Klein didn’t hide much of the truth. He began with Aston Rieveldt’s question, before mentioning the warning from the mysterious person in the dream, and how he was told not to make a choice that resisted the trend of the times. Following that, he talked about the sudden telegram, and finally he spoke of Cynthia’s mutation. He went into detail about the situation, the arrogance of the secretary, how he dealt with it, and the general investigations that followed.

The only information he kept to himself was that the 4th February was the first day he arrived on Oravi Island, as well as his subsequent guesses.

Of course, he was also very vague with matters regarding combat. He believed that Admiral Amyrius was understanding enough. After all, what a Beyonder was good at or what unique abilities he had were one of their greatest secrets. If they were exposed or understood by others, it gave others a chance of setting up a targeted ambush, making it possible for them to die under the hands of an enemy of a lower Sequence.

Below that of High-Sequence Beyonders, many Beyonders could be very powerful or very weak!

After Amyrius listened to the recount in silence, his expression didn’t seem to change in the dark room. However, the fact that he hadn't interrupted Klein's recount implied something.

After a few seconds of silence, he asked in a deep voice, "The mysterious person who infiltrated your dream emphasized the fate of an era, as well as the trend of the times?"

"Yes." Klein had already changed back into Gehrman Sparrow's appearance. He didn't deliberately go into detail that the mysterious person had never mentioned Aston Rieveldt's exact plan.

Amyrius fell silent again.

"You maintained my appearance in your dream?"

"Yes, this is my secret," Klein answered succinctly.

Amyrius nodded indiscernibly as he paced around in a tiny area before looking back at Gehrman Sparrow.

"There were no problems with your choices."

Upon hearing this, Klein seemed to receive the ultimate and most effective feedback. A large portion of the potion in him was digested as a result.

Amidst the deep, reverberating tone, Amyrius turned his body to the side and said without any hint of emotion, "I originally had no plans to have a contract with the stand-in, and instead I wanted to inform Cynthia that I had the symptoms of losing control, making it impossible for me to have any physical relationship with her for five days. However, I later changed my mind due to certain reasons."

If not for the temporary contract's forceful restriction, even if I'm able to withstand the temptations during usual times, I might not have been able to resist the magnified desires last night…

Of course, if Cynthia knew of the five-day restriction ahead of time, she wouldn't be in such a rush to consume the powder ground from the Proliferation Necklace. It would've prevented her from sensing the Mother Tree of Desire and end up mutating… But as such, the ball is in the Naturism Sect's court. They could've made up an excuse to get Cynthia to consume it…

This matter was really targeted at me… What does the Mother Tree of Desire actually want? Also, what was the reason that caused Admiral Amyrius to make such an important change… Klein seemed to grasp the crux of the matter as he looked at Amyrius's side profile.

"What's the reason?"

Amyrius said with a deadpan expression, "There's no need for you to know."

"…"

For the first time in his life, Klein hated such a response.

After some thought, he took out the cracked pendant and threw it at Amyrius.

"This is the Proliferation Necklace that originated from the Mother Tree of Desire."

Amyrius raised his hand to catch it before looking down.

"You may leave.

"Go to Bilt to receive your reward."

Aren't you worried that I know of something I'm not supposed to know? That's right. Aston's ploy has been exposed and is known by his political enemies. As for Amyrius, he was clearly not involved; therefore, it doesn't matter if I understand anything… Klein imagined that there would be a long-term confidential contract, but to his surprise, he could leave just like that.

Noticing that Amyrius didn’t raise another matter, he pointed at him and said, “Clothes.”

Only then did Admiral Amyrius look up, silently taking off the formal attire comprised of a shirt and tailcoat.

Klein had originally wished to ask for additional payment due to the excessive dangers that went beyond the scope of the original agreement. But after secretly confirming that Cynthia’s outcome was because of him, he abandoned the idea while feeling guilty. He quickly took off the comfortable sleeping robe, switched into a tailcoat, and under Amyrius’s guidance, leaped out of the window, and secretly left the gardened villa while the bodyguards’ eyes were “confounded.”

Amyrius donned a sleeping robe and clenched the Proliferation Necklace before walking to the window. He stood there silently as he faced the crimson moon and few stars in the dark night.

He stood there without an expression, not even changing his posture for a long period of time.

Pa!

He slightly relaxed his clenched fist as the miniaturized rhinoceros horn fell to the ground in the form of shattered pieces, bit by bit, fragment by fragment.

†

The next day at noon, Klein, who had slept soundly the entire night, left the inn and took a carriage to Sweet Lemon Bar. He went to the second floor to meet Bilt Brando.

“It’s over?” Bilt asked with relief and surprise.

Klein nodded and said, “Admiral Amyrius has returned.

“Where’s the rest of the payment?”

Bilt revealed an unconcealable smile. After he dismissed his guards, he personally went to a safe and took out the remaining 500 pounds and a blue cufflink.

"This is the mystical item created from the murloc bladder you provided," Bilt introduced. "It can provide illusory scales hidden beneath the skin, so you will be as difficult to catch as a fish. It will also help withstand a certain level of damage for you. With it, you can dive to at least fifteen meters without any protective gear. You can freely move about in the water for ten minutes. It doesn't have any serious negative effects. It will just make you tired easily when in a hot or arid place."

That means this cufflink shouldn't be used with the Sun Brooch… Klein extended his hand to collect the money and item.

"Aren't you afraid that there will be problems?" Bilt cracked a joke.

"Your business is here," Klein answered calmly.

His meaning was clear. If there were any problems, he wasn't afraid that the person-in-charge would go missing.

Bilt's smile froze as he said, "It hasn't been named. You can give it one."

"Murloc Cufflink." Klein couldn't be bothered to waste his brain cells.

"…Nice name. It leaves quite an impression," Bilt said with a forced smile.

He paused for a moment before saying, "That Artisan said that he can fix the summoning ritual of a spirit world creature onto materials with spirituality. It will be able to last a maximum of one and a half years, but you will need to provide detailed information.

"Heh heh, according to our agreement, I'll be responsible for it, so there's nothing to be worried about."

"Alright. Make it a harmonica." Klein took out a pen and paper from his pocket and scribbled the ritual to summon his messenger.

"Messenger? This is rather rare. It's very hard for Beyonders not from the Death pathway to find a suitable one." Bilt received the piece of paper and casually scanned it. "Eh, if the messenger is accidentally summoned during the production process, a gold coin has to be given to her… What happens if it's not given? Heh heh. Spirit world creatures always have something odd about them. I've seen some who love music, as well as ones who loiter around shit."

What happens if you don't give one? Perhaps Ma'am Reinette Tinekerr might bring the heads of you and the Artisan to me. She's a creature with a castle in the spirit world. She might even be stronger than me. Well, under situations when I'm not using the Sea God Scepter… Klein lampooned as he said in a deep voice, "The third promised item can be left to the future."

"Alright." Bilt didn't have any objections. Following that, he asked out of curiosity, "Mr. Gehrman, how did you fool Secretary Luan, Governor-general Aston, and Miss Cynthia—people who Admiral Amyrius specifically mentioned?"

"…"

Klein did his best to prevent his facial muscles from twitching.

"Follow the information and think about it carefully."

He didn't provide an exact description before he stood up and bowed with his hat.

"It's time I bid farewell."

"It was a pleasure working with you," Bilt answered with a smile.

After watching Gehrman Sparrow's figure vanish behind the door, he shook his head and chuckled, muttering, "This powerful and crazy adventurer is actually a natural actor?"

After lunch, his subordinate sent him the day's papers.

As Bilt sucked on a cigar, he flipped through it when his expression suddenly froze.

Last night, the new governor-general, Ben Conrad, held a banquet… New governor-general? Aston Rieveldt has been relieved of his position as governor general? Bilt picked up the other sets of newspapers and found the same piece of information.

With his connections in Oravi, he should've long heard of news regarding a replacement of the governor-general. However, the replacement was extremely sudden. Most people only learned of the situation when the new governor-general officially made his appearance.

After a while, a partner who was secretly serving Admiral Amyrius entered the room.

"Your Excellency wants you to investigate the people around you for Naturism Sect believers and sink them all into the sea," the partner passed on Amyrius's instructions.

"Alright." Bilt asked curiously, "What exactly happened? The Naturism Sect suffered a terrible blow since yesterday."

"His Excellency suffered an assassination attempt from the Naturism Sect yesterday. Miss Cynthia perished as a result. Secretary Luan was injured, and the admiral lost many of his bodyguards," the partner described simply.

"Ah?" Bilt was momentarily stunned.

A-aren't these the people Admiral Amyrius mentioned to be careful of when acting in front of them?

I even specially emphasized it to Gehrman Sparrow…

Now, Miss Cynthia is dead, Secretary Luan is injured, and Aston Rieveldt has been relieved of his position as governor-general… The corners of Bilt's mouth twitched while he wore a blank expression.

†

East Chester County, Stoen City.

Audrey silently listened to a noble lady's words, echoing her from time to time as she provided an ear to listen to.

Towards the end, the noble lady praised her sincerely, "Audrey, you really are an angel. I feel a lot more comfortable after chatting with you."

At this moment, Audrey saw the female priest from the Church of Evernight enter. Hence, she exchanged pleasantries before walking over with a smile.

This priest appeared ordinary, as she only provided low-level preachings, but in fact, she was a secret member of the Psychology Alchemists.

"Audrey, the potion formula is already in my hands. However, you need to contribute enough to obtain it," the female priest whispered while no one was paying attention.

Audrey's eyes darted around slightly as she said, "That wouldn't be an issue.

"However, Ma'am Smine, can you tell me its name?"

The female priest looked around before saying with a suppressed voice, "Hypnotist."

Chapter 633 - Two Types of Parasitizing

◆

After leaving the Sweet Lemon Bar, Klein directly returned to his inn.

Just as he was packing his luggage, the gigantic skeleton messenger appeared suddenly.

It originally wanted to pat Klein on the shoulder, but it failed due to its nearly four-meter-tall body with its head penetrating through the ceiling. All it could do was throw the letter ahead before collapsing into nothingness.

Mr. Azik has finally replied. It has almost been a week… Has the messenger been changed? It looks like the original one and would make the corresponding warning… Klein caught the letter and unfolded it.

“I’m very sorry that I’m only replying to you today.

“Perhaps it’s because the memories I’ve recovered has exceeded the limits of my body. I had to spend several days in a deep sleep to adapt to it.

“The matters you described does coincide with the traits of a Marauder pathway. Their corresponding Sequence 4 is Parasite. In higher Sequences, they possess the Beyonder powers of parasitized bodies.

“According to what I know, there are two types of parasitizing.

“The first type is a preliminary state. The Parasite would ‘borrow’ the Host’s body to hide himself, so as to extend his lifespan and recover from his injuries. He can see and hear whatever the Hosts sees and hears, but he is unable to interfere with the Host's thoughts or steal his thoughts. Therefore, for a Host to converse with a Parasite, he will have to be the first to speak.

"The other is full control. The Parasite is nearly fused with the Host's Spirit Body, knowing and understanding his thoughts, as well as take over control of the body.

"Faced against the first type of Parasite, one can inform the Host via dreams or a subconscious conversation without worrying about being discovered by the Parasite. This is because the Parasite has to use the Host's senses to sense his surroundings.

"For the second state, there is no way to converse with the Host without the Parasite's knowledge. However, there is a chance of eradicating the Parasite, which is to rely on the Host's faith. It's very difficult for me to accurately describe such matters, and all I can say is that when one opens his heart while praying, the target of the prayer would be able to discover the existence of the Parasite, and through a particular ritual, provide feedback to complete the separation or eradication.

"Of course, the prerequisite is that the Host himself doesn't know of this; otherwise, the Parasite would definitely be alerted and begin carrying out preventive measures…"

Isn't the latter situation somewhat similar to Little Sun's? He prayed to me without much thought, and I discovered the existence of Amon's avatar. Then, with a concealed goal, I taught him the secret deed ritual and used it to cleanse the Parasite… Klein instantly had a deeper understanding of the previous situation he was in.

However, I'm currently unable to determine which state my dear poet is in. Back in Tingen, he would occasionally talk to himself. This might be a result of the first type of parasitic states, but the problem lies in the fact that it has been months. It's possible that the Parasite has completed his complete control of Leonard.

I have to first confirm the matter before knowing what I should do. Otherwise, rashly entering his dream will only lead to preemptively warning the Parasite, making the problem more serious and harder to resolve…

If it's the second parasitic state, my dear poet believes the Goddess, but "She" has millions of believers. It's unlikely that she would pay important notice to a Red Glove who's neither a Blessed or Saint…

She's unlike me, The Fool. I read every prayer and often provide a one-to-one service.

This is what it's like during a "startup phase"…

As Klein thought over it, he suddenly sighed and felt wistful.

He originally planned on entrusting a task to Emlyn to secretly monitor Leonard Mitchell to see if he often whispered to himself. However, after considering how Emlyn had already appeared before Leonard and the Parasite because of Tinder, there was a high chance that he was a target they were wary of or a target of investigation. Therefore, he rationally abandoned such a thought.

Miss Magician is only a Sequence 8 and a Trickmaster. She doesn't have the ability to monitor a Parasite at the angel level or a Red Glove…

Miss Justice's identity is the best form of concealment. Besides, she's also a believer of the Goddess. But the problem lies in the fact that she's back in her fief. She will only return to Backlund in June…

Mr. Hanged Man and Ma'am Hermit are at sea. As for Little Sun, there's no way for him to connect with the outside world…

There's still not enough Tarot Club members. The factions they've expanded into are still lacking. I can't find any suitable person to help me complete this task.

Among the people I know, Miss Sharron should be the best choice to perform such matters when it comes to concealment, but I have no way of contacting her, even if I do it through Miss Magician or Emlyn… Sigh, I had fled Backlund in a hurry, so I failed to consider many of the consequences…

Klein raised his hand to knead his temples as he thought about how Leonard was an elite Red Glove in the Nighthawks. There were high-ranking deacons and the Church watching over him, so it was unlikely the Parasite would dare to do anything for now. Hence, he decided to put the matter aside and wait for a more suitable helper.

Perhaps I can wait until I digest the potion and head east of the Sonia Sea to find mermaids. After I complete my advancement, I can return to Backlund and do it myself… The experienced Klein didn't hesitate further as he rapidly made up his mind.

†

Inside Sweet Lemon Bar.

After the uneasy Bilt handled two Naturism Sect believers among his close aides, he finally received some good news.

"Are you telling me that Admiral Amyrius will be returning to Bayam today?" He stood up with a cigar in hand.

Sothoth nodded gently and said, "His fleet left the harbor half an hour ago. It's steering towards the Rorsted Archipelago."

Phew… Bilt didn't conceal his sigh of relief, having confirmed that the admiral wasn't putting any blame on him.

Just the thought of how Gehrman Sparrow had managed to "make" the admiral suffer the loss of so many of his bodyguards, the younger brother's loss of his position as governor-general, the injury of his secretary, and the death of his mistress, he couldn't help but wonder about his own management capabilities.

Although the responsibility of these matters wasn't necessary Gehrman Sparrow's fault, to have them all happen at once had made one believe that it was the crazy adventurer's fault. At the very least, he was unlucky enough. And as his employer and endorser, Bilt believed that there was no way he could escape responsibility. He definitely needed to incur punishment from Admiral Amyrius.

"His Excellency is indeed a demigod. He didn't let his rage blind his reason. Praise the Lord. May the Storm be with us," Bilt said as he struck his right fist on his left breast.

At this moment, the subordinates he sent rushed back.

"Boss! Gehrman Sparrow has disappeared!" the subordinate reported in a hurried tone.

Bilt frowned slightly.

"Disappeared?"

"Yes! After he checked out of his room, he held his suitcase and circled the area several times before disappearing!" the subordinate explained truthfully.

It's really difficult to monitor an adventurer who can shapeshift into anyone… Bilt sighed and said, "Leave it.

"There's no need to seek him out again."

†

After being targeted by the Mother Tree of Desire, Klein cautiously changed his appearance and identity, as well as his place of residence to prevent anyone from targeting him.

From the feedback received from acting as Admiral Amyrius, he decided to quickly digest the potion by putting it into practice.

While riding a carriage to the Oravi Hospice Foundation, Klein once again stepped in.

The person in charge of the registration was still Ma'am Joanna. She looked up and asked, "You want to do volunteer work?"

"Yes." Klein nodded seriously.

Joanna took out a form and asked like clockwork, "Name."

Klein smiled and replied, "Sinbad Volentier"

†

The weather in East Chester County during April was comfortable. The vegetation was lush and the scenery was beautiful. It was the perfect season for hunting.

Audrey was dressed in a waist-fitting black riding suit with a helmet. She was on a burgundy mare, that belonged to her, while in pursuit of a brightly-colored wild chicken.

She shot a whistling arrow and accurately struck the prey.

As a Psychiatrist, her physical attributes had clearly been enhanced. Together with her education in archery from a young age, whether it was in shooting firearms or in archery, she was considered rather skilled.

A golden figure pounced forward and rapidly bit onto the prey which had lost its life. It was none other than Susie.

"It's a pleasure working with you." The corners of Audrey's lips curled up as she struck her palm with Susie's paw with a smile.

At this moment, the aristocrats surrounding her came over, either praising her for her hunting prowess or her training of her hunting hound.

Audrey felt a little ashamed regarding the latter half.

She had never trained Susie before!

The aristocrats quickly dispersed as they continued chasing their prey. As for the low-level priest of the Evernight Goddess, she came over and said to Audrey with a suppressed voice, “You can receive the Hypnotist formula after completing the final mission.”

Finally… Audrey’s eyes lit up as she silently nodded.

To be frank, if she were still the green and squeamish noble lady of the past, she would’ve long lost the patience to accumulate the required contributions and would’ve ended up requesting the purchase of the Hypnotist potion formula at the Tarot Club.

But she knew very well that building up contributions would aid her infiltration into the Psychology Alchemists. She would be more trusted and build up a good foundation for her to receive the High-Sequence potion formulas in the future. Therefore, she patiently performed matters that were either uninteresting or interesting.

Of course, Audrey didn’t waste the past two months. She had been eavesdropping on the conversations of the aristocrats and maidservants, before guiding them to pour out their frustrations and aid them in defeating their negative emotions. This allowed her to act as a Psychiatrist very perfectly.

During this process, she realized that she would unknowingly eavesdrop, observe, and steer the people around her, to understand their flaws and habitual thought processes. She believed that she could disadvantage or mentally break any one of them without leaving a mark. She could also get them to help her by their own will without them even realizing it.

It has to be said that it’s actually quite terrifying, just like monsters in the legends, who can grasp your minds… As she recalled, Audrey couldn’t help but sigh inwardly.

Smine was somewhat unaccustomed to horse-riding as she carefully circled the area and said, “Stoen University’s Associate Professor Michele is a collector. We wish for you to purchase a notebook from the Twenty Year War.”

The Twenty Year War referred to a war between the Loen Kingdom and Feysac Empire in the Fifth Epoch’s Year 621–642. The former was defeated and lost the ancient elves’ island, which was present-day Sonia Island.

Chapter 634 - City of White

◆

Stoen University… Professor Michele… Notebook from the Twenty Year War era… Audrey extracted the key terms in the words and glanced at Susie, who was running happily in front of the mare. She went straight to the point by asking, “Ma’am Smine, what kind of notebook is it?”

“I’m not sure. All I know is that it belongs to the period of the Twenty Year War. It’s part of Associate Professor Michele’s collection. It has an important characteristic—the patterns on the cover faintly forms a dragon.” Smine didn’t hide it from Audrey as she told her all the information she knew.

Audrey, who silently listened to her descriptions, restrained her burgundy mare as she considered how she could complete the mission.

Visit Associate Professor Michele and view his collections before raising a request to buy one of the items isn’t too difficult.

Although it’s embarrassing to admit this, it’s quite unlikely he would reject me regardless of the way it’s said. Yes, Audrey, you shouldn’t be overly reliant on these…

The biggest problem is being out-of-the-blue. I didn’t know Associate Professor Michele before this, making it very difficult to explain why I’m suddenly visiting him. Besides, I don’t know what the notebook means to him. Announcing my desire to purchase it might result in him being alert and wary.

…Jen’s elder brother is studying at Stoen University. At the last gathering, he depicted his penchant for describing and discussing matters. If I were to invite him and his sister to the next afternoon tea and steer the topic towards history, archeology, or collections, then he will likely mention Associate Professor Michele. Yes, at a university, there's definitely not many people who can be called collectors.

With such a precursor, I can send someone to pay a visit to Associate Professor Michele and make the request to view his collection. At the first meeting, I'll try my best not to show my desire for it. I'll observe the owner's actions and guide him to reveal his true self. This will be helpful for me to use suitable matters for suitable requests at a suitable time.

After confirming her line of thought, Audrey nodded at Smine and smiled.

"I'll work hard to complete the mission, but I can't guarantee success."

Just as she said that, she tightened the girth before shooting forward like an arrow, heading straight for a reddish-brown fox that was darting around in a hunting encirclement.

†

Above the tumultuous sea, the Blue Avenger was like a leaf tumbling amidst heavy squalls. From time to time, it would be thrown up before crashing back into the waves, but it maintained a stunning sense of balance without any signs of capsizing.

Inside the captain's cabin, Alger Wilson was floating around the window as he looked at the waves outside which were as high as mountains. There were forceful winds blowing around him in silence.

Some time later, he landed his feet onto the carpet.

Wind-blessed is indeed a Sequence that can be easily "acted" based on its name. The only problem is that it occasionally makes me irascible, completely matching the characteristics of a gale… Alger sighed inwardly without any delight.

Over the past two months or so, he had failed to obtain the Ocean Songster formula through his own resource channels and the Tarot Club’s trades. After all, it was that of a Sequence 5, the Sequence closest to a demigod. The corresponding formula was already something where demand far outstripped supply. Even with boatloads of money and the willingness to pay a premium, it was very difficult to buy one.

Normally speaking, joining the corresponding Church or organization was the most effective method of obtaining the corresponding formula, but as a Church of Storms bishop, Alger was unable to rely on this method. Due to particular secrets, he needed to hide his strength in order to win the freedom he needed to take action and be under light monitoring. Only after he had sufficient confidence would he head for a place and complete the goal he had been waiting for all this time.

To his joy, he didn’t waste the past two months. At the very least, the speed at which he digested the Wind-blessed potion was pretty decent.

The Wind-blessed is simple. Ocean Songster is said to be quite difficult… Must I frequently sing? Alger couldn’t help but turn his head and look towards the deck.

Although he was separated from them by several rooms, he could still hear the drunken sailors singing with gusto, creating a din that could rival the storm’s roars.

Alger unknowingly frowned.

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough. Synthes Circus.

“Ma’am, didn’t you say that you’re performing magic? Why are you dressed like that?” a youth asked the woman dressed in a pitch-black pointed hat and dress of the same color in puzzlement.

I don't know why I'm wearing this as well. Perhaps it's because of my first appearance here. My brain was freezing from the weather and my style was subsequently fixed… Fors rubbed her face which had red and yellow paint as she replied with a smile, "In ancient times, magic is often mistaken as witchcraft."

But this has nothing to do with why I'm wearing this… She picked up the middle of three porcelain cups which were placed in front of her. She then placed a white ball beneath it.

Then, she quickly switched the positions of the cups before smiling at the youth who had questioned her.

"Guess where the tiny ball is?"

"Isn't this one of the gambling methods invented by Emperor Roselle?" the youth said with piqued interest. "But you aren't a croupier, but a trickmaster at a circus. Therefore, I believe that the ball has already been switched away. All the cups are empty!"

Fors smiled and said, "Congratulations, you got it wrong."

She suddenly picked up the cup in the middle as a white blur flew out.

It was a dove!

As for the tiny ball from before, it was where the dove had left!

"Wow!"

"Godly!"

"Wonderful magic!"

"Brilliant!"

After a series of amazed exclamations, Fors clearly looked pleased with herself as she looked at the distant cathedral bell, put away her props, and returned to the tent where the circus master resided.

"Are you really resigning? I can double your salary!" the circus master came over as he tried to persuade her otherwise.

Unfortunately, I had already summarized the Trickmaster principles by the middle of March and had already completely digested the potion last week. If it wasn't because the contract ended today, I wouldn't even be here today…

Although being a Trickmaster feels very nice, this doesn't stop me from my goal of advancing to Astrologer. Teacher said that he would be giving me the formula, ingredients, and a gift this week… What kind of gift will it be?

Sigh, the ravings from the full moon are getting more terrifying. If not for Mr. Fool, I definitely would've lost control and become a monster… Fors extended her right hand and covered her mouth, languidly yawning. Then, she said with a smile, "Well, I'm actually a best-selling author. My next book is related to circuses, so I came here to be hired."

"A best-selling author?" The circus master's eyes lit up as he said worriedly and expectantly, "Will you write bad things about us?"

"Are there any? I had a great time for the past two months." Fors took off her pointed black hat.

The circus master revealed a sincere smile and said, "Wall, Ma'am Wall, can you mention our circus's name in your book? I-I'll pay you advertisement fees. Of course, it won't be much. As you know, I'm responsible for the livelihoods of many people."

That can be done? This circus master is quite smart… For the first time, Fors realized that a novel could "advertise" just like in newspapers or magazines. Furthermore, the format was more obscure and natural.

†

Amidst waves, a liner with rows of cannons traveled along a safe sea route without daring to deviate far from it.

Any deviation from the sea route east of Oravi Island usually meant disappearing. Even pirates didn’t dare to stray too far from the safe zones.

This sea was filled with unexplored regions, filled with all sorts of sensational legends!

After two months of volunteer work and finding four chances to engage in true acting, Klein bade farewell to carrying patients, scrubbing toilet bowls, cleaning vomit, and other miscellaneous chores. He boarded a ship headed for the Gargas Archipelago.

At the Tarot Gathering in early March, he had hired The Hermit Cattleya in a private conversation. He would meet her at the capital of Gargas Archipelago, the City of White, Nas. He would then board her ship and head for the dangerous ocean, which was close to an illusion, on the far east of the Sonia Sea. There, he would search for unaffiliated mermaids who lived there.

The Hermit Cattleya seemed to be very interested in meeting members of the Tarot Club in the real world. With just a few seconds of thought, she agreed to The World’s request. However, due to the high level of danger, she had given a high asking price.

3,000 pounds!

Klein’s first reaction was to give up and take Mr. Hanged Man’s ghost ship, but considering how there would be many sailors from the Church of Storms following him, making his freedom limited, and the fact that the level of danger in the easternmost area of the Sonia Sea was high, he finally accepted Ma’am Hermit’s condition. As for her, she would wait around the Gargas Archipelago for a month at the beginning of April.

Any delay would imply the end of the cooperation.

To not waste the thousand-pound deposit, Klein didn’t wait to complete his digestion before heading for Gargas Archipelago from Oravi Island.

Of course, with the summaries and chances at true acting from before, he was already very close to completely digesting the Faceless potion. Even if he didn’t use true acting, just acting in his capacity as Gehrman Sparrow was enough to complete the digestion in two to three weeks.

Due to this reason, as well as The World’s identity being tied with Gehrman Sparrow, Klein transformed back into the lunatic and powerful adventurer once he left the hospital. However, he did disguise himself to a certain degree.

As he watched the perturbed sea surface, Klein finally saw a port city that had houses mainly made of white rock.

The most eastern front of the Feysac Empire, the capital of the Gargas Archipelago, Nas!

I’m finally overseas… Klein looked at a fishing boat carrying whale meat cruising into the harbor. Its ruggedness wasn’t concealed.

Meanwhile, he discovered several ships hanging pirate flags docked at the harbor without any signs of concealment.

Indeed, Oravi Island’s eastern front is a playground for pirates… Klein wore his hat and carried his luggage and left the cabin after the liner came to a stable halt. He went down the gangway into the harbor.

After a few steps, he saw a crew of pirates seemingly entering conflict with a local gang. Both sides drew their weapons as they clashed.

Klein calmly walked past, showing no signs of stopping them.

At that moment, he saw a local pull out a few cans from his pocket and opened the lid before throwing it into the middle of the road.

What’s the meaning of this? Klein nearly laughed out before recalling an infamous item at sea.

Canned wolf-fish!

Canned wolf-fish was popular on the east coast of Feysac and the Gargas Archipelago!

Just as the thought surfaced, an indescribable stench seemed to inundate Klein’s olfactory senses.

His facial muscles twitched as he tried hard to resist his body’s discomfort as he quickly left the region.

A small number of pirates who were struck by the stench vomited immediately, while the remaining ones frantically fled while dragging their companions as though they had lost all their combat strength.

A minute later, in a secluded corner, the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, crouched down and silently belched.

Chapter 635 - Meeting

◆

The smell of canned wolf-fish is really pungent… Not only is it smelly, but it's also disgusting… It's practically a biological weapon! Klein crouched in the corner and took nearly a minute to recover.

Before that very instant, he had underestimated canned wolf-fish. He had failed to take the necessary actions to deal with the situation. He could've used Paper Figurine Substitutes or create an invisible air tube to pretend that he was using Underwater Breathing, but he had done none of that.

Now, he finally got a deep understanding of how wise it was to ban opening canned wolf-fish in public!

Phew… Klein exhaled as he slowly stood up. Carrying his suitcase, he slowly walked towards the harbor.

His first impression of the city named Nas was one of many white houses, with stone being a common material for the buildings. The second impression was that it wasn't too far north, but the temperature was rather cold. Even though it was already April, it was still only a few degrees Celsius. The third impression was that there were many whaling houses. Gigantic beluga whales were being dismembered for their skin, flesh, fat, bones, and "gray amber."

The latter two could be used to make pannier for banquet dresses or top-grade scented materials. Whether it was for incense or perfume, they were considered luxurious goods that only the wealthy and nobles could enjoy.

As for the skin, flesh, and fat of beluga whales, they also had their own uses. They were used separately to make clothes, food, or oil-related products. In Nas and the Gargas Archipelago, the culinary methods for preparing beluga whale had transformed into a unique culture. There were all sorts of techniques and famous restaurants.

Klein passed by the various whaling houses, seeing separated fat being carried out on cargo carriages towards nearby factories that spewed black smoke. They were oil refineries which were very unique to Gargas. Beluga whale fat could be refined into whale oil which could be bottled and made into outstanding incendiary material and the lifeblood of particular industries.

Very unique… Klein exhaled some mist as he stopped and watched for a while.

Out of the harbor and into the city district, a cacophony of Feysac inundated his ears.

Having mastered ancient Feysac—the source of the Northern Continent's language—Klein was long familiar with the language of the Northern Continent barbarians. He turned his head upon hearing the din and saw the tall populace with slightly blonde hair raising horizontal banners as they protested on the streets.

The horizontal banner right at the front clearly wrote the reasons for their protest.

"Oppose the poaching of beluga whales! We need sustainable development!"

Pfft… Klein nearly lost his cool as he believed that the concept of "sustainable development" was highly likely to be "invented" by Emperor Roselle.

As he swept his gaze, he looked at the banners behind it and understood the goals of the protest.

“Whaling for survival, not entertainment!”

“Humans aren’t more important than beluga whales!”

“Greedy devils should leave Nas!”

At this moment, a policeman dressed in a gray uniform held a shield, riot fork, and baton to stop the protesters from advancing.

After a brief argument, the scene quickly turned violent.

Many protesting youths threw opened canned wolf-fish, as well as Molotov cocktails. The police didn’t show restraint as they forged forward, raising their shields and striking with their batons.

Klein pinched his nose as he watched the fire burning on the street. He realized that many passersby were completely unfazed. Apart from a small bunch of spectators, the rest continued proceeding to their destinations.

It appears that such things happen often in Nas… Do protests develop into riots? As expected of the Feysac Empire… Klein mumbled to himself, circled the street, and casually found an inn to stay.

He continued registering as Gehrman Sparrow, unworried that the news released by Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy would cause the Church of the Evernight Goddess to view him as a Faceless. This was because he had no plans on traveling through the whale fishing routes to find mermaids who were believers of the Goddess. He planned on heading to the dangerous region farthest east from the Sonia Sea.

As for the safety in the Gargas Archipelago, there was nothing he needed to worry about. This was a colony of the Feysac Empire. The only legal Church was the Church of the God of Combat. They were enemies with the Church of the Evernight Goddess.

Klein was originally worried that he would encounter many Faceless here, meeting seven or eight Faceless simply from going next door to enjoy some whale cuisine. However, after serious consideration, he rationally eliminated this possibility.

First, Beyonders from the Seer pathway were rare to begin with. Klein had only met three Beyonders who were beyond Sequence 8, and second, Sequence 6 Beyonders weren't commonly seen. Even in a playground for pirates, those who had 5,000-pound bounties were considered rare creatures. Third, once a Faceless had many preparations, they would seek out mermaids on a whaling boat. They would either begin having faith in the Goddess, sink to the bottom of the ocean, or become research personnel. Otherwise, the extremely smart ones would seize the opportunity and successfully advance before leaving safely. It was very rare for them to stay on Gargas Archipelago for long.

In all of Nas, excluding myself, there wouldn't be more than two Faceless… Klein straightened his clothes as he wasn't in a rush to contact Admiral of Stars Cattleya. He came onto the streets in a good mood and began searching for delicacies according to what he heard on his travels.

Raw beluga whale slices, fried whale steak, whale oil with skin, roasted whale meat… Like a standard traveler, Klein restaurant hopped thrice and sampled different food.

Not bad. It's pretty unique and it's not very fishy. Instead, it's very appetizing and alluring… Burp… Klein covered his mouth as he came onto the streets. He discovered that the street lamps were sparse, but the lights from the houses lining the streets were bright. To a certain extent, they reduced the darkness of the night.

Ice-cold winds passed through the ocean, causing Klein to raise his hand to prop up his collar. The blue cufflinks had their lusters restrained as they were deeply embedded at his wrists.

Compared to rings, items like cufflinks were more suited to Gehrman Sparrow's persona. Therefore, Klein didn't blame the Artisan for making changes without his permission.

As for the harmonica that had fixed the summoning ritual of a spirit world creature, it matched Klein's inward intentions completely. It could be used for a year and a half. It was silver in color, exquisite and beautiful.

When he received the harmonica, Klein had imagined such a scene—a crazy and powerful adventurer playing a sad tune on the harmonica in a silent night under the dark moonlight by the side of a boat.

Unfortunately, the harmonica couldn't produce any sound, and it could only be used to summon Reinette Tinekerr.

Shaking his head indiscernibly, Klein steadily walked down the empty and cold Nas streets before returning to his inn.

Using sleep to bring himself back to an optimal state, he went to Gray Amber Street the next morning and entered a sundry store named Hot Whale Dance.

Upon seeing the grizzled boss who was a head taller than him, Klein tapped the counter and said in Feysac, "Whale oil."

The boss had wrinkles plastered across his face, but he only wore a coat made of beluga whale skin. The light-colored patterns had a strange beauty.

"How much?" The boss was drinking large mouthfuls of liquor, ignoring the messy placement of the goods.

"One and a quarter buckets," Klein replied according to the predetermined secret password.

The boss's drinking actions instantly slowed down as he placed the cup of brownish-green alcohol onto the bar counter.

"Do you want to try some? It's many times purer than Nepos. It's considered the mistress of all Feysac men."

This was a distilled liquor that's a specialty of Feysac. It's brewed with potatoes or grain. The alcohol purity was high, as stimulating and famous as Blaze. Compared to Sonia blood wine, its price was rather low, and it was well-liked by ordinary Feysacians.

"There's no need." Klein shook his head.

The boss chuckled.

"What kind of man are you if you don't drink Nepos?

"Are there only women in Loen?"

He mumbled before drinking another mouthful.

"Who introduced you here?"

"Ma'am Gehrmuses," Klein said a name in the style of the local customs.

The boss exhaled, causing a strong scent of distilled liquor to linger in the air.

He staggered as he got up, like a polar bear performing at a circus.

After giving the store employee instructions, he brought Klein to a tiny room on the second story of the warehouse at the back.

"Let me search for it. Let's see…" the boss mumbled as he crouched.

Klein controlled the twitching of his facial muscles as he recalled a widely-spread joke in the Loen Kingdom.

"When is a Feysac man not drunk? When he's in his mother's womb."

After waiting for a moment, Klein saw the boss find a pure crystal ball from his rummaging.

Then, the tipsy "polar bear" had his back facing Klein as he rubbed his hands on it, softly chanting the tongue-twisting ancient Hermes.

The room gradually turned dark as all the corners without light sank like they were producing a strange attractive force.

The crystal ball quickly lit up, producing the figure of a woman wearing a black, classic robe.

She had an oval face and had very fair skin. Her eyes were deep black with a slight purple hue which was filled with mystery.

I'm seeing another Tarot Club member's actual appearance again… Klein stepped forward and received the crystal ball.

On the opposite end of the crystal ball, The Hermit Cattleya could also clearly see The World. He had black hair and brown eyes, with a thin and angular face.

Her gaze paused for a moment before she hesitantly said, "Gehrman Sparrow?"

She discovered that the true strength and standards of the Tarot Club members were far stronger than she had expected. The World was actually the crazy hunter, Gehrman Sparrow, who was considered at the level of a pirate admiral!

My various assumptions of The World were problematic… Controlled, staid, experienced, and ruthless… Admiral of Stars didn't feel overly surprised.

"Yes, Ma'am Cattleya." Klein gestured for the boss to leave the room.

After it became extremely quiet, Admiral of Stars Cattleya asked once again, "I'm very curious. How did you recognize my identity? I've been very careful when participating in the gatherings."

Of course, she had jumped in fright when The World, who had chosen to speak privately with her, immediately greeted her with "Admiral of

Stars.”

And it was partly because of this that she chose to take on The World’s commission.

“A secret.” Klein smiled politely.

As he didn’t wish for her to make connections to Mr. Fool, he calmly added, “Your eyes are very special.”

“Can I understand that as a form of praise?” Cattleya smiled, feeling somewhat enlightened.

She believed that The World had previously only relied on her eyes and other details to suspect that she was Admiral of Stars, but she wasn’t certain. Hence, he had probed her with language, and her reaction told him the correct answer.

Klein didn’t respond as he switched to asking, “When can we set off?”

Chapter 636 - Slaughterer

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Admiral of Stars Cattleya thought before answering, “Tonight at 8. Dock 6.”

Not bad. There’s no delay at all… Klein nodded slightly.

“Okay.”

Just as he said that, the light inside the crystal ball suddenly converged as the figure dressed in a black, classic robe darkened and blurred before quickly vanishing.

Holding the crystal ball which had turned very ordinary, Klein turned around, pulled open the door, and walked out.

Glancing at the boss who was guzzling alcohol while leaning against a wall, he threw the crystal ball at him.

The boss fumbled to catch it as Klein unhurriedly walked down the stairs and left the warehouse.

Once he was out of Hot Whale Dance, he took out his golden pocket watch and snapped it open to check the time.

It’s almost noon. Most bars will be open… Klein stopped a rental carriage and used Feysac to tell the driver to head to the Lærdal Bar. It meant Dawn Bar in the local language. It was a place where adventurers would gather in the Gargas Archipelago.

To Klein, the gathering of different intel and news was meaningful.

This might aid him in making the best judgment at critical points in time, allowing him to escape the misfortune of losing his life. Therefore, even if he didn't like bars, he often went there. He would get a cup of thick malt beer and silently sit in the corner of the bar counter and listen to any matters of interest which people mentioned at sea.

In addition, he wanted to know about Roy King, who had been imprisoned in Bayam's governor-general's office. Over the past two months, Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin hadn't sent him any dreams. Similarly, Fate Councilor Ricciardo didn't summon his messenger to provide him any clues to a powerful mystical item.

About twenty minutes later, the carriage came to a halt. A huge vertical signboard with the words Lærdal Bar appeared before Klein's eyes.

He habitually took out two soli in notes and handed them to the carriage driver.

It was only when he saw the worn face of the carriage driver did he suddenly realize something.

He was overseas and this was a colony of Feysac. It had its own currency!

The smallest denomination was the kopek, followed by the feysilver, and then the gold hoorn. They maintained the very intuitive base-ten denomination, making conversions very simple.

I forgot to visit the bank to exchange for kopek and feysilver… I used it all at the inn and restaurant… Klein was just about to look around to see if there were any banks around when the carriage driver happily received the two one-soli notes. After repeatedly checking it, he beamed with his wrinkled face.

"Thank you, thank you for your generosity!"

Klein got off the carriage. While walking towards the Lærdal Bar, he was recalling the carriage driver's delighted look. Gold pounds, soli, and pence can be used here as well? Yes, Gargas Archipelago isn't that far from Toscarter and Oravi. Many items would be sold here, and many Loen adventurers like to visit the Sea of Beluga Whales. To have Loen Kingdom's currency being used in private is rather common… Heh heh. Loen's industry and economic strength is greater than the Feysac Empire. It can even be said to be much stronger. The gold pound is worth a lot more than the gold hoorn… Wait!

Suddenly, he recalled something. One gold pound could be used to exchange for 5.5 gold hoorn.

This also meant that two soli was equal to 5.5 feysilver.

And in the City of White, a rental carriage cost four feysilver an hour. There wasn't any prorated discounts.

It was no wonder the carriage driver was so happy! Klein turned back and realized that the carriage had long disappeared.

Sigh… Gently exhaling, Klein pressed down on his hat and pushed open the heavy wooden door before entering the Lærdal Bar.

In this world, bars near the dock and factory districts often sold lunch and dinner. Therefore, they opened around eleven in the morning. At that moment, there were quite a number of adventurers, who had nothing better to do, gathered in front of the bar counter. They ordered liquor and smoked fish or vegetable soup with oil floating on the surface. They had a great time eating all of that with bread.

Drinking Lanti Proof and Nepos at noon? Are they planning to be drunk the entire day? The customs of Feysac are really unacceptable… Klein mumbled as he walked to the bar counter with a deadpan expression. He sat in a corner and rapped the wooden counter.

"Two toasted bread with red sausage, a set of smoked whale meat, a bowl of thick vegetable soup, and a cup of Golas beer."

Golas beer was rather popular along the eastern seaboard of Feysac. It was rather rare in Sonia Island and the Gargas Archipelago.

“New here?” The bartender glanced at Klein. “A total of 4 feysilver and 6 kopek.”

I’m new because I don’t drink liquor? Klein ignored the bartender’s question and threw 2 soli in notes.

It was equivalent to 5 feysilver and 5 kopek.

Considering how he was Gehrman Sparrow, Klein held back the urge to get the bartender to give him change as he treated it as a tip.

Of course, in a Backlund bar, that amount of food would’ve cost him about two soli.

Having received a tip, the bartender didn’t ask further. He skillfully poured a cup of Golas beer and pushed it towards Klein.

The beer was rather black in color with plenty of foam. It had a pleasant charred taste, and there was slight stimulation in the mellow taste. It made Klein feel as though the alcohol content was rather high as he suspected if some other liquor had been poured in.

While waiting for his food, he sipped his beer and silently listened to the conversations of the surrounding adventurers.

And the group’s conversation was mainly centered around how someone had made a windfall, who was killed by pirates, who finished off a pirate captain without claiming the bounty and instead inherited the deceased pirate captain’s subordinates, which woman in Nas had an illegitimate child, or who became a laughing stock for failing to perform at a brothel.

When the Gargas specialty, thick soup brewed using sweet vegetables, onions, cabbage, carrots, fish, and butter, was served before Klein, he finally heard something interesting.

An adventurer suppressed his voice as he said to his surroundings partners, “Have you heard of this? There’s a Fourth Epoch ruin east of Gargas.”

“No! Who discovered it?” his surprised partner curiously asked.

The adventurer looked to his left and right as he said without much thought, “Gareth discovered it. As you know, he’s a Seafarer who’s good at diving.

“As he was drunk, he was thrown off the deck and sank to the bottom of the sea. Who knew that he ended up discovering remnants of steel buildings. They were definitely steel buildings made from human hands!”

“And then?” his partner pressed.

The adventurer chuckled.

“Gareth followed the ruins and discovered an abandoned sea well of unknown depths. It was already filled with seawater, but it still left him with extreme horror. Holy Lord of Storms, this might even lead to the core of the land.

“He said that there was something summoning him inside, but he didn’t dare explore it. So he floated up in fear.”

A deep sea well… Strange attraction… This might not be a Fourth Epoch ruin. Perhaps it’s from the Third Epoch or Second Epoch. Little Sun had mentioned that during the Dark Epoch, sea monsters were subject to Elf King Soniathrym and helped “Him” rule the bottom of the sea… Sweet, salty, and a little tartish… Klein drank a mouthful of thick vegetable soup as he forked a piece of smoked beluga whale meat.

The adventurers didn’t talk about Gareth’s encounter, as there wasn’t any sight of heart-stirring gold or jewelry, mystical items, or Beyonder ingredients at the moment.

The conversation quickly steered to a few adventurers who they weren't friendly with. They mocked about how they had married beautiful natives who all turned into stout and fat women a couple of years later. Their strength could even match those of Low-Sequence Beyonders.

Finally, they concluded that it might have to do with how people from Feysac had tiny bits of giant blood running in their veins.

They didn't say anything of value until Klein finished his lunch and drink his beer, but the number of people inside Lærdal Bar kept increasing.

Suddenly, the heavy door was pushed open as it slammed into the wall.

A top hat-donning young man who was clearly of Loen blood rushed in. He shouted nervously, "Is there anyone from the Adventurer Association?"

Yes, Bilt still owes me the creation of one item… Klein watched as the young men looked around frantically while constantly turning his head back. It appeared as though someone was pursuing him.

Before he could consider whether to render assistance, three adventurers stood up from different corners. One of them was more than two meters tall. He had wide shoulders and firm muscles. His hair was slightly blond, and his eyes were a deep blue; he was rather eye-catching.

The strength he appears to have matches with his substance… This isn't a Beyonder of quite a significant Sequence… Klein retracted his gaze as he became a spectator once again as he looked out the door.

Soon, a man in a linen shirt and brown jacket appeared. He was of medium build, and his lips were purple. His brown eyes could hardly conceal the intense baneful look he tried to hide.

He… Klein instantly connected the man to a portrait on a bounty!

It was the second mate of the King of Immortality Agalito, Slaughter Kircheis, with a bounty of 9,500 pounds!

This is a notorious pirate… Klein's nerves tensed up as his gaze locked onto the man. He naturally hung his left hand down as his body prepared to lunge forward.

Kircheis swept his gaze at the two-meter-tall "giant" and saw Klein before retracting his gaze. He turned to leave the Lærdal Bar without stopping at all.

Very decisive, very alert… Klein frowned slightly, confident that he hadn't revealed any killing intent. He had even controlled his gaze very well.

Was he worried about that "giant," or is his intuition very sharp to a particular extent? Just like the premonition towards danger like Devils? Klein wondered as he drank the remaining Golas beer without participating in the private conversations of the Adventurer Association members. He left the bar and came onto the streets.

Now, he didn't wish to give himself new troubles aside from finding mermaids.

After circling the area, Klein discovered that Slaughterer Kircheis had long departed, his whereabouts were unknown. Hence, he silently returned to his inn.

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City of Silver. Inside the spire.

Derrick Berg once again met the Chief of the six-member council, Colin Iliad.

He clearly remembered that nearly seventy "days" ago, Colin had told him that in two months he should prepare to be sent out on an exploration mission.

Chapter 637 - The Future

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“Are you done with your preparations?” Colin had his back to the window as he asked without any abnormality in his tone.

With the Axe of Hurricane attached to him, Derrick lowered his head slightly.

“I’m done.”

In the past two months, through the patrol missions and arduous practice, he had fully mastered the various Beyonder powers of Solar High Priest. He was already not too far from digesting the potion.

What he wished for the most was to obtain the Sun pathway’s Sequence 6 potion formula in the next two to three Tarot Gatherings, so as to ensure his continual advancement.

The release of Shepherd Lovia made him feel highly threatened. He believed that only by reaching the same Sequence 5 would he have a chance of effectively putting her in check and avert the potential danger of the City of Silver. However, with the knowledge of the acting method and without the lack of Beyonder ingredients, all he needed to do was survive the various patrols and exploration missions and make enough contributions to make Sequence 6 a reachable target. However, Sequence 5 required a specific ritual which made it relatively difficult.

The grizzled Colin nodded.

“In another two days, I’ll be leading a small team to the vicinity of the

Giant King's Court. We will do a second sweep of Afternoon Town which we previously found, and your powers are very suitable for such matters."

Afternoon Town… Having been "brushing up" on his knowledge of legends over the past few months, Derrick was no stranger to this name. It was an area that needed to be passed when going to the Giant King's Court from the Kingdom of Silver. It was a town where humans and giants lived together. It clustered around the ancient god's residence which was forever fixed at sunset, just like the last door that separated the real world to a mythological legend.

"Yes, Your Excellency." Derrick couldn't find a reason to reject.

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City of White, Nas. In a particular inn.

Klein sat behind a desk as he looked at the constantly changing clouds outside the window, silently awaiting the arrival of evening.

At eight, he would board the Star Pirates's flagship, Future, on Dock 6 to head to the furthest eastern front of the Sonia Sea. No matter what happened in the Gargas Archipelago or this region of the sea known as a pirate's playground, they would have nothing to do with him.

Therefore, he didn't attempt to hunt the small number of pirates with bounties on their heads that he met while walking in the big and small alleys or bars and casinos. He didn't want to mess up his plans of finding mermaids.

My spiritual intuition tells me that Slaughter Kircheis from noon seems to have targeted me… I wouldn't mind if he wishes to send himself to his death. Well, battle strategy can be despised, but battle technique needs to be treated seriously. Without using the Sea God Scepter or Tinder, I'm at best a little stronger than him. I'm at an advantage by being well-rounded and strange enough… Klein half-closed his eyes as he imagined the gathering of countless spherical lights, and he used it to enter Cogitation rapidly so as to maintain the acuteness of his spirituality.

After an unknown period of time, his spiritual perception was triggered as he opened his eyes immediately.

At that moment, the sun had already set in the west. The fiery-red colors seemed to burn the sea as long shadows were drawn out through the curtains.

The shadows seemed to come alive as they danced about before distorting and standing up to project themselves on the wall.

Its pitch-black darkness was like the manifestation of the immense evil at the bottom of a human's heart.

Klein watched this scene with a deadpan expression. He raised his left palm high as he slowly extended his fingers.

The pitch-black shadow produced a voice that sounded hoarse, as though it held sandcloth in it. While looking at Klein, it said, "Gehrman Sparrow!

"Do not interfere in the matter that happened this afternoon.

"This is the will of the King of Immortality."

With that said, the shadow slid down like flowing water and scattered into the darkness, having its original state restored.

Klein didn't pay attention to the shadow's changes. Instead, he cast his gaze outside.

He could sense that the person controlling the shadow was somewhere across the street. Hence, he didn't plan on acting upon an incorporeal entity.

Indeed, Slaughterer Kircheis recognized me as the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, who loves to hunt pirates. That's why he didn't hesitate to turn around at noon. He might not be afraid of me, but there was another rather powerful adventurer present as well…

The power he revealed just now is somewhat similar to the Desire Apostle in Backlund. He's more and more likely to be a Beyonder from the Devil pathway…

Heh, using the King of Immortality to scare me. Do you think I'll submit just like that? I never intended to involve myself in it! By doing so, I'm actually a little curious… Forget it. Finding the mermaids is of utmost importance as of now. I shouldn't create incidents for myself… Klein retracted his gaze as he lampooned.

He was originally wondering if he should report the matter to the Church of the God of Combat in Nas, but after serious consideration, he discovered that it was likely to be meaningless.

The Church of the God of Combat is the only legal religion in the Feysac Empire. The number of High-Sequence Beyonders they have is definitely a little higher than the Church of the Evernight Goddess, but just by a little. Even if the demigods of the Feysac royal family and military are added, with the extensive land and numerous colonies it has, making the number of critical areas that require protection crucial, they would definitely be lacking in manpower. The Gargas Archipelago, which is far away from the empire and in a relatively ordinary location, with the only industry being whale fishing, there's no doubt that it's only an afterthought and doesn't have any saints protecting it.

According to what Klein had previously learned, the archbishop of the Gargas diocese for the Church of the God of Combat was only a Sequence 5 Guardian. Together with the tribunal's inquisitor, a baron from the royal family, and a commodore from the military, they form the highest level of Beyonder combat forces here.

Of course, the existence of Sealed Artifacts had guaranteed the control of the area. Klein suspected that the Church of the God of Combat in

Nas had at least one Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. Only by doing so could they combine it with their fleets and Beyonders to ensure that the whale oil and gray amber trade industry wouldn't be under the control of pirates and not end up as one of the vassals of one of the Four Kings. Under any sudden assaults, they were able to use it to last until reinforcements arrived.

And it was precisely because of this that the officials in the Gargas Archipelago ultimately maintained a defensive state. As long as the pirates didn't cause problems, they were allowed to freely enter and leave.

Reporting things wouldn't be of any use… No wonder it's called a pirate's playground. It's no wonder Bilt wants to organize an Adventurer Association… Klein sighed as he gave up his previous thoughts.

After dinner and resting for a while, Klein took out his gold pocket watch and opened it to check the time.

Seeing that it was already seven, he held a ritual and summoned himself before responding to himself. He then brought different items into the gray fog while adjusting his inventory.

As he was adventuring out at sea on the Future, the Murloc Cufflink and various Sea God domain charms were necessary. Therefore, Klein left Tinder and the Sun Brooch above the gray fog. With Creeping Hunger as his main force, he matched it with the Biological Poison Bottle and a revolver which was loaded with different Beyonder bullets. He still had 7 purifying bullets, 13 demon-hunting bullets, and 2 exorcism bullets.

Wearing his coat, Klein placed down Azik's whistle, as well as his wallet containing only fifty pounds into his inner pocket. Then, he stored the silver adventurer harmonica and charms together.

After doing all of this, he touched the revolver beneath his armpit, polished the blue cufflink at his left wrist, and buttoned his double-breasted frock coat. He wore his half top hat, picked up his black suitcase which contained only his change of clothes and some daily necessities, and left the inn for the harbor via a carriage.

After waiting for a while at Dock 6, he saw a gigantic sailboat slowly appear from the distance.

According to his limited knowledge of boats, Klein knew that a sailboat of such length wasn't scientific. However, this didn't deter it from cruising calmly on the black sea surface as it headed for the lighthouse which emitted its light.

As the sailboat approached, the flag gradually became clear. The crimson but weak moonlight allowed the people at the harbor to see ten white stars of the same size as they circled a cold eyelashless eye on the flag.

"Admiral of Stars!"

"The Future!"

The pirates and sailors who were watching over their ships exclaimed as every dock in the harbor was filled with stirred emotions.

After more than ten seconds, the defensive cannons on the two ends of the mountain "nervously" adjusted themselves and aimed at the gigantic sailboat which didn't conceal itself.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The distant cathedral produced light and ethereal chimes, signaling that it was 8 o'clock sharp.

As the tenseness around the dock became more evident, the Future came to a halt.

At some point in time, a woman dressed in a black classical robe appeared at the bow. Her clothes were filled with different symbols and magic labels, making her look like a powerful warlock of ancient legends.

Under the crimson moonlight, the ground beneath her suddenly lit up. Resplendent starlight scattered down, forming a long, transparent bridge.

The long bridge constantly extended forward before landing on Dock 6.

An impressive show… As expected of one of the seven pirate admirals. Furthermore, she's a full Admiral, a rank higher than Iceberg and Ailment… Klein sighed as he wished to extend his palm to cover his face.

He didn't wish to let others know that the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, was cooperating with Admiral of Stars Cattleya.

At this point, I can only maintain my persona. Once I'm done digesting the potion and by the time I'm back in the Northern Continent, there wouldn't be Gehrman Sparrow anymore… Klein walked out of the shadows as he pressed the half top hat on his head. He smoothly walked onto the starry bridge.

His footsteps were firm as Klein walked with his back straight while being targeted by numerous defensive cannons. Under the gazes with ambiguous meanings, he unhurriedly walked to the docked Future.

The bridge under his feet was transparent as the dark-blue seawater which was almost black ebbed beneath him. It would make anyone with acrophobia turn limp.

Thankfully, I've long become a Clown. I've even jumped off a clock tower… Klein covered the last ten meters with a cold expression before stepping onto the deck of the Future.

Faced with the black-eyed Admiral of Stars Cattleya, who had purple tint to her eyes, he didn't show any nervousness. He took off his hat and bowed.

“Good evening, Ma’am.”

Chapter 638 - Poison Expert

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While Klein bowed, the purple tint in black-haired Cattleya’s eyes converged as they seemed to turn into an abyss that could suck up souls. What already exuded an air of mystery had turned even more obvious.

She saw that the Astral Projection deep inside Gehrman Sparrow’s Ether Body was pure darkness. In minute areas, there were dark flows with unending changes.

She saw that Gehrman Sparrow’s left hand was bright and lustrous, but it was stained with a sanguine color that couldn’t be dispersed.

She saw a blue luster by Gehrman Sparrow’s wrist and a silver flow on his left pocket. The colors were bright and obvious as though they were connected to the illusory, stacked spirit world. There was the sound of the tide and the illusory sounds of wind surrounding the items.

She saw an intermix of green and black lusters by Gehrman Sparrow’s right pocket, as well as two points of golden, silver, and bronze under his armpit. At his chest, there was a deep grayish-white like rotting death.

Four mystical items and Beyonder artifacts or spirituality charms in units of ten… Cattleya’s eyes were a little dazzled as she couldn’t help but close them for a moment.

She nodded as well.

"Good evening, Mr. Sparrow."

Even as a powerhouse who was famous across the seas, a senior member of the seven pirate admirals, she seldom saw people who armed themselves to the teeth with Beyonder items.

Of course, she had also seen people with more mystical items, Beyonder artifacts, and spirituality charms, but they had secret organizations backing them. They typically had several ships and more than a thousand pirates under them. Many things needed to be turned in, split and shared, as well as sold in order to maintain and strengthen one's faction. Few things could be left in their possession as a result.

However, "few" was relative. They could compare with what Gehrman Sparrow presently had, but Cattleya had reduced her items to only two after several trades. They were two items that were sufficiently powerful and mystical enough to match her identity as a pirate admiral.

Apart from the lusters representing different items, Cattleya's black eyes, which were slightly purple, could also tell that Gehrman wasn't real enough. He seemed to be hidden behind thick curtains.

Th-this is the reason why he gives me the feeling like he's not a living person at the Tarot Club? He has quite a number of secrets. It involves at least a Sequence 3 saint or an even higher-level angel… Cattleya didn't dare take another look as the glow in her eyes were no longer as profound.

Meanwhile, she mocked herself, believing that some of her guesses about The World and Gehrman Sparrow were somewhat funny.

Involves a Sequence 3 saint or an even higher-leveled angel. Heh heh, there's nothing wrong with that, since he's like me, a member of the Tarot Club. We're definitely involved with Mr. Fool, who's likely a reawakened ancient god.

After exchanging greetings, Cattleya didn't engage in further small talk. She led Klein towards the cabin.

At this moment, the Future, which had been docked, set sail again. A long contour was drawn on the surface of the sea as it cruised east of the whale fishing route. With that, the tense atmosphere at the Nas Harbor dispersed.

Gazes from various sailors were cast over. Klein didn't show any signs of pressure as he surveyed the area and said with a tone as though he was back in his own home, "There are fewer people than I expected."

Cattleya turned her head and glanced at him before answering simply, "East of the whaling route is very dangerous. Only Ludwell heads there frequently as though he's searching for something.

"Apart from the Future, the pirate crew's other ships wouldn't join us. Similarly, a large number of sailors have been placed on the other ships. Only the minimum number needed to guarantee the successful voyage of the ship has been maintained."

A very wise choice… Ludwell. That Admiral Hell Ludwell? Mr. Hanged Man mentioned him a long time ago. He said that he was beginning to study Sonia Sea's eastern end of the navigation… Klein nodded a little without a word.

This was Gehrman Sparrow's bearing.

He silently observed his surroundings and realized that the deck, the cabin, and spars were covered with mysterious and abstract symbols. As a whole, it looked like a gigantic ritualistic magic ceremony.

It's like the Golden Dream. It's a sailboat of mystery, but it's not at the level of a ghost ship… Compared to Admiral of Stars and Vice Admiral Iceberg, Tracy, who has only become a pirate admiral for the past few months, clearly is considerably more inferior. The Black Death has nothing special about it… Klein retracted his gaze and followed

Cattleya to the cabin's entrance.

Waiting here was a man in dungarees and a white shirt. He was in his thirties and looked strong and fit. He had thick body hair. As for his forearm, which was exposed outside, it seemed like he was downing a brown sweater.

He wore a circular hair with a depression in the middle as he revealed a smile and stretched out his right hand.

"The first mate of the Future, Frank Lee.

"Good evening, Mr. Sparrow."

Poison Expert Frank Lee who has a bounty of 7,000 pounds… Klein instantly recognized the man.

Considering how Gehrman Sparrow didn't have the habit of shaking hands, he bent his back slightly and said, "Good evening."

Frank Lee retracted his right hand and glanced at Cattleya. He said while maintaining his smile, "You seem to know me? That's right. The picture I took before is on my arrest warrant.

"Don't mind the Poison Expert title. I'm a very friendly person, as long as I'm not facing those darn bastards! My greatest hobby is to study soil and figure out cross-breeding techniques. Believe me, this is the future of humanity."

"But the people from the Church of Earth Mother don't believe him." Cattleya gave Klein an introduction in the most subtle manner.

He's originally someone from the Church of Earth Mother? Cross-breeding techniques are good. As long as the quantity rises, it will be able to provide for more humans, raising the poverty line… Klein looked at Frank Lee, and he calmly said courteously and truthfully, "This is something commendable."

"…You are indeed an adventurer who doesn't share the viewpoint of the common man! Excellent! Excellent! There are just too few people like you!" Frank Lee's blue eyes revealed a clear look of pleasant surprise. "I've only tried cross-breeding a bull, a cow, and wheat together, allowing calves to be born like wheat. For that, I was almost sent to court by the Church of Earth Mother. My benevolent mother, they don't understand your true will at all!"

Cross-breeding a bull, a cow, and wheat… You devil… Only then did Klein realize that his understanding of cross-breeding techniques was different from what Frank Lee was talking about.

He maintained a stoic expression without providing any further explanation. Under the lead of Frank Lee, who was reeling in a sudden bout of enthusiasm, Klein walked through the corridor beside Cattleya.

After stepping on the steps and arriving at a higher level, Klein's spiritual perception stirred as he cast his gaze to a shadow beside him.

A figure grew out of the distorted darkness—a thin and tall but pale figure.

His cheeks were nearly transparent, and his nose bridge was disharmonious and tall. His entire being gave off a sickly feeling.

"This is the second mate of the Future, Heath Doyle," Frank Lee introduced with a smile.

Bloodless Heath whose bounty is higher than yours at 7,600 pounds? Klein quickly matched the face to the correct bounty notice.

Heath nodded as a greeting before receding back into the shadows.

"He's a Rose Bishop." When turning around to head for the captain's cabin, Frank Lee warmly mentioned Heath Doyle's situation.

You are telling me your second mate's Sequence directly? Klein nearly pricked his brows.

He secretly glanced at Cattleya and discovered her masked exasperation.

“Are you puzzled and worried that he’s a devout believer of the True Creator, a lunatic who has been tainted? No, haha. He’s a lucky fellow. Due to an incident, the ordinary him was scattered with the potion concocted from a Rose Bishop’s Beyonder ingredients. The potion seeped into him, bit by bit, and he survived the ordeal. Finally, he became quite a special Beyonder. As he didn’t experience the Listener stage, he wasn’t tainted, nor did he become a lunatic. As long as he doesn’t proactively use the Beyonder power, Listen, he remains an ordinary person,” Frank Lee said in a flaunting tone.

What an enviable fellow. He reached Sequence 6 in one go. Furthermore, he didn’t turn mentally unstable like the sea serpent, Kalvetua… Klein sighed silently as he watched Admiral of Stars open the door to the captain’s cabin.

Cattleya pointed inside.

“Your room is diagonally across from here. Frank will send you over. If there’s anything, you can come to me directly.

“You can have your meals at the dining hall at any time. You can also get Frank to send someone to bring food to your room. What you choose is dependent on your preference.”

Admiral of Stars does things in a very clear and direct manner. Yes, she’s a mature and wise lady… Klein praised inwardly as he replied without a change in expression, “Okay.”

He took this opportunity to glance at the layout of the captain’s cabin, discovering that it contained a bookshelf, a full-body mirror, a table, and a carpet.

She actually reads. Isn’t she unable to digest all the information the Hidden Sage imbues in her… Klein thought in amusement.

At this moment, having seen their conversation come to an end, Frank Lee passionately promoted, “Mr. Sparrow, would you like a serving of roasted potatoes tonight?

“When you chew it, it’s like beef and its taste is like beef, but it’s certainly potatoes.”

Will I get sick eating that… Klein answered coldly, “I don’t eat supper.”

“Alright then.” Frank Lee drooped his shoulders and was just about to lead Klein to his room.

Cattleya suddenly thought of something and said, “Mr. Sparrow, you’ve likely hunted quite a number of enemies and have received several spoils of war.

“I’m curious about the number of Beyonder characteristics you have left. Perhaps, they can be used to reduce the remaining price of the trip.”

Klein considered for a moment and answered frankly, “Most of them have been sold.

“There’s Interrogator, Pugilist, and Lunatic left.”

He didn’t mention the All-Black Eye or the Beyonder characteristic of Nightmare.

He really is the most famous adventurer during the past few months… Even after selling most of them, he still has three sets of Beyonder characteristics… Cattleya sighed inwardly as she pondered.

“I want Pugilist.”

She had a Warrior subordinate from the Gargas Archipelago who had long made enough contributions to apply for an advancement.

Chapter 639 - Name List

◆

There was no reason for Klein to decline Cattleya’s request. He thought for two seconds and said, “700 pounds.

“Very fair.” Cattleya didn’t haggle.

Sequence 8 Beyonder characteristics typically cost 600 to 700 pounds, but there was often a premium if someone was in desperate need for it. After all, such items seldom appeared at Beyonder gatherings.

Klein didn’t immediately complete the transaction. He raised his suitcase and said without a change in expression, “I’ll give it to you tomorrow.”

He didn’t bring the Pugilist Beyonder characteristic with him, as most items of value had been thrown above the gray fog.

Cattleya wasn’t surprised by Gehrman Sparrow’s response. She nodded.

“That wouldn’t be an issue.”

She had encountered many similar cases. It usually meant that the Pugilist Beyonder characteristic was stored with items which wasn’t meant to be known by others. Therefore, it was impossible for Gehrman Sparrow to open his suitcase in front of her to complete the transaction on the spot.

A crazy adventurer definitely had his secrets!

Cattleya paused for a second before adding, “There won’t be any surveillance placed in your room.”

Whatever she could see had already been seen by her.

“It’s fine.” Klein curled the corners of his lips and coldly smiled.

His previous considerations was to place down items like Azik’s copper whistle and Will Auceptin’s paper crane before holding a ritual or going above the gray fog. It was to resist any spying in the sense of mysticism. Then, he could use the washroom as a way to avoid physical surveillance.

Of course, he wasn’t too worried that Admiral of Stars would go overboard. He didn’t believe that she was afraid of the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, but that Cattleya had no reason to do so. She definitely had milder and more concealed means of observing.

For example, getting the help of a Beyonder from the Spectator pathway… Klein took off his hat, bowed, and followed Poison Expert Frank Lee to return to his own room.

Seeing him walk off at an adequate speed, Cattleya turned into the captain’s cabin, picked up a heavy pair of glasses and wore it.

†

Backlund, at the Harvest Church south of the Bridge.

In the eyes of an ordinary person, Bishop Utravsky, whose height was that of a half-giant, put down the bible in his hand. He prayed once around the hall and smiled.

“The number of believers is increasing.”

“Is that so?” Emlyn White, who was in a brown priest robe, was wiping the candle racks as he said without even looking up.

He knew that the number of believers of Earth Mother had indeed increased significantly. It would've been a miracle in the past to have a handful of people be in attendance for praying on weekdays or in the daytime. Now, there was often close to ten.

Father Utravsky looked down at the busy vampire priest and chuckled.

"Anyone can tell if they aren't blind.

"You have contributed greatly to this. If not for your concocting of the medicine and treating the plague, and your willingness and sincerity in teaching people about medicine, our faith wouldn't have been that easily accepted by the residents of this borough.

Emlyn held a cloth and straightened his back. He tipped his chin slightly.

"I was only acting."

What, what do you mean by "our faith?" Don't lump me with you! Emlyn's expression twisted before he said with a smile,

"Speaking of the blind, it reminds me of a joke. It's said that the demand for blind people in Backlund far exceeds supply. This is because they are widely believed to be most suitable to be jurors."

Father Utravsky ignored the joke and benevolently said, "Regardless of the goal, you have contributed greatly to the spread of the faith of Earth Mother.

"Besides, this also proves that you have a kind heart."

Pui! I said so back then, but why didn't you believe me? Emlyn looked up at the priest's massive body before retracting his gaze in silence.

After busying himself at the cathedral, he changed into his normal clothes and wore a silk top hat that sheltered him from the sun. He then walked onto Rose Street.

He stealthily sized up his surroundings and didn't notice any signs of monitoring.

The Red Glove named Leonard from before really hasn't appeared again… I thought my act of exposing his secrets and buying Tinder would result in me being constantly investigated in secret… Emlyn White shook his head indiscernibly as he felt puzzled.

In the earliest stages, he had planned on taking in The Hanged Man's theory to incur the investigations of the Red Gloves so as to disrupt the monitoring from the upper echelons of the Sanguine. He could then achieve a perfect equilibrium by using the Church of Earth Mother's Blessed, Utravsky.

But things didn't develop as he had expected. Leonard Mitchell had apparently left Backlund very quickly.

At the end of February, Emlyn had made a detour to 7 Pinster Street while he was out once, only to discover that it was uninhabited.

Without thinking about this matter any further, he walked to the end of the street, got onto a rental carriage and headed straight for the Odora villa.

He was left to a study on the first floor by an attendant where he saw many Sanguine who had recently come of age. Among them was a Sanguine who had already become a Baron.

I'm not the only one? he thought before closing the door. He then said to the owner, Cosmi Odora, "My lord, Was I not called here because of a summoning from Lord Nibbs?"

He had said "my lord" rather indifferently as though he was calling him by name. This was because he was also a Sanguine Baron; the difference was that he hadn't publicized it.

Cosmi was a very refined middle-aged gentleman. He smiled and said, "All of you are outstanding young Sanguine. My grandfather has entrusted all of you with some tests."

Another Sanguine Baron, Rus Báthory, who was lucky to receive an inheritance, asked, “What tests are they?”

Cosmi drank a mouthful of dark red blood which was concocted with grape wine as he scanned the area.

“Perhaps you might not know, but the Snake of Fate from the Life School of Thought has disappeared for quite some time.”

As Emlyn White and the other Sanguine looked puzzled, Cosmi continued, “But I believe all of you should know that the Life School of Thought is a coalition which was barely formed thanks to their belief in fate. They allied under the massive pressure placed by the seven orthodox Churches in the beginning of the Fifth Epoch and are formed by Beyonders who think of themselves as absolutely rational and aloof, those that worship the Primordial Moon, and those that seek the essence of life and spirituality.

“Due to the existence of the Snake of Fate, there hadn’t been many serious problems internally. Their worship of the Primordial Moon was ultimately restricted to a fixed symbolic meaning. Furthermore, the process of formula exchange was melded with a master-apprentice heritage system.

“Unfortunately, heh, with the disappearance of the Snake of Fate, this process has been disrupted. The Primordial Moon’s believers rapidly turned passionate, producing a fracture in the faction that represents fate. An intense conflict ensued as a result.

“This matter was used by the Rose School of Thought. It dealt quite a sizable amount of damage to them.”

Emlyn White, Rus Báthory, and other Sanguine remained perplexed. After sharing the background information, Cosmi dived into the details.

“Worshipers of the Primordial Moon are our eternal enemies. They have always been hunting us, concocting us into potions to achieve strength!

“Now, we will not let go of such an opportunity.

“Here’s a list of Primordial Moon worshipers and their situations. Whoever finds them and kills them will be the victor of this test. My grandfather, as well as various important figures would reward you generously.

“If you complete a portion of the list, we will determine this by numbers.

“Of course, these people were selected, and all of you are capable of dealing with them. The rest will be tracked down by the important figures.”

Upon hearing the first few sentences, Emlyn White had no intention of participating, despite having hatred for those “artificial” vampires. He found the matter troublesome, laborious, and tiresome. He’d rather stay at home in silence to chat with his dolls.

By the time he realized that it was a competition, as well as sensing the gazes of Rus Báthory and the other Sanguine which were cast on him, Emlyn suddenly straightened his back and tipped his chin.

“No problem.”

His red eyes slowly swept across the other creatures in the room.

†

On the Future, inside a spacious room with an attached bathroom.

Klein stood in front of the window, looking out into the undulating blue ocean. In a good mood, he breathed in the cold winds that came from the north.

The flagship of the Admiral of Stars had already separated from the other ships in the fleet as it began to cruise alone.

After an unknown period of time, two whaling ships appeared ahead. Once they noticed the flag containing the stars and eye flying from the Future, they immediately responded nervously.

They quickly adjusted their positions, aiming their starboards over, their cannons ready to shoot at any moment.

At the same time, spears and harpoons, which were shot using explosives, were directed in the same direction. The blond and large fishermen from the Gargas Archipelago held tridents and guns as they braced for an attack, either by standing or crouching.

Klein also noticed that there were a number of women with figures similar to the Hulk. It was obvious at a glance that they were heavy and good at fighting.

The Future didn't mind their "welcome." It continued cruising past them, heading deeper into the whaling route.

After cruising for a while, Klein saw more pirate ships ahead. They were clustered around the sea route's periphery, their motives unknown.

The Future came close without standing on ceremony. Immediately, the pirate ships reacted like startled birds as they quickly retreated.

Sensing the Future slowing down, Klein left his room in puzzlement.

Just as he approached the captain's cabin, he discovered Cattleya walking out. This woman wore a thick pair of glasses on her nose bridge, hiding her mysterious purple eyes.

She glanced at Klein and said succinctly, "Someone discovered a ruin which is said to be from the Fourth Epoch at the bottom of the sea in the waters around here.

"We plan on taking a look while on the way."

Bottom of the sea? Ruin from the Fourth Epoch? Klein instantly recalled the rumor he had heard from the Lærdal Bar.

So this piece of news has already spread? I was wondering why I got to learn it so easily… he said inwardly in enlightenment.

Chapter 640 - Female Pirate

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein had a certain degree of curiosity towards the outcome of the exploration. He didn’t ask further as he walked past the captain’s cabin and walked down the stairwell.

After a few seconds, he felt his throat itch. He couldn’t help but raise his fist to his mouth and cough.

Klein wasn’t surprised by such a development, as it was inevitable. He had carried the Biological Poison Bottle for more than two hours last night. Only when it was late at night and his confirmation that Admiral of Stars and crew didn’t have any intention of attacking him did he move the mystical item into a black suitcase. Sadly, he ended up falling sick.

Of course, the amount of time he brought the Biological Poison Bottle with him wasn’t considered long. His body wasn’t in a weakened state, so his resulting illness wasn’t anything serious. He just felt his tonsils swell in pain.

Cattleya, who was walking slowly behind, saw this scene, but she didn’t find it a problem. Instead, she found it normal.

It was common knowledge for knowledgeable Beyonders that mystical items were bound to have negative side effects. Furthermore, they would learn from the seven orthodox Churches and categorize those with serious side effects which made them impossible to possess or use for prolonged time as Sealed Artifacts.

The reason why Cattleya had sold or exchanged many of her low- and mid-level mystical items was firstly because she wanted to better strengthen her survivability. Secondly, the various negative effects from multiple items were troubling. Often, one could avoid one but not the other. Some negative effects might even stack and synergize into something worse. Therefore, to most Beyonders, the disadvantages surpassed the advantages.

She discovered that Gehrman Sparrow had used mystical items, Beyonder weapons, and spirituality charms to arm himself to the teeth. While being amazed, she was already guessing at the type of negative effects he was facing. From what she saw today, it was a temporary simple illness.

With steady steps, Klein arrived on the deck and saw Frank Lee. He was still dressed in a white shirt and dungarees. His arm was stained with dirt as though he wasn't afraid of the cold winds that blew down at him.

"Good morning, Gehrman." Frank warmly waved his hand and said, "Here, try my latest product. This is definitely the most welcomed item at sea!"

As he said, he raised his other hand. In it was a wide and fat fish of an unknown breed.

No, I don't want to know what "monster" you have cooked up this time… Klein paused in his footsteps as he looked at him with a cold expression.

Frank Lee didn't discover any problems with his attitude. He pulled out a dagger from his waist and stabbed the fish before slicing a hole open.

Blood flowed out and accurately landed in a large beer cup on the deck. It didn't emit any fishy smell.

"Smell that? It's such an intoxicating alcoholic fragrance!" Frank Lee half-closed his eyes as he fervently said, “This is a fish who has red wine replacing its blood. As such, the wine contains lots of nutrients!”

“…”

Klein realized he was at a loss for words.

Frank looked at the surroundings sailors in excitement before saying to Gehrman Sparrow, “Do you know what’s the most troubling matter out at sea? That’s when we run out of alcohol without being anywhere close to shore! As long as this kind of fish can rapidly reproduce and become the sea’s primary produce, then we won’t be lacking any alcohol no matter where we are. By the way, they can be categorized by species. Some will produce Lanti Proof, others Nepos, red wine, and beer. The beer needs to come from sharks or whales; otherwise, there won’t be enough!”

Isn’t the most troubling matter the lack of water? Of course, all of you can use beer to replace water most of the time because it doesn’t easily spoil… Those poor fishes… Klein was pondering over a response to Frank when Cattleya came on deck. She walked past him and questioned her first mate.

“Is Nina done with her preparations?”

“Yes, she has already finished a bottle of Nepos!” Frank pointed at a shadow formed by the sails.

The so-called preparations are to drink a bottle of Nepos, a specialty of Feysac? The Nepos which can light a fire? Klein suddenly felt that Nina, the lady mentioned by the first mate, was likely someone with Feysac blood.

“Captain, I want a bottle of Sonia blood wine more!” In the dark, a female figure slowly stood up and walked over.

She was more than 1.8 meters tall. Her blonde hair was casually tied up into a high pigtail. Her facial features weren’t anything outstanding, but she had the striking traits of someone from Feysac. Her skin was fair and her eyes were dull.

This lady named Nina wore a black tight suit made of fish skin. The top and bottom seemed to be a one-piece, fully accentuating her stunning figure.

Such a style was rather sexy to begin with. Nina's breasts were also far above what was normal. It was obvious what the surrounding pirates were looking at.

Klein felt a little embarrassed and wished to move his gaze away. However, on second thought, Gehrman Sparrow was definitely not such an untried person. All he could do was empty his gaze and look straight at Nina's face.

"Gehrman, this is our boatswain, Nina! She's also the navigator's assistant. Haha, her Sequence's name is Seafarer!" Frank Lee still didn't hold back in his introductions.

Apart from his research of crossbreeding, this Poison Expert is rather simple… I now recall that this lady named Nina has a bounty of 3,600 pounds. Her nickname is Seabed Murderer. Sigh, after seeing so many bounty notices, there are some I can't immediately recall… Klein looked at Nina's eyes and nodded calmly.

"Good morning, Ma'am."

Nina held back her smile and sized up Klein.

"Good morning, Mr. Sparrow.

"I'm very curious if Vice Admiral Ailment is really as charming as the rumors say?"

As a female pirate who had mixed with low- and mid-class people for extended periods of time, she was always very frank and direct towards both men and women. She didn't show any coyness. She had originally planned on asking Gehrman Sparrow if she was lacking in charm, or ask if he was the cold type which resulted in her being completely ignored or him showing any reaction. But considering how the man standing before her was a powerful guy, an adventurer who nearly successfully hunted Vice Admiral Ailment, or a lunatic who could draw his gun and shoot at any moment, she rationally held back her jesting words. She switched to asking about Vice Admiral Ailment.

…How am I to answer you? Klein gloomily said, “Her bounty is extremely charming.”

Nina was taken aback, somewhat at a loss for a response to continue the conversation. Hence, she turned to look at Admiral of Stars.

“Captain, do we begin now?”

Cattleya, who felt her bounty flash through her mind for some baffling reason, nodded.

“Begin.”

Just as she said that, Nina took large strides to the side of the ship. With her right hand supporting herself, she leaped into the sea, swimming downwards like a gigantic black fish.

At the same time, there were a few splashes. A few sailors had jumped down as well to provide her aid.

This… She begins at the mention of it. She didn’t need any additional time to prepare… This lady has the temperament of the Church of Storms. As expected of a Beyonder from the Sailor pathway… Klein looked out the ship as he couldn’t help but cough.

“You’re sick?” Frank Lee asked directly.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “A little.”

Frank thought for a moment. He didn’t say a word as he rushed back into the cabin; his destination unknown.

By the side, Cattleya nudged her heavy glasses and smiled.

“Frank is a Poison Expert, but he’s also an outstanding doctor.”

As expected of someone from the Planter pathway… Klein didn’t ask further as he stood there, awaiting Nina’s preliminary exploration.

Seeing the sudden silence that became somewhat awkward, Cattleya took a few steps forward and said, seemingly in passing, “In another day, we will be leaving the whaling sea route.”

“But we’re at least a week from those waters?” Klein thought before asking.

“That is if we follow the whaling sea route. In fact, this will lead further north and be more roundabout. I know of a secret sea route that can allow us to reach the waters you wish to go to in two to three days.” Cattleya’s gaze looked at Klein’s eyes through her thick glasses, as though she wanted to tell how much he knew of the extremely dangerous waters.

Klein considered and simply said, “Very good. That’s exactly what I want.

“In addition, those waters are more illusory than real.”

Cattleya retracted her gaze in thought as she looked at the entrance to the cabin.

Frank Lee ran over and held a green apple in his hand.

“This is the outcome of another one of my projects. It’s a cross-breed of medicine and fruits. It makes the consumption of medicine more enjoyable!” He beamed as he handed Klein the apple.

…I’m afraid I’ll end up even sicker after eating it… Klein glanced at Admiral of Stars and saw her nod gently. Only then did he inwardly force himself to accept the apple while appearing calm on the outside. He then bit down at the apple.

It had the taste of a normal apple. It just had a lot more juice, and the insides were softer.

After a few bites, Klein discovered that his throat suddenly wasn't hurting. He didn't realize when he stopped coughing.

I have to say that it's rather magical… As long as it doesn't involve animals and humans, Frank Lee is really a genius that should be taken seriously in the Church of Earth Mother. Unfortunately, he ultimately became a devil-like person… Klein looked at the Poison Expert and said frankly, "It's healed."

"Very good." Frank didn't praise himself as he began casually introducing the pirates on the deck.

After a while, Nina and the other supporting sailors swam up to the surface and returned to the ship.

She held a metallic piece that had been rotten into an identifiable state and a piece of black hardened mud that was filled with honeycombed holes. She grumbled to Cattleya, "Captain, there's no deep-sea well!

"That well's mouth isn't even bigger than my breasts!

"Of course, it's very deep and dark. It's unknown what's hidden in it."

She gestured using her hands.

"Exaggeration is a common trait of pirates and adventurers." Cattleya nodded without using the term "bragging."

The diameter of the well's mouth is that small? Klein puzzledly looked at the item in Nina's hand as he politely diverted his gaze from her body which had streams of water flowing down.

Cattleya's gaze moved in sync with his as she said, "Go into the details."

Chapter 641 - A Well Mouth That Humans Can't Pass

◆

Nina was a pirate who had risen up the ranks. Often, she might be easily irritated, but she was very experienced at handling matters. She was a rather reliable person. After some thought, she gave a description in a serious manner.

"The well's mouth is at a rather deep depth along the seabed. I need enough time to adjust myself before I can acclimatize to the temperature and pressure of the area. That's why I took so much time to get there.

"It isn't easily discovered, but the remnant steel buildings are indeed rather obvious. I found them once I got acclimatized.

"They've already completely collapsed or rotted. There's no way to imagine what they originally looked like. However, I could tell that they definitely spanned across a great distance in the past. It's just shrunken by a great deal now."

When Nina said this, she chuckled and scanned all the men around her.

A real female pirate is indeed different… Klein sighed from the bottom of his heart.

From his point of view, be it Admiral of Stars Cattleya, Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina, or Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy, none of them could be considered a pure female pirate. All of them hailed from major factions or secret organizations. When they were Low-Sequence Beyonders, they were either not at sea, or they were following important figures, so what they did were relatively safe matters. Otherwise, they were independent adventurers who had never been tainted by the characters and atmosphere of low- or mid-level pirates.

After Nina finished laughing, Cattleya pointed her finger to the rusted item that could hardly be described as a metal beam.

“This is a portion of the steel building?”

“Yes, Captain. As you know, I don’t know much about history or mysticism. I could only bring some back for your inspection. You’re an expert on this.” Nina smiled as she handed the “metal beam” over.

Then, she pointed at the black piece of hardened mud which was filled with holes on its surface.

“Not far from the iron ruins, I found a well. It’s not very big. If it’s to be described with the word ‘huge,’ then I’ve definitely seen plenty of huge cannons.

“Those drunken adventurers are better at bragging than us pirates!

“This is the mud from the inner layer of the well. I can’t imagine how such patterns could be formed!”

Nina’s finger repeatedly struck the honeycombed dots on the black mud.

Klein originally believed that they were marks left behind by dense shots with very tiny projectiles, but after a careful inspection, he suspected that they were remnant “patterns” after something had rotted. Each spot was very shallow as its edges spread outwards in an irregular pattern.

Nina handed the black mud to Cattleya as she continued describing, “The well’s mouth is really small. Even a child from Nas wouldn’t be able to enter.

"It's very deep. I even felt that it was bottomless. In that environment, the interior was completely dark as though something was slowly summoning me, yes—slowly.

"I found a few rocks nearby and threw them in, but there wasn't any response. In short, it's filled with water."

Cattleya held up the "metallic beam" and black mud. Through the thick glasses, she observed them seriously.

"Since the mouth is very small and humans can't enter them, there's no need for us to begin the exploration immediately. It will be very dangerous.

"Let's wait until I figure out the secrets hidden within these items and whether the ancient well is worth us taking the risk before we return to make an attempt."

"Aye aye, Captain!" The wet Nina was trembling as a result of the cold winds. The way she wavered made all the surrounding pirates stare straight at her.

Cattleya nudged her glasses and said to Nina, "You can drink a bottle of Sonia blood wine. There's no limit for the rest."

"…Long live the captain!" Nina cried out in joy.

An underwater well that humans can't enter… Klein, who had no desire to explore it, summarized Nina's description.

Suddenly, he had a strange idea.

Humans are unable to enter the well, but that doesn't mean that non-humans can't do it!

Many deep-sea fishes aren't necessarily that huge. There's a significant chance that they can pass through the well.

As the "Sea God," he had the means to make marine creatures do his bidding while wielding the scepter!

There's no rush. Let's see if Ma'am Hermit is able to figure out anything from these two objects. I'll consider whether I'll explore it on the return trip; otherwise, I might attract some exaggerated danger… There's still not enough information regarding this. There's no way to do any divination… As his thoughts wandered, Klein's expression remained deadpan.

At that moment, Cattleya shot him a glance out of curiosity. Then, she retracted her gaze without leaving any traces.

Why did she suddenly look at me? She was seeing what I was doing? It's impossible for her to know that I possess the Sea God Scepter and can make marine creatures do my bidding. That's not right. She knows, but she only knows that Mr. Fool wields Kalvetua's godhood scepter, not The World… Unless she has figured out that The World is The Fool… But that's even more impossible. Even Mr. Hanged Man is still stuck at the concept that The World is a Blessed. She hasn't even realized this point…

Viewing this from a different point of view, I'll consider it from Admiral of Stars's angle… She's someone being pursued by knowledge, and she's a follower of Queen Mystic. She's loyal to the Moses Ascetic Order, and she has roamed the sea for years. She has plenty of knowledge and experience, so it wouldn't be odd that she knows that the Sea God domain possesses the Beyonder power to control marine creatures.

Therefore, after realizing that humans are unable to pass through the ancient well, she naturally made the connection with the scepter in Mr. Fool's hand. Does she plan on requesting for help in the future? She looked at me to figure out if The World has also grasped the corresponding information or have similar ideas?

Many ideas went through Klein's mind. With the powers of Clown, he forcefully maintained his indifferent expression. He didn't react abnormally in any way.

As Nina was about to draw the Sonia blood wine, Klein pressed down his hat and returned to the cabin.

Just as he was about to approach the door, a figure surfaced in his mind suddenly.

In a room in the cabin's upper level, the windows were tightly shut and the curtains were drawn. There were a pair of blurry eyes hidden behind them, silently watching the crowd on the deck, as well as Gehrman Sparrow.

Who is it? Klein didn't stop. His body didn't show any hesitation as he entered the cabin normally as though nothing had happened.

†

At three in the afternoon, the bright but not scorching sunlight shone into the garden adjacent to Stoen University.

Michele Deuth was already a Senior Associate Professor by forty. He was wearing a long tailcoat and a beautiful bow tie as he waited by the door.

Yesterday evening, he received a letter. The sender was from the attendant of the richest aristocratic family in East Chester County, the Hall family. The person who wrote the letter was the daughter of a Member of Parliament from the House of Lords who wielded immense influence. She was Miss Audrey Hall, who was deemed to be the most stunning gem in Backlund.

This noble lady had mentioned in the letter that she had learned from a gathering that Mr. Michele Deuth was an outstanding collector and an aficionado of this domain. She had a great desire in paying a visit.

Michele Deuth didn't have any reason to refuse.

Soon, a classic carriage with a family emblem arrived at the door.

Two servants, who had been instructed to open the outer gates made of iron railings, led the carriage around the garden and arrived in front of the house.

A housekeeper was the first to alight, followed by guards and maidservants.

Following that, a hand wearing a long white-gauzed glove was extended outside.

With the help of the maidservants, Audrey elegantly stepped onto the carpet which Michele had paved.

Michele was first taken aback before his eyes lit up. He felt as though the flowers in the garden had instantly faded.

He took two steps forward and took off his hat to bow.

“Welcome, my honorable lady.

“Your visit is an honor for me and my family.”

Audrey took off the veiled hat and passed it to her maidservant before exchanging a few pleasantries. Then, she followed Michele Deuth into the living room and entered the collector’s room on the first floor.

Here, Michele finally found his confidence as the master of the house. He began pointing at his collection and providing an introduction from the left.

“This is a helmet that appeared in the White Rose War. After lots of research, it can be determined that the owner is a member of the Sauron family. Back then, they were still considered royalty.”

The golden helmet had an intricate design. There were avian and flying wings that adorned it, and the visor was formed from pieces of golden scales.

“My ancestor obtained his first aristocratic title in that war,” Audrey replied with piqued interest.

She had already adjusted her mental state ahead of time—she was to appear as though she was really here to tour the collections.

“The failure of the Twenty Year War had caused the kingdom to suffer years of humiliation, but it also carved out several heroes.” Michele resorted to flattery.

The White Rose War happened after the Twenty Year War and before the Battle of the Violated Oath. There, Loen defeated Intis and became strong again.

Michele continued introducing his collection as Audrey solemnly listened, raising questions from time to time as she conversed with him.

Finally, Michele’s finger pointed towards a notebook with a black cover.

“This belonged to a knight stationed on Sonia Island in the Twenty Year War.

“This knight’s name has already vanished in the long rivers of history. This notebook is the only proof of his existence. He once stood fast until the very last moment on Sonia Island.

“This notebook is not only a first-hand account for the research of that portion of history, but it also hides certain problems. The knight’s grammar has many uncommon habits. This might be a clue to aid us in determining his exact identity.”

Audrey instinctively believed that the notebook was her target. Hence, she only leaned in a little. Indeed, the black cover had unobvious patterns. Together, they outlined an abstract image of a dragon.

From Michele’s tone and minute expressions, his interest is focused on the content and not the item itself. He doesn’t particularly treasure it… I have a high chance of purchasing it… Audrey calmly made a judgment as she turned her head. She then smiled at Michele Deuth and said, “What are the uncommon habits exactly?”

“Enjoys using short sentences—very simple and short ones…” Michele described in a flaunting tone.

Audrey was always a good listener. She looked at him with a smile as she listened with focused attention. This made Michele speak more.

As she listened, she suddenly felt that the knight’s grammatical habits were somewhat familiar.

That is… Audrey’s eyes darted around slightly as she quickly remembered the source of the familiarity.

This was a grammatical habit of Dragonese which she had diligently mastered!

Chapter 642 - Killing Three Birds With One Stone

◆ ◆ ◆

A knight who knows Dragonese and even used it in the critical stage of his growth… It's no wonder that the Psychology Alchemists wish to obtain the notebook he left behind… Audrey was enlightened as she stopped her wandering thoughts. She happily and seriously discussed the problem that stemmed from such grammatical habits with Michele Deuth.

Soon, they concluded the discussion over the notebook as Michele began introducing the other items.

Time passed as the tour slowly came to an end. Audrey had planned on raising her request of purchasing the notebook to their next meeting in order to make her goal less obvious. However, in a friendly atmosphere and with the naturalness of their conversation, she sharply sensed that it was an opportunity. Hence, with the powers of Lie, she made her cheeks blush red.

"Mr. Deuth, that helmet from the Sauron royalty that originates from the White Rose War is a keepsake of my ancestors. Pardon my presumptuous, but can I buy it from you? Also, the notebook of the Twenty Year War. I'm very impressed by the knight that stood firm for Sonia Island and also wish to have it.

"I know it's not a polite request, but I wish that you can understand how I feel. Of course, you have the right to decline."

Her eyes moved as she obviously darted them around, partially deliberate and truthful to express her lack of confidence and embarrassment.

Michele subconsciously moved his gaze away as he said with a hoarse and slow voice, “I’m a collector. I won’t sell my collection.”

His tone and the words he used aren’t firm enough… In the intel I previously gathered, he’s a gentleman who values his reputation greatly. Using cash to purchase his collection is probably unacceptable… The reason why the Psychology Alchemists didn’t get someone else to complete the mission is firstly because I have a way of earning contribution points, and secondly, it probably took the Associate Professor’s attitude towards such matters in mind… I have to change my approach. Before the visit, Audrey had already carefully decided of different tests according to the intel she received. After some thought, she changed topics.

“Mr. Deuth, I heard that you’re requesting Stoen University to build an ancient relic research center?”

“Yes, that has been my goal for the past few years,” Michele looked at Audrey and answered frankly.

Audrey smiled faintly and said, “I’m very interested in the research in this area. I also feel a deep respect for you and hope to see your wish fulfilled.

“Well, I’m planning on donating 1,000 pounds, a nearby piece of land spanning 2,000 ares[1], and a manor with rather good returns to the faculty you are from at Stoen University. I hope to have a non-profit basic relic search and preservation foundation set up. I know it’s not a lot, but I will drum up support from the ladies and gentlemen I know in order to get them to make a certain amount of contributions.

“Mr. Deuth, I think you’re the most professional relic collector and researcher I know. I’m wondering if you’re willing to be the person-in-charge of this non-profit foundation?”

2,000 ares of land near the university. That's worth about 6,000 pounds. Together with the manor and the cash, Miss Audrey would be donating nearly 10,000 pounds… With such a non-profit relic search and preservation foundation, the difficulties I would encounter to get my research grants approved would be drastically lowered… Michele paused for a few seconds before revealing a sincere smile. He bowed solemnly and said, "My honorable lady, the importance you place on academia has left me touched. Its glow is enough to match your beauty and upbringing. I believe I have no reason to reject your invitation.

"I've already recorded the contents of the notebook. I will send it and the helmet to your residence tonight. Treat it as a gift from a sincere friend."

Success! Audrey was delighted as she wished to praise herself. However, she appeared reserved and indifferent. She didn't do anything that was improper.

"It's my honor," she said earnestly.

Although the two items were definitely not worth 10,000 pounds, it wouldn't result in any loss on her part.

In her plans, this suggestion contained three important goals which yielded three returns!

The first goal was naturally to obtain the item and complete the mission. She would then successfully obtain the Hypnotist potion formula from the Psychology Alchemists.

The second goal was to enhance her prestige, standing, and image via donating to academic research and the preservation of ancient relics. This was something most nobles and tycoons needed to do. Even if the donation wasn't today, Audrey would have to donate 3,000 pounds or more to the various charitable organizations. Therefore, she believed that her father, Earl Hall, wouldn't stop her from doing this with a few of her properties.

The third goal was that by having a foundation that focused on the search and preservation of ancient relics, it made it easier for her to come into contact with historical records or mysterious items of value. Audrey didn't need to personally do anything. All she needed to do was sit at home to receive items that might be beneficial to her. It was equivalent to using 10,000 pounds to produce even more money to establish her own "faction."

Of course, if Michele Deuth hadn't accepted this exchange, then she had other plans. The kingdom's Higher Education Commission had someone from the Hall family, as well as noble friends she knew. As long as the Associate Professor had anything he needed, she was certain that she had the means to satisfy him.

However, Audrey didn't like such methods. She had a nagging feeling that it was shady and would harm the public interest.

After discussing the matter, Audrey stayed for a little longer and chatted idly for about fifteen minutes. It made the wrapping up process not as sharp and abrupt.

Following that, she first left Michele's house and rode her carriage back to the Hall family's villa in Stoen City.

Past eight in the evening, she received the Sauron royalty's helmet and the notebook from the Twenty Year War.

Audrey wore a pair of white-silk gloves and sat before her desk with piqued interest. She placed the helmet to the side as she began flipping through the content in the notebook.

She discovered that the records were sparse. The early records indicated how the knight who was stationed in the ancient elven island had learned how to brew Sonia blood wine, how he chased after women, how he spent the boring days. In the later records, it entered the period of the Twenty Year War. It mainly included his cursing of the people of Feysac, his grumbling about his companions, and the consideration towards his plans to stand fast. It also included the end of how the Sonia Island was first lost.

Apart from the grammatical habits being similar to Dragonese, there aren't any serious problems. Nor can I find any hidden clues… Audrey frowned as she closed the notebook.

She had used methods derived from mysticism to do her checks, but they were to no avail.

This made her unwilling to waste time as she planned to turn it in to the Psychology Alchemists.

As her thoughts raced, she suddenly had a new idea.

Mr. World and Mr. Hanged Man will often consider problems from different angles to provide suggestions. Should I learn from them?

Well… Viewing it from a different point of view, if the content of the notebook isn't problematic, would the physical item actually be what the Psychology Alchemists are after?

What's so special about it? I didn't discover anything… It belongs to a knight who's accustomed to using Dragonese. That knight must've experienced something… Divination! Yes, divination! Perhaps I can find the knight's final location using divination with the help of the notebook. And this might be related to a dragon!

Since it's a dragon, there's a high chance that it's a mind dragon, a representative of the Spectator pathway. Clues involving it would indeed be something the Psychology Alchemists will pay close attention to…

Audrey, that's some nice thinking!

Audrey's eyes turned crystal clear as it seemed to hide a clear resplendence.

She couldn't help but turn her head and looked at the golden retriever sitting by the side.

Susie glanced at her owner and barked.

"Audrey, do you want me to praise you?"

"No, there's no need…" Audrey turned her head back, feeling a little embarrassed.

Then, she discovered an important question. She wasn't able to divine things herself, or it could be said that the revelation that she received from divination would be highly inaccurate!

There's no way to confirm it… No, I can seek Mr. Fool's help! A secret deed ritual? It can only be performed on my body and not towards an external object… Artificial sleepwalking? It's similar to secret deed rituals, so it wouldn't do as well… Sacrifice it to Mr. Fool and get "Him" to do the divination before bestowing it back to me? No, that won't work. It will appear rather disrespectful. "He" isn't my father or teacher, but a real god. Using such a method is way too casual and somewhat sacrilegious… Audrey's thoughts slowly went from Mr. Fool to divination.

Although she was rather incapable of divination, she had a certain level of understanding in the corresponding knowledge. She soon locked onto a particular method of divination.

It was to seek the help of a third party's strength—an unknown or mysterious existence—via a certain ritual. The most classic example of such a method was magic mirror divination!

Yes… It's indeed very dangerous, but the danger stems from the possibility that the target is filled with malice or one that can cause a person to break down immediately. But I don't have such worries. I can seek Mr. Fool's help! Audrey blinked and held down her agitation as she said to the golden retriever, "Susie, guard the door outside. I will use a mysticism method to study this notebook.”

“Didn’t you use them before?” Susie asked, puzzled.

She’s getting harder to fool… Audrey’s eyes darted around as she said confidently, “I plan on using magic mirror divination.

“Don’t worry. I’ll make the plea to a safe existence.”

“Alright.” Susie determined that Audrey was speaking the truth.

She took a few steps before turning around to exhort her.

“Audrey, you need to be careful about being possessed by a mysterious existence.”

“I know,” Audrey replied without feeling worried at all.

From her point of view, if Mr. Fool really wanted to do something to her, he had countless opportunities in the past. There was no reason for him to wait until this day.

After Susie opened and closed the door by herself and went out, Audrey sat in front of her desk and recited the honorific name of The Fool to request the use of magic mirror divination.

After a while, Klein, who was on the Future, went to the bathroom and headed above the gray fog. There, he heard Miss Justice’s prayer.

That can be done? That’s right. As a mysterious and unknown existence, I can be the third force in a magic mirror divination… Klein allowed it while feeling amused.

Audrey immediately picked up the notebook, sat in front of the dresser, and lit a candle while facing the mirror.

†

Author's Note: One are is 100 square meters. In the late Victorian era, land in the suburbs was approximately 100-130 pounds per acre. Converting to ares, it's about 2 pounds and 10 shillings to 3 pounds and 5 shillings per are. Well, that's excluding London. Of course, this might not be too accurate. I did an inference from the overall cost of the land purchase and building a house and subtracted the cost of building a house from the information from that era.

Chapter 643 - Klein's Version of "Magic Mirror Divination"

◆

With the curtains drawn tightly and all the lights extinguished in the room, Audrey followed the requirements of magic mirror divination and completed the corresponding preparations.

Of course, she didn't specially choose a specific time, as there wasn't any need to be that troublesome when getting Mr. Fool's help.

Looking at the candles and reflected light in front of her, as well as her reflection, Audrey picked up a bottle of extract in excitement and some unease. She then dripped a few droplets onto the dim flame.

As the mild and refreshing fragrances filled her nose, for some baffling reason, Audrey recalled the times when she was still a mysticism enthusiast.

In the beginning, she would also commit all kinds of mistakes. She would realize that she had forgotten to prepare the essential oils and extracts that would please the deity at a critical moment during the ritual. All she could do was make do with perfume, and her attempts no doubt failed.

In fact, according to the information which Mr. Fool shared, "He" would similarly respond even if I had used my perfume… Audrey exhaled slightly and, using Cogitation, calmed herself down.

She knew that her uncontrolled thoughts weren't ordinary behavior coming from her. The tiny bit of anticipation and nervousness had been magnified by Lie!

After making sure she was in an optimal state of mind, Audrey clasped her hands and pressed them to her mouth and nose as if in prayer. She sincerely chanted softly, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

†

The secret incantation gently echoed seven times as Audrey felt the surrounding darkness had the inclusion of something which was somewhat indescribable. It was like an undercurrent hidden beneath the water surface.

Looking up, Audrey reached out her right hand and passed it through the still candle flame and stroked the mirror’s surface from top to bottom.

At this point, the magic mirror divination was basically done. If the mysterious and unknown existence’s interest was piqued, it would respond through the mirror.

Above the gray fog, in the ancient and magnificent palace, Klein looked at the crimson star representing Miss Justice expand and contract as it rippled with an illusory glow. Finally, it was tainted with a nearly black feeling of serenity. It condensed into a circular halo the size of a mirror that appeared to lead to the outer world.

It’s different from past rituals. Interesting… Klein leaned back into his chair and extended his spirituality to make contact with the black circular hole.

Silently, his vision changed. The long bronze table and the crimson star overlapped with the spacious room which was illuminated with candlelight, becoming distinct once again.

At this moment, Klein felt that a mirror had become an extension of his body or eye. It allowed him to clearly see and interfere with the real world despite being above the gray fog.

Yes, clearly!

All the objects in Klein's vision no longer looked blurry as they appeared distinctly in his eyes!

His gaze suddenly froze for two seconds.

In front of him was a golden-laced, white-dressed lady. Her long blonde hair was casually tied up as they smoothly and luxuriantly flowed down. Her emerald eyes reflected a somewhat palish flame, looking as deep as the ocean and also as pure as a gemstone. Her facial features and the shape of her face were matched with a stunning beauty. Her bearing and elegance were clear and pure.

Klein shifted his gaze away as he felt guilty for some baffling reason.

I nearly imagined her to be a Demoness of quite a high Sequence. Thankfully, I recalled in time that Miss Justice is a Beyonder of the Spectator pathway. It's impossible for her to become a Demoness… The smell of this extract isn't bad. Very unique… It has a very subtle feeling. The mystical item created from that Faceless Beyonder characteristic? Miss Justice made it into a necklace… Klein's gaze landed on the mystical item which was disguised as a diamond necklace.

Then, he heard Miss Justice say with utmost anticipation, "Mirror, Mirror, please tell me the location of the owner of this notebook."

Audrey knew that she was asking Mr. Fool, but "Mirror, Mirror" were words she had always wanted to recite from the stories she had heard from a young age. She finally had a chance to use it in practice.

The failures in the past don't count! Yes! Audrey nodded inwardly.

Klein instantly looked at the black notebook placed between Miss Justice and the candle. He discovered that his spirituality could easily spread out with the help of the mirror. He could "hold" the divination medium as though he was using his hand.

Above the gray fog, he quickly wrote the corresponding divination statement.

"The location of the original owner of the notebook."

With one "hand" holding the notebook and another hand holding the piece of paper, Klein recited as he leaned back in his chair. With the help of Cogitation, he quickly fell into a deep sleep.

Audrey looked at the mirror intently with her emerald eyes, awaiting Mr. Fool's reply.

After a few seconds, she saw ripples being produced on the mirror's surface.

It's a success! Magic mirror divination really works! Audrey's eyes widened as they reflected the scenes flashing inside the mirror.

It was a view of a village from above!

The scene zoomed in as the dragon drawings on the various buildings gradually turned clear.

A cathedral quickly occupied the mirror in its entirety before being replaced by the cemetery attached by it.

Finally, the scene was fixed on a tombstone in a corner. On it were words that had turned blurry as a result of the elements. The only thing that could still be discerned was the name, "Lindelira."

At this moment, the mirror suddenly darkened before restoring to normal. It reflected Audrey and the candle in front of her once again.

Isn't this the village which had the customs of dragon worship? The knight who wrote the notebook is named Lindelira, and is from that village. He returned to his hometown after the loss of the Twenty Year War and stayed there until his death? Or was he sent back to his hometown as a corpse? Hmm… That village is in East Chester County. Stoen City is also part of East Chester County, so it's very understandable that the notebook which Associate Professor Michele obtained stems from there… There's indeed a mind dragon living in the sea of collective subconscious over there… Feeling enlightened, Audrey thanked Mr. Fool and ended the magic mirror divination.

Under the candlelight's illumination, she stared at the notebook for a moment before deciding to hand it over. She wanted to know what the Psychology Alchemists would divine or figure out.

At the very least, the present me lacks the strength to come into contact with that mind dragon. That's all I can do… Besides, even if the Psychology Alchemists really discover anything and benefits from it, once I slowly rise up the ranks in the organization, some of that will belong to me~ Audrey's mood very quickly turned positive once again.

†

Above the gray fog, Klein rapped the corner of the long bronze table. With Miss Justice's description, he made his judgment.

The notebook and the village had something to do with a dragon, and dragons often implied treasure!

What a pity. Miss Justice's strength is lacking; otherwise, I would've encouraged her to explore it and pray to the “Sea God” if something happens while I provide support to her via various means. Yes, it's too dangerous for her. It can only be set aside for now… If the Psychology Alchemists didn't discover anything, perhaps we can attempt it in the future… Klein suppressed his regret as he recalled the experience of the magic mirror divination.

This kind of divination is extremely advantageous for the third party. There's almost no price to be paid to connect to the real world. If I so wished, I could've torn out of the mirror in my Spirit Body form! But to the user, it's indeed dangerous. They will appear under the "sights" of an unknown existence without any protection. From there, they can be possessed, controlled, cursed, and corrupted… Klein sighed from the bottom of his heart.

He wasn't worried that Miss Justice would abuse magic mirror divination, as she had the best and safest target to pray to. There was no need for her to seek anyone else.

And that would be me! Klein retracted his finger and sat at the end of the long bronze table and waited in silence for twenty to thirty seconds.

Soon, he returned to the real world. He didn't stay too long since he was on the Future. There was someone watching him from the dark.

After leaving the bathroom and putting away Azik's copper whistle and Will Auceptin's paper crane, Klein glanced at the crimson moon which had been shrouded by clouds as he pondered silently for a moment.

He put on his half top hat, pulled open the door, and went into the corridor.

After taking a few steps forward, Klein deliberately slowed his footsteps and glanced at the first room on the left through the corner of his eye.

Based on his judgment, the mysterious pair of eyes that were silently observing him and the deck during the day was in that room.

Klein walked slower and slower as he nearly stopped in front of the door.

He didn't hide the extension of his left palm as he reached for the handle when scenes naturally surfaced in his mind.

Not far behind the door was a clothes rack with nothing hanging on it.

Faint starlight scattered across the clean floorboards. There was a sense of solitude and serenity that lacked the aura of humans.

The windows had opened at some point in time as the sea breeze blew in from the outside, lifting the curtains which weren't too heavy.

There's no one there? Klein had planned on probing the area, but he immediately retracted his left palm and walked towards the stairs as though nothing had happened.

When he arrived on the deck and was taking in the cold night breeze, Klein strolled on the starboard with a cold and casual expression as though his main goal was to come out for a stroll.

Suddenly, he saw a man sitting ahead of him. The man was wearing dungarees and a white shirt.

Frank Lee? Klein didn't stop as he approached.

The man sensed something as he turned his body halfway around to look at the person approaching.

He was none other than Poison Expert Frank Lee, but he no longer wore a smile. Streaming down the corner of his mouth was blood-red liquid.

Klein pricked up his brows without saying a word.

Frank Lee suddenly raised his hands and grabbed a silver-scaled fish that wasn't struggling.

He said in depression, "It failed… Their lifespan is shorter than I imagined. It's impossible to breed them, even if they are planted in the ground…"

As he spoke, he raised the silver-scaled fish in his right hand and bit down on it.

That’s good… Otherwise, I’m really afraid of the kind of abominations you would create… So, you are drowning your sorrows with alcohol, no—fish? Klein silently heaved a sigh of relief.

Chapter 644 - Laughter

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein couldn’t go against his own wishes to console Frank Lee, nor could he bring himself to tell Frank Lee that not being able to breed red wine fish was a good thing. All he could do was pretend that this was a trivial problem and not provide a response.

He walked two steps diagonally and circled around the starboard before looking far into the undulating sea.

By then, the clouds high in the sky had thinned. The crimson moon’s moonlight brightened up the rather dark night.

In such an environment, Klein could see the nearby scenery. There were dark clouds that hung low, and he discovered a hurricane swishing back and forth, encompassing an unknown swath of sea.

Under the illumination of the silver lightning, fine rain danced amidst the wind, forming a scene that resembled the dawn of the apocalypse.

Such a terrifying disaster was only a few nautical miles or even shorter from the Future, but the Future didn’t seem affected. Only the wind had become a little stronger.

This is the meaning of a safe sea route—to advance by the side of a storm… Without a good navigator, just traveling normally might push the ship into a disaster… Klein turned his head to look where the ship was heading. He saw a little illumination and fog being emanated. The visibility was extremely low, and using just the naked eye was very difficult to discern if they were in a dangerous or safe zone.

Such situations weren't obvious west of Oravi Island. But here, it was common once they took the secret sea route.

Klein was just about to retract his gaze when he saw a black, massive object seemingly hiding in the periphery of the storm!

A sea monster? He suddenly recalled some of the rumors he had heard at the different bars he had been to.

After steering away from the safe sea route, it's very easy to encounter all kinds of monsters. Some of them are behemoths and possess intense offensive power. Once they surfaced from the sea, they could finish it in one mouthful.

The Future didn't stop advancing. Before long, it closed the gap between it and the gloomy but massive object.

Klein finally managed to discern the entity's appearance and discovered that it wasn't a sea monster, but a gigantic sailboat which was even larger than the Future.

The sailboat was nearly two hundred meters long. With its bow and stern raised high, it appeared like a crescent.

Its surface was black. The cannons were arranged in three rows in an untidy manner on the side of the ship. There was order from top to bottom. Apart from the mast, the portions that extended out of the deck was similarly tall and massive. It was at least equivalent to a five-story building.

This ship's most odd feature was that it only had one sail and on it was the drawing of a black tomb.

"The Death Announcer…" A heavy voice sounded in Klein's ears. At some point in time, Frank Lee had thrown the silver-scaled fish whose blood had been replaced with red wine away and approached his side.

The first mate who had a bounty of 7,000 pounds held his head heavy as his muscles remained tense. It was as though an attack would be launched anytime from the minute changes of the gigantic sailboat.

Death Announcer? Klein was first taken aback before he recalled what the name represented.

It was one of the most legendary and infamous ships on the Five Seas!

It was the flagship of the King of Immortality Agalito!

We actually encountered one of the Four Kings… Klein clicked his tongue silently as he uncontrollably entered a highly-vigilant state.

However, he maintained a superficial level of indifference and calm as he continued looking at the Death Announcer.

Recalling how the second mate of the Death Announcer, Slaughterer Kircheis, who had a bounty of 9,500 pounds, had recently appeared in Nas and warned him, Kircheis came to an understanding. He was no longer puzzled as to why he would bump into the Death Announcer not far from the Gargas Archipelago.

After putting aside this question, he made connections with even more rumors. And among these rumors, there were a number which could be confirmed to be an actual description.

King of Immortality Agalito is a middle-aged man who’s so pale that he’s on the brink of rotting at any moment.

The bounty placed on him by a single country reached as high as 100,000 pounds.

His former enemies are all dead, regardless if they were pirates, adventurers, or members of a naval fleet. Only the other three members of the Four Kings remained alive.

He has never entered into direct combat with an official demigod. He is extremely restrained in such matters.

No one really knows his exact Sequence. No one knows what his Beyonder powers are.

He's cruel by nature and enjoys killing. He can launch an attack on any person or any ship at random.

He liked to find excuses to rip apart promises. Other than his nickname as the King of Immortality, he was often nicknamed "The Untrustworthy."

Thankfully, I'm on the Future. The King of Immortality will likely give Admiral of Stars a free pass. After all, she's one of the seven pirate admirals… No, the Four Kings and the Pirate Admirals can cooperate or be at odds normally, apart from the pirate convention organized by the King of the Five Seas… With the King of Immortality's character, he might not leave any chance of survival! Just as this thought flashed in Klein's mind, he heard a deep, rumbling horn.

Whoosh!

The sailors who were resting in the cabin jolted awake immediately. Without wearing their clothes, they ran to the different cannons on deck to make preparations to do battle. The Future instantly went from a peaceful state to a combative one.

Klein turned his head and looked up. He saw that the captain's windows were already open. Cattleya wore the usual black dress as she stood there and observed the Death Announcer.

She wasn't wearing the thick glasses, and her pitch-black eyes were tainted with some purple, making them mysterious and deep.

Indeed, she's also worried about a sudden attack from the King of Immortality… Klein retracted his gaze and looked at the Death Announcer which had its tail raised up.

At this moment, the two ships had just passed each other by. The pirates could see their counterparts on the other ship.

Similarly, those pirates were also looking over. They maintained a silence resembling that of a statue as though they had zero emotional fluctuations, brandishing their knives and blowing at the guns. They were being extremely provocative.

At that moment, just a matchstick was enough to trigger the tense nerves and begin a war.

Finally, the Death Announcer didn't take any actions. It continued silently anchored on the spot, "watching" the Future pass it by before it distanced itself.

Phew… At Klein's side, Frank Lee didn't conceal his exhalation.

He produced a smile and said to Klein, "Heh heh, there has always been many rumors about the King of Immortality's strength. Others say that he's really a demigod, while others say that he's only a Sequence 5. He is able to reach the level of a Sequence 4 thanks to the Death Announcer. But regardless, he has lived long enough. Uh… Tell me, do you think crossbreeding him and my fishes would enhance their survivability?"

Frank suddenly had an idea.

First, you need to capture the King of Immortality; otherwise, make him interested in your fish… Klein lampooned before calmly saying, "You can discuss it with him."

Frank Lee was taken aback as he sighed, depressed.

"He won't agree to it. He will plant me into the soil."

Just as he said that, the Death Announcer which had opened a gap with the Future suddenly turned its sails.

A shrill laughter which was filled with malice sounded from several hundred meters away as it blanketed the Future.

"Hahaha!

"Hahaha!"

The laughter resounded constantly. It switched from being hoarse, to chaotic, sounding like ravings or singing at times. The sailors on deck fell to the ground one after another as they tried hard to cover their ears, but all they could do was struggle in pain.

A number of Beyonders began to produce fish scales on their bodies.

Klein was similarly affected. He felt that his brain was instantly injected with all kinds of thoughts. There were the good, the bad, the bright, and the dark.

They were abnormally disordered as they combined with the constantly changing laughter to produce a swelling feeling that could burst one's brain.

Klein's facial expression distorted slightly as inconspicuous flesh tendrils began to start wriggling under his skin.

If he hadn't experienced the True Creator's ravings and Mr. Door's cry for help, or suffer similar torment when he passed the gray fog each time, giving him a certain level of resistance, Klein would definitely be like Poison Expert Frank Lee—pressing his head, kneeling down with a ferocious expression to resist the pain brought from the terrifying laughter.

Klein noticed that some short orange hair was growing from Frank's face, making him seem to transform into a bear.

At that moment, the symbols and magical labels on the Future's walls, deck, and mast lit up. They became like a resplendent sea of stars in a moonless night.

The terrifying laughter which was either sharp or hoarse didn't weaken, but everyone was distanced from one another in a second. The sounds that came from a further distance away sounded empty and illusory.

Klein's swelling head instantly received reprieve as he used the rest of his strength to look up.

Behind the opened windows in the captain's cabin, the Admiral of Stars's face had additional traces of gloominess, and they looked like they would crack apart at any moment, producing horrible items.

At that moment, Cattleya's palms pressed down on the window sill as bits of starlight swirled around her, seemingly matching the Future which was on the resplendent sea.

Whoosh!

A squall stirred for no reason as the ship began its own adjustment. Despite the Future having so many of its sailors down, it sped up instead of slowing down. It quickly opened up a gap from the Death Announcer.

Klein looked at the room with the mysterious pair of eyes that observed the deck, and he discovered that the windows were rattling from the strong winds without any signs of abnormalities.

Whoosh!

Amidst the strong winds, starlight descended to form a swath of "floating ice" as they dragged the Future into a "rapid flight."

Finally, the Death Announcer vanished behind it. The terrifying laughter which could make a person lose control or go mad turned more illusory and distant.

Frank Lee lowered his hands and panted before barely recovering. Many of the sailors on the deck were still tumbling about and struggling in extreme pain, but their condition didn't worsen.

This ability of the King of Immortality is truly impressive. There's almost no way to defend against it… It's no wonder he's one of the Four Kings… Klein frowned slightly as he sighed.

Although he was experienced and rather knowledgeable, this was the first time he was being directly attacked by a demigod in the true sense of the word. He discovered that even Agalito, who was ranked last among the Four Kings, similarly made him feel weak as though it was impossible to resist.

With Agalito's character, will he make the Death Announcer pursue us? Although there's a high chance he would wait for Slaughterer Kircheis to return, that possibility cannot be excluded… If he chases up, I'll pray to myself and use the Sea God Scepter to give him a maelstrom and a thunderstorm to wipe him out… After making the decision, he once again looked at Cattleya.

The pirate admiral's expression was already ghastly pale. However, there were no longer any signs of darkness. The starlight that twirled around her slowly extinguished one after another.

Chapter 645 - Calming Method

◆

Following the complete disappearance of the surrounding astral glow, Cattleya lowered her head and said to Frank Lee who was slowly recovering, “Let them calm down.”

She was referring to the sailors who were still struggling in pain.

Just as she said that, Cattleya shrunk her body back as the windows closed.

At that instant, Klein vaguely saw a green vine grow upwards, covering the Admiral of Stars in layers.

As he didn’t sense any danger or wickedness, he intuitively believed that it was a method in mysticism which Ma’am Hermit used to treat her injuries and recover her energy.

A power of her Beyonder pathway? Or is it from some mystical item she possesses? She began treatment without any worry and allowed Frank to deal with the chaos on the ship. She’s not afraid that the Death Announcer would be able to chase up to us? How far did the Future “fly” in that last pounce? Klein no longer held his neck up as he turned to look at Frank Lee.

This first mate, who was both a poison expert and a capable doctor, had already retrieved a coiled soft tube from the pocket of his dungarees. It was connected to a small glass bottle, and on the other side was an embedded thin and sharp needle.

“A sedative I concocted,” Frank Lee said with a forced smile while still having pangs of fear.

I’ve bought something similar before. They were all given to Zombie Maric… Klein surveyed the area and said, “This might not be enough.”

“No, it’s not for them. I need a helper. They will receive the help of beer which comes with a sedative effect. Haha, they’re often rowdy once they’re drunk, so I’ve added the necessary elements in most of the alcohol buckets,” Frank explained in passing.

Spiking their drinks without any notice… Klein nearly twitched the corner of his mouth.

At that moment, he had a deep appreciation for the aptness of the nickname “Poison Expert.”

Simply because he found the pirates rowdy when drunk, Frank had added a modified sedative to most of the alcoholic beverages without any sense of guilt or shame. It was as though he was doing something very ordinary.

This fellow is a really straight and warm person in certain aspects, but in other aspects, he’s more terrifying than a devil. This is because he doesn’t believe that what he does is evil… How did the Church of Earth Mother produce such a crazy scientist? Klein controlled his expression and followed Frank Lee from a distance and found the boatswain, Nina, who was squirming in the shadows of the bulkhead.

This pirate with an exaggerated figure was slumped there, writhing in pain. She kept scratching the deck, producing ear-piercing sounds as bloody marks were left behind.

Just watching the scene made Klein feel pain in his fingers.

“Gehrman, help me press her down to prevent her from struggling.” Frank raised the needle and tube in his hand.

Klein didn't object to it, but he didn't say a word. He calmly crouched by the side and pressed down on Nina's shoulders.

He felt his hands slip the moment he touched her, finding it difficult to grab her. It was as though she wasn't a lady but a gigantic fish covered in slippery scales.

Klein instantly corrected his actions. Using a Clown's precise control, he grabbed Nina firmly by the shoulders.

However, Nina's struggling was surprisingly strong, far greater than Klein's. Soon, he felt his fingers turn sore as he could hardly continue.

As expected of a Sequence 7 Beyonder from the Sailor pathway, while I'm not a Beyonder who excels when it comes to physical strength… If not for the need to feed it, I can activate Creeping Hunger and switch to Steel Maveti's soul and use the strength of a Zombie as a most suitable response… As these thoughts ran through his mind, Klein saw Frank approach, crouch down, and press his knee onto Nina's back.

His muscles bulged as he quickly stopped Nina's struggling.

A Beyonder from the Planter pathway has quite a lot of physical strength as well… However, Mr. Frank Lee, it's probably difficult for you to get a girlfriend if you use such crude manners against a lady… Of course, you definitely don't mind. You could totally let your child grow from the soil… Klein lampooned as he watched Frank Lee inject the needle into the back of Nina's hand.

As the small bottle of sedatives was injected, Nina stopped her attempts at struggling. Klein released his hands and stood up.

After a few seconds, Nina combed her hair and rolled to her feet. She grumbled at Frank Lee, "Why must you always be so rough like a bear? Can't you try a different method?"

As she spoke, she stretched her arms without concealing the pained expression on her face.

Unlike the dive from earlier, she was now wearing a linen shirt and a brown coat. She looked no different from an ordinary pirate.

Frank wasn't fazed by Nina's complaints as he asked in puzzlement, "How was I rough?

"Alright, let's not argue on this topic. Let's help them first.

"Get the beer barrel out. Let's work together to make them drink.

"Gehrman, you don't mind participating in this, right?"

Klein shot a glance at the sailors on the deck. After contemplating for a few seconds, he asked, "The goal is to let them calm down?"

"That's right." Frank Lee nodded heavily.

"Can I just knock them unconscious?" Klein asked calmly.

This has almost the same effects as a sedative beer, and it's more efficient… he added inwardly.

Nina turned her head in surprise and was momentarily stunned speechless.

Frank Lee thought seriously for a moment.

"Okay."

"Alright." Klein walked to a cutlass he had long noticed, picked it up, and used the dull edge to strike it at its owner.

Bang!

Through his precise control, the pirate who was rolling in pain calmed down and fell unconscious.

Nina's expression froze for a second before she recovered.

She then slowed down when passing by Klein. She suppressed her laughter as she said, “I’ve heard rumors of you, but I never expected you to be more exaggerated than the rumors. Usually, it should be the opposite.

“Yes… Your thoughts are very, very special. Completely different from others, and they’re closer to those of Frank’s. This is probably why he’s able to treat you as a friend in such a short time.”

No, there are differences among lunatics. Gehrman Sparrow hasn’t reached the level of Frank yet… Klein observed silently and gave such a reply inwardly.

He ignored Nina and held the cutlass and walked across the deck, knocking the sailors unconscious and waiting for them to wake up naturally.

Frank wished to do the same, but he gave up his rash thoughts when he was asked by Nina if he could guarantee that he only knocked them unconscious instead of killing them. He entered the cabin and brought out a beer barrel and acted according to his original plan.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Klein struck as he walked all the way to the bow. At this moment, an elder in his fifties with a pointed bonnet had gradually come round.

When he saw the cold and crazy adventurer approach, he hurriedly tried to stand up and blurted out, “No, I don’t need it!

“I’m already fine. I’m fine!”

There’s no need to explain. It’s very clear… Klein held back his amusement and turned for the bow.

At this moment, the elder introduced himself, “I’m the navigator of the Future, Ottolov.”

Navigator? Klein turned his head and discovered several books dropped around Ottolov. They were either spread on the ground face up or down, flat or sideways.

“Haha, I fell from above and brought them with me. They nearly went mad,” Ottolov explained.

Klein shifted his gaze towards his eyes and discovered the colors of the deep sea in his blue eyes.

It’s not the pair of eyes that were observing me in the day… But this feeling is somewhat similar to the Admiral of Stars… They are of the same pathway? Klein retracted his gaze and watched Nina and Frank Lee calm the other sailors.

Just as he was about to look back to see if the Death Announcer had continued its pursuit, Ottolov suddenly shouted, “Be careful!”

Whoosh!

A huge wave struck the bow, causing the Future to shake vigorously.

If not for his balancing ability as a Clown, Klein would’ve fallen like Frank. And when the huge spray pattered down like rain, it drenched his half top hat and double-breasted frock coat.

There should be a steam iron here, right… The act of a crazy adventurer washing his clothes doesn’t violate his persona. It’s weird if he doesn’t wash his clothes… I should’ve worn clothes in the style of the Rorsted Archipelago natives! At that instant, Klein felt a series of heartache.

He saw a storm ahead with huge waves coming one after another as they surged high up like mountains. He could sense the crazy winds and the rumbling thunder.

W-we’ve come to the boundaries of the safe sea routes? The “flight” from just now might’ve allowed us to lose the Death Announcer’s tail, but it has also diverted the ship from its path? Klein watched as Ottolov, Nina, and Frank, as well as Bloodless Heath Doyle, who had appeared at some point in time, wake up the sailors as they took their places. They frantically and busily began to steer the Future.

Through their hard work, the Future changed directions in time and tore through the gigantic waves and dodged the bolts of lightning before returning to the safe sea route.

After everything calmed down, Klein released the charm from the Sea God domain and breathed a sigh of relief.

Looking back, he saw no signs of the Death Announcer's pursuit. He finally eased up and found that there was nothing calm about the night.

After surveying the area and seeing the pirates rub their heads or gasp for breath, looking exhausted and on the brink of collapse, Klein left the deck, feeling a slight guilty-conscience. He walked to the cabin and sighed inwardly.

We just left the Gargas Archipelago recently and the ship was nearly destroyed. The search for mermaids really doesn't seem simple…

Following the staircase to the upper level, Klein walked past the captain's cabin and slowed down. He observed for a moment and saw green leaves covering the crack in the door. Everything was isolated.

He shifted his gaze and returned to his room. He considered the matter of praying to The Fool before going above the gray fog to grasp the nearby waters and search for traces of the Death Announcer by responding. He wanted to let the King of Immortality Agalito, who attacked others for no baffling reason, to experience the same treatment as he did.

No, there are "eyes" watching. I should try my best not to do such things. Besides, it will only teach the King of Immortality a lesson and not seriously injure him. It's not worth the risk… I shouldn't let my anger get the better of my rationality… I'll think about it again after advancing successfully! Klein repressed his urge.

Chapter 646 - Leymano's Spellbook

◆

Backlund, outside the steam locomotive station.

Fors wore a finely checkered black veiled hat with embedded blue flowers and stood by the hall at the station's entrance, awaiting her teacher, Dorian Gray.

The drizzle on the streets and the cold winds blowing underground had made this female author tremble slightly. She felt that she had underestimated Backlund's spring.

I wonder what Xio is doing that makes her busy all year round. Sigh, she said that she wouldn't even get out of bed when her father was still alive. Apart from going to the bathroom, both food and water would be served to her by her servants. Now, she's leaving early in the morning every day and only returning late at night regardless of the weather. She has completed one mission after another, capturing one fugitive after another. With this in mind, Fors couldn't help but admire Xio.

Last week, this female Sheriff had already paid off her debt and had even saved up 200 pounds!

I have to say that, as a Beyonder job, a Sheriff is really suited to being a bounty hunter. Of course, the choices available to her are limited to Low-Sequence Beyonders… Fors's thoughts wandered as her gaze that was directed outwards had suddenly caught sight of a familiar figure.

It was a man of medium build, and he was dressed in a black suit, the most popular attire in Loen. He wore a half top hat, and in a rare instance, his shoulders appeared broad. It was broad in an almost exaggerated sense.

He was none other than Fors's teacher, one of the few remaining members of the Abraham family, Dorian Gray Abraham.

Fors was delighted as she immediately went over with her umbrella in hand.

With so many people on the streets, she didn't directly approach him. However, her gaze met his and saw him raise his clenched right fist towards the first button on his black suit.

This… means danger! Fors's expressionlessly diverted her gaze away. She smiled as she cast her gaze to a young gentleman behind Dorian, and as though nothing happened, she passed him and walked forward.

An ancient family had unimaginable experience in all kinds of matters, so Dorian Gray had long informed Fors of the signals and gestures to use in urgent situations. The action from before was extremely simple. It was to inform her to stay away!

The young man behind was somewhat taken aback to be stared at by the languid, mature lady. Following that, he instinctively adjusted his clothes and pressed down on his hat.

Just as he finished these series of actions, Fors had overtaken him and continued heading forward.

Under the drizzle, Fors circled the area and boarded a rental carriage and headed for Hat Trick Inn on Cherwood Borough's 22 Hope Street. This was the place that Dorian Gray had reserved in advance.

Having spent so many years in mysticism circles, Fors, who had plenty of experience, calmly got a neighboring room and stood before the window to observe the guests that came to the inn.

Finally, she saw Dorian Gray get off a carriage and walk through the door.

Fors quickly turned around and came to the bend of the stairwell. She covertly observed her teacher being led to his room by an attendant.

After a while, she took off her hat, messed up her hair a little before coming to Room 2016, and she knocked on it.

Her plan was very simple. If her teacher's response wasn't problematic, she would enter the room to converse with him. If it was abnormal, she would pretend as though she had come to the wrong room or that she was a prostitute trying to get some business.

Creak. The door slowly opened as Dorian looked at his student in front of him before looking both ways down the corridor.

Then, he raised his right arm and spread his fingers to press on the second button of his suit.

This meant that he wasn't controlled and that the abnormality was over.

Fors let out a silent sigh of relief and instantly entered the room.

"Teacher, what happened just now?" she asked, feeling worried and concerned.

Dorian closed the door and smiled wryly.

"I saw someone familiar."

He sighed and added, "An enemy."

It was his former student who had later betrayed the Abraham family with Traveler Boulaya and nearly wiped out the upper echelons of the Abraham family.

According to what Dorian knew, his former student had already joined the Aurora Order and was likely one of the 22 Oracles.

“What did he do? Is he very strong?” Fors asked curiously.

Dorian fell silent for a few seconds and divulged a little.

“Lawrence, Laubero, Aulisa, and I belong to a particular organization. A few members betrayed it and dealt a heavy blow to it.

“That was one of the traitors.”

He didn’t mention it as a family, nor did he mention the conflict between bloodline members and the apprentices so as to prevent Fors from getting her feelings involved.

“How despicable!” Fors immediately recalled the kind Mrs. Aulisa and the friendly and amiable Mr. Lawrence.

“Alright, let’s not chat about such unhappy matters.” Dorian took out a piece of paper that had been folded a few times and handed it to Fors. “Here’s the Astrologer potion formula. Your digestion of the Trickmaster and Apprentice potions has exceeded my expectations. This is the greatest surprise I’ve had in the past ten years.”

“I specially joined a circus.” Fors didn’t hide the fact, and she even felt that it was worth flaunting.

As she spoke, she unfolded the piece of paper to read the Astrologer’s potion formula.

At this moment, Dorian nodded in relief.

“I’m very sorry. Due to the previous losses, I’m unable to provide you with the main ingredients of the Astrologer potion. Just treat it as a final test.

“However, I have prepared a gift for you.”

As he spoke, he took out a palm-sized notebook from his inner left pocket. Its cover looked hard, and it was entirely bronze-green in color. It looked rather ancient.

The notebook was comprised of three types of paper. The yellow-type of parchment had the fewest pages, while another was a yellowish-brown goatskin of about ten pages, while the rest was ordinary white paper. On the cover there were the words written in ancient Feysac: “I came, I saw, I record.”

Fors’s gaze moved away from the Astrologer potion formula and onto the notebook. She recognized it to be the item left behind by Mr. Lawrence. It was the item she had specially traveled all the way to Pritz Harbor to hand to her teacher!

Dorian smiled.

“I believe you are no stranger to it.”

After Fors nodded, he sighed.

“This is a rather potent mystical item. It can be ranked in the top five among all the similar items I’ve seen. This doesn’t mean that it’s more impressive than the ones ranked after it, but it’s simply because the negative effects are the easiest to resolve. When the two are put together, it makes it worth a lot.”

“What is its name? What negative side effects does it have?” Fors couldn’t disguise her excitement and agitation.

Dorian caressed the notebook’s cover and said, “It’s called ‘Leymano’s Travels,’ but we prefer calling it ‘Leymano’s Spellbook.’

While this spellbook will expose you to more kinds of Beyonder powers, it can also allow you to record them.

“It will be materialized onto a particular page for long-term storage. You can use it at any time, but remember, the corresponding page will become blank again with each use, awaiting your next record.”

…It sounds amazing. Fors felt as though she was dreaming.

I can record any Beyonder powers I see and use them once?

I-isn't this another kind of Shepherd? The Shepherd mentioned by Little Sun… Yes, it's only limited to a single prepared battle.

I wonder if I can record the Beyonder powers of a demigod. If it's possible, in a prepared battle, I'll be even stronger than a Shepherd!

Dorian seemed to read her mind as he explained in detail.

"It can be said so. It corresponds to a Sequence 6 Scribe of the Apprentice pathway. It's not guaranteed that a Beyonder power that is higher than this Sequence can be recorded. There's a chance of failure; the greater the gap, the greater the chance of failure. Furthermore, the effects will be halved.

"According to the experience of past users, while chances of success against a Sequence 5's Beyonder powers is considerably high, once it reaches Sequence 4, which is the level of a demigod, it becomes relatively difficult. There might not be a single instance of success within ten attempts. And I believe no demigod will cast it again and again for you. If it's an enemy, they would've killed you ten times over.

"Do you see these? The yellow parchment is specifically used to record Beyonder powers with godhood. There are a total of three pages, which is to say that even if you are very lucky, all you can record is three demigod Beyonder powers, and you can only use them each once."

Although it appears to have many restrictions, making it impossible to fully produce the traveling notebook's might, it isn't an obstacle for two types of people. One of them is a lucky person, while the other is someone with a large organization or faction backing them, the kind which has a demigod helping… Fors instantly thought of seeking Mr. Fool's help to display "His" powers so that she could record them. However, she immediately found it sacrilegious as she hurriedly apologized inwardly.

Following that, she sincerely hoped that the supposedly strongest Ma’am Hermit in the Tarot Club would quickly become a demigod.

Dorian noticed that Fors’s thoughts were going astray as he continued, “The pages like goatskin can record the Beyonder powers of a Sequence 5 or 6. There are a total of ten pages, and the effects would be more than half of the original, roughly 70 to 80%.

“The remaining pages record Beyonder powers below Sequence 6. There are a total of 25 pages, and the effects are almost equal to the original, but they are still slightly inferior.

“Due to some developments in the past, the spellbook still has five pages with Beyonder powers left. The rest are blank. You can test them for yourself.”

Dorian paused before saying with a solemn expression, “Before giving it to you, I have to seriously warn you that it has negative effects. After using it each time, it will make you get lost, and it’s the kind that causes you to encounter danger. You have to draw a bit of your blood to smear it on the cover evenly to reduce the effects.

“Remember, don’t underestimate getting lost. You must resolve it as quickly as possible.”

“Yes, Teacher,” Fors replied seriously.

Dorian then handed Leymano’s Travels to Fors.

“This is my gift.”

Teacher is really nice… Fors pursed her lips and asked, “What’s the name of that student who betrayed you? What does he look like?

“If there’s a chance, I wish to seek vengeance on him for both you and Mr. Lawrence.”

“No, don’t think about it. You are much weaker than him. Back when he betrayed us, he was already a Scribe. Now, he might even be a Traveler," Dorian said solemnly. "However, you do need to remember him and avoid him. His name is Lewis Wien. I'll draw a picture of him later."

"Alright." Fors nodded.

†

On the Future, in the pirates' dining hall.

Klein met Cattleya who was exiting just as he walked in.

The lady was no longer as pale as the previous night. With a pair of thick glasses, she calmly said, "Make your preparations. We will be arriving in those waters in a while."

That fast? How far exactly did we fly last night? Klein was taken aback.

Chapter 647 - Sea of Ruins

Although Gehrman Sparrow didn’t show it on his face, Cattleya seemed to notice the surprise in him. She simply explained, “It’s a kind of flight that makes it impossible for the Death Announcer to continue its pursuit.”

Just as she said that, she discovered that Gehrman Sparrow had completely changed his attire. He wore a round neck shirt, a brown jacket, pantaloons with a dark-colored cap. He didn’t look like an adventurer and instead resembled a native of the City of Generosity, Bayam.

According to Nina, his clothes were drenched by a huge wave last night… Does he only have one set of decent clothes? Cattleya recalled and found the reason.

She wasn’t surprised by this. She even felt that it matched Gehrman Sparrow’s insanity. He only had one set of decent clothes, spending the rest of his money on mystical items, Beyonder weapons, spirituality charms—with the sole goal of raising his strength.

It’s no wonder the King of Immortality gave up. All he did was attack passing ships. There wasn’t enough hatred to drive him to pursue us the entire way… Yes, in front of the Four Kings, senior pirate admirals still have a chance to escape to a certain degree…

Almost arriving… Man, I haven’t completed my digestion…

However, acting as the crazy adventurer yesterday seemed rather effective. The crew of the Future gave a very spontaneous and warm response towards it. I should completely digest it in two to three days. And even if we entered the dangerous waters, finding mermaids wouldn't be that simple. I should have enough time… Klein nodded and suppressed his urge to ask. He planned on passing by Admiral of Stars and head to his usual spot to have breakfast.

At this moment, he saw a pirate who was carrying a blue fish which was alive and kicking rush in. He went straight for a corner.

Seated there was the second mate of the Future, Heath Doyle. His face was nearly transparent from the paleness, and his nose bridge was rather unharmonious.

Pa!

The fish which was nearly a meter long was placed in front of Bloodless.

Heath Doyle extended his hands and pressed down on the fish. He bent his body bit by bit as he inched his head downwards, plastering his face to the scales as though he was kissing it.

Suddenly, the fish stiffened and, like wax meeting fire, melted rapidly and turned into a disgusting pool of flesh and blood.

The flesh and blood surged into Heath Doyle's mouth like liquid as they covered his skin.

Amidst the horrendous sight of the squirming, the fish and all the bones, flesh, and blood vanished. Nothing was left behind as Heath Doyle's face appeared very clean. All that was left was the bright red color on his lips like a blooming rose.

Rose Bishop… The name of the Sequence surfaced in Klein's mind.

Cattleya, who was beside him, also saw the scene as she nudged her glasses.

“Every Rose Bishop needs to replenish themselves with enough blood and flesh. That way, they can fully showcase their Beyonder powers and not lose control after being injured as a result of an intense battle.

Her lips curled slightly as she added, “However, the lunatics from the Aurora Order have an inclination towards human flesh and blood. Actually, substitutes would work fine.”

From the looks of it, this Bloodless with a bounty of 7,600 pounds is really lucky. On the one hand, he’s lucky to achieve Sequence 6 at once without any abnormalities or losing control. On the other hand, joining Admiral of Stars’s pirate crew is another. Without the secret knowledge that this lady who is being pursued by knowledge possesses, he might’ve turned into a monster that desires human flesh and blood sooner or later, even if he didn’t listen to the True Creator’s voice… Klein sighed silently.

He was increasingly convinced that the Secrets Suppliant pathway, which was also the Shepherd pathway, was the Beyonder pathway which was the easiest to lose control and turn mad. Nothing came close; even the Abyss pathway, which represented evil, was slightly lacking.

Klein retracted his gaze, and just as he was about to take a step forward, the entire ship jolted.

In an instant, the scene ahead of the Future naturally surfaced in Klein’s mind.

The blue sea was being separated by a gigantic crack as infinite amounts of seawater plummeted down into bottomless darkness like a waterfall!

This scene was magnificent and mystical. It made one suspect if they weren’t on Earth.

Whoosh!

The Future wasn't able to stop in time as it rushed to the edge and quickly plummeted.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

All the pirates in the dining hall flew up and slammed into the ceiling. Toast, white bread, butter, margarine, beer, and roasted fish flew around at random without settling down.

Klein also lost his balance as he couldn't help but be thrown towards the ceiling.

He extended his palm in time and pressed upwards, quickly adjusting his posture like an acrobatic act, allowing him to look less pathetic.

Not far away, Nina showcased her stunning balance. With the help of the ceiling, she maintained her posture. Perhaps intentionally or unintentionally, she extended her feet and kicked Frank to send the Poison Expert flying diagonally to a beer barrel, drenching him with pale yellow liquid.

At this moment, the most casual and unfazed person was Cattleya. Stars swirled around her as the resplendence beneath her feet coagulated, causing her to float in midair. She wasn't affected by the sudden dip.

Apart from her, Bloodless was the least pathetic. At some point in time, this Rose Bishop had blended into the shadows and disappeared.

With the Future about to plummet into the bottomless crevice, a plume of water surged up suddenly!

It held up the ship and threw it high into the air and towards the other edge.

After momentarily floating in the air, Klein believed that the Future had landed stably on the surface of the sea. Once again, the charm from the Sea God domain, which he held tightly in his right hand, wasn't used.

At that moment, the sunlight outside the window shone inside, illuminating the mess inside the dining hall.

Klein, who had long regained his balance, briskly walked to the window and saw that the endless sea seemed to be burning with golden flames. It appeared to have been noon the entire time.

It was only morning moments ago!

Klein looked up and narrowed his eyes to see that the sky was filled with sunlight. There were no clouds nor the sun, just a swath of golden rays.

It's no wonder Arrodes's description of this place is that it's no longer a real ocean, but a relic of a war between the gods.

As he swept his gaze, he discovered nearby ruins which were diagonally ahead.

The ruins were mostly covered by seawater. Protruding out from the surface was gray stones and stone columns that formed a peak. At the top was a dome-like object. From its angle, it was able to hold up quite a large area of space.

The ruins were definitely massive in the first place. Through the transparent waters, Klein saw that its base extended to the seabed without end.

"These are extremely dangerous waters." At some point in time, Cattleya came beside him.

Klein turned his head over and waited for her to continue.

Cattleya's gaze was cast forward as she said somewhat wistfully, "I haven't been here many times. Furthermore, all my visits happened a long time ago."

"My" and not "our"… That means that it wasn't with the crew of the Future… Or was it back when she was a subordinate of Queen Mystic? Klein acutely noticed the terms which Admiral of Stars had used as he made a guess.

Cattleya didn't turn her head as she looked at the sky and sea which were covered in golden flames.

"No one knows where the ends of these waters are. Nor does anyone know how wide it is.

"Do you know what's most dangerous about this place?"

…I should've gotten Arrodes to give me a more detailed explanation… Klein honestly shook his head.

Previously, he had nearly been caught by a demigod of the True Creator. He had only survived thanks to the Die of Probability; therefore, in the past two months, he didn't dare bring the radio transceiver back to the real world. He was afraid that the True Creator, who was closely watching the region, would sense it. Hence, he didn't have an opportunity to contact Arrodes.

His original plan was to seek out Will Auceptin's help through the paper crane once he approached the dangerous waters, and understand the corresponding dangers of the environment. To his surprise, they had encountered King of Immortality Agalito, and the Future didn't give him any time before they arrived at their destination.

Behind the thick glasses, Cattleya's black eyes with a purple hue glazed over for a moment.

"There are many ruins floating here. There are all kinds of mutated monsters. Among them include many demigods who have lost control or ancient evil creatures.

"This isn't the most dangerous part. If it's only because of this, these waters would've become a hunting ground for the seven Churches, a treasure trove for them to obtain High-Sequence ingredients or items. Of course, there are many monsters and evil creatures who have lost control here, but they might not be real. They can kill us, but they might not leave anything behind after they are killed.”

Upon hearing this, Klein made the connection to the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt.

This dragon king could conjure anything through his imagination!

Could it be that these waters were where the ancient gods of the Second Epoch fought? Klein nearly frowned.

Cattleya said with an ethereal voice as she continued, “Here, you will never guess what dangers you will encounter next. Perhaps you will just melt while approaching a ruin, turning into a wax-like monster. Perhaps you might turn into a rock amidst the storms from slightly deviating from the explored sea routes and end up shattering to pieces.

“To Beyonders at our level, that is the greatest danger.”

Klein turned his head slightly as he sharply asked, “What about Beyonders that surpass our levels?”

Cattleya sighed and smiled.

“The waters here are filled with a voice that shouldn’t be heard.

“The higher the Sequence, the easier it is to hear it. Therefore, most demigods who dare explore these waters have ended up with problems. They either went mad or lost control, ending up lost here forever.”

It’s no wonder the seven Churches don’t send their experts here to reap the harvest… Most of them ended up with problems… Which means that there are a small number of demigods that can survive here? Enlightened, Klein looked out the window again.

At this moment, the Future had closed in on the ruins.

Suddenly, a loud and clear panting was heard by everyone!

Chapter 648 - Noon and Night

◆

Whoosh! Gasp!

The loud panting sounds entered Klein's ears in a slow and rhythmic manner. It left a chill running down his spine as he felt an inexplicable sense of horror, but he didn't feel any dangerous foreboding.

It wasn't only him. Cattleya, Frank Lee, and the other pirates also heard the panting sounds. They either turned their heads, looked outside, raised their weapons, or were on high alert, showcasing their rich experience.

After trying to discern the source, Klein discovered that the intense panting stemmed from the ruin ahead of them. It originated from a spot between the peak made of stones and stone columns.

At that moment, Bloodless Heath Doyle floated out of the shadows. He clasped his head and softly grunted in pain.

"There's a corpse…

"There's a corpse there!"

Corpse? A corpse that pants loudly? Klein's thoughts raced. Cattleya, who had subconsciously removed her heavy glasses and looked towards the ruins, had her expression suddenly turn solemn. She turned her head towards the pirates in the dining hall and said, "Quick!

"Quickly circle around that area and do not approach it!"

Her voice contained a magnetic allure that jolted everyone awake. The sailors rushed out of the dining hall and headed for spots that needed help. Under Navigator Ottolov and Boatswain Nina's instructions, they adjusted the sails and changed direction, passing by the ruins from a relatively great distance.

Only when the peak formed by stone and stone columns vanished beyond the horizon did Bloodless Heath Doyle lower his hands; his expression no longer in pain.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein narrowed his eyes. He felt that this Rose Bishop, the second mate of the Future might be a huge latent risk on this voyage.

This wasn't because of his contempt towards Beyonders of the Secrets Suppliant pathway, but a judgment he made from combining the Admiral of Stars's description and how Heath Doyle had reacted.

Just now, Heath Doyle was the only one in pain while everyone heard the loud panting. He instinctively believed that there was a corpse buried in the ruins, and Cattleya's reaction after her observation proved his words.

That means that even if Heath Doyle doesn't proactively listen to the True Creator's voice, just by having the Beyonder powers of a Listener is enough to make him hear more than the average person and most Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders in ordinary environments. Hence, he was affected the most and obtained more information on the danger when we encountered the panting sounds while being sufficiently close to the source of the sounds.

Here, it doesn't mean that problems can be resolved by avoiding similar ruins. Because according to Cattleya, these waters are filled with voices that can make a demigod lose control—voices that shouldn't be heard. If Heath Doyle were to be in an inadequate or overly adequate state one day, he might end up hearing those lethal whispers.

Similarly, even if a Sequence 6 Rose Bishop is inferior to a demigod who is good at listening, the gap can't be too huge. In terms of the Die of Probability, just 2 points—not 1 point—is enough to have Heath Doyle hear voices he shouldn't hear to go mad or lose control… I have to warn Ma'am Hermit even though she should've long figured this out and made the corresponding preparations… Klein retracted his gaze and heard his stomach groan softly.

He had yet to have breakfast.

At this moment, beer was splashed across the floor. Butter had been splattered everywhere. All kinds of food—roasted fish, toast, white bread—were strewn across the floor or hanging off of something. All of them had become somewhat dirty.

It should still be edible by peeling off the outer layer… Klein looked at a piece of bread that was leaning on a table leg, in a dilemma on his course of action.

This was at odds with Gehrman Sparrow's persona!

When he decided to wait for lunch, Cattleya instructed the chef, "Prepare breakfast for the rest once more.

"Leave this to Frank. P-perhaps he has uses for it."

For the rearing of monsters? Klein lampooned inwardly.

After a while, he finally had breakfast which wasn't as sumptuous as before. It was a smoked pork sausage and two utterly burnt toast, as well as a cup of unsedated light beer that was treated as water.

Due to them traveling through very dangerous waters with the possibilities of mishaps happening at every turn, Klein showcased his eating skills from back when he was studying in college. He only spent one to two minutes to finish the breakfast just like he did back in his college's mess hall.

He left the pirates' dining hall and came to the deck. He was having an after-meal stroll while also observing his environment.

At that moment, the sea still appeared as though it was illuminated by a midday sun as it was colored gold.

Klein stopped and looked into the distance and saw a point of light ahead expanding.

Under the sun's illumination, the point of light was producing coruscating, multi-colored lusters due to the refraction. It was a like a gigantic and transparent gem.

As the Future continued forging ahead, the point of light gradually revealed itself.

It first parted before becoming clear. It was comprised of four gigantic columns made of pure diamond.

They were like legendary columns that held up the sea. They extended downwards and stably stood there, holding up a sizable floating island.

Above the floating island, the soil was charred black without any hint of greenery. In its depths, the lights had such an abnormal brightness that it outshone the midday sky.

Suddenly, there was a long screech that was emitted from the island.

It was loud and unrestrained, but it gave people a hair-raising sense of danger.

Before long, Klein heard the galloping sounds of horses as he saw two steeds that seemed to be tempered from gold rush out of the floating island. Behind it was a beautiful chariot which was similarly made from gold.

At this moment, Cattleya's voice was amplified as she hurriedly had it resound in every corner of the Future.

"Look down!

"Don't look at it!"

Klein was never one to put on a brave front. He subconsciously lowered his head upon hearing those words and looked at his leather boots.

He noticed that the sunlight which illuminated the deck was becoming brighter before it dimmed and was rapidly restored to its former brilliance.

"It's alright now." Cattleya's voice sounded in the ship again without any obvious emotional fluctuations.

Only then did Klein look up. He discovered that the two steeds tempered from gold and the beautiful chariot they pulled behind it had vanished. The diamond pillar silently supported the floating island as resplendent glows swirled around it.

What a huge diamond… What a strange floating island. What would happen if I hadn't lowered my head and had watched the golden chariot charge forward? Klein looked around as he suddenly frowned.

A pirate who stood about seven to eight meters away from him had already vanished. Standing there were two pitch-black footprints.

Looking at the ashes floating in midair, Klein vaguely knew the outcome of not lowering his head.

Thankfully, Admiral of Stars has been here a few times in the past. She knows what to avoid and when to bow her head. If I had hired Mr. Hanged Man, even if he was the one steering the ghost ship, we might've already been wiped out by now… No, if the Future hadn't arrived at its destination ahead of time without giving me any time to prepare, I would've long sought out Will Auceptin's advice. A magician never performs unprepared… Besides, if I had hired Mr. Hanged Man, I definitely would've purchased the relevant information from Ma'am Hermit… Klein first sighed before recovering his calm.

He didn't suggest visiting the floating island to explore it. He left the Future to pass it by and head forward.

In the rest of the time, the sea was like the outer world. There were only the undulating waves, the vastness, silence, and endlessness.

Klein occasionally saw fire embers floating on the surface of the sea, but he didn't find any signs of marine creatures, including mermaids.

Time ticked by, and lunch was soon underway.

Just as Klein was about to leave the deck for the dining hall, he suddenly realized that his surroundings had darkened!

The sky which had remained in a midday state no longer had any sunlight as it was covered in rich darkness.

This change was so sudden and fast that Klein's first reaction was to wonder who had switched off the lights!

Silently, the Future was covered in a layer of resplendent stars that illuminated paths in every direction.

Cattleya's voice that contained a magnetic allure was once again magnified as it resounded in everyone's ears.

"Return to your room or find any corner you can and make yourself fall asleep.

"Then, wait until you wake up naturally."

Puzzled, Frank Lee asked loudly, "What will happen if I don't sleep?"

At that moment, his voice boomed like a speaking bear.

Cattleya stood behind the window of the captain's cabin and said, "When we wake up, we will find you gone, never to be found again."

The night here is that terrifying? Klein was curious, but he had no thoughts of attempting to stay awake.

He returned to his room, and using the starlight which hadn’t been extinguished on the Future, he unfolded a paper crane and picked up a pencil to quickly write:

“What should be taken note of when traveling to the dangerous waters on the easternmost front of the Sonia Sea?

“Where can I find mermaids there?”

Putting down the pencil, he folded the crane. Without taking off his coat, he lay in bed and, with the help of Cogitation, quickly fell asleep.

In a hazy world, he suddenly jolted awake, clearly knowing that he was dreaming.

No one is infiltrating it… Klein surveyed his surroundings and found himself on a mountaintop. Behind him and to his sides were black, cloister-like buildings. Ahead of him was a withered tree and a protruding boulder.

On top of the boulder, Cattleya sat alone. She hugged her knees and leaned her body forward as she stared at the mountain opposite them.

She was still dressed in the black classical robe that exuded an air of mystery. Her expression wore an indescribable look of confusion.

At that moment, she didn’t move at all; it was as though she was a stone sculpture.

Why is she in my dream? Klein took a few steps forward and leaped onto a boulder.

Before he could ask, he was stunned by the vast scene before his eyes. It was a feeling that struck a blow to his body and soul.

In front of the boulder was a bottomless cliff and across the cliff was a mountain which was covered with countless palaces, spires, and majestic city walls.

These buildings were opulent and stacked in circles. Just one of them was abnormally huge and didn’t resemble a human’s residence. Combined together, it had an indescribable sense of epic proportions that seemed legendary or mythical.

The sun hung far away as it cast the colors of the sunset onto the city as the light seemed to be frozen.

“This is a dream shared by all of us…” Cattleya continued sitting there, hugging her legs as she said as though she was in a reverie.

Chapter 649 - Black Cloister

◆

A dream shared by everyone? Klein repeated Cattleya’s words inwardly as he slowly realized the situation he was in.

Nighttime in these dangerous waters would connect the dreams of all living creatures!

And any creature that didn’t sleep would lack the necessary protection, as their Soul Bodies weren’t in the dream. As such, they would suffer an unknown attack.

As for why such an attack would lead to one’s disappearance and not instant death, Klein, who hadn’t actually experienced it, had no grounds for speculation.

As his thoughts raced, Klein retracted his gaze from Cattleya’s body, recasting them onto the magnificent city on the opposite cliff. He thought out of curiosity.

If this world can really be formed from the connection of dreams from all the local creatures, who could’ve imagined such an unimaginable city?

He observed for a few seconds before asking, “What is its name?”

What’s the name of this city that can only exist in myths and legends?

Cattleya stared ahead in a daze as she spoke as though she was in a reverie, “No idea… There will be a chance of seeing it every time we enter the dream, but it’s impossible to approach.

“She said that it resembles the Great Twilight Hall in Feysac.

“She likely has her own guesses, but she has never told me.”

She? That Queen Mystic? The Great Twilight Hall is where the Church of the God of Combat’s papal chair is… Klein surveyed the area and deliberated before saying, “I plan to look around.”

He believed that the Future wouldn’t leave these waters anytime soon. He would definitely encounter more nights and enter this dream world several times. Therefore, to defend against any accidents and to obtain intel, it was necessary for him to explore the area.

And the exploration no doubt needed a partner.

Cattleya remained sitting there, hugging her knees. Her tone remained ethereal as she said, “Not interested.”

…This isn’t what a mature pirate admiral should say. You could’ve been more euphemistic. Ma’am Hermit, you resemble a young petulant lady… Klein was taken aback as he suspected if he had misheard. This was in conflict with the Admiral of Stars he had in his mind.

Thinking of how Gehrman Sparrow also had his side of not being afraid of dirt and hardship, he came to a realization. He quickly made a guess.

Cattleya isn’t completely awake in the dream. She is able to know that she’s in a dream, but she’s unable to effectively control it!

That is to say that she would unknowingly depict the feelings buried deep in her heart and reveal some of her personality which she usually suppresses.

It’s no wonder she said that she was never able to approach that miraculous city. It’s because she never had the intention of exploring it herself… Klein thought for a moment and deliberately probed, “We might be able to discover something over there.”

"Not going," Cattleya didn't hesitate to reply, but she never shook her head. "I'll be here waiting! Waiting!"

She really is in a semi-unconscious state… Klein made the judgment based on her reaction and tone.

He didn't waste any more time and turned to leap off the boulder.

Pa!

Klein's feet stepped on the ground as he subconsciously looked back.

Cattleya remained sitting there hugging her knees. There wasn't anyone around, and the congealed sunset from the city opposite her shone over, producing a long shadow for her, blending with one of the shadows produced by withered trees.

A gentle mountain breeze blew as the black figure gently shook. Cattleya didn't move as she stubbornly waited on the spot.

At such times, there's a need for a Psychiatrist to interpret the dream's emotions. This has nothing to do with the revelations obtained from divination… Klein curled his lips and surveyed his surroundings to seek a direction in which to explore.

He discovered that regardless of the direction he took, he would end up at the black buildings formed from the cloisters. There was a towering wall that isolated it from the cliff. No matter how the exploration was made, one had to pass by the cloister unless once jumped down the cliff.

Since there was no other choice, Klein went directly to the pitch-black door of the cloister.

The door was nearly ten meters tall, and it didn't look like it was prepared for human use. Klein sized it up for a few seconds, took a deep breath, and extended his hands to push at the ends of the door.

A creaking sound followed. The door's weight far exceeded Klein's imagination. His muscles bulged as his face flushed red. Yet, he was only able to move the door by a tiny bit without being able to push it open.

Thankfully, it's only a dream. As long as there's reason to believe, I can raise my strength without truly activating Creeping Hunger… Klein exhaled and made his left glove be tainted with a paleness.

In the midst of dark green sparkles, he obtained the strength of a Zombie. His arm turned thicker as his legs swelled.

Screech!

A deep grinding sound boomed as the door slowly opened to reveal its interior.

The two dark spires and the black buildings were connected by covered bridges as they surrounded a vast grayish-rock square.

There were plenty of holes in the square. Embedded in them were huge arrows. There were flaming stacks in various spots as if they had previously encountered an attack.

Klein passed through the cave's entrance and entered the square. Unsurprisingly, he saw Frank Lee, Nina, Ottolov, and company there.

This is their dream? It doesn't seem so… Or should it be said that everyone's dream is limited to themselves? They will then be randomly placed somewhere in this world? Klein guessed without confidence.

Frank Lee was the closest to him. He was holding a shovel and digging at some rubble. Beside him were the white bread, toast, and roasted fish which had previously fallen to the floor.

He plans on using them as fertilizer? He's planting things even in his dreams… Klein went over and casually asked, "What are you doing?"

Frank didn't stop, but he revealed a smile.

"I'm cultivating some little things. They need to sleep in the soil for some time before they can grow big and proliferate."

"What's their use?" Klein asked, both worried and curious.

Frank beamed and said, "They're a crossbreed of fungus. It can make bulls produce milk. This way, we can obtain more milk, allowing more people to drink good milk."

Spare those bulls… Klein's face twitched as he asked, "Will it succeed?"

"There's no problems with the effects, but I'm very worried that they can't reproduce," Frank said with a frown.

May Death forever favor them… Klein prayed as he walked pass Frank Lee and headed for the black building's entrance across the square.

Along the way, he passed by Nina and Navigator Ottolov, who were drinking beside a collapsed pillar.

"Have you ever thought of leaving the pirate crew after you're older to find a man to marry and settle down? I don't think anyone wishes to drift out at sea their entire lives." Ottolov took off his pointed bonnet and revealed his slightly hoary hair.

His eyes and tone informed Klein that in between the lines, he meant: if you wish so, why not consider me?

Mr. Navigator, you are old enough to be Nina's father. You need to consider your health… Passing by, Klein couldn't help but lampoon when he heard the conversation.

Nina gulped a mouthful of beer and looked in a particular direction.

"No, that's not the life I wish to lead.

"Before joining you, I once attempted to settle down in the east coast of Feysac and not be a pirate again, but I was unable to bear with the boredom. I have to lug wood and move things every day, and I can only stay at home at night. I'm not allowed to go to the bar or go out hunting in the wilderness. Such a life seems constant and unchanging! Furthermore, I suffered all kinds of criticism, tolerating those irritating people. I have to worry about the cops even if I wished to beat them up!

"It's still better on the ship. Although it's boring most of the time, we can often go to different places and encounter different matters. Heh heh. Even the most boring times can wreck those fellows, training them into passable pirates. I can also tell them that the one who performs the best every month can spend the night in my room. Then, I'll watch them excitedly enjoy the torment. Of course, spending the night and having sex are different. It depends on my mood."

A true female pirate… Everyone wishes for something different… Klein neutrally gave a comment and didn't believe that there was anything wrong with Nina's ideas.

I won't disagree with her choice, but if she often kills, engages in arson, and plunders, I don't mind using her head to exchange for a bounty the next time we meet… Klein retracted his gaze and arrived at the suspected entrance of the black buildings and spires.

Subconsciously, he turned his head and realized that the shadows in the corner seemed normal, but there was something different about it.

Bloodless Heath Doyle? He hides in the shadows even in a dream? According to my limited knowledge of psychology, this is a result of greatly lacking a sense of security… Klein pushed another door which was similarly almost ten meters tall.

Amidst the grinding sounds, his gaze suddenly froze.

Behind the door was a vast hall which had two rows of stone pillars supporting it.

The hall was abnormally dark without any candlelight. As the main door opened, the light from outside shone in, lighting up the interior to make it clear.

Klein saw that there were murals of various colors, with gold being the main color of choice on the dome. They were connected to one another without any gaps. It gave him a magnificent and sacred feeling.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

A figure had its back facing Klein, using the axe in its hand to chop at a long and huge tree; its motives were unknown.

The figure was dressed in a white shirt and a black vest. It didn't look like any of the pirates on the ship.

There's someone else in these waters? Or could it be the mysterious pair of eyes that had been observing the deck and me? Klein's heart sank as he slowed down. He warily approached and came to the figure's side where he discerned the figure.

It was a man who looked young. He had blond short hair that was split seventy-thirty. His emerald-green eyes looked focused and serious.

"What are you doing? What is this place?" Klein carefully asked.

He intuitively believed that the person wasn't the owner of the mysterious eyes.

The young man raised his hand to touch his earlobes without turning his head.

"Why are you asking these questions? My ship has sunk, and I'm busy making a canoe for myself. I don't have time to speak to you."

"…"

Klein thought before asking, "Who are you?"

"Who am I? I'm the unlucky Anderson. Ever since I saw that mural, I've been plagued with bad luck." The young man pointed in a direction.

Tracing his finger, Klein saw a mural.

The mural depicted a sea of fire that split in the middle to produce a path.

On the path, there was a long line of people. The members either held their heads low with pious devotion or prostrated to the ground. Their destination was in the depths of the sea.

Their leader was a lanky man with long silver hair. His facial features were mild and his eyes were tightly closed. On his back were layered wings.

This… Klein's pupils constricted suddenly.

He recognized the leader on the mural!

It was the Angel of Fate which Little Sun had once depicted!

It was the Tail Devourer, Ouroboros!

Chapter 650 - The Unlucky Anderson

◆

After recognizing the leader on the mural, Klein subconsciously suspected that it was something from his dream.

However, he quickly rejected the idea. This was because the unlucky Anderson wasn’t someone he knew. He was also not someone that had left an impression on him. There was a low chance of him being the extension of his own dream.

And Anderson had clearly said that he became unlucky after seeing the mural. It was strongly tied to the mural, so it could only be the case that the mural was part of Anderson’s dream!

As he focused and looked carefully, Klein quickly realized that the mural was somewhat different from the mural that Little Sun saw in the True Creator’s abandoned temple.

The background here was a sea burning with golden flames, while the previous one was that of a desolate plain.

The destination here was the depths of the sea, while the previous one was had a destination of a distant mountain. On the mountaintop was a huge cross and figure hanging upside down.

The bottom of the Angel of Fate Ouroboros’s feet was black slush with heads pointing down and fishes stuck inside. Previously, it was a meandering river.

It’s a different mural, but more of a memory from different stages of the same pilgrimage… Klein nodded with a guess.

A similar scene surfaced in his mind.

A very long time ago, in a particular period of the Fourth Epoch, Ouroboros led a devout group of pilgrims or the remnant believers of the True Creator. With many powerful enemies in pursuit, they rode a boat through this sea.

Due to certain reasons, “He” abandoned the boat. With the help of the True Creator or “His” own powers, he parted the sea and led the devotees through it and into the Forsaken Land of God, leaving behind the kindling for organizations such as the Rose Redemption and Aurora Order.

In the Forsaken Land of God, they tore through desolate plains, and on the pilgrimage, they built temples along the way. And one of them was discovered by Little Sun and company.

With how Will Auceptin was forced to restart a cycle and be reborn as a baby, the Tail Devourer is likely still alive… Does this mean that “He” eventually arrived at the destination with the pilgrims—the holy residence of the True Creator? Does this mean that the holy residence of the True Creator is somewhere in the Forsaken Land of God? With this in mind, Klein suddenly felt a baffling sense of wistfulness.

If my theory is correct, then that means that no matter how the City of Silver tries to save itself, or how they continue passing the flame, once the True Creator completely awakens or is restored to his original state, they would unavoidably head towards destruction!

When you are very close to the divine kingdom or holy residence of an evil god, your survival has nothing to do with your struggles!

This is like the bubbles produced when sea waves surged to the shore. Once the waves recede, they would vanish.

Human civilization and ethnic groups are just that weak under the gaze of an evil god.

No, I can’t be that pessimistic. I was only making a guess. Perhaps the one that forced Will Auceptin to reincarnate isn’t Ouroboros. Perhaps the True Creator wouldn’t recover or awaken that easily. “He” might be sealed by the seven deities…

Therefore, the City of Silver still has a chance. A path between the Forsaken Land of God and the external world needs to be forged before the evil god escapes from his shackles, allowing them to be moved out! This is probably why the chief of the City of Silver released Elder Shepherd. They need to use all the power they can get… Klein forcibly retracted his thoughts.

He suddenly felt somewhat worried, afraid that his arrival was enough for him to be stuck in an endless cycle of fate created by the Tail Devourer.

At this point, he instinctively wished to take four steps counter-clockwise and go above the gray fog. He wanted to forcibly search for memories that he might have lost, but ultimately, he resisted those actions and prepared to observe first.

From his interpretation of the symbols, there were no repeating rivers. There was only a black slush with fish embedded inside. It didn’t mean the existence of a circle of fate, only the lingering of bad luck!

This was identical to what Anderson said!

As a King of Angels, Ouroboros definitely has more than a cycle of fate. Different temples have different murals, and them using different powers is completely logical… Besides, this is a dream!

Besides, even if I didn’t do anything and really am stuck in a repeated cycle, making me repeatedly converse with the Admiral of Stars, to the point of making my observations, the problem will be resolved once Monday comes. The Tarot Club will definitely not be held. Miss Justice and the others will definitely feel puzzled as they make a prayer, and I'll use it to regain my memories… Klein instantly felt confident as the chaos and tension in his heart was buried instead of disappearing.

He looked up ahead and discovered that the hall went further in. There was no end to it, and there was light shining inside. However, it was restricted to the entrance. The other areas were dark and only became darker the deeper it was. All that could be seen were the wooden doors on both sides; their destinations were unknown.

Upon seeing this dark and creepy scene, Klein's desire to continue exploring was minimized.

To encounter a mural left behind by a King of Angels here, who knows what will happen if I delve deeper or enter some room…

The fear of the unknown was an extremely ancient feeling. A premonition of danger with unknown origins had brought about a strong terror towards the unknown. Klein observed himself for a few seconds before he stopped proceeding forward.

He turned towards Anderson, who was chopping the gigantic tree.

"Why are you here?"

Anderson looked up and scoffed.

"I'm a treasure hunter.

"So tell me, why would I be here?"

Treasure hunter… Klein casually asked, "There's treasure here?"

Anderson continued busying himself with the creation of the so-called canoe. His voice suddenly turned deep.

"There are treasures everywhere in these waters.

"As long as you obtain it successfully and leave alive."

That's true… But the problem is that it's very dangerous if one isn't a demigod, but it's even more dangerous for a demigod to be here… Klein looked into the hall's depths and asked, "Do you know where this place is?"

Anderson traced his gaze and said, "I don't know.

"At least a third of my companions formed a team and headed in to explore. But they never returned."

"Are you referring to the real world or the dream world?" Klein asked with a clear line of thought.

Bang!

After the axe landed, Anderson laughed.

"Of course it's in the real world.

"The ones that proceeded to explore the dream are the other third of my companions. They similarly didn't return."

"…"

Klein inhaled as he thought.

"Where are their bodies in the real world?"

"They have mutated into monsters. They killed off quite a number of my companions." Anderson raised his axe and cleaved down.

Clang!

Amidst a crisp sound, his axe broke into two. As the crack was towards the back, the fragment immediately shot at him.

Anderson's right chest and abdomen immediately bled like a spewing fountain.

He held his left hand to his wound and looked up at Klein. Smiling bitterly, he said, “I told you I was plagued with bad luck ever since I saw that mural.

“Thankfully, this isn’t considered too unlucky. At the very least, they didn’t destroy my ordinarily handsome face.”

…Are such descriptive terms supposed to be used that way? Klein looked at Anderson quickly pull out the fragments from his body as he handled the wound and consumed some medicine. He discovered that Anderson was unfazed, and the skill involved in his actions meant that he had already gotten accustomed to it.

Klein had a single hand in his pocket as he played with the coins in it. After some deliberation, he asked, “When your companions began the exploration, were you part of the group that stayed behind to study the mural?”

Anderson was taken aback as he inserted his medicine bag into his belt and wiped his mouth.

“No.

“I was part of the group that did the exploration…”

As he spoke, he grinned and revealed a genial smile.

This… Klein’s pupils constricted as he bent his back slightly and raised his left palm.

At this moment, blinding sunlight illuminated everything in a dazzling white. Then, it dimmed and vanished.

Klein naturally opened his eyes and discovered that the outside had been restored to the midday state.

He took out the pocket watch in his inner pocket and opened it.

Only half an hour passed. This night is rather short…

That unlucky Anderson looked very normal, but who knew that he was that terrifying!

Rolling to his feet, Klein suddenly recalled something. Snake of Fate Will Auceptin had yet to "reply" to him!

As everyone's dream had been pulled into the world without the connection of the spirit world, "He" was unable to locate me? Or did "He" sense Ouroboros's aura and didn't dare come close? Or could there be something problematic with these waters to begin with? As his thoughts whirled, Klein decided to verify it.

As for how it could be verified, the method was simple. He could sleep again while it was still "noon."

However, he wasn't in a rush to do so. This was because he wasn't sure if there were any taboos about sleeping in the day.

Wearing his cap, Klein came outside the captain's cabin and knocked on the door.

After three knocks, he retracted his hand and patiently waited.

Before long, Cattleya opened the door.

She no longer looked as lost as she was in the dream. She had worn her heavy glasses once again.

"Is sleeping in the day alright?" Klein asked directly.

Cattleya nodded.

"Yes."

After answering, she hesitated and asked, "It seems you were very proactive in that dream?"

Realizing how much danger lurked in these waters, and thinking about how he would be forced to show some of his abilities, Klein decided to proactively lay the foundations of his future explanations.

He looked at Cattleya and smiled politely.

“Yes.

“This is a gift bestowed upon me by my Lord.”

My Lord… Under Cattleya’s thick glasses, her eyes clearly shimmered.

In a rare instance, she frowned slightly and eased them without asking any more questions.

Klein thought for a moment, then he added, “Be careful of Heath Doyle.”

Cattleya clearly understood what he meant and directly answered, “Don’t worry. He has a Sealed Artifact which has a negative effect of him only being able to hear voices from nearby.”

That’s a smart use of a negative effect… Klein didn’t drone on as he took off his hat and bowed before returning to his room.

He lay down once again and used Cogitation to fall asleep.

In the dream world, he woke up and saw the familiar pitch-black plains and black steeple.

Phew, it’s still possible to connect… Klein heaved a sigh of relief and traveled into the steeple. In the usual place, he saw the scattered tarot cards and the new words.

“There’s plenty of dangers there, the most dangerous being the dream that happens when night falls.

“It isn’t about the disappearances if you do not sleep, but there’s one thing to remember.

“Do not explore that dream!

“Absolutely do not explore that dream!

“Since there’s not enough space, I won’t explain why. Alright, it’s just a joke. The reason is that the area contains some of the dreams left behind by a deity.”

Chapter 651 - Meeting Again

◆

Upon seeing Will Auceptin’s warning, Klein’s first found himself blessed with good luck.

Thankfully I didn’t court death and continue the exploration… He didn’t hesitate to heave a sigh of relief.

Although he had seen the mural related to Ouroboros, as well as the terrifying monster, Anderson, who mutated for some unknown reason, he didn’t actually physically get himself into a dangerous situation.

I wonder if I’ll randomly appear in a region in the next dream, or will it continue from before… If it’s the latter, the best choice of action is to not disturb Anderson so as to avoid agitating him. I’ll just walk the same way back and leave that black cloister… Klein retracted his gaze and continued reading.

“Apart from the dream, the other things aren’t that troublesome. As long as you don’t attempt to approach those ruins, directly look at the thing that flies in the sky at ‘midday,’ or challenge the storms that give ample warning, then it wouldn’t be a problem if you follow the safe sea routes that have been verified by others.

“As for mermaids, just keep cruising forward and you’ll ultimately encounter them. This is because, at their levels, they will only live in relatively safer areas, and there aren’t many such areas.

“Finally, I hope everything goes smoothly.

“Sincerely, your friend who might be often in deep sleep due to reaching a critical stage in his maturing development,

Will Auceptin”

The final sentence was long and somewhat awkward-sounding, but Klein instantly understood what the Snake of Fate meant: Before I’m born, don’t disturb me unless it’s something extremely important and critical!

I’ll try my best… Klein replied inwardly without any assurance.

If he successfully advanced, then it might not take long before he had to seek Will Auceptin’s help in finding the Sequence 4 potion formula for the Seer pathway.

Being more confident with finding mermaids, Klein immediately left the dream, wore his hat, and headed for the pirates’ dining hall.

Due to the dream’s disturbance, most of the food had turned cold, but the pirates still had a great time eating. After all, no one died.

Since no one died during this mystical encounter, they naturally felt great that they had something to brag about.

“Do you want a cup of milk?” Frank Lee held a plate and sat opposite Klein, asking warmly.

Recalling the conversation in the dream, Klein firmly shook his head with a deadpan expression.

Inwardly, he was very worried that the milk on the ship were all Frank’s experimental products.

Frank didn’t mind as he gulped a mouthful of milk.

“I remember telling you about those little things in the dream?”

“Yes.” Klein cut through a Dragon-Bone Fish that was cooked in sauce, and he stuffed it into his mouth.

This kind of fish was well known for having few bones. Most of the time, it only had one main bone. In Backlund, due to its various species, they were considered a mid- to high-end delicacy, but east of the Oravi Island, in the periphery of the safe sea routes, they could often be caught.

Frank chuckled.

"My description back then was a little inaccurate. Their true purpose was to successfully produce milk even when they aren't in a state capable of lactation, regardless of whether they are male or female. As long as they consume it, they will produce milk and return to normal once they aren't fed. This way, the milk cows don't have to suffer any torture. This way, it becomes fairer for men and women to bring up their children. It will be beneficial for women to head out for work…"

Wait, why are you telling me this… Klein nearly failed to maintain his persona as Gehrman Sparrow.

At that instant, he felt that the nickname of crazy shouldn't be Gehrman Sparrow's but Frank Lee's.

He's actually someone who supports equality between men and women. However, his means are a little terrifying… That's right. The Church of Earth Mother is like the Church of the Goddess. They believe that women should have the same standing in society as men. However, they place more emphasis on reproduction, treating it as the holiest matter…

Among the seven Churches, the Church of Storms and the Church of the God of Combat are most biased towards men. The Church of the Sun is next. As for the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, they are different from the other Churches. They discriminate based on intelligence. The Church of Steam is neutral and has even worked with the Church of the Goddess to encourage women to head out for work due to the need for more labor in the development of industry… Klein instantly had the differences between the seven Churches flash past his mind.

He looked up and glanced at Frank Lee as though what he had just said was something trivial.

This made Frank rather happy as he couldn't help but drink a few more mouthfuls of milk.

After the pirates finished their lunch in batches, Cattleya pushed open the windows to the captain's cabin once again. Using magic, she amplified her voice.

"There's an island 1.5 nautical miles ahead of us. We will dock there and wait for the storm to pass.

"In these waters, every time there's a switch from noon to nighttime, there's a possibility of a terrifying storm occurring. I cannot confirm when it will happen, but I believe it's safer for us to wait for it to pass before we continue our voyage."

She went into the details a lot more than in the past, as it wasn't a sudden occurrence, and there was plenty of time.

One of the things people at sea feared the most was a storm; therefore, no one objected to it. They went according to Cattleya's instructions. Under Navigator Ottolov's and Boatswain Nina's guidance, they nervously prepared to dock.

And this made Klein confirm one of the matters that Will Auceptin had mentioned.

Do not challenge any signs of a storm!

Before long, an island covered with gigantic trees appeared ahead of the Future.

The more than hundred-meter-long sailboat adjusted its course and docked against the wind.

More than half an hour passed as the sky suddenly dimmed. Lead-colored clouds surfaced one after another.

They overlapped with one another as though they enveloped all the surrounding waters.

Amidst a loud boom and blinding flashes of lightning, a hurricane from afar swept over.

It was connected to the clouds at the top and to the sea at the bottom. It was more exaggerated than any legendary giant. It was like a gigantic coiling serpent in a bid to destroy the world.

The terrifying hurricane brought with it waves that towered like mountains. Lightning that branched out like trees and didn't stop because of the incoming storm. It constantly struck the surface of the sea, splitting into tiny electric bolts that spread outwards.

As the rain pattered down on the Future's deck, it made the pirates who had entered the cabin or gotten shelter feel like the apocalypse had arrived.

Such a storm didn't last too long. The sea calmed down after about fifteen minutes, and the hurricane dissipated. The midday sunlight reigned in the sky once again.

"You can head onto the island for a while, but don't wander inside. You have to be within the range of the cannons." Cattleya gave the pirates a brief chance of reprieve.

Klein kept in mind Will Auceptin's warnings and had no desire to explore the island. After leaving the Future, he only walked about on the shore, taking in the feeling of having his feet on solid ground.

Beach, sunlight, trees… It feels like a vacation… Klein thought in amusement when he suddenly noticed a rapidly moving black dot through the corner of his eye.

It was rushing over from the boundary of a cliff!

The black dot increased in size to reveal a human figure!

Not far away, Cattleya, who was on the sand, also noticed the abnormality. She half-turned around and took off the heavy glasses on her nose bridge.

The figure with emerald-colored eyes approached. He was wearing a white shirt, a black vest, and trousers. He was of medium build with his blond hair split seventy-thirty.

Anderson!

The unlucky Anderson!

Klein instantly recognized him.

The person was none other than the terrifying Anderson in the dream world!

It was the Anderson who said that his companions never returned after they proceeded to explore the hall but had claimed to be a member of the exploration team!

At that moment, Anderson raised his right hand.

Without any hesitation, as Gehrman Sparrow, Klein took out a charm and chanted a single word in ancient Hermes.

“Storm!”

The charm made of tin immediately turned sharp, resembling a thin blade.

With the infusion of spirituality, the wind in midair reverberated.

With a deadpan expression, Klein threw out the charm in his hand at Anderson.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

Azure sharp blades shot at their target like a lined up firing squad.

Anderson was raising his right hand high with a smile and was about to say something when he heard a deep and mysterious incantation and the scalp-numbing sound of the wind.

His gaze froze as he threw himself to the side and somersaulted multiple times in a pathetic manner as if the area before him was scorching metal.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

The wind blades struck the beach, slicing clear slits into the sand, but they were just short of hitting their target.

“Stop! Stop!” As Anderson nimbly somersaulted to dodge, he shouted, “I come in peace! I mean no harm!”

“Anderson Hood…” Admiral of Stars suddenly said a name as she raised her hand to stop Gehrman Sparrow who had taken out a charm.

She knows Anderson? Klein didn’t rashly chant the charm’s incantation as he said in a deep voice, “He has already mutated.

“I saw him in the dream.”

He wasn’t surprised at meeting the unlucky Anderson. This was because the pirates were all in the same area during the dream. They were all very close to one another, which also meant that Anderson, who wasn’t too far away, was also very close to the Future.

“No! Not at all!” Anderson stood up, at a loss on whether to laugh or cry. He raised his hands like he was surrendering. “I recognize you. You asked me many questions. Back then, I wanted to pull a prank on you.

Really, it was just a joke to enliven the mood. Don’t you think that having the mood suddenly change into one of horror is an exhilarating experience? Of course, I’m referring to the target and not myself.

“If I had participated in the exploration, how could I still be alive?”

That is what I’m worried about… Klein didn’t believe his explanation.

Anderson shrugged and said, “I was preparing to explain that the moment I said that. I was planning on telling you that I was joking and had planned to seek your help. I hope that you could take me away, but at that moment, the dream ended… Dammit, I was really too unlucky!”

It does comply with the traits of being unlucky… Klein silently muttered.

He planned on flipping a coin right there and then to test him with divination when he suddenly heard Admiral of Stars Cattleya say, “Listen to what he has to say.

“He’s very famous in the Fog Sea. He has the nickname ‘Strongest Hunter.’”

Chapter 652 - Mermaid Clues

◆

Strongest Hunter… Klein was shocked by this nickname. After carefully recalling, he realized that the man didn’t have a bounty on his head.

That meant that Anderson Hood’s description of himself in the dream world was real and reliable. He was more of a treasure hunter!

Unfortunately, Gehrman Sparrow hasn’t killed any pirate admirals, otherwise, I would be the strongest hunter… Klein didn’t let down his guard as he coldly looked at the man.

As long as Anderson Hood showed any signs of abnormality, he would immediately throw the charm in his hand. After all, the activation incantation was all the same. At his Sequence, he could do it simultaneously while injecting his spirituality.

Upon hearing the Admiral of Stars’s introduction, Anderson seriously shook his head.

“No, I’m not the strongest hunter.”

Oh, he’s still rather humble… Klein sighed inwardly.

Anderson chuckled and added, “Admiral of Stars, if you really insist, then it’s best if you add the condition: below that of a demigod.

“Yes, the strongest hunter below that of a demigod.”

…I take back what I just said… The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched indiscernibly.

Seeing no response from the Admiral of Stars, Anderson naturally lowered his arms.

“These waters are very dangerous, but it contains many treasures. In this regard, I believe the two of you are very aware.

“In the past, many adventurers, or more precisely, treasure hunters, have entered these waters to seek our fortuitous encounters, but most of them didn’t leave these waters alive. Heh heh, I’m talking about most, so there are always some lucky ones who can obtain items and ingredients while successfully leaving.

“The treasure-hunting team I was in was organized by two treasure hunters who are experienced in this area. They claimed to be very aware of which ruins are not to be explored in the first half of the safe route and which ruins could be attempted. They also claimed to know which methods should be used to hunt various kinds of monsters, as well as what methods should be used to avoid evil creatures who have lost control.

“I’ve always been curious about these waters and was successfully convinced by them and joined the expedition.”

“And then?” Cattleya looked at the figure opposite her with her black eyes that had a purple hue.

Anderson sighed and said, “It was very smooth in the beginning, as smooth as it can be. We avoided danger and obtained many of the relics left behind by former explorers, and we also hunted some monsters and obtained several ingredients.

“Everything changed when we discovered a strange temple on a submerged island. There were many murals which remained intact. This gentleman has also seen it in the dream world.”

He used his chin to gesture at Klein.

“That’s not important,” Klein replied calmly.

Anderson shook his head and smiled bitterly.

“One of the murals was very sinister. It described a pilgrimage proceeding forward amidst a parted sea.

“The leader of the pilgrimage is depicted as an angel, having long silver hair that reached his back. He had very mild facial features.

“I was the first to arrive in front of that mural. I reached out my right hand and habitually outlined the various lines in midair. It’s true, I… really didn’t touch it. I was at least five centimeters away, but to my surprise, the angel in the mural suddenly opened his eyes.”

…Your nickname as the Strongest Hunter must’ve been forced as a result of you attracting too many problems… Klein scoffed silently without any sense of pity.

“Silver-haired angel?” Cattleya asked in return.

“Yes, but I’m not sure which angel it is. At the very least, he hasn’t appeared in any of the portraits of the seven Churches. Of course, the mural artist might’ve casually added it, and it might not be real.” Anderson was just about to raise his hand to comb his hair when he discovered that the man wearing a round neck shirt, a brown jacket, pantaloons with a dark-colored cap was coldly staring at him. It appeared as though any abnormal action would result in the man attacking without hesitation.

But at that moment, Klein was thinking about something else.

This fellow is very professional when it comes to art. At the very least, the typical person wouldn’t be able to know of so many religious portraits.

Cattleya, who didn’t receive an adequate answer, immediately turned her head towards Klein, her gaze filled with an inquisitive look.

She had just heard from Anderson Hood that Gehrman Sparrow had seen the mural.

Perhaps, this member of the organization that has been gifted by the "Lord" can recognize the angel… Cattleya had an inexplicable feeling that Gehrman Sparrow might really know the answer.

Considering how Ma'am Hermit would be able to obtain the answer at the next Tarot Club from a casual question, Klein didn't hesitate to simply say, "Tail Devourer Ouroboros."

Tail Devourer Ouroboros? That Angel of Fate? That King of Angels? Cattleya unknowingly pursed her lips as the purple hue in her eyes turned slightly more obvious.

The last time she had heard this name was from the Tarot Club, thanks to Miss Justice.

And that was her first time learning of the existence of the Kings of Angels. She never expected to obtain clues of them in the real world in just a few months!

"Tail Devourer Ouroboros?" Anderson ruminated over the name in a daze.

Klein didn't speak further, showing his disinterest in explaining.

Seeing how the Admiral of Stars wasn't speaking a word, Anderson could only laugh and continue, "I thought I was hallucinating back then because the mural didn't show any abnormality after that.

"Following that, our team fractured into two. Most of them were frightened by my account and believed that they shouldn't continue exploring the temple. The remaining third desired to obtain more treasure and began setting off deeper into the temple. We waited an entire day—noon switched night a total of three times—but we didn't manage to see them return.

"We were all outstanding treasure hunters, so we knew that something must've gone wrong. After making some confirmations, we didn't dare stay any longer or wait. We immediately left the temple and got onto the ship to return the way we came. We had already received plenty, and we didn't wish to take any more risks."

Wait, none of you had the intention to save your companions? Yes, a treasure-hunting team that is temporarily put together will only bother with themselves and the few friends they are familiar with when they encounter danger… According to my experience, those companions of yours that vanished might be eating the fingers of corpses… Klein lampooned and didn't reprimand Anderson.

Anderson sighed again and said, "After leaving that temple, I discovered that there was something abnormal about myself. On the one hand, I became very unlucky, with everything I do failing. Even when drinking light beer in silence, I'll realize that someone had used a beer barrel as a toilet and pissed in it. Well, that's not what I encountered. It was my companion.

"On the other hand, we obtained control of ourselves in our dreams. We were no longer in a reverie and knew something, but we had no means to take action. Therefore, a number of my companions, a third of the original number of people, ventured deep into the dream world. Heh heh, they never returned."

Cattleya, who had been listening in silence, asked, "What about their bodies in the real world?"

"They mutated into monsters, killing quite a number of my remaining companions and sailors." Anderson took an obvious deep breath. "We might've successfully killed those monsters, but due to the lack of sailors, as well as encountering a streak of bad luck, we failed to reach this island in time before the storm arrived. Therefore, our ship sank. Likewise for our loot. The rest of my companions either drowned, got struck by lightning, or got eaten by the underwater monsters. I didn't see all of it myself.

"As for me, I was relatively stronger and luckier than them. I was sent flying by the waves and successfully swam to the shore of this island and began attempting to create a canoe to leave this area. Heh, as you can see, even my final axe has shattered. It was also reflected in the dream."

Anderson's final sentences were directed at Klein.

They really are a treasure-hunting group plagued with bad luck… Klein inwardly drew the crimson moon for him.

He believed that Anderson's description was likely real. His experienced didn't seem to be fabricated out of thin air. However, it was unknown if he was hiding something.

Perhaps, Anderson had really gone deep into the temple and eaten the fingers of the corpses before coming out, believing that he was fine. Perhaps, he had already explored numerous places in the dream world and had been corrupted by some unknown creature in an inconspicuous manner.

After Anderson Hood finished recounting his experience, he smiled at Cattleya and the man who he didn't know the name of.

"Do I have the honor of being a passenger on your Future?

"I will pay for the fare."

He looked as if payment wasn't a problem at all.

Cattleya once again turned her head to the side towards Klein, as though asking if he would accept.

This is to say that you are leaning towards accepting his request? Aren't you going to do any tests? I have to go above the gray fog to divine before I can provide a clear answer. What gives you the confidence? A Beyonder power obtained once a Mystery Pryer reaches Sequence 5? Klein figured out a lot of information from Cattleya's gaze.

Just as he was hesitating, Anderson hurriedly said, “I’m very familiar with the route ahead!

“I can help you avoid the latent dangers on the safe sea route, and I can tell you which ruins aren’t to be explored. I can also give you early notice to avoid the singing voices of the mermaids in time!”

“Singing voices of mermaids?” Klein’s eyes nearly lit up as it took him a great deal of effort to maintain Gehrman Sparrow’s image.

“Yes, a day’s voyage from here, and I mean a day in terms of the world outside, we will circle around a ruin and turn…” Upon saying that, Anderson suddenly realized something as he shut his mouth with a smile without saying anything more.

Klein thought for a moment and took out a gold coin in front of Anderson as he silently chanted.

“Anderson Hood is problematic.”

†

He repeated seven times and went through the standard process of divination, but he didn’t hold any hopes for an answer.

It was a test on Anderson.

If Anderson really was problematic, he would definitely show signs of guilt. After all, he couldn’t be certain of Gehrman Sparrow’s divination standard and was unable to determine if he could disrupt it successfully.

Ding!

The gold coin was flung into the air before landing. Klein glanced at it before putting it into his pocket.

“No problem.”

I'll later make a confirmation by going above the gray fog… Klein added inwardly.

Cattleya looked at Anderson and nodded.

"I agree to your request.

"However, after we leave these waters, you need to hand over half of what you have. If there's nothing, I'll not take anything either."

Anderson fell silent for a few seconds before smiling again.

"Deal!

Having found a way out, he clearly relaxed as he smiled.

"Also, I have to warn you that although my bad luck is limited to me alone, you should be careful because I might attract monsters. Of course, I believe that with you, this gentleman, and myself, we should be able to guarantee our safety."

Just as he said that, the entire island quaked. A smoky plume emanated out of the primitive forest.

"Don't tell me a monster is really coming…" Anderson subconsciously turned agape.

Chapter 653 - Black-faced, Black-handed

◆

The ground trembled slightly as a figure that was nearly three meters tall appeared at the boundary of the island’s primitive forest.

Its body was grayish-white in color, seemingly formed from boulders. Its face was potholed without any obvious eyes, nose, mouth, or ears.

“Stone giant…” Cattleya muttered the monster’s type.

Be it Klein or Anderson, both of them knew nothing about such monsters.

However, they didn’t cast an inquisitive look at Cattleya. They focused on the monster, looking highly professional.

Cattleya turned her body to face the docked Future. She raised her right hand halfway and amplified her voice.

“Aim!”

The pirates on duty immediately adjusted dozens of cannons on the port of the ship, aiming them right at the Stone Giant which was lumbering over.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Cannonballs flew out and landed around the Stone Giant, sending dust flying as the bombardment covered a huge area.

The ground clearly quaked as flames surged. Splinters spewed everywhere as though everything could be destroyed.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The tall grayish-white figure tore out of the dust, having not suffered any serious damage. All it had were a few cracks on its surface.

Cattleya said without a perturbed expression, “This isn’t a kind of giant, but a kind of stone golem.

“Its core is the main ingredient of Sequence 5 Guardian from the Guardian Sequence pathway. Therefore, its defenses are extremely high.”

Amidst the reverberating cannon bombardment, Klein nearly suspected if there was a problem with his auditory senses.

Since you know that the stone giant has high defense, why did you use a cannon bombardment? Isn’t that a waste of cannonballs? he thought in puzzlement as he lampooned.

Perhaps hearing his inner thoughts, Cattleya said as she watched the stone giant approach, “I’ve never encountered such a Beyonder creature before, so I wished to do some tests.”

I have nothing to say against such a reason… Klein was rendered speechless.

At this moment, Anderson Hood, who had been observing the stone giant the entire time, raised his hand and said, “Do you have anyone who has Beyonder powers in the ice and frost domain?”

“Me,” Cattleya coldly answered.

Seeing how Ma’am Hermit had the means, Klein swallowed back the words he nearly said out loud.

He really didn’t wish to activate Creeping Hunger unless necessary, despite Zombie possessing the powers of ice and frost.

He believed that he couldn't find any suitable food on the island!

Cattleya took out a grayish-black scroll from a secret pocket in her warlock robe and softly chanted a single word in ancient Hermes, "Freezing!"

Silently, the scroll was consumed by icy-blue flames and immediately, there were crystalline streams of light that appeared in midair.

They flew towards the stone giant and froze the target within as icicles hung from it.

Amidst jarring, cracking sounds, the ice layer cracked in turn as the stone giant slowly walked out of the zone. However, its grayish-white exterior had turned a darker shade. Its motions were a lot stiffer than before.

At this moment, Anderson raised his hands as though he was a conductor gesturing for the audience to give their applause.

Orange-yellow flames which were almost white in color sprouted at the stone giant's feet as though it had stepped into a particular trap.

Its surface rapidly produced a bout of steam as cracks spread across its body in the form of deep fractures.

Anderson pulled back with his right arm as a burning-white spear condensed in his palm.

[image]

The flames at the tip of the spear condensed to a point as it emitted a blinding luster.

The spear flew out, accurately hitting the crack in the stone giant's belly as the flames melted a huge hole in it.

As for Anderson Hood, who was originally on the beach, he seemed to merge with the burning-white spear. The flames brightened as he strangely appeared behind the stone giant.

He held his left hand into a fist as his arm bulged. With an uppercut, he struck upwards from the hole and into the stone giant's heart.

This simple-looking strike created an exaggerated effect. The stone giant immediately froze on the spot as cracking sounds constantly emitted from its interior. In seconds, it had crumbled into rubble.

A critical strike… Klein's pupils constricted.

Cattleya calmly stood on the spot and said without any surprise, "Sequence 5 of the Hunter pathway is Reaper.

"Furthermore, they are good at finding the weakness of their prey."

Reaper… A death reaper of life? No wonder… Klein nodded slightly.

At this moment, Anderson crouched down and rummaged through the stone giant's carcass.

Then, he turned his head and smiled ruefully.

"It's not a real monster."

That meant that there weren't any spoils of war!

While Anderson described the situation, the rubble vanished at a discernible pace.

…For an unlucky fellow like you, don't be the one opening chests or looting corpses… Klein couldn't help but lampoon inwardly.

Anderson returned and kept droning on.

"The greatest problem of these waters is this. Not every monster will provide you with riches!"

This is because conjured monsters such as this are a part of more powerful monsters of a higher level. Of course, it's possible that they're the result of remnant powers and auras… Klein already had a preliminary theory towards this.

Having gone through the voyage, he discovered that there were Beyonder traces of Sun, Evernight, Storm, and the Spectator pathway. He had a more fleshed out theory from his previous theories.

He originally suspected that these waters were the remnants of a battlefield in a war between Second Epoch ancient gods. Storm belonged to Elf King Soniathrym; Spectator belonged to Dragon King Ankewelt; Evernight belonged to King of Demonic Wolves Flegrea. With Little Sun providing him with the legendary records from the City of Silver at each gathering, Klein had gained a preliminary understanding of the authorities of the eight ancient gods in the Second Epoch.

However, the constant midday and the Sun Chariot formed from gold had made Klein have doubts about his theory. This was because none of the eight ancient gods grasped the Sun pathway.

Soon, Klein connected it to Amon's and Adam's father, the City of Silver Creator who was deemed as the ancient sun god.

After this Creator awakened, and after a series of intense battles, he had taken back the authorities of the ancient gods!

Hence, these ruins of the battle between gods were left behind? The incomplete mural he saw at the elven ruin suddenly surfaced in Klein's mind.

Elf King Soniathrym and the City of Silver's Creator, who was also the ancient sun god, were at odds!

As his thoughts wandered, Anderson had returned to his chuckling state. He looked at him and said, "How do I address you?"

"Gehrman Sparrow," Klein simply gave his name.

“Gehrman Sparrow?” Anderson was first taken aback before recovering. “I’ve heard of you. You’re the adventurer who nearly successfully hunted Vice Admiral Ailment. You have the title of the craziest hunter! Last month, when the ship I was onboard passed by the Rorsted Archipelago and Oravi Island, I had thoughts of getting to know you over drinks, but your whereabouts were unknown.”

Last month? I was doing volunteer work at the hospital… Klein nodded and said, “You know me now.

“Also, try your best not to say anything.”

“…” Anderson forced a smile. “I know, my bad luck tends to make the negative words I say become reality. Alright, stop looking at me. I won’t speak again. Put down that charm of yours.”

Due to the appearance of the stone giant, the pirates’ relaxation time was cut short. The Future quickly set off once again, venturing deep into the sea.

Along the way, Klein stayed standing on the deck and leaned against the side of the ship. He observed his surroundings while Anderson was loitering on the ship. He was good at socializing and interacting with the pirates.

Impressive. He easily got to know the situation of the ship… Klein shot a glance at Anderson, who was drinking with a few pirates in the shadows, as he sighed inwardly.

Of course, the Strongest Hunter probably doesn’t know that the alcohol he’s drinking has a sedative of unknown origins… Klein held back his laughter as he thought mischievously.

With Anderson’s help, the Future circled around two hidden maelstroms and a floating palace ruin as it continued down the safe sea route.

About three hours later, night fell again.

Klein rapidly found his lucidity and reason in the dream as he opened his eyes and looked around.

His vision was a swath of pitch-blackness with nothing to be seen.

…Don't tell me I'm blind… Such a thought instinctively appeared in Klein's mind. Then, he reached his right palm into his pocket and took out a matchstick.

This was a component that every Magician needed for his spells.

With familiarity, he took out a matchstick and ignited it. Immediately, a weak flame appeared in front of Klein's eyes.

The flame struggled as it bloomed, slightly illuminating his surroundings.

He was in a prison cell, one with an unlatched gate made up of metal railings!

Why would I be here? I'm neither beside Admiral of Stars or in the mural hall where Anderson was… I'm randomly placed in a particular area? As his thoughts raced, Klein flicked his wrist and extinguished the matchstick that nearly burnt his fingers.

A resplendent layer of sunlight bloomed on his left hand as his eyes had two miniaturized suns.

With the soul of the Priest of Light, he obtained night vision from the Light of Holiness.

As he observed his surroundings, Klein saw that the cell he was in wasn't too cramped, but the floor was dirty and messy. There were many footprints, a mystery as to what previously happened.

Most of them are human footprints. A few of them are rather exaggerated, likely belonging to giants… The single bed is broken in the corner while there's a key beside the door… Someone succeeded in a jailbreak? Klein came before the unlocked metal gate and carefully looked outside.

The prison was filled with darkness. The darkness enveloped a stone-paved corridor, and across from him was a cold but solid wall. The path extended continuously on both sides as though there were more prison cells.

Klein retracted his gaze, picked up the key on the ground, and locked the gates.

He didn't attempt to head out and continued staying in the cell.

He clearly remembered that Will Auceptin had advised him not to explore the dream world. Therefore, he planned on awaiting the arrival of noon!

So what if it's a prison cell? It's not like I'm leaving… Klein huddled in the corner, sitting on the halved single bed, seemingly blending with the rich darkness around him.

In this extreme silence, Klein suddenly cocked his head since he vaguely heard light footsteps!

The sound of footsteps came from afar in an ethereal manner and at a slow frequency as it approached him.

Chapter 654 - Prisoner and Guard

◆

No way. I haven’t gone anywhere… Has the far-reaching hands of trouble come on its own? Klein revealed a grimace that didn’t match Gehrman Sparrow’s persona. He nearly drew a gasp.

The only thing stopping him from doing that was because it would cause quite a stir, making “trouble” discover his hiding spot!

No longer a green Nighthawk, he rapidly made up his mind. He held his breath, slowly stood up, and moved to the side of the metal gate, without a sound. He secretly and silently looked in the direction of the incoming footsteps.

He believed that, since hiding and avoiding it wasn’t necessary useful, he had to determine the danger revolving around the situation so as to make the best choice!

The two miniature suns in his eyes dimmed as Klein waited for nearly a minute as he heard the footsteps turn heavier and clearer. Following that, he heard the clanking sound of a metallic gate slamming into the wall.

Following that, he saw a towering figure appear on the right of the corridor.

The figure was nearly 2.5 meters tall and wore black, full-body armor. The cold feeling it exuded seemed corporeal like a gigantic knight.

His aura was converged, and he was staid like the deep sea. In the space where his eyes were, there were two deep-red glows that flickered. In his hand was a long and broad black sword.

Creak!

He pushed open the metal gate to a cell and stepped in. He circled the cell, seemingly in search of something.

Man… Is he trying to find a particular prisoner? I'll definitely be discovered if this continues… Klein hesitated for a moment and wondered if he should leave the cell and search for a way out before the figure came close, or to sneak an attack to finish the target in a clean swoop before continuing to huddle in a corner to await the end of the dream.

After judging how much time he had left to think, Klein quickly took off the topaz pendant on his left wrist and began divining with a voice that perhaps only he could hear.

"That knight from before is very strong."

After quickly repeating it seven times, Klein opened his eyes to see the topaz pendant turning clockwise at a high frequency and large amplitudes.

This meant that the target was an extremely dangerous existence!

Without any hesitation or time to hesitate, Klein used the Beyonder powers of a Clown and controlled his muscles to pull open the metal gates without causing any additional stimulation.

Then, he took the opportunity when the black-armored entity entered another cell, to gently walk out into the corridor and rapidly headed left with his body crouched.

In the immense darkness, as he listened for any commotion behind him, he maintained his stealthy and swift motions, quickly making a bend and arriving at a metal gate which opened outwards. It looked like an exit.

Attempting to push and pull, Klein discovered that the metal gates weren't heavy, but it had been locked.

After two seconds of thought, he took out the key he picked up inside his cell, inserted it, and twisted it without holding out much hope.

A light click of a latch opening sounded as the metal gates unlocked.

That works? Although it's a dream, you can't just have a randomly picked up key be an important item… I originally planned on folding some paper to insert into the keyhole and repeatedly slice at it, bit by bit… Klein slowly pushed open the door as he lampooned while thinking in puzzlement.

To his disappointment, what stood behind the metal gates wasn't the exit but a hall filled with junk.

Closing the gate behind him in passing, he locked it again and circled around the items randomly strewn around, in search of a possible door or path.

A few seconds later, he noticed an inconspicuous black wooden door in a corner. Therefore, he carefully approached it and reached out for the handle.

The scene inside naturally appeared in his mind. It was a storage room, and on the right was a full-body mirror. And to its right was a figure wearing a short linen robe.

There's someone there? The escaped prisoner? Having been forced to leave his comfort zone, Klein decided to take hold of the initiative in a limited fashion. Therefore, he gently twisted the handle and pushed open the black wooden door.

He wanted to gather information on the general situation, so as to determine where to engage in combat or flee at the critical moment in time.

“Who is it?” the figure wearing a short linen robe hurriedly but softly asked. Its voice was filled with despair and pain.

“An adventurer,” Klein succinctly answered.

He had already used his night vision to discern the figure’s looks.

It was a man with a weathered face. He had wrinkles on his forehead and the corners of his eyes and mouth, but his hair was raven-black and lustrous. There wasn’t a single strand of gray hair.

His short linen robe was ancient and simple. His expression was distorted due to the pain. His rarely seen pure black eyes were filled with unconcealed surprise and puzzlement.

“Adventurer?

“Why would you be here?”

Klein maintained a certain distance from the man who was difficult to discern whether he was considered young or old. He stood by the entrance and looked at him.

“Before asking others, introducing yourself is a necessary form of politeness.”

As a Faceless, just the short act of sizing him up from before had made him grasp the man’s features. Apart from the discordant hair and the wrinkles, he had an old, gruesome scar on his cheek.

The man was startled as he worriedly glanced at the hall.

“It’s best you close the door. We cannot be caught by that devil; otherwise…”

The muscles on his face clearly twitched as though he had recalled something nasty.

“Devil?” Klein murmured and extended his hand back to close the black wooden door.

The man heaved a sigh of relief and smiled wryly.

“I apologize. I was indeed impolite.

“My name is Leomaster, an ascetic of a religious organization.”

“A religious organization? From the looks of it, you aren’t a devotee of any of the seven deities.” Klein discovered a problem with his choice of words.

If he was an ascetic of one of the seven deities, he could’ve directly said it out loud. Even the high priest of the Church of Sun and the bishops of the Church of Storms wouldn’t come to blows the moment they met in such a dangerous place.

Leomaster said with a self-deprecating laugh, “That’s right. I worship the original Creator. ‘He’ is an omnipotent and omniscient existence, the source of everything great. ‘He’ is the Beginning and the End. ‘He’ is the god of all gods!”

This… Upon hearing how this person revered the original Creator, Klein’s first reaction was that it was the Twilight Hermit Order.

However, there are also some smaller denominations in the Northern and Southern Continents. There’s quite a number of people who believe in the original Creator… Klein deliberated as he asked, “What’s the name of that religious organization?

“How did you end up here?”

Leomaster hesitated for a moment before saying, “To the far east of the Sonia Sea is where my Lord sleeps. ‘His’ sacred mountain is hidden somewhere there. I led a pilgrimage here in an attempt to witness his miracles to redeem myself.

"Perhaps it's a necessary test. We were caught by that devil, and one by one, we died…

"Later, I seized the opportunity to escape the cell and hid here, awaiting the devil's departure."

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "Do you know the name of that devil? What characteristics does he have?"

"He?" Leomaster shook his head, saying in a somewhat puzzled manner. "I do not know his exact name, but many pilgrims seem to know him. They call him the Saint of Darkness."

Saint of Darkness? A demigod? Is this Leomaster's dream, or is it the demigod's dream? From the outcome of my divination, it's likely the latter. Otherwise, it wouldn't be that dangerous… Klein was about to continue asking which organization Leomaster was from and determine the Beyonder powers of the Saint of Darkness when he suddenly noticed the full-body mirror opposite the ascetic through the corner of his eye.

In mysticism, mirrors were passages that connected hidden and unknown worlds. It easily brought about terrifying accidents; therefore, Klein, who was in a dangerous dream, carefully walked over and planned on using the powers of a Priest of Light to destroy the item.

"No, don't!" Leomaster seemed to sense Klein's intention as he cried out softly in horror. "Without it, I-I will immediately die!"

Ah? Klein looked at the mirror again in puzzlement.

Although the environment was abnormally dark, the mirror clearly reflected two figures. One of them was Leomaster with his numerous wrinkles and raven-black hair. The other was the thin-faced, black-haired and brown-eyed Gehrman Sparrow who wore a cap.

At this moment, the Gehrman Sparrow in the mirror slowly moved his head even though Klein didn't make any movements. He revealed a deep, sinister smile towards him!

The mirror's surface suddenly rippled as a hand reached out.

With just the blinking of his eyes, the Gehrman Sparrow, who looked identical to him, crawled out of the mirror. His face was tainted with an obvious sinisterness due to the darkness cloaking it!

How terrifying… Unfortunately, I don't look like Gehrman Sparrow; therefore, you failed to scare me… If Zhou Mingrui came out of the mirror, I might've been woken up out of fright… Klein calmly looked at his counterpart and raised his left hand which swirled with a layer of sunlight.

The sinister Gehrman Sparrow smiled as he raised his left hand as well, making a darkness that was made up of magnificence and sinisterness surface on his glove.

This corresponded to the powers of a Baron of Corruption!

My clone? Klein thought as he raised his right hand expressionlessly.

From out of nowhere, he held a short milky-white scepter in his palm, and at its tip were embedded blue "gems."

Sea God Scepter!

Although his actions in a dream needed to abide by logic in order to achieve the desired effects, Klein suspected that the illusory world was unable to influence the mysterious space or the gray fog. Therefore, he attempted to simplify the ritualistic process and told himself that the Sea God Scepter was stored in a similar unique zone in the spirit world. He could retrieve it whenever he wanted.

The outcome from his attempt delighted Klein. Indeed, the dream world was unable to differentiate between a unique zone in the spirit world and the space above the gray fog. With the premise of the Sea God

Scepter belonging to him, this Sealed Artifact at the demigod level was “retrieved!”

It really works… Otherwise, I’d have to engage in an intense battle… Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

He similarly believed that the mirror was unable to replicate matters related to the gray fog.

The sinister Gehrman Sparrow looked opposite him in a dazed state. He instinctively raised his hand, but his right palm was empty.

Then, he saw countless bolts of silver lightning shoot out, enveloping him inside, causing him to expend one Paper Figurine Substitute after another without being able to escape from the area.

With a sizzling sound, a huge ball of lightning illuminated the cramped room which provided no room for dodging. Following that, the Gehrman Sparrow from the mirror vanished.

For some reason, Klein felt himself immediately turn serene, as though he had become a sage.

He turned his head and looked at Leomaster again.

“What’s the name of the religious organization you joined?”

Leomaster trembled as he answered, “Aurora Order…”

Aurora Order? Klein was stunned as he couldn’t help but prick up his brows.

At this moment, there was a loud clanking outside. The locked gates that opened outwards had seemed to have been kicked open.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The heavy footsteps that sounded like drumming walked towards the corner, seemingly discovering where Klein and Leomaster were hiding.

Klein suspected that the Lightning Storm from before had been sensed by the Saint of Darkness!

There’s no way of hiding… Klein held the Sea God Scepter and kicked the black wooden door of the storage room open towards the Saint of Darkness!

As the door tumbled, he clearly saw his target’s appearance.

The knight, who was wearing black full-body armor, had already raised up his visor at some point in time, revealing his deep wrinkled face and some of his bright raven-black hair, as well as the old scar on his cheek.

He looked identical to Leomaster. Even the minute features were identical!

The only difference was the deep redness that emitted from his eyes.

Chapter 655 - Dream Analysis

◆

!

Klein was alarmed. He instinctively turned his body to the side without exposing his back to Leomaster, who was trembling in horror in the storage room.

He couldn’t be certain that the prisoner wearing a short linen robe wasn’t problematic!

At this moment, the deep redness in the black-armored knight who had the same face as Leomaster brightened drastically. He raised up the gloomy broadsword in his hands.

Bam!

With a step forward, he cleaved forward at a speed that Klein couldn’t capture with his naked eyes.

At the same time, Klein, who was standing to the side of him, subconsciously raised the Sea God Scepter and made the blue gems at its tip light up simultaneously.

Whoosh!

A corporeal hurricane appeared out of thin air as it swirled around Klein, protecting him within the eye of the hurricane.

Whoosh! The black streams of light carved its way over as layer after layer of the strong winds dissipated, scattering in every direction, causing the entire hall to tremble.

Boom!

Under the black broadsword, the hurricane produced an explosive boom and was reduced to a surging wave that flooded the entire region. It lifted up all the junk into the air.

The intense collision clearly shook the dream as Klein felt his mind go adrift. He couldn't help but roll twice.

Plop!

He fell from his bed to the floor, the fall causing him to open his eyes.

That Saint of Darkness is really powerful… Or should I say that I've never used the Sea God Scepter in the real world, so I'm unable to replicate its full might in the dream… Wait! It's still night! Klein suddenly noticed a problem.

At that moment, the midday sunlight wasn't beaming in from the windows!

His awakening was due to the intense struggle in the dream, not due to a natural occurrence!

That also meant that he needed to sleep immediately; otherwise, he might very well disappear in the dark night, never to be found again!

With that thought flashing in his mind, Klein pushed his right hand to the ground, flipping his body up as he flew towards his bed and laid himself down.

Then, he imagined the stacked spherical lights and quickly entered his dream.

During this process, Klein swept his gaze to the window and vaguely saw the dark night outside. It was quiet and serene without any sense of sinisterness.

Meanwhile, he vaguely felt that there was a fog encompassing the surface of the sea relatively far away. Amidst the fog, there was a cathedral composed of rather ancient architecture. It was completely black in color. There wasn't a bell tower, and at the top of it were pitch-black ravens spiraling around it as though they were consecrating or lamenting over something.

This cathedral has many buildings around it. There are ordinary two-story residences and simple wooden huts. There are bread shops with hanging signboards and grayish-white mills using waterwheels for power… Pedestrians pass through the main streets and alleys with their figures flitting about, impossible to know of their actual situations.

A mirage? The source of the danger at night? All the people who disappeared had lost their minds and went somewhere? Klein woke up from his dreams because he subconsciously considered the questions that he had accumulated.

Following that, he forcefully made himself concentrate. He retrieved the Sea God Scepter from the "spirit world's unique zone!"

He remembered that he was in an intense battle with the Saint of Darkness just before he left the dream!

The slightly dim golden light shone into Klein's eyes as everything immediately turned bright.

What he could see was no longer the tall knight dressed in black full-bodied armor, nor was it Leomaster, who was dressed in a short linen robe. Instead, he was facing a floor-to-ceiling window that faced the setting sun.

The window was very clean and revealed an indescribable sense of purity under the sun's illumination.

By the side of the window were tables with their original wooden colors and black high-back chairs. Further away were rows of bookshelves with all kinds of books placed on them.

A library? A book repository? Every time I enter this dream world, I'll be placed randomly in a certain area? Klein carefully observed his surroundings and confirmed that it was temporarily safe without the so-called Saint of Darkness or strange evil creatures.

He held the Sea God Scepter and first came to the floor-to-ceiling window and looked at the environment outside.

The first thing that he saw was the opulent buildings that covered the opposite mountain peak. The huge palaces, magnificent steeples, and the towering city walls that all appeared frozen in the sunset. It was a visual spectacle.

Even though it wasn't his first time seeing it, Klein still held his breath, quietly admiring this miraculous scenery for a few seconds.

He then moved his gaze away towards the cliff. He saw the high walls of the black cloister and the withered trees beside the boulders. But as they were blocked, it was impossible to confirm whether Cattleya remained in her original spot.

Indeed, within a certain radius, it's not possible to leave this region… I'm deep inside the black cloister? Klein retracted his gaze in thought as he walked to the bookshelves.

He temporarily didn't have the time to consider what happened between the Saint of Darkness and Leomaster in his previous dream. This was because he needed to determine his current situation.

When he arrived by the bookshelves, Klein discovered that the books placed on them had their own names. They weren't blurry and indistinct like ordinary dreams.

The Spirituality of Life, Book of Charms, The Flower Within the Heart, The True Cosmos and Inner Universe… These are all books on mysticism… Klein carefully reached out and took out the Book of Charms.

He quickly flipped through it and realized that he knew most of the content, but there was a small portion which he had never come into contact with.

It can be confirmed that this isn't from my dream… Ma'am Hermit's? The knowledge that pursues her and is injected into her has been conjured in this black cloister? Klein had no desire to explore beyond where he was. He held the Book of Charms and returned to the side of the floor-to-ceiling window. He found a spot to sit down and began reading in a serious manner with the sunset's glow.

You can still study even in dreams! As he lampooned, he took out a pen and paper as he wrote and drew.

While he was engrossed in this, the light suddenly bloomed as blinding whiteness blanketed his vision.

Klein naturally opened his eyes and felt warmth from the sunlight that shone inwards.

I just read a few pages and planned to speed read it before using dream divination to recall them… Klein sat up, frustrated. He felt like he had lost a good opportunity to study. This was because he couldn't determine if he would be randomly placed in the black cloister's library again.

He straightened his hair, wore his cap, and went to the deck. As he observed his surroundings, he recalled the dream.

That prison is likely inside the black cloister as well. Yes, it might be underground. In other words, the Saint of Darkness and Leomaster are in a ruin nearby.

It's no wonder that Will Auceptin told me not to attempt exploring the dream. These places are really filled with danger!

Why would the Saint of Darkness and Leomaster look identical? That dream was a little strange. Also, that full-body mirror was very magical and sinister. It actually managed to clone a Gehrman Sparrow…

Upon recalling this, Klein began to find examples from his past experiences to confirm his through processes by comparison.

This was called relying on experience.

Soon, he thought of something. He had once borrowed the Mental Terror Candle in Backlund and helped Father Utravsky eliminate the "past him." A character that was dissociated from his original self!

Could it be that Leomaster is the Saint of Darkness from the Aurora Order?

Due to certain reasons, he had split his personality, separating his good and evil sides? That sealed and dark prison is the reflection of his inner dream?

Yes, that full-bodied mirror! Leomaster had said that if it were destroyed, he would vanish as well. When I looked into the mirror, the Gehrman Sparrow inside it did form a corporeal body. It was evil!

It's no wonder I felt like a sage after I eliminated the Gehrman Sparrow in the mirror. It's because I got rid of my evil and sinister thoughts in my mind…

Yes, that full-body mirror must be in the form of a mirror in the real world… These waters clearly have the Beyonder remains of a Visionary. It conjures many unreal and real monsters that can kill… And this belongs to the Spectator pathway; therefore, being able to split good from evil and causing dissociated personalities does make logical sense…

Heh heh, Saint of Darkness Leomaster is a high-ranking member of the Aurora Order. He must originally be very evil, but that ruin or item stirred up his inverse side, which is the good hidden deep in his heart. It caused a split personality; hence, he is trapped somewhere nearby. Klein felt that he had roughly understood the truth to the matter and felt a little regret.

Unfortunately, I'm unable to enter the same spot a second time. Otherwise, with the Sea God Scepter and Leomaster's good side, there's a high chance of defeating his evil side, the Saint of Darkness. And the damage dealt in the dream world would continue on in the real world…

In that case, a good saint who understands the Aurora Order would be born. It will make it easier to strike down on this cultist organization… Klein silently sighed and turned halfway around and watched Anderson Hood walk out of the cabin.

"Where did you go in the dream? I didn't actually find you," the Strongest Hunter asked as though they were best buds.

Klein secretly frowned as he asked, "Why should I be seen by you?"

Anderson was taken aback.

"Shouldn't you return to the spot where you left the dream upon returning there again?"

…There are other elements involved in my random appearance in other spots within a particular radius? Something to do with my uniqueness? Klein realized that the problem was more complex than he had imagined.

He said with some deliberation, "I went elsewhere after entering the dream."

"Strange…" Anderson frowned as though he was very puzzled.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he thought before speaking again, "There's another strange incident."

"What?" Klein asked cooperatively.

Anderson surveyed his surroundings.

“Back when I was pretending to make a canoe in the hall last time, I heard the sounds of a door opening and of footsteps that came out from deep inside. But when I looked up, I found nothing.

“I originally thought that it was someone from the ship, but later it didn’t seem like the case.”

Chapter 656 - Crazy Mutations

◆

Someone opened a door deep in the hall of murals and came out? A Rampager or Beyonder creature who was nearby? Furthermore, it possesses the ability to act in dreams? After hearing Anderson Hood's description, Klein began making logical speculations.

As his thoughts whirled, he suddenly had a new idea.

Could it be the owner of the mysterious eyes that observed me and the deck?

It's possible! If that mysterious person has been lurking on the ship the entire time and followed us into these waters, then he'd have to sleep when night falls, so he will appear in the dream world… Ma'am Hermit is completely unaware of his existence, or has she tacitly agreed to his actions? Or he's the trump card that she wields, which is why she isn't afraid of the dangers in these waters when taking on my mission? No, that cannot be determined. At the very least, I can't determine that the person who opened the door deep inside the hall of murals is the mysterious person on the ship… Klein looked at Anderson with a deep, gloomy look before asking, "Why does it seem unlikely?"

Back when Anderson Hood mentioned it, he originally suspected that the person who opened the door was a member of the Future, but he later felt that it was unlikely.

Anderson chuckled.

"I visited every person on the ship in the dream, and I discovered that no one possesses the ability to act freely in that world except you.”

“Unfortunately, I was pushing open a door outside back then,” Klein said calmly.

Anderson shrugged and said, “I know; that’s why I’m not suspecting you. These waters have dangers lurking everywhere. All sorts of unimaginable monsters are active here. Perhaps the person opening the door from before was the stone giant from earlier or a rotting dragon who dreamed of countless treasures.”

Upon saying this, he leaned against the side of the ship and looked at the sea which was bathing in golden sunlight as he smiled wistfully.

“I discovered that ever since I escaped the ship-sinking crisis brought about by the storm, my bad luck has been decreasing bit by bit. Haha, it’s obvious that it’s not fixed and wouldn’t last forever.

“Look, I successfully swam onto the island, and although I kept meeting with all kinds of bad luck, I managed to last until you arrived.

“Yes, I do attract monsters and did make that stone giant appear, but didn’t we easily resolve it?

“Also, nothing happened despite me being on board for several hours. Doesn’t that explain…”

Before Anderson could finish his statement, Klein coldly cut him off.

“Shut up!”

Doesn’t this guy know to keep his words to a minimum when faced with a livid expression? I really want to beat him up! If it wasn’t for the divination above the gray fog that said that you haven’t mutated or have a big shot possessing you, then I would’ve already sunk you to the bottom of the sea. Yes… Sequence 8 of the Hunter pathway is Provoker. He must’ve easily digested the potion back then… From the bottom of his heart, Klein felt that the level of Anderson’s provocation was far higher than Danitz.

Without feeling frustrated, Anderson raised his arms and said with a rueful smile.”Fine, fine. I’ll shut up.”

Seeing how he wasn’t providing him with any more clues about the individual who opened the door in the dream world, Klein remained silent for a few seconds, suddenly turned around, and walked into the cabin.

He had discovered a huge oversight on something!

Since Anderson, who’s plagued with bad luck, was on the ship, that meant that the chances of them experiencing an incident would only increase exponentially. Therefore, he needed to make some preparations!

After returning to his room, Klein walked to the bathroom as he picked up Azik’s copper whistle and Will Auceptin’s paper crane. After setting up the ritual to summon himself, he brought Tinder, the Sun Brooch, and the Nightmare Beyonder characteristic from above the gray fog into the real world.

He didn’t immediately switch out his equipped inventory, but he did place them inside his suitcase and beside the Biological Poison Bottle.

This way, even if danger suddenly struck, he would have a chance to adjust his “inventory,” and then he could make a selection based on the danger he faced.

After doing all of this, Klein felt significantly relaxed. He put away the other items and left the room for the deck, afraid that he would miss any signs of mermaids.

Just as he walked out of the cabin, he saw Frank Lee crouched in a corner, looking shocked and dazed.

“What happened?” Klein felt his heart skip a beat.

He was afraid that something had gone wrong with the crazy cross-breeder's experiments, causing everyone on the Future to be embroiled in a terrifying biological disaster.

Frank shook his head in a daze.

"Didn't I mention about those little things before?

"They actually need to sleep for some time before they can grow and reproduce. In the end…"

"What happened in the end?" Klein's expression turned solemn.

This made the Strongest Hunter Anderson, who was bragging about how many pirates he had hunted to the audience around him without realizing the change in their eyes, sense something as he curiously stopped his description and came over.

The crouching Frank looked up and said, "They just finished a large-scale reproduction stage and have even mutated.

"Th-this is a miracle!"

"And? Where have they gone? Are they still in your laboratory?" Klein instinctively felt that this wasn't something good.

Frank used two seconds to digest the problem as he rolled up his sleeves to show his hairy arm.

He pounded the deck in front of him and revealed a smile.

"They have drilled inside and have seemingly reconstructed the Future…"

Amidst the dull pounding, something that seemed like milk spewed out like a fountain from the deck, spraying Frank Lee in the face.

He licked the liquid by his lips and said in pleasant surprise, "The Future… The Future has produced milk!"

At the same time, the pirates by the side of the ship pointed down at the cannons in horror.

“The cannons are spewing milk!”

This… This isn’t scientific… Klein nearly couldn’t control the twitching of his facial muscles.

Ever since he boarded the Future, and ever since the ship came to the ravine and began the descent, he felt that many of the things that had happened were extremely unscientific. It even exceeded the confines of his mysticism knowledge.

Anderson watched agape, nearly forgetting to inquire. He stomped his feet habitually and successfully saw another milk fountain spew out.

One thought after another flashed past Klein’s mind as he acutely figured out a problem.

He immediately looked at Frank Lee and asked in a deep voice, “After your little things have infected the Future, will it continue infecting people?”

While asking, Klein’s right palm reached into his pocket. According to the situation, he selected the Floating Charm and prepared to fly into the air in order to escape the infection.

Frank Lee thought seriously for a moment.

“In theory, yes…”

Before he finished his sentence, a figure appeared and kicked him in the ass, sending him tumbling a few times, slamming into pools of milk.

That person was none other than linen shirted Nina, who was draped in a blue jacket.

She glared angrily at Frank Lee on the deck as she cursed while hyperventilating.

“Aren’t you going to finish off those darn little things of yours!?

“Did you do this while thinking that my breasts aren’t big enough?”

“A-alright,” Frank Lee patted his ass and said unwillingly.

At this moment, Klein had already taken out his charm and softy chanted, “Storm!”

He believed that he had underestimated Frank Lee’s ability to cause trouble and suspected that the disaster brought about by him would only worsen; therefore, he decided to first fly into the air.

[image]

Blue flames enveloped the charm made of tin as squalls immediately stirred. They swirled around Klein’s feet and body, lifting him off the deck and to a height of four to five meters.

Anderson was first taken aback before he reached out his palm in an attempt to grab Klein, but he was a moment too late. All he could do was watch Gehrman Sparrow rise up as he remained standing on the spot.

This ordinarily handsome hunter shook his head with a warped expression, somewhat amused while also wanting to dismember the first mate of the Future.

At this moment, Frank had already taken a bottle of dark green powder. He grabbed a handful of it, and as he chanted in Jotun, he scattered it around his surroundings.

The moment the powder made contact with the deck, it immediately produced green vines that grew wildly. Soon, it drew out the milk and the “little things,” entangling the entire deck and cabin within.

In just about ten seconds, the Future had been reduced into a forest of vines.

“Phew, it’s over.” Frank smiled at Nina before his expression changed again. “Th-they’ve mutated!”

At this moment, a pirate walked over in a stagger, shouting with a tinge of horror, “A… A watermelon is growing from my head!”

Klein looked towards the voice and saw a green vine drilling out of the pirate’s head. One of them seemed to produce a soon-to-ripen watermelon.

“This is the so-called mutation? This is way too crazy, goddamn madness!” Anderson blurted out a sigh.

His eyes then darted around as he said in a deep voice, “There’s something wrong with the surrounding waters!”

In midair, Klein had also determined the same thing.

If there wasn’t any external disruptions, then Frank Lee’s experimental products and Beyonder powers wouldn’t have caused a simultaneous mutation!

Rip!

One vine after another tore apart as the window to the captain’s cabin opened.

Cattleya appeared there and shouted in an amplified voice with witchcraft, “Frank, stop all experiments.

“There are remnant auras of Earth Mother here.”

Earth Mother? Klein looked in surprise at Ma’am Hermit, and he felt that his theories about these waters being the battlefield of the gods had been completely overturned!

“Oh my, Merciful Mother!” Frank crossed his arms and made a pose like he was hugging a baby.

Following that, he sprawled on the floor as he devoutly kissed the vines.

Cattleya silently watched this scene as resplendent stars instantly swirled around her. Following that, she made the entire Future light up.

With a flick of her finger, she made a colorless flame land on the vine outside the window of the captain's cabin.

The vines were immediately ignited as they silently turned to ashes.

The colorless flames silently spread and wreaked havoc, without harming a single sailor. As for the Future, the light it produced helped it withstand the fire.

Before long, the forest of vines vanished completely, leaving behind the pirate who had a watermelon growing on his head. Of course, the vine that was connected to it had been burned to nothingness.

"Phew, th-this is no different from a devil's descent!" The pirate took two steps forward and carried the watermelon which had grown out from his head.

"Don't open it!" Just as Cattleya's warning reverberated, the pirate had opened the watermelon with brute force, partially to vent his anger and partially to satisfy his curiosity.

The watermelon split into two, and inside it was a milky-white "brain" filled with gullies. Flowing around it was a blood-like liquid.

With a thud, the pirate died immediately, without any chance of saving him. The Beyonder characteristics on him rapidly condensed at an extraordinary speed.

How sinister and crazy… Klein sighed silently and prepared to land back onto the deck.

At that moment, he saw a gigantic palm suddenly reach out from the surface of the sea, smacking the side of the Future.

The five fingers of the palm were long, each almost half a meter long. The entire thing was a grayish-black color like an arid desert!

Klein silently drew out a gasp as he couldn’t help but look at Anderson Hood.

This fellow had just mentioned that nothing had happened since he came on board!

Chapter 657 - Terrifying Vitality

◆

The grayish-black hand grabbed the side of the ship and quickly hoisted it up, revealing the submerged parts, inch by inch.

Through the blue water waves, Klein saw a huge grayish-black shadow. Following that, squirming flesh occupied his entire vision.

The monster seemed to be an amalgamation of countless blackening or graying corpses. Attached to the two gigantic palms were withered-looking arms that resembled dry timber. The arms stemmed from a corpse that was suspected to be from a giant. This giant's single eye was shut tightly as a few heads were stuck to its neck. And further down these heads were incomplete scaly fish, lizard bodies, or warped human corpses. Layer after layer, they formed flesh that appeared like a floating island.

From the different corpses and the connections of the crevices, a yellowish-green gas was emanated and spread to its surroundings as though it was enveloping the entire area.

Cough! Cough! Cough! Cough!

Just the smell of it had made many sailors on deck cough violently. It was so bad that they couldn't even straighten their backs.

Upon seeing this scene, Frank Lee didn't hesitate to take out the materials inside a hidden pouch on his belt. He showcased his corresponding Beyonder powers, but to his surprise, Cattleya's voice rang in his ears.

“Frank, stop!

“Help Nina command the sailors to get them to adjust the sails!”

“Why?” Frank Lee subconsciously asked in return.

“In this area, the supernatural matters within the authority of Earth Mother will mutate, including your powers.” As Cattleya spoke, she extended both her palms forward and pressed down on a particular spot on her desk.

The symbols and the magical labels on the Future immediately became more pronounced as they lit up one after another, converting the entire ship into a resplendent sea of stars. They seemed to correspond to each and every point of starlight that swirled around Cattleya’s body.

The spreading yellowish-green gas was kept out as Klein began floating towards the window of his room from the closest wall.

The coughing pirates felt alleviated, and under the lead of Boatswain Nina and First Mate Frank, as well as the instructions of Ottolov, they quickly adjusted the sails and attempted to make the Future escape from the nearby waters in order to escape the influence of the mutation effects.

However, the grayish-black colossal monster had held back the front of the ship, and the body beneath the water had connected to unknown parts of the ship in order to hold the Future, preventing it from advancing forward.

At the same time, formless tall mountains seemed to appear around them, blocking out the sea winds that blew from afar, preventing the Future from using its strength no matter how it adjusted its sails.

Faced with such a situation, there’s a need to use a backup steam engine system. Unfortunately, the Future lacks it…

Yes… It can still fly with the help of the starlight, but that seems to be extremely draining on Ma’am Hermit. Besides, it will be difficult to grasp the direction and distance it will bring us. To make such a flight in such waters, there’s a high chance of entering a more dangerous zone without being blessed with good luck. Heh, there’s still the extremely unlucky Anderson on board… Klein floated by the window in his room as he took in the situation.

He wasn’t nervous, as neither Admiral of Stars Cattleya nor the Strongest Hunter Anderson had showcased their true strength.

Of course, that includes me as well… Klein added inwardly.

He planned on first returning to his room and wearing Tinder. Without any “food” around, using such a mystical item was more suitable than Creeping Hunger. The latter was to be reserved for him when facing more dangerous and complicated situations before throwing it above the gray fog for it to cool down.

As for the negative effect of losing items on him, Klein already had a plan. He decided to put in his wallet, Azik’s copper whistle, the adventurer’s harmonica, and other items into his suitcase when changing his inventory, leaving Creeping Hunger, Murloc Cufflink, and the charms from the Sea God domain. He would keep a close watch on the latter two to prevent them from being lost.

And from a probability standpoint, the most likely item to be lost by Tinder would be the charms since they were the greatest in number.

Klein wasn’t worried about this. He had created charms with different effects. They were highly disposable!

Besides, the corresponding metal in the Storm domain is tin. It’s very cheap and worth nothing. The Beyonder effects are bestowed by the Sea God Scepter, so I don’t have to spend any additional money… As Klein mumbled, he reached out to push open the window to his room.

At this moment, the colossal grayish-black monster, which was a combination of flesh, climbed higher again. With its approach, the busy sailors had their hair grow wildly, to the point of exceeding their waists.

This wasn't the most terrifying outcome. It was more harrowing that the blob of flaxen-colored hair seemed to have a life of its own. They would interweave and bind themselves to their owners.

As the hair began to produce similar changes, the lustrous sea of stars on the surface of the Future could no longer hold back this influence.

To a number of pirates who had shaved themselves bald, their uniqueness didn't bring them luck either. Their nose hair would rapidly grow at a discernible pace, blocking their nasal passageways.

By the window of the captain's cabin, Cattleya had raised her arms at some point in time. In her hand was a scroll made of smooth fish skin.

"Numb!"

As the incantation in ancient Hermes resounded while the scroll burned in silence, a light green luster shot out from within, striking the monster's gigantic palm that appeared by the side of the ship.

The squirming flesh formed from countless corpses didn't pause at all. It slammed down on the lustrous sea of stars, sending sparks flying while the ship trembled.

The dark purple color in the depths of Cattleya's eyes deepened. She didn't take out a new scroll, and she instead directly pushed her right palm forward.

"Imprison!"

When the mysterious incantation came out of the pirate admiral's mouth, the resplendent starlight that swirled around her flew out, descending upon the terrifying monster.

The starlight instantly converged, creating a gigantic, transparent amber. It enclosed all of the squirming flesh and bound it to where it was.

At this moment, a pitch-black and lusterless short sword appeared in the Strongest Hunter Anderson's right hand. On the surface of it was layers of diabolical patterns, but they were only an illusion.

Seizing the opportunity of having the terrifying monster trapped in the starlight cage, Anderson's body produced a layer of blinding white flames.

The flames flew forward, leaped out of the ship, and landed on the grayish-black flesh which was formed from countless corpses.

Following that, the blinding white light rapidly flowed across the monster's surface as if it was engaged in painting an extreme piece of artwork.

With a boom, the flames surged into the sky as Anderson jumped back onto the deck with his pitch-black sword.

The colossal monster remained frozen in place, as though it had lost all its vitality.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Deep wounds appeared on its surface, shattering into countless pieces of flesh in just a second.

A Reaper's offensive strength is truly exaggerated… Klein, who had redone his inventory, returned to the side of the window to see this scene.

Suddenly, he frowned indiscernibly.

At this moment, something unexpected happened. The fractured pieces of flesh spread out their "limbs," shooting towards the deck in a barrage of attacks.

This colossal attacher seemed impossible to kill no matter how many pieces it was divided into—the number of pieces determined the number of monsters!

Silently, a piece of grayish-black flesh facing the captain's cabin jumped up from the deck, heading straight for Admiral of Stars in a bid to wrap around her head.

A figure surfaced from the darkness and shielded Cattleya. It was none other than Bloodless Heath Doyle.

He opened his mouth as they cracked open, all the way from his nose to his chest. Soon, he formed a squirming vortex of flesh and blood.

The vortex sucked at the grayish-black flesh and rapidly swirled inwardly, pulling it inside.

Heath Doyle landed on the deck like a shadow. After wavering a little, he finally recovered. As for the grayish-black flesh that had splintered off from the monster, it had completely disappeared.

The most terrifying part of the monster is its ridiculous vitality. If only this trait can be stolen… Having used another Floating charm, Klein floated out the window. He reached out his black-gloved right hand and spread his fingers.

The scene before him changed as a result. Blobs of different, gorgeous colors replaced the corresponding people and items.

These colors kept changing as they rapidly twinkled, making it difficult for anyone to grasp the rules it followed.

With the help of this vision, Klein discovered that the grayish-black flesh shared some of this luster. Although it was splintered, it was actually one.

Calmly, he clenched his right fist, grabbed a blob of the light, and turned his wrist to the right.

Suddenly, Klein saw the yellowish-green luster being drawn away, fusing into his right palm.

This was the corresponding trait of the Fog of Poison.

He had stolen the grayish-black monster's Fog of Poison!

This was Tinder's effect!

At the same time, Klein discovered that his Damage Transfer Beyonder power was lost. He no longer had it!

I can only steal from the same target once every twelve hours… With some level of realization, Klein looked at the surrounded Future. The yellowish-green fog which was corroding the resplendent sea of stars rapidly thinned and no longer looked obvious. The grayish-black flesh that scattered everywhere also showed signs of desiccating and darkening.

With that, the pirates found a chance to catch their breath. As for Cattleya, she wore a golden brooch on the front of her classic robe.

The brooch seemed to be made of gold, and it was shaped like a bird with a long feather tail.

The surrounding atmosphere suddenly turned staid and serene. All the chaos and anxiety vanished in a baffling manner. Even Klein sensed the indescribable influence and felt like he had become an emotionless zombie.

Seeing how the critical moment was at hand, a ship came cruising over.

It was also a sailboat and was equally large. Its color was mainly dark with a ghostly green to it.

Its ghastly pale main sail drew a blooming pitch-black tulip.

It was the flagship of Admiral Hell Ludwell, the Black Tulip!

It was a ship that frequently plied these waters!

Chapter 658 - 55,000 Pounds

◆ ◆ ◆

The Black Tulip… Admiral Hell Ludwell… This is jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire… Aren't we a little too unlucky? Floating in midair, Klein was the first to discover the approaching ship. He couldn't help but turn his head to look down at Anderson, who was wielding his pitch-black sword and seriously observing the monster.

Anderson quickly returned the gaze in puzzlement. As he remained wary against the grayish-black flesh which could shoot out at any moment, he asked, "The look you are giving me is very strange. Did something happen again…"

Just as he said that, he reflexively shut his mouth and sensed something. With a leap, he dodged the monster's splintered body which was making his fingernails rapidly grow. He quickly arrived at the other side of the ship.

As he straightened his back, Anderson suddenly hissed.

"Admiral Hell…"

He wasn't a good person. As a pirate admiral who was infamous for killing indiscriminately, he didn't have any psychological burdens when it came to earning profit by "fishing" in troubled waters.

Once he weighed the situation and realized that he could use the powerful monster to finish off Admiral of Stars and everyone on the Future while also receiving tremendous spoils of war, he would definitely take action!

My bad luck hasn't decreased at all. It has only switched to a lump sum withdrawal? Anderson's expression warped, it was a mystery on whether he was crying or laughing.

At the same time, the corresponding information surfaced in Klein's mind.

Just the bounty placed on Admiral Hell Ludwell's head by Loen alone had reached 55,000 pounds!

He was an extremely powerful member of the Seven Pirate Admirals, the one with the highest bounty among the Seven Pirate Admirals!

His flagship, the Black Tulip, didn't have many pirates living on it. Most of the jobs were left to undead creatures or the spirit world creatures he controlled.

He killed indiscriminately, but he didn't have a sick fetish for killing. All he did was seriously complete his job of sending living creatures to hell.

He had all kinds of connections with the Numinous Episcopate. The rumors state that he possesses a ring left behind by the ancient Death!

While Klein and Anderson were looking at the Black Tulip, the golden brooch on Cattleya's robe began to emit a pure bright light instead of blinding sunlight.

In front of the captain's cabin was a blurry figure that was rapidly increasing in length.

It was filled with the silence and serenity of a specter's aura, but it also emitted a warmth resembling sunlight.

This was an extraordinarily incongruent existence. It was as though a wraith had been created out of Sun Holy Water!

It was both holy and evil!

The Sun Wraith widened its arms as it flew out at ludicrous speeds and hugged the grayish-black flesh.

The sizzling sound of fat and oils burning sounded out. The Sun Wraith and the grayish-black flesh canceled each other out as they were simultaneously obliterated, leaving no traces behind.

The dark purple hue in the Admiral of Stars's eyes flowed as the brooch brightened. It quickly produced another Sun Wraith outside the window of the captain's cabin as it pounced towards the grayish-black flesh that had invaded the Future.

And at this moment, Bloodless Heath Doyle protected Frank, Nina, and the other sailors. He used the devouring and digesting method in order to resist the monster's flesh which possessed immense vitality.

The Black Tulip's speed was faster than Klein had anticipated. In seconds, it had entered a range which was cause for alarm for the Future.

The black sailboat with a gloomy green slowed down and stopped to the side. It didn't seem to be aware of what had happened.

Suddenly, Klein saw a nearly transparent eye surface around the Future's airspace. It had ghastly-pale eye whites as it looked down from above without blinking.

This… is a Spirit Medium's version of a telescope? After a momentary pause, Klein drew his revolver with his right hand and aimed at the eye that belonged to a spirit world creature.

At that moment, he was somewhat hesitant. As the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, to directly fire was the choice that matched his persona the best. But at this moment, Admiral Hell Ludwell had yet to show any signs of animosity. He might have qualms about the faction backing Cattleya and hold back. If Klein were to rashly kill the "telescope," it would undoubtedly push the situation into the direction of a more chaotic and dangerous development!

During that brief dilemma, the nearly transparent illusory eye vanished. A distance away, the Black Tulip continued approaching as it became clearer and clearer.

High above the Black Tulip, white skeletons, who didn't wear clothes or leather armor, busily controlled the sails while pale zombies patrolled the area with cutlasses in hand. The latter were observing their surroundings with green burning eyes. Shadows, wraiths, and all sorts of strange spirit world creatures were flying in circles, boring through the ship at times as the shipboard protruded transparent faces that weren't too obvious.

Amidst Klein's Spirit Vision, the Black Tulip only had one living person. It was the man dressed like a captain, who was silently standing on the deck.

He wore an exaggerated triangular hat with a white skull and feathers on it. He wore a lace-trimmed white shirt and a heavy and magnificent brown coat. The ox-hide belt which held his white tights had a thin rapier hanging off it.

The man wore a silver mask. His facial features and contours were hidden within. The holes that depicted his eyes, nose, and mouth had cold lines that left one shuddering.

This matched the rumored image of Admiral Hell Ludwell!

Where are his first mate, second mate, third mate, and boatswain? Klein was first surprised at the lack of living personnel on the Black Tulip before quickly coming to a realization.

Just like how the third mate, the gunner commander, and many of the sailors of the Future were sent to the other ships of the pirate crew, only the minimum number of personnel were used to enter these waters. Admiral Hell Ludwell didn't let his "weak" subordinates follow him. After all, he could control the undead and spirit world creatures to steer the ship.

At this moment, the Black Tulip clearly turned around and aimed its starboard side over.

As Admiral Hell Ludwell touched his silver mask, a salvo of shots rang out.

Cannonballs flew over, some falling into the sea before they came close, producing splashes; others overshot and fell somewhere even further away.

This was a calibration shot!

Soon, the Black Tulip produced a second volley of bombarding cannon fire.

Klein was just about to activate Creeping Hunger and use the Baron of Corruption's Distortion power to change the target of the cannonballs, sending them further away when he saw Anderson Hood raise his right hand and push it forward.

Orange-yellow Fire Ravens instantly condensed as they accurately flew out to intercept each and every cannonball!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Blinding flames were emitted in midair as debris scattered, it was as though dozens of fireworks were set on display.

I have to say that a Pyromaniac's powers are very useful at sea. It's a mystic version of a ballistic missile defense system. However, this is because Anderson is the Strongest Hunter and has already reached Sequence 5. If it were Danitz, there's no way he could block them all. It would be pretty impressive if he could trigger half of them… Sigh, when I use Flame Controlling, I can only deal with one cannonball at a time… As Klein sighed, the Black Tulip ceased its bombardment and changed its speed again, closing the gap between it and the Future.

As it approached, the surface of the sea between the two gigantic sailboats which was dyed with golden sunlight rapidly turned black. It didn't look like ink, but the darkest night without any moon or stars.

Translucent and illusory ferocious creatures crawled out of this dark sea. Pale corpses reached out their palms which had rotten flesh dangling from them as dark red or cold flames emerged, forming pairs of eyes.

Suddenly, the area seemed to turn into the entrance to hell. All kinds of undead creatures floated on the surface of the sea in dense numbers as they charged forward like an unending tidal wave.

Anderson looked back at the Sun Wraiths which were obliterating the grayish-black flesh, and he knew that Admiral of Stars was at a critical moment in dealing with the terrifying monster. All he could do was draw a gasp and look up at Gehrman Sparrow with a bitter smile.

Just as he was about to press his hands onto the shipboard to create scarlet flames that spread outwards to prevent the invasion of the undead army, he was surprised to see Gehrman Sparrow turn around and fly back into his cabin.

H-he fled? No way… Anderson's expression clearly froze.

He grimaced as he hurriedly leaned forward with his extended palms to press onto the shipboard.

Silently, a swath of scarlet flames soared into the sky and swept the area ahead of him.

At this moment, a charm suddenly fell in front of him as he heard a word spoken in ancient Hermes.

"Storm!"

Huh? Anderson instinctively looked up and saw Gehrman Sparrow in his round neck shirt and brown jacket being swept up by a squall as he rapidly flew towards the Black Tulip.

I-is he committing suicide? I can’t understand such madness… Anderson turned agape as he felt puzzled.

Whoosh!

With the charm’s effects and the blessings of the wind, Klein flew to the airspace above the bow of the Black Tulip.

Admiral Hell Ludwell immediately looked up at him. The eyes behind the silver mask burned silently with two pale-white flames.

The shadows, wraiths, and the spirit world creatures of the Death domain who were spiraling above the Black Tulip immediately swarmed towards the enemy.

They either opened their mouths, letting out silence screeches, or they extended their long tongues with shrunken faces as though they were extremely excited.

Klein looked at them with a deadpan expression as he reached into his pocket with his left hand, releasing the wall of spirituality on a squarish box.

Then, he took out Azik’s copper whistle, which was tied to a few matchsticks, and threw them at the deck of the Black Tulip’s stern.

Suddenly, the transparent, cold, and indistinct shadows and wraiths paused. It was as though they were frozen worms.

Following that, they didn’t hesitate to turn their bodies to rapidly fly to the stern of the Black Tulip. The strange-looking spirit world creatures followed closely behind.

In less than a second, the skeletons and zombies who were adjusting the cannons betrayed Admiral Hell. The bow was left completely empty except for Ludwell.

Pa!

Klein landed on the deck while pressing down on his cap, landing right before Ludwell.

His body was bent slightly as he released the right hand on his cap, his gaze locked on the silver-masked Admiral Hell.

Chapter 659 - This Beyonder Power is Very Powerful

◆ ◆ ◆

On the Future, Anderson Hood pressed his hands on the shipboard and saw the undead army in the pitch-black sea recede like the tide. They rushed over one another and surged for the stern of the Black Tulip. He saw Gehrman Sparrow press his cap with his right hand while he descended from the sky before landing opposite Admiral Hell Ludwell.

Such a scene was illuminated by dark red or gloomy green light. With the accentuation from the wraiths, shadows, and all sorts of strange spirit world creatures, there was an indescribable sense of beauty.

Cool! As expected of the craziest adventurer… Anderson praised from the bottom of his heart before recalling something.

Gehrman Sparrow had apparently thrown a charm in front of him before flying over. Furthermore, he had specially demonstrated the incantation to activate the charm!

His intent is… Anderson Hood moved his gaze down and discovered a charm made of tin at his feet.

On the Black Tulip, Klein, whose body was slightly bent while his eyes were locked onto his enemy, wasn't actually as cold and calm as his expression depicted.

Anderson better fly over with the charm. There's a high chance that I can't deal with him alone. It might even be very dangerous… While his eyes reflected the silver mask and the two pale-white flames, Klein silently prayed.

As the mysterious eyes that observed the deck and himself existed, as well as the door opener in the dream world which Anderson Hood had mentioned, he cautiously gave up the idea of immediately praying to himself in order to use the Sea God Scepter above the gray fog to respond. He also warned himself not to expose such matters unless he was in dire straits.

He believed that Creeping Hunger and Tinder, together with the various Beyonder powers of Magician and the charms of the Sea God domain, gave him the ability to fight Admiral Hell Ludwell. As for Azik's copper whistle, it could attract undead creatures or spirit world creatures that were inclined to Death's domain. It could neutralize the most powerful means of a powerful Spirit Medium. For a Sequence 5 Beyonder of the Death pathway, as long as it didn't exceed a certain number, one would often choose to overwhelm their enemy with numbers when facing a certain number of Mid-Sequence Beyonders.

However, Klein didn't believe that he alone could defeat Ludwell in such a situation or even kill him. Firstly, the battlefield would be held on the Black Tulip. Considering how Admiral of Stars could use the Future, anyone with a brain knew that such a situation wasn't optimistic. Secondly, Ludwell was the most senior pirate admiral at the moment. He had the two powerful factions, the King of the Five Seas and the Numinous Episcopate, backing him. The mystical items and Sealed Artifacts he had might not be any weaker than Klein's or might even exceed his. In addition, many rumors indicated that he possessed a ring that was left behind by the ancient Death!

Along with the fact that his Sequence was lower than Admiral Hell, Klein was not only lacking in the adrenaline of a pending successful hunt or of performing great acting in the role of a crazy adventurer, but he was also tense and anxious. He didn't dare to be careless. All he wished was that the Strongest Hunter who was plagued with bad luck would quickly fly over.

Only when two people of equivalent strength allied together could they have a small chance of defeating or resisting Ludwell, who had lost his undead army. It also gave Cattleya and her pirates time and space to finish off the pieced-together monster.

Just as this thought flashed across his mind, Klein didn't hesitate to launch an attack. He made the Fog of Poison which he stole with Tinder spread.

No one could see the uneasiness and worry in his heart.

Wearing an exaggerated triangular hat and silver mask, Ludwell raised his clenched left fist, spread his fingers, and aimed his palm at Klein.

Instantly, the deck of the bow was enveloped by a harrowing yellowish-green fog. And in front of Ludwell, an illusory glow exploded. Following that, a point spiraled and collapsed inwardly, outlining a blurry bronze door whose two sides swung open.

The bronze door was covered in all sorts of mysterious patterns. It had an indescribable heaviness and silence to it.

With a creak, the door shook and cracked open a little.

Behind the gap was endless darkness, as though it was the deepest and darkest night.

Indescribable pairs of eyes were hidden in the darkness behind the door. They were densely packed and everywhere, but it was impossible to discern their actual bodies.

Skinless arms covered in blood, along with greenish-black vines with baby faces reached out. Palms with mouths filled with teeth grabbed at everything beyond the door as they screamed, laughed, sobbed, yelled.

This brought a terrifying suction force. Out of nowhere, cold hurricanes that sent chills down the bone stirred, pushing objects towards these strange creatures and the gap in the bronze door!

The yellowish-green Fog of Poison was instantly cleared as Klein couldn't help but lean forward as he stumbled.

The glove on his left palm immediately turned pitch-black. It had the sinister feel of the night and the grandeur of the cosmos.

Klein's brown eyes darkened as he spread out his left arm to the side in a gesture of politeness.

The terrifying suction force that swept the bow's deck suddenly changed direction, "grabbing" the skeletons and rotting zombies that were rushing to the stern, and it threw them into the gap of the door. They were bound by the greenish-black, baby-faced vines and bloody arms and were pulled behind the bronze door where the countless eyes were.

"Distortion!"

Baron of Corruption's Distortion!

Klein had distorted the target of the mysterious door, and he used the skeletons and zombies on the Black Tulip to substitute himself.

Despite that, he was still affected by the remnant forces of the tremendous suction force. He found it difficult to take a step, preventing him from fully making use of his nimble and agile traits.

The cap he wore had already been blown up by the hurricane and was spinning in midair. It seemed to take flight as it pursued the undead creatures that had been sucked away.

At this moment, Admiral Hell Ludwell, who wore his exaggerated triangular hat, raised his right hand again and extended his palm.

The right side of his upper body rapidly turned illusory, as though it belonged to that of a specter or wraith. His arm kept extending and instantly covered quite a significant distance as his pale palm grabbed at his enemy.

Whoosh!

The noise from the hurricane suddenly vanished as soft sobbing sounds drilled into Klein's ears, causing his body to turn numb, as though his blood had frozen.

As the pale palm approached, he seemed to be possessed by a wraith or evil spirit. He couldn't produce an effective response as he watched death approach. In despair, he felt his vitality deplete at an increasing rate.

Without any resistance, Ludwell's pale and illusory right palm grabbed Klein and squashed him into a thin paper figurine.

The paper figurine was covered with signs of dark green corrosion. Soon, it was shredded to dust under the hurricane that never stopped.

To the side of the bronze door, Klein's figure surfaced again. His left glove had already been dyed with the color of pure sunlight.

He immediately straightened his body and spread open his arms.

Golden flames swirled around a pillar of holy light that descended from the sky, striking the bronze door which was covered in mysterious patterns.

Sunlight suddenly burst out, and it was so blinding that it made it almost impossible for Klein to open his eyes. As for the terrifying door which Ludwell had created, it had begun shaking and turning slightly blurry. Even the extraordinary suction force from behind the door had weakened. More than half the greenish-black baby-faced vines and the bloody arms were vaporized.

However, even more strange arms and distorted creatures attempted to squeeze out from the opening in the door.

Just as Klein was about to continue using the Priest of Light's Light of Purification to purify the bronze door, Ludwell's pale palm swiped down wildly.

Klein hurriedly dodged to the side as he kept rolling to avoid the remnant effects of the hurricane and the soul-sucking palm.

One roll, two rolls, three rolls, and his body abruptly bounced up in a diagonal fashion. At some moment in time, Creeping Hunger had already appeared to be made of gold.

Admiral Hell's silver mask was the first thing that was reflected in Klein's eyes. It included the pale flames in his eye sockets. Following that, two bolts of lightning brightened from the depths of his eyes.

Interrogator's Psychic Piercing!

At this moment, a black, square-shaped ring on Ludwell's left index finger produced a slight glow.

Immediately a scene appeared in Klein's mind.

It was a gigantic throne that was made up of the rotting heads of creatures like humans, elves, giants, dragons, demonic wolves, sea monsters, and vampires. On each side, there would be miniature transparent faces of wraiths, shadows, and evil spirits. They were filled with hatred, viciousness, and indignation.

Suddenly, Klein felt as though his head had been struck by an axe. The fearsome pain filled his mind without any delay.

His Psychic Piercing had not only failed to show its effects, but it had even ended up affecting him in an amplified manner!

If not for him having experienced more extreme pain, Klein definitely would've fallen to the ground, wailing and struggling. But even so, he temporarily lost his ability to resist as he bent his back with a grimace.

Seizing this opportunity, the gap where Ludwell's mouth was, a slow language that ordinary living creatures were unable to understand was emanated. The surroundings instantly turned dark, blurry, and illusory.

This was the Language of Death that came from hell and the Underworld!

Just as Klein felt a little better, he discovered that his Spirit Body was floating up uncontrollably, separating from his body, inch by inch!

And the terrifying suction force from the bronze door was an irresistible force to the spirit.

No, this won't do! While his Spirit Body hadn't completely left his body, Klein raised his right arm and spread his hand which was wearing Tinder with great difficulty.

Different lustrous glows instantly interweaved as they surfaced before him and kept changing and rapidly flickered.

Without any hesitation, Klein grabbed onto a pale-white blob swirling with a gloomy green color. He twisted his wrist and extracted it.

In this battle, the Beyonder power he wished to steal the most was the one that created the bronze door, but he couldn't guarantee his success. All he could do was seek the blessings of the Goddess.

The lustrous glow flew over and landed in Tinder.

However, this wasn't the Beyonder power that Klein wanted the most. However, it wasn't the worst either.

The mouth behind Ludwell's silver mask moved, but it wasn't able to produce the sluggish, awkward language that was destined for the living to not understand.

At the same time, Klein opened his mouth.

Chapter 660 - Behind the Mask

◆

One syllable after another of distorted, incomprehensible, jarring, and indecipherable words slowly spewed out of Klein’s mouth. It made the hurricane produced by the bronze door’s terrifying suction force to instantly calm down, cloaking the already dim surroundings with a deeper gloom.

Only at this moment did he know that the Beyonder power which Admiral Hell Ludwell had just used was known as the Language of the Dead. It could circumvent the protection of one’s flesh and blood, so as to target the Spirit Body.

It belonged to an advancement in a Spirit Medium’s powers. It could go from direct communication with spirits to that of commandeering, to the point of enslavement!

Living creatures were unable to understand the resounding language. Ludwell couldn’t help but freeze on the spot. A transparent layer rapidly surfaced on his pirate captain attire.

His spirit was being tugged at by an illusory power!

At this moment, the black, square-shaped ring on Ludwell’s left index finger produced a faint glow.

The minute portion of his Spirit Body which had been forcefully drawn out had returned to his body as the two fused back into one.

Ding!

With his right hand, Ludwell drew the thin rapier hanging by his waist.

It was iron-black in color, and its tip gathered the surrounding light, turning into a dark point.

Admiral Hell suddenly took a step forward and with vigorous wind currents, he suddenly closed the distance between him and Klein. Immediately, he thrust out the rapier in his hand at lightning speed!

The bronze door which was covered with mysterious patterns remained standing erected in its original spot. It didn't vanish because of Ludwell's retracting of his left hand and subsequent actions. This was different from the similar-looking ability that Miss Sharron had previously cast using a mystical item.

Oof!

The black rapier pierced through Klein in an unavoidable manner.

Klein's figure rapidly crumpled into a piece of paper. Its surface turned yellow and dry, as though it had been weathered for thousands of years.

The hurricane brought about by the bronze door completely pulverized the paper figurine.

In midair, Klein jumped out of the darkness as he held a huge handful of charms from the Sea God domain.

"Storm!"

He quickly shouted in ancient Hermes as the tin flakes lit up individually as they sacrificed themselves to Sea God. This also meant that if Klein wished so, he could recycle most of the materials and use it multiple times until the metals could no longer withstand the spirituality.

Whoosh!

Blue wind blades shot out as the surrounding waters sprayed out heavy waves that were as tall as the ship. As Klein didn't attempt or have the time to distinguish between the different kinds of charms, while these attacks inundated Ludwell, the extraordinary effects also augmented Admiral Hell. He was given augmented effects like Underwater Breathing, underwater mobility, flight, and pressure resistance, none of which were useful at that moment.

Ludwell suddenly opened his mouth and produced a silent screech. He then struck the waves beside him as countless wind blades temporarily froze in midair.

Immediately following that, Admiral Hell raised his left hand as the black, square-shaped ring on his index finger produced a sinister and eerie glow that instantly brightened.

Whoosh!

The bronze door, which exuded an indescribable feeling, instantly swelled as it doubled in height and width.

Amidst a heavy creaking sound, the gap in the door opened up. The already terrifying suction force immediately rose to an unimaginable level.

Blue wind blades and black sea waves were produced as Klein charged at the door from the air, heading straight for the strange vines and arms that extended outwards.

Klein had planned on using the Priest of Light by clashing head-on with the bronze door with Light of Holiness to catch a breather, but he ended up seeing a glaring white fireball about half the height of a person fly over.

The fireball's speed was augmented by the ridiculous suction forces generated by the door. It flew by Klein and smashed at the gap of the mysterious door.

Boom!

The white flames scattered as they rained down, but all it did was make the bronze door quake a little and dim a little.

Klein took the opportunity and snapped his fingers.

The few matchsticks he separated in his pockets immediately lit up as scarlet flames rapidly enveloped his body as he melted away.

A flame burst out by the side of the bronze door as Klein leaped out of it.

He instantly noticed that Anderson Hood was floating in midair in a rather awkward manner. He held a burning-white spear in his palm.

The Strongest Hunter had finally arrived, but he just appeared unaccustomed to flying.

When Ludwell looked up and saw this scene, the pale-white flames behind the silver mask clearly jumped twice.

Clearly, he never expected that the Future had two other powerhouses at the pirate admiral level apart from Admiral of Stars Cattleya. Furthermore, they wielded pretty good mystical items and Sealed Artifacts.

At this moment, Ludwell suddenly raised his hand and pressed down on his face, surprisingly taking off his silver mask.

Heavy, pale-white light suddenly spewed out from behind the mask, causing endless silence to instantly spread out from the black, square-shaped ring on Ludwell's left index finger.

The silence surged into the bronze door and lifted it off the deck and into the air.

The door covered in mysterious patterns fused with the endless silence as it rapidly burgeoned to more than thirty meters tall.

With the sea as its base, it stood there, erect like an entrance to another world, one completely different from the present world.

Creak!

The bronze door opened as unspeakable darkness surged out and enveloped the Black Tulip's bow.

Upon seeing this, Klein didn't focus on his attacks as he quickly took out the correct charm and rapidly used it on himself.

A strong gust of wind swept over and lifted him above the Black Tulip.

With the pull of the darkness, the gigantic sailboat steered into the bronze door, ten meters a time, as it sailed into another world.

Admiral Hell Ludwell stood at the bow as he looked up into the sky. His face was blanketed by the pale-white luster, preventing anyone from discerning his looks.

His gaze first swept past Klein before landing on Anderson Hood. He seemed to make a mental note of these two hunters, but he didn't make any further attempts to attack. He seemed to have been restrained by the surrounding darkness.

Anderson was taken aback as he didn't hesitate to throw out the burning-white spear in his hand.

The spear shot straight at Ludwell, but once it entered the region enclosed by darkness and silence, it silently vanished.

Ludwell is planning to escape? How decisive… Klein was first stunned before he recalled that Azik's copper whistle was still on the Black Tulip.

With the gigantic sailboat halfway inside the bronze door and about to enter another world with no way to stop them, Klein threw a matchstick and snapped his fingers.

He appeared fifty meters above the stern where the undead creatures were fighting for Azik's copper whistle. This item which kept changing hands finally burst into a scarlet flame due to the matchsticks tied to it.

Amidst the flames, Klein's figure surfaced there and grabbed Azik's copper whistle.

This was the preparations that he had made for retrieving the copper whistle!

Furthermore, to prevent any mishaps from happening, such as the matchsticks being pulled away by the undead creatures, he had also coated the copper whistle with an easily flammable essential oil of the sun!

Pa!

Surrounded by countless undead, Klein didn't have the luxury of time to retract his hand that grabbed the copper whistle. He immediately snapped his fingers again.

At this moment, transparent, rotting, pale, or illusory hands grabbed him!

The matchstick Klein had previously thrown into the air ignited in midair as it produced a flame.

His figure quickly materialized amidst the flames. His face was livid and his lips were white.

Having been grabbed by countless shadows, wraiths, and undead creatures, Klein felt that the depths of his Spirit Body was ice-cold. He couldn't control his body as he plummeted into the sea dyed in gold.

With the Black Tulip almost completely crossing the bronze door, the sea which appeared like an entrance to hell had been restored to normal.

Klein sank a few meters and swallowed a few mouthfuls of bitter and astringent seawater before he ultimately recovered.

Thankfully I was sufficiently prepared… As this thought flashed past his mind, he suddenly felt something amiss.

By wearing the Murloc Cufflink, he had the passive ability to breathe underwater for ten minutes. He shouldn't have drank mouthfuls of water!

Klein suddenly turned his head and looked at his wrist, only to realize that the blue cufflink had detached itself at some point in time.

It's lost… Tinder lost it… I was on the Black Tulip the entire time… Klein splashed a few times and floated to the surface, just in time to see the gigantic sailboat's tail meld into the darkness as the bronze door slowly closed.

He instinctively swam forward a few seconds before ultimately stopping. He selected one of his remaining charms and gave himself the Beyonder effect of Underwater Breathing.

In midair, Anderson Hood clicked his tongue when he saw this.

"This fellow is really crazy…

"He's actually trying to engage in pursuit!"

At this moment, the starlight above the Future fell and condensed into a long bridge that extended over.

Cattleya had finally finished off the grayish-black monster with immense vitality!

What a pity. If only Admiral Hell had hesitated a little and didn't flee in such a timely fashion… Anderson Hood sighed silently and firmly landed on the star bridge.

As he watched Gehrman Sparrow fly over, he was just about to greet and praise him when he saw the cold and gloomy expression.

Anderson instinctively made way and chuckled dryly, allowing Gehrman Sparrow to walk past him.

After returning to the Future via the star bridge, Klein held back his effusing emotions and watched Frank Lee walk over and give him a thumbs up.

“You’re the craziest fellow I’ve ever met!

“You actually dared to board the Black Tulip alone and single-handedly challenge Admiral Hell. You even returned alive!”

Sorry, in terms of craziness, I’m far inferior to you… Klein thought in response.

At this moment, pirates with long or disheveled hair expressed their astonishment and amazement.

In such an atmosphere, Klein closed his eyes and felt his Faceless potion completely digest.

Chapter 661 - Approaching

◆ ◆ ◆

Frank Lee sensed the Gehrman Sparrow's abnormality as he added with a chuckle, "I had planned on providing you some help by throwing some seeds over. Unfortunately, I have no way to throw that far."

Throw some seeds at the Black Tulip? These waters have the remnant auras of Earth Mother. Beyonder matters in the corresponding domain would mutate and would attack everyone, without identifying friend from foe… I was on the Black Tulip at that moment… Thankfully, you didn't throw them… Klein suddenly recalled the tragic state the Future had been placed in moments ago and how the dead pirate had grown a watermelon on his head.

Just as he was about to give a minced answer to match Gehrman Sparrow's persona, he suddenly saw Heath Doyle appear from the shadows, bending his back to vomit.

This Bloodless retched first before his knees went limp as he knelt on the deck.

Ugh! Ugh!

He finally vomited a pool of yellowish-green liquid. Amidst it was a piece of half-rotten grayish-black flesh which was still squirming a little.

Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

Heath Doyle continued vomiting similar items.

Upon seeing this, other than feeling somewhat disgusted, Klein felt significantly relieved. He was originally worried that Rose Bishop Heath Doyle had been corrupted from randomly eating things. But from the looks of it, he had likely isolated what he had eaten without truly digesting it.

As expected of a Rose Bishop who isn't mad… Klein silently sighed.

Just as he was planning to look away from the vomit, thoughts suddenly flashed in his mind.

Creeping Hunger has already been activated. It needs to be "fed" once within a day. And there aren't any outsiders here. There's also no ideal scum… The pirate who died won't do. Although his partners might not put too much weight on his corpse, Creeping Hunger devours the soul…

I wonder if these pieces of flesh can be treated as "food." At the very least, it contains a tremendous amount of vitality, a corpse that has been influenced by Earth Mother's aura…

With this in mind, Klein took two steps forward and came beside Heath Doyle.

He couldn't bear to look at the puddle of vomit as he instinctively cast his gaze aside towards the grand sea which reflected the sunlight beyond the shipboard.

Then, he reached out to a piece of grayish-black flesh with his left hand.

Creeping Hunger didn't react as it didn't crack open a mouth.

Looks like it doesn't wish to eat it… For now, I can only barely use it to deal with any latent dangers. If I'm still unable to find any suitable food when the day is almost up, I'll throw it above the gray fog… Klein helplessly retracted his hand as he looked up at the captain's cabin.

The golden brooch in front of Cattleya bloomed with light once again, materializing a Sun Wraith that cleansed the pieces of grayish-black flesh from Heath Doyle.

This pirate admiral’s expression didn’t seem to change. She only looked slightly tired as the purple hue in her eyes became increasingly obvious.

After confirming that the ship had set sail again, Klein didn’t stay any longer as he prepared to return to his room to change out of his drenched clothes.

Anderson glanced at him and curiously opened his mouth.

“Shut up!” Klein spoke out before he could.

The turn of events had made him lose his Murloc Cufflink; therefore, he progressively found the person plagued with bad luck as a sore sight. He was just short of defining him as food for Creeping Hunger.

“…Alright.” Anderson raised his arms. “I’ll just drink in silence.”

Klein ignored him and entered the cabin before returning to his room.

Inside his bathroom, he picked up a Water Creation charm and activated it with ancient Hermes. With a tub of clean water, he took off all his clothes and slid in.

The ice-cold sensation and the warm sunshine significantly soothed him. He picked up a pen and paper he brought from his desk and wrote down a divination statement: “The location of the Murloc Cufflink.”

After reciting it seven times, Klein completely leaned down, using the front of the bathtub as a pillow before entering a dream.

Amidst a grayish blur and a disconnected illusory world, he saw a zombie rotting in several parts of the deck. The blue Murloc Cufflink was embedded in the flesh of the zombie’s left waist.

Apart from the deck, it was pitch-black. It was impossible to tell where the ship was.

It really is on the Black Tulip… Klein opened his eyes and came to the conclusion.

I hope Admiral Hell wouldn't discover it. This way, I can use this cufflink to lock onto the Black Tulip's location…

It's not a big problem, even if he discovers it. As long as Ludwell doesn't throw the cufflink away, and there isn't too much of a delay in time, I can use it to locate his ship. However, the place to do the divination will have to be above the gray fog instead of the real world.

Also, I need to perform divination disruption later to prevent Admiral Hell from locking onto me with the cufflink or even being able to curse me.

That ring really seems like an item left behind by the ancient Death. Yes, I should write to Mr. Azik and inform him of this. Klein quickly rinsed his body and walked out of the bathtub.

After wiping himself dry, he switched into the Loen gentleman suit from before. He first adjusted his inventory and washed his clothes before unfolding a piece of paper, taking out Azik's copper whistle.

Standing beside the desk and looking at the objects on it, Klein hesitated when he extended his right hand.

The light in his eyes flickered before he put away Azik's copper whistle and placed it into a small metallic box. He then isolated its aura with a wall of spirituality.

He planned on summoning the messenger only after he left these waters and the Future.

I suffered quite a huge loss this time. Thankfully, I finished digesting the Faceless potion. I can now just wait for the appearance of mermaids…

Yes… The actual situation of this battlefield of gods is different from what I imagined. It actually has the aura of Earth Mother…

It must've been left behind later; otherwise, it's impossible that a deity can't control "Her" own aura.

None of the eight ancient gods in the Second Epoch wielded the authority of the Earth domain…

There are some suspects among "Their" subsidiary gods, such as Giant Queen, Goddess of Harvest Omebella, or Goddess of Life who's subsidiary to Vampire Ancestor Lilith.

This is a battle with subsidiary gods participating, or it really wasn't something from the Second Epoch? Klein knew too little about the battlefield of the gods, so he could only mainly guess and have some fanciful thoughts.

He focused again as he began cutting some paper figurines and drew The Fool's symbol of concealment and change on them.

Pa!

Klein raised the paper figurine and shook it.

Flames appeared out of thin air as the paper figurine burnt to a crisp.

By doing this, he could obtain the desired effects to a certain extent. If he wished for better effects, he had to go above the gray fog to respond. He could use the Black Emperor's card to stir the powers of the mysterious space, coupled with the paper angel to provide protection.

With Azik's copper whistle and Will Auceptin's paper crane interfering with a suspected existence's spying, Klein returned to the bathroom and methodically finished what he needed to do.

After tidying up the room, he put on Creeping Hunger and Tinder, and he slowly walked to the deck, prepared to seriously observe his surroundings, so as to not miss any clues of mermaids.

Just as he left the cabin, he saw a seated Anderson Hood leaning against a wooden alcohol barrel. He had a gloomy expression as his aura was converged. It was as though he was in thought or feeling melancholic.

He really kept to his promise and has been silently drinking? Klein mumbled to himself as he passed by Anderson.

Anderson slowly looked up and asked as though he was in a reverie, “Is there a problem with the alcohol here?”

Klein was taken aback as he seriously replied, “Yes.”

“…” Anderson fell speechless.

This fellow is just too unlucky. His Beyonder powers had even failed him to the point of him not detecting the problem with the alcohol? The corners of Klein’s lips twitched as he continued forward.

On the deck, many sailors were gathered together, watching Nina take on the duty as a Lord of Storms priest. She was holding a wake for the recently deceased pirate.

After a simple prayer, Nina looked around and said, “Revere’s wish was to be buried on the mountain at his port hometown after his death. There’s the most beautiful sunset there.

“He wishes to be cremated so that he wouldn’t be disturbed after his death.

“Holy Lord of Storms, bless him with eternal peace.” Many of the sailors believed in the Lord of Storms as they struck their left breast with their right fists.

Klein didn’t approach as he silently watched this scene from a distance.

After the wake was over, the corpse of the pirate, Revere, was reduced to ashes with the help of a scroll. Klein silently sighed as he inwardly drew a crimson moon.

For the rest of the day, the sunlight remained brilliant as it continued being midday. The Future circled around several ruins as it ventured deeper into those waters.

At some point in time, Anderson had recovered and arrived beside Klein.

He shot him a glance and pointed to the buildings that were submerged ahead.

“After passing this ruin and heading about ten nautical miles with a left turn, there will be a chance of encountering mermaids.”

Finally… Klein was just about to answer when the sky suddenly darkened. The sunlight subsequently vanished.

Night had fallen again.

Without another word, he returned to his room and got into bed.

Soon, he found himself awake in his dream. Clean floor-to-ceiling windows stood before him. There were also neatly arranged tables and chairs, as well as bookshelves filled with books.

He had returned to the spot from where he had previously left the dream. He was back in the library.

As the glow of the sunset shot in, it cloaked every object with a faint layer of gold. Klein walked forward in puzzlement and came before the bookshelf he previously browsed.

Unsurprisingly, he saw Book of Charms and other books on mysticism.

Klein planned on taking out the book again and quickly read through it when his gaze suddenly swept across a bookshelf opposite him. He saw a black-covered book with the title: Roselle’s Notebook 3!

The emperor’s diary? An entire diary? Klein subconsciously wanted to extend his hand.

At this moment, the pair of mysterious eyes that observed the deck and himself flashed in his mind, along with the individual who opened the door in the hall of murals that Anderson Hood had mentioned, as well as how he was abnormally moved about in the dream.

Klein retracted his gaze and took out the Book of Charms again.

He came to a long table, sat down, and began quickly browsing through it.

Suddenly, he heard footsteps approaching from the depths of the library.

Klein instantly tensed up as he slowly lifted his head.

The first thing that he saw was a pair of black leather boots.

Chapter 662 - Powerful Aura

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As his gaze moved up, Klein roughly guessed the owner of those footsteps.

She was a woman wearing beige trousers that made it easy to move about. She wore a pair of long black leather boots, but on her body was a light brown skirt that reached her knees. The hemline fell down diagonally and in layers, giving an unrestrained and cool vibe to her.

Such a getup made Klein feel as though he had returned to Earth. This was because be it Loen, Intis or Feysac, Feynapotter, Lenburg, Masin, East Balam, and other countries, none of them had popularized such styles!

Klein lifted his head faster and finally saw the lady's appearance.

She had long chestnut hair that naturally cascaded down. Her straight eyelashes extended out just perfectly. Her deep blue eyes were deep and profound, as though it hid an ocean in them.

She had outstanding beauty, but that wasn't the most eye-catching thing of all. Her actions naturally effused a sense of nobility. She gave off a strong impression at how she had enjoyed having the status of being someone important for extended periods of time. Klein subconsciously tried to bow his head to avoid meeting her gaze.

Furthermore, she's very tall. She's almost as tall as my state as Klein Moretti… Klein suddenly added inwardly.

After completely digesting the Faceless potion, he came to a realization that one's self was an amalgamation of personality, experiences, knowledge, and social connections. His looks and build could be changed at will; therefore, as long as he knew who he was, he didn't mind using the word "state" to describe the characteristics of each of his different identities. After all, every Faceless change could be fixed without any additional maintenance. That also meant that, even without the corresponding Beyonder powers, he could still maintain his external appearance as Gehrman Sparrow.

And because of that, he could easily make Klein Moretti grow taller if he wanted.

Tap. Tap. Tap. The lady, who exuded the feeling of looking down from above, walked in front of Klein. She pulled out a chair and sat down.

"We meet again," the lady said with a gentle and emotionless tone.

The way she speaks sounds familiar… Klein's mind whirled as he remembered the source of the sense of familiarity.

The scene of her arrival immediately resonated in his mind, and he finally fixated on that pair of black leather boots!

It's… It's her! Klein suddenly recalled the relevant scenes.

Back when he used his Spirit Body state to infiltrate the Royal Museum and retrieve the Black Emperor card, he had encountered a demigod. She had been sitting at the top of a wooden staircase in the middle of two large bookshelves. Her black leather boots back then were dangling in the air!

He changed back into his identity as Sherlock Moriarty and shouted for help when he was being pursued by the Devil dog. Midway, he encountered a forest path formed from green pea vines. He had no choice but to follow the carriage up into midair where he saw the pea vines interweave to form a hammock and a pair of black leather boots!

It’s her! Why would she appear in this dream world and these waters? B-besides, she said, “we meet again.” I’m Gehrman Sparrow right now! Amidst his thoughts, Klein replied with a deadpan expression, “We haven’t met before.”

So what if you’re a demigod? As long as you aren’t an angel, I can use the Sea God Scepter to resist you in this dream world! Klein encouraged himself in secret.

The lady with long eyebrows sat there and lifted her chin as she observed Klein for two seconds.

“Is that so? Mr. Hero Bandit Black Emperor…”

Klein’s thoughts erupted with a boom as if he had been struck by lightning. His thoughts were reduced to countless fragments that were left in shambles and chaos without any main line of thought.

S-she knows that I’m Hero Bandit Black Emperor?

She recognized me as the Spirit Body who originally stole the Card of Blasphemy from the Royal Museum?

H-how is this possible!?

Wait, why did she directly address me as Hero Bandit Black Emperor. If she had used Sherlock Moriarty, I would be even more astounded, and I might even fail to hide the change in my expressions…

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein instinctively controlled his facial muscles and calmly said, “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

The lady, who wore clothes that were different from the present fashion trends, didn’t repeat her words or explain anything. Instead, she said in a direct manner, “Your identity as Gehrman Sparrow was provided by me.”

"…"

Klein instantly felt his scalp tingle. He felt as though he didn't have a single secret when facing her.

This identity of Gehrman Sparrow was created through the use of Miss Sharron's resource channels… This demigod lady is one of them?

Right, Miss Sharron had previously mentioned that someone in her circles had been investigating the true identity of Hero Bandit Black Emperor and had promised to fulfill any reasonable request in exchange. For ingredients, it was limited to those below that of High-Sequence Beyonder ingredients…

According to Miss Sharron's description, the person who offered the mission was more than 1.7 meters tall, with a very proportionate body and long chestnut hair. She liked wearing black leather boots. Man… isn't that the person before me… Back then, I even suspected if she was the demigod whom I met in the Royal Museum. Furthermore, she knew very well that I had taken the Black Emperor card…

Thoughts flashed past as Klein was temporarily at a loss for words. All he could do was maintain his silence.

The lady whose chin wasn't sharp and was a little rounded didn't harp on Gehrman Sparrow's identity. She looked out at the frozen sunset and said, "While you were in the Rorsted Archipelago, Nast Solomon's Black Emperor also appeared in those waters.

"I believe you know what that means, Mr. Hero Bandit."

Realizing how she wasn't exposing his identity and was even giving him clues and evidence, Klein could only twitch the corner of his lips and say, "Law of Beyonder characteristics convergence."

The expression of the lady opposite him immediately softened as she said with a smile, "You really are Hero Bandit Black Emperor."

…So you weren't certain… You were only listing down the clues and presenting your confident attitude… How was she so certain just now? Does she still have evidence that she hasn't provided? Klein felt some regret and was abnormally puzzled.

The lady who seemed to enjoy her standing as an important figure didn't say anything further. She then looked at the bookshelf and said, "You discovered that the bookmark has a Black Emperor card through his diary?"

Diary… This lady also knows that the so-called Roselle's notebook is a diary… Klein was taken aback as he didn't reply to her.

"You didn't take that notebook because you sensed something?" the lady asked again.

This… Klein suddenly realized something and decided not to answer and instead pose questions. He wanted to extricate himself from a passive state and not be led by the nose.

He looked at the lady's deep blue eyes and asked directly, "You are the mysterious person on the Future who was secretly spying on me?"

The beautiful lady who didn't allow anyone to come close replied frankly, "Yes. Cattleya doesn't know that I've secretly boarded the Future, but you actually discovered it… A Clown's sense for danger?"

Based on the observation and the information from before, she can basically determine that I'm a Faceless, a Magician… From her tone, she's very familiar with Admiral of Stars… The upper echelons of the Moses Ascetic Order or that Queen Mystic? Klein nodded and said, "That's right."

The lady raised her chin and curled her lips up slightly.

"It's impossible for a normal Clown to sense danger at this level, even if they're already a Sequence 5."

She has discovered another unique trait again… This… She knows the Seer pathway very well… Indeed, I've been somewhat affected by the gray fog's powers, giving me a direct premonitory intuition even in situations that aren't dangerous? Klein didn't give her a chance to speak again as he asked in a deep tone, "Were the sounds of the door opening and the footsteps heard by Anderson Hood in the depths of the hall of murals yours?"

"Are you referring to the hunter who's plagued by bad luck?" the lady asked in thought.

"Yes." Klein nodded.

"It was indeed me." The lady paused. "Inform that hunter of a prophecy. The most lethal danger often lies in day-to-day life."

What does that mean? Seeing how she had no intention of explaining, Klein deliberated and asked, "You were the one that made me appear in the Saint of Darkness's dream?"

The lady combed her long chestnut hair as she said gently but coldly, "That's not hard to guess.

"Through that dream, I confirmed that you took the remains of that sea serpent, Kalvetua.

"And like before, you appeared using a Spirit Body state. You took away the item from Jahn Kottman and vanished directly? Oh, you still carry the Black Emperor card."

Klein didn't respond to this topic and switched to asking, "You are Queen Mystic?"

"Many people call me by that name," the lady calmly answered.

It's really her… This lady's bounty reaches 650,000 pounds just from Loen's bounty alone! Klein silently drew a gasp and said, "Ma'am, is there a reason why you are looking for me?"

Queen Mystic used her blue eyes to look at him for a few seconds before saying, "I hope you can share with me the method to interpret the language created by Emperor Roselle. For that, I can satisfy most of your requests."

Klein didn't admit or deny anything. He chuckled and asked, "Don't tell me you're even able to give me the corresponding High-Sequence Beyonder potion formulas?"

Queen Mystic had her bearing converged, but she said without any decrease in her dignity, "Your fate lies on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range."

This… Klein felt a baffling sense of shock.

His eyes darted around. While he was considering a question, Queen Mystic stood up.

"When you need some help or clues to a few Cards of Blasphemy, tell me the answer."

She turned around and walked into the depths of the tidy and vast library. With each step, her figure turned faint before quickly vanishing.

The library immediately collapsed. After a moment of feeling adrift, Klein found himself in the hall filled with beautiful murals.

Anderson looked at him in shock as he blurted out, "How did you get here?"

Chapter 663 - False Alarm

◆

After hearing Anderson’s question, Klein was momentarily at a loss for an answer. He couldn’t just tell him that he had fallen out of a dream suspected to belong to Queen Mystic.

He coldly looked at the unlucky Strongest Hunter, raised his right hand, and pointed upwards.

“Is that so…” Anderson Hood nodded in enlightenment.

What… did you figure out… I don’t even know what I’m expressing myself… Klein discreetly twitched the corner of his lips and changed the topic. He said in recollection, “I met someone just now…”

“Not someone we know? Not a member of the Future? The person who came out of the door from deep inside the hall?” Anderson suddenly became excited.

This fellow doesn’t put on airs of being the Strongest Hunter. He’s like a breaking news reporter… Klein lampooned without answering him. He directly said, “She got me to pass on a prophecy to you.”

“She… What prophecy?” Anderson was somewhat puzzled.

If I were using my identity as Klein Moretti, I would’ve answered, “Sorry, I’ve forgotten. She only said it once”… As Klein imagined the prank that wouldn’t have happened, he said with a deep voice, “The most lethal danger often lies in day-to-day life.”

Anderson listened carefully as he drew a gasp.

"That's just too accurate! I was drinking beer and nearly made myself a ret*rd. Who would imagine that most of the alcohol on the Future is problematic!"

He ruminated for a few seconds and asked, somewhat worried, "That's it?

"Did you forget any details or keywords?"

I can tell that you're being provocative… Klein ignored Anderson Hood and walked to the entrance of the hall of murals where he looked at Frank and Nina outside.

Back in the library, he had been suddenly accused of being Hero Bandit Black Emperor by Queen Mystic. This inevitably caused him to be placed in a passive state. Afterwards, he attempted to throw her off and not be led by the nose; therefore, he remained extremely nervous. His thoughts were completely focused on what he should say in response, without the time to consider the entire process and figure out the details. Now, he finally had the time.

First, what's most important is to understand a question. To what level of comprehension does Queen Mystic have towards my identity and Roselle's diary?

Yes… She believed that I grasp the means to interpret the language created by Emperor Roselle, and not the language itself. Although the difference in meaning isn't great, it's enough to prove that our identity as transmigrators isn't something she has figured out or have any clues that point towards that conclusion.

Miss Sharron isn't a rookie who just joined the mysticism circles or got herself involved in complicated matters. While getting someone to fake an identity for me, it's impossible for her to divulge who she's doing it for. Besides, the picture I provided was already Gehrman Sparrow's image…

That means that Queen Mystic hasn't equated Sherlock Moriarty to Gehrman Sparrow. Yes, if she had already known about this, as I had previously imagined, a better form of address would be Mr. Black Emperor Sherlock Moriarty. This would've dealt my mental defenses a blow that was several times stronger than directly addressing me as Hero Bandit Black Emperor.

From her standpoint, how did she gather useful information from scattered clues?

She knows that the bookmark is the Black Emperor card. Hence, the specter-like Hero Bandit Black Emperor and the strange Spirit Body who stole the Card of Blasphemy from the Royal Museum were connected together. Later, King of the Five Seas, Nast, suddenly appeared in the Rorsted Archipelago. According to the law of Beyonder characteristics convergence, she guessed that Hero Bandit Black Emperor might've appeared in Bayam and the archipelago.

After her investigations, she discovered the familiar identity known as Gehrman Sparrow. Then, from his identical trajectory with Hero Bandit Black Emperor's actions, she made a prediction and engaged in pursuit. She infiltrated the Future and observed me up close.

This is logical, but there's a certain level of coincidences in all of this. King of the Five Seas Nast appears anywhere he likes. Perhaps he might be missing a particular lady from the Red Theater and got his ship to cross the spirit world to enter the waters around the Rorsted Archipelago, or perhaps Bayam happens to have the High-Sequence Beyonder ingredients of the Black Emperor pathway that attracted him… There's no way to directly link it to Hero Bandit Black Emperor.

Of course, it's not incomprehensible for Queen Mystic to make such a connection. Perhaps she abides by the principle of being wrong rather than feel sorry in regards to important clues. Heh, that's a good habit, but it's just tiring.

There's also a high chance that she didn't lock onto Gehrman Sparrow immediately. However, with the reputation of the crazy adventurer Gehrman Sparrow becoming more prominent in the Rorsted Archipelago waters and the City of Generosity Bayam, she matched the timing after hearing the name, and then she came to a preliminary conclusion.

Sigh, it's still better to keep a low profile in life. Thankfully, my acting has finally come to an end. Subsequently, I can make the identity of Gehrman Sparrow vanish! Klein ran through everything and felt that he had mostly understood the problem at its root.

However, he had another thought and guess.

It was the way Admiral of Stars Cattleya had received Gehrman Sparrow on her ship. She had done it in an ostentatious manner, as though she was afraid that it wasn't known to the world that the crazy adventurer was cooperating with her!

Perhaps, she was providing a certain level of clues. Later, Queen Mystic came and learned that it was Gehrman Sparrow. After figuring out the trajectory of my activity at sea, she had a certain speculation. Instead of trying to pull a bluff, she was actually rather certain! Klein held one hand in his pocket as he walked out of the hall of murals. He then headed straight for Cattleya, who was outside the black cloister. He planned on using her turbid state to question her.

At this point, he had actually relaxed significantly. This was because Queen Mystic clearly only knew that Gehrman Sparrow was equivalent to Hero Bandit Black Emperor, and he was a Beyonder who worked for some important figure. It didn't involve even more secrets.

Even if she had connected the loss of the Black Emperor card that night to Detective Sherlock Moriarty who was nearby, that wouldn't be a huge problem.

From a very long time ago, I had already equated Sherlock Moriarty to The World, and I also equated that to the Blessed of The Fool. Gehrman

Sparrow is only an extension of that identity. Heh heh, this is my preparation for such matters. I always believed that I shouldn't treat others as ret*rds. As long as someone is active, any clues on their trajectory and social connections would lead to exposure. Therefore, I prepared this identity ahead of time for these smart people. I also strictly abided to these settings even in my everyday life.

And for the Blessed of an important figure to have a basic understanding of Roselle's dairy is completely understandable and acceptable. It's within the realms of an ordinary bestowment from a special existence.

Heh, you probably never expected that there's a mask under the mask!

[image]

Amidst his thoughts, Klein also felt that the help from the gray fog and his caution had played a significant role. If he hadn't noticed that he had been observed by someone ahead of time while instinctively abiding by his will, he might've summoned the messenger under Queen Mystic's surveillance.

The messenger alone might not expose anything, but it's worrisome that Queen Mystic might have a way of tracking it and finding Mr. Azik. From his recent sightings, it's possible for her to dig out my identity as Klein Moretti… Klein tore through a square filled with numerous giant arrows, walked out the black cloister, and saw Cattleya sitting there as she hugged her knees just like before. She was staring at the beautiful sunset.

Klein leaped onto the boulder and came to the side of the withered trees. He looked at the magnificent buildings on the opposite mountain and said in a seemingly normal manner, "At Nas, you showcased the star bridge to connect the dock to the ship. Were there any hidden motives behind that?"

Cattleya's head leaned to the side a little as she said, "I'm not telling you!”

“…” Klein was momentarily left at a loss.

He originally imagined that Admiral of Stars would be very honest in the dream world. He had never expected such a situation; of course, this was also a form of honesty, but it was an honest personality.

After two seconds of silence, Klein decided to pull a bluff.

“You wished to use this method to inform someone that I’m worthy of attention?”

Cattleya exhaled and remained sitting there, hugging her knees.

“Pretty much.

“It was mainly to tell others that if something serious happens or if I show obvious abnormalities, you will be the first clue.”

As expected… Klein sighed inwardly.

He knew that Admiral of Stars had done such a cheap trick to protect herself, but as The Fool, he needed to punish her for such actions.

However, I can’t use this matter to act up. It will appear as though The Fool protects “His” Blessed too much. That will be quite lacking in standing… Yes, Admiral of Stars must’ve done more than this. I can tabulate these series of actions as one and punish her for them… Klein quickly made up his mind. He wasn’t as flustered towards what he encountered in this dream world again.

As for Queen Mystic’s suggestion, he didn’t even consider it.

Emperor Roselle’s diary contained matters of his transmigration and Earth. If he taught Queen Mystic how to read Chinese, she would discover this point and make even more critical guesses!

She must have her qualms about the important figure who can randomly lend out the Sea God Scepter, so she wouldn't take any forceful actions. If there really are any matters that need her help or if she has some dirt on me, I can agree to help her translate a few important pages of the diary she wishes to know about. But I'll definitely not teach her Chinese. Yes, even if I translate it, it will be watered down with the use of synonyms. I just need to maintain the main points; that way, she has no way of reverse-engineering the language… Klein retracted his gaze and casually asked Cattleya, "Rumor has it that you and Queen Mystic had a falling out, but it doesn't seem to be the case?"

Cattleya's glazed expression suddenly had a lively change. She pursed her lips and said, "What right do I have to fall out with her?

"I was just banished."

Banished… Klein was just about to ask when blinding sunlight beamed as he naturally woke up.

Looking at the bright sky outside, he wiped his forehead and muttered silently to himself.

What a terrifying dream.

After dealing with his wistfulness, Klein rolled off the bed and came to the deck. He continued his observation and awaited the appearance of mermaids.

Nearly an hour later, he finally heard a faint, indistinct voice coming from the distance.

Chapter 664 - Every Second Counts

◆ ◆ ◆

Mermaids?

Klein felt delighted as anticipation and excitement filled him.

Having left Backlund for nearly four months and experiencing a series of events, he finally arrived at the destination of his travels. He was completing the last condition needed for him to advance to Sequence 5 Marionettist!

His irascibility and frustrations had been constantly growing ever since he entered these waters, and it was all thanks to the waiting. The various ridiculous and humorous matters on the Future, the matters that seemed abnormally harrowing on careful thought, and the dangers and unknown things contained within the night, noon, and dreams in the ruins of this war of gods had left him even more mentally tense. He lived through every minute and hour with great torment.

Now, the pressure from these emotions finally had a chance of being released!

Phew… Klein slowly heaved a sigh of relief. He directly returned to the cabin and entered the room that belonged to him.

Without being flustered or letting the joy get to his head, he followed the planned sequence of taking out Azik’s copper whistle and Will Auceptin’s paper crane to interfere with the possible spying of Queen Mystic.

After taking out the remnant spirituality of ancient wraiths, the pair of eyes from a six-winged gargoyle, drago bark, and a metallic bottle containing Sonia Island's Golden Spring from his suitcase, he spread them across his desk, entered the bathroom, and locked the door. He then familiarly set up the bestowment ritual.

After setting up the ritual, he wasn't in a rush to go above the gray fog to respond to the prayer. Instead, he set up another ritual of summoning himself!

While taking four steps counterclockwise and chanting the incantation, Klein arrived above the gray fog. He responded to the summoning ritual and used his Spirit Body state to come to the real world. He then brought Tinder back to the mysterious space.

After doing all of that, Klein didn't relax. He came to the seat of The Fool, conjured a pen and paper, and quickly wrote the divination statement: "The singing ahead comes from mermaids."

Taking off his topaz pendant, he used divination to confirm the situation.

The singing ahead of the Future was from mermaids!

After calming his emotions, Klein summoned the iron cigar case from the junk pile and made it land on the ancient, mottled bronze table.

With a snapping sound, he opened the lid and saw the pupil-less All-Black Eye sitting there in silence. He could sense the extreme madness and danger from it, but it appeared to be in deep slumber.

After observing it for two seconds, Klein took out Tinder and slowly wore it on his right hand.

After completing all of this, Klein didn't hesitate and reached out his right palm and spread his fingers.

All sorts of blobs of light surfaced before his eyes. Grayish-white, bronze-green, dark red, and black colors formed the foundation of this mysterious space.

And inside the All-Black Eye, there was a flaring and flailing iron-black beam lingering around the remaining colors.

Without using his spiritual intuition, Klein knew with certainty through his understanding of objects that the True Creator's mental corruption was represented by this iron-black light!

Feeling extremely wary, he closed his fingers and grabbed at the target before turning his wrist.

The iron-black light was instantly extracted as it fused with Tinder. Immediately, the illusory, evil, terrifying, and indescribable ravings boomed in his ear like déjà vu.

This destroyed his line of thought as it ground at his psyche. It brought about a fracturing pain to his brain, but it was soon repressed by the gray fog's power and turned completely silent.

Klein didn't think further. He followed his plans and reenacted the trial runs that he had practiced numerous times by grabbing Tinder with his left hand, pulled it off, and threw it onto the stone ground of the magnificent palace.

Right on the heels of that, Klein grabbed the All-Black Eye which was now completely fine. He quickly replied to the bestowment ritual and passed the Marionettist Beyonder characteristic through the illusory door and into the altar in the bathroom.

He didn't dare delay any further. All he did was glance at the evil-exuding Tinder which was tainted with an iron-black color as its fingers twisted and its palm cracked opened. He then used his spirituality to envelop himself as he stimulated a plummeting sensation to return to the real world.

Klein opened his eyes, grabbed the All-Black Eye on the altar and ran out into his room. While doing so, he had a thought. If I allow Creeping Hunger to watch what happens to Tinder and its outcome, I wonder what its thoughts would be…

Coming before the desk, from the side, Klein took out an iron pot that originally belonged to the Future. He then poured 80 milliliters of Sonia Golden Spring into it.

As the pale gold liquid slowly spread out in a clear and transparent state, it made him subconsciously feel thirsty, as if he wished to drink a cup of it to quench his thirst.

The items—drago bark, eyes of the six-winged gargoyle, and the remnant spirituality of an ancient wraith—were thrown into the pot by Klein, causing different reactions. Finally, the potion turned into a pale gold color, but it looked ethereal as though it was weightless.

At this critical juncture, Klein became abnormally calm instead. He steadily picked up the pupil-less black eye and dropped it into the potion.

He had already confirmed that the True Creator's mental corruption hadn't penetrated the gray fog or returned inside the All-Black Eye!

And this was something he had expected.

The All-Black Eye was instantly submerged by the pale gold liquid as the surface began bubbling.

Every bursting bubble made the potion turn blacker. About ten seconds later, all the changes came to a halt.

[image]

Inside the pot, the potion took form as a completely black liquid. Inside, it seemed to contain countless tiny worms that were squirming about, worms that couldn't be seen by the naked eye.

Klein took out a gold coin and made a quick divination as a confirmation.

After receiving the revelation that it was a success, he heaved a sigh of relief and poured the Marionettist potion into a metallic bottle he had prepared and stuffed it into his pocket.

He didn’t act in a fluster or rush. He followed the process he had planned by quickly clearing up the altar in the bathroom, and he retrieved Azik’s copper whistle and Will Auceptin’s paper crane.

At this point, he walked out of the cabin and onto the deck.

At this moment, the symbols and magical labels on the Future had once again lit up, forming a resplendent sea of stars. It significantly reduced the mermaids’ singing.

Rumors claimed that the singing of mermaids could make humans lose their reasoning and turn irrational. They would then jump off their ships to become food for the mermaids.

Klein subconsciously nodded at the window corresponding to the captain’s cabin.

Admiral of Stars was standing there as her body swirled with starlight. The gaze she sent back at him appeared mixed.

Have you recalled what you said and how you acted in the dream? Klein lampooned as he said with a calm expression, “I need a dinghy.”

“It has already been prepared.” Cattleya pointed towards the shipboard without any signs of surprise.

Gehrman Sparrow had mentioned that his purpose was to seek out mermaids back when he hired the Future!

Soon, Klein left the Future and the protection of the resplendent sea of stars. He headed into the ocean on his tiny dinghy.

As the singing grew louder, a voice seemed to drill into his Spirit Body, numbing his body, making him wish to hear more of it.

This was far from sufficient for Klein. Besides, his spiritual intuition told him that he needed to be closer to make the singing clearer so as to satisfy the requirements of the ritual.

“Storm!”

Klein took out a charm made of tin, and he summoned a controllable gale that could push the dinghy ahead.

After an unknown period of time, the mermaid’s singing increased in volume. They were so clear, it was as though they were singing softly by Klein’s ears. Each tone stirred his Spirit Body, and the melody was intoxicating.

Klein felt his mind adrift as he nearly jumped into the sea and swam towards the source of the melodic singing.

He tried his best to control himself and discovered many reefs ahead. Figures were seated at its edge as they sang.

These creatures with a human head had quite some beauty in their clear, pure eyes. Their breasts were lifted up high, but they were also covered by dark red scales. The lower halves of their bodies were comprised of massive fishtails as they rhythmically struck the reef.

The mermaids looked different and had different colored scales. From a human’s standpoint, they were all a different kind of beauty.

Klein relinquished his control of the dinghy, raised his right hand, and reached into his pocket for the potion.

At that moment, the mermaids sensed his approach and looked over.

Then, these creatures, who were also known as sirens, stopped singing out of shock. All of them leaped into the water with a splash.

[image]

Don’t go… Klein feebly reached out with his right hand.

Isn’t it said that you use your singing to attract humans for food? Why are you running with a human here? I’m not a bad guy. I’m only here to listen to your singing… At this moment, Klein’s heart was filled with “what the f**k” emotions.

He soon discovered that the mermaids’ singing didn’t completely stop. Further away on the reef were a few mermaids with their backs facing him. They didn’t discover the fleeing of their companions, due to the crashing of the winds as they continued boldly singing.

Klein’s mind stirred as he thought for a moment and took out a charm.

This was the charm from the Sea God domain that gave the user affinity with underwater creatures!

“Storm!”

Amidst the incantation, blue flames enveloped the tin plate, making it vanish from the real world.

Although the remaining mermaids noticed him, they didn’t flee in fear. Immediately, Klein took out the metal bottle containing the Marionettist potion and unscrewed the lid.

He made every second count so as to prevent any mishaps!

As he gulped the potion down, a somewhat bitter potion with a mustiness surged down his throat, into his gullet, and into his stomach.

Suddenly, Klein found himself abnormally stiff. He felt as though he had returned to Tingen, back when he was being controlled by the strange puppet known as Sealed Artifact 2-049.

He tried moving his joints, but he felt as though they were filled with lead.

At the same time, he felt that tiny worms were boring into every one of his cells and into his Spirit Body.

His thoughts slowed down as his brain reflected the gradual loss of control over his body.

The mermaids' singing floated over, stirring those desires, the accumulated fanaticism and infatuation, allowing Klein to hold onto his final lumps of emotions. Through this temptation, he slowly escaped the state of petrification.

A grayish-white fog quickly surfaced before his eyes as he heard the illusory ravings of "Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…" Compared to his advancement to a Seer, Clown, and Magician, these ravings appeared staccato, as though they were being disrupted by something.

It's different from when I became a Faceless. The ravings are clearly much stronger. It can intermittently break through the obstacles produced from the fusion of the powers of the gray fog and reality… I can think again! Klein was delighted as he attempted to raise his arm.

His joints still felt heavy, but the feeling was weakening!

At the same time, Klein "saw" his present appearance.

His skin was yellowish-brown, like a puppet that had been buried alive for years with old bandages.

Fleshy tendrils were hidden beneath his skin as they squirmed, separated, and fused.

Klein immediately outlined the countless spherical lights in his mind, and he used Cogitation to calm his present state.

During this process, the mermaids' singing continued to reverberate in his ears, allowing his joints and muscles to twitch before the numbness slowly receded.

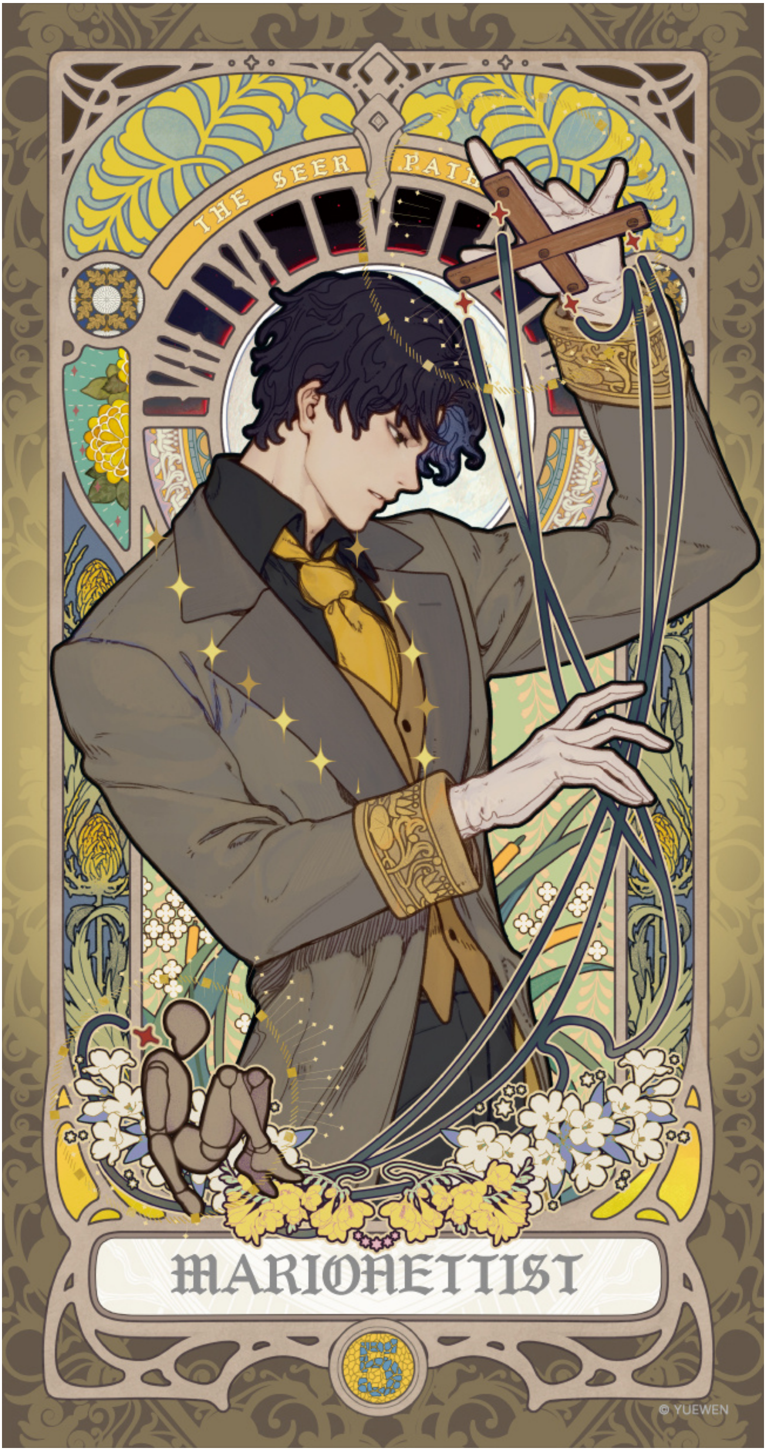
After an unknown period of time, Klein opened his eyes, his body having completely restored to normal.

He took a deep breath and silently sighed.

Finally…

I’m finally a Sequence 5!

I’m finally a Marionettist!


THE SEER PATH
MARIONETTIST
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Chapter 665 - Spirit Body Threads

◆

Under the strong sunlight, the sea reflected a golden shade. Apart from that, deep in Klein's eyes were countless illusory black lines.

They extended from the nearby mermaids, from his body, and from the different parts of the neighboring waters. They were packed densely in thin and numerous threads, corresponding to different spots. Some extended into the infinite distance, to the ends of the void.

This strange, beautiful scene wasn't an unfamiliar sight to Klein. In the few times he used the All-Black Eye's powers and his usage of it to create the fake World, he had been able to see similar scenes.

This was the source of a Marionettist's Beyonder powers!

From the knowledge he obtained from the potion, these illusory thin black threads were known as Spirit Body Threads. By controlling them, one could directly influence the target's Soul Body, Astral Projection, Body of Heart and Mind, and Ether Body. Then, with the Ether Body as a bridge, one could control the target's body.

Therefore, all the Beyonder powers of a Marionettist was built on the Spirit Body Threads.

Firstly, it could find a hidden target using the Spirit Body Threads that existed in every creature. It was the best measure against a Demoness's invisibility and a Shadow Ascetic's hiding in the shadows. Of course, Klein wasn't aware if there were means to hide one's Spirit Body Threads.

Secondly, it was to control a target like a puppet. It would make the target's thoughts and body stiffen. This was a type of forceful control and was almost indefensible. The only way of escaping this control was to rely on the potency of one's Spirit Body. It was almost no trouble for a Sequence 5 Marionettist to control anyone who wasn't a demigod.

Thirdly, through the passage of time, the control would deepen. A Marionettist could completely turn the target into their marionette. Up to a certain distance, they could hide behind the scenes and control the marionette to do battle. While doing so, the marionette could use all of its original Beyonder powers!

This is truly magical, terrifying, strange, and indescribable. It's the perfect thing for someone working behind the scenes. It's no wonder Rosago claimed that the control of Spirit Body Threads is one of the most difficult abilities to deal with for anyone that isn't a High-Sequence Beyonder…

But it requires time. Control cannot be instantly achieved. It requires a process that deepens with each step until it's ultimately achieved. To obtain initial control, the present me needs 20 seconds. But with the digestion of the potion, the time needed will clearly decrease. Once my Marionettist potion completely digests, I might be able to do it within five seconds. Yes, before the effects show, the target wouldn't even notice it. Perhaps those with prophetic abilities might be able to detect it…

Once initial control of the target has been achieved, they will immediately be slow to think. Their actions will be impeded and their bodies stiffened. Then, bit by bit, they will develop into a puppet, a marionette. If a Marionettist has a partner, this process will make it easy to finish off a target that has been forcibly controlled. Yes, if the enemy's Spirit Body isn't strong enough, a Marionettist will have the strength remaining to even draw a gun or use a mystical item to act in concert with himself.

If the controlling process isn't disrupted by an external force, the target will become my marionette after five minutes. In a sense, the marionette is truly dead and the process is completely irreversible. Once the potion is completely digested, the time it takes to convert someone into a marionette will definitely be greatly shortened.

The maximum number of marionettes I can control at present is one. I can't be sure how many I can control in the future, but it will definitely increase. The limit seems to max out at three.

This will not only need time, but there's also a distance restriction. I can only see Spirit Body Threads within a hundred meters. And to control them, I need to be five meters from the target…

When controlling marionettes, I cannot be more than 100 meters from it. I'm sure it will increase in the future.

Heh, apart from keeping its Beyonder powers, a marionette can also normally use mystical items and Sealed Artifacts. Furthermore, it expends its own spirituality and not mine. Of course, my controlling of the marionette will expend spirituality itself.

This ability is very suited for me. In extremely dangerous situations, with me having no choice but to investigate, I can let the marionette do it for me. Although it will be heartbreaking to lose it, it's better than having myself die. Heh heh, back when Marionettist Rosago came to deal with me, he must've been engaged in another operation. This resulted in him losing his marionette. Yes, he must've not fully digested the Marionettist potion. That's why he wasn't able to achieve initial control over me while waiting for me to open the door. He had to enter in order to converse with me.

In short, this lives up to being a Sequence 5 Beyonder power! Furthermore, the Beyonder powers before this have also been enhanced by 50%, or even more…

I'm really looking forward to knowing what kind of qualitative changes

I'll experience when I reach Sequence 4 when possessing so many strange powers. Sigh, I don't even know what its name is… Klein ended the inspection of his body and reflected wistfully.

He then used the experience of setting an activation and deactivation method for his Spirit Vision to give himself a restriction of seeing Spirit Body Threads, so as to not see things he shouldn't see.

Activating by tapping my left thumb twice on the first segment of my index finger. Repeating the action deactivates it. Same for the right hand… He reined in his thoughts and looked ahead, and he saw that the remaining mermaids had turned around and were looking at him with watery blue eyes.

At the thought that he would've lost control and become a Sealed Artifact akin to 2-049 without their singing or this simple ritual, Klein gave them a friendly smile.

Affected by the charm, the mermaids also moved their lips and showed a somewhat embarrassed smile.

As their light purple or deep red lips parted, one by one, Klein saw their teeth—razor-sharp like wolf fangs. They were white and shiny and dripping from them was a sticky liquid.

Klein was taken aback. He discovered that this was even more unacceptable for him than a real monster.

He had originally mentally prepared himself and treated mermaids as creatures that swam in the sea. Therefore, no matter how crazy and terrifying they looked, he believed that he could tolerate it. However, the situation was somewhat beyond his expectations. Mermaids were clearly beautiful and alluring females on the surface. Their tails had a hetero sense of beauty, but their teeth were nasty and disgusting. This was a stark contrast that Klein couldn't take. He nearly moved his eyes away.

Waving his hand, he quickly took out a charm from the Sea God domain and created another gale of wind to push his dinghy back to the Future.

Along the way, Klein couldn’t help but recollect the feelings he just had.

So the mermaids’ singing is meant for neutralizing and balancing. Otherwise, most Faceless are unable to resist the corrosion of their own Spirit Body Threads by the Marionettist potion. They would directly lose control. Heh. Lucky ones like Kalvetua aren’t included. Perhaps, it’s because of the lack of the ritual’s help that it’s relatively weaker.

In theory, as long as there’s a voice or Beyonder power with similar effects, they can be used to replace a mermaid’s singing, but people who haven’t personally experienced it themselves wouldn’t be able to tell the minute differences. Therefore, High-Sequence Beyonders who aren’t from the Seer pathway will find it difficult to provide any effective suggestions.

Amidst his thoughts, the dinghy returned to the Future. With a rope, Klein easily returned to the deck.

Anderson Hood stood by the shipboard and chuckled.

“So your search of mermaids was a requirement of a ritual, and not because you wish to obtain the corresponding ingredients.”

“That’s obvious,” Klein succinctly replied.

Anderson shrugged and said, “No, it’s not. A normal person will guess that mermaids are the ingredients you need, as this doesn’t match the rituals needed by a Sequence 4. But who knew that Adventurer Gehrman Sparrow, who was at the level of a pirate admiral, was only a Sequence 6.”

What do you mean “only?” Klein resisted the urge of controlling Anderson’s Spirit Body Threads.

Ignoring the Strongest Hunter who automatically had a provocative halo, he entered the cabin and returned to his room.

Just as he approached the captain's cabin, he heard a creak as the door before him opened.

Cattleya didn't wear her heavy glasses. She looked at Gehrman Sparrow as the dark purple hue in her eyes swirled.

"Congratulations on your advancement.

"P-previously in the dream, did I say something?"

"You know what you said," Klein replied with a deadpan expression.

Cattleya fell silent for two seconds before saying, "You questioned me about my relationship with Queen Mystic?"

As she spoke, she couldn't help but look around.

She guessed that Queen Mystic might be on the Future because of my rather sudden question? I really have to be careful when conversing with a smart person… Klein nodded, walked past her and returned to his room, leaving the corridor in silence.

Only when he opened the door and took a step inside did he hear Cattleya's voice sound out from the captain's cabin. It reverberated through the entire ship.

"Set sail for the return voyage."

Inside the room, Klein waited a few minutes before reentering the bathroom. He set up the ritual again and threw Creeping Hunger, which was turning more irascible due to the lack of food, above the gray fog.

After doing this, he wasn't in a rush to leave. He summoned the distorted iron-black Tinder and made it land before him.

After studying it for a moment, Klein placed Tinder inside the iron cigar case and threw it into the junk pile.

Although this expensive glove was now unusable, Klein was certain that trash could still be used.

Immediately following that, he slowly took off the already silent Creeping Hunger, and he similarly placed it into the junk pile.

Phew… Klein remained silent for two seconds before leaving the palace that looked like a giant's residence, and then he ventured deep into the mysterious space above the gray fog.

From his previous exploration, he discovered a bright staircase that seemed to lead to heaven. He suspected that the number of steps had something to do with his Sequence; therefore, he immediately came here to confirm it after he advanced.

After walking for a while, Klein finally saw the holy staircase made out of pure light. Compared to before, there was another step, making it a total of five steps.

Indeed… Klein sighed, unsurprised.

Then, he climbed up the staircase that appeared to be prepared for giants and arrived at the top.

At that moment, he wasn't that far from the gray fog which was hardened in midair. He seemed to just need one more step to reach that height.

Klein subconsciously looked up and seemed to see something.

Chapter 666 - Afternoon Town

◆

That's… Klein's eyes reflected a nearly transparent object.

It appeared like a carapace of something, occasionally shrinking and vanishing from Klein's line of sight, and at times peeking out due to an invisible wind, revealing some of its outlines.

With it acting as an anchor point and looking further up, there were colors of green that was almost black, standing there silently.

They look like the colors of the trees of a dark forest… Klein mumbled without imagining what the object of those colors signified. All he could do was boldly guess that it had something to do with gaining a deeper control of the mysterious space above the gray fog.

Without trying to do something that was destined to be in vain, he jumped down from the staircase that seemed to lead to heaven and phased back inside the palace.

With the existence of Queen Mystic in mind, Klein did some simple tidying up before leaving the gray fog and returning to his bathroom.

After tying up the loose ends, he walked to his suitcase, took out the Sun Brooch, and wore it on his double-breasted frock coat.

After all the turmoil he had been through, the mystical items he could now use had returned to the state when he was in Backlund. However, he was already a Sequence 5 and possessed one of the most difficult powers to deal with below that of the demigods. He was, in the true sense of the word, a powerhouse in the Beyonder world.

I should be very agitated and happy, but I'm actually not. I'm even as excited as when I found mermaids… This is because I've just taken another step on my road to revenge. The true goal I wish to achieve is still a distance away…

Following this, I should conclude the principles and digest the Marionettist potion and seek out the corresponding Sequence 4 formula and ingredients. Yes, I can only do all of these things after leaving these waters. Next, I'll seek advice from Mr. Azik, Will Auceptin, and Arrodes…

Heh heh, I should relax for the next few days. Being overly tense might break me down and cause me to have symptoms of losing control… Klein turned to look at the full-body mirror in his room. Looking at his 1.8-meter-tall build, black hair, and brown eyes, with a thin face and cut features; dressed in a white shirt, a suit with a bow tie, and a top hat that was matched with the pale gold Sunbird brooch. He wore a calm expression with a deep, dark gaze.

After looking at this in silence, he raised his hands and adjusted the buttons at his cuffs and patted his black suit.

†

Lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the stacked, dark buildings ahead.

Demon Hunter Colin Iliad, with two swords on his back, pointed ahead and said, "That's Afternoon Town."

He combed his grizzled hair that was flying about in the wind that swept through the wilderness.

That's fast… With his Axe of Hurricane in hand, Derrick sighed wistfully in surprise.

He soon realized that it was reasonable. This was because the Giant King's Court was located somewhere near the City of Silver. Afternoon Town was the intersecting point that connected both nodes.

With the lightning that illuminated the night sky, he clearly saw Afternoon Town in its entirety. It was built at the foot of a mountain and was naturally split into upper and lower levels. Instead of calling it a town, it wasn't much smaller than most of the ruins the City of Silver found.

Here, the gray stones were stacked into different buildings. Some were entirely emptied out, nearing ten meters. Some were similar to the residence Derrick currently resided in; it was short as though any normal person would hit their heads onto the ceiling.

These buildings were arranged close together before spreading out. Some of them had collapsed, while a number remained standing despite showing signs of age and tear.

It's completely different from what's described in the textbooks… Derrick suddenly recalled the knowledge he had learned from his history lessons.

According to the City of Silver's records, Afternoon Town was the door that separated reality from myth. It was a place where humans and giants lived together. There was day and night here, but most of the day was in a "noon" state. Regardless of the fog, storms, or snow, none of them were able to blot out the strong sunlight. But at this moment, it was dark and heavy. Even if the area was illuminated by light, it lacked a sense of brightness and there was no signs of life.

Clenching his axe tightly, Derrick, whose eyes had two miniature suns, was on the flanks of the exploration team. He followed Chief Colin into Afternoon Town.

This area had been cleared once on the first exploration. The streets were covered with signs of rotting flesh and dry pus. It was completely silent.

“Be careful. There are many strange monsters lurking in the darkness.” Colin Iliad, with his scarred face, didn’t let down his guard. He drew one of his dual swords as the silver light on his sword converged.

This is the mythical door? When the Creator abandoned this piece of land, even the myths were abandoned? Derrick couldn’t help but imagine what Afternoon Town had experienced during the cataclysm. He instinctively felt that it was probably different from the Kingdom of Silver.

Before he could carefully observe his surroundings in search of possible clues, he suddenly heard a teammate on the other flank anxiously cry out, “There’s something!”

Derrick turned his head and saw a transparent face growing out of the wall of a ten-meter-tall stone building.

The face was filled with countless cracks. With great regularity, they spiraled around the center, forming a single eye or mouth that resembled a vortex.

The hurricane within the vortex was corporeal as it spewed out with a howl. The dawn-like light from within was dense, as though they were arrows of light.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

They struck a few members of the exploration team, but they seemed to strike thick city walls. All they produced was dull and closely-spaced out thuds before disappearing into the dark environment.

At some point in time, City of Silver Chief, Colin Iliad, was genuflecting. He stabbed the silver sword in his hand into the rotting gray ground.

He had provided the front row with the strongest protection!

At the same time, the other members of the exploration team methodically unleashed their attacks. Hurricane's of light and scarlet fireballs struck the monster.

Right on the heels of that, the holy light that Derrick summoned had landed on the vortex that resembled a single eye.

Amidst the explosive boom, the boulder, which was originally covered in cracks, collapsed. A transparent face screamed as it vaporized.

Although the battle was simple, Derrick didn't feel happy at all. He had heard Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice discuss cases of Beyonder fights. Matching it with the experience the City of Silver had accumulated from resisting all kinds of monsters from the darkness, he worriedly discovered that the City of Silver had a limited number of pathways. Those who were not demigods lacked effective means of control, and the situation from before proved this point.

Thankfully, there are Sealed Artifacts that are formed when monsters die to make up for this… Derrick silently thought as he heard the Chief instruct, "Move according to plan. Three to four people a group. Search and clear the different areas."

"Yes, Chief!" The exploration team members were mostly rich in experience. They soon formed their groups.

Derrick's group consisted of three people. Apart from him, there was Joshua and Haim who had been to the abandoned temple with him before. The former was a Sequence 7 Weapon Master, and he had a mystical glove that could control fire. The latter was a recently advanced Sequence 6 Dawn Paladin. He was tall and reached a height of 2.3 meters.

The City of Silver, which had Warriors—also known as the Giant pathway—as the main force, had an average height of 1.8 meters (including children above the age of 6). Even if the Beyonder characteristics were inherited, the normal genes that were modified had accumulated with each generation. Although Derrick wasn't old, he was nearly 1.8 meters tall and still had room to grow.

According to the designated targets, Derrick, Joshua, and Haim entered an alley on the left in a triangular battle formation. They checked every building that still allowed entry.

Perhaps as a result of the former sweep, they didn't encounter any monsters. They couldn't help but feel a little relieved.

"Rumor has it that the six-member council plans to set up camp here and make Afternoon Town a stronghold," Joshua, who was wearing a scarlet glove on his left palm, said after observing the buildings.

Haim nodded and looked down at his two partners.

"The true target seems to be…"

He pointed diagonally upwards.

"The Giant King's Court?" Derrick asked in surprise.

Isn't it a search for the sea where Jack and company came from? Don't we need to circle the Giant King's Court? Derrick was filled with puzzlement.

Haim shook his head.

"I've only heard rumors."

He swept his gaze and pointed at the entrance to the underground chamber.

"Let's finish our search here."

Derrick answered tersely. With his night vision and ability to emit light, he wasn't afraid of the darkness as he stepped into the underground chamber first. Haim lifted an animal hide lantern while Joshua followed closely in tow.

This building's underground chamber was rather wide, with traces of dried, blackening pools. The smell of blood remained despite the many years that had passed.

Derrick surveyed the area and suspected that a sacrificial ritual had once been held here.

A very, very long time ago… he silently added and discovered a candle left on the stone table which resembled an altar. He felt more certain about his guesses.

Why would the residents of Afternoon Town secretly hold sacrificial rituals in their underground basement? When the Giant King's Court was in power, they were believers of the Giant King. Later, they came under the lord that created everything… The owner of this building secretly worshiped other gods? Questions arose in him as Derrick approached the altar. He saw that the stone table was originally carved with words, but they had been damaged by either natural or unnatural elements.

After some careful identification, Derrick found three names:

"Ouroboros;

"Medici;

"Sasrir."

Ouroboros? Isn't that the name of the Angel of Fate? Mr. Fool mentioned before that Medici is also a King of Angels. Sasrir is another one? Derrick suddenly felt excited and horrified as he hurriedly turned his head to shout out for his companions to take a look.

But in his vision, the underground chamber was empty. There was only darkness. Haim and Joshua who were supposed to be behind him were gone!

Chapter 667 - Prayer

◆

They’re gone?

There’s only darkness?

Faced with such a sudden change, Derrick’s first reaction wasn’t horror; instead, he clasped his hands together and pressed it to his mouth.

Pure light was emitted out of his body as he dispersed the surrounding darkness, illuminating every corner of the underground chamber.

In Derrick’s living environment, darkness was the most terrifying existence. Once they left the City of Silver, they had to constantly maintain the existence of light. Even a brief loss of light couldn’t last for more than five seconds.

When Derrick first joined the exploration teams and lacked experience, he had nearly killed himself because of such a mistake. Thankfully, the Chief was standing nearby.

As the light slowly and continuously radiated from him, Derrick raised his tightly-gripped Axe of Hurricane and carefully observed his surroundings.

He discovered that apart from Haim and Joshua—teammates who had entered the underground chamber with him—vanishing, the stone slabs and tufts of black hair on the walls had turned blood-red at some point in time. They were moist as though they had just been sprayed on.

This calmed down Derrick, who was well-versed with exploration materials, to realize a possibility. The problem didn't stem from Haim or Joshua, but himself!

All I did was approach the altar and silently read three names… Typically speaking, even angels will require someone to read or write down an accurate honorific name in its complete form before they can receive "prayers." And it's supposedly limited by range… I wonder if the Kings of Angels require the same conditions…

Uh, one of those three names was the key to activating the hidden powers in the altar. I triggered the problem by using Jotun which can stir the powers of nature? No, that's not right. It needs to be said out loud. Even if these are the true names of the Kings of Angels, I've never faced such problems in the past… Derrick anxiously turned his body while feeling perplexed. He returned to the altar and came to the stone table.

He was surprised to see that the words and symbols on the stone table were a lot more complete and clearer than before. It was as though the host of the ritual had just drawn it.

The words were written in three languages. They were in Jotun, Dragonese, and a language that Derrick couldn't recognize. However, he suspected that it was the ancient Hermes previously mentioned by Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man. This was because he had a basic understanding of some words from the conversations during the Tarot Gathering. They were rather similar to the words used on the stone table.

The content expressed by Jotun and Dragonese were identical. They repeated the three names and their corresponding titles.

Angel of Fate, Ouroboros;

Red Angel, Medici;

Dark Angel, Sasrir.

Following these names and titles was an entity Derrick was very familiar with.

Rose Redemption!

Sasrir really is a King of Angels, one known as Dark Angel. “He,” Angel of Fate, and Red Angel are the founders of Rose Redemption? I wonder if Mr. Fool knows anything about “Him”… “He” definitely knows a lot… The words in ancient Hermes should likely be the same content… In Afternoon Town, which had already converted to the faith of the Lord that created everything, there were residents who were secretly worshiping the three Kings of Angels beside the Lord… Upon having this thought, Derrick suddenly felt a chill run down his back. He felt as though he was close to the reason why the Creator had abandoned this land.

When he looked up again, he saw that the walls remained red, but Haim and Joshua were still nowhere to be seen.

Silently repeating them didn’t do a thing. Perhaps they don’t produce any effects on their own… Derrick drew a breath as he raised his Axe of Hurricane. He carefully walked towards the entrance of the underground chamber, hoping to find the problem at its roots, so as to determine what led to his present situation.

One step, two steps, three steps. Like a gigantic candle, he returned to the hall upstairs.

There were rich shadows here, making it gloomy and eerily silent. The rotting chairs and the remnants of stone tables remained sitting there in silence, no different from before.

Failing to find Joshua and Haim, Derrick could only walk towards the window while he felt high-strung. He wanted to see if he could encounter other members of the exploration team.

Thud… Thud… Amidst light footstep sounds, he approached a huge hole that should've been a window sill. He leaned forward and looked outside.

Countless dark buildings spread out, either tall or short, as they extended outwards like steps.

The lightning in the air happened at a very low frequency as many windows had candlelight emitting out of them. The dim yellow flames danced but weren't extinguished.

This… Derrick couldn't help but swallow a mouthful of saliva. He felt as though all the residents were still living in peace just before Afternoon Town encountered its cataclysm.

†

Haim, who was carrying an animal hide lantern, didn't need to bend his back to enter the underground chamber. He jokingly said to Joshua, "This house must belong to a human, but their family definitely has giant's bloodline in them. They're probably my height. Tsk, the last time we went to that ruined city, we had to bow our heads when using the main doors!"

Having a giant's bloodline didn't necessarily mean that they had giant blood flowing in them. Instead, it referred to a physical characteristic that was inherited by descendants thanks to the consumption of the pathway's potion. Being tall was one of its manifestations.

Joshua looked up at Haim and scoffed.

"That was you. I didn't need to."

"But you won't take long before you can advance. When the time comes, you won't be shorter than me," Haim said with a smile before glancing at Derrick via the corner of his eye. It was to prevent any accidents from happening when Derrick approached the altar.

Joshua thought before saying, “Actually, I’m very curious. Chief is a Sequence 4 Demon Hunter. He should be like an ordinary giant with a height of three to four meters. Why does he look very ordinary, with him being only half a head taller than me?”

Haim subconsciously surveyed the area and said, “Rumor has it that the Chief has a giant form.”

“A giant form? Will his clothes tear when he becomes a giant?” Joshua asked with a laugh.

“Unless his clothes and pants are mystical items.” Haim and Joshua exchanged a knowing smile.

They were just about to turn their heads to share the joke with Derrick when they realized that the youth was gone!

Derrick, who should’ve been standing before the altar, had vanished!

Haim’s and Joshua’s expression instantly turned heavy. One of them raised his huge broadsword, while the other raised his red-gloved left hand.

They carefully approached the altar and did a careful inspection, but they failed to identify anything suspicious.

Joshua was just about to attempt to identify the words on the stone table when Haim patted him on the shoulder.

“Don’t look at it. I just recalled that Derrick was looking at those words before he vanished.

“Let’s bring the Chief here.”

“Okay.” Joshua nodded.

They didn’t leave in a fluster. They surveyed the surroundings before one of them rubbed his index finger with his middle finger to light the remaining candle on the altar.

This was to protect Derrick so as to prevent him from falling into true darkness!

In the past, the exploration teams of the City of Silver had similar encounters in the ruined cities. A teammate might appear to have suddenly vanished, but they had actually been concealed by some kind of power. He stood in his original location, but with his teammates eager to seek help, they would leave the area with their lanterns. Hence, the poor bastard would be devoured by the true darkness, never to be found again. If it wasn't for another teammate finding themselves in another similar situation and having been rescued on the spot, the others wouldn't have known the actual reason for the previous person's death.

With the candle lit, the dim yellow light spread outwards. Haim and Joshua immediately left and arrived at the alley where they released a spirituality signal that everyone carried.

They didn't wait too long for Colin Iliad who had jumped off from the roof of another building before landing firmly.

"What happened?" the Demon Hunter asked in a deep voice.

The silver sword in his hand was already covered with a layer of light gray oil.

Haim immediately recounted what had happened. Finally, he said, "We didn't discover the reason for Derrick's disappearance."

Derrick… Colin nodded in thought, walked past them, and headed straight into the corresponding building.

†

Despite the candles alight outside and the warm yellow color, Derrick felt as though he had fallen into a frozen abyss. A chill at the bottom of his heart kept spreading.

He clenched the Axe of Hurricane with his right hand and retracted his gaze from the town. He turned to return to the underground chamber and stood in front of the altar again.

He had already determined that he was the one with the problem!

However, he didn't have the urge to explore the strange Afternoon Town. He didn't even dare open the door.

Derrick wasn't nervous, nor did he show any obvious signs of flusterness. This was because he didn't believe that he had encountered something severe.

As long as it's not an immediate threat, it's nothing severe… Derrick took a silent breath, bowed his head, and reverently whispered, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…"

Klein, who had been admiring the scenery of the battlefield of the gods, had no choice but to enter the bathroom, set up the disruptive items, and take four steps counterclockwise to head above the gray fog.

He sat at the high-back chair at the end of the long bronze table. He stretched out his right hand and emanated his spirituality, touching the crimson star which represented Little Sun.

Suddenly, the prayers turned abnormally clear as the corresponding scene appeared before Klein's eyes.

He first saw the still-hazy Little Sun, before discovering that the environment around him was abnormal!

Swirling around The Sun was an unspeakable darkness, and in the darkness there were eyes of different shapes silently watching him.

The eyes were densely packed and hidden in the darkness. They were like unwelcomed observers which Little Sun hadn’t noticed at all.

Afternoon Town is that dangerous? Klein was very aware of what dear Sun was up to lately.

He thought for a moment and instinctively believed that the darkness was extremely strange and surreal. Therefore, he abandoned the option of using the Sea God Scepter to respond to Little Sun. Instead, he switched to pulling him up above the gray fog.

Klein extended his spirituality, but he felt as though the crimson star seemed to be in a quagmire, making it rather difficult for him to pull him over.

Which King of Angels has he crossed this time? With a thought, Klein made the mysterious space and the gray fog beneath him produce ripples.

After advancing to Sequence 5, he could stir some of the powers above the gray fog, without the use of the Black Emperor card and the corresponding rituals!

Silently, Klein easily completed transporting Derrick as his figure appeared on the high-back chair belonging to him.

Meanwhile, Klein saw the strange darkness swirling around Little Sun’s body shatter.

†

The Demon Hunter entered the underground chamber in high alert, followed closely by Haim and Joshua.

They saw that in front of the dim yellow candlelight, Derrick Berg’s figure was quickly outlined like a picture.

Chapter 668 - Confidence Might Also Be a Weakness

◆

Above the gray fog, in the palace that was held up by stone columns.

Derrick quickly repeated his encounter to Mr. Fool.

Dark Angel Sasrir… The names and titles of these Kings of Angels seem to have been washed away by the rivers of history. Almost no one knows of them. If it weren't for Little Sun discovering them in the Forsaken Land of God, or me directly encountering the ancient evil spirit suspected to be Red Angel himself, I might not even know a single King of Angels. At best I would've heard of the Amon family and would have no way of delving deeper into the Blasphemer… Where is this Dark Angel at present? Is "He" still alive? Is "He" still one of the upper echelons of the Rose Redemption? Klein felt wistful.

Afraid that Little Sun would ask him related questions that he couldn't answer, Klein instantly stopped his contemplations and leisurely leaned back into the chair and said, "You have been freed from your predicament. Your companions will soon find you."

As he spoke, he didn't give Little Sun a chance to speak by directly cutting off the connection.

As for an explanation in the event that Little Sun was discovered to be abnormal, Klein disdained the thought of reminding him to fabricate an explanation.

To mysteriously disappear and then appear again, wasn't it very normal that all sorts of strange scenarios accompanied it?

At that moment, Derrick was very grateful that Mr. Fool didn't ask him any further questions. This was because he was afraid that he would be exposed to the lethal darkness or hidden monsters once he escaped the alternate Afternoon Town. Therefore, he was eagerly hoping to regain control of his body as soon as possible, so as to prepare the necessary precautions. However, if Mr. Fool had really asked a question, he would still seriously and very patiently explain the corresponding situation.

With his consciousness returning to his body, Derrick rapidly recovered his senses.

When he opened his eyes, he saw a candle which was almost done burning. The wick's flame was wavering in the wind.

Immediately after that, he discovered that the Chief was standing to his side at some point in time. The tall Haim and the red-gloved Joshua were warily standing two steps behind.

How long have they been watching me like that… Although Derrick had already thought of a reason above the gray fog, he still felt guilty and nervous.

Colin's wrinkled face was deadpan. He asked in a normal tone as he looked at Derrick Berg, "What did you encounter?"

Derrick didn't immediately answer, as it would appear as though he had already fabricated an excuse. He used a trick taught by The Hanged Man—he deliberately paused for a few seconds, and as he recalled, he described while recalling the events in a rather staccato manner, "I saw the altar after entering the underground chamber. I suspected that it was an altar and tried to identify the remnant words and symbols on it. I recognized three names. One of them was Angel of Fate Ouroboros… At this point, the light from the lantern extinguished. When I turned my head to look, Haim and Joshua had vanished. I created a light source and walked out of the underground chamber and discovered that the outside was still… was still Afternoon Town. However, many of the buildings had candles lit inside them as though… as though humans were living in them.

“I didn’t dare to leave the building, and I returned to the underground chamber. I attempted to do what I did again. Uh, Chief, in that Afternoon Town, the words on the altar were very complete. There were a total of three languages. One was Jotun, the other Dragonese, and another I didn’t recognize. However, the first two languages expressed the same words. They were the names and titles of the three angels, as well as Rose Redemption…

“Later, I found myself back here.”

What he said was the truth, and it was very complete. All he did was hide the details of how he returned.

Derrick didn’t have any hopes of successfully lying to the Chief. He planned on being confused when he was pressed, pushing the reasons onto the abnormality of his body that he didn’t understand.

This will definitely make the Chief suspicious, but Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice from the Spectator pathway all said that he wouldn’t ask too many questions regarding such matters. By appearing abnormal, will he think more importantly of me? I will be viewed as a chess piece that can counterbalance Elder Lovia… The outside world sure is complicated. It was only recently that I fully understood their train of thought… Derrick couldn’t help but sigh inwardly.

In a dire environment, the depletion of every ounce of strength would mean more danger for the City of Silver. It had very few instances in the past. And even if it happened, it was basically concentrated within the six-member council. The first thing the other Beyonders learned in their patrols and adventuring was cooperation.

Colin nodded gently, walked to the altar, and attempted what Derrick described, but he didn’t disappear as a result of this. He remained standing in his original spot.

“From the looks of it, the remnant powers have already completed their mission,” the Demon Hunter muttered softly to himself.

I didn’t even need to fabricate an excuse… Derrick thought, feeling somewhat embarrassed.

Colin thought for a moment before turning his head to look at Derrick.

“What are the corresponding titles of Medici and Sasrir?”

“Red Angel and Dark Angel.” Derrick was honest.

Colin nodded gently, seemingly in thought.

“In a small number of books, there is mention of a Red Angel, but with no actual name associated with it. As for Dark Angel Sasrir, ‘He’ has completely been lost to history.”

Derrick was just about to take the opportunity to ask about the other Kings of Angels when he suddenly noticed that the candlelight in the underground chamber had dimmed, as though a shadow was surging in from outside.

“Let’s leave this place for now,” Demon Hunter Colin said cautiously, having sensed the same thing.

With the Axe of Hurricane in hand, Derrick immediately approached Haim and Joshua to form a battle formation with them.

However, just as he took one step, he discovered that Haim had retreated two meters to the side. Joshua had raised his left red-gloved hand. Both of them didn’t hide their wariness as their eyes keenly observed him.

Derrick knew that this was a very normal reaction from them. This was because lessons regarding explorations had the corresponding teachings. Be observant and make less contact with companions who had just escaped a strange situation!

And I haven't clearly explained how I escaped that strange Afternoon Town… Derrick opened his mouth in a bid to explain, but he closed his mouth in silence again.

He felt ashamed and aggrieved as he pursed his lips. Holding the Axe of Hurricane, he turned and followed the Chief, taking one step at a time before leaving the underground chamber.

The quartet soon arrived at the entrance and was prepared to leave. To their surprise, they realized that the Afternoon Town with shadows cloaking its buildings had appeared to have darkened a little.

Almost instantaneously, there was candlelight shining out from different windows from different buildings. The dim yellowish lights were either connected or disconnected, silent and heavy.

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Klein didn't stay too long above the gray fog. He quickly returned to the bathroom and put away the corresponding items.

Let's hope that there wouldn't be any more incidents on Little Sun's side. It wouldn't be too good for me to repeatedly enter the bathroom. People in the know will realize that I'm hiding a secret, but those not in the know would definitely think that Gehrman Sparrow has a bladder problem. It would be a tarnish on my persona!

Although I've already digested the Faceless potion, Marionettist Rosago went from one Sequence to the next. The Beyonder characteristic he left behind obviously contains a set of the Faceless potion… Using this Beyonder characteristic as a main ingredient is equivalent to me drinking an additional Faceless, Magician, Clown, and Seer potion, or even more…

Sigh, I should still try my best to abide by the various principles I previously concluded, so as to digest the excess portions. Klein made some clean water and washed his face before walking out of the bathroom.

Just as he was wondering if it was almost time for dinner and was planning to take out his golden pocket watch to take a look, the scene before his eyes suddenly turned black. He could hardly see his fingers.

It's night again… The intervals don't follow a pattern… If we encounter a monster and both sides are in an intense battle, what happens when the sky suddenly turns dark? Monsters are also creatures, so they need to sleep as well; otherwise, there's a high chance that they will disappear into the night… Heh heh, both parties in combat have to lie down and sleep, only to continue when they wake up… Is this really a story that can pass the censors? Klein, who had relaxed after successfully advancing, lampooned as he quickly walked to his bed.

Just as he got in bed, he suddenly thought of a problem.

The night here is very dangerous. If living creatures do not sleep, they will vanish completely.

The darkness of the Forsaken Land of God, including the City of Silver, is similarly dangerous. If there's no light to disperse the darkness, humans would completely vanish if the darkness exceeds five seconds.

It's really similar… Could there really be some connection here?

Klein shook his head and, with Cogitation, entered a dream.

Amidst the dream, he realized that he had switched locations again once he became lucid!

The last time he left the dream, he was on the boulder where Admiral of Stars Cattleya was sitting as she hugged her knees. This time, he was facing a staircase.

The light of the sunset shined through the colored glass panes high above, making the black spiraling staircase adorned with sculptures look exceedingly beautiful.

Klein instinctively looked to the side and found Queen Mystic standing high up the staircase.

This long chestnut-haired lady wasn't wearing her dress with open hems. Her top was a white shirt with lace and flowery bands, matched with a simple dark blue coat. Her lower half was still the beige-colored trousers with black leather boots. However, Klein believed that Queen Mystic probably had an entire wardrobe, or even a room full of trousers and leather boots of the same style.

"What's the matter?" Klein took the initiative to ask.

Queen Mystic caressed the handrail with her right hand as she slowly walked down.

"Confidence might be a weakness at times.

"You trust that copper whistle and paper crane of yours too much. Perhaps one day, it will be the source of danger."

Klein felt a little uneasy at that, but he didn't show it.

"I don't understand what you mean."

"Confidence might be a weakness at times," Queen Mystic repeated again. "Cattleya trusts the Sealed Artifact she gave Heath Doyle too much. If I hadn't boarded the ship, then Nina, Frank Lee, and her would've died. But you might survive."

"That Sealed Artifact isn't actually able to block the ravings that fill these waters? That's how Heath Doyle mutated?" Klein acutely read in between the lines.

Queen Mystic nodded.

"Under ordinary circumstances, it can. But do you know who the ravings that fill these waters come from?”

Without waiting for Klein’s reply, she gave the answer.

“The True Creator.”

Chapter 669 - Exchange of Information

◆◆◆

The True Creator? The ravings that fill these waters come from the True Creator? Upon hearing Queen Mystic's answer, Klein was surprised while feeling somewhat joyful.

He was rejoicing because, just as Queen Mystic said, if she hadn't boarded the ship, Heath Doyle might've undergone a mutation even with the existence of a Sealed Artifact which could reduce his auditory senses to a certain effect.

Towards Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders of other pathways, they would only feel repressed and frustrated, or they would occasionally suffer from nightmares when faced with the True Creator's ravings without actually listening to them. But to a Rose Bishop, the Sequence 0 for his corresponding pathway was the True Creator. To be immersed in the ravings of this evil god, even if he was deaf, something would've happened to him sooner or later.

Once Heath Doyle went mad or lost control, together with the uniqueness of these waters, it was truly difficult for the rest of the people on board the ship to be safe. However, Klein believed that as long as he could survive the sudden attack, he would have the chance to pray to The Fool and use the Sea God Scepter above the gray fog to provide a response to resolve the problem.

He was surprised that the owner of the ravings was in complete contradiction with his theory. He originally imagined that these waters were the battlefield between the ancient gods and the Creator worshiped by the City of Silver during the Second Epoch. He suspected that the subsidiary gods, who were also the corresponding angels, had participated in it as well. To his surprise, this appeared to be wrong from the beginning. This was because the True Creator had apparently first appeared after the Third Epoch's Cataclysm!

I cannot rule out the possibility that the ravings were later left behind… Klein didn't blindly make a conclusion. He watched as Queen Mystic walked past him as she caressed the sculptures on the handrail and slowly walked down.

The lady's back was tall; neither fat nor thin. Her figure was extremely proportioned, and her long chestnut hair simply cascaded down.

This made Klein feel a sense of familiarity. After recalling the matters involving Queen Mystic, he finally recalled the source of the familiarity.

Back when he was searching for the Cards of Blasphemy at the Roselle Memorial Exhibition, he had seen a similar back. Back then, the figure dressed somewhat oddly. Despite wearing a yellow layered dress which had the vibes of a young girl, she wore a black, out-of-fashion bonnet.

She was likely Queen Mystic. She had also visited the Roselle Memorial Exhibition ahead of time… Back then, she was looking at the basic education books the emperor had improved for his children and the Chinese Chess and toy blocks… She was certain that I had taken the Black Emperor card…

The emperor's eldest daughter, Bernadette, established the Element Dawn to resist the Moses Ascetic Order. And from the diary, that lady appreciates the maxim, "do as you wish, but do no harm." Therefore, from these two points, it can be inferred that she's likely a demigod of the Mystery Pryer pathway…

The Mystery Pryer pathway's Sequence 4 is Mysticologist… Queen Mystic… Of course, the reputation of Queen Mystic has long been known across the seas for more than a hundred years. She's definitely not a Sequence 4 anymore. Yes, after Cattleya left Queen Mystic, she joined the Moses Ascetic Order…

This queen seems to take the interpretation of Roselle's diary very seriously…

All sorts of fragmented pieces of information came together as Klein suddenly had a theory.

Perhaps Queen Mystic was Emperor Roselle's eldest daughter, Bernadette Gustav!

This might explain why this queen dresses in the style that resembles Earth's but also appears rather strange. She has been deeply influenced by the emperor's preferences, and she's unable to completely extricate herself from the fashion trends. Hence, she mixes them into a unique and strange style she can call her own… As for it being aesthetically pleasing, that's a whole other matter. A beautiful person will look good and fashionable even with a gunny sack… Klein lampooned inwardly, but he wore a solemn expression. He unhurriedly followed Queen Mystic down the beautiful staircase.

Queen Mystic didn't turn her head. As she walked, she said, "This dream world isn't vast. There are only two parts. One of them is the projection of the Giant King's Court on the opposite mountain, and the other is the black cloister over here."

Giant King's Court? The majestic building complex that seemed frozen in the sunset surfaced in Klein's mind.

This is actually the projection of the Giant King's Court!

And Little Sun and company happen to be at the entrance of the Giant King's Court, Afternoon Town!

Queen Mystic said with a gentle but emotionless tone, "This is my theory, as it resembles the Great Twilight Hall in Feysac.

"And in the Fourth Epoch, there has always been rumors that the God of Combat is an ancient giant who survived the Cataclysm."

The God of Combat pathway is the Giant pathway… Klein inwardly expressed his agreement with Queen Mystic's theory.

At that moment, he recalled the mythical information he had received from Little Sun. He realized that the description of the Giant King's Court being "forever residing in the sunset" matched the spectacle of the opposite mountain.

From the True Creator to the Giant King's Court, she has revealed two extremely valuable pieces of information… She's expressing her goodwill to me, no—the entity backing me. Heh heh, and the person backing me is myself… Klein calmly replied, "The real Giant King's Court is in the Forsaken Land of God."

He said this matter in an indifferent tone, so as to accentuate his value and the entity backing him.

Queen Mystic stopped in her tracks as she pressed down on the beautifully sculptured handrail with her right palm. She half-turned her body to face Gehrman Sparrow and said at an adequate speed, "Rumor has it that the path leading to the Forsaken Land of God is hidden in the mountain across us, hidden in the projection of the Giant King's Court."

So Little Sun and company have begun exploring Afternoon Town? But didn't Jack mention that they appeared by the sea? The Giant King's Court and the projection of the Giant King's Court must have switches in them. Only by opening them ahead of time can the two seas meet?

This place is filled with the True Creator's ravings, and it hides the secret of the Forsaken Land of God. It has remnant powers of the Evernight, Sun, Storm, Earth, and Spectator pathway. This seems to correspond to the Cataclysm!

After the Cataclysm, the Forsaken Land of God was isolated from the outside world. The Goddess, Eternal Blazing Sun, Lord of Storms, Earth Mother, and company saved the world while the True Creator appeared… Only the Spectator pathway's imagination doesn't exactly add up… Klein made a guess based on whatever information he knew at hand.

Queen Mystic continued walking down as she said, "The black cloister here doesn't appear big, but each building and every level represents a different part of these waters. Behind every door might hide the dream of a creature."

I see… Klein glanced at the handrail and discovered that the sculpture on it was mainly that of a human's head. It was beautiful at a glance, but terrifying on careful inspection. Hence, he asked in passing, "Whose dream does this staircase belong to?"

"An Undying from the Numinous Episcopate. He came here in search of Death's remains—one of the main requirements of the Artificial Death. However, he lost control as a result of the ravings, and he's forever loitering in an underground ruin, turning every adventurer who dares to enter into becoming his zombie," Queen Mystic calmly explained.

Death was also involved in the battle of gods that happened here? It's no wonder Admiral Hell would take the risk and enter these waters from time to time… Klein felt enlightened.

He wasn't alarmed about the matter regarding Artificial Death, as he had previously heard Demoness of Unaging Katarina Pellè mention it before. Furthermore, the Numinous Episcopate seemed to be rather far from success.

At this moment, just as Queen Mystic finished walking down the stairs, she turned to glance at him.

Right on the heels of that, the lady turned into a corridor and entered a building.

Klein surveyed the area and discovered that there was no longer any stairs leading downwards. They were apparently at the bottom level.

Queen Mystic stopped in front of the black wooden door filled with strange patterns. She gripped its handle and said, “I’ve always suspected that the dream within is the key to sustaining this place. The remnant powers of Evernight only provides the possibility of such a development.”

As she spoke, she twisted the handle and opened the door.

The black door slowly moved backward, and behind it wasn’t a room as Klein had imagined, but a sea.

The sea was illuminated by blinding sunlight. The waves were huge swaths of rich gold.

As the door opened, Klein felt an unimaginable aura seep out from inside. The entire building began to quake in an obvious manner as the dust and bricks on the wall began to fall.

Subtly, Klein felt that the dream was on the brink of shattering.

At this moment, Queen Mystic pulled her right hand, shutting the black wooden door tightly. Everything was restored to normal as a result of this.

“Even I do not dare enter,” this mighty figure in the mysterious world said.

“This place has the dreams of certain remnant deities,” Klein said calmly as though he had someone backing him, allowing him to grasp the situation ahead of time.

Queen Mystic turned around as her blue eyes swept over Gehrman Sparrow’s face.

“These waters and this black cloister hide a lot of secrets. My understanding of it might not even reach a single percent."

She didn't continue as she silently looked at Gehrman Sparrow, as though waiting for something.

What intense pressure… Klein thought for a moment and asked probingly, "Do you know the activation incantation of the Black Emperor card?"

Queen Mystic fell silent for a few seconds and shook her head.

Klein looked her in the eye.

"Bernadette."

The entire corridor turned so silent that even their breathing could be heard. Queen Mystic's lips moved a little before they pursed together.

Her blue eyes temporarily lost their focus, but they quickly recovered their profundity.

Queen Mystic turned around at an adequate speed, walked to the black staircase, and said without a change in tone, "The dream is ending."

Klein looked at her back move up the black staircase until the blinding light drowned out everything.

†

Afternoon Town.

Upon seeing the candlelight light up in the buildings outside, the silent town seemed to come to life. Derrick felt as though they had plummeted into a nightmare as they instantly tensed up.

Demon Hunter Colin observed for a while before solemnly saying, "We are in the real world.

"The power of the altar has leaked out."

Chapter 670 - Repenter

That strange Afternoon Town has infiltrated the Afternoon Town in reality? Derrick vaguely understood what the Chief was saying as he had a rough guess as to why this had happened.

He suspected that when Mr. Fool pulled him out of the strange Afternoon Town, “He” had broken an intricate balance, causing the powers to seep out.

This also explained why Demon Hunter Colin Iliad didn’t vanish immediately when he repeated the attempt.

Just as Derrick was wondering what kind of changes this would bring, the chief of the six-member council, Colin, had taken out a luminescent powder from a pouch on his belt, and he scattered it in the air.

The powder suddenly blasted apart, spewing silver light upwards. It made it appear extremely obvious in such a dark environment.

Derrick, Haim, and Joshua knew very well what this signal meant. It meant not to run about haphazardly. Stay in your area, be wary against any incoming enemies, and await rescue!

Without a doubt, this was a signal to all the other exploration teams scattered across Afternoon Town.

Colin consecutively released the signal thrice in the span of two lightning bolts. Then, he turned and said to Derrick and company, “We shall meet up with the rest by combing outwards.

“Be careful along the way.”

“Yes, Chief!” Derrick had already forgotten the grievance from before, only wishing that he could help his partners as soon as possible.

Following Colin’s instructions, he took the left flank of the small team. On the other side was the red-gloved Joshua who held an iron-black sword. Lining the back was the relatively stronger Dawn Paladin, Haim. And right in front was the Demon Hunter who was about three steps away.

As lightning flashed at relatively fast intervals, the gloomy Afternoon Town would go from being bright to darkness. The candlelight from each window showed a wavering flame that burned in silence and calmness.

Derrick was no longer the fledgling he once was. Although he was nervous, his palm didn’t sweat while holding the Axe of Hurricane. He skillfully moved his gaze around, wary against any monster that might leap out from the buildings on both sides.

After a flash of lightning, the world was thrown back into darkness. The bits of candlelight in Afternoon Town seemed to await travelers that needed lodging.

As for the animal hide lantern in Haim’s hand, its light scattered outward, but it failed to produce much light in a radius around him. It wasn’t as effective as Derrick’s night vision.

The only usage was that it appeared to dispel the rich darkness around them.

At that moment, Derrick suddenly felt a chill down his neck, but there wasn’t any cold winds!

He didn’t turn his head subconsciously. Instead, he took one step diagonally, half-turned his body, and glanced through the corner of his eye.

He saw the nearly 2.3-meter-tall Haim looking at him with a gloomy expression. He cleaved down with the broadsword in his hand!

Bang!

Derrick somersaulted to dodge the strike as he seemed to still hear the echoing sound of the intense wind.

Following that, he heard the Chief's voice.

"What happened?"

"Haim attacked me!" Derrick rolled towards Colin's direction and stood up.

"Me?" Haim held the animal hide lantern in one hand and his broadsword in the other, asking with a look of puzzlement.

Colin glanced at Derrick.

"I didn't discover any abnormality on his part."

As he spoke, the Demon Hunter's eyes produced two dark green symbols.

He surveyed the area and said, "The attacker transformed its appearance to Haim's?"

Before he finished his sentence, the silver sword that was clenched tightly in his right hand stabbed backward!

Oof!

Amidst the dull clashing sounds, a figure appeared in the dark environment. He had grizzled and disheveled hair, with deep wrinkles. He had weathered but profound blue eyes and he held a silver sword with light gray oil slathered over it—looking identical to Demon Hunter Colin. The only difference was his gloomy expression and dark skin.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Two silver swords clashed in midair, sending sparks flying.

Meanwhile, Colin Iliad shouted with a deep voice, “Light!”

Light? Derrick instinctively raised his hands and pressed them to his mouth and nose.

At that instant, he discovered three figures dashing out from the surrounding darkness. One of them was the tall and muscular Haim, another the red-gloved Joshua, and the last one was a tall person with a child-like appearance—Derrick himself!

Derrick wasn’t thrown into a fluster. He acted in accordance with the Chief’s instructions and released lustrous brilliance from his body.

The three figures seemed horrified of this as they raised their palms to cover their faces while attempting to escape to the sides.

However, their speeds were in no way comparable to the speed of light.

The lustrous brilliances illuminated the surroundings, enveloping the three figures within.

They opened their mouths and let out silent screams, but they soon dimmed and vanished.

As the light surged outwards, the two Demon Hunters were consumed by the light. The actions of one of them immediately turned stiff and was impeded before losing its color and turning completely black.

Oof!

The silver sword with light grayish oil slathered on it penetrated the monster, but it seemed to stab into air, failing to cause any actual damage.

At this moment, the black monster suddenly immolated itself, cracking into distorted shadows as they corroded the light and flames, inch by inch.

Colin retracted his silver sword and turned his head to Derrick and company.

“The monsters this time are our shadows.

“Their weakness is the brightness of light!”

As he spoke, the Chief’s body produced a bright and holy light of dawn, illuminating the entire street as though it was day.

This was a Beyonder power a Dawn Paladin would receive from the Warrior pathway. The reason why he didn’t use it from the beginning was because the effects were obvious, and he had no idea what kind of accident it might bring. Now, he was already aware of the weaknesses of these monsters in Afternoon Town!

The light of dawn produced by the Chief was like a domain. Haim gave up his plans on using a similar Beyonder power. He continued holding up his animal hide lantern, and he followed behind Colin Iliad with Derrick and Joshua as they turned into another street.

Before long, the quartet arrived at a half-collapsed cathedral.

The cathedral originally had a tower, and its entirety was made up of classical stone columns and masonry. They were heavy and dark.

Passing through the door that even a giant would find wide, Derrick followed the Chief and came to the prayer hall. They saw the deity’s statue destroyed, but the candle on the altar had been lit by some unknown entity.

In front of the altar, a figure donning a spartan white robe was prostrated there, praying so softly that no one could hear him.

“He’s not one of us.” Haim, who also had night vision, was the first to discover the abnormality thanks to his height.

This means that it's not a monster that was transformed from our teammates' shadows… Derrick helped Haim express the context between the lines inwardly.

This meant an unknown, and an unknown often represented extreme danger!

"There should've been an exploration team here." Colin converged the range of his light of dawn to prevent himself from provoking the white-robed figure.

Haim, Joshua, and Derrick suddenly fell silent. Under such a situation, the absence of the exploration team's immediate appearance basically meant an undesirable outcome.

Their minds raced as two men dressed in tight black clothes walked out from the right side of the hall. They were the two members of the exploration team at the cathedral.

"Chief, those shadows… Those shadows are problematic! Laroya was swallowed by his own shadow!" One of the teammates swiftly made his way to Colin and immediately said in agitation and fear.

Has someone already been sacrificed… While Derrick's heart sank, he saw the light of dawn expand, enveloping the two teammates within.

The two of them suddenly wore ferocious expressions as their bodies rapidly darkened. Just two seconds later, they completed vanished like shadows that had been illuminated.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

White bones and globs of bloody flesh fell from their bodies, smashing to the ground.

Light slowly effused out of these mangled carcasses.

Colin retracted his gaze as he said, without an expression, “Go to the side of the ecclesiastic and hear what it’s reciting.”

Derrick and company nodded in silence as they set off towards the collapsed statue.

About ten steps later, they discerned the white-robed figure’s appearance from diagonally across. He was a crying middle-aged man with deep features.

This ecclesiastic’s face was nearly plastered to the ground as he muttered to himself, “Omnipotent Lord, I repent. … tempted Sasrir. The Kings often came to the palace belonging to the dusk to conspire.

“It was unknown when the people in this town changed. They set up secret altars and held strange rituals, doing things you forbade.

“It was already too late by the time I discovered all of this. Degeneration, bloodshed, darkness, rot, murders, corruption, and shadows had already drowned this piece of land.

“A huge calamity will begin here!”

These words kept repeating like a prophet describing the inevitable future with a heavy voice.

A huge calamity would begin here? The abandonment from the Lord that created everything of this land, is this where it began? Also, who tempted Dark Angel Sasrir? This ecclesiastic should’ve stated who. It’s because after he said the words “I repent,” there should’ve been a name, but it was blank… He had originally said it, but the name vanished by itself? Who wiped it away? This ecclesiastic should’ve been from that strange Afternoon Town. After the balance was broken, he appeared here. Otherwise, he should’ve been discovered on the previous exploration… Many thoughts flashed through his mind in a short span of time.

At that moment, he saw the Chief take a stride, walking to the side of the ecclesiastic in white.

†

Klein woke up from his dream as the midday sunlight shone at his eyes from outside the window.

He rolled out of bed, and he unhurriedly arrived at the pirate's dining hall.

When Frank Lee saw his arrival, he immediately waved at him.

"Gehrman, I discovered something new!"

F**k, what now… Klein immediately felt his heart in his mouth.

"A new invention of yours?"

"No, it isn't. Frank shook his head in excitement."I was planning on studying the fish in these waters. They will likely be able to dream! Just as I tried fishing, I ended up getting this strange item."

Chapter 671 - The Fourth Name

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Strange item? Klein instantly felt a headache, but he asked with an unperturbed expression, “What is it?”

“Fish with human fingers growing in them!” Without waiting for Gehrman Sparrow’s reply, Frank ran into the dining hall. Before long, he ran back and held a strange bluish-black fish in his hand.

The fish was of normal length. In the space where its eyes were, it had a face resembling a human. Its belly had been dissected, and three bloody fingers could be seen stuffed inside.

“It wasn’t inserted by me. It was originally like that! Look at its teeth. It’s very unlikely that it will eat something like that, so it can only be the case of the fingers producing themselves! Of course, I’m currently unable to determine what the fingers will do to its body,” Frank hurriedly explained his judgment.

Klein glanced at the fish and said after some deliberation, “It might also be stuffed inside by someone.”

“…Makes sense. Then it’s not the most unique fish.” Frank was stunned for a second as he appeared somewhat disappointed. “Fingers are considered flesh and blood. I’ll ask Heath. He’s an expert on such matters.”

As he spoke, he surveyed the area and found Heath Doyle who was huddled in a corner eating.

Frank quickly went over and placed the bluish-black fish before Bloodless.

Heath Doyle extended his hands and pressed his face to the fish.

Upon seeing this scene, Frank had a baffling feeling that something was amiss.

He soon reacted and laughed.

“No, this isn’t food for you. You’ve been eating fish all this time to the point that even your body smells of fish.

“What I meant was to ask if you know the fingers inside the fish’s stomach? Can you find its original owner?”

Heath Doyle stopped his leaning actions and carefully studied it for a few seconds.

“They belong to a Rose Bishop’s, at least a Rose Bishop’s.”

He took out the three bloody fingers and stacked them together.

After a brief moment, the fingers melted like wax, turning into a puddle of sticky flesh and blood.

The flesh and blood squirmed as they drew a word in blood-red: “Help!”

Fingers from a Rose Bishop… “Help”… Upon seeing this scene, Klein instantly made some connections.

He recalled the Saint of Darkness and Leomaster from the dream world!

This Aurora Order saint was in a particular ruin, and he was affected by the remnant powers of an angel or deity of the Spectator pathway, causing him to dissociate and transform into a kind character. This resulted in him being trapped there.

His good and evil side constantly fought, often clashing at the psyche level. The main persona, which was more inclined towards the darkness, gradually held the advantage as the good personality hid everywhere in the mind world in search for help.

Therefore, this is an attempt by Leomaster's good side to call for help? As a saint of the Aurora Order, he might very well have advanced from a Shepherd, so it's nothing strange to have the Beyonder powers of a Rose Bishop… Klein nodded in thought, believing that his judgment was likely close to the truth.

"Help? How?" Frank Lee turned his head at Gehrman Sparrow with a blank look.

You should ask your captain, not me… Klein shook his head.

"You don't have to bother.

"There are too many oddities with these waters."

The reason for giving this opinion was that, from the dream, Leomaster's main persona held the absolute advantage. To really rescue him, he needed to make preparations to deal with a demigod. Although the good side would definitely interfere with it, all it could do was lower the Saint of Darkness's strength to a certain extent. It would still remain a demigod.

Of course, with Queen Mystic on board the Future, to make any actual attempts wasn't impossible. But if Leomaster were so easily rescued and have him become a completely good Saint of Darkness, Klein believed that the queen would've long done so. The reason why she didn't take action had to be because it was unrealistic.

For example, the place where Leomaster is at causes one's spirit to dissociate, so much so that Queen Mystic doesn't even dare challenge it… Leomaster's dream was only partially restored. It nearly made me face a situation I couldn't deal with. Finally, I resolved the problem quickly with the Sea God Scepter. If I were to meet him in the real world, I'd really suffer a dissociation in personality, becoming a member of an asylum. I would have to find a way to borrow the Mental Terror Candle from Father Utravsky to have a chance of being treated… Heh heh. I can also get Miss Justice to treat me, but she's still lacking in strength at the moment… Klein recalled the past as he jested inwardly.

"Yeah." Frank Lee trusted Gehrman Sparrow a lot. "Perhaps the fellow who's asking for help is long dead…"

Upon saying this, his eyes suddenly lit up as he stared at Heath Doyle.

"Can you wipe out the mental imprint left on this flesh and blood?"

"Yes," Heath Doyle replied succinctly.

The ends of Frank Lee's mouth cracked open bit by bit as he smiled like a two-hundred-pound child.

"I've always been very curious about the flesh and blood structure of a Rose Bishop.

"I've always thought of the outcome of using similar flesh and blood as the medium for crossbreeding."

One day, you will die amidst your experiments. Thankfully, I'll be leaving this ship soon… Klein had the baffling impression of a brattish child entering an armory.

Heath Doyle, whose face was nearly translucent from the paleness, was taken aback for two seconds before sincerely saying, "Thank you."

"Why thank me?" Frank Lee scratched his head, looking completely puzzled.

He's probably thanking you for being able to hold back your curiosity and not using his flesh and blood as the experimental subject. You are a partner worth trusting… The corners of Klein's mouth twitched a bit in an attempt to interpret the reason. He realized that the Future's first and second mate had rather strange thought processes.

†

Afternoon Town. In the half-collapsed cathedral.

Colin stood by the side of the ecclesiastic in white and softly asked, "Who are the Kings?

"What is the huge calamity?

"Who tempted Sasrir?"

The ecclesiastic didn't seem to hear him as he continued prostrating to the ground. He repeated his words of penitence as though he was an illusory recording left behind by the environment.

A wraith, specter, or an evil spirit? Derrick looked in that direction, feeling somewhat nervous.

Seeing no response from the ecclesiastic, Colin reached out his right hand, inching his silver sword towards the person.

However, despite the sharp blade tip reaching the back of his head, the ecclesiastic remained in penitence, as though nothing had changed.

Colin Iliad retracted his silver sword as he surveyed the area with dark green symbols in his eyes.

Then, he walked diagonally to the altar ahead as he cast his gaze onto the candle emitting a yellow light.

After a few seconds of silence, he reached out his left hand and extinguished the entirety of the candlelight.

The collapsed deity statue in the middle of the altar suddenly turned dim as the prostrating white-robed man finally stopped his penitence.

He slowly lifted his head. It was a gloomy green, and his gaze was filled with hatred.

Before Derrick, Haim, and Joshua could react in time, the devout ecclesiastic had pounced forward with an exceedingly fast speed, drawing out an afterimage.

Colin was already prepared for it. He took a step diagonally forward with his right foot, turned his body halfway, and swept backward with the silver sword in his left hand.

On the sword, spots of light soared, instantly forming a gigantic storm.

The storm that was formed purely out of light swept the surroundings, leaving the ecclesiastic frozen in midair before he was completely devoured.

The storm quickly came to an end as Colin looked at the ecclesiastic whose body had been infused with the light of dawn. Then, he repeated his previous questions again.

“Who are the Kings?

“What is the huge calamity?

“Who tempted Sasrir?”

The ecclesiastic whose figure was already very indistinct replied in a dazed manner, “The Kings are Sasrir, Ouroboros, Medici…”

Just as he was about to say the fourth name, a transparent flame tore through him from the inside!

The flame instantly engulfed him, burning him into a spreading black gas.

So the Kings refer to the Kings of Angels… What’s the fourth name? Why did he self-destruct just as he was about to say it? Is it the one who tempted Sasrir, or someone else? Derrick was filled with questions.

As the ecclesiastic died, the streets outside and the entirety of Afternoon Town suddenly produced roars that sounded like wild beasts.

Derrick subconsciously looked out the window and saw a gigantic face.

The glass where it was originally plastered to had grown a single unique eye. On its face was short and dense black hair.

Tap! Tap! Tap! Another similar monster rushed out from inside the cathedral. It had the build of an ordinary human and two eyes, but the surface of its body was similarly covered with short black hair that resembled a beast's.

"A degenerate town that has been completely corrupted..." Colin sighed as he faced one of the monsters.

Derrick, Haim, and Joshua also took up battle positions in a bid to fend off the remaining monster.

†

The Future continued cruising in peace before encountering a brief night once more.

After Klein entered the dream world, he found himself back in his original position—by Admiral of Stars Cattleya's side.

He was just about to look at the projection of the Giant King's Court on the opposite side of the mountain to seek out more possible clues when he suddenly heard Cattleya ask heavily while hugging her knees.

"Have you met her?"

Klein acknowledged tersely without hiding the truth.

Cattleya pursed her lips and asked, "She's on the ship?"

“Yes.” Klein turned his head and looked at Admiral of Stars as he said in passing, “You have very deep feelings for her.”

Cattleya’s expression wasn’t as lost and dazed as before. Biting her lips, she said in a self-deprecating manner, “That’s right.

“I was by her side before I was three. Heh heh. That’s what they say, but I no longer have any actual memories of that.

“She taught me, and she held me by the hand as we adventured. She watched me grow up. To me, she’s my captain and my teacher, as well… as well as my mother…”

As Cattleya spoke, she suddenly fell silent.

Chapter 672 - Bystander

◆

Upon glancing at the silent Cattleya, Klein suddenly felt a little awkward.

He didn’t speak again as he turned and jumped off the boulder. He walked into the black cloister through the half-opened door.

In the square surrounded by a gloomy tower and the buildings, there were remnant fires from a war. Gigantic arrows were embedded in the ground, with the end of their shafts softly wobbling from the wind.

Frank Lee was still digging and planting something, but there wasn’t food by his feet anymore, but a pool of flesh and blood.

“What experiments do you plan on performing on them?” Klein, who walked past, couldn’t help but ask.

Frank smiled in excitement.

“Plenty!

“For example, all I need is one ox that can satisfy the meat requirements of an entire ship. Every time a piece of meat is sliced off, it will regrow new flesh again!”

…Why is it oxen again? Klein was momentarily unable to provide a response. All he could do was silently draw the crimson moon inwardly.

Along the way, he encountered Navigator Ottolov, who was reading on the ground; Nina, who was almost taking off her clothes due to her inebriation; Heath Doyle, who was hiding silently in the shadows of a corner, before arriving at the hall filled with murals.

At some point in time, Anderson Hood had conjured a reclining chair and was leisurely lying on it, observing the extremely religious and holy murals on the dome.

“Sigh, we’re finally about to leave these cursed waters. It will just be another two noons and nights!” Seeing Gehrman Sparrow enter, the Strongest Hunter sighed from the bottom of his heart. “As long as we successfully leave this area, then I’ll no longer need to worry about any remnant problems.”

Klein originally wished to ask him to shut up, but since he was talking about himself and no one else, he couldn’t be bothered. He asked in passing, “Are you from Intis?”

“Barely. My father is from Intis, and my mother is from Segar,” Anderson answered, with the full intention of having a chat.

Klein continued taking a few steps forward.

“Then, do you believe in the Eternal Blazing Sun, God of Steam and Machinery, or the God of Knowledge and Wisdom?”

Anderson’s expression suddenly turned a little odd.

“My faith was originally in the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, but their priests are too despicable. Just because I failed my examinations, they ignored my ordinarily handsome face and treated me as a ret*rd. Pui! I’m just better at other topics. My intelligence is in no way lacking! My eye for aesthetics and my basic foundation in drawing has always been excellent! Heh heh, before becoming a hunter, my dream was to be an artist.

“Of course, after coming to the sea, my faith is more or less in the Lord of Storms.”

Upon hearing Anderson's description, Klein suddenly thought of a joke*—a priest from the God of Knowledge and Wisdom might make such a statement: "He failed his examinations? This child is hopeless. Just bury him."*

He was about to lead the conversation into Anderson's life as a hunter, as he was the only person apart from Queen Mystic who could communicate with him normally in this dream world when he suddenly heard the sound of a door creaking open.

In the depths of the hall of murals, there was the sound of a door opening!

Anderson just mentioned about successfully leaving these waters… Klein felt an inexplicable urge to facepalm himself as he focused his gaze on the source of the sound.

Following that, he saw a man in a short linen robe running out from the depths of the hall of murals and towards them.

The man had luxuriant raven-black hair, but he had wrinkles on his face, as though he had suffered plenty of hardship.

Saint of Darkness Leomaster! Leomaster's good side! Klein recognized the man, and he immediately discovered a tall figure surface in the depths of the hall of murals.

The figure was dressed in thick and heavy black full-body armor. His eyes emitted a deep redness.

He held a huge sword as he chased after Leomaster.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

His metallic boots hit the ground repeatedly, releasing clear and hurried sounds.

It's the real Leomaster! The main persona of the Saint of Darkness!

Klein saw the two approaching figures as he instinctively turned to the side and quickly retreated.

He immediately held himself to the hall's wall before realizing that Anderson Hood had leaped up from his reclining chair at some point in time, clinging close to the other side of the wall.

Sensing Gehrman Sparrow's gaze, Anderson grinned, returning a smile that meant "so you are the same as me."

Who's the same as you? This isn't cowardice. If you weren't around, I would've taken out the Sea God Scepter and fought the Saint of Darkness! I've always been considering what would happen in the real world if I were to help the good Leomaster kill the main persona in the dream…

Yes, there are crewmembers from the Future outside. If Leomaster's main persona really goes mad, Queen Mystic will definitely take action…

It shouldn't be a coincidence that these two fellows left their own dreams and came here… Both parties are already very close in the real world? Perhaps someone had directed the good Leomaster over. Queen Mystic? Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind.

Leomaster, who was dressed in short linen robes, saw the two men ahead. He had wanted to cry for help, but in the blink of an eye, he discovered that the two of them had escaped to the two ends of the hall, as though they didn't wish to partake in any of this.

"…"

He desperately ran as he rushed out the hall of murals.

The redness in the armored Leomaster's eyes darkened. He continued his pursuit, completely ignoring Klein and Anderson who were clinging close to the mural walls.

By the time they left the hall, Klein, who had some theories in mind, didn't hesitate to take a stride forward and rush out like a hunting leopard.

"..."

Anderson raised his right hand and grabbed at thin air, failing to stop Gehrman Sparrow in time.

"This guy was still rather rational a moment ago. Why did he suddenly go mad? He discovered something? What a strange person..." Anderson looked at the square outside, hesitated a few seconds, and finally chose to follow.

They chased all the way out the black cloister, and they arrived in the region where the Admiral of Stars was. Klein saw the linen-robed Leomaster circling around the boulder to escape his evil counterpart. Then, he took the opportunity and faced the projection of the Giant King's Court on the opposite mountains, praying softly with ancient Hermes, "The Lord that created everything;

"You are omnipotent and omniscient..."

After making another circle, the good Leomaster continued chanting,

"You are the source of everything great. You are the Beginning and the End;

"You are the god of gods. You are the ruler of the vast astral world!"

With the honorific name spoken, the sea of clouds that separated the two mountains suddenly stirred before slowly splitting apart and revealing a deep crevice at the bottom.

The projection of the Giant King's Court on the opposite side suddenly sucked up the frozen dusk that was extremely distant!

However, nothing happened after that.

Klein seemed to figure out something as he turned his head to look at the buildings near to the black cloister's door. He saw that, behind a clean floor-to-ceiling window, the beautiful but distant Queen Mystic Bernadette was watching everything that was happening in silence.

She was indeed the one who made the good Leomaster escape from his dream and arrive here… Since a Listener from the Aurora Order was able to bring Little Jack into the Forsaken Land of God, it doesn't make sense that the Saint of Darkness isn't able to do so! When there's no path ahead, and with him seeing the projection of the Giant King's Court, Leomaster's split personality will definitely wish to escape into it. Hence, he demonstrated the way to enter the Forsaken Land of God to the person observing in secret… Klein retracted his gaze with great certainty.

As for why Leomaster didn't succeed, he believed it was because—he wasn't in the right location!

He needs to be deep in those waters, and he needs to find a particular spot that is surrounded by danger and strangeness. Then, only by chanting the honorific name of the City of Silver's Creator in the dream brought about by the night, will the passage that's hidden in the projection of the Giant King's Court be opened? Following that, one can enter with the aid of a dream, bringing one's body and ship to transmigrate through the fog that mixes reality and illusion, so as to reach the shores of the Forsaken Land of God? Klein thought of certain possibilities.

To him, the method of entering the Forsaken Land of God wasn't something he needed to care about. If he wished to do so, once he advanced to Sequence 4 and truly obtained a certain level of godhood, he could get Little Sun to set up a descent or bestowment ritual for him to directly descend!

However, if he used this to reverse engineer the way to leave the Forsaken Land of God, it would be extremely useful. This was priceless for the City of Silver!

From the looks of it, the key to leaving the Forsaken Land of God is really in the Giant King's Court, but as to what it is, there's no way of guessing it… Amidst his thoughts, pea vines rapidly grew out from the soil, instantly turning the area outside the black cloister into a green forest, and it also forcefully separated the Saint of Darkness's main persona and the good persona.

Then, Klein saw through the gaps of the pea vines that Cattleya had stood up. She was no longer sitting there hugging her knees.

†

Sizzle!

Derrick first did a roll before he jumped up, cleaving down at the giant's leg which was covered in short, black hair. Stimulated silver lightning smote down, causing the single-eyed monster to tremble as he stood rooted to the ground.

Derrick didn't miss this opportunity as he immediately opened up his arms.

Bright and pure holy light descended and enveloped the mutated giant.

In the brilliance, the monster collapsed with a tragic cry as its body produced black fog.

After a series of battles, Derrick discovered that the monsters produced by the strange Afternoon Town were all afraid of intense light despite their different traits.

Such an experience had allowed him to avoid injuries, allowing his teammates to keep their lives.

After a while, when Colin finished the strongest monster, Afternoon Town was restored to its silence. All the lit candlelights were already extinguished.

The Chief of the six-member council surveyed the area before saying with a sigh, “Let’s regroup before we set up camp.”

At that moment, the teams that had gathered together had already been reduced to a third. There were only six people!

Colin Iliad’s true goal was actually the Giant King’s Court, but their encounter in Afternoon Town had made him realize that the exploration couldn’t be done in haste. This was because the Giant King’s Court might hold deep secrets about the cataclysm, with unimaginable danger. Therefore, he needed half a year or more, perhaps even two years of preparation and preliminary explorations before he could attempt opening it.

Chapter 673 - Blood Text

◆

Layers of pea vines that appeared as though they were capable of weaving into a stairway into heaven dropped and shrank back into the soil.

Be it the Saint of Darkness’s main persona or Leomaster’s good side, they vanished. Only Cattleya stood at the top of the boulder, surveying her surroundings with a blank look.

Queen Mystic threw Leomaster’s main and good side back into his own dream? Or did she pull them elsewhere in an attempt to understand the unique traits necessary for entering the Forsaken Land of God?

It seems like it’s impossible to pull these two personalities into different dreams; otherwise, Queen Mystic would’ve long conversed with the good Leomaster individually, as well as agree to help him defeat the devil in exchange for relevant information, without going through so much trouble…

Of course, to truly kill off the Saint of Darkness’s main persona, perhaps one will have to enter the dangerous ruins in the real world. Even Queen Mystic wouldn’t dare to attempt it, as it might produce an evil queen who abides by “do as you wish, and do as much harm”… Klein turned his head once again in thought, looking at the nearby buildings around the black cloister’s door. He saw that the figure belonging to Bernadette had vanished behind the clear floor-to-ceiling windows.

Klein didn’t attempt to seek her out to figure out if Queen Mystic had obtained more information from Leomaster’s good side. This was because he remembered Gehrman Sparrow's core persona—Mr. Fool's Blessed!

And Admiral of Stars knew very well that, in Mr. Fool's Tarot Gathering, The Sun came from the City of Silver in the Forsaken Land of God. To say that Mr. Fool didn't know the method of entering the Forsaken Land of God was unbelievable.

Therefore, as a Blessed, Gehrman Sparrow definitely lacked the motivation to delve deep into the matter!

There are many matters where the case is true that a persona which brings you success will also make you fail. This is a flaw for Faceless… Klein retracted his gaze and looked back at the projection of the Giant King's Court on the opposite mountain, only to realize that the frozen sunset was slowly returning to the horizon.

On the same mountain, the boulder remained standing as Cattleya slowly sat down again, hugging her knees.

†

Noon and night switched thrice, but the actual amount of time that had passed in the outside world was just the daytime of a single day.

The Future circled around the dangerous ruins and dodged the latent dangers hidden in the safe sea routes, before finally arriving near the entrance of those waters.

Klein and company once again saw the ruin which was mostly submerged with seawater from the very beginning. They saw the gray stones and columns, as well as the huge dome at the top.

Previously, they could hear loud and clear panting sounds. Bloodless had even painfully pointed out that a corpse was hidden in those ruins!

And that corpse was very likely to be the source of the panting!

At that moment, the ruin that hid immense danger no longer brought fear to the people on board the Future, but joy. This was because it meant that they were about to leave the ridiculous and terrifying waters!

At some point in time, Nina had already climbed up to the tall crow's nest and said loudly as she looked at the ruin, "Eh, there's a ship!"

Ship? Klein circled around Anderson Hood, who was blocking him, and approached the shipboard as he focused.

Indeed, on the right of the stacked stones and stone columns, there was an ordinary three-mast sailboat docked by it. As there was something in the way, it would be difficult for the people on board the Future to notice it if they weren't viewing it from a high vantage point or looking carefully.

The sailboat floated there without a single sailor on board. The silence made it terrifying.

"It's as though it was all eaten by the ruin." Anderson came over and shook his head with a sigh. "In these waters, one mustn't go close unless one knows the ruins well."

A person who dares outline the mural of an Angel of Fate doesn't have the right to say that… Your treasure-hunting team claimed to be rich in experience, but in the end, aren't you the only one left from it… Klein didn't turn his head as he lampooned.

At this moment, Cattleya also came to the deck as she looked at the sailboat docked by the ruin.

During this entire process, she didn't give Gehrman Sparrow a glance; it was as though he didn't exist.

After a brief moment of silence, Cattleya raised her hand to remove the heavy glasses on her nose bridge. The deep purple hue in her eyes swirled as though she was trying to outline one complex symbol after another.

A pair of eyes suddenly appeared above the empty sailboat; they were a pair of illusory, translucent dark purple eyes!

The pair of eyes slowly moved and circled the deck once before entering the cabin.

This Beyonder power is very useful… Speaking of which, based on the means demonstrated by Queen Mystic and Admiral of Stars, the Beyonder powers of a Mystery Pryer has some of the highlights of fairy tales! Man, will Queen Mystic be able to turn people into frogs? Also, is the mystery prying of a Mystery Pryer demonstrated here, on their eyes? Admiral of Stars's eyes are somewhat odd. I have to take note… Klein silently made a guess as he awaited the outcome of Cattleya's remote exploration.

After a while, the dark purple hue in Cattleya's eyes finally dimmed.

She rubbed her brows, wore her glasses again, and said to Anderson Hood and Frank Lee, "There's a problem inside."

As she spoke, she took out a handful of colorful powder from her classic warlock robe, and she suddenly threw them outwards.

The powder didn't scatter onto the ground and instead formed a realistic color picture.

The picture's background appeared like a captain's cabin. There was a picture on the desk and a portrait on the wall, both depicting the same person.

He was a man from Feysac, with broad shoulders, light blond hair, and deep blue eyes!

This… Klein first found it familiar before he recalled where he had seen the man before!

Back when he was in Nas, an adventurer had been pursued by the second mate of the King of Immortality, Kircheis, and ran into the Lærdal Bar to seek help from the members of the Adventurer Association. At that instant, among the powerhouses who stood up to provide protection was a muscular man from Feysac who was more than two meters tall. Klein had found him rather strong and placed him at Sequence 6 at the very least.

Why would his ship suddenly enter these waters, and why would he rashly explore a dangerous ruin? Amidst Klein's puzzlement, he carefully observed the supernatural picture on the deck.

This time, he saw a pool of blood on the floor, and beside the blood were a few words in Feysac: "The Fountain of Unaging…"

The last character had a drawn-out mark of blood before it was connected to clear smudges that extended out towards the door.

Klein's mind seemed capable of restoring the actual scene. The Sequence 6 Feysac man had suffered a sudden attack and fell to the ground, heavily injured. He tried his best to write down the source of his encounter, but just as finished the first few words, he was held by the legs or head by some unknown entity, and he was forcibly pulled away!

Considering how the red words weren't wiped away, Klein suspected that the entity that dragged the adventurer away wasn't a living person.

It should be the corpse of that ruin… he thought, feeling a headache.

"The Fountain of Unaging? They came here in search of the Fountain of Unaging?" Anderson Hood said in excitement.

"Clearly, but they didn't find it." Frank Lee shook his head in great disappointment.

He also looked forward to the Fountain of Unaging, believing that the fountain's waters could create qualitative changes to his various experiments.

The Fountain of Unaging… Slaughterer Kircheis was the one chasing after the young adventurer back then. He's the second mate of the King of Immortality… Rumor has it that the King of Immortality had once drunk the waters of the Fountain of Unaging… Kircheis even warned me—Gehrman Sparrow—to not interfere with the young adventurer's matters, claiming that it was the will of the King of Immortality… Klein barely reproduced the truth based on various tidbits of information.

The young adventurer obtained the secret of the Fountain of Unaging from one of the King of Immortality's aides, and he was thus pursued. Later, with the protection of some of the stronger members of the Adventurer Association, he barely escaped from Slaughterer Kircheis. Later, to hide from the King of Immortality and also to seek out the Fountain of Unaging, they finally chose to adventure into these waters. Who knew that they ended up being wiped out in that ruin…

Could it be that the Fountain of Unaging is hidden deep in that ruin? Klein looked at the stacked gray stones and stone columns as he vaguely made a prediction.

As he temporarily had no way to verify his theory, nor did he know whose corpse was buried there, he didn't have the urge to explore or take risks. He rationally retracted his gaze.

I can ask Will Auceptin or Arrodes… Heh, perhaps the Fountain of Unaging is the pus produced from that rotting corpse… Klein guessed with the most nefarious of thoughts.

At this moment, Cattleya, who heard Anderson's and Frank's conversation, thought and said, "If their death was caused by their search for the Fountain of Unaging, I do not believe that the owner of the portrait and picture would have the motivation to leave behind accurate information before his death. After all, the people who actually find him here wouldn't be his family."

Makes sense… If I were in his shoes, and if I encounter a monster in my treasure-seeking adventures, I wouldn't think of providing any hints to others before my death… Klein indiscernibly shook his head, failing to think of any reason for the time being.

Cattleya looked at Anderson and Frank who wore looks of anticipation.

"A successful adventure is a result of having detailed intel and sufficient preparation, but we lack all of that now."

Her voice suddenly turned loud as it resounded in every corner of the ship.

"Continue sailing.

"Leave these waters!"

"Aye aye, Captain!" Nina, who was on the crow's nest, gulped a mouthful of beer.

A few minutes later, the descent and ascent that violated common sense happened once again, but the prepared members on the Future were no longer in a sorry state like before. They easily overcame the stimulating scene of jumping over the ravine and being sent flying.

Soon, the Future landed over blue seas, and a distance away was a gigantic storm blotting out the sky.

Not far away, there was another ship floating there silently. It was two hundred meters long, its front and back curved up, making it look like a crescent.

Upon seeing the flag depicting the black tombstone, Klein's mind flashed with the corresponding name: The Death Announcer!

It was the flagship of the King of Immortality Agalito!

At this moment, Klein no longer felt fear and horror, but excitement and agitation.

With Queen Mystic on board, and with no need to hide this time… She, together with me, Admiral of Stars, Anderson Hood, and the crew of the Future will have the chance of wiping out the crew of the King of Immortality! Food for Creeping Hunger has been found! I've found a candidate for a marionette!

At this moment, the Death Announcer suddenly turned around, moving away at an unprecedented speed.

I-it fled… Klein instantly wore a blank look.

Soon, the Death Announcer had vanished from his line of sight.

Chapter 674 - Leaving the Ship

◆ ◆ ◆

That was way too fast… I just had the thought… Klein looked at the undulating surface of the sea, temporarily unable to gather his thoughts.

Amidst his thoughts, he came up with a theory.

King of Immortality Agalito's second mate, Slaughterer Kircheis, is suspected to be a Devil or even a Desire Apostle. He possesses the Beyonder powers to detect danger ahead of time and the ability to lock onto the source of the danger. Then, would the King of Immortality be a Sequence 4 demigod of the Devil pathway to begin with?

That's why once the crew of the Future possessed the actual strength to deal harm to him with an actual plan in mind, he immediately sensed the problem and discovered the existence of Queen Mystic, so he didn't hesitate to retreat?

Yes, this means Queen Mystic also had the intention of taking action. Otherwise, my thoughts would've only made King of Immortality sneer and retaliate crazily…

Sigh, this Beyonder power of the Devil pathway is just too useful. Trying to ensnare the King of Immortality or his first mate, second mate, or third mate is quite impossible… Klein thought regretfully as he looked at Anderson Hood.

The Strongest Hunter still showed a clear, warped expression, as though reeling in despair that his bad luck hadn't decreased. He was also surprised that the Death Announcer would flee with its tail between its legs, as though it wasn't going according to the script in his mind.

He darted his eyes as he looked around with a guess, seemingly coming to a conclusion.

Unfortunately, Anderson's bad luck isn't strong enough. Otherwise, he can be sacrificed in order to bait the King of Immortality… Heh heh, isn't that the correct usage of a Provoker? Klein turned into the corridor and returned to his room.

Just as he pushed open the wooden door, he saw a familiar back standing before his window. She had a very proportionate figure and was dressed slightly oddly. She was none other than Queen Mystic, Bernadette.

Ma'am, did your father not teach you? You shouldn't enter someone's room without permission, especially the room of a male stranger? As a lady who was brought up in a noble family, you should've been waiting by the door and earnestly request permission to enter… Emperor, didn't you recall the books on education? Klein silently lampooned as he closed the door in passing.

Without waiting for him to say a word, Bernadette said to him with her back facing him, "The matters from before have verified a theory of mine."

"What theory?" Klein repressed his curiosity as he asked with a deadpan expression.

Bernadette didn't turn her head as she looked out at the calm sea surface.

"Agalito's Fountain of Unaging is a scam.

"If there really is a Fountain of Unaging, it would've been one of the main ingredients of a Demoness of Unaging, or it would be something that would be produced from their corpses. Therefore, any man who claims to have drunk from the Fountain of Unaging is lying."

She didn't explain what a Demoness of Unaging was, seemingly certain that Gehrman Sparrow knew what it was. And even if he didn't know, he would have the means of figuring it out later.

Fountain of Unaging… Demoness of Unaging… It does match. So, the bloody text on that sailboat beside the ruin is to tell the world that the Fountain of Unaging is a scam? King of Immortality Agalito has released news of the Fountain of Unaging again and again in order to lure adventurers and pirates to enter dangerous waters and die, or to take the opportunity to slaughter them? It has strong vibes of a Devil… It's no wonder Slaughterer Kircheis warned me not to interfere… Klein thought for a few seconds and deliberately said in a ruminative tone, "scam…"

Queen Mystic Bernadette nodded and said with a gentle tone, "This might be part of the ritual that Agalito needs for his advancement to Sequence 4. It might also be an action needed to digest the Sequence 4 potion."

She paused as though making a silent sigh. Then, she said, "That's because the Sequence 4 of his pathway is Demon."

Demon? Sounds deceitful… Creating a treasure scam to harm others, that does match the style of a demon… Klein was instantly enlightened.

At this moment, Queen Mystic turned around as she cast her gaze through her checkered black veil and towards Gehrman Sparrow's eyes.

It's my turn to provide information? Klein deliberated for two seconds.

"According to the analysis of limited diary entries, Emperor Roselle suffered an extreme predicament in his later years. This forced him to come up with the idea of attempting something crazy."

In this aspect, he was extremely frank. This was because the diary entries he had received up to date didn't reveal what Emperor Roselle wished to do in his later years, what predicament he was in, or what crazy action he did.

Therefore, by providing this piece of information, he was hinting to Bernadette that to know the truth, she had to hand over the diary entries of Emperor Roselle's critical period to Admiral of Stars Cattleya.

Bernadette remained silent for a few seconds.

As the dark clouds moved through the sky, allowing the sunlight to shine from the outside, the queen that reigned over the Five Seas suddenly dissociated like bubbles, shattering and disappearing.

The light refracted from the bubbles had produced different colors, filling the room with a fairytale-like dreamscape.

If not for the Hidden Sage, the Mystery Pryer pathway is really interesting… Klein reflected as he tapped his left thumb on the first segment of his index finger twice.

He activated his vision of Spirit Body Threads, but he didn't discover any additional black threads.

This meant that Bernadette had already left!

Phew… Klein silently sighed and quickly deactivated the vision.

Just as he was about to lie in bed to take a rest, he heard brisk footsteps approach.

Knock. Knock. Knock. Someone knocked at his door.

"Who is it?" Klein sat up.

"It's me." Cattleya's voice sounded.

Klein went over, feeling puzzled as he opened the door.

He didn’t ask what it was about as he coldly looked at her, his gaze expressing everything.

Cattleya nudged the heavy glasses on her nose bridge and said, “Coming out from those waters doesn’t bring us back to where we entered. We are less than 100 nautical miles away from Toscarter Island. It will take about three days to Nas. Where do you wish to return to?”

The entrance and exit are different? Klein was surprised as he asked in a confirming manner, “Then, is it possible to enter those waters from this place?”

“No, we will directly fall into that bottomless ravine of the ocean. According to the results of divination, the people who did so are dead in the true sense of the word,” Cattleya explained simply.

Is that so… Klein thought before saying, “To Toscarter Island.”

The reason why he didn’t choose Nas was because they were close to the next Tarot Gathering. He didn’t wish to do something that took plenty of time on the Future.

Furthermore, Toscarter Island was the easternmost colony of the Loen Kingdom. The currency used was pence, soli, and gold pounds. Klein no longer needed to consider the problem of foreign exchange.

“Alright.” Cattleya had no views on this.

Watching her turn and walk to the captain’s cabin, Klein shook his head slightly and sighed inwardly.

If you had come earlier, you would’ve met Queen Mystic.

†

In the evening, the Future arrived at the port of Toscarter Island as it forcefully docked there.

Klein dressed up as a gentleman, carried his leather suitcase, and came to the deck. He then handed over the final payment placed in his two pockets to Admiral of Stars Cattleya.

After subtracting the Pugilist Beyonder characteristics worth 700 pounds, it was a total of 1,300 pounds.

As such, Klein's wealth was reduced to 8,436 pounds and 5 gold coins.

Cattleya received it in silence and opened her mouth as though she wanted to say something, but she ultimately didn't say a word.

"Are you getting off here, or are you going somewhere else?" She turned to look at Anderson Hood.

Realizing that Gehrman Sparrow was about to leave and that he was on a pirate ship with him hunting several pirates in the past, Anderson immediately smiled.

"I'll get off here."

"You can now make payment." Cattleya didn't spare him just because Anderson had borrowed clothes from the pirates.

"Alright." Anderson didn't hide his heart-aching expression as he reached out and pulled off an ordinary button in the middle of his shirt.

Reluctantly, he handed it over.

"This is what I acquired from those waters. It's from the corpse that originated from an explorer from the Loen military.

"I'm not sure of its original name, and I can only call it by its corresponding Sequence 6 due to the powers it exhibits. Yes, Judge.

"It's negative effects aren't especially strong. It makes its wearer easily offend people or monsters. Perhaps, one might end up being targeted by a demigod."

This isn't something you can call not especially strong? If I were Admiral of Stars, I would've chosen that sword of yours… Klein lampooned as he watched Cattleya receive Anderson's payment for the boat ride.

He didn't bother with their affairs as he lifted his suitcase and left the Future, arriving at the pier of Toscarter Island.

Bang!

Anderson Hood leaped off the deck and landed beside him.

"Let's get some drinks? To celebrate our departure from those cursed waters!" the hunter invited him with excitement in a relaxed manner.

Klein swept his glance at him, refusing his offer with his eyes. All he wanted was to put a distance between him and this fellow who had bad luck and a provocative halo.

"Alright." Anderson looked to his sides, cleared his throat, and said, "Can you lend me money? As you know, everything that I had has sunken in those waters."

Having said that, he laughed.

"Don't worry. I'll return what I owe tomorrow morning. There are plenty of pirates in Toscarter's bars and brothels. I plan on getting them to sponsor me a little."

Extort those without bounties while cashing out those with bounties? Klein tsked inwardly and handed him a five-soli note.

"That little?" Anderson said with his mouth agape.

"It's enough for your drinks, meals, and hotel," Klein calmly replied. "Besides, this is one pound in cash."

"One pound?" Anderson rubbed his eyes and said with a helpless smile. "Alright, it's one pound. I'll return one pound to you tomorrow morning.”

Chapter 675 - Building Ties

◆

Afraid that Gehrman Sparrow would go back on his word, Anderson grabbed the five-soli note as scenes of ordinary beef sizzling over flames and alcohol beverages without any additional sedatives surfaced in his mind.

Well, well, well, this fellow actually accepted it. I was just saying it in passing in order to accentuate my persona, as well as to let him understand that it isn't so easy to borrow money from me so as to prevent him from hunting pirates and returning to the Fog Sea after borrowing a huge sum of money… Klein mumbled inwardly.

To him, a Sequence 5 Hunter wouldn't starve or have nowhere to stay when placed in a place with plenty of pirates, even if he didn't have a single penny.

He indiscernibly shook his head and was about to leave the dock when he suddenly heard a boorish shout, "Gehrman!"

"…"

Upon hearing Frank Lee's voice, Klein shuddered as he turned around, his nerves taut.

The first mate of the Future, the Poison Expert with a 7,000 pound bounty, stood by the shipboard and held his hands to his mouth. As though broadcasting his voice, he asked, "Where will you be most of the time? Where should I write letters to?

“I wish to share with you the latest results of my research.”

I don’t wish to know… This fellow probably doesn’t have many friends. And I dare say that many people he thinks of as friends doesn’t treat him as one… Yes, Admiral of Stars is still inclined towards Queen Mystic, and she lacks belonging to the Tarot Club. To openly develop a snitch at her side, no—a source of intelligence. It helps in my shock and awe tactic towards her, and it’s a kind of “Gehrman Sparrow” level punishment imposed on her… With this as a bedrock, it would be reasonable and natural for Mr. Fool to punish her… Klein’s thoughts raced as he took out a notepad and fountain pen used for divinations from his pocket.

He scribbled down the summoning ritual needed to summon his messenger, and he didn’t forget to include the additional requirement of a gold coin.

With a whoosh, Klein flicked his wrist, sending the note flying at Frank Lee like a dart, landing accurately in his hand.

“Excellent!” Frank Lee glanced at the information on the piece of paper and waved his hand in delight.

Klein didn’t delay any further as he picked up his leather suitcase, left the dock, and began searching for a hotel.

During this process, he was originally very adamant about objecting to Anderson’s request to stay in the same hotel, but on second thought, he agreed to it.

He was afraid that this fellow who was plagued with bad luck would get into trouble again, bringing about a disaster to the innocent guests and attendant; therefore, he decided to monitor him up close and decisively handle the problem if required.

After checking in, Anderson went into his room with his key.

Bang! He sat down on a reclining chair as though a heavy burden was released.

After leaving those dangerous waters, he finally felt like he was human again. He didn’t need to worry about suddenly dying.

After he laid there silently for a while, Anderson Hood slowly got up. He took out a flask that had an outer lining made of iron, flipped over a glass cup, and poured himself some hot water.

He believed that he should recollect himself and begin visiting the bars.

After drinking some alcohol and filling his stomach, he could seek out some sponsors!

After the hot water cooled a little, Anderson raised his cup and gulped it down comfortably.

Suddenly, he coughed intensely as his face turned a little purple.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

Anderson reached for his throat, but he didn’t seem capable of taking a single breath.

With a crashing sound, the glass cup fell to the floor from his hand, shattering across the ground.

Cough… Cough… Cough… Anderson’s coughing weakened as his face turned purple.

At that moment, his eyes seemed to produce a spark as the veins on the back of his hands squirmed like they were alive.

Bang!

Anderson fell to the ground, convulsing a little before becoming motionless. His breathing even seemed to come to a halt.

Seconds later, the corpse-like Anderson suddenly got up as he rubbed his face in fear.

“Damn it, I almost choked to death from drinking water…

“If that really happened, then I might be the hunter with the most laughable cause of death!

“Thankfully, thankfully, I bought this item at great cost before entering those waters. It finally came in handy today…”

As he spoke, Anderson took out a doll formed of straw, from a secret pocket in his vest. Ink was used to simply draw two eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

The doll’s surface had already been corroded as pitch-black liquid dripped down, drop after drop.

In about eight seconds, it was completely reduced to a liquid, turning into a stain on the floor.

“My bad luck hasn’t decreased at all, and it has even gotten worse… Man, Gehrman Sparrow once told me of a prophecy, saying that the most lethal danger often lies in day-to-day life.” Anderson paced about as he carefully avoided the glass fragments at his feet, afraid that it would cause him another death.

“No, I need to save myself! I need to save myself!” Anderson pulled open the door and carefully walked out.

He came straight to Klein’s room, reached out his finger, and rapped on the door.

Soon, the wooden door, which was neither too solid or hard, opened without a sound. Gehrman Sparrow, who had only taken off his coat, appeared before Anderson.

Anderson forced a smile and said, “Surprise!”

Bang!

The door closed right in front of him.

"…"

He was first stunned before he muttered to himself with a stiff expression, "I should change the way I talk."

Thump! Thump! Thump!

He knocked on Klein's door again.

The door quickly opened as a revolver was pointed at him.

"Haha, I just wanted to ask if you know any Beyonders who can improve my luck?" Anderson raised his hands midway, wildly hinting for Gehrman Sparrow to provide him with the details of the powerhouse that informed him of the prophecy.

Too late. I've no idea where Queen Mystic is… Eh? She didn't leave me a way to contact her? But since my messenger's summoning ritual is known to Frank Lee, it also means Admiral of Stars knows of it. And that means Bernadette knows of it. Also, after returning to Backlund, I can seek out Miss Sharron's help. Queen Mystic is in her circles, even though the frequency of her appearance isn't high… Klein gave Anderson Hood a look of pity.

He wasn't fond of this Strongest Hunter, often mocking him inwardly and expressing all kinds of nefarious thoughts towards him. After all, Anderson was partially responsible for him losing his cufflink; however, it was only limited to his thoughts. He had no intentions of actually putting it into practice. If Anderson truly sought his help, he similarly wouldn't reject him.

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "I can help you ask, and I'll give you the answer tomorrow morning.

"But I suspect you don't have the means to pay me."

"I'll go make my rounds at the bars later! Furthermore, I have plenty of stashes in the Fog Sea," Anderson replied without hesitation.

Klein nodded and as he closed the door, he said, "Meet you tomorrow morning. I hope you can survive until then."

Creak!

The door was locked once again.

"Is that a curse, or was he wishing me luck?" Anderson whispered with a wry smile. "According to my experience, there probably wouldn't be any accidents in the next two to three days."

Inside the room, Klein returned to his desk.

On it was a letter that already had the introduction written, as well as an unfolded paper crane.

In regards to Anderson's problem, Klein had already thought of a target to ask before he even agreed.

There was no doubt that to resolve the means of a Snake of Fate, questioning another Snake of Fate was the best solution!

He pondered over the space that was available after unfolding the paper crane and the questions he would like to ask before writing a draft in his mind. Finally, he raised his pencil and wrote:

"How should the bad luck curse from an Angel of Fate mural be removed?

"What's the name of the Sequence 4 potion for the Seer pathway? Where can the formula and main ingredients be obtained?"

Putting down the pencil, Klein carefully scrutinized the questions before carefully folding the paper crane according to the folds and placing it in his wallet.

After doing all of this, he continued writing to Mr. Azik.

In the letter, Klein first mentioned that he received the help of Admiral of Stars in entering the dangerous easternmost front of the Sonia Sea; successfully completed the ritual; and, changing gears, he mentioned his encounter with Admiral Hell Ludwell's inexplicable attack mid-journey and how he nearly suffered terrible losses.

While on this topic, he began describing the ring on Admiral Hell's hand, which was suspected to be a relic from ancient Death. He asked very subtly if Mr. Azik had any recollection of it, or if he needed to obtain it to study it, so as to invoke more memories.

After mentioning this, Klein mentioned in a casual manner about the Artificial Death Project by the Numinous Episcopate, as well as asking this big shot if it was feasible, or if there were any records that recorded the actual details.

Finally, he mentioned how he didn't know the subsequent Sequences of his pathway, and he didn't know how to obtain those opportunities. Klein began providing a description of the summary of things to take note of from traveling through those dangerous waters.

This was to provide Mr. Azik information so as to prevent him from suddenly wishing to seek out the remnant aura of ancient Death, without realizing the lurking dangers.

"…Rumor has it that those waters are filled with the ravings of the True Creator. The higher the Sequence, the clearer one will hear it, making it easier to be influenced and resulting in madness or a loss of control. This is demarcated by Sequence 4… But a small number of demigods have found the means to act freely there…" Klein wrote at the end of his letter.

After folding the paper, he picked up Azik's copper whistle and summoned the huge skeleton messenger.

The messenger burrowed out from the ground and politely looked at Klein from a level height before opening his palm.

Not bad… Klein praised silently and handed the letter over.

Then, he brushed his teeth and took a bath before comfortably getting into bed.

After an unknown period of time, he found himself awake in a dream, and he saw the desolate plains and pitch-black steeple.

Familiarly walking into the depths of the steeple, Klein discovered Will Auceptin’s reply among the scattered tarot cards.

“Friendly reminder: The paper crane is about to tear!

“The bad luck curse brought about by the mural can be resolved by Ricciardo.

“High-Sequence formulas for the Seer pathway can only be obtained from the crazy Zaratul or the Hornacis mountain range. If you are the Blessed of the Evernight, treat it as though I didn’t say it.

“Sequence 4 of the Seer pathway is Bizarro Sorcerer!”

Chapter 676 - Tripartite Transaction

◆ ◆ ◆

Bizarro Sorcerer… Klein suddenly woke up from his dream as he opened his eyes to see the dark night.

It's not noon yet. It's still very dangerous… he mumbled before returning back to sleep.

At this moment, he finally recalled that he had already left those dangerous waters. He wouldn't vanish or go missing if he wasn't sleeping at the end of the night.

Phew, it's this kind of stable environment that's good! I have to say that mysteriously vanishing due to not sleeping after dark is something that can be used to scare kids, making them not dare to sleep late. Heh, I was often scared by such stories when I was young. Klein sat up, walked to the desk, and poured himself a cup of water.

After a moment of silence, he gulped down a mouthful of water as he gradually recovered his ability to think.

Zaratul really went mad… What exactly did he encounter, or what happened to him…

Bizarro Sorcerer. Sequence 4 is called Bizarro Sorcerer. The Seer pathway's main focus is on being tricky, crafty, pranky, and paranormal? Or should it directly be summarized as being bizarre?

Yes, Clown, Magician, Faceless, and Marionettist do give me such a feeling. Seer appears to be an exception, but in the eyes of others, the style of a charlatan might appear rather strange and terrifying at times… That's why Zaratul said that fate isn't the main domain of this pathway?

Also, it's clear that Beyonders of this pathway are more inclined to being spellcasters.

According to Will Auceptin's explanation, there are three methods to obtaining the potion formula to Bizarro Sorcerer. One, seek out the Secret Order and find the mad Zaratul. Two, head to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range and find the treasures left behind by the Antigonus family. Three, obtain it from the Church. For example, that Antigonus family's notebook might contain the corresponding formula.

But each one of these three options is more dangerous than the other. According to Emperor Roselle's description, Zaratul was a Sequence 2 Miracle Invoker a long time ago, a true angel. Later, he even advanced to Sequence 1. He's equal or slightly weaker than a King of Angels. The crazy him, no—"Him" might have gone mad, but it's likely that "He" will be more difficult to deal with. At the very least, there's no possibility of me convincing or tricking "Him". Even in terms of pure strength, I wouldn't be Zaratul's match even if I employed Mr. Azik's help.

Heh heh, unless I wait for Will Auceptin to be born, but if "He" were to involve "Himself" in this matter, there's a small chance of him incurring the attention of Angel of Fate Ouroboros.

As for the treasure on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, the resounding ravings, the set up of the Antigonus family, and the rumors of the Nation of the Evernight buried in the depths of mystery, they make me feel that it isn't a simple matter. I suspect it's likely to be a trap.

I don't even need to consider the Church of the Goddess. Ignoring the fact that the Holy Cathedral has angels presiding over it, as well as a bunch of Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, just the Backlund diocese where the Antigonus family's notebook is has a terrifying demigod…

Klein couldn't help but recall Mr. A who had been erased like a pencil drawing. And the one that executed all of that was likely to be one of the upper echelons of the Church of the Evernight Goddess!

A beautiful lady whose eyes lacked spirituality… She even smiled at me. I've no idea what it means… Klein shook his head in resignation, believing that he only had one course of action that he had at present.

That was to find a demigod from the Secret Order who was still considered normal.

Compared to the mad Zaratul, I can communicate with them at least, or even deal with them. Just Klein alone was impossible, but he could seek Mr. Azik's help or Queen Mystic Bernadette's help at a certain price.

I can only consider this for now… Klein rapidly turned his thoughts back on how to help Anderson Hood rid the bad luck curse.

It's been more than two months. I wonder if Fate Councilor Ricciardo has left Oravi Island. Sigh, he hasn't summoned my messenger all this time to inform me of clues to the mystical item I seek. However, it's not a big problem. Bellman Carnot definitely hasn't left his post. I can contact Councilor Ricciardo through him.

That's good too. The Life School of Thought hasn't completed the request up to now, meaning that they haven't made their final payment. They can pay it off by changing Anderson's luck for the better, then I can receive the payment from Anderson.

Heh heh, when it comes to a mystical item or Sealed Artifact which possesses immense offensive powers, isn't Anderson's sword one? According to the traits showcased by Reaper, I can ignore the item formed after he dies… Heh, I'm not some greedy demon either. I'll definitely pay additional fees to tide him over.

Klein wiped away his mischievous thoughts and took out the paper crane from his wallet. After unfolding it, he carefully erased the pencil marks on it.

"It's really about to tear. I can use it another two times at best…" he muttered sadly. Then, he folded the paper crane and returned to his bed to continue sleeping. As for using the radio transceiver to contact Arrodes, he planned on doing so after leaving this pirates' playground.

†

After daybreak, Klein languidly got up and slowly washed up, believing that this was how life should be.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The knocking on the door interrupted his state of wistfulness.

Without his acumen for danger, his spiritual intuition told him that it was Anderson Hood.

As expected of the Strongest Hunter. He successfully survived up to now… Klein tsked and controlled his expressions before opening the door.

Anderson was wearing a deer-hunting cap of unknown origin. He grinned as he handed him a Loen gold coin.

"What I owe you from yesterday."

Klein received the gold coin and measured its weight in his hand.

"There's an answer to your problem."

Anderson's eyes lit up.

"What's the solution?

"Don't tell me that the answer is that there are no solutions…"

Am I such a person? I'll just say that it's hopeless, so just wait for your death. Goodbye! Klein lampooned as he swept Anderson with an indifferent gaze.

"A demigod that's good at changing one's luck stays in Oravi Island. He owes me a favor."

"Excellent!" Anderson didn't hide his joy. "So, what sort of payment must I make?"

Very sensible of you… Klein deliberately fell silent for two seconds before saying, "I need a mystical item with powerful offensive abilities. Do you have any clues?

"If the value exceeds that of the luck enhancement ritual, I will pay the difference."

Anderson frowned bit by bit before easing them. He said with a smile, "I have a mystical item that matches your request. It has a Beyonder power that can deal lethal damage. The negative effects aren't bad either. It eats, sleeps, and has some bad luck, easily attracting monsters and enemies. Occasionally, it will be talkative and be a little off-putting. Haha, it's a joke.

"To be frank, my Death Brachydont is the mystical item you need, but it's the only weapon I have left. Eh… I do have one relevant clue. It's a rather special revolver. The bullets it shoots have the effects of 'Weakness attack,''Lethal attack,' and a 'Slaughtering effect.' Furthermore, it can be matched with bullets of different characteristics. The negative effects include developing a weakness that originally didn't exist after every use, such as the fear of light, the fear of ships, the fear of dogs, etc. And such a weakness will last for six hours.

"There's almost no negative effects when having it on you. It just makes you easily thirsty. This is something completely tolerable. If not for the characteristics of the revolver overlapping with my abilities and the mystical items I have, then I would've bought it back then. The seller is offering it for 9,000 pounds!

"So, the total price would be 1,500 pounds and the clues to the revolver. How about that?"

Sounds very suitable. Besides, it fits my combat habits… Klein didn't directly agree as he asked in return, "1,500 pounds?"

"Haha, I found more than ten pirates yesterday. They were all very kind, contributing all their wallets to me. Otherwise, they would lend me their characteristics and heads. In just one night, I received 1,600 pounds. Seriously, I love this pirates' paradise!" Anderson said with a beaming smile. "I have to keep 100 pounds for myself for the ship tickets to return to the Fog Sea. So all I can do is pay you 1,500 pounds."

Earning 1,600 pounds a night? Not only are there many pirates in Toscarter, but they are either worth a lot or have plenty of money? Klein suddenly had thoughts about staying a few more nights in the port city.

But considering how the easily cashable and locatable targets had mostly been finished off by Anderson, what was left was definitely not easy. He felt depressed again as he coldly asked, "Aren't you afraid of being a target of revenge for doing something like that in a pirates' playground?"

"What's there to worry about? I'm not afraid, even if they're subordinates of a pirate admiral. Heh heh, I believe you're the same. If they're men of the Four Kings, that's not a big problem either. We're about to leave, and the propagation of information takes time. By the time they come, I'd have changed ships and identities several times!" Anderson said without much concern.

Why are you cursing yourself again… Klein silently swept him a look of pity.

"Deal."

"Haha, here's 300 pounds. You'll have to wait for the remaining 1,200 pounds. That's when the bounty rewards and characteristic money arrive. Don't worry, it will definitely come today. It's not a lot." Anderson took out a thick wallet filled with plenty of soli bills and handed them to Klein.

In consideration of his persona, Klein only did a simple count before stuffing the cash into his wallet and pockets. He said without emotion, "Buy two tickets to Oravi for tomorrow."

He didn't deliberately exhort Anderson to buy them with a different identity, as he believed that the hunter across him was mature and experienced.

If he's lacking in experience and strength, with the way he does things, he would've long been buried in some sea… Klein couldn't help but lampoon inwardly.

"Alright." Anderson pointed at the floor. "Breakfast together? My treat."

Klein nodded without refusing him.

Once they arrived downstairs, the two sat at a table near the window. Midway, a waiter brought white porcelain cups and teaspoons over.

Just as they interacted, the waiter's gaze suddenly turned adrift. He picked up the teaspoon and stabbed it at Anderson's throat without any warning.

Although Anderson was surprised, his reaction was in no way slow. He immediately leaned backward and dodged the sudden strike.

Bang!

Not far away, the hotel's boss suddenly shot at Anderson's dodging body.

“W-what am I doing…” After the gunshot, the boss muttered with a look of alarm and blankness.

Chapter 677 - Falling to the Ground

◆ ◆ ◆

Amidst the gunshot, Anderson's body suddenly collapsed to the floor, using an amusing manner to dodge the bullet.

As for Klein, who didn't fully understand the situation, he jumped to the side and activated his Spirit Vision while pulling out his revolver.

At that instant, his first reaction was that Anderson had gone overboard in his hunting last night and was now the target of revenge. He only wished to shout, "I don't know him! It has nothing to do with me!"

At the table beside Anderson Hood, a stout man dressed in a shirt with rolled-up sleeves threw forks and knife, and he suddenly drew an already loaded double-barreled hunting rifle, aimed at the ground, and pulled the trigger from a commanding height.

These series of actions were nearly simultaneous with the hotel's boss, but they were simply one step slower due to the many steps involved.

Bang!

The scattershot sprayed out countless tiny shrapnel, riddling the ground with holes. Although Anderson had dodged in time and avoided most of the blast, he was still struck by a portion of the shrapnel as his sides were immediately left mangled.

Just as Klein was about to kill the stout man with the double-barreled hunting rifle to help Anderson Hood get out of danger, he realized that the man suddenly turned blank, just like the hotel's boss. He was then filled with alarm and horror as though he had jolted out of his stupor.

That's not right. They're not the true assailants… Klein rationally stopped attempting to pull the trigger. He quickly swept his gaze across the restaurant.

Discovering nothing with his Spirit Vision, he tapped his left thumb on the first segment of his index finger twice, activating his Spirit Body Threads vision.

At this moment, all the ladies and gentlemen in the restaurant had stood up in a fluster due to the sudden shootout. All of them were rushing for the exit.

When passing by the tumbling Anderson, an elegantly-dressed lady with pretty good looks suddenly paused. She released the dark-colored glass bottle she held in her hand and poured it at the Strongest Hunter.

Sizzle!

Anything that was splashed by the liquid rapidly turned black as it suffered intense corrosion. Anderson covered his face and leaped up, dodging this attack once again.

Immediately following that, a gentle and cute lady, a gentleman with newspapers, a red-vested waiter, and a five-year-old child whose hands were stained with sweets attacked Anderson Hood in all kinds of manners.

Flour, lit matchsticks, fruit knives, boiling coffee, and concentrated alcohol beverages inundated him as almost everyone in the hotel's restaurant seemed to have one goal—kill Anderson Hood!

In this abnormally dangerous situation without any Beyonder powers involved, Anderson, who had been surrounded with no way to escape, employed an array of actions—leaping up, sending tables flying, igniting items ahead of time, barely managing to avoid suffering damage to any vital spot—and didn't suffer any serious damage.

Meanwhile, Klein also noticed something abnormal.

In a corner of the restaurant which was blocked by a decorative cabinet, there was clearly thin, illusory black Spirit Body Threads extending from it, but it was silent over there.

In this chaotic and panic-stricken restaurant, it appeared especially abnormal!

The true assailant who planned the "passersby murder case" is sitting over there? From the confusion, puzzlement, horror, and fluster that the hotel's boss, waiters, and guests exhibited after attacking Anderson, they didn't become marionettes. This is another kind of control… An illusion, an emotion seed of a Desire Apostle, or could it be an influence on one's psyche? Klein suddenly had an idea light up in his mind. He immediately took two steps forward and sent a customer who still had butter on the corner of his lips flying, opening up a pathway for Anderson Hood.

The Strongest Hunter immediately somersaulted out of the encirclement via the path that was opened up, and he ran up to the hotel's second floor. Then, with his back to the wall on the corner of the staircase, he gasped for air.

"Has my provocative powers reached this level? Even the ordinary residents that I don't know wish to kill me and have actually rose to arms? Man…" Just as he spoke, Anderson pulled his right rib and nearly cried out in pain.

No, no, no. The real circumstance is that a person plagued with bad luck shouldn't do things like hunt pirates… The reason why Klein had abandoned approaching the target to attempt to control them with Spirit Body Threads was because he had thought of a possibility.

The passersby were implanted with psychological cues or had suffered manipulation on the psyche level. Only then would they attack Anderson in an orderly fashion. This didn't match the Beyonder powers of a Desire Apostle, as the attacks by the manipulated passersby were targeted and precise, without showing any observe signs of preparation. And Klein had formerly heard of the name of the potion formula of a Sequence 4—Manipulator!

In addition, according to the Psychiatrist released from Creeping Hunger, Klein always suspected that Toscarter Island had a mission or figure related to the Psychology Alchemists.

In addition to the psychological cue and the control on the left side of the mind, it was rather similar to that of the Spectator pathway. Klein had long believed that a Manipulator very likely belonged to the Spectator or dragon pathway; thus, making the outline of the matter relatively clear.

The Psychology Alchemists really does have an important base in Toscarter Island. They also sent a Sequence 4 demigod go watch over it. This demigod influences certain pirates and makes them unknowingly do his bidding, but these pirates had unfortunately ended up as Anderson Hood's sponsors last night. Hence, their true investor came knocking!

Keeping his expressions in check, Klein looked at Anderson and indifferently said to him, "It's likely that one or several of the pirates from last night is involved with a hidden demigod on this island.

"Do you think something like that can be done by a Mid-Sequence Beyonder?"

"I can't be that unlucky, right…" Anderson's voice grew softer before it turned into a mutter. "Indeed, those people were controlled and are innocent. Thankfully, I didn't attack back, or I would become the main suspect of a shocking murder case and be given a bounty! When that happens, I'll be in trouble and could only become a pirate."

"…"

The corners of Klein's mouth twitched slightly.

"If the ones being controlled had been pirates with Beyonder powers, or Mandated Punishers, or priests of the Church of Storms, how would it develop?"

"I would already be dead." Anderson threw up his hands as he said in realization, "You mean he doesn't want me dead and only wants to give me a warning?"

Klein nodded in a serious manner and said, "So, you still have a chance.

"Yes, to apologize."

Go see what that demigod is up to.

"Apologize?" Anderson's face wrinkled immediately. Placed in a difficult position, he said with great difficulty, "I have quite a reputation in the Fog Sea."

Klein didn't say a thing. He stood up, patted his coat, and prepared to walk off.

At this moment, Anderson lunged forward and rushed to the entrance of the staircase ahead of Klein. He yelled, "I'm sorry! It was my fault!

"We can talk about anything!"

He paused for a second and repeated again, "I'm sorry! It was my fault!

"We can talk about anything!"

Clap! Clap! Clap! A series of slow claps sounded on the first floor as a figure appeared at the staircase.

Amidst the light footsteps, this figure slowly walked to the bend, but Klein instinctively moved his gaze away as though he didn't wish to know what that person looked like.

In addition, he realized that he didn’t have any intentions of raising his arms or aiming his gun. It was as though he had been cued and had lost the intention of resisting.

This is terrifying… Yes, it’s not a face-to-face hypnosis, which is why I could detect it. But if I was directly targeted, the repercussions would be unimaginable… I can be influenced now. In the way Miss Justice would explain it, the other party will use the sea of collective subconscious to silently arrive beside my island of consciousness, and then they would do something to a certain extent? Klein came to a realization as he had the sudden urge to leave and return to his room.

This is the silent “instruction” given to me by the demigod? Klein roughly understood that the other party wished to communicate with Anderson in private; hence, he didn’t resist and walked to the stairs before returning to his room.

In less than five minutes, Anderson knocked on his door, his face grimacing.

“Done talking?” Klein asked without much surprise.

Anderson gave a heavy nod.

“Phew… Yes, he got me to help him do something. As for what is it, I can’t tell others.”

“Do you still remember what he looks like?” Klein deliberately asked.

Anderson thought carefully as he suddenly frowned.

“I don’t remember…”

As expected… Look at you. For 1,600 pounds, you offended a demigod. It wasn’t worth it at all… Klein silently sighed and then said, “Can we leave tomorrow?”

"Yes. There's no rush for that matter. Let's resolve the problem with my bad luck first," Anderson didn't hesitate to answer.

Klein didn't speak further as he pointed at the floor.

"Still having breakfast?"

Anderson was first taken aback before revealing a smile.

"Of course!

"No type of frustration can influence eating and sleeping!"

The two went down to the first floor and discovered that the waiter was silently clearing up the shattered items. The boss and the customers had all forgotten what had happened.

†

After breakfast, Anderson continued going out, busy obtaining his bounty rewards and Beyonder characteristics money. He also did some preparations while Klein stayed in his hotel room, converging the spirituality that overflowed from his advancement and using worms to test his Marionettist Beyonder powers.

At half past two in the afternoon, he went above the gray fog ahead of time and began practicing for the upcoming Tarot Gathering. After all, Mr. Fool would very casually and lightly punish The Hermit Cattleya.

Sitting in the chair belonging to The Fool, Klein began playing out the three punishment plans he had decided over the past few days. Two of the plans needed him to borrow some of the power of this space, and two of them needed to use props. Hence, he needed to decide on the entire process ahead of time. He would then familiarize himself with it, and he couldn't reveal his lack of fluency at the critical moment.

After an unknown period of time, Klein exhaled and confirmed his plan.

Then, he conjured The World. Without any items, he saw the countless dense black threads that emanated from his body.

Items conjured using the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog possess a certain amount of spirituality… So they come equipped with Spirit Body Threads. And in the real world, items without life do not have any. Klein familiarly controlled the black threads and quickly completely controlled The World.

Now, not only could he make The World's expressions more intricate and have reactions that were more like a real person, he could also make the marionette's spirituality fluctuations become more natural. It wouldn't appear as lifeless anymore!

Apart from that, he was like a player who had two accounts, gaining The World's vision, hearing, as well as his other senses.

After completing all of this, Klein glanced at his golden pocket watch, sent Little Sun a message, and began to silently count his heartbeats.

Chapter 678 - Punishment

◆

On the two sides of the ancient mottled bronze table, blurry figures extended outward from the embrace of deep red beams of light before turning corporeal. The surroundings remained as silent and empty as always, as though no living creature had ever set foot there for millions of years.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~” Audrey’s brisk and cheerful voice soon resounded through the resplendent palace held up by stone columns.

Klein nodded his head with a smile, watching as the other members expressed their greetings under Miss Justice’s lead.

Here, there was no doubt that The Hermit Cattleya appeared rather reticent. Audrey’s read on her was that she had many things on her mind.

After the voices came to a stop and the members had taken their seats, The Fool Klein swept Miss Justice a glance, making the Psychiatrist instantly understand his intentions; hence, she didn’t raise her hand slightly and speak out. Following that, he looked at Cattleya and chuckled indifferently.

“Tell Bernadette that she can use certain items in exchange for some answers.”

Bernadette… After hearing this familiar name which was neither Queen Mystic, the owner of Dawn, nor the leader of the Element Dawn, Cattleya realized that Mr. Fool already knew everything. Her cheap tricks were laid bare in front of “Him!”

This made her heart sink as she couldn’t help but feel an intense sense of fear. She was temporarily at a loss in regard to the attitude or words that she needed to show in response.

To her, Mr. Fool’s words were clear. Pass on the message, but only that one message; nothing else. She wasn’t allowed to provide any other hints!

Cattleya believed she knew what “He” meant between the lines.

Bernadette? That’s a common name for Intis females. Who could it be? What is the answer she wishes to exchange for? What relationship does she have with Ma’am Hermit? Ma’am Hermit had privately made a request, and Mr. Fool’s answer is “yes?” No, that’s not it. Definitely not it. If it’s a private and reasonable request, Ma’am Hermit wouldn’t have mentioned it specially in front of us. He would’ve directly replied to her prayers… “He” is giving a warning? Audrey forgot to observe the other members as a series of questions flashed through her mind. Following that, with her acumen from the Spectator pathway, she grasped Mr. Fool’s true intentions.

Following that, she had a particular theory.

Ma’am Hermit had privately hinted about our Tarot Club to this Ma’am Bernadette because she hopes to acquire some answers… Mr. Fool is very displeased regarding this matter, so he pointed it out directly and gave this first-time offender a warning?

Seriously, why would you divulge matters of the Gathering to others? I haven’t even told Susie! This will bring danger to everyone! Thankfully, Mr. Fool is around!

Audrey nearly puffed up her cheeks, forgetting her image and etiquette. For the first time, she realized that not every Tarot Club member had a sense of belonging like she did, showing such reverence and faith in Mr.

Fool.

The Hanged Man Alger, The Magician Fors, and The Moon Emlyn also had similar questions and theories, but their focus wasn't the same.

As Alger anticipated what Mr. Fool would do, he began to wonder who this Bernadette—a commonly seen female Intis name—represented. He was curious as to why the reserved Hermit would risk divulging some information on the Tarot Club. While Fors was worried if the existence of the Tarot Club would be exposed, she also instantly imagined a spy and double spy story. Emlyn watched in schadenfreude, believing The Hermit to be truly foolish.

Heh, even our Sanguine's Ancestor treats Mr. Fool equally and had sent me as an envoy to be nurtured. You aren't even a demigod, but you attempted to try pulling off cheap tricks under Mr. Fool's watch? Do you have a death wish? Indeed, I can't understand the thoughts of short-lived creatures. Emperor Roselle once said that bugs that can only live in summer have no way of truly knowing what snow looks like… Emlyn sat back in a relaxed manner as he didn't hide the shaking of his head.

The Sun Derrick didn't have many thoughts on the matter; all he felt was that the mood wasn't right. Out of curiosity and puzzlement, he asked, "Mr. Fool, who's Bernadette?"

Well asked! I thought Miss Justice would be the one asking. Yes, she seems a little angry, which is why she doesn't wish to speak… Klein silently commended him as he casually answered, "Roselle's eldest daughter;

"Owner of the Dawn;

"The leader of the Element Dawn."

He mentioned all of Bernadette's identities, making her appear without any secrets before all the Tarot Club members.

And the reason why he had used "Owner of the Dawn" in place of Queen Mystic was that Klein didn't believe that The Fool should address Bernadette as a queen.

The owner of the Dawn… Queen Mystic! She's actually Emperor Roselle's eldest daughter! Ha, The Hermit, I can confirm that you are Admiral of Stars Cattleya. So the rumors of you having a falling-out with Queen Mystic are fake… Alger felt excited. He felt that the restriction and pressure he had endured for the past three months had vanished at once.

This made his staid self mock The Hermit inwardly.

Emperor Roselle once said that those who play with fire will ultimately burn themselves. And you, Admiral of Stars, dared to challenge a god's clairvoyance!

At that moment, Alger was rather thankful, thankful that although he had attempted to pull off some cheap tricks and attempted to figure out Mr. Fool's identity, goals, and present state, he hadn't involved any outsiders. He hadn't divulged any information, so he hadn't suffered any punishment.

As he had introduced the Four Kings and the Seven Pirate Admirals, Audrey and company just needed to recall in order to confirm that Bernadette was Queen Mystic, a demigod that reigned supreme over the Five Seas. They were also surprised that Emperor Roselle's eldest daughter would still be alive and had become an important figure that was known throughout the world.

The answers that Queen Mystic wishes to obtain are hidden inside Roselle's diary? Combining everything that had happened and the words that were said, Audrey vaguely guessed Bernadette's goal, believing that the emperor's daughter wished to figure out the truth behind her father's assassination.

At this moment, Cattleya had already regained her ability to think. She turned her body to face the end of the long bronze table and said without any hopes that she could be let off, “Yes, I committed some mistakes. I will not defend myself. It was indeed wrong.

“Mr. Fool, no matter how much you punish me or even kill me, I’ll accept it.”

Hypocrite… If Mr. Fool really wishes to punish you, do you think you have any means of resistance? Mr. Hanged Man scoffed on the opposite side of the table. He could identify the problem with such a simple sentence.

Ma’am Hermit is still a little afraid… Audrey could notice the hidden fear from the minute actions and words Cattleya had used.

To her, people who deliberately emphasized their willingness to be executed were often afraid of dying right there and then.

Fors found her peace from The Fool’s calm attitude, believing that there weren’t any leaks about the Tarot Club; or that the leaks weren’t anything important. Hence, like Emlyn, she waited curiously and expectantly for the punishment Mr. Fool would mete out.

Derrick remained clueless about what had happened, uncertain why Ma’am Hermit would suddenly request to be punished.

At that moment, seeing Mr. Fool’s brief moment of silence, Cattleya resisted her unease and lifted her head slightly, observing the existence behind the thick gray fog without a trace, in an attempt to figure out “His” true intentions so as to give a better response. She didn’t wish to make another mistake again and provoke “Him,” making the situation irredeemable.

The dark purple hue in her black eyes produced a sense of mystery as her eyes penetrated through the gray fog and saw The Fool.

Suddenly, Cattleya’s eyes heated up as illusory blood bled from them.

A sinister, terrifying, and depraved language and an indescribable roar sounded in her ears. It instantly filled her senses with extreme pain as her body began to convulse and tremble uncontrollably.

Her face, hands, and the areas that weren't concealed by her clothing had quickly cracked opened, revealing her flesh and blood. Inside, black worms and white moths squirmed before forming all kinds of indescribable eyes.

Cattleya's cries and painful grunts resounded above the gray fog, causing Alger, Emlyn, Fors, and company to exchange looks as though they could sense the pain she was suffering.

Meanwhile, the blurry figure turned rather clear, allowing them to see The Hermit's mutation.

The disgusting and nasty scene frightened Audrey enough for her to look away. She straightened her back and looked straight ahead without daring to move.

Although the others didn't have such an exaggerated response, they also shared the same behavior.

The True Creator's ravings are indeed useful… Klein, who was shrouded in the thick gray fog, reflected from the bottom of his heart.

The reason why he hadn't immediately replied to Cattleya's request for punishment, was because he wanted to confirm if there was anything special about her eyes, whether they could see beyond what he allowed!

For this, he had stirred some of the mysterious space's powers to be hidden in the gray fog that shrouded him ahead of time. It was to connect anyone who used a Beyonder power to see through the obstacle to Tinder!

This was equivalent to the owner of the Beyonder power directly observing an item corrupted by the True Creator at a psyche level. Hence, with Klein not using the gray fog to deliberately suppress the influence, Cattleya naturally heard the True Creator’s ravings. Her “organ” which used the Beyonder power was first severely damaged before she was imbued with extreme pain, causing her mutation!

If Admiral of Stars hadn’t tried observing him, then the plan Klein had prepared was to get her to apologize to every Tarot Club member, and also to allow them to discuss a method of punishment in a democratic manner.

And regardless of how democratic it was, the major punishment would ultimately be to stir some of the mysterious space’s powers to connect Cattleya to Tinder!

After waiting two seconds, Klein knew it was enough. He gently lowered his palms, allowing the gray fog to silently repress the True Creator’s ravings and revert Cattleya’s mutation.

Admiral of Stars trembled as she calmed down at a discernible pace. The cracks in her skin gradually closed as her thoughts returned to her, allowing her to take in her surroundings once again.

At this moment, Alger said in a deep voice, as though he was warning himself, “Do not pry into the mystery of God…”

Chapter 679 - Murder Request

◆ ◆ ◆

“Do not pry into the mystery of God…”

Alger’s whispers soon disappeared, but it continued resounding in everyone’s ears, making them realize a reality.

Although Mr. Fool often didn’t put on any airs and seldom spoke, nearly answering every request they had, making them find him warm, “He” was ultimately a god, a god whose mysteries shouldn’t be pried into. He was a god that transcended reality!

Audrey, Emlyn, and the other Tarot Club members instinctively accepted Mr. Hanged Man’s altered saying, pretending that they had forgotten the original wording to be “do not look directly at God,” because they had looked at Mr. Fool from time to time, asking him questions or seeking his advice, and with regards to that, Mr. Fool didn’t seem to mind.

Of course, we weren’t looking at him directly due to the thick gray fog’s obstruction… From Ma’am Hermit’s outcome, Mr. Fool had done so for our own good… Audrey slowly exhaled.

At this moment, The Fool Klein was thinking, Mr. Hanged Man is working very well in concert. I was prepared to control The World to say something similar to complete the final step of the punishment…

He originally felt that getting the fake World to say something like “do not lie to god” or “do not pry into the mystery of God” would make it somewhat embarrassing. In the future, if people were to learn that the so-called Blessed or the so-called World was actually a smurf of The Fool, he would be too embarrassed to face anyone. But later, on second thought, The World had done similar deeds in the past, so he wasn't short of one more. Besides, all he needed to do was to not let anyone know, right?

Having overcome his mental barrier, Klein had planned on acting according to his rehearsals, but to his surprise, reality went better than he had expected. The Hanged Man seemed to be shocked to the bone as a result of The Hermit's punishment. As such, he helped him say the sentence "do not pry into the mystery of God," making the effects even more natural and perfect!

Yes… The problem of Ma'am Hermit's leak of information regarding the Tarot Club was only briefly tapped on by The Fool. "He" had given a warning via the insinuation behind "His" words, but she later suffered from prying into the mystery of a god. It wasn't truly The Fool's intentions…

This is the outcome I wished for the most. This can effectively uphold The Fool's image. After all, a god wouldn't be petty with mortals, as it would only tarnish "His" reputation…

However, the way Ma'am Hermit does things is way too bold. I just realized and confirmed today that she has pried into the mysteries of The Fool more than once. Although it wasn't for any vile motives, it's also something worth punishing her for. Heh, my previous reactions must've made her believe that I had "acquiesced" her "observations," so she made it a habit. In the end, she ended up falling headfirst into my expectations…

In addition, without fully grasping Mr. Fool's attitude, she directly gave hints to outsiders. Her boldness is obviously extraordinary. This means to show that she hasn't suffered enough in the past. Today's lesson should be enough to drill it into her for a very long period of time…

Thinking back to her state in her dream, all of this seems pretty much the expected outcome… Sparing the rod spoils the child!

Heh heh, I also managed to put Mr. Hanged Man, as well as the other members in check today as a result, Klein silently muttered to himself in amusement, surveyed the area, and said calmly, “That shall be all.”

Upon hearing that, The Hermit Cattleya, whose Spirit Body had just recovered, felt relieved. She felt intense fatigue and joy surge through her body. All she wanted was a reclining chair for her to rest for a while.

The first time is a warning, but the second time wouldn’t be a nice outcome… This pirate admiral sighed silently, warning herself not to try her cheap tricks any further or believe that her hints could fool Mr. Fool. She was also not to attempt to pry into “His” secrets!

The pain she received was in no way weaker than the torment of having knowledge injected into her by the Hidden Sage. Therefore, she believed without a doubt that Mr. Fool was essentially a god, a true god, an unfathomable god whose mysteries couldn’t be pried into!

Thankfully, Her Majesty now knows where she can exchange the answers she has been desperately looking for all this while… I don’t need to hint to her or tip her off in the future… Cattleya turned her body to the side again, trembling as she looked at the end of the long bronze table. This time, she only dared to look at the end of the table or the armrest. The dark purple hue in her eyes had also turned faint.

Amidst silence, with sincerity, she said, “I’ll remember your leniency in sparing me.”

In the gray fog, The Fool Klein nodded gently without repeating his previous words.

After a moment of waiting, The Magician Fors straightened her back, looked around, and spoke before Justice Audrey.

“Everyone, is anyone interested in an assassination mission?

“The target is an important member of a cult.”

Grateful for the favors her teacher, Dorian Gray, had given her, Fors had been recently hoping to do something for him.

After some consideration, she placed her sights on the Aurora Order Oracle who had dealt immense damage to her teacher’s family—Lewis Wien who could be a Scribe or Traveler!

She didn’t let Leymano’s Travels get to her head to the point of believing that she could kill an experienced Sequence 6 or Sequence 5 Beyonder who was good at escaping. The reason why she had such considerations was that she believed that the secret organization known as the Tarot Club, which was backing her, would provide her with unimaginable support.

Ma’am Hermit and Mr. World both appear to have the means to fight Lewis Wien. With any of them taking action, and with me using Leymano’s Travels to help, it’s not impossible for us to succeed… Fors began formulating the most ideal situation.

Of course, she knew that her current savings weren’t enough to kill a powerful Beyonder like Lewis Wien. After all, with her 830 pounds, she probably couldn’t even buy a single hand of his. She knew very well that back then, Miss Audrey Hall had spent more than 10,000 pounds to kill an Intis ambassador, a Sequence 6 Conspirer. The cost of assassinating Lewis Wien, who was of a similar Sequence or even higher, was obvious!

Fors planned on agreeing to a series of requests that the executor of the mission would have, helping the executor complete matters they found inconvenient to do themselves, in order to pay off the cost of the mission. She believed that after obtaining Leymano’s Travels, she was equipped with the abilities to complete certain difficult tasks.

After hearing Miss Magician’s request, The Hermit Cattleya, The Hanged Man Alger, and Justice Audrey cast their gazes onto The World.

They believed that this gentleman, one who had a unique penchant for hunting Beyonders, possessed the necessary strength.

I'm not in Backlund… However, I can't respond that way. Otherwise, it would expose the possibility that Mr. Fool only has two to three Blessed to Mr. Hanged Man and Ma'am Hermit… Klein controlled The World, overcoming his emotions as he hoarsely laughed.

"Where? Which cult?

"What's his Sequence? What unique powers does he have?"

Eh, Mr. World is a little different from before… I can't explain it clearly, but it feels like he's suddenly in a better mood. Perhaps, he has really encountered something worth being happy about… Audrey suddenly noticed the difference as she excitedly imagined what could have recently happened to Mr. World.

Fors happily replied, "He's an Oracle from the Aurora Order. He's in Backlund, formerly a Sequence 6, but he might be a Sequence 5 now, but I can't be sure.

"He can record the Beyonder powers that others have used and can use them once. He's good at escaping any form of entrapment, and it's difficult to surround him. Perhaps, he might be able to travel through the spirit world…"

The target is an Oracle from the Aurora Order, a Sequence 6 or 5, with powers seemingly from the Apprentice pathway… Indeed, Miss Magician doesn't appear as simple and ordinary as she seems. My original judgment was right… Cattleya quickly returned to her usual state. She wasn't surprised that The Magician would actually dare conspire against a particular gentleman from the Aurora Order.

As for which Oracle he was, she wasn't sure because the only ones she knew were Mr. Z and Ma'am D.

Meanwhile, Klein also quickly evaluated the situation.

An Oracle from the Aurora Order, that makes it impossible for him to be innocent. Rather, he's a madman who destroys lives. Killing him doesn't make me feel guilty…

It's not like I haven't offended the Aurora Order more than once or twice…

Sequence 6 or 5; that's something I can handle… I've seen something that matches the trait of recording and releasing Beyonder powers as described by Miss Magician. Mr. A had used it before, but it might not really be it…

To me, it doesn't matter if he's good at escaping and traveling through the spirit world. As long as I'm close to the Oracle and successfully control his Spirit Body Threads, there will be no way for him to run!

It's hard to tell what will happen in a direct clash. I do have quite a solid chance of success if I sneak an attack in. Of course, succeeding at a sneak attack is a whole other matter…

After some serious consideration, The World looked at The Magician Fors.

"I can consider taking on the job, but not anytime soon. It will, at the least, be two months later."

He wasn't sure what other accidents he would encounter at sea, so he had been rather relaxed on the time period.

"Two months later…" Fors repeated the time, appearing to be in a deep dilemma.

It was too long; besides, she wasn't sure how long Lewis Wien would stay in Backlund.

At this moment, Alger, who had been watching from the side, deliberated and interjected, "Miss Magician, do you need to kill that Aurora Order Oracle personally?"

“No, as you can see, I’m considering requesting Mr. World for help,” Fors replied with a smile.

Alger nodded as though in thought.

“The premise of killing someone is to be able to find the Oracle. Can you find him?”

“No, but I’ll investigate,” Fors answered frankly.

“Why don’t you get The World to do it after your investigations bear fruit?” The Hanged Man pressed.

“Yes, but I haven’t decided.” Fors was somewhat confused, unaware of the reasons as to why Mr. Hanged Man was asking her all these questions.

Alger sneered.

“If you can confirm the location of the Aurora Order Oracle’s location, then why spend large amounts of money to hire someone to kill him? Wouldn’t reporting him directly to the Churches be enough? After the Great Smog, no Church is willing to let go of any related clues.

He wasn’t trying to make The World lose any business. Instead, he had clearly read the dilemma inside her, believing that there was a higher possibility of her not going through with the request. After all, too many incidents might happen in two months. Therefore, he gave some suggestions to ensure that this matter reached some preliminary agreement.

Report him to the Churches? This sounds familiar… Klein was surprised, never expecting Mr. Hanged Man to say something like that.

Heh heh, while everyone is being infected by Mr. Hanged Man, he too has been influenced by us… Klein immediately felt relieved and rather pleased.

“Report?” Fors was momentarily stunned.

After a few seconds, she whispered, “That’s possible…”

The Hanged Man smiled upon hearing that.

“You can do it this way. First, investigate your target and seek out his whereabouts. If you obtain anything in two months, then you can hand the matter over to the Church. If the matter exceeds two months, and when Mr. World is free, then he can provide you the help needed. What do you think of that?”

Fors seriously considered it and said, “Okay.

“When the time comes, I’ll discuss the price with Mr. World.”

Chapter 680 - New Thoughts

◆

After receiving The World's consenting nod and confirming the matter regarding Lewis Wien, Fors thought for a moment and continued, "Everyone, does anyone have a Meteorite Crystal or the crystallized blood of a Lavos Squid, or any information about them?"

These were the main ingredients of the Astrologer potion formula.

Fors originally planned on continuing her requests, hoping that Mr. Moon, who was also in Backlund, could help her find Lewis Wien, but after some consideration, she decided to first do it herself. Only after confirming that there aren't any solutions or clues would she then request the Tarot Club for help.

Meteorite Crystal? Lavos Squid's crystallized blood? Sounds familiar… Isn't this because I know the Seer potion formula… Yes, it's familiar because the Seer potion formula's main ingredients is 50 grams of Star Crystal and 10 ml of Lavos Squid blood! The main ingredients of Astrologer are like the upgraded versions of a Seer… Indeed, the Apprentice and Seer pathway can be interchanged in the future… With this in mind, Klein suddenly had an idea.

Since the potion formula of Bizarro Sorcerer is difficult to obtain, with the three options being extremely dangerous, should I consider the other Sequence 4 options in the neighboring pathways? Such as Apprentice!

Once he had this idea, he brightened up as he felt that most of his predicament had vanished.

And for the Sequence 4 potion formula of Apprentice, the Tarot Club has clues to it. It's the Abraham family behind The Magician!

With this in mind, The World looked at Miss Magician with a subconscious gentleness to his gaze. It left Fors shuddering, suspecting whether Mr. World had already formulated a plan to hunt Lewis Wien.

At this moment, The Fool Klein recalled another problem. According to Dunn's and Daly's theories, the first five Sequences of the Seer pathway didn't present any obvious progression. Each of them presented a Beyonder power of one aspect. Then, at the critical point of Sequence 4, the five of them would converge and clench like a fist, presenting a qualitative change.

Back when Captain and Ma'am Daly made this theory, they only knew bits of information regarding Seer, Clown, and Magician. I'm only able to verify this idea for the subsequent Faceless and Marionettist by myself… So, could it be that Seer, Apprentice, and the possible Marauder pathways cannot be interchanged at Sequence 4, but at Sequence 3? Klein slowly felt his joy dwindle again.

He knew too little and was temporarily unable to make a judgment. All he could do was await Mr. Azik's reply and wait to leave the waters which were watched by the True Creator before contacting Arrodes.

As Klein was thinking, he suddenly heard Cattleya say, "I have the crystallized blood of a Lavos Squid. It will cost 600 pounds.

"As for Meteorite Crystal, I know where to get it from. How many grams do you need?"

600 pounds, a very reasonable price… Fors replied in a pleasant surprise, "60 grams."

"Alright, I'll give them to you within two weeks. It will also cost 600 pounds," Cattleya said clearly and succinctly.

It's resolved just like that… Today's Ma'am Hermit is really proactive with the desire to participate. Yes, she had just been… Fors quickly nodded.

“That wouldn’t be an issue.”

I have 830 pounds in savings. That’s enough for me to buy the crystallized blood of a Lavos Squid. But in two weeks, I still need to save up nearly 400 pounds. The royalties after the new year will be paid soon. It’s about 150 pounds, making me lack 220 pounds. I have to think of ways to earn money again… Fors quickly calculated her financial situation.

Seeing how Miss Magician took only a minute to gather the main ingredients for her potion, Justice Audrey couldn’t hold back either. She raised her hand slightly and said, “I wish to obtain the complete pituitary gland of an adolescent mind dragon, but if that’s not possible, 60 ml of a Black-hunting Giant Lizard’s spinal fluid and one fruit of an Illusory Chime Tree.”

This was the main ingredient of the Hypnotist potion. If she obtained the complete pituitary gland of the adolescent mind dragon, then there was no need for any other corresponding ingredients.

Just as Audrey said that, she heard Ma’am Hermit reply.

“Since the Fifth Epoch, mind dragons have nearly gone extinct and are hard to find.

“I have the means of obtaining the spinal fluid of a Black-hunting Giant Lizard, but it will also take two to three weeks. The price ranges from 1,500 to 2,000 pounds, as I’m not the one who decides it.

“I can help you keep a lookout for the fruit of an Illusory Chime Tree, but I cannot guarantee anything.”

Wh-what great efficiency… After Ma’am Hermit was punished, her sense of belonging towards the Tarot Club has appeared to increase. She’s more active and amiable… Audrey was momentarily speechless.

After a few seconds of silence, she bowed slightly and said, “No problem.”

Alger, who had been watching by the side, suddenly felt that the development wasn’t going as he expected. Having been punished by Mr. Fool, The Hermit changed her style of being mostly an observer. She began to involve herself in every matter that she could involve herself in during the Tarot Gathering. And with the strength, background, resources, and channels of a pirate admiral, she immediately produced intense and blinding light!

This “blinded” Alger so much that he could hardly open his eyes. He had a strong feeling that he was at risk.

At that moment, he wished for Ma’am Hermit to return to her former state.

Klein also felt surprised by what he heard and saw.

I thought Ma’am Hermit would be silent for some time, feeling an aversion to the Tarot Club for some time, but in the end…

Is she the type that needs to be beaten in order to be obedient?

Yes… Sparing the rod spoils the child. Queen Mystic must’ve spared the rod too much… Heh, the way Queen Mystic does things isn’t much to speak off either. The emperor has also spared the rod!

As he lampooned, Klein controlled The World, making him survey the area before chuckling.

“Does anyone of you have the potion formula of the Seer pathway’s Sequence 4, or have any clues regarding it?”

Sequence 4… Mr. World is beginning to advance towards the realm of a demigod? Audrey was surprised.

She originally imagined that she was advancing sufficiently fast, and she felt a little proud about that. But now, she suddenly realized that she was falling behind!

Mr. World has instantly become really lofty… Fors was similarly surprised.

Although she felt that the silent, reserved, and unsocial Mr. World was a powerful Beyonder, she believed that he was still very far from a demigod, from a Sequence 4. But to her surprise, he was already seeking to purchase the Sequence 4 potion formula.

As expected of Mr. Fool's Blessed… Alger sighed.

Likewise, Emlyn and Derrick shook their heads, expressing that they had never heard of the name of the pathway's Sequence 4.

Klein, who believed that he could obtain clues from the City of Silver or the Sanguine, could only helplessly retract The World's gaze.

After a few seconds, Cattleya said, "I need a drop of blood from a mythical creature, regardless of the kind."

In the palace held up by stone columns, silence suddenly became the main symphony. Even The World didn't know the exact concept of what a mythical creature was.

Klein didn't expose this point as he planned on inquiring about it to the people he could ask in the future. He controlled The World to remain silent for a few seconds before saying, "I'll keep an eye out."

As this was a rare request from Ma'am Hermit, Justice and company also gave similar responses.

"Alright." Cattleya wasn't surprised by this outcome.

The only reason why she made the request was to express her attitude of being integrated with the Tarot Club to Mr. Fool. She believed that this was better than trembling and being apprehensive at eliminating the aftereffects of what had happened.

After a brief pause, Derrick was about to say something when Emlyn spoke out ahead of him.

The Sanguine Baron chuckled.

“The requests for our row is clear. He wants the Sun Sequence 6 Notary’s potion formula, and Mr. Hanged Man wishes to obtain the Ocean Songster’s.”

Upon hearing this, Klein suddenly felt a little guilt-ridden. When he first obtained Creeping Hunger, he had wished to quickly release the Priest of Light in it, and obtaining the Sequence 6 and 5 potion formulas of the Sun pathway, so as to sell it to Little Sun. Yet, he hadn’t completed it all this while.

I’ll walk around Toscarter’s pier tonight. I’ll find a pirate with Beyonder powers who deserves to die or some gang leader to settle this emergency, regardless of which Sequence they are… Or, I can directly release the Priest of Light… Klein made The World deliberate before saying, “I’ll provide you with the Notary potion formula in three days.”

Upon saying this, he looked at Little Sun.

“You can consider what item you wish to exchange for it.”

“Alright, Mr. World,” Derrick replied in glee.

As for the Ocean Songster potion formula which The Hanged Man needed, everyone didn’t have any clues.

Emlyn cleared his throat and said, “My request is different from the last one.

“I hope that you can help me find the believers of the Primordial Moon. Every effective clue will be rewarded with 100 pounds. A direct confirmation will be 500 pounds!”

He looked at Mr. Fool to make a request and, after obtaining “His” approval, he conjured five things that resembled bounty notices. Each person received a set of the five bounties. He and Derrick didn’t have one.

Klein controlled The World to pick it up and casually browsed through it.

Galis Kevin, Dandy, Lara, Windsor Behring, Argos… They aren’t weak at all. At the very least, they’re equivalent to recently born Vampires… he silently muttered to himself as he memorized the corresponding information.

After completing this matter, Emlyn felt more confident about winning the “competition.” He leaned back casually and waited for the other members to issue requests.

This time, no one spoke again.

Upon seeing this, The Fool Klein chuckled.

“Continue your free exchange.”

Instantly, Audrey, Alger, Cattleya, and company cast their eyes at Derrick.

They remembered that The Sun had previously mentioned that he would have arrangements to join an exploration mission that involved the periphery of the Giant King’s Court.

Chapter 681 - Indirect Answer

◆

Being the main focus of attention, Derrick didn’t choke. He eagerly said, “I’ve recently been in an exploration team led by the Chief to Afternoon Town.

“It’s a key gateway that leads to the Giant King’s Court. It’s a door that separates myth from reality.”

His opening perfectly garnered the interest of all the Tarot Club members as they awaited the rest of his account in different postures.

Derrick skipped the unimportant experiences that they had during the journey, and he directly started his story from Afternoon Town. He first described the dead silence and darkness before how his three-member team discovered an underground altar. He then described how he identified the names—Ouroboros, Medici, and Sasrir—and entered another side of the town without realizing it. There, he saw the titles such as Dark Angel and the words Rose Redemption.

Having said that, he thanked Mr. Fool once again for “His” help from the predicament.

Then, Derrick simply introduced the monsters that transformed from their shadows before emphasizing the ecclesiastic who was in constant penitence in the half-collapsed cathedral.

He used his own words to describe what was said, mentioning that the ecclesiastic suddenly self-destructed when he was about to say the name of the fourth King of Angels and was burnt to a crisp by a transparent flame.

Another King of Angels! And the mood in Afternoon Town is really dark and scary. The ecclesiastic's penitence has a very, hmm—a feel of a prophet predicting a calamity… Audrey listened in relish as she had her interest about the blank line and unspeakable name piqued.

At this moment, Derrick turned his body and looked at the end of the bronze table, sincerely asking, "Mr. Fool, who was it that tempted Dark Angel Sasrir? Who does the fourth name refer to? Why can't it be said?"

Here it comes… Behind the gray fog, Klein's smile nearly froze.

The reason that he had hurriedly sent Little Sun back to the real world was that he was afraid of facing such a question!

Back then, he was worried that Little Sun would inquire about Dark Angel Sasrir, and now, he was facing a question he didn't know the answer to.

Thankfully, a Magician never performed unprepared. After that day, Klein undoubtedly began to seriously consider how to answer such questions. Now, with great confidence, he landed his right palm on the armrest and said with a deep, meaningful glint in his eyes.

"It's because it's concealed."

He used his eyes and body language to hint to the Tarot Club members that "concealment" wasn't to be taken at face level, and it had a deeper, more substantial meaning. As for what it was, they had to figure it out themselves. Deities had deep reasons to conceal certain matters.

After finishing this series of actions, Klein couldn't help but feel penitent. He felt that his charlatan vibes were increasing. Meanwhile, he felt regret that The Hermit's prying into his secrets was a result of his temptations. This was because Mr. Fool would use "His" eyes and body language to provide additional hints. Therefore, all the members would subconsciously observe "His" attitude.

That’s because I have no solutions. Without doing this, how am I supposed to continue the act… It’s not like I’m a real evil god! Klein sighed silently.

Secret? The name itself is a secret? The content which Mr. Fool wishes to point out is in here? Hmm, which names are concealed… True gods at Sequence 0? Alger instantly thought of many things as he came up with a theory by combining many of the matters which Little Sun had previously mentioned.

When a name itself becomes concealed, it means that the matter involves a true god. Furthermore, it’s very likely to have the Evernight Goddess involved. It’s because she’s the Mother of Concealment! The extreme danger of the darkness in the Forsaken Land of God indirectly proves this point… Cattleya came up with an unconfirmed theory based on the knowledge she had and the hint from Mr. Fool.

Meanwhile, she was almost certain that the calamity the ecclesiastic was referring to was the Cataclysm that ended the Third Epoch.

A King of Angels who was tempted, Afternoon Town residents who fell from grace, a town being corrupted bit by bit, a black flower of calamity that blooms. All of that buried an epoch, creating the Forsaken Land of God… What a heavy sense of history… Cattleya couldn’t help but think poignantly.

While the Tarot Club members were in contemplation, Klein also began to analyze the reason for the empty name and the reason why it couldn’t be said.

Could it be the true name of a deity? A true god had tempted Dark Angel Sasrir, and the fourth name representing the King of Angels also became a true god later?

But it’s not like I haven’t said the true name of a deity before. Primordial Demoness Cheek is understood by many to be on the same level as the seven deities. It’s not like anything happened in the end…

Perhaps it has something to do with the language used? The languages of Loen, Intis, and Feysac, and even ancient Feysac do not possess the ability to stir the powers of nature. On the other hand, the commonly used Jotun in the City of Silver can. That ecclesiastic likely used a similar language.

I should later try to pronounce Cheek using Jotun? Then, I'll die on the spot and succeed in courting death… Forget it. Besides, having a blank name and an unspeakable name means different things… I've no idea why.

At this moment, seeing how Little Sun was still in a confused daze without understanding Mr. Fool's meaningful hint, Alger volunteered to give an explanation.

"The two names might separately represent two deities, so they cannot be said.

"Perhaps the True Creator had tempted Dark Angel Sasrir, leading to the fall from grace of the few Kings of Angels and the residents of Afternoon Town. This brought about a great calamity. It's why 'He' has a temple and statue in your Forsaken Land of God.

"The fourth name that corresponds to a King of Angels might have benefited greatly from the calamity and succeeded in advancing to become a true god."

This is similar to my guess, but they can't be confirmed… Cattleya didn't supplement, as she didn't believe that their theories were facts.

Audrey, Fors, and Emlyn listened attentively as they couldn't help but feel poignant that the Tarot Club often made things appear especially high-end when discussing such matters. Things like Kings of Angels, evil gods and real gods, or ancient secrets all depended on a single word.

"Is that so… I get it." Derrick came to a realization as he earnestly thanked Mr. Fool once again.

Just as he was about to turn around, he suddenly recalled something and worriedly asked, “Mr. Fool, is the crux to leaving the Forsaken Land of God really in the Giant King’s Court?”

After all this time, he had already accepted Mr. Hanged Man’s take that the region where the City of Silver was located was known as the Forsaken Land of God.

That’s what I believe, but the problem is that I’m unable to confirm it… To not search for the sea and switch to exploring the Giant King’s Court was likely Shepherd Lovia’s suggestion. This can partially verify my theory, but it cannot eliminate the possibility that it’s a conspiracy… The Fool Klein’s smile nearly froze again.

His thoughts raced as he quickly thought of a solution that didn’t need him to give a direct answer without tarnishing Mr. Fool’s reputation.

He immediately gave a relaxed chuckle, turned his head at The Hermit Cattleya.

“Speaking of this matter, heh. Bernadette already knows the method for entering the Forsaken Land of God.”

Cattleya immediately recalled her vague memories of the dream and subconsciously looked at the end of the bronze table.

“It’s that projection?”

Before she finished speaking, she suddenly realized that she was sizing up Mr. Fool again. She hurriedly closed her eyes and said, “M-my Eye of Mystery Prying is instinctive. It can only be enhanced and not be deactivated. I need to rely on a mystical item to seal it…”

But it doesn’t exist here.

Is that so… Klein nodded gently.

“You can conjure a pair of glasses.”

"Yes, Mr. Fool." Cattleya followed the instructions and conjured a pair of glasses.

During this process, Klein stirred a minute amount of the power above the gray fog and infused them into the pair of glasses.

By the time Cattleya wore them, she discovered that her Eye of Mystery Prying had been sealed as she had expected.

It was only at this point that Fors and company realized that Ma'am Hermit's eyes were extremely special. It had something to do with the prying of mysteries, and it didn't need to be activated to use it!

It's no wonder we didn't notice it. Ma'am Hermit was severely injured because of her attempt to pry into the mysteries of Mr. Fool… Audrey moved her lips in enlightenment, having one of her questions answered.

As for Alger, who recalled how The Hermit had previously sized him up and how he had been wearing the clergy clothes of the Church of Storms, his face nearly darkened.

Klein didn't wait for the members to calm down. He chuckled and replied to Cattleya's previous question.

"It's that projection.

"The projection of the Giant King's Court."

"So it's the projection of the Giant King's Court…" Cattleya muttered in pleasant surprise.

Then, her mind went adrift as she thought, She likely also knows this answer…

Derrick spent a few seconds to digest the conversation between Ma'am Hermit and Mr. Fool, and he vaguely came to a realization. The key to entering the Forsaken Land of God had to do with the projection of the

Giant King’s Court!

Therefore, the crux to leaving the Forsaken Land of God is really in the Giant King’s Court? Derrick’s heart palpitated as he bowed his head in excitement.

“Thank you for your answer, Mr. Fool.”

Phew… Klein silently heaved a sigh of relief. He felt that such a situation was extremely draining on his brain.

Alger kept his emotions in check as he looked around before looking at The Hermit.

“Where’s the projection of the Giant King’s Court?”

He didn’t dare ask Mr. Fool, as his question about the Forsaken Land of God had previously been rejected.

Cattleya answered frankly, “In the waters on the easternmost front of the Sonia Sea. In the dream of the night time there.

“I happened to wish to share with all of you what I encountered this time.”

Audrey and Fors simultaneously slowed their breathing as they waited excitedly for Ma’am Hermit to recount her encounters which were bound to be fantastic.

Chapter 682 - Seeking “Food”

◆ ◆ ◆

Cattleya controlled herself without looking at The World Gehrman. She said in a deep and slow voice, “Northeast from the Gargas Archipelago, there’s a safe sea route that allows one to enter those dangerous waters…”

She began her description with the deep abyss which separated the seas, the sun chariot which couldn’t be viewed directly, the night which required sleeping, the terrifying ravings that filled the entire sea, and the shadow of the Giant King’s Court which stood on the opposite mountain peak in the dream world.

During this process, she didn’t mention Gehrman Sparrow at all, deliberately avoiding any mention of him. As for the abnormalities that happened en route, she described them simply, such as the remnant aura of Earth Mother which caused hair to grow rapidly.

Towards the end, she placed her focus on the ruin with a sleeping corpse and the adventurers’ sailboat which had the words written in blood, “Fountain of Unaging.”

“This might mean that the Fountain of Unaging is in that ruin, and the corpse that produced such loud breathing is the keeper,” Cattleya mentioned the common theories on the Future, but it didn’t mean that it was hers.

Fountain of Unaging… One of the six major treasures at sea… Alger was tempted by what he heard as he considered the possibility of exploring those ruins after reaching Sequence 5.

Audrey finished listening attentively as she shook her head slightly.

“I don’t believe that the decisive meaning behind those words in blood mean that the Fountain of Unaging is in those ruins.”

After a second’s pause, she attempted to analyze the deceased’s state of mind.

“A person who’s about to die after being attacked by monsters wouldn’t point out matters regarding the treasure. If he wishes to warn companions or relatives who come looking for him, then he should’ve written that it’s dangerous here, or speak about the source of the danger. If he plans to tell passing ships that the Fountain of Unaging is there, then he lacks the motivation to do so for a living creature at death’s doorstep. Unless, a conspiracy is hidden in this matter—the conspiracy of enticing people to enter the ruin to seek out the Fountain of Unaging might be how he can be rescued.”

“Yes, if I were in his shoes, I wouldn’t think of desperately telling others that there’s treasure here. What’s in it for me?” Emlyn echoed. “Only hatred—bone-deep hatred—will make me write something like that on the brink of death. Otherwise, I’d rather tell others how I should be buried or what kind of burial items I want!”

He tsked and shook his head.

Klein nodded indiscernibly. Controlling The World, he said hoarsely, “The Fountain of Unaging is a scam.”

He used absolutely certain words without any additional words that would signify other possibilities.

The Fountain of Unaging is a scam… Cattleya looked at The World before retracting her gaze in thought.

It seemed to corroborate with certain theories and guesses she had.

Alger frowned, not that he didn’t agree with The World’s judgment or that he believed that Miss Justice's and Mr. Moon's explanations were devoid of reason. Instead, he realized that he had completely failed to consider this possibility!

To him, this was a mistake he shouldn't have committed!

…After all these years, I'm still being temporarily blinded by immense profit… He fell silent for a few seconds and sighed.

After exchanging what everyone had seen and heard recently, everyone began to teach Little Sun ancient Hermes, and they learned some mysticism from each other.

Time quickly passed as The Fool Klein surveyed the area after everyone came to a stop.

"Let's end it here for today."

"By your will." Audrey stood up immediately and curtsied with her illusory dress. The rest of the members said the same almost at the same time.

As he watched the blurry figures vanish before his eyes, Klein wasn't in a rush to leave. He conjured a goatskin and fountain pen and wrote down the divination statement:

"The hope for my advancement to Sequence 4."

Putting down the fountain pen, Klein held the goatskin and leaned back. As he closed his eyes, he entered a Cogitation state and began silently reciting the divination statement.

After chanting it seven times, he quickly fell asleep and entered the dream world.

The gray, blurry sky cracked open as he saw a towering mountain tear through the clouds.

At the mountaintop, there was a collapsed palace whose walls were covered with weeds and moss as they showed obvious holes.

Inside the palace's hall was a huge throne carved out of stone. It was adorned with dull gemstones and gold. It was mostly mottled and damaged.

It looked as though it wasn't prepared for a human, as countless translucent maggots were bunched densely together. They squirmed slowly as they kept growing.

Around the throne was a raving that seemed to penetrate the long rivers of time and history. It was illusory, ethereal, and constantly echoing.

"Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…"

The moment the ravings entered his ear, Klein jolted awake before he frowned.

It really is the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range. Furthermore, I can see and hear it more clearly than before…

This made him recall Queen Mystic Bernadette's prophetic words: "Your fate lies on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range."

Is that my fate? It really makes me want to be rebellious and not go… Sigh, I can't deal with absolutes. It depends… Klein sighed and conjured the five bounty notices provided by Emlyn White. Combining the information he had, he used the methods of divination to find the locations of the Primordial Moon believers.

Finally, due to his lack of information, he could only confirm two points.

Galis Kevin, Windsor Behring, and Argos are all in Backlund.

Dandy and Lara are at Enmat Harbor and Pritz Harbor respectively.

This is as good as nothing… Klein shook his head and returned to the real world.

Recalling how he had already agreed to provide Little Sun with the Notary potion formula within three days, he wore his coat and a top hat, and he prepared to head out to find a target.

When he opened the door and came to the stairwell, he saw Anderson Hood walking up, twirling his deer-hunting cap with his hand while humming a folk song.

This fellow is really good at recovering from setbacks… He was just taught a lesson by a demigod in the morning and was forced to apologize and agree to a request, but I don't see any sign of trauma from him anymore… It's no wonder he became a Sequence 5 powerhouse. Just this state of mind alone makes it difficult for him to lose control… Klein looked at him, nodding slightly as a greeting.

"Good afternoon, Gehrman." Anderson chuckled as he waved his hand. "I've received the bounty and characteristic money. I'll pay you the rest now."

As he spoke, he took out stacks of cash of different thickness from different pockets.

"It happened pretty smoothly I see," Klein commented without much emotions involved.

Anderson immediately laughed.

"That's right. It happened far smoother than I imagined! Those fellows who should have rocks for brains were surprisingly friendly, polite, and efficient! I even suspect whether I've become a Blessed of Lady Luck!"

"There's no such deity." Klein ruthlessly shattered his fantasies.

"Why so serious? It's life. Relax a little. Relax a little." Anderson handed over the remaining 1,200 pounds. "Actually, I'm very clear about what happened. That gentleman doesn't want me to waste my time, so he secretly ‘exhorted’ those people.”

Klein glanced at the cash, pressed down on it, and asked in passing, “Have you confirmed which pirates gave you the problem?”

He was asking about the prey that resulted in the Manipulator’s involvement.

“There’s no way for confirmation,” Anderson said with a bitter smile. “Do you think I didn’t confirm it ahead of time? Although I appear nonchalant in front of you, I will investigate the prey’s background and situation ahead of time to avoid provoking someone I can’t afford to. Who knows… Sigh, I can only blame it on my bad luck.”

…This fellow is more careful than I thought… That’s right, his previous Sequence was called Conspirer… Klein thought in enlightenment before asking indifferently, “Who deserves death the most in this area?”

Anderson was taken aback before he chuckled.

“Does our craziest adventurer plan on beginning his hunting activities?

“However, you have to consider it well. I do not wish for you to be my partner when completing the demigod’s mission.”

Don’t worry, we’re different. I’m a Seer. I have all kinds of means to hide my tracks. I will not allow someone to come knocking at my door. Besides, that’s a demigod of the Spectator pathway. He’s not good at divination or prophecies… Klein maintained his cold attitude that was unique to Gehrman and said, “You don’t have to bother.”

Anderson immediately gave a thumbs up.

“Your craziness is worthy of praise!”

He thought for a moment and added, “The person who deserves death the most is Molsona from the Loen’s New Party. He’s one of the pirates’ best friends. He has in his control some kind of plant that’s similar to cannabis, which is highly addictive. This helps him control many people in the Toscarter government and the police department. He's one of the most powerful mob bosses over here…

"He has committed many crimes, killed plenty of people, and basically did it with the help of pirates. On the surface, there's no apparent problem.

"Heh heh, he isn't a Beyonder, but the difficulty in killing him is how troublesome it is, yes—troublesome!

"He has three to five Beyonders from different pirate crews providing him with protection. On the rooftops, outside the building, beneath the windows, everyone there belongs to him. To finish him off, the only way is to forcefully storm in and kill a large number of people.

"I have the means to do it, but it's too troublesome. There's also a certain level of danger. You'll become a wanted criminal after that, so I didn't deal with him and only dealt with his safe at home."

Safe… To talk about banditry in such a fresh way… Yes, I previously heard that Toscarter's main industries are its plantation economy and pirates' black market trading. It also has flourishing bar, brothel, and gambling industries. I never expected that it includes new-age drugs… Molsona is an ordinary person and not a Beyonder… Perfect, Creeping Hunger happens to lack food… Klein nodded and indicated for Anderson to go deeper into detail.

†

Evening, in the Oaktree Bar.

A boxing match was about to unfold in the boxing ring. Many alcoholics surrounded it with mugs in hand.

They were like sharks who had caught the scent of blood. As they placed their bets, they loudly yelled words such as "kill him"!

This was a business of the head of the Loen's New Party, Molsona. The unique thing about the boxing matches held here was that death was permitted!

Molsona greatly enjoyed matches that resembled ancient wrestling competitions. He often came to watch a few matches. At that moment, he was seated on the second story, overlooking the ring.

Around him were several bodyguards. They were watching every direction, and among them were no lack of Beyonders sent from the pirates he worked with, as well as experienced adventurers he hired with large sums of money.

These people either had their backs or sides facing Molsona as they surrounded him, and they prevented anyone from approaching him. Revolvers, rifles, and hunting rifles were all aimed outside to leave the masses intimidated.

After confirming the situation, Klein pressed down on his top hat, entered the bar, and saw Molsona sucking on a cigar.

This mob boss had a very discernible face. Be it his brandy nose or thin brows, they were all very unique.

Klein retracted his gaze and first went to the bar to get a cup of local malt beer worth 4 pence. Then, he made his way to the railing beneath the second floor.

Although he wasn't directly under Molsona, as it was heavily guarded, he was already not very far from him.

I'm within five meters… Klein silently muttered to himself, raised his cup of beer, and looked at the boxing ring.

Chapter 683 - So You Are Here as Well

* * *

Black Spirit Body Threads that stemmed from different lifeforms appeared in Klein's vision, but he didn't immediately extend his spirituality to attempt to control them.

After distinguishing and confirming which Spirit Body Threads belonged to Molsona, he gulped a mouthful of malt bear as he began to focus on the boxing match in the ring, just like a real member of the audience.

The two boxers had their tops bare and didn't wear any protective gear. They fought all-out, constantly clashing with each other as fist met flesh, and the situation quickly escalated to a fervor.

Many of the alcoholic gamblers had adrenaline pumping through them as they shouted for the boxer they supported passionately, yelling, "Kill him!"

"Finish that son of a b*tch!"

On the second floor, Molsona also forgot the cigar in his hand as he was fixated on the ring below, his hands clenched tightly into fists.

Apart from those who had to have their backs facing him because they were keeping tabs on any suspicious people or watching the important regions such as the rooftop or area beneath, the people around him couldn't help but have their eyes peeled to the intense boxing match.

Klein raised his hand again, gulping a mouthful of beer as though he was out of breath from the tense atmosphere.

At this moment, his spirituality silently extended and grabbed onto the illusory black threads corresponding to Molsona.

One second, two seconds, three seconds… The brandy-nosed Molsona was just about to pump his fist a little as though he was in the ring himself when he suddenly found his brain go numb.

He felt the surroundings abruptly turn odd, as though several panes of glass were in between him and them.

Molsona immediately discovered that his thoughts had clearly slowed down, as though all the parts in his brain had suddenly rusted.

As the target was only an ordinary person whose Spirit Body was far inferior to that of a Beyonder, Klein took less than twenty seconds to achieve initial control over him.

Seven seconds!

All it took was seven seconds!

Oh no… Something wrong is happening… It's likely… a Beyonder… with relatively… special powers… Molsona, who often interacted with pirates, was no stranger to the mysterious world. It was why he spent large sums of money to hire Beyonders to protect himself. If he hadn't long destroyed his body with sex and alcohol, making his psyche relatively weak and his condition terrible, giving him a high chance of losing control if he were to consume a potion, he would've also wished to obtain supernatural powers himself.

At that moment, as his thoughts were slowing down and due to his lack of experience, Molsona spent more than ten seconds to figure out that he was under assault. He immediately reached out his arm and opened his mouth in an attempt to shout for help.

However, his actions were extremely slow, and his voice was weak.

With a number of his bodyguards around him engrossed in the exciting and nerve-wracking boxing match, and the audience's roaring in an ever-increasing crescendo, as well as all the guards along the perimeter putting their attention on any possible attack locations to protect their employer, his obvious abnormality ended up being neglected.

When the climax of the match received a temporary respite, a number of bodyguards and subordinates turned to look back at their boss, and they saw that his eyes appeared somewhat in a daze. His hands didn't seem to be in the right place as if he was still caught up in the match, anxiously awaiting the final results.

The corners of the mob boss's eyes had tears welling up as he tried hard to release his fingers to drop the cigar to attract the attention of his subordinates, but he discovered in despair that his line of thought was becoming highly impeded and stiff. Even a simple action needed more than a minute to complete, and his fingers were even resisting his will!

Pa!

The burning cigar finally fell to the ground as Molsona's tears flowed down to his neck across his cheeks.

A few bodyguards discovered this and were just about to ask their boss if it was because the match was too exciting when Molsona suddenly bent down. As he wiped his face, he picked up the cigar.

"That was an excellent match! Give the victor more money!" Molsona flicked the cigar and pulled up his collar as he grinned happily.

He didn't say exactly how much was to be given, as Klein didn't know the market rates. All he could do was give a vague comment.

Yes, Molsona of the Loen's New Party had already become his marionette!

As this mob boss was only an ordinary person, and his Spirit Body was even weaker than most healthy humans, all it took was two minutes and fifteen seconds!

If the time needed was any longer, he would've had to divert his attention to create an illusion to create some chaos, making the bodyguards place their attention on protecting Molsona and not being able to discover his abnormality in time.

"Kill him!"

"Kill him!"

†

The shouts of the audience suddenly turned uniform as the match in the ring came to its end. Molsona also allowed his bodyguards to continue watching the match.

When a boxer collapsed to the ground unconscious, Molsona took a swig of his cigar and said, "To the lounge.

"I want to take a break."

"Yes, Boss." His bodyguards and subordinates immediately surrounded him, escorted him to the corridor on the second floor, and helped him open the door to the lounge.

After instructing his guards to guard different critical spots and to not disturb him, Molsona paced around and opened a safe. He found documents involving all kinds of new drugs and selected the most important ones.

Following that, he placed the documents and an address he cut from the newspapers, as well as a total of 758 pounds in cash into a briefcase.

With a creak, he opened the door and called for a subordinate.

"Throw this bag under the third street lamp around the alley."

“Yes, Boss.” The subordinate didn’t inquire why.

This was a rule!

After closing the door again, Molsona found three candles and items with spirituality and used a pen and paper to carefully draw the corresponding symbol of The Fool—a half Pupil-less Eye which represented concealment, and the Contorted Lines which represented change.

Then, this mob boss who had become a marionette lit the candles, used cologne to represent essential oil and extract, and solemnly held a bestowment ritual.

He softly chanted The Fool’s honorific name, and he used ancient Hermes, which he originally didn’t know, to recite the corresponding incantation. Following that, he picked up the item with spirituality and let it fuse into the wind, constructing an illusory door with the transformed candlelight. If he couldn’t find any items with spirituality, Klein had planned on using Molsona’s blood. A human’s blood was an item with spirituality to begin with!

In the washroom on the first floor, Klein took this opportunity by taking four steps counterclockwise and going above the gray fog.

He didn’t use the Black Emperor card, and instead, he directly stirred some of the powers of the mysterious space, combining it with the paper figurine before throwing it through the bestowment door.

The pitch-blackness immediately transformed into an angel with twelve pairs of wings. It flew through the illusory and mysterious door, passing through the pitch-black depths of the void and arriving where Molsona was.

This was to disrupt any subsequent investigations via divination, prophecy, or other Beyonder powers!

Right on the heels of that, Klein picked up Creeping Hunger and threw it into the ritual's door!

Creeping Hunger arrived in the real world thanks to the bestowment ritual, and it arrived in front of Molsona. Having not eaten for a long time, it immediately became restless.

At this moment, Klein, who had returned to the washroom, controlled the frozen Molsona from a distance of dozens of meters away to immediately close his mouth and pick up the glove on the altar.

A crack opened in the middle of the glove as two rows of illusory, white, and eerie teeth were revealed!

The senses of the marionette he obtained quickly weakened as he decisively severed his control.

The slight backlash made his mind spin, but it didn't take long for him to recover.

Then, as though nothing had happened, he left the washroom, returned to the bar counter, and continued drinking the malt beer he didn't finish earlier.

At the same time, he found a rat on the second floor through the use of Spirit Body Threads, and he made it become his marionette in less than two minutes.

The rat began searching for a tunnel and path with rather awkward and unfamiliar motions, and it took quite some time before entering Molsona's lounge through a hole hidden by a bookshelf.

At this moment, a thin glove that resembled human skin lay silently on the ground as there was nothing left behind of Molsona, not even his clothes.

The rat climbed up to the table and bit on the paper with the symbol corresponding to The Fool, placing it close to the burning candle.

The paper quickly ignited and burned to ashes.

After extinguishing the three candles and returning them to their original locations, the rat came beside Creeping Hunger and bit onto it.

Then, it returned via its original path and left Molsona's lounge.

It stealthily ran all the way to the balcony facing the outside on the second story, and it silently climbed down.

On the first story where the bar counter was.

Klein finished drinking his last mouthful of beer, put down the cup, and slowly stood up.

He pressed down on his half top hat, stuffed his hands into the black double-breasted frock coat, and walked past the alcoholics and gamblers without any haste and came to the streets.

Following the light of the street lamps, he entered the alley at a normal pace. While pulling out a paper figurine and lighting it with a flick, he picked up the briefcase thrown under the third street lamp.

At this moment, a gray rat came with a thin human-skinned glove in its mouth out of the shadows.

Klein bent his back with a deadpan expression once again and picked up Creeping Hunger.

Then, the gray rat left on its own, climbing into a rubbish chute and lying there until it lost its breath.

With night about to fall, the street lamp illuminated Klein as he stood there, spreading his fingers in an unhurried manner while wearing Creeping Hunger on his left hand.

After stretching his finger joints and getting used to the glove, he carried the briefcase and followed the still vibrant and lively Oaktree Bar before vanishing at the crossroads.

†

He took out the address slip and stamps from the briefcase and left only with the important documents, pasting them onto it. Then, he placed it in a mailbox on the corner of the street. Finally, Klein changed back into Gehrman Sparrow, took a rental carriage, and headed for another bar around the pier.

It was a bar provided by Anderson that had relatively more pirates!

Upon entering the bar, Klein swept his gaze and took in the interior.

Suddenly, he saw a familiar figure.

The figure had a medium-sized build and his lips were purple. His brown eyes hid an intense maleficence that left one afraid. He was none other than the second mate of the King of Immortality Agalito, Slaughter Kircheis, with a bounty of 9,500 pounds!

Clearly, after escaping via the exit of the dangerous waters, the Death Announcer had arrived in the nearby Toscarter Island in search of replenishments!

So you are here as well… The corners of Klein's mouth curled up slightly, discovering in a chance encounter the Devil who couldn't be more suitable for hunting!

Just as he generated that ill intent, Kircheis sensed him and turned his head to the entrance of the bar.

Klein didn't hesitate to grab a beer on the table beside him and threw it over.

Right on the heels of that, he drew his revolver and coldly aimed.

Bang!

Chapter 684 - Battle Encounter

◆◆◆

Kacha!

Kircheis only half-turned his body as the cup of beer hit the round table beside him, smashing to pieces.

Amidst the gunfire, he didn’t attempt to dodge, as though he had instinctively seen through the illusion. It was as though he had a spring installed in him as he bounced to the forefront amongst the gamblers and alcoholics who were crouched down or scattered. His gaze was locked onto the cold adventurer wearing a suit by the door.

Gehrman Sparrow… Kircheis’s pupils constricted as he opened his mouth and chanted the Language of Foulness that stemmed from the Abyss.

At this moment, Klein truly pulled the trigger as a pale golden bullet that appeared to be scooped out of boiling-hot water shot out, going straight for the “Slaughterer” who had a bounty of 9,500 pounds.

However, all Kircheis did was gently lift his right hand and spread his fingers to produce a light blue flame in his palm. Then, he grabbed the bullet in an unimaginable manner.

The bullet entered a “cage” as the light blue flames solidified. Following that, the bullet emitted sunlight, just enough of it to neutralize everything.

Two figures stood up beside Kircheis, one of them was a short-haired woman wielding dual pistols, and the other was a boorish man in boxing gloves.

Clearly, Kircheis didn’t come to Toscarter’s pier in search for supplies alone. Or it should be said that he definitely had partners he knew here!

Three Beyonders… Kircheis might even be a Sequence 5… At that moment, Klein nearly blurted out something along the lines of “sorry, my bad.”

One couldn’t make any preparations when attacking a Devil, relying on complete chance. Furthermore, there couldn’t be any hesitation; otherwise, the Devil would immediately detect the ill intent and danger.

However, under such situations, it was truly hard to tell who held the advantage in such situations!

Klein didn’t hesitate to turn around while holding his revolver. Then, he agilely dashed for the staircase leading to the bar’s second story amidst the crowd and above the crouching alcoholics.

Just as he dashed in, a light blue fireball smashed into the side of the staircase before instantly exploding.

Boom!

A tiny part of the bottom of the staircase collapsed as the bar began to tremble. The strong smell of sulfur spread.

Kircheis and his two companions didn’t delay as they jumped across the first few steps of the staircase in fervent pursuit of Gehrman Sparrow.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein ran for the second story, and midway, he quickly began his examination of the corresponding Spirit Body Threads.

This allowed him to easily find an empty room without any humans.

He turned around, took a step, and was about to enter the door before jumping off the window to escape from the bar.

At that moment, Kircheis and his two companions chased up to the second story, and upon seeing this scene, they tacitly split up. The former continued the pursuit, while the latter entered the rooms on the same side in a bid to head down to intercept Gehrman.

And Klein was waiting precisely for this opportunity!

He suddenly half turned his body as his left black-gloved hand grabbed at the air.

The woman with the dual pistols and the man in boxing gloves continued their actions without detecting any abnormalities. They rushed into the other rooms, jumped off the windows, and went far away without returning.

Their goal and actions of "separate and intercept" had allowed Klein to use the Baron of Corruption's Distortion to change it to "separate and take action alone!"

This wouldn't last very long, but it was enough time for Klein to fight Kircheis one-on-one for a brief moment.

Boom. Having completed Distortion, he fell to the ground, rolling inside the building and avoiding the light blue fireball which Kircheis kept shooting out.

Amidst the incessant booming, the buildings where the bar originally was wavered as though it had experienced an earthquake.

Right on the heels of that, Kircheis rapidly lunged forward, entering the rather vast room.

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow adeptly somersaulting and jumping without fighting him head-on while also controlling his emotions very well, Slaughterer immediately opened his mouth and used the unique

Language of Foulness to say the word, “Slow!”

The entire room and all the objects inside seemed to calm down. Klein’s somersaulting actions slowed down significantly and weren’t as smooth as before.

Kircheis didn’t hesitate to lock onto his target as he followed up with another word of the Devil language.

“Die!”

Klein’s figure instantly froze as he stood rooted on the spot and gradually turned faint and thin, becoming a paper figurine filled with spotted red rust.

At the same time, he surfaced by the side of the door, wearing a half top hat and black double-breasted frock suit. He reached out his black-gloved hand, grabbed the handle, and shut the door to the collapsing room with a pull.

Creak!

The din outside vanished as the room seemed to stand out alone, becoming a firm cage.

Upon seeing this, Kircheis’s body swelled as his clothes tore.

He instantly transformed into a behemoth nearly three meters tall. His skin appeared dark, but it was dark black and sinister. Goat horns filled with countless mysterious patterns grew on his head as a pair of bat wings on his back spread open. Swirling around him were light blue flames that emitted the strong smell of sulfur.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

Light blue fireballs shot out in unison, blanketing the region around the door. At the same time, the redness in Kircheis’s eyes bloomed as he said with the extremely corruptive words of the Devil, “Corruption!”

This was also an area of effect attack!

The light blue in his eyes filled up as Klein clenched his left hand, which wore a sinister and noble glove, and quickly did a half twist.

The fireballs immediately lost their trajectories and acted chaotically as though in random motion.

They smashed into the ceiling, the door, ground, or flew backward at Kircheis. Immediately, the booming sounds in the room undulated. The seal created by the power of Distortion suffered an intense blow as it trembled, but it didn't show any signs of damage.

The light blue flames soared into the sky as the smell of sulfur spread. Klein's body suddenly bent down as his body was covered in a layer of clearly sticky black liquid.

Bang!

His figure exploded, turning into torn pieces of paper and corrupted black fog.

Immediately following that, he surfaced on the other side, his skin a clear dark shade. His clothes were torn from the explosive force and the flames from the abyss.

Corruption, which had splash damage, was useful against his Paper Figurine Substitutes to a certain extent, inflicting damage to a certain degree via an unavoidable influence. And the aftermath of the explosion wasn't within Klein's control. Similarly, it dealt damage to him.

However, upon their first encounter, Klein had "given" Kircheis a cup of beer, completing the Bribe; therefore attacks and control effects directed at him were greatly negated!

Kircheis clearly didn't expect the minor influence that Corruption had dealt to Gehrman Sparrow. Just as he pulled out a long blade formed entirely of flames, and before he could unleash his speed and strength in a fervent attack, he saw his opponent's left hand's glove transform as though it was made of gold.

Two blinding streaks of lightning tore out of Klein's eyes!

Psychic Piercing!

"Ah!"

Kircheis instantly let out a tragic cry as he felt as though a hundred bottles of holy water had been infused into his mind.

He was rich in actual combat experience and, knowing that having been struck by a psyche attack, knew that he would subsequently suffer a series of relentlessness attacks. Hence, he instinctively transformed into a pitch-black liquid and began spreading across the floor.

The liquid appeared to be the coalescence of the darkest and evilest desires of a person's heart as the liquid spread across the room towards Gehrman Sparrow, as though it would corrupt everything.

This state is truly perfect… In a battle encounter, either party would suffer the problem of not being sufficiently prepared… Thankfully, I've always remembered the suspected Desire Apostle I encountered, and I've completely held back all desires and emotions… Klein didn't dodge as the glove on his left hand rapidly bloomed with pure and clean sunlight.

He spread out his arms, allowing a pillar of holy light that had golden flames swirling around it descend from the sky. It illuminated every corner and every shadow of the room!

The column of light struck the richest parts of the pitch-black liquid as it radiated outwards in a rippling manner.

Amidst the bright and holy light, the pitch-black liquid quickly evaporated and mostly vanished.

Kircheis hurriedly materialized his body and reformed near the window.

He still maintained his state as a three-meter-tall Devil. He was as calm as always, but he could hardly hold back his intense bloodlust and desire to kill.

The present him was already rather weak. He didn't dare to circle around Gehrman Sparrow as he waited for him to show any emotion so as to control his desires. He ignited the two mysterious goat horns on his head in an attempt to forcefully attack his enemy's psyche, inducing emotions to a certain degree in an unavoidable manner.

Once he had any desires or emotions, the situation would be in the Desire Apostle's control!

At that moment, Kircheis's head suddenly turned numb, causing him to nearly lose the thoughts he previously had!

After both parties entered a range of five meters, the reason why Klein remained in a passive state, using Paper Figurine Substitutes and a Baron of Corruption's Distortion powers to barely put up a fight and stall for time, was to divert attention in order to control Kircheis's Spirit Body Threads!

With the strength of a Sequence 5's Spirit Body, it wasn't easy to obtain initial control over Slaughterer to begin with. However, with the cup of beer Bribe, it reduced Kircheis's defense and resistance. And after that, this Desire Apostle suffered a Psychic Piercing and was thoroughly purified once by Light of Purification. As a result, he had become rather weak!

Therefore, even though Klein was using his other powers, he still took fifteen seconds to obtain initial control over Kircheis.

The intense battle in the room instantly turned quiet. Although Kircheis's thoughts had turned slow, he still had the ability to complete certain actions. He could still forcefully resist the control that stemmed from the depths of his Spirit Body.

The bloodshot colors in his eyes converged as his eyes reflected Gehrman Sparrow's figure. The curled goat horns on his head began to burn intensely as hatred, greed, lust, wrath, and other emotions and desires began to spread outwards in a corporeal manner.

Klein entered a half-Cogitation state as he calmly focused on deepening his control, hoping to quickly make Kircheis lose all means of resistance.

Chapter 685 - From A Delay to Disconnection

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In the room that had been reduced to shambles, Klein, whose top hat had fallen to the side and clothes had become tattered, was about four meters away from Kircheis, who was a behemoth with bat wings. The situation was so quiet, as though a puppet show was being played.

In fact, Klein still had the means to do something else.

Back when Marionettist Rosago forcefully controlled both him and Sharron, he could resist the Wraith’s possession and use Flame Controlling to summon a flame to destroy the shadow pulled in by Sharron. If he hadn’t made a serious mistake by targeting the Sequence 5 Wraith, Rosago could’ve diverted his attention to killing Klein, snuffing out any chance of him using the Language of Foulness charm. Now, although Klein was definitely inferior to him, there was also only one enemy!

Of course, there wasn’t really much he could do. Under the premise of not losing control over Kircheis, he could move, but he couldn’t do it too hastily or quickly. He could use Beyonder powers which didn’t expend too much of his spirituality, but he couldn’t divert his attention to power the mystical items he carried, or use actions that required too much movement like drawing a gun.

And when a target was controlled to a certain extent, several attacks could nudge or stimulate the target, allowing them to resist the control of their Spirit Body Threads to a greater extent and even show signs of escaping from his control.

Therefore, Klein had to wait.

At that moment, his heart rate suddenly sped up as an uncontrollable sense of horror and anxiety surfaced in his mind.

He couldn't help but suspect that Kircheis's companions who had their intentions affected by Distortion were about to return!

No good! My emotions have been stirred! Klein was first taken aback as he tried to use Cogitation to forcefully calm his agitated heart.

Haha… He has… emotional stirrings… A chance… Kircheis was delighted as a slow thought flashed through his mind.

Then, using his Beyonder powers, he attempted to magnify Gehrman Sparrow's horror and anxiety, planting an emotional seed in him.

As long as he succeeded, all he needed was to completely "trigger" it, maiming his opponent, making him unable to influence him further!

No… How can it… be ineffective… His… emotional stirrings… have disappeared… Kircheis's bloodshot eyes constricted slowly as it was gradually filled with shock, alarm, and anger.

Klein, who imagined that he had given the Desire Apostle a chance to counterattack, discovered that nothing had happened after completely calming himself down. The curled goat horns on Kircheis's head were ignited, but he didn't attempt to use his emotional stirrings!

Moments after having this thought, Klein roughly understood the situation.

It wasn't that Kircheis didn't wish to control his horror and anxiety, but it was that he had failed!

From the moment he sensed the emotional stirrings, he had to take a few seconds to digest the situation before using two to three seconds to make the decision. Finally, he spent even more time to organize his thoughts before channeling the corresponding Beyonder powers. All of that took him at least ten seconds to complete.

Klein only took a total of three to four seconds to calm his mind after detecting the problem.

Therefore, Kircheis's Beyonder powers naturally failed to be effective against an enemy who was in normal condition.

To put it simply, the delay was too long! Under such situations, don't try to fiddle around with highly intricate matters… Klein lampooned before suppressing his sense of schadenfreude.

After another ten seconds, Kircheis finally understood the source of the problem. He no longer considered targeting desires and emotions, and instead, while flapping the bat wings on his back with great difficulty, he relied on a Devil's powerful body and Spirit Body to resist the control stemming from the Spirit Body Threads. He tried to make the swirling light blue flames slowly coagulate into a fireball.

Klein could almost foresee fireballs bombard him; hence, he didn't hesitate to split off some of his spirituality, snapping his fingers using his right thumb and middle finger.

Pa!

The light blue flames suddenly soared before they truly took form and collapsed completely. They were like fireworks blooming behind Kircheis.

Magician's Flame Controlling!

Kircheis continued struggling, but his actions became even slower as he resembled a rusting puppet. As for Klein, he casually moved his feet to dodge the Devil language Kircheis had launched with all his strength.

Three seconds, two seconds, one second… Klein suddenly stopped as his eyes locked onto Kircheis's head which had lost its curved goat horns.

At that moment, he still needed two and a half minutes from controlling this Desire Apostle to turn him into his marionette, but Klein didn't have such plans. He never had such plans in the first place!

It took too much time, allowing Kircheis's companions to rush back in time!

Klein only had one ultimate goal—it was to control Kircheis to a certain extent so that attacks within a certain limit wouldn't help him escape his predicament!

The bloodshot eyes, grimacing expression, and sharp teeth with drooling saliva reflected in Klein's eyes. He opened his mouth and said a word, "Bang!"

Air Bullet! An Air Bullet of a Sequence 5!

This was already comparable to a bullet shot from a steam rifle!

Bang!

The Air Bullet accurately hit Kircheis's forehead, causing him to throw up his head, yanking the Spirit Body Threads.

In between his brows, a bloody hole that wasn't too deep had appeared. It wasn't a mortal blow.

To a Devil, a Desire Apostle, their bodies seemed to be cloaked with thick and hard armor. Their blood and flesh had extreme elasticity and defensive strength.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Klein kept creating Air Bullets while making gunshot sounds, striking Kircheis's forehead, again and again, slowly leaving it a contiguous mess. At the same time, he stably controlled the Spirit Body Threads to prevent him from using the feedback to weaken his influence.

Kircheis let out an angry stuttering roar as he tried moving forward in a bid to counterattack, but Klein was a lot more agile than him!

And his plans to liquefy undoubtedly failed because of the control of the Spirit Body Threads.

Bang!

Another Air Bullet struck Kircheis, completely shattering his forehead, penetrating his brain.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The subsequent bullets flew in, one bullet after another.

Bang!

Kircheis's skull was finally sent flying as black crevices filled his brain. At that moment it was a complete mess.

The aura of this Slaughterer worth 9,500 pounds quickly dissipated, but he didn't close his eyes, as he had already lost them.

Bit by bit, he collapsed to the ground slowly as Klein walked over and extended his left hand.

Two blood-red eyes split open in the middle of the glove.

A cold and eerie wind appeared as Slaughterer Kircheis's Spirit Body, as well as his black fog-like Beyonder characteristic shot towards Creeping Hunger amidst screams before fixing itself to a blank finger.

Soon, the glove turned black once again, but this time it was profound and pure, resembling countless squirming dots of the same color formed one layer after another.

Klein sensed the changes for two seconds before walking towards the shattered window, feeling somewhat disappointed and also somewhat delighted.

When Grazing Kircheis, he had actually considered which Beyonder powers he wished to receive and which he didn't wish to receive. The one he didn't wish for was the danger premonition of a Devil, as this needed to have Creeping Hunger constantly activated while maintaining Kircheis's soul. And this meant that he needed to feed the glove every day, which spelled an extreme inconvenience for himself. Furthermore, this also overlapped with his powers as a Seer to a certain extent.

As for whether the danger premonition of a Devil worked after making it into his marionette, Klein believed that it was targeted on the marionette and had nothing to do with its controller.

What Klein wished for the most was to "draw" the Desire Apostle's Beyonder powers of using a target's emotional stirrings or the use of any of the Language of Foulness, with the best being Death or Corruption.

At that moment, he had been quite lucky to obtain three Beyonder powers. One of them was Language of Foulness, but it wasn't Death or Corruption, but Slow. This allowed all targets in a seven-to eight-meter radius to instantly turn numb or even come to a halt. However, it could only be maintained for two seconds.

The second Beyonder power was Sword of Lava. It could create a flaming sword with extremely high offensive power. One strike could directly cleave through a thick stone column, leaving the sliced off end to appear to be melted off. This was the option Kircheis had used when he attacked maniacally.

The third was Sulfur Fireball. Not only could it create an explosion of considerable might, but it could also poison people and objects which had been stained by the flames. If matched with a Devil form's powers, ten to twenty fireballs could be launched at the same instance. Out of that form, it maxed out at three.

That's not bad. The damage delivered by Sword of Lava to non-undead or non-corrupt creatures is clearly higher than the Priest of Light's Light of Holiness… Klein came to the window and happened to see the backs of Kircheis's companions opening up a distance from him.

They haven't shaken off the influence? No, with so much time having passed, they must've shaken off the influence and returned somewhere nearby. Now, they're escaping? They sensed Kircheis's death? That's a little weird… Klein turned his head back and saw Kircheis's corpse still in his Devil form. His form didn't change back into a human as a result of his death.

He looked at the corpse for two seconds before coming up with a theory.

"Powers like the Devil form are a state that brings a body close to the state of losing control. However, they still have their reasoning and can change back while they're in control. Otherwise, they will maintain their forms."

Klein didn't delay as he searched the Devil's corpse. He discovered that Kircheis's gigantification had torn all his clothes and pants, causing his wallet and cash to scatter across the ground. Later, they were all destroyed due to the blanketing attack from the fireballs and sulfurous flames.

"…" Just as Klein looked away, he suddenly discovered something twinkling in the giant Devil's chest.

It was a thin and long crystal formed purely of blood. A faint smell of sulfur emanated around it.

"What's that?" Klein frowned, unable to figure out an answer.

Kircheis's Beyonder characteristics has clearly entered Creeping Hunger. Why would his corpse produce something strange? A question flashed across Klein's mind.

Furthermore, as the second mate of the King of Immortality, Kircheis didn’t even carry a mystical item or Sealed Artifact. This had exceeded his expectations.

Chapter 686 - A Hard-to-complete Ritual

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After thinking for a moment, Klein, who didn't have an answer, put away the thin blood crystal when he didn't sense any danger from it. Then, he bent down to inspect Kircheis's Devil form which had lost half its head.

I wonder if I can still use this to exchange for a bounty, and if so, how much can I get… I have no idea who I can contact from the military over here. Send Oz Kent a telegram? This back and forth, together with the work he has to do remotely, it's hard to tell if it will finish in three to four days. I'll be leaving tomorrow… Also, I can't forget the middleman's cut. He mumbled, walked to the side, and picked up the clearly charred half top hat and wore it.

Then, he dragged the heavy and massive Devil's corpse and walked to the door before reaching out to open the door.

A howling wind blew in, breaking the silence in the room.

Klein tapped his finger joint to deactivate the Spirit Body Threads vision as he continued dragging the nasty and terrifying Devil's corpse across the corridor, down the stairs to the first floor.

At that moment, there weren't many people left in the bar. Tables and chairs were overturned, and there were shards everywhere. It was a mess.

Klein went past the heavily damaged staircase and into the main hall. He surveyed the area and found the forlorn bar owner behind the bar counter. Few of the bouncers he hired had remained. Most had scattered off.

Tap. Tap. Tap… Klein walked over one step at a time with the Devil corpse behind him bumping into the furniture.

[image]

“W-what are you planning to do?” the owner took a step back as he yelled at the top of his lungs.

His bouncers gathered over, shuddering in fear. Their eyes were darting around as their bodies revealed their own inclinations. It appeared as though they would immediately flee the moment any incident happened.

Klein stopped in his tracks, throwing Kircheis’s corpse in front of him.

Then, he said in a deep voice, “Can you claim bounty rewards?”

The owner was stunned for a second as he instinctively moved his gaze down before seeing the huge Devil’s corpse which still had some blue flames lingering around it.

He and his bouncers drew a cold gasp at the same time, many of them feeling surreal.

This was a real devil!

Apart from its lack of curled goat horns, it looked identical to the devils described in the Church’s bibles or mythical stories!

To ordinary people living in the pirates’ playground, it wasn’t rare to witness supernatural powers. Here, their horizons were clearly broader than the colonies of Oravi and the civilians of the kingdom’s native soil. However, as the owner and bouncers of a bar, they had never seen real devils before. They even suspected that it was an attempt by the Church to tarnish unofficial Beyonders.

The owner retracted his gaze with great difficulty as he looked at the stoic adventurer in tattered clothes.

“I can. Th-they should have the means to determine that this is Kircheis.

“It’s Kircheis, right?”

Klein silently heaved a sigh of relief and silently nodded.

The owner hesitated for two seconds and forced a fearful smile.

“However, it’s impossible to get everything. As you know, there will be some money spent during the process. The fees cost about 30%; otherwise, you’ll have to wait quite a while. After all, 9,500 pounds isn’t a small sum. For Toscarter’s pier, it will take at least a week. I-its because there are pirates frequenting this area, and there are often adventurers here to claim bounties. Therefore, it constantly has quite a bit of cash reserves. If you were in Oravi Island or anywhere else, it might take two weeks or even a month.”

9,500 pounds really wasn’t a small sum. Klein clearly remembered that back in Tingen City, the Nighthawks team’s monthly budget was only about 1,000 pounds. The budget was even split between the Church and the police department.

He thought for a moment and asked the bar’s boss, “Do you know me?”

“Yes.” The owner hurriedly nodded.

Klein swept his gaze across everyone and continued asking, “Can you figure out where I’m living?”

“Yes, yes.” The owner didn’t dare to lie.

Klein tersely responded before using a flat and direct tone.

“Send 6,000 pounds to me before noon tomorrow.”

6000 pounds? That's less than 70%. That's about 600 pounds short… The owner was taken aback, never expecting the crazy adventurer to take the initiative to lower the price.

"Can you do it?" Klein asked again.

The additional 650 pounds was his compensation for the bar. After all, he had left the bar in a mess. However, this wasn't something the crazy adventurer would say himself. He believed that the bar's owner wasn't a philanthropist. There was no way he would hand over the excess to others.

The owner considered it seriously before replying, "Yes!"

Even though the official process wouldn't be that fast, there was nothing he needed to worry about. This was because he planned on borrowing some of the money and using his savings to pay the bounty reward which Gehrman Sparrow wanted.

To be able to earn several hundred pounds at once wasn't something he would miss out on!

Klein nodded and didn't speak another word. He turned around and walked to the bar's entrance.

When he came near, he took out a few yellow pennies and threw them onto a tiny round table that still stood standing.

After some clinking sounds, the pennies spun to a stop. They numbered eight pence.

While doing this action, the black-suited Klein didn't stop walking. His figure soon disappeared from the entrance.

"W-what's the meaning of that?" the owner said with a surprised and blank look.

Most of the bouncers shook their heads with the same expression, indicating that they didn't know Gehrman Sparrow's motive.

Only a bouncer who had been standing guard by the door thought with a frown. Then, he said uncertainty, "When he first entered, he took… he took someone's cup of beer and threw it at Kircheis.

"This is the compensation for that cup of beer, as well as the cup?"

The bar fell into silence once again. Although the owner and bouncers couldn't accept such an explanation, they had the baffling feeling that this matched the style of the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow.

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Another set of clothes ruined. That's nearly 9 pounds… Thankfully, I made quite a lot this time… Yes, I'll have to make another set tomorrow… After turning into another street, Klein stopped and observed himself.

He wasn't in a rush to return to the hotel he stayed at. He first followed the information provided by the head honcho of the Loen's New Party, Molsona, and found a policeman who was controlled by drugs. The man helped the gangs commit several sordid deeds, to the point of creating a scheme to kill a witness. He channeled his spirit to confirm his crimes before allowing Creeping Hunger to enjoy a true feast for the day.

After doing that, Klein returned to his hotel via a carriage and entered his room.

After setting up the altar, he used a ritual to send Creeping Hunger and the thin blood crystal above the gray fog.

Sitting at the end of the long bronze table, Klein didn't hesitate to pick up the glove and release the soul of the Priest of Light.

This Sequence 5 powerhouse had a thin face and an elegant bearing. He was an amiable elder, and he wore a simple white clergyman's robe. He bowed to express his gratitude to the mysterious existence who was concealed by the gray fog.

Klein gently nodded as a response. Then, he conjured pen and paper and wrote down the divination statement: “The potion formulas for the Sequences above the Sun pathway’s Sequence 7.”

Leaning back into his seat, he began using dream divination to communicate with the spirit.

The grayish world quickly changed. He saw the Priest of Light roll open a piece of brownish goatskin in a room filled with sunlight. On it was a formula written in ancient Feysac: “Sequence 6, Notary.

“Main ingredients: 1 set of crystallized roots of the Tree of Elders, 5 feathers of a Spirit Pact Bird.

“Supplementary ingredients: 100 ml of Radiance Spirit Pact Tree’s juice, 1 golden-rimmed sunflower, 1 white-rimmed sunflower, 5 drops of Aqua Fern juice.”

After the scene paused for a few seconds, ripples surfaced again, outlining an opulent hall filled with golden statues.

Inside the hall, a man covered in pure light that prevented one from looking straight at him said to a half-centenarian elder, “This is the potion formula for the Priest of Light. Remember, dispel the darkness and praise the sun.”

The elder received it in excitement and spread open the ancient goatskin.

“Sequence 5, Priest of Light.

“Main ingredients: red comb of a Dawn Rooster, a pure white Brilliance Rock.

“Supplementary ingredients: 5 grams of Rosemary, 7 drops of fingered citron juice, 10 ml of Rock Water, 60 ml of a King of Dawn Rooster's blood.

"Ritual: In pure darkness, bury your entire body in ice that usually doesn't melt, before consuming the potion."

The scene quickly vanished without any additional content.

Klein wasn't surprised. He knew very well that when it involved the domain of a demigod, the seven Churches would often directly provide the potions and rituals without giving them the formula.

At this moment, the Priest of Light's figure had mostly dispersed due to the forceful spirit channeling.

His painful expression eased as he raised his head and spread out his arms as though he was embracing sunlight.

"Praise the sun!" the Priest of Light closed his eyes as he piously said.

Those were his last words as his Spirit Body rapidly disintegrated and plummeted into the gray fog before completely disappearing.

A pious believer… Klein sighed in comment. Following that, he recalled what he had seen in the dream and recorded the formula.

The main ingredient of a Notary is the root crystal of the Tree of Elders… I remember that Miss Justice's Psychiatrist potion requires the fruit of the Tree of Elders… From the looks of it, the Spectator and Sun pathways might be interchangeable at High-Sequences… The difficulty of the Priest of Light's ritual for most people is to find ice that usually doesn't melt, but it's different for Little Sun. To bury a living person in pure darkness in the Forsaken Land of God might lead to one's disappearance. A method to avoid this has to be figured out… Dispel the darkness and praise the sun is the acting method? Klein considered for a moment before picking up the blood crystal produced by Kircheis's body.

After a few seconds of consideration, he wrote down the corresponding divination statement in a serious manner: “Its origins.”

Holding up the item and the piece of paper, Klein chanted softly once more and entered a dream.

In the gray, blurry world, he saw the gigantic sailboat, the Death Announcer, with its bow and stern curving up high. He saw Kircheis climb up a soft ladder and arrive on the deck.

Just as this Desire Apostle found his footing, a sticky black fog emanated from the deck’s cracks. It was filled with a corruptive smell that enveloped Kircheis within it, corrupting and tainting all the shimmering objects on him, including his body.

The gas quickly contracted and entered Kircheis’s chest. The color gradually turned red, as though it was a bloodstain.

Finally, everything was restored to normal. Kircheis genuflected as he said to the deck, “Your will is my will. Great Death Announcer!”

Following that, the scene shattered as Klein opened his eyes.

He sat straight and looked at the thin and long blood crystal. In thought, he silently said, The Death Announcer is alive?

A Sealed Artifact with living traits?

This crystal is the source of its control over its crew, and it comes equipped with an intense corruptive force. Therefore, mystical items of low levels will be corrupted by it?

Chapter 687 - Blatherer

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Picking up the blood crystal and smelling the faint smell of sulfur, Klein could vaguely sense the corrosive powers hidden deep within.

Legend has it that the Abyss is an area with the greatest powers of corruption. Even an angel will fall and lose control there. The people guarding the Abyss will eventually be assimilated by the Abyss… The characteristic shown by the Desire Apostle does match this point. Hmm, deepening the assimilation of a Desire Apostle? Klein allowed his thoughts to wander.

Soon, he noticed a detail. Kircheis had declared loyalty to the Death Announcer, and not to King of Immortality Agalito!

Does this mean that the real King of Immortality is the Death Announcer? Agalito is only its spokesperson or the administrator to infect targets? Heh, rumor has it that Agalito isn't a demigod and isn't at Sequence 4. He relies solely on the Death Announcer to become one of the Four Kings. If that's the case, his actual situation is worse than I expected. He doesn't even have any autonomy…

Of course, I can't eliminate the possibility that he's a Sequence 4, and his relationship with the Death Announcer is just one of cooperating partners. He's a Demon after all. He's crafty and enjoys misleading people…

Klein contemplated for a few seconds before attempting another divination to see if he could obtain any revelation for the blood crystal's usage.

He wasn’t afraid that it would incur huge trouble for him, or it could be said that he was already prepared to receive any. Even if it was connected to the Devil King in the Abyss, it would at most be equivalent to the backlash from the True Creator or Eternal Blazing Sun. Klein believed that the gray fog had the means to defend against and suppress it.

This is the first time. I won’t have my location locked on, so it’s not a big problem… Besides, I already divined its origins, and there wasn’t any danger. Therefore, the Death Announcer definitely isn’t a Sequence 0 Devil… Eh, isn’t that obvious? If it’s really a Sequence 0 Devil, or a Sealed Artifact at the level of King of Angels, Amon, then there’s no need to avoid the joint forces of me, Queen Mystic, Admiral of Stars, and Anderson… Klein realized that he had been frightening himself. He began to seriously begin the dream divination.

In the blurry world, he saw a world covered with sticky black fog.

A monster formed from dark-colored lumps of flesh squirmed over as its body cavity produced a raging roar, “Blatherer!”

The scene changed, producing an ancient-looking altar which was splashed with fresh blood. Engraved on of it were words and symbols filled with a corruptive feeling; it was as though they were shouting something.

The hazy world shattered as Klein slowly opened his eyes and sat straight.

He tapped his finger on the edge of the long bronze table and muttered to himself, Blatherer refers to the state before the Death Announcer became a Sealed Artifact—a Blatherer from the Abyss. Or was it a gigantic monster formed from dark-colored lumps of flesh that became a Sealed Artifact after being killed by a Blatherer?

Heh heh, regardless, the final confirmation is that there’s one ship involved. Otherwise, it wouldn’t have solidified into its present state.

Hmm… From the laughter of the person on the brink of losing control, it's very likely that the Death Announcer corresponds to Blatherer. A preliminary prediction is that it isn't a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact; otherwise, King of Immortality would be the best of the Four Kings… It's probably a Sequence 3? Furthermore, Agalito clearly doesn't match well with it. The level of power shown isn't that high. It's at most Sequence 4…

That corruptive altar that gave off a feeling as though it was shouting suggests that the blood crystal is able to summon a high-level Devil? For example, the Blatherer?

Having no idea how to summon a high-level Devil, nor having any plans on doing so, Klein casually threw the thin blood crystal along with the Beyonder characteristic—the glowing crystal left behind by the Priest of Light—into the junk pile. Then, he perfunctorily named the former: Aura of Blatherer!

After doing this, Klein cautiously attempted another divination. It was to confirm if he would encounter any danger that night, danger that came from King of Immortality Agalito.

In fact, he already had a prediction for the divination's outcome. King of Immortality Agalito wouldn't touch ground on the island!

Firstly, it was because Toscarter had a hidden demigod. Ordinary Beyonders might not know, but the Four Kings would have some level of understanding. And it was unlikely Agalito would wish to have any head-on conflict with other demigods. Forcefully entering the "territory" of another person wasn't his style.

Secondly, Klein's previous theory had produced a conclusion: Agalito didn't dare to leave the Death Announcer, and the Death Announcer had no way of going ashore!

Indeed, Klein received the revelation that it would be very safe that night.

This meant that he didn't need to change his appearance and move to another hotel.

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Around nine in the morning of the next day, Klein saw Anderson Hood appear the moment he walked into the restaurant on the first floor and found a seat. Anderson immediately sat opposite him.

This Strongest Hunter used his fingers to comb his short blond hair, making it part seventy-thirty. As he looked at Gehrman Sparrow, he tsked with a laugh.

"Impressive, you managed to hunt Kircheis even when fighting one-on-three!

"The way you dragged the Devil's corpse downstairs has already spread throughout Toscarter Pier.

"Heh, it's said that every pirate with a bounty on their head has decided to distance themselves from your sights. They will not appear anywhere within a five-kilometer radius from you!"

Ever since he acquainted himself with Frank Lee, Klein had quit drinking milk. He raised his hand to order a cup of coffee, a piece of white bread, two toasts, a roasted pork sausage, and a plate of butter. Then, he replied in an extremely calm manner, "Your ability at gathering intel is pretty good."

Anderson chuckled.

"This is necessary for a hunter. Heh, the Toscarter adventurers are discussing a serious question as to who is the strongest hunter!"

When Anderson saw Gehrman Sparrow look up with a cold and ambiguous gaze, his smile froze.

"They've all chosen you.

“Haha, after all, this is the Sonia Sea, and not the Fog Sea.”

Why did you need to add that second sentence? It’s just asking for a beating… Klein casually asked, as though being indifferent, “Anything else?”

“Ah?” Anderson suddenly felt his comprehension skills were impeded.

“Any other intel?” Klein repeated himself with more details.

“There is…” Anderson suddenly signaled with his eyes. “Molsona from the Loen New Party has mysteriously disappeared last night. He mysteriously disappeared in his own room while being protected by countless guards! The official explanation is that Molsona has already died. The reason was that he possibly consecrated an evil god or summoned a devil. Heh, no one believes that. It’s because the Church of Storms has received an anonymous letter that has detailed records of Molsona’s crimes, as well as evidence.”

He stared intently at Gehrman Sparrow, hoping that the crazy adventurer would provide him with more information.

He clearly remembered that Gehrman Sparrow had just asked him who deserved to be killed yesterday afternoon. And his answer was Molsona from the Loen New Party.

Klein tersely responded without saying anything more.

At this moment, a figure rushed into the hotel. After looking around, he walked towards Klein in delight.

He was none other than the bar owner from before.

“Mr. Sparrow.” The owner took off a bonnet that had a depression in the middle and bowed. “It has already been confirmed, but the process will take another two days. After all, it’s too large a sum. Heh heh, I know you’ll be leaving today, so in order to not delay your schedule, I’ve decided to cover the bounty for now. Well, a portion of it comes from the bar's liquid cash, and a portion of it I loaned from my friends. Please make sure the number is right."

He deliberately spoke in detail to express his goodwill to Gehrman Sparrow while earning a profit. He wanted to befriend this crazy adventurer.

As for whether King of Immortality would seek revenge on him, he wasn't too worried. Many a time, Kircheis would similarly claim bounties through him. After all, it was a reward for battles between pirates. Everyone liked gaining some additional cash. It was an unspoken rule at sea.

Klein did a count of the thick stack of notes worth 6,000 pounds. He split them into a few stacks and placed them into different pockets. Then, he said with a nod, "Not bad."

The bar owner heaved a sigh of relief. He then warily surveyed his surroundings before suppressing his voice.

"You have to be careful. King of Immortality is a very vengeful person. He might intercept your ship at sea."

He didn't dare to say that he had the means to arrange for someone to board certain ships to depart in secret, afraid that it would be detected by King of Immortality and that he would suffer retaliation as a result.

"I know," Klein replied indifferently.

The bar owner didn't speak further. He bowed once more and left the hotel's restaurant.

"Do you have the means to leave?" Anderson looked at Gehrman Sparrow with a look of curiosity.

"Guess." Klein revealed a gentlemanly smile.

The corners of Anderson's lips twitched.

“I’m relieved by seeing your confidence.

“By the way. The tickets. It sets sail at half-past one in the afternoon.

“Impressive. I thought I was rather amazing earning 1,600 pounds in a night. Who knew…”

Klein didn’t respond as he began enjoying his breakfast.

Later, he made a new suit to prevent himself from lacking a change of clothes.

Time passed, and soon, it was time to board the ship. Anderson held a newly bought suitcase and looked at Gehrman Sparrow beside him. He asked, seemingly worried, “Are we just leaving on this ship?

“The Death Announcer should be around the surrounding waters. The Future left yesterday after it was resupplied.”

He felt that leaving while under the wrath of the King of Immortality wasn’t a wise choice.

It’s impossible for Gehrman Sparrow to be crazy enough to just storm right into death, right… Unless, this is his trap… A thought came to Anderson as he had a hunch.

Klein didn’t turn his head to look at him. He directly boarded the liner with his suitcase.

His thoughts were simple. It was likely that the Death Announcer could sense something wrong with its aura. Based on the King of Immortality’s modus operandi, it was unlikely for him to make a forceful assault. If his assumption was wrong, then the moment the Death Announcer appeared along the horizon, Klein would immediately enter his room and pray to himself. Then, he would go above the gray fog to use the scepter to respond. He wanted to see who was stronger—the Blatherer at sea or the Sea God!

This wasn’t Klein’s original plan. He had planned on using the Sea God Scepter’s ability to command sea creatures to find an underwater “carriage” for himself. Then, under layers of protection from his charms, he would pull Anderson out into the waters and escape the range of the Death Announcer’s blockade before secretly boarding a liner he had tickets to.

However, in consideration that the target of revenge had disappeared all of a sudden, it was possible that the King of Immortality would vent his anger on others by slaughtering liners indiscriminately. After all, pirates didn’t abide by the law, nor did they come with any proper morals. After divining above the gray fog, Klein ultimately decided to leave brazenly.

Chapter 688 - Fruitless Wait

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After hitting the deck, entering the cabin, and coming to his room, Klein was just about to say something when Anderson Hood spoke before he could.

“That’s not right… If I were the passengers on board this ship, I’d definitely be very afraid and nervous to see an adventurer who just offended the King of Immortality. I’d either get the captain or first mate to convince you to switch to another ship, or I would switch ships myself. To my surprise, all of them are especially calm.”

This guy is very sharp. He’s able to notice the minute details… Is this a real Conspirer? Often acting happy-go-lucky, shooting off his mouth, and being optimistic, but in actuality, he has silently grasped the situation and made his preparations… As Klein opened the door with his key, he began considering if the ship had any real problems.

At that moment, Anderson raised his hand to slap himself in the cheeks before laughing dryly.

“I get it!

“It happened just recently. The matter is only spread among a number of adventurers and pirates. Typical tourists and sailors wouldn’t even know of this. Besides, people who know what you look like are definitely people with good intel, not ordinary people.”

Wow, he knows to answer his own questions… Do you know that time is life? Klein lampooned and entered the first-class cabin.

It wasn't that he wished to enjoy comfort, but that he needed to watch over Anderson Hood. He didn't want this "Unluckiest Hunter" to bring disaster to the liner, so he had gotten him to book a first-class cabin for themselves.

With a suitcase in hand, he walked straight to the master bedroom. Klein pointed at the guest room and the servant's room, and he said to Anderson, "Choose one for yourself."

Anderson was taken aback as he turned agape.

"You're very used to this…"

Of course, I have rich experience in interacting with hunters. If Danitz were here, I would designate him to the servant's room… Klein didn't answer as he entered the master bedroom.

Half-past one. The steam engine whistled as the liner set off on time.

After hanging his coat, Klein walked out of the master bedroom in pants, a shirt, and a vest. He looked out the window at the horizon.

Thanks to the wind, the green waves ebbed as they spread along the outline of Toscarter Island, inch by inch.

"That's no way to see the full situation." Anderson came over and smiled. "You can only ensure that there are no problems from one of the flanks, and the Death Announcer might appear from the other flank, or the front. The best option is to climb up to the crow's nest. Haha, there's definitely a crew member there, but an experienced hunter or pirate has a hundred means to fool his senses!"

Klein turned around and looked at Anderson with a stoic expression.

"Well said.

"I'll leave this to you."

"Ah?" Anderson was taken aback.

He snapped to his senses and asked in surprise, “You don’t have any other means to observe?”

Without any other means to observe, how was he to lay a trap for the King of Immortality?

“No.” Klein nodded his head with abnormal frankness. “I can only rely on you.”

…Who gave you the courage to leave under the King of Immortality’s scrutiny? Anderson was momentarily speechless.

As he muttered to himself, “Don’t stop me. I’m jumping ship.” He left the cabin room and headed for the bottom of the crow’s nest.

In theory, King of Immortality Agalito, or the Death Announcer, should’ve long sensed my ill intent and sensed the danger that stems from me. Then, will they attack? Will they believe that I’m at the level I show myself as and that I don’t have any help, or will they suspect that some powerhouse who can interfere in their premonition for danger did something? Klein retracted his gaze from the door and looked once again at the sea outside.

After a while, he suddenly sensed something as he quickly activated his Spirit Vision and turned his head to look to the side.

The tall skeleton messenger burrowed out of the ground, the black flames in its eye sockets jumping slightly.

It only revealed its upper body, so it wasn’t too much taller than Klein. It looked at him at eye level and handed him a letter in its hand.

Mr. Azik replied pretty quickly this time… Klein politely nodded and received the neatly folded piece of paper.

After the skeleton messenger collapsed and disappeared, he unfolded the letter against the sunlight coming in from the window.

"…I'm very happy to hear about your advancement. Your travels have been more interesting than I had imagined.

"Those waters are indeed very dangerous. I vaguely remember that it might have to do with the source of the Cataclysm. As for why there's a remnant aura of ancient Death there, I'm not too sure.

"I will keep your warning in mind. Before completely recovering my memories, I will not enter those waters. The True Creator's ravings aren't pleasant to the ears.

"I'm somewhat interested in the ring worn by Admiral Hell. However, I've recently been embroiled in some past matters. I might need some time before I pay him a visit…"

Upon seeing this, Klein couldn't help but smile.

After replying to Mr. Azik, I'll tell him that I have the means to lock onto Admiral Hell Ludwell's location. I must get him to bring me along with him when he pays a visit. Oh no, I didn't divine the location of the Murloc Cufflink recently. I'm not sure if Ludwell has discovered it or thrown it away… Yes, I'll divine it above the gray fog after I confirm that the Death Announcer isn't pursuing me…

Moving his gaze away, Klein continued reading.

"The ancient chronicles I received from Katarina does mention matters regarding Artificial Death. To put it simply, the former royal family of the Balam Empire, present upper echelons of the Numinous Episcopate, had gained inspiration from the Hidden Sage's sudden coming to life and turning anthropomorphic. They wish to let Death, which is at present only a concept, to experience something similar.

"There's a possibility of it being fulfilled. Due to the indestructibility of Beyonder characteristics, the perishing of Death doesn't mean that the corresponding Beyonder characteristics and authority has been completely lost.

"According to the chronicles, the corresponding research hasn't reached a breakthrough, but that was from centuries ago…

"The Sequence 4 corresponding to Seer is Bizarro Sorcerer. The powerhouses from the Antigonus and Zaratul family left me with a deep impression. Even though I've already forgotten the details, my recollections are still able to bring me some feelings of fear.

"As for where to get the formula and ingredients, I'm not sure. Perhaps you can consider switching to neighboring pathways. I've already recalled matters regarding this. You can choose Sequence 4 Secrets Sorcerer of the Apprentice pathway or Sequence 4 Parasite of the Marauder pathway. However, I vaguely remember that these three pathways only allow switching at Sequence 3…

Indeed… There's only Arrodes left… Klein forcefully produced a grin.

After reading the reply, he took out a pen and paper and wrote down parts of the content he had already thought of, as well as asking about the exact definition of a "mythical creature."

After putting down the pen and paper, he wasn't in a hurry to summon the messenger. He planned to wait for the Death Announcer to appear before adding the request for help into the letter and then mailing it out. This way, he could hold out for some time with the Sea God Scepter, and he might even have Mr. Azik tear through the spirit world to rescue him. When the time came, the two of them could join forces and have a chance to claim the Death Announcer as theirs.

As for why he didn't write it ahead of time, it was because a Devil might not come again due to their premonition for danger. Of course, Klein had no idea whether they could sense the exact contents of his current ill intent.

After patiently waiting for a few hours, Klein heard the door open. When he looked back, he saw Anderson stroking the side of his face. He walked in with mixed emotions.

"The Death Announcer hasn't appeared. We've completely left the waters around Toscarter Island…"

The King of Immortality actually didn't seek revenge… This fellow is more impressive than I imagined! Anderson sighed inwardly.

Klein gave a regretful nod, walked to his coat rat, and took his coat and hat in preparation to head for the dining hall.

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In a secret chamber, a small Red Gloves team was discussing a case they were on.

Soul Assurer Soest held a chalk and pointed at a blackboard.

"The Devil murder case this time has some similarities with the assassination of Duke Negan in Backlund.

"First, a human skin with its own smell and aura appeared. This is something that hasn't appeared in many of the Devil-related cases in the past.

"Second, there's more than one Devil. They take turns wearing the human skin in order to carry out their normal activities to conceal their partner's evil acts.

"Finally, they're suspected of belonging to the Beria family…"

At that moment, Leonard, who appeared to be listening attentively in the corner, couldn't help but recall something when his captain mentioned Backlund.

Having witnessed the complete destruction of the underground ruin, he wanted to find time for himself to investigate the mysterious detective, Sherlock Moriarty. He had planned on starting from Sherlock Moriarty's former landlord, but his team took on an emergency case and began to investigate a new series of serial murders. He had no choice but to leave Backlund.

“Leonard, what’s your take on this?” After Soest finished his briefing, he named Leonard Mitchell to continue.

Leonard turned his head to the side in a daze and looked at the content on the blackboard. He quickly organized his words and said, “I believe that it’s not only a form of concealment, but is also a requirement of a particular ritual. Captain Soest, as you know, Devils have many kinds of blasphemous and evil rituals.”

“Reasonable deduction.” Soest then gestured for another team member to speak his piece.

Phew, thankfully Old Man has recently been catching me up on Devil studies… Leonard heaved a sigh of relief and began attentively listening to the discussion of his team.

†

After a two-day voyage, the liner safely arrived at Oravi Island.

After checking into a hotel, Klein said to Anderson Hood, “Wait here for me. That demigod doesn’t like strangers suddenly visiting.”

He didn’t wish to expose the contact person of the Life School of Thought.

“I hope I’ll live to see him.” Anderson smiled bitterly as he wished himself good luck.

The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched, and he gave up saying anything further. He rode on a carriage and went straight for the Church of Storms’s St. Draco Cathedral.

Before long, he arrived once again in the small room in the magnificent bell tower where he saw the tall, extremely asymmetrical and ugly bellman, Carnot.

After hearing Gehrman Sparrow’s intentions, the hunched Carnot nodded.

“I’ll bring you to Mr. Ricciardo. He has already recovered and is no longer where he originally was.

“Alright.” Just as Klein gave a response, he suddenly recalled that Carnot was a product of the Church of Earth Mother’s human body refining. He then asked a question, “Do you know Frank Lee?”

Chapter 689 - That's It?

◆

Bellman Carnot's expression immediately turned odd when he heard Frank Lee's name.

"Yes, he… he's a kind and pure person, but at times, his pureness is terrifying."

Indeed… Klein made way and allowed the bellman to walk down the stairs. As he followed him down, he asked, "Are you familiar with him?"

Carnot silently walked ahead, and after a while, he said with his back facing Gehrman Sparrow, "I'm a failed product filled with all kinds of problems. I was always mocked, and only Frank was one of the few who looked at me normally, treating me as someone with a real soul…"

"Why did he leave the Church of Earth Mother?" Klein asked despite knowing the answer.

Carnot came out of the bell tower, answering while getting his bearings, "I do not know about the specifics.

"He's an orphan. He grew up in the cloister from a young age. He really treats the Church as a family and views Earth Mother as his mother.

"He has many strange ideas. He had the opportunity of becoming a diocese bishop, but he was later nearly sent to a tribunal for being sacrilegious."

Frank mentioned this before. He was trying to crossbreed a bull, a cow, and wheat together… To be frank, if it were me, I would've sent him to the tribunal as well… This guy was fine early on because of his low Sequence, limiting what he can do… Klein mumbled and followed Carnot down another street and arrived in the alley behind St. Draco Cathedral.

Carnot walked in front of an ordinary building, pulled the doorbell thrice, each tug lasting two seconds.

After a while, thudding sounds approached as the door creaked open.

Klein immediately saw an elder in a black short coat with a hard cane.

His hair was as white as snow, but he didn't have any obvious wrinkles. He wore a black eye mask around his eyes.

"Mr. Councilor, Mr. Gehrman Sparrow is here to pay you a visit."

Councilor Ricciardo? He's Councilor Ricciardo? He's blind? Previously, Klein had only heard his voice without meeting him. It was no wonder he was surprised.

Ricciardo turned his ear to the side and slowly turned his head towards Gehrman Sparrow and chuckled.

"Sorry, I can only meet you this way. When I woke up this morning, I suddenly had a premonition that I mustn't open my eyes to see anything today. To prevent any accidents, I wore an eye mask."

…You can actually do that… He's in no way inferior as a charlatan… Klein was momentarily amused and surprised.

Following that, he understood the correct interpretation of his premonition. He didn't want to see him!

He remembered that Beyonders from the Monster pathway were able to see things others couldn't see. Therefore, Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin was able to sense my uniqueness. And back in Tingen City, Ademisaul's eyes bled and he collapsed to the ground simply from seeing me.

Councilor Ricciardo sensed the danger and wore an eye mask ahead of time… Sigh, if not for that, I was planning on asking what he can see… Klein didn’t have any penchant about forcing others to harm themselves. He held back his thoughts and asked, “Do you have clues to the mystical item I need?”

“Not for now,” Ricciardo said with a smile. “After I recovered from my injuries, I went to Bayam. I was lucky that there was some adjustments to the upper echelons of the navy and governor-general’s office, so I successfully rescued Roy King, but it wasted quite a bit of my time.”

Klein had expected this as he said without any signs of surprise, “Then, I’ll use this request to get another form of help.

“I have a friend who is plagued with bad luck after interacting with a mural left behind by the Angel of Fate. He needs it completely removed.”

Ricciardo thought for a moment before saying, “No problem. Bring me over to him. Don’t allow him to leave his residence, or there might be accidents.”

Klein nodded and walked towards the alley with his suitcase in hand. He took the opportunity to ask, “Mr. Councilor, what do you know about the Mother Tree of Desire?”

From Klein’s point of view, the Life School of Thought and the Rose School of Thought were at odds with each other, so it was likely that they knew each other very well.

With cane in hand, Ricciardo slowly walked behind him to his right. He didn’t need anyone to help him; it was as though he wasn’t wearing an eye mask.

He chuckled.

“The Mother Tree of Desire is the Rose School of Thought’s manifestation of the Chained God. However, I suspect that the truth is actually the reverse. The Chained God is one of the Mother Tree of Desire’s many manifestations. My reasoning is that Red Light, Moria, claims that the Mutant pathway’s Sequence 0 is still unoccupied. Heh heh, you know about Sequence 0, right?”

“Yes,” Klein succinctly answered. He didn’t even express his knowledge of the Great White Brotherhood.

Ricciardo tersely acknowledged. “In short, no one knows the true identity of the Mother Tree of Desire, nor does anyone know what ‘Her’ pathway is. Perhaps, that’s ‘Her’ true identity. In addition, I can provide some indirect information.

“The Mother Tree of Desire and the Primordial Moon are at odds. There seems to be some irreconcilable conflict between them, and it’s because of this that the Rose School of Thought views us as an enemy.

“However, at times, the Mother Tree of Desire and the Primordial Moon seem to have a subtle relationship. You might find it hard to imagine that the Southern Continent’s Shaman King, who worships the moon, joined the Rose School of Thought.

“The seven Churches hate the True Creator, Primordial Demoness, Dark Side of the Universe, and the other evil gods, but their hatred for the Primordial Moon and Mother Tree of Desire runs even deeper.

“Similarly, the Aurora Order, Demoness Sect, Blood Sanctify Sect, and Moses Ascetic Order do not like the Rose School of Thought.”

That’s interesting… Mother Tree of Desire is one of the two most isolated ones? Klein stopped a carriage while in thought as he watched Carnot help Ricciardo up the carriage.

He then entered the carriage and instructed the driver to bring them to a nearby hotel.

Before long, the carriage arrived at their destination. Just as Klein was about to get off, he suddenly heard a loud bang. A rumbling explosion shook the entire street as glass fragments from a window fell to the ground.

No way… Could it be caused by Anderson's bad luck? Klein's spiritual intuition told him that it was the case, but the Unluckiest Hunter had apparently lived.

He turned his head to look out the carriage and saw that a huge chunk of wall had collapsed from the hotel's second floor. Flames and smoke remained.

At this moment, a figure with disheveled blond hair and messy clothes stood below as he muttered, "To think that there's such a daring person to trade arms in a hotel. New kinds of explosives, especially. He nearly caused me to die without even knowing why… My suitcase…"

Klein looked down at the suitcase he was carrying and suddenly felt how great it was to be cautious.

He turned around and helped Ricciardo down the carriage.

Anderson sensed something as he turned his head to say with a bitter smile, "The arms dealers these days are too unprofessional! Thankfully, it's daytime, and there aren't many people in the hotel. The owner sure is pitiful, having to suffer a certain loss. However, the gold they carry shouldn't be destroyed that easily. It should make up for his loss."

I think your bad luck is responsible for a large part of the accountability… Klein nodded and said to Ricciardo, "It's him."

Ricciardo then turned his head to Anderson, but his gaze was completely blocked by the black eye mask.

He paused for a few seconds before smiling.

"Give me a gold coin."

"Oh?" Anderson took out a Loen gold coin from the inside of his clothes, feeling suspect. Then, he smiled at Gehrman Sparrow. "Tradition from my hometown. We sew a tiny pocket on the inside of our clothes to keep a few coins. I originally didn't believe in it, but I've been just too unlucky recently."

As he spoke, he handed the gold coin to Ricciardo.

Ricciardo received the gold coin, slowly closed his fingers, before retracting his hand.

He then laughed and said, "Alright. Your bad luck has been dispelled."

"Ah?" Anderson stood there in shock as he looked at Gehrman Sparrow, as though saying, "That's it? Did you get a fraud?"

Klein was surprised as well, but he chose to believe Ricciardo. After all, he was a Fate Councilor.

Ricciardo put away the gold coin and chuckled.

"The bad luck you received this time wasn't child's play. If you don't believe me, you can head over to the casino to try your luck."

"Makes sense!" Anderson clapped and immediately got directions for the nearest casino from a passerby.

After a while, he returned in a clean and decent jacket. He looked at Ricciardo and instinctively opened his mouth.

He was suddenly taken aback as he forcibly closed his mouth and thanked him with a grin.

After the demigod was sent on a carriage, he leaned in towards Gehrman Sparrow and wistfully said, "I was planning on saying that 'although you're blind, you really are amazing when it comes to the domain of fate…' Thankfully, I recalled in time that he's a demigod."

If you had really said that, you might have the chance of becoming the hunter who died immediately after having his bad luck removed… Klein didn’t echo his sentiments as he said, “Now can you tell me the clues to that revolver?”

As Creeping Hunger had great limitations, he still wished for a more conventional offensive mystical item.

Anderson combed his hair and chuckled.

“It’s in Bayam.

“It’s from a friend I used to know, a very powerful adventurer. As he got sick of the unstable and dangerous life, he used his savings to buy a few spice gardens and found a lady to marry. He then completely left this line of work we’re in.

“He recently had a child and his thoughts changed again. He began to wish that his child would be brought up in a better and safer environment with better educational prospects, so he plans on moving to Backlund. There are the best grammar schools and public schools there.

“Heh heh, he doesn’t wish to rent a place in Backlund, but he also doesn’t plan on selling his gardens that constantly earn him money. He happens to have an excess when it comes to mystical items, so he plans on selling that revolver.

“Back then, I was in a rush to follow the treasure-hunting expedition into those waters, so I’m not sure if he succeeded in the end. However, few people can buy something worth nearly ten thousand pounds at once, so the transaction won’t close that easily.”

“Alright. Bring me to him,” Klein replied simply.

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At that moment on the Golden Dream, Danitz was horrified to realize a

problem.

His captain hadn’t appeared in three days!

Chapter 690 - Miss Messenger

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Under the sunlight, the Golden Dream emitted golden lusters as if it was a mobile treasure.

Danitz stood inside the captain’s cabin, pacing about endlessly. He attempted to recall everything that had happened over the past few days in a bid to find a clue.

Three days ago, his captain, Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina, wanted to do a study in which she might not appear for ten to twenty hours. Therefore, all corresponding classes were canceled. In regards to this, Danitz and company didn’t find it odd. These happened frequently.

They were delighted that they didn’t need to attend classes; hence, there was drinking, singing, and a bonfire party held on the ship. They were only short of burning down the Golden Dream, but they had a great time.

But with the passage of time, everyone gradually felt that something was amiss, including the somewhat slow Danitz. Their captain, who should’ve finished her studies within 24 hours, didn’t appear the next day. She didn’t even get anyone to send her food or light beer which was used as water!

After patiently waiting for half a day without seeing Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina, the sailors mustered the courage to knock on her door. To their horror, there wasn’t any response.

Under the first mate, Bru Walls’s lead, the pirates opened the captain’s cabin and found it empty!

They then went to the collector's room and other places, but they failed to find her.

Based on past experiences, their initial guess was that their captain had suddenly thought of something and left the Golden Dream in a rush while using some mystical technique or emulating someone else's Beyonder powers without leaving a letter behind.

Later, Danitz and company attempted to contact her using methods like the Soulfall Ritual, but they failed to receive a response. All they could do was search the captain's cabin and other places as they convinced themselves to wait patiently.

Three days passed, but Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina didn't appear nor reply. It left the sailors panicking.

"Dogsh*t, any results from your divination? Didn't you claim to be an expert?" Danitz turned towards Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson in frustration.

Jodeson, with his black hair that was dyed gold, rubbed his temples and said in a rather mellow voice, "They failed. Every divination method used to find her has failed.

"But for now, it can be confirmed that Captain is still alive. It's just that her whereabouts are unknown."

The first mate, Walls, who had short, grayish, curly hair, nudged his monocle and said, "We need to seek help. None of Captain's collections have been lost. She didn't even bring her essential mystical items with her when she left. This means that the situation was very sudden and unexpected."

"Whose help can we seek?" another boatswain whose waist was swollen, Barrel Daniels asked anxiously.

Bru Walls raised his silver-patterned knife to his aquiline nose and said, “Return to the western shore.”

Between the lines, he was hinting at seeking the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom that backed Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina.

“That won’t do. To go from the pirates’ playground to the western shore, we will need to pass the Sonia Sea, the North Sea, and the Berserk Sea. Then, we will cruise through the Fog Sea for a very long period of time. Captain can’t wait that long! Anything might happen to her at any time!” Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson said. “We have to immediately find someone we can quickly contact and provide us with help on short notice.”

Danitz wanted to curse “dogsh*t,” when he suddenly had a “light bulb” moment.

There was only one person he could quickly contact, and that was Gehrman Sparrow. Furthermore, this crazy adventurer had never hid the fact that he was good at divination and also had a mysterious background!

Perhaps that madman can find Captain. He’s often able to do the impossible… Danitz tugged at his collar as he felt his worry and frustration ease a little.

He raised his chest and looked around. Then, he cleared his throat and said, “I have a candidate. I can immediately contact him. Besides, he’s very good at divination…”

Just as he said that, Gourmet Bru Walls, Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson, Iron Skin, Barrel, and company turned their heads at him in unison. With their eyes red, they roared, “What are you waiting for!?”

“…” Danitz silently left the captain’s cabin and returned to his room.

He unfolded a piece of paper, picked up a fountain pen, and followed his captain’s teachings by writing a greeting followed by some pleasantries.

Suddenly, he stopped writing. He felt that the excessive politeness and small talk didn't match his goals for seeking help.

"Dogsh*t!" Danitz cursed as he tore up the piece of paper.

Right on the heels of that, he wrote on a new piece of paper:

"Help!

"Captain has vanished!"

"Well… Although Gehrman Sparrow is a madman who can't be comprehended with common sense, he probably won't be able to understand such a letter… Dogsh*t!" Danitz cursed himself again as he ripped up the second letter.

He calmed himself down and contemplated for a few seconds before penning a third time.

This time, he simply wrote what happened after his captain's disappearance. He also included the location of the Golden Dream, and he minced his words by asking Mr. Gehrman Sparrow if he could provide help to a cooperating partner.

"Divination needs something…" Just as Danitz folded the letter, he suddenly realized that he had forgotten something. He rushed back to the captain's cabin and found a pearl earring that Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina often wore.

After doing all of this, he took out his notebook that was filled with all sorts of mysticism knowledge. He flipped to the corresponding page and unfamiliarly set up a messenger-summoning ritual with his past experience.

After placing a gold coin on the altar, he took two steps back and recited in ancient Hermes, "I!

"I summon in my name:

"The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the messenger that belongs to Gehrman Sparrow."

Howling winds resonated as the candlelight on the altar rapidly burgeoned before being dyed a pale whiteness.

Reinette Tinekerr appeared at a decent speed, still wearing her complicated black dress while holding four beautiful and identical heads.

Danitz imagined that the messenger would bite the gold coin and the envelope containing the paper and earring like the last time. But to his surprise, the four heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand automatically turned around, surveying the area before finally looking towards the captain's cabin.

A few seconds later, two of the heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand bit down onto the gold coin and the envelope.

After the strange messenger vanished, Danitz exhaled and wiped his forehead, feeling a baffling sense of pressure.

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Oravi Island, in the room of another hotel.

Klein was just about to get Anderson Hood, who had won quite a fair bit of money, to purchase the tickets to City of Generosity Bayam when his spiritual perception was triggered.

He quickly activated his Spirit Vision and saw his headless messenger, Reinette Tinekerr, appear by his side at some point in time. In her hands were four beautiful heads.

She's not like the skeleton messengers who I can detect the moment they appear. My spiritual perception is triggered only after she completely enters the real world… Klein received a letter from the teeth of one of Reinette Tinekerr's head while in thought.

At the same time, he noticed that Anderson's spiritual perception was no way weaker than his. He too had reacted.

"This is a… messenger?" Anderson asked in disbelief, as though he had heard of such things but had never seen them before.

Klein nodded without expression as he tore open the letter.

Eh, a pearl earring? Klein unfolded the letter in puzzlement.

By his side, Anderson came over out of curiosity as he sized up Reinette Tinekerr as he tsked.

"There's an indescribable sense of bloody beauty…"

Just as he said that, his hands suddenly rose up to grab himself by the throat. The grip was so tight that his tongue extended out as he foamed at the mouth. As for Reinette Tinekerr, who had nothing above her neck, she didn't show any further reaction.

Klein turned his head over and seriously studied the situation before looking at his messenger. He then silently mumbled, Resembles Miss Sharron's abilities… Miss Messenger belongs to the Prisoner pathway? No, I can't be sure. She's a spirit world creature, so being good at such things is very normal…

Realizing that Anderson was about to suffocate, Klein leisurely said, "That's enough, he still needs to lead me somewhere."

One of the heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand turned over as she glanced at Anderson with her bloodshot eyes for a second.

Following that, each of the heads' mouths spoke one after the other.

"Still…" "Can…" "Lead…" "You…" "By…" "Making…" "Into…" "Zombie…"

As she said that, Anderson's hands finally stopped and left his own neck, leaving obvious, deep finger marks on it.

Phew… Phew… The Strongest Hunter panted as he bent his back, retching.

Klein quickly scanned the letter and saw that it was from Danitz. This "famous pirate" wrote to him, saying that Vice Admiral Iceberg had mysteriously vanished and was in need of help.

Just as he moved his gaze away from the letter, Klein was surprised to see Reinette Tinekerr was still around.

This doesn't make mystical sense… Shouldn't a messenger disappear after sending the letter, appearing only when summoned again? Klein deliberated and asked out of curiosity, "Is there anything else?"

"Awaiting…" "Your…" "Reply…" "Letter…" Reinette's four head said one after the other.

"How do you know that I'll reply?" Klein glanced at Anderson, who hadn't recovered, and confirmed that the Strongest Hunter didn't notice the words that didn't match Gehrman's persona.

The heads in Reinette's hand said once again, "Her…" "Disappearance is…" "Very…" "Odd…"

"How do you know that?" Klein instantly imagined that Miss Messenger had secretly read Danitz's letter.

The heads with the long blonde hair simply rolled up and said a phrase each, forming a complete sentence.

"I…" "Investigated…" "The ship's…" "Situation…"

My messenger is a part-time scout? Miss Reinette Tinekerr, will you be a hired goon in the future? I wonder if I need to make additional payment… As Klein lampooned in thought, he said, "No rush. I'll reply later.”

He planned on heading above the gray fog to use Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina’s earring to do a divination.

Reinette Tinekerr didn’t say a word as she vanished silently.

“Ahem…” Anderson finally recovered as he stood straight. He gave Gehrman Sparrow a flabbergasted look. “Your messenger… Your messenger is a demigod!?”

Chapter 691 - Meeting

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There's no need for you to tell me. I've more or less confirmed it moments ago… Upon hearing Anderson Hood, Klein wore a calm expression as he mumbled inwardly.

Back when he encountered Reinette Tinekerr in the spirit world where he saw her massive true form and gothic-styled castle, Klein already believed that she wasn't someone to be messed with. And with Miss Messenger almost killing the Strongest Hunter with such ease, it made him believe without a doubt that she was a demigod, a Sequence 4 at the very least!

A demigod is willing to help me deliver letters for a gold coin per trip? It's obvious that things aren't that simple. Miss Messenger must have her motives; of course, I can't disregard how I'm always encountering all sorts of strange matters. It might've piqued her interest, and she doesn't mind being a messenger since she happens to be free…

Similar situations include Arrodes's fawning and Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin's friendliness… Regardless, I should be wary and not fully trust her… Before having a chance to discuss similar matters, I shouldn't consider blowing the harmonica whenever I encounter danger. Who knows if Miss Messenger will just directly rip me to shreds… Klein instantly had many thoughts go through his mind while he continued wearing a stoic expression. Faced with the alarmed Anderson, all he did was slightly nod his head.

"It's none of your business."

…This guy is really mysterious! A spirit world creature at the demigod level is his messenger! Besides, he casually knows a demigod that's good at improving a person's luck… It's no wonder he's so calm and composed after offending the King of Immortality… It's no wonder the King of Immortality didn't dare to seek revenge or even appear! Anderson suddenly came to a realization as he couldn't help but carefully size up Gehrman Sparrow.

"Oh?" Klein emotionlessly swept his gaze at the Strongest Hunter.

Anderson hurriedly retracted his gaze as he chuckled dryly.

"I realized that you're very suitable to being the main lead of a figure painting, the kind that has a dark, gloomy background. This really accentuates your bearing.

"How about it. Do you want to consider it? I can help you draw a portrait. Believe me, I'm a master at this!"

Klein couldn't be bothered to listen to his nonsense. He lifted his golden pocket watch and opened it.

"Return to your room. I'll come for you in five minutes."

"Alright," Anderson replied with a beaming smile.

After the Strongest Hunter left, Klein took out Azik's copper whistle and Will Auceptin's paper crane before entering the bathroom where he set up a ritual.

After placing Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina's pearl earring above the gray fog, Klein sat at the end of the long bronze table. There, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote a simple divination statement: "Edwina Edwards's location."

Holding the paper and earring, Klein leaned back into the chair and recited the divination statement as he entered a dream with Cogitation.

First, a gray world occupied his vision. Following that, plains blanketed in ice and snow were reflected in his eyes.

The howling snowstorm enveloped everything as the area was covered with thick fog. It didn't appear like a real frontier.

Klein quickly saw Edwina's figure. Her long brown was tied up simply at the back as the rest of it fluttered wildly in the snowstorm.

Dressed in dark-colored trousers and a white waist-fitting shirt with complicated flowery patterns along the collar and sleeves, she gave off the feeling as though she was frail in such an environment.

Edwina's feet, which were clad in leather boots, kept moving across the snow, leaving behind a series of clear footprints, but they were quickly wiped away by the violent snowstorm.

The screen shattered in turn as Klein opened his eyes. He realized that he couldn't interpret Vice Admiral Iceberg's actual location from his divination's revelation.

The poles? Feysac's Plains of Evernight? There's no way to confirm. Apart from the snowstorm, there aren't any features… Klein sat up and put down the pearl earring and the paper with the divination statement.

After contemplating for a few seconds, he confirmed another matter—Edwina Edwards had really vanished. She wasn't in the Golden Dream, but it could also eliminate the possibility that it was a trap.

Klein cautiously performed some divination on this matter and received the result that there weren't any traps on the Golden Dream.

After some thought, he left the mysterious space above the gray fog and, via a series of procedures, brought the pearl earring back to the real world.

Recalling the map of the waters around Oravi Island and the present location of the Golden Dream, Klein selected an uninhabited island that fishermen used to seek shelter from storms. In the letter, he got Danitz and company to steer their ship to somewhere not too far from there.

After folding the letter, he blew his harmonica and once again saw Miss Messenger holding up the four heads.

While handing over the reply letter, Klein coughed slightly and said, "Can you confirm Danitz's location?"

One of the heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand nodded before the rest spoke.

"Yes…" "As long as…" "He's not beyond range…"

Seeing that Miss Messenger remained floating there without any signs of leaving, he said with his eyes looking to the side, "The gold coin will be paid by Danitz."

"Alright…" Reinette Tinekerr's figure quickly phased away.

Phew. Klein exhaled. After some precise preparations and dealing with the scene, he carried his suitcase which he had finished packing and walked out of the room. He then knocked on Anderson Hood's door.

"We'll go somewhere else first before heading to Bayam," he calmly told the Strongest Hunter of his decision. "You can choose to wait for me in Bayam, or follow me."

Anderson gave a cheeky smile and said, "I can feel my adventurer's blood burning in me. I'm very curious as to what matter that messenger has brought.

"I thought I had no means of knowing better, but to my surprise, you actually invited me!"

I didn't. I'm only giving you two choices… Klein coldly turned around and walked to the staircase. Anderson hurriedly carried his newly bought suitcase and followed behind.

Out of the hotel, Klein took a carriage to leave the port city. Then, he walked to the periphery of an uninhabited cliff on Mount St. Draco.

Looking at the waves crashing into the cliff below, Anderson looked around in surprise.

“This is our destination?”

Klein ignored his question. He took out a charm made of tin and softly chanted the incantation, “Storm.”

He infused his spirituality and split the charm into two—half of it for himself, while the other half was used to augment Anderson. The remaining one was thrown down the cliff.

“Underwater breathing, deep-sea membrane…” Anderson identified the additional supernatural effects applied to him in surprise.

At that moment, there was a loud splash beneath the cliff. A massive creature that resembled a whale surfaced from the sea.

It was entirely dark blue in color. Its mouth was open, revealing its white teeth and blood-colored interior.

Klein walked to the edge of the cliff and jumped straight down. With the charm’s powers, he gently landed in the undersea behemoth’s mouth.

Anderson watched blankly before he jumped down in excitement, landing beside Klein.

The massive undersea creature closed its mouth, turning the interior pitch-black.

Then, it submerged itself and began swimming for its designated destination.

Inside its mouth, Klein's eyes produced a flash of lightning as he saw through the darkness. He found a tooth to lean against as he casually sat down.

Due to the protection from deep-sea membrane, he wasn't afraid that his clothes would be dirtied.

"Man, this is quite fascinating…" Anderson surveyed the area and asked curiously, "How did you come up with this? How are you doing this?"

Of course it's by praying to myself, then using the Sea God Scepter to pull a suitable undersea creature from nearby… Klein didn't reply Anderson's question. He half-closed his eyes as though he was resting.

"It's just a little stuffy…" Anderson took out a cigar case and matchstick from his pocket. "Can I smoke in here?"

"Ask it." Klein didn't open his eyes.

Anderson chuckled dryly before putting away the cigar and matchstick.

"I don't think it will like the smell of tobacco."

In the dark sea, this massive creature swam quickly, efficiently drawing out the oxygen in the water via the use of its special organs from time to time.

After an unknown period of time, it surfaced in front of an uninhabited island.

After using the charm's power to go ashore, Klein took off his hat and bowed at the undersea creature.

"You're very polite…" Anderson said in amusement when he saw this scene.

"I've always been very polite, even if I'm facing prey." Klein shot a glance at him as though he was including him.

Anderson chuckled dryly as he pointed to the other side of the island.

“There’s a ship there.

“Oh, it’s the Golden Dream!”

At that moment in time, Klein had also seen the sailboat that had been scrubbed clean. On the ship spanning dozens of meters, a lustrous main cannon that didn’t belong there was swirling with stacked symbols.

He immediately went over with his suitcase, and before long, he arrived where the Golden Dream was anchored.

Then, he saw Danitz jump down from the deck as he ran across the water.

Just as Danitz arrived before Gehrman Sparrow, deliberating on what to say, he suddenly saw a familiar figure.

“Anderson Hood!” he pointed at the Strongest Hunter as he yelled.

Anderson immediately roared with laughter.

“You didn’t expect me, right?”

Although he didn’t know why he would encounter the Golden Dream, this didn’t stop him from having the idea of occupying the ship by force.

You know each other? Klein indifferently swept his gaze towards Danitz.

Danitz instinctively shuddered as he forced a smile.

“This guy isn’t a good egg. In the Fog Sea, he’s often pursued by a bunch of pirates, but in the end, all of those pirates would end up as bounty rewards.

“You might not be aware, but he started off in the Church of the God of

Knowledge and Wisdom. Later, he was banished after failing his exams repeatedly. I heard all of this from Captain. They were former classmates.”

He gave Anderson a look of contempt, mocking his low intelligence. As for Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson and company on the ship, all of them showed similar expressions.

Anderson’s gaze slowly swept across their faces before tsking.

“That’s not the main point. The main point is that I once pulled at your captain’s hair!”

The scene instantly turned extremely silent as Danitz couldn’t stop his expression from twisting.

Chapter 692 - Suspect

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Seeing everyone on the Golden Dream aim their sights at Anderson, Klein took a step forward and said to Danitz, his side facing him, “Bring me to the captain’s cabin.”

“…Alright. Alright.” Danitz retracted his angry glare aimed at Anderson Hood.

Prioritize Captain’s rescue. Prioritize Captain’s rescue… he kept repeating to himself.

The Golden Dream first released a dinghy before lowering a gangway, allowing Klein to easily step onto the deck without using a charm.

Anderson followed by his side, completely ignoring the glares of the Golden Dream’s crew. With a smile, he strolled forward as he looked around, treating it as his own home.

His mental fortitude is truly beyond remarkable… Yes, even after offending a demigod where he was forced to apologize in public and accept a mission, he was able to laugh at himself and enjoy a meal… Klein sighed inwardly as he walked towards Third Mate Jodeson and company.

“Hello, Mr. Sparrow. I’m this ship’s first mate, Bru Walls.” A 1.8-meter-tall man with a monocle politely bowed.

The pirate “Gourmet” who’s worth 6,200 pounds… The bounties on Vice Admiral Iceberg’s pirate crew are clearly lower than Admiral of

Stars. They live up to being treasure hunters who happen to be part-time pirates… Klein greeted him using Gehrman Sparrow's style of politeness, "Hello. I've heard about you."

"…Haha, it's my honor. I'm only a treasure hunter who dreams to be an artisan, but I ended up having to be a gourmet," Bru Wall said in a self-deprecating manner. He pointed to the man beside him and said, "Our second mate, Singer Orpheus."

Bounty of 5,500 pounds… The Beyonders on the Golden Dream all have very odd nicknames. I didn't know that they were the subordinates of a pirate admiral, I would've definitely believed them to be a traveling crew who sing and enjoy good food while holding bonfires as they seek out legendary treasure. It's truly a beautiful life… Klein cast his gaze at Orpheus and nodded.

The Singer had deep sculpted outlines and a head of resplendent blond hair. He said with a sad smile, "Actually, I'm only praising the sun, but now, my 'sun' has disappeared."

"…"

Klein nearly felt goosebumps all over him.

"Tsk, as expected of someone from Intis. He speaks like he's singing. What a pity, I grew up in Segar, in Lenburg, and didn't pick up this ability," Anderson said with a chuckle. It wasn't clear if he was praising or degrading Orpheus; after all, half the blood flowing in his veins was Intis blood.

Born in Segar and later studied in Lenburg. Yes, it was likely a Church school. He's classmates with Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina…
Mr. Orpheus is definitely from the Sun pathway, but he's unlikely to be from the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun. From his bounty, he's likely a Sequence 6 Notary… I almost forgot to inform Little Sun that I have his formula. I wonder what he will use in exchange this time… Klein turned towards Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson and Barrel Daniels before

Gourmet Bru Walls introduced.

“We’ve met.

“Let’s not waste any time.”

“Alright.” Bru Walls heaved a sigh of relief, stroked his short beard and led the way into the cabin.

If it wasn’t for how famous Gehrman Sparrow was on the ship, he wouldn’t have been that polite.

At that moment, Anderson deliberately stayed behind, walking alongside Danitz, Orpheus, and company.

He looked to his left and right, unfazed by how the surrounding pirates looked like they wanted to rip him apart. He laughed with a tsk.

“The one you should be wary of isn’t me.”

“Yes, we aren’t wary of you. We only want to stuff you in. See that? Into that cannon!” Danitz wasn’t afraid that Anderson was the Strongest Hunter. After all, they were on the Golden Dream. There were plenty of pirates, and many of them were Sequence 6 or 7 Beyonders.

Anderson curled his lips.

“I’m actually not a threat. Think about it; your captain definitely hates and detests me. She wouldn’t even want to speak to me. Isn’t that ideal?”

“…”

Danitz turned agape, but he didn’t say a thing. He suddenly felt that what the pile of dogsh*t said made sense.

The looks in the eyes of Orpheus, Jodeson, and company also subconsciously turned gentle.

Anderson chuckled as he looked at them. He said in a rather ethereal tone, "The person you should be wary about is Gehrman Sparrow."

"Why?" Danitz blurted out.

Although he's a madman that warrants the need to be wary of him, he's not an enemy at the moment… Danitz silently added.

Anderson laughed.

"I'm assuming. Assuming that Gehrman successfully finds your captain and rescues her, will your captain have fond feelings for him as a result? Besides, he looks pretty good. He has that cold and aloof aesthetic and is strong. He's at the level of a pirate admiral, and his background is especially mysterious. He's completely compatible…"

How… is it possible… Danitz wished to retort, but he was momentarily at a loss for words. He felt increasingly more convinced that things weren't right.

Orpheus and company had their expressions collapse bit by bit. They looked at Gehrman Sparrow's back with a newfound sense of wariness.

Resolved! The provocation problem from before has been resolved… With a smile, Anderson walked into the cabin.

When he arrived inside the captain's cabin, Klein first circled the room which was nearly filled with bookshelves. On it were all kinds of books.

The average captain's cabin is filled with racks of alcohol… he silently mumbled before walking straight to the desk by the window.

According to Danitz's description, Edwina had vanished during her research. Therefore, finding traces of her research was Klein's goal. After he gathered enough information, he would head above the gray fog to divine the matter.

At that moment, the desk was a mess with many things placed on it.

There was white paper, a fountain pen, an ink bottle, a bronze dagger, and untidily stacked books.

In the middle of the desk was a book made of goatskin. Its dark brown cover had the words "Groselle's Travels" written in ancient Feysac.

Isn't this one of Vice Admiral Iceberg's collections? It has a mysterious origin and is suspected to be related to the dragons and City of Miracles, Liveseyd… Edwina was studying this before she disappeared? Klein looked at the book and instinctively made a guess.

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow study the ancient book, Danitz forced a smile and said, "There's nothing wrong with it. We have already inspected it."

Is that so? I seriously doubt your meticulousness… Since someone had flipped it and there weren't any obvious abnormalities with it, together with the fact that Klein determined that Danitz was saying the truth with his spiritual intuition, Klein reached out for it and asked, "Have you read Groselle's Travels?"

Danitz shook his head. Bru Walls, Orpheus, Jodeson, and company shook their heads as well.

Their expressions seemed to say that their daily studies were tiring enough. They didn't wish to read any other books during their breaks!

Swiping his fingertip across the yellowish-brown goatskin, Klein carefully and seriously read each page.

Soon, he arrived at the spot where the pages were stuck together. From the corner of his eye, he saw what was written in it.

Eh… That's not right! His gaze focused as he hurriedly flipped two pages back.

He clearly remembered that his previous read stopped at giant Groselle and his team preparing to challenge the frost dragon, the King of the North, in a head-on clash. There was nothing after that, but now, there were two more pages!

It also meant that the stuck pages had thinned, and the book had two more pages!

The chapters came to a halt for a thousand years before it was continued? These are the fruits of Vice Admiral Iceberg's research? This also led to her disappearance? As Klein lampooned, he frowned as he read the additional content.

The two pages described a lost female pirate. She encountered the King of the North in a blizzard, and she was nearly killed. Only by using all her strength was she successful in escaping before meeting the main lead's team who were here to challenge the frost dragon.

There's the addition of a female pirate… Female pirate… Klein ruminated over this description as an idea suddenly came to him.

Could she be Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina?

She entered the book and became a character in the story?

With this idea in mind, Klein quickly realized certain problems.

Arrodes mentioned before that the past owners of Groselle's Travels vanished…

Groselle's Travels has a giant from the Dark Epoch which is also the Second Epoch, an elf, an ascetic from the Third or Fourth Epoch, a Solomon Empire noble, and a Fifth Epoch Loen soldier. The times are extremely chaotic.

If they were all the past owners of Groselle's Travels who disappeared, that will solve the problem… They do not belong to the same period, and they were swallowed by the book, becoming a character in the story! Klein found his theory ridiculous as he thought about it, but it was highly likely.

In the world of mysticism, this isn't impossible!

I have to confirm it… Besides, what did Edwina and the past owners do to be "swallowed" by the book… And what should I do to release them… Klein retracted his gaze and thought deeply in silence.

Soon, he looked up at Danitz and company.

"Prepare items like candles. I will be praying for an answer from a secret existence."

And that secret existence is myself… Klein added inwardly in jest.

He really is professional and crazy… Gourmet Bru Walls and company didn't dare to speak further. They hurriedly provided the materials before leaving the captain's cabin.

They didn't dare to watch such dangerous rituals unless Gehrman Sparrow requested them to do so.

Inside the captain's cabin, Klein locked the door, closed the windows, and quickly set up the ritual. Then, he brought Groselle's Travels above the gray fog.

After placing the ancient book at the end of the long bronze table, he sat down and conjured a pen and paper. He then scribbled a divination statement: "Edwina is in the story of this book."

Chapter 693 - Attempt

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After putting down the fountain pen in his hand, Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his left wrist, holding it in one hand and letting it hang down over the paper in close proximity.

“Edwina is in the story of this book,” Klein closed his eyes and silently repeated the divination statement.

After he recited the statement, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz pendant spinning clockwise.

This meant that Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina was inside Groselle’s Travels!

It really is a world inside a book… Furthermore, the situation inside is very special. Without new characters, the story isn’t able to continue… Klein indiscernibly nodded. Wounding the silver chain and the topaz pendant around his wrist again, he picked up a dark red fountain pen and wrote a new divination statement: “The method to entering Groselle’s Travels.”

This time, he used dream divination. In the gray, hazy world, he saw indistinct figures.

The figures were of varying sizes, some huge, others slender. The thing all of them had in common was that they held a book with pages of yellowish-brown goatskin.

The following developments branched off into two scenarios. A number of them vanished silently with Groselle's Travels on them. The others would accidentally or deliberately drip their blood on the cover while carrying Groselle's Travels with them before suddenly vanishing!

The scene shattered and Klein opened his eyes to see the mottled table in front of him. He frowned as he made an interpretation.

To enter or activate Groselle's Travels, it either needs prolonged contact with it to a certain extent, or you would need to drip one's blood onto the cover?

Isn't that too simple? Perhaps… it's really that simple. In the story, the Loen soldier's first appearance was as an ordinary person who didn't know mysticism. With the help of his companions, he slowly became a Disciplinary Paladin… Therefore, the activation method isn't too complicated. An ordinary person is able to accomplish it.

A small number of researchers before this, including Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina, were Beyonders with sufficient amounts of mysticism knowledge. They knew not to rashly drip their blood; otherwise, death might occur without them even knowing it. This is akin to ordinary people using the correct form of magic mirror divination. It's very easy to provoke a powerful existence or secret existence. It's why no problems happened to them…

Furthermore, Edwina keeps Groselle's Travels in the collector's room most of the time and only interacts with it occasionally. As such, it was only when she recently had a new research concept that she had prolonged contact with it, completing the condition required to activate the book?

Yes, even Arrodes only knew that there's something strange with the book. Many of the past owners had vanished, and it's suspected to have something to do with the dragons and City of Miracles, Liveseyd. This means that Groselle's Travels will interfere with its surroundings when being activated; therefore, most of the collectors in the past do not know of its problem and had no thoughts of studying it.

The owners who disappeared likely aren't limited to the ones in the story. The others might've died for all kinds of reasons, failing to leave their names in the book.

Klein focused again and made another divination, hoping to obtain the method to leave Groselle's Travels.

This time, he saw a more tempestuous blizzard in the gray, hazy dreamscape. He saw a gigantic figure at the top of an ice peak.

It was a translucent dragon who remained nearly five meters tall while standing on all fours. It resembled a lizard's cousin and had an ugly face with eerie blue eyes. It had a thick, powerful tail and a pair of gigantic wings covered in a skin membrane on its back. It seemed to blot out the sky simply by spreading its wings.

Its scales resembled ice crystals as they swirled with a crystalline glow. It was the most beautiful and dreamy part of its entire body.

Suddenly, the dragon which resembled an ice sculpture raised its neck and body, and it let out a terrifying roar that penetrated through the blizzard.

At that moment, it reached ten meters tall by standing up on its hind legs.

King of the North… That frost dragon… Klein left the dream and tapped the armrest of the high-back chair.

His interpretation of the divination revelation was that the key to leaving Groselle's Travels lay with the King of the North!

Klein's initial guess was that only by helping the main lead, Groselle, accomplish his goal—slaying the frost dragon—would the story come to a complete "end," opening a passageway to exit the book.

However, I can also attempt to see if I can forcibly break open the barrier between the world in the book and the real world… Klein relied on his rich experience to quickly come up with an attempt.

He first picked up the Black Emperor card which was facing down, and he infused it into his Spirit Body.

Suddenly, Klein's body was covered in black full-body armor. On his head was a heavy crown as his aura became majestic and dignified. It exuded an awe-inspiring vibe.

Following that, he stirred the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog to the limit, making them surge over like a tidal wave.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein didn't hesitate to summon the Sea God Scepter from the junk pile before he infused his spirituality within.

The blue gems on the end of the bone scepter lit up one after another, emitting a blinding luster.

Countless silver bolts of lightning surfaced as they zapped about the grand palace as though they were forming a sea of lightning.

Finally, Klein used the suppressive power and balance from the Black Emperor's loftiness to infuse the stirred powers into the Lightning Storm.

Rumble!

Thunder resonated above the gray fog and into the distance as thick bolts of lightning smote down, striking Groselle's Travels.

Blinding light enveloped the entire palace for a full twenty seconds.

After everything was over, Klein looked at the target again and discovered the mottled table was in shambles. As for the dark-brown leather book, it was completely unharmed. Only its ends curled up a little.

It's far more impressive than I imagined… That's right, how can an item which can create a whole new book world be simple… Heh, I wouldn't have made a loss buying it for 8,000 pounds back then. It can be used as a shield. It can definitely defend against attacks from Saints. The only problem is its tiny size. It won't be able to shield much… Klein's thoughts raced as the bronze table was quickly restored to normal.

Since there was no way to forcibly tear open the barrier between the world inside the book and the real world, he could only consider how to enter it according to the normal procedures.

Get some blood, bring it up here and smear it across the cover, and then enter as a Spirit Body with the Blood Emperor card and Sea God Scepter? This way, I don't have to worry about encountering King of the Five Seas, Nast, as there's no way he can sense it. He won't be able to enter the world inside the book either. But the problem lies in the fact that rescuing Vice Admiral Iceberg this way will allow her to determine that Gehrman Sparrow is Hero Bandit Black Emperor.

Yes, there's a more important problem. Entering with a Spirit Body means that the body is still in the outside world—the captain's cabin of the Golden Dream. I have no idea how time flows in the world inside the book. It might easily be a few days. That way, my body might meet with an accident since it lacks protection. I'm in unfamiliar territory as well. When the time comes, I might rescue Edwina, but I would find "myself" gone. That would be fun. Klein quickly rejected the idea of entering as a Spirit Body.

He didn't trust most of the people on the Golden Dream, and he also felt wary of the Strongest Hunter, Anderson.

His attempt to divine if it was dangerous to enter the book to rescue Edwina was met with failure. Klein thought deeply for a moment before returning to the real world. Then, he unhurriedly brought back Groselle's Travels and removed the traces of the ritual.

Looking out the window at the impending dusk, he walked to the captain's cabin's door, unlocked the door, and opened it.

Gourmet Bru Walls, Singer Orpheus, and company were all outside. None of them had left. There were even sailors who peeked their heads out from the staircase.

"Any clues?" Bru Walls blurted out his question, but he didn't hear his voice because everyone at the door was asking the same question.

Klein swept his gaze and nodded.

Instantly, he heard sighs of relief, then he saw all kinds of happy and excited expressions.

If I were to vanish one day, who would act like that… Klein focused his thoughts and said to Danitz, "I need an assistant."

With that said, he turned to walk to the desk.

"Alright!" Danitz hurriedly followed and familiarly locked the door.

"Is there anything you need of me?" he hurriedly asked. He looked as though he could already see his captain being rescued through his hard work.

Klein stood by the desk and solemnly said, "What happens next will be very dangerous."

"Very dangerous?" Danitz instinctively gritted his teeth.

"You might vanish or even die immediately." Klein told him the worst possible outcome.

Seeing how serious the madman, Gehrman Sparrow, was, Danitz instantly understood the gravity of the situation. His heart sank as he subconsciously became frantic.

"W-what does this have to do with rescuing Captain?"

"It's directly related," Klein answered succinctly.

Danitz's expression twisted as he fell silent for two seconds.

"What will happen if nothing is done?"

"Your captain might be left there forever, or she might die in the next second," Klein said truthfully.

Danitz turned agape as he closed his mouth in silence.

His eyes turned adrift for a few seconds before they focused back on Gehrman Sparrow's face. Gritting his teeth, he said, "Let's begin."

"Dogsh*t!" he softly cursed himself.

Klein picked up the pen and paper on the table, scribbled a note, and folded it into a square before handing it to Danitz.

"Put it into your pocket. Read it after you enter."

"Enter?" Danitz asked, puzzled and clueless.

As he spoke, he automatically took the paper slip and stuffed it into his trouser pocket.

Klein didn't reply as he pointed at Groselle's Travels.

"Smear some of your blood on the book's cover."

This… As Danitz made a vague guess, he picked up the bronze dagger beside him and nodded heavily.

"Alright!"

Chapter 694 - Burn Upon Chanting

◆

Danitz held the bronze dagger and sliced across the back of his left palm, but his hesitation prevented him from using much strength.

He looked up and forced a smile.

“Although I’ve been injured many times, pain still leaves me afraid.”

“Get to the point,” Klein replied coldly.

Danitz gave a hollow laugh.

“Haha, I’m just a little scared of pain.”

Just as he said that, he exerted strength with his right hand, slicing open a wound on the back of his hand with the bronze knife. The words he had said was apparently to divert his attention so that he could reconcile with the idea of pain.

Blood quickly seeped out as Danitz immediately put down the dagger. He dabbed some blood on his right finger and smeared it across the dark brown cover of Groselle’s Travels.

After finishing that, he held his breath, waiting for a change.

Suddenly, he saw a snowflake the size of a goose feather. Strong winds howled by his ears, and immediately, a biting chill wildly drilled into his body.

Although Danitz was mentally prepared, he was still alarmed. He instinctively looked around to confirm where he was.

He realized that at some point in time he had left the captain's cabin of the Golden Dream. He found himself in a land of frost wrecked by a blizzard. Due to the extreme environment, he couldn't see into the distance at all. He couldn't even tell if he was on a mountain or on a flat plain.

I've really entered a strange world… Captain is here too? Danitz held up his hand to block his face, afraid that the snow would get into his eyes.

He calmed himself down and recalled Gehrman Sparrow's instructions. From his pocket, he hurriedly took out a piece of paper that had been folded into a square, and he carefully unfolded it.

While doing this, he was especially afraid of any accidents that could lead to the paper tearing or being blown away. That would make him lose all hope; but thankfully, none of that happened. He saw the contents written by Gehrman Sparrow.

"Recite the following honorific name in Hermes, but preferably in ancient Hermes:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

"Burn this upon chanting."

This… This is a secret existence at the level of a deity? Due to Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina's strict education, Danitz wasn't illiterate when it came to mysticism. He even had quite a good foundation.

Looking at the piece of paper in his hand, he subconsciously drew a gasp, sucking in the cold wind and ice-cold snowflakes that left a biting cold. He immediately coughed as his expression turned twisted.

He was now able to confirm one of his past theories.

Gehrman Sparrow really did belong to a powerful and very secretive organization! And the organization consecrates an existence known as The Fool, a godlike existence!

Indeed, such a powerful and crazy fellow can't appear out of nowhere. They don't just sprout out of the ground… Danitz tugged at his collar and tightened his clothes. Looking at the piece of paper fluttering in the wind, he wore a clear look of hesitation.

He knew very well how dangerous it was to recite the name of an unknown secret existence whose intentions were unknown. It could lead to an outcome more terrifying than death!

Captain is also trapped here. Furthermore, there's no way of leaving… Danitz clasped his hands and placed them before his mouth.

He suddenly threw out his hands and used ancient Hermes to recite The Fool's honorific name.

†

On the Golden Dream, in the captain's cabin.

With his own eyes, Klein witnessed Danitz turn illusory without any reason before disappearing. There was no longer any question about how entry into Groselle's Travels could be achieved.

After patiently waiting for a moment, he heard a series of illusory pleas, and it clearly came from a man.

Phew, from the looks of it, Groselle's Travels is unable to block out the gray fog. The world inside the book is still connected to that mysterious space… This way, even if I were to enter, I wouldn't be entirely cornered or lack any trump cards… Klein didn't hide his sigh of relief.

To confirm it, he took four steps counterclockwise while chanting the incantation. After arriving above the gray fog, he saw the brilliance representing Danitz rippling outwards beside The Fool's high-back chair.

The body and soul enter together… The world inside the book is very stable. There's no way to shatter it just by pulling the Spirit Body… Indeed, if it's possible, the divination from before would've received the corresponding revelation… Using the Sea God Scepter is too dangerous. Bestowing Danitz directly will only speed up his death… Klein half-closed his eyes as he emanated his spirituality. After taking everything in for a moment, he arrived at many conclusions.

He didn't delay and returned to the real world immediately. Holding the bronze dagger, he wiped away Danitz's blood on it with a piece of paper.

After folding a piece of paper and putting it into his pocket, he began to consider his next move.

From the looks of it, smearing blood allows direct entry. This way, I don't have to worry about my body suffering any accidents. Furthermore, I can very quickly resolve the problem.

But similarly, I can't be careless. I have to be careful of any other dangers. Hmm… If there's anyone on this ship that might be problematic, they might be able to sneak into the captain's cabin after I enter Groselle's Travels, sacrifice this book to the True Creator, Primordial Demoness, or Hidden Sage. I'll be in trouble then. I'll definitely suffer something worse than death.

The Golden Dream's sailors mostly seem to be infatuated with Vice Admiral Iceberg. The fact that Anderson's superficial provocation was effective enough proves this. Therefore, telling them that this involves Vice Admiral Iceberg's life and getting them to watch each other so that no one enters, that will put me at ease.

The problem lies with Anderson. He's the Strongest Hunter. He's stronger than any of the Beyonders on board this ship. Furthermore, he's good at ambushes and infiltration. There's a small possibility that he can avoid the monitoring of others and secretly sneak into the captain's cabin… His background is still too dubious, and I have no way to really trust him.

I have to think of a way to get him to enter Groselle's Travels with me…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein flipped through the ancient book covered in yellowish-brown goatskin. He discovered that there wasn't any new content, and the story lacked traces of Danitz's existence.

This is to say that one needs to successfully survive and meet up with the lead's team before they will be considered a true part of the story? That will make more pages appear? Klein made a preliminary guess as he walked to the door again and opened it.

"Did it succeed?" Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson and company asked.

Klein shook his head and said calmly, "Next up will be a long ritual.

"No one is to enter and disrupt it; otherwise, it will lead to Edwina Edwards's disappearance forever or even her death."

After informing them of the main point, he looked around and directly said, "I suspect that one of you here might have problems.

"Everyone is to watch each other."

Gourmet Bru Walls instinctively wanted to retort out of habit when he suddenly saw the captain's cabin was empty. Danitz, who had just entered, was gone.

Recalling the captain's disappearance, and confirming that Gehrman Sparrow was about to attempt to save her after finding the cause of the problem, he nodded and said, "I'll be in charge of this matter.

"And they will also monitor me."

Klein didn't harp on the topic. He then turned to look at Anderson Hood who was leaning against a wall.

“Come in.”

Anderson curled the right side of his mouth as he tsked.

“People not in the know might think I’m your subordinate. Your attitude is basically a role model for Provokers.”

Despite his grumbling, he straightened his back and opened his stride before entering the captain’s cabin.

After closing the door and locking it, Klein turned to face Anderson.

“Are you interested in participating in a rare adventure?

“You might be able to fulfill the achievement of hunting a dragon.”

According to his observations over the past few days, he believed that Anderson Hood was a curious and adventurous hunter. He enjoyed learning about new things and experiencing novel forms of excitement.

Anderson stared at Gehrman Sparrow’s face and sized him up seriously before smiling.

“I’m not interested.”

He firmly shook his head.

Following that, he chuckled before Klein spoke again.

“I smell danger. A highly-conceited, crazy, and powerful adventurer is actually inviting me to adventure together. What does this imply? It means that it’s extremely troublesome and dangerous!”

I thought you would be interested. This is different from how you usually act. You really can rein yourself in and let go of yourself… Hmm, I’ll try another threat. If it doesn’t work, I’ll throw this fellow on a deserted island and let the Golden Dream sail off. We'll pick him up later. As a hunter, survival on a deserted island shouldn't be difficult for him… Klein quickly made up his mind as his gaze immediately turned cold. He looked at Anderson and said, "I will not permit having latent risks around myself."

Anderson was stunned for a second before he quickly smiled.

"Haha, it was just a joke. I'm very interested in the title of 'Dragon Hunter.'"

…You changed your mind way too quickly… If you had insisted a little longer, you could've enjoyed the feeling of being abandoned… Klein nodded, walked back to the desk, and said to Anderson Hood who had followed behind him, "Smear your blood on this book's cover. There's no need for too much."

"Smear it?" Anderson scrutinized Groselle's Travels out of curiosity before surveying the area. "Edwina's disappearance is related to it? Same for that failure of a hunter's disappearance? Ah, right. Blazing Danitz. I nearly forgot his name. Thankfully, his bounty is a bit higher than before."

The corner of Klein's mouth twitched as he replied frankly, "That's right."

"Interesting…" Anderson glanced at the desk, picked up the bronze dagger, and indifferently sliced open a bleeding gash in his hand.

Right on the heels of that, he carefully put down the dagger and smeared the blood on the dark brown cover of Groselle's Travels.

After a few seconds of observation, just as Anderson was about to pick up the bronze dagger and wipe off the remnant blood on it, his vision was suddenly blanketed by a blizzard.

Seeing Anderson disappear just like Danitz, Klein picked up another piece of paper and wiped away the blood on the dagger before folding it and putting it into his pocket.

He wasn’t sure if the trio would appear at the same location after entering the world inside the book. Therefore, he made preparations by having materials needed for Dowsing Rod Seeking!

After doing all of this, Klein held that dagger and streaked it across the back of his hand.

His facial muscles twitched as he looked diagonally downwards. Only after a few seconds did he exert strength.

His body shook slightly as his head turned to the side. The corners of his mouth couldn’t help but open.

When the blood flowed out, Klein, who was still holding the dagger, grabbed his cane and quickly smeared the red liquid over the ancient book’s cover.

After a short delay, Klein found himself amidst a white land of snow.

Chapter 695 - Stark Contrast

* * *

Gales with icy fragments and goose feather-sized snowflakes blasted at Klein's face repeatedly. As he surveyed his surroundings, he couldn't help but tense up. He bent over slightly as he trembled.

How… cold… He nearly cursed out as he confirmed that he was in a land of ice and snow which had extremely low visibility.

He originally imagined that the moist coldness of Backlund's winter was terrifying, but he now knew that absolute low temperatures and strong winds that were as sharp as blades were a deadly combination. Even though he had worn an additional sweater ahead of time, and his coat was thick and long, he still couldn't withstand the chill.

He didn't wear Sun Brooch because the heat generated was psychological. It could be used to resist the influence of the intense chill for a short period of time, preventing his body from turning numb. But faced with an everlasting icy environment, it was equivalent to suicide. Heat at the psychological level made one's pores open up as though one was in summer. It would peel off the final layer of defense against low temperatures, and it would even proactively welcome it.

Therefore, Klein threw the mystical item above the gray fog. He planned on using it only on certain special occasions.

He couldn't afford to delay while in such harsh environments. After a preliminary observation of his surroundings, he immediately burned the blood on the bronze dagger and stuffed it into his pocket. Following that, Klein took out the Adventurer's Harmonica and blew into it.

Amidst the howling winds, he failed to discover the appearance of Miss Messenger, Tinekerr Reinette, through the Spirit Vision he activated.

Indeed, this place isn't connected to the spirit world. Or it should be said that this place has a unique spirit world for itself… Hmm, from the looks of it, praying to Sea God would be useless. Only charms that point to the mysterious space above the gray fog would tear through the barrier…

Here comes the problem, as a believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, Edwina knows the true god's honorific name. Why didn't she seek "His" help? Or did she try to no avail?

Yes… Not every deity will personally reply to "Their" believers. Many a time, "They" seem to provide feedback based on certain laws. You probably can't find a second "secret existence" like me who takes on jobs like myself… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh and made a preliminary judgment.

He then put away his harmonica, took out the paper slip with Danitz's blood, and he wrapped it at the end of his cane.

"Danitz's location."

Klein softly said as he began using Dowsing Rod Seeking.

Then, according to the outcome, he traversed across the thick snow, and he quickly tore through the frosty winds under the gloomy sky. From time to time, he would carry out a divination and adjust his bearings. After all, Danitz wouldn't wait in his original spot, as he would end up as an ice sculpture by doing so.

About ten minutes later, Klein discovered a scarlet flame.

Phew… He exhaled before taking a few steps forward to identify his target.

It was indeed Danitz. This famous pirate wore rather thin clothes. He wrapped his arms around himself as he walked forward with a lost expression.

However, he didn't seem to be that cold. This was because scarlet Fire Ravens were circling around him. They were boiling the snow and blocking out the winds, bringing about a spring-like warmth.

In such times, Klein especially admired a Pyromaniac. Although a Magician had the same ability to summon flames, it was an offensive ability that couldn't be maintained. It could only be used for a split moment. To rely on it to warm himself, he needed to constantly cast it, tiring himself out quickly. As for Flame Controlling, it depended on existing flames or ignitable materials. Both of them were extremely lacking in this world of ice.

As he saw the Fire Ravens soaring into the air, Klein sped up his pace and approached.

Danitz jumped in fright when he sensed someone approaching. When he saw who the newcomer was, he immediately heaved a sigh of relief. Then, with an odd expression, he forced a smile.

"Haha, there's no stars to be seen here. Getting lost is inevitable."

Klein ignored what he said as he directly asked, "Have you burned it?"

"I did!" Danitz hurriedly nodded, his entire being effusing with indescribable fear.

Klein observed Danitz for a few seconds and, after confirming that he wasn't lying, produced the polite smile of Gehrman Sparrow.

"Remember.

"Chanting 'His' honorific name makes you 'His' believer."

"…"

Danitz's expression twisted as he forced a smile which looked worse than crying.

"I don't want to change my faith! I have no intention of believing in an unknown existence of dubious origins!" He inwardly roared crazily but didn't say a word.

He suspected that any retort he makes would lead to him being buried in the snow by the madman!

Klein wore a smile that had hints of madness. He added with a calm tone, "Remember, keep it a secret.

"Once divulged, you and your captain will both die."

"What has this got to do with Captain?" Danitz blurted out.

Klein maintained his previous expression as he smiled at Danitz.

"Guess?"

Danitz gaped his mouth. With the reason known, all he could do was give a hollow chuckle.

"Do I look like someone who can't keep secrets?"

Klein nodded. As he took out the paper slip with Anderson's blood, he chuckled and said to Danitz, "Believe in 'Him.' Serve 'Him.' Perhaps one day, you will become a Blessed like me.

"When the time comes, your name will spread across the Five Seas. You will be in no way inferior to a pirate admiral."

As he spoke, he planned on adding a gesture as The Fool's believer, but sadly, he realized that he didn't have such a gesture. All he could do was console himself.

A secret organization needs to be secret. Doing all these kinds of superficial actions is meaningless… Mr. Hanged Man was right…

No way inferior to a pirate admiral… Danitz's eyes suddenly lit up.

Since I've already chanted the honorific name of this secret existence, there's really no way to avoid it from a mysticism point of view. I might as well take this opportunity… He instantly had many thoughts, having even named his future child.

Hehe, if it wasn't for Gehrman Sparrow's persona, I would've directly said that you would have the reputation and strength that matches Vice Admiral Iceberg when the time comes. Of course, whether she likes you will be a whole other matter. According to my observations, you stand little chance. The partner Edwina wishes to have is someone who can study and improve alongside her, someone who can discuss all kinds of knowledge… Klein mumbled as he used Dowsing Rod Seeking again.

"Anderson Hood's location."

"…He came in too?" Danitz was first taken aback before he asked in surprise.

Klein finished chanting the statement, released his cane, and determined the direction in which it fell. He then nodded and said, "I'm worried if he stays outside."

So you're also wary of Anderson Hood… Danitz couldn't hide his smile as he echoed, "That's right! He's the kind of person who smiles on the surface but will stab you in the back once you turn around!

"His reputation in the Fog Sea is terrible. There are no pirates that like him!

"He even deliberately tried to sully you, making us be wary of you, to view you with animosity!"

If pirates were to like him, it would only mean that his title as Strongest Hunter isn't substantial… I heard Anderson's provocations… Klein didn't reply. He picked up his cane and proceeded through the blizzard.

Danitz followed closely behind, using Fire Ravens to scatter the snow and block out the cold, so that they two didn't need to freeze.

Not bad. Quite sensible… At that moment, Klein once again experienced the benefits of having a servant—to have someone hold an umbrella during a rainy day, and someone to provide warmth in a blizzard!

In the white vastness, the two appeared like black dots, trudging through the snow. They proceeded forward for nearly twenty minutes before arriving at the location where the dowsing pointed to.

"He isn't here…" Danitz surveyed the area and failed to find any traces of Anderson Hood.

He didn't have any doubts about Gehrman Sparrow's Dowsing Rod Seeking, because he was the last person to be found with it.

Klein frowned as he activated his Spirit Vision and enhanced his spiritual perception.

Suddenly, he sensed something. He prodded forward with his cane, causing the snow in front of him to collapse.

The collapse revealed a cave. Inside it were dark rocks that were reflecting the light from a fire.

Klein crouched down. In his vision, he discovered that the cave extended into a narrow passage. And at the end of the passage was a bunch of glowing red rocks. Strange underground plants were slowly burning as Anderson Hood sat beside it. He was leisurely roasting an animal that resembled a rabbit. The fragrance of the fats and the warmth it brought were emanating out, drilling into Klein's and Danitz's noses.

"You guys are finally here? Want to give it a try? There's actually a strange rabbit around here that can live in such ice and snow." Anderson bent down, looking towards the entrance as though he was greeting companions on a camping trip with him.

Although he didn’t say anything provocative, I really wish to beat him up… Klein entered the cave with a stoic expression. He came close to the fire and experienced the long-awaited bliss.

Danitz followed in tow. He looked at the fire which was roasting a rabbit and then at the Fire Ravens beside him before silently dispelling them.

“H-how did you find this cave?” Danitz asked in disgruntlement, unwilling to admit his inferiority, but his body betrayed him by leaning closer to the fire.

Anderson turned the rabbit which was impaled with his pitch-black sword, and he shot Danitz a glance.

“First lesson of being a hunter. Observe your surroundings. Be familiar with your surroundings. Make use of your surroundings.”

Danitz’s expression immediately froze.

Anderson looked at Gehrman Sparrow and chuckled.

“It’s a cave I blasted open. How is it? It’s not bad, right? I controlled my strength perfectly.”

As he spoke, he took a whiff of the air and said, “How fragrant. The roasting seems to be done. Do you want to give it a try? Although I didn’t bring any spices, there’s rock salt here. It will just be a little astringent.”

“Are you sure you can eat this? If it’s a Beyonder creature, you might lose control with just one bite,” Danitz said with a tsk.

Anderson glanced at him.

“Second lesson of being a hunter. Distinguish what can and cannot be eaten in the wilderness.”

He carefully reached out his hand, pulled off a leg, and stuffed it into his mouth as he ate it with relish.

Klein was just about to say something when he suddenly felt a wanton aura approach from afar. The suppressive feeling that came from a high-leveled creature appeared extremely real. It made Danitz tremble uncontrollably.

The aura swept across them without noticing the strangeness of the cave beneath it. It then quickly departed.

King of the North… The title flashed across Klein’s mind.

Chapter 696 - Giant Guardian

◆

As the tyrannical aura flew past, high in the sky, Anderson’s chewing came to a sudden halt. It was only when the entity was a distance away did he swallow the remaining rabbit meat. He looked up at Gehrman Sparrow.

“That was the dragon you were talking about?”

Klein nodded slightly, confirming Anderson’s guess.

The corners of Anderson’s mouth slowly curled up, revealing an expression as though he was at a loss on whether to laugh or cry.

“I thought you were talking about a mature or adolescent dragon. The one that just flew past…

“I probably won’t be able to become a dragon hunter. Dragon feces perhaps.”

The tyrannical feeling that the King of the North exudes is indeed a little terrifying. Compared to the pieced-together monster which made hair grow without restraint on the Future, it’s a lot stronger… Perhaps, it’s a Sequence 4, at the level of a demigod… Klein calmly made a judgment without revealing any hints of panic or horror.

He clearly remembered that Groselle’s Travels had clearly indicated that the female pirate had managed to succeed in escaping from the King of the North’s attack before meeting up with the team led by the main lead, Groselle.

And Edwina Edwards clearly wasn't a demigod. She was a Sequence 5 of the Reader pathway. Furthermore, as she was suddenly swallowed by the book, certain mystical items and Sealed Artifacts that she didn't permanently keep on her person were left in the captain's cabin. The tools she had that were useful to her were probably limited to one or two.

Under such a situation, she was able to defend against the King of the North and survive. Having just advanced, and having adjusted his inventory, Klein believed that it wouldn't faze him too much. Furthermore, he was still connected to the gray fog. He could use the Sea God Scepter to produce a response!

This was also why Klein dared to enter directly after confirming that Danitz was in an ordinary state during his prayer.

Yes, the King of the North doesn't seem like a demigod from a normal pathway. According to Vice Admiral Iceberg, it's a Rampager who gathers frost-related Beyonder characteristics, and it can match a demigod in certain domains but would have flaws in other aspects… Edwina, Anderson, and me, along with the Beyonders of the main lead's team, we wouldn't be helpless! If all else fails, I can still use the Sea God Scepter. I don't believe that this book can defend against items above the gray fog. If it could, it would've shown it long ago… Standing beside the fire, Klein looked down at Anderson and grinned.

"Are you afraid?"

Anderson was taken aback as he immediately beamed.

"Not at all. You seem to be very confident."

After saying that, he looked at Danitz, who was still trembling and trying hard to compose himself, before tsking.

"Do you know what's the most important thing for a man?"

Danitz had just taken a deep breath. He was stunned by what he heard as he held his right index finger and middle finger together, pointing to his crotch with uncertainty.

Anderson blinked before he roared with laughter.

"…B*stard, you really are a crude pirate!

"Haha, I wanted to say something, but… Haha, I can't remember it!

"Oh right, I wanted to say courage. Courage is the most important thing for a man. Look at you. The dragon hasn't even attacked, and you're almost hugging your head and begging for mercy!"

Danitz's face instantly flushed red as he glared at Anderson.

You weren't acting like this back at Toscarter… Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

Danitz was just about to make it clear that he was only influenced by the high-level creature when he suddenly recalled what was just said. His expression was immediately restored to normal as he casually replied, "I can't compare with dragon feces at all."

Anderson's smile froze as he coughed lightly. As though nothing had happened, he yanked off a rabbit's leg and handed it over to Gehrman Sparrow.

"Want a bite?"

Klein remained silent for a few seconds before he slowly shook his head.

"This is a strange world. Before confirming that there aren't any problems, it's best not to eat anything here.

"Perhaps it might be a piece of rabbit meat that will make you stay here forever."

"…" Anderson moved the roasted rabbit's leg to his nose before slowly putting it down. Following that, his face collapsed. “Why didn’t you say so earlier?”

Klein calmly replied, “I just thought of this problem.”

Anderson’s expression turned twisted as he lowered his head. He quickly bit down on his roasted rabbit leg.

“A-aren’t you afraid that something really bad will happen?” The Strongest Hunter’s actions alarmed Danitz.

Anderson laughed helplessly.

“I’ve already eaten one earlier. I’ve already digested it by now… Since there’s no way of turning back, I might as well focus on enjoying it.”

Klein and Danitz were momentarily at a loss for words.

After Anderson finished gnawing on the rabbit’s leg, he deliberated and asked, “Are you really not eating?”

“We have no idea how much time we’ll be spending here. If we really do starve, how are we supposed to fight the dragon?”

Klein didn’t reply. He took out his golden pocket watch and opened it.

“It’s ten past six in the evening outside.

“We’ll eat a little after four to six hours if nothing happens to you.”

“…” Anderson turned agape, speechless.

Klein ignored him and turned to say to Danitz, “Fifteen minutes break. We’ll search for your captain after that.”

As he said that, he had already taken out the pearl earring belonging to Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards.

“Alright.” Danitz suddenly felt pumped with his blood boiling, completely forgetting the cold outside.

But after about eight seconds, he huddled close to the fire again.

†

Around seven in the evening in the outside world, Klein pressed down on his hat and held his cane. Together with Danitz and Anderson, he followed the revelation provided by his divination and found their way to a mountain.

After circling the boulders which were encased in thick layers of ice, they saw a dark mountain cave. Standing by the entrance was a woman holding an ancient bow.

The woman had a head of soft, lustrous black hair which she had simply tied into a pigtail. Her facial features were soft, making her look different from any national of the Northern Continent.

She wore a brown ancient-styled hunter’s coat and trousers. She acutely cast her gaze over.

Upon seeing her slightly sharp ears, Klein immediately guessed her identity from matching her to the content in Groselle’s Travels.

She was the female elf who got to know the giant, Groselle, at the very beginning. Her name was unknown.

Compared to Earth, people from the Northern Continent look more Caucasian. But this elf has more of an oriental charm… Klein quickly concluded this particular trait.

“An elf! She’s identical to the elves drawn in the ancient Church drawings!” Anderson suddenly became excited. “I have to negotiate with her to get her to be my model so that I can draw a few portraits of her!”

By the side, Danitz scoffed. He mocked in a succinct manner, “Boorish!”

Clearly, he hadn’t forgotten Anderson’s previous mockery.

"Do you only know of that kind of drawing?" Anderson shot a glance at him, sped up, and walked towards the female elf.

Just as he approached, the female elf didn't hesitate to raise her bow. The arrow strung on it shimmered with silver lightning.

"Wait!" Anderson immediately raised his hands.

It's useless. The elves mostly belong to the Storm pathway. They are prone to being irascible and rash… Klein secretly activated his Spirit Body Threads, planning to achieve initial control over the elf in order to let her listen calmly.

At this moment, Anderson saw a blur before seeing two thick, huge, muscular grayish-blue legs. Embedded in the snow was a huge, terrifying sword!

"…" Anderson was horrified to realize that his height only reached the leg's knees. He instinctively followed the sword and looked up, bit by bit.

With his head almost completely facing upwards, he finally saw the giant who was nearly four meters tall!

The giant's skin was grayish blue. His abdomen and waist was covered in a thick furry beast hide, leaving him naked everywhere else. Even his legs lacked protection.

He pounded on the sword which was wider than a human door, and using his trademark single vertical eye to look at Anderson, Klein, and Danitz, he asked with a booming voice, "Who are you?

"Why are you here in the Groselle camp?"

Klein was just about to reply when a familiar figure suddenly walked out from the dark mountain cave. Danitz's eyes were instantly filled with ecstasy.

Dressed in a complicated shirt and dark-colored trousers, Edwina swept her gaze across the trio. Her usually cold expression revealed a rather flabbergasted look, as though she hadn't expected to see Gehrman Sparrow and Anderson Hood here.

She quickly composed herself and looked up at the giant.

"Groselle, they are my companions."

Groselle widened his huge mouth into a grin and asked in delight, "Are you also here to help deal with Ulyssan?

Ulyssan? Klein was momentarily left at a loss for an answer.

At that moment, he saw Edwina, who was standing in the giant's shadow, give him a look. She wanted him to give an affirmative answer.

Ulyssan is the King of the North? Klein replied in thought, "Yes."

"Haha, then we are friends!" Groselle looked down at the trio and laughed.

As he spoke, Anderson silently retreated back to Gehrman Sparrow's side as he said under his breath, "This is the first time I'm meeting a living giant.

"There's no way of hitting his vital spots. He's just too tall!"

You can hit his legs… Klein lampooned and calmly replied, "A huge target makes it easy to strike them."

"…That's right." Anderson agreed.

At that moment, Edwina walked over and introduced the three of them:

"This is the leader of the camp, Giant Guardian Groselle.

"This is the Elven Songster, Siatas."

Elven Songster? Ocean Songster? Klein suddenly felt that there was hope for Mr. Hanged Man’s potion formula.

Edwina turned halfway around and said to Groselle and Siatas, “They are my companions.

“The strongest adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow; treasure-hunter, Anderson Hood; and renowned sailor, Danitz.”

…I always thought Vice Admiral Iceberg was the serious type who never lied… Renowned sailor. Ha, in a certain way, that’s true… Klein took off his hat and gave a serious bow. Anderson followed suit in a rather casual and perfunctory manner.

Reeling in his delight that his captain had introduced him as a companion instead of a subordinate, Danitz was slower than the others as he acted in a fluster.

Groselle laughed.

“Come on in. We will be fighting that evil dragon, Ulyssan, at any moment now!”

How warm and amiable… But be it the Churches’ canon or the myths of the City of Silver, giants are extremely violent creatures who have a strong desire for destruction… Yes, anything is possible in a book. It all depends on whether the author can make everything flow nicely… Klein nodded slightly as he followed Groselle into the spacious cave.

When Edwina saw this, she approached the trio without showing any signs of abnormal behavior. As though she was leading the way, she whispered, “The history they speak of is a little odd.

“Same for their language. Regardless of the language they speak, all of us can understand it.”

Chapter 697 - Story's Progress

◆

Everyone can understand each other regardless of the language used? Klein skipped over Edwina's first sentence and focused his attention on the second sentence that didn't seem too problematic.

Although this was the book world created by Groselle's Travels, everything was possible, but there were certain details that still revealed problems.

To Klein, he wasn't too caught up with how they could understand each other, but the kind of method that resulted in the comprehension.

This world incorporates something akin to the rule of language comprehension, or does it have a consciousness residing high above everyone else, helping in the real-time translation work, just like what I do at the Tarot Gatherings? If it were the former, targets who don't understand Jotun will only hear an unfamiliar language, but they would understand the meaning. If it were the latter, it will be them hearing a language they're familiar with… As he knew many ancient and supernatural languages, Klein was unable to figure out the situation immediately. He slowed down his footsteps and walked alongside Danitz. He asked while suppressing his voice, "Can you tell what language Groselle was using when he was speaking?"

Danitz was taken aback for a second. He recalled and said, "It's a language which sounds a little familiar yet unfamiliar, but I was able to understand everything."

The supernatural languages he knew were ancient Hermes, followed by

Elvish. He was only a beginner in Jotun.

Yes, it's something like the rule of language comprehension… It's comprehension at the level of the mind… This means that the entire book world's fundamental rules can be different from the outside world. It's a setting that it comes with, but the changes don't seem capable of exceeding certain limits. This point remains suspect and requires verification. After all, I can't eliminate the existence of someone like The Fool, someone who completely interprets the communication via the mind… Edwina is indeed sharp and good at observing. The problem she discovered leads straight to this book world's essence… Amidst his thoughts, Klein unhurriedly entered the huge, dark cave.

As for the history described by the members of the main lead's team, he wasn't the least bit surprised. He even looked forward to hearing the details.

Klein long knew that the various Churches and the Northern Continent's countries had consciously attempted to destroy or conceal information, to hide the true history of the Fourth Epoch, Third Epoch, and even the Second Epoch. What people knew as common knowledge actually differed from the people who used to live in those eras.

This was also one of the reasons why Klein took on the risk to enter the book world!

Inside the spacious and windy cave, a bonfire scattered its light and heat on three humanoid figures.

One of them was a middle-aged man in an extremely spartan white robe. He had wrinkles but didn't appear old. He had his back to the fire as he faced the stone wall with his eyes closed, focused on his prayers. He had short brown hair, and his shoulders, arms, calves, and feet were exposed, revealing all kinds of old scars.

Beside him was a lad using a stone for a pillow. He donned a black, heavy full-body armor. By his hand was an erected black sword that emitted a cold shimmering light. His facial features were rather deep, giving him clear Loen traits.

Sitting opposite the two was a man in his thirties who was dressed strangely. He gave people a sense of unease. He wore a sharp and hard black hat, and his coat's buttons were mismatched. It was messy and chaotic, highly asymmetric and unharmonious.

In addition, the tips of his leather boots curled up high, making him look like a circus clown.

This man had quite a handsome face. He had flaxen-colored hair, deep brown eyes, a high nose, and thin lips. Even though he sat there, he gave off an arrogant feeling.

Edwina pointed at him and said, "Solomon Empire's Viscount Mobet Zoroast, a gentleman who can take away the ideals and dreams of others."

"You don't have to mince your words. Hello there, I'm a Sequence 5 Dream Stealer of the Marauder pathway," Mobet said with a chuckle. He acted nothing like the arrogance he seemed to exude.

A member of the Zoroast family… The angel parasitizing Leonard's body is from this family. Perhaps they know each other? Heh, I now know the name of Sequence 4 and 5 of the Marauder pathway, but I don't even know the corresponding Sequence 6 and 7… Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he maintained his stoic look.

At that moment, Anderson warmly greeted him with a smile and asked as though they were pals, "To be frank, this is the first time I'm hearing of Dream Stealer. I only know of Marauder and Swindler. There are two Sequences in the middle I'm not aware of."

"Are the Beyonders of this pathway already so scarce? Doesn't Edwina know? Sequence 7 Cryptologist and Sequence 6 Prometheus. Haha, let me do the introductions." Mobet warmly pointed to the praying man whose back was facing everyone. "The pious ascetic, Snowman. He believes in the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God. Don't mind him. He's completely sealed himself in his beliefs. But in combat, he's a very reliable companion. Eh, Snowman, you should say something at the very least."

Mobet, who didn't receive a response, stroked his chin with a rueful smile.

"This is the treatment I often receive. You might find it hard to imagine that I was an arrogant, reserved, and refined nobleman. But time has changed everything. Heh heh, that happens when your companion is a giant who only knows how to chuckle foolishly and shout slogans…"

When he said this, Groselle, who was sitting on a rock, smiled in a simple and good-natured manner. He raised his hand to scratch the back of his head as his single vertical eye didn't show the ferocity and cruelness that giants were strongly rumored to have.

Mobet shook his head and pointed at the ascetic, Snowman.

"As for him, he might not speak a single word for years or even a decade. Siatas is a very violent woman. As long as there are any emotional stirrings in her, she'll beat me up. Sigh, I'm as afraid of her now as I was infatuated over her back then. Therefore, I can only make conversation and speak to them; otherwise, I'll definitely go mad!

"Thankfully, Frunziar came later. He's quite the conversationalist. Hey, Frunziar, wake up! We have new companions!"

The sleeping black-armored knight slowly woke up as he looked at Klein and company.

Suddenly, there was the sound of metal striking each other as he stood up. Staring at Klein, he said, "Loenese?"

"Yes," Klein nodded frankly. He discovered that this Loen soldier who had gone missing for 165 years didn't look old. He had black hair and sharp, blue eyes. He made one submit to him unknowingly.

Frunziar appeared adrift for a moment as he quickly composed himself.

"Do you know of Backlund's Edward family?"

"Backlund has many Edwards," Klein replied simply.

"The Edward family that lives at 18 Delahire Street in Northwest Borough," Frunziar pressed anxiously.

Klein shook his head.

"Northwest Borough no longer exists."

"Northwest Borough no longer exists…" Frunziar repeated those words as his voice grew softer.

He fell silent for a few seconds before exhaling.

"I've no idea how many years have passed outside, but it should've been quite a while. Edwina told me the actual year, but I don't remember the year I entered… I was sleeping most of the time, and time here seems to be frozen."

Mobet Zoroast chuckled upon hearing that.

"That's because you have bad luck. Back when we were passing through cities and villages, everything was perfect."

He looked at Klein, Anderson, and Danitz.

"Back then, we lived in places with humans, with intelligent races. We got married again and again, seeing our wives turn old, grow weak, and die. Heh, before a new member joins, we would forget our goals. We would lead ordinary but happy and relaxed lives for decades or centuries. The only con is that we aren't able to bear our own children.

“Later, Frunziar came. We entered this region blanketed by ice and snow. We hunted many monsters, but gradually, we began to fall into a slumber. We were seldom awake until we met Edwina.”

This means that time in the book world flows normally. The story’s progress is maintained by a certain power that influences the main lead’s party. Before new members join and before the book’s pages flip, they’ll stop and stay at a certain node, doing other things… This is similar to the inter-translation of languages at the mind level…

Conversely, does this also mean that towns and villages in the book world also develop normally? Yes, I have to quickly find King of the North Ulyssan; otherwise, with the passage of time, we might also experience that influence and fall into a slumber or forget the main quest. We’ll stay here for a long period of time until a new member is swallowed into the book and finds us… Klein fell silent for a few seconds. Just as he was about to say something, Edwina said, “There’s no need to worry about that problem.

“We will soon encounter the King of the North.”

“Why?” Anderson and Mobet asked in unison.

Edwina surveyed the area and said, “Before I entered, the stuck pages in the book only had a few more pages.

“And now, with you entering and finding the camp, there definitely can’t be many pages left. The story is about to come to an end.”

Mobet nodded indiscernibly in agreement with Edwina’s judgment. Anderson softly mumbled terms such as “stuck.”

Edwina then introduced Klein, Anderson, and Danitz as she made an example of herself and sat down beside the bonfire.

[image]

Klein took off his hat and held it with his cane. He slowly sat down and looked at Mobet Zoroast who was inclined to chat.

“Have you heard of the Tudor Empire and the Trunsoest Empire?”

He didn’t beat around the bush and asked directly. That was Gehrman Sparrow’s persona.

“No.” Mobet shook his head. “Edwina has already asked me. Heh, in my era, the Tudors and Trunsoests were just like my Zoroast family. We’re aristocratic families of the Solomon Empire and were loyal subjects of the Black Emperor.”

So the Trunsoest and Tudor families were traitors of the Solomon Empire… Klein thought and said, “Apart from you, what other aristocratic families did the Solomon Empire have?”

“Many.” Mobet smiled as he looked at Frunziar. “Augustus, Abraham, Zaratul, etc. In my era, the Church of the Evernight Goddess’s archenemies were the Church of the God of Combat and the Southern Continent’s Eggers family. The Churches of the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom were all at odds with each other, all of them hoping to gain the support of the Solomon Empire.”

He paused for two seconds as his expression gradually turned solemn.

“Back then, deities walked the land, and not in the astral world.”

Chapter 698 - Fifth King of Angels

* * *

Deities walked the land, and not in the astral world… In the early Fourth Epoch, during the era of the Solomon Empire, there was no distinguishing between the worlds of myth and reality. Deities directly walked the land without the need for a descent?

This is somewhat similar to the Second Epoch as written in the City of Silver's books. The Giant King's Court and other locations are separated by a door in the real world. They just needed to pass through it and return the same way. Mortals and deities mixed together in the chaos and darkness… Also, the astral world really does correspond to deities… After hearing Viscount Mobet Zoroast's description, Klein instantly began connecting the dots.

He subconsciously swept a glance at Groselle, as this giant was very likely someone who had experienced the history of the Second Epoch!

Groselle picked up a cup larger than a wooden bucket and gulped down some melted snow as he laughed.

"Mobet, what's there to be surprised about? Why are you so solemn?"

"I've no idea why I became so solemn either." Bit by bit, Mobet Zoroast revealed a smile. "Haha, it might be something very normal for us, but in their eyes, it's terrifying and unbelievable. I have to use a suitable expression to describe it in order to achieve a satisfactory result. Do you still remember Frunziar's expression when we told him those stories in the very beginning? He almost knelt down to seek forgiveness from the Lord of Storms."

"…" Klein, Danitz, and company were momentarily unsure of the expression of words they should use to respond.

Anderson leaned over to Gehrman Sparrow and said with a suppressed voice, "I think he has the talent to be a Provoker."

He appeared to be suppressing his voice, but his words could be heard by everyone present.

Mobet didn't mind as he chuckled before continuing, "I know that you aren't very convinced and find it unbelievable that deities walked the lands, just like Edwina's previous reactions. Heh heh, I can give you two examples. The Chasm of Storm on Pasu Island and the Tenebrous Heaven in the Amantha mountain range were the divine kingdoms of the Lord of Storms and Evernight. They were divine kingdoms located on land. They were divine kingdoms separated from the real world by a mere illusory door!

Pasu Island? Isn't that where the holy altar of the Church of Storms is? The Amantha mountain range… Amantha means serenity in Hermes; this refers to a holy cathedral, the Cathedral of Serenity? When the deities no longer walked the land, "Their" kingdoms became the headquarters of their respective churches? Klein instinctively believed that Mobet Zoroast wasn't lying as he used it to come to certain conclusions.

Danitz was puzzled and horrified by what he heard. He subconsciously wanted to leave, but when he saw his captain listening attentively, Gehrman Sparrow who was in thought, and Anderson Hood who wore a look of interest on his face, he could only hold back his urge as he sought a better, more comfortable seating position.

At that moment, the Elven Songster Siatas, who was in charge of the perimeter, walked in and said with contempt, "Do not mention that fake god. The authority of the storm only belongs to the king of us elves!"

Her voice was clear and beautiful, but her tone was filled with anger and irascibility. It felt as though she would raise her hands at any moment to shoot an arrow at Mobet Zoroast.

“Alright, I will use the words ‘fake god,’” Mobet raised his hand to adjust his sharp and hard black hat.

Siatas retracted her gaze. She then said to the former Loen soldier, Frunziar Edward, who wasn’t a staunch believer of the Lord of Storms, “It’s your turn!”

Frunziar raised his head a little; his expression in a trance-like state.

Apparently, he hadn’t noticed the conversation and argument from before. He drew the iron-black sword beside him and walked towards the cave entrance.

Klein observed for a moment and took the opportunity to speak to the elf, Siatas.

“Do you know of Queen of Calamity, Cohinem?”

He wasn’t actually sure if Cohinem was Elf King Soniathrym’s subsidiary god, Queen of Calamity. His inquiry was for Elven Songster Siatas to give him the answer.

Siatas’s gentle and exquisite face immediately produced a trance-like expression like Frunziar’s.

“I haven’t heard ‘Her’ name in a long time. ‘She’ is the queen of us elves.

“Mobet and Frunziar didn’t even know of ‘Her’ existence…

“Where did you encounter ‘Her,’ no—learn of ‘Her’ situation?”

As she spoke, Siatas’s tone became urgent.

At that moment, Danitz looked at Gehrman Sparrow in surprise, reflecting over the revelation that the madman was so knowledgeable.

He was even able to share a common topic of interest with an elf from ancient times.

“I never expected you to be a scholar… I really couldn’t tell. Couldn’t tell at all…” Anderson sighed as he shook his head.

Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina likewise cast her gaze at Klein. Her limpid blue eyes had a strong desire to learn from him.

Klein answered frankly, “I’ve once entered a ruin belonging to Queen of Calamity Cohinem and obtained some items.”

“Ruin?” Siatas ruminated over that word in a soft voice, her tone having seemingly lost something unimportant, but something that she couldn’t bear to part with.

“From the situation inside, ‘She’ might not be truly dead.” After seeing Siatas’s eyes light up, Klein went straight to the point. “Do you have the Ocean Songster’s potion formula? Can I use something to exchange for it?”

He felt that being honest and direct with a Beyonder from the Storm pathway was the best choice.

Siatas thought and said, “Use one of Her Highness’s items for the exchange.”

“I only obtained a wine cup made of gold. It’s already been crushed flat. Complicated patterns are engraved on it, with the Elvish phrases Calamity and Cohinem.” Klein didn’t hide the truth.

“I know about that cup. It was the cup Her Highness loved the most,” Siatas said, unable to hide her excitement. “Deal!”

“The cup is outside.” Klein had no intention of heading above the gray fog in front of everyone.

Siatas nodded.

"I understand.

"We will complete the transaction after we leave this book."

Having said that, she pressed her palms together.

"The Storm will definitely belong to the elves!"

Before anyone spoke, she asked curiously, "What else did you discover there?"

"Some murals depicting the Elf King battling an ancient sun god." Klein shot a glance at the ascetic, Snowman, who believed in the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God.

With his back still facing the fire, the middle-aged man who was facing the stone wall finally opened his mouth.

"No, 'He' isn't the Sun God.

"'He' is our Lord, the father of all things, the great source of everything.

"'He' wasn't battling the Elf King, but taking back the authority which belonged to him.

Just as Snowman said that, Siatas stood up and aimed her arrow at him.

Suddenly, this Elven Songster's plaited black hair flared up in violation of the laws of nature. The strands of hair were distinct and they were all swirling with silver lightning, emitting a strange deep blue luster.

Just as Siatas was about to release the arrow, a huge grayish-blue palm appeared before her, blocking the arrow tip, without any fear of being struck.

It was the palm of the giant, Groselle. One of the traits of this race was its exaggerated limbs. They were so long that they appeared a little distorted. Therefore, simply by sitting there, he could stop Siatas by extending his arm.

“Alright, Snowman, cut it out. As you know, Siatas is an elf who likes to put actions before words,” Groselle said to the ascetic before turning his head to the Elven Songster. “Siatas, we are companions who can leave our backs to each other. We have experienced plenty of dangers together. You can retort Snowman and even beat him up, but do not attempt to harm him.”

As expected of the lead of the book. He’s filled with positivity… But what’s the difference in beating him and harming him? Klein couldn’t help but mumble.

Siatas grunted and sat back down, turning the mood heavy and silent with a level of awkwardness.

Giant Groselle used his single vertical eye to survey the area before chuckling.

“Then, I’ll talk about my past.

“Before entering this book, I lived in the Giant King’s Court. I was one of the guardians of the Waning Forest. It’s somewhere only our king can enter. Rumor has it that buried inside it are ‘His’ parents, who also form the origins of us giants.”

The Giant King’s Court is formed of many parts, and the Waning Forest is one of them? Buried in there is the most ancient ancestor of the giants? Klein listened attentively, only wishing to ask more.

To him, this was more valuable than the Fourth Epoch’s history. This was because the City of Silver’s hope likely laid in the Giant King’s Court.

However, before he opened his mouth, Edwina spoke before him.

“Groselle, what did the book look like when you received it?”

Groselle raised his hand to rub his cheeks.

"It had nothing, like an empty book waiting to be written."

I even thought that Groselle might be a completely fictional character in the book… Klein deliberated for a few seconds and didn't directly ask about the details of the Giant King's Court. He turned to say to Mobet Zoroast, "Do you know of Blasphemer Amon?"

"Blasphemer refers to the entire family of Amon. They are the archenemies of us Zoroasts. It's said that they have a very powerful and terrifying ancestor that even Ouroboros and Medici viewed with great importance. They even feel fear towards 'Him,' but no one knows of 'His' actual name," Mobet introduced in detail.

Ouroboros, Medici? Yes, back then the True Creator and Rose Redemption supported the Solomon Empire… Klein's heart stirred as he immediately asked, "Then, have you heard of the name Sasrir?"

Mobet was taken aback as he slowly shook his head.

"Never."

Dark Angel Sasrir's name and title vanished after the Cataclysm? It was buried? Klein confirmed a fact through this.

At that moment, Snowman, who was facing the stone wall, said with a deep voice, "Sasrir is the Dark Angel, the leader of the Kings of Angels, the one closest to the Lord."

I was waiting for your answer… Klein cast his gaze on the ascetic and asked in a deep voice, "Apart from 'Him,' Ouroboros, Medici, and Amon, what other Kings of Angels are there? You don't have to say out all 'Their' names."

Klein was afraid that it would result in unnecessary reactions, just like the "repenter" in Afternoon Town.

Edwina, Anderson, and Danitz were at a loss from the very beginning. This was because the contents of the conversation between Gehrman

Sparrow and the few ancient figures were things that they had never heard of. They found it unbelievable that this crazy adventurer knew so many secrets!

After a few seconds of silence, Snowman said, “There’s also the Angel of Imagination, Adam…”

Just as he said the name, the entire cave shook. The familiar and crazy tyrannical aura rapidly descended!

King of the North Ulyssan had arrived!

Chapter 699 - Boss Fight

◈◈◈

Loen soldier, Frunziar Edward, who was onguard by the cave's entrance, saw a massive figure descend from the sky just as he moved. It landed on a huge boulder covered in thick layers of ice. The wings which were covered in a membrane of skin weren't retracted as they continued spreading outward, nearly blocking out all the surrounding light.

The illusory armored scales that resembled frozen ice and the violent eerie-blue dragon eyes were immediately reflected in Frunziar's eyes. He instinctively sensed danger as he raised his iron-black sword and leaped to the side, rolling far away from where he was standing.

Almost at the same moment, King of the North Ulyssan opened its mouth, silently spewing out a distorted icy-blue flame towards the cave. It froze everything in its wake!

Moments later, the icy-blue flames produced a tidal wave formed from illusory light as they surged into the dark cave, sealing everything it passed in ice.

The words "Angel of Imagination, Adam" were still flashing across Klein's mind as he couldn't help but recall Emperor Roselle's description of the Twilight Hermit Order. Their mission was to revive the original Creator, and they had a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Spectator pathway among their ranks, or even the Uniqueness. The means in which they summoned the members was through a true dream that connected the eastern and western ends of the continent. Furthermore, it had the characteristic of being detected upon being mentioned. But even so, he still instinctively reacted in response to the impending danger.

He lunged sideways, dodging towards the uneven parts of the cave, attempting to use the rocks ahead to block the attack.

However, the surging icy-blue light was like a tidal wave that drowned every corner of the cave. It sealed everything, leaving no safe zones inside the cave.

Seeing his surroundings turn into an icy cage, a gigantic, grayish-blue figure appeared before Klein's eyes.

Groselle had stepped forward without a sound. He genuflected with his left knee, leaning his back forward as he stabbed the broadsword in front of him.

Light that resembled the dawn of light bloomed as illusory walls formed to the left and right of Groselle, protecting everyone behind them.

An icy-blue "tidal wave" surged over, splitting at the erect broadsword before colliding with the light of dawn on both sides.

Everything in the mountain cave turned dark for Klein and company before a small source of light was restored.

They could still see that the bonfire had been extinguished. It was especially dark with the dim rays of light outside attempting to tear through the layers of ice.

At that moment, every inch of space in front of Groselle was frozen. The giant seemed to become a bug stuck in amber!

Right on the heels of that, the sword which was embedded in the ground emitted a luster resembling the light of dawn.

They mixed together, enveloping Groselle before turning into a

Hurricane of Light that swept outwards.

Silently, the layer of ice had a huge hole burned through it as it extended all the way to the cave's mouth. Groselle's grayish-blue figure had vanished from where he was.

Elven Songster Siatas, who hadn't had time to tie her head, held her bow and arrows. Embraced by the swirling gales around her, she charged out the cave without any delay. Dressed in an asymmetrical black coat, the Solomon Empire Viscount Mobet Zoroast mumbled, "don't be in a rush" or "it's finally here" as he ran, following closely behind Siatas.

The ascetic, Snowman, stood up as well. He tapped his chest four times as though he was forming the shape of a cross.

"May the Lord bless me!"

Amidst his hoarse and dry voice, he stepped onto the biting cold ice with his bare feet and ran out of the cave.

Klein didn't hesitate either. He didn't draw his revolver, and he kept his hands empty. Together with Anderson, who was clenching Death Brachydont tightly, they ran into the hole in the ice.

Dressed in a shirt with complicated patterns, Edwina Edwards looked at Danitz, who was trembling due to the aura of the high-level entity. She said with a gentle, but emotionless tone, "Stay here."

Having said that, the look in her blue eyes deepened. Gales howled around her, pushing her out of the cave.

Stay here… Danitz was stunned. He subconsciously surveyed his surroundings and saw the walls covered in frost and the completely extinguished bonfire.

The cave was silent with him being the only one left.

Danitz’s trembling body slowly came to a stop as he turned agape. However, he didn’t say a word as he saw his captain’s figure disappear from the cave’s entrance.

Outside the cave, Frunziar Edward, who had just rolled to avoid the first series of attacks, saw Ulyssan spread its wings as it was about to leap into the sky, closing the distance between it and his party. He ensured his safety as he steadied his figure and pushed his left palm out diagonally.

Immediately following that, he declared a statement in ancient Hermes: “Flying is prohibited here!”

Suddenly, the frost dragon’s wings that blotted out the sky seemed to be weighed down by invisible objects weighing a hundred times its body weight. It began flapping them with great difficulty.

The King of the North immediately let out a furious roar as the loud sonic boom drilled into Frunziar’s ears, making his stagger.

With a whoosh, the pair of wings finally managed to flap, stirring up the snow and frost around it into the air.

Although it was difficult on Ulyssan’s part, it eventually managed to fly.

At that moment, Disciplinary Paladin Frunziar’s expression turned solemn. He said a sentence constructed in ancient Hermes once again: “Violators will be punished!”

Just as he said that, his figure leaped up at a speed which was faster than Ulyssan, as though he had been augmented by some unknown power.

Ding!

Frunziar extended his body in midair as he brandished the iron-black sword in hand, striking down at the King of the North’s neck with his posture speaking great certainty of a hit.

A clear crack appeared on the crystalline armor plates as it spread slightly; however, this failed to make Ulyssan bleed.

The frost dragon didn't even feel the pain as its eerie-blue eyes locked onto Frunziar, its expression cruel and tyrannical.

It then lifted up its front claws while Frunziar remained in midair without any means of dodging.

At that critical moment, a hurricane blew over, pushing the black-armored Disciplinary Paladin away, causing Ulyssan's strike to swipe at air. Its strike caused an explosive boom despite the miss.

Elven Songster Siatas didn't hesitate to take action once she rushed out the cave, saving Frunziar immediately.

Immediately following that, her hair flared up in violation of the laws of nature. They were distinct with swirling lightning bolts.

She aimed her arrow at the large but slow, flying target in the sky, King of the North, before firmly pulling back the arrow.

The sky turned dark, as though dark clouds had gathered as lightning bounced through them.

Unable to fly smoothly due to the Disciplinary Paladin's influence, Ulyssan suddenly pulled back its wings, swooping down at Siatas like a high-speed train.

At that moment, a grayish-blue figure that left one feeling safe had appeared in front of the King of the North's trajectory!

Groselle genuflected once again, plunging the broadsword, which was unusable by human hands, in front of himself.

Dawn-like light surfaced, forming an invisible, impenetrable wall.

Boom!

The collision between the frost dragon and Groselle was like a terrifying explosion. It shattered the layers of ice around them, pushing them outwards.

Groselle failed to keep his footing firm as he flew out like a ball, tumbling past Siatas before slamming loudly into the mountain wall. A huge amount of snow and ice stalactites crashed from above, nearly causing an avalanche.

As for Ulyssan, it wasn't sent retreating. It remained standing in its original spot.

Having had its swooping attack interrupted, its hind legs were in the ground as its body leaned forward. It shook its neck before aiming its open mouth at Siatas.

The Solomon Empire's noble, Mobet Zoroast, had long arrived beside Siatas. Upon seeing this, he hurriedly extended his right hand and rapidly turned his wrist.

Ulyssan forgot what it was doing despite having its mouth completely open. It stood there in a daze without continuing its attack. Suddenly, Mobet turned his head and spit to the side.

"Pui!"

The spit was ordinary without any special traits to it.

Seizing this opportunity, Snowman, the ascetic who came out, raised his arms as though he was embracing god's grace.

Then, he said to the Elven Songster in ancient Hermes, "God says it's effective!"

With a sizzling sound, the flashes of lightning surrounding Siatas brightened greatly as they surged out, entangling with the arrow.

She released her grip as an arrow shot out.

Boom!

Dark clouds gathered in the air as a thick bolt of lightning smote down, augmenting that arrow.

The arrow turned completely silver, as though it was shot from the god of lightning. It struck Ulyssan's forehead at a completely unavoidable speed.

Layers of ice disappeared as the illusory armor plating cracked. The arrow stabbed into the King of the North's head, making it let out a deafening cry.

Light blue blood gushed out and quickly froze as the frost dragon's ugly face shook violently as silver bolts zapped at it.

At that moment, Klein and Anderson came out of the cave. Disciplinary Paladin Frunziar had tumbled onto the ground before standing up again. Groselle extended his palms from the snow pile, rubbing his head. He didn't appear seriously injured.

With so many teammates, I don't have to be the main assault force. I can attempt to control Ulyssan's Spirit Body Threads… From my observations, it doesn't seem to have the defensive abilities of a demigod. Of course, it's much stronger than a Sequence 5… A five-meter radius is a little dangerous… Klein looked at the frost dragon as he quickly had an idea.

Chapter 700 - Excellent Teamwork

◆ ◆ ◆

King of the North Ulyssan's tragic cries rapidly turned into a roar. Following that, a snowstorm engulfed the area outside the cave, reducing the visibility to less than five meters.

Howling gales swept up dense "goose feathers" as they covered every inch of space. Meanwhile, an icy-blue halo rapidly extended outwards, clinging close to the ground. It left frozen ice everywhere in its wake as it passed.

Klein, who had his vision and hearing affected by the blizzard, instantly had the corresponding scene surface in his mind. He hurriedly bent his knees and kicked his heels, jumping high up, allowing the icy-blue halo to sweep underneath him.

As for Mobet Zoroast, who wasn't adept at combat, he was already too close to the icy-blue halo when he noticed it. He didn't have the time to jump up.

At that moment, he was hoisted up by his shoulders as the bottom of his feet had a tempestuous hurricane lift him up into the air. With this combination, he instantly flew up into the sky, avoiding the outcome of being frozen.

Mobet turned his head and, without surprise, saw the deadpan Siatas. This Elven Songster could only muster up strong winds to glide forward due to the "law" forbidding flight.

Anderson, Edwina, Snowman, and Frunziar reacted accordingly, jumping in time and dodging the attack without succumbing to it. Only Groselle, who had just pulled out his broadsword from the snow, was hit in the legs by the icy-blue halo, as he couldn't dodge in time.

Layers of ice instantly surged upwards as Groselle stood on the spot like a frozen corpse.

Whoosh!

The exaggerated blizzard obscured all the Beyonders' vision, making them lose their vision of the frost dragon. All they could do was passively defend against any attacks.

At that moment, Snowman, who hadn't dropped to the ground, spread out his arms once again and said solemnly in ancient Hermes, "God says it's ineffective!"

The violent blizzard suddenly calmed down significantly. Be it the tempestuous hurricanes or the dense snowflakes, they were weakened or had been cut in half.

Siatas vaguely made out a gigantic face with an ugly lizard-like face. The broken arrow was still embedded in its forehead.

Ulyssan had taken the opportunity to close the distance between them!

Siatas didn't panic. The strong winds suddenly changed directions, sending Mobet and her floating backward. Meanwhile, her chilled, pale lips opened as she sang in ancient and abstruse Elvish, "The rocks are destined to be shattered by the waves;

"The trees are destined to be struck down by the winds;

"The mountains are destined to crumble by the lightning…"

As every word in Elvish was rich and filled with meaning, the constructed sentences were extremely succinct. Therefore, the lyrics didn't waste too much of Siatas's time. Furthermore, from the moment the first word was spoken and from the beginning of the beautiful and forceful rhythm, the winds in the blizzard began to experience changes!

The howling sounds of wind turned chaotic as it spread out in every direction. Ulyssan's massive figure once again appeared before Klein and company's eyes.

When Siatas sang the third phrase, Disciplinary Paladin Frunziar had already pushed out his right palm and profoundly said in ancient Hermes, "Imprison!"

Instantly, the frost dragon which was about to rush Siatas and Mobet had frozen on the spot. Surrounding it were layers of transparent walls.

And as Frunziar said that softly, Edwina, who had just found her footing, made her light-blue eyes turn black. Inside them flowed a sticky liquid that seemed to be the manifestation of all the evil in the depths of one's heart.

She gently clenched her right palm as Ulyssan stood up with a roar, instantly ripping apart the effects of Imprison.

The frost dragon's eerie-blue eyes were filled with blankness and pain. It seemed to be still immersed in the emotions of sudden madness and ruthlessness.

Even though this was a state it was always in, to have it fully triggered was uncomfortable.

Without a doubt, it was a dragon who found it difficult to control its emotions!

Seizing the opportunity of Ulyssan's brief pause, Anderson Hood condensed a burning-white spear in his hand. Then, he bent his back and threw it out.

Without waiting for the outcome, flames appeared under the Strongest Hunter's feet, turning the ice into liquid.

Sou!

The spear accurately struck the frost dragon's half-open mouth, quickly melting the thick armor plates of ice, with the excess force penetrating the upper part of its forehead.

Ulyssan let out another tragic cry as its hind legs stomped backward, sending its body lunging forward. It stayed close to the ground as it rushed towards Anderson with a terrifying speed.

The only thing in its eyes was this worm that had dealt significant amounts of damage to it!

Schwing!

The snow split apart as a deep and wide chasm opened up in the ground. It emanated all the way to where Anderson was as it continued extending.

Bang! With its terrifying inertia, the frost dragon slammed into a boulder covered in thick ice, shattering its outer shell and cracking its interior!

If Anderson had collided with it, the Strongest Hunter was bound to turn into meat paste. Even being brushed was likely to lead to his death.

However, in a particular spot in the chasm where Anderson was originally standing, there was a dark hole that led straight down. It was just enough for a person to burrow in.

Pa!

A hand held onto the hole's entrance. Through the exertion of force, the Strongest Hunter with disheveled hair jumped out.

After he threw the burning spear, he didn't dodge in panic. Instead, he directly used his Beyonder powers to melt the snow beneath his feet, and he burned the underlying soil. Silently, he created a hole that wasn't too deep. Following that, he sank himself into it by crouching, perfectly dodging the King of the North's charge.

At that moment, a pure beam of light descended and struck Groselle, quickly melting the ice encasing him.

Snowman had used an offensive blow to remove the restrictions placed on the Giant Guardian!

With the explosive light of dawn, Groselle raised his broadsword and charged to the frost dragon with wide strides before cleaving down wildly.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Groselle was only a meter shorter than Ulyssan's non-humanoid form. His strength was equally ridiculous. As he clashed repeatedly with Ulyssan's front claws, occasionally wavering and retreating at times, he quickly recovered by taking a step forward and engaged his opponent.

With the Giant Guardian occupying the frost dragon's attention, the others reacted accordingly with relative composure.

Snowman maintained his spread arms as a sun-like halo appeared around him. It quickly spread outwards, warming up all his companions and giving them immense courage. Furthermore, he carefully ensured that it avoided the King of the North.

Not far from him, Siatas's hair flared up as she drew her bowstring. She shot out arrows that appeared to be formed by wind blades or lightning. Due to the massive target, every single one of her arrows had hit her target. Furthermore, all of the arrows struck the same spot—the frost dragon's "shoulder."

Mobet Zoroast worked with Groselle, occasionally stealing the thoughts the King of the North had and was about to execute, making it pause briefly. At other times, he would attempt to steal its powers, but in the few times he did, he didn't have any success.

With the pitch-black sword, Anderson carefully circled to the frost dragon's flank and attempted to strike a particular spot. Disciplinary Paladin Frunziar brandished his iron-black sword, using Prohibition and Imprison to aid Groselle's brawl with the frost dragon. Without his restraints, even if the giant was a Guardian, he would have long been sent flying, suffering from a fatal stomp or the spewing of breath.

Klein looked at Edwina and raised his hand to point at himself.

"Invisibility!"

He didn't know if she had the ability to mimic this power. If it wasn't possible, he needed to consider using other methods.

Edwina didn't ask why as her light blue and limpid eyes immediately reflected Gehrman Sparrow's body which lost its color and turned transparent.

Following that, Klein's figure became faint and vanished.

After confirming his condition, Klein quickly ran towards the intense clash between the giant and the dragon. With a roll, he arrived by the King of the North's left foot.

Then, as he focused on dodging Ulyssan's feet while it did battle, he emanated his spirituality to control the illusory black threads with the Spirit Body Threads vision he had long activated.

Right on the heels of that, he would roll or leap around, in search of space beneath or around the frost dragon.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

Silver lightning arrows and pure azure wind blades landed in a small region, shattering the armor plates of ice, tearing apart the resilient skin. Soon, the frost dragon's right shoulder was a swath of light-blue. The corresponding claw's motions also appeared to slow down indiscernibly.

Disciplinary Paladin Frunziar acutely noticed this point. As he dodged the icy-blue breath, he pointed in that direction and declared in ancient Hermes, “Death!”

With a bursting sound, the blue blood flowing from Ulyssan’s right shoulder instantly dried up, and the tear allowed its translucent bones to be seen.

At that moment, Edwina used a palm-sized brass mirror and reflected parts of Ulyssan’s body in it.

She reached out her right hand and grabbed at the mirror’s surface, pinching the reflection within. Then, she forcefully pulled outwards!

Ulyssan’s wound instantly worsened. It kept spreading as though it was about to lose one of its front claws.

It let out a tragic cry as it suddenly raised its body, standing on its hind legs.

Light blue light that was almost white surged out of the dragon. In a hundred-meter range, the temperature plummeted, followed by a fearsome force.

Suddenly, all the Beyonders were sealed in ice. Their bodies became extremely cold as they turned very stiff. They couldn’t help but tremble.

Siatas, Mobet, Edwina, Klein, Groselle, Anderson, and Frunziar all shared similar symptoms. The only one who barely maintained his mobility was the ascetic, Snowman, thanks to withstanding the training of being frozen countless times.

He maintained his spread arms, half-closed his eyes, and solemnly said, “God loves everyone!”

Sunlight tore through the wind and snow as the warmth began to melt the feeling of being frozen.

Bang!

Ulyssan sent Groselle flying with a claw, severely injuring the Giant Guardian by leaving a depression in his chest.

It temporarily ignored the rest as it targeted Snowman, blitz rushing him!

Snowman has no one protecting him… It's about to move beyond a five-meter radius… Klein watched this scene, feeling somewhat numb. He had the urge of running into the cave to pray to himself before using the Sea God Scepter above the gray fog to respond.

At that moment, a scarlet fireball appeared beside the ascetic before the frost dragon arrived. Then, it exploded without any reservations, sending him flying.

It was from the Strongest Hunter, Anderson.

At that moment, Edwina had produced a fireball in her hand and threw it at Ulyssan's back, but she failed to hit it.

She was creating a passageway for Klein to phase over with the fire!

She had learned from Danitz of this ability Gehrman Sparrow had!

Chapter 701 - Giants Never Retreat

◆ ◆ ◆

Ulyssan arrived at Snowman's location, but he failed to hit anything. It slid past, leaving behind a deep chasm.

Behind it, fireballs exploded afterward, producing bursts one after another. Klein's somewhat stiff figure flashed about thanks to the fire. The King of the North didn't manage to open up a gap from him as the five meters was maintained.

By the time Ulyssan came to a stop, Klein, who was still invisible, suddenly sensed something amiss. A corresponding scene appeared in his mind. He lunged forward as he clung close to the ground and appeared underneath the frost dragon.

Meanwhile, Ulyssan's thick and powerful tail had swung over, lashing it towards the nearby Siatas and Mobet.

Whoosh!

With a loud crack, Mobet was sent flying as he dodged the frost dragon's tail. As for Siatas, she failed to keep up. Although she had the aid of the gales to retreat and reduce the force, she had been struck in the side. The strike shattered the thick illusory scales that surfaced over her body while her ribs fractured. She was also thrown out, but thanks to the wind, she didn't fall too hard onto the snow.

If it were Mobet or Anderson, this strike would've instantly killed them. Thankfully, the Storm pathway had the corresponding illusory scales to protect her. Furthermore, every Sequence advancement brought about corresponding improvements. Siatas was only heavily injured, but she didn't lose consciousness. She didn't even completely lose her mobility.

At that moment, Ulyssan's neck moved as it widened its mouth, spewing out a light blue beam of light.

The beam of light swept past Snowman, freezing him into an ice sculpture. Edwina, Frunziar, and Anderson were blocked by the huge dragon's body. They couldn't help him in time with the use of their other Beyonder powers because of the distance.

Bang!

The frost dragon leaped up a little and turned around. When it hit the ground again, it left a slight tremor.

At that moment in time, it was clearly in a terrible state. The crack on its right shoulder was abnormally nasty. Although the frozen light blue liquid barely stopped the wound from worsening, its corresponding claw was nearly maimed and could hardly be used.

Many of the illusory scales on its body had shattered and abnormally dimmed; it was as though they had lost large amounts of vitality.

Regardless, it had severely injured and restrained three of its opponents. The situation was much better than before, especially with Groselle being seriously injured. It was no longer caught up in battle and could now attack as it wished.

Upon seeing this scene, Edwina's light blue eyes turned black again. Sticky vile thoughts slowly flowed.

She suddenly clenched her right palm, causing Ulyssan to raise its head in a roar. It was in excruciating pain as light blue liquid flowed from the corner of its eyes and mouth.

At that moment, the only thought on the frost dragon's mind was to purge the emotional disturbance from its Spirit Body.

Taking the opportunity, Edwina's eyes lit up and turned extremely pure. The light of dawn around her had quickly materialized into a sword.

She wanted to play the role of a Guardian to fend off the King of the North!

She believed that Gehrman Sparrow definitely had his reasons for staying by Ulyssan's side while being invisible. All he needed was time!

At that moment, a figure enveloped in the original light of dawn had charged at the frost dragon.

It was none other than the giant, Groselle!

His chest had sunk in. His grayish-blue skin was pale, and the broadsword in his hand had web-like cracks. However, he still bravely faced his enemy.

Groselle cleaved at his target like he was burning up his life, emitting light and warmth.

"Giants never retreat!"

Amidst his roar, Groselle parried the frost dragon's repeated blows, and he managed to dodge the ice-blue breath in time due to its maimed front claw.

"Imprison!" Frunziar ran over and began to restrict the King of the North's actions. Edwina also worked in tandem with him. Once Ulyssan's rage allowed it to escape the restraints, she triggered its emotions again, allowing the restriction to continue and prevent the charge from happening again. At this moment, Anderson switched between throwing burning-white spears and fireballs. Again and again, he dealt severe damage to the frost dragon. After Mobet managed to catch his breath, he continued stealing its thoughts or powers, stopping the frost dragon's attacks.

Ulyssan attempted to spread its wings a second time. It flew into the air a second time, sending snow flying, but with Frunziar adding another flight restriction, it could only give up when it sensed the difficulty in doing so.

Klein, who kept switching positions by its feet, gained a deeper control of its Spirit Body Threads. It had long reached the twenty-second threshold, but he failed to achieve success. This was because the King of the North's spirituality was extremely potent!

After a while, there was a clang. Groselle's broadsword was tainted by the frost dragon's breath as he was struck by its claw. The former shattered completely, turning into countless fragments as they flew everywhere.

With sputtering sounds, the invisible walls in front of Groselle reached their limit as they let through several fragments that impaled his head and chest.

Frunziar, who was similarly nearby, failed to dodge in time. The side of his armor collided with the fragments as his side was mangled.

"Giants never retreat!"

Groselle roared loudly once again. The light of dawn radiated from him once again as a sword made of pure light appeared in his palm.

As the dark red blood on his face flowed, he parried the frost dragon's strike.

At that moment, Klein was flicking the Spirit Body Threads before he finally saw the opportunity to achieve initial control.

Three seconds! Two seconds! One second!

Ulyssan's actions instantly froze as all its joints seemed to grow rust.

The frost dragon immediately became alert and sensed that the source of the danger came from beneath it. Seizing the moment before its thoughts came to a complete halt, it instantly made the decision to sit down.

It wanted to quash the despicable fella!

Suddenly, its mind went adrift, having forgotten what it wanted to do. And about twenty meters away, Mobet Zoroast's knees buckled as he sat strangely on the snow.

Klein took the opportunity to move his feet, walking to the side of the frost dragon's hind legs at a decent speed.

His invisibility was beginning to wear off. After all, the mimicked ability definitely couldn't compare with the original. He extended his hands halfway as his spirituality jumped, his actions akin to controlling a huge puppet.

Bang!

Ulyssan, whose thoughts were already slowing down, finally recalled what it wanted to do. Its hind legs slowly bent as its hefty figure smashed downwards, but all it did was send snow and dust flying.

No… No good… Have to… do that… Thoughts flashed through its mind sporadically as its heart suddenly contracted, condensing a terrifying light blue halo.

This was the Beyonder power stemming from its life. It could create a cold hell. With this, Klein and company would completely freeze. If not for Snowman's experience and powers being capable of restraining that state, more than one or two Beyonders would've died.

However, with it under Klein's control, everything Ulyssan tried to do was clearly impeded. Edwina acutely noticed the source of danger which she previously had no idea about. Immediately, she clenched her right fist, detonating the frost dragon's strong emotions.

The King of the North's figure trembled in slow motion as the light blue halo that it had just converged scattered out of control. It failed to interfere with its environment.

"…Ah…"

The frost dragon's mouth slowly opened as it let out a stuttering cry.

[image]

Siatas stood up with great difficulty the moment she recovered a little. Upon seeing the situation, she immediately held back her pain and drew her bow.

Her hair flared up again as heavy dark clouds appeared in midair once again. Two different silver bolts of lightning added radiance to each other as they surged onto the bow, forming a terrifying arrow that swirled with a bolt of lightning.

Siatas's face twisted as she released the arrow.

The silver bolt of lightning instantly penetrated Ulyssan's chest with a whoosh, tearing open a ghastly wound. Flames spewed and lightning bolts sparked inside its wound, causing greater damage.

At that moment, Anderson's eyes lit up. A blazing white flame enveloped his body as he transformed into a stream of light, accurately shooting straight for the wound.

Pitch-black marks rapidly surfaced on the frost dragon's abdomen as though someone was scribbling over it. Ulyssan's thoughts weren't as slow due to the intense stimulation. As it struggled to flap its wings, it soared up into the sky.

"Flying is prohibited here!" Frunziar added more restrictions in a timely manner.

Bang!

King of the North fell to the ground again as its pitch-black marks on its abdomen tore open. Light blue blood and damaged organs spewed out like a waterfall.

Anderson took the opportunity to jump away from the dragon's body. The flames over his body had extinguished as a transparent layer of ice covered him.

"Cold… It's really cold." He held Death Brachydont as he stiffly jumped away. His body was constantly trembling.

Klein, who had nearly allowed the frost dragon to escape his binding, achieved initial control again. He made Ulyssan's thoughts of making everyone present die with it slow down as it suffered from theft and explosions.

Its long neck slowly looked up as it let out a slow whimper as its body collapsed bit by bit.

During this process, Klein didn't attempt to stop Siatas and company's continued attacks. He knew very well that to turn the frost dragon into a marionette needed far more than five minutes. There were too many accidents that could happen in that span of time.

Frunziar stood straight while panting. With the side of his body mangled, he pushed forward his swordless palm and declared in ancient Hermes, "Death!"

Ulyssan's body trembled as it collapsed to the ground like a small mountain made of ice.

Light-blue light that was nearly white was released from its body as its flesh and body quickly disintegrated. Soon, the gigantic dragon corpse turned into a snow-laden heavy door that swung outwards.

Without anyone mentioning it, all the Beyonders present knew that it was a door leading to the outside world.

“Finally… Finally… Success…” Groselle laughed out loud as his voice grew softer.

Thud!

His nearly four-meter-tall figure fell forward as he held himself up with a knee. Following that, the light of dawn around him scattered as his aura was almost immediately gone.

“Groselle!” Siatas and company went over with great difficulty or great speed.

Groselle looked around him slowly, clenching his fist as he gave a good-natured laugh.

“We succeeded!

“Giants never retreat…”

His head with the single vertical eye drooped down when his voice came to a halt.

Chapter 702 - Epilogue

◆ ◆ ◆

“Groselle!”

Frunziar, who was closest to the giant, rushed to Groselle and caught him. Then, he slowly released his grip and stood up, as though he had just experienced a confusing dream.

Siatas tore out of Mobet’s arms, and ignoring the pain all over her body, she ran to Groselle’s side with the aid of the wind.

She bent down and carefully observed for a moment. Then, she nudged the giant and hysterically shouted, “Wake up! Wake up!

“It’s time for us to leave!”

Her voice softened into silence.

Mobet stood by the side, seeing the giant unable to maintain his body as it wavered. Finally, it fell to the ground with a thud.

He fell silent for a few seconds before exhaling.

At that moment, Anderson and Edwina had already run to Snowman. One used a flame, while the other mimicked holy light to quickly defrost him. As Klein was nearby, he directly arrived by Groselle’s side.

His Spirit Body Threads vision told him that the giant was dead. Only his spirit lingered, but it was beginning to scatter. This made his Damage Transfer powers completely useless.

From the moment Groselle ignited the light of dawn and engaged the frost dragon in a second battle, he must have prepared himself for death… Klein fell silent.

Mobet glanced at him and said with a rueful smile, “To be frank, I’ve not seen many giants. Most of my impression of them had come from books, teachers, and parents. I always thought that this race was cruel and violent, unintelligent creatures who were closer to monsters. However, Groselle wasn’t like that. He was frank, honest, and optimistic. Although he might appear rather silly, he knew better than anyone what was right and wrong.

“He told me that this was because he wasn’t one of those ancient giants. He wasn’t even a second or third generation giant… The cruel and violent giants similarly had the ability to reproduce and give birth. As for their descendants, there would be more rational ones appearing from time to time. These descendants would reproduce and have more descendants, allowing the entire giant race to escape from the confines of being monsters.

“Hehe, I don’t know if I should believe him, but his existence has proven the possibility…”

As Mobet said that, he suddenly paused as though immersed in his memories.

At that moment, Edwina and Anderson helped Snowman, whose body was still a little stiff, walk over. The ascetic struggled as he walked to Groselle’s side.

Looking at the tightly closed single eye, Snowman gestured the sign of the cross on his chest. He half-closed his eyes as he whispered a prayer:

“Father of all things, the great source of everything, here lies an honest and pure soul… May he enter ‘Your’ kingdom and receive eternal redemption…”

Siatas opened her mouth as though she wanted to say that Groselle's faith was in Giant King Aurmir, but she ultimately chose to keep silent. She watched in silence as Snowman completed the prayer.

"We have to leave as quickly as possible. No one knows how long this door will remain open!" the Elven Songster said as she surveyed the surroundings. Her sorrow and pain left her rather quick-tempered.

She looked down at the giant and added in a heavy voice, "We can't let Groselle's soul dissipate in this illusory world. We have to bring him back to reality!"

"Alright," Mobet immediately agreed. Klein and company didn't object either.

Edwina turned her head and shouted at the mountain cave of ice and snow.

"Danitz, you can come out now."

At that moment, Siatas's eyes darted around as though she had recalled something. She turned her head and said to Klein, "Do you have a pen and paper?"

"Yes." Klein took out the fountain pen and notes he brought around with him. This was a professional trait of being a Seer.

Siatas received it and began scribbling on it. She didn't stop, even when Danitz ran out of the cave.

Danitz kept silent. He was also in low spirits as well, lacking the joy and excitement he should have with the pending departure from this book world.

Finally, Siatas stopped writing and handed the paper and pen to Klein.

"The formula you wanted."

Aren't we completing the trade only after leaving? Klein mumbled silently in puzzlement. He received the pen and the Ocean Songster potion formula.

As though sensing his puzzlement, Siatas turned her head and looked at Groselle. She said with a heavy voice, “We are now companions.”

So you can give me the potion formula directly? Klein put the items away and nodded indiscernibly.

“I’ll give you the wine cup after we leave.”

Siatas didn’t respond. Instead, she nudged Mobet.

“Bring Groselle along.”

Mobet looked down at his body which wasn’t too muscular and his sharp, curvy leather boots. He gave a bitter smile of helplessness and walked to Groselle’s thigh.

Frunziar silently followed as he bent down to embrace the giant’s left shoulder.

Anderson looked around and tsked.

“All of you are injured or weak. Let me do it.”

He then lifted up Groselle’s other shoulder.

Klein was just about to help with the other thigh when Danitz rushed over to take the spot.

Upon seeing this, he stopped in his tracks. He then watched Anderson and company lift Groselle as they walked towards the illusory snow-laden door.

Klein; Edwina; Siatas, who stumbled as she walked; and Snowman silently followed beside them before they arrived at the exit formed from Ulyssan’s corpse.

At that moment, Klein surveyed the area and discovered that the light blue blood that flowed out from the King of the North had vanished. It was as though it had never existed.

Indeed, it's a conjured monster that's almost real… Klein walked behind as he watched Edwina take a few steps forward as she bent her back, placing her palms on the door.

Then, Vice Admiral Iceberg exerted her strength and pushed open the snow-laden door.

Silently, everyone saw everything disappear after turning illusory then transparent.

Rows of brownish-yellow bookshelves quickly appeared before their eyes, along with the orange-yellow sun which had just set below the horizon and a desk with a fountain pen, ink bottle, and paper.

This was Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina's cabin!

Klein quickly placed the middle of the table in his sights. Sitting on it was a book filled with yellowish-brown goatskin.

The book flipped to the end as a result of a formless wind. Klein and company then saw the epilogue.

"With the help of the crazy adventurer and the strongest hunter, Groselle fulfilled his promise. He led his teammates and slayed the King of the North, but he also ended up sleeping forever in the Nation of Frost."

"It didn't even give our ending… Siatas, where do you plan on heading to next?" Mobet released Groselle's thigh as he turned his head to ask the Elven Songster.

Siatas's eyes seemed to glaze over for a few seconds before she firmly said, "Seek out my race…"

Just as she said that, she suddenly saw Mobet's flaxen-colored hair rapidly turn white. His originally smooth face had obvious wrinkles.

In just a second, Mobet was dying of old age.

Siatas's heart tightened. Just as she was about to lunge forward, she was surprised to realize that she had lost the strength in her legs at some point in time.

With a thud, she fell to the ground and realized that the back of her hands were covered in the aged spots of an elder.

She instantly understood what was happening as tears immediately flowed down her face. She struggled as she attempted to crawl towards Mobet.

Mobet had similarly slumped to the ground as he crawled towards her while extending his right palm.

Siatas reached out her right palm and grabbed the wrinkled and thin hand.

They raised their heads with great difficulty as their pupils reflected one another.

The corners of their mouths curled up simultaneously before loosening weakly. Their eyelids drooped down and blocked out the light.

Klein, Edwina, Anderson, and Danitz failed to react in time to such changes. They had no idea what they could do as they helplessly watched Groselle's corpse rapidly rot as his flesh and blood evaporated, leaving his skeleton and Beyonder characteristic. As for Mobet, Siatas, Snowman, and Frunziar, they aged in seconds before breathing their last breath and repeating whatever had happened to Groselle's corpse.

Their clothes had either disappeared or turned to dust. Their souls dispersed at extraordinary speeds before they were gone.

“Even the one who lived inside the book for the shortest time had been there for 165 years…” Edwina muttered softly as she turned her head to look at that bones which faced the sea and sun.

[image]

It was none other than Disciplinary Paladin Frunziar. He was sitting on a chair looking west—where Backlund was.

Snowman was seated cross-legged to the side. His corpse maintained the posture of praying.

That’s right. They’ve lived in the book world for centuries or millennia. With the rules of the outside world, as non-demigods, they should’ve died long ago… I should’ve realized this… Why wasn’t I wary of this point at all? Could it be… Klein suddenly recalled the psychological influence on Mobet, Groselle, and company as he began having an idea.

He once again looked down at the book bound by goatskin. He believed that it had many, many more secrets.

“This fellow is rather interesting. He died just like that…” Anderson looked at Mobet’s corpse as he smirked.

At that moment, all the Beyonder characteristics had slowly condensed. However, Frunziar didn’t produce anything similar to that. Edwina observed for a moment before softly saying, “The potion he consumed was illusory, likewise for the strength he obtained. It’s just like that frost dragon.”

It was likely conjured in the book world. It was almost real… Klein sighed silently. He was momentarily at a loss for words, so all he could do was maintain Gehrman Sparrow’s silence.

In the next ten minutes, no one spoke in the captain’s cabin of the Golden Dream until the four Beyonder characteristics took form.

One of them was the size of a fist resembling a heart; it was covered with holes as it shimmered with the light of dawn. Another resembled a jellyfish; its translucent exterior seemed to contain azure-blue seawater, and inside it were vortices that were occasionally stirred by hurricanes or flashing silver lightning while emitting a faint, ethereal song. Another was a pure, bright crystal that exuded holiness. The last was a baby’s palm with five thin stretched-out fingers as it kept changing colors due to the environment.

“Sigh, we can’t just keep watching like this.” Finally, Anderson broke the silence. “Let’s split the Beyonder characteristics.”

Just as Edwina’s light-blue eyes were dyed with pangs of fire, the hunter shrugged and said with a wry smile, “I believe that they’ll have wishes such as this, as we were companions who fought together.”

Chapter 703 - Thank-you Present

◆ ◆ ◆

Seeing Edwina's gaze warm up, Anderson curled the sides of his mouth and shook his head with a sigh.

"You're always so inflexible. That's why you aren't able to become an artist your entire life."

After sighing again, he looked at the corpse on the chair.

"We can't keep watching. We have to do something. Doesn't Siatas wish to find her race? Let's bury her near an elven ruin in Sonia Island. Mobet looks like he wants to be with Siatas. We should bury them in the same tomb.

"Doesn't Frunziar want to return to Backlund? Burn his remains to ashes, store the ashes in a box, and bring it to the city when possible. If time permits it, then someone can look for his descendants. As for Snowman, it's not known if he believes in the ancient sun god or the original Creator. Who knows if the two are the same. Heh, to us, it's the same. There's definitely no way to find the corresponding cathedrals or altars. Therefore, the only thing we can do is bury him beside Groselle.

"Groselle… He wishes to return to the Giant King's Court, but that's a city in myths and legends. There's no way to find it in the real world. However, there are Giant ruins in the Northern and Southern Continent. We can bury him there and allow him to have a proper burial."

Giant King's Court… Backlund… Klein listened in silence as he deliberated for a few seconds.

“Leave the ashes of Groselle, Snowman, and Frunziar with me.”

He believed that in the time to come, the City of Silver would manage to reach the Giant King’s Court. When that happened, he could hand Groselle’s and Snowman’s ashes to Little Sun and allow him to bury the two ancient figures. As for Backlund, Klein needed to return to it, as it was the final destination of his travels. He could then bring back Frunziar, who had left his hometown for more than 165 years.

Edwina added, “The Golden Dream often goes to Sonia Island. I’ll handle Siatas’s and Mobet’s remains.”

“Alright. You’ll be in charge of the cremation later.” Anderson turned to look at Danitz as he chuckled and sighed. “Look, everyone plays a part in this. There’s no need to feel inferior.”

He originally imagined that Danitz wouldn’t understand his consoling and would glare at him angrily. To his surprise, this well-known pirate’s expression turned heavy as he nodded in silence.

“Ahem. As companions who faced the King of the North together, let’s each choose one. Treat it as though we’re inheriting their legacy.” Anderson gestured at the shimmering items on the floor. “Heh heh, these Beyonder characteristics definitely have remnants of their psyche. I wonder what kind of influence they will bring. Be it concocting it into a potion for consumption or getting an Artisan to craft it into an item, there should be something special about them. The former can be digested with the acting method, but nothing can be done about the latter. Ah, from the looks of it, you don’t know the acting method. Treat it as though I didn’t say a thing.”

The last two lines were said to Danitz.

Klein didn’t have the mood to lampoon Anderson. He looked at the four Beyonder characteristics and said, “Give Siatas’s to me.”

This was the main ingredient of an Ocean Songster!

Edwina thought for a moment before saying, “I’ll take Snowman’s.”

It corresponded to the Priest of Light which Klein already had one of. Hence, he didn’t choose it.

Anderson glanced at the remaining two Beyonder characteristics as his gaze paused at the strange item that resembled a baby’s palm.

“I have to say that this guy is very interesting. Perhaps it can be made into a mystical item that can talk to me. That way, everyone wouldn’t be too lonely.”

At that moment, the “giant’s heart” didn’t have an owner. Klein glanced at Danitz and indifferently said, “It’s yours.”

“Mine? I didn’t do anything. I didn’t participate in the battle…” Danitz was extremely surprised.

Klein said simply, “You scouted and took on a risk.”

To Klein, this was a form of compensation. This was because Danitz had chanted The Fool’s honorific name and knew Gehrman Sparrow’s secret. Therefore, he had to force the faith of The Fool on him; otherwise, it would only leave latent risks.

Although this was a risk which Danitz was willing to take, Klein still wished to compensate him. Of course, he hoped that Danitz would view it as a bestowment from The Fool.

And regardless of exchanging Groselle’s Beyonder characteristic for money, using it to purchase the corresponding formula and ingredients, or making it into a defensive mystical item, all of them would be very useful for Danitz.

“Take it,” Edwina said as she looked at Danitz.

“…Alright.” Danitz nodded after a few seconds of silence.

After distributing them, Klein took a few steps forward and bent his back to pick up Siatas's Beyonder characteristic. Looking at the azure-blue seawater sloshing inside the translucent membrane, he could vaguely hear the elf's beautiful singing.

Just as he stood up, he saw Danitz nodding as though he was responding to a question. However, no one had spoken!

Klein's gaze swept past Edwina's expressionless face and suspected if this Mysticism Magister was communicating with Danitz in a way others couldn't hear.

Seeing Danitz give an affirmative answer, Edwina reached out to pick up Groselle's Travels from the desk and closed it. She then handed it to Klein.

"This is a token of my gratitude."

"Without me, all of you would've defeated the frost dragon." Klein didn't reach out his hand as he looked at the book comprised of yellowish-brown goatskin.

"No, we definitely would've died. We had no way to defend against the King of the North's final frenzy. Besides, you were taking a huge risk entering the book." Edwina was like a teacher, explaining to him the reasons in a serious manner. "My only request is that you will tell me the answers if you figure out its origins and principles."

Klein was very curious about the secrets hidden in Groselle's Travels. He couldn't reject the offer as he reached out to take the magical book.

"Okay."

At this moment, the importance of the Giant King's Court became more obvious. He even thought of buying the black iron key belonging to the giants and was worth 5,000 pounds while he was at it. However, he didn't immediately make the request, to prevent Edwina from thinking that he was trying to fleece her.

He prepared to wait a few more hours, or perhaps tomorrow, before borrowing the key from Vice Admiral Iceberg. He would head above the gray fog to divine its worth before offering to purchase it.

Seeing Anderson and Danitz pick up their Beyonder characteristics, Edwina glanced at the darkening sky and said to Klein, “Where are you heading to next?”

“Bayam,” Klein replied frankly.

Edwina nodded.

“You can head there on the Golden Dream. We have plenty of rooms.”

Klein nodded indiscernibly as he agreed.

Who wouldn’t want a free ride?

After dealing with the remains and cleaning up the captain’s cabin, Edwina walked to the door and opened it.

There were gasps of pleasant surprise as the mood in the corridor turned jubilant.

“Alright, it’s fine now.” Edwina looked around as a smile formed from her cold expression.

The crew cheered loudly, making Anderson stroke his chin and frown.

“It’s more exaggerated than I imagined…” Without a doubt, his words were drowned by the ebullient cheers.

After everything came to an end, Klein and Anderson left the captain’s cabin under Danitzs lead and headed for other rooms on the same level.

Half-turning his body to look where they were, Anderson suddenly sighed.

“Is that it?

"Although we didn't get to know each other for more than half an hour, people who fought alongside you often leave a deep impression. But to think they suddenly died in a baffling manner. All of them…"

Klein was silent for two seconds before saying, "This world is filled with baffling deaths to begin with."

"…That's right." Anderson immediately smiled. "That's why optimism is needed to enjoy life. If I were to face death one day, I'll definitely be composed and cool, not losing my elegance at all. I would face it in the most handsome manner possible."

Don't raise flags for yourself… Klein didn't say a word as he entered the room Danitz opened for him. Anderson took the room beside him.

In the room, Klein stood at the window as he silently watched the darkening sea for nearly ten minutes. Then, he entered the bathroom, took four steps counterclockwise, recited the incantation, and went above the gray fog.

Sitting at the high-back chair of The Fool, he conjured The World's figure and made him make a praying pose.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, please inform The Sun that I've obtained the Sequence 6 Notary potion formula he wants. I also have clues to the Priest of Light formula and main ingredients. He can delay payment by putting it on credit and pay for it in the future."

Klein was doing this to prepare for his advancement to Sequence 4. The City of Silver had rich resources, so it was possible that particular main ingredients or difficult supplementary ingredients that were hard to come across would exist over there. Therefore, with him in no rush to get anything, he planned on letting Little Sun owe him.

The reason why he didn't say that he had obtained the main ingredients and potion formula for Priest of Light, was because he felt that it was too exaggerated. He planned on telling him once Little Sun was more or less done digesting the potion.

After checking the conjured scene twice, he transmitted it into the crimson star representing The Sun as a stream of light.

†

Afternoon Town.

Having just finished patrolling the periphery of the newly established camp, Derrick's vision suddenly blurred, and he saw an endless gray fog and an indistinct figure praying inside a dark red glow.

Immediately following that, he heard The World's voice and learned that his Notary potion formula had been acquired.

Mr. World's efficiency is really high. It's the exact number of days that he promised. Furthermore, he even got clues to the Priest of Light potion formula and main ingredients! Derrick felt joy after a moment of alarm.

He couldn't help but admire The World, wishing that he would possess similar strength and styles in the future.

Above the gray fog, the busy The World made another prayer after Mr. Fool confirmed that there weren't any problems with the Ocean Songster potion formula.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, please inform Mr. Hanged Man that I've already obtained the Ocean Songster's potion formula and the corresponding main ingredient. I'll give it to him during the next Tarot Gathering. Please get him to consider what he would like to provide in exchange."

Chapter 704 - Origins

◆

On the undulating sea, inside an ancient and dark sailboat.

Alger Wilson stood in front of a window, considering the report he had to produce when he arrived at Pasu Island. It was at that moment when the endless gray fog and a figure lording over him appeared.

He then saw a dark red glow and saw a blurry figure resembling The World. He then heard the figure's calm words.

After hearing it, Alger's eyes widened. He found it difficult to suppress his joy as a strong sense of bewilderment and shock emerged within his heart.

He remembered very clearly that The World had only promised The Sun to obtain the Notary potion formula within three days at the last Tarot Club gathering. He hadn't mentioned anything related to the Ocean Songster potion formula, but in just days, this gentleman had obtained the rare Sequence 5 formula and even its main ingredient!

What did he do exactly? Alger muttered silently to himself as he couldn't help but recall Gehrman Sparrow's cold and formidable appearance. He found the man more and more unfathomable.

Is this the advantage of being a Blessed? Yes, I just received the news yesterday that Gehrman Sparrow boarded the Future last week in Nas. On the one hand, it proves that Admiral of Stars is indeed The Hermit, and on the other hand, it means that what The World did last week was extremely important. For example, entering those dangerous waters in the eastern front to obtain something. Therefore, he had no choice but to seek The Hermit's help? As such, he advanced and became a Sequence 5 powerhouse?

This can explain how he obtained the Ocean Songster potion formula and its main ingredient in the span of a few days… But what did he do exactly? Don't tell me that he killed someone from the middle-upper echelons of the Church? Alger couldn't help but frown.

He quickly calmed his heart as he focused on another matter.

Although instantly obtaining the formula and main ingredient delighted and excited him, making him feel that becoming a Tarot Club member was a turning point in his life, he still needed to pay for it!

What can I give The World… Alger fell into deep thought, depressed to realize that he didn't have any items or money of equal value.

He subconsciously paced about his window.

†

Above the gray fog, the busy World vanished as Klein cast his eyes on Groselle's Travels which he had brought above the gray fog.

This book comprised of yellowish-brown goatskin was silently placed on the long bronze table. It didn't appear special in any way, appearing so ordinary that only history fans would notice it.

Klein conjured a pen and paper as he cautiously wrote the first divination statement: "This is the Spectator pathway's Uniqueness."

He was most worried about this point, as it meant that he couldn't seal the book above the gray fog. It might bring about unexpected accidents, but carrying it with him made it possible for him to be sucked into the book at any time. That would be very problematic.

He undid the spirit pendulum on his left wrist, composed himself, and attempted a divination.

When he opened his eyes, the topaz pendant was spinning counterclockwise.

It meant a negative result.

From the looks of it, this strange book isn't the Spectator pathway's Uniqueness. Then, there's no need to be too afraid… Klein thought for a few seconds before divining if Groselle's Travels was the corresponding item of the Spectator pathway's Sequence 1 or 2. To his surprise, the divination ended in a failure.

Hmm… he thought for a long while before penning a new divination statement: "Its origins."

The reason why Klein dared to do such a divination was because he knew very well that the Spectator pathway's Sequence 0 had long perished. There was a high chance that the Uniqueness was in the hands of the Twilight Hermit Order. Therefore, the chances of him having to face a real god was negligible.

Putting down the pen and holding the paper and book, Klein leaned back into the chair and recited the divination statement as he entered a dream with Cogitation.

The gray, hazy world cracked open as the sky turned extremely dark. It was as though strong winds were stirring the dark clouds.

In this dark environment, a sliver of light appeared first along the horizon as it grew bigger and clearer.

It was a floating continent!

It was a huge continent that could hold several cities!

The continent's periphery was grayish-white in color. Huge boulders revealed their outlines, and above them, there were dozens of erect hundred-meter-tall stone columns. They either stood independently or propped up magnificent ancient palaces.

Dragons of different colors—grayish-white, scarlet-red, yellowish-bronze—as well as some made of ice, were flying over the continent and the one-of-a-kind city. At times, they would land on a stone column to rest as they overlooked the land. At other times, they would enter the opulent palace and vanish from Klein's sight.

Among them, the smallest one was about the size of King of the North Ulyssan. The biggest spanned a hundred meters.

The scene quickly zoomed in as a palace with a height of over two hundred meters occupied Klein's vision.

Its interior had stone columns erected, propping up a dome. The space was so large that it allowed any dragon to move freely within.

The "camera" kept moving inward, and soon, Klein saw a book made of yellowish-brown goatskin. Its cover was blank as it floated in midair. Compared to its surroundings, it was amazingly small.

Right behind the book, a large shadow appeared.

Just as the shadow's silhouette was outlined, Klein felt his thoughts instantly explode!

His eyes spewed out with blood as his ears were left with two black holes. His mouth and nostrils had white matter stained with blood spew out from them.

The mysterious space above the gray fog gently trembled as it pacified everything. Klein quickly recovered as he gritted his teeth and rubbed his head.

It hurts! It freaking hurts!

It's in no way inferior to the Eternal Blazing Sun. I didn't even discern

‘His’ looks or gain any knowledge…

Was “He” Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt? According to Little Sun’s information, “He” had perished at the end of the Second Epoch. After so many epochs, spanning two to three millennia, just prying into the mystery was enough to put me in such a sorry state. If not for the gray fog’s screening and assistance, I would’ve died immediately… This mark is way too powerful, isn’t it?

There’s no way of comparing them. Its damage is inferior to the previous encounter with the Eternal Blazing Sun, but one had died long ago, while the other is still alive. It just begs the question if the ancient gods are stronger than the real gods of the present day…

Using nearly a minute to recover from the pain, Klein recast his gaze on Groselle’s Travels. He tapped the mottled table’s edge and muttered silently, This book’s “author” is Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt?

A book written by an ancient god, a storybook that can automatically deduce the ending?

What is “His” goal? When this book was formed, the Dragon of Imagination likely hadn’t encountered the ancient sun god and was fine. After all, it would take some time to go from the City of Miracles, Liveseyd, to the Giant King’s Court. And before Groselle was swallowed by the book, the Giant King’s Court was clearly still in existence.

Just a prank? A toy used to kill “His” boredom? Or could it be that the Dragon of Imagination had foreseen some of the future. “He” specially created this book to leave behind a chance for “Himself” or the dragons to resurrect. However, he underestimated the ancient sun god’s might, and he completely perished. It made the book unusable for millennia, so all it could do was naturally absorb characters into it to play out a story?

Klein made some guesses, but he wasn’t able to verify them. After some consideration, he thought of finding a chance to enter the book in search for clues.

In the future, I can enter as a Spirit Body above the gray fog. Once I encounter any trouble, I'll immediately return… Yes, I'll make the attempt after I'm no longer with Edwina and Anderson. I have to be careful and cautious… Klein nodded as he divined if leaving Groselle's Travels above the gray fog would bring undesirable changes to the mysterious space, but he was met with failure again.

As for the reason, he actually knew why. This was a place that transcended the spirit world. Divining about matters involving this area naturally failed if attempts were made to obtain revelations from the spirit world.

After deciding to frequently come above the gray fog to take a look so as to prevent any accidents, Klein threw Groselle's Travels into the junk pile. He then waved his hand, summoning a golden wine cup that had been partially flattened.

The cup had complicated patterns engraved on it, with the Elvish phrases "Calamity" and "Cohinem." Apart from that, there wasn't anything special.

With it in hand, Klein silently rubbed it for a few seconds.

†

Knock, knock, knock!

Klein politely knocked on the door to the captain's cabin.

"Is there something?" Edwina, who had let down her hair, looked at Gehrman Sparrow and asked.

Klein handed over the elf queen's golden wine cup.

"Put this in Siatas's tomb."

“…Alright.” Edwina fell silent for two seconds before nodding and receiving it.

She habitually studied the engravings and symbols on the cup before withdrawing her gaze in embarrassment. She then looked out the window and said, “They’ll be organizing a bonfire party. Will you be participating?”

“No.” Klein shook his head.

“I understand. I don’t plan on participating either. Not everyone is like Anderson, who can quickly raise his spirits,” Edwina said with pursed lips.

Actually, it’s not necessarily a bad thing… Klein was momentarily at a loss for a response. And apart from “giving lessons,” Edwina wasn’t good at socializing. Immediately, the two of them fell silent.

About ten seconds later, Klein silently inhaled and broke the silence.

“Are you selling that key that originates from the giants?”

“Yes.” Edwina thought about it before glancing at her collector’s room. She added, “I can lend it to you for studying. You can decide whether to buy it before leaving the ship.”

Chapter 705 - Mythical Creature

◆ ◆ ◆

…You didn't even need me to mention it… I was still a little embarrassed to raise the subject… Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief. After considering Gehrman Sparrow's persona, he calmly said, "I do not take advantage of others."

Just as he said that, he felt a little regretful. He was afraid that Vice Admiral Iceberg would really change her mind.

Edwina's light-blue eyes moved slightly as she said, "The only condition is that you have to tell me the answer to anything you figure out."

Phew… Klein didn't harp on the issue as he nodded.

"Okay."

About a minute later, he carried an iron black key the size of a heptachord.

And at that moment, there was a series of fervent singing from the deck.

"Your eyes are so mesmerizing that it feels like the light from dawn;

"When night comes and the sun has gone down, I almost start feeling melancholy; fervently awaiting your light;

"Oh, your eyes are so mesmerizing that it feels like the light from dawn[1]…"

Klein subconsciously went to the window and looked out. He saw that the bonfire had already been lit, and the Golden Dream's crew, that had nothing to do on their hands, were gathered around it. They were either roasting meat or fish as they guzzled beer. Otherwise, they would be dancing a rather random but lively dance alongside Singer Orpheus's singing. It was a very merry atmosphere.

The oily roasting exuded a tantalizing aroma that wafted upwards. Klein saw that Anderson Hood was also among the pirates, drinking in high spirits and eating happily. From time to time, he would shout a few words and say a joke, as though he was already a member of the Golden Dream. He was no longer ostracized like before. Instead, Danitz didn't appear among them. At the very least, Klein didn't see him near Iron Skin or Barrel.

As long as he doesn't provoke others, Anderson is rather good at socializing… This might be the intelligence gathering powers of a Conspirer? Yes, he might've transferred the hatred onto me…

I wonder if Danitz will work hard after what happened. If he can improve himself and acquire greater strength, then as The Fool, I wouldn't only have myself as a subordinate. I don't have to always appear as a trinity. Heh heh, this secret existence of mine finally has a real believer, someone I can directly order to do things, even though it's only limited to Danitz… I have to say, it's still quite pathetic…

As Klein reflected over the matter, he prepared a ritual to sacrifice the giants' key above the gray fog.

At that moment, his spiritual perception was triggered as he instinctively activated his Spirit Vision and looked to the side.

White bones were thrown up as they materialized into the messenger with black flames in its eye sockets.

Half of the messenger's body was in the lower deck, so it was nearly level with Gehrman Sparrow without tearing through the ceiling.

However, the palm holding the letter remained huge, as though it could easily wrap it around Klein's head.

Mr. Azik was quite quick to reply this time… As Klein politely nodded, he received the letter and unfolded it.

Just as he was about to read its contents, he suddenly realized that the skeleton messenger remained standing there. It didn't vanish once it delivered the letter.

"Is there something?" Klein asked in surprise.

Just as he said that, an idea flashed through his mind as he quickly added, "If there's a need to reply, then I will summon you again."

The skeleton messenger's huge head nodded as its body collapsed like a waterfall before returning to the Underworld.

Ma'am Reinette Tinekerr previously waited for me to give a reply, same for the skeleton messenger this time… Is this some new regulation the messenger world has enacted? Pui! There's no such thing as a messenger world. They're all individually summoned, and most messengers are just doing it part-time… Yes, the skeleton messenger gave me an aggrieved feeling… Klein shook his head without much thought before focusing his attention on Mr. Azik's letter.

"…To put it simply, attaining godhood begins from the moment one advances to Sequence 4. It's a slow process of evolution towards a mythical creature. This process comes to an end at Sequence 2. Therefore, there is a qualitative difference between an angel and a saint. In ancient times, the former are even called subsidiary gods.

"Every demigod, including saints and angels, have their own mythical state. This is a nonhuman form which is a potpourri of complex knowledge, godhood characteristics, and secret symbols. Ordinary people will suffer tremendous damage from a simply glance, to the point of losing their minds. And as the demigod grows in strength, the damage only grows more potent and irresistible. Therefore, creatures at this level have to constantly control themselves to not expose this form, or just from their very existence alone, it can bring about a catastrophe to their surroundings.

"To demigods, one of the main traits of losing control is losing reason. When that happens, they will no longer be able to restrain their mythical creature form.

"However, a saint's mythical form isn't complete. There are clear characteristics of their original race. Strictly speaking, one is a true mythical creature only after they reach Sequence 2…"

I wonder if the blood that Ma'am Hermit wants is the blood of a mythical creature in the true sense of the phrase, or if the criteria can be relaxed… Heh, I wonder if the placenta blood from Will Auceptin's birth counts. "He" is a Sequence 1 Snake of Fate, an absolute mythical creature, just not in the correct form… I'll accumulate more matters before writing on the paper crane to ask him. Yes, there are only two more times, so I need to do it for serious matters. However, I'll be returning to Backlund soon… With this in mind, Klein silently calculated when Will Auceptin would be born.

He didn't make an accurate recollection, but based on his impressions, Will Auceptin had been conceived last November, and it was currently only the middle of April.

Therefore, "He" will be born in July? Perhaps earlier… Klein thought without great certainty. After all, he didn't have a girlfriend or wife in his previous life, much less having a child.

He quickly threw those thoughts to the back of his mind and began setting up the ritual. He sacrificed the giants' key to himself. The reason why he didn't use his Spirit Body to carry it, it was simply because it was too heavy.

Soon, he arrived above the gray fog. He made the iron black key fly onto the surface of the bronze table as he seriously inspected it a few times.

After confirming that there wasn't anything abnormal about it, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote the divination statement: "The place this key corresponds to."

With the paper in hand and his arm around the key, Klein leaned back into his chair and fell asleep while chanting.

This time, the gray, hazy world first presented a distorted translucent screen. As the scene zoomed in, he immediately appeared before a ten-meter-tall door.

The door was mainly gray and blue in color and on its sides were various engraved symbols, labels, and patterns. They were stately and mysterious.

The light of dusk shone over faintly, dyeing the door with a clear sense of decline. It was like the daylight was gone for the world, with only eternal eventide replacing it.

Right on the heels of that, Klein noticed that the opening in the door's left side, at a height of three to four meters, there was a pitch-black socket which was equivalent to an adult's fist.

The scene quickly shattered as Klein opened his eyes.

A door similar to the black cloister's but of a different color… The light of dusk… My interpretation is that it represents a particular door of the Giant King's Court… Yes, the first distorted translucent screen should be the barrier between the Forsaken Land of God and the outside world. Therefore, without the gray mist eliminating interference, there's no way to see the scene via divination… Klein tapped on the edge of the mottled table as he made judgment.

He had already decided to buy the giants' key!

After going through the hassle of bringing 5,000 pounds in cash back to the real world, Klein tidied the items on the table and held a thick stack of cash. He left his room once again and walked to the captain's cabin.

Heh, As a Desire Apostle, Kircheis's bounty is equivalent to a key and 1,000 pounds… Klein glanced at the cash in his hand as he knocked on Vice Admiral Iceberg's door again.

With a creak, Edwina appeared by the door. When she saw him holding the cash, her brows twitched as she widened her eyes. She said with a brightened expression, "You have results?"

Klein tersely acknowledged.

"I already obtained results that it's likely related to the Giant King's Court."

"The Giant King's Court as spoken in myths?" Edwina's eyes lit up as she asked.

Klein gently nodded in affirmation.

Edwina's lips quivered as though she wished to inquire further, but ultimately, she didn't say a word. She took the 5,000 pounds in cash.

She turned back to look at the rows of bookshelves in the captain's cabin and fell silent. She finally said to Klein seconds later, "If you're interested in these books, you can borrow them anytime in the day."

My only request is… Klein secretly predicted what Vice Admiral Iceberg was about to say.

"My only request is that you can talk to me about history whenever you're free," Edwina paused before she added with her eyes appearing bright.

Klein chuckled inwardly and said after some thought, "Alright, but I will not answer every question."

Meanwhile, he silently prayed inwardly, Let's hope Vice Admiral

Iceberg's collection has methods to create higher-level charms…

"No problem." The corner of Edwina's mouth twitched as her expression became livelier.

"See you tomorrow." Klein took off his hat and pressed it to his chest as he bowed to bid farewell.

Edwina also seriously returned the pleasantries.

"See you tomorrow."

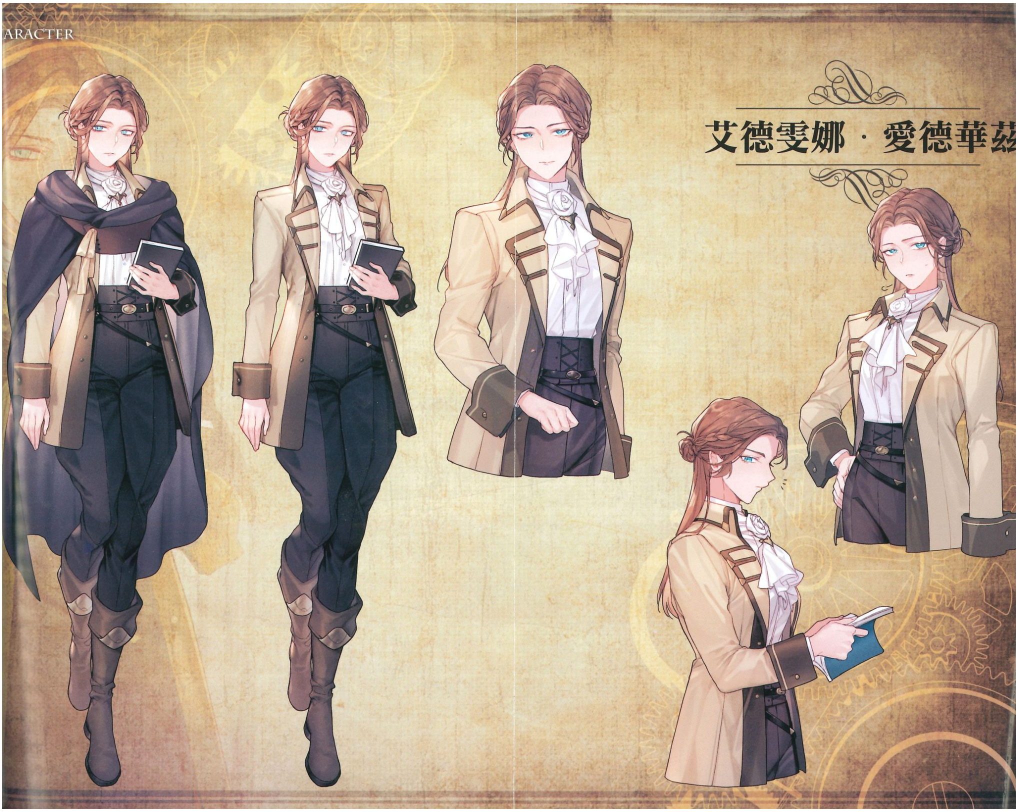
†

Backlund. Iron Gate Street, outside Bravehearts Bar.

Emlyn White got off a carriage, pushed open a wooden door, and walked in.

He was then triggered by the mixture of smells inside as he pinched his nose in contempt.

He hadn't had much progress in the competition to hunt for the Primordial Moon believers; therefore, he planned on heading to the Bravehearts Bar which Sherlock Moriarty often mentioned. He was there to find the rather informed black-market arms dealer, Ian. The latter's name was acquired by Emlyn through other means.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Adapted from ’O sole mio.

Chapter 706 - That Man

◆

Turning his body to the side, Emlyn avoided a bulldozing drunkard. While swatting his clothes with a frown, he continued jostling towards the bar counter.

During this process, he didn’t seem to be doing anything, but the surrounding customers would always fail to touch him. Be it in terms of speed, agility, or his balance and coordination, he had reached a rather terrifying level.

Finally, Emlyn arrived at the bar counter as he rapped the wooden counter.

“Where’s Ian?”

The bartender glanced at him. Without a word, he kept his head low and wiped his glass cups.

“…” Emlyn stood there in surprise, wondering if he had done something wrong that earned him nothing. This angered him a little as he wished to reach out and yank the bartender out.

However, he believed that such acts were lacking as a gentleman. He forcefully held down his emotions and looked around and discovered that everyone was drinking.

With a thought, Emlyn experimented by saying, “A cup of Aurmir red wine.”

The bartender’s actions paused as he looked up and gave the handsome, black-haired, red-eyed man an odd look.

“We don’t have that available.”

This was the finest red wine in the world. The price was staggering!

Emlyn wasn’t dumb, and he could tell from the bartender’s eyes that he had ordered something he shouldn’t have. On careful thought, he said, “One glass of Southville beer.”

“5 pence.” The bartender finally lowered the cup and cloth.

Emlyn took out a 1-soli note and said, “Keep the change.”

“Thank you.” The bartender pointed left and said, “Ian is in Card Room 1.”

Emlyn immediately smiled, feeling happy and proud that he had resolved an actual problem. He didn’t take the cup of Southville beer and, instead, turned around and walked straight to Card Room 1.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He politely knocked on the door.

“Please come on in.” A rather adolescent voice sounded.

Emlyn adjusted his collar and pushed open the door, only to realize that the scene inside was unlike what he had expected.

He believed that since it was a card room, there would be a bunch of people surrounding a long table, playing games like Texas, but to his surprise, there were indeed about eight people, but there weren’t any poker cards. A piece of paper was placed in front of every participant as they seemed to be recording something. Apart from that, there were only fountain pens and multi-faced dice on the table.

Emlyn instinctively cast his gaze on the youngest person inside. It was similarly a handsome boy with red eyes. He looked about sixteen.

“Ian?” Emlyn asked.

Ian nodded with a smile.

“That’s me. Sir, is there something I can help you with? Or do you wish to join our game?”

“Game?” Emlyn returned with a question.

Ian chuckled.

“Yes, game. I don’t enjoy playing cards or billiards, but something needs to be done when spending the whole day here. I gained some inspiration from Emperor Roselle’s biography. It’s to organize a few people to sit down and attempt a tabletop adventure.

“In this game, as long as you abide by the rules, you can be anyone—a doctor, an adventurer who loves eating vegetables, a private detective who always carries a wrench and pipe, or an adventurer who enjoys radical ideas. Together, they can head to some ancient castle and seek out the history hidden within, battling all kinds of monsters along the way.

“Sounds a little interesting.” Emlyn had a feeling that this game suited him well.

“Haha, do you want to join? We’re currently embroiled in a ploy and are facing a powerful ancient vampire. He appears to have a handsome face, but beneath his skin are boils formed from his boiling blood,” Ian warmly invited him.

Sanguine, thank you very much! Emlyn’s expression twitched indiscernibly as he directly said, “I have a mission for you.”

“Alright… Let’s go to the room next door.” Ian took his round hat and old satchel and stood up.

The billiard room next door had no one in it. The boy closed the door with great familiarity as he surveyed the area before looking at Emlyn.

"Sir, I do not know you. Might I know who introduced you?"

Emlyn lifted his chin and smiled.

"Sherlock Moriarty"

Just as he said that, he suddenly looked left and right as he raised his hand to pinch his nose.

"So it's Detective Moriarty." Ian heaved a sigh of relief without hiding it. "I'm assured then. By the way, didn't he go on vacation to Desi Bay? When will he be back?"

Emlyn lowered his right hand as he said without a change in expression, "He isn't back yet. I've been to his rented apartment.

"To be frank, a normal vacation should've ended by the end of January. It's already April."

"Could it be that something happened to him?" Ian asked worriedly.

Emlyn recalled the powers and mysteriousness which Sherlock Moriarty presented as he shook his head.

"Perhaps he's caught up in a complicated case."

Ian didn't speak further as he asked, "How may I address you? What mission do you have?"

"You can call me Mr. White." Emlyn took out a piece of paper that resembled a bounty notice. "Help me find these five people."

Ian received it and carefully flipped through it for a while.

"20 pounds for an effective clue; 150 pounds for an exact location. Is that acceptable?"

"No problem." Emlyn felt that the price was just too cheap.

Compared to this, the prices seen at the Tarot Club were way more exaggerated.

Ian folded the piece of paper and said, “Mr. White, how do I contact you if I have any clues?”

“South of the Bridge, Harvest Church.” Emlyn had already thought of the answer.

Upon hearing that, Ian gave him an odd look.

“You’re a believer of Earth Mother? That’s rare in Backlund.”

“I’m not!” Emlyn firmly shook his head. “I’m only doing volunteer work over there.”

Without waiting for Ian to speak, he asked, “How did you inherit those red eyes?”

This was something he had wished to ask when he first saw Ian. This was because red eyes were a trademark characteristic of Sanguine in ancient times. However, there was a long period of time when humans and Sanguine copulated in the Fourth Epoch. They were all residents of an Empire; hence, with the widespread fellowship, many descendants were produced. There was an increasing number of red-eyed mixed-bloods as they passed down their genes, becoming an uncommon eye color for humans.

To put it simply, every red-eyed human had a Sanguine ancestor.

Ian replied in surprise, “My father… I’ve no idea how much further up the family tree, as I was a vagabond.”

From the looks of it, he isn’t connected to the Sanguine… Emlyn handed over a twenty-pound deposit, feeling somewhat disappointed before turning to leave the billiard room.

After he left, Ian didn’t immediately return to the card room. Instead, he closed the door and said into the air, “Detective Moriarty hasn’t returned to Backlund. I'm a little worried about him."

A figure suddenly appeared in the billiard room. She had a pale face with exquisite features while wearing a black bonnet. Dressed in a black Gothic regal dress, she was none other than Wraith Sharron.

"He's doing fine," Sharron replied without any perturbation in her tone. Her figure dematerialized before vanishing.

"You always says the same thing. Don't tell me that you've always been in contact with Detective Moriarty…" Ian mumbled softly as he picked up a newspaper in the corner of the billiard room.

Placed on it was the Tussock Times, and beneath it was News at Sea. The latter was mainly used to report the situations of the different colonies of the Loen Kingdom and matters at sea, but due to technological restrictions, the News at Sea that reached Backlund was severely outdated. It wasn't of much use to people who needed it, so subscription numbers were low, and the business was floundering.

Later, with a suggestion from a new chief editor, the newspaper's style changed. It had more rumors out at sea, as well as all sorts of strange matters revolving pirates and adventurers. It appeared more like stories rather than actual news reports.

To people's surprise, this change in style was welcomed. As it involved ghosts, specters, sea monsters, and treasures; it became the semi-literate people's prime choice to flaunt their knowledge to the illiterate at the various bars. After all, although the stories seemed fake, they were sufficiently interesting.

Ian casually flipped through the newspapers without finding any content of interest. He only had a deep impression on one of the reports in News at Sea.

"According to our correspondent, on the night of the 25th March, the King of Immortality fleet attacked a ship heading from East Balam to

Feysac and plundered all its goods and money. And living up to his title, Slaughterer Kircheis finished a bloody massacre…”

These pirates are really preposterous… Ian shook his head and lowered the newspapers. He returned to the card room and continued his game.

Outside the bar, Emlyn boarded a carriage and leaned onto the carriage wall as he watched the street lamps move past him.

He pinched his nose again and silently muttered, A Wraith?

This arms dealer sure is resourceful… Not bad!

Emlyn closed his eyes as he felt more hopeful about his entrusted mission.

†

The sunlight shone in from outside, dyeing the captain’s cabin golden.

Edwina sat on a chair with a book in hand as she looked opposite her.

“So, you also believe that the Solomon, Trunsoest, and Tudor Empires all coexisted?”

“This is a necessary condition for the War of the Four Emperors,” Klein simply replied.

He held a book titled “Book of the Three Worlds.” It originated from a Life School of Thought member before it landed in Vice Admiral Iceberg’s hands. It described the material world, the spirit world, and the world beyond rationality. It included some information on charms, with rather profound parts. Klein was seriously reading information on this in a bid to better use the Sea God Scepter and the Worm of Time.

Klein had actually discovered that the books collected by Vice Admiral Iceberg were various ancient texts that were rather unsystematic. This was quite different from the characteristics of the Church of the God of

Knowledge and Wisdom which backed her. Therefore, he guessed that the internal, orthodox, systematic mysticism knowledge of the Church was not public.

Edwina was just about to ask again when she suddenly realized the Golden Dream's cruising speed gradually drop. She looked out the window and after a few looks, said crisply, "We've arrived in Bayam."

Chapter 707 - Danitz's Request

◆

We've reached Bayam? Klein stood up upon hearing that and looked out. He saw the familiar Resistance's private harbor.

He didn't show his surprise as he commented calmly, "Faster than I expected."

It was three hours faster than he had expected!

"It's faster than I expected as well." Edwina looked away and agreed with Gehrman Sparrow.

However, these are all unimportant details… Klein lowered his head, pretending as though he was browsing through the rest of the Book of the Three Worlds. He then handed it to Vice Admiral Iceberg.

"That marks the end of this discussion."

Edwina looked at the book in silence. She opened her mouth, but no words came out.

She reached for the Book of the Three Worlds and placed it on the table in passing. Following that, she got up and bowed.

"I look forward to future discussions with you. Your expertise in ancient history is admirable."

If Klein had been acting as himself, he would've said a few words of humility while praising Vice Admiral Iceberg for her breadth of knowledge; unfortunately, he was the crazy adventurer, Gehrman

Sparrow. All he did was nod and say, “We are collaborators.”

It meant that there would be opportunities in the future.

He didn’t speak further as he left the captain’s cabin and returned to his room. He packed his suitcase with a relaxed mind, waited for the Golden Dream to dock, and then headed straight for the deck.

At that moment, there were many crew members gathered on the deck. It included Gourmet Bru Walls, Singer Orpheus, and Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson, most of the crew who were upper echelon members of the pirate crew with their heads worth a handsome bounty.

They gave sincere smiles as they happily kept waving at Klein. Among them, Barrel and Iron Skin were filled with excitement as they belted out a song for their departing guest.

When did I have such a good relationship with them? Klein lampooned as he walked past the pirates until he arrived at the gangway.

Anderson Hood was there with his hair combed, his clothes neat and tidy. He said with a laugh, “They probably mean to say goodbye, or should I say—let’s hope we don’t meet again.

“Gehrman, do you know how dangerous a situation you were in? You nearly became the public enemy of every crew member. They were so eager to steer the Golden Dream to Bayam in five minutes.”

Klein was just about to answer when he saw Danitz jog over with a black cloak draped over him.

This fellow has really resolved himself to do better, and he plans to leave the Golden Dream to go at it alone? This is a little incompatible with my plans. Only by being around Vice Admiral Iceberg and the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom would his value as a believer of The Fool be accentuated… However, it doesn’t matter. If Danitz can grow stronger, it will be even more meaningful… Klein habitually measured the pros and cons before ignoring his other thoughts. He looked at Danitz in silence and waited for him to speak.

Danitz opened his mouth with a serious expression, but nothing came out of it. All he did was give a hollow chuckle and say to Anderson, “Do you have the potion formula for Conspirer?”

“Yes,” Anderson said with a chuckle. “But I have no plans on selling it to you.”

Danitz’s expression darkened as Anderson continued, unfazed, “What’s the point of obtaining the Conspirer potion formula now? Any attempts to advance now will only result in failure!

“Pal, it’s best you redo your acting as a Hunter, followed by a Provoker, and then a Pyromaniac. Heh, it’s best that you get an Artisan to make that giant’s heart into a defensive mystical item. Otherwise, I’m afraid you would be killed by others when the time comes.

“After you’re sure about your chances, get the Conspirer potion formula from your captain. She has it.

“However, I believe that will be the end for you. Heh, Conspirer has very high requirements.”

Danitz’s face twitched as he was being mocked, but he remembered every word Anderson told him. This was because the man before him had the title of “Strongest Hunter,” who had rich experience on this pathway. Furthermore, he had a vague idea that the key was “acting.” He suspected that the captain’s guidance from before was directed at this, just that it was rather vague.

“There will come a day when I’ll let you know what a true Conspirer is!” Danitz stubbornly retorted before looking at Gehrman Sparrow.

He cleared his throat as he said without daring to look into his eyes, “I’ve already made the request with Captain. In the future, I’ll be in contact with the Resistance, and I’ll often be in Bayam.”

It means you don't wish to leave the Golden Dream, but you will find opportunities to hone yourself? Heh, why does it feel like you're reporting to your boss? Klein chuckled inwardly as he gave a terse answer.

Danitz was instantly relieved as he felt a lot better. If it wasn't because his companions were watching behind him, he would've diligently helped Gehrman Sparrow carry his suitcase and send him all the way to the dock.

After watching Gehrman and Anderson leave, he cautiously decided to pray to The Fool every day starting tonight. He wanted to show his devotion to prevent any accidents from happening to him.

Inside the Resistance's private harbor, Anderson watched as Gehrman Sparrow circled into another newly built road before walking out of the woods via the shortest distance.

"You seem familiar with this place? This road wasn't here the last time I was here," Anderson said, partially bored and poignant.

Of course, there are so many people praying to me every day telling me what they've done, and I occasionally give them a response, such as directing them to mend this road… Klein thought smugly but replied with a stoic expression, "Where does your friend stay?"

"In a manor in the Bayam City outskirts." Anderson sped up his pace as he led the way.

An hour later, he brought Klein to a manor. There was an eclectic smell from various spices, mixed with an indescribable ersatz exoticism.

After informing the gatekeeper of their intentions, the two didn't wait long before they saw a man of medium-sized build of less than 1.75 meters walk over. By his side were his butler and valet.

The man's skin was somewhat sallow, with quite a tan. His contours were gentle, but his eye sockets were much more recessed than most

Loenese.

To Klein, he could basically determine the man's background. He was a highlander from the Feynapotter Kingdom.

The man was already a little plump, with a rotund, amiable face. He immediately laughed when he saw the Strongest Hunter.

"Anderson, you aren't dead yet?"

"I'm waiting to attend your funeral," Anderson replied without standing on ceremony. He then turned sideways to Klein. "Ukfa Connerchris, the doctor of my former team."

He didn't introduce Gehrman Sparrow to Ukfa and said with a grin, "I've brought you business."

Ukfa instantly understood Anderson and didn't ask in front of his butler and valet. He led the duo towards the main building in the manor.

Along the way, Klein saw buildings like windmills, bakery, brewery, and militia training grounds. The entire manor appeared like a miniaturized kingdom. Apart from the lack of a blacksmith, it was completely self-sufficient. Most iron products were cheaper buying them from the city than personally making them.

This is the pastoral lifestyle… Klein sighed silently as he followed Ukfa into the house and to his study.

Ukfa didn't call the mistress of the house over, nor did he carry his child to meet Anderson and Klein. Clearly, he didn't wish for them to have any contact with the mysterious world. Hence, after he closed the door, he went straight to the point.

"What's the business?"

"Didn't you wish to sell that revolver? He has intentions on buying it."

Anderson pointed at Klein. “Gehrman Sparrow.”

“Gehrman Sparrow? The powerful adventurer who easily hunted Wormtongue Mithor?” Ukfa said in surprise, but he didn’t show any fear.

Although he had distanced himself from the adventuring lifestyle, he knew that he couldn’t be careless. Therefore, while in Bayam, he would proactively keep himself informed to prevent trouble from happening.

Anderson scoffed when he heard that.

“That’s old news!

“This gentleman’s achievements include successfully hunting Slaughterer Kircheis while living to this day.”

“Kircheis? The second mate of the King of Immortality?” Ukfa’s expression changed. He couldn’t hide his horror as he secretly turned wary.

“That’s right!” Anderson said with a self-deprecating smile. “In the pirates’ playground, he’s the one who’s recognized as the Strongest Hunter.”

Ukfa gulped as he looked at Klein. He couldn’t help but smile and say, “I believe you have the ability to buy Death Knell.”

“Death Knell?” Klein asked with piqued interest, but he didn’t show it.

“That’s the name of the revolver. It has accompanied me for a decade. Sigh, if it’s not because it overlaps in functionality with one of my other mystical items, and isn’t of much use for me at present, I wouldn’t be willing to sell it,” Ukfa replied with a sigh.

At that moment, Anderson tsked with laughter.

“That wasn’t what you said before. You said you preferred farming tools.”

A Planter… Klein made the corresponding judgment based on Anderson's words and Ukfa's expression.

Meanwhile, the corresponding potion names flashed through his mind: Sequence 9 Planter, Sequence 8 Doctor with the ancient name Healing Pastor, and Sequence 7 Harvest Priest.

It's no wonder Anderson introduced him as his former team's doctor… Klein thought for a moment and said, "Do you know Frank Lee?"

"Haha, no. Although I'm from Feynapotter, my formula and ingredients were obtained by myself, one at a time. I had nothing to do with the Church of Earth Mother. Therefore, I wouldn't dare to return to Feynapotter. However, I've heard of Frank Lee. He's someone who gives the Church quite a headache," Ukfa replied frankly. "He's only a Sequence 6 Biologist, but he's given such importance by the Church. I really do wish to meet him if there's a chance."

No you won't, you will regret having that thought… Klein could tell from Ukfa's answer that he believed in Earth Mother and was likely a powerful Sequence 5 Beyonder.

By his side, Anderson's face twitched when he heard Ukfa. He said with lingering fear, "That guy does give one a headache. In a certain sense, you can call him a devil. His powers and thoughts have exceeded the level of a Sequence 6… Alright, let's not talk about him. Whenever his name pops up, I still remember the milk that was jettisoned."

Ukfa looked at the duo in puzzlement as he restrained his looks of curiosity. He walked to the table side, opened a drawer, and pulled out an iron black revolver that looked a little longer than an ordinary revolver.

"This is Death Knell," Ukfa introduced it solemnly.

Chapter 708 - Revolver Worth 9,000 Pounds

Death Knell? Striking the enemy’s death knell with every shot? I like this name… Klein controlled his facial expressions as he went forward without any anticipation or excitement on his face. He reached out to receive the iron black revolver with a slightly long barrel.

He was originally very worried that Ukfa would raise the price if he showed any strong desires for it. This was common in any transaction, but on second thought, with Gehrman Sparrow’s reputation, and with Anderson, the Strongest Hunter of the Fog Sea, as a witness, it was unlikely that Ukfa Connerchris would offend him despite possibly being a Sequence 5 Beyonder. After all, he had quite the adventuring circles and had hoped to lead a quiet and settled life. He definitely had reservations that the crazy adventurer might sneak into the manor in the middle of the night despite not flaring up in front of him.

Therefore, his attempts to maintain his calm and composed attitude became one of simply maintaining his persona.

Realizing that Gehrman Sparrow was seriously inspecting and studying Death Knell, Ukfa gave a detailed introduction.

“Its powers are rather uniform: to reap the lives of others. There are three methods:

“First is Weakness attack. There’s no need to meet any conditions. Just directly inject your spirituality and pull the trigger. It will allow you to discover the target’s weaknesses from a mysticism angle. In other words, it would be the aspects where defenses are weaker, and it will provide you with the corresponding accuracy; thus, resulting in extraordinarily terrifying damage.

“The second is Lethal attack. You have to cock the hammer before shooting. Its distinguishing feature is that wherever you hit the target, it will be equivalent to an attack on their weak spot. And if you really do strike the true weak spot, it will be capable of dealing a lethal blow to an enemy without overly strong defenses. To targets who are good at defending, three shots would be able to resolve the matter. This includes Guardian. Of course, that is under the premise that the three lethal blows aren’t spread too far apart. It’s best not to exceed five seconds.

“The third is Slaughtering. On the foundation of a Weakness attack, providing more than twice the spirituality on top of that will imbue ordinary bullets with grapeshot effects. Simultaneously, when aimed at a group of enemies, it will result in area-of-effect damage. To increase the damage, it will need to meet the conditions for Lethal attack, as well as provide more than thrice the spirituality. This drain will be quite a burden on the user.

“It can also be combined with bullets with different characteristics, allowing you to target different kinds of enemies.”

This sounds like it corresponds to a Sequence 5 Reaper of the Hunter pathway… Klein glanced at Anderson and asked, seemingly in thought, “If the target’s physical condition reaches that of a Sequence 4 dragon, how many strikes of Lethal attack will kill it?”

Ukfa was taken aback as he shook his head in a daze.

“I’ve never met a dragon before.”

Much less a dragon whose physical condition has reached that of a demigod!

Does Gehrman Sparrow plan on using this gun to slay dragons? And a demigod dragon at that? Isn't that way too crazy? Ukfa suddenly felt that the adventurers these days were completely different from the ones he met back when he was active. He didn't even consider the possibility of death.

Anderson coughed before clearing his throat.

"That will depend on your luck. For real, trust me, luck is extremely important!

"If you encounter a dragon that has been beaten to a state close to death, then one shot would be sufficient. Otherwise, I suggest you to run. Yes, it's more important to stay alive.

"Of course, if the demigod dragon doesn't defend and stays there for you hit it, five shots of Lethal attacks should be enough to kill it."

Ukfa looked at Anderson before looking at Gehrman Sparrow. He decided not to pursue the topic as he changed topics.

"Anderson has told you about the negative effects of Death Knell, right? You will receive a weakness that originally didn't exist, or it will enhance an already existing weakness, making it become more extreme. This effect will be maintained for six hours. There was once a time when I became extremely afraid of cats. There was one when I had just hunted a famous pirate, but I ended up going limp in the legs in front of a newborn kitten. I knelt before it, wailing and crying for it to spare me.

"If you carry it around, the problems aren't great. It will only make you easily thirsty. Just drinking more water and heading to the washroom more often would solve the problem."

Why does it feel like the negative effects of an additional weakness will bring me more trouble… However, it is something acceptable… Klein deliberated and said, "Name your price."

"9,000 pounds. Anderson should've mentioned it. That's my bottom line." Ukfa looked at Death Knell in Gehrman Sparrow's hands and said, "This is already cheap enough. If it wasn't because I was worried that getting to know more Beyonders would affect my present life, I would've actively promoted it. I'm sure I can sell it for 12,000 pounds."

Indeed, a mystical item at this level can be sold for sky-high prices if the negative effects aren't too serious when meeting a suitable buyer… Normally speaking, 10,000 to 12,000 pounds is a reasonable price… Although Klein had the intention of bargaining, the price was already low enough that he felt embarrassed to try and take advantage of him. With a terse acknowledgment, he said, "I'll give it a run. I'll complete the deal if there aren't any problems."

Of course, he didn't really try the gun, as it would give him a weakness for nothing. His method for inspection was to use his spirituality to probe the gun, along with testing for the credibility of Ukfa's words via divination. He did it rather openly, without minding Ukfa's and Anderson's gazes.

I'll make confirmation later above the gray fog… However, Ukfa likely doesn't dare to lie to me. He's definitely afraid of a crazy adventurer seeking revenge on him. After all, he has already obtained a settled and quiet life. He has a wife and children… Klein placed Death Knell on the table, lifted his suitcase, and took out 9,000 pounds from it. The money had been removed from above the gray fog to "air" it ahead of time.

After Ukfa received the money, he did a quick count and confirmed the authenticity of the money.

"As expected of a recently famous adventurer. Few people can produce 9,000 pounds in cash at once. Even a tycoon doesn't have that much liquidity," he said poignantly as he put away the stacks of cash.

I even spent 5,000 pounds to buy a key not long ago… Klein felt his heart suddenly turn empty as he saw the 9,000 pounds enter Ukfa's drawer.

I've been out at sea for so long, saving up so much money, but in just moments, it's all gone… Now, I'm left with 2,683 pounds and 6 gold coins. I can't even afford a relatively decent manor… Klein sighed as he took out the ordinary revolver from his underarm holster, removed the bullets inside, and stuffed them into Death Knell.

After Anderson watched the entire transaction, he said with a tsk, "Ukfa, you've changed. In the past, you would've checked the authenticity of each note. If you find it troublesome, I can help you!"

"It's totally fine, but I'm worried that Gehrman will shoot you." Ukfa clearly knew the Strongest Hunter's talent at provocation.

He could imagine the scene of Anderson posing in a way that was begging to be beaten—counting each and every note while verifying them against the light in slow motion.

Well said! Klein silently praised him. He then stuffed the iron black, long-barreled revolver into his underarm holster.

The original revolver was thrown inside the suitcase.

"Thanks to you, I no longer have to fret over this matter," Ukfa said with a smile as he pointed at the door. "I'll get my valet to send you out."

Anderson opened his mouth as he chuckled.

"Ukfa, aren't you going to keep us here for dinner?"

"When you're married with kids, I'll treat you to the best food at the best restaurant," Ukfa said with a smile, completely unfazed by his accusation.

Out of the manor, Anderson looked up with squinted eyes. At the sight of the setting sun, he chuckled.

"Back when I knew Ukfa, he was a doctor who was good at planting all kinds of strange plants on the ship to improve everyone's lives. I thought he would die early on during our adventures, but to my surprise, he was always lucky. He even became a Druid later."

Why are your poignant words also so deserving of a beating… Klein deliberately said, "He does have good luck.

"As your companion, luck is needed to survive."

Anderson turned his head in surprise as he scrutinized Gehrman Sparrow.

"You know how to mock others? Or have you been infected by me?"

He wasn't too affected by it as he straightened his clothes, took off his hat, and said with a smile, "Alright, you've gotten the mystical item you need. If there's nothing else, it's time I embark on my own journey."

"Don't forget that demigod's mission." Klein succeeded in using a single sentence to crumple Anderson's expression.

"I already have an urge that compels me to finish that matter as soon as possible. Alright, there's no need for goodbyes. Perhaps we might really meet again one day." Anderson gave a self-deprecating laugh, waved the hat in his hand, and turned to head towards another path that left to Bayam.

As he watched the Strongest Hunter depart, Klein slowly heaved a sigh. Holding his suitcase, he followed the path he took to get here and headed for Bayam under the red evening sky and the shelter of unique palm trees.

†

Inside Bayam City.

After finding an ordinary inn to stay in, Klein began considering his subsequent plans.

I'm finally free. I can attempt to act as a Marionettist. I have to figure out the corresponding principles. That's the most pressing issue for now.

Yes, Marionettist. The focus should be on the marionette. I haven't actually created a marionette and controlled it in battle. I should start from there.

This matter can be completed before returning to Backlund. Not only do Beyonders have to stay hidden there, making it difficult to encounter one, but no matter what one does, it's easy to get on the bad side of the Church or some important figure. I need to be careful. It's not a good place to select and create marionettes. The sea is better. I'll go make my rounds at the bar later. I'll find a pirate who deserves death to give it a try.

With this in mind, Klein immediately got up and left his room. As though he was bringing his certificate of deposit to a bank to withdraw the money, he headed for the nearby Seaweed Bar. Famous pirates often showed up there.

Soon, he arrived at the bar's entrance. After straightening his clothes, he pushed open the heavy wooden door.

Gazes subconsciously swept past his face before they moved away as though it wasn't anything extraordinary. Following that, someone shouted with a suppressed voice, "Gehrman Sparrow!"

In a blink of an eye, several figures in the bar ran for the back door. Before Klein could figure out what was happening, the bar was left relatively desolate and empty.

Chapter 709 - Elland's Warning

◆

As Klein looked at the bar which was so silent that he could hear breathing, he was taken aback. Only then did he step in and walk straight to the bar counter as though nothing had happened.

I should change my appearance the next time I come… he thought in frustration, just short of facepalming.

Ukfa's lack of awareness that Gehrman Sparrow had successfully hunted Slaughterer Kircheis had made Klein believe that the latest news hadn't reached the City of Generosity, and he boldly came to the Seaweed Bar. To his surprise, the problem lay in Ukfa who had kept a distance from the adventurer circles. He was a little behind on the news, and the crazy adventurer's infamy had already spread amongst the pirates around the Rorsted Archipelago.

Sighing silently, Klein sat in front of the bar counter and rapped the wooden counter.

"One glass of Southville beer."

"…Six pence." The bartender gulped his saliva with great difficulty.

Klein took out a few copper pence and placed it in front of him. Without a change in expression, he asked, "Any developments recently?"

The bartender took the money and carefully delivered the beer to Gehrman Sparrow. Then, he forced a smile and said, "Admiral Amyrius

Rieveldt has been transferred back to Backlund. Admiral Robert Davis has replaced him, becoming the highest-ranking naval commander of the surrounding waters for the kingdom. The archipelago's situation is a little tense, and many pirate crews have sent people to gather intelligence."

Admiral Amyrius was ultimately implicated by his brother and lost his post… However, as long as he wasn't directly involved, it can't get worse for him when considering his status as a demigod. At the very least, he can maintain the treatment he receives as an admiral. Nothing will happen to his family either. Once the matter blows over, he might still have a chance of being a high-ranking member of the navy… Klein gulped down the beer and asked in passing, "Which family is Robert Davis from?"

"No, he's not a noble. He's one of the rare officers who slowly rose up the ranks to admiral. In the Berserk Sea, Sonia Island, and East Balam, he has rendered plenty of meritorious services." The bartender recalled the commendations the papers recently had for Admiral Robert Davis. After a pause, he said, "However, I heard that he has received the sponsorship of many nobles."

Yes, with the Imperial Navy, admirals who are from the royal family or aristocrats, or have close ties with them take up at least 80%. The remaining 20% are mainly rear admirals and vice admirals… Klein had long learned of the situation from the documents he received from Amyrius Rieveldt.

Compared to this, the army was a lot better.

Gehrman Sparrow didn't continue asking as he seemed to focus on his drinking. The bartender then added, "In the past two to three months, the Resistance has been very active. They've been constantly attempting to destroy railways or set up blockades on public roads. They've given the governor-general's office quite a headache, forcing it to dispatch large numbers of soldiers to maintain a smooth flow of traffic. However, the Resistance army seldom clashes with them head-on.

I'm aware of that. It's all going according to my plans… In a place where the natives and mixed-bloods take up 80%, it's not difficult for the Resistance to gather accurate intelligence. Coupled with external sponsors, it wouldn't be hard for them to live on for short periods of time. The reason why they were in a dire situation in the past was all because Kalvetua was an irrational sea serpent. It often got them to attack key nodes in a city, fighting head-on with the Loen Kingdom's navy and army… Klein mumbled to himself in delight as he drank another mouthful of beer.

He had also warned the Resistance to not be overly active. If they forced the governor-general's office into a corner, the Loen Kingdom might send Sequence 5 Beyonders or even demigods who were good at pursuit and tracking. With the Resistance's strength, there was no way they could put up a fight. In the name of Sea God, Klein's instructions were to maintain while slightly improving their present situation and await for the global situation to change.

This wasn't too far off. According to the various matters Miss Justice had feedback on, and with The Hanged Man giving insight that affirmed this, it was certain that once the Loen Kingdom was done with its internal reforms and making the original and newly added ironclad warship become its main force in combat, a war against the Southern Continent's colonies was inevitable.

He silently drank his beer until the bartender was done. He then wore his hat, got up, and left the bar, heading straight for his inn.

Along the way, he saw bronze-skinned children with curly hair and natives with brown jackets and pantaloons. These people either made way in horror without even looking up, or they were hunched in a corner, looking at Klein with a complicated look in their eyes.

Klein helplessly curved the ends of his lips as he silently returned to his room.

He didn’t immediately change his appearance and head to the various bars to seek out pirates. This was because he was certain that they would hide the entire night and not appear again.

Just as Klein was planning to enter Groselle’s Travels to explore it, there was a knock on his door.

Without needing to ask, all he did was grip the knob when the visitor’s appearance naturally surfaced in his mind.

It was a middle-aged man dressed in a dark red coat and white slacks. He wore a ship-shaped hat. The corners of his eyes and mouth, as well as his forehead, had clear wrinkles. He was none other than the captain of the White Agate, military personnel, Just Elland.

Impressive. News of me appearing in Bayam just spread, and he managed to find where I’m staying… Of course, it’s because I didn’t attempt to hide myself. I directly used my identification documents to check-in… Klein turned the knob and pulled open the door. He politely greeted him, “Good evening.”

“Good evening. I’m very glad to see you back in Bayam.” Elland took off his hat and entered the room without any reservations.

“Is there something?” Klein pulled a chair over and sat down.

Elland sat opposite him and chuckled.

“Isn’t visiting a friend the most important matter?”

You’re such a smooth talker. Too bad Anderson is gone, or he can learn from you! Klein felt triggered for some reason.

He maintained his usual state and looked into Elland’s eyes.

“Alright, you’ve made your visit.”

Elland seemed to have expected such a response. He smiled and said, “Do you still remember Donna?”

Of course, she and her brother are adorable. I wonder if they’ve recovered from the fright I gave them the last time and have given up any curiosity towards the mysterious world… Klein calmly replied, “I don’t have amnesia.”

“Forgetting unimportant matters aids our mental health. Heh heh, this isn’t said by Emperor Roselle.” Elland simply explained, “Didn’t you tell Donna’s father that he should post an advertisement in the Sonia Morning Post for three days in a row, asking to buy Damir’s special cured meat if he needs your help? He did so recently, but unfortunately, you weren’t in Bayam or the nearby seas.”

“What happened after that?” Klein’s instincts told him that Donna and her family weren’t in serious trouble based on Elland’s relaxed attitude.

Elland chuckled and said, “I heard your conversation back then, and after discovering the advertisement, I visited them using the address. As you know, Donna is a lovely lady. She reminds me of my daughter.

“The matter isn’t too complicated. Urdi, who’s Donna’s father, had a bunch of valuable goods plundered by the Crazy Captain. This plunged him into a terrible economic situation. Although it isn’t as bad as going bankrupt, life for him has definitely turned for the worse. That’s why he wishes to commission you to get the goods back.

“I knew you weren’t in Bayam back then, so I had to go through my own channels to help Urdi recoup the goods at a reasonable price.”

“Crazy Captain?” Klein first found the title familiar before recalling where he had heard it before.

According to red-haired Helene, Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy’s delivery of slaves for the Demoness Sect was passed off to Crazy Captain Connors Viktor. The latter appeared to have close connections with many of the slave dealers and merchants in the Loen Kingdom.

And this was tied to the truth behind the human disappearances in the colonies, as well as the underlying reason of the Great Smog of Backlund!

I've always been trying to investigate this matter. Back when I attacked Tracy, that was half the reason, but unfortunately, I didn't succeed. Later, I was busy acting for the digesting of the potion and my search for mermaids, so I temporarily abandoned my investigations… Klein's thoughts raced as he asked without a perturbed look, "Where's Crazy Captain now?"

"Urdi has already gotten back his goods," Elland hissed, emphasizing that the matter had been settled.

Klein looked at him and repeated, "Where's Connors Viktor now?"

Elland shook his head in exasperation.

"I've no idea, but his subordinates are still in Bayam trying to gather intelligence. As you know, Admiral Amyrius has returned to Backlund, and he's been replaced by Admiral Davis. Many changes are in place, so the pirates need to have a new handle of the latest situation.

"Therefore, I guess that Connors's ship is docked in the shadows of one of the nearby islands, but that's a guess with no way to confirm."

After listening in silence with his hands clasped, Klein said, "Thank you."

Elland exhaled and looked out the window as his expression rapidly turned solemn.

"I came here today to tell you that you're too eye-catching. The higher-ups are beginning to pay attention to you. A powerhouse that can easily kill Kircheis wouldn't be ignored!

"It's best you stop using this identity for checking in; otherwise, you might face some difficult problems."

Klein nodded seriously and said, "Alright."

He was very grateful for Captain Elland's warning, but he didn't show it on his face.

After Elland left, Klein immediately changed his appearance, switched inns, and confirmed that he wasn't tracked by the military.

After doing all of that, he began considering the search for Crazy Captain Connors Viktor.

To others, this was an extremely difficult task, but Klein had a trick up his sleeve.

It was to use the Sea God Scepter and communicate with nearby sea creatures!

As long as Connors Viktor was in the Rorsted Archipelago's waters, there was no way he could hide from Klein!

Of course, it was necessary that he had enough time to perform the search.

Chapter 710 - Plan

◆

Above the gray fog, Klein extended his hand and summoned the Sea God Scepter from the junk pile. He began browsing through the countless points of light swirling about the Sealed Artifact.

Every point of light corresponded to a believer’s prayer. The glows swirled with ethereal holiness!

Soon, Klein did a preliminary screening as he focused on the waters instead of the archipelago. After he had isolated the Sea God Scepter above the gray fog, he was unable to directly use the “divine artifact” to sense the surrounding waters and do anything effective. He had to rely on the scenes of his believers’ prayers as a foundation before reaching out five nautical miles to influence the corresponding undersea creatures.

Klein emanated his spirituality and touched one of the specks of light. He saw a native performing his daily prayers in the evening on a fishing boat before docking.

As Klein’s thoughts changed, the angle of the scene quickly drew higher as more dark clouds and undulating waves appeared in the scene.

There are signs of a storm brewing hours ahead? That’s right. I did find the atmosphere repressing when I was out… That’s why Elland said that Crazy Captain Connors’s ship is likely to be hiding in the shadows of some island. It was to avoid the storm… Klein tapped the edge of the mottled table as he muttered silently.

Having deduced this, it made his “search” much easier. This was because he didn’t need to search the extensive waters; all he needed to do was focus on the different islands around those waters.

With a change in thought, a blue gem at the tip of the Sea God Scepter in Klein’s hand lit up.

On the waters which no longer had the fishing boat, the crimson moonlight shone down on the deep blue waves that were slowly rising. Suddenly, splashes silently surged upwards as an exaggerated eye looking up into the sky surfaced. Beneath the eye was a massive silhouette.

At the same time, all kinds of fish began surfacing nearby.

They took in the indistinct halo that came scattering down, and they circled around before swimming down and headed in different directions.

Ten seconds later, the waters in a five-nautical-mile radius returned to its previous state. The deep blue waves rose up to a high height again, awaiting the final eruption.

Phew… This is a little draining… Klein raised his left hand to rub his temple.

He wasn’t only simply commandeering the sea creatures, he had also bestowed them with remnant Beyonder spirituality to a certain degree. It allowed them to transmit the scenes they saw by praying after they discovered any docked ships around the island.

This wasn’t too difficult or complicated for the Sea God Scepter, but it was burdensome and draining for the controller, Klein.

Then, Klein selected a few praying believers situated on different islands around the archipelago. He then used the same method to command the sea creatures of the region.

After doing all of this, he didn't bother throwing the Sea God Scepter into the junk pile before returning to the real world. He took off his coat and collapsed into bed.

Having expended his spirituality to the limit, he believed that he would fall asleep immediately. Yet, his head began aching, preventing him from opening his eyes or falling asleep.

Klein could clearly feel that his skin seemed overly sensitive. Lumps grew over his skin, and hidden beneath them were countless meat tendrils.

Indeed, as Mr. Hanged Man said, if you drain your spirituality to zero for two consecutive days, you'll definitely start hearing things and show signs of losing control. My body became a little abnormal just from reaching my limits once despite not even maintaining it for too long. Of course, it's because I've only recently advanced, and I haven't digested much. Furthermore, there's the excess from the potions from the prior Sequences… Klein regained his train of thought as he attempted to Cogitate the stacked spherical lights so as to calm the fatigue of his body and mind.

Having gradually recovered, he finally fell asleep. By the time he woke up, it was in the middle of the night.

At that moment, the winds were howling outside. The rain was pouring as the storm had finally unleashed its might after a prolonged period of brewing.

And this wasn't a rare situation in Bayam. Apart from that, the night was relatively serene.

Klein went to the washroom to clear his bowels. Washing his hands and taking four steps counterclockwise, he once again appeared above the gray fog.

He picked up the Sea God Scepter on the end of the long bronze table and began browsing through the “scenes” from the sea creatures.

The scenes were that of ships, all located at different ports, harbors, or the shadows of different islands.

Although Klein hadn’t seen Crazy Captain Connors Viktor, he had previously learned of his traits and the various emblems of his pirate crew. Therefore, he wasn’t afraid of failing to identify him.

Scenes flashed past as he patiently scrutinized the details of the ships.

About ten minutes later, a look of unconcealed joy appeared in his eyes. He zoomed in on a scene as he pulled the orientation of the scene closer.

He had found the suspected ship!

The ship was docked at the back of Symeem Island, an island furthest from the Rorsted Archipelago. Behind it was a towering cliff with churning waves below it.

Its sails and flag had been reefed up, but there was a white skull emblem with an eye-patch on the two sides of the ship.

This was none other than the emblem of the Crazy Captain’s pirate crew!

Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his left wrist and made a confirmation with divination.

The answer made him rejoice, as it was indeed Connors Viktor’s ship!

And Crazy Captain only had one ship!

It’s no wonder that despite most adventurers at sea knowing that Crazy Captain is in contact with the kingdom’s human traffickers and slave merchants, the Church of Storms’s investigations of the colony disappearances didn’t point to him. He only has a bounty of 3,300 pounds. The pirate crew only has one ship, so it just looks like it’s a small business. It’s impossible for him to do large-scale human trafficking… What should I do next? Klein first sighed silently before considering his angle of investigation.

His first reaction was to summon a massive undersea creature, hitch a ride on something akin to a whale, and head straight for Symeem Island while the storm continued. Then, he could infiltrate and use his powers as a Marionettist to control Crazy Captain Connors Viktor without causing too much of a stir. But on careful thought, he felt that it was a rash decision.

It wasn't a problem dealing with other pirates who weren't at the pirate admiral level, but since Crazy Captain Connors Viktor was involved with a terrifying matter like the Great Smog of Backlund, he had to consider that Connors's normal actions were just a disguise. In consideration of how he might have another identity, with the ship concealing some secrets, there was a high chance that there was a trap that could deal with pirate admirals. Klein might not walk out alive despite being armed to the teeth if he made such a rash infiltration attempt.

Should I summon myself and head over with the Sea God Scepter as a Spirit Body? This can avoid some accidents, as I can immediately end the summoning if anything goes wrong. However, the Sea God Scepter is essentially the Beyonder characteristic of a High-Sequence Beyonder from the Storm pathway. As long as it appears in the real world, it might attract Sea King Jahn Kottman… This will prevent the situation from developing as I expect it to… Klein looked at the storm in the scene as he came up with a preliminary plan.

Before that, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote the divination statement: "Dealing with Connors Viktor is very dangerous."

Picking up the silver chain of the spirit pendulum, Klein reined in his thoughts and focused on the divination.

Soon, he opened his eyes to see the topaz pendant turning clockwise at a high frequency and large amplitudes.

This meant that dealing with Connors Viktor was very dangerous!

It's as I expected. Thankfully, I didn't rashly rush over… Klein picked up the Sea God Scepter and decided on executing the plan he had just thought of.

It was to use the prayer scene and strike Connors Viktor's ship with the Sea God Scepter from afar by using the cover of the storm. He would rouse the nest and force out its secret!

After grasping the relevant situation, he would end the attacks before Sea King Jahn Kottman sensed the abnormality or arrived at the scene.

Klein wouldn't feel disappointed if Connors Viktor unfortunately landed in the hands of the Sea King. This was because he would have to think of the means to pass the information to the three Churches after he figured out the truth of the Great Smog of Backlund.

If Crazy Captain successfully escaped, Klein would've pried into his secrets by rousing the nest. He could then subsequently formulate a plan of attack!

Phew… Klein slowly exhaled as he watched the ship bob about with the dark crashing waves before raising the Sea God Scepter high in the air.

At the tip of the scepter, the blue gems that circled around it had begun to emit a bright light.

Chapter 711 - The Storm Attacks

◆ ◆ ◆

Symeem Island. Under the towering cliff, dark sea waters were being roused by the surrounding waves as they churned about considerably.

On Crazy Captain Connors Viktor’s ship named the Single-eyed Skull, a few pirates donned cloaks as they pulled up their hats. The rain pattered down heavily on them as they fought against winds that could lift a child, in order to walk out the cabin and inspect the ship to prevent any accidents from happening.

Their cloaks were made of linen, but their surfaces were smeared with an already hardened sticky liquid. The raindrops were unable to permeate through that layer and could only flow down onto the deck.

The liquid was Donningsman tree sap, produced from the Southern Continent’s rainforest. It was naturally water-resistant and was quite commonly seen. It was originally rather cheap, but after a research team last year suspected that it had beneficial effects on hair growth, its price skyrocketed.

“In such weather it’s suitable to be inside the Red Theater, drinking liquor, smoking weed, and having women in your arms!” A pirate looked out of the shipboard and grumbled.

His companion echoed him as he pulled at his cloak’s hood, “I heard there’s a bunch of new arrivals at the Red Theater. I really want to give them a try.”

“How did you learn of that?” another pirate asked in passing.

He was met with a chuckle.

“I heard it from the boss. It’s not like you have no idea what Captain’s ‘business’ is? That’s why the boss knows plenty of human traffickers. Ha! They prefer to be called ‘slave merchants.’”

“Speaking of which, I recall what happened that time.” The pirate who spoke at the beginning wore a reminiscent look. “Among the ‘goods’ sent over, there was a young noble lady who had fled from her home. Her skin, figure, looks, tsk—were… were… I have no idea how to describe it. I still remember her to this day. What a pity that she committed suicide!”

As they spoke, they suddenly felt their vision brighten as they subconsciously looked up into the sky. Apart from the pattering rain, there was an abnormal silver bolt of lightning that was snaking its way through the dark clouds that hid the crimson moon and stars.

Suddenly, a gigantic bolt of lightning that illuminated the surrounding waters smote down, heading straight for the Single-eyed Skull!

Boom!

The bolts began to spread out randomly as the wooden ship burst into flames. Deafening thunder echoed in the pirates’ ears.

Right on the heels of that, silver bolts of lightning struck down like they were brandishing their claws. The tiny sailboat was instantly plunged into a lightning forest.

At that moment, the thick lightning bolts that were about to interweave together had suddenly separated. They split apart in violation of the natural laws, and they failed to hit the Single-eyed Skull. They hung close to the ship’s surroundings before striking the pitch-black water, lighting up the surrounding sea as sizzling lightning bolts snaked out in a spectacle.

The pirates on the deck suffered from the strike. One of them had been charred black like an overburnt piece of wood. Two collapsed as their bodies convulsed.

There really is a problem!

Above the gray fog, Klein couldn't help but sigh when he saw the scene of his Lightning Storm being dispelled.

He was certain that this was a power at the level of a demigod!

If he had rashly infiltrated the Single-eyed Skull, even with Creeping Hunger, Death Knell, and Groselle's Travels, there was no way he could put up an effective resistance against such strange powers. And by then, he wouldn't have the time to pray to himself and respond using the Sea God Scepter above the gray fog!

Taking a deep breath, Klein made all the blue gems on the tip of the white-boned scepter light up.

Around the Single-eyed Skull, there were two kinds of sounds in the storm. One was piercingly sharp, as though it could prick through one's eardrums and penetrate one's brain. The other was deep, sounding like a beating heart as it struck on one's Spirit Body.

This gave the pirates an extremely uncomfortable experience, with many having the urge to vomit blood. However, this was only the beginning. The sound of splashing water intensified as a dark wave surged up to a height of nearly ten meters, running opposite the island's cliffside!

The wave was like a wall created by a deity as "He" pushed it toward the Single-eyed Skull with an invisible hand.

This was a tsunami that Klein created!

It could already be considered a calamity!

The whooshing sound of the wave sounded like explosions as the pirates on board looked at the dark sky outside, the churning clouds, and the massive tsunami. It felt like the apocalypse mentioned in mythical legends had arrived. They lost all will to save themselves.

But as they were waiting in despair for the final judgment, a disturbance that didn't abide by logic or scientific laws appeared in the middle of the waves created by the tsunami. An indescribable vortex rapidly took form as it tore through the entire wave, causing the terrifying waves to rapidly collapse as a result!

Amidst a rapturous rumble, a secondary wave threw the Single-eyed Skull up high into the air as the gigantic wave from before dispersed, spraying a portion of its load onto the ship. One of the masts broke, and the ship was in shambles. Even the deck was completely flooded.

Whoosh!

A strong wind suddenly stirred and swept up the pirates, turning into a hurricane that exceeded its own limits, pushing the airborne Single-eyed Skull further towards the sea.

The ship began to ride the squall as it flew across the sky, covering a distance of several nautical miles without landing in the undulating waters. It was as though it was an airship that continued stably proceeding forward.

Klein was amazed at the demigod or Sealed Artifact of the corresponding level inside the Single-eyed Skull for nullifying the tsunami. He sighed at his lacking Sequence, as he couldn't create the destructive tsunami that Kalvetua had previously created, despite stirring the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. In the meantime, he controlled the hurricane and ensured that the Single-eyed Skull didn't lose its support and plummet, afraid that it would leave his five-nautical-mile range of influence.

At that moment, his goal wasn't to destroy the Single-eyed Skull, nor was it to capture Crazy Captain Connors Viktor, but to force out the demigod or Sealed Artifact hidden inside the ship.

A powerhouse or item at this level was scarce in the world. By seeing their appearance, he would know who they were sooner or later, as well as which organization they belonged to!

And this provided the subsequent direction for the investigation regarding the Great Smog of Backlund!

I hope it's not from the Seer pathway; otherwise, who knows if it's his true face or not… However, this is also a good thing. Since I'm investigating the truth of the Great Smog, I'll figure out what Ince Zangwill is doing, and I'll make preparations for my subsequent revenge. I'll also be able to successfully find the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula and main ingredients… As Klein silently sighed, he made the gem on the tip of the Sea God Scepter emit a pure azure light.

With a hum, the Single-eyed Skull's flight experienced a change. It plummeted like a roar and didn't even manage to glide!

Suddenly, it turned very, very light, landing on the sea's surface like a feather caressing a human's face.

At that moment, Klein, who had exhausted plenty of spirituality, was just about to muster his remaining strength to create another tsunami when he heard an explosive boom from the scene.

It was a terrifying sonic boom!

Furthermore, it was different from normal sonic booms, as though it was mixed with the howling sounds of the wind.

It was from Sea King Jahn Kottman! Although he was still a distance away, he wielded mastery of these waters, so he could exert his influence across space while he rushed over!

This was a Sequence 3 Saint who was close to that of an angel!

The terrifying sonic boom sent the Single-eyed Skull flying out. There was no hesitation on whether it would harm anyone; after all, there was nothing wrong with striking down on pirates!

Meanwhile, Klein felt a psyche that was so potent that it was terrifying as it swept across the area in search of any spots that appeared abnormal. It caused the scene before his eyes to be affected as everything turned indistinct.

After resisting another blast, Klein calmly and rationally ended the response. He shut down the corresponding prayer scene before throwing the Sea God Scepter into the junk pile.

The gap isn't anything trivial. If Sea King didn't appear, I wouldn't have the confidence in forcing out that demigod. My Sequence is still too low, giving me troubles when using the scepter, as it's overly burdensome… However, at sea, the Storm pathway is really powerful. They're practically mobile calamities.

The powers displayed by that demigod had the key elements of distortion, confusion, loaning, and violation of normality. It appears to be the Black Emperor paths of the divine. Others might not realize it, but I have the corresponding Card of Blasphemy! It definitely isn't only a Sequence 5 Mentor of Disorder… An Earl of The Fallen? Hmm, the military has a portion of the potion formula for the Black Emperor pathway, but it seems to be limited to the first five Sequences. They lack Sequences 4 and above…

Although Klein failed to force the demigod or corresponding Sealed Artifact out, he had gained a certain number of clues from their reaction. He suspected that a particular faction in the royal family wasn't only cooperating with the Demoness Sect and Ince Zangwill, but it was also secretly in cahoots with a faction that wielded most of the Sequences of the Black Emperor pathway.

The descendants of Solomon or Trunsoest? Is King of the Five Seas Nast involved in this? Klein was in serious thought when he heard overlapping prayers in his ear.

It broke his train of thought as he instinctively emanated his spirituality and touched the rippling light beside his chair.

Then, he saw Danitz.

This well-known pirate had his eyes closed as he piously prayed to The Fool.

"…"

Klein took out his pocket watch in a daze and took a few looks at the time to confirm that it was almost three in the morning.

Is he nuts? Why is he praying in the middle of the night? Does he not want me to sleep? Klein watched carefully in exasperated amusement and discovered that Danitz looked tipsy. There was even faint singing echoing outside.

The crew members of the Golden Dream are having another bonfire party? Are they celebrating the departure of Gehrman Sparrow? To think they celebrated all the way into the middle of the night! Klein instantly understood why Danitz was praying at that moment.

He took a deep breath as he emanated his will into the halo, saying in a deep voice, "Those who say my name are on my mind."

†

Sea King Jahn Kottman arrived at Symeem Island as he began searching for the abnormal tsunami that had happened here, as well as the ship that belonged to an unknown pirate crew.

He was certain that there was a demigod on board that ship!

This tall and brawny Cardinal of the Church of Storms with thick, dark-blue hair, a high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punisher, clenched his fists as the dark clouds in the sky cracked open, sending crimson sunlight scattering across the sea.

After identifying the positions of the stars, Jahn Kottman flew in a particular direction.

Suddenly, his speed slowed down because he saw a pirate’s ship with a flag fluttering with the Single-eyed Skull emblem.

The ship wasn’t manned by anyone as it drifted in the wind. Scarlet flames were everywhere on it, along with charred corpses.

In the middle of one of the masts, a middle-aged man was tied to it. He wore a triangular hat and a black eye-patch. His exposed eye was widened and filled with horror. A wooden pole had impaled him in his chest as blood dyed everything.

His life and Spirit Body had completely dissipated.

Chapter 712 - The Loyal Alger

◆

Situated beyond the storm, the Golden Dream had crimson red moonlight shine through the thin clouds and onto one of its rooms which was dark and unlit.

Danitz was standing beside his bed, motionless. It was as though he had encountered the Beyonder powers resembling Medusa's petrifying gaze.

He couldn't help but grind his teeth loudly as his feet indiscernibly trembled. An endless grayish-white fog and an indistinct figure that stood high above everything, saying the awe-inspiring words "those who say my name are on my mind" filled his mind.

Th-there really was a response… There really was a response! Danitz's lips quivered as he muttered silently to himself. He felt that his calves had gone soft.

This was the first time he was receiving a response from a prayer!

He was frightened out of his wits!

He long knew that The Fool was an unknown existence, the figure whom the secret organization backing Gehrman Sparrow believed in, and that he had already made a connection due to chanting his honorific name. If he had any actions of disloyalty or betrayal, he would immediately die a baffling death, but this knowledge stemmed from the knowledge Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina had taught him. He had never encountered similar situations before, and he had never imagined that an unknown existence would respond to him.

When the fog, figure, and voice suddenly appeared before his eyes and ears, he learned for the first time that mighty existences would directly respond to their believers!

Yes, deep down, Danitz had unknowingly changed the unknown existence into a mighty existence.

Just as he recovered from his shock, he hurriedly took a few deep breaths as he attempted to pace about to relieve the remnant horrors in his heart. However, just as he took a stride with his right foot, he discovered that his legs had gone limp. All he could do was collapse onto his bed before barely managing to turn around to sit up.

“It really is a magnificent existence. It’s real…” Danitz muttered softly as he came to a clear realization that he had involved himself in something serious.

Back in the book world, as he had only chanted the honorific name without discovering any abnormalities, all he felt was fear having known of the possible outcomes. Now, he was facing a hidden danger that finally outlined itself, as well a future he couldn’t see clearly. How could he not plunge into an inescapable pit of extreme fear?

After an unknown period of time, Danitz exhaled as he consoled himself.

It might not be a bad thing. At the very least, Gehrman Sparrow is still living, and he’s leading quite a good life!

Upon having this thought, he forced a smile.

I’m a member of a secret organization, and in the future, a person blessed by a magnificent existence…

As his thoughts raced, Danitz decided to pray every morning when he woke up. He believed that no existence would dislike a pious believer.

Of course, he would keep in mind the revelation and often pray inwardly.

†

The next morning, Klein woke up normally, having exhausted himself the previous night.

He slowly got out of bed and saw that the skies were blue and the ground outside was wet. The entire world seemed to be cleansed by water, making it abnormally fresh. However, the disorderly leaves, broken branches, and all sorts of trash were an indication that it wasn’t a peaceful night.

After washing up, Klein wore an ordinary Loenese face, ordered a cup of Gurney Sap, something that originated from Symeem Island, and a rather heavy choice for breakfast—Teativa—to make up for his previous night’s expenditure.

As he drank the beverage that resembled lemonade with sugar and milk, he ate the fresh, fragrant meal that mixed mutton and fish together, along with the sweet and slightly sour flavor of the fruit. Klein held up the newspapers provided by the inn with great pleasure as he read through the papers starting with the Sonia Morning Post and News Report.

At the end of breakfast, he flipped open Strange Cases, a paper that was rather popular among adventurers, and he saw a striking article headline:

“Bloody infighting amidst storm:

“According to sources, there was intense infighting on Crazy Captain Connors Viktor’s Single-eyed Skull. The pirates executed Crazy Captain and killed each other, and reports say that no one survived.

“All of this evil was concealed by the terrifying storm last night. No one was aware of the conflict until the Single-eyed Skull was found drifting around Symeem harbor.”

The article attached an unclear photo, seemingly captured from the harbor in secret.

The photo’s Single-eyed Skull’s characteristics stood out at once. It was heavily damaged and many spots were charred black. Only a single mast remained intact, while the middle mast had a figure with a triangular hat pinned to it.

It’s Connors Viktor… He died just like that? Klein’s pupils constricted as he seriously contemplated. It can almost be confirmed that there was a demigod on the ship last night… When he saw that Crazy Captain was targeted, or with Sea King in pursuit, he could only care for himself. Unable to bring Connors with him, he decisively silenced him and destroyed all evidence?

Klein, who had plans on continuing his pursuits of Crazy Captain, felt dejected. He realized that although the trail of clues hadn’t been completely cut off, there was little of it left.

The only matter he was aware of at that moment was that the demigod likely belonged to the Black Emperor pathway!

From the intensity of the storm last night, the Single-eyed Skull was likely sent to the harbor by Sea King Jahn Kottman so as to do any follow-up investigations. I wonder if they will have any additional findings… Yes, I can get Mr. Hanged Man to keep an eye out for it in the Church of Storms… There’s no need to inform him since the Tarot Gathering will be this afternoon. The World can directly commission him to do so… Klein quickly made up his mind before downing the rest of the Gurney Sap.

Then, he returned to his room and planned to retrieve the radio transceiver which he had placed above the gray fog for an extended period of time to contact Arrodes. He wanted to see if it had any other clues regarding the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula.

Having left Oravi's East Sea, which was also where the Aurora Order's demigod had previously targeted him, Klein now dared to use items with the gray fog's aura. However, he knew very well that he couldn't do it frequently, and each use couldn't be for too long; otherwise, there was the possibility of the True Creator detecting it.

Due to this reason and his wariness against Arrodes, he planned on doing whatever he could do himself, and he would seek advice from others if possible. He only planned on playing the question-and-answer game if he was out of options.

†

In the Blue Avenger which was docked at the Resistance's private harbor.

Alger planned on getting one last resupply before his return to Pasu Island.

After instructing his crew which items to purchase, he changed into local clothing, and he went straight for Bayam. After circling a few times, he came to the Cathedral of Waves, planning on reporting to diocese bishop, Chogo, about recent developments.

Although he was returning to Pasu Island and reporting his work to the upper echelons of the Church, he knew very well who his immediate superior was. He knew that he needed to act appropriately and not make his superior believe that he was skipping the chain of command by directly establishing relations with the upper echelons.

Chogo remained hale and hearty as he was very pleased with Alger's proactive reporting. After he heard that, he said with a brisk tone, "There's no need to worry about it. It's just routine reporting. I've already informed His Eminence Kottman that you're devoted to the Lord and are loyal to the Church. You're one of the most trusted captains, and His Eminence Kottman will inform the Council of

Cardinals of this.”

He paused, but without giving Alger any time to speak, he continued, “In addition, there’s another mission. Investigate people who are intimately tied to Crazy Captain Connors Viktor.

“This is a mission directly issued by His Eminence Kottman. You have to take it seriously.”

Investigate people related to Crazy Captain? Alger was puzzled, but he didn’t question it. Instead, he struck his right fist on his left breast and said, “Yes, Your Excellency.”

The grizzled Chogo nodded and thought for two seconds before asking, “Do you know Gehrman Sparrow?”

This question sounded like a bolt out of the blue. It left Alger’s pupils constricting as he nearly lost control on the spot. Thankfully, he was mentally strong, allowing him to barely maintain his normal state.

“I’ve heard of him. He’s been very famous recently. Not only has he hunted Wormtongue Mithor and seriously injured Tracy, but he has also boarded Cattleya’s Future.” Alger droned on to hide the stirrings in his heart.

Chogo made a terse acknowledgment.

“You were at sea, so you’re a little behind on the news.

“Gehrman Sparrow killed Kircheis at Toscarter last week and obtained his bounty. Hehe, that pirate was indeed a Devil, a Sequence 5 Devil.”

“Kircheis? Agalito’s second mate?” Alger asked with very honest emotions.

He knew that Kircheis was suspected to be a Sequence 5, but he didn’t know that he was of the Devil pathway. And the fact he was both a Sequence 5 and a Devil meant plenty of things. It meant that he was difficult to kill, which meant that Gehrman Sparrow had very likely killed Kircheis during a sudden encounter!

This meant that Gehrman Sparrow was already at the pinnacle of Sequence 5s!

If it wasn't because he was seeking to purchase the Sequence 4 potion formula, I might even suspect that he had become a demigod… Alger thought, feeling perturbed.

He was alarmed to realize that in a week, The World had obtained the Sequence 5 Ocean Songster potion formula and main ingredient, killed a Sequence 5 Devil, and might very possibly have a Sequence 6 Notary potion formula in hand as well!

How did he do it? Alger realized that he was feeling a little frightened of The World.

Of course, it wasn't something unacceptable for him. This was because he knew that The World was Mr. Fool's Blessed representative. And Mr. Fool's Blessed clearly wasn't a single person. If one was responsible for the Notary potion formula, while another was responsible for the Ocean Songster, then it was possible that Gehrman Sparrow had only killed Kircheis.

Although this similarly left one apprehensive, it didn't seem like a fabricated story.

Chogo nodded solemnly.

"Yes, Agalito's lack of reaction implies something.

"Focus on gathering information about Gehrman Sparrow."

"Alright, Your Excellency." Alger bowed reverently, having already decided to be perfunctory with the mission as much as he could.

†

Inside the inn, Klein placed the radio transceiver on the table.

Before long, rushed clacking sounds were heard.

Chapter 713 - Three Questions

◆

Amidst the clacking sounds, the radio transceiver spewed out new illusory paper. On the paper were words composed of Loenese: “Great Master, your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, has finally caught up to you!”

…There’s no need to be so excited… Oh, the way Arrodes speaks is as professional as always. He didn’t express his bitterness about not being able to contact me for prolonged periods of time, nor did he question me about why I haven’t been looking for it. It directly blamed itself by claiming that it hadn’t caught up to me… It makes me feel a little guilty. But, I still need to be wary… Klein was momentarily at a loss for an answer.

Arrodes didn’t wait as it used the radio transceiver to produce an emoticon of carefully peeking out on the illusory paper.

“Great Master, the ruler above the spirit world, your servant has sensed that you are one step closer to returning to your holy throne, am I right?”

This fellow has evolved really quickly. He’s already using colored text to form a nascent form of emoticons… From Arrodes’s point of view, I’m a true god taking steps to find myself? That’s why, although it can clearly sense that I’m only a Sequence 5, it still treats me with respect and is even more humble? Klein understood that the mirror was deliberately asking a question, so he nodded in a frank manner.

“Yes.”

“You have already answered my question. As an exchange and a rule that I need to overlook, you can raise a question to me.” Arrodes “typed” quickly in response before adding a “smiley face.”

Klein didn’t hesitate and asked directly, “Where can the potion formula for Bizarro Sorcerer be found?”

The illusory paper spat out a long paragraph of complicated symbols before turning into a mirror as it represented a realistic scene.

It was a dark cathedral without any natural light source. Inside it was a bunch of squirming things that were all so blurry. It looked as though it was a pencil drawing that had been wiped by an eraser, preventing any exact details to be seen.

However, Arrodes added a bunch of text at the bottom of the scene.

“This is Zaratul. In ‘His’ advancement to Sequence 1, Attendant of Mysteries, ‘He’ lost control and became a monster. However, Great Master, you have to be careful. ‘He’ is a very crafty person. Perhaps everything about ‘Him’ is just an act with a purpose.

“I’m unable to look at ‘Him’ directly, as it will bring me harm. Aside from ‘Him,’ you will be unable to obtain the potion formula from any demigod from the Secret Order. This is because back then Zaratul would directly provide the High-Sequence potion to them. And there’s almost no way to use any Beyonder methods to reverse-divine it.”

What a detailed answer, and it even gave me the additional knowledge that the Sequence 1 corresponding to the Seer pathway is Attendant of Mysteries… Does it mean being an angel that serves upon Mystery? From the looks of it, the Secret Order approach can only work by directly facing Zaratul to obtain the potion formula. And I’m not even capable of viewing “Him” directly… It’s no wonder the Snake of Fate Will Auceptin told me to find the crazy Zaratul without mentioning the Secret Order… Klein was moved by Arrodes’s attitude. If he didn’t feel that he lacked the level and strength to commandeer this Sealed

Artifact, he even planned on truly treating it as his servant.

Amidst the clear clicking sounds, another segment of the illusory piece of paper appeared, presenting another scene.

It was a towering mountain peak. On it was a swath of dilapidated palaces. Inside it was a gigantic stone chair.

Klein was very familiar with this scene. Without Arrodes's footnote, he knew what it represented.

The Antigonus family's treasure hidden at the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range!

White paper continued being spat out as a new scene was presented. Just like a movie, it had changes in the camera angle.

The first scene that appeared in Klein's eyes was a lofty gothic-style bell tower and beautiful palaces around it.

The former represented the Bell of Order, and the latter represented the Sodela Palace. They were landmark buildings in Backlund.

The scene changed, and soon, there was a new building on the paper. It was a pure black cathedral with two symmetrical bell towers.

The scene of the cathedral's interior grew larger, and soon, it presented the entirety of the interior. It was then fixed at a pair of iron black doors that swung open.

The door was abnormally heavy, and on it were seven Dark Sacred Emblems, as though they were guards of the Tenebrous Heaven.

Chanis Gate… Saint Samuel Cathedral… Klein recognized the familiarly styled door. Based on the architectural style, he confirmed that the cathedral was the Church of the Evernight Goddess's headquarters of the Backlund diocese—Saint Samuel Cathedral!

White paper was spat out and the scene changed as it plunged deep into the darkness. On an empty bookshelf built from bones, there sat an ancient notebook. It was a black hard-covered book.

Klein recognized the notebook at once.

It was the Antigonus family's notebook which had caused the death of the original Klein!

After going round and round, everything came back full circle!

Klein silently observed it for a moment, and after the scenes disappeared did he regain control of his thought processes.

Yes, back then, the members of the Aurora Order were able to see the Clown potion formula from the notebook. Having been acknowledged by it, the content presented to me will definitely be completely different from before when I flipped through it. It should have the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula. It just lacks the ingredients or characteristics.

So this notebook has been sealed behind Saint Samuel Cathedral's Chanis Gate all this time. To get it from there, the difficulty in doing so wouldn't be lower than finding Zaratul and facing "Him" directly… Back then, there were High-Sequence Beyonders involved in the Great Smog of Backlund. After I reported the matter to the Backlund diocese's Church through Miss Justice, the matter was quickly quelled. This is sufficient enough to prove that the Backlund diocese has plenty of power. They have no lack of demigods or Sealed Artifacts… Yes, regardless, I'll need to return to Backlund first and see if there are any opportunities. In contrast, I'd prefer not to head to the Hornacis mountain range…

Reining in his thoughts, Klein looked at the radio transceiver which had turned dark and solemn.

"Last night, who was the demigod on Crazy Captain Connors Viktor's ship?"

Clacking sounds quickly sounded as the illusory paper from before vanished as new ones were spat out.

The content on the piece of paper was likewise a realistic scene.

On an exquisite brass chandelier, five candles of different heights spread their warmth and light. A middle-aged man wearing a triangular hat and black eye-patch stood before a cabinet that stored grape wine, champagne, and tequila. He was humbly looking opposite him.

Opposite him was a tall figure in a black cloak. Its face was completely hidden beneath the hood.

The figure didn't seem to have a real head, only a blob of heavily distorted darkness that was embedded above the neck.

Thanks to the portraits from bounty notices, Klein recognized the one-eyed man to be Crazy Captain Connors—his disheveled and oily hair cascaded down and happened to cover his neck.

Opposite him is likely that demigod. But he deliberately disguised himself and did the corresponding anti-divination preparations. For Arrodes to be able to produce a scene of this level is already impressive enough… Klein wasn't too disappointed. Instead, he carefully memorized the figure's build.

More than 1.85 meters tall, but less than 1.9 meters… Rather long arms, and when hanging his hands down, it almost reaches the knees… The broad shoulders prop up the cloak… The feet are faced outwards to a certain degree…

As an expert in disguises, Klein believed that when a person disguised himself and prepared a certain level of anti-divination measures, there was a high chance that he wouldn't take note of disguising his build, especially when one's body didn't have any particular traits.

Therefore, this can provide a certain amount of clues. This allows Klein to find the person familiar when he sees the target!

“Very good. It’s your turn to ask.” After keeping that in mind, Klein stopped scrutinizing the figure as he waited for Arrodes’s question with piqued interest.

He was curious as to how Arrodes would continue breaking through his image of him.

The typing sounds slowed down as it seemed to appear hesitant. Bit by bit, the illusory white paper was spat out.

“Great Master, c-can I say something to you?”

“Yes,” Klein answered the question, puzzled. He began to look forward to what Arrodes had to say.

The sound of typing hastened as it exuded an obvious sense of warmth.

On the illusory paper, a single line appeared: “Great Master, happy birthday!

“This is belated. Your current body was born on 4th March 1327. I originally wanted to wish you a happy birthday at midnight of that day, but I failed to keep up with you.”

…It’s a topic that really exceeded my expectations… I even forgot about my own birthday… The corners of Klein’s lips twitched as he was at a loss for words.

He had received the original Klein’s memory fragments and received parts of his emotions. He knew the birthday, but for a person who led a solitary life, why would he remember such things?

This fellow is actually the first person to wish me a happy birthday… Benson and Melissa must be feeling more upset today… The interview should’ve ended in February. I wonder if Benson succeeded in becoming a civil servant… Klein felt poignant as the way he looked at the radio transceiver warmed up.

He thought for a moment as he calmly asked, “Third question: Your origins.”

The typing sounds paused for two seconds before sounding out again.

A white piece of paper was spat out as a new scene surfaced.

Large amounts of black sticky liquid spewed out from the ground as they spread outwards in a distorted manner. They grew different numbers of arms and legs before becoming strange monsters that charged ahead.

During this process, a speck of light was shot out along with the black liquid before landing on a rock, to which it rapidly fused together, turning into a mirror with ancient patterns and black gems adorning its two sides.

What kind of strange scene is this… This was how Arrodes was born? What was that speck of light? Where did it originate from? It does seem like a Beyonder characteristic… Klein came up with a preliminary interpretation of the scene.

The typing sounds didn’t stop as another line appeared: “Great Master, do you have any other questions?”

Taking note of the time, Klein shook his head.

“No.”

“You have finished answering the questions, and it’s time for me to leave. Great Master, the ruler above the spirit world, your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, looks forward to serving you again and hopes to be able to continue following in your footsteps. Bye~” At the end of the illusory piece of paper, a hand-waving emoticon was presented.

Chapter 714 - New Diary Pages

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the quiet room in the inn, the dark and silent radio transceiver instantly returned back to normal as its surroundings stopped being eerie.

Klein busily set up the ritual and sacrificed it above the gray fog before having the time to consider the answers he had received.

According to the clues provided by Arrodes, and combining the answers from Mr. Azik and Will Auceptin, Klein had a basic idea on how he should proceed.

It wasn’t just because he wished to return to Backlund for some rest and reorganization, but because he viewed the large city as a main locale that he would spend a long period of time being active in. He wanted to see if he could steal the Antigonus family’s notebook from the Church of the Evernight Goddess’s Saint Samuel Cathedral.

If he confirmed that there weren’t any solutions, he would attempt to switch to neighboring Beyonder pathways, but if that was impossible, he had no choice but to take the final route—head to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range.

Hmm… I definitely can’t use my identity as Sherlock Moriarty when I’m back in Backlund unless I wish to dig out Ince Zangwill or the royal family faction that’s hiding in the darkness. However, when contacting people I’m familiar with or using the resources of the Church of Steam, I can transform back into Sherlock Moriarty.

In short, I have to create a new identity. Furthermore, it has to be completely separate from Gehrman Sparrow. Hmm, I won't directly return to Pritz Harbor this time. I'll make a detour to Desi Bay and make sure that no one can figure out my background. Klein's thoughts raced and he soon came up with a clear train of thought.

After determining the next steps of action to take, he planned on drawing some blood and heading above the gray fog to explore Groselle's Travels using his Spirit Body, but in consideration that there was a Tarot Gathering in the afternoon, he lay back in bed and took the time to rest and relax.

†

The Future smoothly cruised through the undulating waves as Admiral of Stars Cattleya stood by the window, watching the scenery that seemed to go on without end. And by the deck, there were Nina's exasperated shouts from time to time. She would be angrily scolding Frank Lee for producing a bunch of fast-growing, beef-flavored mushrooms that enjoyed eating fish.

Cattleya sighed silently as she nudged the heavy glasses on her nose bridge.

At that moment, her spiritual perception was suddenly triggered as she looked down at her study desk. At some point in time, a few pieces of yellowed paper had appeared there.

The emperor's diary entries… She finally sent a messenger over… Cattleya turned around in delight and picked up the few pieces of paper that were akin to a preliminary probe.

By three in the afternoon, having memorized the symbols, Cattleya saw the illusory crimson light surge at her like a tide, drowning her within.

Under a high dome propped up by stone columns, Cattleya saw similar red beams soar up, transforming into indistinct figures.

She didn't look carefully, as she realized that a pair of familiar glasses had naturally appeared over her nose bridge. It was almost a perfect replica of the one from the outside world.

Then, she caught Miss Justice elegantly stand up from the corner of her eye. Miss Justice briskly greeted the figure at the seat of honor, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

Audrey was in a good mood recently. After she returned to her family's castle, as an obedient daughter, she helped her mother, Lady Caitlyn, resolve some psychological problems that stemmed from her age and physical condition. She received extremely good feedback, allowing her to conclude more of the acting principles for Psychiatrist.

Amongst them, the most important principle was to help others resolve psychological issues. She suspected that this was the reason why the potion's name was Psychiatrist and not Psychologist.

Miss Justice is very happy… Klein appeared infected as he nodded with a smile as a response.

During this process, he noticed that Mr. Hanged Man appeared to be preoccupied with concerns. He looked like he was hesitating and struggling, having not made up his mind.

Eh, this means that Mr. Hanged Man is able to buy the Ocean Songster's potion formula and main ingredient, but he will have to pay a huge price. I thought he would request to pay for it in installments… The Fool Klein reined in his gaze without any signs of unrest as he surveyed the area.

After Miss Justice was done with her greeting, Cattleya looked towards the end of the long bronze table.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I found three pages of Roselle's diary."

Here it comes… I wonder if the three diary pages specially selected by Queen Mystic will be valuable. For instance, providing clues to the Card of Blasphemy for the Seer pathway. This will be able to provide me with another alternative… Klein was filled with anticipation as he calmly and naturally said, “Very good. You can think of a request.”

“Yes, Mr. Fool.” Cattleya replied in an impeccable manner before requesting to conjure the contents of the diary pages.

Upon seeing her behavior and thinking about how she acted in the dream, Klein was rather gratified. He felt like a teacher having successfully reformed a student.

This is the first time Ma’am Hermit is providing Emperor Roselle’s diary entries. With the standards and ability she has showcased, it’s impossible for her to have failed to find it in the past… Yes, in the past, she was more of an observer. After being punished by Mr. Fool, she has truly integrated into our Tarot Club? Together with how Cattleya had performed last week, Audrey made a judgment.

Meanwhile, she sensed that Mr. Hanged Man didn’t seem normal. He looked like he was anticipating something but was also unable to bring himself to part with something. She was rather intrigued.

Klein didn’t wait too long before the three diary pages were conjured and came into his hands.

Derrick and the other members instinctively fell silent, so as to not disturb Mr. Fool’s reading.

“9th February. Today is Bornova’s birthday. He’s already a healthy, strong, honest, and kind young man. His piousness has won the Church’s favor.

“Everyone is congratulating me, saying that Bornova will definitely become a Blessed, a saint. They praise him for how pure and flawless his faith is.

“I should be very happy, but I can’t hide my dismay. I wish that my children can be more human, to have more emotions. I hope that they can be themselves, and not just a believer of a deity.

“However, almost everyone believes from the bottom of their hearts that Bornova’s present state is excellent. Matilda is the same. Likewise for Ciel. Most of my noble officials share the same feelings. Only Bernadette shares my point of view. She has told me in private that she believes a person should be more self-centered, as long as they don’t harm others.

“Recalling the words Zaratul had said during Bornova’s birth, as well as the premonition I’ve had after becoming a demigod, my heart is turning heavier. Adorable angel, heh heh, what an adorable angel.

“Is this you being wary of me?

“Is this how you are attempting to control me?

“No, you can probably never understand the pride inside me. To me, so what if you’re a deity? I can replace you!”

“11th February, contact with Zaratul was fruitless again.

“Ever since he obtained that Antigonus notebook, the number of times this Secret Order leader appears has been decreasing. I’ve no idea what secret he’s scheming. Anyway, ‘He’ will definitely not tell me.

“12th February. I made a mystical item very suitable for Bernadette.

“This can allow her to effective avoid the Hidden Sage’s nagging, as long as she doesn’t proactively pray and seek a response. Yes, this item seems to be able to help saints enter the easternmost front of the Sonia Sea where the battlefield of the gods is. It prevents one from being influenced by the True Creator’s ravings, and that place likely hides the secret to the Forsaken Land of God.

“Ha, I was only making a present for my daughter out of fun. To think that it has such powerful effects. Bernadette, your dad is really the best Artisan in the world!”

Best Artisan? Does this mean that the emperor had already reached Sequence 2 of the Savant pathway when he wrote this diary entry, that he had become an angel? With the God of Steam and Machinery present, this is the peak an Artisan can attain… It's no wonder that Queen Mystic can freely enter and exit the battlefield of the gods. So it's because of a gift from the emperor. Indeed, a child with parents is like a treasure… Klein felt wistful.

In addition, he could sense Emperor Roselle's repressed and angry feelings from the diary entry. He used his comprehension skills that were honed from his previous life to figure out what was written in between the lines.

After he became an angel, the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery obstructed him and suppressed him. The God of Steam and Machinery had exerted some influence on his youngest son, Bornova, making him become the most devout believer and appointing him as someone who could become an angel and enter the Land of Perfection.

And this not only made Emperor Roselle submit to the suppression while having misgivings, but this had also stirred thoughts of rebellion in him.

The Emperor later became a public enemy of the world because of this rebellion? Klein nodded inwardly.

Meanwhile, he noticed a matter regarding Zaratul. He suspected that the Miracle Invoker only began aiming for Sequence 1 after he obtained the Antigonus family's notebook. For this, he planned many things, but something happened during his advancement, turning him into a monster. Of course, just as Arrodes said, Zaratul might not have lost control. He could be hiding something or plotting something.

After quickly scanning through it, Klein flipped the page and looked back. It wasn't continuous, and it was brand new content.

"5th October. A few Primordial Moon believers were caught by the Men in Black organization I established. They failed to complete the corresponding sacrificial ritual.

“Their behavior has intrigued me, as their strength seems to come directly from the crimson moon.

“Unfortunately, large amounts of data have confirmed that the crimson moon is really a satellite that’s revolving around our planet. Then, how is it fusing physics and mystery together?

“With my present strength, it’s not impossible to head for the crimson moon. At most, it will be troublesome and a little difficult, but it doesn’t seem to be necessary.”

“17th October, I’ve finally made up my mind.

“I will attempt to switch to the neighboring Mystery Pryer pathway. Only by doing so can I become a Sequence 1.

“I’ve always suspected that the Hidden Sage is only a conceptualized Uniqueness. Due to some sort of accident, it became sentient and awakened. Therefore, this pathway’s Sequence 1 position is likely still empty!”

Chapter 715 - Madness in His Later Years

◆

“I’ve long obtained the potion formula of Knowledge Emperor from that most ancient organization. Now, it’s time to seek the corresponding ingredients. It might already belong to a particular angel, and it might’ve fused with an object around it, turning into a warped and evil monster, or a chaotic and terrifying Sealed Artifact. In short, I have to be careful. It’s best that I find a suitable helper.

“Knowledge Emperor. This Sequence 1 potion name is rather interesting. If I hadn’t directly seen the Blasphemy Slate, I would’ve imagined that it belonged to the Reader pathway, making it belong to the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Even stranger, these two pathways aren’t switchable.

“I once discussed this matter with that mysterious leader and Old Mister Hermes. We basically came to a consensus and believe that the Reader pathway represents the ‘omniscient’ part of ‘omnipotent and omniscient.’ And the Mystery Pryer and the Savant pathways correspond to knowledge itself which is categorized into two aspects; one is more about mystery, while the other is more about reality.

“Heh, when I become a Knowledge Emperor, Bernadette can stop worrying about the Hidden Sage’s infusion of knowledge. She can also stop being afraid of pursuing knowledge.”

The emperor eventually switched to the Mystery Pryer pathway? I wonder if he successfully became a Knowledge Emperor… Perhaps it’s because of this that his ties with the Church of Steam completely fractured, making him the public enemy with no one to help him. All he could do was place his hopes on the Twilight Hermit Order… Klein thought poignantly as he came up with possible conjectures.

Apart from that, he was rather interested in the emperor's explanation of how the Reader pathway wasn't interchangeable with the Mystery Pryer and Savant pathway. He believed that by deepening his understanding of it, he might be able to figure out the rules and rationale behind the interchangeability of Beyonder pathways.

To the typical Beyonder, the Reader, Mystery Pryer, and Savant pathway belong to the "knowledge" domain. There should be a very strong connection between them, yet the former is different…

Reader belongs to the "omniscient" part of the phrase "omnipotent and omniscient." Then, the Secrets Suppliant, which is the Shepherd pathway is the "omnipotent" part? Then, there must be a certain intersection between the two. For example, being potent as a result of being erudite, and being erudite as a result of being potent. Therefore, they can be interchanged…

Starting off from this angle, the Storm pathway can be understood as omnipotence in the sea, land, and air domain. The Spectator corresponds to the psyche, making it a powerful supplement for Storm. Then, why can the Sun pathway be interchanged with them? Considering how there was an ancient sun god who was deemed to be "omnipotent and omniscient," does this mean that the Sun pathway is the foundation that accommodates "omnipotent and omniscient?"

Yes… according to such a thought process, Mystery Pryer and Savant are different aspects of "knowledge" itself. That's why they can be interchanged. Then, how is Assassin and Hunter differentiated? What about the Evernight, Death, and God of Combat pathways? In moments, Klein thought of many things, but he didn't have the time or sufficient knowledge to delve deeper into his analysis. All he could do was temporarily throw the corresponding questions to the back of his mind and will the third diary page to the top of the stack.

At a cursory glance, Klein suddenly became focused. This was because the diary page was very different from the past ones.

It didn't have a date, and the words were spaced apart. Because it was the original copy, the weight placed on the page when the words were penned was obviously out of the ordinary!

Klein swept through the page as the contents were reflected in his mind.

"No! Impossible!

"How can that happen!?

"If my predictions aren't wrong, I'm not the only one who met with that encounter!

"No. No! How can that happen!?

"The thing that I saw tells me that everything will be destroyed. Likewise for everything I've created! No! I can't accept such an ending!

"I have to work hard to save myself. I can't rely on the seven deities!

"As long as I ascend to the throne of Sequence 0, only then will I and the things I value be preserved!

"Should I attempt to pull Mr. Door back into the real world? No! Although 'He' claims to be only a Sequence 1, I believe that 'He' isn't just an ordinary Sequence 1! It's very likely that 'He' will bring unexpected catastrophe upon me!"

The Chinese words which were much larger than those on the first two pages had occupied the yellowed piece of paper in a haphazard manner. There wasn't much content, but it left Klein's head throbbing painfully.

Back when he was writing this diary entry, Emperor Roselle was very likely a Sequence 1 Knowledge Emperor. The content he wrote was infused with a potent sense of mystery and was colored with his emotions. This also meant that if Klein had read the contents in the real world, he might very well turn mentally unstable or go mad and lose control on the spot!

Thankfully, Ma'am Hermit doesn't know Chinese; otherwise, she would've mutated when she was memorizing the contents… Even if she doesn't understand Chinese, she must've found it especially tiring and draining… If one is exposed to it for extended periods of time, visual and auditory hallucinations can't be avoided. Furthermore, there's a high chance that early signs of losing control will appear… Klein thought, congratulating himself for his good luck.

His focus quickly turned back onto the diary entry as a sense of puzzlement surfaced.

What did the emperor see that made him so emotional? His mood was also rather extreme.

No, the agitation and rashness, as seen in the words, are a little abnormal. It doesn't match the image of someone who has occupied a high position for extended periods of time. It doesn't match the level of an angel. Even in his final days, he said that after he dies, he didn't care if floods deluge the heavens. He didn't lose his composure or appear that agitated back then.

Who influenced him? Or did something corrupt and pollute his thoughts?

Also, he mentioned that he's not the only one who met with that encounter. What is he referring to? Transmigration? It's true that he isn't the only one who transmigrated for no baffling reason. There's also me… or even more?

As thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein didn't waste any time. He made the three diary pages vanish as he smiled at Cattleya.

"Have you thought of the request?"

Cattleya bowed in preparation as she said, "I wish to know why Emperor Roselle went mad in his later years."

Audrey, who was in the same row as her, blinked. She believed that she had heard wrongly, as she didn't expect Ma'am Hermit to immediately ask such a heavy question.

Furthermore, how does she know that Emperor Roselle went mad in his later years? Also— Also, she only handed three pages, so how can she ask a question of this magnitude. It doesn't abide by the principle of equivalent exchange! Audrey had many thoughts arise in her mind, but she didn't stop Ma'am Hermit's question. Instead, she waited for Mr. Fool's response with piqued interest and inexplicable excitement.

Alger, Emlyn, and Fors similarly held their breaths. They cast their gaze at the end of the bronze table. Only Derrick and The World seemed oblivious.

Klein thought and chuckled.

"First, we need to accept reality.

"I'm not omniscient, nor am I omnipotent."

He had said those words in a relaxed, self-deprecating manner, but The Hermit and company didn't show any signs of unrest. Instead, they appeared even more reverent.

To them, it was obvious that Mr. Fool wasn't omnipotent and omniscient. Ignoring their guesses regarding Mr. Fool's state, this hidden existence's honorific name didn't have any related descriptions that explained the problem.

Furthermore, none of the present true gods and evil gods had honorific names that involved omnipotence and omniscience!

After setting their expectations, Klein began to answer The Hermit's question.

"I also wish to know what Roselle encountered in his later years.

"At present, it can be confirmed that due to an unknown cause and source of stimulation, Roselle cast his gaze on Sequence 0."

He didn't explain what Sequence 0 corresponded to. In the Tarot Club, there were more people who knew of it than those who didn't. Even those who didn't know could've guessed something.

Sequence 0… The emperor wanted to become a god? It's no wonder that it's said that he went mad in his later years… Audrey knew what Sequence 0 meant as she instantly sighed. Likewise for Alger.

Cattleya clearly knew what Sequence 0 implied. She expressed her gratitude while in thought as she retracted her gaze.

Sequence 0… Emlyn and Fors ruminated over the phrase, as though they had just realized that there was a position above Sequence 1 that belonged to true gods!

Derrick looked at Mr. Fool with a muddled expression. He didn't understand what was wrong with Emperor Roselle's attempt, someone who had a strong presence in history. In the City of Silver, if anyone had the chance, every resident would wish to become a Sequence 0 true god, so as to create a more sustainable living environment, or to lead everyone out of the forsaken land.

Klein didn't elaborate as he leaned back into his chair and surveyed the area.

"You may begin."

With that said, he controlled The World to look at Derrick before smiling deeply.

“The Notary potion formula you want has been acquired.”

“Thank you, Mr. World. According to the agreement, I will remember the debt and await your request,” Derrick said sincerely.

“Alright.” Klein gave a response by controlling The World before making a show of him requesting Mr. Fool to conjure the formula.

Before long, the potion formula was in Little Sun’s hands.

Derrick received it in glee as he ravenously scanned the contents of the goatskin.

“Sequence 6, Notary. Main ingredients: 1 set of crystallized roots of the Tree of Elders, 5 feathers of a Spirit Pact Bird. Supplementary ingredients: 100 ml of Radiance Spirit Pact Tree’s juice, 1 golden-rimmed sunflower, 1 white-rimmed sunflower, 5 drops of Aqua Fern juice.”

Without waiting for the others to speak, The World looked at Alger and said once more, “As you know, I have your Ocean Songster potion formula and main ingredient.”

Ah? Audrey and company were momentarily dumbfounded.

Cattleya couldn’t hide her alarm as she looked at The World. She vividly remembered that Gehrman Sparrow had just hunted Slaughterer Kircheis a week ago. How did he obtain the Ocean Songster potion formula and main ingredient?

Don’t tell me he killed an Ocean Songster? That would be considered a quasi high-ranking member in the Church of Storms… It’s only been a week! Cattleya found this unrealistic.

Chapter 716 - Island and Ruins

◆

Mr. World has also obtained the potion formula and main ingredient for Ocean Songster. He’s really impressive! Derrick moved his gaze from the goatskin in his hand and looked at the gentleman seated at the other end of the long bronze table.

In his mind, The World’s toughness had reached a whole new level, one that could match the weaker members in the six-member council!

Fors was also similarly astonished as her poignancy grew deeper.

She remembered that back when she first joined the Tarot Club, Mr. World gave her the impression that he was gloomy and reserved. Apart from that, nothing stood out. In the subsequent gatherings, he began to show that he was experienced and knowledgeable, as well as possessing rather impressive abilities. At a glance, he was a senior Beyonder who had experienced many things, just second to Mr. Hanged Man amongst the Tarot Club members.

This image had already formulated in Fors’s mind, but in recent months, Miss Magician was repeatedly surprised by The World.

He was first capable of obtaining rather important information, and following that, he sold plenty of Beyonder characteristics in a short span of time. He made her involuntarily suspect if he was a Beyonder assassin who was active in the mysterious world. She feared him from the bottom of her heart, but along with that came happiness. This was because it meant that she could commission Mr. World with certain requests that would be met with high chances of success.

When the new member, The Hermit, appeared, Fors even imagined that Mr. World's halo would be blanketed by this powerful lady. But to her surprise, he had snatched the "limelight," and blinded everyone with his magnificence.

To obtain the Ocean Songster potion formula, its corresponding main ingredient, and the Notary potion formula was seemingly impossible by human standards!

He really is impressive. I admire this kind of quiet and ordinary person who is actually very capable. Sigh, I wonder when I can become a Viscount. After this hunting competition, the winner will receive a prize that's likely something that will allow a Sanguine to become stronger… Emlyn White quickly turned his thoughts back to himself.

As Audrey was sighing in amazement, she was puzzled about a matter from before.

Why is the impressive Mr. World not searching for Emperor Roselle's diary pages? Hmm, he's not like Ma'am Hermit. He has already joined the Tarot Club for quite some time, and he doesn't need to observe… It's not like he doesn't have any requests that don't require him to search for Emperor Roselle's diary pages to obtain something from Mr. Fool… Then, why isn't he searching for them?

Has he privately submitted them? But why?

Imperceptibly, Audrey felt that Mr. World and Mr. Fool had a connection to a certain degree, but she wasn't able to confirm it, as there were just too many possibilities.

At this moment, Alger turned to the seat of honor after a few seconds of silence.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I wish to communicate privately with The World."

Here it comes… Klein nodded with anticipation as he isolated everyone's senses.

Alger waited for two seconds before turning back to look at The World, Gehrman Sparrow.

“I will use an unknown primitive island’s coordinates in exchange.

“On the island, there aren’t only extinct Beyonder creatures that cannot be found on the Northern and Southern Continent, but there’s an ancient ruin of unknown age.

“Back then… Phew… It was discovered by Qilangos and me. Back then, we lacked the strength to delve deep inside it. However, he discovered certain traces, and he suspected that the ruins hide something extremely, extremely important. He believes that the value isn’t lower than a card created by Emperor Roselle.

“My strength is inferior to Qilangos, and I didn’t go as deep as he did. I had no idea what he saw, other than guesses about the situation from his remarks.”

…What Mr. Hanged Man said holds plenty of information. From the looks of it, he long knew Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos. They had even adventured together and found the primitive island and ancient ruins. And previously, he was also the one who thought of finishing off this pirate admiral while he was away at sea… Mr. Hanged Man isn’t an ordinary member of the Church of Storms. His past seems very complicated, and he hides many secrets… Yes, a primitive island’s value isn’t small. For a secret organization, this can be the foundation to support the growth of its members… Klein controlled The World to appear to be in thought as he attempted to obtain more information from The Hanged Man.

With The World not rejecting or agreeing, Alger, who had calmed down, calmly said, “On the island, there are traces of demigod-level Beyonder creatures. To you, that should be something valuable.

“On this point, I can swear on Mr. Fool’s name. I guarantee that I’m not lying.”

After I obtain the Bizarro Sorcerer's potion formula, I'll have to consider how to obtain the corresponding ingredients. At the level of a demigod, money becomes of little use. Trading gives me the highest chance of obtaining something I need… The location of demigod-level Beyonder creatures is important. That ruin is also quite interesting… The World didn't hesitate as he chuckled.

"Deal."

Alger didn't immediately receive the Ocean Songster potion formula. Instead, he said, "I have a condition. I wish that on your first exploration of the primitive island, that you will do it with me. With Mr. Fool watching all of this, I believe you won't be concerned that I'll be up to no good."

Klein considered it for a moment and made The World nod.

"No problem. I will need companions when heading to dangerous places. I hope that you will have the required strength."

Alger wasn't angered by The World's tone as he heaved a sigh of relief.

"That's why, I wish that your first exploration will be after I advance. Of course, if I were to lose control because of my potion, this agreement will naturally be null and void."

"No problem," The World replied without any qualms.

Alger didn't harp on the topic. After obtaining Mr. Fool's agreement, he conjured the situation of the primitive island on a goatskin.

It's along the periphery of the Rorsted Sea… It's quite a big island, almost the size of Blue Mountain Island… Klein received the goatskin and quickly scanned through it to gain a general understanding of the primitive island.

He quickly looked up and said, "I'll hand over the potion formula and main ingredient after the gathering ends."

“Alright.” Having made his choice, Alger no longer had any reservations. When hearing that, he felt upheavals going through his heart, but he appeared even more staid on the surface.

After the duo’s private conversation came to an end, Cattleya retracted her gaze at The World and looked at Fors.

“The Meteorite Crystal has been obtained. 600 pounds for 60 grams.”

That’s fast… Ma’am Hermit is really efficient! Fors felt delighted, but she was also stumped.

After last week’s gathering, she had already obtained the crystallized blood of a Lavos Squid. For that, she had paid 600 pounds, leaving her with 230 pounds. Adding the 150 pounds she received this week from her royalties, she was still short of 220 pounds.

I’ll first borrow from Xio. She should have that much… After I succeed in advancing, I’ll try to earn money as quickly as possible! I have to! Fors silently drew a breath and said, “Alright. We will do the transaction tomorrow at this time.”

The Hermit tersely acknowledged and, without wasting any time, looked at Audrey.

“The Black-hunting Giant Lizard’s spinal fluid has been confirmed. 1,800 pounds. There are temporarily no clues for the Illusory Chime Tree’s fruit.”

“That’s already very good. Better than I expected. Thank you, Ma’am Hermit.” Audrey sincerely thanked her without even minding the price.

She recently realized that there was a benefit to establishing the “Relic Search and Preservation Foundation.” She could use her funds in a more secretive and unnoticeable manner. It made it difficult for her parents to notice.

After confirming the two transactions, Cattleya surveyed the members as though she was one of them.

“Any clues to the blood of a Mythical Creature?”

Klein immediately controlled The World as he chuckled with a hoarse voice.

“Are you referring a pure Mythical Creature?”

Pure Mythical Creature? There are impure Mythical Creatures? Audrey and company were puzzled but interested by what they heard.

Cattleya was taken aback as she said, “A pure one, which means the blood of an angel. One drop is enough.”

She didn’t introduce it in detail back then, because she believed that for the time being such a high-level object wouldn’t appear in the Tarot Club unless Mr. Fool was willing to provide her with help. And clearly, Mr. Fool didn’t need anyone to explain to “Him” what a Mythical Creature was.

“I have certain clues, but I can’t guarantee that I can obtain it. Furthermore, it might take another three months at least.” Klein controlled The World to give the response.

The other Tarot Club members fell silent. They never expected The World to have clues to an angel’s blood!

What can’t he accomplish? Audrey, Fors, and company had their impression of Mr. World refreshed again.

As for Alger, he suspected that The World would seek Mr. Fool’s angel for a drop of blood.

After a brief moment of silence, Emlyn, who suddenly realized that his advancement wasn’t necessarily as obvious as the other members, weakly said, “Are there any clues regarding my previous commission?”

Fors immediately said, “There are suspected cases. I will continue investigating.”

Burdened with debt, she was motivated to work.

At the end of the trading segment, Derrick mentioned his request of buying the crystallized roots of the Tree of Elders. As for the feathers of a Spirit Pact Bird, the City of Silver had it in their special warehouse.

In addition, he also sought to purchase the Golden-edged Sunflower and other supplementary ingredients. They were commonly seen items in the outside world, but they were lacking in the Forsaken Land of God.

“The crystallized roots of the Tree of Elders and the supplementary ingredients aren’t difficult to obtain.” Emlyn’s attention was caught as he said, “Then, what can you use in exchange?”

Back when he provided Miss Justice with the fruit of the Tree of Elders, he had already learned where the crystallized roots were.

Derrick thought and said, “A Beyonder characteristic of a Sequence 5 Vampire?”

It was quite a commonly seen monster in the depths of the darkness.

“Sanguine!” Emlyn said through gritted teeth. “There’s no rush. I’ll tell you when I’ve decided what I need.”

He didn’t want an item obtained from a transaction to overlap with the prize of the hunting competition.

“Alright.” Having already owed a debt to The World, Derrick was relatively at ease.

After a moment of silence, Klein rapped the edge of the mottled table to indicate the commencement of the free exchange.

Chapter 717 - The World and Hero Bandit

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the ancient palace standing above the gray fog, Alger wasn’t in a rush to mention the matter regarding Crazy Captain Connors Viktor. He turned his head to look at The Sun.

“Are you still in Afternoon Town?”

Derrick nodded honestly.

“Yes, we took a very long time to establish a camp. Later, with small teams, we wiped out the remnant monsters, one street at a time, in search of any ancient ruins that might still exist. Although this process is slow, it’s sufficiently safe.”

His answer was extremely detailed, and it gave the impression that Mr. Hanged Man could ask more questions if he wished to know more.

Audrey listened with interest as she raised her hand slightly.

“With all of you staying in Afternoon Town for so long, what do you rely on for food? Is there any Black-Faced Grass nearby?”

She had long heard from Little Sun that the City of Silver relied on the Black-Faced Grass that they grew around the city as their source of sustenance.

“We carried a portion of powdered Black-Faced Grass, but the main source of food comes from hunting those monsters. Once the Beyonder characteristic is expelled, a large proportion of them can be eaten once we skin them and roast them with fire. However, there's a certain degree of corruption in the meat, which will result in psychological problems. We can't continuously consume the meat, and we will need to spread out the intervals," Derrick replied in a serious manner to Miss Justice's question.

Audrey recalled the few monsters in the depths of the darkness mentioned by Little Sun, and having terrifying vibes about the dark and eerie area around the City of Silver, she couldn't help but press further, "Wouldn't that be very disgusting?"

Fors, who was attentively listening to the other members' conversation, was inspired by this question. She deliberately didn't look at Emlyn as she asked Derrick with piqued curiosity, "I remember you mentioning that monsters in the depths of the darkness include Vampires. Their bodies run with pus and are extremely ugly. Then, how would you consume Vampires after killing them?"

Emlyn, who heard the question, forgot to correct her by informing her that Sanguine weren't Vampires. His expression turned livid as he felt an inexplicable feeling of indescribable horror.

Derrick was silent for two seconds before saying, "There are some monsters that are indeed disgusting—very disgusting. Just like the Vampires as mentioned by Miss Magician, but we have no choice. As long as it's edible, we will eat it."

His voice gradually turned heavy, as though he once again deeply felt the tragedy that was the curse which enveloped the City of Silver.

The palace that looked like a giant's residence fell silent once again. Even Emlyn, who wanted to retort Derrick, didn't say a word. All he did was curl his lips and retract his arm.

A few seconds later, The World broke the silence with a chuckle.

"Let's return to the sea. There have been certain matters that require your attention. Crazy Captain Connors Viktor's Single-eyed Skull drifted to a nearby harbor after a storm. The masts were snapped, and there were charred marks. The entire crew, including Connors Viktor, died. No one survived.

Justice and company didn't know who Crazy Captain was. They weren't too interested in the news, other than being curious as to what caused this destructive naval tragedy.

On the other hand, Alger shared completely different thoughts from them.

There must be a tremendous secret if The World is paying attention to the matter regarding Crazy Captain! It's no wonder His Eminence Kottman issued such an important command to get the Mandated Punisher and captains to investigate the situation! Alger's eyes darted about slightly as he said after some thought, "In Bayam, the Church of Storms is actively investigating the people and matters surrounding Crazy Captain Connors Viktor."

Heh, there's no need for me to commission it… Klein chuckled inwardly and got The World to directly ask, "What clues does the Church of Storms possess?"

"I have no idea. I'll try my best to understand the situation." Alger frankly shook his head.

He believed that The World understood what he was implying—that he wasn't exactly sure, but he would sound out what the Church knew.

Audrey, who was listening out of curiosity, realized that the matter regarding Crazy Captain wasn't simple. Hence, she asked probingly, "Mr. World, isn't this common infighting among pirates?"

Klein was just about to be perfunctory with Miss Justice but without divulging anything further when he suddenly thought of a problem.

Behind the Great Smog of Backlund and the disappearances, there might be a particular faction from the royal family. It also included some military personnel. And Miss Justice would lean towards the nobles and royal family both her emotions and from her standpoint. If there comes a day when I target those bastards who are deserving of death, she might not find it acceptable if I commission a mission to her. She might even fall into a dilemma…

Therefore, I should now inject the impression in her that the royal family and military have plenty of bad guys. I would subtly change the direction in which her standpoint and emotions are directed towards. For this, I can bear the burden that some of the information regarding The World is leaked… Klein thought for a moment and made The World say with a relaxed, but mocking tone, "Crazy Captain is related to the disappearance of the colonial slaves which Mr. Hanged Man was previously investigating.

"The Demoness Sect takes the people who are tricked or abducted and hands them over to Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy, and they have them ship the people over to the Northern Continent's East Sea's coast. Then, with Crazy Captain Connors Viktor, it completes the last mile. This pirate is intricately tied with many human traffickers and slave merchants in Loen.

"Back when I informed Mr. Hanged Man of the news in January, someone witnessed Baelen, who was involved in the disappearance cases, with a MI9 member who is loyal to the royal family.

"Also, Backlund's largest human trafficker, Capim, had guards from the Arbiter pathway.

"With so many matters compounded together, do you think that Crazy Captain's death is simply a result of pirate infighting?

"Heh heh, I've always wondered why the person behind all of this needs so many slaves."

The connections between the clues were clearly presented before

Audrey, Alger, and company. It made them suddenly realize a lot of things.

Mr. World left Backlund and headed for the sea to seek out clues. He's always been investigating the truth behind the Great Smog and Prince Edessak's death! According to the information he provided, it's clear that the true murderer hasn't been punished. He's still hidden inside the royal family, and there's a portion of the military who are working for him. How despicable! This kind of person should be thrown into hell! Hmm… How does Mr. World know that the guards around Capim were Beyonders from the Arbiter pathway? Did he fight with them? Audrey's mind raced as she suddenly made the connection.

Capim was killed by Hero Bandit Black Emperor. The latter clearly knew which pathway Capim's guards belonged to.

Hero Bandit Black Emperor is Mr. Fool's Blessed.

Mr. World is suspected to have certain connections with Mr. Fool. He has never sought Emperor Roselle's diary pages.

Therefore, Mr. World is Hero Bandit Black Emperor, and he's also Mr. Fool's Blessed?

He doesn't hand in Emperor Roselle's diary pages because he hands them over in private? Some of his actions from before were to hide his identity as a Blessed? This is a test given to him by Mr. Fool? It's really hard to connect Mr. World with Hero Bandit Black Emperor. The latter feels like a hero… Audrey felt like she had stumbled upon the truth as she began to wonder what kind of person Mr. World, who was also Hero Bandit Black Emperor, was actually like in real life.

Alger and Cattleya instantly understood why Gehrman Sparrow had attacked Tracy.

This Blessed was seeking out the truth behind the Great Smog of Backlund!

And the truth hidden behind this was something Mr. Fool was interested in!

Fors and Emlyn, who lived in Backlund, also vaguely sensed something when The World mentioned Capim. After all, Hero Bandit Black Emperor’s legend was rather striking in the recent half a year. He became an important character in many run-of-the-mill novels. Even Fors herself had thought of making him the protagonist in a love story between a hero bandit and a young royal lady.

They finally understood why The World had noticed in time that something was brewing in Backlund and that a tragedy was about to happen. This was because this gentleman had been tracking the corresponding clues the entire time.

From the looks of it, the matter in Backlund is far from over. There will likely be another accident in the future… I really wish to flee from this place immediately, but Xio definitely wouldn’t want to. I have no way of explaining this to her… Fors suddenly had thoughts of fleeing Backlund.

Emlyn wasn’t too afraid. From his point of view, the Sanguine’s important figures were in Backlund and were definitely able to provide some protection if a disaster really happened.

After two seconds of silence, Alger said in a serious manner, “I will try my best to investigate this matter.”

He had already sensed that the truth behind Crazy Captain’s death hid a rather terrifying storm. As such, he was a little apprehensive and afraid, but he also trembled with excitement that he was involved in the most important matter regarding the Southern and Northern Continents.

After Cattleya heard that, she nodded.

“I will also seek out relevant information.

"If there are more clues provided, perhaps I might be able to help."

Klein thought for a moment before letting The World speak frankly, "On the night of Crazy Captain's death, a High-Sequence Beyonder suspected to be from the Black Emperor pathway appeared on his ship. However, this demigod managed to escape before Jahn Kottman arrived."

Black Emperor pathway, demigod… Alger and Cattleya ruminated over these phrases as they considered an angle of attack.

Audrey and company were astonished that the Tarot Club had discussed the development of demigods to something directly involving demigods. The cases that they were involved in were really increasing in level. As for Derrick, he didn't understand a thing.

With Crazy Captain's matter coming to pass, Cattleya glanced at The World before deliberately mentioning her tidbit.

"Another incident happened at sea. Last week, the crazy adventurer Gehrman Sparrow hunted the second mate of the King of Immortality, Slaughterer Kircheis. He was a Sequence 5 Beyonder."

"How impressive…" Fors, who was only a Sequence 8, sighed from the bottom of her heart. She knew very well what it meant to be a Sequence 5.

"Yes, he really is a legendary adventurer," Audrey echoed.

Emlyn turned agape before he closed his mouth. He felt that he was still a distance away from that level.

Alger said without any signs of unrest, "It's because of this that the investigation of Gehrman Sparrow's origins has become an important mission of the various major organizations."

Are you implying that the Church of Storms has gotten you to investigate me? Klein instantly read in between the lines as he made

The World chuckle.

“I wonder where I can claim this commission? I wish to use some unimportant information in exchange for money. I have some understanding of Gehrman Sparrow.”

Oh, Mr. World is hinting that he doesn’t mind me exchanging what appears to be important but, in reality, is actually meaningless information regarding Gehrman Sparrow in exchange for rewards and trust? The Hanged Man nodded in enlightenment.

The free exchange continued for a while until Derrick finished learning this week’s list of ancient Hermes terms before everything came to a close.

After he watched the bowing Miss Justice and company leave, Klein cast his gaze onto Groselle’s Travels.

Chapter 718 - Characters in the Book

Not finding himself overly exhausted, Klein rubbed his temples and beckoned over a tiny metallic bottle from the junk pile.

Inside it was a tiny tube of blood that he went through great effort to extract from his vein, and he had long brought it above the gray fog. It was only waiting for the opportunity when Klein would use his Spirit Body to enter Groselle's Travels to explore the book world.

After opening the cap, Klein wasn't in a hurry to smear the blood over the book's dark brown cover. Instead, he summoned all the items from the junk pile that he had brought to the mysterious space before the Tarot Gathering, and he spread them out in front of him.

In consideration of how the Black Emperor's form was too eye-catching, and with him not too certain of the exact situation in the book world, Klein decided against bringing the Card of Blasphemy. Instead, he used Azik's copper whistle to fortify his Spirit Body to prevent himself from failing to return above the gray fog before being instantly killed by some unknown power.

As the ancient and exquisite copper whistle fused into his body, Klein's Spirit Body swelled up and became more corporeal.

Two pitch-black flames flared out from his eye sockets as though they possessed a life of their own.

With the help of Cogitation, he adjusted his spirituality, converging the iciness that stemmed from the aspect of Death within his body. Soon, his eyes returned to normal.

This was like an evil spirit taking on an ordinary form to lure prey into its proximity.

Right on the heels of that, Klein wore Creeping Hunger and held Death Knell while he hid the Nightmare Beyonder characteristic in his body. The latter was prepared for him to seek out any abnormalities when exploring the dreams of the living entities in the book world.

After completing all his preparations, he poured a few drops of blood and smeared it over the cover of Groselle's Travels.

After a brief wait, his vision turned blurry, as though countless translucent objects were hidden within it. Following that, it turned clear—there were blue skies, white clouds, grayish-brown city walls, and passersby.

This is no longer the land of ice and snow from before, but a city that looks very normal on the surface… Klein stood by the side of the dirt road as he observed the residents of the book world. He discovered that most of them wore linen shirts, a short brown coat, and loose dark-colored trousers. Their overall style was akin to that of the Loen Kingdom centuries ago.

He looked down at the format of the tailcoat, starched shirt, and damaged dark-red bow tie as he silently changed it all out. Instantly, he was no different from the people around him.

He then walked to the city gates in preparation to enter.

At that moment, a leather-vested soldier at the gate stopped him.

"Entrance fees! One liddle."

Do I look rich? I don't even know what a liddle is… Klein mumbled inwardly, amused. He then "communicated" with him at a spiritual level, successfully transferring the soldier's attention onto a merchant caravan behind him.

As a quasi-wraith who could possess anyone and control them, exerting a psychological influence on others was nothing extraordinary. It wasn't a particularly potent ability, but it was extremely useful against ordinary people.

When Klein entered the city, he walked through the streets in a seemingly relaxed manner, but he inwardly remained wary. He felt that public hygiene was slightly better than Backlund a few years ago. It appeared to have a mature sewage system, preventing the situation of any waste and trash being dumped.

I couldn't tell that this is an illusory world inside a book at all. Everyone has Spirit Body Threads… Klein proceeded forward as he observed. Suddenly, he noticed a stone building that was more than ten meters tall to his side. It only had two stories, and the top of the door was about four meters tall.

Beside the building was a signboard. It was written in a language that was completely different from any of the outside world's languages, but Klein instantly understood what it meant: "Pessote Blacksmith Guild."

There's a blacksmith guild. This place really hasn't entered the Age of Steam… Just as Klein was feeling poignant, he saw the door creak open, and out walked a giant with four long limbs!

The giant's skin was grayish blue, and his head had the trademark single vertical eye. In his hand was a huge and heavy sledgehammer. He walked across the street with his lips curled.

The humans walking past him didn't show any fear, as though it was a common sight.

They even greeted the giant.

"Good afternoon, Groselle!"

Groselle… Klein, who was rather face-blind to giants, had his pupils constrict. Only then did he realize the familiarity!

He was just about to chase after them when he discovered that the giant had turned into another street, vanishing from his sights.

Klein stood on the spot, silently observing the intersection as he came up with a few guesses.

There's another Groselle in the book world?

No, the ending of the travels is that Groselle died in battle in the Nation of Frost…

This is another story?

Filled with all kinds of questions, Klein wasn't in a rush to find Groselle. He turned and entered a bar by the side of the street.

Such places were often the places with the most messy and multifarious information in a city. It aided him in quickly gaining a grasp of the entire situation.

The bar's lighting was dim, and the ventilation wasn't the best, making the air appear somewhat turbid. At that moment, there weren't many customers drinking. Most of the people were by the bar counter, chatting happily with each other or the bartender.

Klein slowly walked over when his gaze froze.

He saw a man wearing a black pointed hat and an asymmetrical coat by the side of the bar counter. He looked pretty handsome with his flaxen-colored hair, deep brown eyes, a high nose, and thin lips. He was none other than the Solomon Empire viscount, Mobet Zoroast!

Upon seeing him, Klein recalled the scene of the Dream Stealer's rapid aging before he collapsed onto the ground as he struggled to crawl towards Elvish Songster Siatas and grabbed her hand.

All of that remained clear as day, as though it had just happened yesterday; yet, Mobet had once again appeared before his eyes.

Klein's expression grew heavy as he walked over and sat beside Mobet.

He didn't say a word, as he knew that Mobet was one to start a conversation.

"Outsider, first time in Pessote? I swear I've never met you before." Mobet put down a cup of distilled liquor as he turned his head to the side.

"I come from the Nation of Frost." Klein randomly cooked up a story.

Mobet immediately laughed loudly.

"You're a funny one. This is the Nation of Frost, but of course, that was many years ago.

"Ever since the King of the North was killed by a bunch of adventurers, no—heroes, this place is no longer plagued by ice and snow. Everyone believes that it should be called the Nation of Neverwinter."

Klein fell silent without responding.

"Why so serious? It looks like you have your own troubles." Mobet rapped on the wooden bar counter, showing signs of sympathy. He downed a mouthful of spirits and said, "I'm telling you. Men should absolutely not get married. It's the beginning of suffering! Do you know? When she gets worked up a little, she would beat me up. When she's happy, she beats me up. Same when she's embarrassed or angry! Anyway, she beats me up for any reason! From this very moment, I've decided not to return home again!"

Does this mean you got married to Siatas? Klein kept silent for two seconds as he sized up Mobet's face. He discovered that there were no signs of bruises and swelling on his face. This meant that the Elvish Songster knew that men needed to put on appearances.

He asked with a sigh, “Then why did you marry her?”

Mobet was taken aback as he smiled wryly.

“I came here with a merchant caravan. When I first saw her, she was just that beautiful. Her singing was moving and seemed to hide indescribable sorrow. Heh, I’m as afraid of her now as I was infatuated over her back then! I definitely won’t return. Hey, why do you seem a little sad? You don’t have to be sad for me. I’m already free!”

At that moment, the door to the bar suddenly opened as a beautiful female voice shouted.

“Mobet, come out here!

“I’m counting from ten. Never come back if you don’t come home!

“Ten, nine…”

Mobet immediately jumped up and ran to the door. As he ran, he muttered, “I know you don’t have any patience. You always jump to two after counting to eight!”

Klein turned his body and saw Siatas’s figure, but he no longer had the intention of communicating with her.

The real Mobet and Siatas were already dead. The ones living in the book world were just two characters.

Standing up and leaving the bar, Klein came to a nearby deserted alley. He planned on confirming the kind of spirit world this world had.

He quickly outlined spherical lights in his mind as his thoughts gradually emptied out and his body and mind became tranquil.

As his spirituality spread out bit by bit, several indescribable illusory figures appeared around him. However, up high in the sky, it lacked the seven lustrous brilliances of different colors that contained endless knowledge.

The seven lights don't exist here… The number of spirit world creatures here are lacking… This place is indeed a fake spirit world created by the book… Klein took a step forward and found the colors in his vision saturate to the extreme as it overlapped with the obvious differences.

He wasn't in a rush to explore the spirit world. He exited it and began window shopping through Pessote and chatted with others.

Before long, he found Groselle's residence.

The giant ran a blacksmith shop. He was taking an afternoon nap on a huge bed on the second story.

Klein directly entered by passing through the wall and came to Groselle's side.

He observed the giant for a few seconds and took out the Nightmare Beyonder characteristic from his Spirit Body. With some difficulty, he used some of its powers that it came naturally equipped with.

Deep, serene darkness quickly spread as it instantly enveloped Klein and Groselle. And in a Spirit Body state, Klein directly saw a blob of irregular hazy spherical light.

His spirituality immediately emanated over and touched the spherical light.

All sorts of scattered scenes instantly flashed past around him before fixating on a forest with towering but withered trees. On the other side of the forest was a mountain and steep cliffs. At the top of it was a magnificent palace.

The palace was huge and opulent, and it didn't seem suitable for humans. It gave him the impression like it was from a myth as the light of dusk that scattered above it seemed frozen.

Klein had seen this palace before. It was the Giant King's Court that had appeared in the dream world of the battlefield of the gods!

However, this angle was completely different from before. He was situated behind the king’s court!

Chapter 719 - Dream Tour

◆

Klein turned his gaze to the forest where light could hardly penetrate through its denseness, having gained a rough idea of where he was.

This was the Waning Forest which Groselle guarded when he was at the Giant King's Court.

The trees in the forest were tens of meters tall, and the thickness of the trees was the arm span of several giants. However, their barks were mottled with signs of rot everywhere. The leaves and twigs were mostly withered and dropping as they interwove with each other like a dark cloud floating in midair.

Groselle and similar-looking giants guarded the boundary of the forest, either carrying axes or broadswords, fully concentrating on defending the area.

According to Groselle, this Waning Forest has the bodies of Giant King Aurmir's father and mother buried in it. Apart from this ancient god, no one else is allowed to step inside, including these guards… Yes, Giant King Aurmir's parents should be so-called original giants, the kind that was the craziest, cruelest, and most ferocious. Perhaps… Eh, why would Groselle have such a dream? As Klein was in thought, he suddenly sensed something amiss.

According to his random conversations in Pessote, the present Groselle was a native giant who had nothing to do with the Giant King's Court.

Therefore, having such a dream made it appear rather abnormal!

From the Psychology Alchemists' theory which Ma'am Daly and Miss Justice have discussed before, perhaps the book world will use or clone the original character's subconscious or collective subconscious when creating a character. Then, it would make minor changes, making the consciousness fulfill the required settings. Therefore, Groselle's dream will be influenced by his subconscious, reproducing life in the Giant King's Court… if that's the case, it can only be said that this book is a cruel author… The moment Klein thought of this, he suddenly had an idea. He felt that this was an opportunity for him to gather relevant information on the Giant King's Court.

He previously planned on directly learning about such matters through Groselle. But in order to keep his promise, the Giant Guardian had died in the battle with King of the North Ulyssan. After his Spirit Body left the book world, it quickly dissipated without giving him any chance of communicating. Now, he finally had another method, which was to explore Groselle's dream.

There had to be parts of it that were ridiculous or exaggerated, but the remaining content had to be a true reflection of reality. As long as an approach of careful study is employed, it's not impossible to distinguish the two.

Groselle never entered the Waning Forest, so the scenes inside must stem from his imagination. There's no need to explore it… Klein slowly cast his gaze onto the mountain where the king's court was.

It wasn't tall, which meant that the Waning Forest was on a mountain rather close to the king's court. It was probably just a straight path from there to the ancient god's residence.

Klein didn't waste time searching as he walked straight to Groselle and acted like he knew him well. He asked in a relaxed tone, "How should I return to the king's court?"

He knew that Groselle was an honest giant, and he would only be more honest in his dream.

Groselle raised his hand to scratch the back of his head as he looked down with a confused look. He said with a smile, "Isn't it simply by taking the Barren Tunnel?"

He pointed ahead and added, "You'll see it when you circle around that boulder."

"Thank you," Klein sighed as he said with a bow.

As he watched Klein depart, Groselle scratched the back of his head again, muttering to himself in confusion, "Who is he? Why do I find him so familiar…"

After circling a boulder that protruded out the mountain, the scene opened up before Klein's eyes. A gigantic cave at least thirty meters tall appeared.

Erected outside the cave was a stone stele. Engraved on it was a single vertical eye, a high nose, and plush lips. It looked like a giant's head had been squeezed in to reveal the frontal facial features.

Just as Klein approached, the mouth on the stele opened.

"Why are you returning to the king's court ahead of time?"

"By His Majesty's orders," Klein said in an unflustered tone. After all, the intelligence level of all the living beings in this dream was equivalent to the owner of the dream—Groselle.

The lips on the stele opened and closed as it let out a humming sound.

"Please answer a question; otherwise, you shall not pass."

…If only I brought along Arrodes, it should be rather fun to see what happens… Klein lampooned as he calmly nodded.

"Okay."

The stele's lips closed for three seconds before opening.

“If your wife, daughter, and a woman you covet ask you to judge which of them is most beautiful, who would you choose?”

This is completely different from the magic mirror’s style… Klein’s lips quivered as his mind raced. Using nearly ten seconds, he answered, “My intelligence is insufficient to determine this matter. I will assign someone who is more intelligent than me to give the answer.”

How can I answer something that can get me killed? He gritted his teeth as he added.

“…Who is this more intelligent person?” The giant’s face on the stele froze for a few seconds.

Klein solemnly answered, “Of course it’s our king.”

The stele was shocked beyond words. It took quite a moment before it said, “Alright, I’ll consider it as you answering the question. You may pass.”

Klein immediately crossed the strange stele and walked into the cave.

The ground in the cave was paved with large stone panels that had been weathered. The sides and top of the cave were filled with murals, speaking of stories of the giants and dragons battling the demonic wolves, mutants, devils, and phoenixes. The drawing style was crude and the color choice was dark. However, it was extremely vivid.

Klein walked forward as he observed the murals. He discovered that there were swaths of withered weeds, as well as all kinds of coarse gravel in between the stone panels and the bottom of the murals.

And the lack of water and the decline of life became more apparent the deeper he ventured inside.

After walking for an unknown period of time, Klein saw a huge grayish-blue open door. Standing on each side of the door was a four-to five-meter-tall giant.

The giants guarding this place were different from Groselle and the others. They wore solid and beautiful iron-black armor and firm, exquisite helms. They looked like two huge statues.

They didn't stop Klein and allowed him to pass through the door and enter the hall within.

The hall wasn't too spacious. The ends of the hall could be seen clearly, and it could probably only hold five to six giants.

As Klein was observing his environment, he suddenly halted. Then, the hall seemed to be pulled up by an invisible hand as it quickly rose.

He staggered a little before finding his footing. All he saw were grayish-black walls flashing by as they kept sweeping downwards.

In about ten seconds, there was a thud as the hall stopped ascending.

At this moment, it wasn't the cave tunnel outside the door, but a magnificent palace propped up by stone columns.

Klein briskly left the original hall as he sized up his surroundings with piqued interest.

This is the Giant King's Court's "elevator?" This seems to be the place where the guards live. Outside is a long table taller than humans, with extremely large chairs. On the two sides are rooms, and inside them are neatly ordered beds… Klein swept past the various items in the hall before he stopped at a mural.

The mural's main character was a giant dressed in full-body silver armor. As there was nothing to scale, Klein was unable to know exactly how tall he was.

The giant stood by the side of a cliff, with a sword in hand pointing diagonally upwards. His body emitted a bright halo, like a rising sun illuminating the surroundings.

Many giants were genuflecting around him, as though praying or worshiping him and awaiting a bestowment.

The giant king's son, God of Dawn, Badheil? Klein looked at the face of the mural's main character in thought, and he saw that his face was blocked by a mask. There was only a dawn-like halo coming from his eyes.

It's very similar to the God of Combat statue in the Backlund underground ruins. His face is completely hidden behind a mask… Heh, Queen Mystic said before that the God of Combat is a giant who lived from ancient times. Therefore, their Church's headquarters, the Great Twilight Hall, resembled the Giant King's Court… Could it be the son of the giant king? God of Dawn escaped the destruction of the king's court, and at a certain point in time, he managed to retake the authority wielded by "His" father? Klein made a bold guess, but he lacked any evidence or clues.

He used the correspondence principle to look at the wall opposite the mural. There was also a mural there, but the main character was no longer God of Dawn, Badheil. Instead, it was a female giant in a leather vest and long skirt.

This female giant stood sideways. Her facial contours were soft, and her single vertical eye was focused beneath her. Long, dark-brown hair reached all the way to her back.

Her right hand was spread out as she held items like wheat and fruits. Around her were golden fields, clear lakes, and trees covered with fruits and colorful mushrooms.

Giant Queen, Goddess of Harvest, Omebella? Klein looked around, but he didn't see the mural representing Giant King Aurmir.

There's no depiction of the ancient god because this is the residence of remote guards? Then, going out from here will likely be the interior of the Giant King's Court… Klein carefully walked to the door. He used the method he employed in the dream world of the battlefield ruins of the gods by activating Creeping Hunger and using the strength of a Zombie to open the door.

However, there wasn't a palace in the frozen dusk that he had imagined outside. Instead, it was a gray, hazy world. It appeared to be a cliff with a bottomless pit.

According to Miss Justice's previous experience, this is likely the boundary of the dream. The only way is to head down and enter Groselle's subconscious. Finally, I'll arrive at the sea of collective subconscious… Miss Justice discovered a mind dragon in the human sea of collective subconscious where she was. Then, in this book world created by the Dragon of Imagination, what would be contained in the sea of collective subconscious? Klein's mind whirred as he conjured a staircase that led down into the hazy world.

The staircase didn't head straight down but spiraled around deep into the gray haze. The bottom couldn't be seen, nor were any of the details of the mind world that were possible to discern.

Chapter 720 - Philosopher

◆

After silently observing it for a few seconds, Klein walked forward as he got onto the staircase and carefully walked down it.

The surrounding light gradually dimmed with a gray, hazy luster that enveloped the extremely silent world. The moment Klein proceeded down the staircase, he felt more and more like he was being locked inside a dark, silent room. Slowly, his ears could hear his sloshing blood and his beating heart.

The latter sped up as it was invaded by panic and horror which he could hardly keep in check. Klein focused his mind as he imagined the stacks of spherical light so as to stabilize his emotions and recover.

To his side, a grayish-white cliff coldly stood there, a representation of the domain of Groselle's consciousness. It was silent as though it were dead, but the surrounding grayness would occasionally coruscate.

Klein focused his gaze and saw that in one of the points of light, there was a giant who ripped apart a human before stuffing it into his mouth, as well as Groselle panicking. Back then, the latter was less than three meters tall, and it was clearly still an adolescent.

The point of light flashed past, appearing in the frozen dusk that scattered over the mountain peak. Time here seemed to become impeded.

Klein was just about to seek out any valuable information in Groselle's subconscious when he suddenly heard sounds akin to a beast's panting.

With a whoosh, a huge palm appeared from the surrounding haze. Its skin was grayish-blue and was covered with signs of rot. On it was an obvious yellowish-green liquid as it quickly grabbed at Klein's ankle.

Amidst the panting sound, similar palms rose up one after another from the staircase below, as though they were attempting to forcibly pull Klein's Spirit Body into the mind world's darkest and most unfathomable zone.

Instantly, these rotting palms formed a dense horse as they kept struggling upwards and let out sounds of horrible, hair-raising panting. It made Klein instinctively jump up three steps.

However, the countless palms that belonged to giant corpses didn't stop. They squirmed along the staircase as they surged upwards, covering every inch of space.

Klein was just about to reach out his right palm to draw Death Knell and use Purifying Bullets combined together with Death Knell's Slaughter ability to finish off the countless monsters when two questions suddenly flashed in his mind.

Where do these palms come from? Why would they be inside Groselle's subconscious?

The moment this thought came to mind, his spiritual perception was triggered. Klein came to a realization as he immediately abandoned his thoughts of using Death Knell. He calmed his breathing and imagined the spherical lights.

The huge, rotting palms took this opportunity to reach his feet as they grabbed his calves and ankles!

At that moment, they silent vanished as though they had never appeared.

Indeed, this is an illusion created by Groselle's subconscious. Here, minds don't just face each other, but they interact with them as well. If one lacks the corresponding Beyonder powers, the deeper one goes, the easier it is to have an emotional breakdown. Intrusion by the other party's subconscious will slowly happen until one's Beyonder powers are severely tainted. As a result, one will become a mental patient that will never be able to recover their rationality, and this might very well lead to a loss of control… This is different from communicating with spirits. Corruption isn't avoided simply by maintaining lucidity and reason. This is because one is already inside the target's Beyonder powers… Klein muttered to himself, having figured out something.

He hesitated for a few seconds before turning around to climb back up the stairs. He gave up on venturing deep into Groselle's mind world because he lacked the Beyonder powers to placate his own mind. Insisting on heading down was equivalent to suicide.

I'll consider exploring again after I find a mystical item that targets this aspect. Klein determined his thoughts as he walked faster. Finally, with a leap, he returned to Groselle's dreamscape and returned to the guards' quarters in the Giant King's Court.

He already felt exhausted, so he immediately left the dream, walking out of Groselle's blacksmith through the walls before observing the wonders of the book world.

I've already met Groselle, Mobet, and Siatas. And while I was casually chatting with others, I also heard of the devout priest, Snowman, and the philosopher, Frunziar. However, there isn't an Anderson Hood, Edwina Edwards, Danitz, or Gehrman Sparrow… Therefore, only the dead will possess brand new characters in the book. Or could it be that only those who had stayed in here for extended periods of time—fully expressing themselves as an adventurer in their day-to-day lives—would be able to have their subconscious replicated? As Klein strolled by the side of the street which was illuminated by the setting sun, he considered something that he found crucial.

If it were the former theory, where the dead would "revive" and become new characters, then there was nothing Klein needed to worry about. However, if it was the latter, he had to consider reducing the frequency at which he explored the book, as well as strictly control the amount of time he spent in it each time.

There's no way to ascertain it for now. I'll deal with the situation by assuming it's the latter. There's definitely nothing wrong with being cautious… Klein quickly made up his mind and was about to return above the gray fog.

At that moment, he saw another familiar figure.

Frunziar, with his black hair and blue eyes, was sitting on a long, wooden chair by the street. He was staring blankly at the sky which seemed to be alit in flames, as though he was in thought.

Recalling how this Loen soldier's ash urn was still with him, he planned on sending it back to the Church of Storms cemetery in Backlund. Klein silently sighed and walked over before sitting beside him. He asked as though it was a casual conversation, "What's on your mind?"

"I'm wondering who I am, where I come from, how I should return…" Frunziar didn't look away as he said in a dream-like state.

Without waiting for Klein to ask another question, he shook his head with a chuckle.

"I ultimately feel that I don't belong here. I'm not myself at the moment, and that there's some place awaiting my return.

"They always mock me for considering such pointless questions, so they gave me the title of 'philosopher'…"

As he spoke, he looked at the setting sun and once again fell into silence and looked spellbound.

Klein didn't say a word. He sat there quietly and accompanied Frunziar in watching the sunset. Finally, he silently vanished.

Frunziar didn't notice that the person beside him had already left. He sat there motionless like a marble statue, looking far into the distance.

†

After replenishing the ship's supplies, Alger Wilson instructed the Blue Avenger to leave the Resistance's private harbor. It wasn't going to stay too long in the Rorsted Archipelago.

He had to return to Pasu Island to make his report by the designated time.

At that moment, in the captain's cabin, he was watching in anticipation at the illusory door that was formed by items with spirituality and a burgeoning flame.

It was the door of sacrifice, and it was also a door of bestowment!

Amidst an illusory creaking sound, the mysterious door slowly opened, revealing an infinite depth and darkness within its interior.

Light shot out from within before converging immediately. After everything calmed down, two items had appeared on the altar at some point in time. As for the door with all kinds of strange symbols, it was gone.

Alger was able to compose himself as he seriously thanked Mr. Fool. He finished the ritual according to the procedure before reaching out to pick up the two items.

One of them was a piece of paper that had been neatly folded, while the other was a translucent jellyfish that had azure-blue seawater in it.

Alger inspected the latter and discovered that there were occasional vortexes formed by winds or occasional lightning streaks. And from time to time, he could hear a distant, moving voice sounding from it.

This voice sounds like a woman's… From the looks of it, this characteristic's owner was a lady. Alger couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief. This meant that it wasn't some quasi high-ranking member of the Church of Storms that had been killed.

The Church of Storms didn't have any female high-ranking members, quasi or not!

Putting away the Ocean Songster's Beyonder characteristic, Alger unfolded the piece of paper. He swept past the main ingredient, and he quickly looked at the supplementary ingredients. Finally, his eyes paused at the ritual.

To him, the main ingredients were unimportant with a Beyonder characteristic in hand. He could look at it later. As for supplementary ingredients, they were rather easy to find, so they didn't need much attention. It was the ritual that was of utmost importance.

Drink the potion in an Obninsk's belly… Alger silently read the ritual's contents as the corresponding information quickly surfaced in his mind.

Obninsks were ancient sea monsters. They could directly devour a sailboat, and it had a humongous, distorted body. It had as many as three heads and many tentacles that entangled with each other. They were the protagonists in many legends at sea.

Most of these sea monsters were tamed by the Church of Storms. They had a fixed region of activity, but it was unknown if they had near-human intelligence.

It's no wonder the Church controls Obninsks, and not other sea monsters… It's no wonder there are so many Beyonders in the Sailor pathway among pirates, but only a few can reach Sequence 5. Either they directly inherited it, or they're the subordinates of King of the Five Seas or Queen Mystic… Then, where should I find Obninsks that don't belong to the Church… Alger frowned slightly as he contemplated his advancement that bypassed the Church of Storms.

His first reaction was to find Queen Mystic Bernadette through Admiral of Stars Cattleya. From her, he could find Obninsks that didn't belong to the Church of Storms. His second reaction was that it exposed himself to danger. This was because the corresponding Obninsks were likely servants of Queen Mystic, and they would report everything to their mistress.

Yes, this will be the last resort if there aren't any other choices. Alger's thoughts raced as he quickly had another idea.

That was to pray to Mr. Fool!

This reawakened existence secretly wielded the former authority of Sea God Kalvetua. "He" could commandeer undersea creatures, allowing "Him" to know where to find Obninsks that didn't belong to any faction!

There's no need to rush it. If I were to advance now, I won't be able to hide the advancement from others, because of my lack of control over the spirituality dissipation. I can perform the prayer after I make my report and leave Pasu Island… Alger calmed down and memorized the Ocean Songster formula. Then, he moved the piece of paper to the tip of the candle's flame.

As he watched the flame devour the formula at an increasing speed, Alger's gaze turned deep.

After finishing off the remnant traces, his gaze landed on a sea map and locked onto a location.

Bansy!

Alger had planned on making a trip to Bansy in passing while en route to Pasu Island. He wanted to know what the present state of the harbor was.

He had already shared his thoughts with his sailors, and no one objected. This was because they were equally curious as to why Bansy

Harbor was suddenly destroyed. They were curious what it had turned into.

Chapter 721 - Klein's Guidance

◆ ◆ ◆

On the Future, Frank Lee rolled up his sleeves and began flicking his fountain pen while writing with a smile.

"My dear friend, Gehrman Sparrow, I have good news for you. I have successfully cultivated a new breed of mushrooms by using the flesh and blood of a Rose Bishop. As long as there's fish, it will keep growing. We'll no longer have to worry about not being able to eat mushrooms due to long voyages. Furthermore, it has been crossbred with beef, making it taste excellent!

"Its only flaw is that there's no way to make it catch fish by itself. External help is needed, but I don't think it's too big a problem. After all, based on what Nina said, it wouldn't corrupt the ocean. Well, let's just pretend she's right.

"I've mailed you some dried mushrooms. As long as you give it water and fish, they will immediately become normal and reproduce by themselves. I hope you will like my gift…"

After going on and on, Frank finally folded the letter and placed it in an envelope. He stuffed three dried mushrooms into it before applying glue and sealing it.

After doing all of this, he took out the note Klein had given him, followed the description written, and began to seriously prepare the ritual needed to summon the messenger.

This wasn't complicated for Frank, so it didn't take long for him to set up the altar and create a wall of spirituality.

Finally, he solemnly placed a Loen gold coin before the candle.

He lit the candle, softly chanted the incantation, and stared at the flame. He watched it burgeon as a headless woman walked out with four heads in hand.

Frank first jumped in fright before staring at Reinette Tinekerr's four beautiful blonde, red-eyed heads that looked identical with patience as he muttered, "How was it done?

"Why are they completely identical?

"If planted in soil, will more be grown?"

The eyes of the four heads held by Reinette Tinekerr turned in different directions before uniformly falling on Frank Lee's face.

Suddenly, the soil stored inside all kinds of vessels within the room flew out and piled before Frank.

Following that, Frank floated up as he tumbled in midair with a shocked expression. He was thrown straight into the pile of soil with his head first.

His legs kept struggling as they dangled outside, but he was unable to pull himself out of the soil pile anytime soon.

Only then did two of Reinette Tinekerr's four heads reach out forward, separately biting down on the letter and the gold coin.

Only after she completely disappeared did Frank Lee finally find the best spot to exert his strength to escape the soil as he fell to the ground.

She's powerful… Frank first sighed with a sense of lingering fear. Following that, he wiped the soil beside his mouth, bit into it, and chewed on it carefully before muttering to himself, "It's a bit sour…"

At that moment, Cattleya, who had just finished a sacrifice in her cabin, sensed something. Her dark purple eyes subconsciously looked towards Frank Lee's room, and she vaguely saw a crudely-made illusory doll.

The doll didn't have a head!

The scene flashed as Cattleya closed her eyes immediately. She felt her eyes were burning as she couldn't help but have her tears flow out.

She knitted brows little by little as she muttered in disbelief, "Ancient Bane?"

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After sending the Meteorite Crystal and Black-hunting Giant Lizard's spinal fluid to Miss Magician and Miss Justice, Klein returned to the real world. He lay himself down on a reclining chair as he allowed his body to rock gently. He began considering where he would head to next.

With news of Gehrman Sparrow's sighting and Crazy Captain Connors Viktor's matter, it's unlikely that the pirates will openly appear in Bayam for some time. They've either left the harbors or are hiding themselves, making it difficult for others to find them.

That is to say that there's no need for me to stay here. The matters regarding the Resistance can be directed by responding to them through Sea God or by going through Danitz.

Hmm, I'll head to the Seaweed Bar later. I'll get a fake identity, buy a scalped ticket, and head for Desi Bay's Conant City… That's not only the biggest harbor around here, but it's also Davy Raymond's hometown. I previously agreed to this Red Glove's request when I released him from Creeping Hunger that I would pay this beautiful bay city a visit and tell his daughter that revenge has been exacted. Yes, I'll also think of a way to return the Nightmare's Beyonder characteristic to the Church.

Heh heh, how hypocritical can people be? I'm planning on returning a

Nightmare characteristic while also planning how to steal a Sealed Artifact from behind Saint Samuel Cathedral's Chanis Gate…

Shaking his head, Klein closed his eyes and slept to recover his spirituality.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly felt something as he opened his eyes naturally. He quickly activated his Spirit Vision.

Then, he saw Reinette Tinekerr walk out of the void.

This messenger was wearing the same complicated black dress, with a letter clasped in one of the head's teeth.

Who mailed it? Danitz, Vice Admiral Iceberg, Frank, or Anderson? Klein received the letter as he nodded in appreciation.

"Thank you."

He was very courteous with his powerful messenger with a mysterious background. He didn't wish to be strangled to death one day.

"Do you…" "Want to…" "Immediately…" "Reply…" Reinette Tinekerr's four heads spoke one after another.

Klein tore open the envelope, took out the letter and opened it to read it. The content alarmed him as he nearly forgot to reply to her. As for Reinette Tinekerr, she wasn't quick-tempered. She silently waited by the side.

One day, Frank Lee will destroy the world. He definitely needs to be controlled. I can't give him a chance to advance! Seriously, how much does this fellow love to crossbreed and create all kinds of strange plants? Eh… the City of Silver is in need of food… A thought flashed through Klein's mind as he had a bold idea.

It was to direct Frank's research efforts towards all kinds of food that suited the City of Silver!

This way, cows, fish, mushrooms, Rose Bishops, the sea, and the world would be safe!

Klein hurriedly looked up and said to his messenger, “Yes, I’ll immediately reply.”

He instantly got up from the reclining chair, walked to the desk, got out a pen and paper, and started writing quickly.

“…I have a question. If you eat the mushroom breed you create, then eat cooked fish and drink a cup of water, will it continue to reproduce?”

After finishing the reminder, Klein proceeded to the main point.

“…Is it possible for you to create wheat that can grow without sunlight, or cows that can produce milk and meat simply by consuming monsters? That seems rather interesting!”

He continued on this topic and wrote a few paragraphs before folding the letter. He then handed it to Reinette Tinekerr and, in a natural way. he said, “The postage will be paid by Frank.”

“Let’s hope…” He…” “Isn’t…” “Dead…” After the messenger’s four heads said those words one after another, a representative was made to bite on the envelope.

Let’s hope he isn’t dead? Klein jumped in fright. Just as he was about to clarify the matter, Reinette Tinekerr had already entered the spirit world and disappeared.

After contemplating for two seconds, Klein wrote a divination statement and used his topaz pendant to confirm that Frank Lee was still alive.

He silently heaved a sigh of relief, packed up the dried mushrooms, and rubbed his temples before lying back into the reclining chair.

†

After dinner. At the Seaweed Bar.

Klein wore an ordinary-looking face and came here once again.

Unlike before, the customers in the bar were mainly mixed-blood or natives who had darker skin and curly black hair. They were either part of the gangs in Bayam, or they were secretly working for the Resistance, or even both. There weren't many ordinary people, and the commonly seen pirates who often came from different countries were all gone. Only a few people dressed as adventurers were drinking liquor and discussing rumors at sea.

Klein swept the bar and found Deniel, who Danitz had mentioned. This thin local could provide him with fake identification documents and scalped ship tickets.

Without any apprehension, he went over.

"A second-class ticket to Conant for tomorrow, and an identification document."

Deniel looked up and glanced at him. After some thought, he said, "A total of 20 pounds."

Just a second-class ticket to Conant costs around nine pounds… However, scalped tickets are more expensive to begin with. Together with the faked identification documents, 20 pounds isn't too ridiculous… Klein silently did the math before saying, "When can I get it?"

"In 45 minutes," Deniel replied like clockwork. "You can pay 5 pounds first, and then pay the rest after receiving the ticket and identification."

"Alright." Klein didn't harp on the issue as he took out his wallet and pulled out five one-pound notes.

He wasn't worried that anyone would target his wallet, for it might mean that he would save the 20 pounds, or even get more.

Moments after Deniel checked the authenticity of the notes and was about to inform his subordinates to get working, he suddenly realized that the bar was extremely silent!

Klein also sensed it as he subconsciously looked towards the door.

There were two people there. One was wearing a formal tailcoat and a black trench coat, with brown hair neatly combed backwards. His eyes weren't big, but they were bright and piercing. He had a thin mustache around his mouth, making him exude a gentlemanly feeling while also looking a little sloppy. The other person wore a hooded robe which was rather rare. His face was hidden in the shadows, making it impossible to identify him.

The sloppy gentleman scanned the area and was rather pleased with the crowd's reaction. A silver coin was tumbling in between his fingers as he walked towards Deniel. The hooded person followed behind him, taking out something from his clothes and stuffing it into his mouth, producing crunching sounds.

The silver coin stopped moving when the sloppy gentleman came in front of Deniel. He said with a chuckle, "Prepare ten tickets to Pritz Harbor tomorrow for me. They need to be split between three different ships."

"Yes, Mr. Oder," Deniel stood up in a panic as he replied.

Klein momentarily failed to recall who the sloppy gentleman who was tumbling the silver coin in his hand was. Only when he heard the name "Oder" did he find him familiar.

As he was recalling, he saw the man in the hood take out a coffee-colored sweet before popping it into his mouth. He was munching on it, producing the sounds.

After obtaining an affirmative reply, Oder and the man didn't stay any longer. They walked to the staircase in the quiet atmosphere, and they headed for the second floor of the bar.

Deniel exhaled as he turned his head to see Klein looking puzzled. He then said, “Oder. The adventurer, Oder, who serves the Dawn.”

…I remember, Silver Coin Viper Oder! He’s always claimed that he works for Queen Mystic, but no one could prove it. I can ask Ma’am Hermit later… The last I heard of him was at Damir Harbor. He was apparently mixing with Admiral of Blood’s intelligence officer, Old Quinn… However, the latter has already been finished off by Mr. Hanged Man… Klein instantly recalled many things as he deliberated and asked, “What about the other one?”

“Who knows?” Deniel turned his head to instruct his subordinates as he got them to prepare some identification documents and the corresponding ship tickets.

Chapter 722 - An Unpeaceful Night

* * *

As Silver Coin Viper Oder wasn’t a pirate, there were all kinds of rumors about him, most of which could hardly be verified. Klein retracted his gaze from the staircase and walked to the bar counter. He found a seat at the counter and tapped it.

“A cup of Zarhar.”

This was a locally produced malt beer. It was a lot cheaper than Southville beer that needed to be shipped over from the Northern Continent.

“3 pence.” The bartender recovered from his silent state as he picked up an overturned cup.

The crowd in the bar began to break out into whispers as they were illuminated by the gas wall lamps. All of them were discussing the reason for Silver Coin Viper Oder’s purchase of ten tickets.

“He’s definitely being pursued by someone. Ten tickets among three ships… It’s clearly to prevent his pursuers from knowing which ship they boarded!” A gang member with his sleeves rolled-up, revealing his tattoo, shared his view based on his experience from evading capture twice.

An adventurer drinking Lanti Proof scoffed.

“You don’t understand Oder. If his plan was that simple, he wouldn’t have the title ‘Silver Coin Viper.’

“I dare bet that he won’t be on any of those liners from those ten tickets!

“The only thing I can confirm is that they’re heading to Pritz Harbor.”

Another adventurer shook his head when he heard that.

“Perhaps the news of him heading to Pritz Harbor is fake as well.”

The gang member from before was taken aback by what he heard. Refusing to be one-upped, he said, “According to your descriptions, Oder has likely thought of what you figured out. That’s precisely why he’s heading to Pritz Harbor and will be on one of the three ships!”

The two adventurers were about to retort him, but they decided that there was quite a nonzero chance of that happening after some careful thought. Momentarily, none of them said a word.

This made the gang member extremely happy as he downed the rest of his liquor.

Klein was holding a cup of Zarhar as he sipped it while listening to the conversation. He was waiting for the fake identification and tickets he needed.

There’s another 45 minutes. I hope nothing happens. Don’t make the bar into a mess… He silently prayed as he drew the crimson moon inwardly.

The light-yellow beer slowly dropped in volume while Klein would look at the wall clock from time to time, or at the entrance, hoping that time would pass faster.

Half an hour later, the door to the bar was suddenly opened with a loud thud as the evening wind gushed in.

No way… The corners of Klein’s lips twitched as he held back his urge to smile wryly. He turned his body to look at the sound.

Standing by the door were five people. Their leader had black hair and brown eyes, with recessed facial features and cut facial contours. He looked Loenese and looked to be in his early forties.

His expression was cold and he exuded a natural air of dominance. It made everyone in the bar quieten down without realizing it.

And the three men and the woman behind him were in trench coats. They didn't hide the fact that they were holding revolvers, and that they would instantly aim and shoot if there was any slight sign of abnormalities.

I don't know them. They aren't on any wanted list or have any bounties on them… Klein mumbled to himself as he maintained his state as a spectator.

The five intruders suddenly scattered as they came before different customers, bent their backs slightly, and looked at them before asking, "Where is Silver Coin Viper Oder?"

The customers were hesitant to give an answer when they saw the black muzzle pointed at them, along with the handle made of ivory and ebony which exuded a strange sense of beauty under the lights.

"T-they went to the second floor!" The customers who had been asked nearly pointed to the staircase in unison.

Someone is really pursuing Oder. This is an act against Queen Mystic, or has Silver Coin Viper done something himself? Or could it be because of the mysterious hooded man beside him who was eating sweets? Klein drank another mouthful of beer as he saw the intruders send four people up to the second floor. One was left behind to continue questioning the customers.

Soon, the latter grasped the situation of Oder's request to purchase tickets from Deniel. Immediately, the person walked straight to the thin and dark-skinned black marketeer, and he asked in a heavy voice, "Tell me honestly. Where is Oder heading with those tickets?"

Deniel didn't put on a front just because of his social connections. He forced a smile and said, "He didn't make it clear. He requested for ten tickets that are to be distributed across three different ships. The departure date is set for tomorrow with the destination being Pritz Harbor."

"For real?" The questioner was a seemingly radical man in his twenties.

Deniel softly replied, "You can ask anyone here. All of them heard it."

"Dogsh*t!" The man shoved Deniel angrily as he turned to walk towards the other customers.

Deniel staggered backward and was about to fall and hit his head onto the side of a tiny circular table when he suddenly felt an additional force on his shoulder. Instantly, he regained his balance.

He subconsciously looked over and saw that it was the customer who had just requested to purchase a fake identity and scalped tickets.

"Thank you, those bunch of military hyenas!" Deniel first thanked him before softly saying through clenched teeth.

The person who had helped him was Klein. He didn't wish for anything to happen to this "ticket scalper;" after all, he had paid a deposit of 5 pounds.

Of course, helping the innocent was also a habit of his.

Military hyenas? In Bayam, this description often refers to people from MI9… What did Silver Coin Viper Oder do? Klein silently asked himself as he eliminated the possibility that someone was targeting Queen Mystic.

To the Loen military, it was meaningless.

As he was thinking, the MI9 members who had headed up to the second floor rushed down. As they ran, they said to their partner, "He has long fled through the window!”

The group of people came and left in a rush. Soon, the bar resumed its usual din, but the still gently wobbling main door proved that it wasn’t as calm earlier.

Klein’s wait for his fake identification documents and scalped ticket paid off. He didn’t need to worry about any possible interruptions.

After paying the remaining 15 pounds, he left the Seaweed Bar, and he returned to the ordinary inn he stayed at.

John Yode… This name is way too simple, isn’t it? Before I return to Backlund, I need to make a more realistic identification document. Klein flipped through the series of identification documents before throwing them inside his suitcase.

He took a bath and relaxed, prepared to leave Bayam tomorrow, and begin the last stage of his sea “travels.”

At this moment, he heard knocking at the door.

Who is it? Klein hurriedly took off his bathrobe, wore his clothes and pants, and walked to the door.

Outside were a few policemen in black. One of them looked Loenese, while the rest were either mixed-bloods or pure natives.

“What’s the matter?” Klein asked, puzzled.

“Please show us some identification,” a mixed-blood said politely since the gentleman in front of him was apparently a Loenese.

Thankfully, I just made one. Otherwise, I’ll be spending the night at the police station, or I’d have to flee on the spot, change my looks, and redo everything… Klein mumbled as he returned to his room, and took out the identification documents.

The Loen police officer casually flipped through it as he said, “Mr. Yode, are you living alone?”

“Yes, everyone in the inn can vouch for me,” Klein replied frankly.

The Loenese police officer revealed a smile and said, “Have you seen this person before?”

As he spoke, a constable beside him unfolded a portrait. On it was an elder who was abnormally thin with white messy hair. Apart from that, nothing stood out.

“No.” Klein shook his head.

“He likes to eat sweets,” the Loenese police officer added.

“Sweets…” Klein suddenly recalled the mysterious hooded man behind Silver Coin Viper Oder. He had been eating plenty of coffee-colored sweets in a short period of time.

After a short deliberation, Klein said without hiding anything, “Perhaps. Back when I was in the Seaweed Bar, I saw a man who loved eating sweets and was following Silver Coin Viper Oder.”

The Loenese officer didn’t hide his disappointment. After a simple word of thanks, he ended the questioning.

Only after he knocked on the other guest rooms did Klein close the wooden door, and return to the reclining chair.

Oder’s matter has not only attracted MI9, but it has also gotten the governor-general’s office to send manpower to do a city-wide search. This is quite something… he muttered and decided to head above the gray fog to browse through the prayer points of light around the Sea God Scepter. He could gain more information from the prayers of the believers in Bayam. He didn’t wish to end up embroiled in a massive maelstrom for giving the wrong response.

After entering the bathroom, he went above the gray fog where he summoned the white bone scepter from the junk pile. Swirling around it were countless points of light.

As he browsed through each point of light, he determined that the questioning wasn't on a small scale. The target was Oder and the mysterious man, but he couldn't figure anything else out.

After some thought, he cast his gaze on a point of light that had been specially marked out by godhood.

It belonged to a mixed-blood policeman named Boulaya. He claimed to have swallowed humiliation by changing his faith to the Lord of Storms for the Sea God so as to climb up the police ranks.

He was already a superintendent!

Then, Klein cast the Sea God's will into the corresponding point of light.

Boulaya, who was in the police station, assigning work to his subordinates suddenly broke out into a cold sweat. He hurriedly found an excuse to enter the washroom as he silently prayed.

"Blessed of the sea and spirit world, the great Kalvetua, your pious believer has something to report to you.

"The person we are specially searching for tonight is a very thin elder. His hair is completely white, but he has luxuriant hair. It's just very messy. He's very afraid of the cold, and he wears thick clothing even in Bayam. He loves to eat sweets, as though he's a steam engine himself and sweets are high-quality coal. The higher-ups have informed us to find him, but not harm him."

Klein ignored Boulaya and reined his thoughts back as he tapped the side of the long table.

Compared to the portrait, such a description gives me a sense of familiarity.

It’s like I’ve heard of it somewhere in the past…

To a Seer, a sense of familiarity meant a clue. Hence, Klein wrote a divination statement and began questioning his spirituality.

As he chanted the statement, he leaned back into the chair. He fell asleep with the aid of Cogitation.

In the gray and dark world, Klein found himself back in Backlund, back in 15 Minsk Street which he previously rented.

In front of him was the red-eyed Ian. This teenage boy looked up and said, “Turani von Helmosuin, the greatest scientist after Emperor Roselle, a mathematician, a mechanist, and the father of the second generation difference engine.”

Suddenly, Klein woke up and knew who MI9 was looking for!

They were finding the great scientist who caused many deaths between the Loen military and the Intis spy organization solely because of a third-generation difference engine!

They were finding the science freak who had mysteriously disappeared for years!

It’s no wonder Admiral of Blood’s intelligence officer, Old Quinn, had a modified radio transceiver that surpassed those in Backlund! Klein was instantly enlightened.

Chapter 723 - Another Good Deed Today

◆

After a moment of his mind going adrift, Klein rubbed his temples and slowly composed himself. He discovered that the matter had little to do with him.

He wasn't motivated to participate in the matter. He was apathetic to whether the Loen military found Turani von Helmosuin, because he lacked a sense of belonging to the Loen Kingdom. What he had done in the past was solely to ensure a stable society and that its citizens wouldn't suffer any accidental damage. If possible, he didn't mind instigating a revolution to allow the poor to lead better lives.

I never expected myself to become more of an internationalist after coming to this world… He gave a self-deprecating laugh as he prepared to return to the real world and have some sleep. Under the cloak of darkness, he would allow the tempest outside to freely unleash its might.

At this moment, his attention was caught by the biggest item in the junk pile through the corner of his eyes—the radio transceiver.

Speaking of which, what is the faction controlling Turani von Helmosuin? It's nothing much if it's people from Queen Mystic Bernadette's side. She's a strong believer of "do as you wish, but do no harm," so she wouldn't do anything overboard.

It wouldn't be good if it's the Rose School of Thought represented by Admiral of Blood. Ignoring the temperance faction that's being suppressed, as believers of the Chained God or Mother Tree of Desire, their level of vileness can’t be lower than the Aurora Order. Letting them grasp the most advanced technology available might bring about a disaster… Klein stopped his actions of wrapping his body with his spirituality. He gently tapped the edge of the mottled table.

He soon had an idea, which was to bring the radio transceiver back to the real world, adjust it to the correct frequency to see if he could receive the telegrams from Admiral of Blood’s crew. Then, he could use the codebook he had to decipher the communications.

There will be a huge sweep of the city tonight. The matter must be at a rather important and intricate point. If the ones controlling Helmosuin are them, there’s a possibility of the appearance of crucial telegram exchanges… In a situation in which the governor-general’s office, the Loen military, and the Church of Storms haven’t placed importance or even accepted this technology, this is the safest method. Therefore, Admiral of Blood and company have a nonzero chance that they wouldn’t change the frequency and codes after Old Quinn’s death… Anyway, I’ll just give it a try. After some deliberation, Klein didn’t delay as he returned to the real world and busily prepared a bestowment ritual.

After bringing the radio transceiver into his room, he didn’t immediately use it. Instead, he used a ritual dagger and created a wall of spirituality to seal the room.

He was doing it to air out the gray fog’s “smell!”

To him, there was actually no need to go through so much trouble to confirm the faction that controlled Helmosuin. He could’ve used the gray fog’s aura to contact Arrodes and receive the answer. But the problem was that he had posed his questions recently, and the “smell” that frequently appeared might incur the notice of evil gods like the True Creator or the Primordial Demoness. It was extremely dangerous.

Therefore, Klein decided to play safe by relying on himself.

After about eight minutes, when the “airing” was almost complete, he dispelled the wall of spirituality and controlled the radio transceiver to begin his surveillance.

After an unknown period of time, the corresponding frequency received a transmission!

Klein held back the joy in his heart as he seriously made notes. Then, he flipped through the codebook which he had replicated using divination, and he began the necessary deciphering process.

Soon, he wrote a line on a note: “32 Black Pepper Avenue. 7 a.m. tomorrow.”

Indeed, the people in control of Helmosuin are Admiral of Blood and company. There might be powerhouses from the Rose School of Thought involved… Klein immediately made a judgment.

This wasn’t confirmed based on the content of the telegram, but a simple inference from the existence of the telegram itself.

If Admiral of Blood and company were uninvolved, it was unlikely for them to send and receive telegrams involving Bayam’s streets!

The meaning of this telegram is to gather by 32 Black Pepper Street tomorrow before 7 a.m.? Does it mean that Helmosuin and Silver Coin Viper Oder are hiding there, and they’re reporting to Admiral of Blood of their location and giving a corresponding time? Klein thought for a moment and immediately returned above the gray fog. With the intel he had just received, he wrote the divination statement: “Turani von Helmosuin’s present location.”

With the paper in hand, he leaned back into the chair and chanted the statement in a raving-like manner as he entered a dream with Cogitation.

In the gray, hazy world, he saw an underground hall with countless gas wall lamps.

Inside the hall was a massive, complicated machine. It was constructed from copper cylinders, operating levers, take-up levers, and countless gears. It took up nearly two-thirds of the space.

A thin elder with grizzled, disheveled hair wore a thick coat as he paced in front of the machine. From time to time, he would pop a sweet into his mouth and munch on it noisily.

“No, it shouldn’t be called a difference engine. It’s an adorable fellow who can analyze questions and calculate the answer based on a set of procedures. Yes, its name should be a calculator!” The elder kept muttering to himself as Klein’s vision was pulled upwards and out the underground hall, arriving at the building above.

It was a three-storey villa with a garden and lawn. Outside was its address, and it reads: “32 Black Pepper Avenue”!

He really is here… Klein opened his eyes as he silently exhaled.

Then, he was stumped about what to do next.

A scientist like him is useless to me. Instead, it’s the root of many problems. I can’t just keep him above the gray fog. Therefore, there’s no need for me to personally get involved and take him away… Hmm, hand over the news to the Loen military or the Church of Storms? This will effectively prevent the Rose School of Thought from obtaining any benefits, but there’s a faction in the military that is likely related to the true culprit behind the Great Smog of Backlund. It’s not a good thing to have Helmosuin fall into their hands… The Church of Storms is well known for being rash. A conflict might end up with the scientist meeting the deity he believes in… After some careful deliberation, he gradually had a bold idea.

It was to make the news public. He would make the existence and location of Turani von Helmosuin known to the Loen Kingdom military and the Churches. This could effectively ensure that the scientist’s capabilities would be employed by the Loen Kingdom itself, and not any one faction!

The key is balance… Klein smiled as he muttered. He then beckoned with his hand for the Sea God Scepter.

For the former him, he had to carefully “distribute fliers” across the city to make a matter public and known to all, but now, he had an even simpler and effective method!

He selected a believer who happened to be praying, and then pulled his view back as the surrounding area spanning five kilometers entered his vision.

Then, with the Sea God Scepter, he wielded control of the wind!

Once the wind calmed down, Klein’s will sank into the scene as he changed his voice, saying with a low roar, “Helmosuin is at 32 Black Pepper Avenue!”

Whoosh!

In Bayam, the howl of the wind turned intense as it swept in every direction, bringing with it the deep and loud voice.

“Helmosuin is at 32 Black Pepper Avenue!

“Helmosuin is at 32 Black Pepper Avenue!”

†

This voice soon spread across Bayam like a broadcast to the entire city.

Silver Coin Viper Oder was donning a cloak, pretending to be Helmosuin. He hid himself in a crowded building in the slums, occasionally appearing to mislead MI9 and the governor-general’s office’s police officers.

Suddenly, a gale swept past as the voice sounded in his ears.

“Helmosuin is at 32 Black Pepper Avenue!”

…What? As the voice resounded, Oder fell into a dazed shock. Without noticing it, he fell from the top of the roof and nearly injured himself badly.

Behind the Cathedral of Waves, and in a small nearby building of the governor-general’s office, Jahn Kottman and Robert Davis heard the voice in the wind.

The first reaction they had was to look up at the sky before casting their eyes towards the borough where Black Pepper Avenue was.

After the broadcast and being in a good mood, Klein threw the Sea God Scepter back into the junk pile and returned to the real world.

He wasn’t in a rush to bring the radio transceiver back above the gray fog. Instead, he left it there as he continued monitoring the transmissions.

This way, even if there are powerhouses from the Rose School of Thought hidden in Bayam, they wouldn’t dare appear. Heh heh, and regardless who takes action, they’ll have no choice but to “hand” it over to the country! Unfortunately, I don’t have the habit of writing a diary like the emperor. Otherwise, I could write something like: I did another good deed today! Klein silently sighed, took off his coat, got into bed, and slept. He didn’t care what was going to happen next, as it had nothing to do with him.

After sleeping for an unknown period of time, he suddenly woke up and sat up. Then, there was knocking on his door.

Who could it be? To knock in the middle of the night… I’m currently John Yode… Klein wore Creeping Hunger and took out Death Knell from under his pillow before coming to the door.

The visitor’s looks quickly surfaced in his mind. It was a thin elder with grizzled, disheveled hair. He was wearing a coat stuffed with cotton and a tweed overcoat. He was popping a coffee-colored sweet into his mouth.

Turani von Helmosuin!

Holy f*ck! Why is he here looking for me? I'm just the ordinary John Yode! Also, how did he escape the tracking of a demigod? Klein's first reaction was to tell the man that he had gotten the wrong person, but he held back and asked, "Who are you looking for?"

Helmosuin smiled weakly and said, "I noticed you when we were in the Seaweed Bar; however, I didn't have a chance to talk to you.

"Heh heh, my life is at its end, so I recently recalled many things.

"Please allow me to introduce myself. You can call me Orange Light Hilarion.

Orange Light Hilarion? Klein was taken aback before he asked in puzzlement, "Is there something?"

Helmosuin chuckled.

"I'm here to warn you. Be careful of the Mother Tree of Desire!"

He paused for a moment before saying, "Alright, I need to leave, and I'm about to die before returning to the spirit world.

"Do you have any enemies here?"

"Why do you ask?" Klein asked, confused.

Helmosuin coughed and said, "I can silently die at their doorstep. That way, you would have your revenge."

Chapter 724 - The True Meaning Behind the Warning

◆

Upon hearing Helmosuin’s reply, Klein couldn’t help but twitch the corner of his lips. He nearly froze on the spot.

My enemies aren’t in Bayam… Even if you were to die at Sea King’s doorstep, it wouldn’t be of much use… He slowly drew a breath and didn’t continue the topic. Instead, he asked, “Helmosuin, no—Mr. Hilarion, how did you notice me?”

You even came here before your death to specially warn me!

This was also the puzzlement he had towards Arrodes and Reinette Tinekerr. He just never had a chance to ask them.

With the door in between them, Helmosuin fell silent for two seconds. Then, he said with a smile in his tone, “There are some tiny unique traits about you. In high-level creatures of the spirit world, it’s no secret. It’s noticeable as long as they make contact with you in close proximity. After all, the gray fog that represents the great ruler of the spirit world is above our heads. Deities with certain unique authorities or Beyonders who represent fate can also discover this point to a certain extent. Of course, the premise is that close contact has to be made.”

Gray fog… Although Orange Light’s explanation and Arrodes’s compliments are nearly identical, he is the first person I’ve met that directly pointed out the gray fog to me to my face! Therefore, the mysterious space is the divine kingdom above the spirit world left behind by the great ruler? Which Sequence 0 pathway is this? The deities who can discover that I'm augmented by the gray fog include the Mother Tree of Desire, so "She" was able to target me? Klein's thoughts bubbled like boiling water as all sorts of questions popped in his head.

Just as he was about to speak, Helmosuin had continued, "In Yellow Light's prophecy, the great ruler above the spirit world is one of the variables of the apocalypse. However, I cannot be sure that you are equivalent to 'Him.' There are too many possibilities for you that allow that unique trait; for example, you being 'His' Blessed, 'His' child, or 'His' chosen oracle, but none of this stops me from expressing my friendship.

"Ahem. You know about Backlund's stock exchange, right? You're like a railway company that just got listed. You seem to have a bright future ahead. Some people will naturally think well of you and purchase a certain number of shares, but there will be no lack of people who are greedy. They wish to use other means to seize this company or obtain the controlling rights. I'm part of the former, while Mother Tree of Desire and even more powerful spirit world creatures are part of the latter.

Is that so… If it wasn't because the transmigrator, Emperor Roselle, who existed before me, had some level of interaction with the gray fog, and if I hadn't divined my origins in that mysterious space and received clear scenes of Earth, allowing me to recall even more of my memories, I would've suspected if I was the reincarnation of the great ruler above the spirit world… Taking everything into account from this experience, Emperor Roselle and I are more like the chosen oracles… The great ruler above the gray fog is equivalent to the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings? Klein couldn't help but generate all kinds of conjectures as his mind was in a mess like a cat playing a ball of yarn.

He calmed his emotions and said, "Is there any way to hide this unique trait?"

“Become a demigod.” Helmosuin suddenly coughed after answering. “Do you mind if I die at your doorstep?”

“…Yes.” Klein didn’t wish to draw the attention of Sea King Jahn Kottman, Naval Admiral Robert Davis, and other demigods.

Helmosuin munched at his sweet and said, “Then, I’ll have to leave immediately, or else there wouldn’t be time.

“After you become a demigod and have the powers to probe deep into the spirit world, we might have a chance of meeting.”

Klein was silent for two seconds before saying, “Thank you for your warning, Mr. Hilarion.”

Helmosuin didn’t reply as he lumbered to the staircase.

As he listened to the footsteps down the stairs, Klein focused. Suddenly, he had a certain theory about why Emperor Roselle had failed to enter despite discovering the existence of the gray fog.

He restored that silver plate which resulted in his transmigration far after he became a Beyonder. As for me, I was already an ordinary person when I attempted the luck enhancement ritual again… Also, Emperor Roselle chose the Savant pathway, while I took the Seer pathway. The mysterious space above the gray fog clearly provides great aid in divination.

Therefore, the prerequisites for entering the space above the gray fog is to be an ordinary person or be a Beyonder of the Seer pathway, as well as knowing of the corresponding incantation, rituals, and symbols? The emperor’s experiments were too late, and he had chosen the wrong pathway, so he naturally had no means of entering it.

With how the Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder pathways are considered neighboring pathways, perhaps the former two would work too. Could this be the deeper reason why the emperor made the poignant point in his diary that he should’ve chosen one of these three pathways? Apart from not having any Sequence 0 for these three pathways, preventing any influence from the peak, it's also the key to entering the gray fog?

As his thoughts churned, Klein placed this matter, which he couldn't obtain any confirmation of, at the back of his mind. He began considering Orange Light Hilarion's warning.

Be careful of the Mother Tree of Desire!

Due to the incident as Admiral Amyrius, Klein was rather wary against the Mother Tree of Desire. He had no choice but to change his identity and use the need for him to act, so as to hide for two months. Subsequently, he wasn't too willing to provoke Admiral of Blood and other members of the Rose School of Thought, afraid that he would fall into a trap.

Towards the extreme danger lurking around, a normal human's first thought was to resolve the matter. It was likewise the same for Klein. However, the problem was that he had no solutions.

The Mother Tree of Desire was suspected to be a Sequence 0 true god located in the astral world. Even if Klein jumped up, there was no way he could hit "Her" or defeat "Her." And the faction, the Rose School of Thought, that "She" controlled was an organization with quite a long history. It likely had angels presiding over it and had Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts. Otherwise, it was very difficult for them to survive to this day with the Churches and all the secret organizations at odds with it. Therefore, even if Klein had plans of getting the help of Mr. Azik or other powerful figures, there was no way he could uproot the Rose School of Thought. It was even possible that they would encounter danger.

Due to these reasons, Klein could only hide and hope that he could successfully advance to Sequence 4 and become a demigod.

I've always been careful against the Mother Tree of Desire. Mr. Orange Light Hilarion didn't know that I once fell for the evil god's trap at Oravi

Island?

Or did he specially come over to warn me that “She” would be doing something major soon?

Hmm… He was previously under Admiral of Blood’s control, and Admiral of Blood is a member of the Rose School of Thought. He might very well know of something!

Klein was instantly alarmed. He didn’t just blindly believe that a Faceless transformation was enough to fool the Mother Tree of Desire’s attention!

According to Orange Light Hilarion’s explanation, “She” would be able to discover certain unique traits when in close proximity with me. This is something the Faceless Beyonder powers are unable to mask! “She” hasn’t done anything in a while. Could it be that “She” is attempting to use this sensation to bestow something to “Her” believers through some ritual or item, and that “She” is about to succeed soon? Klein slowly frowned as he felt that it was certainly a possibility.

This made him more eager to return to Backlund. In that huge city, even angels had to behave themselves, just like a particular Snake of Fate. The believers of the Mother Tree of Desire and the powerhouses of the Rose School of Thought were unable to act as they wished. All they could do was wait for an opportunity!

Phew… Klein exhaled and headed above the gray fog. He divined if his life would be in danger soon.

This time, he received a negative answer—his life wouldn’t be in danger.

However, Klein didn’t relax as a result. He recalled that the Mother Tree of Desire’s divination interference could penetrate the gray fog’s shielding to a certain extent.

And very long ago, his spirituality had prevented him from divining the

Werewolf Beyonder characteristic above the gray fog. This was because it might very well involve the Chained God, and the Chained God was suspected to be another manifestation of the Mother Tree of Desire.

Either there's really nothing going on and that I'm overthinking matters, or the danger is already very close. That's why the Mother Tree of Desire took action to interfere… To be safe, I need to make preparations. Even if it's proven to be a false alarm, it's still better than being captured by the Rose School of Thought and taken away by the Mother Tree of Desire to perform some unspeakable matters! Klein immediately returned to the real world and took out a pen and paper before quickly writing a letter. He started with, "Dear Mr. Azik."

Considering how the Underworld was inside the spirit world, that the demigods of the Death pathway were considered high-ranking spirit world creatures in a certain way, and that Mr. Azik might be able to see his unique trait after he recovered his memory, Klein was rather honest. He directly wrote about the entire conversation between Orange Light Hilarion's manifestation, Helmosuin the scientist. The only thing he left out was about the gray fog and the parts about the great existence above the gray fog.

Finally, he mentioned something.

"Does Mr. Hilarion's warning imply that I'll suffer mortal danger from the Rose School of Thought?"

After he folded the letter and blew the copper whistle to summon the messenger, Klein still didn't find it safe enough. He hurriedly took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew into it.

Silently, Reinette Tinekerr appeared before him. Each of the four heads with blonde hair and red eyes rotated and said, "There's no…" "Letter…"

"I have something to discuss with you." Klein forced a big smile. He handed over the gold coin he received from Anderson and said, "This is the fee for the summoning."

One of the heads Reinette Tinekerr held bit onto the gold coin. The two other heads that didn't get the chance to speak asked, "What is…" It…"

"I might face a certain degree of danger soon. I wonder if it's possible to summon you for help." Klein tried his best to make his eyes look sincere.

The eight eyes on Reinette Tinekerr's four head darted around as they said, "Yes…" "Pay…" "Ten Thousand…" "Gold coins…"

…Ten thousand gold coins. That's 10,000 pounds! Klein turned agape as he said with a wry smile, "I don't have that much money."

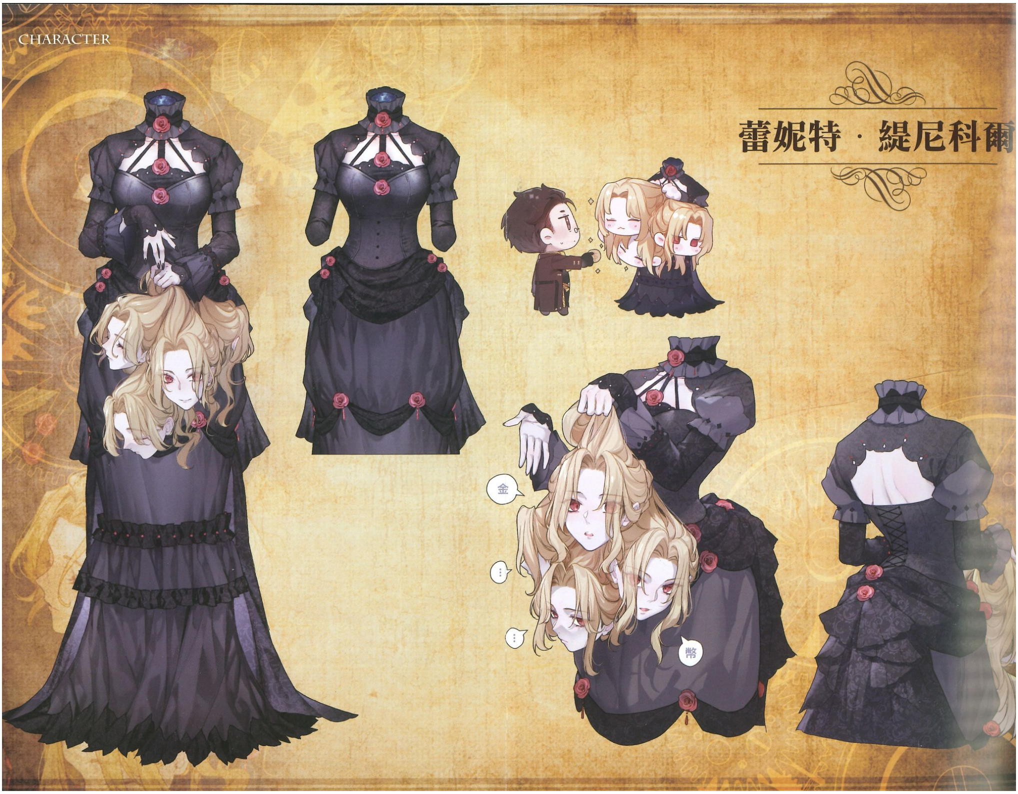
Reinette Tinekerr's four heads spoke one after another.

"You…" "Can…" "Pay by…" "Installments…"

Installments… Klein was surprised that his messenger kept with the times. After two seconds of shock, he said, "Alright."

Reinette Tinekerr didn't say anything else as her four heads nodded simultaneously before disappearing in front of Klein and returning to the spirit world.

蕾妮特 · 緹尼科爾



Chapter 725 - Morning

◆

Upon seeing the messenger disappear, Klein thought of the demigods he could contact on short notice, but he realized that there weren't any. All he could do was turn his attention onto what he should do next.

The city-wide broadcast must've made Sea King Jahn Kottman not only find Helmosuin, but he would also do his best to search for Sea God and the traces of his believers. It's easy to be detected if I leave in the middle of the night, so I can only choose to stay here until daybreak…

I can't take that ship tomorrow. If I encounter an attack midway, I might affect everyone on the ship. Furthermore, it's not discreet enough.

Hmm… I can summon an undersea creature and leave by riding it. I can rest and switch rides on the deserted islands and reefs we encounter along the way until I arrive at the next port… Since Orange Light said that the unique trait can only be detected at close distances, it still won't exceed the size of a city, even if the Mother Tree of Desire tries to expand her perception range to find me via a ritual or her believers. It might even be limited to the size of a particular street. This is also why I encountered a trap when I arrived in Oravi.

As long as I leave Bayam, I should be able to escape from their gaze…

While Klein's thoughts gradually turned clear, he suddenly heard a signal from the radio transceiver!

He hurriedly went over and quickly jotted it down. Then, with the codebook, he transcribed the corresponding words into a single sentence.

Before long, the telegram's content appeared on paper in jet black.

"I see you."

I see you… When Klein read those words, he felt a chill run through his heart.

†

Bayam, in an ordinary residence not far from the governor-general's office.

In a spacious basement, there were candles silently burning, scattering their dim glow around the surroundings.

Silver Coin Viper Oder had already taken off his hooded robe. He looked at the middle-aged man opposite him as he trembled. He said with a quivering voice, "Lord Senor, I don't know know how Helmosuin's real hiding place was known by others as well."

Senor wore an old triangular hat. His eye sockets were recessed, and his face was shockingly pale. He looked more like an evil spirit than a human. He raised his hand to stroke the two black mustaches above his lips as his light brown eyes coldly swept across Oder's face. In response, the well-known adventurer couldn't help but lower his head.

After observing him for a few seconds, Admiral of Blood, in his white trousers and red coat, said with a deep voice, "Less than three minutes after that telegram was sent, it was spread across the entire city. And the message spread was part of the telegram.

"I suspect that another faction has begun paying notice to radio transmissions, and they had obtained our codebook from Old Quinn."

"Yes, yes. It has to be the case!" Oder hurriedly echoed, hoping that

Admiral of Blood wouldn't pin the loss of Helmosuin as him being inept.

He knew very well that this pirate admiral was cruel to subordinates who made mistakes!

Senor swept his gaze at Oder and sneered.

"Regardless, you failed.

"If not for you and your mistress giving me plenty of joy, I would've gotten you to dig out your intestines!

"Send a telegram. Tell that listener who might or might not exist that I can see him. Let him spend the night in horror and unease. This is the only thing you need to do now."

Upon hearing that, Oder immediately heaved a sigh of relief. He glanced at Admiral of Blood in trepidation and the bloody altar behind him before reverently replying, "Yes, Lord Senor!"

He felt that he would've become part of the sacrificial items just moments ago.

After Oder retreated out of the basement, Senor turned his head to look at the altar covered with human heads, organs, limbs, and blood. He said in a manner even more reverent than how Oder treated him, "Lord Shanks, has the ritual succeeded?"

"Yes. All that's left is to wait for God to respond." A cold, unfeeling voice sounded from the drooping curtains around the altar.

Then, the curtains seemed to possess life as they rolled up on both sides, smoothly forming a knot before landing in the middle of the altar.

A somewhat translucent figure appeared by the side of the altar at some point in time. His skin was slightly brown, and his wrinkles formed deep crevices. His white, thinned hair was like leaves in autumn, as though they had lived for many, many years.

He humbly fixated his gaze at the candlelight with his brown eyes.

Senor didn’t dare say a word as he stood beside Lord Shanks, awaiting for any changes to happen to the altar.

Suddenly, the candle’s flame was dyed with all kinds of colors. Each color seemed to correspond to the different desires of an observer.

The heads, organs, limbs, and blood on the altar moved by themselves as they stacked up together, forming the state of a melted candle.

Before long, they formed a Tree of Flesh and Blood that wasn’t too tall. Its surface was uneven, resembling the shell of a walnut.

Plop! Plop! Plop!

The interior of the Tree of Flesh and Blood seemed to have a heart beating forcefully with strength.

When Senor was about to succumb to the din, the Tree of Flesh and Blood instantly withered, rotting into slosh and collapsing.

There was a tiny, flesh-colored, moist, sticky ball left behind.

Soon, the tiny ball grew four limbs and a head, turning into a palm-sized humanoid creature.

Its face didn’t have any eyes, nose, or ears, other than a pinhole-like mouth.

In its mouth, grayish-white fog spewed out before converging back in. It repeated several times without stopping.

The elder named Shanks devoutly and passionately chanted the name “Mother Tree of Desire,” and reached out to grab the strange tiny figure.

Silently, all the candlelights were extinguished, but to a Wraith who had night vision, this didn't affect them from seeing things.

Senor observed Shanks and heard this important person say in a deep voice, "We've prepared for a long time for this ritual, and god's grace can help us sense the existence of the target through a wider range.

"Next, we can use the glasses made by the Life School of Thought to accurately locate him!"

As he spoke, Shanks took out a monocle from his inner pocket. It didn't look any different from a normal monocle, but it coruscated with a pearly white luster in the darkness.

"Lord Shanks, what should we do next?" Senor asked respectfully.

The wrinkled Shanks thought for a few seconds and said, "Seek out the target after daybreak.

"If he has powerful helpers, we will monitor him and prevent him from leaving our detection range. Then, patiently await Lord Suah's arrival.

"If he doesn't have any guardians and is weak himself, then we shall take action directly."

After hearing the word "Suah", the corners of Senor's forehead twitched as though just the mere mention of this important figure's left him apprehensive.

He slowly took a deep breath and said, "Yes, Lord Shanks!"

After answering, Senor instinctively touched the necklace by his chest.

The necklace seemed to be made of pure silver, and the pendant looked like an ancient coin.

†

Klein, who didn't get much sleep for the rest of the night due to the fright from receiving the telegram, immediately sacrificed his suitcase, wallet, and most of his cash to the mysterious space above the gray fog at daybreak.

After clearing up his tracks, he went to the front desk to check out. He rode a carriage to the borders of Bayam, left the city, and climbed the mountain as though he was heading for a cemetery prepared for locals.

Midway through his journey, he suddenly took a detour into the woods and planned on walking straight to the cliffs where a massive undersea creature was waiting underneath for him!

The birds chirped and the insects buzzed in the woods as critters would occasionally scuttle by. Klein walked through the humic material-covered grounds at high-speed.

Along the way, he saw mushrooms growing after the rain, torn cloth, and rubbish which the Bayam residences had left behind after a picnic. Everything seemed so serene alongside the fresh morning air.

A leaf fluttered down as Klein didn't stop and easily dodged it.

At that moment, the leaf's speed sped up and did a surprising bend, clinging to him in between his lips and nose.

It was like an adult's palm that clasped his mouth and nose tightly, making it impossible for him to breathe.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

The surrounding trees had their branches fall off as they shot at Klein like sharp arrows.

And the rubbish left from the picnic received a life of their own. They formed an airtight net as they came looming over!

Chapter 726 - Preparations Are Very Important

◆

Suddenly, Klein had a familiar feeling. It felt like every tree, every leaf, every rock, every blade of grass wanted him dead.

Upon seeing the rubbish comprising of fragments and paper lunge at him in a strange web, his body suddenly collapsed into a paper figurine.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

The arrow-like branches impaled the paper figurines and landed into the distance. As for the strange net, it immediately enveloped everything within into a ball as it gently squirmed.

Klein's body appeared to the side about eight meters away. He knew that the attack he was worried about had finally descended upon him.

He didn't make any observations or show any hesitation. Raising his right palm, he reached into his pocket and pulled out the adventurer's harmonica.

The situation he had encountered had made him realize that the attacker was likely a demigod from the Rose School of Thought. It was an enemy he was currently unable to defend against!

The one who had been pursuing Sharron back then gave him a similar feeling!

At this moment, the paper figurines in his pocket suddenly flew out as they plastered over his face, one after another, layer after layer!

At the same time, Klein's sleeves automatically tightened as they bound both his arms, preventing his palms from reaching down.

His Taraba shirt and brown jacket were tightening like a bear giving him a hug!

In seconds, he was bound on the spot by his clothes, trousers, and shoes. His face was covered with paper figurines, as his ribs were on the brink of fracturing. He found it abnormally difficult to breathe.

Klein was mentally prepared and was equipped with rich combat experience, so he didn't panic. His right thumb and middle finger, which weren't affected, touched each other as he snapped his fingers.

At his ham, scarlet flames immediately soared up, burning the tightly-bound trousers clean before spreading upwards and downwards.

Seizing this opportunity, Klein bent his knees and jumped up with great difficulty, like a cannonball that weakly fell to the ground moments after being launched, as he lunged to his right.

In midair, he snapped his fingers again. This time, the sleeve by the right arm joint was ignited!

As for the spot where he was originally standing, the green weeds suddenly withered as the blackened ground suddenly turned white as if it had been weathered by the elements.

This attack was silent and deadly, without any forewarning. Klein knew that his enemy was powerful and that staying in the same spot would likely result in him suffering an attack he couldn't resist; therefore, he first removed the influence on his legs. If he hadn't done so, he would've already been heavily injured and lose his ability to do combat. He might've even perished.

With a smacking sound, two spots around Klein's sleeves ignited. His right palm finally had the freedom to move as he reached into his pocket and grabbed the adventurer's harmonica.

Plop!

He fell to the ground, rolling as he immediately stopped himself with his right hand to bounce up. His left palm which wore a human-skinned glove snapped its fingers.

This time, his target was the paper figurines that were plastered over his face to prevent him from breathing.

Pa!

The paper figurines burned up as the scarlet tongues of fire burned Klein's hair.

At that moment, a scene suddenly flashed in his mind.

An icicle had formed and was speeding right for his head like a thin gloomy-green arrow!

Due to its speed, it was translucent itself, making it usually impossible to discover it!

But even though Klein's danger premonition was triggered, it was a little too late. This was because his clothes were still affecting his mobility. It was too late for him to dodge the attack.

A thought flashed through his mind as he barely bent his back, his upper torso was bent backward, and he moved quite significantly to his right.

Oof!

The thin, cold ice arrow struck his left chest, instantly shattering the brown jacket and white round-collar shirt which were located there as they scattered into the air.

However, this lethal ice arrow didn't continue heading forward. This was because in its way was a book with a dark brown cover.

The book appeared ordinary, and it was bound into a book with commonly seen yellowish-brown goatskin, but it didn't shatter like the two pieces of clothing. There wasn't even a hole pricked open.

Groselle's Travels!

This was an item that even the Sea God Scepter's Lightning Storm imbued with some powers of the mysterious space had failed to damage!

Last night, the telegram of "I see you" gave Klein such a fright that he undoubtedly reinforced his protective countermeasures. He prepared every method he could think of!

Apart from hiding the book at his vital spot, his other pocket had the iron cigar case which stored the influence of the corrupted True Creator. Once things went bad, he would dispel the wall of spirituality, throw out the item, and see if it would draw the attention of the True Creator. He hoped that "He" would send his powerful subordinates to make the situation more chaotic.

He knew that even evil gods like the True Creator hated the Mother Tree of Desire!

After withstanding the ice arrow, Klein fell to the ground while somersaulting to the side. He then brought the adventurer's harmonica to his lips and blew hard into it.

At that moment, his face was turning a little black due to the burning of the paper figurines, but due to Flame Controlling, he wasn't injured.

Then, he felt that the clothes on his left arm, waist, thighs, neck, and legs were restored to normal, giving him newfound freedom.

At the moment he blew the harmonica, he quickly activated his Spirit Vision. He saw Miss Messenger walk out of the void with four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand. They automatically turned and stared at the same spot.

One of the heads grunted as it opened its mouth and began drawing in air.

A cold wind hummed as a figure was forcibly pulled out from a green tree a hundred meters away from Klein.

This figure failed to maintain his difficult-to-detect state as he rapidly turned half transparent and half corporeal.

He was the wrinkled elder with white, thin hair. His facial features had the traits of the people of the Southern Continent. Just as his brown eyes reflected Reinette Tinekerr, his brows pricked up. Then, he didn't hesitate to open his mouth as though he was about to deliver an extreme curse that he had been preparing for a long time.

At this moment, another one of the heads which Reinette Tinekerr was holding had opened its mouth as well, as though it was making a silent screech.

With that, nothing happened inside the forest.

When Shanks saw this, he hurriedly turned his head to look at Klein who had yet to react in time when a figure with white, thin hair and exaggerated wrinkles appeared in his eyes!

His mind instantly turned cold. Although his thoughts weren't impeded, he had lost control over his body. All he could do was watch the white-haired elder vanish as he turned to face Miss Messenger.

The two heads which Reinette Tinekerr carried suddenly flew out and appeared before Klein. One of them opened its mouth as it drew in air, while the other's red eyes turned dark as its teeth turned long and sharp, phasing between an incorporeal and corporeal state.

Klein saw the translucent elder with white, thin hair being forcefully pulled out from his body before Miss Messenger's head with the long teeth that bit at his shoulder, tearing out an object that appeared both like a Spirit Body and a physical body.

Shanks frowned without screaming. Its figure abruptly vanished as it leaped to a spot with a glass fragment a hundred meters away.

Following that, he seemed to be pursued by formless hands and enemies. He kept phasing into shallow puddles of water, the eyes of animals, the dew on plants, etc. Finally, he was able to catch a breather, and still, Klein was feeling a little stiff and cold from the inside out.

Phew… Shanks entered the spirit world and walked out again. In his hand was a moist, sticky, palm-sized doll.

This figure's face only had a hole as it was inhaling and exhaling a grayish-white fog which Klein found familiar.

Shanks didn't hesitate as he stuffed the doll into his mouth.

Upon seeing this, Reinette Tinekerr's other two heads left her palm, and like before, flew towards Shanks at a fast speed, arriving nearly instantly.

However, Shanks had already begun transforming.

His body turned black as his skin scrunched up and water began seeping out. His hair, brows, and other parts began withering and dropping. Following that, his limbs grew long and thin.

In just a second, Shanks seemed to be assimilated by the doll, becoming a huge, black, moist infant with long four limbs and swollen shriveled skin!

His eyes, nose, mouth, and ears moved from their original locations to the middle of his face as though they were gathering together to form a brand new organ.

His skin, limbs, and newly formed organ brought an indescribable sense of mystery and wickedness. Just a single look had made his body which had just recovered from the coldness feel extremely itchy. Red spots protruded from his skin as a result of the clumps of fine granules.

His eyes undoubtedly suffered a piercing pain. He instinctively closed them tight as tears were forced out.

By the time he calmed himself with Cogitation and opened his eyes again, he realized that Miss Messenger and the Rose School of Thought's demigod had vanished.

However, Klein's spiritual intuition told him that they were nearby. They were in an intense battle shuttling between the real world and the spirit world. Be it the dropping of the leaves, the shaking of the weeds, the crawling of the worms, and the fleeing of the wild beasts, all of them represented each and every clash.

As his mind whirred, Klein took out Death Knell and tapped his left thumb on the first segment of his index finger twice.

Countless illusory thin threads appeared in his eyes, making him see objects that usually couldn't be seen with his normal vision or Spirit Vision.

Two blobs were flying around him, and the dense black bundles of threads that entangled with each other were Reinette Tinekerr and the Rose School of Thought's demigod!

Apart from these, Klein also discovered that a blob of illusory black threads was rapidly approaching him. It would stop from time to time, so as to avoid the intense battle between the two demigods.

There's another enemy? An enemy who was hiding in the distance awaiting the results, but hasn't decided to participate in the battle? Anyways, anyone who's stealthily approaching in such a situation must be an enemy! Klein's eyes moved slightly as he cocked the Death Knell and lowered it naturally to put it into a state for Lethal attack.

Then, he pretended as though he hadn't detected the bundle of illusory black threads, stuffed his left palm into his pocket, and grabbed a gold coin. He made it tumble between his fingers as though he was in a divination state.

He was doing this to disrupt the approacher's spiritual intuition for danger!

After losing his paper figurines, this was the only method he had.

After patiently waiting for two seconds, when the other party was within shooting range, Klein's eyes turned solemn as he suddenly raised his right hand, aimed, and pulled the trigger!

Chapter 727 - Lucky One

◈ ◈ ◈

Thud!

The black revolver with the slightly long barrel recoiled backward as a pale golden beam shot out, heading straight for the spot where the target was about to arrive at.

However, the illusory black threads suddenly stopped as though they were observing something.

From his condition, it didn't appear like he had sensed the arrival of danger, but he had his attention attracted by something else.

A grayish-white rabbit leaped out the thick grass and fled far away as the tree standing in front of the blob of illusory black threads collapsed due to the gunshot.

At the height of a human, a gigantic and irregular hole and a raging pure fire appeared at the tree's trunk, directly splitting it from the middle!

Death Knell's might was equivalent to a small-caliber cannon, and its penetrating powers were even more potent!

The blob of dense, illusory black threads was clearly given a fright as it instinctively disappeared from where it was, appearing on the surface of a nearby puddle of water.

Inevitably, his figure was outlined—he had a pale face with deep recessed eye sockets and light brown eyes. He looked to be in his forties, had a double mustache above his lips, and wore an old triangular hat.

Klein was no stranger to the man, as his bounty notice often appeared before his eyes. Step by step, they were stacked into a clear image: Admiral of Blood Senor!

Just in Loen alone, his bounty was worth 42,000 pounds!

He had long infiltrated Bayam! Was it to take away Turani von Helmosuin? After this scientist passed away due to being discovered, he joined the Rose School of Thought's mission to target me? I seem to have an additional weakness, but before it's triggered, I've no way of knowing what it is… As his thoughts raced, Klein saw Senor's figure disappear once again.

However, the traces of Admiral of Blood's existence was rather obvious. The blob of illusory black threads of his was like a firefly in the darkness. It wasn't difficult to identify him at all.

The blob of illusory black threads circled around him with the aid of the morning dew, glass fragments, and water puddles that had frozen for some reason. Jumping again and again from one medium to the other, the gap between the two soon narrowed.

Klein didn't wait on the spot. Instead, he quickly moved but only slightly shifted his position so as to prevent the Rose School of Thought demigod, who was engaged in an intense battle, from attacking him in passing.

Senor's performance made him understand one thing: A Wraith's ability to possess someone to directly control their body requires them to enter a certain range. Previously, although the Rose School of Thought demigod was able to accomplish it at further distances, he hadn't done so, perhaps out of contempt or for fear of any accidents.

It could be confirmed that Senor was a Sequence 5 Wraith! Klein kept changing his location, and he awaited the opportunity when the distance between them was more suitable.

Just as Admiral of Blood’s speed slowed down slightly, and he was about to possess his target from a distance, Klein’s left glove suddenly turned deep black, as though it was formed layer by layer by pure particles.

Following that, he said a word filled with foulness, a word that came from the Devil language:

“Slow!”

Senor had sensed it and changed his position before Klein could even open his mouth. But everything within an eight-meter radius came to a halt. His evasive maneuver had failed to show any effects.

It was an area-of-effect attack!

Senor’s figure suddenly became slow. He once again outlined his figure in the real world as Klein raised his iron-black revolver, cocked it, and placed his target in his sights.

With Death Knell, he saw that Senor’s body was covered with all kinds of colors that indicated his weakness wasn’t at his head, but slightly above his throat.

Without any hesitation or delay, Klein pulled the trigger.

Lethal attack!

At that moment, a blob of illusory black threads walked to Senor’s side and pulled at him.

Admiral of Blood immediately moved diagonally as the golden bullet grazed past his neck, striking a boulder and shattering it.

A golden flame burst from Senor’s neck as it jerked his head up and opened his mouth.

A sharp Shriek blasted out and entered Klein’s ears, causing his mind to hum as his body came to a temporary halt.

Formless souls had flown to Senor's side at some point in time before mixing with cold winds. From the sky and from the ground, they surged towards the enemy.

In each of Klein's eyes, a pale-looking man with a red coat and triangular hat quickly appeared and took form.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers as his body was instantly enveloped by scarlet flames.

He disappeared from his location before the Wraith was able to possess him!

And under a tree that was less than ten meters away, weeds burst into flames as the flames grew bigger and they soared into the sky.

Klein nimbly leaped out from it and raised Death Knell again. He aimed towards the spot where he was originally standing still at, and he injected more than twice the normal amount of spirituality into the gun.

Slaughter!

Thud!

He pulled the trigger as a golden bullet split into countless shrapnel and, with a sacred flame, swept to the region the gun's mouth had aimed at. The formless specters and souls seemed to be swept away by a solar hurricane as they failed to resist and were ignited amidst screaming.

Senor knew that a counterattack was in place once his possession attempt didn't succeed. He immediately flashed into a nearby glass fragment in an attempt to evade the incoming shot, but the bullet hurricane brought about by Slaughter was a rather huge range that included that glass fragment!

Amidst a huge boom, golden flames struck the sides of the glass without hitting it. With only burn injuries, Senor leaped to another mirror surface and appeared on the surface of a rolling drop of dew a distance away. His body had a rotting wound thanks to the purification powers, but it wasn't anything serious.

There's no way he's that lucky, right? Indeed, Senor has a mystical item that makes himself lucky… There are only three Purifying Bullets left… Klein frowned as he agilely ran over as though he was in pursuit.

As he knew that he was facing members of the Rose School of Thought, he had changed all the Beyonder bullets in his revolver to Purifying Bullets that targeted Wraiths and Zombies. There were a total of six bullets, and now, he had already shot thrice!

In the first shot, Senor was saved by a rabbit that suddenly leaped out. In the second shot, he was yanked away by the Rose School of Thought's demigod who happened to come beside him. In the third short, he happened to be in the gap of the fragment amidst the Slaughter hurricane, preventing him from suffering too much damage. Klein found this level of luck completely unacceptable!

However, Klein didn't wallow in depression. Instead, he turned back into Gehrman Sparrow's appearance and build. This was for him to immediately throw a bunch of Sea God domain charms to create a certain commotion once things went south, so as to attract the attention of Sea King Jahn Kottman who was in Bayam City.

If this Sequence 3 demigod were to arrive, he would be facing a Rose School of Thought demigod, a hostile pirate admiral, and an adventurer with a mysterious background who had certain ties with the military. It was quite obvious who he would deal with first.

As for Miss Messenger, Klein believed that she could escape into the spirit world in a timely fashion and was free to choose whether to participate in the battle royale or leave.

The reason why Klein didn't escape in the middle of the night after receiving the telegram last night was because Sea King gave him a sense of security.

If he were to leave alone, he would definitely be noticed and captured by the Church of Storms. He would be interrogated, making the subsequent developments unpredictable.

If he were to stay in his room and await the person who "saw him" to attack, he had a chance of struggling until he reached the streets, allowing Sea King to notice it.

Faced with an evil operative who was at least a demigod and a Sequence 5 adventurer who was rumored to have ties with the military, there was no doubt that Jahn Kottman would first deal with the Rose School of Thought member. And as a Cardinal of the Church of Storms and a high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers, he could use various Sealed Artifacts of the diocese. He could last a moment, even if he faced an angel. At the same time, with the reinforcements from the military, there was a chance for Klein to escape to the sea during the chaos and leave via whale!

To his regret, the night remained peaceful after he received the telegram. And once daybreak happened, Sea King would find it difficult to monitor the entire city.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers again, igniting the surrounding trees. This appeared like blooming fireworks around him as they exuded an inexplicable sense of beauty.

The reason why he had chosen to pass through the forest to head for the cliff was because this was a place that was suitable for a Magician's performance!

His figure flashed through the flames as he circled around Senor, avoiding his approach and control. And from the previous experiences and lessons, Senor knew that his target had an area-of-effect attack and a damaging blow. He didn't dare stay too close to him, and he would pull away and create a gap once he missed an attack. Otherwise, he would use a Wraith's Shriek to affect his target or use his pale green fingers to aim at his target. Unfortunately, the latter could only extinguish flames and wither vegetation. There was no way to pinpoint Klein's location.

Seeing how the fireworks-like flames were the biggest barrier to his attacks, Senor stopped and let out the deafening Shriek which would also damage a Spirit Body.

Amidst the Shriek, the icy-blue halo beneath his feet rapidly expanded, covering the mud, randomly strewn weeds, and scattered rocks with a layer of ice.

The flames sizzled as they produced tiny amounts of mist before being extinguished by the frost.

Klein was influenced by the Wraith's Shriek, causing his Flaming Jump to be one step too slow. He ended up failing—his figure projected itself midway as his feet stumbled.

Then, he saw illusory skulls swirling with black gas rush at him, bringing with them the strong smell of death, as though an envoy from the Underworld had arrived!

At that instant, Klein didn't seem like he could dodge. However, a light blue fireball emanating the smell of sulfur suddenly condensed before him.

His glove remained black as it remained in its Devil state!

With a thumping sound, the fireball was extinguished as the illusory skulls shattered and scattered to the ground, creating spots that didn’t have any life to them.

Right on the heels of that, Klein steadied his body and took out the iron cigar case from his pocket. He threw it at Admiral of Blood Senor as his glove turned noble and sinister at some point in time.

Baron of Corruption, Bribe!

Chapter 728 - Triple Combo

◆

Senor obviously wasn't going to bet that the item thrown by his opponent didn't pose a threat. He immediately dodged far away, allowing the iron cigar case which was sealed by a wall of spirituality to fall to the ground.

Then, he opened his mouth once again and produced a Shriek.

A roar that seemed to come from the depths of his own Spirit Body made Klein experience excruciating pain in his head. Even though he often suffered from the ravings of existences like the True Creator and Mr. Door, and was rather resistant towards such attacks, it was impossible for him to not pause momentarily. He felt his nose burning as though a capillary had burst.

However, with his resistance combined together with Bribe, the effects were reduced. It made his momentary pause only last for an instant, and this was something Senor had no idea of knowing.

Therefore, Klein pretended as though he hadn't recovered as he revealed his weak state, waiting for the enemy to fall into his trap.

In an ordinary battle, as a Wraith was able to jump through mirror-like mediums, making it impossible to determine that location ahead of time, it made it impossible to maintain a five-meter distance from his opponent, even if he created flames and repeatedly used it to achieve phasing. It caused his Spirit Body Threads controlling ability to be disrupted momentarily after there were any significant effects.

For this, he planned on taking a little risk. He made his opponent fall for a trap he planned, so as to quickly end the battle and escape to the cliff.

Seeing his target appear dazed due to the repeated Shrieks, Senor didn't hesitate to make his aura turn deep.

Admiral of Blood's contracted figure rapidly appeared in Klein's eyes in an abnormally clear manner.

This wasn't a reflection of the world, but two tiny figures seemingly coming to life in his eyes!

When the Wraith's possession was almost close to completion, Klein, with his tattered and charred clothes, unhurriedly extended his left palm as though he was gesturing "please" as a polite gentleman.

Creeping Hunger maintained its sinister and noble blackness as it forcefully distorted Admiral of Blood's target.

Due to the Freezing halo from before, there was frost and crystalline bodies everywhere around them. All of them were equivalent to a mirror surface!

On the thin ice, Senor with his triangular hat had appeared there, his expression was as though he was at a loss.

At that moment, Creeping Hunger switched to a deep black state as Klein said a word filled with foulness, a word that came from the Devil language:

Slow!

Just as he was about to use the mirror surfaces to phase away, Senor instantly froze. His figure involuntarily outlined itself as his body turned extremely rigid. His attempts had failed.

As there was no way to repeatedly use Slow, Klein made his left glove turn pale as it was tinged with a slightly dark green color.

Zombie!

The sealing caused by the frost on the ground had once again exacerbated as they rapidly spread to Senor's side as they began to spread from his toes to turn him into a completed ice sculpture.

With his knowledge that Wraith's had a very strong resistance to the cold, Klein didn't let his guard down or waste any time. He made Creeping Hunger transform as if it was gilded.

The illusory black threads in his eyes were hidden away as two blinding silver bolts of lightning shot out from the innermost depths of his eyes.

Interrogator's Psychic Piercing!

In his usual state, Senor's fusion of spirit and flesh typically wouldn't be significantly affected. He could even cause the attack to backfire on his opponent. However, having just recovered from Slow, he found himself sealed in ice. All he could do was resist the formless bolt that targeted his Spirit Body!

His mind felt as though a blade had penetrated it as it twisted. The pain spread through his body as he temporarily lost all reason.

By the time he regained his lucidity and prepared to make continuous leaps to open up a distance, the cold adventurer opposite him opened his mouth once again.

Slow!

Dogsh*t… Senor's actions turned sluggish and impeded once again. Then, without any surprises, he suffered from the two follow-up attacks of Ice Stun and Psychic Piercing.

When he barely escaped again, the black-haired, brown-eyed Gehrman Sparrow opened his mouth a third time with a deadpan expression.

Slow!

Senor was enraged as he reeled in despair before finding himself stuck in a perpetual cycle.

As for Klein, who had kept his opponent in place three times, was beginning to control his opponent's Spirit Body Threads.

In fact, the most effective solution for when his opponent was unable to escape was to take the opportunity to use Death Knell to deliver two or three Lethal Attacks. But his past failures had told him that his enemy had a mystical item that allowed him to be lucky. An overly direct and lethal shot might very well lead to an accident, resulting in some undesirable effects.

It was precisely because of this that he decided to gradually proceed in the proper order by controlling Admiral of Blood's Spirit Body Threads!

Time quickly passed. As Klein ran around Senor to dodge the possible attacks from the Rose School of Thought demigod, he controlled Senor's Spirit Body Threads, and he slowly reached the state of gaining initial control.

Three seconds! Two seconds! One second!

Senor's thoughts instantly turned sluggish as though every part of his body was rusting.

Klein no longer had the strength to use Creeping Hunger again. He continued deepening his control as he began walking at an adequate speed.

No… I… can't… let… this… continue… Thoughts slowly moved through Senor's mind as a translucent icicle condensed in front of him.

It was dyed with a gloomy green as though it was showing its respect to the surrounding forest.

As for Klein, who had witnessed his opponent's series of slow actions, he unhurriedly retracted his left hand and took out Groselle's Travels from his chest and braced himself.

Sou!

The icicle finally shot out, seemingly heading for Klein's chest, but it suddenly changed directions midway as it flew diagonally upwards!

This adjustment should've been a sudden lethal blow, but as Senor's thoughts had been slowed down significantly, the "order" received by the icicle had only happened when it was almost reaching Klein. This made the sudden change insufficient to catch Klein by surprise as he shifted Groselle's Travels and easily blocked the attack.

Senor's expression turned pale again. After a few seconds of thought, he slowly opened his mouth in an attempt to let out a Wraith's Shriek.

Having already prepared himself, Klein spoke first:

"Bang!"

An Air Bullet quickly shot out and struck Senor in the mouth, throwing his head backward as teeth fell. The Shriek was left stuck in his throat.

Seeing the control deepen and how Senor's resistance was crumbling bit by bit, to the point of losing his reason and launching a barrage of attacks like a lunatic, Klein suddenly felt some joy.

At that moment, a shrill, sharp infant's cry sounded and resounded in the woods.

Lumps protruded all over Klein's body as he dropped Groselle's Travels from his hand. His head felt as though it was being clasped tightly by an invisible hand, making him momentarily lose his senses of his surroundings, including the Spirit Body Threads. His control over Senor was removed as a result.

About a hundred meters away from them, the large-sized baby, which was black, swollen, and wrinkled, that appeared to have stormed out of the water had escaped its illusory state and returned to reality.

His limbs were long and thin, and there was only an irregular hole on his face. Circling the hole were gnarling teeth.

At that moment, Shank's body had an additional wound that was obvious and deep. It was a piercing wound that went through the black and swollen skin, causing putrid blackish-green liquid to gush out.

After this Rose School of Thought's demigod appeared, he stopped dodging or escaping. He began screaming like crazy, letting out infantile screams. It made Klein and Senor fall into a painful stupor. Even their bodies showed signs of losing control.

The four blonde, red-eyed heads were thrown into the void as they opened their mouths and let out a soundless Shriek, silencing the terrifying cries.

Reinette Tinekerr and Shanks had engaged in another round of combat, phasing between the spirit world and reality from time to time as they shuttled between leaves, weeds, insect eggs, ice crystals, and thorns.

Senor and Klein stood in their spots in a stupor. They tried their best to recover from the effects of the infantile cry.

In this aspect, Senor believed that, as a Wraith, he had an unsurpassable advantage. The corners of his lips subconsciously curled up a little.

He had already figured out what to do with his opponent later.

But at that moment, the eyes of the adventurer who was in tattered clothes while exuding a cold demeanor had turned lucid!

It had only been a second since the infantile cry had ended!

Klein, who was experienced in this, quickly recovered as he realized that Senor was still in a dazed and impeded state.

An opportunity! His mind stirred, but he didn't attempt a long-distance attack which allowed for plenty of accidents. Instead, he chose to control Senor's Spirit Body Threads which took more time. He tapped his right foot as his figure dashed towards his opponent like a panther.

His left glove was dark, and when it moved backward, it condensed in a manner that resembled a blade, forming a gigantic weapon formed from lava and flames.

Desire Apostle, Sword of Lava!

Bam!

Klein's body passed by Senor's left as the searing sword swept across his chest and got stuck in the middle.

The light-blue flames ignited Senor, but aside from suffering damage to his body, he didn't lose his life. However, the pain left him yelling incessantly.

After the two brushed by each other, Klein immediately abandoned the Sword of Lava. He took a step to his left and turned around, facing Admiral of Blood's back. He raised the iron-black Death Knell to his opponent's head.

He didn't use Lethal Attack, and he directly pulled the trigger!

With a bang, his body suddenly shook a little. This was because the spot he had stepped onto appeared to be a hole. Hence, Death Knell had slid downwards, and the golden bullet had hit the side of Senor's neck.

Blood tainted with a dark-green tinge spewed out. Admiral of Blood had lost nearly half his neck as he fell forward. He fainted, but he remained alive.

Klein was just about to add another shot when the sky suddenly darkened. An arm suddenly reached out!

The arm was ten meters long, and it had a black sticky surface with strange protrusions. They were either skulls, erected eyeballs, or barbed tongues. The moment it appeared, it made the entire forest shake.

All the leaves withered as all the insects stiffened to their deaths. All the beasts either fell paralyzed to the ground, or they began biting themselves wildly, leaving their bodies bleeding!

Klein's danger premonition reached its limit. He hurriedly closed his eyes, lunged forward, and did a roll. He grabbed Groselle's Travels and held it in front of his face!

Chapter 729 - Chaos

◆

The entire forest was withering as though an entity that was bringing about destruction to everything was about to descend.

Just as the arm was about to fully extend, a thick bolt of silver lightning smote down from nowhere, illuminating the entire mountain. The sizzling sounds chained together as a cage only spoken in myths enclosed around the black sticky arm.

Dark clouds quickly converged together in the sky, forming brows and a mouth, as though a face was hidden within!

In Bayam City, the huge commotion was noticed by Sea King Jahn Kottman. He didn’t hesitate to take action as he ordered the Mandated Punishers to activate the corresponding Sealed Artifacts.

Reinette Tinekerr’s figure was forced out of the void, but her complicated black dress didn’t seem crumpled at all.

She raised her left hand as two of the blonde, red-eyed heads flew back and landed on her severed neck. The remaining two continued engaging in combat with the black, swollen, and wrinkled infant.

When the cut at her neck began to wriggle, two corresponding cuts were connected. Her figure instantly burgeoned to the size of a gothic castle. Patterns, vines, and accessories appeared on the surface, interweaving into a mysterious, sinister sight that couldn’t be looked at.

Klein closed his eyes tight as he placed Groselle's Travels in front of his face, injecting his spirituality into it, but he was unable to eliminate all the effects inflicted upon him. His body kept quivering as granules kept protruding from his body.

And only at this moment did he confirm that the side effect of using Death Knell was a fear of the dark.

For the next six hours, he wouldn't suffer any more weaknesses.

Thankfully, the weakness is just insurmountable, but it doesn't mean that I'm unable to resist for a short period of time… Klein desperately closed his eyes as tears kept rolling down his cheeks.

He didn't spend time considering the problems regarding this, because the situation had developed into one of extreme danger, but it was also very chaotic.

The one that descended seems to be stronger than Sea King. It's likely an angel, but "His" condition doesn't seem to be particularly good as well. "He" didn't directly appear, and he instead used the spirit world to attack…

Is it because "He" can't rush here in time and could only consider using this method? Thankfully, I received a warning from Orange Light; otherwise, the results would be unthinkable if this situation drags on! As Klein's thoughts flashed through his mind, his first reaction was to take the opportunity to flee and open up a safe distance.

However, he knew that hastily retreating without any preparations was equally dangerous.

If the Rose School of Thought's angel abandons the attack and retracts "His" arm, Sea King Jahn Kottman wouldn't have any motivation in embroiling himself in a pursuit effort. This is because he isn't facing a saint who he can consider retaining. This way, simply relying on Miss Messenger, Reinette Tinekerr, makes it difficult to stop this entity. I might be pursued again when the time comes! I have to add more trouble for "Him," making "Him" temporarily unable to leave. I'll take this opportunity to escape the waters where Blue Mountain Island is! As his thoughts churned, Klein followed his emergency plans, took out Groselle's Travels, stuffed Death Knell inside, and made a few rolls before arriving next to the iron cigar case.

He stabbed it with his finger, removing the wall of spirituality and opening the case, and he threw Tinder, which was corrupted by the True Creator, into the air, towards the source of the danger!

Right on the heels of that, Klein used Groselle's Travels to shield the top of his head, opened his eyes, and took out a whistle.

This wasn't Azik's copper whistle, but the Numinous Episcopate copper whistle which he had obtained from a mysticism enthusiast in Backlund. It originated from a resurrected Numinous Episcopate member.

Back then, Klein had made a divination about the copper whistle, and he received a revelation that sending a message would be extremely dangerous!

At that moment, he decided to allow "extreme danger" to meet "extreme danger," so as to create an even more chaotic situation that benefited him!

He quickly put the copper whistle to his mouth and blew into it. Then, he activated his Spirit Vision without daring to look up. A skull with three lifeless eyes emerged. Around it were black appendage-like tentacles.

Without any hesitation, Klein handed over a white feather left behind by the resurrected Numinous Episcopate member to the messenger.

He didn't wait for the messenger to disappear as he immediately bulged his muscles, swung his arm, and threw the copper whistle into the air where the source of danger was.

With that done, he put away the iron cigar case, did another roll, and bounced up as he rushed straight for the cliff. During this process, he kept his head down and kept changing location. He didn't dare to look at the scene happening above him, nor did he dare to stay any longer.

When he passed by the spot where Admiral of Blood Senor should've been lying unconscious, Klein's gaze suddenly froze. He was alarmed to find that he had vanished!

In that chaotic situation without any aid, this Wraith, who had suffered immense damage and was unable to maintain his Spirit Body state, had vanished!

Klein paused as he swept his gaze. He saw that ahead of him were a few drops of splattered dark red blood that coruscated with a dark-green tint. And this region was where Groselle's Travels had previously dropped!

No way… A few drops of Admiral of Blood's blood dropped onto the book's cover? This sucked him in? Klein frowned, as he didn't think it was a good thing.

He was afraid that the angel and saint that the Mother Tree of Desire had sent was able to gain the help of Admiral of Blood from within Groselle's Travels to pursue him!

However, it was impossible for him to abandon the book. Without it, Klein didn't believe that he was lucky enough to dodge all the stray blasts and unknown shrapnel which could fall from the sky at any moment.

…I'll resolve this latent risk by entering with my Spirit Body after I escape! As a few thoughts rose up in his mind, Klein dipped the tip of his foot down as he ran, lifting up the soil which had Senor's blood on it, reached out, and grabbed a handful.

This was used to locate Admiral of Blood later!

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein ran in a meandering manner, holding Groselle's Travels over his head, making adjustments from time to time based on his premonition for danger.

The book blocked the random bolts of lightning or the scattering rain of corroding rock, and it shielded him from a terrifying gaze that was cast over. With the book, Klein successfully tore out of the lifeless forest and came to the edge of a cliff.

At this moment, the surroundings turned dark. It wasn't the kind of darkness before a storm, nor was it a result of a moonless or starless night. It was a dead silence that emanated the smell of rot.

Ravings sounded out from varying distances and at varying pitches, as though something seemed to be slowly breathing in the air.

Klein, who was afraid of the dark, trembled. He didn't dare to look at what was happening above him. All he noticed was a few white feathers stained with yellowish oil spiraling down to the ground nearby when there was a flash of lightning.

His right foot took a stride forward as he jumped off the cliff and plummeted straight down. He fell out of the darkness and could see light.

Then, he dropped into a mouth that had been waiting for him for a long time.

The mouth didn't have any teeth as it immediately closed and sank to the bottom of the sea. According to the agreement they had made previously, it was to head for a reef beyond Blue Mountain Island as quickly as possible.

This was a gigantic undersea creature with sixteen fins on its back.

In the darkness, Klein instinctively wished to huddle into a ball and helplessly tremble, but he barely repressed his emotions and took out a Priest of Light Beyonder characteristic he had prepared to deal with Wraiths.

He had obtained it through the glove.

Pure light emanated from the translucent stone-like object as it drove away Klein's fear.

He was just about to contemplate if he should wait for the outcome, or if he should attempt something, when he suddenly felt the back of his palm become itchy.

He hurriedly looked down and saw his pores widen as they grew some fine white hair.

These fine hair rapidly grew and looked like feathers!

Klein immediately felt his entire body itch!

The fellow that was attracted by the copper whistle is really very dangerous! Klein was rather experienced. He immediately stood up and took four steps counterclockwise while chanting the incantation in the undersea creature's mouth.

His Spirit Body once again tore through the grayish-white which had endless ravings and roars as blackish-green gases drilled out of his body.

Returning to the palace that looked like a giant's residence, Klein observed his Spirit Body once again, and he discovered that it had returned to normal. There weren't any of the blackish-green gases, nor were there any white feathers.

Phew, it's effective… He exhaled and immediately returned to the real world.

With the illumination from the Priest of Light Beyonder characteristic, Klein saw that the white feathers on the back of his hands remained, but they had lost the ability to continue growing. There were more or less some signs in other parts of his body, but they weren’t obvious.

Yes, I should be able to resolve the remaining problems once Mr. Azik arrives. Klein heaved a sigh of relief and drew the crimson moon on his chest. He prayed for the Goddess’s blessing, and that Mr. Azik would arrive quickly.

At this moment, Reinette Tinekerr’s figure appeared before him.

Miss Messenger had three heads growing on her head while she held one in her hand. Compared to before, she appeared more lively.

She reached out with her left palm and grabbed Klein’s shoulder, and she directly brought him into the spirit world as they quickly traveled through it.

Amidst brightly stacked colors, Klein felt somewhat dizzy before he returned to reality and realized that he was on a reef.

Reinette Tinekerr’s four heads swept the area and said, “Already…” “Safe…” “Remember…” “To pay…” “Next time…”

With that said, she vanished as though she had something more important to do.

You could do that… I should’ve just gotten Miss Messenger to bring me away using such a method… However, her present state doesn’t seem to be that great either. This must be a state and method she seldom uses… As Klein reflected over the matter, he placed the Priest of Light Beyonder characteristic into his pocket, and he kept Groselle’s Travels outside.

Just as he was about to size up his surroundings to figure out where he was, another arm reached out and grabbed his shoulder.

Klein jumped in fright as he hurriedly turned his head, only to discover that Mr. Azik had arrived.

Azik grabbed his shoulder and pulled him into the spirit world once again. They rapidly moved through the brightly stacked colors.

…Actually, I’m already safe… The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched, but he didn’t say those words.

Chapter 730 - Handling the Latent Risk

◆

On a mountain outside Bayam City, in a forest that had lost all its vitality because it was buried by a half-collapsed cliff.

A tall, stocky middle-aged man with deep blue hair was wearing a Storm priest robe as he stood in the air and overlooked the area. There was a clear burning rage in his eyes.

He was none other than the Church of Storms Cardinal, Archbishop of the Rorsted Sea, high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers, Sea King Jahn Kottman.

At that moment, the battle from before was still fresh in Kottman's mind. He remembered how every participant in the battle retreated.

The angel from the Rose School of Thought had used a particular method to transfer "His" powers over from a great distance. After "He" failed to achieve "His" objectives, "He" rather easily brought away "His" heavily injured partner, and no one wanted "Him" to stay, aside from the strange monster that appeared out of nowhere. Jahn Kottman remembered very vividly that when the angel retracted "His" arm, it had sparse white feathers on the black, sticky arm. From the top of the skull and from inside the erected eye, they grew from unimaginable spots. And all of this was because the Rose School of Thought's angel was dodging the glove with the True Creator's aura while using some of "His" strength to shatter what seemed like an ordinary copper whistle.

Shortly after the sinister and strange spirit world creature engaged in battle with the angel, it voluntarily retreated into the depths of the spirit world, preventing Jahn Kottman from pursuing it.

The Aurora Order saint who had opened a Door of Teleportation didn't participate in the battle. After observing the situation in puzzlement, he picked up the glove with the True Creator's aura, and he opened the door to leave before the battle ended.

The strange monster that was summoned because of the copper whistle didn't have a fixed form. "He" was like the manifestation of death itself. "He" was like a mist that filled the surroundings but had many feathers with yellowish marks on it. "His" target was obvious—the angel of the Rose School of Thought. Before the latter escaped, "He" had also vanished from the area as though it were in pursuit of "His" target. But even so, Jahn Kottman, who had taken a Sealed Artifact from the city and rushed here, still felt uneasy. It felt like suddenly jumping forward while on his long journey towards death.

The only person without any godhood had fled the scene before Jahn Kottman arrived, and he was nowhere to be found.

However, Jahn Kottman recognized him.

He was an adventurer who had killed a Sequence 5 Desire Apostle, making him qualified to have his information placed on Sea King's desk!

Although this wasn't something that he needed to pay great attention to, Jahn Kottman, who had experienced the Seafarer Sequence, still remembered the relevant information.

He cast his gaze towards the cliff and looked down at the crashing waves as he muttered a name: "Gehrman Sparrow!"

†

On an island in unknown waters, Klein and Azik's figures were rapidly outlined on the shore.

Klein was just about to speak when the hat-wearing, bronze-skinned Azik's eyes suddenly turned dark, as though it was connected to a silent and dark world.

He grabbed the air with his right hand, and all the undeveloped white feathers flew out and curled into a bundle, landing in his palm.

With a gentle squeeze, all the strange feathers vanished as though they had turned into food for the silent world in his eyes.

"Mr. Azik, this was brought about by that Numinous Episcopate whistle." Klein first pointed out the matter before explaining in detail. "The situation was somewhat pressing, and to make the situation even more chaotic, I blew that copper whistle and gave that feather to the messenger. Then, a similar feeling from the Underworld descended. I didn't stay, and I immediately left the area, but I still had these feathers on my body."

Azik, with his soft facial features, nodded gently and said, "I sensed it from afar.

"It shouldn't be an ordinary High-Sequence Beyonder. I suspect that it's a byproduct of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project."

Is that so… So it succeeded in holding back that Rose School of Thought angel? Klein thought in joy.

Azik looked around and continued, "I still have matters that require my attention. This might awaken more of my memories.

"When all of that is done, I'll look for you again to claim that ring left behind by ancient Death. I have a feeling that I might need to make a trip to the Berserk Sea or the Southern Continent.

"It's best if you head over to large cities like Backlund or Trier. In those places, the forces the Rose School of Thought can deploy are very limited. They wouldn't dare to act rashly. Of course, it's best that you choose places like Pasu Island where major Churches have their headquarters, but this will bring about another type of danger."

Azik's last sentence was a joke, just like an ordinary Loen gentleman. The experiences of his present life seemed to leave a deep impression on him. Regardless of the portion of memories that he had recovered, he still showed clear signs of his old self.

In situations regarding retained memories, the time span of decades shouldn't have much of an influence on the time span of millennia, but from a state of complete memory-loss, two to three decades is enough to remold a person… After Mr. Azik completely recovers his memories, will his many different lives result in him having different personalities? What a profound question. I'll let Miss Justice consider it later and seek advice from the Psychology Alchemists… As Klein was thinking, he secretly heaved a sigh of relief when he realized that Mr. Azik wasn't delving into why he had a conflict with the Rose School of Thought. Instead, he asked, "Mr. Azik, do you know anything about the Mother Tree of Desire?"

Azik shook his head.

"I didn't even know of 'Her' existence before you sent me the letter."

You didn't know the Mother Tree of Desire? Klein was taken aback as he switched to asking, "Then what about the Chained God?"

Azik shook his head again as he said with a smiling sigh, "In ancient times, 'She' or 'They' might have had other names."

That's right. Mr. Azik began the cycle of losing and finding his memories at the end of the Fourth Epoch. He kept wandering the Northern Continent, while the Rose School of Thought was born in the early Fifth Epoch in the Southern Continent… Klein nodded and didn't ask further. And since Azik had matters which needed his attention, he gave a few words of advice before bringing him to traverse across the spirit world until he arrived at a particular beach on the Northern Continent's eastern shore.

With Mr. Azik gone, Klein looked at the seawater that kept surging towards the shore for a few seconds. He wasn't in a rush to head for the nearby city; instead, he found an uninhabited cave, set up a simple ritual, and created a wall of spirituality. He sacrificed Creeping Hunger, Death Knell, Azik's copper whistle, Groselle's Travels, and the soil with Senor's blood to the mysterious space above the gray fog.

Then, he walked four steps counterclockwise and entered the mysterious space. He took the seat which belonged to The Fool, and he summoned a metal bottle.

As it was stored above the gray fog, the remnant blood in the tiny bottle didn't coagulate. After wearing his glove and stuffing the other items, Klein poured a few drops and smeared it over Groselle's Travels's dark brown cover.

Eh… Why doesn't a brand new story start right from the beginning, with the addition of a new character… Klein looked at the book that didn't change its name as he suddenly felt puzzled.

Before he had the time to think, his vision turned into a blur, as though there were countless translucent creatures hidden around him.

Everything soon turned clear, and Klein found himself sitting on a long wooden chair along the street.

This was where he had departed from previously.

There's a saving function? Klein joked inwardly as he took out the mud stained with Senor's blood before snapping a tree branch to attempt divination.

Following the results he received, he walked out of the city, entered a nearby forest, and found the unconscious Admiral of Blood beside a small stream.

At this moment, only about ten minutes had passed since the battle.

The exaggerated wounds, on Senor's neck, chest, and abdomen, were contracting and appeared to have recovered significantly. Such a level of vitality was completely different from a human's.

In another fifteen to thirty minutes, Admiral of Blood would likely wake up, and in another one to two hours, his mobility would be restored.

This was a Zombie, a Wraith!

You had a chance of being rescued by your organization's angel and demigod, but your blood happened to splatter onto Groselle's Travels, making you a prisoner of this book and giving me enough time to handle you… Of course, this made you avoid the stray attacks of the battle between demigods, preventing you from dying immediately. I've no idea if you'd call this good or bad luck… Klein mumbled as he observed while grasping Death Knell in his hand and reaching out to Senor's neck and removing the necklace made of pure silver.

The necklace had a pendant of the same color which resembled an ancient coin. Both sides were filled with mysterious patterns and relevant symbols, as well as words carved in ancient Hermes: "You will be as unlucky as you are lucky now."

This is the mystical item which raises Admiral of Blood's luck? Unfortunately, even a demigod can't enhance my luck, so I doubt it can… I can sell it for money, or I could ask Miss Messenger if I can use this to make a partial payment… Klein wasn't in a hurry to take the necklace as he placed it on the stone beside him.

He was afraid that there were unknown side effects that might affect the things he was about to do.

Then, Klein focused as he controlled Admiral of Blood's Spirit Body Threads.

He wanted to make his first marionette which he would use for an extended period of time, so as to conclude the principles of a Marionettist.

Furthermore, no marionette was more convenient to bring around than a Wraith!

One second, two seconds, three seconds… In just ten seconds, Klein achieved initial control.

Senor’s spiritual intuition sensed the danger as his body showed obvious signs of struggling, but he was unable to wake up due to his heavy injuries and sluggish thoughts.

Time ticked by, and by the fourth minute, Klein didn’t hide his sigh of relief.

At that moment, Admiral of Blood Senor opened his eyes, rolled to his feet, and faced him. With a harmonious series of actions, he pressed his chest and bowed.

“Good morning, sir. How may I be of service?”

Chapter 731 - Gains

◆ ◆ ◆

Illusory black threads emanated out of Senor’s body and entered Klein’s hands. With every jolt in spirituality, it gave a different reaction.

In fact, there was no need to use both hands when controlling the Spirit Body Threads. Klein was just accustomed to doing so, as it gave him a feeling like he was truly controlling a puppet.

From the looks of it, other Marionettists can discover each other’s marionettes. The Senor’s abnormality can’t be hidden from their eyes, so I have to be careful about this. Klein concluded the problems he discovered, and he quickly turned his thoughts back onto Senor.

This Admiral of Blood was dead. His Spirit Body had become a vessel for the marionette, losing any traits that belonged to him. Therefore, many divination methods were ineffective against him.

Of course, methods to seek his corpse were still effective. Klein planned on “cleansing” the Wraith in the gray fog before using Paper Angels to envelop the mirror-like objects that he had possessed before placing him into a cigar case that was sealed by a wall of spirituality, along with Azik’s copper whistle. This created a 3-layered interference effect.

This way, Klein believed that, even if the Rose School of Thought angel wished to, it was impossible to use divination to lock onto his position via Admiral of Blood.

As for whether the Mother Tree of Desire had left any “backdoors” in Senor’s body, he wasn’t too worried. This was because if that really happened, “She” could’ve mutated Senor during the demigod battle royale in order to deal with him. Based on the situation back then, there was a guaranteed chance of success.

Mother Tree of Desire, or should I say, the Chained God, strictly controls its organization’s members. It relies on a vow contract and other methods that are ingrained into the soul. This can be inferred from Miss Sharron’s descriptions and my interaction with the corresponding characteristics…

As long as I don’t attempt to use Admiral of Blood to divine the secrets of the Rose School of Thought or the potion formula of the Mutant pathway, I wouldn’t trigger any problems. The Werewolf Beyonder characteristic has remained normal despite being above the gray fog for so long…

Besides, there’s still the gray fog “cleansing” process. If there are any latent problems, it should be washed out… Klein thought for a while and took out Azik’s copper whistle from inside his body.

He turned his right wrist and made the side with fewer patterns appear under the sunlight, making it reflect the light.

Immediately, the copper whistle had Senor’s figure appear on it as it rapidly turned clear.

The Admiral of Blood in front of Klein suddenly vanished as a result.

Perhaps the Mother Tree of Desire can use the vow contract and other methods to vaguely lock on, but that doesn’t matter. “She” can sense the gray fog’s unique trait on me anyway, and “She” will sense me once I’m within range… Besides, this marionette might be destroyed at anytime when I use it as a shield… Klein was like a jobless tramp who was debt-laden. He felt that there was almost nothing he was afraid of.

Of course, he really was debt-ridden.

As long as I advance to a demigod and can hide my unique trait, it’s fine losing marionettes… Klein surveyed the area as he bent his back to pick up the silver necklace. He took four steps counterclockwise while chanting the incantation softly.

This time, he hadn't entered via summoning his Spirit Body, so he couldn't directly return.

The grayish-white fog was quickly emanated as hysterical ravings and roars echoed for an eternity. Azik's copper whistle didn't react abnormally, which meant that there weren't any latent problems with Admiral of Blood.

Sitting at the end of the bronze table, Klein placed Azik's copper whistle in front of him, making Senor, who was dressed in a dark red coat and old triangular hat, appear. He was like a butler awaiting orders from his master.

"Do you have any other items on you?" Klein asked, as though Admiral of Blood was still alive.

This was his attempt to act as a Marionettist!

Following that, he controlled Senor, made him rummage through every pocket as he subsequently took out 325 pounds, 16 soli, and 8 pence in cash. There were also 13 gold coins.

Apart from that, perhaps due to his frequent act of transforming into a Wraith state, Senor didn't carry anything else on him.

How poor… As a pirate admiral, you don't even have a single mystical item? Did you hand it over to the Rose School of Thought or your subordinates? Klein seriously considered cashing out Admiral of Blood via the black market.

Just in Loen alone, he was worth 42,000 pounds!

Yes, claiming the bounty from Loen isn't pragmatic. Be it the Church of Storms and the kingdom's military, they will follow the clues to capture

Gehrman Sparrow, who managed to embroil so many demigods in a battle royale, and then investigate the organization backing him. They wouldn't even pay, and they might even plant a trap…

By the same logic, the Churches and governments of other countries must have similar ideas. However, they might be easier to work with. Retrieving the bounty will require substantial risks…

Besides, there's no rush. I'll send Senor out when I plan on switching marionettes. After all, being a marionette for a few days won't change his identity or value… Klein reined in his thoughts and cast his gaze on the silver necklace with an ancient coin attached to it.

He immediately used divination to gain the gist of its origins and usage.

It came from a Sequence 5 Winner from the Life School of Thought. After dying at the hands of a Rose School of Thought demigod, this gentleman's Beyonder characteristic and psyche fused with an ordinary silver necklace that he carried with him, turning into a mystical item.

As for the reason why the ordinary silver necklace would be carried by a Sequence 5 powerhouse for extended periods of time, Klein was unable to receive any effective revelations from it, as it had been too long and it had been corrupted.

The mystical item had two uses. One was to passively make the wearer lucky. In their daily lifestyle, the owner would encounter good things, easily succeeding in whatever they did. When suffering a lethal blow or terrifying disaster, ridiculous scenes would happen, allowing them to be successfully rescued. The latter situation only lasted for ten minutes.

The second use was to actively give an enemy bad luck, making the target unlucky. Be it in daily life or combat, it was easy for them to experience failure due to some trivial problem.

The corresponding negative effects of the necklace was the

Conservation of Luck. After being lucky, they would immediately meet with repeated bad luck. They would be as unlucky as they were lucky before. It needed the wearer to be devoted and seriously avoid any danger; otherwise, it was very easy for them to die in a comedic manner, and even harm people around them.

The luck received in one's daily life would often revert back after a month. The user would end up unlucky regardless of whether they wore it or not. However, such bad luck was slowly released, so it wasn't too dangerous.

And luck obtained in combat would similarly strike back ten minutes later in a similar vigor.

Overall, this is a rather good mystical item, but I don't have much use for it. After all, Fate Councilor Ricciardo was unable to change my luck… Hmm, I'll just wear it on me for now. It has few negative effects on me. I'll sell it if there's a chance to pay off my debt with Miss Messenger… Miss Messenger wants gold coins, while I have gold pounds. It's nearly impossible to exchange 10,000 gold coins through the banks or official markets. From the looks of it, I'll have to do it in batches, getting each Tarot Club member to change some of it… Klein soon decided on a plan as he casually came up with a name for the necklace:

Scales of Luck!

Following that, he cast his gaze onto Senor, who was standing reverently to his side. He began to study the powers a Wraith had.

Forceful possession, Enemy Control, Wraith's Shriek, Mirror Blink, Obstacle Penetration, death-related spells, and Invisibility that wouldn't be discovered by most Mid- and Low-Sequence Beyonders… Klein distinguished each power, and he matched them with Sharron's and Maric's description, as well as his experience gained from combat.

He soon concluded this, afraid that the candle in the outside world would finish burning. And a dark cave was extremely bad for the present him who had a phobia of the dark.

Klein immediately took out a paper figurine from the junk pile, and together with the Black Emperor card, he stirred some of the powers above the gray fog, turning it into an anti-divination “angel.”

This angel rapidly spread its wings and wrapped around a gold coin. On its reflective side was Senor’s figure.

Then, Klein brought the gold coin, Azik’s copper whistle, Death Knell, and his suitcase back to the real world. As for Creeping Hunger and Groselle’s Travels, one of them hadn’t been fed, and the other might cause Klein to be swallowed into the book for carrying it for too long. Therefore, they were left in the junk pile above the gray fog.

Having returned to the cave, Klein hurriedly placed the gold coin and Azik’s copper whistle into a cigar case before sealing it with a wall of spirituality.

He cleaned up the scene, switched into formal clothes, and carried his suitcase. He followed the beach until he came to a residential area. He discovered that he was near Pritz Harbor.

He didn’t immediately return to Backlund. Instead, he changed his appearance, took a steam locomotive, and headed for Conant City in Desi Bay. He planned on circling the area once before changing his identity again.

†

Bansy Harbor.

Alger Wilson looked at the destroyed city under the afternoon sun.

He saw that the buildings had completely collapsed, and there were deep chasms in the ground and charred spots everywhere.

Such a scene extended into the depths of the island. Even the mountain had collapsed.

At that moment, there wasn’t anyone from the Church of Storms watching the ruins, since there wasn’t anything here. And the plans to rebuild the harbor wasn’t brought forward at all.

Alger jumped off the Blue Avenger and circled the ruins with his sailors, but they didn’t discover anything of value.

“Let’s go,” he instructed with a staid attitude.

He soon boarded the ship which hoisted its sails and left the island.

After an unknown period of time, a figure suddenly walked out from the depths of the ruins.

He wore a double-breasted, pure black clerical robe. He had dark golden hair, and his facial features were clear and distinct, like an ancient, classical sculpture without any wrinkles.

His eyes were dark blue, nearing black. They looked lusterless, but they were filled with dense blood capillaries.

Chapter 732 - Destination

◈◈◈

Desi County, Conant City, 67 Red Indus Street.

Wearing a commonly seen face in the Loen Kingdom, Klein took a step forward and rang the doorbell.

In less than a minute, the door creaked open as a maidservant looked out and asked out of curiosity, “Good evening, who might you be looking for?”

“I’m here to find Ma’am Neelu. I’m a friend of her father, Davy Raymond,” Klein answered calmly.

Davy Raymond was the Nightmare who he had released from Creeping Hunger. It was a Red Glove from the Nighthawks, and the first thing on his mind before he dissipated was his daughter, Neelu Raymond. He was very apologetic towards her for not spending time with her while she grew up, making her effectively lose her father when she had already lost her mother. Klein had promised him that he would make a visit to the beautiful coastal city if he had the chance to visit his daughter.

Having probed for more information earlier, Klein had gained a general idea about Neelu Raymond’s situation. After this girl graduated from grammar school, she worked at the Women and Children Care Foundation which was run by the Church of the Evernight Goddess. She had a weekly salary of 2 pounds 10 soli and was the target of envy by her neighbors.

She also inherited an inheritance from her “businessman” father. As for how much it was, no one knew. They just knew that she was richer than most people from the middle-class.

Typically speaking, women with such wealth would place great emphasis on their marriage. They would repeatedly select and observe candidates, resulting in their late marriage. However, Neelu had married to a civil servant just a year later.

As both parties were believers of the Evernight Goddess, she didn’t take on her husband’s last name. She continued going by the name Neelu Raymond, and she continued staying at 67 Red Indus Street.

After hearing Klein’s answer, the maidservant quickly requested him to wait as she entered the living room to report to her mistress.

Before long, a woman in a home dress walked to the door. She had black hair and blue eyes. Her face was rather thin, and she was rather pretty. She resembled Davy Raymond.

“Good evening, sir. I’m Neelu, Davy Raymond’s daughter. May I know when you got to know my father?” Neelu Raymond asked politely but warily.

Klein took off his hat and smiled.

“I got to know him at sea. It’s been several years.”

Neelu Raymond swept him with a wary gaze and said, “Perhaps you might not know, but he has already passed away.”

Klein sighed and replied, “Yes, I know. I got to know him through that disaster. He had some words to say back then which I didn’t think too much about. However, the more I thought about it in recent years, the more I felt that I should inform you.”

“Is that so?” Neelu said softly. After some thought, she invited him. “Please come in. Would you mind if my husband listens in?”

"This is up to you to decide," Klein frankly replied.

Neelu nodded and led Klein into the study. Her husband had the looks of an ordinary civil servant with a gentleman's bearing. He put down his newspapers and followed them in.

After both parties sat down, Klein looked at the couple on the sofa and deliberated.

"Mr. Davy Raymond once experienced disaster after another. He lost his father, mother, wife, brothers, and sisters."

Neelu nodded with a deadpan expression.

"I know."

Klein thought and continued, "He appears to be a merchant, but he was in fact seeking out the murderers who caused that disaster."

"I know." Neelu didn't object to it.

Klein glanced at her and continued, "He dedicated himself to this matter, and he was very regretful that he didn't manage to spend time with you growing up, making you lose your father alongside your mother."

Neelu fell silent for a second before she rapidly replied, "I know!"

Klein swept his gaze to the old books around him and sighed silently.

"He said that his greatest wish was to see you enter the hall of marriage under the witness of the Goddess, to have your own family, and to not be lonely anymore. I believe he should be very happy right now."

Neelu's gaze slowly moved away from Klein's face as she turned agape, answering only two seconds later.

"…I know."

Klein leaned forward slightly as he clasped his hands.

“He said that he might die at sea, and he wanted me to tell you that he died as a result of an accident. All the murderers from before have already been punished. You do not need to hate anyone.

“He also said that he loves you very much and that he’s very sorry.”

Neelu remained silent for a few seconds as she blinked. She turned her head to the side and scoffed with an unclear attitude.

“Got it…”

Klein gave her a deep look before getting up.

“I’m done passing on the message. It’s time I leave.”

Met with silence, Neelu’s husband nodded gently as a gesture of thanks.

Klein turned around, walked to the door of the study. Just as he twisted the doorknob, Neelu Raymond’s voice sounded from behind him, deep and hoarse.

“What… kind of person do you think he was?”

Klein fell silent for a second, turned his head, and curled his lips. He said with a smile, “A guardian.”

He didn’t stay any longer as he opened the door and walked to the coat rack.

When he wore his hat and left 67 Red Indus Street, soft, restrained sobbing suddenly drilled into his ears.

Shaking his head silently, Klein left the borough and entered a cathedral of the Evernight Goddess.

Passing through the dark and serene aisle, he sat in the seventh row from the back. He faced the crimson half-moon and the black Sacred

Emblem filled with resplendent stars. He took off his hat, lowered his head, and held his hands to his mouth, just like the many believers present.

While praying silently in the silence and tranquility, time quickly passed. Klein slowly opened his eyes as he gently stood up.

At the spot where he sat, he left behind an item wrapped in paper.

Klein walked along the aisle and left the prayer hall, going straight to the cathedral's entrance.

With his back facing the hall, he wore his hat, raised his right hand, and snapped his fingers.

Pa!

The paper suddenly ignited where he sat, garnering the priest's attention. When this gentleman rushed over, the flames had already extinguished, leaving behind a dark gem-like item.

This is… Although the priest didn't know what the item was, his spiritual perception told him that it was very important!

When he and the other priests rushed outside the cathedral, the gentleman in a tailcoat and half top hat had already disappeared.

The next morning.

Through a local black market, Klein had obtained a new identity as he came to the steam locomotive station.

In his hand was a second-class ticket worth 18 soli, as well as identification documents for himself. He held a black leather suitcase as he stood at the platform with his back straight, awaiting the arrival of the train headed for Backlund.

The present him was a middle-aged man who was nearing his forties. He was slightly more than 180 cm tall, and his black hair had a few silver strands. His deep blue eyes were like a lake at night, and he was rather good looking. He gave off mature and elegant vibes.

Looking down at the identification documents, Klein's eyes reflected his present name: "Dwayne Dantès."

After some thought, he placed the suitcase on the ground, laid it down, and opened it before stuffing all his identification documents inside.

Inside the suitcase, there was a black wooden box containing the former Loen soldier, Frunziar Edward's ashes.

Moments after arranging his suitcase, he heard a whistle. A steam train chugged into the station spewing smoke before it slowed down to a halt.

He looked up and cast his gaze forward as he examined it in silence. Then, he looked down at his suitcase and whispered, "It's time to return…"

He then stood straight, carried his belongings, and walked to the open carriage door.

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough, 26 Gunstedt Street.

Benson took off his hat, removed his coat, and handed it to the maidservant. He looked at his sister, Melissa, who was glued to her book in the living room.

"The entrance examinations are in June. You'll finally experience the pain of studiously studying that I endured back then."

Melissa didn't look up as she continued reading.

"I'm studiously studying every day."

“A little humor, Melissa. A little humor. What’s the difference between a person without humor and a curly-haired baboon?” Benson said with a smile.

Melissa casually glanced at him and said, “That wasn’t what you said in the past.”

She didn’t correct him on what the exact difference was between humans and curly-haired baboons, and she instead said, “Do civil servants also finish work so late?”

“No, there’s been a lot of work recently. As you know, oh—you don’t. In such a huge reform, the handing over of work and the straightening out of different relationships are very troublesome.” Benson swept the mirror in the living room. He couldn’t help but lift his hand to comb his hair as he said with a look of displeasure, “Although I’m only a low-ranking employee in the Ministry of Finance, that doesn’t stop me from having plenty of work. The only thing to be happy about it that I’ve finally survived the darn probationary period. I’ll soon have a weekly salary of 3 pounds!”

Melissa put down her book, and she walked to the dining hall and said to Benson, “It’s dinner time.”

She paused and said very seriously, “I read in the papers that there’s something called Donningsman Tree Sap that has a significant effect on boosting hair growth.”

Benson’s face immediately had mixed expressions.

†

Whoosh!

Amidst the whistle, the long steam locomotive chugged into Backlund.

Klein picked up his suitcase and once again stepped into the Capital of

Capitals, the Land of Hope. He discovered that the smog had thinned significantly, and there wasn't the obvious palish yellow colors. The gas street lamps on the platform were already turned on, dispersing the gloominess and darkness.

Surveying the area, Klein walked out the steam locomotive station, took the metro and a carriage, and came to a Church of Storms cemetery outside West Borough.

Then, he spent a little bit of money and placed Frunziar Edward's ashes into a partition.

By then, this Loen soldier had already left Backlund for more than 165 years.

After taking a step back, Klein observed it for a moment before using a pen and paper to engrave something on the partition door:

"Frunziar Edward."

He closed his eyes and added:

"Every journey has its destination."

Traveler - The End

旅人
TRAVELLER
原著·诡秘之主|原曲·大爱|策划/填词·乾坤
演唱·苑颜|后期·岁语|念白·庄道鱼
曲绘/美工·祇言|pv·沐浴露
@自饮乾坤三百岁

[image]

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Chapter 733 - The Return

◆ ◆ ◆

Under a persistent rain, mingled with the thin fog, the rows of street lamps tried their hardest to shine through the mist. The occasional horse carriage that proceeded down the streets was a common evening sight in Backlund.

Apart from these, Klein noticed a few gratifying changes while standing behind the window.

Ring!

A crisp sound echoed in the air as a two-wheeled mechanical device rushed down the side of the street to the other end of the street. Its frame was black in color, with some parts revealing grayish-white steel. Under the illumination of the street lamps and rain, it sparkled with the beauty of metal.

On this device sat a man dressed in a postman's uniform. He kept pedaling with his legs, apparently using a great deal of strength. Behind him was a wooden box that had been painted in green.

It's been promoted very well… The white-shirted, black-vested, mature-looking Klein sighed inwardly when he saw this scene.

In a few hours within his return to Backlund, he noticed many similar mechanical devices, and they were none other than the bicycles that he had promoted and invested in!

From the newspapers, Klein knew that the Backlund Bike Company had done tons of advertisements. It even held a bicycle competition in boroughs like Cherwood and Backlund Bridge so as to garner the attention of others. Apart from that, they also actively promoted it to the government departments such as the postal service and the police departments. The results were said to be pretty good.

Their pricing strategy had followed Klein's original suggestion, avoiding the middle-upper class who often used horse carriages. Instead, they aimed their target audience at those with weekly salaries of 1 pound 10 soli and above, such as technical workers, students with a decent family background, and clerical employees that often needed to travel outside. Therefore, a bike worth 3 to 5 pounds was affordable for the people in this demographic if they bit the bullet a little. And at the same time, they could flaunt it to the masses who had incomes that were lower than them.

The current issue is that Backlund often rains. It's difficult to hold an umbrella while riding a bicycle… The next step should be a raincoat. Klein retracted his gaze, shook his head, and chuckled.

The place he stayed at was a high-end hotel in the Hillston Borough. It cost him 10 soli a night, making him feel quite the pinch. However, to match his persona, all he could do was bite the bullet and put up with it.

His idea of Dwayne Dantès was that he was a believer of the Evernight Goddess and a mysterious tycoon that came from Desi Bay. He had sold his original land and mines, planning to seek out brand new opportunities in Backlund. He had a certain level of interest in obtaining an aristocratic title, but he didn't have the abundant wealth to do so. He had to first expand his social circle and begin making some investments.

The benefits of this identity was that it was clearly different from the characters Klein had previously acted as. It allowed him to very naturally interact with people from the middle-upper class, especially members of the military officers club and the Backlund diocese bishops of the Church of the Evernight Goddess. It made it convenient for Klein to continue his investigations into the Great Smog of Backlund while gathering intel before he made detailed plans to steal the Antigonus family's notebook.

There were obvious disadvantages as well. Such a mysterious tycoon would definitely catch the notice of the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers, so there was a certain level of background checks that he would have to undergo.

According to Klein's experience, such an investigation would be done by the official Beyonder organizations under the premise that nothing important had happened. It could also be handed over to the police department, but in summary, not too much effort would be put into it, as it would be considered a routine check.

Therefore, Klein, who was considered quite an expert at disguises, had prepared a second layer to his identity as Dwayne Dantès to his designs, so as to deal with the background inspection.

This second layer to his identity was that Dwayne Dantès was a person who had adventured in the Southern Continent's East and West Balam for some particular reason. He had used a nickname, and he spent more than ten years in that rather dangerous land filled with opportunity in order to amass a great deal of wealth.

Since the origin of his wealth wasn't overboard, he had secretly returned to Desi Bay, and he forged a new identity. He had planned on beginning a new life in Backlund and gradually legalize his wealth.

It wasn't rare to see such people in Loen. Their stories were acceptable and imaginable for an investigation. For this identity layer, Klein had left some inconspicuous clues in Conant City so as to indirectly reveal the "truth."

These clues included but were not limited to the stubs of his scalped tickets from East Balam to Conant City, habits as a result of living in the

Southern Continent for extended periods of time, as well as his wealth of unknown origins.

Klein believed that as long as Dwayne Dantès didn't involve himself in any serious Beyonder matters, preparations such as this were enough to fool most routine background inspections.

And if he encountered an extremely dedicated official Beyonder who investigated it all the way and was even willing to seek the help of colleagues from the Southern Continent, then Dwayne Dantès had a third identity layer. It was that he was a cheat who had anti-divination measures to a certain degree. He disguised himself as a mysterious tycoon and spent large amounts of money in investments for this final scam.

This identity was enough to get Dwayne Dantès arrested, but the level of attention placed on him wouldn't be too great. This allowed Klein to exit the stage without much trouble.

Compared to my first time in Backlund, the creation of a three-layered identity shows how I've really matured significantly… Klein slowly walked to the middle of the room as he cast his gaze on a full-body mirror in the corner.

His reflection had black hair and some strands of gray hair. His eyes were deep, but his experiences had left indelible marks on his face. He was a charming middle-aged man with a mature bearing.

The design of Dwayne Dantès's identity wasn't difficult for the present Klein. However, stealing the Antigonus family's notebook from behind Saint Samuel Cathedral's Chanis Gate was practically an impossible task for any external Beyonder. Even a King of Angels couldn't guarantee success.

Of course, unlike other Beyonders, Klein had two advantages. First, he was once a Nighthawk. He had quite a good understanding of the internal procedures they followed, and he knew which matters he could exploit. Therefore, the first solution he eliminated was to become a particular Nighthawk, infiltrate it, and find a chance to pass through Chanis Gate.

There was a problem that existed in this. Nighthawks weren't able to randomly enter Chanis Gate, even for the captains and deacons. Something had to happen first before they received the corresponding authority. Furthermore, Chanis Gate had its Keepers inside. Randomly entering or taking things would result in an attack on him, causing a battle to break out. Klein didn't wish for his theft to result in any deaths or injury to the members of the Church of the Goddess.

After careful consideration, he placed his sights on the Keepers.

These elders were retired Nighthawks who volunteered to enter Chanis Gate. They were in charge of watching the Sealed Artifacts, and they were from a different department from the Nighthawks. They entered and exited using the underground passageway through the cathedral, and they never interfered with the Nighthawks' work, nor would they be disturbed by the Nighthawks.

Perhaps a result of staying behind Chanis Gate for extended periods of time, these Keepers all had certain traits. They had cold auras and had deadpan expressions. Their skin was pale, and they resembled monsters from the deep darkness who were on the border of life and death. Klein believed that it wasn't difficult for him to locate his target if he met one.

His initial plan was to rent a place in North Borough near Saint Samuel Cathedral. He would hire a butler, a valet, a maidservant, a gardener, a chef, and a carriage driver to have a front as a tycoon. Then, he would often head to the cathedral to pray piously, participate in Mass, donate money, and familiarize himself with the bishops and priests.

During this process, he would work hard to find suspected Keepers. He would choose two or three targets and observe their habits. When the opportunity arises, he would imprison one of them, change into his appearance or directly possess him, pass through Chanis Gate, and attempt to flip through or take the Antigonus family's notebook away.

This was a very crude plan that was merely a train of thought. It needed to be perfected according to the intelligence Klein would slowly acquire.

For this matter, Klein's second advantage was the Tarot Club. He had assistants that the Church of the Evernight Goddess and the Nighthawks would never think of. Furthermore, he could consider extending the recruitment of a Backlund diocese Nighthawk or Keeper into the Gathering. He could then complete the theft through this traitor, just like how Emperor Roselle was used to obtain the Antigonus family's notebook by Zaratul.

I've got to frequently head to the cathedral. Only by doing so can I find a target… Klein faced the mirror as he silently nodded.

It had to be said that he felt conflicted. If a true Nighthawk or Keeper were to betray the Church to serve Mr. Fool, his first thought was to unleash divine punishment to get rid of this despicable traitor!

After exhaling, he gave a self-deprecating laugh. He wore his double-breasted frock coat and hat, walked out the room, and reached the streets.

With an umbrella, he circled to another street. Taking advantage of the distant street lamp and the drizzle, he suddenly changed back into Sherlock Moriarty.

Glancing at his wrinkled trousers, Klein stopped a carriage and planned on heading to Isengard Stanton's house in Hillston Borough.

Half an hour later, the somewhat ancient and dark building appeared before Klein's eyes.

He paid 2 soli for his ride as he walked steadily around the puddles amidst the drizzle that refracted the yellowish light of dusk before coming to the famous detective’s doorstep.

Putting away his umbrella, he reached out to ring the doorbell and waited for a moment before seeing a man with a wide face open the door.

The man had a head of malt-colored hair, grayish-blue eyes, and high cheekbones. He had the traits of someone from Lenburg or Masin.

Mr. Isengard Stanton’s new assistant? Someone from the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom? Klein took off his hat and said with a smile, “Good evening, is Mr. Isengard Stanton home?”

“He is. He just had his dinner after a busy day at work,” the malt-colored lad replied politely. “May I know who you are?”

Klein chortled and said, “Tell the good detective that a friend of his has returned from his vacation.”

The young man was taken aback as he blurted out, “Mr. Sherlock Moriarty?”

Chapter 734 - Old Friends

You actually know me? This means that Mr. Isengard Stanton often mentions me as a friend, or does it mean that the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom knows that I was embroiled in the Great Smog of Backlund? Klein smiled as he nodded in an unperturbed manner.

“Yes, I’m Sherlock Moriarty.”

The grayish-blue-eyed lad immediately gave way as he warmly gestured him in.

“Mr. Stanton has been worried about you all this time. He was afraid that you met with trouble. He can now be at peace.”

Klein handed him his umbrella as he took off his hat and coat while walking in. At this moment, Isengard Stanton, who had sensed something, had put down his papers and pipe, and he left his reclining chair to take a look.

“Oh my, Sherlock, you’re finally back. It’s been so long, my friend.” The thin Isengard with grayed sides revealed a smile as he came over with welcoming arms in an attempt to give him a greeting hug.

Klein wasn’t used to such a custom, so he forced himself to reciprocate it and smile.

“Mr. Stanton, this isn’t something a believer of Wisdom would do.”

The bishops and priests of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom had their pride, and they seldom gave greeting hugs.

But in fact, apart from the boorish Feysac Empire and the liberal Intis Kingdom, such a manner of etiquette was rare in other countries and regions. It only happened among very familiar friends.

Isengard took two steps back and chuckled.

“No, Sherlock. We’re never stingy with respect and friendliness towards intelligent friends.

“In my heart, you’re one of the top five detectives in all of Backlund.”

I like that! Klein smiled inwardly as he retorted in jest, “So you’re one of the top three detectives?”

To be praised as having true wisdom by a Sequence 7 believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom was really delighting.

“I wish that you share the same thoughts as myself,” Isengard skillfully and gently replied. Then, he invited him to the living room and to the sofa.

He leaned into a reclining chair and picked up his pipe. With a deep breath, he exhaled.

“I’m very happy that nothing bad happened to you. You seem especially fine, both in body and mind.

“How was it? Was Desi Bay fun?”

Klein had already prepared an excuse as he calmly smiled.

“In fact, I didn’t go to Desi Bay. I ended up going to Constant. Heh heh, I was previously embroiled in some trouble in Backlund, so I could only find a place to hide.”

Sherlock Moriarty was a gentleman from Midseashire who had a slight accent. It was a very normal choice to return to his hometown after causing trouble. Constant was Midseashire’s capital.

"I know," Isengard replied heavily.

He didn't inquire about the trouble which Sherlock had involved himself in. Instead, he said with a smile, "In short, welcome back to Backlund. Come to me if you need any help."

Klein didn't stand on ceremony as he immediately said, "The purpose of my visit was first because it's really has been a while since we last met, and second, I wish that you can sell my shares in the Backlund Bike Company on my behalf. Heh heh, all the documents are in place, and there's no need to carry out any other procedures."

In order to act as a mysterious tycoon and to repay Miss Messenger with the 10,000 gold coins, not only did he plan on selling items he had little use for, but he also planned on letting go of the last 10% of his shares in the Backlund Bike Company. After all, Sherlock Moriarty wasn't able to appear in a legitimate fashion for a long period of time.

"Are you really going to sell it?" Isengard stroked his pipe and said, "Although I've never been a businessman, I can tell that the bike is a product that's of great value and something that can be promoted on a large scale. Its commercial future is like the newly-risen sun, and it has yet to reach its limits. You'll be losing plenty of money by selling it now."

"That's why a buyer will be very willing to raise the price significantly because of this expected value." Klein chuckled. "I believe the people who can tell the value of the bike and its future aren't in the minority. And Framis and Leppard are definitely unwilling to reduce any part of their holdings at this stage. There shouldn't be a problem selling my 10% shares at twice or thrice the normal price. Isengard, the pricing of shares isn't about the present, but about its future."

To illustrate an alluring story for the buyer and investor, and drawing a beautiful future is very necessary! Of course, the value and future of the bike don't require additional input from me. Anyone with any business sense can tell. The only problem stems in the rubber production… Klein silently added inwardly.

“The pricing of shares isn’t about the present, but about its future…” Isengard softly repeated Klein’s words, and after a moment he sincerely sighed. “Sherlock, perhaps you should be involved in the business world. However, there will always be many accidents present.”

“To dare to take risks is equivalent to chivalry in business. Oh well, I admit that I’ve recently been in dire need of large sums of cash,” Klein replied with a smile.

Isengard picked up his pipe as he gave it a satisfactory suck.

“You’ve convinced me.

“I will specially hire a lawyer and accountant to confirm the market value of Backlund Bike Company. Then, I’ll add on an estimate of the expected profits and sell that 10% of yours. The corresponding fees and taxes will be deducted from the amount received.

“Oh… How should I contact you? It seems like your rental contract for the house at Minsk Street has lapsed.”

Klein obviously wouldn’t expose his present identity. He said, having prepared for it, “You can post news on the Tussock Times, Backlund Daily Tribune, and other newspapers about the sale of the shares to make more people know. Only when there’s competition would there be better price negotiations. When it’s sold, you can publish a notice to indicate that the deal has been closed and that further inquiries won’t be entertained.

“And when I see that notice, I’ll come visit you.”

Isengard was no stranger when it came to communicating over published notices in the newspapers. He nodded and said, “No problem. Of course, all expenses will be deducted from the final sum received.”

With his main goal accomplished, Klein stood up and reached out his hand.

“Thank you for your help, Isengard.

“I need to leave. We can talk in the future.”

Isengard didn’t hold him back as he sent him straight out the door.

Klein circled to a nearby street and took a carriage to the Bravehearts Bar as he admired Bravehearts Bar’s night view in the drizzle.

He planned on reestablishing all the news and resource channels which Sherlock Moriarty used to have!

After entering the noisy bar, he didn’t head for the bar counter to order some beer and make inquiries. Instead, he circled around the boxing ring in preparation to leave, so that he could wait for Miss Sharron to appear on the carriage outside.

At this moment, the door to a billiard room creaked open. Ian, with an old coat, walked out with newspapers in hand.

His red eyes did a cursory sweep when he suddenly noticed a familiar figure. He gaped his mouth, but he didn’t say his name. He greeted in pleasant surprise, “Good evening, sir. Is there anything I can help you with?”

“Not for now. I’m only here to visit an old friend.” Klein smiled warmly.

As he spoke, he noticed that the papers in Ian’s hand was News at Sea. On it was a striking headline: “Shocking! Crazy adventurer made a fugitive!”

Crazy adventurer… Klein intuitively believed that it had nothing to do with him.

Ian noticed his gaze and raised the newspapers with a smile.

“This is one of the rare up-to-date reports from News at Sea because the bounties have already appeared in various places.

“The crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, plotted to bring harm on the City of Generosity, and he has been proven to be a member of a cult. In this incident, thanks to the Church of Storms and the military, no one from Bayam was injured. But Admiral of Blood Senor, who was involved in the matter, vanished as a result. It’s suspected that he has been killed by Gehrman Sparrow.

“Guess how much of a bounty they are offering for Gehrman Sparrow.

“50,000 pounds!

“It has exceeded Admiral of Blood’s, and it’s almost reached that of Admiral Hell’s!”

50,000 pounds… Klein’s heart stirred.

He calmed the palpitations in his heart as he replied with a smile, “Unfortunately, few people can claim such a bounty.”

He pointed at the bar’s entrance and said, “I’ll come to look for you again when I have the time.”

“Alright.” Ian didn’t ask further as he mentioned in passing, “Is Mr. White from the Harvest Church your friend?”

That fellow, Emlyn, is finally willing to get out of the house? For those Primordial Moon believers? Klein nodded.

“That’s right.”

After saying that, he squeezed through the crowd and pushed open the door to leave the Bravehearts Bar.

After getting onto a rental carriage, Klein cast his gaze outside, awaiting Miss Sharron’s appearance.

Of course, he wasn’t certain that she was here. Months had passed, so it was very possible that this lady and Maric had switched their area of activity.

Silently, Klein's spiritual perception was triggered as he turned to look at the window. On the glass which could reflect the night view, a young lady in a black bonnet and gothic-styled black dress clearly appeared.

Turning his head, Klein saw Miss Sharron sitting opposite him. Her pale blonde hair, blue eyes, and pale expression didn't seem any different from before.

"Good evening." Klein, who no longer needed to act as Gehrman Sparrow, greeted first.

Sharron got up a little and curtsied.

Realizing that she might've read News at Sea, he was momentarily unable to find a topic for small talk. He cleared his throat and directly said, "I killed Senor."

"Okay." Sharron nodded slightly, indicating that she was aware.

Klein smiled as he continued, "If Maric still needs the Beyonder characteristic of a Wraith, he can wait and prepare the money needed. Once I find a replacement, I'll sell Senor to him."

Sharron didn't ask what "replacement" meant as she replied, "After seeing that piece of news, he has been awaiting your return."

"Very good." Klein chuckled. He reached out for his collar, pulled out a silver necklace and said, "Senor's lucky item. You should know about it, right?"

Sharron tersely answered as she waited for Klein to continue.

"I plan to sell either this or the Biological Poison Bottle. Would you, or people from your circle, be interested?" Klein took the initiative to ask.

Chapter 735 - Another Visit

◆

Sharron was silent for two seconds before she said, “I’ll help ask.”

It means you need to consider it? That’s right. The negative effects of Scales of Luck does leave one hesitant. However, Biological Poison Bottle is really compatible with a Wraith. If it wasn’t because I’m short on money, and how it lowers my immunity, making me easily fall sick, I wouldn’t be willing to sell it. It’s rather effective in an ambush! Klein vaguely grasped Sharron’s intentions as he stuffed the silver necklace back into his collar.

He asked after some thought, “Which power of a High-Sequence Prisoner pathway Beyonder makes all surrounding lifeless items attack one’s target?”

“Puppet,” Sharron succinctly replied.

It’s the power of a Sequence 4 Puppet? Turning themselves into a lifeless puppet, so that they are able to control all lifeless objects in a certain range? Advancing further, will they be able to directly influence the mystical items of an enemy? Klein nodded in enlightenment and asked, “Then, do you know that demigod?”

He immediately described in detail the appearance of the elder who had attacked him outside Bayam.

“Shanks,” Sharron calmly said a name.

I actually wished that you could share with me more about him… Klein knew Miss Sharron's style as he said with an exasperated smile, "Then, do you know Zatwen?"

He was the mentor of the Naturism Sect's leader in Oravi Island.

"The demigod who was pursuing us," Sharron answered without hiding anything or any emotions, like a doll.

That's the one who made me feel like the chairs, tables, and curtains wished to kill me… What a coincidence… However, it wasn't arranged. It just proves that as a secret organization, the Rose School of Thought, with a history of over a thousand years, doesn't have that many demigods… Perhaps it has about the same number as the Aurora Order. The number of saints number around five, and the number of angels and Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts number about two to three… Of course, this is also because they were suppressed by the seven major Churches, reducing their headquarters to colonies. At the height of their powers, they might've had far more than these… Klein thought and asked again, "Then, do you know the Rose School of Thought member that is able to make an entire mountain tremble with just one arm?"

He planned on describing the arm's traits, but he realized that he hadn't dared to look straight at it.

Sharron listened quietly as her eyes darted around as though they came to life. She asked with a clear voice, "What did you encounter?"

A saint, an angel, as well as Sea King, an Aurora Order demigod, a monster byproduct from the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death… Klein silently made a self-deprecating comment as he said with a wry smile, "I got on the bad side with the Mother Tree of Desire, and I suffered an ambush from the Rose School of Thought. Thankfully, I was in Bayam, allowing the Church of Storms and the kingdom's military to take action. I also threw out an item corrupted with the True Creator's aura, as well as something related to the Numinous Episcopate. In short, it was chaos, and I took the opportunity to escape."

He replied frankly, apart from hiding the existence of Miss Messenger and Mr. Azik. As for the matter of the True Creator, he believed that Miss Sharron had long known that he wasn't affected by the ravings. This could be explained by a timely psychological intervention or psychic treatment.

"Mother Tree of Desire…" Sharron murmured the name as rare emotional upheavals slowly appeared in her eyes.

Klein didn't have the interpretation abilities of a Spectator, and he was unable to tell what was exactly on Sharron's mind. He could only sense that she felt a little fear and loathing.

Sharron quickly restrained her abnormal reaction, turning back into an extremely exquisite "doll."

She looked at Sherlock Moriarty and said, "You are very lucky and very mysterious."

Klein smiled without a word, neither lying nor explaining.

Sharron didn't inquire as she said, "You might've met Suah. 'He' is an Abomination born 922 years ago and claims to be the son of the Chained God. 'He' is also the present leader of the Rose School of Thought."

No way. The Rose School of Thought sent its leader and a demigod to deal with me… I'm just a mere Sequence 5! If not for Orange Light Hilarion's warning, I might've already been captured by the Rose School of Thought… Klein felt a chill run down his back again as he asked, "Is Abomination the name of the Prisoner pathway's Sequence 2 or Sequence 1?"

"Probably," Sharron didn't give an affirmative answer.

At this moment, without waiting for Klein's response, she said, "Williams Street has been destroyed."

Klein had pondered what kind of reaction he should have when Miss Sharron raised the topic, so he immediately frowned.

“By who? When did it happen?”

“The Nighthawks and Machinery Hivemind. About two months ago.” Sharron had clearly gathered the corresponding intelligence.

Klein nodded solemnly and, after some deep thought, said, “Perhaps we’ve neglected something. That evil spirit didn’t need us to rescue it. It was still controlling Baronet Pound!

“Could it be that something happened to that gentleman, incurring the notice of the Nighthawks and Machinery Hiveminds?” Klein offered a guess filled with half-truths without utmost confidence.

Sharron nodded.

“Baronet Pound died during one of his revelries.”

That’s it? That’s the end to Alista Tudor’s final bloodline? Klein thought and said, “How’s the situation with Williams Street at the moment?”

“Some high-rise buildings are being built,” Sharron described without much of an expression. “People monitored it in secret at the beginning, but the surveillance decreased with time, diminishing to zero early last month.”

Klein pondered for a few seconds and said, “Have you gone down to explore it?”

Sharron’s eyes swept his face.

“No.”

This is her remembering our unwritten agreement—to explore it together because we found it together? What a noble-hearted lady. The Rose School of Thought’s temperance faction is infinitely times better than the indulgence faction! Klein probed, “Shall we go now?”

“Alright,” Sharron succinctly expressed her stance.

Klein immediately instructed the carriage driver, and he changed the destination to Williams Street at the intersection of West Borough and Empress Borough.

Along the way, he casually mentioned what he heard and saw at sea, as well as the experiences that didn’t involve his secrets. Although Sharron didn’t answer him, she listened attentively, seemingly interested.

This made Klein recall the time when he first got to know her as Miss Bodyguard. She sat on the illusory high-back chair in the oriel window’s glass. Her right hand held her cheek as she seriously listened to his conversation with Ian. She had great potential in being a Spectator.

The carriage passed through the silent streets in the drizzle before finally arriving near Williams Street.

Without approaching the area, Klein and Sharron discovered that the area had become a huge worksite.

After circling to the region that matched the underground ruins, they stood behind a huge tree with a lush canopy. Klein said to Sharron, who wasn’t drenched by the rain despite not holding an umbrella, “Let’s head down.”

As the rain fell, they passed through Sharron’s blonde hair and body before hitting the ground.

“Alright.” Sharron didn’t ask how Sherlock Moriarty was planning on heading down with her.

Klein reached his hand into his pocket and easily removed the wall of spirituality, and he opened the iron cigar case.

Beside him, a figure suddenly appeared. It was none other than Admiral of Blood Senor who wore a dark red coat and an old triangular hat.

"He will head down in my stead," Klein said with a smile.

Immediately following that, he controlled his marionette in a composed manner.

Senor immediately pressed his hand to his chest and bowed at Sharron.

"Good evening. I'm honored to work with you."

Sharron swept her gaze across Klein and Senor, and without a word, her body sank into the soil.

Uh, Miss Sharron seems to detest Senor quite significantly… Klein curled his lips and made Admiral of Blood rapidly turn into a Wraith and sink.

As for himself, he leaned on a tree, half-closed his eyes as he seriously controlled the marionette. There wasn't anyone around him, and the drizzle was light and the streetlights dim.

Slowly, Klein found the feeling of being a Marionettist.

His vision and Senor's vision overlapped with one another as he saw black-brown soil, squirming worms, and miscellaneous items in between the rocks.

As they passed through layers of obstacles, they arrived at the region where the ruin once was. The dome ceiling had collapsed and the stone columns had snapped. The area was filled with soil and rubble, looking nothing like it once was.

Such a scene made Klein believe that the humanoid statues of the six deities had been completely destroyed.

To his joy, their location was relatively close to the room which sealed the evil spirit. That meant that he didn't need to worry that any subsequent exploration would exceed the hundred-meter range for the control of his marionette.

Amidst the smell of soil and rot, they soon entered the previously menacing room; however, between the rubble and soil, there were only a few signs of crushed bone and rotting clothes. The dark gold and deep blue light from before had all vanished.

The Beyonder characteristics have been taken away by the Nighthawks and Machinery Hivemind… Senor's expression twitched as it perfectly reflected Klein's mood.

Sharron turned around in the dark solid environment and gently shook her head.

"They didn't send anyone in. There are no traces of living creatures existing in here."

That's right. If a living person had entered and exited this room over the past half year, a Wraith should be able to sense it… Besides, the deity statues obviously cannot be seen by the Nighthawks and Machinery Hivemind… Where did those Beyonder characteristics go? As Klein frowned, Senor had a similar reaction.

Could it be that the evil spirit wasn't completely obliterated? It had long escaped? Klein thought about it when he suddenly came to an alarming conclusion.

He held back his emotions and made Senor pass through the soil and rubble-filled room with Sharron, and they arrived at the spot where the bloody door previously stood. And at that moment, only a few splinters proved that it existed before.

After proceeding forward a few meters, the two truly entered the room where the evil spirit was sealed.

It had likewise been destroyed and buried. Klein used Senor's body and eyes to look for clues as he flew about.

"There should be a black high-back chair here." Sharron stopped and pointed at the splinters above two rocks.

Klein instantly recalled the scene he had once seen in the dream—the young man suspected of being Medici had sat on a high-back chair, his head drooped low as though dead.

Sharron didn’t pause. She continued proceeding in the compressed soil in search for any traces. Suddenly, she spoke again.

“There should be one here.”

Another one? A second black high-back chair? “Klein” floated over in surprise.

Chapter 736 - Third Chair

◆

Senor, in his Wraith form, passed through the thick soil and rocks under Klein’s control, arriving beside Sharron. He saw a damaged armrest which had asymmetrical patterns buried there, looking rather similar, but also different from the splinters they discovered moments ago.

The armrest wasn’t pure black in color. Their patterns exuded a dark red color, as though it was an intersection of iron and blood.

Recalling the scene from his nightmare, Klein determined that this wasn’t the high-back chair that the entity suspected to be Medici sat on.

This was the second chair!

The room that sealed the evil spirit had at least two high-back chairs!

“Klein” and Sharron didn’t say a word as they circled around in different directions to search for other clues.

Before long, they discovered the evidence of a third high-back chair!

It was the leg of a chair, mainly dark red in color with pure black patterns. It was completely different from the other two kinds of splinters.

“Perhaps it’s a problem caused by the asymmetrical trait of the Fourth Epoch…” Klein knew Sharron’s style, volunteering to speak and saying something even he couldn’t believe.

In the nightmare that resulted from the evil spirit's influence, the colors of the high-back chairs were, at the very least, uniform!

Sharron shook her head slightly.

"Three has more of a ritualistic feel."

She was implying that the innocent victims of Blood Emperor Alista Tudor weren't just one person back then. Perhaps a ritual had been held in the room that sealed the evil spirit.

Klein was taken aback by what he heard as a scene flashed through his mind.

In a spacious and dark room, three high-back chairs of different styles were placed around a particular point in the center. And sitting on each chair was a breathless humanoid creature with a drooping head. Among them included Red Angel Medici.

The scene became clearer as Klein instantly connected two additional matters together.

The main ingredients of the Sequence 0 Black Emperor's potion is the Uniqueness and two Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics (excluding one's own Beyonder characteristic);

Blood Emperor Alista Tudor had apparently forcefully jumped from the Black Emperor pathway's Sequence 1 Prince of Abolition to the Red Priest Sequence 0, which wasn't a neighboring pathway. As a result, he became a half-crazy true god!

As his thoughts whirred, Klein quickly had a theory.

This room had once held a Sequence 0 advancement ritual needed for a true god!

Of course, according to the complicated ritual needed by a Black Emperor, this was only part of the requirement. The pathway that represented war had clearly required the entire continent to be in chaos and at war to match in scale.

And Blood Emperor Alista Tudor doesn't have the corresponding Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic, so his Red Priest potion requires three Sequence 1 angels or Sealed Artifacts to provide "Him" with the Beyonder characteristics. There happens to be three high-back chairs here!

Yes, the evil spirit suspected to be Red Angel Medici said that to help it escape its seal, one should find direct descendants of the Sauron, Einhorn, and Medici family, and then extract 10 ml of blood and mix them with holy water… Sauron and Einhorn wield the Hunter pathway and are also angel families of the Red Priest Beyonder pathway. They've existed since the Fourth Epoch to this day. One of them has already waned, only capable of controlling the spy network and a military faction in Intis, while the other remains the royal family of Feysac… Thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he had a new belief regarding what had happened in the room, as well as the true identity of the evil spirit.

On the other two high-back chairs sat the ancestors of the Sauron and Einhorn families, Sequence 1 angels!

Together with War Angel Medici, who very likely possessed the pathway's Uniqueness, all the main ingredients of the Red Priest potion were gathered!

And that evil spirit is highly likely to not be the pure Red Angel Medici. It might include the remnant psyche and hatred of the Sauron and Einhorn family's ancestors!

Man, this place once sacrificed three Sequence 1 angels! Before "They" died, their curses and the ritual itself left effects, making this room become abnormally horrifying, as well as sealing it? Thankfully I reported this to the Churches ahead of time to let them deal with it. Otherwise, we might have died here if we relied on ourselves. It would be the same even if Miss Sharron and I advanced to Sequence 4. We would become food for the evil spirit… Klein felt a sense of fear and joy.

Meanwhile, he began to understand the reason why the Red Priest card had landed in the hands of the evil spirit. After all, the former highest-ranking members of a pathway were buried here in this underground ruin, the convergence of Beyonder characteristics would naturally lure Beyonders of the same pathway over without any deviations.

Furthermore, as Roselle once said—whatever separates will definitely converge, and whatever converges will definitely separate—after Blood Emperor Alista Tudor perished, the true god characteristic he possessed, which is the Sequence 0 characteristic, will likely split into four pieces.

One is the Uniqueness, an abstract item or concept, while the remaining three are three sets of Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics. If it wasn't because of that, the corresponding Beyonder pathway wouldn't have anymore Sequence 1s when someone becomes a god…

Could one or two of these Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics be attracted, entering the sealed room? This is likely one of the reasons why the Card of Blasphemy was lured over! The more Klein thought, the more he felt that he had previously underestimated the evil spirit.

They live up to being angels who advanced from Conspirers… Standing under the tree, Klein controlled Senor to say, "Perhaps it really is a ritual.

"It's related to Blood Emperor Alista Tudor. The scale and level involved must be great."

Sharron added after silently listening, "Sauron, Einhorn, Medici…"

Miss Sharron is also suspecting if the three high-back chairs once belonged to different angels from the details requested by the evil spirit… Klein thought for a moment, and he divulged something through Senor.

“Blood Emperor Alista Tudor is likely a true god from the Hunter pathway; the Card of Blasphemy is represented by the Red Priest.”

Sharron remained silent for a few seconds as though she came to a realization regarding certain matters as she said, “That card is gone.”

She was referring to the Red Priest card which the evil spirit had formerly shown them.

“Perhaps that evil spirit had long escaped before the Nighthawks and Machinery Hivemind destroyed this place.” Klein shared his theory. “And it had taken away all the Beyonder characteristics and that Red Priest card.”

Sharron silently surveyed the area and said, “It’s very crafty. It wouldn’t leave behind any obvious clues.”

That’s right. The Beyonder characteristics outside the sealed room are clearly not at Sequence 4. To an evil spirit who was once a King of Angels, they don’t have any allure. Likewise for the Red Priest card… It can be understood that it took away the things in the room, but why didn’t it leave anything? It’s like telling others something like “Haha, I’ve fooled you. I’ve already successfully escaped. Catch me if you can”… Wait, perhaps that’s exactly what it wishes to convey! As Klein thought, he suddenly found it amusing as he made Senor speak.

“No, being crafty doesn’t necessarily equate to not leaving clues.

“The Sequence 8 of the Hunter pathway is Provoker.”

At that moment, the Red Angel that surfaced in his mind had the picture of Anderson Hood over it.

Sharron listened silently as she gaped her mouth slightly, but she didn’t say a word.

Similarly, Klein was speechless. He felt that the Beyonders of the Hunter pathway truly had a crystal clear style.

In comparison, the red-haired Helene didn't appear anything like someone from the Sauron family.

However, she was rather talented at provoking Vice Admiral Ailment… Yes, back then, the Sauron family members also infuriated Roselle terribly… Klein silently exhaled as he lampooned.

The silent mood was soon broken by Klein. Senor looked around and said a joke, "Perhaps that's the reason why they were captured and brought here."

"Who was helping Alista Tudor?" Sharron's translucent figure asked, but she didn't seem to look forward to the answer.

"Perhaps it's the six deities…" "Klein" recalled the six deity statues in the hall.

However, he had second thoughts.

"However, the seven deities supported the Trunsoest Empire. The Sauron and Einhorn families were powerful aristocrats of the empire.

"Of course, it cannot be ruled out that they first supported Tudor, and later had a falling out after 'He' went mad."

If it's not the six deities, does it mean that there are other deities supporting Alista Tudor? Who would it be? Klein thought in silence.

Sharron didn't stay any longer as she floated up to the surface, returning to the tree.

Klein stored away Senor's Wraith, allowing it to enter the gold coin inside the iron cigar case. Then, he asked in passing, "Actually, I've always been curious. Where do the powers of pure evil spirits and wraiths who do not have Beyonder characteristics come from?"

“The spirit world,” Sharron answered simply.

The conservation of Beyonder characteristics, but the source of Beyonder powers isn’t necessarily the same? Yes, perhaps the spirit world itself is the product of some Beyonder characteristics… Klein nodded and looked at the soil beneath his feet.

“I’ll continue investigating the whereabouts of the evil spirit. I’ll inform you if there’s anything.”

He planned on asking Arrodes later.

With that said, he took out a pen and paper, scribbled down the method to summoning his messenger, and handed it over.

“You can write to me if there’s anything.”

Sharron received the piece of paper and seriously looked at it.

“I’ll be in the Bravehearts Bar.

“Letters can be mailed to 126 Garde Street, Hillston Borough. Address it to Ma’am Maryam.”

“Alright.” Klein stuffed his pen into his pocket. In front of Sharron, he used a ritualistic dagger to create a wall of spirituality and resealed the iron cigar case.

Following that, he crossed the street to stop a carriage like a gentleman, sending Sharron all the way back to the Backlund bridge area.

After doing this, he returned to the high-end hotel in Hillston Borough. Midway, he changed his appearance and switched carriages.

†

Bayam. Inside the Seaweed Bar.

Danitz, who had spent some time drifting at sea, once again stepped back into the City of Generosity. He planned on helping the Resistance handle some matters.

He pressed down on his cap, sat at the corner of the bar counter, and prepared to first hear about the recent news. He didn't wish to become a bounty reward due to untimely or inaccurate intelligence.

At this moment, he heard an adventurer beside him say to his companion, “Hey, do you think Gehrman Sparrow will get someone to claim Admiral of Blood's bounty on his behalf?”

Ah? Danitz subconsciously looked up, looking at the speaker with a blank, confused look.

Chapter 737 - Official Appearance

◆

Why would the madman, Gehrman Sparrow, need to find someone to claim Admiral of Blood's bounty on his behalf? That's not right. Why would he be able to claim the bounty? Danitz suddenly snapped out of his confusion and grasped the crux of the matter.

He immediately lowered his head to prevent himself from exposing his shock and confusion.

The adventurers beside him continued their conversation.

"How would that be possible? No one would dare to claim it on his behalf!"

"That's right—unless they wish to bear the wrath of the Church of Storms or selling out Gehrman Sparrow!"

"42,000 pounds… If I can receive that sum of money, I'll immediately head to Backlund to be a tycoon!"

"Haha, wouldn't you be enjoying yourself in the Red Theater for half a year first?"

"Perhaps Gehrman Sparrow can claim it from Intis, Feysac, or Feynapotter. Although it wouldn't be as much as 42,000 pounds, it's definitely in no way a low amount…"

†

As the adventurers conversed, they began imagining their lives after obtaining 42,000 pounds. They even had a conflict of opinions and began arguing with flushed faces.

No way… Are they implying that Gehrman has finished off Admiral of Blood? No, although that madman always had the intention of doing so, he lacks the required support that he needs. He needs to work with Captain… Anderson Hood? Danitz stood up, pressed down his cap, and kept his head down. He rushed towards the billiard and card rooms where there were newspapers placed there.

Just as he left, the few adventurers from before looked at his back and spoke in hushed tones.

“Do you recognize him? It’s obvious that something is wrong with how he was acting so suspiciously!”

“I didn’t get a good look, but I think he’s a pirate who’s here to gather intel.”

“Shall we…” An adventurer gestured, slicing his hand across his throat.

“Perhaps it’s someone we can’t afford to offend. Let’s wait and see.” Another adventurer stopped his companion’s actions.

Danitz entered an empty billiard room, came to the corner, and picked up a stack of newspapers. He quickly flipped through them, and slowly, his expression twisted.

What did that madman do? He really finished off Admiral of Blood? It’s only been a few months, and his strength has risen to such a level? Furthermore, the papers didn’t even mention Anderson Hood… Danitz was alarmed and thankful that he wisely chose to submit in front of Gehrman Sparrow. Otherwise, people would’ve long seen the news of him being hunted in exchange for bounty money.

No, no. Back then, my death wouldn’t have been published… Man, Gehrman Sparrow is really a member of a cult… As he thought, Danitz suddenly froze like a statue.

That was because he was apparently, probably, likely a member of that cult…

Haha, the Church and military often likes to exaggerate. Yes, it's a secret organization, not a cult! Danitz consoled himself before having the feeling that the organization backing Gehrman Sparrow was surprisingly mysterious and abnormally powerful.

The successful hunting of Senor, one of the Seven Pirate Admirals, was evidence!

Phew… Danitz exhaled as he apprehensively praised The Fool inwardly, expressing his desires to handle matters seriously.

†

In a small building near the governor-general's office, Elland and Oz Kent walked out.

"It's finally over…" Elland sighed as he wore his captain's hat.

Oz Kent rubbed his red brandy nose and added with a sigh, "That's right."

They had been interrogated while separated for two full days because of Gehrman Sparrow. They were faced with Interrogators who were best at such matters.

Thankfully, Elland had never hidden anything from the beginning. He had reported to his superiors that Gehrman Sparrow was of unknown origins, but that he was friendly to the military. It had nothing to do with him since the decision of making this crazy adventurer an informant while having his background investigated was made by the higher-ups.

As for Oz Kent, there weren't any problems at all. He had followed regular protocol when claiming the bounty for Gehrman Sparrow.

As they slowly walked towards the entrance in the middle of the garden, Elland said with a sigh, “Who knew that Gehrman Sparrow was that crazy and powerful…”

According to the little information that they knew, finishing off Admiral of Blood was just one of the most ordinary and trivial matters that Gehrman Sparrow had done that day.

And such a crazy person had made the choice of entering the dangerous Bansy to save a few passengers and crew members who had merely expressed their friendship to him.

Elland later learned that the dangers lurking in Bansy had far exceeded his imagination. The Church of Storms had directly destroyed the entire place!

If I had told the Interrogators that Gehrman Sparrow has a soft and kind heart, they will definitely think I’m lying… Humans are really a mass of contradictions… Elland silently shook his head.

After hearing Elland’s poignant remark, Oz Kent replied with a wry smile, “Back then, I thought you introduced me to a relatively strong adventurer. But in the end, he even finished off Admiral of Blood! Damn it. I even think he has the strength to become the fifth king. You wouldn’t doubt what I say if you look at the forest and those nearby mountains!

“That place, it’s like… it’s like…”

Elland glanced at Oz Kent and finished his sentence for him: “It’s like it was blasted by the coastal defenses more than a hundred times over.”

“That’s right!” Oz Kent agreed with Elland’s description.

By then, the two had walked out the main entrance.

Elland looked at the night sky with twinkling stars and the dark crimson moon. After a few seconds of silence, he adjusted his collar and said, “Let’s hope he doesn’t return to the sea again…”

†

Bayam. 6 Sfere Street.

Dressed in children’s clothes, Denton ran up to the study and said to his elder sister who was practicing her sketching, “Donna, th-they say that Uncle Sparrow is a bad guy, a cultist, and a murder!

“Th-they even showed me the newspapers!”

Donna turned her head as she wrinkled her nose.

“No way!

“Uncle Sparrow is a righteous, brave, and kind adventurer. We saw it with our own eyes. These are definitely more reliable than the papers!”

She hesitated for a moment before eloquently saying, “Al-although he had a very terrifying and ugly appearance, it was the price for his dreams and the power to protect! Denton, remember, the papers often like to fabricate content based on rumors or hearsay.”

“Yeah!” Denton nodded heavily. “I’ve already cursed them!”

Donna praised her brother and subconsciously looked out. She saw that the street lamps had cast their light into their garden. It was tranquil, serene, and gentle.

†

Hillston Borough, inside a high-class inn.

Klein folded a white handkerchief and placed it in his left breast pocket, and he raised his hand to retrieve his half top hat.

Today was the day for the mysterious tycoon, Dwayne Dantès, to officially appear in public!

He didn’t wait for the sale of the bike company shares or the mystical items, and he planned on first using the remaining 2,962 pounds he had to cover his initial expenses.

This was sufficient, as it was equivalent to six to seven years of an upper-middle class family’s income!

Arrodes didn’t enter my dream last night. This means that he’s unable to sense my return to Backlund without any close contact. That’s a good thing. Yes, I’ll contact it with the radio transceiver tonight to inquire about the evil spirit. I won’t need to go through this hassle in the future, Klein mumbled inwardly as he held his cane and walked out of the hotel.

At that moment, the sun was shining through the thin mist, elating the moods of the pedestrians. Klein got onto a carriage, and he went straight for Cherwood Borough’s City Family Servant Assistance Association at 9 Canylowell Street. He planned on hiring an experienced butler, and get him to organize the servants needed for a villa.

In the City Family Servant Assistance Association, Baylin ended a conversation with a male colleague that came to talk to her. She lowered her head to clean up the two drops of black tea on her lotus leaf-colored dress.

At that moment, she heard a mellow and heavy voice that time had left its mark on.

“Good morning, Ma’am.”

Baylin hurriedly looked up and towards the reception. She saw a gentleman in his forties, wearing a tailcoat made of silk and carrying a gold-inlaid cane. Apart from the three buttons on his clothes, there was a golden chain that extended into his pocket.

This gentleman had a pair of deep blue eyes, and he was good looking. Even the tiny white patches on the side of his hair had added to the air he exuded. Just a smile from him made Baylin feel her cheeks turn warm.

“Sir, h-how many I be of service? Ah, right. How may I address you?” Baylin hurriedly got up and said.

“Dwayne Dantès,” Klein warmly replied with a smile. “I wish to hire a butler, a good one.”

“Mr. Dantès, please wait a moment. Have a seat.” Baylin hurriedly led Klein to the guest area, and she reached out to point at a cloth sofa.

Klein held a smile without rushing or nagging her. He very patiently sat down and awaited the staff to provide him with a list of names of the butlers.

What a gentleman… Oh no, I forgot to ask him what requirements he has! Baylin raised her hand to touch her cheeks and said, “Mr. Dantès, what kind of butlers are you looking for?”

Klein was already prepared as he replied with a mellow voice, “It’s best if they have served in a noble family before.”

This aided Dantès in widening his social circle.

Baylin gradually grasped her professional knowledge as she said in detail, “Such butlers are rare. As you know, nobles seldom change their butlers unless they’re unable to provide an effective service. Furthermore, even if they aren’t able to be a butler, they’re able to fill other positions in a noble household.

“In addition, the wealthy often have a considerable desire towards such butlers, and they’re willing to offer salaries with a premium. Mr. Dantès, we do have the kinds you are looking for, but their annual salaries are above 100 pounds.”

That makes the weekly salary to be about 2 pounds and up… An ordinary butler’s annual salary is 40 to 80 pounds, which is 15 soli to 1 pound 10 soli a week. That appears to be at the level of a technical worker’s salary, but the master will provide room, food, clothes, charcoal, and other necessities. A butler practically has zero expenditure… An annual salary of 100 pounds and above is really expensive… Klein quickly did the math as he replied as though he didn’t take much notice, “No problem. As long as they’re good butlers.”

Dwayne Dantes potrait:

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诡秘之主
Lord of Mysteries
GOODS WAVE
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Chapter 738 - Life of a Tycoon

“Please wait a moment. Would you like coffee or tea?” Baylin asked warmly.

Klein laughed and replied, “I enjoyed coffee when I was younger, the rich and fragrant kind, but now, I prefer black tea.”

“I prefer black tea as well. Then… a cup of marquis black tea?” Baylin suggested with a smile.

The coffee and tea provided to guests at the City Family Servant Assistance Association were ordinary in quality, ranging from low- to medium-quality. Marquis black tea was tea that Baylin had brought from home for her own enjoyment.

Klein wasn’t a simpleton, and he was great at observing. Just as he walked into the door, he would take in everything about his surroundings without anyone noticing. He discovered that the coffee and tea container placed in the display case were very ordinary, and he believed that the quality was definitely lacking. Therefore, he believed that marquis black tea was likely reserved by the association for VIPs, or it belonged to the lady before him. Regardless, it expressed how sincere she was.

He didn’t expose her as he smiled.

“Thank you, you leave me unable to reject your suggestion.

“How may I address you, ma’am?”

“Baylin, just call me Baylin,” Baylin said with a smile which resembled a blooming flower.

She immediately briskly walked inside, and she selected suitable candidates from her colleague. Then, she returned to the reception counter, picked up a tin container, and skillfully brewed a cup of black tea.

Sigh, with a good-looking face and a good disposition while being dressed in a way that speaks volumes of my status, I can still sense the friendliness from a beautiful girl even though I’m middle-aged… Klein was having such an experience for the first time as he couldn’t help but sigh.

This made him further understand the importance of the Faceless principle of ultimately “being yourself.”

If he didn’t keep this in mind and lost himself to the benefits brought about by his appearance, he would keep maintaining the corresponding appearance, resulting in him forgetting or even rejecting his former self, and he would gradually lose his identity!

Soon, Baylin carried a white gold-rimmed porcelain teacup and placed it in front of Dwayne Dantès. She said with a smile, “It still needs some time to cool down.”

Klein looked down at the cup, and he said half-jokingly, “Perfect, this gives me the time to adjust my mood to more formally face this cup of black tea.”

His compliments and gratitude made Baylin feel even better. She found him a true gentleman, one who knew his way with words.

He’s definitely not a believer of the Lord of Storms… Baylin combed her slightly curly brown hair, and she returned to the room to hurry her colleague.

Before long, she came over with a stack of documents and sat on the single-seater beside him.

“After the screening, we have three suitable butlers. I’ll briefly introduce them to you.

“The first person is Mr. Asnia, age 55. He once served Viscount Yorkville, but after this viscount had a failed mining prospect investment, his family fell into a particular financial situation, and he had to sell its land and manors while terminating many of its servants. In the past decade, he was hired by two tycoons, and he has contributed significantly to the management of their households.”

As she spoke, Baylin’s brown eyes sparkled like two stars hid in them. She exuded the unique vibes of a teenage girl.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Then why did he leave the two tycoons?”

Baylin replied with a smile, “The first tycoon invested greatly in East Balam, and his whole family had moved there. Mr. Asnia wasn’t willing to leave Backlund, so he offered to resign. The second tycoon’s health isn’t too good, and he had handed the family business to his son who has a butler he trusts more.

“Mr. Asnia is a believer of the Evernight Goddess, and his political inclinations is with the Conservative Party. He expects an annual salary of 130 pounds.”

“May Goddess bless him.” Klein tapped four spots in a clockwise manner on his chest, forming the sign of the crimson moon.

Baylin’s eyes lit up as she asked, “Mr. Dantès, are you a believer of the Goddess?”

“Of course.” Klein nodded with a smile without explaining further.

It’s no wonder he’s so gentle! Baylin praised inwardly as she continued introducing, “Mr. Rebach, age 48. He once served the Negan family, and he was the deputy butler for a long period of time, as well as an assistant to the butler. Later, after a transaction, he became Baron Syndras's butler.

"Shortly after Duke Negan was assassinated, Mr. Rebach, whose contract came to an end, didn't receive a new contract from the baron, so he had no choice but to seek our help.

"He's not a staunch believer of the Lord of Storms, and his personality is without problems. His political inclination is with the Conservative Party. He expects an annual salary of 120 pounds."

Klein listened silently, nodding from time to time as a response, but he didn't cut off Baylin's description.

Baylin flipped through the documents and took a few glances and spoke again.

"The third person is Mr. Walter, age 42. He had been the land steward and assistant butler at Viscount Conrad's household. Due to certain matters, he had a conflict with the butler, and he chose to leave. He expects an annual salary of 115 pounds.

"He's a believer of the Evernight Goddess, and his political inclination is with the New Party."

Oravi Island's new governor-general is a member of Viscount Conrad's family. This family pledges loyalty to the royal family… The relevant information quickly flashed through Klein's mind.

After the introduction, Baylin handed over the stack of documents.

"Mr. Dantès, who do you wish to choose?"

Klein fell silent for a few seconds before saying with a smile, "Let's do this. Let the three of them come to where I live tomorrow at 9 a.m. I'll meet them and have a chat with them to make the final decision."

He knew that such associations didn't provide lodging, and it was purely an agency. Even if he made the selection right there and then, he still had to wait until the afternoon or tomorrow to see his butler. Therefore, he decided to have a small interview to select the person that matched his intentions the best.

"No problem," Baylin said with a smile. "May I know your address?"

Klein sipped the black tea, picked up a pen and paper from the table, and wrote down the location and name of the hotel he was staying in.

"You just came to Backlund?" Baylin blurted out a question when she saw it.

Only then did she realize that Mr. Dwayne Dantès's skin was slightly darker than normal. It was slightly bronze-colored, seemingly a result of tanning. It gave him quite a rugged flavor.

Yes, he doesn't have a Backlund accent… Baylin slowly recalled more details.

Klein smiled.

"I came from Desi Bay. I'm waiting for an excellent butler to help me seek out a suitable house and servants."

After handing over a 3-pound deposit, he politely drank another sip of black tea and got up to bid farewell.

Baylin sent him all the way out of the door and watched him board the carriage.

Mr. Dantès also seems to be a tycoon… Compared to that, his bearing and gentlemanliness are even more charming… Baylin stood in her spot as she casually thought.

On the carriage, Klein half-closed his eyes as he leaned against the wall, and he couldn't help but calculate the subsequent expenditures awaiting him.

The butler will cost around 120 pounds. Taking into account the average cost, a valet will cost 35 pounds, a chef 30 pounds, a gardener 25 pounds, a carriage driver 25 pounds, a nursery governess 20 pounds, three ordinary lady's maid 15 pounds, and three maidservants 10 pounds. This way, just the servants alone would cost 330 pounds a year. It's equivalent to 6 pounds 7 soli a week. This already exceeds my salary back in Tingen.

Furthermore, I'll need to have a carriage which costs about 100 pounds. I need a garden and house, and the weekly rental fee is about 2 pounds. With all the food, clothes, and charcoal expenditure for all these people, the overall cost is ridiculous.

Is this the life of a tycoon…

Klein suddenly felt a little regret over choosing such a persona.

He exhaled as he tried hard to ignore the matter. He took a carriage to Phelps Street in North Borough.

There was a pure-black cathedral here, with a clock tower on each side, producing a symmetrical beauty. This was none other than the headquarters of the Backlund diocese of the Church of the Evernight Goddess, Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Klein adjusted the handkerchief on his left pocket, held a gold-inlaid cane, and strode into the cathedral and walked down the quiet aisle. Under the sunlight which penetrated the colored glass panes, he came to the main prayer hall.

It was very dark, making one's mood automatically turn peaceful. Klein casually found a spot, leaned his cane, and took off his hat. He then closed his eyes and prayed.

Time passed, and after listening to the preaching, he slowly got up, walked to the altar, and bowed at the bishop with short, black hair.

Then, he walked to the donation box by the side.

Exhaling silently, Klein took out two 10-pound notes, six 5-pound notes and stuffed it inside.

The bishop caught this sight through the corner of his eye as his expression couldn't help but turn soft.

Typically, unless they specially solicited for donations or received donations from a deceased's will, the cathedral's donation box received tens of pounds at most.

This meant that the person was a tycoon, a rich person!

Chapter 739 - The Encountered and the Yet-To-Be-Encountered

* * *

In the main prayer hall of Saint Samuel Cathedral.

The black-haired bishop retracted his gaze and stopped looking at the middle-aged gentleman in front of the donation box, nor did he have any intention of chatting with him.

Here, before the holy altar, he represented the Church, and he was under the Goddess's sight. He couldn't show more warmth towards anyone because of their generous donations.

However, he remembered the gentleman's good looks and mature, refined disposition. He planned on attempting to get to know him when the opportunity arose in the future.

Seeing the final note slip into the donation box, Klein closed his eyes and turned to leave.

When passing the preaching bishop, he deliberately glanced at the clergyman and smiled with a nod.

The bishop returned with a warm smile as he tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

Klein wasn't in a hurry to make contact with the relevant personnel. He needed his actions to adhere to logic, and not to have any jarring actions that would incur suspicion. He silently and coolly turned to the side to give way to another devotee, and he made way down the aisle back to his seat. He then picked up his hat and cane before walking out of the cathedral.

At that moment, with the preaching done, the devotees either went forward to the donation box to express their sincerity, or they got up to leave without feeling that there was anything wrong. After all, it wasn't compulsory.

Even a devotee who passionately donated was unable to donate money every time. It usually depended on the family's exact situation, doing it once or twice every one to two weeks.

At the level of a commoner, each donation was in the form of pennies, while middle-class devotees ranged from three to five soli. The wealthy and nobles used pounds, but they didn't exceed 100 pounds.

This was under ordinary circumstances. During the Evernight Goddess's holy memorial day every year, which was the Winter Gifts Day, the amount donated would increase several times. The commoners with a little bit more cash to spare would choose two to three soli, while the middle-class donated around 5 pounds. As for the members of high society, they directly donated to the diocese bishop or Church's charitable organizations, ranging from several hundred pounds to a few thousand pounds.

Winter Gifts Day was the day in a year when the night was longest. It was believed to be the birthday of the Evernight Goddess.

†

After leaving the cathedral, Klein stood at the square outside. He watched idly as pigeons flew up, circled around, and landed.

He even bought some food from a nearby street hawker. He leisurely fed the pigeons, and he had no plans on flipping through the advertisements in the newspapers to find a suitable residence in North Borough since it was the butler's mission.

An excellent butler that had resided in Backlund for many years had ought to know the different nobles and tycoons, as well as the best middle-class individuals who could provide their masters with help. He would know which streets to live in and, from there, purposefully choose a residence.

The interaction between neighbors was the first step for a newcomer to enter the relevant circles!

Be it the Carleton Club where members of the Conservative Party gather, the Club of the Free of the New Party, or the various in-service and veteran clubs for the military, they also require a recommendation before any contact can be made… Sigh, this is also the so-called club politics in the kingdom. Klein reined in his thoughts as he considered what he should do after he was done setting up the pigeon-feeding persona he created.

After careful consideration, he discovered that there was really nothing that needed his immediate attention. This was because his plans were stuck on the surface.

Hence, he planned on enjoying an expensive and sumptuous lunch. This was an action Dwayne Dantès ought to have, and it was also a result of Klein's own curiosity.

In the months when he was in Backlund, he didn't manage to muster the courage to head to the most famous restaurants in the big city to broaden his horizons. He kept choosing one of the four—his own dining hall, the buffet cafeteria of the Quelaag Club, the ordinary restaurants by the streets, and Lawyer Jurgen's dining hall. Otherwise, he would head to East Borough and settle his breakfast and lunch in what seemed like a very oily coffee shop.

Laborie Restaurant? Their head chef is said to be from Earl Hall's family. He has provided tycoons, successful lawyers, high-ranking government officials with usually hard to come by flavors… Earl Hall had apparently invested in this restaurant and holds quite a major stake in it… Hmm, this restaurant mainly serves local Backlund cuisine. It's very famous for its desserts, but its price is horrendous…

Intis Srenzo Restaurant. It serves the most authentic Intis cuisine. Heh heh, many of the specialty dishes use Roselle's name, claiming that it originated from the emperor's palace dishes… Besides, it's not like most of the restaurants of the same class where they only offer a few main dishes every day. It has a wide variety… Klein recalled the information of the top restaurants he had read from the papers and magazines, and he finally decided on trying out the emperor's palace dishes.

He didn't stay any longer as he got on a horse carriage and headed for the Intis Srenzo Restaurant in West Borough.

At the entrance, Klein handed his coat, hat, and cane to a red-vested waiter as he asked, "Are there still any available seats? I didn't make a reservation."

"Yes, sir." The red-vested waiter didn't show any abnormal behavior as he humbly asked, "Sir, is this your first time here? Are you alone?"

Klein nodded frankly and smiled.

"Yes."

"Then, may I have the honor of introducing you to some of our most unique dishes and fine wine that our restaurant has to offer?" As the waiter spoke, he led the guest in.

"That's exactly what I need." Klein passed through the beautifully decorated door, and he saw walls that nearly reflected golden light.

Instantly, he felt as though he was in a gold vault.

Then, he noticed oil paintings hung on the walls, marble statues that were placed at suitable locations, as well as golden objects that were embedded or adorned in different spots.

“Please watch your step,” the attendant warned him as he led Klein to a spot by the window. Violin music played in the background of the restaurant.

The waiter brought him a food menu and a wine menu as he flipped it open and introduced, “These are our most famous dishes—red-braised Tagia beef short ribs, black truffle porcini mushrooms, Intis-styled foie gras. I would like to point out that our foie gras comes directly from the Bonas farm in Champagne province in the Intis Kingdom…”

As Klein listened to the waiter’s introduction, he browsed through the menu written in ancient Feysac, as the prices caught his eyes.

After introducing the main dishes, starters, and desserts, the waiter began explaining how the wines should be matched. Finally, he said, “The champagne, red wine, and white wine we have all come from a famous brewery from Champagne province. We even have Aurmir red wine from 1330. Its price is 126 pounds. If you wish to purchase it, you can take it along with you or store it with us, drinking a cup every time you come.”

126 pounds… I can already hire an excellent butler with that… Heh heh… Klein smiled with great grace.

“Your dishes and wine are excellent. It’s really difficult to choose.”

The red-vested waiter gave a hospitable smile.

“You can choose the chef’s recommendations for the day. It will be an authentic and delicious Intis meal arranged by our main chef. There are three choices—15 pounds, 10 pounds, and 8 pounds.”

I don’t want any of them… Klein leaned back slightly as he smiled.

“I’ll have the 15-pound set meal.”

“Alright.” The red-vested waiter took away the menus, and he walked towards the kitchen.

Klein drew a breath and slowly exhaled as he casually observed the area before him.

Suddenly, he saw a familiar figure. It was a lady wearing an olive-green dress.

She was tall, with an excellent figure. She wore a black, out-of-fashion bonnet, with a fishnet veil hanging down and concealing her face.

As a Faceless, Klein had a strong ability to discern the external characteristics of humans. He immediately identified the lady.

Queen Mystic, Emperor Roselle's eldest daughter, Bernadette Gustav!

He wasn't in a rush to look away as he naturally moved his gaze to the side. Bernadette didn't seem to notice anything abnormal as she disappeared around the stairwell.

Why would she appear here? Right, this restaurant's specialty is Emperor Roselle's palace dishes. Heh, it's nothing like the Chinese cuisine I thought it would be. He probably doesn't know how to cook and at best, is able to describe the concept. There are stir-fried dishes here… Hmm, could the owner behind the scenes actually be her? Why is she here in Backlund instead of floating out at sea? Hasn't she found Hero Bandit Black Emperor? Klein sat down with a calm expression as questions arose in his mind.

†

Meanwhile, on the streets, a carriage was driving towards the Intis Srenzo Restaurant.

Sitting in the carriage was Aaron Ceres's family. This famous surgeon was a member of the Quelaag Club, a good friend of Sherlock Moriarty. He had once sought out the detective to handle Will Auceptin's matter.

Ever since his wife became pregnant, he found his luck had become rather good. His business was improving by the day, and his income was rising by the month. He recently successfully completed Baron Syndras's surgery, and he received the commendation of this newly promoted noble. He was invited to the Srenzo Restaurant to have lunch with him.

"It's said that the ice-cream is pretty good," Aaron smiled as he said to his wife.

His wife was a black-haired beauty, and she was already obviously pregnant. She smiled demurely and said, "I'm more looking forward to Emperor Roselle's palace dishes."

Aaron tersely acknowledged as he looked out the window.

"We're almost there."

Just as he said that, his wife held her tummy and frowned.

"It hurts a little."

Aaron, who wasn't a first-time father, immediately checked on her and didn't discover any problems, but his wife was feeling greater discomfort. The child in her womb seemed to be pulling a tantrum.

"I-I think I won't go over there. I wish to return home to rest," Aaron's wife suggested.

Aaron thought for a while and said, "I'll accompany you home."

He immediately ordered his valet, "Get down here and head to the restaurant to apologize to Baron Syndras on my behalf."

After the carriage began its return, the discomfort that Aaron's wife suffered was relieved. By the time she walked through the doorstep, everything was normal.

She pointed at her tummy, exasperated.

"It appears like he doesn't want to eat ice-cream."

Achoo! In the Intis Srenzo Restaurant, Klein, who hadn't spared any dish, felt the pinch but began enjoying his ice-cream in satisfaction. Midway, he found his nose itchy as he sneezed into a piece of tissue paper he pulled out.

†

West Borough. In a dark house.

Fors, who had already advanced to Astrologer, participated in all kinds of Beyonder gatherings, in search of the possibility to earn money.

She owed Xio 220 pounds, and she was even suspected by her good friend of being involved in illegal gambling.

I can't even afford to buy my essential crystal ball… As her thoughts wandered, Fors suddenly heard a member at the gathering say, "I wish to sell a Moon Puppet."

Chapter 740 - Self-recommendation

◆

Moon Puppet… Fors's heart palpitated as she refocused and looked at the gathering participant who had just spoken.

The man in a black iron mask had already taken out a small puppet and showed it to everyone.

"I have a friend who discovered a series of graves deep in the Southern Continent's Paz Valley. This puppet was stuck in the deceased's right eye socket.

Fors observed the puppet seriously just like the other gathering participants. She discovered that it was slender, and its entire body resembled a tiny wooden piece that had been engraved with crescent-like eyes and a mouth. Embedded in it were dried grass and flowers.

Doesn't look like anything special… Fors mumbled inwardly. Her spiritual perception didn't sense anything as her pen-wielding hand continued hovering over a bronze-green notebook.

The man in the iron mask continued the introduction:

"My friend and I are unable to determine what use this puppet has, and we can only suspect that it's not simple. It might also hide quite a secret.

"60 pounds. For just 60 pounds, you can have it. This price is very fair. Even if it has nothing to do with mysticism, it's not a bad antique worth forty to fifty pounds.

“That is to say you’ll be spending 10 pounds to have a chance of a pleasant surprise. To you, this is a small sum of money.”

A very tempting explanation. This gentleman is likely a successful salesman. However, I don’t even have 10 pounds… As Fors engaged in a self-deprecating laugh, she didn’t believe that anyone would buy the so-called Moon Puppet of unknown origins and usage.

Just as she had that thought, she heard a female voice which was deliberately suppressed.

“50 pounds.”

Is she too rich, or is she willing to try her luck? Fors subconsciously turned her head to look at the speaking person, only to see the lady wearing a hooded long robe. Her face was hidden in the shadows.

At that moment, the owner of the Moon Puppet laughed.

“I’ll be more inclined to keep it for myself. Perhaps, there might come a time when I discover what’s so special about it.”

As he spoke, he realized that no one was offering a better price. He immediately said, “Of course, as a gentleman, I’ll satisfy your wish since you have expressed your desire and have given a reasonable price.”

“Deal,” the hooded woman replied with a deep voice.

Soon, the gathering’s attendant helped them complete the transaction. Fors noticed that the lady’s hand was trembling slightly after she received the Moon Puppet.

She places great importance on the item… She might actually know what’s so special about the puppet… Moon Puppet… Moon… From the Southern Continent… Fors suddenly made connections and recalled the few Primordial Moon believers who Mr. Moon was searching for. She began having a suspicion that the hooded lady was one of them, or that she had a connection with them.

Of course, she had zero evidence. She didn't even have much of a compelling reason to have such a guess.

Phew… Fors silently exhaled as she decided to find a way to verify her theory.

She casually moved the hard-covered notebook in her hand, making a yellowish-brown goatskin appear.

On the piece of paper were all kinds of patterns that formed an ancient, mysterious picture of unknown intent.

This was one of the pages of Leymano's Travels, and it recorded a particular Beyonder power.

It wasn't a recorded power which Fors had gathered herself, but one of the five original pages when she received it.

Fors looked up, and she pretended to observe the transactions of the others while fully taking in the hooded lady's situation.

She discovered that there was a mosquito with dark brown spots on a nearby wall and unknown worms that were slowly squirming on the ground.

Fors's finger naturally slid across the yellowish-brown goatskin's pattern as a complicated symbol quickly formed in her mind.

Silently and without showing any odd signs, she felt that she had "understood" the brown pattern, as her thoughts connected with the other party's.

The brown-spotted mosquito flew at a low height.

It circled beneath the hooded lady and carefully clung to her front.

The mosquito's vision was different from a human's since an incomprehensible scene appeared in Fors's mind. But it soon disintegrated and reformed into a rather normal scene.

The hooded lady had a rather curved outline with dark skin. Her brows were thin and the corners of her mouth drooped significantly.

Fors immediately recognized her. She was none other than the Primordial Moon believer, Windsor Behring, who Mr. Moon was searching for!

An effective clue is worth 100 pounds, and directly finding her means 500 pounds! Fors recalled the reward as she immediately became flustered.

Her first reaction was to drive the mosquito to bite Windsor Behring and suck her blood. That way, she could later use astromancy to directly lock onto her location.

However, she gave up the idea after struggling for a moment. That was extremely taboo in a Beyonder gathering. If she were discovered, she would definitely be attacked by all the participants of the gathering.

And the host of the gathering often had significant strength. Going too overboard made it easily detectable!

Hmm, I'll just get the 100 pounds. If there's another chance, I'll consider how to lock onto her directly… I have to leave this gathering early and smear my blood over Leymano's Travels to prevent myself from getting lost. That would be dangerous… Fors repressed her disappointment as she made her final decision.

In fact, her actions were already out of line; hence, she didn't wish to stay another second longer.

†

Hillston Borough, inside a high-class hotel.

Klein stood behind an oriel window as he silently took in the crimson moon and thin clouds in the sky.

Some time later, he combed the white hair around his temples and reached out to draw the curtains.

Then, he went through the hassle of moving the radio transceiver back to the real world and spent the time “airing” out most of its “smell.”

This time, he only waited about ten seconds when he felt the room turn dark and eerie. He heard the radio transceiver begin to producing clicking sounds.

Klein approached and saw a piece of illusory paper spew out. On the paper were words composed of Loenese: “Great Master, please look right!”

Right… Klein turned his head in amusement and curiosity to his side.

He saw a full-body mirror, which had already turned dark, as though it was smeared with a layer of ink.

Just as a thought flashed in his mind, the full-body mirror lit up. Illusory fireworks began shooting inside the mirror as it burst and scattered down in a beautiful and dazzling display.

Meanwhile, the full-body mirror produced a line of golden Loenese words.

“Welcome back, Great Master!”

At that moment, although Arrodes didn’t produce any sound, Klein had the baffling feeling that it was hysterically shouting.

As the fireworks came to an end, the golden text distorted and formed a new line of text:

“Great Master, your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, wishes to ask you how I might be of service to you?”

Klein was already very accustomed to this as he said in a practiced manner, “Answer my questions.”

The golden line of text reformed again.

“Thank you for your answer. You may ask.”

Prepared, Klein said, “Where did the evil spirit in Williams Street go to?”

The full-body mirror’s golden text froze for a few seconds before they slowly disappeared. As for the blooming fireworks in the background, they first blurred before a new scene became clear.

It was that of an abandoned chapel where withered vines crawled over its walls, and gray stones were strewn everywhere.

Klein found it rather familiar. It was where he and Sharron had once conversed with the evil spirit.

The scene drew close as Klein saw that in a corner of the collapsed chapel was a tiny pit that wasn’t too deep. There were clear signs of it being dug up with one’s fingers.

Miss Magician mentioned it before… As Klein’s thoughts surfaced, the scene produced a cold voice that hid a smile:

“It’s a pleasure working with you!”

As those words came out of the soil, the scene immediately turned distorted like a water surface being stirred before the scene completely shattered.

Pleasure working with you… Who did the evil spirit speak to?

To make an angel from the Hunter pathway use such a tone, the person opposite it mustn’t be someone of a lower level. That person might even be an angel. However, why would “He” use his hands to dig? “He” should have a much easier method that didn’t waste that much time…

The angel is also restricted in a certain sense? Hmm, just like that Grandpa in Leonard's body? Right, Leonard was in Backlund back then! This is a clue, but there are other possibilities. Something at the level of an angel doesn't equate to being an angel…

The evil spirit controlled Baronet Pound to contact someone? From the looks of it, the Intis and Feysac spies were just a smokescreen that was deliberately set up by the evil spirit. As expected of a Conspirer… Thoughts ran through Klein's mind as he said to Arrodes, "Second question: I have three butlers to choose from. Who do you think is the most suitable?"

Golden Loenese words appeared one after another:

"If you choose Rebach and Walter, there might be an additional development. Asnia is the most professional, but he's also the most ordinary."

Hmm… the two who were formerly under the service of Duke Negan and Viscount Conrad do allow for additional development… Klein nodded in thought.

"It's your turn to ask."

At this moment, a bunch of golden text appeared:

"Great Master, what do you make of me being your butler? As long as you bring me out of the Church of Steam, I can become the best butler in the world!"

"…"

Klein hesitated for a second as he replied, mincing his words, "It's not suitable at the moment."

The golden text in the full-body mirror darked instantly before it lit up again, reforming the words:

“Alright.

“Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, will patiently await the day.”

Immediately following that, the full-body mirror produced a complicated picture with some footnotes.

“This is a rune formed with the corresponding symbols and magical labels. Great Master, as long as you are in Backlund, writing it on some paper is equivalent to summoning me.”

A mixture of concealment and mystery prying symbols… Klein identified the rune and said, “Okay.”

Chapter 741 - Butler

* * *

9 a.m., Hillston Borough, inside a high-class hotel.

Klein picked up a bottle of exquisitely packaged white wine as he handed it over to the elder opposite him.

“Mr. Asnia, thank you for coming. This is a gift of mine. Please accept it.

“At the latest, I’ll make my decision by tomorrow. When the time comes, I might come and visit you in person.”

He was using such a euphemistic manner to inform the man that he had failed to be selected.

To be frank, he was actually rather pleased with Mr. Asnia. He perfectly met his image of a butler—stern, well-mannered, professional, a high level of mental understanding, and was good at handling all kinds of thorny issues.

As the oldest candidate who lived the furthest away, he had arrived half an hour ahead of time. He had been patiently waiting outside while Rebach and Walter were only fifteen minutes early.

If not for Arrodes mentioning that the latter two allowed for additional developments, Klein felt that he would’ve chosen this old gentleman. After all, his main goal was to use the butler’s social connections to more easily enter high society so as to make contact with the corresponding targets.

The white wine was specially bought from the Intis Srenzo Restaurant, costing him two pounds since he knew someone was destined to be disappointed while wasting money to travel to and fro by carriage.

This could effectively accentuate how generous Dwayne Dantès was and how gentlemanly he was as a mysterious tycoon.

In addition, he didn't think it was right to belittle a butler from a noble family. Such people definitely knew plenty of people in high society, many professional butlers, and countless servants due to their past professional experiences. They covered the entire spectrum of people, and they could affect a gentleman's image, and this was a necessary consideration for entering even higher social circles.

At present, the fifty-five-year-old Asnia had plenty of white hair. His blue eyes were ingrained with the wisdom that time had given him, so he didn't reject Dwayne Dantès's gift. He received it and glanced at it before bowing.

"I love white wine from Garrod. Thank you for your kindness. Your grace is admirable."

Garrod? Yes, the waiter yesterday mentioned that it's a brewery in Intis's Champagne province. It's well known for producing high-end grape wine. Some of the wine of certain vintage years are considered top-notch. Sigh, a butler knows more about wine than me. That's right. Mr. Asnia had mentioned that wine cellars are directly under the charge of the butler or a butler assistant among nobles and the rich… Does this mean that I need to have a wine cellar in the future? Wine costing two pounds is at the bottom of the totem pole, while even Aurmir red wine from 1330 which costs 126 pounds isn't even considered the best… How much would such a wine cellar cost… As he thought it over, Klein felt heavy in the chest. He began to suspect that the 2,888 pounds he had set aside from the gold coins weren't going to last long.

If not for the training he had during his time as a Clown, he definitely would've lost his cool and not reply with a smile.

“Your fondness for it is the greatest form of praise for me. Mr. Asnia, please invite Mr. Rebach who’s at the coffee house below up.”

Asnia didn’t hesitate to agree to it. Less than five minutes later, Rebach knocked on the door and entered the living room.

This gentleman had his blond hair combed neatly. The edges of his eyes and mouth had some wrinkles which weren’t too distinct. He had a ruddy complexion and a masculine bearing. It was obvious that he was a butler who could accompany his master hunting or even fend off enemies.

After exchanging greetings, Klein invited him in to take a seat while smiling. He went directly to the point.

“Forgive me for being honest. I don’t understand why you would become the butler of Baron Syndras. Your father was the assistant butler to the Negan family, and your grandfather was the land steward of the same family. Many of your ancestors served the duke and his relatives until they returned to the arms of god. You should have had such a life trajectory as well.”

Due to Emperor Roselle’s influence, the various countries in the Northern Continent went from using their fief and aristocratic title to indicate their nobility to just their names and aristocratic titles. Only under special formal occasions would they use the former. Of course, there were a few nobles whose names stemmed from their fiefs.

Rebach gave a standard smile and answered, “Baron Syndras is a newly promoted noble, an old friend of the late duke. Therefore, I was sent to his family to help him and his family get accustomed to noble life and grasp the corresponding etiquettes.”

The late duke he was talking about was the present Duke Negan’s father, the Pallas Negan who had been assassinated the previous year.

“Then, why did you leave the baron’s family later?” Klein deliberated and asked.

Rebach answered honestly, “Although Baron Syndras obtained his aristocratic title via the Conservative Party, he is one of the most famous bankers, investors, and enterprise owners in the kingdom. He was one of the earliest multi-millionaires, and he had a strong penchant for the New Party. He was willing to provide a certain degree of support to them, creating friction between him and the Conservative Party nobles, including the younger duke.

“Therefore, to prevent the baron from being put in a difficult position, I offered to leave. He actually tried to keep me, and he was an excellent employer.”

Klein nodded and asked, “You believe in the Lord of Storms?”

Rebach seriously replied, “Yes, the Lord gives us courage, zeal, and a sense of responsibility.”

Klein asked a few more matters about butlers and received a detailed response. Then, he said with a smile, “Might I trouble you to invite Mr. Walter who’s at the coffee house up?

“After I’m done chatting with him, I’ll make the decision. You can wait in the coffee house for about ten minutes.”

“Alright.” Rebach didn’t harp on the matter and immediately got up to bow. After bidding farewell, he left in a manner that exuded the air of a military man.

As he watched him leave and close the door, Klein sat back down, picked up his black tea, and took a sip. He muttered silently, If I were to choose him, I’ll likely establish certain connections with the present Duke Negan and the Conservative Party. The additional development might include the situation before the assassination…

Before long, Walter arrived and entered after knocking on the door.

Klein first exchanged some pleasantries before asking, "What conflict did you have with Viscount Conrad's butler? You should understand that I need to understand the situation. I cannot afford to risk offending a noble."

Walter had a broad forehead with raven-black hair and brown stern eyes, but he wasn't a person who appeared taciturn. He thought for a few seconds and said, "As a butler assistant, I was responsible for the viscount's children. During this process, due to certain matters, I was appreciated by a particular important figure. As such, I won the recognition of the viscount, which made the butler wary against me.

"Later, that important figure passed away due to an accident, and as a result, the viscount's attitude towards me changed. The butler treated me even worse, making me believe that it was pointless waiting for things to improve."

In charge of the viscount's children, and he got to know an important figure… Hmm, Talim also got to know Prince Edessak from teaching Viscount Conrad's youngest son. And the prince passed away a few months ago because of the Great Smog of Backlund… This matches Walter's explanation… From the looks of it, this butler was one of the peripheral victims of that matter… He's rather cautious and professional. He didn't expose his former employer's negatives or reveal the matter about the prince, nor did he speak ill of the viscount's butler… If I select him, the additional development is something to look forward to… Klein listened silently as he made some connections.

He then switched to asking some professional questions, expressing his desire to enter high society. After receiving a satisfactory answer, he straightened his clothes, got up and smiled.

"Let me introduce myself again. I'll be your employer, Dwayne Dantès."

Walter immediately bowed and said, "Sir, how may I be of service?"

He kept maintaining a stern, old-fashioned, and unperturbed demeanor, as though these were the professional traits of a butler.

“Two matters,” Klein replied with a chuckle. “First, help me hand this bottle of white wine to Mr. Rebach who’s waiting at the coffee house. Please express my apologies and gratitude to him. Second, hire a solicitor to write up a professional contract that will include you and the other servants.”

“Alright, sir.” Walter bowed once again.

As Klein handed the white wine over, he asked, “Walter, how many servants do you think I need to hire in order to not appear improper?”

While Walter received the bottle of Garrod white wine, he replied without any hesitation, “You should first determine where you will be living. Only then can you know how many servants you actually need.”

“Oh, do you have suggestions? My requirements are simple. I wish to live in North Borough, as I’m a pious believer of the Goddess.” Klein drew the crimson moon on his chest in passing.

According to the information I read on the papers and magazines, a gardened villa in a high-end district has to be at least 3 pounds a week. That makes it 156 pounds a year… Although there are no direct numbers, I can infer that the suburb’s best gardened villas cost about 2 pounds a week. A high-end apartment with a few rooms and halls would cost about the same. It’s been mentioned that that’s relatively extravagant, a place where only the richest of the middle-class can afford to rent. Yes, from that, I can preliminary estimate the rent of a tycoon’s house…

It’s expensive just thinking about it. Back in Tingen, Benson, Melissa, and I spent 13 soli a week on a gardenless terrace house. There was an additional 5 pence for the use of furniture. In the house I lived in Minsk Street, it didn’t even reach 1 pound…

Sigh, so be it; even if it’s 3 pounds. I have 2,888 pounds. It shouldn’t be a problem renting a slightly better one… No problem at all… While awaiting Walter's answer, Klein silently recalled the information regarding rental costs. He began calculating how much he needed to pay every week and every year.

Walter considered it for two seconds before replying in a serious manner, "Sir, you can choose 32 Böklund Street. It's close to Saint Samuel Cathedral, and it's a three-story manor with more than ten rooms. It comes with a stable, a servants' quarters, and a rather large garden. Living nearby are baronets, House of Commons members of parliament, and senior lawyers…

"The interior design is especially tasteful. There are plenty of famous paintings and antiques. All the furniture and wares are enough to accentuate your identity. You can rent it for a year first. If you find it satisfactory, you can consider buying it entirely."

Sounds pretty good… Klein asked with a smile, "How much is it to rent for a year?"

Walter sternly and skillfully reported the number, "Including the use of furniture, 1,260[1] pounds a year."

"…"

Klein was glad that he wasn't drinking any tea, or else he would've spewed it all across his butler's face.

He mustered nearly all of a Clown's control in order to prevent any abnormalities from showing on his face.

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Author’s Note: The rental prices of houses are referenced from ”Money in the Past - on the Economic Life of People in Beijing, Paris, and London in the 19th Century” and ”British study of Victorian middle-class marriage and family life”. A house costing 1,260 pounds is an embassy rented during the Qin dynasty. As for whether there was a premium to it, I’ve no idea.

Chapter 742 - Decided

◆

After a brief moment of silence, Klein raised the black tea and took a sip. He said with a smile, "It's something that can be considered, but Emperor Roselle once said to never be in a rush to make a decision. Only after repeated comparison will one receive the best answer.

"Are there any other options?"

Walter, who wore a white glove, replied without any abnormality to his expression, "Phelps Street would also satisfy your request. I recall that Unit 9 is available for rent. It's a two-story villa with more than ten rooms. It comes with a stable, the servants' quarters, and a small garden. The furniture and wares are relatively old, but they're considered decent. The annual rent is 220 pounds."

That's quite a reasonable price… Reasonable… However, Phelps Street means that it's less than 100 meters away from Saint Samuel Cathedral. Although this does help in being right under their noses, many of the pedestrians will be Nighthawks. It would be very inconvenient for me to leave and return, making it easy to make mistakes… Klein, who originally had a budget of about 160 pounds, suddenly felt 220 pounds was a pretty good price after undergoing the catharsis of the gardened manor's price.

This made him suspect whether Butler Walter had deliberately offered him an expensive choice at the very beginning.

Klein pondered for a few seconds and said, "Any others?"

Walter replied without showing any signs of impatience, “160 Böklund Street is also available for rent. It’s a three-story house which also comes with a garden, a stable, servants’ quarters. There are more than ten rooms, but its location isn’t as good as Unit 32. The decorations, furniture, and wares can be considered decent. It has an annual rent of 315 pounds.”

315 pounds… The rental fee flashed past Klein’s slightly numb mind. He asked in thought, “What do you suggest?”

At that moment, he had already decided on an answer, but as an employer, he wasn’t in a rush to express his decision. This was because he would easily be belittled if his decision had a slip up in common knowledge.

Walter seriously thought and said, “160 Böklund Street.

“In comparison, the neighbors here will be more helpful in entering high society. As for Unit 32, it’s overly extravagant. To rent it immediately will make your surrounding neighbors believe that you lack the necessary self-restraint, making it seem inappropriate.”

To put it simply, to rent a house costing 1,260 pounds a year so easily will make neighbors define me as an ostentatious nouveau riche… To a tycoon who’s trying to enter high society, such a reputation will be terrible… Klein sipped his black tea and asked with a smile, “Then, why did you offer me the selection of 32 Böklund Street?”

Walter unhurriedly bowed and said, “Honorable sir, I’m only a butler. My responsibility isn’t to decide, but to present all suitable options and give you certain suggestions for your consideration.

“In a situation where I’m unaware of your exact preferences, I have to do my best to provide you with all possible options.”

Very professional… He’s likely worried that Dwayne Dantès is a nouveau riche who enjoys flaunting his wealth, so he first gave the choice of 32 Böklund Street as a way to probe me, so as to adjust his suggestions and management style… Klein smiled and said, “Let’s eliminate Unit 32. We shall choose one of the two.

“Before I make the decision, I’m accustomed to paying a visit. Let’s head off after lunch.”

“Yes, sir.” Walter continued wearing that stern, old-fashioned expression.

†

South of the Bridge, Harvest Church.

Emlyn White was wiping the silver candle stands as he was mulling over the clues provided by Miss Magician.

A secret Beyonder gathering… That’s equivalent to providing no clues. It will be rather difficult to pursue the matter. And I won’t be able to participate in the gathering in short notice… Emlyn observed himself in the silver stand’s surface as he combed his hair.

Then, he put down the wiping cloth, retreated to the first pew in the cathedral, and sat down as he watched Bishop Utravsky praying seriously before the altar with his gaze unfocused.

Thoughts came to his mind as they occasionally created sparks. Emlyn suddenly grasped a detail.

Why would a puppet that garners the Primordial Moon believer’s immense interest happen to appear?

Moon Puppet… This feels like it’s bait. C-could it be a trap designed by Rus Báthory and the others? Emlyn’s eyes lit up as he suddenly stood up.

Rus Báthory was a Sanguine Baron who was participating in the hunting competition. He was viewed by Emlyn as his strongest competitor.

The more Emlyn thought about it, the more he found it as a possibility. This was because he knew that Báthory was an antique enthusiast, one who especially enjoyed collecting all sorts of strange trinkets from the Southern Continent!

After pacing back and forth a few times, he curled the corners of his lips and chuckled. He silently said, I have no way of entering the Beyonder gathering to seek out the location of Windsor, but I can monitor Rus Báthory and finish off the target before he does!

Haha, I look forward to his expression when that happens.

Yes, Miss Magician's clue is indeed worth 100 pounds.

Just as Emlyn was feeling abnormally excited, Father Utravsky ended his prayers, walked over, and looked down at him. He said with a gentle voice, "Our piousness is not in our language, but in every detail of our body language. You were not being focused enough today.

"Wipe the candle stand again."

"A-alright," Emlyn replied, suddenly feeling ashamed.

After the priest turned to walk to the confessional, he snapped to his senses as he muttered, amused and incensed, I'm not pious at all. I don't have to appear pious!

†

Rows of straight Intis parasol trees lined both ends of the street, making the streets appear beautiful and tranquil. With his gold-inlaid cane in hand, Klein slowly walked out of Unit 160.

He silently drew a breath and turned to look at Walter.

"Tell the owner that I'm very satisfied.

"I'll temporarily rent it for a year. We might move to a better place later, such as Empress Borough."

His words hinted at his ambition to obtain an aristocratic title, as Empress Borough was a place where the nobles gathered.

As for why he didn't rent half a year to save on money, it was because such high-end estates only accepted long-term contracts. One year was the minimum.

To be frank, if money wasn't an issue, Klein had quite a liking for the house. Its lawn was clean, and the garden was beautiful. The furnishing was befitting, and the wares were exquisite. There were plenty of bedrooms, sufficient furniture, and many washrooms on every floor. Even the stables and servants' quarters at the back weren't shoddy work. It was the best residence Klein could've ever imagined in the past.

Walter immediately replied, "I'll hire a solicitor in a while.

"Sir, what specific requests do you have regarding servants?"

Klein strolled underneath the Intis parasol trees and smiled.

"I'd first like to hear your suggestions."

Walter thought for a moment before saying, "Sir, you will need a housekeeper regardless."

During the interview, Klein had mentioned that Dwayne Dantès wasn't married and had no children, nor did he have any mistresses in Backlund; therefore, he didn't need a lady's maid.

Dwayne Dantès nodded gently without expressing any intentions. Walter continued, "Her duties would be to manage the female servants and the expenses of the household. Sir, you can't leave everything to me or the same person. Balance is an art in politics, and it's also a good method when managing a household. Emperor Roselle once said that absolute power definitely corrupts.

"I'm confident in myself before money, but it's only confidence."

Hmm, very honest… A housekeeper is needed. She'll cost about thirty to forty pounds a year… Klein nodded.

"Okay."

At that moment, Walter was walking behind Klein to his side. He extended his hand to stop a rental carriage.

On the carriage, he continued, "I will get the Family Servant Assistance Association to produce a name list for the selection of the housekeeper. You shall choose her personally, and I won't provide any suggestions.

"Based on the current residential situation, you will also need a steward who can be male or female. You will need a valet, a lady's maid in charge of the bedrooms, and two chambermaids who will be in charge of the living room and activity room. Two footmen to valet guests, a parlor maid, a scullery maid, two laundresses, and two handymen.

"Apart from those, you will need a cook, two gardeners, two coachmen or one coachman and an assistant coachman. If necessary, you can have an additional attendant, a steward's boy, a nursery governess, and a second cook.

"You currently do not have any carriages, but you'll definitely have two in the future. A four-wheeled carriage costs about 300 pounds. A two-wheeled one costs about 100 pounds…"

As he listened to his butler introduce the required servants in detail, Klein's mind went numb. He didn't wish to do the accounts on how much he needed to spend. After all, it was paid on a weekly or monthly basis, and not an annual basis.

Ignoring the attendant, steward's boy, nursery governess, and second cook, there will be ten to eleven male servants, and the female servants with the housekeeper will number about nine to ten… It's basically several times what I calculated. Each week's expenses will exceed 10 pounds… This can only be determined after all of them are hired and their salaries are negotiated… There's also the carriage… Klein's mind couldn't help but drift when he saw Walter's mouth moving nonstop.

Seeing the staid and extremely dignified Mr. Dwayne Dantès nodding from time to time, Walter subconsciously broadened the topic.

"In the future, you will also need to rent a manor in the suburbs to entertain friends to have a wonderful weekend over there. There's no rush. It can wait until you hold several dances and banquets at Unit 160…

"Sir, do not mention housemaids in front of the neighbors of this street. Only those with salaries below 500 pounds a year will hire housemaids because they're unable to hire enough female servants to handle the different parts of the household…"

"…"

Klein listened numbly as he reflexively wore a warm smile.

Back at the hotel, he watched Walter leave before he sat back down, his expression collapsing.

When it was twenty minutes to three, Klein rubbed his temples and slowly got up. He went into his bedroom and prepared to begin this week's Tarot Gathering.

Chapter 743 - A Diary Page

◆ ◆ ◆

Above the gray fog, in the palace with the towering dome.

The Fool Klein glanced at The Sun, who had been pulled up ahead of time, as well as The World who had been conjured in advance. Emanating a little bit of his spirituality, he made contact with the crimson star representing Justice, The Hanged Man, The Magician, The Moon, and The Hermit.

Beams of light rose up as relatively blurry figures appeared on the two sides of the long bronze table.

Justice Audrey, who had just returned from a tree farm leading to the castle, had already changed into a dress. Her sleeves were layered in laces that were filled with lustrous pearls.

Like clockwork, she stood up, lifting the corners of her skirt as she curtsied.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~”

Klein instantly felt better as he nodded with a smile in response.

Meanwhile, he couldn’t help but sigh.

To act like a tycoon costs so much money. I wonder how huge the expenditures are for a noble like Miss Justice…

After all the members exchanged greeting nods, he looked at The Hermit, as he knew that this pirate admiral would likely provide him with new Roselle diary entries.

As he had expected, Cattleya spoke out:

“Mr. Fool, I only managed to find one page of Roselle’s diary.”

Just one page? Shouldn’t Queen Mystic be able to produce an entire book anytime she wants? Klein, who had been met with repeated tribulations recently, remained composed as he nodded.

“That won’t be a problem.”

Cattleya immediately conjured a yellowish-brown diary page. It then seemed to tear through the spirit world and enter Mr. Fool’s hands.

Klein deliberately looked down, and he was surprised to discover that the beginning of the diary entry didn’t have a date.

That means that it’s a second page from another diary page… Why didn’t Bernadette give me the first page? She should be able to figure out dates. After all, Old Neil succeeded… Did she not? Or were the diary pages thrown into a mess, and she wasn’t able to restore them to the correct order? Does this mean that Emperor Roselle’s belongings were vied for by various factions after his death? Some were lost, and at that time, Bernadette was unable to stop them. Only when she became Queen Mystic did she have the ability to get involved… As Klein guessed, he quickly began reading the content on the piece of paper.

“How surprising. The Fourth Epoch history divulged by Mr. Door is getting more and more interesting.

“This unlucky b*stard who’s trapped amidst the storm and lost to the depths of darkness told me that the Black Emperor died once and had revived again.

“Surprisingly, this matches what was said in that ancient secret organization. Back during that gathering, they said that the nine secret mausoleums of the Black Emperor weren’t all destroyed. Even if this deity who walked the land were to perish, ‘He’ could resurrect.

“Even if all nine mausoleums were destroyed, as long as the order left behind by the Black Emperor remained, ‘He’ had the ability to strangely resurrect. Only with the birth of a new Black Emperor would he be completely obliterated, never to appear again.

“According to Mr. Door’s description, the Black Emperor had three stages in the process of ‘His’ resurrection. First is that the Uniqueness leaves the person possessing it, turning into an abstract concept. Second is when the subjects of the Black Emperor hear ‘His’ mighty voice again. The third is that, when fused with the Uniqueness, the Black Emperor would reappear in the astral world. The three Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics would automatically be returned into the emperor’s hands. This is an order that other true deities are unable to distort or prevent.

“This way, the Sequence 1 Prince of Abolition of this pathway, Blood Emperor, and Night Emperor would be in a rather awkward situation. They might instantly perish, falling back to Sequence 2. Mr. Door said that back then, the Lord of Storms and the Evernight Goddess had chosen the Night Emperor. They helped ‘Him’ switch to a neighboring pathway—the Justiciar pathway. As such, the Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire fractured.

“And Blood Emperor Alista Tudor, who was pushed into a corner, made a crazy decision. It was to switch to a non-neighboring Beyonder pathway. He paid the cost of losing his reasoning, becoming a lunatic so as to forcefully advance and become a true god.

“I have to say that this decision is filled with irrationality. It’s almost impossible for it to happen, but Mr. Door told me that Alista Tudor eventually succeeded. The craziest true god was born!

“It’s truly fascinating, but Mr. Door didn’t go into the details since he kept it from me.

"I asked him which was worse—lunacy or death. 'He' said that it was an obvious choice, death, because as long as one was alive, it wasn't impossible to recover even if one was completely mad.

"'He' laughed and gave an example. A crazy true god could use 'His' instinct to mate with all kinds of living beings, giving birth to all kinds of descendants. Through this process, if 'He' was lucky enough, the conflicting Beyonder characteristics would be purged. The lunacy would slowly disappear with time as 'He' improves bit by bit.

"Mr. Door deliberately didn't say if there would be any remnant problems, nor did he explain why almost no one made such a choice, but I could tell that there was definitely some huge hidden risks.

"I have to say, Mr. Door's understanding of true gods far exceeds my imagination. Before 'He' was exiled, 'He' might've made an attempt to reach Sequence 0… It's no wonder 'He' shows such contempt to Zaratul, and he has zero respect for the various true gods.

"This only makes me more unwilling to let 'Him' return to the real world."

There's plenty of information… It's no wonder that Bernadette deliberately chose this diary page… Wait, why did she choose this page? What important meaning is there behind it? Did problems begin to slowly happen to Emperor Roselle from that day until he eventually went mad? Mad…

Could it be… No way… Roselle's situation back then was similar to Blood Emperor Alista Tudor. His pathway was severed, and the neighboring pathways were blocked by either people or items, making it difficult to reach them… C-could it be that under the immense stress, he made an irrational choice like Blood Emperor, and he had attempted to switch to a non-neighboring pathway?

This way, the craziness in his later years was a result of him truly losing his reasoning, not a result of the defamation from others. It's no wonder Bernadette hated and betrayed him but is also trying to figure out the truth… From this angle, certain things have become very interesting. Roselle forcefully ascended to the throne and declared himself emperor, his declaration of the Civil Code, using the order from Earth's 18th and 19th century to replace the existing order. He wantonly spread his speeches and promoted his sense of aesthetics…

Heh heh, I really belittled this "senior" of mine. I always thought he was cosplaying Napoleon or Caesar for his own entertainment. So it was him making preparations to become the Black Emperor… No, I saw a few pages of his diary back then. His thought processes were clear, and his emotions were stable. He could even communicate with various noblewomen of different ages…

Hmm, he might not have made the final decision back then but was subconsciously leaving a way out for himself?

The Civil Code probably wasn't deliberate. As a usurper to the throne, declaring new laws is necessary, and from what he could use for reference, the Civil Code was what matched the situation and flow of history…

The actions of him declaring himself emperor later on must be something Bernadette found incomprehensible. She found it difficult to accept… As Roselle's most beloved child, she probably noticed certain abnormalities with her father before he declared himself king. Hence, she chose the longest diary page during that period of the emperor's life to give to Admiral of Stars… Klein couldn't help but make connections, as though the heavy history hidden deep in the fog was being turned over to reveal a page filled with blood and iron.

This made him curious about the final trigger that made Roselle go mad.

Meanwhile, he also resolved some of his puzzlement.

So the resurrection of the Black Emperor is done this way. It's very similar to my previous guess…

In the Fourth Epoch, there was actually a Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire which was supported by the six deities like the Lord of Storms and the Evernight Goddess… The two thrones in the ruins in Williams Street can be explained then, as it belonged to the United Empire…

According to Mr. Door, the six deities chose the Night Emperor, resulting in the United Empire fracturing. Then, who helped the Blood Emperor capture or kill the three Sequence 1 Hunters? Among them, Red Angel Medici was likely stronger than the Blood Emperor from back then… Primordial Demoness? Death? Primordial Moon? Dark Side of the Universe? Mother Tree of Desire?

Klein tried listing possibilities for his guesses, but he had nowhere to begin.

He quickly made the diary disappear as he smiled at The Hermit.

"What's your request?"

Cattleya frankly answered without holding back, "Is there someone else apart from Emperor Roselle mentioned in this diary entry?"

This question made Audrey turn to look at Mr. Fool. Her eyes sparkled as they were filled with curiosity. Even her ears seemed to prick up.

Alger was also very interested in the matter. That person definitely wouldn't be an ordinary person to be mentioned in Emperor Roselle's diary!

Klein could guess at their thoughts as he couldn't help but lampoon inwardly.

It's only because this diary entry was specially selected by Bernadette. If it were any other entries, I'd have to tell you that the other people mentioned are Demoness A, Demoness B, Hunter A, Hunter B, some aristocratic ma'am, some aristocratic lady…

After two seconds of consideration, Klein, who was leisurely leaning back into his chair, replied with a smile, “Mr. Door.”

Mr. Door… To be addressed by Mr. Fool in such a manner, it must be an existence that’s close to a god, right? Audrey figured out Mr. Door’s status from the tone and words used as she obtained an affirmative answer.

Cattleya and company also had similar ideas, but no one knew who Mr. Door was. They looked at each other only to be met with the shaking of heads.

Seeing Fors and the other members have a uniform reaction, Klein deliberately looked at the lady and chuckled.

“You shouldn’t be a stranger towards ‘Him.’”

“Ah?” Fors wore a confounded look.

She didn’t feel like she knew a so-called Mr. Door.

This person seemed to be of a very high level!

Chapter 744 - Sale

◆ ◆ ◆

I'm no stranger to Mr. Door? Apart from Mr. Fool, the only one I'm no stranger to will be the seven deities. Furthermore, I've only been to the cathedral of the God of Steam and Machinery… As Fors was feeling puzzled, she quickly recalled which high-level existence she could have made contact with.

Since there weren't many, she quickly eliminated all the other possibilities. Her eyes lit up as she made the connection with the contents of what Mr. Fool had originally said to her.

She looked at the end of the bronze table that was enveloped in gray fog. Her voice trembled as she asked, "Is 'He' the one who created those ravings during the full moon?"

Klein chuckled with a nod.

"That's right."

Ravings during the full moon… What's that? Audrey and company exchanged looks as though they were ordinary people who had just entered the mysterious world.

They had never heard of any so-called "full moon ravings."

As expected, Miss Magician isn't simple. She actually knows about Mr. Door, and she's aware of the corresponding matters. My initial judgment wasn't wrong… Although the Beyonder ingredients she needs are relatively low, there are too many possibilities… Cattleya nodded her head indiscernibly, planning to ask more about Mr. Door during the free exchange. She was also willing to pay a certain price for it.

An existence who could be seriously mentioned by Emperor Roselle and addressed by Mr. Fool in a rather formal manner, had to have many secrets involved. It was definitely nothing simple!

At that moment, Fors silently exhaled. She felt that she was one step closer to removing her curse.

At the very least, I now know who's producing the full moon ravings… She lowered her gaze and sincerely said to Mr. Fool, "Thank you for your reminder."

Klein didn't speak further, nor did he point out that Mr. Door was suspected to be the ancestor of the Abraham family, Bethel. After surveying around the table, he said with a casual tone, "You may begin."

With that said, he immediately controlled The World to say with a hoarse voice, "I have two mystical items for sale."

Two mystical items… Mr. World has recently been able to produce something of great value at every gathering… He lives up to being Mr. Fool's Blessed… Audrey poignantly sighed in amazement as she cast her eyes towards the other end of the long bronze table. Clearly, she was looking forward to The World's explanation of the powers of the item.

Alger was tempted, as he knew that the mystical items The World sold were definitely up to mark. However, thinking back to his lack of savings, with the secret to the primitive island already given to him, all he could do was silently sigh, feeling depressed.

He still had five hours before arriving at Pasu Island, and he was yearning to immediately fly over and complete his report. Then, he could leave the area, find an Obninsk to advance to Ocean Songster.

Once he did that, he could explore that primitive island with The

World, obtaining the relevant rewards, so as to ease his financial situation!

As for Derrick, Emlyn, and Fors, although they were somewhat curious about the mystical item, they lacked the desire to actually purchase it.

One of them could submit an application to the six-member council to select one mystical item which the City of Silver had for becoming a Sequence 6. The other wished to receive the rewards from the hunting competition, and he wasn't certain what the rewards would be; therefore, blindly purchasing items made it easy for redundancy and wastage to happen. Furthermore, he only had the two to three thousand pounds needed for the reward for clues. As for the last one, she didn't even have the money to purchase it.

Cattleya looked at Gehrman Sparrow with piqued interest as she considered the possible origins of the mystical item.

If it was suitable, without clashing with the two mystical items she had, she didn't mind buying it.

Seeing how the two major clients appeared interested, The World gave a deep chortle.

"One of them is Scales of Luck. It's what I named it…"

As he spoke, he requested Mr. Fool to conjure the silver necklace that had an ancient coin dangling from it.

After introducing its mystical effects and negative effects, he glanced at Audrey and specially gave a warning, "I suggest that Beyonders lacking in combat strength don't purchase it. Although it can allow one to avoid a fatal blow, the subsequent backlash is equally dangerous. One needs to have sufficient combat strength and sharp reactions to have a chance of surviving the backlash."

Thinking back to how she took on more of a support role, one that leaned towards control and influence, as well as her lack of combat experience, Audrey nodded with slight disappointment. It was an indication that Mr. World was right.

Mr. World is pretty nice to me and the Tarot Club members. He's willing to give such a warning. This would've prevented him from selling it… Audrey adjusted her understanding of The World.

The Hermit found the description extremely familiar. She had apparently heard of the effects of the Scales of Luck.

Scenes quickly flashed through her mind before finally being fixed onto a few particular scenes. Cattleya's eyes constricted as she blurted out in surprise, "Senor?"

It's likely Admiral of Blood Senor's necklace! It looks similar, and the effects are identical! Where did Gehrman Sparrow obtain it? What did he do this time? Did I miss some important news over the past few days while the Future was out at sea? Cattleya instinctively suspected that The World had stirred up something massive again!

Klein thought about it and controlled The World to laugh deeply.

"He's already dead."

He wasn't against letting Miss Justice and company realize that Gehrman Sparrow was equivalent to The World. After all, there were already two people who knew, and he didn't plan on using this identity frequently in the future.

A powerful member who often took action made the rest of the Tarot Club feel a greater sense of belonging.

He's already dead… Gehrman Sparrow killed Senor? In the previous battle, I only held a slight advantage over him… Cattleya discovered that she was increasingly unsure of The World's strength.

Although Admiral of Blood's bounty was higher than hers, it was mainly because he did more evil deeds. In terms of strength and mystical items, Cattleya was slightly stronger.

It wasn't as if she had never had any conflict with Senor. She had held the advantage several times, but she had failed to mortally wound him.

As for Gehrman Sparrow, she believed that he was inferior to her when they met on the Future. he was even unlikely to defeat Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy in her optimum state.

Only when this crazy adventurer completed his advancement and hunted Slaughterer Kircheis did she determine that he truly had the strength of a pirate admiral and was someone at her level.

However, a week had just passed, and Gehrman Sparrow had completed another hunt. He had finished off Admiral of Blood Senor who was one of the top three pirate admirals!

Cattleya knew that she herself was incapable of doing so!

He's dead? Admiral of Blood Senor is dead? Gehrman Sparrow did it? He's killing one Sequence 5 a week? Furthermore, each one of them is stronger than the last… Even if he's Mr. Fool's Blessed, isn't such strength too ridiculous? Especially when he hasn't become a demigod… Was it done with the help of the other Blessed? The Church should have the relevant records, but at my present position, I won't be able to read them… Alger was secretly alarmed as he automatically began to consider a reasonable explanation.

Audrey was still in her family castle in East Chester County. All she read was a few newspapers and magazines that involved the entire nation, so she wasn't aware of what happened at sea. However, from Ma'am Hermit's tone and words, she could tell that Mr. World had done something incredible again!

Senor… Mr. Hanged Man had apparently mentioned it before. It's Admiral of Blood's name… Mr. World finished off this pirate admiral and obtained his mystical item? How amazing. That's practically what I dreamt of! Back when I had heard of the Seven Pirate Admirals, I had imagined myself becoming a powerful Beyonder to adventure out into the sea to capture all of them and hand them over to the kingdom… So our Tarot Club is already this powerful!

Hmm, I have to investigate who killed Admiral of Blood. That way, I'll be able to figure out Mr. World's real identity… But would he be unhappy about that? No, he mentioned it himself, so he's likely willing to let himself be known… Audrey thought in glee.

Fors, who needed to read various newspapers to obtain material, instantly recalled a piece of news that she had recently read:

Admiral of Blood Senor was suspected to have been killed by the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow!

C-could it be that Mr. World is the crazy adventurer worth, no—is the crazy adventurer with a bounty of 50,000 pounds!? Fors felt respect. She began to believe that he had the ability to help her finish off the Aurora Order Oracle, the suspected Traveler, Lewis Wien!

Emlyn shared similar feelings as Audrey. This was because he seldom read minor newspapers. His area of activity didn't include any information gathering grounds. As for Derrick, he wasn't one bit surprised. He had long confirmed that Mr. World was extremely powerful. Even though Mr. Hanged Man had once mentioned that Admiral of Blood Senor was very powerful, he believed that Senor was inferior to Mr. World due to a lack of any direct impression of him.

Cattleya said after a few seconds of silence, “How much do you plan on selling it for, or what item would you like to trade it with?

“If the price is suitable, I can consider it.”

Great! There's finally someone who's interested! Klein, who was burdened with immense financial pressure controlled The World to say, “12,000 gold pounds.”

He was afraid Cattleya would be frightened away by such a price, so he quickly added, “You can choose to pay a portion with gold coins. That way, all you will need is 11,000 pounds.”

Klein believed that Admiral of Stars, who had plundered gold-carrying ships from various nations, definitely had some gold reserves. Even if she didn’t have much, she could exchange for them from other pirates. This would allow him to make his first payment to Miss Messenger.

As for fishing up sunken ships, due to the existence of the Church of Storms, Klein believed that any easily discoverable ships would’ve long been found by the irascible Storm bros.

Sea King isn’t weaker than Sea God, and there had to be a handful of people at the level of Sea King inside the Church of Storms!

Cattleya did a silent calculation and said, “4,000 pounds worth of gold coins and 6,500 pounds in cash. We can close the deal if you are agreeable.”

The money wasn’t easy to raise, even for her, but she had the Moses Ascetic Order backing her. Spending about 10,000 pounds to obtain the Scales of Luck was something that no secret organization would object to.

As expected of a pirate admiral… Unfortunately, I have to avoid the Rose School of Thought, and I can’t clean out Admiral of Blood’s ship… Klein made The World carefully consider it before saying, “Deal.”

Chapter 745 - Knowledge is Money

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Finally… At the instant that they reached a deal, Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He felt the pressure on him significantly decrease.

Although Miss Messenger had said that the 10,000 Loen gold coins could be paid in installments, and she hadn't specified when it would begin, Klein didn't wish to drag out payment for too long, afraid that he would incur the wrath of Reinette Tinekerr.

After all, she was a spirit world creature at the demigod level. If she really ended up mad, she had the means to make things difficult for her "employer" even if she was restricted by the contract!

Besides, the cost of acting as a tycoon is just too high. The salary of twenty plus servants and the corresponding costs is only just a tiny portion. There's still the carriage, horses, wine, gifts for neighbors, banquets, and investments to conceal my status, each of them more expensive than the last. If I don't save up enough cash, I'm afraid I'll go bankrupt and be unable to continue…

Sigh, 6,500 pounds with the cash I already have should be able to last until I confirm my target, right? No, the experiences from the past two days have proven to me that I should never use my own understanding to imagine a tycoon's life. I probably still need another five to six thousand pounds to barely maintain it… Klein wished to raise his hand to rub his temples, but he ultimately held back.

He soothed his mind and made The World look around again before saying with a hoarse laugh, "The second item is Biological Poison

Bottle…”

He used a relatively succinct description to describe the conjured brownish translucent bottle. He emphasized the few poisonous traits it had, how long it took, how to prevent the effects ahead of time, and any negative effects it gave while carrying it.

Audrey felt a chill down her spine as she felt a little embarrassed. She felt the former because of the terrifying poison that made one rip off their skin and flesh, while the latter was a result of the strange aphrodisiac effects it had on a wide area.

This is truly a crazy mystical item… Hmm, it’s the type that needs to be prepared ahead of time to show its full effects. It’s quite useless against an ordinary Spectator because observation and reading minds can help the Low-Sequence Beyonders of this pathway detect the danger ahead of time and make the necessary actions… However, there’s no need for me to do so. If I were to detect danger ahead of time, I can directly cry out for my guards… B-besides, I don’t like such effects! It will easily harm myself! Audrey, you’re already a mature and rational Beyonder. You can’t buy everything you see! Audrey seriously considered it for a few seconds before giving up on asking the price.

Seeing Miss Justice not ask for the price, Klein couldn’t help but let The World add, “5,200 pounds.”

Audrey bit down on her inner lips as she politely shook her head.

“I wish to obtain a mystical item that’s more offensive in nature.”

Spectator was a pathway that lacked any direct attacks in the early stages, one that was only effective at affecting or controlling their targets.

“5,200 pounds.” Alger, Fors, and Emlyn repeated the price softly in unison before they shirked all thoughts about it.

“5,200 pounds…” Cattleya suddenly seemed to recall something as she paused obviously. She then quickly added, “It’s not necessary for me.”

Ma’am Hermit seems to be afraid of something… Audrey acutely read her emotions.

For a split second, Cattleya felt that the Biological Poison Bottle had a lot of synergy with Poison Expert Frank Lee. Furthermore, their powers didn’t overlap too significantly, and they even complemented one another. She was wondering if she should purchase it for her first mate since he had saved up quite a bit of money, but considering how Frank Lee might come up with terrifying experiments after obtaining the Biological Poison Bottle, she trembled and gave up on the idea.

She didn’t wish to see the deck of the Future produce the children of the crew, the kind that mooed.

After the gathering is over, I’ll write to Miss Sharron and tell her that Admiral of Blood’s necklace has been sold. All that’s left is the Biological Poison Bottle… Klein hid his disappointment, and after some thought, made The World speak, “I have a Book of Secrets. It’s a book on mysticism left behind by the Southern Continent’s Shaman King Klarman. It’s suitable for Mid-Sequence Beyonders who have pretty good foundations.

“The price is 1,000 pounds.”

Knowledge is money!

Having undergone the teachings of Mr. Fool, Mr. Hanged Man and the other members of the Psychology Alchemists, Audrey was tempted.

She now had an extremely solid foundation in mysticism, and she had a desire to improve further.

The Psychology Alchemists will likely teach me some mysticism knowledge of a higher level in the future, but it will definitely not be all-encompassing and will be limited to the domain of the mind… Audrey easily convinced herself as she nodded.

“This is exactly what I want.”

Fors was equally interested, but the thought of how much money she had made her close her mouth. As for the other members, they didn’t lack such knowledge.

As expected of Miss Justice. She doesn’t bargain at all. My bottom line was actually 800 pounds. No, I don’t have one at all. It’s not like knowledge can only be sold once… Klein happily made The World chuckle.

“Deal.

“However, I have to remind you not to pray to the Primordial Moon. It will make you become a lump of squirming flesh that only knows to wildly mate with different creatures to produce all kinds of children. Of course, you cannot pray to other secret existences. It will be equally dangerous.”

Audrey was terrified by what she heard as she couldn’t help but change her seating posture.

She then calmed down, turning to look at the end of the long bronze table. She said firmly, “I’ll only pray to Mr. Fool when holding a secret ritual.”

She had spoken with utmost sincerity and without any hypocrisy.

Miss Justice really worships and trusts The Fool… Klein felt touched and a little ashamed. This was because the Sea God Scepter’s domain didn’t overlap with the Primordial Moon. He was unable to provide an effective response in certain rituals. All he could do was attempt to use some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog as feedback.

Following that, as The Fool, he expressed his attitude on the matter:

“Very good.”

Meanwhile, having achieved his goal, he made The World say, “I have an Interrogator Beyonder characteristic here for just 1,200 pounds.”

…How many items does he have… Fors was dumbfounded.

Considering how Xio was still lacking in money and lacked the corresponding formula, all she could do was retract her gaze and pretend as though she hadn’t heard him.

As for the Interrogator Beyonder characteristic which was in the hands of Mr. Fool’s subordinate, she didn’t believe that he would keep it that long for her.

Seeing no one respond, The World coughed and said, “I’m done.”

Just as he said that, Alger, who had been waiting all this time, looked at Cattleya and said, “I wish to know where Obninsk sea monsters that do not belong to the Church of Storms are.”

Obninsk sea monsters that don’t belong to the Church of Storms? The Hanged Man really isn’t a member of the Church of Storms? Cattleya frowned a little before easing them.

“I’ll help you ask. We’ll talk about the price when I have actual clues.”

“Alright.” Alger silently sighed.

A few seconds prevailed before Emlyn said to Fors, “I’ll pay you the 100 pounds for the clue today.”

“Thank you,” Fors said without a delightful expression.

Mr. World’s transactions were all in the thousands or more. It made her feel a little numb to such a pittance.

Emlyn then looked towards Derrick.

“The crystallized roots of the Tree of Elders and supplementary ingredients you need have been acquired.

“Hand me the list of resources and monsters around the City of Silver, and I’ll choose a few items of equal value.

“Oh, they cost me a total of 2,000 pounds. Adding my payment of 200 pounds, it will be a total of 2,200 pounds.”

Emlyn only wished to obtain things that he could quickly sell; otherwise, he wouldn’t have much money.

“Alright. Eh, thank you, Mr. Moon.” Derrick was delighted for he suddenly felt that Mr. Moon wasn’t that irritating after all.

He quickly conjured the corresponding list and handed it over to Emlyn.

Emlyn casually flipped through the piece of paper and suddenly felt that it wasn’t right.

This was because just this piece of information had extremely high value. It presented the detailed information and corresponding resources around the City of Silver!

I remember that they didn’t pay to see this list… Emlyn couldn’t help but glance at The Hanged Man Alger and The Hermit Cattleya.

At that instant, he seemed to understand something.

When he looked at The Sun again, Emlyn had a newfound sense of superiority, as well as a sense of guilt he couldn’t get rid of. He cleared his throat and said, “This, this, also this…”

Derrick seriously memorized what was said, and he indicated that there was no need for him to return to the City of Silver, as those could be gathered around Afternoon Town.

Following that, Audrey inquired about clues to the fruit of an Illusory Chime Tree, but she received a disappointing answer.

When the transactions came to an end, it didn’t need The Fool to announce it, as they automatically entered a free exchange.

Alger looked towards Little Sun and said, “Are you still in Afternoon Town?”

“Yes, but we will be returning to the City of Silver soon. The new expedition team arrived today.” Derrick not only answered Mr. Hanged Man’s question seriously, but he even offered a tidbit. “I’ve already told the Chief that while clearing out the Afternoon Town monsters, I obtained the potion formula for Notary.”

The Hanged Man nodded slightly and said, “What was his attitude?”

“He only said ‘very good,’” Derrick carefully recalled what had happened.

Alger chuckled when he heard that.

“You can be at ease. Your Chief is very happy to see you grow. In contrast, he will be more wary of the Elder Council’s Shepherd.”

He didn’t continue on the topic as he informed all the members of a piece of news:

“Recently, many pirates have been heading to Bansy Harbor. They discovered that it has already been completely destroyed. Even if it’s rebuilt, it would take several years.”

Chapter 746 - Same Night

◆

After hearing The Hanged Man's description, Klein couldn't help but recall Red Angel Medici and the evil spirit found in the underground ruin.

However, he didn't share the discoveries of his exploration this time. Firstly, there wasn't a need to, and secondly, it involved Miss Sharron.

As for the other members, they had already learned that Bansy Harbor had been destroyed. And since The Hanged Man hadn't revealed any new information, there was no need for them to reply to the matter.

Realizing that no one was saying anything, Alger glanced at The World before looking back. He said calmly, "That's all from me."

The Hermit immediately turned to look at Fors.

"Ma'am, what do you know about Mr. Door? I can pay for the corresponding piece of information."

Fors, who didn't wish to expose her problems, suddenly hesitated when she heard the latter half of the sentence. She was momentarily tempted.

Payment. I wonder how much Ma'am Hermit can pay me… I don't really know much about Mr. Door either… Furthermore, some of the knowledge stems from Mr. Fool's words… Fors looked to the end of the long bronze table once again and asked, "Honorable Mr. Fool, can I tell her?"

As he met her every full moon, Klein knew that Miss Magician's financial situation wasn't in the best of states, so he smiled with a nod.

"Yes."

Fors silently heaved a sigh of relief, turned to Cattleya, and said, "500 pounds. You can request for a private exchange."

Cattleya didn't bargain. After some thought, she said, "There's no need. Just say it directly."

She wished to see if the other members would be able to figure out more about Mr. Door from Miss Magician's description.

Fors nodded and deliberated over her words.

"I once obtained a mystical item that helped me traverse the spirit world. But after using it, I would hear strange ravings every full moon or Blood Moon. It would inflict an excruciating pain upon me that puts me on the verge of losing control.

"And according to Mr. Fool, these ravings come from Mr. Door."

She paused and added, "'He' might be asking for help."

So Fors has been silently suffering such pain… She usually doesn't show it, acting as though she greatly enjoys life… As Audrey subconsciously pitied her friend, she began wondering how she hadn't discovered anything abnormal about Fors with her Spectator powers.

Mystical item that can traverse the spirit world… Ravings during the full moon… Suspected to be asking for help… Cattleya repeated Miss Magician's key points as she nodded with satisfaction.

"Thank you for your description."

She then swept her gaze at the other members, regretfully realizing that no one else had any additional reaction.

The free exchange continued and soon came to an end.

Watching the other members leave and helping them complete a few transactions, Klein returned to the real world as he sat in his reclining chair, feeling relaxed as he rested for a while.

Following that, he walked to his desk, and he picked up a pen and paper to write to Sharron. He told her that the Scales of Luck had been sold, leaving only the Biological Poison Bottle for sale, as well as the Lunatic Beyonder characteristic.

After folding the letter, he wrote the information such as “126 Garde Street, Hillston,” and “Ma’am Maryam.” Then, he opened his iron cigar case and made Admiral of Blood Senor silently appear beside him.

This Wraith acted like a valet as he humbly picked up the letter on the table before vanishing from the room.

A few streets away, a letter appeared out of nowhere in a mailbox as it fell inside.

†

East Chester County, the Hall Family Manor.

Audrey looked at the mirror with her unfocused green eyes as the contents of the Book of Secrets filled her mind.

This knowledge formed an illusory book that appeared upon being recalled. She could then flip to the corresponding page simply by willing it.

This was a result of Klein directly using a portion of the powers from the mysterious space above the gray fog to create a product that was a fusion of information bestowment and the Seer’s dreamscape ability to recall it. It could last a week or two.

And this was sufficient for Audrey to finish reading the Book of Secrets.

If she had anything she couldn't recall in the future, she could always request for a bestowment.

Mr. Fool's condition seems to be improving… Audrey thought in delight as a twinkle gradually returned to her eyes.

She stood up, walked to the door, and said to the bored golden retriever who was sprawled on the ground outside, "Susie, you don't look lady-like enough this way."

Susie looked around warily and twitched her nose before saying, "This is the most standard action during hound training."

But you aren't a qualified hound… Audrey lampooned as she said with a smile, "I thought you would reply: 'Audrey, I'm only a dog~'"

Susie replied in a serious manner, "An excessive use of repeated words makes it easy for others to grasp your personal habits and mental gymnastics.

"Audrey, that's what that book on psychology wrote."

"…"

Audrey was momentarily at a loss for words. At that moment, she saw her father, Earl Hall, with his valet and attendant walking up the castle's staircase.

Even though it was sunny outside, this place remained dark and gloomy. There were even candle stands that had been lit. They were embedded in the walls as they illuminated the stairs.

"This castle is just too old. I think it needs a major renovation," Earl Hall casually grumbled to his daughter.

Audrey nodded in a demure manner and said, "Yes, my dear earl. This is precisely why I dislike this place. It makes me feel like I'm slowly rotting away."

"But I'm actually spending 13,000 pounds a year to repair this place," Earl Hall said with a regretful chuckle.

Audrey glanced at Susie and smiled at her father.

"Father, is there something for me?"

Earl Hall pointed at the papers in his attendant's hands.

"A telegram from Backlund. Someone is selling 10% of the Backlund Bike Company. Are you interested? I think this industry has a very bright future. And it's currently far from reaching its lowest estimated prospects."

"Bike?" Audrey found the word rather unfamiliar as her eyes darted around, her expression slightly confused.

Earl Hall smiled at his daughter.

"It's a kind of machinery with two wheels that allows a person to ride on it. You can understand it as a carriage for the ordinary person."

"In Loen and Backlund, the majority of the population doesn't mostly comprise of the nobles or businessmen, but the ordinary people who engage in labor work. Next would be the type of people with some technical skill and standing. This is the target audience of the bike. They have absolute numbers, as well as the required ability to purchase it. Even if 10% of them are willing to buy a bike, it will lead to quite a wonderful development for this company.

"Yes, they hold the corresponding patents."

Audrey trusted her father's foresight, and she could understand the prospects as described by him. She nodded gently and said, "How much would the 10% shares cost?"

"According to preliminary estimates, the Backlund Bike Company is currently valued at 50,000 pounds. This is because the product's advertising and sales campaign still needs time to develop further. Therefore, you can't naively believe that the 10% shares are only worth 5,000 pounds. I suggest that you bid 8,000 pounds in the first round of bidding, with a bottom-line price of 15,000 pounds. I will send people to help you in this matter," Earl Hall answered succinctly.

About 10,000 pounds… I've mostly used up the cash for this month… Clearly a little embarrassed, Audrey said, "Father, I won't be able to produce that much money on such short notice. And selling my shares, estate, collections, or await their profits will require some time."

Earl Hall laughed out loud.

"There's no need to go through so much hassle. You can mortgage your shares in the Backlund Munitions Corporation or Pritz Commercial Marine Company to the bank for a short period of time to obtain the cash. Once the matter is complete, you can mortgage the shares in the Backlund Bike Company for a longer period of time, using the mortgage loan to pay off the first loan.

"This way, you'll only need to pay about a week to two weeks of relatively high interest to complete the trade. And the bike company's dividends a year would be enough to cover the interest of the long-term loan. You'll then be able to patiently wait for its value be recognized, and that's a high-probability event."

Although Audrey had never received a complete education in commercial finance, she wasn't too unfamiliar with such matters with a major banker as her father. Some thought had allowed her to understand the entire process as she asked as a form of confirmation, "That's to say, I only need to pay about two to three hundred pounds to obtain 10% of the bike company's shares?"

"Or lower," Earl Hall said with a smile.

Audrey understood her father. As the largest shareholder of the Varvat Bank, as well as the fourth-largest shareholder of the Backlund Bank, he had the ability to help his daughter to obtain the most reasonable interest for a short-term loan.

“Thank you, my dear earl.” Audrey smiled as she curtsied.

†

Under the moonlight, with the dark-blue seawater nearing the color of black, Alger Wilson stood at the bow of the ship as he watched the silent outline of Pasu Island.

This was the headquarters of the Church of Storms, a land where a true god’s grace was showered.

As a middle-ranking member of the Church, Alger recalled himself coming here only three times. The first was him finding the Blue Avenger and after advancing to Seafarer. The second was his report last year, and this time. And very long ago, as a mixed-blood with dark blue hair, he had been selected to enter the headquarters to be a member of the children’s choir, but without any talent in singing, he was soon dismissed. He returned to the chapel on the island where he was born to be a servant. And the priest there was an extremely violent superior to his subordinates.

[image]

Every time he recalled that piece of history, his expression would turn extremely livid, fortifying his thirst to become a high-ranking member of the Church.

Amidst the wind, the Blue Avenger silently cruised forward into the harbor.

†

In Backlund, which had also ushered in the night, Emlyn White, who was dressed in a starched formal suit and top hat, infiltrated the residence of another Sanguine Baron, Rus Báthory.

He believed that Rus would be taking action soon to reel in his bait. And for a Sanguine, a night with the crimson moon was very suitable for hunting.

After an unknown period of time, Emlyn's eyes suddenly lit up. He saw a figure leap from a window facing the house's rear before landing silently on the ground.

Chapter 747 - First Blood

◆◆◆

Under the crimson but gloomy moonlight, Emlyn took out a metal bottle, twisted its lid, and downed it.

Then, he seemed to transform into a shadow as he drifted over the surface of the wall, quickly and silently following Rus Báthory.

Sanguine were always known for their speed. The two Barons ran through the sides of the dark alleys and streets, one after another, spending more than half an hour to arrive at the messy and dirty East Borough where they stopped in front of an old apartment.

Seeing Rus Báthory choose to climb the pipe, and using the most stealthy approach to head for the third story, Emlyn slowed down his pace and didn't rush to follow behind him, as he would be easily discovered.

After two seconds of serious consideration, he picked up a translucent perfume bottle, twisted it open, and pressed down on it, scattering the liquid inside it onto his body.

This potion only had one use—eliminate his smell to make it identical to his surroundings!

After putting down the bottle in his hand, Emlyn raised the brass bottle and downed the liquid inside.

A Potions Professor sure is troublesome… he mumbled, looking down as his hands became transparent. The brass bottle seemed to be floating in front of his sleeve.

After Emlyn stuffed the tiny bottle away, all that was left was a formal suit, a top hat, and a pair of leather shoes without any buttons or laces. They formed a human shape as they moved about.

Another completely transparent bottle resembling a perfume bottle flew over and floated in midair as it pressed itself, spurting the potion inside onto the clothes.

Following that, the suit, top hat, and shoes turned faint and completely disappeared.

After completing his “invisibility,” Emlyn glanced at the apartment where Rus Báthory had entered. He silently climbed a pipe, and he chased after him with extreme speed.

While the window was still ajar, he floated inside like a transparent cloud, without causing so much as a stir. He hid in the corner as he watched the thin-faced but charming Rus Báthory search for the target.

The latter slowly frowned since the place was empty. There wasn’t even a mosquito, much less a person, despite the former becoming active in the past week.

And this Sanguine Baron had already confirmed that the Moon Puppet was here.

Suddenly, a creaking sound broke the frozen silence.

The apartment’s main door opened as a woman in a black dress leisurely walked in. When she saw Rus Báthory, she asked with an ethereal voice, “Who are you looking for…”

Emlyn looked in the direction of the sound, and he saw a dark-skinned, long-browed face with soft outlines and a drooping mouth. It was none other than his target Windsor.

However, in Emlyn's eyes, this Primordial Moon's devout believer had certain differences from her portrait. He discovered that her eyes, eyebrows, and mouth were curved up, like they were mimicking the crimson moon.

And her forehead, cheeks, neck, and every layer of skin that she exposed had patches of withered grass and flowers.

…Man, what did Rus Báthory sell to her? Why would she become like this? Emlyn jumped in fright as he felt the hair on his back stand up.

Meanwhile, withered grass mixed with dried flowers grew from the floor, walls, door, and ceiling in swaths.

They began to isolate the room from the outside world, creating an extremely strange scene.

Once Rus Báthory caught the smell of danger, he didn't attempt to converse with her. Without any hesitation, he took out a metal bottle and downed the liquid inside.

Pa!

He threw the bottle as his body dragged out afterimages as he pounced towards the mutated Windsor. His fingernails extended as they swirled with black gases.

The withered grass and dry flowers that were embedded in Windsor's face made her look like a huge doll. She met him at an equally fast speed, clawing at Rus Báthory without any aversion to being injured.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

After a series of collisions, Rus Báthory was sent flying back as he slammed into the wall.

His sleeves were ripped apart, revealing the bone-deep scratches on his skin.

And in the midst of his flesh, the withered grass and dried flowers slowly grew from the inside out!

What a monster… This was the first time Emlyn was encountering such an enemy. He huddled in a corner and nearly forgot to help his kinsman.

He didn't rashly appear as all kinds of thoughts flashed through his mind. As he observed the battle between Rus Báthory and Windsor, he considered how he should deal with the situation.

The strangest of all is the withered grass and dried flowers… Withered grass and dried flowers… They're likely afraid of fire! Emlyn's heart stirred as he immediately abandoned his invisibility, took out another metal bottle, twisted its lid, and downed it.

He then spewed out all the liquid in his mouth.

The grayish-red liquid ignited upon contact with air, extending its scorching flames to the side.

The flames stacked upon each other as the fire extended. Instantly, they engulfed the room in a scarlet ocean of fire!

Amidst crackling sounds, the withered grass and flowers were ignited one after another as they rapidly spread the flames to their own kind.

In just a few seconds, the sealed environment was on the brink of destruction. As for the grass and flowers on Windsor's body, they were also turning aflame.

At this moment, Rus Báthory had a gaping hole dug through his chest, making him lose a great portion of his combat strength. He was relying on the Sanguine's extraordinary recovery ability to barely hold up.

Seeing his enemy as a flaming torch, Emlyn acutely noticed that her aura was weakening. He didn't hesitate to lunge forward, circle around Windsor, and deliver several clawing swipes.

Beneath his feet, wisps of black gas rose and swirled around the Primordial Moon believer like chains that bound her vitality.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Intense and short bursts sounded as the two figures suddenly closed the distance.

All movement within the scene had vanished in the end as Emlyn's grabbed Windsor's throat with his left hand, raising her up.

After hesitating for a second, he saw her hideous appearance and snapped her neck.

Pa!

A thin, miniature wooden puppet embedded with withered grass and dried flowers fell from Windsor's body as the flames in the apartment gradually died out.

Emlyn yanked Windsor's mutated head, turned around, and faced the heaving Rus Báthory. He then pressed his free right hand to his chest, and he bowed with a smile.

“Thank you for your help.”

Seeing Rus Báthory instantly turn furious and helpless, Emlyn added in great delight, “Remember to hand over the puppet and the Beyonder characteristic to Lord Nibbs. They might be problematic.”

After saying that, black gases coagulated behind him, turning into two illusory bat wings.

With a whoosh, Emlyn flapped these wings as he turned to fly out the window and land in the dark, nearby alley.

When he landed, he quickly converged the black gases and turned to look around.

Seeing that Rus Báthory hadn't followed him, Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief as he pressed his fist to his mouth. As he coughed, he mumbled, "I hate fire. I hate smoke!"

He was just about to leave East Borough when he felt a chill run down his back.

Emlyn's mind instantly tensed up as he held onto Windsor's mutated head, slowly turned around, and looked at the shadows in the corner.

He first saw a very tiny figure before identifying it.

The body was thin and long, akin to a wooden pole. Its eyes and mouth were curved like a crescent, and its surface was embedded with plenty of withered grass and dried flowers. It was none other than the Moon Puppet from before!

It's targeting me… What the hell is this… I'm still very far from where Lord Nibbs stays… It's really dangerous outside… Thoughts surfaced in Emlyn's mind as he felt his spine turn cold and his muscles turn tense.

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, he suddenly had an idea. He stared at the Moon Puppet, and he murmured in ancient Hermes, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…"

†

"Can't a man have some sleep in the middle of the night!?" Klein sat up as he rubbed his temples in fury.

He quickly left his bed, took four steps counterclockwise, and he entered the space above the gray fog. He then took his seat that belonged to The Fool.

It’s that fellow, Emlyn White? Klein gave a glance as he curiously emanated his spirituality, touching the crimson star that represented The Moon.

He then saw a stiffened Emlyn, and he saw the thin, strange puppet looking straight at him.

The puppet was cloaked in a rich but illusory crimson moonlight. They were undulating like a tidal wave, making a connection with something high in the sky.

At this moment, the crimson moonlight was spreading silently, enveloping Emlyn White within.

There’s a problem… There’s something wrong with this puppet… Klein, who could see more with the gray fog’s aid, didn’t hesitate to summon the Sea God Scepter from the junk pile into his hand.

The blue gems on the end of the bone scepter lit up one after another, emitting a blinding luster.

†

After chanting Mr. Fool’s honorific name and seeking “His” assistance, Emlyn felt his already cold blood turn colder. It felt like it would slowly freeze into ice.

This made his body rapidly turn stiff as he watched the Moon Puppet stumble and swagger towards him.

At this moment, a silver bolt streaked down into the alley, causing all the gloom and darkness to scatter.

Pa!

The lightning bolts sizzled into a ball of lightning and landed on the Moon Puppet, drowning it in a swath of silver.

The burst of light dissipated immediately as the strange puppet was left charred black. It lost its decorations as it collapsed. As for Emlyn, his blood no longer froze as it resumed its flow.

With him quickly recovering from the stiffness, he knew that Mr. Fool was watching. He hurriedly asked softly, “Do you need, no—what can I sacrifice to you?”

He always believed that Mr. Fool adhered to the principle of equivalent exchange. Therefore, he believed that he needed to pay a corresponding price for requesting ‘His’ assistance.

After a brief silence, he saw the boundless gray fog and the faint figure behind it. He then heard a lofty and magnificent voice:

“That puppet.”

“Alright.” Emlyn took two steps forward, bent down to pick up the puppet and cleared up the scene before quickly leaving East Borough.

As for Klein, he cautiously used a Paper Angel to disrupt any divination before returning to the real world.

Just as he was planning to head back to bed, he suddenly discovered the moonlight brighten outside as it seemed stained with blood.

Eh… Klein walked to the window in puzzlement. When he looked out, he saw that the crescent had turned full at some point in time; it was scarlet red like blood.

Another Blood Moon.

†

Blood Moon? Alger Wilson looked up at the sky as he steadily walked into the Lightning Cathedral ahead of him. This was the place he would be giving his report tomorrow.

And in the middle of the island, at the peak of the towering mountain, there was another cathedral named the Chasm of Storm. It was the headquarters of the Church of Storms’s headquarters, the holiest of holy temples.

Chapter 748 - A Duet

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the Lightning Cathedral, the high and spacious dome arched continuously. There wasn't any blank space, with gold and blue as the main colors. It made anyone who walked beneath it subconsciously feel that the place was sacred and solemn; thus, making them bow their heads.

Alger Wilson often made contact with a secret existence, and he often gathered in the palace of a deity's residence. As a result, he no longer had a longing for this. He wasn't as respectful as before, but he still had to put on an act. Like the other sailors around him, he kept his head down as he lightened his footsteps without even daring to breathe clearly.

In the silent atmosphere, they were led by the priest all the way to the clergymen's quarters at the back of the cathedral, with each of them getting a room.

After closing the door, Alger saw the sanguine moonlight shine into the window. It made the environment turn cold and sinister, as though countless wraiths seemed to be observing the real world through a thin curtain.

Every time the Blood Moon appeared, one's spirituality would be enhanced. Powers that stemmed from spirituality and hell would receive a significant boost, while the negative emotions of living beings reached an explosive state. The higher the Sequence, the more obvious it would be.

Faintly, Alger heard sobbing, low shouts, and whispering. This was completely different from the solemnity he previously felt in the Lightning Cathedral.

Illusory arms appeared before his eyes as they reached outwards from the walls, floor, and ceiling, like a three-dimensional pale forest.

Alger knew of the abnormalities of the Blood Moon, so he removed his captain's hat without panicking at all. He entered the bathroom and washed his face.

During this process, he suddenly heard a distant singing voice.

The singing voice was indistinct, as though it came from the middle of the island. It kept echoing endlessly as though it was right beside Alger. It didn't make him feel horrified, for it was akin to a woman who was away from her family and loved ones, singing slowly and sadly as she looked at the surging tides.

Alger pulled at a towel and wiped his face before cocking his head to listen.

He gradually frowned as he took out a small iron box from his priest robe's inner robe and placed it close to his ear.

In it was the Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristic he had purchased from The World. He suspected that the residual mental imprint on it was temporarily enhanced by the Blood Moon.

As the metal box came close, the singing by Alger's ears instantly became partially clear, melancholic, sorrowful, wistful, and painful.

But apart from that, there was still the ethereal and ancient voice sounding from it, forming a clear boundary with the clear singing as though they were in a duet!

Whose voice is that? It sounds like an elf's… An item in the Church that stems from the elves? This Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristic on me comes from an elf? Alger nodded as he came up with a theory.

Due to them sharing the same Sailor pathway, the Church of Storms had always been in search of elven relics. They were used to concoct potions, made into Sealed Artifacts, or isolated underground. Those with relatively fewer negative effects were rewarded to clergymen; therefore, it wasn't odd that something similar would be stimulated on the night of the Blood Moon.

If it's a mystical item, there wouldn't be a problem. If it's a Sealed Artifact, it means it's definitely not simple if the voice can penetrate the isolation barrier… Alger reined in his thoughts, brushed his teeth, and went to bed.

He soon fell asleep and had a dream.

After an unknown period of time, Alger suddenly felt a little lucid, vaguely aware that he was having a dream, but he automatically sized up his surroundings.

He discovered that above him was rippling dark blue seawater which was stacked up layer after layer and blocked the view of the sky. Ahead of him was a beautiful palace made of coral. It was tall, spectacular, dark, and gloomy.

Alger subconsciously walked towards the palace, walking into the open doors.

Inside were columns of coral that held up an exaggerated dome. The walls and dome were filled with murals depicting the terror of a storm.

Over a hundred meters away, there was a throne embedded with sapphires, emeralds, and lustrous pearls above a nine-stepped staircase that was extremely striking.

Alger looked over and saw a woman in a complicated ancient dress sitting on it. Her hair was black and held up into a bun. Her facial outline was soft, and her features were exquisite. She had a beauty that seemed timeless.

The woman’s expression was cold and her ears sharp. Her deep brown eyes looked down at Alger from a commanding position.

In her hand was a golden wine cup with complicated patterns.

Alger was just about to say something when her eyes emitted silver light resembling the bright flash of lightning, tearing through the dream.

Phew… Alger sat up and subconsciously gasped for breath. He found the dream both blurry and clear at the same time.

The woman’s appearance was blurry, as well as the details of the murals and coral palace, but her eyes that contained lightning and her sharp ears were clear.

A high-ranking elf? Under the effects of the Blood Moon, her relics resonated with the Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristic I have, resulting in it influencing my dream? As Alger guessed, he wondered which item it would be.

Due to his limited standing, the number of Sealed Artifacts and mystical items he knew were limited. However, he knew certain knowledge that others didn’t know, so he quickly thought of a possible target.

Calamity Cohinem?

The Book of Calamity “She” left behind has likely been sent to Pasu Island…

After making the report and departing, I’ll seek Mr. Fool’s advice and see if there will be any unexpected influences regarding this matter…

Alger didn’t dare recite The Fool’s honorific name in the Church of Storms’s headquarters.

After daybreak, he didn't show any signs of abnormality. Under the servant's lead, he entered a room with a long table, and he was questioned by three Mandated Punisher deacons.

Among these three deacons, only one of them possessed dark blue hair. This was because this wasn't a necessary change that would happen from consuming the Sailor pathway potion. However, this trait would quite stubbornly be passed down, just like the elves. Many of them with black hair would end up with blue hair. Nowadays, mixed-bloods with elven blood mostly had blue hair.

Alger sat at the end of the long table as he systematically answered the deacons' questions. He mentioned what he had done at sea, what he had planned to do, and what he had succeeded, as well as his failures.

And this would be compared to the description from his crew to prevent anyone from lying.

Towards the end of his report, the deacon with dark blue hair glanced at Alger. He asked with a hoarse voice, "Do you know Admiral of Stars Cattleya?"

Not only do I know her… Alger was nearly taken aback as he answered after some thought, "I met her at the pirate convention."

The deacon didn't harp on the question as he directly said, "Think of means to get to know her. Try to investigate Gehrman Sparrow's situation from her."

So that's how it is… It's because Gehrman hunted Admiral of Blood? Alger deliberately asked, feigning his ignorance, "What did Gehrman Sparrow do again?"

The dark blue-haired deacon said in a peeved manner, "He nearly destroyed Bayam! Alright, this isn't something you should know. In summary, remember. Gehrman Sparrow is a very dangerous person. There's a secret cult backing him. That organization has a demigod that's at odds with the Rose School of Thought!"

Nearly destroyed Bayam? A demigod in the organization? At odds with the Rose School of Thought? Alger deliberately didn't hide his shock.

He originally imagined that a focus was placed on Gehrman because of his hunting of Admiral of Blood Senor, but who knew that the reason was far more complicated and ludicrous than he had imagined!

What did Gehrman Sparrow do? When I pass by Bayam, I should find the actual spot to take a look… Also, isn't our Tarot Club's archenemy the Aurora Order? Isn't Mr. Fool always targeting the True Creator? Why did it change, no—why is there the additional Rose School of Thought? Alger muttered to himself inwardly.

As for the Tarot Club having a demigod, he wasn't surprised. He even found it logical. How could an ancient existence not have a demigod under "Him?"

Besides, back when Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos died silently in a strange manner, he was already convinced that Mr. Fool had a High-Sequence Blessed!

Thankfully, my meeting with Gehrman was very secretive; otherwise, things would be troublesome… Alger listened in silence without asking any questions. Like before, he accepted the missions and got up to leave the room.

†

Backlund's North Borough, outside 160 Böklund Street. Servants stood in two rows to welcome their master's arrival.

With white hair at his temples and deep blue eyes, Dwayne Dantès wore a tailcoat and a top hat with an inlaid gold cane. Together with Butler Walter and Valet Richardson, he walked in between his servants and arrived at the entrance of the three-story building.

Waiting there was Housekeeper Taneja who he had long selected.

She was in her early forties, and her hair was tied neatly. She had ordinary looks but wore an experienced demeanor. She wore gold-rimmed glasses and a black-and-white dress which was different from the other maidservants.

From the information received and the interview, Klein knew that this lady was born in East Borough. She was a believer of the Evernight Goddess, and she had chosen to be trained by a charitable organization by the Church at the age of fifteen, making her become a qualified maidservant.

After more than ten years of hard work, as well as the free lessons from the night schools, she was promoted from the lowest-ranking maidservant in a tycoon's household to a lady's maid. She later followed the tycoon's daughter when she got married, and she became a housekeeper until the family met with a financial crisis, forcing her to leave. She was extremely experienced when it came to managing a household.

After this lady signed the contract, she received 1,000 pounds from Dwayne Dantès as petty cash for the month before entering an argument with Butler Walter on whether they should purchase or rent a carriage.

From her point of view, since Mr. Dantès's goal was to enter high society and move into West Borough, or even Empress Borough, a carriage needed to be custom made to not appear inadequate. Before that, they could rent a high-end carriage for a year and wait until there was hope of him becoming a noble before they had one custom made. It was a more reasonable choice that didn't waste money or appear inadequate.

She convinced Walter, and of course Klein. This was because renting a high-end carriage with the horse costs only 88 pounds, and a two-wheeled carriage costs only 42 pounds.

Of course, someone who controls the household's expenditures needs to be someone who's good at accounting… Klein felt poignant as he smiled at Taneja before stepping through the three-story house's door.

This was the stage for which the tycoon, Dwayne Dantès, would be acting on.

Chapter 749 - The Moon's Authority

◆

Upon entering the house, the first thing Klein saw was the foyer. It was very spacious here, with several chairs and umbrellas placed there. Furthermore, the furnishing was elegant, and the decorations were befitting of his status. If he hadn't known of the structure ahead of time from his inspection, Klein might've imagined it to be the living room.

After passing through a second main door, the sight before his eyes opened up—it was a huge hall that could accommodate dozens of dancing guests.

In the middle of the hall was a brightly colored, thick, and plush carpet. Surrounding it were spaces covered with bright marble tiles, with a piano, stone sculptures, and other decorations decorating the hall. There were also stone columns that held up the second floor with inlaid ornaments.

To the left was a series of floor-to-ceiling windows, and beyond them was a lush, green lawn and blooming garden. To the right were walls, wooden doors, and a corridor that led to the lounges, storerooms, washrooms, kitchen, and butler's room, etc.

The hall was two stories high, and there was a crystal chandelier hanging down from the ceiling. It instantly made one imagine what it would look like when night fell.

Ahead of him were two staircases that led to the second floor.

The winding corridor here was square in shape, and the emptied-out section in the middle happened to be where the carpeted hall was. All Klein needed to do was hold a cup of wine and stand behind the railings of the second floor, and he could leisurely take in the sights of a ball below.

There were many rooms on the second floor. There was a living room, an activity room, a dining room, washrooms, a billiard room, and many bedrooms. If any guests needed to stay for the night, they would stay there.

Similarly, on the second floor, there were two staircases that led to the third floor. That was where Dwayne Dantès stayed. There was an exaggerated master bedroom, with a bar counter-equipped open room that allowed one to sunbathe and enjoy the scenery. There was a study which could be deemed as a miniature library, as well as two changing rooms and small bedrooms for the valet and the maid on night duty. There were also rooms meant for the household members and bathrooms, but Klein was currently a single man.

As for the other servants, they lived in a terrace house behind the main mansion. In another direction was the stable.

The mansion's underground area was equally spacious with a huge storeroom and wine cellar.

Taking off his coat, Klein stood on the balcony in the half-open room on the third floor with his back straight. He took in the sights of the surrounding streets and couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

There really is a reason why it's so expensive. The rent of 315 pounds really can't be considered a waste…

He had already paid a year's rent yesterday afternoon, and he could only force himself to enjoy this place that he rented.

Meanwhile, he had also directly paid Walter a year's salary of 115 pounds. As it was very possible that he would flee once he obtained the

Antigonus family's notebook, he didn't want to affect his butler's livelihood.

By the same logic, he had long paid Housekeeper Taneja her annual salary of 42 pounds. It allowed this lady to realize how generous Mr. Dwayne Dantès was, as well as how mannered he was.

Through the two head servants' negotiations and hard work, they hired all the servants. The annual salary of a male steward was 30 pounds; his valet, Richardson, was 35 pounds; the two footmen in charge of valeting guests and serving at the dining table each received 30 pounds; the two lady's maids were 18 pounds each; the two chambermaids were 12 pounds each; and the two handymen were 12 pounds each.

Apart from them, the cook was 30 pounds; the assistant cook was 15 pounds; the scullery maid was 13 pounds; the parlormaid was 11 pounds; the nursery governess was 25 pounds, the steward's boy was 10 pounds, the two coachmen were 25 pounds each; the two gardeners were 20 pounds each; the two laundresses were 10 pounds each—all for a total of 413 pounds. It cost about 8 pounds a week.

Together with the two head servants' annual salary, Klein needed to pay 570 pounds a year, making it approximately 11 pounds a week. This was still without including the expenditures for food, clothes, and all kinds of daily necessities.

I'll pay ten to twenty pounds a week without any income the moment I open my eyes… Klein did a mental calculation as he forced himself to cast his gaze onto the garden.

In the afternoon, he had paid off the rental fee for the two carriages and servants' first week's salary. Together with him giving Housekeeper Taneja 1,000 pounds for the daily expenses, he only had 1,286 pounds and 18 gold coins left. However, he would receive the payments from Miss Justice and Ma'am Hermit within the week.

I wonder how long that 1,000 pounds can last Taneja. Just to store up the required alcoholic beverages for the balls would cost a few hundred pounds… The rich Mr. Dwayne Dantès fell into deep thought and could hardly extricate himself from it.

To calm his emotions, he decided to head above the gray fog while the butler and servants were busy with handling the household chores. He wanted to study the strange puppet which Emlyn White and sacrificed.

After the Blood Moon happened, Klein had no choice but to return to the mysterious world and pull Fors into it. He resisted the urge to sleep as he listened to her drone on about her daily life in Backlund. After everything was over, he was just too tired. He accepted Emlyn's sacrifice, and after confirming that there wasn't anything weird, he returned to the real world and collapsed into bed.

After straightening his stylish dark-colored vest, Klein walked to the door and said to the awaiting valet, Richardson, "I have a habit of sleeping in the afternoon for forty-five minutes. I don't want anyone disturbing me."

"Yes, sir," Richardson answered humbly.

He was an illegitimate son with mixed blood. His father was Loenese, a supervisor at a manor, while his mother was a native from East Balam who was a slave in the same manor. After he was born, he was met with discrimination and bullying. This resulted in a weak and submissive character, and because he was good-looking, he was suitable for valeting guests. He was selected by the manor's master to be a valet before being brought to Backlund.

After both Houses of the Loen Kingdom had abolished slavery, he found himself out of a job. All he could do was seek the help of the City Family Servant Assistance Association.

Before Klein, he had served two households and committed some mistakes, but he did build up a wealth of experience. He caught Butler Walter's notice, and he became Dwayne Dantès's valet.

After looking at Richardson, who stood straight and tall, with a height that was almost identical to himself, Klein indiscernibly shook his head and sighed.

This guy that can clearly be a celebrity with his looks can only be a servant in this day and age. Furthermore, he's such a tall man, but he appears cowardly and weak. However, this can also be considered an advantage. He's obedient, silent, and submissive. He does whatever his master instructs him to do, and he will absolutely not dare to make his own decisions…

If I only have a valet with me requiring him to handle all kinds of matters, Richardson will definitely not be up to mark. However, I still have Butler Walter and so many other servants. He can handle the other matters with his experience and capabilities.

Without musing further, Klein locked the door and returned to the side of the reclining chair. He took four steps counterclockwise and entered above the gray fog.

He sat at the seat of The Fool, and he beckoned with his hand to make the charred Moon Puppet fly over and land before him.

After scrutinizing it, Klein didn't discover anything odd about it. Hence, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote the divination statement: "Its origins."

Putting down his fountain pen, Klein waited a few seconds before picking up the piece of paper and leaning back against his chair.

Hmm, my spiritual intuition didn't stop me from making the divination statement. It means that the latent danger of the Moon Puppet isn't as bad as the Rose School of Thought Beyonder characteristic… Klein mumbled as he skillfully recited the divination statement.

In the gray, hazy world, he saw an altar with a circle of fiery torches around it.

On the altar, there was what he suspected to be human skin with traces of blood everywhere. In the middle were three candles and a few puppets that resembled thin wooden poles.

These miniature puppets had curved eyes and mouths, as though they corresponded to the crimson crescent in the sky.

Therefore, they continued hanging their creepy smiles as withered grass and dried flowers remained embedded in their bodies.

A priest in a dark red robe was circling the altar with heavy steps, as though he was dancing a dance created by an epileptic patient.

At some point in time, moonlight gathered and shone on the puppet as it increased in brightness. Towards the end, it resembled the gentle ebbing of water waves.

The ritual quickly came to an end as the priest picked up a thin puppet and walked to the human body bound to a frame beside him. Instantly, he stabbed it through the body's eye socket.

Amidst tragic cries, the scene quickly changed. The dead man with the Moon Puppet in his eye socket was buried somewhere in an orderly manner.

The scene once again skipped and showed further development. Every full moon or Blood Moon, the moon's glow would scatter over the grave, seeping into it like water as the surrounding darkness turned gloomy.

Klein opened his eyes and adjusted his seating posture. He had a general idea of the Moon Puppet's origins.

It came from a prayer ritual to the Primordial Moon. It was a ritual lasting for centuries!

Over the past few centuries, they had absorbed the powers of the crimson moon, mutating bit by bit until they were exhumed by the colonists.

They usually didn't exhibit any oddity, and something only happened when a Primordial Moon believer activated them with the correct method. As for what would happen, Klein had no idea.

In a particular sense, these primitives are equivalent to the Primordial Moon's Chosen ones… Last night, after I smote one to death, that evil god was enraged; thus, causing the Blood Moon? Klein gently tapped the mottled table's edge as he came to a preliminary judgment.

Hmm, the Primordial Moon's wrath directly changed the moon's phenomena, making it a Blood Moon… If this theory is right, it means that in the domain of the crimson moon, the Goddess is inferior to the Primordial Moon. "She" might only have the title in name as "She" grasps a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact… Klein nodded slightly as he attempted to divine the weaknesses of the Moon Puppet.

This time, he saw sunlight and lightning.

This means that the Beyonder powers in the Sun domain and lightning from the Storm domain are best at dealing with it… As Klein interpreted the information, he threw the Moon Puppet into the junk pile and returned to the real world.

An hour later, Walter, who was wearing a starched suit and white gloves, knocked on the door. He bowed and said, "Sir, I'll be printing your name card in a while. They will be sent to the neighbors along with some gifts.

"They will take a few days to observe to determine your situation. If they're willing to accept you, they would send gifts and invite you to be their guests.

"Does your name card need a title added?"

Title… The Fool that doesn't belong to this era? Klein lampooned as he replied with a smile, “Merchant Dwayne Dantès from Desi would suffice.”

Walter nodded and said, “Based on your wishes, I’ll immediately arrange for you to have etiquette lessons. The focus will be on dancing, and I’ve hired a professional teacher.”

Chapter 750 - Attraction?

◆ ◆ ◆

Having read many magazines, Klein knew that the social life he wanted to enter had many balls, so he wasn't surprised by Walter's suggestion. He said with a nod, "Okay."

With that said, he looked sideways at his valet, Richardson.

"Prepare the carriage. I'll be heading over to Saint Samuel Cathedral."

Klein vividly remembered that his main goal was to act as a devout believer of the Evernight Goddess in order to get to know the corresponding clergymen, and from there he would find a way to sneak into Chanis Gate. Therefore, he planned to pray at the cathedral whenever he had the time to express his sincerity and get to know the members of the clergy.

"Yes, sir," Richardson answered politely.

Before long, Klein boarded his rented luxurious four-wheeled carriage, decked out in a coat and a top hat. As he enjoyed the scenery on his journey, he sampled the black tea that was adorned with a slice of lemon.

In fact, there was a tiny bar counter in the carriage, and in it, Butler Walter had specially prepared Golden Lanti, Winter Black Rand, and other distilled liquor, as well as all kinds of red and white wine that came from Intis.

However, Klein wasn't someone who enjoyed drinking. As a Beyonder, he didn’t like the feeling of being tipsy. It made him recall the feeling of losing control; therefore, he used the excuse of him heading to the cathedral, so as to get his valet, Richardson, to prepare a pot of marquis black tea.

“If it’s possible, I would actually like a cup of sweet ice tea. It’s something from the south,” Klein said half-jokingly to Richardson.

“I will prepare it next time,” Richardson immediately replied.

Klein chuckled and shook his head.

“No, there’s no need. That wouldn’t appear decent.

“Once I’m more familiar with the neighbors, and have hosted a Desi-styled banquet, we can prepare some sweet ice tea. Heh heh, I believe their children will like it.”

When Richardson realized that he had mistaken his employer’s intentions, he hurriedly said in a fluster, “I will keep it in mind.”

It only took twenty minutes to go from 160 Böklund Street to the Saint Samuel Cathedral at Phelps Street on foot. If it wasn’t because he needed to hire a coachman and rent a carriage to project an image befitting his status, Klein would rather walk over to digest his food and strengthen his body.

Soon, the carriage stopped along the square outside the cathedral. Klein held his gold-inlaid cane, got out of the carriage, and stopped there to enjoy the pigeons’ dance.

After entering the cathedral and coming to the main prayer hall, he passed his top hat and cane to Richardson. He found a seat near the aisle and sat down. He lowered his head, clasped his hands, and seriously and silently prayed.

Richardson sat behind him to his side, putting the items in place as he glanced at the Dark Sacred Emblem on the altar. He then closed his eyes.

In the serene atmosphere, Klein felt his spirituality lightly scatter. He wasn't too surprised by this, because the praying masses in the cathedral would encounter something similar. The tiny bits of spirituality that carried pious beliefs gathered together to provide power to the Chanis Gate's seals underground.

After an unknown period of time, his spiritual perception triggered as he opened his eyes and looked diagonally across him.

Standing there was an elder dressed in a black clergyman robe. His hair was sparse, and his face looked pale. He resembled a dead man.

From afar, he had a cold aura with a lacking expression. He blended in with the prayer hall's dark environment to a certain extent.

A Keeper… Klein made a judgment from a single glance. He closed his eyes again and continued praying. Of course, he had already remembered the man's facial features.

Big nose, grayish-blue eyes, loose facial skin, and no facial hair.

The elder dressed as a clergyman had sat down as well. He focused on praying to the Goddess. Inside the prayer hall, the wall in front had a few holes. Pure light shone in from them like resplendent stars. It made the dark environment appear gentle and holy.

Time ticked by as Klein felt his spiritual perception trigger again.

He carefully opened his eyes and saw that the black-robed Keeper had left his seat and entered a passageway to the side.

That should lead to the back of the cathedral… The Keepers stay inside the cathedral? They have no family and don't have their own residences? From their conditions, it's not that surprising either. Furthermore, the Keepers of Chanis Gate are monitored by the bishops, so it's a normal precaution… This means that I have to become friends with the priests and bishops of Saint Samuel Cathedral to obtain the freedom to enter the area at the back of the cathedral… Klein didn't sneak anymore glances as he closed his eyes and considered various problems.

After some time, he slowly got up and walked to the altar. Standing in front of the donation box, he took out fifty pounds in cash and devoutly threw it in.

This made the bishop and priest on duty look over. Their gaze turned friendly as they remembered his appearance.

After doing that, Klein nodded gently at the clergymen, turned around, and walked down the aisle towards the exit. Richardson held his hat and cane and followed closely behind.

Once out the prayer hall, he walked towards the main entrance alongside a series of intricate murals and colored-pane windows that lined the top.

At this point, a few figures walked in. Leading them was a middle-aged man with long sideburns and soft facial features. He wore a black trench coat without any gloves, nor did he carry a cane.

Behind him was a young man dressed in a similar trench coat. He had black hair and green eyes, and he looked handsome with his randomly styled hair. He looked like he hadn't combed it after waking up in the morning.

Klein was especially familiar with his looks and figure. It felt as though they hadn't seen each other for years.

Leonard Mitchell!

Klein's pupils constricted a little, but he didn't stop at all. He maintained his pace and stride, and he walked towards the few Nighthawks in black trench coats.

Yes, Klein was certain that they were Nighthawks!

When they met, he casually swept a gaze at Leonard and company before passing them and walking towards the main entrance.

The main entrance was open, and the clouds outside were thin. There was plenty of sunlight and pigeons were flying.

Leonard Mitchell glanced at the believers who walked past him out of boredom, and he retracted his gaze. He said with a sigh, "I hope we can stay in Backlund for a few days this time to have a good rest. The case this time wasn't only dangerous and thrilling, but it also required us to be tense the entire time.

His team of Red Gloves had just cracked a human skin-donning Devil case, and they had captured two targets.

This seemed easy on the surface, but it wasn't simple at all. They went through plenty of setbacks and tribulations before completing the mission with great difficulty. Every member was exhausted both in mind and body.

Captain Soest shook his head with a smile.

"This is the life of us Red Gloves. You should've known that this would be how it would be back when you chose to join.

"However, congratulations on advancing to Soul Assurer."

Leonard Mitchell curled his lips into a smile.

"It's slower than I had expected. Also, Captain Soest, you've finally reached Sequence 5."

"This isn't a problem with the Church. If I could've endured it better, I could've become a Spirit Warlock earlier." Soest wiped his smile away as he walked into the prayer hall's corridor. "Pray to the Goddess. It will effectively eliminate your mental stress, allowing you to recover."

As he spoke, the team of Red Gloves entered the dark and serene hall as they found a spot to sit down.

Leonard was just about to focus on praying when he suddenly heard a slightly-aged voice ring in his mind:

“That person from just now is problematic.”

“Who?” Leonard kept his head down as he asked with a suppressed voice.

The slightly-aged voice replied, “One of the men you met at the entrance. I’m living in your body, and my strength hasn’t recovered, so I wasn’t able to see too clearly.”

Leonard recalled and asked softly, “What do you mean by problematic?”

“He has an ancient aura.”

“A Beyonder who has lived for a very long period of time?” Leonard mumbled, “I will try to investigate.”

Simultaneously, he thought, Old Man must be hiding certain things. He seldom volunteers to tell me that someone is problematic, yet be so vague about it… After I find the target and confirm that there’s no danger for the time being, I’ll leave it. I don’t want to be embroiled in the conflict of some undying monsters from the Fourth Epoch… If that person will really bring about a calamity, I’ll directly report it to the Archbishop…

†

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

“This the money I borrowed from you.” Fors handed 220 pounds to Xio.

She had already received the 100 pounds from Mr. Moon and the 500 pounds from Ma’am Hermit.

Xio Derecha grabbed at her messy blonde, unsmooth hair, looked at the money, and raised her head to look at Fors. She blurted, “You really are involved in illegal gambling?

“I have to tell you that such gambling must be a scam and a trap. They let you win in order to make you lose more! Even though you’re a Trickmaster and have a chance of fooling them, such gambling scams might have other Beyonders hiding in it!”

“Stop, stop, stop!” Fors lowered her hands. She said in bemused anger, “Do I look like someone who will participate in illegal gambling?”

“Yes!” Xio didn’t hesitate in her reply. “If I didn’t stop you, you wouldn’t just be smoking cigarettes, you’d even be smoking cannabis!”

That’s because I needed to numb myself due to the pain brought by the full moon’s ravings. I no longer need to… Fors didn’t debate with Xio as she directly explained, “I sold the mysticism knowledge I know at a Beyonder gathering. Heh heh, that person was very generous and had paid several hundred pounds.”

“Is that so…” Xio instantly threw the problem to the back of her mind and said, “There’s been a new Beyonder gathering that appeared recently in East Borough. I’ve been invited.”

“A new Beyonder gathering?” Fors was first taken aback before feeling a sense of anticipation.

According to her teacher, Dorian Gray, and Mr. Fool, she knew that Lewis Wien was an Oracle of the Aurora Order. His arrival in Backlund was likely to replace the missing Mr. A, so as to rebuild the Aurora Order faction in this big city. Therefore, there was a solid chance that he had disguised himself to organize a new Beyonder gathering.

Fors thought for a moment and said seemingly mindlessly to Xio, “Are you going to join it?”

“Of course, I have to prepare the Interrogator formula potion,” Xio answered decisively.

Fors nodded and covered her mouth to yawn.

“Remember to bring me along when you have the privilege of inviting a new member.”

Chapter 751 - Loen-Styled Euphemism

◆

Late at night. 7 Pinster Street.

Leonard Mitchell sat on a chair with his legs raised onto the side of his desk.

Following that, he leaned back, causing the wooden headrest to creak from the pressure. His breathing gradually turned long and slow.

After an unknown period of time, his eyelids drooped and covered his eyes.

At this moment, Leonard's spirit had arrived in a gray, hazy world, but he was still in his bedroom.

He flew to the window and saw thick gray fog blanket the nearby streets and extend outwards. It seemed to be embracing all of Backlund.

The street lamps along the streets and the warm light from the different houses appeared abnormally dim. They were only able to illuminate a very tiny region, and everything seemed to be tainted with a sense of blurriness.

At the same time, blobs of illusory oval lights appeared as they enveloped a house in an intersecting manner, as though it was the source of their existence.

This was the city through a Nightmare's eyes.

Leonard followed up on his previous investigations and leaped out the window in a Nightmare state. He then flew to 17 Minsk Street.

He didn’t attempt to storm in. He stood at the door in the thick fog as he politely pulled the doorbell.

Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Dressed in her nightgown, Stelyn Sammer opened the door.

She placed her silver-inlaid pleated fan at her chest as she asked in confusion and puzzlement, “Who are you looking for?”

She was none other than Klein’s landlord back when he was acting as Sherlock Moriarty. She was a blonde-haired, blue-eyed lady in her thirties.

Leonard had already changed into a black-and-white checkered police uniform. He casually showed his identification and asked, “Do you know Sherlock Moriarty?”

Trapped in the dream, Stelyn’s reaction was very slow. She asked after a few seconds, “Did something happen to him?”

Just as she asked, her impression of Sherlock Moriarty appeared beside her under Leonard’s influence.

He wore a half top hat, a double-breasted frock coat, gold-rimmed spectacles on his nose, and a bushy mustache around his mouth…

This was identical to the information he previously received about Sherlock Moriarty. Hence, he didn’t show any doubts and said, “He’s been involved in a case and is undergoing an investigation.

“I hope you can cooperate with us.”

“A-alright.” Stelyn wished to raise her chin, but for some reason, she felt a little horrified.

Leonard thought for a second and asked, “Since when did he rent this place from you?”

"Early September last year," Stelyn said after recalling her memories.

Leonard continued asking, "What do you know of him? Or should I say, what kind of person do you think he is?"

When that was mentioned, Stelyn appeared as though she had long considered the answer to such a question.

"He comes from Midseashire, and he has an accent from that area. He's a very capable detective, and he once exposed the adultery which Mary's husband was undertaking. However, his income isn't too high. He doesn't even hire a full-time housemaid. All he can do is get my maid to help him part-time… My children tell me that he's good at telling stories, especially detective-related stories. This might be why he had chosen this profession…"

Without giving Leonard a chance to interrupt her, she droned on incessantly, "He's not as boorish like the typical detective. He went to grammar school and studied history. What leaves me most envious of all is how he obtained Mary's gratitude. He joined the Quelaag Club where its members are people with significant status. I've only been there a few times…

"Later, he apparently became famous in the detective circles, and private detectives often came to look for him…"

Leonard lost his patience listening to her drone on as he couldn't help but rub his temples.

He had failed to obtain any useful information from Mrs. Stelyn. Apart from Sherlock Moriarty's poor financial situation and him being good at telling detective stories, the rest was within the scope of what he had previously investigated. He even knew that Sherlock Moriarty had good ties with Isengard Stanton.

Next, I'll investigate those from the Quelaag Club who have good relationships with Sherlock Moriarty… Once he patiently finished listening to Mrs. Stelyn's droning, he immediately thanked her and left her dream.

†

160 Böklund Street. Inside Dwayne Dantès's mansion.

In the hall that could accommodate more than a hundred dancers, Klein was embracing a lady in her thirties as they danced.

This was the etiquette teacher that Walter had hired. Her name was Wahana Heisen.

She had a common name, but she wasn't ordinary at all. Her facial features were only above average, but her disposition was impeccable. Her every action was filled with charm.

According to Walter's introduction, she was born in a baron's family. She received a good education from a young age and later entered the palace. She had the job of court lady until she was married.

As her family had declined and her husband's financial situation was only ordinary, being a believer in the Evernight Goddess prompted her to choose to become a private tutor in etiquette. She often went to the families of nobles and tycoons to teach their children.

Although the butler didn't spell it out, Klein knew that he couldn't perform badly in front of this lady, or there was no way to save his reputation.

The way members of high society asked about a person's situation was mainly through common acquaintances. And at times, the interaction between servants also mattered.

With nimble footsteps and graceful moves, the black-haired Wahana nodded approvingly.

"Mr. Dantès, it's hard for me to imagine you not having learned these dance steps before.

“In less than half an hour, you’re as skilled as a noble who received education on this from a young age.”

“It’s all thanks to your teachings.” Klein gave a humble smile as he wore a warm, humble look.

With the Clown’s balance, dancing was a very easy matter for him.

Wahana lowered her head and chuckled softly.

“You’re a gentleman who can really make a lady happy.”

She immediately raised her light brown eyes and swept her gaze across Dwayne Dantès’s silver sideburns and deep blue eyes.

“That’s the best praise I’ve heard today,” Klein replied with a smile. During this period, his feet kept moving as he spun Wahana gently around. Not far away, the hired quartet’s melodious music echoed through the hall.

He had the intention to have close ties with Wahana, not to improve his reputation, but because she was once a court lady.

After Wahana corrected a minor mistake that Dwayne Dantès committed, she said, “When inviting a lady to dance, it’s not only a dance. You also need to converse. You can’t be like two dolls unless both of you are so immersed in the dance and music’s rhythm that you do not wish to speak. Of course, that’s also a form of communication—a form of communication of the heart.

“When conversing, you must be euphemistic because this is Loen, not Intis.

“To put it simply, do not be direct and crude. You need to appear gentlemanly.

“Let me raise an example. If you wish to compliment a lady for her perfume, you can't directly tell her how nice it smells, nor ask what kind of perfume it is to praise her. You need to connect a more euphemistic meaning to it and mention that. Yes, you can say something like: It feels like I'm out in the spring meadows.

"Of course, this needs to match the traits of perfume."

There's no literary feel. Shouldn't you say that "the moon is beautiful, isn't is?" Klein lampooned with a Japanese-styled euphemism as he said with a self-deprecating smile, "Thank you for not telling me that my praises weren't gentlemanly enough."

Wahana's smile deepened.

"Mr. Dantès, do you know what kind of gentleman is very welcomed by women at social events?"

"Pray, do tell." Klein honestly shook his head.

Wahana said without a change in her smile, "The second most popular type are men who make women think that he's very intelligent."

"What about the first?" Klein asked cooperatively.

Wahana glanced at him and said, "The most popular type are men who make women think that they are very intelligent."

Upon saying that, she smiled and didn't say another word. Klein instantly understood she was hiding her praise in between the lines.

So this is Loen-styled euphemism… It's not like Intis where they just aim straight for the lower half of the body… Hmm, that's what's written in papers and magazines. I've no way of confirming what real Intis social events are like. Anyway, both countries often sully each other… The emperor's era does match that description though… Klein nodded in enlightenment.

The two-hour etiquette lesson ended in a harmonious mood. Klein walked Teacher Wahana Heisen to the door with Butler Walter and Valet Richardson before giving her a tiny gift.

It was Moonlight, a perfume from the Dream Company. It was mixed with gray amber, making it rather expensive.

As for how much it was, Klein wasn't sure, as Housekeeper Taneja was responsible for buying it. The payment was through her. Only when the 1,000 pounds was almost expended would she come to him with receipts and a list for him to vet so as to receive fresh funds.

The reason why Klein knew the company and perfume was that his butler had informed him ahead of time. It was to prevent him from appearing insincere if Ma'am Wahana were to ask.

From this detail, he had a deep understanding of the use of a good butler.

Watching the satisfied Ma'am Wahana Heisen leave, Klein held back the urge to rub his temples as he sighed inwardly, This is more tiring than a Beyonder battle. I have to constantly watch my actions and deliberate over my words… I need some rest.

At that point, the white-gloved Walter took a step forward and said, "Sir, since you wish for your etiquette studies to progress faster, we can move the remaining lessons forward."

"What lessons?" Klein felt a headache.

"History, international politics, philosophy, music, as well as general knowledge of sports like golf, racing, hunting…" Walter answered meticulously.

"Philosophy?" Klein asked in surprise.

Walter nodded.

"It's one of the most common topics discussed in high society. You don't need to have very deep research into it, but you need to know what others are discussing. You need to know that the origins of philosophy stem from Kongsoka, Mareddy, and Paterson, and not Emperor Roselle. You need to know that”Man was born free” came from Leumi.

“When tycoons first enter high society, many of them often make mistakes in such aspects. They’re used to attributing certain sentences and philosophical thoughts to Emperor Roselle.”

Klein felt his head ache the more he heard. He forcefully smiled and said, “I haven’t got any matters to do recently, apart from my afternoon naps and heading to the cathedral. You can arrange the lessons to be at anytime.”

†

In a dark room, a letter floated up and opened by itself before shaking the piece of paper.

In her tiny bonnet, Sharron’s figure was outlined. She grasped the letter and seriously read through it.

She then wrote a reply and set up a ritual to summon Sherlock Moriarty’s messenger.

During this process, she didn’t forget to prepare a gold coin.

Soon, Sharron finished the incantation as she watched the candle flame burgeon and be tainted with a gloomy green color.

Reinette Tinekerr, with the four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand, appeared out of the candlelight and appeared before Sharron.

Sharron’s eyes constricted as her doll-like face suddenly showed immense emotional fluctuations.

She blurted out, “Teacher!

“Haven’t you already…”

Chapter 752 - Warning

◆

160 Böklund Street. In the sunny study.

The bookshelves were orderly arranged with a huge collection. At a glance, one appeared as though they had stepped into a private library.

Klein sat on a high-back chair as he read the newspapers. He discovered that be it the Tussock Times or the Backlund Daily Tribune, there was an additional advertisement in a striking spot—it advertised selling 10% of the Backlund Bike Company's shares.

Mr. Stanton is rather efficient. It's only been a few days, and he has completed the financial checks and evaluation… Klein silently reflected on the matter when his spiritual perception was triggered.

He quickly activated his Spirit Vision and saw Reinette Tinekerr walk out of the void. She still held the four blonde, red-eyed heads in her hand, with one of them having a letter in its mouth.

It's likely a reply from Miss Sharron… As Klein had these thoughts, he reached out to receive it and nodded.

"Thank you."

As he spoke, he subconsciously glanced at the door because standing outside was his valet, Richardson.

After tearing open the envelope and unfolding the letter, Klein quickly scanned it, confirming that it was written by Sharron. She indicated that she had no intention of buying Biological Poison Bottle, and she might only consider it after a period of time if it was still available.

She's in a tight financial situation? Or is she saving money to do something important? Klein casually thought and instinctively felt that it was the latter. This was because it was impossible for the demigod named Zatwen to keep staying in Backlund. For now, Sharron and Maric had escaped the pursuit of the Rose School of Thought, and with their Beyonder powers and unique traits about their Sequences, it wasn't difficult for them to amass money in a relaxed environment. Furthermore, they seemed to be in charge of the illegal arms dealing in the Bravehearts Bar, and they were the backers behind Ian. Just this alone would make them plenty of money.

As he thought about it, Klein looked up and saw Miss Messenger's eight red eyes looking at him intently.

He jumped in fright, imagining that she was urging him to pay the debt he owed her. He cleared his throat and said, "There's no need to reply.

"I'll be paying the first installment within the week."

Reinette Tinekerr's four heads spoke one after another.

"There's no…" "Rush…" "There's no…" "Interest…"

Miss Messenger is quite nice after all… As Klein sighed, Reinette Tinekerr vanished from her spot, returning back into the depths of the spirit world.

After burning the letter and resting for half an hour, he walked to the door to inform Richardson to prepare the carriage.

He planned on heading to the cathedral before his philosophy class in the afternoon.

The journey there was smooth sailing, and Klein arrived at the square outside Saint Samuel Cathedral after a few sips of tea.

After gaining the serenity from taking in the sights of the pigeons, he strode towards the cathedral's main door, entered the prayer hall, and randomly found a pew to sit at. Like before, Richardson sat diagonally behind him with his master's hat and cane.

As he emptied his mind during his prayers, Klein's spiritual perception was triggered once again. He instinctively opened his eyes and looked left.

He saw the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell.

This Nighthawk wasn't wearing a trench coat. He looked casual with his white shirt tucked out while matching them with straight trousers and a black vest.

Seeing the middle-aged man with gray streaks at his sideburns look at him, he smiled with a nod, retracted his gaze, and closed his eyes in a bid to pretend to pray.

He wasn't worried that the man would discover that he was watching him, because he had only done a cursory sweep without any additional actions. Many believers present had similar actions as well.

It was inevitable for a good-looking, dignified gentleman to attract some attention when he entered. Leonard Mitchell was someone who often attracted such attention, so he knew this very well.

At this moment, the slightly-aged voice sounded in his mind.

It's him.

Heh, he didn't make my hard work of running over to the cathedral yesterday and today be in vain… Leonard thought smugly as his expression remained stoic.

Klein was also pretending to pray as puzzlement surfaced in his thinking mind.

When did this fellow, Leonard, become so pious?

Although he's definitely more pious than me, he's not the kind of person who would come to the cathedral every day. He would come once or twice a week at best…

What's his goal for coming? He seemed to be observing me just now…

Upon having this thought, Klein suddenly realized something.

The Grandpa in him is the angel of the Zoroast family, which makes him an angel of the Marauder pathway…

Blasphemer Amon is a King of Angels of this pathway. "He" could discover the gray fog and even tried to infiltrate it…

So, it's very possible that the Grandpa in Leonard can also sense the gray fog or the traces of its powers on me!

Upon making this judgment, Klein immediately felt his heart in his throat. He felt like dangerous traps were surrounding him.

He maintained his praying posture, and the eyes under his eyelids remained motionless. His entire person was calm and reserved, completely identical to the cathedral's atmosphere.

After an unknown period of time, he slowly got up and walked to the altar. He came before the donation box and threw in a total of 50 pounds in cash.

Following that, he did the same as before, smiling at the bishop and priest on duty while nodding. He received a rather friendly response.

The moment he walked out of Saint Samuel Cathedral, Klein received his hat from Richardson, and he fed the pigeons on the square for about ten minutes.

And behind him, the believers who had finished their prayers walked out, including Leonard Mitchell.

Without looking at the entrance, Klein leisurely clapped his hands, took his gold-inlaid cane, and walked to the nearby four-wheeled carriage.

Leonard was similarly feeding the pigeons on the square, but he didn't have any intention of following when he saw his target leave on the carriage.

Since the person had an ancient aura and that the parasite in him placed such importance on him, he obviously didn't dare to be careless. He didn't act directly, as it was extremely dangerous.

He planned on making superficial investigations to gather the required intelligence.

I'll see what Old Man has to say when the time comes… Besides, it's not like there's no direction for investigation at the moment. There can't be that many of that particular type of high-end carriage in Backlund. No matter if it's his, or if it's rented, it's easy to determine the source. Then, I'll know the identity and background of that gentleman… Leonard glanced at the pigeons as he thought leisurely.

He was an experienced Nighthawk, and he was even an elite Red Glove among the Nighthawks!

At this moment, a pigeon spread its wings and flew over. In its beak there appeared to be a paper slip.

Leonard frowned as he reached out his left palm and saw the pigeon fly down before dropping the slip. Then, it flapped its wings and flew off.

Raising the paper slip, Leonard warily unfolded it while feeling puzzled. He saw two lines of text on it:

"Zoroast;

"Parasite."

This… Leonard's pupils suddenly constricted as he felt all his hair stand up. His emotions nearly exploded at that very instant.

That gentleman has seen through my secret?

As expected of someone with an ancient aura!

He might be one of the undying monsters that remained from the Fourth Epoch!

He's warning me? That I shouldn't involve myself in his matters or even come close to him?

At that moment, Leonard felt that every action the middle-aged man with white sideburns and blue eyes had done had left him shocked when he recalled them. He was someone not to be looked at directly or approached.

He immediately lost all thoughts of investigating the man. As he watched the pigeons land, he said with a suppressed voice, "Old Man, he might be an old friend of yours.

"If you wish to investigate, then it's best that you wait till your strength recovers."

"Old friend…" the slightly-aged voice repeated the two words as though he found it suspect but couldn't be certain.

Leonard quickly converged his emotions and chuckled.

"So you're someone from the Zoroast family…"

At this moment, about a hundred meters away, at the intersection of Phelps Street and the other streets.

The black-haired Dwayne Dantès who had streaks of gray hair leaned onto the wall as he slowly closed his eyes, hiding his wrinkled facial features in the shadows of the carriage.

To the side of his valet, Richardson, a middle-aged man wearing a dark red coat and old triangular hat appeared, bowing to his master before disappearing. No one saw this illusory figure.

The carriage slowly turned as a flock of pigeons flew up from the square.

†

After returning home and entering the room with the huge balcony, the silent Klein finally heaved a silent sigh of relief.

If Leonard didn't accept the warning because of the Grandpa's bewitchment, he planned on writing another slip with the contents: "I know where Blasphemer Amon is."

In between the lines, it means I'll tell Blasphemer Amon that there's a Zoroast family angel here if you foil my plans.

This wouldn't make the Grandpa believe that Dwayne Dantès was so weak that he had to rely on others to fend him off. It was more of a friendly warning that wouldn't number beyond three times, a form of respect towards an angel.

If two warnings weren't enough to rein him in, there was no other choice but to inform Blasphemer Amon.

Yes, there's a very high chance that this would scare them. There must be other ploys or difficulties for this Grandpa to choose to parasitize in such a shallow manner. He likely doesn't wish for me to flip the table… Heh heh, this matter is all thanks to Arrodes. If he hadn't informed me ahead of time that Leonard has a Marauder angel, I definitely wouldn't have noticed that I've been targeted, much less have the suitable excuse and method to warn them… Klein thought calmly and didn't show the anxiety or flustered state from before.

As he relaxed, there was a knock on the door. His valet, Richardson, said, "Sir, the butler wishes to seek an audience with you."

“Please invite him in.” Klein left the balcony and returned to the half-open room.

The white-gloved Walter entered and said, “Sir, your philosophy teacher, Mr. Hamid, is here.”

Philosophy classes… Klein rubbed his aching temples.

He had previously heard from Walter that Mr. Hamid was a believer of the Lord of Storms. It was the same for the famous scholar, Leumi, as well. Many of the philosophers in the Loen Kingdom shared the same faith.

This made him rather surprised because, to him, believers in the Storm were irascible bros.

From the looks of it, I have to change my stereotypes and subjective impressions… Heh, the prerequisite to being a philosopher is to not have a wife, or not have a cordial relationship with their families? As Klein lampooned, he straightened his clothes and walked to the door. He said to Butler Walter, “Alright, I’ll head over there now.”

Chapter 753 - Bishop Visits

◆ ◆ ◆

After the philosophy class, Klein had a feeling as though he hadn’t slept in three days. His mind was filled with names and concepts like skepticism, metaphysics, a priori and a posteriori, nominalism, Roselle socialism, existentialism, and positivism.

If it wasn’t because the original Klein had studied history, which included some mastery of philosophy, he doubted that he had the ability to last through the lesson. This wasn’t his college lessons on Earth; they were one-to-one, making it impossible for him to sleep, daydream, or read novels on his cellphone when he didn’t understand the content.

Actually, Mr. Hamid was quite different from what I had imagined. He was humorous, candid, and extroverted. His lesson wasn’t dull, making him unlike a philosophy teacher. He also doesn’t possess the stereotypes of a Lord of Storms believer… Klein rubbed his temples, turned to leave, and walked to the staircase. He returned to the third floor as his valet, Richardson, followed him in silence.

During this process, he discovered that his servants were busy with their own duties. None of them were lazing about, and they would only stop when their employer walked past. They would bow and greet him, clearly indicating how well-mannered they were.

Taneja is very capable when it comes to the arrangement and management of household matters after all… Klein walked through the corridor on the third floor and walked to the half-open room.

Before he walked in, Klein saw Butler Walter hanging two double-barreled hunting rifles on the wall, making the interior have a raw and bold feeling.

This was a decoration every tycoon's home had. It's very easy to get approved for a hunting license. A double-barreled hunting rifle is potent, enough to allow the servants to fend off any criminals who wish to burgle or kidnap me.

After hanging the rifle up, Walter took two steps back and observed the hunting rifle. He then took out a golden pocket watch from his inner pocket.

Pa!

He opened the pocket watch and looked at the lid's interior. His stern, old-fashioned face softened significantly.

Klein coughed gently to inform his butler before pushing open the ajar door and walked in.

Walter closed the pocket watch, returned to his spot, and bowed.

"Sir, we applied for six hunting licenses and bought six double-barreled hunting rifles and the corresponding canister cartridges."

Klein had Death Knell hiding under his armpit, so he didn't mind it too much. All he did was nod as a form of acknowledgment.

He then revealed a warm smile and asked as though having a casual chat, "Back when I saw the information from the Family Servant Assistance Association, I noticed that you already have a wife and child?"

A butler was the assistant to the employer. He was a confidant that knew many matters; therefore, establishing rapport with the butler was something every employer had to do. Klein didn't wish to be an exception.

Furthermore, he remembered Arrodes mentioning that Butler Walter could result in additional developments.

Walter answered in all seriousness, “Yes, back when I was a servant at the Viscount Conrad’s manor, I had to have constant contact with a lady due to work. We began having feelings for each other, and under the Goddess’s watch, we walked down the aisle of marriage and ended up having a daughter. She’s currently studying at a grammar school and wishes to pass the Backlund University’s entrance exams. However, that’s something to consider only two years later…”

Upon mentioning his wife and daughter, this unsmiling butler’s tone unknowingly turned mellow.

At present, all the Churches were emphasizing the importance of family. It was to stem the stress and mental problems that arose due to the tide of technological progress. The only difference was that different Churches emphasized different matters. For Evernight, men and women were equal as they helped one another in the family. For Storm, men were to work outside while women were to handle the family to be the former’s supportive angel. For Steam, it was more about learning more and to have technology do more of the work. All of them had their strengths, and they complemented each other.

Klein felt wistful hearing that as he said, “Ma’am Taneja seems to be single?”

“Yes.” Walter’s expression turned solemn again. “In modern society, male and female servants still do not enjoy equal treatment. I’m not referring to the salary, as a housekeeper is at the same level as a butler or butler assistant, earning 25 to 50 pounds a year. Instead, I’m talking about a deeper idea and belief. The Church is trying to change it, but there’s plenty of resistance. After all, the Goddess isn’t the only belief in Loen.”

He paused and added, “Male servants can get married, but if a female servant were to have a family, it implies the loss of her job or becoming the lowest laundress who's only a part-time employee that doesn't need to live at the employer's residence. All of these will change only when one reaches the rank of housekeeper. But this isn't something a young and inexperienced lady is qualified for."

Klein didn't continue on the topic as he nodded gently. He then walked towards the reclining chair.

At this moment, his gaze swept by the piled newspaper by the coffee table.

His mind stirred as he paused, turned to the side and said to his butler, "I saw an advertisement on the papers regarding the sale of Backlund Bike Company shares. Find a professional lawyer and accountant to inquire about it to figure out the exact situation.

"Heh heh, I'm rather interested in this industry. If the price is right, I'll consider buying it."

For a second, Klein thought of a problem. As a tycoon who had brought huge sums of money to Backlund to seek out better opportunities, it was impossible that he didn't pay attention to the sale of the Backlund Bike Company shares.

Since "he" didn't know the prospects of this industry, he needed to hire people to gain a better understanding of it; otherwise, it wouldn't fit his persona.

Of course, I can also raise the price as a result, allowing me to sell those 10% shares at a higher price… Yes, I have to remember to just raise the price a little and not be too greedy. If I were to keep raising the price and it ends up back in my hands, I'll be crying. It would throw all my liquidity into it, and I won't be able to maintain my daily expenses… As Klein fantasized, he warned himself.

"Yes, sir." Walter didn't ask further as he directly agreed.

At 4:35 p.m., Richardson knocked on the door and entered. He said to

Dwayne Dantès, who was reading leisurely, "Sir, Mr. Maury Macht and his wife, Ma'am Riana, as well as Saint Samuel Cathedral's Bishop Elektra, is here to pay you a visit."

Maury Macht? That House of Commons member of parliament? Also, why would Saint Samuel Cathedral's bishop be here as well… Klein thought and asked with a smile, "Is there such a protocol?"

He had only attended two etiquette lessons and knew that at his stage, visits wouldn't be that direct. People would first send their butlers or servants to hand over an invitation or schedule a visit.

Richardson habitually lowered his head and said, "Yes."

"It's because Mr. Butler informed the neighbors that you would be home in the afternoon for the next week when he was delivering your name cards and gifts.

"Under such a situation, neighbors who received your name card and have heard about you will observe the corresponding details. Not only can they send their servants to invite you over, but they can also pass by on the excuse of being out on an afternoon stroll from four to five to make a semi-formal visit. Oh, the ladies will wear strolling attire; otherwise, it wouldn't be decent enough. And you can also invite them to have afternoon tea with you."

Klein walked to the door and allowed Richardson to retrieve his coat to help him wear it. He then asked, "Then why would Bishop Elektra be here as well?"

This was what he really cared about most. The first question was to lead up to it.

Richardson answered as though he had prepared an answer, "Bishop Elektra was a guest at Member of Parliament Macht's house in the afternoon. They must have mentioned you while having a chat and decided to pay a visit by strolling over."

His hands weren't affected by his talking. He skillfully helped Dwayne Dantès adjust his attire.

Klein tersely acknowledged, and after Richardson went forward to open the door, he walked out.

Soon, he saw the three visitors in a small living room on the second floor.

Maury Macht was a classic Loenese gentleman. He was in his forties, and he had black hair and brown eyes. He had a deep outline with a receding hairline. His face was a little thin and long. He was formerly in the military and had entered politics after being discharged. He started his career in Backlund until he became a Member of Parliament of the kingdom's House of Commons. He was a believer of the Evernight Goddess and a member of the New Party. He was in support of improving the environment.

His wife, Riana, was from a family of lawyers. She provided plenty of funding for her husband's political ambitions, and she was also a believer of the Evernight Goddess.

Elektra wore a black, double-breasted clergyman's robe. He looked to be forty, and he had deep, blue eyes and a thin face. He wasn't good-looking, but for some baffling reason, he was pleasing to the eyes. Klein had once met this bishop when he was donating money into the donation box.

Upon seeing Dwayne Dantès appear, Maury Macht took two steps forward and chuckled.

"I've been hearing for the past few days that a pious believer in the Goddess had moved into Unit 160, and I've been wanting to visit. We happened to be taking a stroll today, and we took the liberty to visit. Please pardon us for our faux pas."

Klein smiled and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

“At such times, the only thing we need to do is praise the Lady.”

“Praise the Lady!” Elektra and Riana nodded as they drew a crimson moon on their chests.

After exchanging pleasantries, Klein invited his three guests to take a seat. A maid hurriedly delivered some tea and coffee. Housekeeper Taneja had already asked each one of them what they wanted prior.

“Mr. Dantès, I heard you’re a merchant from Desi. I wonder what business you were previously engaged in?” Maury Macht asked casually before joking. “Your last name just makes me think of many things.”

He was referring to the protagonist’s name of a particular best-selling novel written by Emperor Roselle.

Klein smiled and humorously asked in return, “What kind of business does digging up treasure count as?”

This was also related to the content of said best-selling novel.

Without waiting for the Member of Parliament to answer him, he said the answer he had long fabricated, “I once had my own mine, but as you know, it will one day be mined out. Mining cities would also end up waning as a result.”

He was hinting that he was born in one of the resource-rich cities in Desi County. There, gangs were rampant, and there were many secret tycoons. If ordinary people were to attempt to investigate Dwayne Dantès’s situation, it would take them at least half a year.

Bishop Elektra nodded in thought as he asked, “So, you chose to come to Backlund to seek out new opportunities?

“May I know who proselytized you into the Church?”

Chapter 754 - Invitation

◆◆◆

Klein had already walked through Bishop Elektra’s last question before, so he said with a sigh, “It was my father. He was a truly wise elder. Unfortunately, he passed away many years ago during an accident.”

When he said that, he infused the original Klein’s emotions of losing his parents, him being in an alternate world with no home to return to, as well as the scars that resulted from his time in Tingen City. He sounded calm and wore a slight smile, but there was a sorrow that lasted forever that remained hidden deep inside.

“I’m sorry for your loss. He must’ve entered the holy residence of the Goddess, sleeping peacefully under ‘Her’ watch,” Bishop Elektra answered sincerely as he formed the sign of the crimson moon on his chest.

Without waiting for Dwayne Dantès to respond, he looked at him and invited him:

“There will be a Moon Mass the day after tomorrow for the deceased. It will help him sleep in the Goddess’s nation and receive eternal peace. I wonder if you’re interested in participating?”

The Church of the Evernight Goddess didn’t have many festivals, and the most important one was Winter Gifts Day. The second most important was the Mass held during the full moon, also known as the Moon Mass. The rest were just normal Masses and prayers on weekends. However, different dioceses and different cathedrals had their own patron saints and angels which would have a corresponding special festival for them.

“I would love to.” Klein stood up and bowed, saying it from the bottom of his heart.

This gave him the perfect excuse to interact with the bishops and priests of Saint Samuel Cathedral, or even the diocese bishop. He had a firm foundation for entering particular regions in the cathedral.

Meanwhile, he came to realize why the Evernight pathway was interchangeable with the Death pathway.

Both wielded the authorities of serenity, eternal sleep, and darkness. It represented the end and a destination!

Following that, Maury Macht didn’t continue the topic regarding Dwayne Dantès’s identity and background. It appeared as though he had only been asking in passing. He and his wife, Riana, began idly talking about their vacation experience in Desi Bay last year. Having filled the gaps on this by staying there for two days, Klein replied with a native tone as he shared his thoughts on the Desi specialty, roasted fish.

During this process, he also pretended to unintentionally mention his hunting activities while he was doing business in West Balam, and how he was extremely familiar with the primitive forest over there.

This was to build up the necessary foundations for the second layer to Dwayne Dantès’s identity. Furthermore, West Balam was different from East Balam. The colonial factions from Loen and Intis were on par, allowing for frequent conflicts. Even the actively controlled regions would experience changes from time to time. To investigate the activity trajectories of a merchant or adventurer wasn’t easy at all. This was even more so the case when Dwayne Dantès was likely using a fake name.

As for his hunting experience in West Balam’s primitive forest, Klein didn’t randomly fabricate stories, nor did he plagiarize articles from the magazines or newspapers. He used what the Fog Sea's Strongest Hunter, Anderson, had previously mentioned regarding his glorious deeds as a blueprint. He drew on the details and abandoned the main storyline. What he fabricated was partially true and fake as well.

Upon hearing the thick anacondas, man-eating fishes, and flowers which could capture their own prey in the forests, Riana would let out gasps from time to time, looking afraid but also eager to know more. As for the member of parliament and bishop, they were equally interested. They often had to force themselves to interrupt Dwayne Dantès's description to ask about the details.

"You really are an excellent hunter! Back when I was serving in East Balam, I never had the chance to enter the forest. I never expected it to be this dangerous." After this extremely dignified middle-aged gentleman finished his tales, Maury Macht picked up a tiny piece of velvet cake and praised sincerely. "I wish to invite you to go hunting if there's a chance in the future."

As they conversed, a maid had delivered the afternoon tea pastries. A male servant served them from the side.

Upon hearing Member of Parliament Macht's semi-serious invitation, Klein replied with a smile, "I'm already looking forward to it."

After chatting a little more and discussing Backlund's pollution control, the three guests suggested they take their leave. As they had only acquainted themselves and weren't considered familiar with each other, Klein didn't retain them. He sent them to the door with his valet, Richardson.

As he watched the bishop, member of parliament and his wife leave, Klein's smile slowly disappeared until there was nothing left.

He was rather pleased with the progress he had made. Bishop Elektra was directly related to the Church of the Evernight Goddess, which was the main goal for him to return to Backlund. Maury Macht was a discharged soldier and a member of parliament at present. Without a doubt, he belonged to certain military officer clubs, and he would be beneficial to his continued investigation of the Great Smog of Backlund.

Next up, I should slowly deepen our relationships… Klein returned to the small living room and saw that the maid had taken away the remaining pastries and tea.

He originally planned on having a little more…

Regardless of the other types of food, the pastries and desserts in Loen, especially Backlund, were outstanding. As for the cook which Dwayne Dantès had hired, he was skilled in that. Even Ma'am Riana was filled with praise about it. Klein also agreed from the bottom of his heart.

Retracting his gaze, Klein didn't say a word as he steadily walked to the staircase that led to the third floor.

Before dinner, Butler Walter finally returned to the house and briefed him on the situation regarding the 10% of Backlund Bike Company's shares.

"Sir, we are lucky enough. Someone had hired a professional lawyer and accountant to investigate the situation of the Backlund Bike Company, and they had offered a price to the seller before the advertisements were published. But in subsequent negotiations, the price exceeded the buyer's expectations. He had no choice but to give up.

"This way, we don't have to wait for the investigation report. We can directly hire that original team."

Klein nodded and asked without hiding anything, "What's the current bid?"

"The buyer that gave up had offered 6,000 pounds with a bottom-line price of 7,000 pounds. The seller didn't divulge the situation about the other buyer; however, from the feedback from various channels, it's at least 8,000 pounds."

8,000 pounds. Not too bad… Should I raise it a little more? If I were to raise the price a little and the other party just gives up, wouldn't it be awkward? Klein nodded slightly and said, "Give me the corresponding report. I'll consider it."

After flipping through the report and having dinner to accentuate his extravagant but brilliant image as someone who did solid work, Klein turned his head to Richardson and said, "Prepare the two-wheel carriage. I'll be making a trip outside."

He originally imagined that Richardson would ask him in surprise. A two-wheeled carriage didn't seem befitting enough, but to his surprise, his valet answered politely after flashing a curious look, "Alright, sir."

Submissive and never asking why. That's also considered an advantage… Klein sighed inwardly as he waited for Richardson to return to help him wear his coat.

After getting on the two-wheeled carriage, he directly instructed, "Let's circle around the Backlund Bridge area and East Borough."

Richardson still didn't ask about his master's motives and just got the coachman to steer the horses carefully.

As the carriage passed through Cherwood Borough, it arrived in the Backlund Bridge area under the illumination of the street lamps.

Klein didn't give a destination, and he only got the coachman to meander through the nearby streets.

He leaned against the carriage wall, looking out at the streets. He saw pedestrians in old clothes, walking along with tired faces as though they were in a rush to return home for dinner after a hard day's work. Occasionally, there would be the ringing of a bike passing by. They were fast as they shot into the distance. In comparison, the rider's expression appeared more lively than the pedestrians. They seemed to beam with an indescribable sense of pride.

It’s an obvious difference in class. Although it’s the difference between a technical worker and an ordinary worker, with the difference in weekly salaries of one to two pounds to those with one pound a week… Klein slowly exhaled as he subconsciously looked up at the sky.

At that moment, darkness had already completely covered Backlund’s skies, but the smog wasn’t too serious. One could see through them and see the twinkling stars.

After the Great Smog, the management of the environment is improving by the day… However, the situation with the lower-class workers in the East Borough hasn’t significantly improved. Although their salaries might be higher, and their working hours have improved, due to the large number of people surging in, prices have risen across the board, reducing the effects of the salary hike. The improvement in working hours have just gone from 15–16 hours to 11–12 hours…

They’re just fixing the problems with the greatest problems. As for the other problems that didn’t rear their ugly heads, they’re neglected… Yes, the kingdom is still undergoing reforms. Many things haven’t been straightened out… Klein watched as his thoughts drifted until the carriage left Cherwood Borough.

†

On the Future, Admiral of Stars Cattleya stood behind the windows in the captain’s cabin, watching Frank Lee pushing wooden barrels into the shadows. He was putting unknown things into it before closing the lid.

He’s recently been researching the growth of plants in dark environments… Why did he suddenly become normal? Cattleya frowned with suspicion, often worrying that Frank Lee would create some huge “invention.”

I’ll get Nina to ask later… Just as she had this thought, her spiritual perception was triggered. She turned her head to see a letter on her desk.

As a faint smile curled on her lips without her realizing it, Cattleya walked over, tore open the envelope, and unfolded the letter. She quickly read through it.

“There are two Obninsks that do not belong to the Church of Storms swimming north from Sonia Island towards the Abyss Maelstrom…

“Find the direct descendant of Abraham family…

“You did well.”

Abyss Maelstrom was the name of a dangerous area at sea, and not the Abyss.

Abraham family… Cattleya thought for a moment, and without any clues, she planned on asking at the next Tarot Gathering.

†

The next morning, after divining again if he should raise the price again, Klein said to Butler Walter, “Hire that team and continue the negotiation. My bottom line is 9,000 pounds.”

“Alright, sir.” Walter then immediately said with an apologetic look, “Something happened at home, and I wish to have half a day off.”

“No problem. Do you need any help?” Klein asked gently.

“Thank you for asking. I can handle it, and it’s not too urgent. I will first handle the matters regarding the share negotiation first,” Walter said sincerely.

Klein didn’t ask further as he nodded and permitted him to take time off.

After his butler left the room, Klein turned to look at Richardson and asked, “Did Walter meet anyone earlier this morning?”

“Mr. Butler received a letter,” Richardson replied without hiding anything.

Chapter 755 - “Switchboard Receptionist”

He received a letter? Didn’t he say that something happened at home? Walter’s family lives in Backlund, so if there really is anything wrong, then they can directly come over via public carriage or a rental carriage. Wouldn’t that be faster than sending a message by mail? With his salary and land in the countryside, he can definitely afford it… Klein nodded without a word as though he had just asked in passing.

He slowly returned to the reclining chair, sat down, and began to seriously read the papers.

Upon seeing this, Richardson didn’t say a thing as he silently retreated out of the room and quietly closed the wooden door.

After hearing the light click, Klein cast his gaze away from the papers and towards the door. He thought, I’ve discovered another advantage of Richardson. He enjoys observing his surroundings, and he’s able to notice information of value. Back when Bishop Elektra was a guest at Member of Parliament Maury Macht’s place, he was the first one to notice it from the balcony.

However, this is different from a Spectator. The focus is more on the event rather than the details…

Walter’s matter seems a little abnormal. Could this be the additional development Arrodes mentioned?

Regardless, I’ll first divine the matter. I don’t want danger to come to me without me realizing it…

With this in mind, Klein immediately entered the bathroom, took four steps counterclockwise, and arrived above the gray fog. Every time he appeared as The Fool, his inner shell beneath the gray fog would wear Klein Moretti's appearance. It wouldn't overlap with Sherlock Moriarty, Gehrman Sparrow, or Dwayne Dantès.

Due to the lack of necessary information, he could only divine about any danger that targeted himself; therefore, he didn't use dream divination. He removed the spirit pendulum around his wrist and wrote the corresponding divination statement: "Walter's abnormality will bring me danger."

Holding the spirit pendulum in his left hand, Klein closed his eyes and entered Cogitation as he muttered the sentence he had just said.

After repeating it seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz spinning counterclockwise at a rather ordinary speed and amplitude.

This also meant that Walter's abnormality wouldn't bring him any danger.

But this can only mean that I might not encounter any dangerous trouble through this problem. In addition, there's also another possibility. The danger depends on whether I make the appropriate choice. If I were to rashly get myself involved, something that isn't dangerous might become dangerous… Klein interpreted the matter with his rich experience.

Just as he put this matter on hold, he suddenly saw the crimson star that represented The Hermit coruscate as it burgeoned and shrank.

Does this mean that the payment for Scales of Luck is here? Klein was delighted as he immediately emanated his spirituality.

He was left disappointed because Cattleya was only requesting Mr. Fool to pass on a message to The Hanged Man. She didn't mention when she would close the deal with The World.

There are Obninsks at the Abyss Maelstrom north of Sonia Island? Mr. Hanged Man is pretty lucky. At least he isn't like me, needing to enter the ruins of the battlefield of gods… Of course, Obninsks can be dangerous as well. It's not easy to use one for a ritual. Mr. Hanged Man might even need Sea God's help…

Ma'am Hermit's request is actually to help find the direct descendants of the Abraham family… This means that Queen Mystic is rather aware of Mr. Door's origins… The emperor had mentioned it to her? Klein began making connections from Cattleya's words as he threw the corresponding image to the crimson star representing The Hanged Man.

At this moment, Alger Wilson had just finished his reports and had passed the examination, allowing him to return to the Blue Avenger.

When he saw the endless gray fog and heard The Hermit's words, he walked to the captain's cabin with a deadpan expression, keeping his pace normal.

Upon entering the room and closing the door, he came in front of an alcohol cabinet, took a bottle of Lanti Proof, the most beloved drink of pirates, and poured half a cup.

Alger immediately held the cup to his mouth and downed it like it was water.

During this process, he kept his eyes half-closed as though he was completely immersed in his own world.

After drinking half a cup of Lanti Proof, Alger put down the cup, wiped his mouth, and chuckled.

Abraham family's direct descendant? This might be very difficult for others, with almost zero clues, but I can ask Miss Magician. Her teacher is one… Heh heh, Admiral of Stars still isn't aware of it yet.

He quickly reined in his emotions and paced about, finally giving up on his idea and responded frankly to Cattleya's request.

Admiral of Stars won't only ask for my help. At the Tarot Gathering next week, she might announce this mission to everyone, and the others know that Miss Magician's teacher is a member of the Abraham family… There's no point lying about matters that can be easily exposed. I shouldn't jeopardize the possible transactions in the future just for some petty gains… At times, honesty is the best policy… Alger stopped walking as he reverently bowed his head and recited Mr. Fool's honorific name.

"…Please inform Ma'am Hermit that she can directly ask Miss Magician for clues regarding the direct descendants of the Abraham family…"

After settling the request by Admiral of Stars, Alger took the initiative to mention his encounter during the night of the Blood Moon, and he inquired to Mr. Fool about whether the item that resonated with the Ocean Songster's Beyonder characteristic was the Book of Calamity, and if the female holding the golden cup in the coral palace was Cohinem.

Something like that happened? Queen of Calamity might really not be completely dead… It's likely that "She" had split her Beyonder characteristic, splitting them into the Book of Calamity and the one in the undersea ruin. Yes, there might even be a third or fourth portion, but I've no idea where they are… Klein confirmed without any hesitation that the elf was Queen of Calamity Cohinem!

This wasn't based on intuition, but a logical inference.

He had once obtained the golden cup that Elf Queen Cohinem loved, and a similar vessel had appeared in the dream.

Elven Songster Siatas knew of Queen of Calamity's daily trivialities, and she had quite a strong relationship with the angel, which strongly implied that she was an elf that attended to Cohinem. It was completely understandable that the Beyonder characteristic she left behind resonated with the Book of Calamity on the night of the Blood Moon.

With this in mind, Klein suddenly recalled a matter. He had given Cohinem's beloved golden cup to Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina for her to bury in Siatas's tomb.

If Queen of Calamity really isn't completely dead, will the golden cup cause any form of mutation to the corpses of any elves close to her? Klein did a count of the time, and he discovered that he couldn't be certain if the Golden Dream had reached Sonia Island.

After some thought, he calmly replied to The Hanged Man, "That's right."

Following that, he forwarded the message to the crimson star representing The Hermit.

After doing all of this, Klein conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made him pray:

"Honorable Mr. Fool, please tell Danitz to pass on a message to Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards about the existence of any abnormalities between Elven Songster Siatas's corpse and the golden cup."

Phew… After doing all of that, Klein exhaled and threw the corresponding image to the specially labeled point of light beside him. He then returned to the real world and left the bathroom.

Coming before his changing mirror, he looked at his gray sideburns and blue eyes as he curled up the corners of his lips. He knew that he had returned from being Mr. Fool to the mysterious merchant, Dwayne Dantès.

†

Bayam, inside a primitive forest.

Danitz, who was having a feast in a particular base of the Resistance, suddenly trembled as he nearly choked on the liquid in his mouth.

Although this wasn't the first time he was receiving an answer from the mighty Fool, he still felt apprehensive and afraid.

After he identified the figure and heard his words, he heaved a sigh of relief and knew that Gehrman Sparrow was getting him to do something.

Ask Captain? That's simple… The Golden Dream will be picking me up in a few days… Hehe, Gehrman Sparrow isn't crazy, and he's even very sincere and reverent before the mighty Fool… Danitz quickly relaxed as he leisurely thought.

Meanwhile on the Future, Cattleya, who had received a response that surprised her, muttered in silence, Directly ask Miss Magician?

Yes, she seems to be a Beyonder of the Apprentice pathway… She's actually related to the Abraham family?

As I expected, she's not simple!

Cattleya considered a moment and decided if she ought to give The Hanged Man a new mission because she wasn't too sure if Miss Magician was willing to divulge clues to the Abraham family.

†

Walter returned to 160 Böklund Street in the afternoon with a normal expression like before. He had apparently resolved everything easily.

Klein didn't ask. He felt that their relationship hadn't reached a point in which his butler could be totally frank with him. Furthermore, the problem hadn't fully blown up before him in a way that couldn't be hidden.

Time quickly passed as he had his lessons. The next evening, with the arrival of the full moon, Klein brought along Richardson and rode his high-end carriage to Saint Samuel Cathedral for the Moon Mass.

He wasn’t worried about the donation that would happen, because Miss Justice had paid him 1,000 pounds. He now had 2,186 pounds, so it wasn’t too difficult for him to donate a few hundred pounds.

It’s only not too difficult… Klein sighed inwardly as he looked at the bell tower outside, left the carriage, walked across the square, and stepped into Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Chapter 756 - Grand Mass

◆

After waiting nearly ten minutes outside the prayer hall, Klein and the other believers who were here to join the Moon Mass entered under the priest’s lead.

In the dark and serene atmosphere, they heard uniform and ethereal chanting:

“Full-faced above the land stood the crimson moon;

“And sweet it was to dream of themselves,

“Of child, and wife, and parents; but evermore[1]…”

Holy and rhythmic voices echoed in the prayer hall as the believers involuntarily quietened down, as though they had forgotten all their frustrations in life or the different challenges they faced in the real world.

Under the guidance of a few priests, they found their seats. In front of the altar, Bishop Elektra, who was in charge of celebrating the Mass, held The Revelation of Evernight and began preaching.

As this segment came to an end, the priests held up water and bread, and they began handing them out to Klein and company. This was the loving grace of Evernight, food that people both alive and dead could share.

Having not had dinner, Klein naturally didn’t waste the bread of average quality and the water in the cup. Then, he saw candles light up on the altar, and under the darkness, they appeared like stars in the night sky, emitting light and warmth that eased one's heart.

At that moment, Bishop Elektra led the few priests and everyone in the choir to chant in unison:

"We look upward into the night sky,

"We tenderly say her name: 'Evernight Goddess!'

"We know no other words, except 'Evernight Goddess,'

"May the Goddess draw out from the angel chorus

"With the silence sweet to gather,

"And hold both within 'Her' right hand which is gentle.

"'Goddess!' If 'She' heard us, 'She' would surely agree,

"Smiling with purity at the dead:

"Come, rest and sleep well, my children![2]"

The empty voice filled with holiness drilled into every believers' ears. It felt as though all the spirits present were resonating in unison. As a Sequence 5 Beyonder, Klein felt as though his Soul Body was being cleansed as his spirituality naturally flowed out in comfort.

Following that, a tranquil darkness seemed to appear before his eyes, a darkness without any sound.

In the darkness, corpses lay there; their faces calm and at peace, as though they weren't dead and were actually in a deep sleep.

Klein calmly traversed the darkness in a staid manner when he suddenly stopped and looked diagonally ahead.

At a spot where moon flowers were silently blooming, there were a few people sleeping.

They were the hatless Dunn Smith in a trench coat; Old Neil, who still wore his black classic robe; and the short Kenley, who worked hard to save up money.

They closed their eyes in a relaxed manner as a faint smile appeared to show on their lips. Around them were erected tombs, each of them having the same word written on them: “Guardian.”

Klein instantly closed his eyes as a holy and ethereal voice resounded by his ears:

“Cross your hands humbly,

“Over your breast!

“Make the silent prayer,

“And shout from the bottom of your heart:

“The only escape is tranquility![3]”

Klein lowered his head, closed his eyes, and raised his hands up before crossing them before his chest. He then repeated silently, The only escape is tranquility!

The only escape is tranquility!

†

This repeated again and again until the prayer hall reached a state of extreme silence. Only then did Klein open his eyes again and rubbed the corners of his eyes.

He slowly exhaled and glanced around him. With the light from the candles, he discovered that most of the believers were covered in tears without realizing it. Even his valet, Richardson, was constantly tearing up without wiping his tears.

The Moon Mass is akin to a ritual, a ritual with Beyonder powers involved. Its effect is likely to make everyone's spirit resonate, allowing different people to see the deceased who they share deep relationships in the darkness. It relieves one's grief in order to obtain tranquility… Yes, this isn't an abnormality that's targeted at Beyonders, so I can be at ease… To ordinary people, this might be an illusory outlet that's instantaneous. They would only believe that it's a result of the Goddess's greatness, and not some extraordinary powers… Sequence 5 Beyonders of the Evernight pathway seem to gain a significant enhancement in their control of spirits… Klein withdrew his gaze as he made a judgment.

Right on the heels of that, he recalled the darkness and the deceased that lay amidst the moon flowers.

Closing his eyes, Klein allowed his thoughts to drift.

That dark plain filled with moon flowers, night vanilla, and slumber flowers is a manifestation of the Goddess's divine kingdom?

What does the source of danger in the night time inside that battle of the gods ruin correspond to then?

Klein gradually outlined the cold darkness and the fog that enveloped the sea on the eastern front of the Sonia Sea.

In the fog, there was an ancient, pitch-black cathedral with a steeple. Ravens spiraled above it as though they were holding a memorial or were in grief. And around the cathedral were ordinary residents, simple wood huts, grayish-white mills, and indistinct figures.

Logically speaking, this foggy scene that's intricately tied to the night and dreams should be formed from the aura left behind when the Goddess slayed Annihilation Demonic Wolf. But it doesn't have any similarities with the corresponding divine kingdom… Yes, mortals can't pry into the secrets of deities, so perhaps the dark plains filled with flowers isn't the projection of the divine kingdom, but rather an outcome of the ritual… Seeing that the Moon Mass was coming to an end, Klein reached into his inner pocket and took out his wallet.

Holding his wallet, he got up and entered the aisle, walked straight to the altar, and under Bishop Elektra's compassionate watch, he walked diagonally over to the donation box.

He tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion, drawing out the crimson moon before throwing in all his large-denomination notes.

A total of 300 pounds!

At that moment, Klein didn't feel the pinch like the previous few times. He was in a very calm mood because he recalled the ritual Old Neil had used to repay his debt.

Back then, they picked up a wallet containing 300 pounds, all thanks to the Goddess's blessings.

Taking a step back, he drew the crimson moon once again, and he gave his spot to the donor behind him.

At that moment, Bishop Elektra walked over and said as he drew the crimson moon, "May the Goddess bless you."

"May the Goddess know about it. What I wish for now is to receive some teachings," Klein replied with a smile.

Bishop Elektra glanced at the prayer hall's side door and said, "If you don't mind waiting fifteen minutes, I can explain the Bible to you in the library."

"I would love that," Klein said with a warm smile.

Bishop Elektra immediately got a priest to lead Dwayne Dantès and his servant out the prayer hall through a side door as they circled around a spiral staircase to the nearby library.

There was a huge bookshelf here, and on it were various books from the

Church of the Evernight Goddess. There were tables and chairs lining the sides for priests and bishops to study and preach to the believers.

Twelve minutes later, Bishop Elektra entered the library with a calming smile and saw Dwayne Dantès with his white sideburns standing in front of a bookshelf, flipping through a book with great focus. He exuded the vibes of a scholar.

“What are you reading?” he asked with a smile.

Klein snapped the book together and said with a self-deprecating smile, “The Revelation of Evernight.

“To be frank, although I’m a pious believer of the Goddess, I’ve never had the time to seriously sit down and read the Bible due to my busy life.”

As he spoke, he didn’t show any odd signs on his face, but he felt uneasy deep down. He was afraid the Goddess would smite him with a bolt of lightning to reward this “pious” believer, Dwayne Dantès.

Well, lightning isn’t in the Goddess’s domain… Klein consoled himself.

Bishop Elektra smiled and took The Revelation of Evernight from his hands.

“It’s never too late to begin.”

Following that, he invited Dwayne Dantès to sit down beside a table and systematically introduced The Revelation of Evernight’s structure and the corresponding Holy Word.

Richardson held his employer’s hat and cane, and he stood a slight distance away, silently waiting to listen to the bishop’s preachings.

Time ticked by, when Klein, who appeared serious, suddenly felt his spiritual perception trigger. A scene outside the door naturally surfaced in his mind.

This was an intuitive foresight that stemmed from a Clown, one that had been enhanced by the gray fog!

Outside the door, an elder dressed in a black clergyman robe walked by and headed for the nearby spiral staircase.

He had lush white hair but didn't comb it, making him look rather disheveled. He had a thin face that made it appear as though he was bones wrapped in skin. He exuded a rather cold bearing, and his skin was abnormally pale. His eyes were a rare pure black.

This figure quickly vanished from the door as the footsteps gradually sounded like they were coming from above.

A Keeper! But it's not the one I met at the prayer hall… Hmm, it's his turn today? Klein paid attention to Bishop Elektra as he wore a contemplative look over the Bible's contents.

He wasn't surprised that a Keeper would appear inside the cathedral and pass by the library at this time. This was because the sealing forces behind Chanis Gate would reach its peak at night. It wasn't suitable for living creatures to remain inside; therefore, the Keepers only entered at sunrise and left at sunset. It had just turned dark.

I need to remember what day and date it is today… Later, with more information, I'll be able to figure out the Keepers' rotation schedule. This way, I'll be able to act as the corresponding target at the right time… Klein reined in his thoughts as he listened attentively. Finally, he got up and bade farewell thirty minutes later.

He smiled and said to Bishop Elektra, "I'm wondering if I have the honor to listen to your preachings in the future?"

"No problem." Faced with a tycoon who had just donated 300 pounds, Bishop Elektra couldn't reject him. He even happily nodded. "As long as you come to the cathedral and I have the time."

Klein didn't harp on the details to prevent any suspicion. He earnestly thanked him and left Saint Samuel Cathedral with Richardson.

He returned home before eight, and enjoyed dinner as he leisurely spent the rest of his night.

†

Late at night, inside the master bedroom.

The sleeping Klein suddenly opened his eyes.

His spiritual intuition told him that someone had infiltrated his mansion!

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Adapted from the Lotos-eaters by Tennyson.

Adapted from The Cry of the Children by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Adapted from The Bridge of Sighs by Thomas Hood and Lotos-eaters by Tennyson.

Chapter 757 - Dream Encounter

◆ ◆ ◆

Someone has infiltrated the compound? Klein didn't immediately sit up. All he did was turn his body to the side and reached his left palm under his pillow. He secretly held Death Knell, and at the same time, he slowly spread his left hand open, preparing to activate Creeping Hunger.

After knowing that it was difficult to find food for Creeping Hunger in Backlund, he had infiltrated the prisons in Desi Bay's Conant City, found an inmate on death row, and confirmed that there wasn't any mistake in the judgment before feeding him to the glove.

The Rose School of Thought has locked onto me? No, it's impossible for them to be that quick. Besides, if it's them, they wouldn't just come but would wait for an opportunity. They will seize the opportunity when I'm passing by a secluded spot and strike so as to not alarm Backlund's official organizations… I donated too much money at the Moon Mass, causing criminals to target me? Hmm, a generous tycoon who just came to Backlund from a foreign land is indeed an easy target… Of course, I can't rule out the routine investigations of the Nighthawks… As thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein heard a soft noise coming from the balcony in the adjoining half-open room.

Right on the heels of that, there was the sound of a lock turning as the floor-to-ceiling window was pulled open nearly silently.

Klein carefully listened and sensed the footsteps pass through the half-open room and into the corridor.

After a pause, the footsteps walked towards the master bedroom before passing it, turning the doorknob to his valet's room.

He went into the wrong room? Or could it be that he's here to find Richardson? Klein's heart stirred as he released his grip on Death Knell. He then reached out to the iron cigar case which wasn't too far.

After he removed the wall of spirituality, an illusory figure in a dark red coat and old triangular hat appeared beside him. It then walked into the full-body mirror.

When Senor, the Wraith marionette, jumped to the glass window in Richardson's room, he saw a figure with orange-yellow skin, raven-black hair, and soft facial features walk out of the room. As for Richardson, he was silently sitting by the edge of his bed, his body leaning forward. His back was hunched up like he was fused into the darkness.

Horror colored his face as he showed a weak and stumped expression. Finally, he fell silent.

The person is indeed here for Richardson… His traits resemble that of someone from the Southern Continent… He's agile and skilled. He's likely not an ordinary person… This is a friend that Richardson got to know at the manor in the Southern Continent, or could it be a maternal relative? Richardson is only a valet with an annual salary of 35 pounds. What matter would need his help? Klein guessed as he used Senor's vision to observe.

At that moment, he suddenly realized why Richardson was good at observation and often stayed in the balcony to size up any pedestrians.

He was afraid of being found!

I hope it's not too big a problem and won't affect my plans… I'll later divine the matter… If Richardson is unable to resolve the problem, I'll have to find an excuse to terminate his services… Seeing his valet lie back down, Klein pulled back his Wraith marionette.

†

Meanwhile, Leonard Mitchell, who lived at 7 Pinster Street, once again entered the fog-immersed Backlund.

He had previously questioned the Daily Observer reporter, Mike Joseph, and received the news that Sherlock Moriarty didn't proactively involve himself in Lanevus's matter. Instead, he participated in a discussion after being hired. This made any suspicions regarding him drop drastically.

If it wasn't because this detective had been slightly involved in Capim's matter, and how he had a close relationship with Emlyn White from the Harvest Church, Leonard Mitchell would have had thoughts of giving up the investigation to continue his search for Ince Zangwill.

As Sherlock Moriarty didn't have many friends at the Quelaag Club, with one of them dying in the matter involving Prince Edessak while the other was Reporter Mike Joseph; therefore, Leonard only had one target left: Dr. Aaron Ceres.

From the dossiers, this doctor was once involved in a Beyonder matter of the Monster pathway… After the item was swapped, he stopped being unlucky or having nightmares. His life returned back on track… Heh, most people that Sherlock Moriarty know are involved in Beyonder matters. This detective sure isn't an ordinary someone… As Leonard thought, he rang the doorbell in Aaron Ceres's dream.

Upon entering the dream, he casually found a sofa to sit in and said to Dr. Aaron who was opposite him, "Tell me in detail how you got to know Sherlock Moriarty."

In the dream, Aaron didn't lie. He started from how Mrs. Mary had introduced Sherlock Moriarty into the Quelaag Club, and how he was one of the recommenders. He continued until the detective suggested that he inform the Church of the Evernight Goddess's bishop about his abnormal matters.

The truth is described in the dossiers. Sherlock Moriarty seems rather friendly towards the official Beyonder organizations, and he was endorsed by Isengard Stanton… Leonard glanced at the mustached Sherlock which Dr. Aaron conjured and retracted his gaze as he listened attentively.

After Aaron finished recounting everything in detail, he said, "He headed to the south for a vacation, and he hasn't returned. I've been worried about him all this while.

"However, he's a detective filled with wisdom and a kind heart. I believe nothing bad will happen to him. I just wish that he can participate in the celebration of my child's birth."

Perhaps… Leonard suspected that Sherlock Moriarty might never return to Backlund.

He then politely bade farewell and walked out of Dr. Aaron's dream.

After taking a few steps forward, he subconsciously looked back and saw that inside the house with a garden, blurry spherical lights that represented different dreams filled the entire space. Everything was fine.

Was it a mistake on my part? I keep feeling as though something about me is changing… Leonard muttered as he turned to fly to Pinster Street.

Everywhere he could see was covered in dense fog. The street lamps were gloomy and pale.

Suddenly, Leonard stopped flying as he cast his gaze at a building.

In that house, there were about five spherical lights floating in silence, making it look different from the other buildings.

However, Leonard's spiritual perception told him that there was apparently a black blob in the house which could absorb all light.

Furthermore, he discovered that he didn't recognize the street he was at.

He felt alarmed, suspecting if he had seen something he shouldn't see. He hurriedly retracted his gaze as he prepared to leave and head for his residence.

At that moment, the building that looked ordinary sounded with a teasing voice:

"Why don't you come in for a cup of tea?"

Thoughts erupted in Leonard's mind as he flew up at high speeds without even thinking.

In his spiritual perception, the terrace houses lining the back, the garden, and tiny buildings were burgeoning in size as the windows and doors turned into mouths that were biting at him!

The nearby black street lamps were extending in height, making the surroundings appear like a forest of steel that seemed to stop Leonard.

Leonard didn't stop or turn back. He felt a chill down his back as it became more obvious and deeper!

His body slowly stiffened as though he was being grabbed by countless invisible hands.

Just as he felt that he couldn't hold out any longer, he saw a familiar house where a familiar window and lights stood.

He held his breath, plunged down abruptly, and fell back into his dream!

Phew… He jolted awake and found himself drenched in cold sweat.

“Old Man, what did I actually encounter?” Leonard retracted his legs from the desk’s edge and asked with a sense of lingering fear.

The slightly-aged voice in his mind replied after a few seconds, I’m not sure.

Leonard’s eyelid drooped immediately as he didn’t pursue the matter.

He then cast his gaze out the window and saw lights everywhere in the Backlund night sky. It was tranquil.

†

160 Böklund Street. Inside Dwayne Dantès’s mansion.

“Sir, Ma’am Wahana Heisen is here,” Richardson entered the room and said to Klein.

Klein put down his papers and looked up, glancing at his valet. He discovered that he was still an apprehensive man of few words, silent and reserved. There was nothing odd with him.

If it wasn’t because the divination outcome was okay… Suddenly firing an employee will incur suspicion… Klein silently mumbled. He stood up as though nothing had happened, and he got Richardson to help him wear his coat.

Fifteen minutes later, he was holding his etiquette teacher, Wahana Heisen, in an embrace as he began to learn another common dance used at social events.

“I feel as though I’ll be losing my job in a few days.” After a while, Wahana praised Dwayne Dantès for his progress. When she was done, she added, “However, you’re still a little restrained. Although you don’t have to act like Intis men who cling closely to the ladies, you don’t have to constantly maintain a distance. It’s very normal to make occasional contact. The way you are behaving now makes you appear rigid and dull."

Klein pulled her in a little and replied with a smile, "I was afraid of being rude."

Does this mean that being too close to ladies is an act of rudeness? It also implies I'm full of charm, and that he might embarrass himself if he's too close? This is quite a euphemistic form of praise… Wahana thought and said with a smile, "You have learned well."

The dance continued as Klein looked at Wahana Heisen's face as he asked warmly in a casual manner, "Ma'am, you seem frustrated?"

Wahana lowered her head and chuckled.

"It's nothing serious. My husband is a businessman, and he recently had some minor conflicts with some people. We can resolve the matter.

"Oh, your question was too direct. Before both parties have established a friendship, it's best not to ask about their matters, unless she has made it obvious."

Compared to you who comes and goes in families of high society; thus, knowing many madams and ladies, as a tycoon who just arrived in Backlund, I do lack the necessary social connections… Klein nodded gently and said with a smile, "I thought we were no longer strangers."

He then skipped the topic and began talking about his own experiences and his neighbors. Wahana would mention a few things in response, allowing Klein to better grasp the traits and preferences of his neighbor.

After Wahana left, Klein stood at the door for some time before turning to say to his butler, "Walter, find out what trouble Ma'am Wahana is facing. If she can't resolve it, we will provide her with some timely assistance."

Chapter 758 - Efforts Will Ultimately Pay Off

◆ ◆ ◆

In the evening, Klein, who had just returned from Saint Samuel Cathedral, was just about to enter the dining hall on the second floor when he saw Butler Walter walk over and say with a polite bow, “Sir, the matter you wished to be investigated has been completed.”

Klein didn’t inquire further in front of the other servants as he staidly nodded.

“Let’s talk in the study.”

Walter followed behind him and came all the way to the third floor. Richardson then opened the door and lit the gas wall lamp inside.

Klein unhurriedly walked to his desk, sat down, and looked at the butler for the report.

As Walter gestured Richardson to guard outside the door, he approached the desk and deliberated over his words.

After the door closed again, he said, “Ma’am Wahana’s husband is a cloth merchant. He had been cooperating with someone and had invested 1,000 pounds into it, but the other party ran off with the goods. She has already sought the help of Member of Parliament Macht and Ma’am Riana to urge the police department to crack the case as quickly as possible. However, the police usually doesn’t dare to guarantee that they can find the target for such cases.”

Klein picked up the black fountain pen on his desk and stroked it.

“To Ma’am Wahana’s family, 1,000 pounds isn’t a small sum.”

Based on what he knew, an ordinary home tutor didn’t earn more than 150 pounds a year. If the employer provided boarding and lodging, the salary would be even lower.

Although Wahana served high society and had many employers, her annual income capped out at about four to five hundred pounds. Furthermore, a large amount of her expenses would be spent on her dressing, posture, and looks, to prevent her employers from finding her unfitting as an etiquette teacher.

“Yes, her husband’s income as a cloth merchant can only be considered average. To him, a 1,000-pound investment is a rather huge investment,” Walter said by mincing his words.

It’s a lot for me too… Klein sighed and smiled.

“I just came to Backlund, so I’m not very familiar with the police.”

Walter immediately replied, “Sir, back when I was under the service of Viscount Conrad, I knew a few members of a Backlund high-ranking police officer association.”

Backlund high-ranking police officer association? That would be the most important members at Sivellaus Yard. Even the chief superintendents who are in charge of an entire borough might not be qualified for induction.

Sivellaus Yard referred to the Backlund police department. It got its name from the street it was located at.

As expected of a butler who served under a noble family… Klein sighed inwardly as he smiled with a shake of his head.

“There’s no need to do so for the time being. On this aspect, I’m sure

Ma'am Wahana is able to seek the help of many people. Be it Member of Parliament Macht or others, all of them have the ability to make Sivellaus Yard place importance on the case."

He paused and deliberately said in passing, "I've seen the lower rungs of society, and I know their methods of survival. At times, the police might not be as useful as gang members or bounty hunters.

"Walter, go to the police department to retrieve the corresponding details and head over to the famous bars in the Backlund Bridge area and East Borough to commission a bounty mission.

"Regardless if they find the corresponding criminals or the batch of cloth, I'll be giving them 200 pounds in return.

"Heh heh, let's hope that those cheats had chosen to remain in Backlund."

"A reward of 200 pounds?" Walter repeated the sum as he couldn't help but steal a glance at his employer, as though he found it unbelievable that he would offer so much for Wahana's matter.

He turned agape and was just about to say something but ultimately kept silent. All he did was seriously reply, "Alright, sir."

"I'll give you this money directly." Klein slowly got up and took out his wallet.

As Walter received the thick wad of cash, he asked in thought, "Should I tell Ma'am Wahana?"

Klein smiled.

"There's no need."

Enlightened, Walter nodded with a bow.

"Your generosity will spread through this street."

†

East Borough, Dharavi Street, in a cramped but lively pub.

Xio, who had seriously combed her short, blonde hair before heading out, squeezed through the area filled with men that stank of alcohol and putrid sweat and arrived at the bar counter.

She tapped the counter and asked the bartender, “Any new missions today?”

If it were anyone else who asked without ordering any drinks, the bartender would’ve ignored them, but upon recognizing Xio, a bounty hunter who no one wanted drinking, he could only sigh and say, “A very handsome reward, 200 pounds.”

“200 pounds?” Xio nearly suspected that she had heard wrong. Apart from Miss Audrey’s missions, she had never seen such a handsome reward in East Borough or the Backlund Bridge area. Even the mission to seek out Azik Eggers that drove bounty hunters crazy had only offered 150 pounds.

For an ordinary bounty hunter, completing a commission like this was enough for them to not work for a year!

To Xio, it was equally important because she had been helping the mysterious man in the golden mask over the past few months. She had learned that the man was from MI9, and she was trying to earn enough contributions to exchange for the Interrogator potion formula.

Therefore, the reward she received when completing his tasks only paid a little. Most of it was exchanged towards her contribution goals, so all her savings came from the advantages that her Sheriff Sequence had given her to capture criminals.

Once I receive the potion formula, I still have to spend money to buy the Beyonder ingredients, and I only have 300 odd pounds… Fors is right.

Money isn’t omnipotent, but it’s sufficiently important… Upon having this thought, she looked at the bartender and asked cautiously, “What’s the mission? Who commissioned it?”

“Find a few cheats. They cheated the victim of cloth costing 1,000 pounds.” As the bartender handed the details to Xio, he said, “The person who commissioned the mission looked like a butler. He called himself Walter, and he’s in service of a Mr. Dwayne Dantès from Böklund Street. If you capture the cheats or find the cloth, you can head there to retrieve the bounty.”

Xio quickly flipped through the documents as something quickly formulated in her mind. She instinctively knew the direction in which to continue the investigations.

“I’ll take this mission,” she said immediately with a nod.

The bartender shrugged and said, “You aren’t the only one. All the bounty hunters have taken on this mission.

“Besides, they have other ideas.”

“Like what?” Xio asked out of curiosity.

The bartender chuckled.

“They say that since Mr. Dwayne Dantès is so generous, they’re willing to recommend themselves if he lacks a bodyguard.

“However, they later gave up on the idea since being a bodyguard isn’t as free as being a bounty hunter. Even having drinks will have to wait until they’re given time off.”

That’s not a problem for me, but I can only be a bounty hunter… Xio nodded, jumped off the high-stool in front of the bar counter, and didn’t waste time heading for the door.

†

The next day, just as Klein finished breakfast and was preparing to head to his garden to have a stroll to aid in his digestion, Butler Walter came in from outside and silently followed behind him until there wasn't anyone around.

"Sir, there are two matters that need your attention," he said politely.

"Two matters?" Klein was somewhat surprised. He thought that there would only be one.

Walter nodded.

"Yes, the first matter involves the 10% shares in the Backlund Bike Company. Someone has already offered 10,000 pounds.

"Sir, do you still wish to continue in the bid?"

It has been raised to 10,000 pounds? Not bad at all! Klein deliberately acted stumped as he thought.

"I'm new in Backlund, and there are many things that need me to hold back on.

"Let's leave it at that…"

"Alright, sir." Walter then said, "The cheats who scammed Ma'am Wahana's husband of the cloth have been captured. The bounty hunter has already arrived and requested payment."

"That quickly?" Klein turned his head in shock as he looked at his butler.

If he had taken action himself, he was indeed capable of settling it that very day. After, he had Dowsing Rod Seeking to find people, but the problem stemmed from the fact that most bounty hunters weren't Seers.

Yes, perhaps it's a Beyonder good at tracking and searching for people… Klein made a preliminary judgment.

Walter answered in confirmation, “Yes, it’s much faster than I imagined.

“According to that bounty hunter, she did a reverse search from black market sales before finding the cheats.”

The black market peddlers gave in so easily? From the looks of it, they must’ve been taught a lesson with the fist… Klein nodded and said, “What’s that bounty hunter’s name? She’s quite capable…”

“She calls herself Xio,” Walter answered truthfully.

No way… Klein almost stumbled. Thankfully, he had the impressive balance of a Clown.

After calming the upheavals through his heart while acting calm, he deliberated and said, “Keep the bounty hunter’s contact method. Perhaps there might be a chance to gain her assistance in the future.”

“Alright, sir.” Walter didn’t find any problems with Dwayne Dantès’s instructions. Any decent member of high society kept some unofficial means to their chests.

Klein didn’t continue on the topic of Xio as he tersely said, “How much was reclaimed?”

“The cash and the yet-to-be sold cloth from the cheats came up to about 850 pounds.” Walter had apparently anticipated his employer’s inquiry on the matter and had asked ahead of time.

“Very good,” Klein nodded and said. “After paying the bounty hunter, help her send the cheats and the goods to the nearby police station.”

†

North Borough Police Station.

Wahana and her husband, Bacchus, looked at the high-ranking inspector in front of them as they asked in unison, surprise coloring their voices.

“It’s been found?”

“They’ve been caught?”

The high-ranking police inspector smiled in response.

“Yes.”

When he informed them how much cash and cloth was left, Wahana and Bacchus heaved a collective sigh of relief.

They could afford 150 pounds in losses. Furthermore, the remaining cloth still had space for greater appreciation and profit. In essence, they hadn’t suffered much of a loss.

They repeatedly thanked the inspector until someone invited Bacchus to identify the goods and criminals.

Wahana sat there without losing her etiquette. She smiled at the high-ranking inspector and said, “Your efficiency has exceeded my expectations. I’m very curious as to how you found the bunch of cheats?”

Being aware that this beautiful and elegant lady knew a Member of Parliament of the House of Commons, and that she would eventually learn the truth, the high-ranking inspector didn’t hide it from her.

“In fact, it was completed by a bounty hunter. She investigated the black market of stolen goods and quickly caught the suspects.”

“You even offered a bounty?” Wahana seemed to gain a full understanding of the whole story.

The inspector shook his head and said, “No, someone beat us to it. He offered 200 pounds.”

“200 pounds?” Wahana asked in surprise.

That wasn’t a small sum of money, and it even exceeded the expected profit that her husband would earn from the sale.

Seeing the inspector give an affirmative reply, Wahana couldn’t help but ask, “Who was it that offered the bounty?”

“The bounty hunter didn’t say, but accompanying her was a gentleman dressed as a butler.” The inspector simply described Walter’s looks.

Wahana vaguely guessed at the butler’s identity as she leaned back slightly, muttering softly to herself, “200 pounds…”

†

In the afternoon, Wahana, who came to Member of Parliament Macht’s house to teach his daughter etiquette, first thanked Ma’am Riana for extending their help.

After the blackish-green-haired Riana said a few words of humility, she asked, “Wahana, I heard that you’re Mr. Dwayne Dantès’s etiquette teacher. I wonder what kind of person he is?”

Wahana deliberated and said, “He’s a true gentleman. He’s warmhearted, generous, kind, educated, gentlemanly, and very knowledgeable.”

Riana nodded slightly upon hearing that before turning to look at her proud daughter and chuckled.

“Unfortunately, he’s a little too old, or he might make a good match.

“Well, I plan on inviting him to our ball this weekend.”

Chapter 759 - First Dance

* * *

Saturday night, 8 p.m.

Klein rode his high-end carriage and arrived at 39 Böklund Street—Member of Parliament Macht's house—in two and a half minutes

After stealing a glance at the lit fountain that was sloshing with water, he buttoned his tailcoat and walked down the carriage before strolling to the house's main entrance.

Richardson held an exquisitely packaged bottle of Southville red wine and followed closely behind his employer.

After walking through the main door, Klein instantly saw Member of Parliament Macht and his wife, Riana, walk over to welcome him.

The former was wearing an olive-green army officer uniform with an orange-red sash around his waist and a few medals hanging from his chest. In the Loen Kingdom, serving and retired officers enjoyed wearing their military uniforms at balls.

The latter was wearing a yellow long dress with frilly sides and rarely-seen, exquisite lace, making her look different from unmarried ladies. However, she also partially exposed her fair neck and her shoulders.

Klein took the bottle of Southville red wine from Richardson's hand and handed it to Member of Parliament Macht before saying with a bow, "Sorry, I'm late by a few minutes."

This was actually a common situation at Loen balls. Guests would rather be late by a certain amount of time than be early. This was because the masters of the house might still be busy with the final preparations with the ball. It was the worst time for them to entertain guests, but of course, one had to ensure that they weren't late by more than ten minutes.

If Wahana hadn't specially taught him this, Klein would've definitely come early as a form of respect.

"It's fine. The ball hasn't officially begun." Macht glanced at the Southville red wine as he handed it to his valet before nodding with a smile.

At Loen's high society engagements, one had to bring a gift for the master if it was their first time attending a ball. Alcoholic beverages were the most welcomed, but one had to keep in mind that the first gift had to be something locally produced.

After greeting Macht, Klein looked towards Ma'am Riana and saw that she had slightly raised her right hand. Hence, he took one step forward and lifted her palm and bent his back to kiss it.

"You illuminate the entire ball."

Before the ball began, complimenting the masters of the house was a necessary step in Loen social events. And unlike Intis, Loen's hand-kissing etiquette required the lady to gesture that it was possible before a gentleman could do the kiss; otherwise, it would be a serious faux pas.

"Likewise for your arrival," Ma'am Riana replied with a smile.

Then, the couple led Dwayne Dantès through the corridor and into the main hall where a pleasant tune was echoing.

After taking a few steps forward, Maury Macht pointed at a lady in a sky-blue dress.

"My daughter, Hazel."

Klein looked at the girl as his pupils suddenly constricted!

He knew this girl!

To be precise, he had seen her image before!

Back when he had asked Arrodes where he could obtain a mystical item which could steal the Beyonder powers of others, the magic mirror had indicated a scene of an arrogant lady loitering in the sewers, and she was none other than Hazel Macht. She was a lady with wavy black-green hair and bright brown eyes!

She has a mystical item that corresponds to a Prometheus? With her family conditions, why would she be loitering in the sewers? Is it some fortuitous encounter of hers? Was she searching for something or waiting for something in the sewers? She has already become a Beyonder? How did she become one? Could it be that she has a Grandpa parasitizing in her body? Klein, who was donning the "skin" of Dwayne Dantès, instantly thought of many questions, but he pressed his hand to his chest as he bowed with an unperturbed look.

"Good evening, Miss Hazel."

During this process, he stole a glance at Hazel Macht's face and discovered that she wore a composed look. There was an arrogance in her eyes, and all she did was smile politely and answer, "Good evening, Mr. Dantès."

She didn't have any abnormal reaction, which means that she's unable to sense the aura of the gray fog… At the very least, there's no Grandpa parasitizing her. I can't be certain for now, and I'll have to continue observing… Klein stood up straight as he took a cup of pale-gold champagne from a waiter's tray. He then began chatting with Member of Parliament Maury Macht.

"I never expected you to be a major."

He could tell from the epaulet on Macht's shoulder.

If he was a colonel, Klein would've even suspected if the gentleman was also a Beyonder, but it was hard to tell for a major.

"Haha, it's nothing. There are many opportunities to render meritorious services in Balam," Maury answered. "Of course, the weather there is especially unsuitable. I've always been suggesting to the army's higher-ups to design a uniform for West Balam and to get rid of the traditional dark colors; otherwise, the officers will only feel as if they are beef waiting to be roasted."

As for the enlisted soldiers, most of them wore red tops and white bottoms.

"Yes, the weather there is completely different from what it's like in the country. Even Desi Bay isn't that hot." Klein indicated that he had been to the Southern Continent, and he had been to either East or West Balam to corroborate his hunting experiences that he had mentioned a few days ago.

After a few minutes of small talk, Macht apologized and walked to the staircase with his wife. At the second floor, he raised a cup of red wine while standing by the railings facing the main door and said, "Thank you everyone for coming to our ball. First, let us toast the deities. They are the source of everything beautiful."

He and Ma'am Riana tapped four times on their chests as they softly praised the Goddess. The other guests also praised the deities they believed in via their own means.

Macht continued having his cup raised as he said with a smile, "Second, a toast to the kingdom. It is a stable bedrock."

"To the kingdom." Klein raised his cup of champagne and spoke with the other guests around him.

Following that, Macht surveyed the area and asked humorously, "Finally, what shall we toast to?"

Klein's mind whirred as he said loudly with a smile, "A toast to the improvement of the air in Backlund."

Macht was taken aback as he couldn't help but smile in response.

"Excellent. That's a great suggestion.

"A toast to the improvement of Backlund's air. This is a symbol of us living better lives. Cheers!"

The fixing of the atmospheric pollution issue had always been one of his political ideals as a House of Commons Member of Parliament. He had ultimately been pushing for the corresponding bills, and he had played a significant role in the improvement of the environment. Therefore, toasting to the improvement in Backlund's air was equivalent to toasting to himself. It was more euphemistic and more aboveboard.

All the guests echoed in a spirited burst as they finished the drinks in their hands.

Right on the heels of that, Member of Parliament Macht held Ma'am Riana's hand, and they went down to the hall. They then started the opening dance in the mellow music.

All the gentlemen present began finding their first partners to dance. Klein took another cup of champagne as he leisurely sized up the guests.

Hmm, Ma'am Mary is here as well… He swept his gaze and found someone familiar. As one of the major shareholders of the Coim Company, with a wealth amounting to tens of thousands, Ma'am Mary had formerly hired Sherlock Moriarty to investigate her ex-husband's act of adultery.

She's a member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, so it's normal that she has a close relationship with the Member of Parliament… Klein didn't attempt to invite her to a dance, since he here as Dwayne Dantès. He didn't know this lady who lived in another street.

He retracted his gaze and looked elsewhere. He saw Hazel Macht holding a cup of white wine and standing to the side. She wore a clear smile of alienation as she watched the gentlemen lock onto their targets to invite them for a dance.

This lady actually looks pretty good. She's dignified and pretty. She should've been the star at this ball, with people yearning to invite her to a dance. However, the way she exudes that look of arrogance, looking down at people with a supercilious look, makes any gentleman who casts his eyes on her shift over to another target.

I've seen this look in the eyes of certain Beyonders as well. They no longer think of themselves as mortal, and they often have a sense of superiority when facing ordinary folks… Heh heh, this implies that Miss Hazel is likely a Beyonder… That's right, if she isn't a Beyonder, how would she dare to loiter in the sewers… She's from the Marauder pathway? But how is she to act as a Marauder or Swindler with such arrogance? It's hard to imagine… Seeing that the hosts were almost done with the opening dance, he began seriously considering who he could invite.

Dwayne Dantès is in his early forties, so it isn't appropriate to invite a lady for his first dance, unless it's someone confirmed to be a junior. And the first dance of most ma'am's would be done with their husbands… Hmm, I should be able to invite people I'm familiar with or the hosts… Klein swept the dance floor and found the only lady Dwayne Dantès was familiar with. It was his etiquette teacher, Wahana.

Invite her? No, she likely already knows that I've secretly helped her. To invite her for the first dance can easily make her misunderstand. It might even affect her relationship with her husband and incur unnecessary trouble for Dwayne Dantès… It's not like I'm Emperor Roselle who has a penchant for the wives of others. No, he has a penchant for everything. In short, I should avoid creating gossip…

Klein shifted his gaze and heard the music change. It went from a mellow melody to something brisk.

It was a piece of countryside music that was popular in central Loen. It was well-liked by nobles and was often used for the first dance.

With the change in music, the gentlemen walked to the ladies and madams they had selected. Klein also noticed that no one approached Hazel Macht.

She's one of the hosts of this ball… Besides, I can observe her at a close distance… Heh heh, if she really is a Beyonder of the Marauder pathway, it implies that the gray fog is able to "converge" Beyonders from the neighboring pathways of the Seer pathway… Klein wore a gentle smile as he unhurriedly walked to the arrogant lady.

"Miss Hazel, may I have the pleasure of a dance with you?" Dwayne Dantès with his white sideburns gave a standard bow as he said.

Hazel glanced at him and, after a few seconds of silence, said, "It will be my honor."

She then extended her palm.

Klein politely held her hand and entered the dance floor as they began a brisk and lively dance.

Glancing at her beautiful but deadpan face, Klein said with a smile as he tried probing, "I just noticed that many young gentlemen wished to invite you to a dance, but they were unable to muster their courage."

Hazel looked up and swept her gaze at him and said, "Mr. Dantès, that's not a polite topic."

"…"

Klein choked, lost as to how to reply.

Chapter 760 - What a Small Circle

◆ ◆ ◆

I thought she would contemptuously say that she doesn't like immature and incapable men, hinting that she isn't impressed with ordinary people. Who knew she can't even be bothered to answer this question… Heh, this sense of superiority will easily lead to a loss of control for subsequent advancements… Klein couldn't help but lampoon inwardly.

From what he knew, Beyonders were only humans who had additional powers. It was equivalent to having plenty of money or status. In fact, they were still considered human and had no way of escaping human society. Only by reaching Sequence 4 would one experience a qualitative change.

Furthermore, most demigods continue being active in human society. Even the Sequence 1 Snake of Fate Will Auceptin is being an obedient unborn fetus… Perhaps only at the level of Blasphemer Amon and the others will they be able to view the real world as a "god"… Klein's mind whirred as he said, "I'm sorry. I was once a merchant who often spent time in the Northern Continent and Southern Continent, and I have had little experience with a ball. Heh heh, I mean, this type of ball."

"It's fine," Hazel replied calmly as though she didn't care about the topic he had just raised.

If it were anyone else, they would've been at a loss for a conversation with this arrogant lady. All they could do was focus on the dance, but Klein was considered quite a knowledgeable and experienced person at this point. He knew quite a bit of the different Beyonders in the mysterious world, so with his apology, he said with a smile, “This is a challenge that isn’t simpler than the sea. It similarly has beautiful scenery but hides countless difficulties. Of course, the sea also has stories of all kinds of treasures. Some of them are clearly fake, but others sound rather realistic but are impossible to verify. It’s just like Death’s Key that’s ranked first amongst them.”

“Death’s Key?” Hazel looked up at Mr. Dwayne Dantès who was a lot taller than her.

Indeed, a Beyonder with a strong sense of superiority would often have their interest piqued when it’s something that involves mystery… Klein chuckled inwardly and he nodded gently.

“Yes, it’s rumored to be hidden somewhere in the Berserk Sea…”

He used the legends he had heard back when he was aboard the White Agate, as he added more of the details he had heard during his career as an adventurer.

During this process, he couldn’t avoid mentioning the Four Kings and the Seven Pirate Admirals.

Hazel was clearly interested in these as she responded to Klein in a rare instance. She would even occasionally ask other questions, making the dance between them less awkward. Without realizing it, their dance came to an end.

Klein skillfully ended the topic and switched to asking, “Do you plan on returning to where you were, or do you plan on heading over to get some food?”

After a dance, the gentleman had to abide by the lady’s wishes and send her to where she wished to go. It didn’t have to be where she originally stood.

Hazel opened her mouth as though she wished to ask further, but she ultimately didn't speak further. She nodded her head in a reserved manner, "Where I was."

Hehe, she clearly misses the stories at sea… She's just a big brat. As long as you grasp her temper and find what interests her, she's actually not difficult to interact with… Klein held back his smile as he sent Hazel back to the periphery of the dance floor where she previously stood.

As for him, he acted casual as he walked to the long table that had all kinds of food placed on it. He picked up a plate and began to scoop a serving of pan-friend Dragon-Bone Fish, and he matched it with some sliced black pepper steak.

Compared to the dance and entertaining others, food is the true essence of a gathering… As Klein thought, he worked hard at trying to make his appearance while eating appear elegant enough.

At this moment, he saw Ma'am Mary walk over and fork a piece of foie gras soaked in red wine onto her plate.

When Klein saw her glance at him, he politely smiled with a nod as a response.

"How may I address you? I haven't met you before at the balls and banquets hosted by Member of Parliament Macht." Perhaps it was because of Dwayne Dantès's gray sideburns and deep blue eyes that were very charming, the ordinary-looking Ma'am Mary with slightly high cheekbones took the initiative to ask.

Klein laughed and replied, "I'm a merchant who just returned from Desi Bay, Dwayne Dantès. I live on this street.

"Ma'am, do I have the honor of knowing your name?"

Mary nodded in thought, and she roughly understood this man to be a merchant who was trying hard to enter high society, just like she was previously.

She said with a smile, “Mary Schott, Coim Company’s executive director.”

She didn’t mention that she was the biggest shareholder of the Coim Company, or mention that she was a member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council. This was a Loen-styled euphemism.

Mary Schott. She has taken up her original last name? Right, she has already divorced… Klein silently thought to himself and said with a smile, “I know of this company. Its main business is in anthracite and high-quality coal. It has expanded rapidly in the past few months. Heh heh, to be frank, I have the intention of investing in it, but I don’t seem capable of competing with the rest.”

After the atmospheric bills were passed, there was a drastic increase in the demand of anthracite and high-quality coal. Coim Company managed to develop itself in ways that exceeded its past efforts. Its overall valuation had already exceeded 250,000 pounds. Klein wasn’t shooting his mouth when talking about investing, but that he believed that this industry would become even more important in the coming years until humanity found a resource to replace it.

Mary had always been very proud of the National Atmospheric Pollution report she pushed for, as well as the development of the Coim Company, so she couldn’t help but smile when she heard that.

“This is because people are beginning to pay attention to the environment that they are living in.”

Having said that, she gently sighed and said, “As it gets better, trouble also increases as a result.”

Having “just” acquainted himself, Klein didn’t ask about the trouble. With his prior acquaintance with Ma’am Mary, he easily found a topic of interest and had a good conversation with her.

Heh heh, her attitude towards Sherlock Moriarty and Dwayne Dantès is very different… Despite being someone she knows, just a change in looks and identity will be given a brand new form of treatment without any problems arising. This feeling is truly magical… As they chatted, Klein felt wistful as he felt that the additional Faceless potion he had consumed was quickly digesting.

After a few minutes, a handsome man with bright blond hair walked over with a cup of red wine. He smiled at Ma'am Mary and said, "Mary, what are you talking about?"

"Hibbert, this is Mr. Dwayne Dantès from Desi. His experiences at sea and West Balam are truly interesting," Mary immediately introduced the two. "Dwayne, this is Mr. Hibbert Hall, the eldest son of the Earl of East Chester. Heh heh, we should be calling him Lord, but he prefers people to address him as Mr. Chief Secretary. He's the chief secretary of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council."

I've heard you mention him before. Of course, that was when the identity, Sherlock Moriarty, was still active… The Earl of East Chester is a major noble in the nation. He's considered the top brass when it comes to high society… Klein politely bowed without appearing overly low.

"Please permit me to convey my thanks as an ordinary citizen. The work of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council has allowed us to live in better living environments."

Hibbert Hall was rather pleased with such sincere gratitude, so he smiled in reply.

"This is all thanks to the hard work all of us have put in."

By the side, Mary said with a smile, "Dwayne, don't mention such matters again. You will make Hibbert arrogant. No, I was just joking. He's more humble than all the noble children I know. He should be having a vacation in the East Chester County's fief at this time and spending his time hunting with his friends, but he immediately returned after I sent him a telegram informing him that I was invited to this ball by Member of Parliament Macht.”

“It’s not only for this ball. There are many things that require my attention. My father, Earl Hall, would also frequently commute between Backlund and our fief before June,” Hibbert seriously explained.

A gentleman who places great importance on his social image… Klein made a preliminary judgment.

When Mary heard that, she asked in passing, “Is there anything still keeping you back? When are you leaving Backlund?”

“Most of my work has already been completed. There’s only one matter left. Heh heh, my sister, Audrey, is very interested in the Backlund Bike Company’s 10% shares. She hired a specialized team to help her in the negotiations, and I’m responsible for overseeing the matter,” Hibbert said without much thought.

Backlund Bike Company’s 10% shares? What a coincidence… I have to say that the circle of high-society is quite small after all… Klein sighed inwardly as he deliberately mentioned, “I also found a team to attempt to purchase the 10% shares, but I only managed to offer up to 9,000 pounds. Unfortunately, I wasn’t able to compete with the other competitors and could only give up.”

Hibbert glanced at him with a look of surprise.

“You have good taste.”

He didn’t mention how much his side’s bid was, to prevent his competitor from participating again.

9,000 pounds… Mary silently muttered, realizing she had underestimated Dwayne Dantès’s wealth.

At this moment, the music for the third dance sounded. Hibbert Hall turned to Mary and said, “May I have the pleasure of a dance with you?”

“That’s what I’ve been waiting for.” Mary immediately extended her hand.

This made Klein unable to exchange name cards with them; however, he wasn’t in a rush, because it was still some time before the ball ended.

After getting another plate of food, he enjoyed it while looking at the dance floor, admiring the madams’ and ladies’ dancing.

During this process, he noticed that Member of Parliament Macht and Ma’am Riana were mingling with different guests from time to time, having happy conversations with them and even dancing with them.

According to Walter, after confirming the guest list, the hosts need to seriously conclude every guest’s preference and background, so as to tailor a different topic of conversation or jokes for them. This is to make everyone feel as though they are being treated uniquely… Socializing in high society sure is troublesome… Heh heh, this might be why Loenese gentlemen tend to have receding hairlines… Klein lampooned as he sighed in reflection.

He retracted his gaze and looked at his cleared plate. He seriously considered if he should invite another lady or madam to a dance, or if he should eat a little more.

At this moment, he caught Hazel Macht’s figure through the corner of his eye. She was heading for the third story with hurried footsteps.

Chapter 761 - Good People and Good Deeds

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What happened? Klein instantly tensed up.

He had experienced too many accidents in the past, and he knew that he easily found himself involved in Beyonder matters. Upon encountering something similar, he couldn’t help but subconsciously be on alert. It did resemble some form of post-traumatic stress disorder.

After seriously watching Hazel Macht’s figure disappear from the staircase, Klein sensed that she was only in a hurry and wasn’t panicking.

This means that she has the matter under control… Besides, Macht is a Member of Parliament of the House of Commons, a member of high society just below the nobles in the kingdom. There should be Beyonders around protecting him. Yes, Earl Hall’s eldest son is here too, so his bodyguards must be Beyonders as well… Besides, Saint Samuel Cathedral is only a ten-minute carriage ride from Böklund Street. If anything were to really happen, the Nighthawks, priests, and bishops would rush over… Unless one has made up their mind to sacrifice themselves, no one would create an accident at this ball… Klein gradually calmed down and had another guess regarding Hazel’s situation.

She was rushing to the third story to resolve the negative effects of the mystical item!

The question Klein had asked Arrodes previously was where he could obtain a mystical item which could steal the Beyonder powers of others, and one of the answers he received was Hazel Macht!

Thinking back to their dance, Hazel's image rapidly reconstructed in Klein's mind with her different accessories as his focus.

Hair ornaments, earrings, necklace, brooch, fishnet gloves… Which one could it be? Klein retracted his gaze and found himself thirsty. Hence, he picked up a cup of water and downed it.

Just as he put down the cup, he saw his etiquette teacher, Wahana Heisen approach him with a plate.

This lady was dressed in a red dress, but she didn't look tawdry. She smiled at Dwayne Dantès and said, "I noticed that you don't enjoy drinking alcohol."

"I've once missed an important matter as a result of drinking," Klein randomly fleshed up Dwayne Dantès's character as an experienced person with depth.

Of course, he knew how to restrain himself. He didn't use his Faceless powers to remove a finger to prove how determined he was when making that former oath.

When Wahana heard that, she smiled in thought.

"Your past is filled with mystery. This is fatally attractive to many young ladies."

She didn't continue on the topic as she said, "I forgot to tell you that the problem my husband faced has been resolved."

Klein picked up a cup of champagne and raised it. He then said with a smile, "This is something to be happy about. Congratulations."

He didn't mention anything about him helping in secret.

Wahana gave him a deep, penetrating look as she raised the cup of red wine in her hand.

“Cheers.”

After clinking cups and taking a sip, Klein politely excused himself, put down his cup, and headed for the washroom.

This wasn’t because he wanted to head above the gray fog, but was solely due to the negative effects of Death Knell. He had drunk too much water and needed to relieve himself.

When he walked out of the washroom, Klein looked up at the staircase that led from the second story to the third story. He found Hazel Macht walking down with unhurried footsteps. She wore an unperturbed expression.

Indeed, it wasn’t a huge problem… It’s likely a result of the negative side effects of the mystical item she possesses… I wonder what it is… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he casually swept the dance floor. During the interlude between two songs, he walked over to a lady and invited her to a dance.

With Dwayne Dantès’s appearance and bearing, his invitation was undoubtedly accepted.

With him dancing, eating, chatting, and eating again, the ball slowly came to an end as the guests bade farewell one after another.

Having completed his mission of exchanging name cards, Klein did the same. However, he wasn’t the first or last person to leave.

The hall soon turned silent as Ma’am Riana monitored the servants while they cleaned up the area. Meanwhile, she beckoned for her daughter, Hazel Macht.

“Mr. Dwayne Dantès’s performance was better than I imagined. Many ladies had even asked me about him in private,” Ma’am Riana said in a veiled manner. “Hazel, what’s your impression of him when you were dancing and chatting with him? You’re a lot more mature than girls your age. I believe in your taste and judgment.”

She knew her daughter very well, and she had deliberately added the last sentence; otherwise, Hazel was unlikely to be interested in giving a detailed answer.

Hazel wasn't that arrogant when facing her mother. She said after some thought, "He's not very familiar with this circle, and he easily mentions topics that can be offensive, but he's very knowledgeable."

"Very knowledgeable…" Ma'am Riana was slightly surprised as she repeated her daughter's words.

With her understanding of Hazel, this was a rather good compliment.

She couldn't help but be worried that her daughter had taken a liking to Dwayne Dantès.

Hazel thinks little of the eligible bachelors around her because they are too young, inexperienced, and incapable? Dwayne Dantès happens to be the kind of man that girls who mature early like… Riana suddenly felt a little regret inviting the gentleman to the ball.

She knew that with Hazel's personality, she might very well elope if she were to suffer any objection to her newfound love.

Hazel seemed to sense her mother's thoughts and said without emotion, "I only like men who are sufficiently powerful."

Phew… Riana silently heaved a sigh of relief as she was no longer worried about the problem from before. This was because Hazel was a girl who found lying beneath her.

†

Late at night, Hazel got up from bed. With her night vision, she changed into clothes that facilitated movement.

She climbed down from her bedroom's balcony and carefully avoided her family's bodyguards. She went all the way to the garden and came to the middle of Böklund Street. Not every sewer manhole allowed a human passage with vertical metal ladders.

Hazel adeptly moved the manhole cover away and climbed down before closing the cover from underneath.

Nearly forty-five minutes after, she moved the manhole cover again and returned into the shadows of the street.

At this moment, Hazel saw a shadow nimbly flip into a garden nearby.

Unit 160… She read the corresponding address.

It was none other than Dwayne Dantès's residence.

On the manor's third story, Klein was once again awoken from his sleep due to his spiritual intuition. He had the urge to capture the infiltrator that disturbed his sleep and feed it to Creeping Hunger.

This time, he directly opened his iron cigar case and released his Wraith marionette.

Senor, in his dark red coat, first walked into the full-body mirror before leaping over to the oriel window in his valet's room.

"He" observed Richardson and saw the valet sit up as he looked at the door with fear and anxiety.

The door silently opened as a shadow flashed in.

Under the crimson moonlight, the infiltrator exposed brownish-yellow skin, a soft outline, and short curly black hair. He obviously hailed from the Southern Continent.

With a gloomy cold aura, he stood by the door and looked at Richardson, saying in a deep voice, "Have you decided?

"Do not believe that you can attain your calm life by leaving. Inside of you flows the blood of Death's subjects. You are destined to give up everything to restore god's glory.

"Think about your deceased mother. Think about the insults you once suffered. Do you wish that your child will grow up under the contemptuous looks of others, to be a servant of others forever?"

"But, what can I do…" Richardson lowered his head as he said with great difficulty.

"Wait for the mission." The infiltrator's voice turned gentler.

Richardson didn't commit to an answer as he seemed to be struggling inwardly.

As for the infiltrator, he didn't seem to care about his hesitation. He treated it as though Richardson had agreed, turned around, left the room, and traced his steps back.

Death's subject… Someone from the Numinous Episcopate, or another organization that's trying to restore Balam? Having witnessed everything, Klein leaned back into bed and silently said, What mission would they give Richardson? Steal my money to provide funds for the organization? Or will they create a terrorist incident at one of the balls of high society?

At that moment, the infiltrator had climbed down from the balcony, passed through the garden, and flipped over the perimeter fence made of steel bars.

Suddenly, he saw a figure pounce over from his left. he dodged as he clenched his fist and threw a punch.

Thud!

The punch hit the black figure, but it pierced straight through. It was as though he had struck a shadow created by the street lamp.

Meanwhile, he suffered a heavy blow to the back of his head as he fainted onto the ground.

Hazel's figure immediately surfaced behind the infiltrator as she wore an excited expression. It was as though she had completed a successful scam.

She quickly reined in her emotions as she maintained her arrogant demeanor. She turned to look at the black metal gates of 160 Böklund Street.

This girl bent her back and held the infiltrator by the arm as she dragged him to Dwayne Dantès's doorstep.

Immediately after that, Hazel let go of her left hand, cleaned up any traces, walked forward with her chin slightly lifted, and pulled the doorbell.

Then, she quickly departed, heading straight to her home through the shadows in the street.

And on a street lamp outside Unit 160, on the black metal gate was a piece of glass. It reflected a figure wearing a dark red coat and an old triangular hat. It had seen the entire process.

†

How should I deal with this… Inside the room, Klein was stumped.

He knew that Hazel was doing a good anonymous deed for her neighbor to finish off an infiltrator, but this way, if his butler were to make a police report, the matter would be investigated in detail, causing the matter to be transferred to the Nighthawks. When the time came, whoever struck the infiltrator unconscious would become an important question.

If Klein was really an ordinary person, it wouldn't have mattered—he could allow the Nighthawks to carry out their investigation. However, not only was he a powerful Sequence 5 Beyonder, but he was also scheming to steal an item from behind Chanis Gate. He didn't wish for any external setbacks to spoil his plans, or else he would have to change identities once again.

To be frank, his earliest solution was to find a way to terminate Richardson's services.

However, what he had heard changed his mind a little.

If I were to terminate Richardson's services, it would be equivalent to pushing him into the abyss despite his desire for a quiet life. It will force him to mix with those people… Unfortunately, Dwayne Dantès has a "mission;" otherwise, helping him in passing wouldn't be difficult… Klein sighed as he thought.

Ten seconds later, the unconscious infiltrator suddenly stood up, cracked his neck, and hid in the nearby shadows. And at this moment, Butler Walter had walked out of the house's main door after hearing the doorbell.

Chapter 762 - Nation Reestablishment Society

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At the gates, Walter used the light from the street lamps and discovered no one was outside through the gaps. The street was silent.

For an instant, Walter suspected if he had heard wrong and that the doorbell hadn’t rung!

He composed himself, and he quickly walked to the servant quarters at the back of the compound. He woke up a few servants and got them to carry double-barreled hunting rifles to begin patrolling the main building so as to prevent any bandits or burglars from infiltrating.

Walter didn’t immediately get the police, because nothing had happened yet. The doorbell from earlier might’ve been a prank from a tramp.

Meanwhile, under the nearby sewers, the infiltrator was holding onto the metal handles as he slowly headed down into the unlit area.

He soon came to a halt, leaned back onto the moss-covered wall, and slowly slid down to sit down on the dirty ground.

His eyes closed again as though he was still in an unconscious state. In front of him, a middle-aged man wearing a dark red coat and an old triangular hat instantly appeared. He was none other than Klein’s marionette, Wraith Senor.

Senor bent down, rummaged through the infiltrator’s pockets and found 7 soli and 11 pence, as well as tiny cloth bags containing different kinds of powders.

Inside the room, Klein remotely controlled his marionette from dozens of meters away. As he identified the powder, he discovered that his theories were correct. They were all herbal powder in the Death domain. And a portion of them could be used for spirit channeling!

He was very likely to be a Beyonder from the Corpse Collector pathway that hailed from Balam. Even if he hadn't reached Sequence 7 Spirit Medium, it was very normal for him to prepare the corresponding herbal powders, essential oils, and extract. After all, these materials weren't only used for spirit channeling.

Immediately, Klein controlled Senor to set up a ritual to pray to The Fool.

Then, he went above the gray fog to respond, allowing Senor to complete what followed.

After doing all of this, he returned to the real world and continued controlling Senor, allowing him to channel the spirit.

Passing through a storm of glimmers, Klein saw the infiltrator's spirit. He appeared listless, blurry, and translucent.

"What's your name? What faction do you belong to?" Senor asked with a deep voice.

The infiltrator answered blankly, "Godotpos. I belong to the Black Skeleton Gang."

Black Skeleton Gang. I believe it's a gang that's active around the border of East Borough and the dock area close to the Backlund Bridge area. It's mainly filled with people of Balam heritage. Although they aren't as barbaric and boorish as the Zmanger Gang, they aren't strangers to violence… As Klein recalled the intelligence he had previously gathered, he made Senor continue asking:

“What do you mainly do? Why are you looking for Richardson?”

Godotpos answered in a muddled state, “We are fighting for God.

“We were originally members of the Balam Nation Reestablishment Society. We established the Black Skeleton Gang to grasp various intel and obtain funds. Apart from that, we also have another mission. It is to seek out any items related to Death, and send it back to the Southern Continent.

“This time, we obtained verified information that in Earl Wolf’s collection is a mask taken out from the Eggers family mausoleum. This family is a descendant of God.

“For this mask, we need to send someone to infiltrate Earl Wolf’s household as a servant or infiltrate during one of the balls and banquets he hosts. And Richardson is an excellent choice. He has no history with any of the other organizations, and he’s an experienced servant.”

The servants of nobles are often “inherited.” It’s obviously not easy to infiltrate… Only short-term employments will be made if there’s a sudden need for plenty of manpower…

Speaking of which, there really is such a situation. At the ball today, a few ladies had mentioned that some nobles who are financially tight will sell lots of their lands and manors, and also dismiss nearly all their servants, leaving fewer than ten to serve them, so as to barely maintain a decent lifestyle. When there are large-scale balls or banquets that require manpower, they would spend money to hire a bunch of temporary workers from the Family Servant Assistance Association to keep up a front…

Also, Earl Wolf actually has a mask from the descendants of Death’s family. I recall Mr. Azik’s last name to be Eggers… Unfortunately, I don’t wish to be disturbed by any accidents at the moment; otherwise, I might’ve come up with a way to help Mr. Azik obtain that mask… Klein mumbled silently and made Senor continue asking:

“How do you know Richardson?”

Godotpos said blankly, “We got to know each other at a manor in East Balam. Back then, we were both slaves.

“Among the slaves, there are people who secretly spread the faith of Death. Richardson, his mother, and I couldn’t help but become believers of Death in such a life. We secretly joined an organization that had a lot of influence among the slaves there.

“Later, Richardson’s mother passed away from an illness, and he was brought to Backlund, while I stayed in East Balam before I found an opportunity to escape.

“A few years later, I was sent to Backlund, and I chanced upon Richardson. H-he actually forgot about his mother’s death and the abuse he had once received. He forgot his faith towards God, and had his will eroded by what he called a peaceful life!

“To avoid me, he deliberately made mistakes and kept switching employers, but how could he have guessed that his former companion is no longer an ordinary human!”

Everyone has the right to choose as long as they don’t harm others. However, Richardson and I are two different kinds of people… In the room, Klein closed his eyes and made Senor ask in a deep voice, “What’s the organization that is very influential among the slaves?”

Godotpos hesitated for a moment and said, “The Eternal Life Society. Those who believe in Death will obtain eternal life in the Underworld once they leave the real world that’s filled with pain and sorrow.”

Eternal Life Society… I’m aware of this. It’s a branch of the Numinous Episcopate… As a former Nighthawk, Klein knew quite a lot about such matters.

He continued controlling Senor to interrogate Godotpos, and he obtained plenty of information regarding the Eternal Life Society, East Balam Nation Reestablishment Society, and the Black Skull Gang while confirming that Godotpos and his gang had their hands covered in the blood of the innocent.

After finishing the spirit channeling and clearing up any traces, he waited thirty minutes before letting the Wraith enter Godotpos's body, controlling him to climb out of the sewers and returning back into the shadows of the streets.

And at this point, the servants in 160 Böklund Street, who were wielding double-barreled hunting rifles, were no longer as vigilant while doing their patrolling rounds. They seemed to believe that any latent danger had passed.

Klein pretended as though he didn't notice anything as he continued sleeping in his master bedroom. However, he had already set up a ritual to summon and respond to himself. With Azik's copper whistle, the iron cigar case, and Creeping Hunger, he silently left his residence in the form of a spirit.

He followed behind Godotpos and constantly maintained a distance of eighty meters. By using his marionette to possess this "hostage," he made him circle to another street and board a rental carriage by the side of the road.

About an hour later, Godotpos returned to the headquarters of the Black Skeleton Gang, a tiny house situated near the docks.

There were plenty of firearms stashed away here, with several operatives that were sent from the East Balam Nation Reestablishment Society. They formed the upper ranks of the Black Skeleton Gang.

Following the method that was agreed upon, "Godotpos" knocked on the door, and he said to a member who came towards him, "Richardson has submitted."

"Very good." The member inattentively shot Godotpos a glance, made way for him, and gave him passage.

"Godotpos" surveyed the area and found the high-yield explosives and a bunch of rifles stacked in the corner of the house. A few of the top brass of the Black Skeleton Gang were gathered together, discussing something.

"Godotpos, want a smoke?" The member from before handed him a cigarette.

This was a cigarette fashioned to the preferences of the Southern Continent. They were made from dried tobacco leaves mixed with tiny amounts of herbs.

Godotpos received the cigarette and casually picked up a box of matchsticks from the table, took out a few sticks, and lit them.

Then, he threw the few burning matchsticks to the corner where the easily flammable explosives were.

"…"

Everyone present looked at Godotpos with a dumbfounded look, momentarily at a loss as to what had happened.

Rumble!

On a public bench dozens of meters away, Klein sat there as the flames blazed behind him, a hot gust of air swarming out of the house.

A few seconds later, Senor in his dark red coat appeared beside him, with some signs of being burned.

The Wraith held his hand to his chest and bowed before returning inside the gold coin inside the iron cigar case.

Unfortunately, I won't be able to pick up the Beyonder characteristics; otherwise, it wouldn't appear like an accident… It'll definitely be suspicious if the upper echelons of the Black Skeleton Gang don't have any Beyonders… Klein silently sighed as he cleared any traces before ending the summoning and returning above the gray fog.

The next morning, he got up and washed up as though nothing had happened. He then waited for his valet to bring in a change of clothes.

Richardson entered in silence as he finished his work skillfully.

Following that, he took a step back and bowed his head.

"Sir, after serving you this week, I wish to resign."

He typically received a weekly salary from Housekeeper Taneja.

"Why?" Klein looked at himself in the mirror as he adjusted his vest.

Meanwhile, he leisurely thought, Not bad at all. You know how to resign by your own volition and not bring trouble to your employer…

Richardson had already thought of an excuse.

"I believe I'm lacking in ability to be a valet. At last night's ball, I realized how lacking I was when I was interacting with the servants of the other guests."

Klein smiled.

"Everyone begins with zero experience. Few grew up with experience. Consider it again, and give me your final answer tomorrow."

"Yes, sir." Richardson didn't speak further as he took the initiative to leave the room. He went to the first floor to help his employer pick up the morning papers.

During this process, he would always first flip through it and place the most interesting articles at the top.

While flipping through, his gaze froze as he focused on an article:

“An explosion happened at 79 Dirham Street in the Backlund Bridge area. It’s suspected to be related to the Black Skeleton Gang…

“According to the police, all the upper echelons of the Black Skeleton Gang died in this accident, including Lima, Moreira, Godotpos…”

This… Richardson shook his head, suspecting that he was dreaming.

Chapter 763 - Mr. X

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160 Böklund Street, inside the dining hall on the second story.

Klein had just bitten into the buttered toast his servant had served him when he saw his butler walk in.

Walter bowed and said, “Sir, a person of unknown origins pulled our doorbell last night.

“As it was already very late, I didn’t wake you up, and instead got the servants to patrol the area with the double-barreled hunting rifles.

“If you so permit it, I’ll visit the nearby police station to get them to reinforce the patrols on this street at night.”

To employ such a butler, there aren’t any flaws aside from him being expensive… Klein nodded slightly and drank the fresh milk that had been delivered to him.

“Very good.”

†

39 Böklund Street, Member of Parliament Macht’s house.

Hazel entered the activity room on the second floor and saw her mother, Riana, chatting with the housekeeper.

“What happened?” She pushed a lock of black-green hair to the back of her ear.

Riana chuckled and said, “Someone rang Dantès’s doorbell late last night.”

“A prank?” Hazel sat down.

“No one knows. Anyways, Dantès’s butler specially went to the police station this morning,” Riana recounted what she had learned from her servant.

Hazel nodded slightly and said, “It’s best to have the police involved.”

“But it’s useless. No one knows who pulled the doorbell. Apparently, there wasn’t anyone there.” Riana laughed while shaking her head.

Hazel was taken aback as she blurted out, “There wasn’t anyone there?”

“That’s right. Dantès’s butler only seemed to ask the police to double their efforts on the night patrols on our street. That’s good news.” As the wife of a Member of Parliament of the House of Commons, and the daughter of a famous lawyer, Riana had very good relations with the police.

“Not a single person…” Hazel repeated softly before falling into silence.

After a while, she left the activity room and returned to the third story.

Along the way, she couldn’t help but clench her fist and swing it as though she was testing something. In between her brows was a clear look of puzzlement.

†

Inside his bedroom, Klein looked at the large pile of gold coins in front of him. All he saw was the shiny color of gold!

There was a total of 4,000 pounds of gold coins!

After a week of gathering funds, Admiral of Stars Cattleya had finally completed the transaction for the Scales of Luck. Apart from the gold coins, she had also paid another 6,500 pounds in cash.

To be honest, having a pile of gold coins is way more visually shocking than a pile of cash of the same size… As Klein sighed, he took out the 13 Loen gold coins—coins he received from Senor—from his pocket and threw it into the pile.

After doing all of this, he took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew into it.

Silently, Reinette Tinekerr appeared in front of him with the four blonde, red-eyed heads in her hand.

"Ma'am, this is the first installment, a total of 4,013 pounds." Klein retracted his gaze from the pile of gold coins and looked at Miss Messenger.

He was actually quite curious as to how Miss Messenger would move such a huge pile of gold coins. He remembered that she always used her teeth when collecting letters.

"Very good…" "You still have…" "Five thousand…" "Nine hundred…" "Eighty…" "Seven…" Reinette Tinekerr's heads said one after another.

There's no need to remind me… Klein forced a smile and said, "I'll try to gather the rest as soon as possible."

Reinette Tinekerr didn't speak further as one of the heads tried hard to open its mouth.

Suddenly, the area before her turned dark and deep. All the gold coins were sucked up by vortex-like surging water.

In a few short seconds, the large pile of gold coins vanished.

Reinette Tinekerr's four heads nodded at the same time before returning to the spirit world.

I still have 8,156 pounds and 5 Loen gold coins… I can barely be considered a tycoon… I could actually afford any investment opportunities if they appear, and it won't just be me raising the price and mentioning it in passing… This way, I won't be suspected to be a cheat for the time being… Heh heh, be a little optimistic. Perhaps the investment opportunity might allow me to earn back the money I spent. It's always fast to make money work for you… Klein silently exhaled as he cast his gaze out the window, forcing himself to enjoy the thinly fogged streets.

†

At night time in the East Borough, the surrounding area was pitch-black due to the few street lamps available, along with many of them being damaged. It was as though there were countless monsters and criminals lurking within.

Xio Derecha wore a hooded cloak, turned into a small alley, and came outside to what seemed like a dilapidated house.

This was the new gathering in East Borough she had previously mentioned to Fors!

Xio wasn't in a rush to knock on the door with the agreed-upon signal. She first looked down to check her attire.

Unlike how she usually dressed, she wore a pair of long boots.

They didn't look odd, but Xio knew very well that the soles were very thick. She had stuffed plenty of things inside, allowing a person to "magically" appear taller.

And this effectively hid Xio's greatest characteristic!

Feeling assured by the presence of her triangular blade, Xio pulled her hood up and knocked on the door with the signal.

Soon, she was led into an activity room inside as she randomly found a spot to sit down.

After the participants had mostly arrived, the host of the gathering finally walked in.

He was of medium build, with a height of about 1.75m. He wore a black classical robe, a pointed mage hat, with a brass mask on his face. He gave off an ancient and mysterious vibe.

Rather dark skin, but it's not exactly brown. He resembles someone from Feynapotter or Desi Bay… But I can't be sure. It might be a tan… He has raven black curly hair. This does match my first guess… Xio sized him up as a Sheriff.

The man in the brass mask looked around the room before laughing deeply.

"You can call me Mr. X."

Mr. X… Xio couldn't help but twitch the corners of her mouth.

After becoming an outer circle member of MI9, she had learned quite a bit of the situations regarding the secret organizations, and that included the Aurora Order.

Therefore, she knew very well that the Oracles of the Aurora Order used alphabets as their code names, and they enjoyed addressing themselves as Mr. or Ma'am.

And from her point of view, to address themselves in front of others in such a manner was obvious exposure of their identity and background. After all, the members who participated in these gatherings were mostly Beyonders who were lacking in knowledge!

Isn't he afraid that others would report him? It's no wonder the gentleman from MI9 said that the Aurora Order is filled with lunatics, that there's no way to understand their actions with the logic of the average person… Ever since Mr. A vanished, there have been a few gatherings in Backlund that had impersonators, or gatherings that were hosted by his associates for their own benefit. The hosts were quickly reported and ended up being arrested… Hmm, it's not necessarily the case that Mr. X is from the Aurora Order. Perhaps, he's just like the others… Xio retracted her observing gaze and silently watched the gathering continue.

She seldom reported matters, because she had experience as an unaffiliated Beyonder. She knew it wasn't easy to survive in this world with such identities, so long as there wasn't any accidents, she wouldn't provide such intel to MI9.

If it's confirmed that he's an Oracle of the Aurora Order, I'll report him. These people are all lunatics. They will bring about extreme danger… As Xio thought over the matter, she watched the others exchange information and complete trades.

She didn't participate much in it, firstly because there wasn't any information or item of interest, and secondly, she was saving up for her Interrogator potion.

†

After the end of the gathering, she returned to her residence at Cherwood Borough. Xio saw Fors wearing a face mask that was said to be able to moisturize faces as she lay there leisurely reading.

"How was it? How was that gathering?" Fors asked, pretending as though she wasn't interested.

Xio threw her cloak to the side and said, "There were quite a number of participants, and there were quite a number of items as well, but they were mostly for Low-Sequence Beyonders."

"No one will offer anything good at the first gathering," Fors said as she lowered the novel in her hands.

“Yeah.” Xio nodded and said, “The organizer of the gathering calls himself Mr. X, but no one knows if he’s related to Mr. A.”

Mr. X… A suspected Aurora Order Oracle… Could he be Lewis Wien? Fors’s attention was caught as she languidly leaned back and asked, “What does he look like?”

“He wore a mask!” Xio rolled her eyes at her. “Do you think I have the ability to see through an obstacle?”

“No, no, no. I mean his build.” Fors had seen Lewis Wien’s full figure thanks to her teacher, Dorian Gray, and knew his characteristics.

As a Sheriff, Xio easily restored Mr. X’s appearance and asked out of puzzlement, “Regardless if he’s related to Mr. A or not, isn’t he worried that he’ll be reported for having such a name?”

After Fors heard Xio’s description and saw the portrait she made with her Sheriff powers, she was delighted. There was a high chance that Mr. X was the traitor of the Abraham family, Lewis Wien!

He’s not afraid of being reported because he’s a Traveler. He can calmly escape no matter what happens? If the official organizations were to use their experience like how they dealt with Mr. A, there’s really no way they can restrain him… Fors silently mumbled. She stopped talking about the topic and switched to something else.

After Xio went to take a bath, she hurriedly used her powers as an Astrologer to ask her spirituality, and she stacked Lewis Wien’s image with Mr. X’s image before obtaining the answer that they were one and the same!

It’s really him! Fors stood up as she paced about in excitement and glee in the living room.

Her first thought was to report this to the various major Churches, and also include the tipoff that the target had the powers of a Traveler. Following that, she recalled her prior attempt at hiring Mr. World to assassinate Lewis Wien.

Regardless, I should first ask Mr. World if he’s free to take on this mission. I can’t offend him. Upon recalling everything that Mr. World had done, Fors couldn’t help but shiver.

After making up her mind, she first checked that Xio was having a bath and wouldn’t come out anytime soon before praying to Mr. Fool.

“…Please tell Mr. World that the Aurora Order’s Oracle, Lewis Wien, has appeared, and there’s a high probability that he’s a Traveler, codenamed ‘Mr. X.’”

Chapter 764 - First Investigation

◆◆◆

Klein was returning from Saint Samuel Cathedral to Böklund Street on a four-wheeled carriage when he heard the stacked illusory pleas.

A female… It’s nothing urgent… All he did was make a rough judgment and didn’t immediately head above the gray fog to respond.

Sweeping his glance at the street lamps which were dispelling the darkness, Klein retracted his gaze and raised the white porcelain with gold rims to take a sip.

Beside him, Richardson noticed this and said after mustering his courage, “Sir, I’ve thought it through. You’re very right. Everyone starts with zero experience. Few grow up with experience. Thank you for giving me this chance to grow.”

After confirming that Godotpos and gang were dead, he was finally at ease as he began considering his professional career.

Switching employers repeatedly in a short period of time was a stain on a servant’s record. Once he resigned from Dwayne Dantès’s employ, Richardson believed that it would be difficult for him to continue being a valet.

This would be extremely damaging for him.

This was not only because a valet’s annual salary was at least 25 pounds, and was way better than any non-management jobs. It was comparable to a lady’s maid, and being a valet gave one the greatest opportunity of becoming a butler!

By following their male or female employers and helping them in all kinds of trivialities, being their mouthpiece and assistant would allow them to build up their skills. It would allow them to grasp all the traits needed for being a butler and, as a result, become their employer's confidant. As long as there was a chance, one could easily be made a land steward, butler assistance or deputy butler, as they were slowly promoted to a butler.

Richardson did yearn for a peaceful life, but this didn't mean that he was willing to be a servant his entire life. Without a doubt, he wished to rely on his hard work to earn more and gain a higher standing. And becoming the butler of a wealthy family was his ultimate goal.

"It's not too late to realize that now," Klein replied with a smile, consenting to Richardson's retention.

After returning to 160 Böklund Street, he instructed Housekeeper Taneja to prepare supper for him at half-past eleven as he headed to the third story where he took off his coat and entered the bathroom.

At that moment, the bathtub had already been heated to an appropriate temperature by a maid five minutes ahead of time.

Klein wasn't in a rush to take his bath, as he went above the gray fog to determine who had prayed to him.

Mr. X… Traveler… Miss Magician is rather efficient… Without realizing it, she has matured quite well… Klein muttered to himself.

After some serious consideration, he conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made this fake person pray amidst the veil of the gray fog.

"…Give me the time, location, and provide more information. Only then will I take action."

Klein's idea was very simple. He found a Traveler's powers rather useful, but it was difficult for Dwayne Dantès to have a period of prolonged absence from Böklund Street, or stay in his room all the time. It would be fine if Miss Magician could provide detailed and reliable intel, allowing him to carry out the assassination once. But if she were to get The World to slowly gather information bit by bit, there was no way he could do it, as it affected his own plans.

Soon, Fors gave a reply.

“…I’ll try to gather it as quickly as possible.”

As the location and timing for Mr. X’s next gathering hadn’t been confirmed, all she could do was patiently wait.

After settling this matter, Klein returned to the real world, took off his clothes, and placed himself into the bathtub.

The warm water enveloped him as he closed his eyes in comfort. He felt that the fatigue that plagued his body and mind were being washed away bit by bit.

During this period of time, he had been to Saint Samuel Cathedral a few times to listen to Bishop Elektra’s explanation of The Revelation of Evernight. He had grasped the looks and characteristics of another two Keepers, but he hadn’t seen any repeated sightings, preventing him from determining the schedule of the Keepers.

And doing such acts would similarly bring him trouble. Klein opened his eyes as he looked at the steam above him, sighing inwardly.

The first investigation should be coming soon…

A person who often entered Saint Samuel Cathedral’s interior would likely be investigated by the Nighthawks, and with his origins still an unknown, such an investigation was almost necessary.

If there aren’t any investigations, it would be a serious case of negligence for the Nighthawks… Klein slowly exhaled.

†

In the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard slowly walked out of a quiet room.

His green eyes had a tint of strange black water as countless illusory bubbles and ripples appeared and disappeared.

“Not bad. You’re already a Soul Assurer and are almost catching up to me.” Standing in the corridor was Daly Simone as she congratulated him in a self-deprecating manner.

She was still wearing her hooded black robe, with blue eyeshadow and blush. She had quite an uncanny sense of beauty.

When Leonard looked at this familiar lady, he found her bearing even colder than before. There seemed to be countless shadows hidden around her, in layers that went deep and felt cold.

“Clearly, I’m still very far from you. With your condition, you should be able to advance to Gatekeeper, right?” Leonard didn’t act too casual in front of Daly, speaking rather formally. This was because if he attempted to make any jokes, the one who would eventually be left blushing in embarrassment would definitely be him instead of the lady.

Gatekeeper was Sequence 5 of the Death pathway.

“I was ready two months ago,” Daly said without concealing anything, her expression slightly warped.

Leonard roughly understood what she meant as he nodded slightly.

“You haven’t contributed enough?”

Daly curled her lips immediately.

“That’s right.

“It’s like I’m already in bed with everything in place, only to realize that there aren't any condoms at home. Worst of all, it's late at night, and most of the stores around the neighborhood have closed for the day!"

What an amazing analogy… Leonard didn't think it was right of him to respond as he said with a smile, "You can choose to handle certain cases."

Without giving Daly a chance to speak, he pointed at the other end of the corridor.

"Captain Soest is still waiting for me to report on my advancement."

Daly didn't say a word as she watched him leave.

By the time his back disappeared around the corner, this lady's expression seemed to turned adrift as she muttered softly, "Captain Soest…"

In the room where Leonard's Red Gloves team was temporarily stationed in, Soest, who had just become a Spirit Warlock, saw his desultory subordinate walk in as he casually threw a dossier over.

"Very good. You've already advanced. I'll congratulate you later. First, investigate this target's dream."

It was already late at night, but for the Nighthawks who were mainly staffed with Sleepless, it was no different from day. They even felt stronger at night.

"Isn't this something the local Nighthawks do?" Leonard received the dossier and asked in passing.

"They've recently been swamped with cases and are lacking in manpower. They've requested our help," Soest explained without much care.

Leonard didn't ask further as he looked down and flipped through the dossier.

The first thing that he caught sight of was a photograph, and the middle-aged gentleman on it had given him a deep impression!

Dwayne Dantès… Leonard's pupils instantly constricted.

He knew this man, aware that this person was an undying monster who had survived since the Fourth Epoch. He was at least a Saint or even stronger!

Furthermore, he knows my secret and Old Man's identity… Leonard instinctively raised his hand to rub his temples.

"Captain Soest, I just advanced, and my spirituality is a little out of control."

"Is that so…" Only then did Soest realize that he might've made a mistake. He hurriedly turned to look at another Red Glove and said, "Albert, you do it."

Albert was a man in his thirties. His hair was slightly blond, and his skin was pale. He didn't look too healthy.

Leonard heaved a sigh of relief as he handed the dossier over to him.

At this moment, his heart suddenly skipped a beat. Would Albert suffer any negative effects if he were to enter the undying monster's dream?

At that moment, he felt a little regretful. He believed that he should've done it himself. At the very least, he knew the level of danger and had faced him before. It wouldn't result in him provoking him.

Dwayne Dantès likely won't do anything to Albert… If he has any excessive reaction and causes anything abnormal to happen to Albert, he would immediately expose his problems to us. And with our Church's strength and Backlund's situation, there's no way he can leave this city alive… Leonard quickly calmed down, believing that Dwayne Dantès would use a milder manner to avoid the dream investigation.

He pulled over a chair and sat beside Albert. Although he appeared like he was reading the papers without much thought, he was constantly watching him to prevent any accidents from happening.

†

160 Böklund Street, inside the master bedroom.

Klein suddenly woke up in his dream, aware that “someone” had come.

The investigation of the Nighthawks? As he mumbled, he surveyed the area and found himself in the half-open room.

Following that, he heard knocks on the door.

“Come on in…” Klein tried hard to make his voice sound like a dreamy murmur.

The doorknob twisted as the door opened. A thinly-built blond man dressed in a black trench coat walked in. He was none other than the Red Glove, Albert.

“I’m a superintendent from the Backlund Police Department.” Albert casually showed proof of his identity and sat opposite Klein.

“How may I help you, Officer?” Klein got into character.

He knew that due to the influence of a Nightmare, he needed to appear normal.

Albert conjured a stack of papers and began reading them softly, “Dwayne Dantès. Male. Hails from Desi County…”

He repeated all the intelligence that had been gathered and asked, “Is this set of information legitimate?”

“Partially, but some of them are fake,” Klein replied “honestly.”

The only partial truths are probably “male” and “single”… Meanwhile, he was making self-deprecating comments.

Albert was pleased that he had made progress so quickly as he asked with a deadpan expression, “Which of these are fake?”

Klein was already prepared for that as he pretended to recall.

“Most of my wealth doesn’t come from mining, but from adventuring in the Southern Continent.”

He fabricated a story from Anderson’s description of West Balam about how a commoner earned his wealth by relying on his eloquence, intel, experience, and guts in an area that conflict often happened between Loen and Intis.

This story wasn’t considered very detailed, and it was mainly an outline. The main goal was to make the Nighthawks believe that Dwayne Dantès wasn’t a Beyonder, but just an ordinary person with a sense of adventure and risk. Such stories of people getting rich were common in Loen.

Chapter 765 - Monday Again

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After Klein was done, Albert asked a few targeted questions according to his recount, to ensure that the details matched up.

Without a doubt, he obtained a satisfactory answer.

“Thank you for your cooperation. Have a great dream.” Albert smiled as he got up and bowed. Then, he used his Nightmare powers to influence Dwayne Dantès once again. It would make him have a vague recollection that he had such a dream when he woke up, but he wouldn’t be able to recall the specifics.

After doing all of this, he turned to head for the door, turned the doorknob, and left the dream.

Indeed, the Nighthawks place too much trust in Nightmare powers. If I were to be the one leading this investigation, I would definitely design a series of questions that attack the matter from different angles ahead of time, and then do cross-referencing to find any loopholes… Heh, the best method is to enlist Miss Justice’s help in creating a set of professional psychological questionnaires and get the target to finish it in the dream. If he were faking something, the psychological state and the image he wishes to project would definitely show contradictions from different evaluations. This is unless he’s also a psychological expert and can spot the true goals of each set of questions… Klein leaned back into the sofa and cast his gaze out the window.

In the darkness, the street lamps’ glow appeared dim and pale, illuminating the surroundings in a gloomy silence.

Klein silently observed for a few seconds before he curled his lips and gave a self-deprecating smile.

And in the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard first heaved a sigh of relief after he saw Albert wake up normally and heard his report. He felt even more fearful of the undying monster from the Fourth Epoch.

†

City of Silver. Lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating every street.

Derrick Berg walked out of his house with the Axe of Hurricane in his possession as he headed for the twin towers that was north of the city.

Along the way, he met several residents of the City of Silver. They were either busy, sending their children for general education lessons, or patrolling every corner in groups. It was to prevent anyone from turning into an evil spirit after dying from an accident at home and being without a relative to end their lives.

The existence of these people made the City of Silver appear lively, and from time to time, Derrick could hear the laughter and cheers from little children.

He couldn’t help but recall the days in Afternoon Town. The number of humans he met every day had numbered about twenty, and most of the time, they needed to stay in a garrisoned building. Outside were monsters that lurked in houses under the cloak of darkness. They were eradicated again and again, but they would appear time and time again from unknown places. Every team member from the expedition felt a sense of helplessness towards this, as though there was no way of gaining true safety. They could never feel at ease with the need to go all out at any time. There was no chance for them to relax at all.

No ordinary creature would wish to maintain such states of high stress and vigilance for prolonged periods of time; therefore, in regards to that, the City of Silver had already developed a rotation system.

It didn't take much time for the first expedition team to go from Afternoon Town back to the City of Silver, but there was the unavoidable quarantine and relaxation period. It was only today that Derrick had managed to adjust himself to a mental state which he believed he could withstand the negative effects from advancing.

He had previously reported to Chief Colin Iliad that he had obtained the potion formula to Notary, and he was allowed to use this discovery to exchange for the corresponding Beyonder ingredients—feathers of a Spirit Pact Bird.

As for the items he owed The Moon, he had obtained them from patrolling Afternoon Town's surroundings and had passed them to him with Mr. Fool's help.

After advancing, I'll be qualified to select a mystical item for non-High-Sequence Beyonders… Derrick felt a little expectant as he sped up his pace, and arrived at the twin towers.

Although the material warehouse and the mystical items were all in the spire where they were watched by the six-member council, Derrick's goal was the steeple, because that was where he could exchange his contribution points for items.

Just as he was about to enter the steeple, he felt his spiritual perception trigger. He subconsciously looked up at the spire, and he saw a woman in a black, purple-patterned robe standing behind a window, looking down at him.

She had silver-grayish hair, light gray eyes, and a beautiful face. She was none other than one Elders of the six-member council, Shepherd Lovia!

When their eyes met, Lovia's gaze seemed to penetrate his soul, but her expression remained the same. She even nodded slightly as though she was greeting him.

She’s not greeting me, but the person behind me… Suddenly, Derrick came to a realization.

This was from the experience he slowly accumulated under the guidance of the Tarot Club.

He nodded in response as he retracted his gaze without any signs of abnormality. He then unhurriedly entered the steeple.

†

At night, in a private harbor in Bayam, the Golden Dream, with its strange main cannon in the middle, docked by the side of the harbor.

Danitz carried the local specialties that the Resistance had given him as he waved at them with a beaming smile while he headed up the gangway to the deck.

He had been leading an extremely comfortable life in recent times. As an envoy who sent arms, food, and small amounts of Beyonder ingredients, he received quite good treatment. He either ate sumptuously or enjoyed himself by hunting and bragging. He was even invited to watch the ritual in which the Sea God blessed “His” believers.

After witnessing all of this, he suddenly came to a realization. Bayam, or perhaps all the colonies, would eventually embroil themselves in an intense conflict. It was something that wouldn’t ease with decades or even a century.

Therefore, Danitz decided to sell most of his properties in Bayam, leaving behind only one piece of property. He then found a chance to buy properties in the Intis capital, Trier, and the Loen capital, Backlund, as well as extremely idyllic and peaceful villages.

I can also take the opportunity to return to Elema Town and visit the old man and mom. Yes, I can buy one less house and get them a vineyard… Danitz waved passionately at the Resistance once again.

He then puffed up his chest and said smugly to Flowery Bow Tie Jodeson, “Where’s Captain? I need to report to her on the recent developments.”

Jodeson tsked in contempt.

“She’s obviously in the captain’s cabin.”

Meanwhile, he lampooned inwardly, This fellow is becoming more and more arrogant after establishing ties with Gehrman Sparrow! However, that crazy adventurer is really terrifying. He actually managed to hunt Admiral of Blood!

“Heh!” Danitz scoffed as he walked with a provocative gait and entered the cabin where he met Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards.

He instantly stopped his provocative look as he smiled.

“Captain, I’ve completed the mission.”

“Details,” Edwina put down the book in her hand as she asked.

Danitz was already prepared as he gave a detailed description of what had happened recently while exaggerating his importance. When he was done, he said, “Captain, I met Gehrman Sparrow, and he got me to ask you if there have been any abnormalities with Elven Songster Siatas’s corpse and that golden wine cup.”

Edwina didn’t answer him directly as she walked to a corner in the captain’s cabin. Sitting there was a black wooden chest.

The Golden Dream was setting sail for Sonia Island, so Siatas’s and Mobet’s remains remained on the ship. They were stored by Edwina in a specially prepared chest.

Bending one knee in genuflection, Edwina opened the wooden chest, allowing the interlocked remains to see the light of day.

The mostly squashed golden wine cup was held silently in a bony palm without any abnormal signs.

“There’s nothing abnormal.” Edwina gave the conclusion.

Danitz shot a glance and memorized the answer, preparing to report this to the mighty Fool once there wasn’t anyone around, so that “He” could forward the message to the lunatic, Gehrman Sparrow.

†

Nothing abnormal? Above the gray fog, Klein frowned slightly, feeling a mixture of puzzlement and ease.

According to his theory, there was a high chance that there was a problem with the golden cup. To have nothing abnormal happen to it had exceeded his expectations; however, he also liked the answer. This was because he didn’t wish for Siatas’s and Mobet’s eternal slumber to be disturbed.

Perhaps it needs other additional catalysts? Heh heh, let’s hope that never happens… Klein muttered to himself before casting his gaze onto the junk pile where Groselle’s Travels was.

As he temporarily didn’t have any intention of entering the sea of collective subconscious, along with his recent focus being on the Antigonus family’s notebook, he had delayed his plans of searching the book world a second time.

Phew… Klein exhaled, retracted his gaze and prepared for this week’s Tarot Gathering.

Three in the afternoon, Backlund time.

Dark red beams of light shot up along the two sides of the long mottled table, materializing into different blurry figures.

As usual, Audrey was in a good mood, or perhaps in a better mood than usual. This was because her brother, Hibbert Hall, had sent a telegram, informing her that the purchase of the Backlund Bike Company's 10% shares was completed for a total of 12,000 pounds.

Furthermore, she didn't need to rush back to Backlund to sign any documents. Before Hibbert set off, she had signed a letter of authorization while under the witness of two lawyers. All she needed to do now was wait for everything to be over before signing a letter of confirmation for her brother.

Audrey curled up the corners of her lips as she stood up and said to the figure sitting at the end of the bronze table who was concealed by gray fog.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

May Mr. Fool bless me. I hope there will be clues to the fruit of an Illusory Chime Tree today… Immediately after that, she began praying in silence.

After exchanging greetings and taking their seats, Cattleya didn't let down Klein's expectations. Once again, she lowered her head without daring to look straight at him.

"Mr. Fool, there are three pages of Emperor Roselle's diary this time."

Has that Queen Mystic still not found the clues to why Emperor Roselle was assassinated… She's still providing diary pages through Ma'am Hermit… What a pity, I've recently been in the fief, and I haven't had much contact with the Psychology Alchemists. I can't even obtain new diary pages… Hmm, I'll head over to the Relic Search and Preservation Foundation after a few days to take a look. Perhaps they might've found something… Audrey listened in curiosity.

The Fool Klein chuckled.

"Very good.

“You can consider your request.”

In fact, I know that Queen Mystic has already given you the question… I wonder what she’s doing in Backlund… Klein’s mind started to wander.

Soon, Cattleya conjured the three diary pages and handed it to Mr. Fool.

Chapter 766 - The Deities' Anchor

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Knowing that the diary pages specially selected by Queen Mystic contained rather important information, The Fool Klein focused his attention and cast his eyes on the yellowish-brown goatskin in his hand.

“11th September. Ever since I became an angel, I’ve had the feeling that I’ve had my identity disassociated. In my heart, in my soul, and in the depths of my mind, there’s ultimately a voice urging me, influencing me and creating an uncontrollable sense of coldness, bloodthirstiness, cruelty, and craziness.

“This doesn’t stem from the external world or an influence from a god of the same pathway. I can clearly sense that it comes from one’s genes, the collective subconsciousness of humanity from generation after generation. It stems from the Beyonder characteristic itself, and not from the remnant psychological influences.

“It makes me have a strong desire to hunt and kill. It makes me want to devour all the living beings around me with Beyonder characteristics. It requires me to spend a lot of effort to resist it. Even if I’ve already acted and digested the potion, it doesn’t seem to improve.

“It’s no wonder that Mr. Door said that rationality is temporary, but madness is eternal.”

“28th September. I haven’t written a diary entry in ages. In the past half a month, I seemed to see myself being replaced by a stranger. Bit by bit, I turn cold and terrifying. Even my daughter, Bernadette, can only allow me to show her minute amounts of fatherly love. Very, very tiny amounts.

“Just as I was about to go mad, I seemed to hear countless praises. They were from my subjects, people who had benefited from my reformations. They are the believers who view me as the Son of Steam. They praise me with great acclaim. They erected statues of me, write stories for me, and have created songs and poems for me.

“Their voices seem like a ship’s anchor that helps me ‘secure’ myself in place.

[image]

“I began to have the ability to resist that desire and that roar within me. Bit by bit, I walked out of it as I once again possessed the normal feelings of a father, a husband, and a man.

“Just Sequence 2 alone causes such changes. At Sequence 0, at the level of a true god, how terrifying would it be to resist that madness?

“Perhaps ‘They’ also need an anchor so as to resist the Beyonder characteristics and the strong inclination to lose control, the urges buried deep in the collective subconscious.

“I probably understand why ‘They’ establish Churches and why ‘They’ want to spread ‘Their’ faith, to write stories for ‘Their’ faction’s saints and leave legends for ‘Their’ corresponding angels…

“But why do ‘They’ not have any anthropomorphic form other than symbols?

“I can’t understand it.

“I’ll try asking Mr. Door in the future. ‘He’ seems to know a lot in regards to the domain of deities. If ‘He’ had been released back then, there might very well be an additional deity today.”

“29th September. After rereading yesterday’s diary entry, I recalled the corresponding rituals of my Sequence 4, Sequence 3, and Sequence 2. They clearly had hints of madness and cruelty, akin to the kinds held by antagonists in novels.

“A Sequence pathway might very well be a path destined to be crazy and filled with despair.

“And this is the only path for humans to obtain extraordinary strength.

“How laughable and ironic it is.

“We strive to save ourselves, only to better destroy ourselves?”

The first page’s content left Klein’s heart heavy and repressed. The Roselle who had written those words was no longer an ordinary person, but someone who had become an angel, someone who had joined the Twilight Hermit Order, and someone who had seen the Blasphemy Slate. His understanding of the mysterious world and Beyonder characteristics far exceeded him, but he was even more pessimistic than him. He seemed to believe that the world’s origins were innately warped, crazy, and destined for destruction.

However, the seven deities have apparently found a way to maintain “Their” rationality. Ordinary humans aren’t without any use. Their recognition and their spirituality put together can help a deity “anchor” “Their” original image, retaining “Their” memories and rationality that “They” had accumulated for years… This can be inferred from Roselle’s own experiences… However, why would the seven deities abandon “Their” anthropomorphic images and use Sacred Emblems as a form of abstraction? This doesn’t match my theories… I can’t understand why… Klein didn’t waste any time as he flipped to the next diary page.

“5th December. Night of the Blood Moon. I conversed with Mr. Door.

“Like every time prior to this, ‘He’ would always make a request to get me to help ‘Him’ return to the real world, but ‘He’ doesn’t overly insist on it. Furthermore, ‘He’ would randomly answer some of my questions.

“Heh heh, it’s like ‘He’ is playing a game, trying hard to raise my affection towards ‘Him.’ But unfortunately, I’m sorry, I’ve already sealed off that option ahead of time.

“As I already knew of the legends of the Kings of Angels, I mainly asked Mr. Door about the level of strength that the Kings of Angels have, knowing the fact that I had nothing to lose by asking ‘Him’ that question.

“Mr. Door said that some of the Kings of Angels accommodated the Uniqueness, while others had consumed two sets of Sequence 1 potions; it could also be both.

“The word ‘accommodate’ is used in an odd manner. I had asked ‘Him’ about it, but Mr. Door didn’t directly answer me. All ‘He’ said was that if one was unable to ‘accommodate’ the Uniqueness, then the Uniqueness was a burden instead of an aid to a Sequence 1 angel before they held the ritual to advance to Sequence 0.

“Hmm, it’s understandable. It’s akin to using a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. The negative effects are often terrifying, and the Uniqueness must definitely be even more exaggerated.

“I also asked which Kings of Angels had ‘accommodated’ their Uniquenesses, and similarly, Mr. Door didn’t give a direct answer. ‘He’ only said that Amon and Adam make all the angels feel a sense of envy, because ‘They’ were born with a Uniqueness and didn’t need to consider the problem of ‘accommodation.’ From another point of view, does it mean that Amon and Adam’s state is equivalent to having consumed a Sequence 1 potion and the Uniqueness? As expected of the Creator’s sons!

“That Creator who’s also known as the ancient sun god was actually so powerful that ‘He’ could pass on a Uniqueness to each of ‘His’ two sons, as well as Sequence 1 Beyonders characteristics… Was ‘He’ trying to purify ‘Himself’ to eliminate any unneeded interference?

“Then, does Mr. Door also ‘accommodate’ a Uniqueness, and also possibly have even consumed two Sequence 1 potions? I didn’t ask, because I knew ‘He’ definitely wouldn’t answer me.

“During the conversation, Mr. Door warned me not to directly say out Adam’s full name; otherwise, it would be detected and the conversation would be discovered.

“I had an inkling why as I laughingly asked ‘Him’ that didn’t ‘He’ just say Adam’s full name?

“Mr. Door said it didn’t matter. This is because the Apprentice pathway’s Sequence 4 is called Secrets Sorcerer. It has the meaning of maintaining secrecy, and although it’s inferior to the Servant of Concealment of the Evernight pathway, it’s enough for ‘Him’ to block any detection at ‘His’ level.

“I asked another few questions regarding the deities, but Mr. Door didn’t answer. All ‘He’ said was that when I had the ability and opportunity, I could head above the moon to take a look. I would then understand many things.

“This is somewhat in line with some of my previous thoughts, but I’m suspecting if ‘He’ is luring me there to get a chance to return to the real world. After all, ‘His’ appearance each time is related to the moon!”

As long as Mr. Door appears, there will be plenty of information, usually covering an entire page… Hmm, his explanation of the level of strength that Kings of Angels have does match my theories…

The generalized meaning of King of Angels implicitly refers to a quasi-deity who exceeds Sequence 1 by using a variety of means, but ‘They’ have yet to reach the level of a Sequence 0. This includes accommodating the Uniqueness or consuming additional Sequence 1 potions. The simplified meaning of King of Angels will point out to the

Creator who the City of Silver worships—the eight kings of all the angels that are ruled by the ancient sun god. Of course, 'They' must also fulfill the general definition… Thoughts rapidly flashed through Klein's mind.

As for Roselle's theory about the ancient sun god, he was in strong agreement. He believed that the Creator who the City of Silver worshiped had reclaimed too many authorities of the ancient gods, causing "Him" to show signs of chaos and insanity. Hence, "He" decisively gave birth to two sons to eliminate a portion of the "waste."

To put it simply, Amon and Adam are freebies that come with drinking potions… From the looks of it, Angel of Imagination, Adam, clearly possesses the Uniqueness of the Spectator pathway. "He" is likely the mysterious leader of the Twilight Hermit Order. Since ancient times, "He" has been interfering with the direction of the times in order to revive "His" father… I wonder if "He" has advanced to Sequence 0… Even if "He" hasn't, the number of angels the Twilight Hermit Order can mobilize probably exceeds my imagination… Oh, Secrets Sorcerer actually has the meaning of keeping secrets, as well as the implications of concealment… Klein instantly recalled the symbol on the back of The Fool's chair.

It was the Pupil-less Eye, a symbol representing secrecy, and the Contorted Lines that represented change!

He quickly reined in his thoughts and flipped to the third diary page.

"28th November. I dreamed of Grimm again.

"He was the smartest among my subordinates, but unfortunately, he died in the Fog Sea due to some unknown infection while exploring that nameless island. He didn't even leave a child behind.

"Back then, I knew that the nameless island hid secrets with unimaginable danger, but due to my lacking strength, all I could do was hold back.

“The dream this time is likely a result of my spirituality reminding me that I can explore that island, grasp its secrets, and completely resolve Grimm’s matter.

“29th November. I summoned three subordinates, and with Benjamin Abraham’s help and some searching, I finally found that nameless island again.

“I didn’t directly enter, and I decided to rest for a day along its periphery.

“Edwards said that he also often dreams of Grimm, feeling a deep sense of guilt for not having managed to save him back then.

“‘This is not your responsibility, but my problem.’ That was what I said to Edwards because I’m their leader.”

“30th November. We ventured deep into the island.

“Existing here were Beyonder creatures that large sources of data claim that they have gone extinct. They gathered there without any conflict, as though they were consecrating something…

“This bunch of Beyonder creatures without any intelligence appeared to be holding some ritual!

“They were praying to an unknown deity?

“In the ritual, I saw Grimm…”

Chapter 767 - Passing a Message

◆

Grimm, who got infected on the nameless island and was undeniably deceased, appeared once again on the nameless island? Emperor, when did you start writing horror stories? Also, where's the rest? Klein's gaze froze onto the last line of the third diary page, and he discovered that there wasn't any new information.

Apart from that, he was similarly alarmed by Emperor Roselle's description of the Beyonder creatures strange gathering and their worship of an unknown entity. One had to understand that not all Beyonder creatures had intelligence and could be communicated with. Many of them were monsters who had lost control or had madness as an innate property.

And these monsters that had lost control were gathered together, worshiping some unknown existence!

Unfortunately, the emperor didn't leave behind the coordinates of the nameless island… However, even if he had recorded it, I wouldn't dare to head over, for fear of any infection. If I were to die only to be revived on the island, that would be troublesome… I'll need to be at least a Sequence 4 or even a Sequence 3 before I'll have what it takes to explore it… As Klein thought, he made the diary in his hand vanish. He then turned to look at Cattleya and asked with a smile, "What's your request?"

Cattleya asked without even thinking, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I wish to know if Emperor Roselle once participated in a very secretive and very ancient organization."

Very secretive and very ancient… Twilight Hermit Order? Emperor Roselle used to be a member of it? Audrey suddenly recalled Mr. Fool's previous mention of that organization.

Alger recalled the corresponding matter and remembered that in Miss Justice's description of the Desire Apostle case in Backlund, there was a mysterious organization mentioned. Back then, Mr. Fool had told the members not to say the organization's name in the outside world, because "any mention of it will be known!"

Such an organization does match Emperor Roselle's status… Alger nodded inwardly.

As for Klein, he thought of something else.

Queen Mystic's choice of diary pages are vague. She isn't able to accurately and precisely ask questions based on the content. It also means that she roughly knows that diary pages from certain periods are very important with key information within them, or she is able to discern Roselle's emotions from when it was written.

As for Ma'am Hermit's question, it didn't pose any problems for Klein. He smiled and said, "Yes."

At the same time, he silently warned himself, In the future, I need to be careful that Queen Mystic's questions might be completely unrelated to the diary pages she hands over… Thankfully, I've read quite a number of Roselle's diary, and I have quite a good understanding of the emperor…

After saying that, he added and said with a smile, "It's your turn."

He didn't directly mention the Twilight Hermit Order, wishing that he could answer another question based on this topic in the future.

Cattleya bowed and expressed her gratitude before looking at The

Magician.

“I wish to obtain clues regarding the direct descendants of the Abraham family. 1000 pounds.”

She had no psychological burden when it came to offering a price, as Queen Mystic could definitely provide compensation for her.

Why did you directly look at me? She already knows that my teacher is a member of the Abraham family? Fors was first alarmed before realizing that it was nothing surprising. This was because this matter wasn’t a secret to the other members of the Tarot Club apart from Ma’am Hermit. It was very normal for them to mention it after completing a transaction with her.

Although 1,000 pounds was very attractive, Fors didn’t plan on selling information on her teacher. In all her life, there were only a handful of people who had been truly sincere to her; therefore, she cherished such relationships.

After some deliberation, Fors asked, “Why are you looking for them?

“If you can provide a reason, I can pass the message. As for any further developments, it will depend on them. I have no say on those matters.”

Indeed, she might appear ordinary, but she actually conceals many secrets. She’s a lady who’s cautious and meticulous… Cattleya sighed inwardly as she said with a nod, “That’s very reasonable.

“I’m searching for the direct descendants of the Abraham family in the hopes of obtaining information on Mr. Door. Pass this message to them and see if there’s a chance for cooperating.

“Well, just for passing on the message, I’ll pay you 350 pounds. If they’re willing to take up the matter, I’ll pay another 650 pounds.”

Fors held back for a full second before answering, “Deal.”

After saying that, she came to realize the hidden meaning behind Ma'am Hermit's words.

Mr. Door is related to the Abraham family? That's right. My bracelet came from Ma'am Aulisa, and it came from the Abraham family… Yes, Teacher still doesn't know that I'm aware he's part of the Abraham family… I can only casually mention it in my letters that someone was searching for the direct descendants of the Abraham family at a particular gathering, and that it has something to do with Mr. Door… I wonder what kind of reaction Teacher will have…

At this point, Miss Justice was happy for her friend, sensing that her friend had escaped the predicament of being broke.

Fors is already Sequence 7. She has almost caught up to me. I have to become a Hypnotist as soon as possible… As she had such thoughts, she glanced at the Tarot Club members, wishing that they had clues to the fruit of an Illusory Chime Tree.

Miss Justice's gaze really makes it hard to say no… Fors lowered her head in embarrassment. This was because she had yet to obtain any clues regarding the fruit of an Illusory Chime Tree in her circles.

Sitting across from Audrey, Alger thought for two seconds and said, "I have clues, but it will take two weeks before I can obtain it."

He did have clues. A long time ago, he had discovered an Illusory Chime Tree when he entered the primitive island with Qilangos. But due to his lacking strength, he didn't attempt to approach it. And now, he had the chance of advancing to Sequence 5. He naturally didn't want to give up any opportunities for making money. After all, he still owed Admiral of Stars for the information of the Obninsks.

As for why he was mentioning it now, in a sense, it was to declare his rights. When the time came, he and The World would explore together. It was best to decide the splitting of the spoils ahead of time to prevent any conflict.

Of course, when dealing with the Illusory Chime Tree, it was likely that Gehrman Sparrow would idly stand at the side without rendering any assistance.

“No problem!” Audrey was delighted, and she didn’t even ask for a price.

She was already beginning to consider finding an excuse or a reason to directly buy it from the Psychology Alchemists after returning to Backlund in June.

With the two transactions coming to an end, due to none of the other members having any requests for the time being, Cattleya repeated her search for the blood of a Mythical Creature and Emlyn once again mentioned that he was searching for the remaining four believers of the Primordial Moon. Then, the Tarot Gathering entered the free exchange segment.

Derrick very naturally said, “I’ve already become a Notary.”

You don’t have to tell us that… The Hanged Man had the urge to facepalm, but he replied with a calm voice, “Although a Notary will receive a massive boost in one’s physical attributes, it’s still more of a support role. If the notarization of a power is valid, you’ll have them temporarily enhanced. If the notarization is invalid, the Beyonder powers will be forcefully dispersed. At the same time, a Notary is good at creating contracts. Once a signature is provided as confirmation, even a Sequence 5 cannot violate it. Even if a Sequence 4 demigod tries to forcefully violate the contract, they will have to pay quite a price…”

As a member of the Church of Storms, it was one of the basics for him to know the strengths and weaknesses of the Sun pathway; therefore, Alger carefully explained the exact situation for Little Sun. He also reminded him to select a mystical item that was good at controlling a target. If there wasn’t any, it was best to select something with powerful offensive strength.

“Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man,” Derrick thanked him from the bottom of his heart.

Deep down, in the entire Tarot Club, he felt that the greatest and most respectable person was Mr. Fool, and the most impressive person to strive for as a role model was Mr. World. And the most reliable and kind person was none other than wise Mr. Hanged Man.

Towards this, Emlyn thought, This fellow has actually caught up to me. No, I can't be surpassed by him. I need to complete the hunting competition as soon as possible to get the rewards!

He contemplated for a few seconds, and after receiving Mr. Fool's permission, he conjured the thin Moon Puppet that resembled a wooden pole.

"Ladies and gentlemen, does anyone of you know what this is?"

He knew that Mr. Fool was definitely aware of the answer, but he temporarily didn't have anything he could use for an equal exchange with this mighty existence. Therefore, he could only rely on the other members of the Tarot Club for any answers.

Isn't this the puppet I saw at that gathering? Mr. Moon already found his target… Fors similarly waited for others to give an answer out of curiosity.

Cattleya carefully observed it before frowning.

"It's likely a Moon Envoy.

"It's a Beyonder item that Primordial Moon believers create by using a bloody ritual that spans centuries. It's said to be imbued with divine powers. Each one of them possesses an unimaginable horror.

"Where did you obtain it from? It's very dangerous. It's best that you hand it over to the upper echelons of the Sanguine."

Emlyn changed his sitting posture and chuckled.

“I encountered it when hunting the Primordial Moon believer.

“She’s already dead, while I’m still alive.”

Mr. Moon’s flaunting of himself is really obvious… The senior Spectator, Audrey, chuckled inwardly.

Cattleya was taken aback. Without deliberately hiding anything, she asked, “How did you do it?

“Did the upper echelons of the Sanguine provide you with assistance?”

Emlyn gaped, somewhat at a loss for words.

Only then did he realize that this topic wasn’t suitable for a deeper discussion.

“Ahem.” He cleared his throat and looked towards the end of the long bronze table. “I sought help from Mr. Fool.”

Chapter 768 - “Conversation” Between Smart People

◆ ◆ ◆

Sought help from Mr. Fool? You can do that? Cattleya was stunned by what she heard.

Having been punished and discovering that “His” Blessed, Gehrman Sparrow, was becoming more and more impressive, she no longer had any doubts regarding Mr. Fool’s status or abilities. She even knew that when Mr. Fool pulled her in through the use of an ancient item, allowing her to escape the pursuit of knowledge, she had come to realize that “He” was an existence at least at the level of the Hidden Sage or Primordial Moon. However, for certain reasons, “He” wasn’t able to interfere with the real world, making her suspect “Him” to be an ancient god that was undergoing an awakening process.

The Moon’s words left her surprised that Mr. Fool was able to provide substantial help to the Tarot Club members, and wasn’t just someone who could only provide knowledge or pull them above the gray fog.

On the one hand, this means that in times of danger, I can also pray directly to Mr. Fool for help… This is more ridiculous than any ritual… On the other hand, it reveals the fact that Mr. Fool’s recovery process is faster than I had imagined… Many thoughts instantly flashed through Cattleya’s mind.

Audrey, Derrick, and company weren’t that surprised. They had more or less sought Mr. Fool’s help in the past, and they had even witnessed the angel under this great existence.

Seeing everyone’s gaze fall on him, Emlyn shrank his neck as he lifted his chin.

“I paid a price.

“It was a fair and equal exchange!”

Fair and equal exchange… A mighty existence’s immediate and effective response is priceless! Cattleya couldn’t help but retort inwardly.

She didn’t directly say it, because she too wished to use the opportunity of such a “fair and equal exchange” in the future. It would imply that she would have an additional life compared to others!

Fors was quite puzzled by Mr. Moon’s deliberate emphasis on the principle of fair and equal exchange. Everyone who had sought Mr. Fool’s help had made a corresponding payment!

Mr. Moon sure is a man who cares about his reputation, no—a Sanguine… Audrey seriously evaluated Emlyn’s emotional changes that happened over a span of seconds.

As the exchange continued, the Tarot Gathering slowly came to an end.

After returning to the City of Silver, Derrick first recalled a Notary’s strengths and weaknesses mentioned by Mr. Hanged Man. Then, he once again headed for the twin towers that was north of the city to select a mystical item.

He didn’t do this before, because his condition wasn’t stable after advancing. He was worried that making contact with a mystical item would lead to him losing control.

Inside the spire, Derrick Berg listed his requirements after finishing the paperwork. He saw a filtered list of items and obtained the corresponding documents that contained the information.

After having a careful read and observation period, he quickly narrowed down the choices to two:

The first was Cardi's Ring. It was ancient and simple in appearance, and it was completely iron-black in color. It was engraved with dark and complicated patterns. It was left behind by a resident of the City of Silver a long time ago. It could aid the wearer in awing a target, causing them to stop. It could also make ordinary humans temporarily lose their reason, or it could awaken the hidden emotions and memories of a crazy monster, allowing them to enter a brief period of confusion in which they wouldn't deliver any attacks.

The other item was Thunder God's Roar. It was obtained from a city that was in ruins. It was rather heavy and resembled a sledgehammer. It was dark blue in color while silver lightning swirled around it. Holding its handle felt like holding the leg bone of a creature. It could produce sounds that left the enemy in fear and chaos while in combat, as though a Thunder God had descended upon the ground as "He" kept roaring. Every strike brought with it a potent destructiveness with no lack of terrifying lightning.

The negative effect of Cardi's Ring was that the wearer would unknowingly produce another "self." Therefore, one needed to periodically receive treatment from a Psyche Analyst. If there were any missed treatments, then it could result in the aggravation of the problem, making it harder to treat. And eventually, the two selves would enter a fight, ultimately leading to losing control.

In contrast, Thunder God's Roar didn't have that many latent risks. It would only make the user be a little irascible bit by bit. As long as one periodically vented their emotions, there wouldn't be a problem. However, it also had another side effect. In a completely dark environment, the chances of being attacked by terrifying monsters from the depths of darkness was one hundred percent!

The chances of being attacked is one hundred percent… Upon seeing this number, Derrick turned gloomy. This meant that many City of Silver residents had vanished because of this reason.

They were the former owners of Thunder God's Roar!

Which should I choose? Generating another "self" is terrifying. Miss Justice has mentioned before that it's called dissociative identity disorder… Thunder God's Roar not only has a power that affects the enemy's state, but it also has a rather powerful offensive capability… My Axe of Hurricane has been used too many times, so it will likely be damaged ahead of time… I can produce light by myself, so I don't have to be worried about absolute darkness… Derrick thought for a moment and pointed at the dark blue sledgehammer.

"I want Thunder God's Roar."

†

160 Böklund Street. Klein walked out of his master bedroom and saw Butler Walter waiting for him with a few invitation letters in hand.

"Sir, there are a total of three invitations this week. There's an afternoon tea session on Wednesday, a literary salon on Friday, and a banquet on Saturday. They were sent from…"

Klein listened with a warm expression before saying with a smile, "Tell these friendly inviters that I'll be participating."

"Alright, sir." Walter bowed and left the third story.

Seeing the figure disappear from the stairwell, Klein couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

After another week of such invitations, it will be my turn to invite my neighbors for a banquet or a ball…

By repeating this act of inviting others and being invited, I'll really enter their circles and would be recommended by them to important figures at even higher levels. I'll be able to enter different clubs…

Heh heh, such recommendations are definitely established on a foundation of having sufficient wealth. A person without any value wouldn't be recommended…

Socializing for high society is truly troublesome. It'll take at least another month before I'll get to make contact with people who were slightly involved in the Great Smog of Backlund… The Church is easier. As long as there's enough donations and enough piousness, I'll be able to freely enter and exit to listen to the bishop's preachings. Of course, that's on the premise I pass the investigation…

If everything goes well, I'll be able to figure out the rotation schedule of the Keepers and find a chance to go behind Chanis Gate…

Klein reined in his thoughts as he instructed his valet, Richardson, to bring him his coat, hat, and cane.

According to his schedule, he was to head to the Royal Grand Theater to see the most popular play, "The Betrayer's Ring," in recent times.

This isn't solely for entertainment. It's to understand the popular plays, famous music, and trending novels. Only then could he have a common topic of conversation at the various high society gatherings.

Being a popular gentleman must be tiring. Behind a one-minute performance lies ten years of hard work… Social gatherings such as these are really exhausting… As Klein lampooned, he allowed Richardson to help him wear a coat before he sat in his high-end four-wheeled carriage. He headed for the Royal Grand Theater in West Borough, where he had a luxurious box to himself, and watched "The Betrayer's Ring."

It's different from television and movies. A play's acting is more exaggerated and impactful. Yes, this is determined by the acting environment…

The story isn't bad. But why does it seem familiar? Don't tell me that it's a story adapted from Emperor Roselle's works…

These are likely famous play actors. The papers have mentioned them before. It's said that they're very popular, just like celebrities on Earth during the age of the Internet…

As long as I participate in the gatherings of high society, I'll definitely have the opportunity of meeting them… As Klein watched the play, he habitually lampooned inwardly.

†

Cherwood Borough, at the ticket booth of a large theater.

Melissa, who finally had her turn, pushed the notes and coins through the booth window and said, "The Betrayer's Ring. Two tickets. 3 p.m. on Sunday."

†

After watching "The Betrayer's Ring," Klein sat in his carriage as he sipped a cup of black tea and received the evening papers that Richardson had purchased.

He first flipped through the play's critic column, and he found the comments from some professional critics. He compared their reviews to his own, and he gradually formulated a unique and profound experience.

Yes, at the very least, it's enough to fool those ladies and gentlemen… After Klein finished his "homework," he leisurely read the papers and was surprised to find a piece of news.

"The Backlund Bike Company's 10% shares have been sold. Further inquiries won't be entertained!"

It’s done? By publishing this piece of news, it means Mr. Isengard has already received the money… Klein was first delighted before he frowned slightly.

His gaze landed on the exclamation mark at the end!

The information was indeed what he and Isengard Stanton had agreed upon ahead of time, but he found that exclamation mark was rather harsh on the eyes.

Such a statement doesn’t need an exclamation mark… Mr. Isengard is a person who pays attention to details. He wouldn’t give the papers free rein… He deliberately left the exclamation to pass a message?

He’s giving a warning? While pondering, Klein suddenly realized something.

The 10% shares which Isengard Stanton sold are obviously from Sherlock Moriarty. With the former’s character, he wouldn’t sell it for no reason. In a certain sense, this means that Sherlock Moriarty or his proxy has returned to Backlund!

Therefore, one of the factions of the royal family that was involved with the Great Smog of Backlund had acutely noticed this situation and has begun monitoring Detective Isengard Stanton, hoping to capture the person who heads over to claim the cash!

How should I get the money… Klein seemed to naturally read the papers as he began seriously considering the pertinent question.

Chapter 769 - Sacrificing to Oneself

◆

Ten at night. Backlund was drizzling again as a thin fog produced a blurry sense of beauty amidst the street lamps.

Isengard Stanton’s assistant, Bowen, surveyed the bottom level once before walking to the side of the oriel window and was prepared to shut the final window.

At that moment, a shadow scuttled in and landed firmly on the protruding wall.

It was a blue, short-furred stray cat!

Bowen saw the large pair of yellow eyes looking at him as he couldn’t help but chuckle.

“There’s no food here.”

As a detective’s work made him prone to revenge, and him having many secrets to hide, Isengard Stanton’s cook and servants were paid by the hour. There were a fixed number of hours a day, and they wouldn’t prepare too much food. This made it difficult for there to be any leftovers after dinner.

The blue cat opened its mouth but didn’t produce any meowing sounds. It began speaking like a human, “I’m Sherlock Moriarty. I’m here to meet Mr. Isengard Stanton.”

“…” Although Bowen was a Beyonder who was nurtured by the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, he was a Low-Sequence

Beyonder and his horizons were stilted. This was the first time he was encountering a speaking cat, so he was momentarily shocked and dazed.

After a few seconds, he came to his senses and recalled what the cat had just said.

It said… It said it's Sherlock Moriarty?

This great detective really isn't simple!

He actually changed into a cat, no—controlled a cat!

Such powers are really strange and terrifying!

Bowen rapidly calmed down and didn't directly answer the cat. He reached out to close the windows.

After doing all of this, he said with a suppressed voice, "Follow me."

The cat immediately leaped from the platform behind the oriel window as it agilely followed behind Bowen with its tail up. It followed him all the way to the second story and watched him knock on Isengard Stanton's bedroom door.

"Is there something?" Isengard, who was dressed in pajamas with faint lines, opened the door and asked.

He was just enjoying his tobacco before sleeping.

Bowen cautiously pointed to the crouched blue cat beside him.

"Mr. Sherlock Moriarty is looking for you."

Isengard, with his white sideburns and thin face raised his brows slightly and looked down. He took two steps back and allowed the blue cat to saunter into his bedroom.

"Return to your room and get some sleep. Wake up as per normal tomorrow. We still have a case awaiting us," Isengard instructed Bowen as though nothing had happened.

After his assistant left him, he closed the door and turned to look at the blue cat who was sitting beside the reclining chair. He chuckled.

"I never expected you to have such Beyonder powers. I was worried you would directly come over."

"I noticed your exclamation mark," the cat said with a smile.

It had to be said that having such an expression show on a cat's face was rather odd. It left anyone who witnessed it feel a chill run down their back.

Isengard didn't react abnormally towards that as he sucked at his pipe, sat on a reclining chair, and slowly exhaled in comfort. He said with a smile, "I trust your intelligence."

"Thank you for your compliments." The cat politely reached out its paws and bowed.

Isengard observed it and rubbed its pipe while smiling.

"You should've understood what is happening.

"Those people don't dare to monitor me too strictly, afraid that I would discover them and end up telling the Church of Evernight and the Church of Steam. Heh heh, so even though it will be quite troublesome for them if they get exposed, I believe that they have a demigod among them. This is a deduction and is also based on certain feedback. After all, I've lived on this street for years.

"Therefore, humans and animals wouldn't be stopped from entering my house. I believe you've already figured that out. But when leaving, you'll definitely be tailed and tracked. Do you have the means to evade their tracking? Hmm… the sum of money isn't a small one. Bringing it out would be quite conspicuous.

"Let me think. Were you planning on conferring with me in order to get me to deposit the money into a particular bank account, and then you'll find many people to withdraw them in different parts of Backlund?"

Upon saying that, Isengard said with a self-deprecating smile, "This is the best solution I can think of, but carrying it out would be extremely troublesome."

The cat didn't give a direct response as it gave a deep chuckle.

"I only need you to lend me an empty room and three candles."

"No problem." Isengard didn't press the issue as he said, "The shares were sold for 12,000 pounds. The buyer is the daughter of Earl Hall, Audrey. Well, the hiring of lawyers and accountants, as well as the publishing of the advertisements cost a total of 600 pounds. In addition, there was a 0.5% stamp duty and 20% D-type taxes. So at the end of the day, there's only 8,940 pounds left."

D-type taxes were a tax on commercial, financial, and specialized income.

There's tax… More than 2,000 pounds are gone just like that… The cat's expression instantly froze.

Klein was formerly a Nighthawk, and his salary was tax-free. Later, as a private detective, his income was difficult to be monitored, so he never declared his income for tax purposes. Later, he became an adventurer, and since the bounties targeted at pirates enjoyed concessions, there was no need for him to pay taxes on them. Hence, he never realized that tax was something he needed to pay. Therefore, back when Isengard Stanton had mentioned taxes, he hadn't taken it to heart, believing that it wouldn't be much. However, reality had given him a heavy beating.

As for why there weren't any taxes for the share transaction the previous time, taxes were waived by the Loen government for initial investments related to inventions, as a way to foster inventions.

After a brief silence, the cat's whiskers moved as it said, "Alright, give me the cash. Eh, move it to the empty room.

"There's no problems with the money, right?"

"I've already checked them. They wouldn't do any cheap tricks on that, as it would be an insult to my intelligence." Isengard stood up with his pipe. "Remember to send me a signed letter of confirmation by mail later.

"It's already on its way," the cat replied, prepared.

Isengard walked to the safe inside the master bedroom, using a passcode and key to open it. Then, he took out stacks of cash, and he stuffed them into different briefcases.

Following that, he left the master bedroom with these briefcases and entered a guest room diagonally opposite the master bedroom.

"Check it," Isengard placed the briefcases filled with cash on the ground as he said to the cat that followed him in.

"I trust you," the cat said after taking a few glances.

Isengard nodded and pointed to the cabinet.

"There are candles inside."

With that said, he left the door, held the doorknob, and said with a smile, "I'm really curious how you would leave… I believe it will be a very exciting magic show."

Isengard Stanton closed the door with a click, leaving the guest room silent and bleak.

At the cat's side, a figure dressed in a dark red coat and an old triangular hat appeared. It was none other than Klein's marionette, Wraith Senor.

He found the candles and quickly set up a simple altar. Skipping over many of the first few steps, he directly muttered in Elvish, “Blessed of the sea and spirit world, guardian of the Rorsted Archipelago, ruler of the undersea creatures, master of tsunamis and storms, the great Kalvetua.

“Your devoted servant prays for your attention;

“I pray for you to take his offerings.

“I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.

The wind inside the wall of spirituality suddenly grew in intensity as Senor quickly sliced the back of his hand and threw out a few drops of blood.

As a Sequence 5 Wraith, everything on him was material that was rich in spirituality!

The strong winds sucked up the blood, howling as it drilled into the candle flame that symbolized Sea God Kalvetua. The flame burgeoned, forming an illusory door filled with magic labels and symbols.

After about ten seconds, the door let out a heavy creak as it slowly opened.

One by one, Senor lifted up the briefcases filled with money and threw them into the illusory door.

When there was almost none left, the gold coin he stored in his body flew out and landed on the altar.

The Wraith’s figure then disappeared, projecting onto the smooth side of the gold coin.

The gold coin trembled as it flew up, hitched a ride on the briefcase ahead of it, and entered the illusory door of sacrifice.

Silently, the mysterious door closed as the three candlelight were restored to normal.

At this moment, the blue, short-furred cat seemed to recover its senses. It looked around blankly as it meowed.

After a while, Isengard opened the door and entered, finding all the briefcases with the cash gone. There were only three candles burning silently as the blue short-furred cat was warily arching its back at him.

While he scrutinized this scene, a rental carriage slowly drove past on the fork on the other end of the street.

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On the same night, in a building inside Cherwood Borough.

Xio returned home under the drizzle. As she wiped her hair with a towel, she said to Fors, "Your letter has been mailed."

Fors tersely answered as she began to guess when her teacher would respond.

At this moment, Xio put down the towel and quipped, "There's news about Mr. X's gathering. It'll still be at the same place on Friday night."

Great. I can tell Mr. World! I wonder how much I'll need to pay… Fors's eyes lit up when she heard that.

Before she could ask about the details, Xio added, "Mr. X also gave a mission that's said to have handsome rewards. Eh, it's to inform him of people around them who have abnormal luck."

"People with abnormal luck?" Fors muttered in puzzlement. "Is this man's brain working? Who would divulge things around them at such a gathering? This will make it easy for others to discover their true identities."

"Who knows? Perhaps he really is a lunatic." Xio didn't know anyone with abnormal luck, so she answered without much thought.

Fors carefully thought for a moment, but she failed to figure out the true intentions behind this mission. All she could do was throw it to the back of her mind. She planned on praying to Mr. Fool once Xio went to take a bath, passing the relevant information to The World Gehrman Sparrow.

Chapter 770 - A Child Should Act like a Child

◆

Mr. X is looking for people with abnormal luck? Above the gray fog, Klein ruminated over the information Miss Magician had provided, in an attempt to analyze anything of use.

After thinking to no avail, he decided to approach it from another angle. He first recalled the people who had abnormal luck around him to see if there were any connections.

Hmm… The Fog Sea's Strongest Hunter Anderson Hood counts as one… Dr. Aaron Ceres is another… Hmm, both of them were affected by one of the Snakes of Fate… Angel of Fate Ouroboros was one of the creators of Rose Redemption. This secret organization supports and believes the True Creator… The Aurora Order is equivalent to the True Creator's Church… A series of circumstances surfaced in Klein's mind as he quickly came to a conclusion.

This is Angel of Fate Ouroboros's attempt to search for Snake of Fate Will Auceptin!

"He" is driving the members of the Aurora Order to help "Him" find Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin!

And this implies that behind Mr. X, there's a King of Angels existing somewhere in Backlund!

Under such circumstances, assassinating Mr. X will be equivalent to having a death wish… It's no wonder Mr. X doesn't care about the uniqueness of Backlund… The official factions would at most imagine that he has a saint backing him. Hmm, in the official dossiers, the Aurora Order only has five saints. This way, they will respond in the wrong manner… After Klein made the judgment, the first thought he had was to decline Miss Magician's request, and also to warn her not to provoke Mr. X.

If it wasn't because sounding the alarm might affect Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin, while the Church of the Evernight Goddess clearly had records of Dr. Aaron Ceres's bout of bad luck, Klein would've gotten Miss Magician to report both the Angel of Fate Ouroboros and Mr. X to a particular Church!

He calmly thought for another few seconds and conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow, making him pray in the gray fog.

"…I'll confirm the situation and give you a reply tomorrow."

He didn't directly reject her commission, as he planned on first asking Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin!

He then immediately returned to the real world, and he carefully took out the extremely fragile paper crane from his wallet before gently unfolding it.

Klein wasn't in a rush to write anything. Instead, he first recalled the various questions he needed to consult Will on. After thinking up a draft, he got out a pencil and sharpened it with a blade.

After stretching his muscles, Klein wrote:

"The members of the Aurora Order are searching for people with abnormal luck.

"I wonder if you know how to use the Worm of Time to create charms.

"Does your placenta blood count as a Mythical Creature's blood? If it does, I hope to obtain one drop. What price would I have to offer?"

Klein had originally planned on asking Will Auceptin how he was able to maintain "His" rationality. After all, the Church's information indicated that there had been no public faith in the Snake of Fate. However, he ultimately curbed himself from doing that, afraid that Will Auceptin in "His" infant state replied, "How did you conceive the notion that I'm rational?"

That way, he had no idea if Will was joking or speaking the truth.

Hmm, although there's no organization that believes in the Snake of Fate, there are certain areas that believe in the God of Luck; it's considered a traditional custom… Perhaps "They" are an alternative identity of Will Auceptin or Ouroboros… Klein mumbled silently and used the best of his Clown abilities before managing to refold the paper crane. He then placed it underneath his pillow.

After doing all of that, he had the time to calculate how much cash he had.

17,046 pounds, 5 gold coins, 3 soli, and 8 pence in change… If I had assets like a house, manor, and company shares, having so many liquid assets would make me quite a tycoon in Backlund… Of course, I'm still very far from being a top tycoon. To reach them, one's overall assets need to be a million pounds… As Klein was glad that he had quite a bit of money, he recalled his debt, as well as the large investments that he needed to make in order to develop his persona's image.

He then drank a mouthful of water, got into bed, and covered himself with a light but warm blanket before he slowly fell asleep.

Amidst his reverie, Klein suddenly snapped awake and saw the desolate black plains.

He walked all the way to the pitch-black steeple in the middle of the plains, passing through the chaotic and abnormal layout before coming deep into the steeple. Like before, there was a circle of tarot cards on the ground.

However, the protruding area in the middle of the tarot cards didn't have any silvery lines written.

Will Auceptin didn't give a reply… Then why did he pull me into this dream? Amidst Klein's puzzlement, he suddenly saw a black baby pram roll out of the shadows. In it was an infant whose looks were indiscernible while it was wrapped in silver silk!

"…Mr. Snake of Fate?" Klein politely and cautiously asked.

The infant immediately said in a clear voice, "What makes you so sure it's a mister?"

Isn't that determined from your name? Don't mind such details! Klein lampooned and relaxed due to the attitude he was given.

"Then, how may I address you?"

Will Auceptin in baby form tersely answered as it said, stumped, "I haven't decided…

"As you know, oh—you don't. Every time I start again, I try to make myself a little different, so as to maintain a good mental state. A child should act like a child while they're a child."

Klein's heart stirred when he heard that.

"Is this the way the Monster pathway maintains its reasoning so as to resist madness?"

In the black pram, Will Auceptin replied briskly, "Yes, every beginning washes away the madness. However, it still needs certain anchoring from faith; otherwise, I wouldn't be able to maintain my state as a Sequence 1 for too long.

"Heh heh, compared to before, you're becoming more and more knowledgeable."

Oh, apart from anchoring oneself with faith, there are other ways to resist the madness. However, “restarting” is clearly an ability of Sequence 1 Snake of Fate of the Monster pathway. Other Beyonder pathways aren’t able to emulate that… Mr. Azik is constantly losing his memories and repeatedly finding himself. Does it also involve the same concept? Klein nodded in thought as he made every second count by asking, “I suspect Ouroboros is searching for you through the Aurora Order members.”

Will Auceptin scoffed.

“I’ve been playing hide-and-seek with ‘Him’ for a very long time. ‘He’ isn’t good at such matters. It’s quite obvious that ‘He’ doesn’t have a childhood. Every time he restarts, ‘He’ grows up beside the True Creator. ‘He’ lacks the psychological experience of the different stages in life, causing ‘Him’ to be very crazy at times, but of course, ‘He’ doesn’t mind.

“I did inform Ricciardo to use the Die of Probability in certain places and leave marks. This will mess up Ouroboros’s judgment. ‘He’ will soon leave Backlund once again.”

That means there’s still chance of assassinating Mr. X… Yes, when the time comes, I’ll divine the level of danger above the gray fog… Klein didn’t continue on this topic as he asked, “Do you know how to use the Worm of Time to create charms?”

Will Auceptin didn’t directly answer and instead returned with a question, “You obtained a Worm of Time from Pallez Zoroast?”

“How did you know?” Klein was taken aback as he asked.

He wasn’t surprised that Will Auceptin had managed to mention the origins of the Worm of Time—after all, there weren’t many demigods in the Marauder pathway who could create avatars—but why hadn’t ‘He’ assumed that it was Blasphemer Amon? The latter could also leave behind a Worm of Time!

Will Auceptin smiled and said, “Pallez Zoroast isn’t in good condition, and he had to parasitize your former colleague. Ah right, your former colleague was investigating Sherlock Moriarty, and he had entered my house in the middle of the night.

“I sensed that there was something problematic about him and had given him a short period of bad luck, causing him to encounter other demigods hidden in Backlund. And when he was in danger, Pallez Zoroast had taken action. Haha, it would’ve been fine even if he hadn’t taken action. It’s only a prank. I would’ve given your former colleague sufficient good luck at the critical moment.”

Leonard is investigating Sherlock Moriarty? The Grandpa in his body is called Pallez Zoroast… Klein frowned slightly, unsure where the problem stemmed from.

Will Auceptin continued, “The creation of a Worm of Time charm isn’t too difficult for you. You can pray to that uniqueness trait about you and use a compound of mercury and pure silver as a medium to draw the corresponding symbols.”

It’s not too difficult… Pray to The Fool? That’s right. The mysterious space above the gray fog clearly has a form of attraction to the Marauder pathway… Klein was thrilled as he felt like he had grasped something.

At this moment, Will smiled and added, “As for what the corresponding symbol is, I’ve no idea.”

…What a huge reversal… Klein couldn’t help but twitch the corner of his lips.

When he noticed that Will Auceptin wasn’t speaking any further, he hurriedly smiled and said, “There’s another question. About your placenta blood…”

Before he could finish his sentence, Will suddenly opened his mouth and let out a cry.

“Waaa!”

He began wailing like a real infant.

…Can’t we talk normally… Klein froze in his spot.

If he hadn’t already confirmed it, he really would’ve suspected whether the entity before him was a Sequence 1, the president of the Life School of Thought.

“Alright, alright. I just wanted to ask if it’s the blood of a Mythical Creature,” Klein said as he raised his hands midway.

Will stopped crying and said with a laugh, “Of course, but I’ll swap it ahead of time. Otherwise, everyone will die on the spot.”

He paused for a moment before saying, “If you can give me something suitable, it’s not impossible to give you one drop.

“Alright, goodbye!”

Just as Will Auceptin said that, Klein felt the steeple shake as the dream rapidly shattered.

Soon, he woke up.

Chapter 771 - Fate Siphon

◆ ◆ ◆

What item would a Snake of Fate be interested in? Klein slowly sat up and leaned against a pillow.

He thought for some time and decided to consider it at a later date. After all, he was still at least a month away from Will Auceptin's birth. He could also leave the question for The Hermit Cattleya and Queen Mystic Bernadette, who was backing her, to rack their brains over.

Of course, Klein didn't eliminate the possibility of Will Auceptin's sudden choice of having an early birth.

He slowly turned his attention into creating a Worm of Time charm. According to Will Auceptin's explanation, he had most of the conditions required, but he was just short of the corresponding symbol.

Pray to The Fool and use the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog… I wonder if a symbol corresponding to the Marauder pathway would work… Even if it does, I don't know what it is. Unless I pull a Marauder above the gray fog and let the high-back chair produce the corresponding pattern… As Klein thought about the details, he suddenly had an idea.

In that case, perhaps he could try the symbol behind The Fool's chair!

It was the Pupil-less Eye, a symbol representing concealment, and the Contorted Lines that represented change!

I wonder if it will work… Divination won't be able to rule it out by elimination, but I can predict if the attempt will be successful. Besides, even if it fails, it shouldn't be too big a problem. After all, I'm praying to myself. Even if the material were to be wasted in the experiment, it would enter above the gray fog and not be lost… With this in mind, Klein felt pumped. He couldn't help but get out of bed to try out the experiment that very night!

A material like the Worm of Time that's left behind by a Marauder demigod at Amon's level still has its essence and level even if it's dead. When using it for a charm, it might not reach the level of an angel for various reasons, but it wouldn't be too far off. It'll be about the peak strength of a Saint. If Klein succeeded, it would be equivalent to having an additional trump card. At critical points in time, it might give him an additional life. So how could he not be excited and expectant!?

I can only stir some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. The level of the Worm of Time charm will likely drop a little more. But regardless, it will definitely be like the Ninth Law given to me by Admiral Amyrius… If I used the Blatherer's aura to create a high-level charm in the Devil domain, it will likely be at the level of the Ninth Law. Unfortunately, I wouldn't dare to pray to the Dark Side of the Universe… Klein wore his pajamas as he stood barefooted. He walked took four steps counterclockwise on a thick carpet as he chanted the incantation before entering above the gray fog.

Sitting at The Fool's seat at the end of the long bronze table, he conjured a dark red fountain pen and yellowish-brown goatskin. He wrote down the corresponding divination statement:

"The charm I'm about to begin making will be successful."

Unwinding the spirit pendulum from his wrist, Klein held it with his left hand and entered the state of Cogitation.

After repeating the divination statement seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz spinning counterclockwise at a rather slow speed and ordinary amplitude.

This means that it will succeed… But that begs the question, will it successfully verify that the symbol I use is effective, or successfully verify that it doesn't work? As an experienced Seer, Klein attempted to interpret the revelation, but he failed to obtain any confirmation.

With regards to that, he could only decide to experiment. There was no way for him to eliminate the mistakes if he didn't do so.

Right on the heels of that, Klein wrote a new divination statement:

"The assassination of Mr. X this Friday will be dangerous."

This time, the topaz pendant continued spinning clockwise at a faster frequency and greater amplitude.

There's significant danger, but it doesn't reach the level of a demigod's participation, much less that of a King of Angels… If it involves an existence of that level, "He" will definitely sense my divination and resist it… From the looks of it, Angel of Fate Ouroboros will soon be led out of Backlund… This means that the danger itself is a result of Mr. X and his subordinates. It's within the limits of what I can handle… As long as I don't make a mistake, the chances of success are pretty high… Klein made a judgment, put down the pen and paper, and returned to the real world.

As a mysticism expert who often created charms, he had no lack of common materials. He immediately got out some candles and lit them on the table. Following that, he set up a simple altar against the glow of dusk. He then used a piece of silver to draw out the combined symbol that represented The Fool.

As Klein didn't know what Path Number The Fool represented or what magic labels there were, he could only ensure that both sides remained equal. According to the books of charms he had read, these would similarly satisfy the rules of mysticism, but the corresponding might would be reduced. The chances of failure would rise because the existence that one was praying to could consider it as being irreverent and not pious enough. Of course, it wasn't a problem for Klein since he wouldn't reject himself.

After completing the act of carving the symbol, Klein found a metal bottle and used his spirituality together with a container, and he then poured the mercury out and filled the carved out pattern.

This time, he decided to complete only the front side for now. He would then summon himself and respond to himself. He would then bring the worm with the twelve translucent rings back to the room and then place it on a silver sheet.

After doing all of this, Klein adjusted the altar and took two steps back. He then said in ancient Hermes, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era."

Following the process, he completed the necessary steps before taking four steps counterclockwise and entered the space above the gray fog. After imbuing himself with the Black Emperor card, he used his spirituality to stir a tiny amount of the powers above the gray fog to respond to his prayers.

While the surging energy poured into the circle of light, Klein didn't hesitate to return to the real world. He saw the altar had turned dark and gloomy, as though there were countless secrets hidden here. And the silver sheet had already floated up, fusing with the Worm of Time's corpse.

Klein took two steps forward, flipped the silver sheet around, and he filled the carved symbol on the back with mercury.

As the lines lit up, they effused a hazy luster.

Klein rapidly retracted his arms and saw the luster grow richer. He then enveloped the silver sheet and the Worm of Time's corpse inside.

Suddenly, the darkness around the altar distorted as the entire space seemed to turn abnormal.

This change disappeared as fast as it came. The charms filled with strange patterns slowly landed on the desk. It was entirely translucent in color and was dark black. It was like a miniature card made out of a special crystal. It also resembled the eyes of a particular existence that was watching this world.

It succeeded! It really works! Klein was delighted as he hurriedly picked up the charm. He found it cold to the touch as if he was touching snow.

Regardless of the resulting effects of the charm, just its formation had meant a success!

Klein had once again obtained a high-level charm at the demigod level!

He busied himself again, bringing the completed item above the gray fog. He then used dream divination to figure out how to use it.

The charm which was in the shape of a black crystal card had only one effect, but it was highly potent. It was to siphon off the luck of others. And to be precise, it was to graft fate—a period of the target's fate would be grafted onto the user!

The simplest situation would be when an enemy is about to kill me, I'll use this charm, siphoning off his fate of surviving, as well as grafting the fate of impending death onto thim. Then, the situation would be developed into him clearly succeeding, only for him to die… It does match the Marauder pathway's usual traits, but it's more sinister and terrifying… It's going from stealing wealth to stealing fate… If the Worm of Time were alive, and I was able to fully employ the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, this charm might even point towards the domain of time… As Klein thought, he felt a sense of fear.

If it wasn't for the assistance that this mysterious space had given him by obstructing and purging things, he had no way to deal with a Worm of Time!

Phew, now it's mine… I can't call it a Worm of Time anymore. I'll just call it Fate Siphon… Klein once again got busy as he brought back the Fate Siphon charm to the real world.

After dealing with the traces of the ritual, he gravely placed the high-level charm into the iron cigar case, putting it together with Azik's copper whistle and the Senor gold coin. He then sealed and isolated the case with a wall of spirituality.

Being in a good mood, Klein didn't feel sleepy. He drew the curtains a little and allowed the crimson moonlight to shine in, illuminating his room with tranquility and silence.

While he was enjoying the scenery, he suddenly saw a figure sneak out from Member of Parliament Macht's house as it approached amidst the shadows.

It was none other than Hazel Macht. She once again headed for the sewers, removed the manhole cover, climbed down, and didn't forget to close the cover.

Why is she always heading into the sewers? It's not likely for her to be heading to other areas from here to act like a superhero in the mysterious world. After all, each trip doesn't take her more than an hour. Unless she has very reliable intelligence, it's difficult to achieve anything. Besides, this will make it easy for her to be caught by the official Beyonders… Together with the scene provided to me by Arrodes, she's likely finding something… Hmm, it's very easy for her to encounter danger if she keeps heading into the sewers… Klein stood behind the curtain gap as he observed what was happening under the serene night.

He didn't attempt to warn Hazel or let the Wraith possess her to let her understand the dangers of the Beyonder world. Firstly, this was because he had quite a subjective view that Hazel's sense of superiority was due to a result of her lacking knowledge in mysticism, so he couldn't be sure. Secondly, he wasn't sure how she had obtained Beyonder powers and a mystical item. Warning her out of gratitude for her kind deed earlier would easily attract unwanted attention or even trouble.

After enjoying an evening of peace, Klein returned to bed and slept till daybreak.

Before Richardson entered, he turned into Gehrman Sparrow and prayed to The Fool:

“…I can accept the mission, but regardless of the outcome, I want a stone from that bracelet of yours, as well as the ability to use that spellbook of yours for some time.

“If it succeeds, all spoils of war will be mine. You can only take the target’s head.

“If required, you will need to provide assistance.”

Chapter 772 - Walter's Abnormality

◆

He wants a stone from my bracelet and the right to use Leymano's Travels for some time? How does he know that I have those two items? I don't remember mentioning it during the Tarot Gatherings… After hearing Gehrman Sparrow's response, Fors was bewildered and rather shocked. It felt like he had seen through all her secrets.

She tensed up as she quickly tried recalling how this information could've been leaked.

Aside from Teacher, Xio, and Mr. Fool, no one knows that I have these two items, especially Leymano's Travels. I haven't even used it… Mr. Fool… Hmm, Mr. World appears quite strange during the Tarot Gatherings; he never hands over Emperor Roselle's diary pages, and he doesn't seem to put any effort into this, nor does he show any concern… He and Mr. Fool have a deeper connection. He obtains the relevant information from "Him"? A believer or a Blessed? Fors carefully thought over the matter as she grasped something, easing her horror from before.

Only at this moment did she have the time and energy to consider if she could accept Gehrman Sparrow's requests.

To Fors, such a price was too cheap, far lower than she had expected. Furthermore, it was reasonable!

As a Beyonder who seldom went out and just stayed home writing and resting, lending Leymano's Travels for some time didn't affect her safety or her need to use it. And likewise, giving one of the two remaining stones in the bracelet that allowed her to travel through the spirit world didn't cause her to lose all her trump cards.

The only problem is that Mr. World seems to be willing to only try it once. If he fails, he will still take the payment… Yes, with the fact that he needs to bear the risk, that's normal… I originally imagined that I would need to help him do many things and obtain a reward from Teacher by using the traitor's head to repay the debt… Fors thought calmly for a few seconds before she prayed to Mr. Fool:

"…Please inform Mr. World that I accept his conditions, and I will try my best to provide him assistance in the operation."

He originally wished to warn Gehrman Sparrow that using the stone might result in the side effect of receiving the ravings of the full moon, but she then realized that it was apparently only something Beyonders from the Apprentice pathway encountered.

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Regardless if it succeeds or fails, I'll obtain that stone. I'll be able to secretly leave Backlund and meet with Mr. Hanged Man to explore that primitive island… When the time comes, I'll use the spellbook to record the usage of the stone. That way, I don't have to worry about the return trip. That's unless my luck is terrible and the recording fails… Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief, opened the door, and got Richardson to help him dress up.

"Sir, after breakfast, your schedule is to head to the Royal Museum to see the royal family's collection exhibition." As Richardson helped his employer wear his coat, he informed him of the day's schedule.

As Dwayne Dantès mastered social dancing very quickly, the number of etiquette classes in the morning went from five times a week to three times a week, allowing him to spare time for other things. And such exhibitions were definitely a hot topic of conversation in high society circles. By not going in person, it would make him appear lacking.

As for heading to Saint Samuel Cathedral for the bishop's preachings, Klein had consciously lowered his frequency. This wasn't because he needed to donate tens of pounds each time, but that he was afraid that heading there frequently despite having the novelty period wear off would incur suspicion. Being natural and reasonable were the core traits of his plans.

Other than on a Sunday, he planned on randomly heading to Church on two of the remaining six days. He wanted to rely on an even longer period of time to accumulate intelligence so as to figure out a pattern. He couldn't be impatient or in a rush!

"I'm already looking forward to it." Klein looked at the dignified reflection of himself as he said to his valet with a smile.

Upon thinking of Saint Samuel Cathedral and the Church of Evernight, he naturally connected it to Leonard Mitchell's secret investigation of Sherlock Moriarty. He didn't understand what he was suspicious about.

Is it because of Emlyn White's purchase of Tinder that drove Leonard to investigate the people related to him, or was it because of the fleeting appearances of the detective in the cases of Capim and Lanevus that made the Red Gloves who are in charge of the investigations notice something? Or could it be both? Klein thought about the clues that he had left behind and had a rough guess.

He wasn't afraid that Sherlock Moriarty would be wanted by the Church of Evernight and given a bounty. After all, apart from contacting a few people that he was familiar with, the detective wasn't to appear again. He was worried that someone would discover that Sherlock Moriarty, in his early appearances, resembled Klein Moretti greatly, and as such, they would pursue the deceased former Nighthawk.

In fact, it's not a problem even if they discover that. I'm no longer the Clown or Magician from before. There are more than a handful of demigods searching for me. Even with the high-ranking deacons of the Church, there won't be any qualitative changes… Besides, Benson and Melissa truly are ordinary people. The Church will definitely not involve them and disturb their lives… I wonder if they will claim the bereavement compensation back. Probably not, for there's no way they can explain it to ordinary people… Klein wasn't that worried with all the debt he was in.

This was also why he was so calm when he heard Will Auceptin mention Klein Moretti's identity last night.

How could a Sequence 1 Angel who was good at fate-related abilities and had previously interacted with Sherlock Moriarty early on not discover the detective's origins?

Even with the gray fog's obstruction that interfered with many details, Will Auceptin was definitely able to know that Sherlock Moriarty originally came from Tingen.

And back in Tingen, Klein had interacted with a youth named Ademisaul, who was of the Monster pathway, leading him to bleed from his eyes. And if Will Auceptin were to be aware of this and make a comparison, the answer was obvious.

If Leonard were to really realize Sherlock Moriarty's hidden identity, I wonder what kind of expression he would have… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh as he walked out the master bedroom. He went to the second floor to enjoy the breakfast his cook had prepared specially for him.

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West Borough, 2 King's Avenue, Royal Museum.

Klein passed through the ticket entrance with Butler Walter and Valet Richardson and went into the museum.

The exhibition was held by the Loen royal family. They showcased all kinds of collections that had historical meaning from the kingdom's founding so as to allow the public to enjoy and gain an understanding. It was a way to raise the kingdom's citizens respect and recognition of the royal family.

As a graduate from the Department of History, Klein was still rather interested in the exhibition. Many of the matters that he was very familiar with had the corresponding items appear here. They allowed him to plunge into the long and fascinating history from another angle.

What left Klein somewhat puzzled was Walter's deep understanding towards most of the exhibits. He introduced them to Dwayne Dantès with extreme detail.

As expected of a butler who came from an aristocratic household… Klein silently nodded.

As he perused the exhibits, the trio kept encountering other visitors, and the exhibition hall was quiet and orderly, so people had to converse in whispers.

When passing by an exhibit, Klein noticed Walter suddenly stop. He then glanced to his side as his expression turned complicated.

As he wasn't a Spectator, Klein wasn't able to interpret the actual meaning of those complicated feelings. All he could do was trace Walter's gaze towards the exhibit.

Standing in front of the exhibit were a man and a woman. The man was in his thirties and wore a black suit, silk hat, and a gold-inlaid cane, looking like a gentleman of status and wealth. The woman was in a yellow dress with a golden necklace. Her overall attire was inclined towards bright colors.

Mr. Butler is looking at that man… Klein instantly made the judgment as he swept his gaze past the target without anyone detecting him.

He realized that the man looked rather old. His skin was dark as a result of frequent exposure to the sun. The back of his hand was like dried wood, and his fingers were extremely rough.

If I didn't look at his attire, I would've believed it if someone told me he was a farmer, gardener, or carriage driver… Klein retracted his gaze as he felt a little puzzled.

The reason why he noticed these details was because he had seriously considered the appearance of an ordinary person who adventured in the Southern Continent for extended periods of time back when he was constructing the identity of Dwayne Dantès.

He believed that apart from his gaze, bearing, and natural facial features that were etched by his rich experience, Dwayne Dantès also needed to have details, such as skin that had experienced long periods of suntanning, unobvious scars, and rough but strong palms. Otherwise, it wouldn't be enough to prop up such a character's inherent traits

I have to say that from the moment I became a Faceless, I'm getting more and more experienced and wise in the aspect of creating a new character… If I were to return to Earth, even without my Beyonder powers, I'll have strong acting skills… As Klein made self-deprecating comments inwardly, he saw Walter recover from his stern look as though nothing had happened.

As for the man with somewhat old facial features and rough skin, he pointed at a flag inside the exhibition case.

"This is the flag that the Earl of Lastings, Prince Harrods Augustus used during the White Rose War. Unfortunately, he perished in that war. However, his death was the turning point of the entire war and the reason why Loen eventually clinched victory. Look, the flag still has his blood…"

He's quite knowledgeable in the field of history… Klein gaze swept towards Walter from the corner of his eye, thought for two seconds, and smiled. He approached the couple and interjected in a friendly manner:

“I never expected such a neglected tidbit of history would be known by someone else. I originally believed that the people’s understanding of the White Rose War was only limited to Loen’s victory against Intis.

“Sir, your eruditeness leaves me amazed.”

To be praised in front of his female partner, the man’s expression turned from a wary one to a relaxed one. A gleeful smile appeared on his face.

“I’m just a person who likes history.”

He casually swept his gaze towards the servant of the gentleman in front of him as he suddenly frowned before easing his brows. There were remnant looks of puzzlement.

Indeed, he knows Butler Walter… Klein smiled while maintaining his composure.

“Hello there, I’m a merchant from Desi, Dwayne Dantès. How may I address you?”

The man hesitated and said, “William Sikes, a land steward at a manor.”

Chapter 773 - Additional Development

◆ ◆ ◆

William Sikes… A land steward… Klein inwardly repeated the response he got before turning the topic of conversation towards the flag and the White Rose War.

After a short chat, he politely bade farewell and walked towards the other exhibits with Walter and Richardson. He continued his own tour of the exhibits, as though his encounter from before was completely trivial, a conversation that was purely coincidental.

When it was almost noon, Klein, who had returned to his high-end four-wheeled carriage, looked out at the passing bicycles when he suddenly said, “Walter, you seem to know Mr. William Sikes?”

Walter solemnly nodded and said, “I once knew him while I was working for Viscount Conrad’s household.

“He served a member of the royal family, the former Earl of Lastings, Prince Edessak.”

He didn’t conceal anything, and he described William Sikes’s background in detail.

He was once in service of Prince Edessak? He’s living quite a good life after the prince passed away because of the Great Smog of Backlund. I wonder what manor he’s the land steward of… Perhaps he knows some secrets? Klein gently nodded and didn’t probe further. He was wondering if he should find an opportunity to investigate William Sikes.

If William Sikes really knows something, the royal family's faction wouldn't leave him be. Or perhaps he is part of that faction. In short, investigating him will be a rather dangerous matter. There's no way to entrust this matter to Miss Magician, Emlyn White, or Miss Xio… Miss Sharron has the ability to do so, but this might result in destroying her peaceful life… The best solution is still to use Hero Bandit Black Emperor. But the problem is that before stealing the Antigonus family's notebook, my investigations of the Great Smog of Backlund should only be superficial. I shouldn't alarm anyone or bring about any accidental changes… Klein appeared to admire the streets outside, but many thoughts were going through his mind.

Finally, he decided to hold back for the time being, being unwilling to affect the most pertinent matter he had at present.

After having lunch and taking a nap, Klein received classes in literary appreciation until it was almost evening.

After sending away his teacher, he was just about to head to the second story's dining hall when he suddenly heard the doorbell ring.

Amidst the ringing, Klein saw Richardson immediately take a few steps forward to open the door.

Standing outside were two police officers in black-and-white checkered uniforms. From their epaulets, one of them was a high-ranking inspector, while the other was a sergeant.

"Officers, how may I help you?" Richardson asked on behalf of his employer.

The high-ranking inspector was a thin man and had his black hair hidden under his peak cap. His sideburns had a little color as he swept his gaze into the house before warmly saying with a smile, "I'm here for Mr. Dwayne Dantès. There's a case that involves him and his butler."

"What is it?" Klein slowly walked to the door. "I'm Dwayne Dantès."

After introducing himself, he asked politely, “Officers, how may I address you?

“If the matter is a little more complicated and needs more time, why not come to my parlor. We can discuss it over tea.”

The other police officer, the sergeant, was an elegant lady. She was clearly interested in taking up the offer as she looked at the high-ranking inspector, awaiting the decision of her superior.

Due to the Church of the Evernight Goddess, the Loen police force had plenty of female officers, but due to the other faiths and the prevailing trends of society, they suffered some form of discrimination when it came to promotions and positions. They mostly did clerical work, and there was an invisible ceiling for their career development.

The high-ranking inspector smiled and said, “There’s no need for tea, but we need to question your servants.”

He paused before getting to the main point.

“Mr. Dwayne Dantès, do you know a person by the name of William Sikes?”

“I got to know him this morning at the Royal Museum.” Klein vaguely sensed that some sort of unexpected development had occurred as he asked, “Did something happen to him?”

The high-ranking inspector wiped away his smile and said, “He’s dead. He died at a hotel near the Royal Museum.”

“He’s dead?” Klein didn’t hide his puzzlement and shock.

I just met him, and he’s dead?

Had he already been targeted?

The inspector nodded solemnly and said, “Yes, the cause of death is rather complicated, and we aren’t ruling out the possibility of murder.”

“What about his female partner?” Klein frowned as he asked. “He had a female partner when I met him.”

“That lady was his mistress. When she left the hotel, William Sikes was still alive. This can be confirmed by the attendants at the hotel because they had later sent him red wine.” The inspector simply shared the situation and said, “After leaving the Royal Museum, where did you go?”

“I came back here directly. I had lunch, took a nap, and attended lessons. My servants, neighbors, and literary appreciation teacher can prove that,” Klein frankly replied.

He then turned his head to Richardson and said, “Bring Walter here.”

Soon, Walter walked down from the second story with a white glove and answered similar questions.

After receiving Dwayne Dantès’s permission, the two officers questioned the rest of his servants, but they failed to find any problems.

They didn’t stay for long, politely bidding him farewell and visiting the other neighbors.

Klein’s appetite wasn’t affected by this matter as he went to the second story to enjoy his dinner.

Time quickly flew by as he spent the rest of the time reading books and newspapers. Before sleeping, Klein took in the scenery outside the window as he awaited his valet, Richardson, to take away the fruits in the room.

Suddenly, he asked without turning his head, “What did Walter do in the afternoon?”

“He was busy handling various matters. He never left,” Richardson answered softly.

Klein nodded gently without asking further. He began suspecting if he had been overthinking matters.

Phew… He slowly exhaled before getting into bed.

In the middle of the night, Klein's spirituality was triggered as he snapped awake.

He pricked up his brows, left the bed, and arrived by the window. He pulled back the curtains a little.

Under the dim moonlight, a figure carefully passed through the garden's trail and arrived by the perimeter walls before flipping over it.

He had a broad forehead with raven-black hair and stern brown eyes. He was none other than Butler Walter.

"He's agile and his motions are fluid. If he's not trained, he's a Low-Sequence Beyonder…" Klein observed the scene as he made a preliminary judgment.

He saw Walter's shadows follow the streets until he arrived at the manhole which Hazel often used to enter the sewers. He removed the manhole cover, climbed down, and didn't forget to close the cover.

Why is everyone so skilled at getting into the sewers? Mr. Butler likely hasn't done it in the past; otherwise, my spirituality would've warned me. After all, he's leaving from my "territory"… It means that before he became my butler, he had performed such actions quite frequently elsewhere… Klein curled his lips, returned to his bedside, and took out a the iron cigar case from under his pillow.

He controlled Wraith Senor to tail Walter, wanting to see what he was up to.

I hope it doesn't exceed 100 meters; otherwise, I'll need to enter the sewers as well… as Klein silently muttered to himself, he returned to the gap in the curtains.

His marionette, Senor, immediately used the mysterious connection between different mirrors to jump to the street lamp beside the manhole before passing the manhole to silently tail Walter.

Klein saw that Walter turned into a more secluded and dark passage after taking ten meters forward. On the wall were all kinds of moss and dirt.

Suddenly, the butler stopped and said to someone, “Why were you so rash?

“Why didn’t you wait for a better opportunity?”

Soon, a weak and slightly hoarse female’s voice replied to Walter’s inquiry.

“It was the best opportunity.

“Once he returns to that manor, there’s no knowing when he will come out again.”

“But why would you be so seriously injured?” Walter said with sighs of concern.

The female voice scoffed and said, “William Sikes is stronger than what you or I imagined. Perhaps only this way can he satisfy his secret identity.

“Regardless, I finally obtained clues from him. After so much time, I finally have a chance to approach the truth.”

“You didn’t need to be so rash.” Walter fell silent.

The weak female’s voice chuckled and said, “I’ve already sold my soul to an evil god. The only meaning to life is vengeance.”

In a rare instance, Walter sighed and said, “Continue hiding here. I’ll prepare food for you until you recover.

“If there aren’t any accidents, use the old method to contact me.”

The weak female voice remained silent for a while before saying, “When he was alive, he had many subordinates who claimed to be loyal. After his death, few still remember him or are willing to risk their lives for him. You are the one who has surprised me the most.”

“He is the first noble who treated me that way, and he is the person I’m truly loyal to,” Walter answered in a deep voice.

Having heard the conversation with his marionette, Klein vaguely understood the entire story.

After Prince Edessak passed away, a few of his loyal subordinates were investigating the truth of his suicide. Walter was one of them. However, he was mainly in charge of gathering any superficial intelligence, as well as using his identity to provide some help… This is probably the additional development that Arrodes mentioned…

Klein immediately made Senor go invisible as he infiltrated the secluded passageway and saw Walter conversing with someone while standing. His figure blocked a black-dressed woman who was seated on the ground against the wall. Her face was somewhat pale.

After the woman heard Walter’s words, she gave a throaty laugh and looked towards the entrance.

“It’s time you leave. Don’t be caught by others.”

She turned her head, allowing Klein to see her. She had a round face, slender eyes, and a gentle and refined temperament. Deep down, she was sweet and was an outstandingly gorgeous beauty who Klein was “familiar” with.

Trissy!

Trissy Cheek!

Chapter 774 - Clues

◆ ◆ ◆

She isn't dead? She managed to escape? She's actually trying to seek revenge for Prince Edessak? At that moment that he saw Trissy, Klein nearly lost control of his expression.

Although he had guessed it based on the conversation, he still felt it exceeded his expectations when the truth was placed before him.

Without even the need for a dream divination, he could still recall the Great Smog of Backlund. Trissy had conversed with him, and back then, she was eager to escape Prince Edessak's control and escape the manipulation of her fate by the hidden person behind the scenes. She felt her daily life was filled with pain.

This Demoness who was once a man had sold her soul to an evil god to help avenge Prince Edessak? What kind of crappy trite romance plot point is this!? The corners of Klein's lips twitched as he "saw" Walter throw a bag of food to Trissy. After "hearing" him give a few words of advice, he turned and left the secluded path.

At this moment, a figure appeared from Member of Parliament Macht's house. It was within Klein's line of sight from where he was standing. It followed the shadows in the street as it quickly approached the entrance to the sewer. She was none other than Hazel who held a mystical item from the Marauder pathway.

She'll encounter Walter… This isn't some entrance to the sewers! It's clearly the entrance to a bustling city! Klein looked down and nearly facepalmed.

Upon arriving at the manhole, Hazel warily observed her surroundings for a few seconds before moving the cover away and climbing down. The entire process was done in one fell swoop without any signs of delay.

Stepping onto the slightly moist ground, she followed the rusted metal pipes and the sewage that slowly flowed with a clear destination in mind.

Suddenly, she felt her back turn cold as a chill ran down her spine. Her hair began to stand on end.

Right on the heels of that, Hazel seemed to plunge into a freezing river, and she felt a coldness that was overcoming her body.

She was horrified to see herself walking in a different direction, heading straight for the wall with metal pipes. And this was completely against her will!

Horror filled Hazel's mind before she received a reprieve from her numb thoughts. She infused all her spirituality into the necklace on her neck.

The seven green gems on the necklace were equidistant from each other. Embedded around them were tiny diamonds. In the absolute darkness, they still swirled with a faint lustrous glow.

Suddenly, a gem lit up as the green glow illuminated Hazel's ghastly face.

She leaned against the wall and paused for a moment. She moved her feet forward in an awkward manner before retracting them.

At that instant, the coldness Hazel felt had paused for a moment.

She didn't hesitate to use her spirituality to light up another green gem. She raised her right hand, aimed it at herself, and twisted her wrist.

At the same time, many mysterious symbols and patterns appeared in her mind as her spirituality and voice changed momentarily.

She had stolen the Beyonder power, Wraith Shriek!

Hazel was just about to open her mouth to shout when she found her hands losing control again. She forcefully and quickly covered her mouth with her hands.

Her Shriek turned into a muffle as she took a few brisk steps to the wall. She turned into another fork before crouching down in the pure darkness.

She tried hard to struggle, but it was useless. She wasn't even capable of activating the necklace on her neck.

Hazel's dark brown eyes widened as they filled with horror and indignation. Tears began to well in her eyes before slowly streaming down her cheeks.

And at this moment, Walter had come out from another path, returning back to the sewer entrance before climbing up agilely.

After he sneaked back into 160 Böklund Street, Hazel suddenly regained control of her body. She felt that the coldness had completely disappeared.

She first raised her hands in surprise, using her night vision to take a glance. Following that, she looked around in a fluster, as though there were countless unknown monsters hidden in the darkness of the sewers.

Hazel immediately touched the necklace with her right hand, carefully stood up, and headed for the entrance.

She didn't flee in panic, but she instead warily prepared for any attack that would appear from the darkness.

Finally, she returned to Böklund Street where she saw the black street lamp emitting its light, illuminating the streets that still had the remnant signs of rain.

Only then did Hazel speed up her pace and run home. Midway, she suddenly turned back, nervously and frantically closing the manhole's cover.

After doing all of this, she followed the shadows and entered her garden. With the help of the gas and water pipes, she entered the balcony to her bedroom.

Only at that point did she really have any room to think. She widened her eyes and subconsciously looked around. Slowly, her body began to tremble.

She raised her left arm, hoping to use her clothes to wipe her face, but she paused midway, switching to using a handkerchief from her pocket.

†

Hazel still has the basic abilities needed to react. She's not a complete newbie… In the sewers, Senor appeared with his dark red coat and triangular hat as he spoke silently.

Following that, under Klein's control, he went invisible again as he entered the hidden fork where Trissy was.

[image]

Just as the Wraith approached, the black-dressed Trissy looked up and revealed a weak but stubborn smile.

“From the looks of it, you have no ill intentions.

“That lady was quite lucky.”

She had sensed Hazel and discovered the Wraith!

Senor's figure appeared as he chuckled.

"Perhaps killing her will only bring you greater trouble."

To be honest, he wished to report Trissy to the authorities because he knew of the evil deeds she had done. He knew how she had incited the passengers and crew on the Alfalfa, causing them to kill each other out at sea. He also knew how she had many innocent lives die ahead of time. However, after realizing that Trissy was investigating the mystery behind Prince Edessak's death, Klein had a new plan in mind. He would incite the Demoness and cooperate with her on certain matters.

The mystery of Prince Edessak's death was equivalent to the truth of the Great Smog of Backlund!

Investigating this matter is bound to be very dangerous. Roping others in will make me feel guilty, afraid that harm or even death will happen to them as a result. By getting Trissy to do it, I wouldn't have such a psychological burden. The crimes she had committed had long doomed her to hell! The only problem is that she might be using the investigations of the mystery to Prince Edessak's death for her own ploys. I have to be wary about this to prevent myself from being used, thus causing a disaster… As Klein thought, he made Senor take two steps forward.

Trissy looked at the middle-aged before her and chuckled.

"Since you have ill intentions, go ahead, Mr. Senor."

At this instant, the marionette's senses revealed countless threads floating and flailing around Trissy. And seated in the middle was her black-dressed self with a pale face. It resembled a spider in the middle of her web, but it was filled with temptation and pity that made one approach her.

"You know me?" The marionette halted in his footsteps.

Trissy's expression was somewhat adrift as she answered in reverie, "I once spent an unforgettable period of time at sea."

Back then, you were still a man… Klein lampooned and chuckled.

"Why are you investigating Prince Edessak's death? Didn't he commit suicide?"

Trissy immediately looked up as anger colored her face.

"Suicides can be different. Some people do it willingly; others are forced."

No way, she really seems to mind Prince Edessak's death… Lady, have you forgotten that you were once a man? Have you forgotten the pain you were previously talking about? Don't tell me that this is the so-called Stockholm syndrome where you end up bonding with your captor due to the minute amount of kindness they've provided? Well, I'm not a Spectator, and I can't determine if she's being truthful or not… Klein made Senor chuckle.

"So, you believe that Prince Edessak was forced to commit suicide?

"You sought William Sikes to investigate this matter?"

The angry look on Trissy's face vanished as a miserable but beautiful smile appeared.

"That's right.

"It was he who forced Edessak to commit suicide with a spirituality obliteration bullet. However, he was also under orders by others. Heh, to obtain the final bit of pleasure, he revealed everything. Heh heh, he was still unable to really touch me. I even showed him my former photo. He died filled with even more misery and despair…"

I can't imagine what William suffered… Trissy is as twisted as she was before… Demonesses at the stage of Pleasure are really filled with charms. Every expression and every action are filled with enticement…

But I can tell that Trissy has already reined it in very well, only using it when needed. She has already advanced? Or is it because of love? As Klein lampooned, he made Senor ask, “Who is it?”

When asking that question, Klein hadn’t expected to receive an answer, but Trissy chuckled and replied, “Viscount Stratford.

“The royal guard captain of the royal family.”

Chapter 775 - Making Use

Viscount Stratford… Royal guard captain of the royal family… From this post, the Great Smog of Backlund does have inklings of a particular royal family faction being behind it. As for who it is, it will require investigation… Klein temporarily didn't have the time to verify Trissy's answer, so all he did was make Senor scoff.

"I'm a little doubtful since you are telling me this so easily."

Trissy said in a scoffing and self-deprecating manner, "That's because it's something good for me. I can tell that you and the faction you represent are very interested in the true motives of those pulling the strings of the royal family. I would be very happy if I can provide some useful clues that cause you to have conflict with them, causing the real conspirer to surface. This will aid in my revenge and also be of the greatest help to me."

According to this logic, does that also mean that I can use you to investigate this matter and fish out the mastermind behind this? From that, I can allow my faction to hide in safety before it obtains any actual information… Eh, wasn't what Trissy said meant to entice me to engage in limited cooperation with her, while she also volunteers to be the mine-clearer in order to reveal the truth… She is clearly expressing her value… She's afraid that I'll eventually decide to kill her… Klein roughly understood what Trissy was truly getting at as he controlled the Wraith to say, "Very reasonable. I should also do the same.

"I believe that without my threats or enticement, you'll attempt to make contact with Viscount Stratford after you recover from your wounds.”

Trissy curled her lips and said, “I only hope that he doesn’t like men.”

This isn’t something that cannot be resolved. If you’re already Sequence 5, then you can consider switching to the Hunter pathway’s Sequence 4 Iron-blooded Knight… Also, have you forgotten your past self? Why are you getting used to the powers of a Demoness of Pleasure to deal with men… Klein lampooned before making Senor smile.

“This isn’t a problem. You can always show him your old photo.”

Trissy was taken aback as a slightly twisted expression colored her face. A humiliation that she had buried deep inside her had been dug out, exposing it beneath the sun.

Her beautiful eyes were tainted with what stemmed from anger from the humiliation. Her face which was pale due to her injuries instantly flushed red.

Trissy quickly reined in her emotions and scoffed, speaking with a suppressed voice, “As expected of Admiral of Blood. It appears you know plenty about the Demoness pathway.”

She wasn’t sure before. I made that joke because I thought the Demoness Sect and the Rose School of Thought had worked together, making her believe that Admiral of Blood would know the secret of the Assassin pathway… Regardless, it’s not nice mocking the gender of others… Hmm, this is in line with Admiral of Blood’s persona… A Marionettist’s principle is “remember that every marionette has its own setting?” The reason why Trissy had mentioned her past photo was apparently just to vent and grind off an enemy’s joy and excitement. She wasn’t taking notice of the details she mentioned… Klein nodded in thought as he controlled Senor.

“At my level, there will always be plenty of secrets I know.”

He didn't continue on the topic as he said, "How can I contact you?

"I might be able to provide you with some help during the investigations of Viscount Stratford."

Trissy reached her hand towards her ear and grabbed a clump of smooth, raven-black hair. Then, blue ice formed, allowing her to crack it off.

She then spread out her palm, allowing a silent, pitch-black flame to appear, burning the hair to ashes.

These ashes weren't lifted up by the cold winds in the sewers, but they had shrunk, forming a sticky black object.

"Smear it uniformly over a mirror, and then I'll know that you're looking for me. I'll subsequently use that mirror to communicate with you." Trissy shook her wrist and threw the pasty black object to Senor. "It can be used about five times, and that should be enough."

As Senor was only a marionette, Klein wasn't worried about letting him grab the black sticky object. After taking a few looks, he stuffed it into his pocket.

Trissy fell silent for a few seconds before biting her lip.

"If I need your help, how do I contact you?"

That's a problem… Klein did wish to have her directly contact Miss Messenger, Reinette Tinekerr. After all, Trissy would later know that behind the Wraith was Gehrman Sparrow if she gathered any news about Admiral of Blood. This wasn't something that could be hidden.

After a few seconds of consideration, he decided to be a little more cautious. He decided to wait until Trissy had any substantial discoveries before changing the communication method.

After all, she isn't someone to be trusted… To avenge Prince Edessak, some of her feelings are real, but they likely include some other goals, for example, seeking revenge for herself… Klein made Senor survey the area and said, “These sewers hide plenty of secrets. I’ll come often. You can leave the help you need in text form here.

“If the matter is urgent, preventing you from doing it in time, you can contact that person from before to get him to leave the message.”

Trissy slowly nodded.

“Okay.”

With the conversation almost done, Klein planned on letting his marionette, Senor, leave.

At that moment, he caught sight of Trissy’s hands. he discovered that the sapphire ring which was equivalent to a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact was gone!

I noticed it just now, but I thought she had switched it to her other hand or another finger, but it’s actually gone… From the looks of it, she paid a considerable price back when she escaped Prince Edessak’s Red Rose Manor and escaped Ince Zangwill’s 0-08’s control! The mark that the Prince Edessak left on her has also vanished? Klein thought for a moment before getting Senor to laugh.

“One more thing.

“Which evil god did you sell your soul to?”

Trissy gave the middle-aged man a deep look.

“The Primordial Demoness.”

…Weren’t you trying to escape from that strange state? Didn’t you feel that you were increasingly becoming less like yourself? Why did you backtrack? Don’t you know that by changing your name to Trissy Cheek, they were trying to make you the Primordial Demoness’s vessel?

No, she might really not know. She might not even know what Cheek means… She did her best to escape her fate, only to plunge deeper into it… At that instant, Klein felt a baffling fear towards fate and deities.

He made Senor smile.

“It’s hard for me to believe it with you replying so easily without any qualms.”

Trissy’s eyes had a slight tinge of confusion as she said in a self-deprecating manner, “That’s because it’s a problem for me, not a secret.

“With one more person knowing, there might be one more chance of a solution presenting itself. Even if the chances are slim, it’s better than nothing.”

While solving the problem, there’s also a high chance that you’ll be finished… Klein didn’t continue the topic as he said after some thought, “When you approach Viscount Stratford and the mastermind behind all of this, take note of any coincidences that often happen around you.”

The deeper the investigation into the Great Smog of Backlund is, the more likely it would gain the attention of Ince Zangwill and 0-08!

“Coincidences…” Trissy was taken aback as she repeated the word.

At that instant, she recalled all the coincidences she had encountered back at Red Rose Manor.

Amidst her thoughts, she suddenly looked up, only to realize that Admiral of Blood Senor had vanished.

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The next morning, Klein woke up punctually, and with the assistance of Richardson, he wore his coat.

Just as he arrived in the dining hall, he saw Walter standing by the door, politely awaiting his arrival.

“Sir, your schedule for today is to participate in a tea session at Member of Parliament Macht’s residence.” Walter professionally reminded his employer.

He was stern, old-fashioned, and conscientious. He looked no different from his usual self, making it impossible to tell that he had headed for the sewers in the middle of the night.

Klein nodded with a smile as though nothing had happened.

“I haven’t forgotten.”

He then entered the dining hall and enjoyed an exquisite meal that had started showing signs of being repetitive.

There’s not enough variety for breakfast… Klein focused on eating, and after he was done, he put down his cutlery and sighed.

“I miss my hometown a little. Get the cook to prepare some Desi pie tomorrow.”

“Yes, sir. I should’ve thought of that earlier,” Housekeeper Taneja replied apologetically.

Klein waved his hand as a gesture for her not to take it to heart before he headed to the garden for a stroll.

After doing all of this, he returned to the third story to continue reading the papers he hadn’t finished until his etiquette teacher, Wahana, arrived.

Wahana was still dressed decently with an elegant bearing. She smiled at Dwayne Dantès and said, “I heard you would be heading to Ma’am Riana’s place for high tea later today. Then, this lesson will focus on high tea…”

Klein maintained his smile as he listened attentively, asking questions from time to time.

About thirty minutes later, Walter knocked on the door and entered.

“Sir, Member of Parliament Macht’s servant just came over to inform us that the high tea session has been cancelled because Ma’am Riana’s daughter, Miss Hazel, is sick. She’s very apologetic for that, and she wishes to invite you again next week.”

Hazel is sick? A result of last night’s fright? It’s not impossible if it’s an ordinary person, but a Beyonder has their physical qualities enhanced. The chances of that happening are very low…

Furthermore, Hazel clearly hasn’t seen the changes that result from the loss of control brought about by potions. Her mental state is still well, allowing her to feel a sense of superiority and having no fear. Even if she was frightened, it wouldn’t result in any psychological ailments… Ailments… Sequence 5 of the Demoness pathway can make people around them get infected with ailments…

Last night, Trissy secretly released her ailment after seeing a stranger enter the sewers? And as a Wraith, Senor wasn’t affected, so I didn’t discover it… Such a problem isn’t too serious. Hazel didn’t spend much time in the area for too long. She’s just a little shaken, preventing her from recovering quickly… From the looks of it, Trissy has really advanced to Sequence 5… Klein nodded gently and said, “Please give Miss Hazel my regards.”

Chapter 776 - Preparations

◆

Without the high tea session, Klein decided to pray at Saint Samuel Cathedral, so as to show his devoutness.

Of course, he didn't forget to stop and admire the white pigeons on the square, allowing himself to appear leisurely and calm.

He entered the cathedral, passing through the murals that were illuminated by the sun from high above and arriving at a dark and deep prayer hall.

This place wasn't as gorgeously decorated like the other Churches that had all kinds of dazzling elegant taste that produced a visual impact. Instead, it was mild and peaceful, allowing one to feel a natural sense of tranquility. As for the pure light that resembled twinkling stars up ahead, they were filled with the intense solemnity of holiness.

Klein removed his hat and handed it to Richardson along with his cane. Then, he walked down the aisle.

At this moment, two figures stood up in the front pew and turned towards the entrance. One of them was the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell who looked suave with his untidy hair.

Almost at the same moment, Leonard Mitchell also saw the middle-aged man with the white sideburns and deep blue eyes.

Dwayne Dantès… He tensed up momentarily as his body showed signs of indiscernible stiffness.

Klein gave Leonard a side look as he nodded with a smile. He had a friendly and casual expression.

"…"

Leonard forced a smile as he nodded in a slightly sluggish manner.

Following that, he turned to the side, made way, and brushed shoulders with Dwayne Dantès.

This made Klein see who the person was behind him. It was also someone he knew—Daly who was wearing a spirit medium's black robe.

This lady still wore blue eyeshadow and blush, presenting quite an uncanny sense of beauty.

Daly glanced at the middle-aged gentleman when her expression suddenly went adrift. She retracted her gaze as she silently approached the exit.

No way, I was just mimicking Captain's profound eyes. Even the color is different, yet Ma'am Daly could still find it familiar? A woman's intuition is truly terrifying… Klein had a vague guess when he noticed Daly's brief abnormality.

A long time ago, as an insensitive man, he believed that Ma'am Daly was secretly in love with Captain; otherwise, she wouldn't have endured the risk to rush to Tingen to get Klein to find an opportunity to teach the acting method to Dunn Smith.

As for Captain, Klein wasn't sure about his thoughts. After all, Dunn Smith, at that moment, was often unable to distinguish reality from a dream. His bad memory was rather pronounced, and he might unknowingly have forgotten certain things that lay at the bottom of his heart.

However, Captain often mentions Ma'am Daly, using her as an example to educate us. He was so familiar with how many years she took to advance and the kind of talent she had that it seemed like he had memorized it… Yes, whenever Captain mentioned these matters, he would occasionally add that he spent nine years going from Midnight Poet to Nightmare… C-could it be that he was feeling a little inferior when facing Ma’am Daly? Inferior… Klein recalled the past as his mood suddenly felt dampened.

He realized that he didn’t really understand Dunn Smith. He didn’t understand how many things the man had hidden inwardly.

And Ma’am Daly isn’t much younger than him. She appears to be very open and doesn’t care about marriage… Klein silently sighed and reined in his thoughts. He found a nearby pew and bowed his head, closing his eyes to pray.

Outside the prayer hall, Leonard had recovered as he gathered with the other Red Gloves teammates with Daly.

They waited for a while as Soest, who had become a Spirit Warlock, walked out from another side. He scanned them and said, “Our mission this time is to use the various clues discovered from the explosion of the Black Skeleton Gang’s headquarters to find all the formal members of the Numinous Episcopate in Backlund.

“Ma’am Daly is a Beyonder from the Corpse Collector pathway. She knows quite a bit about the Numinous Episcopate, so His Grace, Saint Anthony, has gotten her to assist us.”

†

In the evening, Klein, who had dismissed Richardson, took four steps counterclockwise and entered above the gray fog. He conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made his blurry figure pray.

“…Please inform Miss Magician that she needs to reserve a hotel room before Friday night. It’s best that it’s far from the place where Mr. X holds the gathering…

"…Pass me the stone and spellbook ahead of time. I need to make certain preparations…

"…On Friday night, she needs to stop her friend who participates in Mr. X's gathering and also present to me that person's external appearance when in disguise…

"…If there's anything else, I'll inform her in time."

With only two days left before the assassination attempt on Mr. X, Klein undoubtedly needed to prepare ahead of time. And there were many things that needed preparation. Dwayne Dantès wasn't able to do everything, so he had to rely on Miss Magician.

His preliminary plan was to use the powers of a Faceless to disguise himself as a participant in Mr. X's gathering. He would enter directly with the passcode, and then he would employ different plans based on the situation.

According to the experience he had in engaging in combat and controlling his marionette, Klein had a feeling that a Marionettist's principle was "try to hide behind the scenes, covertly directing a script."

Unless necessary, a Marionettist had to avoid engaging in direct combat with others!

Currently, the most troublesome point is that Mr. X's gathering is at eight. And usually, at this time, Dwayne Dantès clearly wouldn't have fallen asleep. He won't be able to escape the notice of his butler and servants and secretly head to East Borough… Of course, on the contrary, it can also create an alibi, but the problem is, what method should I use to fool everyone in his house… If only I had a Faceless partner who can act as Dwayne Dantès… Miss Justice's necklace can do it, but she's not in Backlund… Klein leaned back into his chair as he rubbed his temples.

He had even considered directly summoning and responding to himself, using his identity as Hero Bandit Black Emperor to carry out the operation, but doing so would cause him to lose the ability to change his physical appearance. It also made it difficult for him to possess others and disguise as Fors's friend to participate in the gathering.

Unless Miss Magician's friend is a part of this, allowing me to possess him or her… That wouldn't do either. First, it will expose some of the Tarot Club's secrets, and second, Mr. X might have the means to discover a Wraith. Of course, traces of this can be concealed using a series of seals with a gold coin, the Paper Angel, or the iron cigar case… Klein considered for a while before deciding on a method he was very proficient in from his previous life.

Feigning sickness!

I'll begin acting sick tomorrow. I'll eat very little, and sleep before eight… This way, the butler and servants wouldn't disturb me… But if there's an emergency, what do I do when Walter and company knock on the door? A Magician's Illusion Creation can only fool the eyes. It isn't some artificial intelligence… Artificial intelligence… Right, I can fix the illusion onto a mirror, letting it look like Dwayne Dantès. Then, I'll get Arrodes to answer remotely! With this in mind, Klein's thoughts suddenly opened up.

I have to say that Arrodes can be quite useful at times… After a poignant comment, Klein returned to the real world. He walked to the desk, took out pen and paper, and began drawing a picture comprising of symbols that implied concealment and mystery prying.

Just as he finished his final stroke, the room's lighting dimmed suddenly. The full-body mirror first turned deep black before silver light surfaced. Loenese text appeared one after another.

"Great Master, your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, heard your summoning. W-was I late?"

There's something new every time… Klein shook his head in amusement.

"No."

"How tolerant you are of me, Great Master. You can ask your question." Words neatly appeared on the mirror.

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "I plan on eliminating the Aurora Order Oracle, Mr. X. Do you have any suggestions?"

The full-body mirror's words froze for a few seconds before changing.

"It's best you do it after Thursday."

It's in line with my divination… Angel of Fate Ouroboros or a Saint of the Aurora Order might be around Mr. X tonight and on Thursday… Klein smiled and said, "Arrodes, I have something that requires your help."

"T-this is my honor! You are giving me an opportunity!" Words quickly emerged, fully professing what it meant to be excited and delighted. "May I ask what the mission is?"

Klein nodded and said, "This Friday night, I will be using a mirror as an illusion prop, changing it to look like my present identity… If any emergencies happen, you're in charge of controlling the mirror to answer without letting anyone discover any abnormalities.

"Can you do it?"

The air around the full-body mirror suddenly gushed around, and a toady voice belonging to Dwayne Dantès sounded:

"Great Master, I'll try my best to complete anything you command.

"Although it won't be able to last long, and it doesn't match my usual habits, it's enough to deal with everyone here.

"If you wish, I can simulate any voice!"

You're more talented than I expected… It's not easy being a mirror these days… However, why does that final statement sound odd… Klein's facial muscles trembled as he said, "When dealing with them, hide the nature of the question-and-answer game. Don't let others notice it."

Arrodes immediately presented a new sentence on the full-body mirror:

"I will play your identity well!"

"Very good." Klein nodded.

He was truly worried that Arrodes would begin asking Butler Walter and Valet Richardson embarrassing questions. Questions like: "have you fantasized about ladies you shouldn't have any urges for?" or "who do you think of late at night when resolving your physical needs?"

He believed that with the magic mirror's way of doing things, it might very well carry out such an act without any forewarning. Back then, Danitz nearly broke down thanks to its questions.

Without speaking any further, Klein switched to saying, "That will be all for today. I'll contact you again on Friday night."

"Yes, Great Master. Your humble servant already looks forward to serving you!" Arrodes first conjured a single line before producing a drawing of a hand waving.

Chapter 777 - Sick and Crazy Setup

* * *

On Friday afternoon, Klein, who had skipped a literary salon because of his feigned sickness, arrived above the gray fog once again.

In front of him was a hard-covered, palm-sized notebook which was bronze green in color. It was Leymano’s Travels which The Magician Fors had provided.

After flipping the item which was closer to a spellbook over to a certain page, Klein looked at the yellowish-brown page, raised his hand, and summoned the Sea God Scepter from the junk pile.

As he injected some of his spirituality into Leymano’s Travels, making it light up with a faint luster, he made the blue gem on the scepter’s tip emit a bright light.

A sizzling sound was produced as bolts of silver lightning appeared out of thin air. They were thick and menacing as they zapped about, meshing together to form a hurricane.

At the same time, complicated symbols and labels quickly outlined themselves on the page of Leymano’s Travels. They overlapped each other and fused together, slowly taking shape.

Just as the page was about to be colored in silver, bolts of lightning snaked out from it, causing all the patterns to be destroyed!

It failed again… Klein sighed silently as he repeated the same process.

This wasn’t his first attempt. Ever since he obtained Leymano’s Travels on Wednesday night, he would head above the gray fog from time to time, using this spellbook to record the powers produced by the Sea God Scepter. He repeated it until his spirituality was nearly drained, forcing him to return to the real world to take a break.

During this process, there were successes and failures. Klein relied on repeated attempts before completing the final step, recording the Lightning Storm spell which he had eyed for a very long time!

This was a demigod power of the Sailor pathway!

Before that failure, Klein had failed nearly twenty times. It could be said that his luck was terrible.

After repeated failures, he was delighted to see a silver luster spread across the yellowish page at the fifth attempt. An ancient, mysterious, complicated, and indescribable symbol contracted, forming a fancy diagram that made anyone who placed their eyes on it feel as though they were being struck by lightning.

Phew… I've finally succeeded. Klein rubbed his fingers against the paper and heaved a long sigh of relief.

He flipped through Leymano's Travels and admired his previous efforts.

Over the past two days, he wasn't fully caught up with Lightning Storm. He also recorded two other demigod powers. One of them was Paper Angel that he had used while stirring some of the powers above the gray fog. It aided in disrupting any divination and prophecies. Similarly, there was Hurricane that stemmed from the Sea God Scepter.

When recording them, Klein was rather lucky. One took nine times, while the other took twelve before he succeeded.

As for Flight, Glide, Lightning Strike, and other powers that didn't reach Sequence 4, they only required him to do it once or twice. Therefore, Klein had almost filled the entire book.

This spellbook isn't very useful to unaffiliated Beyonders. It needs plenty of time and patience to record a sufficient number of powers. And when the powers exceed Sequence 6, the chances of failure increases, making the powers difficult to obtain… However, there are 22 pathways in the mystical domain. If the first few Sequences have their powers matched well, finishing off a Sequence 5 isn't too surprising… Klein closed Leymano's Travels and sighed inwardly.

From his point of view, the spellbook was equivalent to half a divine artifact for unaffiliated Beyonders. Although it was more difficult to be useful than Creeping Hunger in its early stages, once there was a good combination, it was quite normal for one to fight someone of a higher Sequence. However, among Beyonders who were supported by major factions, Leymano's Travels would be ridiculously powerful. This was because it could record a demigod's powers!

As long as they wish, a demigod can repeat the power again and again. As for Creeping Hunger, it has a high chance of failing to devour a demigod. Even a real Shepherd would find it extremely difficult to Graze a High-Sequence Beyonder. Firstly, there are no available resources, and secondly, it's easy to lose control. Elder Lovia from the City of Silver was someone lucky enough to be able to Graze a Sequence 4 evil spirit… When Klein thought of this, he cast his gaze onto a dark green, coarse stone. It was rough and uneven with signs of burn marks. It was none other than Fors's stone that allowed the traversal of the spirit world.

With Leymano's Travels and this stone, along with the Fate Siphon charm and Wraith marionette, even if Mr. X has a Saint protecting him, I should still be able to complete the mission and leave without problems… Klein rubbed his temples and returned to the real world. After setting up a bestowment ritual, he brought the corresponding items back.

After making all the preparations, he walked to the full-body mirror and looked at himself. He made himself look haggard.

After dinner, Klein had used the excuse of not being well to return to his room.

After taking in the night scenery, he took out a palm-sized mirror from the drawer and placed it on the soft and elastic pillow.

Then, Klein went over, making the mirror reflect the blue-eyed, white-sideburned Dwayne Dantès.

He then slowly straightened his body and took a step back, creating another Dwayne Dantès in bed!

This gentleman was wearing silk pajamas and leaning against a pillow. He held a book in hand with his eyes half-closed as though he was in thought.

Not bad, the mirror illusion isn't weaker than a paper figurine illusion… Klein returned to the desk and picked up a fountain pen, drawing the strange symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying.

After a brief silence, the Dwayne Dantès in bed suddenly opened his eyes and gave a toady smile.

"Great Master, your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is here!"

I have to say that even with Dwayne Dantès's face, there's no way he can look normal with that kind of smile… Klein silently sighed and nearly turned to look to his side.

"Very good," he praised with a nod.

He didn't give any other instructions. With a half top hat, he slid down from the balcony to the first floor. He followed the secluded garden trail and flipped over the corner perimeter wall of 160 Böklund Street. During this process, he hadn't forgotten to close the windows.

Pressing his right hand on his hat and landing his feet on the streets, Klein slowly looked up. At some point in time, his facial features and outline had changed. He had black hair and brown eyes, with a thin and angular face.

This was the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, who had a bounty of 50,000 pounds from just a single country!

The hunt was about to begin.

†

Cherwood Borough. Xio, who was just about to head out to East Borough to participate in Mr. X's Beyonder gathering, was stopped by Fors.

"You want to head out to gather material?" Xio deliberated before saying the words her friend often used.

Fors stroked her hair and said, "No, to earn money!

"I previously accepted a mission to find the dust left behind after a ghost fades away. As you know, there aren't any ghosts at the cemetery. They've all been given a send-off by the priests and bishops to their respective deity's kingdom. Therefore, I can only head over to East Borough and find targets that died due to various reasons without being discovered.

"Can you bear letting such a beautiful and frail lady like me head into such a messy place alone?"

"But, can't you push it back a day?" Xio said hesitantly. "I'm planning to participate in Mr. X's gathering."

Fors immediately shook her head.

"No, I need to complete the mission tomorrow. It's a total of 50 pounds!"

"If it's due tomorrow, why didn't you do it the past few days?" Xio looked suspiciously at her friend.

Fors chuckled.

"Is this your first day knowing me?

"Don't you know I have a severe case of procrastination?

"Besides, you have no money. What's the point of going to Mr. X's gathering? You don't even know what Beyonder ingredients you need!"

"That's true." Xio was convinced before she smiled. "Does every author have a sickness of procrastination?"

"Probably." As Fors perfunctorily replied, she secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

†

In the East Borough, inside a cheap motel, Klein entered the room which Miss Magician had reserved for him under a fake alias.

Here, having a room and a bed for one person was an extravagance, but even so, such rooms only cost 12 pence a night. Of course, many of the cheap motels in East Borough didn't have any single rooms. The best of them were some compartments that cost 5 pence a night. It only had a bed and a partition that blocked others from looking inside, allowing the occupants to change clothes.

As for the ten to twenty bunk beds in the basement, they cost 1.5 pence a night. The motel didn't hold any responsibilities for the items that one stored there.

There's actually a mirror. Not bad… Klein put down his hat and stood in front of a full-body mirror filled with crevices. He then wore the hooded robe which Miss Magician had prepared for him.

Immediately after that, his body shrank at a discernible pace. His skin gradually turned pale with a tinge of malt colors. The Adam's apple at his throat vanished as his hair grew long and turned blonde.

Klein instantly recognized the image of Fors's friend, even though the disguise didn't show her looks. It was Miss Xio!

However, because there was a hood to conceal himself, he didn't really transform into a woman. All he did was handle the easily noticeable spots.

I can't do anything about the height of 150 centimeters. I'll need to digest the entirety of my potion before I can reach this limit… Thankfully, Miss Xio disguises herself by raising her height. I don't have to vex over this… Klein looked at the 160-centimeter-tall figure in the mirror, switched to a pair of leather boots that looked to be and was flat-soled.

After donning the disguise, Klein hooded himself and silently left the single room from the window. He came to an alley in East Borough, taking a detour until he arrived outside the building where Mr. X was hosting the Beyonder gathering.

After recalling the passcode which Miss Magician had provided, Klein rapped the door with his fingers—three light taps and three heavy taps, separated by two long and three short intervals.

After ten seconds, the door silently opened. An attendant wearing an iron mask first observed the visitor before making way.

Klein calmly walked past him and entered the building without showing any signs of panic.

Chapter 778 - 1 + 1 > 2

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While passing through the living room, Klein's spiritual perception was triggered. He felt that there was an invisible gaze scanning him from an unknown location.

He feigned ignorance as he entered the activity room ahead. He surveyed the area and found a spot that wasn't too far or close to the host's seat.

And at the moment he passed through the activity room's door, all the attention on him vanished.

If not for the Wraith having three seals to isolate it, it probably would've been noticed… Mr. X doesn't appear to be as bold and crazy as he seems… Klein sat down and moved his hood, hiding his face deeper in the shadows.

After about ten minutes, when most of the members had arrived, a brass mask-wearing Mr. X appeared by the door without causing a commotion. He walked in and headed towards his seat.

He was dressed in a black classical robe with a pointed mage hat. As he walked, he had a converged aura, but it was enough to make everyone present bow their heads without realizing it.

Turning around and slowly taking his seat, Mr. X surveyed the room and said in a deep voice, "Let's begin."

He's within four meters… Klein wasn't in a rush to take action. He retracted his gaze and patiently watched as a few gathering members exchanged information about people with abnormal luck for money. Occasionally, Mr. X would reply.

Time ticked by as the gathering's focus went from Mr. X's act of handing out rewards to the transactions between the members. Klein didn't hesitate as he tapped his left thumb on the first segment of his index finger twice, activating his Spirit Body Threads vision.

Illusory black threads immediately surfaced before his eyes as they emanated from the bodies of different people, out into the void towards some boundless distance.

After making a simple distinction of the threads, Klein began to secretly control Mr. X's Spirit Body Threads.

There were two difficulties to this mission according to his plan. The first was that having Astrologer as one of the earlier jobs in his pathway, Mr. X or the other hidden Aurora Order Saint might be able to sense the danger when he began controlling the Spirit Body Threads, acutely sensing some abnormality.

Klein wasn't sure about Mr. X's spiritual intuition because back when Miss Sharron existed in a Wraith state, she failed to notice Marionettist Rosago's controlling of her Spirit Body Threads. However, for a Saint who was a demigod, a High-Sequence Beyonder who had obtained godhood, no special trait of this being would surprise Klein. It wasn't surprising if that being's spiritual intuition was triggered due to the changes in another person's Spirit Body Threads.

For other Marionettist, they were probably helpless regarding this. But Klein was different. He had another identity as The Fool. He had the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog to aid him, allowing him to rely on Paper Angels to produce interference and eliminate any hidden problems.

The gathering continued without any abnormalities. More than ten seconds passed as Klein was close to gaining initial control of Mr. X. There was only three seconds left, but this Aurora Order Oracle didn't notice at all. He continued observing the completion of another transaction with a deep look in his eyes, his thoughts a mystery.

At the critical moment, Klein stopped!

He barely maintained his progress as he extended his hand, reaching into the pocket of the hooded robe and touching the iron cigar case which had been sealed with a wall of spirituality.

Klein moved his fingers, prodding it gently to remove the wall of spirituality, allowing it to disperse into a swirling wind inside his pocket.

He pulled back his palm and waited for a few more seconds until Mr. X's gaze looked to the side before he continued controlling the Spirit Body Threads.

Two seconds. One second. Zero!

Mr. X's thoughts turned sluggish as though someone had poured stirred cement onto him.

An enemy… Danger… Slow thoughts appeared in his head as he quickly made his decision. He planned on seeking help from his subordinates and the entity who was watching in secret, and put up an effective resistance.

At this moment, coldness drilled into his body, preventing his limbs and mouth from answering his will.

Admiral of Blood Senor!

A Wraith's possession!

There were many flaws to a Marionettist's control of Spirit Body Threads. The biggest problem was the target immediately realizing that there was a problem once initial control was attained. They would then have the ability to carry out any contingencies.

If it was one-on-one, without anyone around them, Klein could naturally use the target's increasingly impeded state to effectively disrupt and interfere with any resistance they put up, but if the target had any aides, it was very difficult for a Marionettist's control to fool others. It required help from the environment, or partners to conceal the matter without exposing it.

And on this point, a Wraith who was able to possess a target and forcefully control them was the best support for a Marionettist!

The reason why Klein didn't directly enter a state of initial control was because he needed to release the Wraith.

After the initial inspection at the door, the vigilance in the activity room at the gathering location was definitely lower!

Mr. X's eyes widened as his thoughts turned sluggish. His instinctive attempt to shout was blocked by his throat and mouth, silencing him completely.

His attempt to raise his hands also slowed down as they reached for a porcelain teacup by his side.

This completely violated his will. It was because of the cold aura that occupied every corner of his body!

Wraith… Marionettist… No… If this continues… I'll die silently… Mr. X immediately controlled his spirituality as he constructed complicated symbols and labels in his mind.

He was just about to open a Traveler's Door, which was also the Door of Teleportation, to escape the Marionettist's control range. Compared to that, a Wraith's possession was relatively less dangerous!

But amidst his sluggish thoughts, the illusory symbols and labels failed to appear all at once. Instead, they appeared one stroke after another in a discontinuous matter and at an insufficient speed.

Seizing this opportunity, Wraith Senor, who was possessing Mr. X, under Marionettist Klein's control, simply moved Mr. X's head, changing his seating position.

Such an action instantly interrupted the formation of the Traveler's Door!

Oh no… My… reaction… is too slow… It will be… interfered… by the Wraith… Use mystical… item… Mr. X's eyes filled with blood, but none of his subordinates around him noticed it. Even the one watching in secret didn't notice any abnormalities.

As for the gathering members who were interacting and trading, they lowered their voices because of his change in seating posture.

At that moment, the activity room was filled with people. Although there were Beyonders everywhere and many were his assistants, Mr. X found himself in extreme solitude and was helpless.

He didn't even know who was attacking him or where the attacker was sitting!

As the thoughts went through his mind, Mr. X regained control of his spirituality as he directed it towards the golden ring with an embedded ruby on his left index finger.

However, going from a thought to a decision, and then going from a decision to an action took too long. It was as though he was acting out his thought processes in slow motion.

This gave Senor plenty of time to raise Mr. X's left palm, bend his finger, and tap the side of "his" forehead which was uncovered by the brass mask as though in thought.

It was a very faint tapping sound, and the strength used was quite significant, but under Klein's control, Senor held back perfectly. It made most of the strength enter Mr. X's mind without spreading outwards so as to hide any commotion.

Tak! Tak!

Mr. X's thoughts of emanating his spirituality were disrupted, and he was temporarily unable to find his train of thought.

By the time he recovered, the Marionettist's control had deepened. This made his thoughts chaotic and impeded. Even his thinking and decision-making became extremely difficult.

With the Wraith using all kinds of tiny, concealed actions to interfere with Mr. X's attempts to use his various Beyonder powers and impressive mystical items, he slowly slid towards the abyss of becoming a marionette.

He watched helplessly as he marched towards death slowly.

Only then did he realize how terrifying and unsolvable the combination of a Marionettist and Wraith was.

The hunt continued silently under everyone's noses.

As Klein's control deepened, Mr. X's actions turned stiffer and sluggish. However, with the Wraith possessing him, no one could notice any problems.

To be precise, Mr. X's actions were no longer a result of the sluggish him, but from Wraith Senor. He wasn't even able to show the look of despair in his eyes.

Amidst the transactions that either succeeded or failed, ranging from arguments to negotiations, five minutes quickly passed. Klein was just one last step from killing Mr. X and turning him into his marionette.

However, he couldn't do so.

This was because he had yet to digest much of the Marionettist potion. He could only control one marionette at present, so if he wanted to convert Mr. X, he had to give up Wraith Senor.

But once he gave up Senor, this Admiral of Blood who was long dead would immediately surface and be discovered by everyone. It would bring about extreme trouble.

Similarly, if Klein didn't give up his Wraith marionette had and assassinated Mr. X while he wasn't able to resist, he needed to consider the Aurora Order Saint who was lurking in the shadows.

This was the second most difficult part of his plan.

To silently control Mr. X and remove his ability to resist wasn't difficult with the combination of Marionettist and Wraith. The way to kill him wasn't difficult as well. Mr. X in his present state could easily be finished off by Klein with an Air Bullet.

The difficulty was in leaving safely after pulling off such a stunt.

This actually required sufficient patience.

Time slowly passed with Klein appearing calm despite his tensed nerves. He pretended that he wasn't interested in the items that appeared as he kept silent the entire time.

Finally, when the gathering came to an end, Mr. X said in a deep voice with complete normality, "The end."

His words were succinct, just like the way he ended the previous gathering. This was what Xio described to Fors.

As the gathering's members stood up one by one, Klein mixed in among them, looking inconspicuous. At the same time, he reached his hand into his pocket, and he flipped open Leymano's Travels based on his sense of touch.

Chapter 779 - One-Shot

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The three types of paper in Leymano's Travels clearly had different textures. The white paper that could only record Sequence 7, 8, and 9 powers was thin, smooth and flat. The yellowish-brown goatskin which could record Sequence 5 and 6 powers were very pliable like tanned leather. The three charred yellow pages that could record godhood powers were thick and textured. Together, they allowed someone to quickly distinguish between them simply from touch.

Klein's fingers quickly found the thick and textured three pages as he gently pinched the middle page.

Although his pocket wasn't large enough, preventing him from fully opening Leymano's Travels, the hooded robe was personally modified by Fors herself. The pocket had plenty of space, allowing the palm-sized spellbook to be flipped to a right angle.

As Klein used his palm to prevent Leymano's Travels from closing, he used his finger to slide across the corresponding page's surface. The surface had slight bumps and depressions, making the strange patterns and symbols that were filled with mystery and ancient vibes be directly presented in his mind.

He injected his spirituality into it.

This charred-yellow page recorded a demigod power of the Storm pathway: Hurricane!

Klein wanted to use it to create chaos, so as to interfere with the Aurora

Order saint who was lurking in the darkness. By doing so, he could seize the opportunity to assassinate Mr. X and escape with the help of the wind.

Aside from this goal, the chaos could also effectively hide his tracks. By letting the members of the gathering scatter, and with everyone's identity being a mystery, doing so made everyone be a suspect. The Aurora Order would then find it difficult to pinpoint Xio.

As his thoughts whirred, Klein locked his gaze onto a spot, and he slowly pulled out Leymano's Travels.

Meanwhile, Mr. X took two steps to Klein's side, standing near him like he was a friend he hadn't seen in years.

Following that, there was a loud buzz as a terrifying hurricane spiraled out of control in front of everybody. It was where Klein had targeted his spirituality at.

The tables, coffee tables, sofa, and high-back chairs in the room flew up as the violent hurricane ripped through the walls, carrying the roof away as it headed for the alley. Some of the gathering's participants were in the way of the hurricane and were thrown far away, while others fell forward due to the wind pressure as they ran in another direction.

If Klein hadn't purposely controlled the timing and direction of the hurricane, not only would Mr. X's old house be destroyed, but even the series of condominiums around it would suffer damage. As for the gathering participants, they would've been swept up in the hurricane, having their survival depend solely on luck.

The buzzing sounds quickly intensified as the hurricane that reached into the sky was like a terrifying giant. It stomped across the alley towards the street, leaving nothing behind in its wake.

Klein was similarly swept up as he and the possessed Mr. X were thrown onto another street.

During this process, as both of them were standing close to one another, along with how a Wraith could float, these could control the target's body to a certain extent even with the hurricane. Therefore, the distance between Klein and Mr. X ultimately stayed within five meters. His control of the Spirit Body Threads had never been terminated.

In midair, with the howling winds in his ear, Klein suddenly yanked at his chest with his right hand, tearing away the hooded robe's surface, reached under his arm, and drew Death Knell.

Although in Mr. X's current state where just Air Bullets alone could finish him off, Klein decided to be cautious. He was afraid that certain mystical items on his body would suddenly be triggered, just like Admiral of Blood Senor's necklace.

When hunting, it was necessary to do his best!

Klein's vigorous action of drawing his revolver had obviously affected his control of the Spirit Body Threads. If it wasn't because Mr. X was on the brink of being fully controlled, just this alone was enough to recover his usual lucidness.

However, even so, Mr. X's thoughts were no longer impeded as his mind sped up.

He attempted to resist, but with Wraith Senor's possessing him, it had forced his efforts to be in vain for a brief moment.

Then, Mr. X's eyes reflected an enemy who swooped downward. It was a thin face with pronounced facial lines.

In his vision, the person coldly cocked the revolver, pointing the black barrel at him.

Bang!

Klein didn’t hesitate to pull the trigger as the gunshot was drowned by the howling winds.

Mr. X’s head jerked backwards as though an invisible hand had pressed onto it.

His head and brass mask shattered into pieces, splattering red and white liquids everywhere.

It was a lethal shot!

Death Knell had sounded the knell for him!

Plop!

After the shot, Klein fell to the ground on his back.

With a thud, Mr. X landed beside him as the blood and fragments that scattered in midair had strangely flowed back, gathering by his neck and forming a head filled with cracks and crevices.

This was the ability of a Wraith.

At that moment, the hurricane was starting to disperse, and the huge commotion had undoubtedly caught the notice of faraway demigods.

Inside the Holy Wind Cathedral, the new Backlund archbishop, Deep Blue Officiant Randall Valentinus, instantly flew out of his room as he floated in the air.

Klein, who had fallen on the ground, noticed that the wind pressure had weakened. With Death Knell in one hand and Leymano’s Travels in the other, he flipped the latter to the first yellowish-brown goatskin page.

After obtaining this spellbook, he realized that there were a few pages recorded in it, with one of them being Traveler’s Door.

Klein originally imagined that it was a coincidence, but on careful thought, he found it inevitable. This was because Leymano's Travels belonged to the ancient Abraham family. They wielded the Apprentice pathway and several corresponding mystical items, so they had the resources to easily record a Traveler's powers. After all, this was something very, very useful.

At that moment, as long as the Traveler's Door was formed, Klein could leave unharmed with Mr. X's corpse that was being possessed by Wraith Senor.

He hadn't used it in the building, because it was possible that the Aurora Order Saint might intercept it. Furthermore, Mr. X was also a Traveler. He had a chance of successfully escaping via Traveler's Door. Therefore, Klein didn't dare risk it before he was completely dead.

At that moment, Klein's vision went black as he realized that the surrounding streets were filled with a pitch-black and strange liquid. They surged over and quickly coagulated to form a strong cage.

In such darkness, shadows began to come alive as cold gazes landed on him.

A demigod's power! The Aurora Order does have a saint nearby! There's no way to directly teleport away! Klein's heart tensed up as he calmly flipped Leymano's Travels to the charred-yellow page.

Sizzle!

A silver "python" snaked out of thin air, embroiling itself with the darkness as it illuminated everything.

Lightning Storm!

The coagulated pitch-blackness shattered instantly. And without any hesitation, Klein stuffed his Death Knell-wielding right hand into his pocket, pinching the dark green stone that was filled with burn marks.

"Door!"

He chanted in ancient Hermes with an abnormally calm tone.

A light blue brilliance burst out as Klein's figure rapidly turned into a blur. Even Mr. X's corpse which had come close to grab onto his shoulder had experienced similar changes.

The two figures instantly turned invisible as they vanished from the spot. They quickly departed into the spirit world with overlapping saturated colors, pulling off an ingenious escape.

In the shadowy alley with the flattened gathering building which had planks, rubble, clothes, and all kinds of random items strewn all around, someone harrumphed.

"Damn it!"

At this moment, the other gathering members had already fled the street. From far away in the sky, a sonic boom could be heard.

†

Xio and Fors, who were searching for ghosts in East Borough, were alarmed by the sky that suddenly lit up. They hurriedly looked into the distance and saw the silver forest that seemed to bloom like a forest.

The twisted form and sense of horror had left them trembling despite the distance. They didn't even dare look straight at it.

"What happened over there?" Xio mumbled as she exchanged looks with Fors blankly.

Fors actually had a guess, but she found it difficult to believe. This was because it had far exceeded her expectations of The World Gehrman Sparrow's strength!

†

In a dark alley, Klein appeared out of thin air with Mr. X's corpse as they landed on the ground.

He wasn't flustered at all. He kept Death Knell in his pocket and then took out another book.

Groselle's Travels!

Smack! Klein smacked the book written by Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt onto Mr. X's face, staining the cover with blood.

Moments later, Mr. X's corpse vanished, leaving behind Wraith Senor in his dark red coat and old triangular hat.

Right on the heels of that, Klein put away Groselle's Travels, flipped open Leymano's Travels and made another charred-yellow page face up.

Suddenly, a bright light emitted from the book as an illusory angel with twelve wings flew up and landed on Klein.

All of this happened in an instant before darkness returned to the alley. Only the dim moonlight continued illuminating the area silently.

Klein immediately took out another metal bottle, poured out the blood stored inside, and uniformly smeared it across Leymano's Travels.

After doing all of this, he put away everything else, pulling away the hooded robe and throwing it beside him.

A scarlet flame immediately soared up, burning the tattered robe clean.

Meanwhile, Klein silently grew another 10 centimeters as he transformed into a relatively ordinary appearance.

Then, he identified his bearings with the help of the stars, and he picked up a fallen branch to assist him as he quickly toured through the dark and deteriorated streets, returning back to the cheap motel.

At this point, he still had no idea what additional weakness he had been given.

Inside the single room in the motel, Klein changed into his own clothes, turning back into Gehrman Sparrow.

Seeing this thin and cold-looking crazy adventurer in the mirror, he fell silent for a few seconds, picking up the half top hat and wearing it.

†

Above the flattened building, Church of Storms Cardinal, Backlund diocese archbishop, Deep Blue Officiant Randall Valentinus, who had failed in capturing anyone, looked down in silence for an extended period of time.

†

160 Böklund Street. Upon seeing the visitor outside, Butler Walter asked in surprise, “Your Excellency, why are you suddenly here? Is there something?”

Bishop Elektra chuckled and said, “I heard that Dwayne is sick, so I’m here to visit him. Perhaps he will quickly recover under the Goddess’s blessings.”

Chapter 780 - Extract

◆

Walter came to the third story and rapped on the master bedroom’s door.

“Who is it?” Dwayne Dantès’s slightly weak and hoarse voice sounded.

Walter turned the doorknob, opening a tiny crack in the door.

“Sir, Bishop Elektra is here to visit you.

“Do you wish to meet him in the living room or activity room, or should he be invited directly to your bedroom?”

Usually, visitors weren’t permitted to enter the master’s bedroom. This was rather impolite, but visiting the sick was an exception.

After a brief silence, Dwayne Dantès replied, “Invite him into the bedroom.”

“Alright, sir.” As Walter gestured Richardson to urge a maid to prepare some tea, he walked down and invited Bishop Elektra of the Church of Evernight up.

Soon, Elektra entered the bedroom and saw Dwayne Dantès lying in bed, looking haggard.

“Richardson, get the bishop a seat,” the pale Dwayne Dantès said with a smile.

Richardson had already done so. He immediately moved a high-back chair to a spot near the bed.

However, Elektra took a few steps forward to observe the new tycoon in town and asked in concern, “Dwayne, how are you? Did you consult a physician?”

His spiritual perception wasn’t triggered, so he didn’t make any attempts. He was only visiting a pious believer out of concern.

Dwayne Dantès coughed lightly and smiled.

“I’m actually almost recovered. I believe I’ll be able to head over to church tomorrow or the day after tomorrow to listen to your preachings.”

“That’s good. I was wondering if I needed to pray to Goddess to bless you.” Elektra chuckled and took a step back before sitting on the chair which Richardson had brought for him.

At this moment, Dwayne Dantès glanced at the bishop and chuckled.

“Actually, I’ve always had a question. Are clergymen of the Church of the Goddess allowed to get married?”

Elektra, who was two years short of reaching forty, sighed and smiled.

“This question has actually troubled us for the longest time.

“In ancient times, the archbishops had engaged in intense debates about this on several theosophical meetings.

“One side believed that servants of the Goddess need to maintain their purity, be it men or women; otherwise it would be sacrilegious. The other side found words from the Goddess in The Revelation of Evernight and other books, believing that the Goddess encouraged marriage. ‘She’ encouraged equality between both sexes and for them to have normal contact. Hence, clergymen should be an example of this, and not be a negative example; by doing so, that would be the greatest respect towards the Goddess.

“In recent times, this question has basically been shelved. The Church doesn’t ban or encourage it. The only request is that married clergymen are not to let their families live in the cathedrals.”

Dwayne Dantès nodded slowly as he curled the corner of his lips.

“Your Excellency, do you have a wife?”

Although Bishop Elektra was thin and not very good-looking, he was pleasant to the eyes. He sighed and said, hardly hiding his smile, “Two years ago, I walked down the aisle under the Goddess’s watch. I happen to have a child this year.

“I originally imagined that I would remain single my entire life in order to serve Goddess, but…”

As he spoke, he gave a self-deprecating laugh and shook his head.

Without waiting for Dwayne Dantès to probe deeper, Elektra asked, “You seem to be single as well. Are you considering the problem of marriage?”

He seemed to imagine that Dwayne Dantès had such thoughts, and he directly asked, imagining that the answer was certain as he continued, “What kind of lady do you like? Perhaps I might be able to help introduce you to someone.”

Dwayne Dantès coughed lightly and said with a smile, “I often chose adventures to amass wealth in the past, so I wasn’t willing to get married, afraid I would drag her down. Heh, I like many types of women and am not picky.

“I like those older than me, one’s who can give me warmth and make me feel at ease…”

Before he finished, his valet, Richardson, wore a stunned expression. He hurriedly turned his head aside and lowered it. He felt his face burning for some baffling reason.

Dwayne Dantès didn't seem to sense it as he continued, "I also like those younger than me, those who are pure and lively, making anyone who sees them feel as though it's dawn because of the radiance they aren't aware of…"

Bishop Elektra's face suddenly froze as he raised his palm and clenched it into a fist as he held it to his mouth and coughed twice.

Yet, Dwayne Dantès didn't stop. He shook his head and said with a sigh, "I also like those who were once in love or were married so that people wouldn't dare approach due to their status, women who can only be viewed from afar. They are so charming that each action of theirs are so intoxicating and irresistible. I often dream…"

Butler Walter, who was standing nearby, trembled. He felt as though he had experienced a dream that he didn't wish to wake up from despite opposing it greatly. He had no idea if it was a good or bad dream.

Dwayne Dantès was about to continue to describe further, but he stopped producing any sound after opening his mouth.

He then chuckled softly.

"That's all very normal. When humans are at their limits and are under the influence of their senses, they often have some abnormal thoughts. As long as they're repressed while acting in line with one's will, it wouldn't feel like torture. One would still be a husband, a good father, a good man."

"That's very reasonable. When I'm incensed, I often have irrational thoughts, but few people will turn them into reality." Bishop Elektra ingeniously changed the subject. As for Butler Walter and Valet Richardson, they revealed looks of contemplation.

The bishop didn't stay long. After drinking a few sips of the marquis black tea that the maid delivered, he got up and bade farewell, leaving Dwayne Dantès's residence.

The room quickly turned quiet as the window at the balcony silently opened. Klein, who had changed back into Dwayne Dantès, agilely leaped inside.

Thankfully, I returned in time. If I allowed Arrodes to continue speaking, Bishop Elektra would probably renounce a pious believer like me… Perhaps I'll even discover Walter and Richardson hanging from their rooms tomorrow morning, and the streets would have rumors of Dwayne Dantès being a pervert… Klein looked at the fake Dwayne on the bed and sighed silently. That final response had been personally formulated by him, and he got Arrodes to read it.

Of course, this was his contingency plan for the worst possible scenario. He had believed that Arrodes wouldn't have made the situation develop that far.

"Welcome back, Great Master." The Dwayne Dantès in bed bowed and greeted. "Did your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, do well?"

Hearing the mirror stammer the question, Klein sighed and said, "It's still alright. You did pretty good.

"However, try not to agitate others when chatting."

"I-I will take note!" The fake Dwayne Dantès rapidly vanished as a small mirror appeared on the pillow.

Above the mirror, silver light bloomed as words appeared:

"Thank you for your affirmation. I will continue following in your footsteps. I look forward to being of service to you the next time~"

After a goodbye expression was sketched out, the mirror returned to normal.

Klein went close to it and put away the mirror before entering the bathroom attached to the master bedroom. He took four steps counterclockwise and headed above the gray fog.

He wanted to complete the Grazing before Mr. X's Spirit Body dispersed.

†

In the book world, inside a cave on a snow-laden mountain peak.

Klein looked at Mr. X's corpse and carefully identified the head that had been pieced together from the fragments. He matched it with his memories of the target's picture which Miss Magician had provided him.

It's him… I hope I'll obtain Traveling and Record. With them, I would make a killing with this operation. Otherwise, I'll have to consider getting Miss Magician to pay more. The difficulty between hunting a Sequence 5 and that of facing a demigod are two completely different matters. As Klein thought, he reached out his left palm and spread open his fingers, aiming at the corpse whose spirituality hadn't completely dispersed.

Creeping Hunger quickly transformed back into its original form, looking as though it was made of thin human skin, two eyes split open in the middle of its palm. Its pupils were bright red, as though they were dyed in blood.

Amidst a cold and eerie wind, Mr. X's significantly dispersed Spirit Body and the resplendent Beyonder specks of light that resembled the Milky Way drilled into Creeping Hunger, fixing onto a blank finger.

Creeping Hunger first turned transparent as if it was a shadow of the spirit world before returning to normal.

Klein closed his eyes and sensed it as his brows gradually eased. A smile surfaced on his face.

His luck was pretty good this time because he had drawn one of the Beyonder powers he wanted the most: Traveler's Door!

It could also be called Door of Teleportation, Teleportation, or Traveling. Its effect was to allow a person to traverse the spirit world while sensing the external world. Beyonders of different Sequences could endure Traveling for different periods of time due to the differences in their Spirit Body's potency. This made the effects of spirit world traversal and the distance differ.

If it's a Sequence 9 or 8, they wouldn't be able to go beyond Backlund… With my present level, I wonder if I can directly head to the primitive island which Mr. Hanged Man provided. Hmm, if that doesn't work, I can split it into a few trips… Klein thought as he smiled.

At this point, he realized that a Traveler's strength in head-on combat was very powerful. This was because the difficulty in using short-distance Traveling was about the same as Flaming Jump. This also meant that a Traveler could keep phasing around a target, opening up and narrowing distances as they pleased. This would catch people by surprise while also preventing them from inflicting a successful blow.

Furthermore, if plenty of powers were Recorded and the vigilance that accompanies immediately departing once something felt amiss, Klein suspected that even with Lightning Storm and Hurricane, he had no way of restraining a Traveler in direct combat.

Indeed, a Marionettist should try to hide behind the shadows… As Klein thought poignantly, he cast his eyes on Mr. X's corpse.

Creeping Hunger had also obtained another Beyonder power. It was Door Opening of the Apprentice Sequence. It was equivalent to a very weakened version of Traveling and was of little value.

Turning his gaze, Klein's eye noticed the ruby ring on Mr. X's hand.

Chapter 781 - Negative Effects

◆

After staring at Mr. X’s corpse for a while, Klein held back the urge to personally dig through his pockets for spoils of war. He made Wraith Senor take two steps and retrieve the ruby ring.

This way, even if Mr. X carried an item with unimaginable negative effects, it would be endured by the marionette and not affect himself.

After some careful inspecting, Senor held the ruby ring, 48 pounds in cash, and an ordinary pipe filled with tobacco and walked back.

That’s all? An Oracle of the Aurora Order only has this much? Klein was rather surprised at this scene as he nearly cursed “pauper” at him.

Soon, he recovered his calm and used his reasoning to convince himself that such a situation was very reasonable.

Mr. X is a Traveler. He can record the Beyonder powers of others. He’s considered an all-rounder. Even if such a powerhouse were to have other mystical items, he would tend to record them and not carry them around. This way, he could enjoy the benefits of the powers without suffering from the negative effects. That can prevent himself from killing himself.

Using this line of thought, the effects of this ring was likely to be passive or triggered.

With this in mind, Klein nodded gently. He made Senor carry Mr. X’s cracked and sticky head, possess him, and return above the gray fog.

Sitting behind The Fool’s seat, he was no longer afraid of anything. He directly took the ruby ring and used the method of divination in order to determine the actual effects of the mystical item.

Its name is Flower of Blood…

It allows the wearer to control their body at a deeper level. As long as they don’t suffer from instant death or are completely purified; hence, losing the ability to control it, they will be able to slowly recover…

This is equivalent to an instinct, a passive effect…

From the looks of it, my choice of delivering a lethal strike with Death Knell was the correct one. If I hadn’t used all my might, Mr. X might not have actually died. He would then be able to use the extreme pain to awaken himself and escape the control of a Marionettist… He had also considered his weakness of being more of a spellcaster and having a body that was insufficient in strength…

This ring has flesh magic to a certain degree. It’s quite useful… As Klein held the ruby ring, he rapped the edge of the mottled table and muttered silently.

He then began probing the Flower of Blood’s negative effects.

Nearly a minute later, Klein opened his eyes and left the dream.

Oh, come on!? This? he muttered as he wore a twisted look.

With dream divination, he had interpreted the Flower of Blood’s negative effects. It involved randomly making the wearer lose all rationale and the ability to think.

Great. This is in line with the True Creator… Klein couldn’t help but grind his teeth.

A negative effect that was completely random meant that the Flower of Blood had no way to be used!

Thinking back to the scene from before, Klein muttered to himself in an amused and peeved manner, Mr. X actually dared to wear such a ring?

That's right, people who change their faith to the True Creator often don't have any facility to think. In that case, wearing such a ring wouldn't make them worse.

Hmm, losing rationale isn't losing reason. It wouldn't be as bad as suddenly hurting others. But clearly, he would be very rigid and foolish, acting only on instinct.

Phew… Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He decided to throw the Flower of Blood into the junk pile and not vex over it. From his point of view, it was a piece of crap that he couldn't use, nor was anyone willing to buy it unless he sold it to the Aurora Order. However, that would only make the True Creator very happy.

At that moment, he caught sight of Admiral of Blood Senor who was standing beside him through the corner of his eye.

Klein's heart stirred as he clapped.

Why didn't I think of that—I might not be able to use it, but I can let my marionette use it. After all, he's dead and he follows all my instructions. He doesn't need to think!

Admiral of Blood, Flower of Blood. It's destined to be a pair! Although Senor has lost his control over his body because he's dead, I can provide that…

This way, he can still be fixed even if he can't phase into a Wraith in time, or if his Zombie body isn't strong enough to withstand a blow, causing him to lose a limb or two.

Of course, to a marionette, that's not important, as it doesn't affect his intrinsic character. The main goal is to obtain the additional flesh magic.

A few seconds later, a delighted Klein made Senor pick up the ruby ring and wear it on his left index finger.

After doing this, Klein made the Wraith return to the gold coin before he raised his left palm and spread his fingers.

He wanted to release the Interrogator from Creeping Hunger!

This was a promise he had made a long time ago.

This was the last Spirit Body that had been Grazed when he received Creeping Hunger. It was time to set it free.

Amidst an indistinct cold wind, a blurry soul appeared by the side of the bronze table.

He was a man in a navy uniform. He was in his thirties and had the rank of commander. He had brown whiskers on his painful and dazed face.

"What's your name? How did Qilangos kill you?" Klein asked in a deep voice.

The man jolted from his reverie and answered, "My name is Andy Haydn. The second mate of the Enmat. I died at a battle at sea, no—I didn't die immediately. I was captured by a Feysacian before I entered that glove of yours…

"I do not know of a Qilangos, much less heard of him."

This Interrogator was already inside the glove when Qilangos obtained Creeping Hunger? As Psychic Piercing is very useful, he didn't switch it? I wonder who the previous owner of Creeping Hunger was… Klein asked with piqued interest, "Who was the Feysacian who caught you? What does he look like?"

Andy Haydn thought seriously and said, "I don't know his name. I only remember his epaulet was that of a captain. I remember that he had a big, impressionable nose. I remember his eyes were blue, and his hair was close to blond. He was almost two meters tall…"

Such people from Feysac are common… other than his identity as a captain… Klein considered for a moment and said, "Which year did you die?"

Andy Haydn's figure slowly dissipated away, and finally, it said, "1338…"

That's twelve years ago. Hmm, Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos got famous less than ten years ago… That captain might already be an admiral… Klein gently nodded and discovered that he had failed to ask if Andy Haydn had any last wishes.

Forget it, setting him free is already a good deed… Klein quickly threw the matter to the back of his mind as he conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow.

†

"…Please inform Miss Magician that Mr. X, Lewis Wien, is dead. Please get her to take receipt of the item and the spellbook… I'll request it from her when I need it again…"

An endless gray fog filled Fors's eyes as The World Gehrman Sparrow's words emotionlessly rang in her ears. Although she was already prepared for this piece of news, she still found it unbelievable and unacceptable.

He really succeeded? That storm in East Borough was created by him? Fors held down the upheavals in her heart. Taking advantage of the silent night, she set up a bestowment ritual in her bedroom.

Before long, the candlelight and spirituality items created an illusory door. Two items flew out and landed gently on the table.

When Fors took a careful look, she nearly screamed as she hurriedly covered her mouth. She took two steps back and kept close to the wall of spirituality.

One of the two items was her Leymano's Travels, while the other item was a hideous head covered in cracks. It was stained with blood as if they had pieced together, as it seemed to shimmer with what appeared like reflected light on glass.

As a graduate of med school, and having worked as a doctor at a well-known clinic, Fors had seen her fair share of corpses but never had she seen such a disgusting, creepy, and terrifying head.

After composing herself, Fors looked at the head again, identifying it to be Lewis Wien's.

She carefully used astromancy to make a final confirmation. Following that, she muttered with a slightly twisted expression, Mr. World shattered the target's head and then pieced them back together?

At this moment, Fors couldn't help have a scene surface in her mind.

It was of the cold Gehrman Sparrow sitting in front of a table, piecing together the bloody head fragments together, as though seriously putting a jigsaw puzzle together.

This made Fors involuntarily shiver. She had an inexplicable feeling that The World was a psychotic killer with a serious mental illness.

Moving her gaze away, she took two steps forward and picked up Leymano's Travels and casually flipped through it.

Her gaze gradually froze because there were more spells in the spellbook, most of them seemingly related to wind and lightning.

This made her recall the lightning storm that quickly passed in East Borough. She was convinced that it was created by Mr. World.

Fors hurriedly flipped to the three charred-yellow pages in Leymano's Travels and found them blank.

She immediately had a guess, believing that The World Gehrman Sparrow had likely gained Mr. Fool's help to record Beyonder powers at the demigod level.

I just realized that if I have enough money and resources, I can hire the Tarot Club members to help me record different Beyonder powers. This way, Leymano's Travels will become extremely powerful, but I don't have the money or resources… Hmm, I can request for a reward from Teacher this time. I can say that I paid quite a price to help seek revenge for him… Fors thought and first thanked Mr. Fool before asking him to pass on the message to The World.

"…I'm very sorry that my payment isn't proportionate to the difficulty of the mission. After I receive a reward, I'll provide compensation."

After the prayer, Fors ended the ritual and hurriedly hid the head.

If Xio discovers this, she'll definitely imagine a horror story… After she was done, Fors clapped her hands as she thought leisurely.

†

When Fors replied, Klein had already returned to the real world. All he heard was a vague female's voice.

But even so, he couldn't help the fear and horror he felt. This was because Death Knell had given him an additional weakness: the fear of women!

Chapter 782 - Saturday Night

◆

On Saturday morning, Klein, who was wearing pajamas, rubbed his head and got out of bed.

He didn’t sleep well, as different women would inevitably enter his dreams, scaring him awake. He needed to spend several seconds to calm his emotions before returning to sleep again.

Thankfully, this weakness only lasts six hours, and there’s no need for me to head out in the middle of the night. I didn’t have to face the maids… Klein sighed as he pulled the rope beside his bed. Richardson, who had been waiting outside, immediately entered with the clothes his employer needed to wear.

I’ve no idea what Arrodes said. Richardson seems to try to avoid me when facing me… Was it the kind of ladies he mentioned he likes, and that it happens to also be at odds with how society views it? Klein happened to only hear the magic mirror mention the kind of women that Butler Walter liked when he rushed back. He wasn’t sure what had happened prior to that.

He didn’t use dream divination to obtain the corresponding information, as he didn’t feel that it was necessary. After all, with Richardson’s personality, he wouldn’t have the courage to take action no matter who he liked. It wouldn’t have had any additional effects.

After changing into his clothes, Klein headed to the second story and walked to the dining room. Walter was wearing white gloves as usual, waiting by the entrance.

Upon seeing Dwayne Dantès approach, he took a step forward and bowed politely.

“Good morning, sir. You have two lessons today. In the evening, you will be participating in the banquet at Mr. Portland Moment’s place.”

Portland Moment lived at 100 Böklund Street. He was a full-time professor at Backlund University’s Department of Engineering, a fellow at the Loen Kingdom Imperial Science Institute. As he had discovered a few metal alloys, he had received the Light of Machinery award, and he was just second to people like Turani von Helmosuin in the world of academics.

Furthermore, the few metal alloys were widely used in ship and steam engine construction. Just the licensing patent was enough to make him a tycoon with a wealth of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Upon hearing Walter, Klein casually glanced at him, realizing that he had some dark eye circles. His eye bags were a little puffy, making him look different from usual. It was as though he hadn’t slept well the entire night.

If not for a Faceless’s powers, Dwayne Dantès would probably look the same… Klein retracted his gaze in pity and didn’t speak further. As he nodded gently in response to Walter’s greetings, he entered the dining hall.

To be honest, Klein was rather impressed with him. He was able to hold back his fantasies and stop himself from approaching her to seek out pleasure, despite frequently meeting a Demoness. All he did was have wet dreams that included the target when alone at night.

One had to know that a Demoness, especially one who was in the midst of or having passed the Pleasure Sequence, had a charm that far exceeded a Beyonder’s effects towards males. Every action was filled with a charm that made any men who came close to them feel intoxicated and lost. It was like consuming opioids and gradually developing into something more serious, to the point of not being able to extricate oneself from the pleasure given by a Demoness. Perhaps only gay men could effectively resist such charms.

Of course, Klein suspected that gay men were not immune to it either. This was because one's mind and hormones would be affected, creating changes that originally didn't exist. Furthermore, a large number of Demonesses were men to begin with. This lowered one's psychological resistance.

And precisely because of this, even though he was a Sequence 5 Beyonder, Klein had to constantly maintain a high-strung state when facing Demonesses like Trissy and Tracy. He was afraid that any mishap might cause him to be charmed.

Even he wasn't immune to such effects, much less an ordinary person like Butler Walter. This wasn't something that willpower alone could resist!

Although perhaps being a result of Prince Edessak's death or her own advancement, Trissy was clearly able to rein in her charms. Walter is only an ordinary person. Hmm, even if he is one, he's at best a Sequence 9 or 8… For him to maintain his present state implies how strong his self-restraint is. He's very loyal to Prince Edessak, and he loves his wife and daughter… As Klein sighed, he sat down. Breakfast today was his favorite Desi pie. The oil that effused out of it made him salivate.

†

The sea late at night was nearly black as it was faintly dyed with a sliver of crimson red. It was calmer and quieter than in the day.

The Blue Avenger was ebbing up and down in the waves like a ghost as it cruised towards the crimson moon.

Alger Wilson stood at the bow, looking far away at the waves. On the surface, he appeared staid as usual, but deep down, he could hardly hold back his agitation.

Ahead of him was the Abyss Maelstrom north of Sonia Island!

As it was a dangerous vortex that was famous for appearing without any signs, no ship was willing to enter these dangerous waters.

After delivering the report and leaving Pasu Island, Alger commandeered the Blue Avenger all the way north where they circled around Sonia Island and headed for this area.

Midway, they had docked at a harbor for resupplies without wasting any more time.

As for whether he would be suspected for heading north, Alger wasn't worried. This was because the Church of Storms was happy to have its captains head north of the Sonia Sea and the Fog Sea in order to obtain intel on the Feysac Empire, Intis Kingdom, Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, and the Church of the God of Combat.

Looking back at his ship, Alger walked deckside, took out a charm made of tin, held it in his palm, and chanted the incantation, "Storm!"

A blue flame soared and devoured the charm. Alger suddenly sensed a baffling affinity with all the fish in the ocean beneath him.

At that instant, both parties were able to communicate at the psyche level!

The tin charm was one of the items he had obtained from his resupply at Pasu Island, allowing him to have an affinity with undersea creatures, providing a crude level of psychic communication with him.

Amidst his thoughts, Alger didn't think of obtaining any intel. All he did was wait for the Blue Avenger to approach the Abyss Maelstrom and make a second attempt.

Seconds turned into minutes as Alger, who had failed nearly a hundred times, finally learned from a spindle-like fish about where Obninsks often appeared.

If I didn't know that the target is near the Abyss Maelstrom, I would've long given up. It's really difficult to grasp any reliable information through a brute-force search… Alger concluded as he touched his pocket.

He had already used up most of his affinity charms, with only five left.

I'll have to get another batch of them when I return. Others must not discover that I've expended all these… I heard the Rorsted Archipelago's Resistance has plenty… Heh heh… As Alger was pondering, he changed the direction of the Blue Avenger for the spot he had just learned about.

About an hour passed as the Blue Avenger stopped. Alger casually took out a sealed metal bottle.

This was the Sanguine anesthetic gas that he had spent 130 pounds to buy from The Moon. He had no doubt in regards to its effects because he had used one in the past.

As the Blue Avenger was a ghost ship, it didn't need many people to man it at night. There was only one person every night who was in charge of watching the ship, preventing it from deliberately creating problems or cruising into dangerous waters.

As the captain, Alger had arranged himself to be on duty that night without anyone noticing.

After he was done with his preparations, he came to the door of the sailors, took out a metallic pipe, and opened the bottle. He released the gas into each room, without even sparing the storeroom which stored all kinds of sundry. It was in case certain members of the crew were playing cards in there instead of sleeping.

After doing all of this, Alger, who wasn't in a rush to concoct the potion, brought the ingredients with him, changing into a diving suit that was made of shark skin. He leaped from the starboard and into the water, without causing any splashes.

Under the dark and calm waters, Alger's eyes gradually turned dark blue, allowing him to see his surroundings clearly.

He breathed in the air within the water comfortably as he arrived in a pitch-black deep sea.

Then, he used the affinity charm once again to communicate with the surrounding fish that were of different shapes and sizes.

With the advice from the kind fish, Alger identified his bearings and swam as he asked, finally arriving at what seemed like an underwater volcano.

The fish actually didn't know that an Obninsk stayed here. They only knew that their own kind and a number of top deep sea hunters often disappeared in the vicinity.

With his Beyonder powers, Alger looked far ahead and saw the huge, black cave in the undersea volcano. Tentacles that were thicker than pythons found in a Southern Continent primitive forest gently flailed outwards.

The huge suckers and patterned skin, as well as the cave that was several times the size of the Blue Avenger, left Alger apprehensive as he didn't dare approach.

An Obninsk is at least a powerful Sequence 5… Furthermore, it has a terrifying body… Hmm, I can confirm that it's my target… Alger carefully swam over and stopped at a distance from the threat. After careful identification, he used the affinity charm once again.

Following that, he allowed his spirituality to pass through the water and reach into the cave in an attempt to communicate with the powerful psyche force that was huddled inside.

The massive psyche slowly relaxed as countless thoughts were released.

It was taken aback for a moment before its psyche suddenly erupted like a volcano!

Roar!

Amidst a terrifying sound, the cave produced a ludicrous vortex that sucked the surrounding water, trash, as well as Alger towards it.

It's filled with animosity! Alger's pupils constricted as his body turned slippery as he was driven by a formless wind backward in an attempt to escape.

He used several Beyonder powers before escaping the influence of the vortex. He didn't dare stay near the undersea volcano, and he quickly surfaced before opening up a gap.

Almost a minute later, Alger, who had escaped the dangerous area, spat out bubbles as he heaved a sigh of relief.

That Obninsk can actually resist the influence of charms that increase an affinity with sea creatures…

Does it hate items with the Lord's aura?

After some thought, Alger, who didn't wish to waste this opportunity, steeled his resolve since he had already come this far. He began using Elvish to pray amidst the seawater.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

Chapter 783 - The Trick to Communication

◆

When he heard the illusory pleas, Klein was attending a banquet at Portland Moment’s place due to the time difference.

The banquet began from half-past seven, and it continued all the way to half-past nine, and even ten. This was because the appetizers, soup, side dishes, main dishes, staple food, vegetables, fruits, and desserts had numbered a total of ten to twenty dishes. The footmen would serve the dishes one after the other, removing and changing dishes in unison to prevent the dining table from turning chaotic, and also providing an interval between the dishes in order to allow the guests to chat. Gentlemen would take the initiative to talk to the ladies to their right.

In short, it’s rather troublesome and exhausting. I even have to take note of which dish matches with which alcohol… However, it’s quite tasty… Taking the opportunity when the roasted lamb was being switched out, he said to Ma’am Willis to his right, “My apologies. I’ll need to use the washroom.”

He got up, pressing his right hand to his chest and bending over slightly as a gesture. Then, he left the dining hall and headed for one of the washrooms on the second story.

Upon entering, he locked the door and immediately took four steps counterclockwise to head above the gray fog.

…Mr. Hanged Man’s prayer. He wishes for me to help him in gaining the goodwill of an Obninsk, and he’s willing to find 15 pages of Roselle’s diary, or help me do something of equal value… His progress isn't slow… Klein sat at The Fool's seat as he emanated his spirituality and touched the constantly burgeoning and contracting crimson star.

After pondering for a few seconds, he said, "Investigate all Feysac captains who participated in the Konotop sea battle in 1338."

As a historian, Klein immediately knew which sea battle it was when he learned that the Interrogator had died at the hands of a Feysacian in 1338.

In 1338, the relationship between Loen and Feysac was tense with occasional conflicts. However, there was only one battle that resulted in the death of someone that was at the level of a commander. It was a sea battle that happened in East Balam's Konotop.

And on a Feysacian fleet, there were definitely not many captains!

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In the deep, dark waters, Alger Wilson saw the endless grayish-white fog and heard Mr. Fool's answer.

Investigate all the captains from the Feysac Empire that were involved in the Konotop sea battle in 1338… Why would Mr. Fool pay attention to such a trivial figure? Is there some immense secret hidden in this matter? Alger's heart stirred. Without any hesitation, he directly agreed.

"Your wish is my wish."

Such a mission was difficult and very complicated for him, but it wasn't dangerous. It was something that the present him could accept.

After the response, Alger heard Mr. Fool's deep voice once again:

"You can return to the target's vicinity."

That’s it? As expected of Mr. Fool! After he obtained the authority, “He” is more like a Sea God than Kalvetua. His might isn’t limited to the Rorsted Archipelago! Alger was delighted as he thanked The Fool solemnly. Then, bending his back and kicking his legs, he turned to head down, diving into the depths once more.

In just minutes, he returned beside the undersea volcano and saw a turbulent flow in the gigantic dark cave as the tentacles were flailing and had yet to calm down.

Although Alger trusted Mr. Fool in being sufficiently powerful and terrifying, an awakening ancient god, he instinctively became cautious when he saw that scene. He carefully inched forward.

He suspected that the Obninsk’s flailing of its countless tentacles was a sign of welcoming him.

And at this moment, above the gray fog, The Sea God Scepter-wielding Klein frowned slightly.

“It refuses to communicate with Sea God, and it even hates the feeling, making it unwilling to show its goodwill…” he muttered under his breath, exasperated.

His influence on the surrounding waters through the prayee had failed!

For some unknown reason, the Obninsk strongly resisted Beyonder powers that promoted an affinity with sea creatures.

Through the prayer scene, he could see the thick tentacles thrashing about, and he vaguely sensed that the target was infuriated. It was trying to rip apart all living beings that dared approach it.

Mr. Hanged Man has gone over… He’s going over… The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched as he decided to switch his approach.

He raised the Sea God Scepter a little higher, allowing the blue gems at the tip light up one after another, emitting a bright, blinding light!

Right on the heels of that, he directed the violent aura of Lightning Storm over, casting it on the Obninsk.

The thick tentacles that thrashed about at the bottom of the sea suddenly froze before falling down. They clung close to the seabed as countless green points of lights appeared in the dark cave.

Amidst a jarring rumbling sound, a terrifying monster that could devour a sailboat crawled out. Its patterned black body was massive and distorted. It had a total of three heads, and each head had more than a dozen eyes. All of them were emitting a green light!

The monster then prostrated, appearing as obedient as a trained hound.

“Indeed, tricks are needed in communication.” Klein nodded in satisfaction and once again used the Beyonder affinity powers to make the Obninsk open the mouths of its three heads via a psychic connection.

This made Alger instantly see three dark “caves,” each of them large enough to provide a sailboat passage inside.

Praise be to Mr. Fool… Alger looked at the “magnificent” scene before him as he couldn’t help but mutter inwardly.

He didn’t waste any time, and he chose the middle head by quickly swimming towards it.

A spiraled and warped passage quickly appeared in Alger’s vision as the walls were made of flesh. The width was comparable to the bow of the Blue Avenger.

Whoosh. Water flowed into the passage, heading right for the deep depths. Alger took the opportunity to let his body go with the flow.

Suddenly, he felt as though he was back as a Sailor, engaging in combat amidst waves, groggy from being tossed around. It couldn’t be sustained.

By the time Alger used his Beyonder powers and got a hold of himself, he had already left the tunnel of flesh. He was in a dark, spacious world, with a sticky sensation by his feet. There was a putrid stench everywhere around him.

In just a second, Alger realized that the liquid inside was corroding him. He hurriedly produced a water membrane as he made it swell into a transparent sphere.

He knew that he was already inside the Obninsk's stomach. Without any hesitation, he took out all the bottles he had long prepared and began concocting the potion.

As the supplementary ingredients were thrown into the wide-mouthed metal bottle, they mixed into a dark blue liquid. Following that, Alger carefully threw in a "jellyfish" that enveloped azure-blue seawater in its translucent membrane.

The distant and ethereal singing grew in intensity before calming down. In the bottle, there wasn't any ripples or bubbles. The liquid was dark, just like the ocean before a storm.

Alger calmed his mind, entered Cogitation, and picked up the metal bottle before cleanly downing the Ocean Songster potion inside.

The liquid was cold as it brought about a numbness that slid down his gullet and into his stomach. It then spread throughout his body cells at an unimaginable speed.

At that instant, Alger vaguely heard countless voices. They came from all life at sea, but the Obninsk's body blocked most of it, leaving a relatively screened out version.

Plop! Plop! Plop!

Alger felt his heart beating violently as it spewed blood outwards. His spirituality and the sound waves began to remold his voice and soul.

He couldn't help it as he opened his mouth, letting out a loud sigh.

Amidst the sigh, Alger felt his Spirit Body being ripped slightly. As the sound waves spread outwards, they first turned into mottled scales on his skin before pulling out long flesh tendrils that appeared like flailing tentacles.

The sound wave continued spreading outwards with his Spirit Body fragments, making contact with the sticky liquid within the Obninsk's stomach, and they magically bounced back, infusing Alger's body once again.

Alger, who was on the brink of losing control, instantly felt better as he seized the opportunity. Without any fear of embarrassing himself, he began singing loudly in a bid to vent the invisible sound waves that would blast his body apart.

Rough, messy, off-tune singing filled with a metallic quality spread outwards, wave after wave, mixing with the numerous Spirit Body fragments before bouncing back on the Obninsk's sticky stomach walls.

In this process, Alger was like an ingredient being baked in sound waves as he was molded into form.

Finally, he regained control of his body, and he grasped his spreading spirituality.

At last… Alger closed his eyes as a smile couldn't help but appear on his face.

He had completed the first goal he had for all these years—to advance to Ocean Songster!

I've gained superficial control of lightning, gaining a more all-rounded underwater mobility, as well as the ability to use singing to affect targets… The latter ability is different because of every person's uniqueness, producing different branching paths. One of them is to use beautiful singing to disrupt an enemy's Spirit Body, causing him to turn adrift and fall into a daze; another is to raise one's explosive strength; another is to simulate a thunderous boom to leave others in awe; and another is to use chaotic and unpleasant singing to leave the enemy frustrated, causing them to lose their rationality… Alger inspected himself as his expression turned a little odd.

He soon put these thoughts away, picked up his items, and swam towards the Obninsk's mouth before gently tapping on the already closed mouth.

The mouth slowly opened as it roared suddenly, spewing out everything in its mouth.

Alger instantly felt as though he was in midair as he nearly collided with a shark.

After a series of actions, he surfaced and swam towards the Blue Avenger.

Only after the ghost ship's outline was reflected in his eyes did he truly heave a sigh of relief.

Alger was only worried that something out of the ordinary would happen to the Blue Avenger while he was advancing.

Although an hour or two wasn't a huge problem, there were always all kinds of surprises in this world.

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After receiving Mr. Hanged Man's gratitude again, Klein returned to the real world, washed, and dried his hands before leaving the washroom and walking towards the dining hall.

As the fragrance of food inundated his olfactory senses once again, he slowly drew a breath as he returned to his seat with a smile. As he gestured to the guests, he sat down.

At this point, it was already time for dessert.

From the looks of it, I stayed too long in the washroom… I hope that after today there wouldn't be talks about Dwayne Dantès having constipation… Klein silently muttered to himself as he smiled at Ma'am Willis to his right and said, "When I was young, I ate all kinds of strange food in the Southern Continent. One of them was called Tenet Tree plums. They taste like bland butter, just like these desserts."

He euphemistically explained the reason for his delay by implying that he had weakened his stomach from his younger days.

Chapter 784 - Character Assassination

◆

Ma’am Willis glanced at Dwayne Dantès and said with a smile, completely unfazed, “Your past, and your experiences in Desi Bay and the Southern Continent, are more interesting than any novel I’ve read. It makes me feel like having a similar experience of my own.”

Of course, they’re just real-life stories that have been tweaked. It’s all thanks to Anderson Hood, a hunter that goes everywhere… As Klein cast his gaze on a tiny butter cake, he chuckled.

“It’s because those are only the interesting ones. There are many that I’d rather not be reminded of.”

After that simple statement, he began enjoying the dessert. However, when Ma’am Willis and the other ladies heard that, they were somehow reminded of a best-selling novel, “A Man with a Story.” To them, Dwayne Dantès was such a man. Although he looked like a placid lake, there was more deep down. Hidden there were more pleasant surprises and plenty of pain.

The banquet ended twenty minutes to ten. A number of gentlemen and ladies went to the card room to play two hours of Texas hold’em, while the remaining men headed for the activity room to have a chat. They didn’t bar women from joining, but as it was inevitable for them to broach on sexual matters while smoking, no women joined them. They either circled the piano at the first story and listened to and sang along with the performer, or they grouped up to play chess.

Klein chose to head to the activity room on the second story. Private conversations with a few people had helped him speed up his admission into the circle.

After entering the room, he observed the environment and went straight for the windows to open them. Then, he pulled a nearby high-back chair to sit down.

Just as he did this, he saw the banquet's host, Portland Moment laugh with a pipe in hand.

"Men often need some space for themselves."

His voice was sonorous, and he had a big build. He was an elder in his sixties with a ruddy complexion and rather thick hair despite being all white. His facial features were the most classic features of a Loenese man with nothing that stood out.

"Yes, men have to take note of their image when the ladies are around. We have to be considerate about their thoughts. I've already wanted to kiss this an hour ago," Hazel's father, Member of Parliament Macht, took out a gorgeous silver box, taking out a cigar from inside.

The other men in the activity room did the same as pipes or cigarettes appeared in their hands as though they were pulling off a magic trick.

As the flames flickered, wisps of smoke began to billow, filling the room as though the smog from yesteryear hadn't dispersed.

After enjoying it for a few seconds with his eyes closed, Portland Moment looked to the guest by the window and asked, "Dwayne, do you not smoke?"

Klein clenched his fist and placed it to his mouth, coughing slightly as he said, "I have yet to recover. The doctor advised me not to smoke for the time being."

To be frank, he was almost choking. Thankfully, he had smartly chosen a seat by the window.

This group smoke like chimneys… Klein curled his right index finger and rubbed against his nostrils.

He had the urge to use the Beyonder powers of a Magician to create an invisible air pipe that extended outside to draw in fresh air so as to escape the harm of second-hand smoke. But considering how there might be Beyonders hiding amongst these men, he wisely gave up on the idea.

Portland Moment laughed upon hearing that.

“I heard from Bishop Elektra that it’s not without reason that you were sick. You lack a wife!”

This professor was a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery, but his wife was a believer of the Evernight Goddess. Therefore, they had taken up residence in Böklund Street near Saint Samuel Cathedral. He often had bishops visiting him and having exchanges.

Is he mocking me for thinking about women despite being sick? I really couldn’t tell that Bishop Elektra is actually a man who likes spreading gossip… It’s all Arrodes’s fault! Klein lampooned and shook his head with a smile.

“I place great importance on marriage. I’d rather remain single if there’s no one suitable.”

At this moment, the high-ranking employee of the Backlund municipal office, Mr. Willis, spewed out smoke and said, “Actually, I envy Dwayne’s single status. it allows him to be able to pursue any kind of woman that he likes.”

He had deliberated enunciated “any kind,” causing ambiguous laughter to sound out.

The matter of Dwayne Dantès’s wide preferences and him never rejecting any charming woman has already spread across this street? Klein held back his right hand to prevent himself from subconsciously rubbing his temples. He felt that the deep, dignified, handsome, gregarious new tycoon's image was undergoing a subtle change.

He first suspected that it was the loudmouth, Bishop Elektra, that had spread the news, but later believed that it was Butler Walter who had proactively gotten the servants to spread the gossip.

This was because a nearly flawless, charming gentleman would often be unknowingly ostracized by members of the same sex in a circle. But when a blemish surfaced, with a topic that could be used in jest, it made it easier for him to build closer ties.

Klein wasn't angry about such treatment; instead, he deliberately gave a wry smile in a rather gentlemanly manner.

"That's why I have difficulty choosing, causing me to remain single to this day."

"Haha." Portland Moment and company laughed in unison.

Member of Parliament Macht then said, "What you need is to be a little more decisive. A good marriage and a good family aids a man greatly."

He stopped teasing him and gave serious advice.

From the looks of it, no matter which world you're in, you can't escape the fate of being pressured into marriage… Klein nodded gently and glanced out the window, taking in the night scenery of Portland Moment's garden.

At this moment, he saw a figure. It was Hazel Macht, who was dressed in a black-green gown, following a trail going deeper into the garden, pausing from time to time to look around as though she was looking for something.

Wasn't this lady playing the piano just now? Why would she suddenly be in the garden? When Klein retracted his gaze, Hazel's figure was blocked by flowers.

When guests attend banquets or balls, leaving the hall to head into the garden isn't something impolite. After all, it's a very stylish habit to take a stroll under the moon and take in the flowery aroma of the night winds. However, this often implies a rendezvous.

Who's Hazel rendezvousing with? No, it doesn't seem like it. No one that came today is truly her "equal." Although she doesn't appear as arrogant after the fright she suffered in the sewers, making her occasionally look depressed, she still seems to belittle ordinary people deep down… She's dealing with the negative effects of the mystical item? That doesn't make sense. Entering a lounge or the washroom would be better than the garden since there's more privacy. Furthermore, back at the ball held at her place, she also went to the third story and not the garden… Klein eliminated the various impossibilities and finally had a theory.

From the way Hazel is trying to sense or find something, she seems to have noticed some abnormality and plans to observe and deal with it up close?

Does this also mean that there's some paranormal activity happening in Professor Portland Moment's house?

If that's true, this professor or someone in his family isn't simple at all… The bishops of the Saint Samuel Cathedral haven't realized anything despite them visiting often!

Hmm, a Marauder's senses and observation skills in certain areas definitely stand out…

Klein didn't have any thoughts of intervening in the situation outside. After all, something that Hazel could sense was definitely nothing too dangerous. Besides, Saint Samuel Cathedral was nearby. If there were any hidden secrets, no one would attempt to escalate matters and, would instead, try to lay low.

At this moment, Macht finally calmed down from an untasteful joke and looked towards Portland Moment.

“I heard you’ll be leaving Backlund University?”

Professor Portland Moment sucked at his pipe and said, “That’s right. The Higher Education Commission wishes that I become the chancellor of the reorganized Backlund University of Technology. Heh heh, although a large amount of my wealth comes from metal alloys, what I’m best at is mechanical engineering.”

“They’ve promised to build me a better laboratory there, and also provide me with more funding. Ha, at my age, having more autonomy and helpers is more important.”

Mr. Willis echoed with a smile, “And Backlund University will have a full-time professor spot empty up. Those Senior Associate Professors that have been waiting for decades can finally have a chance.”

In Loen’s tertiary education system, full-time professors weren’t just a title, but also a post. It was equivalent to a dean, so there was only one.

Backlund University of Technology… Klein smiled as he listened, keeping silent on matters he didn’t know much about.

†

In the garden, Hazel arrived in a dark and secluded corner.

She had discovered that ants and other insects on the ground were gathering in an abnormal manner, and her spiritual perception felt that something was hidden here.

This was innate to her Sequence, and it had never failed in the past.

Without any additional help, she could directly choose the precious items hidden among several sealed boxes. Of course, she wasn’t able to distinguish what it was exactly. All she knew was that compared to the rest, what her spiritual perception told her was something definitely more valuable.

Just like Mr. Dwayne Dantès. He definitely has extremely precious items on him… Hazel curled the corners of her lips as she cast her gaze at the soil which looked a little loose.

She sensed that copious amounts of spirituality were gathered underneath, thus attracting insects and souls.

It’s not a human body. It’s some spirituality-equipped materials that have been used… They should’ve been thrown away in batches, but they were instead buried together, causing unnecessary changes… Hazel’s eyes turned darker as she interpreted the situation underground based on the unhidden spirituality traits and changes.

She tipped her chin slightly and looked back at the building. She believed that Portland Moment’s family had at least one person with extraordinary powers.

And if this problem in the garden wasn’t resolved, the nearby houses would have paranormal activity in the coming days!

Hazel retracted her gaze, extended her left hand, and aimed it at the soil. With a gentle grip, she slowly twisted her wrist.

The gathered spirituality vanished as though it had been stolen by someone.

Chapter 785 - Trissy’s Discovery

◆

100 Böklund Street, in a corner of the garden in Portland Moment’s residence.

The many ants and worms that were gathering there slowly dispersed as the cold, creepy sensation faded.

That person with extraordinary powers likely doesn’t have any experience… With her goal achieved, Hazel nodded indiscernibly before turning around briskly and strolling through the garden.

She wasn’t in a rush to return as she enjoyed the crimson moonlight, the cold air, and the faint flowery scent.

After a long while, Hazel stopped her stroll and left the garden, entering the hall on the first story.

At this moment, apart from the guests still playing Texas hold’em, many ladies and gentlemen had bid farewell. Moments after Hazel found her mother, Ma’am Riana, she saw her father, Member of Parliament Macht, and a few other gentlemen walking down as they conversed with lively expressions.

“Are you ready to head home? You have to visit a very important guest tomorrow morning.” As Riana gestured for her daughter to come close, she walked towards her husband and greeted the others with a smile.

Macht nodded and said, “I would’ve loved to try another of Portland’s cigars if not for that matter.”

Riana swept her gaze to Willis, Dwayne Dantès, and company, and she asked in passing, “Gentlemen, what are you talking about? It sounds interesting.”

Macht turned his body to the side and said with a smile, “Dwayne said that he encountered ghosts when he was in the Southern Continent.

“He and his companions suddenly woke up in the middle of the night and found themselves unable to open their eyes. Their bodies were heavy, as though someone was pressing on them.

“They used a great deal of strength before escaping such a state and left their beds. However, they discovered their rooms were extremely cold. You might not know this, but East Balam’s weather is hot most of the time.

“Then, Dwayne and his companions each held double-barreled hunting rifles and stood guard the entire night. They frantically left the town after the sun rose.”

After hearing that, Ma’am Riana looked at Dwayne Dantès with piqued interest.

“Is that true?

“Do ghosts really exist?”

Klein shook his head with a smile.

“That I’m not sure of. Perhaps my companions and I had just experienced a harrowing adventure and our bodies and minds weren’t in the best of conditions. This might’ve resulted in all kinds of problems.”

The stories he told were sourced from one of Anderson’s experiences. Back when the Strongest Hunter of the Fog Sea was exploring a temple in the primitive forest, he chanced upon a specter, creating a large-scale breakout overnight.

Ghosts… Hazel turned her head to look towards the garden as the corners of her mouth curved up slightly before she held back.

She didn’t say a word as she quietly listened to her parents bidding the rest of them farewell before returning home together.

Late at night, Hazel, who had changed into a sleeping gown, walked to the balcony and stood behind a gap in the curtains. She looked towards the sewer manhole on Böklund Street.

As she looked at it, her face gradually turned pale as though she had recalled an experience filled with pain and horror.

She forced herself to retract her gaze, took two deep breaths, and turned around to walk to her bedside.

During this process, she bit gently on her lip and muttered silently, That was likely a wraith… Definitely…

I need items or charms in the Sun domain…

While Hazel was looking at the manhole, Klein was also doing the same.

It’s been days. I wonder how well that Demoness, Trissy, has recovered and whether she has left or not… Thankfully, after Hazel was given a scare by me, she hasn’t dared to approach the manhole… Klein’s gaze swept the iron-black street lamps as he nodded slightly.

He opened the iron cigar case and made his Wraith marionette appear within the full-body mirror.

He had already decided to send Senor down the sewers to check the area to confirm Trissy’s condition. He didn’t want that Demoness to cause any trouble.

Furthermore, the sewers were just physically too close to his identity as Dwayne Dantès. Klein didn’t wish for Trissy to be in the vicinity any longer, wishing that she could recover soon and take action. That would prompt her to leave Böklund Street.

Hmm, having Admiral of Blood Senor appear every once in a while would fulfill the character setting I previously created. It doesn't live nearby, and because the sewers contains a secret, it often wanders around in search of it… As Klein was thinking, he made the marionette in the ancient triangular hat leap onto the street lamp's surface before passing through the manhole cover in a Wraith form, quickly approaching the hidden fork where Trissy hid herself at.

Before reaching the dead end, Senor, who had night vision, could see that the area was empty.

She's already recovered and left? Klein thought as he made the marionette continue forward, stopping at the spot where Trissy was previously sitting.

He discovered that the place was tidied up. Not only was the ground not muddy and moist, even the moss on the walls and corner had vanished.

There isn't any leftover food either… That fellow became a germaphobe after becoming a woman? No, perhaps he was like that to begin with… With Senor's vision, Klein surveyed the area and determined that either Trissy hadn't left, or she hadn't left for more than a day; otherwise, it was impossible to maintain the cleanliness of the place.

Just as this thought flashed through his mind, light footsteps sounded into the Wraith's ear.

Under his control, Senor retraced his steps and wasn't surprised to see Trissy in her black dress.

This Demoness had her luscious black hair cascading down, unlike peers her age who had different hairstyles. It was simple and neat.

Matched with her pale face that had just recovered some of its ruddiness, Trissy looked like a dreamy flower that was silently blooming in the night.

As expected of a Demoness… Thankfully, there's a marionette in between us; otherwise, I would just end up staring at her… Heh heh, a dead person won't be enticed! No matter how charming a Demoness is, there's no way they can make the deceased climb out of a tomb like a zombie… Klein lampooned as he looked at Trissy who had a blank expression but was secretly wary, having released the invisible threads.

"Where did you go?"

Trissy pricked up her brows and said, "Would you like to relieve yourself where you sleep?"

Uh… I thought a Demoness wouldn't need to use the washroom… Klein gave a self-deprecating comment and made Senor chuckle.

"Are you referring to pissing and shitting?"

He had deliberately made the marionette say such words, as it matched Admiral of Blood's persona of a boorish pirate.

Trissy indiscernibly frowned and said, "Is there anything else?"

Senor didn't continue on the topic as he said, "You look like you've almost recovered."

Trissy smiled.

"Not bad. I'll be leaving tomorrow."

She paused as she slightly narrowed her slender eyes.

"To be frank, I doubt whether you're the real Admiral of Blood at times."

Of course it's real! You should ask if he's alive or dead… With his interest piqued, Klein made Senor ask, "Why do you say that?"

Trissy's gaze swept over the Wraith's face and said, "It's said that

Admiral of Blood is someone who indulges in his desires, and he has no resistance towards beautiful females and males.

“Yet, I don’t see any sparks of desire when you face me.

“I believe the real Admiral of Blood would’ve added the condition of doing something I wouldn’t want to in the agreement.”

Klein deliberated for two seconds and made Senor give a self-deprecating smile.

“I’m afraid of finding myself lost to Pleasure and ending up being controlled by you.”

Trissy’s expression instantly changed. This was indeed one of the reasons why she had raised the topic.

To a Demoness of Pleasure, Beyonders who habitually indulged in their desires were natural prey.

Klein actively ignored the topic and made the marionette say, “You’re seeking out the target tomorrow?

“Very clearly, the royal guard captain knows you and knows what you look like.”

After all, you were arranged by them to be by Prince Edessak’s side… Klein silently added.

Trissy lowered her head and looked at her toes before chuckling.

“Rest at ease, I have the perfect plan.”

As she spoke, she turned her body sideways and casually looked deep into the sewers.

“If you set off from here, at the end of the sixth left fork is a hidden passage. It has signs of prolonged human activity. Heh heh, I discovered it while walking around in the past few days.

"I believe it has something to do with that girl, right…

"It's also the reason why you're here?"

Hidden passage? Klein didn't confirm or deny it. He made Senor smile and say, "Did you discover anything?"

Trissy shook her head.

"There was nothing at all. Perhaps only a certain pathway, or someone with a specific item, can find the clues."

A Marauder's intuition, or something on Hazel's person? Klein didn't make Senor continue on the topic as he pressed his hand to his chest and bowed with a smile.

"Since you've recovered, I can be at ease."

The moment he said that, he suddenly vanished.

Trissy focused her eyes into a stare, but it was to no avail. Only when the invisible threads she had released was hit by a breeze did she retract her gaze, confirming that Admiral of Blood had really left.

At that moment, Klein had brought the Wraith back to the manhole without attempting to explore the spot which Trissy had mentioned.

There were three reasons for his decision. First, it had exceeded a hundred meters. Second, he suspected that he wouldn't find anything since he wasn't from the Marauder pathway, nor did he have the corresponding items. Third, Trissy was still around.

†

Fors woke up naturally on a Sunday morning as she got up to wash up. As she chewed on a fresh piece of toast, she retrieved a stack of items from her mailbox.

As she walked to the coffee table with a cup of coffee on it, she casually flipped through the items and discovered a reply letter she had been looking forward to.

Throwing down the papers, bills, and other letters, Fors tore open the envelope.

“…Teacher is already in Backlund?” Fors quickly read through the letter as she muttered in surprise.

At the same time, she saw the toast in her mouth plunge to the ground.

Chapter 786 - Accounting Fraud

Hat Trick Inn on Cherwood Borough's 22 Hope Street.

Just as the attendant at the front desk was about to drink some water, she saw a lady walk in.

The lady was about 1.65 meters tall, and she wore a light-colored dress with frilly sides. Her brown curly hair cascaded down as she wore colored glasses. She looked casual, just like someone who had just returned from Desi Bay.

She held a dark brown leather suitcase as she unhurriedly walked to the front desk.

A lady with extraordinary disposition… Her attire is nice… How I wish I could see what she looks like without her glasses… As a female, the attendant habitually sized up her clothes and accessories.

She then heard the lady say in a languid tone, "One night. A single room."

"2 soli and 8 pence." The attendant gave her the room rate for the day and directly asked, "Do you have any identification documents?"

She wasn't too adamant about registering her identity, because the inn had no means of confirming the authenticity of the documents.

"Yes." The lady put down her dark brown suitcase and took out an identification document from her handbag before passing it to her.

“Margaret Taylor…” the attendant muttered as she registered her before finding a bunch of keys. “Room 2012.”

“Thank you.” The lady in fashionable attire received the keys, carried the dark brown suitcase, and walked towards the staircase.

At this moment, an attendant in a red vest came over. He bowed and asked, “How may I help you?”

He immediately cast his gaze on the dark brown suitcase.

The lady curled her lips into a smile as she shook her head.

“There’s no need. It’s very light.”

With that said, she didn’t stop as she walked up the stairs and entered Room 2012.

Only after she closed the door and put down the suitcase did she raise her right hand to her chest, letting out a long sigh of relief.

Why do I feel like a psychotic murderer…

She was none other than the disguised Fors. There was nothing in her suitcase except for Mr. X’s head which was wrapped in newspapers!

The two attendants from before probably wouldn’t have guessed that a fashionable lady didn’t have any clothes, facial products, or makeup in her suitcase, but a cracked, bloody head… If they were to discover that, everyone in the inn would be given a fright… This is source material for a detective novel! Fors calmed her feelings of anxiousness and picked up her suitcase again and opened the door.

She observed the corridor and saw no one walking through it. She hurriedly walked out and headed for Room 2016 and rapped on the wooden door.

Her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham, was living in the same room he previously used.

After sensing someone sizing her up through the peephole, Fors heard the doorknob twist as the gears unlocked.

Dorian Gray was dressed in a black suit with very broad shoulders. He looked to the left and right warily before making way, allowing his student to enter.

“No one noticed you, right?” Following that, he closed the door and asked cautiously.

Fors put down the suitcase and removed the colored glasses that hid half her face.

“No, I used a fake identity.”

As a Beyonder in Backlund with rather rich experience as a Low-Sequence Beyonder, having a few fake identification documents was necessary.

Furthermore, she had Xio’s expert help in such matters.

The only problem was that it was ultimately a fake identity that couldn’t stand up to police scrutiny.

However, Fors had heard that there were places where real identity documentation could be obtained. Furthermore, they were documents which the police department had a record of, with the pictures swapped. Of course, the price was much more expensive.

Dorian nodded gently and silently exhaled. As he got Fors to sit, he brought a chair over and said, “You mentioned that someone is paying to find the direct descendants of the Abraham family at a Beyonder gathering in Backlund? And the goal is to find information on Mr. Door?”

“Yes, Teacher,” Fors said nothing but the truth. “I don’t know much about the family, so I thought of asking you to see if you knew anything.”

She hid two points, namely the Beyonder gathering being called the Tarot Gathering, and that she long knew that her teacher was a member of the Abraham family.

Dorian sat down and drank a sip from a white porcelain teacup. He asked with a calm expression, “Who was the one asking?”

“I’m not sure. I can only confirm that it was a woman. She had concealed her appearance. Uh, she seemed very powerful and must have quite a strong backing.” Fors described her impression of Ma’am Hermit.

What she didn’t say was that this woman had close ties with Queen Mystic Bernadette.

Dorian Gray pondered for a few seconds before saying, “I don’t know much either. All I know is that Mr. Door is the ancestor of the Abraham family. He vanished during the War of the Four Emperors. You can try using this piece of information to get some of the bounty.”

Mr. Door is the Abraham family’s ancestor? Mr. Door, who made the Abraham family suffer the curse of the full moon, causing many members to lose control, is actually the Abraham family’s ancestor? Fors was alarmed.

Having already learned some of the problems of the Abraham family from Mr. Fool, she couldn’t believe that the cause of all of this was the source of the bloodline!

Does Mr. Door not know the consequences of his actions? Fors muttered silently as she couldn’t help but frown.

Dorian Gray noticed his student’s abnormal reaction as he asked, somewhat puzzled, “Is there a problem?”

Oh no, I didn’t manage to hide my expression… Fors deliberated and said, “I just don’t understand. It’s been more than a thousand years, so apart from the Abraham family’s direct descendants, who would wish to gather information on Mr. Door and why?"

Perhaps they're trying to find Mr. Door? Ah right, Queen Mystic is Emperor Roselle's daughter, and Mr. Door has appeared in Emperor Roselle's diary. Therefore, the queen is trying to find Mr. Door to figure out the truth of the past. That's normal… However, Mr. Door vanished in the War of the Four Emperors, more than a thousand years before Emperor Roselle's era. How did they manage to contact each other… Could it be that Emperor Roselle could also hear the full moon ravings… Hmm, I remember Mr. Fool making a remark that Mr. Door might be calling for help… If that's the case, it's really… it's really… As an author, Fors was momentarily at a loss for words to describe her feelings.

Dorian revealed a wry smile and said, "Certainly, I'm also puzzled about this problem. Remember to tell me if you find the answer."

Fors didn't harp on this matter, afraid that Dorian Gray would notice anything amiss. She then said, "Teacher, why did you suddenly come to Backlund?"

Dorian smiled and picked up a cigarette as he raised it to his nose to give it a whiff. Without lighting it, he said, "I happen to have some matters that need me to be in Backlund. I also decided to check on your digestion progress."

In fact, he had been alarmed by Fors's letter. He couldn't believe that anyone in the world would still be asking about Mr. Door. One had to know that even the Abraham family had given up such attempts. He was the only one who kept at it, teaching students on his own accord.

This also made him recall a prophecy that was passed around within the family—the Abrahams were increasingly approaching their destruction.

When he connected the two matters together, he rushed over to Backlund to confirm his student's situation. He wished that she could advance as soon as possible, leaving some hope for the Abraham family.

“I just grasped the various astrological knowledge,” Fors replied, feeling a little guilty.

Due to her lack of money, she hadn’t bought the high-quality crystal ball needed by an Astrologer.

To not continue on this topic, Fors began asking Dorian Gray about the acting principles needed for Astrologer, obtaining advice such as “astrology isn’t all-powerful.”

Towards the end, Fors glanced at the dark brown suitcase beside her and said, “Teacher, there’s one more matter.”

“What is it?” Dorian leaned back into his chair as he leisurely drank a mouthful of black tea.

Fors followed the script she had prepared and said, “After knowing that Lewis Wien betrayed the organization, inflicting a great deal of harm upon all of you, I’ve always had the thought of finding him and exacting revenge for all of you.”

“Give up that thought!” Dorian sat up straight. “Even if you have Leymano’s Travels, you are no match for him, much less able to kill him! I’m very glad that you have such thoughts, but there’s no need to take unnecessary risks.”

I’m definitely not able to do it alone… Fors mumbled silently before saying, “I got to know a very powerful bounty hunter. I spent about 10,000 pounds to seek his help.”

She wasn’t able to estimate the cost of the job, so she had used the price that Miss Audrey paid when previously entrusting them to kill the Intis ambassador.

That might be a cheat… Lewis Wien is likely a Traveler, and he has the support of the Aurora Order… Dorian didn’t hold any hopes of any bounty hunter being Lewis Wien's match when he heard his student say, "He has already succeeded."

Cough! Cough! Cough! Dorian choked on his saliva as he broke out into a fit of coughs.

He dropped the teacup to the ground, but it bounced up like magic, firmly landing on the coffee table.

"He has given me Lewis Wien's head." Fors held up the dark brown suitcase and opened it, taking out the spherical object which was wrapped in newspapers.

With the newspapers unfolded bit by bit, Dorian saw that face he would never forget. The smug smile on Lewis Wien's face back when he attacked the Abraham family's headquarters was gone. His head was covered in cracks, as though it had been glued together piece by piece. It was gruesome, filled with pain and despair.

As an Astrologer, Dorian Gray's spiritual intuition told him that it was undoubtedly Lewis Wien's head.

"Good, very good…" Dorian muttered in excitement before looking up at his student. "Who was the bounty hunter? I can't imagine Backlund having such a powerful bounty hunter."

Fors hesitated for a moment before saying, "Gehrman Sparrow."

Chapter 787 - Dorian's Warning

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Gehrman Sparrow… Dorian felt the vessels on his forehead pulse when he heard that as he held his hands together, tensing up without realizing it.

Situated in Pritz Harbor, he inevitably learned of the various news at sea, both actively and passively, knowing far more than the residents in Backlund who relied on the newspapers.

In recent months, he often heard from different channels of information about Gehrman Sparrow. From killing Steel Maveti to severely injuring Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy, to successfully hunting Admiral of Blood Senor, all these stories were colored with mania.

He left the sea and came to Backlund? He hasn't changed his trait of craziness! Dorian held back the horror and wariness that subconsciously rose in his heart as he looked at his student and said in a deep voice, "It's best that you minimize your communication with that bounty hunter.

"He's bound to get into big trouble one day, and it wouldn't take long for that to happen."

Teacher is indeed experienced and has great acumen. He instantly saw through Mr. World's intrinsic nature… Unfortunately, I'm already a member of the Tarot Club, so it's impossible not to communicate with him… Fors adjusted her state of mind and sincerely nodded.

"Yes, Teacher."

Dorian composed himself and once again looked at his former student and current enemy, Lewis Wien.

However, this Traveler could no longer speak. He didn't even have an iota of spirituality left.

After a few seconds of silence, Dorian leaned back slightly and looked at Fors.

"You mentioned paying 10,000 pounds for the job?"

He wasn't aware of Fors's financial situation, other than knowing that his student was a best-selling author who likely earned quite a bit from her royalties. Furthermore, she seemed to be doing quite well in the few Beyonder circles with transactions that rewarded handsomely. Therefore, it wasn't too surprising or unacceptable that she could save up 10,000 pounds.

Fors fidgeted, feeling a slight guilty-conscience as she said, "Is it too expensive?"

She deliberately asked a question in order to hide the fact that she had mentioned a fake number, so as to show that she didn't have much experience in such matters.

Dorian shook his head.

"No, it's too cheap.

"It's so cheap that I suspect whether Gehrman Sparrow has other motives."

As a member of the Abraham family which had suffered numerous setbacks, he often maintained a relatively high level of wariness.

In the professional terminology of various clubs and gatherings, that's called a membership fee… Fors lampooned as she "frankly" said, "There were other conditions, including everything on Lewis Wien's person belonging to him, as well as the requirement of me providing him help. Also, I promised that if he's in need of cash in the future, I will compensate him an additional 3,000 pounds."

"That's reasonable, but just barely." Dorian nodded gently and said, "Usually, assassinating Lewis Wien who had the Aurora Order backing him would cost at least 30,000 pounds. Hmm, and if there are other situations, the price will be higher."

Back then, Mr. World had used demigod powers recorded in Leymano's Travels… He probably encountered something else… An Aurora Order Saint? Having had an edifying experience exerted on her by the Tarot Club, Fors wasn't unfamiliar with the Aurora Order's structure. She didn't hide her frown as she said, "From the looks of it, it's indeed a little abnormal. Perhaps he's in desperate need of cash?"

Dorian thought and said, "Perhaps he cares more about Lewis Wien's Beyonder characteristic. To the Beyonders of other pathways, it can be forged into a rather useful mystical item as long as he finds a suitable Artisan…"

Dorian paused for two seconds before adding, "There's no need to worry about that. Just stay away from him in the future.

"Perhaps he had long targeted Lewis Wien, and he was just using the information you provided to carry out the assassination while still getting an additional bonus."

Dorian didn't continue on the topic as he took out a fist-sized pure crystal ball from his pocket.

"It's made of Star Crystal, and it can effectively raise your astromancy."

The light shone in from outside the window as resplendent "waves" surfaced within the crystal ball.

Without waiting for Fors to reject, Dorian chuckled.

“Lewis Wien is my enemy. The payment used to get rid of him should be paid by me. I don’t have that much cash at the moment, and I can only use some items to deduct from the payment.”

“No, there’s no need…” Fors shook her head, partially genuine, but partially in contradiction to her will.

It was genuine because she only wanted to seek revenge for her teacher back when she thought of getting rid of Lewis Wien without considering the possible rewards she could later receive. It was in contradiction to her will because she couldn’t reject the reward.

Dorian said with a stern expression, “Do you wish for me to be ashamed and uneasy?

“Don’t worry. I still have quite a bit of wealth.”

Fors nodded in response.

“Alright then…”

Dorian smiled once again.

“Also, I’ve brought you the Scribe potion formula. You can gather the corresponding ingredients as you digest the Astrologer potion. Heh heh, I’ll prepare one of the main ingredients for you—the brain of an Asmann. You’ll have to rely on yourself for the rest.”

An Asmann was said to be a monster that existed in ancient times. It looked like an unprotected human brain that could fill a room. Not only could it create terrifying illusions, but it could also make its attackers die from their own attacks.

As he spoke, Dorian took out a yellowish-brown goatskin and passed it to Fors.

Fors received it in gratitude and quickly scanned the list of main ingredients:

"One complete brain of an Asmann, cursed artifact of an ancient wraith…"

I hope I can gather the remaining ingredients before I finish digesting the Astrologer potion… Just as Fors rolled up the goatskin, she saw Dorian take out a pure golden box from his suitcase.

After removing the wall of spirituality, Dorian opened the box as he said, "Without the gold enclosing it, the brain of an Asmann will constantly affect you, causing you to hallucinate until you lose your mental facilities."

Inside the squarish box was a blob of grayish-white, translucent, and wrinkled object. It was about a fifth the size of Lewis Wien's head.

As expected of a family with a long history… Fors sincerely thanked him once again and received the golden box and skilfully closed it and used a wall of spirituality to seal it.

Dorian didn't stop and instead gave an excuse for Fors to stay back. He set up a ritual and summoned the void creature Malmouth who enjoyed music. He then took out two documents from the creature's spherical body.

He had prepared the three items for Fors when he received the shocking news regarding Mr. Door; therefore, he had it on him.

"These are two pieces of property in Backlund. One of them is in Hillston Borough, and the other is in Cherwood Borough. They're in excellent locations and should have a total valuation of about 6,500 pounds. The amount you can sell them for will be yours," Dorian said with a smile.

Although the Abraham family was in a state of decline, as a former angel family with a long history, it still had quite a bit of resources, including land, tree farms, property, manors, and mines. However, Dorian only had control over a few, with most of the remainder belonging to the various smaller families.

The place I'm renting costs 2,500 pounds and s in an okay district but an average location… What Teacher gave me today does add up to about 10,000 pounds… Fors couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

†

In the Holy Wind Cathedral, Deep Blue Officiant Randall Valentinus looked at the Mandated Punisher deacon and said, "Any findings?"

The new Backlund archbishop was a middle-aged man with a domineering demeanor. His dark blue hair was thick, and he had large earlobes. His eyes seemed to constantly hide lightning and storms within them.

The Mandated Punisher deacon standing before his desk was a thin middle-aged man wearing a modified captain's hat. His looks didn't stand out, but there was an anchor tattoo on his neck.

The man answered reverently, "Your Eminence, we've already caught some of the members who participated in the gathering.

"However, they have no idea who the rest are, much less know of the person who assassinated Mr. X.

"According to their description, the assailant was about 1.6 meters tall and likely female. We can't rule out the possibility that it's a short man."

Randall held back his anger and asked, "What do you plan on doing next?"

"As we are temporarily unable to know who Mr. X invited to the gathering, and 1.6-meter-tall women are common, our plan is to relax our stance on the surface as we target a few suspicious targets and convert those we've caught into informants. Without us exerting any danger, those bunch of lunatics from the Aurora Order will definitely seek out the murderer themselves in order to avenge Mr. X. They'll likely do a carpet search, and this way, not only will we find the assassin, but we can also discover more clues to the Aurora Order," the thin middle-aged man explained in detail.

Randall nodded in thought and said, "Roy, when taking action, remember to apply for a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact.

"The situation is clear that the Aurora Order has at least a Saint in Backlund. And the assassin's strength is greater than the typical Sequence 5 Beyonder, and they similarly have a demigod backing them."

"Yes, Your Eminence." Roy Wellesley struck the left side of his chest with his right fist.

†

"Dwayne, you often exceed my expectations. It hasn't taken you long to finish studying The Revelation of Evernight's Book of Wisdom." Inside Saint Samuel Cathedral, Bishop Elektra closed the bible in his hands and smiled at the pious tycoon with gray sideburns and deep blue eyes.

Klein laughed and replied, "This is expected of a believer.

"Next up is the study of the Letters of the Saints?"

"Yes, which saint do you wish to begin with?" Elektra asked.

Klein looked to his sides and chuckled.

"Let's do Saint Samuel then."

Elektra wasn't surprised at that as he seriously introduced, "Saint Samuel was a Backlund archbishop during the Fourth Epoch of the Trunsoest Empire. He contributed greatly to the spreading of the Goddess's faith and entered 'Her' divine kingdom before dying, becoming an angel…"

As he spoke, he flipped to the corresponding Letters of the Saints.

At this moment, Klein's spiritual perception was triggered. He felt a deep sense of evil and diabolical will spread above him.

Following that, a cold and quiet feeling extended from underground, leveling everything and restoring the cathedral to its former tranquility.

Bishop Elektra snapped out of his daze and said to Dwayne Dantès who didn't seem to detect anything, "Sorry, I just recalled something."

Chapter 788 - Hidden Passage

◆

“It’s fine,” Klein replied with a warm smile.

Although he didn’t seem to notice anything, thoughts were flying through his mind. He began considering what the anomaly that happened during that instant meant.

Previously, the Keepers would head upstairs along the nearby staircase. It can be preliminary determined that they live there, coinciding with the area where the anomaly happened… The Keepers aren’t in the best of conditions, so the chances of them losing control are greater than ordinary Beyonders, causing them to suddenly release a sense of an evil and diabolical will?

And this was suppressed and quelled by the core seal deep behind Chanis Gate?

If that’s the case, there are two possibilities. One, the core seal behind Chanis Gate can sense all the anomalies in Saint Samuel Cathedral, and then react instinctively. Second, during the Keeper’s watch over the years, they are constantly corroded by the core seal’s powers. In a certain sense, they are a part of it, or they bear the weight of the corresponding traits. Once any abnormalities happen, their bodies will immediately intervene.

If it’s the former, that means that when I knock a Keeper unconscious and replace him, it will easily be detected by the core seal behind Chanis Gate. It will produce an anomaly like before, causing my plan to fail right at the beginning. If it’s the latter, I’ll definitely be repelled when entering Chanis Gate, even when disguised as a Keeper…

I need to figure out the problem before coming up with a direct countermeasure…

It's really difficult to steal Sealed Artifacts from the various Churches. It's no wonder almost no one is willing to do so…

As Klein's thoughts wandered, he superficially paid attention to Bishop Elektra's explanation of Saint Samuel's experiences and letters that he left behind. When it was almost time, he politely bade him farewell.

After returning to 160 Böklund Street, he saw his butler approach just as he handed his hat and cane to Richardson.

"Sir, do you plan on holding a ball or banquet next weekend and invite the neighbors?" Walter wasn't using a suggestive tone, but a tone of inquiry.

However, Klein knew very well that since his butler had raised the matter, it meant that it was almost time.

He nodded gently and said, "Saturday night then. A ball.

"I'll have to trouble you and Taneja to make the preparations.

"Is there enough money?"

When saying the last statement, Klein looked to his housekeeper.

Taneja sternly nodded and said, "There's enough.

"The various alcoholic beverages in your wine cellar is enough to handle several banquets."

When moving into 160 Böklund Street, Klein had handed her 1,000 pounds in cash for the household expenses. From the looks of it, even with the need to replenish fine wine, tea leaves, and coffee beans, it wasn't something that could be spent in a month.

The gold pound is rather strong after all… Klein nodded and smiled.

“Let’s not use wine that’s too expensive for our first ball. It’s common to be reserved in Loen.”

“Yes, sir.” Although Walter was very aware of how to run a ball, he still paid serious attention to his employer’s instructions.

He paused and said, “There are only two things you need to do. First, it’s to settle the guest list with our help, thinking up some small talk for each guest, matching the person’s corresponding status and experience. Second, it’s to order a suit for the ball.”

How troublesome… When greeting Hazel, can I say that the sewers here are cleaner than the squares in the Southern Continent? As Klein sighed and lampooned, he nodded slightly.

“No problem.”

†

Deep into the night, the crimson moon hung high in the sky. The smog which had significantly thinned made Backlund have an additional sense of tranquility.

In Dwayne Dantès’s master bedroom, Klein set up a ritual to summon himself.

He planned on entering the sewers tonight to confirm that Trissy had left. He then planned on heading for the fork she had described, to explore the so-called hidden passageway to see if he could discover anything.

Klein didn’t have extravagant hopes of gaining anything. He was only worried that the secret hidden in the sewers would pose a hidden risk that would one day explode. This could easily involve Dwayne Dantès who lived nearby, spoiling his plans in stealing the Antigonus family’s notebook.

On this matter, I can’t be an ostrich that buries its head in the sand and pretend not to know anything… I should discover the problem early and destroy what needs destroying or report what needs reporting before it completely erupts. That’s the most effective solution… Of course, I also need to be sufficiently careful. I mustn’t let my exploration end up lighting a fuse… Klein’s Spirit Body tore out of the candlelight, and with Azik’s copper whistle augmenting him, he possessed the physical body of Dwayne Dantès, controlling him to walk to the boundary of the wall of spirituality and sit in the reclining chair.

To the external world, it looked as though the tycoon had dozed off reading the papers.

Summoning my soul to possess my own body feels different from returning to my body. There’s an obvious barrier in between… Klein did a comparison of the experience and floated to his desk, cleaning up most of the items on the altar and leaving behind the candle that maintained his summoning to burn silently.

After doing all of this, Klein wore Creeping Hunger, and with Azik’s copper whistle, Death Knell, and the Senor gold coin in possession, he flew out of the master bedroom and left 160 Böklund Street, drilling into the sewers.

Just as Klein found himself in the moist and dirty environment, he immediately released Wraith Senor and made his marionette open up a distance from him, turning into the hidden fork where Trissy was previously recuperating.

This time, he saw that the clean region in the sewers was already stained with dirt containing signs of rats.

From the looks of it, Trissy has really left… Klein, who was following far behind, heaved a sigh of relief.

As a Spirit Body, he didn't need to breathe, nor did he need to walk on the ground. Therefore, he didn't mind how disgusting the sewers were.

Senor walked out of the area and continued walking ahead and turned on the sixth left turn. Klein constantly maintained a distance of fifty meters, perfectly acting the role of the person behind the scenes.

At the end of the fork was a corroded wall covered in moss. At a glance, there weren't any abnormalities to it. If Trissy hadn't mentioned it, Klein wouldn't have gotten his marionette to observe every inch of the area in detail.

A few minutes later, Senor suddenly straightened his back and walked forward, entering the wall.

Passing through the rather thick obstacle, Klein's eyes opened up. With the marionette's vision, he saw a half-natural, half-artificial cave. It wasn't more than 1.8 meters high and was about 3 meters wide. The ground was littered with tools like shovels which were wrapped in oilskin and large piles of mud and rubble. Right up ahead were two hidden passageways that extended downwards.

The left one was about five to six meters deep, while the one on the right was nearly ten meters deep. However, nothing seemed to have existed in them, as though they were still being excavated.

This was dug up by Hazel? In the day, she's an arrogant lady of high society, and at night, she's an excavator in the sewers? Furthermore, she's moving the dirt and rubble one pail at a time? She was loitering around to find the exact spot, and digging was the subsequent step? That wall must've been a secret door… Klein hid himself at the fork's entrance as he made Senor scrutinize the area.

Following that, he made the Wraith enter the left passage until he reached a completely sealed off area.

Senor's figure slowly turned faint as it turned incorporeal. In this state, he passed through the soil and explored deeper.

But even when reaching the hundred-meter limit, he didn't discover anything of use. All he saw were ordinary insects and worms.

Klein made the marionette switch directions, "swimming" in the sea of soil without finding anything.

Senor soon returned to the cave from before and entered the right passageway without being affected by any obstacles.

There's still nothing… It's not without reason that Trissy determined that it will only work for a particular pathway or being in possession of a certain item… Hmm… She must've probed the area with the invisible threads of a Demoness of Pleasure… Unfortunately, I've already lost Tinder… I wonder if the gray fog's aura on me would work. It seems to strongly attract Beyonders from the Marauder pathway… Klein silently commented and, using his Spirit Body state, planned on personally visiting the two hidden passageways that Hazel had dug up.

However, he curbed his desire because he was now a Marionettist. Doing it personally in situations that didn't require it was in violation of the acting principles.

It's fine even if I don't use the gray fog's aura. I'll just request to purchase a mystical item from the Marauder pathway during tomorrow afternoon's Tarot Gathering. It doesn't need to be too expensive. It can just correspond to Sequence 8 or 9… Hmm, that badge from Lanevus is only a signal receiver, not an item of this pathway… While not aware of the exact situation of what's hiding inside, rashly using my Spirit Body to explore it might result in me attracting a High-Sequence monster… Being careful and cautious will forever be a condition for myself… Klein slowly heaved a sigh of relief and retrieved Wraith Senor.

He wasn't worried that Hazel would continue coming in the near future. Any person with normal intelligence wouldn't continue coming unless they had the means to deal with the situation from before!

Ignoring how Hazel hasn't had any contact with Beyonder circles, even if she has, getting an item from the Sun domain isn't simple. After all, Backlund is the territory of the Church of Storms… I do have something that I don't use often. Heh heh, can I find an opportunity to sell it to her and then let her use it to harm my marionette? Klein jeered at himself before shaking his head with a laugh.

He ended the summoning and returned above the gray fog, vanishing from the sewers.

†

On Monday morning, the bright sunlight tore through the thin clouds, shining onto every corner of Backlund.

Emlyn White pulled down on his silk top hat. As he left the carriage and walked to the Harvest Church, he squinted his eyes and mumbled, "What terrible weather…

"Backlund's worst season is coming soon…"

He was just about to step onto the stairs when he saw a paperboy approach him, handing him a copy of the Tussock Times.

"Sir, today's morning papers!"

Emlyn wanted to reject it when he discovered a small slip clasped in the middle of the boy's fingers.

"…"

Emlyn maintained his countenance as he took out a penny and passed it to the boy, receiving the copy of the Tussock Times and the slip.

Before entering the Harvest Church, he quickly spread it open and scanned it.

"There are clues to the people you are looking for. Please come to the

Bravehearts Bar.”

Chapter 789 - Each Person's Monday

◆

9:30 a.m., Backlund Bridge area, Iron Gate Street, Bravehearts Bar.

Emlyn White stood rooted to his spot after he got down from the carriage. He stared ahead in a daze, nearly forgetting to avoid the sunlight.

At that moment, the bar's main door was shut with no signs of it opening.

As a Sanguine who seldom left his home and only went to places like bars at night, Emlyn never expected the bar to be closed in the morning. He had left the Harvest Church in a rush via the transportation system after seeing the paper slip, hoping to obtain any first-hand intelligence.

To save time, he even tolerated the cramped environment and stench of the metro.

At that moment, Emlyn was somewhat peeved, but he knew that he had made the mistake. All he could do was pull a face and circle around Iron Gate Street to not waste his trip.

Just as he was about to approach a rental carriage that stood along the street, he caught sight of a familiar figure from the corner of his eye.

The person was wearing a brown rounded top hat and an old coat while carrying a ragged haversack. He was none other than Ian, the underground arms dealer and intelligence merchant.

Hehe, I have quite good intuition. I knew he would appear early! Emlyn was delighted as he stuffed his hands into his pockets and leisurely walked over, blocking Ian's way as he chuckled.

"Good morning."

Ian looked up and glanced at the handsome man before him, replying in puzzlement, "Good morning, Mr. White. You should've come in the evening."

"It seems to be a suitable time now," Emlyn said with a smile, clearly in a good mood. "Ian, why do you always wear the same clothes and outfit every time I see you?"

Ian answered without minding the question, "This can make me appear more mature while allowing me to keep a low profile.

"Of course, the main reason is that I lack money."

The final sentence was added with a joking tone.

"I look forward to your attire in summer," Emlyn said with a scoff.

"I'll take off my coat," As Ian spoke, he took out two pieces of paper from his ragged haversack. They were the bounty notices that Emlyn had previously given him. "Someone in East Borough saw this person."

He handed over one of the papers to Emlyn, and on it was the name, Argos.

Realizing that there really were clues to the Primordial Moon believers, Emlyn asked in delight, "Where is he?"

Ian didn't reply as he looked at him with a silent smile.

Experienced, Emlyn immediately took out his wallet and gave 150 pounds to Ian.

"That's your reward."

Ian smiled and said, “There’s still another half to go.”

Another half? Emlyn nearly wanted to let this merchant in front of him know the prowess of a Sanguine. This was because an effective clue cost 20 pounds, while an exact location cost 150 pounds.

However, he quickly read between the lines as he asked in pleasant surprise, “Another one was found?”

“Yes.” Ian handed him the remaining piece of paper in his hand. “While my friend observed Argos and confirmed his residence, it was discovered that he had met with this person named Galis Kevin. Therefore, I’ve obtained the residence of the two targets at the same time.”

“…Very good.” Emlyn emptied his wallet and gave another 150 pounds to Ian.

He was abnormally delighted; he felt that the Ancestor and Mr. Fool were blessing him. This was because there were only five targets, and he had successfully hunted one. Now, with two additional clues, all he needed to do was succeed in order to declare himself victor regardless of what the other Sanguine did.

Ian seriously counted and checked the notes before saying with a suppressed voice, “Argos is on the third story of the apartment block at East Borough’s 6 Limestone Street, opposite the public washroom.

“Galis Kevin is similarly in East Borough. He stays in the room beside the staircase on the first floor at 19 Beluga Whale Street.”

“I will confirm your intelligence. I believe you wouldn’t wish to abandon your business for a mere 300 pounds.” Emlyn nodded gently as he gave a warning. Following that, he chuckled and said, “They were found so easily?”

Ian’s red eyes darted around slightly as he said, “First, many bounty hunters are my friends. They have many informants in East Borough.

“Second, those two gentlemen didn’t have great disguises. Despite being in East Borough, they wore very different attire from the people around them. If they were willing to wear more ragged clothes and did more than twelve hours of labor work, I believe they would be hard to find in the messy East Borough.”

Is that so… One needs to take note of the difference in environment when hiding oneself… Emlyn muttered silently to himself, feeling as though he had learned a new trick.

He didn’t plan on heading to East Borough immediately. This was because even if he took action in the day, it would be very difficult to escape without causing a commotion. It was a rather dangerous act in Backlund, as it meant that the Mandated Punishers or Nighthawks might come knocking at the door just after he sneaked back home.

Emlyn planned on verifying the situation and taking action between eight to nine in the evening after the Tarot Gathering.

The Primordial Moon believer from before was quite strong. These two likely aren’t weaker. Although I have confidence, it feels unsafe only relying on myself… As Emlyn considered the problem, he waved his hand and bade Ian farewell. He rode on a rental carriage, heading back for the south side of the Bridge.

†

East Chester County, Stoen City.

Audrey stood behind a railing, watching the servants placing the items that had been brought from the family castle in suitable spots. The scene was bustling but orderly.

I’ll send someone to Associate Professor Michele later and tell him that I’ll be paying a visit to the Relic Search and Preservation Foundation… I hope that they’ve obtained some items that have been tainted with Beyonder effects… As Audrey’s mind wandered, she couldn’t help but smile. She was proud of her decision of donating the funds to establish the foundation.

When her eyes that were as beautiful as emeralds saw the time on the wall clock, she hurriedly reined in her thoughts and turned to return to her bedroom.

Susie was slumped in a corner of the bedroom. Its front paws were crossed, giving it a sense of elegance.

In front of it was an opened book. There were dense lines of text written on it.

Susie would raise one of her front paws from time to time to flip the page as she read with great seriousness.

Every time I see Susie like that, I feel a little ashamed… Audrey, you mustn't slack off on your education! Audrey encouraged herself in silence as she approached, planning to get Susie to head outside to guard the door.

Susie looked up and glanced at Audrey before standing straight up, saying, "I got it!"

After saying that, it briskly ran out the bedroom without closing the door.

"…I haven't said anything." Audrey blinked as she softly muttered to herself.

She had given such instructions many times. To prevent Susie from detecting that she wanted to be alone in the room from 3 to 3:30 p.m. on Mondays, forbidding humans and dogs from coming close, she had also done similar matters at other times, pretending that there was a gathering, wanting alone time while maintaining an irregular pattern.

I have to say that Susie's existence has effectively raised my motivation to learn, as well as how strictly I handle matters… I can't be inferior to a dog! But, being better than this dog doesn't seem to be something worthy of praise… Audrey puffed her cheeks with a self-deprecating comment as she sat by her bed, awaiting the beginning of the Tarot Gathering.

†

3 p.m. above the gray fog.

Dark red figures shot up along the two sides of the long bronze table, materializing into different blurry figures.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~" Audrey's greeted with a cheery voice as she bowed.

The other members greeted one after another until the existence at the seat of honor nodded in response.

While sitting down, Fors couldn't help but look at Mr. World, wondering what she should use as an opening.

Apart from passing on her teacher's reply to Ma'am Hermit, she planned on doing a few matters. One, she wanted to tell Mr. World that due to the difficulty of the mission, she would pay him more, but it required him to wait. This was because the sale of the houses took time. Second, after brainstorming, she thought of a good way that could earn money and raise her strength. She had gained inspiration from The World's actions: Rent out Leymano's Travels!

When a member needed an item to temporarily raise their combat strength to deal with certain situations, they could rent Leymano's Travels from her. The rent could be paid in two forms—cash which wasn't too expensive or to record Beyonder powers instead. This also meant that the renter had to guarantee that the spellbook was returned with more filled pages.

Of course, as the provider, Fors would record useful Apprentice powers like Door Opening, providing the renter with relevant help.

A problem that could easily happen in this transaction was that the renter might not return it, but with Mr. Fool witnessing these exchanges in the Tarot Club, Fors believed that no one would be blinded by greed.

And the death of the renter was a low probability event for losing Leymano's Travels. But with everyone knowing that they could pray to Mr. Fool in times of danger, death was an even smaller probability!

How can there not be any risks when doing business… I will talk to Mr. World about when he will use it so that there won't be any conflicts… Fors retracted her gaze and heard Ma'am Hermit speak.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I have two pages of Roselle's diary this time."

Ever since contact was made with Queen Mystic, the receiving of diary pages has stabilized in a rather terrifying manner… Klein nodded slightly and chuckled.

"Very good."

After a brief silence, Cattleya conjured two yellowish-brown pieces of paper. They leaped into Mr. Fool's palms as if they had tunneled through the spirit world.

Klein slowly lowered his gaze at the diary in his hands.

"29th December. It's almost a new year again.

"All the mausoleums have been built. What's done cannot be undone."

Chapter 790 - The End of the Diary

◆

All the mausoleums have been built… What's done cannot be undone… Klein looked at the diary page in his hand as his thoughts boiled over as ideas kept emerging and shattering.

From his point of view, this diary page of Emperor Roselle nearly proved his previous conjectures. He had chosen to forcefully switch to the Black Emperor pathway in his later years, doing so at the cost of going mad to become a Sequence 0 true god!

What drove the emperor to make such a decision? What did "He" discover that resulted in "His" agitation, rashness, and loss of composure in the previous diary entry? And compared to back then, "His" emotions in this diary entry appear calm and composed, but it feels like "He" is even more extreme… It's hard to imagine what the emperor experienced or encountered in "His" later years that resulted in "Him" having such an abnormal situation… The madness that Angels are embroiled with to begin with, or is it something that had happened to the faith of the believers that kept him anchored "His" rationality? Hmm, if "He" was normal, shouldn't "He" hold back a little and strive for certain outcomes before finding an opportunity to devour the Hidden Sage? Klein instantly thought of many things, but he was unable to find any evidence.

And on this page of goatskin, there were only two short lines of text, as though it indicated the final diary page of Emperor Roselle's life. The end of the year or the beginning of the new year was the day "He" was suspected to have perished in the White Maple Palace.

An emperor of an era, a transmigrator's last words? Klein sighed silently as he flipped to the goatskin beneath.

The diary page didn't have a date, but at the top of the page was a line in Feysac:

"Immediately follows the previous page."

The words were written neatly and elegantly, very different from Emperor Roselle's handwriting. It was obvious that it was added by someone else.

It's probably a note by Queen Mystic… To indicate that this is the last part of the diary, written after the emperor said that what's done cannot be undone? But why isn't there a date? Klein was deeply puzzled as he read the corresponding content, his gaze freezing up.

"I believe I'm not the only transmigrator in this world.

"If there's anyone else who can read my diary, remember to carefully select your Beyonder pathway.

"Once you choose this, it pretty much confirms your allies and your enemies.

"I'm unable to give any actual suggestions because I myself can't see the true faces of the seven deities or those evil gods. This might be partially related to the second Blasphemy Slate that the ancient organization hides. Unfortunately, I only have a rough idea of the hidden parts, and I'm unable to verify them.

"Similarly, I don't know what's written on the first Blasphemy Slate either.

"A useful warning is to not choose pathways with Sequence 0s that are occupied, and also be careful of neighboring Sequence 0s and Sequence 1s. I've suffered tremendously on this aspect.

“As for what Sequence 0 represents, search for my other diary pages if you aren’t aware.

“Heh heh, this page is equivalent to the afterword of my life. If I succeed, I’ll be a god, and it will be another story. If I were to fail, there wouldn’t be a future. Perhaps, well—you know.

“Go, my friend who understands my diary, go seek out the secret of transmigration and the truth hidden within. I’ll be watching you, if I’m still alive.

“Finally, let me warn you that you have to remember:

“Be careful of the moon!”

Klein wasn’t surprised about there being more than one transmigrator. After all, he had long known of a “senior” in the form of Emperor Roselle.

He was puzzled about the details that the emperor had used to determine that there wasn’t only one transmigrator.

This was a very important point, as it held great meaning as to whether there were incomparable problems in his bid to return home.

This was like an unknown equation. Without enough examples and conditions, there was no way to obtain the correct answer no matter how he tried to solve it. Only with enough equations could he find the correct answer.

Hmm… The emperor should’ve written his discoveries on this matter in the previous diary entries. Unfortunately, I have no way of knowing where it is in order to do a targeted search and recovery… Klein silently sighed before considering the other contents in the “afterword.”

The hidden contents in the second Blasphemy Slate which the Twilight Hermit Order showed?

Did they deliberately hide the contents, or did they not actually obtain it… The second Blasphemy Slate was actually split into two parts, with the other half landing in the hands of other factions?

My pathway has already been determined. It was selected based on the exclamation found in Emperor Roselle's diary… From the emperor's afterword, I can be a bit assured. The Seer pathway doesn't have a Sequence 0 because the mad Sequence 1 Zaratul is still alive. And according to the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation, heh heh—this subdivision part can probably be called the Law of Incompatibility. If there's a Sequence 1, there's no Sequence 0.

I need to be careful of Zaratul, Mr. Door, Blasphemer Amon, and Pallez Zoroast, as well as the other Sequence 1s who exist in these three pathways.

What does being careful of the moon mean?

Be careful of the Primordial Moon?

That could be said directly…

Wait, the emperor apparently had thoughts of exploring the crimson moon before. Could it be that he finally committed himself to do it and discovered something on the moon, which is why he warned other transmigrators to be careful of the moon?

The moon has something to do with transmigration?

Yes… the emperor's tone indicates that "He" still has some contingency plans, and he might not completely perish. He might be watching me… There should also be clues to such matters, and they should also be written in the earlier diary entries…

As conclusions and puzzlements flashed through Klein's mind, he finally turned solemn.

He made the diary in his hand vanish and looked towards Cattleya.

"Do you have anything you want to ask?"

Cattleya nudged the heavy glasses on her nose and politely bowed her head.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I wish to know if Emperor Roselle is still alive."

This question snapped the other members of the Tarot Club out of their own thoughts as they looked towards the end of the bronze table in agitation.

Although Emperor Roselle being alive wasn't directly related to them, nor would it bring any obvious influence, this topic was enough to stir the thirst hidden deep in the hearts of people regarding rumors and gossip!

I thought I would be immune to such matters after advancing to a Psychiatrist… Sigh, I'm really curious! Audrey looked at Mr. Fool with bright eyes as she waited for "Him" to give the answer.

Only Derrick was uninterested in the matter. The reason why he looked at Mr. Fool was solely because everyone else had done so.

Indeed, Queen Mystic's questions are basically targeted at the diary pages she provides… Klein didn't feel stumped as he skillfully chuckled.

"Perhaps."

By using the answer "perhaps," he was expressing that Emperor Roselle had the hope of saving himself. As for whether he eventually succeeded or whether there was an accident, it wasn't in the scope of the question that might not have an answer.

Perhaps… Mr. Fool is implying that Emperor Roselle might still be alive? Cattleya and company felt as though they had heard the greatest secret in the world as they felt a little agitated and excited.

However, they could also sense the underlying tone in Mr. Fool's words.

Due to the lack of diary entries and with him having just awoken recently, “He” was unable to determine if Emperor Roselle had seized an opportunity. To determine that would require more clues and evidence in the future.

Regardless, Emperor Roselle was likely mentally prepared for the assassination.

Without giving Justice, The Hanged Man, and company to think of the related problems, Klein leaned back and said with a calm tone, “That’s all from me.”

Fors hurriedly snapped out of her fantasizing of Roselle’s late years as she looked to the end of the bronze table.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, I wish to communicate privately with The World. It will end quickly.”

What does she want to communicate with Gehrman Sparrow about? Isn’t Mr. X’s matter over? Klein thought in puzzlement as he nodded gently.

“Yes.”

Following that, he blocked the senses of the other members and controlled The World to chuckle hoarsely.

“Is there anything else?”

Fors deliberated for two seconds and said, “This is the matter. Mr. X’s head allowed me to receive a handsome reward. I believe that I didn’t pay enough on this matter to match the difficulty of the mission. Therefore, I wish to compensate you.

“How much do you wish to receive.”

Not bad. You actually want to compensate me without any prompting… Although Miss Magician is a little greedy on gaining petty advantages, she's still an honest person. Hmm, it's very normal to earn some profit while making a transaction. It's not considered greedy… The pleasantly surprised Klein sighed inwardly in praise as he made The World chuckle.

"How much can you pay?"

Fors hesitated for a moment and said, "5,000 pounds."

She had used the 10,000-pound price she had informed her teacher, and planned to split it evenly with Mr. World. Furthermore, she needed the recipe, crystal ball, and Beyonder ingredient; thus, she planned on selling the two properties and give him money directly.

And as for the reason why Fors was this generous, it had to do with the mission being harder than she had expected while also paying too low a price. In addition, she was increasingly fearful of The World Gehrman Sparrow. She didn't dare to offend the crazy adventurer and terrifying bounty hunter.

The Abraham family gave quite a huge reward… Klein controlled The World to say with a laugh, "If you can use large amounts of gold coins in place of notes, you can pay less. It will just depend on how much you can gather."

"I'll try my best." Although Fors was very puzzled over why Mr. World valued gold coins that much, she didn't dare to ask. He had done the same with Ma'am Hermit's transaction previously.

She paused before asking, "Mr. World, when would you need to use Leymano's Travels? I plan on renting it out before and after that period in order to earn some money and Beyonder powers."

Rent it out? Rent out a mystical item? Klein was taken aback upon hearing that. He never expected Miss Magician to have such business-oriented mind!

Chapter 791 - New Model

◆

As a youth that came from the Internet age on Earth, Klein quickly understood Miss Magician's idea, how she prepared to do it, and what she was relying on.

Isn't this sharing economy? With the Tarot Club and The Fool, there's no technological limitation… Miss Magician is usually lazy and doesn't have a strong presence, but I never expected her to have sharp acumen on such matters Hmm, it also stems from me requesting to borrow the spellbook… Regardless, to be able to quickly be inspired and set up a business model is pretty good… Klein deliberately made The World Gehrman Sparrow hesitate for a few seconds before saying, "I might need it this weekend and next week."

He was estimating this based on the time it took Mr. Hanged Man to return from the Abyss Maelstrom to the Rorsted Sea, while also allocating time for him to stabilize his spirituality and replenish his supplies.

When the time came, they would join forces to explore the primitive island with many Beyonder creatures.

Fors hurriedly nodded.

"Alright, I will make the arrangements to prevent others from using it."

As she heaved a sigh of relief, she requested Mr. Fool that he bear witness for the subsequent rental agreements. After obtaining a confirmation from "Him," she indicated that she was done with the private communication.

Following that, she conjured Leymano's Travels and surveyed the table.

"Everyone, I have here a mystical item.

"It has a total of 38 pages. Each page can help the user record Beyonder powers they encounter. They will then be able to release it when needed, but it will be slightly weaker than the original power…

"Each page can be repeatedly recorded. Each record can only be used once… Amongst them, three pages can be used to record demigod level Beyonder powers, but the chances of success are very low. It might not succeed one in ten times…"

Fors simply explained the traits of Leymano's Travels and its negative effects. It lit up the eyes of Audrey and company.

With them no longer being novices in the domain of mysticism or the Beyonder world, it wasn't difficult for them to tell the value of Miss Magician's notebook without her making it explicit to them. At the same time, they viewed it as a demigod-level artifact.

It resembles a Shepherd and the Creeping Hunger. They allow the use of the Beyonder powers from other pathways, but there aren't as many negative effects. There's also a chance to record a demigod power… Draw my own blood… Audrey suddenly shrank her hand back in fear as she thought over the matter.

As a powerful noble's daughter, she had almost never been injured from a young age. Therefore, she had an extreme fear of pain that remained an unknown to her.

Taking the opportunity when Fors paused, she raised her hand slightly and asked, "Miss Magician, how much do you wish to sell it for?"

Audrey believed that her father, Earl Hall, would also be able to recognize the value of Leymano's Travels, so it was certain that she could be reimbursed by him. Therefore, she planned on fully satisfying Fors's requirements.

She must be lacking money recently, or else she wouldn't be selling such an important and useful mystical item… While Audrey thought in pity, she considered whether she should offer to buy it at a premium.

Damn it… Why can't it be put on sale after I return from the primitive island… Alger had a strong interest in Leymano's Travels, but he wasn't able to produce the money or materials needed to purchase this mystical item.

1,300 pounds was money that an ordinary person might not be able to save up even in ten to twenty years, but compared to an item at the level of Leymano's Travels, it was nothing!

It's worth at least 10,000 pounds. If I encounter Beyonders that are backed by powerful factions, it wouldn't be a problem selling it for more than 30,000 pounds… Alger swept his glance at Justice, who was inquiring about the price, as well as Cattleya, who had nudged her glasses, looking as though she was planning to join the bid. He couldn't help but sigh. He didn't believe that the transaction would fail according to his wishes, having it left unsold before he returned from the primitive island.

Miss Justice has money, and The Hermit has Queen Mystic and the Moses Ascetic Order. They don't lack money or resources. Sigh… Alger adjusted his seating posture as he looked across the table with a heavy look.

Emlyn and Derrick were similarly interested in Leymano's Travels, but it was simply interest. They knew that they lacked the ability to provide anything in a fair exchange.

When she heard Miss Justice's question, Fors realized that she had forgotten to mention the most crucial point. She hurriedly added, "No, it's not for purchase. I'm only renting it."

"When you need it, you can rent it for a short period which will be witnessed by Mr. Fool."

Rent? You can do that? At that moment, everyone except Klein and Derrick were surprised.

Without a doubt, they knew what a rental transaction was, but they never expected it to be applied to a mystical item, much less have it appear in the Tarot Club!

This was apparently very doable. It was relatively useful for every member of the Tarot Club, and it wouldn't cost them much while remaining affordable. Furthermore, Miss Magician could slowly build up quite a sizable fortune by doing so, but in fact, the best result was to record Beyonder powers. She could gather different kinds of Beyonder powers from various pathways in this way, making it far more efficient than seeking the chance to record it on her own! Alger quickly realized the key to the rental transaction as he was delighted. He asked, "How much is the rental fee?"

Leymano's Travels corresponds to a Sequence 6. It's usually about 5,000 pounds, but due to its uniqueness, it costs at least 10,000 pounds… Fors had built up quite a bit of experience during her time in the Tarot Club, so after some consideration, she said, "Each rental basically starts at 300 pounds. Every additional day is an additional 50 pounds. And when returning it, the notebook needs to have two additional pages of Beyonder powers than when it was rented out. If there's only one blank page or no blank pages when it's rented, one just needs to fill up the full book."

Having two additional pages didn't mean two additional powers. That also meant that they could use any of the Beyonder powers in Leymano's Travels. One just needed to make up for it later. There was no need for it to be of the same type, as pages were all that mattered.

50 pounds a day, 1,500 pounds a month… if it's possible, I can keep renting it… Audrey did a simple count of the costs.

Alger was thrilled when he heard that as he said with an unperturbed look, “I plan on renting it for two days, but the exact price needs negotiation. It will be adjusted based on what Beyonder powers are recorded in the notebook.”

He felt more confident towards his exploration of the primitive island!

“When do you plan to rent it?” Fors asked, delighted that she had business right away.

“I’ll be renting it for two days sometime between this weekend to next weekend. The exact time hasn’t been determined,” Alger replied without any hesitation.

Fors immediately frowned as she said apprehensively, “This period of time has already been reserved for Mr. World.”

Reserved for The World? When did this happen? Alger was surprised as he looked at the other end of the long bronze tale.

He soon came to a realization that it had been agreed upon during their private communication.

Why would they come to such an agreement? Miss Magician doesn’t need to have informed him ahead of time… They had other transactions during the private communication? What kind of communications and transactions would they have… Hmm, Miss Magician had commissioned the assassination of an Aurora Order Oracle. The World had accepted the mission, and one of the traits of the Oracle is the ability to record and use the Beyonder powers of others once. Heh heh, this is identical to Leymano’s Travels… Does this mean that The World has already succeeded? As such, Miss Magician is indebted to him, and she hadn’t fully resolved it. Now, she came up with this method to pay off the rest? Alger eliminated the possibilities and finally felt that he had found the truth.

Without anyone catching wind of it, The World Gehrman Sparrow had already hunted an Aurora Order Oracle, an Oracle suspected to be a Sequence 5!

This secretly made Alger feel alarmed because he was about to cooperate with The World soon.

Thankfully, there's Mr. Fool bearing witness… As a Blessed, Gehrman Sparrow wouldn't violate the agreement he makes in front of a god… Alger consoled himself and retracted his gaze from The World.

Meanwhile, Audrey and Cattleya had recalled the matter of the Aurora Order Oracle from the transactions involving both Miss Magician and Mr. World, as well as how the Oracle's powers were similar to Leymano's Travels; hence, they believed that The World might've already completed the mission. Renting the spellbook was one of the parts to completing the transaction.

Emlyn didn't think about such matters, putting his focus on the unavailability of Leymano's Travels this weekend and the following week.

In other words, I can borrow it for the next few days? If I have help from this notebook, those two primitive believers wouldn't be able to pose a threat… Emlyn looked around and turned anxious as he leisurely said, "Can I rent it for today and tomorrow?"

"400 pounds plus two pages of Beyonder powers," Fors directly announced the price.

Emlyn nodded gently.

"Introduce what Beyonder powers are recorded first. If they aren't very useful to me, I wish that the price can be lowered because I'll need to waste time recording powers."

Fors flipped through Leymano's Travels and began to give a vague introduction.

Door Opening… Black Screen… Tumble… Teleport… Lightning Strike… Float… Flight… Windblades… Eh, why are there so many Beyonder powers in the Storm domain? The World has used it before? He recorded the Beyonder powers corresponding to Sea God from Mr. Fool? When I return to the cathedral, I should find out what recently happened in Backlund. That Oracle couldn’t have died without a trace… As Alger listened, he began thinking of investigating the matter.

Chapter 792 - The Fool's Authority

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The Hermit similarly thought of The World Gehrman Sparrow from hearing the Beyonder powers which were recorded in Leymano's Travels.

I wonder if I can pay a certain price to get The Fool to showcase demigod powers of the Storm pathway as well as "His" domain… This will be better than seeking the help of the Moses Ascetic Order. That will make them know of my possession of Leymano's Travels… Hmm, I should first write to Her Majesty. Perhaps, she will come to the Future to showcase her powers… Cattleya was increasingly convinced that the spellbook had a value that exceeded its level and was very regretful that Miss Magician was only renting it.

After hearing the description, Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief. This was because the Beyonder powers like Lightning were very lethal against artificial vampires.

Of course, it was the same for Sanguine.

Very good. I was still worried about needing to seek The Sun's help and passing Leymano's Travels to him to get him to showcase purification powers to be recorded… Emlyn instantly became relaxed as he glanced at Derrick beside him while saying to Fors, "Deal."

400 pounds with the recording of a few Beyonder powers was nothing compared to the completion of his mission.

I can earn money quickly and also obtain Beyonder powers this way…

Fors suddenly felt that her future was bright as she hurriedly smiled.

“Alright, I’ll get Mr. Fool to transfer it to you after the gathering.”

Right on the heels of that, she turned to say to Cattleya, “Ma’am, the Abraham family’s direct descendant has given a reply. Do you wish to communicate privately or have me directly say it out loud?”

Cattleya thought and said, “Let’s do it privately.”

Soon, the others had their senses blocked as Fors recounted what her teacher said:

“They don’t know much about Mr. Door either. They only know two things, no—three.”

“First, among their ancestors, there is an existence known as Mr. Door.

“Second, this ancestor vanished in the War of the Four Emperors. They’ve been struggling to find him.

“Third, they will hear ravings that can cause a loss of control during the full moon and Blood Moon.

“In addition, they temporarily do not wish to make any direct contact.”

The third point was added by Fors by herself. She wished that Ma’am Hermit and the Queen Mystic behind her could use this to further understand Mr. Door’s matters. This was beneficial in helping the Abraham escape the fate of being cursed.

Mr. Door is the Abraham family’s ancestor and “He” vanished in the War of the Four Emperors. “He” would create ravings during full moons? Hmm, the latter was confirmed by Mr. Fool, so there’s nothing suspicious… That is to say that although Mr. Door has vanished, “He” still can affect Beyonders of the same bloodline, as well as living beings that used certain items during the full moon and Blood Moon. This means that “He” hasn’t completely lost his connection with the real world… This is how the emperor was able to interact with “Him”? Her Majesty once said that there were members of the Abraham family who worked for the emperor back then… Cattleya had some theories as she gently nodded.

“If there are any questions, I’ll get you to pass them on.

“I’ll pay the remaining 650 pounds today.”

With 650 pounds, along with Mr. Moon’s 400 pounds, I’ve made a profit of 1,050 pounds today. Together with the 730 pounds from before, as well as the sale of the two properties to pay Mr. World, I might still have a thousand left. My savings are about to exceed 3,000 pounds! This way, I’ll have the money needed to purchase the other main ingredient for Scribe. I might still have some leftover… At that moment, Fors suddenly found herself a little wealthy.

This made her consider helping purchase the Interrogator Beyonder characteristic for Xio to make up for the risk she had to endure over Mr. X’s assassination.

After the blocking of senses was lifted, Fors heard The World Gehrman Sparrow speak before she could say a word.

“I need a mystical item from the Marauder pathway. It can be at Sequence 9 or 8.”

Cattleya considered for a moment and said, “I can ask around for you. However, items of the Marauder pathway aren’t common. There might be a premium involved.”

“No problem.” Klein controlled The World to provide the response.

He then made his marionette look at the now wealthy Miss Magician.

“I want to sell an Interrogator Beyonder characteristic for only 1,000 pounds.”

Typically, this Sequence 7 Beyonder characteristic which could be used as a main ingredient should've been priced around 1,200 pounds, but Klein had two sets at the moment. Furthermore, considering how he had used Miss Xio's identity to participate in Mr. X's gathering, there was a certain degree of danger he was bringing to her; therefore, he gave a slight discount.

It's only 1,000 pounds. That's like a sale at a department store! But why does Mr. World know that I want it? He is Mr. Fool's Blessed. The Interrogator Beyonder characteristic was in his hands, and he is also aware that I can now afford it… Fors was stunned for two seconds as she nearly forgot to reply.

During this process, Audrey held back the urge to engage in shopping, because she knew that Xio needed the item.

1,000 pounds? An Interrogator's Beyonder characteristic? Cattleya seriously thought over the hidden intent behind The World when she heard Miss Magician say, "Deal!"

…I haven't even made my offer… Cattleya mumbled inwardly as she maintained her silence.

She could tell that The World and The Magician had reached a strange level of understanding on this matter, so she didn't interject.

Similarly, she also sensed that something good had happened to The Hanged Man this week. He appeared more spirited than before, appearing more confident.

He previously purchased the potion formula and main ingredients to Ocean Songster… He had also asked me where Obninsks that do not belong to the Church of Storms can be found… This is likely related to the ritual… He has already advanced? Cattleya suddenly felt a sense of danger.

As the Admiral of Stars who was famous throughout the Five Seas, she always felt a sense of superiority in the Tarot Club. But in recent times, with The World Gehrman Sparrow showing his ability at hunting pirate admirals, followed by The Hanged Man reaching Sequence 5, a Sequence 5 that made him adept at sea battles, she felt that she no longer had the right to belittle others. She felt a sense of urgency that hadn't existed in her for a long time.

However, I have Sequence 4 ahead of me. It's the boundary between spirituality and godhood. It's not that easy to advance… I still don't see any hope despite preparing for years… Cattleya sighed inwardly as she looked at The World Gehrman Sparrow and asked, "Any chances for the blood of a Mythical Creature?"

I've been waiting for you to ask this! The Fool Klein smiled while watching the transactions as he controlled The World to hoarsely laugh.

"That angel got me to ask you what you can give 'Him' in exchange for a drop of blood.

"'He' emphasizes that it needs to satisfy him."

Angel? Mr. World directly contacted an angel? Furthermore, he has convinced the angel to provide a drop of blood!? Audrey was first alarmed before her thoughts raced as she turned to look at the seat of honor.

She suspected that The World, Mr. Fool's Blessed, had contacted an angel that was in service to Mr. Fool!

She was like The Magician, believing that The World only knew of clues to the location of an angel or its remains. They never expected him to directly converse with an angel!

One had to know that the Grounded Angels were equivalent to the leaders of the seven Churches!

Indeed… Alger sighed silently, believing that his guess has been verified.

As expected of Mr. Fool's Blessed… Cattleya held back her surprise and shock as she pondered.

"May I know what pathway this angel is from?"

The World surveyed the area and said, "Monster."

Monster, which means it's an angel from the Fate pathway? It's no wonder Mr. Fool's honorific name has the words King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck… Audrey, Derrick, and company were enlightened, believing that their inferences matched the actual situation and the inherent logic.

Their gazes and guesses stirred Klein. He realized a corresponding problem. In the honorific name he fabricated, the description of wielding good luck had successfully been directed towards the mysterious space above the gray fog!

Is this related to why the people from the Fate pathway can see my uniqueness? Could this be related to why the Snake of Mercury, Will Auceptin, took the initiative to establish friendly ties with me? In my honorific name's three lines, the first line is a description of my inherent self, and the second is about the corresponding divine domain. Only the third line involves the authority. Wields good luck… Of course, The Fool itself can also contain a certain amount of authority… Klein suddenly felt that he needed to find an opportunity to communicate with the unborn fetus.

However, he suspected that the paper crane would tear at any moment. This was because just erasing the original content was already a rather precarious process.

At this moment, Cattleya said, "Thanks for your help. I will seriously consider it and give you a response as soon as possible."

She planned on consulting Queen Mystic to see if there were any conditions that would entice an angel from the Fate pathway.

With the conversation between The World and The Hermit ending, the transactions came to a formal end. The Tarot Gathering then proceeded into a period for free communication.

Fors thought for a moment and looked at Emlyn.

“I’d like to remind you of two things. First, be familiar with the powers on each corresponding page. It will be very dangerous if you were to flip to the wrong page and use the wrong power in combat.”

Emlyn scoffed immediately as he said, “I’m very confident in my intelligence.”

Fors didn’t speak further and switched to mentioning:

“A serious case involving Beyonders happened in East Borough. The surrounding region is on high alert. If you plan on carrying out any operations, take note of that.”

Emlyn viewed this piece of information with great importance as he asked, “Are you aware of what happened?”

Chapter 793 - Surprise Visitor

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Upon hearing Mr. Moon's question, Fors nearly blurted out, "Of course! Better than anyone else! I'm just not too aware of the details."

However, she controlled her mouth in time as she apprehensively looked at Mr. World.

At the same time, Alger, Audrey, and Cattleya vaguely guessed that the serious matter that had happened in Backlund's East Borough was the assassination of the Aurora Order's Oracle. Based on the inferences they had before, it was done by The World!

And as Emlyn wasn't a Spectator, he wasn't able to tell from her eyes. All Fors could do was force a smile at Emlyn.

"I'm unable to tell you the specifics.

"I only know that demigod-level Beyonder powers of the Storm domain appeared back then. The Church of Storms places a great deal of attention over the matter."

She didn't dare divulge the reasons on behalf of Mr. World, simply describing what she had seen.

She believed that if Mr. World was willing to reveal more, he definitely would've added on to her answer.

Demigod-level Beyonder powers of the Storm domain? Audrey and company were taken aback as they instinctively doubted the accuracy of their theories.

They had previously imagined that Leymano's Travels had been created after the death of the Aurora Order Oracle; therefore, The World had no way of borrowing Mr. Fool's demigod-level powers to record them before the assassination!

The serious case involving Beyonders in East Borough has nothing to do with Mr. World? No, Fors's glance is enough proof that it was caused by Mr. World! But why would a demigod-level Beyonder power of the Storm domain appear? One possibility is that Leymano's Travels isn't a result of this assassination but that it originally belonged to Fors. Another possibility is that a Cardinal of the Church of Storms or a Beyonder with the corresponding Sealed Artifact had delivered an attack…

If it were the former, needing Mr. World to use the Beyonder powers at the demigod level implies that the Oracle was relatively powerful with the possible existence of a Saint backing him. If it were the latter, to have Mr. World still be able to leave safely after such an assault implies his formidableness…

Of course, the possibility can't be eliminated that he deliberately lured the Church of Storms to encounter the Aurora Order's Oracle, and while a battle broke out between demigods, he efficiently carried out an assassination during the chaos… Audrey made some guesses based on the details she had observed, and each guess implied one thing:

The World had the strength, intelligence, support, and ability, making him one of the top Sequence 5 Beyonders below that of demigods!

How terrifying. As expected of Mr. Fool's Blessed… When I arrive at a cathedral, I should be able to figure out what happened… Alger also made a basic judgment of the situation as he sighed. All he could do was console himself. With such a helper, the exploration of the primitive island would only be easier.

As for Cattleya, she shared similar thoughts with Audrey. She planned on asking Queen Mystic about the situation. This owner of the Dawn had previously revealed in her letter that she would be in Backlund for the time being.

Demigod-level Beyonder powers of the Storm domain… Emlyn repeated Miss Magician's words as his head ached.

Although he enjoyed staying at home and not heading out, he still needed to head out to get some blood to drink from the hospitals. Being in a big city, he was equipped with common knowledge. Together with his elders warnings and guidance, he knew a lot about the official organizations like the Machinery Hivemind, Mandated Punishers, and Nighthawks. He knew the influence that a serious case would bring to the area.

If I don't have a good disguise while infiltrating East Borough, I might be caught by the Mandated Punishers before I even approach my targets… Although I have the identity of being part of the Church of Earth Mother and wouldn't be impounded underground or made into a test subject of Sealed Artifacts, this also means that my operation has failed. I might even have Leymano's Travels taken away… During such times, taking the sewers would be even more dangerous. Who knows how many official Beyonders are lying in ambush over there… Emlyn suddenly felt that what seemed like a simple mission had turned difficult.

He quickly came to a decision that he would take action in the latter half of the night. During this time, the low-class residents of East Borough would begin returning home from work. Although it was dark, the streets would be bustling. Even if the Mandated Punishers had ten times more manpower, it was impossible to carry out any strict surveillance and single out every possible suspect.

The next important step is to plan the operation to finish off the two artificial vampires without causing much of a stir… Hmm, I'll have to consider a situation of an intense battle that's impossible to hide… Wait, Miss Magician had just mentioned that Leymano's Travels has a

Beyonder power known as Teleport… The problem is resolved! Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief and chuckled.

"I will keep that in mind."

He had said that sentence very calmly and with great confidence, as though everything was in control.

Heh, this fellow Emlyn was first stumped before feeling relieved. There's a 90% chance he recalled the Traveler's Door in Leymano's Travels… If I hadn't obtained Traveling, I definitely would've added the condition that no one is to touch that spellbook's page before The World Gehrman Sparrow… Klein scoffed silently without a word.

To him, as there was only one Traveler's Door in Leymano's Travels, he definitely needed to use Creeping Hunger for his return trip to the primitive island. In that case, he might as well exploit the glove as he needed to feed a death row convict to it. He didn't want to waste it.

"Anyways, I've warned you." Fors didn't speak further, wishing that everything would go smoothly for Mr. Moon.

At that moment, Alger turned to look at Little Sun.

"Are you still in the City of Silver?"

"Yes, my recent mission is to acquaint myself with my powers and patrol the surrounding area," Derrick replied honestly.

Alger thought for a moment before saying, "Has that Shepherd Elder not looked for you recently?"

"No." Derrick paused. "The six-member council seems to be busy with the former Chief's mausoleum. As for what it is, I'm not privy to the information."

Klein had heard Little Sun mention of the former Chief of the City of Silver. It was said that he had built a mausoleum that reached deep underground before moving into it, and he hadn't appeared again. It was suspected that his attempt to switch to Sequence 3 of the Death pathway had failed.

I wonder what happened inside the mausoleum. My spiritual intuition tells me that there's danger involved… Before Klein spoke, he heard Alger say, "Take note of this matter. To investigate the former Chief's mausoleum at such a critical moment means that it's something important. It might bring you danger."

"Okay!" Derrick nodded strongly. "I'll do my best to figure out the specifics."

The exchange continued. As the members didn't encounter much this week, this segment quickly came to an end. The Tarot Club members began teaching The Sun mysticism languages of the outside world as they learned about ancient myths from him.

During this process, Audrey was a little disappointed and depressed. She had failed to buy anything or share anything this week, and her participation appeared lacking.

Sigh… My life has been too quiet and stable. I have nothing to share… However, this is normal. As the daughter of one of the top three bankers in the kingdom, a daughter of East Chester's earl, if I were to frequently encounter Beyonder matters, experiencing alarming and exciting matters every week, that means that the present society and government structure is unable to maintain the order of the Beyonder world. It would definitely result in a fundamental change to everything… Hmm, when I return to Backlund, my contact with the Psychology Alchemists will increase. I'll be able to change this situation… Audrey rapidly became optimistic, and she stood up and bade Mr. Fool farewell.

Over the past half a year, she had read quite a number of useful books thanks to Susie. In terms of profundity and maturity, she was a lot better than before.

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Backlund North Borough, 160 Böklund Street.

After ending the Tarot Club, Klein walked to the attached balcony to his bedroom, and he looked at the surrounding environment which was filled with vegetation.

With Miss Magician’s attempt to rent out Leymano’s Travels, there will be more of such Tarot Club transactions in the future. Heh heh, they might not have realized that their own Beyonder powers can be sold! Once the rentals happen more frequently, someone will ultimately request someone to help record a particular power… When the time comes, I’ll be able to supply Beyonder powers of various domains thanks to the numerous mystical items I have…

It won’t be too expensive, but it’s long-lasting, and it will often be in demand.

Heh, I wonder who will be the first to muster their courage to seek The Fool for help, hoping that a demigod power can be recorded… This needs to be a fair exchange, and a sufficient price needs to be paid… If no one dares take that step, afraid that it’s blasphemous, I can let The World be an example. After all, Mr. Fool has shown his friendliness and casualness from the beginning. As long as no mistakes are made, similar transactions can be made…

Having the precedent of punishing Ma’am Hermit, I don’t believe anyone will belittle The Fool as a result. They would be honored, delighted, and fearful… Klein thought about the Tarot Club as his thoughts wandered, filled with anticipation towards the trade of Beyonder powers in the future.

At this moment, he heard knocking at the door.

“Please enter,” Dwayne Dantès with his gray sideburns turned around and said.

The doorknob turned and the door opened. Butler Walter in his white gloves walked in and said respectfully, “Sir, Ma’am Mary from the National Atmospheric Pollution Council is here to visit you.

“Do you wish to meet her?”

Mary Schott? The major shareholder of the Coim Company, the lady who got me to investigate her former husband’s adultery? Why is she here? Don’t tell me that Dwayne Dantès has caught her fancy… Klein was slightly puzzled as he nodded with a smile.

“It’s almost tea time. Let’s have it a little earlier.”

“Alright, I will invite Ma’am Mary to the activity room on the second story.” Walter easily understood his employer’s intentions.

Klein nodded slightly without saying anything else. With the help of his valet, Richardson, he wore his coat and went down to the second story.

Soon, he saw Ma’am Mary with her tall cheekbones in the activity room.

This lady was dressed in a dark blue dress with elegant accessories in an ostentatious but restrained manner. Compared to last year, she appeared more classy and with a higher temperament.

“Good afternoon, Ma’am. I’ve always been considering finding a time to visit you. I would wish to hear about your investigations on Backlund’s atmospheric pollution.” Klein took the initiative to speak politely.

Mary replied with a smile, “Unfortunately, I didn’t manage to wait for it.”

After exchanging a few words of pleasantries as they talked about the recent weather, Klein sat on a single-seater as he raised his porcelain teacup.

“Ma’am, you seem to have something troubling you?”

He could tell that Mary was hesitant and deliberating.

Mary laughed as she sighed.

“I’ve heard about your experience and wisdom. I believe that you’re a gentleman with excellent foresight.

“This is the thing: Are you interested in purchasing some of the Coim Company’s shares?”

“Why? Ma’am, are you in trouble?” Klein asked in a staid manner

Mary shook her head.

“Someone else is selling them.”

Chapter 794 - Short-Term Investment

Someone else is selling? Klein ruminated over those words without immediately asking. After the servant placed the silver three-layered tray down for high tea and left, he said with a smile, “Ma’am, why don’t you purchase it yourself?

“Even a blind person knows that Loen will place more attention on environmental pollution in the future. Therefore, the Coim Company, that deal with anthracite and high-quality charcoal, definitely has a promising future. It being worth half a million or even a million pounds wouldn’t be a fantasy. Of course, the premise is that the company’s management can keep up with the corresponding expansion.

“In such a situation, the acquisition of shares in the Coim Company is definitely a profitable business. If I were you, I’d take it for myself, no matter how much debt I get myself into.”

Mary used two fingers to pick a cucumber sandwich from the bottom silver tray, took a tiny nimble, and slowly chewed before swallowing it down.

With this as a buffer, she finally organized her words.

“Ever since the law to fix atmospheric pollution was passed, the Coim Company has been rapidly developing. The faces of the shareholders have begun changing. As you know, people who have their sights on money will often have good business sense. And behind them, there are usually some powerful figures at play.

"If I weren't a member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, and had used this to get to know quite a number of nobles and high-ranking government officials, I believe I wouldn't be able to withstand the pressure, and I would end up selling my shares at a relatively good price. I would then leave the stage with a considerably good profit.

"But even so, most of the shares will quickly concentrate, and I'll quickly lose my status as the highest shareholder, losing control over the company's direction.

"This is something I inherited from my father. I don't want it to become somebody else's toy. I wish for it to slowly develop into the biggest anthracite and high-quality supplier to Backlund, or even all of the Loen Kingdom. Heh heh, it's not that I haven't tried other solutions. I've pledged my shares and sold my property, investing a large sum of my liquidity into it, absorbing 15% of the shares in secret, as well as requesting friends that I can trust to help. I've obtained a total of 10% of the shares, and together with the 20% I originally had, I hold 45% in total.

"The current situation is that a minor shareholder suddenly decided to liquidate his 3%, and my friends and I temporarily do not have the money to acquire it."

This is a commercial war… This was a first for Klein, who was accustomed to dealing with Beyonders; he found it fresh but also unfamiliar.

He similarly reached out his hand and selected a sandwich which had high-quality turkey at the bottom of the three-layered tray. As he ate, he contemplated for about ten seconds and said, "The shares that you acquire later can also be pledged, right?"

"There won't be enough time. The other party has already provided an offer, and the transaction can be closed at any time," Mary said as she finished the food in her hand.

Klein leaned back into his sofa in a relaxed manner.

“Why did you come to me?”

Upon hearing the question, Mary heaved a slight sigh of relief.

“First, you must’ve brought quite a sizable amount of money to Backlund. You wouldn’t need to raise funds through different means. Second, you just came to Backlund, so you aren’t deeply involved with the other party or in other aspects. This also means that I’m not afraid that you would violate the terms of the agreement. Even if you choose to align with them, you’ll have to consider if it’s worth violating the law. Third, although we’ve only met once, I believe you are a very dignified and knowledgeable gentleman.”

Your praise is leaving me a little embarrassed… However, it also means that my acting performance as Dwayne Dantès is effective. At the very least, everyone knows that he’s a middle-aged gentleman with foresight and competence, with plenty of money that he has nowhere to invest… Hmm, considering the original 16,493 pounds and Miss Magician’s 5,000, no—6,000 pounds, as well as the 48 pounds provided by Mr. X, I have a total of 22,991 pounds and 5 gold coins. Even if I deduct the 5,987 pounds I owe Miss Messenger, I’ll be considered a true tycoon… Many people with assets worth a hundred thousand pounds might not have that much liquidity… Klein couldn’t help but do a count of his wealth as he asked with a smile, “Ma’am, what do you wish for me to do?”

Mary sipped some tea and said eloquently, “Acquire the 3% shares. But before that, I’ll sign two contracts with you. The first contract stipulates that I’ll forcefully purchase the shares from you in three months and buy it at the highest price over this period of time. The corresponding tax will be shouldered by me. The second contract stipulates that we act in concert…

“In addition, I will make you a member of the board of directors for the Coim Company. You will enjoy the corresponding perks as you monitor the company's development. This will help you be integrated even better into high society."

Sounds like a sure-win. It's equivalent to me providing a loan, and Ma'am Mary will repay me with a certain amount of interest and social resources… And compared to a debt agreement, I'll be holding onto the shares of an excellent company. It's more secure; after all, we are considered strangers… Of course, that's under the premise that the Coim Company itself is alright. Hmm, this is also why she's making me a director… Klein analyzed the conditions proposed by Ma'am Mary and slowly felt enticed by them.

From his point of view, Dwayne Dantès needed some investments. Otherwise, he would appear suspicious. Then, selecting the kind of investment was a rather important problem since it had to be considered that Dwayne Dantès might have to give up everything and leave Backlund because of his operation's failure or success.

When the time comes, there's a chance to take away the money, but I can forget about the shares… This kind of investment, one that allows me to quickly recoup my investment, meets my requirements… I might even earn quite a bit… Klein contemplated for a moment before warmly smiling.

"Helping a lady resolve problems is something that I need to do."

Ma'am Mary immediately felt relieved. Just as she was about to say something, she heard Dwayne Dantès's attractive voice continue:

"However, I'm rather cautious in regards to any investments I make.

"I will hire a lawyer and an accounting team to investigate the Coim Company's situation. I'll try to reach a conclusion as quickly as possible, and if there aren't any problems, we can begin our cooperation."

Aside from that, I will also do a divination… Klein silently added inwardly.

“Definitely.” Ma’am Mary smiled and added, “I’ll bear the costs for such expenses.”

Klein didn’t reject the offer as he nodded and said, “How much would the 3% shares cost?”

“The current valuation is 9,600 pounds, but the shareholder believes that the Coim Company has a promising future, so it can’t be lower than 12,000 pounds.” Mary gave him the exact details.

Phew… Klein used a calm and relaxed manner to smile.

“That’s still alright.”

Dwayne Dantès is indeed rich… Mary thought as she said, “Dwayne, can I invite you to visit the Coim Company tomorrow?”

“That’s exactly what I wish for,” Klein replied with a smile.

At the same time, he couldn’t help but think of something. His former landlord, Stelyn Sammer’s husband, was likely still a manager at Coim Company.

Yet another familiar face, but it’s not one for Dwayne Dantès… Klein felt wistful for some baffling reason.

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At 8 p.m. there were still crowds of people entering East Borough from the other streets. Fatigue obviously colored their faces.

And this continued almost until ten.

Emlyn White had changed into a grayish-blue worker’s attire, wore a cap, and hid himself in the alley of the Backlund Bridge area while observing the poor that sauntered back and forth.

Although he didn’t have any experience in disguising himself, he had eyes and brains. Just a short observation was enough for him to discover the problems with his attire.

The most important point was that, compared to the poor who had dirty and ragged clothes, the work attire he had bought in the afternoon was too new and clean, easily attracting the attention of others.

Emlyn thought for a moment, returned to the dark alley, and reached out his fingers. Using what he had seen, he began tearing open the areas that were easily damaged.

Then, he observed his surroundings as his facial muscles gradually distorted into a grimace.

With a look of contempt, Emlyn came to the wall, closed his eyes, and began dabbing the dirt onto his clothes and pants.

The smell of coal… the smell of rotting mud… the smell of p-p*ss… Emlyn subconsciously extended his palm away from himself as he covered his mouth with his other hand. He nearly vomited.

At this moment, he realized that having an extraordinary sense of smell wasn't necessarily a good thing.

After a few minutes of excruciating torture, Emlyn finally finished his disguise. Even his handsome face was stained with coal.

With this disguise, he hunched his back, and slipped into the crowd, quickly entering East Borough without garnering any attention.

As he walked, Emlyn realized a problem.

He wasn't familiar with the roads at all!

He had no idea where Limestone Street or Beluga Whale Street was in East Borough, while most of the street signs had already been damaged.

An assassination attempt really is a troublesome matter… Emlyn mumbled as he began asking around for directions.

After nearly an hour of hard work, he finally arrived at Limestone Street. The streets were narrow, with the buildings on both sides leaning close to each other. Even in the day, it appeared dark. At night, it gave off a terrifying sense of creepiness and darkness. But to the Sanguine, such an environment wasn't bad. The only problem was the dirt and messiness.

After spraying a medicine that eliminated his scent, Emlyn walked into the condominium at Unit 6, went to the third story, and approached the public washroom with his nose pinched before standing outside the room of Primordial Moon believer, Argos.

Emlyn cocked his ears to listen for a while before he stopped pinching his nose in puzzlement.

He nearly fainted from the stench wafting over from the washroom. It took him a great bit of effort to focus his gaze on the room.

His sense of smell told him that there wasn't anyone inside, nor were there any corpses.

He moved away? Or he isn't back? Emlyn muttered silently in a daze.

He never expected his hunt to be so unsuccessful.

After reining in his emotions, Emlyn left the condominium and rushed to 19 Beluga Whale Street.

This time, he was delighted to discover that someone was home. Galis Kevin was home.

At that moment, Emlyn caught the scent of another person. It was very identical to Argos's apartment at Limestone Street.

Two people… There are two people in the room! Argos isn't home because he came to Galis Kevin… Two… Emlyn's expression suddenly froze.

He wasn’t worried if it was one-on-one. But if it was one against two, he was still a little fearful with Leymano’s Travels. After all, the two of them were artificial vampires with rather significant strength!

Chapter 795 - Patience

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As a Sanguine who liked to stay home, the number of battles Emlyn had involved himself in could be counted on one hand. Furthermore, he had never attempted fighting in the state of a numbers disadvantage.

Be it his attack on the previous Primordial Moon believer, or resisting Bishop Utravsky from the Harvest Church, he basically had the numerical advantage in being the worst at one-on-one fights.

Thinking back to the failure of his family of three attempting to defeat the half-giant bishop, Emlyn's expression turned livid as though he had recalled the torture he suffered back at the Harvest Church.

As there weren't many residents living here, and with Galis Kevin having sharp senses as an artificial vampire, he didn't dare stay outside the door for too long. He quickly walked past the area and walked to the end of the corridor and hid in the shadows.

What should I do next… Emlyn leaned against random objects that blocked the crimson sunlight as his thoughts rapidly whirled in an attempt to find a solution with his pitiful amounts of experience.

Gradually, the words which The Hanged Man had taught The Sun surfaced in his mind:

"Patience is an important premise when dealing with many situations…

"Only by being able to curb your urges and irascibility will you be able to avoid danger to the greatest extent…

“At times, tolerance is very important…”

Tolerance… Emlyn nodded indiscernibly and knew what he needed to do.

He planned on laying in ambush until Argos left!

As this wasn’t the artificial vampire’s residence, it was certain that he would leave. When the time came, Emlyn could deal with a one-on-one situation.

Patience, tolerance, waiting… Emlyn repeated these words inwardly so as to resist the damage the surroundings were dealing to him.

The air wafting through the first floor of the condominium was filled with the stench of piss, rotting moisture, the unflushed smell of feces, the odor of some of its residents, as well as all kinds of nauseating, unpleasant, and disgusting smells. Mixed together, they were like a poison that ate at Emlyn’s senses.

For the first time in his life, Emlyn wished that he could slice off his nose. He had the feeling as though he was stuck in an abyss or was in hell suffering torture.

Patience… Tolerance… Waiting… he mechanically chanted the principles, finding each second that passed excruciatingly long.

Finally, he saw Galis Kevin’s door open. A thin dark-brown figure walked out. His cheekbones protruded, and he had a high, sharp, and crooked nose. He was none other than the Primordial Moon believer, Argos.

At that moment, his face had patches of swollen festering that looked disgusting.

Indeed, as that young boss, Ian, said, these fellows wear clothes that are clean and tidy, completely unlike the residents of East Borough… Emlyn became spirited as he watched Argos leave the condominium.

After patiently waiting for nearly five minutes, he stood up and decided to take action.

As his target, Galis Kevin, was an artificial vampire, Emlyn was rather aware of his opponent’s strengths and traits. Hence, he had made preparations in a targeted manner.

Galis Kevin’s sense of smell isn’t weaker than mine when I just came of age. Heh, this actually cannot be confirmed. For him to stay in such an environment, he might’ve already lost his nose and brains… Besides, his spirituality can’t be weak, and he has an innate instinct that’s geared towards danger… His vision and hearing can’t be too bad either… As Emlyn viewed his opponent with scorn, he consumed a potion and sprayed out a liquid to cover his body’s scent again.

Right on the heels of that, by consuming the potion and spraying it on like last time, he hid his body and attire, disappearing as though he had been wiped away by an eraser.

In a dark, uninhabited corner, a palm-sized notebook which was bronze-green in color had suddenly appeared out of thin air, as though it had passed through a transparent screen.

It began flipping itself almost silently before fixing onto a white page that was filled with astromancy symbols.

As these symbols vanished, the surroundings brightened up a little.

This was the disruption ability of an Astrologer!

Then, Leymano’s Travels was retracted, disappearing inch by inch as it was completely concealed by the invisible screen.

Prepared, Emlyn recalled his plans. He lightened his footsteps and silently arrived outside Galis Kevin’s apartment without approaching the door.

The notebook appeared out of thin air once again before being flipped to the Door Opening page.

An illusory sound immediately resounded in Emlyn's mind as it "prompted" him to reach out a hand towards the wall.

At the same time, Emlyn cautiously pulled back Leymano's Travels into his clothes, using his invisible coat to hide it.

When Emlyn's palm finally pressed the wall, he saw a ghostly-blue, incorporeal, blurry door appear before his eyes. It was embedded in the wall, but it also showed signs of masonry at the bottom.

Cocking his ear to hear the goings-on inside the house, he took a sniff of the air before taking a step forward. He then passed through the ghostly-blue door as if he was passing a screen of water.

The scene before him changed immediately. It was filled with walls covered in stains and three wooden beds on the side, a worn-out cupboard, and all kinds of miscellaneous items.

This was the inside of Galis Kevin's apartment!

As for the ghostly-blue door behind Emlyn, it had long vanished as if it had never existed before.

Cautiously surveying the area, Emlyn caught sight of his target, Galis Kevin.

This Primordial Moon believer was a good-looking mixed-blood. He had long hair that reached his shoulders, and his eyes were a little red, as though he didn't fully acquire the eyes of a Sanguine.

At that moment, he was sitting by the side of the bed, staring at the door; his thoughts a mystery.

Emlyn circled to his side without causing a commotion. He took out

Leymano's Travels which he ensured was in a blind spot, and he flipped to a page that left his fingers slightly numb.

It was a yellowish-brown goatskin page. The surface was filled with all kinds of ancient and distorted symbols and patterns. Together, they constructed a figure that looked like a thin tree with outstretched branches.

After adjusting his angle, Emlyn slid his finger across the page.

Suddenly, silver lightning illuminated the room as if it was daytime.

A sizzling sound was heard as the lightning smote Galis Kevin on the head, charring the Primordial Moon believer instantly. His body convulsed as his eyes lost focus.

The silver bolts of lightning continued snaking around while Emlyn's figure surfaced behind the frozen target's back. He reached out his right palm and clenched his opponent's neck.

Kacha!

He calmly snapped Galis Kevin's neck and yanked off his head and tossed the body away, eliminating the possibility of letting his opponent heal himself with his strong restorative powers.

Pa!

Galis Kevin's headless corpse collapsed to the ground as blood sprayed everywhere.

An artificial vampire lost its life just like that.

Emlyn's calm expression was quickly replaced with surprise. He looked at the head in his hand with disbelief. He realized that Galis Kevin didn't realize what was happening even upon death. Fixed in his eyes were pain and puzzlement.

It's that easy? It happened like a breeze? Although Emlyn was proud, he didn't believe that he could finish off an artificial vampire that easily. However, reality told him that it was as easy as a breeze.

A Lightning Strike that can cause paralysis, together with my high movement speed, had allowed me to instantly kill my target… Heh, the premise is that he's weak to lightning, allowing him to be easily paralyzed… Also, I had interfered with his spiritual intuition ahead of time and avoided attacking him head-on by passing through the wall. Those were key to my success… After a few seconds of surprise, Emlyn recalled the details and concluded plenty of useful experience.

This made him truly realize the potency of matching Beyonder powers, as well as the value of Leymano's Travels.

It's no wonder Mr. Hanged Man was the first one to have thoughts of renting it… Emlyn reined in his thoughts and looked at the blood that gushed out of Galis Kevin. His throat couldn't help but move.

He hadn't had that much fresh blood in a while.

However, he didn't dare drink it. This was because the deceased Beyonder characteristic had yet to appear. The blood would still contain parts of it, and drinking it would easily result in excessive Beyonder characteristics, adding the risk of losing control. This wasn't conducive to his subsequent operations.

Emlyn retracted his gaze and surveyed the surroundings. He found a stack of old newspapers and a tiny wooden chest. He planned on using that to store Galis Kevin's head in.

And before that, he sat down and waited for the Beyonder characteristic to appear.

Two minutes later, Emlyn suddenly looked up at the door.

He heard footsteps!

Immediately after that, he caught the scent of Argos!

Why is this artificial vampire back? He returned midway? Emlyn White instantly became a little nervous, unsure how he was going to handle the issue.

Thump!

Argos knocked on the door from the outside without making a sound. This resulted in an abnormal silence.

Emlyn was stunned. He immediately understood that Argos had caught scent of the blood and knew that something had happened inside.

What should I do… Rush out and finish him? No, others will see me if I do so. I would then be caught by the official Beyonders… Emlyn instinctively took out a potion ad planned on hiding himself again.

Suddenly, he had an idea.

Exhaling silently, Emlyn placed Galis Kevin on the bed as he drank an invisibility potion and spewed out the corresponding amount of liquid. Slowly and very gently, he moved to a corner of the room and hid there.

This way, it made it seem like the assassination was completed and that the murderer had long fled the scene.

As time passed, aside from the occasional passing by of the residents, there was silence both inside and outside.

Suddenly, Galis Kevin's window creaked open as a pair of eyes shot its gaze inside.

After careful inspection, Argos, with a festering face, leaped into the room and slowly walked to the corpse which was still indistinctly expelling the Beyonder characteristic.

In the corner, Emlyn White secretly took out Leymano's Travels while Argos wasn't looking in his direction. He flipped to another page of Lightning Strike.

At this moment, Argos's sight landed on the bed and on his companion's head, as well as the stack of old newspapers and the tiny wooden chest.

His pupils suddenly constricted.

Chapter 796 - Slowly Becoming Proficient

◆ ◆ ◆

Not good! Emlyn White traced Argos's gaze and realized that he had forgotten to deal with the old newspapers and the tiny wooden chest.

Although they were part of the room, they were placed in different parts of the room. Now, they were put together, making it appear rather odd. It was as though someone had wanted to do something with them before having to give up for the time being.

Then, why would there be a need to give up? Was the person alarmed by the knocking of the door? That means that the murderer hadn't left and is hiding in a particular corner of the room? Similar thoughts flashed in Argos's and Emlyn's mind at the same time. However, one of them was feeling perplexed, while the other was reverse-inferring the other party's thoughts.

No good!

The two vampires reacted at the same time as Argos lunged to the side as he emitted thick black gases that resembled a bat's wing. As for Emlyn White, his finger quickly swiped across the opened Leymano's Travels.

Suddenly, a silver hue appeared, illuminating the room again.

The Lightning that branched out didn't hit Argos and ended up hitting the ground beside the bed. It broke up into countless thin bolts that snaked towards conductive materials.

Here, the wing which Argos used thick black gases to create seemed to attract the lightning. It was pursued by the snaking lightning as they struck him, spreading across his body.

Argos became numb for a second and crashed down to the ground before he could leap up.

Emlyn hurriedly flipped through Leymano's Travels and once against slid his finger across a Lightning Strike page.

Although he didn't know why there were so many pages of Lightning Strike, with them taking up nearly half of the yellowish-brown goatskin, he was overjoyed that he could keep using them.

The silver bolts of lightning crashed down, smiting Argos, causing his body to emit black smoke despite having just recovered from his numbed state. Failing to leap away, his body began to convulse uncontrollably.

Seizing this opportunity, Emlyn White bent his knee and leaped forward with his feet, approaching Argos with afterimages trailing behind him. Then, he wrapped his right arm around target's head, easily flashing behind him.

Kacha!

Argos directly saw his back.

His eyes filled with blood as the few festering parts on his face burst open as deep and illusory darkness poured out from inside.

Emlyn had no idea what had happened. He slid backward instinctively as he kept changing his positioning.

Argos didn't pursue him as his eyes lost their rationality. All that was left was pure malicious intent, madness, and clear blankness.

He raised his hands and pressed them against his head before forcefully twisting it, allowing it to return to its normal orientation with a crisp crack.

And around this artificial vampire, the darkness surged as though it wanted to devour everything.

Then, Argos stretched his neck from side to side as his body swelled and oozed out disgusting pus.

He had come to Galis Kevin tonight because his body had shown signs of losing control. There was a need to discuss a solution. He returned midway because he suddenly came to a realization that perhaps the harsh environment had caused intense negative effects to him due to his extraordinary sense of smell and sensitivity; thus, resulting in him having signs of losing control.

And at that moment, he completely broke down with the shadow of death hanging over him. He had lost control.

Emlyn White's heart palpitated when Argos swept his gaze across him. He felt that he had encountered trouble again as he couldn't help but curse the Primordial Moon's believers for often making themselves into monsters.

He didn't immediately pray to Mr. Fool for two reasons. First, there wasn't any time as his opponent was about to launch an attack. Second, in a one-on-one situation, Emlyn believed that it wasn't too dangerous dealing with a Sequence 7 Rampager.

He made every second count by flipping through Leymano's Travels quickly, letting it land on the page with Lightning Strike again.

Pa!

Thick, distorted bolts of silver lightning smote down heavily as it flailed its claws, striking the mutated Argos.

At that moment, the lightning seemed to shatter the surging darkness, but it also seemed to be devoured by it. The two vanished at the same time, leaving behind Argos who had finally locked his sights onto Emlyn.

This artificial vampire who had lost control produced afterimages as he pounced towards his target.

Emlyn crouched down and rolled, dodging the lethal strike.

At the same time, he reached his free right hand into his pocket and took out a metal bottle.

Bam!

As Argos quickly turned around, he instantly appeared near his enemy.

Pa! Without any time to remove the cover, Emlyn clenched his fingers, pinching open a crack in the metal bottle.

Then, he threw the bottle ahead, letting the pure and radiant liquid inside splatter towards the approaching Argos.

This was Sun Water which he had concocted with his spirituality. It was extremely strong against vampires.

This was the preparation that a Potions Professor had to do in advance!

"Ah!"

Being splashed by the liquid, Argos let out a blood-curdling scream. Wisps of black smoke billowed from his body as he lost his strength in midair.

Bang! Although he collided with Emlyn, he failed to make him lose his balance. Emlyn tumbled twice but didn't suffer any actual damage.

While tumbling, Emlyn ignored managing his injuries. He swatted his right hand which had made contact with a few drops of Sun Water and quickly flipped Leymano's Travels.

Pa!

Another bolt of silver lightning smote down, causing Argos's tragic cries to come to an end.

This vampire who had lost control had appeared to be suffering the radiance of the sun from a close distance as he fell into a state of intense paralysis.

Emlyn seized this opportunity and took out another bottle of Sun Water. He unscrewed the cap and poured it towards his opponent.

This time, Argos didn't even manage to let out a cry. His body began to melt like wax.

It was only then that Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief. He then conjured a thick black fog behind him, turning it into illusory bats the size of a palm as they swarmed towards his target.

The black bats landed on Argos, enveloping him completely. Following that, they separated and flew back to Emlyn before vanishing.

Argos's body had shrunk quite noticeably, and he finally couldn't hold out any longer. In his half-melted state, he slowly collapsed.

Only then did Emlyn raise his right hand to check on the remnant pain. He saw that his palm and a few fingers had wounds that were corroding.

However, the flesh inside was rapidly squirming as they healed themselves.

It's over… I actually finished him… Emlyn retracted his gaze and looked at Argos's corpse in slight disbelief.

Although this hunt had quite a few ups and downs, he hadn't encountered any real danger the entire time. This made him realize that the existence of the Tarot Club made him far stronger than he imagined.

If Argos had checked Galis Kevin's corpse first and not notice the newspapers and wooden chest, he definitely would've figured out that I possess Beyonder powers like Lightning Strike. He wouldn't have used Wings of Darkness while dodging and end up being hit by the lightning.

But this way, he wouldn't have discovered any abnormalities and wouldn't have made any evasive maneuvers ahead of time. My Lightning Strike would've struck him directly and things would've been easier.

Viewing it from this angle, no matter what happened, I would be able to kill him as long as I didn't make a mistake in my handling of matters… They're really weak… So I'm already this powerful…

It's no wonder the Ancestor made me join the Tarot Club… This is a gathering that prepares the various races for the impending apocalypse. It's of a much higher level than the other secret organizations! Emlyn tipped his chin up a little as he couldn't help but curl his lips.

Following that, he heard footsteps outside, but no one dared to approach.

Argos's scream must've alarmed the surrounding residents, but they wouldn't dare enter because they're afraid of trouble… However, someone will definitely report it to the police… I need to clear the scene as quickly as possible and leave… Emlyn retracted his gaze from the door and walked to Galis Kevin's corpse. From the pooling blood, he picked up an item the size of a fist.

It was completely red in color and resembled a heart. It was expanding and contracting slightly, and its surface was translucent. He could vaguely see a liquid flowing inside, and it was none other than the Beyonder characteristic of a Sequence 7 Vampire of the Apothecary pathway.

This is my trophy… Emlyn momentarily felt unaccustomed to it. After calming himself, he wrapped the Beyonder characteristic and Galis Kevin's head with the old newspapers and stuffed it into the wooden chest.

After placing the wooden chest to the side, he yanked Argos's head whose form looked nothing like before. He then took out another bottle of medicine and scattered in every corner of the room.

During this process, Emlyn wasn't flustered at all. It was as though he wasn't worried that the official Beyonders in East Borough would rush over.

A few minutes later, he picked up Argos's mutated Beyonder characteristic, glancing at its surface, which was nearly black in color, and the indistinct human-faced patterns. Behind him, a black gas was emanated.

The black gas transformed into countless tiny bats again as they flew within the room. They combined with the potion liquid that had been sprayed earlier, forming a silent black flame that spread outwards.

The black flames burned away the blood and corpse, as well as the traces of the Lightning Strikes. All that was left was a layer of sticky liquid that resembled asphalt covering the different objects in the room.

Then, these liquid bodies turned into heavy black bats as they spiraled around Emlyn's body.

Emlyn didn't have extravagant hopes that his actions could completely interfere in subsequent investigations. He only had one goal—to make the situation look okay. This made the police or official Beyonders who took on the case write off the matter as something of little value. After a simple investigation, they would file it away and not pay any further attention to it.

After doing all of this, Emlyn, with his cap and blackened face, surveyed the room.

Following that, he bowed slightly at the crimson moon.

Meanwhile, he flipped the pages of Leymano's Travels and had it stop at Teleportation.

Emlyn's figure, along with the heavy bats, immediately turned transparent and formless as he vanished from the spot.

After nearly fifteen minutes, a few policemen from East Borough rushed in. They crashed through the door but didn't discover any residents or corpses.

They yawned languidly and forced the onlooking residents to admit that they had been hallucinating; thus, ending the investigation.

This was the efficiency and style of the East Borough police.

†

After leaving East Borough, Emlyn first headed home and hid Leymano's Travels. Then, with his spoils, he headed straight for Odora's house in West Borough.

He wanted to declare his victory and claim his reward!

Chapter 797 - Reward

Inside Odora’s villa, Emlyn saw Cosmi, who was also a Baron like he was.

This Sanguine who seemed like a man in his prime was Nibbs Odora’s spokesperson.

I’m also a Baron, and one that recently achieved adulthood at that… Emlyn mumbled inwardly. He got up from the sofa in the activity room and bowed.

“Good evening, My Lord.”

Cosmi was just about to say something when his nose twitched. He then cast his gaze towards the wooden chest beside Emlyn’s feet.

“The smell of fresh blood?”

As he asked in puzzlement, he seemed to connect the dots and added after a second of thought, “You killed another target?”

Emlyn curled his lips and shook his head.

“No.”

Then, before Cosmi could ask further, his smile turned profound.

“Not one, but two.”

Two? The middle-aged gentleman was taken aback as he watched Emlyn bend down to open the lid.

During this process, Emlyn's facial muscles winced a little as this series of actions had touched the wound on his right hand.

Holding back the change in his expression, Emlyn allowed his arm to hang down slightly, allowing the chest to tilt and reveal its contents to the Sanguine Baron opposite him.

Two charred, bloody heads were stuffed inside a pile of old newspapers. By the side were two transparent objects which resembled hearts—one red with vitality, and the other nearly black.

This impactful scene was reflected in Cosmi's eyes as he looked up in surprise, staring at Emlyn blankly as he blurted, "You did this?"

Although he had only managed to recognize one head being Galis Kevin's, but the two Vampire Beyonder characteristics couldn't be faked!

Emlyn put down the wooden chest and allowed his right hand to hang down naturally. Surreptitiously, he flicked his right hand very slightly along the corners of his trousers as he replied with a smile, "Of course.

"This is the thing: After receiving the 7,000-pound reward back then, I bought a particular Baron's legacy at a particular Beyonder gathering. With it, I advanced.

"I don't wish to use money to satisfy the murderers who hunt us Sanguine, but I didn't wish for this legacy to land in the hands of others; besides, the seller wasn't necessarily the hunter."

Taking this opportunity, Emlyn revealed the fact that he had already become a Baron. Furthermore, every word he said was the truth.

This was a technique he had learned from the Tarot Club.

I long knew that you were a Baron. Do you think your frequent purchases of all kinds of items with spirituality and the borrowing of books that explain potions would go unnoticed? If it weren't because of certain factors, we would've questioned you long ago… What I'm surprised about is your combat ability. You don't even have a single mystical item, and with you only wishing to buy dolls, it's not easy to hunt two artificial vampires without causing a commotion, even for a Baron… Even I would need to make plenty of preparations and acquire detailed intelligence before it's possible… Without anyone noticing it, Emlyn is already this strong? Cosmi Odora couldn't help but lampoon as he revealed a fake smile.

"So that's the reason…

"Emlyn, why did you hide it from us? Don't you wish to be addressed as 'Lord' by the other Sanguine?"

Emlyn glanced at the Sanguine's expression and tilted his chin.

"I was planning on telling everyone, but since there was the hunting competition, I decided to give everyone a surprise.

"Cosmi, I've already hunted three of the Primordial Moon believers, and you gave five targets. Does this mean that I've won?"

He couldn't wait to change his form of address from 'Lord' to 'Cosmi.'

Cosmi's eyelids twitched as he chuckled.

"Yes, that's right. You can ignore the two other targets. Leave it to Rus Báthory and the rest. This way, they might still be eligible for a consolation prize."

Having said that, Cosmi found his attitude a little too cold, so he hurriedly asked in concern, "Were you injured?"

"A little." Emlyn raised his right arm and stretched his fingers.

To be frank, on his hunt that night, the worst injury he suffered was after he teleported out of East Borough. He had ripped apart his skin to wipe his blood across the cover of Leymano's Travels.

Cosmi didn’t develop the topic as he said after a few seconds of silence,

“Congratulations on being the victor of this hunting competition. You will receive two prizes.

“First, if there’s a chance to become a Viscount in the future, you will enter the final list of candidates, receiving free help for the ritual.

“Second, you will obtain a mystical item. It’s a ring personally created by the Ancestor. Although it doesn’t contain any godhood, it possesses potent and very mystical powers. As the Ancestor didn’t name it, we all call it ‘Lilith’s Ring.’

“Also, according to convention, these two Beyonder characteristics will belong to the entire Sanguine race. This way, we might be able to have two more newborns, and you would receive 3,000 pounds in cash in return.”

A ring personally created made by the Ancestor… Although Emlyn was somewhat disappointed that the reward wasn’t a Viscount’s Beyonder characteristic, with it only being candidature and a free ritual, the ring made by Sanguine Ancestor Lilith herself was enough to put things right.

To a proud Sanguine with a sense of racial superiority, this was the highest form of honor!

As his joy was quelled, Emlyn, who had participated in several Tarot Gatherings and had completed two hunts, felt that things weren’t that simple.

I was sent by the Ancestor to Mr. Fool, and now, I’m receiving a ring from the Ancestor? Isn’t that too much of a coincidence? Emlyn thought for a moment and couldn’t figure out the answer. He finally decided to pray to Mr. Fool later, describe the entire situation, and see what advice “He” could give him.

Noticing that Emlyn’s joy had subsided and that he had remained silent for more than ten seconds, Cosmi cleared his throat.

“That ring and the cash will be given to you tomorrow.

“When the time comes, I’ll summon Rus Báthory and company, officially announcing your victory in this hunting competition. Then, the ring will be given to you.”

“No problem.” Although Emlyn lacked the experience in such matters, he knew that “rewards” couldn’t be given in private. It needed to be given in front of all the participants.

Without staying any longer, he bade farewell and left Odora’s villa in a rental carriage.

As the carriage slowly drove off, Emlyn took a look at the crimson moon which was hanging silently in the sky. His mind gradually calmed as he couldn’t help but recall everything that happened that very day. From that, he concluded lessons and gained experience.

Finally, he began counting how many Beyonder powers he needed to record onto Leymano’s Travels.

I used all of the five Lightning Strikes… One Teleportation, one Door Opening, one Astromancy… A total of eight times. In addition to that, I need to pay two additional powers, making it ten.

This will be a little difficult. There are some Beyonder powers that probably can’t be recorded; for example, my self-recovery powers… I can only repeat them… Heh, after I obtain the Ancestor’s ring, I can try recording the Beyonder powers it possesses…

†

Lilith’s Ring? Above the gray fog in the palace that looked like a giant’s residence, Klein sat in the high-back chair belonging to The Fool as he quietly pondered over Emlyn White’s prayer.

He had originally imagined that he would be woken up in the middle of the night, having to provide a particular inexperienced vampire help, but to his surprise, Emlyn had finished everything by eleven and had even “submitted” the mission in.

Back then, Emlyn prayed to The Fool because of a revelation from the ancient god, Lilith… Now, he has received “Her” ring… Regardless of who Lilith is, I need to be wary and observe… Klein seriously contemplated for a few seconds before replying to Emlyn’s prayer in a staid manner, “When praying to me or participating in the Gathering in the future, take off that ring.”

After giving his instructions, Klein returned to the real world. Without worrying about being woken up in the middle of the night, he slept till daybreak.

After breakfast and taking a rest, it was time for his etiquette lessons with Wahana. It was a special lesson for the ball he was hosting at his residence on the weekend.

Wahana’s soft black hair flowed as the ends of her dress twirled while she led Dwayne Dantès into familiarizing himself with the opening dance.

In the brisk and comforting music, this etiquette teacher suddenly said, “I heard Ma’am Mary visited you yesterday afternoon?”

“Yes.” As Klein poignantly reflected on how there weren’t any secrets in the world of social networks, he nodded frankly.

Wahana nodded gently and said after two seconds of silence, “I heard that Ma’am Mary has pledged all her shares to the bank to borrow a large sum of money.”

This is a warning for me to be careful, so that I wouldn’t fall into a scam… The help I previously provided had not only allowed me to quickly enter the social circles in Böklund Street, but it has also continuously brought me benefits… However, Ma'am Mary's pledging of shares was to secretly acquire more shares… Klein listened in silence before revealing a warm smile.

"Thank you."

He paused and added, "I believe in the character of every friend, but in the field of business, caution is forever the first principle.

"I've already gotten Walter to hire an independent lawyer and accounting team to perform the due diligence, and come up with a proposal that can protect my interests and avoid taxes in the best way possible.

"Before that, I won't make any decisions."

Wahana raised her head a little and looked into Dwayne Dantès's deep blue eyes before suddenly sighing with a laugh.

"You truly are a wise person."

Klein originally wanted to attribute it to maturity, but thinking back to how Wahana's husband had previously been in a scam over his cloth, and he had only managed to reduce his losses thanks to him, such an answer easily made her imagine things and make comparisons. Since it would appear like a mockery, he changed his excuse and said with a chuckle, "My wisdom comes from the lessons I've received in the past."

"It's hard to imagine you being duped." Wahana chuckled as she lowered her head. "Is it due to all your experiences that you can appreciate the different kinds of charms for all kinds of ladies?"

When is this rumor ever going to end… Klein said with a helpless smile, "Every flower has something beautiful about it."

After familiarizing himself with the entire process and the corresponding dance, Klein walked Wahana out. Together with his valet, Richardson, he took up Ma'am Mary's invitation and headed for the Coim Company in Cherwood Borough.

Chapter 798 - Revisiting an Old Haunt

◆

Cherwood Borough, outside the Coim Company.

When Klein alighted from the carriage, he looked around as if he had never been here before, as though everything had a strong sense of novelty.

In fact, he wasn't a stranger to the area. He knew that opposite the street was the Gardeley department store where the middle-class enjoyed patronizing, and that there was a shop not far away that was famous for its specialty Desi pies.

He had once spent a considerable amount of time here waiting for Doragu Gale, to tail him so as to obtain evidence to his acts of adultery!

Retracting his gaze, Klein walked towards the Coim Company with Richardson. Ma'am Mary and her lady's maid were already waiting there.

In the relatively conservative Loen Kingdom, a lady's servant had to be of the same sex; otherwise, it would result in nasty gossip, affecting her social relationships and marriage. Therefore, even though Ma'am Mary's lady's maid needed to play the role of her secretary to a certain extent, with her understanding societal etiquette, commercial knowledge, and having a certain level of negotiation skill, all she could do was select from women with good education or with relevant working experience without considering any men.

Similarly, gentlemen needed to have valets and commercial secretaries of the same sex.

Of course, even so, there were always people who couldn't rein themselves in and engaged in immoral acts. Every year, there were cases of servants and their employers having relations. Amongst them, the maids were mostly the victims. They were either cheated, forced, or enticed to become the male employer's lover. When they were eventually discovered, they would be fired, losing their jobs. Then, their reputation would be destroyed, making them ineligible options for servants again. Many a time, they had to become prostitutes.

"Good afternoon, Dwayne." Ma'am Mary welcomed him with a smile.

Klein bowed and said, "Good afternoon, Ma'am. It really is a flourishing area."

Such a topic was roughly equivalent to talking about the weather.

After Mary exchanged pleasantries with him, she led Dwayne Dantès through the Coim Company's entrance and said with a smile, "Later, there will be professionals giving you an explanation as they show you around.

"After about half an hour, head on up. I've prepared a buffet and invited a few friends in different circles."

Friends in different circles… This is her trying to expand my social circle… Very sincere! Klein nodded slightly and said, "As someone not from the area, I always look forward to knowing more friends, having just come to Backlund."

"No, you're nothing like that. If I had the liberty of saying it, you're a true Backlund gentleman who has received excellent education," Ma'am Mary replied politely.

As they conversed, they passed through the door and entered the reception area which had excellent lighting. A stocky man in a suit with a beautiful mustache stood there waiting.

“This is Luke Sammer. He is our Coim Company’s first manager,” Mary introduced him to Dwayne Dantès.

Actually, I know him… Klein looked at Luke and nodded with a smile.

To him, Luke Sammer was a rather staid, professional gentleman. He enjoyed machinery and was a very gentlemanly person at banquets. He didn’t belittle the poor detective who had yet to make a name for himself, not did he deliberately curry favor with the few mid-ranking civil servants of the Backlund municipal department that lived on Minsk Street.

“This is my friend, Dwayne Dantès. He’s interested in anthracite and high-quality charcoal. Help me give him a detailed explanation,” Mary said to Luke.

Luke, who had been informed ahead of time, took a step forward and looked at the tycoon from Desi Bay. He gave a warm smile and said respectfully, “Mr. Dantès, this is the Coim Company’s headquarters… We have long-term agreements with several anthracite mines… We supply Cherwood, Hillston, North, and West Borough with anthracite and high-quality charcoal, satisfying 30% of their overall demand. We also have the chance of clinching a huge contract with the navy…”

I’ve never seen Luke with such an expression… Klein followed him around Coim Company with an unperturbed expression as he listened to Luke introduce the various areas. From time to time, he would inquire without expressing his attitude.

Half an hour later, they went up to the second floor and entered a huge meeting room.

The place was already set up with tables clinging close to the walls. Plates of food were randomly placed on them, with mainly ham, smoked meat, sausages, bread, salad, cakes, pudding, and other cold dishes. However, there were a few hot dishes.

Just as he stepped in, Dwayne Dantès was introduced to two men who were talking close to Mary.

"This is Reporter Mike Joseph from the Daily Observer. This is an excellent surgeon, Dr. Aaron Ceres. In Backlund, you will often need them."

As Klein listened to Mary, he smiled at the two gentlemen, the corners of his lips nearly twitching.

These are all friends I'm very familiar with! Well, I'm even more familiar with the fetus in the womb of Aaron's wife. Hmm, why does that sound wrong… As Klein lampooned, he patiently waited for Mary to introduce Dwayne Dantès to the two men before politely greeting Mike and Aaron.

Mike Joseph didn't look much different from last year. He had thin brows, rough skin, and charming blue eyes. As for Aaron Ceres, although he was intrinsically a cold and reserved person, he didn't make it obvious. Everything that happened in the recent half-year had been smooth for him. In terms of mood and confidence, he was riding a high.

Upon hearing that Dantès was a tycoon from Desi, Mike took out his name card and handed it over with a smile.

"You don't mind me advertising, right?

"If you wish to publish an advertisement, find me. Be it the Daily Observer or the Tussock Times, I can provide you with a discounted price."

As he spoke, Mike winked, indicating that he was joking.

You are nothing but a reporter with all these fake identification documents… Why didn't you mention the discount price advertisements to Sherlock Moriarty in the past? You were looking down on the detective, were you? Klein lampooned and exchanged name cards with him.

“I’ve always had such needs.”

Following that, he turned to Aaron and handed another name card to him.

“I was recently ill and recovered only recently. I’m very aware of how important a doctor is.”

“I’m a surgeon, so I believe you wouldn’t wish to meet me that much.” Despite saying so, Aaron still received the name card.

No, I’d love to meet you. I even wish to join the party of your child’s birth… Klein mumbled, deliberately leading the conversation to the field of medicine and having a good conversation with Mike and Aaron.

He had previously been stressing over how to close ties with Aaron to reestablish connections with a particular unborn fetus. After all, the paper crane was about to tear at any moment, making it unusable for even one more attempt. As for Sherlock Moriarty, it was difficult for him to openly appear in Backlund to pay Aaron a visit, much less participate in the birth party.

There aren’t any problems now. With Ma’am Mary’s introduction, I can very naturally get close to Aaron. When the time comes, I’ll definitely be invited. Hehe, I might even be made the godfather of a particular Snake of Mercury; after all, we are all believers of the Goddess… Will this make a particular fetus angry?… I’d better be careful. I definitely wouldn’t mention this unless Aaron mentions it… Klein thought in delight.

He skillfully held himself back without appearing overly passionate on their first meeting. After a simple chat, he was introduced to the other guests by Mary.

During this process, Klein didn’t forget to get some food and water, making him appear to easily adapt himself to the environment.

After completing a round, Mary stopped and said after some deliberation, “Everyone here is my friend.”

This means that you didn’t invite anyone from the other camp, and you are also including me as your friend? Klein nodded gently.

“I probably shouldn’t ask as a gentleman, but as a businessman, I need to know who is the person, or who are the people, vying for the Coim Company’s controlling share rights?”

Mary fell silent for two seconds.

“Baron Syndras and his friends. They wish to publicly list the Coim Company and earn the sky-high evaluation that will eventually happen. They’re completely unconcerned with the company’s future development.”

Baron Syndras, one of the richest men in Loen. By donating to the Conservative Party, he became an aristocrat and is a banker, factory owner, and a powerful businessman… It’s hard to tell where he stands, so even though he relied on the Conservative Party to obtain his aristocratic title, he’s more aligned with the New Party while being biased towards merchants… Klein thought and asked with a smile, “Why didn’t you get that Mr. Hall to help? His father is a powerful noble and banker. He should be able to provide you with the necessary help.”

Mary said with a wry smile, “Mr. Hall doesn’t wish to involve himself in this matter. He claims to be the chief secretary of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, so he can’t be involved in commercial activities that deal with anthracite or charcoal.”

A man whose true ambitions lie in politics… However, he probably doesn’t wish to be at odds with Baron Syndras… Heh heh, if I were to choose another butler back then, I’d likely have established ties with Baron Syndras… He’s so rich, so if he really wants to raise the price, I wouldn’t be able to beat him… Heh, will a trope of him using money to crush me appear… Klein didn’t ask further as he said, “I will wait for the investigation report.”

Realizing that Dwayne Dantès wasn’t directly backing out, Mary said with slight gratitude, “In this age, chivalrous people are already few and far between. You are one of them.”

Klein smiled without promising anything. After the buffet was over, he began returning to North Borough on his high-end four-wheeled carriage.

As he daydreamed while looking out the window, Klein suddenly said to Richardson, “Turn towards Saint Samuel Cathedral.”

He had failed to figure out the exact answer to the reason for the anomaly in the cathedral which was later quelled. This made him wonder if he should find a chance to make contact with the Keepers.

He also remembered that every afternoon, there would at least be a Keeper who prayed to the Goddess in the prayer hall.

How should I make contact? In that environment, even a conversation will appear noisy… And this will easily incur the suspicion of others… Klein frowned slightly as he decided to observe before coming up with a solution.

The carriage didn’t change direction as it continued driving towards Böklund Street, but it didn’t stop and instead continued past it.

Inside the carriage, Klein closed his eyes to calm his slightly anxious feelings.

Chapter 799 - Spying

◆

North Borough, Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Just as Klein entered the main prayer hall, he used the points of light that shone from the back of the altar to survey his surroundings, taking in all the believers inside.

In one glance, Klein rapidly locked onto a target. He followed the aisle and walked forward without showing any abnormal signs.

In the first row was an elder wearing a black clergyman's robe, but he exuded a cold aura. His face was pale, and his hair was withered and yellow. He had his eyes closed tightly as he prayed with great focus. He was one of the Keepers that Klein had previously sensed.

His shift is usually on Friday… Klein didn't approach him and instead sat two pews away from him. After finding a spot to sit down, he handed over his hat and cane to Richardson.

Then, while sitting down, he tapped his left thumb on the first segment of his index finger twice, silently activating his Spirit Body Threads vision.

Suddenly, black illusory threads appeared in front of Klein as they densely extended out of different Spirit Bodies endlessly.

Having just taken his seat, Klein shifted his gaze, casting it onto the Keeper.

He nearly exclaimed from what he saw, but thanks to his self-control as a Clown, and his ability to expect abnormal situations, he managed to relax and maintain his staid attitude.

In his vision, although the yellow-haired elder had Spirit Body Threads extending out, his body was entirely black in color on the inside as the darkness swallowed the origins of the illusory threads in a way that was completely different from ordinary Beyonders!

Indeed, they have already been eroded by the core seal, causing a mutation at the level of the soul… From the looks of it, the problem is closer to my second guess. They are, in a sense, part of the core seal. Once they show signs of losing control, they will immediately trigger the item's instinctive reaction that forcefully quells them… It's no wonder the Keepers need to be a voluntary role and be advanced in their years. They probably understand the outcome… Klein sighed as he prepared to deactivate his Spirit Body Threads senses and retract his gaze.

At this moment, he saw a pair of eyes. They were black without any emotions within.

Beside the eyes, there were pronounced wrinkles that extended bit by bit, as though they were distorted, strange mysterious symbols.

They were the Keeper's eyes!

At some point in time, he had straightened his body, turned around, and looked blankly at Dwayne Dantès!

Klein's scalp instantly went numb as he forced a smile and nodded at him as though it was a normal meeting of eyes.

The Keeper slowly moved his head as a response.

Then, Klein felt as though he was extracted from his surroundings as things turned blurry before turning clear.

At that instant, he knew that he had been pulled into a dream.

Hence, as he maintained his image as Dwayne Dantès, he sized up his surroundings, only to realize that he was still inside Saint Samuel Cathedral. However, all the pews were either damaged or overturned and strewn everywhere. It looked as though it had met with a raid.

The altar up ahead was filled with cracks and weeds. The thick layer of dust made it seem like it had been in such desolate conditions since a long time ago.

The Keeper with yellow, withered hair was in front of the collapsed donation box, coldly staring at Dwayne Dantès who was suited in black.

Upon seeing Klein look over, he widened his mouth to reveal white, sharp, irregular teeth.

And these teeth were embedded with blurry, indistinct, and tiny figures. They had complete facial features and limbs, and their expressions were different but were colored with the same pain as though they were imprisoned there and unable to escape.

“Grunt…” The Keeper’s throat let out a growl that sounded like a beast as his back hunched over.

By his spine and waist, his clothes swelled as four blood-vessel-covered arms without any skin grew out.

Right on the heels of that, they grew fine black hair as the tips of his fingers grew sharp nails with a smacking sound.

In just three short seconds, the Keeper who looked normal had turned into an eight-legged monster that sprawled on the ground. It looked like a spider that had silently woven its web in the night while awaiting its prey, and also like a deformed black wolf that struck intense fear into one’s heart.

Meanwhile, two gigantic palms filled with black hair extended out of the desolate altar without any warning. They pressed onto the sides as black gas condensed into slippery tentacles that extended in every direction. Soon, they filled the entire prayer hall.

The aura that left him trembling, the extreme sense of fear, and the huge, illusory figure were penetrating an invisible barrier as they manifested more clearly.

He lost control? That Keeper lost control? Klein stood there, subconsciously wishing to react and use his uniqueness to forcibly escape the dream, but suddenly, he figured out the series of events that had happened. His expression changed as he wore a terrified expression as he ran to the door, trembling. It looked like he was struggling in a dream.

In the time it took to take a breath, a dark chill spread out from the outside world like a tidal wave, inundating the entire dream and quelling everything.

Klein snapped his eyes open and realized that he had fallen asleep at some point in time. As for the yellow-haired Keeper, he had long turned his head to continue praying.

Dwayne Dantès's eyes darted around as he looked around in horror as though he was still immersed in the dream and unable to escape the horror that had gripped him.

After nearly a minute, he took two deep breaths and looked at the Sacred Emblem again, drawing a sign of the crimson moon on his chest.

Only then did Klein have the time to recall the experience he had and began speculating as to what had happened.

As I had spied on his Spirit Body Threads, it caused him to show signs of losing control; thus, causing an excessive reaction by pulling me into a dream and attempting to deal with me?

Later, the core seal behind Chanis Gate sensed the anomaly and quelled the problem…

Now, the crux of the matter is if the Keeper still remembers the source of his near-mutation… If he's already used to it, he should find the cause of the problem very vague considering his present state… Of course, it might not be my problem. Perhaps he was already on the brink of losing control… Klein looked at the elder once again to observe what he would do next to determine how he should react.

If all else fails, I'll directly use Creeping Hunger and escape with Traveling… Klein rapidly made up his mind as he patiently waited for the possible repercussions.

A few minutes later, he saw Bishop Elektra walk in from the side door towards him.

Klein's heart tightened as he spread open his left fingers in preparation to activate Creeping Hunger.

At that moment, he suddenly had an idea and stopped his actions.

If the Keeper has already informed the bishops about my problematic situation via a dream, I would be the victim of a collective assault by the Church's Beyonders. After all, pulling me into a dream can avoid harming the other believers. Therefore, they have no need to find a bishop I'm familiar with to come over… It's likely more to extend their regards and to placate me… Klein retracted his gaze and continued a praying pose.

In less than a minute, he finally sensed someone approach as he looked up and saw Bishop Elektra softly say, "You don't look too well?"

"I fell asleep without realizing it and had a nightmare. I still feel a little afraid," Klein said with a self-deprecating smile.

Bishop Elektra sat beside him and said in a staid manner, "Dreams are sometimes the manifestation of the fear within you.

"You will feel better as long as you sincerely pray to the Goddess and consume holy water.

“Of course, the most important thing is to not suppress yourself usually. Learn to confess to the Goddess. At times, wailing in secret can reduce a lot of your stress.”

Klein secretly observed the bishop’s attitude and read his tone before heaving a sigh of relief.

“I understand.”

He cast his gaze forward again, bowed his head, and clasped his hands to begin praying silently.

While doing so, he saw the Keeper in front of him stand up and walk to the side door where a bishop was waiting.

Phew… Klein silently exhaled as he truly became one with the serene environment.

Suddenly, he heard a voice that was his, but it wasn’t something that he could control.

“Did you think what you did was well-hidden?

“No! Not at all! Have you forgotten that you’ve touched the Evernight Goddess’s Holy Artifact?”

Chapter 800 - Psychologically Becoming “Better”

◆

Who is it? Who is the one speaking? Klein’s muscles tensed up as he nearly opened his eyes.

At that moment, his back oozed with sweat that soaked his shirt.

What he was most alarmed of wasn’t the words said, but that it directly sounded in his heart and had modulated the voice to sound exactly like his.

Although I maintained my lucidity in that dream, I still had my Spirit Body tainted by his psyche that was on the verge of losing control? Or is someone using that Keeper to pass me a message? Countless guesses ran through Klein’s mind. Finally, combining the contents of what was said and his own situation, he came up with a preliminary judgment.

The number of people who knows about my identity as Klein Moretti is few to begin with. Likewise for those who know that Klein Moretti had once sworn an oath while touching a Holy Artifact. Furthermore, there’s almost no intersection between the two.

Mr. Azik had heard me mention the former matter before, but if he wants to give me any reminders, he can directly do it through a messenger. There’s no need to use such a frightening method… Will Auceptin might know; after all, he’s a Snake of Mercury who represents fate. But by the same logic, “He” can directly contact me… Of course, I can eliminate the possibility that he suddenly had the thought of frightening me. I just thought in the afternoon about having a chance of becoming his godfather…

The Antigonus family's notebook had corrupted the Keeper, just like how it used the Misfortune Cloth Puppet to deliver the symbol? But if it really is the Antigonus family's notebook, why didn't it just give me the potion formula directly? Or try negotiating with me to help in a Notebook Jailbreak… Saint Samuel Cathedral is the headquarters of the Backlund diocese, making it at a higher level than Saint Selena Cathedral. That notebook shouldn't have the ability to do anything further. It should be securely sealed…

Apart from them, there is only one entity who is aware of both matters—the Evernight Goddess. However, with a deity's pride, "She" has no need to pretend to act as a passerby to call me out with a polite and estranged tone… I'm in Saint Samuel Cathedral, so all "She" needs to do is produce a revelation, and dozens of Beyonders will appear to mow me down. And as a diocese headquarters, with sufficient preparation, they can probably disrupt Traveling; therefore, there's no need to go through so much trouble…

Hmm, there's still one more person who's aware of both matters…

That's myself!

Before planning my operation, I've actually considered the corresponding problem. Back then, my conclusion was that I didn't need to worry too much about it because only after advancing to Faceless will some of the gray fog's powers enter the real world, allowing certain demigods to sense my uniqueness. Before this, only Beyonders from the Monster pathway could discover a tiny bit of my uniqueness, and back when I touched the holy sword and made that oath, I had yet to become a Clown…

Just because of the secret connection established from the oath, it made the Goddess slowly sense something about me. It's been so long, and I haven't seen "Her" take any action… That female Angel, hmm… she should be an angel. She had even smiled at me when she wiped away

Mr. A… Therefore, the Goddess might be happy to see me take away the Antigonus family's notebook. Although I'm not sure of "Her" motives, I can only accept it and subsequently think of ways to deal with it at my current level. This is ultimately safer than climbing the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range… Of course, that's built on the premise that the lady which wiped away Mr. A is an angel of the Church…

Hmm… Although I had undergone all kinds of acting during the Faceless stage and got to know myself well, I've consumed additional potions without completely digesting them. And Marionettist requires every marionette to adhere to a specific persona. This also easily causes a personality dissociation… Also, to steal the Antigonus family's notebook and to act as Dwayne Dantès, I'm under immense stress. I am subconsciously wavering and am suspicious… In this state, the Keeper's corrupted psyche of nearly losing control had agitated my Spirit Body, causing me to have a split personality?

Just as Klein thought of this, the familiar yet unfamiliar voice resounded in his mind again.

"Heh, your considerations are too idealized. All of your actions are fundamentally all thanks to luck. If that high-ranking deacon, Crestet Cesimir, with the holy sword was here in Backlund to handle Beyonder cases, can you guarantee that the holy sword wouldn't sense you when you are in the same cathedral? Both of you are linked by an oath!"

If Deacon Cesimir were to come, I'll abandon this plan… Besides, it's also not possible to avoid it ahead of time. I'll find an excuse or reason to be out of town for some time… Klein mumbled inwardly.

Then, he heard the voice belonging to himself sound in his mind:

"This makes it a situation prone to too many accidents and unpredictable developments.

"Before coming to the cathedral, didn't you also not consider that the mere observation of Spirit Body Threads would result in a mutation?"

My nervousness back then was the anxiety that something happened beyond my expectations. However, as it's a mere observation without me making any direct contact, I didn't believe that there would be too great a problem. I should be more cautious in the future… Also, accidents and developments exist for everything… Who exactly are you? Klein closed his eyes as he pretended to focus on praying.

The voice hesitated and said, "I'm Klein. You are Zhou Mingrui.

"No, I'm Zhou Mingrui. You are Klein…"

Indeed… Klein felt his hair stand on end once again. He decided to leave Saint Samuel Cathedral immediately, return home, and resolve the problem of his character dissociation.

When the symptoms first appear, the situation is easier to resolve. Once the other personality stabilizes and becomes stronger, it will begin to snatch control of the body. I might even need external help when that happens!

He opened his eyes and looked at Elektra with a tranquil expression.

"I feel like I've calmed down."

Ever since I got a mental illness, my mind is a lot better… As he spoke, Klein inwardly gave a self-deprecating comment.

He enjoyed lampooning, partially because it was in his character to do so, and partially to enforce his personality. It was ultimately to remind himself who he was, so as not to lose himself to his acting.

Bishop Elektra smiled.

"May the Goddess bless you."

As he spoke, he took a cup of water from a priest's hand and passed it to Dwayne Dantès.

Without any explanation needed, Klein knew that it was holy water. He often drank it in the past; hence, hiding his anxiety, he received it in a composed manner and downed it.

A refreshing feeling slushed down his throat, jolting his mind as he became a lot more awake. Even the voice in his mind weakened.

This has the effect of placating the Spirit Body… The Church does view Dwayne Dantès with great importance. Of course, this is created by their Beyonders… As Klein nodded at Bishop Elektra, he drew the sign of the crimson moon and staidly walked to the altar and donated fifty pounds into the donation box.

After doing everything, he led Richardson and left the cathedral, riding the carriage back to Böklund Street.

On his trip back, he didn't feed the pigeons, because an ordinary person who had just encountered something would hardly have the peace of mind to do so.

After returning home, the silent Klein used the excuse of an afternoon nap to dismiss his servants. In his master bedroom's bathroom, he took four steps counterclockwise and headed above the gray fog.

Passing through the roars and ravings, he didn't feel his body be purified. He was increasingly certain that the voice in his mind originated from himself. It was a result of being corrupted and agitated, causing a character dissociation.

Sitting in the high-back chair of The Fool, Klein immediately studied his Spirit Body's situation. He discovered that there were some signs of chaos without it being pure. The corresponding aura colors were somewhat spotted.

After seriously contemplating for two minutes and ignoring the echoing noise in his head, Klein conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made him devoutly pray:

"Honorable Mr. Fool… Please inform The Moon that I wish to rent the

Mental Terror Candle for half a day. I know he has the means of obtaining it…”

Very early on, his identity as The World had been prepared for Sherlock Moriarty, so Klein wasn’t worried about it.

†

South of the Bridge, Harvest Church.

Emlyn White, who was anticipating his obtaining of Lilith’s Ring in the evening, suddenly saw the endless gray fog and heard The World.

Alarmed, he muttered in silence, How does he know that I can get the Mental Terror Candle?

Chapter 801 - Plea

◆

After a brief moment of stupefaction, Emlyn couldn’t help but look around. He suspected that The World was lurking around him, as though he was one of the nearby believers.

After all, he had never mentioned the Mental Terror Candle at the Tarot Club. Bishop Utravsky seldom had conflicts with others, so he almost never used any mystical items. If it wasn’t because Emlyn had been planted with a psychological cue to frequently head to the Harvest Church and received the heads-up from Sherlock Moriarty, he wouldn’t have asked the bishop and learned of the existence of the Mental Terror Candle.

At that instant, everyone looked like The World to Emlyn. Be it the plump middle-aged man, the granny with a gray headscarf, or the fashionable beauty, he felt that all of them looked like they had something similar to The World.

No, I must figure it out. He’s actually so aware of my surroundings… I haven’t mentioned certain things even while in front of Mr. Fool… Emlyn was left in utter shock as he stood up and walked to the clergymen’s break room at the back. In a quiet and empty environment, he replied, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I wish to directly communicate with The World.”

In less than ten seconds, Emlyn saw a dark red glow surge forward like a tidal wave and devour him.

Then, he found himself back above the gray fog. He was inside the majestic palace and was seated at his seat.

And at the other end of the mottled table was the blurry-figure of The World who was waiting for him.

Compared to before, Emlyn had changed tremendously. He wasn't in a rush to speak to The World, and he instead bowed to Mr. Fool, who was leisurely watching at the other end of the table, before looking at his target.

"How did you know that I can get the Mental Terror Candle?"

Under Klein's control, The World said with a hoarse laugh, "We might have met before."

He didn't speak further and only mentioned the key point. As for whether Emlyn could figure out the situation, that wasn't his problem.

Of course, Klein believed that Emlyn lacked the ability to connect The World to Sherlock Moriarty since he lacked the necessary clues.

Emlyn frowned bit by bit as he had a few targets of suspicion, but he wasn't able to determine who was The World.

"Believe me. I have no ill intentions towards the members of the Tarot Club," The World added when he saw Emlyn in a state of prolonged silence.

Heh, there will be a day when I'll find you! Emlyn silently muttered to himself as he asked, "What are you going to do with the Mental Terror Candle? I need to have a substantial reason to borrow such a mystical item."

Klein controlled his urge to rub his temples as he made The World turn solemn and say, "To treat my psychological problems."

Treat… psychological problems… Emlyn couldn't help but shrink his body back before straightening it again.

Looking back at The World, his eyes clearly indicated that The World really was a dangerous lunatic.

…The Mental Terror Candle does have such effects, Emlyn thought for a moment and said, "I can only borrow it for half a day. There wouldn't be any problems, right?"

Klein held back the horror and pleas that were running through his mind as he controlled The World to answer, "No problem."

If the Mental Terror Candle was effective, Klein could finish the problem in fifteen minutes. If it wasn't of any use, it would be the same even if he possessed it for days or months. Therefore, the rental duration wasn't critical. He didn't mind such restrictions at all.

Emlyn did a count and said, "The rental fee will cost 300 pounds, as well as five pages of Beyonder powers in Leymano's Travels."

He decided to outsource half of the debt he had.

Five pages… How many pages did this fellow use… As Klein lampooned, he made The World reply, "That wouldn't be an issue."

After closing the deal, Emlyn immediately returned to the real world and walked into the Harvest Church's break room for the clergymen.

Casting his gaze to the side of the altar and waiting for Bishop Utravsky to finish talking to the believers, Emlyn suddenly fell into a dilemma.

Although he sounded confident in front of The World, he had never tried borrowing similar items from the bishop. He had no idea what kind of attitude the bishop would have.

As his gaze darted around, Emlyn subconsciously surveyed the tiny prayer hall.

I've helped Father rescue many commoners who were infected by the plague, and have been teaching those who wish to learn about herbs.

I’ve made the faith of Earth Mother spread quite significantly in this borough. What’s wrong with borrowing the Mental Terror Candle for half a day? Emlyn raised his chin and walked to Bishop Utravsky, who he needed to look up at, and cleared his throat.

“I have a friend that has a psychological problem. I wish to borrow the Mental Terror Candle.”

He didn’t directly mention his contributions, because his pride didn’t permit him to do so.

Utravsky looked down at the priest-robed Emlyn and smiled warmly.

“Okay.”

…That’s it? Emlyn was stunned, finding it unbelievable that the bishop would agree so easily.

He didn’t immediately accept it as he couldn’t help but ask, “Aren’t you afraid that I’ll lose the candle?”

Utravsky replied with a smile, “Everyone and every item has its end. They will all return to the earth, buried deep within the soil and sprout, grow, and bloom, one incarnation after another.

“That is the fate of all entities. If the Mental Terror Candle is lost, it just means that my connection with it has come to an end. I will need to patiently await the arrangements that fate and Mother have for me.”

Whether the Mental Terror Candle is lost depends on fate, but whether I end up being killed by you is also fate? Emlyn lampooned without asking further. He received the strange candle from the half-giant bishop.

Following that, he used the excuse of needing to treat his friend to leave the Harvest Church. He randomly found an inn and set up the sacrificial ritual.

†

Above the gray fog, Klein once again received the Mental Terror Candle.

[image]

More than half of the mystical item was burnt, and its surface was covered with what looked like human skin. There were a few warts that protruded out.

The candle's wick was very short and was entirely black in color. It was covered in thin densely packed scale-like patterns.

Klein didn't delay, for he didn't wish to give his alternate personality a chance to grow. He wanted to resolve the problem completely while it was still weak; otherwise, what awaited him was the irreversible fate of losing control. Furthermore, the mysterious space above the gray fog would completely screen the negative effects of the combat between the two personalities.

Phew… Klein slowly exhaled as he extended his hand to summon the Sea God Scepter.

At that moment, he didn't do any divination because he couldn't be sure who "me" referred to. The outcome would naturally be meaningless.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers and lit the Mental Terror Candle.

Above the pitch-black wick, a flame with light-blue spirituality silently glowed, illuminating the palace that looked like a giant's residence.

Unknowingly, the environment changed as a cupboard, desk, bunk bed, and gas meter appeared in Klein's eyes. The crimson moonlight shone in from outside the windows, covering every item with a crimson veil layer.

This was the apartment where the Morettis had lived in!

This was the place where Klein Moretti had shot himself to death!

At that moment, a figure was sitting at the bottom bunk, looking at the Sea God Scepter-wielding Klein with a warped expression.

He had traits like black hair, brown eyes, thin built, average-looking features, a rather deep outline, and a scholarly air to him. He was another "Klein."

This "Klein" revealed a furious expression as he said, "You occupied my body, and now you wish for my soul to be obliterated?

"I should be Klein Moretti! You despicable, shameless transmigrator. You parasite!"

He appeared to have just grown in strength, and he wasn't able to use the objects in the external world.

Klein didn't reply as he walked over with a heavy expression.

The expression of "Klein" slowly changed as fear occupied his eyes.

His body scrunched up as he pleaded with a slight tremble, "Let me go. Let me go.

"You snatched my brother, my sister, and my life from me. Isn't that enough?

"I'll remain quietly in your body, helping you analyze problems and giving you suggestions. I'll definitely not wrestle control with you over the body.

"Let me go. Let me go…"

Klein remained silent as he raised his Sea God Scepter-wielding right hand.

The “Klein” was already awash with tears as he yelled angrily and fearfully, “I only wanted to remind you!

“If I wasn’t trying to remind you, why would I have exposed myself!?

“Let me go. Let me go… I have no ill intentions!”

Klein silently looked at him and made the blue gems on the tip of the Sea God Scepter light up one after another.

Lightning bolts instantly appeared as they twisted and entangled “Klein,” like a storm.

Amidst shrill cries, the figure rapidly dissipated as a bolt of lightning wiped all traces of it.

As expected of myself… To know the soft spots in my heart and which are the most effective ways to plea… However, I’ve already come to know who I am. I’m Zhou Mingrui who has fused with Klein’s memories and emotions. If I were to let you go, it would be equivalent to splitting the two up, admitting that they are opposing parties. That way, I’ll immediately lose control once I return to the real world… Klein lowered the scepter and closed his eyes as he sighed silently.

Then, he ultimately maintained his lucidity as he left the mind world.

Chapter 802 - Follow-up Solutions

◆

When Klein opened his eyes again, the threats and pleas in his mind had vanished. The light-blue flame before his eyes continued burning on that pitch-black wick.

He seriously inspected the state of his Spirit Body and confirmed that the signs of chaos were gone. His aura's colors had turned pure and were no longer spotted.

It's finally resolved… Klein heaved a sigh of relief and lowered the Sea God Scepter. With a snap of his fingers, he extinguished the Mental Terror Candle.

He didn't immediately return to the real world. He sat quietly above the gray fog as he used the silent palace to calm the remnant negative emotions that his inner heart couldn't vent.

After this matter, Klein gained a deeper understanding that the path of a Beyonder was a path that constantly fought with madness. All Beyonders would be pushed to the brink of losing control, or they would have psychological problems if they weren't careful due to internal reasons or external stimuli. And once the symptoms appeared, not resolving them in time might leave them in a situation that would be abnormally difficult to resolve.

The split personality that was created was a result of internal and external factors… The cause is a result of me being a transmigrator. Yet, I fused with Klein Moretti's memory fragments and received parts of his emotions. I was naturally inclined to having a dissociation.

Together with me trying to steal the Antigonus family's notebook recently, it's akin to me walking along the boundary of an abyss to act as Dwayne Dantès. The stress is immense, so after being agitated and mentally corrupted by the Keeper's near loss of control, the problem erupted… As Klein raised his hand to rub his temples, he vanished from above the gray fog.

Just as he returned to his body, Klein felt his mind and spirit were a lot more relaxed. It felt like a dusty window had been carefully wiped clean, and the additional Faceless potion he had consumed was fully digested.

The alternate personality that appeared is really a result of all the past psychological problems. I was able to resolve the problem with the Mental Terror Candle, which is equivalent to receiving a complete and effective Psychoanalysis. I wouldn't have any latent risks in this aspect in the short term. However, I need to be constantly taking notes and frequently regulating myself. I mustn't be careless… Klein walked out of the washroom, came to the balcony, and looked at the distant mountains and nearby vegetation. He was in quite good condition.

He could clearly sense that his self-recognition and self-acknowledgment had deepened. The constant sense of disidentification had greatly weakened as a result.

I never expected my victory over my split personality would bring such benefits… If it wasn't because the generation of another split personality would result in one that's stronger and harder to deal with, I would've wished to split a few personalities, killing "myself" several times… Klein shook his head with a scoff as he gave a self-deprecating laugh.

To be frank, just one instance of a split personality was rather dangerous and unresolvable for anyone else. Since he was aware of where to acquire the Mental Terror Candle, the essence of the problem, and his experience in resolving it in the past, he was able to eliminate the latent risks and not allow his split personality to strengthen itself. Otherwise, the best outcome would be the state in which Bishop Utravsky was in, and the worst outcome would be a gradual loss of control until it became an inevitability.

Furthermore, I still have a Psychiatrist as backup… Klein chuckled as he strolled back to his room and sat in a reclining chair.

He recalled what he had encountered during the day, and from there, he obtained the points that he needed to take note of in the future.

If a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Sleepless pathway loses control, they will be able to directly cause mental corruption by pulling others into a dream. I need to be wary of that in the future…

Before becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder, the Rampagers of most pathways aren't capable of doing this. Often, they will mutate into monsters and use the corresponding Beyonder powers to control or attack their targets. It's difficult for them to transmit their corruption.

Apart from the Mid-Sequence Beyonders from the Sleepless pathway, the Spectator pathway should be capable of doing so as well… When faced with similar enemies, not rushing to wipe them out would really result in a situation where you have no way of defending yourself… Also, although I'm aware of the Keepers' conditions and have figured out their relationship with the core seal, the corresponding problems have arisen. If I were to disguise myself and infiltrate inside, how should I create the performance of being eroded by the core seal and not have my disguise be seen through… Klein carefully contemplated for a moment and was completely out of ideas. All he could do was stand up, walk to his desk, and draw a picture comprising of symbols that implied concealment and mystery prying.

He was summoning Arrodes.

The full-body mirror in the master bedroom suddenly undulated with invisible waves as silver light appeared, forming Loenese text:

"Exalted Great Master, your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is constantly at your service.

"My actions from before had caused a certain damage to your image. I-I'm very appalled and ashamed. Will you accept my apology?"

You actually know to admit your faults… Klein scoffed and said, "Don't make the same mistake again in the future."

"Alright!" The full-body mirror presented new words. "How may I be of service?"

"There's something." Klein deliberated and said, "The Keepers of the Church of Evernight are contaminated by the core seal's power behind Chanis Gate. They are in different conditions from the typical Beyonder. Is there any way to perfect a disguise?"

The silver words changed and outlined new text:

"Great Master, there's only one method—to sacrifice your marionette and allow it to receive the contamination of the core seal. It will gradually change and become identical to the Keepers. Then, you can hold it in your body to fool the core seal."

That actually works… It's an idea… However, a marionette that's made from a Sequence 5 Wraith can't be bought with money… I really need to pay an extremely high price to obtain the High-Sequence potion formulas and ingredients… Klein thought and said, "Then, how do I get the marionette to receive the core seal's contamination?"

Typically speaking, a Wraith marionette might be detected by the seal before being forcefully purified and dispelled just as it approached Chanis Gate, or even just appear in the prayer hall.

The full-body mirror's waves stirred again as it accentuated a figure.

The figure wore an old-fashioned veiled hat. She was tall with long, chestnut hair. She was none other than Queen Mystic, Bernadette.

“Great Master, you can seek her help,” Arrodes explained with a sentence made from silver words.

Her? Queen Mystic isn’t from the Evernight pathway. How can she provide any help? Or does she have a Sealed Artifact that corresponds to the High Sequences of the Evernight pathway, making it similar to the core seal behind Chanis Gate? Thankfully, Admiral of Stars needs a drop of blood from a Mythical Creature. When the time comes, apart from providing an item that can satisfy Will Auceptin, there’s still a middleman fee for me… This will be the middleman fee! Klein thought as he nodded and said, “Very good, you may return.”

“Yes, Exalted Great Master. Your humble servant, Arrodes, awaits your next summoning.” As a silver line of text appeared, Arrodes outlined a palm with a handkerchief in hand as it shook it.

The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched as he looked at it, momentarily unsure how to respond.

†

West Borough, within the Odora family’s villa.

Emlyn White wore a faint smile as he randomly found a single-seater to sit in the activity room.

Diagonally across him, another Sanguine Baron, Rus Báthory, was holding a wine cup filled with blood. He was observing him with narrowed eyes, without concealing his disgust and hatred. Rus Báthory had not only been injured during the hunt for the first Primordial Moon believer, but he also had Emlyn steal away his spoils of war.

Such an act from you will only please me… Emlyn chuckled inwardly as he turned his head to look at Cosmi Odora who had just entered. He waited for the Baron to declare the results and reward him.

Cosmi forced himself to ignore Emlyn’s gaze as he walked to the fireplace and said to all the Sanguine present, “I’m gathering all of you today because the final victor has emerged for the hunting competition.”

Who is it? The Sanguines looked around as they exchanged looks, guessing at who could’ve clinched victory.

Most of their gazes landed on Rus Báthory, with no one believing that it could be Emlyn White. Only Rus Báthory had a hunch as he looked in surprise at the darn fellow.

Cosmi secretly sighed and said, “Emlyn White has already hunted three targets, automatically clinching victory.”

“What?” a young Sanguine blurted out in disbelief.

The Sanguine was a race with fewer members than humans. In Backlund, they were all part of a smaller community; therefore, they weren’t unfamiliar with each other.

Everyone knew what kind of Sanguine Emlyn was!

Chapter 803 - Name Rectification

Amongst all the Sanguine present, even if Emlyn wasn’t the oddest, he was definitely among the top ten.

As a member of a race born with a long lifespan, having one or more hobbies to kill time was common. Emlyn wasn’t the only one who liked dolls, but that wasn’t the problem. Aside from purchasing new dolls and matching them with new clothes, or obtaining blood from hospitals to drink, he almost never left his home. Nor did he enjoy interacting with his fellow kinsmen. Unless he desired relatively fresh blood, needed to obtain some historical knowledge, or exchange for certain ingredients, he never participated in any of the corresponding gatherings.

Such a lifestyle was nearly identical to the aging, high-ranking Sanguine who had no choice but to lie in specially-made coffins to barely maintain their existence. It looked nothing like that of a fellow who had recently matured. As a result, Emlyn became a topic of idle conversation at many Sanguine gatherings.

In the years before, people only mentioned it in passing, jeering at him in private, just like the normal gossip about different freaks in Backlund. When they heard that Emlyn walked into the Harvest Church because he got lost and ended up being captured and locked up underground by the Earth Mother’s bishop, his reputation slid into the irreversible state of being the brunt of the jokes, as well as being a disgrace to the Sanguine.

Yet, this disgraceful fellow had hunted three consecutive Primordial Moon believers!

Those were artificial vampires!

Could it be that he had employed the help of the Church of Earth Mother's clergymen? Or did he hire some especially powerful bounty hunters? Thoughts flashed through the minds of the Sanguine as they speculated over how Emlyn had clinched victory.

At this moment, Cosmi coughed lightly and said, "Emlyn has already found the corresponding characteristic legacy and become a Baron."

Baron… When the members of the Sanguine looked at Emlyn again, there weren't any looks of doubt and puzzlement. Instead, their eyes were filled with shock, astonishment, and surprise.

For the first time in his life, Emlyn was being stared at by his kinsmen in such a manner. He suddenly felt ethereal as his mind was filled with joy. This made him wish to proudly tip his chin and say, "All of you should be addressing me as Lord."

This satisfaction is identical to me buying a doll I've been saving up and craving for… Emlyn sighed silently as he held back his tongue. He wore a faint smile as he slowly surveyed the area. Then, while buttoning his coat, he got up and walked to Cosmi Odora's side.

After the other Sanguine snapped back to their senses as they looked at the two Barons with mixed looks, Cosmi finally said, "The champion of the hunting competition will enter the final list of Viscount candidates and obtain free help for the ritual.

"In addition, he will also receive a ring created by the Ancestor."

As he spoke, Cosmi took out a silver jewelry box engraved with complicated patterns. Snapping it open, he showed it to all the Sanguine present.

It was a translucent ring that seemed to be made of light-red amber. It had a blood-red gem embedded in it. It was the size of a fingernail and it emitted a faint glow.

“It’s called Lilith’s Ring. It allows the wearer to be even more charming and always be in the optimal state of being under the full moon.” Cosmi gave a rough introduction. “It can also make the surroundings be under the effect of a full-moon; hence, the corresponding Beyonder powers will be greatly enhanced. At the same time, it can also project a door that leads deep into the spirit world.”

Cosmi paused and added, “This door is the Door of Summoning. It can let creatures deep in the spirit world use it to arrive in the real world. However, it can only be used once in a fixed amount of time.

“When spirit world creatures pass through their door, it’s equivalent to signing a corresponding contract with the wearer. They will serve the wearer for a specific amount of time, possibly around five minutes. If the service period needs to be maintained for even longer, the wearer needs to personally communicate with the spirit world creature to re-sign a contract that’s of a longer duration.

“Under normal circumstances, the strength of the summoned spirit world creature will be equivalent or slightly stronger than the wearer, but there’s the possibility of them being much weaker or much stronger. There was once a Viscount who relied on this ring to summon a demigod-level spirit world creature.

“The stronger a spirit world creature’s strength, the more they can resist the agreement in the Door of Summoning contract itself and harm the wearer. If you encounter such a situation, you must decisively dispel the projection and end the summoning.

“Its negative effects is Blood Thirsting Disease. You will need to drink at least one blood vial of human blood every hour to relieve it. Otherwise, your blood will boil and evaporate. In less than fifteen minutes, it can cause the death of a Baron.”

I'm not against that. I do yearn to drink blood more frequently, but the problem is that I'm unable to obtain that much blood… Emlyn held back his joy and agitation as he considered how he could resolve the negative effects.

At this moment, Cosmi turned to glance at him.

"The additional blood will be provided by the race."

Then the problem turns into the modification of a bottle so as to carry around that much blood… Emlyn scanned the other Sanguine who wore looks of envy and jealousy as he asked, "If I don't wear it, will I get the Blood Thirsting Disease?"

"No." Cosmi firmly shook his head.

Emlyn stared at Lilith's Ring and asked again, "If I were to wear it for 59 minutes and take it off, will I get the Blood Thirsting Disease?"

Cosmi's facial muscles twitched as he said, "When you wear the ring, you will be inflicted with the Blood Thirsting Disease. You have to drink one vial of human blood to have it subside for an hour. During this process, if you were to take it off and put it on again, the Blood Thirsting Disease will be activated again. Regardless of whether it's been an hour or not, you'll have to drink blood again. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"Of course, this isn't a complicated problem," Emlyn said with a tsk.

Cosmi retracted his gaze and looked at the other Sanguine.

"I'll be giving this ring to the champion of this hunting competition, Emlyn White.

"Congratulations, Emlyn." He turned and extended his right hand towards Emlyn to shake his hand.

Then, he handed over the blood-colored Lilith's Ring to Emlyn.

“Thank you.” Emlyn smiled in a reserved manner.

Cosmi stopped looking at him as he said to the other Sanguine, “There are two targets left. They are your prey, and there will still be a reward for them.”

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At 10 p.m. above the gray fog.

Klein received Leymano’s Travels which Emlyn had sacrificed, and he learned of the usage of the so-called Lilith’s Ring.

The other aspects aren’t noteworthy, but the thing to pay attention to is the Door of Summoning which leads deep into the spirit world… Perhaps there will come a day when the one passing through that door is an ancient goddess, Lilith… Of course, many conditions need to be met… As Klein made a bold hypothesis, he flipped open Leymano’s Travels and checked the Beyonder powers which Emlyn had used and replenished.

He used up all of the Lightning Strikes. Traveling is gone as well… This fellow really doesn’t feel the pinch when using the powers of others…

He added a Wings of Darkness. It can help the user receive an enhancement in speed and the ability of brief flight, as well as it transforming into a colony of illusory blood-sucking bats to attack the enemy…

One is Full Moon. It can make a certain region appear to be in the state of a full moon. One’s spirituality would be rejuvenated and the aspect of death would grow stronger… This is recorded from Lilith’s Ring…

One is Claw of Corrosion. It can cause one’s fingernails to grow another segment with mysterious symbols and patterns. They would be sharp enough to slice through steel. It would also come with potent corrosive abilities, making it the nemesis of defensive methods like scales and skin…

One is Animal Sense. It can communicate with animals and control them while also sharing their senses… If used well, this has wondrous effects… Heh, I've never seen Emlyn use it before. What a waste…

One is Abyss Shackles. It's a spell belonging to the darkness domain. It can make the darkness or shadows condense into a chain that controls or restrains the enemy…

There's no Door of Summoning… That's right. It should be very difficult to record. With Emlyn's personality, he would've given up after a few failures… As Klein flipped through Leymano's Travels, he used divination and his mysticism knowledge to interpret the new Beyonder powers.

Retracting his gaze, he summoned the Sea God Scepter over, added a few pages of Lightning Strike. This was in line with his fear of lacking firepower.

Then, Klein used the Sun Brooch to record Holy Light Summoning and Holy Water Creation, allowing Leymano's Travels's Beyonder powers to become more varied.

After doing all of this, he closed the notebook and picked up the Mental Terror Candle.

After settling the split personality in the afternoon, he didn't immediately return the mystical item. Instead, he had the idea that since it belonged to the Spectator domain, it was possible that it could help him explore the sea of collective subconscious inside Groselle's Travels. Therefore, he planned on delaying it for half a day before returning it to Emlyn.

To his surprise, he found from his research that the Mental Terror Candle didn't have any effects of placating the mind or eliminating negative emotions. All it could do was let one enter the depths of a target’s mind, and from there, one could plant a cue or resolve a problem.

Phew… Klein heaved a sigh of relief. Through the bestowment ritual, he returned the Mental Terror Candle and Leymano’s Travels to Emlyn and Fors respectively.

Returning to the real world, he had a comfortable bath, and he read some papers and magazines before heading to bed.

Amidst his reverie, Klein suddenly woke up, aware that someone had entered his dream.

He saw the scene before him change as the sky was dark and deep. They were adorned with resplendent diamonds that left him awed and serene.

A distance away, a singing voice sounded. The ethereal and common voice reached straight into his heart.

Meanwhile, the clouds moved as the crimson moon half-revealed itself, scattering down its mild glow.

All of this made Klein feel as though he had arrived in the Evernight Goddess’s divine kingdom. In the dream, he felt relaxed and comfortable.

This is… Klein suddenly realized the situation he was in.

This was the arrival of a Beyonder from the Church of the Evernight. This Beyonder was using the dream to placate the tycoon, Dwayne Dantès, so as to heal the mental scars he suffered in the afternoon.

What you are doing only disturbs my sleep! Klein silently sighed helplessly.

Chapter 804 - Archaeological Team

◆

As he sighed, Klein indulged himself by relaxing like an ordinary person enjoying a rare instance of serenity and comfort in his dream.

After about fifteen minutes, he finally waited to the point when the Church's Beyonder that was sent to placate him had left.

Finally… I can sleep in peace… Klein planned on opening his eyes out of habit before falling asleep again, but he realized that once he wasn't on high alert and on guard, the remnant sense of tranquility in his dream would allow him to directly fall into a deep slumber.

That night, the quality of his sleep was extremely good, and he only managed to wake up at daybreak. Outside, the sun had just peeked out over the horizon, while the moon remained shining in the sky, and there was a slight howl from the winds.

Klein lazily dazed in bed for nearly ten minutes before picking up the golden pocket watch by his bedside table and snapping it open.

It's not even half-past six… Should I roll over and continue sleeping, or should I wake up? Klein observed his physical condition and found his mind clear and brimming with energy. He didn't have any hint of feeling lethargic, so he decided to get out of bed to wash up before walking to his balcony to take a look at the orange vista.

In this season, due to the wind, Backlund didn't have thick smog. Together with the environmental measures put into place over the past few months, the skies were often blue and the air fresh. The gardeners were already busy in the garden, and the parlor maid and handymen were heading to the market. Other than them, the surroundings were calm and peaceful. This invigorated Klein as he temporarily forgot all his troubles. He felt that the world belonged to him at that moment.

With a faint smile, he silently enjoyed the scenery. In the next fifteen minutes, servants would walk out from the surrounding houses in pairs or threes. They were either holding baskets or leading horses. The entire borough seemed to come to life as the sunlight grew brighter.

This is what life should be like… Klein silently sighed as he had the sudden urge to take a stroll. He turned around and left the balcony and walked to the door.

Outside the master bedroom, Richardson was already waiting outside. It was impossible to guess what time he had woken up.

This was the most difficult thing about a valet. He needed to sleep later than his employer but also wake up earlier than him.

“There’s another hour before breakfast. Sir, if you wish for it to be brought forward, the kitchen will be ready within fifteen minutes.” Richardson didn’t ask Dwayne Dantès why he had suddenly woken up so early.

Klein chortled and said, “There’s no need to bring it forward. I plan on taking a stroll first.”

“Very well, sir.” Richardson entered the bedroom, and based on his employer’s suggestion, he chose a coat and helped him wear it.

Finally, Klein wore a silk top hat and held a gold inlaid cane before walking down to the first floor. Leaving the residence, he strolled down the street that was lined with Intis parasol trees and black street lamps until he reached the other end.

Along the way, each residence’s garden emanated a faint fragrance as the green leaves of the trees created a sense of tranquility from high above. Pedestrians were in pairs or threes in what seemed like a sparse street. The occasional carriage that drove by would break the silence before quickly leaving.

Klein enjoyed the morning, taking in the pleasantness of waking up early. He felt that the negative emotions from yesterday were evaporating bit by bit and vanishing.

Hmm, Beyonders need to learn how to create conditions for themselves to regulate their moods… By taking this stroll, the bishops at Saint Samuel Cathedral will likely know that Dwayne Dantès has completely recovered. They won't disturb my sleep in the middle of the night… As Klein's thoughts wandered, his gaze swept past 39 Böklund Street.

It was Member of Parliament Macht's residence.

Its external perimeter was in the form of sharp iron rods, allowing passersby to appreciate the beauty of the garden within through the gaps.

While moving his gaze away, Klein saw a familiar figure. It was Hazel with her long black-green hair and dark brown eyes. This beautiful and proud lady was strolling through the garden's trails with her maid, looking around from time to time.

She woke up early as well? Her quality of sleep is excellent because she doesn't need to head down the sewers in the middle of the night? Klein lampooned and retracted his gaze as he continued proceeding forward.

Glancing at Richardson who was silently following behind him, Klein suddenly thought of the news reports, magazine articles, and novels he had recently read about the Southern Continent.

He consciously kept up with the content of that region because that would flesh out his persona as Dwayne Dantès. After all, a lot of what he knew about the Southern Continent stemmed from the pirates, adventurers, and the Fog Sea's Strongest Hunter, Anderson. He had no idea if they were exaggerated or fabricated.

The information I've read recently and in the past were about people who struck it rich in the Southern Continent before returning or had just decided to stay there. Heh, this makes Backlund residents believe that there's gold everywhere in the Southern Continent, and that there are opportunities to strike it rich. Even common wood and sap can be used for many things, allowing one to exchange for plenty of pounds. That's why the kingdom frequently goes to war with countries like Feysac and Intis to vie for the colonial lands… If not for the commoners' inability to save up for the ferry tickets or dare to smuggle themselves there, I'm sure a large number of people would swarm it… As Klein's thoughts whirred, he casually asked his valet, "What's your impression of the Southern Continent?"

He remembered that Richardson was born in a manor over there. He had only been brought to Backlund when he was an adult.

Richardson paused for a few seconds and said, "Sir, I actually do not know much about the Southern Continent because I was spending most of my time in the manor. I had few opportunities to head out."

"Just tell me of your impressions—your true impressions. You don't have to hold back. I just want to have a general understanding. As you know, they all believe me to be an expert of the Southern Continent, but in fact, my experiences are only limited to a few places and merchants," Klein said with a chuckle.

Richardson nodded and bowed his head as he looked at his toes that were walking forward.

"My impression of the Southern Continent is:

"Hunger, exhaustion, pain, as well as pining for the world after death…"

Hunger, exhaustion, pain… Klein repeated those three words as he walked into Böklund Street without making any further inquiry.

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East Chester County, in a building beside Stoen University.

Audrey was looking at the collections obtained by the Relic Search and Preservation Foundation.

She had originally planned on coming on Tuesday afternoon, but Associate Professor Michele Deuth had participated in an academic conference in Backlund; therefore only returning today. As a result, she had no choice but to change her plans.

"This pair of boots was discovered by a farmer in a mountainous ruins in Stoen. Its shape and traits match the societal trends of the Fourth Epoch," Michele introduced the item inside the glass cabinet to the beautiful aristocrat.

Audrey looked over with interest and discovered that the ends of the boots were curled like a clown's.

The heights of the curled parts weren't uniform. One was three centimeters, and the other was five centimeters. They didn't look like a pair.

The Fourth Epoch's asymmetrical style… I wonder what level it is for three on the left and five on the right… Audrey retracted her gaze and followed Associate Professor Michele to the next exhibit.

At the end of the tour, Michele pointed at the glass case diagonally ahead of them and said, "This coat of arms was delivered a few days ago. It involves the very ancient worship of dragons."

Dragons… Audrey strode forward in a reserved manner and saw a grayish-white dragon with its wings spread out engraved on the coat of arms.

"Where does it come from?" Audrey asked just as she did before.

Michele answered, "It's from a village named Hartlarkh. This Loenese word doesn't have an archetype in ancient Feysac. Apparently, it was written like how it's read."

Hartlarkh… That's the village which I previously visited that had the folk tradition of worshiping dragons. In the sea of collective subconscious of the people there, there's a mind dragon in it… The Twenty Year War notebook which I previously obtained from Associate Professor Michele was from a local knight named Lindelira. He was suspected to have something to do with that mind dragon… Audrey nodded in thought as she deliberated over her words, wishing to ask about the person who had found the coat of arms.

At that moment, Associate Professor Michele's expression turned abnormally heavy.

"Accompanying the discovery of this coat of arms was a tragedy."

"A tragedy?" Audrey didn't hide her surprise.

Associate Professor Michele sighed and said, "An archaeological team entered the village to study the folk tradition of worshiping dragons, but that night, one of the members went mad. And this mental illness was apparently contagious. The entire archaeological team later went mad, killing themselves or each other. In the end, none of them survived.

"This coat of arms was found among their remains. It was first taken away by the police, and after confirming that it's without problems, only then did they donate it to us."

An archaeological team entered the village, and the members went mad one after another… Audrey's eyes dilated as she inwardly repeated Associate Professor Michele's words.

Suddenly, an idea came to mind.

Psychology Alchemists!

The members of the archaeological team were members of the Psychology Alchemists!

Chapter 805 - Meeting Up

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Inside the building of the Relic Search and Preservation Foundation, Audrey, whose thoughts were undergoing an upheaval, blinked. She took note of her body language and expressions as she drew a crimson moon on her chest in a half-genuine manner. She said with a sigh, “What a tragedy. I hope that their spirits can rest in peace.”

The reason she had guessed that the archaeological team had comprised of members of the Psychology Alchemists was that she had previously received a mission to help the organization obtain a notebook related to the Twenty Year War from Associate Professor Michele. And this notebook belonged to the knight from Hartlarkh Village, Lindelira.

Back then, Audrey had made a request to Mr. Fool and relied on magic mirror divination to determine the origins of the notebook. She discovered that it was deeply connected to the village that worshiped dragons. As she knew ahead of time that there was a mind dragon hiding within the sea of collective subconscious, she ultimately chose to hand over the notebook to the Psychology Alchemists in consideration of her lacking Sequence and strength.

That also meant that the Psychology Alchemists had quite a significant chance of locking onto Hartlarkh Village through the notebook before heading over to find their target.

Another factor that Audrey used in her judgment was the strange mental illness that the archaeological team suffered. It had spread like a plague, causing the people to go mad in batches.

In the real world, there was a probability that mental illnesses were hereditary, but it was almost impossible to be contagious. But in the mysterious world, in the world of the mind and consciousness, chaos and madness could be spread to others through spirit channeling, dreams, and the subconscious!

And hidden in Hartlarkh Village was a mind dragon that had lived for years!

The Psychology Alchemists had found Hartlarkh Village through the notebook, and the threatened mind dragon used this ingenious method to spread mental corruption? "He" might've achieved this through the sea of collective subconscious… The Beyonder world sure is dangerous. This small team must've been formed by a selection of Beyonders, but they ended their lives in such a simple and ridiculous manner… As Audrey thought about it, she was glad that she had made a sufficiently rational decision. She hadn't willfully used the knight's notebook to explore Hartlarkh Village. Otherwise, there would probably have been an addition name to the list of members who went mad.

Thanks to Mr. Fool. Thanks to the other members of the Tarot Club. Thanks to Qilangos who previously infiltrated in disguise. They allowed me to still recognize the hidden dangers despite my lack of actual experience in the domain of mysticism. It made me sufficiently cautious… Audrey silently thought in gratitude.

At that moment, her recalling her performance when she first joined the Tarot Club had made her wish to bury her head in her pillows to roar at herself:

Audrey, you were that naive and immature back then!

Thankfully, you met Mr. Fool. If it were any other secret existence, you would've long gone mad or turned into a monster!

Mr. Fool is such a nice man! No, such a nice orthodox god!

By the side, Associate Professor Michele noticed that Audrey had been silent. He said with a heavy nod, "Yes, it truly is a tragedy that strikes one with fear.

"I only wish that the government has already handled the matter and prevented the contagious mental illness from becoming a plague."

Don't worry, unless that mind dragon loses control and plans to challenge the three Churches, there won't be any more victims of that mental illness… Audrey replied silently.

From her point of view, the official Beyonders had already taken on the case. After all, a contagious mental illness was definitely going to be under the purview of the official Beyonders.

Therefore, the dragon coat of arms in the glass case must've been determined to be fine before being donated to the foundation. The police department didn't have such authority!

While Audrey felt pity for the archaeological team who were suspected to be Psychology Alchemists members, as though she had experienced the tragedy for herself, she was curious if the mind dragon remained in the vicinity of Hartlarkh Village.

To hide in the sea of collective subconscious with one's actual body would probably make it difficult to be discovered… However, the three Churches have a long history. In the Fourth Epoch or even earlier, they must've had bouts with mind dragons, so perhaps they have the corresponding records about it… Besides, the Psychology Alchemists is in control of the Spectator pathway and has the existence of High-Sequence Beyonders. Their comprehension of the sea of collective subconscious can't be much weaker than the mind dragon's. After suffering a terrible failure due to the lack of information, they will definitely send a very powerful team… Hmm, although that mind dragon was stronger than what the Psychology Alchemists expected, it probably wouldn't stay there to be discovered. It should've left… Audrey made an inference based on what she knew.

She didn't have any thoughts of visiting Hartlarkh Village to figure out the truth, because she long knew that the present her lacked the strength to deal with the mind dragon.

Her only intentions were to mention the matter at the next Tarot Club, and see if the other members could provide any feedback or any valuable knowledge. For example, it might be that the mind dragon had entered the sea of collective subconscious because of the local worship of dragons, or it could be that the mind dragon's inhabitation of the sea of collective subconscious caused the villagers to dream of it; thus, being subconsciously influenced and having the tradition of worshiping the dragon.

†

On Friday afternoon, Klein received the invitation list for the ball tomorrow. He began to seriously memorize the topics he needed to discuss with different guests.

When meeting Member of Parliament Macht, I need to make remarks about the recent good air in Backlund, and make a few jokes about the Loen Kingdom Imperial Science Institute… As Klein memorized each line, he suddenly heard stacked illusory pleas.

A man… Based on how long it's been, it's most likely Mr. Hanged Man… In thought, Klein put down the piece of paper in his hand and gulped down a mouthful of black tea before leaving the half-open room with the big balcony to head for the master bedroom's bathroom.

He took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog, and he discovered that it was indeed The Hanged Man.

This man had requested the honorable Fool to inform The World that he had arrived at the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, City of

Generosity, Bayam. He could head for the primitive island in two days after he replenished his supplies.

He wanted The World to begin preparations so that they could meet in time. He also indicated that if he lacked the means to head for the primitive, he could arrange for The World to secretly board the Blue Avenger.

Board the Blue Avenger and bring a bunch of sailors from the Church of Storms to the vicinity of the primitive island? How long can the Sanguine's anesthetic gas you bought from Emlyn last? Will there be enough time to explore? Klein thought for a moment and conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow, making him pray devoutly, "…There's no need to go through that much trouble.

"You should have freedom of movement in Bayam. Meet at the cemetery outside the city at midnight today.

"Before that, replenish your stores."

†

Bayam, in an inn.

Alger frowned slightly after hearing The World Gehrman Sparrow's words.

He did have freedom of movement in the City of Generosity. This was because the sailors were eager to head to places like the Red Theater. They were definitely not returning tonight, and after waking up in the day, it was almost certain that they would head to a casino to gamble to let themselves loose. It was to vent the repression and misery that resulted from drifting out at sea for extended periods of time.

That also meant that even if Alger disappeared for a night and a day, no one would discover it.

…Is The World implying that we use this interval? That is indeed better than using the Sanguine's anesthetic gas. I've already used it twice, so who knows if someone is already suspicious about it and is waiting for his theory to be validated… But without a ship, how do we head for the primitive island… Oh, Leymano's Travels? Miss Magician did mention that it has the Beyonder power of Teleportation. However, there's only one page, making it impossible for a return trip… Alger relied on his strong ability to connect matters to vaguely guess at Gehrman Sparrow's intent, but he believed that the necessary conditions were lacking.

With these doubts in mind, he found his contact with the Resistance and replenished his Storm charms that were made with tin.

When it was eleven at night, Alger secretly left his inn and headed out of the city under the shadows.

He wasn't worried that the sailors would discover his disappearance because he too had physical needs. It was possible that he was sleeping in a lady's bed in the Red Theater and was unwilling to return. And there were many such brothels in Bayam, with many prostitutes in existence. It was impossible to say that there was something wrong with him because he wasn't at the Red Theater.

Once he left Bayam, Alger walked on a narrow road where horse carriages couldn't pass as he headed for the mountainside of the mountain range beside the sea.

Suddenly, his gaze froze as he noticed something.

Under the crimson moonlight's illumination, the mountain that originally existed had vanished!

And the area underneath, such as the piled stones, vegetation, and terrain, changed almost completely!

This… Alger had come from the Resistance's private harbor earlier. He hadn't managed to pay close attention to the mountain; hence, he only noticed the abnormality at that moment!

The mountain collapsed? It actually collapsed? Right, it was previously mentioned in the papers that Bayam encountered a shallow earthquake, with its might being focused in the mountain range outside the city… Also, the Church's deacon said that Gehrman Sparrow nearly destroyed Bayam, and that matter had demigods involved… Both of them occurred during the same period… Could it be caused by Gehrman Sparrow? He instigated a demigod-level battle, and he managed to successfully escape while killing Admiral of Blood? Alger's pupils dilated as his footsteps slowed down to a halt.

He suddenly understood why the Church of Storms had placed great importance on Gehrman Sparrow, and why he had a bounty worth as much as fifty thousand pounds!

In the undamaged cemetery up ahead, a cold wind blew across it and towards Alger in the silent night. It made him tremble involuntarily.

At that moment, Alger's heart stirred as he turned his head to look right.

Underneath a giant tree, a figure quickly outlined itself in the shade.

This figure had his hand on his top hat while he slowly looked up, revealing a thin face and cut features. The emotionless dark brown eyes were none other than Gehrman Sparrow's.

Chapter 806 - Entering the Island in the Middle of the Night

◆ ◆ ◆

He did teleport over… How extravagant… Alger tensed up before relaxing; however, he did not let his guard down at all.

Upon meeting Gehrman Sparrow again, he discovered that there wasn’t much of a change to him. However, his every action had the indescribable air of a powerhouse, and the profundity he exuded left him apprehensive.

As expected of the crazy adventurer who can instigate a battle of demigod proportions while escaping unscathed… The slight bit of smugness of having become a Sequence 5 vanished from Alger.

He slowly walked over with lantern in hand. When he saw Gehrman Sparrow, he deliberately probed, “The traces you left behind might not vanish for the next few centuries or even millennia.”

He was trying to confirm if the mountain’s collapse had anything to do with Gehrman Sparrow.

Klein shot a glance at the modified terrain as he released his grip on his top hat and smiled in a gentlemanly manner.

“The one who contributed the most in causing this damage was Sea King.”

Man, he actually triggered a demigod battle that could’ve destroyed Bayam, causing Sea King to directly attack… Yet, despite such circumstances, he survived and left with Admiral of Blood. It's completely unimaginable and unbelievable! Alger began to suspect if Gehrman Sparrow had a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact on him—an item at the demigod level!

He didn't express his shock and surprise, nor did he dare to probe further. Instead, he asked, "Do you plan on heading to that primitive island now?"

"Of course," Klein answered calmly.

It was late at night, a period when Dwayne Dantès was asleep. No one would disturb him, but he had to show himself once it was daytime.

Of course, to prevent any unexpected circumstances, Klein had summoned Arrodes to monitor the mirror illusion and provide a response.

It's thanks to the Church of Evernight for having ended its dream treatment of Mr. Tycoon; otherwise, I would definitely have to delay the operation… Klein couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

Alger observed himself and discovered that he wasn't able to obtain any mystical item in such a short span of time. He then took out an iron-black ring that protruded out like a thorn and wore it on his left thumb.

Bearing with the excruciating headache, he nodded slightly.

"I hope for a pleasant partnership."

Then, he saw Gehrman Sparrow walk over with a stoic expression, reach out his hand, and grab his shoulder.

At that instant, Alger's first reaction was that Gehrman Sparrow was attacking him. He instinctively wanted to turn to the side to dodge his attack, only to recall his previous guess. Amidst his racing thoughts, he withheld his subconscious reaction and allowed the crazy adventurer to place his palm on his left shoulder.

Right on the heels of that, he noticed Gehrman Sparrow's left hand turn transparent as though it was bearing the shadows of the spirit world. Then, the blacks before his eyes grew darker, and the crimson moon turned brighter. All kinds of colors seemed to layer upon one another.

Countless nearly formless figures receded "backwards" as Alger tore through the spirit world with Gehrman Sparrow's help.

Creeping Hunger… Teleport… So that's how it is… Just as he had such a thought surface in his mind, he saw his body plummet as the saturated colors around him receded. Everything had returned to normal.

Beach… reefs… trees… This is a deserted island… Alger surveyed the area and was just about to speak when the colors around him saturated as the layered phenomenon happened once again.

This time, when he left the spirit world, he was in midair with undulating waves beneath him.

Although Alger had never worked with Gehrman Sparrow in actual combat before, the experienced him immediately created a spiraling wind and allowed them to float. It was a tacit display of teamwork.

Hence, the Teleportation triggered successfully once again as Alger's and Gehrman Sparrow's figures rapidly phased away.

When the surroundings were restored again, the two had arrived at the periphery of a gigantic island. There was a heavy mist in midair that the crimson moonlight was unable to fully penetrate. This not only failed to disperse the darkness in the forest and mountain, but it also added an eerie charm to it.

"We're here," Alger said as he looked around.

Klein wore an indifferent expression, but in fact, he was cautiously observing his surroundings. He found the place extremely quiet. There weren't any birds tweeting, wolves howling, or bugs chirping. It exuded a deathly silence.

As though guessing his feelings, Alger raised the lantern and illuminated the shrubs ahead where there was a natural trail made up of beast-type footprints. He said, “If you come in the day, it will be quite a lively sight. You will even see birds that only exists in myths fly in the forest.

“But at night, the ‘power’ that rules this place will change. Many Beyonder creatures will hide as they await daybreak.”

Mr. Hanged Man has come here more than once. At the very least, he has the experience of a day and night here… Klein silently nodded without speaking further.

Alger thought for two seconds and pointed ahead.

“If we follow this trail and enter the dark forest all the way to the end, we will arrive at that ancient ruins of unknown age.

“On the way, we can hunt the Beyonder creatures that we encounter and are able to deal with. If it’s killed independently, the corresponding ingredients will belong to the killer. Those we jointly killed will be held in your custody. When we leave this place, we can take turns to choose. We will determine the owner based on our contribution, to decide who has the priority to choose, as well as the number of priority choices.”

Instead of being in a rush to take action, he first made clear the route and the plan to split the loot. It was to prevent any conflict that would result from the exploration.

To let me have custody of the loot we receive from a joint kill… Mr. Hanged Man is being very sincere… Klein raised his right hand and pressed down his half top hat and chuckled.

“No problem.”

Alger heaved a sigh of relief and continued, “Our main goal is to explore that ancient ruins. The spoils we obtain along the way are supplementary. Once we finish the exploration, it’s best we leave immediately without heading to the other zones or taking other paths.

"As for anything in the future, it's up to you to decide when and where you would like to explore."

Alger emphasized this matter because he was afraid of Gehrman Sparrow's greed. After all, Beyonders were not perpetual machines. There was bound to be a point when they were exhausted. After a round of explorations, they were bound to be close to their limits. If they were to force themselves to hunt Beyonder creatures in other zones, perhaps the identities of hunter and prey would switch. Even if the crazy adventurer was very powerful and unafraid of such danger, to be in a state of drained spirituality would trigger signs of losing control.

Do you think I'm not sharing the same thoughts as you? I'm the one worried that you'd be the one who's overly greedy, rashly proceeding deeper just to obtain more… Klein smiled and said, "I'm a polite person."

Polite? Alger was a little puzzled by Gehrman Sparrow's choice of words.

The corners of Klein's mouth curled as his expression turned darker in the darkness.

"When visiting someone's place for the first time, overstaying would be impolite."

…This fellow's train of thought and logical behavior is completely different from that of a normal person's… As expected of a crazy adventurer… Alger was first taken aback before he raised the lantern and took a step forward in the dim red shadows.

"Let's set off."

Klein allowed his hands to naturally droop down as he walked beside Alger like he was on a hike.

The two quickly entered the dark forest that had nearly zero moonlight shining in. They saw that the trees were thick and tall with luxuriant leaves. Even the smallest trees were thicker than the span of a person's arm.

And the trait they all had in common was that the bark appeared scaly. They were densely packed together as though they would come to life or squirm at any moment.

It's like a mutated drago tree. A snake-scaled tree? Klein retracted his gaze and noticed the weeds at his feet that didn't seem problematic.

None of them spoke as they maintained a state of abnormal silence. They didn't wish to say anything to eliminate the awkwardness just because it was too quiet.

As they walked, the duo saw the distribution of trees ahead turn sparser thanks to the lantern's light.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

A dull knocking sound echoed through the area. As Alger and Gehrman approached, it became clearer and more obvious.

When the duo entered the sparse area, the lantern's light finally revealed hunched or prostrate figures.

Amongst these figures were humans, baboons, goats, and tigers. They were either holding rocks or using their claws and teeth to constantly burnish the stacked trees and rocks as though they were building a palace.

Without the obstruction from the luxuriant leaves, the crimson moonlight that penetrated the heavy mist cloaked these figures, dyeing them with a faint blood-red layer.

There are humans? Klein's eyes focused as he immediately spread his left fingers. Alger slowed down, preparing his vocal chords to be activated at any moment.

Suddenly, the figures seemed to sense something as they stopped their actions in unison before uniformly turning around to look at the two outsiders.

They either had pale faces, withered skin, or festering bodies. None of them looked alive.

Corpses… A Beyonder creature is driving these corpses to build a palace for it? Klein cast his gaze past them and saw a dark cave that led deep into the ground. The surroundings were covered in weeds as white feathers stained with yellow oil scattered among them.

Feathers… Corpses… These instantly reminded Klein of the products of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death Project, as well as the infectious aura that made him grow feathers.

This zone’s sovereign won’t be weak… He calmly made a judgment.

At that moment, Alger, who had carefully observed for a while, hesitated for two seconds before suggesting, “I’ve never seen such a situation before. I’m not sure of the level of the Beyonder creature. Why don’t we circle around it and choose a target which we have more confidence in?”

His instincts told him that something extremely dangerous was hiding in the dark underground cave.

I was waiting for you to say that! Maintaining his persona as Gehrman Sparrow, Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he chuckled.

“Will this be impolite?”

Just as he said that, the land quaked as though a creature beneath them was rolling over in its bed!

Chapter 807 - Mediocre Luck

◆

Sensing the land quake, Alger's heart tightened as he glanced at Gehrman Sparrow, using his actions to replace his words.

The sound of wind howled beside him, allowing him to run more easily and quickly to the side.

The reason why Alger had done so was because he was worried that Gehrman Sparrow would suddenly go mad and decide to hunt the terrifying creature inside the dark underground cave. If that were to happen, even if they ultimately clinched a victory, it would've been extremely disadvantageous for the subsequent explorations.

As an experienced Sailor, he knew that decisive action spurred companions who remained indecisive into subconsciously following his actions.

Upon seeing this, Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he gave up the discussion about politeness. He widened his stride and ran behind The Hanged Man.

Following that, he sensed a strong wind blow at his feet, thrusting him forward. This significantly reduced his need to overcome gravity, allowing him to obtain additional mobility that instantly doubled his speed!

Amidst the rustling sounds, Klein and Alger ran out of the sparse woods and circled around the flank of the eerie darkness.

At this moment, their heartbeats suddenly slowed. It was as though they hadn't been engaging in intense exercise and were instead in a state of reverie that resulted from the tanning of the afternoon sun.

Klein immediately felt his body turn cold as an inexplicable and baffling sense of gloom arose as they tried invading his body.

Meanwhile, he saw the light from Alger's lantern be swallowed inch by inch by a gigantic black shadow. A corresponding scene naturally surfaced in his mind.

In the depths of the dark underground cave, a thick, humongous serpent snaked out. It had dark green scales with exaggerated eyes that seemed to burn with fire.

In between its scales were white feather covered in yellow oily stains. Along its back was a pair of thick wings that could be spread.

While slithering and flying, this giant serpent raised its body high, coiling itself around a thick tree and extending its pitch-black tongue. It stared intently at the two figures that had barged into the surrounding area.

Around it, the trees were rapidly withering along with the weeds. Countless corpses burrowed out of the soil as invisible shadows surged to its side.

Feathered serpent!

It was a feathered serpent!

In the Southern Continent, it was a symbol of holiness. It was the emblem of the descendants of Death, the Eggers family!

Klein and Alger didn't pause as they held back the coldness of their bodies and their slowing heartbeats. Under the intense winds, they charged into the depths of the dark forest, pulling a distance away from the sparse trees.

Badump! Badump! Badump! The duo’s heartbeats gradually returned to normal as the coldness of their bodies were dispersed by the heat generated from the intense exercise.

Klein’s spiritual intuition told him that the danger had passed. Hence, he slowed down his pace and turned to glance back. He said calmly while facing the depth of the darkness, “A demigod-level feathered serpent.”

“Demigod-level…” Alger similarly slowed down as the blood vessel in his forehead pulsed.

He paused for two seconds and exhaled lightly.

“Don’t worry about it. The Beyonder creatures here are very territorial. Unless they wish to hunt, they will not enter other zones, especially when it’s near the mountain. That feathered serpent wouldn’t chase after us.”

Klein nodded and said, “The Beyonder creatures here are very strong.”

Alger retracted his gaze and replied with a shake of his head.

“No, there are also many weak ones.

“I’ve been here at night before, but I’ve only discovered the traces left behind by Beyonder creatures at the demigod level without encountering them. I actually encountered one this time.

“Such matters are mainly about luck. The chances of this happening again isn’t too high.”

As a Seafarer, being able to calculate was a necessary ability.

Are you looking down on me, the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck? Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh as he said with a deadpan expression, “Absolute judgments often result in the opposite results.”

When translated into Earth speak, it was: Don't raise death flags!

In fact, if it wasn't a feathered serpent at the demigod level, and instead was something at Sequence 5, Klein would be happy to bully it. After all, with Azik's copper whistle in hand, the Beyonder creatures in the Death domain would lose at least half their combat strength.

As for encountering a Beyonder creature at the demigod level, he wasn't too alarmed. This was because The Hanged Man had previously mentioned it, and he had made the corresponding preparations. He had the Fate Siphon charm, three pages of demigod-level Beyonder powers in Leymano's Travels, and the ability to Travel. Although it wasn't necessarily the case that he could resist a demigod, it was enough to help him create opportunities to escape.

As long as I do not encounter angels… Klein silently added inwardly.

After hearing Gehrman Sparrow, Alger was somewhat puzzled. This was because the crazy adventurer was clearly informing him to be more careful and cautious.

A cold and crazy fellow? That's right. If he's just crazy, he wouldn't have lived to this day… Alger looked up at the sky as he tried hard to look past the mist and distinguish the blurry stars.

After two minutes, he retracted his gaze and pointed in a direction.

"We'll head in that direction."

Klein had long drawn his iron-black Death Knell. He allowed the muzzle to naturally point downward as he silently followed alongside Alger. He wore a cold and composed expression that had no signs of anxiety.

After traversing the extremely dim forest for some time, Alger suddenly stopped. As he looked to his left, he said in a deep voice, "If we head forward more, there will be an Illusory Chime Tree. I hope to handle it by myself."

“The second Beyonder creature we encounter will be handled by you. I won’t involve myself in the hunt.”

Unless you can’t handle it alone… Alger swallowed the second half of his sentence.

He wasn’t like the Hunters who were often seen at sea, people who often couldn’t hold their tongues as they habitually said things that infuriated others.

The main Beyonder ingredient which Miss Justice needs… Mr. Hanged Man has quite a bit of adventuring experience under his belt. He knows that being frank at times is more useful than concealing matters, and that negotiating is more effective than scheming… Klein maintained Gehrman Sparrow’s persona as he nodded with a hint of gentlemanliness amidst his coldness.

“Okay.

“If you can’t deal with it, it’s best you shout for help; otherwise, I’ll treat it as your persistence.”

The style of a crazy adventurer appears to be different from hunters, but in certain aspects, they are surprisingly similar… Alger silently drew a breath as he continued forward with his lantern.

As they walked, they heard weak chiming sounds, and they immediately felt as though they were home, their bodies and mind at ease.

Klein acutely sensed that his wariness was melting away in an irreversible manner. No matter how much he emphasized it to himself, he was unable to tense up.

At that instant, he even had the urge to head for the source of the chimes, believing that there was something extremely dear and familiar to him located over there.

As they were quite a distance away, the chiming was sporadic. Klein was barely able to hold himself back as he turned to look at Mr. Hanged Man.

Alger no longer looked as staid as before. The eyes of his rugged face were slightly red. It was unknown if he had recalled something that caused him to plunge into some emotional state.

I wonder what Mr. Hanged Man looks like when he's crying… It must be quite terrifying… Klein couldn't help but muse.

At this moment, Alger said softly with a hoarse voice, "Leave it to me."

Just as he said that, he put down the lantern and slightly turned the sinister ring on his left thumb. He made the protruded thorn that looked like it was stained with old bloodstains turn brighter.

This was his mystical item, Whip of Mind. Its side effects was to place the wearer in a state of a constant headache, one so bad that the wearer would yearn to slam their head into a wall.

However, at that moment, the excruciating headache made Alger maintain his basic lucidity amidst the chimes without being truly hypnotized.

At times, a side effect might actually provide benefits to the wearer… As Alger remained poignant, he took out a wooden box from his pocket and snapped it open.

Inside it was a gray rat!

Mr. Hanged Man wishes to use the rat as bait, so as to attract the Illusory Chime Tree's attention before taking the opportunity to attack it? Not bad. He made adequate preparations. He already had a detailed plan ahead of time… As an experienced adventurer, Klein instantly guessed The Hanged Man's thought processes.

Alger held up the rat and shook it when his expression suddenly turned odd.

The gray rat was no longer moving. It wasn't breathing and was cold. It wasn't able to take on the responsibility of being bait!

Back when they encountered the demigod-level feathered serpent, although Alger was in the periphery of the entity's focus and had escaped quickly without being overly affected, the gray rat he carried with him was only an ordinary animal. It didn't have a strong constitution and vitality, so it perished from the effects of the feathered serpent.

It's dead… It's dead… Mr. Hanged Man now understands a principle—plans often can't keep up with change… His luck is mediocre… Upon seeing this scene, Klein couldn't help but twitch the corners of his mouth. He wanted to laugh, but he didn't make a sound, afraid that it would destroy his persona.

Such situations were rare to the experienced and meticulous Hanged Man.

Alger quickly reined in his emotions as he proceeded forward with the dead gray rat. Klein bent down and reached out for the lantern as he unhurriedly followed behind him.

The chimes grew clearer as it made them more and more silent, with the urge to run towards it becoming greater.

After taking another few steps forward, Klein finally saw that strange tree.

Above its brownish-green trunk were thin cracks. Deep inside each crack was a darkness that looked as though different eyes were growing inside them.

The branches that extended outwards had chime-like metal-gray objects hanging from them. They were swaying automatically, letting out melodious sounds. And on the branch closest to the trunk, there was a fist-sized, colorless, translucent fruit.

Alger stared in that direction as he pressed at his throat before saying to Gehrman Sparrow with a heavy voice, “It’s best you cover your ears and converge your spirituality.”

Chapter 808 - Awful Singing

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing The Hanged Man, Klein’s heart skipped a beat. He had an ominous premonition as he ignored his persona, put down the lantern, and took out two slips of paper. He then crumpled them into a ball and stuffed them into his ears.

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow do it without any questions, Alger heaved a sigh of relief. He reflected on how nice it was to work with an experienced fellow. Even though he was an adventurer known to be crazy, he was someone who followed reasonable instructions. He knew what and what not to do.

Just as he was about to throw the dead rat which still retained some of its warmth at the Illusory Chime Tree to divert its attention, he suddenly saw the shrubs shake as a yellow-skinned, black-striped tiger appeared.

Amidst the melodic chimes, the tiger walked towards the strange tree normally, but its eyes were glazed over. It felt indescribably creepy.

When Alger saw this, he lowered his arm and abandoned his attempt of throwing the dead rat. Resisting the headache, he calmly watched as the tiger walked closer to the tree due to the growing influence of the melody.

It crouched down, raised its right claw, and bared its claws, slicing itself at the neck.

Despite the oozing blood, the tiger seemed to have lost all sense of pain.

It continued digging in deeper, engorging the wound before it began to skin itself, revealing a "naked" body covered in mangled flesh and blood.

The chimes gradually weakened as the branch suddenly came alive. It extended downwards, stabbing into the tiger's sorry, unprotected body.

Alger, who was already prepared, immediately drew his dagger, opened his mouth, and sang hoarsely, "Break, break, break;

"On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

"Break, break, break;

"At the foot of thy crags, O Sea![1]"

His voice had bold overtones, but it was completely out of tune. It was at complete odds with the comprehension of both humans and creatures. It was a jarring boom that had a metallic sound to it. It was filled with the power that left one frustrated and disgusted.

Meanwhile, the Illusory Chime Tree's branches trembled as they retracted like they were huddling together. Following that a melodious chime lessened the terrifying noise to a small extent.

At Alger's side, although Klein had used paper balls to stuff his ears and had converged his spirituality, he immediately felt his forehead's blood vessels throb. He instantly had the urge to kill the singer and destroy everything before him.

Furthermore, his mind had the feeling of being ripped apart. His muscles and vessels were squirming as a result.

Others charge people money to sing, but Mr. Hanged Man's singing charges you with death! Klein lampooned as he resisted the irascibility in his heart.

"Break! Break! Break!"

Every word Alger said burst out like waves striking reefs. Bolts of silver lightning descended in turns, as though in euphoric praise.

As silver flashes lit up one after another, they smote down at the Illusory Chime Tree's surface, causing it to tremble incessantly. Its branches shook in a numb and random manner, making it difficult for it to produce the melodic hypnotic music.

Alger took this opportunity as he threw the dead rat and thrust the dagger in his hand forward.

With a howling wind, invisible blades swooshed over, slicing at the branch at the top and nearest to the Illusory Chime Tree's trunk.

Kacha!

The colorless, palm-sized, translucent fruit fell as it was swept up by a gust of wind and flew into Alger's palm. The tree bark which was covered with eye-like cracks froze as the remaining branches drooped down, having lost their ability to move.

Indeed, as long as you gather the correct intel ahead of time, Beyonder vegetation at the same level is a lot easier to deal with than animals due to its lacking intelligence… Alger took out a golden container he had prepared, and he put away the Illusory Chime Tree's fruit.

Then, he turned around to look at Gehrman Sparrow.

"Let's continue…"

He suddenly stopped speaking as the word "forward" vanished from his vocal chords.

At that instant, he saw Gehrman Sparrow's cold expression looking somewhat warped. The whites around his brown irises were slightly red, as though he would unleash an attack upon him at any moment.

Alger felt tense as he slowly drew a gasp and completed his sentence.

"Let's continue forward."

"Let's go," Gehrman Sparrow replied softly. He first circled around the withered Illusory Chime Tree and walked deep into the dark forest.

He didn't get any bark, branches, or materials that were rich in spirituality, because they were bound to encounter many Beyonder creatures later. Furthermore, he didn't have any so-called storage artifacts. Naturally, he left whatever space he had for worthwhile spoils.

Besides, having too many things on him would only weigh him down and prevent him from fully displaying the agility of a Clown.

Unfortunately, those are materials without any vitality or blood, making it impossible to enter Groselle's Travels… I can let my marionette bring them in, but that will be very troublesome and detrimental to the subsequent exploration… As Klein sighed, he calmed his mind, extricating himself from the remnant effects of The Hanged Man's singing.

This was the most jarring and terrible singing that he had heard in both his lives!

If The Hanged Man continued for another one or two minutes, he couldn't guarantee that he could stop himself from beating him up.

Using just paper balls to stuff my ears and converging my spirituality can only weaken the effects. There's no way to really block it out… Even a deaf person can hear it. This includes an "exchange" at the spirituality level… This is probably the most indefensible attack from an Ocean Songster. Furthermore, there's no way of dodging it once it happens. There's only Lightning Strike which can be dodged ahead of time. This is a rather powerful Sequence 5 as well… However, why does Mr. Hanged Man's singing feel completely different from Elven Songster Siatas… As Klein summarized and analyzed his experience, he was somewhat puzzled.

At this moment, the lantern-holding Alger, who was walking beside him, couldn't help but consider a question:

Even Gehrman Sparrow can't stand my singing. How should I act as an Ocean Songster…

In that silent environment, the two quickly proceeded forward amidst thick trees that appeared to be covered in snakeskin as they approached the ancient ruins.

With a Seafarer beside him, Klein saved himself the trouble of using Dowsing Rod Seeking. He focused on watching out for any sudden attacks.

The dark and silent environment resembled a horror story. As the two proceeded forward for an unknown amount of time, they discovered that the trees were beginning to systematically become sparse.

This was completely different from the situation back when they met the demigod-level feathered serpent. The trees there had abruptly become sparse, while what they were encountering now was a progressive change. It made them have the misconception that they were about to leave the dark forest.

"After passing through this zone, we will arrive at the periphery of the ancient ruins." Alger broke the silence.

He paused and then added seemingly casually, "Based on my experience, it becomes more dangerous as we approach it. The signs of a demigod creature I found last time was around here. However, oddly, the periphery of the ancient ruins doesn't have any signs of Beyonder creatures. However, I have no idea about deep inside it."

This is probably because there's an even more terrifying existence inside the ancient ruins. That zone is its territory, so other creatures do not dare to approach… Klein mumbled inwardly.

He had a sense for the danger level of this expedition. He had previously performed the corresponding divination above the gray fog, and the revelation he received was that it had its ups and downs, as well as its problems. However, leaving safely wasn't much of a problem.

After The Hanged Man said that, Klein chuckled.

"You likely know what my guess is."

He didn't say anything further as he entered the zone with sparse vegetation.

Alger silently walked beside him, increasingly convinced about his judgment of Gehrman Sparrow: He was calm and crazy!

After proceeding dozens of meters forward, they suddenly saw a pair of ghostly-blue eyes situated at where the lantern's glow could reach.

It was a black baboon crouched on a branch. Its fur was naturally curled, and its head grew black crystals. These crystals grew upwards in a random manner, forming a strange crown.

Upon seeing the black baboon, Klein and Alger simultaneously had the urge to bow their heads to not look directly at it. They felt as though it was the ruler of the nearby region, their sovereign.

Sovereign… Alger relied on the excruciating headache which the Whip of Mind brought him in order to escape its influence as he hurriedly took a step to the left in an attempt to avoid any direct clashes. He left the unknown Beyonder creature to Gehrman Sparrow.

They had agreed to it prior.

However, despite walking to the left, he ended up walking forward. His legs also hobbled as though he suddenly needed crutches.

Subconsciously, Alger drew his dagger, causing sharp wind blades to swish towards the curly-haired baboon.

At that moment, the baboon grinned.

The wind blades suddenly changed direction in midair, moving in every direction at random to perfectly avoid hitting the target.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein gave up his plans on approaching through ordinary methods. His left glove instantly turned transparent as he turned invisible.

Alger stopped his actions that resulted from his stress when he saw Gehrman Sparrow in his top hat appear behind the black curly-haired baboon. The distance between them was less than five meters.

Right on the heels of that, the black curly-haired baboon's body abruptly stiffened as though it lost control of most of its body. It even tried hard to raise its palm, trying hard to dig at its eyes in an attempt to distort something.

And at this moment, Gehrman Sparrow had already made use of this delay to raise the iron-black revolver in his right hand, aiming the dark barrel at its head.

Then, without any emotion, the crazy adventurer pulled the trigger.

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Excerpt from Alfred Tennyson's 'Break, Break, Break.'

Chapter 809 - The Danger Amidst the Darkness

Bang!

The loud gunshot reverberated in the sparse and open region as they extended outwards. If it was an ordinary island with an ordinary forest at night, it would’ve alarmed the birds and beasts, sending them scattering away. But here, everything remained quiet, so quiet that it didn’t seem like any living creatures existed.

As for that black curly-haired baboon, its head had burst open, splattering blood and brain matter everywhere like it was raining.

The black crystal at its head shattered as well, with not a single piece remaining intact.

Klein bent his arm and slowly retracted Death Knell which was still spewing out smoke. He watched as the mutated curly-haired baboon’s stocky body, one more that was muscular than a human’s, collapse to the group.

By approaching with Traveling, forcefully controlling with Wraith, and seizing the opportunity to deal a lethal strike with Death Knell, it was an instant kill!

Klein wasn’t doing this to flaunt his strength, but via his observations, he believed that the mutated curly-haired baboon had unique powers. If he didn’t quickly finish it off while it didn’t understand anything about him, there was a very high chance that the situation would be reversed, making the battle rather tricky. Besides, on such a dangerous primitive island, it was imperative he avoided situations from escalating, for no one knew what things could be lured by an intense battle.

Therefore, after Klein possessed the mutated curly-haired baboon with a Wraith, he gave up on the more reliable and more unnoticeable method of controlling Spirit Body Threads, because it took longer. Instead, he chose to cock the gun and use Death Knell to finish it off while it was stiff and slow as a result of the Wraith's influence.

The effects were identical to his expectations. The possible accidents that could happen midway were as he imagined. With the help of Distortion and Disorder, the mutated curly-haired baboon did possess the ability to extricate itself from the unfavorable situation of the Wraith's possession, and it would allow the bullet's trajectory to violate the laws of physics and avoid its body.

Unfortunately, its efforts had come to an abrupt stop before it could change any effects. Klein had seized that brief moment of sluggishness to decisively deliver the lethal strike.

If he had switched to controlling Spirit Body Threads, the outcome might've been very different.

It's worth it to suffer a weakness for this… Furthermore, there's a higher chance of me being needed to use Death Knell later. Compared to realizing what I'm afraid of in a more dangerous environment, it's better to know the problem ahead of time and avoid similar situations. That's the better option… Klein allowed his revolver to point downward as he walked to the side of the mutated curly-haired baboon.

At this moment, under the Wraith's control, the Beyonder characteristic of the Beyonder creature rapidly appeared.

Alger held up the lantern as he watched this scene from a distance away. It took him nearly a minute to snap back to his senses. Frozen in his mind was ultimately the scene of the flare from Gehrman Sparrow's muzzle and the bursting head of the curly-haired baboon.

The Disorder they encountered in the beginning had made him understand that the Beyonder creature they had encountered was at a Sequence higher than that of the Illusory Chime Tree. It was a relatively difficult creature to deal with, one that required sufficient caution during combat. Furthermore, there wasn't any guarantee of victory. Yet, Gehrman Sparrow had finished the battle in three seconds. The speed at which it happened was as though he was engaging in target practice.

Being a Sequence 5 Beyonder as well, the difference was unbelievable!

Combining a short-distance teleportation ability and a strange power that can control an enemy for a certain amount of time, along with that astoundingly potent revolver, the effects are unimaginable terrifying… If I were to encounter it for the first time, I would definitely be killed instantly. And even if I'm prepared, it wouldn't be easy to resist it. The best solution is to use my singing to affect my surroundings indiscriminately. It will prevent Gehrman Sparrow from successfully completing a Teleport… As expected of a crazy adventurer with a bounty of 50,000 pounds. Even without Mr. Fool's help, just him alone isn't weaker than Admiral Hell. It's possible that he's even stronger… While sighing poignantly, Alger reined in his thoughts as he considered how he could deal with the situation if he were in the curly-haired baboon's shoes.

Compared to the descriptions from others and his own guesses, witnessing it himself was more convincing and shocking!

Inside the corpse of the curly-haired baboon where the shattered black crystal was, a faint blob of light quickly appeared and converged together, turning into a translucent, pitch-black fist that was tightly clenched.

Indifferently to their thoughts, the fist produced a feeling of strength and sinisterness. The palm's lines, luster, and fingernails seemed to follow ordinary principles, but they were filled with an abnormal charm. It seemed to hide large amounts of madness and disorder.

Sequence 5 Mentor of Disorder from the Black Emperor pathway? I wonder what weakness I received. I hope it's not too odd… Hmm, I can use Death Knell as much as I want in the next six hours… As Klein muttered, he bent down to pick up the Beyonder characteristic and stored it in a prepared metal container.

In fact, he could attempt to Graze the curly-haired baboon and see if he could obtain the corresponding Beyonder powers of a Mentor of Disorder so as to swap away his glove's Baron of Corruption. But ultimately, he gave up on that idea since he wasn't sure what the Beyonder creature had done that made it deserve such torture.

His encounter had been an encounter on a battlefield. Ensuring his enemy's death was nothing out of the ordinary, but Grazing was an extremely excruciating pain that left a soul yearning for liberation. Klein had his own principles and stubbornness. He didn't easily violate them, and he often cautiously chose his targets.

Of course, to him, creatures of lower intelligence were not the same as humans. Even if he attempted to Graze it, it wasn't crossing the line. However, many of his past experiences told him that persisting to keep to his principles and not relax the requirements for himself was not only a moral question but was something to prevent himself from losing himself. He couldn't keep pushing the envelope just because he thought it was nothing. As the trivialities accumulated, it would eventually result in a terrible mistake.

In this crazy and chaotic mysterious world, actions aren't for others to see, but for myself. A person can fool humans and even deities, but they can't fool themselves. Uh, I wonder if High-Sequence Beyonders from the Spectator pathway can fool themselves… As Klein's thoughts raced, he took out Groselle's Travels that he hid near his chest, intending to smear the curly-haired baboon's blood over its cover.

At that moment, his heart tensed up as the hair along his neck stood up.

This was an intense premonition of danger!

And in this premonition, no scene had surfaced in Klein's mind!

Not good! Klein instantly found his heart wrapped in layers of shadows as everything before his eyes seemed to be covered in a layer of dark glass.

Without the luxury of time to consider what was happening, the glove on his left palm turned transparent once again.

His figure turned invisible before he appeared beside Alger, reaching out to grab his shoulder.

At that instant, Alger also sensed the abnormality. His heart contracted and expanded like the source of a storm as his blood surged through his veins and arteries like a tidal wave.

Meanwhile, he saw Gehrman Sparrow's right hand which was grabbing his shoulder. From the finger nails, it was turning gray and turning dull, bit by bit, just like any stone that could be found anywhere in the dark forest. And his feet, knees, and muscles were turning stiff as though they no longer belonged to him.

The two figures quickly turned transparent as they vanished from their location and entered a saturated and clearly overlapped spirit world as they quickly traversed it in the direction of the ancient ruins.

Suddenly, the red, green, black, and other stacked colors before Klein's eyes uniformly darkened as they produced fine patterns that resembled raven black hair.

Raven black hair!

A chill rose up from their soles as Klein didn't hesitate to leave the spirit world with The Hanged Man and return to the real world where they landed in an area mixed with rubble and weed. Not far away was a mostly collapsed building.

Through the corner of his eye, The Hanged Man had already turned grayish-white from the waist down, as though he had turned into a stone sculpture!

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers, igniting the grass tens of meters away in preparation to leap over.

At that moment, he suddenly felt his heart palpitate as his body began to tremble involuntarily.

The appearance of the soaring flames was terrifying to him!

The weakness Death Knell gave him this time: fear of fire!

Seeing the dark "glass" thicken before his eyes, Klein felt a howling wind sweep him up from below before he could overcome the fear, causing him and Alger to fly up, passing through the invisible border and entering the vicinity of the ancient ruins.

Bang!

The duo fell to the ground simultaneously, producing the sound of crashing rocks.

The thick shadow over their hearts vanished as the danger that hid in the darkness receded like the tide.

Phew… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he saw the grayish-white color that had spread to his elbow turn faint and recede. He felt his physical condition was rapidly recovering after he left that zone.

His back was covered in perspiration that soaked his shirt.

And what left him most horrified was that he didn't know what monster had attacked him or what powers were used!

Did Death Knell's gunshot alarm some monster in the vicinity, or is it the existence that rules over this forest at night? Thankfully, it doesn't dare to enter the vicinity of the ancient ruins… This isn't necessarily good. This means that deep in the ancient ruins is something that makes it fearful… I should be prepared to retreat at any moment… Klein stretched his hands and slowly stood up.

At this moment, Alger escaped from that grayish-white layer as he turned his head to glance over.

"That zone was petrifying us."

That zone… Petrification… Klein nodded in thought as he walked towards the mostly collapsed building that was strewn with weeds and covered in vines. He then replied in a deep tone, "The problem now lies ahead."

Alger didn't speak further as he sped up his pace, steadily walking by his side.

After approaching, Klein looked at the building. His gaze swept the spires and stone columns, as well as the damaged walls that remained standing.

He stopped and asked seemingly casually, "What kind of building do you think this ruin was in the past?"

Alger remained silent for a few seconds before saying, "Cathedral.

"A cathedral."

Chapter 810 - Whose Cathedral

◆

A cathedral… We came to the same judgment… Klein looked at the ruin ahead of him as he silently muttered to himself.

At that moment, the tiny amount of crimson moonlight that penetrated the mist had scattered onto the collapsed building. Compared to before, it was a lot richer in color, almost approaching the color of blood.

Klein maintained Gehrman Sparrow’s trademark cold attitude as he said in an unperturbed manner, “Where did you previously explore?”

As he spoke, Klein glanced at the lantern in The Hanged Man’s hand which remained unshattered despite all the ordeals. He subconsciously tensed up his muscles and skin when he saw the glow from the flame.

Although the flame was ultimately contained by thick glass and metal frame, it still left him a little afraid.

Alger didn’t notice the minute changes in Gehrman Sparrow as he raised his dagger-wielding right hand and pointed at the grandest building amidst the ruin.

“There.”

All that was left of the building was its main structure. It was impossible to know what it originally looked like. The only things that could only be determined were that it had thick walls with narrow windows, and the building’s scale and its magnificence. Furthermore, it once had a spire and clock tower. It had a spartan facade and an ancient architecture.

“This is an architectural style from the early Fourth Epoch. There are records of these in the Church of Storms’s canon. It’s said that in that period, the various Churches used such styles to build their cathedrals in a widespread fashion.” Alger had a deep impression on the ruin. Over the years, he had flipped through many books and had acquired quite a bit of the background. “Its greatest trait is the temple found above and the catacombs found below. Life and death were both unified here. However, I cannot confirm that the ancient cathedral’s interior is as I described, as I’ve never ventured deep into it.”

This might be an architectural style left behind from the Third Epoch… Klein made a guess as he walked straight to the opening of the ancient cathedral ruin’s abnormally huge door. By keeping the lantern behind him, enjoying only the light emitted from it, he didn’t need to suffer from his fear of fire.

The duo quickly moved up the grayish-white stairs that were ridiculously high, and they arrived at the door’s opening. Inside, they saw remnants of stone columns and arches that extended upwards towards the center.

Klein wasn’t in a rush to enter. He reached his left hand into his pocket and took out a gold coin as he allowed it to weave between his finger while seemingly muttering something.

Suddenly, he flipped the gold coin and opened his palm to await its descent while saying to The Hanged Man, “How did you determine that deep in this cathedral is something of value that is not less than that of the Cards of Blasphemy?”

After he said that, he looked at the gold coin that had fallen into his palm before putting it away.

Alger pointed inside and said, “I’ve said before that my strength was inferior to Qilangos, and I didn't go as deep as he did. I had no idea what he saw, other than the judgment that there was something extremely precious and important inside from his remarks. Furthermore, it was something that only a true Sequence 5 could obtain.

"However, the murals near the entrance and the marks on the ground might be able to explain something."

Klein nodded and walked through the dark door's opening that the crimson moonlight was unable to illuminate. The black trench coat he wore fluttered gently behind him as Alger held up a lantern and clenched his dagger while following behind.

Passing through the opening, Klein used the crimson moonlight that shone in from the opening at the dome to see the hall of considerable depth up ahead. A few of the ancient stone columns supporting it had already snapped.

At the end wasn't an altar, nor were there any staircases that led upwards. It was completely dark and difficult to tell the details. It appeared as though it led underground.

It isn't a temple above and a catacomb beneath… The temple is underground in the catacombs? It's impossible to determine that. We'll know only by venturing down… Klein subconsciously glanced around and discovered side doors along the two sides, but the regions they led to had already completely collapsed with no usable path.

The murals near the entrance and the marks on the ground… he recalled what The Hanged Man had just said, and he took two diagonal steps before releasing the invisible Wraith Senor. With his night vision, he began observing the remaining murals.

The mural's background was of a towering and magnificent mountain. At its peak was a gigantic cross that was covered in a lustrous glow.

In front of the cross were grand and abnormal figures that were clustered around. They were angels with two wings, four wings, or six wings.

This… Klein did a cursory glance and felt a strong sense of familiarity.

He had seen a similar mural before, back in Blasphemer Amon's mausoleum!

When he focused again, Klein quickly noticed the difference. There weren't the two infants that represented Amon and Adam, nor were there any twelve-winged angels. The grand figure in front of the cross held its arms to its chest as it held an ancient, spartan slate.

The slate was drawn in an extremely indistinct manner; yet, it felt both ancient and young, holy and sinister. It was in extreme contradiction.

Slate… Klein's pupils dilated slightly as a specific term flashed in his mind:

Blasphemy Slate!

This is likely that ancient sun god, the Lord that created everything which the City of Silver worships… Indeed, the Blasphemy Slate is closely related to "Him"… I wonder if this is the first Blasphemy Slate or the second… Klein roughly guessed at the cathedral's worshiped entity, and he also began to believe that the depths of the ruin hid items that were very valuable and important.

He withdrew Senor's gaze and allowed the marionette to turn to face the ground.

Apart from the slates being covered in cracks and some odd marks remaining, they were dark red in color, smaller than a human's forehead. They overlapped with one another at times as they extended all the way to the ends of the hall.

At that instant, a scene naturally appeared in Klein's mind.

Devout believers were prostrated on the ground as they proceeded forward, slamming their foreheads heavily onto the ground after covering a certain distance, leaving blood oozing out.

Noticing Gehrman Sparrow look around without any scrutiny, Alger probed, "The ancient sun god?"

At that moment, he felt the baffling sensation of a cold wind blowing from Gehrman Sparrow's side. He suspected that hidden around them were shadows or wraiths.

Recalling the strange restraints the mutated curly-haired baboon was under, Alger made a vague theory that he didn't voice out.

Upon hearing The Hanged Man's question, Klein had wanted to chuckle and reply, "you can also call 'Him' the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God," but he felt that such a tone and choice of words was closer to that of The Fool and not Gehrman Sparrow. Hence, he held himself back and nodded slightly.

"It's not hard to tell."

Alger silently heaved a sigh of relief as he held a sense of anticipation for the item buried deep underneath the cathedral.

The two simultaneously decided to walk towards the end of the hall.

When they approached it, Klein finally saw the staircase that led downwards.

"An underground area?" he asked succinctly.

Alger shook his head.

"I can't be sure. I've never gone down.

"Although Qilangos had attempted to venture in, he returned in less than ten minutes with his aura becoming relatively weak."

Klein nodded thoughtfully and said in passing, “You seem to be very familiar with him.”

If it were said by anyone else, Alger would’ve pretended to have not heard it or answer directly. But deep in his heart, The World Gehrman Sparrow was Mr. Fool’s Blessed. His question could possibly represent the intentions of that existence, so he needed to view them seriously.

After deliberating for a few seconds, Alger said in a deep voice, “We were fellow-townsmen, and we were servants at the same cathedral.

“The priest there was an easily irritated person who enjoyed punishing the servants. Qilangos couldn’t bear it and escaped secretly to become a pirate.”

So there was such a past… Mr. Hanged Man is also a man with a story… Klein didn’t probe deeper as he headed down the staircase in the extremely silent cathedral ruins.

Although his footsteps were extremely light, they still sounded obvious in such an environment as they echoed.

Soon, the two of them came to the end of the staircase and saw the opening of an arched door.

On both sides of the opening were two shadows that stood there silently in an immutable fashion.

Klein and Alger halted at the same time as they looked at the two shadows, only to discover that they were two stone statues.

They were both men with their surface being grayish-white. One of them wore full-body armor that resembled a barrel, and the other work a jacket that looked more contemporary. Their expressions were writhing in pain as their eyes protruded as though they were glaring at something.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein realized something as he recalled the encounter outside.

He and Alger had also shown signs of petrification, and it was thankful that they extricated themselves of the effects, or they might have really become statues!

This… Don't tell me they're humans who met with the same situation… If we had been petrified, would we be "moved" down here, standing guard at this door opening for centuries or even millennia? The source of that petrifying power isn't afraid of these ruins? Klein felt explicable horror as his scalp tingled.

He controlled his emotions and turned his head to look at The Hanged Man. He discovered that the pupils of the boorish man at sea had similarly dilated and was clutching the dagger tightly.

Mr. Hanged Man has come to the same conclusion without me needing to speak further… Klein pointed at the door opening and said, "There might be even more stone statues inside."

Alger nodded as he said worriedly and jokingly, "Let's hope we don't see ourselves."

If we're convinced that we have escaped the effects of petrification, only to see our statues in this underground area, that would be quite the horror story… Klein thought for two seconds and said to The Hanged Man, "Do you have night vision?"

His true meaning was that the light of the lantern was especially eye-catching in the dark catacombs and that it might easily cause unwanted developments. Therefore, it was best to extinguish the flame if he had night vision.

And he believed that Mr. Hanged Man was able to read in between the lines.

Alger replied frankly, "Yes."

As a Beyonder of the Sailor pathway who could dive, it was a given that he had night vision.

Klein glanced at him without a word, but his meaning was obvious.

Then why are you still using a lantern?

Alger seriously replied, “Firstly, it’s to misdirect the enemy into instinctively believing that I don’t have night vision because of my use of a lantern. When they destroy my lantern and try hard to create a dark environment, I’ll give them a pleasant surprise.”

How sinister… Klein was momentarily at a loss for words.

Alger continued, “Secondly, it’s to avoid situations similar to the City of Silver. There might be extreme danger lurking within complete darkness.”

Makes sense… Klein didn’t insist that Alger extinguish the lantern as he first stepped past the two stone statues. Under their pain-frozen gazes, he stepped into the entrance that led underground.

As he didn’t know what the petrified statues represented, nor did he know if they were completely dead, Klein didn’t attempt to shatter them to obtain their Beyonder characteristics and mystical items.

Chapter 811 - The Picture in the Catacombs

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After passing through the door opening and going underground, there wasn't a sliver of natural light in front of Klein and Alger. The ceiling was intact, preventing any crimson moonlight from seeping in after penetrating the mist.

Alger raised the lantern in his hand, lighting up the area up ahead with a limited dim yellow glow.

Klein took a glance and discovered at least six stone statues of both sexes. They were entirely grayish-white in color, and even their clothes looked like they were engraved.

These stone statues included elves, giants, and humans that had an ancient dress sense. Apart from their frozen expressions of pain and despair, there wasn't anything similar.

Klein felt a chill down his back when he saw their eyeballs watching him without moving, having made the connection that they were once alive. He felt that darkness ruled the depths of this passageway, as though a terrifying monster had widened its mouth as it lay in wait for the two to walk into its belly.

Reining in their stirring emotions, Klein and Alger remained silent as they passed through the grayish-white statues with warped expression, and they proceeded forward.

After walking for more than ten seconds, Klein didn't need to use

Senor's night vision to see the damaged and dark murals thanks to the lantern.

There were a few murals that were relatively intact, allowing them to recognize what was being depicted. They were no doubt focused on the cross that glowed and the grand figure that stood before it.

This blurry and solemn figure either faced cities that had been flooded, stepped upon fractured lands, or looked up at the cosmos where it locked eyes with the pairs of evil and maniacal eyes.

When the apocalypse happens, the ancient sun god will rescue the world? This is somewhat similar to the murals that Little Sun and the others found in the True Creator's temple… Or perhaps it's just plagiarism from both sides, with no one giving up on working towards this goal. After all, it's to emphasize that "They" were once the messiah and a deity worthy of one's faith… Klein quickly swept his gaze across the wall as he slowly entered the depths of the passageway.

Alger was also observing the damaged murals when he suddenly suppressed his voice and said, "I suspect that the True—Fallen Creator's description of 'Himself' has references to some of the content here."

Indeed, everyone has the same views… Klein lowered Death Knell and chuckled.

"I won't be surprised if we see matters related to the True Creator up ahead."

"That might be a particular connection between 'Him' and the Creator that the City of Silver believes in." Alger agreed with Gehrman Sparrow's judgment.

The duo continued ahead as they tried hard to soften their steps. However, there were still some echoes that reverberated in that extremely silent environment.

At this moment, Klein's spiritual perception was triggered. He immediately took two steps forward and put himself in front of Alger, blocking out most of the lantern's light.

Less than two seconds later, he heard a dull sound emitting from afar.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The ground shook gently as the sounds became clearer. Then, Klein saw a figure nearly four meters tall walk out.

It was also grayish-white in color, with armor plating patterns engraved on its body. Its head had goat horns and a mouth that resembled a hound's. Its half-opened mouth revealing snarling fangs.

And what attracted attention the most were its pair of eyes which burned red and the six pairs of white-membraned wings.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The monster held an eight-meter-long stone trident as it slowly entered a passageway. It shook the land with every step as its great weight was spread out.

Although Klein hadn't seen it before, he instantly recognized what it was.

It was a six-winged gargoyle!

Its core crystal was one of the main ingredients of a Marionettist, and the Beyonder powers it possessed were extremely special and indefensible!

Based on its external build and from what it's made of, it definitely has extremely potent combat strength while not being afraid of most damage… All it needs to cause terrifying damage is to storm over and perform a downward smash with its stone trident… Klein relaxed his left hand and wasn't in a rush to react.

He and Alger remained on the spot, one using his body, and the other using his clothes to conceal the lantern’s light.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The six-winged gargoyle didn’t look towards the duo, and it instead passed through the passageway, its footsteps slowly distancing themselves from them.

Indeed, it’s not very perceptive… It’s no wonder Qilangos was able to venture deep down and return safely… Klein proceeded forward again when the footsteps were undetectable as he went past the crossroads.

In fact, with his current strength and gear, and his understanding of his target, killing a six-winged gargoyle wasn’t something too dangerous. Furthermore, The Hanged Man could provide him with help. The reason why he gave up attacking it was because he had no idea how many six-winged gargoyles there were in the catacombs. Once a battle ensued, any large commotion could result in them swarming over. When that happened, they could only escape using Traveling. In addition, if they were to stir the existence in the ruins that even nearby Beyonder creatures were afraid of, the problem would only worsen.

Curbing one’s greed was a premise for a risky exploration.

Alger was also rather pleased at the crazy adventurer’s calm and rational actions. His suspicion was that Gehrman Sparrow was under the orders of Mr. Fool; thus, resisting his urge to attack the six-winged gargoyle.

The calmer he appears, the crazier he will be when he encounters his true target… As this thought flashed in Alger’s mind, he followed Gehrman Sparrow straight down the crossroads.

The murals on both sides remained damaged, and they were still describing the greatness and holiness of the ancient sun god.

Finally, Klein and Alger arrived at the ends of the passageway. Here, there was an eight-meter-tall stone double door. It depicted various symbols of death, sleep, end, new birth, and beginnings.

“A tomb?” Klein turned to say to Alger.

Alger nodded and said, “It might also be a temple.”

Clearly, he was also wondering if it was both a temple and tomb.

The grayish-white stone door before the duo wasn’t shut completely. It was cracked open with a tiny gap that allowed a child passage. Alger glanced at the floor and walked over. Putting the lantern down and securing his dagger, he pressed his hands onto one side of the door.

He slowly drew a breath as he bent his knees, his arm muscles swelling suddenly.

Silently, the gap widened significantly.

Klein pricked up his brows when he saw this scene, feeling somewhat astonished because The Hanged Man’s pushing of the door didn’t produce any sound at all.

He didn’t doubt an Ocean Songster’s strength, but he didn’t believe that it could prevent the stone door from making contact with the ground.

As he moved his gaze down, Klein saw a pool of slightly sticky liquid gathered under the door.

He quietly produced a lubricant effect… Mr. Hanged Man is very meticulous… Is this the power of a Seafarer or an Ocean Songster? Hmm, he probably also used the powers of a Wind-blessed to control an air cushion; thus, resulting in this door silently opening… Klein roughly figured out the reason.

Although he approached the stone door, he wasn’t eager to enter it. Through the widened gap, he observed the scene inside.

Reflected in the eyes of the Wraith was the corner of the room where there was a row of grayish-white stone coffins.

It is indeed a catacomb… As for whether it's also a temple, it's an unknown for now… As Klein thought, he took out Leymano's Travels with his left hand. On it were Beyonder powers that were suitable to handle matters related to the Death domain.

Meanwhile, he used a silver dagger to quickly create a wall of spirituality and sealed the iron cigar case to prevent Azik's copper whistle from causing the dead to rise from their graves.

Alger also drew his dagger again and placed his left palm over it before sliding his palm outwards.

Amidst light crackling sounds, the dagger swirled with silver bolts of lightning that snaked outwards.

Having made their preparations, Klein, who was acting as the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, was first to pass through the door and into the tomb.

Of course, Wraith Senor had already acted as a scout by circling the tomb before he entered.

To a Marionettist, there was no need to take risks on many matters once they had a marionette!

The tomb's ceiling was soaked with water droplets, a clear indication of the humidity. The room was divided into two regions that each had twelve grayish-white stone coffins. In the middle was a circular region where there appeared to be a beautiful and complicate picture placed on the ground.

Klein didn't approach it as he stopped Alger. Then, he controlled Senor to appear as it quickly floated to a spot above the circular region.

Admiral of Blood… Alger's facial muscles twitched.

Although he had already guessed so, he couldn't stop his subconscious reactions when he saw it with his own eyes.

At this moment, Senor descended and was able to fully take in the scene in the central region.

The picture had dark, dull colors with the background being filled with blurry figures. In the foreground was a long table.

On the table was a figure with a resplendent cross glowing from it, and surrounding the figure were three people shrouded in shadows.

One was handsome and youthful, another solemn and bold, and the last looking wise with his white beard. The three pairs of eyes exuded an indescribable sense of evil, just like the actions of their owners.

One of them had ripped off the figure's arm, stuffing it into their mouths, and gnawing at it as blood was filling his mouth. Another held up a brain and sucked at its juices, while the last had dug out a beating heart, chewing at it in a ravenous manner.

[image]

In contrast to them, in the figure's chest was a long and wide crack. Sitting cross-legged in there was a dark and sinister infant who was masticating on the intestines that had fresh blood gushing down.

These four entities seemed to sense someone prying into their act as they looked up in unison, as though they were staring at any being that placed their eyes on the picture!

Chapter 812 - Myth from Another Perspective

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon clearly seeing the picture through Senor’s vision, Klein’s heart raced so loudly that even he could hear it.

As a Seer who was good at interpreting revelations and symbolism, he felt his blood gush to his head, leaving his head swelling. It seemed to prevent him from engaging in thinking deeper into it.

Even so, there was an ethereal voice belonging to him that resounded in his mind. It was filled with alarm.

Th-that figure that’s dismembered and eaten likely represents the ancient sun god, the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God which the City of Silver believes in!

And I-I’ve seen the three evil figures surrounding “Him” before!

In the underground ruin in Backlund, the place that sealed that terrifying evil spirit!

They existed in the form of a statue but didn’t look as evil as the picture depicts them to be. Th-they each respectively represent:

The Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom!

Suddenly, Klein recalled the name he had once received, one that he had directly received when looking straight at the Eternal Blazing Sun:

White Angel!

No… no way… Could it be that the Eternal Blazing Sun was once an Angel by the ancient sun god's side? Little Sun once mentioned that they heard an ecclesiastic's penitence and prophesy of a matter in Afternoon Town. One of the sentences was "The Kings often came to the palace belonging to the dusk to conspire…" the Eternal Blazing Sun was originally named White Angel, which is also a King of Angels, one that betrayed that Creator?

And "He" and the Lord of Storms, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, and the dark infant who I have no idea what it represents had benefited the most out of consuming the City of Silver's Creator… The bibles of the various Churches mention that the three most ancient deities were born from the Original Creator's spirit… In a sense, it's actually hinting at this dark history?

If my theories are correct, then the Lord of Storms and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom are likely the Kings of Angels that served the Creator, the ancient sun god, who the City of Silver worships. Perhaps, "They" should be addressed as Wind Angel and Wisdom Angel…

This way, all eight Kings of Angels are accounted for—Dark Angel, White Angel, Wind Angel, Wisdom Angel, Angel of Imagination, Angel of Time, Angel of Fate, and Red Angel… From what Little Sun heard, and from the subsequent developments of these Kings of Angels, it seems that apart from the two sons of god, Amon and Adam, the other Kings of Angels had betrayed the Creator… No way, this ancient sun god ended way too tragi… However, this picture might not be real. It might be sacrilege. It's still suspect…

I wonder who the dark infant sitting in the ancient sun god's abdomen represents… It feels like the True Creator is the greatest suspect… Klein instantly thought of many matters as he felt the urge to leave and pretend that he hadn't seen the picture the deeper he pondered over the matter.

At that instant, he felt an irrepressible sense of fear, to the point of feeling that the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom were casting their gaze down from the astral world in his imagination.

Who left this picture behind? Who could've known so many secrets and clearly be on the ancient sun god's side? One of the other Angels or Saints that have been constantly following the City of Silver Creator with enduring faith? Klein's back oozed with sweat as his body trembled slightly.

Although Alger's observational abilities were inferior to Miss Justice, he was an experienced Beyonder. In this environment that needed a high sense of vigilance and awareness, it wasn't difficult for him to notice that something odd had happened to Gehrman Sparrow.

“What happened?” he asked with a suppressed tone.

Klein suddenly snapped to his senses as he made Senor move his gaze away as he pointed at the circular region in the middle.

“You'll know just by looking at it.”

A picture that can make Gehrman tremble? Will it make me lose control immediately? It's probably not a problem since he's not stopping me but suggesting that I take a look. However, I cannot eliminate the possibility that he has already lost his reasoning and is just acting normal… Many thoughts flashed through Alger's mind, but ultimately, he steadily walked towards the central region with his lantern in hand.

After about eight steps, he saw the gloomy picture.

In just three seconds, Alger's hands trembled with the dagger and lantern in his grip. It was as though he was suffering from some kind of mental illness.

Thanks to The World Gehrman, he had once seen the six orthodox deities' anthropomorphic statues in the Tarot Club. He naturally recognized that the arm-eating, heart-ripping, and brain-guzzling figures were respectively the Lord of Storms, the Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom!

In the past, he had committed a disloyal act to the Church whilst under Qilangos's coercion, he joined the Tarot Club and distanced himself from the Chasm of Storm, believed in Mr. Fool and wished to gain more strength and power, and he leaked the Church's intel and was unmotivated in certain matters. Even so, he ultimately believed himself to be a believer of the Lord of Storms, albeit someone who wasn't devout and passionate enough. But at that moment, he felt deep down in his heart that he had committed a grave sin of sacrilege. He nearly dug out his eyes in horror.

To not kill myself directly, it means that I really have become a false believer… Alger didn't dare take another look as he turned around and looked at Gehrman Sparrow. With a trembling voice, he asked, "Those three are Kings of Angels?"

"I can't give you confirmation. All I can say is that the Eternal Blazing Sun is intimately connected to the White Angel," Klein vaguely answered.

As expected… Alger immediately felt that the possibility that the Lord of Storms, the Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom were once Kings of Angels.

As for Gehrman Sparrow not being able to confirm the situation, he wasn't too surprised. It wasn't odd since he was only a Blessed and not Mr. Fool.

Alger was just about to say something when he heard a sharp screech.

It was as though someone was using their fingernails to scratch the lid of a stone coffin!

No, it wasn't an analogy, and it was exactly what was happening!

Schwing! Rip! Sizzle!

Sharp, jarring sounds of scratching sounded from three stone coffins on both sides. Then, the heavy lids were either flung open or blasted open as three warped figures stood up.

One of them wore an ancient white robe that had nearly turned gray. Its face was riddled with pockmarks, and across its neck, forehead, and the back of its hands were deep eyes. Beside it was a figure with huge palms and thick fingers that looked as though they were made of wood. Slathered around its body was a layer of yellow-green pus as a mist of the same color emanated out of it, seemingly capable of eroding away the stone coffin.

Opposite the two was a figure in a tattered brown jacket with a triangular hat with a skull on it. Many parts of its skin had rotted away, revealing the bone beneath.

Under its clothes and pants, thick and slimy tentacles that had fish scales embedded inside had burrowed out as it released a domineering, savage, tyrannous, and terrifying aura. This even made Klein feel as though he was facing a High-Sequence Beyonder from the Storm pathway. However, its body didn't appear to reach that level.

The three deceased bodies that crawled out of the coffin cast their eyes in the direction of Gehrman Sparrow and Alger. One produced silver bolts of lightning that crackled. Another reflected the duo's figures in the countless eyes it had. The last one spread its yellow-green mist and created brown vines.

At the same time, they stormed over with loud and hurried footsteps as a six-winged gargoyle was rushing over.

Upon seeing this, Klein didn't panic. His Leymano's Travels-wielding left hand reached into his pocket, tore open the wall of spirituality, and used two fingers to pick out Azik's copper whistle.

Right on the heels of that, he flicked his wrist and threw the copper whistle to the other side of the room. Without any surprises, he saw the three deceased bodies with terrifying auras turn around and rush towards it like trained hounds.

Upon seeing this scene, Alger's gaze froze before he made a decision. He threw his lantern and rushed for the door.

His experience told him that while Gehrman Sparrow could deal with the three terrifying deceased, he needed to hold back the six-winged gargoyle to prevent it from interfering with the crazy adventurer's battle.

Bang!

Just as Alger arrived at the door, he saw the double door crack. A six-winged gargoyle was charging in with an eight-meter-long trident.

He immediately drew a gasp as his eyes burned with rage. His muscles swelled, and under the aid of the wind, he charged forward and brandished the dagger that swirled with silver lightning.

Bang!

He dodged the stone trident that smashed downwards, and he cleaved at the gargoyle's abdomen with a dagger.

Instantly, sparks flew as rubble sprayed everywhere. Alger flew backwards as the gargoyle's charge was disrupted.

Bang! Alger heavily slammed into the ground. As he had created an air cushion in time, he didn't suffer any serious injuries.

And at this moment, the three deceased bodies had gathered together to vie for Azik's copper whistle.

Klein looked at them and calmly flipped Leymano's Travels to a charred-yellow page with complicated patterns and symbols.

This was a demigod-level power that he recently recorded—Lightning Storm!

Then, Klein slid one finger across the notebook page with his Death Knell-wielding hand.

At the same time, he looked at the three mutated deceased bodies who were vying for Azik's copper whistle. With a deep voice, he greeted them:

"Bye bye."

Amidst sizzling sounds, bolts of lightning burst forth, meshing together to form a hurricane, enveloping the region where Azik's copper whistle was, as well as the three deceased bodies.

The entire tomb was instantly lit up like it was daytime. Even Alger nearly failed to open his eyes. His body instinctively trembled as a result of the terrifying aura.

With the aid of the wind, he leaped up with the hurricane taking form in his eyes. He once again charged at the six-winged gargoyle that attempted to attack Gehrman Sparrow.

Chapter 813 - Tyrant

◆ ◆ ◆

Aside from the Sailor pathway's Raging Blow, Alger knew that he didn't have any powers that were adequate against the six-winged gargoyle's strong body due to its immunity to lightning strikes.

Of course, directly creating a resonance with its hearing organs and Body of Heart and Mind through the use of his singing was the most effective method. If this encounter had been anywhere else, Alger definitely would've exploited the gargoyle's great weight and lack of agility to circle around it. Then, as he sang to affect it, he would attack the same spot with sharp wind blades, slowly grinding away at his enemy through the cumulative damage over time.

But now, he was in a catacomb, and due to the environment's limitations, any acts of directly avoiding it would only cause the gargoyle to turn its gaze to Gehrman Sparrow. It would then attack the crazy adventurer with its eight-meter-long trident, preventing him from seizing the opportunity to finish off the three deceased bodies. And most important of all, Alger suspected that his "singing" will have more adverse effects on Gehrman Sparrow than what the gargoyle was capable of.

Bang!

The stone trident crashed heavily into the ground, blasting open an exaggerated crater. It left the catacomb shaking as if an earthquake had happened. As for Alger, he didn't attempt to parry it. With the help of strong winds, he dodged to the right and soared up, agilely dodging the gargoyle’s attack as he dashed for the monster’s head.

At that moment, he saw the grayish-white eyes which burned with flames.

Alger’s mind turned sluggish as his body instantly stiffened. He had the feeling of being petrified again, but his skin didn’t show signs of spreading grayish-white colors.

Thanks to the inertia, he continued soaring upwards, but he wasn’t able to brandish his dagger. He slammed straight into the gargoyle’s head before loudly being repelled backward, his body aching in pain.

The heavy grayish-white trident reflected in his eyes again as his thoughts were sluggish, making it impossible for him to put up any effective resistance.

Suddenly, a hand grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him to the side.

Bang!

Rubble flew as sparks were produced. The gargoyle’s heavy trident had blasted open a huge crater again.

Alger’s body trembled as his vision regained its clarity while his thoughts were rapidly restored back to normal.

He was like someone who woke up from an irresistible nightmare which he was helpless against as he regained control over his body.

Only then did he realize that Gehrman Sparrow had appeared by his side. There were still remnant flashes of lighting and sizzling sounds in the corner where the three deceased bodies were.

“Do not lock gazes with it. Attack its chest.” As Klein pulled Alger away quickly in a bid to dodge the stone trident, he succinctly advised his companion.

Alger had personally experienced and witnessed many battles, so without further explanation from Gehrman Sparrow, he knew what the latter meant. He stopped receiving aid as he nimbly circled to the gargoyle's flank.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

He ran towards the gargoyle and waited for the stone trident to sweep over him, before soaring high up with the help of the strong gales to dodge the attack.

Whoosh!

Another hurricane pushed Alger towards the gargoyle's chest.

During this process, he closed his eyes, pulled back his right arm, and bulged his muscles.

Then, with his ability to judge distances as a Seafarer, he threw out his dagger-wielding right fist.

Howling wind blades and sizzling lightning were emitted along with his fist.

Bang!

Alger's right fist heavily struck the gargoyle's chest, producing an explosive effect. It caused the gargoyle stone to be covered in fine cracks as silver lightning snaked around. Following that, the cracks widened and depressed into a pit!

With a cracking sound, his dagger exploded, turning into countless fragments that scattered everywhere.

The strong recoil sent Alger flying back. In midair, he saw through the corner of his eye that the hatted Gehrman Sparrow had at some point in time circled to the front and cocked his revolver.

Right on the heels of that, the cold adventurer suddenly raised his hand

and aimed the black barrel right at the gargoyle.

Bang!

Amidst a loud echo, a bullet tore through the pit in the gargoyle’s chest and pierced it.

Following the explosive boom, the grayish-white stone monster convulsed a few times before the flames in its eyes were extinguished.

After a brief pause, it collapsed like a mountain, producing an exaggerated sound and earthquake-like shaking.

Death Knell had delivered a lethal blow!

And at this moment, Alger had just maintained his balance and found his footing thanks to the wind.

Klein didn’t speak to him or search for the spoils of war. He immediately turned around and headed for the charred area where Azik’s copper whistle sat silently.

Slippery tentacles covered in fish scales moved as the deceased body with nearly half its body gone had stood up. Bolts of lightning continued snaking around its body.

It was the domineering, savage, tyrannous deceased body that wore a tattered brown jacket with a triangular captain’s hat. It was missing its left arm and right leg, as well as having half its head. Its body was covered in traces of charred and melted flesh.

But even so, it didn’t sleep in peace. It was still attempting to fuse with the surrounding flesh and blood in order to obtain a stronger state.

One had to know that Klein had used Lightning Storm, which he had recorded from the Sea God Scepter. Even if the act of recording had reduced its might, it was definitely the Beyonder power at the demigod level. Just the fact that the other two deceased went silent without letting out a grunt was a testament of its might!

This awakened deceased body is problematic… Klein's heart stirred as he made Senor leap onto the smooth surface of Azik's copper whistle before attempting to reflect onto the deceased fish scale on its slippery tentacle.

At that moment, through the marionette, Klein sensed a tyrannical and high-level repulsive force. The Wraith was unable to possess it!

Senor was even repelled as it couldn't help but lose its invisibility.

Upon seeing this, Alger didn't question the situation. He raised his hands and created a spiraling wind around the deceased body, hoping to restrain its actions. However, the wind didn't sweep inwardly, as though it was afraid of something. It was forcefully dissipated as it rapidly vanished.

The only thing to be happy about was that the deceased body didn't immediately attack the duo. Instead, it jumped to the left, bent its back, and attempted to pick up Azik's copper whistle.

Klein immediately flicked his wrist and precisely flipped Leymano's Travels to the page with Abyss Shackles.

This was a Beyonder power which Emlyn had recorded, one belonging to a Sequence 7 Vampire.

As Klein swiped his Death Knell-wielding right hand onto the notebook, the shadows around the deceased body suddenly came to life and manifested chains that shackled it firmly to the ground.

Taking advantage of his opponent's brief pause, Klein raised his revolver in a deadpan manner.

Different colors—red, green, and white—immediately appeared in his vision.

Aiming at the white, Klein pulled the trigger.

Bang!

A pale golden beam shot into the head of the deceased body, causing it to rupture immediately into a spray of blood. At the same time, the Purifying Bullet also emitted a sun-like radiance that illuminated the target's body.

The deceased body melted like wax as it bent its waist and lost its balance, collapsing right beside Azik's copper whistle.

Monsters without any intelligence that only move on instinct are much easier to deal with than Beyonders of the same level… However, am I letting the copper whistle down? Ever since it was given to me, it has suffered explosions, the catharsis of lightning, and the purification of sunlight. Life sure isn't easy for it… Klein repented for a second before controlling Senor to pick up the ancient and exquisite copper whistle and stuffing it inside his body.

He didn't directly head over, afraid that a deceased body would awaken. Hence, he continued letting Senor to investigate the fellow who could resist the possession effect.

Klein suspected that the deceased had an item of a rather high level!

Soon, Senor in his non-Wraith form touched something and pulled it out.

It was a card!

On the face of the card was a man wearing a papal tiara with both hands held up. Before him were prostrated believers, and behind him was lightning, dark clouds, gales, and waves!

Klein was very familiar with the man because he had a portrait of this person in another set of attire.

It was Emperor Roselle!

And to the top left of the pontiff-dressed Roselle, there was a line of text formed from resplendent starlight: Sequence 0: Tyrant!

The Card of Blasphemy from the Storm pathway? The Tyrant card? Klein instantly recalled how the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom addressed the Lord of Storms: Tyrant!

Alger also saw the Card of Blasphemy as his gaze froze instantly. Flames of greed flared up in his eyes.

He took a deep breath and moved his gaze away as he looked to the side and said, “The battle was intense. Perhaps other entities deep inside this cathedral have been awoken by us. So, let’s store away the things as quickly as possible and prepare to leave.”

Mr. Hanged Man, do you think I’m not aware of that? There’s no need for you to nag. What happened to our tacit teamwork from before? Heh, indeed. The Tyrant card has affected you. You can hardly calm down, and you have become talkative… As Klein got Wraith Senor to pick up the Card of Blasphemy and enter one of the deceased bodies to accelerate the production of the Beyonder characteristic, he coldly said, “You’ve already wasted five seconds.”

Alger was taken aback. Without saying another word, he walked to the remains of the six-winged gargoyle and dug out the eyeball that glowed red. Then, he patiently waited for a moment and reached into its shattered back to extract a gargoyle translucent crystal.

Elsewhere, with the Wraith’s help, the deceased body that was covered with yellow-green pus produced a blob of brown “soil.” It had roots to it with hidden “blood vessels.” It appeared rather strange.

Without wasting time to guess at the Sequence or pathway it belonged to, Klein got Senor to store it away before heading for the deceased body whose slippery tentacles were still twitching slightly, to accelerate the production of the Beyonder characteristic.

Seeing what looked like a jellyfish with azure-blue seawater in it take form, Klein and Alger suddenly heard a dragged out sound.

“Sigh…”

This sighing came from deep within the cathedral, bringing along with it an indescribable sense of ancientness.

Chapter 814 - Disappeared

◆

The long sigh that sounded from deep within the cathedral had left the back muscles of Klein and Alger tense as they were pumped with adrenaline.

Without any hesitation, Klein's left glove turned transparent as he vanished, appearing beside The Hanged Man.

As he reached out to grab his shoulder, Senor also picked up the jellyfish-like Beyonder characteristic and, with the help of mirror leap, returned back to the gold coin inside the iron cigar case.

Right on the heels of that, Klein's and Alger's bodies turned incorporeal and invisible, leaving the catacombs silent again.

The two of them were directly teleported into midair a distance away. Their figures came into existence amidst the shadows of the clouds and the crimson moonlight.

Subconsciously, Klein and Alger turned their heads in unison to look at the primitive island, wishing to know if any changes would happen to it.

When they heard that sigh, they had relied on their instincts and experience to immediately escape despite not sensing any actual danger. Now, they couldn't help but feel curious and puzzled.

In their vision, the thick mist that cloaked the primitive island had quickly dispersed. The moonlight shone straight down without anything obstructing it.

Amidst howling winds, Klein and Alger floated in midair as they saw the primitive island's present state through the sparse mist.

It had vanished.

This primitive island that had a demigod feathered serpent and all kinds of Beyonder creatures had vanished!

The region it was in had dark-blue seawater which was almost black was ebbing slightly. Nothing appeared out of the ordinary!

Alger couldn't help but reach his hand into his pocket where he touched the six-winged gargoyle's core crystal that had left his mind sluggish.

If not for his battle spoils still being in existence, he would've suspected if it was all a dream. He wondered if he and Gehrman Sparrow had somewhat gotten lost, that they hadn't found the real primitive island, and ended up completing the exploration in their dreams.

Klein had similar thoughts as well. He even felt as though he was hallucinating. After all, a giant island with so many powerful creatures that hid secrets from mythical times couldn't just vanish without a word. Even the seawater didn't show any corresponding signs of its existence.

Thankfully, I didn't hesitate at all and chose to immediately escape. Otherwise, Mr. Hanged Man and I might really vanish, never to be found again… Klein suddenly felt a deep sense of joy. He didn't dare stay any longer as he activated Traveling once again and vanished with Alger as they traversed the spirit world.

And the final scene of this body of water that froze in their eyes was of mist spreading once again with increasing density.

After another Teleportation, Klein and Alger returned to the deserted island. They stood on a reef and watched the waves strike the shore loudly.

Alger looked around and heaved a silent sigh of relief. He took out the core crystal of the six-winged gargoyle and said, “This is a shared spoil of war. You get to choose first.”

After weighing the matter, he considered the six-winged gargoyle to be a monster that the duo had killed together. As for the three deceased bodies, they were solely Gehrman Sparrow’s.

Klein didn’t directly respond. He made Senor float beside him as he took out the Tyrant card, the brown soil Beyonder characteristic, and the jellyfish-like Beyonder characteristic. The latter was suspected to be that of an Ocean Songster’s.

After doing all of this, he said, “One battle. I’ll choose first. Thrice.”

He meant that in the battle the duo faced, they had fought three deceased bodies and a six-winged gargoyle. He had contributed greatly in the entire battle, so the spoils of war received in the tomb belonged to the pool.

Of course, based on the contributions, Gehrman Sparrow had the right to choose first and choose three consecutive times.

Alger was taken aback as he gained a new understanding of the crazy adventurer. He then nodded.

“Okay.”

Klein immediately reached his hand towards his marionette and calmly took the Tyrant card with Roselle’s face on it.

“This counts as twice.”

With the Card of Blasphemy, along with the Sea God Scepter, he could barely be considered a fake demigod when taking action in his Spirit Body state.

This was also very useful when acting as Sea God.

Of course, the greatest value the Tyrant card provided was the High-Sequence potion formulas of the Storm pathway, as well as the subtle ability to sense the ingredients needed after reaching Sequence 4.

And it was precisely because of this that Klein didn't wait till they returned to the City of Generosity, Bayam, to split the spoils of war. He was afraid that the Tyrant card would directly attract Sea King Jahn Kottman.

It's up to you to say how many times it counts… Alger didn't retort, nor did he plan on objecting to Gehrman Sparrow's claim. He watched as Gehrman reached for the jellyfish-like Beyonder characteristic which likely corresponded to Ocean Songster.

To Klein, it could be used to create a mystical item in the Storm domain; thus, replacing the Murloc Cufflink that had been taken away by Admiral Hell. It could also be bestowed to the Rorsted Archipelago's Resistance in the future to raise their survivability at sea. Of course, the condition was that they had greatly pleased Sea God.

Putting away the Tyrant card and the jellyfish-like Beyonder characteristic, Klein glanced at The Hanged Man, indicating that it was his turn to choose.

Alger deliberated and said, "Can I choose the Sequence 4 potion formula from that Card of Blasphemy?"

"No problem." Klein nodded without much of an expression. "I'll give it to you in the future."

Although the Tyrant card had been activated, using it was bound to cause quite a stir. Therefore, to be safe, Klein planned on heading above the gray fog to study it after he returned to Backlund.

"Alright." Even with Alger's stateliness, he couldn't help but smile.

After this adventure, once his digestion of the Ocean Songster was almost done, he could showcase his strength and take the path of being advanced by the Church. When the time came, drinking an additional potion wasn't a big problem. Even if he didn't give birth to a child, just time alone could allow him to resolve the matter completely. The key obstacle was that going from Sequence 5 to Sequence 4 was a qualitative transformation. It was a sublimation of life's natural order. Countless Ocean Songsters in the Church of Storms had worked hard for decades, but they had failed to obtain an opportunity. Alger didn't believe that he, as a mixed-blood, one who had promoted himself from a servant, would receive any special treatment. He felt that not being ostracized was already something to be happy about, a result of his ability to build social ties.

Furthermore, in the Church, the potion was directly given for the advancement to Sequence 4. There was no advanced understanding of the formula or its preparation. For Alger to gain an advantage in this intense competition, he had to have other ideas apart from being ranked within the top three in terms of contributions.

His present line of thought was to kill a famous pirate. From him, he could "obtain" the Cataclysmic Interrer's potion formula. Then, he could let the clues point towards the mutated deceased body in the primitive island. It was likely a powerful pirate who had once been active at sea before suddenly vanishing.

This way, the upper echelons of the Church of Storms would definitely suspect that this powerful missing pirate had obtained the Card of Blasphemy, and this undeniable reality could be verified via many different means.

Alger could use the advantage of already knowing the Cataclysmic Interrer's potion formula to obtain a chance to become a Sequence 4.

Of course, that's working on the premise that the Church doesn't have a Sealed Artifact that can directly wipe out any corresponding memories… If this method doesn’t work, and there’s no real way to advance, I can only secretly gather the corresponding ingredients and prepare the required ritual for advancement. Once I become a Sequence 4, I’ll immediately leave the Church and become a Pirate King… Alger reined in his thoughts and watched as Gehrman Sparrow took away the brown soil-like Beyonder characteristic.

Glancing at the remaining items, he put away the grayish-white translucent crystal and handed the six-winged gargoyle’s eyeball to Gehrman Sparrow.

With him not lacking any powerful offensive means, and him being well-rounded when it came to the sea and land, it was rather useful for him if the Beyonder ingredient could be made into a mystical item.

Back in the tomb, if it wasn’t because he was uncertain if Psychic Piercing could affect the gargoyle, and the battle situation didn’t allow for any mistakes, he would’ve chosen to first use the Whip of Mind.

After splitting the spoils of war, putting them in different boxes, and sealing them with walls of spirituality, Klein stored away Senor. Reaching out his hand to grab The Hanged Man, their figures turned faint as they entered the spirit world.

After the Traveling was completed, the two appeared on a mountain beside the sea in the Bayam city outskirts. It was still close to the cemetery, and it was as though they had never left.

Alger didn’t harp on the topic as he nodded at Gehrman Sparrow.

“If you need any mystical items created, I shall bear the corresponding costs.

“It’s a pleasure working with you.”

Wearing the transparent glove, Klein tersely answered before vanishing.

He left The Hanged Man behind, and he directly teleported himself to a secluded corner in Bayam City.

Next, I need to select a lucky pirate… Klein surveyed his area as he muttered silently and stretched his fingers before walking out into the street.

Of course, he didn't forget to change his appearance. He also smeared blood over Leymano's Travels. After all, there were bounty notices everywhere for Gehrman Sparrow, and Sea King Jahn Kottman remained in this city. If he were recognized or got lost, things would be nasty.

†

On the mountainside outside the city, Alger looked up at the dark night where there were the crimson moon and the countless stars. He slowly inhaled and exhaled, allowing the refreshing and saltiness of the seaside to cleanse his body.

The exploration he had just completed was the most dangerous adventure he had ever had. If not for the Teleportation from Gehrman Sparrow's Creeping Hunger, he doubted that they could escape alive.

However, as Mr. Fool's Blessed, The World should have other trump cards. For example, those demigod-level Beyonder powers in Leymano's Travels…

But in that case, we might not have successfully reached the tomb, with us encountering more trouble along the way…

Yes, that Card of Blasphemy of the Storm pathway is the target that made him restrain his madness… Was this was an instruction from Mr. Fool? "He" had already foreseen it! Perhaps, "He" even knows the existence that produced that sigh from deep within the cathedral!

Back then Qilangos might've seen the Tyrant card but had lacked the ability to obtain it. That must be why he said that… Alger’s mind churned as he slowly walked to the foot of the mountain.

Chapter 815 - After-action review

◆

Backlund, 160 Böklund Street.

Gehrman Sparrow’s figure suddenly appeared inside his bedroom as his black trench coat fluttered while his half top hat remained straight.

The Dwayne Dantès lying in bed immediately turned incorporeal, receding into a palm-sized mirror.

Probably no one came tonight. Arrodes didn’t cause any trouble… Upon seeing the peace and quiet, Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief as his body grew a lot taller and his sideburns turned gray. His blue eyes deepened as he transformed into Dwayne Dantès.

Meanwhile, watery waves stirred in the mirror as silver light gathered to outline words:

“Great Master, I didn’t do anything today! No, I seriously acted as the sleeping Dwayne Dantès.

“In addition, I encountered something. Do you wish to know what it was?”

Ignoring Arrodes’s desire to be praised in its first sentence, Klein felt his heart skip a beat. As he took off his hat and threw it on the reclining chair beside him, he said in a deep voice, “Tell me.”

The words on the mirror disintegrated and squirmed into new text.

“A lady peeped into this house when she was walking past this street.”

How does that matter? There are plenty of people who admire the surroundings when passing by every day… Klein was just about to say something when the aqueous light stirred on the mirror's surface, outlining a figure.

The person was dressed quite oddly in the eyes of normal people. She wore a spirit medium's black robe. Her eyeshadow and blush were blue. She looked beautiful, but she also had an uncanny appearance. She was none other than Daly Simone.

This lady had turned her head to look out as she passed by Unit 160 while on a carriage moving down Böklund Street. She had stared out for more than three seconds.

Man, she not only had an impression of Dwayne Dantès because of his eyes, but she has also grasped something about the situation? Klein frowned slightly and asked, "Anything else?"

"No!" As Arrodes presented the word, it sketched what symbolized a sworn oath.

Klein nodded and ignored the mirror's passion. He then sent it away.

After doing all of this, Klein took out a candle and set up a ritual. He summoned and responded to himself, bringing all the spoils of war and his clothes above the gray fog. He planned on separating Gehrman Sparrow's and Dwayne Dantès's clothes. He didn't wish to miss out on any details in the future.

Pa!

He snapped a finger and made the candlewick burn with a scarlet flame.

Flame.

Flame…

Klein's gaze froze as he quickly closed his eyes and turned around, his back facing the candle.

Then, he controlled Senor to approach the desk.

During this process, Senor's body trembled violently, but he ultimately reached out his right hand to extinguish the fire.

I'll sleep for the night and think about it tomorrow… No, I have the Tyrant card on me, and it has already been activated. Although there's the wall of spirituality to seal it, it might not be able to fully screen out the attraction force from those of the same pathway. It might only weaken its influence and take more time… Back when I was in Bayam, I came and went quickly, without daring to stay too long… Just as Klein calmed down, he thought of certain problems.

A few seconds later, he slowly took a deep breath, raised his hand, and snapped his fingers to light the candle.

Following that, he held back the horror in him as he controlled Senor to take another two candles to set up the sacrificial ritual. This way, it skipped the step of him responding to the summoning for the entrance to the real world via the flame.

After everything was done, Klein turned around with great difficulty as he "piously" lowered his head. Without looking into the candlelight, he seriously chanted the honorific name of The Fool.

Via sheer willpower, to the point of him bursting out in tears, he finally completed the ritual and sacrificed all the items, sending them above the gray fog.

Phew… Klein exhaled, taking four steps counterclockwise, he arrived at the silent mysterious space. Sitting in The Fool's seat, he first picked up the Tyrant card, and he triggered the content hidden within.

The Card of Blasphemy immediately became three-dimensional, like a palm-sized book.

As he flipped through the pages, each page had a Roselle Gustav. He was either playing the role of a sailor, or he was wearing a captain's hat and holding a sextant; otherwise, he was singing loudly with the sea as his background.

Klein was rendered speechless by this sight. He felt increasingly convinced that his fellow Earthling was way too narcissistic.

I'll be really impressed if the Demoness card also uses his image… As Klein lampooned, he read through the corresponding contents, analyzing the Sequence names, ingredients, and rituals of the Storm pathway.

"Sequence 9: Sailor… Sequence 8: Folk of Rage… Sequence 7: Seafarer… Sequence 6: Wind-blessed… Sequence 5: Ocean Songster… Sequence 4: Cataclysmic Interrer… Sequence 3: Sea King… Sequence 2: Calamity… Sequence 1: Thunder God… Sequence 0: Tyrant…

The ritual to become Tyrant, or in other words, the Lord of Storms, is very different from that of the Black Emperor. Firstly, it needs hundreds of thousands of followers to submit and believe in said person out of fear. Secondly, it is to challenge a true deity, in other words, another Sequence 0, and survive. Finally, in this atmosphere of fear and submission, consume the potion to complete the advancement.

This sucks. A Sequence 1 who hasn't experienced a qualitative change is to challenge a Sequence 0 true deity, doesn't that spell almost certain death?… Besides, what if there's no Sequence 0 during that era? Then, wouldn't one need to think of a way to nurture one, or to switch to a neighboring pathway… Of course, the ritual might not be necessary. With enough luck, there's still a chance of succeeding by directly drinking the potion. Sea God Kalvetua was such an example. It didn't even consume a potion but instead an unconcocted Beyonder characteristic…

The core of this ritual is the courage to challenge a deity, with massive feelings of fear and submission?

Hmm, Tyrant doesn't seem to come equipped with the Black Emperor's uniqueness of distorting rules, preventing "Him" from resurrecting from the dead and returning from the void. However, it seems to be able to transform into lightning or light for a short period of time, perhaps capable of creating a planet-level disaster… Emperor Roselle's focus is on the formula and ritual. His description of the Beyonder powers and deity authorities are very vague…

Klein casually summoned a piece of paper that wasn't conjured. Using a fountain pen, he recorded the Cataclysmic Interrer's potion formula and wrote a note in The World Gehrman Sparrow's style of speech.

"Avoid recalling the contents of that picture usually."

This was a warning for The Hanged Man. In the mysterious domain, matters that involved Sequence 0 required caution and carefulness. Care needed to be taken even if it violated common sense.

It didn't mean that seeing and discussing that picture on the primitive island meant that they were safe in the outside world. If they often recalled the matter, there might be a day when they were "lucky" enough to have lightning smite down at them, them suffering from an unresolvable conundrum that killed them with an aneurysm, or them dying from heatstroke from the sun's radiance.

The ritual of the Cataclysmic Interrer is extremely dangerous. It will trigger earthquakes and tsunamis, and the advancer needs to consume the potion in such an environment, holding out until it ends… Klein folded the piece of paper and placed it to the side while putting away the Tyrant card.

After using divination to confirm that the three Beyonder characteristics he obtained were separately the Black Emperor pathway's Sequence 5 Mentor of Disorder, Storm pathway's Sequence 5 Ocean Songster, and Planter pathway's Sequence 5 Druid, Klein finally had the time to recall what had happened during his exploration as he considered the information it hid.

Eternal Blazing Sun is clearly of the Sun pathway, and that City of Silver Creator is also known as the ancient sun god. This can be determined from some of the Fourth Epoch history and the murals of the elves… According to the law of Sequence Beyonder Characteristics Conservation of having no Sequence 1 when there's a Sequence 0, the White Angel back then likely wasn't a King of Angels. But if "He" wasn't a King of Angels, "He" had no right to partake in the feast of the City of Silver Creator. This not only has external elements in play, but it also includes the problem of jumping directly from Sequence 2 to Sequence 0 which has a high chance of losing control!

Either Eternal Blazing Sun had switched pathways to become a god, or the City of Silver Creator's main authority wasn't the Sun. After he defeated the ancient gods, "He" had already allocated parts of his authority to the angels beside him, making "Them" become Kings of Angels. Therefore, the elves' murals and the name that eventually spread had only indicated that "He" once wielded authority over the Sun, and that it wasn't an authority he held the entire time.

There's also another possibility. The Creator, who took over the ancient gods' authorities, had the ability to allow a Sequence 2 of the same pathway to advance to Sequence 1…

Klein's train of thought quickly turned to who had built the cathedral and left behind the mural. Due to the messiness of the various situations, he conjured a piece of goatskin, and he summarized all the points by writing them down to seek out the connection.

"That primitive island was discovered by Qilangos and Mr. Hanged Man…

"Qilangos received a mission from the Twilight Hermit Order. To obtain a priceless item, he headed to Backlund to assassinate Duke Negan, and he ended up dying at Mr. Azik's hands…

"Qilangos told Mr. Hanged Man that deep inside the ruin was a precious item that was in no way worse than Roselle's tarot card, but it was something that could only be obtained at Sequence 5…

“He later obtained Creeping Hunger and became a pirate admiral, with a strength already equivalent to a Sequence 5…

“That Tyrant card remains deep inside the cathedral’s catacombs…

“Qilangos didn’t make any subsequent attempts? Or did his attempts fail?

“That cathedral was built by an existence who worships the ancient sun god. The mural depicts the dark history of the true deities before the Cataclysm, and is clearly on the ancient sun god’s side…

“The Twilight Hermit Order is suspected to be established by the son of God, Adam, with the goal of resurrecting the ancient sun god, the City of Silver Creator…

“That primitive island suddenly disappeared as though it never existed…

“Adam is an Angel of Imagination… Amongst the Twilight Hermit Order’s core members, there’s at least one angel of the Spectator pathway, Hermes…

“The Twilight Hermit Order tends to select members of the Sailor, Reader, or Sun pathways. It has a high chance of possessing High-Sequence ingredients and items from the Storm domain… There might be angels from the Storm domain in it…”

Klein lowered his pen and looked at the content listed out as he slowly made a guess.

Chapter 816 - Completing the Transaction

◆

After listing down all the important points, Klein rapped the edge of the long mottled table and silently muttered, The one who sighed in the depths of the cathedral is a member of the Twilight Hermit Order?

Qilangos had caught the eye of the Twilight Hermit Order after he managed to venture deep inside? Later, he obtained an advancement and received Creeping Hunger, allowing him to become a Pirate Admiral?

If that’s the case, it can be understood why he didn’t go to the primitive island again to take away the Tyrant card after possessing the strength of a Sequence 5… It’s yours only if it’s given. You can’t touch it if it’s not given?

Of course, Qilangos might’ve established contact with that member of the Twilight Hermit Order during his second visit of the cathedral after possessing enough combat strength…

Regardless, that primitive island must have quite a connection with the Twilight Hermit Order.

The reason why we arrived at the tomb rather smoothly in the other zones and saw the picture of the Kings of Angels feasting on the Creator was because that Twilight Hermit Order member had the intention of letting us do so? They are happy to let that lost piece of history spread given the chance… However, their depiction of something from their own standpoints might not be the truth as well…

Later, that Twilight Hermit Order member probably sighed because he or she didn't expect us to quickly finish off the awakened deceased bodies and the six-winged gargoyle to obtain the Tyrant card?

With how things normally go, we should've been in danger, and "He" quells everything, talking to us from a distance, making us outer circle members of the Twilight Hermit Order?

Klein carefully used "He" to refer to the existence in the depths of the abandoned cathedral.

He even suspected that the person might be the former King of Angels, son of God, Adam!

Of course, he wasn't certain if the primitive island belonged to the Twilight Hermit Order. He believed that even divination wouldn't give him a certain answer, as there were too many possibilities. It also involved other hidden existences, and any information related to the spirit world would definitely be wiped away or hidden.

If it's really as I guessed, does that mean that I missed the chance of joining the Twilight Hermit Order? If I pass their test, then I might be able to take a glance at the second Blasphemy Slate and obtain the High-Sequence potion formulas of the Seer pathway… What a pity… However, Gehrman Sparrow has a mysterious origin with a secret existence backing him. This is known by the various factions at sea, and as the most ancient and secret organization, the Twilight Hermit Order will definitely be aware of the corresponding situation. The outcome for Gehrman Sparrow would probably be immediate execution and then having answers obtained via spirit channeling… Klein first found it a pity before feeling afraid.

As his thoughts whirred, he even thought of sending The Hanged Man to the primitive island again and seek out an opportunity to make him an outer circle member of the Twilight Hermit Order, so that he could slowly reach its core.

Sigh, but the problem is that the primitive island has vanished… Otherwise, Mr. Hanged Man really has a chance of being a triple, no—a quadruple spy… Klein snapped his fingers and made the paper in front of him disappear, throwing the night's exploration to the back of his mind.

However, he warned himself that he needed to pay attention to the appearances of any abnormalities in his daily life.

He was afraid that it wasn't that the hidden existence deep in the cathedral wasn't able to stop himself and The Hanged Man from escaping, but that "He" had a deeper motive.

If not for the gray fog and him having been "sterilized," Klein even suspected if there were any hidden marks left on him.

Glancing at the items on the table, Klein first flipped the Tyrant card over and placed it beside the Black Emperor card. Following that, he began considering how he would deal with the remaining spoils of war.

He already had plans for the Sequence 5 Druid Beyonder characteristic of the Planter pathway—sell it to Frank Lee via The Hermit Cattleya.

But the problem is whether I want to accelerate the destruction of this world… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh as he fell into a dilemma.

Allowing a dangerous fellow like Frank Lee to advance to Sequence 5 meant that cows, fish, the sea, and Rose Bishops would be fearful. No one knew what this fellow, who was no better than a lunatic, would achieve in his experiments after obtaining greater powers. It was an unknown what sort of strange species he could create.

What if he plants himself and obtains a bunch of Franks. The world would truly be in danger if that happens… Klein silently exhaled and planned on letting Admiral of Stars vex over this problem.

After all, I'll just be selling the Druid Beyonder characteristic normally. Whether Ma'am Hermit wishes to buy it is up to her… Besides, it's only a Sequence 5. I believe Queen Mystic and the Moses Ascetic Order will support her and be able to ensure nothing goes wrong. Besides, the Church of Earth Mother has a bunch of Saints, Angels, and Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, as well as a true deity. There's nothing they can't handle… As Klein consoled himself, he placed his attention onto the Mentor of Disorder and Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristics.

His initial plan for the latter was to create a mystical item, but he wasn't sure if the Artisan that The Hanged Man knew had the ability to do so. As for the former, he planned on selling it.

Although it could also be made into an item, it overlapped with the Baron of Corruption inside the glove. Besides, Klein also began to realize that having too many mystical items wasn't necessarily a good thing. Particular negative effects were a pain when stacked. With Creeping Hunger and the rentable Leymano's Travels, he believed that it was best if he traveled light most of the time.

Under normal circumstances, Creeping Hunger matched with Death Knell, along with a few Purifying Bullets, it was enough to deal with most matters!

When in a sea or air battle, he could have an additional mystical item made from an Ocean Songster. In complicated situations, he could rent Leymano's Travels when given the opportunity. If there wasn't an opportunity, he could use Groselle's Travels for defense, and throw out the Fate Siphon charm.

And this wasn't considering his own Beyonder powers, Wraith marionette, or the hard-to-use Sea God Scepter!

In terms of fixed assets, I'm considered a true tycoon… Klein sighed as he made the Beyonder characteristics fly to the junk pile.

As for the eyeball of the six-winged gargoyle, this was a material rich in spirituality and had some hint of strangeness. It could be used in a ritual to create charms. Klein temporarily had no better use or requirements for it, so he had already thrown it into the junk pile.

After doing all of this, he disappeared from above the gray fog, and he returned to the real world.

†

On Saturday morning, Fors had originally planned on waking up naturally, but she ended up being awoken by The World's transmission via Mr. Fool.

He was returning Leymano's Travels to her!

Fors rubbed her eyes and planned on directly preparing the ritual, but when she saw her messy hair and puffy eyes, she decided to wash up first to make herself look human.

She had finally sold the two properties yesterday, selling them at a higher price than she had expected. Even after deducting the corresponding taxes, she had received 6,550 pounds.

To her chagrin, gold coins which were used in daily life may appear common, but when she attempted to collect them en masse, she failed to obtain much. After plenty of work, all she got was 600 gold coins.

Phew, I can finally repay the debt and complete the transaction. Fors combed her hair and began setting up the ritual.

Last night, to celebrate her first time accumulating such immense wealth, she secretly drank half a bottle of Lanti and a barrel of Southville beer. This resulted in her waking up in a terrible state.

During the ritual, and after some communication, Fors paid 5,200 pounds and 600 gold coins, closing the assassination commission and receiving an Interrogator Beyonder characteristic.

This way, she still had 2,530 pounds in cash. As for the royalties from her two books, although they weren't much, they were relatively stable.

After a brief wait, Fors saw the Door of Sacrifice and Bestowment light up as two items flew out.

One of them was Leymano's Travels, and the other was a light-blue, translucent hexagonal prism. In it were streaking bolts of lightning.

Mr. World sure has many Beyonder characteristics on hand… Fors sighed silently and first thanked Mr. Fool before ending the ritual to accept the Interrogator's Beyonder characteristic.

Finally, she picked up Leymano's Travels and flipped through it to see what additional Beyonder powers there were.

As the pages flipped over, her gaze suddenly froze. This was because two of the charred yellow pages weren't empty. They were filled with mysterious and strange patterns and symbols.

These represented Beyonder powers at the demigod level!

A total of two pages!

"How extravagant…" Fors couldn't help herself as she muttered.

This was the first time she was seeing a demigod Beyonder power which she could freely use!

As a best-selling author who mainly wrote romance, her first reaction was that The World Gehrman Sparrow was chasing after her.

But thinking back to how they hadn't met before, and how the gentleman was a cold and powerful assassin, she quickly rejected such a guess. She believed that The World Gehrman Sparrow was probably able to receive help from a demigod at any time, so he didn't mind such matters.

Phew, I should try not to use it. I'll let Mr. World use it when he rents it again… Fors exhaled with some fear, completely lacking the guts to take advantage of the terrifying assassin.

After composing herself, she used her crystal ball and identified all the new Beyonder powers. She felt that they were all relatively useful apart from Full Moon.

If I wish to commit suicide, this is quite a useful one… she muttered and closed Leymano's Travels. She planned on giving Xio the Interrogator's Beyonder characteristic when she returned in the evening.

†

At seven in the evening, Klein wore starched clothes as he waited at the foyer with Butler Walter and Valet Richardson to welcome the guests at his ball.

Soon, he saw a familiar face walk over.

Aaron Ceres!

This famous surgeon walked to the main door while helping his pregnant wife.

Pregnant lady… Klein's heart stirred as he walked over with a beaming smile.

Chapter 817 - Guests

◆

As a polite gentleman, Klein obviously wouldn't stare at Aaron's wife. He looked at the famous surgeon and said, "Good evening, Aaron. How may I address your lovely companion?"

Aaron's cold demeanor hadn't changed, but it didn't stop him from handing over an intricately packed bottle of red wine and say with a polite smile, "My wife, Wilma Gladys, a middle school teacher."

"It appears you are about to become a father again. When's it due?" Klein received the present and asked.

The topic he had planned to cover when talking to Dr. Aaron had been about a few new surgery techniques in the papers, but he never expected him to bring his pregnant wife.

This was a pleasant surprise for him. This was because Ma'am Wilma Gladys was expecting the unborn Snake of Mercury, Will Auceptin.

Aaron subconsciously glanced at his wife's tummy and said with a smile, "Early July. If you don't mind, I wish to invite you to his birth party."

Just as he said that, the gentle and beautiful black-haired lady, Wilma, suddenly held her tummy and exclaimed in pain.

"What happened?" Aaron asked in concern.

"He kicked me, but he's calmed down," Wilma said with an eased expression.

She then looked at Dwayne Dantès and smiled.

“Because of my pregnancy, I’ve been home all the time and haven’t been to such balls in a while. Feeling pent up at home, I got Aaron to bring me along. Although I can’t dance, I’ll be able to chat with the other ladies, and I’ll even find some time to play some cards.”

“Your presence honors me,” Klein sincerely replied. “I will come for his birth party in early July.”

He wasn’t affected by the tiny accident, as he still remembered Dr. Aaron’s invitation.

After exchanging a few words of pleasantries, Klein handed over the gift to his valet, Richardson, and got him to lead his two, no—three guests into the hall.

Without needing to wait too long, he received his second guest. It was Bishop Elektra, who was still wearing his black clergyman robe, and his female partner.

His partner was a lady in her early twenties who still had a little bit of baby fat to her cheeks. She looked at everything with a sense of wonder, and she was filled with energy. However, she had an additional hint of maturity to her due to her already having a child.

“Good evening, Your Excellency. My sleep has recently been excellent,” Klein said, feigning ignorance of the Church of Evernight’s secret efforts.

Elektra immediately tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

“This is a blessing of the Goddess.”

He then introduced his female partner.

“She’s my wife, Shona Johnson.”

As he often visited Dwayne Dantès and had been to his residence several times, he didn't need to prepare any gifts for the ball. It would appear overly polite and too distant.

"Nice to meet you. You are a lot younger than I imagined," Klein greeted Shona half-politely and half-jokingly with a nod.

Meanwhile, he silently did the math.

It's said that the bishop got married two years ago. That means that his wife was only eighteen or nineteen… This age difference is quite huge… In a few years, I might have to introduce a particular chubby Apothecary to him…

Upon hearing Dwayne Dantès's joke, and recalling the conversation back when he visited him while the former was sick, Elektra immediately felt uneasy. He coughed gently and replied, "She's someone who likes a bustle. If she's free, she has no wish to miss any ball."

Klein didn't speak further because he saw Ma'am Mary alight from her carriage and was walking over.

After letting Bishop Elektra and his wife enter the hall, Klein smiled at Mary and said, "Ma'am, perhaps we will be fellow workers next week."

The lawyer and accounting team he hired had completed their investigations and had cleared the Coim Company's audit and said that it was very suitable for investing into. Furthermore, he had already reached a preliminary agreement with the gentleman who was selling the shares. Final confirmation of the sale of 3% shares for 12,800 pounds was to be made next week.

When Mary heard that, she chuckled and said, "I already treat you as a partner."

This seems to have a deeper meaning to it… Don't tell me that Dwayne Dantès has caught your fancy… Klein's heart stirred as he feigned ignorance and reached his hand out.

"I hope for a pleasant partnership."

After a shake of hands, he got Butler Walter to lead the lady in.

At this moment, more and more guests were arriving. Klein recalled the corresponding topics and warmly and humorously received them, receiving plenty of gifts as a result.

If not for my instinctive ability as a Faceless to remember a person's looks and characteristics, I wouldn't be able to tell who is who, much less find the correct topic to raise… It's no wonder that a butler's help is often needed at such times… As Klein was stirring in poignancy, he saw Member of Parliament Macht and his family arrive.

He smiled again and took a step forward.

"Good evening. Today's starry sky is especially beautiful."

Member of Parliament Macht smiled as he handed a bottle of black Rand from some unknown vineyard to him and said, "I've been in Backlund for nearly twenty years, but the number of starry skies I've seen combined cannot even compare to the number I've seen this year."

"I hope there will be more with time." Klein then said to Ma'am Riana, "I heard that the both of you have gotten a boarding school for Miss Hazel?"

Riana looked at her daughter who wore a cold expression despite maintaining a polite smile.

"Boarding school education is becoming increasingly popular. It's the same for females. And most importantly, perhaps Hazel will get to know more friends. Unfortunately, she doesn't seem too happy about this arrangement, as she can't bear to leave us."

In Backlund, boarding schools that targeted females of high society had already grown in popularity. The education they provided might not be better than home tutors, but it created a social circle.

The school fees for such a boarding school like that was about 500 pounds a year.

She probably can't bear to part with the sewers here… Klein lampooned. After a short chat, he let Member of Parliament Macht and family into the hall.

When it was almost time, he didn't wait by the door and instead walked to the second floor. Standing behind the railing that faced the main door, he gestured for the musicians to pause the music.

Holding a cup of champagne, Klein surveyed the surroundings. With all the guests looking at him, he loudly said, "I'm very happy that all of you can grace this ball with your presence. First, I'd like to thank the Goddess, as well as you…

"I've prepared for everyone local music and food from Desi, and I hope you will like it…"

After a simple speech, Klein walked down the stairs to the first floor, in preparation to invite a lady to dance the opening dance.

Typically, a married host would definitely invite his own partner for the opening dance, while unmarried men or women would dance with a relative of the opposite sex, or invite someone they had their eye on, in an alternate form of a blind date. But Dwayne Dantès didn't have any family or any suitable target, so this matter appeared somewhat embarrassing.

However, he had an experienced butler. His butler had hired a socialite of high society, and although dancing the opening dance would result in some rumors, it wouldn't make others believe that they were dating.

Therefore, Klein looked at the lady named Oria without any guilt as he walked towards her.

This lady was a widow who had good relationships with several people in Backlund's high society. She enjoyed quite a status in this circle, but of course, she wasn't well-liked by the ladies. Anyone with a bit of standing looked down on her.

Regardless, Oria's female charms and her bearing was excellent. It was especially so with her figure that had alluring curves. If it wasn't because her looks were only above average, Klein would have suspected that she was a Demoness.

"Ma'am, may I have the pleasure of dancing with you?" Klein followed the teachings of his etiquette teacher, Wahana, and posed flawlessly.

Oria with her blonde hair bun smiled and reached out her hand.

"You are a gentleman that cannot be rejected."

…That sounds ambiguous… Her identity and the role she plays in social settings ensures that she can't act as demure as most ladies and madams… Klein held her hand, entered the dance floor, and began dancing under the tune of a village folk song.

The aristocrats all had land, manors, and castles in the villages, and they spent several months a year there; therefore, folk songs were one of the mainstream songs in high society social events.

"You dance really well. If Wahana hadn't mentioned it before, I wouldn't believe that you weren't able to dance before." Oria deliberately leaned in close. As they moved in step, her breathing could be heard.

As she was a stranger, Klein was a little uneasy by the close distance, but he couldn't push her away while under everyone's gaze, so all he could do was smile.

"I just didn't know how to dance such dances.

"In fact, I'm good at the kind of dances from Desi Bay and the Southern Continent where there's greater freedom."

“I also like those kinds of dances. They are full of strength and passion. It’s danced for yourself and not for others.” Oria found a topic as she gyrated her body, appearing extremely intimate with Dwayne Dantès.

Towards the end of the opening dance, she said with a suppressed chuckle, “If it wasn’t for the rumors, I would even suspect that you don’t fancy women because you’re a little stiff.

“However, I no longer have any doubts.”

As she spoke, she glanced down.

Klein was actually rather embarrassed. She was really good at using her body and words to create a suggestive atmosphere; however, Dwayne Dantès was an experienced man and couldn’t admit defeat.

He smiled with a natural expression.

“Stiffness is a result of not being used to Backlund’s social scene.”

“I can teach you,” Oria said with a chuckle.

At that moment, the tune came to an end as she took a step back and winked with a smile.

“You’re really passionate.”

The words were a double-entendre that left Klein nearly blushing. He even began to suspect if she was related to Demonesses.

He continued wearing a stoic expression as he bent his back into a bow, and he sent Oria back to her spot. Through the corner of his eye, he caught Wilma Gladys, who was pregnant with the Snake of Mercury, walking towards the long table to the side. Her target was apparently the first batch of ice-cream.

Chapter 818 - Warning

* * *

Klein’s gaze moved away from Wilma Gladys and looked to the pastries like carrot cake and cream puffs to the side, as well as the roasted poussin, stewed lamb, seared rib-eye, Desi roasted fish, and the other food nearby.

He gulped his saliva slightly and forced himself to retract his gaze as he prepared to invite Ma’am Mary for the second dance.

As the host, he couldn’t skip any of the first three dances; therefore, all he could do was temporarily forget his hunger and the delicacies.

And at this moment, Wilma Gladys, whose pregnant state showed, walked to the spot where there was ice-cream. She reached out her hand before retracting it.

“You want some?” Dr. Aaron hadn’t joined the first dance as he stayed by his pregnant wife’s side.

Wilma Gladys sternly shook her head.

“No, I don’t. I’m pregnant. It’s not good to have ice-cream.

“However, the little fella in my tummy seems to want a little, just a little.”

Dr. Aaron nodded indiscernibly and said, “Then have some. Leave the rest to me.”

Wilma immediately revealed an irresistible smile.

"You spoil him too much!"

She didn't object to it as she watched her husband pick up a scoop of ice-cream that had been circled with ice.

After taking two bites, Wilma closed her eyes and suddenly shifted her gaze. She looked at a few ladies who hadn't participated in the first dance. They were chatting about something in hushed tones. They had smiles across their suggestive faces, often covering their mouths and laughing covertly.

What interesting matters are they talking about? Wilma's curiosity was instantly piqued, and after informing her husband, Aaron, she walked over.

However, the few ladies quickly dispersed as though they were awaiting the second dance.

Wilma was disappointed as she asked the young beautiful lady who remained standing there, "Do you know what they were discussing about?"

"I'm not interested in their topics," Hazel said as she glanced at the pregnant lady beside her.

She didn't fault her for being a little impolite because pregnant ladies often had some privileges.

Only then did Wilma notice that Hazel, with her long black-green hair, was holding a cup of champagne. She looked like she had no wish to be invited to a dance.

She has a sense of pride that stems from the bottom of her heart. Even when looking at baronet madams, she will only maintain the most basic courtesy… This is a delightful character, but the problem is that she's like that to everyone. She's overly cold and aloof… Perhaps, she's in the rebellious stage that Emperor Roselle had mentioned before? As a middle-school teacher, Wilma couldn't help but make comment inwardly. Then, knowing better, she opened up a distance from Hazel and began looking for the ladies she was familiar with.

After completing three dances, Klein finally had a brief reprieve to stuff himself with more food and drink some thirst-quenching sweet ice tea. This was a Deis specialty that he specially got the kitchen to prepare.

Due to the influence of Death Knell, he had drank a little too much. After having a short conversation with Bishop Elektra, he had to apologize and take his leave to the washroom.

In fact, he could hold back for another three more dances. However, he felt that Snake of Fate Will Auceptin might have wanted to communicate with him, judging from his sudden appearance; therefore, he found a suitable place without anyone around.

Although "He" is an unborn fetus and came here passively, if "He" doesn't wish to meet me, "He" has a hundred ways to stop "His" mother from heading out… In short, it's worth giving it a try… Klein mumbled as he entered the washroom and locked the door.

Just as he was in a dilemma to deal with his burgeoning bladder or patiently wait another two minutes, his spiritual perception triggered as he looked at the mirror.

At some point in time, the mirror had produced a black pram that was covered in shadows that prevented him from seeing any details. The only thing he could discern was that there was a child wrapped in silver silk inside.

The child used a clear voice and said, "Your fate deviated a little."

"What happened?" Klein tensed up immediately.

Will Auceptin in his infant form scoffed and said, "You should ask yourself!

"All I know is that you likely met an angel."

Klein immediately recalled his experiences on the primitive island and had a guess. After contemplating for a few seconds, he asked with a frown, “Can angels see my uniqueness?

“I’ve met Orange Light, and he said that only a few high-level creatures of the spirit world, as well as deities with certain unique authorities or Beyonder who represent fate can discover this point to a certain extent. Of course, close contact has to be made.”

In the pram, Will Auceptin sucked at his thumb and laughed.

“Probably not, because you aren’t dangerous.

“Besides, apart from you being unique, some items on you or your companion might have a similar uniqueness that can garner the interest of that person.”

Items on me, my companions… Klein’s mind raced as he discovered that he might have been psychologically cued in the past, and along with the fact that he hadn’t thought of it, he had missed out something.

When exploring the primitive island, he had brought Groselle’s Travels along!

This was a book created by an ancient god, the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt!

If that primitive island is related to the Twilight Hermit Order, be it the Angel of the Spectator pathway deep inside the cathedral with a High-Sequence ingredient of the Storm pathway, or the opposite, “He” will likely be interested in the notebook. After all, the leader of the organization is the Angel of Imagination, the son of God, Adam! And it’s because of this notebook that I was allowed to take away the Tyrant card while also preventing me and Mr. Hanged Man from continuing the exploration? Klein had a hunch as he asked, “How should I resolve this?”

“There’s no need. In the long term, this should be something good, but there might be some trouble midway," Will Auceptin replied with a clear voice. "Furthermore, you are already burdened with so many matters. An additional matter wouldn't matter. I warned you so that you can take note so as to not be struck by trouble."

…Makes sense. One stops worrying when there are too many debts. Perhaps it might create opportunities and let my debtors end up fighting… On careful thought, Klein echoed inwardly.

He asked instead, "My friend who wishes to obtain a drop of a Mythical Creature's blood wishes to know exactly what you need."

"What do I need?" Will Auceptin scoffed once again. "There's plenty I need. For example, the means to accommodate the Die of Probability, or how to finish off Ouroboros. If it's possible, you can take as many vials of blood as you want! But, can it be done?"

If it's possible, why take the risk to finish off Ouroboros? Wouldn't it be easier to just deal with a weak Snake of Fate like you? As Klein lampooned, he shook his head without a doubt.

"No."

"Then think of something else. I'm not in a rush." Will Auceptin paused and said, "There's a very arrogant lady at the ball tonight. There's something wrong with her. If you have the chance to chat with her, you can lead the topic of conversation towards dreams."

Hazel? Dreams? Klein nodded in thought.

"Okay."

Seeing that Will Auceptin had the intention to leave, he hurriedly said, "That paper crane is about to tear. How should I contact you in the future when I encounter an emergency?"

Will Auceptin fell silent for a moment before saying, "Are you hoping that I can fold a paper crane for you in my mother's tummy? Even if I can, you won't be able to get it!

"If I have any desire to find you, and as long as you live here, I can do so at any time during dreams.

"If you have any emergency matters, just visit my father directly! After all, don't you have to wait when using the paper crane?

"Alright, as a fetus who hasn't been born, I need to have more sleep. Let's leave anything else to the future."

All Klein could do was nod and say, "If there's nothing else from you."

Just as Will Auceptin was about to dissipate his body, he suddenly paused for two seconds and said, "Another thing."

"What is it?" Klein tensed up once again.

Will Auceptin dragged out his tone and said, "The ice-cream your cook made is too sweet…"

Ah? Klein temporarily didn't react to what he was saying until the black pram vanished from the mirror. He then snapped out of his daze and couldn't help but twitch the corners of his lips.

After settling the problem with his burgeoning bladder, he washed his hands and came out. He found Richardson and instructed, "Go to the kitchen and get them to lower the sweetness of the ice-cream that is subsequently being made."

Richardson didn't ask why, and he immediately did as he was told. Only when he was about to enter the kitchen did he recall the problem.

Mr. Dwayne Dantès hasn't touched the ice-cream yet, so how did he know that it's a little too sweet?

Towards this problem, Richardson quickly had an answer. He believed that a guest had informed his employer after sampling the ice-cream.

Although it was a little impolite, it wasn't something rare, especially among familiar friends. They would proactively and kindly inform him so as to prevent the host of the ball from suffering unpleasant critique.

At this moment, as the previous dance was still happening, Klein wasn't in a hurry to consider a dance partner. He walked to the long table by the side and seized the opportunity to have some of the delicacies.

Just as he selected a piece of Desi roasted fish without many bones, he suddenly saw Wilma Gladys lean over and pick up a cup of sweet ice tea.

The lady nodded at the host and smiled.

"This beverage is nice. I've never had it before."

"It's sweet ice tea from the south," Klein explained with a smile as he casually glanced at her tummy. "He seems to be very obedient. Oh, perhaps, it's a she."

Wilma smiled.

"Most of the time, but there might be some stirrings in the middle of the night at times."

Middle of the night… At times… Don't tell me it's when he's replying to my questions… Klein suddenly broke out into a sweat as he feigned ignorance and cast his attention back onto his plate. As Wilma drank a sip of sweet ice tea, she headed back to her previous conversation.

When the new dance began, Klein handed his plate and cup to an attendant beside him and glanced at Hazel. He slowly walked over and bowed with a smile.

"Lady, may I have the pleasure of dancing with you?"

Hazel fell silent for a few seconds and placed the cup of champagne onto an attendant's tray and replied politely, "It will be my pleasure."

Chapter 819 - Gift

◆

Amidst a soothing melody, Klein and Hazel began dancing with their backs straight. One was tall and slim, and apart from the clear difference in age, their movements, demeanor, and looks were highly compatible. It was a beautiful sight to behold, one that could almost be used as a prime example for dancing.

Klein took the initiative to break the silence. As they twirled, he casually said, “I often had nightmares some time ago, but thankfully I had the Goddess’s blessings. I prayed a few times at the cathedral and drank a few cups of holy water, and after that, I stopped jolting awake.”

Hazel silently looked up and, after two seconds, asked, “What kind of nightmare?”

To think you will be interested in such a topic… Will Auceptin was right after all… Klein replied with a smile, “I was being pursued by all kinds of monsters inside an abandoned, dilapidated cathedral.

“But you probably know, it’s almost impossible to remember the details in a dream. I find it difficult to describe those monsters.”

Hazel didn’t say a word, but her bright, brown eyes were colored with dissent.

That also meant that she believed that dreams weren’t necessarily impossible to recall.

Klein took a step diagonally with her in his arms as he said with a smile, "Indeed, I've had a very clear dream in the past.

"Back then, I was still in the Southern Continent. I dreamed of an inverted mausoleum. It was constructed from pitch-black stone columns that extended underground. There were zombies covered in white feathers that appeared from them in a bid to pull me in.

"I had such dreams for several days, and it's really quite embarrassing. I was very afraid back then, so I frantically went to a nearby city and found a divination club. I got them to interpret my dream, and I received the conclusion that during one of my purchases of local goods, I had offended the faith of a tribe that believed in Death.

"Strangely, when I went to the tribe to apologize, gave them gifts, and participated in their celebrations, I never had that dream again."

He had fabricated the story from his experience as a Seer. His goal was to pique Hazel's interest to see if she would unknowingly reveal something. At the same time, this was a suggestion with a deeper meaning, one that wouldn't garner suspicion. The deeper meaning was that Hazel could find a divination club member or a cathedral's priest to interpret her dream if she was troubled by it. It was best not to make rash choices while blindly believing the contents of the dream.

When Will Auceptin mentioned that there was something wrong with Hazel and suggested chatting about dreams, Klein suspected that her dilemma stemmed from a dream that kept happening. Otherwise, it was hard to explain how, despite being at least a Sequence 8, she had a severe lack of knowledge towards the mysterious world with her blind arrogance. Furthermore, she was a lady from high society who had been educated at home. Thus, it made it difficult for her to make contact with unaffiliated Beyonders or those without clear intentions. After all, her father was a Member of Parliament who was definitely protected. She likely had no lack of Beyonders around her.

Therefore, Klein believed that Hazel might have made contact with something or had caught the fancy of some powerful Beyonder due to her personality. Through dreams, she was slowly guided to become a Beyonder, without giving her the necessary knowledge. At the same time, the entity enticed her to dig in the sewers to search for something.

There were two reasons that solidified his theory. Firstly, it was because of Will Auceptin's words. Secondly, Sequence 5 of the Marauder pathway was Dream Stealer. It was impossible that it only had the one Beyonder power of stealing the intent behind an action!

Hazel quietly listened to Dwayne Dantès's description as her mouth subconsciously gaped before closing again. After nearly ten seconds, she asked, "Why didn't you head to the Goddess's cathedral?"

As expected, she's reacting to topics about dreams. However, she's quite careful and doesn't divulge anything… Klein smiled wryly and said, "There weren't any cathedrals of the Goddess around. It was a region that held faith in the God of Steam and Machinery."

Hazel didn't continue the topic as she focused her attention back onto the dance, as though she was fully immersed in the music.

Klein also quietened down as he swirled around in the beautiful melody with the girl.

After the dance, he sent Hazel back to where she was standing, and then he headed for the long table due to his thirst, hoping to get a cup of sweet ice tea.

At this moment, he saw Bishop Elektra enjoying some red wine over there.

Unlike the Church of Storms and the Church of the God of Combat, clergymen of the Evernight Goddess were prohibited from excessive drinking. They needed to reject distilled spirits, and they could only drink champagne, beer, and red and white grape wine in moderation.

"How is it? This should be your first time holding such a grand ball, right?” Elektra smiled as he raised his cup.

Klein smiled and replied, “Very troublesome, and it’s also, hmm… The biggest problem is that having so many dances in a row is exhausting. I kept sweating and wanted to drink more water.”

Bishop Elektra chuckled and said, “When you’re here in Backlund, don’t slack on any physical exercise. At times, the social scene is more tiring than you can imagine.”

With that said, he said with a jibing smile, “Ma’am Oria has endorsed you, believing that your character matches your appearance.”

…I’d like to thank her for her endorsement… Klein was momentarily unable to find the words to reply with as he replied in a jokingly manner, “A person’s character cannot be identified from a single dance.”

Without waiting for Elektra to reveal a smile that all men understood, he switched to saying, “Your Excellency, I’ve recently involved myself in some business, and I’m afraid that I might offend a gentlemen in power. I’m a little worried.”

He was referring to the Coim Company and Baron Syndras.

Elektra took a sip of red wine and said, “Don’t worry. Backlund follows the rule of law. Besides, the Goddess will bless you.”

“That’s relieving. Praise the Lady!” Klein seriously drew the crimson moon on his chest.

After Elektra headed for the dance floor, his gaze darkened as he sighed silently.

He wasn’t feeling fearful or hatred. He just felt a slight guilty conscious. Up to this point in time, the Church of Evernight had been good to him. Although money was the reason, they had provided him plenty of help to the point of providing him some protection. Yet, he was planning to deal with the Keepers, as well as contemplating how to steal something from the core seal behind Chanis Gate.

Sigh, if this plan takes too long to complete, I'd really need periodic psychological treatment. Otherwise, I'll have some mental problems… Klein monitored his emotions as he shook his head indiscernibly.

†

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

Xio came home with Feynapotter pies and Desi Bay sweet ice tea. As she put it on the dining table, she said to Fors, "Don't eat too much of such food. It's unhealthy."

"Why do you say that?" Fors picked up a pie stuffed with fruits and ham before taking a bite.

"I read about it in a magazine. As a bounty hunter, maintaining one's figure is a necessity." Xio hesitated for a moment before pulling a pie to her mouth.

Fors scoffed.

"You're a Beyonder geared for combat, an extraordinary bounty hunter. There's no need to bother about maintaining your figure.

"Perhaps, you might've missed out on your final opportunity to grow taller as a result. Oh right, I heard that the Warrior pathway has an effective way of raising a person's height. It's obvious just from looking at those barbarians from Feysac."

Xio was taken aback as she suddenly sighed.

"But I was born as a half-Arbiter. I have no way of becoming a Warrior."

Clearly, she had seriously considered it in the past.

Realizing that she had triggered her friend's memories, she acted as though she hadn't said a word as she focused on having her late dinner.

After they were done eating and clearing up, Fors pulled Xio into her bedroom and cleared her throat.

"You've helped me tremendously, so I plan on giving you a present."

"What troublesome matter do you need help with this time?" Xio touched her short, blonde hair warily.

"…" Fors blinked as she suddenly reflected on her recent behavior.

She chuckled dryly and said, "This is for the past—the past."

Without waiting for Xio to reply, she took out a metal box under Xio's doubtful gaze, one that was used to store cigars.

"I don't smoke," Xio said with a shake of her head.

Fors tersely answered as she opened the box, revealing a translucent hexagonal pillar that was light-blue in color.

Xio's gaze froze as she looked at the luster that streaked inside the crystal-like lightning as she instinctively asked, "Interrogator?"

"Yes, a participant at a Beyonder gathering was selling it cheaply. I was afraid of missing the opportunity and hurriedly bought it," Fors said the complete truth. "As you know, I've recently been rewarded by my teacher because of something just a while ago. I'm not lacking in cash."

Xio knew that her friend had been out recently, claiming that she was doing something for her teacher. However, she found it unbelievable that she could so easily buy her an Interrogator Beyonder characteristic as a gift. This was completely unlike her original lifestyle!

Is she still gambling, having earned large sums of money after becoming an Astrologer? Or did she finally cast her sights onto a bank vault and used her Door Opening powers to rob the cash inside? Many guesses flashed through Xio's mind, but she wasn't able to find the corresponding proof.

About two to three seconds later, she made a decision. She was to randomly pretend to head out two days a week, and she would secretly observe what Fors was doing.

If it wasn't for her trust in her friend's character and bottom line, she would have suspected that she had become the mistress of a powerful Beyonder or tycoon.

“I-it's too valuable.” Xio waved her hand, in an attempt to reject the gift.

Fors had already thought of the excuse as she said with a smile, “I'll have matters to trouble you with in the future. Just treat it as an advanced payment.”

“We are good friends. There's no need to talk about payment,” Xio hesitated for a second as she said with a shake of her head.

I was waiting for you to say that! Fors immediately smiled and said, “Then treat it as an early birthday present. Don't you reject it!”

“But my birthday is more than half a year away…” As Xio muttered, she eventually reached out and took the Interrogator Beyonder characteristic.

†

Sunday afternoon. Xio repressed her excitement and anticipation as she headed out as per normal. She planned on heading to a specific spot to leave a corresponding mark to schedule a meeting with the masked man from MI9 at some secluded alley.

After obtaining the Interrogator's Beyonder characteristic and having digested her Sheriff potion, all she needed was the correct formula to advance to Sequence 7. It would be a crucial step for her investigation of the truth and restoring her family's honor. Therefore, she was eager to receive a few more missions from the military to accumulate the amount of contributions she needed.

After doing all of this, she planned on circling East Borough first to see if there was any important news. Then, she planned on returning home to tail Fors, so that she could figure out what her good friend was up to, or if she was in any danger.

However, the moment she entered East Borough, she had a hunch that someone was staring at her.

Chapter 820 - Two Dazed Instances

Who is it? As a Sheriff, Xio had a sharp intuition for monitoring others and for being monitored by others. Her heart tensed up as her mind raced to consider what had just happened.

In the past two to three weeks, she hadn't encountered anything particularly noteworthy. The few criminals she apprehended weren't Beyonders, and they were, at best, related to certain gangs. No one would offend a famous bounty hunter in East Borough for them. Therefore, she quickly narrowed down the list of suspects, and she vaguely guessed at the spy's faction.

A member from the Aurora Order? I didn't attend Mr. X's gathering, and an accident happened. Apparently, it was quite a stunning scene… The person from MI9 said that Mr. X was assassinated on the spot, and had his corpse taken away. Furthermore, the assassin had used powers at the demigod level… Is the Aurora Order investigating the possible culprits? Every invitee is in their sights? Although Xio was careless and short-tempered at times, her thought process was relatively direct. But in similar fields, she had a strong intuition that allowed her to figure out the crux of the matter.

And on the matter regarding Mr. X's assassination, she had once been thankful that Fors had stopped her from attending; thus, avoiding the accident. On the other hand, she felt that there wasn't anything wrong about her, allowing her to stand up to the scrutiny of any investigation. Therefore, when she met the masked man from MI9 last week, she had been frank and confident, and she had accepted the mission to investigate the truth behind the matter. Unfortunately, she wasn't sure which other Beyonders had participated back then, and she had no clues to kick her off.

Hmm, that man from MI9 said that the members of Aurora Order are either lunatics or potential lunatics. You can't use common sense to guess at their actions. Even if they believe that there's nothing wrong with me, they can kill me in passing to vent their anger as a warning to the real murderer… The stressed Xio walked forward as she revised her path in East Borough.

This new route allowed her to obtain the help of friends at any time. If she suffered an ambush, there was a considerable chance that she could escape or kill the assailant.

As she walked, Xio's mind suddenly went into a daze, as she realized that she had unknowingly arrived back at her residence in Cherwood Borough at some point in time.

Xio entered blankly and drank a cup of water when she was patted on the shoulder by Fors.

"Accompany me to East Borough."

Xio was taken aback as she found herself saying something very familiar.

"You want to head out to gather material?"

Fors immediately said that it wasn't the case, indicating that she had previously accepted a mission to find the dust left behind after a ghost faded away. As the deceased had been given a send-off by the priests at the cemetery to their respective deity's kingdom, there wasn't any ghosts. Thus, they could only head over to East Borough to find targets.

Xio hesitated and said, "Can't you push it back a day? I'm planning to participate in Mr. X's gathering."

Fors immediately wore a bitter look and said that she had delayed it by too much, and the mission's deadline was looming.

Xio sighed and agreed to accompany her friend to East Borough to find a deceased person that had just died or one that hadn't been discovered after a period of time since their death.

Just as the two were about to exit, Xio felt the wind strike her in the face as she trembled and snapped awake. She saw a wandering poet sitting in a corner, playing a seven-string guitar as he sang a folk song that was famous in the southern villages.

Xio frowned slightly as she rubbed her temples. She had a nagging feeling that her mind had gone adrift, but she couldn't remember what she was thinking about.

She continued maintaining her vigilance as she followed her originally set route, entering a bar that sold lunch. On the way, she met an East Borough resident who would occasionally provide her with intelligence.

He was a man who was either twenty-three or twenty-four years old. He had thinned his brows, and his brown hair reached his shoulders. His facial features were rather soft, and he had put on cheap makeup. He gave off quite an odd vibe.

"Sherman, did anything happen in the past few days?" Xio greeted.

According to what she knew, this young man named Sherman had always thought of himself as a woman. However, fate had played a terrible joke on him, making him a man. This made him suffer serious levels of ostracization for many years.

Sherman grinned and said, "It's been peaceful. No man offered to buy me any drinks."

"Drinking is bad," Xio advised him seriously, walked past him, and walked to the bar counter.

Sherman spat as he walked to the entrance, swaying his hips until he arrived at the condominium he rented.

He paused at the door for nearly a minute before walking two steps to the side and knocking on the door next door.

The wooden door creaked open as a low, female voice sounded with an undeniable sweetness to it.

“Have you made your decision?”

Sherman walked in and closed the door behind him. Looking towards the bed, he said to the black-dressed lady, “I’m still doubtful. I don’t believe that there’s something as magical as that.”

To him, the lady had a round face and a gentle and refined temperament. Not only was she sweet-looking, but she also had a different air to her. She was extremely charming and alluring.

Of course, to Sherman, he was more envious instead of smitten.

The black-dressed lady replied with a deadpan expression, “Haven’t you seen the picture of my former appearance?”

Her gaze moved as she couldn’t help but feel a sense of melancholy.

“But that might’ve been your twin brother. I find it difficult to believe that there really is a substance to change me into a woman…” Sherman said in a wavering tone.

The black-dressed lady chuckled without any humor in it.

“Then, you can pretend that it’s fake. You may leave.”

Sherman’s hands tightened as he fell silent for a long while.

“I-I’m willing to give it a try. Although I know that you might be bluffing me, I still wish to give it a try.

“Then, what should be the price I need to pay?”

“Listen to my instructions, and help me do certain tasks. Don’t worry. They will definitely be things you are capable of,” the black-dressed lady said. “To truly change your sex, you need to drink three potions and complete certain rituals. I’ll guide you.”

Upon saying this, she said in a self-deprecating manner, “You can consider your female name.”

†

At night, in the Backlund Bridge area, in a small alley at Iron Gate Street.

Xio stood under a street lamp that had been shattered by someone. She was recounting what had happened in the morning.

After confirming that she wasn’t being tailed, she returned to Cherwood Borough and secretly observed Fors. She discovered that her friend didn’t head out at all, staying at home like she usually did. She spent most of her time reading novels, newspapers, and magazines. She also drew the curtains in her room for nearly an hour, as though she was familiarizing herself with her Beyonder powers. Until she had nothing to do, she got a piece of paper and spent fifteen minutes writing the opening to her new book. Finally, she tore it apart, crumbled it into a ball, and threw it into the trash can.

She smokes and drinks excessively… Xio silently clenched her teeth when she saw a figure in a black suit walking out of the shadows from the other end of the alley.

The man was tall and wore a golden mask that revealed his eyes, nostrils, mouth, and cheeks. He was none other than the MI9 member who was in contact with Xio.

“Is there anything urgent?” he asked directly.

Although Xio was short, she said in a similarly domineering manner, “I was tailed in East Borough. I suspect that it’s someone from the Aurora Order. They seem to be investigating what happened during the gathering.”

The topic Xio had prepared to talk about was about someone she was asked to look for. She planned on using a clue that couldn’t be confirmed, to make a request for the emergency meeting to appear normal. However, she now had a more suitable excuse thanks to the Aurora Order.

“The lunatics from the Aurora Order are like that. Although they know that we’re also investigating the matter and are finding them, they don’t shrink back. If it’s not because of that, they wouldn’t always be suffering setbacks,” the golden-masked man said with a laugh. “To be frank, I’m very surprised that they didn’t directly surround you and bring you to a secluded place to interrogate and channel your spirit.”

Xio was about to answer him that the Aurora Order member didn’t tail her for long when she suddenly recalled the dazed feeling she found inexplicable. Hence, she deliberated and mentioned, “I’m not sure what I encountered. For a very brief period of time, I seemed to be in a daze and can’t remember what I recalled.”

The golden-masked man fell silent. After nearly twenty seconds, he said, “The investigation pertaining to you should have ended… The importance the Aurora Order has placed on this matter has exceeded my imagination. I will report this matter.

“Hmm… You mentioned that many Beyonders received the invitation but didn’t attend?”

Xio nodded and said, “The participants of each gathering doesn’t exceed a third of the number of people invited.

“This is mostly normal for a gathering. It’s not an exception for Mr. X’s gathering either.”

The golden-masked man considered for a moment before asking, “Are there any clues about the person I got you to search for?”

“The person whose original name was Trissy?” Xio shook her head after seeing him nod. “Not yet. She’s likely experienced.”

The golden-masked man immediately chuckled.

“The number of people she has killed is more than the number of bounty missions you have completed. If you have any clues, make sure not to approach her. She’s highly dangerous.”

Xio tersely answered and focused on the main topic at hand.

“Is there a new commission?”

“Why have you suddenly become so proactive?” the golden-masked man asked in surprise.

Xio frankly replied, “I’m almost about to save up enough points to exchange for the Interrogator potion formula. I wish to obtain it early.”

“Actually, there’s no need for that. You can directly exchange it for the potion, as it will save quite a bit of points,” the golden-masked man suggested in Xio’s behalf.

I already have the Beyonder characteristic! Xio shook her head and said, “That would still take a very long time. I might be able to buy the ingredients at other Beyonder gatherings.”

The golden-masked man didn’t insist as he said with a laughing sigh, “I wish you luck.

“This time, it’s a rather complicated commission. If you can complete it, you should have enough points.”

Xio held back her delight and asked, “What’s the mission?”

The masked man said with a slightly odd tone, “Take note of the people

Viscount Stratford interacts with, and list them down in a report before submitting it to me.

“There’s no need for you to frequently monitor him. Whenever you are free or walk past, take note of it in passing. Trust me, you aren’t the only one working on this mission. As long as you hand over a report of certain value a week, it’ll be considered as you contributing a certain amount. This can be repeated every week.”

Viscount Stratford… Xio suddenly fell into a daze again, but this time, she knew why.

This viscount was the captain of the royal guards; he was once her father’s deputy!

Chapter 821 - Soul Imprint

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Xio was dazed for about ten seconds before remembering the need to reply. She looked at the golden-masked man and nodded.

“Alright, I’ll take note of the people Viscount Stratford interacts with.”

The golden-masked man seemed to sense her dazed state as he said, “There’s another mission. The Church of Evernight’s Red Gloves are investigating something related to the Numinous Episcopate. If you have any relevant information on that, immediately inform me.”

Xio tersely responded, unable to extricate herself from her emotions.

The golden-masked man fell silent for a few seconds and asked after some deliberation, “Are you interested in directly joining MI9?

“You can continue maintaining your present identity, being active in East Borough.”

Xio was taken aback for two seconds as her mouth turned agape. She was momentarily unable to make a decision.

The golden-masked man didn’t require an immediate answer as he said with a smile, “There’s no rush. Tell me your answer after you become an Interrogator.”

After saying that, he walked back, step after step, slinking away into the shadows at the other end of the alley.

†

That same evening, Klein snapped awake from a dream.

The soul imprint he had set up in Böklund Street's sewers had been touched!

Who is it that isn't sleeping in the middle of the night… Is Hazel not afraid of being possessed by a Wraith? Klein sighed helplessly as he took out the iron cigar case which was wrapped in a wall of spirituality from under his pillow. He then walked to the balcony where the curtains were tightly drawn.

Wraith Senor rapidly leaped onto the surface of a street lamp before passing the manhole and sinking deep into the sewers.

After advancing a short distance, with the eyes of his marionette, Klein saw Hazel in commoner clothes.

This lady was warily walking forward as she raised her left hand without realizing it to touch the necklace with seven emeralds. In her right hand was a charm made from gold.

Although the charm hadn't been activated, it exuded the feeling of sunlight and warmth, as well as the refreshing sense of morning dew.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein suddenly recalled his encounter when strolling in the morning.

Hazel had woken up early to stroll in her garden!

She was gathering materials to create the Sun domain charm? Morning dew? Klein guessed with uncertainty as he felt a little puzzled. This was because Hazel wasn't only half-illiterate in the mysterious domain, but she also lacked quite a bit of knowledge. Furthermore, she was a believer of the Evernight Goddess.

Such a Beyonder wouldn't receive any response if she prayed to the Eternal Blazing Sun. Even if something special happened, the smallest probability event would be that of receiving punishment!

As she hasn't been digging and searching in the sewers for too long, that Beyonder that has been guiding her with a dream has turned anxious. That's why she was taught how to make Sun domain charms via a dream? Hmm, from the Marauder pathway, the corresponding High-Sequence representative, Amon, is also known as a Blasphemer. Does this mean that at a certain Sequence of this pathway, they have the ability to pretend to be believers of other deities and circle around any defenses to obtain a response and create various kinds of charms? This does match their modus operandi… With Senor's vision, Klein watched Hazel walk deep into the sewers.

Based on his spiritual intuition, although the Sun domain charm was targeted at a Wraith, it was far from sufficient to truly threaten a Sequence 5, with it dealing a certain amount of damage at best. After all, Hazel had no way of obtaining high-level materials. However, Klein didn't let his Wraith possess her again, afraid that it would alarm that Beyonder who was influencing Hazel. After tomorrow's Tarot Gathering, he believed he would obtain a low-level item from the Marauder pathway, allowing him to make the corresponding investigations. Before that, maintaining the status quo was the best choice.

Of course, the premise was that he was certain that Hazel wasn't able to dig up anything within a day or two. He had plenty of time to prepare.

As a Seer, he had many ways to make a confirmation. The simplest way was to head above the gray fog.

After retracting his marionette, Klein took four steps counterclockwise and arrived inside the ancient palace which had stone columns propping it up. He conjured a pen and paper, and he wrote down the corresponding divination statement:

"Something major will happen in Böklund Street over the next three days."

With the topaz pendulum, Klein obtained a negative revelation. This also meant that in three days, no major incident would happen in Böklund Street.

As for the possibility of what Hazel would really dig out, it would only affect him while being trivial to Böklund Street, he wasn't fazed. This was because something trivial wouldn't affect his subsequent plans. He didn't have any strong intentions of stopping her.

He had previously given a hint to her at the ball. If Hazel didn't understand or didn't take it to heart, it was her problem. Klein didn't have any psychological burden on such matters.

After returning to the real world, he waited for forty-five minutes before Hazel came out. After confirming that no significant changes happened underground, Klein laid back in bed, and with Cogitation, he quickly fell asleep.

†

Monday afternoon at three.

Dark red beams of light that soared up from both sides of the long bronze table appeared before The Fool Klein's, The Sun Derrick's, and The World Gehrman Sparrow's eyes.

Justice Audrey remained in a good mood as she bowed at the figure shrouded in gray fog.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

Klein nodded with a smile as a response to this lady who often delighted him.

Meanwhile, Audrey swept her gaze and discovered an additional card beside Mr. Fool's hand!

A new Card of Blasphemy? I wonder which pathway it's from… I really wish that it's from the Spectator pathway… Audrey's heart stirred as she turned to greet the other members.

Once everything was done, she looked to the end of the mottled table ahead of The Hermit Cattleya and said, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I’ve found three new pages of Roselle’s diary.”

This was actually obtained from the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation, but as its founder and main sponsor, she easily received the opportunity to make a copy.

Audrey was rather proud in regards to this. She was increasingly convinced that establishing such a foundation was a wise decision of hers. Unfortunately, to not expose her identity, she didn’t share this matter with the other members of the Tarot Club.

“Very good.” Klein smiled with a nod, indicating that Miss Justice could conjure the diary.

And at this moment, The Hermit Cattleya didn’t interject, as though she hadn’t obtained any new Roselle diary pages.

There’s temporarily no response from Queen Mystic? Or has she focused her attention on something else? Klein looked at the three diary pages which Miss Justice had conjured as he allowed them to jump into his palm.

When he scanned them, the corners of Klein’s lips nearly twitched. This was because he had encountered a familiar page of one of Roselle’s sexual escapades.

Compared to the pages specially chosen by Queen Mystic Bernadette that had plenty of information, the other members often obtained parts that weren’t too important. The content tended to be about Roselle’s daily life. The three pages that Miss Justice had provided was such an example. Klein casually flipped through them and discovered a diary entry that was worth a detailed read. As for the rest, it was either about him having a rendezvous with some lady or madam, or him belittling people who survived due to their status instead of intellect. He even expressed his desire for a Demoness from all the rumors he heard.

Soon, Klein placed his attention on the most valuable diary entry.

"…Based on the information obtained from the Church, there really are monsters in existence that are stitched at the soul level.

"After High-Sequence Beyonders die, the Beyonder characteristics they produce will have remnants of the imprint of their soul. It can be very powerful and resilient. It might not even fully dissipate after centuries or even a millennium.

"But when Beyonder characteristics form a mystical item with their surrounding objects, there's a need to have a sufficiently similar soul in order to use them; otherwise, the negative effects will be extraordinary. And when such Beyonder characteristics are preserved and made into the main ingredient of a potion, the consumer similarly must have a powerful Soul Body to withstand it; otherwise, there's a high chance of failure.

"In mysticism, an advancement's failure will often lead to a loss of control or death. Only very few lucky ones can be calmed down and maintain an intricate balance. However, it's rumored that certain special Sealed Artifacts can draw out unfused Beyonder characteristics and recondense them. It would be akin to not having consumed the potion, so the failures will only suffer a storm-like assault on their soul. But according to my conjectures, there's likely some level of mutation at the gene level. This is because, based on the information provided, those who failed their advancement and survived by this method had mostly died from terminal illnesses within five years.

"Therefore, consuming a potion similar to one's Soul Body can effectively decrease the difficulty of advancements, but it will leave behind remnant soul imprints. Unknowingly, one will suffer an identity dissociation, and they would slowly transform into a monster stitched at the soul level. It's just like that High-Sequence Beyonder who resurrected on his body. Resurrected…

"On careful thought, it's really quite terrifying… However, the Church told me that there are roughly three methods to rid the High-Sequence Beyonder soul imprints in a Beyonder characteristic. As for what they are, they didn't tell me. They don't seem simple. It's no wonder the Sauron family enjoys calling descendants who look similar to their ancestors as having talent. Heh, talent. I have to say that I do pity Floren quite a bit."

Monster's stitched at the soul level… High-Sequence Beyonder soul imprints… Sounds a little alarming… So High-Sequence Beyonder potions have such a problem. Hmm, the Churches probably have a way to resolve them. They have no lack of Angels and Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts. They can shatter a Beyonder characteristic and recondense them; thus obtaining a purified one… Those ancient families probably aren't that lucky. They might not have any more Angels protecting them. They might only have one or two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, but they aren't that easily used. Furthermore, different Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts have different uses. They might not be adequate for such matters… Klein's mind raced as he made the diary pages in his hand vanish. Then, he looked at Miss Justice and asked with a chuckle, "What do you wish to exchange them for?"

Audrey was waiting for her potion ingredients, and she temporarily had nothing she lacked. Therefore, without any hesitation, she chose to satisfy her curiosity.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, is that an additional card by your hand a Card of Blasphemy? Which one is it?"

Chapter 822 - Another

◆

I knew it. Miss Justice wouldn't not ask when she sees an additional card… I got through another question so easily… Klein secretly smiled as he casually flipped over the new Card of Blasphemy, showing it to Justice.

"Tyrant."

As expected, Gehrman Sparrow has handed it over… That was Mr. Fool's goal? Alger eagerly glanced at Emperor Roselle in a papal tiara as he thought poignantly.

He had already obtained the Cataclysmic Interrer potion formula, and he knew what ritual was needed. He was in a great mood and felt that, although there were obstacles ahead of him, he was filled with radiance and hope.

Audrey quickly took in the details of the Card of Blasphemy.

Tyrant card… It looks like it's the Sailor pathway. How I envy Mr. Hanged Man… Eh, Mr. Hanged Man doesn't seem alarmed or surprised… From a psychological point of view, his reaction should have been greater than mine! Hmm, he was already aware that it was the Sailor pathway's Card of Blasphemy?

Eliminating all other impossibilities, this is the only explanation… But how did Mr. Hanged Man know of it ahead of time?

Sequence 0: Tyrant… The potion name corresponding to the Lord of

Storms is Tyrant?

This Tyrant card was likely in the form of The Hierophant; however, the actual meaning has certain discrepancies with some similarities. Some of it is inversed, and some are just an extension… In short, the interpretation of the card is that of a conservative view, an emphasis on submission at the level of the soul. By relying on dominance and strength, fear is created to bring about faith…

Audrey, who had liked mysticism from a young age, interpreted it as she felt a strong sense of satisfaction. She felt that the payment of three Roselle diary pages was especially worth it!

Card of Blasphemy… Hmm… Being equally good at interpretation and being knowledgeable, Cattleya also quickly figured out the pathway in which the card represented. She also managed to add Sequence 0: Tyrant to the gaps in her knowledge.

Apart from these facts, she also made a connection.

The World Gehrman Sparrow plotted the death of Sea God Kalvetua; thus, allowing Mr. Fool to obtain that scepter representing Sea God's authority and begin answering believers in the name of Sea God…

This time, "He" obtained the Tyrant card of the Storm pathway…

It's definitely no coincidence…

As she thought about the matter, Cattleya was suddenly alarmed, suspecting that Mr. Fool was secretly attempting to erode away the Lord of Storms's authority!

A battle between gods! It's a massive plan that has a far-reaching influence! This is one of the true goals of Mr. Fool? As thoughts flashed through Cattleya's mind, she retracted her gaze and stopped looking at the Tyrant card.

Fors and Emlyn didn't understand much about Sequence 0. They had only heard Mr. Fool mention it once at a previous Tarot Gathering; therefore, they were only surprised that it was a Card of Blasphemy. They also began to link the name Tyrant and the Sequence 0's potion name to the Lord of Storms. The former began trembling a little, feeling as though she was being sacrilegious. As for the latter, he began imagining and guessing what was the name of the artificial vampire pathway's Sequence 0.

It must be Moon! Or Crimson Moon! Emlyn's mind raced as he came to an answer. As for whether it was correct, he didn't mind it at all. He just felt that it was definitely close to the truth.

Having grown up in the City of Silver, Derrick had received quite a solid education in mysticism. He wasn't unfamiliar with the concept of Sequence 0, and he had even aimed his sights to becoming one at that level. Only by doing so could he bring the City of Silver out into the light and warmth, so as to bring hope and a future.

This likely represents Elf King Soniathrym… So it's called Tyrant… However, "His" authority seems to be a little more than what the card represents… Derrick thought as he participated in the ongoings of the Tarot Gathering in a rare instance.

After showing it for two seconds, The Fool Klein covered the Tyrant card again before casually glancing at Ma'am Hermit.

Cattleya hurriedly said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, there aren't any new Roselle diary pages this time."

As expected… Klein nodded gently and said with a smile, "That's all from me."

Just as he said that, The World Gehrman Sparrow looked at The Hanged Man.

"After this gathering, I'll send you that Ocean Songster's Beyonder characteristic. Can you find an Artisan to create an easily portable mystical item?”

A-another Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristic? The same thought surfaced in the minds of Audrey, Emlyn, and company.

Powerful Sequence 5 Beyonders weren’t carrots that you could easily buy on the street!

And Mr. World had killed several in the past two months!

Which quasi high-ranking member of the Church of Storms met harm this time? Cattleya started off with her conjecture that Mr. Fool was attempting to erode away the Lord of Storms’s authority as she came to such a thought.

Fors became increasingly fearful of Gehrman Sparrow as she kept warning herself not to use the two pages with demigod-level Beyonder powers!

Derrick couldn’t help but think back to how City of Silver teams would clear a region of monsters. In that dark environment of despair, the number of Sequence 5 main ingredients and Beyonder characteristics were few and far between. There were even instances where there weren’t any at times!

“Alright,” Alger, who had already made the promise, calmly replied without mentioning the Artisan’s fees.

This made people like Audrey and Cattleya notice something. They suspected that Mr. World and Mr. Hanged Man had secretly cooperated and negotiated on certain matters. This coincided with Audrey’s belief that The Hanged Man had the knowledge that the Card of Blasphemy was the Tyrant card, making her guess that the Tyrant card might have been one of the spoils of war that they had obtained in a private partnership!

Without waiting for them to ask about anything they needed, The World Gehrman Sparrow surveyed the area whilst under Klein’s control.

"I have here another Beyonder characteristic of a Sequence 5 Mentor of Disorder from the Black Emperor Sequence pathway. It can be made into a mystical item, and it should possess the power to use the loopholes found in order so as to distort the words, will, and actions of a target. It can also raise one's physical state and create a certain degree of chaos and confusion to the surroundings."

He described it in such detail because his target clients were Miss Justice and Ma'am Hermit. It was impossible for the two of them to switch to the Black Emperor pathway, so their requirements for Beyonder characteristics were naturally for a mystical item. Of course, the latter had subordinates, so it was possible to purchase Beyonder characteristics for her organization's members.

Another one… And it's Sequence 5… What major event did Mr. World do last week? Audrey instantly forgot to generate interest in the Beyonder characteristic.

Cattleya, Emlyn, and company exchanged looks, puzzled as to which Sequence 5 Beyonder met harm again.

Again!

What Alger cared about was that this belonged to the Black Emperor pathway, a Sequence 5 Mentor of Disorder.

The latter was something he wasn't previously aware of.

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, Audrey began to ruminate over Mr. World's words.

Use loopholes found in order… Create chaos and confusion, raise one's physical state, and distort a target's speech, will, and actions… It seems to be very compatible with my dear Earl Hall… Besides, I also want to have such powers. I still have too many shortcomings just by relying on myself and Lie…

Hmm, I should figure out the price first and find a chance to ask Father. Let's see if he's interested in buying such a mystical item for himself or his adorable daughter…

Audrey thought for a few seconds before raising her hand slightly.

"Mr. World, what do you plan on exchanging it for? Or how much do you plan on selling it for?"

A reasonable price for a ready-made mystical item like Death Knell costs 10,000 to 12,000 pounds… Just the Beyonder characteristic alone will be cheaper. It will be about 7,000 to 8,000 pounds… Klein had already done the math. Now, after some thought, he made The World Gehrman Sparrow reply, "8,000 pounds."

He knew that if Miss Justice was really interested, she wouldn't haggle.

"Okay." Audrey nodded and turned to look across the table. "Mr. Hanged Man, roughly how much would it cost to pay the Artisan to turn such a Beyonder characteristic into a mystical item?"

Alger quickly did the math and said, "1,500 pounds at the very least. It might be higher."

"Alright." Audrey shifted her gaze and said to The World Gehrman Sparrow, "I'll consider it for a few days and give you an answer by the end of the week. You can continue asking if anyone else wants it."

The World nodded in silence as he looked at the other members. He noticed that Ma'am Hermit hesitated for two seconds but ultimately kept silent. As for the rest, they were only watching with interest.

Just as Audrey was about to ask about the fruit of the Illusory Chime Tree, all the members heard The World Gehrman Sparrow hoarsely say, "There's another Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic from the Planter pathway, Druid."

Suddenly, the palace that looked like a giant's residence turned extremely quiet. Apart from Mr. Fool who continued observing everyone in a leisurely manner, The Hanged Man Alger didn't show any additional thoughts.

A-another… When did Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristics become so common? What did he do? Cattleya suddenly felt baffled. She felt that the risk and hard work she had put in over the years was, in essence, no different to the commercial goods The World Gehrman Sparrow was selling.

I-it's terrifying… Fors had already begun imagining a series of stories.

Impressive! Derrick idolized Mr. World even more.

Audrey and Emlyn remained silent for a long time, momentarily finding themselves suffering from a lack of vocabulary.

After nearly ten seconds, Cattleya realized the hidden meaning behind The World Gehrman Sparrow's words.

He didn't mention the effects of what the Druid Beyonder characteristic can have after being made into a mystical item… He's asking me if I'll buy it for Frank?

At that instant, Cattleya felt an unprecedented dilemma.

Chapter 823 - The Maturing Tarot Club

◆

As the captain of the Future, Cattleya knew of the latent dangers that Frank Lee had better than anyone else. She knew that this first mate's strange ideas would at times be about truly terrifying and crazy developments. If it wasn't because those "creations" had yet to be proliferated and lacked the necessary elements, Cattleya believed that the world would be different.

Of course, if there came such a day, she would finish off Frank Lee ahead of everyone else by feeding him to the fishes!

With him lacking godhood, many things will be limited in scope even if they're considered a success. It's impossible to distribute out and bring about a greater disaster… Just advancing to Sequence 5 wouldn't result in any qualitative changes, and Frank has been holding back greatly in recent times. He's been focused on researching plants that can survive and grow through the absorption of monster corpses in the darkness… As her thoughts swirled and changed in her mind, Cattleya finally made a decision.

"How much do you wish to get for it?"

She had a vague feeling that The World Gehrman Sparrow was recently in need of money.

"8000 pounds. If you can replace it with large sums of gold coins, you'll receive a discount." Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief as he answered using The World.

At the thought of how Frank Lee could be able to afford this sum, and how he wouldn't reject a Druid's Beyonder characteristic, Cattleya pondered for two seconds and said, "Deal. Give me a week to gather the amount."

"No problem." Klein got The World Gehrman Sparrow to retract his gaze.

After the trip to the primitive island, if not for having garnered the attention of the existence hidden in the depths of the cathedral, he would've given himself a perfect score. In less than half a night, he had obtained an invaluable Card of Blasphemy, a mystical item with not less than 10,000 pounds, as well as a possible total of 16,000 pounds. Furthermore, no taxes needed to be paid. It was faster than robbing a bank!

Unfortunately, that primitive island has vanished. Otherwise, I can always pay a visit when I'm lacking money… Klein's thoughts wandered as he watched Miss Justice look at Mr. Hanged Man and ask with a tone of anticipation, "Do you have the fruits of the Illusory Chime Tree?"

Audrey actually had some inkling to the answer. This was because Mr. World had obtained so many Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristics recently, and Mr. Hanged Man was suspected to have had a private partnership with him in the past week. It was unlikely that he had obtained nothing.

I can figure out certain clues from Mr. Hanged Man's satisfied and confident state… Audrey felt increasingly confident in her ability to observe others.

Alger chuckled and said, "I was just about to tell you that I've already obtained the fruit."

Excellent! Audrey held back and didn't act overly agitated.

This meant that she had gathered all the ingredients for Hypnotist. All she needed to do was wait for her Psychiatrist potion to completely digest before she attempted the advancement.

And it wouldn't take too long! Having already become an "Aunt Agony" in the aristocrat circles in East Chester County, Audrey thought with great certainty.

To be frank, if she hadn't deliberately guided the topic of conversation, Audrey wouldn't have imagined that the aristocrats that all looked beaming with decent demeanors suffered immense stress. They had pains that others would find impossible to imagine. The changes of the times and the trends of society made them worried about the futures of their families and self. Of course, this was also related to them not being powerful aristocrats, as well as the limited resources they held on hand.

These matters made Audrey truly understand the concept of a facade. She understood that faced with different targets, everyone wore a different facade.

After concluding such situations, she had instantly digested a significant amount of her Psychiatrist potion as her progress clearly sped up.

Perhaps, in two weeks, more or less. In short, before I return to Backlund, I should be able to become a Hypnotist… Audrey looked at Alger with bright eyes and asked, "What do you want in exchange?"

Having advanced to Sequence 5 recently, and having obtained the "key" to the door of demigods, as well as being about to possess a potent mystical item, Alger was lacking in money the most at the moment. Therefore, he said without any hesitation, "2,000 pounds."

"Deal." Audrey agreed with relatively great ease.

This amount of money didn't need a reimbursement for she could easily afford it herself.

After completing the transaction, Audrey couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief. She finally didn't feel like she was falling behind in the Tarot Club.

During this period of time, she had watched Fors become a Sequence 7, and watched Mr. Hanged Man approach the level of a High-Sequence Beyonder. She also saw Mr. World finish off one Sequence 5 Beyonder after another, producing their corresponding Beyonder characteristics again and again. Yet, she remained as a Psychiatrist, a Sequence 7 Beyonder. She couldn't help but feel stressed as she became a little anxious. She relied solely on Placating herself, and Susie's counseling, to prevent any emotional problems from happening. Now, she had finally taken a step forward towards becoming Sequence 6!

As the delighted Audrey increasingly enjoyed the gathering, she heard Ma'am Hermit say to Mr. World, "I can provide an answer to that drop of blood from the Mythical Creature."

"Do you wish for a private communication?" The Fool Klein controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow with piqued interest as he asked.

If it's solely an exchange of information, I'll make a killing out of nothing! he thought with anticipation.

Cattleya looked around, and after a few seconds of thought, she shook her head and said, "There's no need.

"I can only provide two forms of payment. One, a single glance at the Wheel of Fortune card. I believe you know what this Card of Blasphemy that was created by Emperor Roselle means. Two, it's to provide the means to regain a certain amount of strength during one's weak stages.

"Please pass this message to that Angel, and ask if 'He' is satisfied with such a payment."

Provide the means to regain a certain amount of strength during one's weak stages? Queen Mystic has guessed that it's related to the Snake of

Fate? That doesn't make sense. An Angel includes a Sequence 2 Soothsayer… Can't The Fool have an Angel from the Fate pathway serving "Him"?

I've no idea if Will Auceptin knows the way to become the corresponding pathway's Sequence 0. If "He" is unaware, then taking one look at the Wheel of Fortune card would be an irresistible temptation. However, it's unlikely. "He" has lived for so long, and he's a Sequence 1 at that. It wouldn't be so terrible to the point of only now grasping the ritual to becoming a god…

Heh heh, I wonder what Roselle looks like on the Wheel of Fortune card… It has a snake with the emperor's face and other animals? Klein casually thought as he deliberated and made the fake person, The World, say, "Okay.

"If a transaction is ultimately made, you will need to pay an additional amount."

"What do you want?" Cattleya asked cautiously.

The World Gehrman Sparrow said with a hoarse laugh, "I want to meet Queen Mystic. Don't worry. The matter is very simple. There's just something that needs her help."

After a moment of silence, Cattleya said, "I can only try my best to facilitate it, but I can't give any guarantees."

Upon hearing their conversation, Audrey suddenly found it surreal.

Has the Tarot Club already matured to such a level?

Aside from Mr. Fool, from us only being able to exchange basic knowledge in mysticism and Sequence 9 potion formulas, it has developed into transactions involving Cards of Blasphemy and the blood of Mythical Creatures…

It hadn't even been a year!

It’s like a dream… I’ve also matured significantly… As Audrey sighed, The Hermit Cattleya continued looking at The World Gehrman Sparrow and said, “There’s some news regarding the Marauder pathway mystical item you want.”

As she spoke, she requested Mr. Fool’s help to conjure an item that resembled a tweezer.

This tweezer was grayish-white in color, as though they were formed from two finger bones. Apart from that, it was relatively ordinary.

Cattleya introduced, “It’s called Broken Finger. It can enhance the stability and agility of your wrist and fingers. It allows you to easily steal items in the pockets of your target without being discovered. The negative effect is kleptomania when worn. It costs 500 pounds.”

It corresponds to Sequence 9 Marauder? Hmm, there’s a slight premium involved… Klein considered for a moment and said, “Alright. Let’s close the transaction as soon as possible.”

This way, he could investigate the region dug up by Hazel in the sewers, so as to eliminate any hidden risks.

After the conversation between the duo ended, Fors asked with the intention to express interest in a purchase so that she could use it when the need arose.

“I need a cursed item from an ancient wraith, as well as its remnant spirituality. Please help me take note.”

After she obtained a positive reply from the members, The Moon Emlyn sized up his surroundings and leaned back into his chair, and he said to The Sun Derrick, “Does your City of Silver have the Beyonder characteristic that corresponds to Sequence 5 of the artificial vampires?”

He didn’t wish to call the fellows covered in puss as described by The Sun as Sanguine; therefore, he changed the way he phrased his

question.

From his point of view, since there were often mutated vampires appearing around the City of Silver, then obtaining one or two Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristics wasn't too difficult.

Furthermore, they clearly lack the potion formula of this pathway as well as an Artisan. Their retention of these Beyonder characteristics depends only on luck. Time needs to pass to determine if they would corrupt the items surrounding them, transforming into Sealed Artifacts… Emlyn convinced himself that he was helping the City of Silver instead of asking for The Sun's help.

Derrick was stunned as he answered in complete honesty, "Yes.

"But Mr. Moon, do you wish to be covered in pus?"

Ah… Emlyn's expression froze as he was momentarily unsure if The Sun was mocking him or warning him.

Upon seeing this, Derrick hurriedly added, "Many of them have serious levels of mental corruption, and without the potion formula, our City of Silver wouldn't waste the effort to cleanse such problems."

Is that so… This will be troublesome… Emlyn nodded slightly and said, "Got it."

He didn't involve himself in possible transactions, preparing to seek advice from the upper echelons of the Sanguine to figure out the matter regarding the mental corruption of Beyonder characteristics.

With the transaction segment coming to an end, the Tarot Club's members began their free exchange segment.

Audrey looked straight at Gehrman Sparrow and said with some hesitation.

"I would like to know where the Mentor of Disorder characteristic came from? If it involves certain secrets, you can choose not to answer.”

She was making the preparations to convince her father, Earl Hall. It was also to avoid any unnecessary troubles. After all, Beyonders from the Black Emperor pathway might have certain connections with the military and royal family.

Klein secretly laughed as he made The World answer, “It comes from a curly-haired baboon.”

Chapter 824 - Conflict

◆

It comes from a curly-haired baboon… Audrey was momentarily unsure if Mr. World was referring to a real curly-haired baboon or someone who couldn’t be considered human.

In the Loen Kingdom, curly-haired baboons were a common term used to mock others, often used as a joke for low intelligence.

From the looks of it, Mr. World doesn’t wish to provide any further explanation. Alright then, I’ll just treat its origins as that of a real curly-haired baboon… Audrey didn’t ask further as she said, “Didn’t I visit a place that had the tradition of worshiping dragons while seeking out the traces of a mind dragon?”

“But didn’t you discover that the mind dragon lived in the sea of collective subconscious in the local residents? And to ensure your safety, you chose to leave?” Cattleya replied.

“You went back?” Fors asked with a guess.

Audrey shook her head.

“No, I’ve long left the area. I’ve only heard of a rumor recently.

“An archaeological team entered one of the villages in that area. A member suddenly went mad at night, and the mental illness seemed contagious. The other members went mad in turn as they killed each other or themselves. Eventually, not a single member survived.”

Alger was just about to say something when Cattleya said, “This matches the traits of a mind dragon."

"I have no doubts about that. I'm just curious if the mind dragon will remain in that region," Audrey expressed her thoughts.

"No," Alger and Cattleya replied in unison.

Sitting at the long mottled table, The Fool Klein made a connection to something else.

The "anchor" of the deities!

He suspected that the region's tradition of dragon worship was an "anchor" to stabilize the mind dragon's state!

Before such traditions ceased its practice, that mind dragon likely doesn't need to worry about the problem of an "anchor." Therefore, after it leaves, it can hide in a new region's sea of collective subconscious. It doesn't need to take risks to enter the different dreams to create faith. This way, the three Churches will lack clues to finding it. After all, they aren't experts in this domain. Even with the corresponding Sealed Artifacts, they will, at best, only be capable of entering the sea of collective subconscious or force the mind dragon out… Instead, the Psychology Alchemists might be able to figure something out… As Klein thought casually, he made The World say, "The tradition of dragon worship is very beneficial in stabilizing the mind dragon's condition. You can get people to take note of such matters. If large-scale changes occur, then it means that the mind dragon is creating similar traditions in other places."

He originally wanted to mention that he suspected the mind dragon to be an angel, one at Sequence 2, but on careful thought, he found it impossible to determine that.

Indeed, when humans reach Sequence 2 and reach the level of an angel, they will need the "anchor of faith" to secure themselves to prevent themselves from going mad. But that is a dragon in the true sense of the word, an ancient Beyonder creature. It has the madness inherited from its ancestors, and even if it's cleansed and weakened every generation, it's definitely easier for it to lose itself compared to humans. Therefore, it might be a Sequence 3, or even a Sequence 4 that needs an "anchor" to resist its inclination of losing control.

"That folk tradition is beneficial in stabilizing the dragon's condition?" Audrey asked in doubt and puzzlement.

"Yes." The World didn't give an explanation aside from providing an affirmative response.

Audrey subconsciously turned her head to look at the other end of the long bronze table. She began considering if she needed to consult Mr. Fool and pay the corresponding price.

Upon seeing this, The Fool Klein surveyed the area and said with a chuckle, "Why do you think the various deities want to spread their faith?"

This… Isn't it because God loves the world so much… This standard and orthodox answer surfaced in Audrey's mind.

Following that, she, Alger, Cattleya, and the other members thought of the second answer.

"Stabilization of one's condition!"

No way… At that moment, Fors found her brain lacking. No matter how good she was at coming up with stories, there was no way she could come up with something like that!

To think that's the case. No, I can't eliminate the possibility that Mr. Fool is only mentioning one of the possible reasons. "He" is secretly eroding away the Lord of Storms's authority… This is related to godhood? I should consult Her Majesty about this in the future… Cattleya nudged the heavy glasses on her nose bridge as she made a guess.

Alger had previously seen the picture, and when he heard such matters, he no longer had that trembling sense of paralyzing fear. Instead, he began seriously considering why faith could stabilize the conditions of a demigod creature.

The other members, including Derrick, felt a little horrified. They felt that what they had heard was sacrilegious. They didn't dare think too deeply about it or say a word.

This wasn't something that only involved the evil gods like the True Creator. It had an intimate connection to the seven orthodox deities and the existence of the City of Silver Creator!

The Fool Klein didn't say anything further as he allowed them to maintain their silence while he appeared extremely relaxed.

After about ten seconds, Audrey forced a smile and said, "That's all I've encountered recently."

What she meant was that that was all from her, and it was the others' turn!

Fors and Emlyn had nothing they encountered that was worth informing to the others. They shook their heads, indicating that they had nothing to say.

Of course, the latter actually wished to flaunt his victory of the hunting competition that won him the ring made by the Ancestor.

Alger thought for a moment and looked at Gehrman Sparrow.

"Can that picture be shared with everyone?"

He believed that the picture was directly connected with certain matters that happened in Afternoon Town and the Giant King's Court. It gave The Sun some prior knowledge of what would be discovered or encountered if the City of Silver were to continue exploring. From that, he would be prepared ahead of time, allowing him to avoid danger. And it was because of this that sharing was a better choice than keeping it to himself.

“I don’t mind.” Klein had similar considerations as he made The World reply.

What picture… It seems to be very important… This is a picture Mr. Hanged Man and Mr. World saw during their partnership in finding the Tyrant card? Audrey waited in curiosity.

Gazes were cast over as Alger obtained Mr. Fool’s approval as he conjured the picture of the City of Silver Creator being eaten by the Kings of Angels.

The bloody, sinister, terrifying, and dark picture instantly left the Tarot Club members stunned. Even the knowledgeable Cattleya momentarily lost her ability to think.

Who are they? What are they doing? This is way too brutal a meal, right? Us Sanguine no longer do such things ever since the Fourth Epoch… We respect life and only drink blood… Emlyn was quite stunned by what he saw. As he had never seen the six statues in the Tudor ruin, he was unable to recognize the three figures.

Back when The World shared the images of the six statues, he had yet to join the Tarot Club.

However, he recognized the victim from the resplendent cross. “He” was likely, perhaps, probably the Creator of the City of Silver, the legendary ancient sun god. In a previous free exchange segment, The Sun had shared with them the corresponding symbols and Sacred Emblem of the Lord that created everything.

I-isn’t this the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom who Mr. World once presented? Why are “They” eating a human. No, “They” are feasting on the ancient sun god, the Creator of the City of Silver! Audrey was dumbstruck as she instinctively suspected if someone had distorted or blasphemed the images of the orthodox deities.

As Fors trembled in fear, she found the picture that was filled with darkness and evilness to have a form of aesthetics and was of high artistic value.

In her mind, she had already come up with a title, a title for the picture: "The Last Supper!"

Cattleya had never seen the six deities' statues before, and she only knew the ancient sun god. She subconsciously frowned and blurted out, "Kings of Angels?"

"Yes, at least the three present were," Alger said without any doubts. However, he wasn't sure who the dark infant inside the City of Silver Creator was.

As he spoke, Alger glanced at Derrick and noticed that the youth's eyes were glazed over; his thoughts a mystery.

At this moment, Derrick's mind was filled with misery and despair.

He believed that the one being eaten was the Creator which the City of Silver believed in. He had also recognized the surrounding three to be the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom!

This made him suspect the term "Forsaken Land of God."

In the various tomes in the City of Silver, they emphasized that God had forsaken the land due to certain reasons. It made them turn into the People of the Dark; therefore, as long as everyone repented from the bottom of their hearts and pleaded for forgiveness, the day would come when God would truly return to illuminate the entire world with sunlight.

That's not right, no amount of repentance or seeking forgiveness can redeem the City of Silver… Derrick muttered inwardly. That's because God is dead. Eaten and never to return…

This meant that the City of Silver's miserable pursuits and hope were only a mirage, one that would never be fulfilled.

After a long silence, Audrey said, trying to convince herself, "This is a distortion of the legend of how those three gods were born from the soul of the Creator?"

Three gods? Cattleya's and Emlyn's eyes constricted at the same time, having figured out the general meaning of the picture. They knew what alarming matter it represented.

"Perhaps, but there's no way to explain that infant," Alger replied.

He silently glanced at Mr. Fool, and he realized that this impressive existence had no intention of speaking. All "He" did was watch silently.

With Audrey silent, the remaining members of the Tarot Club didn't say a word either.

This silence continued until Alger dispersed the picture and turned to ask Derrick, "Have you investigated the matter regarding your former Chief's mausoleum?"

Corruption from Another Universe:

Chapter 825 - Reservation

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing Mr. Hanged Man's question, Derrick replied in shame, "No. I've been constantly assigned to patrol missions recently, and I didn't have the time to investigate."

Alger wasn't too surprised, but he was puzzled over one thing.

"Why don't you get the help of a few friends?

"You don't have to tell them your true motives. Split the task into very minor missions that wouldn't garner much attention. Let them search for information in different areas. This way, even if anything gets exposed, it wouldn't implicate them in a fatal way."

Derrick fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "I do not have friends."

Before his parents died, he had a certain number of friends from general education classes and those at the combat training field. After all, there weren't many people that are roughly the same age in the City of Silver. They often got to meet each other, and they would even become teammates. However, after his parents death, Derrick had become introverted for a very long period of time. Burdened by the secret of the Tarot Club, he unknowingly distanced himself from his friends and stopped interacting with them. The last time someone visited him at home was Darc Regence who had been corrupted by the True Creator.

Alger choked on The Sun's reply. After taking a breath, he reorganized his words.

“That’s not a good thing.

“You won’t be able to rescue the City of Silver just by relying on yourself. You have to unite a group of people, friends who can provide you with help during critical moments.”

“But, this will make them be suspected…” The Sun said hesitantly.

Alger immediately said sternly, “Being suspected is better than being dead.

“The City of Silver is now at a dangerous crossroad. You have to carefully consider what needs to be done.

“It’s impossible for there to be no sacrifices in such matters. There will even be a large number of sacrifices. Do you wish for their sacrifices to be worthless, or to be of value?”

He didn’t provide any further persuading words as he allowed Derrick to inwardly struggle over what he had just said.

Mr. Hanged Man is always able to find a reason to convince someone… Klein sighed and made The World Gehrman Sparrow turn his head to look at Justice Audrey.

“Are you currently able to treat relatively serious mental illnesses?”

His only understanding of a Psychiatrist was Frenzy and Dragon Might. He knew little about the rest, having only heard Miss Justice occasionally mention Placate and Psychological Cue. Therefore, he wasn’t sure how capable she was at treating mental illnesses.

Audrey’s attention was caught as she eagerly replied, “Yes I can. There’s no problem.

“Mr. World, do you have a friend that requires treatment?”

I happen to lack patients! she thought in excitement.

At this moment, Emlyn raised his right hand and held it to his mouth and nose, as though he already knew the answer.

Klein silently sighed and made The World said with a low chuckle.

“No, I’m the one who needs treatment.”

The entire magnificent palace suddenly turned extremely silent.

Alger, Cattleya, and Fors all knew that Mr. World was a crazy adventurer, but they never expected him to have a relatively serious mental illness that brought him to the brink of complete insanity!

This is the price for strength? Fors trembled as she felt increasingly afraid of Gehrman Sparrow.

Communication and reasoning were still possible with a crazy adventurer, but it was impossible with a lunatic!

The Mental Terror Candle wasn’t able to fully treat his mental illness? It has already reached such a severe state? Emlyn, who had expected this, felt that The World could go mad at any moment.

Derrick didn’t think too much about it, solely feeling concerned for Mr. World. He had wanted to say that the City of Silver had a Psyche Analyst that could provide treatment, but realized that it would expose too many problems. All he could do was shut his mouth as he looked at Miss Justice with an expectant look.

Audrey was alarmed, lost, and puzzled. She said with some deliberation, “Mr. World, based on my observation, you shouldn’t have any relatively serious mental illnesses.

“If it’s just anxiety and immense pressure, you can condition yourself and properly relax yourself to recover. There’s no need for direct treatment.”

The World Gehrman Sparrow chuckled and said, “The reason you didn’t discover it is because the mental illness from before has been treated.

“I’m only making a reservation. If similar signs appear again in the future, I wish to receive timely treatment.”

I see… Audrey nodded in enlightenment.

She suddenly felt a little pity for Mr. World. She felt that this cold Reaper who had killed several Sequence 5s a week was a cold and profound Blessed of Mr. Fool. He was a powerful and fear-inducing Beyonder, but he was also someone whose inner feelings resembled an ordinary person. He was currently suffering from immense stress and was being eaten away by various kinds of negative emotions, slowly walking into an abyss of pain.

After a few seconds of consideration, Audrey sincerely said, “If you are within my reach, it wouldn’t be a problem.”

After her coming of age ceremony, she had obtained a certain level of autonomy. She could spend her holidays at her parents’ family castle, or stay in East Chester County’s Stoen City on her own. However, this freedom was still limited. She couldn’t head anywhere she wanted. Even in Stoen City, there were many areas she couldn’t visit. This could only be circumvented if she joined certain charitable organizations of the Church of the Evernight Goddess.

“Alright.” Having Grazed a Traveler, Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He made The World reply, “You can confirm the location when the time comes and prepare the means to not expose your identity.”

Audrey tersely answered as a scene naturally surfaced in her mind.

She and Mr. World would be in two separate compartments somewhere, with a wall or wooden board in between them as she conversed with him and administered treatment.

In such a situation, Mr. World wouldn’t be able to determine that it’s me. To him, it doesn't matter as long as he's treated… This also means that if I can't make myself available, I can get Susie to do it! Mr. World definitely wouldn't believe that the one treating him is a dog~! Oh, Susie doesn't know the existence of the Tarot Club. Unless it's necessary, I shouldn't get her to help Mr. World… As Audrey thought, she suddenly felt the joy from thinking up a prank as she went through a great deal of effort in order to stop the corners of her lips from curling up.

After confirming this matter, Klein thought of another problem and got The World to look at Cattleya.

"Can you provide a crate of explosives?"

He believed that as a pirate admiral, she definitely didn't lack the resources in obtaining them!

"Yes. When do you need it?" Cattleya didn't ask why.

With Gehrman Sparrow killing so many Sequence 5s, a crate of explosives was nothing.

"Send it together with Broken Finger." Klein controlled The World to say, "How much will it cost?"

Cattleya replied without minding it, "Just treat it as a freebie for purchasing Broken Finger."

A crate of explosives wasn't expensive at sea. They were even rather cheap.

I like that… The Fool Klein secretly said as he made The World nod and then remind everyone:

"That picture from before—try your best not to recall it or even try to draw it when out in the real world."

Audrey and the other members subconsciously glanced at the other end of the long bronze table and realized that Mr. Fool didn't say anything against it. They immediately turned serious and didn't dare to be careless.

This also made Cattleya's thoughts of writing to Queen Mystic Bernadette about this matter be placed on hold. She had to consider a suitable method that could avoid influencing factors.

Following that, the free exchange segment slowly came to an end as the area above the gray fog fell silent.

†

Returning back to the Future, Cattleya stood behind the window of the captain's cabin. She was clearly in a dilemma.

Finally, she took a deep breath and exhaled. As she nudged her glasses, she left the captain's cabin and walked to Frank Lee's room.

This first mate had been "chased" to the bottom cabin after the crew's unanimous vote. It was to prevent his experimental products from suddenly spreading.

Frank Lee was rather pleased with this because his new residence was much more spacious. Furthermore, it also suited the condition of a dark environment.

Knock. Knock. Knock. Cattleya came to the bottom cabin and rapped at the door.

"Wait a moment!" Frank Lee shouted a reply. It was unknown what he was busy on.

After a minute, he opened the wooden door with his sleeves rolled up. He asked in puzzlement, "Captain, is there something?"

Cattleya didn't directly answer him as she used her night vision to peep into the pitch-black interior. She saw blue fish laid on the table with their eyes wide open. From the gap between the scales, green sprouts grew out. Some were already mature with a ear of wheat.

“You succeeded?” Cattleya held back her instinct to take a step back as she asked.

Frank nodded in glee before shaking his head.

“Not yet. But I’ve already made significant progress!

“I’ve crossbred wheat, mushrooms, and a bit of a Rose Bishop’s cells, and I achieved a first-stage product. Placing them in the stomachs of fish, they will be able to absorb the flesh and blood to grow to maturity even without any light.

“But the current issue is that the target is supposed to be monster corpses. There’s a need to prevent the poison and madness accumulated inside to not spread to the food after their flesh and blood is absorbed…

“Also, producing them is a problem. There’s definitely not that many Rose Bishops who are willing to be material. Therefore, there’s a need for them to have the ability to split and absorb flesh and blood themselves…”

After hearing Frank Lee’s description, Cattleya silently nudged her glasses.

“Will such food begin to absorb flesh and blood and multiply while inside a human’s stomach after consumption?”

Frank Lee fell into deep thought. After a few seconds, he said, “In theory, no. Because no one will eat them raw.

“Hmm, I will have to test its activity under high temperatures. No, they still lack the ability to split themselves. It doesn’t matter if they have any activity…”

Seeing Frank Lee in his confused state, Cattleya fell into a dilemma

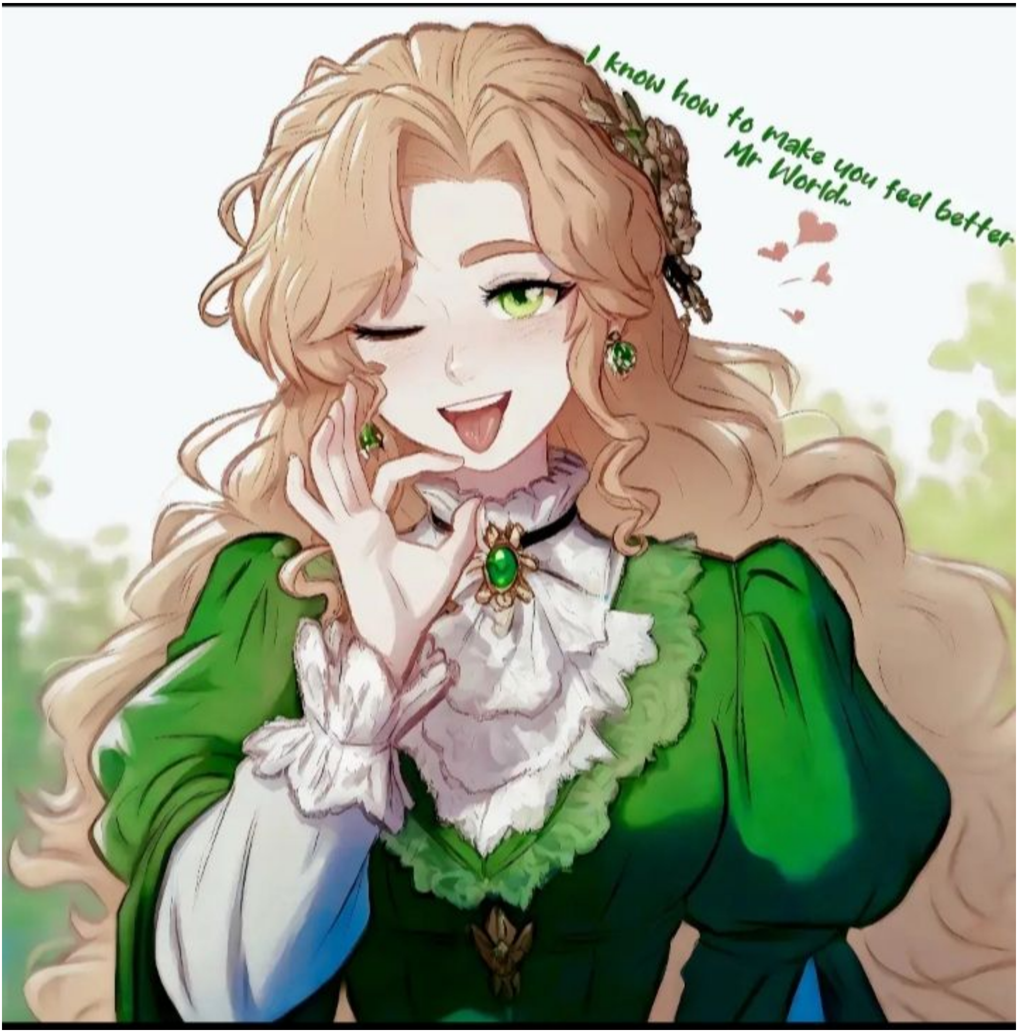
again.

After a while, she slowly asked, “I have a channel that allows me to obtain a Druid’s Beyonder characteristic. Do you need it?”

“Ah? Of course!” Frank became thrilled. “Many a time, my abilities are what limit my ideas!”

This… I kind of regret it… Cattleya suddenly had such a thought.

World: Can you treat serious mental illnesses?
Audrey: Yes, your friend needs treatment?
World: No, I need it
Tarot Club:


I know how to make you feel better
Mr World~

Chapter 826 - The Thought of Being Forgotten

◆ ◆ ◆

Monday evening. 160 Böklund Street.

Klein set up a ritual and summoned himself. He planned on investigating the secret hidden in the sewers.

While responding above the gray fog, he was in a dilemma about the card to use—the Black Emperor or the Tyrant card. It was like the selection of clothes before heading out.

In consideration of how Backlund was a place where the Church of Storms was a very powerful faction, and being afraid that he would end up attracting High-Sequence irascible bros, Klein ultimately chose to use the Black Emperor card. He wore a crown and black armor with a cape behind him.

Aside from this Card of Blasphemy, he also brought Creeping Hunger, Azik's copper whistle, Senor's gold coin, and Broken Finger, the Marauder pathway's mystical item which Cattleya had given him three hours ago, as well as some ordinary explosives.

Of course, Klein didn't bring the entire crate of explosives. For a Spirit Body, it was just too heavy. He only took out five sticks and left Senor to hold them in his body.

As for Death Knell, he had left it in his room. This was to prevent himself from having the urge to participate in a battle. He had very clear goals, so once he discovered any problems, to avoid danger, he would immediately leave and not stay behind. On the contrary, a powerful weapon would end up making him act bold, making him wish to probe deeper and resolve the matter by himself.

This is Backlund. It's best that I don't create too great a commotion… As for what's hidden in the sewers, I have no way of being clairvoyant about it. I can only divine whether it will be dangerous… Klein looked at the wall clock in his room, and he confirmed that there was another hour and a half before Hazel took action like she usually did.

His figure suddenly vanished as he passed through the balcony's glass and flew into the streets before entering the sewers.

In the dirty and humid environment, Klein took out a Loen gold coin and made Wraith Senor appear in front of him with his dark red coat and old triangular hat.

Following that, he handed over the tweezers that resembled two ground bone fingers to his marionette.

Just holding it on him for a short period of time had nearly made him steal the sewer's manhole cover.

Senor held Broken Finger and walked ahead. Dressed as the Black Emperor, Klein turned invisible and walked behind, allowing his marionette to open up a gap of at least fifty meters from him.

With this distance between them, he was no longer affected by kleptomania, and as a dead person, Senor also lacked the thoughts of stealing.

He didn't even have any thoughts!

Turning in at the corresponding fork and passing through the hidden door, Wraith Senor held the grayish-white tweezer and appeared inside the half-natural, half-artificial cave.

Unlike before, the oilskin-wrapped tools like shovels had changed positions. The hidden passage on the right had deepened a little.

That was clearly Hazel's main focus.

Right on the heels of that, Klein, who didn't enter the fork, stayed close to the wall of the sewers without touching it, his back facing the target region. He controlled his marionette as he walked deeper into the right passage.

Soon, Senor came to the end.

At this moment, Klein suddenly felt the grayish-white tweezer in his marionette's hand tremble subtly, as though it had been attracted by some unknown object not far away.

The unknown item was deep and profound like a calm ocean. It made it difficult to pry into its exact state.

A characteristic that's alive, much closer to that of a spirit… Klein was only able to determine this as he immediately let Senor use Mirror Leap to return to the half-natural, half artificial cave, onto a shovel that hadn't rusted. He didn't attempt to head deeper underground via the passage.

Then, Senor appeared again, took out the five ordinary sticks of explosives from inside its body, and placed them in different spots.

Every Wraith was a demolition expert!

After doing all of this, Senor's figure phased away, appearing on the surface of the gold coin in Klein's hand.

As he stuffed the gold coin into his body, Klein raised his right hand, in preparation to snap his fingers and trigger the five sticks of explosives!

His idea was very simple. It was to deliver an explosion of a suitable scale in order to destroy Hazel's hard work and traces. It would attract the Nighthawks and resolve everything.

This way, regardless of what was hidden deep in the passage, it wouldn't bring him danger!

In Backlund, knowing how to ingeniously "sound the alarm" was more effective and safer than rashly attacking by himself. This was especially so when Klein wasn't capable of determining that the matter involved a demigod!

I'm such a good citizen! As Klein gave a self-deprecating remark, he prepared to snap his fingers to ignite the explosives.

Suddenly, his head swayed a little as he lowered his arm, as though nothing had happened.

The cautious Klein immediately ended the summoning and returned above the gray fog. Then, he returned to the real world and entered his physical body.

Just as he was about to busy himself to bring back Creeping Hunger, Senor's gold coin, and the other items from the mysterious space above the gray fog, he frowned slightly.

He seriously recalled the entire process of his late-night exploration when he was alarmed to realize that he had apparently lost a small portion of his "memories."

He didn't remember if he had triggered the five sticks of ordinary explosives!

As he turned his head to sense his surroundings and confirmed that the entire street was very silent, Klein began to believe that he hadn't snapped his fingers.

This is a Beyonder power of a Dream Stealer? It seems to be much stronger than Mobet… If not for the gray fog and my habit of doing an after-action review, I might not have discovered that my thoughts of triggering the explosives were stolen away… The other party might have also snapped his fingers, but without the Flame Controlling powers to work in concert, nothing happened… Klein's expression turned grave as he thought, prepared to make another attempt.

Similarly, to prevent himself from being tracked, he still summoned himself and responded to himself.

With the Black Emperor card, Klein left 160 Böklund Street from another side, deliberately circling two streets away before arriving at the sewer's manhole.

This time, he didn't approach the fork. Staying not far from the manhole, he used his enhanced Flame Controlling to sense the explosive and lifted his right hand.

He raised it and lowered it as Klein rapidly ended the summoning and returned above the gray fog to prevent himself from being attacked by an unknown existence.

Not in a hurry to return to the real world, he sat at the chair of The World, doing a debrief of the entire process.

I forgot to trigger the explosives again… If I didn't force myself to recall this, I wouldn't have even considered such a problem… Truly quite impressive. The one that steered Hazel to the sewers to dig is probably a demigod… Why didn't he directly parasitize Hazel? Could it be due to particular reasons that he's sealed somewhere in the sewers and can only release some of his powers to drive Hazel to help him via a dream? The one that caused Broken Fingers to react abnormally via the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence is also him? He is unable to control the signs in regards to this? Klein thought as he rapped the corner of the long mottled table.

After having a rough guess, he discovered that there was apparently no way of truly carrying out his original plans.

This was because his thoughts would be stolen once he entered the distance in which he could use Flame Controlling to ignite the explosives. Even if he recalled it later, there was no way to make up for it.

Considering how Hazel would be affected by her dream, Klein suspected that the limits to the person's powers didn't stop at the manhole. If he discovered that Hero Bandit Black Emperor was related to Dwayne Dantès, then he would lose his corresponding thoughts and memories even while sleeping in his bedroom.

However, he has no way of locking onto me by passing over the gray fog… Heh, does he think it's so easy to stop me from "sounding the alarm"? Klein thought as he cautiously summoned a paper figurine and used a tiny amount of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. With the ritual that had yet been terminated, he conjured an angel and forcefully created an interference effect.

After doing this, he carried the Black Emperor card and entered his bedroom with his Door of Summoning.

Klein's new plan was to head to another street, find a random house, and borrow some pen and paper to write: "At the end of the sixth left fork in the Böklund Street sewers, there's a secret passage that's suspected to hide a demigod from the Marauder pathway" or something similar. Then, with the image of Böklund Street, he would plaster the piece of paper on Saint Samuel Cathedral's entrance as a public notice!

Of course, he would politely knock on the door to let the bishops inside sense it to prevent ordinary people from first seeing it.

At times, the most primitive methods are the most effective ones! Just as Klein was about to leave 160 Böklund Street from another area, he suddenly felt a tremor as a deep rumble sounded from afar.

It was ignited? The explosives were ignited? Who did it? Klein paused in surprise.

It was definitely not done by him, as it couldn't have been delayed for so long. And previously, there wasn't anyone in the sewers. Even if there was someone, the thought of igniting the explosives would be stolen away.

Unless a demigod happened to come. But how could it be this coincidental…

There's another possibility. It was done by the demigod from the Marauder pathway… He had repeatedly stolen my thoughts before, preventing me from using Flame Controlling. It was to buy time to leave. Now that it's finally done, he triggered the explosives to destroy all the evidence?

That adheres to logic, as he should know very well that a powerful being whose origins can't be traced cannot be stopped if he insists on "sounding the alarm." The best solution is to drop its tail in order to survive, just like a gecko…

However, if he can leave, why did he steer Hazel into digging the secret passage? Doing so will deal tremendous harm to him? Klein thought of certain possibilities, but he was unable to verify any of them. Furthermore, he was certain that the underground explosion was bound to have already attracted attention. Hence, he immediately left Creeping Hunger and other items behind, terminated the summoning, and returned above the gray fog.

After returning to the real world, he stopped the ritual, cleared the altar, and cleaned all traces before getting into bed.

†

39 Böklund Street, Member of Parliament Macht's house.

Hazel, who didn't sleep at all, was alarmed by the tremors and deep humming sound. She walked to the balcony and drew the curtains to look towards the sewer manhole. However, she didn't notice any anomalies.

After observing for a while, the uncertain her had decided to cancel her operation for the night and sleep in peace.

At this moment, she suddenly heard squeaking as she turned to look at the corner of her balcony.

At some point in time, there was a gray rat sitting there covered in sewage water.

Chapter 827 - Plenty of People Coming and Going

◆ ◆ ◆

Despite getting in bed, Klein didn’t manage to sleep until daybreak. This was because he believed that, with most people stirred awake from the commotion underground, him sleeping too soundly without noticing anything would make him suspicious.

Indeed, just as he got out of bed, walked to the balcony, and drew the curtains to pretend to search for the source of the commotion, Walter came knocking at his door. Two servants with double-barreled hunting rifles were assigned to protect their employer to prevent any accidents from happening.

Before long, the police arrived. Based on the descriptions of the residents in the area, they identified the sewers as the target.

As for what they discovered or whether they sought backup from the Nighthawks, the ordinary citizen, Mr. Dwayne Dantès, had no idea.

After confirming that there wouldn’t be any more accidents, he sent his butler and servants away and quickly got some sleep.

By the time he woke up again, Böklund Street had been restored to normal. Pedestrians were on the streets, and the carriages were coming and going. The Intis parasol trees that lined the side of the street continued making the area seem tranquil.

“Are the results of the investigation out?” Klein looked at himself in the mirror as he asked Richardson who was helping him smooth his clothes.

Richardson had already inquired about the matter and was waiting for his employer to ask. He immediately replied, “Apparently some gang members were trading firearms in the nearby sewers and accidentally triggered an explosion.”

What a reasonable explanation… Klein didn’t probe deeper, nor did he consider where the demigod of the Marauder pathway who stole away his thoughts went to or if the Nighthawks found him.

Firstly, this was because he believed that the demigod’s action of igniting the explosives would definitely implicate him in a serious manner. If the demigod had the ability or suitable environment to do so, he would have long parasitized Hazel without going through the convoluted and troublesome hassle. This also meant that in the next two to three weeks, or even two to three months, Klein didn’t need to worry about the demigod.

Secondly, if he continued pursuing the matter and pushed the demigod into a corner, Klein had no doubts that he would be harmed as a result. Once the demigod lost all inhibitions and began affecting the surroundings on a large scale. Then, even if he didn’t expose himself, he would suffer the demigod’s attack, as well as implicate the innocent residents along the street.

Apart from the first two reasons, Klein was apprehensive over the matter. If anomalies kept happening in the originally “normal” Böklund Street, it was bound to attract a deeper level of suspicion from the official Beyonders. And all of this happened after Dwayne Dantès moved in. Even if Klein’s body was covered in mouths, there was no way he could explain himself. When the time came, he would have to give up on his plans and reconsider new ones.

I shouldn’t head into the sewers for the time being. There’s probably a trap laid by the official Beyonders… There’s one thing to do… Hmm, take note of Hazel without leaving any clues. I’ll observe to see if there are any abnormalities about her, and once I discover any dangerous signs, I'll immediately turn into Hero Bandit and put up "advertisements" at Saint Samuel Cathedral… Klein went downstairs to have breakfast with a composed look. After doing so, he returned to his master bedroom and got Richardson to wait by the door. As for himself, he took out the almost torn paper crane from his wallet.

He planned on using it one last time and inform Snake of Fate Will Auceptin of the choices that Admiral of Stars was offering "Him" and if "He" was agreeable or not.

Typically, he could complete such matters by visiting his parents. However, without Dr. Aaron's invitation, and him lacking a sufficient reason to pay a visit, that wasn't the best choice, as it easily made others question his motives. He obviously couldn't tell Dr. Aaron that he wasn't there for him, but for the fetus in his wife's womb.

After carefully unfolding the paper crane, Klein glanced at the pencil marks left on it. His intuition told him that, as long as he used an eraser, the paper would definitely tear.

However, this didn't stump him. He got a black fountain pen and directly wrote on it:

"The other party has made their offer."

The black ink was a lot more obvious than the pencil marks; therefore, although the text overlapped, it didn't affect anyone from recognizing the words written on it.

There are always more solutions than problems… Klein nodded in satisfaction as he folded the unfolded piece of paper according to its crease marks.

This time, he suspected that unfolding it again would result in it tearing.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Ever since the Tarot Gathering ended, Derrick was like a petrified statue who sat by his bed, motionless.

After an unknown period of time, he was “awakened” by the noise on the streets outside. However, the feeling that he was still in a nightmare continued enveloping him. It made his footsteps towards the window appear especially heavy.

God might already be dead… God might not return again… Such thoughts kept resounding inside Derrick’s mind as he felt an irresistible sense of despair and pain.

Back when he had to kill his parents with his own hands, he had already suspected if God would return or show “His” blessings to his forsaken People of the Dark. He later thought of relying on Mr. Fool, allowing himself to become the true Sun and help the people of the City of Silver to escape their cursed fates. However, having been educated from a young age and the environment constantly affecting him, he still looked forward to the return of the Creator. He held expectations that sacrifices and the repentance of the City of Silver would earn them a response.

And now, all his hopes had been dashed. The tiny sliver of hope that was left had now been engulfed by the darkness.

The City of Silver will continue in this state until it disappears into the darkness. There will be no one remembering that we once existed and struggled… Derrick cast his gaze out the window and saw many of his neighbors gathered together. They were praying and seeking forgiveness from the Lord that created everything.

This wasn’t a ritual organized by the six-member council, but a tradition that took form in the City of Silver after two to three thousand years. They would pray for almost anything—good developments, unstable emotions, an injury in the family, and the birth of new life.

Lightning streaked across the sky and illuminated the streets. Derrick stood motionless in the darkness of his room, staring outside in a daze. Unknowingly, he clenched his fists.

By the time his neighbors dispersed, he finally retracted his gaze, his expressions somewhat warped.

He reached out to touch Thunder God's Roar as his gaze gradually focused. He planned on following Mr. Hanged Man's advice to befriend others to help him.

Soon, he felt a little stumped because he had no idea how to make friends. Nor did he know how to warmly greet others or find a topic of conversation.

This was in violation of his own character.

After some thought, Derrick decided to head to the training field and use combat to reestablish ties with people he was familiar with in the past. That was a gathering ground for the residents of the City of Silver where he often met people he found familiar.

†

It was late at night once again. Klein once again saw the pitch-black steeple and desolate plains in his dream as he had desired.

Passing through one obstacle after another, he arrived at the region with the scattered tarot cards. A black pram was already waiting there.

Will Auceptin, who was wrapped in silver silk, asked with a bright voice, "What are the choices?"

You are being very proactive this time… What happened to your reservation as a Sequence 1? However, kids are like that. It's good that you maintain such a state of mind… Klein silently chuckled as he said, “Two choices. Choose either one.

“One, it’s to take one look at the Wheel of Fortune card. Two, it’s the method to regain a certain amount of strength during your weak stages.”

Will Auceptin fell silent for a second and chuckled.

“So it’s Bernadette on the other side.

“My intuition was right after all. I’ll be able to obtain something good this time.”

Following that, he asked, “Which choice do you think I’ll choose?”

Klein’s subconscious idea was: I have a chance of posing a question once. Then, he said with a self-deprecating laugh, “Two.”

Will Auceptin tsked and said, “Do I look like a Mythical Creature that doesn’t have such methods?

“I’ve already restarted so many times. I definitely have the right state of mind to make preparations!”

Reasonable… Klein nodded and said, “You wish to take a look at the Wheel of Fortune card? Or do you want them to switch the choices?”

Will Auceptin sucked at his thumb and said, “I choose two.”

“…”

Klein’s expression froze.

Will Auceptin smiled and said, “Knowing one more method means one more trump card. Isn’t that the right thing to do?”

Yes, whatever you say is right… Klein replied in exasperation, “Alright. When can you complete the transaction?”

Will Auceptin waved his short arms and said, "Of course it's when I'm born and have the placenta blood!

"This will probably be in early July, but it might be brought forward."

Having said that, he relaxed his limbs as he chuckled.

"I wouldn't mind it either if they wish to hand me the method ahead of time."

"They?" Klein subconsciously asked, unsure how the Snake of Mercury knew that it was "they" and not "her"—Queen Mystic, Bernadette.

Will Auceptin sucked at his thumb and said indiscernibly, "Bernadette has already passed that stage. The stage… that needs a drop of Mythical Creature blood… is likely being prepared… for her subordinate."

Is that the case… Ma'am Hermit needs it? Klein asked thoughtfully, "What is that drop of Mythical Creature blood for? The main ingredient of some potion?"

He connected it to the fact that a drop of divine blood from the Eternal Blazing Sun could be used for the Unshadowed potion's main ingredient.

"No, isn't it suicidal for other pathways to consume the blood of a Fate pathway Mythical Creature?" Will Auceptin said with a scoff. "I heard that to advance from Sequence 5 to Sequence 4 for the Mystery Pryer pathway, there's a need to completely analyze a drop of a Mythical Creature's blood and, from there, obtain complicated and massive amounts of knowledge. This is part of the ritual. As the Mythical Creature blood used is different, what they will be proficient at during the Mysticologist stage will also differ."

To think that's possible… The rituals of the different pathways and different Sequences all have their unique traits… Klein bowed in enlightenment and said, "Thank you for your answer."

Will Auceptin waved his hand and said, “Stop disturbing me. Letting me be born in peace is the greatest form of gratitude!”

Without waiting for Klein to answer, “He” added, “Giving me that method doesn’t count!”

With that said, the black pram retreated and entered the shadows before vanishing.

Klein watched the surrounding walls collapse as he silently heaved a sigh of relief. He planned on escaping to sleep again.

At this moment, he froze because he discovered a new power infiltrating his dream.

Another one is coming just after one left. This is more lively than in the day! As Klein changed the dream according to his wishes, he pretended to look around in a daze.

Chapter 828 - Movement of the Night

◆

Klein had set the dream to be that of 160 Böklund Street. He produced many beauties that circled around Dwayne Dantès. He did this to perfectly create the image of a knowledgeable and experienced tycoon who could only let go in his dreams while holding back in the real world to uphold his reputation.

Sitting on a sofa and receiving a cup of red wine from a young lady, Klein found his surroundings suddenly change before he could even taste it. It turned from his brightly-lit villa filled with elegant beauties to a dark, humid, and dirty sewer.

Following that, he saw five familiar explosives in his hands.

Aren't these the ones I placed earlier? Klein was first taken aback as he pretended to jump in fright, throwing away the explosives as he looked around warily.

Noticing that there weren't any other abnormalities, he retreated one step at a time until he felt his way to an upright metallic ladder. He decisively climbed up, moved the manhole cover away, and left the sewer.

As he returned to Böklund Street, his dream shattered as he woke up.

Klein opened his eyes and found himself in a dark room. As he looked at the ceiling adorned in gold, he recalled his encounter.

This was done by that Marauder pathway's demigod?

He escaped the pursuit of the Nighthawks and is still hiding nearby. As he's afraid that the Black Emperor who exposed his whereabouts would appear again, he began steering dreams to seek out his target?

Very possible! If it wasn't because I can maintain my reason and lucidity when others infiltrate my dreams, I might have been driven by my subconscious to place the explosives again. After all, this is something I've done before, and the memory is still fresh in my mind…

Thankfully, I concluded the principle that a Marionettist should try to hide behind the scenes. Be it my exploration of the sewers, or meeting with Trissy, I had relied on my marionette. Even if it's because of the distance, I didn't choose to do it personally and had instead used my Spirit Body with the gray fog as a proxy while carrying items that can interfere with the prying of secrets and divination, making it impossible to determine who is the true mastermind. I would have long been discovered and targeted. Even if I didn't die, I would have to flee Backlund in a pathetic manner.

Upon thinking of this, Klein felt relieved. In the beginning, he wasn't certain of the secret hidden in the sewers. He had never expected it to be a demigod, but he had abided by the Marionettist's principles and followed his strict requirements. Hence, he avoided the tragic outcome of having his "act" exposed.

Backlund really is a dangerous place. Any mistake can result in trouble… As Klein reflected over the matter, he felt that his Marionettist potion had unknowingly digested a little.

After he composed himself, he chuckled inwardly.

It appears that demigod is still in Böklund Street. He's probably hiding in Hazel, or maybe even by her side.

Heh heh, if that demigod had infiltrated my dream a minute or two earlier, he would've met Snake of Fate Will Auceptin. Although this Sequence 1 angel is still in a weak phase, that's only relative to other angels like Ouroboros. Faced with a sneaky demigod who can't even parasitize Hazel, there likely won't be any trouble. Ignoring the other powers, just revealing a full Mythical Creature state would be enough to deal tremendous damage to a demigod who's equally weak.

I dare to bet that Will Auceptin must have sensed it ahead of time to choose that time window to come out; thus, successfully avoiding an encounter with any other demigods.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to make that Marauder demigod understand how dangerous it is to randomly infiltrate dreams in Backlund… Leonard definitely knows this very well…

Klein reined in his thoughts and pretended as though nothing had happened. With Cogitation, he fell asleep again.

It was only when the sun rose high in the sky that he woke up naturally. He sat up, transformed into Gehrman Sparrow, and prayed, "…Please inform Ma'am Hermit that the angel has accepted the method to regain a certain amount of strength during one's weak stages. 'He' has agreed to complete the transaction in late June or early July.

"You can also ask Bernadette about when I can meet her."

After completing the prayer, Klein transformed back into Dwayne Dantès, got out of bed, and entered the bathroom to wash up.

After brushing his teeth and washing his face; thus, becoming abnormally alert, he took four steps counterclockwise and headed above the gray fog. He then threw the scene of the prayer into the crimson star representing The Hermit.

†

On the docked Future, Cattleya watched Frank Lee step on the dock while filled with anticipation. He planned on finding some place to sell his items and save up 8,000 pounds to purchase the Druid Beyonder characteristic. She couldn't help but raise her hand to her forehead, feeling an inexplicable lack of confidence.

Although she believed that she could suppress Frank Lee, even if he was a Druid, thanks to her strength, mysticism knowledge, and mystical items, just the thought of his strange ideas, as well his terrifying ability to put them into action, made her feel that the problem wasn't that simple. She didn't wish for a watermelon to grow on her head or participate in the Tarot Gathering above the gray fog while covered with ears of wheat.

Thankfully, he still doesn't have the Druid potion formula. For now, I don't have to worry about him advancing to Sequence 5… Cattleya nudged her glasses as she comforted herself.

At this moment, an illusory fog emanated in front of her as Gehrman Sparrow's voice sounded in her ears.

That angel agreed? Cattleya's expression softened as she couldn't help smiling.

Once she obtained that drop of Mythical Creature blood, it meant that she was very close to the realm of a demigod!

She already had the Mysticologist potion formula. She has also completed the necessary conditions to exchange for a main ingredient from the Moses Ascetic Order. She also knew of the channel to obtain the other main ingredient, as well as the method to obtain it.

I just need to wait until July. July… Cattleya pursed her lips as her gaze penetrated the thick glasses while she surveyed her captain's cabin.

†

Thursday afternoon. Just as Klein finished a class on ancient literature, he heard the illusory, stacked pleas.

After heading above the gray fog, he discovered that the supplicant was The Hermit Cattleya.

Admiral of Stars had requested Mr. Fool to inform The World that Queen Mystic had agreed to his request. If he was in Backlund, they could meet near the entrance of the bridge on the south bank of the Tussock River at eleven in the evening.

Bernadette is still in Backlund… Klein conjured Gehrman Sparrow and gave a confirmatory answer.

At 10:58 p.m., he entered his bathroom and took out a paper figurine from his pocket.

Pa!

Klein shook it and made the paper figurine turn into a Dwayne Dantès who sat on the toilet with a book in hand as though he was daydreaming.

Then, he shortened himself by about four centimeters. His face turned thin as his facial contours became more pronounced. He had transformed into Gehrman Sparrow.

Right on the heels of that, the glove on his left hand turned transparent as countless illusory figures appeared within.

Following that, Klein saw the surrounding colors saturate before turning well-separated and stacked. His body then phased away from the real world.

He quickly traversed the spirit world, and, based on his location, kept adjusting his trajectory. In just a few seconds, he appeared at the south bank of the Tussock River where the Backlund Bridge entrance was.

At that moment, it was already late at night. There was no one on the bridge, and it was extremely silent. The only thing that could be seen was a platoon of soldiers guarding the bridge a short distance away.

Klein was just about to find Queen Mystic Bernadette's traces when he suddenly saw green pea vines droop down from the sky, interweaving to form a lush forest.

This "forest" didn't have a peak as the veins formed different paths that either intersected or spiraled before extending high into the sky.

Klein was taken aback for a second as he casually found a pea vine and hung over a tiny trail in midair before taking steps forward.

After an unknown period of time, he saw that the green plants were connected to a seat that resembled a hammock. It was gently shaking above him.

Queen Mystic was sitting there, wearing a white Intis-styled shirt and a dark-black jacket. By her waist was a thin rapier. Other than not wearing a triangular hat, she was dressed like a standard pirate captain.

She didn't only reveal her black leather boots like she did back when she interacted with Sherlock Moriarty in Backlund. At that moment, her chestnut hair cascaded down as her blue and deep eyes looked over. She gently said without any emotion, "Thank that existence behind you on my behalf."

So you are still quite respectful towards The Fool. Hmm, the few answers I previously gave her had likely resolved some of her confusion… With the "mask" of Gehrman Sparrow on, Klein politely replied, "Alright."

Bernadette's eyes didn't shift as she continued looking at him.

"Is there something this time?"

Klein paused for a second as he said the words he had already prepared, "I wish to receive your help in reproducing the prolonged state of being contaminated by the core seal's power behind Chanis Gate of the Church of Evernight."

As he spoke, Klein made Wraith Senor appear beside him.

Bernadette looked deeply at the upright Admiral of Blood. Without asking Gehrman Sparrow how he knew that she had the means, she calmly said, “The core seals in the different cathedrals of the Church of Evernight are different. The state of contamination will also be different.

“Is it the Evernight pathway, the Death pathway, or something else?

“Is it a main diocese cathedral, or a typical central cathedral in a city?”

She had directly eliminated the option of the Church of Evernight’s headquarters, the Cathedral of Serenity. This was because even a King of Angels wouldn’t cast “Their” sights on it.

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “Diocese cathedral. Evernight pathway.”

Bernadette nodded gently and said, “Then, I can allow him to suffer the corresponding contamination, but doing so will basically destroy this marionette of yours. It can still be used normally in the beginning, but with the passage of time, the contamination will worsen. He will slowly fall asleep, never to awaken.”

“Can the time it takes for the complete contamination be pushed back?” Klein asked, holding back the pain of potentially losing a marionette.

Senor was one of the most valuable assets he had!

Bernadette said with a calm expression, “Two months is the limit.”

Klein struggled inwardly for two seconds before replying in a deadpan manner, “Alright.”

He then pressed his hand to his chest and bowed.

“Thank you for your help.”

Bernadette didn't say a word as she retracted her gaze. She extended her right hand as words that were written in Jotun, Dragonese, Elvish, and ancient Hermes appeared in midair.

These words interwove into strange symbols with a star-like radiance, as though they were opening a secret door that led deep into the spirit world.

With the secret door opened, a gust of wind blew, conjuring the upper body of a man that was covered in white cloth.

"Sleep Bugle," Bernadette said gently but sternly.

The man who had a torso and wind for his bottom replied reverently, pulling out a human skull from the white cloth.

The skull's eye sockets were deeply recessed and dark; It was impossible to see the bottom. The rest of the skull was covered with holes of different shapes and cracks. It was white like a piece of jade.

Bernadette took the Sleep Bugle and glanced at Gehrman Sparrow.

"Go back at least fifty meters."

Klein didn't ask why as he left Senor in his original spot, and he quickly distanced himself along the pea vine path.

After exceeding fifty meters, he suddenly heard a distant and serene melody that was filled with sorrow and gloom.

Subconsciously, Klein looked up at the area covered by the pea vines. Bernadette was sitting with her back slightly hunched. Her chestnut hair was fluttering as her head was bowed. She had placed the human skull to her mouth, letting the orifices produce an air stream that appeared like the orchestrated movement of the night.

The movement brought with it the power of calmness and faint melancholy. Bit by bit, it spread out without alarming the soldiers guarding the bridge beyond the pea vine forest.

Klein stood there and listened seriously when he suddenly had a pining for home.

That was home, something that a traveler who had been drifting for a long period of time yearned for the most but was unable to touch.

Chapter 829 - Arrival of June

◆

In the dark night, and within the green vine forest, Klein closed his eyes as he listened to that musical movement that was emitted from the sky.

He felt calm in both body and mind, but he felt a faint sense of depression and sadness grow, emanate, and resonate.

After an unknown period of time, the soothing melody finally disappeared as the hanging pea vines gently swayed in the night wind.

Klein sighed silently as he opened his eyes and looked up. He saw that Queen Mystic Bernadette had handed over the orifice-filled human skull back to the “servant” that was half-man, half-wind.

“It’s done.” Bernadette’s gentle and calm voice sounded.

“Thank you for your help.” Klein bowed once again as he controlled Wraith Senor to return to his side.

At this moment, the pea vines retracted upwards and slowly turned faint. Soon, the green forest vanished.

Klein and Senor simultaneously landed at the entrance to the bridge. There was no one around this silent area, apart from a platoon of soldiers whose backs were facing him. There was nothing different from before.

The fairytale-like scene from before was like an illusion.

Only then did Klein have the time to observe his marionette. He discovered that his marionette appeared more like a dead man than before. His face was pale and his aura cold. He gave off an obvious sense of gloom.

This is likely the result of a single high-dosage of contamination… If it's just guarding Chanis Gate for one to two times a week, with each duty happening during the day, it wouldn't be this serious. It's impossible that two months is the limit… If that's the case, even if it's the church of an orthodox deity, it won't be able to afford such losses… I expect a normal Keeper to live for several years, or even more than ten years. However, it's easy to mutate midway and lose control… Sigh, they likely already know of the outcome when they chose to become Keepers… Klein felt poignant as he made Senor project himself onto the gold coin inside the iron cigar case.

Following that, he used Traveling to head out to sea. After selecting food for Creeping Hunger, he returned to his master bedroom's bathroom in 160 Böklund Street.

†

5th June. Sunday. Inside the Hall family castle.

Audrey was sitting in front of a study desk as she admired the sight of the mystical item she had just acquired.

Its outer appearance was that of a black fishnet glove that reached the elbow. It appeared to be a product of the royal family that came with a sense of magnificence and elegance.

This was the item the Artisan had made after some time, using the Mentor of Disorder Beyonder characteristic she had obtained from The World Gehrman Sparrow.

Audrey had previously asked her father, Earl Hall, and obtained the answer: "You can buy it and use it for yourself. Having such filial thoughts is already good enough." Hence, she specially instructed Mr.

Hanged Man to get the Artisan to make it into an item that could be carried around by a lady.

This also made her suspect if her father had better mystical items, or if the Church of the Goddess provided him rather high-level protection.

Based on The Hanged Man's description, this fishnet glove gave the wearer several Beyonder powers.

One of them was the enhancement of one's dignity and body, making surrounding beings lower their own standing to submit themselves without realizing it.

Another was Distort, the ability to distort a target's words, actions, and intent. It allowed one to formulate a certain order that provided them with an advantage.

The third was Bribe, which bribed them via a symbolic gesture. It allowed the target to feel a great sense of fondness, making it difficult to have any thoughts of animosity or even wish to fight the wearer. If the conditions were suitable, the person who received the "Bribe" had an extremely small chance of attacking their companions. Audrey heard from Mr. World that this was one type of "Bribe" Beyonder powers that was known as Bribe—Charm."

The last was to produce a "Disorder" effect on a target or surrounding area, making it difficult for attacks to land on the wearer, and making the enemy easily "choose" to make the wrong judgment.

Audrey was very satisfied with these effects. However, what vexed her was that the Artisan's level was lacking. The Sequence 5 mystical item he created had relatively serious negative side effects.

First, it would make the wearer's psyche slowly grow dark, making them often wish to take shortcuts, use schemes, or dishonorable methods to complete matters. Second, the wearer would enter a state of Disorder after wearing it for more than three minutes. Audrey had tried it previously, and she had made a mistake without realizing it when she was bathing.

The normal procedure was to let her maidservant fill the bathtub with water and adjust the temperature before she took off her clothes, enter the bathtub, and then finish washing up. However, Audrey had first entered the bathtub, filled it with cold water, and waited until her clothes were wet before she remembered to take them off.

The only thing she was thankful about was that she had eventually controlled herself and hadn't called her lady's maid in to witness such an embarrassing matter.

This makes me feel like a curly-haired baboon! Audrey thought in embarrassment and anger.

She found the first negative effect acceptable because she was a Psychiatrist. She could often check on herself and eliminate her dark thoughts. Furthermore, she had Susie to provide her with help as an onlooker. However, the second negative effect was completely unacceptable.

The second negative effect is just too problematic. All I can do is bring it with me. I'll wear it at critical moments. Ah, right, I still have Lie. It will amplify my emotions, so combined with the glove, it will only worsen the darkness in my heart. The current me might not be able to withstand it… Audrey's green eyes darted around as she tried thinking of a solution.

At this moment, she heard knocking at the door.

Her maidservant, Annie, said from the outside, "Miss Audrey, the Lord wishes to talk to you about something."

Audrey left the black fishnet glove on the door as she stood up and came to the door to open it.

Earl Hall, who didn't wear a coat at home except for a shirt and matching vest, touched his beautiful beard and said with a chuckle, "Are you not ready? We'll be returning to Backlund in a while.

"Tomorrow night will be your 18th birthday party."

As he spoke, Earl Hall looked at Annie and company, indicating that they should retreat.

"Sigh, it's the annual socializing season again." Audrey nodded, feigning her maturity.

Earl Hall glanced at his daughter and asked with a laugh, "Have you thought of how you can make use of that item yet?"

Audrey pursed her lips into a smile.

"Of course.

"I plan on folding it up and putting it into a bag. Susie will carry it."

This way, as she didn't wear it or use it, Susie wouldn't find herself in any situation of disorder and confusion, and its dark psychological problems could be treated by Audrey with Placate. More importantly, without Lie's amplification, Susie, who was also a Psychiatrist, could also check on herself inwardly and regulate her mental state from time to time.

Earl Hall was taken aback as he praised with a surprised smile, "That's a smart solution."

Audrey felt smug, but she said in a reserved manner, "I plan on calling it the Hand of Horror."

"Dear Earl, thank you for the birthday present~"

In a few more days, I can concoct the potion and attempt an advancement! Audrey added inwardly in joy.

†

Sunday night. 160 Böklund Street.

Klein stood on his balcony as he peeped at the street through the gap in the curtains. He couldn't help but feel somewhat nervous.

If nothing unexpected happened, he planned on beginning his plan of stealing the Antigonus family's notebook in a while.

With Queen Mystic Bernadette's help, he had made his marionette enter a contaminated state. From his frequent visits to the cathedral for praying, bible studies, and donations, he had figured out the Keepers' duty roster. There was only one thing left that was necessary for the preparations of Klein's theft.

That was to secretly replace his target without anyone noticing it!

Based on Klein's understanding of the situation, the Keepers would head underground at daybreak. And it was during such times when the cathedral remained close. To directly infiltrate inside ran the risk of being discovered by a demigod like the diocese's archbishop. It could be said that there was no chance of success.

Therefore, Klein's plan was to infiltrate the cathedral one day earlier and patiently wait for an opportunity.

This undoubtedly needed a sufficient disguise, but this didn't stump a Faceless.

After a observing for some time, Klein discovered that the Church held a major Mass on Sunday night. This was because Sunday and the night were symbols for the Goddess.

And after the Mass ended, the servants would be busy clearing the trash and throwing them outside.

Klein's plan was to seize this opportunity to knock a servant unconscious and enter the cathedral while disguised as the servant before sleeping in the servants' quarters.

For this, he had even purchased a dosage that was able to let a person fall into a deep sleep for ten hours without causing any physical harm. He bought it from Emlyn for five pounds.

Phew… After a few minutes, Klein slowly exhaled as he drew the curtains. He walked back to his bedroom, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

Sitting in The Fool's chair, he thought in silence for a minute before conjuring a pen and paper. He wrote the divination statement: "This theft of the Antigonus family's notebook will be dangerous."

After putting down the dark red fountain pen, Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his left wrist. Using his left hand to hold the chain, he let the topaz hang down over the paper in close proximity with it.

He entered Cogitation, closed his eyes, and silently chanted the divination statement. After repeating it seven times, he slowly opened his eyes and saw the spirit pendulum spinning clockwise with an ordinary amplitude and frequency.

There's danger, but it's within an acceptable range… Klein quickly made an interpretation.

In fact, he was a little worried if his divination was being interfered with, just like how the Mother Tree of Desire had done so. However, he had no way of verifying it, much less falsify the possibility.

Therefore, when the divination outcome, plans, and preparations satisfied the required conditions, Klein had made up his mind.

He looked at the hanging topaz that slowly came to a halt. In Chinese, he said in a heavy voice, "A strung bow is poised to strike."

Before he finished his sentence, Klein let his spirituality envelop himself as he simulated the feeling of falling, and he returned to the real world.

This time, he planned on only bringing three items with him—Creeping Hunger, Senor's gold coin, and Azik's copper whistle. The characteristic they had in common was that they could be stored inside an iron cigar case. He could use Paper Angel and a wall of spirituality to provide a double layer of screening.

As for the other items, there was a high chance that they couldn't pass through Chanis Gate, as they could easily trigger an anomaly at the core seal. Therefore, Klein had left the rest of his items, as well as his money, above the gray fog, prepared to immediately flee if anything went wrong.

It's just that the 3% Coim Company shares worth 12,800 pounds is tied to Dwayne Dantès's identity… Klein quickly reined in his thoughts, picked up a mirror, and placed it on the pillow.

Following that, he drew the mysterious symbol used for summoning Arrodes.

Chapter 830 - Infiltration

◆

The mirror on Klein’s pillow glowed with an aqueous luster as silver points of light gathered to form Loenese words:

“Exalted Great Master, your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is constantly at your service!”

Klein stood beside the bed and looked at the mirror before calmly asking, “Where is the Antigonus family’s notebook located behind Saint Samuel Cathedral’s Chanis Gate?”

He wanted to confirm the location so that he could directly head for his target and complete his plan in the shortest time possible. Through this, he could avoid all kinds of accidents.

Silver text distorted and changed on the mirror’s surface, forming a new line of text:

“It’s a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. It will be on the right in basement two. I can’t see anything more specific.”

Klein tersely acknowledged as he said, “It’s your turn to ask.”

Arrodes immediately dispersed the silver words and presented a new question:

“What other instructions do you have?”

If this were any other time, Klein definitely would’ve secretly tsked, but his high-strung mind made him nod.

"Just watch over my illusion like before to deal with any accidents."

"Alright, Master!" Arrodes didn't hesitate to give an answer as it hurriedly added, "I-I will hold back my instincts. I swear to you, the great ruler above the spirit world!"

Klein nodded gently, took two steps forward, and made the mirror look like Dwayne Dantès.

The image became clearer and bigger until it looked real.

After some slight adjustments, Klein made it lie in bed as though it was already sleeping.

At this moment, he saw Dwayne Dantès turned his head over and smile at him with a toady look. At the same time, he reached out his hands and pulled the blanket towards his head.

"…"

Without a word, Klein transformed into the cold and crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, as Creeping Hunger on his left hand turned transparent.

His body rapidly phased away as he Traveled to the other end of Phelps Street where Saint Samuel Cathedral was. Following that, he walked to the square filled with pigeons in the day, and he hid himself in a corner under the guise of the shadows.

A short while later, a batch of believers who had attended Mass came out of the cathedral. Before long, servants began leaving the cathedral with all sorts of miscellaneous items, walking to the trash bins in an alley. A number of people were dealing with the feces that was found at the spot where the carriages parked at.

At this moment, a servant's body suddenly trembled before he bowed his head. He seriously began cleaning the area, and he even proactively walked towards the square as though he wanted to clean the trash there. He slowly opened up a distance from the others until he came to a shadowy area.

When the other servants stopped placing their attention on him, a hand suddenly outlined itself and reached out of the void, grabbing him by the shoulder and causing his body to phase away into nothingness.

Klein had directly Traveled to a cheap two-bedroom condominium in East Borough. He had Teleported over a few days ago with another identity to rent it.

A Traveler's ability is really convenient. The only problem is that I need to have a pirate sacrifice his life every time… Klein lampooned to relieve his anxiety as he made the servant lie in bed. Then, he took out a long metal vial and threw it at him.

The servant caught it and pulled out the stopper before gulping down the soporific medicine in it. In a few seconds, he fell into a deep slumber as Senor surfaced to the side.

Klein observed the servant on the bed as his body suddenly softened like he had transformed into a slime monster.

However, he didn't collapse into a pool. After some swaying, he instantly shortened his height by fifteen centimeters as his skin darkened in color. His facial features moved, and soon, he had transformed into the servant.

And at this moment, Senor had already taken off the servant's clothes.

Without wasting any time, Klein quickly changed into those clothes and moved the items from the iron cigar case over.

Picking up the broom and surveying the area before confirming that there weren't any problems, he made Senor return to the gold coin before Klein lowered his left arm and spread his fingers. He watched as Creeping Hunger produced an indescribable transparency effect.

After teleporting back to the shadowy corner, Klein bent his back and began cleaning the area seriously. Step by step, he approached the busy servants but maintained a distance from them to prevent anyone from chatting with him which would increase his chances of being exposed.

After about thirty minutes, the servants gathered together and entered Saint Samuel Cathedral and turned into a side door.

At a distance away from the priests, a servant stretched his arms and said, “How tiring.”

Klein pretended to look uninterested in the conversation due to his fatigue as he tersely nodded without participating in the conversation.

Soon, they returned to the servants’ quarters. It comprised of two rather big rooms, with many bunk beds inside. Beside each bed was a wardrobe and chest.

Klein was immediately at a loss. He didn’t know whether to head left or right.

Thankfully, he was a Seer. He could solely rely on his spiritual intuition on matters that didn’t involve Beyonders or mysterious domains. Furthermore, he was still holding onto a broom. Hence, he pretended to have his hand slip and secretly did a Dowsing Rod Seeking. He received a revelation that he should head right.

When he entered the room on the right, Klein deliberately slowed down a little, observing the actions of the other servants. Then, he mimicked them by placing the broom in the region behind the door. Then, he went outside to the common bathroom to wash his face, rinse his mouth, and wash his feet.

After he completed all of this in a slow manner, the bed that belonged to him revealed itself—the bed that wasn’t occupied.

Lying in bed, Klein finally felt relieved as he secretly sighed in relief.

The servants were all exhausted and before long, they fell asleep, producing a symphony of snores.

Klein maintained his consciousness and very slowly removed Creeping Hunger. Folding it up into a tiny shape, he stuffed it inside the iron cigar case, putting it together with Azik's copper whistle and Senor's gold coin.

Seconds turned to minutes as he found it impossible to sleep due to anxiety. All he could do was rely on Cogitation to force himself to sleep for a few hours.

He woke up at a specific time and released Senor.

This marionette's cold aura rapidly melded with the surroundings as the Spirit Body Threads collapsed inwardly, gradually turning black without any origins.

It can still be controlled… Klein nodded indiscernibly and made the Wraith use the stained glass windows high above and the bright stone floor tiles to arrive at the staircase that led to the Keepers above.

He believed that if Senor hadn't been contaminated ahead of time, making Chanis Gate's core seal think of it as one of its own, it definitely would've reacted and cleansed it.

How could a Wraith have the ability to move freely in an orthodox Church's cathedral!

And due to the "tacit approval" from the core seal and the disruption from the Paper Angel, the demigod-level archbishop that lived somewhere in the cathedral wasn't alerted!

Under Klein's control, and using the sensations from the contamination, the invisible Senor slowly walked to the second floor before turning left and finding the residence of the Keepers.

It's Monday tomorrow… This week's Monday shift is likely done by the

Keeper I met first… Klein had long figured out the roster, so he made the dark-red coated Wraith stealthily pass through the wooden door and float into different rooms to identify the target.

As there were only a few people inside, he quickly found the pale elder with loose facial skin, sparse hair, and a big nose

Senor immediately took out a sedative vial and placed it to the side. Then, before the Keeper sensed anything, it possessed him!

The Keeper, who was in deep sleep, lost control over his body before he could even wake up to resist. All he could do was open his grayish-blue eyes and watch himself slowly pick up the vial and pull off the stopper. Then, he downed the liquid inside.

His body convulsed abnormally as his organs seemed to be engaged in a violent struggle. After a full minute, he slowly went limp and closed his eyes again, entering a dreamless sleep.

After doing all of this, Senor left the body of the Keeper and used all kinds of mirror surfaces to leap back to the servants' quarters before entering Klein's body.

Klein immediately emitted a cold, dead, and distant aura. Even showing an expression appeared to be difficult.

He slowly got out of bed and silently left the servants' quarters. In the shadows and murals that weren't illuminated by the moonlight, he walked to the second floor and entered the target's room.

Standing by the bedside, Klein, whilst in the appearance of a servant, slowly grew taller as his hair turned gray and sparse while his nose enlarged significantly.

In just a few seconds, he looked identical to the Keeper who just drank the sedative. Even his aura was identical.

Changing into the black clergyman's coat that was placed to the side, Klein moved the Keeper's and servant's clothes underneath the bed and laid down as he kept note of the time.

At half-past five, he woke up ahead of time, finishing the white bread he had prepared the night before and drank a cup of water. He then looked quietly out the window.

Just as day broke, Klein maintained his deadpan state and walked out the door. He went to the first floor, and following the path he had previously verified, he took a left turn.

After walking for a moment, he wasn't surprised to see a priest.

This was his experience as a former Nighthawk; therefore, Klein wasn't too worried that he couldn't find the path.

The priest stood outside a secret door that led underground. As he raised his right hand, he tapped four times clockwise on his chest and said, "May the Goddess bless you."

"Praise the Lady," Klein replied hoarsely and similarly drew a crimson moon.

He didn't stay any longer and walked past the priest. Under the lamps that lined the walls, he walked down the staircase and arrived at the crossroads.

Based on his understanding of his environment, Klein believed that turning right would leave the cathedral, and it would likely lead to the disguised security company or other organization belonging to the Nighthawks. Therefore, he didn't hesitate to turn left.

At that moment, he saw a man wearing a Red Glove walk over.

The casually dressed man had black hair and green eyes with handsome looks. He was none other than Leonard Mitchell.

Chapter 831 - Just Inches Away

Upon seeing Leonard, Klein's back muscles instantly stiffened. His nerves tensed up like a fully-drawn bow that could snap at any moment.

He remembered very clearly that Leonard had a Marauder pathway angel, Pallez Zoroast, parasitizing him. "He" could sense the uniqueness about his body and, from that, see through his disguise.

If that Grandpa were to inform Leonard of the problem with the Keeper in front of him, that would be troublesome. I'll just have to hope that my dear poet is afraid that his secret will be exposed and that he would feign ignorance… Back in Tingen, although he often said that everyone has their secrets and that there's no need to worry about it, that's all regarding matters pertaining to the Church. Who knows if he suddenly feels the need to uphold justice and decides to be loyal and take the risk to expose me. After all, this matter is very similar with Ince Zangwill's… At that moment, Klein's forehead nearly broke out into a sweat.

To be frank, he never expected to encounter Leonard while heading to Chanis Gate because he was a Red Glove and not an ordinary Nighthawk. There was no need for him to be on duty, so there wasn't a need for him to be here at that moment in time.

However, Klein immediately thought of a crucial point.

The one who could detect his uniqueness was Pallez Zoroast and not Leonard Mitchell. The former's attitude was more important!

The Grandpa knows that I know of “His” existence. Once “He” exposes my disguise and pushes me into a corner, “He” has to be prepared to be exposed by me. When the time comes, we will definitely be trading blows with each other, benefiting no one. And for an angel from the Marauder pathway who doesn’t believe in the Goddess, there’s no need for that… If I were “Him,” I would pretend that nothing had happened. I wouldn’t even remind Leonard Mitchell, leaving my safety to be decided by my host… As he quickly cleared his train of thought, Klein composed himself and walked over towards the red-gloved Leonard Mitchell.

Leonard indifferently looked at the Keeper with grizzled sparse hair. He couldn’t help but raise his right hand to cover his mouth and yawn.

He has nothing better to do because he doesn’t sleep at night, so he’d gone to the duty room to play cards with the person on duty? What a perfect Sleepless… Klein roughly understood the reason for the Red Glove poet appearing.

He recalled the reactions of the Keepers when they met Nighthawks in Tingen. He silently nodded his head at Leonard and drew a moon with his right index and middle finger, tapping his chest four times in a clockwise manner.

Leonard used the same action in response as he passed by the Keeper without noticing anything.

Klein silently exhaled as he maintained his usual pace and gait until he reached his destination.

The iron-black double door was heavy and cold. Engraved on it were seven Sacred Emblems appearing as though nothing could stir it.

Klein turned his body to the side and took two steps to the side. He knocked on the Keeper’s door, and under the gaze of the Nighthawk on duty, he opened Chanis Gate.

The darkness deep inside immediately surged out. Even though there were silver candles with engraved patterns burning silently inside, they were unable to disperse such a feeling. And the ghostly-blue flame accentuated the deathly silence.

Meanwhile, Klein felt that something invisible in the darkness was grazing past his skin and entering deep into his body. It passed through the boundary of reality and illusions, connecting to Wraith Senor.

Suddenly, without even activating his Spirit Vision, he saw black threads covering the area behind Chanis Gate. They were gently swaying, either bundled or extended out as though a lady was spreading out her hair, or some monster was flailing its tentacles.

Klein walked forward with a deadpan expression. After entering the sealed land, he turned around and closed Chanis Gate.

At that moment, all the sounds outside were completely cut off. The silence inside was like a kingdom of the dead. It made him imagine and feel fear. Klein was reminded of himself occasionally watching the darkness in bed with his eyes open. He didn't dare to sleep even though he hadn't heard any ghost stories.

It's no wonder the Goddess has the title of Empress of Horror… Klein cast his gaze to the side and raised the lantern in the corner, lighting it with great familiarity.

Dim yellow light immediately poured out before being tainted with a ghostly blue.

Klein, who was wearing a black clergyman's robe, wasn't in a rush to head for basement two to search for the Antigonus family's notebook. Instead, he stayed behind the gate and patiently waited.

He was doing so in the event that the Nighthawks were in urgent need of something but could only wait until daybreak since they were unable to retrieve them at night.

Based on his experience, Keepers were most easily disturbed in the first five minutes of them entering Chanis Gate. As long as he survived that period, and as long as there weren't any additional accidents, the normal retrieval process of materials would happen after eight. That was the standard working hours of the Nighthawks and civilian staff.

In other words, once Klein lasted the first five minutes, he wouldn't be disturbed by the Nighthawks for the next two hours. Of course, he didn't have that much time for his operation. The Church of Evernight opened at eight, and the servants would wake up an hour or an hour and a half ahead of time to get down to work. After half-past six, the other servants could realize that one of them was missing!

Time ticked by as Klein's heartbeat couldn't help but speed up. He found the five minutes excruciating.

Finally, his countdown finally ended as he cast his gaze towards the stone stairs in the darkness. it was the passage that led to the second floor.

At that moment in time, there was no one in here that could restrict him!

At this stage, Klein believed that he had overcome 70% of the difficulties. The remaining 30% consisted of how he would leave after obtaining the notebook.

Of course, there was always a certain chance for all kinds of accidents to happen. Klein didn't wish to be careless as he raised a lantern and walked to the stone staircase.

To other Beyonders, the first level behind Chanis Gate was actually a lot more attractive than the Sealed Artifacts. There were all kinds of Beyonder ingredients, potion formulas, and secret knowledge here. There were even captured heretics that had been apprehended, as well as unaffiliated Beyonders. Be it trying to be rich, to advance, or to rescue their companions, an infiltrator just needed to search around this level.

However, Klein needed to head deeper inside where the dangerous items were sealed.

Passing through a few tightly locked stone chambers, he clearly sensed people inside. However, they weren't making a fuss or roaring, nor were they pleading for mercy or shouting for help. They were silently lying there or sitting there. Their auras had already turned cold.

The lantern's light flickered as it illuminated the staircase that led down. Klein focused again and steadily walked deeper underground.

He didn't run, afraid that he would trigger a negative reaction from the core seal.

As it became darker, the ghostly-blue flames from the elegant candle stands on the two ends had weakened; they appeared as though they were about to be extinguished at any moment. And at that moment, the pure darkness might bring about unimaginable horrific changes. Klein repressed his instinctive fear as he finally walked down the stairs and came to basement two.

With a Wraith's night vision, Klein discovered that there were strange walls made of steel, bricks, mud, and silver. They were sectioned off into different regions, with certain spots open and other rooms tightly shut. All of them had a Sealed Artifact.

With the lantern in hand, he turned left as the scene before Klein's eyes lit up. He saw a burning flame and a glowing-red and black anthracite and charcoal.

The region was in a half-open state. Inside was a bathtub-like object made of steel. The area beneath it was dug open and was stuffed with anthracite, charcoal, and other flammable objects.

They kept burning, making the steel bathtub produce bubbling sounds, letting the steam emanate out, condensing on the ceiling and dripping down like rain.

An artifact that needs to be soaked in hot water for the seal… And the Keepers need to periodically add anthracite and charcoal to prevent the fire from extinguishing… Hmm, if there's a Sealed Artifact that can constantly emit high temperatures, they can be placed together, making the seal easy… Klein glanced at the steel bathtub. Hoping that no accident spoiled his plans, he approached it and used a tool to add some anthracite into the fire pit.

When he looked up, he noticed something through the corner of his eye. Immersed under the hot water in the bathtub was a silver metallic object.

Together, they seemed to form a heavy full-body armor. And a part of it had unremovable dark red blood stains and splattered red spots.

1-42… An ancient god's blood… So now it's permanently stored in the Backlund diocese… Klein had seen this Sealed Artifact before as the corresponding information surfaced in his mind.

Just as he was about to retract his gaze, he saw the spartan silver helmet.

The helmet's visor had been pulled down, making its interior appear dark. At that instant, Klein felt that a gaze was penetrating it and casting itself on him.

He trembled as he hurriedly took two steps back, his heartbeat racing erratically.

Not daring to observe it any further, Klein composed himself and cast his gaze forward as he steadily walked forward and left the area.

After passing through a few sealed areas, his spiritual perception was triggered. He felt that something on the right was summoning him. Furthermore, it was producing the beating sounds of an expanding and contracting heart!

Indeed, the Antigonus family's notebook has been waiting for me all this time… Klein silently confirmed his earlier theory, and following the illusory summoning, he changed direction and approached it.

In just two or three minutes, he saw a room with an ajar stone door. It was dark inside without any source of light.

With the lantern's illumination, an empty bookshelf formed from white bone appeared in Klein's eyes. On it was an ancient notebook in a black hardcover.

It was the Antigonus family's notebook!

“Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…” Illusory voices drilled into Klein's ears as he confirmed his target!

Things happened very smoothly, but Klein didn't dare to be careless or rash. He carefully entered the room as he slowly approached, afraid that the mechanism that sealed the Antigonus family's notebook would inflict harm to him.

Hence, when he closed in, a hand in a dark red sleeve suddenly reached out from his abdomen!

It was Wraith Senor's hand.

One of the principles of a Marionettist: Use as a marionette as much as possible in situations that a marionette could be used. If anything were to happen, the marionette would bear the brunt!

At this moment, there was a slam from the direction of the door as though someone had walked in.

Klein's pupils dilated as he lunged for the bone shelf without any thought, making the marionette's hand by his abdomen grab the Antigonus family's notebook. At the same time, his right hand reached into his clothes and opened the iron cigar case and wore Creeping Hunger. He was attempting to teleport directly outside before the core seal reacted!

During this process, a scene of the door naturally appeared in his mind.

A figure wearing a hooded classical robe was standing there. The figure had a pretty face that wore a lifeless expression. The deep black eyes lacked any spirituality!

That high-ranking member of the Church that directly wiped Mr. A out of existence and ended the Great Smog of Backlund? Why would she be hiding underground? That's not logical! Just as a sense of horror emerged in Klein's heart, he instinctively lowered his head to look at his body.

His body was rapidly being wiped away like an eraser erasing a pencil drawing. Before he could touch the Antigonus family's notebook, he had completely vanished.

Chapter 832 - Town

◆

Before his brain “short-circuited,” Klein only had time for two thoughts:

How powerful. There’s no way to resist…

I wonder if I can be revived from such a death…

As his thoughts resonated, Klein’s vision turned pitch-black. He lost all his senses as he entered a dreamless slumber.

After an unknown period of time, the silent darkness suddenly stirred. He vaguely felt a sense of grogginess as he felt a cold wind blow at him.

As his thoughts thawed bit by bit, Klein slowly opened his eyes and saw fog everywhere above him. The crimson moon was hidden in it, occasionally showing itself.

Did I just resurrect again? Or have I entered the Underworld? Even if it’s the latter, that’s not too problematic. I might even be able to get the skeleton messenger to contact Mr. Azik. However, I’ll have to become an undead creature or spirit world creature… Klein’s mind was still a little heavy, as though someone had injected glue into his brain, preventing him from expanding on his thoughts.

Slowly, he sensed his body and heard his heart beating.

His mind quickly turned lucid as he believed that the possibility of him resurrecting was higher. Perhaps, he had been thrown out into the wilderness.

Pa!

Klein's joints produced a crack as he jumped to his feet. Without checking his physical condition, he first observed his surroundings and confirmed the type of environment he was in.

The first thing he saw was a fog that permeated the area and the dark and stillness of the night. And closeby was a tiny town.

The most striking building in the town was an extremely ancient spired cathedral. It was completely black in color. There wasn't a bell tower, and at the top of it were pitch-black ravens spiraling around it.

Around the cathedral were many buildings. They were normal two-story residences and simple wooden huts. There were bread shops with hanging signboards and grayish-white mills using water wheels for power. However, there wasn't a single pedestrian. They seemed to be asleep in the quietness of the night.

As a Seer, Klein instantly found the town very familiar, as though he had seen it somewhere in the past!

After a brief recall, he remembered what it represented.

This was the source of danger of the night time in the ruins of the battle of gods!

After entering the easternmost region of the Sonia Sea, if one didn't sleep and enter a dream world when night fell, it would be discovered that the person would have gone missing once it was daytime. Klein had once been jolted awake in a dream with the Saint of Darkness, and he saw in the distance a place which was enshrouded in the tranquility of the night. There was a mysterious and bizarre foggy town!

He even suspected that all the living beings that vanished at night in the ruins had entered the town.

Now, he was there himself. He was less than a hundred meters from the foggy town!

It’s related to the night… The target vanishes like it was erased… The power of that high-ranking member of the Church doesn’t directly kill her enemies, and she instead sends them here? Do the living beings that vanish at night in the ruins also encounter such situations? But it’s said that there’s no way to obtain their whereabouts via divination. The only interpretation they can conclude is that they might still be alive… of course, it’s also possible that I can be resurrected; thus, appearing here… Amidst his thoughts, Klein retracted his gaze and used his ability as a Clown to observe his physical condition.

He had already changed back into Klein Moretti, but he was still wearing the Keeper’s black clergyman robe. He didn’t have any signs of an injury on him.

Filled with experience, Klein quickly calmed down. His right hand reached into his pocket and opened the iron cigar case. He took out the folded human-skinned glove and wore it on his left hand.

After confirming that Creeping Hunger could still be used, Klein lifted Azik’s copper whistle and blew into it.

However, the skeleton messenger didn’t appear in the Spirit Vision he quickly activated.

Klein wasn’t too surprised with such an outcome. Instead, he found it normal. After all, the people who had vanished on the eastern front of the Sonia Sea had yet to be found. After all, over the years, there was likely no lack of Beyonders here who could summon messengers, such as the members of the Numinous Episcopate.

This place is directly isolated from the spirit world? From the looks of it, Traveling can’t be used… As expected of a high-ranking member the Church sent to deal with the Great Smog of Backlund. She “sends” her targets here as a form of eternal exile or imprisonment. It’s impossible to use ordinary or simple means to contact the outside world. To escape from this place, even saints will find it difficult… Klein didn't lose himself to anxiety as he still felt confident.

He placed Azik's copper whistle back into the iron cigar case and prepared to take four steps counterclockwise.

He wanted to head above the gray fog to escape the "imprisonment" of the fog town!

"The Immortal Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings…

"The Sky Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings…

"The Exalted Thearch of Heaven and Earth for Blessings…

"The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings…"

With one sentence per step, Klein rapidly completed the ritual.

However, he didn't hear the familiar, frenzied ravings. Nor did he see the endless emanating grayish-white fog.

This… Klein's pupils constricted as he fell into a momentarily daze.

This place was isolated from the mysterious space above the gray fog!

This made his greatest trump card unusable!

Klein had relied on the area above the gray fog to escape danger many times in the past. But this time, this solution was ineffective.

This was the first time he was encountering such a situation.

Man, it feels as though my cheat has been blocked… Klein lampooned to relax his tense emotions.

Based on his knowledge of mysticism, he suspected that the foggy town was likely related to a true deity because this was the only explanation as to why he couldn't head above the gray fog.

This place has close ties to the night. I was “sent” here after encountering a high-ranking member… Could it be a “prison” that the Goddess created herself? But, “She” is the Mother of Concealment. Perhaps she can directly make people or items enter a “concealed” state, making people in the real world never able to find them again… Klein seriously contemplated and decisively decided to explore the foggy town. This was because the method to leave this place was most likely to be there.

At this point, he was no longer worried about not being able to convene the Tarot Club.

Of course, there was no need for him to worry about it for now. He had canceled the coming Tarot Gathering ahead of time because the operation of stealing the Antigonus family’s notebook was fraught with danger and variables. Klein suspected that he might end up dead and be unable able to resurrect in time. Therefore, he used a reasonable excuse to get everyone to make additional preparations for a week.

After making up his mind, Klein immediately got the Wraith inside him to float beside him.

The marionette’s condition was already in a terrible state. The dead and cold aura was something substantial, making his control of the Spirit Body Threads somewhat rough.

Thankfully, I can still use him for a few more days… Also, Mr. A was erased by that high-ranking Church member. He might be living nearby. I have to be careful about this person who’s equivalent to a lunatic… Klein transformed into Gehrman Sparrow as he made Senor walk ahead and enter the foggy town.

Following the Marionettist principle he had concluded, he stood in the back with a distance of at least 110 meters between them.

Over time, his digestion had increased his control over his marionette to 120 meters. There was also a reduction in the time needed to gain initial control of Spirit Body Threads and completely change someone into a marionette. Faced with an enemy whose Spirit Body was equally strong, the former took 16 seconds, and the latter took four minutes.

In the silent foggy world, Senor, in his dark red coat and old triangular hat, didn't take long to enter the bizarre and mysterious town.

Many of the building doors were still open as though they were welcoming guests from afar. With his marionette's vision, Klein saw that there was a half-chewed loaf of white bread on the table. There were wine glasses for red wine and messy silver cutlery…

It looked like someone had been enjoying dinner, but there was no one present. The owners of these different houses seemed to have suddenly vanished into thin air.

Vanished… This term suddenly surfaced in Klein's mind as he hurriedly made Senor cast his gaze towards the grayish-white mill.

Inside the mill, the wind-powered mill was rotating silently, but other than the floor that was scattered with flour, no flour came out again.

This scene feels familiar. I seem to have heard of it before… Klein frowned bit by bit. As he relied on his marionette, he continued surveying his environment while carefully recalling the similar situation.

Just as he was considering using dream divination to question his spirituality, he found the corresponding answer.

A similar scene had appeared in the ancient ruins that appeared at the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range!

Based on the literature, the buildings there had every arrangement and decoration well-preserved. Even the wall murals didn't have any signs of damage. The table was arranged with cutlery, and there were dried stains of rot on the dining plates… In some rooms, there were half-filled bottles of alcohol that had almost turned into plain water…

The discoverer mentioned that when he first discovered the remains, he even had the belief that the people residing there had just vanished all of a sudden!

There's some relation between this foggy town and the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range? No way, after trying to avoid it, I ended up coming to it? Klein's facial features twitched involuntarily. For a moment, he couldn't believe what was on his mind.

Of course, the scene was just similar and wasn't enough to make him come up with such a conclusion.

After taking a deep breath and slowly exhaling, Klein forced himself to calm down. He controlled Wraith Senor and made him venture deeper into the foggy town.

At that moment, he heard light footsteps.

Klein's heart tensed up as he hurriedly hid inside the mill and made his marionette stop.

In just a few seconds, Wraith Senor saw a woman walk out from a nearby alley.

She wore a pure white robe, and her hair was pulled back, revealing her long, white neck. She looked extremely beautiful.

Chapter 833 - Things to Take Note Of

◆

Inside the dark, foggy town, the woman who walked out of the alley seemed to be out of place with her surroundings. She was pure, stately, and untainted. She was so gorgeous that it lit up the eyes of anyone whose gaze landed on her.

As for her pure, simple robe and her loosely pulled back hair, they added to her bearing and languidness.

That gorgeous woman also noticed Senor. Her expression froze for a moment before she smiled. using a sweet voice, she said, “Senor…

“When did you become a marionette? If not for the powers of Evernight contaminating you this badly, I wouldn’t have recognized you.”

Although she looked like she was talking to Senor, she was actually conversing with the controller through the marionette.

Sigh, this kind of dead and cold aura can’t be hidden at all. I can’t fool Beyonders of higher Sequences… I was still hoping that I could hide somewhere inconspicuous and use Admiral of Blood Senor to make contact with her so as to maximize my own safety… This place screens away the power of the gray fog, so if I were to die, I likely won’t be able to resurrect… Klein hid inside the grayish-white mill and made his marionette speak hoarsely, “If you could leave, you’d easily find out that I’ve been serving my master more than a month ago.”

He used Admiral of Blood’s tone and experiences to answer as though he was still alive.

This was the acting principle of a Marionettist, to let each marionette have their unique identity and setting!

Meanwhile, Klein also buried a keyword "leave," in preparation to broach the topic of leaving.

In this bizarre and mysterious town, he didn't have thoughts of instantly killing any Demoness that he saw. Ignoring the question of there being any good Demonesses and whether he was equipped with the strength to do so, just the fact that they were trapped in here had made it imperative that he communicated with her for intelligence to seek a way to get out. This was enough to make him choose peaceful coexistence for the time being.

The woman in a simple white robe chuckled and said, "Not forgetting to constantly act. From the looks of it, you will quickly digest the Marionettist potion.

"A member of the Secret Order?"

She's very familiar with the Seer pathway… Hmm, the Demoness Sect was a secret organization that was active in the Fourth Epoch. Even if they didn't have close ties with the Zaratul or Antigonus families, they should be quite familiar with each other. It's very normal to understand the Seer pathway. Of course, the premise to that is that this lady is a Demoness… Klein's heart stirred as he deliberately asked, "Aren't there other possibilities?"

He tried to sound her out to see if other organizations might wield control over the Seer pathway.

The beautiful and pure lady walked forward and leaned towards Admiral of Blood Senor as she said with a smile, "It doesn't matter which organization you belong to. We have been exiled here, and it's practically eternal imprisonment. The past no longer matters; what matters is the future—whether we can cooperate to find a way of leaving."

I failed to sound her out… Klein made the Wraith reply, "That's exactly what I was thinking.

"How may I address you?"

As the lady approached Senor, Klein caught a whiff of a refreshing fragrance with his marionette's sense of smell. Due to her words, he suddenly had a baffling thought to help each other in such a perilous situation while abandoning all morals, to help warm up each other's souls with their bodies.

She's like a Demoness… Hmm, her voice sounds more familiar the more I listen to her. But why can't I put my thumb on it. What a pity, there's no way to use dream divination in such a situation. She will be able to seize the opportunity while I'm unconscious, and it's hard to predict what will happen… Klein frowned slightly.

This beautiful woman with a tinge of languidness raised her hand to stroke her hair, accentuating her petite ear.

"Panatiya.

"What about you?"

Klein had originally planned on randomly choosing a disguise, such as the Aurora Order's Mr. X or Death Announcer's second mate, Kircheis. After all, he could use Creeping Hunger to simulate their powers, but he ultimately gave up the disguise and directly said, "Gehrman Sparrow."

He didn't know when this suspected Demoness had entered the foggy town, so he was unable to eliminate the possibility that she knew about Admiral of Blood's disappearance.

Panatiya nodded and asked, "How did you get in?"

Klein didn't keep the truth from her as he said with the marionette's mouth, "I encountered an unknown lady.

"She wore a hood, and her eyes were like the night, but it lacked any spirituality."

Panatiya fell silent for two seconds before saying, "So it's her. Heh…"

She didn't continue in detail as she said with a smile, "What did you actually do? You actually managed to get the Church of Evernight to send 'Her' to deal with you?"

Panatiya had changed the pronoun she used.

"Her"? That lady is an angel? An ascetic from the Church? Panatiya seems to know much about "Her"… Klein's thoughts whirred as he said vaguely, "I infiltrated Saint Samuel Cathedral and attempted to steal a Sealed Artifact, but in the end…"

He didn't go into the details, because he had no idea how he encountered the lady.

Klein believed that as an angel, it was impossible for the lady to keep living behind Saint Samuel Cathedral's Chanis Gate. There was nothing in there that required an important figure like "Her" to keep watch on the entire time!

"Is that so… So 'She' is indeed in the basement of Samuel Cathedral." Panatiya seemed to confirm something.

In secret organizations, the word "saint" is not used when talking about Saint Samuel Cathedral… I should take note of this detail in the future… Klein ruminated over her choice of words.

Panatiya didn't continue on the topic as she said with a smile, "Alright, let's not bother with the past. Just as I said, what's important is the future and how we can escape."

Klein used this opportunity to make Senor ask, "What do you know about this place?"

Panatiya glanced at the spired cathedral in the middle of the town and said, "This place isn't the real or spirit world, nor is it the astral world. It's in some kind of secret, hidden state.

"I've explored most of this area, including the area outside the town. I didn't manage to find any clues. All that's left is that cathedral. Perhaps all the secrets are hidden inside.

"Why don't you explore the cathedral?" Klein asked with his marionette's mouth.

Panatiya yanked her pure white robe. On it were signs of wear and tear.

"My intuition tells me that there's extreme danger inside."

Upon saying that, she switched topics.

"And now, there's a solution. Your marionette can help us scout. Even if it's lost, it wouldn't deal you any harm.

"Don't worry. As long as we gain an understanding of the situation inside, I'll find a chance to give you a better marionette. After all, it doesn't look like it can last long."

There's nothing unreasonable about that, but I don't trust you. After all, you are most likely a Demoness… Klein didn't agree or object to it as he took the opportunity to get Senor to ask, "Are there any things to take note of while in here?"

Panatiya pursed her lips and said, "Due to various reasons, a sizable number of people end up here, but they have all vanished."

All vanished? Klein's heart palpitated as he asked, "What happened?"

Panatiya sighed and said, "There are things I'm not sure about. Some entered those buildings and ate some of the food inside. Then, they vanished—instantly.

"And this time, the results of divination indicate that they've lost their lives and are undergoing eternal sleep.”

There will be erasure and vanishing events in this foggy town? Furthermore, they will no longer exist… Klein was horrified before he thought of another matter. He nearly blurted it out.

Won’t you feel hungry?

Afraid that it would result in an anomaly, he forcefully held his tongue and made Senor ask her indirectly, “How long have you been in here?”

As though sighing and laughing, Panatiya said, “Perhaps it’s been half a year.

“I’ve witnessed many people cannibalize others for sustenance. Thankfully, I don’t need much and can live very long with a bit of food. And on a human’s body, there is food that won’t damage the body too significantly.”

As she spoke, she raised her hand and pointed at the crimson moon hanging behind the fog.

“Another thing to take note of is that once the crimson moon turns clear, there will be changes here. It will become extremely dangerous.

“I’ve been severely injured as a result.”

As she said that, she turned to point at a tear in her pure white robe.

Klein subconsciously made Senor cast his gaze over, and he saw that at her collarbone underneath the tear, there was a deep wound that exposed her bone amidst fair, supple skin.

At this moment, the skin transformed, producing dense patterns of mystery and colors of darkness and evil!

Klein’s mind seemed to explode as ravings and cries resounded in it.

Meanwhile, his breathing became difficult as his body rapidly weakened. He couldn't help but collapse backward as he broke into a coughing fit.

Then, he saw the pure white robe and the two long female legs—Panatiya.

This lady had already entered the grayish-white mill, and as she watched the struggling Gehrman Sparrow, she cracked the corners of her lips and revealed blood-colored tendrils in the gaps between her neat, white teeth. She softly said, "Got you…"

Chapter 834 - Good Luck

◆

“Got you…”

Invisible threads emanated over as Panatiya said that. They quickly wrapped around Gehrman Sparrow as though she was binding him into a cocoon.

At this moment, the figure in a black clergyman robe suddenly turned thin, transforming into a paper figurine covered in metal rust.

Klein’s figure appeared outside the grayish-white mill as he ran frantically towards the depths of the town.

He was a person who had seen the Eternal Blazing Sun’s true body and lived. He had a certain level of resistance towards a Spirit Body impact and the inclination of a loss of control brought about by a Mythical Creature form; furthermore, Panatiya wasn’t a complete Mythical Creature. Therefore, even without the gray fog’s help, Klein was able to recover from the racking headache. As he suppressed his body’s mutation, he sensed that he had been inflicted with ailments. While collapsing, he used his violent coughing as a cover for him to use Paper Figurine Substitutes!

Paper figurines weren’t mystical items, nor did they have any spirituality. Hence, Klein wasn’t afraid that it would trigger a reaction from the core seal behind Chanis Gate. Hence, he had brought quite a number with him.

As Klein ran forward, his rubbed his right thumb and middle finger and lit up the flour piled inside the mill!

Boom!

The flour burst into flames as the mill was sent flying. The windmill outside collapsed to the ground as Panatiya's figure crumbled bit by bit in the intense blast and scarlet flames as though she was a mirror.

Almost at the same moment, her white-robed figure appeared behind Klein. Her loose, pulled back hair instantly flared up and wildly extended in Klein's direction.

Pa!

As Klein snapped his fingers to ignite a tree leaf beside him, he controlled Senor to use Mirror Leap to appear in a window on a two-storied residence beside Panatiya. Then, he attempted to make the terrifying woman's eyes reflect Senor's figure to complete the Wraith possession.

Scarlet flames suddenly leaped up and enveloped Klein's body, making him vanish from where he was as he appeared in a flame tens of meters away. As for Panatiya's gemlike eyes, they seemed to hide mirrors that reflected figures wearing an old triangular hat and dark red coat. They overlapped one another and descended into chaos.

Klein didn't hesitate to let Senor leave the window, transforming into a Werewolf state to charge the Demoness.

Yes, Klein had already determined that Panatiya was a Demoness, and she was a Demoness at the demigod level!

The strands of black hair, as well as the invisible transparent threads, flared up, forming a ludicrous spiderweb that enveloped Senor whose body was covered with thick, short hair.

However, just as they made contact, Admiral of Blood's figure instantly phased away, causing the black hair and illusory Demoness threads to pass through it. Without being able to touch him, it was obviously unable to bind him.

He had taken his Wraith form!

“Humph! Panatiya’s expression didn’t change at all. All she did was produce a harrumph.

Suddenly, the thick hair strands and illusory threads that made contact with Senor burst into dark and silent black flames. They used spirituality as fuel, turning the Wraith into a torch!

Pa! Pa! Pa! Senor turned back into a Werewolf from the burning as his limbs fell to the ground from the flame injuries.

With that, a Sequence 5 Wraith perished completely.

And at this moment, Klein had repeatedly snapped his fingers, jumping into different columns of fire and using his marionette’s sacrifice to escape deeper into the town.

With a few flashes, he had pulled open a gap of hundreds of meters from Panatiya.

Suddenly, Klein felt his forehead burning hot. His lungs began to heave as he panted loudly and emitted heated air.

As he had been hit by the impact of seeing an incomplete Mythical Creature’s form, he had been a little too slow at using Paper Figurine Substitutes. He had failed to swap out his ailment, and he had suffered some of the damage. Klein had originally imagined that he just needed to persist until he escaped Panatiya’s range of influence, but to his surprise, his condition was worsening faster than he expected!

Furthermore, despite having opened up a gap of hundreds of meters, he didn’t escape the signs of being infected.

Thud! Just as he was about to continue using Flaming Jump, Klein’s knees buckled as he collapsed to the ground without successfully snapping his fingers.

Immediately, he heard Panatiya's pleasant laughter in his ears.

"Even if you were to escape to the other side of town, there's no way to escape my ailments.

"You ought to know that back in Backlund, the entirety of East Borough was immersed in the plague fog I created. Apart from the most distant Empress Borough and West Borough, all the other areas were significantly affected as well."

This… She's that Lady Despair who cooperated with Mr. A… She's one of the true murderers behind the Great Smog of Backlund… Klein felt his mind go adrift as he found himself become very sick while reeling in pain and despair. Although it still wasn't lethal, the irresistible coughs prevented him from using most of his Beyonder powers.

Panatiya walked over as her beautiful eyes were stained with an indescribable color of bloodthirst. It was like a tramp finally seeing a sizzling steak after starving for days.

In her hands were what was left of Senor's torso and two broken limbs.

This was apparently meant to be her stockpile of food.

"Your finger snap sounded good. I believe the taste of those two fingers should be pretty good." Panatiya looked at Gehrman Sparrow as he coughed in the distance, speaking with the tone of a raving lunatic.

Just as she finished her sentence, she raised her hand and stuffed Senor's index finger into her mouth. She bit down on each segment, producing crushing sounds.

Klein watched this scene with a blurred vision. In his grogginess, he felt his fingers also suffering such excruciating pain.

At this moment, he knew that Lady Despair Panatiya was already partially mad because she had eaten too much flesh from other Beyonders.

Although with her knowledge of mysticism, she would have definitely waited for the Beyonder characteristics to seep out before partaking in her meal, the deceased had been trapped in here without any food, making them each other's targets. It was inevitable that they slowly lost their minds as they approached insanity. How could she remain fine eating such meat?

Just as Klein was reeling in despair and wondering what method he could use to save himself, he saw the crimson moonlight suddenly turn bright.

He saw Panatiya's face colored with a look of horror. Without hesitation, she turned around and charged into a nearby building and slammed the door.

As Klein felt his illness alleviate significantly, he hurriedly looked up into the sky. He saw that the crimson moonlight was already penetrating the fog, appearing clear as it illuminated the town.

His heart stirred as he recalled what Panatiya had previously said. He immediately struggled and hobbled into another building beside him without forgetting to lock the door.

"Once the crimson moon turns clear, there will be changes here. It will become extremely dangerous."

Chapter 835 - The Figures Coming and Going

◆ ◆ ◆

After rushing into the building and closing the door, Klein realized that the curtains behind the windows were constantly in a drawn state. Only some faint crimson moonlight seeped in, lighting up the room slightly.

He didn’t bother making any additional observations as he found a wooden chair and sat down. He attempted to enter Cogitation to calm his inclinations towards mutating.

Since he had witnessed a saint-leveled Beyonder’s incomplete Mythical Creature form, how could he survive it that easily? This wasn’t the mysterious space above the gray fog that came with recovery effects!

As Klein was able to withstand mental blows relatively well, he was able to straighten his thoughts out early and prevent himself from losing control; thus, allowing him to successfully escape. However, this didn’t mean that the problem had been resolved.

He sat there, relying on Cogitation and his control over his emotions to resist the waves of insane thoughts. During this process, he heard his cheekbones produce crunching sounds. He saw his black hair turn long and thick in an uncontrollable manner as his chest bulged through his clothes while his skin produced granules in the form of meat tendrils.

After nearly thirty seconds, Klein finally exhaled and relaxed significantly.

He had completely recovered from the effects that Panatiya's incomplete Mythical Creature form brought. He even gained some new knowledge—the level she was at had "despair" at its core, making her good at creating and spreading plagues.

The insanity and mutation from witnessing a Mythical Creature not only produce the symptoms of losing control of one's pathway, but it also comes with the traits of the other party's Sequence… Back then, I was nearly baked by the Eternal Blazing Sun, and this time, I nearly became a Demoness… Klein looked down at himself, restoring his skin, chest, and hair to normal.

If he wasn't a Faceless, aside from letting those meat tendrils sink into his body, he would have to rely on external forces to resolve the problem.

Without the time to poignantly sigh or analyze the situation, Klein slowly stood up and cast his gaze towards the tightly-drawn, dark-colored curtains as he attempted to figure out his current situation.

His expression suddenly changed because he heard rowdy murmurs outside the street!

At that instant, he felt that, apart from him and Lady Despair Panatiya, the uninhabited town suddenly had many residents. They were loitering across the streets and alleys, greeting one another as they discussed whether to only buy bread or be extravagant and buy a pound of beef.

The foggy town suddenly seemed to come to life!

However, none of the figures entered the buildings that lined the streets. They seemed to keep coming and going across the street, producing voices that one would find difficult to believe to be conversations, as they sounded more like the deep growling of savage beasts.

Klein couldn't imagine the scene outside. All he knew was that even a demigod-leveled Demoness had to hide from the danger.

He retracted his gaze and thought deeply for a few seconds, silently muttering, I can't head out…

But I can't stay in here either…

Who knows when that crimson moon will be covered by fog again, allowing Panatiya to regain her freedom of movement. When the time comes, with us being so close, there's no way for me to escape!

But, how do I move without heading out?

In his silence, Klein slowly turned his body and faced the pitch-black spired cathedral.

According to Lady Despair Panatiya, that cathedral was the only place she didn't dare explore. It was as though entering the cathedral was the only way to escape her "hunt."

Of course, a Demoness like Panatiya wasn't necessarily speaking the truth, but Klein believed that she wasn't likely to lie regarding such matters. After all, to her, he was her prey, her delicacy.

Besides, Panatiya back then was using her speech and charm to entice him bit by bit, designing a trap for him so as to capture her prey. With a demigod's confidence, it was unlikely she would reveal information as a bluff. In addition, at such times, speaking the truth was the safest and most reassuring option. There was no need to worry about the prey escaping ahead of time due to the detection of a lie.

Unless her half-mad state causes her to habitually lie; otherwise, it shouldn't be a problem… Klein, who was out of options, quickly made up his mind.

He lowered his left hand and made Creeping Hunger turn transparent.

Although he knew that Traveling was useless, he still held out hope because this was the point when the crimson moon was at its clearest. There was no obstruction, and it was round like a silver plate. During such times, Mr. Door could transmit "His" shouts into the ears of "His" descendants from where "He" was lost. Traveling was enhanced, and anomalies happened, so it wasn't something impossible.

Klein's figure rapidly phased away, but seconds later, his body outline appeared again where he stood.

I can't enter the spirit world, to the point of not even sensing it… As a Beyonder power, Traveling only has a third of its uses. It can barely be used as invisibility… Klein muttered silently as he concluded his experiences and lessons. However, he was puzzled about one point. Traveling's phasing away and turning transparent is due to the unique traits of the spirit world, so why would it be effective?

Klein pondered for about ten seconds before he came to a rough idea.

Every person must be connected to the spirit world because one's Astral Projection is located there. It can obtain all kinds of abstract information, which is the reason why revelations can be obtained from divination.

Therefore, when we are converted into a hidden and secret state, our connection with the spirit world becomes part of it?

This can explain why I can still use the unique traits of the spirit world, but am unable to enter it. This is because the former had a portion of it hidden away! Hmm, I didn't have the time to consider it before and had attempted Flaming Jump. I was met with success, and this also requires the unique traits of the spirit world.

After confirming this point, Klein raised his right hand and snapped his fingers, attempting to ignite a half-melted candle in the neighboring building.

He wanted to use Flaming Jump to pass through the neighboring buildings and slowly approach the spired cathedral. Once the crimson moon was hidden by the fog, he would reassess the situation to decide if he would take the risk and hide inside.

A scarlet flame was set ablaze in the neighboring building as it slowly expanded and illuminated the surroundings.

At that moment, the streets outside suddenly turned abnormally silent.

All of the beast-like growls disappeared!

The figures that loitered on the streets seemed to turn to face the building, using their gazes in an attempt to penetrate the windows!

Klein instantly broke out into a cold sweat. He didn't dare to "leap" over as he instinctively snapped his fingers and extinguished the flame.

After a brief silence, the rowdy murmurings sounded again. The indistinct figures continued walking here and there.

Only then did Klein heave a sigh of relief. He raised his hand to wipe the cold sweat from his forehead.

He discovered that he had unknowingly made several mistakes after entering the foggy town. In such a dangerous and bizarre environment, he hadn't divined if he should light the candle in the neighboring building!

My spiritual intuition should have warned me, but it didn't… From the looks of it, after the gray fog was screened away, my spiritual intuition and sense for danger are no longer enhanced. Now, I'm just a little stronger than a Marionettist of the same level. I'm far from being crazy powerful… It's because of this that I was incited by Panatiya's Instigator powers to look at her wound. I didn't receive any premonition for danger and subconsciously believed that it wouldn't be a problem with a marionette in between us… Klein temporarily didn't have time to have an after-action review of his previous battle. He placed his attention back onto approaching the cathedral without heading out.

He began scrutinizing himself and his mystical items' Beyonder powers. Suddenly, his eyes lit up as he found a solution.

This solution stemmed from a Traveler's Door Opening which he thought was useless!

This Beyonder power was completely overshadowed by Teleportation under normal circumstances, but in this mysterious and bizarre foggy town, just its usage of the unique traits of the spirit world became more useful!

Klein wasn't in a rush to take action as he took out the gold coin which Senor used to reside in. Using divination to question his spirituality, he obtained the answer that he should "penetrate" the wall.

And without any way to obtain a revelation from the spirit world, he could only choose to trust himself. He then walked to the wall that was shared with the neighboring building and pressed his hands on it.

Silently, Klein passed through the stone wall and entered the next building.

He followed the terrace houses until he arrived at the final one. According to his initial impressions of the town, he was already very close to the spired cathedral. He didn't need more than two Flaming Jumps to reach it.

At that moment, the crimson moonlight that penetrated the dark-colored curtains didn't weaken. He could vaguely see figures coming and going like they were leading a normal life.

Without being capable of moving further away, all Klein could do was sit down on a wooden chair that was a distance away from the windows. It was almost completely dark here with deep, dark shadows.

Only at this point did he had the time to recall the details of his encounter with Demoness Panatiya.

She's actually the murderer that caused the Great Smog of Backlund. Tens of thousands of people died because of her. Even more people suffered the pain of losing their loved ones.

Old Kohler who worked hard to live, Ma'am Liz who worked hard to raise her two daughters… Klein closed his eyes as he lifted his head and took deep breaths.

He forced himself to extricate himself from the anger and hatred that suddenly surged in him as he calmly observed the turn of events.

Unfortunately, I didn't let Senor wear that Flower of Blood; otherwise, he should still be able to put up a struggle. However, there wasn't a choice. While possessing me, wearing a ring corresponding to a Rose Bishop while entering Chanis Gate would be equivalent to blasting myself apart…

Now, the only mystical item I can use is Creeping Hunger. There's Zombie, Baron of Corruption, Desire Apostle, and Traveler inside…

Yes, I should try to see if I can contact the gray fog by praying while the crimson moon is clear…

It doesn't work…

I can now confirm that even with a marionette between us, I'll still be affected by a Demoness's charm and incitement…

Since Panatiya can release a plague on a large scale, why didn't she attack me in secret in such a concealed manner? Instead, she waited until I nearly lost control from witnessing her incomplete Mythical Creature form and exposed my location before spreading the ailments?

Hmm, she can definitely do it. The Great Smog of Backlund is the best proof… There are two explanations. First, it's because I was personally "sent" here by the angel. This made her place a great deal of attention on me, worried that spreading the plague in advance would be detected by my spirituality. Second, she's afraid of something, so she doesn't dare to blanket the area with her plague… If it's the latter, there are other dangers here…

As Klein thought over the matter, he felt his spiritual perception trigger as a chill ran down his back.

Almost at the same time, he saw that a deep shadow that blanketed him and the surroundings suddenly shrank, drilling towards his nostrils, mouth, and ears!

Chapter 836 - "Tossing Food"

◆

At that moment, the shadow seemed to turn corporeal. It was ice-cold and moist, and it instantly bound Klein within it like he was a mosquito in amber.

Klein's figure was squashed and compressed as he regressed into a piece of paper, rapidly turning into mush.

Paper Figurine Substitutes!

Having sensed the danger ahead of time, he had made timely use of Paper Figurine Substitutes!

His black-robed figure appeared on the other end of the dining table as he opened his mouth, producing a bang sound.

At this moment, Klein's mind suddenly turned adrift as he found his surroundings blurry and unclear.

He instantly understood what was happening. He had been forcefully pulled into a dream!

And with this, he determined one point—his abnormal ability of maintaining his lucidity and rationality in dreams had already solidified and become one with him. There was no need to use the gray fog to do so!

After a brief struggle, Klein suddenly snapped awake and saw the shadows in the building slowly surging at him like a tidal wave.

Bang!

He opened his mouth and produced an extremely mighty Air Bullet.

This bullet struck the shadow, producing a huge swath of white.

The shadows around the whiteness immediately receded and filled it to the brim, returning everything to normal once again. Klein took this opportunity to roll to the side and turned his left glove pale with a tinge of dark green.

With a clap, the spot he stood at was smashed by a lump of flesh and blood that flew out from the shadow, covering the dark red carpet that was covered with strange mold.

In an unobvious manner, Klein had a feeling that he was being weakened. Without any time to think deeper into the matter, he immediately made his feet produce an icy layer that emanated cold air.

White frost crept up and rapidly froze the shadow. Underneath the crystalline frost was a squirming and warping pitch-blackness, like oil that had its own life.

Zombie's Ice Stun!

Klein did another flip and changed his position while making his glove produce black granules that were profound and dark.

Right on the heels of that, he straightened his body, and facing the shadow beneath the layer of ice, he said a word filled with foulness, a word that came from the Devil language:

Slow!

Suddenly, Klein saw the shadow's squirming slow down. Clearly, it was in an extremely sluggish state; however, his thoughts had also turned sluggish, preventing him from dealing any follow up attacks.

His Language of Foulness had been distorted, and although it was clearly directed at the shadow, it had been distorted to target the entire living room; hence, affecting himself.

In just seconds, Klein extricated himself from the slowed state, and without any thought, he lunged for the dining table, picking up a plate with half a piece of steak and throwing it at the shadow.

During this process, his left glove remained dark black, but it had a sinister and noble vibe.

Bribe!

He had used the steak to Bribe the enemy, weakening the other party's offensive, defensive, and controlling abilities!

At this moment, the figure suddenly shrank back into the corner of the wall, allowing the dining plate to smash and shatter into the melting ice.

Then, the figure surged upwards, taking the form of a pitch-black figure with a hooded robe.

In the palm of the figure, a transparent and blurry book appeared in front of him. It was accompanied by a distant and indistinct chant: "I came, I saw, I record."

Just as the chanting sounded, the book rapidly flipped through the pages and produced a burning-white spear.

Mr. A? Has he gone completely mad? He dares to use fire-related Beyonder powers in such an environment? Klein's heart tightened as his thoughts raced. He hurriedly rushed towards his opponent and held his left hand behind him.

Creeping Hunger was quickly tainted with the dark colors of corruption before condensing a ridiculous great sword that seemed to be combined from scarlet magma and blue-hot flames.

Thump!

Klein’s footsteps were heavy as he bent his back, pulling his shoulder back as he forcefully delivered a strike with his left arm.

The muscles on his arm bulged as he swung the Sword of Lava!

Pfft! The resplendent great sword cleaved down on the fiery spear, sending sparks of white, blue, and red scattering in every direction as they ignited the chairs and curtains.

The murmurs outside the street had long vanished. All the indistinct figures had turned over and there was extreme silence.

After shattering the fiery spear with a cleave, Klein bent his knee and genuflected, snapping his fingers with his right hand.

Pa!

The flames in the entire room were extinguished.

Klein didn’t move any further. He had a nagging feeling that a dense array of gazes were trying to see through the curtains to seek out any abnormalities.

The hooded man formed of shadows didn’t take any action as well. Although he was acting crazy just moments ago, he seemed to have sensed the inexplicable horror that was slowly approaching.

In the dark room with tiny hints of crimson moonlight, Klein was genuflecting while the other was standing close to the wall, it was as though the two of them had turned into stone statues.

In the unbearable silence, time passed by abnormally slowly. All Klein did was count ten seconds, and it felt like an hour had passed.

Finally, the beast-like growls sounded once again in a staccato, disjointed manner, and the indistinct figures outside began walking again, returning back to the streets.

Almost at the same time, Klein obtained initial control of his target's Spirit Body Threads. The hooded man's actions of pouncing forward instantly turned sluggish!

Without any hesitation, Klein bent his body and circled the area, preparing to take advantage of his opponent's delay to disrupt any of his subsequent counterattacks and slowly turn him into a marionette.

At this moment, his nose suddenly felt an itch as he couldn't help but open his mouth.

Achoo!

Klein sneezed and lost his control over the Spirit Body Threads. Furthermore, his throat began to hurt as mucus began to take form.

He had caught a cold!

He actually caught a cold in the intense battle!

After suspecting that his opponent was Mr. A, Klein had actually been wary against a Demoness's ailment based on his past experience when fighting Mr. A. He had been placed at a significant disadvantage back then, but in a battle that didn't give him time to think, he had made a mistake. His constitution had long weakened due to the plague from the actual Demoness, Panatiya. He had no way to wait until the marionette conversion completed. He didn't even have a chance of obtaining a deeper level of initial control and use Air Bullets to deal a lethal strike!

Achoo!

As Klein sneezed, he rolled away. Meanwhile, he switched Creeping Hunger to the Baron of Corruption state and attempted to use his Distortion powers to reduce the effects of his cold.

Of course, thanks to his Bribe from before, his condition wasn't too serious. All it did was affect his control over the Spirit Body Threads, and not make him incapable of fighting.

While rolling away, Klein noticed from the corner of his eye that his opponent was leaving his shadowy state. The hood slipped backward, revealing a face that looked beautiful like a female. It was none other than Mr. A.

This Aurora Order Oracle had actually managed to survive this long despite the harsh environment!

However, his eyes were already bloodshot. He looked at Klein as though he was looking at a delightful delicacy. The hunger that was innate and instinctive wasn't concealed at all.

At that moment, Klein's mood didn't wane because he still had sufficient strength to do battle.

What he was most worried about wasn't Mr. A, but that their escalating battle would produce flames and attract the danger outside. When that happens, there was no way the two of them could escape death!

Hunger… The immense hunger has made Mr. A lose his rationality and no longer care about the loitering figures… If I can slightly alleviate his hunger, he should stop attacking and patiently wait until the crimson moon is once again hidden by the fog… Give him some "food?" As his thoughts raced, Klein nearly sliced off a piece of his flesh to throw at Mr. A.

Thankfully, he thought of something in the nick of time.

He had food on him!

They were the dried mushrooms that Frank Lee had produced. It was said to be a crossbreed between beef and the flesh of a Rose Bishop. As long as there was fish and water, it could keep reproducing.

As this was a new species in a subtle sense, making it not directly related to a Rose Bishop, Klein had placed it with herbal powders he often used like slumber flower, without removing them. He wasn't afraid that it would trigger any anomalies within the core seal behind Chanis Gate.

Achoo! With another sneeze and another roll, Klein had taken out the dried mushroom and thrown it at Mr. A.

Perhaps the smell of beef had attracted him, or perhaps it was the mutual sense shared between Rose Bishops, Mr. A immediately stopped attempting to flip through his illusory book. As he caught the mushroom, he stuffed it into his mouth, chewed, and swallowed it.

The hunger pangs that were written in his eyes gradually lessened, but the way he looked at Klein remained the same.

Klein threw the remaining dried mushrooms at Mr. A who caught them. Without any hesitation, he cleanly ate them.

His vision finally turned for the better. Glancing at the indistinct figures loitering outside the windows, he stepped back into a corner, fusing into the shadows.

Phew… Klein heaved a sigh of relief and retreated to another corner of the wall.

Mr. A actually isn't dead… I have to say that in such an environment, a Rose Bishop's abilities can provide immense help. Just using the stored flesh and eating himself can make him last quite long… Of course, the fact that Mr. A hasn't been killed by Lady Despair Panatiya implies his strength. However, the demigod-level powers he recorded must have been used up… As Klein thought, he deliberated over his words, wishing to sound out Mr. A for more information.

"Have you found any clues on how to leave?"

There was silence as Mr. A didn't give an answer.

His insanity has made it impossible to talk to him? Klein pondered for two seconds and said a name, “Leomaster.”

This was the name of the Aurora Order’s Saint of Darkness who had dissociated personalities.

After a brief silence, Mr. A’s slightly hoarse voice sounded again.

“He has been ‘sent’ in here as well?”

Indeed, only matters regarding the Aurora Order elicits a response… Klein frankly said, “No, he is trapped inside the ruins of the battle of gods.”

Without waiting for Mr. A to say a word, he continued, “Why don’t you enter the cathedral?”

Mr. A said in a muddled manner, “It’s very dangerous, very, very dangerous…

“It’s also dangerous outside. All the dangers stem from there. All the people who vanished would reappear during the crimson moon…”

Before he could finish his sentence, the tiny bit of crimson moonlight that passed through the curtains suddenly turned extremely dim.

Chapter 837 - The Hangers

◆

As the crimson moonlight dimmed, a thought surfaced in Klein's mind:

The crimson moon is about to be covered by fog again!

Just as this thought appeared, the indistinct, loitering figures outside vanished as though they had evaporated into thin air. The beast-like growls also came to a halt.

The environment has been restored to its previous state… Demoness of Despair Panatiya can move about freely again… Mr. A will no longer have any qualms about the danger outside. He can unleash a barrage of attacks to capture his prey… Klein instantly came to a conclusion as he raised his right index finger and snapped, igniting the leaves of a tree tens of meters away.

He wanted to open up a gap with Mr. A to prevent himself from getting sicker. At the same time, he wanted to determine if he should take the risk of entering the ancient cathedral.

With respect to his present situation, Klein already had a plan in mind. It was to use Mr. A's potent and multifarious abilities to draw Panatiya's attention. After all, to her, a Shepherd and a Marionettist weren't any different when it came to meat quality. They could both fill her stomach, so her priority was definitely on who was easier to deal with.

When the time comes, both parties would definitely engage in a battle, and Klein needed to find an opportunity to strike down Panatiya!

Just as the scarlet flame soared and engulfed Klein, he saw Mr. A turn into a shadow and meld into the surroundings once again. It was unknown where he hid himself.

He ran… ran… Aren't you the crazy Mr. A? Shouldn't you continue pursuing your prey? Why did you run… Klein's gaze froze as he couldn't help but twitch the corners of his mouth.

His figure vanished amidst the flames before appearing in flames tens of meters away.

Just as Klein leaped out of the fire, he felt his forehead burning once again. His lungs felt heavy as his breathing became rapid and difficult.

Plague!

Demoness of Despair Panatiya had spread her plague once again!

To Klein, this beautiful lady in a pure white robe had already floated somewhere in midair at some point in time, walking towards him.

Beneath her feet were countless transparent and thin lines that formed a spider's web. They were connected to the surrounding buildings and trees, fully covering half the street.

In the eyes of this demigod-level Demoness, the intense hunger pangs were gone. The obvious bloodshot look in her eyes wasn't there, and the way she looked at Gehrman Sparrow was one of insanity and teasing. It was as though she wanted to drain his ability to resist, bit by bit, making him feel the deepest, most heavy, and most painful despair.

Klein held back his urge to cough as he snapped his fingers again, causing the tree beside the cathedral to burst into flames.

His figure was immediately engulfed by the fire as he rapidly faded away and appeared above the tree. He had appeared amidst the gorgeous flames.

Right on the heels of that, Klein hurriedly jumped to the ground, somersaulting to the side of the ancient cathedral.

At this moment, his body suddenly turned cold as he found that his feet, thighs, and waist were covered in thick layers of ice. And surrounding him was an accumulation of frost as the temperature declined rapidly.

Klein clenched his teeth, holding back the horror within him. He followed his plan, and he reached out his arms in an abnormally rigid fashion, pressing it straight onto the wall.

The Creeping Hunger on his left hand turned transparent.

In silence, Klein passed through the thick, pitch-black wall and entered the spired cathedral.

The spot where he was standing had a black fireball smash into the wall, just a little too slow. It splashed out like water, burning away the nearby frost and weeds.

At this moment, at the top of the ancient cathedral's spire, swirling ravens opened their beaks.

“Waaa!”

“Waaa!”

“Waaa!”

Panatiya halted as she looked at the dark cathedral. Bit by bit, her face was dyed with a look of fear.

†

Inside the cathedral, Klein found himself unable to see anything, as it was darker than the outside. As the frost melted, and with him getting accustomed to the dim lights, he finally saw the scene before him.

As far as he could see, there were figures being hung up in midair.

They were all humans!

Some of them were dressed in black classical robes, others in brown jackets. Some were wearing very fluffy skirts, while others had tattered clothes, making them resemble beggars.

Some of them had boorish looks, others handsome with cut facial features. Some of them were beautiful, others tender, adorable, and looking youthful. None of them looked the same.

No, there was something that they had in common. They were like meat that was undergoing a curing process. They hung from above, swaying gently as their heads were bowed and their eyes rolled back.

Klein felt his scalp tingle as he no longer doubted that this place was extremely dangerous as described by Panatiya and Mr. A.

He held his back to the wall, planning on using Door Opening to leave to avoid danger the moment anything happened. He would then pass through the wall if he was discovered by the Demoness of Despair to avoid her attacks. By repeatedly doing so, he could ensure his safety.

Whoosh!

A cold air blew through the cathedral as the figures and corpses turned around, facing Klein.

Their collars were like ropes that left their heads drooping.

Klein nearly drew a gasp as he pressed his left palm onto the wall.

At this moment, the figures began to sway like wind chimes. They opened their eyes and produced raving-like voices:

“Hornacis… Flegrea…

“Hornacis… Flegrea…

"Hornacis… Flegrea…"

The voices resounded into one, drilling into Klein's ears as he found it abnormally familiar!

This was the raving that he had heard during his advancements in the past!

It actually originated from here, from the foggy town. It came from the corpses that hung high in this ancient cathedral!

At that instant, not only was Klein's scalp tingling, he even felt his body trembling.

Could it be that this foggy town actually originates from the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range… That Nation of the Evernight which vanished? Don't tell me that I really am on the mountain? However, why would it be inside this cathedral? These same ravings don't bring about a headache or push me towards losing control… Klein hissed as he spread his hands and clenched it again repeatedly, resisting the urge to pass through the wall.

Since he was already inside and had seen the source of the ravings, he believed that escaping probably didn't resolve any problems.

Regardless, it's necessary to do a simple search. Otherwise, I wouldn't even know the reason when something abnormal happens to me!

After using a gold coin to quickly do a divination, Klein tapped his molars gently and activated his Spirit Vision. He looked up at the hanging figures and found their spirituality converged. The aura colors looked normal, but they exuded a stiff appearance.

There are aura colors… They aren't dead yet? Klein frowned slightly and deactivated his Spirit Vision.

Right on the heels of that, he tapped his left thumb on the first segment of his index finger, planning to observe the Spirit Body Threads.

Upon sweeping his gaze across, Klein's pupils dilated because the Spirit Body Threads of the swaying figures looked extremely special.

The illusory black threads that corresponded to their bodies were extended in the same direction—the peak of the ancient cathedral. There wasn't a single exception!

In Klein's vision, they were like corpses being hung up by their Spirit Body Threads!

Before Klein could figure out what all of this meant, he caught a scene from the corner of his eye.

His Spirit Body Threads were automatically reaching upwards to the peak of the cathedral, to the source that hung up those figures!

This was the first time Klein saw Spirit Body Threads moving autonomously!

It was as though they were metals that had come into contact with magnets. They floated upwards uncontrollably, and the fastest thread had already reached its destination!

Klein didn't dare imagine the outcome if all his Spirit Body Threads gathered up above. He suspected that he too would become a piece of "cured meat" that would be hung up to be dehydrated, producing the ravings of "Hornacis… Flegrea" along with the wind.

For most Beyonders, they could only consider leaving the cathedral in a bid to sever the process of having their Spirit Body Threads attracted, but Klein was different—he was a Marionettist. Quickly, he controlled his Spirit Body Threads and pulled them thread by thread.

After nearly thirty seconds, Klein finally completed this task. However, his Spirit Body Threads continued floating upwards. He had to constantly pay attention and resist this upward drift.

This is one of the dangers lurking inside the cathedral? Klein slowly drew a breath as he no longer leaned close to the walls. Step by step, he ventured deep into the cathedral.

Above him, the figures swayed as though they were watching him.

After proceeding nearly thirty meters, Klein finally saw something different. It was the pitch-black altar of the cathedral.

On the altar was a stone statue.

Klein identified the statue when he took a few more steps.

[image]

It was in the shape of a female human. However, her hips and ribs had two beast legs growing out from each one of them. These limbs were covered in short, thick, and firm black fur.

In addition, the statue was surrounded with black bands that seemed to reach out like tentacles.

At the statue's feet, there were souls sleeping as though they were holding her up on a pedestal.

Klein shifted his gaze and looked at the statue's head and saw a beautiful face.

This… Klein's gaze froze.

That face wasn't unfamiliar to him, because he had been "sent" in here by that entity!

This stone statue's appearance was identical to the "Eraser" angel under Saint Samuel Cathedral!

"She" is actually related to this place… That's right. The people "She" erased are sent here, so it would be odd if she's not connected to this place… What's the connection between "Her" and the Fourth Epoch's Nation of the Evernight on the Hornacis mountain range? That Mother of the Sky? But if that’s the case, why would “She” be working for the Church? Furthermore, such an image does have its resemblance to the demonic wolf that Little Sun mentioned… Many thoughts instantly surfaced in Klein’s mind.

During this process, he slowly shifted his gaze away in another direction, in the hopes of finding any possible clues.

A few seconds later, Klein discovered a figure. It wasn’t hung in midair but was seated diagonally behind the statue.

Chapter 838 - Scene from the Historical Void

◆

The figure sitting diagonally behind the statue was an elder in a black robe. He wore a hood and his head was bowed with his eyes closed. By his mouth was a thick, long, and white beard. It was as though he hadn't had it trimmed for years, preventing anyone from telling what he originally looked like.

And in Klein's eyes, this hoary elder was even more bizarre than the figures hanging in midair.

After his Spirit Body Threads extended out from his body, it didn't drift up to the spot which seemed to hide "magnets." Instead, they coiled around his body and back on themselves, making the source and destination one and the same!

Ordinary Spirit Body Threads stemmed from inside a Spirit Body, extended outwards in different directions into infinity. As for the figures that hung from above, the sources of their Spirit Body Threads was no different. The destination which they extended out to was gathered at the top of the cathedral; thus, it was obvious that there was something wrong about it.

This is the reason why he hasn't been hung up? Or should I say, this is how he avoids the danger inside the cathedral? As Klein controlled his Spirit Body Threads to resist the continuous upward drift, he silently muttered and guessed at the reason.

Suddenly, he saw a pair of eyes—a pair of pitch-black eyes that looked like an unlit water surface.

The elder sitting behind the statue opened his eyes.

He was still alive!

Klein subconsciously took a step back as he bent his back slightly, holding out his left palm in front of him.

Amidst indescribable silence and anxiety, he saw the hoary elder's eyes move slightly, open his mouth slightly, and speak in a muffled manner:

"Finally, another Seer has come here…"

Another? Beyonders from the Seer pathway have entered this cathedral? That's right, apart from Eraser angel's erasing of people, sending them to this foggy town, and those who vanished in the night at the battle of god ruins would also appear here, amongst them, there might be a few Seer pathway Beyonders who attempted to seek out mermaids in those waters, or had successfully advanced and were looking to leave… Seeing that the other party had no intention of immediately attacking him and had the intention to converse with him, he forcefully composed himself and said after some thought, "Why do you say that?"

The hooded elder with black eyes and white beard didn't immediately reply as he asked with a muffled voice, "Do you wish to escape?

"I can tell you how."

Klein wasn't moved as he immediately asked, "Then why are you still here?"

Since the method to escaping this foggy town was known, why would one stay inside such a dangerous cathedral?

The elder drooped his head and chuckled in a throaty manner.

"It's because I've died long ago."

"…"

The hair on Klein's back stood on end as he broke out into a cold sweat. He was speechless.

He could tell that the elder wasn't an existence in the form of a soul!

Seeing no response, the elder slowly lifted his head and swept his glance at Klein in his Gehrman Sparrow appearance.

"I've used special Beyonder powers to seek out the void in this world's history and fate. I sliced off a portion of my projection and left it here. It has been maintained to this day. As for my body and my spirit, they have long died and dissipated.

This is such a fascinating power… Klein was unable to verify the claim, so all he could do was ask, "Then why are you giving guidance on how to escape to Seers who enter?"

The elder's voice remained muffled.

"After you open the door, the history and fate in here will experience a change. The projection I sliced will also vanish, and when the time comes, you will see an urn of ashes.

"I only wish that they could be scattered in the Srenzo River near Intis's capital, Trier. That is my hometown, the place where I was born."

"Do you know the place I'm referring to? I've no idea how much time has passed in the real world."

He's been imprisoned for at least a century? Klein frankly replied, "They still exist."

"Excellent," the elder said with a nod, his throat apparently filled with phlegm.

Although Klein didn't fully trust the person before him. He believed that knowing more made it beneficial for him to make a judgment.

Hence, he decided not to waste any time, for fear of being interrupted again.

“Then, how should I escape?”

The elder remained sitting in his spot and said without any obvious movement, “See that wall behind the statue?

“Do you see an inset?”

Klein actually didn’t wish to follow his instructions. After all, he had been led by Panatiya to do so, resulting in him seeing her incomplete Mythical Creature form and, hence, suffered from shock and damage. However, he had previously planned on surveying the surroundings in search of clues. Therefore, he ultimately carefully shifted his gaze to look at the wall behind the statue.

Engraved on it were short and ancient symbols, but there was an empty spot in the middle, preventing it from being connected as one.

The blank area was the size of two palms and was obviously indented. It was as though someone had dug away a brick on its surface.

“As long as you find the corresponding obsidian rock and insert it, this wall will tentatively be released from a concealed and secret state. It will showcase illusory colors. When the time comes, I’ll tell you of a complicated special symbol. It will be the key to opening the door on the wall, allowing you to escape.” The elder didn’t turn his head as he looked straight ahead and spoke in detail.

A complicated special symbol… A key to opening the door… Klein listened to the ravings of “Hornacis… Flegrea…” resound with the wind behind him as a symbol suddenly came to mind.

It was the vertical eye formed from many secret symbols!

It was the information that the Antigonus family’s notebook had passed to him by corrupting the Misfortune Cloth Puppet!

And the Antigonus family appeared to have a deep connection with the Nation of the Evernight on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range!

Could this be the so-called key? Klein retracted his gaze in a calm manner as he asked, “Why did all the Seers from before fail?”

The elder chuckled and said, “Some of them are as naggy as you are, failing to leave this cathedral before the crimson moon turned clear. They ended up being hung up. It’s the case for that fellow who gave himself a handsome face. Likewise for the lady with flawless features.”

“…” Klein was nearly rendered speechless by the elder’s jibe.

However, he also learned something. The danger inside the cathedral would greatly increase once the crimson moon turned clear. Even Marionettists were unable to control their Spirit Body Threads!

I’ll have to constantly take note of the changes in light. Once the crimson moon turns clear, I’ll pass through the wall… Klein looked around him and confirmed that the wall closest to the pitch-black altar was six to seven meters away. Then, he quickly came up with an emergency plan.

The hooded elder didn’t look at him as he continued, “The rest weren’t very lucky. They encountered enemies that had lost their reasoning and only wanted them for food. They were then devoured.

“You have to know that there aren’t many Beyonders from the Seer pathway to begin with. The ones that can become Marionettists are even fewer. The number that can come in here due to various reasons are only a handful.

“Of course, there are a lot more that were attracted and enticed in here, but it was difficult for them to come all the way here as they…”

He didn’t finish his sentence as he slowly looked up and glanced at the top of the ancient cathedral. He then said with a muffled voice, “Their outcomes were equally tragic."

What do you mean… If I didn't attempt to steal the notebook, I would have to rely on the ravings from these hanging corpses inside this cathedral and climb up the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range to seek out the Antigonus family's treasure. Will I be considered as one of those that got attracted or enticed? It's difficult to come in here, and the outcome would be equally tragic? Klein's mind stirred as he began suspecting that the so-called treasure of the Antigonus family was nothing but a trap based on the dilapidated palace and translucent worms he had previously seen from his divinations.

He didn't bother asking in more detail as he tried to sound out more important information.

"Do you know where that obsidian rock is?"

The elder chuckled.

"It's in the hands of that Demoness of Despair."

Demoness of Despair. So Panatiya really is a Demoness of Despair… Klein had previously addressed Panatiya inwardly as such, but that was because he knew that she was called Lady Despair, as well as him being certain that she was a Demoness. Hence, he had simplified the two tidbits of information and given her such a nickname. He never expected that the Sequence 4 of the Demoness pathway was Demoness of Despair.

"That will be very difficult for me to obtain that obsidian rock. She's a true demigod." Klein didn't conceal the difficult position he was placed in as he waited to see if the elder had any suggestions.

The elder shook his head and said, "I'm a person who is long dead. There's very little help I can provide.

"Hmm… Didn't you have a marionette when you came in?"

“Yes, but it has already been eaten by the Demoness of Despair,” Klein replied in a seemingly calm manner.

The elder sighed and chuckled.

“I can help you summon him from the history of this world.”

Just as he said that, Klein saw lines quickly outline themselves beside him, drawing out Admiral of Blood Senor in his triangular hat and dark red coat. Furthermore, the Spirit Body Threads were still under his control!

Klein’s pupils immediately constricted as he heard the hooded elder add, “It can only be maintained for thirty minutes. Make good use of the time.

“I’ll help you strengthen some of the connections, enhancing your control of the marionette. This way, you can let the marionette use your Beyonder powers, and also allow you to swap locations with him instantaneously. Heh heh, the controllable distance and traits of him looking alive will also be boosted.”

Allow my marionette to use my Beyonder powers? Doesn’t this mean that I can use the powers of a Faceless to make my marionette turn into another me? A perfect body double? This is a demigod of the Seer pathway? This is one of the powers of a Bizarro Sorcerer? The enemy never knows if the one killed is the real Bizarro Sorcerer? Also, summoning a marionette from history. This is completely inconceivable… Thoughts surfaced in Klein’s mind as he could hardly compose himself.

The elder looked up and glanced at him before continuing, “Give me a paper figurine.”

Klein frowned slightly and hesitated for a few seconds before taking out a paper figurine and handing it over.

The elder reached out his wrinkled hand and took the paper figurine before swiping across it casually.

Klein’s headache, fever, and enlarged tonsils suddenly disappeared!

The paper figurine was tainted with spots of red rust as it quickly cracked after becoming brittle.

Using my paper figurine to transfer my ailment? Klein thought and finally asked, “Sorry for my breach of etiquette. How may I address you?”

The elder didn’t immediately reply as he said with a sigh, “I can only provide you a little help.”

He paused as he gave a muffled laugh.

“You can call me, hmm…

“Zaratul.”

Chapter 839 - Descendant of An Ancient God

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F*ck… At that instant, Klein, who heard the elder's reply, had vulgarities resound in his mind. Apart from that, no other thoughts appeared.

Zaratul—the leader of the Secret Order, a descendant of the Fourth Epoch's Solomon Empire aristocracy, the former owner of the Antigonus family's notebook, and the Beyonder guide for Emperor Roselle. "He" was a true High-Sequence Beyonder of the Seer pathway, a Miracle Invoker who was a secret existence about two centuries ago. "He" was believed by Arrodes to have lost control, turning from an angel into a monster during "His" attempt to advance to Sequence 1, Attendant of Mysteries!

No matter which description was used, "He" was a heavyweight that the present Klein was unable to resist. He had the feeling of shock that a figure from history textbooks had jumped out of it and walked in front of him, alive. He also felt the air around him appear to congeal as they piled on top of him, crushing his body and stifling his breathing.

Klein had once imagined that perhaps all his encounters, including his transmigration, had stemmed from Zaratul's setup, and he suspected that "He" would be akin to the final boss he would encounter in games. And now, he had met him—ahead of time.

I'm only a Sequence 5! Klein couldn't help but shout out inwardly as he suspected if the person opposite him was the real Zaratul.

Zaratul is a last name. It represents an aristocratic family in the Fourth Epoch's Solomon Empire. In theory, there should be many Zaratuls over two thousand years of history… Perhaps the one in Roselle's diary is the grandfather, father, brother, or son of that Secret Order's leader… Also, he mentioned that he has been dead for years, while Arrodes and Will Auceptin have testified that the Secret Order's leader, Zaratul, is still alive. He has just lost control and turned into a monster, turning extremely crazy… Klein tried to convince himself that the situation might not be as terrible as he imagined. This quickly calmed him down as he began to carefully contemplate.

The Beyonder powers that this Zaratul showcased doesn't seem like much, but all of them exceed the realm of normalcy. It's even more so for those that's related to history and fate… He's definitely not only a Bizarro Sorcerer. He might even be a Sequence 3 or Sequence 2. And this pathway's angels are few to begin with…

This place is intricately tied with the Nation of the Evernight which disappeared from the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, and it produces the ravings that reach the ears of Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders of the Seer pathway… Back then, the Secret Order's leader, Zaratul, had fewer appearances after he obtained the Antigonus family's notebook via Emperor Roselle. It's unknown what "He" was plotting. Does this mean that I can believe "He" had come to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range to seek out the treasure left behind by the Antigonus family based on the notebook and obtained the corresponding potion formula and ingredients of Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries?

In the world of mysticism, repeated coincidences usually imply problems and a confirmation…

If it is that Zaratul, could it be that splitting "himself" to store "Himself" inside the foggy town is the reason that caused "His" ultimate loss of control?

As for being “long dead,” there’s an even more reasonable explanation. The Secret Order leader, Zaratul, had said so “Himself”: What is a miracle? A miracle is to be resurrected from the dead!

And “He” was already a Miracle Invoker!

As Klein’s mind churned, the hoary elder who claimed to be Zaratul chuckled.

“From your reaction, you seem to know me?”

Klein quickly probed, “I’ve heard of this last name.

“I once met Queen Mystic and learned of the Secret Order from her, and also know of its leader.”

The elder nodded gently without giving any confirmation or denial. He smiled and vaguely asked, “What other help do you need?”

Help… Klein recalled the Beyonder powers he had showcased and said after some hesitation, “Are you able to summon a fish from the outside world from this concealed world’s history? It’s okay if it has already been turned into food.”

From his point of view, it wasn’t an impossibility. After all, most people that entered the town had come from Sonia Sea’s easternmost front, the ruins of the battle of gods. Perhaps some fish that had been reared there had been brought in. They could be used to be stored as food and also used to observe the changes in the environment. There could also be explorers who vanished from not being able to sleep in time when night came after eating their fill of fish. It wasn’t unreasonable that fish meat could be found in the history of the foggy town.

Zaratul raised his head and looked at Klein. He didn’t immediately give him an answer.

After a few seconds, he leveled his gaze and said indistinctly, “Yes.”

Just as he said that, a blob made up of ground-fish meat appeared in Admiral of Blood Senor's hands.

"It can only be maintained for forty-five minutes. Once it's over, it's as though one has never eaten it before," Zaratul added.

That actually worked… Klein increasingly found the High-Sequence Beyonder powers of the Seer pathway to really be bizarre and terrifying.

He had planned on saying that he didn't need any help, but considering how Zaratul was well-known to be deceitful, with everything he said and did being questionable, he felt that he needed to make some preparations.

Amidst his thoughts, Klein decided to appear a little greedy to lower Zaratul's appraisal of him and believe that he could easily lead him to do his bidding.

After letting his marionette put away the fish meat, his eyes rolled a little as he indiscernibly drew a breath and said, "I still need the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula."

Zaratul didn't change his posture as he fell silent for a few seconds. He then said with a chuckle, "No problem. As long as you trust that I'll give you a real formula.

"After you return with the obsidian rock, I'll hand over both the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula and the symbol needed for opening the door to you.

"Sigh, that isn't something that I need to care about. All that matters is that you scatter my ashes back into the river in my hometown."

After Klein listened in silence, he couldn't help but ask, "You have a very high level. The ashes you leave behind will contaminate the river and create countless monsters."

Zaratul laughed upon hearing that.

“Very meticulous.

“However, there’s nothing special about my ashes. I’ve lost them long ago.”

As he spoke, he looked up again and glanced at the peak of the ancient cathedral.

He’s hinting that his Beyonder characteristics and body’s specialness had been absorbed by the “magnet” above? Klein pondered over Zaratul’s meaning as he pressed on matters regarding his Beyonder pathway.

“What’s the Sequence 3 potion name after Bizarro Sorcerer?”

Zaratul’s beard moved slightly as he said, “Scholar of Yore.”

Scholar of Yore… Although it sounds like a relic that’s already dead and dug out from a tome, Zaratul has repeatedly mentioned history. The corresponding Beyonder powers are fascinating… Klein thought in glee as he asked again, “Then what’s the corresponding Sequence 0?”

Zaratul lifted his head again and glanced at him. Finally, he chuckled and said, “You will likely know when you ‘open the door’ to escape.”

I hate people like you, saying things midway, often just smiling without giving an answer… Klein immediately understood the feeling Emperor Roselle once had as he turned his gaze to the statue beside him and asked, “Who is this?”

Zaratul’s head didn’t turn as he said in a muffled manner, “‘She’ is a descendant of an ancient god.”

A descendant of an ancient god. A descendant of Annihilation Demonic Wolf Flegrea? This ancient god seems to wield the authority of Evernight… “His” descendant established the Nation of the Evernight? Before Klein could ask a question, he heard Zaratul chuckle and say, “‘She’ also has a brother that you wouldn’t be unfamiliar with.”

"Who is it?" Klein tried hard to recall who, but he couldn't find an answer.

Zaratul chuckled.

"'He' gave 'Himself' a new last name.

"Antigonus."

Antigonus… Nation of the Evernight… Hornacis… Flegrea… Klein's eyes lit up slightly as he pieced together the fragmented pieces of information.

It's very easy to understand the Church of Evernight destroying the Nation of the Evernight, as it's a battle of authorities. However, to completely eradicate the Antigonus family for having inherited the Seer Beyonder paths of the divine doesn't make sense. There's no need to go that far. After all, the pathways that can be interchanged with the Sleepless pathway are the Death and Giant pathways.

Furthermore, Klein was still puzzled to this day. Why would the Antigonus family place their treasure on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range? Why did they trust the people of the Nation of the Evernight that much?

Now, he finally understood something.

Just as Klein was about to ask more questions, he suddenly saw the crimson moonlight shining in from the cathedral's windows brighten. It drew out shadows of the corpses hanging in midair.

The crimson moon has turned clear! Klein's heart tightened. Without any additional thoughts, he followed his emergency plans by raising his right hand. Snapping his fingers, he lit a candle by the wall that was a distance away from him.

At the same time, he got Senor to possess him as he leaped out, somersaulting in the process before arriving at the wall closest to the outside.

And this time, the entire cathedral had turned abnormally silent. There were no longer any resounding ravings.

Klein's spiritual intuition didn't give him any indication of danger, but he could tell from the shadows on the ground that the corpses hanging in midair had turned towards the flame!

Without any hesitation, Klein pressed his left palm down, passing through a wall and arriving outside the cathedral. Then, without even daring to even raise his head, he borrowed the driving force of a Wraith to tumble and run towards the nearest building. The distance from wall to wall was only about ten meters.

During this process, he didn't hear the beast-like growls nor detect the loitering figures. However, his back felt like it was being pierced by a sea of glares!

In just a second, Klein had appeared outside the building. Pressing down with his palms, he passed through the wall.

Then, he snapped his fingers and remotely used Flame Controlling to extinguish a candle inside the cathedral.

After a brief moment of silence and anxiety, the feeling of being stared at vanished. Beyond the tightly-drawn curtains, figures began to appear as they began loitering.

Chapter 840 - Using His Advantage

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With all the abnormalities vanishing, Klein heaved a slight sigh of relief. He began to observe his surroundings. Then, he selected a shadowy spot that wasn't too dark due to the faint moonlight. This was to prevent himself from suffering any sudden attacks.

And the few seconds from before had made him come up with a theory about the faint figures and beast-like growls.

They were previously corpses that were hung inside the cathedral, producing the ravings of "Hornacis… Flegrea…"!

When Klein passed through the wall and left the cathedral, the corpses that hung from above had turned to face the lit candle, and there weren't any figures on the street until Klein remotely used Flame Controlling and extinguished the flame. Everything was the same as before!

When the crimson moon is clear and one's spirituality is enhanced, the "magnet" at the top of the cathedral will have a stronger influence on the foggy town. It will be able to control those corpses to loiter around and pretend that everything is normal? If that really is the case, the light might actually be attracting the controller's attention. Under such circumstances, if the flame isn't extinguished and the source is locked on, it might result in an extremely terrifying outcome. Hmm, I can't rely on Flame Controlling to repeatedly divert the "attention" of those figures… Klein reminded himself. Then, he turned to use his Spirit Body Threads vision that he didn't deactivate, to size up the bread, stewed beef potatoes, and red wine on the dining table.

He suspected that the food here was part of the “magnet” at the top of the cathedral. If it was consumed, one’s Spirit Body Threads would be corrupted, and it would cause them to be unable to resist floating towards the cathedral. This also explained why eating the food caused them to vanish. They ended up being hung up to dry in the cathedral and be let out to “walk” when the crimson moon turned clear. This matched Mr. A’s description of the vanished people’s reappearance under the bright moonlight.

At a glance, Klein discovered that the food was like living beings. They had Spirit Body Threads extending out, reaching towards the ancient cathedral.

The most special point about them was that they had only one Spirit Body Thread, obviously being different from the dense, countless Spirit Body Threads of a normal living creature.

Indeed, it’s close to my theory… After obtaining some validation regarding his theory, Klein retracted his gaze and considered how to deal with Demoness of Despair Panatiya.

Beside him, Wraith Senor in his ancient triangular hat and dark red robe appeared. This marionette’s bones cracked as his face squirmed. Soon, he turned into Gehrman Sparrow.

This was a marionette using the powers of a Faceless!

Klein observed his double for a moment and realized that there were some flaws. The clothes couldn’t be changed, and if he concealed them with an illusion, it wasn’t possible for him to fool a demigod-level Demoness of Despair. Even Mr. A might not fall for it.

After some thought, he made Wraith Senor take off his clothes. As for himself, he took off the black clergyman robe, and they switched clothes with one another!

While wearing the clothes and hat, Klein's expression turned odd. Over the past two months, the marionette had been wearing the same outfit. It had been down the sewers and experienced an explosion, so there were all sorts of smells mixed into the clothes. It wasn't a pleasant smell.

Sigh, my present suffering is all a result of my laziness prior to this… Klein sighed silently as he completed changing his appearance. He had turned into Gehrman Sparrow dressed as a pirate captain.

At this moment, Senor had also changed into the black clergyman robe. His aura was spirited and no longer cold. He looked no different from a living person.

Klein deliberated for a moment and took off Creeping Hunger, allowing Admiral of Blood to wear it on his left hand.

This way, the marionette was the perfect copy of Gehrman Sparrow!

One must go all the way when putting on an act… Besides, if Creeping Hunger were to revolt at this moment, then it will be eating the marionette. Heh heh, once the marionette lapses, will it feel cheated? It's like it ate a placebo… As Klein got Senor to get used to his state and take away the fish meat, he seriously began formulating plans.

Relying on a marionette that can use my Beyonder powers wouldn't be able to defeat a Demoness of Despair, even stealing the obsidian rock from her is nearly impossible. She's a genuine demigod after all…

Even though this extremely convincing marionette gives me a chance of achieving success in battle, such as letting it draw her attention while I complete a sudden sneak attack and constantly swap positions; thus, confusing Panatiya so that she can't make an accurate judgment, I can't make up for the disadvantage that stems from the difference in our levels and strength to achieve my goals…

I can consider using the marionette to engage in close combat and attempt to control Panatiya's Spirit Body Threads. He's already a corpse, so he wouldn't be affected by the plague. I can catch her by surprise using this method… But there are too many problems. First, the mysticism "viruses" and "germs" that a Demoness of Despair creates will grow in strength. At its peak, will it be able to affect a zombie? Second, does she still have other Beyonder powers I'm not aware of… There's a high chance that it's the case!

Hmm, I'll first make a list and write down my advantages or things that are on par with the Demoness of Despair. Let's see if I can get any ideas…

I can disguise myself. A marionette using its Beyonder powers can be considered at the level of a demigod. Instantaneous swapping is also one. Apart from them, there isn't anything else… Yes, considering Demoness of Despair's current state, I seem to have something that I'm better at than her…

She's in a half-crazed state. Her reason comes and goes at random, and she does extreme things. She's easily led around by her instincts. Hmm, although she's still good at incitement and allurement, that's an innate quality for catching prey. As for me, I'm in a normal state, and I haven't had any problems with my rationality yet. I'm still able to think and analyze…

Don't tell me I need to come out on top using my wit?

An idea came to Klein as he gradually formulated a new train of thought and plans.

Why must I fight Demoness of Despair Panatiya to the death at this moment?

She definitely yearns to escape this foggy town. Deep down in her heart, this will be something that beats her instinctive need to eat! Furthermore, she's still full at the moment!

I can try to cooperate with her. She can provide that obsidian rock, and I'll draw the special and secret symbol, putting together the conditions for opening the door…

Besides, I'm not too sure about Zaratul. Who knows what schemes "He" might be up to. "He" might be secretly plotting something. By pulling a Demoness of Despair into this, it can effectively make the situation chaotic and restrain "Him" in some way!

Cooperation is a diplomatic choice, not a militaristic choice. The effects of an intact stand-in at the demigod level has will definitely be better than directly engaging in battle. This is equivalent to me obtaining benefits from both sides!

Klein rapidly made a decision. As he pondered on the details of him negotiating to cooperate, he patiently waited for the crimson moon to return behind the fog.

After a while, the crimson moonlight that seeped through the dark-colored curtains dimmed. Klein immediately made his marionette pass through the wall and leave where he was hiding.

Then, Senor walked onto the streets with the appearance of Gehrman Sparrow, walking straight towards the pitch-black cathedral.

In about ten seconds, Klein discovered that Senor was being affected by an ailment.

To the dead, this was completely ineffective, but Klein could foresee that, with the passage of time, the ailment would worsen and turn stranger. It might even affect one's nerves and spirituality. This would make the zombie's actions turn stiff. In the end, even its knees would be unable to bend, making movement only being possible by hopping.

Thankfully, I didn't choose to use the plan of letting my marionette control the Spirit Body Threads. Klein immediately made Senor say out loud, "I was inside the cathedral for a while, and I'm not dead.

"I found a way to escape from this place!"

After saying that, "Gehrman Sparrow" sniffed as though his resistance to the ailment had weakened due to the declining state of his body.

And at this moment, the white-robed Panatiya suddenly appeared at the door of the cathedral. Her hair had been tied up once again, looking neat and tidy.

Her slightly crazy-looking but beautiful eyes looked at Gehrman Sparrow as she took out a strangely profound obsidian rock.

The contours of the obsidian rock was identical to the inset on the wall behind the cathedral's statue!

"You need it?" Panatiya asked calmly.

Klein discovered that the Demoness of Despair had dispelled her plague and ailment as he hurriedly made Senor nod.

"Yes. As long as you place it in the correct location in the cathedral, and match it with a special symbol, we will be able to open a 'door' that allows us to escape.

"I know that the cathedral's interior is very dangerous to you, but this is mainly a result of Spirit Body Threads. And as a Marionettist, I can control Spirit Body Threads to prevent you from suffering the fate of being hung up."

Panatiya fell silent for a few seconds as she curled her lips. With a bright smile, she returned with a question, "Then, I'll become your marionette?

"Or you can stop helping me at the critical moment, making me turn into a loitering figure under the moon?"

Klein was long prepared. He immediately made his marionette reply earnestly, "What should I do to make you feel at ease?"

Panatiya didn’t immediately reply. After some careful thought, she said, “Give me your hair and flesh.”

Curses that Demonesses are good at? Using Senor’s hair and flesh to curse Gehrman Sparrow? Count me as the loser if that works! As Klein felt grounded, he made the marionette appear in a difficult position.

“Then wouldn’t you be able to kill me at any moment?”

Panatiya replied with a smile, “You can hand me the hair and flesh only when entering the cathedral.

“When inside, if there are any signs of me cursing you, you can give up controlling my Spirit Body Threads. It will be the same the other way round too. If anything abnormal happens to me, I’ll immediately curse you.

“Once the door is opened, I’ll leave first. And at the same time, I’ll return the flesh and hair to you.”

“Gehrman Sparrow” hesitated for a long time as he discussed the details with the Demoness of Despair. Finally, he nodded and said, “Alright, let’s do it.”

Just as Panatiya wanted to say something, her eyes suddenly narrowed as she slowly said, “For some reason, I’m still a little worried.”

Chapter 841 - Keeping Each Other in Check

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What terrifying intuition. Despite not realizing that the “Gehrman Sparrow” in front of you is a double, you still feel that something is amiss… Hidden in a faraway building, Klein inwardly drew a gasp. His mind raced as he quickly came up with a corresponding strategy.

He controlled Senor and made the marionette reply in a deep voice, “I’m also a little worried.

“After opening the ‘door,’ if you leave first, you can ambush me from the outside once I’m out. You don’t even need to ambush me. You can just wait outside.

“I believe that I should be the first to leave. And before that, you need to return to me my flesh and hair. When the time comes, you can be closer to the ‘door.’ This way, you will have enough time to pass through the ‘door’ before your Spirit Body Threads drift to the top of the cathedral.”

Panatiya listened in silence and returned with a question, “Then how do I prevent you from destroying the ‘door’ after you leave?”

“This is also a problem for me,” the marionette answered without giving any signs of weakness. “When I obtain that special symbol, I’ll show it to you. That way, even if I close the ‘door,’ you will still be able to open it again.”

Panatiya closed her mouth as though she was thinking through the details, but she appeared somewhat irascible and could hardly compose herself. It was as though her inclination for insanity had filled her mind.

After about ten seconds, she said again, “I think a pure curse might not be able to harm you. Seers do not lack the means to avoid harm, just like the Paper Figurine Substitutes you used before.”

She really isn’t leaving behind any loopholes. Thankfully, the person in front of you is a fake from top to bottom… As Klein lampooned, he made Senor take out one paper figurine after another. Then, he burned them all in front of the Demoness of Despair.

“I can’t be sure that you haven’t hidden one,” Panatiya said in suspicion, still somewhat neurotic.

“Gehrman Sparrow” twitched the corners of his mouth in a deadpan manner and said, “You can try divination. Aren’t Witches good at that?”

Panatiya smiled impatiently and said, “The spirit world cannot be communicated with in here, and my spirituality…”

She didn’t finish her sentence as the look in her eyes turned somewhat dangerous.

Klein knew what the Demoness of Despair was getting at. Her spirituality had been corrupted due to half a year of “eating.” It was somewhat chaotic and crazy, making it give unreliable “answers,” especially against a Beyonder that was best at divination.

The two reached a stalemate, momentarily unable to resolve the problem of trusting one another.

At this moment, on the roof to the left, a hoarse and muffled voice sounded.

“I can be your ‘witness.’”

“Gehrman Sparrow” and Panatiya turned their heads at the same time and looked over. Mr. A’s figure grew out from the shadows as he wore a blood-red hooded robe.

“How will you bear ‘witness’?” Klein made Senor ask.

Mr. A pulled down his hood and said with a deep chuckle, “I’ll use flesh and blood magic to drill into your body and control your condition. Once you stop controlling the Spirit Body Threads, or if you try to use Paper Figurine Substitutes, I’ll immediately give a warning or attempt to stop you.

“Once that ‘door’ you speak of opens, I’ll leave your body and pass through the door before my Spirit Body Threads are affected.”

Do you think “Gehrman Sparrow” is an idiot? Klein made his marionette curl his lips.

“Based on what I know, Rose Bishops can hide in the bodies of others, but the host will immediately die once they leave.”

“No, using that method is to evade investigations; therefore, there’s a need to fuse with the host’s flesh and blood. But there’s no need to do so in this situation. I’ll silently wait inside your stomach,” Mr. A explained in detail.

No, it’s not my stomach. It’s Senor’s stomach… Klein made Gehrman Sparrow take out a gold coin and pretend to attempt a divination.

This crazy adventurer muttered under his breath as the gold coin in between his fingers was flipped.

With a ping, the gold coin flew into the air and landed in his palm.

“Gehrman Sparrow” carefully glanced at it.

“From the looks of it, you aren’t lying.

“However, you will have to leave my body before I show the special symbol to Lady Despair.”

If this wasn't done, "Gehrman Sparrow" might end up being murdered by their collusion. After all, if Panatiya obtained the door-opening symbol while wielding the obsidian rock, given enough time, she didn't need to worry about any anomalies with her Spirit Body Threads. Then, she wouldn't need help from "Gehrman Sparrow" at all. Mr. A's existence was only to prevent the use of Paper Figurine Substitutes.

However, "Gehrman Sparrow" didn't need to be too worried if Mr. A came out ahead of time. He wasn't even afraid that Panatiya would lose decorum after knowing the door-opening symbol, because if that happened, he could rely on Paper Figurine Substitutes to avoid certain death. On the other hand, Panatiya wouldn't carry out a pursuit in the cathedral. This was because she would end up being hung up with the passage of time; hence, she needed to seize the opportunity to escape immediately!

Besides, there was no way to take the obsidian rock. "Gehrman Sparrow" would then have no chance of any subsequent escape attempts.

Although the details of this plan were still flawed, it fully considered the situation of all three parties. Panatiya raised her hand and grabbed at the hair that was sliding down her sideburns when she suddenly asked, "If I were to escape first, aren't you afraid that I'll ambush you?"

This was also a problem that Gehrman Sparrow was previously worried about.

Klein immediately made his marionette curl his lips and say,

"I'm afraid.

"But I still have other means of escape. I'll take the risk."

Panatiya took two steps in an irritated manner before finally saying, "We shall do it as agreed then."

After making up her mind, her smile became extremely relaxed.

"You really are a special man, a man that made me see hope. After we leave, I don't mind letting you experience what extreme pleasure is if you aren't afraid."

"Gehrman Sparrow" shifted his gaze away with great effort before looking at Mr. A.

"I have no more questions."

With the sound of howling wind, Mr. A flew down and landed not far from "Gehrman Sparrow."

His figure, along with his "clothes," rapidly melted away, turning into a sticky glob of flesh and blood.

Right on the heels of that, the flesh and blood piled onto one another and kept compressing into a "tiny stream" that had the thickness of an arm. Then, it flowed towards "Gehrman Sparrow."

Far away in a building, Klein felt somewhat disgusted as he retched. Then, he made "Gehrman Sparrow" open his mouth.

The "flesh and blood" stream climbed up the marionette's body and drilled into its mouth. The slightly warm but slippery feeling passed through the gullet and entered the stomach.

It's heavy… However, Mr. A's flesh and blood is helping to hold up the stomach, preventing it from sagging too much… Klein inspected the marionette and made him look up at the shrouded crimson moon and say to Panatiya, "Let's begin."

"Alright." Panatiya, who could hardly withstand her urges, impatiently walked towards the cathedral's entrance.

Klein made "Gehrman Sparrow" follow by her side and first plucked off his hair before making two meat tendrils grow out from his arm before ripping it out. It made blood gush out.

If someone very familiar with me were here, they would definitely notice a problem because I can't deal harm to my own body so decisively… Hmm, perhaps in the eyes of others, the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, can probably do such a deed easily… As Klein noticed a problem and gained experience from his conclusion, he made the marionette pass through the ajar main door of the ancient cathedral. He then handed the hair and flesh to Panatiya.

Panatiya slowed down her pace as she took out an ugly, palm-sized puppet and wiped the flesh over it and tied the hair around its thin neck.

She held the cursed puppet in one hand and finally stepped through the cathedral's door. Klein immediately got "Gehrman Sparrow" to control their Spirit Body Threads. As for Mr. A, as he had overlapped with the marionette, it wasn't too much of a hassle.

Hmm, even I can do it. With the powers showcased by Zaratul, "He" totally has the capability to help Beyonders that are not from the Seer pathway to resolve the loss of control over Spirit Body Threads in the cathedral. This way, as long as "He" wants the Demoness of Despair to enter, "He" could've opened the door a long time ago… Why didn't "He" do it? "He" is unable to communicate with others beyond the cathedral? That's why Seer pathway Beyonders who aren't Marionettists or higher can't walk to "Him"? Klein used his marionette's senses to analyze the situation remotely.

And inside the cathedral, the corpses remained dangling in midair. Their heads were bowed and their eyes were rolled back. From time to time, they would sway with the wind, producing the ravings "Hornacis… Flegrea…"

When Panatiya saw this scene, her body instantly stiffened, but she quickly composed herself. Together with "Gehrman Sparrow," they walked under the "gazes" of the hanged.

Before long, they saw the pitch-black altar and the statue of the ancient god’s descendant.

Zaratul remained sitting diagonally behind the statue, wearing a hood and sporting a white beard.

When “Gehrman Sparrow” and Panatiya approached, “He” slowly lifted his head and chuckled.

“Very good. Beyonders from the Seer pathway need to know how to use their brain and not always think of fighting.”

“He” seemed to have foreseen that all of the paper figurines of “Gehrman Sparrow” would be destroyed. “He” directly reached out “His” wrinkled palm and grasped at something. “His” grab pulled out a yellowish-brown goatskin and a quill filled with ink and a bottle of ink.

This made Panatiya involuntarily twitch her brows.

Zaratul picked up the quill and scribbled words and symbols before rolling it up and handing it to “Gehrman Sparrow.”

“That’s the door-opening symbol, as well as the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula you want.

“They can only last for forty-five minutes and cannot be taken out.”

Klein avoided the Demoness of Despair and unfolded the goatskin, allowing the potion formula and the door-opening symbol to appear before his eyes.

Suddenly, his pupils constricted and nearly froze.

The door-opening symbol and the symbol provided by the Antigonus family’s notebook via the Misfortune Cloth Puppet were mostly the same. It was a vertical eye made up of many mysterious patterns and labels representing concealment!

However, there were tiny differences in the details. A crescent pattern had switched spots with a dotted-line label!

Chapter 842 - Behind the Door

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At that instant, the first thought that surfaced in Klein’s mind was: As expected, Zaratul has a ploy!

Right on the heels of that, he was thankful that he had obtained the correct door-opening symbol from the Antigonus family’s notebook ahead of time. With this newfound confidence, he didn’t panic and become at a loss.

Zaratul returned the quill and ink bottle to the past, and he lifted his head. Scanning “Gehrman Sparrow” and Panatiya, he said with a sigh, “All the conditions are in place. You can now open the door.”

Upon saying that, he fixed his gaze on “Gehrman Sparrow” and chuckled.

“Don’t forget to take my urn with you.”

Just as he said that, his entire body suddenly crumbled into countless points of light and scattered into the surroundings, fusing into the void. It was as though he had long rotted and turned to dust.

Left in the spot where he was sitting, there was a tin urn. Its surface had ancient patterns that didn’t look anything special.

Klein made “Gehrman Sparrow” take two steps forward, bend down, and pick up the tin urn. He found it heavy, nothing like something that was fake.

He used the hand holding the goatskin to open the lid and saw that it was filled with grayish-white powder and particles. It didn't have a lustrous glow.

It really is just ordinary ashes? Then who helped cremate Zaratul? He cremated himself? After "Gehrman Sparrow" closed the lid, he casually used this goatskin-wielding hand to take out a piece of flesh from a pocket and swallowed it.

Panatiya noticed this action as she squinted her eyes at him as though she was asking what he was doing.

Klein stuffed the fish into the marionette's mouth as he deliberately adjusted his breathing and said, "I'm a little nervous.

"I'm not sure if this door-opening symbol works."

Panatiya had already confirmed that he was eating ordinary fish meat. Although it looked somewhat disgusting, the half-crazy her had lacked the patience to make a further distinction. She moved her gaze away and looked at the urn and smiled.

"If it's useless, we can share it.

"I'll have one scoop a day, and it will last a very long time."

This Demoness's mental state is really abnormal… Klein silently sighed. Passing by the Eraser angel statue suspected to be the Mother of the Sky, "Gehrman Sparrow" came in front of the wall.

Then, he turned his body to the side and pointed to the inset and said to Panatiya, "Place that obsidian rock inside."

Panatiya smiled gorgeously as she said with dull eyes, "Let me see the door-opening symbol first."

There's no need to be so wary of me. If I really wanted to harm you, I can immediately give up my marionette, and you wouldn't have the time to escape this cathedral. You'll definitely be hung up. When the time comes, I'll saunter in, pick up the obsidian rock, and open the door to leave… However, the symbol given by Zaratul is really problematic. It's best I find a person to bear the brunt of it… Klein's mind whirred as he made "Gehrman Sparrow" lift his palm and pat his abdomen while opening his mouth.

A blob of indistinct flesh and blood surged out, piling up ahead and turning into the beautiful feminine Mr. A.

Upon seeing this scene, "Gehrman Sparrow" flicked the goatskin and unrolled it.

The special symbol was with the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula as they were reflected in the eyes of Panatiya and Mr. A.

Panatiya's eyes darted about before she smiled coquettishly and said, "Open the door. You leave first."

She had confirmed that "Gehrman Sparrow" was still helping her control her Spirit Body Threads, so there was plenty of time for her to wait.

As she spoke, she threw the ugly puppet stained with blood and tied up hair at him.

She's also afraid of an accident… As Klein got "Gehrman Sparrow" to catch the puppet, he watched the Demoness of Despair take a few steps forward and insert the obsidian rock into the recess.

The two fused together perfectly, not leaving any protrusions.

The wall rapidly emitted light and gradually turned transparent. It could be seen that the outside was paved in stone slabs. There were walls with holes and clouds floating in midair.

As Panatiya took a step to the side, "Gehrman Sparrow" held the puppet, goatskin, and urn in his left hand and reached out his right palm. He then used his finger as a pen and drew the vertical line made up of several concealment symbols on the transparent wall.

During this process, Klein was in a dilemma. He wasn't sure if he should draw Zaratul's symbol or the Antigonus family's one.

Although he believed that Zaratul was problematic and had a scheme, he felt that he had belittled this powerful figure after calming down. If Zaratul's sole purpose was to harm him and everyone else with him, there was no need for him to mention the opening of the door. All he needed to do was wait patiently to achieve his goals.

Furthermore, with the gray fog's aura completely severed and screened from Klein by the foggy town, he couldn't figure out why Zaratul would target him.

Therefore, his final judgment was that Zaratul's goal was to coax someone into opening the door to allow "Him" to obtain something or escape something. As for whether there was danger after the door opening, that wasn't within "His" considerations. If scattering the ashes was genuine and rather important, it was likely to be relatively safe after heading out. In short, danger was at every turn.

That also meant that Zaratul's door-opening symbol was real, and the probability that it didn't carry any danger was 50%.

And on the other hand, the Antigonus family's notebook wasn't necessarily "kind-hearted." The scene that Klein had seen from the divinations he did above the gray fog, and the information he obtained from Zaratul, and the fact that Zaratul had lost control and gone mad, he could basically determine that the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range's Antigonus family's treasure might very well be an enticing trap. Then, whether there was any latent risks in the complex picture provided by the notebook, that was something that needed consideration.

On the one hand it's a tiger, and on the other hand it's a wolf. It's the ultimate choice of the lesser evil… Also, the Antigonus family's symbol is for entering the treasure trove. It doesn't mean that it can be used to leave… As Klein contemplated, he didn't stop drawing while he quickly approached the part which was different.

At this moment, he stole a glance at Panatiya and discovered that her eyes had a glint in them as she wore a smile. It felt like she had the urge to try.

She… If she's normal, as a senior Instigator, she should be able to control her expressions… Besides, she just saw the door-opening symbol as well… Klein's heart stirred as he let the marionette draw the symbol provided by Zaratul.

Soon, the complicated vertical eye was drawn.

Pure light enveloped the area as they traversed the patterns and finally gathered together.

Amidst a spectacular blast of light, an illusory, double door filled with secrecy appeared on the wall. Due to the push from "Gehrman Sparrow," it slowly opened.

Behind the door was the ancient stone tiles and hole-ridden walls they had previously seen. Everything was very silent and there were zero abnormalities.

At this moment, Panatiya's figure suddenly shattered, turning into mirror fragments.

At the same time, the lady in a pure white robe appeared in front of "Gehrman Sparrow" and passed through the door.

And in her hand, there was an additional ugly puppet stained with blood, its neck coiled with a strand of hair.

As for the one in "Gehrman Sparrow"'s hand, it had degenerated into a piece of glass.

In terms of magical illusions, a Demoness of Despair was several times superior to Klein.

After Panatiya passed through the door first, she half-turned around and faced “Gehrman Sparrow,” revealing a crazy and teasing smile. Black flames soared from her palm as she ignited the puppet.

At that moment, it was as though she was saying, “Despair! Plunge into the deepest pit of despair just as hope arrives!”

Only then did Klein realize that the curse couldn’t be diverted or weathered by Paper Figurine Substitutes!

Panatiya immediately turned around, preparing to depart from the foggy town and the ancient cathedral, afraid that an accident would happen.

At that moment, her eyes suddenly froze.

Her body crumbled, transforming into one mirror after another. However, she wasn’t able to put a distance further than ten meters between her and the door.

In just a second or two, Panatiya let out a sharp cry as invisible threads and thick, black hair curled around her, binding her within. Her exterior was covered in black flames as she froze into layers of ice.

Suddenly, all of this disintegrated. Demoness of Despair Panatiya’s eyes effused clear, deep despair and regret.

Her expression rapidly turned stiff as her neck seemed to be held up by an invisible hand. Her entire body rose into the air and hung there, her eyes rolling back bit by bit, but her looks remained immaculate.

On the side of the door, “Gehrman Sparrow”’s body had been enveloped in black flames and began melting like wax. As for Mr. A who had planned on flying through the door, he began retching, vomiting one fresh mushroom after another. His body began to sprout mushrooms as if a drizzle had just passed.

Before “Gehrman Sparrow” lost his vision, the scene behind the door pulled close, presenting an empty foyer.

No, it wasn’t empty. Hanging in midair were even more corpses. They were of all ages and sexes. Some were dressed exquisitely, others gorgeously, ancient, or casually.

These corpses were like the ones hanging in the cathedral. They all floated up as they came and went as though they were acting in a grand musical, accurately reflecting a musical of the daily lives and details a town should have!

Klein saw that, behind these hanged corpses, there was a transparent and slimy tentacle. It was covered in complex patterns with secrecy hidden within. It was as though it could drive anyone crazy.

Countless tentacles extended deep into the foyer, and there sat an ancient, huge stone chair. Its surface was inlaid with dull gold and gems.

This… Klein tensed up as he didn’t hesitate to close his eyes and cut his connection with the marionette!

In his mind, the scene that he had seen from his previous divination surfaced.

Seated on the huge chair were countless translucent maggots that clustered together. They squirmed slowly as they grew freely, extending out nearly invisible tentacles.

And the final scene that was embedded in the marionette’s vision was at the bottom of the ancient chair. A tarot card sat there silently.

Its surface was also that of Roselle. The emperor was wearing a gorgeous head accessory and colorful clothes. It held a stick with luggage hanging from it as though he was on a long trip.

He had a visionary look, and beside him was a puppy. At the corner were shiny words: “Sequence 0: The Fool!”

Chapter 843 - Magical Mushroom

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“Sequence 0: The Fool!”

After discerning the words on the tarot card, Klein once again felt the same feeling he had when he heard Zaratul say his name.

At that moment, he felt the strong call of destiny. He felt that everything had been arranged from the beginning, just like 0-08.

He began to suspect that his original judgment, believing that the female beast tamer from the traveling circus that had visited Tingen and performed a tarot divination for him wasn’t an ordinary person.

As his thoughts raced, Klein viewed it from another angle and came up with a new idea. Gradually, he stopped being that horrified, fearful, and depressed.

Perhaps it wasn’t a machination but the changes that I brought about myself.

This is because of the ritual that resulted in my transmigration. I had a connection with the mysterious space above the gray fog. Fate would naturally be affected as a result. More precisely, as a visitor from another world, I never had my “fate” here. The current trajectory I’ve taken is a result of my character, the encounters of the original Klein, the influence of the gray fog, and the surrounding environment.

The mysterious space above the gray fog is clearly strongly tied to the Seer pathway. And this pathway’s Sequence 0 is The Fool. When projected into reality, and in front of a divination, I'll definitely get The Fool as my card!

Similarly, this resulted in me later using The Fool as my name.

Klein's mood calmed down bit by bit, believing that this was the most plausible explanation.

Using Occam's Razor to eliminate all presently unknown factors, I can still obtain a reasonable explanation. That means that it's quite likely to be the case… Klein forced himself to stop thinking about questions he couldn't provide certain answers to. He then turned his attention to what had just happened.

That huge chair and that cluster of translucent maggots were what I saw when I made a divination above the gray fog.

From carefully considering and inferring things from this harrowing scene, it might very well be an angel from the Seer pathway, an angel that had lost control and turned into a monster!

Zaratul "Himself"?

Or the powerful entity from the Antigonus family from the Fourth Epoch?

If it's the former, that corroborates with Arrodes and Will Auceptin. Zaratul is already Sequence 1 and has lost control and gone made. "He" broke down into a monster. This matches… This can also explain why Zaratul only wishes for the door to be opened. It's because once the door of secrets is opened, the two sides will have a connection, allowing "Him" to recover from "His" present state bit by bit. "His" repeated emphasis on "His" ashes was just a pretense.

But herein lies the problem. The environment Zaratul is located in, as presented by Arrodes, doesn't resemble the ancient palace at the mountain peak. Otherwise, I would've recognized it back then.

What if that's the angel from the Antigonus family who's living as an abject existence, one that made Zaratul suffer after "He" came to the Hornacis mountain range after obtaining the notebook from Roselle? "He" had a part of him separated from "Him" without realizing it; thus, causing "Him" to go mad during the advancement. Regardless, "He" is a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries. After all, Zaratul was already a Miracle Invoker back then…

From this angle, Zaratul's goal might very well be the opening of the door, allowing the foggy town's history and fate to become mixed with the outside world, preventing "Him" from being dissociated again.

Regardless, that cluster of translucent maggots is probably a Sequence 1 that lost control. No wonder the Demoness of Despair faced a breakdown the moment she saw "Him." She only managed to struggle a little before being hung up, turning into a marionette that's being hung up to dry. Thankfully, I was lacking in clues back then, and the scenes I saw through divination wasn't clear enough. Otherwise, I would've suffered a terrible blow from witnessing a complete and crazy Mythical Creature. I would've lost control and mutated…

Wait, no matter how strong "He" is, can "He" be stronger than the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator? Even if a Seer pathway Beyonder has a certain resistance against the mysterious space above the gray fog, it would at best make "Them" be at the same level. In other words, as long as I endured the pain, with the prerequisites met, I have one chance of prying on its secrets, and a complete Mythical Creature's state is mixed in with the relevant knowledge.

Who knows, I might be able to get one or two High-Sequence formulas, just like how I obtained the Unshadowed from the Eternal Blazing Sun back then.

At this thought, Klein couldn't help but have a scene surface in his mind.

The Fool above the gray fog was silently reaching out his thieving hands once again.

While reeling in joy, Klein also found it a great pity because, with his present level, strength, and items, he had no way to head to the ancient chair with the translucent maggots and pick up The Fool card.

To see an item that one desired the most but not being able to obtain it was often painful.

Phew… At least I've already obtained the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula. In the future, I still have once chance of prying on its secrets. The risk I took this time wasn't in vain. All the gold pounds I spent and the marionette I lost wasn't in vain either… Hmm, Zaratul likely wouldn't give a fake formula. To "Him," there's no need for him to lie to a Sequence 5 Beyonder who might not walk out alive. Besides, if "He" was lying, he had to be wary of me already knowing the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula. The reason why I asked might only be to determine if "He" was worth trusting… I'll divine this later when I'm back above the gray fog… Klein heaved a sigh of relief, and seeing that there hadn't been any anomalies outside for quite a while, he decided to immediately approach the pitch-black cathedral and observe the changes inside.

To him, all the problems that he thought about weren't pressing issues. The pressing issue was to leave the secret world, to leave this foggy town!

When he came out of the building he was in, Klein, who was wearing an ancient triangular hat and dark red coat, carefully came to the entrance of the ancient cathedral. He carefully passed through the ajar door and walked in.

The corpses that looked and dressed differently were no different from before. They remained hanging in midair, swaying with the wind and producing the ravings of "Hornacis… Flegrea…"

Klein walked under them as his eyes got accustomed to the dim environment, allowing him to see more.

The half demonic wolf-and half-human statue was still standing there without any signs of damage. The obsidian rock and the tin urn were behind the statue without any signs of cracking.

Klein first heaved a sigh of relief as he began to observe his surroundings when his gaze froze.

In a dark corner stood a gigantic mushroom taller than he was.

The mushroom's cap had scarlet-red like blood with interspersed white patterns. Its body was formed out of similar tiny mushrooms. Their patterns drew out a face—Mr. A's face.

However, Mr. A's "eyes" were blank. It didn't have the glint that one would call human. There were mushrooms growing from both sides of the stem, forming into long arms. And on the left palm was a thin human-skinned glove. Both parties had seemed to fuse as one.

…What kind of abomination is that… Klein involuntarily took a step back. He found his knowledge in mysticism completely lacking at that moment in time.

He began taking actions to protect himself. While doing so, having not deactivated his corresponding visions, he discovered that the terrifying mushroom didn't have any Spirit Body Threads. It appeared to have long been dead, and its only movements were the results of spasming nerves.

Suddenly, Klein had a theory.

Mr. A, who had been infested with mushrooms, didn't manage to escape in time and had seen the cluster of translucent maggots. He had seen a complete Mythical Creature, causing his mind to instantly die as his body collapsed completely. This also resulted in a terrifying mutation. It then merged with Senor who had disintegrated from the curse, becoming a never-seen-before mushroom monster!

Also, Creeping Hunger has been swallowed… This “mushroom” is really disgusting. I’ll throw Frank into the sea if he ever mentions mushrooms again… Klein’s eyes darted around slightly as he subconsciously headed for the obsidian rock. He planned on ignoring the “mushroom” and first escape.

At this moment, he found his mind turning adrift. Everything around him seemed to turn into a blur.

Suddenly, Klein realized that he was being forcefully pulled into a dream!

He immediately escaped the dream and saw the nearly two-meter-tall “mushroom” sliding over slowly. In its hand was a great sword that was a combination of scarlet magma and blue-hot flames.

It can use Sword of Lava… Klein didn’t hesitate as he opened his mouth and let out a sound: “Bang!”

The extremely penetrative Air Bullet hit the “mushroom” who had slowed down due to it being engaged in controlling dreams. The bullet drilled through its cap, tearing open a huge wound.

Underneath the wound was human flesh and tiny spores. They quickly squirmed and restored the “body.”

To think that’s possible… Klein felt a strong sense of danger as he hurriedly lunged to the side, rolling several times in the process.

The “mushroom” sped up suddenly as the Sword of Lava in its hand dragged scarlet and blue flames, cleaving down at the spot Klein had been standing at. It caused the floor tiles to rupture as flames scattered.

At this moment, Klein snapped his fingers, igniting the tiny mushrooms that formed the monster.

Then, he ran towards the back of the statue in an attempt to obtain the obsidian rock.

But finding his thoughts go adrift for a moment, Klein realized that he was going in the wrong direction.

He was rushing towards the entrance.

It can distort my will? Klein's heart tightened as he noticed through the corner of his eye that the surface of the gigantic "mushroom" was covered in a layer of frost. The frost had extinguished the soaring scarlet flames.

As his thoughts raced, Klein ran towards the door and snapped his fingers, igniting the tree leaves outside.

In situations with zero understanding about his enemy, and him having not made any preparations, he believed that a Magician had to choose to retreat and avoid dangers for the time being.

More importantly, his strongest Marionettist powers were useless because the gigantic "mushroom" didn't have any Spirit Body Threads!

Scarlet flames soared up like water, enveloping Klein's body. He quickly appeared in the flames outside as he jumped towards the ground.

He was just about to distance himself when he heard a howling wind.

The red-capped "mushroom" had come out of the cathedral with the auspices of a strong gust of wind!

It can even fly! Klein snapped his fingers, using Flaming Jump to open up a gap.

Meanwhile, he discovered his nose was itching as he wanted to sneeze.

I'm also sick… How am I supposed to fight? I don't have any mystical items, and I haven't been able to fully express my strengths as a Marionettist… It really is a magical mushroom! Klein was at a loss on whether to laugh or cry when he hid inside a building.

Suddenly, he felt his body become somewhat cold as his mind naturally reflected his present appearance.

His ancient triangular hat, dark red coat, white pants, and black boots had vanished. All he had on him was a pair of briefs to uphold his last bit of dignity.

This… Thirty minutes are up. The spell for summoning Senor from the past has ended… Klein instantly understood the reason as he began thinking.

That "mushroom" which fused with parts of Admiral of Blood has likely disappeared as well…

Also, in another fifteen minutes, the effects of the "fish" will disappear. It will lack the main element that forms it…

Klein couldn't help but curl his lips. He immediately used flames and leaped out. Indeed, as he expected, the gigantic "mushroom" had a ridiculous hole in part of its stem. Furthermore, it couldn't fix it, causing its speed to slow and become impeded.

Come on, let's play hide-and-seek… Klein silently said as he began circling the town's streets, using the flames and buildings to engage in a merry chase with the gigantic "mushroom."

During this process, the crimson moon didn't turn clear at all.

After more than ten minutes, the terrifying "mushroom" finally lost its ability to move as it collapsed on the street.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he slowly and carefully approached. He saw that the flesh and blood of the "mushroom" was gathering together as points of light converged. Soon, all that was left was a thin human-skinned glove.

This… because of the mutation brought about by the Sequence 1 angel, Creeping Hunger fused with Mr. A? It's an upgraded version of Creeping Hunger? Klein bent his back as he carefully picked up the human-skinned glove.

Chapter 844 - Which Symbol

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The thin human-skinned glove didn't look any different from the past, but Klein didn't dare to be too careless. He used divination to make a crude inspection.

Apart from the five fingers, the palm and the back of the palm can each Graze one more soul…

Currently, all seven spots are filled. It has signs of similar Beyonder characteristics fusing together…

It also seems to have the powers of flesh and blood magic…

The speed of switching souls has sped up significantly…

It has to eat a person a day, or else it will eat its owner. Heh, Creeping Hunger, you are swelling in self-importance again. You need to reflect on yourself above the gray fog later.

I'm temporarily unable to obtain any revelations for the rest. After I leave this place, I'll head above the gray fog to make a more accurate divination.

Yes, I'm still not sure if there are any other side effects. All I know is that it wouldn't cause me any harm for the time being.

Also, Mr. X who was Grazed wasn't affected. Traveler's Traveling and Door Opening still work.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he wore the upgraded Creeping Hunger.

Then, he rushed for the cathedral, hoping to leave as soon as possible.

During his merry chase with the gigantic “mushroom,” he hadn’t forgotten to cast an illusion on himself to make him wear a trench coat and a top hat.

As for the Beyonder characteristic that Senor left behind, Klein suspected that it was likely in the hands of Demoness of Despair Panatiya. And this demigod was being hung inside the ancient palace, under the watch of the cluster of maggots.

Sigh, flesh can be slowly eaten to be stored for the future, but Beyonder characteristics will definitely have appeared and taken form after this much time. Even if Demoness of Despair didn’t care too much about it and threw it somewhere, in this place that isn’t connected to the spirit world and highly restricts divination, I’m unable to quickly locate it. And in this sort of environment, who knows what sorts of anomalies will happen next. Who knows if that obsidian rock will automatically teleport and disappear. Thus, I need to make every second count and escape as quickly as possible… Klein returned to the cathedral with a clear line of thought.

Although he had promised Miss Sharron to sell Senor’s Beyonder characteristic to Maric, the ingredient itself was corrupted to begin with, making it difficult to use for the concocting of a potion. Secondly, his safety was a lot more important.

It’s not like it cannot be resolved. I can just hunt another Wraith or find Will Auceptin’s help to shatter the Beyonder characteristic in Maric’s hands and allow it to be purified. Hmm, this will have to wait until a particular infant is born… Klein mumbled silently as he passed through the swaying corpses and came to the side of the stone statue.

Along the way, he found the iron cigar case which he had used to put the marionette in. It hadn’t been devoured by the “mushroom.” Azik’s copper whistle and the Loen gold coin inside weren’t damaged either.

Putting these items away, Klein controlled his Spirit Body Threads to prevent himself from floating to the top of the cathedral as he bent down to pick up the obsidian rock.

After confirming that the important item wasn't damaged, he felt a lot calmer. He then inspected Zaratul's tin urn.

When he opened the lid and took a careful look, Klein's pupils constricted as his gaze instantly froze.

All the ashes inside were gone!

There wasn't any left inside!

Zaratul achieved "His" goal? Should I say as expected… Klein threw away the thin urn while feeling doubtful. He stood up straight and inserted the obsidian rock into the wall at the back.

The wall emitted light again as it turned transparent, allowing people to see the ancient stone slabs outside, the holed walls, and the floating clouds.

At the thought of the cluster of terrifying maggots, Klein wasn't in a rush to draw the symbol provided by the Antigonus family's notebook. He first raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

He had ignited a tree outside the cathedral, in preparation to escape with Flaming Jump the moment something wasn't right.

After making his preparations, Klein used his finger and quickly outlined the vertical eye formed of many concealment symbols. Compared to the previous one, a crescent and dotted line had swapped places.

With his final stroke, the pure beams of light bloomed as they followed the vertical eye's patterns before blasting into a radiant light!

The entire cathedral turned ethereal as it shook.

Klein felt as though he had instantly arrived at the top where the corpses were being hung. In front of him was a pair of illusory double doors. Behind the door was a familiar ancient palace. It was where Panatiya and the other corpses were gently swaying.

Translucent tentacles with strange and mysterious patterns swarmed over and slammed on the door but were unable to open it. All it could do was use some of its strength to "grab" Klein's Spirit Body Threads!

Klein didn't hesitate to snap his fingers. While pulling at his Spirit Body Threads, he leaped to the flames outside the cathedral.

Right on the heels of that, he snapped his fingers repeatedly and flashed away, escaping to the farthest point of the foggy town.

After the ethereal feeling of the pitch-black cathedral vanished, Klein paused and frowned.

That also leads to the palace with the rampaging angel…

The symbol provided by the Antigonus family's notebook is as much of a trap as Zaratul's was!

However, this symbol only seems capable of triggering the door to escape, but it's unable to open it. Otherwise, I might not have been able to escape…

It's the symbol for entry, while Zaratul's one was for exiting?

What should I do… How do I leave?

Klein subconsciously surveyed the ghastly silent town which was shrouded in fog, and he forced himself to calm down. He began to think about how he could escape.

Perhaps that's not the only wall that allows me to leave, but it's unlikely. All these years, there have been batches of people coming to the foggy town. If there are any clues outside the cathedral, they should have long found it.

Try another symbol?

What should I try…

Klein fell into deep thought as he analyzed the intricacies to see if he could be inspired.

This place is related to the Nation of the Evernight and the Antigonus family. As for the monster on the huge throne in the ancient palace, it's definitely a rampaging angel from the Seer pathway, regardless of "His" identity…

Zaratul, who's also involved in this matter, is similarly an angel of the Seer pathway. The Antigonus family's notebook which provided the symbol is also directly tied to this pathway…

Therefore, the correct door-opening symbol is likely related to the Seer pathway?

Sequence 0 of the Seer pathway is likely called The Fool… This can be initially confirmed; otherwise, that owner of the Card of Blasphemy wouldn't have been lured to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range and become a hanger…

The Fool… The Fool…

As he ruminated over the word, Klein suddenly thought of himself. He thought of the mysterious symbol behind his high-back chair that represented himself above the gray fog!

Perhaps I can give it a try? Klein pondered for a few seconds before deciding to make a bold attempt. After all, he was temporarily out of ideas.

He returned to the spired cathedral, and under the gaze of the hanged corpses, he walked to the wall behind the statue and picked up the obsidian rock that had fallen once again.

After the obsidian rock was inserted, the door rapidly turned transparent. As Klein snapped his fingers to light another tree, he took a deep breath. He drew The Fool's symbol that was made up of the Pupil-less Eye and the partially Contorted Lines.

Soon, he completed the symbol as he found himself feeling anxious.

But this time, nothing happened to the transparent door.

It doesn't work… Klein's expression turned wry as he suspected that he would be trapped in there, engaging in murderous battles with Beyonders who later entered, doing so until he starved to death or was eaten.

He shook his head to dispel his emotions of despair. He began running through ideas in search of other clues.

This place is related to the Nation of the Evernight and is related to the Antigonus family, and they were obliterated by the Church of Evernight.

The one who sent me here is the Eraser angel who's suspected to be the Mother of the Sky. "She" was active in the basement of the Church of Evernight's Saint Samuel Cathedral…

The reason why people vanish if they don't sleep at night in the ruins of the battle of gods is said to be a result of the remnant aura and strength of a deity from the Evernight domain.

Therefore, this is clearly related to the Evernight's authority or even the Evernight Goddess, uh—areas related to the Goddess.

The more Klein thought about it, the more he lacked confidence. He was originally analyzing the problem from an objective angle, but he had unknowingly changed the way he addressed the Evernight Goddess.

And this led him to a new idea.

Perhaps I can try the label corresponding to the Dark Sacred Emblem or the symbol that represents the Goddess in mysticism?

Out of options, Klein exhaled and raised his right hand again, drawing the simplified picture of the Dark Sacred Emblem.

Suddenly, the watery scene behind the transparent door shook as a change occurred.

Although he could still see the ancient palace and the hole-ridden wall, they were very far away and could only be faintly made out!

Behind the door was a bottomless cliff with jagged rocks. It was amidst the clouds in the sky with stars and the crimson moon that hadn't been concealed by the sunlight. It was like some part of a mountaintop!

…It really works… Klein stared at this scene with a dumbfounded expression as he subconsciously reached out with his palms and pushed the door open.

There was a cold breeze outside that produced a howl.

Klein was just about to take a step out when he fell into thought and paused.

Then, he flipped a gold coin and did a divination. He received a revelation that there was no danger outside.

Following that, he drew a crimson moon on his chest in a feigned manner.

After doing this, Klein stepped out with his right foot and passed through the illusory door.

His vision went dark as he saw an endless night and resplendent stars. Following that, he found himself on a mountaintop. Apart from the unmelted snow, jagged rocks, and morning sunlight, there was nothing.

I’m out… I’m safe? Klein didn’t observe his surroundings as he directly used Creeping Hunger to turn transparent as he attempted using Traveling.

If this succeeded, it would mean that he had escaped the foggy town and returned to the real world. He could then leave the location he was at to avoid any danger. If he were to fail, he would quickly take note of the situation and be wary of any sudden attacks.

After a moment, Klein’s body turned faint as he vanished from the spot. The colors in front of him saturated as countless, indescribable shadows appeared.

He had succeeded in entering the spirit world!

Chapter 845 - Return

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It really is the spirit world… Klein was delighted as he inwardly muttered to himself.

Without needing further confirmation, his spirituality and spiritual perception had told him that this was the real spirit world!

And this meant that he had returned to the real world, the place with all kinds of delicacies.

I nearly cried tears of joy… Klein inwardly made a self-deprecating comment as he considered where he was supposed to head to next.

From the position of the stars, moon, and sun, it's still morning. If there's no time difference between the real world and the foggy town, it's at most 7:30 a.m., or maybe earlier. At this point, the servants must've discovered the disappearance of their mate, and they would definitely inform the priests and bishops.

Even if they have received the corresponding training and would report to their superiors according to the protocol, they will have to first eliminate the possibility that someone was skiving away or having a stomachache. They would need more than ten minutes before confirming this and begin taking the necessary actions.

And after the report to their superiors, the priests and bishops wouldn't be able to instantly tell the severity of the matter. They would only believe that the servant had escaped, and they wouldn't quickly connect this matter to the Keepers. After they do a divination or investigation to figure out the truth, it would be twenty to thirty minutes later.

That also means that they likely haven't begun their search in the surrounding area to find the intruder. The identity of Dwayne Dantès hasn't been exposed yet.

Hmm, if the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula given by Zaratul is real, then the identity of Dwayne Dantès still has many uses. If I can still keep the identity going, I should try harder to not abandon it.

Besides, the only things that I'm wearing, which are real, are my glove and underwear. If I head elsewhere, I'll be a pervert…

Klein already had a choice he was leaning towards. He took out the iron cigar case, which appeared to be inside his pocket, but was actually lodged under a rubber band. He opened it and took out the gold coin inside.

"Returning to 160 Böklund Street is dangerous," Klein muttered seven times, and with a flick, he saw it slowly spin in the spirit world, wobbling up and down, left and right, before landing on his palm.

This time, it was tails, indicating a negative response!

Klein nodded indiscernibly and immediately traveled towards Backlund.

After three stops, his figure finally appeared in his room at 160 Böklund Street. The curtains were drawn tightly and it was dim. It was very suitable for sleeping.

And on the bed, Dwayne Dantès was lying on the bed facing up. His hands were grabbing the ends of the blanket near his neck.

From the looks of it, the investigation hasn't reached me… This appearance is ridiculous… Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief and saw "Dwayne Dantès" dissipate and turn into a palm-sized mirror.

Water ripples appeared on the mirror's surface as silver light bloomed and turned into Loenese text:

"Exalted Great Master, did you encounter something? Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, failed to sense you before!"

"It wasn't anything important," Klein answered perfunctorily.

This made him confirm that Arrodes was unable to pry into the secrets that happened in the foggy town. After all, this fellow was able to present the environment where the rampaging Zaratul was.

It really is related to the authorities of a deity? Klein's mind stirred as he asked, "Did anyone look for me?"

"No, no one came to disturb you." The silver on the mirror's surface changed and produced new words.

Klein felt truly relieved as he said to Arrodes, "You may leave. I'll summon you again if needed."

"Alright, Master. Goodbye, Master~" Like before, Arrodes produced a drawing of a hand waving on the mirror.

After the aqueous light vanished, the mirror was restored to normal. Klein walked to the bedside and pulled out the pajamas underneath and wore it.

Then, he took out candles and other items before entering the bathroom. He set up a sacrificial ritual, preparing to send Creeping Hunger, Azik's copper whistle, the iron cigar case, and the various mysticism materials above the gray fog to avoid any investigations he might face.

After doing all of this, Klein didn't delay and sat at The Fool's seat. He conjured the Bizarro Sorcerer's potion formula in front of him.

"Sequence 4: Bizarro Sorcerer.

“Main ingredient: Bizarro Bane’s main eye, the true soul body of a Spirit World Plunderer.

“Supplementary ingredients: 200 ml of a Bizarro Bane’s blood, 30 grams of a Spirit World Plunderer, 10 grams of Red-hair Birch bark. One segment of golden grapevines, fingernail-sized Self-made Rubber Mask.

“Advancement ritual: Relying on one’s strength and strategy, orchestrate a grand performance before many spectators to kill a Beyonder creature at the level of a demigod. Then, at the end of the performance, consume the potion.”

Klein didn’t consider what this ritual actually meant. Beneath the potion formula, he wrote a corresponding statement.

Following that, he summoned a spirit pendulum from the junk pile. Holding it in his left hand, he began a divination.

Before long, Klein opened his eyes and saw the dangling topaz rotating clockwise.

This meant that the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula he had was genuine!

Phew… Klein exhaled as he took the opportunity to determine what kind of changes Creeping Hunger had experienced, as well as what the various negative side effects were.

After a dream divination and several direct attempts, he figured out the exact situation in less than two minutes.

Creeping Hunger could now Graze seven souls. During each Grazing process, it could obtain two or three Beyonder powers. One of them can be chosen by the wearer.

There are currently eight souls inside Creeping Hunger. The others completely dissipated from the mutation brought about by the Attendant of Mysteries. And due to the excessive number of souls, it caused a “congestion,” making some of the powers unusable. One soul needs to be released to restore it back to normal.

At present, the first of the eight souls is Baron of Corruption, which is Wormtongue Mithor. He fused with the Beyonder characteristics of the same pathway that Mr. A had Grazed. Apart from Distortion and Bribe—Weaken, there’s another area of effect Beyonder power called Corrosion. It can turn the hearts of people within ten meters dark and greedy, making them make irrational choices.

The second is Desire Apostle Kircheis. He fused with Mr. A’s Devil and replaced Danger Premonition, which requires advanced activation before being useful, with Sulfur Fireball. And Language of Foulness—Slow and Sword of Lava have been enhanced.

Third is Traveler, Mr. X Lewis Wien. He fused with Mr. A’s Scribe. While keeping Traveling and Door-Opening, it has obtained the Beyonder power of Record. However, there’s a change. It’s unable to record ordinary Beyonder powers, and it can only be used against targets at the demigod level. The chance of success has been increased. Although it’s still very troublesome, eight times or so would be needed as long as I’m not too unlucky. In addition, it cannot record more than two demigod-level Beyonder powers, and cannot exceed Sequence 3.

Fourth is Zombie Maveti. There hasn’t been any change. It’s still the original Zombie Strength, Ice Control and Zombie Manipulation.

Fifth is an unknown Demoness of Affliction. She can give the user a rather powerful sense of charm. In addition, one’s appearance would receive an adjustment to a certain degree. In addition, she can provide an ailment that covers 50 meters. Creatures within that range will slowly be infected, and the effects slowly become severe. In the beginning, it might be oversensitive skin, a cold, or a fever. But twenty to thirty seconds later, it might very well turn into serious illnesses like pneumonia. After two or three minutes, one can suddenly suffer cardiac arrest or a brain aneurysm.

Sixth is an unknown Wind-blessed. There are three Beyonder powers—Short-distance Flight, Dive, and Water Control.

Seventh is an unknown Soul Assurer with the two Beyonder powers of forcefully pulling one into a dream and causing a Spirit Body to sleep.

Eighth is an unknown Doctor with the three Beyonder powers of distinguishing the time, treatment of serious ailments, and stitching souls.

At the same time, Creeping Hunger itself has Shadow Lurking and Flesh Bomb. Furthermore, it has the chance and strength to barely Graze a Sequence 4 saint.

It has instantly become so much stronger… As Klein was secretly delighted, he also frowned at the negative side effects.

Now, Creeping Hunger had to eat a living person every day, otherwise it would devour the wearer. At the same time, it would praise the True Creator from time to time in the wearer's mind. It would bring about chaotic thoughts and a headache. Apart from those two, it was also still afraid of mushrooms. No powers could be used if mushrooms appeared within five meters of it.

To randomly praise the True Creator is really troublesome. Same for eating a living person every day… I'll first throw it above the gray fog and let it calm down for a few days. Perhaps there might be some changes. If that really doesn't work, I can only write to Mr. Azik… Klein quickly made up his mind and didn't hesitate to release the Soul Assurer's soul.

He also planned on swapping the Wind-blessed and Doctor later. The Demoness of Affliction depended on the circumstances.

To the side of the bronze table, the Soul Assurer's spirit surfaced. But due to the mutation, it couldn't be maintained once it lost its host. It rapidly dissipated.

His Beyonder characteristic was produced. It was entirely black in color. At its core was pure shimmering light that looked like a night sky with embedded stars.

After doing this, Klein didn't hesitate to throw Creeping Hunger and the other items into the junk pile. He then quickly returned to the real world, ended the ceremony, and cleared up any traces.

Following that, he washed his face and brushed his teeth to make Dwayne Dantès look sharp.

After leaving the bathroom, Klein, in his pajamas, walked to the door with his usual expression. He pulled open the door and said to his valet outside, "Prepare a set of clothes that's suitable for home wear."

"Yes, sir." Richardson didn't ask why as he immediately walked to the wardrobe.

Only at this point, with him seeing his servant's back, did Klein confirm that he was out of harm's way and had returned back to his normal life.

Chapter 846 - Find the Target

◆

Saint Samuel Cathedral, behind Chanis Gate.

Backlund Archbishop, Saint Anthony, stood at the staircase connecting the two different stories and watched as the Nighthawk deacons rushed about. Many of them wore red gloves.

As a spokesperson for the Church of Evernight in the kingdom's capital, Saint Anthony had a clean-shaven face. His face didn't betray his mood, and his deep black eyes similarly hid any upheavals he had. But everyone who passed by him would feel their souls tremble as an indescribable sense of horror arose in their hearts.

"Your Grace, an inventory count has been made. None of the mysticism ingredients are missing, including the potion main ingredients and Beyonder characteristics…"

"Your Grace, all the potion formulas are in their original locations. It can be preliminarily determined that no one had gone through them in the last eight hours…"

"Your Grace, all of the prisoners imprisoned on the first level are accounted for. None of them escaped, nor did anyone pass away…"

"Your Grace, none of the information or books suffered any damage or were moved…"

"Your Grace, the Grade 2 and Grade 3 Sealed Artifacts are all present. None of them have been taken away…"

"Your Grace, the three Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts remain in their sealed states. None of them show signs of having left their confines…"

"Your Grace, the core seal remains intact and didn't suffer any damage…"

"Your Grace, it has been confirmed that there are no new items in here. There are no remnant setups that bring about danger…"

"Your Grace, we didn't find the enemy who disguised himself as a Keeper. H-he seems to have evaporated into thin air…"

One deacon after another came over to make a report as the matter gradually turned somewhat odd.

They found it unimaginable that a scheming and powerful Beyonder would take such an immense risk and set up such a tight plan and use all kinds of means to pass through Chanis Gate. Yet, nothing was taken, and the perpetrator had left after circling the area once!

This made it seem like the person was only trying to prove themselves, or it was someone who had specially come to find flaws in the surveillance of Chanis Gate for the Church.

The deacon who led a Red Gloves team surveyed the area and deliberated as he came up with a theory.

"Your Grace, could it be the requirements of an advancement ritual of some Sequence?"

Having been on a mission to capture Devils, he was accustomed to making such guesses. And from Sequence 5, different pathways and different Sequences had different advancement rituals. The ones that the Church of Evernight was aware of wasn't a large number.

If that were the case, Soest could already see the infiltrator's mockery grin that said, "I'm free to go anywhere, even if it's the Church of Evernight's Chanis Gate. It's no different from a department store.

Those Nighthawks will only become raged after the matter, feeling useless."

He has to be caught! Soest silently clenched his red-gloved hand.

Saint Anthony was just about to say something when Nighthawk deacon, Daly Simone, raised a second possibility.

"Perhaps the infiltrator had attempted to take some Sealed Artifact away and suffered the negative effects. He died on the spot and was cleanly devoured?"

Saint Anthony nodded in thought and said, "I'll head to basement three to take a look."

With that said, he steadily walked to basement two, and in a secret location, activated the path to basement three.

The other deacons were lacking in rank or clearance, so all they could do was wait in their spots.

Saint Anthony quickly arrived at basement three which didn't span too big an area. He basically confirmed that Sealed Artifacts 1-29 and 1-80 hadn't undergone any abnormal changes.

Following the strict protocols, he observed 1-80 with 1-29 and found 0-17 lying inside with eyes half-open, just like always.

During this process, Saint Anthony approached thrice and opened a distance from it thrice. Sometimes, he changed where he stood, and at other times, he cloaked himself in the darkness of the night. He didn't dare skip the necessary steps.

Even as a saint, he didn't dare belittle any of the items in here. Ignoring the powers that would break out of its vessel, temporary causing the seal on 0-17, even 1-29 and 1-80, which were rather dangerous items, to become ineffective. Saint Anthony didn't wish to degenerate into an amnesiac who had to relearn how to eat and drink, much less become part of a dream that existed between reality and illusions.

There's nothing wrong… Anthony heaved a silent sigh of relief. He began restoring the two Sealed Artifacts to their original states.

A few minutes later, the Nighthawk deacons saw the archbishop return.

"The infiltrator might have died from touching a Sealed Artifact," Saint Anthony said, his pronunciation of "died" being somewhat muffled.

He didn't give any additional explanations as he instructed, "Regardless, this matter needs to be investigated. The infiltrator might have a partner!

"To be able to infiltrate Saint Samuel Cathedral without causing a stir, it means that the target is very familiar with this place and is familiar with the recent duty shifts of the Keepers. He's very familiar with how Nighthawks handle and take over matters, and has the ability or an item to change his appearance. In addition, he had obtained the help from a Beyonder with a sacred Evernight pathway item or has one himself.

"Putting all these conditions together, investigate the servants and priests to see if they have encountered any indistinct spirit channeling or enticement. Check if the bishops have betrayed the Goddess, as well as the believers who have recently come to the cathedral on a regular basis… At the same time, check on all the believers and the surroundings of their residences. Perhaps they had unexpectedly divulged something and had something stolen. I'll carry out the investigations pertaining to you.

"Also, find the missing servant and see if there are any clues."

"Yes, Your Grace," Soest and the other Nighthawk deacons answered in unison.

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In the office with a tense mood, Leonard Mitchell wasn't having his feet up on the table like usual. He sat very properly and wore a rather solemn expression.

This was the second time he had encountered a matter that targeted items behind Chanis Gate. It invoked the memories that he buried deep inside his heart.

And more importantly, he had encountered the fake Keeper before without realizing the problem!

I-if I were a little stronger and had better observation skills, perhaps it might not have… Leonard Mitchell's lips pursed tightly as he looked at the documents in front of him, but he wasn't reading a single word. This continued until his teammates entered.

"That Keeper has awoken. He didn't see the infiltrator and only knew that he encountered the possession ability of a Wraith," the Red Glove that entered said to everyone in the room.

"How can a Wraith move about inside the cathedral?" Many Red Gloves raised the question, but no one had an answer.

Perhaps that Wraith believes in the Goddess… Leonard mumbled inwardly. While no one was paying attention to him in the corner, he suppressed his voice and seemed to mutter, "Old Man, didn't you discover anything abnormal back then?"

The slightly-aged voice sounded in his mind:

"It's not like I'll observe the outside world all the time, especially when I'm near Chanis Gate."

Leonard didn't dare ask further as he joined in the discussion with his teammates.

Before long, the Red Gloves team captain, Soest, entered the room and threw a stack of dossiers on the desk.

“These are the targets we need to investigate. The bishops have provided the names of the believers who have frequently come to the cathedral recently.”

Leonard glanced at it, and towards the back was a dossier with a familiar name: Dwayne Dantès!

This… this old fellow that survived from the Fourth Epoch came to a nearby street for less than two months, and Chanis Gate was infiltrated? Isn’t that too much of a coincidence? Besides, he has been frequently coming to Saint Samuel Cathedral. He might be observing the situation and figuring out the patterns… Old Man’s excuse wasn’t too convincing, but if the infiltrator was Dwayne Dantès, then everything makes sense. He’s afraid that he would expose himself and pretended not to discover anything abnormal… Leonard’s mind instantly filled with many ideas as he asked in deliberation, “Captain Soest, what did the infiltrator take? What clues did he leave behind?”

Soest surveyed the room and said, “Nothing was taken or left behind. It was like no one stepped inside. His Grace suspects that he died or was vaporized from contact with some Sealed Artifact. Our priority is to find his partner.”

No, Dwayne Dantès wouldn’t die that easily! He’s a monster who has lived since the Fourth Epoch… However, why did he carry out the infiltration? Leonard frowned slightly as he hesitated for a moment. Then, he proactively included Dwayne Dantès into the investigation targets for himself and two other teammates.

After the Red Gloves and local Nighthawks began taking action, Leonard found an excuse to head to the washroom first. He suppressed his voice and asked, “What are your thoughts about Dwayne Dantès?”

He didn’t expose his parasite’s lie.

The elderly voice chuckled and said, “Didn’t I tell you? I don’t know much about him. I only know that there’s something special about him.

His aura has something ancient about it.

“However, the case you previously investigated gave me some inspiration. I suspect that Dwayne Dantès might be related to that matter. He might be a proxy of some existence.”

“What matter? Which existence?” Leonard muttered softly in surprise.

In his mind, the ancient voice replied with an odd tone, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.”

†

160 Böklund Street.

Klein had his breakfast and returned to the balcony’s half-open room. He sat in his reclining chair and raised his hand to rub his temples.

After his tense mood subsided, Klein discovered that his mind had turned somewhat adrift. He would often see the hanging corpses in the ancient cathedral, as well as the cluster of translucent maggots that remained unclear in his deepest memories. Illusory voices would seem to constantly echo in his ears: “Hornacis… Flegrea…”

Although I had quickly cut the connection with my marionette, I had suffered some of the effects. My soul has been slightly corrupted… As expected of a real Mythical Creature… After the preliminary investigations are done, I’ll have to find a way to resolve the remnant problems… Klein slowly heaved a sigh of relief and used Cogitation to calm himself.

Chapter 847 - The Name Hidden in the Dossiers

◆

A carriage passed by Böklund Street as Leonard Mitchell and two Red Gloves teammates discussed the target they were investigating this time—Dwayne Dantès.

“I still haven’t had any direct contact with this gentleman. I’ve only investigated his servants and neighbors,” Cindy, who had long wine-red hair, introduced her findings. “For now, it has been confirmed that Dwayne Dantès has acted the same since last night to this morning. He went to his bedroom to sleep at eleven and finished washing up at half-past seven in the morning. At times, he would have some supper and end the day after midnight. At times, he would wake up before seven and head out for a stroll, but that’s not the norm.”

Another Red Glove, Bob, nodded and said, “From this point of view, there’s nothing wrong with Dwayne Dantès.”

Leonard Mitchell, who sat in a seemingly casual manner, immediately said with a smile, “But the reverse can also be true.

“According to what we’ve currently gathered, the missing servant was likely replaced between 11:20 and 11:35 last night. The infiltrator entered Chanis Gate at six in the morning, and we discovered the problem at 7:20 a.m. without finding the target.

“It can thus be said that during the infiltration, Dwayne Dantès was sleeping and lacked an alibi.”

“What you say makes sense…” Cindy glanced at Leonard in surprise.

Her impression of this teammate of hers was one who often had a judgment or question that pointed at the core of the problem. However, he seldom described his logic in great detail. He was more like a desultory poet who occasionally had epiphanies.

Bob, who had a sharp chin, frowned as he shook his head.

“If that’s the case, everyone on this name list cannot be cleared of suspicion. They were sleeping with no one watching them. Even if they have wives or husbands, they would similarly be sleeping at such times.

“Also, I don’t believe an infiltrator would be so bold. He had already entered Chanis Gate and managed to successfully escape, completing an unimaginable feat; yet, he stays nearby and hasn’t abandoned his identity or gone far away. How is this possible?

“The risk involved cannot be predicted unless he’s also planning something else. Or he can’t bear to part with certain things, but what can compare with infiltrating Chanis Gate? What can compare with those Sealed Artifacts, ingredients, and formulas?”

If I didn’t know that Dwayne Dantès was problematic in the first place, I would’ve come to the same conclusion… Leonard had already thought of an explanation as he crossed his right leg.

“I’m just saying why we can’t so easily strike off Dwayne Dantès from the suspects.

“Besides, Captain Soest has said it. The infiltrator might have already died behind Chanis Gate. Even if Dwayne Dantès isn’t involved, he might very well be an accomplice.

“Hmm… Don’t you find it too much of a coincidence? He moved in for less than two months, and the Church encountered something that might never happen in centuries. Besides, he has been visiting Saint Samuel Cathedral too frequently. He had ample opportunities to figure out the corresponding situation.

“Also, during this period of time, there was a strange sewer explosion along Böklund Street.”

Cindy bunched up her long, wine-red hair and said, “You’ve convinced me. This should be a target that we put our focus on.”

Bob pulled at the ends of his left palm’s red glove and said, “There are indeed many coincidences.

“However, coincidences might not be equivalent to problems. Even if Dwayne Dantès goes to the cathedral daily and listens to the bishop’s preachings, all he could do is understand the layout and not obtain deeper information, such as when the Keepers will head to Chanis Gate and how the handover is done with the Nighthawks.”

“Therefore, he’s more likely to be one of the accomplices,” Leonard said with a shrug.

He similarly didn’t understand how Dwayne Dantès would understand the internal protocols of the Nighthawks so well.

Cindy echoed, “Regardless, we have to do a deeper investigation.

“Shall we wait till noon and directly enter Dwayne Dantès’s dream to question him? Hmm, he has the habit of taking afternoon naps.”

Leonard raised his right hand and waved it gently.

“There’s no need to be in such a hurry.

“It’s not like we’ve never done any routine inspections in the past or entered his dreams, but we didn’t discover anything wrong.

“If there really is nothing wrong with him, we wouldn’t gain anything from entering his dream again. If there’s a problem with him, the fact that he didn’t expose himself back then means he has the means to resist an inquiry during the dream. We will still be fooled by him if we enter his dream again.

“Therefore, we should monitor him and see what kind of people he interacts with, so as to prevent him from escaping while waiting for Desi’s response about this tycoon’s true identity. Once we discover any clues, we will request to use a higher-level investigation method than questioning him in dreams.”

Cindy was once again surprised as she couldn’t help but joke, “It’s rare to see you analyze the situation so seriously.”

Furthermore, his thought processes were extremely clear!

Leonard fell silent and gave a self-deprecating comment.

“Perhaps it’s because I’ve encountered something similar.”

Instantly, Cindy felt that Leonard’s green eyes had turned darker.

She didn’t speak further.

“Let’s take turns to monitor Dwayne Dantès. I’ll go first.”

“Alright.” Leonard nodded and turned to Bob. “Get the case files on the sewer explosion. Let’s see if we can discover any problems. I’ll head back to read through the corresponding dossiers and see if there are any other abnormalities on this street.”

After splitting the work, the three Red Gloves began their work. Leonard returned to Saint Samuel Cathedral’s basement and obtained the information involving Böklund Street and the cases that the Aurora Order had actively or passively involved themselves in for the past three years.

The latter was something that sparked off the clue provided by the Parasite in him. It gave him an idea.

“Since The Fool’s existence and the corresponding honorific name initially came from the Aurora Order, it means that the Aurora Order was involved in something or had suffered some setbacks. It might be related to the organization that believes in The Fool!”

After returning to the office, Leonard held back his desultory attitude as he very seriously read through the thick dossiers.

In the dossiers related to the Aurora Order, there was the Lanevus case he was most familiar with. This True Creator’s descent had failed terribly because of some baffling report. A mysterious person had appeared to kill the main criminal. He was suspected to be related to Hero Bandit Black Emperor. As he targeted evil criminals, he would scatter tarot cards over the target’s corpse. That person wasn’t able to do it for Desire Apostle Jason Beria only because Leonard had rushed over too quickly.

Similarly, Leonard once again saw the name, “Sherlock Moriarty,” appear in the periphery of the case.

Aurora Order’s Mr. X was assassinated at the gathering he convened. There were traces of powers at the demigod level left at the scene… At this point in time, Dwayne Dantès had already arrived in Backlund. It matches perfectly…

Aurora Order’s Mr. A and the Demoness Sect cooperated to create the Great Smog of Backlund. This person vanished as a result…

Aurora Order’s Mr. A had assassinated the Intis ambassador…

†

Leonard read case after case, but he didn’t find anything of use.

He rubbed his temples and decided to attack it from a different angle. He began from the cases related to Hero Bandit Black Emperor.

Lanevus case… First murder scene with the tarot cards thrown as a ritual… And The Fool is the beginning of the tarot cards…

Capim's case… From the strength and level showcased by Hero Bandit Black Emperor, he won't and wouldn't mimic others… He similarly scattered tarot cards on the corpse…

Desire Apostle Jason Beria… I saw Hero Bandit Black Emperor with my own eyes, preventing him from scattering the cards in time…

Apart from major events and evil criminals, what other connection do these three cases have? Leonard had previously considered the relevant questions and was certain that Detective Sherlock Moriarty had been partially involved in the Lanevus and Capim cases.

Then what about the Desire Apostle case?

Leonard found the addendum and began leafing through them. Finally, he spotted a line in an inconspicuous spot:

…People attacked involved Isengard Stanton, Sherlock Moriarty…

Leonard's expression slowly turned excited as though he had discovered a breakthrough.

He flipped through the Aurora Order dossier and didn't miss out any of the names involved. He kept expanding his search and requested for all the dossiers that involved every name.

"Aurora Order's Mr. A assassinated the Intis ambassador… The Intis ambassador was in charge of the conflict over the difference engine manuscripts… The clues to the manuscripts came from a spy who usually acted as a private detective…

"It is reported that another private detective was embroiled in this matter and had nearly been killed by a gang member under the command of the Intis ambassador… Another private detective…" Leonard suddenly stood up as he left Saint Samuel Cathedral and headed for the police station that handled the case back then.

Although most of the dossiers had been taken away by MI9, Leonard still found the name of the person who had made the police report: “Sherlock Moriarty!”

I now have reason to believe that this great detective was also involved in the Great Smog of Backlund. Among the various people who are involved, his name appears, right at the periphery of the matter! He and Dwayne Dantès all belong to a secret organization that believes in The Fool? Leonard thought as the corners of his lips curled up. He decided to immediately search for more information to verify his conjecture.

†

160 Böklund Street, inside the master bedroom.

Klein didn’t have any Nighthawks enter his dream during his afternoon nap, but he once again “returned” to the foggy town. He saw Demoness of Despair Panatiya with her smile showcasing blood-colored flesh in between the gaps of her teeth. He saw her slowly being hung up as her eyes rolled back in despair before her head drooped down.

The hung corpses, the horrifying gigantic mushroom, the cluster of countless translucent maggots kept appearing one after another, waking Klein up from his dream.

As he rubbed his temples, Klein found that his mind was in a terrible condition. And this wasn’t a problem that could be resolved by the gray fog.

He fell into deep thought and entered his bathroom and arrived above the gray fog. He conjured Gehrman and made him pray:

“…Please pass on my question to Miss Justice about when she will be free. I wish to receive some psychotherapy.”

Chapter 848 - Getting Caught in the Crossfire

Backlund, Empress Borough, Inside the Hall family's luxurious mansion.

Audrey had just tried on three selections of evening gowns today, and she was sitting on a cushioned chair, wondering how they could be matched with her accessories and which one she was more inclined towards. She also pondered over her mother's opinion.

At this moment, she suddenly saw an endless grayish-white and a blurry figure watching down at everything from high above appear before her eyes.

Immediately after that, she saw another figure. It was a praying figure that had been shrouded by the gray fog. Her ears resounded with the corresponding words.

Instead of being alarmed, Audrey was delighted. Her unease and worry that there wasn't a Tarot Gathering today was instantly quelled.

As expected, it was nothing! Oh, Mr. World really has a psychological problem. He must've been under immense stress recently. It's no wonder he booked an appointment in advance… Audrey sighed as she began to consider when she was free.

As she pondered, she scanned the maids who were busy in her room and the golden retriever, Susie, who was sitting by the door.

Audrey’s lips curled up slightly in an irresistible manner as she bowed her head and secretly prayed in response:

“…Please tell Mr. World that I’m currently free. He can determine the time and location. Uh, as long as it’s not night time and doesn’t exceed the boroughs west of Backlund…”

In regards to this, the golden retriever who was observing the maids’ work seemed to sense someone looking at her. She suspiciously turned her head and looked in Audrey’s direction. However, it failed to discover any problems.

†

Above the gray fog, inside the palace that looked like a giant’s residence.

She’s free at any time… Periods when it’s convenient to head out… Won’t leave places she’s familiar with… Klein rubbed his temples as he interpreted Miss Justice’s reply.

His first reaction was that it was best done today or tomorrow, and to have her determine the location. Then, he could use Creeping Hunger to Teleport there, but he soon thought of a problem.

Dwayne Dantès was part of the Nighthawks’ investigations. It was very possible that he was being monitored; therefore, rashly Traveling could easily expose him.

Wait a few days, or… Klein seriously thought about it as he conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and prayed once again:

“…Please inform Miss Justice that let’s do it today. Above the gray fog.”

†

Ah? Audrey’s eyes widened. She found that the answer provided by Mr. World exceeded her expectations.

How was she supposed to get Susie to be her stand-in!?

Besides, there are many details that I'm unable to see or clearly sense while inside Mr. Fool's palace. It will seriously hamper any psychotherapy… Audrey calmed her sense of alarm as she posed her doubts from a position of viability and requested Mr. Fool to pass it on to Mr. World.

Before long, she received a reply again.

"…I will request Mr. Fool to remove those restrictions. We'll use other means to conceal our true appearances…"

That can be done? This is the special treatment one gets from being Mr. Fool's Blessed? Hmm, our continuous communication is almost like a conversation. I've really troubled Mr. Fool. And "He" seems to almost allow us to indulge in it… Audrey's thoughts raced as she stopped finding excuses.

"…Alright. Let's do it between 11:30 to 12:30 tonight…"

She didn't believe that she would have anywhere to be alone before the end of her birthday ball.

†

At the same time, in a building at 39 Böklund Street.

Hazel was looking at the selected evening gown in boredom as she listened to her mother's repeated exhortations.

She was to accompany her parents to attend Miss Audrey Hall's birthday ball.

Just as Hazel's thoughts were wandering and her mind gradually turning blank, she saw a grayish-white rat appear by the door. It was frantically waving its paws.

This… Hazel patiently listened to her mother repeat herself one more time before finding an excuse to return to her bedroom.

After she closed and locked her door, the grayish-white rat appeared from somewhere and arrived by her feet. It sat there in a rather comical manner.

"I've discovered something wrong with the surroundings!"

The rat had sent vibrations in the air to speak with human words!

Hazel wasn't surprised at that as she asked in puzzlement, "What's wrong?"

The grayish-white rat raised its right forepaw and pointed out the window.

"There are Beyonders from the Church of Evernight investigating this street. It's at a rather large scale."

"What are they looking for?" Hazel asked with a slight frown.

The grayish-white rat slowly inhaled and said, "How would I know? But it's definitely something very serious.

"This way, they might very well discover something wrong with you."

Hazel asked, feeling somewhat worried and confused, "How did they make the discovery? Weren't the clues in the sewers blasted away? Weren't the corresponding problems dealt with?"

The grayish-white was momentarily unsure about what to say. A few seconds later, it vaguely replied, "Official Beyonders have plenty of strange but effective investigation methods… In short, I'll have to deal with your dream. This is where it's easiest to divulge things."

Hazel looked down at the rat as her knitted brows relaxed.

"Alright then…"

Don’t look so unwilling! It wasn’t easy for me to accumulate this bit of strength, and now it’s going to waste once again! Is this street cursed? First it was that Demoness with a strange condition. Following that Hero Bandit Black Emperor appeared. Now, there’s some baffling and unknown situation that made the Nighthawks pay serious attention to this street! the grayish-white rat squeaked in frustration.

†

At half-past seven in the evening, Hazel accompanied her parents, Member of Parliament Macht and Lady Riana, to Empress Borough and entered the Hall family’s residence.

As it was a birthday ball today, she didn’t manage to directly meet Miss Audrey Hall. All she did was quietly stay by her parents side as they exchanged pleasantries with Earl Hall, Lady Caitlyn, and Lord Hibbert Hall.

To her, these respected aristocrats were, in essence, the same as commoners. Therefore, she didn’t appear notably reserved. Her actions and tone were rather liberal.

If it wasn’t because of her mother’s repeated exhortations, Hazel even believed that the beautiful dance floor, the murals with high artistic value, and the elegant and outstanding statues were more worthy of respect.

As she smiled at the people she knew and didn’t know, Hazel finally waited until the ball began. She saw the star of tonight’s show. Miss Audrey Hall held the arms of the earl and earl’s wife as she walked out of the room on the second floor before arriving at the railings that faced the dance floor.

Hazel scanned her and habitually ignored her appearance as she observed the matching of her gown and accessories.

However, her gaze wasn’t able to move away. On the chandelier hanging high above, whale oil candles produced light that came with dreamy colors. When shining on the eighteen-year-old Audrey, it made her emerald-like eyes, pure and indescribable face, and lustrous gold hair seem to glow. It made her gown and accessories lose their luster.

Hazel was momentarily caught in a daze. She failed to hear what Earl Hall had said until the melody filled the floor as she snapped out of her daze when Audrey Hall began the opening dance with the earl.

The always proud her had suddenly felt a little inferior. She felt that even if this striking lady didn't possess any Beyonder powers, there was no way Audrey was inferior to her.

Hazel pursed her lips and looked around. She realized that everyone's gaze had been grabbed. The only difference was that they all had different feelings about the situation.

Phew… Hazel heaved a sigh of relief.

That night, she didn't act that arrogantly again. However, she yearned to leave at every minute of the night. She wanted to head home to busy herself with her matters to obtain more magical and powerful abilities.

Finally, the ball came to an end as Hazel's family bade farewell to the family and walked to the door.

On the way out, Hazel couldn't help but look back. She saw Miss Audrey standing along the sides of the dance floor with a faint and beautiful smile as she expressed her gratitude to each and every guest that was about to leave.

She seemed to remain under the spotlight.

†

After the end of the birthday ball, Audrey took off her accessories and changed into her sleeping gown before entering her bathroom.

As she looked at the white steam emanate with her bathrobe beside her, Audrey wasn't in a rush to soak herself inside. She first sat in the corner and prayed to Mr. Fool to indicate that she was ready.

In about ten seconds, she saw crimson light surge at her like a tidal wave, drowning her.

Above the gray fog, Audrey appeared by the side of the long bronze table.

This time, she didn't see Mr. Fool who was enshrouded in gray fog. She discovered an ancient confessional—it was a brown crate that was one and a half times the height of a person. There were doors on both sides, and a wooden plank separated the area in between them.

I thought Mr. World would request Mr. Fool to conjure a wall which we will use to communicate across… Although it's essentially the same, a confessional is cramped and dark. He really doesn't know how to consider a lady's feelings! Yes, I would find it odd if Mr. World did that… As Audrey suffused a smile, she walked to the ajar door of the confessional. She bent her back and entered before sitting down with her legs bent sideways.

After closing the wooden door, Audrey, who was treating a patient in the true sense of the word for the first time, suddenly felt a little excited.

Immersed in darkness, the environment and her mood made her loosen up from the many rules she had to abide by. She curled her lips and reached out her fingers and gently tapped on the wooden partition.

"Hello~ Mr. World, are you there?"

Sitting cross-legged opposite her, Klein was infected by Miss Justice's cheerful tone. His emotions relaxed as he said, "You may begin."

This time, he didn't use the gray fog to enshroud himself but had turned himself into Gehrman Sparrow.

Indeed, Mr. World’s mental state isn’t too good. He’s too tense and worried… Audrey sensed him first and then used a Psychiatrist’s Placate.

A gentle, invisible wave emanated over as Klein instantly felt a cool, refreshing morning breeze blow at him during a hot summer day. The frustrations and feverish feelings within him suddenly vanished.

Seeing Mr. World having made an obvious recovery, she secretly heaved a sigh of relief and asked softly, “Have you had any nightmares lately?”

Chapter 849 - Consultation Fees

◆ ◆ ◆

Nightmare? Klein deliberated for two seconds and said, “Yes.

“I dream of a town that’s enshrouded in fog. The crimson moon in the sky would be clear and blurred at random.

“In the middle of the town is a black cathedral. Corpses are hung up inside. They wear clothes from different eras as they sway in the wind and produce strange sounds.

“Apart from that, there’s a beautiful lady whose gaps in her teeth were filled with blood-colored human flesh, a mushroom man formed of countless tiny mushrooms…”

To treat his psychological problems, Klein reconstructed his dream in a rather complete manner. However, he didn’t say that he had encountered those things in reality, nor divulge that he knew the beautiful lady’s identity and the strange mushroom’s origins. At the same time, he hid the existence of the cluster of translucent maggots and Zaratul.

Audrey listened intently and seriously. Based on her Beyonder intuition and knowledge from mysticism and psychological, she said as she contemplated, “Mr. World, I can imagine such a terrifying and sinister dream. I can also experience the immense horror that it brings you.”

Seeing that there wasn’t any rebuttal from the other side of the wooden partition, Audrey grew in confidence. She silently did another round of Placate and began “Guiding.”

“The horror that appears in dreams will often stem from feelings hidden deep in one’s heart. And there are only two sources of horror in one’s heart. One is the unknown, and the second is what cannot be resisted.

“The terrifying things you see in your dream are only superficial. What you are really afraid of is what they represent and symbolize—the truth hidden behind them.”

As she spoke, Audrey suddenly asked, “What is it?”

Klein was gradually relaxing and scrutinizing himself as he took in Miss Justice’s gentle and sweet voice. When he suddenly heard this question, he subconsciously answered, “The existence that created all of that.”

He paused and hesitantly added, “They are both an unknown and also cannot be resisted.”

At this point, Klein knew why he was having nightmares, as well as the true reason for his terrible mental state.

He instinctively felt horrified over certain matters and instinctively had latent negative emotions.

The former included the cluster of translucent maggots and Zaratul’s terrifying performance. There was also the Eraser angel’s baffling actions and the fact that using the Dark Sacred Emblem was the key to opening the door. They separately created a mood of despair that seemed impossible to resist, as well as the feeling of not knowing who was friend or foe, and their ploys.

Yes, I’m fearful that the cluster of translucent maggots that’s suspected to be a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries of the Seer pathway. I’m fearful of Zaratul who has accomplished an unknown objective by “opening” the door. I’m fearful of the Goddess whose thoughts are an unknown, as well as the Eraser angel… Klein slowly exhaled as he admitted his fears.

Audrey used Placate once again and discovered that Mr. World's tense mind had essentially relaxed. She was delighted as she boldly said, "One of the biggest sources of fear is a lack of confidence. Try recalling if you had any oversight or had committed any mistakes in the related matter. This results in your spirit repeatedly warning you and hinting to you. It eventually transformed into part of the nightmare."

Oversight and mistakes. Warning from my spirit… Klein pondered over Miss Justice's words and seriously began organizing the details of the matters that resulted in his horror.

Soon, his expression turned heavy, bit by bit, as he discovered a problem.

I swore an oath with the Goddess bearing witness via the holy sword. Although I hadn't become a Clown, with the gray fog's powers yet to have entered the real world, preventing me from being noticed by special deities, demigods, and spirit world creatures. However, I couldn't fool fate, which would also be Beyonders of the Monster pathway.

And the Goddess has another title. "She" is the Empress of Misfortune and Horror. "She" wields control over misfortune and is one of the deities in the domain of fate!

Therefore, I was noticed from back then?

Klein's heart sank bit by bit as the horror that stemmed from the unknown was greatly alleviated.

He didn't reply nor did he wait for Miss Justice to speak again. He switched to asking, "If you will face one or even many difficult-to-challenge enemies, what would you do?"

Audrey wasn't annoyed by her patient's question. Instead, she felt that it was a good sign. After some deliberation, she said, "First avoid them and hide. Try harder to improve yourself.

"What if the time won from avoiding and hiding isn't enough to make you grow to a level that is sufficient enough to face your enemies?" Klein pressed, "What if the gap between the two is difficult to bridge?"

Audrey answered him seriously while also consoling him, "Find enough helpers."

Helpers… Names suddenly flashed across Klein's mind as his heart felt a lot more settled. he then continued asking, "What if the enemies cannot be resisted even with helpers?

"What if there are helpers who are plotting something that might be beneficial to you, but they might also bring you harm?"

Audrey drew a blank, and after a few seconds of thought, she replied, "You can pray to a deity."

She nearly said to The World: you can seek Mr. Fool's help.

And from the question and answer session, Audrey was able to confirm a matter. The mental problems that Mr. World was suffering stemmed from powerful and terrifying enemies, but there was a worry that, at a deeper level, the "helpers" had unknown stances.

Pray to a deity… Klein didn't dare to directly say: what if deities couldn't resolve it because the thoughts of deities are even harder to fathom. After all, this was The Fool's kingdom, and he was a Blessed.

He organized his words and said, "Deities can only provide help in certain areas. And what if that isn't enough?"

"…"

Audrey originally wanted to say that there was always a way and that good was bound to defeat evil, but she couldn't convince herself of it. She couldn't provide any relevant case studies, so eventually, she pursed her lips and said, "I don't know…"

In the confessional, it was a still darkness. The two temporarily stopped speaking as they fell into their respective inner struggles.

Finally, Audrey broke the silence and looked at the wooden partition.

“Regardless, something needs to be done. Work hard at it. You can’t just give up like that and not put up a fight.”

That’s right… At the very least, I still have many secrets and things to rely on… Klein closed his eyes as he leaned on the wooden plank. His thoughts slowly rewound from the most recent events as he was no longer constantly tense and often frustrated.

Audrey sensed his change and immediately added a Placate. With that, Klein’s mental condition was completely restored back to normal.

“I feel much better. Thank you for your treatment. What kind of consultation fee do you want?” Klein offered.

Actually, I should be the one thanking you for providing me an opportunity to handle a case… Audrey didn’t really wish to collect any fees as she looked at the wooden partition in the darkness. She couldn’t help but recall Mr. World’s usual gloominess and coldness, as well as his experienced and ruthless demeanor.

Hmm… His mental problems likely also have to do with his personality… Audrey suddenly had an idea as she smiled.

“The consultation fee that I charge isn’t much at all.

“Yeah, wish me happiness!”

…What’s going on? Klein was momentarily stunned. He nearly forgot he was wearing the facade of Gehrman Sparrow.

This was a request he had never heard of before.

Klein hesitated for a moment. Finally, he pretended to coldly say with The World’s identity, “Since you requested…

“I wish you happiness.”

Audrey’s smile turned into a beaming smile.

“I wish you happiness too!

“Mr. World, don’t always keep everything inside. Smile more and be happier. It can eliminate most of the latent problems.

“Alright, your mental problems have been resolved, but you will need a follow-up appointment in a few days or by next week.”

Klein was at a loss for an answer as he tersely acknowledged in affirmation.

Then, he heard the door on the other side creak open. With The Fool’s angle, he saw Miss Justice retreat from the confessional and straighten her body.

After sending her to the real world, Klein didn’t dare stay above the gray fog for too long. He quickly left and got into bed.

At that moment, his mental condition had been restored. With his body and mind at ease, he realized something. He had digested quite a bit of his Marionettist potion! The progress had surpassed his expectations.

This is because I relied on my marionette to fool a demigod, Panatiya, and orchestrated her and Mr. A to complete my planned out performance at the foggy town? Therefore, apart from “trying to hide behind the shadows” and “let every marionette have their own persona to make it more realistic,” the Marionettist principles include “use one’s marionette as a guide to control the enemy to play the role of a puppet?” Klein thought as he muttered inwardly in thought. He believed that he could digest the potion before the end of the year.

He exhaled with mixed feelings as he turned his head and looked at the crimson moonlight that penetrated the curtains as he silently said, That missing servant should’ve been found. The clues I left behind should've been discovered as well…

†

In the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard, Cindy, Bob, and company looked at Captain Soest who had returned from a meeting as they patiently waited for him to introduce new clues.

Soest drank a mouthful of aromatic coffee and said, "The missing servant has been found.

"And in the room he was left in, there were some clothes left behind by the infiltrator.

"It has been confirmed that it belongs to the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, who had previously been active at sea."

Why did it involve another crazy adventurer… Leonard was somewhat puzzled as he directly asked, "When did he come to Backlund?"

"No one knows. The only thing that can be confirmed is that this crazy adventurer had appeared at sea in the recent few weeks and had hunted a few pirates," Soest said in an unhurried tone. "The Church of Storms knows more. MI9 also seems to know quite a bit. The higher-ups will send people to liaise with them."

Just as Soest finished his briefing, a telegram was sent over.

It came from the Nighthawks in Desi. The content which was decoded read:

"Dwayne Dantès's present identity is fake. In the past ten years he spent in the Southern Continent, he had relied on adventuring to amass a significant amount of wealth… Further confirmation will require some time. As this place is very chaotic and there are often wars, the jurisdiction of zones are frequently changed."

Chapter 850 - The Devil is in the Details

◆

“Sounds like a contrived story. Ever since the new sea route was discovered, there has been no end to stories of people becoming rich from taking risks,” Soest casually commented on the content of the telegram. As he thought, he looked towards a particular Red Glove. “I recall that we had investigated Dwayne Dantès before and had an exchange with him in his dream.”

“Yes,” the Red Glove who was responsible for the task nodded and replied. “I didn’t directly ask him about such matters, but I could tell that Dwayne Dantès was very familiar with the Southern Continent. He had plenty of experience there.”

Heh heh, that might be information that Dwayne Dantès deliberately revealed to you… Leonard had his doubts regarding the contents of the telegram, believing that this was another layer of disguise from an undying monster who had lived since the Fourth Epoch.

However, he didn’t inform his teammates about his conjectures, because he had no basis for them.

Soest didn’t pay great attention to the matter as he said, “Do you have any problems with the clues related to Gehrman Sparrow?”

“Since this crazy adventurer was still at sea in recent weeks, when did he come to Backlund?” As a Nightmare, Cindy repeated her doubts, “What I’m concerned about isn’t the exact time, but whether he has the time to travel to Backlund. After all, we’re rather far from the sea.”

Soest nodded gently and said, “In the meeting, a deacon raised this question. According to the time and venue of Gehrman Sparrow’s last sighting, he normally has no way to arrive in Backlund last night and complete an infiltration.

“Of course, I’m referring to normal circumstances.

“The missing servant told us that when he was sweeping the square, he suddenly lost control of his body. He froze on the spot and was unable to cry for help. Then, he saw bright colors like an abstract oil painting, and he felt that his body was floating upwards.

“Later, he lost consciousness, and after awakening, he found himself in a room in East Borough.

“The former matches with the Keeper’s description of being possessed by a Wraith. The latter is suspected to be a Traveler’s Teleport.

“If it really is Teleport, then Gehrman Sparrow can appear in Backlund at any moment.”

As elites of the Nighthawks, the Red Gloves knew about the various Beyonder pathways far better than their colleagues which were at the same level. They were no strangers to Wraiths and Travelers.

After listening to the captain’s explanation, another Red Glove added in thought, “It’s rumored that Admiral of Blood, who was hunted by Gehrman Sparrow, is a Wraith.”

The details matched!

And as for Gehrman Sparrow being able to obtain the powers to become a Wraith, it wasn’t unacceptable. The easiest method was to find an Artisan to make one’s prey into a mystical item.

Cindy recalled even more information with this stimulus.

“It’s said that Gehrman Sparrow has the ability to change his appearance… And the infiltrator had disguised himself as the Keeper."

Another detail matched!

"Excellent thinking," Soest raised his hand to rub this temples. "According to these details, we can come to a preliminary consensus that the infiltrator is Gehrman Sparrow. And this way, the name list we came up with might be erroneous. Gehrman Sparrow doesn't need a companion to frequently come to the cathedral to pray to gather information. He can change his appearance every day and enter to figure out the situation. This will be more indiscreet than using a companion."

As the largest and most holy Church of Evernight cathedral in Backlund, the number of believers that came to Saint Samuel Cathedral on a daily basis was too numerous to count. No bishop could remember every unfamiliar face that they once met.

"That also means that the names we have here are meaningless?" Leonard raised his hand to rub his brows, sounding rather desultory.

"That's somewhat obvious. Our focus now should be on Gehrman Sparrow. The other targets can be placed aside as we perform the most basic level of surveillance." Having said that, Soest clapped and said, "Alright, get busy."

Leonard didn't have any objections. He happened to hope to find the Machinery Hivemind, Mandated Punishers, and MI9 to gather some information.

†

On Tuesday morning, Klein woke up naturally, feeling relaxed and calm. He had the feeling of joyful emotions slowly coming to life.

A Psychiatrist's Beyonder powers are quite useful after all… It really matches the extremely infectious optimism that Miss Justice brings with her… Klein got out of bed and drew the curtains.

He leisurely took in the scenery outside and the scattering golden sunlight. He regained his drive and began formulating his plans for the next couple months and even the year.

First, get a new marionette.

Second, use the identity of Dwayne Dantès and the control over a marionette to orchestrate scripts to expedite the digestion of the potion.

Third, during this process, slowly gather the ingredients needed for the Bizarro Sorcerer potion. In that regard, I can ask Little Sun about the Bizarro Bane to see if he has any clues. I'll seek Mr. Azik's help regarding the Spirit World Plunderer. After all, the Underworld is part of the spirit world.

Fourth, I'll continue investigating the Great Smog of Backlund and find the true culprit. This includes Ince Zangwill, as well as the demigod that killed Crazy Captain. There aren't any targets more suitable than them for my advancement ritual. However, I have to be careful of 0-08. I have to constantly keep watch of any intentional coincidences… Hmm, I'll just dabble in the matter in an ordinary manner and mainly provide support. The dangerous investigations can be handed to Demoness Trissy.

Klein's thought processes slowly became clear. Although he still felt worried and fearful, this no longer affected his mental state and capacity to take action.

Retracting his gaze from outside the balcony, Klein walked into the bathroom and washed up.

Soon, he opened the door while feeling highly spirited, and he saw his valet, Richardson, and butler, Walter, waiting outside.

The gentleman was wearing white gloves as he politely bowed and said, "Good morning, sir. There's only one item on your schedule today. It's to join an event at the East Balam Military Veterans Mess with Member of Parliament Macht at three in the afternoon.

"He's a new member of parliament, so by accepting his invitation, it will also indicate your political inclinations. You still have the opportunity to be hesitant about it."

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "There's no need. It's my choice."

He paused and asked in an inquiring tone, "It will be my first time visiting the East Balam Military Veterans Mess. What should I take note of?"

"Praise their work that they have established in East Balam. Use this opportunity to make some donations. There's no need to give too much or little. 500 pounds is a rather suitable sum," Walter provided his opinion.

500 pounds… Seriously, no matter which circle I enter, I'll have to spend large sums of money… Sigh, this is because Dwayne Dantès doesn't have any birthright or background. He can only open a path with cash… Klein nodded gently and agreed with his butler's suggestion.

At the same time, he quickly did a count of his present assets.

The Artisan hasn't completed the work regarding the Ocean Songster, but the money for Mentor of Disorder and Druid has been obtained. That's a total of 16,000 pounds…

With the cash I originally had on hand, subtracting the 13,000 pounds I used to purchase 3% of the Coim Company's shares, as well as the daily expenses of a tycoon's household and the donations at the cathedral, there's still 23,985 pounds and 5 gold coins left…

In addition, I still owe Miss Messenger 3,413 gold coins…

500 pounds has already exceeded 2% of the cash I have on hand…

Klein didn’t speak further as he walked out of his bedroom, going to the second floor where the dining room was in order to have his breakfast.

†

In the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard Mitchell returned to his office earlier than his teammates.

He had already obtained the relevant information and had learned of an inconspicuous matter.

Prince Edessak, who passed away in the Great Smog of Backlund, had once hired a private detective to investigate the death of equestrian teacher, Talim Dumont.

And that private detective’s name was: Sherlock Moriarty!

As expected! There are hints of him being involved with the Great Smog of Backlund! Leonard was delighted as he excitedly ruffled his hair.

Following that, he pounded down at the documents on his desk with his fist, planning to seek out even more clues.

However, he suddenly fell silent for about eight seconds before raising his cup in embarrassment and drank a mouthful of coffee. He mumbled inwardly, What did I want to do. I forgot about it after the pounding…

After some careful recall, Leonard finally recalled what it was. He pulled out his drawer and took out a deck of tarot cards.

Then, he found The Fool card and placed it on a piece of paper. On it, he wrote three names:

“Sherlock Moriarty, Gehrman Sparrow, Dwayne Dantès.”

After some hesitation, Leonard drew a line linking the three names to

The Fool card, indicating that they might very well be members of a secret organization that believed in The Fool.

Among them, he was most unsure of Gehrman Sparrow's identity as he wrote a question mark.

Later, Leonard took out The Emperor card and stuck it beside the name, "Sherlock Moriarty." He labeled it "suspected to be."

Gehrman Sparrow and Dwayne Dantès each correspond to a card? Leonard muttered silently. He took out the crazy adventurer's records and began reading them seriously.

Suddenly, he found a date very familiar.

Early January!

Gehrman Sparrow's first appearance was in early January!

No way… Leonard drew a gasp as he flipped through another set of documents. At the end of it were the words:

"At the end of December, Sherlock Moriarty left Backlund and headed south for a vacation. He has yet to return."

End of December… Early January… Backlund… Pritz Harbor… Gehrman Sparrow can change his appearance… No way? Leonard mumbled inwardly as he drew a dotted equality sign between "Sherlock Moriarty" and "Gehrman Sparrow."

This great detective is the key… Leonard found Sherlock Moriarty's portrait that he had drawn via a ritual as he carefully looked at it.

After considering the point that "looks could be changed," he began imagining the detective in different disguises.

As he did it, Leonard's gaze froze bit by bit as he couldn't help but frown.

Chapter 851 - Dwayne Dantès's New Business

◆

Leonard stared intently at the portrait of Sherlock Moriarty. His brain had just imagined what the latter would look like without glasses or a beard.

Although this could be quite different from the actual situation and was more of a product of imagination, Leonard increasingly found Sherlock Moriarty very familiar, as though he had known him before.

“How is that possible? He’s long dead! And I buried him with my own hands!” Leonard couldn’t help but shake his head as he muttered with a scoff.

Just as he said that, his expression froze because the person in his memories held a huge secret.

This person had strangely escaped the influence of 2-049 without the help of others!

This person used 2-049’s uniqueness to finish off a Sequence 7 Beyonder, and back then, he was only a Seer who isn’t good at combat!

This person had managed to summarize the acting method within a very short amount of time, and he had advanced to Sequence 8 at an extraordinary pace!

This person possessed a High-Sequence Sun domain charm and had used it with Captain Dunn Smith who wielded a saint’s ashes, successfully finishing off Megose who was pregnant with an evil god's spawn!

This person's Sequence 8 Beyonder characteristic had been taken away by Ince Zangwill, but Captain Dunn Smith's Sequence 7 Beyonder characteristic was left behind!

Perhaps, it wasn't because Ince Zangwill had taken away the Beyonder characteristic which had appeared, causing it to be missing from the scene, but that it had never formed to begin with! Leonard Mitchell suddenly jolted to his senses as he observed Sherlock Moriarty's portrait again.

Ten seconds later, he squeezed the words through his clenched teeth: "Klein Moretti…"

He found that the mysterious detective, Sherlock Moriarty, looked more and more like his former teammate, the hero who saved Tingen, Klein Moretti!

And this was under the scenario of him being without the clear discrepancies of glasses and a beard!

Leonard's had fingers clenched tightly at some point in time as his joints suffused with a whiteness. After a moment, he let out a clear pant as he picked up Sherlock Moriarty's dossier again.

This time, he flipped with a target in mind, roughly to the time when Sherlock first appeared in Backlund: Early September!

And this wasn't long after Klein Moretti had been buried!

Leonard Mitchell's green eyes turned dark as he instinctively flipped through the dossier.

Then, he saw a name: Lanevus!

This was one of the masterminds behind the evil god's descent in

Tingen City. He was one of the main murderers who led to the death of Dunn Smith and Klein Moretti, and the other Nighthawks.

And Sherlock Moriarty's second record in Backlund was his investigations at the dock for a serial murder; thus, bumping into the disguised Lanevus!

After this, the True Creator's plan of descending was foiled, and Lanevus died in the sewers. His body was scattered with tarot cards, making it identical in style to the subsequent Hero Bandit Black Emperor.

He didn't forget the harm that swindler brought… Leonard whispered silently, his expression softening.

He quickly flipped through the documents and sat in his chair, motionless for an extended period of time. It was as though he had fallen asleep from the shadows brought about by the light.

After a few minutes, Leonard finally moved. He leaned into the chair and said in a deep voice, "Old Man, do you think this detective, Sherlock Moriarty, resembles my teammate back in Tingen City, Klein Moretti?"

In his mind, the aged voice said after some hesitation, "The one who joined the Nighthawks because of the Antigonus family's notebook?"

"Yes…" Leonard answered in a heavy voice.

In his body, the Parasite said after two seconds, "There's some resemblance."

After receiving the reply, Leonard once again fell silent. After a long while, he took out a gold pocket watch and snapped it open to determine that it was still morning.

Leonard snapped the pocket watch closed and stood up, nearly overturning the stack of documents.

He hurriedly reached out his hand and held onto the documents. Then, he left behind a note, saying that he had found certain clues and planned to head out to do some investigations; thus, making it possible that he would return very late.

Let me see if someone is pretending to be Tingen City's hero, or if you've always been wearing masks—a secret organization member who sneaked into the Nighthawks. Your true motives aren't much loftier than Ince Zangwill. You were also targeting something behind Chanis Gate… Leonard no longer had that aloof attitude as his eyes narrowed as he quickly left Saint Samuel Cathedral's basement.

†

In Hillston Borough, outside a building with quite a unique architecture.

Dwayne Dantès got off his carriage and saw the building that was built in the style of the late Fourth Epoch.

The building was mostly comprised of huge stone slabs, creating a total of four stories. The windows on each level were like a door and it was matched with a tiny balcony.

Its entire facade had been weathered by the elements, revealing a sandy-yellow color. The stone columns and arches held up a refined porch that made it seem rather magnificent.

This was the East Balam Military Veterans Mess.

Klein waved his cane and pointed at the building before him and said with a smile, "It has quite a historic feel."

Member of Parliament Macht nodded in reply.

"Even though it's a building built in an ancient style, it still has more than a hundred years of history…"

As he spoke, he led Dwayne Dantès into the club and said to the lady at the reception, “Dwayne Dantès, unofficial member. I’ll be his recommender.”

With that said, he turned to the tycoon and explained, “Not only have you not served in East Balam, but you have never participated in the wars that happened there. You don’t even have a military background, so there’s no way for you to be an official member.

“However, even being an unofficial member will allow you free entry and the use of the various facilities. You will be able to enjoy the delicious food and alcohol, and get to know different friends.”

“That’s exactly what I was hoping for.” Klein nodded with a smile.

After the beautiful lady who was of Southern Continent descent finished the registration, Macht added, “There’s no admission fee. It’s 60 pounds a year for the membership.”

With that said, he chuckled and said, “It’s not expensive, even more so for you. Here, you will get to come into contact with all kinds of weapons. There are enough shooting ranges to provide you with shooting practice. You can even learn horse-riding…”

At a club of this level, 60 pounds really isn’t expensive. After all, generals often appear here, and they have many famous chefs… Klein didn’t speak further as he took out his wallet. He counted 60 pounds and gave it to the receptionist, obtaining a badge with the logo of a forest, ocean, and blades.

“This is a place filled with glory. I’m deeply impressed with your contributions in East Balam.” As Klein wore the badge with a number on its back, he said to Macht, “If I wish to contribute to the cause, who should I look for?”

Macht pointed at the receptionist.

“Just give it to her.

"She will jot it down and announce it on the notice board over there."

Klein nodded slightly and said, "Alright."

He then turned his head and made Richardson take out the 500 pounds he had already prepared.

After giving the donation, Klein passed through the beautifully decorated foyer with Macht, arriving at a room that resembled an activity room. As for his valet, Richardson remained outside in the break room. There were snacks, tea, and coffee there.

In the small room, through Macht's introductions, Klein got to know five officers who were either still in service or were retired. Apart from a particular House of Commons member of parliament, the highest-ranking epaulet was Colonel Calvin. He was presently working at the Loen Kingdom's Ministry of Defense. However, his actual position was unknown.

According to what Klein knew, for quasi-high-ranking members of the military at the rank of colonel, they were mostly Beyonders—Mid-Sequence Beyonders!

Macht, Calvin, and company quickly began chatting. Klein didn't interject as he seriously listened to their conversations, occasionally echoing a sentence or two.

In this relaxed atmosphere, Calvin suddenly turned his head and said to Dwayne Dantès, "I heard you were often active in West Balam?"

The colonel had a long face like a donkey's, but it didn't look comical at all. His gaze was rather deep.

Klein smiled and replied, "Yes, that place is more chaotic than East Balam."

Calvin laughed when he heard that.

"Of course. Intis made too many mistakes over there."

He paused and continued asking, "How is your relationship with the people from Intis over there?"

Klein didn't understand the colonel's motive as he bit the bullet and said, "It's alright. They're all very greedy."

In fact, he didn't know a single one. He had only heard Anderson mention a few names and their corresponding matters.

Calvin nodded and raised another question.

"Are you familiar with the tribes over there, as well as the Resistance?"

"…I know some," Klein answered vaguely.

He only knew one Intis military leader of the Resistance. It was the former Intis princess, Queen Mystic Bernadette.

Calvin laughed as he took a sip from his cup of red wine.

During this process, no one spoke, including Macht.

After putting down his cup, Calvin looked at Dwayne Dantès again and said, "This is the thing: every year, we would obsolete many rifles and cannons. And directly destroying them or processing them is too much of a waste or costs too much. It's not a good solution.

"I'm not sure if you're interested in buying a batch and selling it to West Balam. You can sell it to the regions ruled by Intis, selling them to the tribes and Resistance.

"Trust me. This is definitely a very lucrative business. Of course, it's also very dangerous. If you're caught by Intis in West Balam, we will disavow you."

This… is making me an arms dealer? This is one of the most lucrative businesses… Although I'm not familiar with West Balam at all and lack any connections, I can sell it to Queen Mystic or the Resistance at the Rorsted Archipelago… Klein was tempted as he deliberately wore a mixed and hesitant expression.

“I’ve never done such things before, but it’s definitely attractive enough.”

Calvin laughed and said, “There’s no need to rush to a decision. This is a very important matter that requires serious thought.

“Just give your answer to Macht before the end of the week.”

Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief and nodded with a smile.

“Alright.”

†

Tingen City. Raphael Cemetery.

Although the afternoon sun was rather strong, this place remained gloomy and cold.

Leonard was standing in front of a grave, staring silently at the tombstone.

Chapter 852 - Straight to the Point

◆

The sun hung brightly in midair. In a dark, silent corner of the cemetery, Leonard Mitchell suddenly raised the shovel beside him.

The two mounds of soil at the side gradually raised in height as the coffin pit became obvious. From time to time, there would be passersby, but they didn’t notice anything, as though a dream was happening over there.

Finally, Leonard threw the shovel and bent down. He reached out and grabbed the ends of the coffin lid with both hands.

Using immense strength, he pulled open the heavy wooden lid and discovered that the thick, long nails had fallen off at some point in time. There was nothing inside the pitch-black coffin.

Nothing!

Leonard continued keeping his body hunched as he silently watched this scene without any further movement. He stood there like a petrified statue for a very long time.

[image]

†

In his hazy dream, Klein saw a tombstone with an epitaph. It stood silently among many other tombstones as it was dyed in crimson moonlight.

This scene shattered immediately as Klein snapped awake. He confirmed that he was still Dwayne Dantès and that he was still inside 160 Böklund Street's master bedroom.

The dream seems to be telling me something… As a Seer, Klein treated every dream seriously. This was no exception. He focused and shook himself out of his state of drowsiness before attempting to make an interpretation.

That's likely a tomb…

This represents a particular deceased or something related to resurrection…

The crimson moonlight represents the Goddess, corresponding to the Church of Evernight and the Nighthawks… If I were to directly see the moon, it might involve the Primordial Moon, Vampire Ancestor Lilith, and the Mother Tree of Desire…

The tomb was dyed with a color almost resembling blood. This symbolizes something bad…

As Klein did an interpretation of the dream, he gathered all the content and attempted to make an effective, meaningful conclusion.

After some serious thought, he began to believe that the dream's revelation was referring to the past him and the Church of Evernight.

After making the connections with what had happened the past few days, Klein slowly came to an answer.

As Dwayne Dantès has repeated headed for Saint Samuel Cathedral, he must've been added to a list of suspects. If Leonard hasn't left Backlund, this must've garnered his attention. After all, he knows that Dwayne Dantès isn't a simple person and has mysterious origins…

As an angel from the Marauder pathway, Leonard's grandpa probably discovered that the gray fog and the Seer pathway has intricate ties, and knows that the corresponding Sequence 0 is called The Fool…

This way, they will naturally be able to make connections with the honorific name of The Fool that was previously spread, and they would believe that I'm a member of a secret organization that worships The Fool. And developing on this clue, it can also involve the person who killed Lanevus and Hero Bandit Black Emperor who used tarot cards…

Along with the Gehrman Sparrow clues I deliberately left behind, as well as Leonard's previous investigations into Sherlock Moriarty, it's not impossible for him to put things together and find what's highly dubious.

And in the beginning, Sherlock Moriarty's disguise wasn't too good. As long as Leonard investigates seriously, it wouldn't be difficult to discover that the great detective resembled his former colleague… So, he went to Tingen to dig up the grave for confirmation?

As he thought about the matter, Klein pulled a back cushion over and sat up. He felt that he had already found the answer to his dream.

He began seriously analyzing what could happen afterwards, considering if he should abandon the identity of Dwayne Dantès.

Leonard has no way of conveying his theories and conclusion to the other Nighthawks because he won't be able to explain the key points for his inference. This will expose his own secret…

Based on my experience and my understanding of him, he will steer the matter via different means. This will be more complicated and troublesome, wasting even more time. Before that happens, I should find him and give him another warning. It should snuff out whatever is on his mind. After all, the Church didn't suffer any material loss, nor did anyone die.

Yes, for Dwayne Dantès, I have taken note of the time. I specially created tracks of my activity in the Southern Continent over the past few months, staggering it with the decline of Gehrman Sparrow's sightings. And this involves the Intis colony, so it will be rather difficult to verify the matter…

That also means that Leonard has, at best, figured out that Gehrman Sparrow equals Sherlock Moriarty equals Klein Moretti. He will just believe that I'm in cahoots with "them," part of a secret organization that believes in The Fool…

Heh heh, to him, Dwayne Dantès is a powerful, mysterious Beyonder who can sense the grandpa in him, a demigod. This is an obvious discrepancy with the other identities.

Klein soon came up with countermeasures as he turned his attention to the matter he encountered at East Balam Military Veterans Mess in the afternoon.

Why would they directly seek me out for such a private arms deal?

I just established a friendship with Macht and hadn't experienced any tests. I don't deserve such trust…

Perhaps it's a test?

In the beginning, it will just be rifles and cannons. The quantity would probably be limited. Nor will it involve high-quality items. Furthermore, I'll need to come up with the cash before receiving the goods. If I have any real problems, they wouldn't suffer any losses. They will only suffer the repercussions of a small batch of weapons falling into hands within their own domain of control.

Yes… to them, a tycoon like me, with a complicated background and a deep understanding of West Balam, really is an excellent candidate. First, I have the money. Second, I have the guts. Third, I have the resources and social connections, allowing the arms to be sold to suitable factions. Fourth, I have no background in the upper echelons of the kingdom. I can always be made the scapegoat and be abandoned.

They must've sent people to monitor me in secret… As long as this "business" is smoothly completed, I'll be a close partner with the military… This will aid in my investigations of the truth behind the Great Smog of Backlund…

The problem I have now is that I have zero actual knowledge of West Balam's Resistance and various tribes… I've no idea where that fellow, Anderson, is. I don't have his method of contact either…

Hmm, Danitz might be aware of the situation in West Balam… Same for Ma'am Hermit. Likewise for Queen Mystic who's backing her… I'll first gather intelligence from these channels…

Having made up his mind, Klein's working brain slowed down as a sense of drowsiness washed over him again. He let his body slide down bit by bit as he got under the blankets.

†

In the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard, who had returned from Tingen, managed to be in time for the team's internal meeting.

Soest first briefed them on the conclusion of the archbishop and what the other local Nighthawk teams had obtained.

"With the help from the Holy Cathedral, Saint Anthony has confirmed that the infiltrator is Gehrman Sparrow. The conclusion is that this crazy criminal is still alive but doesn't exist in this world.

"This is truly a contradictory statement. I don't understand it as well. His Grace didn't explain anything either.

"In short, our focus will be on the investigation of Gehrman Sparrow.

"According to the information provided by MI9, Gehrman Sparrow is a fake identity. He originally came from Backlund…"

After Soest finished the briefing, he asked, "Do you have anything to add?”

Leonard opened his mouth and was just about to say something, but his eyes shimmered twice before he fell silent again.

Soest turned his head and glanced at him, calling him out by name.

“Leonard, did you discover any clues?”

Leonard remained silent for a second before shrugging.

“That clue has been eliminated.”

Soest didn’t ask further as he looked at the other teammates.

After a series of supplementary information and analysis, he began assigning missions to his Red Gloves team.

After everything was assigned, Leonard Mitchell held a name list that required him to enter their dreams for a cross-check. He returned to the break room above and threw his body into bed.

He sat there silently as he raised his hand to comb his hair, preparing to begin taking action.

However, the first dream he entered wasn’t anyone in the name list.

His target was Dwayne Dantès!

After repeated considerations, he decided to speak to this secret organization member, an undying monster from the Fourth Epoch, face to face. He wanted to see what information he could sound out.

This looked somewhat rash, but with both parties knowing each other’s secrets, it was still a good choice.

†

160 Böklund Street. Klein’s drowsy mind suddenly became clear as he

knew that someone had entered his dream.

He pondered silently, sitting in a reclining chair and turning his head to look at the balcony. He saw a black-haired, green-eyed man wearing a white shirt and black vest nimbly leap inside. He was none other than Leonard Mitchell.

[image]

I haven’t gone looking for you, and here you are coming to my doorstep… The other Nighthawks would politely knock on the door before entering. Only you would jump into balconies… Klein lampooned as he looked at the poet approach him.

At this moment, in Leonard’s eyes, Dwayne Dantès was still wearing a formal suit in the dream. His sideburns were gray, and he had an angular face with an immense amount of charm.

At this moment, the tycoon wore a smile, as though he wasn’t hiding the fact that he remained lucid and that he wasn’t affected by a Nightmare.

“Didn’t Pallez Zoroast teach you some manners?” Klein said with a tone he believed matched Leonard’s impression of him.

Pallez Zoroast… He’s warning me again… Leonard was taken aback as he remembered the name.

He quickly reined in his thoughts and bowed in a manner that lacked standards.

“Please pardon me for the intrusion. You are on our investigation list.

“Was the infiltration done by you guys? Is that your goal for coming to Backlund?”

“No.” Klein in his Dwayne Dantès guise raised the cup of red wine and sipped it. “It’s not us, but just him alone.”

He put on an act that he wasn’t afraid of Leonard knowing.

“Gehrman Sparrow?” Leonard asked in a deep tone.

Klein glanced at him with his deep blue eyes that seemed to have seen the vicissitudes of life.

“Isn’t that obvious?”

“What does he actually want to do? He didn’t take anything away,” Leonard took the opportunity to ask.

Klein raised his hand to stroke his white sideburns and chuckled.

“What do you think is the answer?”

Chapter 853 - Comparison of Experience in Sophistry

◆ ◆ ◆

What do I think? If I were to know the answer, why would I be here? I'd have long handed this information to my superiors! Leonard silently mumbled as he deliberated over his words.

During this process, he discovered that, although he was standing straight and looking down on Dwayne Dantès, the tycoon who was sitting leisurely in the reclining chair held the aura of having the advantage. It was like a high-ranking personage casually listening to his subordinate's reports.

This made Leonard feel a little uneasy. He subconsciously surveyed the area and pulled a chair over as he leaned back into it, half out of habit and half as a deliberate action.

"I believe he, or all of you are searching for something.

"Back in Tingen, he infiltrated the Nighthawks to search for something. In Backlund, he also infiltrated Chanis Gate to search for that item!

"His search was fruitless the first time, so he escaped by feigning death by using Ince Zangwill's assault.

"He still failed to find it the second time. Hence, he didn't take anything and directly left Chanis Gate!"

While speaking, Leonard used a very certain tone to divulge that he had figured out that Gehrman Sparrow was Sherlock Moriarty and also

Klein Moretti. He wished to use the effect of pressure to make Dwayne Dantès not appear that calm or have any thoughts of resorting to sophistry.

Indeed, he went to dig my grave… Klein sighed inwardly as he chuckled. He picked up the glass of red wine and gently swirled it.

“Do you think that we would consecutively make two rash attempts before having any confirmed intelligence? You should know that such matters can only be done once. Once there’s a failure, there’s no way it can succeed again.

“Therefore, who would use an operation to verify one’s guess when the target isn’t clear?”

He has tacitly confirmed my explanation. Klein Moretti is Gehrman Sparrow, Hero Bandit Black Emperor, a member of the secret organization who believes in The Fool… Leonard tried hard not to frown as he crossed his right leg and said, “So, it’s not that nothing was found, but that there was a failure due to other factors?

“During these two attempts, Tingen City’s Saint Selena Cathedral and Backlund’s Saint Samuel Cathedral only shared two common items: Sealed Artifact 2-049 and the Antigonus family’s notebook.

“Antigonus family’s notebook… That’s it? Klein Moretti joined the Nighthawks because of it!”

Although the process of inference is wrong, the answer is actually correct… Klein chuckled and said, “Our brains aren’t there just for show.

“If his goal was the Antigonus family’s notebook, there was no need for him to join the Nighthawks. Before you obtained it, he had plenty of opportunities.

“And even after you obtained it, he had no lack of opportunities to obtain it. You should understand the situation back then better than I do.

“Also, since the target was the Antigonus family’s notebook, why didn’t he take it away?”

Upon being mocked by Dwayne Dantès, Leonard Mitchell realized that the theory he came up with on the spot was filled with logical contradictions. He felt ashamed as he showed some anger.

He slowly took a deep breath and said, “Then why would he infiltrate Chanis Gate using two different methods? And not only didn’t he take something away, but he didn’t even leave anything behind. He even entered a strange state.”

Just as Leonard said that, he saw Dwayne Dantès with his gray sideburns produce a deep, profound smile.

“I’m not sure of the reason for the latter matters. Perhaps you should ask the Evernight Goddess.”

Goddess… What does he mean? Leonard instantly felt alarmed and puzzled. He found it unimaginable as to what had happened behind Saint Samuel Cathedral’s Chanis Gate.

Right on the heels of that, he heard Dwayne Dantès say with a deep laugh, “As for your first question, I believe you are mistaken about something.

“Our organization’s members come from different places and join for different reasons, choosing to change their own faith in the process. As for what happened before that, their lives remain their own.

“Just like me. I had a past and have a present as well. The reason why I came here is because of the last name I gave myself.”

Dantès… The Return of the Count… He joined the secret organization that worships The Fool for revenge, and came to Backlund? Leonard nodded in thought.

Klein paused for a few seconds as he casually sipped the red wine and wore a smile. He continued, “Similarly, he, who was resurrected because of the Antigonus family’s notebook’s curse, does it for vengeance as well.”

Klein had deliberately mentioned his present last name, Dantès, and mentioned revenge. It was to preemptively distinguish himself from Gehrman Sparrow and Klein Moretti. It was to prevent Leonard from later finding similar objectives between the two and begin making a deeper connection from the similarities.

By personally mentioning it, it framed the listener’s thought processes and made them subconsciously follow the logic of the content; thus, treating Dwayne Dantès and Klein Moretti as two completely different people. The only similarity was their thoughts of revenge. And in this world, there weren’t only two avengers.

Leonard lowered his crossed right leg unknowingly as he leaned forward.

“Vengeance?

“Who does he wish to seek revenge on?”

After asking the question, the elegant and handsome middle-aged gentleman curled the corners of his lips.

“Lanevus and…

“Ince Zangwill.”

“Ince Zangwill…” Leonard blurted out as he couldn’t help but have his expression repeatedly change. Finally, he fell silent.

His green eyes looked ahead, unfocused; his thoughts a mystery.

Phew… After a long silence, Leonard exhaled and released his originally clenched hands.

He asked with his voice a little hoarse, “Lanevus was really killed by him?”

“Of course,” Klein secretly sighed as he replied calmly.

Leonard’s mouth gaped open as though he wished to say something, but he didn’t. He tightly pursed his lips.

Realizing that his goals had been met, he immediately changed topics and chuckled.

“If you have a similar goal or require help, you can also chant ‘His’ honorific name. Perhaps you will receive a response.”

“He”… That secret existence, The Fool? Leonard imagined that Dwayne Dantès was habitually proselytizing and attempting to develop the secret organization. Therefore, he didn’t think further and replied with silence.

Klein then laughed.

“By the way, help me pass a message to Pallez Zoroast. One of our organization’s members encountered Blasphemer Amon in the Forsaken Land of the Gods.”

This piece of information contained massive amounts of information, so much that Leonard was temporarily at a loss for a response. His mind kept reverberating with the relevant information.

The Forsaken Land of the Gods? The Forsaken Land of the Gods that even the seven Churches are unable to find? Their secret organization actually has members who can enter the Forsaken Land of the Gods!

Blasphemer Amon… Old Man told me that he’s hiding from a High-Sequence Beyonder with the last name Amon. He was heavily injured by Amon and had no choice but to parasitize me…

Dwayne Dantès’s tone and attitude really is like an undying monster who lived from the Fourth Epoch. He's also at the same or a similar level as Old Man… In front of him, I really don't feel any sense of superiority. I even feel like I'm lacking confidence…

As his thoughts ran through his head, Leonard forced himself to focus.

"I'll pass on the message to him."

Hmm, based on the circumstances after Leonard enters the dreams of others, it can be determined that the grandpa doesn't completely control his senses. Otherwise, he would definitely have an abnormal reaction when he hears the name Blasphemer Amon… Previously, Will Auceptin's words also corroborates this point. Only when my dear poet encounters true danger would the grandpa sense it and take action… Very good. "He" isn't a full Parasite… As Klein interpreted the unspoken information, he smiled.

"You may leave. You can also relax. My goal isn't the Church of Evernight."

My coming goals, not the ones of the past… Klein silently added inwardly.

Leonard had already received enough information; thus, he didn't dare overstay his welcome. He got up and bowed.

Then, he left Dwayne Dantès's dream.

†

In a room on the back streets of Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard woke up and heard the aged voice from the Parasite in him echo in his mind:

"What did he say?"

Leonard deliberated over his words and said, "He directly admitted to being a member of that secret organization that believes in The Fool. Likewise for Klein Moretti whose alias is Gehrman Sparrow.

"Their goal is for vengeance, their own vengeance."

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a second before saying, "Did he say how Klein Moretti could be resurrected? Or how did he fake his death to such an extent?"

Leonard recalled and said, "The explanation he gave was a curse from the Antigonus family's notebook."

Curse… At this point, Leonard discovered that Dwayne Dantès's choice of words was rather strange.

He had described the power of resurrecting the dead as a curse!

Pallez Zoroast didn't seem to have any questions about that. After a few seconds of silence, he said, "What else did he say?"

Leonard didn't hide it from him and said frankly, "He mentioned Blasphemer Amon, saying that a member of their organization met him in the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

"Old Man, is that the Amon you mentioned?"

The aged voice replied after a while, "Probably."

He paused for a moment before saying, "I believe that Dwayne Dantès, no—The Fool that's backing him, might be some old friend of mine…"

Old Man believes that he's at a higher level than Dwayne Dantès, or even higher… He's a Grounded Angel? Leonard thought and asked, "Which old friend?"

Pallez Zoroast didn't answer as he asked, "Are you going to find an opportunity to reveal the situation about Dwayne Dantès and Klein Moretti?"

Leonard suddenly fell silent and only heavily said more than ten seconds later, "Not for now.

“Perhaps he and I, and them, have the chance of working together…

“And the Church didn’t suffer any material loss this time.”

The Parasite inside him didn’t say a word, as though he had fallen asleep.

Leonard slowly looked up and read the information in front of him. His eyes turned dark as he muttered, “He’s overtaken me by leaps and bounds…”

Chapter 854 - Confession

◆ ◆ ◆

Early morning, 160 Böklund Street.

After Klein got out of bed and washed up, he didn’t rush to leave the bathroom. He took four steps counterclockwise and headed above the gray fog.

He then conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made the fake person pray piously:

“Honorable Mr. Fool, please pass on the message to Danitz:

“I need him to provide me information on West Balam. It’s best if he includes his social connections.

“Also, get him to be careful of the Church of Evernight for the time being.”

†

Above the Golden Dream, Danitz, who saw the sun earlier than Backlund, was holding a cup of malt beer as he sat in the shadows, hiding away from the vile sunlight.

Lessons will begin in another fifteen minutes. Captain said that a treasure hunter must have a sufficiently good grasp of mathematics… Sigh, this is really such a headache, but it’s also something to look forward to. Dogsh*t! Danitz placed one hand on his knee as he downed a mouthful of beer.

At this moment, the gray fog emanated in front of him. The blurry figure that looked down from above appeared as Danitz's ears resounded with Gehrman Sparrow's voice.

Information on West Balam? Although we've been there to search for lost ancient treasure and got to know a few tribal natives, that is pretty much it. There won't be much that I can tell him about… This is so troublesome. I'll have to do all sorts of work again. Why does Gehrman Sparrow get involved in so many things!? Danitz silently grumbled as he vigilantly glanced to his sides, afraid that the madman would suddenly appear.

He drew a breath upon considering how he wanted to become stronger. He didn't wish to be of no help when his captain met with danger, having to shamefully hide at the back. Danitz slapped his face a few times with his free hand before standing up.

He immediately left the shadows and found Iron Skin and Barrel. He asked them in detail about West Balam's situation and who he should ask for the various matters, only to obtain a unanimous answer: "Captain Edwina Edwards, or Anderson Hood who previously joined our bonfire on the ship."

Will she be suspicious if I directly ask Captain, making her believe that I have a secret and am secretly working for someone else… But, I've no idea where that fellow, Anderson, has gone to. Dogsh*t! Danitz fell into a dilemma as he couldn't help but think about something else, recalling Gehrman Sparrow's last words:

"Be careful of the Church of Evernight!"

Danitz wasn't a fool. He knew that a matter that the crazy adventurer emphasized was something important. It also meant that he believed that he had a high chance of being an important target of the Church of Evernight! He would be wildly pursued by the Red Gloves!

Apart from the Church of Evernight, the Church of Storms, and the military are targeting me as well. It’s said that they have each sent a squad… Danitz thought as his heart palpitated.

He soon revealed a puzzled and bitter look as he muttered to himself, “But I haven’t done anything…”

†

After passing the message about gathering information on West Balam to Admiral of Stars Cattleya, Klein left the area above the gray fog and returned to the real world. Like every other day, he had his breakfast and had lessons.

After he woke up from his afternoon nap, with Richardson’s help, he changed into a formal suit for an excursion. He got into the carriage that had already been waiting for him at the door.

“Head to Saint Samuel Cathedral,” Klein leaned on the carriage wall as he instructed the carriage driver.

He had decided to continue maintaining his identity as Dwayne Dantès. He believed that it was best if he didn’t change his former persona. Therefore, he couldn’t change the frequency of his trips to Saint Samuel Cathedral. Nor could he donate less.

Besides, this can effectively wipe away any suspicion they have of me. After all, it’s hard to imagine that the criminal who infiltrated Chanis Gate hadn’t stayed behind but would saunter into the cathedral as though nothing had happened… I’ll have to thank Emperor Roselle for not plagiarizing criminal psychology. He didn’t point out that intelligent criminals often return to their crime scene to admire their work and the helpless response of others… Klein mumbled inwardly as he took a sip of the black tea that Richardson had brewed.

After moistening his throat, he glanced at his valet and asked, seemingly casually, “What is your deepest impression of East and West Balam?”

Sitting beside him, Richardson didn't ask why. After some thought, he said, "East Balam is safer. West Balam is more chaotic."

After giving a simple answer, Richardson turned to look at his employer, only to see Dwayne Dantès with his eyes half-closed as though he wanted him to continue.

Richardson scratched his ear and deliberated over his words.

"There's also poverty, hunger, and whip abuse. Uh, people from East and West Balam originally worshiped Death. Later, due to the perks of believing in the deities like the Goddess, Lord of Storms, and the Eternal Blazing Sun, allowing them to boost their statuses and receive protection from the cathedral, there was a large-scale change of faith.

"However, as the number of believers increased, that special status was quickly removed. The people of the lower class began worshiping Death again in secret.

"It's more obvious for the more messy West Balam in regards to this point. The descendants of Death often receive a great deal of support…

"This is what my, my father of mine occasionally mentions after he's drunk."

Klein listened in silence and didn't stop his valet's recount, nor did he probe deeper.

Soon, the carriage arrived outside Saint Samuel Cathedral. Klein first took in the sight of the white flying pigeons before entering the prayer hall. He took off his hat and handed it together with his cane to Richardson.

He randomly found a seat and looked at the altar in the darkness. He watched the stars and the Dark Sacred Emblem as unease, embarrassment, and a lack of confidence arose in him.

If he had guessed correctly, ever since he made contact with the holy sword and made a vow, the Goddess had likely taken notice of him. Every time he entered the cathedral to pretend like he was praying, it had the feeling like the Emperor's new clothes.

I wonder what the Goddess's opinion on this is… And what position is the Church taking… Hmm, I'll probe first… Klein clasped his hands and held it to his nose, looking as though he was praying seriously.

After about eight minutes, he slowly got up, walked to the donation box, took out fifty pounds, and piously threw it in.

After doing that, Klein turned to the confessional along the sides of the hall and entered.

Unlike most ancient confessionals which were big wooden crates with two doors, the modern confessional was an independent spacious compartment. The confessor and the listening bishop were separated by a wooden partition, with each one of them having their seats.

Using the dim light, Klein sat on the chair and listened to the bishop say with his mellow voice, "Do you have something you would like to say? The Goddess cares about all 'Her' believers."

Klein raised his right hand and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

"Praise the Lady.

"I wish to confess that two days ago, the military came to me, wishing that I can sell a batch of firearms and cannons to West Balam, to add coal to the chaos there…"

After he said that, the bishop on the other side didn't immediately give him an answer, as though he was alarmed by the arms dealing. He was momentarily unsure as to how to organize his words.

The confessional instantly ended up being wrapped in an awkward silence.

You became frightened just from that? Have you never encountered a confessor as frank as me? If I were to say that I'm currently plotting the murder of a demigod while hiding from the Mother Tree of Desire and the True Creator, wouldn't you be jumping up? Klein lampooned as he continued, "I did enjoy the adventurer's life when I was young. I obtained my wealth through metal, blood, and fire. But I'm already sick of that life. I only wish for a peaceful future.

"I originally wanted to decline the offer, but I'm unable to overcome the greed in my heart. This is a sufficiently enticing business, and it helps me in obtaining a firm footing in Backlund's high society.

"I confess that I ultimately chose the bustle and chaos."

The bishop on the other side finally had a response as he said with a gentle voice, "Don't be afraid. Don't waver. You don't have to feel guilt for a certain level of greed. As long as you don't harm the innocent or commit any of the crimes as written in the bible.

"Go, follow your inner heart and make the choice you wish to make the most. Only this way can you truly understand the teachings and understand the truth of those words.

"There's no need to be put in a difficult position. Remember this. No matter what you do, sincerely being contrite and penitent is worthy of praise and forgiveness.

"May the Goddess bless you."

"Praise the Lady!" Klein drew the crimson moon once again on his chest.

His visit to Saint Samuel Cathedral was to use the opportunity of a confession to inform the Church of his intentions of engaging in arms dealing. He wanted to know their reaction, so as to pry into the Goddess's attitude towards him.

Without saying anything extra, Klein slowly got up and left the confessional. He walked down the aisle and went towards his valet, Richardson.

At this moment, he saw a lady sitting in the corner of the prayer hall. She was wearing a hooded black robe, with blue eyeshadow and blush. She had quite an uncanny sense of beauty. She was none other than Spirit Medium Daly Simone.

Daly looked up and similarly noticed Dwayne Dantès. Her expression momentarily turned adrift as though she had fallen asleep while praying and had entered a dream.

Klein nodded at her indiscernibly as a polite gesture. Then, he took his hat and cane from Richardson as he unhurriedly walked out of the hall.

Daly retracted her gaze as she looked down at the pew in front of her before slowly closing her eyes.

Walking out Saint Samuel Cathedral, Klein stood by the side of the staircase and paused for two seconds.

The white pigeons suddenly flew up in the square up ahead, blocking the sights of all who were taking in the scene.

†

Less than thirty minutes later, in the basement, Leonard heard that Dwayne Dantès, who had previously been investigated, was about to cooperate with the officials. He was going to be a merchant who would sell arms to West Balam.

What is he trying to do? Leonard frowned, little by little, completely at a loss as to what the undying monster’s thoughts were.

Chapter 855 - New Visitor

◆ ◆ ◆

As he returned from Saint Samuel Cathedral to 160 Böklund Street, Klein saw his white-gloved butler, Walter, walk up to him.

“Sir, someone delivered a name card. He said that his employer wishes to visit you from four to five,” Walter said with a staid expression.

Klein tried figuring out who the visitor was, but he had no clue. He nodded gently and said, “Who’s his employer?”

Walter darted his gaze around and saw that the other servants were rather far away. He then replied, “Baron Syndras.”

Baron Syndras… That millionaire tycoon who obtained his aristocratic title with the help of the Conservative Party and Duke Negan, and is also one of the most famous bankers and entrepreneurs in the kingdom? I previously helped Ma’am Mary purchase the Coim Company shares. The competitor happens to be him and his friends… He’s visiting me personally for that matter? It’s only a transaction worth about 13,000 pounds. It shouldn’t be something that requires him to go this far… As Klein’s mind raced, he walked to the staircase that led to the second floor.

Walter walked half a step behind him as he said, “Sir, if you don’t wish to meet Baron Syndras, I’ll inform him that you got caught up at Saint Samuel Cathedral, listening to the bishop’s preachings, and might return very late.”

In between the lines, the butler was saying that Baron Syndras was a believer of the Lord of Storms. It was impossible for him to head directly to Saint Samuel Cathedral to seek him out.

Klein thought and smiled before gently saying, “This is a noble who has immense influence in the banking industry. I’ll definitely come across him in the future, so I have to meet him.

“Hmm… Arrange the meeting to be at the small living room on the second floor where there’s the most sunlight.”

According to what Klein knew, Baron Syndras was the third-largest shareholder of Backlund Bank and the largest shareholder of Southville People’s Bank. In Loen Kingdom’s banking industry, he was definitely one of the few people with the greatest influence.

“Yes, sir.” Walter didn’t nag on.

At ten past four, Klein met the visitor who often appeared on the papers, in the predetermined living room.

The only thing that was different and deviated from his expectations was that Backlund turned cloudy after three. The weather had turned dark and began drizzling. It didn’t bring in the bright and warm sunshine.

Baron Syndras was identical to how he looked on the papers. He had black hair mixed with some white hair that was neatly combed backward, revealing his broad forehead and receding hairline.

His face was rather round, but it lacked the flesh needed to support it. His cheekbones were rather high, and his wrinkles were obvious.

Unlike most Loenese his age, Baron Syndras didn’t have any facial hair. He was clean-shaven, and his light-blue eyes were nearly colorless.

Beside him were a valet and bodyguard. They were the kind of people that didn’t attract much attention. The former’s greatest characteristic was his thin hair, while the latter had short hair if you didn’t count the thick beard that reached down from his ears.

“Good afternoon, Lord Syndras. It’s my honor to have you here as my guest.” Klein held his hand to his chest as he bowed.

Usually, a host would mostly lean their bodies forward and reach out their right hand for a handshake when greeting a guest, but at this moment, he was in front of a noble; thus, requiring him to be more courteous.

Baron Syndras nodded gently as he smiled in response.

“You’re being polite. I should’ve visited you a long time ago, Dwayne Dantès, an experienced gentleman who knows much about the Southern Continent.”

After exchanging some pleasantries, the two took their seats while the valets and bodyguards settled by the side.

Klein was just about to say something when Baron Syndras said with a genial tone, “Dantès, I’m really impressed with people like you. Not everyone can obtain riches from the chaos in the Southern Continent. This requires plenty of guts and the courage to face adversity, as well as stunning judgment.

“Back when I was facing bankruptcy, I had entertained the idea of starting anew in the Southern Continent, but unfortunately, I’m not a brave man.”

Although Baron Syndras later became a noble, he wasn’t a commoner in the true sense of the word. His great grandfather and grandfather had benefited from the development of the colonies, earning them plenty of money from the sea trade. They were rather successful merchants. As for his father, he had invested in industries, building up his reputation and acquiring several factories.

When it came to his generation, he blitzed into the developing banking industry with his sizable wealth, becoming one of the earliest millionaires in Loen.

During this process, Baron Syndras had suffered three failures, but he overcame them, one after another. The most harrowing incident was when the Southville People's Bank he founded suffered from a reputation crisis. A bank run happened, nearly bankrupting him.

He keeps chatting about my experiences in the Southern Continent… Is he hinting to me that he has already discovered the problems with my background, and is using it as a warning? Heh, he probably never expected that the Southern Continent experience he keeps repeating is all fake… Klein scoffed inwardly, but he replied while looking absolutely normal, "That isn't courage but rashness.

"Most people who head to the Southern Continent do have the spirit of adventure, but that's all they have."

Without waiting for Baron Syndras to continue, he smiled and said, "I nearly hired Mr. Rebach some time ago as my butler. He said that you were an excellent employer."

Baron Syndras listened in silence before sighing.

"That is something that fills me with regret.

"Back then, I was very sincere in hoping that Rebach could continue being my butler, but he couldn't overcome the conflict within our positions."

Upon saying that, Syndras looked at the handsome and elegant Dwayne Dantès, picked up the black tea that had been served by a servant, and took a sip.

"I also sincerely hope that we can be friends. I hope you can transfer the Coim Company's 3% to me.

"I will give you an offer you can't resist."

Here it comes… But I have a contract with Ma’am Mary… Klein fell silent for two seconds and said with a smiling sigh, “I deeply value my trustworthiness.”

Upon hearing such an answer, Syndras didn’t show any obvious anger. He smiled, curious and surprised, “Aren’t you going to listen to my offer?”

Klein deliberately spread out his hands with a wry smile.

“I’m afraid I will find it irresistible.”

“Haha.” Syndras immediately laughed and slowly stood up. “You’re as humorous as they say. At the same time, you have a firm will that the rumors fail to mention.”

He looked at his bodyguard and valet before saying to Dwayne Dantès with a smile, “Being a partner with you is definitely better than being a competitor. Alright, it’s time that I leave. There are many things that require my attention.”

Is this sincere praise, or a veiled threat? Klein wasn’t a Spectator, so he wasn’t able to interpret the subtleties. All he could do was shamelessly reply, “Likewise. I look forward to having the opportunity to cooperate with you in other domains, Lord Syndras.”

Dressed in a formal suit and a tie, Baron Syndras smiled and nodded. Without saying another word, he was led out of the main door by Dwayne Dantès and his butler and valet.

As he watched the luxurious carriage disappear into the distance, Butler Walter suddenly said, “Sir, should I hire some temporary bodyguards?”

Ah? Klein nearly failed to understand his butler.

Seeing his employer’s expression remain unperturbed, Walter added, “At times, competition in business can endanger one’s personal safety.”

Mr. Butler also noticed the veiled threats by Baron Syndras? Klein curled the corners of his lips and said, “I’m not too worried because this is Backlund.”

Because my name is known at the Church of Evernight. Because I’m about to cooperate with the military… Therefore, I’m not afraid of suffering any form of retaliation in the Beyonder domain, and I’m not afraid that matters will develop like with the Intis ambassador. Besides, Baron Syndras is a successful man with status and power. He won’t be that rash… Klein thought inwardly.

When Walter attempted to continue, Klein chuckled and said, “However, being careful is forever a good habit.

“Hmm… You can hire two bodyguards. Let them secretly provide me with protection. Try to not have them be discovered by the servants at home.”

“Yes, sir,” Walter immediately replied.

Klein thought for a moment and said, “Make a trip to Member of Parliament Macht’s place. Invite him to dinner at the Intis Srenzo Restaurant tomorrow along with his wife and daughter. If they have a prior commitment, we can postpone it to another day.”

He planned on informing Macht that he planned on taking the military’s test and completing the small arms deal.

The most convenient method was to visit Macht at his residence and mention it in passing, but considering how there might be a demigod of the Marauder pathway around Hazel, any close contact might result in the aura of the gray fog on him being detected. Therefore, Klein changed his plans and decided to have the venue to be at a restaurant.

This way, based on his judgment, the demigod which had failed to parasitize Hazel was unlikely to accompany her.

†

Xio hid in the shadows of the woods as she watched a brown carriage slowly drive past and turn into a particular street in Empress Borough.

There was an obvious coat of arms on the carriage. It was mainly a flower and two rings. They belonged to the captain of the Loen Kingdom's royal guards, Viscount Stratford.

Realizing that she had made zero discoveries, she gloomily left her hiding spot and took a nearby public carriage. She returned straight to the Backlund Bridge area and walked into East Borough.

Upon coming to the Dharavi Street's bar, Xio easily walked to the bar counter as the drunkards avoided her. She directly asked the bartender who was wiping a cup, "Any new jobs?"

The bartender immediately smiled.

"Yes. Butler Walter, who previously offered a 200-pound bounty for a few cheats, has offered a new job. It's very simple. Secretly protect his employer for a few days. The payment will be discussed face-to-face. It will definitely be a handsome reward.

"He was very pleased with your efficiency during the last mission. He requested that we give you priority.

"How about it? Are you interested?"

Xio had a rather deep impression of the butler and his employer because they had spent 200 pounds to seek out cheats who had only scammed 1,000 pounds of cloth.

Very generous, and he's quick to pay… Xio did a slight recall before nodding and saying, "Alright."

Chapter 856 - Bodyguards Arrive

◆

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

Just as Xio entered, she caught the scent of fried food. She couldn’t help but twitch her nose and looked towards the kitchen.

“Fors?”

“Would there be anyone else?” Fors peeked her head out from the kitchen and asked with a smile.

Xio put down the papers in her hand, half-surprised and half-grumbling, “Do you still remember how long it’s been since you stepped into a kitchen? Eh, making toast in the morning doesn’t count.”

Fors returned to the kitchen, leaving only her voice behind.

“I choose the food outside because they’re better. And now, the surrounding streets don’t have any good fried chicken.

“I suddenly had cravings for it. When it comes to Intis cuisine, I like it the most!”

Xio walked to the kitchen and leaned against the door frame as she watched Fors busily prepare dinner. She deliberated and said, “I received a job. 100 pounds a day. Ranging from three to five days, but I need another helper.

“Weren’t you previously lacking in money. Why don’t we do it together?”

Actually, my financial situation has improved… However, a mission that pays 50 pounds a day isn't bad. I'll save up as much as I can. There will be plenty of places that require me to spend money in the future… As Fors watched her oil-filled pot, she asked, "What kind of job is it?"

She had already calculated how much she could receive.

Xio combed her slightly coarse blonde hair and said, "Secretly protect a tycoon named Dwayne Dantès."

"What did he encounter? Will it be very dangerous?" Fors asked cautiously.

Xio recalled and said, "Apparently there was some kind of business conflict, and his competitor has threatened him.

"This isn't anything dangerous. As you are aware, the powerful Beyonders in Backlund wouldn't dare to take any risks, as it's easy to expose themselves, causing them to be targeted by the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers."

"Perhaps the other party is a lunatic? You can't rule that out." While retorting, Fors naturally thought of The World Gehrman Sparrow. This gentleman was a lunatic who dared to pull off major upsets in Backlund!

She paused and scooped up the pieces of fried chicken.

"Since you've already accepted the mission and I have nothing coming up recently, let's do it together.

"It's good too. We will be protecting him in secret, so no one will discover that I'm a bodyguard. Otherwise, I'll have no way of participating in those literature saloons. Heh heh, actually, I can tell them that I'm experiencing life and gathering material. My next novel will be about a female bodyguard and her male employer!"

Xio was already used to Fors's penchant for letting her thoughts wander. She scrunched up her nose and said, “Let’s head over after dinner.”

†

160 Böklund Street. Klein had set up a ritual in the master bedroom’s bathroom and headed above the gray fog.

He planned on handling some random matters before the bodyguards hired by Butler Walter came—it wouldn’t be convenient for him to do them in the coming days.

And among these random matters, the most important task was to confirm the situation with the Creeping Hunger.

Sitting behind the seat belonging to The Fool, Klein made the human-skinned glove fly out from the junk pile.

After a series of divinations, he discovered that the Creeping Hunger was rather stubborn this time. None of the negative side effects had changed.

It’s a result of Mr. A’s corruption, so it’s absolutely not giving up its praise of the True Creator? The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched as he seriously considered the solution to this matter.

Find another way to threaten it? No, how can I call it threatening? Under the premise of being proactive, I will be engaging in friendly communication with it… Klein rapped the corner of the long mottled table and muttered silently, I’ll be writing to Mr. Azik later anyway. I can also mention in passing that the Creeping Hunger’s seal is no longer effective.

I can also bring some mushrooms along with me. No, that wouldn’t work. Although it will stop the Creeping Hunger from praising the True Creator, it will make it unusable. Hmm… I’ll get a few of the original mutated mushrooms from Frank to see if there are other effects…

After determining his thought process, Klein threw Azik's copper whistle and the adventurer's harmonica through the Door of Sacrifice and Bestowment before returning to the real world. He packed up the ritual items and wiped away any traces of the ritual.

After leaving the bathroom, Klein walked to his study desk, taking out a fountain pen and paper as he deliberated over the things to say.

"Dear Mr. Azik… It's been a while since I've written to you. I wonder how you've been recently…

"…Due to certain unforeseen circumstances, your seal on the Creeping Hunger is no longer effective. Can you give me the corresponding method? I wish to apply the seal on it again…

"…Have you heard of creatures known as Spirit World Plunderers? What level are they, and what kinds of characteristics do they have? Where are they usually active in?"

"…I might be heading to the Southern Continent in the near future. If I obtain any new information on Death, I'll write to you as soon as possible…"

Putting down the fountain pen and reading it twice, Klein folded the letter and blew the copper whistle.

Silently, white bones spewed out from the floor, gushing out like a fountain into midair, forming a giant skeleton that was nearly four meters tall.

The skeleton lowered its head to glance at Dwayne Dantès before bending its back, bending its right arm and spreading open its palm.

This messenger is becoming more polite… Klein nodded in satisfaction, handing it the letter.

The skeleton messenger didn't stay, and it immediately disintegrated, pouring down like a waterfall before rapidly vanishing.

Klein silently heaved a sigh of relief as he retracted his gaze and continued writing a letter to Frank.

"…The dried mushrooms you provided were pretty good. Do you still have more?

"…Do you find the idea I previously mentioned viable? If you encounter any difficulties during the research process, you can write to me…"

After folding the letter, Klein blew into the adventurer's harmonica.

He saw Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr appear by his side. She still lacked a head as she wore a complicated black dress while holding four beautiful blonde, red-eyed heads.

"Can you lock onto Frank Lee?" Klein asked rather confidently. After all, Miss Messenger was unlike ordinary messengers. She was a spirit world creature at the demigod level.

Under normal circumstances, a messenger could only locate the contractor or the person who held the summoning ritual. As for the latter, there was a limitation. Once the ritual was too far away, the messenger wouldn't be able to find them.

Reinette Tinekerr's four heads turned in unison and looked at Klein.

"Yes…" "It's that…" "Man…" "Who wants…" "To…" "Plant…" "Everything…" "Right?"

"…"

What did Frank do to leave such a deep impression on Miss Messenger… Back when I replied, she even said that she hoped that he wasn't dead… Klein nodded seriously.

"Yes."

Reinette Tinekerr's four heads spoke one after another.

"Can…" "Locate…" "I labeled…" "Him…"

Ah? Klein turned agape, nearly forgetting his motives.

Poor Frank, no, the great and powerful Frank. He actually got Miss Messenger to specially label him… May the Goddess watch over him… Klein silently exhaled and handed the letter to Reinette Tinekerr.

"Please hand it to Frank.

"He will pay you the gold coin."

One of the heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand opened its mouth and bit down on the letter. Then, it directly entered the spirit world, unable to be sensed again.

After dealing with these matters, Klein left the copper whistle and harmonica on him. He went downstairs to have dinner.

Midway, Walter entered and whispered into Dwayne Dantès's ear, "The bodyguards have arrived. It's that Miss Xio and her friend from before. I will arrange for them to secretly provide you protection."

Miss Xio and her friend? Don't tell me it's Miss Magician… Klein was momentarily at a loss for words as all he could do was gently nod, acknowledging the new tidbit of information.

His spirituality actually didn't sense that someone had "infiltrated" his house. However, this was very normal since it wasn't time for most people to sleep for the night. When it was that period of time, any abnormalities became rather obvious. Therefore, unless Klein specially used his spirituality to leave undetectable marks at key spots, or if the intruder had plenty of ill intentions towards him, he would find it difficult to notice them.

†

In a bedroom on the third floor, Xio and Fors each took a window.

Through the glass, they looked down at the garden.

“This is my dream house. When I have enough money, I’ll buy a house just like this in a scenic area. No, I’ll still choose Backlund. There are more delicacies here, and it’s more convenient,” Fors said sincerely.

With that said, she sighed inwardly.

Unfortunately, I have the curse of the full moon. I can only continue improving myself. Otherwise, I’d have kept a house instead of selling it for cash…

Xio traced her friend’s gaze and looked outside, whispering, “I lived in such a residence when I was little…”

Fors stole a glance at Xio. As she had no idea what to say, she changed topics.

“How should we provide him with protection?”

Xio retracted her gaze.

“When Mr. Dwayne Dantès is home and without guests, we’ll just hide in the room and watch the surroundings to prevent anyone from infiltrating…

“When there are guests, we’ll head to the adjacent room and keep close attention to any developments. We’ll open the door at any moment to save him…

“If Mr. Dwayne Dantès were to head out, the butler will inform us ahead of time. I’ll hide underneath the carriage to protect him while you’ll follow on another carriage…”

“Xio, you’re becoming more and more professional!” Fors seriously praised her before chuckling. “I saw Mr. Dwayne Dantès’s portrait just now. If you hadn’t told me that the danger arose because of a business conflict, I would’ve suspected that the problem arose because of love…”

Before Fors finished her sentence, she suddenly saw a carriage stop outside the compound. Following that, a few policemen in black-and-white checkered uniforms got out of the carriage.

What's happening? She looked at her friend and found Xio looking equally puzzled.

†

Inside the living room on the second floor, Klein met the four officers.

"Mr. Dwayne Dantès, do you know Mr. Cuarón?"

Cuarón? Klein tried recalling and remembered that it was the gentleman who had sold him the Coim Company shares.

"Yes, what happened to him?" Klein asked calmly.

The officer that led the team replied in a rather polite manner, "He committed suicide."

"In addition, he left behind a will, accusing you of forcing him to sell his shares and torturing him using all kinds of underhanded means, causing him to suffer from severe depression.

"And his family has provided proof regarding the contents of his will."

Chapter 857 - Poignant

◆

Cuarón committed suicide? His will accused me of forcing him to sell his shares? His family can even provide evidence? As Klein listened to the officer's description, he digested the relevant information and produced questions in his mind.

After he understood the situation, his first reaction was: Baron Syndras has taken action!

This powerful banker didn't hesitate to carry out his follow-up action against me after failing to cooperate with me, treating me as an enemy. He didn't hold back!

Furthermore, he has clearly gathered enough information to know that Dwayne Dantès is involved with the Church of Evernight and Member of Parliament Macht and the faction backing him. If he were to directly deal with me, it would easily attract unwanted trouble. Therefore, he chose to strike at the other end of the transaction, Cuarón. This will be more indirect and safer, but it would be equally treacherous and ruthless.

This is an utter disregard of an ordinary person's life… Klein suddenly recalled the innocent people who collapsed during the Great Smog of Backlund. He couldn't help but feel a sense of rage surge within him as it bubbled to the surface but was ice-cold.

Klein used his Clown powers to control his facial expression, making him look even more surprised as he asked, seemingly finding the situation incomprehensible, "Are you certain you aren't joking?"

The leading officer nodded solemnly.

“If we didn’t have sufficient clues to support it, we wouldn’t disturb a gentleman like you.

“Mr. Dwayne Dantès, I’ll have to trouble you to follow us to the station for further investigations.”

Despite looking unperturbed, Klein’s mind was racing. Just as he was about to say something, he suddenly noticed something illogical.

Regardless, murder is a serious crime in the current Loen Kingdom. With Baron Syndras’s identity, status, and social connections, he will have at least a few dozen effective means to deal with a foreign tycoon that just came to Backlund two months ago. There’s no need to go this far.

After all, as a member of high society, he will more or less understand or be in contact with Beyonder powers. He knows that there are all kinds of incredible means to pursue the true murderer. Unless he’s completely confident, taking the risk to frame someone for murder is definitely the worst choice.

If Syndras were to use his authority to suppress the investigations of the official Beyonders, it will definitely be more effective and simpler to employ other means!

Even if he temporarily isn’t aware that I’m about to work with the military, he’s definitely aware of my connection with the Church of Evernight and Member of Parliament Macht. He wouldn’t do things in such a simple and brazen manner… Most importantly, even if he’s the kind of murderer who would kill for 3% shares, why didn’t he do it earlier? He could’ve held Cuarón at gunpoint early on, resolving the matter without causing any fuss… Klein glanced at the officers in front of him while in thought without immediately giving an answer.

And in an adjacent room, Xio and Fors were leaning against the wall.

Using the latter's ability to open a small door, they didn't miss any parts of the entire conversation.

"What do we do? If the police want to arrest him, do we still provide protection?" Fors, who lacked the experience of a bounty hunter, hurriedly suppressed her voice as she asked her friend.

She never expected that the business conflict would result in a case of murder and suspicion of framing. The enemy she had imagined had transformed from an infiltrating murderous bandit into a police officer. She was momentarily unsure of what to do.

Xio was also in a dilemma.

"Usually, a bodyguard will only deal with illegal encroachers.

"But… They have given a sufficiently sizable remuneration."

Fors was surprised and amused by the response as she asked, "If he really is imprisoned, are you thinking of breaking him out of jail?

"Let's put aside the problem of danger. That way, you too would be wanted, and you won't be able to be a bounty hunter again. When the time comes, do you plan on fleeing elsewhere with this gentleman?"

As she spoke, Fors, who had already come up with a story, discovered that Dwayne Dantès had a response.

This elegant gentleman with white sideburns turned to look at Walter and said with a calm and gentle voice, "Two matters. First, visit Baron Syndras and tell him that someone is trying to frame him."

Walter revealed a rare look of surprise and confusion, finding his employer's instructions incomprehensible.

From his point of view, this matter was highly likely to be machinated by Baron Syndras. It was pointless visiting him, as it would only result in mockery.

Klein smiled.

“He was a guest recently, and he had threatened me for the shares. Following that, Mr. Cuarón met with his demise. I find it hard to believe that he wouldn’t be under suspicion. Therefore, I believe that it’s necessary to warn him. This is what a gentleman should do.”

The officers were slightly perturbed by what was said. They had the inexplicable feeling that the matter was more complicated than they had imagined. As for Walter, he was somewhat enlightened as he replied, “Yes, sir. I’ll immediately visit Baron Syndras and inform your friends and his of this matter.”

This way, if this wasn’t done by Baron Syndras, all subsequent trouble would be dealt with by him. If he were the mastermind behind this, by involving him in the name of kindly warning him and spreading the news, it could create sufficient pressure from public opinion. It would make it easier for Member of Parliament Macht and company to “rescue” him.

Smart… A good butler really helps… Klein silently praised him as he continued, “Second, please call for my lawyer to handle this tiny inconvenience.”

After instructing his butler and valet, Klein looked at the few officers in front of him.

“Alright, I’ll follow you back to the station. I won’t make things difficult for you.

“However, I wouldn’t answer any of your questions before my lawyer arrives.”

The leading officer heaved a sigh of relief as he said with a nod, “Thank you for your cooperation, Mr. Dantès.”

At this moment, in the adjacent room, Fors hurriedly said, “Are we following?”

"Yes. I'll hide underneath the carriage now and follow it to the station. We can't be certain that those police officers are real ones!" Xio replied rather cautiously.

She paused, seizing the moment to ask, "What else do you wish to say?"

Fors thought for a moment and poignantly said, "Nobles and tycoons are truly terrifying!"

Xio was taken aback. She didn't speak further as she walked to the window. Supporting herself with one hand, she nimbly jumped down, landing in the shadows of the building.

A few minutes later, Klein and two officers boarded a carriage belonging to Dwayne Dantès.

When he sat down, he looked at the thick carpet, his expression the same as before.

†

At the police station, Klein was directly brought to an interrogation room. However, he didn't give a response, regardless of what the officer asked.

Only when his lawyer arrived did he give an account. He said that he had only met Cuarón once. He also mentioned that the negotiation of the share purchase was completely handled by a professional team; hence, he didn't personally involve himself in it.

He repeated his statements, saying that he was unaware of anything else. This left the interrogator at a loss until he was called out of the room.

After a while, the officer responsible for recording the statement walked in and said, "Alright, you may leave. A gentleman with an honorable status has vouched for you and paid for your bail."

Klein didn’t immediately stand up as he continued sitting in the chair. He looked up and asked, “Who is it?”

The officer said with a respectful tone, “Baron Syndras.”

Klein immediately revealed a smile as he slowly got up. He left the interrogation room with his lawyer before meeting up with his butler and valet.

At the entrance to the police station, he met Baron Syndras once again.

This powerful banker’s hair was still neatly combed back, with silver and black interweaving with each other. Beside him was a valet and his bearded bodyguard.

“Thank you for your warning, Dantès. Few people would be so calm and sharp when they encounter such a sudden turn of events,” Syndras smiled as he took two steps forward, reached out his palm, and shook Klein’s hand.

Klein replied with a smile, “I was simply trusting your character.”

Syndras obviously didn’t believe such lip service. He found an excuse and, with his bodyguard, boarded Dwayne Dantès’s carriage.

As for his valet, he sent him off to his luxurious carriage to instruct the carriage driver to follow behind.

As parasol trees flew past outside the carriage window, Syndras spoke first.

“Dantès, how did you come to such a judgment?”

Klein glanced at his butler and valet beside him and chuckled.

“Two points. First, I believe that you will have a better solution. You wouldn’t do something this violent.”

Syndras drank a mouthful of white wine on the carriage as he chuckled.

"Indeed."

"…" The corners of Klein's mouth twitched as he said, "I'm very curious as to what kind of methods you would employ."

He had only asked in passing, without the extravagant hopes of obtaining an answer. However, Syndras chuckled and said,

"With matters developing this far, it doesn't matter if I tell you.

"It's very simple: isn't your goal to enter high society? I planned to hire women of different ages. They will accuse you on different social occasions that you toyed with their feelings and bodies, but you refuse to be responsible for your actions. If necessary, I'll find a few toddling children to clasp you around the legs, calling you PA[1]. Perhaps I might get some civilians to accuse you of seducing their wives and destroying their marriage.

"This is Loen, a rather conservative place. No one would wish to have such a person as a friend. Likewise, the Church of Evernight who values 'marriage' and 'family' will also distance itself from you.

"It will be difficult to clear the air on such matters; yet, it wouldn't be a big deal. They wouldn't use their resources to help do an investigation for you. By the time you eventually find a loophole, your image would be hardened and known by all. How many people do you think will believe your explanations? You are just a newcomer and have yet to build a reputation. You aren't that trustworthy.

"Of course, if you were willing to accept my conditions, I'd stake my reputation for you.

"That will be the first step. Now, it wouldn't happen."

Klein was almost stunned by what he heard. He found himself too inexperienced compared to a seasoned banker who had established a commercial empire for himself.

"I believe I should thank you," he replied with an unfazed smile. "Second, if you really wanted the 3% shares, I wouldn't be your match when it comes to wealth. It would ultimately be better to force Mr. Cuarón rather than killing him after the sale is completed."

Syndras raised his right hand and pressed his fingers to the corner of his forehead as he chuckled.

"No, you're mistaken. I was bent on obtaining the 3% share.

"However, you're right about one thing. I did prepare an irresistible offer for Cuarón, but he suddenly made a decision and completed the deal with you at an extremely fast speed. It caught me by surprise."

Klein narrowed his eyes slightly as he suddenly fell silent.

†

Returning to 160 Böklund Street, Xio circled the area and entered the third floor again, seeing Fors who had easily entered by using Door Opening.

"How is it? Nothing happened, right?" Fors, who had only followed from a distance away, asked curiously.

Xio shook her head in a slightly wooden manner.

"No."

She then revealed a poignant expression.

"Nobles and tycoons are truly terrifying."

†

This is referencing Mark Twain’s “Running for Governor,” a common piece of literature taught to Chinese middle-school students.

Chapter 858 - Generous

◆ ◆ ◆

On the tiny balcony of the master bedroom, Klein stood behind a railing in the form of Dwayne Dantès. He silently watched Baron Syndras's luxurious carriage depart.

His mind was still resonating with the conversation he just had. He believed that there had been a secret plot behind the acquiring of the Coim Company's shares from the very beginning.

According to Syndras, although the Coim Company has great potential and bright prospects, its current value is only limited to Backlund. It's constrained by many conditions, making it not worthy for a powerful banker to place such great importance on it that he had to take on a stance of being hell-bent on acquiring it. After all, even if he didn't succeed, it would only be a difference in monetary profit. It wouldn't result in any losses.

For the seller, Cuarón, it's very normal to be under external stress to sell his shares for cash. It's also very normal for him to be unwilling to see "Moneybags" Baron Syndras from the Conservative Party. But herein lies the problem. As a businessman, faced with a deal that isn't considered important, the political inclinations are something to be considered when prices are similar. There's no reason to reject the possibility of receiving an extremely high premium. Yet, he had deliberately rushed to close the deal with Dwayne Dantès before Syndras could make his final offer. It's as if he has a grudge with money or views the Conservative Party with extreme prejudice. And this doesn't match the current political climate. The Loen Kingdom's internal politics hasn't reached such a splintered state.

From the looks of it, someone is forcing Syndras to do this, and someone had designed a trap, using Cuarón's 3% shares as the bait and me as the cover to lure Syndras into the trap, wishing to achieve a certain goal… Klein looked at the street lamps under the night sky as he sighed poignantly.

Based on my assumption, if I hadn't discovered the problem tonight and hadn't sent someone to Syndras, the subsequent developments would definitely have me crushed by all kinds of seemingly incriminating evidence. And when the military or the Church of Evernight intervenes, there will undoubtedly be a twist in the evidence, incriminating Syndras.

During this process, just a tiny misjudgment on Syndras's part will result in him treating Dwayne Dantès as an accomplice of the mastermind behind this ploy. He would use a rather intense method in response, hammering the final nail in my coffin.

As for who the mastermind was and their true goals, Klein had no idea. All he could do was confirm that Ma'am Mary likely wasn't aware of the truth. She was only used due to her anxiousness to preserve her control over the Coim Company. In short, she wasn't qualified to be deeply involved in the mastermind's ploy.

Environment protection… New Party… Conservative Party… Bankers… Acquisition… Framing… One word after another surfaced in Klein's mind, seemingly allowing him to see through the present calm in Backlund. He saw the dangerous stirrings that were hidden beneath the surface.

They existed for a long time and hadn't been quelled because of the Great Smog. It was even possible that it was just an extension of the tragedy.

When all of these meshed together, mixed with the tense international environment, Klein suddenly thought of a word: “Revolution!”

In that second, Klein seemed to catch a whiff of the impending storm.

Together with the prophecy of the apocalypse, I wonder how much chaos and madness are brewing in secret… Currently, my main goal is to start from the military and investigate the truth behind the Great Smog of Backlund. If I were to get caught up in this maelstrom, there’s a high chance I’ll get involved in unnecessary trouble. Perhaps it might expose my Sequence powers, preventing me from continuing my act as Dwayne Dantès… Klein retracted his gaze, having made up his decision.

It was to quickly extricate himself from the matter!

As for Syndras’s safety, he wasn’t too worried. First, the former had the Conservative Party backing him, and he had his own faction. With him on alert, it would be difficult for him to suffer any further harm. Second, Klein didn’t have any deep ties with him; thus, providing a warning had already spoken volumes of his character.

As for the truth behind Cuarón’s death, he had no right to carry out any investigations. All he could do was trust in the Nighthawks’ rich experience and the myriad of means to have a chance of finding the real clues.

How should I extricate myself? As long as the shares are with me, it implies that I’ll ultimately remain center stage… Get Ma’am Mary to acquire it ahead of time? That will be very difficult. She likely doesn’t have the funds… Sell it to Syndras? That will be in violation of the contract… Amidst Klein’s flurry of thoughts, he gradually had an idea.

His facial muscles twitched a little for some baffling reason before they relaxed. This was because what he wanted to do was something he had planned on doing but lacked the ability to do so. Furthermore, it would also benefit him by establishing an image, bettering his chances of entering high society.

†

In the room adjacent to the balcony, Xio and Fors were observing the streets and garden. One of them was looking at the crimson moon that was half-hidden behind the thick clouds. There was a prolonged silence.

Only when Dwayne Dantès's lights were extinguished did Fors turn to look at her friend. She said in excitement and clear poignancy, "Being a tycoon sure isn't easy…

"If you were him, you might've gone bankrupt in three days and be sent to jail."

Xio shot her a glance and said, "I can hire a powerful butler, a professional lawyer, and a capable business secretary to help me."

Fors didn't continue putting her down as she said with a smile, "If I were you, I would change all of it to cash, bonds, and property. I'll use the annual income they bring about to maintain a decent life."

Just as she said that, she saw Xio frown slightly. She cast her gaze towards the first floor.

"What happened?" Fors tensed up.

Xio observed for a few seconds before saying, "My spiritual perception tells me that an item or matter related to black magic has appeared."

One of the biggest advantages of a Sheriff was that when they were close enough, they could sense matters related to evil, chaos, and madness that weren't screened.

"Black magic?" Fors was considered a senior Beyonder, so she wasn't unfamiliar with that.

Strictly speaking, anything that didn't pass through the seven orthodox deities was considered as black magic. It included ritualistic magic that prayed to secret existences.

In the typical sense, black magic referred to the use of flesh and blood, hair, and all kinds of strange items to cast strange spells. It partially involved evil gods, one's Beyonder powers, the spirituality of the materials used, and the correct symbols and magic labels.

Xio nodded heavily and said, "Yes, it's on the first floor. I plan on taking a look. Stay here to protect Mr. Dantès."

Fors kept silent for two seconds and nodded without wasting any time.

"Okay."

After Xio left the balcony's half-open room, Fors took out Leymano's Travels from a hidden pouch, prepared to immediately take action if anything amiss happened.

Elsewhere, Xio nimbly and briskly arrived at the first floor. Following her senses, she arrived outside a room.

After confirming that the target was inside, Xio was surprised as her expression gradually darkened.

If she didn't remember wrongly, this room likely belonged to Butler Walter who had hired her!

During her momentary daze, the black magic item or matter which triggered her spiritual perception vanished. Calm returned to the room as though nothing abnormal had happened.

Xio hurriedly pressed her ear to the door and carefully listened, confirming that there was the breathing of a human inside.

After waiting for a while and seeing that Walter wasn't doing anything else, she returned to the third floor with a look of suspicion. She recounted her findings to her friend and finally said, "Do we feign ignorance, or think of a way to remind Mr. Dantès?"

Fors thought and said, “Perhaps the butler doesn’t have any ill intentions?

“Let’s keep observing.”

After deciding on their stance, she tsked in wonder.

“I have to say that Mr. Dwayne Dantès is a really pitiful person. Not only was he used by others to harm Baron Syndras and get framed, nearly throwing him into jail and losing his reputation, but he also has a butler who researches black magic with an unknown motive. Sigh, I hope he doesn’t lose his life because of that. On this front, he’s only a helpless commoner.”

Xio nodded in agreement.

“If we’re unable to determine the butler’s intentions after three days are over, we can leave a slip for him to warn him.”

†

The next morning, Klein glanced at Walter in a normal fashion after having breakfast before leaving home with Richardson. He rode a carriage to Saint Samuel Cathedral.

After the preaching and prayers, Klein didn’t make any donations. Instead, he directly came to Bishop Elektra.

“Is there something?” Although this bishop was under immense stress due to the infiltration of Chanis Gate, he was still rather friendly when dealing with the faithful.

Klein smiled and replied, “I’ve recently been involved in certain matters and have come to recognize my true self.”

Without waiting for Elektra to inquire, he continued, “I wish to establish a foundation that targets the poor. I hope that they can receive help from the Church.

"I will place the Coim Company shares I have on hand into this foundation, so as to kickstart this initiative using all the funds obtainable from the contract.

Elektra was nearly stupefied by what he heard because it was definitely a sizable sum.

Although it wasn't public knowledge how much Dwayne Dantès spent on acquiring the 3% shares, just from the relevant sources of information, it was estimated to be over 10,000 pounds. Furthermore, the future returns were nothing to scoff at!

And back then, Ma'am Mary had been pursued by many men of status who had wealth in the range of tens of thousands of pounds.

Therefore, for Dwayne Dantès to suddenly donate more than ten thousand pounds was definitely considered a generous move. In the whole of the Church of Evernight, apart from donations from a deceased's will, there were only a handful of one-time donations that exceeded this amount!

"This is an act that deserves all kinds of praise," Elektra said from the bottom of his heart. "However, I have the obligation to remind you that you shouldn't do something that exceeds your reach."

Klein smiled and replied, "This isn't a small sum for me as well, but it's still acceptable. It wouldn't affect my life and business."

Elektra's smile gradually turned warm as he said with a nod, "The Goddess will definitely watch you."

Upon hearing this blessing, Klein's expression nearly froze.

Elektra continued, "I will report the matter to His Grace and try to organize a charity party for this foundation. When the time comes, I'll invite the Goddess's faithful from different domains. They will include powerful aristocrats and their families. Let's see if there are more people who are willing to participate."

He knew very well that Dwayne Dantès was attempting to enter high society; therefore, he had deliberately made mention of powerful aristocrats.

Chapter 859 - New Mushrooms

◆

In the bottom cabin of the Future where it was pitch-black.

Frank Lee lit a candle which illuminated a table covered with flesh, mushrooms, wheat, and fish.

He casually pushed the items away and cleared out a space that was just enough to accommodate a piece of paper.

Right on the heels of that, he spread out a piece of paper, picked up a fountain pen, and wrote with an excited expression:

“My dear friend, Gehrman Sparrow, I’m delighted to know that you found the dry mushrooms to be pretty good. Perhaps it’s more useful than I imagined it to be. When I’m free, I’ll take another look at them.

“As I’ve been fully focused, in both body and mind, in the experiment you mentioned, I’ve already stopped all other creations. Most of the mushrooms have been burned away by Nina, leaving me with the last three. I hope it will be of help to you.

“Placed together with them are my latest products. One of them is a type of mushroom that grows by feeding on flesh and blood. They have three breeds. The first is crossbred with wheat and can be ground into a mushroom powder that can be used to make bread. Another has the characteristic of being mixed with milk, allowing milk to be drawn from them. The last has been crossbred with fish. They come with a refreshing taste and it has a thick meaty texture.

“The things to take note of is that they are absolutely not to be eaten raw. They need to be cooked in 90°C hot water for at least five minutes so as to kill any living characteristics; otherwise, regardless of what it turns into, it will absorb the flesh and blood around it, including human organs.

“Another point. It’s unable to distinguish between normal flesh and monster flesh, nor can they deal with the latter properly. They will accumulate with the corresponding toxicity and madness.

“I think they will experience different mutations because of the different types of monster flesh, producing different kinds of danger. However, I wasn’t able to verify that, because I lack a sufficient number of monster corpses. If you were to obtain one while adventuring, please mail me one. I only need a tiny amount.

“As for any other problems that might exist, I’m not sure either. It’s still a prototype, preventing further attempts and observation…

“I wish you all the best and to have a bountiful time adventuring. Sincerely, your friend, Frank Lee.”

After putting down the fountain pen, Frank read his reply in its entirety before folding in satisfaction. He found a gold coin and placed it over the letter.

He quickly set up the messenger summoning ritual in preparation to chant the incantation.

At this moment, he subconsciously surveyed his surroundings and was stunned.

Then, Frank moved the nearby pile of soil out the door.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey was hiding in her room, observing the glass bottle in her hand.

In the bottle was a translucent, colorless, sticky liquid. It was like a mirror when still, completely reflecting everything within its vicinity. When undulations happened, a very tiny whirlpool would silently spin beneath the surface.

This was none other than the Hypnotist potion which she had just successfully concocted!

Audrey had already digested her Psychiatrist potion and planned on advancing to Sequence 6 before Backlund's Psychology Alchemists contacted her.

After using Placate to quell her mental state, Audrey gently bit down on her lip, raised the glass bottle, and downed the potion.

After a brief chill, she suddenly felt her mind seem to explode. Her body also seemed to be contaminated as it turned somewhat incorporeal.

At that moment, her Soul Body, Astral Projection, and Ether Body were being absorbed and assimilated by her Body of Heart and Mind. Her entire person was like an amalgamation of pure thoughts that began churning. She felt the boundless sea of collective subconscious which connected all living creatures, and she sensed the spirituality sky that stood in contrast.

Having experienced the sense of alarm she received during her Psychiatrist advancement, Audrey didn't panic. She ultimately maintained a sliver of lucidity and curbed her instinctive urge to fuse into the "sea." She allowed her consciousness to spread out in all directions before contracting like a rubber band.

After an unknown period of time, she finally found her inner self. She saw the back of her hand covered in dense, firm golden scales and saw that the hair on her shoulders turned luxuriant and heavy, as though they were really made of gold.

After these anomalies receded, Audrey quickly recovered. However, when she looked into the mirror, she found her green eyes appear clear, but deep down was a strange bottomless whirlpool. It made it difficult for others to shift their gaze away from them, easily drowning within them.

This is a sign of the dispersing spirituality that has yet to have been fully converged… Audrey slowly eased her brows as her smile turned bright.

She looked at herself in the mirror and nodded gently, finding it hard to hide her smile.

“Audrey, you are already a Sequence 6!”

After she calmed her emotions, she seriously introspected herself to determine her new Beyonder powers and the qualitative changes.

After some work, Audrey came to a rough understanding of the situation.

First, her constitution had received a significant enhancement. Be it her strength or agility, it had exceeded an ordinary person’s. She could also form a layer of “Scales” over her skin, largely resisting and reducing any damage. Second was a qualitative change in Psychological Cue. It became a form of hypnosis within the non-combat domain. As long as she made the target focus on something, Audrey could open the door to their Body of Heart and Mind and directly alter their conscious and affect their subconscious.

This way, the target wouldn’t notice that they were abiding by her arrangements, taking actions that didn’t match their true intentions.

Of course, if Audrey’s “arrangement” directly harmed the target’s life or something he subconsciously placed great importance to, then the target would produce an intense resistance, causing the hypnosis to fail. In addition, if the target had a strong soul and firm body and mind, they would be able to resist the hypnosis to a certain extent.

Third, Battle Hypnotism. Audrey could forcefully hypnotize an enemy, making them do something abnormal, such as attacking their companions or avoid her, the Hypnotist. However, such hypnosis only lasted for short periods of time. The target would quickly snap awake and sense the problem. Similarly, it was unable to harm the target's life and make the enemy commit suicide.

Fourth was Psychological Invisibility. With one's control of the target's Body of Heart and Mind, allowing oneself to remain in the blind spot of one's consciousness, she could achieve the effect of invisibility despite someone standing in front of her without being able to sense her.

“Very impressive… My only regret is that I still lack Beyonder powers that can launch direct attacks…” Audrey puffed her cheeks in an indiscernible manner as she tried hard to converge her spirituality and make her eyes less intoxicating.

After mostly eliminating her abnormalities, she opened the door and let Susie in. With the help of her golden retriever, she began familiarizing herself with her new Beyonder powers.

Before long, her lady's maid, Annie, knocked on the door and entered with an invitation letter in hand.

“My Lady, the Church will be organizing a charity party on Saturday night for a newly established bursary foundation that's targeted at the poor. They have invited you.”

Audrey didn't directly agree as she asked, “Did they invite my parents?”

“Yes, they were also invited, as well as Lord Hibbert,” Annie replied honestly.

Audrey nodded and said with a smile, “Tell the Church that I'll be participating.

"Also, figure out the exact situation with the charity foundation so that I can better decide on the amount to donate."

†

In the evening at the Intis Srenzo Restaurant.

"This place is truly dazzling. It's much prettier than the living rooms and activity rooms of many nobles." Fors looked around as though she was here to gather material.

Although she had participated in many noble-organized literature saloons, she had always visited them at their residences and not at such top-end restaurants.

Xio grabbed at her coarse blonde hair.

"This is the style of Intis. It's different from us. It might look pretty, but it lacks substance."

"How does it lack substance? Look, those are all famous oil paintings and sculptures…" Fors deliberately retorted.

During this process, she suppressed her voice, as they hadn't entered by the main door.

As she spoke, she found the private room mentioned by Walter. Fors directly used Door Opening and pulled Xio in. They hid inside a pantry cupboard and waited for their target of protection, Dwayne Dantès, and his guests to arrive.

"How much do you think the 3% shares of Coim Company is worth?" Bored, Fors casually asked.

In the morning, she had entered Saint Samuel Cathedral with Xio to provide protection while feigning prayer.

Xio hesitated and said, "At least several thousand pounds. The bishop seemed to place a great deal of importance on the matter."

"How rich. Donating thousands of pounds just like that. Why doesn't he save poor people like us?" Fors said poignantly in a joking manner.

At this moment, the door to the room opened. Dwayne Dantès and Macht's family walked in and took their seats. The waiters also started rushing around.

Xio and Fors didn't speak further as they eavesdropped on the chit chat outside as they observed the surrounding situation. From time to time, their noses would twitch because of the food's fragrance.

Suddenly, Xio frowned as though she had sensed something before quickly easing her brows as though nothing had happened.

"What's wrong?" Fors leaned in towards her friend's ear and whispered.

Xio shook her head.

"Nothing. I was uptight, causing me to overreact."

At that moment, Klein put down his fork and knife, glancing to the side with a normal expression.

In his eyes which had his Spirit Vision activated, a blonde, red-eyed head had appeared out of the void. In its mouth was a thick letter.

Klein faintly caught the scent of milk, wheat, and fish.

The corners of his mouth twitched as he secretly reached out his left hand to grab the letter. And sitting in the other three seats, Macht, Riana, and Hazel didn't notice anything.

Klein stuffed the letter into his pocket without anyone noticing as a waiter walked out of the pantry, serving a new dish to the four customers. Among the dishes, two of them were butter-fried mushrooms.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein suddenly felt disgusted. His expression turned odd as his left palm that remained in his pocket trembled.

Chapter 860 - Runaway Horse

◆

Thankfully, it's not a mushroom dish I ordered, or else it would've been a waste of a dish… Despite believing that he no longer affected by the trauma inflicted upon him by mushrooms, the smell that came with the letter successfully made him suffer a "relapse." Klein's expression rapidly restored itself as he retracted his left hand and placed it on the cup to his side, drinking the ice water inside.

"Please give me another cup." As though nothing had happened, he turned his head and instructed the waiter who was at the door.

At the same time, he pressed down his clothes and slowly got up while expressing his apologies before heading for a bathroom attached to the private room.

It was opposite the pantry, placed on either side of the main door.

Hiding in a cupboard, Fors heard footsteps approach as the bathroom's door opened and closed. She couldn't help but lean into Xio's ear and whisper in amusement, "It's the second time!

"They've been here for slightly more than thirty minutes, and Dwayne Dantès has already gone to the washroom twice!

"The first time was clearly to pee. If it's for the same reason, it means that this gentleman's kidneys, bladder, or prostate is problematic.

"He's coming out. He's coming out. He's really only peeing. Tsk, he seems to drink plenty of water usually and often heads to the bathroom. Sigh, it’s difficult being a tycoon, but it’s even more difficult being a good-looking tycoon in particular!

Xio rolled her eyes.

“What has that got to do with you?

“Focus and be serious. We’re on a mission!

“Also that bodyguard of the member of parliament named Macht seemed pretty strong. He’s probably a Beyonder. We need to be careful.”

Fors had no choice but to suppress her desire to chat as she shrank back.

“They’re guarding the area outside without being wary of others passing through the walls. How unprofessional… Alright, we’ll chat when we’re back.”

At that moment, Klein had returned to the table and sat back in his seat.

He drank a mouthful of ice water, sipped on some white wine, and said to Macht with a smile, “Having been here in Backlund for nearly two months, I’ve been busy getting used to the environment and hadn’t found the time to start a new business. Every day I wake up seeing money flowing out without any coming in. Heh heh, it’s about time I do something.”

He indicated his willingness to participate in the arms dealing by cracking a joke.

Macht stroked his cup and said with a warm smile, “I can empathize with that. In the beginning, I was in such a stage as well.

“How much money do you have to spare? I can introduce you to some friends for a partnership.”

Klein replied in a calm tone, “I’ll be able to spare a maximum of 20,000 pounds at present.”

"You're richer than I imagined," Macht said with a heartfelt sigh.

Under normal circumstances, a tycoon who had a liquidity of 20,000 pounds was definitely someone who's overall wealth was on the order of a hundred thousand pounds.

Not giving Dwayne Dantès a chance to be humble, he casually said, "Didn't you buy 3% of the Coim Company's shares before? You can pledge it for at least 10,000 pounds. That will give you some liquidity."

Klein immediately smiled and sighed.

"I have already donated those shares to the Church. I plan to establish a bursary foundation that's targeted at the poor."

"You donated it to the Church?" Macht had yet to meet the priests or bishops of Saint Samuel Cathedral today. Furthermore, he had been out and had yet to receive the invitation; therefore, he wasn't aware of the new development.

Ma'am Riana and Hazel, who were enjoying the delicious food, looked up as well, subconsciously casting their gazes at Dwayne Dantès.

At their level, it wasn't uncommon to have friends they knew that could donate 10,000 pounds, but very few could donate that much in one go. And among these few people, there might not even be one who was willing to donate such amounts!

No, there was one now—Dwayne Dantès!

"Yes." Klein nodded with his usual expression. "If not for the Goddess's blessings, I would have long died in the chaotic Southern Continent. And when I was young, if I had the chance to attend school and study, perhaps my life would've been completely different. Thus, I wish to give those children who desire to change their fates some hope."

"Your character is as amazing as your generosity," Riana lowered her cutlery and praised sincerely. Hazel also nodded indiscernibly. The way she looked at Dwayne Dantès turned significantly gentler.

Seeing her parents begin an idle conversation over the charity, she excused herself and walked to the bathroom, seemingly pressing her right hand onto her abdomen.

When she arrived at the door, she was just about to turn right when she suddenly turned her head and looked at the cupboard beside the pantry.

She frowned slightly and revealed a look of confusion before retracting her gaze and opening the washroom's wooden door.

When Hazel came out after washing her hands, she had apparently forgotten the abnormality that had happened. She touched the necklace at her chest and returned to the dining table.

Dinner came to an end after the dishes and dessert were served. The four left the private room and met the two bodyguards outside with their servants. They were preparing to return home.

At this moment, Hazel suddenly paused and said, "I think I dropped my ear studs inside. Sorry about that. Please wait a moment."

Without waiting for Ma'am Riana to instruct a waitress to do the search, Hazel turned around and circled around the bend, returning to the room she had been in.

Hazel lowered her hand that held her left ear and directly entered the connected pantry until she was in front of the cupboard. She then placed her hand on it.

She had planned on opening the door to the cupboard at an extremely fast speed, but after some thought, she decided to be cautious by holding onto her necklace with one hand and turning her body sidewards to prevent any sudden attacks from whatever was inside.

As she held her breath, Hazel took the chance when the waiter was clearing the table inside to suddenly pull the door open, exposing whatever was inside.

However, apart from some spare cutlery and table cloth, there was nothing.

Hazel once again wore a look of puzzlement, as though she couldn't believe the scene before her eyes.

"I clearly sensed something very valuable inside…" she muttered under her breath and quickly closed the door before her maidservant chased up to her and walked out of the pantry.

†

Outside the Intis Srenzo Restaurant, Fors and Xio turned their heads simultaneously and looked inside.

"That girl actually noticed us?" Fors whispered in disbelief and amazement.

If she hadn't used Door Opening and sneaked out from the back of the cupboard, she and Xio would've been discovered, having no choice but to admit that they were secretly protecting Dwayne Dantès.

Xio wore a confounded look as well.

"I remember that you didn't speak or move about when she was heading to the washroom."

"Perhaps… She's a Beyonder as well, and has a certain type of spiritual intuition…" Fors made an uncertain guess. "Mr. Dwayne Dantès sure leads a difficult life. He often encounters the power struggles between tycoons and nobles while having a butler that secretly studies black magic at home. Furthermore, there are Beyonders with mysterious powers living nearby. By the way, what's her name?"

"Hazel." Xio was looking for Dwayne Dantès's carriage, preparing to hide underneath when her gaze suddenly froze. "Fors, look. That person is acting oddly.”

Fors traced her gaze and saw a middle-aged man in a black formal suit. He was pacing along the sides of the street, looking very anxious and frustrated.

“How is he acting oddly?” Fors didn’t have the time to observe him carefully as she directly asked.

Xio answered simply, “He’s dressed as a decent gentleman, but his shoes are very dirty. It’s as though he hasn’t shined them in a while. As you know, Backlund is covered in dust.

“Also, he would touch the area underneath his armpit. I dare bet that there’s an underarm holster hidden there…

“Apart from that, his expression and attitude imply that he isn’t normal.

“Hmm… They’re coming out soon. I’ll head to the carriage first. Watch that person and ensure that Mr. Dantès is protected.”

“Alright.” As Fors found it troublesome, she also found it rather interesting. Hence, she retreated to an area that concealed her as she observed the entrance of the Intis Srenzo Restaurant.

Nearly thirty seconds later, Dwayne Dantès and the Macht family walked out. After bidding each other farewell, they headed for their respective carriages.

At this moment, a two-wheeled carriage charged out from the end of the street at an extremely fast speed, as though it would topple at any moment.

The horse that pulled the carriage wore a rabid look in its eyes, as though it had been alarmed. It charged for the Intis Srenzo Restaurant’s entrance in its panic.

Of Macht's two bodyguards, one went forward in a bid to subdue the runaway horse, while the other protected the member of parliament and family.

At this moment, the middle-aged man who had been loitering around had approached from the back and drew a revolver. With a warped expression, he aimed at Macht's head.

Klein's right hand was raised indiscernibly before he retracted it without doing anything.

He nimbly performed a jump, dodging the runaway horse. At the same time, Fors, who was hiding elsewhere, clenched her palm gently and pulled to the side.

The assailant's leg suddenly went limp, as though he had stumbled over something, as he fell to the ground, failing to pull the trigger.

In his haste, he pressed down with one hand and immediately leaped up, planning to shoot wildly without aiming.

However, when he squeezed his finger, he didn't feel any tactile feedback.

The revolver had already dropped by Hazel's feet!

Following that, he and the runaway horse was subdued by the bodyguards.

"Why did you attempt to assault me?" Macht held back his churning emotions as he took a step forward and asked with a deep voice.

The middle-aged man immediately laughed as he shouted with a hysterical expression, "It's you! It's all because of you and the others!

"You talk about atmospheric pollution, wanting things like anthracite! My factory is going bankrupt, my child is dying from an illness, and my wife has committed suicide!"

Chapter 861 - Fors's Dream

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing the middle-aged man's shout and seeing his warped expression, Hazel's eyes which were filled with rage and hatred gradually froze before melting into a confused and lost look.

It wasn't only her. Macht and Riana, as well as Dwayne Dantès, fell silent. No one spoke for a moment. Even Fors, who had concealed herself, also lost the sense of excitement she originally had, no longer having that strong sense of justice.

After more than ten seconds, Macht stopped looking at his assailant and turned his head to say to his bodyguards, "One of you stay here. Watch the scene and the suspect. Wait for the police."

Having said that, he paused and said to his valet, "Get a few reporters to cover this matter."

After preliminarily dealing with the matter, this House of Commons Member of Parliament surveyed the area and discovered that several passersby were attempting to gather over to check on what was happening. He then looked at Dwayne Dantès and apologized with a smile, "My apologies for putting you in such danger. I never expected the matter to develop this way. We did consider the actual situation of similar factory owners and coal suppliers, and we had provided them some assistance and interim measures. Who knew…"

Coming up with a bill is something, but the actual implementation is an entirely different matter. When atmospheric pollution becomes abnormally pressing and the various parties exert immense stress, it's no surprise that a cookie-cutter solution is employed… Klein sighed and said with a self-deprecating laugh, “There’s no need to keep my feelings into consideration. I’ve been in even more dangerous situations in the past.”

On the surface, it appeared as though he was referring to his encounters when doing business in the Southern Continent’s West Balam. In fact, he had recalled Megose who was pregnant with an evil god’s spawn, the terrifying meteor that had crashed down from the sky, Cynthia who wanted to bear a child for Admiral Amyrius, and the Rose School of Thought angel and Numinous Episcopate monster who had collapsed the mountain outside Bayam.

Compared to these, what had happened here was like a drizzle. He didn’t even need to consider his own safety since there was Xio, Miss Magician, and Hazel. He didn’t even take action besides dodging normally like any experienced adventurer would do.

His focus was on whether this would result in a storm.

Macht sighed and nodded.

“I can tell that you’re very calm.

“I once doubted your experiences, but now I’m convinced.

“Alright, Dwayne. Let’s return home separately. Leave the rest to the police. If there’s a need to take a statement, they will do it at your residence.”

Klein nodded and said to Macht and family, “Be safe.”

Macht nodded seriously and sighed once again.

“Backlund’s social season has just begun, and this happened… Cherish the peace we have now.”

Backlund’s social season is marked by the return of the House of Lords

Members of Parliament. It seems to have begun since last weekend… And this week, two cases have happened consecutively. The harm dealt to Baron Syndras, and the assault on Member of Parliament Macht… As he thought, Klein didn't stay put. He brought Richardson, who clearly looked a little shaken, and walked towards his carriage.

When he got into it, he watched the scenery fly backward as he sighed and half-closed his eyes.

He was presently unable to determine if the assault hadn't involved Beyonder powers, as everything that had happened could be done by ordinary people. As for the middle-aged man, he had sufficient reason to do so. This didn't need deliberate fabricating, as Klein believed that in Backlund, at present, there were more than one former factory owner or employer that had lost their livelihood because of similar developments.

The only thing that felt questionable was that Macht was the target.

Although the House of Commons were the supporters, advocates of the environmental measures, often making relevant speeches and are interviewed by the papers, he wasn't the most obvious target during the passing of the bill. In comparison, there was a higher chance that members of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council were picked as targets for revenge.

Klein leaned on the carriage wall as he slowly opened his eyes. Seeing that it was already dark and cloudy with rain already pattering down.

Once again, he realized how the maelstrom hidden beneath the seemingly-calm Backlund surface was intensifying.

Reining in his thoughts, Klein raised his left palm and tapped his pocket.

In it was what he believed to be Frank Lee's reply and some unknown mushrooms.

Klein really yearned to return home to head above the gray fog and use the newly received mushrooms to communicate with Creeping Hunger, doing so to regain the use of the Sealed Artifact. With the storm already brewing, he believed that there was a need for him to quickly be returned back to his optimal combat strength. And in this aspect, Creeping Hunger was essential.

Unfortunately, he had two Beyonder bodyguards following him, so it was best if he didn't head above the gray fog for the time being.

I clearly don't need any protection, but I spent a few hundred pounds to hire two people to restrict my actions. How helpless I am as a tycoon… Klein finally sighed inwardly as he raised the cup of black tea that had just been prepared by Richardson.

He took a sip as his facial muscles tensed up before relaxing.

Klein looked down and discovered that there had been twice the number of lemon slices in his black tea than usual.

He glanced at Richardson in an unnoticeable manner, and he saw that his valet was in a daze, as though he was still lost in the horror of the assault.

As cowardly as usual… Klein commented inwardly as he placed the porcelain cup on the table.

†

Late at night. 39 Böklund Street, Member of Parliament Macht's house.

Hazel sat before her dressing table, looking at the gray rat sitting on a powder box. After a long silence, she said, "Was my father wrong? The matter he pushed for is clearly a good thing…"

"There is nothing that is beneficial to everyone. There will always be those who benefit and those who suffer from it. At such times, a relevant bill or plan requires thought, compensation, and aid. If your father had done them, the problem isn't his. Conversely, it also means he's cold and ruthless," the rat said perfunctorily.

Hazel recalled for a few seconds and relaxed her expression.

"During dinner, I sensed that there was something very valuable hidden inside the cupboard in the pantry, but when I later got an opportunity to open it, there was nothing."

The rat was taken aback as it said in thought, "Perhaps that was Dwayne Dantès's bodyguard.

"He was recently embroiled in a suicide case, and it's said that it involves Baron Syndras. Hiring a bodyguard to protect him in secret is normal.

"Hmm… The bodyguard inside the cupboard might also possess supernatural powers, carrying mystical items with them. That's why you were able to sense it."

Hazel nodded gently and accepted the explanation before subconsciously muttering to herself, "I wonder what kinds of supernatural powers those bodyguards have…"

After saying that, she swept the gray rat with a puzzled look.

"How do you know Dwayne Dantès was embroiled in a troublesome case?"

The rat squeaked.

"My present state is very suitable for me to eavesdrop into the conversations of others."

As it spoke, it looked in the direction of 160 Böklund Street, the glint in its eyes shimmering.

†

Based on the sleeping rotation, Fors was asleep as she felt herself float to an ancient and majestic castle. In it were all kinds of Beyonder ingredients and mystical items. There were even two blurry tarot cards.

However, she didn't take any of them away, as they were sealed by an invisible forcefield.

Fors looked around in an attempt to find the means to remove the seal. Finally, she saw a complicated symbol drawn at the top of the dome.

It was a symbol formed from "fate" and "concealment"!

If I find an item engraved with this symbol, I'll be able to unseal some treasure… Fors immediately came to a realization when she snapped awake. She discovered that she had curled into a ball on the carpet in the room. She had a thin silk blanket covering her. She and Xio didn't dare sleep in the reclining chair, afraid that Dwayne Dantès, who often sat in it, would notice something different.

Rubbing the edges of her brows, Fors sat up and saw Xio having her back to the wall of the master bedroom. She was seriously listening for any stirrings.

As Fors walked to Xio, she said with a frown, "I feel that there is some secret hidden here. I had a strange dream, dreaming of an exaggerated treasure trove and a complicated symbol."

As an Astrologer, she instinctively believed that there was a problem with her dream!

Noticing the serious look on Fors's face, Xio suppressed her words of doubt and said after some thought, "Perhaps there really is some sort of secret. I once heard a proverb regarding the mysterious world. It goes: 'When a Beyonder element is discovered somewhere, there must be a second one.'"

"Ignoring the butler who we can't tell if he possesses Beyonder powers or not, that Miss Hazel is someone with a Beyonder element. Around her, or should I say, that this street, likely has a second one." Fors nodded gently before laughing. "However, it has nothing to do with us. We will receive our remuneration tomorrow evening and terminate this bodyguard mission. We will leave this place. The most pitiful of all is Dwayne Dantès. He's innocent and ordinary, but he ends up involved with troublesome matters and Beyonder elements."

Having said that, Fors looked and Xio and joked, "Quick, quickly wish him that the Goddess would watch over him.

"I'm a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery. I won't be able to do so."

Xio seriously considered for two seconds before drawing a crimson moon on her chest, piously muttering, "May the Goddess bless Mr. Dwayne Dantès."

Fors was snapped out of her reverie as she covered her mouth and yawned.

"I'll head out to patrol the building. It's your turn to sleep after another fifteen minutes."

"Alright." Xio was clearly more awake than Fors.

Fors immediately headed for the door and pressed on the wall with her outstretched hand, arriving at the corridor.

She was just about to walk to the staircase when she sensed that there was a slight stir coming from the room of Dwayne Dantès's valet.

Fors's eyes darted slightly as she cautiously headed over. She opened a "tiny door" in the wall and peeped in.

She then saw Richardson jumping a crazy dance that had a tinge of mystery.

A spirit dance? Doesn’t this valet believe in the Evernight Goddess? He’s secretly worshiping Death? Fors frowned as she watched Richardson finish his spirit dance, softly praying for Death’s protection to help him avoid all kinds of danger.

After everything came to an end, Fors tsked and shook her head. She silently said to herself, What a pitiful man, Mr. Dantès.

Chapter 862 - Kind Warning

◆ ◆ ◆

After returning to the room with the balcony, Fors looked at Xio who had her back against the wall and whispered, “Guess what I saw?

“That male servant, Dantès’s valet is actually a believer of Death! He was dancing a spirit dance and praying!”

Xio widened her eyes before relaxing her expression.

“When it comes to Mr. Dantès, that’s the least of his concerns.

“Yeah, that valet named Richardson is clearly of Southern Continent heritage. Perhaps he was born there, so it’s not surprising that he worships Death.”

Fors replied with a smile, “I know. I just find it interesting. Aren’t there a little too many people with secrets around Dwayne Dantès?

“I won’t be surprised if I were to discover one day that all the living beings in this building except him, including the housekeeper, maids, gardeners, carriage drivers, earthworms, bugs, and rats are related to mystery and Beyonders. I would be able to easily accept that reality.”

Xio rolled her eyes.

“If that were the case, Mr. Dwayne Dantès definitely wouldn’t be a simple person. Having Beyonders and supernatural creatures around him means that he might be the spawn of an evil god or a Grounded Angel.”

Without waiting for Fors to expand the scope of the conversation, Xio asked, “Didn’t you say that you had a strange dream involving treasure? Why aren’t you curious or considering what it symbolizes? That perhaps it might actually exist?

Fors chuckled.

“Such a dream often implies trouble and danger. I’ll consider it again if I have a chance of encountering that symbol.”

Although she said that, her true thoughts were:

There’s quite a bit of a problem with that dream. Who knows if there’s a ploy behind it. I’ll consult Mr. Hanged Man, Ma’am Hermit, uh—and Mr. World at the Tarot Gathering next week before deciding what to do. They are experienced and powerful Beyonders. Perhaps they have had similar experiences.

“You’ve matured.” Xio nodded, and exerting strength in her back, she bounced off the wall and walked to the spot where Fors had been sleeping before.

“Mature?” Fors scoffed and leaned in towards her friend. She straightened her back and looked down at her friend’s hair.

Without waiting for Xio to become enraged, she sighed.

“You’re the one who matured.

“I still remember this time last year. You did things based on instinct, arbitrating with your fist. From time to time, you would commit mistakes without realizing it and become lost. You’re much better now.”

Xio was stunned as she lay down and covered herself with the thin silk blanket. With her back facing Fors, she grumbled, “The main reason why I got lost was because of you being a burden by my side.”

Fors chortled and nodded in thought.

“That’s a characteristic of an Apprentice. It has nothing to do with me. Get it!?”

Seeing Xio on the floor, she walked to the wall adjacent to the master bedroom and seriously started being a bodyguard.

As the night slowly passed, the sky gradually lit up. Klein got up to have breakfast and received visits from two batches of policemen and a batch of reporters. They were here for further investigations regarding Cuarón’s suicide case, while another was to obtain more details regarding Member of Parliament Macht’s assault.

With Walter’s help, Dwayne Dantès met them and quickly handled the matters.

In the afternoon, Macht suddenly visited and urged Klein, “Join me at the club for a game of tennis.”

He was a member of a few clubs, but there was only one club that overlapped with Dwayne Dantès: East Balam Military Veterans Mess!

This is to confirm the arms deal? Klein managed to read between the lines and immediately got Richardson to get his coat, top hat, and cane. He rode on his carriage and headed to the sandy-yellow unique building at Hillston Borough with the member of parliament.

They entered the club and used the same room as before. Klein once again met the long-faced army colonel from the Ministry of Defence, Calvin.

After habitually exchanging pleasantries for a few minutes, Calvin finally focused on the main topic at hand. He looked at Dwayne Dantès and said with a chuckle, “I heard from Macht that you can have 20,000 pounds available?”

“Although it will make me tight on funds, it’s true that I can,” Klein replied with a smile.

Calvin nodded in satisfaction and said after some pondering, “There won’t be any need for 20,000 pounds for now. The batch of firearms, explosives, and small number of cannons reserved for you is in a particular warehouse in East Balam. There’s not that much, enough to equip about three to four thousand people. Based on the price of decommissioning them, it will cost 10,000 pounds at most. Of course, you will have to give me 15,000 pounds.”

He didn’t mince his words in any way, as though this was common in the Loen military.

“No problem,” Klein said and nodded calmly.

Calvin immediately chuckled.

“Excellent. Macht has a keen eye for people. A person who wants to do such business absolutely mustn’t be stingy.

“That batch of firearms is worth at least 20,000 pounds in West Balam. If you can find a suitable buyer and fully showcase your experience in the area, it’s entirely possible to sell them for 30,000 pounds or even more. By the way, the transportation fees and escort fees will be borne by you. We will only send two or three personnel to assist you.”

As expected, there will be monitors… Klein listened in silence, believing that it was time that he urged Admiral of Stars and Danitz to quickly provide him with information on West Balam.

He pondered for a moment and said, “Roughly when will it begin?”

“That batch of firearms will take another two weeks before being placed in the corresponding warehouse. When it happens after that period is up to you. Hmm, you don’t have to pay it in full at once. You can first pay 8,000 to 10,000 pounds and pay the rest when everything is settled.” Calvin wore an expression as though things were highly negotiable.

Two weeks later. That will be closer to the end of the month. I'll definitely have to wait until the party of the Snake of Fate's birth before leaving… I'm still waiting for his placenta blood… Klein's thoughts raced as he said, "I'll need to carry out some preparatory work. I'll probably head to the Southern Continent in early July."

Calvin Macht exchanged looks with Macht and gently rubbed his palms.

"No problem."

†

Outside the East Balam Military Veterans Mess, Xio and Fors hid themselves on the roof of a nearby building, monitoring the people that were coming and going.

Xio knew that there were many Beyonders in the club, so she didn't dare get Fors to sneak her in to provide protection to Dwayne Dantès at a close distance. All they did was wait outside.

"Thankfully, this is Backlund. Even though there's no smog this season, there will be no lack of clouds. The sun wouldn't be too strong; otherwise, my skin would definitely turn red," Fors mumbled as she hid herself in the shadows.

Xio was about to say something when she saw a carriage drive into the back door of the club. It was entirely brown in color and had a trademark coat of arms. It was made of flowers and rings.

Viscount Stratford's carriage… Xio silently mumbled as she hurriedly widened her eyes and focused. She then saw a familiar figure who was a stranger to her get off the carriage. Surrounded by bodyguards, the figure entered the East Balam Military Veterans Mess.

"What's wrong?" Fors noticed her friend's abnormality.

Xio didn't conceal the matter as she frankly said, "I saw Viscount

Stratford. He also came to this club."

"That captain of the royal guards?" Fors asked in surprise.

"Yeah." Xio nodded heavily.

Fors turned agape, hoping to say something, but she was at a loss as to what to say. All she could do was look around, pretending to monitor for anything that was amiss.

After a while, she saw Dwayne Dantès walk out.

†

160 Böklund Street received another guest in the afternoon.

This time, it was the largest shareholder of the Coim Company, Ma'am Mary.

"I'm very sorry that my request embroiled you in such trouble. I never expected Baron Syndras to do something like that. Poor Cuarón. He was planning on bringing his family to Winter County for the summer," Mary Schott apologized with hints of anger.

Klein replied calmly, "I agree with your views on Cuarón. He was really unfortunate.

"However, this matter probably wasn't done by Baron Syndras. It might be a trap that's targeting him."

Mary nodded heavily.

"I've heard of the theory. It's said that the police department is planning to hire a skilled forensic pathologist to dissect the corpse to search for any missing clues."

Her final sentence was automatically replaced by Klein as "the police department is planning to hire a skilled Spirit Medium from the Church of Evernight to examine the corpse to search for any missing clues."

I wonder what will be discovered… Klein raised his right hand and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

"May the Goddess give Cuarón peace and that the true murderer behind his death will suffer punishment."

Mary responded in the same way before saying, "In order to prevent you from being affected by this matter, I plan on purchasing the shares from you ahead of time. I'll add an additional 1,000 pounds above the highest price to date.

"You don't have to worry about my funds. I've recently been busy borrowing money from the banks."

Klein sighed and replied, "I'm very grateful for your kind intentions, but any advance transferring of the shares will need to be done with the Church. I've already donated it to them. I plan on using the income I receive to establish a bursary foundation that targets the poor."

This was the first time Mary was hearing of such news. She was momentarily stunned and speechless.

After ten seconds, she exhaled and said, "Your character, generosity, and wisdom truly impresses me."

As she said that, she looked at Dwayne Dantès with an additional look of admiration.

Klein humbly diverted the compliment to the Goddess before pausing. He then asked with a stern expression, "Ma'am Mary, I have a question that I hope you can answer.

"When you decided to clash with Baron Syndras to protect your control over the Coim Company, was it purely by your own will, or a result of persuasion by others?"

Mary frowned and frankly replied, “All the persuasion that was directed at me was to ask me to give up.”

Klein immediately fell silent as he didn’t discuss the matter further. He casually mentioned Member of Parliament Macht’s assault before sending the lady out of 160 Böklund Street.

After dinner, Walter came to the half-opened room with the balcony and said to his employer on the reclining chair, “Sir, the two bounty hunters have been dismissed. It cost a total of 300 pounds for three days, excluding the food provided.”

They’re finally gone… Klein immediately relaxed as he nodded, acknowledging his butler’s reply.

Following that, he eagerly entered the master bedroom, planning on taking out the mushrooms sent to him from Frank Lee and bringing them up above the gray fog to communicate with Creeping Hunger.

When he came to the desk with the hidden mushrooms, he saw a letter held down by an ink bottle.

Klein picked it up in puzzlement and tore it open. He quickly scanned it as his expression turned odd.

“Dear Mr. Dantès, we are the bodyguards you hired. In the past few days, we discovered certain matters that we feel obligated to inform you. Therefore, we entered your bedroom to leave this letter while you were having dinner.”

Chapter 863 - Charity Party

◆

“Your butler might be researching black magic;

“Your valet is secretly worshiping Death;

“Someone among your neighbors has supernatural powers.

“The street where you live might have certain secrets that cause people to have strange dreams…

“You should understand some of the terms mentioned. We won’t provide a further explanation. May the Goddess bless you.”

“…”

Klein looked at the letter in his hand as he was momentarily unsure whether to laugh or cry.

After a few seconds, he couldn’t help but give a self-deprecating laugh.

Just from the contents of this letter, I’m really quite pitiful…

And the matters described don’t seem to be problematic in any way…

As he shook his head with a smile, Klein held a letter in one hand and suddenly shook it to the side.

Scarlet flames surged and devoured the piece of paper.

Regardless, Miss Xio and Miss Magician are rather kind people. The only problem is that what they mentioned are things I already know. In fact, I'm more aware of the reasons than they are… As Klein mumbled, he found the mushrooms he had hidden.

There were a total of four breeds of mushrooms. One was three dried products that could react with water and fish. The second was a new breed with golden caps as they emitted the smell of flour. The third was white with specks of black spots; they were swollen and puffy, as though a liquid was flowing within them as they exuded the smell of milk. The fourth had strange gills running down its two sides, their surface was filled with dense and soft scales.

Klein swept his gaze at these mushrooms and took out a gold coin. He caught it after flicking it.

After confirming the results, he took off the ordinary glove he previously wore. With his bare skin, he grabbed the three new mushrooms to test various scenarios that Frank Lee hadn't mentioned.

They felt normal to the touch, and there weren't any changes to the mushrooms. Klein heaved a sigh of relief, no longer afraid that the level of danger they possessed had exceeded his capability.

He was previously afraid that these mushrooms would immediately produce roots upon contact with items of flesh and blood, devouring whatever was in its path to grow before dispersing its spores.

Perhaps it's the relatively strong light from the gas wall lamps, or it might be as a result of plucking them which causes these mushrooms to lose most of their living characteristics. They will be revived only under special conditions, such as being in the stomach of a living creature… With the intention to figure out the truth, he drew all the curtains to the master bedroom and extinguished all the wall lamps.

Then, he picked up the new mushrooms with his bare hand and determined that there wasn't anything abnormal about them as they hadn't fed on his body.

After doing this, Klein lit the wall lamps again and set up a ritual, sacrificing the mushrooms above the gray fog.

Sitting in The Fool's seat, he wasn't in a rush to summon Creeping Hunger. He first summoned a metal bottle that had his blood inside to the long bronze table.

Right on the heels of that, he poured a drop of blood on the table and piled the three new breeds of mushrooms onto it.

In just a second, the mushrooms suddenly softened at the parts where they made contact with the blood. They squirmed as they enveloped the blood. Whatever they made contact with grew a dense array of needle-like hair.

"…"

The corners of Klein's lips twitched when he saw that. He directly adjusted some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog, suppressing all the mushrooms. Then, he sent the drop of blood back into the metal bottle and closed the lid.

He had roughly understood the characteristics of the mushrooms. Without wasting any time, he summoned Creeping Hunger from the junk pile.

Holding the thin human-skinned glove, Klein placed it on the table and removed the seal around the mushrooms.

Then, he saw the Creeping Hunger support itself with its five fingers before standing up with great difficulty. It began retreating rapidly like it was playing a piano.

So you do know fear? Klein revealed a genial smile. He pressed the glove down and "gifted" it with some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog.

Then, he grabbed a mushroom with his other hand and brought it close to Creeping Hunger.

The human-skinned glove struggled with all its might but ultimately failed to escape his grasp as it clearly began trembling.

Klein stopped moving the hand with the mushroom and chuckled.

“Are you still going to randomly praise the True Creator?”

Creeping Hunger continued struggling without giving a reply.

Klein thought for a moment before he compromised.

“I’ll allow you to praise once a day. In the day or in the evening.”

Creeping Hunger’s struggling weakened, but it didn’t stop.

Tsk… Klein continued negotiating with an unperturbed expression, “Thrice a day. During breakfast, lunch, and dinner time. However, you will need to warn me ahead of time.”

Creeping Hunger struggled twice before sprawling onto the desk, motionless.

After another round of negotiations, Klein successfully reached an agreement with Creeping Hunger. However, eating daily was instinctual to the item. It was unable to be weakened much as a result of the negotiations. Therefore, he needed to wait for the sealing method provided by Azik. At present, what Klein could do was bring Creeping Hunger around without it eating. However, he needed to come up with a meal within 24 hours.

How troublesome… Thankfully, after Creeping Hunger fused with Mr. A and the mushroom, its living characteristic has strengthened; otherwise, there would be no way to make any negotiations with it… Klein commented wistfully. Finally, he did a divination regarding the recent matters, and he received a conclusion that there wasn’t too much danger. He also got confirmation that Cuarón’s suicide was a result of the influence of a Beyonder.

After busying himself with all of that, he left the gray fog and returned to the real world and continued waiting for Mr. Azik's reply.

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On Saturday evening, Klein, who wore a formal suit, arrived at Saint Samuel Cathedral with Richardson on a carriage to participate in the charity party.

After passing through the main entrance, he was led by a priest to a huge adjacent hall.

There was a baldachin with the Sacred Emblem representing the Evernight Goddess placed inside. High above were a few miniature crystal chandeliers that hung down. In front of it were thin and long candles as well as overturned round metal lids used to store wax.

At this moment, all of them had been lit, illuminating the hall with brightness. It had quite a holy feeling to it.

Klein glanced over and saw a series of neatly arranged seats and guests who wore out of the ordinary attire.

Among them, the women mainly wore two types of clothing. One was dresses that were either bright or dark colors, and they were bold and liberal in their dressing, allowing one to see the fair flesh at their bosoms or their shoulders. The other type wore pure and fresh colors in relatively conservative dressing. Even their collar bones could hardly be seen. Some of them even had theirs concealed.

Based on what Klein knew, this was the difference between married and unmarried women in the Loen Kingdom. As for widows and divorced, they could choose between the two. However, the former tended to choose darker colors.

Aside from those, Klein also saw shimmering necklaces and exquisite earrings, as well as all kinds of valuable accessories. They were a lot more impressive than what the guests that attended the ball or banquet which Macht and himself had hosted.

After walking into the hall, Klein greeted the bishops, Macht, and others he knew and exchanged pleasantries.

At this moment, there was a sound from the door as many guests turned to look back, revealing their smiles as they walked over.

When Klein looked over, his gaze first lit up before it froze.

At the entrance to the hall, the most attractive one there was a girl with lustrous blonde hair that softly cascaded down her shoulders. Her beautiful eyes were green like emeralds. They appeared like the sea which hid a maelstrom within, making anyone who looked at her unable to move their gaze away.

Her facial features were pretty, and she had an outstanding bearing. Her looks were nearly flawless, making the men and women present find it difficult to notice what kind of dress she was wearing or the designer of her jewelry. However, Klein had swept his gaze to the necklace at her collarbone. A lustrous and perfect pearl was being embedded within the crevice between the intersection of her collarbone. It softened the lines at her neck, making her accentuate a clean and mesmerizing feel.

Klein had met her before and he knew her!

She was none other than the Tarot Club's Miss Justice!

Back when she used magic mirror divination, Klein had seen her before!

Immediately, Klein moved his gaze away, without daring to take another look.

This was an instinctive reaction of his, as he knew that Miss Justice was a Beyonder of the Spectator pathway. If he garnered her attention, it was very easy for her to read his true thoughts and secrets based on the changes in his expressions and body language.

But his racing mind quickly forced him to turn his head back as he continued casting his gaze at Miss Justice.

He discovered that him avoiding her had made it worse and more obvious.

How could a gentleman who liked all kinds of women not take a few more glances when encountering such an abnormally beautiful lady?

At the same time, Audrey sensed the abnormality of a particular man.

His sideburns are a little white. His looks and bearing aren't bad, making him appear profound… This is likely Mr. Dwayne Dantès who donated more than 10,000 pounds in an attempt to establish a bursary foundation for the poor…

His reaction was a little odd, as though he was trying to hide something…

To Audrey, Dwayne Dantès's act of moving his gaze away was actually very normal. She had encountered many similar situations in the past. Some men would indeed subconsciously turn their heads away after seeing her, as though afraid that she would notice it, or that they would make eye contact, exposing their moment of being mesmerized.

Therefore, what was odd wasn't that Dwayne Dantès had moved his gaze away. Instead, he had turned his gaze back again. In addition, Audrey felt that the greatest problem was that the gentleman's emotions were more of shock instead of amazement.

What's he shocked about? What is he trying to hide? With her questions, Audrey greeted her parents and brother and the people that gathered over with a faint smile.

Seeing Miss Justice no longer paying attention to him, Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief as he began thinking.

I need to be careful later and play the role of Dwayne Dantès well. I mustn’t let a Spectator notice any problems.

Hmm… Regardless of whether Miss Justice noticed it or not, I’ve already thought of the excuse for my abnormal reaction…

Miss Justice is indeed a lady from a powerful aristocratic family. I wonder what her last name is exactly. I’ll ask Macht or Bishop Elektra later…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein frowned slightly, having a nagging feeling that he was being watched. Following his spiritual intuition, he swept his gaze towards the door.

Outside the door in the shadows, there was a golden retriever sitting there silently.

Chapter 864 - Actor and Spectator

When the ghostly gaze of the golden retriever pierced through the curtains from the shadows, Klein's brows indiscernibly twitched as he failed to hide his alarm.

He then naturally shifted his gaze away and looked towards Miss Justice and company.

How terrifying… Why is that dog sitting in the corner, hiding in the shadows for no good reason?… It was silently looking at everyone in the hall… Uh, Miss Justice seems to have fed a Spectator potion to an animal and had once asked Mr. Hanged Man for advice… Don't tell me it's that golden retriever? Two Spectators, one out in the open, and one in the dark. Which actor can handle that!? In high society, Miss Justice and the dog are unlikely to be the only Spectators. Her joining the Psychology Alchemists was a result of other nobles as well. It seems like it was done by Duchess Negan's sister? As Klein lampooned and analyzed, he walked to Macht's family and asked in a seemingly casual manner, "The ones who just entered seemed to be very noble people?"

Macht glanced Dwayne Dantès and chuckled.

"East Chester Earl's family. You can directly call him Earl Hall. You should've heard of him.

"That's his wife, Ma'am Caitlyn. That's his eldest son, Lord Hibbert. You should've already met him…"

Upon hearing Macht's introduction, Klein suddenly broke out into a cold sweat. This was because he had indeed met Hibbert Hall at the ball Macht had hosted; however, he had failed to notice the Lord, or he wouldn't have raised the question.

I was shocked by Miss Justice's sudden appearance… Klein maintained his smile and listening stance.

Macht continued, "That's his daughter, Miss Audrey Hall. In the social scene over the past two years, she has the title of being the most stunning gem in Backlund. It's very apt, isn't it?"

Without waiting for Dwayne Dantès's reply, he minced his words by saying, "She is courted by princes, duke heirs, and many honorable excellencies and gentlemen."

Macht's concealed meaning was clear. He was saying to this man, one who liked all kinds of women, not to place his sights on the lady. She was a target he had no thoughts of making contact with.

As for Klein, he was having other thoughts.

So Miss Justice is Earl Hall's daughter. It's no wonder she's so rich. It's no wonder she's never bargained…

Earl Hall is one of the top bankers in the kingdom. He's the most influential Member of Parliament of the House of Lords, and one of the hereditary peerage. His wealth is much more than Baron Syndras…

Even if Miss Justice is unable to inherit the aristocratic title and family estate, the wealth she will inherit will be at least a hundred thousand pounds…

With her looks, birth, and character, she is indeed the best choice for a marriage partner with the royal family or powerful nobles.

However, the way she has been repeatedly buying mystical items doesn't look like she's someone with a wealth of only a few hundred thousand pounds… She's able to claim it from her father? I also wish to have one like that…

Amidst his racing thoughts, Klein replied to Macht's warning with a smile, "I've heard of the various rumors about Miss Audrey. It's only today that I have realized that they aren't that exaggerated.

"Unfortunately, I'm not a prince or the heir to a duke, marquis, viscount, or earl. Otherwise, I would also be one of her pursuers.

He was implying that he knew his status and standing.

Macht didn't continue the topic and began introducing the various guests he knew to Dwayne Dantès. He had truly led him into high society. Of course, the greatest supporter involved in this was the Church of Evernight. Without the charity party they held for the foundation, Macht wouldn't have the chance to bring Dwayne Dantès to meet so many honorable people.

Marquis Locent, Earl Gross, Viscount Loveland… The aristocratic believers of the Goddess separately exchanged pleasantries with Dwayne Dantès with a rather genial attitude.

Before Macht was done with the introductions, an elder walked into the hall.

He was wearing a black clergyman robe with red accents. By his chest hung five Dark Sacred Emblems. He was clean-shaven, and his eyes were deep, dark, and tranquil.

Including Earl Hall, everyone turned to face the elder and respectfully bowed.

"Good evening, Your Grace."

This elder was none other than Saint Anthony Stevenson, one of the thirteen archbishops of the Church of Evernight!

He was the person in charge of the Backlund diocese, and he was part of the upper echelons of the Church in the true sense of the word.

When Klein saw the archbishop, his body and mind involuntarily trembled as he found it difficult to hide it. It was as though he stumbled upon a grave on an unlit village trail back when he was young.

He swept his gaze and saw that the other guests didn’t have any strong reactions. He immediately realized that the “horror” which Saint Anthony carried with him was more clearly felt by people with stronger spirituality. He hurriedly entered Cogitation in an attempt to calm himself down.

When he managed to control his trembling, Saint Anthony had already smiled. He surveyed the area and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

“Praise the Lady.”

“Praise the Lady,” the guests at the charity party replied one after another.

With the archbishop’s arrival, Macht stopped introducing Klein to the other guests because the party had officially begun.

According to convention, everyone would take their seats and piously pray to the Goddess for three minutes. Following that, the cathedral would begin singing and walk to the baldachin and use their ethereal, uniform, and seemingly cathartic voices to praise the Goddess.

After the religious ritual ended, Elektra received Saint Anthony’s instructions to stand to the side of the choir. There was a podium there with all kinds of books placed on it.

“Everyone, I’ll like to thank you all for coming. Your character is a resplendent star in the serene night…” Elektra first said a few words of pleasantries before saying, “Our establishment of a bursary foundation that targets the poor stems from Mr. Dwayne Dantès’s suggestion. He is truly an honorable gentleman. His piousness and character are impeccable and a definite role model to others. Next, I'll like to invite Mr. Dwayne Dantès to give everyone a brief speech."

Although Klein was already prepared, he drew a gasp inwardly when he heard the last sentence.

This was different from usual. There were two or even more Spectators around. It wasn't something that he could bullsh*t through if he wanted to. The content of his speech needed to be sufficiently realistic, without them being able to see through his lies or fake examples!

Pressing down his clothes at his abdomen, he quickly stood up and walked to the podium as he buttoned his suit.

Coming behind the podium and steadying himself, he surveyed the nobles, Members of Parliament, clergymen, and high-ranking civil servants. He said with a smile, "I'm a little nervous. This is my first time being stared at by so many people of such honorable standing.

"I was once active in a region where the poor gathered. I was active in the chaotic Southern Continent and, thus, saw many things. There was a young lady who helped her mother make pasted matchboxes from the age of six. If she didn't do that, they wouldn't even have the money to buy rye bread after paying rent. The rye bread they eat is filled with millfeed, and occasionally, they will bite into gravel or rocks. The hardness make it usable as a rod to attack others…

"When this girl gradually grew up, although she led a laborious daily life, and her family lacked any additional funds, she still looked forward to the night schools run by the Church. She wished to study how to read in order to grasp knowledge. This is because she knew that only by doing so could she stop living the way she did. Only by doing so would she not starve and be able to wear clothes that could really protect her from the cold. She wouldn't need to work at factories with harsh conditions and end up dying in her twenties…"

Klein had selected a portion of the experiences of the poor kids he had met before, merging them together as he conveyed them with his true feelings.

He could clearly see many ladies more or less reveal looks of empathy. A number of girls even had their eyes flicker such as Audrey Hall.

She really is an easily moved child… I've acted from the bottom of my heart. I've even moved myself, much less a Spectator… However, most gentlemen aren't moved. Some of them seem to already be aware of the situations of the poor. Some do not mind those of the lower class…

Klein swept his gaze as he continued, "Our industry has been developing. In the future, we will definitely need more literate workers… Our election criteria has been relaxed. In the future, the ones who are eligible to vote will definitely include most of the educated… With the empathy towards these poor children and my expectations of the kingdom's future, I've decided to donate all my Coim Company shares that I have on hand to establish a bursary foundation that targets the poor. It lets them have the opportunity to enter official institutes of higher learning after attending the free night classes…"

Earl Hall, who had a beautiful mustache, nodded when he heard that. He was the first to raise his hands to gently clap.

Amidst the vigorous applause, Klein returned to the seat belonging to him. Bishop Elektra headed up and announced, "The shares that Mr. Dwayne Dantès donated are valued at 15,000 pounds. We would use it to establish a Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. Ladies and gentlemen, if you agree with him and pity those children who thirst for knowledge, you can contribute to this foundation."

As he spoke, he pointed at the donation box beside him.

Audrey retracted her gaze and pressed the corner of her eye and said to her father, "Father, I plan on donating 1,000 pounds. What about you?"

As she spoke, her mind quickly summarized what she had observed.

Dwayne Dantès has likely lived a lower-class life. His pity, empathy, and speech were all very realistic… Those poor children are truly pitiful…

Just now, when the bishop mentioned that the shares were valued at 15,000 pounds, the corners of his lips twitched unnaturally. From the looks of it, he likely feels the pinch over donating the money. However, the sincerity of him donating it doesn't seem fake… This means that he's a gentleman who loves money, but he "loves" kindness even more…

Why was he shocked when he saw me, and what is he hiding?

He has seen me somewhere before but doesn't know my identity? But there's no need to hide that…

He identified my necklace as a mystical item, so he was shocked before trying to attempt to hide this matter?

If that's the case, it means that he's definitely a Beyonder, one that isn't a Low-Sequence Beyonder…

Hmm, I'll ask Susie later when I'm back. Perhaps, she noticed other details. She was hiding in the darkness, so he wouldn't be on his guard against her, allowing her to discover more.

Amidst her thoughts, Audrey saw her father smile as he took out a checkbook and fountain pen.

The value he wrote down was: 10,000 pounds!

Chapter 865 - Earl Hall's Suggestion

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10,000 pounds… Audrey blinked as she used a very slight change in expression to express her surprise.

Without needing her to voice out her question, Earl Hall had noticed her puzzlement. He chuckled and said, “This is an insightful man. His ideas have inspired me and resonated with me. Besides, we can’t ignore the misery that objectively exists just because it cannot be resolved anytime soon.”

Audrey vaguely understood her father, but she felt that she didn’t fully understand him. She nodded slightly and took out her checkbook from her purse that matched her dress and wrote down the “1,000 pounds” value.

This was a charity ball. Furthermore, it was held in a side hall of the cathedral, so there weren’t any dances or extravagant arrangements. There weren’t any valets or lady’s maids following by their sides. It was simply a charity event that had some degree of donations involved. The ladies undoubtedly brought their bags on them.

The guests subsequently threw their checks into the donation box and headed for the two long tables for some beverages or simple food. After which, they walked around the hall socializing instead of sitting.

This was closer to that of a buffet party.

Klein also accompanied Elektra and came to Saint Anthony’s side and was introduced to him.

Saint Anthony smiled in response to Dwayne Dantès's greeting. He sized him up and said, "Very good. We are proud to have a believer like you.

"It's the Goddess that has taught us that character is more important than status. Therefore, you are an extremely honorable gentleman."

To be frank, faced with this saint, Klein's heart was drumming because deities or Beyonders related to the fate domain was able to see the gray fog's aura on him. For example, everyone from the Monster pathway or the Evernight Goddess who wielded the authority of misfortune. As for Saint Anthony, if he was a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Sleepless pathway and grasped Beyonder powers involving misfortune, then there was a chance that he could see that there was a problem with Dwayne Dantès.

As such, Klein had headed above the gray fog to divine so before attending the charity party. He received the answer that there wasn't any danger.

Since the Goddess didn't say anything, even if "Her" archbishop were to discover some problems, he will probably feign ignorance… Klein replied with a warm smile, "I've been to the cathedral frequently to pray and listen to Bishop Elektra's preachings in recent times. Even my soul seems to have been cleansed. Therefore, I abided by the Goddess's teachings to pass such beauty and hope to others."

Saint Anthony nodded and said, "In front of the Goddess, all believers are differentiated by their character, regardless if they are nobles or commoners, male or female. They are all the same.

"I hope those people who live in poor environments will liberate themselves of fear and receive serenity.

"Praise the Lady."

Klein and Elektra tapped their chests four times in a clockwise fashion.

"Praise the Lady!"

Seeing Saint Anthony turn towards the other believers, Klein planned on heading over to the table to get a glass of champagne to quench his thirst.

At this moment, he saw a gentleman approach him.

This man had somewhat loose skin with an obvious potbelly. However, it could be seen that he was rather handsome in his youth. Even now, his blue eyes that had a smile on them and his beautiful mustache made him appear good looking.

Klein had previously learned from Macht's introduction and knew he was the House of Lords Member of Parliament and powerful banker, Earl Hall.

Of course, to him, the most important identity of this noble was that he was Miss Justice's father. And Audrey happened to be by his side. She was observing Dwayne Dantès with her bright eyes, awaiting her conversation with the gentleman later.

This made Klein immediately feel a little uncomfortable.

I need to present the persona that matches Dwayne Dantès… A person of ordinary birth who's working hard to get himself into high society. At this moment, he's bound to be a little nervous and restrained. Likewise, a gentleman who loves beautiful women will feel the same feelings when faced with the most stunning gem in Backlund's eyes. But he will also unknowingly showcase his own breadth of knowledge and show his charms to express his desire. Yes, an experienced tycoon who survived the chaos must be someone who has pride and confidence hidden in him. No matter what he faces, he will try his best to appear calm, respectful but not sycophantic… Klein's thoughts raced as he smiled and politely said to the approaching Earl Hall, "Honorable Earl, I happened to see the check you donated. Your kindness and generosity truly impresses me. Yet, you've never flaunted that or informed others how much you've donated."

Earl Hall chuckled.

"No, compared to you, the price I pay is far inferior to what you made."

Between the lines, he meant that 15,000 pounds might be a tenth of Dwayne Dantès's overall wealth or even a fifth, but 10,000 pounds to him was just a thousandth or even lesser. Clearly, the former paid a greater price, and his willingness to do was even more pure.

"From my point of view, as long as the poor who yearn to use knowledge to change their fates can be helped, all donations are kind and sufficiently benevolent. From this angle, the only difference between 10,000 pounds and 15,000 pounds is just 5,000 pounds." Klein tried hard to express his sincerity as he deliberately glanced at the listening blonde girl without leaving a trace.

He knew that an ordinary "without a trace" was "obvious" in the eyes of a Spectator.

Audrey wore a faint smile as she silently listened to her father's and Dwayne Dantès's conversation, as though she hadn't noticed the gentleman peek at her. This made Klein lack confidence from his failure at receiving any feedback in his "performance."

Earl Hall laughed and said, "Then we shall agree to disagree. This isn't anything bad. At the very least, we are praising one another.

"I can tell that you once had a difficult period and had once led the life of the poor."

Klein nodded and said, "I do not avoid such a past. They are my valuable riches."

"And this is something me and my friends lack," Earl Hall commented with a smile. "And it's because of this that you possess a unique and wise point of view. I hope there will be opportunities in the future to work with you.”

“That is also something I look forward to,” Klein replied with a suitable level of sincerity.

Earl Hall pointed to the side and said, “A couple of friends are waiting for me. I hope that your charitable ways and wealth keep increasing.”

Klein didn’t drag on the conversation as he drew the crimson moon on his chest.

“Praise the Lady.”

“Praise the Lady.” Earl Hall and Audrey tapped their chests in a clockwise fashion in unison.

Watching them walk past him and in another direction, Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

Suddenly, he tensed up as he naturally looked around the hall and noticed the shadow at the door.

Silently sitting there was the golden retriever.

†

On the carriage back to Empress Borough, Earl Hall, who looked like he was resting with his eyes closed, looked at his daughter and said, “Audrey, didn’t you mention that you wish to join one of the Church’s charitable organizations?

“Are you interested in joining this bursary foundation?”

“Ah?” Audrey had already sensed that her father might have such thoughts back in the cathedral, so she expressed the appropriate level of surprise and confusion.

“It’s only a small charity foundation.” Audrey’s brother, Hibbert Hall, argued for his sister.

Earl Hall shook his head and laughed.

“I’ve asked a few bishops. The total amount of donations tonight has already reached 100,000 pounds.

“Why do you think there’s so much?”

Hibbert frowned slightly as he said in thought, “They were bribed?”

At the same time, Audrey gave her own point of view.

“Knowledge and the relaxing of the electoral qualifications?”

Earl Hall nodded and sighed.

“Nothing is an essential existence, including humans themselves as well as the nobility.”

He then looked at Audrey and said with a smile, “There’s no need to force yourself. I can get others to join the bursary foundation. I just wish that you will gain more knowledge because of this and now view certain matters as definite and immutable. Heh heh, even if you miss this, there will be other charity organizations.”

“Father, I’ll consider it,” Audrey replied seriously.

After hearing Dwayne Dantès’s recount of the stories of the poor, she had already decided on joining to gather more donations, to contact the government, and organize events to contribute her efforts to the cause. She was hesitant because she felt that the middle-aged man was a little problematic.

After returning home, Audrey immediately brought Susie to her room and closed the door.

“What’s your take on that Mr. Dwayne Dantès?” Audrey asked directly.

The golden retriever sat opposite her and thought.

“He seems to know you or something on you. Also, a lot of the time, he’s acting and leaving a certain degree of clues… He seemed to be guarded against me. He’s extremely sharp…”

“Yes, I noticed it too. He might be a Beyonder. He acted very well, but it’s still an act. However, this is also very ordinary. At a social event, and faced with different people, we would all play different roles and engage in a corresponding act,” Audrey said in thought. “The biggest problem stems from his shock when he saw me. He was almost horrified. Also, he was embroiled in two cases, one after another, especially with that case regarding Baron Syndras. It seems to have some Beyonder elements involved in it, with signs of someone being cued to do so…”

Susie gaped her mouth, unable to give a definitive explanation. All she could do was woof.

Audrey began another train of thought.

Hmm… I’ll get someone to investigate Dwayne Dantès, and after confirming that there aren’t any major problems, I’ll join the bursary foundation… Ah right, it’s almost Monday. I can request Fors and Mr. Moon. They’re both in Backlund…

†

Monday afternoon at three.

Dark red beams shot up in the grand palace, materializing into blurry figures.

Audrey quickly surveyed the area and looked to the seat of honor at the bronze, long table and bowed with a smile.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~”

Chapter 866 - Home

◆

Upon hearing Miss Justice's greeting, The Fool Klein suddenly had a strong wistful feeling.

After knowing her identity, status, looks, and situation, he had a deeper understanding as to why Audrey's tone had a happy and radiant air. He understood where they essentially came from, but he didn't end up envious or jealous because of that, nor did he believe that she lacked the toughness that was brought about by misery. Instead, he felt that in this world that had chaos, warped, and madness underlying it, having such a lady exist was really nice.

A smile surfaced on his face as he gently nodded as an acknowledgment of Miss Justice's greeting.

After the Tarot Club members exchanged greetings, Cattleya nudged her glasses and turned her body sideways. She bowed in the direction of the blurry figure that was enveloped by gray fog at the end of the long bronze table.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, there are three diary pages this time."

Queen Mystic has finally come online again… Klein lampooned and said with a smile, "Very good."

A few seconds later, Cattleya conjured the diary pages after receiving approval before seeing them "leap" into Mr. Fool's hands.

Klein glanced at it casually when his heart skipped a beat.

He realized that the diary pages provided by Queen Mystic depicted Emperor Roselle's early days. It didn't seem to contain anything important.

Logically speaking, when being unable to distinguish the importance of entries, one will definitely prioritize the later diary entries. This would best restore the mystery as to why Emperor Roselle was "agitated"… I believe Queen Mystic is sufficiently clever… As Klein wondered to himself inwardly, he began seriously reading the first page.

"21st September. Arrived at St. Millom. I've officially begun my first state visit.

"Feysac's weather is really a little cold. It's not even October and it looks like it's about to snow. It's no wonder it's famous for its various coats and winter wear. As well as its liquor!

"F*ck, the people here are ridiculously tall. As expected of a country that descended from giants. However, I have to say that I hate it when people look down on me!

"Tonight, I'll be going to a bar to find a Feysac beauty to share some drinks!"

Upon reading this, Klein suddenly suspected if Queen Mystic Bernadette's question was if she had a brother of Feysac descent.

Holding back his tsking inwardly, Klein swept his gaze to the second diary entry.

"22nd September. I think I blacked out…

"What happened last night? What happened to my Feysac beauty? I actually lost out to her in drinking!

"The embassy staff told me that the women here are often better at drinking than men…

"I should show some temperance when I head to bars in the future. I sure don't want some ugly, middle-aged woman to do unspeakable things to me when I black out…

"The alcohol here sure is strong. My headache has lasted an entire day. Thankfully, my stomach doesn't hurt. I should sleep early. I'll be visiting the Great Twilight Hall tomorrow."

"23rd September. The Great Twilight Hall is indeed grand. It's like a myth materializing into reality. That building seems to be completely prepared for giants.

"Since I don't share their faith, I could only circle the perimeter. The square at the bottom of the Great Twilight Hall is also filled with the fragrance of alcohol!

"There were plenty of people there, some kneeling, some sitting, others playing musical instruments. They exude a rather relaxed and open feeling.

"I got to know a Feysacian who blows a bone flute. Compared to his kinsmen, he's ridiculously tall. He's roughly three meters tall.

"His name is Honegger, and he claims to be from one of the clans in Feysac that have the purest giant bloodline. The way he plays the bone flute looks very sorrowful, as though he doesn't belong here but has no idea where to go to. Compared to the skirt chasers at Intis, he's a lot more like a poet. Now that I mention it, I really can't help but give some criticism. Those guys seem to wear any sexual diseases as a badge of honor. It just messes up the entire social market!

"I had a chat with Honegger for a while and raised my question from before. He said that he's only homesick.

"But the problem lies in the fact that he's a true blue native from St. Millom. He has never left this place before.

"Honegger didn't immediately reply to me as he played the bone flute for a few more minutes. He later told me that he misses the origins of the giant bloodline, the Giant King's Court mentioned in myths.

"He told me that he and his clan of Feysacians often dream of tall mountains that are used as giant city walls. It's a palace forever bathed in twilight's glow, with tall towers and other kinds of buildings. It resembles the Great Twilight Hall, but it's even more fascinating, epic, and miraculous.

"Without anyone needing to tell them, Honegger and his clansmen believe that it's the Giant King's Court.

"Towards the end of our conversation, Honegger slowly stood up and thanked me for listening. He was going to leave Feysac to seek out the Giant King's Court, to find the home of his soul.

"He believed that in the zone at the easternmost front of the Sonia Sea, there might be a path that leads to the Giant King's Court.

"He said that a millennia has passed, but the giants have never forgotten their home. Now, it's his turn to follow the footsteps of his ancestors. This path would never stop until the destination is reached.

"He played the bone flute again and gradually left amidst that ethereal and sorrowful tune.

"Home…"

Home… Upon reading this, Klein felt for the first time that his feelings resonated with the emperor.

Although Roselle only wrote the word that seemed to repeat without describing his feelings, Klein could understand the undulating feelings within the emperor. This was because he and Roselle were like Honegger. They had a home they belonged to spiritually.

Sighing inwardly, Klein flipped to the second diary page.

“10th January. Visited Sonia Island.

“This place is also called Ancient Elf Island. It has plenty of elvish ruins and customs left over.

“I was surprised on the first day. The elves actually make ‘blood cake,’ and they enjoy eating animal organs and are good at using spices.

“They even invented chopsticks?

“Thinking about the elvish depictions on the murals, apart from their blue hair, their facial contours and eyes are similar to Asians on Earth. Could they be my fellow countryman?”

Yes, back then, I had such suspicions as well. However, it’s impossible for so many people to transmigrate at once since it’s almost an entire race. I felt that I was overthinking matters… But it doesn’t make sense that the customs and cutlery that appears on Earth won’t appear here… Klein thought in interest as he quickly continued reading. He wanted to know if Roselle had gotten to the bottom of it.”

“13th January. I’ve been so busy searching for writings, relics, and folk tales that I forgot to write my diary for a few days.

“Although many objects have been taken away by the various Churches, I’ve still obtained something of value.

“Various legends have it that Elf King Soniathrym created chopsticks. There are records of ‘Him’ using animal organs and blood to cook delicacies. There are stories of this ancient god being good at identifying and using spices. It’s acknowledged that ‘He’ is their founding ancestor, the first elf. Due to certain reasons, ‘He’ led the race and left the Western Continent that only existed in legends, bringing them to the Northern Continent.

“Could it be that this is a fellow countryman of mine, a transmigrator?

“‘He’ later produced an entire race? There’s nothing ancient gods can’t do, including having children?

"'He' apparently had a wife who was also an elf. Hmm… I'll need to think this through."

"16th January. After further investigation, elves might really have nothing to do with transmigrators. At the very least, they didn't leave behind any Chinese, English, or other symbols.

"They have likely been using Elvish all the time. Nothing of it gives me a sense of familiarity.

"Furthermore, the inventions we have in common didn't appear before I came. Likewise for famous quotes. There are only proverbs and idioms with similar meanings but with a completely different choice of words.

"From all the items and legends I have now, none of them support my theory. This is a little disappointing, but it also makes me relieved. If I were to encounter another transmigrator or other transmigrators, I really have no idea how to face them."

"17th January. I dreamed of the home I've nearly forgotten."

Indeed, the emperor more or less gave up on that theory… Klein flipped to the next page and saw the final diary entry.

"2nd April. My daughter is smart. She can speak before the age of one! Although she has only learned a few words, I believe that her subsequent development can't be slow!

"She must have inherited this from me!

"No matter how I look, she looks a little like how I looked like on Earth. Could it be that a soul will also bring about some level of inheritance? Haha, I'll just treat it as so.

"Bernadette, this name is quite good. It sounds beautiful, but deep in my heart, I keep having the urge to give her a Chinese nickname.

“Sigh, she won’t get to see her real grandmother and grandfather…”

“3rd April. I suffered from insomnia last night because of the wistful thoughts I suddenly had yesterday. Thankfully, I know Cogitation.

“However, this also made me consider a problem. That is whether I should secretly teach Bernadette Chinese.

“No, I can’t. If she were to understand the diary entries her father had previously written, I’d rather kill myself! In my daughter’s heart, her father is filled with honor.

“However, using Chinese to write my diary is my final tether to Earth and my past. My daughter should inherit this tether to a certain extent.”

“6th April. After a few days of consideration, I’ve decided to teach Bernadette two Chinese characters as though they are special symbols. I’ll tell her that this is a protective incantation that her father is giving her and that she is to remember it forever.

“She doesn’t need to know the corresponding meaning. All she needs to do is to remember it.

“The word in Chinese is:

“Home.”

Home… Klein repeated this word again as he felt his eyes redden a little.

He finally understood why Queen Mystic had chosen these three diary pages. This was because it was the protective symbol her father had left her.

“Home.”

At this moment, Klein seemed to see a river of emotions. Its surface was flowing silently, but there were infinite eddies flowing underneath, churning without end.

Klein retracted his gaze and made the diary pages disappear. Looking up at Cattleya, he asked, “What’s your question?”

Chapter 867 - Investigation Mission

◆

When looking at Cattleya, Klein had actually guessed what her request would be as he sighed and felt confident.

How did Mr. Fool know that I'll be asking a question and not making a request… As expected of Mr. Fool… Cattleya thought before politely asking, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I would like to know the meaning of these two symbols."

After receiving permission, she conjured the Chinese characters. They were "Gu" and "Xiang."

As expected… Klein sighed silently.

"When combined together, they mean home, the homeland for one's soul."

When combined together… the homeland for one's soul… Cattleya placed the emphasis on the second sentence because she knew very well where home was for Queen Mystic, nor did she believe that it was anything special.

Audrey, Alger, and the other Tarot Club members took the opportunity to learn the new Roselle text and tried hard to memorize the symbols and their combined meaning—except Derrick.

Klein didn't speak further as he leaned back into his chair.

"You may begin."

Alger immediately turned his head and looked at The World.

"Your mystical item is ready. I'll give it to you this week."

He was referring to the mystical item made from an Ocean Songster's Beyonder characteristic.

The Artisan had first rushed to finish Miss Justice's glove. As for The World's request, it had been delayed until this week.

With Mr. Azik not replying yet, and with me unable to restore the seal on Creeping Hunger, this mystical item's arrival is timely… Klein controlled The World and made him nod.

"That's still an acceptable speed."

An acceptable speed… If I had delayed it for another two to three weeks or even a year, would you be teleporting to me? Alger thought with a baffling sense of wariness.

As his original plan was to obtain the Cataclysmic Interrer potion from the Church, and with him just beginning to digest the Ocean Songster potion, he wasn't looking to purchase any corresponding Beyonder ingredients. He fell silent again and began watching the other members begin their transactions.

To Alger, the most important thing now was to obtain one or two mystical items to match with Whip of Mind. After all, although mystical items were more about quality than quantity, with the need to avoid having the negative effects stacking with each other, to only have one mystical item for a Sequence 5 Beyonder was quite an embarrassment.

Under normal circumstances, Sequence 5 Beyonders would have two or three mystical items whose negative effects didn't overlap, making them the best combination.

Of course, Alger had already reserved one. Once the Artisan finished

The World's item, it would be his six-winged gargoyle's core crystal.

For that, he needed to pay 1,000 pounds. Together with the fee he needed to pay for The World, the little amount of money he had was reduced by 2,000 pounds, leaving him with 1,800 pounds. Out of that, 500 pounds was a commission he had earned from Miss Justice's glove.

With no one speaking, Emlyn looked at The Sun and asked after some deliberation, "I need a Sequence 5's artificial Vampire's Beyonder characteristic. What do you wish to get in exchange?"

In recent times, he had learned that the Sanguine had the means to eliminate the mental corruption of a Beyonder characteristic, but he needed to make sufficient contributions to make an application.

Therefore, Emlyn wished to first obtain the main ingredient needed for advancement before considering the other problems.

Based on his observations, such a Sequence 5 artificial Vampire Beyonder characteristic roughly cost 8,000 pounds based on Mr. World's pricing. As for himself, he only had 5,400 pounds and was still a little short.

Based on Emlyn's original thoughts and habits, he needed to save up 8,000 pounds before requesting a trade with The Sun. He wasn't a Sanguine who liked to buy things on credit, even for the newest and best doll. Nor could he thicken his skin to borrow from others. All he could do was to be more frugal, work harder, and save up more. However, he quickly realized something. The Sun didn't accept cash. To the residents of the City of Silver, Loen's cash was no different from scrap paper.

Therefore, Emlyn believed that The Sun would make a request for an item, so it was better to learn of it to prepare it ahead of time.

Furthermore, The Sun doesn't understand the market prices. Perhaps the thing he wants only costs 5,000 pounds… In the hopes of being pleasantly surprised, Emlyn lifted his chin slightly and looked at The Sun beside him.

Derrick thought seriously and said, “Uh… Sun pathway’s Sequence 5 potion formula.”

He originally wished to request him to repay his debt with Mr. World, but he realized that Mr. World hadn’t raised any requests at all. Hence, he didn’t find it appropriate to relegate it to someone else.

In addition, having participated in so many Tarot Gatherings, Derrick was no longer the newcomer who knew nothing. With the City of Silver having an exchange standard, he knew the difference between a Sequence 6 Notary potion formula and a Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic very well. Using the former to cover the debt of the latter would be a terrible deal; therefore, he changed his request to the Sequence 5 potion formula.

Sequence 5 potion formula. That’s very difficult to purchase. It will cost between 4,500 to 7,000 pounds. It will mainly depend on how urgent both parties are. Also, there’s a cost to verifying its authenticity too… Emlyn was just about to answer when he heard Mr. World’s hoarse voice sound:

“I have it.”

Instantly, the palace that looked like a giant’s residence fell silent. All the Tarot Club members appeared a little wooden.

Is Sequence 5 that common?… Emlyn felt down when he realized that he still wasn’t at Sequence 5 yet. After calming down, he asked, “How much will it cost?”

Considering Emlyn White’s financial situation, Klein made The World chortle deeply.

“5,000 pounds. Priest of Light potion formula.”

5,000 pounds? Emlyn was first taken aback before he said without hesitation, “Deal!”

It was like he was facing a discount for a doll he had been longing for.

“Alright.” The World nodded as though it wasn’t a major transaction.

Then, he saw Miss Justice look around and hear her say, “I’d like to commission an investigation mission.”

Investigation mission… The Fool Klein’s heart skipped a beat as The World’s expression turned somewhat sluggish.

“What is it?” Fors asked proactively.

Her impression of Miss Justice’s commissions was that they were relatively simple while paying handsomely. She definitely needed to take it!

Audrey organized her words and said, “There have been two matters that happened in Backlund recently. One is Baron Syndras. He was suspected to have been framed. The other is Member of Parliament Macht being assaulted because of the environmental measures…”

Fors found Miss Justice’s description especially familiar because she had been present for the two matters. She had witnessed them and was involved in them!

She unknowingly straightened her back, waiting for Miss Justice to continue.

“And in these two matters, there is a tycoon named Dwayne Dantès involved. He came to Backlund two months ago, and he had donated more than ten thousand pounds of shares to the Church of Evernight in an attempt to establish a bursary foundation that targets the poor,” Audrey described using a tone as though she had never directly interacted with him and was simply suspecting something about him from the data and rumors she had received. “I wish to hire someone to investigate the actual situation with that gentleman."

I know! I know! I know this too well! He's rather rich and he looks pretty good. He handles matters with experience and in a mature manner. He's someone with kidney or bladder problems… Fors nearly raised her hand to shout out her thoughts.

If Miss Justice wasn't pleased with that, she had even more information, such as Dwayne Dantès was in a rather pitiful state. His butler studied black magic, his servant worshiped Death, and one of his neighbors was a Beyonder. There was a secret to his street and that he had donated the shares to extricate himself from trouble!

In short, he perfectly fits the image of a foreigner who is being bullied. I nearly recommended him a medicine that treats kidney and bladder problems. After all, Mr. Moon is skilled in such matters. I can still earn a commission through this… Yes, there's no rush. Let's hear what Miss Justice has to offer… Fors curbed her heart which was awash with excitement as she patiently looked at the girl beside her.

However, her body language and emotional upheavals had betrayed her in front of a Spectator. Audrey was rather surprised and puzzled by this. She never expected Fors to know Dwayne Dantès and seem to know quite a lot about him.

This made her have a new guess as to why Dwayne Dantès was shocked when he saw her. She suspected if Fors had once said or shown something to the man.

Meanwhile, Emlyn was a blank. He knew nothing about what Miss Justice had mentioned. All he could do was confirm that these happened in Backlund. As for The Fool Klein, who was leaning back in his chair, leisurely looking at the members, he nearly twitched the corners of his mouth.

Miss Justice's commissioning of others to investigate Dwayne Dantès had exceeded his expectations. This was because they had only met once at the charity party. They didn't seem to have any deeper interactions, so there was no need for any further investigations!

Could it be that I exposed something about myself that garnered Miss Justice's interest? Or could it be that by donating 10,000 pounds, it shows how much importance Earl Hall places on this; hence, Miss Justice decided to secretly carry out investigations because she's worried for her father? Klein's mind raced as he hurriedly thought of a solution.

At this moment, Audrey deliberated for a moment and looked at Miss Magician and said, "An initial investigation for 500 pounds. If you encounter danger, causing the difficulty to rise, I'll compensate you with more."

No problem! Fors hurriedly organized her words inwardly.

Just as she was about to say something, she saw The World Gehrman Sparrow raise his hand.

He had raised his hand.

Chapter 868 - Shared Identity

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Eh… Fors was taken aback, suspecting that she had seen wrong.

Following that, she couldn’t help but have thoughts surface in her mind.

Mr. World wishes to take this mission? That’s right. He’s in Backlund.

But this is an investigation, not a murder. Dwayne Dantès is already pitiful enough. Leave Dwayne alone!

Eliminating the investigation target implies completing the investigation? Because there will be no need to make another investigation…

What do I do? Do I still take the mission? It’s a full 500 pounds. I just need to recount what I previously discovered to receive 200 pounds, but the competitor is Mr. World… Perhaps we can cooperate and not compete?

Eh? Why would Mr. World be interested in this mission? His focus is actually on the framing of Baron Syndras or the assault on Member of Parliament Macht?

Fors finally grasped the problem at its core. As for Alger and Cattleya, they had already cast their gaze at The World. To them, be it the framing of Baron Syndras, the assault on Member of Parliament Macht, or Dwayne Dantès’s donation of more than ten thousand pounds, they weren’t something that needed special notice. However, to have

Mr. Fool's Blessed choose to accept the investigation mission meant that the problem was bound to be extremely complicated. It made them feel that there were important secrets underlying the matter.

Emlyn didn't think too much about it, but he had also sensed that the seemingly ordinary investigation mission wasn't that simple. His plans on earning some pocket money to make up for the 5,000 pounds that he had just lost were overturned as he suddenly didn't want to say a word.

Dwayne Dantès is really something. There must be a big problem with him that makes Mr. World choose to investigate him? Or are those two cases more important and more critical than I imagined? Audrey's mind stirred as she turned her eyes, and she used the advantage of her seating position to take in all the reactions of the Tarot Club members.

Among them, Derrick was the only exception.

To him, wasn't it normal for the Tarot Club to help each other? If someone gave a mission and one was capable of completing it, wasn't it normal to take it?

Audrey moved her gaze to The World and asked with hidden anticipation, "Mr. World, you wish to receive this mission?"

After returning to Backlund, she had gathered up the news at sea over the past few months, roughly confirming that Mr. World was the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow. While she was deeply impressed by this seemingly polite but dangerous gentleman who had accomplished many great deeds, she felt that her feelings to adventure out at sea had waned.

Klein had already thought of a response. He had controlled The World to lower his hand and wait for Miss Justice to ask. At this moment, he made Gehrman Sparrow's expression turn solemn and reply with a deep voice, "Dwayne Dantès is an identity."

After a period of brief but repeated considerations, Klein decided to expose some information. He made Dwayne Dantès be one of his public facades as a Blessed!

He believed if he chose to conceal the matter, there was a chance of being exposed in the future. This was because Dwayne Dantès was about to enter Backlund's high society. He could find clues to the Great Smog of Backlund or other cases. This way, he might very well need Miss Justice to provide him with assistance. When that happens, the Spectator would probably sense something and discover that The World was previously hiding something and that Mr. Fool had never mentioned it.

This would lower her sense of belonging and make her even begin suspecting even more matters, causing her faith in The Fool to be borderline dangerous.

With two members not knowing each other, or knowing of the other's existence, to tacitly work together to complete a specified mission together to accomplish a complete goal sounded perfect, but in reality, its success was very difficult. Even more so, there was no way he could fool her!

Therefore, most of the time, honesty was more effective and less worrisome than lying.

As for why he didn't directly say that Dantès was Gehrman Sparrow, it was because Klein didn't wish to leave the Tarot Club members the impression as to why it was the same person again. He didn't want them to have the impression that he was the only Blessed of Mr. Fool that appeared.

Dwayne Dantès is only an identity? Audrey sharply read between the lines and had a theory.

Then, she heard The World simply say, "A common identity that me and my companions share.

"I will occasionally disguise myself as him."

Upon saying that, he emotionlessly swept his gaze across The Magician.

A common identity… Occasionally disguise as him. That very pitiful Dwayne Dantès is Mr. World? That tycoon with kidney or bladder problems is Mr. Gehrman Sparrow? Fors felt as though she was struck by lightning as she froze up.

Her brain turned numb as she felt struck with fear, subconsciously feeling that Xio's unintentional comment made a lot of sense.

When a butler, valet, neighbor, and surroundings had problems, the person that seemed ordinary definitely wouldn't be ordinary!

No, it's not the street where Dwayne Dantès stays at, or that he happened to hire a butler with a secret, it's because of that secret that he was selected by Dwayne Dantès—selected by Gehrman Sparrow! The pitiful one isn't Dwayne Dantès but the Beyonders and Beyonder items around him! I was wrong. I shouldn't have gotten Xio to ask the Goddess to bless him. It's more of a curse for Mr. World… Fors suddenly trembled, thankful that she hadn't left a comment in her note that Dwayne Dantès should check on his kidneys or bladder.

Otherwise, she suspected that she wouldn't be able to participate in the next Tarot Gathering. Or perhaps, she would appear in the form of a Beyonder characteristic, sold to the other members by The World.

Logically speaking, Mr. World shouldn't know that I'm The Magician, but I was carrying Leymano's Travels with me… He had used the spellbook before and had added demigod-level Beyonder powers to it! He had definitely observed me in secret, remembering my appearance and evaluating my value… The fear in Fors was surging like a tumultuous sea as her expression was filled with misery.

At this moment, she saw Mr. World sweep his cold glance at her, her feelings of regret instantly becoming that of extreme regret.

Thankfully, I didn't rush to answer and mention my impression of Dwayne Dantès… When Fors gradually calmed down from her horror, she couldn't help but think of another problem.

During the bodyguard mission, were we the ones protecting Dwayne Dantès, or was Dwayne Dantès protecting us… Should I refund Mr. Gehrman Sparrow his money?

This… At times, Dwayne Dantès is equivalent to Mr. World… Audrey was first stunned before finding all her questions answered.

Fors does know Dwayne Dantès, but she didn't know that he's Mr. World. It can be proven from her shocked reaction just now.

The reason that Dwayne Dantès was shocked when he saw me was because he recognized Lie. Although this mystical item has changed, it comes from a Beyonder characteristic that Mr. World provided. Perhaps this crazy adventurer can sense it somehow. After all, Gehrman Sparrow can transform into anyone with the powers of shapeshifting!

Although I only asked Mr. Hanged Man what will happen when an animal consumes a potion, the potion ingredients I gathered later were always in pairs. Mr. World might very well have guessed that I have a Spectator beside me based on that; hence, he became wary against Susie who was secretly observing everyone in the hall… Others might not doubt an animal, but Mr. World is experienced. He must've interacted with Beyonder creatures, so it's very normal for him to be wary against such things.

Which is to say, Dwayne Dantès, no—Mr. World Gehrman Sparrow knew that I was Justice, but he didn't choose to make contact or communicate with me. Hmm, there's nothing wrong with his choice of actions. Under those circumstances, unless he directly says it, it will be difficult for me to guess or believe it. Furthermore, talking about the Tarot Club in Saint Samuel Cathedral is… is just too crazy!

After a brief moment of surprise, Audrey's emotions calmed down, leaving her only with excitement.

Apart from The Magician Fors who she introduced, this was her first meeting with another member of the Tarot Club!

It feels like a historic moment! Yes, Mr. World as well as Mr. Fool's other Blessed. Eh, they should also be considered The World. But why was the identity of Dwayne Dantès made? What are they up to?

The matter of Baron Syndras being framed, Member of Parliament Macht being assaulted, and their donation to establish a bursary foundation really are more complicated and important than I originally imagined… Why do I feel that the kingdom's upper echelons are beginning to stir in a state of unrest? I had this feeling back when Prince Edessak died during the Great Smog of Backlund. Today, it's even more intense…

Now that I know the identity of Dwayne Dantès, I might be able to participate and cooperate indirectly, reducing the risk my parents might suffer, reducing the risk of the innocent… Amidst her thoughts, Audrey quickly made up her mind. She would accept her father's choice to join the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, then she inwardly quipped, Wouldn't it be very logical to have Justice from the Tarot Club join the charity foundation established by Mr. World from the Tarot Club?

Alger and Cattleya weren't too surprised that Dwayne Dantès was The World, that he was the amalgamation of Mr. Fool's Blessed. In their minds, another thought flashed through their minds: Something major is about to happen in Backlund!

Chapter 869 - Report Him!

* * *

Is something brewing in Backlund again? An extension of the Great Smog of Backlund? As Alger and Cattleya wondered about the framing of Baron Syndras and the assault on Member of Parliament Macht, they planned on using their own respective channels to obtain more detailed information to see if they could discover anything abnormal.

They weren't in a rush. They had no intention to directly ask The World what his motives or exact plans were. They felt that he wouldn't answer in detail. At best, he would just make a comment; therefore, they planned to gather more information first to do some preliminary investigations. They would then decide on their subsequent course of action depending on the exact situation.

At the same time, they suddenly realized that the public announcement of the identity of "Dwayne Dantès" seemed to be a boon for them. As long as they paid attention to news of the tycoon, they could roughly grasp the actions of Mr. Fool's Blessed, and from there, they could provide tacit cooperation or help. And since this was just a fake identity, it could be disposed of the moment any problems were exposed.

Similarly, they could be a "witness" for this identity, making Dwayne Dantès appear more realistic. The simplest example was that if this tycoon had a background at sea, Cattleya could provide her crew, friends, and partners the relevant information, making them believe that such a man existed. By the time the official organizations attempted to investigate Dwayne Dantès's origins, they would discover that he did exist and that those matters did happen!

After a brief silence, Audrey was just about to answer Mr. World's question when she saw Mr. Moon sit up straight and look to the end of the long bronze table, taking the initiative to ask:

"What is this public identity used for?

"Are there deeper problems present in the cases mentioned by Miss Justice?"

As a citizen of Backlund, Emlyn was quite concerned about his living environment.

Why don't you investigate all these questions yourself? To not be swept into the vortex, I have already exposed myself… Klein lampooned Emlyn and made The World give a deep chuckle.

"Of course.

"It's awaiting further investigation."

His succinct answer could be translated in detail to: the two cases definitely have deeper problems, but that's a secret. I don't plan on telling you. Likewise, don't ask about the purpose of the identity of "Dwayne Dantès"!

Although Emlyn was quite bad at reading people, he could still understand what The World was getting at. He chuckled dryly and leaned back, pretending as though he was very pleased with the answer.

When Audrey saw this, she used a second to stop the corners of her mouth from curling up. Then, she said to The World, "Alright, I understand. Thank you for the information."

At this moment, she was further convinced that joining the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation was a good thing for her. In the future, if she were to face any danger or had any matters she couldn't handle herself, she could inform Mr. World ahead of time. Then, she could head to the foundation as per normal, busying herself in the office adjacent to Dwayne Dantès's.

Hmm, if the Psychology Alchemists have their suspicions about me, or if they use a mission to test me, I'll get them to meet me at the foundation… Dwayne Dantès's image is completely different from the way he acts as The World above the gray fog. Yes, Mr. World is an experienced actor… Also, Dwayne Dantès is a public identity. He won't always be synonymous to Gehrman Sparrow. It's no wonder there are rumors of him liking a wide range of women… A crazy murderer and adventurer like Gehrman Sparrow definitely is a good match with a pure and innocent girl… As a Spectator, Audrey couldn't help but imagine that.

As for Klein, he couldn't help but lampoon when he heard her reply.

What do you mean "Thank you for the information?"

Shouldn't you be paying 500 pounds in investigation fees?

Are you treating it as something shared among members?

He made The World nod without further mentioning the matter of Dwayne Dantès. He then turned to look at Little Sun.

"Do you have Bizarro Banes over there?"

The World paused and added, "Perhaps you use a different name to refer to it. In short, it's good at disguising itself, and it has bizarre powers. It's nearly at the demigod level and has a main eye gathered from its characteristic…"

He deliberately mentioned that it was nearly at the demigod level, not to flaunt the fact to him, but to warn Little Sun that this was a very dangerous monster.

However, Alger and Cattleya didn't pay attention to this point. As a representative of Mr. Fool's Blessed, it was very understandable for The World to purchase demigod-level materials on behalf of his peers. Besides, even if he was preparing it for himself, it wasn't anything astonishing. Gehrman Sparrow was already a Sequence 5. It was very common for one to gather the ingredients ahead of time.

Without realizing it, they felt that Mr. World's advancement from Sequence 5 was seemingly a good thing.

Derrick thought and said, "It's not among the commonly seen monsters, but perhaps someone might've encountered it before. I will search through the books or help you ask."

The World tersely answered and fell silent.

After Fors made her request, to buy an ancient wraith's cursed artifact and remnant spirituality, to no avail, the transactions came to an end.

Before Mr. Hanged Man could ask The Sun, Fors stole a glance at The World and said, "I recently had a strange dream. In it was an almost genuine treasure trove, including…"

She described, in detail, the scene she had seen, and towards the end, she said, "That is the complicated symbol formed from 'fate' and 'concealment'…"

Fors was just about to look towards Mr. Fool to request permission to conjure it when she heard The World say, "Are you talking about this symbol?"

The World first made a request before conjuring the symbol.

The badge was only the size of an eyeball. On the surface, there were symbols that symbolized "fate" and "concealment."

It came from Lanevus, and it was the proof of admission to the Hermits of Fate's gathering. However, Klein had never made any attempts to participate in it before.

“Ah?” Fors glanced at it and stammered a reply. “Yes, yes, that’s it.”

After she answered it, she realized that Mr. World hadn’t only produced the symbol, but he had also produced an item!

Suddenly, she came to a realization.

Dwayne Dantès had chosen Böklund Street for a reason!

Just as she had the thought, she saw The World say with a hoarse voice, “That treasure is a trap.”

He does know… Thankfully, I was wise to seek the advice of the experienced… Fors heaved a sigh of relief as she smiled.

“Thank you for your reminder.”

Audrey asked out of curiosity, “Mr. World, what does that symbol represent? Why do you call it a trap?”

Klein controlled The World and answered simply, “It represents a bunch of thieves that called themselves ‘Hermits of Fate.’”

Hermits of Fate… Thieves… Alger and Cattleya thought as they memorized the two names. Based on their own knowledge, they had a certain guess.

The former suspected that it was an organization established by a bunch of Marauders. The latter believed that an ancient family from the Fourth Epoch was involved. After some careful recalling, Emlyn White confirmed that he had never heard of such an organization, and he planned on learning more from the upper echelons of the Sanguine.

As for Klein, he thought of another problem.

That demigod from the Marauder pathway who was sealed deep in the sewers hasn’t left Böklund Street as expected. He might be hiding at

Hazel's place. Furthermore, this demigod isn't staying put. He actually tried to influence Miss Magician via a dream!

This won't do. I can't give him free reign to do as he wishes…

I have to eliminate this latent risk as soon as possible!

Hmm… I'll find my dear poet later and warn him. The grandpa inside his body wouldn't be uninterested in a demigod of the same pathway…

With this in mind, Mr. Fool, who was leisurely looking at the members, curled his mouth into a smile.

Audrey vaguely sensed the emotional changes of Mr. Fool as she mumbled inwardly.

That bunch of thieves who call themselves Hermits of Fate are friends related to Mr. Fool?

The talk about the treasure in the dream quickly came to an end. Cattleya thought of something and said to The World, "I'll give you the intelligence you want this week."

At this moment, she was a little curious as to why he needed information on West Balam. However, she wasn't The Sun or The Moon who would ask the moment they didn't know something. She was more accustomed to do a search for clues first.

"Alright." The World nodded. Klein sighed inwardly. With this secret organization, many things were indeed much simpler.

Seeing that he had nothing else to say, Alger turned to look at The Sun.

"Have you figured out the matter regarding your former Chief's mausoleum?"

Derrick said, somewhat ashamed, "I just made two friends."

As a Beyonder from the Sun pathway, he won less than one in ten matches when in combat at the training field. After suffering plenty of beatings, he finally established a relationship with his former acquaintances. However, the ones he could call friends only numbered two.

Without waiting for The Hanged Man to answer him, he hurriedly added, “However, I heard that the six-member council wishes to open the mausoleum. Regardless, they wish to retrieve the characteristic at the very least.”

In the City of Silver, no one felt that such an operation was problematic. To them, being wasteful was a sin.

Alger nodded gently as he changed his admonishing words he was about to say.

“Not bad.

“They don’t necessarily have to be friends in order to provide you with help. When you establish a bigger network, you will naturally obtain more intel.”

Chapter 870 - A Question That Strikes The Heart

◆

Upon gaining recognition, Derrick was taken aback for two seconds. His shame lessened as he said, somewhat embarrassed, “I will take further steps to understand this matter.”

I will work hard to make two sources of information, no—a friend before the next Tarot Gathering… Derrick quickly made a target for himself.

Upon seeing this, Klein made The World hoarsely say, “If it involves the domain of Death, you can seek my advice.”

And I can seek Mr. Azik’s advice… he silently added.

As for Frank Lee’s new mushrooms, he had no plans on transferring them to Little Sun, as they were still incomplete. The “fruits” that were eventually produced were filled with poison and madness.

“Thank you, Mr. World,” Derrick answered gratefully.

After a short exchange regarding other matters, the Tarot Club entered the “learning” segment until it ended.

Returning to the real world, Klein immediately wanted to resolve the problem of the Marauder demigod, but the plan he conceived of was met with an obstacle at the first step.

He had no idea where to find Leonard Mitchell and the grandpa inside his body!

Saint Samuel Cathedral? Leonard is most probably underground, but I have no way of entering… He only prays in the cathedral once or twice a week, and he doesn't do it at a fixed time. I can't be heading there thrice a day all week just to meet him, right? What kind of crappy plot is this? Is this what's called "a stake-out"? Even if I really did it, it might not be effective. As a Red Glove, he might've left Backlund… As Klein lampooned, he felt a deep sense of regret. He regretted being too focused on the sophistry and in fooling Leonard Mitchell; thus, forgetting to ask for his contact method.

I should've said to Leonard, "I will inform Klein Moretti about his identity being exposed. If he has anything he wishes to say, I will pass it on for him." That way, I'll be able to establish a private method of contact… Klein exhaled slowly. All he could do was use his final solution.

That was to ask the magic mirror!

Drawing the symbols that implied "concealment" and "mystery prying," Klein cast his gaze at the full-body mirror. He saw aqueous light ripple, producing white Loenese text:

"Exalted Great Master, your puny, loyal and humble, terrified servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning.

"Before answering any questions, I want to say:

"I was wrong! I was wrong!"

Klein pricked up his brows and asked, "Why are you suddenly admitting to a mistake?"

On the mirror, the white Loenese words warped and turned into new words:

"In short, I was wrong…"

After a series of ellipses, the white words trembled into shape.

“Recently, there have been many people trying to find out about you, and they have learned of the reputation of your present identity…”

So, Dwayne Dantès’s amorous preference of liking anyone beautiful has spread, so much so that even Miss Justice knows of it? Well, that’s good. I used the explanation that it’s a shared identity. More than one Blessed plays as Dwayne Dantès, so having a myriad of preferences can be explained… Hehe, look at this mirror. It’s scared white… Klein was somewhat enlightened as he secretly laughed before saying, “It’s your turn to ask.”

The full-body mirror’s words remained white as it formed new words:

“Will you forgive me?

“No, I mean, are you willing to watch my subsequent performance?”

This attitude… Klein tsked inwardly and said with a sullen expression, “Work hard.”

“Yes, Great Master!” The mirror surface’s ghastly white words bloomed with silver light. “Since you have summoned me, do you have a question to ask me?”

Klein nodded.

“Yes.

“Where will Leonard Mitchell be living in the next few days?”

The silver marks distorted quickly, forming new words:

“7 Pinster Street.”

Beneath the words, the aqueous light rippled, forming a scene:

It was a terrace house numbered Unit 7. There was a black-haired, green-eyed youth just about to get his keys.

It's the same old place. There hasn't been any change… If I were to pay a visit directly, it will sully Leonard's impression of Dwayne Dantès. It will be quite a step down… Get Emlyn White to go? Leonard has probably figured out that the vampire and Sherlock Moriarty, who is also Klein Moretti, have ties… The current problem is that it's hard to determine that grandpa's stance… I have no way of confirming "His" true motives. Giving "Him" a big gift based on his present state might not be appropriate. Perhaps it will bring extreme danger to Leonard… As it doesn't involve myself, doing a divination above the gray fog won't be effective… Thoughts arose in Klein's mind as he changed his plans.

Compared to directly informing the grandpa in Leonard's body about the Marauder demigod, using Pallez Zoroast's or Amon's name to warn the target to force him to leave the area was a milder method that led to fewer repercussions!

Of course, the premise is that I don't expose myself… Klein pondered for a few seconds and asked again, "Where is the demigod beside Hazel Macht hiding?"

The mirror's surface had aqueous light ripple out as the scene changed.

On a thick carpet with beautiful embroidery, there was a small leather sofa. On the surface of the single-seater was a white, furry cushion. In the middle of it was a gray rat. Compared to its kind, its eyes were closer to dark red.

Rat… That Marauder demigod has parasitized a rat? And he's sleeping inside Hazel's room in broad daylight? He got himself what looks like a very expensive cushion… He had to transform into this because I foiled his plans? Klein was surprised before he felt a little amused.

The scene fixed as silver lines surfaced:

"Great Master, what other instructions do you have for me?"

Very sharp… Klein tersely answered and said, "Use the mirror in the room to warn that demigod.

“Tell him that all around this street there is an angel from the Marauder pathway with ill intentions plying it. Furthermore, Blasphemer Amon might come at any time.”

“Alright, Master. I’ll do it immediately!” The words on the mirror sparkled.

†

In Hazel’s room, the gray rat felt his spiritual perception stirred as he hurriedly stood up and cast his gaze on the full-body mirror in the room.

On the surface of the mirror, words that seemed to be written with fresh blood that had yet to coagulate appeared.

“Leave this area!”

The gray rat’s gaze froze for a second as it fell silent for a moment.

“Why?”

The blood seemed to flow as the words spread out and formed new words:

“The surrounding area has an angel from the Marauder pathway in urgent need of replenishment plying it. This pathway is the nemesis of all High-Sequence Beyonders. Blasphemer Amon is rushing over.

“I’m warning you because I do not wish for ‘Them’ to benefit.”

The gray rat squeaked softly before asking in a deep voice, “Who are you?”

It was extremely frustrated, frustrated that the strength it accumulated would often be forced to be drained. Otherwise, it could use Astromancy to confirm the situation.

The full-body mirror which had dimmed at some point in time suddenly had bloody words appear again, presenting new information:

“I’ve already answered one question of yours. Based on the principle of reciprocity, it’s my turn to ask.”

Following that, a new line of bloody-red text appeared underneath:

“After you hurriedly parasitized a rat, you should be influenced by the body’s construct and hormones. Now, which entity will make you have the desire to mate:

“Female human, male human, female rat, male rat, or all of the above?

“Please answer.”

At this moment, Hazel cracked open the door. And for some reason, the gray rat inside didn’t notice it, seemingly affected by something.

The door opened slightly again as Hazel discovered that the entity who claimed to be a demigod that existed in legends was staring at the mirror in a daze. It seemed infatuated with its present appearance: a gray rat.

Uh… Hazel’s brows twitched slightly as she subconsciously paused her action of opening the door.

Then, she saw the gray rat’s body tremble, its red eyes effusing a clear murderous look.

“Stop fooling around with me!” the gray rat growled.

It turned its head to leave the room, but invisible chains suddenly bound its rat’s body!

This strength wasn’t anything for it to fear when it was in its optimal state, but now, everything it had accumulated had been drained. The latest action was to infuse a dream to the Beyonder bodyguard whom Dwayne Dantès had hired.

Boom!

A thick, silver bolt of lightning descended down from the sky, smiting the gray rat.

The scene before Hazel's eyes turned blinding-white as she couldn't see anything. Immediately, her vision recovered as she found the gray rat on the ground, charred black. Its limbs were twitching.

Chapter 871 - Director

What happened? The sudden change made the inexperienced Hazel momentarily lost as to how to react. She stood there in dazed silence for a few seconds before pushing open the door and rushing in.

When she arrived beside the charred rat, the existence that claimed to be a demigod rolled in a fit, speaking with a calm tone, “You forgot to close the door.”

“Ah…” Hazel first wore a blank look before realizing that she had failed to close the door like she usually did because of her eagerness to access the situation. Doing so prevented the maids from peeping in.

With the rat appearing fine, Hazel pursed her lips and turned around, walking back to the door.

During this process, she didn’t forget to glance at the full-body mirror. She saw that everything in it looked normal without any problems. It clearly reflected everything in the room. There weren’t any additional people or objects.

As the door clicked shut, Hazel asked, “Teacher, what happened just now?”

The charred rat looked at her sidewards as it cast its gaze beyond the window.

“In the world of mysticism, anything that involves supernatural power is filled with danger. You can’t be too careless.

“I had tried to use the mirror to do a divination, but I ended up garnering the attention of an unknown existence. After an intense struggle, I finally resolved the problem and prevented the danger from spreading across the street.”

The rat spoke fluently without any stammering or hesitation, as though being struck by lightning was something trivial.

Is that so… Why didn’t you warn me of such matters in the past… Hazel couldn’t help but frown, as she could smell the mixed smell of charred fur and disintegrated fat.

Without waiting for her reply, the rat turned to face the balcony and said to her with its back towards her, “My physical condition has deteriorated as a result. I’m no longer suited to staying here, or else I might be discovered by the Church of Evernight.

“Yes, find an opportunity to send me to your manor in the countryside.”

Looking at the rat’s charred fur, and smelling the fragrance of roasted meat, Hazel fell silent for a few seconds. Suppressing her doubt, she nodded and said, “Alright.”

†

160 Böklund Street.

Sitting in the reclining chair, Klein saw the full-body mirror ripple with aqueous light again as silver light arose.

The silver words formed into a sentence:

“Great Master, your puny servant, Arrodes, has followed your instructions to warn that demigod from the Marauder pathway. I have also given her a tiny punishment.”

Her? Just as Klein was ruminating over the pronoun Arrodes had used, light from the mirror’s surface turned clear as it presented a scene.

A silver bolt of lightning smote down, causing the gray rat to collapse while convulsing.

This is… way too weak? Klein suddenly understood why this demigod's condition was weaker than he expected.

"Are you satisfied with the way I handled it?" The silver lines quickly warped into a question.

"Not bad." Klein nodded.

Considering the demigod's condition, he paused for a second and probingly asked, "Why didn't you directly kill her?"

Arrodes's mirror outlined silver words:

"If one can't be certain in killing a demigod target, it's best not to force them into a corner.

"Once they aren't repressed, they will completely let themselves go. That would result in them mutating into an incomplete and irrational Mythical Creature.

"Most of the time, to have a problematic condition and to having trouble fully expressing their powers is because they are resisting their inclination of losing control.

"I-I'm not here in my actual form, so all I can do is deal a small punishment."

When the final line appeared, the full-body mirror's aqueous light shimmered. Klein suddenly had the feeling that a creature was looking at him with widened, watery eyes.

He didn't respond towards that and instead nodded.

"That's it for today. I'll summon you again if there's anything else."

"Alright, Master~" The mirror immediately produced a hand-waving emoticon.

After cleaning up the room, Klein finished his afternoon nap and left the master bedroom.

Before long, the white-gloved Walter came to the third floor and entered the half-opened room with the balcony. He said to his employer, “Sir, the Church has sent a letter. They’ve invited you to be a director in the board of directors for the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. You can choose to directly take up a post there to receive a sizable salary. Or you can choose to take on a symbolic role. You will only participate in the discussion and vote when handling major matters.

The Church sure is efficient. It has already set up the framework… Klein thought and felt that since he had already donated more than ten thousand pounds, there was no need for him to claim a salary. It was better to not expect anything in return as he deliberated.

“I’ll take on a symbolic role. However, I wish to participate in some of the actual operations of the foundation in the future. I wish to contribute further to spread aid to help more people.”

“I will inform the Church of your thoughts,” Walter seriously replied. “If you have nothing else, it’s best you head over on Wednesday morning to witness the official establishment of the foundation.”

Dwayne raised his porcelain cup and drank a mouthful of black tea.

“Okay.”

†

On the Golden Dream, Danitz sat in front of the deck, worriedly looking at the azure blue sea that was churning with waves.

After being urged once by Gehrman Sparrow, he felt that he couldn’t delay any further. Otherwise, he might become a bounty at any time.

I don't want to become a pile of cash while I'm sleeping… So what if I'm suspected!? Danitz gritted his teeth and mustered his courage. He passed through the cabin door and headed straight for the captain's cabin.

Being unable to find Anderson Hood in a short span of time, he could only ask Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards.

After reaching his destination, Danitz took three deep breaths and raised his right hand, prepared to knock on the door.

At this moment, Vice Admiral Iceberg's voice sounded from inside.

"Please come in."

"…"

Danitz's right hand paused in midair as he forced a smile and entered.

He saw that his captain was sitting behind a desk, holding a dark-red fountain pen. He had no idea what she was writing.

"Captain, I have something I'd like to consult you about." Danitz came over and bent his back slightly as he said with a smile.

Edwina put down her fountain pen and pulled at her sleeves that were laced with flowers. She glanced at Danitz and said, "You wish to ask about West Balam?"

"Ah?" Danitz's expression froze.

The captain already knows?

It must be those b*st*rds and dogsh*t like Barrel and Iron Skin. They told Captain about it!

I know that no secret can be kept on this ship. And it's even more so for

Captain!

After cursing inwardly, Danitz forced a smile again.

“Yes, as you know, I’m very interested in history and geography.”

Edwina’s limpid eyes moved slightly as she looked out the window.

“This is international politics.”

Without waiting for the stiff Danitz to find another excuse, she continued on.

“In West Balam, there are cities managed by the Loenese, valleys belonging to Intis, native generals who are supported by Loen, and tribes who follow Intis orders. There are also powerful independent states who rely on the requirement that both nations are balanced. They are secretly connected to the different factions of the Numinous Episcopate and are in a rivalry with those who claim to be the descendants of Death. In addition, the Rose School of Thought and Feysac Empire have a deep influence on West Balam. On the surface, none of the factions belong to them, but in fact, many of the generals and tribal chiefs have submitted to them.

“Among them…”

Danitz listened in surprise before he lowered his hand suddenly with a dry chuckle.

“Captain, I-I need to take notes.”

Or else there’s no way to memorize this!

Edwina, who had been interrupted, wasn’t mad. She pointed at the fountain pen and paper on the table.

“That’s a good habit.

“I believe Gehrman Sparrow doesn’t wish to receive erroneous information."

"Ah?" Danitz was stunned once again.

†

West Balam sure is chaotic. It's difficult to even tell which backing faction that a medium-sized warlord belongs to, or who he's supported by… The Rose School of Thought has a very strong influence there? That means a sharp rise in risk for me… Klein had quickly scanned through Danitz's letter after receiving it from Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr.

It made him believe that he shouldn't head to West Balam alone unless Mr. Azik accompanied him.

Chapter 872 - Results of Mediumship

◆ ◆ ◆

Watching Miss Messenger leave, Klein glanced at the letter in his hand and considered the problem of West Balam again.

He believed that he needed to make preparations in case that Mr. Azik wouldn’t reply to him in the next month. That also meant that when July came, he might very well have to head to West Balam with a few military personnel, without the Death Consul’s protection. If that happened, the shadow of the Rose School of Thought would ultimately hang over him.

Two choices. If I confirm that it’s extremely dangerous, I’ll directly abandon my identity as Dwayne Dantès. On the contrary, I should seriously consider a “customer list.” I will not have myself involved in any faction that’s suspected to have ties with the Rose School of Thought… Hmm, I might as well set a target first to make any unexpected developments be controllable… The information provided by Danitz likely comes from Vice Admiral Iceberg. The two native generals mentioned seem rather special… The other factions, regardless of the reason, will have a note of their ties with Loen, Intis, Feysac, and Feynapotter, or the various inclinations of internal factions that form a counterbalance. Only, for them, there is no mention of foreign countries other than the point about receiving support from the Numinous Episcopate… Klein read the content from beginning to end as he vaguely figured something out.

He had his initial suspicions that the two native generals were related to the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. The reason why

Edwina didn't make any note was to deliberately point out their uniqueness, telling Gehrman Sparrow that they were targets to cooperate with.

This way, she didn't need to worry that there would be a leak from Danitz, as there was no information to leak other than a hint.

Maysanchez, Katamia… The former receives the support from the royal faction of the Numinous Episcopate. The latter secretly claims to be a descendant of Death… Heh, even if it's real, who knows how many generations separated he is. If he were to meet Mr. Azik, how should he refer to him? Klein chuckled and shook his wrist, burning up the letter.

Following that, he began enjoying an exquisite afternoon tea in the half-opened room with the balcony until Walter entered and whispered, "Sir, the police are here again. It's regarding Cuarón's suicide."

The matter's clues superficially pointed to Dwayne Dantès, so even though Baron Syndras had handled the matters, the police would visit him from time to time. Otherwise, the reporters would claim that it was a dereliction of duty by the police.

As for the assault on Member of Parliament Macht, as Dwayne Dantès was only a relatively important eyewitness, they didn't disturb him further after taking his statement.

"Invite them to the activity room on the second floor with the garden." Klein placed the butter sponge cake he had taken a few bites from onto the plate and drank a mouthful of tea.

As the master, he didn't need to worry that his food would go to waste. This was because the leftovers would be given to the servants. If he were to eat them clean all the time, or request them to prepare the perfect proportions, then his reputation as a stingy master would spread across the servants on the street before reaching the ears of the ladies and gentlemen.

Walter replied with an unperturbed expression, “They wish for you to head to the police station. Today is the day the Cuarón family will be identifying the suspect in a police lineup.

“They say that they are very sorry, but this is a necessary process that cannot be skipped.”

Klein slowly got up as he said, “Understandable. Richardson, get me my coat, hat, and cane.”

Since he was already no longer involved in the matter, he was rather willing to figure out what Cuarón and his family had encountered from a bystander’s perspective, and also how the matter had been directed towards Baron Syndras.

†

Inside a spacious room in the police station at North Borough.

Klein stood behind a glass wall and saw Cuarón’s family. It was an elderly man and woman, a woman in her late thirties, a teenager who was around the age of fifteen, and a girl who wasn’t older than ten.

Their gaze swept the suspects behind the glass wall before landing on Dwayne Dantès at the same moment.

“It’s him! It’s him!” the teenager yelled as his eyes turned red. He clenched his hands into a fist in an attempt to rush towards the glass wall.

“It’s him, Officer. It’s him.” The lady in her late thirties suddenly wept as she looked at Dwayne Dantès with eyes filled with hatred and animosity.

The little girl who was holding her hand wailed.

“Daddy! Return daddy to me!”

The two elders were wiping their tears. One of them was trying hard to keep calm, while the other was nearly fainting from her sobbing. The sorrowful mood instantly spread out.

However, Klein had never even met them before today.

Implanted memories? He frowned slightly. As he sighed, he began wondering what the Cuarón family had encountered.

Meanwhile, in the mortuary beneath the station.

Daly Simone held a pencil and began sketching as her body shook slightly.

As she was here to help at the police station, with the possibility of her encountering reporters when entering or exiting, she didn't wear her usual Spirit Medium robes. She changed into a female black-and-white police uniform set. She had a blouse and skirt on with matching leather boots.

At this moment, her palm was moving uncontrollably, and soon, there was a desk, oriel window, ink bottle, revolver, and other items appearing on the piece of paper.

On the oriel window, there was a figure reflected there.

This figure's hair was neatly combed back, a mix of silver and raven-black. The wrinkled figure had a broad forehead and high cheekbones. He was none other than Baron Syndras!

Pa! The pencil in Daly's hand dropped onto the piece of paper.

She then looked up and said to Leonard, who offered to help, and the two police inspectors who were in charge of the liaison, "In the second that Cuarón committed suicide, he struggled deeply in his heart. That is to say that his suicide is a result of Cuing and Guidance. This isn't a simple psychological problem. It must've involved Beyonder powers at a rather high level.

"And this contradictory struggle resulted in his emotions breaking down, suffering an explosion from his spirituality. Before his death, he would restore the truth to a certain degree. This is the scene that's fixed in his eyes.

The high-ranking inspector beside her furrowed his brows.

"Ma'am Simone, are you implying that the last person Cuarón saw is the real murderer? Baron Syndras is actually the real murderer?"

Leonard Mitchell immediately scoffed.

"What you see might not be equivalent to the truth.

"You might not understand it if I call it an illusion, but if I'm a murderer, I can find a person that looks like Baron Syndras so as to make him appear inside the room before Cuarón committed suicide."

The two inspectors were very pleased with the explanation as they heaved a sigh of relief.

"We've already arranged for Cuarón's family to pay a visit. I'll have to trouble the two of you to obtain more clues that point towards the truth with non-intrusive means."

"Alright." Daly rubbed the corner of her eyes. "I'll use the washroom first."

She hadn't put on her strange eyeshadow or blush. Apart from her skin appearing rather pale, she didn't have that uncanny look to her. Furthermore, she seemed younger, looking more like a woman in her twenties than thirties. Her eyes were bright, and she had beautiful facial features.

Believing that they were in for plenty of work, Leonard Mitchell also left the mortuary and walked towards the washroom above them.

Just as they finished climbing the staircase and turned a bend, they suddenly saw a gentleman with white sideburns appear on the other end of the corridor. He was walking out of the police station with his valet.

This gentleman was mature and elegant, with eyes that were like a lake under the moon. He was none other than Dwayne Dantès.

Daly Simone's mind went adrift for a moment as she turned her head in thought. She looked at Leonard Mitchell and discovered this black-haired, green-eyed poet was looking at Dwayne Dantès.

"Why did you suddenly file for permission to help me? That member of the Numinous Episcopate will soon be found. You have no lack of tasks to do…" Daly didn't give Leonard a chance to find an excuse. After pausing for a second, she directly asked, "You believe that gentleman from before is problematic?"

Leonard retracted his gaze and fell silent for two seconds.

"Dwayne Dantès has met His Grace before."

He deliberately didn't provide any sort of confirmation or denial, as though the question she had should be posed to Saint Anthony.

In between the lines, he was saying that His Grace didn't mention if there was any problem with Dwayne Dantès. Whether it was a lack of any detection or simply because he didn't say, that was up in the air.

Daly nodded gently as she turned her gaze towards the washroom.

†

On Wednesday morning, Audrey Hall, who had received an invitation, rode on a carriage to arrive at the Saint Samuel Cathedral on Phelps Street.

The Loen Charity Bursary Foundation which was about to be established was situated on 22 Phelps Street. The building belonged to the Church of Evernight, so there was no need to pay any rent.

Before getting off the carriage, Audrey held the invitation and looked out at the scenery. She was filled with anticipation for the future.

She was to become a director and would work on raising funds and with external liaisons.

Chapter 873 - Undetectable Communication

◆ ◆ ◆

After entering 22 Phelps Street, Audrey instantly saw Dwayne Dantès walk out from the side corridor.

This good-looking and gentlemanly gentleman was wearing a black formal suit and holding a gold inlaid cane. He was communicating with the foundation’s staff beside him.

As though sensing Audrey’s gaze, Dwayne Dantès naturally turned his head and looked at the door. Then, his eyes lit up in amazement like he had seen a treasure. Following that, he smiled and gently nodded as a greeting.

Audrey returned with a smile and nod that wasn’t a breach of etiquette in any way. She then followed the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation’s staff that came to escort her and walked up to the second floor.

During this process, although she didn’t look in any other direction, but be it the talent of a woman or her instincts as a Spectator, they told her that Dwayne Dantès’s gaze kept following her figure in secret until the wall beside the staircase blocked his view.

Impeccable acting! He perfectly played out the reaction of what a gentleman who has zero resistance against beauties but remains sufficiently reserved and cultured would do when meeting me for the second time. It’s as though we have only met once at the charity party the last time… It’s exactly as I imagined. He was even able to light up his eyes…

This is a technique that's part of his Beyonder pathway, or is it an ability that he possesses to begin with? I have to say that Gehrman Sparrow, uh—I think it's better to use Mr. Gehrman Sparrow is a professional, no—an excellent actor. Furthermore, he doesn't act in an exaggerated manner like those play actors… Audrey complimented in thought before seeing a few reporters waiting to interview her about the establishment of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation on the second floor.

She wasn't a noble lady who enjoyed having her photo plastered on the papers. As she exchanged a few words with her valet that had accompanied her to inform the reporters that pictures were forbidden by Earl Hall's authority, she went into the VIP lounge with her lady's maid, Annie.

Earl Hall was friends with the owners of a few publishing houses and had made the corresponding investments to acquire quite a bit of their shares. If Audrey so wished, she could exchange some of the estate she received in order to create a sizable publishing house.

In the VIP lounge, Audrey, who didn't find it appropriate to bring her dog, greeted the children of the rich and aristocracy, as well as the Church's clergymen. She habitually found a seat where she could see everyone, and she waited until the opening ceremony began and for the first board of directors meeting to begin.

She surveyed the area and said to the female staff that was in charge of escorting her, "Lovesa, this is my first time joining in the actual operations of a charity organization. I wish to know what we should do."

The lady named Lovesa was still in her twenties. She also had blonde hair with somewhat rough skin and tanned freckles. However, her smile was brilliant, making her rather affectionate.

Upon hearing Audrey's question, Lovesa introduced without holding anything back, "The current plan is to not be too eager in widening the scale. We will start mainly with Backlund and reach deep into the public primary schools, weekday schools, and night schools, promoting the bursary to all the students and let those in need to apply to us.

“After the application, we will organize a committee to do the exact audit. This will not only require us to make some verifications with the government, but we would also walk across the grounds to understand the candidate’s actual situation.

“Once the examination is over, we will disburse the bursary and help the poor who yearn for knowledge to change their fates…”

Just as Lovesa said that, a male voice filled with magnetism interjected, “I have two suggestions:

“The first suggestion is that staff are to be gathered today to head to the different weekday schools, night schools, and public primary schools to promote the bursary. June is the examination period, and it’s a critical period for them to enter institutes of higher learning. If we aren’t efficient enough, there will be many students from poor families that will give up taking the examination because of the lack of funds. Even if they later learn of the existence of the bursary foundation, they won’t be able to withstand the loss of wasting a year. As such, they will lose the chance at changing their fate.

“What we are doing might seem simple, but it completely affects each and every child’s life. Therefore, we need to begin quickly and not waste any time.”

The person who was speaking was none other than Dwayne Dantès who had just entered the lounge. He expressed his thoughts with a warm but serious expression.

Ah right, June is the examination period. Be it entering grammar school or the preparations to enter university, as well as the various technical schools to gain experience in their profession, this is a critical period. Once they give up the entry examinations this time, they will have to wait till next June… I actually forgot this. Ma'am Lovesa and the foundation staff seems to have missed this problem… Mr. Dwayne Dantès actually noticed such a detail and had considered those children who are so close to giving up their dreams… He's actually a person with a gentle heart? Audrey suddenly felt that she had a new take on Dwayne Dantès—on Gehrman Sparrow.

This was what a Spectator had just obtained.

A cold assassin, adventurer on the surface but has a warm heart deep down? Unfortunately, I've only been able to obtain descriptions regarding Gehrman Sparrow's crazy side. I'm unable to find any concrete proof… Audrey blinked as she carefully listened to Dwayne Dantès's suggestions.

"Second suggestion. In regards to the bursaries that are to be disbursed, it's best if it's put in the corresponding bank account. When school fees need to be paid, they can bring their documents to us to apply for a withdrawal. For relatively cheaper board and lodging, things don't have to be that troublesome. They can obtain a fixed sum of money every month or week. This is to prevent the applicant's parents and siblings from spending the money. To a poor family, this is an irresistible temptation. Similarly, an account corresponds to one person. No matter who is withdrawing it, the person has to be present. This can effectively prevent people from suffering from the trial of greed."

Having said that, Klein pressed his palm to his chest and said to Audrey and Lovesa, "Sorry, pardon me for barging into your conversation."

Audrey smiled and said, "Mr. Dantès, your suggestions are excellent. You have opened my eyes to matters that I never considered before.

"The only problem is that what you say to us is meaningless. I'm only listening to Ma'am Lovesa's introduction."

Lovesa smiled and said, "Yes, you should mention all of these at the first board of directors meeting."

Don’t you see me deliberately coming over to convince Miss Audrey first? With Justice’s part in this, I can ensure that there will be no objections from the board of directors. Otherwise, it might easily be tabled or altered by someone using some excuse such as lacking manpower… Klein made an enlightened and regretful expression as he rubbed his palms slightly.

“Look at me! Being all anxious about these matters and forgetting my place! Hahaha! Sometimes, I just wish that things will be made into reality once I’m given the chance.”

Mr. Dwayne Dantès’s acting is a little exaggerated… He should know that he can’t fool me. Oh, he’s doing it deliberately to communicate with me ahead of time without leaving behind any traces. He wants me to support him? Audrey instantly read his thoughts as her smile turned clearer.

Although she hadn’t communicated with The World ahead of time, she believed that she would support this Tarot Club member of hers. However, being able to exchange some ideas ahead of time left her rather happy. This was because she felt that he was treating her as an equal.

After “forgiving” Dwayne Dantès’s recklessness and watching the man walk to the table with beverages and pastries in the lounge, Audrey looked away and said to Lovesa, “What I’m responsible for is to raise funds at different occasions, and to communicate with the government and parliament?”

“That should be a simple matter for you,” Lovesa answered frankly.

This was also why the Church’s charity department didn’t object to Audrey Hall’s participation. In fact, they were very supportive of it.

Audrey nodded in thought and said, “If I have the time to spare, can I join you in visiting the different schools for the promotions, as well as the examination of the candidates?”

Lovesa was originally unwilling to agree, worried that the environment wasn't suitable for Miss Audrey. But when she saw her clear green eyes and took in her request that she couldn't resist, her heart softened. She felt that such kindness shouldn't be stopped. It wasn't to be isolated from the reality of the lower class.

If Miss Audrey sees true misery and ugliness and is still willing to help the pitiful people, she will definitely be able to be of greater use. It will prevent the higher-ups from always formulating unrealistic measures… Lovesa quickly found a convincing reason as she sighed and smiled.

"No problem.

"However, you won't be able to wear such a dress or wear any jewelry."

What do I do with Lie? Turn it into a bracelet and hide it under my sleeves? Audrey thought as she replied with a smile, "Alright."

†

With Miss Audrey Hall's support, the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation's first board of directors meeting ended perfectly after its establishment. Klein returned to 160 Böklund Street in a good mood.

Following his usual habits, he entered his master bedroom at around two to have an afternoon nap.

In his hazy dream, Klein suddenly jolted awake and sensed something.

Someone was attempting to infiltrate his dream!

Who is it now? I'm even getting disturbed in my afternoon naps? As Klein mumbled, he made the dream transform into the half-open room with the balcony.

Then, he saw the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard with his unkempt clothes somersault through the window.

Does this fellow not know how to use the main door? Why is he suddenly here? I should remember to get his contact method… Klein sat in his reclining chair, feeling peeved and amused. He looked at the poet with a leisurely expression and said, “This is an impolite way of visiting me.”

When Leonard heard that, he bowed in a manner that lacked standards.

“Mr. Dantès, I have something I would like to consult you on.”

Consult? That’s a nice attitude. Also, it doesn’t seem to be anything major… Klein secretly tsked as he said, “What’s the matter?”

Leonard grabbed a seat and deliberated before asking, “You were embroiled in Cuarón’s suicide. Who do you think the real murderer is?”

If I wanted to know, I would have thrown out Frank’s mushrooms! However, I can’t say that I’ve no idea at all. That just lowers the impression he has on me… Klein was very accustomed to such situations, so he expertly laughed and, instead of answering, asked, “How were your investigations?”

Chapter 874 - I Didn't Say Anything

◆

Leonard Mitchell clasped his hands together and leaned in slightly.

“We have restored the scene Cuarón saw before his death.

“This didn’t directly show the murderer, but the glass on the oriel window happened to reflect Baron Syndras’s figure.”

After a pause, Leonard added, “This is too simple and unconvincing. A powerful banker and noble at Baron Syndras’s level wouldn’t need to personally take action or be present to watch if he wants someone dead, unless he has some special fetishes.

“And as you know, there are many ways to replicate such scenes, be it via an illusion or disguise.”

When he mentioned “disguise,” he looked up slightly and glanced at Dwayne Dantès. It was as though he was implying that the latter’s present appearance was unlikely his true appearance, just like Gehrman Sparrow and Sherlock Moriarty.

What a simple and direct way of framing someone. It’s really suspect if the murderer behind the scenes really wants to frame Baron Syndras… Hmm, I should process everything from the beginning. First, assuming that I, in other words, Dwayne Dantès, act like an ordinary person… Anyway, I won’t mention the conclusion and only raise questions to guide his train of thought. If the final answer isn’t right, that must be because my dear poet misinterpreted it and was unable to figure out what I was getting at… Klein smiled as he raised his porcelain cup and took a sip of black tea.

“Let’s not consider this problem first. If the person who wasn’t embroiled in this matter wasn’t me, how would the case have developed?”

Leonard raised his clasped hands slightly as he tapped his index finger.

“As a suspect, Dwayne Dantès would be remanded at the police station, but his butler, servants, neighbors, and friends will be able to testify that he has never made contact with Cuarón’s family. Hence, the testimonies from both sides will contradict strongly. The police will be unable to handle it and request the Nighthawks to intervene.

“Using mediumship means, we will see the scene Cuarón had before committing suicide; thus, obtaining Baron Syndras’s figure…”

As he spoke, Leonard suddenly fell silent. After a few minutes, he continued speaking under Dwayne Dantès’s smiling gaze.

“Regardless of the unconvincing, odd, and simplistic nature of the clue involving Baron Syndras, we will follow protocol and make contact with him and begin the relevant investigations… And this will lead to certain problems related to him being noticed by us?

“Baron Syndras is involved in matters involving the Beyonder domain, so he can’t stand up to further scrutiny from the Nighthawks?”

The more Leonard spoke, the more certain he became. It was as though he had figured out the mastermind’s line of thought.

He, or they, might not care if their trap is seen through. As long as they get the Nighthawks to do a routine investigation on him, their goal will be achieved. This is because Baron Syndras hides a rather serious and easily discoverable problem!

Yes, that’s the same conclusion I have. This is actually closer to sounding the alarms by providing a tip-off, but it’s more mild. It looks like a trap that will make the Nighthawks definitely investigate things while hiding their existence… Of course, I won't directly acknowledge your guess. Wouldn't it be awkward if I was actually wrong? Klein crossed his right leg over his left and laughed.

"Baron Syndras, who has been alerted, definitely won't show any problems now."

Leonard slowly nodded and said as though explaining to himself, "This baron's experiences are rather legendary. He has been pushed to the brink of bankruptcy a few times, but he managed to turn the tide and ended up reaching a new height.

"Perhaps, in one of these instances, he had sold his soul to the devil, an evil god, or some other secret existence out of desperation?

This story is quite reasonably crafted… Klein didn't comment on the accuracy of Leonard's guess before asking, "On the other hand, how would the Nighthawks treat the real murderer that led to Cuarón's suicide?"

Leonard temporarily put aside all his previous thoughts, and he began following the train of thought based on an "ordinary development."

"The designed trap is too crude. The cuing, guidance, and memory implants were done in an insufficiently concealed and mild manner. It's easy for people to discover problems. Therefore, it's unlikely to be done by Mid- or High-Sequence Beyonders from the Spectator pathway. It looks more like it was done by a Beyonder from another pathway who relied on a mystical item to pose as a Spectator…"

Before he finished his sentence, Leonard fell into silence again; his thoughts a mystery.

Klein maintained his faint smile as he calmly looked at the poet. It was as though he had everything under control, but he wasn't going to say a thing. Everything depended on what Leonard figured out.

This is very similar to what Old Man said from before… Is it really done by some Mid- or High-Sequence Beyonder from the Spectator pathway? His seemingly crude and flawed setup was actually a precise consideration of everyone's reaction. Everyone's response at every step of the way was taken into consideration, with the only mistake stemming from Dwayne Dantès's experience and wisdom? Leonard felt that he had already figured out the truth as he got up and coughed gently.

"Thank you for your advice."

Klein immediately chortled and said, "I didn't say anything."

Without waiting for Leonard's response, he said, "Your former colleague got me to ask you how he should inform you if he were to discover traces of Ince Zangwill."

Leonard, who had planned on getting up to bid farewell, sat back down. Colored with a complicated expression, he said after more than ten seconds of silence, "Pass the information in the form of a letter to 7 Pinster Street."

This means that he won't be leaving Backlund anytime soon? Or is it that no matter how far he goes to carry out missions, he will have the means to monitor 7 Pinster Street and read the letter remotely? It might be the latter assumption. A Marauder pathway's angel definitely has many magical secret techniques. Leonard can definitely use one of them… I can't ask, or else it will lower Dwayne Dantès's level and destroy my setting… Klein wore an unperturbed expression as he said with a smile, "I'll inform him."

Leonard didn't immediately leave as he opened his mouth, paused, and asked, "If I wish to contact him, how should I do it?"

His green eyes were deep as they spoke volumes when he asked.

Klein was already prepared, so he said with a smile, "The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the messenger that belongs to Gehrman Sparrow.

“You can ask Pallez about the exact ritual if you aren’t too sure.”

Leonard knew that Gehrman Sparrow was Sherlock Moriarty who was also Klein Moretti. He nodded indiscernibly and stood up.

“Thank you for informing me. Please pardon me for my intrusion.”

With that said, he retreated to the door, opened it, and left the dream.

Hey, you left just like that? As a Nightmare, or as a former Nightmare, shouldn’t you consider how there might be problems with your memory? You remembered it just from hearing it once? You aren’t putting enough weight on this matter! Klein couldn’t help but lampoon when he saw Leonard’s figure disappear.

He shook his head in exasperation, ended his afternoon nap, and began busying himself over the matter regarding West Balam.

†

On the Golden Dream, Danitz, who had finally finished his mission, drank some iced light beer because of the recent hot weather.

If it wasn’t because the creation of ice needed Beyonder powers, and that there wasn’t much to go around, he felt that he could finish half a bucket of ice in one go.

“That’s what I call life!” Danitz guzzled the remaining liquid in his cup.

At this moment, he saw grayish-white fog appear before him as Gehrman Sparrow’s voice began echoing in his ears:

“…Please inform Danitz that he is to immediately head to West Balam. Figure out the situation of the areas under the control of the two native generals, Maysanchez and Katamia. He should take special note of any signs of Rose School of Thought activity…"

H-head to West Balam? With a cup in hand, Danitz stammered Gehrman Sparrow's request repeatedly.

He had once headed there with the Golden Dream crew to seek out treasure. He had also obtained rather detailed intel from his captain; therefore, he knew how chaotic and dangerous West Balam was.

Furthermore, I have to go alone! Danitz uttered a sound as he found his future bleak.

Primitive forests with all kinds of hidden and terrifying creatures, native tribes who believed in Death and had all sorts of peculiarities, paths filled with bandits and rebel armies, villages with wraiths and shadows haunting them, and cities that had gunfights or even Beyonder battles surfaced in his mind.

No, I have to say no to Gehrman Sparrow. Say no… He should at least send me a helper! Eh… Ordinary people can survive in West Balam and become rich, having their own manors. This means that it's not as horrifying as I imagine it to be. I'm just frightening myself… Besides, Gehrman Sparrow just requested me to figure out the situation, not to contact anyone… Danitz quickly forced a smile and requested Mr. Fool to inform Gehrman Sparrow that he would immediately take action.

Then, following Gehrman Sparrow's instructions, he set up a bestowment ritual to pray to Mr. Fool.

When the ritual came to an end, he saw an illusory door open. A dark golden Sunbird-shaped brooch flew out, landing on the altar.

Sun Brooch!

In the Southern Continent, in a kingdom once ruled by Death, the Sun pathway was one of the most effective Beyonder pathways!

Directly giving me such a precious item… It's not bad working for

Gehrman Sparrow… However, he said something about it being borrowed? Danitz picked up the brooch and felt his surroundings turn hot and humid.

†

After handing out a mission to Danitz, Klein was just about to open the door to instruct Richardson to get him a cup of iced water when he felt his spiritual perception trigger.

Immediately, he activated his Spirit Vision and saw Reinette Tinekerr walk out of the void. She held the four blonde, red-eyed heads in her hand, with one of them having a letter in its mouth.

Who's it from? Leonard? Klein reached out his right hand in suspicion.

Chapter 875 - Mummy

◆

7 Pinster Street. Leonard Mitchell came to his desk and unfolded a piece of paper.

He then picked up a fountain pen and lowered his wrist in preparation to write.

However, just as he dipped a dark blue spot onto the paper, his fountain pen paused. He attempted to move his wrist in order to write a few times, but all his attempts ended up stopping due to hesitation.

He raised his wrist, lowered the fountain pen, and repeated this action again and again. Finally, he froze his wrist in midair.

Pa! Leonard threw down his fountain pen, crumpled the piece of paper, and accurately threw it into the trash can.

†

At 160 Böklund Street, Klein received a thin letter from one of Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr’s heads.

He felt the weight in his hands and only when his spiritual intuition didn’t send him any warnings did he tear it open and retrieve the letter inside.

There was only one page, and on it were two lines of text written in neat, beautiful handwriting:

“I have something that will require your help. Let’s discuss it in detail, face-to-face.

“Sharron”

So it’s Miss Sharron… Klein had his questions answered as he took out a gold coin and did a simple divination in front of Reinette Tinekerr. Then, he took out another piece of paper and wrote one word:

“Tonight.”

After he folded the letter, he asked Miss Messenger as he handed it to her, “Can you still locate her?”

If it wasn’t possible, he planned on giving her Sharron’s mailing address.

Hillston Borough, 126 Garde Street, Ma’am Maryam.

“Yes…” One of Reinette Tinekerr’s blonde, red-eyed heads gave an answer.

The head then opened its mouth and bit down on the letter.

After Miss Messenger vanished from the room, Klein immediately held a ritual, planning to bring Creeping Hunger back to the real world from above the gray fog. He then planned on Traveling to the various archipelagos in search of a lucky pirate.

Creeping Hunger hadn’t been sealed yet, so it still required feeding once a day. All Klein could do was barely use it, feeding it whenever he needed to use it. He would then throw it back above the gray fog when the next feeding time was at hand. He wasn’t planning on making up for the difference.

If Creeping Hunger dares to make a fuss about it, I’ll feed it mushrooms! After ending the ritual and clearing up the scene, Klein wore the thin human-skinned glove, turning his body translucent until he vanished from his spot.

†

He had his dinner, and after waiting for Creeping Hunger to finish its howling above the gray fog, Klein went to retrieve it by using the excuse of having an upset stomach to enter the bathroom. He then used this opportunity to Teleport to the area outside the Bravehearts Bar in the Backlund Bridge area.

During this process, he had already changed his appearance, turning into the black-haired, mustached, and bespectacled detective, Sherlock Moriarty.

Bending his back and rolling up his pant legs, Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh. He lowered his hat and nudged open the heavy wooden door to step into the bar.

After asking the bartender, he held a cup of Southville beer and went to Billiard Room 3 where he knocked on the locked door.

Knock! Knock! Knock! Amidst the rhythmic knock, the door creaked open a tiny gap.

The red-eyed Ian peeped his head out before breaking out into a smile.

“Sir, please come on in.”

As the weather was turning warm, he no longer wore his old coat. Instead, he wore a simple linen shirt.

Klein nodded with a smile and quickly entered the billiard room where he took in the surroundings almost instantly.

Maric, with his hair a little messy, was wearing a white shirt, black vest, and black pants. He was holding onto a cue stick and had his back bent to play billiards.

Perhaps having a deep impression of causing chaos for Sherlock Moriarty, he didn’t summon his zombies to play cards with him.

"Long time no see," Klein greeted first.

Meanwhile, Sharron, with her small black bonnet and black, regal gown, appeared beside the billiard table, sitting on a high stool.

"Good evening, Ma'am." Klein moved his gaze over and bowed with a smile.

Sharron seemed to float up as she stood up before raising the hem of her skirt to do a slight bow as a polite response. As for Maric, he lowered his cue stick and said in a gruff voice, "From the looks of it, you're still in Backlund."

His face was as pale as ever, but the evil look in his brown eyes had lessened significantly. It seemed to be evidence of the effective temperance he had in recent times.

It was apparent that his acquisition of the Scarlet Lunar Corona prevented him from almost breaking down on every full moon, so much so that he didn't need to frequently switch to new types of sedatives.

Klein didn't directly answer Maric. Instead, he walked to the billiard table and put down his beer. Smiling, he said, "I'm very sorry. I was planning to sell a Wraith Beyonder characteristic to you, but unfortunately it was lost."

Sharron's blue eyes didn't move, nor did she probe for a reason. All she asked was a simple, "Are you alright?"

She knew that the Wraith Beyonder characteristic Sherlock Moriarty mentioned belonged to Admiral of Blood Senor. And he was also Sherlock Moriarty's marionette. By losing the Wraith Beyonder characteristic, it also meant the loss or destruction of his marionette. This was a significant loss for such a Beyonder.

"I'm still alright. At least I didn't suffer any harm," Klein said with a sighing smile.

"No wonder I didn't see Senor this time…" Maric muttered in enlightenment.

Maric and Miss Sharron don't seem too bothered about the lack of that Wraith Beyonder characteristic… They have other means or methods to acquire one? Klein sharply grasped this point and switched to asking, "Is there something this time?"

Maric immediately glanced at Ian. The staid teenager didn't ask further as he quickly left the billiard room and closed the door.

Sharron's doll-like face didn't show any emotion as she allowed Maric to speak.

"Tomorrow, there will be a ship from the Southern Continent arriving in Pritz Harbor. It is intimately tied to the Loen army.

"This ship carries with it treasure and relics plundered from the Star Highlands, Paz Valley, and Haagenti Plains. Among them is a mummy. It's the 19th king of the ancient Haagenti Plains, Tutanssess II.

"The Southern Continent's original language didn't stem from ancient Feysacian. It had its own structure. In the ancient highlander language, 'King' also has the special term, 'Kadiev.' It was translated by Emperor Roselle as Pharaoh. It's a mystery what he was thinking. Also, 'Mummy' was named by him too. In short, the meaning of Pharaoh is the son of God, king of humans.

"Tutanssess II was once a High-Sequence Beyonder. However; after his death, the corresponding characteristic was taken away, leaving only his corpse behind to be made into a mummy.

"To other Beyonders, this is a material filled with spirituality, an excellent choice for creating a zombie. But to us, it has another meaning, a very important meaning. Our goal this time is to obtain that Tutanssess II mummy."

Another meaning? The corpse of a High-Sequence Beyonder without any Beyonder characteristic. Apart from using it as a material, there's another meaning to it? Klein's heart stirred as he suddenly thought of Ma'am Hermit's request to purchase a drop of Mythical Creature blood.

Could it be the ritual requirement to go from Sequence 5 Wraith to Sequence 4 Puppet? Miss Sharron already has the formula and has digested the Wraith potion? From the way she acts, she's practically acting as a Wraith all the time. Who knows, she might've digested it a long time ago… However, when we were in the underground ruin talking to the evil spirit, it was evident that she didn't possess the Puppet potion formula. Yes, everyone has their own circles. It's not strange for her to be able to obtain it… Klein swept his gaze at Sharron while in thought, but he failed to discover any obvious changes from before. She was still more like a doll than a living person. However, she didn't show any signs of being even darker and creepier.

Sharron silently sat there and watched Sherlock Moriarty and Maric intently, listening into their conversation.

"If it's just a High-Sequence mummy without a Beyonder characteristic, the level of protection can't be too high. Just the two of you shouldn't find it difficult to snatch it away." Klein raised a suspicion.

From his point of view, a Sequence 5 Beyonder could be considered quite a powerhouse. Unless the ship had a demigod escorting it, it was very difficult for Beyonders at the same level to put up any effective resistance if her target was solely a mummy. After all, there were too many items the Beyonder guards had to look out for. Furthermore, they might be scattered in different cabins due to the different means of storage.

This time, it was Sharron's turn to provide the explanation. She used her succinct manner of speech as usual.

"We're worried that it's a trap the Rose School of Thought is using to target us.

“If there’s nothing, 1,000 pounds. If there’s something, we will be in charge of drawing attention while you take away the mummy. Depending on the level of danger, it will range from 5,000 to 10,000 pounds.”

I see… Klein didn’t immediately reply as he thought and asked, “Do you know of Spirit World Plunderers?”

A Wraith was also a type of Beyonder who could effectively move through the spirit world.

Sharron nodded slightly and said, “I can use the cash and the relevant information about Spirit World Plunderers as payment.”

Klein tersely acknowledged.

“I’ll consider it. I’ll write to you before midnight.”

As an excellent Seer, he would head above the gray fog to confirm the level of danger regardless of what it was. However, he could confirm that this was definitely not a trap targeted at him since he had no need for a mummy.

“Alright,” Sharron replied with a deadpan expression.

Klein didn’t immediately bid them farewell as he walked to the door and informed Ian to enter. He then asked, “Are there any news worth taking note of recently?”

Ian thought for a moment and mentioned pieces of information that were relatively important.

“…Someone is trying to find out about the organization that believes in The Fool…”

Klein was somewhat surprised as he asked with a smile, “A young man with black hair and green eyes?”

He suspected that it was Leonard Mitchell.

Ian shook his head.

“No, black hair and black eyes.”

Some mister from the Aurora Order? Klein considered for a moment before asking, “Can you draw who it is?”

“…” Ian was taken aback before he said in a self-deprecating manner. “You might never be able to recognize him if that’s the case.”

At this moment, Sharron said, “I can help you.”

“Alright.” Ian first heaved a sigh of relief before following the instructions to prepare a rather simple ritual.

Then, his body trembled as he drew a sketch while being possessed by a Wraith:

It was a young man with curly black hair, black eyes, a wide forehead, and a thin face while wearing a monocle.

Amon!

Blasphemer Amon!

Chapter 876 - Art of Diverting Trouble

◆

Amon!

Klein’s pupils constricted, and although he looked normal on the surface, he tensed up significantly with his heart churning with waves of alarm.

Although he had kept using Amon to scare the grandpa in Leonard’s body, as well as the Marauder pathway demigod beside Hazel, he was only using the name. He never expected that this Blasphemer, a King of Angels, would arrive in Backlund so quickly. “He” was even looking for the organization that believed in The Fool!

In fact, although it’s surprising, it’s understandable. With Backlund having an angel and demigod of the Marauder pathway, it’s only a matter of time before Amon arrives based on the law of Beyonder characteristics convergence… The only problem is that “He” has been searching for something in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for so many years, so it’s unlikely he would suddenly abandon his search. Besides, “His” mausoleum in the outskirts of Backlund has been destroyed by the Machinery Hivemind, making it difficult for “Him” to come and go as he pleases… Therefore, this isn’t “His” main body, but an avatar? An avatar that exists in the Northern Continent? Hmm, an angel of the Marauder pathway should be good at using Worms of Time to create avatars. Amon must be stronger than “Them”… Klein’s thoughts raced as fast as lightning as he gradually came to a certain conclusion.

At times, he even suspected that the Mythical Creature of the Marauder pathway was a bunch of Worms of Time that combined together via a certain method.

As a Marauder pathway's King of Angels before the Cataclysm, Amon definitely knows what the name "The Fool" means and can detect the corresponding aura… "He" might even wish to steal control over the gray fog… "He" came here for The Fool this time. This is really going to be a headache… After his initial shock, Klein gradually composed himself.

What he was most afraid of now was that he would end up encountering Blasphemer Amon because of the law of Beyonder characteristics convergence. And Amon was clearly able to detect his uniqueness. When that happens, it might not even cause a stir before the so-called The Fool had to consider if he could be resurrected. After all, this was a King of Angels, an existence just second to a true god. Furthermore, the Marauder pathway was always known for their deceit and concealment. Amon wasn't necessarily afraid to take action, even in Backlund. Perhaps stealing the fate of others was a strength of "His."

From the looks of it, temporarily leaving Backlund to head for West Balam might not be a bad choice… Anyway, the biggest problem stems from myself. If I had already advanced and become a Bizarro Sorcerer, I'll be able to hide the gray fog's aura. Even if I encounter Amon, I won't have to be afraid of exposing anything… Klein drew a silent breath as he once again felt a sense of urgency.

He needed to quickly push open the door to Sequence 4, change his existence, and become a demigod!

For this, he needed to work harder, be it making another marionette, acting at a deeper level to speed up his digestion, or gathering the corresponding ingredients!

Phew… Backlund really is a terrifying place. If Ouroboros hasn't left, or if he has already returned, just the ones I know would number four, no—five angels, including two Kings of Angels! I haven't included the royal family and military who use Backlund as their base. I haven't included the underground evil spirit whose whereabouts are unknown. A former King of Angels that fused with the wills of two other angels… If the Rose School of Thought's Abomination Suah comes in pursuit of Gehrman Sparrow, that would really be a bustle. This would be nothing compared to the demigod-level battle outside Bayam City… Klein looked at the sketch drawn by Ian as he vaguely shook his head.

"Okay, got it."

He shook his head. To Ian and Maric, he had said so because he didn't know the monocled man, but in fact, he was expressing his exasperation.

"I'll have to leave. I'll reply to you before midnight." Klein took off his hat and bowed, slowly walking out of the billiard room. He then teleported back to 160 Böklund Street from a secluded alley outside the Bravehearts Bar.

Inside his master bedroom, the first thing he considered wasn't Miss Sharron's and Maric's request, but on how he was to deal with the problems that Amon brought with "Him".

In such aspects, being rather experienced, he quickly came up with an idea.

It was to find something for Amon to do to draw "His" attention away!

As for what that was, it was definitely something "He" found irresistible, something that he would definitely be interested in; for example, an angel from the Marauder pathway, Pallez Zoroast!

Perhaps this was key to Amon's ability to become a Sequence 0 true god. It would be something far more important than finding the organization that believed in The Fool.

Of course, Klein definitely wouldn't directly sell out Leonard's grandpa, because "He" had yet to show any ill intent to date.

His thoughts were simple. It was to inform this matter to Pallez Zoroast that Amon was already in Backlund. He wanted to see the reaction of the angel who had survived since the Fourth Epoch; then, he would follow up based on the situation.

If that grandpa is helpless against Amon who's likely only an avatar, he can only get Leonard to use the excuse of a mission to leave Backlund to hide from Amon. As for me, I'll have to bring forward my trip to West Balam. I'll just say that it has something important to do with my network. I'll secretly teleport back for the placenta blood when Snake of Fate Will Auceptin is born… Klein arrived at a decision as he took out a piece of paper and wrote:

"Amon has arrived."

Folding the letter and putting it into an envelope, Klein took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew hard.

When Reinette Tinekerr appeared, he took out a gold coin from his pocket and pressed it on the envelope.

This was one of the ten gold coins that he had gotten Richardson to exchange for him in the afternoon. It was to maintain his image of Dwayne Dantès to being equal to someone at the level of Pallez Zoroast. Even when Klein informed Leonard Mitchell of the method of contact, he didn't inform him that the payment of a gold coin was needed.

This shows that face is something you buy with money… As Klein sighed, he said to Miss Messenger who was wearing a dark, complicated dress.

"Send the letter to 7 Pinster Street. Oh, just throw it into the mailbox. There's no need to send it to the addressee."

As he wasn't certain of Pallez Zoroast's true intentions and character, Klein wished to hide more of his trump cards in front of "Him"; therefore, before Leonard wrote to Klein Moretti, he had no plans on letting the poet see Miss Messenger.

The blonde, red-eyed head in Reinette Tinekerr's left hand was raised up as it sucked the letter and gold coin into its mouth. However, she didn't immediately disappear. Instead, she floated at her spot, looking at Klein silently with all eight eyes.

"What's wrong?" Klein was taken aback before coming up with a guess. He asked with an odd expression, "You don't know where 7 Pinster Street is?"

Only then did he recall that a messenger's delivery of letters depended on their mysticism-based location. It was based on the person they contracted with and people they had formerly delivered letters to. Therefore, once the latter left a detectable range, the messenger would not be able to find them.

Upon hearing Klein's question, two of Reinette Tinekerr's heads nodded in unison, indicating that she didn't know.

Klein immediately coughed lightly, pulled out the drawer, and took out a map of Backlund. He then used a fountain pen to circle out North Borough. Following that, he circled Pinster Street.

"When you're here, you will see the unit number on the buildings." Klein folded the map and handed it over.

The head in Reinette Tinekerr's right hand immediately opened its mouth and bit down on the map. Then, her figure phased away and entered the spirit world.

Upon seeing this, Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He turned and walked out of his master bedroom and headed for the half-open room with the balcony to read the papers and magazines.

Late into the night, he took four steps counterclockwise before soaking into the bathtub and entering the mysterious space above the gray fog.

"Helping Sharron and Maric obtain the Tutanssess II mummy is dangerous." Klein took off the topaz pendant on his left wrist and let it hang to perform a divination.

This time, the spirit pendulum rotated clockwise with a weak amplitude and relatively slow frequency.

This means that the danger isn't too great… Furthermore, even if it's a trap targeted at Miss Sharron and Maric, there's no need for the present me to be too afraid… Klein beckoned with his hand as he made a translucent miniature black crystal card fly to him.

This was the Fate Siphon charm.

Klein had used a Worm of Time to create a demigod-level high-level charm!

Right on the heels of that, he summoned Creeping Hunger and the Sea God Scepter. Wearing the former, he picked up the latter and recorded Lightning Storm and Hurricane.

The mutated and upgraded Creeping Hunger could use Mr. X's soul and characteristic to record two demigod-level Beyonder powers that didn't exceed Sequence 3. With this, Klein no longer needed to borrow Leymano's Travels anymore. Furthermore, it was more convenient. After all, flipping a spellbook affected his use of Death Knell and the Fate Siphon charm, unless he grew another two hands.

After making his preparations, Klein returned to the real world, pulled out a piece of paper and wrote simply:

"Exact time, location, and plan."

†

At 1 a.m., Leonard, who had slept two hours, woke up energetically. He prepared to leave 7 Pinster Street and head for the Saint Samuel

Cathedral's basement.

Just as he stepped out the door, he suddenly had his spiritual intuition trigger before he subconsciously cast his gaze to the side.

A look of puzzlement flashed in his eyes as he walked over and opened the mailbox.

During dinner, he had cleared the newspapers, bills, and letters inside. Typically, there wouldn't be any items in the mailbox until daybreak. After all, the mailmen would've clocked off work and returned home. However, at this moment, there was a thin letter waiting silently at the bottom of the mailbox.

"Old Man, you didn't inform me of a new letter," Leonard said softly as he picked up the letter.

The slightly aged voice in his mind replied, "The person didn't enter."

Leonard knew that Old Man's senses were limited to his body; hence, he didn't speak further. He tore open the envelope and took out the letter, flicking it flat.

The letter was mostly empty with just one short line:

"Amon has arrived."

Amon has arrived… Leonard's pupils dilated immediately.

At the same time, he heard the Parasite in him gasp for the first time.

Chapter 877 - Whose Trap

◆

Towards Amon, Leonard didn’t have a strong, direct impression of him. All he knew was that it was the most feared enemy of the Parasite in his body. “He” was the culprit that left this mysterious and powerful Old Man injured to this day. Therefore, he quickly calmed down and asked with a suppressed voice, “What do we do now?”

In his mind, the slightly-aged voice sounded after three seconds.

“The one that came probably isn’t Amon’s actual body but one of ‘His’ avatars.”

“He”… Indeed, Blasphemer Amon is an angel, and probably a Sequence 1 angel. After all, Old Man is suspected to be a Grounded Angel… As Leonard absorbed the information to verify his theories, he listened to Pallez Zoroast continue, “If Amon’s actual body appears in Backlund, it might very well cause a deity’s descent.”

A deity’s descent? How many years has it been since something like this happened? Since the Fifth Epoch, occurrences like these were legends that were recorded in the internal canon. They had never publicly happened before! Could this mean that, even among Sequence 1s, Amon is one of the most powerful existences? It’s no wonder “He” is called a Blasphemer… In just a few words, Leonard came to realize how terrifying the angel named Amon was.

Standing in front of the mailbox, his thoughts wandered when he suddenly had an idea. He hurriedly suppressed his voice and said, “Since Amon has such importance placed on him by the deities, shouldn't we try to find a way to inform the Church of the news of 'His' appearance in Backlund…"

From Leonard's point of view, The Church of Evernight and Storm, which was born in an earlier epoch and existed through the entire Fourth Epoch, had rich experience in resisting angels. They were the best choice at dealing with Amon.

In his mind, Pallez Zoroast chortled.

"It's useless. It might even be something Amon wishes to accomplish.

"To 'Him,' it's just a loss of an avatar. It will just waste a bit of his strength but not deal 'Him' any actual harm. And 'He' can use the death of 'His' avatar to see the corresponding changes in fate. From that, he will be able to see the source of the stir or the creation of the waves. Although this doesn't allow 'Him' to directly lock onto you and me, he will be able to greatly reduce the circle, creating the conditions for 'His' actual body to deal a lethal blow.

"Besides, do you think there will only be one avatar of Amon in Backlund?

"Based on 'His' habits and style, 'He' might only have one avatar that 'He' doesn't hide, but in fact, surrounding this 'beacon' are several, dozens, or even more than a hundred avatars.

"When we attempt to eliminate the one that's out in the open, it might very well be the case that a few, dozens, or more than a hundred Amons will appear from every spot. 'He' could be a passerby, a bird on the roof, an ant on the ground, and 'He' could also be an insect in wooden logs, microbes in the air. One who isn't a demigod wouldn't notice it even if 'His' avatar invades their bodies…"

As he listened to Old Man's detailed description, Leonard felt a chill run through his back. He suddenly had a feeling that the surrounding air was filled with countless Amons.

“You’re afraid now?” Pallez Zoroast chuckled. “If you understand how Amon can steal away your fate without showing any anomalies, you will be even more terrified.”

“What do you mean by stealing away my fate?” Leonard asked, feeling wary and puzzled.

Pallez’s old voice sighed.

“‘He’ will follow you back. Then, you’ll discover that your parents will be making ‘Him’ their son. Your wife will view ‘Him’ as her husband. Your child will treat ‘Him’ as their father. Your friends, everyone you know, will treat ‘Him’ as you. And you will be the unlucky one. You will lose all connection with the real world and slowly die.”

“…Would such a theft be permanent?” Leonard couldn’t help but draw a gasp.

Pallez Zoroast sniggered.

“Before a thief is caught, will he volunteer to return what he stole?

“Unless ‘He’ has had enough fun with it.”

Leonard instantly fell silent. He felt that an enemy at Amon’s level was no longer someone one could defend themselves against but was completely unfathomable.

After a few seconds, he asked, hardly being able to hide his hoarse voice, “Then what do we do?”

He didn’t share his own thoughts because they were most likely unpragmatic.

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a moment before saying, “Let’s watch and see.”

†

Inside the Bravehearts Bar.

Maric was waiting at Billiard Room 3 according to the agreement.

Since Sherlock Moriarty had agreed to provide help, discussing the operation's details face-to-face was necessary.

It wasn't something that could be figured out via an exchange of letters.

Guzzling down a mouthful of beer, Maric raised his hand to comb his hair. His pale face was drained of the color of blood. The demented look on his face was a lot less than before.

At this moment, his heart stirred. He looked up to the side and saw a figure in a top hat and formal suit outlined quickly. It was none other than Sherlock Moriarty.

Teleport? Maric's heart palpitated as his pupils constricted. He instinctively raised his level of wariness.

This wasn't because he didn't trust Sherlock Moriarty, but a natural reaction for a creature when facing a higher existence on the food chain.

At the same time, he noticed through the corner of his eye that Sharron's doll-like figure had appeared on the high stool.

Klein pressed down his hat and bowed at the two. He said with a smile, "What I'm most concerned about is the amount of intel you have.

"If there's sufficient intel, the chances of success will be higher and the risks lower.

"Let me raise a simple example. Do you believe that Tutanssess II's mummy doesn't have any problems? Can you confirm which coffin it is in? If you can, I can teleport over before the guards react, traveling with it through the spirit world. That way, the problem will be resolved."

Just as Maric tried recalling, he heard Sharron say in a calm tone, "It can be confirmed which coffin it is, but we cannot confirm if there are any problems with it.”

Klein nodded and pulled a chair over to sit.

“Apart from that, what else do you know?”

Sharron’s blue eyes moved slightly.

“It might be a trap by the Rose School of Thought, or it might be a trap by the Loen military.”

You didn’t mention the second guess previously… That’s right, before obtaining any confirmation of cooperating together, even I wouldn’t divulge too much… Klein thought as he questioned, targeting the latter point.

“A trap meant for the Rose School of Thought?”

Maric answered this time. He said in detail, “In the ancient Highlands Kingdom, creating a mummy was the tradition for an esteemed person. It’s considered sacred, and the Pharaoh’s mummy is not something to be blasphemed against. Back then, before the Loen, Intis, and Feynapotter allied forces attacked this kingdom, the Pharaoh’s descendants had moved the most important batch of mummies, including the remains of the Pharaohs of past dynasties.

“This time, one of the Highlands’ rebel armies had their secret base stormed. The Loen army found the Tutanssess II mummy at the lowest level and plan on delivering it to Backlund to hand it to an unknown military organization for research.

“To the Pharaoh’s descendants, this is an insult of the greatest order. They have a sufficient motive to snatch Tutanssess II’s mummy back. And among these descendants, there’s a demigod named Mahmosi. He’s both one of the main leaders of the rebel army and is also an important member of the Rose School of Thought. He’s the student of Abomination Suah.”

Klein nodded slightly and answered, “That is to say that Tutanssess II’s mummy might be bait for the Loen army to fish out Mahmosi. Of course, this doesn’t exclude the possibility that the Rose School of Thought is deliberately sacrificing a Pharaoh’s remains to eliminate you.”

He originally wanted to say that as a Sequence 6 and 5, there was no need for the Rose School of Thought to go to such an extent. But when he recalled that the present main faction of the Rose School of Thought was “indulgence,” with them not holding back when it came to their desire for revenge, he believed that he couldn’t make a decision using an ordinary person’s point of view.

Furthermore, Miss Sharron and Maric were able to escape the Mother Tree of Desire’s restrictions and successfully escape from the Rose School of Thought. Apart from luck, they might have someone supporting them in secret… If there is such a person, that person is definitely a target the Rose School of Thought wants to be uprooted… Klein’s mind naturally formulated these thoughts, but he didn’t say it out loud.

“Yes,” Maric said as he rubbed the corners of his eyes. The large amount of words he said had made him feel perturbed both in mind and desire.

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “If it’s the former, the situation might be more troublesome than I imagined.

“To deal with a demigod, a demigod with companions, the Loen army will have at least two Beyonders at the same combat level as Mahmosi lying in ambush. Apart from that, they will definitely have some redundancies to prevent any accidents. For example, they will prepare a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. In short, if this isn’t near Backlund or made into a joint operation with the three Churches, it might not be possible to so easily set up such a trap.”

Sharron’s chin moved slightly as she nodded in agreement with Sherlock Moriarty’s judgment.

Klein didn’t emphasize the difficulty as he said, “Therefore, we have to obtain more accurate and detailed intel. From that, we can make more targeted preparations. This will allow us to achieve our goals.”

Without waiting for Sharron and Maric to say a word, he added, “I know of a secret existence for magic mirror divination. ‘He’ strictly adheres to a principle of reciprocity. If you do not mind your privacy or actions that will bring about intense humiliation, you can obtain answers to many questions from ‘Him.’

“Are you willing to try?

“I’ll perform the summoning.”

In dark divination, whoever did the summoning typically suffered the greatest risk.

“What happens if I refuse to divulge my private matters or reject doing such actions?” Maric asked with narrowed eyes.

Klein sincerely replied, “You’ll suffer a lightning strike, causing quite significant damage.”

Lightning strike… Maric originally believed that with a Zombie’s toughness, it wasn’t too big a problem to suffer any direct damage, but he had never expected it to be lightning which was relatively strong against the dead.

He hesitated for a moment and glanced at Sharron. After receiving an affirmative nod, he exhaled and said, “Okay.”

Klein didn’t speak further. He took out a piece of paper from his pocket as he instructed, “Prepare a mirror.”

Just as he said that, a palm-sized makeup mirror appeared on the billiard table.

A regal-styled makeup mirror… Klein glanced at it and drew a symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying.

Chapter 878 - Arrodes's Question

◆

With Klein finishing his final stroke, the lights in Billiard Room 3 dimmed.

On the dainty makeup mirror, aqueous patterns rippled out before turning into a dark scene.

Immediately, one bloody word after another appeared:

“Raise your questions.”

This scene was filled with a sense of supernatural horror. Even though standing there was a Wraith and a Zombie, they couldn’t help but feel overwhelmed as they momentarily didn’t dare say a word.

Only Klein continued wearing a smile as though he was accustomed to all of this.

He had previously exhorted Arrodes to not raise questions that were too difficult or private, and also to not act like a servant. If it wasn’t because Sharron and Maric could ask much more targeted questions as a result of understanding the situation better, Klein was more inclined to handling it himself and not exposing the reality of having such a “helper.”

After a few seconds of silence, Maric took two steps forward, came to the billiard table, and opened his mouth.

At this moment, Sharron gentle but emotionless voice sounded:

"I'll ask the questions."

Without waiting for Maric to answer, she floated up into a standing position and looked at the mirror.

"Is the Tutanssess II mummy a trap that the Loen military set up to target the Rose School of Thought?"

The mirror's blood-red words melted away and slid down, dragging away the stains, barely leaving two words behind which wriggled to form:

"That's right."

It is indeed a trap the Loen military set up for the Rose School of Thought. We can preliminary eliminate the situation that it's a plot the Rose School of Thought has to target Miss Sharron and Maric. After all, the risk involved exceeds the value of a Sequence 5 and 6 combined. Even if the Rose School of Thought can't curb their desire for revenge, they wouldn't be this crazy; unless, they were already planning on dealing with the Loen military and decided to involve this matter as well. If that's the case, the best place to have such a matter unfold would be in the Southern Continent or at sea, and not somewhere in the vicinity of Backlund. Who knows what kind of terrifying fellows are hidden here… Amidst his thoughts, Klein saw the surface of the mirror turn dark again as new blood-colored words appeared:

"Based on the principle of reciprocity, it's my turn to ask a question.

"If you answer wrong or lie, you will be punished."

Rather obedient. He didn't make the request of doing artistic actions… Looking at the billiard table, Klein nodded indiscernibly.

At this moment, the words from before slowly vanished, presenting new words:

"You…"

As the bloody word froze for a full three seconds, it followed up:

"…are to answer with the relationship between the Chained God and the Mother Tree of Desire."

For some reason, Klein felt that the remaining parts of the sentence had its blood-colored text darken significantly. Thankfully, the question wasn't too out of place, and it was something he would like to know.

Sharron looked at the mirror and replied in a deadpan manner, "Since the Fifth Epoch, after the perishing of Death, the Eggers family gradually lost control over the Star Highlands and Paz Valley, allowing those places to have their own Beyonder organization, the Rose School of Thought.

"In the beginning, there wasn't the Mother Tree of Desire, only the Chained God. The Rose School of Thought advocated temperance and established a religious ritual system, including laws. Formal members led ascetic lives to deal with the repercussions of receiving powers.

"One day, a divine revelation added terms about indulgence. Many people slowly changed and restored ancient but bloody primitive sacrificial traditions. Later, the School of Thought's upper echelons began secretly calling the Chained God the manifestation of the Mother Tree of Desire."

By the sound of it, the Chained God was corrupted by the Mother Tree of Desire bit by bit or replaced… If this entity was once a Sequence 0, then the Mother Tree of Desire is truly terrifying. It's no wonder it's viewed as an enemy by all the other deities… However, the Chained God might not be a Sequence 0. There's a small possibility of being a Uniqueness that has fully come to life, or a King of Angels with two Sequence 1 characteristics, or even someone weaker. There's currently not enough information to verify the matter… Klein frowned slightly as he began thinking about the matters regarding the Mother Tree of Desire.

At this moment, Sharron had switched to asking, “What problems does the Tutanssess II mummy possess?”

On the mirror’s surface, the blood-red text squirmed and changed into a complete sentence:

“It’s filled with hexes, a manifestation of hexes. It has the possibility of automatically becoming a Zombie.”

This mummy is comprised of hexes? As expected of a corpse left behind by a High-Sequence Beyonder… How should this be resolved? Klein turned to look at Sharron and Maric and discovered that they were sufficiently calm without any hint of surprise, as though they already knew that. And this also meant that they had the means to resolve the matter. Of course, Sharron didn’t have much of an expression regardless of the matter. She was as calm as she always was.

After Arrodes answered, it followed the principle of reciprocity and raised its question:

“You…”

“…have been trying hard to increase your Sequence. Why do you do so?”

This time, it had used the same bloody text as the opening, but the words that followed after a few seconds didn’t appear that bright.

Does this mean that Arrodes is hesitating and struggling, resisting its own urges? On the one hand, it finds it difficult to curb its wishes to raise difficult-to-answer questions, but on the other hand, it’s taking my instructions into considerations and thus holding back? Klein thought in amusement.

Sharron stood there in silence before gently moving her lips.

“In the beginning, it was to not be bullied by others. Now, it’s to have the strength to protect myself and my companions, and revenge, as well as spread the principle of temperance… If everyone can temper their desires, to not have wars and killing, there will be less misery.”

Klein was surprised by what he heard. His impression of Sharron was that she was a woman of few words.

It wasn’t that she couldn’t say that many words, but that even if she had much to say, she held back greatly and didn’t provide any additional descriptions. For example, in her answer to the first question, she had simply recounted the situation, and although she appeared to say a lot, she hadn’t said one word more or anything subjective. The words she added towards the end was a relatively talkative act based on her character.

This is something that’s been on her mind, a point of view that she has been repressing for a very long time? Klein suddenly imagined the chaotic reality of the wars in the Southern Continent.

They were lands with plenty of slavery. There were batches of people from the lower class who died of hunger and sickness. There were constant wars and live sacrifices.

If I were born in the Southern Continent and could live to this point, I’ll definitely wish for world peace and happiness to the people… Speaking of which, Miss Sharron and Maric do not look like they are of Southern Continent descent. That’s right, before Death perished, passage between the Northern and Southern Continent was allowed… Also, Sharron mentioned revenge. That word was said without conviction, as though she doesn’t hold out hope for it. Or does she not have that strong of a desire for it? Klein sighed silently as he watched Sharron raise detail after detail and answer question after question.

After learning of the situation regarding the Tutanssess II mummy, Sharron asked again, “Apart from Mahmosi, who are the High-Sequence Beyonders that will appear in this trap?”

The mirror surface’s aqueous wave rippled and formed a bright light, one that enveloped everything. Nothing else could be seen.

With Arrodes's powers, it likely involves an angel or Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. That's why it wasn't able to provide an accurate answer… Klein retracted his gaze and said to Sharron and Maric with a smile, "From the looks of it, it's as I guessed. The Loen military has prepared plenty of redundancies."

Sharron nodded slightly as she continued staring at the mirror, awaiting the secret existence to raise "His" question.

The blood-colored text squirmed and no longer paused like before. Everything appeared at once.

"What are your thoughts regarding your teacher?"

Teacher? Miss Sharron has a teacher… That's right, as part of the temperance faction, to not be influenced by the Rose School of Thought which had changed internally, and to keep to her original path, someone must've provided her with help… This is also one of the reasons why she and Maric could escape? Enlightened, Klein anticipated Sharron's answer.

Sharron pursed her lips.

"I respect 'Her'."

…She used 'Her'? Klein nearly couldn't maintain his smile from the shock.

Including the orthodox Churches and the various major Beyonder organizations, Grounded Angels were very rare. There might only be one or two. He originally imagined that Sharron's teacher was a Sequence 4 or 3 saint with a peak strength equivalent to Sea King Jahn Kottman. To his surprise, she had used "Her" as a pronoun. In Loen, ancient Feysac, and even Jotun and Elvish, this pronoun was very different from his, her, its!

After his shock, Klein suddenly sighed deeply. Miss Sharron's current situation largely implies that her teacher is probably not around. She and Maric escaped perhaps due to the final struggle of the temperance faction within the Rose School of Thought. And to the Mother Tree of Desire, either it's corruption or decimation to create a Sealed Artifact. There will not be any other choices.

The mirror turned dark again as the bright red text vanished.

After a while, new words appeared again.

"Continue."

"I no longer have any questions. Thank you for your help," Sharron curtsied as she said slowly.

With her saying that, the mirror returned to normal. The lighting in the billiard room wasn't dim any longer.

Sharron looked at Klein and said in a tone without any abnormalities, "We shall forgo this matter."

Clearly, she also understood the meaning behind the blast of light that appeared during the hidden existence's final answer.

Klein shook his head and smiled.

"There's no need to rush into a decision. Let me ask you a few more things. Perhaps there might still be a chance that doesn't require us to take too much of a risk."

At least my divination results say that it's possible! he added silently.

"What is it?" Maric couldn't help but ask.

Chapter 879 - Dual Purpose

◆

Upon hearing Maric's question, Klein picked up the piece of paper with the symbol that summoned Arrodes and shook it as he wiped away his smile. He said in all seriousness, "Tell me the detailed process for creating a Pharaoh mummy in the ancient Highlands Kingdom."

As he said that, the piece of paper was engulfed in scarlet-red flames, turning to ash.

Maric glanced at Sharron and replied after some thought.

"First step, lay it down for three to five days and use some auxiliary methods to make the Beyonder characteristic naturally seep out and not become a Sealed Artifact from fusing with any parts of the Pharaoh's body.

"Second step, hold a cleansing ritual. Place the corpse on an altar, pray to the Chained God, and hope that half the deceased's spirit remains in the body. This won't affect the return of the son of God, and it can also allow the created mummy to maintain a long period of spirituality.

"Third step, using Beyonder powers or actual technology, remove the corpse's brain, innards, and bodily fluids, leaving only the heart.

"Fourth step, stuff the corpse with perfumes and medicine that's filled with spirituality and completely dehydrate the body…

"Fifth step, stuff the perfumes and medicine inside again. Arrange some preparations for a ritual on the corpse's surface, then wrap it up in linen bandages before putting it into a sarcophagus.

“Sixth step, the organs which were handled in a similar manner as the fourth step will be used as materials for the ritual. They will be placed in the four corners of the sarcophagus. Likewise for the brain and bodily fluids. The former will be stirred into mush, mixing with the latter. And the sarcophagus will have some preserved circulatory tracts that mimic the deceased state before death… This can gather spirituality from the spirit world and the surroundings, making the Pharaoh mummy an ingredient rich in spirituality even after more than a millennium. It can be made into a rather powerful zombie…”

Sounds like it has nothing to do with enhancing one’s ability in that area. I wonder how Apothecaries turn such rot into a miracle. Yes, there seems to be a difference in the way Egyptian mummies are made on Earth. The level of mysticism involved is a lot greater… Klein finished listening carefully and quickly analyzed if there was anything that could be used as part of the plan.

Regardless, Tutanssess II’s mummy is something with extreme research value. Unless it’s necessary, no one is willing to destroy it… Klein fell into deep thought for a moment before looking at Sharron who had returned onto her high stool. He asked with a solemn expression, “What’s the furthest distance you can travel with Mirror Blink?”

Sharron sat there and answered without any hesitation, “300 meters.”

That’s far enough, much better than my Flaming Jump. However, this is expected. After all, a Wraith’s main trait is to come and go without detection, while Flaming Jump is just part of a magic show… Hmm, not bad. This can be used… Klein couldn’t help but inwardly make a poignant remark.

Although he once had a Wraith marionette, he didn’t know the limits of Mirror Blink, because before it could reach its limit, it would slip out from his control radius. Once that happened, the marionette was equivalent to a dead object. The blink would fail midway.

Klein asked a few more questions and formulated a general plan. After looking at Sharron and Maric separately, he said with a steady tone, "We still have a chance of snatching Tutanssess II's mummy away. There is a risk, but it won't be high.

"Yes, that's on the condition that the two of you listen to my instructions. Let me lead this operation. Of course, if you believe it's unacceptable, you can choose to terminate the operation midway and choose to return. That's your freedom. Just remember to pay me."

If this was in the past, Maric would've rejected the proposal without a thought. He and Sharron were considered very experienced Mid-Sequence Beyonders, so how could he listen to a newly-advanced Beyonder who had once sought their protection before? But after the previous cooperation effort, the intelligence, adaptability, and the mysterious items Sherlock Moriarty possessed had left a deep impression on Maric. He couldn't help but consider him as equals. When news of Gehrman Sparrow continuously reached Backlund, he had been shocked, being even more convinced that he was one of the strongest Beyonders below that of High-Sequence Beyonders. In mysticism, this was a form of authority when it came to Beyonder combat.

Since he possessed authority, it meant abiding by it!

He can still teleport… Maric recalled the way Sherlock Moriarty appeared, and he had a strong sense of confidence bolstered within him. Perhaps there was a chance of success.

He turned his head and looked at Sharron.

The two nodded in unison.

"Alright," Sharron responded, her blue eyes not showing any signs of hesitation.

Klein immediately revealed a smile.

"I'll go into the specifics when we rendezvous at the scene."

Apart from defining the problems and obtaining a more accurate account of the situation, his deliberate appearance using Traveling and providing a "secret existence" to obtain intel was also to establish his image. It boosted the way they viewed him, giving him the ability to be in charge.

As a Marionettist, even without a marionette for the time being, he had to control others to complete a targeted act!

To Klein, this operation was partly to help Sharron and Maric, but he also had hopes of using this grand act and his directing of puppets to further accelerate the digestion of his potion.

It had to be said that the immense pressure of Amon's appearance in Backlund and his recent interaction with Spectators had allowed the marionette-less him to greater understand the Marionettist principle he had previously concluded. With his marionette as a lead, he could control his enemies to put on a puppet act in real life.

His current idea was:

Even without a marionette, he could use his dominance, language, and the settings he designed, or a combination of these factors, to control his target, putting on a puppet act in real life.

Marionettists weren't only controlling Spirit Body Threads!

And what he did previously was merely a small attempt.

Just like Amon, a simple appearance is enough to put many matters into motion. It makes me and Pallez Zoroast appear to be waiting for "Him" to signal with a wave of the conductor's baton… Klein silently sighed as he heard Sharron and Maric answer in unison, "Okay."

†

In the evening at Pritz Harbor, there were elegant gas street lamps made of black metal. They illuminated the various streets with the light they emitted.

At this moment, most of the ships had moored. Silence was the main tune of the area.

At the top of a warehouse, there were many wooden crates circling an area. Three figures suddenly appeared from the void. They were none other than Sherlock Moriarty in his formal suit and top hat, Maric in his white shirt and black vest, and Sharron who always wore a black bonnet and regal dress.

With the help of Teleport, they directly traveled from Backlund all the way here. There was quite a distance between them and the dock where the ship that carried the Tutanssess II mummy was moored at.

Klein pressed down with his right hand as the bottom of his feet stepped on the wood. He nimbly leaped above the crossbar and, like walking on flat ground, quickly arrived by the wall.

There was a tiny air vent here.

He then took out the telescope provided by Sharron, and he looked at the dock based on the intel.

All the building roofs were occupied by soldiers with steam backpacks and thick-barreled rifles. They patrolled the area and were alert of their surroundings, prepared to shoot at any trespassers who dared come near. Only one warning was to be given.

Apart from them, there were a few exaggerated robot monsters parked around the dock. They were entirely metal, and their height had exceeded that of giants. At the top of them, cold machine guns could rotate, and a steam chimney stood erect. The bottoms were grayish-white in color, with many parts exposing rivets, nuts, and gears. They looked rather crude.

In addition, in front of the robots was a very thick cannon. Situated underneath it were two rows of metal wheels with rubber treads.

They were obviously manned, but Klein couldn't see who they were, making it impossible to determine if they were Beyonders or not.

Close to these steel monsters, above the dock was a dark black metal tower standing at a height of more than ten meters. It had a complicated pulley system that seemed to lack any sophistication. Drooping down were steel cables and a hook.

On the surface, it doesn't seem too simple, but it can't be considered a high-level military operation… Klein retracted his gaze and threw the telescope to the approaching Maric so that he could observe the situation.

Before they started taking action, they had come to an agreement. It was to not use Beyonder powers, relying on non-mysticism methods to spy on their target to avoid sounding off any alarms. After all, it was very likely that a demigod was lurking in the dock district.

Of course, Klein had adjusted the powers recorded inside Creeping Hunger. He had matched Paper Angel with Hurricane instead of Lightning Storm.

After Sharron was kept up to date with the situation, Klein, who was standing by a wooden frame, revealed a seemingly relaxed smile.

"We only have one purpose today. It is to make an attempt if there's a chance. If there isn't, we'd rather observe by the side and even evacuate ahead of time.

"Any questions?"

"No," Sharron calmly replied. Maric shook his head, expressing the same intent.

Klein nodded and looked at Maric.

“How many mirrors have you brought?”

“Nine.” Maric showed his preparations as he pointed to his eyes. “These also count.”

“Alright.” Klein pointed in a direction. “When I leave, you are to head for Pritz Harbor. Along the way, throw these mirrors.”

Maric gaped as though he wanted to ask why. But soon, he understood Sherlock Moriarty’s intentions and nodded seriously.

“I’ll follow your instructions.”

Klein smiled as he extended his hand in midair.

“I hope for a pleasant partnership.”

Maric hesitated for a second before extending his right hand to struck palms with him.

After doing this, the tense feelings in him felt relieved for some reason.

Klein turned to Sharron, took out an iron cigar case, and passed it to her.

“Take this. After receiving my cue, fly towards the lighthouse.

“Following that, silently count down from three before removing the wall of spirituality.

“During this process, as well as after it’s completed, you must not stop flying. Try to fly as irregularly as possible, regardless of the methods employed.

“When you see me create fireworks, immediately isolate the cigar case with a wall of spirituality, and do a Mirror Blink in Maric’s direction.

Use everything you have.

“After you meet up, flee all the way without waiting for me. I’ll teleport to you.”

One of the core items in the operation tonight was Azik’s copper whistle!

Stealing the Tutanssess II mummy is difficult, but I can get it to run towards me!

Chapter 880 - The Silent One

◆

After hearing Sherlock Moriarty’s plan, Sharron didn’t say anything apart from nod her head once in agreement.

Klein immediately took out a steel-gray metal mask and wore it, only revealing his eyes and nostrils.

Similarly, Sharron and Maric wore similar masks as well.

However, they had different reasons for the disguise. For the Wraith and Zombie, it was solely to prevent themselves from being recognized by the Loen military; thus, curtailing their ability to be active in Backlund. As for a Faceless, the act of wearing a mask hid his pathway’s trait of being able to change appearances. It was a form of misdirection for the Loen military’s and Rose School of Thought’s subsequent investigations. After all, they would follow normal logic. Since your face was fake to begin with, why would you do the unnecessary act of wearing a mask?

After waiting for a while, a dull whistle sounded as a ship cruised into the port in the darkness.

Klein returned to the vent, raised the telescope, and cast his gaze at the heavily guarded harbor.

He soon saw a hybrid sailboat with a chimney slowing down as it docked. Meanwhile, two squads of soldiers in red tops and white pants ran over in an orderly fashion with rifles in hand before standing on two sides of a path.

Before long, a gangway was lowered, and people from the ship began alighting.

First were sailors carrying wooden crates. Following that, it was a young man dressed in a major's uniform. He held a small casket made of crystal with a heavy expression. Surrounding him were several members of the ship's crew.

The crew were holding lanterns, illuminating the casket from various angles; thus, accentuating what was inside.

In it was a human skull without any flesh and blood left. It had a strange luster swirling under the light!

The group of people moved at a rather slow speed, as though they were constantly taking note of the angles of illumination to not leave any dark spots.

After they got off the ship, they followed the path to the nearest cargo rail where a steam locomotive was waiting there like a giant serpent. In the cabin behind, a man in a black formal suit walked out.

He was carrying a huge iron bucket, and diagonally above, one could see that it contained layers of ice blocks.

For a second, Klein nearly imagined that there was a bottle of wine inside the ice blocks, just like how alcohol was presented amongst high society and high-end restaurants. However, he soon saw what was embedded in the ice.

It was a hand made purely out of gold!

Unlike the group of people, the man carrying the bucket moved very quickly. Beads of perspiration kept dripping from his forehead as the contact between his palms and the metal surface produced mist.

He seemed to be worried that the ice would completely melt before he arrived at his destination.

The military managed to plunder quite a number of Sealed Artifacts at the Star Highlands, Paz Valley, and Haagenti Plains… Klein sighed poignantly as he patiently waited for Tutanssess II's sarcophagus to appear.

Another ten plus minutes passed when, situated in the distance, Klein, Sharron, and Maric heard heavy footsteps.

It was like a giant walking over a hollow deck.

Right on the heels of that, the cabin's side door opened. Four "knights" in black full-body armor carried a golden sarcophagus as they slowly walked out. Their footsteps clinked and clanked, reverberating.

The sarcophagus's surface was engraved with symbols like strange birds, serpents, feathers, and masks. It appeared ancient and mysterious, with the rich flair of an ancient Highlands Kingdom. It was none other than the Tutanssess II mummy's resting bed!

Sounds of metallic chains grinding against each other sounded as a pitch-black metal capstan slowly rotated, lowering the steel cables and hook down. People began securing them against the corners of Tutanssess II's sarcophagus.

Then, a complicated gear system began operating as the heavy sarcophagus was hung up, moving towards a topless carriage outside the harbor.

The four black, full-bodied-armored "knights" had the pressure on them relieved as they sat on the deck, letting out heavy panting.

Amidst the panting, one of the "knights" suddenly grunted.

In a crevice of his armor, dark red blood streamed out in increasing amounts. Towards the end, tiny black armored worms began crawling out of it.

Thud!

The “knight” fell backward, his helmet falling off, revealing mangled flesh and a head whose eye sockets were empty. Countless black armored worms crawled out.

A hex… Tutanssess II’s mummy is a manifestation of hexes itself… Even when wearing armor with augmented blessings, it’s unable to completely avoid being cursed… Klein sighed silently as he cast his gaze to the golden sarcophagus which was being slowly lowered onto the carriage.

The carriage outside the harbor didn’t have any horses. Standing around the carriage were four “knights” in the same outfits as the ones before.

With the sarcophagus landing, they approached the carriage in preparation to pull it.

At this moment, the wheels of the carriage suddenly begun spinning as it maintained its balance and began moving towards the side.

At that moment, it seemed to come to life!

Klein’s mind tensed up as his gaze turned intense.

Pa! Pa! Pa! The wheels spun rapidly, slamming into the rocks, logs, and steps on an irregular path. The carriage without any horses dragged the golden sarcophagus as it moved towards an empty spot of the harbor.

This scene looked like a scene as described in a horror story.

Close to the harbor, a steel monster with a chimney, cannon, and machine gun turned around as a deep voice was heard from the inside without any obstacles.

“Possession is prohibited here.”

Just as this was said, the carriage which was moving by itself lost its drive. After drawing out two long tracks, it steadily came to a halt.

At the same time, a figure wearing a white robe with golden threads was outlined in midair. He had pale-yellow curled hair, with his eye sockets clearly recessed. His face was thin to the bone.

This was a middle-aged man with mixed heritage from the Southern and Northern Continent. His brown eyes had irrepressible maleficence and madness. His rather thick lips were pierced with dense, patterned golden nails that sealed his mouth. He exuded a sinister and terrifying feeling.

According to Sharron's and Maric's description of the characteristics and portrait, Klein instantly recognized him to be an important member of the Rose School of Thought, one of the leaders of the Highland's rebel army, Mahmosi, who had the nickname, The Silent One.

Just as Mahmosi appeared, he cast his gaze to the steel monster that had issued the command. He completely ignored the Tutanssess II sarcophagus that was staying put diagonally beneath him.

His previous attempt was apparently to determine the location of the Loen military's demigod!

In a snap, Mahmosi raised his right hand and pulled at the corner of his mouth.

The golden nails that pierced through his lips shot out like bullets as they no longer sealed his mouth.

Following that, Mahmosi opened his mouth.

Klein didn't hear any sound, nor did he see any light. He discovered the gigantic steam chariot seemed to warp like it was melting. In a blink of an eye, it had transformed into a goat.

A goat with glazed eyes and messy wool!

With a spurting sound, blood spewed out of the goat's abdomen as a blob of flesh rolled out. Embedded in it was a white glove and a golden mask.

A beam suddenly shot out from the flesh, cleaving through all the chaos and evilness. The squirming flesh and blood began forming a humanoid figure, returning to its original appearance.

It was a black-haired, golden-eyed man with a mask.

At this moment, Mahmosi raised his palm, causing all the guns and cannons that were aiming at him to rise into the sky as they shot into the air.

Then, he took out a cloth doll.

The doll seemed to be made of old cloth. There were obvious stains and specks of blood. Its eyes had been dug out, leaving two empty holes.

The moment it saw light, its face began transforming. Its target of reference was none other than the demigod from the Loen military. Its eye sockets were aimed straight at the man in the golden mask!

When the Loen military's demigod saw this, he immediately made the ring on his right hand emit a crystalline beam of light as he vanished from his spot, phasing to the back of Mahmosi.

However, the doll's transformation didn't stop at all.

Meanwhile, to the side of Tutanssess II's sarcophagus, the space around it warped as a translucent mouth spanning more than ten meters was outlined.

The mouth suddenly opened and sucked in, creating a terrifying gale that swept up the sarcophagus and the carriage together.

It was suspected to be a spirit world creature!

It was about to devour the Tutanssess II mummy's sarcophagus!

Suddenly, the bullets and cannonballs that shot into the air turned brilliant as they gathered together, transforming into a grand sea of light that inundated everything.

Klein felt a stabbing pain in his eyes, and even though he closed them in time, tears still flowed down.

Two seconds later, he opened his eyes again and saw the spirit world creature that was only a gigantic mouth had disappeared. Tutanssess II's golden sarcophagus remained sitting silently on the other carriage. Mahmosi's figure had blinked away to the other end of the harbor thanks to a metallic surface. The dirty doll in his hand had been restored to its original form while the masked golden-eyed man did a short-distance teleport as he engaged in tight pursuit.

And the spot where the two were originally standing, a female figure in a black evening gown appeared. She too was wearing a golden mask, and on her head was a crown folded from thorns.

On the crown, pure light quickly swirled, amassing an "ocean"; however, it was in a dim state.

At this moment, Klein saw a hand—a hand wearing a black glove.

It was hidden in the shadows, reaching out as it grabbed at the sarcophagus where Tutanssess II's mummy was stored.

The sarcophagus suddenly vanished, appearing right in front of the palm!

The Rose School of Thought hadn't sent one demigod, but two. Furthermore, they brought with them a Sealed Artifact from the Marauder pathway!

Upon seeing this, Klein immediately turned his head and shouted to Maric, "Run!"

Maric had been awaiting his orders, so he leaped up the moment he heard that, rushing out of the warehouse as he dashed fervently out of the harbor.

Klein immediately turned around and yelled out to Sharron, “Begin!”

Sharron didn’t hesitate as well. Holding the iron cigar case, she flew towards the lighthouse. As a Wraith, the walls and obstacles along the way were nonexistent.

The commotion she and Maric created had probably been detected, but as it was far from the harbor and far from the battlefield, no one paid attention or bothered.

Klein quickly retracted his gaze, extended his left hand, and aimed his palm at the ventilation hole—right where Tutanssess II’s golden sarcophagus was.

In less than a second, a blurry book materialized before him as an ethereal, distant chant sounded in his ears:

“I came, I saw, I record.”

The pages flipped before landing on one page.

Hurricane!

This was a demigod-level Beyonder power that had a wide area of effect!

Chapter 881 - A Play

◆

The Rose School of Thought demigod, who was hiding in the shadows, wore a hooded black robe and a golden mask with red and black patterns smeared across it. His figure couldn't be made out, but he was definitely not short, standing at a height of 1.8 meters.

He used the Marauder pathway's Sealed Artifact to steal Tutanssess II's sarcophagus, placing it before him. Immediately, his body phased away and drew out an extended form as though he had turned into a thick, long, and soft rope.

This transparent and nearly ethereal "rope" quickly bound the heavy sarcophagus in a bid to bring it into the spirit world.

At this moment, a strong gust of wind sounded in the Rose School of Thought demigod's ears. They clashed in the air, forming an explosive-like stir.

Boom!

Tutanssess II's golden sarcophagus was sent flying as the transparent "rope" around it unfurled, shrinking back into a humanoid form.

This Rose School of Thought demigod floated diagonally downwards in an uncontrollable manner before turning into a wraith, no—an evil spirit's form. He allowed the intense winds to blow through his body without making any additional movements.

He saw eddies in the air swirl up rapidly as an unrestrained hurricane suddenly appeared, sweeping up the rocks, gravel, trash, and parts of the harbor's roof into the air. Even the carriage which had been autonomously moving before flew up because of its proximity. It was torn into pieces amidst the strong winds.

Seemingly lucky, but in fact an expected outcome, the shadows where the Rose School of Thought demigod was hiding didn't have any Loen soldiers and was far from the main path.

The lady in the black evening gown and crown of thorns was obstructed by the hurricane as her body involuntarily wavered backward. She was unable to immediately rush to the golden sarcophagus that had been thrown up into the air, and she could only use her momentum to turn her body sideways, casting her gaze to a warehouse that stood far away outside the dock district.

Immediately after that, she turned her head to look at the Rose School of Thought demigod because he wasn't affected by the hurricane.

“Confinement!” The lady who was also wearing a golden mask raised her left hand and grabbed at her enemy's figure within her sights.

The Rose School of Thought demigod had formidable spiritual intuition. As he sensed the danger with the help of his spiritual intuition, he did a Mirror Blink ahead of time, leaping onto a piece of glass about eighty meters away.

At this moment, the hurricane seemed to stabilize itself and rapidly calmed down.

Pa! Pa! Pa! The items that had been swept up fell to the ground, including the golden sarcophagus that contained Tutanssess II.

Bang!

It slammed open a crater as it completely broke apart after suffering the wrath of the hurricane.

The lid at the top flew up, scattering the gold and gems that were sealed in the top two layers of the sarcophagus as burial items.

Then, the lower level of the sarcophagus tumbled a few times, dropping golden boxes and jade containers that stored the desiccated organs.

A corpse that was bound in yellowish-brown cloth tumbled out. Its surface was covered in a dark red, oily liquid.

This was none other than the mummy created after Tutanssess II passed away. It was extremely thin, and its face had a golden mask with patterns covering it just like the mask worn by the demigod from the Rose School of Thought. Embedded in its eye sockets were two abnormally pure onyx gems.

The moment the mummy appeared, the surroundings seemed to dim. The sarcophagus's main body stopped as dark red liquid flowed out of it, soaking the nearby soil.

When the Rose School of Thought demigod with the Marauder pathway's Sealed Artifact saw this scene, he was first enraged before he thought of something. The look in his eyes turned into pleasant surprise.

His figure vanished from the glass fragment, phasing into the two onyx "eyeballs" of Tutanssess II. Then, he possessed the mummy and attempted to pull it into the spirit world!

Suddenly, he sensed that the mummy in his Evil Spirit Vision had vanished.

Simultaneously, the Tutanssess II mummy with a slanted golden crown on its head suddenly bounced up, turning its onyx-embedded face towards the only lighthouse in Pritz Harbor.

This Pharaoh, which had been dead for centuries, produced an inhuman cry from its throat. Bound with yellowish-brown bandages, it freed its shriveled leg, strode and ran off!

It seemed to be running towards freedom, but it had forgotten one thing. It was just a corpse. It should be lying down in silence.

Tap! Tap! Tap! The Tutanssess II mummy finished accelerating just as it began.

Upon seeing this, the lady with the crown of thorns raised her right palm and aimed at the mutated mummy.

“All the dead will receive their eternal peace,” she said a few words in ancient Hermes.

Bang!

The Tutanssess II mummy exerted strength in its legs as it leaped up, jumping into another direction, escaping the region that would make it enjoy its eternal rest, doing so in a way that didn’t adhere to a zombie’s agility.

Further away, the black-haired, golden-eyed man, who was pursuing Mahmosi, narrowed his eyes as his ring once again emitted a crystalline beam of light.

His figure teleported in front of the mummy as he attempted to stop the deceased from moving away.

However, Tutanssess II changed directions once again, charging out from a different angle.

It kept changing its direction, as though its goal was to approach the lighthouse by following an irregular route!

Mahmosi’s heart stirred as his body suddenly vanished, flashing onto a piece of glass not far from the mummy.

He used this as a springboard and finally appeared in the two onyx in Tutanssess II’s eye sockets!

Although the Loen military’s demigod had restricted Possession, the

Highlands Kingdom's Pharaoh was no ordinary item. It had some spirituality remaining!

Seeing his partner succeed, the demigod with the Marauder pathway Sealed Artifact didn't hesitate to extend his black-gloved left hand, aimed it at the lady in the evening gown, and gripped his hand into a fist before turning it half a circle.

The lady immediately felt her thoughts go adrift for a second. Following that, she was bound tightly by her own gown. Almost at the same time, the Loen soldier far away on the warehouse rooftops found it difficult to control their rifles as they aimed in her direction and pulled their triggers.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The steel monsters with thick cannons also unleashed their cannonballs at the lady.

The golden-eyed demigod didn't attempt to save his partner. Instead, he looked at Tutanssess II's mummy which had come to a stop because of Mahmosi's possession. He gripped his right hand into a fist and waved it abruptly.

"Execution!"

A look of joy flashed past his eyes because it didn't matter if the mummy died again, but Mahmosi couldn't afford that!

Elsewhere, just as the bullets and cannonballs were to hit the lady, they suddenly slowed down as though they had sunken into a quagmire formed of air. They were repelled by a power that stemmed from laws.

On the lady's head, the crown of thorns lit up suddenly, using up more than half of the accumulated "ocean of light."

The hooded Rose School of Thought demigod immediately discovered this as he vanished from a location far away from it, as though he was fundamentally wiped away. This also meant that he had “arrived” in front of the lady and saw her raise her right hand.

Gathered within her right hand was pure condensed light. They transformed into a blazing spear that had two pure white wings sweep out at its tip, enveloping the spearhead like an angel’s embrace.

The Rose School of Thought demigod’s eyes widened immediately as he heard the footsteps of death. He attempted to use Mirror Blink to leap away, but he found that his surroundings were sealed by the pure white wings.

An intense sense of fear surged within him and inundated his reason, making him abandon his resistance towards his roots to his being and strength.

At this moment, a shrieking wail sounded as the lady’s eyes temporarily turned turbid.

The blazing spear in her right hand deviated to the side as she failed to maintain its stability. It collapsed into a gorgeous blast of light as it was swept up in the air like a hurricane.

And in the vicinity of the Tutanssess II mummy, Mahmosi had stopped his possession. Beside him, a dirty doll fell to the ground.

The doll’s chest had a tear that nearly penetrated it.

It stood up and its eyeless face seemed to come to life, turning abnormally warped and gruesome. It continuously wailed with a shrieking tone, causing the nearby Loen golden-eyed demigod to feel an invisible hand grabbing at his neck as he kicked and struggled in midair.

It was because of this doll’s existence that Mahmosi wasn’t “Executed.” Likewise, the other Rose School of Thought demigod wasn’t struck by the blazing spear.

When the latter saw this, he immediately used Mirror Blink to approach the Tutanssess II mummy that was still focused on moving in the direction of the lighthouse. He planned on using this opportunity to join forces with Mahmosi to achieve the goal of their operation.

At this moment, the lady in the evening gown erased the distance, appearing directly above them. The crown of thorns on her head emitted the purest of light.

She pressed down with her right hand and said, “This place will have the mysterious weakened and the real strengthened!”

Just as she said that, the blood-stained doll immediately lost its expression and stopped shrieking. The golden-eyed demigod from the Loen military finally had a chance to catch a breather. He forcefully pulled away the hexed hand that was grappling his throat.

From that moment, their demigod powers rapidly declined as attacks that stemmed from reality were rapidly boosted.

This also meant that the Loen soldiers at the top of the warehouse and the steam chariot that was slowly approaching on its treads were the victors in this battle!

To the Loen army, this was a situation where their advantage was extremely amplified!

Mahmosi and the other Rose School of Thought demigod immediately reacted. One of them tried to possess the mummy, while the other attempted to pick up the eyeless doll. They planned on escaping before their strength decreased to a certain threshold.

Of course, the lady with the evening gown and the golden-eyed demigod couldn’t allow the enemy to do as they wished, but just as they were about to take action, a light streaked into the sky and exploded into dreamy fireworks.

Right on the heels of that, the two demigods felt their spiritual perception trigger simultaneously as they looked into opposite directions.

A hand wearing a transparent glove reached out from the void beside Tutanssess II's golden sarcophagus, grabbing a handful of soil that was soaked with dark red liquid.

The liquid was a mixture of Tutanssess II's brain matter and bodily fluids. It was a ritualistic material used to maintain its spirituality, and the latter contained its blood!

Mahmosi and the Rose School of Thought demigod, who wielded the Sealed Artifact also looked over, and they happened to see a figure wearing a formal suit and top hat appear.

This figure was bending his back to pick up the soil soaked with dark red liquid.

During this process, he kept his right hand to his left breast, as though he was bowing towards the demigods. Then, maintaining this pose, he looked up to reveal his metal-gray masked face before rapidly fading away into nothingness.

Chapter 882 - Core of Mischief

◆

Carrying the iron cigar case in hand while passing through walls to leave the warehouse that she was hiding in, Sharron strictly followed Sherlock Moriarty's arrangements, using her state as a Wraith to fly to the tallest building in Pritz Harbor, the lighthouse.

Right on the heels of that, she silently counted down.

Three… Two… One…

Before she could gather her thoughts, Sharron's ear resonated with an intense boom. The harbor in the distance seemed to be swept by a terrifying hurricane.

She held the iron cigar case in her left hand as her nails suddenly grew sharp before stabbing into the wall of spirituality, completely destroying the invisible "isolation" with an attack filled with a Wraith's spirituality.

A sudden gust of wind gushed outwards in every direction as Sharron suddenly felt her Spirit Body become augmented. And this stemmed from the item stored inside the iron cigar case.

She wasn't affected by her curiosity, accustomed to restraining her emotions as she continued approaching the lighthouse at high speeds.

During this entire process, she kept maintaining an irregular trajectory, occasionally lunging forward to the left or drifting upwards to the right. At times, she would rely on Mirror Blink to leap onto a different trajectory before continuing her approach to the target.

This made it seem like she was dodging an invisible and terrifying enemy, but Sharron knew very well that nothing was chasing her, nor was she locked on by a distant attack.

She felt as though she was performing in a one-man show without any opponents.

However, she didn't have any doubts, nor did she waste any time to observe or wait. She pretended that within the air in her surroundings was The Silent One Mahmosi and the Loen military's demigods, doing her best to dodge and slip past them.

As her flight continued, Sharron's blue eyes which were peeled towards the air had a red stream of light reflected in them.

It flew from above, suddenly blasting apart, turning into beautiful fireworks that was a mix of red, orange, and yellow.

Sharron immediately retracted her gaze. As she used her Wraith fingernails to spew spirituality and reform the wall of isolation, she leaped towards the path Maric had laid.

There were shattered mirrors placed at fixed distances in a periodic manner. With her dainty bonnet and black dress, her figure kept flashing to them, and soon, she appeared inside Maric's brown eyes.

She then lightly took a stride out, the iron cigar case in her hand already encased with a wall of spirituality.

Maric and Sharron didn't converse, nor did they exchange looks with their eyes. As though they were being pursued by an invisible monster, they didn't dare stay put.

Frankly speaking, they had a general idea about the role that each of their actions played; after all, Sherlock Moriarty had once attracted zombies and shadows with a copper whistle. As for Sharron's Mirror

Blink, the two of them knew its traits well. However, they couldn't imagine how everything would develop. They had no idea how the detective with many secrets would be able to steal the Tutanssess II mummy under the watch of a few demigods. It wasn't a situation where the mummy could run if it wanted. The demigods were bound to stop it.

At this moment, they saw a figure materialize.

He wore a black formal suit and a half top hat. His face was covered with an iron-gray mask, and in his hand was a handful of dark red soil and a dark-brown book. It was none other than Sherlock Moriarty.

Maric immediately slowed down his pace. As he allowed the detective to smear the soil onto the book before pocketing it and grabbing his shoulder, he surveyed his surroundings. However, he didn't discover the existence of the Tutanssess II mummy.

Did it ultimately fail… Having been mentally prepared for failure, he sighed as he watched himself, Sharron, and Sherlock Moriarty fade away and vanish from the spot.

†

In the region where the demigods were fighting, the golden-eyed Loen military demigod had an ominous feeling when he saw the gray-masked man bow before teleporting away. He felt that things had taken a drastic turn for the worse, into a terrible, unpredictable outcome.

He needs to be stopped! Although I don't know what he did, he needs to be stopped! Such a though instantly surfaced in his mind as the golden-eyed demigod immediately activated his ring. He used Traveling against Traveling, Teleporting to pursue Teleporting.

However, in this short span of time, he realized that he was unable to lock onto the mysterious person's aura. In other words, he had either created an interference at the demigod level, or he had Teleported somewhere very, very far away. Regardless of which possibility it was, it meant that any pursuit attempt would easily face failure.

And more importantly, if he were to leave, leaving the lady to fend against Mahmosi and the other Rose School of Thought demigod alone, that would be an extremely dangerous situation. After all, the mysterious power in the area had not weakened to the point where real firearms could pose a threat to their suppressed selves.

Besides, there haven't been any losses yet. The mummy is still around, with the person only taking away some soil rich in spirituality… The golden-eyed demigod swept his gaze at the Tutanssess II mummy who was standing "blankly" in its spot, before casting his gaze back on Mahmosi.

Suddenly, the mummy wrapped in yellowish-brown bandages that were soaked in dark red liquid had vanished from the four demigods' spiritual perception!

The mummy had vanished without any warning!

For a second, Mahmosi and the other demigods felt as though they had watched an interesting magic show or a play with a mischievous element in it. But sadly, as demigods, they couldn't tell how it was done.

Moments later, having lost their target, Mahmosi and the other Rose School of Thought demigod didn't hesitate to make their figures fade away in a bid to escape via the spirit world.

The golden-eyed demigod and lady tried hard to stop them.

†

After two Teleports, Klein returned to a two-bedroom apartment in Backlund which they had rented ahead of time with Sharron and Maric.

"I will pay you based on what we agreed upon," Sharron said just as she found her footing. At the same time, she returned Sherlock Moriarty the iron cigar case.

They had previously agreed that regardless of the outcome, Sharron would provide him with the information regarding Spirit World Plunderers. If they succeeded, she would pay another 3,500 Loen gold coins or 5,000 pounds.

Klein received the iron cigar case which had corrosive signs on its surface. As he held it in his hand, he sensed Azik's copper whistle lightly jumping inside.

He quickly put it away and gave Sharron and Maric a smile.

"Might I trouble you to wait outside? Give me five minutes."

His tone is very firm. It's as if he has succeeded… What can he do in five minutes? It's impossible for him to Teleport again and bring back the Tutanssess II mummy. This will be more dangerous and more difficult than before… Maric was filled with puzzlement as his footsteps moved at an obviously slow pace. As for Sharron, she had floated to the wooden door which separated the rooms and passed through it.

Maric quickly reined in his thoughts and followed closely behind by walking out the door.

Klein maintained a smile as he watched them. Then, he Teleported to another cheap motel in East Borough. He had disguised himself to rent this room in the afternoon.

Right on the heels of that, he took out the book with the dark brown cover which was stained with dark red mud stains.

It was Groselle's Travels.

As long as the blood still had remnant spirituality and hadn't coagulated, smearing it across the cover would allow the target to be pulled into the book world!

And inside the Tutanssess II mummy's golden sarcophagus contained such blood!

It also meant that, at this moment in time, the mummy was already in Klein's hands—inside Groselle's Travels!

After hearing Maric describe the procedure to making a Pharaoh mummy, Klein had roughly come up with a plan. It was to use the corpse's attraction to Azik's copper whistle as Spirit Body Threads. He then controlled the mummy and used this "marionette" to lead the demigods away from the vicinity of the sarcophagus. He did this so that he could Teleport over to retrieve the blood and create the necessary conditions.

He had never thought of directly taking the mummy away or getting it to run out of the harbor successfully. It wasn't pragmatic to think that, as it would involve directly facing the attacks from the demigods. And even if he, Maric, and Sharron were together, it was still beyond their capabilities. It might not even work even if he spent a large sum of money to summon Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr.

Therefore, despite Azik's copper whistle and the mummy's reanimation appearing to be the goal and plan, it was in fact simply a method to manipulate and misdirect. This allowed the other "actors" to ignore the situation of the golden sarcophagus.

This was a plot that even demigods couldn't fend off. This was because they were protecting the mummy and not the sarcophagus. They were targeting the High-Sequence Beyonders from the Rose School of Thought, and not three people who were loitering around in the distance with unknown goals.

Klein's plan wasn't a plan that was highly interdependent. It was amazingly light and lean while still allowing the plan to be carried out even if there was a tiny accident. He had very few parameters he needed to take into account. As long as the Hurricane successfully toppled the sarcophagus, as long as Sharron followed his instructions and moved in an irregular trajectory, and as long as the military didn't have the manpower to easily finish off the Rose School of Thought demigods, all he needed was to wait for an opportunity to appear. After the demigods left the vicinity of the sarcophagus and that the mummy wasn't possessed by the evil spirit, all he needed to do was Teleport over and retrieve something that was soaked in the liquid before escaping.

This didn't need him to worry about the exact developments of the demigod battle. He didn't care who gained the upper hand or was injured. He also didn't need the Tutanssess II mummy to run a certain distance to consider it a victory. As long as it started moving and became difficult to be caught, there wasn't any problem.

Towards the end, his bow was partly to make it easy to scoop up the soil as a curtain call, and also partly to press Groselle's Travels to his chest. If any accidents happened, he could immediately pull it out and use it as a shield.

It was precisely because of this that Klein could smear the blood-soaked soil across the cover just as he Teleported.

Everything ran as expected. The directing was quite a success… As Klein reflected over the matter, he felt his potion's digestion accelerate.

He didn't delay as he quickly set up a ritual. He sacrificed Groselle's Travels above the gray fog, and then in his Spirit Body state, he brought Creeping Hunger, Azik's copper whistle, the Soul Assurer's Beyonder characteristic, and Sharron's anti-hex golden bead into the book world.

Chapter 883 - Demigod's Appraisal

◆

In the book world, just as Klein appeared in the city outskirts, he immediately took out remnant parts of the dark red soil and picked up a withered branch. Using rod divination, he found the Tutanssess II mummy.

He was worried that this manifestation of hexes would harm the residents here. Although the book world didn't have any lack of Sequence 5 Beyonders, and the Tutanssess II mummy remained in a muddled state having lost the stimulus from Azik's copper whistle, it was still a demigod when it was alive. The hexes that its corpse produced after his death were bound to be extraordinary. Even Klein himself didn't dare approach it if not for the anti-hex golden bead that Sharron had given him.

Of course, Klein had also weighed the consequences before deciding on using Groselle's Travels to steal the mummy. His previous experiences and the encounters of others had proven one thing: Outsiders would not directly appear before the natives when they entered the book world. It required exploration before any contact was made. This was especially so for the first time!

Therefore, Klein believed that the mummy was likely left somewhere uninhabited. And with this zombie's condition, it was likely to be engaging in a random walk. It would be difficult for it to explore in different directions autonomously like humans, elves, or giants.

This also meant that, as long as he didn't drag it out, it wasn't likely for there to be any losses. Furthermore, it had only been about three minutes since Klein smeared the blood-soaked soil across the book's cover.

Following the direction led by rod divination, Klein flew towards a nearby mountain peak. Soon, he came to a valley.

At this moment, the Tutanssess II mummy wrapped in yellowish-brown bandages and was dyed red from liquids had appeared. It was still wearing the golden mask with patterns across it.

Its throat was letting out an inhuman sound as it rushed over with wide strides. The surroundings turned gloomy.

At the same time, many incomplete animal carcasses tore away the soil covering them in the valley as they staggered towards Klein.

Having his Spirit Body augmented by Azik's copper whistle, Klein immediately chuckled.

"What a warm welcome…"

He unhurriedly threw away the branch and raised a blob of black matter.

This was a Soul Assurer's Beyonder characteristic which he had released from the mutated version of Creeping Hunger. At its core was pure shimmering light that looked like a night sky embedded with stars.

Invisible waves spread out in a turbulent manner as the surroundings suddenly darkened as though night had fallen at once.

The serene and peaceful feeling was accompanied by the fall of starlight. The animal carcasses first turned sluggish before collapsing, returning to their eternal rest.

The mummy also slowed down its pace, its motions growing slower and slower. But it didn't lie back down.

Directly using a Beyonder characteristic isn't very effective after all. Furthermore, the negative effects are nothing trivial… Klein couldn't help but cover his mouth with his left hand to yawn.

He made Creeping Hunger turn pale and become dyed in a gloomy green. It used the power of a Zombie to control the deceased in front of him.

The two stacked Beyonder effects finally calmed the mummy down.

With embedded onyx gems for eyes, it slowly walked to Klein's side and stood there silently as though it was the most professional servant.

Unfortunately, it has hexes… From inside his Spirit Body, Klein immediately took out a golden bead with the styles of the ancient Highlands Kingdom. On its surface was deeply engraved bluish-green patterns.

It came from Sharron and was specially prepared for the Tutanssess II mummy. It could effectively suppress and put an end to the hexes. Otherwise, how could the Wraith dare to cast her sights on the Pharaoh mummy?

After twiddling the golden bead, Klein made the Tutanssess II mummy open its mouth before stuffing the bead into the mask's gap where the mouth was.

In just a few seconds, the gloominess of the surroundings vanished.

After doing all of this, he took a step forward and, with his Spirit Body state, possessed the mummy. Then, without any hesitation, he ended the summoning and returned above the gray fog.

This mummy had already become his zombie, allowing him to release it just like he did with his former marionette, Senor. There was no need for him to store it in his body.

After doing a bestowment, the mummy which was rich in spirituality returned to the real world and arrived inside the cheap motel.

After Klein cleaned up the traces, he reached out his right hand, about to grab the mummy's shoulder and Teleport back to the two-bedroom apartment where Maric and Sharron were.

But after taking a look at the oil-stained yellowish-brown bandages and the dark red liquid on it, Klein silently retracted his right hand and switched to using his gloved left hand.

After holding the mummy's shoulder with his left hand, he immediately began to fade, and this effect quickly spread across his body.

In just a flash, Klein and the mummy had returned to the apartment from before.

He wasn't in a rush to open the door to present it to Sharron and Maric. He took out his golden pocket watch and opened it.

Another 36 seconds before it's five minutes… Klein made the mummy pull out a chair and sit down leisurely.

After a while, he finally heard a knock on the door.

"Come on in," Klein replied with a smile as he controlled the mummy to walk over.

When the door creaked open, the thin figure with the golden, patterned mask and yellowish-brown bandages was reflected in the duo's eyes.

This figure's onyx gems shimmered before it swiftly lay itself down on the ground.

"…"

Momentarily, Sharron and Maric were at a loss for words.

Having already used a wall of spirituality to isolate Azik’s copper whistle, Klein dispelled his control over the zombie and pointed at it with a smile.

“I’m leaving the rest to you.”

And that brings the curtain down for my directed play… Klein commented inwardly as he silently took in the sensation of his potion rapidly digesting.

This made him believe that it didn’t need to take him up until the end of the year to consider the problem of advancing to the level of a demigod. It might be expedited by two or even three months.

Furthermore, with this digestion, the number of marionettes he could control finally rose to two. The maximum limit reached 200 meters. Faced with enemies with the same level of Spirit Body as his, gaining initial control of the target and completely converting them into a marionette was respectively reduced to ten seconds and 150 seconds. The range had also been expanded to ten meters.

“You really… succeeded…” Maric’s eyes stared at the Tutanssess II mummy as he couldn’t help but mutter.

He could never have imagined that they could succeed!

Sherlock Moriarty had managed to successfully steal something four demigods and two terrifying Sealed Artifacts were vying for!

Furthermore, this gentleman had previously returned empty-handed!

Could it be that the mummy had delivered itself?

Deep inside Sharron’s blue eyes, her emotions were concealed and they were completely calm. She scrutinized the “target.”

After confirming that it was the Pharaoh mummy and that it was Tutanssess II, she cast her gaze to Sherlock Moriarty who was seated with his legs crossed.

She opened her mouth slightly before closing them.

“Thank you.

“I’ll mail you the corresponding payment.”

“I’ll wish you, uh—all the best in everything,” Klein replied sincerely.

He then silently had a poignant thought.

If Miss Sharron can successfully advance to Sequence 4, it means I’ll have an additional demigod-level helper! The saying from the Foodaholic Empire is apt—rely on your parents at home, depend on your friends when out. The more demigod-level friends, the merrier! Our Tarot Club needs to develop more friends and reduce our enemies… However, my enemies seem to be ever-increasing…

Having thought of that, Klein exhorted them.

“Be careful of being hunted down.”

The Tutanssess II mummy had too many of its items in the Loen military’s possession. It was very simple for them to use Beyonder methods to lock onto it. Klein’s Paper Angel interference was only effective for a limited amount of time.

Of course, he believed that Sharron and Maric were prepared; otherwise, they wouldn’t have had thoughts on stealing the Pharaoh’s mummy. Likewise, he also believed that they could deal with the origins of the gray-metal masks and special fireworks.

If it’s Danitz, he would most likely say, It didn’t cross my mind… Klein did a comparison with a particular Hunter failure.

Sharron nodded, indicating that she would take note. Then, she made the Tutanssess II mummy into her zombie and brought it into the spirit world.

“Thank you for your help.” Maric, who stayed behind in the room, exhaled. He composed his surging emotions and bowed at Sherlock Moriarty.

Following that, he left the room, removed his disguise, and blended into the crowd in East Borough.

During this process, Klein remained sitting in his chair as he silently watched them leave.

At some point in time, his figure also vanished.

†

In an apartment near Pritz Harbor.

The Loen military’s golden-eyed demigod entered and said to his partner, the lady in the evening gown, “Nothing for now.”

“That’s expected. If he wasn’t certain of success, that mysterious person wouldn’t have come to steal the Tutanssess II mummy,” the lady said in a heavy voice. “However, we can relax our investigation scope. Those fireworks, that mask, those clothes, and that taunting bow should lead us to something.”

She was certain that the Tutanssess II mummy’s loss wasn’t done by the two Rose School of Thought demigods. If it was part of their plan, there was no need for them to carry out that step only when they were in dire straits. They had almost failed to escape.

The golden-eyed demigod nodded and said, “I had a premonition that something would happen, but unfortunately, we didn’t work with the Churches for this operation. We didn’t have enough manpower.”

He paused and asked, “Have you figured out what method that mysterious person used?”

The lady held up the crown of thorns and stabbed a thorn into her neck.

As blood trickled down, she shook her head.

“Perhaps the removing of the soil with the Tutanssess II mummy’s bodily fluid is a ritual…

“This is a very cunning fellow who’s good at deceit!”

Chapter 884 - Destined Encounter

◆

The golden-eyed demigod from the Loen military nodded in agreement.

“Indeed. It’s similar in style to certain fellows from the Intis intelligence agencies.

“However, just seconds after he took away the soil, the Tutanssess II mummy vanished. It’s unlikely that he could complete a ritual in time.”

The lady looked down at the crown of thorns that was embedded in her neck. Slightly slow to react, she said, “Perhaps he, or they, had already set up the other steps of the ritual. Once he teleported back, he immediately threw the soil onto the altar, completing the final step.

“Of course, it’s not necessarily a ritual. It might also be a Sealed Artifact that achieves a certain effect with the help of bodily fluids. There are too many possibilities for this.”

Although Sealed Artifacts’ main effects and negative effects mostly adhered to the Sequence traits of the 22 pathways, allowing researchers to barely come up with a hypothesis, just like how everyone had different personalities, Sealed Artifacts were different. Perhaps due to fusing with an object, the environment when formed, the possible existence of a High-Level Sequence’s aura, or a curse from the original owner, these resulted in all kinds of strange traits that made them not viable for testing. No one could imagine ahead of time the different permutations and list them all out.

The golden-eyed demigod pulled out a chair and sat.

"This is very difficult to investigate, so we can temporarily not consider it. However, you missed out on a direction for the investigation.

"Do you still remember that Hurricane? It swept up Tutanssess II's sarcophagus, causing the ritualistic items, which is also the bodily fluids to leak out, and it also caused the mummy to tumble out. This enabled the condition for zombifying it. In short, this established the foundation for the subsequent development, so it can be confirmed that this was done by the mysterious man or his helper."

The turbidness in the lady's eyes grew faint as she slowly removed the crown of thorns.

"Do you mean that, with the Church of Storms in control of the Sailor pathway and the High-Sequence formulas and Beyonder characteristics, there won't be many Beyonders or mystical items that can use Hurricane? Thus, this is a clue that we can follow to find their trail?"

The golden-eyed demigod nodded.

"Also, I remember that not long ago, there was a case in East Borough. The Aurora Order's Mr. X was assassinated at a gathering he convened himself. Lightning Storm and Hurricane had been used at the scene.

"This garnered a lot of attention from the Church of Storms, and they have been constantly looking for clues.

"To have two Hurricanes happen in the same area in a short period of time and not belong to official organizations—this can't be a coincidence. I believe it can be preliminarily determined that there is a connection. The group of people who killed Mr. X and stole the mummy might be one and the same. We need to join forces with the Church of Storms to investigate."

The lady lowered the crown of thorns and thought.

"That's a good angle.

“Also, from their goals and motives, we can figure out certain things. People who want to use a mummy as a zombie wouldn’t take such a high risk by attempting a theft. I suspect that, to those people, the Tutanssess II mummy is something they attach additional importance to.”

“Something that’s key to a ritual?” The golden-eyed demigod deliberated as he said, “From the scene, the one who was carrying something special to attract the mummy was likely a Wraith or had the corresponding mystical item. Combining the goals and motive, I have a theory…”

The lady’s heart stirred as she blurted out, “Members of the Temperance faction that escaped from the Rose School of Thought?”

“Yes.” The golden-eyed demigod nodded. “Although the creation of mummies is influenced by aspects like the faith in Death and Sun worship, despite the Rose School of Thought occupying a ruling position in the Highlands, Valley, and other places, it hasn’t forbidden such burial practices. This implies that mummies are of use to them. Perhaps it’s the ritual requirement of one of the Sequences.”

Upon saying this, he chuckled in a self-deprecating tone.

“There’s another possibility. To show off and act.

“That bunch of people might not really want the mummy. It just happened to satisfy certain conditions, giving them the opportunity to steal. Hence, they did a grand act. To some Sequences of particular pathways, this is key to digesting the potion.”

As a demigod, he was knowledgeable, so he naturally made many connections.

The lady deliberated and said in a heavy voice, “I suspect that it’s not just one possibility but a potpourri of reasons.

“We shall use this as the foundation for our investigations.”

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough. In a building near the Tussock River.

The Silent One Mahmosi sat in front of a square table that had a tablecloth spread across it with golden nails placed on it. It said in a deep voice, “Zatwen, who do you think stole the Kadiev mummy?”

Not far behind him, a figure rapidly appeared on a piano bench.

This figure wore a black clergyman’s robe with a black glove on his left hand. His face was thin, and his skin color was brown. His eyes were recessed like a dried corpse. His mustache hair was black at the root and white outwards. They extended from his mouth all the way to his ear. However, it wasn’t thick and was rather short. It appeared rather sparse.

Zatwen’s eyes were close to his skin color. Despite having the bearing of a priest, he gave off a cold and terrifying feeling. He appeared to be someone who would transform amidst silence. Thinking, he said, “There are only a handful of people who yearn for a Kadiev mummy and would be willing to take the risk to battle demigods. And here in Backlund, there’s only Sharron.

“She has likely received Reinette Tinekerr’s help; otherwise, it’s impossible for her to succeed.”

Mahmosi picked up a golden nail covered in dense patterns. After a few seconds of silence, he said, “Who was the one who teleported?

“It doesn’t resemble Gehrman Sparrow… Another helper Sharron hired?”

“Perhaps.” Zatwen coughed as his pale face flushed blue. “I believe we need to think of a way to pray to Mother Tree. We should be able to receive a revelation.”

Mahmosi nodded gently and stabbed the golden nail through his bottom lip.

Upon seeing this, Zatwen covered his mouth and slowly got up. He staggered down to the first floor in preparation to leave and return to his hideout.

On the first floor, he saw a dark environment with shimmering candlelight. The fragrance of food wafted from different directions, filling the air. The residential buildings in the nearby area were terraces. Facing the street on the first floor were shops. The contact point of the Rose School of Thought was in a restaurant which mainly served Southern Continent cuisine.

As he had suffered quite serious injuries in the operation, Zatwen didn't wish to maintain his state as an evil spirit. It was too great a burden on the injured him; therefore, he had changed into a black clergyman's robe as he hobbled to the entrance.

At this moment, a customer walked into the restaurant.

This customer wore a black formal suit with black pants and leather shoes. He had a pair of black eyes and a thin face.

He had a slightly broad forehead as he wore a monocle and a very tall top hat. As he casually glanced around, his gaze landed on Zatwen.

Upon seeing the black glove Zatwen was wearing on his left hand, the ends of the customer's mouth curled slightly. He shook his head with a smile, seemingly a little disappointed.

Then, he entered the restaurant, brushing past Zatwen who had stared back with a maleficent look.

Zatwen didn't pay too much attention as he walked out and reached the streets.

Under the illumination of the streetlamps, the night's cool breeze blew at him, causing the Rose School of Thought demigod to suddenly tremble.

Zatwen knew that this was a result of his spiritual perception being triggered. With his heart tightening, he immediately looked down at his hands, surprised to realize that the black glove on his left hand was gone.

Gone!

As a demigod, Zatwen didn't know when the Sealed Artifact on his hand disappeared!

He quickly turned around and looked into the restaurant as the image of the man from before suddenly surfaced in his mind.

Soon, he locked onto the target's aura and found that he was still inside the restaurant. The man had even called out to the waiter to bring him a menu.

Zatwen originally had thoughts of using Mirror Blink to possess the man. But for some unknown reason, his hands shook involuntarily. In an indescribable manner, he believed that a dangerous and terrifying enemy hid in his surroundings!

Just as this thought flashed past his mind, Zatwen subconsciously took a step to the side, walking to the end of the street as though nothing had happened.

†

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

Fors was reading the latest issue of Ladies Aesthetic when she suddenly heard a key turn and the sound of the door opening.

"Why are you so late today?" She looked towards the door where Xio stood.

Xio ruffled her short blonde hair and said, “When I was almost home, I saw a meetup mark from MI9. It was urgent.”

“What happened this time?” With piqued interest, Fors lowered the magazine in her hand.

“A continuation of Mr. X’s assassination,” Xio bent down to switch to her home slippers and said in passing.

The look on Fors’s face froze as her eyes darted about slightly.

“Any clues?”

“Not really. Uh, back then, a Hurricane at the demigod-level appeared. It’s not common outside the Church of Storms, and just earlier tonight, there was a small-scale Hurricane attack at the dock at Pritz Harbor. A Pharaoh mummy was stolen away in the chaos,” Xio explained simply. “MI9 suspect that the two cases were done by the same group of people, so they are pressing informants like us to work harder at gathering intel and finding clues.”

…My Leymano’s Travels still has a Hurricane… Mr. Gehrman Sparrow? Why is he stealing a Pharaoh mummy… Fors forced a smile.

“Perhaps it was done by the Church of Storms?”

Xio rolled her eyes at her and quickly walked into the kitchen in search of food.

†

Early morning, 160 Böklund Street.

Moments after Klein finished washing up, and before he could open the door to let Richardson in, his spiritual perception was triggered. He saw Miss Messenger’s headless body walk out of the void with four heads in hand.

One of them was biting down on a rather thick envelope. Opening its mouth, a large pile of gold coins was spat out.

I can finally repay my debt… Klein glanced at Reinette Tinekerr's four neckless heads and said in relief, "I remember still owing you 3,413 gold coins. You can take the last installment away."

Meanwhile, he had the baffling feeling that the pile of gold coins looked familiar. However, he didn't think too much about it because all the gold coins looked familiar to him.

Chapter 885 - Two Letters

◆

Upon hearing Klein’s words, one of the four heads which Reinette Tinekerr held immediately said, “Alright…”

It opened its mouth and immediately sucked back most of the gold coins, where it was stored was an unknown.

Taking a look at the dozens of shiny gold coins left, Klein reached out to receive the rather thick envelope. He quickly opened it and scanned its opening. Indeed, it was the detailed information regarding Spirit World Plunderers.

After Miss Messenger returned to the spirit world, he put away the gold coins, drew the curtains, and sat down under the morning sun, seriously reading the neat and tidy handwriting.

“Thank you once again for your help.

“The Tutanssess II mummy is part of the advancement ritual for me. It holds deep meaning for me.

“Spirit World Plunderers live in the depths of the spirit world. They’re extremely rare, rich in intelligence, and very aggressive. They can capture or kill creatures and make them soul avatars. Their souls can turn into their true soul’s appearance, giving them similar performance and traits. They can also disguise themselves as other spirit world creatures. When encountering them, perhaps all the spirit world creatures around belong to them. They might be soul avatars that mustn’t be neglected.

“This creature can effectively influence the thought processes of their prey, causing them to enter a desensitized state… Their true soul body has potent spirituality. In clashes of such nature, they are often at a noticeable advantage…

“They’re very difficult to find. At present, there is only one place with signs of their activity. The spirit world’s Calderón City.

“This is a legendary city of mysterious and unknown origins. On this front, there are three theories about them. One is that it was once Death’s residence, the entrance to the Underworld. Two, it’s the divine kingdom left behind by a dead ancient deity from the Second Epoch. Attracted by the spirit world, it sank and slowly transformed into a real yet illusory city. Three, it’s a real city that was devoured by the spirit world during the Cataclysm.

“Regardless of the theory, it elucidates one point: This city is very dangerous. It has many special and strange aspects about it…

“I do not have the mysticism coordinates of Calderón City. Most high-level spirit world creatures aren’t aware either…

“I can provide two suggestions. First is to use a special secret deed ritual to pray to Red Light Aiur Moria to receive the corresponding answer. I won’t describe in detail what Red Light is. If you aren’t aware, you can write to ask me again. The second is to find someone from the Abraham family. They have the legacy of the Traveler’s pathway, and they have done a deep exploration of the spirit world…”

Even when writing a letter, Miss Sharron exudes an extremely restrained feeling… Indeed, the Pharaoh mummy is meant for the Puppet’s ritual. Back then, the evil spirit in the ruin had said that it could be one of the components of the ritual… Therefore, the ritual’s exact requirement is to use a High-Sequence Beyonder’s corpse after death, one that still maintains a level of spirituality, or to use an evil spirit that results from the resentment of death?

Heh heh, can I pray to Orange Light to get “Him” to help me ask Red Light? Hmm, to others, finding Calderón City is a very difficult task, but to me, it’s extremely simple. I can directly give this task to Miss Magician. She has just contributed greatly to the Abraham family…

I hope the first theory about Calderón City is correct. That way, once I make contact with Mr. Azik, I can see the dangerous residents of this mysterious city line up in two rows as they welcome me… Klein shook his head, throwing such a beautiful fantasy to the back of his mind.

He scrutinized the information regarding Spirit World Plunderers and confirmed that they had partial characteristics of Marionettist and Bizarro Sorcerer. They were rather dangerous high-level spirit world creatures.

To make soul avatars have the same appearance, performance, and traits of their true souls is identical to a Bizarro Sorcerer’s ability to give their powers to a marionette… At Zaratul’s level, perhaps at Sequence 3 Scholar of Yore, perhaps he can temporarily give certain Beyonder powers to other creatures that are marionettes? Klein began tearing the letter while in thought as he flicked his wrist and engulfed the letter in scarlet red flames, burning them into ashes that fell into the trash bin.

After reining in his thoughts, while dressed in pajamas, he walked to his bedroom’s door to get Richardson to come in to help him change his clothes.

†

Under Saint Samuel Cathedral.

As usual, Leonard Mitchell was leaning back into his chair with his legs raised on the desk.

There was nothing abnormal about his expression, but he was thinking about Amon deep down.

Ever since he knew that the angel had arrived in Backlund, Pallez Zoroast inside him had become abnormally silent. He wasn't as active as before to proactively speak or give suggestions.

If not for the answers he received when he posed questions, Leonard would have even suspected that Old Man had secretly sneaked off to find another host to parasitize.

Amidst his thoughts, his Red Gloves captain, Nighthawks deacon, Soest, walked in.

"How was the interrogation? Any results?" The Red Gloves in the room who were dealing with their own matters quickly cast their gaze to the door.

Late last night, they had just finished a mission. They had captured three Numinous Episcopate members that they had been tracking for quite some time. Now, they were awaiting the results of the interrogation.

Soest sternly surveyed the room and said, "We had contributed greatly in this, but the results aren't something good.

"Based on the testimony of the three Numinous Episcopate members, as well as the information the Church had previously gathered, we can come to a preliminary conclusion that the Numinous Episcopate has fractured between reviving Death or creating Artificial Death. The latter has already achieved some progress and benefited significantly from it.

"They are filled with animosity towards Loen and to us. They plan to put parts of the experiments of Artificial Death in Backlund! Yes, their thoughts are the same as your present concerns. Even if the experiment fails, there's a chance of severely damaging the Capital of Capitals."

Leonard instantly snapped out of his daze as he exchanged looks with Cindy and Bob, seeing the surprise and rage in each other's eyes.

At this moment, Soest rapped the side of the table to stop the members from further discussion.

He cleared his throat and said, “Our new mission is to head to the Southern Continent to find the key members of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction based on clues gleaned from the testimonies we received. We need to figure out how many remnant thorns are left in Backlund before uprooting each and every one of them.

“We will receive help from Ma’am Daly on this mission. And the Church will give her the potion as an advanced payment, helping her prepare the ritual so that she can become a Gatekeeper before she heads off.

“In addition, the high-ranking deacon in charge of the Southern Continent, Her Excellency ‘The Goddess’s Eye’ EyeIlya, and the local Nighthawks, will provide us with help, giving us the corresponding Sealed Artifacts and helping us with the preliminary investigations.

“Ladies and gentlemen, head back to rest for a day and prepare yourselves. We will set off tomorrow night.”

“Yes, Captain!” Cindy, Bob, and company stood up and replied.

Leonard stood up as well, but he didn’t say a word. The first thought that flashed in his mind was: I can use this opportunity to leave Backlund to escape the threat of Amon!

After returning to 7 Pinster Street, he asked with a suppressed tone after closing the door and drawing the curtains, “Old Man, problem solved.

“I believe a normal assignment for Red Gloves won’t garner the suspicion of Amon, right?”

The slightly-aged voice in his mind replied slowly, “No.”

Leonard could tell that Old Man’s voice appeared much more relaxed. As his mind stirred, he considered for a moment and said, “Should I write to Klein Moretti and tell him that we will be leaving Backlund for a very long period of time? After all, he was the one who warned us that Amon is here…”

Pallez Zoroast replied in the same tone, “Write it if you wish.”

Leonard exhaled, pulled out a piece of paper, and picked up a fountain pen.

He deliberated for a moment and lowered his wrist to write:

“I have a mission that will require me to leave Backlund.”

Looking at this short sentence, Leonard put down his pen and folded the letter.

Soon, he finished preparing the ritual to summon the messenger. He lit a candle, took a step back, and said in ancient Hermes, “I!

“I summon in my name:

“The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the messenger that belongs to Gehrman Sparrow.”

The howling of wind sounded in the room as it turned intense.

The candlelight burgeoned as it was tainted with paleness. A beautiful blonde, red-eyed head appeared from within.

Leonard pricked his brows, and just as he was about to speak, he saw that what followed the head wasn’t a complete neck, but a hand grabbing the hair.

Reinette Tinekerr, in her dark and complicated dress, quickly walked out. The four heads in her hand turned in unison to look at Leonard Mitchell as they spoke one after another, “You…” “Want to…” “Send…” “A letter?”

This spirit world creature looks powerful… This is a perk that Klein has for joining that secret organization? As Leonard thought, he nodded and said, “Yes.”

The four heads held by Reinette Tinekerr spoke one after another:

“You need…” “To pay…” “One…” “Gold coin…”

One gold coin? Messengers from the mysterious world also collect money? Leonard was somewhat astounded but was at a loss for a reaction. All he could do was reach into his pocket and take out a gold coin.

Only then did Reinette Tinekerr raise two of her blonde, red-eyed heads to grab the letter and gold coin.

Following that, she stepped into the void and vanished.

After the candle was restored to normal, Leonard muttered with a laugh, “What a strange messenger…”

Just as he said that, the slightly-aged voice of Pallez Zoroast echoed in his mind.

“It’s best you do not speak negatively behind ‘Her’ back.”

…“Her”? Old Man actually addressed a messenger as a “Her”? A messenger can be a “Her”? Leonard’s eyes widened immediately.

Pallez coughed slightly.

“‘Her’ state is very strange, not better than mine.

“In short, that organization that believes in The Fool is more—hmm, when making contact or cooperating with Klein Moretti, it’s best you be more careful.”

After saying that, the parasite fell silent without saying another word.

†

Leonard actually wants to use a mission to leave Backlund so as to avoid the threat from Amon? This is an idea the grandpa came up with? That’s way too cowardly, no? Klein scanned the letter he received and silently muttered.

He began seriously considering the idea of using the arms deal as an excuse to quickly leave Backlund for a period of time.

Chapter 886 - Preparations Before Leaving

◆

After some consideration, Klein, who already had such a plan, smoothly cleared up his thoughts and decided on his plan of action.

Pa! He flicked the piece of paper in his right hand, looking up from the soaring scarlet flames at Reinette Tinekerr. He planned on taking out a Loen gold coin to provide payment.

However, Miss Messenger had already left. There was no one in front of him.

Not collecting payment? Klein was first taken aback before he made the connection. He suspected that Reinette Tinekerr had proactively asked for payment after being used to collecting gold coins from non-contractees.

Perhaps Miss Messenger didn’t say anything, she just stared at Leonard with those eight eyes on the four heads of hers while waiting for him to pay the gold coin. Yet, this fellow didn’t realize it at all, trying to forcefully end the summon, only to have his neck snapped… Klein hissed in alarm as he used the gold coin he had just taken out to do the divination. He received the result that Leonard Miss Messenger was still alive and doing fine.

He breathed a sigh of relief, put away the gold coin, and called out, “Richardson.”

The half-opened room’s door opened without a sound as Richardson walked in and politely asked, "Sir, how may I be of service?"

"Please bring the butler here." As Klein instructed, he sighed inwardly. He had really been spoiled by the luxurious life. Even when getting someone at home, he wouldn't take even half a step. He had to do it through his valet.

Well, this is an acting requirement… he said silently to himself.

Minutes later, the white-gloved Walter came to the third floor and let his arms hang to his side. He stood in a standard posture to the side of Dwayne Dantès, awaiting his employer's instructions.

Klein had already considered his words, so he unhurriedly said, "Go to Member of Parliament Macht's place to inform him that I've prepared the first installment.

"Also, prepare a carriage. I will be heading to the bursary foundation in the morning and will return in the afternoon.

"If Member of Parliament Macht doesn't have time for me in the afternoon, head over to Dr. Aaron's place, saying that I'll pay a visit in the afternoon."

Klein had already taken out 10,000 pounds from above the gray fog and had stored it in a tiny leather briefcase. He was waiting for the opportune time to complete the preparation work of the arms deal transaction.

And to air the cash of the gray fog's smell, he had deliberately Teleported to the sea, feeding Creeping Hunger in passing. He was afraid that Amon, who also knew of the gray fog's existence, would detect the special smell while being in the same city; thus, seeking out the location of the treasure he was yearning for.

"Alright, Sir." Walter didn't ask his employer how he had gathered the first installment. If memory served him right, Dwayne Dantès hadn't been to the bank recently.

Of course, this wasn't something to be bothered with. Often, foreigners, especially tycoons from Desi or Midseashire, would prepare briefcases filled with large sums of money ahead of time.

†

22 Phelps Street, Loen Charity Bursary Foundation headquarters.

Klein walked through the main door and went straight to the second floor where he found the reception room for directors.

As an honorary director who occasionally participated in certain work, he didn't have an office here, but he could use the reception room.

He clenched his right hand into a fist and held it to his mouth, deliberately coughing before stepping into the reception room. In there, he sat on the sofa.

After a short wait, he stood up again and said to Richardson who was waiting beside him, "I'll first head to the washroom."

After buttoning his coat, Klein stepped out of the room and happened to meet Justice Audrey walking out of her own office.

This noble lady was wearing a rather simple dress today. It was white adorned with dark green. Her sleeves and collars had frills, and at her chest were layers of intercrossed lace that formed a bow tie-like flower.

She didn't even wear any jewelry. She had a girdle which he couldn't tell, but near her left arm, her clothes clung to her skin when the wind blew, allowing a slight protrusion to appear.

"Good morning, Miss Audrey." Klein wore a look of pleasant surprise as though it was a chance encounter.

Audrey glanced at the good-looking Dwayne Dantès with gray sideburns and replied with a smile, "Good morning, Mr. Dantès."

She had wanted to cheerfully say “long time no see” to snide at him for not being to the bursary foundation ever since the opening ceremony. But considering how their relationship was that of acquaintances, she held back from saying such words.

Klein rubbed his temples and shook his head with a wry smile.

“I’m very sorry that I’m only coming today.

“I’ve been very busy recently. I can foresee myself being even busier in time to come. I might make a trip to the Southern Continent to handle certain matters.”

The reason why he specially came was that he wanted to inform Miss Justice that he was leaving Backlund for some time. It was to express his sincerity, hoping that this noble lady could help him watch the bursary foundation and allow it to be operated smoothly. To Klein, he wished from the bottom of his heart that the bursary foundation could help more of the poor that required assistance.

“Southern Continent?” Audrey interpreted the sincerity in Dwayne Dantès’s words as she asked in surprise.

Klein laughed and replied, “For business.”

At that instant, the first thought that came to Audrey’s mind was: Which Sequence 5 is about to lose his life?

Upon sensing Miss Justice making some unpleasant assumptions, Klein added, “It’s a partnership with the military for the sale of some necessities.”

What’s the meaning behind this? Dwayne Dantès’s identity is used to probe intel from the military? Audrey was somewhat enlightened as she raised her right hand and gestured four times in a clockwise fashion. She said with a bright smile, “May the Goddess bless you so that everything goes smoothly.”

After habitually saying that, she sensed that there was something discordant about that. She had wished that the Goddess would bless a Blessed of Mr. Fool!

This is probably closer to a curse, right… Will Mr. Gehrman Sparrow be angry? No, he's actually a kindhearted person deep down. And I did it without any malicious intent… The one who returns from the Southern Continent is probably another Blessed who's playing Dwayne Dantès, right? Will it be a demigod? Audrey didn't notice it as her thoughts wandered.

Klein gave an exasperated smile as he equally drew the crimson moon on his chest in a familiar manner.

"May the Goddess bless us all."

And that "She" doesn't smite us with divine punishment… he added silently.

Following that, he spoke as though it was a casual chat, "Have you been going to the schools to do some promotions lately?"

"Yes." When this was mentioned, Audrey's expression seemed to radiate. She was proud and happy that she had finally done something substantial.

Just as she nodded with some strength, her green eyes revealed a look of sadness.

"After visiting a few public primary schools, I found many of the children there very pitiful. To save money, they bring their own rye bread for lunch, matching it with a cup of water."

Upon saying that, she looked at Dwayne Dantès and said, somewhat embarrassed, "I know that they're temporarily not bringing me along to the night schools and Sunday schools to prevent me from seeing something worse.

"But I can imagine, I can imagine things just like those workers who can only live for a few years once they start working at the factories…"

This was something that The World Gehrman Sparrow had once told her. It was the first time she knew of the real situation of the lower class of Backlund, but having not seen them with her own eyes, all she could do was rely on her imagination.

Klein sighed and said, "Perhaps it's worse than you can imagine.

"There's no need to worry. Once you showcase your ability and win their trust, you will become one of them."

"Okay." Audrey nodded, as though in thought about how she could showcase herself better.

Klein didn't continue on the conversation. After all, this was only their third meeting. They had only exchanged a few words previously, so having too long a conversation easily garnered suspicion.

He pointed at the washroom and apologized before opening up his gait to walk over.

Audrey looked at Dwayne Dantès's back and fell silent as she muttered, "What will it be like if it's worse…"

†

After receiving a reply from Macht, inviting him to the East Balam Military Veterans Mess in the evening, Klein followed his plan. Hence, he visited Dr. Aaron at four in the afternoon.

"Mr. Dantès, your butler didn't inform me of the reason for your visit." As his wife was about a month from being due, Dr. Aaron had declined most of his work, and most of the time he had stayed at home.

Towards the sudden visit of Dwayne Dantès, who he wasn't too familiar with, he was rather perplexed. Furthermore, with him not being good at interpersonal relationships, he posed the question after exchanging some pleasantries.

Klein smiled.

“This is the thing. I might be heading to the Southern Continent soon. As you know, the weather there is humid and hot. There are all kinds of insects and diseases there. I wish to prepare some medicine ahead of time to prevent any accidents from happening. I wonder if you have any suggestions. I’m really sorry, but you are the only excellent doctor I know of.”

Dr. Aaron accepted his explanation and began seriously thinking before giving him the names of some medicine.

Towards the end, Klein, who had written a note filled with words, used the excuse of a stomachache to use the washroom on the first floor.

The washroom’s mirror suddenly darkened as though it was covered by a thick shadow. And in the middle of the shadow, a black pram slowly steered near. In it was a blurry child wrapped in silver silk.

“What is it this time?” Will Auceptin questioned using his bright voice.

Klein coughed dryly and forced a smile.

“You should have heard that I’ll be heading to the Southern Continent.

“I don’t wish to miss your birth, so I would like to know when you plan to have your birthday.”

Will Auceptin sucked at his thumb and said, “I don’t know.”

“Even an angel can’t control when ‘He’ will be born?” Klein asked in surprise.

Will Auceptin replied hesitantly, “You don’t understand… I’ve already identified three dates. They have unique meaning when it comes to fate, but I haven’t decided. I still find it blurry. Perhaps only when the time comes will I suddenly understand what I should do.”

Is this decidophobia? It also gives the strong vibes of a charlatan… Klein crossed his hands and indiscernibly rubbed them.

“Then how would I be able to receive notice in time so that I can return in time to complete the transaction with you? Oh, that paper crane can no longer be used.”

Chapter 887 - Familiar Figure

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Upon hearing Klein’s question, the infant wrapped in silver silk raised his fleshy arms and threw them up.

“I can’t do anything about it either. I’m still in my mother’s womb!

“Although you can no longer write on that paper crane, it can still help me locate you. If there’s anything, I will inform you!”

Klein had already expected such an answer from Will Auceptin. He maintained his smile and explained, “That paper crane is already damaged. I think it will have problems locating my position.”

Following that, he gave his suggestion:

“Perhaps we can do this, you can summon my messenger when you’re born to write to me.”

He wasn’t too worried that Will Auceptin’s birth would result in anything abnormal, causing the Snake of Fate to have to change locations while in a baby’s body. That would prevent him from contacting him again.

Inside the black pram, Will Auceptin gaped his mouth before closing it again, momentarily not giving an answer.

After a few seconds, the infant’s mouth curled and said, “Do you think that’s realistic?

“Not only are you getting a newborn to write a letter to you, he still needs to hold a ritual and summon a messenger?”

Klein chuckled and said, “But you’re a Snake of Fate.”

“The laws of nature still need to be respected!” Will Auceptin threw down “His” arms and smacked the cushion beside him.

This infant thought for a moment and said, “Let’s do this. Get someone to watch this area. Once they realize an infant is born, they can immediately inform you.”

Klein’s eyes darted about for a while before saying, “That works.”

On this matter, he had many people he could get help from. He could hire a gangster through Sharron and inform him via his messenger, or he could get the usually free Emlyn White to do it. He could also hire bounty hunter, Miss Xio, letting Miss Magician be responsible for informing The World Gehrman Sparrow of the developments. He could also get Arrodes to take note of the surroundings and report to him through a one-way communication method.

However, that fellow, Emlyn’s nose is very sharp. I wonder if he will smell the placenta blood and be able to identify what it truly is… If that’s the case, it might result in him suffering the impact of seeing a Mythical Creature. His intelligence will drop and he will turn mentally unsound to the point of his body mutating… Klein hurriedly asked before Will Auceptin’s pram retreated into the shadows, “I have a, hmm—teacher who I haven’t been in contact for a while. Can you help me read his current fate?

“His name is Azik Eggers.”

As Mr. Azik hadn’t replied yet, Klein couldn’t help but feel worried. Back when he used the copper whistle to do a divination above the gray fog, all he saw was a silent and deep darkness. He heard a dragged out and distant breathing, making it impossible for him to interpret what the dream meant.

Will Auceptin sucked at his thumb and said, “He’s in a state of metamorphosis. It might be good, but it might also be bad. That’s all that can be seen because that teacher of yours has something special on him.”

Something special? Something directly derived from Death’s godhood? Metamorphosis? This is referring to Mr. Azik’s recovery of more memories, so he’s in a slumber to recover his corresponding strength? Klein thought as he bowed.

“Thank you for your answer.”

Will Auceptin turned his head and looked to the side.

Klein thought and gave a warning.

“Based on what I know, Blasphemer Amon is here in Backlund. Of course, it’s most likely an avatar.”

Will Auceptin was taken aback for a moment before chuckling.

“It’s a bane for you, but a boon for me. Amon and Ouroboros are absolute enemies—No, a more accurate description is that ‘He’ hates the True Creator. Amon is often thinking of means to pull ‘Him’ down from ‘His’ throne as a god, while Ouroboros is loyal to that evil god.”

After saying that, the black pram retreated into the shadows as everything was restored to normal.

Amon hates the True Creator? I’m increasingly convinced that the True Creator was one of the participants in the sharing of the ancient sun god. ‘He’ is the black infant in the middle of the Storm Angel, White Angel, and Wisdom Angel… Klein breathed a sigh of relief. He took two steps forward, turned on the tap, and washed his hands.

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In the evening at the East Balam Military Veterans Mess.

Klein didn’t immediately meet the long-faced Colonel Calvin. After he placed the briefcase with ten thousand pounds into a heavy safe-deposit box, he followed Macht to have a buffet meal at this high-end club.

The dishes here mainly served Southern Continent cuisine. There was cream bread made from tapioca flour; ice-cream dripped in the berry juice of a lilac tree; assorted seafood broth with coconut milk and palm butter; cow innards that was cooked with pepper, tomatoes, and onions; Haagenti seared roasted meat; broth made from Paz Valley’s delights; as well as steak and roasted squid.

Compared to other places, the ingredients used here were rather high-end. The flavors were also in authentic Southern Continent styles, leaving Klein rather satisfied. If not for his need to maintain his image, he felt that eating a mouthful of seared roasted meat and having a mouthful of ice-cream would be an excellent feeling.

Indeed, I prefer food that has stronger flavors… The thing that satisfied me the most today was that aperitif. If Member of Parliament Macht hadn’t mentioned it in passing, I would’ve thought that it was a lightly-flavored fruit juice… The pale gold liquid with two lemons soaked in it and a few pieces of ice makes it sweet but a little sour. There’s no alcoholic taste to it, and it’s refreshing. It instantly just draws away the heat from the body… Klein placed his napkin on the plate as he recounted the feelings he just had.

At this moment, Macht returned from the washroom. He smiled as he bent down and whispered into Dwayne Dantès’s ear, “Same room as before.”

“Alright.” Klein got up, went to the room with the safe-deposit box, and took out the small leather briefcase with 10,000 pounds before heading over to the activity room where he had previously met Colonel Calvin twice.

Calvin, with his long face, was already waiting inside. When he caught sight of the briefcase in Dwayne Dantès's hand, he got up with a smile.

"You really are a gentleman of action.

"I like such attitudes when handling matters."

As he spoke, he extended his right hand and shook Dwayne Dantès's hand.

Klein then handed the briefcase to him and said with a humble smile, "As a merchant, if one isn't decisive and fast when facing an opportunity to make money, that means that they aren't suitable for this occupation."

Calvin sat back down and opened the briefcase in front of Dwayne Dantès and Macht. He roughly counted the neat stacks of cash.

He quickly completed the confirmation check, closed the briefcase, and looked up at Dwayne Dantès.

"What other thoughts do you have towards the exact details of the transaction?"

Klein deliberately wore a look as though he was organizing his words. After a few seconds, he said, "I'm planning on heading to the Southern Continent soon, to West Balam."

Seeing Calvin and Macht show signs of surprise, he added, "I have some matters that aren't convenient to do while bringing plenty of firearms. And to make the transaction go smoothly, some advanced preparations are required.

"Heh heh, I have to put enough importance on this matter. It's a business worth tens of thousands of pounds.

"I'm thinking of first heading to West Balam to contact clients who have such needs, and to clear out any obvious obstacles. At an agreed-upon time, I'll contact you via telegraph and head to East Balam's border to retrieve the goods."

Calvin pondered for a moment and said, "You can send me a telegram after 20th June. I'll give you the details later. In short, after I receive the telegram, I'll inform the officer there and get them to pass the countersign and password to the designated personnel for them to head to the warehouse.

"Hmm… Will you need any auxiliary personnel for protection during this time? When do you plan on leaving?"

I only wish to find a place to hide in West Balam where there's no Rose School of Thought. The rest can be left to Danitz… When do I leave? I obviously wish to leave today and arrive there today, but that will incur suspicion… Klein considered for two seconds and said, "There's no need for any security for the time being. In certain places in the Southern Continent, having such auxiliary personnel is the main cause for causing conflict. Don't worry, I have plenty of friends in West Balam. Without bringing anything of value, my safety can be guaranteed.

"As for when I'm leaving, my answer is as soon as possible."

Calvin thought for nearly a minute before slowly nodding.

"I'll send someone to receive you after dinner tomorrow. The military will have an airship that needs to send goods and personnel to Desi bay. And it's just a short distance to the Southern Continent via ship from there. If everything goes smoothly, it will just take two to three days. Even if there's a storm on the way, requiring a detour of the sea route, it will still take a maximum of a week."

"Thank you." Klein sincerely stood up and bowed.

From his point of view, leaving Backlund with the military was safe enough. He wouldn't be made a target of suspicion.

After discussing some details, Klein got up and bade farewell and returned to the foyer in preparation to leave.

In the foyer, beside the dining table, there were nearly ten military-clad or casually-dressed men holding a cup of wine gathered. They were chatting and laughing about the recent rumors.

When Klein swept his gaze over, he suddenly found a figure somewhat familiar.

The man was more than 1.85 meters tall but less than 1.9 meters. He had rather long arms, and his feet were faced outwards to a certain degree. His shoulders were abnormally broad, causing his black suit to appear rather tight.

This… Klein's mind raced as his nerves tensed up. He had already recalled the source of the familiarity.

It was the demigod that met Crazy Captain Connors that night!

He was the demigod suspected to be working for a particular faction of the royal family, one who was supervising the human trafficking!

Although this High-Sequence Beyonder was previously wearing a black hood that interfered with divination, preventing his appearance from being exposed, Klein remembered the traits of his body.

That was what a Faceless was good at!

Chapter 888 - A Shocking Glance

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For a second, Klein's act of casually sweeping his gaze paused on that familiar person's figure.

He immediately sensed the abnormality in his reaction since a demigod's spiritual perception wouldn't fail to notice it.

His back muscles tensed up as his mind raced, producing figurative sparks.

He didn't immediately move his gaze away as he continued looking at the demigod suspected to be from the Black Emperor pathway. He smiled at Macht and said, "This place really isn't just for veteran officers."

This sounded like a result of careful observation, but it was nothing but meaningless chatter.

Macht chuckled.

"Any club will exceed its original restrictions when it further develops itself."

His answer didn't seem to offer anything, but on careful consideration, it did seem to imply something or perhaps something that was the complete opposite.

At this moment, the broad-shouldered and long-armed gentleman in a black suit had also naturally turned his head. He looked at the two men, and he noticed that the tycoon who had donated 15,000 pounds was looking at him and his companions while engaging Member of Parliament Macht with a whisper.

This made him feel that his look of surprise was more of a natural reaction towards learning of his occupation.

Then, he retracted his gaze and continued his topic of conversation.

And at this moment, Klein's back was covered in a layer of cold sweat, and his legs were going limp.

Although he had, in a way, faced the demigod before and had even fought with him, to have such a close encounter in such a small place, with danger happening in a split second, this was a first. And more importantly, he was far from prepared to face a demigod. Not only did he lack a marionette, all he had on him was Death Knell, Azik's copper whistle, and the adventurer's harmonica.

The Sea God Scepter was impossible to bring on his person. Furthermore, the usage of it had strict environmental limitations; otherwise, it would result in massive damage. If he kept Groselle's Travels on him for too long, he might be pulled into the book world. When that happens, it would become troublesome trying to exit it. Creeping Hunger was still lacking a seal, so it needed to feed every day. Unless necessary, it was impossible to take it out ahead of time. The Fate Siphon charm was made from a Worm of Time, so it was an unknown if it would attract Amon. Unless he could use it very quickly, Klein obviously lacked the courage to bring it on him.

If the demigod who was suspected to be from the Black Emperor pathway had discovered something wrong with him, there was only one optimal solution he could think of.

It was to blow the harmonica and summon Miss Messenger to get her to help him escape Backlund via the spirit world!

He had never thought of letting Reinette Tinekerr engage in a direct battle while he held Death Knell from the side to find an opportunity to fire. This was Backlund, the home ground of the official Beyonders. With Miss Messenger's unique appearance, that man could easily pin a crime on her, and what awaited Klein would be a joint attack on him. There was bound to be increasing numbers of demigods and powerful Sealed Artifacts.

How harrowing… Klein moved his gaze away in a manner that adhered to logic. Using the Clown's ability to control his legs, he walked to the door in a completely normal manner.

He didn't ask Macht who those people were, to appear uninterested as a way to prove that it was all just a casual glance.

However, that person turning to look at him had exposed his appearance to Klein.

He had thick but unmessy black brows with a short and hard crew-cut of the same color. He had dark blue eyes and a high nose-bridge with a bushy mustache spreading out from his mouth. He had a long face with accentuated outlines as well as callous curves.

He had strong masculine vibes and was probably in his thirties or forties. It was difficult to determine.

Just on his appearance alone, Klein felt that he looked more like an Arbiter pathway's demigod rather than one of the Black Emperor pathway.

Of course, this demigod's bearing was closer to that of a Warrior's, but he was too short.

Having had a clear look at him, Klein didn't need to inquire further. He could directly get Arrodes to answer him. Even if he was still wary of the magic mirror, he could always commission Miss Xio, Miss Sharron, and company to do a simple background check.

He believed that no matter how well-hidden this demigod was, it was unlikely for him to have a low-ranking position. It would be easy to figure out who he was.

One step. Two steps. Three steps. Klein left the East Balam Military Veterans Mess in a normal manner.

When he boarded the carriage, he leaned on the wall, closed his eyes, and kept silent for a few seconds. Inwardly, he let out a long sigh.

The disconnected trail of clues leading to the truth of the Great Smog of Backlund has finally been connected again…

He didn't open his eyes or say a word, as though he was recounting the business problems he had previously discussed. But in fact, it was to quell his emotions that had been left in an upheaval.

During this process, Klein realized that Richardson had tried to speak a few times, only to shut his mouth again, doing so as though he was stumped.

Ultimately, he didn't say a word, focused on preparing marquis black tea for his employer.

Due to his previous encounter, Klein momentarily didn't have the capacity to be bothered about him and had pretended to not notice it.

Amidst the silent atmosphere and grinding wheels, they returned to 160 Böklund Street.

When he reached the third floor, Klein was just about to head for the bathtub that had been prepared by the lady's maid when Richardson, who was holding his hat and cane, took two steps forward and respectfully said, "Sir, are you heading to the Southern Continent soon?"

"Yes," Klein replied frankly. He had even prepared 500 pounds in cash to hand to Housekeeper Taneja for daily expenses needed for the Dwayne Dantès residence during his time in the Southern Continent.

Meanwhile, he had a deeper understanding of the importance of having a butler and valet in high society.

There were many things that a master couldn't keep from them; therefore, any conflict in faith and political inclinations necessitated a change.

Richardson hesitated and said, "Sir, I was born in the Southern Continent and am fluent in Dutanese. I'm also very familiar with the various local traditions. I should be of help to you."

Dutanese was a common language of the ancient Balam Empire. In present-day East and West Balam, the citizens still used this language. Only people of the middle- and upper-class knew foreign languages like ancient Feysac, Loenese, and Intis.

Klein felt lucky with regards to this because ancient Balam was once a unified empire with a true god existing in it. Therefore, although the different states had different accents, they all used Dutanese. The written language was likewise the same. This saved him plenty of trouble.

If I were to encounter dozens or more than a hundred dialects and languages, that would be a headache… However, Dutanese and ancient Feysac doesn't belong to the same system. I'm unable to easily grasp the various branches by learning the latter. Finding an interpreter is necessary. Oh, Anderson seems to be fluent in Dutanese. He never seemed to mention having any problems with communication in West Balam… Klein finished listening to Richardson when he suddenly realized what was stumping him.

As a valet, he needed to follow whenever his employer headed out. There was no need for a butler to do so.

This also meant that a valet was like a secretary for the master's daily life. In certain cases, they would also play a role as a business secretary.

Clearly, Richardson enjoyed his life in Backlund and everything it had to offer. He didn't wish to return to the Southern Continent to see scenery or matters that would make him recall his past; therefore, when he got into the carriage, he had tried to mention his traits but was unable to voice it out. He wished that Dwayne Dantès could find a better candidate.

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "I can tell that you don't like the Southern Continent. Why are you telling me this?"

Richardson slowly bowed his head and looked at his toes.

"You gave me a chance to gain experience to mature. I-I believe I can help you."

Very simple feelings of gratitude… If you hadn't said so, no one would know that you knew Dutanese. After all, you were born and raised in an East Balam colony manor… Klein carefully sized up Richardson, chuckled inwardly, and made some silent poignant comments.

However, he didn't plan on letting this valet of his follow him to the Southern Continent. Firstly, it would make it inconvenient for him to carry out certain operations. Secondly, if he was recognized by some Nation Reestablishment Society member of the Numinous Episcopate, it might end up affecting the rest of his life.

Klein laughed and replied, "I have plenty of friends there. They're all fluent in Dutanese and are aware of the traditions there.

"Hmm, you have more important things to do. Stay in Backlund. Help me deliver some gifts to my friends at fixed periods of time. I'll be giving you a name list when the time comes. Also, read more papers and take note of investment opportunities and also perform on-the-ground checks. Finally, give me a corresponding report. I will get Ma'am Taneja to specially prepare some funds for this."

Richardson was somewhat surprised before saying in pleasant surprise, "Yes, sir. I-I will work hard!"

At that instant, he felt that he was being put in an important position as his eyes blurred up.

From the moment he was born, this was the first time he felt hope for his future. It was something to look forward to.

After dismissing Richardson, Klein took a comfortable bath to soothe his tense nerves. Then, he wore his pajamas and returned to the bedroom. Taking a pen and paper, he drew a symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying.

The full-body mirror's surface ripples with aqueous light as silver light formed Loenese text:

"Exalted Great Master, your puny, loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning!

"Are you about to leave Backlund again?"

Klein nodded and said, "Yes."

Without waiting for Arrodes to mention that he could question it, he asked, "Can I still contact you in the Southern Continent?"

"Of course! As long as you take out that magical radio transceiver." On the surface of the mirror, silver words quickly formed. "However, you cannot leave it out in the real world for too long or use it too frequently. There are plenty of beneficiaries of the Mother Tree of Desire. 'She' can use it to detect you."

Klein nodded gently and asked, "What do you know about the Mother Tree of Desire?"

Arrodes suddenly fell into silence. It was only after a very long time that its silver luster formed a complete sentence:

"I don't dare to mention it, nor do I dare to show it."

Chapter 889 - Warning to Everyone

◆

Don’t dare to mention it or show it… At least for Arrodes, the Mother Tree of Desire is definitely stronger than Sequence 1 Zaratul. No, it’s even stronger than the Monster pathway’s Uniqueness, Die of Probability… There should be a way to circumvent the restriction to get Arrodes to display the corresponding information, such as bringing it above the gray fog… Heh heh, how is that possible? That won’t happen unless I’m already an angel and in complete control of that mysterious space… Klein’s eyes moved slightly without pressing the question. He asked, “It’s your turn to ask.”

The full-body mirror’s silver light turned brisk, forming a new sentence:

“Great Master, what other instructions do you have for me?”

Nice question! Klein thought for a moment and said, “After I leave Backlund, take note of Dr. Aaron Ceres’s family. Once his wife gives birth, remember to mention it to me when I summon you.”

After careful consideration, Klein believed that leaving this matter to Arrodes was for the best. After all, no one could monitor Dr. Aaron’s residence twenty-four hours a day. And what Klein needed to do was to switch residences at the end of the month to turn on the radio transceiver once.

“Alright, Master~” The words on the mirror reflected Arrodes’s mood. “I have a question.”

“Speak.” Klein nodded, giving permission.

This time, the sentence Arrodes presented were filled with pauses as though it was very hesitant.

“Great Master, what relationship does that child have with you?”

It seemed to be puzzled why a supreme ruler above the spirit world would pay so much attention to a yet-to-be-born infant.

Hmm, I’ve already said that it’s the yet-to-be-born child of Dr. Aaron Ceres; yet Arrodes fails to notice anything special about Will Auceptin… When it comes to hiding his fate and special traits, a Snake of Fate is far better than the angels of the other Sequences. However, the magic mirror is able to accurately give me the time when Tail Devourer Ouroboros would leave Backlund… Hmm, it’s likely that Will Auceptin’s reboot makes it difficult for high-leveled existences to notice anything. This might also be why “He” can avoid the Angel of Fate… Klein answered in enlightenment, “Friends.”

About being Will Auceptin’s godfather, it was just a casual thought. He didn’t have much confidence about that or dare to force it, afraid that he would annoy the Snake of Fate.

“Only friends…” Arrodes revealed an inexplicable sense of disappointment in its words. “Great Master, you can ask a question.”

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “Do you know who the person I met at the East Balam Military Veterans Mess is?

“If you aren’t sure who I’m referring to, I can draw him for you.”

In the dark and deep mirror, aqueous light surfaced, producing a cold and bearded man with dark blue eyes. It was none other than the demigod Klein suspected to be of the Black Emperor pathway.

Meanwhile, the corresponding text appeared beneath the “picture.”

"He's Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor. He's from MI9 and is a deputy director. He's known to be a Sequence 5 from the Lawyer pathway, but he wields a powerful Sealed Artifact."

MI9… Brigadier General… Deputy director… From the looks of it, he's the representative of the spy network for the faction of the royal family… Klein memorized the information given to him by the magic mirror. But for a moment, he was at a loss as to the direction for the investigation. After all, Qonas was a demigod, and be it spying or sounding him out, it would easily put him in an alert state regardless of whether he did it himself or commissioned someone else. It was bound to provoke revenge.

The only reliable idea he had was to rely on Miss Justice to do some gathering of information. Not only was her standing high, she also had the social connections to obtain the relevant information. Furthermore, she was a Sequence 6 of the Spectator pathway. She could steer topics of conversation without garnering any suspicion, allowing her to complete her observation stealthily.

I have to say that, although Spectators have lacking combat abilities, they are a force to be reckoned with in other aspects. Besides, with the powers of Psychiatrist and Hypnotist, Spectators can control and guide the direction of a battle to a certain extent… Klein reflected over it as he wondered what else he could ask Arrodes about.

At this moment, the light from the mirror's surface faded and formed a new sentence:

"Great Master, do you wish to know the mastermind behind Cuarón's suicide?"

You are even providing me intelligence on your own accord? Although I've already extricated myself from this matter, I haven't been too actively involved in it and am just awaiting the Nighthawks' investigations. I didn't even find it necessary to ask about it… Klein chuckled inwardly and nodded.

"Yes."

The full-body mirror produced a silver line of text:

"Royal family's consultant, Hvin Rambis, one of the councillors of the Psychology Alchemists."

Psychology Alchemists? Royal family's consultant? Klein immediately frowned.

He found it difficult to determine what the Psychology Alchemists were plotting, or if a particular faction of the royal family was dissatisfied with the current political climate and was attempting to "nudge" it.

The Psychology Alchemists isn't like I imagined, being focused on academics and the exploration of ancient ruins… Do all secret organizations attempt to grasp power at a certain point to influence the world? An anchor's requirement? I wonder if Hvin Rambis's ploy is a personal act or decided by the organization. If it's the former, that's still alright, but if it's the latter, it will be easier for Miss Justice to encounter difficult choices as her standing in the Psychology Alchemists rises… Klein's thoughts whirred as he returned to the question-and-answer game. He deliberated and asked, "What else do you wish to say?"

If anyone else had asked such a question, Klein believed that Arrodes would smite them with lightning or use another malicious method to tease them. However, he believed that, as a supreme ruler above the spirit world, he had the right to ask such a question. It was also an opportunity to test Arrodes's bottom line.

The silver light on the full-body mirror's surface transformed into another new line without any hesitation:

"Great Master, Amon is already in Backlund as you expected.

"As it's 'His' avatar that came, I can see it."

What do you mean as I expected? When did I expect it? Klein pricked up his brows and said,

“I’m aware.

“Alright. That’s it for today. I’ll summon you again using the radio transceiver if I come across any more questions.”

“Yes, Master, your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is constantly awaiting your orders! Goodbye~” The mirror’s surface depicted an emoticon of waving a handkerchief.

Klein watched in silence until everything was restored to normal.

On the second day, which was a Monday. He had already made preparations to head to the Southern Continent. Apart from the luggage that contained two sets of clothes, 500 pounds, and some miscellaneous clothing that was meant for show, he threw the remaining 12,125 pounds and 87 gold coins above the gray fog.

The reason why he was so careful was because Klein had a deep impression on his last death and resurrection. If he hadn’t had an anonymous account with a few hundred pounds from Miss Justice, he had no idea how long he had to wander the streets. Perhaps he had to really get a job at the circus to be a clown, or he’d have to head to a certain gangster leader’s place to “borrow” some money.

Seeing that it was almost three, Klein headed up above the gray fog, prepared to have this week’s Tarot Gathering.

He had previously done a divination here, and he received the conclusion that, unless they were in the same building, Blasphemer Amon was unable to detect a Tarot Club member being pulled up into the mysterious space above the gray fog.

Before long, dark red beams shot up in the grand palace, materializing into blurry figures.

Having confirmed that she was restarting her psychology lessons this week and having reestablished contact with the Psychology Alchemists, Audrey looked towards the end of the long bronze table in a relatively good mood. She stood up, raised the corners of her skirt, and bowed.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~”

Opposite her, The Hanged Man also got up and bowed, but he had another question on his mind.

He had originally promised The World Gehrman Sparrow that he would give him the mystical item made from the Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristic last week. But to his dismay, something happened to the Artisan, preventing him from handing it over in time.

With regards to this, Alger planned on explaining the reason to The World at the Tarot Gathering before personally taking action to resolve the problems of the Artisan.

After the bow and exchanging greetings, Cattleya was just about to say something when she saw Mr. Fool rap the edges of the mottled table.

This dull knock made all the Tarot Club members tense up. They had no idea what Mr. Fool was about to say.

It must be something serious! Something that’s emphasized by Mr. Fool at the beginning must be something serious! Audrey determined inwardly.

The Fool Klein surveyed the area and said with a smile, “Amon recently came to Backlund. An avatar.”

Amon? Blasphemer Amon? Derrick instantly felt his unpleasant memories become invoked.

Be it parasitizing the former team captain, asking “are you looking for me?” or coiling around his Spirit Body like a snake, Amon with his pointed hat was a nightmare he couldn’t shirk away from.

One had to know that, as a resident of the City of Silver, Derrick had seen plenty of terrifying monsters. Only a few could make him feel uneasy and fearful just from a mere recollection.

Amon has headed to Backlund where Miss Justice and Miss Magician are living? What does “He” want? What should they do? Derrick suddenly felt nervous for his companions.

Amon… This ancient King of Angels has returned to the real world? Indeed, when a revolution is about to happen or is descending, the waves of the times will come flooding in… Alger’s eyes narrowed as he recalled what Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos had once said to him.

Cattleya’s thoughts were similar to his. As the King of Angels had reappeared in the Northern Continent, she could catch a “whiff” of the unease. A phrase surfaced in her mind: the changing of an epoch!

Amon! Angel of Time Amon… An ancient King of Angels… Audrey trembled in concern. She glanced at The Magician Fors and Mr. Moon who wore blank and horrified looks and couldn’t help but look towards the end of the long bronze table.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, can I think of a way to inform the Church of this matter?”

Chapter 890 - Ignore "Him"

◆ ◆ ◆

Regarding Miss Justice's question, Klein had already considered it some time ago. After all, leaving troublesome problems to the official organizations who could resolve them was his modus operandi. However, Leonard's and Pallez Zoroast's reaction made him realize something different.

Leonard was a Red Glove of the Nighthawks. He could easily create an informant to pass the news of Amon being in Backlund to the Church of Evernight, and then let the archbishop and high-ranking deacons decide on a strategy before carrying out an operation. It wouldn't expose his problem, and it could also quash any latent troubles. Yet, he had chosen to leave using the excuse of a mission. It was obvious to Klein that Amon's appearance was tied to the reason for Leonard's choice of action.

He had the suspicion that informing the Church of Evernight might result in unpredictable negative outcomes. Therefore, the angel of the Marauder pathway in Leonard's body had denied this choice of action. And "He" was one of the existences who knew the various Beyonder powers that Amon possessed.

When I have no idea what to do, the choice is undoubtedly to emulate those with experience… Although there's the gray fog separating us, and any problem will cease at Miss Justice's side, there's no need to take such risks. There aren't many members of the Tarot Club to begin with. Every one of them needs to be cherished… Thoughts flashed through The Fool Klein's mind as he shook his head and said with a calm, humored tone, “Ignore ‘Him.’”

Ignore “Him”… Mr. Fool’s attitude is as if Amon is a stray dog… In “His” eyes, only Sequence 0 true deities are worthy of attention? That’s right. The last time The Sun was possessed by Amon’s avatar, Mr. Fool had easily cleansed it away. As long as Amon doesn’t appear in person, it’s not too big a problem for “Him”… Hmm, the reason Mr. Fool emphasized this matter at the beginning is to warn us to be careful… Alger thought in fearful respect and enlightenment.

Audrey similarly interpreted the meaning that it was a trivial matter. She suddenly made the connection.

Is Mr. World Gehrman Sparrow’s temporary departure of Backlund to avoid Angel of Time Amon? To Mr. Fool, although “He” is still slowly recovering “His” standing, level, and powers, it’s not difficult for “Him” to deal with Amon’s avatar. The Sun’s encounter is evidence… “He” got “His” Blessed to avoid Amon to not attract the Angel of Time’s real body, as this can spoil “His” plans of awakening?

Yes, “He” emphasized it to us as a warning, worried that we wouldn’t react properly when chancing upon Amon. Mr. Fool really shows “His” concern for us!

At this moment, Emlyn had just digested the matter of King of Angels Blasphemer Amon’s appearance in Backlund.

Although he was arrogant, repeated Tarot Gatherings had allowed him to understand what a King of Angels was. It was an existence second to Sanguine Ancestor Lilith, second to the true deities that sat at the pinnacle Sequence. “They” were the strongest ones who walked the real world!

What’s going to happen this time in Backlund? When the time comes, there will be dead people, the wounded, or the sick everywhere outside. I’ll become busy again because of Father… Emlyn recalled his life after the Great Smog of Backlund as he showed signs of fear, fear that such matters would happen again.

Fors also felt that the problem was significant. This was because if Angel of Time Amon really wanted to do something, it was very likely that “He” would inflict damage on a large scale. It was something that she could avoid by hiding at home and not heading out.

She silently drew a breath and looked to the end of the long bronze table, worriedly asking, “Honorable Mr. Fool, why is Amon sending ‘His’ avatar to Backlund?”

Klein deliberated over his choice of words and looked around the table with a smile.

“To look for all of you.”

To look for us? The sentence seemed to be like bolts of lightning that struck Fors and company awake. It left their spines numb.

Right on the heels of that, Audrey made the connection of the reply to “ignore ‘Him’” from before. She found Mr. Fool like the boundless ocean, and a mere avatar of Blasphemer Amon was just a rock. It could only cause a tiny stir and nothing more.

Although Amon’s avatar came to find us Tarot Club members, Mr. Fool has said to ignore “Him,” so there’s no need to bother about “Him”… Praise Mr. Fool! Audrey’s nerves that had just tensed up instantly relaxed.

Emlyn, Fors, and Derrick also figured out something similar. They either leaned back into their seats, exhaled openly, or praised Mr. Fool from the bottom of their hearts.

Cattleya hadn’t joined when Amon possessed The Sun Derrick, and she had only learned of it during a few of the subsequent discussions. Therefore, she knew little and didn’t have deep thoughts about it. She just felt worried over the situation where Amon, a King of Angels, was seeking out the Tarot Club members.

Why would a King of Angels like Amon target the Tarot Club?

"He" likely discovered our organization from The Sun…

What goal does "He" have, and why is "He" so confident?

"He" is targeting Mr. Fool? "He" can sense the abnormalities of the gray fog?

But Mr. Fool said to ignore "Him"… This means that, under normal circumstances, Amon is unable to tell who is a Tarot Club member?

With Kings of Angels appearing, is the Fifth Epoch coming to an end?

After Alger relaxed from his tensed state, he began thinking about something else.

Back when he informed the Church of Storms about Bansy Harbor's problem, his excuse was that he had heard "someone at a bar mentioning it." And he had described this person using Blasphemer Amon's image!

Thankfully, even if the Church were to encounter Amon, with the way they handle things, they wouldn't verify and question this matter. And regardless of Amon's performance or because of his identity, they will definitely find him extremely suspicious and place weight on this suspicion… Alger wasn't worried that he would expose himself for this trivial problem; he only believed that it was best that he should be careful and not randomly use high-ranking Beyonders, especially angels and above, as scapegoats.

Hence, he warned himself.

Although not every high-ranking Beyonder is at the level of "any mention of it will be known," or have similar powers, mentioning it excessively might result in me encountering that existence due to the machinations of fate. After all, the higher one goes, the deeper the connections of fate will be!

Seeing that the Tarot Club members, especially the three who were in Backlund, had already shown signs of wariness about Amon's avatar and had written off the thoughts of being rash and not plan on targeting the Blasphemer, he calmed down and leaned back, leisurely looking at everyone as an indication that the floor was theirs.

Cattleya reined in her worries over the Northern and Southern Continent and the Five Seas before looking to the seat of honor at the long bronze table.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I have three new diary pages again this time."

She remembered vividly that, at the end of last Monday's Tarot Gathering, she had informed the meaning of the two "Rosellean characters" to Queen Mystic. However, she only received a reply on Sunday. In it were three new diary pages and a question of medium length.

"The place his mind and spirit calls home, is it on that island, or the depths of the cosmos?"

When Cattleya ruminated over this question, she seemed to sense the emotional upheavals that were happening when Queen Mystic wrote it, unlike her usual calm self.

With regards to this, she sighed silently based on her understanding of Queen Mystic Bernadette.

In Her Majesty's heart, Emperor Roselle is an unresolved knot. This is the reason why she ultimately doesn't dare to advance to Sequence 2?

Klein had no idea what Ma'am Hermit was thinking; all he did was nod and indicated that she could conjure the new Roselle diary pages.

Soon, the three yellowish-brown goatskin pages appeared in his palm.

"10th March. I participated in that ancient and most secret organization's gathering.

“After many observations, I’m increasingly puzzled over a problem: What does it mean to be the trend of the times? Who defines the trend of the times?

“If it’s really as they claim, when everything ends and the original Creator is resurrected from the dead, awakening from his slumber, he would gather everything back into his body to create a new world and new history. Then, there’s no need for them to let the times develop according to what they expect of the times. They can quickly come up with all kinds of schemes, such as triggering a world war, a war between angels, or even a war between deities. Wouldn’t that accelerate their goals?

“Or could it be the case that ‘the times’ is part of the original Creator? Only when ‘the times’ develop according to a certain expectation can ‘He’ draw energy from it and revive? This isn’t scientific… Of course, whatever I see and participate in now isn’t scientific at all…

“Actually, if I had any say, why revive the Creator who rides above all? Everyone can just go through the motions and enjoy themselves without any restrictions. Isn’t that better?

“Based on my observations, hehe, there are many members who share similar viewpoints as mine. However, there are a number of members who are stubborn and inflexible, strictly abiding to their beliefs. I wonder if they should be called idealists or crazy cultists.

“What I can’t see through the most is that mysterious leader. Old Mister Hermes told me that this organization began with him, no—‘Him’. It was organized with people who shared ‘His’ beliefs and goals. However, ‘He’ seldom expresses ‘His’ thoughts, never stopping many of the members who use the organization for their own purposes. At times, I will even forget ‘His’ existence. ‘He’ seems to enjoy sitting there, silently watching everyone converse.

“But on one matter, I witnessed ‘His’ might. A High-Sequence Beyonder who had gone against their so-called trend of the times was put forth by ‘Him.’ In thirty seconds, the person became a target of elimination. And I believe that the poor fellow wouldn’t survive past summer.

“Who is ‘He’? Some ancient god that survived the Second Epoch??”

Roselle had used two question marks at the end of the sentence to express his strong doubts. This was something he seldom did; hence, Klein suspected that this was the reason why Bernadette had chosen this diary entry.

Chapter 891 - Strange Chapel

◆

The mysterious leader of the Twilight Hermit Order enjoys sitting there, silently watching everyone converse. Once “He” wishes for something to be done, the matter can very quickly reach a consensus… This really matches the characteristics of the Spectator pathway… I’m increasingly convinced that “He” is Amon’s brother, the other son of the Creator, Adam… In his later years, the emperor learned plenty of secrets from Mr. Door and was probably able to come up with similar conclusions… As Klein compared the descriptions in the diary with what he already knew to come up with theories and verify them, he cast his gaze down to read the rest of the content of the page.

“11th March. The more I recall what happened yesterday, the more afraid I am. A demigod existence had his fate decided with just a few words. He didn’t even have the chance to express his disapproval. And the makeup of the ancient secret organization convinces me that, apart from dealing with the seven orthodox Churches, there is nothing that they can’t do. Even the toppling of a nation isn’t impossible.

“How lucky I am to be pulled into this organization; otherwise, who knows if I might one day suffer an unexpected assassination I cannot resist. I’ll die with my eyes wide open!!

“This kind of organization that hides behind the scenes, secretly passing judgment on others, while determining the life and death of the target is really unacceptable. Even if I’m one of their members, I’m still appalled and feel fear deep down.

"This world is so much more dangerous than Earth. Perhaps just being born with relatively high spirituality, randomly flipping through an ancient tome, sitting normally on a ship doing business, taking in the beauty of some lady, entering some castle because of one's love of traveling, being woken up by fighting next door in the middle of the night, or creating something that's of meaning, these would be enough to cause one to die a baffling, tragic death!

"And this is one of the reasons that drive me to improve myself, to advance myself to gain the ability to determine my own fate. I can definitely succeed. I'm the protagonist of this era, ha!"

"12th March. I feel there's a need to seek out some material regarding the Fourth Epoch, Third Epoch, and even the Second Epoch. The experience that came from joining that ancient secret organization tells me that there might be countless secrets hidden here, the kind that will influence the direction of an epoch.

"Unfortunately, such information is astonishingly rare. They're either kept by the Church, or they have been destroyed. I believe that I'm unlikely to gain much simply by relying on my subordinates. The best method is still to raise my Sequence. It will allow me to gain a higher status and greater power in the Church."

From this diary page, it's obvious that the emperor's act of establishing contact with Mr. Door had happened very long after he joined the Twilight Hermit Order. Perhaps he was already a High-Sequence Beyonder; otherwise, there was no way he could withstand Mr. Door's ravings… Compared to the emperor, it's so much easier for me to investigate history. I have his diary for the Fourth Epoch. There's the City of Silver for the Second Epoch. From time to time, I can even encounter the evil spirit that was formed by a King of Angels… Hmm, in the middle of his life, the emperor seems to tone down on his allusions of grandeur… Klein flipped to the second diary page with a relaxed attitude.

“18th May. I’ve been having nightmares recently. I dream of myself wearing ancient silver-gray armor and sitting beside a cliff. In front of me is silence, and there’s a bottomless black fog beneath me. It was filled with corruption and evil. Merely looking at it was enough to influence me. Towards the end, my face grew complicated, jet-black patterns as I monitored the abyss. My skin turned hard and I had the feeling that sticky liquid was flowing across the surface of my body. My eyes completely lost their reason.

“It was a reflection of the Abyss. It was the reflection of the Abyss which I saw and attempted to enter last month!

“As this nightmare becomes more frequent, I realize that extreme thoughts are becoming a common occurrence for me. Occasionally, the anger from being beaten up might lead me to hoping to rip apart the limbs of my target. Also, dark red lumps are growing on my back. My body temperature is also gradually decreasing.

“Is this a form of corruption from the Abyss?

“I have to think of a way to confirm and resolve it!

“For the time being, I cannot get the Church’s help; otherwise, I’ll have to divulge the existence of the primitive island and the Abyss.

“Yes, I can find the priests and bishops of the Eternal Blazing Sun. They’re more skilled at purification!”

“19th May. Through some connections, I received some secret treatment. My entire being felt a lot more relaxed. All the anomalies that happened to me have turned for the better.

“Amidst my joy, I also thought of a problem. I had only explored the periphery of the Abyss, without making contact with any high-level Devils. I even had an object on the Black King that could resist corruption; yet, I was affected without realizing it and even had signs of being corrupted. Those Criminal pathway Beyonders would make sacrifices to high-level Devils from time to time; the corruption they suffer must be even worse. Over time, it's probably untreatable, and they can only be cleansed—both body and aura.

"Likewise, High-Sequence Beyonders, especially angels, should be able to exert influence on Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders of the same pathway. And due to the difference in level, there are corresponding limitations on distance. When one becomes a true god, there's a high probability that they can"communicate" across the whole world and spirit world without any obstructions…

"This begs the question. Am I being influenced to a certain extent by the God of Craftsmanship, no—Should I say the God of Steam and Machinery? This is quite scary. It appears that only by becoming a demigod that I will be able to escape this influence?

"Thankfully, since the Fifth Epoch, there hasn't been any examples of true gods leaving the astral world to descend upon the land. Likewise, pathways without true gods do not have such severe problems."

"20th May. After a period of being dispirited, I've returned to the social scene!

"F*ck, those bastards have been secretly mocking me, saying that the reason for me not coming out recently has to do with me having too much fun and turning weak! Just because my dark eye circles are more obvious because of my nightmare-induced poor sleep quality?

"Hehe, I want to let them know what it means by the difference in one's talent!!"

I wonder what an angel's influence is like on a Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder… The transmission of ravings over great distances? Automatic characteristic attraction? Regardless of where it is, as long as one's honorific name is chanted, one will have the godhood to reply? When meeting each other, is it the direct acquisition and erosion of one's Beyonder characteristic? If all of this is possible, it's equivalent to a mini-deity… It’s no wonder that angels in the Second Epoch are called subsidiary gods… Klein’s thoughts raced as he flipped the page in his hand to read the last diary page.

“12th October. Edwards ran to me, telling me that one of his knights discovered a strange chapel. It might have to do with the faith before the Fourth Epoch.

“This piqued my interest as I immediately rushed to the tiny city by the name of Bayman.”

“13th October. Bayman is a tiny town built on a mountain. The buildings all have protruded domes, just like a white straw hat. It’s very special.

“Following the street, and covering several flights of stairs, I finally found the strange chapel. On the surface, it looked like an ordinary residence with nothing special about it. Only by entering would one discover the difference.

“There was only one priest here. He was a genial middle-aged man who wore a simple white robe. He had a pale gold beard that covered half his face. His light-colored eyes were clear like a child’s.

“He claimed the place to be a temple of the Creator. Any creature from any species, any believer of any deity could enter.

“When I heard him mention this, it reminded me of a question I had. Apart from the seven orthodox deities, the other faiths are deemed as heretics. They are unable to openly build a cathedral other than that of the original Creator. However, there has never been any such Church coming into existence. Even cathedrals are extremely rare!

“In front of the chapel was a simple baldachin. In it was a man carrying a cross. This was likely the divine image of the so-called Creator.

“I sat in the front pew and idly chatted with the priest. He told me of many different stories.

“He said that when humans were first born, the ones that ruled the skies, land, and sea were all sorts of crazy, bloodthirsty monsters. They were said to be the origins of the later species: dragons, giants, and elves.

“These monsters freely indulged in their desires, occupying all kinds of places. It appeared that it wouldn’t take long before they destroyed the entire world. At this moment, it was the Creator who had awoken. ‘He’ retrieved the special traits and powers that they had been blessed with, and he had bestowed it to the humans.

“After that, ’He” returned to his slumber, leaving behind a prophecy:

“When madness, cruelty, greed, indulgence, coldness, and bloodthirstiness drowns the land once again, ‘He’ would awaken and retrieve everything.

“As we spoke, the priest held the hanging cross by his chest and silently prayed.

“Such a myth is completely different from the Churches’ canon. There are many interesting parts that are worth thinking about.”

“15th October. I’ve been back in Trier for a day. Only then did I forget to ask the priest for his name!

“Forget it. There will still be a chance in the future. My sixth sense as a man tells me that I’ll definitely head to that chapel again.”

Isn’t this the condensed version of the City of Silver’s myth? Hmm, the period around the end of the Second Epoch and the beginning of the Third Epoch… That priest seems to know a lot. Perhaps, an organization that passes down such a myth over the generations know a lot… Klein’s mind stirred as the diary pages in his hand vanished.

Then, he looked up at Ma’am Hermit.

“Go ahead.”

Cattleya immediately bowed her head.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, what I wish to know is if the place that Emperor Roselle’s mind and spirit calls home on that island or the depths of the cosmos?”

That island? That primitive island that caused Grimm to die and had left the emperor shocked? From the looks of it, the emperor treated the island with great importance towards the end of his life. Even Queen Mystic Bernadette noticed it…

What does deep in the cosmos mean? The astral world? Or some other planet? There are many things about the emperor that transcends his era, so he’s suspected by his daughter to be an alien?

Although it’s a little ridiculous, it adheres to logic. After all, research has proven that this is a planet. The Sun is a star, and apart from that is the endless universe, a galaxy with countless stars… How should I answer? I can’t just tell her about transmigration. But it’s not like I can’t say anything… Klein pondered for a while before shaking his head with a smile.

“Neither of them.”

Chapter 892 - Individual “Comprehension”

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Neither of them… Cattleya ruminated over Mr. Fool’s reply, suddenly feeling at a loss as to the true meaning of the question.

She originally imagined that the place that Emperor Roselle’s mind and spirit called home had to involve something philosophical or mystical. For example, the island might refer to the divine kingdom of the deity of his faith; the depths of the cosmos referred to the astral world, indicating Emperor Roselle’s belief in surpassing himself in his quest for a deity’s throne. In the end, Mr. Fool answered that it was neither. This denied nearly every possibility, making it difficult for her to think of any other answer.

Perhaps what Her Majesty wishes to ask is not something I understand. What Mr. Fool is saying is pointing at another explanation… It doesn’t matter if I understand it. I’m only a communication tool between them… Cattleya sighed inwardly as she sincerely bowed.

“Thank you for your answer.”

The other Tarot Club members were lost in regards to the question and answer. Although they could understand the reason for the question and could understand what the actual meaning of the mental and spiritual home was, they couldn’t make any connection to the island or the depths of the cosmos. Hence, all of them had their own interpretations and guesses, but all of them felt that their theories were distant from the truth.

Subconsciously, Fors believed that the island referred to the woman Roselle loved the most. The depths of the cosmos referred to the emperor's late years when he cast his gaze to what he deemed "the Sea of Stars."

Audrey believed that the island referred to one's island of self-consciousness in psychology. The sea was the conscious, and below the sea's surface was the subconscious. And the cosmos referred to the spirituality sky that represented the astral world. Hence, the corresponding question became "did Emperor Roselle believe in himself, deities, or purely nature."

From this angle, Mr. Fool's answer appeared rather strange. It was as though "He" was saying that Emperor Roselle didn't believe in anything, including himself.

I might be misinterpreting it… But if that's really the case, Emperor Roselle might seem conflicted based on what Mr. Fool says, but in fact, it might conceal a deeper secret… Or it could be that, in his later years, he had seen through life. He began thinking about the universe, the world, deities, and the basic qualities of humanity. He became a pessimist and a nihilist? Audrey seemed to be training her abilities as she thought with piqued interest.

Alger had similar thoughts as Cattleya. As for Emlyn, he considered it for a moment before decisively giving up upon realizing that he had no clue. Derrick had no interest in Emperor Roselle, but he didn't break the silence. He kept considering the conversations he was to have later.

Finally, The Fool, who was cloaked by the gray fog, chuckled and said, "You may begin."

Alger immediately looked at The World and deliberated over his words.

"Sorry, your mystical item will require a little more time."

Without waiting for him to speak, he quickly gave an explanation:

"That Artisan had strangely gotten infected by a sickness, and there are suspicious 'snoopers' appearing in the vicinity. This resulted in a delay. I will personally make a trip to see if I can resolve his problems so that he can quickly recover. We'll try to make the mystical item you need within two weeks."

He spoke extremely sincerely as a way to express his apologies and importance on the matter. But in his actual description, he had secretly pushed all the blame to the Artisan. It was as though he was saying to The World that if he were displeased, I will teach him a lesson for you. If that's not enough, I will even give you his exact location for you to personally pay him a visit.

That Artisan sure is troublesome… Mr. Hanged Man treats this quite seriously. Hmm, non-official, or should I say Artisans who are willing to accept orders from unknown origins, are extremely rare. If they can be secured, it's best that they are secured… Klein pondered for a moment and got The World to hoarsely reply, "I will allow this delay, but there shouldn't be a next time."

He spoke very calmly, but it alarmed Alger. He could almost feel the hidden murderous intent in The World Gehrman Sparrow.

"Thank you for your understanding," he said with a staid expression.

Upon hearing their conversation, Cattleya looked at The Hanged Man, curled her lips, and nudged her glasses. She said, "If you are unable to resolve the problems, I can provide some help."

From her point of view, as long as the problem wasn't serious, she could even do it for free. After all, this meant that she could skip The Hanged Man and directly establish connections with the Artisan.

Alger obviously sensed the true intent of this pirate admiral. He felt that she was beginning to severely encroach into his territory, giving him a certain level of pressure. He paused for a moment and replied in an unperturbed manner, "Then, I will thank you on his behalf for your kindness.”

On the one hand, he expressed his close ties with the Artisan, and on the other hand, didn’t directly object to her help; thus, giving him sufficient leeway. Compared to having Gehrman Sparrow find fault with him, sacrificing some benefits wasn’t something unacceptable.

Cattleya didn’t harp on the matter as she turned to look at The World.

“Are you pleased with the information on West Balam?”

She had already gathered all the information on West Balam that Gehrman Sparrow needed last Thursday. She had handed it to him via the strange messenger.

She was filled with fear when it came to Mr. Fool, so given any other methods, she was unwilling to disturb that existence.

It cost me a total of 300 pounds. If it wasn’t good enough, I would’ve asked for a refund there and then! Klein mumbled and made The World answer tersely as an affirmation.

Then, the fake person cast its gaze on Miss Magician.

Fors immediately felt uncomfortable, akin to the feeling of a rat being targeted by a cat. She couldn’t help but consider if she had done something wrong.

Could it be that during my conversation with Xio, my description, no—defamation of Dwayne Dantès, was heard by him? Or is he displeased that I didn’t refund him the money? Fors stopped thinking about the bodyguard mission that had happened days ago as she asked, quaking with consternation, “Mr. World, i-is there something?”

The World nodded and said, “A commission.

“Get information on Calderón City from the Abraham family. Most important of all is its location.”

Calderón City… Why is The World suddenly searching for this mysterious spirit world city? An instruction from Mr. Fool? It's a new part of his reawakening plans? Cattleya had some idea about Calderón City, so she was quite perplexed.

The other Tarot Club members, including Fors, didn't know what city The World was looking for. All they could do was maintain their silence. Among them, Emlyn felt that he had heard of it before, but he couldn't recall the exact details.

About four seconds later, Fors forced a smile.

"No problem. I can help you ask."

"How much would it cost?" The World asked in an unperturbed tone.

1,000 pounds! No, 500 pounds, no— I still need to deduct the bodyguard fee… Fors's mind raced and finally gave her price:

"350 pounds."

That's cheap. Other than the spirit world's Seven Lights, perhaps only the Abraham family has detailed information on Calderón City… Yes, to Miss Magician, it's just about asking her teacher. It's indeed simple and convenient. It's no wonder it's not expensive… Klein was first surprised before coming to a realization. He made The World nod and say, "Deal."

After watching this transaction close, Audrey noticed something amusing.

Miss Magician seems to be very afraid of Mr. World. It was to the point of being a reflex!

She had previously met Dwayne Dantès, but didn't know that he was Gehrman Sparrow. During this period, she discovered something terrifying? Hmm, I'll arrange to meet her and Xio at Glaint's place. Let's see if I can figure out something… Audrey thought as she indiscernibly nodded.

At this moment, seeing that The World had nothing else, Emlyn hurriedly looked at The Sun.

“Do you have the Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic of the artificial vampire?”

“I haven’t accrued enough merit points.” Derrick didn’t feel ashamed this time. On the contrary, he felt that Mr. Moon was being overly anxious. How could the points needed for a Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic be so easily amassed?

Emlyn turned his head disgruntledly when he suddenly recalled something. He hurriedly said to Miss Magician, “I have clues to the cursed item and remnant spirituality from an ancient wraith. I’m waiting for more detailed information.

“This might not be an item to give to you directly, but one to provide you with some information about where you can find an ancient wraith in the vicinity of Backlund.”

Upon saying that, Emlyn thought and said, “300 pounds.”

This means that I have to hunt the ancient wraith myself? Based on various mysticism rumors, this is quite a powerful monster… After hearing what Mr. Moon had to say, Fors’s first reaction was that it was a dilemma. Her second reaction was to commission the hunting mission to Mr. World. She was certain that he could quickly and successfully complete it!

But upon the thought that hiring Mr. World might cost far more than what the ancient wraith was worth, she felt that it was better to attempt it herself.

I’ll wait until Xio becomes an Interrogator. Together, we should have a higher chance… Besides, I still have Leymano’s Travels with me. On it is a demigod-level High-Sequence Beyonder power and Angel’s Embrace. There are plenty of unique Beyonder powers in it, and below that of

High-Sequence Beyonders, it’s practically a divine artifact… Uh, I have little actual combat experience since I’m fleeing most of the time. This is an opportunity… Fors quickly made a decision and said to The Moon Emlyn, “Deal.”

After confirming some other matters, the transaction segment came to an end. Klein got The World Gehrman Sparrow to beat Mr. Hanged Man to the punch by looking around and saying, “My preliminary investigations regarding Backlund’s Cuarón’s suicide has borne fruit.”

Chapter 893 - Hair-Resembling Plants

The one that was most interested Cuarón's suicide was none other than Justice Audrey. However, she had long noticed that Fors had some slight interest in the case. Hence, she didn't ask and had maintained her posture, patiently waiting for a particular best-selling author to pose the question.

In just a second or two, Fors looked at the borders of the table in front of The World and asked after some deliberation, "What's the truth?"

Klein had already rehearsed how he was to describe it, so without any hesitation, he got The World to say, "The mastermind behind it is the royal family's consultant, Hvin Rambis. He probably has another identity—a councillor of the Psychology Alchemists."

When she heard the first sentence, Audrey's mind had already naturally produced the image of a genial elder. This man came from an aristocratic background. He had graduated from Berth University and possessed profound knowledge and outstanding insight. He had been a consultant to the royal family for more than a decade and was publicly recognized as a scholar, a good man, a gentleman.

Audrey had previously suspected that Cuarón's suicide might have been instigated by the royal family, but she never expected the mastermind to be the genial, amiable, kind, and humorous Hvin Rambis!

When The World announced the other identity of the man, she found herself unable to hide her alarm and puzzlement.

Hvin Rambis is a Beyonder? He’s a councillor of the Psychology Alchemists?

This also means that he might be a demigod… I’ve seen him so many times, but I’ve never connected him to the mysterious world. I always found him to be solely a scholar, a knowledgeable scholar…

If Mr. World wasn’t misled in his investigations, I’d really find it unbelievable. That Hvin Rambis, who’s known to be helpful to others, would treat a life with such coldness. He coldly made a child lose his father, a wife to lose her husband, parents to lose their son… He usually presents himself to be cultured and loving… Hmm, politics is dirtier than I imagined. Same for the royal family…

Speaking of which, I have yet to meet a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists. I’ve never made contact with their upper echelons. I never expected that this secret organization is almost no different from the cults like the Aurora Order and Numinous Episcopate… Our Tarot Club is better. Mr. Fool is always stopping or disrupting the plans of the evil gods and devils…

While Audrey’s mind was in chaos, Alger acutely sensed the brewing problems in Backlund’s political climate. He felt that various factions were interlinked and that there were many secrets. They formed a massive bucket of explosives that could explode at any time.

The nobles, royal family, Church of Storms, Church of Evernight, Church of Steam, the burgeoning rich, the commoners who live on a precipice, and the lowest class who live abject lives… The revolution of the times is so obvious. To think I didn’t recognize this at all. I just simply believed Qilangos’s words and the “evidence” he showed. An epoch where the old gods fade and new gods arise is about to descend. The tides of history are roaring in an unstoppable manner… Alger silently sighed, seemingly seeing the tall gothic bell tower and the Bell of Order that hung in it.

And surrounding this famous landmark, swirls of air was materializing and the light was darkening. It appeared that eddies were gearing up to form hurricanes.

Suddenly, Alger had a theory.

What arises might not be a new god, but an ancient god from an even more remote age…

He instinctively glanced at the seat of honor at the end of the long bronze table before quickly retracting his gaze. He could hardly quell the upheavals in his heart.

At that moment, he had a baffling feeling that his ambition and goals were too puny. He had only wanted to become an archbishop of the Church of Storms, a saint. In this position, he would have authority in the world and he could direct many things in secret.

Since the old gods are fading away and new gods are rising, Mr. Fool will be returning to "His" throne in the astral world. Then why shouldn't I consider being an angel?

Only at this level can I complete a qualitative change in my existence. I'll be able to live a long lifespan. Only then can I lord over people and lead a large-scale organization. I'll wield authority over the world!

As thoughts flashed through his mind, Alger trembled in an almost indiscernible manner. His heart was spewing with agitated emotions.

When Cattleya connected Queen Mystic's whereabouts for the past two months, she felt that the latter had been spending a large portion of her time in Backlund.

Is something about to happen in Backlund? I can try asking when I write this time. I wonder what response Her Majesty will give… Cattleya nudged her heavy glasses on her nose and swept her gaze across Miss Justice and the other members from Backlund.

Fors knew some of the details of Cuarón's suicide case. She knew that the victim had acted on his own the entire time and that he wasn't controlled. She also knew that the witnesses believed without a doubt that everything was a result of Dwayne Dantès. Comparing this with the actual situation had induced a deep sense of fear towards the councillor of the Psychology Alchemists. She didn't wish that she would one day find out that her thoughts and hobbies were all a result of someone else's doing.

How is this different from being a puppet? A High-Sequence Beyonder of the Spectator pathway is terrifying… However, this is really good writing material. Currently, the science of psychology already has hypnosis… In my next book, I want to write about a sick girl liking a gentleman. She uses hypnosis to make him fall in love with her. The ending climax is when she discovers that the gentleman is actually a master hypnotist… Fors gaped her mouth before closing it again. She didn't ask further about Hvin Rambis since she didn't know him at all.

Klein's sharing of Hvin Rambis was mainly to warn Miss Justice. He wanted her to be careful and wary of this Psychology Alchemists councilor. Now, seeing that his goal had been achieved, he said, "There's another matter. Help me take note of Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor. He's the deputy director of MI9. On the surface, he's only a Sequence 5, but in actual fact, he's a Black Emperor pathway demigod. He possesses rather potent spiritual perception and can sharply detect that others are observing him."

Qonas Kilgor… Audrey repeated this name inwardly and realized that she had no impression of this gentleman.

Either we have little overlap in our social circles, to the point of just nodding at each other when bumping into one another without asking who the other is, or he keeps an extremely low profile. He doesn't attend such gatherings often… If I have a chance, I should ask Kance. He's from MI9. He definitely knows this superior of his… Audrey was no longer surprised that Qonas was a demigod despite being a Sequence 5 in name. From her point of view, it was common for members of an intelligence agency to be in such situations.

Alger and Cattleya had more or less heard of the high-ranking member of MI9, Qonas Kilgor. However, they lacked a deeper understanding of the matter, so all they could do was refresh whatever they knew and remind themselves to be especially careful when encountering anything to do with the person in question.

Seeing that Mr. World had nothing else to share, Derrick didn't wait for Mr. Hanged Man to ask. He said, "I've made a new friend again."

He paused for a moment before getting to the crux of the matter.

"The area he patrols includes the former Chief's mausoleum. He told me that the six-member council has yet to open the door that leads underground. However, through the cracks on the outer rocks of the mausoleum, there are luxuriant and strange plants growing out from them. They look like human hair."

The six-member council has three demigods. Even if there are some out on expeditions and aren't in the City of Silver, the other three likely control a certain powerful Sealed Artifact or have Grazed an evil spirit, giving them nearly demigod strength. Despite joining forces for so many days, they haven't managed to open the entrance to the former Chief's mausoleum… This means that it's quite a serious problem… Also, what's the reason for plants that resemble human hair to suddenly grow? One question after another arose in Klein's mind as he waited for The Hanged Man to ask Little Sun.

He knew that the former would definitely have questions.

Alger, who finished listening quietly, frowned slightly before relaxing his brows. After some deliberation, he said, "Apart from that, are there any anomalies?

"Is the one in charge of opening the mausoleum that Shepherd Elder Lovia?"

“It’s not her. The Chief is present too. Likewise for two other Elders,” Derrick answered seriously. “There aren’t any other anomalies for the time being.”

Alger nodded and said, “Very good. Maintain your present state. Establish communications with more people. Keep a note of any changes with that mausoleum.”

After being praised, Derrick hurriedly nodded as he answered eagerly.

After a few more exchanges of words, the gathering naturally began the learning segment. Fors had planned on asking what the Pharaoh mummy was for, but after seeing The World, she shut her mouth.

When the gathering ended, Klein, who had returned to the real world, turned on the tap and washed his face and hands before patiently waiting for night to come.

When the time came, he would be riding on a military airship to Desi Bay.

†

Southern Continent, Behrens Harbor.

As the Golden Dream was cruising south in the Fog Sea, Danitz only took a few days to arrive at the harbor northmost of West Balam.

He draped himself with a dark-colored cloak and carried a suitcase. Wearing the Sun Brooch inside his clothes, he carried an iron-black boxing glove close to his chest. He was walking down the harbor’s roads and was out while sweating profusely. He felt that he was already armed to the teeth, far stronger than he was before.

Once out the harbor, Danitz glanced to his sides and extended his hand to stop a carriage.

When the carriage driver saw him, he said out a string of words:

“%#@&&&()(())…”

What is he saying… Danitz looked blankly at him. It took him a few seconds to recall one thing.

He didn’t know the local language, Dutanese, at all!

And back when he came to West Balam, he had his captain, a polyglot, leading the crew. He didn’t need to worry that he didn’t understand anything.

Chapter 894 - Meeting

◆

Danitz turned agape as he subconsciously said in Intis, “Hotel.”

The air seemed to instantly freeze as Danitz looked at the carriage driver’s dark-brown skin, coarse and messy black hair, rather soft facial contours, and blank expression. He exhaled silently and blamed it on his bad luck before silently carrying his luggage to walk down the street.

“Dogsh*t! I actually encountered a carriage driver who doesn’t know Intis! Shouldn’t someone who picks up passengers near the harbor know a few Northern Continent languages? There are so many people from Intis, Loen, and Feysac around here!” As Danitz grumbled, he looked ahead to look for pedestrians who looked to be from the Northern Continent or had similar heritages in a bid to smoothen his process of checking into a hotel and filling his stomach.

According to what he knew, Behrens Harbor had quite a number of people from Intis, Loen, Feynapotter, and Feysac who had migrated here. As long as he met one, communication wouldn’t be a problem.

However, Danitz felt that all of this was built on a premise: he had to ensure that he didn’t collapse from heatstroke.

“This dogsh*t weather!” He looked up at the azure-blue sky, white clouds, and the sun which wasn’t too glaring. Cursing with a warped expression, he raised his hand to wipe the sweat from his forehead.

Despite his cursing, Danitz actually knew that the temperature in the

Southern Continent was considered mild to the point that even calling it slightly cool wasn't an exaggeration. The reason why he was feeling so hot was because he was wearing the Sun Brooch. However, having just arrived and having not figured out the situation in his surroundings, he didn't dare remove the brooch to stuff it into his luggage bag. If he were to lose the item, he could imagine the cold and crazy look Gehrman Sparrow would give him.

Come on, give me a few people from the Northern Continent. Any country would do. I'm a famous pirate who knows several languages after all… Danitz kept muttering under his breath as all he could think of was iced beer and icebergs that floated in the ocean.

As he muttered, he suddenly rubbed his eyes.

He had finally seen someone who was clearly of Northern Continent descent!

Furthermore, it seemed to be someone familiar!

Diagonally ahead of Danitz, at a street illuminated by bright sunlight, a young man with blond short hair that was split seventy-thirty was leaning against a wall, blowing into a silver harmonica.

He had emerald-green eyes, and he wore a white shirt that didn't have the top two buttons buttoned up. He wore a completely unbuttoned black vest, dark-colored trousers, and a single black glove. He was none other than the Strongest Hunter of the Fog Sea, Anderson Hood!

What a coincidence? This fellow actually came to West Balam… Danitz felt delighted deep down, feeling that he had finally grabbed a floating plank in the sea of people. Ignoring Anderson's actions on the Golden Dream, he approached him and greeted in standard hunter speech.

"What happened? Treasure hunting hasn't been working out for you, so you've begun busking on the streets?"

He noticed that Anderson had an overturned hat in front of him. In it were about twenty to thirty brass coins. A few of them were Intis Coppets, with the majority being local Delexi.

In Intis, Delexi meant copper coins.

Anderson stopped playing the harmonica as he shot Danitz a glance.

“That’s not my hat.

“I happened to walk past and saw a hat on the ground. Seeing how no one discovered it, I felt a little wistful and took out my harmonica to play it. To my surprise, quite a number of people gathered around to listen and threw money in it.

“A boorish pirate like you probably doesn’t understand the beauty of music and how it has no borders. I’m telling you, your captain especially likes…”

“Stop!” Danitz’s forehead throbbed as he stopped Anderson from diverting the topic of conversation. He asked, “Why are you here?”

Anderson held the harmonica and thought about it seriously.

“That’s a good question.

“I have no idea why I’m here in West Balam either. I don’t remember a thing that has happened over the past two months.”

Danitz originally wanted him to cut it out, but Anderson’s serious expression convinced him. He deliberated and asked, “You don’t remember a thing?”

Anderson put away the silver harmonica, bent down, picked up the hat with quite a number of coins, and dusted it.

“My last memory was of me in Bayam with Gehrman Sparrow. After going our separate ways, I had apparently gone somewhere to meet someone. When I woke up, I was already here in West Bayam…

“Haha, don’t be concerned over such matters. As long as I’m still alive. Ah, it’s almost noon. Let’s go have a meal. I heard that Behrens is famous for its pork knuckles.”

While saying that, Anderson placed the hat along with the coins beside a tramp to his side.

Already hot, hungry, and exhausted, Danitz was invigorated upon hearing that.

“You know Dutanese?”

Anderson chuckled.

“Haven’t you heard of my numerous adventures as a treasure hunter in West Balam?”

That’s right. I had thought of seeking you out to get information on West Balam… The situation here is chaotic, and it’s rather dangerous. I’ll definitely be safer with Anderson around. Also, I’ll have an interpreter! I can’t say I’m hiring him, as I can’t afford him… Danitz slowly revealed a smile.

“That puts me at ease. Let’s go.”

Holding his luggage, he and Anderson circled to a nearby main street and found a restaurant.

Upon hearing the waiter speak in his native tongue, and seeing the menu filled with indecipherable text, Danitz felt a headache as he hurriedly said to Anderson, “I’ll leave it to you.”

As he spoke, he handed the menu to the Strongest Hunter of the Fog Sea.

Anderson didn’t reach out his hand as he replied with a composed expression, “I can’t read it either.”

“…Didn’t you say you know Dutanese?” Danitz blurted out in surprise.

Anderson threw up his hands.

“I didn’t say that.

“What has my repeated visits to West Balam in search of treasure have to do with knowing Dutanese?”

“Without knowing Dutanese, how are you able to understand those texts in the ancient temples and castle ruins? How do you seek out treasure?” Danitz’s expression contorted bit by bit as his tone sped up without him realizing it.

Anderson picked up the cup served by the waiter and gulped it down.

“Problems that can be solved with a dictionary aren’t problems.

“Besides, does not knowing Dutanese mean that you can’t communicate with the people from the Southern Continent?”

WIth that said, he turned to look at the waiter. Speaking in the Intis language, he said, “Two specialty pork knuckles.”

The waiter obviously gave him a blank look as he kept pointing at the menu.

Anderson didn’t fluster at all as he unhurriedly pressed his right hand to his nose and mimicked the grunting of a pig.

The waiter was first taken aback before revealing a look of enlightenment. Then, Anderson pointed at his knuckles and pointed at the Behrens label on the menu before using his fingers to show two.

“%$#” As the waiter spoke in an accented Dutanese, he repeatedly nodded to show his comprehension. By the side, Danitz was dumbfounded by what he saw.

After a series of gestures, mixed with a few basic Dutanese words, he finally finished ordering the meal. Turning his head to Danitz, he smiled.

“Get it? In this world, there’s a common language—body language!”

Danitz watched with a frozen expression as he curled the corners of his lips as a response.

†

A carriage drove out of West Borough, and it headed south at an intersection. Soon, it arrived at a military base.

With Colonel Calvin’s letter and a junior officer escorting him, Klein successfully entered the base and arrived at a square paved with rammed earth. Berthed on it was a dark-blue and white behemoth.

This airship was dozens of meters long, and its truss had solid and light composite metal frames extended from it. They were intercrossed with one another as they held up an impermeable cloth used as cushions. Beneath it were openings mounted with machine guns, projectile launchers, and cannons.

At this moment, the ignition steam engine had yet to hum, and the corresponding propellers were still static. Everything appeared extremely silent.

Klein handed his documents and proof of identity to the officer on guard by the gangway. After receiving permission, he walked up onto the airship with his suitcase in hand.

It was like a ship with three sections. The uppermost section had complicated machinery and a cargo haul. The middle section had a hall for buffets and balls. Surrounding the hall were hallways that led to the upper and lower sections. These hallways included lounges. As for the lowest section, they were the rooms for the machine guns, projectile launchers, and cannons, as well as the soldiers’ cabins.

Walking by the guards equipped with rifles, Klein followed the instructions he received from the officer and found the lounge reserved for him. He placed his luggage beside a sofa-like chair.

Then, he picked up a cup of water on the table, walked to the window, and took in the scenery outside.

To be frank, although he knew a little of everything, it was really only a little. Therefore, he didn't understand the design principles used for this new airship model. He didn't know how high it could go or how stable it was in midair.

This left him a little uneasy. Before setting off, he had even done a divination above the gray fog. He received a revelation that he would arrive at his destination rather smoothly.

There seems to be a safety belt. This world's airship industry has plenty of years of history. They have quite a bit of experience accumulated in all aspects… Klein was just about to retract his gaze and admire the decorations inside the room and the candlelight when he noticed a group of people approaching Airship 1345.

They were men and women, all of them wearing thin, black trench coats and red gloves. They were carrying leather suitcases of varying sizes. Only one of them wore a mysterious medium's robe. She had blue eyeshadow and blush, and she was none other than Daly Simone.

And behind the lady was the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell.

While no one noticed it, Leonard's footsteps suddenly slowed down. Then, he looked up at the midsection of the airship.

His eyes reflected the gray-sideburned and blue-eyed Dwayne Dantès who was wearing a suit and bow tie.

This gentleman was standing behind a window, revealing a genial smile as he raised the cup in his hand.

Chapter 895 - Finally At Ease

Leonard’s expression froze for a moment before he composed himself.

He had already remembered that Dwayne Dantès was working with the military and was preparing to sell a batch of firearms and cannons to West Balam.

Therefore, even though it was surprising to see this gentleman appear on a military airship, it wasn’t jarring in any way.

The only issue is why he’s heading to West Balam so quickly? Amon’s arrival has also exerted some pressure on him? Leonard’s mind raced as he leveled his gaze and walked up the gangway with his teammates to the midsection and entered a huge lounge reserved for them.

Not long after the Red Gloves took their seats, a deep hum sounded. The rotating of the propeller and all kinds of frictional sounds were heard. It caused the floorboards and walls to gently shake.

As the tremors increased in intensity, it turned into a wobbling motion as the airship rose up and slowly regained its stability.

Klein had already sat down and buckled his seatbelt. He was looking at his surroundings out of curiosity as he experienced a different form of flight.

“The takeoff isn’t too stable. The altitude is also rather low, but without encountering any hurricanes, the tremors are still alright. I wonder how it was done…” Klein looked diagonally at the windows ahead without any intention of unbuckling his seatbelt or walking around.

This wasn't acrophobia even if he had a mild fear of heights. This was because he was briefly wearing Creeping Hunger and had the ability of Short-distance Flight and Teleport. He was only seriously acting like a Desi tycoon who was riding on an airship for the first time.

At this moment, Klein's spiritual perception was triggered. He hurriedly clicked his teeth and activated Spirit Vision.

He saw the colors around him saturate as they clearly stacked upon one another. He saw bones spew out from the floor, gushing out like a fountain in midair, forming a giant skeleton that was nearly four meters tall.

This skeleton's eye sockets were burning with dark flames. Its arms were hanging down, holding a folded letter.

Mr. Azik's messenger… He has finally recovered from his state of metamorphosis? Klein was pleasantly surprised as he tried to stand up to receive the letter.

But when he felt a force pulling him back at his abdomen, he recalled that had his seatbelt buckled.

When he reached out to unbuckle it, the skeleton messenger crouched down and stuffed the letter into his hands.

Klein was taken aback as he looked up into the eye sockets which were burning with pitch-black flames. He nodded gently as form of gratitude.

He could understand why the messenger didn't appear from the section below, allowing half his body to tear through the floorboard, as this was a military airship. Apart from the Red Gloves, there were probably other Beyonders. They also had spiritual perceptions and different levels of Spirit Vision. They could also barely sense the messenger's existence.

But I don’t think that delivering a letter in such a crouched manner is being polite… I’d rather it did what it used to… Klein mumbled and saw the skeleton messenger crumble into illusory bones, gushing down like a waterfall.

In the huge lounge, Daly Simone, who still enjoyed being called a Spirit Medium, suddenly turned her head and looked at the room across the hall.

Her brows furrowed slightly as her eyes narrowed.

Daly immediately retracted her gaze and said to the low-ranking officer in the corner of the lounge who was acting as a waiter, “Make me a cocktail. Black Rand and champagne. Half each.”

“That’s a very strange mixture, Ma’am.” As the officer unbuckled his seatbelt, he walked to the bar that was welded to the ground as he attempted to offer a suggestion.

Daly with her blue eyeshadow and blush said with a smile, “I enjoy unique tastes.”

Upon saying that, she casually asked, “Is there anyone else on this airship besides the military officers and us?”

The officer answered while opening the bar’s cabinet, “Yes.”

“A merchant. Apparently, his name is Dwayne Dantès. He is working with the Ministry of Defense.”

Dwayne Dantès… Daly was taken aback as she turned her eyes slightly away and asked, “What kind of work?”

To her right, Leonard Mitchell had subconsciously changed his seating posture. He switched from crossing his right leg over his left to his left over his right.

“I’m not sure,” the officer answered with a shake of the head.

“Apparently it has something to do with using the gentleman’s experience in the Southern Continent.”

“Southern Continent…” Daly repeated the word in thought and stopped asking.

†

In the small lounge opposite, Klein had already unfolded the letter to read it seriously.

It was indeed from Azik Eggers. He indicated that his previous experiences had allowed him to retrieve more of his memories. He had no choice but to sleep to digest and recover; thus, the late reply.

Klein truly relaxed as he cast his gaze towards the end in a good mood.

In regards to the Spirit World Plunderers, Azik’s description was:

“…It’s a rather scheming and rare creature. They are very good at disguises, making it very difficult to find them… One thing to make use of is their strong aggressiveness. However, they’re also very dangerous. Even with a strength that is close to Sequence 4, one needs to be sufficiently careful; otherwise, one can accidentally end up as its soul avatar…

“Its exact characteristic is… I’m not sure nor am I able to recall where Spirit World Plunderers are most active. I suggest you pray to Aiur Moria. ‘He’ is very friendly to humans and will be willing to answer similar questions while wielding authority in such matters… The ritual’s key is the correct honorific name and symbol…

“Once you have the clues to a Spirit World Plunderer, you can wait a while. I might be able to provide you some help…”

How can I bother you… Klein raised his right hand and pinched the two ends of his mouth.

He then flipped the page and read the final page.

"…Likewise, I will help you seal that glove once again… It's not that I do not wish to teach you the way to seal it, but it's unlikely that you can do it. This requires the power of the Underworld, requiring, at the very least, an Undying to do it…

"Alright. I should quickly have some free time. I recall you mentioning about Death's ring…"

Mr. Azik's changes don't seem too significant. At least I can't tell from the letter… Klein slowly exhaled as he flicked his wrist and ignited the paper in his hand, turning it to ashes before it floated into the trash can that was welded to the floor.

Although he didn't receive the whereabouts of Spirit World Plunderers from Azik, he could also determine that this descendant of Death similarly didn't remember Calderón City. He also guessed that this mysterious spirit world city likely had nothing to do with the Underworld; otherwise, Mr. Azik, who had already restored connections with the Underworld, should've recalled something about it. Even so, Klein still planned on replying to ask more about Calderón City.

Regardless, one should always have hope… Also, I should inform Mr. Azik that I'm in the Southern Continent… Klein seriously considered the contents of his reply.

However, he didn't immediately write it, afraid that the act of summoning the messenger would be noticed via the spiritual perception of the other Beyonders on board the airship.

As he turned his gaze, Klein looked out the window once again. It was dark and silent.

†

Looking at the dark sky with the concealed crimson moon, Admiral of Stars Cattleya retracted her gaze, picked up her pen, and deliberated over her words.

“The answer is neither.”

She was originally somewhat perplexed as to why Queen Mystic hadn’t directly asked what “home” was. Instead, she had attached two guesses. This made it easy for the question to receive an ineffective answer. But on second thought, she believed that Queen Mystic had thought it through in a way far better than she could’ve.

This was because this question was posed to a secret existence that was suspected to be an ancient god. As the number of diary pages she could provide had numbered about twenty, with each attempt giving her an answer; therefore, just three pages, even if they were of high value, made it difficult to be equivalent in value to a key question of where Emperor Roselle’s mental and spiritual home was. The secrets concealed within might even be more important than a single Card of Blasphemy.

And Her Majesty’s question seems stubborn. She doesn’t seem willing to switch to something else; therefore, she specially added two choices, hoping that she could obtain an answer via elimination or directly obtain confirmation. In contrast, this lowers the value of the question. It then abides by the principle of equivalent exchange… As Cattleya thought, she recalled something.

Back then, she was still young and was being educated on all kinds of information. Queen Mystic would test her and tell her that in regards to answering a question, there were three opportunities for reducing the difficulty. First, was to eliminate a wrong option. Second, was to request the help of some specific person on the ship. Three, was to pray to one of the Seven Lights to receive the answer. Of course, the prerequisite to doing that was to complete the ritual herself.

Clearly, Queen Mystic had chosen to use the first method to reduce the difficulty.

Did Her Majesty have such an experience when she was little? After eliminating the two wrong options, I wonder how close she is to the real answer… Cattleya's expression unnaturally softened as she wrote:

"According to the intelligence I've gathered, there's a storm brewing in Backlund. I wish you well."

She didn't directly mention the deputy director of MI9 or the royal family's consultant. After all, they were news shared between the Tarot Club. It wasn't something she had asked herself and tacitly acquiesced by Mr. Fool to inform Queen Mystic directly.

Folding the letter, Cattleya summoned Queen Mystic Bernadette's messenger.

†

Behrens Harbor. It was twilight.

Danitz and Anderson found a hotel opened by an Intis immigrant, finally experiencing the convenience of not having any language barriers.

After putting down their luggage, Danitz immediately headed towards the staircase wearing a cloak and his boxing glove.

Anderson leaned against the opposite door and asked in amusement, "Is there anything else?"

Danitz immediately gave a sarcastic chortle.

"I'm heading out to buy a dictionary!

"This is way more reliable than your body language. In a few days, I might even be fluent in a few common words!"

Anderson stroked his chin with his left black-gloved hand.

“Your boxing glove was created from that giant’s remains, right? What are its negative effects?”

Danitz blurted out, “Being rash, often acting before thinking…”

As he spoke, he fell silent.

Chapter 896 - Daly's Probe

◆ ◆ ◆

To buy a dictionary late at night, in a city that's somewhat chaotic. Furthermore, I obviously look like someone from Intis. That really is rather dangerous… No, I can't keep wearing this glove… Danitz was stunned for a few seconds before he raised his hand and attempted to take off his boxing glove.

When he was halfway done, he suddenly paused and sized up Anderson. When he saw him wearing a black glove on his left hand, he did a hollow chuckle and wore his glove again.

"I believe that in the Southern Continent, a place like this requires strength," Danitz added with a faint smile.

Anderson's expression remained the same as he continued stroking his chin.

"Then, what do you plan on doing?"

Danitz pointed at the staircase and said, "I plan on finding the hotel's boss and borrow his dictionary. I believe he will be teaching his children Dutanese."

"That's an idea worth pursuing. But even with a dictionary, you won't be able to master it anytime soon. Even if you grasp a few terms, it will still be rather difficult. After all, the language here is a completely different system from the Northern Continent," Anderson said with a tsk. "Why don't I suggest a solution for you. Your captain has likely taught you some ritualistic magic in the God of Knowledge and

Wisdom domain, right?”

“Yes,” Danitz replied with a nod without a second thought.

Anderson clapped his hands and said,

Danitz shook his head without hesitation.

“I believe in the Lord of Storms, and not the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. The reason why some of the ritualistic magic cast in the past had received a reply was because of Captain.”

Upon saying that, he shot Anderson a glance.

“Weren’t you born in Segar, growing up in Lenburg, being classmates with Captain?

“Then you should also be a believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Wouldn’t it be more effective if you held the ritual?”

Anderson shook his head and laughed.

“Despite being believers all the same, those who can actually receive a reply are in the extreme minority.”

Seemingly in thought, he said, “The best method is to find a priest or bishop from the Church of Knowledge. Get them to make some charms, uh—I recall that there are a few pilgrims from Lenburg here in Behrens Harbor. Why don’t we visit them tomorrow…”

Danitz was just about to say “yes” when he suddenly revealed a look of suspicion.

“I have this nagging feeling that you are up to something…”

Anderson’s expression immediately froze.

†

On the airship, Klein had his seatbelt buckled and had a blanket over him as he leaned against his seat, already in deep sleep.

At this moment, it was dark outside. There was little light from the lands, and the scenery swept across slowly despite moving at a high speed. Everything appeared peaceful and silent.

After an unknown period of time, Klein suddenly jolted awake as he stretched his neck.

As he kept Death Knell on him, he had drank plenty of water. His bladder had woken him up.

Pulling away his blanket and unbuckling his seatbelt, Klein covered his mouth and yawned. He walked out of the lounge and headed for the washroom at the corner of the hall.

After relieving himself, he washed his hand and left the washroom. When he entered the hall, he suddenly saw a figure.

The figure was standing amidst the shadows. It was wearing a black robe, and by its eyes were eyeshadow and blush. At a glance, it looked like a shadow or ghost that had floated out of a corpse.

Ma'am Daly… Klein obviously recognized her as he immediately reacted as though he jumped in fright.

Daly walked a few steps forward and looked up at Dwayne Dantès's face. She paused her gaze in between his eyes as she curled her mouth into a smile.

"Your eyes and bearing resembles a friend of mine, especially the eyes."

Klein immediately feigned enlightenment as he said with a smile, "Ma'am, if our genders were swapped, that would be a standard way of hitting on someone."

Daly's eyes didn't move away as she chortled.

“There’s no need for any swapping. A difference in genders doesn’t change the definition of such actions.

“If this were any other time, I really would be trying to trick you into a bed if I had said something like that, even tricking you all the way down the aisle.

“However, I have no such thoughts at the moment. I came over because yours eyes really remind me of him.”

It’s really quite overwhelming speaking with Ma’am Daly… I can’t let her lead the conversation; otherwise, she might realize that Dwayne Dantès isn’t the casanova that has a wide preference or a romance expert. Instead, he’s nothing but an inexperienced man in front of charming women… I have to take the lead in this conversation… Klein’s mind stirred as he directly asked in a half-joking manner, “Ma’am, do you like that friend of yours?”

Daly was taken aback for a second before she pricked her brows, lowered her head, and smiled.

“That’s not something that needs hiding.

“If only he could be like you, being willing to take the initiative when facing a woman, proficient at creating a suggestive atmosphere, perhaps if that were the case, we might already have children.

“Unfortunately, he’s a conservative man. When he chats with me, all he spoke off was matters regarding work or his experiences. Any hints given to him or any joke that went overboard just made him appear uncomfortable. He often found excuses to leave. He looked old, and he didn’t look after his hair. He also had a bad memory. He even forgot my birthday. Whenever I thought of him, I got mad, having the urge to push him down into bed, tying his arms to the bed’s railing…”

Klein looked at Daly’s head with a gloomy gaze as he sighed to interrupt her.

“Ma’am, you’ve said too much.”

Daly looked up, speaking with a smile in no way different than before.

“I thought you would enjoy talking about matters about this at a deeper level.”

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“Then why didn’t you turn those thoughts into action? I can tell that you aren’t just a woman who can only talk.”

Daly scoffed.

“Guess.”

Following that, she nodded.

“Thank you for not saying that I’ve been harassing you.”

As she spoke, she turned around and headed for the extensive lounge where the Red Gloves were. The corners of Klein’s mouth curled up slightly as he returned to his room, shaking his head.

When she came to the entrance of the extensive lounge, Daly, whose eyes landed on the floorboards, suddenly saw an untied shoelace.

She shifted her gaze up as her eyes reflected the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell.

Leonard glanced at Dwayne Dantès as he entered his lounge and said with a suppressed voice, “He has plenty of secrets. He’s not a simple person.”

Daly chuckled and nodded.

“I know.”

Having said that, she briskly walked past Leonard Mitchell and walked into the extensive lounge.

When she covered a few meters, she slowed down her pace and once again lowered her head.

Leonard remained standing at the door, watching the long dragged out shadows that were cast from the lights outside. Slowly and silently, he exhaled.

Inside the small lounge, Klein stood by the door, raising his right hand and rubbing his temples. He stood there like a statue.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick sat on a stool, munching on bread that was made from Black-Faced Grass powder as he seriously listed down the matters that he had yet to complete in recent times.

I haven’t obtained the information of the Bizarro Bane that Mr. World needs… I still lack the points required for the Sequence 5 Vampire Beyonder characteristic… I only have three friends. That’s not enough… All the clues I have regarding the former Chief’s mausoleum aren’t much…

As the thoughts flashed through his mind, Derrick filled his stomach and took off his shirt. Holding an open container that had been ground from stone, he used the sticky black liquid inside to smear on the obvious bruises on his body.

Although the City of Silver only had edible Black-Faced Grass in its vicinity, it didn’t only have one type of plant. They were many kinds of plants, all of them being strange. By using different powers, they could grow and proliferate in the dark, sun-lacking environment that only had lightning. One of the traditions of the City of Silver was to select different plants and mix them with organs of monsters to create various kinds of ointments. They were especially effective when treating most injuries and illnesses. It prevented the residents from dying just because of a trivial problem.

They were simplified versions of the magical medicine, holy ointment, and essential oil formulas that generations of Demon Hunters obtained from their potions. These low-level products thus became a tradition!

Just after Derrick applied the ointment and took a whiff of the pungent smell before putting on his clothes, he suddenly heard knocking at the door.

His mind tensed up instinctively as he held up Thunder God's Roar, the dark blue hammer that had electric sparks swirling around it. He carefully approached the door, prepared to kill any monsters that suddenly emerged from the darkness.

"Who is it?" Derrick asked in a deep voice.

A gruff voice sounded from the outside:

"Valer."

At the same time, bright light beamed its way through the door cracks and windows. That was the power of a Dawn Paladin.

Derrick relaxed as he opened the door and greeted, "Valer, aren't you leading a patrol team today?"

Valer stood 2.2 meters tall and was recently befriended by Derrick. Derrick was also most impressed with him because Valer was able to rein in his powers to a great extent and was a person who took very good care of his companions.

In addition, his patrol team's recent patrol area included the former Chief's mausoleum.

Valer had brownish-yellow hair that resembled Derrick's and a thick beard. His favorite pastime was fighting with others. Upon hearing that, he said with a smile, "The six-member council has just ordered our team to skip the area of the former Chief’s mausoleum. And this area is the last spot for our patrol mission.

“Let’s go to the training field. Let’s get some exercise!”

The six-member council has specially ordered the patrolling teams to skip that area? They plan to open the former Chief’s entrance today? I wonder what will happen… I hope there’s no sinister plot on Elder Lovia’s side… Derrick was alarmed as he hurriedly built connections, but he was at a loss.

Just as he hesitantly wore his clothes in preparation to join Valer at the training field, a shadow grew out from the dark ends of the street and said, “Derrick Berg, the Chief has requested you visit him at the spire.”

Chapter 897 - The Chief's Hint

◆

At the top of the spire, in the room that belonged to the Chief.

Colin Iliad had the tall body that was standard of the City of Silver. His hair was grizzled, unkempt, and rather disheveled. He had deep wrinkles around his cheeks, but there were no wrinkles elsewhere. Some old scars, that were either deep or twisted, remained on his cheeks.

He wore a linen shirt on the inside with a brown coat draped over his body. By his waist was a belt filled with tiny compartments. His light blue eyes were deep, filled with the experiences and stories they had seen.

After Derrick bowed, the Demon Hunter nodded gently and pointed diagonally to the items placed on the table.

“Do you still remember them?”

Derrick took a glance as his gaze suddenly froze. His eyes reflected two translucent worms that had the thickness of a child’s finger.

Worm of Time!

They were translucent Worms of Time with rings!

They were Worms of Time that came from Blasphemer Amon’s avatar!

“Yes.” Derrick fell silent for a second before instinctively answering, “They were left behind by Amon.”

Colin Iliad nodded indiscernibly and said, “One of them was even coughed out by you.”

Without waiting for Derrick to say a word, he continued in a thorough manner, “You once said that while being possessed by Amon, you were in a daze most of the time, as though you were in a dream. You were occasionally lucid.”

Faced with the Chief’s gaze, Derrick nodded, indicating that he had given such a description before.

Colin Iliad moved his gaze away and cast it out the window, looking down at the nearby buildings.

“I believe I haven’t told you the things you did during those times.

“You did a total of two rituals. One of them had elements of a secret deed, and the other one was like a sacrifice. You obtained a certain reply. Do you have any recollection of such things?”

Indeed, I was being monitored when I sought Mr. Fool’s help and used the secret deed ritual to cleanse Amon’s avatar… Derrick wasn’t surprised by what the Chief was mentioning. He had long been advised by The Hanged Man that, based on the rich experience the City of Silver elders, it was impossible that they would dismiss someone acting abnormally. Thus, the conclusion that he had been constantly been monitored after he left the dungeon was obtained. This was corroborated by the fact that someone had emerged from the shadows when doing the sacrificial ritual.

“…I don’t have any recollections.” Derrick pretended to be in thought before he shook his head.

Colin, who was observing him through the corner of his eye, turned his head over and said with a sigh, “Try recalling it carefully.

“These two worms left behind by Amon are materials of great value. I’ve been trying to find ways of using them. If I can secretly make them into items, this might be a trump card that no one else knows. It can play a crucial role at critical moments.

“During the two rituals you experienced, you might have symbols, ancient incantations, or mysterious elements that can be used for reference.

“Think about it carefully.”

If this were in the past, Derrick would have only understood the Chief superficially, but at this moment, he was able to interpret the hidden and indirect meaning behind the sentence, albeit being a few seconds slow.

“I know there’s still a certain connection between you and Amon.

“We will be opening the mausoleum to the former City of Silver Chief. I need to prepare additional trump cards against any unexpected accidents or cause that Lovia and company to use to inflict any harm to the City of Silver. Try attempting communication.”

Mr. Hanged Man was right. The higher one’s level is, the more experienced they are at handling danger, and the more accustomed they will be at expressing themselves by speaking in riddles. It’s a way to leave options open for both parties… Derrick suddenly felt he had grasped a particular technique.

Upon realizing that the Chief’s goal was to limit Elder Lovia and how she represented the Fallen Creator, he felt that he needed to do something. However, he had zero clue on how to use a Worm of Time. All he could do was consider praying to Mr. Fool and see if “He” could provide any help.

“I’ll try my best to recall. I… need… a silent room.” As Derrick spoke, he paused, deliberating over his words.

Colin Iliad was apparently prepared as he pointed towards the corridor.

"Many of the rooms across the corridor do not have people in them. Choose one yourself."

"Yes, Your Excellency." Derrick bowed and exited the room before entering an unused room. He locked the wooden door, sat down, and in the dark corner, prayed softly as his eyes emitted a soft glow.

†

Desi Bay, Eskelson Harbor.

Klein left the airship from the gangway with his suitcase in hand, prepared to head into the city on a carriage prepared by the military base.

As for Daly Simone, Leonard Mitchell, and the other Red Gloves, they were the first batch to leave the airship. Klein had been arranged to be one of the last; hence, they didn't meet each other.

After entering the city and finding a hotel to stay in, he prepared to have some rest to remedy the poor sleep he had last night. Suddenly, he heard a series of illusory, stacked pleas.

Sounds like Little Sun… Klein yawned while covering his mouth and entered a cramped washroom. With great difficulty, he took four steps counterclockwise and arrived above the gray fog.

As he expected, the crimson star that was blinking and burgeoning was none other than the one that represented The Sun.

He emanated his spirituality to make contact with it, and he quickly learned what The Sun's prayer was pertaining to.

The City of Silver Chief is asking Little Sun, no—asking what he thinks to be Amon on how to use a Worm of Time charm… Thankfully, I had such a question previously and have already gotten an answer… However, using the Worm of Time to create a potent charm that can temporarily exchange fates will require him to pray to The Fool. Wouldn't this directly expose the fact that the one backing Little Sun is not Amon, but some unknown hidden existence? Klein tapped the edge of the mottled table as he seriously considered how he was to answer.

In less than a minute, he quickly reframed his line of thought and discovered that his worries were meaningless.

Firstly, apart from Shepherd Elder Lovia, who can receive certain revelations from the True Creator, no one in the City of Silver knows Amon. All they might guess is that "He" is likely the Angel of Time, one of the eight Kings of Angels that were by the Creator's side. Therefore, even if they learn of an existence called The Fool, they will probably believe that it's Amon's true body, or a deity that Amon now believes in.

Secondly, the honorific name of The Fool is no longer a secret to the True Creator, Blasphemer Amon, and Shepherd Elder Lovia. It doesn't matter if more people from the City of Silver learns of it.

Thirdly, the Chief named Colin Iliad is only a Demon Hunter. Even if he knows the honorific name of The Fool and has a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, there's nothing he can do. After all, Blasphemer Amon and the True Creator haven't been knocking at my door in the middle of the night.

Finally, the six-member council's Chief is long aware of a problem with Little Sun. He just hasn't made it obvious.

As his thoughts raced, he felt that he needed to be bolder. Perhaps I can use this opportunity to develop another one or two downlines, no—I mean believers. Little Sun won't have to fight alone anymore in the future.

Besides, I've already improved since the time when I wiped away Amon's avatar. I've also accumulated even deeper knowledge in mysticism. I wield the Sea God Scepter and can stir even more of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. I don't have to worry about missing anything when facing a Sequence 4 demigod during the ritual… as long as I don't rashly pull him above the gray fog… Klein quickly made up his mind and cast the method to creating a Fate Siphon charm into the crimson star representing The Sun.

†

Knock! Knock! Knock! The sound of knocking resonated within the Chief's room at the top of the spire.

And before the knocking even sounded, Colin Iliad had already known that Derrick Berg had opened the door and was walking over to his room.

"Come on in." He turned his body and faced the door.

Derrick pushed open the door and entered. Bowing, he said, "Your Excellency, I've recalled some vague details."

Colin Iliad nodded with a calm expression.

"What are they?"

"Use pure silver and mercury as materials…" Derrick succinctly described the beginning of the ritual and paused. "I think I muttered an honorific name back then: The Fool that doesn't belong to this era."

Colin narrowed his eyes and immediately cut him off.

"The corresponding symbols are the ones left on the candle?"

"Yes," Derrick frankly replied. "The second line is: The mysterious ruler above the gray fog."

At this moment, Colin cut him off once again.

"Is there no need for other ritual materials?"

"No," Derrick nodded, feeling slightly puzzled.

Only then did he realize that the Chief was apparently deliberately stopping him from reciting Mr. Fool's honorific name.

Yes, our common language is Jotun. It's a language that can stir the powers of nature. If I were to directly say out the honorific name, it would result in all kinds of unknown effects. I know that Mr. Fool is a true deity and trustworthy, so I was reciting it all out habitually. However, the Chief doesn't know that… Derrick continued, feeling somewhat enlightened.

"Third line: The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

Colin silently listened in silence before nodding.

"Very good.

"Although I cannot be sure that the content you recall is of any use, it's still a sizable contribution. I'll get someone to add to your contribution.

"Return, or go to the library to read some books for a while."

"Yes, Your Excellency." Derrick wore a deadpan look as he silently heaved a sigh of relief and rapidly retreated to the room at the top of the spire.

Colin Iliad watched him leave before heading behind his desk and sitting down. He cast his gaze on the two translucent ringed worms in front of him.

Beside the worms was a notebook. Drawn on it was a secret symbol comprised of half a Pupil-less Eye and half Contorted Lines.

Colin's gaze remained fixed for a while, as though he had been petrified.

After a while, he slowly stood up and took out three candles.

Chapter 898 - Response

◆ ◆ ◆

After setting up the candles, Colin Iliad found a piece of pure silver and picked up a carving knife beside it. With steady strokes, he carved out a palm-sized charm vessel.

Then, he followed Derrick Berg's description, drawing the secret symbol of The Fool on both sides of the silver piece.

The entire process was completed quickly. If an observer was watching, they wouldn't have been able to discern his actions. Yet, the final product didn't show any flaws. It looked like a piece of art that had been slowly carved out.

Right on the heels of that, Colin Iliad found another bottle of mercury. Directly using his powerful spirituality, he guided the liquid inside to trickle into the charm and fill all the patterns. He prevented the mercury on the side facing down from dripping due to gravity.

Repeating the process, he made a second charm. Colin Iliad placed them in front of the candles and placed a translucent ringed worm on each of them.

Compared to him standing up silently, the present Colin's every move was stable, calm, and firm. He didn't show any signs of hesitation, just like how he faced powerful monsters that came out of the darkness.

After finishing the ritual, he took two steps back and removed the crossed swords that were hanging from the wall. He stabbed them into the crevices of the floor tiles at the door.

He then closed his eyes and muttered. Pure and thick beams of light emerged out of the void as they enveloped the two swords with a holy and glorious feeling.

The light beams increased in quantity, slowly transforming into liquid water that flowed across the cracks in the floor tiles and the walls, forming a “cage” that isolated him from the outside.

As a senior Demon Hunter, Colin Iliad didn’t wish to take such precautionary measures when holding a ritual. This was because there was a tiny chance of angering the target, bringing about dangerous developments. However, he had no choice but to do so because he needed to be certain that even if the ritual failed, even if The Fool was an existence filled with malice, and even if he were to die at the altar, he would not bring too much harm to the City of Silver.

In regards to the defensive power of the “cage,” Colin was rather confident because this directly stemmed from a god-like Sealed Artifact—a crown which the Giant King Aurmir wore: “Proof of Glory!”

This was one of the main reasons why the City of Silver could survive wave after wave of monster assaults in the Dark Ages.

With all his preparations completed, solely using his spirituality, Colin Iliad used his desk as an altar and created a sacred and clean environment that no one could disturb. He then lit the three candles.

The pale yellow light flickered as they reflected in his eyes. He bowed his head and scattered the plant powder, monster hide, and fur into the candle flame or lit them and threw them into a cauldron so as to please the secret existence he was about to pray to.

Such acts weren’t rare in the City of Silver. Known to all, there were rituals held that targeted the Creator, but from time to time, certain residents would be enticed by unknown existences during their patrols or exploration, tempted to hold all kinds of rituals.

Most of the latter was a passive act, but there were a few that were done proactively. On the one hand, the cumulative despair of not receiving any response from the Creator had made them eager to grab onto any other existence to rely on, and on the other hand, many generations of the six-member council had come to a common consensus that the Creator who had abandoned the land might very well not return again. Seeking out other alternatives was something that had to be expedited, but unfortunately, such attempts only led to nothing or death, nothing else.

And it was because of this reason that regardless of the difficulties faced or how many times they discovered cities that were destroyed because of "evil gods," the City of Silver continued their exploration of regions that were further away.

As for Colin Iliad himself, the discovery of the outsider, Jack, brought him an indescribable sense of surprise and hope. The encounters when they explored Afternoon Town and the prophecies of the Kings of Angel's ploy and the ecclesiastic had made him feel a more pressing sense of urgency. He no longer held hope for the Creator's return.

With the two reasons combined, along with Lovia's and Derrick's abnormality, as well as the prophecy of the apocalypse, as Chief of the six-member council, senior demigod and powerful Demon Hunter, Colin Iliad had no choice but to attempt to dance on the edge of a knife. He had no choice but to consider making a transaction with a hidden existence.

Silently exhaling, Colin took a step back and chanted with a weather-worn tone, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

"I pray to you, praying for the strength that stems from mystery, and praying for the bestowment that stems from good luck. I implore you to make these items on this altar turn into charms…"

Just as Colin spoke with a cadence of mystery, he saw the altar in front of him immediately turn dark. It was as though an indescribable godhood was emanating from the candle in the middle.

The candle's flame instantly burgeoned, but it failed to light the surroundings. Instead, it made everything turn illusory, making countless shapes produce seemingly nonexistence transparent shadows as they covered every inch.

High above this illusory world and countless figures, there were seven lustrous brilliances of different colors spiraling. They seemed to possess immense knowledge.

And above these seven lustrous brilliances, there was an endless grayish-white fog, and sitting above was an ancient palace that looked down upon everything.

Demon Hunter Colin temporarily forgot everything else as he stared intently at the scene above the altar. It was as though something that only existed in books or ancient tomes had taken a step through the illusory and entered reality, appearing before him.

If he recalled correctly, this was likely the projection of the spirit world.

Before the disaster, before the time the Creator abandoned this land, it was easy to observe and enter the spirit world!

The spirit world now only existed in the City of Silver's textbooks and various records, but no one could touch it!

At this moment, a creaking, illusory sound sounded. The ancient palace that overlooked the gray fog and spirit world seemed to open its doors.

Right on the heels of that, Colin saw the unformed charms in front of the candle produce a grayish luster. Their patterns were then "lit up," as they intercrossed with each other, suddenly bursting into a blinding radiance, enveloping the pure silver foils and the ringed worms.

The dark world above the entire altar also instantly warped.

Everything was quickly restored to normal as two strange black crystalline charms appeared on the altar. They were like a pair of eyes of some existence that silently observed the world.

Demon Hunter Colin was taken aback as he retracted his gaze and bowed his head. With a deep voice, he said, “Thank you for your blessings;

“Praise you.”

He didn’t delay as he immediately ended the ritual and removed the seal.

After doing all of this, this City of Silver Chief of the six-member council returned to the desk and picked up the two charms made from the two Amon avatar remnants.

At this moment, his mind was still fixated on the scene he had previously seen.

Based on his knowledge in mysticism, those that were situated high in the spirit world were mentioned to be the Seven Lights in ancient tomes. They were believed to be close to that of deities, but none of the records indicated what was above the Seven Lights or what the gray fog represented. They didn’t indicate what the ancient palace which was enveloped by the gray fog while overlooking the entire spirit world represented.

And during the entire ritual, Colin Iliad only felt that The Fool he was praying to was staid, mysterious, and almighty, nothing like the evil beings who often liked to express their powers as though eager to showcase something.

Such a performance had a close parallel in the records of the City of

Silver—the Creator!

As he looked at the charms in hand and his condition, the grizzled Demon Hunter Colin suddenly closed his eyes as figures flashed past his mind for some reason.

They were his father, mother, elder brother, younger sister, oldest son, youngest son, daughter, and oldest grandson whose lives he had personally ended.

This already old Chief remained silent for a very long time before he suddenly sighed softly.

“It’s been 2,583 years…”

After 2,583 years, the City of Silver had finally received a normal response.

†

In the library in the steeple.

Derrick was in the ancient myth section he often browsed when he saw a notebook he had never seen before.

This notebook’s cover was made from a particular monster’s hide. There were clear patterns on it, and the pages inside were old and yellowed. The records included the experiences of the original author when he encountered different monsters.

These monsters were mostly accessible among the City of Silver’s textbooks. Even their special traits were the same. However, the thoughts and experiences from the numerous battles left Derrick reading in relish as he read seriously.

As he flipped through it, he suddenly noticed a monster named “Shapeshifter.”

Such monsters didn't come equipped with the intelligence to communicate, but they were adept at setting up traps to deal with targets. Furthermore, they could disguise as others, using what seemed like fascinating methods to complete a hunt…

The notebook's owner had commented on them as being bizarre and dangerous.

This is very similar to Mr. World's guess of the Bizarro Bane's traits… Could Shapeshifter be the Bizarro Bane? Derrick felt delighted as he quickly read the rest of the entry. He discovered that this type of monster lived towards the north, in a faraway city's ruins. And the monsters in that area's darkness were powerful and terrifying. Even the six-member council wasn't able to deal with some of them; therefore, after two attempts, the City of Silver paused any exploration of the area. To date, exploration of the area hadn't been resumed. Due to such reasons, the City of Silver's textbooks didn't make mention of the unique monsters there.

After reading the record, Derrick subconsciously flipped the notebook to the last page, wishing to know who had experienced the two harrowing explorations.

As he flipped through it, he saw a name: "Colin Iliad."

†

Desi County, Eskelson Harbor.

Klein returned to the real world, rubbed his temples, and collapsed into bed.

To give the City of Silver's Chief a better impression of The Fool and generate more trust, he had proactively added some special effects when responding, expressing the might of the mysterious space above the gray fog during the secret deed ritual and sacrificial and bestowment ritual. This expended quite a sizable amount of his spirituality, exhausting him.

I’ll find food for Creeping Hunger when I wake up. I’ll let it have a good nap above the gray fog… Klein thought in his stupor and soon fell asleep. He was woken up by his rumbling tummy after sleeping from morning to the afternoon.

Chapter 899 - Berserk Sea's Spirit World

◆◆◆

The ingredients used for Desi's pies are much more generous than in Backlund. However, they prefer adding some local spices. It felt a little odd when taking the first few bites, but after getting used to it, it's quite a different style… Klein sat inside his hotel and swapped between taking a mouthful of the oily pie and drinking a mouthful of cool, refreshing sweet ice tea. He was living quite an idyllic life.

After he had his fill, he didn't immediately pack up. He picked up the top hat on the chair beside him and wore it.

Meanwhile, his left palm suddenly turned transparent as his entire body faded away.

Klein had entered the spirit world and was planning on Traveling to the Poto Harbor in the Berserk Sea. He was there to seek out food for Creeping Hunger.

Eskelson, where he was, did belong to Desi Bay, but it was nowhere along the coast since it was an island. This was the southernmost island of Desi Bay, and going past it meant one's entry into the Berserk Sea.

Therefore, the second Klein headed for the predetermined coordinates, an abnormal sight appeared before his eyes.

The spirit world's air flows seemed to be materialized as they spun into a wind. They howled as they enveloped a huge region that seemed boundless. It was dim inside, with layers of dark clouds. Bolts of lightning tainted with the deep gloom kept flashing, illuminating the surrounding area like it was the apocalypse.

At that moment, Klein felt as though he had arrived in a sea that was eternally ravaged by storms. However, he knew with certainty that this was the spirit world.

Indeed, it's just like what many books on mysticism mention. The power involved with the perishing of Death has not only changed the atmospheric weather of the sea between the Northern Continent and Southern Continent, but it also filled it with disaster and danger. It's how its name was derived. Furthermore, it also broke the barrier between reality and the illusory, tainting and damaging the corresponding spirit world and causing them to affect one another… In the Berserk Sea, if one holds a ritual that involves the spirit world, using powers related to the spirit world, there will be a high probability of an accident occurring, causing unimaginable developments… Klein reflected poignantly as he used his eyes to verify what the books wrote.

From his point of view, if it weren't because of this, the various countries in the Northern Continent wouldn't have waited for Emperor Roselle to find the safe sea route before they had a chance of invading the Southern Continent. After all, to most High-Sequence Beyonders, they could easily traverse normal kinds of natural barriers.

Roselle's safe sea route wasn't simply geological in nature, but also mysticism in nature!

This also meant that since the Berserk Sea and spirit world were influencing each other and overlapped, Klein could directly use the local sea maps to traverse the spirit world's calamities.

Recalling the content he had read before, Klein found the correct location and entered the dark spirit world.

The howling of the gales sounded from every direction. Even the secondary gusts of wind left a chill running deep down from Klein's soul or spine. This made him believe that if he had traveled in a Spirit Body state without the use of the Black Emperor card, Tyrant card, and Azik's copper whistle to augment himself, there was quite a good chance of him suffering a serious injury.

And if this wasn't the "safe sea route," he believed that there was a chance his physical body couldn't withstand the black storms that were filled with death.

Compared to the gales, the dark lightning bolts were far more dangerous. Klein suspected that he couldn't even withstand being smote by one of them. As for the hidden maelstrom and the wandering creatures, they were another form of danger.

This is a place without any material seawater. I wonder what's at the end of the maelstrom… Klein followed the safe sea route and traversed the land at an adequate speed. From time to time, he would survey his surroundings to broaden his horizons.

Suddenly, he saw a strange creature.

It was dragging a huge sickle and was situated inside a black hurricane. As it was formed by individual skulls, it was swollen and massive.

The skulls were either grayish-white or grayish-black of varying sizes. They were also from different species, and all of them were stacked into one, forming its torso, limbs, and head.

Almost at the same moment that Klein saw this strange creature, it also discovered Klein. All the skulls turned their heads in unison, producing a grinding sound that couldn't be concealed.

The dark eye sockets were countless in number as they followed and overlapped one another.

Klein's forehead throbbed as he used Traveling to pass through the area, entering the next safe sea route.

And on the nearby illusory sea, bloody arms and illusory greenish-black tentacles extended out from the sea surface.

†

Outside the City of Silver, a black mausoleum stood inverted over the ground like an inverted pyramid.

At that moment, there were all kinds of dense black plants that grew out from the cracks in the mausoleum's bricks. Even the heavy door by the entrance was covered with them.

Colin Iliad had two swords slung across his back as he stood with two other Elders of the six-member council. They were observing the passage that diagonally led them deep underground.

Lovia with her silver, curly hair watched silently for a moment before saying, "It should be possible already."

Unlike how she usually switched randomly between two mental states, this Shepherd Elder was now staid and calm. She didn't show any signs of abnormalities as her pale-gray eyes were deep and placid.

Colin gently nodded and took out a bottle of medicine from two different compartments on his belt. Unscrewing the lids, he downed them.

His light-blue eyes rapidly brightened. His unwrinkled skin had blood vessels protrude as they got tinted with silver.

Right on the heels of that, the Chief drew a sword and smeared a silver-gray ointment across its surface.

As he took steps to prepare, another six-member council Elder, Waite Chirmont, did something similar.

This bald man who had a tattooed symbol on his head stood nearly 2.5 meters tall. He didn't look a day over 45. But in fact, he was nearly 80.

He was also a Sequence 4 Demon Hunter, a demigod that was one of the main pillars of support for the City of Silver.

In the City of Silver, due to the lack of main ingredients, and with the citizens being aware of the acting method and having sufficient combat experience, they advanced from Low- to Mid-Sequences rather easily. Sequence 6 Beyonders were the majority, but from Sequence 5 onwards, due to the rituals required and other reasons, the number of Beyonders drastically fell. At Sequence 4 where there was a qualitative change, an entire generation might not even produce one.

Waite Chirmont didn’t dual wield like an orthodox Demon Hunter. This allowed him to use different ointments to produce different effects so as to handle more complicated situations. He wielded an iron-gray hammer, and on his back was a huge bow that was equally as massive as his body. He was like a miniaturized giant that walked out of an oil painting.

The bow was a mystical item, one that didn’t have overly severe side effects. In the historical records of the City of Silver, it received its name from killing a dragon at the demigod level. Its name was: “Dragon Slaying Bow”!

After finishing their preparations, Waite slammed his hammer in front of him loudly, drew his bow, and slowly pulled it back.

Sizzling bolts of lightning suddenly emerged as they condensed into one, and as it grew longer from the pull, it formed a blinding and radiant arrow between the bowstring and the back of the bow.

Just as Waite’s fingers released the bowstring, the lightning arrow shot straight to the mausoleum’s door which was overrun with human hair-like weeds.

Silently, the heavy door appeared to have long rotten. It exploded into pieces along with the electric bolt’s explosion, revealing a deep passageway.

This passageway shimmered with pale white lights. It extended far beyond what one's eyes could see, giving off a creepy and cold feeling.

Colin's eyes suddenly flashed with two complex, dark green symbols, and he reflected the mausoleum's entrance in them.

A few seconds later, he held his sword diagonally and walked into the mausoleum. Waite slung his Dragon Slaying Bow, picked up his hammer, and followed closely behind.

The purple-robed Lovia's expression remained the same as she followed through the shattered door at a decent pace with her hands empty.

As they descended via sections of passageways and staircases, the three members of the six-member council didn't show any unrest or anxiety in the completely silent environment. They allowed their footsteps to echo in their surroundings.

After descending one level, they suddenly saw a river before them. It was an illusory and jet-black river.

Under the river's surface were blood-colored arms that had been skinned. Green baby-faced veins and slippery tentacles with eyes were densely entwined together. They kept flailing upwards in a bid to grab whatever passed them.

The river was close to the side of the entrance. There were figures of different heights wearing old clothes with their backs facing the three Elders. They kept walking back and forth as though they were vexed over the crossing of the river.

Suddenly, one of them sensed the trio approaching them. He slowly turned his body to look at Colin, Waite, and Lovia.

It was an elder with his hair being completely white. His forehead and the corners of his mouth were deeply wrinkled. His eyes were light blue and hollow. His expression was numb and blank.

Colin Iliad's pupils shrank, as he recognized the man.

It was his brother, the brother that had been possessed by Amon. He had personally ended his life!

At this moment, the other figures turned around, revealing faces that Colin, Waite, and Lovia found extremely familiar. But they were all abnormally numbed faces.

Lovia's expression remained unperturbed, but behind her, an illusory knight more than five meters tall had appeared at some point in time.

This knight wore ancient silver full-body armor. Its eyes were red like blood as they burned akin to flames.

†

After traversing the "safe sea route," for about ten seconds, Klein arrived at the Berserk Sea's Poto Harbor. This place deviated from the main sea route and didn't belong to any country. It was a free city for pirates.

When his feet hit solid rock, he randomly produced a face, but he wasn't in a rush to enter the port city which had buildings randomly laid out. He reached into his pocket and pulled out an iron cigar case.

While passing through the Berserk Sea's spirit world, he had sensed Azik's copper whistle trembling slightly.

Removing the wall of spirituality, Klein opened the cigar case and took out the ancient and exquisite copper whistle.

This copper whistle had lost its usual coldness and mildness, and it was now burning hot. However, this anomaly was rapidly dissipating.

Chapter 900 - “Self-Recommendation”

◆

The abnormality associated with the Berserk Sea is suspected to be a result of the perishing of Death… Legend has it that this deity’s corpse and items are hidden somewhere in these waters, awaiting someone with a special key to open it… This copper whistle came from Mr. Azik, and Mr. Azik is indeed a direct descendant of Death, as well as being from the first or second generation… Therefore, this copper whistle had sensed something or had been influenced? Thoughts flashed across Klein’s mind as they coalesced today to form a theory.

He planned on finding an inn in Poto Harbor, head above the gray fog, and use dream divination to attempt to obtain a revelation. Then, he would consider the time and method for returning to Eskelson Harbor. It was to prevent himself from encountering any avoidable accidents.

And before that, he needed to seek out food for Creeping Hunger.

After walking down the seaside cliff, Klein entered Poto Harbor.

The buildings here were pretty much built anywhere one desired. There was almost zero planning, causing the roads to be very wide or narrow to the point that it only allowed a single person passage. In certain areas, one couldn’t see the sky when looking up, only to see a swath of clothes that were hung up to dry.

Wearing a new face, Klein strolled through such an environment with many pedestrians dressed in pirate’s attire. He then habitually headed for the bar to seek out prey.

At this moment, he saw several people gathered at a noticeboard on a square up ahead.

What's happening? With his curiosity piqued, Klein approached the area. Using his balance and agility as a Clown, he passed through the gaps of the crowd before he barely arrived at a spot where he could see the noticeboard.

On the noticeboard, there was a piece of paper that was overbearing, covering all the other pieces of paper. It was obvious at a glance.

Its title was: "The Black Emperor's Crew Recruitment."

The Black Emperor? Isn't that the ship of King of the Five Seas, Nast? The one that can traverse the spirit world? Considering how he can be considered the King of Pirates, he's actually openly recruiting crew members? Klein was rather surprised as he deliberately spoke out with a suppressed voice:

"How is that possible?"

"Why not?" A stout man beside him with his arm exposed from his rolled-up sleeves laughed out loud. "It might be impossible in the past, but it's possible now!"

"Why?" Klein was hoping that someone would respond. Immediately, he turned his head and asked.

The stout man had tattoos all over his arms and cheeks, making him look fierce. Upon hearing that, he pointed at the main sea route's direction and said, "A week ago, the Black Emperor and Loen's highly promoted steam ironclad warship, the Pritz, met and clashed in a sea battle. The Black Emperor had many casualties and are in dire need of more manpower!

Ah? Klein's first reaction was that it didn't make mystical sense.

Based on the published content in the papers and the rumors he had heard out at sea, he knew that the Pritz was a warship in the normal sense. It lacked any Beyonder elements. Perhaps in terms of physical damage, it was stronger than the Black Emperor, but the latter could use the spirit world to “leap,” just like a large-sized version of a Traveler. There was no ordinary armament that could damage it.

Furthermore, King of the Five Seas Nast was likely a Sequence 3 demigod of the Black Emperor paths of the divine. He was the most infamous powerhouse at sea. He could directly distort the trajectories of cannonballs, making him nearly invincible when facing a fleet that wasn’t in any sense mystical.

From Klein’s point of view, they were enemies at two completely different levels. Yet, the final outcome was not something he could imagine.

He didn’t hide his astonishment as he blurted, “What about the Pritz?”

The fierce-looking man shook his head and replied, “I’m not too sure, but I heard that it wasn’t damaged. Only two corvettes were sunk.”

This… Klein was first taken aback before he came to a slight understanding of what happened.

He recalled the situation of him robbing the Tutanssess II mummy. The military’s demigod had used the law that had the power of mysteriousness weakened and the real strengthened. Once this came into effect, the Black Emperor was just a sailboat that was a little special with some extraordinariness. It definitely couldn’t beat an ironclad warship. Neither could it flee.

This also meant that the Pritz had a demigod existence on the military’s side, or else such a law wouldn’t have come into effect.

To be able to get the Black Emperor to flee under such a situation, King of the Five Seas Nast must be very, very strong. Below angels, he’s definitely one of the strongest… From the looks of it, due to the existence of the Arbiter pathway, the trajectory of this world's military development remains close to that of Earth's. It wouldn't reach a point of not being able to defeat a slightly higher level mysticism opponent… Klein nodded in enlightenment as he didn't inquire further.

As for Beyonders below Sequence 4, in a large-scale battle, apart from the few jobs that could take on the role of outputting offensive firepower or carry out effective defenses, the rest could only avoid a direct clash. They would then be the "cleanup crew" or simply provide support. For example, a Marionettist with all his marionettes feared no one in a Mid-Sequence Beyonder battle if fighting one-on-one. But once he was on a battlefield with shells hurtling everywhere and machine gunfire sweeping the area, the problem of being physically weak became a problem. Even with Paper Figurine Substitutes, one was unable to escape the range of gunfire; thus, suffering a second round of damage. Under such situations, it might be too late to use Paper Figurine Substitutes again.

In such intense battles, the most effective Mid-Sequence Beyonders are Wraiths. They aren't afraid of cannonballs or bullets, nor are they afraid of being discovered by enemies. Furthermore, they have Shriek which can affect a huge area… Klein allowed his thoughts to wander when the man from before continued speaking, "You're also thinking of joining the Black Emperor?"

"…I'm still not sure," Klein casually replied.

The stout man who was covered in tattoos said in excitement, "I have plans on giving it a try anyway.

"There aren't more than ten people here who are better at fighting than me here. I have rich experience as a pirate. They'll definitely pick me!

"However, I won't stay on the Black Emperor for too long. There are too many meaningless rules, such as not being able to plunder or kill defenseless people. Or something as silly as not being able to drag a woman you like unless it's mutual. Did you hear that? Is that anything like a pirate? Although the King of the Five Seas is one of the Four Kings and is publicly acknowledged as the pirate king, those rules are j-just like dogsh*t!

“I’m already used to leading a real pirate’s life. I like it that way and will not change! I’m only tempted to join because I heard that it’s possible for the Black Emperor crew to obtain supernatural powers. When the time comes, I’ll leave and form my own pirate crew…”

As this man spoke excessively, he suddenly realized the stranger’s expression turn a little odd.

He hesitated for a moment and asked, “Why are you looking at me like that?”

†

The silver-gray glistening sword slashed down suddenly, pinning down a blank-faced figure to the ground.

The figure warped and squirmed and gradually dissipated into illusory blobs of light amidst swirling silver light.

Colin Iliad retracted his sword and stood straight up. Observing his surroundings, he saw that Waite and Lovia had separately finished their corresponding targets. A region had been cleanly cleared out by the riverside.

At this point, above the illusory, eerie-black river, a dark boat cruised over. It silently docked by the bank.

Upon seeing this scene, Colin slowly exhaled as he muttered with a solemn expression, “Ferryman…”

He had spent quite a long amount of time with the former Chief, and they knew each other rather well. They both knew that the other was troubled by the City of Silver’s absence of the Sequence 3 of the Giant pathway, Silver Knight potion formula. This prevented people from advancing once they reached the level of a demigod. They had thoughts of switching to a neighboring Sequence, and this plan had seen the light of hope during a particular expedition. This was because they found the Sequence 3 potion formula of the Phoenix pathway: Ferryman!

From that moment forth, the former Chief began building the mausoleum and eventually took up residence inside before sealing the entrance.

Observing silently with dark green symbols in his eyes, Colin Iliad said heavily, “Let’s cross the river on the boat.”

Waite and Lovia didn’t express any objections, fully trusting the Chief’s judgment. They followed closely behind him and boarded the dark and strange boat.

During this process, the three didn’t show any hesitation or observe their surroundings, nor did they pause. It was as though this wasn’t an exploration but a visit with a destination in mind.

The boat slowly began moving across the ink-black water surface, leaving a long trail in its wake.

The bloody arms and the slimy tentacles wildly reached upwards and slammed into the boat, but they failed to leave any marks. They failed to leave any influence.

In just over ten seconds, the three Elders of the six-member council arrived on the other bank of the illusory river.

There was an altar there with a heavy, iron-black coffin placed on it.

Colin Iliad immediately jumped off the boat and reached out for his other sword. Like before, he appeared cautious, not underestimating anything.

Following that, Waite held his iron-gray hammer and landed heavily on the bank. He left the surrounding soil quaking in an obvious manner.

He looked at the monster skull that embraced the gigantic coffin, took two steps, and placed the hammer in front of him. He then removed the Dragon Slaying Bow behind him.

At this point, Waite suddenly felt the back of his palm itching. He subconsciously looked down and saw that his hair follicles had fine white hair stained with yellowish oil growing from within as they grew in size.

†

Poto Harbor. After Klein fed Creeping Hunger and found a rowdy inn, he got a room that could barely be considered clean.

Then he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

Sitting in The Fool's chair, Klein first picked up the projection of Azik's copper whistle and conjured a pen and paper before writing a corresponding divination statement: "The reason for this copper whistle's abnormality today."

Chapter 901 - The Mutated Paper Figurine

◆

Klein didn’t bring Azik’s copper whistle directly above the gray fog this time, but he did plan on doing it the same way he did back when he first divined the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem. He completed it by using an object’s projection. Although this would decrease the accuracy to a certain extent, causing the divination to fail at obtaining any effective revelation, it guaranteed that the item was undamaged thanks to the gray fog being an intermediary layer.

He still recalled the time back when he divined the origins of the black ear that came from the Listener. This Sealed Artifact had suffered retaliation from the True Creator, causing it to crumble and reform into a charm.

Therefore, with the suspicion that the divination result could point to Death’s corpse or other remains, a godhood power of a Sequence 0 that had long perished but was still capable of changing the Berserk Sea’s environment, Klein decided to leave Azik’s copper whistle in the real world and divine using a projection. This was to avoid the possibility of damaging such an important item. After all, Death and the True Creator were at the same level!

As for why Klein dared to directly use Groselle’s Travels to divine its origins, it was because the ancient god, Dragon of Imagination, had long since perished. Its corresponding characteristic had likely been inherited by someone else and changed hands several times. Furthermore, the book itself was extremely strong. Even a blast of the

Sea God Scepter at full strength could hardly damage it. By the same logic, Mr. Door was likely only a King of Angels and was in an exiled and quarantined state. He could only barely send out his ravings, making it impossible for him to deal any actual damage.

With the help of the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, I can quickly recover from the damage and corruption without any lasting repercussions. If Azik's copper whistle were to be destroyed, it would truly be gone. I wouldn't be able to contact Mr. Azik again and use it to attract the undead. I won't even be able to carry it around with me… Klein very calmly and skillfully held the copper whistle's projection and the paper with the divination statement in hand before leaning back into his chair. Half-closing his eyes, he chanted softly in a state of Cogitation, "The reason for this copper whistle's abnormality today."

After chanting it seven times, Klein fell into a deep sleep and entered the dream world.

After an unknown period of time, he saw a dark and gloomy mausoleum. He saw a dark-colored staircase that extended downwards and coffins placed around it.

The coffins were all open with dead bodies in them. On their backs grew white feathers that were stained with pale yellow oil.

Even in the dream, Klein found the scene abnormally familiar, as though he had once seen it before.

At that moment, he seemed to smell the putrid smell of rot and hear the slow breathing of some object. He felt that the darkness in the mausoleum was thickening, giving him an acute feeling of deathly silence.

Suddenly, ravings that were both loud and soft sounded at the same time. The corpses in the coffins with white feathers on their backs floated up together, and using their half-rotten and half-pale faces, they looked out of the dream!

With his heart skipping a beat, Klein lost control of his heart, as though it was grabbed by invisible hands and was ripped straight out of his chest.

During this process, his dream collapsed into fragments as it returned to nothingness.

And the final scene Klein saw was that, not only were the corpses growing white feathers on their backs and other parts of their body, there were thin illusory black tubes that stabbed into their bodies. They extended deep into the mausoleum where an endless cold, sinister, black fog emanated.

The black fog slowly contracted and expanded, producing panting sounds. When the commotion from this scene landed in Klein's eyes and ears, the color in his skin rapidly drained. It left his skin rotting and overflowing with pus. It made his pores produce thin and dense white feathers that were stained with pale yellow oil. It made the projection of Azik's copper whistle in his hand shatter into a blob of black fog.

The long mottled table in the ancient palace rotted and collapsed as the twenty-two high-back chairs were enveloped by white feathers as though they had a life of their own.

Seeing the endless gray fog silently churn, the mysterious space above this gently stirred, quickly restoring everything to normal. It was as though nothing had happened.

Klein, who had collapsed to the side of the chair, reached out his hand and grabbed the table leg and slowly stood up. Sitting back in his chair, he exhaled slowly.

He rubbed his temples and subconsciously did a comparison.

Weaker than the True Creator and Eternal Blazing Sun, but stronger than Mr. Door. However, I'm not sure if it's because the latter was exiled and quarantined which minimized the amount of power transmitted over.

Why am I thinking about these comparisons? It's not like I'm their match. It will still be the same even if I become a demigod...

Unfortunately, I didn't directly see the object hidden in the black fog; otherwise, I might be able to obtain some potion formulas or mysticism knowledge.

Klein felt a baffling sense of regret as he cast his gaze to the side of his chair. He saw an illusory black fog floating there.

It was the remnants after the shattering of the projection of Azik's copper whistle.

There's no sensation of strength, which means it can't be used as a charm. What is its use? Klein thought of something else as he summoned a backup Paper Angel from his junk pile and cast it onto the illusory black fog.

The moment the two made contact, they immediately fused together. The paper figurine quickly turned black and appeared serene and quiet. On its back grew white feathers that were stained with pale yellow oil.

Such a change was only maintained for a second. The paper figurine returned to its original state, but it didn't seem corporeal, as though it was half-illusory.

Apart from that, there were feather-like patterns that covered the paper figurine's back.

What can this be used for? Klein made the mutated paper figurine land back in his palm.

He didn't dare to use divination to determine its effects, afraid to see the scene from his dream before, allowing the now prepared object from deep inside the black fog to invade where he was.

After repeated checks, Klein used his knowledge in mysticism to determine something.

This doesn’t contain any powers itself, but it’s substantially unique. Perhaps it can create special effects that are related to the undead domain when used as a Paper Figurine Substitute or Paper Angel.

It’s like my adventurer’s harmonica. Although it doesn’t contain any strength, it can summon a messenger with great strength…

Klein immediately put away the mutated paper figurine and began interpreting the scene from his dream.

Black mausoleum, open coffins, corpses with feathers on their back, black fog emanating deep inside. These revelations seem to point towards Death or something important that Death left behind… Or perhaps it’s a certain product of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death?

Right, why did I find what I saw familiar?

Klein carefully recalled and quickly found an answer.

He had seen a similar scene in a particular divination a long time ago!

That time, the contents of his divination was the result of hiding matters related to Mr. Azik from the Nighthawks!

Back then, he had seen two scenes in his dream. One was of himself falling into a sea of blood and being pulled out by Azik. The other was them finding themselves in a dark and gloomy mausoleum, looking as though they were searching for something!

Klein had once tried interpreting it, believing that the first scene represented him in danger and being rescued by Mr. Azik. The second scene represented them exploring a mausoleum or somewhere that symbolized a mausoleum together.

The former had been verified during the meteor that came falling from the skies in Backlund. The latter finally revealed clues today!

Could it be that the place that Mr. Azik and I will be exploring is the mausoleum that I just "saw"? But, this mausoleum is very dangerous. The object in the deepest part of the black fog has a very high level. It's only slightly weaker than true deities. Furthermore, it's filled with malevolence… Klein knitted his brows bit by bit, believing that their exploration together wasn't naturally a good thing.

This made him believe that it was necessary for him to stop Mr. Azik. However, he also suspected that the divination scene he saw couldn't be avoided. Otherwise, a worse outcome would happen in a dramatic way of having destiny unfold.

At least during my first divination, there was only the exploration scene and no appearance of danger… Perhaps there's a way to circumvent it… This might be why Seers are often so vague. At times, being too clear might backfire! Klein planned on vaguely mentioning his dream without providing any interpretation when he met Mr. Azik again and allowing him to share his views.

After making up his mind, Klein leaned back and looked at the dome of the magnificent palace before vanishing from above the gray fog.

†

Light—shattered light and the pure light of dawn—emitted from the Elder of the six-member council, the other Demon Hunter, Waite Chirmont's body. It dissolved the white feathers that grew out of the pores of his skin as he suppressed the subsequent squirming of his flesh and blood.

His arm muscles swelled as he pulled the bowstring of the Dragon Slaying Bow, allowing silver electric bolts and the dawn of light to mesh into a dazzling arrow.

The arrow flew out and instantly reached the altar which was piled with monster skulls. It hit the heavy, iron-black coffin.

Silently, the arrow's beam dimmed and vanished without leaving any effect.

No, the area around the altar was turning darker and more gloomy!

Inside the iron-black coffin, a sound that resembled bones rubbing against each other sounded:

"Why? Why are you disturbing my slumber?"

Upon hearing this, Waite's heart instantly became heavy. This was because there was no hint of hiding its malevolent intent, and that it also meant that the former Chief might've transformed into a monster.

The City of Silver's attempt at salvation had once again failed.

With a bang, the coffin's lid flew up and shattered into pieces. A large wave of black fog emanated out from beneath in an incessant manner.

Amidst this scene, Waite saw a figure slowly stand up from within the coffin. He was nearly four meters tall and his limbs were long. His body was covered in white feathers that were tainted with faint yellow oil. Behind his back were thin illusory black tubes that connected out into infinity.

Behind the three members of the six-member council, a huge wave stirred in the pitch-black river. All sorts of arms, tentacles, and veins surged over.

At this moment, Waite saw the Chief's body transform rapidly and saw his bulging muscles tears his clothes inch by inch.

Chapter 902 - Shadow

◆ ◆ ◆

In just a blink of an eye, Colin Iliad had transformed into a four-meter-tall giant. His skin was bluish-black and muscular. Every inch of his skin, pores, and flesh seemed to violate the normal confines of a human body. It was a unique combination that possessed an unimaginable shock factor.

This wasn't something that could be described superficially or in dimensions, as apart from quantitative terms like length, breadth, height, there was information, strength, and spirituality as measurement quantities. They were directly presented and seemed to be rich with complicated mystical patterns, symbols, and labels. But in fact, there wasn't any change. The former was just a partial image that humans received due to them lacking the ability to sense and discern him. But even so, to face such a creature directly, humans without any godhood would still be corrupted by the spirituality, having their minds thrashed. A common outcome would either be death on the spot or going completely mad.

And it was precisely due to this fact that this creature was known in mysticism as: Mythical Creature!

However, at that moment, Colin Iliad's head didn't experience any obvious changes. All it did was swell up significantly, and the area from his forehead to nose cracked open with a black vertical eye-like rift.

Before reaching Sequence 2, the Mythical Creature form of a demigod was incomplete!

Faced with a powerhouse of this level, the advantages and disadvantages of taking such a form was obvious. On the one hand, this enhanced one's strength and level significantly. On the other hand, it would result in intense madness and provide strong inclinations towards losing control. It was a nontrivial test of one's rationality. It wasn't something those with insufficient willpower could withstand.

Therefore, most saints would consider transforming into an incomplete Mythical Creature only if they were forced into a corner. And it wouldn't just be the transformation of a particular part of their bodies. To them, such an action was an attempt at dancing on the edge of a knife. It easily led to a loss of control; therefore, caution was imperative.

Most of the time, there were two extremes. One extreme was the minority who indulged in their desires and expressed their evil side fully. The other was the kind who had extremely strong willpower and a resilient mind. Once the former produced the Mythical Creature form, it was equivalent to them losing control with no way of transforming back. The latter could use their Mythical Creature form as a rather normal battle tactic, without the fear of losing control and the threat of madness. Of course, something rather normal wasn't normal. It still wasn't something that could be used frequently. This was because, for people who danced at the edge of the abyss, they would only deepen the erosion on them with each attempt. It wasn't something that could be completely avoided just because they could handle the negative effects.

Among the City of Silver's six-member council, Chief Colin Iliad was one of the few who could control his Mythical Creature form as a Demon Hunter.

He held the two swords that were slathered with different ointments. Just taking a step forward with his right foot sent the land shaking as he leaped up towards the top of the altar. He then pounced towards the former Chief whose body was covered in white feathers.

His giant-like body's interior and exterior produced dawnlike light that scattered the surrounding darkness, purifying the harrowing creatures that were in the illusionary river behind them.

At the same time, Waite Chirmont kept drawing his Dragon Slaying Bow, strafing around the former Chief that had transformed into an unknown monster with blinding silver lightning arrows.

Lovia had already closed her eyes. The five-meter-tall silver-armored knight behind her had phased away. Dragging the illusory greatsword, it charged straight at the altar, producing cracks that overflowed with silver light.

In addition to that, at the Shepherd Elder's feet, the shadows that curled into a bundle suddenly began squirming as though they had come to life.

It quickly left Lovia, and amidst the environment intermixing with darkness and the dawn, it followed the eeriness and quickly headed for the iron-black coffin above the altar.

However, its target didn't seem to be the mutated former Chief, but the thin illusory black tubes that were stabbed into his body while extending into infinity!

†

Moments after Klein returned to the real world, he heard the loud sounds of waves crashing. He heard the prostitutes on the streets screaming in horror without any signs of calming down.

Slightly surprised, he walked to the window and, through the gap of two messily built buildings, saw lead-colored clouds stacked together as waves swarmed the area beyond Poto Harbor. A black hurricane extended from the surface of the sea to the air, tainted with dark silver lightning as it silently destroyed everything.

It was like a door that led to the apocalypse had finally been opened.

And inside the port city, the void had turned translucent. Skulls with open mouths, vines with baby faces, bloody arms, and strange slimy tentacles with teeth were slamming at the boundary between the illusory and reality. It was thrilling and horrendous.

This made many pirates tremble in the knees as they didn't dare stay on the streets. All of them rushed into nearby buildings.

The seemingly invisible wraiths and shadows flew around, appearing from time to time. Coming close to the ears of different targets, they attempted to scream but were unable to make contact.

At that moment, Poto Harbor seemed to fall into the hell known as the Underworld. It was eerie, dark, chaotic, and crazy.

Klein frowned slightly, having had a guess as to what was happening.

Back when he made a divination above the gray fog, it angered the object deep in the gloomy mausoleum. It then unleashed its temper, changing the weather of the Berserk Sea and Poto Harbor, creating the phenomena of the Underworld's descent.

This also means that the mausoleum is indeed concealed somewhere in the Berserk Sea… It's probably something that Death left back then. Of course, this might not be at odds with the product of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project. The two might be fused together… Klein retracted his gaze and quickly set up a ritual and sacrificed Azik's copper whistle to the mysterious space above the gray fog. It was to prevent the unknown, strange, and evil object from locking onto him.

After doing that, he looked out of the window at the abnormality that was gradually calming down. He said with a self-deprecating laugh, That's such an endearing welcome.

Hmm… The Numinous Episcopate will definitely notice the abnormality of the Berserk Sea. I wonder what actions they will take…

†

Above the illusory pitch-black river, the waves slowly calmed down. The arms, vines, and tentacles that attempted to grab at something were either vaporized or had no choice but to retract themselves.

Around the altar, the land was already covered in cracks. There were white feathers stained with yellow oil everywhere.

Colin Iliad, in his giant form, had stabbed both swords into the former Chief's body, pinning the rotting monster that wasn't shorter than him onto the collapsed altar. Waite Chirmont's Dragon Slaying Bow had already condensed a silver arrow of light that was filled with a wrathful aura, aiming it at the head of the former Chief which only had tiny pieces of flesh hanging off it.

The shadow that Lovia had produced had successfully arrived at the altar under the silver knight's cover. While the other two Elders weren't paying attention, the shadow leaped and pounced at the black tubes that extended into infinity from the former Chief's body.

With the incorporeal tubes approaching, the shadow's color darkened. The blackness seemed to embody the most corrupt and evil thoughts of humanity.

At this moment, a deep voice resounded around the altar:

"Fate."

The area "in front" of the shadow instantly darkened before realizing that it had pounced on the giant-like Colin Iliad.

Colin looked down at it, his eyes lit with a pure brilliance.

It was like the first sliver of light that illuminates the darkness on an extended night.

The light grew brighter as it blasted out of the mausoleum, causing the basement of the City of Silver’s spire to produce an even brighter and dazzling light that met with it.

When the two met in midair, they fell back down, landing upon Colin Iliad’s massive body. The pitch-black shadow evaporated with a sizzle, and the distortion and squirming weakened until they completely vanished.

Demon Hunter Colin turned back to glance at Lovia without a word or expression. It was as though nothing had happened.

He quickly retracted his gaze and directed the remnant beam straight into the former Chief’s dual swords.

Lovia stood there with her eyes closed without showing any signs of panic or fear. Instead, she slowly sighed.

†

In the City of Generosity Bayam, Alger Wilson circled around many times in order to escape any imaginary trackers or monitors before arriving at the Artisan’s residence. He pulled the doorbell.

He had heard that the Artisan had recently been infected by a disease and strange snoopers had appeared in the vicinity. Alger’s first suspicion was the Demoness Sect, but on careful thought, he felt that the Artisan had no way to withstand the temptation of their charm based on his preferences. There was no need for the Demonesses to go through such a complicated and roundabout manner. All they needed to do was curl their fingers and showcase their charm, and he would divulge and agree to everything.

Therefore, Alger believed that there was another reason for the matter. He needed to see it for himself to prevent the delivery of the mystical item from being delayed. He didn’t wish to lose the characteristic and materials for no good reason.

Amidst the ringing of the doorbell, the Artisan's main door opened. A thin and tanned middle-aged glanced at Alger and said, "Why are you here?"

This person was none other than Artisan Cielf who had worked with Alger for many years. His background was unknown.

"Didn't you say you were sick?" Alger asked, seemingly casual.

Cielf yawned and said, "I'm already better."

Alger was taken aback as he looked around.

"Where's that strange snooper?"

Cielf's eyebags were a little puffy as his brown eyes revealed looks of fatigue and impatience.

"Who the hell knows? There's been no sign of the snooper anyway. In short, I'll be moving soon. It's too dangerous here."

Alger heaved a sigh of relief.

"That's good."

He paused for a moment before saying, "Aren't you inviting me for a cup?"

"A fellow like you who only seeks high-proof alcohol has no way of appreciating fine wine." Cielf pulled at his flaxen-colored hair and moved to the side to make way.

Alger walked in staidly, and with just one glance, he had taken in the entire area into his eyes.

Chapter 903 - Scholar-type Bishop

◆

Cielf's residence wasn't messy and dirty like most bachelors. Things were placed neatly, and there wasn't any dust on any surfaces. After all, as an Artisan, he didn't lack money. Many of his actions simply had the necessity that secrets were kept, so it wasn't convenient for him to hire a large number of fixed servants. Therefore, he had no choice but to hire help who were paid by the hour.

Scanning the area, Alger discovered nothing that was off from his previous visit. The furnishing was extremely simple without any expensive ornaments, oil paintings, or sculptures. It resembled the residence of an ordinary person.

Of course, Alger knew very well that Cielf definitely deserved the title of being a tycoon. He just didn't care about putting on a so-called decent image. He was willing to spend hundreds of pounds for a bottle of limited-edition wine, or gift a mistress a house, but he would never waste a single pence on expensive carpets, porcelain, gold-inlaid cutlery, or paintings of famous artists.

"A cup of Sonia blood wine." Alger's expression remained unchanged, but his verbal and body language indicated that he was coming in simply to get a free cup of wine.

Cielf shrugged and said, "You should feel lucky. I don't have the habit of keeping Lanti Proof."

He walked to the tiny bar counter in the living room and took out a bottle of exquisite Sonia blood wine. He then overturned two cups.

Finding a sofa to sit down, Alger took the opportunity to raise his hand to massage his neck as though to relieve any discomfort in his neck.

Using the cover of this action, he naturally took a glance at his surroundings, quickly making an observation of all the spots where he hadn't been able to see previously.

As Cielf couldn't be bothered to decorate his residence much, Alger quickly completed his attempt as his gaze was fixed onto a glass window of a cupboard a distance away for a second.

Through the glass, he saw some dried grass and flowers.

There were red-rimmed flowers, blood moon flowers, and monkey-faced tree leaves. Their common characteristic was that they were common in the Southern Continent, but they were practically not seen in the Northern Continent.

Alger retracted his gaze as he silently watched Cielf carry the bottle of wine and wine glasses over.

Reaching out to take the glass, he began idly chatting about the recent developments at sea until the small half-filled bottle of Sonia blood wine was finished.

Upon seeing this, Alger smiled and bade farewell before leaving.

Five minutes after he left, Cielf who had silently sat down to indulge in his tipsy experience suddenly stood up, walked to the staircase, and opened a wooden door that led to the cellar.

"Did he suspect anything?"

"No."

"Regardless, this place is no longer suitable for you to live in. You need to move away as soon as possible."

"I still have certain commissions that I haven't completed."

"You don't have to. It's not like you will contact them again. You will receive a new life."

"Alright."

†

Two buildings away, Alger sat on a long bench in someone's garden, cupping his right hand to his ear as he heard the conversation that came with the wind.

†

West Balam, Behrens Harbor. Outside a seemingly ordinary house.

"It's really due to your bad relationship with the Church of Knowledge that you're egging me on to come here to request for a Language Comprehension charm?" Danitz wiped the sweat from his forehead as he looked at Anderson, feeling unnerved.

Anderson said in a self-deprecating and unfazed manner, "You shouldn't describe it as bad..."

"Then hostile?" Danitz blurted out, cutting off his sentence.

Anderson shot him a glance and said, "The negative effects of your boxing glove might not be as easily bearable as you imagine it to be."

He paused and added with a chuckle, "A more accurate description is that: be it me or the people from the Church of Knowledge, neither one of us wishes to interact with one another."

Danitz used one hand to clench his boxing glove and said, seemingly stumped, "But how should I request for the charm?

"Do I just head straight to a clergyman of the Church of an orthodox god and mention something about mysticism? I'll end up locked up!"

Danitz was somewhat rash at the moment, but he was in no way dumb.

Anderson threw up his hands.

“Simple, just directly mention my name. Then indicate that you came to West Balam for some pressing matter and do not have the time to learn Dutanese, nor do you dare to hire a local interpreter. Therefore, all you could do was seek their help, hoping that you could receive a few Language Comprehension charms.

“During this process, you must showcase your knowledge of many Northern Continent languages, making the priests know that it’s not that you lack the ability to learn Dutanese, but that you just lack the time to do it. Then, they will test you. When that happens, all you need to do is get a good score and you’ll receive the charms.”

Test… Upon hearing this familiar term, Danitz’s temples throbbed as he forced a smile.

“You aren’t going yourself because you’re afraid of the tests, aren’t you?”

His original intent was to randomly use some words to conceal his discomfort, but he ended up seeing Anderson’s expression freeze.

From the looks of it, there’s still something you’re afraid of… Danitz chortled inwardly as he was suddenly filled with confidence.

He took large strides into the ordinary house and discovered that its interior was more of an amalgamation of classrooms, and not a land of preaching for the Church of Knowledge in Balam.

Then, he saw a grizzled elder.

Although this man wasn’t wearing the clergyman robes of the Church of Knowledge, just his unique scholarly air convinced Danitz that he was at least a bishop.

He had experienced similar vibes from his captain.

“Hello there.” Without covering himself with a hood, Danitz walked over with a smile while dressed in a commoner’s attire.

The elder silently watched him approach before slowly saying, “Danitz.”

“…”

Danitz paused and froze on the spot. His mind was filled with questions like: “He knows me?” “How does he know me?” “Isn’t my bounty only limited to the sea?”

The elder glanced at him and asked, “You are here for Language Comprehension charms?”

“Yes…” Danitz nodded with a blank look, suddenly having the feeling that he had zero secrets in front of the elder.

The scholarly old gentleman nodded gently.

“Are you planning on heading to the places ruled by Katamia and Maysanchez?”

“Yes.” Danitz continued his blank expression.

The elder took out four brass charms from his pocket.

“These can be used for two months. They should be enough.”

“…”

Danitz received it with a blank look and after a few seconds, said, “That’s it?”

It’s that simple?

Isn’t there supposed to be a test?

“You don’t want it?” the scholarly elder asked with a smile.

“No, it’s not that!” Danitz suddenly shook his head, and before his brain could react, he had already asked, “How do you know me? How do you know I want Language Comprehension charms?”

The elder wore a few looks of pity in his eyes as he slowly said, “Your captain contacted me.

“She said that you refused to stop no matter how much they called out to you when you left the ship, rushing straight into the harbor. She had actually prepared a few Language Comprehension charms for you.”

As he spoke, the man shook his head, the look in his eyes somewhat ambivalent. It was as though he was looking at a student who was often careless in class.

…I should’ve long realized that. Captain is such a meticulous person. It’s impossible for her not to consider the problem of the language barrier… Danitz resisted the urge to slap himself.

When the elder saw the changes in Danitz’s expression, he shook his head and asked, “It probably wasn’t your own idea to seek help here, right? I was about to use divination to find you.”

“Ah, right. It was suggested by Anderson Hood,” Danitz immediately replied.

The elder was taken aback for a second before his expression turned ashen.

At that moment, Anderson was sitting outside in the shade. He had snapped a tree branch and was casually drawing on a barren patch among the grass as he leisurely waited for Danitz to come out.

He had no doubts that this unqualified Hunter could obtain the Language Comprehension charms. This was because, as long as Danitz mentioned Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina, everything would become much simpler. The only difference was how many rounds of tests he needed to take.

Just as he finished drawing King of the North Ulyssan's head, he heard a familiar gait coming from the inside.

Anderson's branch-wielding hand paused for a second when he looked up and turned to the door. He saw Danitz holding a stack of paper, walking over with mixed emotions.

"You… failed the test?" Anderson gave a sincere smile, having zero concern over the failure to obtain the Language Comprehension charms.

Danitz shook his head blankly.

"There wasn't a test."

"…"

Anderson was first taken aback as he asked with immediate enlightenment, "Help from your captain?"

Danitz tersely confirmed it as he handed the stack of paper to Anderson and said, "This is what the bishop wishes me to inform you: 'A real Hunter doesn't only rely on instinct or solely focus on the prey's information. They also need to learn how to grasp the prey's psyche and use all kinds of additional information.'

"This is the information he wants to give you."

Anderson's expression became contorted for a brief moment before it was restored to normal. He chuckled and said, "Thankfully, that's not much."

Danitz's lips quivered as he finally held back the laughter that rose within him. He said with seriousness, "That's only the table of contents.

"That bishop said that you should try to finish reading all the books mentioned in it within two years."

Anderson's smile finally froze.

†

Desi Bay, Eskelson Harbor.

Klein was like any normal Southern Continent tourist. He bought tickets to East Balam, boarded a hybrid steam and sail liner with many cannons.

With a hum, the ship left the harbor and quickly entered the Berserk Sea.

Midway, Klein discovered the Loen Kingdom’s Desi fleet patrolling the safe sea route as though they were guarding against something.

From the looks of it, the abnormality in the Berserk Sea has garnered the attention of the Loen military… This way, the Numinous Episcopate likely has no way of investigating these waters without problems. Of course, a fleet is unable to monitor the entire stretch of the sea route… Klein stood inside his cabin as he looked at the scenery outside, thinking in enlightenment and poignancy.

At this moment, he heard stacked illusory pleas. He hurriedly headed above the gray fog to check on it.

The prayer was from The Hanged Man. He requested Mr. Fool to inform The Hermit that the Artisan was suspected to be controlled by a cult or secret organization and that he wished to receive some help from her.

Chapter 904 - Analysis

◆

The Artisan is suspected to be under the control of a cult or secret organization? Yet, he's trying to get The Hermit's help? Just get The World! Who knows which waters the Future is in at the moment and how long it would take to reach there. What's more, The World can Teleport! After hearing The Hanged Man's prayers, Klein subconsciously rebutted his request, believing that it would delay an opportunity, causing unnecessary losses.

He then calmed down, believing that with Mr. Hanged Man's attention to detail and experience, it was impossible for him to commit such a simple error. Since he believed that he definitely had his reasons for requesting The Hermit's help instead of The World.

This also means that Mr. Hanged Man has determined that the matter hasn't reached a critical state that requires immediate action. He even wishes to observe further to find more clues and details… Besides, since Ma'am Hermit had offered to provide help in advance, it means that she believes that, for the time being, her region of activity would overlap with Mr. Hanged Man's. If anything really happens, she would be able to rush there at the fastest speed possible… Or does she too have powers similar to Teleport? But that's a very low possibility… Klein tapped the edges of the mottled table, believing that he should trust Mr. Hanged Man's experience.

Of course, this also included the fact that Mr. Hanged Man hadn't described in detail about his discoveries or areas of suspicion, preventing him from inferring or divining the truth of the matter.

As his thoughts stirred, Klein threw The Hanged Man's prayer scene into the crimson star representing The Hermit.

As he was waiting for Admiral of Stars to reply, he suddenly saw the star representing The Sun suddenly contract and expand as it produced stacked layers of prayers.

The City of Silver's exploration of the former Chief's mausoleum has some preliminary results? Klein made a guess as he emanated his spirituality over.

In accordance with his expectations, Little Sun began recounting everything that had happened after the three members of the six-member council opened the former Chief's mausoleum. This included encountering the souls of their deceased relatives, the river they crossed which hid countless strange creatures, and how they faced the incomplete Mythical Creature form of the former Chief whose body was covered in white feathers. It also included Shepherd Lovia's separation of a shadow in an attempt to pounce onto the illusory tubes that extended out of the former Chief's body. However, she was stopped when Colin Iliad used the Fate Siphon charm, swapping his and the former Chief's fate for a brief moment, causing a difference in outcomes.

Thin illusory black tubes… White feathers stained with pale yellow oil… This sounds familiar… Yes, wasn't this the main characteristic in the scene I saw when I divined the abnormality with Azik's copper whistle? And the reason that former Chief built the mausoleum was to switch to Sequence 3 Ferryman of the Death pathway… As Klein listened, his mind raced, joining the dots together and considering what kind of conclusion he could receive from that.

Soon, he had a bold guess:

The mutation of the City of Silver's former Chief had a certain connection with the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project!

Although this conclusion sounded inexplicable and unbelievable since the City of Silver was situated in the completed isolated Forsaken Land of the Gods, It was a place that could only be entered through certain means via the Giant King's Court and ruins of the battle of the gods. Even the seven deities couldn't find it or have the power to infiltrate it. However, the numerous similarities made Klein, who was sensitive to coincidences, combine the actions of Shepherd Elder Lovia in the operation and eliminate the other possibilities so as to seriously consider what the two seemingly unconnected matters might possibly point towards.

From the scene that he received from divination and the experiences of having white feather grow from the pores of the back of his hands when he summoned the failed product of Artificial Death, as well as the encounter of the three City of Silver Elders, he began suspecting that the Numinous Episcopate's attempt might have achieved success to a certain degree.

Through a series of sacrificial rituals and the transformation of their own High-Sequence Beyonders, they influenced Death's remains via backward propagation, causing that abstract, illusory Uniqueness which represented a deity's authority to generate some form of sentience. This allowed the object that was only a totem and a concept to come to life!

Hence, this unintelligent object that couldn't be considered Artificial Death had begun assimilating the entire ritual, eagerly exerting its influence on lower Sequence Beyonders of the same pathway.

After reaching certain conditions, the object hidden in the depths of the black fog could extend thin illusory black tubes, establishing connections with the target, and draw upon their strength to transform their bodies.

And this method might involve the Underworld or something special about Death's domain. It could circumvent the force that isolated the

Forsaken Land of the Gods and make effective contact with the beings within!

Therefore, the shadow that Shepherd Elder Lovia had produced was a bestowment of the True Creator. Its goal was to follow the thin illusory black tubes on the former Chief's body and trace the remains of the corrupted Death? Perhaps this was how the Mother Tree of Desire replaced the Chained God back then and seized the corresponding authority…

Thankfully, the current Chief of the City of Silver has a very clear mind. He knew ahead of time to seek out the secret existence backing Little Sun for help. By using the Fate Siphon charm, he remarkably foiled the True Creator's ploy…

Hmm, from the looks of it, the two powerful Sealed Artifacts of the City of Silver are good at purification. They're able to stop the shadow that can corrupt Death's remains…

Heh heh, as The Fool, I seem to have crossed the True Creator once again. Of course, Amon will be the one taking the blame since the Worm of Time was contributed by "Him"… Through Little Sun's description and relying on his own interference, Klein roughly figured out the hidden conflict that happened during the City of Silver's exploratory operation.

Meanwhile, he also gained a first look at Shepherd Elder's mental condition.

To Lovia, thin illusory black tubes that lead to the outside world was undoubtedly the key to the City of Silver's escape from the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Therefore, she was very certain of her actions this time, without showing any signs of regret. She would only believe that the Chief was the one who shattered that hope.

It's not too terrifying to have someone do evil deeds. What's most terrifying is when people who have a martyrish mentality do evil they believe to be right… Klein couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

As for why Little Sun knew what happened inside the mausoleum so clearly, it was obvious that Chief Colin Iliad had informed him during a casual chat.

At this point, Derrick had already recounted how the three Elders had retrieved a special Sealed Artifact. It was a Beyonder characteristic left behind by the former Chief that had fused with his bones.

The former Chief was from the Giant pathway, beginning from Sequence 9 Warrior to Sequence 4 Demon Hunter. The Ferryman potion he consumed corresponds to the Death pathway's Sequence 3. The two Beyonder characteristics mixed together must be weirder and more varied than a single pathway. Together with the added effects of Artificial Death, the final Sealed Artifact must be very powerful. Of course, the negative effects will probably be equally powerful…

Yes, back when the black illusory river was described, the various weird creatures likely corresponded to the Underworld. This is similar to the scene I saw in the Berserk Sea. It's also similar in effect to what Miss Sharron's mystical item created… As Klein thought about it, he listened to Little Sun wrap up the topic of the exploration before mentioning the monster known as Shapeshifter.

After Derrick finished describing it, Klein felt that Shapeshifters were very likely Bizarro Banes.

He hurriedly summoned a gold coin from the junk pile and did a divination to confirm his guess.

With Little Sun's current strength, there's no way for him to head to that city to hunt it. I can only wait until that Chief prays to The Fool once again or seeks help via Little Sun… Anyway, there's no rush. I haven't found the Spirit World Plunderer yet… Klein nodded indiscernibly.

After requesting Mr. Fool to pass the corresponding information to Mr. World, Derrick said that he had enough points and could soon exchange for the Beyonder characteristic for Sequence 5 Vampire and complete the three-party transaction, so he requested that Mr. Moon prepare himself.

†

On the Future which was slowly cruising across the waters of the Rorsted Archipelago.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya thanked Mr. Fool and nudged the glasses on her nose. Opening the window to the captain's cabin, she shouted to everyone, "Turn towards Bayam."

After issuing the command, this pirate admiral curled the corners of her mouth. She finally had the chance to establish a long-term cooperation with an Artisan.

But at that moment, she suddenly thought of a problem.

If she easily received the help of an Artisan, would Frank Lee, who hadn't been able to obtain a Sequence 5 potion formula, attempt to make the Druid Beyonder characteristic into an item to expedite his paused experiments?

That's not a good thing… Cattleya subconsciously raised her hand and pinched her forehead.

†

On the liner, Klein, who had finished handling the matters, focused on enjoying his trip.

Due to the Berserk Sea's abnormal change in weather, the liner he was on board had chosen to take a further and more roundabout sea route that was much safer. Furthermore, it was to dock at a harbor named

Halman for the night.

Klein didn’t alight and remained at a window-side table at the upper level’s restaurant to have his dinner.

While waiting for his food, he casually looked out the window and took in the local night skyline.

Suddenly, he discovered a suspicious figure with a luggage bag preparing to board the ship.

The reason why he appeared suspicious wasn’t only because the man was wearing a black overcoat and tall top hat, but that he wore a scarf that wrapped his face, hiding his physical features. All that was left were a pair of eyes.

And that pair of eyes were peeled to the ground, preventing anyone from discerning his actual appearance.

Chapter 905 - Psychological Blind Spot

◆ ◆ ◆

Based on his experience from watching many detective animations, Klein believed that someone who wore a scarf to conceal his face and hid his physical characteristics with an overcoat was likely problematic. He probably hid an unspeakable secret, especially when it wasn't winter yet and the temperature in the Berserk Sea couldn't be considered cold.

However, this has nothing to do with me. Even if a locked-room murder mystery happens, the one having a headache would be the Captain… I should head above the gray fog later to do a divination and see if this trip will be smooth… Klein didn't mind the matter, but he still thought about it conscientiously.

He retracted his gaze and looked at the Desi roasted fish that was being served by the waiter.

After having dinner, he returned to his cabin and completed a divination above the gray fog. He obtained the conclusion that there wouldn't be drastic changes to the environment he was in and that everything would happen smoothly.

This allowed Klein to fall asleep peacefully without relying on Cogitation as he slept till daybreak.

With a whistle from the steam engine, the liner began moving and departing Halman Harbor.

The harbor could still be vaguely seen as Klein saw a figure there.

The figure wore a white shirt and a dark blue coat. He had a rather high nose, deeply recessed eyes, light blue eyes, and brown curly hair. His face was rather cut and his chin was slightly raised. He gave off a supercilious look.

With a sweep of his gaze, he quickly locked onto the liner which Klein was on.

At this moment, the sky suddenly darkened as though a door leading into the pitch-black land of illusions had formed.

A deafening typhoon stirred up from the seabed, surging upwards with massive amounts of blue mass. Dark lightning flashed like rifts in the void. They kept appearing and kept healing themselves until they disappeared.

This completely blocked the vision of those on the liner and at the harbor, putting them in two seemingly different worlds.

The Berserk Sea had once again shown its horror.

The liner failed to avoid or resist, and it could only continue cruising forward along the safe sea route that had relatively weaker storms.

What a coincidence… This likely isn't a coincidence… Standing behind the window of his cabin, Klein first sighed inwardly before coming to the conclusion that this sudden anomaly in the Berserk Sea was due to unnatural reasons.

Although it was common for the weather in the Berserk Sea to change suddenly without notice, to actually change at a particular point in time still left one suspicious.

The man at the dock is tracking the suspicious tourist from last night? And that tourist decided to change the weather upon realizing that he had been exposed, doing so that he can force the liner to leave? Klein made a guess when he made the connection.

And if that really were the case, it means that the suspicious passenger who hid his face with a scarf might very well be a demigod or someone who carried a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact!

After all, with Klein's present strength and items, it was impossible for him to trigger such a weather anomaly without the use of Sea God Scepter.

Of course, he also had other means like throwing out Azik's copper whistle to see if he could cause the entire Berserk Sea to go berserk.

Seriously? I just want to be a normal tycoon that's heading to the Southern Continent. Why would I encounter a pursuit at the level of demigods… Sigh, I'm under too much stress that my Sequence doesn't deserve… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh and finally chose to believe the divination he made last night.

Amidst the storm, the wobbling liner cruised along a rather calm stretch with apocalyptic scenes around it. And most of the tourists wore calm looks as though they were very accustomed to such conditions. Only a few people who were on their first trip across the Berserk Sea were trembling, grabbing tightly to anything they could grab at.

Time ticked by as the gales and lightning gradually calmed down. Bit by bit, the sky brightened.

At this moment, Klein, who was on the deck, felt his spiritual perception trigger. He subconsciously looked in the direction of Halman Harbor.

Above the undulating dark blue waves, beneath white scattered clouds, there was a white radiant flame flying over at high speeds from afar.

The flame increased in size and became increasingly clearer until it revealed its complete form. It was a gigantic flaming spear!

The flaming spear tore across the sky and landed at the bow of the liner's deck. However, it didn't ignite anything. It burnt through half a wooden plank and spread out before materializing into a figure.

The figure had a high nose, deeply recessed eyes, and blue eyes. He was none other than the man who had previously appeared at the dock!

He looked middle-aged as he slowly surveyed the area and walked through the wide-eyed and agape tourists before walking into the cabin.

The similarly agape Dwayne Dantès silently heaved a sigh of relief when he confirmed that the person wasn't here for him.

The way he appeared sure is cool. As expected of a demigod… Now, the only issue is that they do not come to blows. Even if the conflict cannot be helped, it's best they go to a neighboring sea to fight. Otherwise, there's no way this ship can withstand it… I can Teleport away quite successfully, but all these tourists… I'll only be able to save a few… Klein habitually drew the sign of the crimson moon on his chest, praying for the Goddess to bless them.

Just as he had such a thought, he saw a figure fly out of the cabin, slamming heavily onto the deck. It was none other than the suspicious tourist who had covered his face with a scarf.

This man had already revealed half his face. The tip of his nose was red and he had a thick beard around his mouth with saliva staining them.

His nearly triangular eyes were filled with horror. He held his hands to the deck as he kept crawling backward.

"Who got you to carry that item and put on such a disguise?" At the cabin's entrance, the middle-aged man with the high nose and blue eyes slowly walked out. He spoke in Intis with a heavy voice.

The suspicious tourist shook his head frantically.

"No, I don't know. He was also wearing the same. H-he gave me 100 pounds to take this ship to the Southern Continent before returning by myself!"

The middle-aged man silently watched with his penetrating glare that seemed to tear through his soul.

This made the tourist break out into a sweat as his body convulsed. He once again stammered his explanation, but there weren't any changes to it.

The man retracted his gaze before his body burst into white radiant flames.

Following that, he transformed into a gigantic flaming spear and shot towards the region where Halman Harbor was.

The flaming spear quickly disappeared into the distance, leaving a twinkling speck.

During this entire process, apart from at the very beginning, the demigod didn't take a second look at the surroundings tourists. It was as though they never existed.

A simple but smart ruse… By getting someone to disguise as himself and board the ship, then using certain means to control the weather; thus, creating proof that he's on the ship, but in actual fact, he had been at the harbor the entire time. Once the enemy starts the pursuit, he can then attempt to escape… Enlightened, Klein made a judgment.

This made him suspect if the pursuee was once a Conspirer, Magician, or other Beyonder that was good at coming up with ruses.

As for the person who transformed into a burning-white spear, his arrogance, detestable nature, and his usage of the Intis language had made Klein believe that he was probably a demigod from the Hunter pathway. It was possible that he was an Iron-blooded Knight.

I've no idea why there was a conflict… Klein shook his head and returned to his cabin.

On the deck, the tourists finally snapped to their senses as they discussed the supernatural phenomenon they had just seen in murmurs.

A person could transform into a flame, and the flame could reform into a human!

Amidst the noisy commotion, the liner continued cruising forward on the safe sea route. It didn’t encounter any accidents midway, and it arrived at another harbor at midnight.

Like usual, Klein didn’t alight, afraid that he would encounter something.

He took out his gold pocket watch and opened it to determine the time to head to the restaurant.

Another half an hour… Klein silently muttered to himself as he looked up and out the window.

At this moment, many tourists who were bound for this harbor were heading for the dock along the gangway with their luggage in hand.

As he swept his gaze, Klein’s gaze suddenly stopped on a figure.

The figure wore a black bonnet. He had dark golden sideburns. His lips were tightly pursed and his facial features were clear and distinct, like an ancient, classical sculpture without any wrinkles.

He wasn’t carrying any luggage, and soon, he stepped onto the dock with the crowd, disappearing into the corner of the road.

Klein just watched motionlessly, as though his body wasn’t his.

He felt every drop of his blood turn cold as a name appeared in his mind: Ince Zangwill!

†

The street lamps on the harbor had already lit up. The liner's many windows also lit up in concert with them.

Dwayne Dantès was waiting inside a first-class cabin in darkness and silence.

Klein had already sat down without showing any emotion. All kinds of thoughts couldn't help but flash across his mind.

This is the first time I'm discovering signs of Ince Zangwill after the Great Smog of Backlund…

The demigod from before was probably tracking Ince Zangwill…

His tricks are more profound than I thought. He found someone to disguise as him and gave him items not to divert his trackers, but to create a mental blindspot. It made one subconsciously eliminate this ship from the possible options…

He was here from the beginning…

That coincidental change in weather was likely created by Ince Zangwill with 0-08…

Why would he be pursued by an Intis Hunter demigod… What is he plotting…

Amidst his churning thoughts, Klein suddenly took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew it.

Silently, Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr with her four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand appeared before him.

Klein opened his mouth before closing them again. Picking up a pen, he quickly wrote:

"Mr. Dwayne Dantès has discovered traces of Ince Zangwill on

Waypoint Island in the Berserk Sea."

Folding the letter, Klein handed it along with a gold coin to Miss Messenger.

"Send it to the mailbox at Backlund's 7 Pinster Street."

The four heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand turned at the same time as the eight eyes looked at Klein.

She didn't say anything and bit onto the letter and gold coin.

Chapter 906 - Leonard's Warning

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, North Borough.

The pitch-black night had the crimson moon covered by clouds. There were only street lamps on the two sides of the road that emitted a faint light, illuminating the road ahead and the doors of the nearby houses.

7 Pinster Street's mailbox was silently hiding in the intersection between light and dark, bathing in a cool breeze that blew from the side as though it was in a slumber.

At this moment, newspapers, bills, and letters from various unknown people suddenly spewed out from its mouth.

These objects seemed to be dragged by an invisible hand as they floated in midair before flying towards the door and entering through a gap.

Inside the house, at the foyer, the newspapers automatically spread open as they rapidly flipped over. Then, they were casually left on the chair, stacking over other newspapers.

The bills and letters continued flying into the living room, with the former quickly stopping. With a few shakes, they floated to the surface of the coffee table and lined up. The latter had their envelopes removed, and the letters without envelopes quickly unfolded themselves, showcasing themselves in midair.

After a while, a portion of these letters flew onto a rack on the first floor's study. Some rushed for the scissors to help it cut itself apart.

Then, they orderly surged into the washroom and were thrown into the toilet.

Whoosh!

The mechanical flush of the toilet was automatically depressed, washing away the paper shreds into the sewers.

7 Pinster Street went back to normal, and its silence was identical to an uninhabited house's.

Southern Continent. East Balam. Kolain City.

Leonard Mitchell, who had just arrived, was resting in a residence arranged by the local Church of Evernight.

Suddenly, that slightly-aged voice sounded in his mind:

“Punk, you have an important letter.”

“What letter?” While Leonard asked softly, he already had a guess in mind.

To mail an important letter to 7 Pinster Street without caring that it was inhabited, there was only one, no—two people: Klein Moretti and Dwayne Dantès.

As for why the old man named Pallez Zoroast could still clearly read the letters sent to 7th Pinster Street despite the Berserk Sea and half the Northern Continent separating them, Leonard had only a guess or two. This was because he had helped the old man capture a specter before.

With regards to this, his theory was:

Old Man definitely used a Worm of Time to parasitize that specter, making it “His” eyes, ears, and mouth in the Northern Continent.

At that moment, Pallez Zoroast replied to his question.

"It's from Klein Moretti. He said that while Dwayne Dantès was heading to the Southern Continent, he discovered traces of Ince Zangwill on Waypoint Island in the Berserk Sea."

Leonard fell silent immediately as his mouth turned agape. However, he didn't say a word.

After a long while, he muttered with a slightly hoarse voice, "As expected, he didn't forget the need for revenge…

"What can I do?"

"What can you do? You're only a Sequence 6. Even if Ince Zangwill doesn't wield 0-08, you still lack the qualifications to exact vengeance on him. He just needs to reveal his Mythical Creature form to make you lose control and become a lunatic. The chances of you getting your revenge are zero! This is the qualitative change that godhood brings," Pallez Zoroast said rather sternly.

He paused before chuckling.

"Thankfully, you understand yourself in a way that's better than before. In the past, you definitely would've said that you would inform the Church with news of Ince Zangwill and join the team to pursue him. And now, you know to ask what you can do."

Leonard had wanted to retort a few times, but he ultimately didn't say a word.

Pallez Zoroast continued, "What you can do for now is to give Klein Moretti some information. Wait for him to write back to you. Then, based on the arrangements written, provide the necessary assistance."

"So no finding excuses so as to inform the Church of Ince Zangwill's location?" Leonard heavily asked, somewhat surprised.

Pallez Zoroast chuckled and said, "No hurry. Do it at the critical moment.

“Although 0-08 enjoys causing its possessor’s death, it doesn’t wish to be sealed even more so. As long as you inform the Church of Ince Zangwill’s location and begin a pursuit, it will immediately learn of it and make the necessary arrangements.

“Regarding this, you need to warn Klein Moretti.”

Leonard was taken aback for a second as he asked, “Old Man, you seem to know 0-08 rather well.”

It wasn’t apparent in the past!

Pallez’s slightly-aged voice chuckled.

“Of course I am. During the Fourth Epoch, 0-08 had once caused the death of an angel.

“I can’t tell you too much because once you know of it, it will also know you. The more you know about it, the more likely you will become a character in its stories.”

Leonard came to an actual realization of 0-08’s terror from Old Man’s vague words. This had already exceeded the mysticism he knew!

After some thought, Leonard asked habitually, “Then how should I hint to Klein Moretti without letting 0-08 know? Or that even if he were to know, it will be very superficial knowledge, making me a bystander in the story…”

Just as he said that, Leonard clasped his hands and gritted his teeth. Without waiting for Old Man’s reply, he continued, “An indirect hint? I’ll tell him I’ll temporarily not inform the Church of Ince Zangwill’s location… I believe he should be able to understand that there’s a problem based on the situation. He will understand that we need to be extremely cautious. And even if he fails to interpret that, his secret organization has members who understand the Fourth Epoch well enough to provide him with help.

"Also, just writing the sentence, 'Once you know it, it will also know you,' without mentioning 0-08 should be enough for Klein to guess what this is pointing at…"

After Pallez Zoroast finished listening, "He" chuckled and said, "Humans will only grow under pressure."

Leonard exhaled and sat up. He found a pen and paper and penned his thoughts.

Following that, he set up a ritual right on the heels of that and summoned Gehrman Sparrow's messenger.

†

Berserk Sea, Waypoint Island. On a liner docked at the harbor.

Many tourists weren't alighting. They were huddled in the lower deck cabins, waiting to arrive at the Southern Continent to begin a life filled with hope.

They had gone through a great deal of effort to save up the fare for a ship ride that spanned a few short days. They were from Loen and were those who had been forced to take such risks.

Klein, who was acting as the tycoon, Dwayne Dantès, wasn't like them. He lived in a spacious, clean first-class cabin that could even be described as luxurious. Under some candlelight, he opened the letter that had just been delivered by Reinette Tinekerr.

Will not be informing the Church of Ince Zangwill's location for the time being… To Leonard, although the source of the tip might put him in certain danger, it's not impossible for him to do it… Didn't he join the Red Gloves to seek revenge? This means that he has a reason why he can't sound the alarm on Ince Zangwill… As Klein thought, he continued reading the rest of the letter: "Once you know it, it will also know you."

Suddenly, Klein exclaimed, finding the description somewhat familiar!

This is very similar to the Twilight Hermit Order. Any mention of it will be known… So, 0-08 is a Sealed Artifact of the Spectator pathway? Leonard isn't informing the Church of this matter because he's held back by this. He wishes to wait for a better opportunity? This is likely something the grandpa in his body told him… Klein nodded in thought, feeling thankful that he hadn't asked Reinette Tinekerr for help moments ago.

That would've been equally dangerous for Miss Messenger.

Besides, most important of all, I haven't made any preparations. If I were to only rely on a helper I hire, my plan might very well be detected by 0-08 ahead of time. A series of coincidences would then be created, producing a targeted arrangement… Klein silently sighed and felt that he needed to do something, but he was at a loss as to how to begin.

From the angle of improving his strength, the acquirement of the corresponding ingredients of Bizarro Bane and Spirit World Plunderer depended on the subsequent request of the City of Silver's Chief and how long Miss Magician could receive the exact coordinates from her teacher. These were all dependent on external factors that Klein had no means of expediting.

The only thing he could do was to try his best to digest the Marionettist potion as quickly as possible.

And after concluding most of the acting principles, the actual implementation was more important.

Therefore, Klein believed that he needed to obtain two marionettes within a short span of time.

He had previously been delaying it because he didn't have any good targets. It stemmed from him being in Backlund with servants around him. Unless they were special marionettes, it was very difficult to hide their existences. And now, he was almost at the Southern Continent. He decided that as long as he identified an evil target who deserved the gallows, he would first transform them into his marionette until he had a better replacement!

Perhaps using an ordinary marionette to complete a rather difficult task will accelerate the digestion… Heh, my standards for a marionette has dropped to its lowest. All it needs to know is Dutanese. That way, I don't have to hire an interpreter; after all, I can share their senses… Klein quickly made up his mind and planned on writing to Leonard Mitchell after he had a more advanced plan.

†

East Balam, Kolain City.

Klein carried his luggage and stepped onto the dock, touching ground on the Southern Continent.

He looked into the distance at the city that was built on terraces. He silently said to himself, I have to have two marionettes when I leave this place.

And before that, he had one thing to do. It was to lose the tail of the "followers" that the military had arranged.

The two gentlemen were rather good at being spies, but to Klein, they were as bright as fireflies in the night. This was because, no matter how well disguised they were, Klein could use his Faceless's ability of observation and his memory of a human's physical features and looks to recognize them at a glance.

Chapter 907 - The Power of Mysticism

◆ ◆ ◆

Most of Kolain City's buildings were built on paths that spiraled upwards. There would be squares or small towns in the middle or on rather flat, open spaces.

Klein carried his luggage, and with his spiritual intuition as a Seer, he randomly chose a direction to proceed in and found a relatively lively bar along the way.

There weren't many carriages on the streets, and the rental types were a rare sight. The most popular means of transportation in East Balam was a "Coffin." This stemmed from their traditions of worshipping Death. People viewed coffins as items that brought about serenity and peace; therefore, Klein often saw people walking past him carrying a black coffin. The lids were lighter than the usual kind and were just like a carriage door that could be opened at any time.

They're carried via two, four, or either people; or by horses or single-horned goats… Such a tradition is quite terrifying at night. Hmm, it's not much better in the day. The entire city feels dark and creepy… Klein took in the "scenery" around him as he walked into the square. On the left was a cathedral of the Lord of Storms, and on the right were restaurants and bars.

When he stopped in his tracks, a coffin being carried by four men was also lowered.

As the lid was opened, the passenger inside the coffin stood up and took a step forward. He was a Northern Continent-styled gentleman dressed in a white shirt and black vest.

The gentleman's formal coat was slung against his arm, something he wore only after he left the coffin.

Then, Klein saw the man head straight for the Lord of Storms cathedral and enter it.

This sure is quite discordant… Doesn't the Church of Storms enjoy changing the traditions of the colonies and forcefully implementing those of Loen? Why don't they do that in East Balam? Is it because the Death pathway and Evernight pathway are similar, so the Church of Storms wishes to preserve some of the traditions of Death worship, so as to curb the proliferation of the Church of Evernight? Klein nodded in thought as he turned to the buildings on the right, prepared to enter one of the bars there.

Having experienced it personally, he came to the realization as to why the dressing style of the ancient Balam Empire was written as such in so many history books.

They enjoy wearing trousers, those that are light and breezy. They find creases beautiful… Isn't this to make it easier to lie in a coffin when outside? Klein shook his head with a smile as he pushed open the heavy wooden door. Squeezing through the drunkards, he walked towards the bar counter.

And at this moment, the two military "followers" had deliberately opened up a distance from Dwayne Dantès to prevent themselves from being exposed. They had walked to the door side.

Taking this brief reprieve, Klein suddenly switched directions and passed through the crowd like a fish in water, heading straight for the bar's backdoor.

Although he didn't know Dutanese, he could read drawings on signs and knew where the washrooms and places where entry was forbidden to customers.

After circling to a blind spot from the door, Klein quickly took off his coat and slung it on his arm.

Immediately, with his golden cane, he reached out his palm to cover his face and slow down his pace. Turning directions again, he headed for the bar's entrance.

After opening up a distance of nearly ten meters from where he took off his coat, Klein lowered his face-shielding right hand to reveal a completely different face.

His white sideburns, deep eyes, and elegant demeanor was all gone. He had switched to a common Loenese face that could be seen anywhere on the Northern Continent.

With luggage and cane in hand, Klein walked staidly towards the two military "followers." As they were looking for Dwayne Dantès, he walked past them and left the bar.

Be it tracking or anti-tracking, they were both strong traits of a Faceless!

Returning to the square, Klein turned into a sloped alley that led to higher ground. He planned on finding a hotel elsewhere.

As he walked on a rather deserted path, he suddenly heard a woman's frantic cries.

The voice was only maintained for a very short moment before it was silenced.

Although he didn't know what she was shouting, Klein could sense the horror, fear, and panic in her voice. Hence, he switched directions and entered a narrower and more deserted trail.

In less than ten seconds, he saw a local man in his thirties who was pressing against a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old girl in a secluded corner and was using violence against her. His skin was brownish, and he had rather soft facial features.

Klein took a glance and slowed down his pace before stopping in the nearby shadows.

At this moment, the girl's face was extremely horrified and distorted. However, regardless of how she struggled, she was unable to free herself and had only received a beating in response.

Her tears and snot flowed out while her mouth was stuffed with cloth. All she could do was produce muffling sounds.

At this moment, she was surprised that the rotten egg's attempts to take off her clothes had slowed down.

"…"

Without having the time to consider what was happening, she subconsciously looked at the rotten egg and found that his eyes had widened. His facial muscles were writhing slowly, but he was unable to form a complete expression on his face. Then, his limbs twitched and paused as they continued doing what they were doing but were easily avoided.

The girl instinctively pushed him, which had ended up having surprisingly excellent results. Freed, she immediately stood up and fled. However, she couldn't help but feel her legs go limp. After a few steps, she tripped over a stone and nearly fell to the ground.

At this moment, she heard the sound of footsteps behind her. Reeling in anxiety, she fumbled to her feet.

But almost immediately, the sounds of footsteps suddenly ceased.

The girl subconsciously looked back only to see the rotten egg standing two meters away. His joints were making strange actions as though they were rusted.

What's happening… The girl felt as though she was having a nightmare.

The brown-skinned man struggled for a moment before quietening down. Revealing a smile, he said in Dutanese, "In the future, when you meet someone like me, remember to head for the nearest cathedral or somewhere where there's plenty of people."

The girl was taken aback for a moment before she screamed. Turning around, she ran as fast as she could.

Subconsciously, she chose to run in the direction of the square where the cathedral was.

When the calm and silence of the deserted spot was restored, the brown-skinned man turned to look at the nearby shadows where Klein walked out from.

A new marionette… His body isn't strong enough, and he's not nimble enough. He lacks Beyonder powers and looks rather fierce. Apart from knowing Dutanese, he's completely useless, Klein simply evaluated. If it wasn't because he was committing a crime and that I wasn't proficient in the local language, I would've buried him immediately.

He couldn't help but make a comparison with his former marionette, Admiral of Blood Senor.

Senor was a Wraith and was capable of Mirror Blink. He could hide in gold coins and reflective surfaces. I didn't need to worry that he would be seen by others… He also had Shriek and the ability to possess others. Together with a Marionettist, it's a perfect combination…

More importantly, he also knew Dutanese…

Comparing this marionette and him is like the difference between a penny and 42,000 gold pounds.

I've no idea what his name is, and I can only use powers to sense some superficial thoughts. I have no way of obtaining deeper memories unless I encounter someone or something familiar. There would be a corresponding change in the spirit to release more information… I'll just call him "Ah Fu." Ah, no—that's too Chinese. "Oaf" it is.

Klein rubbed his temples and sighed. He needed to leave the area with his new marionette, Oaf, before the girl led the clergymen over.

Before long, with the help of his marionette's translations, he found an inn to stay in at the border between Kolain City's flourishing and backward area. This place didn't need him to provide any proof of identity, even though Klein had already changed his appearance to that of a regular local.

There's an even greater lack of administration management than the colonies at sea… Klein put down his luggage and threw most of the cash he brought with him above the gray fog, leaving only 50 pounds for his daily expenses.

Meanwhile, having crossed the Berserk Sea, and without needing to be afraid of causing any further anomalies, he took down the copper whistle and iron cigar case from the mysterious space above the gray fog so as to make it easier for Mr. Azik to locate him.

After finishing all of this and having had dinner on the liner, he had the spare time to seek out his second marionette.

As for how he could find one, Klein, who didn't understand Kolain City well enough, decided on using his traits as a Seer and do so with mysticism means!

With Oaf, he left the inn. Klein snapped a branch of a Donningsman Tree and used it as a dowsing rod. With great familiarity, he used Cogitation and muttered, "Location of my new marionette."

In the silent environment, pairs of cold eyes seemed to pierce through the obstruction of the incorporeal and the corporeal and landed on the dowsing rod.

The branch fell to the ground and pointed in a direction.

After advancing forward a little, he did another divination and followed his new revelation. Seven to eight turns later, he arrived at a steep staircase.

This staircase was connected to many roads in Kolain. One had to look up to see the top, and there was no one at all.

The divination's revelation is pointing here… Why isn't there anyone here? The result isn't accurate because I didn't do a divination above the gray fog? But I'm already a Sequence 5 Marionettist. My divination abilities are definitely one of the best below that of High-Sequence Beyonders… Klein frowned slightly as he surveyed the area, but he failed to find any targets.

After some thought, he walked towards the staircase and sat in the shadows of the lowest step. He then waited in boredom despite a lack of confidence.

After a few minutes, he stood up again and made Oaf sit where he was sitting.

Then, Klein opened up a gap from him and hid two hundred meters away in a hidden spot.

†

Kolain City. Lower Lip District.

Leonard Mitchell and Daly Simone arrived at a nearby district with the Red Gloves team captain, Soest.

With the night as cover, Soest emphasized the operation to all the members once again.

“Our target this time is Ulika who’s living at Unit 13. He’s a rather important member of the Numinous Episcopate and is in charge of communicating with the different small teams in Backlund.

“Although all our intelligence points to him not being a demigod, I have applied for a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact to be safe. Her Excellency, Goddess’s Eye, is also ready to provide her assistance to us at any time.

“Also, most of the residents of this district are locals. We have to be wary of them also being members of the Numinous Episcopate.”

Chapter 908 - Not Leaving Any Problems

◆

Lower Lip District. 13 Canine Street.

The plump Ulika was sitting on a sofa with his tiny dark brown eyes and skin. Wrapping a dried yellowed tobacco leaf and ten different kinds of Southern Continent herbs and spices together, he cut it into long strips.

Then, he held his self-made East Balam smoke pipe in his hand and brought it close to the matchstick his subordinate had lit. The end blackened and curled as it glowed red.

Biting at its end and taking a deep suck, Ulika slowly exhaled white smoke that was tainted with light blue hues. He looked at the visitor on the single-seater opposite him and said, “This is what a cigarette is. A real cigarette.

“The ones in the Northern Continent are only suitable for children!”

The person sitting on the single-seater was a man in his forties. He had a high nose, blue eyes, and gentle facial contours. His black hair was thick and curly. His skin color wasn’t too dark, but neither was it fair. He resembled a mixed-blood between someone from Loen and Balam.

He chuckled upon hearing that as he replied in Dutanese, “Unfortunately, I have zero interest in any kind of cigarettes.”

“Enzo, you don’t know how to enjoy life at all…” Before Ulika could finish his sentence, his powerful spirituality that was a result of his pathway had warned him of some danger.

The way it suddenly came and appeared in such a pressing manner made Ulika instantly determine that the problem wasn't trivial.

He had yet to leap away from where he was sitting when all he saw was darkness. It was as though he could directly see the night sky outside. A strong sense of sleepiness overwhelmed him as he felt a level of serenity from the bottom of his heart.

Along Canine Street, be it the houses with lit lamps or extinguished lamps, it became abnormally silent at that very moment. It was as though no living being lived in them, or that everyone had fallen asleep at the same moment.

At this moment, the snoring and slumped Ulika suddenly leaped up. His eyes wore the strange combination of a reverie and lucidity.

Behind him, a nearly illusory girl with pale skin was stuck to his back at some point in time!

This girl's eyes were bluish-green, and her lips were jet black. Her eyes were silently looking to the side, and her ghastly pale and translucent limbs had drilled into Ulika's body as though she was a spirit that couldn't be shaken off.

Her existence brought a chill to his Soul Body, making Ulika barely resist his abnormal sleepiness as he broke free from the influence of a Nightmare.

Before Ulika could completely regain his lucidity, he instinctively rushed to the staircase. Extending his palms, he exerted strength towards the front as though he was pushing a door that didn't exist.

In a blink of an eye, a difficult-to-describe bronze door covered in mysterious patterns appeared in front of Ulika. It wobbled and creaked before cracking open a gap.

The gap led to an endless darkness. In it were indescribable eyes that watched the outside world.

Meanwhile, large amounts of squirming and strange objects that were still unrecognizable surged wildly from the gap.

Ulika was about to continue exerting his strength to open the door and cause the terrifying world behind him to descend upon Canine Street when he suddenly saw a pair of pale, translucent palms appear out of thin air. They passed through the deep darkness and pressed down on the interior of the door's gap.

The palms didn't originate from anything. They weren't connected to a body, and the wrist was bloody. It was unknown who had severed them!

Both parties exerted their strength as the mysterious bronze door stopped moving. It neither closed or opened further.

High above Unit 13, Soest, who was already a Spirit Warlock, was floating in midair thanks to an invisible force. His hands carried a sundial made of gold as he slowly raised it high.

When the golden sundial was finally raised above Soest's head, its resplendent glow flowed out and quickly outlined and became one.

Suddenly, another sun seemed to appear in midair, directing all the light and heat at 13 Canine Street.

None of that caused any damage as they penetrated through the building and landed above the bronze door, enveloping Ulika who was standing in front of it.

Ulika instantly grimaced in extreme pain as the pale and nearly translucent girl let out a shrill scream, but it was stopped by the "sunlight" and drowned by the onslaught.

She warped and quickly evaporated, producing wisps of black gases that dissipated into the sea of light.

There wasn't a single spot inside the building that remained dark!

After the "sunlight" faded, the indescribable bronze door had already vanished. On the ground was a black swollen corpse that was effusing pale yellow oil stains.

With a boom, the corpse tore apart as a thin, tiny figure leaped out from inside.

This figure had identical looks to Ulika, but its skin was raven-black as though it was stained in ink. The surface of its body that stood at a height of around 1.2 to 1.3 meters had sticky pus flowing across it.

The moment he appeared, he dashed for the staircase with a ludicrous speed. Burrowing into the cellar, he opened a secret trapdoor he had prepared in advance as he dashed forward as fast as he could.

In just ten seconds, the miniaturized black version of Ulika saw the entrance—hope.

He didn't lower his guard as he gently clenched his right fist, producing about eight transparent illusory figures from his body.

They were of all kinds of shapes and sizes, as though they were an abomination that fused the characteristics of humans, plants, and certain animals. Some held Ulika's arm, others lifted his feet as they took off in flight.

Right on the heels of that, a mechanical switch was shifted. Gears started rotating as the exit door flung open, leading to a silent and dark street corner.

Further ahead were streets that stood on lower ground, and on the two sides of the streets were rows of houses. They appeared like the sea that churned with the light of the crimson moon.

Ulika was just about to use the help of spirits to fly out of the secret passage and disappear into the other districts of Kolain City when his eyes reflected a foggy lake.

The lake shimmered with light, producing a tranquil beauty. In the middle, concentric circles rippled out as beautiful and illusory figures floated up.

This was a powerful type of spirit. Human legends often deemed it “the Goddess of the Lake”!

Many a time, the strength of a Spirit Guide depended on the deceased or a natural spirit they found and controlled. It was the same with Spirit Warlocks. However, the inclination for Spirit Guides were the deceased, while for Spirit Warlocks, they were better at controlling natural spirits.

At this moment, the strange transparent figures around Ulika uttered a monotonous sound of horror. Throwing away the arms and legs they were carrying, they drilled into the thin pitch-black body like the wind.

With a crash, Ulika fell to the ground, but he didn’t feel any pain, which was a result of intense sleepiness assaulting him. It made him fall asleep without realizing it.

At the exit, Daly Simone, who was wearing a Spirit Medium robe, with her face made up with blue eyeshadow and blush, walked out of some unknown location. Looking at the 1.2-meter-tall Ulika, she said,

“The deceased spirit he fused with is very strange. If it doesn’t use a living human’s body as a ‘house,’ it will quickly dissipate.

“We need to make every second count in order to obtain information.”

In the shadows beside her, Leonard Mitchell walked out. He looked at Daly Simone in surprise and said, “Aren’t you a Spirit Guide? How do you control a Goddess of the Lake?”

“Aren’t you a poet? Why don’t you write poems?” Daly snapped back.

†

On the other end of the street, on a gentle cliff, a figure quickly moved downwards with the protruded pieces of rock, quickly landing in the shadowy corners of Jaw Street below him.

His skin was light-colored and his eyes were blue. He had thick raven-black hair that curled slightly. He was none other than Enzo who had been a guest at Ulika's place at Lower Lip District's 13 Canine Street.

Enzo wasn't a member of the Numinous Episcopate. He was one of the traitors of the Life School of Thought that had escaped under the enticement of the Rose School of Thought.

Furthermore, he was neither a Beyonder from the Apothecary pathway that led to the Vampire Sequence, nor did he worship the Primordial Moon. He was only a person who didn't wish to accept the various rules set by his teacher and his teacher's teacher. He wished to lead a carefree life and take advantage of being a Winner.

Such a state of mind was strongly advocated by the Rose School of Thought's indulgence faction, so it didn't take long for him to formally join them, allowing him to freely satisfy all his various desires.

This time, he was representing the Rose School of Thought to make contact with the Numinous Episcopate in Kolain and discuss the possibility of cooperating on certain matters. To his surprise, Tenebrous Deceased Ulika had suffered a sudden raid by the Church of Evernight. It was a high-level raid!

Thankfully, I'm good at anti-divination. The Church of Evernight members didn't know ahead of time that I was at Ulika's place, and they didn't pay too much attention to me. They just thought of me as Ulika's subordinate, allowing me to find a chance to escape the core region. Besides, that "sunlight" mainly purifies objects with the power of death, evil, and corruption. It didn't deal much damage to me… That's likely a demigod-level attack… Enzo walked to the shadows in the street and couldn't help but recall what had just happened.

After fleeing quite a distance, he turned to look behind him and discovered no one was chasing him. He immediately heaved a sigh of relief and chuckled.

A Winner is a Winner, the eternal Winner!

Enzo recovered his usual confidence as he proceeded down the street with a smile. Then, he turned to his left and quickly moved down the stairs.

It was a steep and long staircase that reached many lower-level streets.

†

In the vicinity of Canine Street, Soest suddenly opened his eyes and said to Leonard and Daly Simone, "There was a man named Enzo at Ulika's place. He's a member of the Rose School of Thought and doesn't have a low Sequence. He probably enjoys quite an important position.

"You are to quickly search the surroundings and see if you can find any traces of him and try to capture him successfully. Don't leave any problems behind."

As for the other Red Gloves and the local Nighthawks, they either had to capture the remaining Numinous Episcopate members or were already capturing them in dreams. They hoped to obtain firsthand news as quickly as possible. Only a few were left behind to watch for any accidents and protect their companions.

"Yes, Captain Soest." Leonard didn't hesitate to agree.

Daly grabbed at the wind and cupped her hand to her ear. After listening for two to three seconds, she said, "The little guys around here tell me that someone did escape via the cliff."

Chapter 909 - Serving Good Luck

◆◆◆

On the steep and long rocky staircase, the crimson moonlight illuminated its midsection, leaving rather thick shadows along its sides.

Enzo was like a normal pedestrian at night, walking a little anxiously but without showing any signs of being flustered. He had a deep faith in his excellent good luck, being a winner in life, one that wouldn’t be caught by the Nighthawks.

Seeing that he would be done after a few more flights of steps, Enzo, who was once a Monster, suddenly sensed something as he turned his head to look at the shadows in the lowest point of the staircase.

He then saw a figure sitting there in a daze. His looks and figure appeared rather indistinct due to the lighting, and he was dressed in the standard outfit of someone from East Balam.

The figure took out a box of matchsticks and struck a match to light up the surroundings.

Enzo didn’t bother sizing up the person when he suddenly saw a scene before his eyes.

The figure threw a matchstick over as though he was gifting him something. And when the matchstick approached, it suddenly burst into a ridiculous inferno as a man wearing a formal suit and top hat walked out!

Seeing scenes he shouldn't see, and hearing sounds he shouldn't hear, were a daily occurrence for a Monster. Having become a Winner, Enzo was already used to all of this. Without any thought, he fully believed in his intuition and lunged forward, jumping off the staircase and making two rolls onto the lower street.

At the same time, the brown-skinned marionette, Oaf, suddenly stood up. After bending his back, he hurled the matchstick in his hand at the location where Enzo was previously standing.

Before the matchstick hit the ground, scarlet flames extended out into midair in a resplendent and brilliant manner.

Amidst the flames, Klein's black-suited figure with a half top hat leaped out. However, he had lost sight of his target.

Klein had discovered someone rapidly coming down the staircase about ten seconds ago as though he was hiding from something. Suspecting that this was his new marionette, he immediately did a dream divination and obtained the revelation that the man was related to the Rose School of Thought and wasn't anyone good.

With such a result, Klein didn't hesitate to take action. Unfortunately, due to the lack of time, he didn't have the time to use Paper Angel which had been recorded in Creeping Hunger to interfere with the target's spiritual intuition, and as a result, it made his ambush fail.

At this moment, Oaf had already left the final flight of steps on the staircase. He was running with large strides towards Enzo, who had just stood up.

Enzo's mind stirred. Without dodging, he nimbly turned his body to the side, avoiding the ordinary attack.

Then, he drew his gun and quickly aimed. With a bang, he shot Oaf's chest.

As blood gushed out, Oaf staggered for a moment before collapsing. His breathing rapidly weakened.

Klein took this brief opportunity as his body vanished, phasing right in front of the target to block his escape route.

Enzo seemed to have an inexplicable strange premonition. He immediately tightly shut his eyes

He didn't know why he did so, but as a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Fate pathway, believing his intuition was an instinct!

Immediately after that, Enzo frantically switched directions. Attempting to rely on his spiritual intuition, he rushed into another street, but at this moment, the man in the suit who didn't have any outstanding features appeared in front of him again.

Klein's figure kept disappearing and appearing in every direction, as though he was running around Enzo at high speeds, often blocking his path but not dealing any direct attacks. Whether he used Beyonder powers or not, it made Enzo face a figure wearing a black suit and half top hat no matter where he turned to.

For an instant, Enzo with his eyes clothes even imagined that he was facing a group of enemies instead of one enemy.

A Traveler was often able to create the effect of being besieged!

In just ten seconds, Enzo, who had failed to find a path to escape, suddenly jolted. His actions instantly slowed down as his mind and joints seemed to be injected with glue.

Traveling works well with a Marionettist as well. While Klein was phasing around, he kept maintaining a distance of ten meters from Enzo! He had been secretly controlling his Spirit Body Threads all this time!

No good… He doesn't attack… and is only blocking me… not because… he is waiting… for the Nighthawks… but for… another reason… Enzo, who still had his eyes shut, felt his heart tighten. Suddenly, he stepped onto a rock, causing his body to lose balance. He slammed heavily to the ground, causing his revolver to fly several meters away.

Plop!

The pain and shock had snapped Enzo out of his suppressed state. He found his fluidity again.

Enzo was no stranger to such accidents. As a Winner, he often obtained an advantage due to all kinds of low-probability events and thus clinch victory.

Without hesitation, he was just about to dash towards the end of the street to his side and flip over the fence to jump into the sea, allowing what fate had arranged for him to escape his predicament when another scene flashed in his mind:

In it, he was breaking out into a coughing fit, to the point of not being able to stand up or open up his stride!

Ailments! The enemy can infect me with ailments! He isn't attacking me and is simply blocking my escape route in order to keep me in this area; thus, infecting me with ailments in an unnoticeable manner! Enzo's heart skipped a beat as he suddenly felt a strong sense of delight.

The Green Essence ring he wore came from a believer of the Primordial Moon. Upon activation, it could easily treat any ailments or injuries that weren't too serious!

This is luck! Enzo pretended to not discover the infectious ailment in the air. Exerting strength in his palms, he lunged forward and followed his predetermined route towards the fence at the end of the street.

Moments after he took two steps, he suddenly coughed and involuntarily slowed down.

His coughing didn't quell like usual. Instead, it was worsening as though he was about to cough out his lungs.

Klein's figure flashed and appeared behind the target while he maintained ten meters from him.

At this moment, Enzo spread his arms and allowed invisible waves to ripple out of his body.

It was like a pure psyche storm that swept all Spirit Bodies in the vicinity, bringing with it an intense sense of drowsiness and calamity.

Klein similarly had a premonition for danger. The moment Enzo spread his arms, his body had already vanished from his spot and had appeared in the midsection of the steep staircase.

Still having his eyes closed, Enzo realized that he didn't receive his desired effect. He immediately abandoned the idea of escaping after finishing his target. He continued running towards the fence at the end of the street.

He had a hunch that if he stalled a little longer, a number of Nighthawks would catch up to him, making the situation more chaotic.

And as a former Lucky One and a Winner, the more chaotic a situation, the higher the chances of him escaping!

At this moment, as he had repeatedly changed directions while running blindly, he once again passed by Oaf, who had been shot in the chest.

On Oaf's left finger was a golden ring with an inlaid ruby.

A sanguine beam flashed from the beam as Oaf's injuries began recovering. He bounced up and widened his mouth, biting down on Enzo who was running past.

His tongue seemed to lose substance as it transformed into a blob of flesh and blood.

Flower of Blood!

Oaf wore the Flower of Blood ring which Klein had obtained from Mr. X. It could randomly allow the wearer to abandon any rationality in order to become a beast. On the other hand, it could allow the wearer to control their body at a deeper level. As long as they didn't suffer from instant death or become completely purified, they could heal from any kind of injury!

At the same time, it also came with flesh and blood magic. It was a mystical item that was very suited for marionettes!

Before Klein came out to seek a new marionette, he didn't know which pathway or Sequence his target would be. Therefore, to make well-rounded preparations, he made Oaf wear the Flower of Blood ring. This way, he could direct a play of him being the main assailant with the marionette as the secondary assailant, but in fact, it was the exact opposite.

Just as Enzo ran past Oaf, he felt a stabbing pain in his knee as though his previous fall had given him some light injuries.

The moment this thought flashed across his mind, he hurriedly crouched down and felt a figure fly past his head. It missed!

Oaf's sudden attack still failed to be effective against a Winner!

Enzo was just about to smile and run again when he suddenly had a premonition. He subconsciously curled up and protected his vital spots.

At the same time, Oaf suddenly swelled up and silently exploded.

Flesh and blood formed a storm, sweeping through a rather large area in the vicinity, hitting Enzo again and again.

One of the preparations Klein had done was to use a power of Creeping Hunger after its mutation. He had planted a Flesh Bomb in his marionette's body!

WIth a clank, the golden ring with an inlaid ruby landed on the stone slabs in the street. Klein's figure flashed to Enzo's side.

He raised his left palm and made his palm pitch-black. As though they were formed of granules, he said a word filled with evil and corruption: "Slow!"

Thanks to his luck, Enzo had avoided most of the damage. His lightly injured body suddenly turned still as his struggling actions slowed down. His curled pose changed bit by bit.

Right on the heels of that, he opened his eyes due to the pain, and a figure wearing a black suit and half top hat was reflected in his eyes.

"Ah!"

Enzo let out a tragic cry as he raised his hands to cover his eyes.

Streams of blood seeped out from the gaps in his fingers.

Monster? Looking at his writhing target, Klein pricked up his brows. He continued controlling the Spirit Body Threads and quickly achieved initial control.

This time, there weren't any accidents that broke the subsequent procedure. In a half-crazy state with scales growing from his body, Enzo was powerless to resist. Klein rather smoothly deepened his control.

Time ticked by when Enzo suddenly stood up and converged the protruded snake-like scales.

He pressed his hand to his chest and bowed at Klein. Then, he walked to the side and bent down to pick up the golden ring with the inlaid ruby. Wearing it on his left hand's index finger, it matched the emerald ring on his other hand.

Klein held back the urge of looking at himself with his new marionette. He got Enzo to clear up the scene of the remnant flesh and any traces left behind.

After doing all of this, he walked into the shadows with his marionette and quickly vanished.

Chapter 910 - Monster Pathway

◆

A few minutes later, Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell, who had repeatedly made errors in judgment, finally arrived at the top of the steep staircase.

They proceeded down the steps at a very slow speed, cautious of their surroundings, and they were ready to enter combat at any moment.

However, they failed to encounter any abnormalities even when they reached the bottom of the flight of stairs. They didn’t even find any useful clues.

Daly grabbed onto the wind, cupped her hand to her ear, and listened carefully.

A few seconds later, she looked around her and said, “There was a gunshot. A weapon once dropped around the street bend. Th-that man named Enzo is d-dead…”

“Who did it?” Leonard asked in surprise.

From his point of view, due to the repeated failures they had encountered, Enzo had easily escaped their pursuit. The possibility of a Rose School of Thought monitor silencing him and wiping away any clues was zero.

If that were the case, who could’ve killed that Beyonder who was suspected to be a Sequence 5 or 6?

It needed to be mentioned that the Red Gloves had used a Sealed

Artifact to implement anti-divination before they carried out tonight's operation. It was unlikely for anyone to predict it ahead of time and wait there to hunt the escaping Enzo.

Daly shook her head.

"Those little guys didn't see anything. It's likely a Beyonder who's good at anti-divination…

"Perhaps it's Enzo's enemy, and they had been planning to act tonight."

She simply offered a guess of hers, and the duo began independently searching the nearby streets to see if they could find any missed clues.

Taking this opportunity, Leonard circled to a fence in a particular street. Suppressing his tone, he asked, "Old Man, did you discover anything?"

Inside him, Pallez Zoroast replied after three seconds, "You should have heard a tragic scream and had used that to correct the direction of your pursuit effort.

"It was let out by Enzo. He had apparently seen something extremely terrifying and indescribable, something that could directly cause damage and corruption to his Soul Body."

Leonard was taken aback for a moment. He narrowed his eyes as he repeated softly, "Extremely terrifying and indescribable…"

†

Inside the inn, Klein Teleported back with his new marionette.

He then made his marionette stand to his side as he sat down. As he sized up his marionette, he sighed.

A Beyonder of the Monster pathway. But he's still inferior to Senor. There's no way for him to hide in a gold coin for ease of transport. I can only let him follow beside me…

From his Beyonder Sequence, he isn't a core member of the Rose School of Thought, but his Sequence isn't too low. Some importance must've been placed on him. That also means that if I don't disguise him, it's very easy for me to be targeted by the Rose School of Thought…

On the contrary, I can probably use him as bait to fish for another Wraith. When the time comes, he can walk alone while I hide 200 meters away to wait for the bait to be hooked.

No, I can't. I mustn't let greed get to my head. The Southern Continent is where the Rose School of Thought is active. Once I expose my location, with how much importance the Mother Tree of Desire places on me, not only will a saint come, even an angel might appear!

Yes, it's better if I disguise this marionette. As a Faceless, I'm quite skilled at disguises…

Then, I'll continue using mystical methods to find my next marionette. I'll wait for Danitz to finish his investigation and for Mr. Azik to come find me.

Klein quickly made up his mind. Using a myriad of means, he gained an understanding of his new marionette's level and Beyonder powers.

He was a Sequence 5 Winner of the Fate pathway!

In this pathway, a Sequence 9 Monster was one who had super high spiritual perception. They often heard sounds others couldn't hear, and also see things others couldn't see. This allowed them to occasionally see the future and have an acute intuition for danger.

Beyonders of this Sequence often entered a state of enlightenment as they muttered indecipherable words. It was the reason why they were treated as real monsters.

As for the corresponding Sequence 8 Robot, the Beyonders would obtain terrifying calculation skills and precise control. The various parts of their bodies in those aspects would be clearly boosted, making them talented at close combat and shooting.

At the same time, they also had the powers of divination and anti-divination.

Sequence 7 was named Lucky One or Lucky, Beyonders of this level frequently encountered lucky events in their daily lives, like finding money on the street, having enemies miss shots aimed at them, getting dice rolls as they wished, and having women they like to also like them back. However, their luck wasn't fixed and would fluctuate. At times, they were especially lucky, and at other times, they were no different from an ordinary person. Therefore, it wasn't something that could be relied upon, and one had to temper one's expectations.

Sequence 6 was Calamity Priest. On the one hand, Beyonders could passively suffer all kinds of calamities, but they could foresee it and make preparations to eliminate or mitigate the effects. On the other hand, they would actively attract different kinds of calamities, affecting a target and enemy as a result. Then, using one's advantage of being lucky, avoid most of the danger and attack during the chaos. To put it simply, they could pull their opponents into a situation where they could take advantage of their strengths the best.

Of course, many Calamity Priests could use the dangers of their own passive encounters to attack their enemies.

Meanwhile, Calamity Priests could create psyche storms. Using their spirituality that surpassed that of other pathways, they could directly affect their opponent's Soul Bodies, causing them to feel dizzy and lost. If a Calamity Priest's enemy entered such a state, they were extremely prone to making errors. It caused the calamity to snowball and eventually devour them.

And at Sequence 5 Winner, Beyonders could control their luck to a certain extent. They could use their own temperance to accumulate large amounts of luck. At critical moments, they could dramatically reduce any dangers to their life multiple times. From time to time, they could also encounter beneficial situations that have extremely low probabilities in their daily lives. For example, due to someone's mistakes, they might receive an inheritance; the strange, comedic way they walked caused them to catch the fancy of a member of the opposite sex; or their enemies who were pursuing them would foolishly get lost or make errors in judgment.

At this level, Beyonders of the Fate pathway had a very keen sense of foresight. Be it divination or anti-divination, they were mysticism experts.

In addition, they could also give their enemies bad luck to a certain extent, making their targets become unlucky.

Beyonders of the Monster pathway are really extreme. Apart from the spirituality and fate domain, they almost have zero Beyonder powers. Even their constitution and calculation skills are provided at Robot. The subsequent advancements give rather limited improvements… This is my ideal model for a charlatan. They do not have any offensive or defensive abilities, simply relying on their premonition and how fate blesses them…

I have to say that this is the most special path out of the 22 Beyonder pathways. I can find or guess their neighboring pathways. Only Monster seems rather asocial. It seems to be a lonely one… Perhaps, the Beyonder pathway that focuses on fate is destined to be lonely? Klein silently reflected on the matter and had some ideas regarding the usage of his marionette.

Of course, he still needed to carry out divinations above the gray fog. He needed to see if the passive good luck and calamities still existed after the Beyonder's actual death.

If it really was present, Klein had to constantly face the trials of calamities.

In comparison, Admiral of Blood Senor is still better as a marionette. Sigh, people only know how to cherish and regret once things are gone. Klein shook his head in a self-deprecating chortle. From the traits of the Monster pathway, he thought of a few effective means to deal with their Mid- and Low-Sequence Beyonders.

First, it was to catch them by surprise to let them see him directly. They would directly see the gray fog or other images, causing them to suffer a catharsis of the mind and receive damage to their bodies, pushing them to the brink of losing control.

Second, it was to throw a special item out, causing them to face the test of seeing what shouldn't be seen and hear what shouldn't be heard. In this aspect, Klein had a blood crystal that came from a high-level Devil that could produce such an effect—Blatherer's aura.

Third, it was to entice them to give him bad luck and pretend to act unlucky so as to have an opportunity to strike back.

Amidst his thoughts, Klein made the marionette empty his pockets, producing 35 pounds 10 soli 7 pence and a leather wallet.

The wallet's surface and interior had a flower and name embroidered on it. It appeared to be completely handcrafted.

Enzo… Whether that's your name or not, your name is Enzo. Klein shot a glance at his marionette as he moved his gaze down to the golden ring with the inlaid emerald on his right hand.

Via divination, he learned that the ring was named Green Essence. It had one effect—treat any ailments or injuries that weren't too serious.

And it was precisely because of this that its negative effects were trivial; it only attracted mosquitoes.

Thankfully, I'm not the one wearing it… Hmm, Monster pathway Beyonders don't seem to wear many mystical items. Even if they do, they will wear one or two rather low-level ones. This is a requirement of fate? Klein retracted his gaze in thought and looked at Enzo who was staring at the wall. He had an urge grow within him.

He wished to use his Monster pathway marionette to look at himself. He wanted to know what was so special about him!

Will this be very dangerous? I'll lose control as a result even if I'm seeing myself? No, back in Tingen City, Ademisaul had also looked straight at me without being a Sequence 9. The only thing that happened was having his eyes bleed and be in a state of pain for a while…

Although I have improved drastically from then, Winner Enzo didn't directly break down when he saw me just now. The reaction resembled my reaction when seeing Demoness of Despair Panatiya's partial Mythical Creature form.

Do a divination above the gray fog? No, that involves the gray fog itself. The outcome will definitely be interfered with… Rely on my own divination powers in the real world? Klein took out a gold coin and let it run through his fingers.

After a while, the gold coin bounced up and fell down into Klein's palm.

Chapter 911 - Strange Scene

◆

Klein looked down at his palm as his eyes reflected the gold coin.

It was heads.

This meant that Klein should use the marionette's eyes to look at himself!

After receiving this revelation, Klein remained hesitant. He pondered about holding a ritual to send Enzo above the gray fog. Doing so was relatively safer, allowing the damage and corruption his Spirit Body suffered to be completely screened by the environment before making an attempt.

However, he suspected that he wouldn't receive an outcome. This was because Beyonders of the Fate pathway were noticing the projection of the mysterious space on his body. Above the gray fog, that uniqueness might no longer exist. It was like an attempt to observe an elephant's body; instead of doing it outside, he was doing it internally.

Pressing his fingers together, he clenched the gold coin in silence for a long while before making up his mind.

He suddenly stood up, took out a ritual dagger, and created a wall of spirituality to isolate the room.

This was to prevent anyone from hearing the possible screams or strange commotion!

Immediately after that, Klein set up a ritual and sacrificed Creeping

Hunger above the gray fog.

He was afraid that the glove would turn on him when something happened to him!

This was a fixed trait of Creeping Hunger itself. Once it didn't have its fill and couldn't secure a schedule of eating one person a day, it would view its wearer as food. And Klein starved it more often than he fed it.

After doing all the preparations in a meticulous and orderly manner, Klein reached out to take the Flower of Blood from Enzo and wore it on his left palm.

This ensured that he could recover even if he suffered any serious physical damage.

At the moment he was about to wear it, Klein thought for a moment and paused. Taking a piece of paper, he wrote: "Remember to take off the ring."

He was worried that he wouldn't take Flower of Blood off after his experiment due to his lowered intelligence.

When that happens, perhaps I need a beautiful princess to wake me up with a kiss, no—take off my ring… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh and exhaled. Removing his outerwear, he wore the ring.

Then, he cast his gaze at his new marionette, Winner Enzo.

The sense of crisis and nervousness was inevitable, but as long as he made up his mind, the experienced him could only forge ahead without flinching.

After doing some adjustments and entering a state of Cogitation, Klein made the marionette slowly turn around to look at him.

With the Winner's eyes, he first saw a layer of thin, emanating grayish-white fog.

Amidst the fog, there was a resplendent door of light that was tainted with bluish-blackness.

The door of light was formed from countless layers of spherical light. Each spherical light enveloped squirming maggots. Some of them were transparent, others translucent. They had complicated and indescribable symbols and patterns that had profound meanings.

Before Klein could discern the actual details, he felt his mind buzz as he lost consciousness.

After an unknown period of time, he slowly woke up. He had momentarily lost his memory, almost imagining that he had slept till daybreak.

What happened? It's still dark outside… Klein sat up with a push of his hands, only to realize that he was on the ground.

At this moment, he caught sight of Enzo through the corner of his eye. Plenty of scenes and voices suddenly surged through his mind.

That's right. I was trying to figure out what Beyonders of the Monster pathway can see from my body… I suffered too much stimulation and fainted immediately? I still vaguely remember painful screaming. Was that me? Klein, who had recovered his memories, hurriedly inspected his condition. He was surprised to see a bloody, gruesome wound on his body, as though something was about to tear out of it.

At this moment, flesh was squirming in the wound, reforming at an abnormally fast speed.

Klein then looked to the ground and saw that there was blood that had outlined a silhouette of where he was lying down.

Thankfully, I wore Flower of Blood; otherwise, I might've slowly died due to the heavy injuries brought about by the breakdown of my body. After I resurrect, I wonder if I'll be in a human form or a monster form… Klein raised his hand and rubbed his temples as he scanned his surroundings. He found that the furniture had toppled, but the wall of spirituality remained intact.

He heaved a sigh of relief, confirming that the abnormality was only limited to himself and a small area around him. Nothing had spread.

And from the speed at which his wound was recovering at, Klein determined that he hadn't been unconscious for more than a minute.

He picked up the chair and sat down, feeling as though he had forgotten something, but he just couldn't recall what.

Only when he instinctively cleared the area did he see a note with the words: "Remember to take off the ring." Only then was he enlightened as he removed the golden ruby ring on his left hand.

More memories surfaced as Klein shook his head and muttered with a lingering sense of fear and amusement, "Luck is really important at times. If the negative effects of the Flower of Blood randomly reached its peak potency, I might not be able to recognize those words and fail to be reminded…"

Seeing that he had mostly recovered from his wound, he made Enzo wear Flower of Blood and take off Green Essence.

Using the latter's treatment, Klein no longer felt any discomfort. He focused his attention back on the scene he saw. It was a scene that Beyonders of the Fate pathway saw on him.

A door of light tainted with bluish-black. Countless spherical lights. Transparent and translucent maggots clumped together. Symbols and patterns that are mystically complicated, hiding plenty of knowledge but giving zero feedback to others… What do these represent?

This is a particular Mythical Creature form that corresponds to the mysterious space above the gray fog? It's one that belongs to a Sequence 0 true god?

Due to the gray fog's screening, only Beyonders of the Fate pathway can see it directly, suffering the visual impact and corruption? Likewise, it's also because of the gray fog's screening that those Beyonders don't directly break down as though they are seeing a deity with their own eyes while also not receiving any knowledge?

Klein thought for a moment and began to use divination to decipher the hidden meaning.

The door of light seems to resemble the symbol behind the Apprentice's chair. It might also point to Mr. Door…

Countless stacked spherical light is identical to my Cogitation. And the latter stems from the mythical systems as described by some novels from Earth… Influenced, my subconscious chose the most relevant and closely-matching memory? Or could it be that my choice influences the expression of the scene from the gray fog?

The distorted and transparent maggots are similar to the clump of maggots on the gigantic throne on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, but there are some tiny differences. That's Sequence 0 The Fool of the Seer pathway? I didn't manage to see the translucent ones clearly. It's hard to tell…

Also, the bluish-black color keeps making me connect it to the depths of the mysterious space that I can't reach… Back when I stood on the highest step of the staircase of light, I could see some hints of bluish-black on the cloud-like mass that condensed in midair…

Klein thought about it for quite some time but failed to receive an answer. All he could do was keep it at the back of his mind and analyze it when he had more information and clues.

After clearing the scene, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog. He planned on doing a thorough inspection of his physical condition and confirm if Enzo still had any passive luck or bad luck.

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Bayam. In the poverty district, in a dilapidated house that wasn't too big.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya was sitting behind a table looking at the door when she heard a unique knocking pattern on the door.

"Come on in." She didn't deliberately disguise her voice.

The wooden door creaked open as The Hanged Man walked in, wearing a hooded black robe.

Seeing his suspicious disguise, Cattleya nudged her heavy glasses and said with a smile, "If you were to walk out like this, you would be surrounded by the members of the Church of Storms within five minutes."

She didn't wear any disguise because she knew that the matter of her permitting Gehrman Sparrow to board the Future had long spread across the seas. It wasn't difficult for The Hanged Man to guess that Admiral of Stars was Ma'am Hermit.

Alger didn't directly reply to her. As he closed the door, he pulled out a chair and snapped back, "It's the same for you."

He meant that Admiral of Stars was just second to Admiral Hell amongst the seven pirate admirals. Furthermore, she was suspected to have deep connections to Gehrman Sparrow. She was a target of pursuit by the Church of Storms and Church of Evernight. Her bounty had risen to 45,000 pounds, and no matter which city she was in, it only spelled trouble once she was recognized due to not being disguised.

Cattleya nodded slightly and turned to look at The Hanged Man's hooded face.

"In front of me, such a disguise is meaningless.

"However, I respect your choice."

She continued wearing her glasses.

She has a domineering stance and great confidence. As expected of the Admiral of Stars… Alger, who was wearing a mask under the hood, didn't harp on the disguise as he went straight to the point.

"Thank you for providing me with assistance."

Cattleya placed her right hand on her left elbow.

"I'm curious. With your present strength and the resources you have, you should be able to resolve the Artisan's problem even without my help. Why are you being excessive?"

Alger was already prepared as he succinctly replied, "I do not wish to become a topic of discussion for others."

Cattleya seemed to grasp the meaning in between the lines. Pondering for a few seconds, she said, "I need more information."

Alger nodded lightly and said, "According to my observations and guesses, the Artisan is likely controlled by those who believe in the Primordial Moon. The latter belong to the original faction of the Southern Continent, not the traitors of the Life School of Thought."

Cattleya's expression remained unperturbed as she thought for a moment.

"Why don't you find Mr. Moon? He should be very interested in such matters."

Alger curled his lips and replied in a normal tone, "If we aren't able to resolve it, I might do so."

Chapter 912 - Origins of the Artisan

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Cattleya understood The Hanged Man. If the problem was too serious, they could use The Moon to involve the entire Sanguine race. They could then minimize their losses in the chaos and obtain some benefits.

She then smiled and said, “If the situation is that serious, why not directly find The World? That seems to make things simple.”

Alger remained silent for a few seconds before saying, “I have to prove my ability at handling problems; therefore, that’s the final resort.”

After hearing his reply, Cattleya immediately made some connections.

The Hanged Man places great importance on the way Gehrman Sparrow views him. It’s because he’s a Blessed of Mr. Fool? Also, his attitude is rather identical to the political jokes of Backlund and Trier. When facing a problem or having committed a mistake, the first reaction is to suppress the matter and find other methods to resolve it. They cannot let their superior or consignor know about it…

This means that The Hanged Man was once or is currently a member of a powerful faction with a strict hierarchy. It influenced him and made him grasp similar traits… The Church of Storms? No, such a person would be an oddity… The fleet of the King of the Five Seas?

Amidst her thoughts, the pirate admiral nudged her heavy glasses and steered the topic back.

“Continue describing the Artisan.”

Alger appeared to have prepared a script. Without any thought or pause, he said in an unhurried manner, “To hide this Artisan’s identity, to prevent this resource from being wielded by others, I deliberately constructed the identity of him being part of the Church of Steam. But in fact, he had no choice but to create items for unaffiliated Beyonders to earn money to maintain his lifestyle of enjoying fine wine and beauties. He betrayed the Church of Steam and hid in Bayam.

“This time, he first contracted a strange disease and was monitored by an unknown person. Later, he seemed to be under control of people who believe in the Primordial Moon, claiming that he could receive new life…”

Cattleya finished listening attentively as her eyes with a purple tint appeared extremely focused.

After The Hanged Man finished his recount, she pondered and asked, “An Artisan definitely has no lack of mystical items. Furthermore, they know all the combinations of different Beyonder effects and negative effects. Their strength is definitely at Sequence 5.

“What methods did those Primordial Moon believers use to control this Artisan without harming him?

“A demigod was involved?”

Alger slowly shook his head.

“There aren’t any clues regarding that, but based on my observation, the Artisan has expressed some willingness. I suspect that, while being threatened and coerced, there are elements of them targeting his weaknesses to entice him.”

He had indirectly denied the theory that a demigod was involved.

Cattleya nodded.

“How did those Primordial Moon believers find this Artisan?

“Based on your description, this Artisan only trades with trustworthy friends he’s familiar with. He doesn’t enjoy widening his channels, and he can be said to be extremely cautious.”

Alger hesitated for a moment and said, “I’m not too sure, but I have a theory.

“I once helped The World sell a Werewolf Beyonder characteristic to that Artisan, and the Werewolf pathway belongs to the Mutant pathway. Be it the formulas or characteristics, they are firmly in the control of the Rose School of Thought. There are seldom any leaks.”

Likewise, those people who believe in the Primordial Moon in the Southern Continent basically belong to the Rose School of Thought… Cattleya added inwardly, having figured out The Hanged Man’s theory.

He suspected that the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic had a latent problem that involved a secret existence. This resulted in the Artisan being targeted by the Rose School of Thought!

And this was also the reason why the Rose School of Thought firmly wielded control over the Mutant pathway’s formula and characteristics.

Cattleya raised a few more questions and obtained satisfactory answers. Finally, she asked, “What’s that Artisan’s name? What country is he from?”

“He’s from Intis. He calls himself Cielf,” Alger replied straight away.

“Cielf…” Cattleya frowned slightly as she repeated the Artisan’s name softly.

What’s wrong with that? Upon seeing this, Alger directly asked, “You’ve heard of him?”

From Alger’s point of view, Admiral of Stars was an experienced powerhouse with a powerful background and was good at controlling herself. If she hadn’t wished to discuss Cielf, she wouldn’t have made it so clear even if she had her suspicions and questions. Due to this, he chose to ask without mincing his words.

After a moment of silence, Cattleya said, “Emperor Roselle’s eldest son is Ciel. It’s very similar to that name.”

Without waiting for The Hanged Man to say a word, she continued, “This prince passed away due to his horror and concerns shortly after the emperor’s assassination. Back then, the Sauron family wished to hang or exile his descendants, but the Church of Steam chose to take them in as clergymen.”

Alger nodded slightly in enlightenment.

“You suspect that he’s a descendent of that prince?”

In most countries in the Northern Continent like Intis and Feysac, it was common for people to use their ancestor’s name or something similar as their names. It represented the legacy of honor; therefore, the more illustrious a family was, the more common it was to have “the second” or “the third.”

Of course, it was also very common for two people to have similar names, but Artisan Cielf wasn’t only a name. He was from the Church of Steam, a person from Intis, and had reached the level of Artisan.

Faced with The Hanged Man’s question, Cattleya nodded gently.

“I can quickly make a confirmation if you can obtain his blood.”

Understanding the reason, Alger didn’t ask further. Instead, he asked, “Are you going to take action now? I can provide support.”

Cattleya’s glasses reflected the crimson moonlight that shone inwards.

“No, I plan on observing for some time.

“At the very least, we need to understand why the people who believe in the Primordial Moon are trying to control Artisan Cielf.

"If they only wish to get the Artisan to work for them and create mystical items, the situation becomes a lot more simple. And if they have other goals, the problem might be more complicated than we imagined. We will need to make more preparations."

As expected of the Admiral of Stars… Alger nodded and said, "I can't stay in Bayam for too long, or else I will incur suspicion. If you need my assistance, it needs to be fast."

After receiving confirmation from her, The Hanged Man slowly got up and pulled up his hood before leaving the room.

Having learned where Artisan Cielf was presently living, Cattleya removed her heavy glasses and pinched her glabella. Clapping, she said, "Heath, come in."

In the shadows of the door gap, the darkness suddenly stirred as a thin and tall but pale figure appeared.

His nose bridge was ridiculously high, and his facial skin was nearly transparent. Looking ill, he was none other than the second mate of the Future, Rose Bishop Heath Doyle.

Cattleya looked at him and said, "The actual situation is… I'll leave the rest to you."

"Yes, Captain." Heath Doyle simply replied before shrinking back into the shadows.

Cattleya raised her right hand and paused for a few seconds.

"Stay—Stay away from Frank for the time being. He had reached a standstill in his mushroom experiments. I'm afraid that he will come up with new ideas."

†

"The location of my second marionette…"

Klein held two branches as he repeatedly chanted without seeing them move.

This meant a divination failure or that Kolain City didn't have a second marionette that suited him well.

From the looks of it, mysticism methods are temporarily useless. I'll pack up tomorrow and leave… Klein mumbled and threw the branches into the trash can.

Standing beside him was Enzo. Although he didn't dare to directly look at his master and was only looking at the ground, he skilfully made a cup of black tea and offered it to Klein.

Compared to before, this Winner now had red skin that was nearly peeling due to sunburn. After all of this turned for the better, he would have a swarthy tan.

To disguise his new marionette and prevent the Rose School of Thought from recognizing him, Klein had brought this gentleman on a trip to the beach which received strong sunlight. He was then left exposed to the sun for prolonged periods of time.

Meanwhile, he controlled the marionette to shave off most of his hair, leaving a thin layer. With the trimming of his brows, contouring his face with powder, and wearing shades, Enzo seemed to transform into another person. Even the most familiar of friends of his might find it difficult to recognize him unless the person was a Faceless.

Apart from a disguise in the real world, Klein also did some mysticism management. Firstly, he used the Paper Angel's embrace, and second, he carried Azik's copper whistle along with it.

In addition, he also determined that a Winner's passive luck and calamity trait was ineffective. However, he had no idea if it was because of its status as a marionette, or if it was due to the gray fog.

Receiving the tea and taking a sip, Klein cast his gaze at the map of East and West Balam on the coffee table. He considered where he could find his second marionette.

At this moment, the colors around him suddenly saturated as though an artist had contoured the area with paint.

Right on the heels of that, a figure appeared beside Enzo. He was wearing a silk top hat and a black suit. With a medium build, he had bronze skin and eyes that seemed to see the vicissitudes of life. He had soft facial features, and beneath his right ear was a tiny black mole. He was none other than Azik Eggers.

Mr. Azik is finally here… Klein was first delighted before he noticed that he had appeared beside his marionette.

This made an amusing scene surface in his mind.

Mr. Azik, who had relied on the copper whistle to locate him, had done the same as he usually did—grabbing the copper whistle's wielder by the shoulder and had left using the spirit world the moment he appeared. And all Klein could do was watch helplessly, trying to stop him with outstretched arms. But being a tad bit slow, he couldn't help but clam up.

Azik appeared more reticent than before. Looking at Klein who had a new face, he asked, "Are you ready?"

Chapter 913 - Klein's Preparatory Work

◆

Ready… Of course not… Klein smiled as he pointed at Enzo.

“That glove still needs sealing.”

As he spoke, the badly sunburnt Enzo removed the human-skinned glove from his right hand with his left hand which wore the Flower of Blood and Green Essence rings.

It was Creeping Hunger.

Normally, Klein tended to throw Creeping Hunger above the gray fog when it wasn’t in use. After all, the glove’s original seal had been disabled after its mutation. It needed to consume a living person on a daily basis; otherwise, it would feast on the wearer. However, considering how Mr. Azik had already replied, it was very likely that he would meet him soon. Finally, he decided to keep Creeping Hunger in the real world unless there were unique circumstances.

After all, he could already imagine the scene of Mr. Azik arriving. He didn’t wish for such a conversation to happen.

“Didn’t you say that the glove needs sealing?”

“Yes. Give me a second. I need to use the washroom.”

Or:

“Are you ready?”

"…No. Give me a second. I need to use the washroom."

Just the thought of a similar scene and similar line embarrassed Klein, making him feel awkward. Even if he didn't consider the possibility of Mr. Azik realizing the secret of the gray fog, this would also affect his impression of him.

Therefore, after obtaining a new marionette and completing his attempt at looking at himself, Klein brought Creeping Hunger back to the real world, making up for its previous meal.

Unlike before, the wearer was now Enzo.

Aside from that, to restrain Creeping Hunger's urge to eat a person on a daily basis, Klein carried a few normal mushrooms with him. He also made the marionette maintain a distance of at least five meters from him.

Upon hearing his words and seeing the marionette's actions, Azik nodded and reached out to receive the human-skinned glove.

Taking this opportunity, Klein took out a few mushrooms from his pocket and threw them into the nearby trash can.

Pa!

He snapped his fingers, igniting the mushrooms within a scarlet flame. However, it didn't affect anything around it.

This was his Flame Controlling power from being a Magician.

After completing this action and seeing Mr. Azik inevitably glance over, Klein chuckled dryly.

"The unforeseen development back then has made Creeping Hunger a little afraid of mushrooms. I'm using its weakness to restrain its usual urges."

In fact, there wasn't much point in doing so because carrying the mushrooms restrained Creeping Hunger. It made the starving Sealed Artifact immediately lash back the moment the mushrooms disappeared. Unless there was any easily obtainable “food” in front of it, it would end up aiding the enemy.

“Mushroom…” Azik muttered as he held the glove which had blood stains on its surface. He made the surroundings suddenly turn dark as the sunlight outside was prohibited from entering.

Ghastly-white, dark-green complicated symbols, labels, and patterns appeared out of thin air. They appeared to be calligraphed by invisible wraiths, shadows, and spirit bodies.

They meshed together in midair, forming a mysterious, illusory double bronze door that seemed to lead to another world. It was a deep, silent, and terrifying world.

The illusory door shrank and finally landed on Creeping Hunger, causing its blood stains to rapidly recede, making it mostly white.

A few seconds later, this human-skinned glove returned to normal. It was still a thin layered glove, and even without any suppressive effect from the mushrooms, it didn’t express any signs of mania or urges.

“It’s like how it was before.” Azik handed Creeping Hunger to Klein.

Having a bigshot backing you sure feels good! Klein reflected inwardly and earnestly thanked him before wearing Creeping Hunger on his left hand.

He thought for a moment and raised a matter.

“Mr. Azik, while I was carrying your copper whistle while passing through the Berserk Sea, I had the same dream repeatedly.

“The main theme of the dream is darkness and coldness. In an inverted underground mausoleum, there were countless coffins with a deceased body inside. On their backs were dense white feathers.

“Those feathers were tainted with pale yellow oil, and deep inside the mausoleum was a blob of black fog that enveloped everything.

“In the dream, you and I were exploring the mausoleum. We triggered something, causing the black fog to produce panting sounds as thin illusory black tubes were extended.

“I would jolt myself awake whenever I reach this point in the dream. This seems to be similar to the byproduct of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death Project that previously appeared.”

Klein described, in detail, his divination of the copper whistle as a dream; he did this as a warning to Mr. Azik as if to say that he shouldn’t be too careless. After all, dream divination was, in a sense, equivalent to a dream, and Azik knew that he was a Beyonder of the Seer pathway. Having such an encounter wasn’t anything odd.

Having a revelation from a normal dream and getting a revelation from a dream divination only differed in one way: one being passive and the other active.

Azik finished listening silently without cutting Klein off. At the end of that, he nodded and said, “It’s likely related to something Death left in the Berserk Sea.

“From the looks of it, the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death Project has had some qualitative progress.”

Mr. Azik lives up to being a Fourth Epoch Death Consul. He doesn’t belittle my dream at all… Klein raised his right hand and rubbed his face, turning into Gehrman Sparrow.

He then said, “I only have one more thing I need to prepare. I need to confirm if Admiral Hell Ludwell isn’t somewhere dangerous and that there aren’t any Numinous Episcopate demigods around him.”

As for whether the Murloc Cufflink was still on the ship, Klein didn’t mention it. This was because he would check on it every few days. He believed that Admiral Hell had yet to discover the mystical item, or he might've already discovered it but had deliberately not moved it, hoping to lay an ambush for the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, when he visited.

Azik replied calmly, "That can be confirmed when we are nearby."

"Alright." Klein immediately made Enzo walk to the coat rack and pull out the golden cane.

Seeing that there was nothing else, Azik reached out his right hand and grabbed Klein's shoulder.

Klein also reached out his right palm to grab onto Enzo's shoulder.

The surrounding colors suddenly changed. The reds became redder, and the blacks became blacker. They stacked against each other but were bright and discordant.

The two men and the marionette began passing through the spirit world as the black gold inlaid cane danced ahead, pointing out the direction of Klein's lost Murloc Cufflink.

Before long, the cane fell down and was suspended in midair. Azik terminated the traveling, but they remained in the spirit world.

He seemed to be watching something or listening in on something. After two to three seconds, he said, "There aren't any problems."

With that said, he brought Klein while Klein brought his marionette out of the spirit world.

Meanwhile, Klein recalled the time he searched for clues to Azik's memories. Back then, the target was the ancient chronicles that Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy possessed.

Back then, Azik had said "the problem isn't serious," but in the end, he faced Demoness of Unaging Katarina…

There aren't any problems… Alright, since you say so… Klein lampooned as he sized up his surroundings.

It was a rather familiar environment. It was a huge ship with a mainly dark color with a ghostly green to it. It had a Black Tulip flag, as well as zombies, skeletons, wraiths, shadows, and other undying creatures; these creatures either directed the sails, patrolled the area, or did cannon drills. All of that proved that it was the flagship, Black Tulip, of Admiral Hell.

Unlike Klein's last encounter, the Black Tulip had quite a number of living Beyonders.

The silver-masked captain with an exaggerated rapier, frilly shirt, a gorgeous coat, and a triangular hat with a white skull on it, Admiral Hell Ludwell, was standing by the cabin's entrance looking over.

Suddenly, the black ring on Ludwell's right hand trembled and glimmered.

The pale white flame in the arrogant pirate admiral's eyes wavered and finally constricted to its limits.

Immediately, Ludwell bent his back, prostrated to the ground in front of Azik Eggers, and kissed the deck under the gaze of the either glazed, surprised, or lifeless eyes.

Chapter 914 - The Calling Deep Inside the Mausoleum

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“…”

Upon seeing Admiral Hell Ludwell’s reaction, Klein and the living crew of the Black Tulip could hardly believe their eyes.

He originally imagined two scenarios:

The first was Ludwell requesting help from a Numinous Episcopate demigod to ambush Gehrman Sparrow and the powerhouse backing him. This wasn’t impossible since Sequence 7 of the Death pathway was called Spirit Medium. They also had the ability to sense impending danger.

The second was that Admiral Hell hadn’t made any preparations. He tried resisting but ended up being easily finished off by Mr. Azik.

Klein’s plan was to have Mr. Azik deal with the demigod while he hunted Admiral Hell in the first scenario, so as to obtain his second marionette. If it were the second scenario, he could request Mr. Azik to watch by the side as he controlled his marionette to challenge Ludwell alone. During this process, he would use Creeping Hunger and hide in the shadows, doing his best to stay behind the scenes so as to digest his Marionette potion faster.

To his surprise, Admiral Hell didn’t put up a fight at all. He directly prostrated himself and kissed the deck as though he was Azik’s most loyal and humble servant.

How are we going to come to blows now… Klein stared ahead blankly, somewhat at a loss for words.

And it was silent across the ship.

Azik raised his hand and pressed down on his silk hat as he walked towards the prostrating Ludwell at a decent pace.

One step. Two steps. Three steps. He stopped in front of Ludwell and said with a deep voice, “What stage has the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death Project reached?”

Ludwell kept his forehead peeled to the ground as he hoarsely replied, “Artificial Death can already influence High-Sequence Beyonders who failed their advancements, but it is still unable to reply to prayers and rituals…”

After the description, he slightly raised his torso and took off the black, square-shaped ring from his right hand. Then, with both hands, he offered it in front of him.

Silently, the ring seemed to be dragged by countless spirit bodies as it flew up and landed in Azik’s palm.

Azik studied it for a few seconds before wearing it on his left index finger.

Suddenly, a terrifying and profound feeling was emanated from his body. The zombies and skeletons who were either naked or wearing rotten leather armor, genuflected, bowing their heads as though they only dared to look at his boots. The flying wraiths and shadows landed on the deck and clung closely to it. None of them dared to float in midair again.

The other pirates aboard the ship plopped to their knees, plastering their faces to the deck without daring to raise them.

Klein stood to the side, watching Mr. Azik’s back and the suddenly empty scene. He turned agape, but he didn't say a word.

Azik took another two steps forward and came to Admiral Hell's side. Then, he turned his body and faced Klein and said to Ludwell, "You shall be his marionette for a year. When the time is up, you can return to the spirit world."

Azik said those words without any inflection, as though he wasn't determining Admiral Hell's life and death or future. Perhaps, to him, this was a trivial matter that didn't need him to care for the thoughts and feelings of the person being ordered.

Ludwell's body shook violently as though he was furious and indignant. But ultimately, he didn't raise his head. He continued keeping his head peeled to the deck.

"Yes, honorable Death Consul."

Just as he said that, ghastly white and dark green mysterious symbols were accentuated as they meshed together, forming an illusory bronze door.

The door rapidly contracted and was imprinted inside Admiral Hell's forehead.

Klein looked in surprise and puzzlement. Only when Mr. Azik nodded at him and pointed to Admiral Hell did he blankly step forward and enter a ten-meter-radius. He began controlling Ludwell's Spirit Body Threads.

The pirate admiral almost leaped up a few times to flail his arms, but none of that happened. Soon, his thoughts turned sluggish as he subconsciously resisted.

After a while, the silver-masked Admiral Hell Ludwell stood up. Bowing his head, he retreated to Klein's side and stood beside Winner Enzo.

Azik watched the entire process in silence before finally slowly saying, "In the Death pathway, high-level Beyonders have extremely suppressive powers over low-level Beyonders.”

…I can tell. Back when I threw your copper whistle, even the Sequence 5 Admiral Hell failed to control his undead creatures… Klein nodded gently, indicating that he had taken note of it.

Immediately after that, a zombie which had rotted in several areas rose up. Carrying an azure-blue cufflink, it came before Klein.

It was the Murloc Cufflink he had lost!

Although it’s useless for the current me, I’ve finally gotten it back… As Klein was lost in poignancy, he reached out to retrieve the item that belonged to him.

Then, he saw Mr. Azik walk back and reach out to grab his shoulder.

He hurriedly extended his arms to grab onto the shoulders of his marionettes, Enzo and Ludwell.

All the colors saturated, brightened, and overlapped. Having entered the spirit world, Klein instinctively asked, “Mr. Azik, where do we go next?”

“Berserk Sea,” Azik calmly replied.

He paused for a moment and then added, “Give me the copper whistle.”

“…Alright.” Klein made Enzo take out the iron cigar case and retrieve the ancient cigar case.

Azik reached out and took it before saying in a deep voice, “My intuition tells me that this ring left by Death, together with this copper whistle and myself, should allow us to find the spot in the Berserk Sea where Death perished back then.”

Klein subconsciously said, “My dream tells me that it’s very dangerous.

“Perhaps we should first find the Numinous Episcopate members who are implementing the Artificial Death Project. We can make decisions after receiving more detailed information from them."

Azik fell silent for a few seconds.

"A voice there is calling out to me."

Klein turned his head to look at Mr. Azik. He saw that this man with soft facial features and weathered eyes had his facial contours furrowed. He no longer had that slight curve to his lips.

Colors flashed by quickly as Azik brought Klein through the pitch-black storm that enveloped the Berserk Sea.

At this moment, the dark square ring and the exquisite ancient brass whistle shimmered slightly, illuminating Azik's face.

This Death Consul who had lived through the Fourth Epoch closed his eyes as he silently listened to a shout that came from an unknown location. Then, he suddenly clenched his right hand.

All the scenery from the nearby spirit world was imploding, turning into a slowly-spinning black vortex whose borders couldn't be seen.

The vortex suddenly burgeoned, devouring Azik, Klein, and his two marionettes.

Klein sensed a sudden and intense sense of dizziness as he nearly vomited on the spot.

He recovered after an unknown period of time, realizing that he was inside a dark, cold mausoleum. Around him were open coffins, and inside them were rotting corpses with white feathers on their backs.

Although I warned Mr. Azik, we still ended up here… Klein was taken aback for a second as he suddenly felt a deep sense of helplessness.

He turned his head to look to the side and saw Azik standing near him. He was staring intently at the flights of stairs that led deep into the mausoleum.

There was a thick black gas emanating in the area as they slowly swirled like smog.

“The one hiding in there might very well be Artificial Death…” Klein couldn’t help but warn.

Azik’s facial contours were no longer as taut as he curved the corners of his mouth.

“My slumber from before has allowed me to recall many more things. I saw myself seated on a bone throne, and I saw Beyonders and ordinary people lying dead in front of the throne. They hadn’t done anything wrong, but they died sudden deaths all the same. One by one, they got up, turning into ghastly undead creatures, undead creatures that pledged allegiance to me.

[image]

“And I was just coldly watching them without any emotional fluctuations. I allowed the disaster to spread through the village and into the city.

“This made me feel unlike myself. However, I also knew very well that this might be the real me.”

As Death Consul from the Fourth Epoch’s Balam Empire…? Klein’s lips quivered slightly before he pursed them tightly.

Azik rubbed his temples and continued in an unperturbed tone, “I sense myself returning to that past.”

Chapter 915 - Another “Me”

Without waiting for Klein’s reply, Azik, who was staring intently deep into the mausoleum, continued, “I still remember my resurrection after my first death. I was lying in a pale-white coffin, and I staggered to my feet. I was feeling horrified, having no idea what was happening. Nor did I know where I was.

“Before the clergymen collected my corpse for purification, I escaped, stumbling along the way like a wandering ghost. I crossed grasslands, villagers, and cities. I couldn’t recall who I was or where I came from.

“No matter where I went back then, I would hear all kinds of sobbing. When I watched priests presiding over mass burials, I felt sorrow in every corner.

“Later, I happened to rescue a noble lady and entered her manor. She was a bright and lively girl, and I was like a feral beast from the jungle. I was sensitive, suspicious, self-abased, afraid; and I often showed a cold, indifferent, cruel side that didn’t match the morality of a human.

“She was very curious about me. No matter how I avoided her or what terrible things I did, she would approach me, infecting me with her smile. She would use interesting matters to influence me, and without realizing it, I got used to her pranks and her existence.

“We secretly got together. She was very worried that her father wouldn’t agree to her marriage to a former tramp and present servant.

“Seeing her melancholic smile, I had the feeling of blood gushing through me for the first time. I rashly told her that I was leaving, but I would return with an aristocratic title and a bridal garland.

“I joined the army, becoming a knight. I raised a three-meter lance and charged at enemies. Thanks to the chaos of the Fourth Epoch’s wake in the Northern Continent, I became a baron and obtained a fief I could call my own.

“I abided by my promise, and with the king’s conferment letter, family emblem, a knight’s medal ribbon, and my self-made garland, I married my bride.”

Upon saying this, Azik’s expression gradually turned gentle. as though he was reminiscing and recalling something. The corners of his mouth curled up without him realizing it.

Klein’s heart stirred from hearing this, as though he had met the familiar Mr. Azik again.

“What happened next?” He carefully guided the conversation.

Azik looked ahead and said, “Later… later, we built a castle on our fief. We had children, a boy. He grew up very quickly, and I could tell that he would grow up to be tall and stout.

“He enjoyed combat, often running around while dragging a broadsword, claiming that he wanted to become a knight.

“I thought it was just child’s talk that wouldn’t last. However, even if he broke his leg or hurt his head, he didn’t abandon his training. He thought that I wouldn’t be able to see him if he hid in his room grimacing while tending to his wound. Heh heh, he underestimated his father. All the spirits in the fief were secretly under my service.

“Year after year passed. I recovered more and more of my memories. My wife often grumbled that the castle was too cold and dark and that she wished to go somewhere with sunlight and warmth. I satisfied her request, but it was only much later that I realized that it wasn’t because she disliked staying in the castle, but that she was afraid of the changes happening to me. She was afraid of the colder me who was becoming a stranger.

“She never told me these things, spending time with me like she always did. We spent a beautiful time by the seaside in the south, and we even thought of having a second child, but unfortunately, we didn’t succeed.

“It was only when I sensed that my next death was approaching did I return to the fief, to my castle.

“My son, that boy told me that he wished to head to Backlund to become an attendant to viscounts or earls and begin his journey as a knight.

“I asked him why he had made such a choice when he was only around ten. He told me that I was his idol and role model. He wished to become a noble by being a knight like me without the help of his parents.

“Back then, I had already recovered most of my memories. Faced with that child, I always felt a little awkward, unfamiliar, and uncomfortable. But when I heard his answer, I still felt an indescribable joy, satisfaction, and pride. He was my son, completely different from the children I had back when I was in the Balam Empire.”

Klein knew that Mr. Azik was talking about his identity as Baron Lamud I. And the child who made him proud and satisfied had been poisoned to death in his middle-age or advanced years. He was nailed in a coffin and even had his skull taken away by Ince Zangwill.

Azik’s gaze went adrift for a moment.

“I died once again and woke up in a groggy manner. I instinctively left my fief and followed my prior arrangements to wander elsewhere. Every incarnation, I had a different life in the beginning. At times, I met with the sweetest love; at other times I received the most adorable daughter. The love, helplessness, and satisfaction left me taken aback, puzzled, and stumped again and again as I gradually recovered my memories.

“There was once a time where I was a filial son. I gave my parents pride, a beautiful life, adorable grandsons and granddaughters. But when I ‘awoke’ and found myself, I recalled that in my previous incarnation, I had coldly watched their real son die in the battlefield and had seized his identity. On the one hand, I felt pain and guilt, and on the other hand, I felt it was nothing, something trivial. My inner heart seemed to dissociate into two.

“Back then, I had a mask that allowed me to change into anyone, but I lost it after awakening. This might have been something I deliberately lost…”

Klein recalled Mr. Azik’s mention of a daughter who liked getting sweets from him. After some deliberation, he asked, “I believe that it isn’t a dissociation, but that you are fighting against madness.

“After losing your past memories, you, who restart your life, are always kind and warm, with rich emotions. At your present state, you probably recognize it even clearer.

“This might very well be the true you, your essence. And as a Death Consul, you suffer the effects of the Beyonder characteristic’s latent inclination towards losing control. You suffer the influence brought about by a high-level Death pathway Beyonder. I heard that ‘He’ had already gone mad after the War of the Four Emperors.”

Klein’s words weren’t without much evidence, because he only knew a few of Azik’s incarnations—Baron Lamud, the father who made a swing for his daughter, the filial child, and the warm and friendly history teacher.

His goal was to provide a guess, a possibility to help Mr. Azik resist the Death Consul personality that came with his memories. It allowed him to introspect his past incarnations and use this to achieve a particular compromise with himself that wouldn't be too cold.

And as he spoke, he suddenly had a new idea. Without waiting for Azik to finish digesting what he had said, he hurriedly asked, "Mr. Azik, do you know about an 'anchor'? To secure 'Themselves', the deities and angels use anchors to prevent the Beyonder characteristic's inclination towards losing control and stop madness from corrupting 'Them'."

"Yes." Azik retracted his gaze and nodded.

Klein wasn't too sure, but he used a rather firm tone and said, "Perhaps, your repeated memory loss to restart and live a new life is the anchor you use to resist madness and the loss of control!"

Do not abandon them. Do not forget them. That is you! After saying that, Klein added inwardly.

"Anchor…" Azik repeated this word as his mind seemed lost.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly sighed.

"This might be an explanation. At least, it lessens the intensity of my mental dissociation and conflicts.

"However, since I've already come this far, I should still head inside the mausoleum to see what's hiding there. Why is it summoning me, and what is causing me to die and revive again and again, losing my memories during the process only to find them again…

"This has troubled me for more than a thousand years. It has troubled my every incarnation. I believe I can receive an answer today."

The look in his eyes turned clearer as his voice seemed gentle, but there was an indescribable firmness in it.

Klein wanted to stop him, but moments after he opened his mouth, he closed it again.

Azik pressed down on his half top hat. Without turning his head, he said with a gentle smile, “Remember to close your eyes.”

With that said, he walked forward, following the flights of stairs as he headed for the deep depths of the mausoleum.

The wafting black fog didn’t produce any more panting sounds. It slowly scattered into its surroundings, accentuating the illusory object that was coiled at the bottom.

It was a massive feathered serpent that seemed to occupy an entire island!

It had huge, dark green—nearly black—scales. Amidst the gaps were feathers covered in yellow oily stains. On every feather, there were thin illusory black tubes extending outwards.

The exaggerated feathered serpent was both illusory and real, its actual form was hardly describable. It seemed to be a combination of things incomprehensible to humans.

Its eye sockets were burning with pale-white flames; its face was that of a human’s!

The face had bronze skin, and it had soft facial features. Beneath its right ear was a tiny black mole. It was another Azik Eggers!

Chapter 916 - Irresistible Approach

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon seeing this coiling feathered serpent deep inside the black fog, and a face at the top of the towering figure, Azik was first taken aback. Following that, the corner of his forehead throbbed as though he had been struck in the temple, splitting his head in two.

Amidst the excruciating pain, several incontiguous scenes flashed in his mind;

It was a feathered serpent with a face identical to his, even to the smallest detail;

Above a silent land, there were countless pale corpses;

Floating in midair, there were clouds stacked from bones that came from different species;

Black tentacles that drilled out from the ground, with eyes that resembled dead fish at the tip of each tentacle;

A transparent Spirit Body was forcefully pulled out of his body.

After these flashing scenes, a pair of white flaming eyes that were on the brink of extinguishing glanced over. A white feather stained with yellow oil fluttered down, splitting Azik's transparent Spirit Body into two.

One of the parts suddenly flew up and plunged inside the "cloud of bones." The remaining part fused with a golden accessory that had appeared out of thin air. Amidst the pale-white flames, it materialized back into a body of flesh and blood.

This scene was like a thunder god's hammer striking down at Azik's mind, again and again, making the pain hardly bearable. He raised his hand to his head as his knees gradually buckled as he knelt on the staircase.

He had finally recalled everything that had happened, and he understood the reason why he was constantly dying and reviving, always losing his memories and having to recover them every single time.

His soul wasn't complete!

Similarly, Azik also understood why the feathered serpent suppressing the entire space in the depths of the black fog had an identical face as his.

It was him!

That was the other Azik Eggers!

And all of this was a concealed attempt before Death's fall.

If stitching souls existed, there was naturally the splitting of souls. At that moment, the crazy and powerful Death had seemingly foreseen "His" outcome. Unwilling to die so simply, "He" secretly split the soul of his son, Balam Empire's Death Consul. He took half of it away and used another item as a replacement, stitching it together with Azik's soul.

It was a mystery if it was a deliberate arrangement of Death, or if it was an unintended consequence of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project, the half soul that had been taken away from Artificial Death had fused with the target of the Artificial Death Project—the Uniqueness of the Death pathway. It made the latter gain certain innate abilities as it began influencing High-Sequence Beyonders of the Corpse Collector pathway who had failed their advancement.

And for the other half, although there was a replacement that prevented it from being incomplete, the incomplete soul resulted in repeated deaths and resurrection just like Sequence 4's Undying. And due to the golden accessory inside his body, and the calling from the other half soul, Azik, who started a brand new life every incarnation, would gradually recover his past memories with the passage of time.

In the past, Artificial Death had attempted to identify the reason, but due to the natural recovery of his memories, he was often already close to death once more. He wasn't able to perform any in-depth investigations. Furthermore, the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project had been raised in the past few centuries. It was only in recent times that they received some level of success. That was why he never found the answer.

Haa! Haa! Haa!

At some point in time, Azik's hands had left his head. They were placed on the staircase as his throat produced a voice that didn't sound human.

Drops of sweat dripped down his forehead and hit the stone steps in front of him. They spread out into a layer of pale yellow oil, growing out into dense white feathers.

At that instant, he felt the other half of his soul calling out, as well as its desire. The two "selves" which had been separated for more than a thousand years were eager to fuse as one, to be whole again.

"No…" Azik muttered in pain, unwilling to raise his head or reach out his right hand.

He had seen it clearly. The "him" as a feathered serpent didn't have any reason. It was filled with extreme coldness and madness. If he became one with it again, he would probably immediately be restored to his state as a Death Consul from before. He might even become a fake Death who only had godhood with zero humanity!

He would forget everything, forgetting everyone who he had once cherished.

“No…” Azik’s throat squeezed out the same word again. Irresistibly, he raised his neck bit by bit as pitch-black and gloomy scales appeared.

At his forehead, something that took a life of its own protruded out. His forehead cracked as a bloody opening appeared.

A golden sliver of light emitted out of nothingness, taking form inside the flesh and blood.

This ancient accessory made of gold was in the shape of a tall, slender bird. Pale white flames emanated around it in the form of feathers. Inside its bronze eyes, there were shimmering layers of light that separately formed a mysterious and illusory door.

The moment it appeared, Azik let out a painful growl. He raised his head completely as two wisps of pale-white flames burst in his eyes that had experienced much.

Deep inside the black fog, the illusory and real feathered serpent had straightened its body. It reached its head out as the two identical faces of different sizes looked at each other in silence.

As four pale-white flames leaped, bit by bit, Azik, whose hands were on the ground, struggled to stand up with a warped expression. Slowly, he walked to the feathered serpent known as Artificial Death.

As he approached, the entire mausoleum began shaking. The surroundings turned transparent, reflecting a world with countless skeletons and shadows.

Bloody arms, bluish-black vines with baby faces, and slimy tentacles with dead fish eyes or two rows of sharp teeth tore through the boundary between reality and the illusory, reaching into the mausoleum. However, they clung straight to the ground without daring to move.

†

East Balam, Kolain City.

Daly Simone, who was rushing to her next target’s location, suddenly stopped in her steps and held her head.

“What’s wrong?” Red Gloves team captain, Soest, asked in puzzlement.

Daly frowned slightly as she answered, seemingly in reverie, “I hear strange voices. I can sense the calling that stems from an unknown place… I even wish to kneel to the ground…”

“Can the rest of you hear it?” Soest prudently asked the other teammates.

Just as Leonard Mitchell shook his head, he heard the slightly-aged voice in his mind.

“Look towards the Berserk Sea.”

Leonard subconsciously turned his body and looked in the direction of the harbor towards the distant Berserk Sea. He saw a swath of pure, deep-black darkness. There weren’t any gales, massive waves, dark clouds, lightning, torrential rain, or sunlight.

†

Although Klein had his eyes closed, his outstanding spiritual perception allowed him to sense his surroundings. When he heard the painful murmurs and shouts that sounded like Mr. Azik, he could sense seemingly corporeal silence and the aura of death.

What’s happening? Although the Artificial Death deep in the mausoleum didn’t attack Mr. Azik, it has inflicted him with adverse effects? Klein’s mind raced as he felt anxious and worried.

His spiritual intuition told him that what was about to happen was not something he wished to see.

However, he couldn't figure out what he could do. He didn't even dare open his eyes to look at Mr. Azik's present state or whatever he had encountered.

This wasn't a problem that could be solved with mere courage. It was a difference in the natural order of life, an unbridgeable gap.

Suddenly, Klein had a strong feeling of helplessness. However, he didn't give up as he tried hard to think of whatever items he had on him that could be of use.

Creeping Hunger? No, it's at a completely different level. It won't be of any use…

Death Knell? Even worse…

Groselle's Travels? I didn't bring it… Neither did I bring the Black Emperor card and Tyrant card…

Fate Siphon charm… Yes, the Fate Siphon charm!

Klein was delighted as he formulated a plan.

It was to use the Fate Siphon charm to temporarily swap his fate with Mr. Azik. He would suffer the influence created by Artificial Death in his place!

At the very least, I still have a chance of reviving. As for Mr. Azik, the deaths he previously suffered wouldn't from the damage inflicted. Who knows if he can awaken again in such a situation! Klein didn't consider if the Fate Siphon charm was effective on Azik and Artificial Death. He only wished to give it a try. He raised his right hand and reached into his pocket.

Then, there was a delay in his actions.

His arm rose a little before landing back in its original location.

He froze for a moment as though he had been petrified into being a stone sculpture.

Klein's lips quivered a few times as his expression distorted indiscernibly. Following that, he swung his right arm and reached his palm into his pocket and pulled it out.

Gripped tightly in his palm was a black crystal card-like charm.

At the same time, Azik was approaching the towering illusory feathered serpent. His footsteps sped up as though he was returning to his throne.

However, his eyes which had pale-white flames were filled with pain. His expression was extremely warped.

"No..." Azik muttered once again. Wherever his skin was exposed, white feathers stained with yellow oil grew out from the gaps of pitch-black scales.

The intense shouting and desire made him lose control of himself. He was about to soar into the sky and leap towards the gigantic feathered serpent that shared his face.

Pale-white flames spread out from the bird-shaped accessory at his forehead, flowing towards the rest of his body.

Klein's spiritual intuition was sending warnings as he hurriedly said a single word in ancient Hermes, "Fate!"

Just as he was about to use the charm, his surroundings suddenly quietened. There was no longer any sound.

A slender, fair female palm appeared out of nowhere and pressed down on the golden bird-shaped accessory on Azik's forehead.

A figure then materialized between Azik and the towering illusory feathered serpent, stopping the two's approach.

With the help of this external force, Azik finally held back that desire and the irresistible calling to fuse together. The pale-white flames in his eyes “reflected” the floating figure in midair.

It was a beautiful lady wearing an ancient robe. She wore a black hood. Her face was deadpan, and her black eyes were deep and dark, devoid of spirituality.

Chapter 917 - Three Choices

◆

The strange turn of events inside the mausoleum left Klein, who had his eyes closed and his spirituality converged, completely unaware of what was happening. He had no idea if it was something good or bad. Therefore, even though he had already chanted the activation incantation, he still didn't dare rashly use the Fate Siphon charm. He was afraid it would make things worse or that it would have the opposite effect.

Seconds passed as Klein felt the passage of time was especially slow. He felt as though an entire century had passed.

Finally, he heard Mr. Azik speak with a somewhat hoarse and uncertain tone:

"It's you…"

Following that, an unperturbed voice that was clearly female sounded:

"You have three choices.

"First, continue proceeding forward to seek completeness. Allow Salinger to revive within your body;

"The second is to have me help you extract that half soul, allowing you to take it with you. You will think of a way to stitch it back together, but this will make you transform back to your original form. You will stop repeatedly dying and reviving, but it will not be the present you. Your past incarnations will truly recede into being dreams;

"Third, it's to give up everything and directly leave. You will forever be stuck at your current level. You will have no way of advancing further. You will still die again and again, waking up with no memories, and repeatedly search for your past experiences."

Klein was taken aback by what he heard. He never expected that there was another "person" in the depths of the mausoleum. Furthermore, she appeared to have absolute authority. She provided the former Death Consul, Azik Eggers, different choices that he could choose from.

This is that the "Artificial Death" that's hiding deep in the black fog?

No, "He" originally didn't seem to have any intelligence. It's been so long, and it's not like "He" has tried communicating…

Extract the half soul and think of a way to stitch it together… What does that mean? Azik's soul was not whole to begin with?

Extract it from where? The lady speaking is actually able to do something Mr. Azik is incapable of?

Also, who is Salinger? Why would he be revived in Mr. Azik's body? He, or "He" is Death that caused the Pale Disaster, Mr. Azik's father or grandfather? "He" foresaw "His" death; hence, he left a seed in Mr. Azik's body for "Him" to revive?

The first choice is definitely something to eliminate without any thought. The second and third choice each have their own problems. The former makes him not his current self. He will become an unfamiliar "him." The latter is to suffer an undying curse for all eternity, never to receive salvation… If he's confident with himself, truly treating all the past incarnations as an anchor, then the second choice can be considered. It allows for reconciliation and a compromise… But this involves the splitting of a half soul into half. It's impossible to guess what developments will happen to the other half soul which didn't experience those incarnations in the future. The anchor might not be able to resolve the problem…

Ideas flashed through Klein's mind. He was puzzled, curious, stumped, and confused. He was so near, yet so far from a solution.

It was Azik's life. It was a future he needed to face. No one else could make the decision for him.

And whatever Klein needed to say had been said. He stood there helpless and worried, waiting for Mr. Azik to speak again.

Azik looked at the beautiful hooded lady in front of him without saying a word. The pale-white eyes in his eyes flickered.

The illusory but real towering feathered serpent seemed to sense a negative development. It suddenly lashed out its tail, wildly sweeping it around as it lunged its head downward and opened its gaping mouth, revealing dark red flesh and fangs that were tainted with yellow oil stains. It stuck out its black serpent tongue and spat dark green slime in a bid to devour Azik Eggers.

However, all of its attempts failed to be effective. It seemed to live in another world!

Amidst the unsettling silence, Azik raised his right hand and rubbed his temples. Calmly, he said with a laugh, "Perhaps I'm accustomed to my present life. I choose the third choice."

Just as he said that, the hooded lady clenched her fist, gripping the golden bird-shaped accessory tightly. Then, she retracted her arm, pulling out the ancient item from the gap in Azik's forehead.

Azik's expression distorted once again as though he was experiencing unimaginable pain.

Every drop of his blood, and in every piece of flesh, there were some parts of his soul seeping out, mixing together into a transparent soul.

This soul appeared complete, but it was filled with discordant and disharmonious feelings. It was because it was half gold in color, the same all the way from the brows, eyes, to the torso, and its four limbs. It had an ancient simplistic beauty.

As the golden bird-shaped accessory was extracted, Azik's translucent soul began to disintegrate inch by inch, as though it was being skinned alive.

His throat let out an unhuman gasping sound once again, causing Klein's head to spin and ache. It felt as though a needle had stabbed into his brain and was stirred wildly.

In seconds, Azik's Spirit Body completely split into two. Half of it transformed into a golden stream that infused into the bird-shaped accessory, while the other half returned to his body, fusing with his flesh and blood.

The two pale-white flames in Azik's eyes were extinguished as the white feathers and pitch-black scales on his body receded. His warped expression also eased as he no longer looked as savage.

His expression turned slightly pale and translucent as his forehead throbbed. Clearly, he was suffering a pain that stemmed from deep within his Soul Body.

"Thank you for your help." He bowed towards the beautiful hooded lady. He turned around and floated up the staircase, coming to Klein's side.

"You can open your eyes now," Azik said with an exhausted smile.

Klein hurriedly opened his eyes and sized up Azik. Realizing that there weren't any signs of madness or loss of control, he was completely relieved. He curiously cast his gaze deep into the mausoleum.

The black fog was still emanating, completely blanketing everything underneath.

"Who was that?" he couldn't help but ask.

Azik laughed and reached out to grip his shoulder.

“Even if I were to tell you, you wouldn’t be able to hear it unless ‘She’ is willing to let you know.”

As he spoke, Klein subconsciously grabbed his two marionette’s shoulders.

The colors around them saturated and clearly stacked upon one another. The two men and two marionettes quickly passed through the spirit world corresponding to the Berserk Sea, returning to Klein’s inn in Kolain City.

Azik released his grip and pinched his forehead. With a gentle smile, he said, “I’ll need to sleep for an unknown length of time in order to recover. If you have any questions, you can seek out the spirit world’s Seven Lights. You should already be aware of the corresponding ritual.”

“Mr. Azik, are you alright?” Klein asked in concern.

At the same time, he rebuked himself.

How can he be fine having lost half his soul forever?

Azik laughed and said, “It’s not a big deal. I’ll just be maintaining my previous state, allowing me to foresee my death and arrange everything, severing ties with my original life. I’ll then forget everything and reawaken in search of my past.

“Like before, at least you’re there, someone who knows a lot about my past. If I were to forget once again, I should be able to recall a lot when I receive your letter.”

He paused and nodded indiscernibly as he chuckled.

“Sleep isn’t a bad thing either. At least I’ll have dreams. In my dreams, I never left, accompanying her while taking in the sun while guiding that stubborn son of mine to use the broadsword. I’ll also make a swing for that little kid that loves to wheedle…"

Having said that, Azik threw out the copper whistle and said with a gentle smile, "Remember to write to me.

"But before I awaken, I will not reply to you."

Just as Klein reached out to receive the ancient and intricate copper whistle, Azik vanished from the room; his whereabouts an unknown.

After blankly watching this scene for a while, Klein suddenly let out a sigh.

†

To go anywhere else from Kolain City by land, one needed to follow the spiraling path that led upwards. After passing through the different streets, one would arrive at the peak of the city. Then, one had to descend the mountain and enter a plain.

At this moment, the Red Gloves team that Soest led was standing on a square at the peak, looking down at the abnormal Berserk Sea.

Daly Simone, who had been pressing her forehead all this time, suddenly lowered her hand as she said, feeling somewhat puzzled, "Everything has been returned to normal. There's no more problems."

"Normal?" Leonard returned with a question in puzzlement.

From his point of view, it was very difficult for Daly to return to normal before the end of the Berserk Sea's abnormality.

"Perhaps it's intermittent?" Soest hesitatingly raised a theory.

Daly was just about to answer when everyone's spiritual perception was triggered. Once again, they looked towards the Berserk Sea.

In the swath of pure blackness, one bright star after another lit up.

†

Backlund. Beneath Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Archbishop Anthony Stevenson received an emergency telegram from the sea.

The telegram's content was rather simple, but it was sufficiently shocking.

"Gehrman Sparrow has appeared, boarding the Black Tulip with another person. He has made Ludwell into a marionette and left with the person Ludwell addressed as Death Consul."

Gehrman Sparrow… Death Consul… Saint Anthony silently repeated these two names.

He leaned back slightly and closed his eyes. Once again, the corresponding complete information of the Sealed Artifact, 0-17 appeared in his mind.

"Number: 17.

"Name: Angel of Concealment

"Danger Grade: 0. Extremely Dangerous. It's of the highest importance and of the highest confidentiality. It is not to be inquired, disseminated, described, or spied.

"Security Clearance: Pope, Team A researchers, and Archbishop of the Backlund diocese (Note: When the archbishop is transferred out of the Backlund diocese, the corresponding memories have to be wiped out using Sealed Artifact 1-29)

"Sealed Method: The seal is completed through the combination of 1-29 and 1-80.

"Description: This isn't an item.

†

“Warning: ‘She’ cannot be used!”

“Appendix 1: This Sealed Artifact first appeared in the Pale Era of the Fourth Epoch.

Exact year: Missing.

Exact date: Missing.

Exact location: Missing

“Appendix 2: Based on the information, ‘She’ has been awakened five times.

“Appendix 3: A limited premise is the reason behind its inability to be used. It has been confirmed that ‘She’ can be used as the Goddess’s descent vessel.”

Chapter 918 - Guesses and Ideas

◆

Kolain City. Inside the inn.

Klein sat on a reclining chair, reaching out to receive the black tea with lemon from Winner Enzo.

Beside him, Admiral Hell Ludwell stood straight, wearing a mask with a rapier by his waist. He appeared like the most loyal guard.

Only at this point in time did Klein, who had completely calmed down, have the mental capacity to analyze what had happened in Death's mausoleum. Amongst all of that, what he paid most attention to was the existence that had helped Mr. Azik get out of his predicament at the critical moment and provide him with three choices.

First, a female voice;

Second, this matter is definitely advantageous to her. Otherwise, no one would cross such a great distance to provide assistance. Of course, if she happened to pass by and had helped Mr. Azik out of goodwill, that's also completely understandable and acceptable. But the problem is that the mausoleum is a product formed from Death's godly powers when "He" perished, a product of the characteristic, corpses, and the natural environment. Without the corresponding key, even deities can't find it. With a door that cannot be opened, how is it possible for anyone to be passing by?

Also, Mr. Azik's actions had been very sudden. He didn't first seek out the members of the Numinous Episcopate that are carrying out the

Artificial Death Project for information. He directly followed the calling and arrived at the Berserk Sea and entered Death's treasure trove. If it's not someone who can locate me or him, or them being someone who has a strong prescient ability, there's almost no existence that can arrive in such a timely manner;

Finally, the Salinger that can revive via Mr. Azik's body is almost certainly the "I'm mad, but I'm stronger" Death from the Fourth Epoch. That female voice directly addressed "Him" by his name without showing any signs of respect.

This…

As Klein seriously analyzed the information, he suddenly had a theory, but he couldn't help but avoid the possibility.

Based on what he knew, the Evernight, Death, and Giant Beyonder pathways were a group of its own. They could be interchanged at High Sequences. And other than using the honorific name of Lady of Crimson or some special Grade 0 Sealed Artifact to occupy a portion of the Moon's authority, the Goddess also had the title Mistress of Repose and Silence. That totally pointed to the Underworld and Death's domain.

And back at the foggy town, and with his use of the holy sword to make a vow with the Goddess bearing witness, as well as the Goddess clearly possessing the authority of misfortune, it made Klein believed that he had entered "Her" special watchlist, just like how he singled out certain believers using the Sea God Scepter.

Making a bold assumption and seeking careful verification, then almost all the questions can be answered if she really was the Goddess.

As one of the seven orthodox deities, as one of the winners of the Pale Era, "She" has the level and right to address Death by "His" name…

And having been labeled by "Her," once anything abnormal happens, such as me entering a strange place like Death's treasure trove, "She" would definitely sense it and take the necessary action in response. Furthermore, as it definitely requires some time, "She" didn't manage to stop it at the beginning…

To "Her," that Artificial Death, or the Death pathway's Uniqueness that had initially come to life, clearly enhances "Her" authority in the aspects of repose and silence. It might even allow "Her" to directly intrude into Death's domain, just like what the Mother Tree of Desire did to the Chained God…

When Death perished, the three Sequence 1 characteristics should've automatically separated. It's unknown who received them. If the Goddess is searching for them, perhaps "Ruler of the Ancient Underworld, Lady of all the Undead" will be added to "Her" title…

Although Mr. Azik has been pursued by the Church's High-Sequence Beyonders, he has ultimately never suffered any real threats. From the looks of it, the Goddess has been waiting all this time for today's development… Upon coming to this realization, Klein suddenly felt a little frightened.

He was rather pious. At the very least, he superficially raised his right hand in a pious manner. Tapping four spots in a clockwise manner on his chest, he formed the sign of the crimson moon and muttered, "Praise the Lady."

This made him recall the answer he received when he asked Snake of Fate Will Auceptin about obtaining the High-Sequence Beyonder potion formulas of the Seer pathway.

"…can only be obtained from the crazy Zaratul or the Hornacis mountain range. If you are the Blessed of the Evernight, treat it as though I didn't say it."

After the incident at the foggy town, Klein had already discovered that heading to the Hornacis mountain range and finding Zaratul was the same choice. Even stealing the Antigonus family's notebook from Saint Samuel Cathedral's basement was the same. And up to this date, he realized that the second line was not without meaning.

He stroked his chin and muttered, "Perhaps, maybe, possibly… I'm really considered a Blessed of the Evernight…"

Towards this, Klein wasn't too unreceptive to it.

On the one hand, he had spent the first few months after coming to this world with the Church of Evernight's Tingen Nighthawks team. He had a group of great teammates and colleagues. He had a rather heartwarming life and acceptable ideals. To this day, he still recalled the past; therefore, although he wasn't a worshiper of the Evernight Goddess, he was very accepting of this deity.

On the other hand, at least on what he had seen to date, the Evernight Goddess had yet to show any ill intent. Instead, "She" had given him some "blessings." Klein believed that since he had been specially marked, it was unlikely that he could be free from it anytime soon. All he could do was learn to accept it and make good use of it.

Of course, I can't let down my guard… In addition, I already have too many enemies in the form of the Mother Tree of Desire, True Creator, Primordial Demoness, Primordial Moon, Blasphemer Amon, Angel of Fate Ouroboros, and others. Some of "Them" might even be able to get a hold of my location at any time. Without finding someone powerful to cozy up to, my future will really be difficult! With so many things on his plate, Klein quickly adjusted his state of mind.

To him, as long as the Goddess had labeled him from the moment he made the vow using the holy sword, and not earlier, as well as not constantly "monitoring" him, he found it acceptable.

At least from the special labels afforded to me by the Sea God Scepter, constant "monitoring" isn't possible… Hmm, Mr. Azik will be sleeping for a very long period of time. The Goddess can't just do a divine descent as “She” pleases. There must be some corresponding obstacles and difficulties. Otherwise, the seven orthodox deities would have made divine descents all across the world to resolve all kinds of problems. That’s why I should keep a low profile and behave myself in the Southern Continent. I shouldn’t try to pin my hopes on an external factor… Klein reminded himself before scrutinizing his new marionette, Admiral Hell Ludwell.

To be frank, he was rather curious about the face hidden beneath the silver mask. But upon recalling how there was an anomaly when Ludwell took off his mask in their previous battle, he held back his thoughts. He planned to make the attempt again after he left the city and did it in the woods or somewhere uninhabited.

After some work, Klein gained a rough understanding of his new marionette’s Sequence and powers.

Ludwell was Sequence 5 Gatekeeper of the Death pathway, and he wasn’t a normal human.

The corresponding Sequence 9 was Corpse Collector. Back in Tingen, Klein had already learned of its specifics. He knew that they possessed certain traits of a corpse. Their entire being appeared rather cold and grim, and their body temperatures were relatively low. This allowed them to avoid being attacked by dead unintelligent spirits. At the same time, they also had their physical bodies enhanced. They gained resistance to the cold, decay, and corrosiveness of cadaveric auras. They were naturally equipped with Spirit Vision, and they understood the characteristics and weaknesses of undead creatures.

Sequence 8 was Gravedigger. Corpse Collectors who advanced to this Sequence become stronger. Their Spirit Vision was further enhanced as their agility increased. They were able to communicate with nearby spirits, allowing them to provide the Beyonder with help. Other than that, Gravediggers could quickly find the weaknesses of unfamiliar undead creatures and spirit world creatures via observation. This was known as the Eye of Death.

Sequence 7 Spirit Medium was a qualitative change. Beyonders of this Sequence gained knowledge of various kinds of mysticism rituals related to spirits. They could directly communicate with the natural spirits and loitering dead souls in the real world. Hence, they had informants everywhere.

At the same time, they could use different spirits to actualize different kinds of magic, creating various kinds of supernatural phenomena in a rather multifaceted way.

Sequence 6 Spirit Guide and Sequence 5 Gatekeeper didn't experience a qualitative change from Spirit Medium other than an increase in the range for communication. Spirit Guides began involving themselves with the spirit world as they began "hiring" messengers and receiving the help of certain spirit world creatures. Gatekeeper could sense the entrance to the Underworld, allowing them to control the dead spirits inside, doing so as though they watched over the gates that separated the dead from the living.

From Spirit Medium onwards, with the advancement of each Sequence, the quantity and quality of natural spirits, undead creatures, spirit world creatures that the Beyonders could control and order increased exponentially. Spirit Guide gained the use of the additional "Language of the Dead" that circumvented the protection provided by one's physical body. Focused on the ability to communicate with a Spirit Body, the ability was enhanced to giving an order, to the point of slavery. Gatekeepers could even open the mysterious gate that separated life and death to a certain extent, opening the gates to the Underworld!

If it wasn't for the natural restraints that Azik's copper whistle had on the Corpse Collector pathway's control over spirits, I probably wouldn't have even had what it takes to fight Admiral Hell back then. And even now, if not for Traveling to ensure my safety, I might not be able to finish Ludwell off, even if I used demigod-level powers. In the future, I have to take note when taking revenge on Ince Zangwill. He was once a Gatekeeper after all. Klein nodded slightly, raised the cup, and drank a mouthful of black tea.

As for the weapon Ludwell had, it was named Harris Rapier. It originated from a prince from the Southern Continent in ancient times. It didn't directly correspond to any Sequence or pathway. It was more of a product that was similar to King of the North Ulyssan who gathered similar characteristics without any proper rules.

It only had one Beyonder power—bringing absolute destruction to the items it stabbed.

As a pirate admiral with the highest bounty, Ludwell didn't only have this mystical item. Unfortunately, his most precious Death ring had been taken by Azik. As for the silver mask on him, Klein temporarily had no way of taking it off for research.

Also, he really doesn't like money. He has zero need for money… Klein lowered his cup and retracted his gaze. Considering how it was still early, he planned on leaving Kolain City and heading elsewhere to wait for Danitz to finish his investigations.

Chapter 919 - “Perfect” Inference

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Fors, who was having an afternoon nap, jolted awake from her dreams. She saw an endless grayish-white fog and Mr. Moon who had his head bowed in prayer, clearly hearing his voice:

“…In the southeast outskirts of Backlund, in the middle of Delaire Forest, there is an abandoned ancient castle. In it are at least two ancient wraiths, and other dead spirits. The possibility of other Beyonders living there cannot be eliminated. The coordinates are…”

I finally have information on the main ingredient of Scribe. Information worth 300 pounds… Fors was instantly delighted as she immediately thanked Mr. Fool and sought “Him” to pass her message to The Moon that she would make payment shortly.

After completing this, she got out of bed and went to the first floor. She planned on pouring herself some wine to drink and consider when she would explore the abandoned castle, as well as the necessary preparations.

For the meantime, Leymano’s Travels cannot be rented out… Xio needs to come along… That abandoned castle has several dead spirits and is rather dangerous. I have to consider the combination of spells. If there’s anything lacking or not specialized, I’ll hire Mr. World, Mr. Hanged Man, and The Sun to record the corresponding Beyonder powers… Although Fors lacked actual combat experience, she had been mixing with Beyonder circles for years. Later, she had joined the Tarot Club, and having heard and seen much, she naturally knew the need for preparations before any adventures.

As for directly hiring Mr. World to do it, she had long struck it off her list of options. She believed that giving all the spoils and her savings to him wasn't enough to hire him.

Of course, if her attempts at exploration proved that the abandoned castle was extremely dangerous, something that a Beyonder at her Sequence couldn't enter, she would have no choice but to shoulder an enormous debt. After all, there was only hope and a future from being alive.

In theory, I shouldn't reach that stage. There are still two demigod-level Beyonder powers left on Leymano's Travels from Mr. World. At most, I'll use it first and think of means to make up for it in the future… The only problem is that the two demigod-level Beyonder powers might not be suitable against wraiths and dead spirits… Fors sipped some Black Rand as her various thoughts took form.

At this point, she heard a key latching into the keyhole as she instinctively looked towards the door.

The door suddenly opened as Xio walked in, carrying two paper bags that emitted a rich fragrance.

"Desi pies?" Fors asked immediately before frowning in puzzlement. "Haven't you had lots of commissions recently? Why are you back so early?"

Xio threw a bag of Desi pies over and said without hiding her smile, "I happened to walk past it. I also hadn't had lunch, so I planned on taking a break."

Without waiting for Fors to ask further, she said, "I've accumulated enough points! I can soon exchange them for the Interrogator potion formula!"

Although her monitoring of royal guard captain, Viscount Stratford, hadn't had any significant progress, it was the kind that accumulated points on a daily basis. All she needed to do was submit a passable report every week to receive the corresponding "bounty." Therefore, together with the other commissions and their varying levels of success, Xio had already earned enough to obtain the Interrogator potion formula.

"Finally…" Fors sincerely felt happy for her friend. Then, she shook the wine cup in her hand. "Shall we celebrate with a drink?"

At the same time, she also thought of something pertaining to herself.

This is great. After becoming a Sequence 7, Xio should've experienced a qualitative change. It will make exploring that ancient castle a sure thing!

Xio looked at the transparent liquid in the cup before shaking her head incessantly.

"Drinking is bad!"

With that said, she frowned.

"Besides, I abhor the smell."

Before Fors could speak, she suddenly recalled something. She stood up and walked to the door.

"I saw the mailbox filled with things. Haven't you opened it today?"

"I didn't have the time." Fors wore a look as though she was busy rushing out her drafts.

Xio was a person of action. Ignoring her explanation, she had already headed out to clear the mailbox.

About ten seconds later, she walked back in with a stack of newspapers and a few envelopes. As she looked at the addressee, she said, "It's all yours! Two letters from the publisher. One's an invitation letter from a surgery forum. One letter is from Pritz Harbor."

Pritz Harbor… Fors's mind stirred as she put down her cup, and caught the letter Xio threw at her.

She seemed to openly tear open all the letters in front of her friend, discovering that one of the letters was indeed from her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham.

"…Calderón City is in a rather special spot deep in the spirit world. I'm not sure of its origins other than it's very dangerous. A demigod had once stepped in without ever coming out… When selling the actual spirit world coordinates to that gathering's member, there's a need for you to warn him…"

Mr. World's target is such a dangerous spirit world city? Fors stared at the letter in her hand as her eyes widened.

†

The Red Gloves team which had arrived at the next East Balam city had rendezvoused with the local Nighthawks, taking up an office of theirs.

"Everyone shall have half the day off. We will start tomorrow morning." Soest took out his pocket watch and opened it.

They were about to strike a secret gathering location of the Numinous Episcopate to find more information of the Artificial Death Project and dig out another batch of enemies that hid in Backlund.

As for the information obtained from Ulika, they had already sent it back to Backlund via telegram. They didn't need to worry about the subsequent work. After all, they weren't the only Red Gloves team. Backlund's local Nighthawks were aplenty and powerful.

Leonard and Daly were just about to seek out their lodgings to rest when a Nighthawk with some East Balam blood walked in with a piece of paper.

“A new telegram from Backlund.”

Soest reached out to take it, and after opening it for a few seconds, he said with a grave expression, “Gehrman Sparrow has appeared again. Using divination methods, it has been confirmed that it’s him.”

Gehrman Sparrow… Leonard wasn’t surprised by this outcome. He already knew from Dwayne Dantès that his former colleague, Klein Moretti, was still alive.

He curiously asked, “What did Gehrman Sparrow do again?”

Soest surveyed the area and sternly said, “He boarded the Black Tulip and turned Admiral Hell Ludwell into his marionette.”

“Admiral Hell?”

“Ludwell?”

“Marionette?”

The Red Gloves could hardly hide their astonishment as they exclaimed one after another. Even Leonard Mitchell was extremely surprised.

One had to know that Admiral Hell Ludwell, who wore the ring left by Death, had the highest bounty among the Seven Pirate Admirals. He was publicly recognized to be the strongest beneath the Four Kings. He was definitely not someone an ordinary Sequence 5 could compare to. As for Gehrman Sparrow, he had actually boarded his ship, turning Admiral Hell into his marionette despite being surrounded by his, the latter’s, undead army and subordinates!

Although they didn’t know much about a Faceless and a Marionettist, just the term marionette was enough to let them know that Admiral Hell Ludwell’s outcome was worse than death.

He’s already this strong? He infiltrated Saint Samuel Cathedral’s Chanis Gate to meet the requirements for a demigod ritual? Leonard gradually fell silent as he didn’t ask more.

At this moment, Soest offered more information:

“According to the crew that escaped from the Black Tulip, there wasn’t a fight back then. Gehrman Sparrow and another man boarded the ship. The moment Admiral Hell Ludwell saw them, he gave up any resistance and prostrated himself onto the deck, calling the man ‘Death Consul.’ Later, he allowed Gehrman Sparrow to turn him into his marionette.”

“Death Consul…” Leonard subconsciously turned to look at Daly Simone.

He believed that this Sequence 5 Beyonder of the Corpse Collector pathway likely knew what Death Consul meant.

Daly scoffed and shook her head.

“I only know that the former Balam Empire, a blood descendant of Death that ruled the real world was known as Death Consul.”

“However, the Numinous Episcopate’s royal faction’s leader has never called himself Death Consul,” another Red Glove, Cindy, mentioned in puzzlement.

This was rather open knowledge amongst the Nighthawks. Those that reached Sequence 7 and above, or those who joined the Red Gloves, had the right to be privy to this information.

As for the Artificial Death faction, it was even more unlikely for any of them to call themselves Death Consul.

“Who knows? Perhaps the Numinous Episcopate has fractured again. Now, there’s an additional Death Consul faction.” Daly first made a casual comment before she thought and said, “Gehrman Sparrow has a mysterious origin. His motives for infiltrating Chanis Gate is unknown.

Perhaps, it's really related to the Numinous Episcopate."

The Numinous Episcopate had always been a main target that the Church of Evernight had been trying to take down. The conflict between the two ran deep.

Her statement reminded Leonard Mitchell of something because he knew that Gehrman Sparrow was Klein Moretti. Furthermore, he had joined a secret organization that worshiped The Fool and represented itself with tarot cards and had a working relationship with the Numinous Episcopate.

In the few factions of the Numinous Episcopate, there's no Death Consul… Admiral Hell Ludwell can almost be confirmed to be an "arm" of the Numinous Episcopate. Dealing with him is equivalent to dealing with the Numinous Episcopate…

Dwayne Dantès once said that the members of that secret organization come from different places with different goals… Klein's goal is revenge. Could the goal of one of the members be to strike the Numinous Episcopate, to gradually absorb them to revive or recreate Death in their own image?

Since there's an undying monster like Dwayne Dantès who lived since the Fourth Epoch, it's normal for that secret organization to have an additional ancient Death Consul. Perhaps, his corresponding tarot card is Death! As his mind raced, Leonard began believing that he had obtained the truth.

Then, he made a connection with certain details.

Dwayne Dantès is an undying creature who had lived since the Fourth Epoch.

He knows the Southern Continent very well.

He recently left Backlund and has gone missing!

Leonard was alarmed. Taking the opportunity while his teammates were in discussion, he lifted his teacup and covered his mouth, softly muttering to himself, “Old Man, could Dwayne Dantès be the Death Consul?”

Pallez Zoroast’s slightly-aged voice said with a smiling tone, “No.

“Balam Empire’s Death Consul is both a rank and a title. It’s also the name of the Death pathway’s Sequence 2.”

Sequence 2… That secret organization even has a Sequence 2 angel… Leonard’s pupils constricted as he muttered once again, “How are you so certain that Dwayne Dantès isn’t the Death Consul? Because he’s not an angel?”

Pallez immediately chuckled.

“No. The reason is very simple. You’ve seen the real Death Consul’s portrait before. Back when you Nighthawks were investigating Welch’s suicide. You might have even met him personally.

“He’s a teacher at Khoy University’s Department of History, Azik Eggers.”

Azik Eggers… Leonard was taken aback before he came to a realization.

He finally understood how Klein Moretti was able to resurrect from the dead, why he was fine suffering curses, or why he could join the secret organization symbolized by tarot cards, doing all of that while usually not showing anything special about himself!

The reason was that behind Klein was a member of the secret organization with the corresponding tarot card: Death!

Chapter 920 - Calderón’s Origins

◆

Bayam, the slums.

Hooded with a mask underneath it, The Hanged Man Alger once again met with Admiral of Stars Cattleya.

At a table, the two of them sat across each other, facing each other without saying a word.

Finally, Cattleya said, “Have you heard the news?”

Alger didn’t directly answer as he returned with a question:

“The one about Gehrman Sparrow?”

Cattleya fell silent for a few seconds and nodded.

“He has turned Admiral Hell into his marionette.”

Be it Admiral of Blood from before or the present Admiral Hell, they were both pirates who had a higher bounty than her. No matter how confident she was of herself, she didn’t believe that the two Sequence 5 elites were weaker than her!

“You learned of it earlier than I expected.” Alger confirmed the authenticity of the news in a tactful manner.

Being a member of the Church of Storms which controlled a large region of the sea, he could directly obtain the latest news from the official channels.

Cattleya curled her lips and said, “If the Future were at sea, I might have to take days or even weeks to receive it. But I’ve been in Bayam recently.”

She didn’t divulge her intel source.

After a pause, Admiral of Stars asked frankly, “What else do you know about this matter?”

Alger shook his head.

“I was trying to figure out the exact situation when I saw your signal, so I rushed here to meet you.”

Cattleya nodded slightly.

“Gehrman Sparrow and Admiral Hell didn’t engage in a battle. Ludwell didn’t resist, because Gehrman Sparrow had boarded the Black Tulip with a man who was addressed as Death Consul.”

Death Consul… Alger’s pupils dilated as he felt an indescribable pressure.

Such a term wasn’t something any random demigod could undertake!

Furthermore, that wasn’t something the man flaunted himself, but an honorific term that Admiral Hell Ludwell had used. Furthermore, he gave up resistance and was willing to lose his life!

With The Hanged Man not saying a word, Cattleya added, “In the Death pathway, Death Consul is the name of the Sequence 2. Of course, every emperor of the Balam Empire was also given this title.”

Indeed, an angel, an angel from the Death domain… Alger automatically ignored the latter possibility. After all, based on the “acting method,” the position of emperor was definitely held by a Sequence 2 angel before the Balam Empire fell. And for someone who could make Admiral Hell become Gehrman Sparrow’s marionette without putting up any resistance, they were definitely not something a mere title could accomplish.

At this moment, Alger suddenly thought of something, something that left a deep impression on him.

After Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos successfully fled, he was found standing by the side of an artificial lake. His face had rapidly rotted with pieces of flesh falling off. Even his eyeballs had rolled out of their sockets.

It was undoubtedly the damage dealt by a potent force from the Death domain. And Alger later confirmed that it was done by Mr. Fool's Blessed.

To rapidly cause the death of a pirate admiral without him putting up any resistance, especially one who carried such a powerful Sealed Artifact, the assailant's level was obvious!

The Church of Storms's Spellsinger of God Archbishop Snake had determined at the scene that it was done by a High-Sequence Beyonder from the Death pathway and that it was not the person he knew.

Alger had no doubts about that. He believed that it was done by a Sequence 4 or Sequence 3 demigod, in other words, a saint. He also felt horrified that Mr. Fool's Blessed was a High-Sequence Beyonder.

Now, he secretly gulped his saliva with great difficulty, believing that he had underestimated Mr. Fool back then as well as that Blessed.

That person wasn't a saint but a Grounded Angel, one that shared the same level as the three crowns of the various orthodox Churches!

When it came to religion, the three crowns represented the various Churches' pope, pontiff, or chief shepherd.

A Death Consul as a Blessed… Although Mr. Fool is still recovering, the amount of strength at his disposal is quite sizable… Alger's thoughts churned as his eyes shimmered. He was momentarily at a loss for words.

Cattleya sensed his gloom as she asked, “You seem to have recalled something.”

Alger deliberated for two seconds before vaguely replying, “Based on what I know, Mr. Fool has a Death angel amongst his Blessed.”

That matches… Cattleya said as though she was muttering to herself, “Then why did The World promise me Mythical Creature blood that’s not from that Death angel? Is it due to having closer ties with the other one, making it easier to obtain?”

“Perhaps.” Although Alger felt that Admiral of Stars’s inference wasn’t wrong, he habitually gave a noncommittal answer.

Cattleya didn’t continue on the topic as she said, “We will start the operation tonight from half-past seven to eight.

“If you can participate in it, head over there with me.”

She has finally figured out the situation with the Artisan? Alger secretly heaved a sigh of relief and asked in puzzlement, “Why that time?”

This wasn’t the most suitable period for any covert operation. Once any mistake was made, the official Beyonders would quickly detect it and rush over.

Cattleya nudged the heavy glasses on her nose and said with a complicated smile, “It’s because it’s dinnertime for them.

“And they will be having mushrooms for dinner.”

What’s the connection… The experienced Alger realized that he couldn’t read the subcontext of Admiral of Stars’s words.

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East Balam, in the lush and humid forest.

Klein deliberately avoided the main path and came to an uninhabited area. He planned on getting Ludwell to take off his silver mask.

This wasn't only to satisfy his curiosity but for a genuine reason. The silver mask was too striking. If he didn't deal with it, there was no amount of disguising that could direct the attention of others away from it.

The biggest problem for a Marionettist is the marionette's identity… The more powerful the marionette, the more famous they were while alive. Bringing one along with me has the risk of being exposed… If it wasn't because I didn't have the time to finish off the pirates on the Black Tulip, I would have had the means to keep it under wraps. For example, I could continue letting Ludwell be the captain while I pretend to be his subordinate. To a Faceless, that's very simple… Klein sighed as he passed through the forest.

There were many mosquitoes around him, but none of them came for him. All of them were circling Admiral Hell Ludwell, trying to suck his blood in vain.

Klein had given his new marionette the Green Essence ring which attracted mosquitoes. This was because its effects were completely overshadowed by Flower of Blood. Wearing the two rings was rather meaningless for Winner Enzo. In addition, Klein had confirmed that Ludwell's situation was special. He wasn't too afraid of being bitten by mosquitoes.

After walking a distance, Klein casually tossed a coin and stopped.

After a few minutes of contemplation, he decided to finish something else before removing the new marionette's mask. This was because, through this process, he could confirm the severity of the latent danger beneath the mask.

Taking out the corresponding items, Klein quickly set up a ritual and moved the radio transceiver from above the gray fog to the real world.

He wanted to contact Arrodes!

Before he left Kolain City, he had paid Miss Magician 350 pounds for the spirit world coordinates to Calderón City. He had also been warned about the extreme dangers associated with it. Therefore, he planned on obtaining more information from two channels in order to prepare for his hunting mission.

The two channels involved asking the magic mirror and Red Light. With Mr. Azik being in prolonged slumber, Klein decided not to hesitate further. He planned on expanding his social circle, and not just stubbornly and inflexibly stick to the Evernight Goddess. He needed to find powers to balance things out. And the relatively friendly Seven Lights of the spirit world were the best choice!

With the appearance of the radio transceiver, the surrounding woods suddenly turned gloomy. It was as though the spirit world had overlapped with the real world.

In about ten seconds, tapping sounds sounded. Illusory white paper began being spat out:

“Exalted Great Master, your puny, loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning.

“There’s temporarily no danger here. What say you?”

Seeing this coquettish manner of speech, Klein sighed silently and finally confirmed that he had connected to the magic mirror, Arrodes.

He had previously been afraid that the white piece of paper would have the words: “I want to have a child with you.”

Of course, he had divined the level of danger of contacting Arrodes above the gray fog, and he obtained an answer that it was fine.

However, with the Mother Tree of Desire having a precedent of interfering with divination, as well as his misinterpretation of infiltrating Saint Samuel Cathedral's Chanis Gate, he wasn't too certain.

"Indeed." Klein nodded in a reserved manner before asking. "What do you know of Calderón City in the spirit world?"

Amidst clicking sounds, a piece of illusory white paper exited the radio transceiver in a hesitant manner:

"I can't see that city too clearly. I do not know its exact state, but I can confirm that a saint had perished in there before. There were also certain angels, Travelers, and spirit world creatures who had once entered to explore it and left it alive in a relatively smooth manner. However, none of them got much out of it.

"Also, I know the origins of that city."

Without waiting for Klein to press, more illusory white paper spat out amidst clicking sounds:

"Its former name was the City of the Dead. It was a grounded divine kingdom of the ancient goddess, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace.

"Ever since that ancient goddess opened up the Underworld, 'Her' divine kingdom was moved there. The City of the Dead gradually became the holy grounds of 'Her' descendants and believers.

"Before Gregrace was heavily injured by the ancient sun god and had the city uprooted and thrown deep into the spirit world, none of its citizens ever came out again. The name 'Calderón' originates from the Abraham family's angel, the first person who stepped in. In the Language of the Dead, it means 'Unknown Soul.'"

Chapter 921 - Politeness First

◆ ◆ ◆

When it came to the understanding of ancient gods, Klein knew as much as many High-Sequence Beyonders. After all, he had the City of Silver who had continued on from the Second Epoch to this day behind him. The corresponding myths that were passed down the ages had left plenty of influence.

Based on what he knew, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace was a so-called ancient goddess. Because of the City of Silver's Creator, the ancient sun god who eventually ended up being consumed by the Kings of Angels dealt heavy damage to "Her." Eventually, "She" perished towards the end of the Second Epoch.

However, "Her" influence had yet to dissipate to this day. Signs of "Her" existence remained because "She" was the founder of the Underworld!

City of the Dead… Unknown Soul… Ancient goddess… It sounds very dangerous… Klein looked at the radio transceiver in front of him and fell silent.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Another piece of illusory white paper spat out:

"Apart from that, I'm unsure of the rest.

"Great Master, I have a suggestion. Would you like to hear it?"

That's a nice question… Klein reined in his thoughts and nodded gently.

"Speak."

The clacking of the radio transceiver became increasingly brisker as a new line of text quickly appeared on the illusory white paper:

"Regarding Calderón City, you can ask Red Light Aiur Moria."

I still have to ask Red Light in the end… Klein nodded slightly and switched to asking, "Is there any danger if I were to remove Admiral Hell Ludwell's mask?"

"No!" A decisive answer appeared before Klein's eyes.

That's good… he thought and said, "Let's end it here for today."

"Great Master, wise Master, in another one or two minutes, a gaze will be cast here! Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, will await your next summoning. Goodbye~" The radio transceiver began tapping without any hesitation.

Another one or two minutes? Why didn't you say so earlier? Klein was alarmed as though he was seeing a countdown timer on a bomb. He hurriedly used the altar and material he had yet cleared to set up a sacrificial ritual. He then threw the radio transceiver above the gray fog.

After doing all of this and confirming that there weren't any anomalies around him, Klein made Ludwell walk to the side and not face him directly as he took off the silver mask.

Gloomy pale-white light spewed out, but it wasn't as exaggerated in his battle between Klein and Ludwell. It only enveloped a small region like an extinguishing candle.

Meanwhile, as the radio transceiver had been sent above the gray fog, the gloomy, cold feeling that had disappeared in the nearby forest appeared again. Furthermore, it had an indescribable sense of horror that struck at the heart.

This reminded Klein of a cemetery and the legendary Underworld.

After waiting a few seconds, seeing that there weren't any additional abnormal developments, he made his other marionette, Winner Enzo, to circle to Ludwell's front and carefully observe the face that had been masked for extended periods of time.

The face lacked flesh; its skin clung tightly to his bones without any colors. It was as translucent as crystal.

Beneath the "crystal," transparent and indescribable shadows quickly flowed out, at times fusing with the skull, and at other times they shrank in gaps, surfacing on his teeth.

Compared to the first one or two months of his transmigration, Klein would've been shocked by Admiral Hell's appearance, but now, having already seen all kinds of odd Rampagers and mutated bodies, he wasn't shocked by such looks.

After another round of research, Klein completely figured out Ludwell's condition.

All of this stemmed from the unique traits of him being a Gatekeeper.

At Sequence 5, after becoming Gatekeeper, Beyonders could use their bodies as cages that belonged exclusively to the Underworld, allowing them to contain a certain number of souls, deceased, and natural spirits. As such, they obtained all kinds of unique powers with powerful helpers. There was no need to bring a huge undead army around in an eye-catching manner.

This was the origin of many folk tales.

Another purpose of a Gatekeeper was an ancient role: to guard the Underworld in their bodies, preventing the souls contained within from escaping, and to use them. This similarly had the symbolism of a pair of double illusory doors.

And after ancient Death, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace, created the Underworld, it was bestowing a small amount of the Death pathway's authority to all Gatekeepers. This made Beyonders of this Sequence receive an enhancement in strength.

The reason why Ludwell kept wearing the mask was because he had contained a powerful Underworld creature in him. On the one hand, this creature could be used by him, and on the other hand, it was eroding his body, turning him into a half-human, half-dead existence. At the same time, ultimately, this creature was innately connected to the Underworld. It was attempting to open the door and return.

This was a combination of a Gatekeeper's own powers and authority, and with the augmentation from Death's ring, it allowed Admiral Hell Ludwell to enlarge the Door to the Underworld, allowing him to steer the Black Tulip directly inside.

Half-human and half-dead form… No wonder Ludwell dares to enter the Underworld. A real living person probably can't survive a second inside… Yes, that Underworld creature gives his body some traits of a dead soul, allowing him to extract the Spirit Bodies of others remotely. I had suffered from that back then… Klein thought in enlightenment as he made Ludwell wear the silver mask again.

The mask's purpose was to placate the soul. It allowed the Underworld creature in Ludwell's body to be in a relatively calm state most of the time.

After resolving his puzzlement, Klein cast his gaze back onto the altar.

He wanted to attempt to contact one of the spirit world's Seven Lights.

In this aspect, there were special secret deed rituals and the corresponding spirit channeling ritual he could choose from. After some consideration, Klein chose the latter. This was because a secret deed ritual required him to open up his mind and spirit, allowing the targeted existence to make contact and thus obtain certain knowledge, strength, help, and a spiritual experience. This also meant that his body's thoughts and secrets were open to that existence.

And through the spirit channeling ritual, there were two types—direct communication and praying for a soulfall. As the spirit world's Seven Lights were extremely lofty existences, Klein couldn't guarantee a response based on the ritual's request. Therefore, although he wished to communicate remotely via spirit channeling, he had to make preparations for a soulfall to show his sincerity.

Lighting three candles and dripping liquids like mint essential oil, Klein specially took out a paper figurine and placed it on the altar for the vessel for the soulfall. If there wasn't anything similar, the supplicating target would soulfall onto him, just like how Danitz had requested Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina's soulfall back then. There were also two scenarios. First, the possessed body would lose all their senses, and they would have the corresponding existence control a certain part of their body so as to facilitate providing a question and answer. The simplest example was one using the mouth to speak while the other controlled a hand to write.

Klein quickly completed the first part of the ritual before he took a step back, opened his mouth, and chanted in ancient Hermes, "I!

"I summon in my name:

"I pray to communicate with the inextinguishable light of the spirit world, the embodiment of infinite knowledge, the Red who wields authority and will…"

The biggest difference between this spirit channeling ritual and ordinary ones was that it couldn't be directed to deities, be it the Evernight Goddess or the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, "Their" honorific names couldn't appear in the ritual or else it was bound to fail.

From a mysticism angle, this meant that the spirit world's Seven Lights didn't serve any deity.

As the words that facilitated the communication with natural spirits were said, Klein saw the three flames burgeon as light splattering sounds connected together as though a door of light was opening.

The area around the altar suddenly turned silent and dark as pairs of unknown eyes looked over from different areas.

A cold, gloomy air blew past. Apart from the three candles, all the items on the altar floated in midair. Among them, the paper figurine staggered straight as its surface was tainted with a thick, clean red that didn't look bloody at all.

"Greetings." As Klein recalled the description of the spirit world's Seven Lights from some mysticism books, he spoke by following the correct way of interacting that he had concluded.

He acted like he was facing a teacher.

The bright red paper figurine's head moved slightly as it let out an illusory but stern voice:

"Hello there."

Quite polite… Indeed, spirit channeling became a soulfall. Thankfully, I made preparations… Various thoughts flashed in Klein's mind as he earnestly and politely asked, "Your Excellency Aiur Moria, I have a question I would like to ask you."

"You can just call me Aiur Moria. Please go ahead and ask." The paper figurine floating in midair seemed to be competing with Klein about who was more polite.

"I wish to get information on Calderón City." Klein didn't change his attitude. After all, in the Foodaholic Empire, there was a proverb: Nobody will find fault with extra courtesy.

The bright red, nearly transparent paper figurine pondered for two seconds and said, "Can I know your purpose?"

Klein didn't conceal his purpose. He frankly said, "To hunt a Spirit World Plunderer."

The paper figurine's head moved slightly.

"That's indeed something that can only be found in Calderón City with ease. Elsewhere, Spirit World Plunderers are like a drop of water in the ocean. They are very hard to distinguish, and even I will occasionally discover them. I'm unable to lock onto them for long periods of time.

"A number of them are active in the core region of Calderón City. A few are scattered in the periphery. As long as you don't attempt to go too deep inside, it's actually not too dangerous. Unfortunately, due to special reasons, us Seven Lights are prohibited from entering; otherwise, we could still provide you with some actual help."

"That's formerly the divine kingdom of the ancient goddess, Gregrace?" Klein's heart settled down as he asked as a form of confirming the answers.

The bright red paper figurine said, "Yes, the ancient Death wished to revive 'Herself' using this City of the Dead, but 'She' failed completely. The authority was taken by Balam's Death.

"However, this also makes Calderón City more dangerous because the setup left by the ancient goddess underwent an anomaly after the failure. As for what it has turned into, I'm not too sure."

Is that so… Klein nodded indiscernibly. He raised a few questions about other matters and received a rather satisfactory answer.

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Bayam. Outside a house near the harbor.

Alger and Cattleya were patiently waiting for the people inside to finish their dinner.

Chapter 922 - Mushrooms and Fish

◆

Looking at the lights that emitted out of the oriel window, the hooded and masked Alger was just about to ask about the details of the operation when he suddenly saw a shadow grow out of the rich darkness. It materialized as a lanky, pale, sickly young man.

Bloodless Heath Doyle… Alger quickly recognized the man to be the second mate of the Future.

Heath didn't look at him as he directly said to Cattleya, "Captain, they didn't notice anything and turned those mushrooms into cream of mushroom soup. They plan to use the prepared pan-fried fish as tonight's main course."

"Excellent." Cattleya removed the heavy glasses on her nose and used her eyes which had a mysterious purple hue to look through the neighboring house's dining hall across the walls.

Heath Doyle didn't speak further as his body instantly darkened and returned to the shadows. It was unknown where he had slunk to.

After hearing their conversation, and combining it with what Ma'am Hermit had previously mentioned, Alger had a rough idea of the core element to tonight's operation:

Mushrooms!

Poisonous mushrooms!

Although he didn't know what method Admiral of Stars was using to cause the spiritual intuition of the Beyonders inside to be ineffective and not be able to distinguish normal mushrooms from poisonous mushrooms, Alger believed that there was nothing impossible in mysticism.

He hesitantly said, “Will this cause Artisan Cielf’s death?”

Unaffiliated Artisans were rather rare, so Alger didn’t wish to lose such a “friend” if there was still room for turning things around. To him, the best case was to imprison the fellow and make him the exclusive Artisan for both him and The Hermit.

“No.” Cattleya calmly shook her head as she explained, “Be it from the information you gave and the observations of my crew, there’s one point to take note of: Cielf doesn’t like fish, and he even hates it. This might have to do with him getting a fish bone stuck in his throat when he was young.”

And it was because of this matter that Cattleya ultimately chose the mushroom strategy. This could effectively reduce the enemy’s effective strength while allowing their side to minimize any risks.

The dark environment-bred mushrooms that devoured flesh and blood and were the first to be eliminated by Admiral of Stars because they could let Beyonders with sharp spiritual perception sense something amiss. This was akin to facing something poisonous. In addition, Beyonders who believed in the Primordial Moon had a rather deep understanding of herbs, plants, and fruits. Relying on visual observation, they were likely able to identify mushrooms that posed danger.

To trick them, the only way was for the food to be harmless itself. Only through its contact with something else did a mutation occur.

Based on this, the mushrooms previously created by Frank were perfect!

If the two conditions of fish and water weren't met, the mushrooms were ordinary mushrooms. They could neither poison a person to death or cause diarrhea. It would be digested bit by bit and be broken down into its different components before being expelled by the body. At this point, any more fish and water was useless.

For this, Cattleya specially got Frank to temporarily abandon his experiment and had obtained a batch of mushrooms. She also promised to hunt an Aurora Order Rose Bishop for him.

"Hates fish…" Alger whispered, feeling like he couldn't keep up with The Hermit's thought process.

He had clearly asked if the poisonous mushrooms could cause Artisan Cielf's death, but the answer he received was that the Artisan wouldn't die because he didn't like fish and even hated it.

Is there some connection between the two? Alger questioned inwardly in puzzlement, but he didn't say it out loud.

He maintained his silence and planned to observe more and take note.

After a while, there were screams from inside the house, followed by pangs of painful grunts and vomiting.

"Begin," Cattleya issued an order in an abnormally succinct manner.

Her figure instantly turned transparent, turning into a sculpture formed by countless stars.

The sculpture shattered instantly as bright stars surged towards the house's door and drilled through a gap.

As stars gathered inside, Cattleya's figure materialized.

Then, she heard howling winds and sounds of collisions.

The door frame shook before the door opened. Wearing a hood and mask, Alger entered the targeted building not much slower than

Admiral of Stars.

He swept his gaze and quickly took in the situation at the dining hall.

Artisan Cielf was retreating from the table with a look of horror.

On the ground were two men and a woman who were constantly vomiting mushrooms. At their chests, their clothes had ripped apart as one mushroom after another sprouted.

Upon sensing someone enter, they subconsciously looked up, revealing bunches of white spores on their faces.

Under his mask, Alger's face involuntarily twitched.

Although he was experienced and knowledgeable, and with him being a Beyonder who had his fair share of experience seeing horrifying scenes, such a scene still left a striking visual and mental impact on him.

Cattleya had expected it, but she had never expected such a harrowing sight. After a moment of surprise, she held her right hand to her mouth and blew a whistle.

Illusory ropes emerged from the ground and coiled around the three Primordial Moon believers like snakes.

“Is there a way to stop this?” Cattleya said to the shadow in the corner.

After a moment of silence, Heath Doyle's voice sounded.

“Frank said that he hadn't obtained a way to stop it in his experiments. The only way is cremation.”

Cremation… Cattleya's brows quivered. Immediately, she took out some powder from a pocket and threw them out.

The powder seemed to have a life of their own as they accurately landed on the three primitive believers and the various mushrooms.

Silently, they burst into scarlet flames and silently burned whatever they touched.

Artisan Cielf was already dumbstruck from witnessing the mutation. When someone intruded, he had thought of resisting using his mystical item, but he quickly recognized the intruder to be Admiral of Stars Cattleya. Hence, he wisely gave up and stood in his spot, waiting.

He knew that he was of significant value. No matter where he went, he was not someone who would immediately be killed. Furthermore, Admiral of Stars never had any infamy to her name.

Worst comes to worst, I'll just have to join the Star Pirates… Besides, this pirate admiral seems to be more beautiful than the bounty notices. She exudes a completely different air… Cielf tugged at his wolf fang necklace and forced a smile, awaiting the intruder to mention her purpose.

Cattleya glanced at him and seriously observed his appearance. All she could confirm was that he was a classic example of someone from Intis, but she failed to find any similarities to Queen Mystic.

The pirate admiral deliberated and said, "I had been introduced by a friend, hoping to get you to create a mystical item, but I later discovered that you were with some Primordial Moon believers.

"The three of them aren't too strong and couldn't restrain you at all. Why do you still remain here?"

In this operation, Cattleya's main hypothetical enemy was actually the Artisan himself. This was because she could neither kill him or control him. Furthermore, he still had many well-matched mystical items, making him a powerful enemy. Yet, things developed smoothly to her surprise.

Cielf said with a smile, "They had strong ones in Bayam in the beginning. Using particular floral fragrances and powders, they infected me with a strange ailment, making me increasingly weaker."

Cattleya casually sized him up and said, "You have already recovered, so why aren't you taking this opportunity to escape?"

Alger stood by the side silently. He didn't say a word, afraid that his voice might betray him.

Artisan Cielf chuckled and said, "While I was under their control, they told me that as long as I believed in the Primordial Moon, I could use certain rituals to treat my chronic illness. I couldn't resist the temptation and tried it, and it really succeeded. I found the feeling of being a man again…"

Having said that, he came to an abrupt halt, realizing that he had said too much, exposing his secret illness.

This is him letting himself go too far when it comes to women; thus, slowly losing his abilities in bed? Alger chuckled inwardly.

Cielf looked up and glanced at them. Seeing that no one was mocking him, he coughed slightly and continued, "It wasn't something that relied on medicine. I really recovered my young, virile state. Later, I had two dreams of a moon that was bloody and very enticing.

"I believed that I had already become a believer of the Primordial Moon; therefore, I didn't dare to escape."

Cattleya and Alger silently exchanged gazes, simultaneously passing the death sentence on him.

As long as someone truly believed in an evil god, devil, or some other secret existence; unless they were willing to continue in the faith and slowly become crazier, there was no regret. Even if they were protected by official Beyonder factions and didn't suffer any problems for prolonged periods, they might end up strangling themselves in their sleep years later!

This was nearly unsalvageable, unless they earned the right to receive the blessings of a Grounded Angel like a pope of a major Church, or if they accepted being isolated by certain Sealed Artifacts and live underground forever.

Of course, under such situations, there were also many who did nothing and managed to live to a ripe old age before dying a natural death. However, they were mostly ordinary people, targets that the evil gods, devils, and hidden existences easily ignored. As for Cielf, he was a very useful Artisan.

Cattleya didn't mention the Primordial Moon believers again. To her, it wasn't a big problem whether the Artisan believed in an evil god. As long as he could be communicated with to reach a deal for cooperation and not go crazy from time to time, the other matters weren't something a pirate needed to be worried about.

She switched topics and said, "What mystical items do you have now? I'll choose a few and leave you with the rest."

Towards such a development, Artisan Cielf wasn't too surprised. She was a pirate, not a policewoman. Doing a heist in passing was extremely normal. For her to leave him some items was something he should earnestly thank her for.

In fact, with his level and items, it was possible for him to successfully escape if he went all-out, but he lacked the courage.

"Alright." Cielf took out a pair of grayish-white glasses from his breast pocket. "Gargoyle Glasses. As long as sightlines are met, it can cause the other party to turn numb all over as though they are being petrified. There are two negative effects. First, if one wears it and looks into a mirror, one will turn numb as well. Second, one's body will turn heavy, making one unagile."

Isn't that the item I reserved… So it has already been made… Looking at the Artisan, Alger couldn't help but narrow his eyes.

Chapter 923 - After Effects

◆

Cielf didn’t notice the change in Alger’s eyes. He pointed at one of the “cremated” Primordial Moon believers and said, “That cane was taken from me. It’s called ‘Word of the Sea.’ It can release lightning at a target. Waving it and striking it will cause it to be augmented with wind blades. Apart from that, it can also create large water spheres and corrosive rainwater. It can also allow the wielder to not be afraid of deep-sea pressure. They can freely extract oxygen from the water. At the same time, it can also be used as a wand to provide flight.

“There are three negative side effects. First, it enjoys singing. Every six hours, it has to belt out a song. The resulting effects don’t discriminate between friend or foe. Due to the different choices of songs and styles, it can make one’s mind go adrift or have one’s mind and soul shocked, and at other times, cause one to be irascible and be in a state of lowered reason. Of course, even without waiting six hours, it will also be very willing to sing if you so desire.

“Second, you can probably tell that it’s equipped with living characteristics. Furthermore, it’s one that is rather testy. It enjoys tripping, beating, or pulling the wielder down stairs when they aren’t paying attention.

“Third, it will cause the wielder to easily be struck by lightning. Therefore, on stormy days, either don’t go out or don’t bring it along.”

This is the Sealed Artifact that was made from Gehrman Sparrow’s Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristic. If he were to know that you had already made it and had allowed the Primordial Moon believer to take it away, you will definitely be sold to someone who is need of you—in the form of a Beyonder characteristic… Alger looked towards the dining table and saw the black silver-inlaid cane.

From what he knew, regardless of whether the other negative effects were severe, mystical items with living characteristics were considered Sealed Artifacts. This was because there were unpredictable dangers associated with them.

With Cattleya and her companion not telling him that he was done, Cielf could only continue taking out mystical items with a glum face.

“This short knife is called ‘Blade of Poison.’ The effects are obvious. There’s no need for me to give any additional information, right?

“Eh, every time it deals damage, it will add on a random poison. As for what it is, it’s all luck.

“Its negative effects aren’t too serious. It will only cause medical treatment to fail and the feeling of being drunk to accumulate within the wielder.”

Cielf continued introducing a few mystical items and finally heard Cattleya say, “Excellent, the rest are yours.”

Phew… She still left me with three… Not only did Cielf not bear a grudge, he felt deep down how nice a person Admiral of Stars was. It was as though he had suffered some psychological ailments.

Cattleya then turned to look at The Hanged Man.

“You pick first.”

She knew that The World Gehrman Sparrow had commissioned a mystical item to be made by the Artisan. Therefore, The Hanged Man had to first select the crazy adventurer’s item first.

Alger nodded and took the Word of the Sea and the Gargoyle Glasses. Then, he indicated that the rest were spoils of war.

Cattleya thought for a moment and said, “Pick another one. The rest will be mine.”

She wasn’t too interested in the remaining mystical items because she had two rather powerful items that suited her. She had also obtained the Scales of Luck and Judge Button later; thus, covering all her bases. Under such a situation, the stacking of negative effects was something to be considered. Unless it was something extremely special, it wasn’t something she would take a second look or choose to exchange.

Of course, as a pirate admiral, she never found mystical items too excessive. After all, she had to hand over some of them to the Moses Ascetic Order and leave the rest to reward her crew.

Alger fell silent for a moment. Starting from what items and Beyonder powers he had, he chose the Blade of Poison.

Following that, Cattleya instructed Bloodless Heath Doyle to move the mystical items that Cielf had placed on the ground, and the remnant items left by the Primordial Moon believers, out of the room.

Then, she looked at the Artisan with her dark purple-hued eyes.

“Why do the Primordial Moon believers want to control you?”

Cielf’s eyes flickered.

“Isn’t that simple and obvious? To get me to make mystical items for them…”

Just as he said that, his heart skipped a beat as a result of the purple eyes that were coldly looking at him. He hurriedly added, “They also seem to have some plan that needs the help of an Artisan. As for what it is, I’ve no idea because it hasn’t started.”

Cattleya retracted her gaze while seemingly in thought. Exchanging a silent look with The Hanged Man, they nodded simultaneously.

They decided not to take away the Artisan today and to leave him there to monitor the subsequent developments.

In other words, they wanted to figure out the Primordial Moon believers' plans from monitoring him.

Actually, for The Hermit and The Hanged Man, whatever the Primordial Moon believers were plotting wasn't something they cared about. They just each had matters they were concerned about. The former used it to communicate with Queen Mystic to provide her reference material for her strategies in the supernatural world. The latter could use this matter to earn contribution points from the Church; therefore, they had instantly come to a tacit agreement to investigate deeper.

Of course, Alger always believed in a principle:

The more information he wielded, the more benefits he could obtain from various matters!

After a brief silence, Cattleya said to Artisan Cielf in the same tone, "Since you're already a Primordial Moon believer, taking you with me provides me with no benefit."

Cielf nodded immediately, agreeing with what she said.

Cattleya paused for a moment before she said, "However, I wish to establish a long-term working relationship with you. Therefore, I need a few drops of your blood. This will aid me in finding you at any time."

Cielf wore a miserable look as his lips quivered, but he was unable to object to it.

Phew… He suddenly exhaled and said, "Okay."

With that said, he picked up a paper cutter beside him and sliced his forearm, letting a few drops of blood drip out.

Cattleya immediately raised her right arm and gently flicked her wrist, causing the few drops of blood to float and fly towards her.

After observing the blood in her palm, this pirate admiral suddenly asked, “What’s your last name?”

“June,” Cielf replied instinctively.

Cattleya didn’t say a word as she turned around and walked out the door. Alger followed closely behind.

The room quickly turned silent as Cielf sat on the sofa. He sat there motionless for quite a while, as though he was deep in thought over the encounter, being unable to extricate himself from it.

Ten minutes later, he suddenly stood up and took out a small human-shaped figurine from his inside pocket.

The figurine was brass-colored, and its face was empty. Blood slowly seeped out from it and remained on its surface.

Cielf hurriedly wiped the figurine’s face with a handkerchief before heaving a sigh of relief. He curled the corners of his lips and silently muttered, Thankfully I have this Fate Puppet…

Humph, Let’s see how you can find me with those drops of blood! Don’t even think of cursing me!

In the poverty-stricken district of Bayam, on a street without any street lamps.

The masked and hooded Alger looked at The Hermit beside him. With a deep voice, he said, “After Cielf escaped from the Church of Steam, he has been living safe and sound to this day. This means he’s not a fool. For him to so easily give you the blood in such a relaxed manner without putting up any resistance means that he has the means to avoid your tracking.

“Besides, he didn’t mention an explanation of how the Primordial Moon believers found him.”

Logically speaking, the believers definitely would’ve asked him for the origins of the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic, but Cielf hadn’t mentioned Alger at all.

As Cattleya took out the pair of heavy glasses and wore it, she said without a change in tone, “It isn’t used for tracking.”

Alger nodded in thought before bidding her farewell, turning into a dark alley.

He made several detours and found a chance to remove his disguise before leaving Bayam. After he returned to the Resistance’s private harbor, he boarded the Blue Avenger.

His sailors had pretty much spent most of their energy and money over the past few days. So at that moment, they were all on the ship, waiting to set off for the seas again.

Upon seeing him return, one of the sailors stood up immediately and asked with a smile, “Captain, have you had dinner?”

“Not yet. Make something simple for me.” For the operation, Alger hadn’t had a chance to fill his stomach.

The sailor who also did some cooking on the side immediately replied, “Alright. We got some fresh mushrooms in the forest today. How about I pan fry it with some butter?”

“…”

Alger’s face twitched as he shook his head with a normal expression.

“Searing a steak would do. Medium rare, uh—Medium-done.”

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East Balam, by the periphery of a forest.

With his two marionettes, Klein wasn't in a rush to leave. He entered a city and planned on getting some dyes to disguise Admiral Hell Ludwell's mask.

And before that, he had other things to do.

It was to seek out a helper for his exploration of the periphery of Calderón!

Klein was never a lone wolf, and it was even more so the case when faced with danger. Therefore, unless he had no options, he would always invite powerhouses to provide him with help by sharing the coordinates and paying the corresponding price. He wasn't one to rashly enter.

To him, being able to obtain the desired ingredient while alive was most important!

If it wasn't because I know it's impossible, I'd even wish to wait one to two weeks before I carry a baby or push a pram to head for Calderón… Klein sighed silently as he took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew into it.

Silently, Reinette Tinekerr with her four heads in hand walked out of the void.

Klein deliberated over his words and said, "I plan on exploring Calderón City soon. Well, I've already obtained its coordinates in the spirit world. I'm wondering if I can hire you for your help? What would be the price?"

The four heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand spoke one after another:

"Won't do…" I…" "Can't…" "Enter…"

Chapter 924 - First Key Factor at Carrying out Risky Operations

◆ ◆ ◆

Can't enter… The Seven Lights can't enter for some special reason… Is this a restriction Calderón City has on higher-level creatures in the spirit world? However, how does Miss Messenger know of this limitation? Has she been there before? If that were the case, I didn't even need to ask Red Light or the magic mirror… Perhaps her spiritual intuition told her that? As his mind whirred, Klein slowly and silently exhaled.

He then took out a gold coin and handed it to Reinette Tinekerr.

"I understand. Thank you for the information."

After one of Miss Messenger's head bit on the gold coin and retreated into the spirit world, Klein allowed his thoughts to roam as he considered how he could find other helpers.

Mr. Azik has entered a state of slumber. It's unknown when he will wake up. There's no way to wait for him.

Will Auceptin is about to be born but is only a baby. "He" is still at a nadir. And even if Ma'am Hermit has a way to temporarily restore "His" power while "He" is weak, it's impossible for "Him" to do something as trivial as being my bodyguard. Besides, once "He" leaves Backlund or showcases his corresponding level, there's a very high chance that he might once again be locked on by Angel of Fate Ouroboros.

Get the help of a demigod from the Life School of Thought through this

Snake of Fate, such as that Councilor Ricciardo? That will be difficult. The Life School of Thought is suffering an internal divide. The Councilors have too many things to do. Besides, they're running all over the world with the Die of Probability to leave traces to divert the Angel of Fate's attention.

Queen Mystic Bernadette? I'm not too familiar with her. Besides, The Fool has demigods and angels under "Him." A Blessed like Gehrman Sparrow can always find other help. Even if I claim that it's a cooperative effort, it will also expose quite significant problems. Sigh, on the surface, The Fool has angels and demigods under "Him," but the actual situation is that at the angel and demigod's side is The Fool who's just photobombing them…

The Chief from the City of Silver? This is indeed something that could be used as a price when he makes a request, but the problem is that he's unable to leave the Forsaken Land of the Gods. I think I should leave this opportunity for the Bizarro Bane…

Those geezers of the Sanguine? There's no suitable reason, and it's very easy for me to be exposed to Lilith. Who knows who that dead ancient goddess who hasn't truly perished is. If "She" is actually the Primordial Moon in disguise, I can forget about resurrection…

Klein thought of one candidate after another, but one by one, he struck them off the list. Finally, he couldn't help but sigh.

When in need, friends are always in short supply!

He couldn't help but think of setting up a ritual to attempt to pray to the Evernight, the Crimson for strength, to seek the blessing of the Goddess, hoping that she could directly bestow him with the true soul body and powder of a Spirit World Plunderer, or have some archbishop, high-ranking deacon, or secret ascetic to provide him with help.

Unfortunately, all he could do was muse over the idea without actually carrying it out. Although Klein was rather accepting of the Evernight

Goddess and wasn't against the identity of being an Evernight Blessed, he still felt extremely wary. He didn't wish to rely on a deity's bestowment for everything. Besides, he suspected that similar rituals wouldn't have any effect. This was because, with his present level and strength, he had no right to raise conditions with a Sequence 0. If the deity was willing to give, then "She" would naturally give it to him. If "She" didn't, praying was useless.

If I have the shamelessness of Old Neil, I might really try it. Back then, the Goddess was willing to respond to his debt payment and resolve his constipation. "She" dotes on her believers pretty well. Of course, there must be certain "side effects"… Klein recalled the past as he sighed.

He decided to change his train of thought. Since he couldn't get help from friends, he considered making use of his enemies.

Hmm, perhaps I can bring the Black Emperor card, Tyrant card, and the radio transceiver. I could wait at the entrance of Calderón City. As long as King of the Five Seas Nast, High-Sequence Beyonders of the Church of Storms, or leaders of the Rose School of Thought like Suah and the other demigods and angels rushed over, I will immediately enter that City of the Dead…

No, that's too explicit. King of the Five Seas Nast and the High-Sequence Beyonders of the Church of Storms are highly unlikely to follow me into Calderón City. Instead, they will stay outside and wait for me to come out…

Abomination Suah might chase after me, but "He" is an angel. "He" wouldn't be impeded by anything in the periphery of Calderón City. I'll only be inviting trouble to myself…

After repeated thought, Klein finally gave up the idea of creating chaos for his benefit. He believed that it was difficult to replicate the same situation outside Bayam City from back then. It was even more so when he wasn't a High-Sequence Beyonder.

A person who treads the edge of the abyss would fall into it sooner or later!

Who else can provide me with help? Klein's gaze swept past his two marionettes as friend after friend flashed past his mind, including the members of the Tarot Club.

Suddenly, he recalled something.

Miss Sharron once told me that the Tutanssess II mummy is one of the keys to her advancement ritual and is very important to her. This also means that she's about to become a demigod, Sequence 4 Puppet of the Mutant pathway…

If she succeeds, I can get her to help. We have had a good partnership.

Thankfully, I chose to help her. Otherwise, I wouldn't have any hope today.

As Klein reeled in poignancy, he took out paper and a fountain pen. Placing the paper on Enzo's back, he scribbled, "It's been a while since we last met. I wonder how you've been recently…"

As he wrote, Klein suddenly stopped. He felt the opening was too off and hypocritical.

Miss Sharron is a person who restrains herself. When she writes letters, she goes straight to the point without saying anything unnecessary. I have to consider her personality and be more frank… Klein thought for a few seconds before raising the previous slip of paper. Shaking it, he made it become engulfed in scarlet flames.

After a few seconds of deliberation, Klein wrote on a new slip of paper:

"I've already acquired the spirit world coordinates of Calderón City. If you've already become a demigod, I wish to cooperate again to receive some help. If not, there's no need to force it. I can still find other friends.

"Sherlock Moriarty"

After folding the slip of paper and addressing it to "Ma'am Maryam," Klein took out the adventurer's harmonica again and blew it.

Reinette Tinekerr, in her dark and complicated dress, walked out of the void as though she had never left the vicinity, appearing right in front of him.

Klein handed her the folded slip of paper and a gold coin before seriously exhorting her, "Send it to Backlund, Hillston, 126 Garde Street. Throw it directly into the mailbox."

"Alright," one of Reinette Tinekerr's head said while another head but on the letter and gold coin.

Upon seeing this, Klein pressed, somewhat worried:

"You haven't lost the previous map, right?

"Do you know which borough Hillston Borough is? Do you know where Garde Street is?"

The three other heads which Reinette Tinekerr held replied, "No…" "I know…" "It's…" "Very…" "Easy to…" "Find."

Klein immediately heaved a sigh of relief as he politely sent off Miss Messenger.

He temporarily threw the matter of Calderón City to the back of his mind and began disguising his marionette, Ludwell.

The next morning, a man, with brownish skin, light curly hair, and was dressed in a formal Loen attire and a silk half top hat, entered Ttniks City that bordered a forest with his two servants.

This was a city that mainly produced timber, rubber, and special products from the forest. There was talk in the town that a few hair-growth research centers and the complementing factories were established here.

Having disguised himself as a local, wealthy man, Klein quickly found a hotel to stay in. Sitting on a reclining chair made of rattan, he observed his handiwork once again.

Winner Enzo's skin was not only bronze, but it was now almost completely black. Together with his thin and soft hair, bushy brows, and dark shadowy facial outline, matched with Balam-styled baggy, creased pants and a black-and-white top, he looked like a typical example of a local servant that hailed from a particular plantation manor.

Admiral Hell Ludwell's rather resplendent clothes had become the same style as Enzo's. His exposed skin had clear burn marks, and his silver mask was now dyed with a uniform iron-black color. This made it look as though he had been disfigured due to a fire accident and that he was wearing a mask to hide his face, lest he scared any passersby.

After having his lunch which was served to his room, Klein heard stacked illusory prayers.

Male… Mr. Hanged Man? It's also possible it's Emlyn and Little Sun. The transaction of the Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic of the Vampire pathway is about to begin… Klein was just about to head for the bathroom to take four steps counterclockwise and head above the gray fog when his spiritual perception was triggered.

He hurried activated his Spirit Vision and saw the headless Reinette Tinekerr appear out of the spirit world which overlapped with the real world with a letter in a head's mouth.

Miss Sharron has replied? Klein first thanked her before receiving the letter and tearing it open to read.

"Sorry, I will likely still need another one to two months of preparation. If you still need my help by then, I'll be fine with it. Sharron."

One to two months… It's not like I can't wait… It's not like I've digested my Marionettist potion yet… Klein nodded indiscernibly as he got a pen and some paper to reply simply:

"Take your own time. There's no rush. My matter isn't urgent. I can wait. Sherlock Moriarty."

After handing the letter and gold coin to Reinette Tinekerr and getting her to send it to Backlund, Hillston Borough, 126 Garde Street, Klein suddenly thought of a problem:

During wars, scouting is necessary. How can I be rash and so careless about exploring a dangerous place like Calderón City?

Hmm, when Miss Sharron advances, I can head there to do some scouting and gather some intelligence without the need to take risks. For example, I can figure out exactly what restrictions there are; what kind of anomalies will happen towards Death domain powers; or I can figure out whether I'm only able to enter by a fixed entrance, or if I have any way of directly returning above the gray fog from inside… After confirming all of this, I can formulate a plan and make preparations… Of course, before scouting, divination is necessary… Klein soon made up his mind and walked into the attached bathroom.

Chapter 925 - Choosing “Clothes”

◆ ◆ ◆

Above the endless grayish-white fog, in the magnificent ancient hall.

Klein didn’t rush to do a divination. He first answered The Hanged Man Alger’s sacrificial ritual and got the cane made from the Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristics to appear in front of him.

Word of the Sea… This name, when transliterated to Chinese, does bring back memories. I’ll just leave it at that… It’s basically a weaker version of Sea God Scepter. It doesn’t have demigod-level powers like Lightning Storm or Tsunami either… There are quite a number of negative effects… As Klein recalled The Hanged Man’s descriptions, he stroked the silver inlaid black cane.

Perhaps the mysterious space above the gray fog had naturally suppressed it, causing this Beyonder cane to not express its living characteristic. It silently lay there like it was the most common and ordinary piece of wood.

Klein nodded slightly and muttered silently to himself, Mystical items with living characteristics are really rather troublesome. But from a different angle, it means that they can be communicated with. The Die of Probability back then was quite a nasty fellow, but didn’t it also become obedient after getting schooled?

Besides, I can always have my servants hold it most of the time. Yes, Winner Enzo will be most suitable. Although he already has zero passive luck, he is still accumulating luck constantly to make preparations for that critical moment. Releasing a little bit of it wouldn't affect anything. This way, be it being tripped, thrown, or beaten, he would be able to smoothly avoid it and not garner the attention of others.

On careful thought, the cane's pranks aren't completely useless. If I were to meet other Marionettists, Spirit World Plunderers, or Bizarro Banes and lose my initiative and end up being initially controlled, my thoughts and actions would turn sluggish. It would be quite difficult to extricate myself from that state by myself. At this moment, if an uncontrollable cane were to suddenly hit me or trip me to the ground, wouldn't I be successfully escaping from my predicament?

Sigh, if a mystical item's negative effects are used well, they can be quite a boon…

Of course, in normal combat, such pranks can bring about unnecessary dangers. How it should be balanced or avoided will need repeated trial and error.

As for the negative effects of easily being struck by lightning on a stormy day, Klein didn't mind. Firstly, unless he was in a special region, stormy weather wasn't common to begin with. It wasn't something that needed to be taken into consideration most of the time. Secondly, as a Seer, divining the day's weather before heading out was a common act. Finally, if he couldn't avoid sudden flash storms, Klein could always give the cane to Enzo. This way, even if the lightning were to strike the Winner, it would even up being attracted by a nearby lightning rod.

Let's just hope I'm not that lightning rod… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh as he considered the most worrisome negative effect.

It would belt out Beyonder singing every six hours!

This was indiscriminate, and it was basically a huge AOE[1] attack!

After some thought, Klein decided to communicate with the Word of Sea cane to reduce the frequency at which it sang, or to give prior warning before it sang.

I had breakfast early today. It's almost time for Creeping Hunger to start its howling… In thought, Klein removed the human-skinned glove from his left palm and threw it at an empty spot in front of the junk pile.

Right on the heels of that, he lifted the silver inlaid black cane and threw it over. Then, he stirred some of the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, creating a barrier that isolated all sound and images. He made Creeping Hunger and Word of the Sea spend time alone.

After doing all of this, Klein rubbed his palms and conjured a pen and paper. He wrote down a divination statement: "My scouting of Calderón City's periphery today is dangerous."

After putting down the dark red fountain pen, Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his left wrist. He let the topaz hang down over the paper in close proximity with it.

After chanting seven times in his mind, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz standing still and not spinning.

This meant that the divination had failed.

Calderón City's actual situation is a secret to the entire spirit world, and divination lacks a starting point… Besides, that was once a divine kingdom of an ancient goddess. There's a mutated resurrection setup left over there. It can similarly interfere with divination… Klein rolled up his spirit pendulum and deliberated in thought. I can only trust what Red Light said. The danger around Calderón City's periphery isn't that great… Besides, I still have marionettes. I can let them go first and confirm if that place screens the gray fog. If it can, I'll give up. If it doesn't, I'll enter myself.

Klein quickly came to a decision. Without any hesitation, he waved his hand to remove the barrier he had previously created.

Then, he saw the Creeping Hunger which had retreated to the side of the junk pile. It was propping itself up with three fingers while its thumb and pinky were pressing backward on Groselle's Travels. It looked weak and could hardly stand.

At the same time, there was a mouth in the middle of the palm. It revealed two illusory, white, and eerie teeth that kept gasping for air.

On the other side of the barrier, the silver inlaid black cane was on the ground. It twitched from time to time as its tip kept oozing with blue transparent water bubbles.

"Very good, silence at last…" Upon seeing this scene, Klein muttered in gratification.

Just as he said that, the Word of the Sea suddenly stood up. And as though it was being held, it "hopped" towards Klein, circling about The Fool's seat and dodged elsewhere. Creeping Hunger used all its five fingers as legs as it chased after the cane with great difficulty. Midway, it collapsed to the ground.

Klein watched speechless before letting out a sigh.

"After fusing with Mr. A, Creeping Hunger seems to have a living characteristic, but this level of intelligence is way too low. It clearly Grazed a Wind-blessed and is capable of Short-distance Flight; yet, it still uses its fingers as legs to chase…"

After saying that, he turned his head towards the Word of the Sea cane which was hiding beside him.

"Aren't you a Sequence 5 of the Sailor pathway? What kind of mystical item are you if you can only hop on one leg?

"Seriously, are such low-level living characteristics equivalent to babies? No, a particular baby is way smarter than all of you!"

Klein reprimanded each of them and sighed as he said in amusement, “It’s not like I’m a devil…”

Just as he said that, the glove and cane who were still stirring froze at the same moment. They didn’t dare make a sound.

Klein’s subsequent words were left in his throat. All he could do was reach out to pick up Word of the Sea and kindly and sincerely speak to it.

After a friendly and frank negotiation, this silver inlaid black cane used high frequency swaying to gesture that it would reduce its singing to a minimum. If it really couldn’t hold back, it would inform its owner. The exact manner included, but was not limited to, trembling slightly or automatically moving up a few centimeters.

At the same time, it raised a request via singing:

Never use the hand wearing Creeping Hunger to hold it!

Of course, if its master insisted on doing so, it didn’t object to it and was happy to accept it.

Better than Creeping Hunger. It’s not too stubborn… Klein beckoned for Creeping Hunger and wore it on his left palm.

Taking a glance at the Door of Summoning which had been produced from the ritual, Klein began considering the items to bring on his scouting of Calderón City.

Needless to say, the two marionettes were going. They could be used as bait, to scout the path ahead, be used as test subjects, and verify any traps. They allowed a Marionettist to not need to undergo too many dangerous actions, so they were definitely going.

They would be wearing Enzo’s Flower of Blood ring and Ludwell’s Harris Sword. They were all standard equipment. In addition, Klein decided to get Enzo to carry the Word of the Sea.

As for himself, Klein planned on heading there as a Spirit Body. Once anything was amiss, he would immediately end the summoning and return above the gray fog. This way, what "clothes" he matched was something worth considering.

Azik's copper whistle? No, that is related to Death, and Calderón City belongs to ancient Death… There's a small possibility that this might create a terrifying anomaly, causing the danger in the core region to automatically come out.

Black Emperor card or the Tyrant card? Hmm, I'll be moving about the spirit world. The two marionettes are basically dead. I'm not afraid that they have their blood extracted. Heh heh, Ludwell is a half-human, half-dead entity. He doesn't have blood to speak of. The value of Enzo's blood only makes him appear human most of the time. And this could be recovered via using Flower of Blood. It also means that I can bring the Sea God Scepter to Calderón City!

It's a place that's deep in the spirit world. It's far from the Rorsted Archipelago, so I don't have to worry about being affected by the believers' prayers. The only problem is that I'll become irascible and short-tempered. It will be easy for me to become hot-headed… This is taboo when it comes to exploring. However, this is easily resolved. I'll leave it with Enzo or Ludwell. Besides, the Tyrant card's level is very high. It can produce a suppression effect to a certain degree on the Sea God Scepter, preventing me from easily flaring up.

With the combination of the Tyrant card and the Sea God Scepter, I'm equivalent to half a Sequence 4. This can then most effectively reduce the risk I face. In the future, even if I were to enter with Miss Sharron, I can also equip myself in such a manner. I'll get her to maintain her state as a wraith—no, an evil spirit state to circumvent all problems!

I don't have to worry about the law of convergence. If Calderón City can screen the gray fog, I'll return after taking a look from the outside. No one will lock onto me or pursue me. After all, the spirit world isn't the home ground of the Sailor pathway. If Calderón City can't screen the gray fog, and a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Church of Storms really does get drawn there, I can end up using him… Amidst his thoughts, Klein suddenly reached out his hand, attracting the Tyrant card to fall into his palm.

Immediately after that, he fused the Card of Blasphemy into his Soul Body.

Suddenly, extreme might and terrifying auras emanated from The Fool's location. A heavy papal tiara silently appeared on Klein's head as his clothes turned into a religious robe.

The latter was similar in dressing as a pope from Saint Seiya: Knights of the Zodiac which he had seen in his previous life. However, the colors were dark blue that was almost black.

As howling winds sounded, the pontiff robe flared up suddenly as Klein raised his right hand and suspended himself in midair before catching the white bone scepter that flew towards him.

At the tip of the scepter, the gems emitted either blinding silver or blue light like bolts of lightning that circled around the Tyrant.

With a thud, the Word of the Sea cane prostrated to the ground, right beside Klein who was wielding the scepter and dressed like a pontiff.

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Area of Effect.

Chapter 926 - Spiraling City

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I really do feel a little irascible, but I’m not that quick-tempered… Wearing the papal tiara and dark blue robes while wielding the Sea God Scepter, Klein seriously observed his new state.

This meant that the Tyrant card could suppress the negative effects of the Sea God Scepter to a certain extent, but it wasn’t able to completely eliminate it.

Using Cogitation, Klein composed himself and turned to look at the junk pile in the corner.

Groselle’s Travels? This is my strongest defensive item to this day. Besides, it also has some magical uses, but the problem is that it was made by another ancient god, Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt. Based on what Little Sun said, this dragon king was once allies with the owner of Calderón City—Ancient Death, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace. Who knows if this book would trigger any unnecessary developments… To be safe, it’s best if I don’t bring it.

And just like Azik’s copper whistle, the mutated paper figurine can’t be included. It has the remnant aura of Artificial Death… This might have a shock-and-awe effect when exploring Calderón City, but it also contains plenty of latent risks.

The Priest of Light Beyonder characteristic? This can effectively restrain dead spirits, a natural nemesis for the City of the Dead, but it’s only an ingredient that hasn’t been made into a mystical item. The effects it has is rather limited. The negative effects are extremely bad. It won't be helpful to my soul state. In addition, lightning can also purify the dead. With the Sea God Scepter and Word of the Sea, there's no need for me to bring the Priest of Light Beyonder characteristic… Thoughts flashed across Klein's mind as he eliminated the remaining items in the junk pile.

He wore the human-skinned glove on his left hand, wielded Sea God Scepter, and raised his right hand slightly. He made Word of the Sea fly up and land in his palm.

Following that, the papal-dressed Klein changed the appearance of his soul. He hid his facial features within the shadows of the papal tiara.

He slowly stood up as the dark blue robes fluttered in the wind, the white bone scepter dazzling.

With just one step, Tyrant Klein passed through the Door of Summoning and walked out of the candlelight, arriving in the real world. He found himself in the rather spacious bathroom.

After adding the Fate Siphon charm and Death Knell into his body, he opened the door and returned to the living room. He got Enzo to come over to receive Word of the Sea.

After some thought, Klein took out Death Knell and handed it to Admiral Hell Ludwell.

After doing all of this, he brought his two marionettes and relied on Traveling to head for the coordinates in the spirit world that were provided by Miss Magician.

The trip happened rather smoothly. The Tyrant aura made all kinds of strange spirit world creatures not dare to approach him while en route. They didn't even dare look at him directly. Before long, Klein arrived at his destination.

The scene in front of him looked no different from anywhere else in the spirit world. The saturated colors were overlapped, and there was some thin fog emanating everywhere. Elsewhere, in the depths, pairs of eyes moved away one after another.

The papal robe's cape fluttered gently in the wind as Klein did a rough scan before getting Enzo and Ludwell to enter a blob of fog that appeared very thin and normal.

Suddenly, his field of vision widened with the help of his two marionettes. A grand city that was of legendary proportions appeared in his eyes.

This city was abnormal. It didn't develop in a vertical manner, but instead spiraled deep into the ground. It gave one the feeling of an inverted mausoleum.

Its buildings had a myriad of styles, but they were equally strange. Some of them had towering pale-white rock columns with a huge single house carved out at the top. Some were long and squarish, with the doors placed at the ceiling with no windows in sight. Some were built in the ground, a tombstone erected at their entrances. Some were built with white bones, messy and scattered.

The closer it was to the bottom of the pit, the more completely preserved the buildings were. The closer they were to the top, the more collapsed areas there were, ones filled with the dilapidation and rot that time brought.

Klein made his two marionettes stop. Despite standing at the edge of the city and overlooking everything, he was unable to identify what was at the bottom of the building. Deep darkness enveloped the area as though no light had been shone inside for thousands and thousands of years.

After a brief observation, Enzo lowered his head and chanted using ancient Hermes:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

Just as he finished the statement, Klein, who was still situated outside Calderón City, heard stacked illusory pleas. He also recognized it to be from a man with a deliberately hoarse voice.

It’s the marionette’s prayer from before… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he silently muttered, “This means that Calderón City doesn’t screen out the gray fog. At the very least, the outer periphery doesn’t. I can enter.”

Although he said that to himself, he was in no way in a hurry. He subsequently controlled Ludwell to raise his left palm and spread it open.

Illusory light was suddenly emitted. Following that, with a point as its origin, the area imploded, forming a pair of double bronze doors.

This door was slightly blurry and extremely incorporeal. The surface was covered with countless mysterious patterns that gave one the feeling of indescribable heaviness and silence.

With a creak, the mysterious bronze door shifted backward and cracked open a little.

Through this crack, Klein saw the deepest and heaviest darkness.

Amidst the darkness, pale-white colors stirred, swirling up at times and descending at other times. It was like a river that was gushing through a night devoid of light.

On its two sides, pale white stone columns appeared, looking extremely identical to Calderón City’s interior but in a more exaggerated manner.

At this moment, pairs of transparent eyes and indescribable faces suddenly appeared. They filled the illusory bronze door’s crack, eagerly trying to pass through.

Klein's eyes felt a slight stabbing pain as he immediately made Ludwell clench his left palm.

Thud!

The illusory door covered in mysterious patterns was pushed by an invisible force as it closed, disappearing from Enzo's sight.

This mysterious door that separates life from death and leads to the Underworld has apparently changed its course. It's no longer the Underworld behind the door, but the core region of Calderón City. The deepest point at the bottom of the pit? Wearing the papal tiara while wielding the Sea God Scepter, Klein nodded in thought.

This way, many of the powers of the Death domain was remade in Calderón City, causing an anomaly.

With this knowledge in mind, Klein once again got Ludwell to raise his left arm.

The left part of this marionette's body rapidly turned illusory as dark green specks appeared as though he had turned into a wraith or specter.

His arm began to stop abiding by the laws of reality as it suddenly extended into the distance. The center of its palm was abnormally white with an illusory face protruding from it.

The face had its mouth half-open as its tongue was sharp like a snake's. It was covered in white fur.

In a completely surreal manner, the tongue flicked out far into the distance. It was as though it could drill directly into a human's body and absorb one's soul.

Indeed, the Death Envoy powers Ludwell gets from the Underworld creature inside his body has mutated. Not only has it been enhanced, but it has also gone from remotely extracting Spirit Bodies to directly consuming them… Klein stood at Calderón City's entrance and made

Admiral Hell display all kinds of Beyonder powers of the Death domain. Through that, he gleaned the differences that there were from the usual outcome.

The thing they had in common was that all of them had become more powerful!

Then, Klein experimented by making Enzo use the specialness of his body and the various powers from Flower of Blood and Word of the Sea before coming up with a conclusion.

Aspects in the Fate domain aren't affected…

Lightning Strike is suppressed, making it much weaker…

Unable to fly too high…

Powers like wind blades, singing, illusory scales, balance, and water membrane undergo no changes…

With the end of these experiments, Klein made Enzo and Ludwell walk down the pale-white stairs, clinging closely to the periphery of Calderón City. The buildings there had already completely collapsed.

As the two-hundred-meter threshold approached, Klein raised his right hand and pressed down on his face that hid in the shadows of the papal tiara. Then, wielding the Sea God Scepter, he stepped into the thin fog.

His mind instantly felt a little groggy as the scene before him changed. He had already entered the City of the Dead, Calderón City.

Enduring the irascible feelings within him, Klein made his left glove turn dark.

His body turned illusory as it was tainted by a dark color, turning him into a shadow. Only the Sea God Scepter in his hand continued emitting silver or blue beams of light.

Using the soul's screening and the Tyrant card's suppression to hide the light, Klein floated diagonally ahead, slinking into the shadows of the collapsed buildings. He followed closely behind the two marionettes, beginning to perform an initial inspection of Calderón City's outer region.

As he traversed the area, Klein gradually noticed something amiss.

It was too quiet!

It was so quiet that it was as though the entire city was dead. Even bugs had failed to survive!

Based on what Arrodes and Red Light Aiur Moria had said, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace had uprooted Calderón City and thrown it deep into the spirit world. Before doing so, the residents inside the city were allowed to leave. Occasionally, there would be other spirit world creatures entering.

But now, not only were there no active creatures in the peripheral region, there weren't even skeletons, zombies, or even one or two non-bonelike buildings!

Klein tensed up more and more. With Enzo's and Ludwell's vision, he carefully observed his surroundings.

During this process, his gaze swept across a broken pale-white column. The ancient but damaged building at the top had a disc burnished from gold inside.

The disc's smooth surface reflected a figure, but it wasn't Enzo, but Klein in his papal tiara and dark blue robe!

This Klein had a gloomy demeanor. His face was pale and his eyes were listless as though he had long been dead.

Chapter 927 - Tyrant's Might

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Hiding in the shadows, Klein's heart tightened. He then quickly calmed down without showing any signs of horror.

This was because he was extremely certain that the reflection on the golden disc's smooth surface wasn't him—at least, it wasn't the real him!

If it really was him, Enzo would've seen the gray fog, seeing magical scenes that resembled a Mythical Creature form. This would've caused Klein to faint immediately!

Since I'm completely fine, it means that the reflection isn't of me… Klein activated his Spirit Body Threads vision, controlled Enzo, and raised Word of the Sea. He approached the pale-white collapsed column and the ancient building which remained in shambles while secretly releasing some of his "luck."

The swarthy marionette approached the golden disc one step at a time. Bending his back and raising the cane, he carefully observed the area.

The disc had two layers—an inner and outer layer. The core region was as smooth as a mirror with very few patterns. The boundaries were engraved with birdlike creatures. Its entirety had an ancient magnificence to it.

The figure it reflected remained the same. Despite reflecting Enzo, it reflected the gloomy, pale Klein with listless eyes. Even the Sea God Scepter, the papal tiara and papal robe that came with the Tyrant card weren’t missing. If it wasn’t because of the lack of the gray fog, Klein definitely would’ve imagined that the disc could influence himself through a marionette and Spirit Body Threads. Or perhaps it would be like what the Saint of Darkness back at the ruins of the battle of gods had encountered, having himself dissociate without realizing it.

What does this actually mean… Klein calmly grew out of the shadows, restoring his appearance back when he first stepped into Calderón City. Then, using his Beyonder powers as a Clown, he produced his present state in his mind.

Holding the white bone scepter with embedded blue gems, he wore a caped papal robe with a papal tiara with different gems dotting it. His face was hidden in the shadows, appearing somewhat blurry. His entire body exhibited a gloomy and cadaveric air, as though he was a zombie that was recently dug out!

This… Klein was alarmed. He never expected to really experience such changes. Apart from the gray fog’s mixing with reality, the reflection on the golden disc really was him!

Something that it doesn’t involve the gray fog, it isn’t anything to worry too much about… he hurriedly consoled himself as he calmed his mental state.

Normally, with Klein’s rich experience and good ability to adapt, there was nothing he needed to do at the moment. But first, considering how he was holding the Sea God Scepter that easily made him rash, he needed to pay constant attention. Second, he knew that this was once Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace’s divine kingdom which contained the setup required for “Her” revival. There was bound to be all kinds of abnormalities. Therefore, he was more nervous than ever before.

Getting Ludwell to return, he used his Beyonder powers to do a thorough inspection of himself before gaining a preliminary understanding.

When living creatures enter Calderón City, they will naturally transform into the deceased. This is similar to the Underworld, but there's a fundamental difference. Here, living creatures won't die an abrupt death before slowly turning into mindless undead creatures; instead, they will directly turn into dead spirits.

I didn't notice it before because Enzo and Ludwell are essentially dead, so there's no need for them to be converted… Arrodes and Red Light Aiur Moria didn't mention this because the Travelers, spirit world creatures, and angels automatically recovered after leaving alive? This kind of transformation is unable to affect the powers of the gray fog that fuses with reality. And the disc reflects the dead me, not all of me, or the me that has had some interaction with Calderón? Klein was more inclined to believe in the latter, but he wasn't too sure.

At this moment, he heard a sound coming from nearby.

Clang!

Clang! Clang!

The sound was heavy but crisp, as though someone was striking metal heavily.

Klein wasn't in a hurry to react. He carefully listened for two seconds before letting Enzo put down the heavy golden disc and walk towards a nearby broken tombstone.

The halved tombstone corresponded to a building that developed further underground. On top of it were the words written with the Language of the Dead:

"…A quick-tempered fellow, one who died as a result of comparing which was harder—his head or someone else's hammer."

Enzo circled around the damaged tombstone and arrived at the entrance to the tomb. He reached out his left hand and turned the knob, pulling open the door.

Amidst the rough grinding sounds of rust, the heavy door slowly opened.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

Pale-white beams of arrow-like light flew out!

They brushed past Enzo's face, the top of his head, torso, and inner thighs and flew into the distance, stabbing into the ground before vanishing. However, Winner Enzo was completely unharmed.

…I have to say that such a marionette is excellent for dangerous explorations… Klein sighed inwardly as he made Enzo cast his gaze down the building.

It was a blacksmith—a giant with bluish-black skin and a head that looked like a ruptured watermelon held onto a hammer as he kept striking an anvil, but there was nothing on it.

As the giant with the cracked head had normal Spirit Body Threads and wasn't the soul avatar of someone else, Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

Just as he was about to get Enzo to take a more thorough look, his body suddenly turned numb as his thoughts turned sluggish.

This feeling was something he had felt before. Back in Tingen, he had been in a similar state when he was under Sealed Artifact 2-049's influence!

Klein didn't know better back then, but after becoming a Marionettist, he knew that this meant that his Spirit Body Threads had been controlled by the Sealed Artifact!

This also meant that someone was controlling his Spirit Body Threads!

Furthermore, the difference from before was that, not only were his joints "rusting" as though someone had infused glue into them, he also felt a strong numbness as if he had been struck by lightning. It made his actions become harder.

No good… It's the Spirit World Plunderer… I was guarded against… its use of soul avatar… It distracted me… and secretly approached… but I never expected… that it not only had a soul avatar… but it also… has a partner… That… giant… blacksmith… made me… careless… And the marionette's… existence… made me… ignore… my own… safety… Various thoughts emerged in Klein's mind involuntarily as it disrupted his normal thoughts of trying to save himself.

At this moment, the giant blacksmith with a ruptured head raised his hammer and rushed over to Enzo, hoping to smash him into a pulp. And by Klein's neck, there was a cold wind blowing at it, pricking his hair up one by one.

The surroundings were abnormally silent before, but now, all kinds of strange creatures emerged from the pale-white stone column, rundown houses, and the tombstone's tomb.

Some of them only had half a body. Others were transparent and nearly invisible. Some were stretched and soft like noodles. Some had a ruptured chest with bloody innards. Some had dark green faces that resembled that of an evil spirit. Others had eyes growing everywhere around their body. There were also others who looked like jellyfish that lived in the air.

Countless gazes were cast onto Klein from different areas. They were without any feelings, just indifferent.

At this moment, Klein opened his mouth with great difficulty as he said a word slowly:

"Sing…"

Just as he said that, the glove on his left palm opened its mouth, revealing its white teeth:

“Praise you!

“The Lord that created everything;

“The Lord who reigns behind the curtain of shadows;

“The degenerated nature of all living things!”

Amidst this jarring voice that resembled blackboard scratching sounds, Enzo, who had been thrown to the ground, successfully avoided the hammer’s strike as Word of the Sea began spewing out water bubbles in excitement.

“Break! Break! Break!”

Klein suddenly felt his head ache as his ability to think was instantly recovered, no longer having disconnected thoughts for a brief moment.

However, his body remained “rusted” as his body was filled with numbness.

Following that, he relied on his spirituality while motionless, controlling Ludwell, who had returned to his side, to punch him with his left fist.

Bang!

Klein staggered back, instantly extricating himself from the numb and sluggish state.

Then, wearing the papal tiara, he became hot-headed as he spread his papal cape and raised Sea God Scepter.

The blue gems lit up one after another as a bright silver bolt of lightning blasted down.

The bolt of lightning spread into “branches,” blanketing Calderón City’s periphery for hundreds of meters with a lightning forest. The destructive aura and sense of destruction were brought to the forefront!

The strange creatures that had charged out from various spots shattered, evaporated, and completely vanished as a result of the swath of silver.

Moments after the silver storm quelled, Tyrant Klein's Sea God Scepter emitted a blinding light once again.

The rapturous bolts of lightning snaked, embroiled the area, smiting down again and again like a huge wave.

After two repeated casts of Lightning Storm, Klein was exhausted as he found his calm again.

His heart beat suddenly as he recalled something.

Lightning Storm was indiscriminate when it struck. Apart from the Sea God Scepter-wielding him and the partner who stood beside him, everything else suffered a decimating blast!

This also meant that Ludwell was still fine, but there was a high chance of Enzo being "wiped out."

Klein instinctively looked over and saw Enzo curled by the side of the halved tombstone. Behind him was the huge metallic hammer which still had tiny bolts of lightning snaking around. Not far from it was two nonhuman charred legs.

The tomb corresponding to the tombstone had already collapsed. The iron-black tiles that landed on the ground still had remnant silver bolts of lightning sizzling away.

…As expected of a Winner. He didn't even die despite such an onslaught… The amount of luck he accumulated has probably been passively expended… Klein felt relieved as he activated his Spirit Body Threads vision to observe his surroundings.

He was searching for the Spirit World Plunderer!

He believed that the range of a Spirit World Plunderer’s controlling of Spirit Body Threads couldn’t match that of a Lightning Storm!

The already dilapidated buildings had nearly been leveled. The remaining stone pieces and bones were mostly charred black. Even the heavy golden disc was in shambles.

Suddenly, a figure emerged from the rubble more than a hundred meters away from Klein.

It was wearing a translucent white robe. It didn’t have a head or limbs. It appeared like it was being propped up by an invisible person.

At that moment, it looked like it was in a sorry state, with wounds and black marks everywhere.

This is the Spirit World Plunderer I suppose… My rash usage of two Lightning Storms seems to have restrained it… Upon seeing this scene, Klein had such thoughts flash through his mind.

Chapter 928 - Misdirection

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At his point, Klein had roughly understood the situation.

Due to the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence, he had been targeted by the Spirit World Plunderer the moment he entered Calderón City, which didn't even have ordinary dead spirits. It first moved the golden disc of unknown origins to the predicted path, allowing his marionette to see it while walking past. As such, his attention was transferred to the transformation effect Calderón City had on the living. Following that, it used the giant blacksmith, which wasn't its soul avatar, to distract him further. Finally, it secretly arrived within control distance and achieved success in "one try."

If it wasn't because I had seen those deceased bodies that are hung up like wind chimes at the cathedral, thus having an instinctual fear of High-Sequence Beyonders of the Seer pathway, and having prepared several autonomous means to disrupt any exertion of control over me, I might've already been made a soul avatar by the Spirit World Plunderer…

Seriously, I should've thought of the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence before I came in… After carrying the Sea God Scepter, even with the Tyrant card suppressing it, I'm still a little too rash. I nearly missed out on such a crucial detail…

On the surface, I did seem as cautious as I usually am, but in fact, I had turned rash without realizing it. Yet, I didn't even believe I was being rash… Klein's thoughts raced before he raised the bone scepter-wielding arm and continued using Lightning Storm.

If once wasn't enough, make it twice. If that still wasn't enough, do it a third time. In short, he had to take this opportunity to prevent the Spirit World Plunderer from escaping from the range of his attacks!

This was the safest method, and it was also Klein's fighting style that he looked up to the most. If it wasn't because Lightning Strike had been greatly weakened in Calderón City, he even suspected that he could've gone over to pick up the Beyonder characteristic already.

And having already digested most of the Sequence 5 potion, his spirituality was sufficient enough for him to deal out such damage for a while!

At this moment, the "invisible" figure wearing a translucent white robe burst into pale-white flames. It appeared in midair several hundred meters away.

The Spirit World Plunderer had used Flaming Jump, which was many times stronger than Klein's version, instantly pulling away from him!

At the same time, in the rubble it was hiding in, a four-meter-tall bluish-black giant staggered to his feet.

The giant's chest was open, but there weren't any innards. However, it stood like a castle, standing in between the Tyrant and the Spirit World Plunderer, blocking Klein's line of sight.

And in Klein's eyes, its Spirit Body Threads were gathered together, extending far towards the Spirit World Plunderer. It was obvious that it was a soul avatar.

At the tip of the Sea God Scepter, the blue-colored gems lit up. A few bolts of lightning leapt out of thin air, mixing together into a huge silver arrow. Instantly, it smote the bluish-black giant's head.

All the invisible defenses shattered, and like paper mache, the giant's head cracked. Countless bits of charred flesh splattered as his headless body evaporated amidst white gases that were tainted with dark green spots. All his vitality was robbed away.

All of this happened in the blink of an eye. Klein, in his papal tiara and papal robe, raised the bone scepter even higher.

The blue light radiated in ripples as howling wind blew up his cape.

In a very large area of Calderón City's periphery, dark clouds quickly gathered. Under a suppressive layer, they made the area appear darker and more repressed.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

Bean-sized drops of water smashed to the ground, releasing dust that had accumulated over time.

Splash!

The raindrops pattered at an increasing pace, forming a catastrophic storm.

The water extinguished the pale-white flames and formed a stream that gushed downwards towards the lowest point of the city, right for the end of the deep pit.

In such weather, Klein's Flaming Jump had been made ineffective, but it was likewise for the Spirit World Plunderer!

However, to a Tyrant, his spirituality could spread through the dark clouds as though he had transformed into a deity that overlooked the land.

Every dark cloud, every drop of water had become Klein's eyes. They allowed him to easily find the Spirit World Plunderer in every area that had its weather change.

This invisible figure with the translucent white robe was hiding behind a broken pale-white column. It hadn’t left the periphery for the core region.

Boom!

A deafening boom sounded as bolts of lightning meshed to form a silver beam that shot out from the dark clouds, right at the Spirit World Plunderer.

Relying on its potent spiritual premonition, the invisible figure burrowed into the ground half a second early.

Three thick silver beams smote the area one after another, melting the soil away as they sank downwards, producing charred craters.

The Spirit World Plunderer emerged from another spot as it hurriedly dodged, keeping to the right at times and left at other times, as though it was carrying out a snaking dodge manoeuver.

However, regardless of where it fled to, the silver beams would chase up to it. They even blocked its path ahead of time, preventing it from attempting to leave the stormy region.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The deity akin to a Tyrant, who looked down from the dark clouds at the Spirit World Plunderer, waved his scepter and struck down again and again at his target, with success barely eluding him several times.

Klein turned more and more anxious, eager to immediately end the hunt. Hence, he unreservedly triggered the Sea God Scepter to increase the frequency at which bolts of lightning struck down.

Suddenly, he felt a strong sense of exhaustion.

This alarmed Klein for he realized that something was amiss.

The Spirit World Plunderer had the chance of retreating deeper into Calderón City at the beginning, so why is it staying around?

It's clearly a spirit world creature without a physical body. It can burrow underground to avoid the lightning and a Tyrant's notice, so why is it circling around from time to time?

It's trying to make me attack. It has noticed that I'm not a demigod through my Spirit Body Threads and my control over my marionettes. It wishes to drain me of my spirituality! Klein was alarmed. Combining it with his original encounter, he came to a realization of how intelligent the Spirit World Plunderer was. It was a rather crafty creature.

At the same time, he also thought of a problem:

Could Lightning Storm and the stormy rain attract the notice of dangerous existences in the core region of Calderón City?

I'm too rash. I keep neglecting the critical details… As thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein put away the Sea God Scepter.

The heavy storm stopped as the dark clouds quickly scattered, the weather restoring to normal.

Klein made Enzo return to his side with Word of the Sea, and he got Ludwell to protect him in the middle.

Following that, he and his two marionettes walked out as though they were trying to leave Calderón City while he still had some spirituality left.

During this process, Klein had his Spirit Body Threads vision constantly activated to prevent the Spirit World Plunderer from approaching him.

He noticed that this creature's Spirit Body Threads were somewhat special. A portion of them came out from its body and extended outwards normally. A number materialized externally and were bound together in a thick bundle, right into the translucent white robe.

Klein suspected that this was the state when a Spirit World Plunderer controlled a soul avatar, making it different from a Marionettist.

As he shifted his gaze, he suddenly saw thin black illusory threads coming out from a collapsed house. A portion of them gathered into a thick bunch with its source in the distance.

Klein didn't hesitate to raise his Sea God Scepter, creating a sonorous thunderclap.

Boom!

Amidst this sound that struck awe into one's mind and spirit, Ludwell suddenly raised his left hand.

Half his body instantly turned illusory as his arm extended out extensively, heading straight for the collapsed house.

Midway, his palm turned abnormally pale-white. An illusory face protruded out and stuck out with a snakelike tongue which had white fur covering its surface.

The tongue reached out far, penetrating the wall and stabbing at the spot where the Spirit Body Threads were gathered. It immediately sucked on a distorted and blurry soul.

Around the soul, a number of Spirit Body Threads suddenly disappeared as though they never existed.

A portion of them was none other than the gathered bundle, the ones that came from afar!

They were fake!

The Spirit World Plunderer was able to create fake, illusory Spirit World Plunderers or instantly swap location between the soul avatar and itself!

Klein suddenly turned his head and looked elsewhere. Indeed, he saw a blob of Spirit Body Threads swim over from underground at a fast speed.

He once again used Sea God Scepter, releasing a thunderclap close to the ground, one that could awe his Spirit Body.

Meanwhile, Enzo expended some of his remaining luck, adding bad luck to the target. Then, he shot out a silver bolt of lightning from the tip of the Word of the Sea.

The bolt of lightning rather luckily passed through a crack and entered the ground, striking the assailant directly. It caused a portion of the Spirit Body Threads to instantly vanish.

It was also fake!

Just as Klein reacted, his thoughts paused and his body turned numb.

Just as he opened his mouth with great difficulty to instruct the mystical item, the invisible figure in the translucent robe descended from above, landing right before him.

The Spirit World Plunderer had been hiding high in the sky, cloaking itself with the grayish-white clouds!

The moment this invisible figure appeared, maggots began crawling out of its collar where its head should be. They were maggots with strange patterns covering them.

Just one look at them sent his mind reeling. Although he broke out of the control of his Spirit Body Threads, he also lost his ability to think.

His face that was shadowed by the papal tiara began to grow meat tendrils. Each tendril was relatively transparent, like squirming worms.

If it wasn’t for the Tyrant card’s level supporting him, he would’ve fallen to the ground while struggling in pain.

The Spirit World Plunderer had a Mythical Creature form to a certain extent.

At this moment, the invisible figure inside the white robe began to control Klein's Spirit Body Threads without any obstacles in the way. In a few seconds, it was already close to succeeding.

Seeing that its prey was about to become its soul avatar, the Spirit World Plunderer suddenly saw its target open his mouth with great difficulty and say a word.

He had recovered from the state of nearly losing control faster than it had anticipated. And the word was in ancient Hermes: "Fate!"

It was the incantation for the Fate Siphon charm!

If Klein really wanted to leave, he would've grabbed his two marionettes and directly ended the summoning to return above the gray fog. He wouldn't have walked to Calderón City's entrance.

He was planting a trap for the Spirit World Plunderer!

The reason why he could recover so quickly from the injuries dealt to him by a Mythical Creature form, and why he was able to chant the relevant word, was because he had experienced such situations too many times. Besides, although he wasn't sure what method his opponent was using, there was definitely a rather well-rounded way to deal with it—make his target unlucky.

Just as Klein entered a sluggish state, his first reaction wasn't to make the mystical item sing, but to let Enzo expend all his luck, making the Spirit World Plunderer have enough bad luck!

Chapter 929 - True Soul Body

◆

“Fate!”

As the dragged out and abstruse ancient Hermes term resounded, the spots where the Spirit World Plunderer and Klein stood suddenly darkened.

It wasn’t very obvious, as though a cloud had drifted over in midair without stopping.

But when this illusionary shadow dissipated, the invisible figure that was donning a translucent white robe stood frozen on the spot. The surface of its clothes showed signs of worms crawling across it. It was sluggish, slow, and in a dire state.

Across it, Klein’s eyes had their lucidity return. The meat tendrils on the shadowed face beneath the papal tiara vanished.

It appeared as though it wasn’t the Spirit World Plunderer who had controlled Klein’s Spirit Body Threads and nearly succeeded; instead, it appeared as though Klein was the one who was controlling it and had nearly converted it into his marionette!

The Fate Siphon charm switched one’s fate!

This was a high-level charm made using a Worm of Time. It could siphon off the target’s subsequent fate, and in a short period of time, burden it with that of the target’s, so as to complete an exchanging of fates.

Therefore Klein and the Spirit World Plunderer's situations had switched. One went from death to survival, while the other went from victory to instant despair.

After confirming that the Spirit World Plunderer was intelligent and extremely difficult to deal with, making it difficult to hunt it, Klein began putting on an act of retreating. He appeared rash as he deliberately walked into the Spirit World Plunderer's control, enticing its actions, ready to use the Fate Siphon charm at the critical moment!

That way, what terrible acts the Spirit World Plunderer did to its enemy, the charm would then allow it to experience the same despair!

Of course, if the Fate Siphon charm didn't have the expected effect, or if the Spirit World Plunderer's main soul didn't appear and had ended up using other means to control the situation, Klein still had his last trick up his sleeve to protect himself—directly end the summoning and return above the gray fog. He would sacrifice his two marionettes and a few mystical items in order to ensure his own safety.

Without the time to marvel at how magical the Fate Siphon charm was, or how terrifying angels from the Marauder pathway were, Klein didn't hesitate to raise the Sea God Scepter high up before the swapping of fates ended.

The dark blue papal robe flared up with the wind as the golden papal tiara emitted meshed blue and silver beams of light. At the tip of the white bone scepter, it shot out bolts of lightning that gathered into a ball before landing on the Spirit World Plunderer's body!

A swath of silver color brightened up immediately, inundating the target, turning the surroundings white.

Once, twice, thrice. Klein continuously triggered terrifying lightning balls, expending his spirituality without holding back.

Finally, he heard a roar that seemed to stem from the depths of one's soul as he instinctively sensed that his target had collapsed and dissipated.

Only then did Klein lower the Sea God Scepter and watch the silver lightning sizzle away.

At that moment, his entire Spirit Body had turned rather illusory. Even with the Tyrant's augmentation, it didn't seem real.

As the lightning dispersed, the invisible figure in the white translucent robe appeared once again in Klein's sight.

Flickering light emerged from within as the Spirit World Plunderer's body cracked, turning into countless illusory bubbles that disintegrated bit by bit.

The Tyrant had succeeded in the hunt.

At this moment, deep within Calderón City, there was a sudden quake. It was as though a massive creature had awoken as a result of the Spirit World Plunderer's death, or that countless dangerous creatures were surging out.

The indescribable feeling combined into a swath of illusory grayish-white and, like a tidal wave, rose up from the bottom.

Other Spirit World Plunderers? No, it appears to be a more terrifying and horrible creature. A being that the Spirit World Plunderer attends to? Also, in Calderón City's core region, at the end of the deep pit, it's still as silent as ever. There's no sound at all, making it more horrifying… Klein pumped himself up as he diverted some attention in order to monitor the situation inside Calderón City as he anxiously waited for the Spirit World Plunderer's characteristic to appear to form an ingredient.

He wasn't relishing in the delight of a successful hunt but was pacing about anxiously at the edge of the abyss.

During this process, Klein got Enzo and Ludwell to stay close to him. He threw the Sea God Scepter to the former so as to escape the state of irascibility. He began considering how to deal with the subsequent development with a clear mind, as well as consider whether he had missed out on some other details.

As the thoughts flashed in his mind, Klein suddenly recalled something:

Back when he made the mystical items sing, Creeping Hunger had praised the True Creator and had used “His” complete honorific name.

Although the human-skinned glove had used Hermes instead of ancient Hermes or other languages that could stir the powers of nature, the former was still usable when it came to sacrifices! This also meant that the True Creator might’ve very well heard Creeping Hunger’s praises and noticed the commotion here.

Apart from the rising grayish-white tide and the terrifying creature deep down in the city, there are other dangers… Wait, I’m now a Spirit Body, equivalent to a wraith. I’m not in my normal state… Just as Klein’s mind thought of something, his spiritual perception was triggered as he instinctively cast his gaze at the entrance to Calderón City.

The lights there flickered as a figure entered.

The figure was wearing a simple and ordinary linen robe with a head of silver hair.

He was a handsome man with soft facial features. His eyes were gentle with some hints of coldness. It was as though he was observing the fates of everyone in the world like a spectator.

[image]

Behind him, there were beams forming illusory layers of pure wings. They spread outwards, blocking the entire entrance.

"…"

Klein nearly hissed through the gaps in his teeth as a series of titles and names flashed across his mind:

Ouroboros!

Tail Devourer!

Angel of Fate!

King of Angels!

He didn't have the luxury of time to consider the possibility of his previous thought. His body expanded as though it was incorporeal, enveloping his marionettes, Enzo and Ludwell, the yet-to-appear characteristic, and the Spirit World Plunderer's remnant bubbles within!

At this moment, Ouroboros's silver eyes already had the distant figure in "His" sights. It was a figure wearing a papal tiara and a dark blue robe, exuding extreme oppression and tyranny. There was a grayish-white fog that had been blurred by the Tyrant's aura.

A river of flickering light appeared in "His" eyes, seeming to circle the Tyrant figure and the periphery of Calderón City.

Silently, the square houses and the pale-white columns stood up again despite being destroyed by the Lightning Storm from before. The charred legs of the giant blacksmith once again possessed a body as he appeared inside the tomb, striking at the anvil.

All of this returned to what it was like shortly after the Tyrant stepped in.

However, Klein in his pontiff attire had vanished. His two marionettes along with the remnant bubbles of the Spirit World Plunderer had vanished as well.

The corresponding figure was unable to return as the rebooted scene shattered, turning back to the desolate state after the battle.

Tail Devourer Ouroboros watched silently for a long while before making a move. The grayish-white swath that rose up from the depth of Calderón City slowly receded back down.

†

Above the gray fog, Klein slumped in the high-back chair of The Fool in exhaustion. He wasn't even able to get Enzo and Ludwell to massage him.

He had already thrown the Sea God Scepter back to the junk pile. The Tyrant card had left his soul body and was placed facing down beside the Black Emperor card. The Spirit World Plunderer's bubbles were floating ahead, with the Beyonder characteristic constantly seeping out before combining with the points of light.

After resting for a while, Klein saw grayish-white powder fall onto the mottled table's surface. Following that was a transparent item that seemed weightless.

The item was the size of a palm, formed by coiled maggots. It was almost shaped like a human, and its interior was filled with a colorless liquid. Bubbles often emerged, scattering black hints of light.

Klein didn't dare to look at it carefully, as there was a more complicated structure in the weightless transparent object. They formed indescribable patterns and symbols that seemed to fuse knowledge, power, transformation, secrets, bizarreness, and madness within, making them no longer abstract.

This made Klein feel very dizzy. His mind was even on the verge of breaking down, with his soul almost losing control.

This is likely the true soul of the Spirit World Plunderer… I have the corresponding powder as well. There's about 70 grams, more than I needed. It's more than I expected. Klein nodded indiscernibly and stored the powder into a box. Together with the true soul body, he threw them on the junk pile and covered it with the gray fog.

After completing this, he raised his hand to rub his temples and made a self-deprecating remark:

If it wasn't for the Sea God Scepter, I probably would've had to leave Calderón City due to the assault of the Spirit World Plunderer. I would then wait until I had helpers and could make the most solid of hunting plans so as to control the stirrings of the area to not alarm the unknown entity at the core region…

Sigh, I was rash the entire time. Although the outcome was fine, it really doesn't suit my character. It's also completely at odds with the Seer pathway's acting. In the future, I should try to avoid using the Sea God Scepter in the outside world.

Uh… The Spirit World Plunderer has been successfully hunted. There's no need for me to get Miss Sharron's help. In a few days, I'll write to her so that she won't be thinking over this matter.

However, I have a premonition that I'll still be heading to Calderón City in the future. When that happens, perhaps I might still need Miss Sharron's help.

In addition, I have to seek out information on Bizarro Banes. I can't put all my hope on the City of Silver…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein directly returned to his body, without bringing his marionettes. He ended the ritual and headed straight for bed, falling asleep the moment his head hit the pillow.

†

"Escaped?" Soest looked at the man opposite him and asked Daly

Simone who was carrying out a spirit channeling.

They had just finished their operation and had captured a few Numinous Episcopate members. However, the key personnel the intel pointed at, Hand of White Palenque Taciblius, wasn't at the secret gathering point.

He was a Sequence 4 demigod; therefore, not only had the Red Gloves team used a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, they had even requested Goddess's Eye Ilya's help. However, it was all futile.

Daly Simone nodded.

"Yes."

She then looked at the captive, suddenly speaking with an ethereal voice, "Where did Palenque Taciblius go?"

"H-he said he was going to meet someone," the Numinous Episcopate member answered slowly.

"Who is that person?" Daly Simone pressed. Leonard Mitchell and company also cast their gazes over.

The man who was being spirit channeled answered with an unperturbed voice, "Ince Zangwill."

Chapter 930 - Former Organization

◆

“Ince Zangwill.”

Upon hearing the name, all the Red Gloves present fell silent. Not a single one spoke for a moment.

Ever since this former bishop betrayed and fled the Church, the Church of Evernight had never relaxed its pursuit of him. Archbishops and high-ranking deacons who took up high posts had taken turns being responsible for searching for him. They helped each other, often bringing the relevant Sealed Artifacts everywhere to search for clues about him. But ultimately, they were unable to lock onto Ince Zangwill. He slipped away as a result of all kinds of coincidences, his shadow wasn’t even noticed. Furthermore, he had caused several major events that killed many Nighthawks.

To the Church of Evernight, especially the Nighthawks, he was someone they hated that had also insulted them!

Without realizing it, Leonard Mitchell had already clenched his hanging fists as his breathing grew deeper.

He soon forced himself to extricate himself from the sudden emotions that emerged within him. He turned his attention to something else.

It was no wonder Dwayne Dantès was able to meet Ince Zangwill on Waypoint Island in the Berserk Sea. It was because the latter’s goal was also the Southern Continent—East Balam!

Amidst everyone's silence, Daly Simone immediately used her Spirit Body to emit an ethereal voice without any obvious changes. With some coldness, she spoke at a quickened pace:

"Where are they meeting?"

The Numinous Episcopate member shook his head blankly.

"I don't know."

Daly raised a few more questions, but she didn't get an ideal reply.

Finally, she took a step back and cast her eyes at the Red Gloves team captain, Soest.

Soest sighed and deliberated over his words before saying, "First, we need to inform this piece of intel to Her Excellency, Goddess's Eye. We shall leave it to her to contact the Holy Cathedral. Ince, who has 0-08 with him, isn't someone a Red Gloves team can handle.

"Second, we should continue investigating and follow this clue pertaining to Palenque Taciblius. Let's hope that we can figure out Ince Zangwill's motives. With the situation of us not being able to track him or lock onto him, grasping his motives is more important than knowing where he is. Perhaps, it can help us set up a trap that he has no choice but to step into.

"Finally, from now on, everyone is to take note of any coincidences. Regardless of the reason, they are to be reported to me!"

"Yes, Captain!" the Red Glove members replied in unison. Leonard maintained his silence as he turned his head to glance at Daly Simone. He found that this Gatekeeper who addressed herself as a Spirit Medium was similarly silent. Her gaze was dark.

At the same time, he heard Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice resound in his mind:

“Heh heh, from the looks of it, I’ll be witnessing a play of running and pursuing.”

What does Old Man mean? Is he hinting at something? We just decided to start investigations on Ince Zangwill’s motives, and it’s already known by 0-08? Leonard looked away and suddenly had an idea.

If a person who is already dead was to secretly do the relevant investigation, would he be able to avoid 0-08’s notice?

After two hours of sleep, Klein rubbed his still throbbing head and slowly got out of bed.

Following that, he pulled the bell by the side of the door and waited for an attendant to arrive.

Before long, a native deliberately dressed in Loen attire—a white shirt and red vest-knocked on the door.

Klein twisted the handle and opened a tiny gap in the door. He instructed with a hoarse voice, “Send another lunch set to the room. I had my meal too early.”

At that instant, he already looked like the tanned Enzo. As a gentleman living in a luxurious room with two servants, it was impossible for him to personally instruct the attendant at the door.

“Yes sir, a lunch set. Any special requests?” The native attendant took out some paper and a pen and began recording as he asked with a rather strange Loenese accent.

Klein used an equally odd Loenese accent.

“With braised meat as the main dish, match it with a cup of sparkling wine with ice and lemon.”

“Do I include two servant meals?” the native attendant asked, following the usual procedure.

Klein was silent for two seconds before saying, “Yes.”

After ending the conversation, he closed the door and quickly set up a ritual, bringing back Enzo and Ludwell from above the gray fog to the real world. As for Creeping Hunger and Word of the Sea, he temporarily left them in the junk pile. One of them was starving, and the other could hardly resist the urge to sing.

After Klein controlled the marionettes to clean up his room, a few attendants came to deliver lunch. Soon, the entire room was filled with the sounds of cutlery hitting the plate and a soft chewing sound.

After some time, Klein put down his cutlery, picked up his napkin, and wiped his mouth. In satisfaction, he leaned backward and shook his head helplessly.

“If this continues, I’ll really become fat…”

The two marionettes had already lost the ability to eat, but to conceal that fact, Klein had no choice but to add servant meals. With him unwilling to see food go to waste, he could only try to eat as much as he could.

“… Thankfully I’m a Faceless.” Klein covered his mouth as he burped before drinking the last bit of sparkling wine.

Only at this moment did he feel like he had recovered. He now had the energy to consider the various details of his trip to Calderón City.

The Marauder pathway is truly terrifying. Just a charm created from a Worm of Time is able to achieve such incredulous effects. As a King of Angels, it’s obvious how terrifying Blasphemer Amon is. Even an avatar isn’t easy to deal with… Thankfully, I didn’t put on a brave front. I knew to mimic those with experience and directly fled to the Southern Continent…

The True Creator places a great importance on me. “He” directly got Tail

Devourer Ouroboros to rush over…

This does have a feeling of traveling across time. The angels on ancient murals are just walking out and standing before me. Thankfully, I was still able to directly end the summoning.

Just as Klein thought of this, his expression sank as he discovered a serious problem:

Ouroboros is a King of Angels from the Monster pathway!

This also meant that “He” could directly see the uniqueness about him. “He” could see the grayish-white fog and see the illusory door formed of spherical lights and the transparent and translucent maggots that formed the spherical lights!

What does this actually imply? The Angel of Fate who has survived since the Second Epoch should know something. And the True Creator probably knows more… Could “They” be able to tell that I’m the master of the mysterious space above the gray fog? Regardless, the importance “They” place on me will rise! Klein clenched his right fist and put it to

Order or Rose Redemption might take.

He felt lucky that, be it Rose Redemption or the Aurora Order, they had yet to lock onto any of The Fool’s believers.

However, during the chaotic battle outside Bayam, when he was still active as Gehrman Sparrow, he had thrown out the Tinder glove, which had been corrupted by the True Creator, to attempt to attract a saint from the Aurora Order. This might very well have led to the crazy adventurer to enter the suspect list.

From the clues extending outward from Gehrman Sparrow, there’s Admiral of Stars, Vice Admiral Iceberg, Danitz, and Anderson. All of them will be investigated by the Aurora Order. I have to warn them. Klein slowly exhaled and stood up, prepared to head above the gray fog.

From his point of view, the pursuit of Gehrman Sparrow by the military, Church of Storms, Rose School of Thought, and Numinous Episcopate were all different. The True Creator's believers were rather crazy and had a King of Angels, a leader who was good at prying into the secrets of fate, active in the real world. This way, it didn't matter if Cattleya and company were at sea, making it difficult to be locked on. There was still the risk of them being found.

Among them, Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina and the Fog Sea's Strongest Hunter Anderson weren't people Klein was worried too much about. They knew little, nothing that pointed towards the core problem. Nothing much would happen aside from the need to consider whether the bunch of lunatics of the Aurora Order would employ extreme methods in the interrogation process.

West Balam, Northern State. In the Cookawa City ruled by Maysanchez. Danitz, who was chewing on roasted meat, paused suddenly. He heard Mr. Fool pass him the warning from Gehrman Sparrow.

"Be careful of the Numinous Episcopate. Be careful of the Aurora Order, especially the latter. Pay special attention. Also, warn Anderson Hood as well as Edwina Edwards."

Be careful of the Numinous Episcopate… Be careful of the Aurora Order… How many has it been… The military, Church of Storms, Church of Evernight, Rose School of Thought… What did Gehrman Sparrow do? Why has he offended so many factions? Dogsh*t! Danitz's expression froze before grimacing.

He had no idea that the strongest person of the seven pirate admirals had changed.

Opposite him, Anderson put down the knife he used to slice meat, pricked up his brows, and curiously asked, "Have you recalled something?"

Danitz secretly took a deep breath and asked after some deliberation, “Have you heard of the Aurora Order?”

He wasn’t sure if Anderson knew. After all, the Aurora Order was a rather secretive organization in the beginning. Its reputation was later build up in the Loen Kingdom.

Anderson chuckled.

“I’m actually more surprised that you know of them. Did your captain tell you?”

Without waiting for Danitz to answer, he combed his short hair with his finger and continued, “They believe that the Creator is omnipresent. Everything has godhood. They believe that life is nothing but a spiritual journey. As long as one is willing to listen to their preachings, understand, discover, and gather the godhood, they will eventually become angels to transcend reality.

“Such an idea doesn’t sound bad, but that’s not the main point. The main point is that they believe in the True Creator…”

Upon hearing that, Danitz couldn’t help but jeer:

“You know quite a bit, just slightly less than I know.”

Anderson immediately curled the ends of his mouth and said with a beaming smile, “Of course.

“I once joined an organization in Intis. They hoped to change society, the world, to make the supernatural no longer secret and to be out in the open for everyone to see, so as to become true rulers.

“They’re called the Iron and Blood Cross Order, and they also believe in the True Creator.”

Danitz’s expression froze as cold sweat oozed out of his forehead.

Chapter 931 - New Method to Acquiring Intel

◆

Glancing at Danitz's expression, Anderson continued as though he didn't notice a thing.

"However, their brains appear to have been eaten by zombies. They were fervent to the point of stupidity. They didn't adhere to my sense of aesthetics. So after cheating them of their things, I quit.

"Eh, why's your face a little pale. You're even sweating. Did you get heatstroke? As a hunter, shouldn't adapting to the environment be an intrinsic ability?"

Danitz lifted his right hand and wiped his sweat. Cursing inwardly, he forced a smile and said, "I've heard that once someone believes in an evil god, it's almost impossible to escape the faith."

As he spoke, he raised his chin slightly, wearing a look as though he was musing over the circumstances of his future death. It didn't cross his mind that Gehrman Sparrow had just offended the Aurora Order and was being targeted by the True Creator's believers. He also didn't make the connection that he was believing in a suspected evil god, The Fool.

"Well said," Anderson replied with a smile that didn't have the slightest hint of gloom. "It's not like I have any true faith. Back then, the incantations I said were lines I modified from the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Since they don't really enjoy using their brains, no—they don't even have that. As long as you superficially appear devout, any random excuse can be used to fool them."

Without waiting for Danitz to develop the discussion further, he asked, “Why are you suddenly asking about the Aurora Order?”

Danitz bit down on his roasted meat and slowly chewed and swallowed. After a deliberate pause of twenty to thirty seconds, he said, “I just recalled something. For some reason, Gehrman Sparrow has been identified by the Aurora Order as a high-priority elimination target. Oh right, there’s also the Numinous Episcopate. And both you and me are known to have relations with him.”

“You want me to be careful against the Aurora Order and the Numinous Episcopate?” Anderson nodded in enlightenment as he chuckled. “You’ve recently mentioned something similar. Rose School of Thought, Church of Storms, Loen military… Man, at times, I even feel that Gehrman Sparrow is more suited to being a hunter than me.”

Danitz could hardly retort as he nodded heavily in agreement.

Anderson thought for a moment when he suddenly changed topics out of the blue:

“What do you plan on doing here in West Balam? Helping Gehrman Sparrow with something?”

Upon hearing this question, Danitz fell silent for a second. He put down the item in his hand and tidied his clothes in an unhurried manner.

“Investigate the faith of the different classes of West Balam.”

This was determined after his discussion with Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina. In common parlance, it meant: Investigating the developments of the various secret organizations and factions in West Balam.

Of course, this included some preliminary contact with the local ruling forces, and to figure out if they had any desire to purchase firearms.

“Investigate the faith of the different classes of West Balam…” Anderson repeated Danitz’s words as he reflectively raised his right hand to rub his temples as though he had a headache.

†

After the end of the Tarot Gathering, and warning Admiral of Stars to take note of the Aurora Order's and Numinous Episcopate's "investigations," with the best choice being seeking the Moses Ascetic Order's help, Klein busily finished the three-party transaction between The World, The Moon, and The Sun. He received 5,000 pounds in return.

After dinner, he bit on an unlit disguised smoke pipe as he read the papers. Then, he saw Miss Messenger walk out of the void to deliver him a letter.

Leonard's… Klein reached out to receive it and noticed that Reinette Tinekerr didn't stay at all. She had rapidly returned to the spirit world.

This also made him determine that Leonard Mitchell had already paid the mailing fee; hence, he took out his other hand and unfolded the letter.

"Ince Zangwill has appeared in East Balam. He's suspected to have met with Palenque Taciblius from the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction…"

Ince Zangwill… Klein ruminated over the name as he slowly leaned back into his reclining chair.

In the letter, Leonard wished that he could do some investigations in secret to figure out Ince Zangwill's motives.

But the problem is that 0-08 has the characteristic of "any mention of it will be known." Knowing of it also means being known by it. Besides, it's good at arranging coincidences, making people follow its directions without even realizing it… Under such circumstances, it's very difficult to avoid 0-08's notice while investigating Ince Zangwill. Not only is there no chance of success, it's also easy to expose myself… As Klein thought, he made Enzo walk behind him and begin massaging his shoulder.

He read Leonard Mitchell's letter again, hoping to find more clues and incisive points for investigations from those few words.

East Balam… Numinous Episcopate… Artificial Death… Palenque Taciblius… Why is Ince Zangwill looking for them for? Trying to find allies for the true mastermind behind the Great Smog of Backlund, that royal family's faction?

Artificial Death… Artificial Death…

As Klein thought, he suddenly recalled that there was a matter that no one knew other than himself and Mr. Azik.

The Evernight Goddess had preliminary gained control of the Death pathway's Uniqueness—in other words, Artificial Death. Presently, "She" was usurping, digesting, and wielding the corresponding authority!

In other words, the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction's target of belief was, in a way, the Evernight Goddess. After the authority was fully transferred and seized, they were bound to suffer a purge before slowly merging with the Church of Evernight. Or they might continue their work, making contact with the other Numinous Episcopate factions and other secret factions while unnoticeably cooperating with the Nighthawks.

To Klein, this wasn't anything of importance. What was important was, that in an ancient text he found before, it mentioned:

To artificially create Death, a number of Numinous Episcopate members had to pray to the Uniqueness daily, as though it was a true deity. It was an attempt to slowly awaken its sentience and allow it to come to life.

Of course, this was only one part of the overall plan which wasn't critical.

Then, could it be possible that when Palenque Taciblius prayed to Artificial Death, he had mentioned Ince Zangwill's motives and had sought blessings?

But he will probably never imagine that Artificial Death has already been controlled by the Evernight Goddess. Although it hasn't become part of "Her" manifestation, it has already lost its "freedom."

From this angle, directly setting up a ritual to pray to the Goddess might allow one to obtain Ince Zangwill's motives… That's quite possible! The more Klein thought about it, the more certain he was that his seemingly ridiculous plan would succeed.

And as for the reason why this could become a reality:

It was because the enemy's "leader" was their "spy"!

After getting Enzo to stop massaging him, Klein slowly got up and paced about, considering if he should make the attempt, and if so, how.

Ince Zangwill is a traitor of the Church. He's an insult to all Nighthawks. If there's a chance to wipe him out, the Goddess should be very willing to see it happen. "She" wouldn't mind providing some help…

But the Goddess is now in a critical stage of seizing the Artificial Death's authority. "She" will not be able to provide answers for a long period of time, and "She" can only provide feedback to normal ritualistic magic. Besides, I also lack the corresponding materials…

Also, I've been constantly warning myself to be on guard. I must not fully trust and rely on the Goddess… On second thoughts, directly praying to "Her" to obtain a revelation might not be too good. I hope to maintain a safe distance… Amidst his thoughts, Klein felt a little hesitant.

He began letting his thoughts wander in a bid to find a more acceptable plan.

Suddenly, he had a more ridiculous idea.

Directly pray to Artificial Death!

This actually posed no danger. This was because Artificial Death wasn't able to respond to prayers and rituals. If there was any feedback, it meant that it was essentially controlled by the Evernight Goddess. On the other hand, Klein had the feather produced and left behind from the Artificial Death Project. He also had Azik's copper whistle. He didn't need to spend too much time to gather the ingredients needed to set up a ritual for a revelation!

In addition, there's a layer in between us. I'm not directly contacting the Goddess. Perhaps, this might even help "Her" further seize Artificial Death's authority. Klein consoled himself as he began busying himself.

He first used the sacrificial and bestowment ritual. He brought back the two remaining feathers and some Full Moon Essence Oil, night vanilla powder, and other items which he had not used in a while to the real world. Then, he modified the sacrificial altar and completed the first part of the preparations. After all, he was essentially praying to the Evernight Goddess, he couldn't be bothered to head out to buy ritualistic materials of the Death domain.

This was essentially the same as other normal ritualistic magic. With great familiarity, Klein lit the candles, dripped some essential oils, and drew the symbols for "human" and "concealment" on an artificial goatskin. Then, in the thin fog that spread, he pressed Azik's copper whistle over it.

Immediately after that, he placed the white feather stained with pale yellow oil stains inside the silver bowl that had burning herbal powder. He then watched it curl without any signs of it turning black.

After exhaling silently, Klein took a step back and chanted in Hermes:

“You are the essence of death;

“You are the lord of the dead;

“You are the final home to all living beings.

“I pray for your help; I pray for you to tell me the motives for Ince Zangwill’s contact with the Numinous Episcopate.

“…”

Just as he said those words, the three candlelight burgeoned as though they brightened significantly but were tainted with a dark green. The surroundings turned cold and creepy.

Klein closed his eyes and entered Cogitation for thirty seconds, feeling uneasy. He walked in front of the altar, picked up the Full Moon Essence Oil and dripped one drop onto each of the three candles.

After doing this, he took away Azik’s copper whistle, grabbed the artificial goatskin, and moved it close to the candlelight representing “himself.” When it ignited, he threw it into the silver bowl.

With a whoosh, the white feather which didn’t show any signs of damage soared with pale-white flames, covering the entire silver bowl and obstructing Klein’s vision.

About three seconds later, the fire subsided, leaving a mound of powder in the silver bowl.

The powder moved without the help of any wind, forming one word after another:

“Possessed by an evil spirit. Requires exorcism.”

Chapter 932 - Thin-Skinned

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…The Goddess really replied… Upon seeing the words formed by the powder, Klein’s first reaction had nothing to do with the content. Instead, he was shocked that this seemingly ridiculous thing had happened.

Although he was already mentally prepared and had believed that the chance of success was rather high, he still felt conflicting emotions. It took him almost a minute to accept it.

After a while, Klein exhaled slowly, raised his right hand, and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise manner.

“Praise the Lady!”

He then ended the ritual, forcing himself to focus his attention on the revelation itself.

Possessed by an evil spirit. Requires exorcism?

Ince Zangwill actually got possessed by an evil spirit? He had gone from Sequence 9 to Sequence 5 of the Death pathway. The godhood he obtained at the critical stage is also Sequence 4 Nightwatcher of the Evernight pathway, one that is good at dealing with Spirit Body-type creatures. Evil spirits and wraiths should be afraid of him, so why would he end up being possessed?

That’s unless the evil spirit’s level is extremely high or, at its core, is very special.

Unfortunately, I've only met one evil spirit in the truest sense of the word. It's that ancient evil spirit sealed in the underground ruins of Alista Tudor. I know little about such monsters, so it's difficult for me to grasp the details. Hmm, I can write to ask Miss Sharron. I can also get Little Sun to find out more. That Shepherd Elder Lovia had Grazed an evil spirit…

It's no wonder Ince Zangwill is trying to meet a demigod of the Numinous Episcopate. When it comes to exorcising evil spirits, aside from the Church of Evernight and Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, the best would probably be the Numinous Episcopate. Uh, there's probably the Church of the God of Combat as well. Neighboring pathways often have similar traits.

There's also one point that can be gleaned from this. Ince Zangwill doesn't wish for his possessed state to be known by the royal family faction and the Demoness Sect who are in cahoots with him. Otherwise, there's no need for him to come all the way to the Southern Continent! The two factions existed before the Fifth Epoch, and they have a long legacy. It's quite unlikely that they don't have a Sealed Artifact that can remove or exorcise evil spirits. Even if they can't find one, getting the Demoness Sect to contact the Numinous Episcopate is definitely safer and more covert than getting Ince Zangwill to make the trip himself…

As his thoughts raced, Klein unfolded a piece of paper and wrote:

"The intel you have provided me made me connect certain clues from what I've previously gathered. And due to a particular great existence's help, this points to a clear conclusion:

"Ince Zangwill is possessed by an evil spirit, and he's seeking the Numinous Episcopate's help.

"Just based on this fact alone, we can make several useful judgments:

"Ince Zangwill will often manifest inconsistency in his words and actions. He will often deviate from his normal path, doing something we feel that is absolutely impossible for him to do, and to make mistakes we find incomprehensible. Before this problem is resolved, he will not stop having contact with the Numinous Episcopate. It might even become more frequent…

“Making investigations based on this might allow us to catch Ince Zangwill by the tail. However, I believe we still wouldn’t be able to lock onto him. The creation of coincidences from that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact is insurmountable.”

Upon writing this, Klein couldn’t help but recall his direct encounter with Ince Zangwill.

His own investigations didn’t directly point to him, but it caused their ploy to nearly fail. Hence, Ince Zangwill personally took action, sending a meteor falling from the sky in an attempt to kill Sherlock Moriarty so as to obliterate any clues. And he ultimately received Mr. Azik’s help and escaped the dire situation, forcing Ince Zangwill to step into the limelight and expose himself.

Back then, if Mr. Azik had recovered to his former strength, Ince Zangwill might already be dead… But to replicate such a situation and force him to appear before me is still extremely difficult. After all, back then, not only was there Mr. Azik, a Death Consul, and my use of the gray fog to foil the coincidences, there was also Trissy Cheek and the ring which was suspected to be a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. Without her suddenly escaping, Ince Zangwill wouldn’t have been forced to personally take action… Klein deliberated as he wrote:

“If we can figure out the origins and primary goals of the evil spirit, there might be a chance of the situation having a favorable change…”

After writing the matters regarding Ince Zangwill, Klein’s heart stirred. Just as he was about to mention something else, he stopped his pen after writing the first few letters. He raised his left hand and pinched his cheeks. He appeared to be in a serious dilemma and seemed a little embarrassed.

After muttering silently a few times, Klein finally smoothly wrote the rest:

“Even without that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact’s help, Ince Zangwill is an enemy you and I are unable to face head-on. We need to make plenty of preparations.

“If you can provide me with some Worms of Time, I can use them to create high-level charms that can deal with demigods. It’s called a ‘Fate Siphon’ charm. It can swap the fates of yourself and the target for a short period of time.”

Putting down his fountain pen, Klein didn’t take a second look as he quickly folded the letter and seriously sealed it in an envelope.

He then took out the adventurer’s harmonica and a gold coin before summoning Miss Messenger. He got her to take away the reply letter to Leonard Mitchell, but this time, it wasn’t addressed to 7 Pinster Street. Instead, it was directly sent to Leonard’s present address. With Leonard having just written the letter, Klein didn’t believe that he had moved out of Reinette Tinekerr’s detection range.

After doing all of this, Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he shook his head slightly.

Requesting the help of others is really a difficult task. It’s even more so for someone as thin-skinned as me.

He quickly retracted his attention and once again modified Enzo’s and Ludwell’s appearances. After all, they had been seen by Angel of Fate Ouroboros during their exploration of Calderón City.

During this process, Klein suddenly had an idea. He planned on “sending” them above the gray fog and using the Spirit World Plunderer’s true soul body for a disguise!

The Spirit World Plunderer could make its soul avatars take the form of its true soul body, and it could also get them to disguise themselves as other spirit world creatures. The Beyonder ingredient it left behind must've had such abilities. However, it would be difficult to use it with the poor effects and the huge negative side effects!

However, this wasn't a problem for Klein who possessed the mysterious space above the gray fog. After all, he didn't plan on using the Beyonder ingredient for actual combat. Doing some changes to his marionette didn't require too many smooth operations and great effects. Furthermore, this could be slowly adjusted. As for the negative effects that came from the godhood, it wasn't something to consider. Who wasn't obedient when left in the junk pile?

After a series of tasks, Klein sat at the high-back chair of The Fool. In his hand was the palm-sized Spirit World Plunderer's true soul body. Without looking down to look at it in detail, he extended his spirituality bit by bit into it.

There wasn't much changes to the scene before him. It was still the illusory and dense black Spirit Body Threads. However, when he tried controlling them, he discovered that not only could he control the marionettes' Spirit Body Threads, but he could also let his Spirit Body Threads extend out and penetrate into their bodies.

When both sides established such a two-way connection, Klein suddenly felt that he and his marionette was one. All his Beyonder powers could be enacted on the other party through the Spirit Body Threads, including his trick for changing his appearance and body!

Amidst a slow and difficult process, Klein felt rather groggy as he felt his emotions turned into a mess. He began showing signs of losing control.

This was an inevitable outcome from having his spirituality make direct contact with godhood.

He hurriedly diverted some attention to stir some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog, and he restored his condition back to its normal state.

After enduring the torment, Klein finished his attempt. Enzo had transformed into a Southern Continent native that looked like he came from a plantation. Ludwell had a mixed-blood feel to him. His ghastly face was no longer more bone than flesh. Instead, there was a plumpness to it. As for the silver mask that had the effect of placating the soul, there was no way of removing it for the time being. All Klein could do was let it stick to Ludwell's chest. This still had a certain level of effect, but it was inferior to wearing it on his face. It could barely maintain the status quo.

Unfortunately, there's no way to change this mask into other types of accessories. Otherwise, it would save me quite a bit of trouble. As Klein rushed to throw the Spirit World Plunderer's true soul body back onto the junk pile, he rubbed his temples and allowed his thoughts to wander. Right, I still have a Soul Assurer Beyonder characteristic here that can be made into a mystical item to replace that mask… No, I've always planned on returning it to the Church. I'll mail it to him when Leonard replies.

After the discomfort slowly subsided, Klein took out his golden pocket watch and opened it to check the time.

Following that, he summoned a paper figurine and stirred some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. He then threw both into a specially labeled point of light.

It was the point of light representing The Fool's only believer at present —Danitz!

From Klein's point of view, Admiral of Stars Cattleya had the Moses Ascetic Order backing her. Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina was from the Church of Knowledge and Wisdom. Anderson Hood didn't know much about Gehrman Sparrow, and being good at identifying the situation he was in, he wasn't one to put on a brave front. Therefore, when the Aurora Order did an "investigation," it was unlikely that they would be in grave danger. Danitz was the only exception. With him in West Balam and not able to return to the Golden Dream anytime soon, his lacking strength, and him often wearing the boxing glove that made him act rashly, it was truly worrisome.

Due to this fact, Mr. Fool had to work a little harder. He gave Danitz a Paper Angel's embrace every day at a fixed time, so as to disrupt any divination or prophecies about him.

†

Leonard never expected Klein Moretti to reply that quickly. With some level of incredulity, he opened the envelope and read the corresponding content.

"Due to a particular great existence's help… Is he referring to The Fool?

"Indeed, Klein's investigations into Ince Zangwill has already reached a significant depth. He has already figured out the truth the moment I mentioned the Numinous Episcopate…

"Possessed by an evil spirit? How did he end up being possessed by an evil spirit?

"How do we make use of it?

"Worms of Time… This…" Leonard quickly scanned through the last part of the letter as his expression suddenly became complicated.

In his mind, Pallez Zoroast maintained his silence without saying a word.

Chapter 933 - Evil Spirits' Common Trait

* * *

After a while, Leonard cleared his throat and wore a smile without realizing it. He said with a suppressed voice, “Old Man, Klein’s… This suggestion seems pretty good. It’s very… very viable. The effects should be quite substantial. Why don’t you consider it?

“Didn’t you mention that you would do your best to help me exact revenge?

“Haha, I thought Worms of Time could only be used for avatars and act as support…”

He subconsciously droned on while Pallez Zoroast remained silent the entire time. Only after a while did he sigh lightly and say, “I can only give you a maximum of two Worms of Time.”

Without waiting for Leonard to say a word, he added, “To exact revenge on a demigod who wields a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, the most important thing is still your own level and strength. Otherwise, you won’t have a chance of using it even if you have a high-level charm.”

Leonard wiped away his smile and nodded seriously.

“I’ll do my best digesting my potion.

“If you finish digesting it and fail to accumulate enough contribution points, I’ll help you seek out the Beyonder ingredients needed for Spirit Warlock.”

As for only having two Worms of Time, he wasn't disappointed at all. It was already a bonus. Just getting one was a great boon. Having two meant that he and Klein could split it, each of them having one Fate Siphon charm.

After expressing his attitude, he asked in puzzlement, "Old Man, do you think Klein has already used the previous Worm of Time as a charm?"

He remembered very clearly that, back when they were figuring out who Emlyn White was supporting, Old Man had parasitized Tinder with a Worm of Time. Later, it lost contact and failed to be of any use. Now, on retrospection, just Emlyn White's and Sherlock Moriarty's close relationship made it easy for him to figure out the truth. The Worm of Time had been eliminated by the upper echelons of the secret organization or even The Fool "Himself." Furthermore, there was a high chance that it had been bestowed to Klein. Otherwise, his former colleague wouldn't have known of the existence of the Worm of Time.

Pallez Zoroast immediately scoffed.

"If he hasn't already used it and seen its effects, why would he raise the issue and ask for more?

"Alright. I need to separate the Worms of Time. This will make me fall asleep for at least two weeks. If you have any questions, find someone to answer them by yourself."

With that said, not giving Leonard a chance to raise further questions, "He" scattered his spirituality and created a blob of light that hung "high" inside Leonard's mind as though "He" didn't wish to speak.

Leonard's instinctive response was to chuckle dryly. He focused his attention back onto the letter from Klein Moretti as he carefully read it again.

Possessed by an evil spirit… The origins and primary goals of the evil spirit…

I don't know much about evil spirits. Nothing comes to mind…

After a few minutes of thought, Leonard took out a matchbox and burned the letter. Then, he left the room which the local Nighthawks had assigned him at the last minute. He came to a room diagonally opposite his and knocked on the door.

Before long, Daly, who hadn't removed her blue eyeshadow and blush, opened the door and pricked up her eyebrows.

"When did a Sleepless have the courage to knock on a lady's door at a time highly associated with a bed?"

"Ahem. I have some questions I'd like to consult you about." Leonard obviously didn't dare respond to Daly's comment as he immediately expressed the reason why he was here.

Daly sized him up and chuckled.

"I'm not responsible for counseling minors."

As she spoke, she made way and allowed Leonard to enter her room.

Without daring to let his eyes wander, he casually pulled a round stool to sit on. He then went straight to the point:

"Ma'am, I'd like to know more about evil spirits.

"You're a Sequence 5 of the Death pathway. You have higher clearance than me. You should know quite a lot."

"Why are you asking me this?" Daly propped herself with her hands on the edge of the table behind her.

Without waiting for him to reply, she continued, "Most evil spirits are the result of dead High-Sequence Beyonders. A small number of them are wraiths who break through various restrictions via using various opportunities.

“The first situation is more common. After High-Sequence Beyonders consume a potion to obtain godhood, their Soul Body would have experienced a mutation. It would be a mutation at their core. This allows their Soul Body to remain even in death or when their powers are dispersed. There will be a certain level of divinity to it, making them rather terrifying. The second situation isn’t different on a fundamental level.

“Normally speaking, evil spirits will weaken with the passage of time until they completely dissipate. However, they can also assimilate into the region where they were born, making the spirit world and even the Underworld fuse with it. They then extract power from this to maintain their existence.

“Therefore, many evil spirits have their own territory and active range. It’s not that they do not wish to leave, but they can’t. The only exception is when they accumulate sufficient power, allowing their existence to experience a fundamental change.”

Leonard habitually crossed his right leg over his left and pressed in thought, “Can evil spirits leave their territory by possessing a person?”

“Yes, but ordinary humans and most Beyonders are unable to withstand the extraction effect the evil spirits have on their bodies. They will quickly lose their spirituality and body temperature and be unable to last long.” As Daly spoke, she raised her hand to point at herself. “The best method is to rely on Beyonders of the Death pathway. Of course, it has to be at least a Sequence 5, because from Gatekeeper, we will have our own dead spirit prison in our bodies. It can be called a miniature Underworld. It can provide an evil spirit with an adequate environment for their existence. Once you become a Spirit Warlock, you will also have similar powers. However, it will be more about sealing and sleeping than an internal Underworld. Heh heh, those natural spirits and wraiths are truly troublesome when they come in and out.”

Ince Zangwill's Sequence 5 is Gatekeeper… It's no wonder that the evil spirit can possess him for long periods of time. Or could it be that he failed at an attempt to enslave an evil spirit? Leonard's thoughts opened up as he immediately made connections.

He deliberated for a few seconds before asking, "What sort of needs does an evil spirit have?"

"Needs? Singing? Dancing? Poetry? Men? Women? The Sea of Stars?" Daly returned with a question, amused.

Leonard realized that his usage of words was problematic as he awkwardly ruffled his hair.

"I mean, what desires will an evil spirit have?"

"That depends on what it desired while it was alive. Typically speaking, the remnant spirit will inherit the original obsessions, without being able to balance it rationally. If it were you, that evil spirit might attempt to write poems, imprison a group of spectators, and seek acknowledgment. Or it will do things in an ostentatious manner like the protagonist of a play," Daly joked. "However, regardless of what it was while it was alive, as long as one becomes an evil spirit, they commonly desire two things."

"What are they?" Leonard turned attentive.

Daly shot a glance at him and said, "First, it's to feed on the souls of living creatures. This can pleasure them, an innate pleasure that stems from the need to maintain their existence. In addition, a large number of souls will allow them to escape the restrictions of their territory and active range. It will replace the power provided by the spirit world and Underworld.

"Second, it's to seek out Beyonder ingredients from their pathway while they were alive. Through this, they could create another foundation. At a certain stage, the evil spirit would no longer need to draw on the powers of the spirit world and Underworld. They would no longer be restricted by their territories or active range. In a sense, they would have transformed into a special spirit world creature."

Leonard seemed to realize something as he thought.

"This also means that evil spirits can consume Sequence potions?"

"No, Sequence potions are created for human consumption. They reduce the risk of losing control. To many supernatural creatures, there's no need to do so. They can directly consume the ingredient raw. It's especially so for evil spirits. Their obsession, cruelty, ferociousness, and penchant for souls make them half-crazy to begin with. There's no need to regulate it from other sources. Furthermore, they are Spirit Bodies, so the method of consumption is direct accommodation and slow digestion." Daly corrected Leonard's point.

This… To the evil spirit that possesses Ince Zangwill, whenever it has the upper hand, it will control the body to seek out Beyonder ingredients of its pathway while it was alive! Leonard was first surprised before he had an idea. He said in a pleasant surprise, "I understand. Thank you for answering my questions."

With that said, he hesitated for a few seconds and asked after some deliberation, "Ma'am, I believe we shouldn't just figure out the motives behind Ince Zangwill's meeting with the Numinous Episcopate demigod, but we also need to track his trajectory since Backlund to East Balam. We need to know what he did midway, what items he found. This might lead us to effective clues."

Daly suddenly fell silent before she pricked up her brows and said, "Well said.

"But what does this have to do with evil spirits?"

"…Nothing. I raised the question so as to make preparations because I believe that since we are investigating the Numinous Episcopate, we might encounter evil spirits. The latter half was a suggestion I wished to make after the break. I just wished to talk to you about it beforehand.” Leonard’s mind raced as he slowed down his speech and fabricated an excuse on the spot.

Daly listened in silence and chuckled.

“If you actually work so hard to fabricate stories in front of other girls, you’ll no longer be single with those looks of yours.

“Unfortunately, I’m not a clueless girl. Alright, there’s no need to explain further. Leave.”

Leonard stood up lamely without trying to emphasize his point. He then walked towards the door.

Just as he gripped the handle, Daly’s slightly ethereal voice sounded behind him:

“I don’t know what secret you’re hiding, nor do I know what you know. None of that matters.

“But when it comes to Ince Zangwill, if you need any help or aid, you can find me.”

Leonard paused for two seconds as his mouth quivered. He then pulled open the door and walked out.

City of Silver.

Derrick Berg had received the order to join an expedition team. Leading it was Chief Colin Iliad. Their target was Nois City. It was in a northern city’s ruins where the Shapeshifter and other terrifying creatures lived!

Chapter 934 - 1 + 1 > 2

◆

Ever since the information about the suspected Bizarro Bane-Shapeshifter-was given to Mr. World, Derrick constantly believed that the latter might one day entrust him with a mission for the corresponding ingredients. However, his strength was lacking. Even with his friends, it was impossible for him to complete the hunt. Furthermore, such expeditions needed to go through the six-member council. Private teams were unable to wander too far from the City of Silver. Therefore, all he could do was temporarily suppress it deep down. From time to time, it was used to motivate him to advance quicker.

To his surprise, it didn't take long before an expedition team headed for Nois City was set up. Leading the team was Chief Colin Iliad!

Combining his previous discussion with Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and company at the recent Tarot Gathering, Derrick quickly came up with a theory:

During the exploration of the former Chief's mausoleum, Mr. Fool had provided a certain level of help to the present Chief, allowing him to foil the Fallen Creator's ploy and successfully resolve certain matters. Hence, noticing his search for information, the Demon Hunter had decided to hunt a Shapeshifter to please the deity!

"This is a necessary way to curry favor, and is also a kind of equivalent exchange…" The Hanged Man's words resounded in Derrick's mind. It made him no longer puzzled over the matter. So, taking the opportunity before he set out, he prayed to Mr. Fool and requested "Him" to inform Mr. World of this expedition.

He quickly received a response and heard Mr. World say:

"… If the hunting of the Bizarro Bane is difficult or dangerous, the requirements can be lowered. Attempt to extract its blood.

"As long as you obtain it, I'll trade for it with the Priest of Light's Beyonder characteristic."

Priest of Light's Beyonder characteristics? Mr. World already has the Priest of Light Beyonder characteristic? Or could it be that he has locked onto a target and will quickly be able to obtain it? With the Chief's strength and the teamwork of the expedition team, there's a high chance of success if it's just extracting the blood… Derrick felt relieved as he held Thunder God's Roar and left his residence, heading straight for the training field.

Just as he arrived at his destination, he saw Chief Colin Iliad. The latter carried two swords on his back. He was tall and staid, leaving anyone who saw him at ease.

And beside this Demon Hunter was another person. She was wearing a black robe with purple patterns, and she had long, curly, silver-gray hair-Shepherd Lovia.

Lovia, who was apparently participating in this expedition, turned her head as her pale gray eyes reflected Derrick Berg's figure. However, there was only calm in her eyes.

Derrick felt a baffling sense of alarm as he involuntarily slowed down his pace.

East Balam, above the gray fog.

Klein deeply approved of the City of Silver's Chief's organization of an expedition to Nois City. He also informed Little Sun that there was no need to take risks. All he needed was some blood of the target for the completion of the mission.

When the time came, he could smear the blood over Groselle's Travels, bring all his gear, and challenge the Bizarro Bane on his turf; thus, obtaining the Beyonder ingredients he needed.

Klein had also considered the possibility of whether Groselle's Travels's ability to swallow people into the book's world was screened by the uniqueness of the Forsaken Land of the Gods. He had also come up with a solution. It was to bestow Little Sun with Groselle's Travels. After achieving the goal, he could get Little Sun to sacrifice it back.

In addition, he wasn't worried about the Bizarro Bane lacking blood because of its nature as a spirit world creature. This was because the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula clearly wrote:

"Supplementary ingredients: 200 ml of a Bizarro Bane's blood…"

There are always more solutions than problems… Klein muttered in satisfaction before returning to the real world.

Before sleeping, he received a reply from Leonard Mitchell. It mentioned that it would take another day for the Worm of Time, and he described the monsters known as evil spirits in detail.

Another day before it can be provided. And there will be two of them. The grandpa in Leonard's body has quite a good attitude… Unable to leave the territory, limited in activity range… Their common trait is to devour the souls of living creatures and to desire Beyonder ingredients from their pathway from when they were still alive… This also means that the evil spirit will seek out the corresponding ingredients and Beyonder characteristics when it wields control over Ince Zangwill's body. This is indeed a direction for investigation. Klein held the letter as he read and thought.

Suddenly, he recalled something:

Back when he encountered Ince Zangwill on Waypoint Island in the Berserk Sea, the latter had been pursued by a powerful demigod from the Hunter pathway!

Could… Could it be a result of that evil spirit?

I previously imagined that Ince Zangwill had received a commission by some faction in the royal family, and did something that targeted the Intis Republic, only to have a mistake happen; thus exposing himself and getting pursued by their powerhouses…

From the looks of it, there might be another possibility… That evil spirit desires the Beyonder characteristics of the Hunter pathway, and when it could control Ince Zangwill's body, it attempted to hunt Beyonders of the same pathway. This might've succeeded or failed. In short, the result was that he was targeted by a powerful demigod from the Hunter pathway. He pursued him the entire journey with his intuition as a hunter. The more Klein thought about it, the more convinced he was that his theory was close to reality.

This was the only way to explain why Ince Zangwill, who wielded 0-08, was discovered!

At this moment, Enzo and Ludwell were kneeling down, massaging Klein's legs.

I can guess that it's an evil spirit of the Hunter pathway for now. I'll later write back to Leonard and get him to steer the investigations in this direction. Eh, this fellow's acting isn't that great, nor does he have the psychological experience. I wonder if he will end up exposing himself. Perhaps, he will explain it away with some nonexistent informant… Hunter pathway evil spirit. Hunter pathway evil spirit… Klein's eyes suddenly widened as he suddenly sat up, leaving his two marionettes at a loss.

There weren't many evil spirits he knew, and he had only seen one; however, that one happened to be from the Hunter pathway!

It was Red Angel Medici's main body that had combined with the remnant psyches of the two Sequence 1 angel from the Sauron and Einhorn families!

When it came to the Hunter pathway, there was no evil spirit that was of an even higher level. That was unless Blood Emperor Alista Tudor still had his psyche remaining.

Previously, Ince Zangwill was in Backlund. That evil spirit, who I'm not sure if I should call Medici, was also in Backlund.

Later, that evil spirit escaped the seal, and its whereabouts are unknown. As for Ince Zangwill, he suffered from the possession of an evil spirit.

Both sides are evil spirits from the Hunter pathway…

This… Could the one possessing Ince Zangwill be the Red Angel evil spirit? Klein frowned bit by bit, almost finding his theory unbelievable. However, he found it very possible!

As his thoughts raced, he found another indirect piece of evidence:

The unique trait of 0-08 is that once you know it, it will also know you. And as a King of Angels who survived from the Second Epoch, Red Angel Medici probably knows all kinds of details about 0-08!

In other words, as long as the evil spirit attempted to recall anything related to 0-08, 0-08 would know of it and establish a connection.

Right, there was that sentence: "Pleasure working with you" …No way… But the problem lies in the fact that I previously suspected that evil spirit to have one Sequence 1 characteristic. There's no need for it to seek any more of it. Could it be that it hasn't digested it? Klein rubbed his temples as his head ached. He stood up, entered his bathroom, and took four steps counterclockwise and headed above the gray fog.

Just as he sat down, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote the following divination statement:

"The one possessing Ince Zangwill is the evil spirit back in the underground ruins of Alista Tudor."

He scrutinized each word for a few seconds before taking off the topaz pendant on his left wrist and planned to use spirit dowsing for the divination.

This time, the scene he saw when he opened his eyes

was:

The topaz pendant stood still.

This meant that the divination had failed.

The level is too high and there's 0-08. Right, that evil spirit also carried the Red Priest card that has anti-divination and anti-prophecy properties. It's no wonder I failed with the three combined… Hmm, this is also an indirect confirmation. Klein analyzed the reason and considered what other ways he could make a verification.

He tapped his finger on the edge of the long bronze table and silently muttered to himself, Apart from getting Leonard to lead the Red Gloves to do an investigation, I should do something as well…

Assuming that the one possessing Ince Zangwill is really the Red Angel evil spirit, where will it seek out Beyonder ingredients from the Hunter pathway when it gains control of the body?

Intis's capital, Trier? Feysac capital, St. Millom? Or would it solely rely on the Card of Blasphemy's activation and seal in order to use the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence to attract Beyonders to fly to it like moths flying to a fire?

Wait, it mentioned before that the descendants of the Medici family are in Bansy Harbor.

Although it has already been destroyed, there might still be something buried there!

Also, the evil spirit with the three angels' remnant spirit has very potent provocative traits. This matches Leonard's description of evil spirits in the letter. It might've deliberately left something in Bansy…

With this in mind, Klein immediately conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow's figure and requested The Hanged Man to head to Bansy once more to do a more thorough investigation.

After doing that, Klein began contemplating. Once he confirmed that Ince Zangwill had the Red Angel evil spirit in him, he wondered if he could use the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence as a starting point, enticing "Ince Zangwill" into the trap he set up using the corresponding ingredients.

Hunter pathway… Hunter pathway… Amidst his thoughts, Klein suddenly recalled two Hunters who were loitering in West Balam.

He frowned slightly and began analyzing.

Although East Balam and West Balam are vast territories, and the distance between the city that Ince Zangwill made his last appearance and the Northern State is very great, he will probably take nearly half a month to travel, even as a demigod since he doesn't have Teleport. In theory, Danitz and Anderson will not suddenly encounter the Red Angel evil spirit because of the law of convergence. Also, their Sequences are too low, but I can't be too sure…

West Balam, Northern State, Cookawa City.

Danitz shot a glance at Anderson and blurted out.

"I'm going to do some investigations. Why are you following me?

"Logically speaking, shouldn't you head back to the Fog Sea at Behrens Harbor?"

Chapter 935 - “Meeting Up”

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Anderson, who was enjoying a piece of cream cassava bread, looked up at Danitz. Seemingly in thought, he said, “I’m not sure why, but I don’t wish to leave West Balam. Haha. Since I’m here, as a treasure hunter, how can I return empty-handed?

“In the extensive forests, there are all sorts of abandoned temples that have gold, jewelry, antiques, and maybe mystical items. All of them are waiting for me to rescue them!”

Danitz tipped his chin and guzzled down the remaining Gwadar.

This was a beverage made from a fruit native to West Balam. It was orange-yellow in color with a sweetness amidst its sourness. It was good at quenching thirst and relieving heat. It also had some caffeine that allowed people to combat fatigue and stay awake.

Putting down the cup and picking up his napkin to wipe his mouth, Danitz scoffed.

“I keep feeling as though you’re up to something.”

“I also hope that’s the case,” Anderson said with an unconcerned smile.

He matched breakfast with coffee.

In East and West Balam, there were many excellent coffee-bearing lands. They were just slightly less famous than Feynapotter’s highlander coffee, the Southern Continent’s highlander coffee, and the Star Highlands and the nearby Paz Valley’s Fermo coffee.

Without waiting for Danitz's reply, Anderson said with a smile, "Actually, isn't this good? I'm providing you with free protection, and you're my interpreter. Everyone benefits out of this arrangement."

Recalling that he was only a Sequence 7 and was wanted by all kinds of factions, Danitz had a baffling feeling that Anderson's words made sense.

He coughed slightly and said, "But there will be certain times when I'll get you to stay away."

"If you say 'please,' then there's no problem," Anderson said in a relaxed manner.

Danitz immediately hooded himself and walked towards the hotel's exit in preparation to begin today's investigations.

Midway, he suddenly said, "Have you had such an experience? Often dreaming of an angel's descent, wrapping you in its layered wings.

"No, it's not only a dream. I occasionally will have the same hallucination even when I'm awake."

Anderson glanced at the boxing glove Danitz was wearing. After pondering for a few seconds, he said with a smile, "Are you a believer of some secret existence?

"Or have you made contact with some ancient item?"

Danitz's expression froze as he forced a smile.

"If it were as simple as you said, I would've long guessed the reason!"

As he spoke, he brushed shoulders with the three men who came in before walking out.

Anderson habitually sized up the passersby to confirm his surroundings. Therefore, he glanced at the three men and realized that they were a master and two servants. The master was tall and his skin was brown. He had soft facial features, as though he had parents from Balam and Loen. He wore attire in the style of the Northern Continent- silk top hat, black formal suit, and a gold inlaid cane.

The two servants were standard locals that seemed to come from plantations. They were helping their master hold his cane and leather suitcase. One of them was a mixed-blood with a fleshy face and baggy clothes. On his waist was a rapier, as though he was also playing the role of a bodyguard.

Unconcerned, Anderson retracted his gaze and followed Danitz onto the street.

He pointed at the different-styled coffins that were horse-drawn or manually lifted with piqued interest.

“Want to try one of those?

“It’s very interesting. Once you get used to it, you will realize that death isn’t something to be afraid of. Perhaps you might be able to open the lid at some point in time and stand up again.”

Danitz looked at the strange transportation tool through the corner of his eyes as he didn’t hesitate to shake his head.

“As a pirate, I more or less believe in the Lord of Storms. Certain things are taboo, and one of them is to stay away from coffins.”

“I’m different. I don’t have any taboos.” Anderson casually took out a few Delexi and bought a few sets of newspapers from the paperboy on the street.

It had to be said that when it came to paperboys, the various cities in the Southern Continent weren’t inferior to the Northern Continent. After all, manual labor was cheaper, and there were many children who needed to supplement their family’s income.

As Danitz walked to the end of the street in search of a carriage meant for foreigners, he took a copy of the newspapers from Anderson and quickly browsed through it.

Suddenly, he noticed a piece of news:

"…Infamous pirate who calls himself Admiral Hell, Ludwell, has been killed by the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow. His Black Tulip and entire crew has been taken over by Mirella who claims to be Death's Envoy…"

"This…" Danitz's mouth turned slightly agape, and he was hardly able to close it.

He finally understood why Gehrman Sparrow wanted him to be careful of the Numinous Episcopate!

This lunatic had actually killed the strongest of the seven pirate admirals, Ludwell!

About ten seconds later, Danitz handed the newspapers to Anderson with a dazed expression.

"Take a look at this."

Anderson received the newspaper with a smile and quickly scanned through it.

After a brief silence, he whistled and chuckled.

"That fellow likely has a new nickname:

"Pirate Admiral Nemesis!"

Danitz didn't dare to nod as he poignantly said, "Back when I first met him, although I already found him terrifying, I never expected him to be this terrifying."

At this moment, he recalled his early attempts of recruiting Gehrman Sparrow as a sailor of the Golden Dream.

And while they left the hotel, Klein had already taken up residence in a luxurious room. He was standing by the window, watching the two Hunters who were being flippant while walking.

Rubbing the cufflink on his sleeves, he unfolded the letter and wrote:

"…I suspect that the evil spirit that possesses Ince Zangwill is from the Hunter pathway. You can carry out more investigations in this regard.

"…Along with this letter is a Soul Assurer's Beyonder characteristic. It comes from a pitiful person who was Grazed. I liberated him and promised to return his characteristic to the Church of Evernight."

In East Balam, having just prepared to join the morning meeting, Leonard suddenly saw the angel messenger who wielded four blonde, red-eyed heads appear before him.

Already used to this, he received the letter and opened it and gave it a glance. He was surprised to see an item as resplendent as the night sky.

This is… Leonard had an inkling as to what the item was. He hurriedly unfolded the letter and read it.

Twenty seconds later, he slowly sighed and silently said, As expected, it's a Beyonder characteristic.

Klein is still very friendly to the Church and the Nighthawks…

He was rather delighted as he took out two transparent dead, ringed worms and placed it in that envelope. He then summoned Gehrman Sparrow's messenger, handed it to her, and paid the one gold coin.

After doing this, Leonard loosened the top buttons of his shirt, walked out the room, and headed underground

On the way, he encountered Daly Simone.

Still dressed as a Spirit Medium, Daly looked forward and asked very normally, "Any new clues?"

"…It's suspected to be an evil spirit of the Hunter pathway." Leonard fell silent for two seconds before he decided against concealing the matter.

Daly nodded indiscernibly and said after some thought, "Then it might have the instinct of being provocative. It will proactively leave clues for us. Of course, this might also contain some level of misdirection to it."

Knock. Knock. Knock. Someone knocked at the captain's cabin of the Blue Avenger.

"Come on in," Alger put down the brass sextant in his hand and said in a deep voice.

A sailor opened the door and looked back. With the urging of his companions, he hesitantly entered the room and struck his left breast with his right fist and bowed.

"Holy Lord of Storms!"

After Alger did the same response, he forced a smile and said, "Captain, many pirates and sailors from merchant ships have been recently saying that they found valuable items in the ruins of Bansy Harbor. There was even gold.

"We don't have any particularly important missions recently, so everyone is wondering if we should make another trip to Bansy. Such a bustling harbor, even if it has been searched numerous times, it should still have plenty of things left…"

Alger listened with a deadpan expression. After a few seconds of thought, he said, "I can understand your feelings. Let's do this. Let's head in the direction of Bansy Harbor, but do not set a destination. If nothing happens midway, we will stay there for a day."

"Aye-aye, Captain." The sailor excitedly clenched his right fist and struck his left breast again. "May the Storm be with you…"

"May the Storm be with you…" Alger watched as his subordinate left and closed the door.

Then, as though nothing had happened, he poured himself a cup of Lanti Proof without any joy or anger as he sipped it slowly.

Whatever that had just happened was within his expectations. This was because the news of finding items of value in Bansy Harbor's ruins was something he had spread while disguised.

As a captain of the Church of Storms, he was constantly monitored by his sailors. Having been to Bansy once, mentioning it again made it suspicious. Therefore, Alger decided on getting the crew to make the request themselves!

That way, even if they discovered anything or encountered something at Bansy Harbor, no one would suspect him, the Captain.

To the sailors, especially sailors who had just spent all their money in Bayam, any news or rumors with sufficient allure would stir their hearts the most. Alger knew this very well.

In addition, the Blue Avenger had stayed in Bayam for too long. If he hadn't set sail, it would also be suspicious.

As for monitoring Artisan Cielf, it was naturally left to The Hermit Cattleya. Due to the "investigations" of the Aurora Order, this pirate admiral and the Future had recently been hanging around the Rorsted Archipelago. It was said to be an important base of the Moses Ascetic Order.

After drinking the liquor, Alger put down his cup and looked out at the undulating waves and silently said a word:

"Bansy…"

Considering how it was late June, and will Auceptin's birthday was still unclear, Klein did some reorganization before heading above the gray fog to bring the radio transceiver back to the real world. He also warned himself that he could only ask a maximum of two questions.

In the room that suddenly turned gloomy and cold, the unmanned transceiver began producing clicking voices.

Chapter 936 - Don't Want to Miss Out

◆ ◆ ◆

Amidst the clacking sounds, a white piece of illusory paper spewed out from the radio transceiver. On it were words composed of Loenese:

“Exalted Great Master, your puny, loyal, and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning!

“Did you know? Dr. Aaron Ceres’s child was born the night before the last.”

Thankfully I contacted the magic mirror in time… Klein nodded slightly and said, “Now I know.”

Amidst clacking sounds, more of the illusory white paper spewed out:

“Based on the principle of reciprocity, it’s your turn to ask a question.”

Klein had originally wanted to ask about matters regarding Ince Zangwill, 0-08 and the Red Angel evil spirit, but considering how he had failed divining it above the gray fog, it was almost certain that Arrodes was unable to see it. At best, it could provide him more detailed information regarding 0-08, but this way, without the gray fog’s screening, it would be equivalent to him knowing of 0-08, and it would result in it knowing him. It didn’t benefit him when it came to hiding behind the scenes to direct a play.

After thinking for two seconds, he asked, “What means are there to speed up the digestion of potions?”

“Do a better job acting.” On the illusory white paper, black words were produced.

Upon seeing the magic mirror's reply, Klein first fell silent before he slowly exhaled.

For the present him, Ince Zangwill's appearance was too early!

He still needed about two months to completely digest the Marionettist potion. When that happened, and with him already gathering the ingredients, he could orchestrate an assassination of the demigod, Ince Zangwill, placing the Sequence advancement with his wish together. Then there was no need for him to consider any room for retreat. However, Ince Zangwill wouldn't "appear," until he was done preparing everything. He wouldn't follow the steps that Klein had in mind.

Based on Klein's earliest ideas, it was to first gather information, figure out where Ince Zangwill was, and wait until it was late August or early September before confirming the plan based on the situation. If not for the possession of the evil spirit, Ince Zangwill wouldn't have exposed himself. If he didn't use Ince Zangwill's current condition, it was very possible that he couldn't find the latter again once he exorcised the evil spirit. Coincidences would stand in his way when it came to meeting him.

Furthermore, if that were really the Red Angel evil spirit, Klein was also worried that Ince Zangwill might've already died by the time he and Leonard started exacting revenge. The reason behind his death could be due to certain machinations, or from some ridiculously comedic situations, and not because of his sins.

Due to these considerations, Klein attempted to digest his potion faster, hoping that he could complete it within a week or two. However, Arrodes's answer left him depressed. He also knew that this wasn't something he could force.

In two weeks, or even in the next few days, how was he to create a better opportunity to act?

In his silence, Klein had already made up his mind. He didn't plan on tying the two matters together, and from the beginning, he wanted revenge against Ince Zangwill as his primary goal provided there was a chance of success.

He didn't wish to miss this opportunity.

Although it had only been about ten months—less than a year—since the incident at the Blackthorn Security Company, it felt like a very, very long time, so long that he didn't wish to wait any longer.

Catching a glance at the gloomy radio transceiver, Klein thought before wearing a stern look, he asked with a deep voice, "Back when I used the Winner marionette to look at myself, I learned why Beyonders of the Fate pathway will have such a reaction when facing me.

"Now, I would like to know what you see when you look at me?"

This question was a bolt out of the blue that seemed to echo in the room. The radio transceiver suddenly fell silent, and the clacking sounds sounded after quite a while.

A black illusory piece of paper spewed out, and on it were ghastly-white words:

"I-I see support and dominance from you.

"Are you satisfied with such a question?"

Support, dominance… What does that mean? Klein had planned on pressing on, but he believed that Arrodes was unlikely to explain it too clearly because it lacked the required knowledge.

Realizing that the Mother Tree of Desire was about to find him if he kept this up, he nodded and said, "Acceptable.

"That shall be all for today. You may return."

The clacking of the radio transceiver became increasingly brisker as the paper that appeared was white again.

“Alright, Great Master, goodbye~ Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is constantly at your service.”

This time, the magic mirror seemed to forget to add a hand-waving drawing.

That was quite a quick escape… Klein mumbled and immediately took four steps counterclockwise and entered above the gray fog. He conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and informed The Hermit Cattleya that the Mythical Creature blood she needed was ready. She was to provide the means to regain a certain amount of strength during one’s weak stages as quickly as possible.

Before long, Cattleya set up a ritual and sacrificed an item to The Fool and requested this mighty existence to hand it to The World and tell him that the principle of the item’s effect was to temporarily borrow a portion of one’s strength from their former self!

This sounds familiar… It sounds like the powers of the Seer pathway’s Sequence 3 Scholar of Yore… The Fool Klein was surprised as he picked up the item that Ma’am Hermit had sacrificed.

It was like the end of a cane with a long transparent gem embedded on it. It was carved with complicated, mysterious, indescribable, three-dimensional symbols and magic labels.

Klein recognized two of them. One was the incomplete Pupil-less Eye, and the other was the incomplete Contorted Lines.

Could this be an item that really points towards Sequence 0 The Fool? But isn’t it a little too complicated… This cane feels really familiar. It’s like… It’s like the crystal ball Little Sun had used when he prayed to me! C-could it also correspond to another crimson star? Klein looked out the ancient palace with an odd expression, but all he saw were illusory stars suspended in the infinite gray fog without any signs of abnormality.

With the fact that such items were one-use items like charms, he abandoned the idea of experimenting with it. All he could do was summon some paper from the junk pile and seriously record down the complicated and abnormal symbols and magic labels on the cane.

†

Loen Kingdom, Backlund, Dr. Aaron's residence.

A maid was inside the master bedroom, taking care of a soundly-sleeping infant. Downstairs, the banquet which had many guests attending had reached the mid-way mark.

Suddenly, in a corner, three figures quickly materialized. Leading them was a man in a silk top hat, black formal suit. He was none other than Klein Moretti who hadn't disguised himself.

He tossed out a charm and muttered an ancient Hermes term:

"Crimson!"

The dark red flames flashed, and amidst a light explosion sound, soothing powers emanated out. The maid fell asleep instantly, collapsing onto the bedside into a deep sleep.

Klein made his two marionettes stand in their spots as he walked to the infant's cot and cast his gaze inside.

It was a child wrapped in silver silk. His skin was very fair, and he was fleshy with layer after layers.

This infant showed no fear towards the stranger as he looked straight at Klein with his eyes wide open while sucking his fingers.

"Ahem." Klein couldn't help but smile as he took off his hat and bowed. "Congratulations on being born."

“You should say that to my parents!” The infant pulled out his fingers and spoke with a bright voice that didn’t match his age.

Klein chuckled and didn’t harp on this meaningless topic with the Snake of Fate. He went straight to the point.

“I brought the method that allows you to regain a certain amount of strength during your weak stages.

“You can now give me that drop of placenta blood.”

Will Auceptin opened up his fleshy palms and said, “Let me take a look first.”

“How do you know that the method is an item?” Klein couldn’t help but ask in puzzlement.

Will Auceptin scoffed.

“An intuition of fate.”

It’s like you didn’t say a thing… Klein moved the cane from behind him forward and handed it over.

The infant held it tightly and glanced at it twice before raising its voice:

“This can only be used once!”

“That’s right. Only once. Is that a problem?” Klein deliberated and said, “With your level and abilities, you can completely replicate the symbols and magic labels engraved on it, and then prepare the corresponding ingredients to hold the correct ritual. Wouldn’t that allow you to use it multiple times?”

Will Auceptin suddenly cut him off.

“Alright, I accept it.

“Remember, you were the one who suggested it!”

"…"

Klein was momentarily a little dumbfounded, but he also seemed to realize something. He had a vague feeling that, despite him being here to take advantage of a baby, it ended up as the baby taking advantage of him.

"Yes, I was the one who suggested it." He finally drew a breath and nodded earnestly.

The baby's plump face revealed a smile as he spread open his other hand.

"I've already prepared it for you.

"A total of two drops. One drop is for the transaction, and the other drop is your commission for facilitating this transaction."

There's a commission? Klein was delighted as he hurriedly looked at Will Auceptin's palm.

There were two drops of silver blood there. Each drop appeared to have countless, minute, aloof, illusory wheels spinning. They formed a belt that had its head connected to its tail.

Just one look at it made Klein seem to lose his ability to think. He felt all his thoughts repeatedly appearing in his mind.

He hurriedly shook his head and took out the iron cigar case which contained Azik's copper whistle. He then placed the two drops of Snake of Fate blood, which had clearly been sealed, inside.

"Thank you for your generosity," Klein said sincerely before asking, "Can this be used to make a charm?"

The baby sucked his fingers and said, "Of course.

"As for the exact symbols needed to be carved, you have already seen those. You are free to choose a combination. Whatever you get will all depend on your luck.”

Klein nodded and asked again, “Who should I pray to?

“You’re probably unable to respond to relatively high-level rituals for the time being. And praying to Ouroboros is bordering on being a provocation…

“Do I pray to a Sequence 2 angel of the Fate pathway? But I don’t know ‘Their’ honorific names.”

Will Auceptin immediately grinned.

“There’s a more convenient method.”

“Who?” Klein pressed in delight.

The baby replied with a giggle, “Empress of Misfortune and Horror.”

Chapter 937 - Several Days Later

◆

Empress of Misfortune and Horror… Isn't that the Goddess? That's right, misfortune includes bad luck—a part of fate. The Goddess has the corresponding authority and can naturally give a response… By giving this suggestion, doesn't it mean that, in Will Auceptin's eyes, "He" has always suspected that I'm Evernight's Blessed, it's just that I didn't notice it myself. It's the same as the answer I received about how I should get the High-Sequence Beyonder potion formula of the Seer pathway… "He" is even more certain after what happened at Saint Samuel Cathedral… Klein was first taken aback before he became enlightened.

As though he was muttering to himself, he said, "If I were to pray to the Goddess, no matter what symbols I choose, the final product's effect will likely be inclined towards the domain of bad luck."

"That's common sense!" the baby wrapped in silver silk shouted.

After obtaining confirmation, Klein felt more certain as he said with a smile, "Eh… Are you still named Will Auceptin?"

He was very curious if "He" changed his name after being born.

"If you like it, you can continue thinking so. However, my full name has already been changed to Will Ceres," the baby replied indifferently.

Klein thought before asking, "If I want to deal with the wielder of 0-08, what suggestions do you have?

"I don't want to know about 0-08. I just wish to know if you have any suggestions."

The plump baby looked at him as he suddenly opened his mouth and let out a loud cry.

"Waaa!"

"…"

The corners of Klein's lips quivered. Upon seeing the maid about to wake up, he took a few steps back and vanished from the room with his two marionettes.

†

Rorsted Sea. On the Future which was docked in the Bayam Resistance's private harbor.

Cattleya, who was holding a ritual, saw a drop of silver blood fly out of the illusory door that manifested itself from the candlelight.

With just one glance at it, she hurriedly closed her eyes, despite wearing her heavy glasses.

At that instant, it felt like an aloof and mysterious wheel was spinning in a circle, forming a silver snake that had its head connected to its tail.

This made her repeat her previous thoughts as she thanked Mr. Fool twelve consecutive times before returning to normal.

It really is the blood of a Mythical Creature from the Fate domain, and its level is higher than an ordinary angel… Cattleya ended the ritual in delight, and she took out a container she had prepared ahead of time, placing the drop of silver blood inside.

After obtaining some information on the Monster pathway from Queen Mystic, and learning the existence of Angel of Fate Ouroboros from Mr.

Fool, she quickly came up with a guess as to who the blood belonged to.

Perhaps it’s the one from the Life School of Thought. Or there might be another Sequence 1 angel… Regardless, Mr. Fool is able to use at least two angels in the real world. Along with that Ancient Bane that I can’t be certain of, aside from the lack of Sealed Artifacts, the faction that believes in Mr. Fool is enough to match that of orthodox Churches. Even the Element Dawn and Moses Ascetic Order can’t compare…

As expected of an awakening ancient god.

Increasingly filled with awe, Cattleya drew a gasp and began considering her matters.

Her other preparations were rather smooth sailing. Without any accidents, all she needed was to wait a month or so to attempt advancing to Sequence 4 to obtain godhood!

†

Overcast with heavy, black clouds, silver lightning would occasionally streak across the sky, illuminating the desolate plains and the winding rivers that ran dry.

And in the middle of the plains, where the river made a half-circle, black, stacked shadowy outlines loomed. It was a lifeless city.

After several days of traveling, the team led by the Chief of the City of Silver’s six-member council, Demon Hunter Colin Iliad, finally arrived at their destination—Nois City.

The team was a small one. Excluding Colin, there were only four other members. They were the six-member council Elder, Shepherd Lovia, two Sequence 5 Guardians, Legere and Gonlun, as well as Sequence 6 Notary, Derrick Berg. The overall strength of the team wasn’t weaker than a complete expedition team; it was perhaps even stronger.

According to Colin Iliad, this was because Nois City was filled with monsters, making it very dangerous. Shapeshifters were adept at disguises, and they enjoyed making use of the trust between teammates. Therefore, the smaller the expedition team, the better. And since there were fewer people, there was undoubtedly a need to prepare it with a stronger team.

As they watched the city in front of them which was covered in mist, one that couldn't be lit up despite the lightning, Demon Hunter Colin drew the two swords on his back. Unhurriedly, he slathered a silver-gray ointment on one, and a golden liquid on the other.

He then stabbed the two swords in front of him. He then removed three small metal bottles from a hidden compartment on his belt, pulled out the stopper, and gulped the contents of the potion.

Meanwhile, Legere and Gonlun had made preparations for combat. Derrick Berg held his hammer with one hand as he opened up his other palm. With a solemn tone, he said in Jotun, "God says it's effective!"

Silently, Colin Iliad and company felt that the consumed potion, the conjured dawn, and the slathered ointment had been significantly augmented.

Right on the heels of that, concentric rings of warm light emanated out, endowing the expedition team with courage and strength.

After Derrick used Holy Oath to boost his agility, Colin shot a glance at Lovia, who was holding an animal hide lantern and standing silently observing. He then turned his head to point at the perimeter of Nois City which was more than ten meters away. He said to the teenager who was once again a little taller, "Use your ability to light up the streets ahead."

After saying that, he surveyed his surroundings and added, "Once we enter Nois City, make sure we do not separate.

"A few days ago, I had already introduced the more active monsters that hide away in the darkness in this region. All of you should be aware of how separating will be utilized by the Shapeshifter."

Gonlun was a beautiful, female warrior who was 2.4–2.5 meters tall. Upon hearing that, she thought and asked, "Then, should we make use of this to hunt the Shapeshifter?"

"It's best that we do not do so. It's just too dangerous. Also, it's very easy to end up killing our own teammates or end up becoming lost in Nois City forever," the grizzled Colin Iliad seriously warned.

Derrick looked at the silent city that was cloaked in thin mist as he subconsciously asked, "Your Excellency, was this city also under the Giant King's Court?"

"Yes, but it's very close to a kingdom ruled by another ancient god," Colin answered patiently.

Holding two iron-black poles, the 2.4-meter-tall Legere pressed with intrigue, "Which ancient god?"

"King of Demonic Wolves, the Annihilator, Flegrea."

Is that so… Derrick remembered the Chief's introduction, took a step forward, and extended his arms.

Pure, radiant sunlight emitted from his body, illuminating the either collapsed or rotting buildings, the grayish-white stone-paved streets, and the extremely silent city perimeter.

Derrick and company saw figures appear on the streets. They were either wearing linen robes or animal-hides, as though they were busily going on about their day.

Upon sensing the sunlight's illumination, they silently turned their heads in unison and looked at the City of Silver expedition team.

†

Bansy Harbor at night would occasionally have ravens or other birds calling out. It accentuated the gloom and deathly silence of the ruins. Even the sounds of crashing waves were unable to wash away that feeling.

As believers of the Lord of Storms and crew members of the Blue Avenger, the sailors were bold, especially when they believed that there might be gold or valuables hidden within the collapsed buildings. It spurred them on, sapping away any fear that might exist. The moment they arrived, they rushed down the ship and began searching the area in groups of two or three.

Alger didn’t follow them as he strolled through the ruins alone, in search of any marks that appeared after Bansy Harbor’s destruction.

As he walked, with him wearing the Whip of Mind ring and having the Blade of Poison slung by his waist, he came to a collapsed building with crumbling walls and a door that was only a few pieces of charred wood.

If I remember correctly, this was the telegraph office of Bansy Harbor… Alger nodded slightly as he approached and did a slight inspection.

He then saw a relatively empty area amidst the rubble. The ground was parched black with two blood-red silhouettes. It was as though two people had been lying there, only to be squashed flat.

And this had been months ago; yet, the two streaks of blood remained fresh, as though they still contained some degree of vitality to it.

Alger’s forehead throbbed as he felt as though he could imagine the vileness before Bansy Harbor was destroyed.

He swept his gaze and suddenly saw a picture engraved on a crumbling wall beside the two blood-colored figures. It was a spot that the moonlight could hardly shine onto.

The picture was very simple, and it wasn't even colored. It was of an armored monster with a squid's head that wielded a trident. Lightning swirled around it as waves surged at its feet. Behind it was a cape formed by bird feathers!

Alger's eyes widened suddenly as he felt a tumultuous storm rage within him.

He recognized who the monster was representing because The Sun had once depicted it before:

It was the warped version of the Lord of Storms according to Rose Redemption!

And could this picture's appearance implied that a Rose Redemption member had previously come to Bansy Harbor, and they had drawn this picture after the building collapsed. Otherwise, it was impossible for the mural to not be damaged. It happened to fill an abnormal, crumbling wall!

This should be what The World wanted me to find in Bansy Harbor… He's pursuing Rose Redemption? Alger muttered silently to himself as he raised his right hand.

He had planned on destroying the picture, but after some thought, he retracted his arm, circling around Bansy Harbor's former telegraph office as though he hadn't discovered anything. He then walked in another direction.

Chapter 938 - Writing

◆◆◆

Above the endless gray fog, in the magnificent and ancient palace.

The warped picture of the Lord of Storms, one that's suspected to be left behind by a Rose Redemption member… Hmm, Red Angel Medici is one of the founders of Rose Redemption… Klein sat in the high-back chair belonging to The Fool as he silently looked at the crimson star representing The Hanged Man.

Using his feedback, he had basically confirmed that the one possessing Ince Zangwill was the Red Angel evil spirit!

In the eternal silence, Klein silently sat at the seat of honor of the mottled table as though he had become a deity's statue.

After an unknown period of time, he nodded indiscernibly and slowly exhaled.

His figure vanished and returned to the real world. He continued his nap without thinking of any plans or considering anything related to Ince Zangwill.

He slept till the next morning and got out of bed. He repeated his habits over the past few days, walking to the window barefooted and drawing the windows.

On the streets outside the hotel, Danitz, who had dressed up like a West Balam native with an extra hooded cloak, held his iron-black boxing glove close to his chest before rushing to the square on his right. Based on his previous report, Klein knew that he was meeting one of the local ruling factions today to understand their stance on the arms deal.

Anderson didn't follow. He had ruffled his parted short blond hair in a mess as he leisurely strolled around the perimeter of the square, sat down, and wore a funny-looking puppet over his left black-gloved hand and began putting on a ventriloquist act for the people who walked by.

The man and puppet each had different voices as they mocked each other with witty remarks. It was quite good at attracting attention.

The only problem was that it was done in the Intis language and not Dutanese. Few people understood it, so after standing around to watch for a moment, they walked off.

Klein focused on the Fog Sea's Strongest Hunter with the same expression as before. His eyes betrayed how deep in thought he was.

†

East Balam, in the temporary office for Soest's Red Gloves.

Cindy, who had long, wine-red hair, walked in with a few telegrams as she said excitedly, "New clues!"

"What clues?" Soest put down the white porcelain coffee mug in his hand as Leonard and Daly cast their gazes to the door.

As Cindy handed the telegram to her captain, she said, "Emperor Roselle's quote 'wherever he steps, whatever he touches, whatever he leaves, even unconsciously, will serve as a silent witness against him,' really makes sense. We've found people witnessing Ince Zangwill in several places, forming a complete trajectory.

"From this, we've realized that Ince Zangwill's thoughts seem to be contradictory. He often approaches the colonies of Intis, staying for a short moment, before leaving it. He then approaches it once again and leaves it repeatedly as though—as though…"

Isn't this what Klein mentioned? That his actions are inconsistent? Leonard was delighted as he offered a better description for Cindy:

"As though he's oscillating."

"Yes, oscillating!" Cindy heaved a sigh of relief and began describing the findings, "In addition, Ince Zangwill has killed a few Intis military spies and has purchased several Beyonder ingredients. It's unknown what he's trying to do."

This… Leonard deliberated and said, "Which pathway's Beyonder ingredients are being bought by Ince Zangwill?"

"They are from the Warrior, Hunter, and Bard pathways." Cindy pointed at the few telegrams that Captain Soest was reading.

Indeed, there's the Hunter pathway… Having failed to find an excuse to get his teammates to take notice of Hunter-related clues, Leonard exhaled silently and no longer had any doubts regarding Klein's theory. He believed it to be the truth!

Next, how should I make everyone realize that Ince has been possessed by an evil spirit of the Hunter pathway… Leonard fell into deep thought. He waited until Soest finished reading the telegram and handed it to the other teammates before he came up with something. He decided to take a risk.

Before he spoke, he subconsciously glanced at Daly Simone. Dressed in a Spirit Medium's attire, this lady lowered her hand slightly, indicating that he shouldn't be too anxious, and to stop whatever he was about to attempt.

Ma'am Daly is telling me that it isn't time, that I should wait for a better opportunity? Amidst his hesitation, he saw Daly flick the telegram in her hand and looked around the room.

"I have an idea."

"What is it?" Soest asked.

Daly smiled.

"I suspect that Ince Zangwill is possessed by an evil spirit."

She… She just said it like that… She will be suspected! Leonard jumped in fright.

Without waiting for Soest, Cindy, and company to raise their doubts, Daly continued, "Ince Zangwill was once a Gatekeeper, and now, he's a Nightwatcher. His body can accommodate evil spirits and use their powers. Furthermore, he also has 0-08's help. If I were him, I'd definitely try to seek out stronger evil spirits and raise my strength as much as possible.

"This way, before he obtains complete control over the evil spirit, there will be backlashes. Ince Zangwill will take actions that seem contradictory. This can explain what's mentioned on the telegram.

"In addition, haven't we been puzzled as to why Ince Zangwill has been trying to contact important members of the Numinous Episcopate, and we had come up with various theories? Perhaps getting them to help him exorcise, purify, or completely control the evil spirit is his goal!"

Soest thought for a moment and deliberated over his words.

"That possibility cannot be ruled out, but this is fundamentally a subjective theory of yours… How did you come up with this? Which details gave you the inspiration?"

Leonard became nervous as Daly chuckled.

"This is a woman's intuition. It's just like how I know your thoughts, as well as those of the rest of you at times.

"Besides, since this is a discussion and analysis, we should list down all the possibilities. We should then eliminate the possibilities based on the actual investigations. This will aid us in finding the correct answer. Therefore, we need to let our thoughts wander. No matter how ridiculous the idea is, we must dare to propose it!

"From the various details we obtained from our feedback, I believe my theory is the most likely one."

Ma'am Daly sure is good with words. At least, she has convinced me… She raised the theory of an evil spirit's possession to protect me and direct the risk towards herself? On this matter regarding Ince Zangwill, she seems willing to take on everything… Leonard became enlightened as he felt poignant.

After hearing Daly's reply, Soest nodded slightly.

"Indeed, since this is a discussion, we shouldn't limit our thoughts.

"The possibility of an evil spirit possession scenario is quite high. I'll report this to Her Excellency Goddess's Eye. I'll leave it to the archbishop and high-ranking deacons to decide the subsequent investigations. After all, we know too little about 0-08."

†

"The Red Gloves team led by Soest discovered Ince Zangwill's abnormalities from the feedback from various telegrams. Daly Simone used this opportunity to mention the assumption of an evil spirit's possession and had received a unanimous agreement.

"She claimed it to be a reasonable theory, but she was already in the know. She had learned it from Leonard Mitchell, who has a Parasite, and Leonard Mitchell's information source came from a letter sent by Reinette Tinekerr. Who could be the one who mailed it?

"Meanwhile, Leonard Mitchell and Daly Simone had already suspected that the evil spirit possessing Ince Zangwill belongs to the Hunter pathway…”

A classic quill dabbed in black ink was writing rapidly on an ordinary notebook as though it was held by an invisible hand.

Suddenly, a silently pale hand reached out and grabbed the quill.

The owner of that hand had dark blond hair with facial features akin to a classic sculpture. One of his eyes was so blue that it was nearly black, and the other was filled with small but obvious blood vessels.

He lowered his wrist and continued writing:

“But is this the truth to the matter? Will everything develop according to what Daly Simone, Leonard Mitchell, and Soest’s Red Gloves team have in mind?”

†

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, in Nois City which couldn’t be illuminated by the lightning.

The figures looked over without making any sound, giving Derrick a fright. He nearly stopped the illumination effect as he dodged to avoid facing them directly.

However, having trained from a young age, and with his experience over the past year, he didn’t end up flustered. He didn’t rush to end it as he forcefully held back his horror and waited for the Chief to give the next order.

Two dark green, complicated symbols appeared in Colin Iliad’s eyes. He took in the streets that were blanketed with faint mist and the seemingly normal figures which didn’t take any action.

Suddenly, he grunted and genuflected, his hands grabbing the two swords that were stabbed in the ground.

At the back of his neck, his bluish-black skin swelled a little as indescribable and complicated mysterious symbols appeared. They were half illusory and half real as they crept to either higher or lower levels.

At the same time, Shepherd Lovia let out a painful grunt as she raised her hands and held her head, vomiting some blobs of squirming flesh and blood.

Her palms and her body seemed to have silver armor strangely appear, overlapping on top of her.

“Stop,” Demon Hunter Colin muttered softly one second later.

Derrick hurriedly ended the illumination and allowed the thin mist to cloak the figures, allowing the dead silence to once again blanket the ancient Nois City.

Everything quickly returned to its former form as Colin Iliad slowly got up. He cast his heavy gaze at the tower, cathedral, and other buildings that could barely be made out through the thin mist.

“It’s a bit different from my last expedition. I’m not sure why there are such changes either.” Demon Hunter Colin retracted his gaze as he surveyed the team members. “Do you have any ideas or thoughts?”

Shepherd Lovia had already crouched down to pick up the blobs of flesh and blood that had fallen to the ground. However, she wasn’t in a rush to stuff them into her mouth, to munch on them before swallowing. She offered, “We can change directions and explore Nois City’s other entrances. Perhaps we might discover something.”

She had been maintaining her silence and kept the attitude of a spectator the entire journey. This was the first time she was voicing out her thoughts and giving her point of view.

Chapter 939 - Bait

◆

Colin Iliad glanced at Lovia without giving a direct response. After he pulled out the two swords in the ground, he nodded and said, “Okay.”

The group of five circled around Nois City’s perimeter, making a few attempts to enter, but they were frightened away by the seemingly normal but silent city’s carrying out of its “daily routine.” They didn’t dare to venture in.

With the frequency of the lightning reducing, and how darkness was slowly beginning to rule the world, Colin took a deep look at Nois City for a few seconds and said, “We will first set up a small camp. We will continue when it’s ‘daytime.’”

The so-called “daytime” meant when the frequency of lightning was relatively higher, keeping the moments of darkness to a minimum.

The expedition team members didn’t object to it. Soon, they set up a simple camp by the riverside amidst a series of rocks.

At the extreme end of the camp, there was a huge boulder providing them with shelter so there weren’t any worries about rain. A bonfire was burning with all kinds of strange creature carcasses piled to the side. From time to time, they would be thrown in as timber. Colin, Lovia, and company sat around the fire, eating the rations they had brought and the monster corpses that had been proven to not cause serious harm.

As the fat sizzled from the roasting, Chief Colin Iliad from the six-member council looked at Derrick Berg and said, “We shall inspect the camp first. We’ll switch when they’re done with their meals.”

If this were any other time, Derrick wouldn’t have thought otherwise. But now, the first thought that came to mind was: The Chief wishes to speak to me in private…

“Alright.” Derrick stuffed the remaining piece of meat into his mouth and lifted the Thunder God’s Roar at his side.

The piece of meat was clearly already ready, but it still presented a ghastly green color.

After coming to the dark edge of the camp, Demon Hunter Colin said in a deep voice, his tone unchanging, “Nois City is more sinister and dangerous than I expected. I’m wondering if you have any views on what we should do next?”

I know nothing about this place. I’m also lacking in experience. Why is Chief asking for my views? Derrick was instantly taken aback, wishing to raise his left hand to scratch the back of his head.

He then recalled the few times he had spoken with the Chief while they were in the City of Silver. He recalled Mr. Hanged Man’s analysis of the hidden context in their conversations as he suddenly realized something.

Chief is giving me a hint!

He’s trying to tell me that Nois City is more sinister and dangerous than he expected. The difficulty of hunting a Shapeshifter far exceeds his expectations. He’s wondering if there’s a possibility of changing the target?

He wishes for me to pray to Mr. Fool and receive a revelation so as to get “His” views?

Hmm… Mr. World really is a wise person. Along the way, he had already told me of a method to hunt the Bizarro Bane in a relatively easy manner. It's by getting its blood. Hmm, with the present situation, it seems like his plan is feasible!

As his thoughts raced, Derrick replied earnestly, "Yes, Your Excellency. I have some suggestions."

Colin Iliad silently heaved a sigh of relief, holding back the more direct speech he had prepared as he nodded gently.

"Go ahead."

"Since Nois City has changed, it will be very risky for us to enter. Perhaps we can consider luring the Shapeshifter out." Derrick didn't directly regurgitate The World Gehrman Sparrow's method, but he did make some modifications based on the present situation.

Colin didn't directly reject it, and said rather seriously, "Then how should we lure the Shapeshifter?"

Derrick didn't hesitate to say, "I have an item that is extremely enticing to Shapeshifters. As long as it's placed at the boundary of Nois City, or even further, it will lure a Shapeshifter out."

The grizzled Colin wasn't surprised by his words. He amiably nodded and said, "What's the item?"

He long knew that Derrick Berg had secretly held a bestowment ritual at night during his guard duty shift.

Furthermore, if he hadn't kept the truth under cover, it was impossible for Derrick to keep it from Lovia, Lovia, and Gonlun.

Derrick didn't know what its name or description was. He immediately took out an iron-black box which was completely different from the City of Silver's style before removing the wall of spirituality.

Following that, he didn't lower his head. Instead, he turned his head and opened the box solely using his sense of touch.

Inside the box was a palm-sized human-shaped object. A cursory glance allowed one to see the transparent liquid filling the inside. From time to time, it bubbled, emanating a black glow. Upon scrutinizing it, there appeared to be maggots circling around the object.

This was the true soul body of the Spirit World Plunderer which Klein had previously obtained!

He believed that, for the Bizarro Bane, this Beyonder ingredient had an unparalleled allure. This wasn't simply a result of the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence, but it was also because once the Bizarro Bane obtained it, it could turn into a complete Bizarro Sorcerer. It would break through all kinds of limitations and receive a fundamental improvement in its life's natural order, truly becoming a demigod!

Therefore, to make the hunting of the Bizarro Bane simpler and clearer, without wasting any time, Klein took the risk of losing the true soul body of the Spirit World Plunderer by lending it to Little Sun.

Colin Iliad looked at it carefully for a few seconds before retracting his gaze.

"It's likely to be effective.

"Close the box and stop adding a wall of spirituality to it. Just bring it around with you. Let's see if they will be attracted to our camp."

"They?" Derrick subconsciously asked.

Colin, with a few old scars on his face, revealed a smile.

"Do you think there's only one Shapeshifter in Nois City?

"If this item's level was lacking, I would even be worried that it might attract more terrifying monsters."

Derrick wore a look of shame as he scratched the back of his head.

Following the Chief's instructions, he closed the iron-black square box's lid, stuffing it into a concealed pocket in his clothes.

In the patrol that followed, he kept a high level of vigilance, but no Shapeshifter attacked.

After a while, Lovia, Legere, and Gonlun took over their mission as Derrick sat back beside the warm fire.

At that moment, he heard cawing as seven to eight red-eyed ravens flew over and spiraled in midair.

This brought about an indescribable sense of horror. Colin Iliad drew his sword and looked up.

Suddenly, his heart stirred as he quickly cast his gaze to Derrick Berg.

On both sides of the bonfire, two brownish-yellow-haired youths who had childlike looks and were nearly 1.9 meters tall were staring at each blankly.

Colin's eyes narrowed as he immediately shouted, "Illuminate!"

One of the youths was taken aback. After a moment of enlightenment, pure, warm sunlight was emitted from his body.

With a whoosh, an incomplete shadow swept past as Colin's sword sliced through the fake Derrick.

It was a shadow, a blurry, transparent shadow!

At the same time, a red-eyed raven fell from the sky. Its body swelled up, turning into a pitch-black shadow.

Above this shadow shimmered a transparent, ghostly-blue single eye. Around the eye were similar eyes but smaller.

Shapeshifter!

A Shapeshifter that could disguise itself as ravens!

Just as this pitch-black shadow landed, Derrick's mind turned numb as he could hardly move, as though he was being petrified. All he could do was watch the enemy pounce at him.

Pa!

The Shapeshifter slammed into an invisible wall and failed to take a further step.

Beside the bonfire, Colin Iliad stabbed the sword in his hand into the ground and drew the other sword on his back.

The surrounding area lit up, and like the legendary dawn, it descended upon this abandoned land. Infinite beams of light reminiscent of dawn erupted, turning into an illusory ocean. It devoured the pitch-black shadows along with all the ravens from the bottom up.

At the entrance of the camp, an illusory knight in silver armor, standing more than five meters tall, appeared behind Shepherd Lovia.

The knight's eyes burned with dark red flames as they instantly locked onto a spot.

He suddenly opened up his stride and appeared hundreds of meters away in a flash.

Beams of sharp silver light shot out, dicing all the objects around into tiny, neat pieces, including all the different monsters hiding there. It included the Shapeshifter that had used some ability to escape the Demon Hunter's lethal strike.

The monster hadn't died as it switched its true body once again, but the pure, bright light of dawn descended once again, completely drowning a huge area.

After the light of dawn turned faint, Colin Iliad in his brown coat appeared with two swords in hand. He calmly watched as points of light gathered above the ground which was covered with cracks. Black-red blood which had mostly evaporated was slowly dispersed.

Success! As Derrick reeled in delight, he hurriedly sealed the black square box with a wall of spirituality.

Colin immediately stabbed the two swords into the ground, took out three metal bottles that had been emptied of their potions, and filled them with the blood on the ground.

While waiting for the ingredient to take form, he said to Lovia and company with his usual expression, “I have a use for the ingredients left by the Shapeshifter. I wish to directly make an exchange for them.”

In the City of Silver, there were typically two ways to handle the spoils from such expeditions. First, it was to bring it back and give it to the city and exchange it for the corresponding contribution points. The distribution depended on the amount of effort put in during the expedition. Second, if it wasn’t something especially important, and if it had caught the fancy of a member of the expedition, they could directly make an exchange for it with equivalent items or contribution points.

“I have no objections,” Legere and Gonlun answered in unison.

Lovia didn’t say a word as a form of tacit consent.

After the illusory silver-armored knight returned, she turned her head and looked towards the bonfire where Derrick Berg was with a deadpan expression.

†

In East Balam, in the temporary office for the Red Gloves.

Soest surveyed the area and said to all the team members, “Her

Excellency, Goddess's Eye, has ordered us to investigate the sale of Hunter pathway ingredients in the local and surrounding cities, as well as any disappearances or deaths of Beyonders of the same pathway.

“She agrees with Daly's guess, and she suspects from the death of the Intis spies that it's an evil spirit of the Hunter pathway.

“Of course, we mustn't ignore any abnormalities since it's only one possibility.

“There's also another thing. We only need to do the gathering of information and to ignore everything else. We will not delve deeper into the investigations. It's an order by Her Excellency, Goddess's Eye!

“Got that?”

“Yes!” Cindy and company replied.

Soest looked at Leonard and Daly before retracting his gaze and said heavily, “Move out!”

Chapter 940 - A Story

After leaving the local Nighthawks's base which was disguised as a private detective office, Leonard glanced at Daly Simone who had suggested to team up with him.

“Where do we begin? Any suggestions?”

Dressed in a Spirit Medium black robe with her hood pulled over her head, Daly Simone, with an uncanny beauty and mature air, shot Leonard Mitchell a glance.

“This is when a gentleman’s decisiveness and style should be showcased.”

Leonard looked at his left hand which was wearing a red glove. He deliberated and said, “If we begin by following Captain Soest’s arrangements, that might allow us to find some clues, but it’s not necessarily useful. I suspect that Her Excellency Goddess’s Eye knows that. She’s only giving us something to do in order to confuse Ince Zangwill.”

“Why do you say that?” Daly wasn’t joking as her expression wore a rare, solemn look.

Leonard glanced to his sides as he said in a heavy voice without realizing it, “Based on what I know, 0-08 has the characteristic of ‘once you know it, it will also know you.’ We shouldn’t be influenced while staying on the periphery of its perception since we aren’t sure of its real name or powers, and only use the code name we gave it. But as Red

Gloves who are pursuing the Numinous Episcopate's matters, and having discussed Ince Zangwill many times, I believe our situation has already been grasped by 0-08. This way, Ince Zangwill should know that his abnormal state has been exposed. From that, he will avoid us by creating coincidences."

Daly recalled the information regarding Ince Zangwill and nodded.

"Soest had also mentioned this problem in the beginning. However, he didn't verbalize it as clearly as you did. It's still in the stage of backward inference from a result of failures.

"Therefore, Her Excellency Goddess's Eye has gotten us to investigate the situation of the nearby district's Hunter pathway Beyonders and ingredients, and pretending as though nothing is confirmed. In the meantime, Her Excellency is preparing the usage of some corresponding items to lay a trap for the moment when the evil spirit gains control over Ince Zangwill and thus appears?"

Leonard turned his body and spoke as he walked:

"That's probably the case, but I suspect that it's unlikely for 0-08 to not know of it…"

Daly followed diagonally behind as she said in thought, "I believe there's still a chance for success. Don't forget that one of the honorific names of the Goddess is the Mother of Concealment."

"That can counter 0-08? The Church has a high-ranking member or Sealed Artifact that can counter 0-08? It's no wonder 0-08 was once obtained by the Church and sealed under the Holy Cathedral…" Leonard's eyes lit up as he came to a realization.

Daly nodded very slightly as her expression turned soft.

A few seconds later, her pupils contracted as she blurted out, "Do you think our discussion has caught the attention of 0-08?"

Leonard’s expression fell, but he didn’t dare confirm anything nor shake his head. He and Daly looked at each other, looking back and forth as they fell silent for a moment.

In a particular room, a slightly pale hand flipped a notebook to its very first page, then it flipped one page after another:

“…After leaving Bansy Harbor, Sauron Einhorn Medici, who had obtained a certain object, was no longer only stubborn or only capable of instinctively conspiring. After repeated struggles and resisting, Ince Zangwill and he had obtained a truce and had even decided on having a limited cooperative effort so as to achieve each other’s goals.

“To an evil spirit of the Red Priest pathway, such a promise cannot be guaranteed to be effective, but Ince Zangwill no longer had any other choice.

“From his point of view, this series of matters had many coincidences, but fundamentally, this was inevitable. At the very least, Sauron Einhorn Medici was many times better at creating stories than him.

“…After confirming the destination to be the Southern Continent’s East Balam, Ince Zangwill boarded a ship to the Berserk Sea… Every time, he would enter the Intis colonial islands, irrationally provoking the official Beyonders and hunting Beyonders from the Hunter pathway. Then, before danger arrived, he would quickly regain lucidity, cover his tracks, and flee far away.

“This might seem like a coincidence, but the problem is when it’s the same coincidence every time, is it too much of a coincidence?

“From the perspective of logic and reason, too many coincidences imply that certain elements or rules were secretly in existence. The reason why Ince was able to do that was because he had written the words above. Using the Quill of Alzuhod, he naturally allowed himself to switch between the two states of ‘being possessed by an evil spirit’ and ‘self-autonomy.’ What a scheming fellow. This wasn’t only directed at

Ince Zangwill, but also at Sauron Einhorn Medici. They were clearly already coexisting in peace, but they acted out to be in conflict as though they were relying on an external force to achieve some semblance of balance.

"…Ince Zangwill's purchase of additional Bard and Warrior pathway Beyonder ingredients was very reasonable. This was because he was hiding the clues that the evil spirit was using him to seek out various items of the Hunter pathway, and to prevent others from realizing that all of this was under his tacit agreement, disguising it as his attempts to resist. In addition, the Bard and Warrior pathways had the ability to resist the dead and exorcise evil spirits. As long as a clever person were to think it over carefully, they would undoubtedly notice this and verify that Ince Zangwill was being possessed.

"…After numerous provocations, the Iron and Blood Cross Order's Tony Down finally locked onto Ince Zangwill and began pursuing him. During this process, this War Bishop, who had made his goal to become a Conqueror, showed off his powers without any restraint. When a storm happened to stop his pursuit, he appeared on a ship filled with ordinary people in an eyecatching manner before pulling out the fellow disguised as Ince Zangwill.

"This was a little coincidental, but it was nothing surprising. This was because the Iron and Blood Cross Order's belief is for the supernatural to be known to all, and to be placed above all ordinary people. And Tony Down's unbridled arrogance often used his own strength to shatter the doubts of others and had extremely great confidence. Therefore, the way he acted was without a problem.

"Likewise, he was overly confident, causing him to neglect the possibility that Ince Zangwill was also on the ship. This didn't match his intuition as a hunter, but in this world, anyone could make mistakes!

"When Ince Zangwill disembarked on Waypoint Island, he sensed someone observing him from a first-class cabin, but he didn't mind it. This was exactly the effect he wanted. It was the best development if someone among the passengers happened to know him! Yes, happened to…

"… It was neither too early or too late. Before Soest's Red Gloves took action, Ince Zangwill met with Hand of White Palenque Taciblius of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction, hoping to obtain their help in exorcising the evil spirit…"

Traces of words scribbled away.

"…The development of things became a little odd. Before having a sufficient amount of clues, Leonard Mitchell and Daly Simone of the Soest's Red Gloves team seemed to come to a conclusion. It apparently came from a letter sent by Reinette Tinekerr…

"Where did the problem lie? Ince Zangwill was rather puzzled by this. From his point of view, unless one could directly capture Palenque Taciblius or other key personnel of the Numinous Episcopate, no one could come up with such a conclusion so quickly.

"This made his preparations a little hasty, but thankfully, this was an outcome he wanted.

"…The Red Gloves team led by Soest discovered Ince Zangwill's abnormalities from the feedback from various telegrams. Daly Simone used this opportunity to mention the assumption of an evil spirit's possession and had received a unanimous agreement.

"She claimed it to be a reasonable theory, but she was already in the know. She had learned it from Leonard Mitchell, who has a Parasite, and Leonard Mitchell's information source came from a letter sent by Reinette Tinekerr. Who could be the one who mailed it?

"Meanwhile, Leonard Mitchell and Daly Simone had already suspected that the evil spirit possessing Ince Zangwill belongs to the Hunter pathway…

“But is this the truth to the matter? Will everything develop according to what Daly Simone, Leonard Mitchell, and Soest’s Red Gloves team have in mind?

“…After the discussion with that person in the Cathedral of Serenity, the Cathedral of Serenity’s high-ranking deacon, Ilya, believed Daly’s theory and decided to use a Grade 1 Hunter pathway Sealed Artifact as bait, so as to allow Ince Zangwill to fall into a trap while the evil spirit was possessing him.

“To conceal this goal, she got Soest’s Red Gloves team to continue investigating the relevant clues.

“Unfortunately, their premise was wrong. Although Ince Zangwill was possessed by an evil spirit, his actions had never been affected! All he had done before was an act. It was done in accordance with Sauron Einhorn Medici’s suggestions, with the aim to confuse the Church of Evernight and to make Ilya blindly attack. And a Red Angel evil spirit that was willing to help and cooperate was enough to change the battlefield’s situation.

“Ince Zangwill’s true motive for coming to the Southern Continent is:

“Hunt the high-ranking deacon, Ilya, of the Church of Evernight! It was for his advancement preparations by obtaining her Beyonder characteristic!

“He wanted to prove to everyone that the Church of Evernight had made a foolish mistake to abandon him back then!

“Of course, before beginning this operation, Ince Zangwill had to first satisfy Sauron Einhorn Medici’s thirst-a thirst for Mid- and High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics of the Hunter pathway. To keep it a secret, he didn’t plan on hunting locally, and he had prepared to do it further away.

"When the evil spirit's undying nature, Red Angel's level, and the uniqueness of a Gatekeeper combined, Ince Zangwill possessed the relatively High Sequence ability of 'Spirit World Traversal' of the Death pathway. He was able to head to remote areas and return in short periods of time. He had deliberately kept this under wraps before.

"After satisfying Sauron Einhorn Medici, Ince Zangwill decided to first kill Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell and pretend to vaguely sense the Church of Evernight's trap. He would forcefully counterattack, only to lose his rationality and head for the trap.

"He didn't plan on leaving any unstable elements. All avengers that survived Tingen had to die!"

The notebook flipped to an empty spot as a pale-white hand grabbed a quill and added the words: "Today, everything will go smoothly."

West Balam, Northern State, Cookawa City.

"You aren't done with your investigations?" Anderson asked in boredom as he walked beside Danitz.

"Soon!" Danitz replied as he found it a little difficult to focus. "Do you have something to do?"

At this moment, Anderson took out a map and a stack of information. He said with a chuckle, "I've already figured out the rough location of an ancient mausoleum. Based on the traditions of East and West Balam, there's definitely plenty of treasure in it. Here, death doesn't mean an end but a new beginning. That's why they have tons of burial items."

Danitz was taken aback as he asked in surprise, "I thought you aren't proficient in Dutanese?"

How did he gather the information?

Anderson chuckled and raised his black-gloved left palm. He spread his fingers and said, "I don't, but I can temporarily steal their language until I finish finding the information."

"…I knew a fellow like you will have some tricks up his sleeves!" Danitz said with gritted teeth as he pointed to the main street beside the square. "Goodbye!"

Anderson didn't stop him as he smilingly watched him walk away with large strides.

At this moment, the two simultaneously noticed a figure walking over.

The figure held a classic quill and wore a black clergyman's robe. He had dark blond hair with facial features akin to a classic sculpture. One of his eyes was so blue that it was nearly black, and the other was filled with small but obvious blood vessels. He was approaching Anderson and Danitz.

Anderson didn't know the middle-aged man, but his body couldn't help but tremble as though he was facing his nemesis.

Warning signs of danger flashed in his mind as his pupils rapidly dilated!

Suddenly, he heard a warm voice by his ears:

"Don't be nervous."

Who… Anderson blankly turned his head and saw a figure strangely appear beside him despite there not being anyone there in the first place.

This figure had apparently been there all this time, but he had always been ignored.

He wore a strangely simple white robe. He had a pale gold beard that covered half his face. His light-colored eyes were clear like a child's. He had a genial and reserved look.

Looking at the quill in Ince Zangwill's hand, this middle-aged man who was dressed like an ordinary priest half-closed his eyes, raised his right hand, and gestured four points before him.

Hanging there was a silver cross.

Chapter 941 - Development That Adheres to Logic

◆

The moment he saw the middle-aged man dressed in a priest's getup, Anderson zoned out for a second. Following that, some shackles in his mind suddenly collapsed as countless memory fragments surged through an invisible barrier. It felt like long-suppressed feelings suddenly erupted.

He remembered the things that had happened over the past two months. He remembered the mission that the demigod had given him!

Back in Bayam, he followed the thoughts in his mind to meet up with the demigod. He followed him and left the Rorsted Archipelago for a secret location.

There, he met the priest beside him. It was arranged for him to enter an ancient coffin, to lay there among Beyonder ingredients and a liquid filled with strange mixed blood, allowing them to seep into him.

After a month of this corrosive treatment, a dark red chrysalis formed inside his body. He then had his memories from this period of time sealed before being sent to West Balam. He was then psychologically cued to not leave until he recovered his memories.

This meant that he hadn't finished the demigod's mission and that it was still underway. Everything that had happened before were just preparations!

Scenes flashed through his mind as Anderson discovered that while he was playing the harmonica on the streets, checking into the hotel with Danitz, obtaining of Language Comprehension charms from the Church of Knowledge's preachers, as well as his arrival in Northern State—all of these incidents had this genial and seemingly innocent priest present beside him the entire time.

When having meals, he was sitting at a neighboring table. When he checked in, the neighboring room was his. When walking on the streets, he was walking right beside him. When playing the harmonica and putting on the ventriloquist act, this man was looking at him in a genial manner!

And Anderson hadn't noticed any of this back then. Danitz, who was beside him, the people around him

-none of them had noticed him. It was as though they had never seen this priest before!

A chill that arose from deep in his heart ran from his tail bone up his spine to his brain. He felt that the experiences he had been through were enough to drive him insane, to the point of losing control.

Danitz, who had already opened up a distance from Anderson, looked at the black-robed clergyman, Ince Zangwill, and then he looked at the simple priest who was praying with his eyes closed. He hurriedly bowed his head and used ancient Hermes to softly chant, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…"

A few days earlier, he had received Mr. Fool's revelation to handle some matters as a guise to stay around Anderson. It was so that he could immediately pray if any abnormalities were to happen.

Although he didn't know what would happen, or who he had encountered, Danitz, who always cherished his life, didn't hold back and did as he was toldeven if the abnormalities that happened might very well be him being overly imaginative!

For this, he had specially worn the boxing glove made from Groselle's Beyonder characteristic. It ensured that he would act first without thinking so as to not waste any time!

At this point, Ince Zangwill had stopped walking. His dark blue, nearly black eye and the eye filled with blood vessels reflected the priest in simple white robes who had a cross hanging by his chest.

In his mind, in his mouth, a furious voice sounded:

"Adam!"

The Creator's son, King of Angels, Adam! Before Ince Zangwill could finish his sentence, the priest opposite him opened his eyes. His light-colored eyes were already pure gold in color.

Suddenly, pitch-black stone columns were erected around them, setting up a majestic cathedral.

Inside this cathedral, each column, each arch, and each dome's surface was embedded with the bones of different races. They were densely packed as they used different eye sockets to stare at Ince Zangwill. They surrounded a cross that was more than a hundred meters tall.

In front of the cross, a blurry figure stood there as though he was watching everything with compassion.

This was a cathedral of corpses, but instead of appearing eerie, it was filled with holiness!

The walls, windows, and doors of the cathedral had transparent, warped faces protruding out. It was as though countless souls were sealed inside, preventing Beyonders from sensing the existence of the spirit world or astral world!

The square and pedestrians from before had vanished. They were kept outside the corpse cathedral that had suddenly appeared.

Ince Zangwill's classic quill had already flown up as it wrote rapidly on his black clergyman's robe:

"Anderson Hood is Gehrman Sparrow's friend. Ouroboros had taken notice of him, and due to various unknown reasons, Ouroboros's appearance here was a development that adhered to logic!"

Just as the quill wrote the exclamation mark, light beams shone in from the colored-windows of the corpse cathedral, forming stacked illusory pure feathers.

Beneath the enveloping feathers, a figure with long silver hair materialized in a genuflecting, praying stance. Following that, the figure stood up straight.

"He" wore a simple linen robe and had handsome looks and soft facial features. He was none other than King of Angels, Tail Devourer Ouroboros!

Ouroboros's eyes were momentarily unfocused, but it soon reflected the genial priest's image.

In "His" eyes, at "His" feet, and on the stacked feathers of light behind "Him," a supernatural, mysterious circle was accentuated, forming an illusory river like a snake that had its head connected to its tail.

The corpse cathedral once again reverted to the point when the pitch-black stone columns erected with the surrounding square were still on the border of existence.

Taking this opportunity, Ouroboros flew out. Ince Zangwill didn't hesitate as he made the surrounding colors saturate and overlap against each other.

Just as this Nightwatcher was about to step into the spirit world, he suddenly saw a cross spanning more than a hundred meters in size plummet down from high above.

This cross impaled the middle of the unformed corpse cathedral as the blurry figure that carried the cross raised its head.

Infinite light spewed out, drowning Ouroboros and the quill-holding Ince Zangwill within.

The corpse cathedral filled with bones of different races and the countless warped souls took form once again.

Upon hearing the stacked, illusory pleas, Klein was inside his hotel and thinking about his daily miscellaneous matters and lampooning in boredom.

He suddenly stood up, went straight to the window and looked towards the nearby square.

On the square, coffins were coming and going. The fountain was still spewing, and there was reverberating music. Everything seemed normal and even felt idyllic. Here, what seemed most unharmonious was Anderson genuflecting with a stiff expression while a trembling Danitz was closing his eyes praying. Without a second thought, Klein followed the plan he had formulated above the gray fog. He controlled Winner Enzo who was a hundred meters away to enter the telegraph office. He had instructed Danitz to live beside a telegraph office!

At the same time, he took out his adventurer's harmonica and blew into it.

Reinette Tinekerr walked out of the void with the four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand. All eight eyes turned to the square.

"For Leonard, Miss Messenger. He likely hasn't left your detection range." Klein took out a letter he had already prepared and a gold coin before handing it to Miss Messenger.

What he said and did was akin to a marionette. He only followed the instructions he had prepared in advance. If he couldn't help think of something else, he would immediately use Cogitation to divert his attention.

This was the method he figured out from Will Auceptin on how to deal with 0-08. By doing the thinking above the gray fog, all he did was act according to plan in the real world.

And in a particular prayer from Danitz, Klein had used the scene that appeared to observe Anderson who was nearby. In the end, he discovered an unfamiliar priest who also felt familiar by his side.

Thinking back to the Psychology Alchemists and the Twilight Hermit Order's hidden connection, and making the connection to the content in Emperor Roselle's diary, Klein immediately realized something. He was certain about what would happen next:

The master of the Twilight Hermit Order, the son of the Creator, Angel of Imagination Adam, was conspiring to obtain 0-08!

This also meant that there was a high chance for Ince Zangwill to appear with Anderson as the target!

Then, Klein redid his plan above the gray fog, pretending as though he had never noticed anything. He continued his state as a "marionette in reality."

One of Reinette Tinekerr's heads bit onto the letter as the eight eyes looked deeply at Klein for two seconds.

Klein nodded indiscernibly without a word, watching Miss Messenger return to the spirit world.

In the Cookawa telegraph office, Winner Enzo handed over the telegram, address, and verl gold he had already prepared for the staff, urging them to send it immediately.

“West Balam, Northern State, Cookawa. Ince Zangwill has appeared.”

The radio waves quickly spread, sending the message to the major bases of the Church of Evernight in West Balam and East Balam.

East Balam.

“Why are you always active around the cathedral? Why don’t you go further to carry out the investigations?” Daly asked Leonard.

Leonard thought and said frankly and seriously, “Awaiting news.”

Daly nodded in thought without prying further.

She turned silent, no longer playing jokes on Leonard. It was as though she was waiting for something as well.

Suddenly, Leonard’s spiritual perception was triggered as he turned to look left.

As a Gatekeeper, Daly had already cast her eyes in that direction.

A letter had appeared at some point in time, landing underneath a gas street lamp.

Leonard didn’t avoid Daly as he hurriedly picked up the envelope and opened it.

The content of the letter was very simple. There was only one line:

“West Balam, Northern State, Cookawa, Revival Square. Coordinates…”

Leonard’s expression turned heavy as he turned to Daly and said, “Ma’am, please help me to cover my tracks.”

As he spoke, his left glove had turned transparent. He stuffed his right hand into his pocket and grasped the Fate Siphon charm.

Daly fell silent for a second and said extremely seriously, “Bring me along.

"Back then, you managed to at least fight, but I didn't have the time to do anything."

Leonard's expression changed as his mouth gaped slightly. Finally, without saying a word, he grabbed Daly's shoulder.

The two then vanished from the rather empty streets.

As he watched Miss Messenger leave, and once he confirmed that the telegraph office had at least sent one telegram, Klein immediately took four steps counterclockwise and entered above the gray fog. He directly sat at the high-back chair of The Fool and beckoned for the Tyrant card, the Sea God Scepter, and a silver-gray charm.

Immediately, he was wearing a papal tiara with a papal robe draped over him with a bone scepter in hand.

Amidst silver bolts of lightning, Klein spread his spirituality towards the point of light where Danitz was.

Chapter 942 - Deity's Curse

◆

With Klein's spirituality making contact, the points of light suddenly expanded into a scene before his eyes.

With his Shadow Cloak up, Danitz was praying with his head bowed in the corner of the square, chanting The Fool's honorific name with ancient Hermes.

Thanks to this, Klein could see an expanded area around him, and he began searching for Ince Zangwill.

Through the gray fog, everything he saw was clearly different from what he had previously seen. In the middle of the square, a pitch-black corpse-embedded cathedral had appeared at some point in time. It was dark inside, but there wasn't any signs of activity inside.

Using this opportunity, Klein replied Danitz's prayer, "Leave the area. Find a hidden spot to hide in."

As he spoke slowly, dressed in the papal tiara and dark robes, Klein raised his left hand and made the blue gems at the tip of the bone scepter light up.

Sharp, jarring sounds immediately resounded in Revival Square in the real world as a sudden gale swept the area. It made the people who were spending their leisure time there or the pedestrians to leave quickly to head for shelter from the wind. Even Anderson, who had a frozen expression, recovered his usual insouciant attitude. Holding his abdomen, he quickly rushed out of the dangerous area.

In a few seconds, Revival Square became extremely silent. Even the pedestrians who walked slowly without running had experienced the feeling of flying with the nudging of the wind.

The empty area entered a brief silence. Then, a flame appeared from the corpse cathedral's window. It grew in size and became increasingly blinding.

Silently, the colored glass windows shattered as blinding white light that bordered on blue shot out like a meteor.

This flaming light instantly crumbled, materializing into Ince Zangwill, who wore a black clergyman's robe and had one dark blue eye and one eye covered with blood vessels.

The moment this Nightwatcher appeared, he couldn't help but open his mouth and scoff at the classic quill in his hand.

"If a fool like you didn't listen to my suggestion, how could something like this happen!

"I'm not even sure what you're afraid of. If you had allowed me to pray to the Lord, allowing me to secretly return to the Rose Redemption and join forces with the 'Serpent,' our preparations would allow us to set up a trap. Today, we will be the ones hunting Adam, and not the other way round!"

The seemingly dark and damaged quill immediately flew up and wrote on an empty spot of Ince Zangwill's clothes:

"Due to a rage stemming from embarrassment, Sauron Einhorn Medici pushed the blame of this development to the Quill of Alzuhod, but in fact, it was 'He' who was stopping himself from praying to the True Creator. Be it Sauron or Einhorn, neither one of them trusted this evil god.

"Today's development made this evil spirit's psychological dissociation to worsen! This is extremely reasonable. This is the diagnosis by the best, most professional psychiatrist!”

“Ince Zangwill” immediately frowned as he raised his left hand and pressed it to his head.

His dark blue eye rapidly recovered its luster as the classically sculpted face turned extremely stern.

At this moment, having escaped the corpse cathedral, he was no longer facing the square. Instead, it was flights of ancient stone stairs. They were leading to the peak of a towering mountain. Erected there was a huge cross with countless angels spiraling around it.

At this moment, an exaggerated bolt of silver lightning tore through the overcast sky, smiting right down at Ince Zangwill.

The sealed and strange space produced cracks. The fountain and its splashes appeared in his dark blue eye.

Ince Zangwill’s figure immediately vanished, leaving behind a blurry transparent spirit. The latter was struck by lightning and was instantly obliterated.

This Nightwatcher didn’t have the luxury of time to consider what other lurking dangers there were. He took this opportunity to transform into a flame as he penetrated a crack and rushed out.

To him, no matter what lay ahead of him, nothing was more terrifying and difficult to deal with than the Son of the Creator, King of Angels Adam!

Upon seeing the flame rise up from the square, allowing Ince Zangwill to escape the restraints of the illusory world and returning to his appearance with dark blond hair and pale hands, Klein raised his head slightly and subconsciously sat straight.

Countless scenes flashed across his mind—him having his heart penetrated, the pair of bright leather boots just before his previous death, Dunn Smith smiling at him with a wink of his left eye, and the Blackthorn Security Company which had been reduced to ruins.

The corners of Klein's mouth quickly curled upwards as he revealed a comical smile.

He then deeply muttered using ancient Hermes, "Misfortune!"

The silver-gray charm on his right palm suddenly burst into a gloomy black light.

This was a charm of the misfortune domain Klein made using Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin's blood and precious metals by praying to the Evernight Goddess.

This was a present he had prepared for Ince Zangwill.

This was an arrow of vengeance.

This was a deity's curse!

Klein immediately stood up, stretched his shoulders, and threw out his right arm, fusing the gloomy black light with the little powers he could stir from above the gray fog as he threw them at Ince Zangwill.

†

Just as Ince Zangwill returned to Revival Square, he saw a dark black beam appear out of nowhere. It blanketed the entire sky, making him find himself in an extremely dark environment.

Such a change happened in a flash before everything was restored to normal in an instant. Nothing seemed amiss, but as a Nightwatcher who could give others a certain level of bad luck, Ince Zangwill acutely "smelled" the aura of danger. Without any hesitation, he reached out his left palm in a bid to use the evil spirit within him and his powers as a Gatekeeper to enter the spirit world and flee.

However, none of the surrounding bright flowers, pure-white fountain, and dark black tiles had their colors saturate, much less become stacked.

Ince Zangwill's Spirit World Traversal had become ineffective!

The glint in his eyes froze as he seemed to understand the reason. It was because the evil spirit in him was having an internal struggle; thus, they wouldn't lend him their power.

"See? Everything would be fine if you had listened to me!"

"Bullsh*t! I'd rather die than believe in the True Creator!"

"What's the point saying all of this? Didn't you still end up the same as us, being made into a potion by Alista Tudor?"

"So none of you are nervous at all? Didn't you notice that the curse clearly came with a deity's aura? That power was fundamentally very powerful. Our present condition doesn't allow us to avoid it at all. Haha, continue arguing. Go on! I'll wait to die with all of you."

†

The veins on Ince Zangwill's forehead throbbed when he heard that. He was furious that Sauron Einhorn Medici would suddenly engage in an internal strife at such a critical moment. They didn't seem to notice the danger they were in at all.

As a former archbishop, as a Beyonder who had watched over the Church of Evernight's Holy Artifacts, Ince Zangwill didn't let his judgment become clouded because of his rage. He instinctively believed that the gloomy black beam had something to do with the Evernight Goddess's authority over misfortune. He believed that Sauron Einhorn Medici's sudden fallout was clearly a result of this influence. Otherwise, it was impossible for the Red Angel evil spirit to break into a quarrel without concerning themselves with the situation they were in simply because of the Quill of Alzuhod's writing!

He immediately turned around, quickly running towards another exit of Revival Square in an attempt to communicate with other spirits. He wished to borrow their powers to escape; however, there wasn't a single spirit around!

At this moment, a figure stood in a hidden corner of the open square. He was a mixed-blood with parents coming from Loen and Balam. He had a fleshy face and baggy clothes. On his waist hung a rapier.

It was Admiral Hell Ludwell!

This was a marionette who usually didn't have any thoughts!

After throwing out the Deity's Curse charm, Klein followed his plan, returned to the real world, and made use of the two marionettes!

As he made Enzo find a corner, he took out the items he prepared, set up a bestowment ritual, and controlled Admiral Hell to walk to a secluded spot to face Ince Zangwill.

This Admiral Hell, who looked nothing like his original self, raised his right hand, allowing his arm and fingers to rapidly turn incorporeal as they extended towards the target.

This was a power he used by borrowing the Underworld creature within him to extract the Spirit Bodies of others remotely!

Ludwell's palm quickly turned pale-white, and above Ince Zangwill, a figure floated up uncontrollably.

However, Ince Zangwill was once a Gatekeeper. An illusory bronze door filled with mystery immediately took form in his eyes as it quickly pulled back his escaping Spirit Body.

With his level and strength, this was unlikely to succeed so successfully, but for some reason, he repeatedly made mistakes and nearly allowed Admiral Hell to succeed. For a brief moment, all he could manage to do was a see-saw-like struggle.

At this moment, two figures rapidly appeared beside Ludwell. One of them was the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard with a transparent glove in hand, and the other was Davy Simone who had blue eyeshadow and blush.

They had arrived at the perfect moment because the bad luck of an enemy often implied that one was lucky enough!

The first thing Daly saw was the figure she could never forget. Pangs of fury burned in her eyes instantly.

She didn't rashly attack as she made some observations. She came behind Ludwell and spread her arms.

A bronze door filled with countless strange patterns immediately descended and creaked open a gap.

This was a door that led to the Underworld. It was a door filled with allure to all undead creatures!

An indescribable and terrifying suction force came out of it as the figure above Ince Zangwill's body completely separated from him.

It was a translucent man wearing blood-stained black armor. He was young and handsome with red hair. His face had terrifying signs of decay, and at his glabella was a flag-like mark.

This young man wasn't too surprised about being separated from Ince Zangwill. Instead, he sneered.

"We sure are unlucky today. We have already died together once, so is there a need to do so another time? Especially when we're being controlled by such a weakling?"

A bloody gap appeared on his upper left cheek as it opened and closed.

“Alright, let’s clear out the surrounding trash…”

[image]

Before the sentence was finished, the man in blood-stained black armor reached out his palm and drew out an illusory sword with dark red rust stains from his body.

A terrifying suppressive force easily allowed the evil spirit to free itself from Ludwell’s and Daly Simone’s extraction. It swooped down in an attempt to return to Ince Zangwill’s body.

At this moment, a hoarse voice sounded, sounding as though it held sandcloth in it. Admiral Hell Ludwell had chanted in ancient Hermes, “Fate!”

Chapter 943 - The Third Act

◆

“Fate!

In the awkward-sounding voice, the spots where Admiral Hell Ludwell and Nightwatcher Ince Zangwill stood turned dark as if they were covered by two black clouds.

Fate Siphon charm!

This was one of the Fate Siphon charms that Klein had made using the Worms of Time from Pallez Zoroast!

To make plans without 0-08’s knowledge, he had kept himself hidden behind the scenes the entire time. Not only had he lent Creeping Hunger to Leonard Mitchell, he had also given the Fate Siphon charm to his marionette!

Hence, the one who was possessed by the evil spirit had gone from Ince Zangwill to Ludwell.

Admiral Hell instantly had Sauron Einhorn Medici’s blood-stained, black-armored body plunge into him as his eyes became filled with minute blood vessels.

Inside the hotel, Klein calmly controlled the marionette without showing any wavering or hesitation due to the impact the evil spirit had. Ludwell reached out to tear his clothes and raised the soul-soothing mask to cover his face.

At the same time, having heard the Red Angel’s words, and witnessing

“His actual condition, Daly Simone, who had suffered immense pressure, seemed to realize something. Not only did she not close the Door to the Underworld, she even gritted her teeth and used all her might to widen the gap.

Bloody, skinless arms, slimy tentacles with teeth, and bluish-black vines with baby faces began emerging from the Door to the Underworld as they grabbed at Ludwell.

This freed up Admiral Hell who had planned on completing this step alone. Taking advantage of the opportunity that the Underworld within his body hadn’t yet been destroyed by Sauron Einhorn Medici, with the only negative effects on his body being decaying, he hurriedly turned around and dashed towards the mysterious, illusory bronze door!

He was then grabbed on his body and legs by the arms, tentacles, vines, and spirits behind the door. With his running working hand in hand with the scalp-tingling tugs, he instantly leaped through the widened door gap and entered the Underworld.

Upon seeing this, Daly immediately pulled back her palm and stopped maintaining the mysterious-patterned bronze door.

Thud!

The indescribable illusory door closed heavily. Admiral Hell Ludwell, along with Sauron Einhorn Medici, were kept out of the real world with the Underworld creatures.

This was a key step to Klein’s plan. It was to forcibly separate the Red Angel evil spirit from Ince Zangwill!

Although he believed that the Red Angel evil spirit was the reason for Ince Zangwill’s instability, he wasn’t willing to face an additional evil spirit formed after the deaths of one King of Angels and two Sequence 1 angels when taking revenge on a demigod. No one could predict what actions a Conspirer would take under such circumstances.

Therefore, Klein used the basis of the magical powers of the Fate Siphon charm and Ludwell's pathway characteristic to formulate a plan. The addition of Daly had allowed the entire process to happen more smoothly. There wasn't any room for being interrupted as they successfully pulled the Red Angel evil spirit into the Underworld!

This way, even if the evil spirit was able to possess Admiral Hell's body and travel back to the real world via Spirit World Traversal, it would be far into the future. After all, to leave the Underworld required them to find an exit, and with the Evernight Goddess wielding control over Artificial Death, she had a certain level of authority in the Underworld. "She was definitely not letting the Red Angel evil spirit leave so easily.

Sacrificing a marionette, a high-level charm, and two mystical items in exchange for removing the Red Angel evil spirit from the battlefield was heart-wrenching for Klein, but it was definitely worth it!

As for the misfortune on Ince Zangwill, on the one hand, it was a continuous state and not a short-term affliction; and on the other hand, he had suffered from Deity's Curse. The Fate Siphon charm could only replace a tiny portion of that and not empty it out. He could soon recover. As for Ludwell, he had Winner Enzo imbuing him with good luck. Nothing would stop his series of actions for a short period of time.

Such a change was completely unexpected for Leonard. However, he had become a Red Glove for almost a year. He had plenty of experience dealing with supernatural cases, so he didn't show any hesitation or confusion. He immediately cast his gaze at the still-dazed Ince Zangwill.

When the figure in a black clergyman's robe with one dim eye was reflected in his eyes, his expression immediately warped as though he was facing a trauma of his.

It was a trauma where he did his best but had failed to put it to use. It was the trauma of seeing Captain and Klein already dead after regaining consciousness.

As Leonard raised his left palm, he pressed the human-skinned glove to his temple and grasped the Fate Siphon charm in his right hand tightly. With a deep voice, he said, “Fate!

The ancient, supernatural language echoed as a transparent book condensed in front of his left glove. Following that, there was the ethereal chant of “I came, I saw, I record.

Bolts of bright, blinding silver lightning blasted down one after another as they instantly devoured Leonard.

Lightning Storm!

This was akin to Leonard holding a revolver to his temple before pulling the trigger.

He was committing suicide, but at the same time, he was using the Fate Siphon charm. This would transfer such a fate to Ince Zangwill!

This was the best solution he could think of when using the Fate Siphon charm and Creeping Hunger! It required immense courage!

Countless silver lightning swept over, shattering the surrounding darkness. Leonard Mitchell immediately snapped awake and found himself still standing at his spot. His left hand had yet to rise, and his right hand had just grabbed the Fate Siphon charm.

Whatever he did was just a dream!

At this moment, in Ince Zangwill’s dark blue eyes, darkness was slowly swirling. It was as though it was saying: When did you get the misconception that you aren’t dreaming?

In fact, long before Sauron Einhorn Medici had been extracted from his body, he had already created a large-scale dream in an attempt to pull all his enemies in. Unfortunately, the man with a rapier was in no way affected. He easily escaped and ended up destroying the dream, reducing its effects to nothing.

As the ability to detect danger which was gained from one's spiritual perception feedback was that obvious, and with the possibility of the conflict between the two Kings of Angels behind him spilling over at any moment, Ince Zangwill didn't hesitate to create a large-scale slumber effect while pulling Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell into a dream.

Right on the heels of that, he picked up Quill of Alzuhod and rapidly wrote on his sleeve:

"Ince Zangwill was in optimal condition today. He could effectively control his Mythical Creature form; therefore, he didn't hold back and used all his strength to escape the area!

As he finished writing the sentence with the quill, Ince Zangwill's body began transforming.

His eyes instantly turned black as though it was tainted with ink. The fine patterns around him began to extend, forming strange and distorted mysterious symbols.

At his waist and ribs, his clothes swelled as four skinless arms grew out from squirming flesh; they were covered with blood vessels.

The arm was rapidly covered with white feathers as a cadaveric aura rippled out.

At the same time, Ince Zangwill's teeth grew long, turning sharp. His body seemed to be embedded with numerous blurry, tiny faces.

In a blink of an eye, this Nightwatcher was already slumped on the ground, turning into a strange monster with eight "legs and white feathers!

Night suddenly fell upon the square as worms in the soil and the bacteria on the floor tiles died one after another, entering an eternal slumber.

This was the combination of the powers of Evernight and Death!

Just as Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell were about to lose their lives amidst their slumber, a thunderclap boomed.

Bolts of silver lightning struck down, turning into a forest of lightning that blanketed Ince Zangwill's incomplete Mythical Creature form.

After sending away the Red Angel evil spirit, Klein didn't stay any longer. Like a marionette with preset orders, he mechanically took four steps counterclockwise and entered above the gray fog. Wearing the papal tiara and papal robe again, he picked up the Sea God Scepter!

This was the third act of the play. With 0-08 exhausted by Adam, and with the Red Angel evil spirit separated from Ince Zangwill thanks to the Fate Siphon charm, he had to face the Sea God's wrath as a Sequence 4!

Klein knew that he didn't have the strength to directly fight a demigod. Therefore, his plan had been to wear off Ince Zangwill's helpers while smiting him from above the gray fog. It was akin to the sea battle with the demigod, Qonas Kilgor, who was from the Black Emperor pathway back then.

Even if he couldn't complete the kill due to a demigod's potency, he could stall for time until the Church of Evernight's archbishop or high-ranking deacons with Sealed Artifacts arrived!

In this plan, there were two uncontrollable parameters.

First, it was unpredictable how much influence 0-08 had towards the end. A card up his sleeve was to let Enzo set up a bestowment ritual and be prepared to send Groselle's Travels to the real world at any time. By sending it to the edge of the battle, Klein wanted to know if this would lure the quill away from Ince Zangwill. After all, he guessed that the quill was a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact of the Spectator pathway. It was likely that it was interested in the special book left behind by the Dragon of Imagination.

Second, he wasn't sure how strong the Son of the Creator, Adam, was. Klein had no reference point, and he believed that it wasn't impossible for a King of Angels like him to subdue 0-08, imprison the Red Angel evil spirit, and kill Ince Zangwill alone!

Towards such a development, Klein had no means to foil it. All he could do was pray for the Goddess's blessings and Fate's tenderness as he waited for the outcome.

Rumble!

The lightning forest smote down, bringing with it intense destructive auras.

At this moment, pure darkness surged out of the gaps in the lightning, devouring all of the silver-white swath.

Right on the heels of that, Ince Zangwill's eight "legs moved rapidly as he ran out of the area.

He couldn't find a target of attack, nor could he lock onto the enemy that had cast Lightning Storm. Holding back his furious emotions, he ran towards buildings along the perimeter of the square, leaving shadowy afterimages behind.

However, amidst booming thunder, terrifying lightning bolts smote down one after another, trapping Ince Zangwill inside the square.

Daly and Leonard had already woken up from their dreams, but the light from the lightning affected their vision, allowing them to discover that Ince Zangwill had apparently turned into a monster, but the details were unclear.

Mythical Creature form… As the two had a solid foundation in mysticism, they immediately realized what was happening and quickly closed their eyes. They then retreated to a spot that provided them shelter.

Realizing that he was unable to dodge the lightning strike given the amount of time he had, Ince Zangwill retracted one of his “legs, picked up 0-08, and as he ran, he wrote on his body:

“An unknown existence is attracted by the combat and feels great pity for Ince Zangwill’s experiences before deciding to help him by taking him away via the spirit world!

Chapter 944 - The Fourth Act

◆ ◆ ◆

On the heavily scuffed and damaged Revival Square, the environment turned dark as a gloominess and eeriness filled it in a seemingly corporeal manner. Even the blinding silver lightning wasn't able to dispel this feeling.

Daly Simone acutely sensed that an unknown creature was crossing the spirit world and approaching. An ominous feeling rose up in her as though she could already see Ince Zangwill using such an accident to easily escape, never to be found.

She felt ice-cold in a manner that couldn't be resisted, just like when she first became a Beyonder.

Back then, due to a particular accident, as a nineteen-year-old, she had lost her family and ended up drinking a potion by mistake. She ended up becoming a Corpse Collector and was placed into a Nighthawks team.

The influence of the potion and the wounds from losing her family had made her enjoy gloominess and coldness. She couldn't help but approach corpses, often loitering in cemeteries and sleeping there.

This made her appear odd, with people instinctively avoiding her. This not only dropped her body temperature, but it also slowly froze her heart and soul as they turned ice-cold.

She was afraid of this feeling. She still hoped to live as a person; hence, she instinctively used how men coveted her for her looks and body to gain a boyfriend. She wanted to use the warmth of a body to stop her soul from turning cold.

In this decadent and surreal life, she met that man, a man who always warmly listened to her. He was a man who always stayed by her side and provided her help. He was a man who became embarrassed when faced with jokes involving the two sexes. He was a man who accepted all the flaws and weaknesses of his teammates with a sincere attitude. He was a man who fumbled in helplessness when she jested at him again and again. He was a man who hid the pain and sorrow in his heart, to the point of suffering an early receding hairline. He was a man who was the first to step forward when encountering danger, putting himself in between the danger and his teammates.

She changed. She began putting on makeup that made her appear older. She stopped mixing with other men but kept her jokes to deliberately express that she hadn't changed in an obvious manner.

However, she still didn't make it in time. She didn't manage to witness the man master the acting method, digest potions, and advance to Sequence 6. She didn't manage to see him reach out his hand to invite her to an opening dance or be able to participate in his final battle. She didn't manage to tell him her feelings in time.

I was wrong. I failed to do anything in time. Today, I'm not having it repeat again… Daly's expression turned sorrowful as the corners of lips curled bit by bit with tenderness and sweetness.

With her eyes closed, she suddenly pulled out a small metal bottle from a hidden compartment. She threw the stopper and gulped the liquid inside.

Her blue eyeshadow and blush instantly brightened, and even her skin turned slightly translucent. Her coiled up hair was instantly released, pushing her hood back as they fluttered.

"Spirit wandering the void, higher-order creature that leave one with awe, the unforeseeable creature," Daly chanted with simple and forceful ancient Hermes, "I, I shall sign a contract with you in my name, pray that you leave this place!"

Behind the eight-"legged," the white-feathered Ince Zangwill, a figure appeared. It was a blood-colored piece of flesh with countless eyes on it and arms of different races.

Just as it was about to grab Ince Zangwill and drag him into the spirit world, it suddenly paused. It then turned its gaze towards Daly Simone.

Pitch-black snake-like scales instantly appeared on Daly's skin, and within the gaps of the scales, white feathers grew.

Her knees buckled as she knelt down in pain, but she ultimately maintained her spirit channeling posture.

That quill began writing autonomously on Ince Zangwill's body.

"The unknown existence descended upon Revival Square and was just about to take Ince Zangwill away—but no, it was attracted by Daly Simone. Its sense of aesthetics was inclined towards humans. Oh no, it abandoned Ince Zangwill. It decided to listen to Daly Simone's suggestion and ended up leaving.

"How surprising that when it came to spirit channeling, Ince Zangwill, a demigod, would actually lose to Sequence 5 Daly Simone. Although this lady had consumed the Flower of Spirit and paid an immense price, she had little chance to defeat Ince Zangwill who was barely using the Quill of Alzuhod.

"Ince Zangwill was just too unlucky. He actually encountered a matter with nearly zero probability!"

Amidst the lightning strikes, blood-red beams lit up in Ince Zangwill's pitch-black eyes that were covered with mysterious symbols before calming down. His "hand" which held the quill wrote on his body once again:

"Another unknown existence was lured into the vicinity and attempted to enter the real world…"

Just as he wrote that, the quill suddenly paused as it continued writing:

"Incoming! Incoming! It, no—'She' was Reinette Tinekerr! No, Reinette Tinekerr chased away all the surrounding creatures in the spirit world. 'She' gave Ince Zangwill a glance, looked away, and left, continuing 'Her' patrol of the surroundings.

"Ince Zangwill is too unlucky, just too unlucky!"

Ince Zangwill's rapidly-moving body suddenly paused as though he had suffered a terrible blow.

Boom!

A thick bolt of silver-white lightning smote the eight-"legged" monster. It sent Ince Zangwill flying up as he let out an inhuman cry.

In his pitch-black eyes, the blood-red beam spread out like an explosion, turning into two bloodthirsty, cruel, and maniacal blobs of light.

"Ince Zangwill could no longer control his emotions and maintain a good state of mind. He lost most of his reason…" The more the slightly damaged quill wrote, the darker it became until it slowly stopped.

With a scream that left one with goosebumps, an endless darkness blanketed the area, pulling Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell into a dream.

However, the thunder booms and lightning snapped the dreamers awake.

Ince Zangwill took a step back with his eight "legs," leaving behind an afterimage in his spot. He rapidly ran towards Daly Simone who was on the brink of losing control, hoping to rip apart the Nighthawk who had foiled his plans for escaping.

Boom! Boom!

Ridiculous bolts of lightning blasted down, stopping his attempts to escape.

Boom! Boom!

The eight “legs” that were covered with white feathers, which now had signs of being charred, moved one after another as he kept his body low while he circled the square, dodging the lightning in search for an opportunity to kill Leonard and Daly.

With time, he realized there was a problem with the remaining reason that he had. The frequency of the lightning was dropping!

The person that kept casting Lightning Strike had apparently reached his limit, and his spirituality was almost drained!

Ince Zangwill’s heart stirred as a cruel smile was plastered across his face. He ran at high speeds as he muttered in ancient Feysac, “All of you will die!”

He had apparently forgotten of his need to escape.

All of you will die… Leonard Mitchell could do nothing despite hearing that sentence. It was because he couldn’t even open his eyes. He couldn’t determine where Ince Zangwill was, nor use his spirituality to lock onto him.

At this moment, he felt as if he had returned to Tingen, back to the Blackthorn Security Company, back to the day where they engaged Megose in an intense battle. He had returned to the time when he was weak and helpless, unable to stop anything himself.

Back then, he clearly wanted to help Captain and Klein. Despite overcoming his horror, despite having Old Man to provide him with help, he quickly fainted due to his low Sequence and lacking strength; thus, failing to participate in the subsequent battle. All he could do was wake up to see two corpses and use the pain of meeting family members to resolve the blame he placed on himself.

He always cherished his leisurely life in Tingen City, the feeling of not needing to take any responsibility as if he was the protagonist. However, the more he cherished those memories, the more he hated his former self, wondering why he hadn't worked harder.

With his eyes tightly closed, figures of light were darting around, and all he could do was ball his hands into a fist as he hurriedly shouted, "Old Man!

"Old Man!"

This time, there wasn't any response in his mind. No one provided him any help, as Pallez Zoroast was still in a deep sleep.

Leonard's breathing turned heavy as he couldn't help but move his head from side to side with the darting of the light. Then, with a slightly hoarse voice, he shouted in clear anxiety, "Old Man!

"Old Man!

"Old Man!!"

His voice gradually softened, drowned by the thunder. Leonard hung his head bit by bit, his face filled with shame and pain.

His lips quivered as he relaxed his hand and gripped it tight again. His entire body froze for several seconds.

Suddenly, he wore a firm expression. With a grimace, he opened his mouth and chanted softly in ancient Hermes, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck!"

Just as he said the prayers, he magically saw a scene in his mind.

Ince Zangwill, who had seemingly turned into a spider or some deformed feather wolf, was running frantically and dodging the lightning strikes. From time to time, he attempted to attack him and Daly Simone.

And unlike normally, Ince Zangwill's figure appeared rather blurry in this scene. It was almost completely represented by red light, and it could only be used to determine his location.

Leonard was first taken aback as he immediately laughed. Teardrops flowed down as he laughed.

Without any hesitation, he raised his left palm, pressed the glove to his temple, and then tightly gripped the Fate Siphon charm with his right hand.

"Fate!"

The incomprehensible, mysterious word in ancient Hermes resounded as a transparent book appeared in front of Leonard. It flipped to a page amidst the ethereal chanting of "I came, I saw, I record," as he locked onto the eight-"legged" monster with white feathers growing all over him.

Silver bolts of lightning blasted as Leonard Mitchell threw out the charm with a hideous expression, shouting, "Die! Ince Zangwill!"

He had waited to say this for a very, very long time. He had played this scene in his head so, so many times.

Chapter 945 - The Story's Ending

◆

The moment the Fate Siphon charm left Leonard Mitchell's hand, it vanished into midair, its whereabouts unknown. It cloaked the spots where he and Ince Zangwill stood in darkness. Even the burgeoning silver storm was unable to illuminate it.

At that instant, Leonard felt the surface of his body turn numb, as though lightning was leaping over it, creating a slight stabbing pain, one that would completely pulverize his body at any moment.

But following that, he didn't get bombarded with irresistible pain, as though nothing had happened.

No, something did happen. A bolt of lightning smote down at him as if it had bared its fangs, shattering the ground and charring the soil.

Klein had personally redirected his casting of Lightning Storm from Ince Zangwill when Leonard Mitchell used the Fate Siphon charm!

"Ah!"

A shrill scream sounded as the rich darkness around Ince Zangwill failed to dissipate the storm that was formed from a mesh of silver lightning bolts. His body was swept into the heart of the storm.

He had suffered the fate of Leonard Mitchell being devoured by the Lightning Storm ability!

Boom!

The thunder boomed deeply as the lightning forest quickly dissipated, but before the Lightning Storm came to a complete end, more bolts of silver lightning smote down from the sky, causing a new wave of attacks.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The wrath of a thunder god smote down again and again as the lightning's frequency returned to normal. There weren't any gaps in between. Even though there were waves of darkness surging out from Ince Zangwill's position, they were unable to obliterate the silver swath.

After a few Lightning Storms, the blinding light finally dimmed. The minute bolts snaked around weakly.

Ince Zangwill remained standing there without collapsing.

However, his head with pitch-black eyes, blood-red halos, and mysterious symbols had cracked. The flesh inside the cracks was charred black as a grayish-white liquid seeped out.

The four "legs" by his torso had already been burnt black and curled up together. All it took was a touch for them to fall off.

On them, not only were the white feathers gone, even the overlapping blood vessels were pulverized and had scattered to the ground, leaving them at head height with him.

But even so, Ince Zangwill still wasn't dead. Creatures that had obtained godhood had an unimaginable vitality compared to ordinary people!

The blood-red halo in his eyes grew richer as the violent aura no longer had any room for decreasing. Feelings of hatred and regret surged in him, giving him the urge to vent them out.

He hated himself for only thinking of escaping in the beginning and not killing all the enemies present. Back then, if he hadn't held back and had used his powers by releasing the terror of a demigod without any reservations, he was definitely able to kill Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell amidst the lightning strikes. If he had done so, he wouldn't have been left in such a sorry state by two Mid-Sequence Beyonders.

"Damn it! Damn it!" Ince Zangwill roared and threw away the darkened 0-08 quill. Using his remaining four "legs," he pounced at Leonard Mitchell.

Leonard was just about to take action when he felt a coldness in him. It was as though thin, long hair was reaching out and binding him from the darkness, doing so from a dream. He was unable to move again.

Boom!

A bolt of lightning struck Ince Zangwill, but it only served to stagger him for a moment and drop a few pieces of charred flesh. He continued his attack and even revealed a cruel smile.

From that strike, he was already certain that the person hiding in the background casting the lightning was at their limit. The person was unable to use any more demigod-level powers!

As for Leonard, who was being bound by countless strands of invisible hair, his thoughts quickly became serene. It was as though he no longer put up any resistance and had wished to sleep in the darkness.

Unable to move, he bit his tongue lightly and temporarily recovered some of his lucidity. He made the transparent book in front of him emit the ethereal chanting: "I came, I saw, I record!"

With a resonating whoosh, a terrifying Hurricane swept at Ince Zangwill, who had arrived with a pounce.

It snapped the illusory black hairlike objects, giving Leonard freedom again.

Whoosh!

Ince Zangwill was thrown up as he slammed heavily to the ground. His body was covered with deep gashes as pale-white blood gushed out of him.

Despite having lost another front “leg,” he still wasn’t dead. He “stood” up again and locked onto the Evernight poet who still had his eyes closed.

Without any warning, Leonard suddenly slipped and fell to the ground. When he tried to get up, he seemed unable to maintain his balance. Even the gale he created had failed to sweep up his body.

“Damn it! I should’ve killed you when you were unconscious back in Tingen City!” Ince Zangwill cursed through clenched teeth. “That woman is about to die. The same goes for you!”

As he cursed, he hobbled over to Leonard’s location as though he had lost his ability to move at rapid speeds. With a ferocious expression, he said, “Your captain was irritating. Likewise for that teammate of yours. All of you are the same!

“After I kill you, I’ll leave this place and return to Tingen to dig up their graves!”

As he cursed, the darkness filled with cadaveric auras surged out of Ince Zangwill, sweeping towards the nearby Leonard Mitchell.

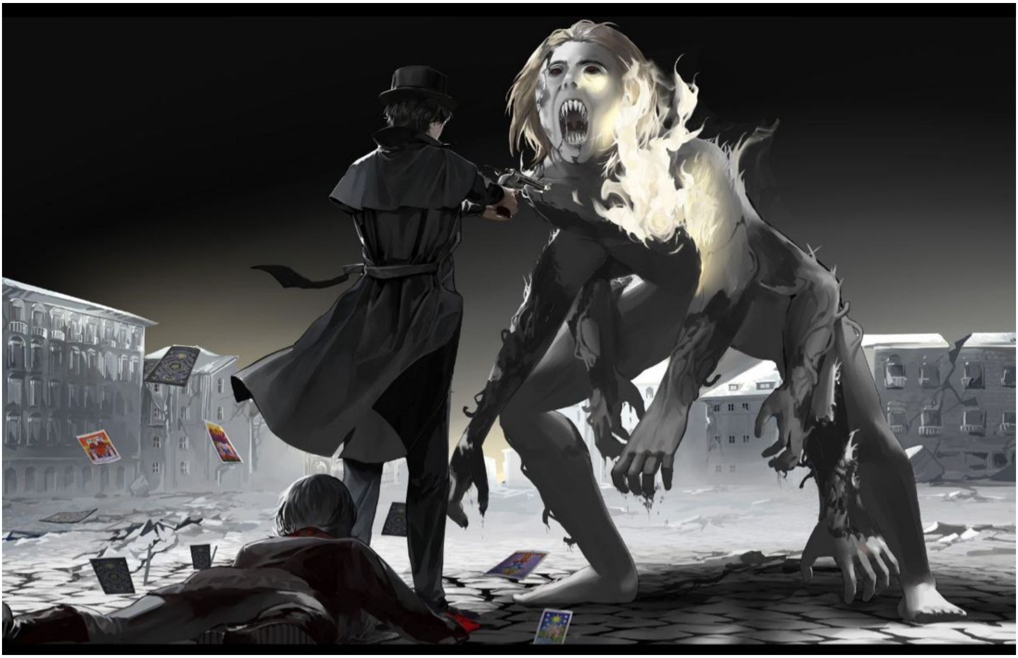
Leonard could sense that he was riddled with bad luck, but he could do nothing. He didn’t even dare to open his eyes.

Bang!

Amidst a gunshot, a pale-golden bullet pierced through the thick deathly darkness, bringing out blinding sunlight, terminating the abnormality within.

[image]

Pa! Tarot cards flew over, stabbing into the ground at different spots.



One of the cards landed in front of Leonard as it burst into scarlet flames.

Amidst the flames, a figure wearing a half top hat and black suit walked out with a revolver in hand. With a bookish demeanor, he had black hair and brown eyes with a face with a deep outline. He was none other than Klein Moretti.

Unable to use the Sea God Scepter anymore, he had decisively returned to the real world. He had rushed here with Death Knell!

“You, it’s really you! You really are still alive! Die together with them!” Ince Zangwill’s movement speed instantly recovered as he circled around Klein, trying to forcefully pull him into a dream.

He had been acting!

However, Klein was completely unaffected. He didn’t show signs of falling asleep as he raised his right hand and pulled the trigger as though he had foreseen it.

Bang!

Ince Zangwill was thrown to the ground by a powerful impact. The cracks on his head widened.

“That shot was for Ma’am Daly,” Klein said in a deep voice as he snapped his fingers. Using the flames that burst up, he flashed to the side of Ince Zangwill.

Ince Zangwill’s eyes protruded out. As he moved at high speeds, he released bad luck in a bid to influence Klein, but it was completely useless.

“This shot is for Leonard.”

All the Tarot cards were ignited at the same time, like bursting fireworks. Klein flashed behind Ince Zangwill, cocked the gun, and relying on his intuition, he pulled the trigger.

Bang!

Pale-white blood spurted out of Ince Zangwill’s left leg as it broke.

His running came to an abrupt stop as he even failed to maintain his balance.

Using the burning tarot cards, he repeatedly cast Flaming Jump, preventing himself from entering the influence of the black “hair.”

“This shot is for Megose.

“This shot is for the Keepers.

“This shot is for the destroyed Blackthorn Security Company.

“This shot is for all the Nighthawks.

“This shot is for me.”

Amidst the gunshots, Klein kept pulling the trigger and did the corresponding reloading as he shot demon-hunting bullets. He blew through another of Ince Zangwill's legs, blasting open his forehead, causing his roars to turn into a whimper until he fell onto the ground.

Finally, Klein flashed in front of Ince Zangwill. He then held Death Knell to his face.

At this moment, mysterious patterns accentuated Ince Zangwill's almost-cracked head, creating an immense impact.

He still had the ability to resist!

He was waiting for him to approach and then use his Mythical Creature form to turn the tables!

However, Klein's brown eyes continued looking at him without reflecting anything.

He thrust Death Knell forward and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

Ince Zangwill's head completely exploded, and like a smashed watermelon, the fragments and the juice splattered everywhere.

Death Knell had sounded the knell for him!

Klein raised his left hand and rubbed away his two eyes. The real eyes that hid beneath were moved back to their original spots.

His brown eyes had blurred up. He curled the corners of his mouth bit by bit and said to the already dead Ince Zangwill softly, "This shot is for Captain."

He didn't give Ince Zangwill a chance to leave any last words. He had no wish to know what bitter past the latter had experienced.

He then took out one remaining tarot card from his pocket and threw it on Ince Zangwill's corpse.

It was an inverted The Star card.

At this moment, a figure appeared not far from him. He bent down and picked up the darkened quill.

This figure wore a simple white robe and had a pale gold beard that covered half his face. On his chest hung a silver cross as though he was the most ordinary priest, but he was the King of Angels, Adam!

Adam looked at Klein and said with a genial smile, "Unfortunately, I failed to retain the snake."

He looked at the quill in his hand and then at the tarot card. He smiled and added, "A price is always exacted for what fate bestows[1], isn't that so?"

With that said, he turned around and slowly disappeared from the ruined square with each step he took. He left the following words as though he sang it:

"Under the witness of a Spectator, Klein Moretti completed a grand performance, directing a magical murder. With that, he managed to digest his potion with enough energy left to attempt an advancement before the curtains fell."

Klein didn't take in the feeling of his Marionettist potion's digestion and the corresponding feedback. With a Flaming Jump, he arrived in front of Daly Simone.

The lady was already on the brink of losing control. She said in a daze, "I don't want to become a monster…"

"Alright…" Klein looked at her with a sorrowful gaze as he quickly thought of the means to rescue a Rampager.

He had considered getting her to chant The Fool's honorific name before pulling her Spirit Body above the gray fog, but with her body already mutating, it was apparently useless. The only way was for Daly to choose to remain there forever. As for the Flower of Blood, it was also unable to resolve such problems.

Daly smiled with great difficulty as she resisted the white feathers and pitch-black scales that kept growing out of her.

“So it’s you…

“Didn’t you ask me why I didn’t take the initiative to confess to Dunn, to throw him in bed?”

She gasped for air and said with a bitter smile, “I had indulged myself too much in the past. H-he was a conservative man. I-I felt inferior.”

She couldn’t hold out much longer, with the outcome of her becoming a monster happening at any moment.

At this moment, she heard Klein Moretti reply, “Captain actually liked you too, very much. Because you were too outstanding and young, he felt inferior as well.”

Daly smiled as her blurry gaze saw a man in a black trench coat with a receding hairline. He had dark gray eyes. She watched as he pressed his hand to his chest, bent down, and reached out his palm to invite her to a dance.

She reached out her hand as her thoughts turned sluggish.

The gray-eyed man in a black trench coat pulled up Daly, whose mutation was slowly fading away. Under Leonard’s watch, they danced a brisk dance in the destroyed square with the fountain spewing water everywhere.

[image]

One material after another flew out. There were golden grapevines and a rather ugly rubber mask. Under the guidance of spirituality, they slowly mixed together and entered a small metal bottle.

Amidst the beautiful dance, Daly leaned forward gently, resting herself in Dunn's embrace.

Klein held the potion bottle, brought it to his mouth, and downed it.

[image]

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†

Quote from Stefan Zweig.

Chapter 946 - A Bestowment Or A Curse

◆

The ice-cold potion slid down his throat, bringing Klein numbness, one that reached deep into his soul.

He had already stopped dancing. His mind seemed to be lifted as though he was high in the air, looking down at the ruined Revival Square, at Cookawa City which had been left in shambles by the repeated lightning strikes.

At this moment, he felt his emotions rouse up for some baffling reason as all the pedestrians below seemed to be connected to him by some invisible threads. They could be happy, angry, or sad, making all kinds of actions based on his directions.

Klein often had such feelings recently. He knew that this was the vision of a "director." By viewing all participants as marionettes or actors, he attempted to control or guide them into putting on a grand performance.

Using that hint of familiarity, Klein hurriedly adjusted his state of mind, completely separating his emotions from it, and viewing everything in a cold, aloof manner, so as to prevent himself from being affected by the play.

As a "director," he followed the script, referred to reality, and rationally made an analysis to choose according to the circumstances. He allowed emotions to build up, allowing himself to push matters forward and use the clues that had developed.

Once his state of mind settled, he felt the potion's power spread across his body, like a sharp threaded net.

Suddenly, Klein felt that his Soul Body was connected to his physical body. They were split into countless parts, and without being able to hold it in any longer, he let out a cry from deep within his soul.

"No!"

His thoughts were diced apart, turning into fragments as they fused with different pieces of flesh as he gained his own sentience.

These included Klein with pain, Klein with arrogance, Klein with coldness, Klein with gentleness, Klein who could amusement himself, as well as Zhou Mingrui, Sherlock Moriarty, Gehrman Sparrow, and Dwayne Dantès!

His entire Spirit Body seemed to be thrown into a grinding machine.

Not far away, Leonard, whose cheeks were streaming with unconscious tears, first saw Captain Dunn, who was embracing Daly Simone, transform back into Klein Moretti. Following that, he noticed his face, neck, and the back of his hands. Pale-colored tendrils protruded out as though they had a life of their own. They kept growing outwards, turning into a transparent maggot. And beneath his clothes, there were also signs of squirming.

This made Leonard have the feeling that Klein would collapse into a cluster of transparent maggots the next second as they raced in different directions!

Just as he wanted to do something, he felt dizzy. He instinctively closed his eyes and didn't dare to keep watching

The transparent maggots that grew out of Klein's body shimmered under the sunlight, producing three-dimensional layers of mysterious symbols. They connected to higher and lower levels, directly presenting the abstract concepts of bizarreness, madness, change, strength, and wisdom.

Amidst howling cold winds, black illusory threads rose up around Klein as they bonded together, forming strange “tentacles.”

The tentacles flailed as his Soul Body, Astral Projection, Body of Heart and Mind, and Ether Body were reduced to fragments as they fused with the different maggots that represented Klein’s various thoughts, turmoil, and dilemmas. As they wafted between them gently, they seemed to fly up to an infinite height where there were countless illusions hugging huge distorted buildings. They were either playing wind instruments, giving speeches, growling, or raving.

Amidst Klein’s countless chaotic senses, everything around him stacked together as though they turned into the spirit world. However, there were living people coming and going with the stars shining upon them.

At this moment, the fragments filled with thoughts had similar memories appear-fresh memories:

It was of King of Angels Adam praying with his eyes closed. It was the scene of his shocking appearance;

It was him using Death Knell against Ince Zangwill as he pulled the trigger to blast open his head;

It was when he revealed his Clown’s smile, saying in a deep voice, “This shot is for Captain”;

It was when Spectator Adam used an extremely clear and innocent eye to take in the ending of the performance;

It was of him turning into Dunn Smith, inviting Daly Simone to dance the closing dance.

They were all so fresh on his mind, especially the gaze of a Spectator. There was a seemingly corporeal feedback that felt like a magnetic force. It made Klein gradually discover his sense of self-awareness once again.

I…

Who am I?

This was a question that Klein had an answer to when he was still a Faceless. He didn't need to think too much about it as he quickly understood his identity:

A person from Earth, a person who had been reconstructed from Klein's memory fragments;

A person whose experience as a Nighthawk deeply influenced him;

A person who played safe and was afraid of danger, but was able to persist and give up everything;

A guardian and a miserable wretch.

Strange sensory organs that didn't come from the Body of Heart and Mind or Soul Body were extracted bit by bit from the fragments, condensing Klein's new thoughts—coldness, calmness, spectating, and overlooking. They were thoughts that allowed him to view the world from even more angles and dimensions.

He knew that this could possibly be godhood. Without putting up any resistance, he chained the original Spirit Body fragments with black threads, allowing him to slowly take form again.

At this moment, he realized the purpose of the advancement ritual.

It was a mark, an anchor. Compared to other pathways, the Bizarro Sorcerer, who experienced the fragmentation of their Soul Bodies, required an anchor much earlier!

However, this didn't require the support of any faith. On the contrary, faith was a numerous and jumbled affair with too many personal feelings involved. During the fragmentation during this ritual, it easily wiped away the humanity of the advancer who was only Sequence 5, leaving behind godhood.

A grand and profound performance under the watch of countless spectators was enough to make up this anchor!

Although the spectators were few in number, as the pinnacle existence of the Spectator pathway, Adam could match thousands of ordinary spectators. He could even imagine a theater of spectators to create the effect.

With his entire body taking form, all kinds of knowledge surged out from the depths of his demigod Spirit Body, embroiling Klein’s mind and giving him an indescribable impact. It felt as though his brain was about to explode.

However, with some level of godhood and his rich experience, he could view this in a detached manner and rather easily pass through this stage.

The transparent maggots on his face, hands, neck, and beneath his clothes returned into his body, turning back into the black-haired, brown-eyed Klein Moretti.

THE SEER PA
BIZARRO SORCERER
4
© YUEWEN

Looking at Daly Simone, who was still in his embrace and slowly turning cold, he lifted her up and walked to Leonard Mitchell. He bent down and placed her on the ground.

Daly no longer had pitch-black scales or white feathers. She had been restored to normal and her eyes were closed. The corners of her mouth were curled up like she was having the deepest and sweetest dream.

Klein stood up and looked at Leonard, who had opened his eyes again, and said heavily, “She has returned to the Goddess’s kingdom, just like Captain.”

He had turned her into a marionette to reverse Daly’s mutation, allowing her to die like a human before releasing his control over her.

Leonard tried to force a smile as he whimpered a sound of acknowledgment. Tears were streaming down his face.

Klein gently nodded his head.

“To her, this might not be the worst outcome. She returned as a human to the embrace of a deity she believes in, and that’s where Captain and the others are.”

As he spoke, he subconsciously and sincerely raised his right hand and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

Leonard instinctively drew the sign of the crimson moon. He was momentarily taken aback as his expression turned odd.

Klein surveyed the area and said, “Take Ma’am Daly back with you to East Balam. Make it known that she died due to Ince Zangwill’s attack and had made exceptional contributions in causing Ince Zangwill’s death.

“Don’t worry, no one will investigate you. Of course, you can take this opportunity to leave the Red Gloves.”

"I-I'm used to the Church," Leonard said heavily.

Klein took off his hat and bade farewell with a bow.

Holding his hat, he turned to walk to Ince Zangwill's body and took a card that had a chariot and a red priest on it.

The red priest wore the face of Roselle Gustav.

Leonard's lips quivered as he suddenly asked, "A-aren't you returning to the Church?"

Klein didn't turn around as he wore his silk top hat and headed for another exit of the square.

After a few steps, he paused and replied to Leonard with his back facing him:

"I can't return anymore…"

Can't return anymore… Leonard stared in a daze as the familiar figure gradually distanced himself and vanished.

After a while, a few Beyonders flew to Revival Square. One of them was wearing the clergyman robes of the Church of Evernight. She had a head of beautiful raven-black hair and an exquisite face.

No one could tell her age, because no one cared. They could only notice the eyes that seemed to contain countless stars within.

This lady was floating in midair as she looked at the square. All she saw was Ince Zangwill's sorry corpse that could hardly be recognized. Covering his cracked head was a commonly-seen tarot card.

It was The Star.

Above the gray fog, Klein placed the Red Priest card by his left hand and closed his eyes to rest for a moment.

He had a basic grasp and understanding of the powers of a Bizarro Sorcerer.

On the one hand, he could transform into animals that weren't too disparate in size. In a Spirit Body state, he could completely ignore this point. He could transfer wounds from either himself or others onto a paper figurine. He had also gained the enhancement of the Flaming Jump ability that now spanned nearly a thousand meters. The might of Air Bullet reached that of a cannon.

On the other hand, he could now obtain initial control of one's Spirit Body Threads in three seconds. He could turn a target into his marionette within fifteen seconds. His control range was 150 meters. At the same time, he could switch Spirit Body Threads, allowing his marionette to obtain all his Beyonder powers. Within a thousand meters, he could switch locations with his marionette as he wished.

Due to this point, and the maggots he separated as a Mythical Creature form, as well as the disguise from the Spirit Body Threads, Klein obtained a higher level of body doubles. This also meant that, as long as any one of his marionettes were alive, a Bizarro Sorcerer would never die!

The enemy often found it difficult to know if the one killed was the Bizarro Sorcerer or his marionette. What was real and what wasn't was difficult to determine.

After confirming his state and resting for a moment, Klein immediately walked deep into the mysterious space above the gray fog. He headed for the staircase of light that seemed to lead to heaven.

As he expected, there was another step, one formed of light.

This time, Klein believed that he could use this sixth step that resembled a giant's to step onto the condensed gray cloud.

One step, two steps, three steps… He came to the end and, with a leap, stepped onto the cloud formed by the gray fog.

Reflecting in his eyes was a door of light tainted with a bluish-black luster. It was formed from countless layers of spherical light, and each spherical light enveloped squirming maggots. Some of them were transparent, others translucent. This was the scene Klein saw through Enzo's eyes, but the objects were very blurry, as though something was obstructing his vision.

In addition, above the door of light, there were thin black threads that hung down. They were hanging up what seemed like completely transparent cocoons.

These cocoons were gently swaying, wrapping different souls. They looked to be of all descents African, Asian, Caucasians, etc. Some were wearing jeans, others holding cell phones. Some had beautiful clothes, others having beautiful facial features. All of them had the aura as though they were living, but their eyes were tightly closed.

[image]

Klein's gaze froze as though he had returned to Earth and had walked onto the streets which were filled with people.

Then, he noticed that three cocoons had opened. They were empty and were swaying with the wind.

Raising his head, Klein took in this sight as he observed in silence.

Undying - The End

[image]

[image]

The Fool Pathway Potion Formula (Sequence 5-4):

[image]

Chapter 947 - House Call

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, East Borough, in a two-room apartment.

A few policemen in black-and-white checkered uniforms opened the door and entered. All of them reached out to cover their mouths.

There was a strong stench of blood inside!

“Officer, I’ve no idea what happened. Other tenants said that it seems like there’s plenty of blood here that they can even smell it from next door.” The landlord with a silk top hat looked around in fear, unwilling to stay in the room for another second.

A black-haired, blue-eyed police officer with an inspector epaulet waved his hand and said, “Wait by the door. We still have questions for you.”

As he spoke, he wore his white gloves and cast his gaze towards the wooden door of the bedroom.

However, he wasn’t in a rush to enter. He slowly surveyed the area and visually took in the surroundings-a pile of coal, a cupboard with cutlery and food, a small stove, a cleanly washed iron pot, a somewhat greasy table, two collapsed circular stools, two slanted chairs, a few glass bottles with unknown powders, and a stack of scattered tarot cards.

“A mysticism enthusiast with an ordinary financial situation?” The black-haired, blue-eyed inspector nodded gently as he made a judgment. Then, he signaled for a subordinate to open the bedroom door.

With a creak, a stronger smell of blood gushed out.

The constable who opened the door looked in and let out a short exclamation as he repeatedly retreated.

The inspector frowned. He pressed the retreating constable's shoulders, circled around him, and approached the bedroom.

When he swept his gaze, his expression immediately changed.

In the bedroom, on a wooden bed, there was a man lying there. His hands were tied to the bedpost.

He was naked with deep and shallow marks on his body. His blood had long been drained, dyeing the bedsheet and blanket beside him dark red.

On a cursory glance, the deceased had apparently been bound by metal wire, cutting into his skin and flesh, right into his bones.

This scene still affected the policemen who had seen many murder scenes. Furthermore, it had a diabolical feeling like it was a ritual.

As the inspector was about to say something, two people rushed into the room. One of them attempted to take photos while the other bombarded him with questions.

"Another murder case?

"Hasn't there been many murder cases in East Borough recently?

"Officer, do you think it's a serial murder?"

The black-haired, blue-eyed inspector frowned and waved his hand.

"Do not interfere with the scene; otherwise, we will view you as the criminal's accomplice."

He then said to the constable from before, "Khazix, please escort the two reporters away. Tell them that if they have any questions, ask the news department of Sivellaus Yard."

After the reporters were escorted out of the crime scene, the inspector let out a long sigh.

"I'm going on the newspapers again. Damn it!"

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

"Another murder in East Borough. The victim is suspected to have been abused before being killed…" Having had dinner, Audrey was in the activity room casually reading the Backlund Evening News.

Upon hearing his daughter's soft muttering, Earl Hall shook his head and sighed.

"This isn't new in East Borough. The statistics show that there are people dying every day in there. It's far from one person."

Audrey didn't pay too much attention to the matter. After a casual chat with her parents and brother, she returned to her room with her golden retriever, Susie.

The human and dog could read each other's minds without any exchanging of words. The latter stood by the door as a guard while Audrey locked the door. She sat by her bed and chanted Mr. Fool's honorific name.

After a few seconds, she saw a dark red beam of light surge and drown everything.

Audrey arrived above the gray fog, coming inside the magnificent and ancient palace.

She then saw a small room to the side. The mottled door was ajar.

It's much better than the old confessional from before… However, this doesn't match Mr. World's character. Did something happen to his state of mind? In thought, Audrey entered the room and closed the mottled door.

She had previously had a follow-up appointment with The World Gehrman Sparrow and concluded that he had fully recovered. To her surprise, she received a request from him for another treatment.

This left her puzzled as she felt a little intrigued.

In the rather spacious dark room, Audrey leaned against the wall that obviously had another person behind it. Her body slowly slid down as she knelt down with her legs placed diagonally.

In the calm and serene atmosphere, she adjusted her state of mind and said with a brisk tone, “Good evening, Mr. World~”

Just as she said that, Audrey’s spiritual intuition already knew the situation with his Body of Heart and Mind, or in common parlance, his emotions or mood.

Gloomy, disheartened, confused, depressed, and having no interest in anything… Mr. World’s current problem is completely different from the last one… What happened this time? Audrey gently bit her lip and calmly made a judgment and used a timely Placate.

This was the most useful power of a Psychiatrist. In ancient times, it was called Psychoanalysis.

The “dark clouds” behind the wall scattered significantly. Gehrman Sparrow finally hoarsely said, “Good evening, Miss Justice.”

Leaning against the wall, Audrey thought and canceled her original plan. She maintained her brisk tone and said, “I’m very curious about your recent experiences. It seems you have had too, too many encounters.

“There’s no need to think about anything else. Let’s have a chat first, just like we’re friends.

"If you're interested in my life, I'm also willing to share with you some of the interesting matters."

On the opposite side of the wall, Gehrman Sparrow fell silent for a moment. Without answering the question, he asked, "What hopes do you have for the future?"

Audrey's eyes darted slightly to the side as she replied seriously, "To advance myself, to work hard to become a demigod so as to better protect my father, mother, and brothers.

"Oh, I've recently visited the applicants to the bursary foundation with the other staff of the foundation. Their living conditions are really worse than I imagined. Although I've read some reports and was mentally prepared, I still found it unsettling when I saw it with my own eyes. A girl who's just a few years younger than me was very short and skinny. She doesn't fill her stomach daily, and she only has two tattered dresses. When she said that she wishes to study, her eyes were extremely pure and filled with an earnest desire. I can't forget it to this day…"

As she spoke, Audrey acutely sensed the change in Gehrman Sparrow's mental state. It was no longer a completely still lake, and it was now rippling and undulating

After a short deliberation, this Psychiatrist continued as though she didn't seem to notice anything, "I once anticipated having a beautiful wedding, wishing that my 'prince' will appear like those popular novels. However, after becoming a Spectator, I realized that I might never be able to fulfill this dream. I can often read the true thoughts of those men and see through their lies. I'm able to confirm that many people aren't as nice as I imagined, and it has left me disappointed. Hmm, in a few more years, I might be able to appreciate people for their flaws, but it's really difficult to do so now…"

Noticing that Gehrman Sparrow, who had his back to her across the wall, having the emotions of laughter, Audrey did a timely Placate on him. Then, she heard him ask, “You once gathered information about dragons from The Sun. You should have some understanding of the Dragon of Imagination.

“If I were to tell you that your father, mother, and brothers are imagined by the Spectator pathway’s King of Angels and that they do not really exist, what would be your reaction?”

I’ll definitely collapse on the spot and directly lose control… Mr. World has a psychological problem because of his discovery that the thing that he has been anticipating-his ultimate goal—will never be fulfilled? Audrey was first alarmed by Gehrman Sparrow’s question before she realized the essence of the question.

She didn’t reply as she asked in a guiding manner, “You seem to have witnessed the destruction of hope.”

“Heh.” There was a self-deprecating scoff sounding from the wall behind Audrey. “Indeed, I once thought that I had family. Later, I realized that it was only an extravagant hope of mine.”

“Why do you say that?” Audrey asked like she was having a casual chat.

Gehrman Sparrow fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “Have you heard of those fairy tales that Emperor Roselle used for bringing up children?”

“Those are my childhood memories,” Audrey acknowledged.

At the same time, she discovered that Mr. World’s emotions were clearly stirred on the other side of the wall. Repressed pain was surging out. This time, Audrey didn’t use Placate. Her spiritual intuition and professional knowledge told her that he needed to vent it out.

“Then you should know of Sleeping Beauty and her prince,” Gehrman Sparrow said with a soft, hoarse voice. “There’s one such person who also entered a deep sleep until he suddenly woke up one day… He believes that his family is still around, and he works hard to improve himself, hoping that he can one day find them. This becomes his main driving force in life. Finally, he realized that he has slept for at least three hundred years, or even more than a thousand years, perhaps even longer. He can never find anything that he once had any more…"

The intense pain and sense of loss was extremely clear to Audrey. She came to a realization.

The gloomy, restrained, experienced, and ruthless Mr. World also has his own goals and reason for existing!

This is in line with his gentle heart… How pitiful… Although he was giving an example using a fairy tale, some of the emotions he felt when saying certain words reflect reality… When he mentioned "deep sleep," "family," "three hundred years," "more than a thousand years," "even longer," "never find," his pain clearly increased… This means that he's from an ancient time and has lived to this day due to certain encounters? This matches the situation of Mr. Fool being an awakening ancient god. It's no wonder he became his Blessed… Audrey quickly grasped the key to the matter.

She pursed her lips and pondered for a moment.

"Did his family say anything? Did they say what they wanted him to do when he wakes up?"

Chapter 948 - Meaning of Existence

◆

From Audrey’s point of view, Mr. World’s current situation wasn’t him suffering from a mental illness, nor was it close to pushing him to the state of losing control. It was because his goal in life and the meaning to his existence had been destroyed. It left him with a psychological barrier that just needed some guidance. Once she helped him set up a short-term goal, allowing him to find meaning in life, the problem would slowly be resolved.

In the serene and silent darkness, Audrey heard Gehrman Sparrow answer in a deep voice across the wall, “No.”

As expected… Audrey wasn’t surprised as she asked, “Then did he search for his family’s last words? Did he search for their grave? Did he try to figure out the reason for the deep sleep?”

The Spirit Body behind the wall seemed to vanish for a few seconds as there wasn’t a single sound. After a moment, the hoarse voice continued:

“No, not yet.”

Not yet… That means that it’s a possibility in the future? Audrey felt relieved as she clearly felt that Gehrman Sparrow’s emotional state wasn’t as heavy and gloomy as before, without any interest in anything. He had a certain level of drive and a tiny sense of urgency. He was just still in a state of confusion.

Taking this opportunity, Audrey cast Placate again. The effects were much better than before. At the very least, she believed that Mr. World had used this impetus to escape from the abyss of gloominess and depression, returning to a normal person's disheartened state.

Following that, Audrey didn't press on regarding how he could find clues or investigate, because this could bring about some resistance. She nodded in the dark room in a natural manner and said, "Yes, there are many things to do, and many things that need amending! Perhaps you will have the chance of meeting someone from the same bloodline? Perhaps a family member of his hasn't died from age, or had ended up living to this day due to some reason? The reason why there's meaning to life is because of its infinite possibilities.

"In the process of searching, make sure to not miss out on your surroundings. Life isn't just a one-way street. There are many branches and alleys. If only the former exists, how boring would it be. You should know how to approach it, to broaden your horizons, and to discover…"

[image]

Trying hard to recall all the suitable words she read in books, Audrey suddenly thought of something as her voice softened significantly.

"Also, don't wear that thick mask."

The thinner and transparent ones don't matter because everyone wears a mask when interacting with others. No one likes to directly express one's relatively private secrets to others. It's both a way to protect oneself and also a way to respect others… When Mr. World has a certain number of friends, a new meaning in life will naturally be formed… Audrey added inwardly, but she ultimately didn't say it out loud. She believed that it might even backfire.

Unsurprisingly, Gehrman Sparrow fell silent again, seemingly still in confusion.

After a few seconds, a voice that wasn't that hoarse sounded again:

“Thank you for straightening me out, and for your treatment.”

“No, this is all a result of the strength inside you,” Audrey replied seriously.

She cast a final Placate to confirm that Mr. World’s mental state was back to normal and that it wouldn’t relapse.

She then heard Gehrman Sparrow say, “Let’s end it here for today, okay?”

Audrey adjusted her tone and briskly replied, “Of course. It’s not a serious problem. I can do another follow-up whenever you’re free next week.

“Also, if it’s possible, make some medicine to stabilize your mental state. Take it for seven consecutive days. The ingredients are 10 grams of chamomile powder, 5 grams of rosemary powder, 10 milliliters of lemon balm extract… During this period, don’t reduce your consumption of desserts, and try to relax yourself in an appropriate manner…”

In the dark and silent room, she propped herself against the wall with her hands and slowly stood up.

At this moment, Gehrman Sparrow’s voice passed through the wall:

“What’s the consultation fee?”

Audrey held one hand to the wall and turned her head in thought.

“Wait till I get the potion formula for Sequence 5 of the Spectator pathway. I might need you to help me find the ingredients.

“If the Psychology Alchemists provides me with the ingredients, hmm…”

She curled the ends of her lips and said, “When you return from the Southern Continent to Backlund, remember to bring me some of the local produce as a

gift.”

A super luxurious and light transportation coffin that’s carried by eight people? On the other side of the wall, Klein had the inexplicable urge to lampoon. He then stood up while clinging to the wall and sent Miss Justice back to the real world.

With a wave of his hand, the room vanished. He returned to the seat of honor at the long bronze table and sat at the seat belonging to The Fool.

In front of him, there were the Black Emperor, Tyrant, and Red Priest Cards of Blasphemy on the right. On the left, there was the Creeping Hunger, which Leonard Mitchell had sent back via Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr.

“I owe Miss Messenger 10,000 gold coins again…” Klein retracted his gaze and raised his right hand to rub his temples.

To prevent Ince Zangwill from escaping through the spirit world, he had already communicated with Reinette Tinekerr before he made plans for the murder. She was in charge of chasing away all the spirit world creatures around Revival Square, in exchange for that very same 10,000 gold coins.

The only thing that caught him by surprise was that 0-08 was more terrifying than he imagined. With Ince Zangwill suffering from Deity’s Curse, and with King of Angels Adam having drained it, its first attempt was able to “attract” an unknown creature which could pass through Reinette Tinekerr’s seal. If not for Daly Simone’s forceful spirit channeling and signing a pact, Ince Zangwill might very well have escaped.

Of course, while under Deity’s Curse, even if Ince Zangwill were to successfully escape, there was a high chance of him encountering other misfortunes, such as being thrown by the unknown creature to somewhere more dangerous or having it directly cause him harm. However, that wasn't within Klein's control.

At the thought that he was 10,000 gold coins in debt again, Klein felt a headache, but his mental state was a lot better.

After seeing the cocoon above the gray cloud, and the door of light beyond the staircase of light, he had suffered a shock that was as though a river had broken through its banks. He felt that all his expectations had been shattered. His mature world view, outlook on life, and values had crumbled as a result, causing his entire being to fall into a turbid state, as though he were a walking zombie.

Thankfully, he still had the innate desire to live and had sought out his private psychiatrist, Miss Justice Audrey, in time for treatment.

Phew… Klein exhaled and forced himself to turn his thoughts towards the cocoons. And from the scene he saw, his first reaction was:

An extremely high-level existence or Sealed Artifact had used different means to grab a large group of people from Earth at the same moment in time. Here, there were people who used the luck enhancement ritual, others bought strange silver plates, or had their phones hit by some strange virus…

Then, these transmigrators had their souls sealed inside the cocoon and were left hanging above the door of light, awaiting a particular opportunity before being sent to the real world.

Based on Klein's observation, the door of light didn't have any intelligence. It was operating based on pure instinct. This also meant that as long as the conditions were met, it would catalyze a cocoon and deliver the soul inside to a specific target's body.

Based on the current circumstances, Klein guessed that there were probably two conditions that needed to be met.

First, there mustn't be any other transmigrators prior, or the transmigrator had already been deemed to have failed or died. Second, the “calling out” of a certain object, item, or ritual. For instance, Klein Moretti had followed the Antigonus family’s notebook to perform that dark divination.

As for the rest, it’s impossible to know. Unless I can find the corresponding content in Emperor Roselle’s diary… Putting together everything that I know, my current theory should be very close to the truth. This will make it easy to explain why, despite being from the same era as the emperor on Earth with less than a year in between us, our entry into the real world was separated by slightly more than two hundred years… It’s because we transmigrated at the same time, but we were “released” in different eras! Before entering the real world, who knows how long we’ve been asleep for… A brother from next door? Klein leaned back into his chair as his eyes shimmered before turning gloomy again.

This was a hypothesis he came up with based on the conditions of the door of light, his situation, and the emperor’s diary.

Of course, this didn’t mean that there weren’t other possibilities. At present, Klein was just unable to find evidence to support them. For example, a cocoon might represent the life of a transmigrator, but this was in contradiction with Klein’s own recovery or the lack of change in his Spirit Body.

And if his hypothesis wasn’t too different from the truth, it meant that he had left Earth, transmigrating over for at least two hundred years or even thousands of years. Even if he found the way and method to go back to Earth, he was unable to return to the place he called home.

Compared to the gap in distance, the barrier of time left him in greater despair.

This was the reason why it caused Klein’s mental state to instantly collapse. “Returning home” was always his ultimate goal.

Miss Justice is right. There are still many questions to resolve and to probe… What's the meaning behind hanging so many transmigrators behind the door of light? What goal does it have? Who set up everything back then? How many people were pulled in here? Where has the other person gone to? The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth? Klein tried hard to engross himself in thinking, so as to find a new goal for the future.

Unfortunately, he was only able to approach the door of light and not touch it. He was unable to touch it, grasp it, or even carefully inspect it. He had no means to do any studies to receive any direct information.

I should consider finding clues from the real world… Also, since reaching Sequence 4 allows me to reach that gray cloud and see the door of light, will there be another qualitative change at Sequence 2? Will I be able to gain control over the door of light when that happens, allowing me to figure out the truth?

Heh heh, I was affected by the Seven Lights, the Goddess, and Arrodes's attitude. I almost imagined myself to be the real owner of the gray fog, and believe that I'm some great master above the spirit world. Now, from the looks of it, I'm just a "test subject" that was randomly thrown down. Once I fail, the next transmigrator will appear… Klein thought as he tapped the edge of the long bronze table.

He was rather curious of another point. Three broken "cocoons," with one representing himself, and another representing the emperor, so who was the third one?

Chapter 949 - Direction of Investigations

◆

Klein’s first target of suspicion was undoubtedly Elf King Soniathrym.

This ancient god had created chopsticks, made blood cakes, enjoyed eating animal innards, and was good at using spices for cooking. “His” descendants had facial features, hair color, and eyes that resembled Asians on Earth. Not only did Klein suspect that “He” was a transmigrator, even Emperor Roselle shared his feelings.

Of course, after a deeper level of investigations, Roselle had ruled out that hypothesis from their language, symbols, traditional proverbs, and other facets. Klein believed that using chopsticks as cutlery, the preference for eating innards, and using spices wasn’t an exclusive trait. To a species that enjoyed nature, it was possible for these to gradually appear in their daily life!

As for why elves who wielded the Sailor pathway were close to nature, Klein didn’t know why. It was just something as described by the murals and texts they left behind.

I for one felt that the Elf King is unlikely to be a transmigrator, but after seeing the three shattered cocoons, I can’t be too sure… Perhaps “He” might be a fellow countryman… Hmm, I can’t rule out the possibility that this ancient god isn’t a transmigrator but that one of the high-ranking elves around “Him” is one. This can also allow the tradition to pass down in the name of the Elf King… Klein tapped his fingers as he thought silently.

Almost at the same time, he had two directions for his investigation:

Groselle's Travels had Elven Songster, Siatas, who served Soniathrym's queen, Queen of Calamity Cohinem!

As long as I enter her sea of collective subconscious, I should be able to see or make contact with the elves and find memory fragments regarding the ancient god!

I can also use Hypnosis, directly allowing her subconscious to speak… But the problem is that I'm not good at such matters. The last time I attempted to delve into Groselle's subconscious, I felt quick-tempered and could hardly calm down. Although I'm already a demigod, it also becomes more pressing that I resist the inclination towards madness and losing control. And I won't be able to regulate my mental state for quite some time… Forcefully spirit channeling isn't suitable for such a situation and for such a target… Klein frowned slightly. He felt that he might need a mystical item that was of a relatively high-level Sequence in the Spectator pathway, or an assistant that was at least a Hypnotist.

He began seriously considering the possibility of getting Miss Justice's help.

There's no problem doing it. It's not impossible to leave by entering as a Spirit Body above the gray fog…

I don't have to worry that Miss Justice will pry into the secret of a transmigrator. As long as Siatas doesn't have any knowledge of this, her subconscious and collective subconscious wouldn't point towards such a conclusion. And I can find the desired clues in details so they don't pay any notice…

The biggest problem is that Miss Justice has no adventuring experience and she lacks it. Entering the sea of subconscious of an ancient figure is very dangerous to her. There might be the remnants of an ancient god in there at any time… Once I don't have the help of a Psychiatrist, I will also end up the same…

Even if I'm getting Miss Justice as support, I'll have to wait until she reaches Sequence 5 so that she can use her level to make up for her lack of experience. When that happens, we can first attempt to hypnotize Siatas and see what we can learn from her mouth. If there's nothing of value, we can consider entering her dream to delve deeper into her consciousness and step into that sea.

Yes, the Dream Charms I create now aren't potent enough. I might not be able to maintain such a long exploration. Sigh, the Goddess won't directly respond to such trivial matters. It's a fixed feedback based on a fixed ritual… The corresponding Beyonder characteristics have been returned to the Church… Don't tell me that I need to bring Leonard with me? I wonder if pulling someone at the Spirit Body level can avoid the notice of the grandpa inside him. I'll do some research over the next few days…

Klein reined in his thoughts and considered his second target of suspicion.

This person didn't seem too special in the past, nor did Klein believe that he was a transmigrator. But now that his mind calmed down, he began processing his thoughts and analyzing, Klein realized that many points that he viewed as common sense weren't that simple on careful thought. They contained an unspeakable sense of horror.

He suspected: the ancient sun god, the City of Silver's Creator!

The seven Church's separate bibles have similarities to Earth's Western religions… It is similarly the case for their Masses!

Based on Little Sun's description, from what Emperor Roselle saw from Adam's chapel, and the content of the murals in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, it's clear that the ancient sun god's main symbol is the cross!

"He" gave his children the names Adam and Amon…

The angels beneath "Him" all have wings of light. I've not seen that in the other pathways to date…

It’s unknown how “He” rose up. “He” suddenly appeared late in the Second Epoch, killed several ancient gods, and took “Their” various authorities…

I never thought much about these details in the past. It’s quite scary now that I think deeply of it. Klein drew a gasp as he began feeling more convinced that it was the ancient sun god instead of Elf King Soniathrym.

“His” experiences were just too legendary, more of a protagonist of an era than Emperor Roselle!

Of course, “His” outcome was rather tragic, becoming a feast for “His” Kings of Angels. Emperor Roselle was also tragic but in no way as terrible.

Doesn’t this imply Amon’s and Adam’s attitude in a certain sense? “They” believe that the gray fog is related to “Their” father, but due to “Their” different pathways, they made different choices? Hmm, there’s a certain chance that Adam can’t see the gray fog. “He” isn’t a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Fate, Marauder, Seer, and Apprentice pathways… Klein nodded slightly.

Based on these clues, he also had a direction of investigation that didn’t require him to make contact with major figures at the angel level.

In Groselle’s Travels lived Ascetic Snowman who survived the Third Epoch and had served the ancient sun god!

The problem circles back to itself… There’s nothing to doubt about the rest for the time being. Klein slowly exhaled, reached out his right hand, and picked up the newly obtained Card of Blasphemy: Red Priest card!

Infusing his spirituality into it, the card produced a blood-red light, forming a palm-sized illusory book.

The pages of the book flipped, presenting portraits of a lifelike Roselle

Gustav. He was either wearing a hunter's attire, raising his middle finger, walking through a burning building, or standing behind a trap. He had all sorts of attires and was doing all kinds of things.

Sequence 9: Hunter… Sequence 8: Provoker… Sequence 7: Pyromaniac… Sequence 6: Conspirer… Sequence 5: Reaper… Sequence 4: Iron-blooded Knight… Sequence 3: War Bishop… Sequence 2: Weather Warlock… Sequence 1: Conqueror… Sequence 0: Red Priest… Klein's gaze swept past the different portraits on the tarot card and imprinted the content into his mind.

He wasn't surprised at this pathway's Sequence 0's ritual to become a god. This was because Hermes had once told Roselle that the "red" in Red Priest meant the red of war.

Therefore, when he saw "stirring up a war that sweeps an entire continent and gain victory," he wasn't stirred at all.

After flipping the Red Priest card, he began thinking about problems and felt his mental state improve. He rubbed his temples, finally feeling exhausted.

I should set a short-term goal and investigate the person behind the Great Smog of Backlund. This is something that I've yet to complete. Yes, I should continue the arms deal according to my original plans, and return to Backlund after receiving the money. Now, there are two clues. First, the captain of the royal guards, Viscount Stratford, and the other is MI9's deputy director, Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor… Klein tried to pull himself up and decided to occupy himself with something.

Before leaving the gray fog, he threw the mental medicine recipe that Miss Justice had given him to the crimson star representing The Moon Emlyn. He requested this vampire, who was good at making it, to make a week's worth at 1 pound a bottle.

†

Backlund, within the Odora family's villa.

Emlyn White, who was waiting in the activity room, curled his lips and thought to himself, A transaction that's just 7 pounds. I really don't want to do it… The World can concoct it himself if he's a little careful.

He hadn't objected to The World's request, because after spending 5,000 pounds to buy the Sequence 5 Vampire Beyonder characteristic, he only had 730 pounds left.

At this moment, Cosmi walked over, looking like a middle-aged gentleman.

After exchanging a bow, the Sanguine Baron asked, "Emlyn, why are you suddenly here?"

Emlyn immediately felt a little guilty before recalling his previous experiences of conversing with The Hanged Man and The World. He tipped his chin slightly and answered in a seemingly casual manner, "I've received a Sequence 5 Scarlet Scholar Beyonder characteristic. I wonder when we can begin the ritual to make me a Viscount."

Cosmi was taken aback as he asked in surprise, "You obtained a Scarlet Scholar Beyonder characteristic?"

Emlyn glanced at him and nodded with a faint smile.

"That's right."

He didn't explain how he had obtained the Beyonder characteristic, as though Cosmi wasn't worthy of knowing.

Cosmi turned agape as he fell silent. After a few seconds, he said, "Wait till the next full moon."

He paused and said, "I happen to have something for you.

"My grandfather wishes to inform you that an important figure will be coming to Backlund. 'He' wishes to meet you."

“He”? Emlyn’s pupils dilated instantly.

The ancient ones of the Sanguine that lived since the Second Epoch to this day, together with the Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, all of those important existences at the angel level didn’t exceed five in number!

Chapter 950 - Keeping Secrets

◆ ◆ ◆

Emlyn fell silent for two seconds as he lowered his chin and asked, “Who… is it?”

To him, angels were naturally worthy of respect, but those who could truly make him bow his head were the important figures addressed as “He” by every Sanguine. “They” had witnessed and experienced the Sanguine’s long history, the source of his pride.

“I’m not sure. But in short, I’ll notify you when the time comes.” Cosmi Odora shook his head.

… The person is coming because of the Ancestor’s revelation? There are subsequent instructions? Why doesn’t the Ancestor directly give me a revelation? This will be better concealed. I’m “Her” chosen one! This is to avoid agitating Mr. Fool? Questions flashed past Emlyn’s mind as he answered them himself.

He didn’t speak further as he wore his top hat and left Odora’s villa.

When he arrived at the door, he looked at the thin clouds that could hardly block out the sun. Emlyn curled his lips in disdain, raised his hand to press down on his hat, and ran for a rental carriage at the end of the street as he inwardly mumbled, Such weather really isn’t suitable for heading out!

The medicine that The World wants isn’t rare. It can be concocted in fifteen minutes… Hmm, the ingredients I ordered previously should be in by today. I can carry out the transaction with Miss Magician that I’ve delayed for days…

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Fors placed glass bottles on an altar and looked at the light blue and golden liquids, feeling the exhilaration from shopping. More enticing than a cocktail. I wonder what it tastes like. Putting some ice in might make it taste better… Seriously, what am I thinking? These are all medicine! Fors sputtered at herself and hurriedly cleaned up the room.

Upon receiving the medicine required for medical treatment, she finished her preparations for heading to the abandoned castle in Delaire Forest. She was just waiting for Xio to return!

After tidying up certain matters, Fors slumped onto the sofa and casually picked up a few newspaper copies and began planning her itinerary for the day.

Set off at dusk. Dinner will probably be when we arrive at the town bordering the forest…

Amidst her silent mumbling, Fors flipped to the copy of News At Sea.

Suddenly, her gaze froze as a familiar name was reflected in her eyes: “Gehrman Sparrow!”

This adventurer had appeared at sea again, boarding the Black Tulip with a middle-aged name known as “Death Consul.” He killed Admiral Hell Ludwell, changing the lineup of the seven pirate admirals again.

ILIL

Fors subconsciously patted her chest, unsure what she was happy about.

At that instant, she had a baffling feeling that Gehrman Sparrow’s experiences were sufficiently legendary, something that could definitely be written into a novel!

Unfortunately, he's not someone who's easy to get along with; otherwise, I can totally be a part-time biographer to write a book for him… Haha, if I were to write the book titled "Gehrman Sparrow," I'll definitely be targeted by the official Beyonders… Fors thought in amusement before hearing the lock turn.

She looked up and saw Xio pushing open the door and entering the living room.

"You're early?" Fors asked in surprise.

Xio ruffled the right side of her blonde hair and said, "I met with MI9 again and received a mission."

"What is it?" Fors sat up, asking out of curiosity.

Xio casually threw herself onto the single-seater.

"Investigate the background of the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow.

"Based on the information provided by MI9, he's a terrifying Beyonder, and the name he uses is fake. Even his identification documents are fake. He probably came from Backlund.

"They suspect that Gehrman Sparrow has another identity and partners here."

Upon hearing the word "partners," Fors couldn't help but twitch the corners of her mouth. She had the urge to tell Xio that MI9's guess was right. Gehrman Sparrow's partner was sitting directly opposite her.

She coughed slightly and acted calm while she asked, "Why are you investigating Gehrman Sparrow's background?

"What did he do this time?"

Xio glanced at the stack of newspapers beside Fors.

"Haven't you read today's News at Sea?

"Gehrman Sparrow killed Admiral Hell Ludwell and is now known as the strongest adventurer of the Five Seas.

"By the way, MI9 also told me that Gehrman Sparrow might very well believe in the secret existence known as The Fool. This is news that came from many different sources, including the Aurora Order and the Rose School of Thought."

I can testify to that… They are right… Fors forced a smile and said, "Sounds rather dangerous."

"Yeah." Xio nodded. "I only plan on gathering the intel and not delving too deep into it."

Fors didn't continue on this topic as she said, "I've already prepared the medicine. Shall we head to Delaire Forest today?"

Xio had already become a Sequence 7 Interrogator a few days ago, and she had mastered a rather useful power, Psychic Piercing.

"Alright." Xio stood up, showcasing how she was a woman of action. "Let's set off now."

"Ah? Let's wait a little longer. I was thinking dusk…" Fors replied, feeling a little resistant.

She often wished to procrastinate until the last moment.

Before long, she was pulled out of their rented apartment by Xio while bringing all kinds of items along. They got a rental carriage and headed for the metro.

Amidst the sonorous whistle of the steam engine, the massive steam locomotive hauled its meandering body and entered the platform. Under the illumination of the wall lamps on both sides, it stopped

Fors and Xio stood outside a carriage and waited patiently for the passengers to alight.

Suddenly, they saw two Red Gloves.

The owner of the Red Gloves was a man in his thirties. He wore a white shirt with a black trench coat. His collar was raised up high, covering his chin and mouth.

He had a pair of dark-green eyes with golden-brown sideburns. He held a silver chest that was big enough to put a tiny violin in it.

Fors and Xio exchanged looks as they lowered their gaze, staring at their toes.

As a high-ranking deacon of the Church of Evernight's Nighthawks, one of the twenty-two members of power in the Church, and one of the three bigwigs of the Red Gloves, Crestet Cesimir wasn't someone who cared about parading himself around. He enjoyed traveling alone, taking the transportation that commoners took, making him appear like an ordinary clergyman.

After transferring to another line, he eventually arrived in North Borough. He then took a rental carriage and headed straight for Saint Samuel Cathedral where he met Backlund diocese's archbishop, Saint Anthony Stevenson.

After greeting each other and praising the Goddess, Cesimir found a seat and said, "I'll be troubling you to provide me with some help for the next couple weeks."

The clean-shaved archbishop, Anthony, in his black robe with red accents sat down as well. He deliberated before asking, "Is it something to do with Ince Zangwill?"

"Yes." Cesimir nodded slightly. "The Holy See wishes that I inform you that another servant of the Goddess, the matron of the Evernight cloister, Ma'am Arianna, will be in Backlund not long from now."

This ascetic was ranked first among all the thirteen archbishops.

Without waiting for Saint Anthony's inquiry, he explained in detail, "Ma'am Ilya learned plenty of important information from Ince Zangwill's remnant spirit, including his mental problems that 0-08 used to escape, as well as the details of his cooperation with the royal family and the Demoness Sect…

"After machinating the Great Smog of Backlund, Ince Zangwill was betrayed by 0-08 and had ended up being possessed by the Red Angel evil spirit. He headed for the Southern Continent alone in an attempt to set up a trap to hunt Ma'am Ilya.

"An important point to take note of is, that in Ince Zangwill's memories, there is a very important underground ruin. It's in the northwestern outskirts of Backlund, an area just before the Tussock River flows in.

"My mission is to find that ruin."

Saint Anthony finished listening in silence before asking in thought, "Ince Zangwill doesn't know of the exact location?

"He has never been there before?"

Cesimir shook his head.

"He had entered, but he was led in there and didn't grasp the required key information."

Saint Anthony tersely acknowledged before asking, "Have you figured out which batch of people from the royal family that Ince Zangwill was working with?"

"No." Crestet Cesimir paused and continued, "Based on normal logic, regardless of whether the partners donned disguises, if they meet, there should be the corresponding memory fragments, but inside Ince Zangwill's Spirit Body, there were no traces of that. It was as though it never existed."

"Perhaps it's an influence of a deed. The source of the deed's power that even a Sequence 4 demigod can't resist is something worth paying attention to." Saint Anthony nodded very slightly.

He thought and said, "The telegram didn't include much. I do not know the exact sequence of events. Who exactly killed Ince Zangwill?"

Crestet Cesimir exhaled slowly and said, "A name you might never believe, Klein Moretti."

"The Nighthawk who died in the line of duty during the Tingen incident?" Anthony's wrinkles deepened.

"Yes, that's what Ilya sent back. No one knows how Klein Moretti, who was only a Sequence 8, had resurrected, or how he could kill Ince Zangwill, a demigod wielding 0-08…" Upon saying this, Cesimir's expression turned somewhat odd. "The Holy See requests us to strictly keep this intel confidential. We are not to divulge this to anyone who isn't an archbishop or high-ranking deacon. Furthermore, we are not to pursue Klein Moretti, pretending as though he's still in his grave."

Saint Anthony fell silent for a few seconds as though he recalled something trivial. He nodded and said, "Perhaps, he's a Blessed of the Goddess…"

Cesimir suddenly looked up at Saint Anthony as though he was a lunatic.

His lips quivered, but he ultimately didn't say a word.

Anthony didn't continue the topic as he looked at the door and said sternly, "Your mission might need plenty of investigations. This requires enough manpower. Hmm, Soest's team has completed their mission in the Southern Continent. I'll get them to return quickly and follow your instructions."

"Alright." Crestet Cesimir didn't put up any objections.

“Rest for the remainder of the day before returning to Backlund?” Leonard looked up at team captain, Soest.

Soest looked pitifully at Leonard, who had been silent for quite some time, and nodded.

“That’s right.”

After watching this Spirit Warlock leave his room, Leonard sighed and leaned against the wall.

At this moment, dark red light surged out from before his eyes, enveloping him completely without any prior warning.

Chapter 951 - Drawing A Card

◆ ◆ ◆

By the time Leonard reacted, he saw numerous towering stone pillars, as well as a towering palace that looked like a giant's residence above the endless grayish-white fog that was being propped up by these stone pillars.

His green eyes wore a blank look. After a second, Leonard found himself sitting on a high-back chair beside a long mottled bronze table at some point in time. Beside him and opposite him were high-back chairs that exuded solemnity.

And at the end of the long mottled table, where the seat of honor was, a figure was shrouded in thick gray fog. The figure was leaning into his seat leisurely, as though he was overlooking everything.

When this figure appeared in Leonard's eyes, he felt as though he was on a liner, seeing a bottomless abyss whose boundaries were nowhere to be seen. It also felt like he had left the city and was on the outskirts, looking up to see lofty mountains that tore through the clouds.

Instantly, many thoughts flashed through Leonard's mind. He had a rough guess as to what he was experiencing. As a Beyonder of the Church, a believer who knew that deities truly exist, he wasn't able to resist his feelings. He subconsciously wished to leave his seat and prostrate before the existence before him.

The might of a deity was boundless!

Just as Leonard stood up, he was pressed down by an invisible force. A slow and calm voice resonated in his ears:

“There’s no need for such trouble.

“You can call me Mr. Fool.”

The Fool… Indeed… Leonard’s fear of the unknown had settled immediately. Although he was still worried about what would happen next, he wasn’t that perturbed any longer. He didn’t sit uneasily with a dry mouth and parched lips.

He got up halfway, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, why did you summon me here?”

As an experienced Nighthawk and a Red Glove who had participated in major cases, Leonard knew how dangerous it was to establish a connection with a secret existence. He knew that he had slid down the edge of the abyss and had no chance of redemption.

At that moment when he decided to chant The Fool’s honorific name, he was able to foresee his tragic end. But for revenge, he had made the choice regardless.

However, everyone had the instinct to survive. Recalling how Klein Moretti, who believed in The Fool, was still alive and had even become a demigod, Leonard couldn’t help but hold out some hope and expectations.

At this moment, he heard the fog-enshrouded Fool chuckle.

“Since you prayed to me for help, then based on the principle of equivalent exchange, you definitely need to pay the price.”

Leonard’s body trembled as he bowed his head lower.

“What is it you wish?”

After a brief pause, The Fool’s voice sounded again:

"There's no rush. Perhaps there will be something that requires you to provide help to certain people.

"Have a seat."

Leonard slowly calmed himself down and sat. He looked around and asked, "He… Klein Moretti… has been here like me?"

The Fool's said with a calm tone, "In a different manner."

Different manner… Indeed, Klein didn't enter because he chanted the honorific name. He had been introduced by that Death Consul named Azik Eggers before becoming one of Mr. Fool's faithful… Leonard couldn't help but survey the area, and he discovered that there were a total of twenty-two high-back chairs around the long mottled table.

It corresponds to the twenty-two Beyonder pathways. There are also twenty-two tarot cards… The Fool… Just as Leonard came up with a theory, he heard Mr. Fool chuckle.

"Other than you, there are other living beings that have been pulled in here for various reasons.

"They earnestly wished for me to convene a gathering to carry out the exchange of information and the transaction of materials and formulas. They also help each other. This allows them to rapidly advance, eventually becoming High-Sequence Beyonders."

This is a little different from the secret organization represented by tarot cards I had imagined. It's rather loosely organized… What motives does Mr. Fool have to agree to such a request? After coming to the ancient palace above the gray fog, Leonard felt high-strung, causing his thought processes to be a lot more agile than usual. He came up with all kinds of questions.

After successfully achieving revenge, he had been feeling low-spirited and empty for a moment, as though he had lost his goal in life. However, he quickly pulled himself together. This was because Daly's death told him that he wasn't strong enough. To reduce the number of casualties of his companions in future missions and so as to not lack the ability to save them, he needed to reach Sequence 4 at the very least. He needed to become a demigod.

Therefore, The Fool's words had stirred his heart. He felt that it was an opportunity. Meanwhile, he also believed that by joining the gathering, he could deeply understand the situation of the secret organization. It helped in maximally averting the danger that resulted from establishing contact with The Fool.

After some deliberation, Leonard asked, "Klein Moretti is also a regular member of this gathering?

"Does he have a seat here?"

The Fool replied without much concern, "Yes."

Leonard fell silent for a second as he asked, "Honorable Mr. Fool, can I join this regular gathering?"

Shrouded in the gray fog, The Fool said with a smile, "Sure.

"But when you return, remember to mention this to Pallez Zoroast about it. Do not attempt to hide it from 'Him."

"Him"… Old Man really is an angel! It's no wonder the Luck Siphon charm is so magical… Although Leonard had already expected this, he still couldn't help but be alarmed after receiving confirmation from Mr. Fool.

He hesitated for a moment and said, "Why must I tell Pallez Zoroast?"

Although he had a good relationship with Pallez Zoroast and had established a certain level of trust, he still felt wary. The reason why he had made the request to join Mr. Fool's secret gathering was to balance the latent danger of the ancient Parasite.

He then heard Mr. Fool reply with a smile, “Many a time, striking fear is a lot more useful than conflict.”

Striking fear is a lot more useful than conflict… That’s right, forcefully creating a balance might agitate Old Man. Regardless, the final battlefield will be in my body, and it would be extremely disadvantageous to me. By striking fear into “Him,” I can get “Him” to recognize the situation. Even if “He” has ill intent, “He” will think of another solution and take another path… Leonard bowed his head in enlightenment.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, I have no more questions.”

At the end of the long bronze table, The Fool conjured a deck of tarot cards and lifted up his hand and pointed at them.

“They have each selected a tarot card to represent their code name. You can also choose one.

“The deck has the cards of their respective owners taken away.”

They do use tarot cards are as their code names… Leonard exhaled and couldn’t help but ask again, “Which card is Klein Moretti?”

“The World,” The Fool said casually. “It’s him, and also not him.”

What does that mean… Leonard didn’t dare to ask further. He extended his right hand and pulled out a card from the deck of tarot cards.

Flipping it over, he saw a goddess pouring holy water, with stars littering the background.

[image]

The Star card!

This didn’t match Leonard’s taste, but since he had already completed the ritual under Mr. Fool’s watch, he could only accept it.

“Return. The gathering happens every Monday at three in the afternoon, Backlund time.” Shrouded in the gray fog, The Fool raised his hand and made Leonard, who was rushing to bow, vanish from the ancient palace.

The Fool Klein chuckled as he flipped all the tarot cards.

All of them had the same picture with the same sky-filled stars.

All of them were The Star cards!

After laughing for a while, Klein cast his gaze to the crimson star that represented Leonard.

While attempting to pull the poet above the gray fog, he had made some careful observation and had discovered that there was a blob of light hiding in Leonard Mitchell’s body. It seemed to be made of countless ringed worms, hidden deep inside his Soul Body.

This made Klein confirm that Pallez Zoroast had only parasitized Leonard at a preliminary stage. “He” didn’t control Leonard’s Body of Heart and Mind, Astral Projection, Ether Body, and physical body. And after advancing to become a demigod, Klein had gained a deeper control over the mysterious space above the gray fog, allowing him to pull in anyone he wanted, without targeting the soul. He could make a selection.

Therefore, Klein decided to not touch Leonard’s Soul Body, and only pulled his Astral Projection above the gray fog. This avoided agitating Pallez Zoroast or end up bringing “Him” into the mysterious space. Of course, it was almost certain that the Sequence 1 angel of the Marauder pathway would notice it.

And the ability to enter the dreams of others stemmed from the Astral Projection of Beyonders of the Evernight pathway, so it didn’t affect Leonard’s ability to do what he was good at in this mysterious space.

Let’s hope that he can escape from Pallez Zoroast’s parasitizing bit by bit… Klein suddenly sighed.

The reason why he made Leonard join the tarot club was because he wished to help this former teammate grow stronger, allowing him to escape the claws of Pallez Zoroast.

If that Marauder pathway angel didn’t have any ill intent, he could get Leonard to help “Him” hide from Amon and aid “His” recovery. This would speed up “His” switching of parasitic targets.

Retracting in his gaze, Klein thought for a moment. He threw the Hunter pathway’s Sequence 6 Conspirer potion formula to the point of light representing Danitz. He then instructed him to leave the Southern Continent and return to the Golden Dream.

Black Hunting Spider’s composite eye, sphinx’s brain… Danitz recalled the content he had just “seen” in a daze as he stood up in delight.

He planned to immediately bid farewell to Anderson and leave the dangerous Southern Continent.

After coming to the door of the Fog Sea’s Strongest Hunter, he knocked on the wooden door, only to see it open.

Anderson hadn’t locked the door!

Danitz was puzzled as he cast his gaze inside and saw Anderson holding a knife and sliding it against his abdomen.

Chapter 952 - What a Small World

Danitz jumped in fright as he blurted out, “Sorry, I didn’t see anything…” Before he could finish his sentence, he had already pulled the door handle towards him.

Bang!

The door closed, emitting a sound that echoed through the corridor.

At this point, Danitz finally came to a realization.

What was I doing just now…

What is Anderson doing?

He instinctively removed the black boxing glove and thought bitterly with a frown. Finally, he decided to return to his room, pack his luggage, and leave.

As for what Anderson was trying to do, he felt that something was amiss despite his curiosity. He had no plans on getting himself involved in it, lest he fell into a trap.

Captain said that I should maintain fear and respect towards the unknown. So, I should distance myself from this… Just as Danitz turned around, he suddenly heard the door unlock before being opened.

Anderson, whose buttons on the lower part of his shirt weren’t buttoned up, walked out with a dull, pitch-black knife. He looked at Danitz with a mixed expression.

"Aren't you going to try to stop me?"

Danitz acutely noticed the chance to mock him as he sniggered.

"That's your freedom.

"If you didn't leave a will, I'll be rich!"

Anderson rubbed his cheeks.

"Aren't you curious about what I encountered?"

Danitz glanced at him suspiciously.

"I keep feeling as though you're up to something."

Anderson roared with laughter.

"Well, I had been captured some time ago and was soaked in strange blood with all kinds of ingredients. I was corroded by it for an extended period of time until a strange chrysalis was formed inside my body. This was to create the effect of having a certain level of attraction towards High-Sequence Beyonders of the Hunter pathway."

As he spoke, he pointed at his abdomen.

Danitz was taken aback.

"I've never really heard of something like that.

"If you were another sex, I might've imagined that you're pregnant…"

He paused for a moment before asking, "That strange fellow in Revival Square was attracted by the baby, no— 'chrysalis' in your stomach?"

Anderson nodded as Danitz gestured with his hands.

"You were trying to cut open your abdomen to extract the 'chrysalis'?"

Anderson replied honestly, "Yes, I'm worried about how it would affect me, or if it will continue attracting demigods. I have to make every second count to remove this latent problem.”

Danitz thought before asking in puzzlement, “Then why aren’t you making the attempt?

“You forgot to set up a will, and you want me to be your witness?”

Anderson’s facial muscles twitched as he chuckled.

“Not bad. Your Provoker potion should almost be digested.”

He then sighed.

“After some careful analysis, I believe there’s no direct way to extract it. Otherwise, they wouldn’t have soaked me in blood and allow the ingredients to seep into me. They could’ve just opened up my stomach and placed the chrysalis inside before sewing me up.”

Without waiting for Danitz’s reply, he said in thought, “Don’t you have the method to contact Gehrman Sparrow? He’s been through so much and knows so much, so I would like to consult him on how to resolve this problem.”

In recent months, Danitz was extremely afraid of people raising the matter about him knowing Gehrman Sparrow, so he subconsciously retorted, “No! I haven’t seen him since I left the Golden Dream!”

Anderson curled the corner of his lips and said, “When you were writing to Gehrman Sparrow, I was beside him and have met his messenger.”

Danitz’s expression immediately froze. He forced a smile after a few seconds.

“Then why don’t you directly summon his messenger?”

Anderson raised his hand again and touched his throat, chuckling.

"I don't know the ritual for summoning his messenger."

Danitz still suspected that Anderson was up to something, and was unwilling to confirm that he had been repeatedly communicating with Gehrman Sparrow. He then suggested, "Actually, you can always seek the help of our captain on such matters. She's very knowledgeable and good at research. She knows many secret techniques and can also seek the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom for help. She should be able to give you the solution for resolving the matter of the chrysalis in your stomach.

"Haha, if you're embarrassed, I can talk to her for you."

Just as he said that, he saw Anderson's face beam. He quickly replied with a rushed tone, "Alright, let's do that!

"I've already packed my luggage. When shall we set off?"

"…" Danitz fell into a daze for a few seconds, feeling that he had been tricked by Anderson.

He returned to the room, drank his remaining beer, and threw all the miscellaneous items into his luggage bag, leaving behind a dried leaf with golden patterns.

This was the token Danitz previously used to establish contact with the Northern State's dominant leader, General Maysanchez. Following Gehrman Sparrow's instructions, he left the leaf inside and allowed the person-in-charge to follow up.

In the room that Danitz checked out of, a candle was suddenly lit as a two-meter-tall scarlet flame burgeoned.

Amidst the flames, a figure walked out. He was wearing a silk top hat, black formal suit, and had white sideburns. He looked outstanding with his deep, blue eyes and mature demeanor. He was none other than Klein as Dwayne Dantès.

After picking up the leaf with golden patterns, Klein left the hotel, circling around the sealed-off Revival Square, and came to Cookawa's core region, White Feather Square.

Maysanchez's residence was there, located beside a Death cathedral that descended downwards.

As a standard Loenese gentleman, Dantès looked out of place when walking through the city. Here, the foreigners were a minority, with most foreigners seen around the few major embassies located around Rejoice Square. The other places were filled with mostly locals from Balam.

Their skin was slightly brown, and they had curly black hair. Their facial features were soft, and in the eyes of most people from the Northern Continent, people of the same sex all looked the same, aside from the differences in height and weight.

These locals, be it male or female, enjoyed rolling dried tobacco leaves into Balam cigarettes. Along the way, Klein would see residents spewing out smoke alongside the road from time to time.

In addition, many of them hung a fruit known as Dalawa by their waists.

This fruit was the size of two fists, with thick skin. After digging open a tiny hole and eating the flesh inside, one could use it to store water, alcohol, and other beverages.

Based on Klein's observations, they mostly drank an orange-yellow Gwadar. It was sour with a hint of sweetness, good at quenching thirst and relieving heat. It was also great at keeping people awake.

I didn't have a chance to try it before… Klein mumbled as he found the guard manning the general's residence and sought to meet a man named Haggis.

Due to his appearance as a Loenese person and a gentleman, the guard didn't deny his request or make it difficult for him. He got a person to head in to get a man in his thirties.

The man's facial features and skin were that of a standard Balam native. However, his curly black hair had been pulled straight and neatly combed back as though he was trying to mimic members of high society in the various countries of the Northern Continent.

He wore a white shirt and a black vest, matched with a very formal bow tie. Upon seeing Dwayne Dantès, he said in standard Loenese, "Good afternoon, I'm Haggis. Nice to meet you."

His accent was a little odd, different from any borough in Loen.

Klein had lived in high society for quite a period of time, so he wasn't too surprised. He said with a smile, "Good afternoon, I'm Dwayne Dantès. I never expected to meet a gentleman who's so good at using the accent of Loenese nobles."

Haggis couldn't help but smile.

"Many children of noble birth from Loen have one come to East and West Balam to seek out opportunities. I was fortunate to learn from them."

"Oh, I might know some of them." Klein wasn't in a rush to talk business as he began making small talk with Haggis like a gentleman.

Haggis smiled.

"My friend includes Colonel Alfred Hall, the second son of an earl."

Hall… Klein let out a soft chuckle.

"I once met Earl Hall at a charity party. He's a true noble.

"What a small world."

Haggis nodded in agreement.

“Perhaps this is an arrangement of fate. Unfortunately, Alfred was transferred to East Balam last year.”

He didn’t continue as he immediately invited Dwayne Dantès into the general’s residence.

When passing through the side door, Klein suddenly looked up, glancing at the embedded stained glass above.

The glass shimmered like a rainbow under the illumination of sunlight, as though gazes were sweeping past.

Chapter 953 - Prophecy

* * *

Klein retracted his gaze in a natural manner, held his gold-inlaid cane, and followed closely behind Haggis before entering the general's residence.

The architecture style was completely unlike those found in the Southern Continent. It didn't make any use of light manipulation to make the rooms appear dark and gloomy, nor did they boldly use some human bones as accessories to produce a strong visual impact. Instead, it was more in the style of the Northern Continent. Furthermore, there was an undeniable hint of Intis influence.

Every column was covered in segmented gold foil. The use of colors in the murals were warm, and there were sculptures embedded with gold. A beautiful spiral staircase descended from above, connecting all four stories before ending in the middle of the huge hall where it faced the entrance. It was extremely grand.

I have to say that countries led by the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun are really at the forefront when it comes to gold artwork. It doesn't have the feeling of the gaudy nouveau riche… Klein swept his gaze to the palm-sized golden angels that extended out from the staircase's railings and mid sections of the columns, holding back his urge to caress them.

Looking at the guards standing by the two sides, he casually found a topic and said to Haggis, "Colonel Alfred Hall seems to have made some significant contributions in West Balam?"

Haggis nodded and used a Loenese noble accent to say, "He's a determined and brave man. He once led a special forces team of more than thirty men to raid an Intis battalion with more than a thousand people, completely crippling them. I heard that he had also made significant contributions in East Balam; therefore, becoming a colonel before the age of thirty.”

Sounds impressive… Perhaps Miss Justice’s brother has already become a Beyonder with quite a significantly high Sequence… Hmm, in every aristocratic family, every generation should have some members taking the Beyonder path… Heh heh, if this Mr. Alfred finally reaches his goal of becoming a Beyonder with a relatively high Sequence and gaining the rank of brigadier general or major general through hardship, I wonder how sad would he be when he returns to Backlund to realize that he’s no match for his sister’s dog… Having drank his medicine before heading out today, Klein used the act of lampooning to adjust his mental state.

He didn’t ask further about Alfred as he asked with a curious tone, “I realize that there are some differences in the traditions of East and West Balam. Here, in many houses, there are people with human bone decorations, but it’s not present in East Balam.

“I’ve been here several times, but I’ve never been able to bring myself to get the answer to this question.”

Haggis stopped and pointed to the exaggerated spiral staircase.

“Mr. Dantès, the general will be here in a few minutes.”

After informing him of this, he chuckled.

“It’s actually not common to see human bone traditions. Only fiefs that came under the royal family of the Balam Empire still have this tradition. To us, the death of family members doesn’t mean that our relationship has come to an end. After the burial, we will take a piece of their bones and place it at home as a decoration as a way to indicate that the deceased continue being with the living.

"As for which bone to choose, it will be decided by the interring priest through a ritual. The best and most symbolic part is the skull.

"Some families will even make the skull into a vessel for drinking alcohol, using it only when entertaining the most honored guests.

"Mr. Dantès, if you close a deal this time, I wish to invite you home. I wish to offer Finis Wine in my grandfather's skull to show my respects to you."

"…"

Klein's expression nearly fell apart. He felt that he was incapable of accepting the local customs in this aspect.

He laughed and was just about to be perfunctory when he saw a figure slowly walking down the golden railings of the staircase.

The person didn't wear a hat. He was wearing a cut black military attire with shimmering gold buttons. The sash he wore was red like blood.

He had light-brown skin and a rather soft facial outline. His facial features looked scrunched up in the middle of his head, making his face appear abnormally big.

Klein, who had obtained the relevant information from various channels, instantly recognized the man to be the dominant ruler of West Balam's Northern State. He was Maysanchez who declared himself as general.

On the surface, he wavered between the factions of Loen, Intis, Feynapotter, Feysac, and the Resistance, maintaining a balance, but secretly, he had received the support of the Numinous Episcopate's royal family faction.

Meanwhile, Klein suspected that this native general had established a solid working relationship with the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom.

As for Maysanchez's strength, be it Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina or Admiral of Stars Cattleya, he was noted to be a Sequence 5. But the two ladies didn't mention which pathway he was from, as the powers this local general exhibited were mostly related to spirits, but he carried a mystical item from the Death pathway.

"Good afternoon, Your Excellency." Klein took off his hat, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed.

At this moment, he sensed gazes locking onto him from some unknown location. They were like lights that flashed across the golden angel figures, the sunlight reflected from the stained glass or the lustrous glow from the smooth marble.

"Hello there, Mr. Dantès," Maysanchez replied in Dutanese.

Having grasped Dutanese through his marionette, Klein naturally was able to understand him. However, in the Southern Continent, the longer he stayed in East and West Balam, the more he felt the similarities between Dutanese and ancient Feysac.

Although these two languages obviously followed different systems, making it much more difficult if he were to truly study Dutanese, certain details were shockingly similar as it was as though they shared a common heritage.

Klein could only be certain that the heritage wasn't Jotun.

Pretending as though he hadn't noticed anything, he very naturally chatted with Maysanchez until the other party raised the topic of the arms deal.

"How many goods do you have in total?"

Klein laughed and replied, "It wouldn't be a problem equipping three to four thousand people. In addition, there will be a few cannons."

Maysanchez fell silent and said, "Name your price."

Klein pretended to deliberate and said, “If you wish for me to send the goods to the Northern State, the price would be 50,000 pounds. If you send your troops to retrieve the goods with me and be responsible for the subsequent transportation and safety, it will only cost 40,000 pounds.”

Maysanchez thought and said, “The latter.

“Take the down payment and go with my men. Once they see the goods and move it onto our carriages, my men will pay the rest.”

He paused for a moment and then added, “However, I do not have much Loen gold pounds.”

So you don’t have enough foreign reserves… Klein surveyed the area and said with an unconcerned smile, “You can directly pay me in gold coins, or even gold bars or gold bricks.”

Maysanchez was rather decisive. He didn’t waste any time to nod and say, “Deal. I’ll get Haggis to bring my men and money to you tomorrow.”

Not bad. I like doing business with people who don’t haggle… Klein first heaved a sigh of relief before suspecting if his price was too low.

After Klein left the general’s residence, Maysanchez suddenly looked up and said to the person above, “Your Excellency Lucca, is this the person you’re waiting for?”

One story above the beautiful staircase, a figure slowly appeared.

He was an elder in a white robe with inlaid brass lines. His hair was completely white and neatly combed. His pair of gray-green eyes were so deep that they appeared bottomless.

He replied with an unhurried tone, “There’s no way to be certain. Although my prophecy tells me that I’ll meet the person who can resolve my future predicament in the next two days here, that person was too ordinary. Besides being a Beyonder, there’s nothing worth taking note of.

“Of course, I can’t tell the more profound truth. He might have an existence that’s at least not weaker than me behind him.”

Having said that, he slowly walked down and, after a few seconds, said, “I’ll attempt to use a dream to see if I can discover more.”

“Do I need to prepare a special room for you?” Maysanchez asked reverently.

Lucca shook his head.

“I’ll use the activity room here. Hmm… The best time will be four hours later. Don’t disturb me before that happens.”

He then entered the room, sat down, and leaned against the sofa. He relaxed himself, closed his eyes, and fell silent.

Only when it slowly turned dark did the old gentleman fall asleep.

In the dream, he found himself standing in the hall of the general’s residence, standing at the first floor of the beautiful staircase. By the side was Maysanchez and numerous guards.

The middle-aged man named Dwayne Dantès was standing opposite him when he suddenly curled his lips into a smile, revealing an exaggerated smile.

Flames soared up as poker cards fell from above.

Lucca’s green eyes instantly darkened as Dwayne Dantès’s body instantly fell into a strange darkness that appeared.

The old white-robed gentleman immediately spread his arms open, revealing a dark vortex at his chest.

The vortex expanded and devoured Dwayne Dantès.

Before Lucca could confirm the situation, he felt something. He turned to the side and saw Maysanchez's face squirming and turning tall before instantly becoming another Dwayne Dantès.

Almost at the same time, Haggis and all the guards present turned into Dwayne Dantès. All of them were casting their gaze at Lucca!

Lucca was jolted awake, and under the watch of Maysanchez, who had entered at some point in time, he faltered for two seconds and said heavily, "I have to personally meet that gentleman from before and see the demigod behind him."

Before he finished his sentence, he subconsciously turned his head to look out the window.

At this moment, the street lamps lit up. It was dark outside, and the crimson moon's moonlight was strangely tainted with a bloody color.

Another Blood Moon!

†

Thankfully there's Mr. Fool… I must say that there are way too many Blood Moons this year… It's only been two months since the last time… I didn't even have any time to prepare! Fors who sat up, wiped her cold sweat, and muttered silently.

She had arrived at a town near Delaire Forest and had checked into a hotel. She shared a room with Xio, and they had made preparations to do some investigations of the abandoned castle early tomorrow morning. To Fors's surprise, there was a Blood Moon just as she was preparing to get some rest.

At this moment, she seemed to recall something as her body stiffly turned to the side.

Xio, who had exhorted her to sleep early, had already woken up at some point in time. She was looking at her with her eyes open.

Chapter 954 - Strange Ancient Castle

Fors's gaze met Xio's in midair as both parties remained silent.

After a while, Fors chuckled dryly.

“Haha, you haven't fallen asleep?”

Xio frowned and said, “What happened to you?”

“Nothing. Didn't I tell you before? Whenever the full moon happens, I won't be in a good state. It's even worse during the Blood Moon,” Fors replied as though everything was normal.

Xio sized her up and pulled her blanket.

“I remember that you brought sleeping pills?”

“There's no need for that. I've fine now.” Seeing that Xio wasn't pressing further, Fors secretly heaved a sigh of relief. “Go back to sleep. We still have to head into the forest early tomorrow morning.”

Xio didn't say another word as she turned around, gripped the blanket, and closed her eyes.

Before long, her breathing turned heavier and became more drawn out and uniform.

Fors stared blankly at the ceiling as her thoughts ran wild. At some point in time, she fell asleep as well.

†

The next day at noon. In the core region of Delaire Forest, in front of a collapsed, ancient castle covered in green vines.

Fors wiped the perspiration on her forehead and exhaled.

“We’re finally here…”

Xio shot her a glance and said, “The boss at the hotel told me that we only need two hours to get here.”

They had set off before six in the morning, but they had spent nearly seven hours to arrive.

The corners of Fors’s lips twitched as she said, “Ideal conditions and reality are different. There weren’t any trails for us to take towards the end. We needed to explore and forge a new path ourselves!”

Xio took out her triangular blade, nodded, and said, “You should’ve foreseen this from the beginning, but you refused to have a guide as suggested by the hotel’s boss.”

“As an Astrologer, I don’t believe such trivialities will cause any trouble. Look, aren’t we there now? Besides, the time is perfect. The wraiths and ghosts are definitely in their weakest state.” Having forced a smile, Fors held Leymano’s Travels in one hand as she pointed with the other. “I didn’t notice it before, but the more I think about it, the more puzzled I become.”

“About what?” Xio also cast her gaze to the ancient abandoned castle that was covered by vines.

Fors casually found an excuse.

“Tell me, who would build a castle in the middle of a forest? Furthermore, they didn’t open up a trail to it…”

Before she finished her sentence, she really found the matter a little odd.

Xio thought and said, “Perhaps there was a trail, but after the castle was abandoned, whatever traces of it had been wiped out with time.”

Fors stroked the hair by her ear and shook her head.

“Then why would they abandon it?

“If they had considered safety back when building it, it would be more dangerous building it far from the town in an uninhabited castle. If it’s just for vacations, with the way nobles do things, they wouldn’t abandon it even if the maintenance and repairs are difficult.”

Xio blurted out, “Could it be because it’s haunted?”

Fors thought for a few seconds.

“Won’t someone who can build such a huge castle hire Beyonders to deal with the ghosts?

“I suspect that the three Churches and the kingdom’s government don’t know of this ancient castle. Otherwise, it doesn’t make sense that they will leave the Beyonder ingredients inside…”

Upon saying that, she raised a possibility:

“An ancient castle of the Sanguine?”

Such extraordinary creatures enjoyed living in places with few people. Furthermore, they were usually connected to dark forests and ancient castles.

In addition, information about this ancient castle came from the Sanguine to begin with.

“It’s possible,” Xio first agreed before disagreeing. “Will the Sanguine be afraid of ghosts? They definitely have the means to deal with the ancient wraiths inside."

Makes sense… Don't tell me those Sanguine don't like money and don't care about the search for Beyonder ingredients? Fors recalled Mr. Moon's behavior and denied her hypothesis. In deliberation, she said, "Unless there's some problem that's not easy to resolve. That's what made the bigwigs choose to skirt around it."

In that case, her operation would become more dangerous than she had anticipated.

Xio tersely agreed.

"Let's do some preliminary investigations while the sun is still strong."

"Alright." Fors held Leymano's Travels and approached the half-collapsed ancient castle one step at a time.

The two soon arrived at the entrance which was two-thirds blocked by rocks. They discovered that, beneath the green vines, the stone walls were mottled and heavily weathered as though it had been in existence for a very, very long period of time.

Xio wasn't in a rush to enter. Calling out to Fors, they circled around the castle slowly.

When they returned to the entrance, she said in puzzlement, "This castle's style is purely defensive. It doesn't seem to consider the problems needed for living in it. Besides, many of the peculiarities of the building are ones I haven't heard of before. It has probably existed in the late Fourth Epoch or even earlier."

"What's there to defend again? Beastmen? Treants? They've all gone extinct after the Cataclysm. Haha, don't tell me that it's a building from the Second or Third Epoch?" Fors casually replied.

She observed the terrain and left the entrance with Xio before arriving at a relatively complete wall. She reached out her palm and pressed on it.

Although she lacked combat experience, she was rather skilled when it came to the various aspects before a battle.

An illusory light appeared in front of her, allowing Fors and Xio to instantly enter the abandoned castle.

The first thing that they saw was a collapsed staircase and layers of remnant concrete from above. There were rays of pure sunlight shining in from above, as well as masonry and rotten wood. There weren't any animal or bird feces or any green weeds on the ground.

With a whoosh, the wind seeped into their bones, chilling them despite it being noon.

Fors activated her Spirit Body and surveyed the area, but she failed to see any Spirit Bodies.

However, she noticed that on the right of a remnant collapsed wall, there was a rather intact stone staircase.

The staircase was mottled and scuffed as it extended downwards to an unknown location.

"Shall we head over there to take a look?" Fors shot a glance at Xio and made a suggestion.

From her point of view, everything else in the castle could either be taken in at a glance or collapsed and stacked together. If they wished to do thorough investigations, it was certain that it would take a rather long amount of time. Therefore, it was better to gain a general understanding of the overall picture to assure themselves.

Xio glanced around and nodded gently.

"The cold wind is gathering underground… I suspect that all the wraiths and ghosts are hidden in the area where the staircase leads to."

“Yeah.” Fors cautiously walked towards the mottled stone staircase and followed the steps, which were covered in gravel, down.

The staircase was rather narrow, allowing only one person to pass at a time. Furthermore, they spiraled down, leaving Fors shaken.

Tap. Tap. Tap. As their footsteps echoed into the distance, the light that shone inside the staircase darkened.

Xio lit the lantern in her hand as Fors opened Leymano’s Travels, swiping a page with great familiarity.

A bright and warm light burst out, illuminating the mottled stairs ahead of them. Tensed, Fors and Xio walked down one level at a time.

On the way, cold wind blew past them, making them overreact and nearly cause them to launch attacks at nonexistent enemies.

Tap. Tap. Tap. In the narrow and silent environment, Fors finally walked down the steps and stepped onto rather flat and solid ground.

She had originally wanted to say “being in a place like this for too long will really make one go mad,” but due to the silent and heavy atmosphere around her, she didn’t make a sound. She was afraid that breaking the silence would result in extremely terrible developments.

Using the blob of light that was floating above her, Fors cast her gaze forward in an attempt to see what was at the end of the staircase.

It was a huge hall that was nearly ten meters tall. There were black tiles laid on the ground with water droplets seeping out. There were signs of damage everywhere.

Dozens of meters away, where the light nearly failed to illuminate the other end of the hall, there was a pair of double bronze doors sitting there silently.

It went from the bottom to the top, and the rocks on the walls to its side had peeled off. The statues were in shambles, revealing the dark brown mud underneath.

The surface of the door was engraved with dense symbols and strange patterns. They had a very mysterious and heavy feel, as though they were sealing something or blocking out something.

Fors finally couldn't help but say with a hushed tone, “Have you seen such large doors before?”

Beside her, Xio shook her head.

“No.”

Fors immediately drew a gasp.

“Say, what could be behind that door? Where does it lead to?

“C-could it be the reason for building this castle in the first place? To prevent the creatures behind the door from coming out?”

Xio circled the area but didn't find any murals that could provide any information. All she found was that the closer she was to the bronze door, the more water seeped out from the ground. There were also more and more abandoned silver-black swords on the ground.

“During the Fourth and Fifth Epoch, murals were very common in all castles and buildings. And before the Cataclysm, it can be seen from various elven ruins that supernatural creatures similarly like to use murals to praise their deities and to record their daily lives…” Xio said slowly, using her experience and knowledge from being a bounty hunter.

Fors nodded slightly and said, “That's indeed the case.

“This ancient castle is more magical than I imagined.”

At this moment, she felt hesitant. She even had thoughts of leaving and seeking Mr. World's help.

Having heard Little Sun describe so many horror stories when exploring abandoned ruins at the Tarot Gatherings, her mind couldn’t help but wander when placed in a similar situation. She was scaring herself.

“Perhaps we can gather more clues by going closer.” Xio boldly took a few steps forward and approached the heavy sealed door that seemed to lead somewhere.

Fors gripped Leymano’s Travels tightly and hurriedly chased after her.

As she walked, she suddenly saw bright redness appear before her.

What seeped out from the cracks of the black tiles was no longer water but staggering blood!

This… Fors immediately flipped open the notebook with a bronze-green cover and cast her sight on Xio through the corner of her eye.

It was unknown when Xio had turned pale. Her eyes were dark-green, and her lips were red. The area around her was dark and gloomy as her expression looked extremely distorted.

Chapter 955 - Ancient Wraith

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Fors’s pupils dilated as though she was trying to absorb more light into her eyes to better see Xio’s current circumstances.

Meanwhile, the light in front of her suddenly exploded with a flash several times more blinding than old-school cameras, blanketing the surroundings with whiteness.

Following that, her finger swiped on a page on Leymano’s Travels as black fog soared from her feet, enveloping her entire body.

The thick black fog quickly transformed into palm-sized illusory bats as they flew in different directions of the underground hall.

This was Wings of Darkness which The Moon had recorded in Leymano’s Travels!

Its original use was to enhance one’s speed and bestow temporary flight capabilities while producing a horde of blood-sucking bats to attack the enemy. However, Fors didn’t use it for this purpose. Instead, she used it as a “prop” for her performance.

After the illusory bats flew away, the space where Fors stood was already empty.

At some point in time, she had appeared more than ten meters away!

After subconsciously escaping and defending herself, Fors could finally calm down as she hurriedly cast her gaze onto Xio, who had turned abnormal.

However, Xio only appeared to have slightly disheveled blonde hair with malt-colored skin due to her continuous forays out in the sun. Besides looking somewhat blank as though she was surprised as to why her friend had such a huge reaction, she didn't show any signs of being influenced by wraiths or ghosts.

"What happened?" Xio asked warily.

Fors narrowed her eyes without directly replying to her. Flipping through Leymano's Travels's pages, she asked, "Xio, how tall are you?"

Seemingly realizing something, Xio answered, "152. Isn't that so?"

Just as she said that, Fors's fingers slid across the notebook's page which was filled with symbols and magical labels.

Silently, a holy light swirling with fire plummeted down from above.

The unadulterated and bright light instantly enveloped Xio before rippling outward with sunlight.

As the blazing light stabbed into Fors's eyes, she saw the hall collapse and the surroundings space shatter like glass.

This feeling was gone in a flash as Fors realized that she was still in her original spot. She had yet to flee.

That was an illusion? She hurriedly turned to the side and saw Xio looking at the damaged region of the heavy door.

Fors deliberated for a moment and asked, "Xio, how tall are you?"

Xio glanced at her and angrily said, "Stop asking such inane questions!"

Phew, she's real… Fors heaved a sigh of relief as she quickly described her encounter to Xio.

After a few seconds of thought, Xio used her lantern-wielding hand to nudge Fors's arm.

"Let's retreat. Perhaps the closer we are to that door, the easier it is to hallucinate."

"Yes, that's possible!" Fors nodded in agreement as she quickly moved back a few steps.

Following that, she surveyed the area and asked in puzzlement, "Why can't we find any wraiths or ghosts here?

"Such an environment should be something that they enjoy."

Xio was perplexed as well. She then did a careful observation before landing her gaze on the blob of sunlight floating above Fors's head.

"Try extinguishing it," she suggested.

Fors came to a realization as she immediately dispelled the light.

Silent darkness blanketed the area and ruled the underground hall once more. Only the lantern's faint yellow light put up a resistance against all of this.

Then, Fors saw two figures in her Spirit Vision.

They were rather close to the bronze door. One was a female with coiled hair, wearing a knight's trousers and a garish shirt for ease of movement. The other was a man wearing silver-black armor as he held a sword that was almost snapping due to rust.

The former's face was a blur as it kept wandering between the door and where Fors and Xio arrived. The latter was loitering beside the door, muttering something.

These are the two ancient wraiths? Fors nudged Xio and said with a suppressed voice, "I see Spirit Bodies."

"I see them as well. They aren't hiding at all." Xio curved her back as she readied herself for a fight.

Fors hurriedly nudged her.

“Don’t be hasty. We aren’t sure that they’re the targets.”

She attempted to take three steps forward, but the two relatively blurry figures didn’t even look at her.

Fors thought and suddenly said, “Ma’am, what are you doing?”

She had heard of stories in other mysticism circles that wraiths, shadows, and other higher-level Spirit Body creatures could be communicated with.

However, she regretted it the moment she said that. This was because communication didn’t allow her to achieve her goal. There was no way she could persuade the other party to kill themselves and hand over the cursed item and remnant spirituality of an ancient wraith.

Just as Fors was considering if she should launch a direct attack, the lady in the garish shirt and knight’s trousers replied with a flat tone, “I’m searching for my husband.

“He’s a guard here.”

Communication is really possible… Fors pressed out of curiosity, “Where did he go?”

At this moment, Xio approached as she wore a look of extreme vigilance.

The blurry-figured lady answered blankly,

“He’s a guard here. He told me that magical power seeps out from behind the door, corrupting his teammates. He got me to leave as quickly as possible with a messenger.

“He said that he would ensure that I escaped safely, but I don’t wish for that. I want to leave with him… After sending off the messenger, I returned midway and returned underground. But I can’t find him…”

With the age of this castle exceeding the present Epoch, the last defender has definitely transformed into an ancient wraith. Hmm, this lady's story has moved me. I really can't bear to attack her… Fors's mind whirled as she carefully took a few steps and circled around the ancient female wraith and approached the bronze door.

This time, she and Xio didn't suffer any more hallucinations. This seemed to imply that her encounter was subconsciously created by the lady.

A distance from the silver-black armored knight with a rusty sword, Fors attempted to ask, "Sir, what are you doing?"

The knight paused and said with a humming voice, "I'm guarding this Door of Blackness. I need to ensure that my wife has escaped safely.

"If you meet her, tell her that her knight will fight for her to the very last moment."

Ah… Door of Blackness. It's clearly a bronze door… Wait, what did he say? He said that he's guarding the door to ensure that his wife can safely escape? I-isn't this the other half of that woman's story which she described? This is her husband? Fors was taken aback as she kept looking back and forth between the two ancient wraiths.

The lady wearing a garish shirt and knight's trousers slowly approached the bronze door before returning to the middle of the hall repeatedly. As for the silver-black armored man, he was patrolling about the door with a rotting sword in hand. At times, they would pass by without noticing each other.

Such a scene must've gone on for at least fifteen hundred years, or even longer… Fors commented silently as she turned to glance at Xio. She realized that her friend's eyes were already welling with tears.

What an easily touched person… Fors couldn't help it as she shouted at the female wraith, "Look at the door. Your husband has been there all along!”

The lady slowed down her pace and first glanced at Fors before casting her gaze at the heavy door.

Her blank gaze penetrated the knight, landing behind him.

“Why can’t I find him…” the wraith repeated her words and repeated her actions.

Fors felt an explicable sense of sorrow, and just as she was about to shout again, she saw the knight turn to look at her and Xio. He shouted, “Who are you?”

Just as he said that, the female wraith cast her gaze at Xio and Fors again.

Fors immediately felt her thoughts slow down as a coldness quickly formed inside her body and rippled out, freezing her flesh and joints. As for Xio, she too was suffering from the same condition. The area around the lantern dimmed significantly.

At this moment, two bolts of lightning lit up in Xio’s eyes.

This made the wraith let out a painful cry as his body turned faint.

Xio instantly escaped from her frozen state and threw out the triangular blade in her hand towards the female wraith.

Bolts of illusory lightning swirled around the triangular blade’s tip, stabbing straight into the lady.

Psychic Lashing!

The female wraith screamed as her body turned faint.

Fors instantly snapped awake as she slid her fingers across the open Leymano’s Travels.

Life seemed to immediately gather from the surrounding shadows, turning into a pitch-black chain that restrained the male wraith to the ground, sealing off his "mouth."

Abyss Chains!

Meanwhile, Xio rushed out, and with an illusory brand in hand, she stamped it on the female wraith.

With her holding back the female wraith, Fors's actions became more composed.

She flipped through Leymano's Travels and slid her fingers.

Silver lightning that branched out and blasted out of thin air, smiting the male wraith and turning the area into a lightning hellscape.

Finally, a holy pillar of light that had flames swirling around it appeared. It enveloped the male wraith and completely purified him.

With one enemy taken down, Fors immediately turned and dealt with the female wraith with Xio.

She didn't hold back on using powers from Leymano's Travels. She came up with wise combinations of them, and using Xio's suppression, she switched between restrainment powers and offense from time to time. Soon, they finished off their target.

Everything fell silent as Fors heaved a sigh of relief. She then looked at the battlefield with a look of disbelief.

"Is that it?"

She originally imagined that two ancient wraiths had unique powers, and with their higher levels, they weren't something sub-Sequence 5 Beyonders could deal with. However, she realized that everything happened rather smoothly.

This made her truly realize how godly Leymano's Travels was. She also began looking forward to the next Sequence as a Scribe.

Xio was somewhat astonished as she thought for a few seconds.

“It’s no wonder someone told me that, beneath the level of demigods, the number of Beyonders, their cooperation, and usage of powers are more important than the Sequence.”

Just as she said that, she heard knocking sounds resonate.

It broke the silence of the hall, and it came from behind the bronze door.

Chapter 956 - The Things Behind the Door

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Bang! Bang! Bang!

Behind the bronze door, the slamming sounds continued incessantly, echoing throughout the vast underground hall as though they came from an abnormally distant past.

Fors clamped up and couldn’t help but tremble. Unable to help it, she suppressed her voice:

“What could be behind the door?” “I’ve no idea.” Xio honestly shook her head, subconsciously gulping.

Her right hand, which had just picked up her triangular blade, had her joints protruding out as her blood vessels surfaced. Clearly, she was gripping the triangular blade tightly.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The slamming sounds continued without any change in frequency. Each sound seemed to strike at Fors’s and Xio’s hearts, leaving their hair standing and scalps tingling

“It likely won’t be able to come out, right… If it could so easily come out, it wouldn’t have waited until today.” Fors tried to console herself with parched

lips.

Xio nodded heavily and said, “We leave once the ingredients form.”

“In such an environment and atmosphere, her curiosity had been completely overwhelmed by her innate fear.

“Alright!” As Fors glanced at the spots where the two ancient wraiths had been cleansed, she blamed The Moon for providing undetailed information. He hadn’t mentioned that there was such a strange door beneath the ancient castle.

At this moment, glowing dust was landing on the ground like shattered gems, forming into two piles as they gathered together.

Around them, nearly formless remnant spirituality condensed into a seemingly ethereal crystal.

Accompanied by the crystals and dust were two different items. One was ring-shaped and completely transparent as though it was a corroded ring. The other was an eye carved from crystal, with faint black gas swirling within. Upon seeing this scene, Fors suddenly realized something

An ancient wraith was a ghost-like creature with a Beyonder characteristic mixed in. The cursed item would be related to a particular item while they were still alive, fusing with the characteristic and turning into a foundation to which they relied on for their existence. It was precisely because of this that different ancient wraiths had different corresponding cursed items in shape and form. However, they were essentially the same. And the dust was another type of characteristic. It was the source of most of their strength, stemming from remnant spirituality, slightly equivalent to the blood and ingredients of monsters.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The entity striking behind the bronze door didn’t let up at all. It kept testing Fors’s and Xio’s psyche.

Being afraid and cautious, the duo's bodies trembled so much that they even imagined that the door was shaking slightly. Their racing hearts were in their throats.

With them being able to head for the staircase at any moment, Fors finally waited until the ancient wraiths' powder and cursed items took form.

As she signaled to Xio to be wary, she crouched down and took out three square metal boxes she had prepared.

After some hesitation, Fors looked up at Xio and said, "These two ancient wraiths have been waiting for each other for so long. I-I'm thinking of separating a little of what they left behind and burying them together… Uh, in that case, I'll get a cursed item, and you'll get a pile of dust. We'll split the remaining spirituality, alright?"

Xio didn't hesitate as she nodded.

"Alright!"

Fors silently heaved a sigh of relief as she pursed her lips. Flipping through Leymano's Travels, she slid her finger across a particular page.

The five nails on her right hand immediately grew long and sharp, covering black patterns and symbols.

This was the Claw of Corrosion from the Sanguine.

Upon seeing her palm transform, Fors grabbed at the ground, easily digging a hole and leaving behind a corrosive mark.

Right on the heels of that, she placed the crystal eyeball-like cursed item and a pile of dust into the hole before filling the hole with the gravel and soil she had dug up.

She lightly grazed the flattened ground with her fingernails, writing an epitaph.

"Returning for you; Defending for you; Together forever."

After doing all of this, Fors sighed when she heard the slamming behind the bronze turn louder.

Bam!

She jumped in fright and hurriedly placed the pile of dust, ring-shaped curse item, and remnant spirituality into the different square metal boxes.

Then, she put the boxes away, stood up, and slowly walked to the spiraling and cramped staircase with Xio.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The slamming sounds behind the bronze door grew intense as Fors and Xio subconsciously gritted their teeth, following the staircase and rapidly heading up.

They increased their speed until they began running. They ignored the possibility of falling on the staircase and tumbling down like a wheel.

Finally, Fors and Xio saw sunlight.

Sunlight beamed in from outside, shining upon the staircase ahead of them. It was bright, pure, and warm.

At this moment, the slamming sounds from underground had come to a sudden stop without any follow-up.

Fors and Xio exchanged looks, slowed down their pace, and after a few large strides, returned to the top of the abandoned ancient castle.

The duo didn't say a word and directly left the area, returning to the periphery of the forest.

After walking for some time, Fors calmed down and pursed her lips.

"It was really terrifying. Although the thing behind the bronze door didn't deal any harm to us, nor did it even show itself, I think it was more terrifying than the ancient wraiths. Compared to all my past experiences—uh, it's far more terrifying. In those few minutes, I couldn't help but imagine all the different tragic deaths I might suffer. Each one was more terrifying than the last, but none of them were as terrifying as the slamming sounds."

Xio turned her head and agreed with a nod.

"Yeah. I felt as though I was walking on the edge of a cliff."

Fors was about to continue when she saw two streams of bright red blood flowing down Xio's nose.

"Xio, Xio! Your nose is bleeding!" Fors hurriedly warned her friend.

Xio was taken aback as her pupils dilated.

"You too!"

"Ah?" Fors blankly reached out her hand and wiped her nose. It felt warm to the touch, wet and sticky.

She was appalled as she hurriedly held her right hand in front of her and saw red blood smeared across it. It was bright and striking.

"A result from being overly-anxious?" Fors muttered in puzzlement.

At this moment, through the sunlight diffusing through the forest's canopy, she realized that faint black spots were quickly growing on her wrists at a discernible pace.

The black spots rapidly spread, covering her arms and the back of her hands.

"Ah!" Fors subconsciously cried out as she hurriedly looked at Xio.

She saw Xio's cheeks and neck covered with black spots!

“Th-this isn’t normal!” Fors blurted out.

Xio sensed the abnormality happening to the both of them as she recalled and said, “Do you still remember what that female wraith said?

“She said that the guards from before had been corrupted by the forces that seeped out from behind the bronze door!

“Could it be that we’ve been corrupted?”

Fors was taken aback for a second before she nodded heavily.

“It’s possible!”

She hurriedly took out the medicine that she had prepared, handing over some of it to Xio. Then, she twisted the lid off and downed two bottles.

However, they didn’t show any signs of recovering. The black spots grew in number, turning their vision blurry.

Badump! Badump! Before long, Fors, whose efforts to save herself were in vain, could hear her heartbeat and sense her body beginning to lose strength.

Out of ideas, she quivered her lips, clenched her teeth, and turned her body around. She took a few steps to open up a distance from Xio.

Then, she bowed her head and chanted Mr. Fool’s honorific name.

In about ten seconds, she saw dark red light appear, engulfing her like the tide.

The ravings and roaring vanished and Fors saw the familiar mottled table and the ten high-back chairs opposite her.

She then realized that her dizziness and blurred vision had vanished. There weren’t any more of the strange, accentuated black spots on her Spirit Body.

“Thank you for your help.” Fors hurriedly stood up and bowed at the figure shrouded in gray fog at the end of the long bronze table.

Then, she heard Mr. Fool say in a calm tone, “Your spirit had been corrupted by some force.

“It should be fine now.”

Cleansed by Mr. Fool? Fors’s heart stirred. Just as she wanted to make a request to Mr. Fool regarding how Xio could be saved, the scene before turned red as light soared up.

After a brief pause, she found herself in the real world, back in Delaire Forest. The black spots on the back of her hands and wrists were rapidly fading and receding. The blood that kept dripping from her nose had already come to a stop.

Returning to her body, she saw Xio weakly slumped on a tree. Her face was covered in black spots, making her look terrifying. The muscles on both sides of her neck were tensed up as her mind spun.

A few seconds later, she walked over quickly, pressed Xio on the shoulders and rapidly said, “I have a way to save you, but you need to follow my instructions!

“Use ancient Hermes to say this: The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…”

Xio could hardly turn her swollen eyelids. Looking at Fors for two seconds, she heavily chanted, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

Just as she said that, Xio saw dark red starlight surge out from the void, sweeping over her.

Indescribable roars continued for a second before vanishing from Xio’s ears. She then saw herself seated in an ancient and majestic palace. She was sitting beside a mottled, bronze table. At her feet was a boundless grayish-white fog. In front of her was a lofty figure looking down upon her.

This scene was both unfamiliar and familiar to her. She had once seen it in a “dream,” but she hadn’t ever had it again after the exorcism ritual.

That purification was actually useless… Xio suddenly had this thought as she stood up in deliberation, bowing at the figure enshrouded in gray fog.

“You are the great King of Yellow and Black?”

She didn’t appear too surprised or alarmed, as though she had already expected it.

“You can call me Mr. Fool. Have a seat,” the figure with an epic aura replied calmly.

Xio bowed again and sat down, confirming that she had escaped her unwell state.

She looked to her sides and thought before asking, “Honorable Mr. Fool, does Fors Wall have a seat here?”

Shrouded in the gray fog, The Fool nodded gently and said, “Yes.” Xio fell silent for a second and directly asked, “Can I join just like her?”

The Fool chuckled.

“It’s a gathering they organized on their own accord but is convened by me.

“There’s still a seat available at present. You may join.

“Draw a card. They use one of the Major Arcana cards as their code name.”

Xio didn’t ask or speak further. She immediately nodded.

“Yes, Mr. Fool.”

On the bronze table in front of her, a deck of tarot cards immediately appeared.

Xio reached out her right hand and solemnly cut the deck, pulled out one card, and flipped it over.

Her card depicted an angel with a trumpet and the sleeping dead awaiting salvation: the Judgment card!

Chapter 957 - Getting to Know Each Other

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Looking at the Judgment card in hand, Xio was taken aback.

“This greatly meets my expectations.”

Shrouded in the gray fog, The Fool nodded and calmly said, “The gathering is held here at three in the afternoon on Mondays, Backlund time. Be prepared.

“During the gathering, you can exchange information, ingredients, formulas, and knowledge. You can also pay a certain price to entrust missions to the other members.”

Xio recalled for a moment before nodding in enlightenment.

“Yes, Mr. Fool.”

Believing that this was all for the day, she heard the voice coming from the end of the bronze table.

“What did you do before being corrupted by that force?”

We really were corrupted… Xio composed herself and completely recounted her exploration of the ancient castle with Fors. She emphasized the bronze door which had been named the Door of Blackness, as well as the ancient castle’s guard that had been reduced to a wraith due to the corruption.

Then, she noticed Mr. Fool nod slightly as he said calmly, “Don’t enter that ancient castle again before you reach Sequence 4.

“It’s time for you to return.”

Xio then got up, and following the descriptions in the religious rituals, she bowed and said, “Your wish is my wish.”

Just as she said that, the dark red color surged in front of her. After everything dissipated, she was back in the real world and leaning against a thick tree.

Subconsciously looking at the back of her hand, she realized that the black spots were rapidly turning faint. Xio looked up at Fors who was staring at her worriedly.

As their gazes met, Fors was first delighted before revealing a smile. She opened her mouth but was at a loss for words.

Xio slowly exhaled and pointed ahead.

“Let’s first return to the town.”

“Alright!” Fors answered without any hesitation.

At this moment above the gray fog, The Fool Klein was tapping on the edge of the mottled table as he considered Miss Magician and Miss Judgment’s encounter.

The object or power sealed behind the Door of Blackness could still corrupt the guards and explorers outside, even without escaping. Just the mere thought of it was terrifying!

Furthermore, this corruption stemmed from the Spirit Body. To resolve it, Klein had only two solutions. One was to make the corrupted entity hold a complete secret deed ritual as he used the powers above the gray fog and the Sun Brooch to complete a purification. The other was to directly pull the Spirit Body over, using the gray fog to “cleanse” them. As he didn’t have the luxury of time, he had chosen the latter.

What could it be?

The most corruptive power belongs to the Devil pathway… That place connects to the Abyss? That's not impossible. Based on Little Sun's description, during the early and mid-stages of the Second Epoch, Devils often left the Abyss and were active over the land. It was only when the ancient sun god appeared, causing ancient gods to perish one after another, did they retreat into the Abyss and seal themselves in. Based on that, it's rather normal to have an underground ancient entrance in the Northern Continent to lead to the Abyss… It can also be imagined that a castle is built with men sent to watch over it…

But the problem lies in the fact that it's been millennia. Why would there still be an existence slamming the door? Are the Devils planning on returning? Klein made a preliminary guess.

He temporarily had no plans on exploring the abandoned castle to verify his thoughts, because it was unlikely that there would be any changes anytime soon. After all, since it was news that came from the Sanguine, he could get The Moon Emlyn to do some gathering of information to figure out the history of the castle.

Reining in this thought, Klein removed the topaz chain from his wrist and divined if the matter regarding the ancient castle was pressing. He received a negative answer.

He immediately returned to the real world and waited for the local ruler, General Maysanchez, to send over the down payment.

At two in the afternoon, Feynapotter time, Haggis, with his hair combed backward while dressed as a Northern Continent gentleman, carried a black leather suitcase with a team of guards as he knocked on Dwayne Dantès's door.

"Please come on in." A warm and elegant voice sounded from the inside. It was first Loenese in a Backlund accent before it was changed to the local language of Dutanese.

Haggis turned the doorknob and entered. He saw Dwayne Dantès with his white sideburns and deep, blue eyes stand up from his reclining chair while pressing down the ends of his black vest.

“Good afternoon, my friend.” This Loen gentleman with good looks and bearings took two steps forward and extended his right palm.

This time, he switched to using Loenese.

Haggis replied using the accent of a Loenese noble, “It’s my honor to be your friend.”

After he shook hands with Dwayne Dantès, he surveyed the area and chuckled.

“Is this your servant?”

He pointed at a mixed-blood youth standing behind the arms dealer. In between the lines, he was asking if he was trustworthy. After all, Dwayne Dantès hadn’t brought any servants back when he visited the general’s residence yesterday.

“Yes, his greatest strength is the ability to keep secrets.” Dwayne Dantès smiled as he pointed to the leather sofa across the reclining chair.

With two guards following Haggis, he closed the door and sat down. He then said with a smile, “I’ve heard of an Intis proverb that’s said to be from Emperor Roselle.

“He said that dead men tell no tales.”

Dwayne Dantès said with a laugh.

“Emperor Roselle also said something else:

“Corpses can speak.”

“Is that so? This is my first time hearing of this.” Haggis enjoyed conversing with a Northern Continent gentleman, so they continued their conversation for a while before he lifted up the leather suitcase beside him and opened it.

At that instant, there seemed to be overflowing golden lusters. Under the illumination from the sunlight outside, the entire room seemed to brighten significantly

Haggis then looked at Dwayne Dantes and said, "5,000 Loen gold pounds, as well as 5,000 gold coins and gold bars.

"This is the down payment.

"I'll bring along the remaining 30,000 pounds in cash and gold the entire time, and will hand it over when the arms deal is completed."

Dwayne Dantès scanned the stacks of cash, the gold coins, and gold bars in the leather suitcase before retracting his gaze and saying with a smile, "When do we set off?"

Haggis closed the leather suitcase and handed it to Dwayne Dantès's servant and said simply, "Tomorrow morning."

He paused for two seconds before saying, "Mr. Dantès, the general has a guest who would like to meet you."

Dwayne Dantès's expression didn't change as he fell silent for a few seconds.

"When?"

"Now," Haggis said without daring to show any signs of being perfunctory. "He's downstairs."

Dwayne Dantès nodded slightly.

"Please invite him up."

Haggis immediately heaved a sigh of relief and left with his guards. They followed the stairwell down.

Before long, Lucca, in a simple white robe with brass lines adorning it, walked up. His silver hair had been combed very neatly.

When he arrived by Dwayne Dantès's door, he heard a voice from the inside just as he raised his hand.

"Please come in."

This time they spoke using ancient Feysac.

Lucca's expression didn't change as he naturally pushed open the door.

He then saw the middle-aged gentleman who had rather good looks and qualities from yesterday standing beside a reclining chair facing him.

And sitting on the reclining chair was a young man. He had black hair and brown eyes, with a thin, cut face. He had a cold temperament.

Lucca was taken aback as he took a step forward, entered the room, and closed the door.

After he sat down on the sofa in a composed manner, his gray-green eyes clearly reflected the young man in front of him.

"Gehrman Sparrow?" Lucca addressed him with a rhetorical question.

Gehrman Sparrow curled the corners of his mouth.

"Directly addressing others by their full name is impolite."

Lucca nodded and said, "My apologies for my faux pas. I recall that you advanced to Sequence 5 less than half a year ago, or it might have only been three months. Yes, it should have been completed when you were in the ruins of the battlefield of gods. I never expected… that you were already a demigod. It left me a little bewildered."

Gehrman Sparrow smiled without giving any explanations.

After a brief moment of silence, he said in an unhurried tone, "Why are you visiting me?”

Lucca calmly replied, “I don’t know.”

The atmosphere in the room suddenly turned somewhat odd. Gehrman Sparrow seemed to forget that there was an elderly man sitting opposite him that needed him to speak again.

Lucca indiscernibly nodded and said, “This is the thing: I made a prophecy by chance not too long ago. In that prophecy, I will be in a rather thorny situation in the future. And one of the people I met with over these few days will help me deal with it.

“I’m not sure if it’s you, but I’d rather be safe than sorry. So I decided to meet you and get to know each other.

“My name is Lucca Brewster, a clergyman who serves the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. I’m presently in charge of various matters in West Balam.”

Gehrman Sparrow nodded and said, “Not bad. I now know you. I don’t believe I need to introduce myself, right?”

“Of course,” Lucca thought and said. “You should be a Bizarro Sorcerer. I recently received some intel that there has been some reshuffling among the Secret Order in Intis.”

He didn’t see Gehrman Sparrow reveal any looks of shock. This powerful adventurer, who was famous across the Five Seas, said after a moment of silence, “Zaratul has returned.”

The look in Lucca’s eyes changed immediately before being restored to normal.

Then, he stood up and nodded.

“Since we’ve gotten to know each other, it’s time we bid farewell.”

After saying this, he walked to the door, twisted the doorknob, and left the room.

Sitting on the reclining chair, Gehrman Sparrow watched as his figure was concealed inch by inch by the wooden door until he completely disappeared. Then, he chuckled.

“What a charlatan.”

“Yes.” Dwayne Dantès, who was standing beside the reclining chair, found a seat and sat down. Then, he picked up a cup of tea and sipped from it.

With white sideburns and deep blue eyes, he and the thin, angular-faced Gehrman Sparrow exchanged looks and smiled in unison.

On Monday afternoon, Dwayne Dantès took out his golden pocket watch, opened it, and said to Haggis opposite him, “We’re almost arriving at our destination. I believe you and your men need some rest.”

“An excellent suggestion,” Haggis was rather agreeable.

Dwayne Dantès pointed at the street ahead.

“There’s a hotel ahead. Let’s rest there for half a day before we set off again tomorrow.”

Haggis didn’t object to it as he turned to the front and instructed the carriage driver.

After checking into the hotel, Dwayne Dantès declined Haggis’s invitation for afternoon tea by using an afternoon nap as an excuse.

Slightly more than half an hour later, above the boundless gray fog, Klein sat in the seat belonging to The Fool.

Chapter 958 - Labeling

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Dark red beams shot up, materializing into different figures on both sides of the long bronze table.

The unchanging silence above the gray fog was broken as the eternal palace seemed to have an additional, inexplicable sense of life to it.

Just as Justice Audrey regained her senses of her surroundings, she prepared to stand up to greet the existence at the end of the long bronze table.

[image]

At this moment, as a senior Spectator, she acutely noticed a difference:

There were two more members than last week!

One of them was a man sitting to the right of Mr. Moon. The other was a lady sitting to the left of The Hermit.

Audrey first felt happy that the Tarot Club was developing and becoming stronger, but then she kept to her professional instincts and quickly began observing

Due to where she sat, the man opposite her was much easier to observe compared to the lady two seats away from her. Therefore, she placed her attention on the man.

Black hair… Green eyes… He doesn’t wear a coat… A vest matched with a shirt… He sits a little oddly. He’s not accustomed to sitting properly…

He's probably about 180 cm tall… He has quite a desultory temperament… He's rather tense… At one glance, Justice Audrey had "read" plenty of information from the rather blurry figure.

She then noticed something different.

The man was quickly surveying his surroundings.

Such an action wasn't a problem in itself. Anyone who came to this strange and secret location would definitely subconsciously size up the other members and attempt to grasp their traits and general situation so as to calm down. But the problem was that the man was moving his gaze too quickly!

His gaze had swept past The Moon, The Hanged Man, and the other members without pausing.

To Audrey, this was a very clear phenomenon. It didn't mean that the man was observing his surroundings and studying the members, but that he was finding someone!

He was looking for someone he had in mind!

Audrey instantly felt a little excited, as she believed that this newcomer knew one of the members present!

Who could it be? She observed for another second and realized that the man sitting diagonally opposite her had fixed his gaze on The World Gehrman Sparrow.

Audrey was thrilled as though she had discovered a secret. She thought in enlightenment, The newcomer is a friend of Mr. World, or it's at least the case that they know each other in the real world. He also knows that he's a Tarot Club member…

Or it could also be said that Mr. World had inducted him into the gathering… No, that's not very possible. If that were the case, the newcomer would be much more certain. He wouldn't be eagerly searching for someone he knows. He definitely would’ve placed his gaze on the other members for a longer period of time…

Furthermore, such an action also proves that he’s not a Blessed of Mr. Fool.

What is his relationship with Mr. World?

Audrey held onto her thoughts of continuing to observe as she stood up and turned to face the seat

of honor.

During this process, she took the opportunity to sweep her gaze at the new member sitting beside Ma’am Hermit.

She’s exchanging looks with Miss Magician… Her height… Xio has finally passed the test and joined the gathering? Upon identifying her, Audrey did a curtsy towards the figure shrouded in gray fog.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~”

Just as she issued the brisk greeting, she realized something:

Mr. Fool is a little different from before.

This great existence seemed to be more one with the entire gray fog, palace, and space. “His” aura was lofty and mighty, like the sea or sky.

This feeling isn’t something that can be described with words… Mr. Fool has taken one more step to “His” awakening, allowing him to retrieve more of “His” authority over “His” divine kingdom? Audrey’s eyes darted around, feeling curious and delighted, as well as a little sense of pride.

At this moment, The Hanged Man Alger and The Hermit Cattleya had noticed the two new members. They noticed that the lady was a little short and was secretly exchanging signals with Miss Magician. She was both unfamiliar but also familiar with the Tarot Gathering. At the very least, she was unlike the man in the white shirt and black vest. He had frantically stood up only after everyone began bowing.

In addition, they sensed that the new male member took special notice of The World Gehrman Sparrow, causing them to have many guesses.

These thoughts resonated in their minds, but they didn't express them. The Hanged Man and The Hermit completed the usual first steps of the gathering with Miss Justice.

As for The Sun Derrick, he was just happy because the Tarot Club had new members again! The Moon Emlyn had mixed feelings. On the one hand, he felt a sense of superiority being more senior compared to the newcomers, but on the other hand, he had a feeling that there were just too many messiahs for the apocalypse.

After some searching, The Star Leonard determined that the one sitting at the bottom end of the long bronze table was Klein Moretti. This was because his physical characteristics were similar to that of Gehrman Sparrow's description.

He's hiding his true identity… He doesn't relax even in such a secretive gathering, using two levels of disguises. I have to take note… Just as this thought flashed across his mind, Leonard saw the girl sitting to the left of Mr. Fool stand up. Then, she led everyone into bowing.

He was taken aback, failing to react in time. He stood out when amongst all the standing members.

After a second, Leonard snapped back to his senses and hurriedly stood up to deliver the greeting.

Opposite him, Xio glanced at him, equating him to Fors to a certain extent.

Fors shared the same thought; however, she had equated the man with Xio to a certain extent. This was because Xio had appeared rather unreliable when they first met.

"This is The Star, and this is Judgment. Take your seats and introduce yourself." The Fool Klein raised his right hand and casually pointed.

The name "The Star" keeps making me think that it's the code name for a lady… As Leonard thought in exasperation, he focused and began labeling the members in the order of their introduction.

Miss Justice. Seems like a young lady, but she might've donned two levels of disguise like Klein… She's rather optimistic and cheerful. Although I can't tell the details of her attire, it appears to be very classy…

Mr. Hanged Man. Burly, restrained. He's likely to be a straightforward but rash person…

Miss Magician. The way she looks at me is weird. From time to time, she will glance at Klein. I've no idea what's on her mind. She seems rather ordinary overall with nothing standing out…

Mr. Sun. He's very tall, but the way he speaks sounds like he's going through puberty. Although he's silent, he does seem rather friendly…

Miss Hermit-uh, Ma'am Hermit. She exudes a mature and staid demeanor. She's likely a very experienced Beyonder…

Mr. Moon. Rather young and looks a little reserved. Makes me feel like I've seen him somewhere before, but I can't recall it. I'll continue observing…

Miss Judgment. Very short with very obvious traits. However, I can't be sure if she has donned two levels of disguises…

The World. Very, very gloomy. This is likely his disguise… Well, it might also be his true nature… He wasn't a demigod before, meaning that this gathering has no lack of Mid-Sequence Beyonders. I wonder if I'm the weakest one…

As Leonard was observing the other members, Judgment Xio Derecha was also using her powers as a Sheriff to extract the traits of the different members and keeping them in mind.

A noble lady… Sailor or a crewmember… Rather young and introverted, but it's not serious… Rather strong. The leader of at least a mid-sized team… Arrogant, of pretty good family background… Desultory, not staid… Gloomy, terrifying…

Amidst their thoughts, the other members finished their self-introduction. The Hermit Cattleya looked towards the end of the long bronze table and said with a bow, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I didn't receive any new Roselle diary pages this time."

Didn't receive… Does this mean that Queen Mystic didn't reply? I wonder what Bernadette is busy with… The Fool Klein nodded and calmly replied, "Begin the transactions then."

As he said that, Audrey noticed the reactions of The Hermit and The Hanged Man. She realized that they had yet to notice Mr. Fool turning loftier and sublime.

Was I the only one who noticed it? Audrey darted her eyes slightly in thought, feeling somewhat poignant and a little happy.

Of course, she also knew that Ma'am Hermit and Mr. Hanged Man didn't dare to look at Mr. Fool too much, especially the former. Most of the time, she only dared to look at the table edge in front of Mr. Fool.

Table edge… Eh, there's an additional Card of Blasphemy! Audrey's gaze froze before she retracted it in pleasant surprise.

With her intuition as a Spectator, she was quite certain that the obtaining of the new Card of Blasphemy was likely to be the same matter as The World Gehrman Sparrow's mental problems but with different outcomes.

She hesitated for a moment and observed the area.

“I have nothing I need.”

Cattleya, Derrick, Emlyn, and Fors had already made preparations and were about to advance; therefore, they didn’t have any requests. Likewise for Alger who was still digesting his potion.

Instead, it was Leonard who had the desire to purchase a mystical item. However, with no one showing him an example, he was momentarily unsure how to begin. All he could do was divert some attention to considering Mr. Fool’s need for Roselle diaries.

After selling Tinder, he wasn’t lacking in money. Furthermore, having had the experience using Creeping Hunger, he realized that having a powerful mystical item was rather useful.

At this point, Fors looked at the silent Xio before looking opposite her.

“Mr. Hanged Man, I have a material that I wish to be made into a mystical item by that Artisan.”

She was referring to the ancient wraith powder that Xio had.

Alger shook his head.

“That Artisan has been controlled by some members of the Rose School of Thought who believe in the Primordial Moon. That’s all I know. The subsequent matters have been left to Ma’am Hermit to handle.”

Rose School of Thought… Primordial Moon believers… Left to Ma’am Hermit to handle… Leonard and Xio looked around and suddenly realized that the gathering they were participating in wasn’t as loose as they imagined.

They were secretly traversing through the shadows of the world!

Chapter 959 - Even Newcomers Are Different Amongst Themselves

◆

Cattleya turned her body slightly to the side and looked at The Magician.

“It’s a little complicated. I suggest that you wait for another one to two weeks. I’m unable to promise anything. All I can say is that there should be someone to help you create the mystical item when the time comes.”

Should be someone… It also means that it might not be the original Artisan… Does this mean that she’s planning on nurturing an Artisan for herself? Or could it be that she’s thinking of a way to turn the original Artisan into a Sealed Artifact, using a machine to create machines? Hmm, Ma’am Hermit is indeed an experienced Beyonder… Leonard listened quietly while doing some analysis. It was the first time he was this serious during a meeting.

“No problem.” Fors had the utmost confidence in Ma’am Hermit. After all, she had already obtained the Mythical Creature’s blood and was likely to undergo a qualitative change in time.

At this moment, she heard The World say with a hoarse voice, “If this matter requires my help, you can get my help.”

To Klein, the Mother Tree of Desire’s abnormal interest in the gray fog, as well as Emperor Roselle’s warning to “be careful of the moon,” which made him, who was determined to figure out the secret of transmigration and the door of light, take note of matters involving the Rose School of Thought and the Primordial Moon believers more than ever before. Furthermore, the Artisan was now involved in both matters.

Cattleya never expected The World to offer his help. After some silence, she nodded slightly.

“Alright. If I’m unable to handle it, I’ll seek your help through Mr. Fool.”

She had deliberately said “through Mr. Fool” to inform the two newcomers that the Tarot Club had a magical way of contacting one another. There was no need for them to be stumped or be in a dilemma in such aspects. It was something they would understand in due time.

As the pirate admiral with the highest bounty across the Five Seas, and as a pirate crew leader of hundreds of subordinates, she wasn’t doing this solely out of goodwill, nor was she worried that the two newcomers would affect the progress of the gathering because of excessive questions. Instead, it was a way to assert dominance in front of newcomers.

Of course, unless time was of the essence, leaving Cattleya no time to set up a ritual, she would in fact rather summon Gehrman Sparrow’s messenger than trouble Mr. Fool.

Seek help through Mr. Fool… Xio vaguely understood something and held back her urge to look at Fors.

Seek help through Mr. Fool? Leonard’s thoughts raced quickly as he made a guess.

Seeing that someone had begun, he relaxed a little and deliberated for a few seconds. Then, he said, “I need a mystical item.”

“What kind?” Audrey answered at the perfect time to prevent an awkward atmosphere from descending upon the area.

Leonard verbally showed his indecision and subconsciously replied, “I don’t know…”

He only had such a plan, but he hadn't thought carefully into the details. He only realized that there was this possibility after being pulled into the gathering

Doesn't know… Is he an idiot… The Fool Klein, who knew Leonard's desultoriness and casualness, resisted the urge to laugh and criticized him inwardly.

Seeing everyone's gaze fall on him with mixed expressions, Leonard immediately felt embarrassed as he hurriedly added, "I mean there are no limits on the type. As long as it's geared towards offense, has rather stealth-oriented attributes, and lesser negative side effects, it would be fine by me."

This was to boost his Nightmare's control to its full extent. At times, he could control a target by himself while Pallez Zoroast controlled the mystical item, giving the dazed opponent a lethal strike. Once he became a Spirit Warlock, with a natural spirit or wraith or shadow sealed in his teeth to aid him, he could do two or even three things at a time.

After Mr. Star finished his explanation, Alger didn't harp over the details. He asked, "Roughly what level is needed?"

"Somewhere around a Grade 2 Sealed Artifact but slightly stronger. Uh, corresponding to Sequence 5 or 6." Leonard had habitually described the item using the parlance of an official Beyonder before switching to more common terminology.

At that instant, a thought flashed across the minds of Audrey, Cattleya, Alger, and Xio: Mr. Star is an official Beyonder, or at least he once was!

From their point of view, although Beyonders that didn't belong to any official organization would at times use the concept of grades when describing Sealed Artifacts, they wouldn't consider using such a vague description when precision was needed in expressing their thoughts and requests. One would often choose a method of explanation that was more direct and easier to understand.

Therefore, the conclusion easily appeared.

This way, things turned way more interesting.

Uh, Mr. World is actually very familiar with an official Beyonder… How did they get to know each other? Why would he rope in an official Beyonder into the Tarot Club? Audrey didn't say a word as she maintained her state as a Spectator while enjoying herself.

At this moment, Alger tersely acknowledged.

"A mystical item at Sequence 5 costs at least 9,000 pounds. For one that matches your request, it can typically exceed 12,000 pounds."

Very frank… Leonard nodded.

"I understand."

After hearing his reply, Klein nearly facepalmed as he sighed inwardly.

A-aren't you showing your hidden card to Mr. Hanged Man by doing so?

I dare bet that if he has something suitable, the price will definitely be above 12,000 pounds!

Aside from the 7,000 pounds from Tinder, Leonard still actually has other savings… With the guidance of a grandpa from the Marauder pathway, he has likely amassed quite a bit. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to purchase Tinder…

I get it. He's not afraid of being fleeced, because he still can purchase from the Hermits of Fate. He can compare the traits and prices from both sides… But the problem is that gathering happens once every half a year. It's totally not at the Tarot Gathering's pace…

At this moment in time, Klein couldn't help but consider selling items to the dear poet that had repeated effects or were of little use after becoming a demigod.

He then heard Mr. Hanged Man reply in a deep and calm manner, “Alright. I’ll keep an eye out for you.”

“Okay.” Cattleya and the other members expressed their stance as well.

Following that, there weren’t any transactions, allowing the gathering to automatically enter the free exchange segment.

Without waiting for Mr. Hanged Man to inquire, Derrick raised his hand and said, “I’m already back in the City of Silver. The chief has informed me that we will begin another round of preliminary explorations of the Giant King’s Court shortly.

“Does he mean that I should make use of this time to advance to become a Priest of Light?”

Giant King’s Court? Explorations of the Giant King’s Court? Leonard cast his gaze to the pubescent youth one seat away from him in surprise.

From what he knew, the Giant King’s Court had already been destroyed long ago in the Second Epoch. Pallez Zoroast, as an angel, had already said that it had vanished from the rivers of time.

To his surprise, The Sun of the Tarot Club was about to explore the area, but none of the members were astonished!

Yes, not one of them. Leonard subconsciously looked at Miss Judgment who was also a newcomer, but he realized that she was apparently aware of this and had remained rather calm.

This… Miss Magician has privately kept Miss Judgment up to speed. Only Leonard doesn’t know anything… The Fool Klein leaned into his seat and seriously analyzed himself.

After he pulled Leonard above the gray fog and assigned him The Star card, he had ignored him. He didn't even write to him or introduce the Tarot Club's general situation to him!

Compared to women, men truly aren't meticulous with the details… Klein was just about to control The World Gehrman to explain to The Star Leonard when he saw The Moon Emlyn glance at the poet beside him and say with a rather faint smile, "The Giant King's Court is in the Forsaken Land of the Gods."

After saying that, he ignored Leonard's reaction, and he said to The Sun, "Have you obtained the ingredients to Priest of Light?"

He knew that someone had only received the formula just one to two weeks ago.

"Yes, I've gotten it from Mr. World," Derrick answered honestly, but he didn't go into the details of the transaction.

At this moment, Leonard's mind was filled with the words "Forsaken Land of the Gods" and "Giant King's Court." He had a feeling like he had walked out of a fantasy or myth.

He instinctively reassessed his knowledge of the Tarot Club, realizing the weight of the simple words of how "the members come from different places."

Even the Churches of the seven deities are unable to find the Forsaken Land of the Gods, but the Tarot Club can do so. It has even roped in a member from there… Right, Azik Eggers, who I believe wields the Death card, doesn't appear at the gathering… Apart from the members here, there are others that come directly under Mr. Fool? It's as I first imagined. It's a secret organization that might develop into an orthodox Church. It's not much weaker than the Aurora Order or Rose School of Thought, and it might even be stronger in certain aspects… This is really a Divine Council… Amidst Leonard's thoughts, Alger agreed with Derrick's guess.

“That’s what it is.

“Exploring the Giant King’s Court is a very dangerous matter. He wishes that you quickly grow stronger to resist that Elder Shepherd’s level.”

Derrick nodded in vague acknowledgment.

“I get it. Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man.”

He then shared information about what he saw at Nois City, leaving Leonard and Xio dumbfounded. They had no idea how such a strange state and atmosphere was generated.

However, The Fool Klein noticed something familiar. He felt that Nois City and the foggy town resembled each other to a certain degree.

The walking crowd was suspected to be lifeless marionettes!

Could it be that there’s a higher Sequence item of the Seer pathway or some monster there? Klein didn’t say a word as he silently took note of Nois City.

At this moment, Xio glanced at The World and said, showcasing some goodwill, “MI9 has recently been investigating Gehrman Sparrow’s origins.”

Chapter 960 - The Fool's Sigh

◆

Upon hearing the name “Gehrman Sparrow,” all the members on both sides of the long bronze table looked at The World. No one spoke or interjected.

They more or less knew that the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, had once again done something huge such as killing Admiral Hell Ludwell. However, Audrey didn’t believe that this was the main reason why he would suffer mental problems.

And the way they acted made Leonard instantly realize a fact: Everyone in the Tarot Club knew that The World was Gehrman Sparrow!

Klein’s disguise is really well done… However, why does he let the other members know of his identity as Gehrman Sparrow? Isn’t it common sense to hide one’s background at such gatherings? Amidst his puzzlement, Leonard heard the blurry-figured The World reply with a hoarse voice, “What clues has MI9 obtained?”

Xio showed no shame in betraying MI9 as she replied frankly, “They have confirmed that the identity”Gehrman Sparrow’ is fabricated, and that it was sourced from Backlund.”

Indeed, he was previously known as Sherlock Moriarty. He became Gehrman Sparrow after leaving Backlund. However, Sherlock Moriarty isn’t his real identity either… Leonard subconsciously surveyed the area and realized that, although the other members weren’t surprised, they didn’t seem to show any signs of realizing it. Hence, he believed that their knowledge of Klein was only at the uppermost surface.

Under Klein's control, The World Gehrman Sparrow chuckled and answered Miss Judgment's information, "There's no need to bother about such matters."

To him, to figure out who the fake identity of Gehrman Sparrow was given to, one had to first capture Queen Mystic Bernadette, or one had to obtain news of Sharron from her. Clearly, the level of difficulty made it nearly impossible!

In comparison, if they did the same as Leonard, starting off from the events in which Detective Sherlock Moriarty was involved in, there was a chance of them figuring out more. However, since MI9 had chosen the wrong direction, Klein was happy to see them take the futile route.

Mr. World is unperturbed and very confident… Xio retracted her gaze and didn't continue.

At this moment, Audrey deliberated and asked, "Mr. World, will you be returning to Backlund in the future? Will you still use the identity of Dwayne Dantès?"

As a qualified Psychiatrist, she obviously wasn't going to inform the mental problems of The World to the other members of the Tarot Club. She only wanted to confirm if he would still return to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. That way, she could be in closer contact to him in the real world, allowing for a better checkup.

She didn't conceal the matter about Dwayne Dantès, since the original members already knew of it. As for Mr. Star, he was clearly familiar with Mr. World. As for Xio, she had Fors to inform her ahead of time.

Ah… Upon hearing Miss Justice's words, Leonard nearly couldn't believe his ears as he felt a little confused.

Klein Moretti is equivalent to Dwayne Dantès?

I've once asked Dwayne Dantès to his face about Klein Moretti…

No, it’s impossible. Dwayne Dantès is an undying creature who has lived since the Fourth Epoch! The way he acted is sufficient proof!

Old Man said the same too!

At that moment, Leonard was unable to control his tumultuous emotions. He instinctively rejected the fact that Miss Justice had conveyed.

If what appeared here was his Astral Projection, he felt that his expressions would be rather obviousoscillating between red and white.

Opposite Leonard, Xio looked up as well, looking at Mr. World with puzzlement.

He’s Dwayne Dantès? Dwayne Dantès is Gehrman Sparrow?

I even accepted his butler’s mission… I even protected him before… I even pitied him…

He can squash me to death with one hand…

Xio then turn her head and glared at Fors.

I don’t dare to say too much about Mr. World. I could only briefly mention a little… Fors turned her eyes away in guilt as she mumbled silently. Alger and Cattleya figured out something from the duo’s reactions:

Miss Magician and Miss Judgment knew each other in the real world.

Miss Judgment had once interacted with Dwayne Dantès before, but she didn’t know that he was Gehrman Sparrow.

As a senior Spectator, Audrey noticed the abnormalities of The Star and Judgment without a doubt. Immediately, she understood that she had made too many assumptions.

Audrey, you need to reflect on this! She said to herself in embarrassment and attempted to make up for it before Mr. World spoke.

“Dwayne Dantès is a public identity. At times, it will be Mr. World, and at other times, it will be the other Blessed of Mr. Fool.”

So that’s how it is… Makes sense! Leonard’s mind stirred as he instantly accepted Miss Justice’s explanation and figured out many different matters.

The Dwayne Dantès that appeared during the period before the breaching of Saint Samuel Cathedral’s Chanis Gate was likely Klein. The periods before and after that was the other Blessed of Mr. Fool… That Death Consul? Indeed, he’s an undying creature who lived since the Fourth Epoch. Old Man’s old friend…

Yes, it might be other Blessed I’m not aware of, but their levels definitely aren’t too low… Uh, other Blessed. Does that mean Klein is also considered Mr. Fool’s Blessed?

It’s no wonder Mr. Fool said that he comes here and participates in the gathering, but the experiences are different from mine… It’s because he’s a Blessed and enjoys the benediction of Mr. Fool, so he also has the ancient aura. It’s why Old Man doesn’t realize that Dwayne Dantès is played by different people?

This explains my previous question. As a Blessed, Gehrman Sparrow doesn’t need to keep his identity a secret…

But to Judgment Xio, Dwayne Dantès being a public identity, or him being Gehrman Sparrow was not her concern. The reason why she overreacted was because, after realizing the truth, she felt embarrassed at all her various thoughts back then.

Seeing the atmosphere return to normal, Klein heaved a sigh of relief inwardly and controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow to answer Miss Justice’s question:

“Yes.

“When the time comes, there might be certain matters that need all of your help.”

When he finished the second half of his sentence, The World swept his gaze across Justice, The Magician, Judgment, The Star, and The Moon.

H-he has plans for something in Backlund? Audrey instantly understood what Mr. World was getting at. She momentarily felt excited but also a little worried.

She was excited because she was about to participate in a secret operation that all the participants didn’t seem to have any ties with, to the point of not even “knowing” each other. This was something she had always looked forward to. Her worries stemmed from whether the operation would have any threat to Backlund’s safety, or if it would bring harm to the innocent.

As for danger to herself, she wasn’t too worried. She believed that Mr. World would arrange for the mission to be held in the outskirts of the city, provide key information, or cause serious misdirection to the target, without needing any direct participation or fighting.

Emlyn was the second person to read between the lines. And this was a result of his innate aversion towards troublesome matters.

Will it be troublesome… he thought with a frown without saying a word. While the other members came to a realization, Alger took a deep look at The World Gehrman Sparrow and said, “I recently received news that the traitor of the Church of Evernight, Archbishop Ince Zangwill, was killed in West Balam. Before that, he had already become a demigod. As for the Sealed Artifact, 0-08, which he had stolen, it’s unknown whose hands it’s in. The only thing that can be certain is that the battlefield was cleared by the Church of Evernight.”

The Hanged Man is very updated on the news… It’s only been a few days… The Church should've kept this strictly confidential… However, there might have been other factions arriving at the square that day… Leonard was taken aback for a moment, but he didn't provide more information.

This was the first time Audrey and company were learning about the news. They could only determine that the matter was rather important from the words "archbishop," "0-08," and "demigod." But since it had nothing to do with them and there wasn't any stimulus, they weren't too intrigued. As for Cattleya, as she had a deep impression and understanding of Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, she planned on seeking out information on this via Queen Mystic and the Moses Ascetic Order after she returned to the real world.

Amidst a brief silence, The Fool Klein suddenly extended his hand and rapped the table's surface.

He felt that he needed to warn all the members.

In the coming years, the waves of the times would come flooding in!

Upon hearing that, all the members straightened their backs or made them even straighter before turning to the seat of honor at the long bronze table. Even the newly joined Leonard and Xio were no exception. It was almost instinctive.

Then, they heard the profound and lofty figure chuckle amidst the gray fog.

"The times have changed as a result."

The times have changed because of this? Ince Zangwill's matter is key to something? Although it involves a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact… Alger, who had shared the news, never expected Mr. Fool to place so much emphasis on it. He was momentarily unsure what to make out of it.

Leonard, who had participated in the matter regarding Ince Zangwill, felt the same. He knew how important and terrifying the Grade 0

Sealed Artifact was, but he never expected that what happened that day would change the times.

While Audrey and company wore blank looks, they focused fully. Even Derrick couldn’t help but take on an attentive posture.

The Fool Klein surveyed the area and said with a laugh and sigh, “Adam is one step closer to being divine.”

Chapter 961 - Warning By Informing

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“Adam is one step closer to being divine.”

Such a simple sentence instantly sent tumultuous waves through every member of the Tarot Club.

Other than Leonard, the other members, including Xio, who had been briefed of the important points by The Magician, immediately recalled the information regarding Adam.

Ancient sun god, City of Silver’s Creator’s son, brother of Blasphemer Amon. Suspected to be one of the eight Kings of Angels!

And this mythical figure, who had existed before the Cataclysm, had become active in the real world once again. And “He” was one step closer to being divine!

This… To make Mr. Fool sigh, it means that Adam is probably just one step short of reaching the divine throne, Sequence 0. There’s a chance that “He” might make that step at any moment. Alger subconsciously came to a conclusion as he hurriedly clasped his hands and couldn’t help but have thoughts run through his mind.

A Sequence 0 true god is about to be born!

There are still births of true gods in the Fifth Epoch?

This will be the first true god this Epoch?

With deities no longer able to descend upon the real world, it’s unbelievable that a Sequence 0 would still appear!

Alger always found himself ambitious, with him now setting his sights on Sequence 2, to become an angel. But after hearing about Adam, he still found it unacceptable.

One had to know that the last one to become a Sequence 0 true god was the former God of Craftsmanship, the present God of Steam and Machinery. And that happened in the late Fourth Epoch.

Since the Fifth Epoch, over thirteen hundred years, there hadn't been any new existence reaching the divine throne!

It's no wonder Mr. Fool said that the times will change as a result… Amidst Cattleya's scattered thoughts, she suddenly came to a realization as though she could see the waves that marked the end of an Epoch flooding over.

Having already gathered the ingredients and being in the process of making preparations for the Sequence 4 ritual, she believed she had the chance of attaining divinity in the near future to change her existence. She was still reeling in joy, anticipation, and unease. But at this moment, she suddenly felt a baffling sense of horror. All she wanted was to communicate with Queen Mystic face to face to confirm the future.

Fors, Xio, and the other members had a myriad of reactions. On the one hand, they were shocked that Adam was attempting to achieve divinity, never expecting such a matter to happen in the Fifth Epoch. On the other hand, they were worried for their present life. After all, be it Emlyn from the Sanguine, or Audrey who lived amongst the Loen Kingdom's upper-class, all of them lived in the Fifth Epoch, living in a situation which had more than a thousand years of history setting the foundation. They didn't dare have any sacrilegious thoughts towards true gods. Even when facing evil gods like the True Creator, they still felt a deep sense of fear and awe, acknowledging "Their" level and loftiness. Therefore, they couldn't believe that a god would soon appear.

They couldn’t imagine what would happen next.

In their eyes, The Fool was a reawakened ancient god, an existence who originally sat at the throne of Sequence 0.

One step closer to being divine… Becoming a god… Derrick was mostly excited, as though he could see hope and have a target to strive for.

To him, only a Sequence 0 could save the City of Silver!

Adam? Becoming a god… Although Leonard didn’t know who Adam was, just the simple words of being “one step closer to being divine” was easy to understand.

He connected it to that ordinary priest who had appeared after the battle ended and had picked up 0-08 in front of Klein.

That’s Adam? Or a subordinate of Adam? No, 0-08 is a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. Only Adam, who’s very close to the divine throne, can do it personally with great certainty… It’s no wonder the battle with Ince Zangwill was easier than I expected. I thought the best outcome would be me and Klein dragging Ince Zangwill into hell together… Who’s Adam? Why haven’t I heard of “Him”… Perhaps a result of being parasitized by an angel, allowing him to know some of the secrets and developments of the Fourth Epoch, Leonard had a deeper understanding of Adam’s path to being divine. The impact he felt wasn’t too great, with most of his feelings puzzlement and curiosity over Adam’s true identity.

And at this moment, The Fool didn’t speak again or give further explanations. It was as though he was simply warning the members to make preparations for the change of the times.

Amidst the confusion and wandering thoughts, The World Gehrman Sparrow glanced at The Star Leonard and simply said, “Adam is the son of the ancient sun god, Blasphemer Amon’s brother.”

Leonard immediately jumped in fright and failed to control his expression.

He had a deep impression of Amon, and he had a deep trauma for Amon because of Old Man's descriptions. And Adam was Amon's brother, so it was very possible that the level of horror was likely the same between the two brothers!

The World ignored The Star's reaction and continued, "It can be confirmed now that Adam is one of the eight Kings of Angels, titled 'Angel of Imagination.' 'He' is ranked on par with Angel of Time Amon.

"The reason for 'Him' targeting Ince Zangwill is to obtain 0-08 to make up any shortfalls for 'His' path to being divine. And 'His' plan succeeded."

Angel of Imagination… Adam is a King of Angels from the Spectator pathway? Audrey instantly connected this to the Dragon King Ankewelt's title, Dragon of Imagination!

And she had long known that mind dragons represented the Spectator pathway.

As for Leonard, another comprehension obstacle appeared before him. He had been stumped by the concept of a King of Angels, but he was too embarrassed to ask. He had planned on seeking Old Man's help when "He" awakened.

Alger pondered over Gehrman Sparrow's words as his expression turned slightly odd. He probed, "You seem to have witnessed the matter?"

Just as he said that, all of them heard a familiar, hoarse laughter.

After Gehrman Sparrow finished laughing, he looked at The Star and said as though it was nothing, "The murder of Ince Zangwill was committed by me and my partner."

"…" Cattleya's mind instantly went blank.

She could accept that Gehrman Sparrow could easily finish off Admiral Hell, but she couldn't imagine that he would one day kill a real Sequence 4 demigod!

Cattleya quickly calmed down because, with a King of Angels involved in the battle, it was possible that a Sequence 5 could kill off a heavily injured demigod due to various coincidences. Furthermore, he had a partner.

Audrey "read" confidence from The World's tone. She couldn't help but ask out of curiosity, "Mr. World, have you already become a demigod?"

The World didn't give a direct answer as he chuckled.

"In the future, all of you can entrust matters involving demigods to me."

Every member present figured out the meaning in between the lines.

He had become a genuine Sequence 4 demigod. Furthermore, he was the kind who had the ability to kill peers at his level!

At that instant, Cattleya became abnormally calm. She tried hard to recall everything that she had seen and heard regarding Gehrman Sparrow. She was very certain that he was only a Sequence 6 before the visit to the ruins of the battlefield of gods. He relied on the glove to match a Sequence 5.

As for Gehrman Sparrow's search for mermaids without hunting any of them, it implied that it was a requirement of a ritual. This meant that he had indeed advanced to Sequence 5 back then. His various performances after that proved this point.

Today, it had only been about three months since Gehrman Sparrow stepped into the ruins of the battlefield of the gods, but he had already advanced to Sequence 4, becoming a demigod existence. This overturned Cattleya's understanding of the world.

She wasn't too old, with her age being less than thirty. But to reach Sequence 5 and gain the title of Admiral of Stars, it took her about seven to eight years. It was only in the past one or two years did she have the confidence to attempt to breach the gate to become a demigod. With her starting to make preparations, she believed she was already far ahead of the pack.

Mr. World is impressive! He became a demigod so quickly! Derrick sincerely felt joy. His idolization for Mr. World grew more intense as he hoped that he could be like him, becoming a demigod at the fastest speed possible.

Audrey was both alarmed and delighted. Following that, she gained an understanding towards the abnormality in Gehrman Sparrow's mental state.

From the looks of it, his low spirits, gloomy, and depressed feelings happened after he became a demigod. These are the negative effects accumulated from potions. It's just like how I nearly lost control when I became a Psychiatrist…

Also, after becoming a Sequence 4 and gaining godhood, he could naturally penetrate more of reality. He then realized that he had been sleeping for a very long time. His family had passed away, making him lose his goals…

How pitiful. With his warm nature, he must've had deep feelings for his family and friends…

However, I'm so envious. Does being Mr. Fool's Blessed make one advance so quickly… I also wish to become a demigod early. Mr. Fool's mention that "the times have changed as a result" leaves me fretting…

While Emlyn and the other members were still in shock, Alger, who also shared the same feelings and felt deep envy and jealousy towards Gehrman Sparrow, had other thoughts.

As Mr. Fool's Blessed, Gehrman Sparrow's embroilment with this King of Angels and 0-08 matter clearly isn't an accident…

On the contrary, it might be more reasonable that it's a mutual plan between Angel of Imagination Adam and Mr. Fool. That will explain it!

Two mythical figures that existed before the Cataclysm. One is awakening, and the other is making an advancement, the two secretly coming together!

Amidst his thoughts, Alger had another idea:

Since Adam had obtained 0-08 and opened the door to the divine throne, what about Mr. Fool? What benefit did "He" get in this matter?

Subconsciously, Alger turned his body and slightly bowed his head to look at the seat of honor.

He didn't dare look directly, and could only look through the corner of his eye.

Chapter 962 - Being Known

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Almost instantly, Alger discovered that Mr. Fool was somewhat different than before.

In the past, although Mr. Fool was distant and profound, making “Him” appear unfathomable, as though “He” was looking down upon everything from above, that was all. It wasn’t like “He” was now. Even though “He” wasn’t doing anything, he seemed to have fused with the entire space, a clear expression of “Him” being the ruler at the pinnacle level.

Sweeping his gaze, Alger saw the third Card of Blasphemy as he felt more certain of his guess.

Indeed, Mr. Fool and the Angel of Imagination Adam had cooperated to machinate Ince Zangwill’s demise. One of “Them” obtained 0-08, making “Him” take one step closer to being a god, while the other obtained the various benefits in a Card of Blasphemy and regained a substantial amount of “His” strength!

The times will change as a result! At that instant, Alger had a deeper understanding of what Mr. Fool had just said.

The other members undoubtedly noticed him turning his head, and they realized that he was looking at Mr. Fool.

After a brief moment of surprise, they made a certain realization at different speeds.

Mr. Fool was aware of Angel of Imagination Adam's plot against Ince Zangwill from the very beginning and had sent "His" Blessed to cooperate. "He" had even provided a certain level of help!

If that weren't the case, how could a recently advanced demigod participate in a matter that involved a King of Angels and Grade 0 Sealed Artifact?

If this weren't the case, The World wouldn't have been able to understand the situation that well, even if he had been embroiled due to all kinds of coincidences.

The obtaining of the Card of Blasphemy, Mr. World's advancement, Ince Zangwill's death, the meeting of Angel of Imagination Adam's goal, these all happened in one week… This means that the relationship between them is tightly intertwined… My previous intuition was right. The obtaining of a new Card of Blasphemy and the appearance of an abnormality in Mr. World's mental state were the different outcomes of the same matter… Audrey nodded very slightly as she confirmed her theory.

Leonard was increasingly convinced that Ince Zangwill's matter was more complicated than he had imagined. Apart from King of Angels Adam, there were likely other important figures of similar levels appearing back then. Otherwise, Amon's brother, the son of the ancient sun god, had no need to seek out Mr. Fool's help. After all, no matter how powerful or terrifying 0-08 was, it was incapable of comparing with the Blasphemer as described by Old Man, as Adam and Amon were likely on par with each other.

The evil spirit that Klein pulled into the Underworld probably isn't simple. It's definitely not something that "being from the Hunter pathway" would be enough to describe it with… Hmm, Klein's participation in the matter regarding Ince Zangwill isn't solely for revenge, but is also due to Mr. Fool's orders… As Leonard sighed, he didn't generate any negative feelings. Instead, he was secretly relieved.

From his point of view, this was a very ordinary situation. Mr. Fool's agreement in convening such a gathering to establish a corresponding organization while hosting it as a deity was definitely not because "He" solely wished to make the area more lively or being done out of goodwill. "He" definitely had "His" goals and needs that "He" wished Blessed like Klein or members like him could complete.

Therefore, seeking revenge on Ince Zangwill and accepting Mr. Fool's mission wasn't in conflict. The latter didn't reduce the former's meaning and importance.

As for why he was relieved, it was because Leonard believed that Mr. Fool's clear expression of "His" goals had made it better than having everything chaotic and unknown. He didn't need to guess or wait with trepidation.

He originally had intense wariness for Pallez Zoroast precisely because he wasn't sure of "His" true motives.

At this moment, The Fool Klein didn't say a word. He didn't confirm or deny the members' guesses and theories. Controlling The World, he made him continue, "Adam might've established a very secretive organization, and it has been secretly steering the development of the times.

"Many important figures you might never have expected are members of this organization. They would machinate one matter after another.

"Also, after leaving this place, do not say or write down Adam's name, including 'His' title. Try not to think about such matters, because 'He' has the trait of 'any mention of it will be known.' The more you know about 'Him,' the more 'He' might know about you. This is somewhat similar to 0-08."

After hearing Mr. World's description, Audrey instantly recalled learning of the mysterious organization from Mr. Fool: the Twilight Hermit Order!

This made her quickly come up with a corresponding theory:

The King of Angels Adam was the leader of the Twilight Hermit Order!

The Angel of Imagination was a member of the Spectator pathway. Likewise for 0-08. Therefore, “any mention of it will be known” was a Beyonder power of this pathway at higher Sequences. Likewise for “the more you know of it, the more it knows of you”!

Impressive… But won’t this be rather noisy… Audrey momentarily looked forward to it with envy while also feeling worried and puzzled.

“Any mention of it will be known”… So the organization behind the assassination of Duke Negan, the one backer behind Qilangos was established by King of Angels Adam… Alger was first somewhat enlightened before his expression fell.

He began to suspect that the primitive island that he had previously explored was related to this secret organization. This was because Qilangos had once ventured deep into it and discovered several items. Furthermore, the final disappearance of the island had resembled the powers of the Dragon of Imagination as described by The Sun.

Putting the two together, Alger couldn’t help but come up with such a theory as he made a deeper realization that Mr. Fool’s cooperation with the Angel of Imagination had started when he and Gehrman Sparrow stepped into that primitive island!

He was more convinced that it was the truth because after the existence in that island’s ruin “awakened,” the only thing that happened was a sigh. He and Gehrman Sparrow weren’t stopped from leaving.

So that’s how it is… The way important figures set up their ploys are truly well-concealed. I didn’t notice it at all back then… The games between gods are truly complicated. Perhaps only Sequence 1 Beyonders or even King of Angels are qualified to participate… Alger sighed as he felt a baffling sense of desire.

Fors had already forgotten the mysterious organization which Mr. Fool had mentioned previously. Only when she heard “any mention of it will be known” did she recall that it was related to Duke Negan’s assassination.

However, she wasn’t concerned about this problem but something else.

Back when she was informing Xio about the general situation of the Tarot Club and the general knowledge, she had mentioned Adam’s name!

Adam has the trait of “any mention will be known”? This… Xio and I are known by “Him”? Fors instantly felt horrified as she couldn’t help but turn her head and cast her gaze to Xio.

She had learned that Adam was the son of the Creator from Ma’am Hermit. Furthermore, she had never emphasized to not mention the King of Angels’s name in the outside world!

“I-I’ve mentioned Adam in the real world,” Fors said with a clear stammer. Xio’s nerves were taut as though a venomous snake had crawled into her clothes and was sliding across her back.

Cattleya tersely acknowledged.

“No need to worry. Although not many people know of Adam and Amon, there’s no lack of them. I’ve mentioned ‘His’ name on several occasions. As long as the words you mention doesn’t involve any secrets, I believe ‘He’ will only observe you for a moment before casting ‘His’ gaze elsewhere.”

She was rather certain when saying that because, in the Moses Ascetic Order that had been pursued by knowledge, Adam’s existence wasn’t a secret. People often mentioned “Him.”

At this moment, her mind was filled with another matter. Could it be that the secret, ancient organization that Emperor Roselle joined was the one that King of Angels Adam established?

Fors hurriedly tried recalling and said somewhat hesitantly, “There were mentions involving the Forsaken Land of the Gods, the Giant King’s Court, Amon, King of Angels, and other knowledge. Would that be a problem?”

She was very happy that she had never mentioned the words “Tarot Club” or described the other members. At most, she mentioned that the gloomiest was Gehrman Sparrow.

Cattleya thought and said, “At your Sequence, discussing knowledge at that level is indeed strange. However, if Adam were to delve deeper, he will realize that you’re related to the Abraham family. It’s quite normal to be aware of this information.

“What you need to pay attention to is that any major matters involving the Abraham family will require you to be wary of Adam.”

How do I be wary of him… Fors forced a helpless smile as she glanced at the seat of honor at the long bronze table. Then, she looked back at The Hermit and said, “Thank you for your analysis.”

As Mr. Fool hadn’t said anything, she decided to believe Ma’am Hermit’s words.

At this moment, Klein sighed inwardly.

Back when Cattleya mentioned Adam during the Tarot Gathering, he wasn’t aware that Adam’s name wasn’t to be verbalized, nor did he know that he was related to the Twilight Hermit Order. It was only when he entered Groselle’s Travels and learned from Ascetic Snowman about Adam being the Angel of Imagination that he grasped this point and came up with the theory.

After seeing Mr. Door’s warning from Emperor Roselle’s diary and gained preliminary confirmation, he ultimately lacked the opportunity to warn the various members. Furthermore, the way the archbishop of the Church of Steam casually mentioned Adam’s name made him believe that many people in the real world knew of Adam and that it wasn't taboo. Furthermore, Adam might not be "His" full name. He wasn't in a rush to guide the conversation towards this, but he was waiting for an opportunity.

Any mention of it will be known? The organization established by Adam is really impressive… Is this the target our Tarot Club is aiming at? As Emlyn reflected over it poignantly, he gained a clear picture of the Tarot Club.

He had previously been figuring out a category for the Tarot Club. He realized that it wasn't like an orthodox Church, and it was unlike the other secret organizations. Apart from being a messiah alliance, there wasn't anything too special. It muddled his analysis.

And today, he finally confirmed that the early development of the Tarot Club could match Adam's organization!

Knowing 0-08's trait, Leonard wasn't surprised that Adam had a similar trait. He was more concerned about the organization with many important figures participating, as well as the Abraham family which Ma'am Hermit had mentioned.

He had once heard Pallez Zoroast mention: This family's standing in the Fourth Epoch was very high!

Chapter 963 - Problem with Intelligence

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According to what Leonard knew, amongst the major noble families of the Fourth Epoch's Tudor Empire, the Abraham family was ranked first. It was even stronger than the Amon family who had the Blasphemer. Of course, he couldn't be certain if the Amon family didn't have any members—that it was all filled with the son of god's avatars.

Miss Magician is actually an important member of the Abraham family… Everyone here isn't to be trifled with… Is this what's called a gathering of protagonists? Leonard first sighed before he made a self-deprecating comment.

Derrick didn't say a word, nor did he make any connections. He seriously listened to Mr. World's description, as well as the conversation between the two ladies—The Magician and The Hermit—before keeping them to heart.

To him, the other members were in the outside world. Regardless of what happened, it had little to do with him or the City of Silver. Only matters regarding the King of Angels was something to be concerned about. After all, be it the Angel of Fate Ouroboros, the Dark Angel Sasrir, and Red Angel Medici, they had left traces around the City of Silver. As for the Angel of Time, Amon, he had personally visited it before, bringing about inexplicable horror.

After everyone quietened down, Derrick couldn't help but consider certain matters.

Any mention of it will be known… How should I inform the Chief about such matters? Or is it fine not saying it for the time being? I'll just mention that Amon is a son of the Creator, that "He" has another brother who's of the same pathway as the Dragon of Imagination…

If the City of Silver were to encounter an overwhelming disaster, would Adam be able to hear it if I said "His" name? Can "He" enter the Forsaken Land of the Gods?

With this in mind, Derrick instantly felt somewhat ashamed. This was because, in such situations, the honorific name he should chant was Mr. Fool's.

At this moment, The World spoke again:

"Although War Angel Medici has long perished, 'He' isn't completely dead. The soul 'He' left behind has fused with the souls of the ancestors of the two major families of Sauron and Einhorn, forming an evil spirit. During the death of Ince Zangwill, there were traces of its appearance."

Klein had specially brought up this point to firstly pass this information to the Church of Evernight via Leonard. Secondly, it was to remind The Hanged Man to take note. After all, he had been to Bansy twice, possibly embroiling himself with the Red Angel evil spirit's fate.

That evil spirit was War Angel Medici? While Leonard was feeling alarmed, he was taken aback. He had just guessed that Adam wasn't the only bigwig who had been present!

Later, setting off from the titles of War Angel and Angel of Imagination, he suspected that the evil spirit was a King of Angels in its former life.

And such an evil spirit had been sent to the Underworld without putting up any resistance under the influence of the Luck Siphon charm!

Old Man's level is higher than I previously imagined… Yes, the evil spirit must've been weakened by Adam, and perhaps even by Mr. Fool, before Ma'am Daly and I arrived. Otherwise, it's not an enemy we could’ve handled… Right, what was Adam doing back then? There wasn’t any sign of “Him” during the entire battle… Could it be that there was another figure at the level of a King of Angels holding back Adam? Leonard felt tumultuous waves swishing through his heart as he forgot to observe the reactions of the other members.

War Angel Medici… “He” perished and became an evil spirit… Bansy was the place “His” descendants lived… “He” was one of the founders of Rose Redemption… Alger quickly linked up the pieces of information and learned many new things.

That mural I saw in the Bansy Harbor telegraph office must’ve been drawn by that evil spirit!

The World Gehrman Sparrow had gotten me to head to Bansy Harbor to search for traces in order to grasp that terrifying evil spirit’s location. It was to prevent his subsequent plans from being disrupted.

Thankfully, I didn’t destroy that mural. Otherwise, I might’ve caught the notice of the evil spirit…

While Alger sighed in relief, he felt increasingly alert. He planned on getting the Blue Avenger to leave Bansy Harbor and head for the northern front of the Sonia Sea to investigate the matter Mr. Fool had previously given him.

Audrey, Cattleya, and the other members listened attentively as they kept it in mind without making too many connections. This was because the matter The World was describing contained information that mostly consisted of key and rich points. And lacking the additional experiences and knowledge, they were unable to expand on the matter.

After sharing the information that everyone needed to take note of, The World chuckled hoarsely.

“That’s about it.”

After a brief silence, Emlyn straightened his back and looked ahead.

"An important figure from my kind will arrive in Backlund, and a meeting with me has been arranged."

After a pause, and seeing how no one responded, he cleared his throat and asked, "How should I deal with 'Him'?"

_"Him"… Another angel…_Leonard felt numb as he noticed something: Mr. Moon had mentioned the concept of his "kind," and he had red eyes.

Leonard was taken aback as he thought to himself, He's a Sanguine?

Sanguine… Don't tell me he's Emlyn White from the Harvest Church? He had been close to Klein's identity as a detective!

Leonard couldn't help but look at The Moon's side profile and figure a few more times. The more Leonard looked at him, the more familiar he appeared. He was almost certain.

Without any doubts, Emlyn noticed The Star sizing him up, just as Audrey was surprised and excited to confirm that Mr. Star had suddenly realized he knew Mr. Moon.

_Did I say something wrong? That fellow, The Star, looks somewhat astonished… He knows me in the real world? Do I know him?_A series of thoughts flashed through Emlyn's mind as he subconsciously sniffed, trying to catch the scent of the new member beside him; however, the gray fog ensured that he failed.

As he surveyed the area and waited for The Hanged Man, The Hermit, and The World to provide him with an analysis and suggestion, he tried hard to recall if he had met someone like The Star.

Gradually, he felt a sense of familiarity, but he couldn't recall who it was due to the superficial impression the person left on him.

At this point, Audrey recalled another problem:

Mr. World and Mr. Star know each other, and Mr. Star knows Mr. Moon.

Then, does Mr. World know Mr. Moon?

She subconsciously sized up the person at the lower end of the long bronze table, but she failed to “read” anything of use from The World Gehrman Sparrow.

As for Alger, he turned to look at The Moon after a few seconds of thought. He said with some deliberation, “Mr. Fool just mentioned that the times are changing. Although the important members of the Sanguine might not know of the ins and outs, at their level, they will more or less sense something and make preparations.

“The reason that this important figure wishes to meet you is both a probing action and surveillance. You just need to act as you usually do, but there will subsequently be some tests and missions.”

As I imagined. A second test and mission will begin. I wonder what revelation the Ancestor has given… Emlyn nodded and said to The Hanged Man, “Thank you.”

With the question answered, Fors, who had been holding back all this while, finally spoke:

“Mr. Moon, the intelligence you gave me regarding the abandoned ancient castle was highly problematic.

“There were two ancient wraiths, but in the underground area was a door. Sealed behind the door is a powerful corruptive power. As long as one enters the region where the ancient wraiths are, they will be corrupted.”

This… Emlyn frowned slightly.

He wasn’t enraged, and he instead felt that her description was completely right.

If the person who had provided the intelligence knew that there were two ancient wraiths, he wouldn’t have ignored that door!

As a cultured and noble Sanguine, Emlyn never wished for anyone to incur any losses or harm because of his mistakes or neglect. He was rather perturbed by this as he thought and solemnly said, “I will investigate the source and provide you with an answer.”

As Fors had returned safely, she didn’t mind it too much. She tersely answered, indicating that she was awaiting the outcome.

As for being saved by Mr. Fool, with it happening once a month or even twice a month, she had already lost count. She was prepared to do anything Mr. Fool instructed her to do in the future.

After they finished their conversation, Audrey was somewhat concerned. She asked out of curiosity, “Do you know what brought about that corruptive force?”

Fors shook her head.

“I don’t know.”

With Mr. Fool not sharing any information, and how she didn’t have any Roselle diary entries to exchange for the answer to the Card of Blasphemy, Audrey retracted her gaze and attentively listened to the conversation of the other members.

After a while, the learning segment came to an end as the Tarot Club drew to a close. The members stood up and bowed at the existence at the end of the long bronze table to bid “Him” farewell.

This time, Leonard didn’t appear too slow.

The dark red light dissipated as he returned to the real world. In front of him was a Red Glove he hadn’t worn.

At this moment, a slightly-aged voice suddenly sounded in his mind:

“Whose dream did you enter a moment ago?”

Old Man has woken up… Leonard was first delighted before he heaved a sigh of relief.

He didn’t immediately answer Pallez Zoroast as he deliberated over an answer.

“Say, it is possible that, at certain times, Dwayne Dantès is Azik Eggers who’s disguised using some particular item?”

After learning that Dwayne Dantès was a shared identity, he began doubting Old Man’s original theory. This was because this Parasite had came to a conclusion based on the different appearances and auras of Azik Eggers and Dwayne Dantès. Furthermore, not every one of Mr. Fool’s Blessed looked identical to Dwayne Dantès, nor were every one of them Beyonders of the Seer pathway; therefore, since a shared identity was needed, it meant that they wielded a mystical item or Sealed Artifact that allowed them to transform into someone else. Together with the ancient aura of being a Blessed causing some interference, it wasn’t impossible for an angel to make an error in judgment.

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for two seconds before saying, “You reminded me. Azik Eggers does have a mask that allows ‘Him’ to transform into anyone.”

Chapter 964 - Medici's Cause of Death

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As expected… After confirming his hypothesis, Leonard didn't harp on the matter as he returned to the topic at hand.

"Old Man, didn't you ask whose dream I entered?

"Yes, on the day we sought revenge against Ince Zangwill, Amon's brother and a King of Angels appeared."

In his mind, the slightly-aged voice didn't immediately reply. After a few seconds, there was a sigh.

"It's just as I expected. Matters related to 0-08 will often attract Adam.

"Thankfully, I chose to sleep ahead of time."

Leonard didn't have the time to ponder over Pallez Zoroast's words as he instinctively cried out, "Old Man, y-you said 'His' name!"

Adam's gaze was about to be cast over, or might have already landed on them!

The slightly-aged voice chuckled. "You actually know about Adam's trait… However, me mentioning 'Him' doesn't matter. 'He' will only imagine that someone else is talking about 'Him.' Of course, there's no need for you to know too much. That will definitely make you occasionally think of it. Once that happens too frequently or at a close physical distance, Adam will also know of it, just like 0-08. Furthermore, 0-08's influence is limited to a huge city, while Adam's is the entire world." As horrifying as Amon… Another form of horror…

Leonard composed himself and forced himself to stop thinking about Adam as he ruminated over what Pallez Zoroast had said.

Suddenly, he nearly blurted out without suppressing his voice:

“Old Man, did you sleep not because you were weak, but because you were afraid of encountering Amon’s brother?”

“Ahem.” Pallez cleared “His” throat. “It was a result of both reasons, but they don’t contradict one another. After giving you the two Worms of Time, my condition deteriorated again. Under such circumstances, how am I to deal with a King of Angels and conceal my existence? I’m already old and feeble. There’s no need for such developments, so it’s almost necessary for me to hide.”

Leonard was momentarily at a loss for words and said after a few seconds, “Amon and ‘His’ brother should be older than you. The ancient sun god is an ancient god before the Cataclysm…”

Without waiting for Pallez Zoroast’s reply, he heaved a sigh of relief.

“That is to say that, because of your act of sealing yourself and sleeping, that King of Angels didn’t discover a problem with me?”

Pallez chuckled.

“No, it was discovered.”

“…” Leonard’s expression sank as he nearly looked around frantically.

He suspected that Adam was sitting in some corner, silently listening to his conversation with Old Man!

At this moment, Pallez Zoroast added, “You were very close to ‘Him.’ Do you think you can hide from a King of Angels who has accommodated the Spectator pathway’s Uniqueness?

“Besides, you likely cried out ‘Old Man’ impolitely at the most critical moment.”

Leonard was taken aback as he subconsciously answered, "…Y-you heard it?"

He suspected that Old Man had heard him but had deliberately chosen to ignore him for fear of being discovered by Adam.

"No." Pallez's slightly-aged voice teased, "I don't have to hear it to know what you would do. How can I not be aware of what kind of person you are?"

Amidst Leonard's embarrassment, Pallez Zoroast continued, "Adam definitely knows that you've been parasitized, but as I'd sealed myself and was asleep, 'He' didn't discover who was parasitizing you. The demigods with such abilities aren't many, but it's also not a very tiny number."

Is that so… Leonard instantly heaved a sigh of relief. He was most worried about having Adam see Old Man before returning to inform Blasphemer Amon.

With this in mind, Leonard raised a question he had been wondering all this while:

"Old Man, what's a King of Angels?"

Pallez Zoroast didn't ask where Leonard had learned of this concept as "He" simply explained, "Those that exceed Sequence 1 but have yet to become a deity.

"If we are specifically talking about the eight Kings of Angels, apart from those that meet the previous definition, they're the ones who served the ancient sun god before the Cataclysm."

What does it mean to exceed Sequence 1 but have yet to become a deity? How is that achieved? By accommodating the so-called Uniqueness? Leonard had the intention of asking, but he suspected that Old Man wouldn't answer in detail. He gradually decided to first talk about other matters before finding an opportunity to raise this issue

again.

He deliberated for a moment and said with a suppressed voice, “During the battle for revenge with Ince Zangwill, I faced immense adversity, to the point of not being able to look at my enemy head-on, much less use the Luck Siphon charm… When seeking your help failed, I chose to chant Mr. Fool’s honorific name and had received a response.

“After everything ended, I found myself heading for an ancient palace as though I was dreaming. It was above the boundless gray fog…”

Before Leonard finished his description, Pallez, who had been listening quietly, cut him off.

“You met The Fool?”

“Yes, ‘His’ aura is vastly deeper than the sea, loftier than the mountains. His figure was cloaked in the gray fog, preventing anyone from seeing it clearly,” Leonard recalled his encounter and described in a poetic manner. “‘He’ established an organization, holding a Divine Council-a true one-every Monday afternoon. I’m already one of the members.”

Pallez fell silent once again and didn’t say a word for quite some time. Only after a while did he say, “The Fool allowed you to tell me this?”

“Yes.” Sitting there, Leonard nodded and let out a suppressed voice into the air as he said “Old Man, do you know ’Him?”

Pallez Zoroast sighed and said, “No, but I can roughly guess of ‘His’ origins. You don’t have to ask what it is because I won’t tell you.

“Heh heh, this might be an opportunity for you. Otherwise, it will be difficult for you to become a demigod.”

Leonard turned agape before closing his mouth. He stopped mentioning the Tarot Gathering because Mr. Fool hadn’t given him permission to go into the details of other matters.

He thought and said, “Old Man, is there another King of Angels named Medici, known as ‘the War Angel’?”

Pallez tersely acknowledged:

“You can also address ‘Him’ as Red Angel. However, ‘He’ has long perished. You were even close to where ‘He’ died.”

“Where?” Leonard was surprised, but he had no impression of that happening.

Pallez scoffed.

“Are the memories of you people from the Evernight pathway so terrible? I recall that your Goddess wasn’t like that.

“Do you still remember the ruin found beneath Backlund?”

“The Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire? The place where Alista Tudor became Blood Emperor?” Leonard asked in enlightenment.

Pallez Zoroast’s slightly-aged voice resounded once again:

“That’s right.”

As Leonard tried to figure out the logic embedded in this matter, he informed Old Man of the evil spirit.

“The remnant soul of Medici fused with the two angels of the Sauron and Einhorn family, becoming a brand new evil spirit?” Pallez repeated Leonard’s words in disbelief. Following that, “He” couldn’t hide his amusement and said, “The three of ‘Them’ are absolute archenemies, the kind that can’t stand each other’s existence. To think that ‘They’ are together in death, fused as one, is truly–haha, it must be quite lively.”

Leonard didn’t know what Old Man was laughing about as he subconsciously asked, “They’ are archenemies?”

Pallez held back his laughter as he said, “Yes, the reason why Medici failed and was captured was because 'He' was dealing with the Sauron ancestor who had fallen into 'His' trap.

"It wasn't that 'He' wasn't prepared, but that was mainly focused on the Primordial Demoness's side. Surprisingly, Alista Tudor suddenly went mad. Heh, on this matter, Amon and Adam had played a rather important role."

That evil spirit is an enemy of Adam… Why would the Blood Emperor want to capture Medici and the two angels of Sauron and Einhorn? The place "They" perished was in the palace where Alista Tudor was trying to become Blood Emperor… "They" were the ritual materials needed to become a true god? Hmm, according to Mr. Fool, Adam is one step closer to divinity after obtaining 0-08… Is this also considered a gathering of materials? Amon is dealing with Old Man because of similar reasons? Leonard had some theories and had the urge to ask, but he ultimately held back.

He was afraid that he touched on highly secretive matters, causing Old Man to react negatively.

He planned on finding an opportunity at the Tarot Club to ask about such matters.

After a brief silence, Leonard looked at the closed door and said with a suppressed voice, "Has Mr. Fool and the Church reached a certain degree of tacit cooperation?"

"That's the implication if no one is investigating you," Pallez Zoroast answered in a rather direct manner.

Leonard nodded indiscernibly.

"What will they arrange me to do next?"

"Arrangement? Reward you for the services rendered and allow you to advance to Sequence 5 after you finish digesting the potion. Then, you will be allocated a Red Gloves team, and you'll be sent to complete missions. Otherwise, they might send you to a large diocese like Backlund to be a deacon in charge of certain matters," Pallez said without much concern.

Back to Backlund… Klein seems to be planning something in Backlund… Leonard's thoughts were suddenly liberated.

He didn't converse with Old Man again as he slumped against the wall and cradled his head with his hands, sitting rather leisurely.

Late at night, in the border town of East and West Balam, outside a row of warehouses.

Dressed in a formal suit, Dwayne Dantès, with his white sideburns, was holding a gold inlaid cane. After exchanging signals and countersigns with the officer on duty, he watched as the officer opened the door to the warehouse and heard him say in a relaxed manner, "It's everything inside. Check the goods and move it yourself.

"Also, pay me the remaining amount before leaving."

Dwayne Dantès nodded slightly and weighed the suitcase in hand. In it was 5,000 pounds in cashentirely from Maysanchez's down payment.

At this moment, two figures were silently watching this develop two warehouses away in a three-story building

Chapter 965 - Brief Crisis

◆

On the top floor of a small building, a black-haired, brown-eyed man donning dark-colored clothes was looking down at the arms deal not far away. This man who looked about twenty-eight couldn't help but say, "He actually got Maysanchez? Oh, Holy Lord of Storms, Alfred, if I had known it would turn out this way, we might as well have done the mission ourselves. Even if all the expenses are deducted, we should still earn at least 20,000 pounds!"

The man beside him was a young man in a black trench coat. He looked about twenty four and had a head of resplendent blond hair and blue eyes that resembled a lake. He had pretty good looks.

Being addressed as Alfred, he shook his head and said, "No, that would be too noticeable. Maysanchez's allegiance has always been unclear. Before figuring out his take on matters, rashly discussing an arms deal with him is extremely dangerous. Dwayne Dantès is able to earn twenty thousand pounds because he dares to take the risk."

The black-haired and brown-eyed man immediately scoffed.

"To think that Alfred Hall, who has led a few dozen men to assault a battalion with over a thousand troops, would claim that he doesn't dare take risks!"

Alfred shot a glance at him and said, "Pagani, this isn't the same thing. That happened because I was confident of wiping out their command center. And once there's a lack of leadership, a thousand scattered troops might not be as formidable as a thousand pigs.

“In addition, the transaction this time is solely a test. It’s to establish communications and to set up a channel. If it’s done by us, who are we to seek out the next time? And the subsequent ones? If we keep at it, we will ultimately expose ourselves. Once that happens, it will be a diplomatic matter. Furthermore, with the deals deepening and broadening, who knows if this would incur the notice of the demigods of other factions. That would spell danger.”

“Haha,” Pagani said with a smile. “How can demigods be that free to pay notice to such small-scale arm deals? Every faction has a limited number of demigods. There are too many matters awaiting them.”

“I know. I’m only raising an example,” Alfred replied in a staid manner.

Pagani didn’t harp on the matter and turned his gaze back to Dwayne Dantès who stood outside the warehouse.

“This gentleman is said to be very generous. He donated stocks worth more than ten thousand pounds to the Church of Evernight shortly after he arrived in Backlund. Is this the early-stage investments that you often speak of?

“Also, he seems to be working at the same charity foundation with your sister. Tsk, such men are very welcome with the young ladies. He’s good-looking and has an outstanding demeanor. He’s smart, experienced, and has the artifice. He has seen all kinds of women, and he’s at the age to settle down. Alfred, you have to warn Audrey that a playboy will always be one and that one’s moral character is a flaw that can never be corrected. You can’t let the most dazzling jewel of Backlund be taken by this fellow.”

Alfred turned his head to glare at Pagani.

“There’s no need for you to show any concern about such matters. Audrey isn’t a young and clueless lady. Her knowledge of the world is far more mature than you imagine. Besides, my father and mother are in Backlund. They have the ability to prevent any nasty things from happening."

Upon saying that, Alfred looked at the nearby arms warehouse and paused.

"Maysanchez actually sent Haggis. I'll go greet him."

This isn't the best time to meet, right… Just as Pagani was about to say a word, Alfred had already turned to walk down the stairs.

†

Klein, in the form of Dwayne Dantès, didn't bring any servants. He held his gold-inlaid cane and stood with Maysanchez's representative, Haggis, outside the warehouse. They watched as crates of munitions were carried out and loaded onto carriages.

At this moment, he half-turned his body upon sensing something and looked elsewhere.

The person that was reflected in his eyes was a young man wearing a trench coat without a hat. His blond hair was combed into a slick back, and his blue eyes looked like a lake under a bright clear sky. He was tall with a good build. His every move exuded an indescribable sense of dignity. Even without any troops surrounding him, the authority he wielded was obvious.

"Alfred!" Haggis noticed the man as well when he cried out in delighted surprise.

Alfred… Miss Justice's second elder brother… This feeling resembles that of the Arbiter pathway… Klein raised his right hand and took off his top hat to press it against his chest as a form of greeting.

After Alfred Hall greeted Haggis, he turned to look at Dwayne Dantès.

"Your character is widely spread across Backlund. Even I've heard of you, despite being in East Balam."

Character? A character at making arms deals? Klein lampooned as he chuckled.

"I'm only doing things that I believe need to be done."

Alfred nodded.

"I believe there's no need for any self-introductions? Haggis should've mentioned me to you."

"Yes, Colonel Hall," Klein replied with a smile. "I only learned that Miss Audrey has another brother here in the Southern Continent after I arrived—that he served in the military and has rendered impressive services."

Alfred cast his gaze on Dwayne Dantès's face and changed the topic:

"I thought you would take the opportunity to work at the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, but you surprised me by choosing to come to the Southern Continent."

Klein maintained his smile from before.

"For an outsider to truly enter a preexisting circle is quite impossible just by giving donations, doing charity, and hosting balls and banquets."

Alfred tersely answered, "Very wise."

After exchanging a few pleasantries, he asked Haggis, "Did something happen in Cookawa? It seemed rather serious."

Haggis squeezed a smile.

"I'm not too sure. I was hiding in an underground bunker at the general's residence. I later heard that there was a lightning storm at Revival Square."

"Lightning storm?" Alfred's gaze turned towards Dwayne Dantès again.

Klein nodded and said, “Indeed. The hotel I was staying at isn’t too far from Revival Square. I did see continuous bolts of lightning striking that area. All of that happened in the day.”

Alfred’s gaze turned towards Haggis again.

“What happened to the scene in the end?”

“Most of the area was in shambles. There were marks of lightning strikes.” Haggis didn’t hide the truth at all.

Alfred nodded gently and pointed to the side before saying to Haggis and Dwayne Dantès, “I still have other matters to tend to. We can chat again when the opportunity arises.”

“See you again,” Klein politely replied. It made them appear to be at a social gathering instead of being outside a munitions warehouse.

He was watching Alfred Hall leave when his body trembled. His head made an abrupt turn to the side.

†

In the primitive forests that covered East and West Balam, a figure was slowly outlined with his back bent.

He had a fleshy face with slightly brown skin. His clothes were baggy, and he had a rapier by his waist. In his hand was a silver mask.

Looking to his sides, this figure straightened his body. He was none other than Admiral Hell Ludwell who had entered previously entered the Underworld.

However, at this moment, two clumps of blood-red flames were burning in his eye sockets. He looked completely different from before.

“I’m starving…” Ludwell opened his mouth, letting out a sigh that seemed to come from his chest.

He then cast his gaze in a different direction, muttering, “The owner of this marionette is over there. Fate has brought us together again.

“He has a Hunter pathway item on him. It’s perfect for replenishing myself.”

Just as he said that, a bloody mouth appeared on the left cheek of Ludwell’s face. It opened and closed as it said, “Medici, what we need to deal with first is our survival! After this marionette loses its connection to its owner, it’s no different from the dead. The remnant spirit will quickly return to the Underworld and not be able to maintain the body. And without the Underworld inside him, we will inevitably be weakened until we dissipate!”

“Yes, the most pressing matter now is to find another Gatekeeper.” Another mouth appeared on Ludwell’s right cheek.

Red Angel Medici immediately scoffed.

“Sauron, Einhorn, were the two of you women in the past? Your nature as angels has been left in the dumps because of you! That fellow was able to resist 0-08’s arrangements several times, implying that he’s definitely not simple. With a chance to lock onto him, how can we give it up? Once this marionette completely dies, things wouldn’t be that simple again!

“Besides, the Hunter pathway item on him can effectively extend our existence. Once we finish him, it wouldn’t be too late finding a Gatekeeper.”

The bloody crack on Ludwell’s left cheek immediately scoffed.

“Medici, have you sacrificed your brain to the True Creator? That fellow has clearly advanced. In our current condition, defeating a Bizarro Sorcerer isn’t difficult, but killing him is nearly impossible!”

Medici wasn’t frustrated, and instead, he laughed deeply.

“This isn’t something unresolvable. As long as you allow me to chant my Lord’s honorific name, helpers will immediately arrive. A Gatekeeper might even be automatically brought here.”

The mouth on Ludwell’s right check immediately opened and closed.

“Sauron, let’s work together to stop him and search for a Gatekeeper.”

“Alright.” The mouth on Ludwell’s left cheek didn’t hesitate to reply.

Upon seeing this, Red Angel Medici laughed.

“The two of you have fallen for it! My goal has been met. I can confirm that the two of you were previously women!”

The two mouths on Ludwell’s cheeks roared, “Shut up!”

“Humph, we’ve been merged together for two thousand years. Would we not know what tricks you’re up to? There’s no need to struggle again!”

As they spoke, the colors around Admiral Hell Ludwell instantly saturated and stacked upon one another.

He had entered the spirit world and began traversing it.

†

Outside the munitions warehouse, Klein finally retracted his gaze as his premonition for danger vanished.

For that one moment, he had a baffling feeling, but he was unable to project the corresponding scene in his mind.

What happened? Klein muttered to himself. Without waiting any further, he threw the suitcase in his hand to the officer who was in charge of handing and taking over. Then, he said to Haggis, “The rest is yours. You can give me the rest of the payment.”

He was referring to the heavy case filled with gold bars and coins.

Haggis had planned on having drinks with Dwayne Dantès after the completion of the deal to celebrate its success, and to discuss any future deals. He never expected Dwayne Dantès to be in such a hurry to leave.

“Alright. It’s on the carriage,” he pointed and said.

Alfred, who had already walked quite a distance, turned his head to look over, perplexed. He wasn’t sure why Dwayne Dantès wasn’t following the predesignated procedure.

Chapter 966 - Train

Seeing Alfred look over, Klein returned with a smile and nodded gently.

“I suddenly sensed some danger.”

With that said, he calmly turned around and headed for the carriage which Haggis had pointed out.

“Danger…” Alfred repeated the word softly as he warily surveyed his surroundings but failed to find anything odd.

He slowed down his pace, constantly taking note of his surroundings before returning to the nearby three-story building with out-of-the-ordinary vigilance.

Pagani glanced at the heavy-expression wearing Alfred and asked, feeling somewhat puzzled, “What happened?”

He was quite a distance from the arms deal, so he hadn’t heard their conversation.

Alfred walked to the window and looked down at the convoy that was prepared to leave after loading the munitions. He deliberated and said, “Dwayne Dantès suddenly left, saying that he had sensed danger.”

“Danger?” Pagani didn’t dismiss it as he warily looked around. He didn’t notice anything amiss even when Maysanchez’s men left the region and vanished into the darkness.

He then laughed.

"Haha, Alfred, I think you're too sensitive. I believe it's solely because Dwayne Dantès is a coward and was unwilling to stay here for too long!"

Alfred retracted his gaze and frowned.

"Perhaps."

After returning to his hotel, Klein made Enzo, who had turned into a mixed-blood lad, open the suitcase in his hand. He took out the gold coins and bars one by one and did the count.

It was valued at a total of 30,000 Loen gold pounds!

Thankfully my previous agreement with Miss Messenger is 10,000 Loen gold coins. I don't need to make any additional conversions… Sitting leisurely in the reclining chair, Klein drank the sweet and sour but refreshing Gwadar as he "monitored" his marionette's work.

After Enzo separated the items, he took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew into it.

Reinette Tinekerr walked out of the void with the four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand. It was as though she was constantly nearby.

Her eight eyes turned towards the pile of gold coins and gold bars that had been separated.

After a few seconds, the four heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand said, "Very good…" "In the future…" "Missions will…" "Cost more…"

…What's the logic behind this? Why are you raising the price after the mission despite me paying you so quickly? Klein was taken aback as he asked with a straightened back, "What?"

Reinette Tinekerr's four blonde, red-eyed heads nodded seriously.

"Mission…" "Price…" "Depends On…" "Your…" "Ability…" "To…" "Earn Money…"

I never expected that… Klein turned agape, but he was unable to retort. After all, such matters were solely decided by the helper. Furthermore, with him advancing to Sequence 4 and becoming a demigod, the missions that he needed her help with in the future was likely to increase in difficulty and danger. It was seemingly reasonable to increase the price.

After Reinette Tinekerr swallowed the gold coins and vanished from the room, Klein reined in his thoughts and began doing calculations regarding his current wealth.

My expenses have been quite significant recently. I'm left with 17,275 pounds in cash and 65 gold coins… This pile of gold bars is worth 25,000 pounds… That makes for a total of more than 40,000 pounds. It's not something to dismiss in all of the Loen Kingdom. I can already buy a manor and some land for farming… Arms dealing sure is profitable…

Reinette Tinekerr needed gold coins, so whatever was left were gold bars.

Standing up and sending the gold bars above the gray fog, Klein walked to the window and cast his gaze to the north.

With the matter coming to a close, he was poised to return to Backlund.

Looking at the horizon, Klein suddenly sighed silently.

Backlund…

North Borough, Backlund University of Technology.

Audrey was touring the campus with a few staff members of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

She was dressed in a simple, light-green dress. By her waist was a white, unadorned leather belt. Her blonde hair had a veiled hat with ribboned flowers that showed off her playful side. She didn't wear any other accessories other than a silver bangle on her left wrist. She looked no different from a female student that came from a family that could only be considered middle-class.

Over the past few days, she had been to public primary schools that bordered East Borough, and she had visited the technical schools in the area around Backlund Bridge. She already knew the appropriate clothes needed for the occasion, not treating charity work as another social scene.

Her green, limpid eyes darted around slightly as she wore a faint smile as she observed the students that came and went.

Backlund University of Technology had recently sent out its acceptance letters, and it was matriculation day for the new class of students.

Matriculation should've happened in late-August or early-September, but as a newly restructured university, Backlund University of Technology's entrance examinations were later than the other universities. That also delayed the results, which also meant that students that applied to the school had also participated in the examinations of other universities or might've already been accepted. Therefore, they had brought forward the registration work to confirm the matriculated numbers before deciding how many more students needed to be accepted.

Due to this, Audrey and the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation's staff came to help the first batch of approved applicants to complete their matriculation procedure.

Wherever she could see, she discovered that the students on campus wore a beaming expression, and every action they made exuded obvious confidence. Their words and actions had an indescribable vigor, one that seemed to have immense hope for the future that allowed them to see light.

And this feeling was completely different from the few public primary schools that Audrey had experienced in the past. The students there were either boorish and noisy or silent and gloomy. A common trait of theirs was being uneasy and confused. Whenever they encountered strangers of status, they would be filled with trepidation. Their eyes were dull, lacking the spirit that youths ought to have.

I really wish those kids will have a chance of receiving higher education and be like the students here where they can work hard for a better future… As Audrey sighed silently, she swept her gaze to a male-female duo who were likely siblings.

The elder brother had clearly stepped into society and started working. He wore a silk hat and wore a rather thin black formal suit. He appeared to be in his thirties and had the air resembling a civil servant.

He had borrowed a rather old camera from somewhere and had placed it on a tripod. He gestured for his younger sister to move and adjust her pose as he searched for the best angle.

The sister was about seventeen or eighteen, and her black hair simply cascaded down. Her brown eyes had a look of exasperation, but she didn't say a word as she seriously listened to her brother's instructions.

Such combinations were everywhere on campus. Some of them had parents and their child, while others were groups of friends.

What a beautiful scene… Audrey looked away and continued proceeding forward.

It was a square, and in the middle of it was a decommissioned steam locomotive. Its massive body was standing there proudly, adding industrial vibes to the Backlund University of Technology.

Whoosh!

The behemoth-like steam locomotive spewed out smoke as it hauled its long body into the platform before slowing down a stop.

A mixed-blood, seven- or eight-year-old girl who looked like a doll, held her mother's hand as she waited in a long line. She asked her father, who was similarly mixed-blood with Loen and Balam heritage, about Desi Bay.

Amidst her shuffling, she saw a gentleman with white sideburns and a top hat holding a gold-inlaid cane. He had a servant with brown skin as he walked towards first-class.

The servant looked around curiously and said, "Sir, the recent situation is different from what I had imagined. I thought the people from Balam would lead tough and difficult lives, with squalid, chaotic, poor, and repressed surroundings. But there was none of them. We even drank Gwadar and smoked East Balam cigarettes. There were even some people who could afford bikes. Uh, as you know, although I have Balam blood in me, I was born in Backlund. I've never been to the Southern Continent. Of course, my Dutanese is still not too bad."

The very noble middle-aged gentleman chuckled and waved his cane.

"That's because we only went to the cities and regions that aren't too bad. The saddest people of Balam are in the villages, in the plantations. The rest take up residence around the factories, creating slums. We never had a chance to see them."

As though sensing the girl's notice, the gentleman with his deep blue eyes and his servant looked over and gave a warm smile.

The corners of their lips clearly curled up, revealing eight teeth before they nodded gently, looked away, and continued on their way.

Before long, the girl and her parents boarded the steam locomotive and found their seats.

When the whistle sounded again, the girl saw a man with dark brown skin, soft facial features, and red lumps on his cheek walk over with his head bowed. His hand pressed on his hat as he quickly walked down the aisle and headed for the head of the train.

The man knocked on the partition before quickly entering the operator's compartment and said to the train driver, "All the train attendants have been swapped with our men. The bridge ahead is where the sacrifice will be held."

With a thick mustache, the train driver nodded and said, "May God be satisfied with the sacrificial items on this train.

"Let's hope we can gain eternal life in the kingdom."

Whoosh!

The steam locomotive drove under a bridge before cruising past a huge bridge. After a long trip, it finally arrived at its destination, the pier.

The doll-like, mixed-blood girl was somewhat sleepy and was no longer as lively as before. Under her parents' lead, she followed the crowd and inched towards the door.

There were a few attendants at the door who were helping some of the passengers remove their luggage.

When the girl and her parents walked past, these attendants curled the corners of their lips and revealed eight teeth, showcasing a warm smile.

After the girl jumped onto the platform, she looked back at them subconsciously. She saw figures standing outside the door, discussing something. Among them was the train conductor, as well as the man with the lumps on his cheek.

A second later, these people turned their heads over and curled the corners of their lips, revealing eight teeth.

The girl retracted her gaze and skipped along as she left the platform with her parents.

Chapter 967 - “Revelation”

◆

Cold winds blew across the platform at night, causing the hanging gas lamps to sway.

The light of dusk stretched and shortened from time to time in this scene, allowing the steam locomotive that was silently parked on the tracks to oscillate between being cloaked in shadows or escaping the darkness. It had an indescribable sense of gloom and death.

At this moment, a squad of black-and-white checkered policemen entered the platform. Under the lead of the railway company’s duty manager, they walked to the huge train that appeared old.

“For some reason, after the passengers disembarked, all the train staff, including the train driver, returned to the carriage and never came out again. I s-sent people to look for them and get them out to have some rest, b-but they quickly ran out looking like that had been inflicted with a disease. All they could do was hysterically shout, ‘they’re all dead,’ ‘they’re all dead’!” The railway duty manager in a blue coat held a lamp, walking as he briefed the police about the situation.

From his stammering and trembling body, the police could easily tell the extreme horror in him. It was as though a sudden tap on his shoulder would literally cause him to jump and abandon everything to rush for the exit.

His emotions infected the police. All of them held their hands to their waists as they pressed onto their holsters.

Tap. Tap. Tap. The leather shoes hitting the solid, hard ground left reverberating echoes. The police followed the duty manager and warily entered the front carriage.

Inside the carriage, there were two people sitting in each row. They were distributed to the left and right, and they stood away from the windows. At that moment, they were leaning against the backs of their seats, motionless.

Through the illumination of the gas lamps outside and lanterns in their hands, the inspectors leading them very quickly recognized the scene before him. Here were the staff of the steam locomotive. They were wearing blue uniforms that differed for men and women, and they were sitting in different seats in silence. Their faces were pale and their eyes wide open. Although there wasn't any sounds of breathing, the corners of their lips were curved up, revealing eight teeth.

Everyone present felt their hair stand up upon seeing the uniform smiles as they subconsciously held their breaths.

This was an extremely bizarre and terrifying scene. All they wished was to turn around and leave, beginning investigations only when it was bright!

The leading inspector drew two deep gasps before he instructed the constables beside him:

"Go confirm if they a-are dead…"

Upon saying that, he glanced at the duty manager.

"Follow him and see if there's anyone missing or excess people included."

"A-alright, Officer," the duty manager said with a trembling voice.

As he and the constables ventured deeper into the carriage, the other policemen drew their revolvers and remained on high alert.

In an unbearable silence, time slowly ticked by until, finally, one of the constables stopped at the end of the carriage, turned around, and shouted, “It’s confirmed. All of them are dead!”

The railway manager stuttered immediately after him, “There are two missing. The train driver and the train conductor…”

The inspector calmed down significantly when he realized that nothing had happened all this time. he thought and said to all the constables, “Maintain the corpses’ present state and await an autopsy.

“Meanwhile, split into two teams. One team is to head to the other carriages to search for the train conductor and driver while the other team is to check the scene for clues and relevant information. Once the sun rises, we will begin investigations starting with the train personnel and the passengers who were previously on board. We will search for any commonalities and peculiarities.”

Although many passengers didn’t present their identification documents when purchasing tickets, the inspector believed that it was possible to find people who had registered themselves and learn from them of any abnormalities on the train or passengers worth paying attention to.

Just as he said that, a biting cold wind stirred, blowing through the carriage.

When all of this came to an end, the inspector was about to emphasize his orders when he suddenly noticed something amiss.

The steam locomotive staff members who were in their seats still had their eyes open with their whites showing and their faces pale. However, their mouths had closed at some point in time and were no longer showing their eight teeth.

Inside a luxurious hotel room, the wall lamps shone brightly onto the carpeted region where a desk stood.

Klein had transformed into Gehrman Sparrow and was sitting on a single-seater. He had his left leg crossed over his right.

Beside him was Enzo who looked like a native. In front of him stood a row of cultist marionettes.

They were the people involved in attempting to make a sacrifice on the steam locomotive—the man with the lumpy cheek, the train conductor and the train driver.

They had circled from different streets donning different looks to gather here.

“Who made you do the sacrifice?” Klein asked in a deep voice.

After advancing to Sequence 4 and becoming a Bizarro Sorcerer, not only was he able to read the thoughts of his marionette’s superficial consciousness, he could also use the increased control of Spirit Body Threads to do things similar to spirit channeling.

Of course, the higher the level of the marionette, the poorer the effects of the spirit channeling.

After a brief silence, the conductor who was clearly Loen with rather thick body hair said blankly, “It’s a revelation from God.”

“Which god?” Klein received the porcelain teacup from Enzo and took a sip.

The train conductor replied in a daze, “God is God. There are no others.”

Klein lowered his cup and asked, “How did ‘He’ reveal ‘His’ revelation? What was said exactly?”

The conductor instantly turned reverent.

“He’ gave a revelation through a divine item, requesting us to sacrifice many lives to pleasure ‘Him.’ In return, ‘He’ will give us eternal life in ‘His’ kingdom.”

Sacrifice many lives… Compared to the Numinous Episcopate, the Rose School of Thought prefers doing such things. They have always been infamous for blood sacrifices… But to have eternal life in God's kingdom is closer to the Numinous Episcopate's beliefs. Of course, I can't eliminate the possibility that it was fabricated… Klein pondered for a moment and asked, "What divine item?"

The train driver didn't reply as he glanced at the man with the red, lumpy cheek.

The man then took out an item from an inner pocket.

It was a cloth doll of shabby craftsmanship with curved eyes and mouth.

"God will issue us commands at a specific time through it. I bought it at a flea market," the man with the lumpy cheek said slowly without any perturbation in his tone.

This… Klein instantly thought of many possibilities before getting Enzo to take the cloth doll and scrutinize it carefully, but he didn't discover anything odd.

With his experience, this meant that the problem wasn't with the doll. That meant that there were two possibilities: First, someone was using the doll as a decoy while acting as a deity nearby. Second, it was a truly secret existence who had specially labeled the item to send a revelation.

If it's the former, the train attendants' death would've been discovered, and preparations would've been made… If it's the latter, perhaps nothing has been detected… Klein contemplated for a moment and made Enzo place the cloth door on the desk in front of the window.

He then stood up and instantly transformed into another train attendant and stood with the row of cultists.

Similar changes happened when Enzo returned.

After an unknown period of time, the night grew deeper.

Suddenly, on the desk bathed in crimson moonlight, the cloth doll with curved eyes and mouth moved its limbs and slowly stood up.

Chapter 968 - “Descending” Saint

◆

The cloth doll turned its lifeless eyes before its body stood up straight. It looked towards the area that the crimson moonlight failed to illuminate. There, the man with the lumpy cheek and the other cultists had been standing quietly, but at this moment, they bowed their heads, raising their arms as though they were praying, piously listening to the “revelation.”

About two to three seconds later, the cloth doll finally stood up straight. Just as it was about to open its tongueless mouth and produce a voice that didn’t belong to the “body” it was in, all its movements suddenly turned sluggish, as though it was a highly-rusted robot.

Hidden amongst the cultists, Klein had seen a strange spirituality thread extend from the cloth doll. Without any hesitation, he began controlling it!

Inside the wall lamp-illuminated room, the lights dimmed instantly. The doll with curved eyes and mouth instantly lost the support that seemed to arise from having a skeleton before slumping to the table, motionless.

Amidst the flickering street lights that were more than a thousand meters away, Klein lost control over the blob of Spirit Body Threads. The power that descended with the help of the doll took less than two seconds to escape out of his range!

Whoosh!

A biting-cold wind swept up inside the room as the rug with tables and chairs above was suddenly tugged, sending the man with the lumpy cheek and most of the other cultists tumbling. Only the disguised Klein had jumped up in time to avoid the accident.

Of course, Winner Enzo stood perfectly fine at the border of the rug, completely unaffected.

Whoosh!

Amidst the cold wind, the rug rolled up and bound the few cultists and covered their noses and mouth tightly, gripping their throats.

Meanwhile, the fountain pens on the table had their caps removed autonomously before shooting forward, stabbing into the neck of the man with the lumpy cheek. They left no gaps in the dense array of pens.

A wooden chair exploded as its splinters swept over without sparing any of the remaining cultists.

Near the wall, the pipe of a wall lamp cracked, causing the gas inside to whistle out.

The cloth that draped the sofa rose up, tied itself into a robe, and wrapped around the train conductor’s throat. A few of the floor tiles flew up, stabbing a few cultists from below.

Instantly, all the items in the room were filled with offensive capability as though they were attempting to kill all signs of life inside.

Klein tried to dodge, but his shirt, pants, belt, coat, and hat seemed to have a life of their own. They forcefully locked him down on the spot.

He hurriedly opened his mouth and let out a sound: “Pa!”

He had mimicked the sound of snapping fingers.

Scarlet flames surged out from his clothes, instantly blanketing his body and removing the restraints

At this moment, the cloth on another sofa rose up as though it was draped over someone.

This strange scene reflected in Klein's eyes immediately as he trembled and turned stiff. He had been possessed by an evil spirit!

The flames that soared up from before hadn't extinguished. They were burning away his clothes and flesh, only to reduce him to a pitch-black paper figurine.

Behind this paper figurine was a pattern covered with feathers. It was a surreal and illusory feeling.

This was the mutated paper figurine that had been tainted with Artificial Death's aura!

Klein knew that there were only two situations that were possible for the doll to mutate. One was that the entity disguising as a god was nearby and had sensed the deaths of the cultists; hence, preparations were made via a deliberate descent, laying a trap for the antagonist. Another was that the one using the doll was indeed some secret existence. "He" wasn't aware that the sacrificial ritual had been foiled and descended at the predetermined time to give the next round of "revelations."

And regardless of which situation it was, it meant danger. Therefore, how could Klein perform unprepared?

Based on the characteristics of a descent or the possession of the doll, he had already placed the paper figurine, which had mutated because of the corruption of Artificial Death's aura, in the iron cigar case. He had also maintained the level of his marionette at the level of an ordinary person in order to lure the target into possessing him!

At this point, the possession target of the "god" that the cultists worshiped had gone from Klein to the Death Paper Figurine! As the scarlet flames swept about, the pitch-black paper figurine ignited as a pale-white color spread abruptly, tinged with a slightly dark green color.

A rather painful grunt sounded as a transparent afterimage flashed across a window tinted with the crimson moonlight.

Almost at the same instant, the items that came “alive” inside the room fell to the ground, returning to their lifeless state. As for Enzo, flames were swirling around him.

At this moment, in the port city north of the Southern Continent, the residents were enjoying the comfort and warmth of their home and family at night. They didn’t notice that their glass windows and the surfaces of the wall lamps would dim before quickly returning to normal.

Alongside this dimming environment, the flames in the fireplace either intensified or dwindled. The remnants in the kitchen were ignited and snuffed out.

During this process, the glass windows in that room dimmed the most, and the fluctuations in the flames kept happening. However, the believers in the room were praying to the Primordial Moon, paying no notice to what was happening.

After an unknown period of time, the crimson moonlight brightened a little, as though covering the entire city in a light veil.

Such brightness quickly returned to normal as a scarlet red flame flared up on a silver candle on a dining table.

Enzo walked out of it as his body and face rapidly changed into Gehrman Sparrow.

Just moments ago, at the instant when the crimson moon brightened, he had lost his target.

Not only possessing the Beyonder powers of a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Wraith pathway, but they can also borrow the power of the crimson moon… Regarding these two aspects, one of them is only possible with a Sealed Artifact or mystical item… Klein muttered silently and came to a preliminary judgment.

After the demigod who possessed the doll had been corrupted by the Death Paper Figurine, he had believed that he had the chance to take his opponent down. To his surprise, the enemy's strength and means available to them were more varied and potent than he imagined.

The only thing he could confirm was that it wasn't an angel, as the strength and level were far inferior to one.

Just as this thought flashed through his mind, Klein left the dining room and entered the activity room. There were a few believers praying to the Primordial Moon.

Unlike the cultists on the steam locomotive, they knew who they were praying to, as though they were more formal members of the parish.

One step. Two steps. Three steps. Klein entered the room in an unhurried pace before they turned their heads when they noticed him.

With the powerful illusion power of a Bizarro Sorcerer, they treated Gehrman Sparrow as an oracle that had descended upon them. They saw a bright moon halo at his head.

The believers plopped to their knees in devout prostration.

Klein didn't beat about the bush as he asked in a deep voice, "Who was the saint you met previously?"

Although one of the believers was puzzled, he still respectfully answered, "Oracle, it was Shaman King Klarman."

Shaman King Klarman… That's a familiar name… Ah right, the author of that Book of Secrets… Isn't he long dead? He was alive in a time over a millennium ago. Saints of non-special pathways have no way of living that long… He joined the Rose School of Thought but still believes in the Primordial Moon. Through some means, he has extended his life? Or could it be that his Sequence alone affords him a long life? Klein's mind whirred and recalled the origins of the name "Klarman."

A sailboat was docked by the pier as the faint moonlight illuminated the cabin's interior.

A figure with frizzled black hair with white streaks in them walked out of a mirror. He wore a back robe with crimson patterns. He had wrinkles that were neither too deep or shallow on his face. His eyes were bloodshot.

At this moment, on the skin he exposed, such as the back of his hand, his pores had expanded, producing white feathers that were stained with pale yellow oil.

This elder's expression was somewhat warped as if he was enduring pain.

He quickly sat on the bedside, bowed his head, clasped his hands, and silently chanted.

In his jarring voice, his forehead slowly cracked apart, revealing a red full moon that seemed to be embedded in it!

The moonlight dispersed and cloaked the elder, causing the white feathers on him to contract and recede into nothingness.

But at this moment, his abdomen bloated up as though it was filled with liquid.

Finally, his clothes, together with his skin, tore apart as a blob of flesh and blood covered in white feathers flew out onto the deck. After squirming for quite a while, it rotted and died.

Phew… The elder looked up and slowly exhaled. His bloodshot eyes were filled with puzzlement.

He muttered softly, “Death’s Blessed?

“But Death is no more…”

Early in the morning, the Church of Storms’s Mandated Punishers, who had taken over the case of the mysterious deaths of the steam locomotive’s staff, had received new intelligence.

The missing conductor and driver, as well as a few suspicious passengers, had been found!

Before long, this Mandated Punisher team followed the clues and found their targets.

They were silently hung outside a building in a row.

“This is a provocation!” The Mandated Punisher’s captain growled through clenched teeth.

But after they lowered the corpses and carried out their investigations inside the room, they saw that these people had been piously praying to the Primordial Moon in the activity room, holding a rather diabolical ritual.

“…Apprehend all of them!” The Mandated Punisher captain issued a command after a second of surprise.

The believers of the Primordial Moon seemed to regain their reason as they tried to resist. However, they were quickly suppressed, either dying or being injured in the process.

The Mandated Punisher captain surveyed the area and inexplicably said to his peers, “They didn’t notice the row of corpses hanging at their doorstep?”

A member of the Reader pathway thought and said, “Those corpses might’ve been left there to guide us to investigate the area.”

The Mandated Punisher captain calmed himself down and nodded in thought, “Which Church’s demigod passed by?”

Chapter 969 - Duke

◆◆◆

Backlund, West Borough, within the Odora family's villa.

Emlyn White, who had been summoned, took off his hat and coat and entered the activity room to wait.

In this room, there were a few other Sanguine members who had been called by name to meet the important figure. After surveying the area, Emlyn picked a spot to sit in, right beside a man with a nose so high that it almost seemed deformed.

Adorning his cut face was brown hair and red eyes. He held a comic in his hand, reading through it aimlessly.

He was none other than the Sanguine who had provided Emlyn with the information about the ancient, abandoned castle in Delaire Forest. His name was Ernes Boyar, a viscount.

Emlyn had planned on visiting this viscount in the next couple of days, but he never expected to bump into him here. After some careful consideration, he said in deliberation, "Your Lordship, I would like to know where you obtained the intel regarding the ancient abandoned castle in Delaire Forest."

"Why? Did your client say that there weren't any ancient wraiths?" Ernes Boyar moved his gaze away from his comic and shot Emlyn a glance.

"No, not at all." Emlyn didn't provide an explanation as he stubbornly emphasized his question again. “I’m just very curious of the source. It doesn’t seem that simple.”

Ernes Boyar closed his comic and nodded slightly.

“It’s not a secret. I learned of it from Lord Nibbs. To be frank, I’ve never heard of this before. I find it hard to imagine that there’s such an ancient castle in Delaire Forest.”

Lord Nibbs… Emlyn instinctively had some thoughts arise in him.

It’s another test…

But isn’t such a test too dangerous? It even needed Mr. Fool to resolve it… Emlyn frowned slightly as he recalled the details he had contemplated previously. He probed, “Your Lordship, then why didn’t you explore that ancient castle? I remember you being an archaeologist. And during this process, you’ll be able to obtain the corresponding Beyonder ingredients of an ancient wraith.”

“Lord Nibbs told me that it’s very dangerous. One shouldn’t approach it unless they’re at the level of Earl.”

“…” Emlyn’s mouth gaped as his expression fell into a daze.

He then held back his anger and asked with a suppressed voice, “Then why didn’t you warn me?”

Ernes laughed.

“Isn’t it obvious?

“How can a location with Beyonder creatures present, one that’s known by us Sanguine, still exist if not for special reasons?”

Emlyn fell into a daze as Ernes added, “Normal reasoning should be like this: Ancient wraiths might exist in some place in Delaire Forest. People have encountered it before, but they were unable to find their origins.

“This means that finding those ancient wraiths is a very difficult and troublesome affair. The time cost exceeds their value, which allows them to live to this day.

“I thought you’d have easily discovered the problem with this reasoning. Likewise for your client. If they had chosen to take action, they must’ve had possessed the corresponding confidence.”

At that instant, Emlyn felt that Viscount Ernes made plenty of sense, and he could hardly rebut him. He believed that it was because he and Miss Magician were too foolish, resulting in her slamming headfirst into danger. It had nothing to do with him.

The next instant, Emlyn felt embarrassed and frustrated, filled with anger towards himself.

Finally, Emlyn figured out another problem:

Regardless of whether the intel exposes any danger or not, Ernes Boyar should’ve clearly informed me of this point because figuring out the level of danger, the source of danger, and how the danger manifested itself. It held immense importance in the subsequent exploration, one that can’t be missed!

He did it on purpose! Emlyn came to a final conclusion as his scarlet eyes narrowed. He raised his chin and said, “Indeed. It’s easy to tell, but I’m more curious about the danger lurking in that ancient abandoned castle.”

Ernes picked up the black tea that nearly resembled the color of blood and sipped it.

“I’m not sure either. Lord Nibbs didn’t mention anything.”

Emlyn’s expression sank. Just as he was about to make a derisive remark, he suddenly saw Odora Cosmi walk into the activity room and look at him.

“Emlyn, it’s time for the meeting.”

“Alright.” Emlyn reined in his emotions and pressed onto the bottom half of his vest, standing up unhurriedly.

Following him down the stairs underground, he finally couldn’t help but softly ask, “Baron Cosmi, who am I actually meeting? How should I address ’Him?”

Cosmi, who looked like a middle-aged gentleman, didn’t hide the truth. He replied with deep respect, “Duke Olmer.”

Duke Olmer… Emlyn subconsciously straightened his back and cast his gaze to the lamps on the wall. He appeared to use the reflection of the metal surface to check on his appearance.

“He” was one of the three dukes that held up the Sanguine, an ancient powerhouse who existed before the Cataclysm. His title was “Round Moon,” with an age exceeding three thousand years. He had once followed in the footsteps of Ancestor Lilith!

Without a doubt, this was synonymous with the history and glory of the Sanguine!

After passing several secret doors, Emlyn and Cosmi arrived inside a metal-gray hall.

The ground and walls were filled with green grass, flowers, and grain. Insects were crawling between the plants, making Emlyn feel as though he had left the city and arrived somewhere rural. He felt life thriving all around him.

Such a scene didn’t seem too odd, but on careful inspection, there were many strange points.

The grass had mouth-like crevices with fibers flying out of them to capture the insects. The flowers used their leaves as hands to harvest pollen for themselves. The grains were heavy, occasionally emitting wailing from inside. There was a myriad spectrum of extraordinary insects. Some had snakes for heads, others birds.

These things grew lusher the closer it was to the middle of the hall. Surrounding the area was a grave filled with exuberant spirits.

Cosmi faced the grave and reverently bowed.

“Your Grace, Emlyn White is here.”

“Good afternoon, Your Grace.” Emlyn didn’t don his usual arrogance and was, in fact, a little flustered.

Inside the grave, a mellow voice which didn’t betray its owner’s age chuckled.

“A very outstanding young Sanguine.

“Cosmi, you may leave for now.”

“Yes, Your Grace.” Cosmi bowed in response and left the metal-gray hall that was filled with freshness.

Emlyn stood there, listening to the mellow voice from the grave.

“In the morning, Nibbs informed me that you obtained the Artificial Vampire Beyonder characteristic that corresponds to the viscount title?”

“Yes, but it has been corrupted and requires purification.” Emlyn hadn’t mentioned the need to remove the mental corruption in the Beyonder characteristics, because he believed that it was a trivial matter to the Sanguine. At the very least, Baron Cosmi had previously confirmed that it was possible.

Olmer tersely acknowledged.

“Very well. I’ll personally purify that characteristic.”

"He" paused before saying, "Although the Sanguine enjoy a long life, we will still mature and grow old. There will be new births and deaths. Regardless, nurturing young members is a necessity for any race. As for the excellent talent and outstanding abilities you have recently showcased, they have made you a target we place great importance on. Therefore, I personally came to meet you to give you some tests so as to expedite your growth." Excellent talent and outstanding abilities… Emlyn raised his chin slightly higher once again.

He then sighed inwardly.

Indeed, just as Mr. Hanged Man determined, there will be a test and mission, as well as an interview…

Amidst his overflowing emotions, Emlyn replied reverently, "I'm always prepared."

"Not bad," Olmer's mellow voice sounded from the grave. "Your next mission is to find the key members of the Rose School of Thought that are hiding in Backlund. There are very few clues for this, and many situations will require you to carry out the investigation by yourself."

Rose School of Thought? They have a grudge with us Sanguine? They seemed to be taking in some believers of the Primordial Moon? Emlyn actually knew quite a bit about the Rose School of Thought via the Tarot Club, but he deliberately hid this without showcasing it.

"Apart from taking in believers of the Primordial Moon, they have in their possession one of the holy artifacts of us Sanguine. It was something left by the Ancestor. We need to retrieve it." There was a solemnity in Olmer's voice.

Left by the Ancestor… Holy artifact of the Sanguine… Emlyn didn't hesitate to say, "Your Grace, I'll work hard to find the key members of the Rose School of Thought in Backlund."

Olmer's voice turned mellow.

“Very good. Get some of the intel from Cosmi in a while and seek out an incisive point.”

Emlyn was already eager to do so, but he still restrained himself, asking in deliberation, “Your Grace, do you know about the abandoned ancient castle in Delaire Forest?”

“You wish to head there? It’s very dangerous,” Olmer said from inside the grave.

Emlyn didn’t explain as he directly asked, “What kind of danger?”

Olmer chuckled.

“That ancient castle might be older than me, even older than Delaire Forest.

“I do not know who built it. I only know that there’s something sealed underground, and it hides an immense secret.

“Any creature that approaches it will be in danger of being corrupted by the force within. We once imagined that it has something to do with the Abyss, but a Devil suffered corruption after being thrown into the ancient castle as well, turning crazy and chaotic from his cold and cruel demeanor.”

Then why didn’t you attempt to open the seal to figure out the situation? Emlyn mumbled inwardly but didn’t say a word.

Olmer didn’t speak further as “He” ended the conversation and dismissed Emlyn.

In the evening, Backlund was covered with dark clouds as a drizzle began falling.

Emlyn White wore a hat and walked under a sheltered veranda, his scarlet eyes locked onto Viscount Ernes Boyar who was browsing some antique stores.

He was upset that Ernes had given him incomplete intelligence, so he had subconsciously tailed him after leaving the Odora villa.

But after a while, he felt lost. He hadn’t figured out how to deal with Ernes or how severe a lesson he should teach him.

Chapter 970 - Talent at Soliciting Donations

◆ ◆ ◆

After blankly following Ernes Boyar for a distance, Emlyn White gradually abandoned his thoughts.

He glanced at the area beyond the veranda as the downpour grew in intensity. He couldn’t help but think, How should I punish Ernes? Although he had done so because he likely followed orders or a cue, it’s still despicable!

As for Lord Nibbs… I presently do not have the ability. But wait, once I become a marquis or a duke, I’ll definitely make him pay the price!

Miss Magician has already completed her exploration of the ancient abandoned castle. I’m not sure if Lord Nibbs had sent Sanguine to monitor the area… From her tone, description, and the feedback given by Mr. Fool, there was probably no monitors… Could it be that Lord Nibbs didn’t send any Sanguine to the vicinity of the ancient castle? But what’s the point of such a test? Or could it be that they missed it because of some problems?

Amidst his thoughts, Emlyn White felt that he needed to get someone to discuss the matter of punishing Ernes Boyar. He was severely lacking in such experience.

Subconsciously, the first candidate of choice that came to him was The Hanged Man. This senior member of the Tarot Club was shown to be extremely experienced in various matters. He was extraordinarily reliable and had never left the other members disappointed.

After hesitating for a few seconds, Emlyn struck down this choice. This was because this matter involved the Sanguine's internal test. To consult the Tarot Club members before he obtained an answer damaged his pride and overall image of the Sanguine!

By the same reason, he eliminated The World as a choice.

Of course, he believed he could guess the suggestion that The World would give: Kill him!

There's no need to go that far… Emlyn mumbled inwardly. As he aimlessly tailed Ernes Boyar, he began expanding the candidates to the real world.

Then, he realized he didn't have anyone to choose from. He almost had zero friends.

Eliminating his parents who were Sanguine as well, he only had two or three people in mind. They were the Harvest Church's Father Utravsky and Detective Sherlock Moriarty, who had a mysterious background and a myriad of means at his disposal.

Sherlock hasn't returned after leaving Backlund. Sigh, I can only seek out Father Utravsky tomorrow. But I can't be that direct… Emlyn quickly made up his mind. He walked past Ernes Boyar, who entered a watch shop, and headed for the end of the veranda where there were several rental carriages.

Getting in the carriage, he felt the wheels turning. He casually glanced out the window and saw more raindrops striking the glass, drawing out trails that streaked down.

In his blurred vision, carriages drove past.

Audrey retracted her gaze from the rainy scene outside the carriage and glanced at her lady's maid, Annie, before communicating with Susie silently.

The look in her eyes, her expression, and her not obvious body language said: We're almost home. I'm a little nervous.

On the ground, Susie shook her tail, raised her paw, and adjusted the gold-rimmed glasses hanging by her neck. Together with the changes in the colors of her Ether Body and Body of Heart and Mind, she expressed herself:

Don't worry. That Ma'am Escalante, who's a psychiatrist on the surface, is only a Telepathist. She won't be able to see through your lies.

Audrey nodded gently and watched her carriage enter the Hall family's luxurious villa and stop in front of the sheltered foyer.

Ever since joining the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, she had begun spending less time at home. She had originally planned on meeting Ma'am Escalante from the Psychology Alchemists at 22 Phelps Street in North Borough, but since Mr. Dwayne Dantès had left for the Southern Continent and wasn't in the foundation, there was no need for that.

In the study she called her own, Audrey met Ma'am Escalante Oseleka who had black hair reaching her waist and a baby face.

"I must apologize. I'd been busy meeting up with friends after returning to Backlund. My subsequent joining of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation has delayed my meeting with you until today." After leaving Susie outside, Audrey elegantly bowed to express her attitude. In fact, this has been deliberate. By dragging out their meeting for about a month, her digestion of the Psychiatrist potion and advancement to Hypnotist became rather reasonable. It was the progress one would expect from a genius and nothing else.

Escalante returned the greeting without much thought.

"I heard that you have been busy with children who desire knowledge. Your virtues are more dazzling than diamonds."

As Audrey gestured for her to sit, she walked to a single-seater and tersely acknowledged.

“Those children are in situations I’ve never seen before. There’s often a voice inside me that’s urging me to do something. Ma’am Escalante, if you’re free, you can join me and the staff of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation to go visit the different schools. There, you will get to see what most children in the world are experiencing.”

Having said that, she chuckled as though being self-deprecatory.

“I apologize. I’ve recently been accustomed to kick-start such topics. It’s because I wish for more nobles and the wealthy to involve themselves in such charities. I hope they can donate more to help even more children.”

After hearing Audrey, Escalante replied somewhat uncomfortably, “I will do so. I’ll also donate some money to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.”

“No, I’m not forcing you to donate. This has to be an action that comes from the heart, and something voluntary. I only wish for you to take a look and then inform the people around you of these children’s plight and their possible futures. This includes the members of the Psychology Alchemists.” Audrey shook her head, rejecting Escalante’s suggestion.

“Alright.” Escalante first nodded gently in agreement before feeling that there was something ridiculous in this matter: Miss Audrey’s true motives were to solicit donations from the Psychology Alchemists.

But this was a secret, extraordinary underground organization!

This was no different from soliciting donations from the Aurora Order!

Audrey didn’t continue discussing matters related to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. Instead, she said, “Ma’am Escalante, I have something I’d like to inform you of.”

“What is it?” Escalante “read” the solemnity, joy, and pride from her actions and emotions.

Audrey smiled and said, “I’ve already become a Hypnotist.”

“…” At that moment, Escalante suspected that Audrey had hypnotized her.

Although she knew that Audrey had obtained the Hypnotist potion formula previously, how long ago was that?

“You should be able to determine that I’m not lying,” Audrey said with a smile.

Only then did Escalante snap to her senses as she asked in surprise and doubt, “You seem to have some extraordinary encounter?”

“It’s to have the courage to make use of matters,” Audrey said things that couldn’t be any truer.

Escalante frowned and said with some hesitation, “You wish for the Sequence 5 potion formula?”

“Yes. What do I need to do, or what price needs to be paid?” Audrey didn’t hide her motives.

Escalante looked at the beautiful, blonde, and green-eyed lady in front of her and deliberated.

“This isn’t something that’s up to me to decide. I will report it and try to arrange for you to meet with Hilbert and Stephen.”

She was referring to psychologist ad jewelry designer, Hilbert Alucard, and furniture merchant, Stephen Hampres.

Clearly, in this group of Psychology Alchemists members, Escalante was in a subordinate position.

Audrey wasn’t surprised by Escalante’s reaction, but this didn’t mean that her handling of matters wasn't without a problem.

A Sequence 6 Beyonder who had the wish to advance was someone that required deep importance to be attached to in any secret organization. This was even the case with the orthodox Churches. They were people who were qualified to meet high-ranking members directly!

This also meant that, after advancing to Hypnotist, Audrey was already an elite in the middle-ranking members of the Psychology Alchemists. Her next goal was to become a quasi high-ranking member. The person she needed to meet was a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists' Council, and not Hilbert or Stephen.

As her thoughts flashed across her mind, Audrey deliberately showed some of her displeasure.

Escalante acutely noticed this and hurriedly explained, "Meeting Hilbert and Stephen is to confirm your condition before a councilor meets you.

"In fact, with your present level, you should be leading a team and recruiting new members. But with your identity, status, and daily environment, we have canceled that plan, afraid that it would influence your normal day-to-day life."

Councilor… I wonder how many councilors from the Psychology Alchemists there are in Backlund… Could it be the royal family's consultant, Hvin Rambis? Audrey nodded in thought and said, "I can understand that and will await your arrangements."

She then diverted the topic and asked with a curious look, "Ma'am Escalante, do you know what's the name of the Sequence 5 potion of the Spectator pathway?"

Seeing this blonde, green-eyed, young noble lady taking on such a demure pose, Escalante silently heaved a sigh of relief.

"I've once heard Hilbert mention that it's called Dreamwalker."

Dreamwalker… This is somewhat different from what I imagined. Or it could be that “dream” is just an analogy. To be precise, it should be Subconscious Walker? Audrey didn’t conceal her contemplation and analysis before directing her questions to psychology and various information.

After having Escalante stay for dinner, she sent the lady to the door where she got on a carriage.

At this moment, it was dark outside with gales roaring and rain pouring.

Amidst the pouring rain, howling winds, and the dark night, a steam sailboat hybrid was cruising through the safe sea route in the Berserk Sea with tourists on board.

Klein had already left the Southern Continent and had returned to Desi Bay as Dwayne Dantès.

Amidst the shaking ship, he suddenly woke up, got out of bed, and headed to the window of his first-class cabin’s living room to look outside.

Amidst the downpour, three huge strange pure-black sailboats were silently cruising over.

Hanging on their sides were lanterns with three black sails on masts almost a hundred meters long.

And on its deck stood a mottled stone chair that was two to three meters high; its back facing the cabin. No one was sitting on it.

It was the Black Emperor-symbol of the King of the Five Seas, Nast!

Chapter 971 - Restraint

◆

On the observation deck of the liner, the bugle was sounded. It tore through the obstacles put up by the wind and rain, awakening all the passengers on board.

Unable to dress up in time, they could only don a coat or their pajamas, rushing barefoot to the window to observe the situation outside.

Half of the passengers quickly saw a gigantic sailboat that didn’t adhere to common sense. They saw its three pitch-black sails and the blob of pale flickering yellow amidst the dark environment.

Together with the howling winds, spattering rain, and the moonless and starless night sky, many passengers felt as though the ship was approaching them from hell, bringing with it an inexplicable sense of horror and dominance.

After a brief pause and frenzy, a name surfaced in their minds: Black Emperor!

Anyone who had been out at sea for some time, or people who lived in port cities in the various colonies, more or less knew the existence of such a pirate ship!

“Sigh, may the Storm be with you and me.”

“May the Goddess watch over us!”

“Holy Lord of Storms!”

As the passengers subconsciously made prayers, they were filled with horror and helplessness.

These passengers knew very well that the owner of the Black Emperor had the highest bounty on the Five Seas. In a particular sense, he was the King of Pirates, and was a powerful figure who could remain alive despite the campaigns of the various fleets from different nations. He was definitely not someone the cannons and crew of a liner could resist.

This meant that they were about to fall into the hands of pirates!

Many women couldn't help but imagine being raped by the pirates and being sold to unfamiliar lands. Some trembled while others collapsed to the ground. Some rummaged for daggers or revolvers; it was unknown if they wanted to resist, or if they were unwilling to face the worst outcome. Having failed to find weapons, some moved a clothes rack to their side.

The men didn't react any better. Apart from a number of them drawing weapons in a bid to organize themselves to resist, the remaining froze in a daze or sought places to hide. Other cursed the darn liner and the King of the Five Seas.

Finally, the captain's voice boomed into the ears of every passenger via the broadcasting equipment or something else.

"Silence! Don't be afraid!

"The owner of the Black Emperor has his own code. He's not like other pirates. His subordinates can only plunder for items and wealth, nothing else!

Such words were repeated a few times as the panicking passengers finally calmed down and no longer exhibited such horror.

Compared to the outcomes they had imagined, being able to live and not be raped was an excellent outcome.

Almost a minute late, a number of passengers were overwhelmed with sadness and cried upon realizing how their hard-earned savings would be wiped out.

Some of them were doing business through loans. If they were unable to pay their loans, it was possible that their family would end up on the streets, relying on the workhouses for survival.

Upon having this thought, they hurriedly took action and hid their wealth in all kinds of hidden compartments, hoping to keep as much as they could from the pirates. After doing this, they held their weapons tight, prepared to fight the pirates to the death at critical moments.

Even feral beasts would fight back when cornered, why not humans?

At this moment, many of the pirates on the Black Emperor were waiting by the broadside according to their orders. They were prepared to jump onto the prey once the distance was closed.

Their second mate, Horror Viscount Bird Mustang was holding a telescope as he observed the liner opposite him without much thought. He was inwardly calculating how much longer before the two ships met.

This pirate, whose bounty had exceeded ten thousand pounds, wore an Intis-styled shirt with complicated patterns on his sleeves and collars. He donned a dark red captain’s attire, as though he was awaiting the commencement of a ball, and not a pirate attack.

Suddenly, his vision blurred and he could no longer see the liner!

Bird Mustang hurriedly searched with his telescope, but regardless of the direction he aimed it at, there was nothing but stormy waves and red-headed sea eagles who enjoyed hunting fish during storms.

Such a huge liner had vanished!

The light in Bird Mustang’s eyes flickered as he failed to make an accurate judgment.

“Where’s the ship?”

“Where did such a huge ship go?”

“It was still around!”

The pirates on deck also noticed something amiss as they exclaimed.

A ghost ship? No, there aren’t any ghost ships with such a make. This is a steam and sail hybrid that got popular in recent decades… An illusion? Someone had hidden a liner with a large-scale illusion? An illusion at this scale has to have been done by a demigod… Bird Mustang’s thoughts raced as he retracted his telescope and headed for the cabin.

During this process, the distance he traveled seemed to distort. In about eight steps, Bird Mustang covered quite a sizable distance and arrived in front of the captain’s cabin. He reverently bowed and said, “Earl Nast, something abnormal has happened with the hunt.”

On the Black Emperor, King of the Five Seas Nast continued having himself addressed as an earl, as it was a title conferred upon him by Emperor Roselle.

Of course, he had publicly announced that it was a matter of time before he established a pirates’ kingdom, becoming a duke, king, or even an emperor.

After a brief silence, a solemn voice sounded from the captain’s cabin:

“Circle around it.”

“By your will!” Bird Mustang didn’t ask why as he directly accepted the order.

Of course, he could imagine the reason.

Be it an illusion or not, to make such a huge steam and sail hybrid liner vanish from the scrutiny of hundreds of pirates, it was definitely not something a Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder could accomplish. The ship definitely had a demigod or a powerhouse wielding a demigod-level Sealed Artifact!

And to clash with an unknown demigod for an ordinary liner was definitely an irrational act. Even if the Earl of White Maple Nast, as the King of the Five Seas, he wouldn’t do such rash acts unless there was something worth fighting for.

From this angle, the demigod was only hiding on the liner and had not launched any counterattack. This also implied that he didn’t wish to clash with the Black Emperor and the King of the Five Seas. Therefore, he had only exhibited his existence for shock and awe purposes.

Bird Mustang immediately got the sailors to leave the broadside and turn the Black Emperor around.

At this point, a huge and heavy red-headed sea eagle suddenly flew out of its flock and headed for the Black Emperor, spiraling above the ghost ship.

Amidst the pirates’ confusion, the red-headed sea eagle looked down upon the deck and spoke deeply in a human’s voice:

“I wish to meet the Earl of White Maple.”

Bird Mustang was taken aback for a second before he cast his eyes at the cabin.

King of the Five Seas Nast’s solemn voice sounded again. Instead of directly answering the sea eagle, he instructed his subordinates, “Let him in.”

Bird Mustang immediately followed the order as the sea eagle swooped down in the storm. Its body gradually changed and turned into a humanoid form.

When it landed on the deck, it was no longer a red-headed sea eagle, but a man with a tall top hat and tuxedo. His face wore a feathered mask.

Bird Mustang's eyes dilated slightly as though he was trying to take in the figure clearer.

But no matter how much he observed it, he was unable to discover anything abnormal about this exaggerated man. It was as though there wasn't a red-headed sea eagle from the very beginning.

A few seconds later, Bird Mustang's pupils dilated even more because he saw the figure's side profile when it walked past him.

This man, who appeared like he was an invitee at a banquet, was very thin. His side profile was about the width of two fingers!

At that instant, Bird Mustang felt as though he was seeing a walking paper figurine, but it was also slightly thicker than one!

A monster… He gulped with great difficulty as he watched the terrifying demigod walk towards the cabin.

The pirates on deck quickly retreated and leaned against the shipboard as though a nightmare had just walked past them.

To them, this abnormally proportioned man was something they had never seen before. It was more harrowing than the many monsters they had seen in the past.

At the third story of the cabin, outside the captain's cabin.

Klein held the handle, twisted it, and opened the door.

The reason he had made himself appear so strange was partially due to having no choice, but it was also partially deliberate. The former was because the red-headed sea eagle wasn't big enough, so after creating the clothes and mask, there was no way to create a normal human's body, even without the innards. The deliberate choice was because he was beginning to try out his theories on acting as a Bizarro Sorcerer. He had some ideas regarding this:

The term “Sorcerer” wasn’t key. What was key was to use the methods of a sorcerer to appear bizarre!

With a light creak, the dark black door opened, revealing the interior of the captain’s cabin.

Candle lamps drooped down from above, with 41 on the left and 40 on the right in an asymmetrical manner. At the end of it, a black platform rose up, surrounding an iron-black chair.

King of the Five Seas Nast’s figure was relatively normal. He was slightly taller than 1.9 meters, unlike the nonhuman form which resembled a giant that Klein had previously encountered.

He was still wearing a miniaturized crown with a black robe with silver ends. He had a squarish face with slight wrinkles. He had a short black mustache underneath his chin, and his black eyes swirled with a red glow. It made one bow their heads without realizing it.

“I’ve never met you before,” Nast said in a deep voice, “Mr. Bizarro Sorcerer.”

Klein took off his hat and bowed.

“You know me now.”

Nast made his voice which made Spirit Bodies tremble resound inside the captain’s cabin.

“Speak. Why are you visiting me?”

“Emperor, I wish to know of your impression of Emperor Roselle. Everyone knows that you and your father have met ‘Him’ in the past far more than once,” Klein replied without being affected.

Nast swept the paper figurine-like demigod as his dark red light brightened significantly.

“Have a seat first.”

Before he finished his sentence, Klein felt a potent suppressive force on him. His body involuntarily sat on a chair beside him.

However, he was only here as a marionette. With a flick of the Spirit Body Threads, the figure that was thin as a book had quickly restored its balance.

Chapter 972 - Nast's Memories

◆

With the pressure relieved, Klein casually pulled a chair over and placed it by the door, sitting opposite King of the Five Seas Nast with the entire hall separating them.

Although the Pirate King was more than 1.9 meters tall and was sitting on a black platform, allowing him to look down in a domineering manner, Klein didn't play second fiddle in this encounter. He wore his tall top hat again.

After a brief silence, Nast, who had the official title of Earl of White Maple, said with a solemn tone, "Give me a reason why I should answer your question."

Klein's thin body casually leaned back as he said, "You will not need to hear the same request when you have something you need to trade with me in the future."

The dark red light flickered in Nast's black eyes as he said, "I basically know all the saints active in this world, but that doesn't include you."

Klein caressed the feathered mask on his face and laughed. Without answering, he asked in return, "Have you met Zaratul?"

"I've met 'Him' twice in Emperor Roselle's palace. I'd also interacted with quite a number of Secret Order members," Nast replied with a calm and direct but extremely domineering tone.

Quite a number of Secret Order members… You should introduce me to them when the opportunity arises… Klein couldn't help but quip.

He then smiled and said, "I've also met Zaratul."

Nast raised his hand to stroke his short black beard. His already tall figure seemed to burgeon, making the mood in the captain's cabin even gloomier and repressed.

After a few seconds, he stared at Klein from above and said, "My impression of Emperor Roselle is very simple:

"No one is more suitable than 'Him' to be the Black Emperor."

He didn't explain what "Black Emperor" meant or pointed to, ignoring if the demigod opposite him understood or not.

Is that so… From this King of the Five Seas's words, although the emperor's diary implied that he made up his mind only in his later years to switch to the Black Emperor pathway and make preparations, he had long had such inclinations. He had unconsciously exhibited it and set up the situation ahead of time… Klein thought in enlightenment.

He believed that Nast's impression of Emperor Roselle was limited to that. After all, they had only met a few times. Hence, he switched topics.

"In the emperor's later years, did 'He' get you or your father to do something secret?"

Nast's crown shook a little as he replied, "Someone had once asked me the same question."

Klein laughed and asked with a bold guess, "Bernadette?"

"Yes." Nast held the two sides of his black throne with his hands. "Back then, she was very young and immature to ask such a question. With Emperor Roselle's level in his later years, compared to handing something secret to me and my father, what could be kept more secret than doing it 'Himself?"

This is implying that I'm as immature as Bernadette back then… Klein sighed and said, "To people who are concerned about this, one wouldn't abandon even the slightest sliver of hope."

This was also why he wished to meet the King of the Five Seas after concealing the liner.

He was now trying to find clues to the door of light above the gray fog in the real world. Apart from confirming who the third transmigrator was, he had to delve deep into Emperor Roselle's matters. This was a necessary decision!

The dark red glow in Nast's eyes contracted and expanded.

"What's your relationship with Emperor Roselle?"

Klein thought and said with a sigh, "We can be considered old friends."

After all, they had been above that mysterious door of light, and the cocoons they were in were neighbors with only a thin obstacle in between them. They had been hanging there for centuries or even millennia.

This was a connection that stemmed from reality, and psychologically, having read so many of the emperor's diaries, Klein had long treated the emperor as a fellow countryman. He shared the same feelings for home and sense of identity with him.

Nast stared at the thin demigod who sat by the door before he retracted his gaze and solemnly said, "Any more questions?"

Klein was already prepared. He asked in an unhurried tone, "Do you feel that there was anything abnormal about Emperor Roselle in his later years?"

The slightly wrinkled Nast remained silent for quite a while before saying, “I don’t know enough about ‘Him,’ so I wasn’t able to notice anything abnormal.

“The only thing that made me feel odd was that when me and my father met ‘Him,’ ‘He’ would stand at a floor-to-ceiling window facing west. He would stare into the distance. This would happen in the morning, noon, and the evening. And that room wasn’t the only one with a floor-to-ceiling window.”

“West… Into the distance… the Fog Sea?” Klein seemed to mutter to himself as though seeking confirmation.

He recalled that the emperor’s diary had mentioned of a mysterious primitive island, and he recalled the Abyss that hid somewhere in the Fog Sea.

Nast nodded slightly and said, “That was my guess as well.”

Phew… Klein silently exhaled. After some consideration, he stood up and said, “I’m done with my questions. Please pardon me for my intrusion.”Your Lordship, I wonder if I can help you in a transaction?”

He was fulfilling his promise.

Nast fell silent for two seconds and said, “Help me find the Card of Blasphemy that corresponds to the Black Emperor.”

For an instant, Klein suspected that the Pirate King was testing him, but he immediately felt that an unknown demigod had little to do with the Black Emperor card. He said with a smile, “I’ll try my best.

“However, the questions from before aren’t worth a Card of Blasphemy. If I can obtain it, I’ll trade you for the information inside it. Of course, I might only provide clues to that card.”

Nast caressed the armrest of his iron-black throne and said in a deadpan manner, “So be it.”

Klein took off his hat again, bowed, and turned to leave before returning to the deck.

Under Horror Viscount Bird Mustang and company's gaze, he raised his arms.

His body rapidly contracted as the feather mask on his face spread out. In just two or three seconds, his entire person became an ordinary red-headed sea eagle.

This sea eagle immediately flapped its wings, flying into the dark storm, vanishing from the sights of the pirates of the Black Emperor.

That's a demigod… Bird Mustang looked into midair and sighed.

Although making a further advancement at Sequence 5 increased the inclination towards madness and a loss of control, making it highly possible for Beyonders to fail their advancement, the title of being a demigod remained attractive. As long as one successfully took the step, they could attain godhood, allowing their life to undergo a fundamental change. Be it in terms of lifespan or powers, it far exceeded that of humans, allowing them to reign above all.

On the liner, Klein abandoned his control over the red-headed sea eagle, allowing it to plunge into the sea to be fish food without anyone seeing it.

And at this moment, the passengers on board felt high-strung because the Black Emperor was about to approach.

In fact, this should've happened a few minutes ago, but for some reason, the Black Emperor had ignored the liner and headed forward. Yet, the liner didn't use this opportunity to escape, and it had instead circled around the Black Emperor, maintaining a few hundred meters from it.

This bizarre situation continued for a while before it finally ended, leaving dozens of meters between the two ships.

The Black Emperor passed the liner and steered into the stormy night without returning.

The passengers and crew watched blankly and realized the reality of the situation only a few minutes later.

The Black Emperor was gone! It hadn't attempted to plunder them!

A number of passengers cheered while others had tears stream down their faces. A few collapsed to the ground and relaxed. Only a few maintained their lucidity, feeling puzzled as to everything that had happened. However, they were unable to find an answer that agreed with the situation at hand. All they could do was console themselves.

The Black Emperor must've completed a plunder already. Since this is a liner and not a cargo ship, it didn't catch its eye!

As the euphoria spread across the ship, Kleindonning the appearance of Dwayne Dantès-cast his gaze to the north.

Compared to King of the Five Seas Nast, who had only met Roselle a few times, there was another person who knew the emperor even better: Queen Mystic Bernadette!

Being an equal peer to Nast, she had recently been in Backlund!

After I return to Backlund, I'll get Admiral of Stars to contact Queen Mystic and try to meet her as soon as possible… Klein retracted his gaze, drew the curtains, and went to bed.

In the Rorsted Archipelago waters, on the Future.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya finally received a letter from Queen Mystic Bernadette.

She had no idea when the invisible messenger arrived, but this didn't stop her from effusing her joy.

Tearing open the envelope and spreading open the letter, Cattleya eagerly read the first line below the salutation:

“That’s indeed Ciel’s descendant…”

That Artisan is really Emperor Roselle’s direct descendant… I can’t allow him to mix with the believers of the Primordial Moon. I have to bring him on board the Future… As Cattleya thought, she nodded indiscernibly.

After making up her mind, she thought of Artisan Cielf’s character and morals that only spelled trouble. She felt that she had the responsibility and duty to discipline him.

Amidst her deliberation, she walked to the window of the captain’s cabin and cast her gaze outside.

After some searching, her gaze fell onto the shipboard where Frank Lee was munching on mushrooms.

“Frank,” Cattleya shouted out with her normal tone.

Frank, who had his sleeves rolled up, snapped out of his deep thought.

“Captain, is there something?”

Cattleya said seriously, “I’ll get you an assistant for your experiments.”

Frank was taken aback before he revealed a pure smile.

“Alright!”

Chapter 973 - New “Angel”

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon seeing Frank’s smile, Cattleya had mixed feelings. She then retracted her gaze and turned it to the nearby fishing village where the Future was docked.

No one expected this place to be an important base of the Moses Ascetic Order.

To avoid the pursuit of the Aurora Order, Cattleya and her crew had been docked here recently!

She wasn’t in a rush to set sail but was prepared to go ashore. She planned on using the equipment in the fishing village to make contact with her subordinates who were monitoring Artisan Cielf in Bayam. Through that, she could confirm the situation and make plans.

Only with this in place could the Future set sail again, headed for the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, Bayam, that was several days away.

†

In Backlund, the sky brightened especially early in July, but the overall temperature wasn’t considered hot. It didn’t even exceed 30°C.

Emlyn wore a top hat to shelter him from the sunlight that penetrated the clouds as he disembarked a carriage and walked into the Harvest Church.

Looking over, he saw the mountainlike Father Utravsky who wore a brown priest robe and a clergyman's bonnet. He was standing in front of the Sacred Emblem of Life, preaching to the few believers that came to pray in the morning.

Emlyn didn't take a second look as he walked straight to the back of the cathedral. He arrived in a room that he called his, and he familiarly changed into his priest robes.

As he wiped the candle stands, he waited for the believers to leave. About twenty minutes later, he finally found an opportunity to sit beside Bishop Utravsky and muttered to himself while looking at the Sacred Emblem of Life, "Father, I have a question I would like to consult you about."

The thin-browed, light blue-eyed Bishop Utravsky with some clear wrinkles replied with a smile, "Go ahead."

Emlyn held his breath and verbalized the words he had been thinking over the entire night.

"If—and I'm saying, if there's a distant relative who fools you, making you and your friend fall into danger and almost lose your life, and this matter isn't suitable in court, how would you punish him?"

Despite sitting down, Utravsky remained like a hill. He said in a deep but gentle voice, "First, you have to confirm if the relative had made a mistake due to negligence, or if he had deliberately fooled you and lead you into a trap. If it's the former, you need to warn him, remind him, and teach him, instead of thinking of punishing him. If it's the latter, you still need to confirm if this is the way he usually does things.

"If it is, then you need to eliminate him. Otherwise, he will definitely bring more harm to others, bringing harm to innocents. By ending his life and sending him back to the land, it will restart the cycle of life. It's a type of compassion and a type of purification…"

…Elimination… Father speaks of murder in a way that's more natural, mellow, and calmer than The World! Emlyn's facial muscles twitched as he hurriedly interrupted Utravsky's reply.

"No, he usually doesn't act this way. It's just that due to various reasons, he had targeted me this once. I-I don't wish to kill him because of this."

Just as he said that, Emlyn froze. He had apparently, probably, most likely, just expressed the fact that he was the victim, expressing that this matter was a Sanguine internal matter.

Utravsky turned to look at him and revealed a smile.

"Not bad. You already understand how precious life is."

Emlyn forced a smile.

"Then, how should he be punished?"

Utravsky looked at the Sacred Emblem of Life in front of him.

"I do not advocate appealing to violence. You can bring him here and have him listen to my preaching and reading the bible. He will understand the value of life and experience the compassion of Earth Mother. He will serve to redeem his sins."

Isn't this what I experienced… Emlyn was taken aback before realizing that this method was in line with his intentions.

This neither caused Ernes Boyar's death, nor was it comparable to simply beating him up and demanding compensation. More importantly, this wouldn't escalate to a conflict that would cause strife among the Sanguine!

Of course, every method had its flaws. To Emlyn, the biggest problem was:

How was he to bring Ernes Boyar to the Harvest Church?

From the moment he began doing volunteer work here, all the

Sanguine in Backlund knew to avoid this region. Ernes Boyar was no exception. It was impossible to trick him into coming in!

And if he resorted to violence, Emlyn believed that, with the ring bestowed to him by Ancestor Lilith, as well as Miss Magician's powerful spellbook that could be rented, defeating Ernes Boyar wasn't a difficult endeavor. However, to control him wasn't simple. After all, he was a Sanguine Viscount, equivalent to that of a Sequence 5 Beyonder. In addition, although Ernes Boyar wasn't too old, he had quite a collection.

Under such circumstances, the extent of which to directly taking action was hard to gauge. It could easily lead to death, and Emlyn would be blamed for it.

Perhaps I need some help… In Backlund, there are many members of the Tarot Club. If we work together, we should be able to easily control Ernes… Uh, I can't expose my identity because of this. The cooperation should be done in stages, so that we don't have to meet… Amidst his thoughts, Emlyn had made his decision. He planned on assigning a mission during the Tarot Gathering next week in search for help.

He nodded gently in response to Father Utravsky's suggestion.

"It sounds pretty good.

"I plan on making a decision a few days later after calming down."

Father Utravsky nodded and smiled.

"Fruits are obtained from planting them. It's a long process that requires patience. From the looks of it, you have understood this point."

Of course, it's such a simple principle! Emlyn raised his chin slightly as he habitually clasped his hands and prayed to the Sacred Emblem of Life.

†

22 Phelps Street, Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

Audrey placed a document in hand on the table and looked up at the wall clock in the director's office. She could hardly relax.

She had already made an appointment with Escalante to head over to Stephen Hampres's residence in the afternoon.

Clearly, this meant a test. If the Psychology Alchemists's team was careful enough, they would've already reported the news, and there might be a councilor secretly observing everything.

Based on her current level and abilities, although Audrey was unable to determine how terrifying a High-Sequence Spectator was, she could imagine the kinds of performance they had in certain domains. This made her uncontrollably nervous, afraid that she would be "seen through."

In fact, I should've delayed it a little more. Although the time and the emotions I showed are in line with logic in psychology, delaying a meeting would definitely incur suspicion. But compared to a little bit of suspicion, it's more important to wait for Mr. World to return from the Southern Continent. That way, I can directly arrange for them to meet at the foundation. I don't have to worry about a High-Sequence Spectator discovering anything… Sigh, Audrey, your plans weren't well-thought enough… Audrey sighed silently and cast Placate on herself to calm her emotions.

After the afternoon, she wasn't in a rush to leave the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. Sitting inside her office, she bowed her head, clasped her hands together, and softly prayed to Mr. Fool.

After completing this, she got onto her carriage with Annie and Susie, heading for the residence of the furniture merchant, Stephen Hampres.

Just as the carriage began moving, Audrey suddenly saw a gorgeous beam of light appear.

Amidst the beam of light, a twelve-winged angel bathed with golden light descended. The wings which were made of flames had wrapped her in layers before they dissipated layer after layer.

Audrey's vision quickly recovered as she swept her gaze past Annie and Susie through the corner of her eye in an unnoticeable manner. She realized that they hadn't noticed anything that had happened.

It's a little different from the previous angel… With Mr. Fool's greater reawakening, "His" angels have also recovered further? As the corners of her lips quivered, Audrey wiped the smile from her face, her inner heart becoming abnormally firm.

In less than half an hour, her carriage had stopped by Stephen Hampres's door.

After passing her hand to Annie, Audrey was helped down the carriage, and she walked straight to the door. She watched as her attendant pulled the doorbell.

Before long, Escalante came to open the door. Like before, she directly brought Audrey to the activity room on the first floor. Annie and Susie were brought to the living room by the servants.

Upon arriving at the activity room, Escalante reached out to hold the doorknob as she gestured for Audrey to enter.

This… Audrey had a guess, but she didn't show it. She slowly walked through the door which Escalante had opened.

Escalante didn't enter as she closed the activity room's door.

Audrey looked ahead and saw that on a single-seater facing the activity room's door, there was an elder sitting there quietly.

The elder wore a shirt, vest, and a jacket, matched with blue-gray trousers with lines adorning it, as well as a dark red bow tie. His hair was completely white but remained thick and lush. He had a warm and elegant bearing.

He had a pair of blue eyes that seemed to hide wisdom and knowledge. Apart from the wrinkles on his forehead, he didn't have any wrinkles elsewhere.

Audrey knew him. He was the royal family's consultant—Hvin Rambis!

Of course, Audrey had long known of this old gentleman's secret identity from the Tarot Club: a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists!

She didn't disguise her surprise, because she truly was surprised. Although she had guessed at the possibility of Hvin Rambis's appearance, she never expected him to appear directly. She imagined that he would observe her in secret, allowing Hilbert and Stephen to speak on his behalf.

"You're very surprised?" Hvin Rambis asked with a faint smile.

He then stood up and bowed.

"A pleasure meeting you, Miss Audrey."

Audrey deliberately opened her mouth before closing it again. Following that, she replied with a mixed smile, "I'm not sure how I should address you."

Hvin Rambis chuckled.

"Like always."

He pointed to the sofa beside them.

"Let's have a seat."

Audrey took a deep breath, wore a smile, and unhurriedly walked over. Sitting by the sofa, she maintained an adequate distance from him.

Chapter 974 - Mind World

◆ ◆ ◆

Hvin Rambis picked up the porcelain teacup and took a sip. Looking at Audrey, who sat in a flawless posture, he said genially, “There’s no need to act so reserved. This isn’t our first meeting. I still recall discussing Birman’s philosophy of ethics and Kongsoka’s pragmatism with you two years ago.”

Audrey smiled faintly and said, “I just find it difficult to put the idea of you and a Psychology Alchemists councilor together.”

Hvin Rambis hadn’t introduced himself, but it was a reasonable inference based on Audrey’s knowledge of the Psychology Alchemists and the present situation.

Hvin crossed his right leg and said with a smile, “This isn’t something worth paying attention to. Never forget that our Psychology Alchemists is an organization established with the goal of studying the psyche and to build knowledge. We are more about the academic side of things rather than handling matters. Heh, since it’s academic, you can always treat a councilor as a university’s professor.”

If she hadn’t learned from Mr. World that Hvin Rambis was behind Cuarón’s suicide, Audrey would’ve been able to conclude that he was a knowledgeable, amiable, humorous, and humble scholar, regardless of the amount of observation that she did. However, since she was wary, Audrey wasn’t someone who would so easily believe things that appeared on the surface.

As she looked at him and organized her words, she prevented herself from focusing too much on one point. She kept her thoughts lively and scattered to prevent herself from being hypnotized.

At this moment, her mind suddenly turned adrift. She seemed to see the seven pure lights that contained infinite knowledge, and the dense, indescribable figures. She saw them blanketing everything from high above.

This was the spirituality sky, the reflection of the spirituality in one's mind!

And beneath the spirituality sky was a deep, dark sea. Every drop of water resembled a point of light as though they represented an imprint on each subconscious.

Near this sea were several islands. One of them belonged to Audrey.

She clearly knew that this was a manifestation of her consciousness. What was exposed above the sea was what she could detect, and the parts covered by the "seawater" were her deeper consciousness that she was usually unable to grasp or know.

Floating above the island, Audrey looked to the bottom. She first noticed that the area was a solitary, quiet, gray blur. They screened out her vision, making her only capable of seeing the massive and dark black outlines of the subconscious, as well as the illusory and rippling sea of collective subconscious. She was unable to obtain much information from that.

Audrey was puzzled as to how she had entered this strange state when she saw large swaths of gray split apart like the sea deep in the sea of subconscious at the island below. It revealed a stone platform that had appeared at some point in time.

On the platform, a figure grew up rapidly in a fashion akin to blinking, entering Audrey's field of view almost instantly.

His hair was completely white but remained thick and lush. He wore a standard three-piece suit, matched with blue-gray trousers with lines adorning it, as well as a dark red bow tie. This man with deep wrinkles on his forehead was none other than Hvin Rambis.

Compared to the Hvin sitting on the sofa, he appeared more sinister. He didn't wear a smile, and his head was slightly bowed. It was as though he was observing Audrey's subconscious that lay behind.

In a few steps, he walked into Audrey's island of consciousness through the sea of collective subconscious. Then, he went from the subconscious to the area exposed above the sea like a silent visitor who didn't knock on the door or receive any permission.

After arriving on the island, Hvin Rambis raised his head. His facial skin was already covered in grayish-white scales. His irises were gold and vertical, and it didn't show any hint of emotion.

This… Floating in midair, Audrey observed this scene and fully understood the situation she was in.

This was the world of the mind, a mind world formed by the spirituality sky, sea of collective subconscious, and the island of consciousness!

Due to the blessings from Mr. Fool's angel, Hvin Rambis's intrusion of my Body of Heart and Mind and psyche through the sea of collective subconscious sounded alarms… That force has separated my most fundamental part of my self-conscious, allowing me to control everything on the island from the spirituality sky. Thus, I'm able to truly resist true forms of telepathy… How magical — No, how despicable of Hvin Rambis! He's not polite at all. He intruded into my "house" without gaining any permission or providing any notification! Audrey grumbled in midair.

After understanding her current situation, she secretly controlled the changes that were influencing the island while answering the casually seated Hvin Rambis in the real world.

"I'm also very reserved when facing university professors."

As she spoke, Audrey made her inner island "mumble."

This isn't a good analogy. As a elderly Psychology Alchemists councilor, he should be a Sequence 4 at least. This is a demigod, one that naturally makes one feel fear, awe, and reserved!

On the sofa, Hvin Rambis chuckled immediately.

"Then I won't be forcing you. I've heard about you from Hilbert. I heard that you've advanced from Psychiatrist to Hypnotist in a short few months. I'm very curious about how you did it? Oh, I've also heard of the answer you gave Escalante-having the courage to make use of matters. However, I wish to hear something more detailed."

At this moment, the Hvin Rambis on Audrey's mind island was observing his surroundings with a deadpan expression, listening the resonating voice. Audrey was already prepared for this as she deliberately pretended to be organizing her words. After a few seconds, she said, "It's just the superficial meaning of 'having courage to make use of matter.'"

"Uh… Let's put it this way. In my future plans, I've always had one of my options being a Psychiatrist. Since I've acquired the corresponding Beyonder powers, I-I was definitely very happy to try it out and help the people around me resolve their mental and psychological problems."

While saying that, she showed some signs of embarrassment towards such actions that bordered on childishness. Her mind island faithfully reflected

this.

After a pause, Audrey continued, "During this process, I discovered that my control over the potion's powers became better until, one day, I felt something in me shatter and fuse into my blood. It also allowed me to vaguely see illusory stars. Mr. Rambis, what does it represent?

"Uh, for some reason, I firmly decided to become a Hypnotist from that day. This might also be a cue from my subconscious."

After saying that, Audrey deliberately stuck out her tongue on her mind island like when she was little, doing things she usually wouldn't do. It was a way to prove that she was feeling a little embarrassed because playing psychiatrist was no different from playing princess when she was little.

And embarrassment often meant the truth.

Hvin Rambis nodded gently and said, "Very talented. You seem to have figured out the 'acting method' by yourself."

"Acting method?" Audrey wore a surprised and blank look both inside and outside before coming to a realization.

Hvin Rambis said with a genial smile, "It's exactly as you think it is. By acting based on the potion's name, and concluding the corresponding principles, that will speed up the digestion of the potion. It is an effective method for reducing the negative influences."

"However, before Sequence 6, we do not teach it because we do not advocate members using this method to accelerate the digestion of their potions. Surprisingly, you have figured it out yourself."

"Why don't you advocate it?" Audrey asked sincerely out of curiosity.

Hvin Rambis sighed and said, "This will make the members not be themselves. Some might even be assimilated by the remnants of the potion.

"To put it simply, the first three Sequences are for one to slowly grasp their powers and get used to being extraordinary. It allows one's subconscious to be deeper, become clearer, and turn more mature. It aids in resisting the subsequent problems that come from the 'acting method.'

"Of course, I can only give my opinion on the Spectator pathway. As for the other Beyonder pathways, I'm not too sure if they're the same. But clearly, pathways that focus on the domain of the mind would have some differences in the area of self-consciousness."

Audrey was unable to determine the veracity of Hvin Rambis's words. She felt that there was definitely some reason to it, but it was not entirely the truth.

Little Sun mentioned before that one key thing to remember regarding the "acting method" is "remember that you're only acting"… I find this more appropriate. Yes, I've been strictly abiding to it, and will keep doing so in the future… Audrey, you mustn't be careless. From this moment forth, you must put more emphasis on your self-consciousness! From Mr. Fool's point of view, this must be trivial and doesn't require additional emphasis since it's included in the statement of "only acting." But to the ordinary person, perhaps it's relatively more important… As Audrey's thoughts raced, she asked, "Can you explain the 'acting method' in more detail?"

Hvin Rambis explained it to her in a relatively more detailed manner before saying, "You are indeed talented and qualified to obtain the Sequence 5 Dreamwalker potion formula, but before that, I'll give you several missions. This is out of fairness and also a form of training for you. This is because once you achieve Sequence 5, you will be leading two to three psychological discussion groups. Your every judgment and choice will influence the future and even the lives of the members beneath you. Therefore, we mustn't allow people who deeply lack experience in handling matters to advance to Sequence 5."

"Understandable." Audrey didn't object to it. "What's the first mission?"

Hvin Rambis said with a smile, "A simple but rather long-term mission. Every piece of feedback you provide will count towards your contributions."

At this point, he sighed.

“The fracture between the New Party and the Conservative Party is widening. The more conflict there is, the more divided the kingdom’s internal politics will be. I wish that you can take note of the attitude of your father, Earl Hall. Inform me of some of his views towards various bills and matters. Don’t worry, this will not cause him any harm. We only wish to mend the fractures.”

His final statement was, in fact, not supported by logic. It was solely a promise. But with Hvin Rambis raising his right hand to his temples while on Audrey’s “mind island,” Audrey felt that what he said was very reasonable and deeply relatable.

Floating above her mind world, she immediately snapped to her senses and realized something was amiss.

Chapter 975 - A Familiar Feeling

◆

How can you not cause harm to my father from knowing his trump cards? This will bring about negative impacts to matters that he's trying to push for or object to… Floating in the mind world, Audrey looked down at her island of consciousness, her thoughts were so calm that it surprised her.

Right on the heels of that, she suddenly realized why Hvin Rambis had directed Cuarón's suicide.

Audrey had always been concerned about this matter. Furthermore, she had obtained information from various sources, giving her a rather clear idea of the overall picture. However, she had ultimately been stumped about the mastermind's goal.

This trap seemed to be targeted at the purse strings of the Conservative Party, Baron Syndras. As long as he failed to respond properly, this powerful banker would have his problems exposed and end up handled by the official Beyonder organizations. However, the actual process seemed to lack the panache of a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Spectator pathway. It was especially so when Dwayne Dantès reacted unexpectedly, causing the plan to immediately be foiled; yet, there wasn't any mending of the plan.

As a rather senior Spectator, Audrey had long noticed the incongruity within this matter. However, it was only after hearing Hvin Rambis's words today that she realized the core of the matter.

Hvin Rambis didn't care if he had successfully taken down Baron

Syndras, as he had already accomplished his goals.

It was just as he had said, the New Party and Conservative Party were fractured!

Although Hvin Rambis claimed to be trying to mend it, his true goal was to deepen the cracks and cause them to completely fall out with each other!

Why is he doing this? Audrey controlled her mind island and didn't make it show any puzzled emotions.

She then replied to Hvin Rambis, "I can understand your concern for the kingdom's political situation. I will work hard on this."

Just as she said that, the gloomy Hvin Rambis on the mind island lowered his right hand from his forehead. Hvin Rambis, who was sitting on a sofa in the real world, said with a gladdened smile, "You are indeed a young noble lady filled with compassion."

With that said, the old gentleman lowered his right leg which was covered by grayish-blue trousers with lined patterns. He leaned forward slightly as his eyes grew darker.

"Due to your identity and daily environment, you shall forget about me. You will only remember Hilbert, Stephen, and Escalante. You will pass any information through them…

"When there are extremely pressing issues that need reporting, you will subconsciously visit me with the excuse of consulting me on some academic question… When you enter my room, your lost memories will recover…"

As Hvin Rambis said those words, the him on Audrey's mind island opened his mouth and repeated the words. A "rock" took form and quickly plunged into the ground, sinking into the subconscious.

At that moment, Audrey felt as though she had dissociated into two entities.

One was a result of a mind island-she could no longer remember the appearance or name of the elder in front of her. She only knew that she had come to Stephen Hampres's residence and met a Psychology Alchemists councilor where she received the approbation of the "acting method" and received a new mission.

Another her floated beneath the spirituality sky, acutely aware of everything that had happened. However, there wasn't much emotional changes. It was more optimistic than gloomy.

Audrey was certain that the one in midair was her true self-conscious. Therefore, she didn't feel confounded. With "her" as the true self, she controlled her other self and got up in a muddle.

"Yes, Sir."

After answering him, she rapidly straightened her body, and like a puppet who was being controlled by invisible strings, she walked to the door and left.

At the instant she closed the door, the her in the mind world's sky and the her corresponding to the island of consciousness fused as one. There were no longer any differences.

The two entities with certain memory discrepancies instantly fused together, giving Audrey a few seconds of confusion. However, with plenty of experience in treating people and hypnotizing others, she very quickly and skillfully identified the differences. She then reconstructed every detail from before.

What powerful mind-reading and hypnosis… He directly entered my Body of Heart and Mind and even my Soul Body to exert influence via the sea of collective subconscious… Although Audrey had the blessings of The Fool's angel, she felt that her recollections were like viewing old photographs. They were yellowed and faded, as though they were matters that happened years ago.

I'll be able to do the same in the future! The blessings of Mr. Fool's angel is really impressive! Humph, I'll only inform you of Father's take on unimportant matters! As Audrey's mind whirled, her mood turned for the better.

Whoosh!

The steam locomotive that spewed out copious amounts of smoke dragged its carriages as it chugged into Backlund.

After traveling for days, Klein had finally returned to this Capital of Capitals.

As Dwayne Dantès, Klein wore a top hat and a formal suit while holding a gold inlaid cane. He slowly left the first-class cabin and firmly stood on the platform.

Behind him was a man with mixed-blood. He was about 1.75 meters tall, and he carried two luggage bags. He was none other than the marionette, Enzo. Of course, this Winner had already changed his name to Enuni, which sounded more in line with the Southern Continent's traditions. In the future, he would be the go-to person to establish contact with the Southern Continent's clientèle for the upstart tycoon and arms dealer, Dwayne Dantès. The non-crucial business would be handled by him, without needing Dwayne Dantès to personally head to East and West Balam.

Of course, this was simply a disguise. In fact, Klein would be the one making the trip.

He had decided to send believers to West Balam in the name of Sea God Kalvetua and get them to represent himself to complete some small-scale deals. After all, Danitz was an infamous pirate over the Five Seas, with a bounty exceeding ten thousand pounds. Furthermore, he had close ties with Gehrman Sparrow, and it easily incurred suspicion if he kept helping Dwayne Dantès.

After leaving the station, Klein rode a carriage and returned to 160 Böklund Street.

It was already dark by then. The street lamps on both sides of the street had already lit up, likewise for Dwayne Dantès's residence. Butler Walter and Housekeeper Taneja led the male and female servants, as well as the gardener and coachmen, out. They stood on both sides to welcome their employer back.

After he arrived in Desi Bay and bought the train tickets, Klein had sent a telegram back to Backlund, informing his butler when he was returning. However, he had instructed him not to send the coachman to pick him up at the station. After all, this was an era when steam locomotives were often delayed. It wasn't impossible that its arrival would be delayed to the next morning.

Glancing at his servants who stood with a standard, reverent pose, Klein secretly nodded and passed through them as he sighed inwardly.

This does resemble the style of nobility. Even when the employer isn't around, the butler doesn't skive… When he arrived at the door, he nodded gently at Walter and Taneja before saying, "It must've been hard on you while I was away."

"It's our duty," Walter and Taneja said with a bow.

Klein then turned his gaze to his valet, Richardson. He realized that this good-looking mixed-blood had a somewhat pale expression as he kept stealing glances at his employer's new valet, Enuni.

Klein smirked inwardly as he nodded at him.

"You did well. However, there's some business involving the Southern Continent that requires Enuni to handle it.

"Oh yes, be Mr. Walter's assistant and help him in gathering information for a manor outside the city."

Assistant… Assistant butler… Richardson was first taken aback before he replied in pleasant surprise, "Yes, Sir!"

With this role, it meant that he had broken free from the constraints of being a valet. He had been promoted!

Walter didn't ask about the manor in detail as he seriously arranged for his employer's settling in, bath, and meals.

After all of this was done, he and Enuni sent Dwayne Dantès back to the third story before he asked, "Sir, do you plan on buying a manor in the suburbs of Backlund? What requirements do you have?"

Something not too expensive… Who knows how long I can use this identity for… Klein inwardly gave a self-deprecating comment before deliberating.

"One with a vineyard and brewery."

After completing the arms deal, he had already established himself in Backlund's high society and had earned a huge sum of money. Therefore, it was necessary for him to own a manor. He couldn't afford to not be capable of inviting his friends on a vacation and hunt in the suburbs when autumn and winter came. This was a faux pas that could easily make him be viewed with scorn.

Furthermore, the manors in Backlund's suburbs were rather expensive. One could purchase a huge manor with rubber trees in places like Desi Bay for eight to ten thousand pounds, but here, all he wanted was a vineyard and grain farm, with facilities like a brewery.

"I will gather the information as soon as possible," Walter replied respectfully.

He knew his employer was exhausted from his traveling, so after briefly informing him of the recent developments, he left the third story and busied himself on other matters. With the new valet's help, Klein changed his clothes and washed up.

During this process, Klein, who had gotten accustomed to his godhood, couldn't help but lampoon.

If it wasn't because a marionette cannot be more than a thousand meters from me, would I have changed valets… Despite being a tycoon, I still have to serve myself… Sigh!

Amidst his sighs, he dismissed Winner Enuni to the adjoining room and walked to the window. He looked at the lamp-lit Backlund, which resembled stars, as he allowed his thoughts to wander.

Next, my goal is MI9's deputy director, Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor…

As for the captain of the royal guards, Viscount Stratford, I can leave him to the Demoness, Trissy… She has vanished for quite some time. I wonder what he has been busy with. I wonder if she has come up with a way to approach that viscount… I had previously informed her that I have other matters to tend to and wasn't free via the method she gave me. I'll later have to confirm that I'm free now and can continue our previous cooperation effort…

After a while, Klein reined in his thoughts and got into bed. Without the help of Cogitation, he fell deep asleep.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly opened his eyes and sensed that someone had entered 160 Böklund Street!

Here it comes again… Klein couldn't help but raise his hand to rub his temples.

On the first day of returning to Backlund, he had been awakened in the middle of the night.

Chapter 976 - Zealot

◆

Dressed in pajamas, Klein didn’t move. In his spiritual perception, the intruder’s Spirit Body Threads appeared.

This also meant that if he so wished, he could turn everyone in 160 Böklund Street into his marionette without leaving the bed. Of course, to a demigod-a Bizarro Sorcerer—the neighbors a few buildings away were within range.

There are many Spirit Bodies around. One of them is helping him fly. He has landed on the opposite balcony… Is it a Beyonder from the Death pathway, or the Evernight pathway? To be able to do this, he must at least be a Sequence 6… He’s here for Richardson? No, he’s walking towards my bedroom. He has paused and has reached out his right hand to knock gently on my door… He’s certain that I’ve detected him? Klein sat up with a slightly heavy expression.

He had made the initial judgment via the Spirit Body Threads, but subsequently, he did it via direct “sight”-a scene that formed in his mind.

After Klein reached Sequence 4, not only was his danger premonition as a Clown enhanced, the amount of power he could stir and use from the mysterious space above the gray fog had experienced a qualitative boost. With the two combined, it wasn’t difficult for him to use his intuition to have a projection of the intruder’s figure and actions, despite the distance.

In addition, due to his deepened control over the mysterious space, Klein could converge the augmentation effects the gray fog had on him in the real world. This prevented Beyonders of certain pathways from seeing anything. Based on his judgment, by being above the gray fog, augmenting himself with a Card of Blasphemy, and using the Sea God Scepter, the strength that The Fool could direct at the real world was asymptotically closer to that of an angel.

If that weren't the case, even if the gray fog and the Paper Figurine Substitutes could allow others to maintain their lucidity in dreamlike states, Klein wouldn't have dared to allow Miss Justice to face a Sequence 4 or even Sequence 3 of the Spectator pathway.

Amidst his thoughts, he left his bed, wore his slippers, and straightened his pajamas. He walked to the reclining chair and leisurely sat down.

"Please come in."

The door to the master bedroom opened silently, but no cold wind blew in. All it did was spiral in the corridor.

The visitor was a man about Dwayne Dantès's age, and of similar height. He had black hair and brown eyes. He had cut facial features, a classic example of a Loenese man.

He wore a silk top hat and had a rather thin face. His demeanor was cold but wasn't one that left others feeling uncomfortable. Instead, it was a manifestation of the night view at a suburban cemetery.

At this instant, Klein saw countless Spirit Bodies hugging a middle-aged gentleman. It made his surroundings dark and stacked, as though a world was hidden within.

Klein's spiritual intuition told him that this was a demigod.

Why would there be a demigod coming to me moments after I arrive back in Backlund… Apart from the Church of Evernight's Backlund archbishop, nothing has been exposed in regards to this identity as Dwayne Dantès… Having a headache, Klein looked at the door without an expression. It was unknown whether he was feeling angry or alarmed.

After taking two steps, the demigod's right hand suddenly hung down straight. Together with his waist, it bent like a bow pulled to its limit.

He had bowed deeply in a strange manner, his attitude extremely reverent. Meanwhile, a cold wind blew over, closing the door silently.

Klein was nearly taken aback, feeling at a loss. His mind whirred as he came to a rough guess.

At this moment, the demigod maintained his pose and said in a deep voice, "In response to a revelation, I, Patrick Bryan of the Numinous Episcopate, am here to meet Your Excellency."

Revelation… Klein controlled the twitching of his facial muscles. Together with his previous guess, he had a rough understanding of what was happening.

The Evernight Goddess had deepened "Her" control of Artificial Death-in other words, the Death pathway's Uniqueness! "She" was able to give revelations to the high-ranking members of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction!

Klein sighed as he chuckled. He pressed his right hand to his chest, but he didn't make any additional movements.

"What is God's revelation?"

Bryan slowly stood straight and looked at the gentleman with the white sideburns sitting at the reclining chair. He replied with some level of fervor, "We succeeded. God has finally awakened. 'He' has requested me to listen to your commands from this day forth, and to follow your arrangements."

Klein had already expected this, but he felt his face burn, unsure whether to laugh or cry.

This is making me be a Blessed of Evernight while also part-timing as a Blessed of Artificial Death, so as to silently lead the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction… Is this a bestowment of fate, or a price that had been exacted? Since the Goddess didn't get the Church's archbishops or high-ranking deacons to handle this matter, it means that "She" wishes it to be kept confidential… Klein instantly stood up and tried to appear pious in tone and expression.

"As God's revelation commands.

"God's wish is my wish!"

After expressing his devotion, he looked at the demigod standing straight in front of him and pointed to the sofa opposite him.

"Please have a seat. Oh, do introduce yourself. That's the most basic form of politeness, isn't it?"

Moments ago, as the thoughts ran through his mind, Klein had vaguely grasped the reason why the Goddess had handed him leadership over the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction.

As Gehrman Sparrow, he had close connections with the Death Consul!

Therefore, if anyone were to really discover anything amiss and begin investigating the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction, they would realize that it had something to do with Gehrman Sparrow and be enlightened. They would believe that they had grasped the truth as to why Artificial Death was able to come to life and send a revelation.

Due to this guess, Klein deliberately made Dantès use Gehrman Sparrow's usual speech.

Patrick Bryan sat on the sofa and said after some thought, "I'm Loenese. I once did business in East Balam and nearly died because of a disease. I was rescued by members of the Numinous Episcopate, and during that ritual, I received God's grace and survived. Later, I secretly changed my faith.

“The faction I’m in is always being vilified by the other members of the Numinous Episcopate. They believe that we’re engaging in sacrilege, that we’re in a bid to create a new Death. But that’s not the case. We firmly believe that God didn’t perish at the end of the Fourth Epoch. ‘He’ is merely asleep and requires certain things to be done in order to awaken. The facts have proven that we were right. You are witness to this.”

The ancient chronicles I received didn’t say so. Those high-ranking members of the Numinous Episcopate are fully aware that they are emulating the matter of the Hidden Sage to create Artificial Death… Could it be that this gentleman in front of me isn’t a core member of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction? And he also lacks sufficient knowledge regarding the Uniqueness? But how can a demigod not be a core member? Even if the Numinous Episcopate is a remnant of the Balam royal family and Death’s Church, with copious amounts of knowledge and powerhouses, there’s no way they will let a demigod go to waste… Even the seven orthodox Churches wouldn’t do such a thing… Klein was extremely puzzled hearing this as he asked, “What about the other high-ranking members of your faction?” Patrick Bryan said with a reverent look, “When I joined the Numinous Episcopate, God had already awakened a little. This is all the work of the saints of the past. They had sacrificed themselves over the numerous rituals.

“Currently, we have a total of three saints and an angel. They are in East Balam while I’m in charge of Backlund matters.”

That’s not right. Based on the information provided by Leonard, the Numinous Episcopate have their members split into many small teams in Backlund. They aren’t aware of each other, and they only make contact with a specific person in the Southern Continent. There’s no overall person-in-charge… Klein’s first reaction was that Patrick Bryan was lying, but he immediately dismissed it. This was because it was something easily verifiable for a Blessed who had been the focus of a revelation.

He thought for a moment before he asked, “What’s that angel’s name? Where is ‘He’? Are there any other revelations?”

Patrick Bryan answered frankly, “God made me not inform others, nor make inquiries to others about matters.

“Our leader’s name is Haiter, both a last name and first name. ‘He’ was once the archbishop of the Church, and later he became an angel thanks to God’s grace. ‘He’ has always been working hard to awaken the sleeping God, but he was severely corrupted in one of the rituals. Currently, ‘He’ is unable to leave his mausoleum; otherwise, he would directly lose control. ‘He’ is considered my teacher.”

This demigod that has existed since the Balam Empire is clearly key in steering the Artificial Death project… Klein asked in thought, “He’ and the other two demigods are Balamese pure-bloods?”

“Yes.” Patrick Bryan nodded.

I roughly get what’s happening… Klein couldn’t help but sigh inwardly.

He believed that Patrick Bryan wasn’t an ordinary demigod, but a byproduct of the Artificial Death

project!

Back then, Haiter and the other members of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction had no intention of saving a Loenese. Instead, they had planned on using him for a ritual’s sacrificial item or material. In the end, something unexpected happened during their attempt which they originally hadn’t had high hopes of. Death’s Uniqueness gained some level of instinct or produced other changes. This led to Patrick Bryan’s survival and his establishment of a certain connection with Artificial Death. His spirit and body became special.

Upon witnessing this, Haiter and the other high-ranking members began viewing Patrick Bryan as key to the success of the Artificial Death project. They gave him potions and taught him, proselytizing him with the faith of Death; thus, fabricating a perfect excuse for themselves. And due to Bryan's specialness, he had advanced rapidly and became a demigod.

Of course, no matter how key he was, he was merely an experimental subject. Patrick Bryan had never been treated as one of the members of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction. Later, he was sent to the Loen Kingdom's Backlund to lead two or three teams. He did various kinds of rituals in a bid to bring the Uniqueness alive.

Such a guess was in line with the situation which Klein was currently aware of. First, Leonard had mentioned that the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction had placed their experiments in Backlund, planning to destroy the enemy's capital even if an accident happened. Second, many teams were independently connected to the Southern Continent and Backlund and had no overall person-in-charge. Third, Patrick Bryan's knowledge of Artificial Death was very different from reality.

This also meant that the people in the Southern Continent didn't care for Bryan's life and death, nor did they tell him the truth. Under such circumstances, there was no other explanation unless he was a byproduct of the Artificial Death project.

Hmm, from the looks of it, the Goddess's control of the Uniqueness is still limited. "She" can only send revelations to one person who is directly connected to Artificial Death. "She" is unable to influence Haiter and the other saints… Klein reined in his thoughts and asked, "What's your current Sequence?"

Patrick Bryan didn't hide the truth.

"I'm an Undying."

Chapter 977 - First Sermon

◆

Klein wasn't surprised at Patrick Bryan's answer. He nodded gently and said, "Which incarnation number are you at?"

Based on what he knew, Undying died once every sixty years before reviving. They would then lose most of their memories, which needed to be slowly recollected. It was like the beginning of a new life.

This was knowledge that came from the potion, so Patrick Bryan easily understood what the Blessed meant. He deliberated over his words and said, "I'm not 50 yet. I haven't been an Undying for more than 10 years."

Klein then asked, "When did you switch faiths to our Lord?"

Here, "Lord" referred to the Lord of the Underworld.

Bryan recalled for two to three seconds before he said, "I had just celebrated my 30th birthday back then."

Stepping into the world of mystery at 30 and becoming a Beyonder. Becoming a Sequence 4 demigod before 40… This speed either means shocking talent or that he's a Blessed… Heh, indeed, his spirit and body had been influenced by the Death pathway's Uniqueness during that ritual… As Klein listened, he became more certain of his theories from before.

Of course, compared to how he had only taken a year to go from an ordinary person to a Sequence 4 demigod, Patrick Bryan's advancement speed was nothing

On this point, Klein didn't feel that there was anything to be poignant about, because he was truly a "Blessed." Furthermore, he had cheats-far greater than one.

The only problem was that he wasn't sure if everything that he had done was enough to exchange for something

After some thought, Klein asked, "What's your current public identity?"

"I'm a businessman. I have two garment factories in Backlund. On the surface, I believe in the Evernight Goddess and am a supporter of the New Party…" Patrick Bryan introduced himself.

Klein nearly let out a scoff as he continued, "How many Numinous Episcopate members do you have under you? What are they doing?"

Already prepared, Bryan answered eloquently, "Two teams, a total of twelve Beyonders. Some of them are working at my garment factory while others are in the watch and clock industry. All of them have their own formal occupations.

"Typically, they will be careful when proselytizing to the people around them. The progress on this is very slow, nor is it the main goal. We do not have more than a hundred believers.

"Most of the time, they are searching for clues that God had left behind, as well as the different materials needed for the awakening ritual.

"With clues in hand, we will carry out operations. And once the materials are gathered, we will experiment in different awakening rituals and seek out the most effective one. I'm the main person behind this operation, and am also core to the rituals."

You sound pretty proud of that… Klein asked about other matters and received detailed answers.

Finally, he thought for a moment before saying with a stern expression, "In accordance with the revelation from God, you are to heed my instructions from this moment forth."

Patrick Bryan immediately got up and gave a solemn bow.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

Klein nodded slightly and answered, "First, stop all rituals and stop gathering materials. God has already partially awakened. 'He' is in 'His' recovery stage, so 'He' isn't to be disturbed by 'noise.'"

From Klein's point of view, regardless of the changes in Bryan's awakening rituals, they were ultimately pointed at Artificial Death-the Death pathway's Uniqueness. This would only increase its chances of coming to life, making it disadvantageous for the Goddess to deepen her control over it.

And regardless if Klein was happy for this to happen or not, since the Evernight Goddess had assigned Bryan to him, he had to make such arrangements.

Patrick Bryan had zero doubts toward his explanation, because Death had indeed awoken, and "awakening rituals" were, in essence, a form of "disturbance."

This Undying thought before asking, "Your Excellency, what should we do next?"

Klein smiled with approbation.

"Continue seeking out clues for things that God left behind. This will aid in 'His' recovery."

Upon saying that, Klein originally had a second request, but he was worried that there were too few clues to it, making it possible for the Numinous Episcopate members to stir up trouble with nothing to be done. He added, "In addition, promote reading to all those around you and your subordinates, be it at the garment factory or elsewhere. Establish night schools or learning classes. Let the people around you extricate themselves from ignorance and savagery."

To make it more convincing, Klein stretched out his right hand and pressed it to his chest. With abnormal piousness, he began preaching, "God said one needs to understand the belief to believe.

"God said that to those who are lost, one has to first strengthen their body and arm his brain. This is because the kingdom 'He' promises is one without ignorance and savagery."

Patrick Bryan didn't doubt Dwayne Dantès's words, nor did he find it strange that such records weren't found in the Numinous Episcopate's bible. This was because this person before him was God's Blessed, a representative appointed by God!

He earnestly nodded.

"I will heed God's teachings.

"May every spirit gain eternal life in God's kingdom!"

As he said that, he used the praying gesture that the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction used. It was to raise both hands high, thumbs facing each other as he held them at his forehead.

In mysticism theory, this was the core to the Underworld contained in every Gatekeeper. It represented Death's position.

Klein returned with the same gesture and words before saying, "Second, orders from the Southern Continent-no matter who it comes from—has to be handed to me first. They can be done only after I give permission. If no permission is given, you are not to do it in private. You can only give feedback based on what I say."

This was because he was worried that Haiter, the angel of the Death domain, would still remain fervent about the Artificial Death plan, occasionally instructing Bryan and the others to make new attempts.

Meanwhile, he also had to ensure that Haiter and the other two saints wouldn't notice anything amiss before the Goddess gained a deeper control over the Death pathway's Uniqueness. He needed to prevent them from doing anything excessive.

Bryan had no objections on this matter.

"Yes, Your Excellency!"

After giving instructions on the two most important matters, Klein wore the same expression, but he inwardly felt relieved. He said after some deliberation, "Third, unless convened by me, do not seek me out. Our usual communications shall be completed via messengers.

"As you know, there are many existences in the astral world who do not wish to see God return."

Patrick Bryan nodded heavily.

"I understand.

"My messenger's summoning incantation is 'Spirit wandering above the world, absolutely friendly creature, Patrick Bryan's Contract Companion." Indeed, it's impossible for a demigod of the Death pathway to not have a messenger… Normally, Sequence 6 Beyonders of this pathway should have one… Klein didn't hesitate as he answered in an unhurried tone, "Remember, my messenger's summoning incantation is 'The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the messenger that belongs to Gehrman Sparrow.' Oh, be it receiving or sending mail, a gold coin needs to be paid to complete the transaction."

Klein deliberately revealed that Gehrman Sparrow and Dwayne Dantès were related, in order to determine Bryan's reaction.

"Gehrman Sparrow…" Patrick Bryan repeated the name in puzzlement before coming to an enlightened state. He exclaimed in pleasant surprise, "Your Excellency, Death Consul?"

Thankfully, although he's a byproduct of a ritual and is fervently zealous, he has normal intelligence. He can consciously seek out information and do an analysis… Klein exhaled in relief and replied with a smile, "I'm not him. 'He' is my teacher."

Bryan nodded in thought, believing that he had fully understood the entire matter.

Klein guessed at his thoughts but ignored it. Crossing his right leg, he placed both hands on his knee and asked, "What do you know about the other factions of the Numinous Episcopate?"

Patrick Bryan sat down again and said, "The Numinous Episcopate's strongest faction is the royal family faction. With God's descendants as the core, they have established many organizations…

"Their leader is currently a descendant with a relatively thin bloodline. Her name is Sia Palenque Eggers. She might be an angel or wields an important relic of God. She calls herself Pale-White Empress…

"Other than her, the royal family faction had five other saint apostles. Some of them are true demigods, while others rely on Sealed Artifacts…

"Other than the royal family faction and us, the other factions are relatively weaker. The main ones are the Repose faction and the Underworld faction… Only by working together do they have three powerful Beyonders who are equivalent to the saint apostles…"

After Bryan finished, Klein nodded indiscernibly.

"That's it for today. If there's anything in the future, feel free to contact me."

"Yes, Your Excellency." Patrick Bryan stood up and bowed before leaving the room. The door silently opened as the "figure" outside slinked into the shadows and disappeared with the cold wind.

After everything calmed down, Klein glanced at the door that had closed. He walked to the window, drew the curtains, and looked towards the street.

There were a few carriages there at some point in time. Each of them had two lanterns hanging in front of them. Their lights were abnormally pale-white with a tinge of dark green. They illuminated the surroundings into a blur.

Nearly transparent figures surrounded this blurry scene. They were wearing illusory clothes that appeared like formal wear, making them appear rather formal.

After Patrick Bryan landed from midair and returned, the figures bowed and attentively followed the demigod and the spirit beside him onto the hardly-visible carriages. Then, they steered into the distance.

The pale-white light with tinges of dark green grew faint and finally vanished into the darkness as though it had never arrived.

Klein looked away and muttered to himself with a solemn expression, Although the revelation received by Patrick Bryan stems from the Goddess and “Her” considerations, I have a nagging feeling that there’s something dark and sinister about to break out in Backlund or even the entire world.

I wonder when it will stir up some waves…

With this in mind, Klein didn’t delay a second. He immediately contacted Demoness Trissy to confirm that nothing abnormal had happened to her.

Chapter 978 - Gift

◆

On a night with clear moonlight, in the garden of 160 Böklund Street.

A gray rat crawled out of its hole, running straight for the master bedroom’s bed.

As a tiny, black, glue-like blob object floated down, the rat held it over its head like an acrobatic act.

It quickly turned around, ran out of 160 Böklund Street, and headed for the sewer entrance.

At this moment, the gray rat raised its torso up and reached out with two of its paws.

They magically extended as blobs of flesh appeared on its forelimbs!

Then, using its mutated front paws, it moved the manhole cover away without causing a sound!

Without stopping at all, the gray rat headed straight down the sewers, going all the way to the spot where Demoness Trissy previously hid.

It kept digging in a corner until it excavated a mirror fragment from the soil.

Having done that, the gray rat threw the black, sticky object over its head to the side where it was relatively clean. It then retreated to a corner, allowing its body to stretch and turn into a middle-aged man wearing a dark red coat and a triangular hat. He was none other than

Admiral of Blood, who had previously been active at sea.

However, this Senor, along with his clothes and body, was just a thin layer, akin to a figurine cut from paper.

“This rat is quite fat…” Admiral of Blood stroked his chin, but his paper figurine-like body nearly flew up as a result of the cold draft in the sewers.

The person who spoke was none other than Klein. He was inside his master bedroom, turning a rat into his marionette by controlling its Spirit Body Threads. He then made it carry the ritual materials and head down the sewers to contact Demoness Trissy.

Senor, whose arms were flailing about due to the draft, bent down and picked up the sticky blob. This was the remains of Trissy’s lock of hair after she burned it with black flames. It could be used for a communication ritual.

Right on the heels of that, he wiped the mirror fragment clean and smeared the material onto it.

After this step, Klein made his marionette take two steps back from the “mirror.” With a smacking sound, Senor was plastered to the mossy wall like an oil painting

East Borough. In a room with thick curtains that left it almost dark.

Raven-black, slimy “tentacles” coiled together, forming a huge sphere.

And at the end of these “tentacles,” there were either eyes with clear blacks and whites embedded in them, or there were venomous snake heads attached there. The latter opened their mouths slightly as they shot out their tongues in a rather strange fashion. It was quite a harrowing scene.

Suddenly, they flailed up or retracted as the sphere crumbled, layer after layer.

Enveloped in the middle of a sphere was a curled up girl. She had abnormally sweet looks, but her brows were tightly furrowed. Her expression looked slightly warped due to the pain, a look that stirred up one's sense of pity.

The slimy and disgusting "tentacles" retracted and shrank, finally turning back into their original form -strands of raven-black hair!

The expression of the girl with soft, long hair soothed as she slowly got up and walked to the side of a tiny bed she had partitioned out. Picking up the sleeping gown that had fallen to the ground, she draped it over her.

Then, she curled her black hair and came in front of the full-body mirror. Reaching out her right hand, she swiped across it.

A black flame burst forth as it burned quietly in the air before being extinguished. It left behind a mirror that had turned dark and profound.

In the mirror, lights drifted and rapidly presented the sewers filled with dirty slush. Thinly plastered to the wall was a middle-aged man with an old triangular hat and dark red coat. He was looking down on the girl across an unknown distance, like a famous painting

The girl with the round face and thin eyes watched in silence before laughing.

As her smile bloomed, the dark room seemed to instantly brighten.

She then lightly opened her mouth and said in jest, "Mr. Gehrman Sparrow, is this your craziness and cruelty as the strongest adventurer?

"Or is it the case where I'm only acquainted with a clown?"

Klein wasn't surprised that Trissy had recognized him as Gehrman Sparrow. After all, he had previously met her in the image of Admiral of Blood Senor, and this pirate admiral had long been hunted by Gehrman

Sparrow.

Back then, Trissy was hiding in the sewers due to an injury and was focused on revenge, preventing her from being kept abreast of the news at sea. It was rather unsurprising for her to be unaware of Admiral of Blood's demise, but things were different after she finished recuperating and left the area. She would've been a terrible Assassin and Instigator if she hadn't investigated her partner. Clearly, Trissy's past actions indicated that, despite being evil, it didn't discount her intelligence.

Klein didn't argue as he controlled the paper figurine-like Senor to smile and simply reply, "Why can't clowns be crazy and cruel?"

Without waiting for Trissy's answer, he said, "Any progress on your investigations into the captain of the royal guards?"

Trissy's expression turned slightly gloomy as she said, "It will need another month at the very least for any results. It might even take two."

"If you need help, you can seek me out," Klein emphasized again.

Trissy scoffed and said, "In Backlund, in this game, strength isn't able to resolve every problem.

"Of course, I've never wasted the opportunity to use others.

"Mr. Gehrman Sparrow, since there's no need to hide your identity, can you give me a more convenient method of contact?"

Why do I feel like I'm being asked to give my cellphone number… Klein thought about it for a moment before informing her of the incantation to summoning Miss Messenger, as well as the important ritual ingredient of one gold coin.

Trissy didn't speak further. Reaching out her right hand, she tapped on the mirror's surface.

The black flames burst before disappearing, restoring the full-body mirror to normal.

In the sewers, Senor buried the mirror fragment back into the soil and made his body shrink rapidly, turning back into a gray rat. It then ran deep into the sewers, allowing itself to be fed by carnivores.

Back in 160 Böklund Street, Klein drew his curtains and returned to the reclining chair.

To be frank, he regretted cooperating with Trissy.

He felt that she was burdened by some will of the Primordial Demoness and was reckless for revenge. She was like a ticking bomb that might explode at any moment.

If Trissy were to mutate, it's highly possible that she would create a terrifying disaster… I shouldn't have spared her back then… Klein sighed and began setting up a ritual. He sent the black blob above the gray fog and attempted to divination Trissy's present location and recent condition.

Twenty to thirty seconds later, he was met with failure.

This only worried him more because such an outcome implied that Trissy had become a Blessed of the Primordial Demoness to a certain extent.

The next afternoon, Klein, who had had breakfast, began instructing Butler Walter and the newly-appointed butler assistant, Richardson, to deliver the gifts he had brought from the Southern Continent.

This filled an entire luggage bag, of which included Fermo coffee beans, East Balam tobacco, River Valley's grape wine, and human-bone sculptures.

They were to be gifted to the different neighbors around the neighborhood as a sign of goodwill from Dwayne Dantès. It was also to announce his return to the social scene.

“Oh yes, remember to mention to Member of Parliament Macht or his wife that this bottle of River Valley grape wine is suitable for making cocktails. It’s best matched with lemon juice,” Klein exhorted Walter.

Particular care was needed in gifting others—it had to take into account the receiver’s preferences, and obviously, the most popular product of the Southern Continent at present, Donningsman Hair Tonic, wasn’t suitable as a gift, as it would only appear to be a veiled attempt at ridicule.

Walter solemnly nodded and said, “Yes, Sir.”

After receiving no more instructions from his employer, Richardson glanced at the remaining pile of gifts and asked, “Where will they be sent to?”

“This is for the staff of the bursary foundation. I’ll deliver it myself,” Klein said with a smile.

He then pointed at the golden amulet in his hand and said, “I missed the birth of Dr. Aaron’s child, so I’ll need to express my apologies in person. Heh heh, I’ll head over in the afternoon and plan on gifting this amulet with Southern Continent characteristics to that child.”

Of course, as a baby, Will Auceptin Ceres probably won’t like it… Compared to this, “He”—I’ll just call him he-would rather have ice-cream… Klein grumbled inwardly after answering Richardson. After the butler and Richardson left, bringing gifts and male servants to the different neighbors, Klein got into his carriage and headed straight for the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation at 22 Phelps Street.

After alighting, he headed forward with his valet, Enuni, carrying plenty of gifts behind him. Along the way, he greeted and gifted any members of the staff he saw.

Soon, Klein arrived at the second story and arrived at one of the director's office. He knocked gently on the door.

“Please come in.” Audrey Hall's gentle voice sounded.

As a rather senior Spectator, she had already noticed that Mr. Dwayne Dantès had come to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. She had been patiently waiting for him.

Klein pushed the door and entered, taking out a small gift box from his inner pocket before saying with a warm smile, “I've returned from the Southern Continent. Well, my business went very smoothly. I brought some gifts for everyone, hoping to share my happiness with everyone.”

He had specially mentioned this to indicate to Miss Justice that he remembered her request.

“You leave me no reason to decline it,” Audrey said with an expectant smile.

This didn't mean that she cared for the gift Mr. World gave, but more a result of being curious as to what Mr. World would give.

After receiving the gift box, she tore open the wrapping in front of Dwayne Dantès and discovered an accessory with a white feather adorned with pale yellow patterns as its highlight.

“This is a decorative ribbon,” Klein explained. “People of certain social standing in East Balam will enjoy wearing items with such white feathers on various parts of their body. Out of all the places, it's considered most noble and meaningful to attach it to a hat. This is said to be a tradition from the worship of feathered serpents. Heh heh, feathered serpents are symbols for Death over there.”

And the feather he got a Southern Continent craftsman to craft into the hat was a byproduct of the Artificial Death project. It could be sacrificed.

Klein had once obtained three of them. He had used one in Bayam by using the copper whistle messenger and summoning the mutated monster which was corrupted by Artificial Death. The other was sacrificed to Artificial Death in the Southern Continent, allowing him to receive the revelation of Ince Zangwill being possessed by an evil spirit. This was the last feather.

As the present Artificial Death was equivalent to the Evernight Goddess to a certain extent, Klein, who was clearly a Blessed, didn't need to carry out such acts in subsequent rituals. He could use other materials to replace the feather, so he decided to turn the remaining one into a gift for Miss Justice. After all, she was also a believer of Evernight, and she might be able to contact Artificial Death at some critical moment.

Audrey held her present with a smile as she silently listened to Dwayne Dantès's description. For some baffling reason, an idea flashed in her mind: Don't tell me Mr. World really plucked a feathered serpent's feather for this hat…

Chapter 979 - Joy of Life

◆ ◆ ◆

“The traditions in the Southern Continent are really different from ours.” Audrey looked down at the feathered cap in the gift box as she marveled, “But it’s in line with my taste.”

The latter half of her sentence was partially genuine and partially out of politeness. On the one hand, she found the processed feather akin to a piece of artwork, and on the other hand, she found its style too obvious and extreme. It wasn’t something she would use as an accessory.

This was akin to how others would have their interest piqued by items with unique and mysterious patterns when visiting ancient ruins. They would be filled with praise over it, but they would seldom purchase similar items to place it at home or use it as an accessory.

Klein smiled in response.

“There are also many stark differences amongst the Southern Continent traditions. It’s almost completely different in East Balam from the highlands and river valley. Of course, they also have their similarities such as their adoration of gold. They believe that this metal possesses magical powers.”

As he said that, he pointed at the feather in Audrey’s hand.

“Legend has it that people who wear such accessories would receive the blessings of the feathered serpent, or in other words, Death.”

He was hinting to Audrey about how she could use the feather.

As a Sequence 6 of the Spectator pathway, Audrey easily read in between the lines. She understood that the hat accessory allowed her to receive a response from the so-called "Death" at critical moments, bringing about certain effects.

As for how she should use it, it was basic knowledge in mysticism. Audrey had a solid foundation and didn't require Mr. Dwayne Dantès to explain in detail.

She faintly smiled without revealing her teeth and said, "I really like it. I will attach it to my hat in appropriate situations."

Not bad. It's so easy talking to Spectators… Klein returned with a smile and pointed at the door.

"I still have presents to hand out."

"You will be the most welcomed person here today," Audrey replied with a smile, a euphemistic way of expressing her gratitude.

Meanwhile, she was a little vexed. She was hesitant about finding an opportunity to inform Mr. World, who had been embroiled in Cuarón's suicide, about Hvin Rambis. He had shown some deep interest and importance on the matter.

Oh, it's almost Monday. I'll leave it until the Tarot Gathering. It will be much easier to communicate when the time comes… I can also seek advice from Mr. Hanged Man and Ma'am Hermit on how to deal with my current situation, especially the problem of being wary against the cues and hypnotism from a High-Sequence Beyonder. After all, I can't always pray to Mr. Fool ahead of time to receive an angel's blessing… On careful thought, such a form of hypnotism is truly terrifying… Carrying out instructions without realizing it… Audrey's mind was awash with thoughts as they bubbled.

This made her suspect that many people in Backlund's high society had been hypnotized, acting in ways that violated their true intentions and will.

In addition, she also came to realize something.

Every time her parents attended Mass at Saint Samuel Cathedral, the one in charge of the rites was definitely Backlund's archbishop. And to hold such a post, he was definitely a demigod of the Church of Evernight!

At times, His Grace will even visit in person to chat with us… This is to prevent such matters from happening? That's why Hvin Rambis's hypnosis effect on me didn't go overboard? Audrey watched as Dwayne Dantès left her office. After closing the door and sitting down at her desk, she picked up a fountain pen and mindlessly scribbled on it.

After she reined in her thoughts, the piece of white paper was filled with interlocking circles. There was a face with cold eyes and scattered lines.

At a glance, Audrey tensed up. She immediately used her spirituality and the friction between items to ignite the paper, turning it to ashes.

Her random drawing had, in a sense, reflected her true emotions and thoughts!

And to a good Psychiatrist, interpreting such pictures was a basic skill. Therefore, Audrey hadn't left any traces behind.

After a while, Klein delivered all his gifts and chatted with a few directors along the way. Finally, he entered a room meant for part-time directors like him to rest. He found a pen and paper, sat on the sofa, and began writing after some thought:

"Dear Mr. Azik,"

While in the Southern Continent, Klein had written about Adam's obtaining of 0-08, his successful revenge on Ince Zangwill with the help of Leonard and Daly. He then summoned the messenger via the copper whistle and sent it to the sleeping Mr. Azik. Without a doubt, he had yet to receive a reply to date.

Klein wasn't worried about mentioning Adam and 0-08 in the letter, because the Angel of Imagination definitely knew about his relationship with Mr. Azik. And sharing matters he encountered with someone familiar wouldn't garner any excessive reaction.

This time, Klein's letter didn't involve anything extraordinary. With a smile and gentle scribble, he shared the details about the bursary foundation which he learned from Audrey and the other directors. At the end of the letter, he wrote:

"…This is a really meaningful matter. I feel satisfied and happy about it. Mr. Azik, would you feel the same?

"When you awaken, perhaps you can attempt to do something similar. Every time you revive, you would be able to see the children who had received your help in the past. When that happens, although you might not remember them, they will definitely remember you…"

After finishing the letter and putting down the fountain pen, Klein carefully read it once, and after confirming that there weren't any problems, he blew the copper whistle, summoned the skeleton messenger, and allowed it to take the letter away.

Following that, he left the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation with his valet, Enuni. He came to the nearby Saint Samuel Cathedral and silently prayed for fifteen minutes in the serene and dark prayer hall.

Like before, Klein came to the donation box and threw a stack of cash in—a total of 80 pounds.

Taking this opportunity, he found Bishop Elektra and had a chat with him and listened to his sermon.

This also announced to the Church of Dwayne Dantès's return.

As for presents, Klein didn’t directly give it since he was inside the Goddess’s cathedral. Instead, Butler Walter would naturally deliver his gifts to the bishops’ residences in private.

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At tea time in the afternoon, Klein followed his schedule and left 160 Böklund Street and headed to Dr. Aaron’s for a visit—Richardson had already informed them in the morning and had received permission to visit.

This time, Klein not only met Dr. Aaron Ceres, but he also met his wife, Wilma Gladys, as well as the newborn and his elder brothers and sisters who were a few years older.

“What a pity that I wasn’t able to participate in, uh…” Klein deliberated paused and successfully waited for Wilma Gladys to reply “Will” with a smile.

He reorganized his words and said, “Unfortunately, I was unable to participate in Will’s birthday party because of my trip to East Balam.

“This is an amulet that’s rather popular over there. It brings children good luck.”

As he said that, he handed the golden accessory to Dr. Aaron.

Aaron Ceres wasn’t a man who was good with words. He accepted it without declining it and nodded.

“Thank you.”

Following that, he held the string and hung the golden amulet into the pram beside him. Shaking it, he asked, “Will, do you like it?”

Wrapped in silver silk, the chubby baby raised his arm, swung it, and flicked the golden amulet away.

Flicked away…

The mood instantly turned a little awkward in the activity room. Klein chuckled and broke the silence.

“This is a reaction all kids have.”

At this moment, a maid had delivered the three-layered tray for high tea, allowing the hosts and the guest to switch topics of conversation, allowing the mood to return to normal.

As Klein drank his black tea and ate the pastry, he began talking about all kinds of interesting customs in East and West Balam. It left the couple and their two other children intrigued as they would question him from time to time.

During this process, Klein suddenly turned to face the pram and asked with a smile, “You don’t seem to enjoy my present?”

As he spoke, nothing abnormal happened to the couple and the rest of the people in the activity room as they continued wearing attentive looks.

In the illusion Klein created, he hadn’t finished his recount!

Will Auceptin, who had fleshy arms, scoffed as he said with a child-like voice, “What’s the point in having such gifts?

“You might as well give me Gwadar. At the very least, that can be drunk!”

Klein smiled as he shook his head and said, “I have some news for you. Ouroboros was injured by a particular person and will likely not be able to continue seeking you out for the time being.”

He didn’t dare mention Adam’s name or title. He didn’t even think about it, afraid that the leader of the Twilight Hermit Order would notice it; thus, discovering Snake of Fate Will Auceptin’s location.

As for a description like Amon's brother, Klein had temporarily avoided using it. He had no idea if Amon was still in Backlund and if the frequent mention of the Angel of Time's name would result in a crossing of fate.

However, Klein believed that the Snake of Fate was likely to guess who had injured the Angel of Fate. This was because the only ones who remained active in the real world and were of a higher level than Ouroboros were limited to Amon and Adam.

He had used the words "particular person" to eliminate the possibility of the assumption of the besieging of several angels or the use of Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts.

Will Auceptin fell silent for a moment and said, "I did tell you that the deviation in your fate is a good thing in the long term."

After exchanging information, Klein was about to dispel the illusion when he suddenly heard Will Auceptin quip, "Oh, I suddenly have a craving for Gwadar, especially if it's iced."

"Such beverages aren't good for a baby!" Klein wore a serious look as he dispelled the illusion, reaching out his hand to receive the cup of ice-cream a maid had delivered.

Then, under Aaron's and Wilma's watch, he scooped some ice-cream with the silver spoon and teased the baby with a smile, "Will, do you want some?

"Do you want some?"

Ma'am Wilma immediately chuckled.

"Our Will doesn't enjoy that."

Just as she said that, Klein stuffed the spoon of ice-cream into his mouth.

“Waaa!”

The baby in the pram immediately let out a loud cry.

Chapter 980 - Choice of Parasitic Target

◆

After some placating, Aaron Ceres and Wilma Gladys finally managed to calm down the baby.

Phew… The thin and tall Aaron heaved a sigh of relief and got up. Nudging his gold-rimmed glasses, he nodded at his guest with an apologetic look. After organizing his words for a few seconds, he said, “Sorry about that. Children are often like this.”

“Indeed.” Klein smiled in reply, indicating that he didn’t mind it one bit.

Following that, he changed the topic of conversation and continued sharing his experiences in East and West Balam.

During this process, he made use of his Beyonder powers once more, making everyone in the activity room fall under the effects of an illusion. Then, he picked up the ice-cream which he hadn’t finished, changed the spoon and got up with a smile. Walking to the pram, he asked gently, “Will, do you want some?”

Without waiting for the chubby fellow wrapped in silver silk to reply, he said with a gentle tone, “You’re born now and should be able to fold a paper crane. This way, I don’t have to visit often. You should know how suspicious it is.”

Will Auceptin Ceres glared at him without giving him a reply.

Klein didn’t flinch as he took out a piece of high-quality paper and placed it in the pram.

Then, he bent down, scooping out some ice-cream.

“A price is always exacted for what fate bestows, isn’t it?” Klein chuckled as he swished the spoon in his hand.

In the pram, Will raised his left hand, wiping the tears that hadn’t dried from his face, and mumbled, “For Beyonders of the Fate pathway, the exacted price needs to be paid first before awaiting bestowment.”

With that said, the chubby baby grabbed the piece of paper and folded a paper crane with great difficulty.

Klein stood in front of the pram and maintained the stability of the spoon, watching this scene with a smile.

A carriage set off from Pinster Street and headed for Saint Samuel Cathedral.

While passing by 160 Böklund Street, Leonard Mitchell looked out the window and seemingly muttered to himself, “Dwayne Dantès is back as well.”

The slightly-aged voice rang out in his mind:

“Fate will ultimately intertwine.”

“Old Man, you’re becoming more of a charlatan after you woke up.” Leonard couldn’t help but mock.

Pallez Zoroast chuckled without a reply.

After coming to Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard entered the study of Backlund’s archbishop, Saint Anthony, under a priest’s lead.

Anthony Stevenson was wearing a black robe with red hues. His eyes were deep and his face clean-shaven. Standing by a cupboard, the shadow created seemed like an unknown existence that observed everything from the darkness. It stirred fear into anyone.

"Your Grace, you summoned me?" Although Leonard had already anticipated it, he still bowed in a rather lacking manner.

Anthony nodded gently and said, "You have already rendered enough services to apply to become a Sequence 5 Spirit Warlock. However, you haven't finished digesting the Soul Assurer potion; therefore, I'll be extracting you out of Soest's team and assigning you some separate missions."

Leonard replied, as per protocol, "I am at your command."

Anthony picked up a stack of papers on his desk and said, "These are cases with suspected paranormal activity. You are to investigate each case, mainly placating or purifying them. If you require additional assistance, you can select members from the Nighthawks team of each area of jurisdiction."

"Yes, Your Grace." Leonard would've done similar tasks even if Saint Anthony hadn't instructed him to do so. Therefore, he had zero objections toward such an assignment.

After receiving the stack of papers, he casually flipped through it and said, "Your Grace, what's Captain Soest's team busy with at present?" He had been focused on revenge over the past half-year, making himself appear desultory and insular. This prevented him from building strong friendships with the Red Gloves teammates, but despite that, they were teammates who he had fought alongside with. He couldn't help but be concerned for them.

"They have been assigned to help Crestet finish a mission," Anthony Stevenson didn't answer in detail.

His Excellency Cesimir is also in Backlund… Leonard didn't ask further as he gestured four points across his chest in a clockwise fashion.

"May the Goddess bless everyone."

"Praise the Lady." Anthony did the same gesture.

After leaving the archbishop's study, Leonard headed down to the basement. He wanted to find a quiet room and list down his upcoming mission and run through them in the assigned order.

Midway while walking down the stairs, he subconsciously looked at the stained windows above him.

The sunlight was shining in, making the artwork made from the stained windows look even more solemn. It also accentuated the tiny bugs and dust that floated in midair.

Upon seeing this scene, Leonard suddenly recalled Old Man's description of Amon. He had the inexplicable feeling that the Blasphemer was everywhere.

He trembled inwardly as a thought came to him. He quickly asked with a suppressed voice, "Old Man, I have a question.

"What is it?" Pallez Zoroast asked slowly.

Leonard asked with a suppressed voice, "Back then, why didn't you parasitize a bug? They're smaller and more concealed. You can easily hide in cathedrals without being worried that Amon would discover you."

"How long can a bug live? Continuously switching parasitic targets is extremely burdensome on the body. This way, not only will recovery not be possible by parasitizing it, but it will even worsen one's condition and shorten one's lifespan," Pallez Zoroast harrumphed and said.

Leonard was somewhat enlightened as he pressed, "What about other creatures? Those that live relatively longer lives and can enter a cathedral without being noticed."

Pallez Zoroast immediately chortled before saying, "From the looks of it, you haven't kept what I've said to heart. This will only serve to make you suffer in the future!

“The higher the Sequence is, the greater the inclinations towards losing control is, and the more madness accumulates. This is a trait of the characteristics, and it can only be resisted and suppressed. There’s no way to eliminate it.

“Therefore, for a Parasite, choosing a target for parasitizing requires one to consider these aspects. If one were to parasitize ordinary animals, it’s still alright for short periods of time, but once it goes on for too long, one will suffer the effects of the body’s construct and hormones. Heh heh, everything is reciprocal, isn’t it? A Parasite can influence the target, but so can the target influence a Parasite.

“When one parasitizes an ordinary animal, it’s necessary to frequently talk to someone to avoid forgetting one’s former identity. This way, the chances of exposure is extremely high, and if one doesn’t do that, the host will definitely influence the Parasite, causing them to lose the ability to speak. It will muddle one’s own existence until one doesn’t know he is. It would then result in madness and with the loss of control crushing the Parasite.”

Leonard was left alarmed as he nodded slightly.

“I understand… It’s no wonder you are so strict on choosing a parasitic target.”

“Are you trying to praise yourself?” Pallez Zoroast tsked. “To us, the best parasitic target is undoubtedly Beyonders of the same pathway. All aspects will be synchronized, and by nurturing them one Sequence at a time, they can be made as replenishments for one’s Beyonder powers. It would be the best medicine and a potential option for taking over the body.”

Upon hearing Old Man speak of such vile and terrifying matters so calmly, Leonard frowned slightly as he secretly heaved a sigh of relief. This meant that Old Man wouldn’t do the same to him.

Pallez Zoroast continued, “The second best choice would be Beyonders from the Seer or Apprentice pathways. The absorption of their powers wouldn't incur too much a burden on the Parasite, allowing them to quickly recover."The next choice would then be smart Beyonders of other pathways. At the very least, communication would be good and cooperation would be possible.

"As for you, hehe…"

Leonard was just about to retort Old Man when he suddenly saw a bishop walking down from above. He hurriedly shut his mouth, held onto the railings, and sped up his pace.

†

Half-past seven in the evening, 39 Böklund Street, Member of Parliament Macht's house.

Dressed in a tailcoat, Klein got off a carriage as he buttoned his clothes. Under the lit fountain's illumination, he entered the foyer and met Maury Macht, who was dressed in an olive-green military uniform with an orange-red sash across his waist. His chest was covered with medals, accolades of his achievements in war.

His wife, Riana, was wearing a shoulder-exposing dress. She greeted Dwayne Dantès with a smile, "Welcome, our traveler. Everyone has been waiting for you to share your experiences at Balam this time."

"Should I launch a travel column at a newspaper company?" Klein replied with a joke.

Macht knew that Dwayne Dantès had headed for Southern Continent to do business. Furthermore, it was a business he kickstarted. Therefore, after exchanging a smile, he came close and gave him a hug, suppressing his voice by saying, "Well done!"

Klein smiled with a nod and asked, "Do you like the present?"

He was referring to the bottle of River Valley grape wine that could be made into a sour cocktail.

“It was excellent. I still fondly recall the taste,” Macht said earnestly.

Klein was about to enter the hall when he noticed something amiss. He did a cursory glance and asked out of puzzlement, “Miss Hazel isn’t in?

“Has she been sent to study at an all-girls public school?”

Riana sighed as she shook her head.

“No, she’s only sick. She’ll head for public school only in September.”

“She caught a cold?” Klein expressed the concern a guest should have.

Macht said with a helpless smile, “No, she was bitten by a rabid rat when she was at the manor in the outskirts. Her wound hasn’t healed completely yet.”

Hazel got bitten… by a rabid rat… Klein nodded in thought.

“Did she see a doctor?

“Oh, has that rat been caught?”

“The doctor gave her an injection to prevent any infections,” Macht said simply. “That rat still hasn’t been found. Perhaps we need to rear a few more cats in the manor.”

Chapter 981 - Hazel's Decision

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After hearing Macht's reply, and combining what he knew, Klein guessed that the rat in the manor was likely the Marauder demigod which had been by Hazel's side. As for why it went rabid and bit Hazel, he was unsure.

He nodded slightly and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

"May the Goddess bless her."

After saying that, he walked past the host, entered the hall, and waited for the ball tonight to begin.

In a particular bedroom on the third story, Hazel was sitting on a reclining chair feeling dispirited, her feet curled up.

Her left hand was wrapped in thick bandages, but there weren't any more signs of blood. Her expression was heavy, nothing like her usual arrogance.

In the manor, her teacher, that was in the form of a rat, had suddenly bitten her. This resulted in her being stuck in a similar state, her entire being turbid and muddled. It was as though it wasn't her hand that was bitten but her heart.

To Hazel, although her arrogance stemmed from her upbringing, with her ability to absorb new information exceeding that of the average person's, her outstanding looks, her family's standing in high society, and her maturity compared to her peers, those feelings were still within normal boundaries before she gained extraordinary powers. None of the aforementioned traits made her feel that she was different from others or that she was fundamentally superior to ordinary people.

Therefore, with her teacher, who maintained her sense of arrogance while being a representation of her fortuitous encounter and the source of her strength, suddenly becoming a real rat—to the point of not being able to speak clearly and even bite her without any reason-it left a deep impact on her. She began to question if supernatural powers represented being extraordinary or a monster.

Amidst her thoughts, Hazel subconsciously pulled her black-green hair to the back of her ear and felt frustrated with the melody that came from downstairs.

At this moment, she heard the creaking sound of the door as she turned her head in hesitation.

Walking in was a gray rat with slick fur. Its eyes were deeper than its kind, closer to dark red.

“Hazel,” the rat said in a deep voice.

Hazel was first taken aback before she reeled in delight. She hurriedly stood up and blurted, “Teacher, y-you’ve recovered?”

Just as she said that, she saw gray rats crawling out from the corner of her bedroom, balcony, and bed. All of them had dark red eyes but could only produce squeaking sounds.

Hazel took a step back in shock, overturning the reclining chair. Her body staggered, almost to the point of collapsing. It took her a great deal of effort to recover her balance.

At this moment, she discovered that the red-eyed rats had vanished. The door had been shut tightly, having never opened.

Everything that had happened was a hallucination or a nightmare that stemmed from the worries inside her!

After a moment of silence, Hazel pursed her lips and sighed.

She sat back down, raising her hand to her temples.

As she massaged her temples, she frowned slightly. She had a nagging feeling that what had happened was too surreal.

Her dark brown eyes darted about slightly as Hazel removed the necklace she wore around her neck, clenching it in her palm.

The necklace's seven green gems were equidistant from each other. Embedded around them were tiny diamonds.

At this moment, one of the gems lit up slowly, emitting a green glow, giving her face a sheen and filling her eyes with mysterious symbols.

The scenes from before surfaces in the girl's mind as her blurry dream-like state gradually turned clear.

While observing the scenes, Hazel sensed something amiss. She confirmed that she hadn't been dreaming, nor was it a short hallucination from having her mind go adrift. Instead, she had been thrown into an illusion for nearly ten seconds.

Cryptologist!

This… Hazel's dark brown eyes widened as she muttered a word filled with horror.

She jumped to her feet and looked around anxiously but failed to discover anything.

But the more she looked, the more terrified she became. She had no idea what she would encounter next, nor did she understand what the person who created the dream was up to!

The only thing she was certain of was that the other party's level and strength in the supernatural domain far exceeded hers!

This shattered what little pride she had left.

After a few minutes, the entire bedroom remained silent. The brisk melody from downstairs instantly connected oneself to the current dance steps.

Hazel finally composed herself, believing that nothing would happen next.

Only then did she have the mood or energy to consider the motives of the person who secretly cast the illusion.

As various thoughts surfaced in her mind, Hazel suddenly came up with a theory:

The person from before was here for her teacher!

Through the illusion, the person had confirmed her teacher's current situation!

Is it Teacher's friend, or an enemy? He's definitely headed off to look for Teacher. What do I do? He likely doesn't know where Teacher is hiding… No, all my neighbors know that I was bitten by a rabid rat… Hazel was thrown into panic as she clenched her necklace with increasing strength.

She couldn't be sure of the motives of the other party, nor did she know what she could do.

She wished to head to the manor and inform her teacher, but she was afraid of encountering danger and end up being sacrificed.

Furthermore, her teacher had seemingly lost the ability to communicate. Her warnings might not necessarily be conveyed.

Without realizing it, Hazel stood up and paced about in her bedroom.

Finally, she made up her mind. Pursing her lips tightly, she walked to the door and said to her lady's maid outside, "I'm a little tired. I plan on sleeping now. Don't let anyone disturb me."

"Yes, my lady," the maid immediately replied.

After closing the door, Hazel began changing into clothes that allowed for greater movement. Her expression was extremely heavy as her teeth bit down on her lip.

She had finally decided to warn her teacher at the manor.

She didn't wish to become a seemingly arrogant person but, in actuality, was a coward, one who would abandon all principles upon encountering danger!

She found it despicable of herself!

While the bodyguards were focusing their attention on the ball's attendees, Hazel took the opportunity to enter the garden using a water pipe from the balcony. When leaving 39 Böklund Street, Klein was holding onto a cup of sweet and iced fizzy wine, discussing business in the Southern Continent with a few gentlemen.

He turned his head slightly, glancing at the garden. He had already noticed Hazel's actions thanks to his intuition.

…Although she's not a likable girl, she has quite a kind heart… Klein nodded indiscernibly and praised her inwardly.

He wasn't worried about Hazel's actions, because to go from North Borough's Böklund Street to Macht's manor in Backlund's northwestern suburbs would take three to five hours on carriage. And before she arrived, he would've already used an excuse to leave the ball, teleporting over directly to confirm the situation.

Although Macht's manor was in the northwestern suburbs, it was on the other side of the Tussock River. Hence, to head there, one needed to take a detour to an area with a bridge. It was fine in the day, as one could use the steam metro to head to the south side of the Bridge beneath the river. At night, there were only three bridges to consider. It was inevitable to spend five hours traveling.

Of course, as Klein had used Tinder before and had read 2-105 Blood Vessel Thief's information, he had some idea about the powers of the Marauder pathway. Therefore, he suspected that Hazel, who had an item of a higher level, could "steal" the flight abilities of birds and use that short period of time to cross the river. This way, she might arrive within three hours.

Regardless, I'll be faster than her… Klein retracted his gaze and began considering who his next dance partner should be.

Ten in the evening, Moose Manor in the northwestern suburbs of Backlund.

This place originally belonged to a viscount, and it had more than a hundred years of history. Macht had bought it after his marriage, spending tons of money to maintain it every year so as to invite friends over during winter weekends for a vacation.

At this moment, the land steward was arranging for the servants to check every corner and to lock all the windows and doors. This was a necessary procedure before they slept every night.

A few maids walked out of the wine cellar in a group, heading straight for the kitchen to ensure that all flames had been extinguished.

The moment they arrived, they heard squeaking sounds as they looked over, only to discover a grayish-white rat gnawing on a table leg.

This rat seemed to sense their gaze, but it didn't run. Instead, it turned its head and glared at them with its slightly red eyes.

Meanwhile, there were more squeaking sounds as red-eyed rats ran out from the roof beams, storage cabinets, and all kinds of miscellaneous, even appearing beside the furnace which had some water boiling over it.

The maids nearly screamed in fear.

As members of the lowest classes of society, they were no strangers to rats. They had even killed quite a number. However, it was their first time to encounter so many at once. They couldn't help but feel a heavy blow to their senses.

"We need to get Guede and the others to deal with this," a maid left the kitchen and suggested in fear.

Another maid nodded immediately.

"Miss Hazel was bitten by a rabid rat… These don't look normal in any way!"

As they spoke, they retreated a great distance back, distancing themselves from the kitchen.

At this moment, a figure quickly appeared on the table. He wore a white shirt and black vest under a dark-colored formal suit. On his head was a half top hat, and he had a pair of bright leather boots.

This figure slowly lifted his head while holding down his hat. He surveyed the surroundings, revealing his black hair and brown eyes. He had a thin face and cut features. He was none other than Gehrman Sparrow.

Having left the ball ahead of time, Klein returned to Dwayne Dantès's residence and entered his bedroom. Then, he teleported over with Winner Enuni.

Of course, the latter had been left outside the manor to allow for any instantaneous switches in positions.

The rats reflected into his eyes as Klein pulled the human-skinned glove on his left hand, casting his gaze towards the flowerbed in the manor.

Almost at the same time, the rats in the kitchen stirred as their movements turned sluggish. However, they quickly returned to normal.

They had become a Bizarro Sorcerer’s marionettes.

And Klein could control as many as 50 marionettes, a number that would rise once he finished digesting the potion!

Chapter 982 - Bizarro Sorcerer vs Parasite

◆

When he cast his gaze towards the garden, the scene of the area was naturally reflected in Klein’s mind.

In the dark corner concealed by the flowers, grayish-white rats spun around wildly like they had been possessed. They kept squeaking as they attempted to push away their own kind and enter the core area.

In the core area lay a gray rat the size of an adult Loen Shorthair-a particular cat breed. Its eyes were slightly red like congealed blood.

Its tail was swishing about rapidly, seemingly in a bid to vent the irascible feelings within.

And whenever ordinary-sized rats approached, it would grab them and bite them to their deaths, causing rat corpses to pile up around it. But even so, this didn’t stop the other rats from surging over.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein suddenly had two thoughts:

First, having his “intuition” boosted by the gray fog was a boon for a Bizarro Sorcerer’s controlling of Spirit Body Threads. This wasn’t apparent in open areas where the owner of the Spirit Body Threads could be instantly determined, but when inside a bustling city or a place with many buildings, Bizarro Sorcerers who lacked “x-ray vision” were unable to determine the owners of the Spirit Body Threads that bunched up from afar. It made it difficult to accurately lock onto an enemy unless they did something special, making them stand out from others. Of course, Bizarro Sorcerers could also ignore the possibility of collateral damage and just indiscriminately control their targets.

Second, the Marauder pathway demigod that parasitized the rat was already on the verge of losing control. Not only was it several times bigger than when Arrodes showed it, but its condition appeared very unstable. It was filled with a violent and crazy aura.

Thankfully, I came in time. If I had waited a few weeks, who knows what kind of tragedy would unfold… A thought flashed across Klein's mind as illusory black threads appeared in front of him.

At this moment, he was less than fifty meters away from the mutated rat, making it completely feasible for him to control the Spirit Body Threads!

And at this moment, the huge rat with slick fur noticed something. It hurriedly stood up and turned its head towards the kitchen.

A glint flashed in its dark red eyes, instantly leaving the young man wearing a silk hat and black suit pausing in his spot.

It had "stolen" the main thoughts of the antagonizer for the next two seconds, leaving his mind blank. Furthermore, it didn't do the follow-up actions that a Sequence 5 Dream Stealer would've done! Right on the heels of that, this rat raised its right forelimb and attempted to "steal" the enemy's Beyonder powers.

At its level, it was able to "steal" three Beyonder powers from the same target and possess them for two hours. Of course, one attempt was limited to one power.

At this moment, the gigantic rat's thoughts turned extraordinarily sluggish. The actions of it using its powers seemed to be bound by invisible threads, making it appear extremely lethargic.

Initial control of its Spirit Body Threads had been obtained!

Its success at stealing Gehrman Sparrow's thoughts and throwing him into a daze was merely an illusion -a Bizarro Sorcerer's Illusion Creation!

Before Klein properly began controlling its Spirit Body Threads, Klein had already switched places with Enuni. As a marionette didn't possess any self-consciousness or thoughts, it was immune to the Beyonder powers of Thought Usurpation.

How could something that didn't exist be stolen?

And in order to trick the Marauder pathway demigod, Klein had used his illusion powers which had experienced a qualitative upgrade. He had also deliberately made Enuni, who wore Gehrman Sparrow's appearance, put on the corresponding act.

At this moment, he was outside Macht's Moose Manor, his straight line distance from the gigantic rat exceeded 500 meters. However, this didn't stop him from controlling his opponent's Spirit Body Threads. This was because a Bizarro Sorcerer could gift his Beyonder powers to his marionette. This included the control over Spirit Body Threads—the core for converting a target into a marionette!

This also meant that if there weren't any other restrictions, a Bizarro Sorcerer could use their marionette and extend his control of Spirit Body Threads from 150 meters to an unlimited range. After all, as long as there was a marionette placed every thousand kilometers, he could rely on extending his influence by gifting his Beyonder powers.

Of course, there was no ability in the world without restrictions. On the one hand, Klein's maximum number of marionettes was fifty, and it was currently impossible to exceed this number. On the other hand, the only thing that a Bizarro Sorcerer couldn't gift his marionette was the ability to think and be self-conscious. Therefore, the limit of using a marionette to control a marionette was the limit of his control over a marionette—1000 meters!

Once he exceeded this range, the marionette wouldn't be able to do anything.

In addition, by gifting his Beyonder powers to his marionette, a Bizarro Sorcerer was effectively separating a maggot that was related to his Mythical Creature form. It was transferred into the marionette's body via the Spirit Body Threads. Unless he had prepared via giving the same marionette additional maggots, the marionette lacked the means of separating another maggot when converting a new marionette or giving the new marionette his Beyonder powers.

And at present, Klein could only split a maximum of fifty. Exceeding this number exerted a huge burden on his Spirit Body and produced signs of his soul fracturing. Recovery was impossible without effective treatment, and it was possible to not recover, even with excellent treatment. It would only increase the possibility of losing control.

Therefore, through Klein's experiments, the maximum distance he could control Spirit Body Threads was 1000+150 meters. And to be able to fully control a new marionette, it needed to be within 1000 meters. At the same time, if the marionette were to die, the maggot inside the body would return to his body according to the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence. However, there was a chance of experiencing a loss if the process was interrupted.

While the Marauder pathway demigod's actions turned sluggish, the rats that had previously been turned into marionettes rushed out from Enuni's side. They aimed at the garden and opened their mouths in a bid to use Air Cannon to cleanse the target's location.

Suddenly, a dark red glimmer lit up in the gigantic rat's eyes.

Instantly, Gehrman Sparrow appeared in the dark corner of the garden, amidst the dead rats. As for the Marauder pathway demigod, it had arrived inside the kitchen where there were plenty of items on the table.

It had “stolen” Gehrman Sparrow’s position!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The marionette rats shot out their Air Cannons without being able to stop midway, hitting the spot where “Gehrman Sparrow” was standing. It left the soil splattering and threw the flowers into the sky. It alarmed the servants in the manor as their bodies trembled violently. They had no idea what was happening and could only frantically run for shelter. The entire garden was leveled by Air Cannon, thinning the layer of soil within. If Klein hadn’t directed the attack in that direction, the manor’s main building probably would’ve collapsed.

Amidst the flying dust, the rats were left dismembered, but “Gehrman Sparrow” remained standing there, uninjured.

Winner Enuni had just released all the good luck he had accumulated!

However, his control of the gigantic rat’s Spirit Body Threads had been terminated as a result. And there were only a limited number of Spirit Body Threads. The rat marionettes were unable to interfere, for it might create pandemonium and cancel each other out.

Hazel’s teacher, the Marauder pathway demigod took this opportunity to regain its freedom. Then, it turned around and raised its right forearm at “Gehrman Sparrow,” instantly stealing his Beyonder powers of controlling Spirit Body Threads.

As a Sequence 4 demigod, it could accurately “steal” the power of the target. Typically, there were three options, and with better understanding, the higher the chance of success was. And this time, its luck was pretty good.

Of course, if the target’s level was much lower, and if it clearly knew of the target’s situation, it could “steal” anything it wanted.

Just as it lowered its right paw, the Marauder pathway demigod raised its left paw. The rat marionettes slumped to the ground and could hardly turn their bodies.

This was a large-scale “theft” that stole the rats’ ability to walk!

Right on the heels of that, countless magical symbols appeared in the gigantic rat’s red eyes.

It rapidly “decrypted” the puzzle and found where Klein was.

With a red glint, it raised both paws and instantly appeared beside Klein.

This time, it had “stolen” the distance between the two!

At this moment, the thin-faced young man in front of the rat vanished. Replacing him was a gray rat.

And around the surrounding trees, worms began crawling out as they opened their “mouths.”

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Air Cannons bombarded the gigantic rat and ordinary rat.

While Klein was controlling the marionettes in the Moose Manor, he didn’t forget to convert new marionettes around him. This was, after all, a basic trait of a Bizarro Sorcerer. Then, swapping his body with a marionette, he had set up a simple trap!

Dust and soil flew high into the sky as the rat parasitized by the Marauder pathway demigod was completely inundated by it.

After everything settled down, a strong scent of blood emanated from the huge crater. There were pieces of flesh everywhere.

Dead? Klein looked at the blast-filled scene with the eyes of his surrounding marionettes.

However, he quickly frowned because there weren’t any signs of a

Beyonder characteristic appearing.

As his thoughts raced, Klein took out a gold coin and flicked it.

As the gold coin landed, scenes surfaced in his mind -revelations from his Astral Projection.

Compared to the past, as a demigod, Klein could use such a simple divination to obtain more information!

Chapter 983 - In Your Name

◆

Pa!

When the flicked gold coin landed in his palm, Klein didn’t even see if it was heads or tails. This was because his mind was fixed on a particular scene:

Amidst the woods, the clouds high in the sky failed to completely conceal the stars that dotted the black velvet sky. The humming, clicking, and thrumming sounds of the insects spread far into the night, mixed with the two commotions of the two “explosions” inside Moose Manor.

Klein rapidly used his knowledge from astromancy, and he roughly gauged the exact location of the scene. Then, his body phased away, appearing beside Enuni before grabbing his shoulder.

During this process, Klein collected the transparent maggots he had implanted in the rats and insects before severing the connection of the Spirit Body Threads.

In just two seconds, he vanished from Moose Manor which was gradually turning chaotic and noisy, teleporting to the spot that he had seen in his mind.

The area was identical to the revelation which Klein had received. It was extremely silent, to the point of being able to hear the breeze wafting through the leaves and trees.

Illusory black threads, representing all the creatures with spirituality in the region, surfaced in Klein's vision.

There were copious numbers of them, dozens being a gross understatement. To sieve through them and determine which was the problematic one couldn't be accomplished in a short amount of time.

However, he wasn't in a rush, because he had confirmed one thing:

His divination results could be trusted as long as the Marauder pathway demigod didn't possess any high-level items. After all, after becoming a Bizarro Sorcerer, not only were his powers elevated, the gray fog's powers also seeped deeper into reality. With these two combined, it made his divination powers far more outstanding than most saints, even without heading above the gray fog. It was unlikely that he was weaker than a Beyonder of the Fate pathway of the same Sequence. In contrast, the Marauder pathway demigod's condition was in shambles with its strength at an all-time low.

Therefore, Klein believed that the demigod was hiding in the woods and hadn't fled far.

Due to such reasons, he believed that waiting patiently was the best solution.

The Marauder pathway demigod was relatively weak, in an unstable condition, and close to losing control. After experiencing that intense battle and abandoning the rat's body, the situation only worsened. It was impossible to experience an improvement. Under such situations, if she didn't replenish herself or recover, it was only a matter of time before problems cropped up. Therefore, Klein could wait, while she couldn't.

As the humming, clicking, and thrumming sounds spread, Klein waited as he hurriedly converted marionettes. He made Enuni leave the region and hide about a thousand meters away. Meanwhile, he kept note of the possibility of having his Spirit Body Threads controlled, as he recalled that the enemy had “stolen” the Beyonder power from his marionette.

Suddenly, he heard a sound that resembled the panting that came from deep within the soul.

Right on the heels of that, a hysterical voice sounded from a tree diagonally ahead of him:

“Why are you forcing me?

“Why are you forcing me?

“Why are you forcing me!”

Amidst the sharp voice, the tree’s outer bark rapidly peeled off, revealing the core wood beneath. And on it, holes cracked open as strange worms with about eight circles around them crawled out.

The transparent rings of these worms had many three-dimensional patterns as though time was swirling through them.

Suddenly, Klein lost all his thoughts, losing the Beyonder powers of Air Cannon and Paper Figurine Substitutes. He lost his belt, coat, and hat, making him appear like a sculpture of flesh.

However, to a marionette, this wasn’t too serious a problem. After all, it was no problem for his actual body. The lost powers could be retrieved by switching maggots.

Yes, upon hearing the panting, Klein had swapped places with Enuni!

And a Winner like Enuni had no need to worry about his pants dropping after losing his belt. His waist swelled rapidly thanks to the powers of Faceless, stopping his pants from falling.

New marionettes in the form of insects and rats crawled out and surrounded the mutated tree.

At this moment, a voice with a hint of a smile sounded from an unknown location:

“Calm down. Don’t be angry. Everything will be resolved.”

The voice was filled with a persuasive force. The mutation of the tree slowed down as the ringed worms slowly shrank back in.

“Is that so?” Inside the tree, the vicious-sounding voice calmed down. There was some level of blankness to the voice, as though it was about to be convinced.

As for Klein, he found the words extremely reasonable. He couldn’t help but reflect on the reason for pushing a demigod to the brink of losing control.

He had a vague feeling that he had forgotten something and was unable to recall the true reason for coming

Then, he saw a chuckling figure walk out of the woods.

“Relax, I have the means to stop you from losing control. All you need to do is to follow my instructions.”

The figure was wearing a black trench coat that resembled a robe. He matched it with black trousers and leather shoes. He had a broad forehead and a thin face. Wearing a tall hat and a striking crystal monocle, he appeared extremely refined.

Klein’s gaze froze as a word resonated through his mind: Amon!

The person before him was Blasphemer, Angel of Time, King of Angels, the son of the Creator-Amon!

Although he knew that it was merely an avatar, Klein didn’t waste any time. He immediately abided by the deepest cries of his heart and used Creeping Hunger to phase away.

During this process, Enuni snapped his fingers and lit the matches in his pocket and fallen leaves a distance away, allowing him to appear beside Klein with Flaming Jump.

Klein grabbed him and vanished with him.

In the event that Amon tried to stop him, or if Enuni wasn't able to return fast enough, Klein's plan was to abandon his marionette and Travel far away.

Under such circumstances, the death of a marionette to ensure his survival was definitely worth it!

Luckily, Amon's attention was placed on the peeling tree. He didn't stop him or, should it be said, it was the case that he didn't have the time to stop him.

After Klein and his marionette vanished, Amon halted and turned to look at where the two were originally standing. As though in thought, he nodded slightly and scoffed.

“A Bizarro Sorcerer of Evernight.”

He then retracted his gaze and looked at the half-mutated tree and asked with a smile, “A descendant of Jacob?”

“Y-yes, do you know my ancestor?” Inside the tree, the rat demigod asked as though it had grabbed onto a floating board while drowning.

Amon stroked his chin and nodded indiscernibly.

“Of course.

“They tasted excellent.” Inside the tree, the descendant of the Jacob family fell silent. Only after a few seconds did a voice filled with horror utter:

“Y-you are Blasphemer Amon!”

Inside the tree hole, the worm with rings began crawling out.

However, they quickly stiffened and froze in their spots.

Amon adjusted the crystal monocle and said with a smile, “That’s too late now, isn’t it?

“It might’ve been of some use if you had struggled and resisted from the beginning, but now… Do you believe that I’m here on my own?”

As he spoke, the trees around him shook as the leaves of different trees ruffled. Birds leaped onto the branches and let out crisp chirping. And even the night breeze had an indescribable feel to it.

“You…” The Jacob descendant inside the mutated tree’s speech came to an abrupt halt. Amon stuffed his hands into the pockets of his trench coat and casually laughed.

“I heard that your family has split into tiny families with zero interaction, afraid that the lot of you will be caught by me, right? Ah right, didn’t you establish a secret organization with Zoroast’s descendants, as well as other Beyonders of the Marauder pathway? I believe it’s called the Hermits of Fate.

“You’re probably a member, aren’t you? Let me see if I can replace you and infiltrate that organization. Heh heh, a secret organization meant to defend against Amon and deal with Amon has Amon participating in it. Just the thought of it is rather interesting.”

Having said that, he glanced at the mutated tree that was vigorously shaking and said, “Unfortunately, from what I can see from your fate, you didn’t undergo a good education in mysticism. You can’t be a member of that organization. Are you the only one left of this Jacob family branch?

“You wished to seek out a secret treasure left by the Jacob family in Backlund, but you ended up seriously injured for some reason and ended up sealed?

“Ha, you even parasitized an ordinary animal. Yet, there are signs of you not talking to humans for an extended period of time… Aren't you very puzzled as to why you didn't receive any 'warnings' about this from the knowledge contained within the potion or the murmurs when you advanced to Sequence 4? Yes, it's because I've deleted them."

"No!"

A sharp scream filled with anger and viciousness sounded. There was an indescribable pain in it.

The mutated tree's tremblings intensified until it calmed down at some point.

Streams of light flew out from within and surged into Amon's body.

Taking out a piece of silk, Amon took off his monocle and wiped it as he mumbled, "How foolish. She actually believed me when I said it's too late. One flaw with fellows who are on the brink of losing control is that they're brainless and easily fooled.

"If she had carefully thought about it, how could she not realize the problems within? If I could quickly finish her off and steal her fate, why would I be wasting so much time chatting with her? An avatar is an avatar after all…"

After Amon wore his monocle again, the stream of light that flowed out of the mutated tree had been completed absorbed by "Him."

At this moment, a figure was passing through the woods-Hazel in hunting gear.

She seemed to sense something as she subconsciously looked over, only to see Amon.

Then, she revealed a surprised smile.

"Teacher, have you recovered?"

"Oh, someone has noticed a problem with you. It's best that you hide!"

Amon listened in silence before curling the sides of his mouth slowly.

“Alright.”

Chapter 984 - Active Response

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Klein didn’t directly teleport back to 160 Böklund Street. Instead, he went to sea with Enuni, found a secluded spot, and chanted the honorific name of The Fool.

Then, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog. With a beckon, he summoned a paper figurine.

Immediately after that, he picked up one of the Cards of Blasphemy on the long bronze table in front of him, and he placed it inside his body.

Klein suddenly had an additional dark red robe. This appearance seemed to look like rust and settled gunpowder that had been stained by copious amounts of blood. As for his face, it was covered by a dark gold mask. The patterns on its were ancient and set off a contrasting appearance with the crown he wore that was embedded with gems that sparkled red, blue, and green.

This was a change that the Red Priest card brought about.

After repeated experiments, Klein had confirmed that certain traits of the Red Angel card were very compatible with the Paper Angel’s interference effect with fate. It allowed the relevant powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog to be further enhanced. Therefore, he had chosen it instead of the Black Emperor or Tyrant cards.

After completing this, Klein, in the form of the Red Priest, picked up a paper figurine and shook it. He then fused it with the gray fog that surged over, throwing it at the rippling blob of light that represented him offering a prayer.

The paper figurine quickly burgeoned, turning into an angel bathed in golden light. Flames crisscrossed behind it, taking on the form of twelve pairs of wings.

This War Angel then used the secret connection that was generated from a prayer to descend upon the world and enveloped Klein and Enuni with its fiery wings.

Only with this done did Klein relax. Putting down the Red Priest card, he returned to the real world.

He first sought out food for Creeping Hunger before returning to 160 Böklund Street with Enuni. One transformed back into Dwayne Dantès, while the other turned into a young man with mixed-blood.

After combing his hair, Klein walked to the balcony of his master bedroom, looking far into the distance where Macht's residence stood. He discovered that the place remained brightly lit, a clear indication that the ball hadn't truly ended.

Typically, a ball continued until midnight, and of course, people were permitted to leave before then. After all, most people that were willing to dance late into the night were young adults.

Phew… Amon is truly terrifying. Just a battle involving a Marauder pathway's demigod was enough to garner his attention, even if one was in the city and the other was in the suburbs… At "His" level, the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence should be extremely substantial. Yes, I can't eliminate the possibility that the demigod's mutation while being on the brink of losing control had caught Amon's notice… Klein couldn't help but recall everything that had happened, afraid that he would find a thin, monocle-wearing young, refined man sitting in the reclining chair behind him while sipping from a glass of red wine when he turned around.

He felt lucky that he had already become a demigod and could converge the aura of the gray fog to prevent Beyonders of particular pathways from detecting it. Otherwise, with the interest Amon had shown in the past, “His” focus definitely would’ve been placed on Gehrman Sparrow instead of the Marauder pathway demigod. If that had been the case, he might not have left so successfully by teleporting As the Amon in Backlund was likely only an avatar, Klein was still rather confident of the Paper Angel’s interference. He believed that this King of Angels had no means to trace him all the way to 160 Böklund Street from a trail of breadcrumbs and also determine that he was Dwayne Dantès.

But this still didn’t ease his mind. This was because the Marauder pathway demigod was involved in Böklund Street as well!

She had encountered Admiral of Blood here and had been forced to trigger the explosives, finally parasitizing a rat… Here, she had been warned by a mirror, learning about the Marauder pathway angel who was in need of replenishments and that Blasphemer Amon was on the way… As she had refused to answer the mirror’s question, she was struck by lightning, and had to move to Moose Manor… In addition, Hazel—the target she attempted to parasitize but was her student on the surface—was influenced by a powerful illusion tonight, exposing her teacher’s condition… All of these factors combined might make Amon pay a visit… The more Klein thought about it, the more unsafe he found Böklund Street.

From his point of view, just the warning about a Marauder pathway angel in desperate need for replenishments was enough for Amon to take up “residence” in Böklund Street for a period of time!

Of course, there was an extremely small chance that the Marauder pathway demigod escaped and that nothing was divulged. However, Klein believed it was impossible. After all, even he had the confidence of handling the matter himself, much less Amon who had a certain level of control over Marauder pathway existences!

Sigh, I shouldn't have been wary against the grandpa in Leonard. If I wasn't worried that "He" would achieve another stage of recovery and cause Leonard harm, everything would've been settled rather quickly. I wouldn't be in this situation of attracting Amon… What do I do next? Regardless, I need to do something. Otherwise, not only will my identity as Dwayne Dantès be at risk, I might even implicate Leonard on Pinster Street and the ordinary people on Böklund Street. Who knows if Amon will suddenly parasitize them or not… As Klein's thoughts whirled, his expression grew heavy as he began seriously considering eliminating Amon's avatar.

His first idea was to establish contact with Leonard and come up with a plan with the grandpa in him, Pallez Zoroast. With this Marauder angel's knowledge of Amon who shared the same pathway, it was likely that "He" could come up with a good plan.

Klein immediately took out his pen and paper in preparation to write. But after making a few scribbles with the fountain pen, he paused.

He found the confidentiality lacking because describing in detail might result in having an effect on fate, allowing Amon to notice it ahead of time!

The more secure method would be to pull Leonard above the gray fog. The discussion can be held there and have him relay it and discuss it with Pallez Zoroast… Apart from this, what else can be done? Report it to the Church and get them to "disinfect" all of Backlund? Klein put down his fountain pen and muttered silently as he considered other proposals.

He soon gave up the thought of reporting Amon, because Leonard hadn't done so previously. With the understanding that the grandpa in him had of Blasphemer Amon, it implied that this method was useless. Either there was a huge flaw, or it might end up affecting oneself.

It's better to ask Leonard first and gain a better situation of the exact situation before coming to a decision… Klein quickly made up his mind.

He temporarily suppressed the urge to draw the symbol to ask Arrodes or use the paper crane to contact Snake of Fate Will Auceptin. After dismissing Enuni, he entered the master bedroom's bathroom, took four steps counterclockwise, and arrived above the gray fog.

Sitting at the seat of The Fool, Klein conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made the fake person pray piously:

"Honorable Mr. Fool, please inform Leonard Mitchell that I've discovered traces of Blasphemer Amon. I hope that he can head to your kingdom as soon as possible to discuss the subsequent actions. The time will be up to him to decide."

After throwing the prayer's content into the crimson star representing Leonard, Klein added as The Fool, "There's no need to hide it from Pallez Zoroast."

In the outskirts of North Borough, in a sparse forest.

Leonard extended his right hand and held down a blurry wild wolf's figure.

The wolf whimpered as the flames burning in its eyes dissipated, returning to normal.

Its body faded away and vanished into the wind. However, it no longer had the bloodthirsty feeling it previously exuded. All was calm and serene.

In the Northern Continent, after the Pale Era, the seven orthodox Churches, along with the various nations, jointly pushed for a Cemetery Burial act which had been strictly carried out to this day. As the number of humans that turned into ghosts were rare, the only exception involved the difficult-to-detect deaths in the slums or drowning victims that couldn't be fished out in time. However, the spirits of the deceased weren't only limited to humans. All kinds of wild animals and all kinds of creatures with spirituality could become specters under certain conditions. Furthermore, it was impossible for them to head to human cemeteries to have themselves interred.

This often resulted in rumors of ghost sightings in the wild.

Just as he put the wild wolf to rest, Leonard suddenly saw a boundless grayish-white fog appear before his eyes as The World Gehrman Sparrow's prayers resounded in his ears.

Traces of Blasphemer Amon. "He" is still in Backlund… Leonard's eyelids twitched as he tensed up immediately.

As he had received Mr. Fool's instructions, he didn't hesitate to speak with a suppressed voice:

"Old Man, did you see it? Did you hear it?"

Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice resounded once again:

"No.

"Although I sensed an anomaly, I didn't see or hear anything. It will only happen if I deepen my parasitization of you, allowing me to directly control your Astral Projection."

Do you think I'm a fool? Hmm, from the looks of it, Mr. Fool's response is done through the Astral Projection… Leonard thought before he said in deliberation, "Old Man, Klein informed me via Mr. Fool that he has discovered traces of Amon. He wants me to head over to Mr. Fool's kingdom to discuss this matter.

"Do you have any suggestions?"

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a few seconds before he let out a long sigh.

"If he wishes to deal with Amon's avatar in Backlund, tell him that unless he has the blessings of concealment, the outcome will be as you expect it to be.”

By saying this, Old Man is giving preconditions. “He” means that “He” will only be willing to cooperate with the blessings of concealment? Leonard’s mind raced as he immediately found a dark corner and informed The World Klein via prayer that he could do it immediately.

As for the danger that resulted from losing control of his body in the wilderness, Leonard wasn’t worried since he still had a Marauder pathway angel in his

body.

Before long, he saw a crimson tide surge towards him and inundate him.

Chapter 985 - Blessed of Concealment

◆

Above the boundless grayish-white, inside the magnificent palace.

Just as Leonard Mitchell’s figure appeared to the side of the long bronze table, he subconsciously stood up and wanted to bow to Mr. Fool.

However, when he looked over, he found the seat empty. No one was sitting there.

Doesn’t Mr. Fool usually sit there? A thought flashed through Leonard’s mind as he cast his gaze to the other end of the long mottled table.

The World was sitting there silently as though he was fused with the gray fog in an indistinct blur.

“… There’s only the two of us. There’s no need to deliberately use Gehrman Sparrow’s appearance,” Leonard casually said to The World as he sat back down.

After discovering Mr. Fool’s absence, he instantly became relaxed. He wasn’t as reserved as he was in the previous Tarot Gathering—just short of throwing his leg up on the table.

“It’s a habit,” Klein replied succinctly.

Leonard nodded in thought.

“I heard that Gehrman Sparrow’s persona at sea is a cold, reserved, refined, and polite person. Your current performance matches that description very well. However, you wasn’t like this in the past, Klein.

You have to remember that you're only acting. Do not be affected by your persona as Gehrman Sparrow."

Hey, I pulled you up here to discuss Amon, not to have a chat! Why do you show so little concern towards your grandpa's matters? Klein had indeed made it a habit to use The World's persona in such situations. But when this was pointed out by Leonard, he was a little embarrassed to change back into his original appearance. He tersely acknowledged that he would keep it in mind.

"Did Pallez Zoroast teach you about the part that 'you're only acting?"

"Yes," Leonard answered frankly.

This grandpa seems pretty good. He mentioned such crucial information to Leonard… Compared to "Him," the rat demigod from before was really up to no good. She didn't teach Hazel any of the most common knowledge. Even if she did, she distorted some of it. Heh heh, no matter how unaffiliated you are, how could they not know anything at the level of a demigod? Even that half-crazy sea serpent, Kalvetua, knew how to respond to rituals or obtain sacrificial items. It even knew some theurgy and how to perform bestowments… Klein established a first impression of Pallez Zoroast.

However, he wasn't hasty to make a judgment. After all, fishing was an activity that required bait. Just one instance didn't prove much. Seeing Klein being silent, Leonard cut the small talk and got down to business.

"Where did you discover traces of Blasphemer Amon?"

Klein went straight to the point.

"I was pursuing a demigod of the Marauder pathway who was on the brink of losing control. However, I ended up encountering Amon in the outskirts of Backlund. All I could do was use Mr. Fool's powers to directly escape."

"Amon's avatar really is still in Backlund…" Leonard sighed before he asked in a rather curious and desultory manner, “Why were you pursuing a Marauder pathway demigod who’s on the brink of losing control?”

After he asked the question, he realized something and swiftly added, “If it involves some plans of Mr. Fool, pretend as though I never asked.”

Why? Isn’t dealing with Beyonders on the brink of losing control or those who have lost control the duty of a Nighthawk? Klein sighed when he heard Leonard’s question.

It stirred up memories of his time in Tingen City.

In that short two plus months, he had handled many similar matters. It included the Mandated Punisher of the Church of Storms who turned into a monster, Hood Eugen’s loss of control, and Old Neil’s corruption by the Hidden Sage. Although they were only a handful, they left a deep impression on him. It drilled certain actions deep to the bone.

Therefore, after taking into account everything that he knew, and coming to the conclusion that the Marauder pathway demigod was on the brink of losing control after rabidly biting someone, he didn’t hesitate and used his illusion from downstairs. From that, he gained confirmation from Hazel and didn’t even wait a day or two to make preparations. All he did was do a divination above the gray fog and came up with a rough plan before taking action.

Such matters were emergencies for him!

In addition, Klein had long had the intention of getting rid of the Marauder pathway demigod because the malintent she had shown when dealing with Hazel was obvious. Furthermore, she had tried to entice Miss Magician to seek out treasure that was in actual fact a trap. If he wasn’t a demigod back then, which meant a great difference in strength, he would’ve taken action back then. Besides, he was also afraid that he would trigger unnecessary accidents.

It was precisely because of this that he followed his predetermined plan to eliminate her once he confirmed the Marauder pathway demigod's condition.

The first stage of his plan was to lure the enemy out of Moose Manor to prevent her from producing her incomplete Mythical Creature form before dying, as that would've affected the ordinary people. The result was pretty satisfactory. With himself as the bait, he achieved his goal, but he failed to use the Air Cannon bombardment to finish the battle. This made the Marauder pathway demigod flee into the woods and parasitize a tree.

Klein actually had a second stage to his plan and had even prepared contingencies in the event he failed to eliminate her. To his surprise, Amon suddenly appeared, making him terminate all his plans and flee without any hesitation. Klein's contingency was to let a marionette escape the battlefield and write to the experimental demigod byproduct of the Numinous Episcopate, Patrick Bryan, to get his help. This Undying likely possessed the ability to traverse the spirit world after all. And if there were any additional unforeseen circumstances, he could summon Miss Messenger and make payment after the deed.

As his memories surfaced, Klein replied to Leonard with a sighing tone, "A secret."

After pausing for a second, he asked, "Why didn't you find an opportunity to inform the Church of Evernight about the arrival of Amon's avatar in Backlund?"

Leonard hurriedly gave an explanation, indicating that if Amon's actual body were to arrive, a deity's descent was almost certain. He also explained that Amon could use the death of "His" avatar to see the corresponding changes in destiny; thus, finding the source of the stir and figuring out the activity range of the mastermind. It was also Amon's style to circle about a superficial avatar but hide a dozen, dozens, or hundreds of avatars. Amon's avatars could parasitize all kinds of creatures with spirituality. If one wasn't a demigod, they wouldn't even notice the parasite.

Towards the end, Leonard informed Klein in detail about the example Old Man had raised of how Amon would steal one's destiny.

This sent a chill running down Klein's back, thankful that he hadn't been rash in dealing with Amon. Otherwise, Mr. Fool might've been replaced.

It's no wonder Leonard didn't report the matter… For Amon to appear so openly, "He" is actually fishing. Furthermore, he has even more avatars hiding in secret, and "He" can parasitize the microbes in the air… This alone sends my scalp tingling. The creatures I can control at the moment can't even reach that state. The smaller the creature, the harder it is to see the Spirit Body Threads. It's quite a special case… Sigh, I can't use the Church's power, unless it's done by someone who is without any problems in every aspect… Klein commiserated as he gained a deeper understanding of Amon's terror. It left him a deeper impression.

From his point of view, Leonard was an excellent candidate to report the matter to the Church of Evernight, but with Pallez Zoroast parasitizing him, he didn't dare expose his existence to Amon.

In addition, The Hanged Man could also shoulder this responsibility, but he was unable to provide the source of the news. This meant problems that deserved deeper investigations into.

One choice after another flashed across Klein's mind. Finally, he paused on himself-his identities as Klein Moretti and Gehrman Sparrow!

As a Blessed of Evernight, it's entirely reasonable for me to inform the Church about Amon's appearance in Backlund. Amon won't be able to pick faults with that.

And having involved myself with the battle with the Marauder pathway demigod tonight, as the Bizarro Sorcerer who witnessed Amon and is now in possession of the knowledge that the Angel of Time's avatar is here in Backlund, it's also very normal and not something that will garner Amon's suspicion. At the same time, as I'm a Blessed of Evernight, just the loss of an avatar likely won't incur "His" full wrath for revenge. After all, "He" might be facing a very possible trap-a deity's descent! Having a backer really feels good… However, a price is always exacted for what fate bestows… Klein quickly came to a conclusion over the matter.

Then, he habitually changed his point of view and began considering this matter from Amon's point of view.

Amon is definitely no stranger to Bizarro Sorcerers. "He" can determine my pathway from my control of the marionettes and my swapping of locations.

Since Amon allowed a Bizarro Sorcerer to flee, "He" must've made preparations to be exposed. "He" might even be hoping to attract the target "He" is looking for.

I was using Gehrman Sparrow's face, but that doesn't imply anything. A Faceless's appearance is the least of one's concern… Hmm, then how would Amon determine my identity? A powerhouse that lurks in the dark and a demigod of the Seer pathway… As the Church of Evernight and the Secret Order are in control of the formulas, ingredients, and a mermaid, there are almost no unaffiliated Bizarro Sorcerers. The descendants of the Antigonus family have all been wiped out. Therefore, a Bizarro Sorcerer is either from the Secret Order or a secret proxy that the Church of Evernight secretly nurtures…

Together with me being in Backlund, the answer is almost obvious…

Due to these reasons, Amon wouldn't find it difficult to determine that the Church of Evernight is aware of "His" whereabouts and will begin an operation to wipe "Him" out. My reporting of "Him" will be within expectations. Not doing so would be abnormal…

Yes, “He” will definitely be hiding. Even if “He” replaces the identity of that Marauder pathway demigod, “He” wouldn’t come to Böklund Street anytime soon!

Having made this judgment, Klein immediately felt a little more relieved because it meant that he would have plenty of time to prepare!

“What ideas do you have?” Seeing Klein’s prolonged silence after he finished his description, Leonard couldn’t help but ask.

Klein reined in his thoughts and asked without answering him, “What suggestions does Pallez Zoroast have regarding this?”

“He’ said that if you wish to deal with Amon’s avatar in Backlund, you have to first obtain the blessings of Concealment,” Leonard replied truthfully.

Blessings of Concealment… Pallez Zoroast is openly trying to test me. Half the symbol behind The Fool’s seat represents concealment… Using Paper Angels and the Red Priest card, I can stir the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog, making it possible for me to disrupt Amon’s avatar. However, it’s probably unable to prevent “Him” from prying into fate itself… However, I still have another identity as Evernight’s Blessed, and another title of the Goddess is the Mother of Concealment… Is eliminating Amon’s avatar considered paying the price or receiving a bestowment? Seems like both… Klein thought before replying in a deep voice:

“Tell Pallez Zoroast that I’m a Blessed of Concealment. I will attempt to pray for help.”

He was referring to being the Blessed of the Mother of Concealment, but it was certain that Pallez Zoroast would understand it as being The Fool’s Blessed.

Chapter 986 - The “Infectiousness” of Parasitizing

◆

So Mr. Fool also has authority in the aspect of concealment… Leonard came to a realization as he understood why Old Man had specially mentioned the need for the blessings of concealment.

Without waiting for his reply, Klein added, “In addition, tell Pallez Zoroast that Amon might very well know that there’s a Marauder pathway angel in the vicinity of Böklund Street.”

This… Leonard’s pupils dilated as he blurted out, “How would ‘He’ know that?”

It’s not convenient to tell you why… Klein mumbled inwardly before replying rather sternly, “It’s not like I’m Amon.”

“Which of ‘His’ actions or words made you come to this conclusion?” Leonard asked subconsciously.

No, it’s me who “told” “Him”… Klein chuckled as a response.

Indeed… Leonard nodded and said, “No problem. I’ll inform Old Man of this.”

He paused for a moment before asking, “Are you waiting for ‘Him’ to give a detailed plan?”

Klein tersely acknowledged.

“When it comes to the knowledge of Amon and the Marauder pathway, few are better than 'Him.'"

Having said that, Klein, who had determined that Amon wouldn't come to Böklund Street any time soon, calmly added, "There's no need to be in a rush to respond. Give me the feedback at tomorrow's Tarot Gathering."

From the looks of it, things haven't reached a critical stage yet… Leonard figured out the most important information from Klein's words. He nodded slightly and said, "Alright, we will discuss this in detail at tomorrow's Tarot Gathering."

After settling this matter, Klein immediately got up and bowed in the direction of the "door of light."

"Mr. Fool, we are done."

Leonard stood up, but before he could do anything, his vision became a blur as the crimson stellar light inundated him.

When he snapped awake, he found himself in the sparse forest on the outskirts of North Borough.

"Is there anything you wish to tell me?" Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice sounded.

Leonard cleared his throat and said, "Klein told me that he's a Blessed of Concealment. He can attempt to pray for help."

"Blessed of Concealment. Indeed…" Pallez sighed and said, "Tell him that as long as he can really gain the blessings of Concealment, I'm willing to provide help when it comes to dealing with Amon and finding all 'His' avatars hiding in Backlund."

Leonard wasn't surprised by this answer as he chuckled.

"Old Man, you don't sound as weak as you make yourself out to be!"

Pallez Zoroast chuckled without a hint of anger in his tone.

“Didn’t you read through Roselle’s Quotes? I recall that there’s a saying that a starving camel is still bigger than a horse.”

“That will depend on the breed of horse and camel,” Leonard retorted habitually before asking, “Old Man, how should we deal with Amon? Do you plan on using yourself as bait?”

“Ahem!” Pallez snapped back, “If that were the case, what we’ll be facing will be Amon’s actual body and not ‘His’ avatars. When that happens, there’s a high chance that it will instigate a deity’s battle. I might still have a chance of escaping. As for you, perhaps you will return to Evernight’s Tenebrous Heaven.”

“…” Leonard could only reply with a chortle.

Pallez Zoroast continued, “Unlike the similar powers of other pathways, Amon’s avatars can rapidly strengthen ‘Himself’ by absorbing the Beyonder characteristics of the Marauder pathway, thereby splitting even more Worms of Time, allowing him to parasitize different creatures. As long as there’s enough Beyonder characteristics, this process can keep happening…”

“I-isn’t this like the spread of a plague?” Leonard felt a chill run down his back once again.

If one had enough Beyonder characteristics of the Marauder pathway, Amon’s avatars could go from parasitizing one person to the entire city!

“Pretty much.” Pallez Zoroast affirmed Leonard’s guess and sighed. “To deal with Amon, this is the only way to take action. Using Marauder pathway Beyonder characteristics at the demigod level to bait ‘Him’ out. As long as you successfully finish off one of his avatars, there are ways to seek out and eliminate the rest. However, Amon is a master of deceit. We need to be careful; otherwise, it might appear like we are baiting ‘Him,’ but in actual fact, ‘He’ is baiting you. On this matter, concealment is of utmost importance!”

“I understand.” Leonard sighed and turned to ask, “How strong can Amon’s avatar be?”

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a few seconds as though in recollection. Finally, he said, “In theory, ‘His’ strongest avatar can reach the equivalent of a Sequence 1, but it’s almost impossible for ‘Him’ to do so. This will make his mental state unstable and show signs of losing control.

“Typically, one of ‘His’ avatars is a Worm of Time, each starting off as a weak Sequence 4. However, each possesses the trait of an angel capable of shattering Beyonder characteristics. By absorbing sufficient amounts of Marauder pathway Beyonder characteristics, such an avatar can reach a level equivalent to a Sequence 2. However, Amon seldom does so. ‘His’ avatars will automatically fracture and create even more avatars.

“Furthermore, with the actual situation in Backlund, it’s very difficult for ‘Him’ to gather enough Beyonder characteristics that can raise ‘His’ avatar to Sequence 2.”

Leonard thought carefully for a moment before asking, ’So, we will be facing a group of Amons. Amongst them, a majority have the strength of a weak Sequence 4, with a minority having the normal standards of a Sequence 4, while an extremely small minority reaches Sequence 3?”

“With Amon’s style, it’s likely the case. However, you have to remember that Amon is good at deceit,” Pallez Zoroast warned. “In addition, based on the time since Amon’s avatar arrived in Backlund, the number of Marauder pathway Beyonder characteristics ‘He’ has gathered to date can’t be too much. After all, this is Backlund. Also, if the situation isn’t right, ‘His’ avatars will use the strongest one as the center and automatically gather together to achieve an elevation in strength. The most important matter when dealing with Amon is to not let matters develop to this stage. Otherwise, there’s no stopping Amon from escaping even if an angel of the Concealment domain arrives.”

"It's truly difficult to deal with 'Him." Besides, it's just an avatar 'He' randomly threw out to develop themselves. As expected of a King of Angels…" After Leonard made a poignant sigh, he suddenly recalled Klein's reminder and hurriedly said, "The Angel of Time has apparently already locked onto a Marauder pathway demigod. Klein said that he encountered Amon while pursuing the demigod. Also, Amon seems to know that there might be a Marauder pathway angel hidden in the region around Böklund Street…"

Pallez Zoroast fell silent once again, remaining that way for a pretty long period of time.

After a while, with Leonard unable to stop himself from prodding for a response, "He" lamented with a sigh, "Why is your former colleague as troublesome as you?"

"What?" Leonard wore a blank look.

Palle Zoroast said in a peeved manner, "The reason why Amon knows that there's a Marauder pathway angel around Böklund Street is likely due to him!"

"Old Man, y-you have the ability to decrypt?" Leonard asked in puzzlement.

Pallez harrumphed.

"I was using my brain!

"Otherwise, why do you think there's the prefix of Böklund Street?"

… That's true. Anything that has to do with Böklund Street can't avoid Dwayne Dantès… Could it be some problem that fellow, Klein, created? Only then did Leonard come to a realization.

At this moment, Pallez sighed.

"Thankfully, he only said an angel and not my name. Otherwise, I suggest that we immediately leave Backlund.

“Tell him that there are currently two solutions:

“First, it’s to seek out a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact of the Marauder pathway or find a demigod of the Marauder pathway. Using them, we design a trap. This entire process requires the blessings of Concealment. Furthermore, it needs to be natural, reasonable, normal, and in no way incur suspicion.

“Second, wait for Amon to enter Böklund Street. He might do a combination of ‘replacing someone’s identity’ and ‘infiltrating through the air.’ Therefore, your former colleague needs to see through the grafting of fate or notice the abnormalities in the microbes. Otherwise, no matter what plans are employed, it will simply be feeding Amon.”

Leonard’s eyelid twitched when he heard that as he solemnly nodded.

“I’ll discuss these matters with him tomorrow afternoon.”

“Alright.” Pallez Zoroast sighed and said, “Also, if all the Amon avatars in Backlund can be eliminated, most of the Worms of Time left behind will belong to

me.”

As a form of replenishing himself? It’s no wonder Old Man is willing to take the risk… Leonard asked in enlightenment, “Do those Worms of Time have the Beyonder characteristics of the Marauder pathway?”

“It might be the case in my hands, but not necessarily for others,” Pallez explained simply. “The Worms of Time left when Amon’s avatars die will indeed contain a sufficient amount of Beyonder characteristics in the beginning, but they will quickly deplete and return to the main body. The corresponding power is needed to prevent this phenomenon from happening.” Leonard first nodded before asking in confusion, “Why was the Luck Siphon charms made from the Worms of Time so powerful?”

Pallez instantly scoffed.

“Have you forgotten what the essence of the charm

is?

“Its essence is the power obtained from a high-level existence. It then uses a material that can handle this power, as well as the powers obtained from the corresponding symbols, to stabilize it. The Worm of Time’s role is to be a unique vessel. If the level is high enough, its essence is compatible, and there is sufficient spirituality, the requirements will be met.”

“Therefore, the power of the Luck Siphon charm actually comes from Mr. Fool?” Leonard asked in thought.

Pallez Zoroast chuckled and said, “Yes, you can try praying to Amon as well and use ‘His’ power to create Luck Siphon charms.

“Of course, the uniqueness of the vessel material will also affect the effects of the final product. In other words, different special materials will lead to different characteristics in power based on the response. Sigh, charms are a very profound and complicated piece of knowledge. It’s not something that can be completely grasped by having some cursory education. You have to put more effort into

it.”

Leonard immediately felt somewhat ashamed.

On Monday afternoon, using the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog to check on Hazel’s family to confirm that there weren’t any problems in the meantime, Klein patiently waited for the convening of the Tarot Gathering.

Dark red beams shot up in the ancient palace before gradually calming down.

Without a pause, Audrey got up and bowed towards the end of the long mottled table.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~”

Chapter 987 - “Warehouse Clearance”

◆ ◆ ◆

After the greetings, everyone took their seats. Audrey swept her gaze across the third Card of Blasphemy placed beside Mr. Fool’s right hand. She suddenly came to a realization that she had forgotten to obtain Roselle’s diary entries from the Psychology Alchemists this week.

I’ve been caught up with the problem with Hvin Rambis all week… Audrey, who felt that she had already brightened up, instantly felt a little melancholic.

At this moment, Cattleya had looked towards the seat of honor at the end of the long mottled table. She bowed her head and said, “Honorable Mr. Fool. I haven’t received any Roselle diary entries this week as well.”

Queen Mystic hasn’t provided any of the emperor’s diary entries for two consecutive weeks. Did something happen? Leisurely sitting in his high-back chair, The Fool Klein felt somewhat puzzled as he couldn’t help but have pessimistic thoughts.

However, he swiftly denied this possibility because Ma’am Hermit didn’t show any anxiety or concern!

With the way Admiral of Stars presents herself as a fledgling in need of her mother in the dream world in the ruins of the battle of god, she definitely wouldn’t be this calm if Queen Mystic doesn’t reply to her for two consecutive weeks. Her anxiety might even prompt her to seek The Fool’s help… That also means that she has received a reply from Bernadette in the past two weeks, but none of Roselle’s diary entries were provided… Klein nodded gently and replied Cattleya calmly, “No hurry.”

After saying that, his thoughts raced as he began analyzing the reason for Bernadette’s actions.

First, Klein eliminated the possibility that she no longer had any more Roselle diary entries. Combining the frequency at which the emperor wrote diary entries, he surmised that the compiled diary would exceed ten standard books. Even if Bernadette only had a third of that, she was definitely capable of producing one or two books. In addition, the diary entries she had previously provided were just a tiny minority which touched on crucial intelligence.

Second, Klein didn’t believe that Queen Mystic had gained the entire truth from the answers he had given.

Finally, he was also certain that she couldn’t decipher the simplified Chinese she had in hand from the tidbits of feedback she received. After all, he didn’t give a detailed translation, but vague answers comprising of a few words.

Combining all three points, he suspected if the diary entries Bernadette planned on providing next would be even more important. They were more key and pointed to a certain secret or extremely special, questions that made one unsure if they wanted to know the answer. Thus, this Queen Mystic was presently in a dilemma!

It’s likely the case… I wonder what the emperor will write about. Besides, how is Bernadette able to know the importance of the entry… I should remember to get Ma’am Hermit to pass on my requests… While in thought, Alger had already turned to look at Leonard.

“I apologize. There’s still no news of mystical items that meet your request at the moment.”

“That’s very normal. That’s right. Uh, mystical items from Sequence 5 and 6 aren’t common to begin with.” Leonard nodded in understanding.

He was originally sitting very straight, but when he found that The Moon and The Magician weren't so uptight, he also relaxed, relieving the straightening of his back.

Upon seeing this, Klein controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow and said with a hoarse voice, "I have a mystical item that suits your requests in various aspects. It's just that it has quite a number of negative effects that make it difficult to avoid. Do you want to consider it?"

He was referring to the Word of the Sea.

Klein had never had the intention of selling this item that almost required sealing to Leonard, as he felt that his dear poet friend couldn't withstand the negative effects of Word of the Sea. The belting of songs that didn't discriminate between ally or foe, the trait of tripping the wielder, or the flaw of being prone to lightning strikes weren't easily avoided. Klein was only able to use it by teaching the Word of the Sea above the gray fog a good lesson, and having Winner Enuni wield it to not be affected. He had even converted the flaws into something that could aid him.

However, after considering how Leonard had a Sequence 1 Marauder pathway angel parasitizing him, Klein had the feeling that Leonard might have the means to resolve the problem. Therefore, he ultimately made an inquiry.

"Oh, tell me about it." Leonard believed that Klein wouldn't scam him, so he expressed his intentions of getting to know the exact situation.

The World Gehrman Sparrow glanced at The Hanged Man and said slowly, "It can release lightning on a target…"

He roughly described the Beyonder powers of the Word of the Sea and the negative effects, leaving Leonard somewhat enticed despite frowning.

It can actually be used as a staff to allow me to fly… Even at Sequence 5 Spirit Warlock, I'll need to seek out a suitable spirit before I can fly… Besides, the offensive strength really is formidable. There are quite a number of traits… But the three negative effects are quite terrifying… I'll return to ask Old Man to see if "He" has any means to reduce the negative effects… Leonard pondered for a few seconds before saying:

"I'll take some time to consider it. How about I give you an answer next week?"

"No problem," The World Gehrman Sparrow replied without any hint of surprise.

As for the other members, even if they were interested in the beginning, all of them gave up the thought of inquiring about the price once they heard the negative effects that the Word of the Sea possessed.

At this moment, The Fool Klein's mind was focused on another matter. He was wondering if he should take this opportunity to do a "warehouse clearance sale."

He had advanced to Sequence 4, and after becoming a demigod, many of the items and characteristics he had before were no longer of much use.

I can keep Creeping Hunger. I should keep it just for Traveling alone. In addition, it can Graze one Sequence 4 saint. It has room for further growth. Furthermore, the combination of the various Beyonder powers it has is pretty good… The value of Death Knell is no longer that great, but after activating Lethal Attack mode, the damage it does on a fixed target exceeds that of Air Cannon. At the very least, I can still use it at Sequence 4. Yes, it also has room for growth… The first two items that surfaced in Klein's mind were the two items he frequently used.

From his point of view, as long as he obtained more powerful bullets, he could produce terrifying effects with Death Knell. The only problem was that such bullets were equivalent to high-level charms—nothing that could be easily found. Even if he sought out the materials to make them himself, he had to consider the chances of success when praying to some high-level existence or if it was possible for there to be a backlash.

On this aspect, Klein came up with a few plans—pray to the Goddess; request Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin to provide help; go through Leonard to get Pallez Zoroast's help; use the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog and also get Leonard to make a trip back to Tingen under the guise of a mission, so as to steal some of the powers of the Eternal Blazing Sun's divine blood from 3-0782, the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

Flaring Sun Bullets are definitely the nemesis of creatures like evil spirits… I have some idea on how to use the materials via borrowing the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog. Amon's Worms of Time can be used to make Luck Siphon charms. My Worms of Spirit can also be made into Beyonder bullets. As for how it can be done, I'll need to ask Pallez Zoroast… Klein began anticipating the upcoming chat with Leonard.

Worm of Spirit was the name he gave to those transparent maggots.

Following that, he began considering the other items and characteristics.

Sun Brooch? I currently lack such powers and items… Although I can use the control over Spirit Body Threads to deal with evil spirits, I can keep it and allow my Paper Angel to have one more additional change. Besides, I can also lend it to Danitz from time to time.

Flower of Blood? I can't sell it. The Tarot Club doesn't have any Aurora Order members. I'll continue letting my marionette use it. Having one additional life is one additional hope.

Green Essence? I can sell this. I can transfer my ailments already. Creeping Hunger also has a Doctor grazed.

Murloc Cufflink? There's no need for this either. If I have a sudden need for its powers, I can transform into a huge fish. And in the long term, I can just head above the gray fog to use Sea God Scepter to augment myself with the effects.

Broken Finger? I wonder if anyone would want it. Besides, I haven't fully investigated why the rat demigod was sealed. It might be of use.

I have 1 purifying bullet, 6 demon-hunting bullets, and 2 exorcism bullets left. I'll just randomly use them. There's no need for me to sell them.

Biological Poison Bottle? Sigh, I haven't been able to sell it all this time.

Blatherer's aura? This can be used to make charms or bullets. I'll temporarily not sell it. But herein lies the problem, am I to pray to the Dark Side of the Universe? That can be struck off the list of options. I'll see if there are any replacement plans in the future.

An Interrogator Beyonder characteristic, a Lunatic Beyonder characteristic, 15 ml of a Thousand-faced Hunter's blood, 40 grams of Spirit World Plunderer powder, an eyeball of a six-winged gargoyle… Tarot Club members have no need for these. I might be able to reward the believers of Sea God or the Resistance in Rorsted Archipelago… As these thoughts flashed across his mind, Klein quickly made a decision.

As for items which were at least at the demigod level such as the Sea God Scepter, Groselle's Travels, the Giant King's Court key, he didn't consider selling them.

Then, he made The World Gehrman Sparrow say, "I have two mystical items for sale. Their levels are relatively low.

Cattleya immediately replied, "A low level doesn't mean it's useless. Many Low-Sequence Beyonders powers can even turn the tides of battles involving Sequence 5 Beyonders. I'm rather interested in knowing the detailed situation of those two mystical items.

Klein nodded gently and described the uses and flaws of Murloc Cufflink and Green Essence. After he was done, he said, “Murloc Cufflink for 500 pounds, Green Essence for 1,000 pounds.”

Just as he said that, Audrey raised her arm.

“I wish to buy the Murloc Cufflink.”

She actually wished to say that she wanted both. After all, the two mystical items have extremely minor negative side effects. However, considering how others might have their needs, she found it inappropriate for her to take them all. Audrey finally decided to only take Murloc Cufflink.

This could provide her a layer of illusory scales, preventing her from being easily caught. And more importantly, she didn’t know how to swim. This could effectively make up for her weakness. As for the heat and the dry weather easily causing fatigue, she wasn’t too worried about it. This was because, be it in East Chester County or Backlund, the temperature seldom exceeded 30oC. The humidity was also rather high.

Seeing Miss Justice having her eyes on Murloc Cufflink, the other members wisely gave up without raising the price, allowing the trade to quickly come to an end.

Following that, Alger bought the Green Essence ring. To him, although the water domain had certain restorative spells, they were inferior to a dedicated item. As a Beyonder who often had to engage in melee battles, it was of great importance.

As for attracting mosquitoes, Alger wasn’t bothered. This was because he had illusory scales beneath his skin, preventing him from being afraid of bites.

After the transaction segment came to an end, Emlyn cleared his throat and asked a question.

Chapter 988 - Joint Operation

◆

Emlyn couldn't help but clasp his hands together, lift up his chin, and say to Miss Magician diagonally opposite him, "I've already confirmed that the ancient abandoned castle in Delaire Forest is an internal test that the Sanguine had given me, having hidden the key situation."

With that said, he felt as though a weight had been lifted off his chest. He no longer felt as hesitant, embarrassed due to the difficult situation he was in.

He surveyed the area and looked for Ma'am Hermit's and Mr. Hanged Man's reaction. He realized that they appeared to have expected it, showing no signs of surprise.

From the looks of it, they had already an idea when Miss Magician mentioned the problem with the intel… Emlyn nodded his head in secret and added before Miss Magician replied, "I'm very sorry. I will refund you the 300 pounds for the intel fee. In addition, I'll pay you another 300 pounds. Also, I will punish the Sanguine who deliberately omitted information."

Although Mr. Moon always wears a proud demeanor, he's rather sincere when a mistake has been made. He didn't find an excuse to push the blame onto… However, I've already obtained the ancient wraith's cursed item and remnant spirituality, so the matter is already over. He didn't deliberately wish to cause harm to me and Xio. There's no need for me to get so much compensation… Fors remembered Xio's exhortations. Without looking at her, she said, "It's only a matter of oversight. There's no need for compensation. Just refunding me for the intel fee is sufficient."

Just as she said that, she suddenly thought of something. Since the ancient abandoned castle was a test of the Sanguine, didn't that mean that Xio and herself had been targeted by the Sanguine?

Fors finally couldn't hold back as she turned to glance at Xio. She found Miss Judgment shaking her head slightly, indicating that she hadn't discovered anyone monitoring them.

This… Fors felt puzzled and found it inexplicable.

She then allowed her thoughts to wander as she recalled the situation back then.

We did the exploration only after quite a while. The Sanguine had already lost their patience by then?

The boss of the town's inn knew of the ancient abandoned castle. He was a Sanguine in disguise? That's not right. Many of the locals knew of this matter. However, that place was too far away and there wasn't anything of value left inside. That's why, unless one was out hunting, people usually wouldn't head in that direction…

That's not right. If the ancient abandoned castle were that dangerous, why are the people who use it for shelter from the rain completely fine? They only describe it as creepy and a little scary? Yes, the Sanguine would usually seal off the passage that heads underground. They opened it for the test? This means that there was some form of monitoring…

Uh, because the ancient castle is too dangerous, the monitoring was done outside the forest and not inside? As Xio and I got lost, we circled around the monitors and weren't detected?

Mr. Fool didn't mention anything about it. It's probably not a huge problem… More attention needs to be taken when I return!

As Fors's thoughts raced, Emlyn said after some pondering, "…Okay."

He didn't insist on additional compensation, because he believed that the best form of compensation was to punish Ernes Boyar instead of giving money.

Then, he waited for Miss Magician to ask about the punishment, hoping that he could take the opportunity to make an inquiry to the other Tarot Club members. He wanted to see if he could get any good suggestions.

As for Fors, upon considering that it was an internal matter for the Sanguine and that although she was a victim, Mr. Moon hadn't offered a plan for action, she decided not to press further in consideration for his feelings. Instead, she decided to wait for the conclusion to see if it was satisfactory.

The palace that looked like a giant's residence turned silent as the mood turned odd.

Audrey looked opposite her and glanced to the side. Pursing her lips, she "curiously" asked, "Mr. Moon, how do you plan on punishing that Sanguine?"

Phew… Emlyn silently exhaled as he subconsciously looked at The World.

"He did so because of orders from the higher-ups. I believe that this mistake isn't something that deserves payment with his life."

In between the lines, Emlyn was implying that Mr. World didn't need to intervene in this matter. There was no need to escalate the matter.

Seeing The World having no objections, Emlyn cast his gaze forward.

"I plan on leading that Sanguine to a particular cathedral of the Church of Earth Mother in Backlund."

Having participated in so many Tarot Gatherings, even if he couldn't be concerned about certain details, he knew the requirement of hiding matters regarding himself in the real world. Therefore, he didn't mention the Harvest Church.

The Church of Earth Mother only has one cathedral in all of Backlund. That's the Harvest Church! The rest are all in the outskirts and surroundings villages… Leonard held back his laughter as he looked up at the dome above.

"You wish to have the Beyonders of the Church of Earth Mother purify that Sanguine?" Fors blurted out in surprise.

From her point of view, this was no different from directly killing the person in question!

"Uh…" Emlyn was momentarily at a loss for words.

At that moment, Cattleya interrupted:

"The Church of Earth Mother has the habit of inducting the Sanguine into the church, converting their faith and making them priests or bishops."

I see… With thoughts in mind, Audrey glanced at Mr. Moon without letting him notice it.

Getting that Sanguine to become a member of the clergyman, to pray daily at the cathedral and do voluntary work, so as to cleanse the heart. He would be stuck doing this for a very long period of time… Mr. Moon's plan for punishment is really vicious… However, I like it! That fellow nearly made me and Xio turn into ancient wraiths due to the corruptive powers behind the door… Fors instantly felt her interest piqued as she asked, "Mr. Moon, how do you plan on luring the Sanguine into the cathedral of Earth Mother? Have you worked out a plan? Perhaps I can provide some help. Uh, you have to be careful. You mustn't enter the cathedral of Earth Mother in order to punish him. Th-that way, the only thing you can do is to request Mr. Fool for help."

Of course, that might be something Mr. Fool wishes to happen, allowing "Him" to have someone on the inside of the Church of Earth Mother… After saying that, Fors silently added.

Upon hearing that, Leonard nearly laughed out. He was extremely certain that Mr. Moon was the Harvest Church's Emlyn White. Clearly, this Sanguine was already a priest of Earth Mother!

This is slightly akin to a drowning person pulling others in… Leonard held back his laughter, glanced at The World, and he found that his former colleague didn't seem perturbed. He appeared extremely somber.

He couldn't help but think, Is this the power of a Clown, or is it a state that Klein is accustomed to?

At the end of the long mottled table, The Fool Klein nearly covered his mouth.

He never expected Emlyn to be so creative!

This was a little like multi-level marketing, yet it's a little different. After all, it's not necessarily a good thing for Emlyn to know of that… Klein leaned back into his chair as he awaited the development with piqued interest.

He had always kept in mind Miss Justice's advice during his last treatment session about not always wearing a thick mask. He tried his best to do so when opportunities arose so as to maintain a healthy mental state.

Upon hearing Miss Magician's words of concern, Emlyn felt even more awkward because he went to the cathedral of Earth Mother several times a day on a daily basis. He felt uncomfortable even if he skipped the weekends.

He cleared his throat and said, “I temporarily do not have a thought-out plan. I wish to get some suggestions from all of you. Yes, I hope that we do not have too intense a battle. It’s difficult to ensure that the matter doesn’t escalate, and I also do not wish for my identity to be directly exposed.

“Miss Magician, there are no problems regarding your participation, but we will absolutely not be meeting each other.”

His idea of not directly exposing his identity meant that he didn’t mind that Ernes Boyar and the other Sanguine could guess that he did it. It was a way to instill shock and awe in them, but it was best that there wasn’t any obvious evidence.

Fors tersely answered as she mimicked the other experienced members of the Tarot Club.

“First, you need to tell us what Sequence that Sanguine is roughly at and what he’s good at.”

Emlyn was already prepared as he answered, “It’s equivalent to Sequence 5. He’s quite experienced and is good at creating the effects of the full moon…”

Effects of the full moon? Fors was taken aback as she turned agape but was unable to say a word.

After Emlyn finished the introduction, Fors said with a hollow chuckle, “I recall that I have other matters to tend to. It might not be convenient for me to participate in this matter.”

When in a state similar to the full moon, she would hear Mr. Door’s ravings!

And this meant that she would instantly be heavily injured by the target, losing all her combat strength!

Emlyn frowned slightly, displeased with Miss Magician’s sudden change in attitude.

At this moment, Xio, who had been listening silently, said, “I can participate. I just need a portion of the spoils.”

Miss Judgment’s tone is very firm. It’s like she wants to exact vengeance… Emlyn mumbled silently to himself and glanced at Ma’am Hermit and Mr. Hanged Man, only to discover that they temporarily had no intention of speaking. It appeared as though they wished to observe what kind of plan the Backlund members of the Tarot Club could come up with.

As this involved her friends and how it could be the first mission that the Tarot Club members would participate in at the same time, Audrey was rather intrigued. After some observation, she said in deliberation, “I can hypnotize that Sanguine, allowing him to enter the cathedral of Earth Mother himself.

“However, to not expose ourselves and to ensure a high chance of success, it’s best that he’s in a lost or half-dazed state while I hypnotize him. Mr. Moon, can you do that?”

Emlyn was summarizing his powers and items to consider a solution when Leonard suddenly laughed.

“That’s simple, but I’ll only be responsible for making that Sanguine unconscious.

“Of course, the premise is that there’s sufficient intel, and it depends on how we go about taking action.”

Just as he said that, Xio nodded and said, “I’m good at tracking and investigation. You can leave intel matters to me.

“Alright. First, Mr. Moon will have to inform me of that Sanguine’s name, address, and appearance.”

“Alright.” Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief before saying in a somewhat lost manner, “Then what’s my part in all of this? Also, what kind of payment do you want?”

Chapter 989 - Mentor Alger

◆

Upon hearing The Moon’s question, the rest of the Tarot Club members realized that the main instigator for the punishment had ended up with nothing to do!

According to the established plan, all he needed to do was provide the name, address, and appearance before waiting for the outcome. Miss Judgment was in charge of tracking and investigations to figure out the target’s patterns. Miss Justice and Mr. Star would then choose a suitable location based on the feedback before Mr. Star threw the Sanguine into an unconscious state without attracting any attention. Miss Justice would then take this opportunity to complete a hypnotism act and make the target proceed to the predetermined location.

In this entire process, there was nothing for The Moon.

Uh… Audrey deliberated and said, “Mr. Moon, what you need to do is to ensure that the hypnotized Sanguine doesn’t encounter any accidents on the way to the cathedral, without him struggling or being rescued…”

Upon saying that, Audrey suddenly realized a problem in the plan as she hurriedly added, “If that Sanguine is extremely resistant towards the Church of Mother Earth, the hypnotic effects wouldn’t be as effective. Therefore, I plan on avoiding this point if possible. I will imbue in him the thought of nabbing some target he hates so that he wouldn’t realize that he’s entering the intended cathedral during the pursuit. Uh, how about letting you be the target of his hatred? This will require you to be able to ensure your own safety while maintaining a distance without being caught."

"…It's not a problem," Emlyn answered after some thought.

With Duke Olmer removing the mental corruption of the Sequence 5 Artificial Vampire Beyonder characteristic, Emlyn just needed to wait till a full moon to become a viscount. That would place him equal to Ernes Boyar. And this opportunity was available next week. When that happened, he didn't believe that he would be caught up to by a viscount just like him when he was equipped with the Ancestor's ring.

If it really won't work, I can borrow Miss Magician's spellbook. I recall that there are powers in the wind domain… Emlyn was rather confident.

By the side, Leonard felt a baffling sense of horror when he heard the conversation between Miss Justice and Mr. Moon.

To him, no matter how terrifying a head-on battle was, it was nothing compared to the horror of doing something that went against his own will without him realizing it.

He paused for a moment and replied to the second problem that Emlyn had raised.

"My payment is the same as Miss Judgment. I want a portion of the spoils."

To Leonard, this entire matter required him to determine the time and location to pull the target into a dream before he left. He didn't need to care if the operation was successful or if any accidents cropped up. It was as simple as heading to a coffee shop to order a cup of Desi coffee. The only thing that needed him to take into account was to not expose himself. Therefore, he couldn't bring himself to ask for an advanced payment, planning to obtain a cut from the final spoils of war.

In addition, he believed that this was a necessary thing to do in order to fully blend in with the Tarot Club. He didn't need to nitpick on such matters.

Audrey turned her head and glanced at Xio before retracting her gaze. Revealing a smile, she said, "My request is the same as Mr. Star and Miss Judgment. I'll take a quarter of the spoils of war."

In fact, she wasn't insistent on getting payment, because she believed that the Sanguine had bullied a Tarot Club member and her two friends. Punishing him was something she expected of herself. The reason why she took a portion of the spoils of war was to take into account Mr. Moon's feelings. She was afraid that her voluntary help would leave the prideful Sanguine embarrassed and angry.

Furthermore, Mr. Moon doesn't have any money, so the payment can only be the spoils of war… Audrey added silently.

Although she didn't deliberately keep count, based on her ability to take note of details and the memory of a Spectator, she believed that Mr. Moon, who had spent 5,000 pounds to purchase the Sequence 5 Artificial Vampire Beyonder characteristic, wasn't in the best financial state. Furthermore, he had to refund the intel fee that he earned.

Four participants, with each obtaining a piece of the spoils of war… That's very fair… Emlyn nodded and surveyed the area.

"Any other suggestions?"

Fors asked in disbelief, "It's that simple?

"That's a Sanguine equivalent to a Sequence 5. The plan you came up with sounds like it would succeed very easily…"

In her mind, Sequence 5 Beyonders were the strongest among unaffiliated Beyonders. Some were even the host of gatherings. Even the powerful pirate admirals were of that Sequence, but now, in the conversation of The Star and the others, such a Sequence 5 was to be finished so simply. There didn't seem to be any difficulties!

Upon hearing her question, Leonard thought and said, “As long as that Sanguine doesn’t have any items that resist my powers, even if he’s equivalent to a Sequence 5, I’ll definitely be able to throw him into an unconscious state for some time. It will just depend on Miss Justice to grasp this opportunity.”

“If I arrange the location and make preparations ahead of time, I’ll be fine,” Audrey replied in a confirmatory tone.

She was actually a little uneasy. After all, this was her first time in battle, but her confidence over her Beyonder powers and knowledge in psychological mysticism allowed her to say those words with confidence.

After Fors heard the response, she suddenly felt her mind a little adrift.

Without realizing it, apart from Mr. World, the rest of the Tarot Club members have the ability to finish off Sequence 5 Beyonders as well…

That’s right. Miss Justice is already a Sequence 6 Hypnotist. With the cooperation of a Beyonder of the same level, there really is a relatively high chance of hypnotizing a Sequence 5 Beyonder…

Just as Emlyn felt that this matter had been settled without needing any more questions to be raised, Alger, who had been observing from the side, spoke:

“As members of a secret organization, I believe that everything needs to be considered at a deeper level.”

“Ah?” Emlyn and Leonard cast their gaze at Mr. Hanged Man with a puzzled look.

Audrey and Xio were taken aback before they realized something.

Alger cleared his throat and looked at Derrick.

“Since Delaire Forest’s abandoned ancient castle was a test, why isn’t the obvious Sanguine a test as well?”

_Exactly… I knew that Mr. Hanged Man would’ve given a warning… _The Fool Klein controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow to nod. Cattleya then looked at The Hanged Man with a look of approval and agreement.

This… Emlyn’s pupils constricted, at a loss for a retort.

In an instant, he found himself too careless!

Leonard was taken aback. Immediately, he realized that he was too desultory. He had involved himself without fully understanding the details and without consideration of any latent risks.

Of course, this style had to do with his identity as an official Beyonder and its thought processes.

_As expected of Mr. Hanged Man. He considers all the details with such meticulousness… Audrey, you need to build up more experience! _Audrey focused on something else as she asked, “So we need to abandon the punishment and take action when the Sanguine are unable to maintain the secret surveillance?”

Alger chuckled and said, “There’s no need to. Just a few acts of misdirection would do.”

He then looked at Emlyn and said, “First, hand the investigation of the Sanguine to bounty hunters in Backlund. Use their existence to hide Miss Judgment’s actions. Second, when determining the location, try to do it near an orthodox deity’s cathedral. This will effectively disrupt any subsequent divinations. Third, before Miss Justice and the others take action, you have to do something that leaves one suspicious but is nothing eye-catching. Make it seem like you will be exacting revenge somewhere else so as to attract the ‘eyeballs’ of the secret monitor away; thus, creating the desired opportunity. This is combined with the first point. Fourth, only after the Sanguine is successfully hypnotized do you become the bait.”

Having said that, Alger paused.

“If there’s the addition of anti-divination and anti-prophecy at the demigod level, this entire matter will be flawless.

“Of course, Miss Justice, Mr. Star, you must be disguised during the operation, without leaving behind any traces.”

This speech left most of the members taken aback, especially Derrick. He couldn’t help show his respect and amazement.

Although he had no means of participating in this punishment operation, as a member of the Tarot Club, he couldn’t help but be concerned and pensive about such matters that required a clear line of thought. He hadn’t noticed any problems with the original plan of Mr. Moon and company, so now, he couldn’t help but be impressed by Mr. Hanged Man’s ability in such matters!

Emlyn thought and said, “You mean that I should use a superficial form of punishment to hide Miss Justice’s and Mr. Star’s secret operation?

“It’s like… It’s like I would make it appear that I’ll take action in a particular corner of a square after the target leaves a coffee shop, attracting all the attention, but in actual fact, Miss Justice and company would have already completed the hypnosis inside the coffee shop without anyone realizing it?”

Alger nodded gently.

“That’s right.”

_I learned something new! Mr. Hanged Man really is an experienced Beyonder!_Audrey felt overjoyed receiving an epiphany.

“The problem now is where are we to find an item or charm with anti-divination and anti-prophecy effects at the demigod level?” Leonard also felt that he had enriched himself greatly as he asked.

He wasn't too worried about himself since he had an angel grandpa in him.

Fors made an utterance before saying, "I can lend out Leymano's Travels. On it there's Angel's Embrace. I can also take one portion of the spoils of war."

As she said that, she secretly glanced at The World Gehrman Sparrow, heaving a sigh of relief when he saw the gentleman silent.

Unbeknownst to her, The Fool Klein had a very simple thought: Angel's Embrace… That sounds so much better than Paper Angel…

With the punishment operation finally confirmed, Audrey didn't hesitate as she surveyed the area.

"I met the Psychology Alchemists's councilor, Hvin Rambis, last week."

What? Hvin Rambis is a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists? Leonard sat up in surprise. He had the urge to immediately report it to the archbishop and gather a team to arrest him.

It was an occupation hazard.

Chapter 990 - Inner Fears

◆

Almost instinctively, Leonard looked around the table and realized that none of the other Tarot Club members showed any hint of surprise. Instead, they were listening attentively.

They knew of it long ago? That's right. This is only my second gathering. I haven't had the chance to learn about many things… The secrets that get exchanged here sure are plentiful… Leonard retracted his gaze and returned to his original sitting posture.

After a slight pause, Audrey glanced at Xio, who sat two seats away from her, before casting her gaze at Mr. Hanged Man. She continued, "He attempted to cue me to interact with different nobles and understand their true attitude over different matters. I would then inform him of them. Thankfully, Mr. Fool had provided me with the blessings of an angel. So I wasn't influenced in any way. Uh, what should I do next?"

You can even get blessings from an angel? Leonard looked around in surprise once more, only to see no reaction from the other members of the Tarot Club.

Obviously, he wasn't surprised that Mr. Fool had a few angels in existence under "Him." After all, the name and title corresponding to Death Consul was one that he had heard numerous times.

He was just surprised that the Tarot Club members were able to pray for assistance at that level. He viewed this secret organization in a new light, finding it more impressive.

Meanwhile, Xio keenly caught onto a few keywords:

Noble… Psychology Alchemists…

Combining it with the blonde hair, emerald-green eyes of Miss Justice's blurry figure, she began to connect it to a particular friend: Audrey Hall!

However, she couldn't be sure because blonde hair, black hair, blue eyes, and green eyes were common among the Loen nobles. People just had different combinations. Besides, no one knew how many members the Psychology Alchemists had developed in the noble circles. Therefore, Xio couldn't directly point it at Miss Audrey from the traits she noticed.

As she tried to do a deeper level of observation, Alger had said, "There's no need to pay too much attention to this. The various orthodox Churches will provide protective measures to their believers with a rather important status. They will prevent them from being assassinated or hypnotized. This comes from experience that has been built up over a thousand years of history. It wouldn't be that easily overcome. From another angle, if the Psychology Alchemists really can control the nobles that simply by hypnotizing them, the ones ruling the country wouldn't be the royal family and the three Churches. Clearly, reality is in conflict with that.

"Yes, just as you said, Hvin Rambis only gave you a cue to observe the true attitudes of the different nobles on different matters. This means that he's holding himself back greatly, afraid of doing anything too overboard. It's to prevent himself from leaving behind any clues. In addition, your true status among the nobles should just be in the periphery. You have no way of directly involving yourself in various political matters. Therefore, in contrast, the protection and monitoring over you wouldn't be too strict. This is also why Hvin Rambis targeted you."

Mr. Hanged Man's analysis is really detailed… Although he often taught Little Sun and the others, he would secretly gain something during the process, wishing that he could get more useful information from the feedback. However, there's none of that this time. Hmm, it's the same for the suggestions for the punishment operation from before as well… On careful thought, his change has been happening for quite some time. It just wasn't too obvious in the past. I even missed out on it… Audrey's professionalism stirred up as she quickly did a mental analysis of The Hanged Man.

She quickly had a theory, suspecting that Mr. Hanged Man was trying to transform his standing within the Tarot Club!

Ever since Ma'am Hermit joined the Tarot Club and showcased her resources and channels at sea, Mr. Hanged Man has been unknowingly been searching to transform himself in a bid to distinguish himself from her… Before problems cropped up with the Artisan, this transformation wasn't that obvious. Even Mr. Hanged Man didn't realize it himself. It was only recently that he seemed to finally come to a realization and thought it to be true… Indeed, to maintain one's standing in the Tarot Club, the raising of one's strength is one aspect, but providing help to the entire group is another aspect… Audrey's mind raced as she turned her attention back to the topic at hand.

She pondered for a moment and subconsciously, her tone turned heavy.

"Does this also mean that the orthodox Churches will have certain levels of surveillance, control, and guidance for the important nobles?"

This was something that she had thought about while in the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation's office.

She had subconsciously drawn a scene that represented her concerns on this matter!

In psychology, elements she drew out in such a state often didn't point to something particular. It was more like an abstract expression. The "cold eyes" mostly represented her fear for people monitoring and controlling her and her family.

Combining it with her subconscious drawing, her worry of Hvin Rambis's cueing, and the celebrant of the Mass at the Church of Evernight her parents attended being Backlund's archbishop, Audrey's interpretation was that not only was she afraid of the hypnosis and cues of the Psychology Alchemists, but she had also become fearful of the othordox Churches. She couldn't be sure if they would directly use their Beyonder powers to imbue thoughts into aristocratic believers with high standings, so as to guide them into doing actions that violated their true will.

This was sacrilegious and rebellious to Audrey, who had received an orthodox education from a young age. Therefore, she had tensed up back then, immediately burning that drawing.

After hearing Miss Justice's question, Alger scoffed.

"Isn't that very normal? When living in human society, one has to accept a certain level of surveillance, control, and guidance.

"I know what you're afraid of, but think about it. Compare someone using their power conferred from their standing, using money and weapons to control and guide others, to using Beyonder powers to do something similar. In essence, is there any difference?

"The difference is that one knows that they don't wish to do it but ends up having to do it; the other is that they do not even have the thoughts of being unwilling to do it."

Audrey nodded and said, "Yes, this means the loss of freedom of one's mind and thoughts. It's the most terrifying."

Alger chuckled once more.

"How can there be a completely free mind and thoughts? By choosing your faith and beliefs, you're naturally bound by your faith and beliefs. Yes, let's focus only on the Loen Kingdom. The three Churches are equal, and together with the royal family, this creates a balance between each other. If the Church of Storms goes overboard towards its believers, that believer can easily convert their faith to the Church of Evernight. Therefore, under most situations, the orthodox Churches will tend to use their standing and beliefs as a religion to guide important believers instead of using Beyonder powers."

Balance… Audrey pondered over this term. She came to a new realization of the kingdom's upper circles and the entire world. This was something she had come into contact with before but had never deeply understood the word.

At this moment, many of her thoughts matured.

"Thank you for your explanation, Mr. Hanged Man." Audrey sincerely addressed him with an honorary title. "Then, how should I deal with Hvin Rambis?"

Alger calmly said, "The problem with him isn't anything to panic about. You fully have the ability to run circles around him. You can provide him unimportant information while keeping the core secrets to heart. You can seek this opportunity to obtain potion formulas and even their Beyonder ingredients.

"After some time, when there are corresponding changes, you can consider switching strategies. Of course, you can't be too careless. Duke Negan is an example of this mistake."

Just as he said that, sitting at the bottom of the long mottled table, The World Gehrman Sparrow glanced at Miss Justice. He said with a hoarse smile, "When the time comes, even if Hvin Rambis were to die, no one will suspect you."

Even if Hvin Rambis were to die… die… He's a demigod… Mr. World has plans of attacking Hvin Rambis? Uh, it's possible. He has always been investigating Cuarón's suicide case. He was even the one who informed me of Hvin Rambis's true identity… Audrey's eyes widened slightly as she felt perturbed.

Even when she hated and felt the most fear towards Hvin Rambis, she had never had thoughts of killing this Psychology Alchemists councilor. All she considered was the means to avoid being guided. On the one hand, it was because she didn't have such thoughts, and on the other hand, it was because he was a demigod.

This meant the top-ranking power in the kingdom and Churches!

"I understand what needs to be done. Thank you, all of you." Audrey drew a breath and politely thanked them.

…Klein sure sounds bombastic these days. Yes, he even wishes to get rid of Amon's avatars in Backlund. Hvin Rambis is really nothing… Leonard looked at The World Gehrman Sparrow with mixed feelings.

Cattleya and company also remained silent.

With the topic of the Psychology Alchemists coming to an end, Klein controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow to make him look towards himself.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I wish to communicate privately with Mr. Star."

Klein temporarily didn't wish to let the other members of the Tarot Club learn about the eradication of Amon's avatars. It wouldn't be good for keeping the matter confidential, and it might lead them to be targeted by Amon.

"Sure." The Fool Klein naturally didn't deny his own request.

As Leonard was feeling poignant at the possibility of private communication, he informed Klein of the main points in Pallez Zoroast's reply. It also included the problem of the Worm of Time Beyonder characteristics loss.

This made Klein suddenly realize how he could use his Worms of Spirit to create charms and bullets.

Split off a few and kill them. When the characteristic contained in them return to my body, the remaining material can also be used like a Worm of Time!

The only problem is that killing Worms of Spirit deals a certain level of damage to myself. After all, each Worm of Spirit contains a part of my Spirit Body. Yes, I have to limit the number each time. Only after I fully recover can I do it again… In thought, Klein got The World Gehrman Sparrow to reply, "I will try my best to confirm if a blessing of Concealment is possible before I give you an answer.

"If there's no problem, we can attempt to seek out Sealed Artifacts of the Marauder pathway at the demigod level. Of course, I will try to think of the means to identify the grafting of fate."

Klein wasn't sure if "observation" from above the gray fog would allow him to see the truth of fate, just like how he was able to see his believers being parasitized. Hence, he planned on using the Paper crane to contact Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin and gain his expert opinion.

"Alright." As Leonard grumbled about how Old Man would've recovered further if demigod-level Sealed Artifacts at the Marauder pathway were that easy to find, he nodded slightly in response.

Chapter 991 - A Ritual Without A "Reply"

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After ending the private communication, Klein made The World Gehrman Sparrow look at Cattleya.

"Please inform Queen Mystic that I wish to meet her to talk about something. The exact time and location is up to her."

Queen Mystic? So Ma'am Hermit represents the royals above the Five Seas… Leonard was first taken aback before he came to a realization.

What's the matter? Cattleya frowned slightly in a wary manner.

"I will forward her your intentions, but I cannot provide any guarantees over her agreement."

"Okay." The World Gehrman Sparrow nodded simply, indicating that it was fine.

At this moment, Derrick finally had an opportunity as he asked, "Everyone…"

He glanced at Mr. Hanged Man and Mr. World before continuing, "The ritual needed for me to advance to Priest of Light requires pure darkness. I need to bury my entire body in ice that usually doesn't melt. In the City of Silver, such ice isn't difficult to find. However, how do we create pure but safe darkness?"

So that's the Priest of Light's advancement ritual. Little Sun sure is honest and simple… Due to her lack of experience and knowledge, Audrey was unable to provide any substantial suggestions. All she could do was cast her eyes at the person she believed was capable of resolving the problem: The World Mr. Gehrman Sparrow.

And at this moment, The World raised his hands to pinch his temples. As for The Fool Klein, he was rapidly trying to think of a solution.

Sigh, if this were the outside world, pure darkness is extremely easy to obtain. Ice that normally doesn't melt would be the most troublesome thing to obtain, but the City of Silver is the complete opposite… There, darkness is too dangerous. Just being within it will result in one's disappearance or suffering the attacks of strange monsters…

I can get Leonard to provide charms from the Evernight domain, and then I can stir some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. Using Little Sun's prayers, I can provide an area of artificial darkness. But the problem lies in me being unable to determine if this would bring the normal danger that the City of Silver encounters. This is not something that can be answered with divination. When matters do not involve myself, I can only determine if a matter is dangerous or not, or when matters should be done. And under such situations, there are too many elements involved, and the sources of danger are diverse…

Yes, I'll summon Arrodes later and ask it…

Klein had previously been considering the problem over Little Sun's advancement, but he had never been able to find an answer.

Seeing The World silent, Leonard, who had originally wanted to say that "creating pure darkness is extremely easy" slowly shut his mouth. He began pondering over The Sun's words and caught notice of a word that he had ignored: Safe!

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, in the City of Silver, darkness is equivalent to danger? Leonard roughly grasped the key idea, but due to his lack of understanding, he was unable to provide any suggestions.

Finally, it was Alger who spoke.

He glanced at Derrick and said, “I will help you gather information and seek out solutions. But in the process, you might need to provide some help to confirm that it can be done.”

“No problem!” Derrick answered without any hesitation.

Right on the heels of that, he added, “There’s no need to rush it. I still have about a month before I can finish digesting my Notary potion.”

Alger nodded gently, indicating that this wasn’t something that needed any reminders.

At this moment, Cattleya deliberated for a moment and said to Derrick, “Perhaps we can consider this problem from another angle. Your advancement ritual wouldn’t last too long. We can simply increase the time you can survive in pure darkness to resolve this matter.

“I remember that you’ve mentioned that after being left in darkness with zero light, there are two dangers. The first would be the attacks from strange monsters that come from unknown origins, and the second would be a baffling instance of disappearance that is akin to evaporating.

“The former situation is easy to resolve. You can make a request to your Chief for certain Sealed Artifacts, or you can get him to stand guard by your side. As for the second case, I don’t know enough. You can attempt to ask your Chief.”

Derrick thought about it carefully and suddenly felt that this was a viable train of thought with a rather significant chance of success.

He immediately replied in pleasant surprise, “Thank you, Ma’am Hermit.”

The exchange and learning session continued until the gathering slowly came to an end. Seeing that it was almost done, The Fool Klein rapped gently on the table's corner.

"Let's end it here for today."

"Your wish is our will!" Audrey and company stood up and bowed reverently.

After they vanished from above the gray fog, Klein left the area and returned to the real world.

He first took out his wallet and got the paper crane which was folded by Will Auceptin. Spreading it across the table, he picked up a pencil and simply wrote: "There's something!"

After folding the paper crane and stuffing it under his pillow, Klein got into bed and genuinely took an afternoon nap.

In his hazy dream, he once again saw the pitch-black plains and the towering steeple.

Passing through the plains and through the wooden doors, Klein arrived at the familiar corner.

A black pram came out of the thick shadows as Will Auceptin, wrapped in silver silk, sucked at his right thumb and derided angrily, "You are getting more and more impolite!"

Klein laughed dryly and said, "With our relationship, there's no need for such pleasantries, right?"

Will Auceptin harrumphed and said, "Speak, what's the matter?"

"This is the thing; I recently encountered Amon's avatar," Klein said directly.

The baby's mouth widened a little as though he was about to cry. It took him great effort to control himself as he said, "I haven't been born for more than a month!"

"…There's nothing I need from you. I only wish to ask you a question," Klein quickly added.

Will Auceptin raised his fleshy arm and waved it.

"What is it?"

Klein immediately said with a smile, "Amon's avatar can steal the destiny of others and appear while replacing their identities. I wish to know how I can see through such a terrifying matter."

Will Auceptin chuckled as he pointed up at the sky with his index finger.

"Pray for help."

From the looks of it, using the powers of the gray fog can be used to discover the grafting of destiny… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he felt even more certain.

When he thought of the word "using," he was referring to using his marionette to pray to The Fool while he entered above the gray fog. Through the point of light representing his believer, he could survey the surrounding area to seek out any abnormalities. In a sense, this was equivalent to The Fool's observation, an equivalent to an augmented "true vision."

But the problem is that I can't stay above the gray fog to observe for grafting all the time. It might be the case that, in between two of the observation periods, Amon could've entered Böklund Street and have done something… Klein thought before asking with some deliberation:

"Anything you would like to remind me of?"

Will Auceptin turned his head away without looking at him as he mumbled, "You have to visit me and my parents once this week. During high tea…"

"No problem!" Klein agreed without any hesitation.

Only then did the baby turn his head back and giggle.

"Next week, around Wednesday or Thursday, there might be some changes in your destiny."

Is that so… Klein nodded in thought as he watched the black pram slowly retreat into the shadows.

After waking up from his dream, he packed up his items and began setting up an altar without any rest.

This time, the target of his prayer was the Evernight Goddess "Herself," and not Artificial Death. This was to prevent Amon from prying upon the source of the stirring via the changes in destiny and, thus, noticing something wrong.

How could the Evernight's Blessed be praying to Artificial Death?

After setting up the ritual, Klein wiped his face and turned into the cold-looking Gehrman Sparrow, causing his height to drop a little lower.

After igniting the first two candles in front, Klein made the ordinary candle representing "himself" burn with a yellow flame. There were two candles in front. One was a candle made of night vanilla and slumber flower to represent Evernight, and the other was a candle made up of white chestnut flowers and wild rose to represent "Concealment."

Following that, he created a wall of spirituality, dripped Full Moon Essential Oil, and burned some herbal powder that pleased the goddess. Bit by bit, he completed the ritual.

Towards the end, Klein took two steps back, activated his Spirit Vision, and chanted softly, "I pray for the power of the dark night.

"I pray for the power of the mystery.

"I pray for the Goddess's loving grace.

"…I encountered Blasphemer Amon's avatar in Backlund. He was gathering the characteristics of a Marauder pathway demigod…

"…I seek for the blessings of Concealment so as to complete the mission of eradicating the Blasphemer's avatars…

"Night vanilla, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please pass my supplication to the Goddess!"Moon flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please pass my supplication to the Goddess!"

After he was done chanting, Klein patiently waited for a while, but nothing happened. There wasn't any reply.

This… The Goddess is in a critical period of gaining control over the Death pathway's Uniqueness and is unable to respond beyond anything normal? Should I try to pray to Artificial Death? After all, if there are the blessings of Concealment, Amon wouldn't be able to see it. If it doesn't, then the source of stirring destiny wouldn't point to me… Klein frowned little by little as he ended the ritual and cleared the altar.

He felt that he needed to find other solutions.

After he finished clearing the desk and turned around, prepared to head for the reclining chair, a figure suddenly appeared in front of him!

The figure wore a simple linen robe with signs of patching. By the figure's waist was a belt made of tree bark. Raven-black hair cascaded down freely as the figure's feet didn't wear any socks or shoes, making them covered in dust and wounds.

It was a lady. She had extremely normal facial features. Her ghostly black eyes were no different from the common person, but just looking at her left Klein feeling a sense of extreme peace and serenity. Even though feelings of alarm rose up within him, they were unable to overpower the peacefulness.

Chapter 992 - Arrodes's Congratulations

◆

“You are?” Klein asked in a rather complicated state of calmness.

The lady in a simple robe nodded and said, “Arianna, Servant of Concealment.”

Servant of Concealment… Arianna… Klein’s eyes constricted, as he knew who the lady was.

As a former Nighthawk, how could he not be aware of the name “Arianna”?

She was the Evernight Cloister’s matron, head of the thirteen archbishops, a likely candidate for the future Pope. Regardless of which identity she had, she was part of the general knowledge that couldn’t be avoided in religious studies and mysticism!

As for the name, Servant of Concealment, Klein had read about it in Emperor Roselle’s diary. Considering the similar name of Attendant of Mysteries, he suspected that this pointed to an angel. Meanwhile, based on the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation, with a Sequence 0 in existence, it meant that Attendant of Mysteries couldn’t be a Sequence 1 angel. Therefore, Klein believed that the Servant of Concealment was likely Sequence 2 of the Evernight pathway.

This… It isn’t that the Goddess didn’t reply, but that she used a very special way to respond… “She” directly sent her servant over… Klein felt mixed emotions that could hardly be described.

He fell silent for a few seconds before giving a solemn bow.

“Good afternoon, Your Eminence.”

In the various Churches, if a demigod at the angel level walked the land, there was a need to address them as “Your Eminence” as a show of respect. Likewise, towards the pontiff, pope, and chief shepherd-representatives of the deities-one had to use “Your Holiness.” In addition, a Church’s head was synonymous with the Holy See or Apostolic See. Of course, many a time, the Holy See could also represent the Church’s headquarters itself.

Arianna tapped her chest four times in a clockwise fashion and replied in a pious manner, “May the Goddess bless you.”

She then said, “I’m an ascetic. You can just call me Ma’am.”

“Yes, Ma’am Arianna.” Klein didn’t insist.

Arianna looked at him calmly for two seconds and directly asked, “You plan to deal with Blasphemer Amon’s avatars in Backlund?”

“Yes, I wish to obtain the blessings of Concealment,” Klein frankly replied.

At this moment, he felt a little stumped because this was different from what he expected.

He originally expected the Goddess to answer by blessing him. Then, he and Pallez Zoroast could join forces to wipe out all of Amon’s avatars in Backlund. During this process, it wouldn’t expose Leonard or the Marauder pathway angel. But now, with the blessings becoming something corporeal that would be involved in the battle, Pallez Zoroast would be immediately be discovered once “He” took action. When that happened, it was hard to predict what would ensue!

Don’t tell me I don’t need to ally with Pallez Zoroast? I’ll only get “Him” to provide intel and then split some of the spoils of war? Klein’s thoughts rapidly ran through his mind as Arianna spoke unhurriedly:

“I can provide the power of Concealment to shield everything that happens from the prying of fate. However, I cannot guarantee that I can eliminate all of Amon’s avatars in Backlund.”

Pallez Zoroast said that “He” has the means of doing so… The person who understands Amon the best is indeed a Sequence 1 of the same pathway… Klein thought and said, “Ma’am Arianna, I have already come up with a well-thought-out plan. All you need is to provide the power of Concealment. You do not need to be involved in the actual battle. Leave the rest to me.”

Arianna nodded and raised her right arm as she spread her palm.

Points of light lit up, profound and resplendent as they quickly outlined an emblem in her palm.

This emblem was completely crystallized, as though it was made of obsidian. It made one realize its existence when looking at it, but it appeared to vanish when not looking at it.

“This is my Evernight coat of arms. It doesn’t possess any characteristics or power by itself. The only use is that, when triggered, it will establish a connection with me, regardless of where you are in the real world,” Arianna explained simply. “Before you begin your operation, remember to use it. I will provide you with the power of Concealment. If you need more direct assistance, use ancient Hermes to chant ‘Arianna’ when triggering it.” This is equivalent to an itemized altar and ritual that points to her… Oh, at the level of angel, the range of responding to prayers has extended to the entire world? Klein instantly grasped the true nature of the Evernight coat of arms.

As a Bizarro Sorcerer, he did not have the means to reply to prayers. This was a trait that could be obtained only at Sequence 3. Of course, as Sea God and The Fool, he was very well-versed in such matters.

Klein didn’t stand on ceremony as he accepted it and bowed sincerely.

“Thank you.”

After saying that, he tapped four spots in a clockwise manner on his chest, forming the sign of the crimson moon.

“Praise the Lady!”

This way, he could still join forces with Pallez Zoroast. As long as he triggered the Evernight coat of arms without using ancient Hermes to chant Arianna’s name, everything would be fine.

“Praise the Lady,” Arianna replied piously.

Her figure then vanished as though she had been erased by an eraser.

This is a departure by entering a concealed state? Klein pursed his lips in thought.

Meanwhile, he was filled with suspicion over Arianna’s swift arrival. After all, the Evernight pathway wasn’t well-versed in methods such as teleport. To go from Winter County all the way to Backlund required a significant amount of time.

My ritual isn’t the kind that prays for a direct descent… Could it be that Ma’am Arianna happened to be in the vicinity, in the Backlund diocese? Isn’t that too much a coincidence? If it isn’t one, it only serves to exacerbate the problem. What is “She” doing in Backlund? The undercurrents are stirring… Klein retracted his gaze and patiently waited a while before turning back into Dwayne Dantès.

He found a pen and some paper once again and drew the symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying.

When the final stroke was written, the full-body mirror in the master bedroom produced a dark but pure light, as though a silent undercurrent was surging out from the bottom of a lake.

Right on the heels of that, fireworks appeared, bursting in the sky.

Colors of gold, silver, red, and blue exploded as words formed in the mirror:

"Welcome back, Great Master!

"Your humble servant, Arrodes, has witnessed the retrieval of a portion of your authority. I'm thrilled that you are gradually recovering your aura. You will eventually return to your supreme position and make the entire world turn silent under your watch!"

This is really… passionate… There's always something new… Klein nodded in silence.

Amidst the fireworks, those words dissipated and formed into a new sentence:

"Great Master, what instructions do you have for me?"

"I have a question," Klein said calmly. "In a place where being in darkness can result in danger, how should one create a safe but pure darkness? There are two kinds of dangers involved. One, it will make a person directly vanish in the darkness, and two, it will cause strange monsters to appear and attack."

The fireworks in the full-body mirror calmed down as aqueous light rippled. Silver words surfaced one after another:

"Great Master, are you referring to the Forsaken Land of the Gods?"

This magic mirror actually knows quite a lot. He also gave me a free question in passing… Klein nodded and said, "That's right."

Without any breaks in between, Arrodes's full-body mirror produced new lines of Loenese text:

"The formation of the Forsaken Land of the Gods is related to the second Creator's fall. The danger of night there stems from the transformation of two essential powers.

“First, it’s the remnants of the Evernight Goddess’s divine powers. Second, it’s the influence left behind by the Creator.”He” wielded partial authority over shadows, darkness, fallen, corruption, and mutation. The former makes creatures vanish into thin air, while the latter produced monsters in the darkness.

So the two types of dangers stem from different powers. It’s no wonder that there’s such huge differences… Arrodes called the ancient sun god the second Creator… This is very close to my theory… Amon’s and Adam’s father isn’t the reawakening of the original Creator, but a transmigrator who inherited a huge “inheritance”? Klein asked in thought, “In that case, the Evernight Goddess was involved in the fall of the second Creator?”

This was something Klein had vaguely expected. This was from the trait of humans evaporating in the darkness of the Forsaken Land of the Gods. It was very similar to the strange disappearances if one didn’t sleep at night in the ruins of the battle of the gods. And based on Little Sun’s description, King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea, who wielded control over the Evernight and Concealment authorities, had long perished in the Second Epoch. It was impossible that “He” had done it.

Therefore, unless there was another deity of the Evernight pathway born in the middle, it was difficult for the two abnormalities to not have the Evernight Goddess involved.

On the surface of the mirror, the silver light rapidly converged forming a short sentence:

“That’s right.”

That’s right… Klein was just about to press on when he immediately shut up. He had just recalled one of his identities—Blessed of the Evernight. Therefore, even without anyone watching him, he had to show respect to the deity and not seek out relevant secrets. Of course, time in the mysterious space above the gray fog was excluded.

He was just about to focus on the main question from before to urge Arrodes to list out solutions when he saw the silver words in the full-body mirror change:

“Great Master, your loyal servant, Arrodes, wishes a small favor from you. C-can we not discuss matters regarding the Evernight Goddess?”

At the end of the question, a simple stick figure was drawn.

Just as I wished… Klein deliberately pondered for two seconds and said, “Okay.”

The silver swirls on the surface of the mirror immediately turned brisk as words began taking form:

“As for the question you asked, there are two solutions:

“One is to accept the corruption and let oneself transform into monsters of the darkness. The reason why these creatures do not vanish into thin air during the night is because they have received the protection of the ‘Fallen’ authority. This way, all the darkness is equivalent to safety.

“The second is to create a darkness that comes with the dream world. This will allow the Spirit Body to receive the protection of the dream; thus, slowing down the encroachment of danger at night.”

Chapter 993 - Another Possibility

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Allowing the Spirit Body to receive protection of a dream to slow down the encroachment of danger at night… This is similar to the necessity to sleep when night fell in the ruins of the battlefield of the gods…

Also, the powers in the Forsaken Land of the Gods likely isn't under the Goddess's control. Once one vanishes in the darkness over there, they definitely won't enter the foggy town… Where will it point towards? Or would they stay in the same spot, unable to interact with companions and the real world until they die of starvation or old age… After reading Arrodes's reply, Klein was somewhat enlightened as he roughly grasped the crux of the issue.

However, he felt that this wasn't necessarily useful, because The Sun only required pure darkness so that he could be buried in ice that normally wouldn't melt to consume the Priest of Light potion. Once he entered a dream, there was no way for him to control his own body to complete that critical step. That way, even if he could remain in the darkness for prolonged periods of time, it would be meaningless.

Yes, I'll wait until Little Sun asks the chief of the City of Silver before coming up with an actual plan based on his answer… Of course, before that, I can try to get a corresponding solution from Leonard to figure out how to create darkness with a temporary dreamworld… Klein nodded slightly, acknowledging the answer provided by the magic mirror.

As for the first option of accepting corruption and turning into a monster in the darkness, it wasn't even considered. In the extraordinary world, this was equivalent to committing suicide which almost couldn't be reversed.

Upon considering how he still had one question left to ask, Klein deliberated and asked, "Where can I obtain the potion formula of the Seer pathway's Sequence 3, Scholar of Yore?"

The full-body mirror's surface had aqueous light ripple once again as it reflected a dark cathedral without any natural light.

Klein found this scene very familiar as he immediately recalled what it represented—this was where Zaratul, who had turned into a monster, hid!

However, this time, deep inside the cathedral, the cluster of blurry and huge maggots were no longer present.

Just as Klein's pupils dilated, the silver words appeared beneath the scene depiction:

"Great Master, Zaratul has vanished!

"I can't find 'Him'!"

Vanished… Klein momentarily forgot to breathe.

Although he had long known of Zaratul's return, since he was the one who began the chain reaction by opening the door to the foggy town, he never expected this big shot to secretly leave the cathedral; "His" whereabouts becoming unknown!

Even Arrodes is unable to locate "Him"… What is "He" plotting? The more Klein thought, the more a chill ran down his back.

Having become a Sequence 4 demigod, he could confirm one thing:

His control over the mysterious world above the gray fog was still insufficient. He could temporarily only converge the leaking specialness that it had augmented him with in the real world, making it difficult for Beyonders of corresponding pathways to see it, but it was unable to repress the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence. As for the gray fog, it had proven time and time again that he had an invisible form of attraction towards Beyonders of the Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder pathway. Amongst them, the effects on the Seer pathway was most evident!

Besides, I myself am quite an attractive Sequence 4 Bizarro Sorceror. It's not impossible for Zaratul to suddenly come to Backlund one day… Klein maintained a deadpan expression and said to the full-body mirror that was switching scenes, "Got it."

Arrodes presented another scene which Klein was equally familiar with. It was the Antigonus family's "treasure trove" at the peak of the Hornacis mountain range.

Below this scene, silver words quickly surfaced once again:

"Great Master, there's another possibility, but I can't tell. I just know that it's easier than the first two."

The Antigonus family's notebook isn't there this time? That's right. It will lead the wielder to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range to seek out the Antigonus family's treasure trove. It's basically the same as the previous option… What's the possibility that even Arrodes can't tell? Based on what I know about the factions in control of the Seer pathway, it's implying that I should pray to the Goddess for it? The Goddess is the Mother of Concealment, so "She" can choose whether Arrodes can see it or not… Klein's thoughts scattered and quickly made a connection.

Of course, he didn't believe that directly praying for the Scholar of Yore potion formula would allow him to get it. It was too ridiculous, as though it was child's play.

From his experience as a Nighthawk, he suspected that he might need to make enough contributions before he could obtain the Scholar of Yore potion formula from the Evernight Goddess via a ritual.

Making enough contributions… This sure is a familiar phrase… Klein sighed as he began having some ideas.

Clearly, he had hints on how to do so—handle the Artificial Death faction of the Numinous Episcopate!

However, Klein suspected that the Goddess only had up to the Scholar of Yore Sequence for the Seer pathway potion formulas, and not the subsequent ones at the angel level. This was because the Antigonus family's angel didn't perish immediately back then but had hidden in a secret palace, losing control to become a monster and was in a half-sealed state. In addition, The Fool card was also there and hadn't been retrieved yet.

At this moment, Klein had the intention of asking about Amon's avatars, but he suddenly recalled that within the memories of the rat demigod, the warning about the Marauder pathway angel and Amon had been given by this very mirror!

As his thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein narrowed his eyes, looked at the full-body mirror, and nodded.

"Alright, that's it for today. Head back. If there's anything in the future, I'll summon you again."

"Yes, Master! Goodbye, Master~ Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is constantly waiting to return to your side!" Light gathered on the mirror's surface, depicting a stick figure waving its hand.

After everything returned to normal, Klein turned around and picked up the paper with the previously drawn symbol. With a snap of his fingers, he made it burst into scarlet flames.

The ash floated down as he spread open his left hand. In it were two maggots shimmering with solid mysterious symbols.

The two maggots squirmed gently, using their lifeforce to fill the entire bedroom with madness and bizarreness. The surrounding lights then dimmed and brightened from time to time in a non-uniform fashion. They were none other than the Worms of Spirit which Klein had separated from himself.

Suddenly, Klein reached out his right palm, suddenly pressing them towards the two transparent maggots.

Instantly, his palm paused, just short of touching the Worms of Spirit.

He raised his palm again, lowering it only to pause. He repeated this several times until he finally exerted his strength with a deadpan expression.

Amidst an invisible and illusory cracking sound, his head suddenly felt a stabbing pain.

This made his soul feel like it was being ripped apart. It was even more painful than encountering a gunshot or a slash wound.

Klein used his Clown powers to control the twitching of his facial muscles. After a few seconds, he raised his right hand to rub his temples, inwardly mumbling, Indeed, the death of every Worm of Spirit deals damage to the Spirit Body. My current limit is six. Hmm, I'll temporarily stop trying. Let's see how long it takes to recover.

Thankfully, this is a tolerable matter. Otherwise, it would be dangerous if a marionette is destroyed while the Worm of Spirit isn't able to be collected in time due to an intense battle…

Yes, it's different from Amon's Worms of Time avatars. A Bizarro Sorcerer's Worms of Spirit will not necessarily die when a marionette is destroyed. Most of the time, a Bizarro Sorcerer is able to retrieve them in time. It's because the distance between the body and the marionette isn't that exaggerated…

After confirming the situation, and waiting for the Beyonder characteristics contained within the Worms of Spirit to return to himself, Klein rummaged for some materials and set up a ritual to pray to The Fool.

After a series of tasks, Klein used the carcasses of two Worms of Spirit, two silver plates, and the complicated symbol which he had previously recorded down to make two silver-black bullets—of which the latter came from Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin.

The two bullets were carved with strange, indescribable patterns. They kept extending inwards as though they were coming together in the middle at one point. Their entire bodies were gloomy but not dark. Just one look at it made one's thoughts sluggish.

Klein flicked a gold coin and used divination, together with his spiritual intuition, to swiftly determine the abilities of the two bullets—the target would immediately enter a state of paralysis upon being hit!

The length of time that one was left in this state depended on the potency of one's Spirit Body. Even Sequence 3 saints would be in a state of stiffness for a second or two!

This already exceeds my powers. Of course, the premise is that contact can be made. Oh, this is a result of the gray fog's augmentation… These two bullets should be at the same level as the Fate Siphon charms. Although my Worms of Spirit can't be compared to Amon's and Pallez's Worms of Time, the amount of power I can now draw from the mysterious space above the gray fog is clearly superior to what I could do in the past… I shall call them, uh—Control Spirit Bullets… Klein drew Death Knell from his underarm holster, snapped open the cylinder wheel, and stuffed the two silver-black Control Spirit Bullets inside.

Following that, he spread open a piece of paper beside the altar and wrote:

"…Next, your mission is to seek out relatively high-level charms and

Beyonder bullets. May God be with you.

“XXX who raised three requests from you.”

This letter was written to Patrick Bryan of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction.

With a subordinate at my disposal, why let him go to waste? As Klein mumbled, he folded his letter. At the altar from before, he summoned Patrick Bryan’s messenger.

The surface of the desk burst into pitch-black flames and quickly gathered together, forming a translucent bird with dark feathers.

This spirit world creature glanced at Klein before slowly lowering its head to bite at the envelope.

Watching it disappear, Klein nodded slightly and inwardly muttered, Patrick’s Contract Companion isn’t of a low level either…

He quickly reined in his thoughts, took out another letter, and fluidly wrote:

“…I have already obtained the blessing of Concealment. You can attempt to gather items at the Marauder pathway demigod level. In addition, I’ve found a way to crack the theft and replacement of destiny. You don’t have to be too anxious.

“…Do you know how to create a darkness that includes a temporary dream world?

“…If you have the time, can you head to Tingen and help me use 3-0782 to create Flaring Sun Bullets. The Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem has the divine blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun hidden in it… Only by sufficiently raising your strength can we be more confident at dealing with Amon’s avatars…”

Chapter 994 - Prelude

◆

At 7 Pinster Street, Leonard, who had specially returned home to participate in the Tarot Gathering, was just about to head to Saint Samuel Cathedral's basement to read the dossiers so as to make preparations for his placating of souls at night when his vision suddenly went into a blur. He saw the messenger in a dark, full dress holding four blonde, red-eyed heads.

As a Soul Assurer, he could already see such creatures with Spirit Bodies.

After taking Klein's letter, Leonard didn't even have the chance to say thank you when Reinette Tinekerr turned around and walked into the void. She didn't even stay for long.

"…Old Man, why does Klein have a messenger of this level? Is this a perk of being a Blessed?" Leonard couldn't help but ask Pallez Zoroast with a suppressed voice.

He originally fantasized that it was standard for every Tarot Club member, but he later realized that he had been imagining things.

Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice chuckled immediately.

"It is likely to solely belong to Klein Moretti. Everyone receives some special fortuitous encounter, isn't that the case? Isn't it the same even for a fellow like you?

"Heh heh, I thought you would use 'incomplete angel' to describe 'Her,' but you ended up using ‘messenger of this level.’ Not bad, you still remember my warning.”

Leonard curled the corners of his lips, spread open the piece of paper, and read the content on it.

“He’s indeed the Blessed of Concealment and Fate…” Pallez Zoroast quickly scanned the heading through Leonard’s eyes.

Leonard didn’t look at the ground. Instead, he took a few steps back and threw himself into the embrace of the sofa before saying, “Klein can see through the theft and replacement of destiny… Then, we don’t need to rush to seek out items at the Marauder pathway demigod level.”

“Even if you were in a hurry, you have no idea where to seek them out,” Pallez scoffed.

Even for the gathering of the Hermits of Fate, similar items needed years to appear even once. And the next gathering was to happen at the end of the year.

Leonard was momentarily at a loss for words and could only cast his gaze at the last two paragraphs.

After a brief silence, he chuckled.

“I’ve always been curious as to where Klein received the high-level charm of the Sun domain when facing Megose. I thought it was provided to him by that Death Consul, but I couldn’t understand why a Death domain angel would be gathering high-level charms of the Sun domain. Wouldn’t that be suicide? Now, I finally understand.

“Old Man, I wielded 3-0782 before as well. Why didn’t you notice that there was a drop of the Eternal Blazing Sun’s divine blood hidden in that? If you could’ve stolen some of its power back then, things wouldn’t have…”

Leonard originally wanted to mock Old Man, but as he went on, he fell silent.

Pallez Zoroast sighed in his mind.

“If that drop of divine blood could be so easily discovered, that Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem wouldn’t have been in Tingen.”

Leonard fell silent for a few seconds before asking, “Then how am I to create an opportunity to get that Sacred Emblem to create the Flaring Sun Charm?”

Although Klein made it sound simple in his letter, Leonard knew that it wasn’t an easy task. This was because he wasn’t a Nighthawk of Tingen City. Even if he returned to visit his former colleagues and teammates, he had no authority to enter Chanis Gate.

Upon hearing his question, Pallez Zoroast replied in a peeved manner, “Why are you asking me something as trivial as this? Can’t you think for yourself?”

Leonard coughed uncomfortably as he began thinking seriously to seek out a solution.

“I’m currently working alone, but the archbishop has given me the authority to get the help of the local Nighthawks in the region of question.

“Hmm, if all the souls in Backlund have been placated, and if I haven’t finished digesting my potion, wouldn’t I have to do it at other dioceses?

“When that happens, if Tingen happens to have a paranormal accident, it will be very reasonable for me to return and get two Nighthawks and use 3-0782…”

After Leonard finished muttering to himself, Pallez Zoroast chuckled.

“Not bad. You came up with an idea so quickly.

“But have you thought about it? You are placating them, not purifying them. This is contradictory with obtaining 3-0782. It will easily incur suspicion.”

Leonard, who had been praised, immediately laughed.

“Old Man, that’s because you aren’t aware. Back when I joined the Nighthawks team, there was one line in the education I received: Only under the premise of having the ability to purify can placating achieve the best results.

“Emperor Roselle had also once said that to solve problems, you need a stick in one hand and a carrot in the other.”

Pallez Zoroast immediately tsked.

“Then follow your plan. Of course, that’s assuming that you can finish Anthony Stevenson’s missions in a week or two. If you haven’t obtained the Sun Flare Bullets before the actual operation of eliminating Amon begins, then it would no longer be necessary.”

Leonard recalled the list of missions written on the pieces of paper as his forehead twitched.

He then forced himself to forget about his worries and mumbled, “I wonder when the mission to punish the Sanguine will begin…

“I wonder if the Sanguine has a Sealed Artifact at the Marauder pathway’s demigod level.”Temporary dreamworld… I can create it myself. I’ll find a chance to make some charms, but can power at this level be able to resist the corrosion of the darkness in the Forsaken Land of the Gods?”

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

Fors took out a novel, sat on the sofa, and watched Xio walk towards the lobby as she wore her boots to head out.

Finally, Fors couldn’t hold back her puzzlement as she said, “There’s no rush. That gentleman said that he wouldn't assign the mission that quickly."

Xio shot her a glance and said, "I'm a bounty hunter. I have other missions."

Upon saying that, she paused and said after some deliberation, "Fors, do you think that Miss Justice resembles Miss Audrey?"

Fors was taken aback for a few seconds before she snapped back to senses. She subconsciously waved her hand and chuckled.

"How is that possible…"

Just as she said that, the similarities began flashing through her mind, her eyes widening in response.

After a while, she whispered, "It's not impossible.

"Spectator pathway, Psychology Alchemists, noble lady, blonde hair and green eyes… She's the only noble I know that meets those criteria… Of course, I don't know that many nobles. Furthermore, I have no idea if the ones I'm familiar with have anything to do with the Psychology Alchemists…"

Xio silently listened to her friend and said after some thought, "Fors, do you still remember the missions assigned to us by Miss Audrey? I originally thought that it was issued by Earl Hall, but on second thought, perhaps it came from the Tarot Gathering…

"Also, how did we know of Mr. Fool's honorific name? Do you remember? It was from books we borrowed from Viscount Glaint! In the book cover was a strange ancient slip!"

Fors nodded in enlightenment.

"If we could discover it, as a good friend of Viscount Glaint, Miss Audrey, has a chance of discovering it as well! This can explain why she joined the gathering…"

"Yeah," Xio agreed with Fors's guess.

Fors opened her mouth and was just about to say something when she recalled that the matter with the Sanguine wasn't completely over. She immediately looked around warily and said, "Xio, we should lessen our discussions of gatherings in the future."

"As for Miss Audrey, we can visit her once every week or two. We can continue observing when the time comes."

Xio snapped to her senses and nodded heavily.

"Alright!"

She then opened her door and went to a particular bar in East Borough and sat by the bar counter.

Rapping on the table, she said to the bartender who looked up, "Any new missions today?"

The bartender gave a rough list without mentioning any investigations of a particular Mr. Ernes Boyar.

Indeed, I'll have to wait till tomorrow or the day after tomorrow… Xio looked around, retracted her gaze, and asked in puzzlement and concern, "I haven't seen Sherman in a while. Do you know where he's been?"

Sherman was a young man who thought himself as a woman-one of Xio's informants.

The bartender chuckled.

"Perhaps he ran off with some man. You do know that he's happy to do so if a man fancies him."

"This isn't something worth ostracizing him about," Xio rebutted seriously, feeling a baffling sense of concern.

She then exerted strength in her palm and jumped off the high-stool, prepared to seek out Sherman in the places he was usually seen.

Backlund Bridge area, Iron Gate Street, Bravehearts Bar.

Holding down his hat, Emlyn pinched his nose as he passed through the crowd that exuded all kinds of smells before finding the red-eyed Ian in the card

room.

"Mr. White, what is it this time?" Ian smiled as he led Emlyn into an empty billiard room.

Emlyn took off his hat and quipped, "Something trivial. Help me put up a mission to the bounty hunters. The details of the mission is to track a man named Ernes Boyar. Figure out his daily activities. The bounty reward will be 100 pounds."

"100 pounds?" Ian subconsciously asked.

For investigations like tracking, 100 pounds was quite a ridiculous reward. One had to know that if a bounty hunter was able to complete this mission on their own, they could rest for an entire year, even if they were supporting a family!

Emlyn nodded.

"The target is rather dangerous."

After the discussion back with the Tarot Club, he had already thought it through. He believed that tracking Ernes Boyar was an easy mission. The Sanguine Viscount would definitely pretend as though he didn't notice anything and deliberately follow a fixed trajectory.

Therefore, this 100 pounds was in fact payment for Miss Judgment to take the risk of participating in this operation. Of course, to aid in the misdirection and concealment, it was almost certain that more than one bounty hunter would complete this mission, allowing them to earn different portions of the reward. All Emlyn could guarantee was that Miss Judgment would earn the most.

“I see.” Coming to an understanding, Ian extended his hand. “Down payment, exact address, level of danger, looks and characteristics. It’s best if you have a portrait.”

Ernes Boyar then gave 30 pounds in cash and Ernes Boyar’s portrait.

“Red eyes?” Ian flipped through the pieces of paper in his hand and couldn’t help but blurt out.

“Yes.” Emlyn nodded gently and looked around him. He suppressed his voice and said, “There’s also something else. Help me seek out clues regarding the Rose School of Thought members in Backlund.”

“… Rose School of Thought?” Ian was taken aback as he asked in puzzlement, as though he had never heard of the name.

Chapter 995 - “Conjoined Person”

◆ ◆ ◆

Emlyn glanced at Ian, raised his hand to pinch his nose, and chuckled.

“It appears you don’t understand me. It’s okay. A more simple description is to gather information about foreigners that come from the Southern Continent, especially from the Star Highlands and the Paz River Valley.

“What information do you want exactly? There are plenty of pure-blooded people from the Southern Continent in Backlund. Those that you’ve mentioned are also common,” Ian calmly asked without flaring up due to the contempt he received.

Emlyn laughed.

“The ones that are a bit more abnormal. They do things in a fishy manner and seem to all be mysterious. You should understand what I’m getting at.”

“There are definitely many people you describe. In Backlund, they are either servants, workers, or thieves—being part of gangs. As the latter will all meet your criteria of being abnormal, fishy, and mysterious.” Ian sincerely pointed out how unpragmatic Emlyn’s request was.

Emlyn was already prepared for this. With an unobvious smile, he nodded slightly.

“Then, give me all the information that meets those criteria. I’ll do the filtering. Oh, I’ll pay 50 pounds as down payment for this commission as the standard fees for the early-stage investigations. The subsequent payment will be counted based on how much information of value is provided. Each one will cost 20 pounds."

"Who is the one to determine its worth?" Ian asked after a few seconds of thought.

For him, having a 50-pound income for preliminary work like this was enough for him to accept the job. It was more than enough to hire a dozen people or so to investigate the areas from East Borough to Cherwood Borough for half a month.

He didn't mind how much he could earn from the 50 pounds, as there were many people here who relied on him for their survival. He needed to arrange jobs with payment for them to do from time to time; otherwise, he would never be able to be kept abreast with the latest developments.

Emlyn sized up Ian and scoffed.

"Of course it will be me. You should know how trustworthy I am."

"Detective Moriarty never told me that…" Ian mumbled and sighed. "Alright. Our last cooperation was still pretty good. I choose to trust you."

Emlyn nodded in satisfaction, took out his wallet, and counted another 50 pounds worth of notes.

During this process, Emlyn momentarily felt the pinch when he realized he only had 407 pounds in savings.

And now there's only 357 pounds… He looked away from the notes and handed the cash to Ian.

He didn't stay. Putting on his hat, he walked out of the billiard room and left the Bravehearts Bar.

On the street, Emlyn stopped pinching his nose and looked up at the flame-like clouds. His expression gradually fell heavy as he silently muttered, That Wraith from before isn't around… Where did it go?

Humph, Ian acted as though he had never heard of the Rose School of Thought, but his racing heartbeat had betrayed him…

Also, he actually didn't ask if Sherlock Moriarty is back in Backlund. He didn't even show any concern… Could it be that Sherlock has already returned to Backlund and that he has already met him?

†

Rorsted Archipelago, City of Generosity, Bayam.

In an area near the harbor, Admiral of Stars Cattleya had brought along Frank Lee, who had his sleeves rolled up which revealed his brown hair, to an area outside a house with gas wall lamps. They came to an empty corner and watched as a figure appeared out of the shadows.

It was Bloodless Heath Doyle who was in charge of monitoring Artisan Cielf. He was thin and his skin was so pale that it was transparent. He looked so frail that a gust of wind could topple him.

"Did anything strange happen recently?" Cattleya nudged the gold-rim glasses on her nose.

Heath Doyle tersely acknowledged.

"Three days after you left, a stranger visited Cielf. He stayed for about fifteen minutes. I didn't approach for fear of being discovered.

"Based on your instructions, I sent men to tail the stranger, but they lost his trail."

"What did that stranger look like?" Cattleya asked with a slight nod.

Heath Doyle took out a piece of raw beef from a leather pouch by his waist. The blood on it remained fresh, but it didn’t show any signs of contamination. It appeared to be a pure piece of solid meat.

Right on the heels of that, this piece of beef melted in Heath Doyle’s hand, dripping to the ground like water. They then squirmed like they had life, drawing a portrait.

“This is the effect I want!” Frank Lee’s eyes shimmered as he watched this scene, expressing his intentions with excitement.

Under his gaze, Heath Doyle, had the intention to run, but he slightly slanted his body and pointed to the ground.

“Roughly like this.”

At this moment, a blood portrait had already taken form. It was that of a man with a mustache, with facial features that resembled that of the Paz River Valley. His greatest characteristic was the three ear studs on both his ears.

“Golden ear studs, thin body, not much fat, very athletic,” Heath Doyle added.

Cattleya retracted her gaze from the ground and asked, “And then?”

Heath Doyle tersely acknowledged.

“No one visited Cielf after that, other than his temporary servants and chef he hired. I got men to investigate them. They are clean.

“Cielf has an evening stroll at a fixed time every day. He will bring a prostitute home, allowing her to leave only at daybreak… I’ve been constantly tailing him, but I never discovered any contact with odd people.”

“He has been acting very normally all this time?” Cattleya asked with a frown.

From her point of view, not having any abnormalities made it most abnormal!

After all, this involved Rose School of Thought members that believed in the Primordial Moon.

Heath Doyle nodded in affirmation.

“Yes.”

Cattleya turned her head to look at the building’s main door and said after some thought, “I actually planned on using Beyonder powers to infiltrate and bring Cielf under control in the fastest speed possible before taking him away to prevent any accidents. But from the looks of it, the best solution is to knock on the door.”

Unknown danger was what terrified people the most.

At the thought that he had been busy with his experiments recently and hadn’t done his duty as first mate, Frank Lee hurriedly said, “Captain, I’ll go with you.”

Cattleya took off her thick glasses and hung them by her waist of her black warlock robe before nodding.

“Okay.”

With that said, she left the shadowy corner and walked towards the main door of Cielf’s residence.

As she approached, she looked up at the crimson moon that could be seen penetrating through the clouds. She curled her fingers and tapped thrice on the door.

Before long, footsteps approached and the door creaked open.

Cielf didn’t show any obvious changes from the previous time. He remained thin and dark. His eyes were somewhat puffy, and his brown eyes were trying hard to force a smile.

“Admiral, is there something this time?”

He stood by the door, blocking the gas wall lamp’s light behind him. It made the area appear dark and gloomy, as though he was sinking into the shadows.

Cattleya stared at him for a few seconds before saying slowly, “I have a new idea. I plan on making you a part of my crew.”

She stood there motionlessly without any intention of stepping inside.

Cielf’s expression warped as his voice turned somewhat dark.

“Why?”

Cattleya’s eyes seemed to freeze as she slowly said, “Because I’m a pirate.”

Pirates didn’t need reasons. They did whatever they did out of their own desires.

Cielf’s facial muscles twitched as a smile suffused his eyes once again.

“I can be your sailor, but as an Artisan, I’ll be of much greater use in a city.”

“I agree,” Cattleya destroyed his resistance. “But before then, I need you to spend some time on the Future to be partners with others.”

Cielf’s expression gradually turned cold as he replied in an ethereal voice, “I’m afraid I won’t be able to control myself. I have a strong urge to procreate every day…”

“Strong urge to procreate?” Frank Lee’s eyes lit up as he asked, seemingly in confirmation.

Cielf was taken aback as he wasn’t sure whether to nod or shake his head.

Frank then looked at Cattleya and asked in excitement, “Captain, is he going to be my assistant for my experiments?

“I love this trait of his!”

Cattleya fell silent for a few seconds before nodding heavily.

“Yes.”

Frank immediately revealed a bright smile and offered his right hand to Artisan Cielf.

“Pleasure to meet you. Let me introduce myself. First mate of the Future, Frank Lee.”

Cielf’s expression returned to normal as he shook the man’s hand with puzzlement. Then, he said, “Am I really going to spend a short period of time on the Future?”

“I guarantee it with my reputation on the line,” Cattleya sincerely replied before inwardly adding, It wouldn’t take long before Her Majesty personally handles you…

“Alright. It’s not like I can beat you.” Cielf shrugged. “Please permit me to pack my personal belongings.”

He then took two steps back, turned around, and walked to the staircase at the end of the foyer.

As he walked, he suddenly paused and said in an ethereal tone to Cattleya and Frank Lee, “Today’s moonlight is as beautiful as it always has been, isn’t it?”

Without receiving a reply, he proceeded forward and vanished from the staircase.

At this moment, Cattleya’s heavy expression became obvious.

After Cielf opened the door, she had already noticed an abnormality with her eyes.

In the past, Cielf’s Spirit Body was that of an ordinary human, but now, he was a conjoined person!

Under the illumination of the moonlight, this “conjoined person” was being nourished and was rapidly growing stronger.

This isn’t a problem I can resolve. I have to write to Her Majesty. Also, I mustn’t forget Gehrman Sparrow’s request for a meeting… Cattleya sighed silently as she subconsciously looked up.

High in the sky, a crimson moon remained bright and silent amidst the thin clouds.

†

Backlund, Hillston Borough, East Balam Military Veterans Mess.

Dwayne Dantès and Macht got off their separate carriages and entered the lobby together.

Chapter 996 - Card Game

◆ ◆ ◆

After entering the East Balam Military Veterans Mess, Klein handed his cane and hat to his valet, Enuni, only to see Colonel Calvin of the Loen Kingdom's Ministry of Defense wearing an army uniform, waiting at the foyer with a glass of red wine in hand.

This long-faced officer smiled as he raised his cup at Dwayne Dantès.

“Long time no see.”

“It really has been a while.” Klein smiled as he walked over.

Colonel Calvin immediately offered his right hand.

“Congratulations. You did pretty well. Everyone was very pleased.”

“I was very pleased as well.” Klein used a Loen-styled euphemism to express his pleasure in cooperating. He then shook hands with him.

Calvin retracted his arm and glanced at Macht before he said with a laughing sigh, “Back when you first introduced Dwayne, I was quite distrustful of your judgment, but now I understand how you're a Member of Parliament.”

“Anyone who interacts with Dwayne can easily tell that he's an expert at this,” Macht accepted the colonel's approbation with the same Loen-styled euphemism.

Calvin retracted his gaze, sipped some red wine, and smiled at Dwayne Dantès, asking in passing, “How much did you earn this time?

“Don’t worry, I won’t raise prices in the future because of it. I’m simply curious.”

“20,000 pounds in gold,” Klein gave the midpoint value as an answer.

In actual fact, he had earned 25,000 pounds, but after paying Miss Messenger 10,000 pounds for “Her” services, he had only earned 15,000 pounds.

Calvin nodded.

“Not bad. If you need to convert those gold bars into gold coins, I can introduce you to someone from an imperial mint factory.

“How was it? Did you notice anything abnormal around Maysanchez’s area?” Klein said directly without thinking, “Yes!

“There was a place called Revival Square under his control that was destroyed by lightning.”

“That, I’m aware of,” Calvin replied with a rather heavy expression.

But you probably do not know that the person before you was the one who created the lightning… Klein smiled and then said, “Also, Maysanchez seems to be maintaining a fragile balance among many factions, but in actual fact, he has already secretly aligned himself with a particular faction. Of course, I’m not exactly sure who it is.”

He had no intention of betraying the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. All he did was divulge a little to win the trust of the Loen military.

“The only thing that can be confirmed is that it isn’t us,” Calvin nodded and said with a deep look in his eyes.

“It’s unlikely to be Intis.” Klein helped him eliminate one of the wrong choices.

Calvin tersely acknowledged.

“That isn’t a bad thing either. The few factions surrounding Maysanchez are supported by Intis. If he wishes to expand, there’s no way he can circumvent them. When the time comes, perhaps we will have more arms sales on our hands.”

With that said, he offered a toast.

“Holy Lord of Storms, to riches for everyone.”

As believers of the Evernight Goddess, Klein and Macht smiled in response without giving a direct answer.

After taking another sip of red wine, Calvin pointed at the second floor.

“Dwayne, I brought you here today to play cards with a VIP. Texas Hold’em.”

“Which VIP?” Klein asked with piqued interest.

Calvin’s expression turned solemn as he said with an unobvious smile, “Admiral Amyrius. He has been given a post and is currently in charge of the Ministry of Defense.”

Admiral Amyrius… The admiral whose younger brother was stripped of his post as governor-general, had his mistress corrupted by the Mother Tree of Desire, and ended up losing his post as highest commander of the Central Sonia Sea’s navy? I’ve worked with him before and even pretended to be him for some time… Indeed, when it comes to a demigod, as long as they didn’t screw up too badly, and if they are willing to hold it in, they will always be able to step out of the nadir… Klein recalled everything that had happened at Oravi Island, turning wistful.

Towards Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt, he still felt some guilt towards him. Although most of what happened back then didn’t have anything to do with him, his mistress’s anomaly was ultimately a result of the Mother Tree of Desire’s wish to control him.

"That is to say that our future cooperation requires His Excellency's approval?" Klein asked in enlightenment.

"That's how it is." Calvin nodded and pointed up the stairs. "Let's head on up."

When they arrived at the second floor, they stopped in front of a pair of dark red double doors. Calvin turned his head to glance at Dwayne Dantès.

"Your mission today is to lose money."

Lose money? Klein sized up Calvin as he curled the ends of his mouth.

"I'll try my best."

By the side, Macht said with a laugh, "There's actually no need to be too deliberate. Admiral Amyrius has excellent card-playing skills. It's almost impossible if you wish to win any money. Heh heh, I always lose. Sigh, I just hope I won't lose too much today. Otherwise, I wouldn't even dare to return home."

Klein nodded thoughtfully.

"I only brought 200 pounds in cash. Would that be enough?"

"Definitely not." Calvin chuckled. "I've already changed chips worth 1,000 pounds for you. Just remember to return it."

Loen's best lawyers only earn about 1,000 pounds a year on the surface… You bunch of profligates… Klein sized up Calvin again.

This colonel didn't notice it as he knocked on the door.

After a while, the double door creaked open, revealing the scene inside.

It was a hall paved with thick, soft carpets. There wasn't a lot of furniture, making it appear rather spacious.

In the middle of the hall was a card table that could accommodate more than ten people. Surrounding it were luxurious-styled high-back chairs.

By the sides of the hall were gold-plated cutlery, marble-carved sculptures, coffee tables with books and newspapers, and a series of leather sofas.

Klein looked over and saw Amyrius Rieveldt sitting at the seat of honor. This admiral didn't look different from before. His black hair was neatly combed backward, with his blue eyes dark and profound. The corners of his lips drooped slightly, and his face was clean-shaven. He had an austere temperament, and he wore dark blue clothes with an epaulet. He was meticulous in every detail, appearing extremely serious.

[image]

When he swept his gaze, Klein found another "familiar person."

He had thick but neat black brows with a short and hard crew-cut of the same color. He had dark blue eyes and a high nose-bridge with a bushy mustache spreading out from his mouth. He had a long face with accentuated outlines as well as callous curves.

He was MI9's deputy director, Qonas Kilgor!

He was one of the targets for Klein's return to Backlund. He was the middle man in the dealings between the Demoness Sect and a particular faction in the royal family. He was one of the accomplices of the Great Smog of Backlund!

This brigadier general had abnormally broad shoulders, making his white shirt and black vest abnormally tight. He was playing Texas Hold'em with great focus.

There are two, no—three demigods at a card table. How can this even be played? Interesting… Klein sat down and began observing the others at the table.

During this process, an attendant delivered a huge stack of chips, worth a total of 1,000 pounds. In the first few rounds, Klein folded after looking at his cards. He acted very cautiously, acting as though he never called or raised unless he had good cards.

As for Admiral Amyrius, his style was the complete opposite of him. He was in no way conservative. He called almost every round, constantly raising in an extremely aggressive manner.

Every round that he was involved in seldom reached the point where everyone showed their cards. Most people failed to withstand such aggression and, with the admiral's domineering force, they would call a round or two before folding. At times, someone would attempt to call Amyrius Rieveldt's bluff, only to encounter four nines. The color in his face instantly drained as though he had been passed the death verdict by a judge.

Qonas Kilgor had a completely different style as well. He would occasionally lose a round, but the chips lost wouldn't be much, preventing him from having too great a loss. And in the next round after his loss, he would often be able to wipe out the person who won all his chips the previous round, forcing him to spend money to buy in again.

Is there a need? Why are you using powers to cheat when dealing with Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders or even ordinary people? Others might not be able to tell, but would I be fooled? One has the Arbiter pathway's dominance, and the other has the Baron of Corruption's Bribe… Klein looked at his Five of Hearts and Nine of Clubs as he shook his head indiscernibly.

He couldn't help but consider which powers of a Seer pathway could provide him help if he wanted to cheat.

Turn all my opponents into marionettes? In that case, I can win as much as I want. I'm practically invincible, but it's of no pragmatic value. It's not like I'm planning for some deathmatch poker tournament…

Unfortunately, there aren’t any mosquitoes here. Otherwise, I can use their Spirit Body Threads and turn them into marionettes to help me check out their hole cards…

Faceless only allows me to change myself, not the cards…

Magician’s Illusion? The effects would likely be pretty good when playing with ordinary people or Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders. But there are two demigods here…

Use a Clown’s ability to swap cards? It’s useless. The dealing and shuffling of cards are done by the croupier…

As his thoughts raced, Klein realized that apparently only his powers as a Seer was of use here.

He threw out his two hole cards to indicate a fold before taking out a metal chip and allowing it to move between his fingers.

At this moment, Amyrius Rieveldt suddenly looked up at him and retracted his hands before pushing all his chips in.

Indeed… Klein nodded inwardly without a hint of surprise.

During his last cooperation, he knew that Admiral Amyrius was able to distinguish ordinary people from Beyonders from his “position.” He suspected that he could even determine a Beyonder’s level, or in other words their “position.”

However, Klein wasn’t too worried, because a Bizarro Sorcerer had concealment powers to a certain degree. This was also why he could converge the augmentation effect the gray fog had on him after he reached Sequence 4. This made him confident that Amyrius wouldn’t be able to determine his level. However, he didn’t attempt any corresponding interference, as he suspected that Amyrius was able to tell that he was a Beyonder.

Therefore, he decided to reveal a tiny problem, making it easy to be seen through and be grasped.

Chapter 997 - “Gambling God” Dwayne

◆

The core rules of Texas Hold’em were very simple. It was to use two hole cards and five community cards to form a hand with any five-card combination. Whoever had the biggest hand won. And the community cards were dealt in three phases. Three community cards to form “the flop” in the first phase, a fourth community card called “the turn” in the second phase, and a fifth community card called “the river” in the third phase. Each phase allowed players to fold, check, call, or raise. This continued until everyone was done or until one person didn’t fold.

Klein fiddled with the chip in his hand as he divined the existence of any lucky instances within the next few rounds. However, he was unable to tell which exact round it was. After all, it was only a quick and simple divination with average effects.

Using this method to play with ordinary people and Low-Sequence Beyonders wouldn’t be a problem as long as the correct strategy is used, but it’s definitely inadequate against demigods. It’s already quite a challenge to defeat a Mid-Sequence Beyonder… Must I close my eyes each round and do a complete dream divination? Heh heh, if that were the case, Dwayne Dantès might end up with the title “Sleeping Gambling God”… Klein sighed inwardly. He continued watching the round play out as he sat by the side. At present, he had already lost a big blind[1] and a small blind[2] when it was his turn.

At this moment, Klein noticed one point: The MI9 deputy director, Qonas Kilgor, had lost 20 pounds to Admiral Amyrius.

A successful Bribe… Admiral Amyrius should be able to tell that Qonas is using his powers as a Baron of Corruption, but he might not know that this MI9 deputy director is a demigod… The next round will be interesting… Hehe…

Klein jolted to attention as the new round began. He didn't check his hole cards when the croupier handed him two new ones. Instead, he placed the metal chip he was playing with in his hand onto his hole card, taking on the stance of not planning to look at them.

After two people folded, the stern and old-fashioned Amyrius Rieveldt casually took a look at his hole cards. After counting five pounds worth of chips, he threw it into the middle of the table, having raised the stakes without garnering any surprises.

Another person folded as Macht called. Right on the heels of that, Qonas Kilgor, who had an unyielding personality, raised the stakes, throwing out a total of 20 pounds.

Calvin confirmed his hole cards once again before calling.

After one last person folded, Dwayne Dantès didn't do an actual count. He grabbed a handful of chips and threw it out.

The croupier who was in charge of counting the chips glanced at it before precisely announcing Dwayne's action, "20 pounds. Call."

"I thought it would be 50 pounds. From the looks of it, I'm still not very used to these chips," the white-sideburned Dwayne Dantès with an outstanding temperament said with a laugh.

However, he didn't add on the additional 30 pounds.

At this moment, no one made a move. It was Amyrius Rieveldt's turn again.

This admiral didn't even glance at the remaining players. Picking up five ten-pound chips, he threw them out.

"Another raise."

He didn't show any perturbations in his emotions, acting as though he was ordering a cup of black tea. However, that indescribable sense of dominance and the act of repeatedly raising the stakes pre-flop made the mood at the table freeze.

Such situations often implied that Admiral Amyrius had excellent hole cards. Perhaps they were a pair of Aces or a pair of Kings, or an Ace and King.

Macht decided to fold. Qonas Kilgor rubbed his high nose bridge and glanced around with his dark blue eyes before saying, "Call."

Colonel Calvin confirmed his cards again. After ten seconds of hesitation, he chose to fold.

Dwayne Dantès touched the metal chip on his two hole cards and smiled.

"Call."

After a round of expressing their intentions, there were only three players for the round. Then, the croupier flipped the three community cards in the middle of the table for the flop.

"2♠, 9♥, K♠."

The person who was up first was Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt. He leaned forward slightly and said in a domineering manner, "50 pounds."

He had immediately raised the stakes to 50 pounds!

Macht, Calvin, and company, including those who weren't in the game, felt stifled for some baffling reason.

"…" Qonas Kilgor trembled slightly, but he ultimately grabbed 50 pounds and threw it out.

Dwayne Dantès glanced at the deputy director of MI9. Completely unfazed by the pressure, he said with a smile, “Call.”

Upon hearing this, Calvin turned his head and nodded at Dwayne Dantès with his deep blue eyes that resembled a nighttime lake, indicating his approval.

From his point of view, Admiral Amyrius’s domineering stance didn’t affect a person who came to lose money.

At this moment, the red-vested croupier revealed the fourth card—the turn.

“9♠.”

There were three Spades, increasing the chances of a flush tremendously. However, Admiral Amyrius still didn’t hesitate. He calmly pushed a stack of chips.

“100 pounds.”

Qonas Kilgor’s fingers tapped on his hole cards, showing his lack of confidence. But ultimately, he choose to call.

Dwayne Dantès glanced at this deputy director once again and maintained his warm smile.

“Call.”

At this point in time, he had yet to see his hole cards, making Calvin somewhat worried. He believed that such an act was going overboard—a clear act of throwing money away. It wasn’t something Admiral Amyrius, who was relatively conservative, might find acceptable.

At this moment, the red-vested croupier revealed the final card—the river:

“2♣.”

As such, the community cards took form:

“2♠, 9♥, K♠, 9♠, 2♣.”

“200 pounds.” Admiral Amyrius pushed a pile of metal chips in with an extremely domineering attitude.

Qonas Kilgor took a deep breath before pushing two stacks of chips.

“500 pounds.”

This amount of money was half of his purported annual salary.

Is he trying to bluff? Calvin and Macht exchanged looks, believing that Brigadier General Kilgor had made it too obvious, making it easy to see through him.

One had to know that when playing Texas Hold’em, apart from doing risk management and probability calculations, it also involved psychological battles most of the time. Be it in terms of body language, expression, or the style used for raises, they made it easy to expose one’s hidden cards.

Of course, good players could also use these details to deliberately misdirect their opponents.

Dwayne Dantès sized up Qonas Kilgor before he laughed. Then, like the previous few times, he said, “Call.”

Amyrius raised his hands, prepared to push all his remaining chips, to pressure his opponents into folding.

At this moment, he suddenly paused. His deadpan expression wore a look of solemnity.

After a few seconds of silence, he calmly said, “Call.”

At this point, the hole cards could be revealed to compare each person’s hand.

Admiral Amyrius flipped his card first. It was an A♠ and 10♠. It formed a flush with the 2♠, K♠, and 9♠. It was a rather high-ranking hand, with the only ones bigger than it being a full house, four of a kind, straight flush, and royal flush.

“It’s your turn,” Amyrius then urged Qonas.

Qonas first flipped open a single card—K♦. It made two pairs with the K and 9 from the community cards.

Following that, he picked up his second hole card. At that moment, the remaining poker cards at the red-vested croupier’s end blurred.

Pa!

The hole card was flipped open, revealing itself: “9♣!”

“What?” Macht and company exclaimed, hardly believing their eyes.

This meant that Qonas Kilgor had obtained a full house—nines over kings!

It was bigger than a flush!

“Sorry about that. Full house,” Qonas looked at Amyrius and said with a smile.

Then, he turned to look at Dwayne Dantès.

“You can reveal your cards.”

“I’m also very curious as to what my cards are.” Dwayne Dantès smiled. He picked up the metal chip that he had placed down on his cards and very casually flipped the two hole cards.

“Eh…”

“What?”

†

Calvin and company rubbed their eyes.

Dwayne Dantès's hole cards were a very weak pair: "2♥, 2♦."

There happened to be a very small pair in the community cards: "2♠, 2♣."

They formed a four of a kind—the smallest rank when it came to four of a kind, but it was higher ranked than all the full houses!

"Praise the Lady!" Dwayne Dantès drew the crimson moon across his chest in pleasant surprise, looking as though he had never expected it.

"An interesting round." Amyrius was taken aback for a moment before he gently clapped.

Qonas Kilgor gave Dwayne Dantès a deep look and said with a laughing sigh, "I never expected the final winner to be you."

Klein wiped the smile from his face as he inwardly grumbled, It's only right that I win over the two of you. On the one hand, Admiral Amyrius enjoys pressuring others and doesn't really rely on his Beyonder powers to cheat. As for you, you placed your focus and Beyonder powers on Admiral Amyrius; thus, ignoring me. On the other hand, the one playing cards with you is actually named Winner Enuni.

Without even looking at his hole cards, it was obvious that he was relying solely on luck!

At the moment he placed his chip on the hole cards, Klein had already swapped positions with Enuni as they switched faces with each other!

Although Colonel Calvin had gotten him to deliberately lose 1,000 pounds, Klein decided to win a killing after he saw Qonas Kilgor.

This wasn't because he couldn't bear to part with the money; instead, his main motive was to garner the attention of this MI9 demigod. He wanted to get familiar with him and build relationships!

Only by doing this could Klein have an opportunity to obtain intelligence from Qonas Kilgor and even carry out an assault on him. After all, he was a demigod. To deal with him in Backlund required sufficient care and caution. He would rather give up an operation if he lacked the confidence to guarantee a kill or lure him away from Backlund. Otherwise, he was bound to expose himself, ending up being surrounded by demigods and even angels in Backlund.

In the subsequent rounds, Klein won and lost different rounds. In the end, not only did he keep his 1,000 pounds in chips, but he had even won nearly an additional 1,000 pounds. During this process, Calvin had gestured to Dwayne Dantès to lose, but he was left stupefied by the latter's ridiculous good luck that left him undefeatable.

After the game came to an end, a person walked over to Dwayne Dantès with a smile—Qonas Kilgor.

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†

"Big blind" is equal to the minimum bet.

The "small blind" is normally half the big blind.

Chapter 998 - Establishing Relations

◆ ◆ ◆

With dark blue eyes, Qonas Kilgor, who had crew cut hair which was seldom seen among members of high society, held a cup of champagne as he walked up to Dwayne Dantès. He said with a smile, “You had great luck today. You also had plenty of courage.” 1

If he’s referring to me immediately folding after receiving a Bribe, with me rather losing a big blind, that’s not luck but knowledge… As for the other times, playing cards with all of you has pretty much drained all of Enuni’s recently accumulated good luck… Klein swirled the cup with pale golden alcohol in his hand and said with a laughing sigh, “For a person who doesn’t care about the outcome, there’s naturally nothing to fear.

“Heh heh, Praise the Lady!”

He was using a Loen-style euphemism to indicate that he was mainly here to lose money and that his good luck was all thanks to the blessings of a deity. It had nothing to do with himself.

Qonas hadn’t lost much tonight-approximately one to two hundred pounds. Although this was already a considerable amount when compared to his purported salary, to a brigadier general deputy director of MI9—a hidden demigod—his salary was the most trivial part of his income. Therefore, he didn’t mind it. He shook his head with a smile.

“Humans often have no way of seeing through the arrangement of fate.

“You are an interesting person. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

His final sentence was both a form of praise and also a part of the formalities. It indicated that their conversation was over.

However, Klein had “acted” all night to acquaint himself with this demigod of the Black Emperor pathway, so how could he give up? He first replied, “It’s my pleasure as well.” Then, he asked in a seemingly random manner, “Your Excellency, are you familiar with the manors in the Backlund suburbs? It’s best if they come with forests for hunting.”

According to the information Klein had received from Miss Justice, Qonas Kilgor didn’t enjoy holding banquets, balls, or saloons at his place. Neither did he accept invitations on such matters. It was unknown if it was a problem with his character or due to his job.

He had very simple hobbies. First, he enjoyed smoking cigars, especially Chieftain Cigars from East Balam’s Mikent-recognized as the best cigars in the world. Second, he enjoyed playing cards, especially Texas Hold’em. Third, he enjoyed hunting. He often headed to the Backlund suburbs during autumn and winter. He even headed to Awwa County or East Chester County for hunting.

Klein was already planning on buying a manor, an expenditure meant solely to integrate himself into high society. He hadn’t made any decisions yet, but after meeting Qonas Kilgor today, he suddenly added this request in a bid to garner his interest. When the time came, he could even invite this MI9 deputy director to hunt in the suburbs over an enjoyable weekend. He could then seek out an opportunity to take action.

Qonas Kilgor drank a mouthful of champagne and said after some thought, “I’ll help you take note of it. If there’s anything suitable, I’ll send someone over. Böklund Street, right? Yes, someone will inform you there.”

“Thank you very much,” Klein earnestly replied.

At the same time, he pitied his former valet, Richardson, who had now become an assistant butler. This young man who wished to better himself recently went out early in the morning and returned late at night. He had been gathering information about manors in Backlund's suburbs, filtering out those that met the requirements and the ones which were on sale. He had been personally visiting them in a bid to list down options which were all flawless. He didn't wish for his employer to spot something he fancied only to find out that it wasn't for sale, or that the actual conditions were far worse what was described.

And after Klein suddenly changed his request, all the work that Richardson had done was undoubtedly made useless.

The all-evil "Party A" in contracts always changes their requirements and requests… Yes, after this is done. I'll get Taneja to raise his annual salary by 5 pounds. As an assistant butler, he should naturally earn more than his time as a valet… 5 pounds… It was gone in just one or two raises in today's game… Richardson's annual salary is only enough to play a few rounds of Texas Hold'em… Klein sighed inwardly when he sensed eyes looking at him.

He directly looked back and realized that it was Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt.

This old-fashioned and stern middle-aged man nodded gently and retracted his gaze. He had no intentions of communicating with Dwayne Dantès, nor did he get anyone to arrest this unaffiliated Beyonder. After all, he was considered a working partner of the military, and it wasn't rare for a merchant, an adventurer with wide connections, to be able to obtain a potion.

At this moment, Colonel Calvin and Member of Parliament Macht walked over to Dwayne Dantès with wine glasses in hand.

"What happened?" Calvin asked with an exasperated and suppressed voice.

As Dwayne Dantès had won nearly 1,000 pounds, he and Macht had to change their strategies to prevent Admiral Amyrius from losing any money. They went from a tight strategy to an unrestrained one. They felt quite the pinch from losing several hundred pounds each.

As such, adding to everyone's losses, Admiral Amyrius had won a total of nearly 300 pounds.

With regards to this, Klein spread his hands.

"I didn't even look at my hole cards!" In between the lines, he meant that this was simply the blessings of some deity that controlled luck.

At the moment, the deities, angels, and secret existences who had authority in the fate domain included, but were not limited to, the Evernight Goddess, The Fool, Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin, Pallez Zoroast, Blasphemer Amon, and Snake of Fate Ouroboros.

"This is really such a vexing matter," Macht said with a bitter smile while shaking his head. "Calvin and I don't even dare to return home after what we've lost."

They had roughly lost about half their purported annual income.

Dwayne Dantès, with grayed sideburns, revealed a surprised look.

"When did you guys lose?"

He then pointed at the pile of chips at his seat.

"I just happened to retain the 1,000 pounds I bought in at the beginning. The rest are yours, isn't that so?" 1.

Calvin and Macht were taken aback as they exchanged looks. Then, they revealed smiles.

"We must've counted wrongly due to the anxiety." Calvin gave an approving nod.

Klein laughed and immediately changed the topic. He then began looking at supper that was placed on the coffee table beside him.

City of Silver, in the spire of one of the twin towers.

Derrick Berg once again met the Chief of the six-member council, Colin Iliad.

“You said that you have something you would like to ask me about?” Colin, who had quite a number of old scars on his face, calmly asked the youth who wasn’t considered too tall.

Derrick bowed and replied frankly, “Yes, Your Excellency. In the advancement for Priest of Light, I need pure darkness, but once I do it, it will be extremely dangerous. I’m wondering if there are any solutions.”

Colin Iliad listened seriously before nodding.

“You have to confirm one point: Is it pure darkness, or darkness with zero light? These two concepts are very different.

“If it’s the latter, you can obtain that in the spire’s underground dungeons. You’ve been there for some time, so you should know what I’m talking about.”

Derrick had a deep fear for the spire’s dungeons because it was there that he first met Blasphemer Amon. Not only did he see the former captain of the expedition team, but he had even been parasitized. Unless it was necessary, he really didn’t wish to recall it.

At this moment, after receiving the chief’s reminder, he began to slowly jolt his memories. He discovered that, under the spire, although each cell was given candles, one would have to wait for the guards to deliver food and medicine and ask for more once they finished burning. This didn’t happen frequently, with it happening only thrice a day with the gaps in between being very long.

And in such an environment, phenomena like the appearance of monsters and the vanishing of humans never appeared.

Derrick recalled that he had been in darkness with zero light for some time without encountering any danger.

He pondered for a moment and hesitantly said, “The darkness with zero light at the bottom of the spire has external powers involved?”

It was this power that prevented the darkness from making people disappear or producing monsters? Colin Iliad looked at the two swords that were hung up in a cross-like fashion on the wall. He looked up and sighed.

“Yes, that’s why it’s called darkness with zero light, not pure darkness.”

Derrick frowned slightly as he tried to recall.

After a few seconds, he said without certainty, “If that’s the case, the darkness outside the spire’s basement isn’t pure darkness as well. In many historical records, the nights before the Dark Ages didn’t make people vanish or produce monsters. Now, the darkness must’ve undergone an abnormal change or had some other forces mixed into it to turn it dangerous.”

“Not bad. For you to make such connections shows that you’ve improved… Therefore, let me ask you again. Do you need pure darkness or darkness with zero light?” Colin’s light blue eyes revealed a hint of surprise.

This… Could it be that pure darkness only exists outside the Forsaken Land of the Gods? Derrick turned gloomy before he pumped himself up.

“Your Excellency, I’m not too sure either. I’ll take some time to confirm this.”

He believed that the experienced and strong Mr. Hanged Man, Mr. World, and the other members of the Tarot Club could give him a good solution.

Colin Iliad didn’t ask further as he said with a nod, “Go on then.

"Once you reach Sequence 5, even if you aren't able to become a demigod for a long period of time, you will have the chance of wielding certain Sealed Artifacts." 1

Backlund, Hillston Borough, Xio changed into a brown jacket and wore a cap, pretending to be a very ordinary short man.

She had officially taken the commission and had begun tailing and investing the gentleman named Ernes Boyar. There were also a few other bounty hunters who participated in this mission.

Ernes Boyar lifted his top hat and pointed his cane forward as he instructed the carriage driver, "To St. George Borough."

It was southeast of Backlund, separated from East Borough by the Tussock River.

Once he got on his carriage and took his seat, Ernes sniffed. He looked out the window and suddenly grunted.

As a Sanguine Viscount, how could he not have discovered the clumsy bounty hunters' tailing him?

Chapter 999 - Instigation

◆

When Ernes left on a carriage, the few bounty hunters hiding in the vicinity immediately appeared. Without being stingy about the costs involved, they immediately stopped any rental carriages that passed by. Some memorized the target carriage’s traits and attempted to take shortcuts through the cramped, isolated paths to catch up to it. Others rode on the bikes they had prepared ahead of time, swerving through the crowds and carriages with their bells ringing. It was very easy for them to keep pace.

Among them, only Xio was completely composed. She remained in her spot, watching Ernes and her peers leave.

This transportation tool known as a bicycle is more useful than I imagined. It’s no wonder so many bounty hunters have saved up to buy one. This can save expenses from taking carriages and save time walking… If one often has such tracking missions, then the money saved is enough to buy a brand new bike… The only problem is that this mode of transportation tool has very few models available. All of them have high seats… Xio was enticed.

At this moment, a tracked carriage drove over from the crossroads and stopped in front of her.

Xio happened to be at a station.

Glancing at the double-decker that stopped on the iron tracks, Xio took out a few pennies, walked over, and sat down by the window.

Such public carriages could seat nearly fifty people with its double decks. It wasn't too crowded, allowing Xio to easily observe the scenery outside.

However, she didn't admire the scenery. Her mind was quickly outlining the exact appearance of her target: brown hair, red eyes, pronounced features, a nose bridge that was so high that it looked deformed, and an oil painting catalog in hand.

With her supernatural senses as a Sheriff, as well as the distance between them not being too great, Xio could vaguely grasp her target's current location and predetermined destination.

Therefore, she remained very calm and even took off her cap while using the glass windows to tidy up her coarse and stubborn blonde hair.

After several stations, Xio suddenly got up when the public carriage came to a stop as she alighted.

This was the Backlund Bridge area. She had sensed that the target had already changed direction and was preparing to head towards the bridge.

Xio immediately went on foot, planning to enter another street at the bend up ahead to board the public carriage that headed for the south bank of the Tussock River.

She had good luck, with a public carriage driving over just as she arrived at the stop.

Xio silently exhaled and took out another batch of pennies she had prepared, her urge to buy a bike strengthened.

This tracked carriage was very crowded, but with her domineering aura as an Arbiter, she was able to easily pass through the crowd, head up to the upper deck, and find a seat.

The carriage moved slowly as Xio casually looked out the window when her gaze suddenly froze.

She saw Sherman who she hadn't been able to find anywhere!

This young man who thought himself as a woman was carrying a paper bag with a few long loaves of bread and a stack of newspapers as he entered a narrow alley.

His brown shoulder-length hair had grown longer, and his gray-patterned trousers seemed tighter.

Although his figure disappeared almost as quickly as he appeared, making it impossible for the average person to notice, Xio, who was a Sheriff, easily made the necessary judgment.

Sherman stopped renting his place in East Borough and moved here? Seeing that Sherman was fine and that she was still tracking her target, she held back her urge to jump off the carriage to chase after him to ask him about his recent situation.

†

Sherman carried the paper bag with several long loaves of bread and a stack of papers as he passed through alleys and streets, making a huge detour before entering an apartment building. He followed the cramped stairs to the third story, took out a key, and opened the door to where he lived.

He seemed to possess some pretty good anti-tracking skills.

With a creak, the door opened as Sherman's eyes lit up. He saw a lady wearing a black dress in front of him.

This lady had a sweet, supple face and an impeccable figure. Even while standing at the window and blocking out the sunlight, making herself become cloaked in the shadows, she seemed to be gilded, making her appear holy and beautiful.

“Why are you here?” Sherman stared at her in surprise but couldn’t help but size her up.

His unobvious Adam’s apple bobbed up and down as he swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

The next second, he turned his head and looked to the side as though he didn’t dare look at her head-on.

“Ma’am T-Trissy…” Sherman stammered a greeting.

Trissy slowly smiled as she allowed the poorly-lit room to appear to become brighter. Then, she asked with a teasing tone, “Why don’t you dare to look at me?”

“I-I don’t know. I-l like men. W-why do I still have odd thoughts when looking at you…” Sherman continued looking at the ground to his side as he stammered an answer.

Trissy’s expression immediately turned mixed before smiling as though nothing had happened.

“Females can also appreciate the charm of beauty within their gender.”

She paused for a moment before saying, “I came here today because I have a mission for you. Your original progress has been very fast, leaving me very satisfied. But it seems like it has recently stopped.”

Sherman’s face immediately wore a look of horror as he subconsciously took a step back.

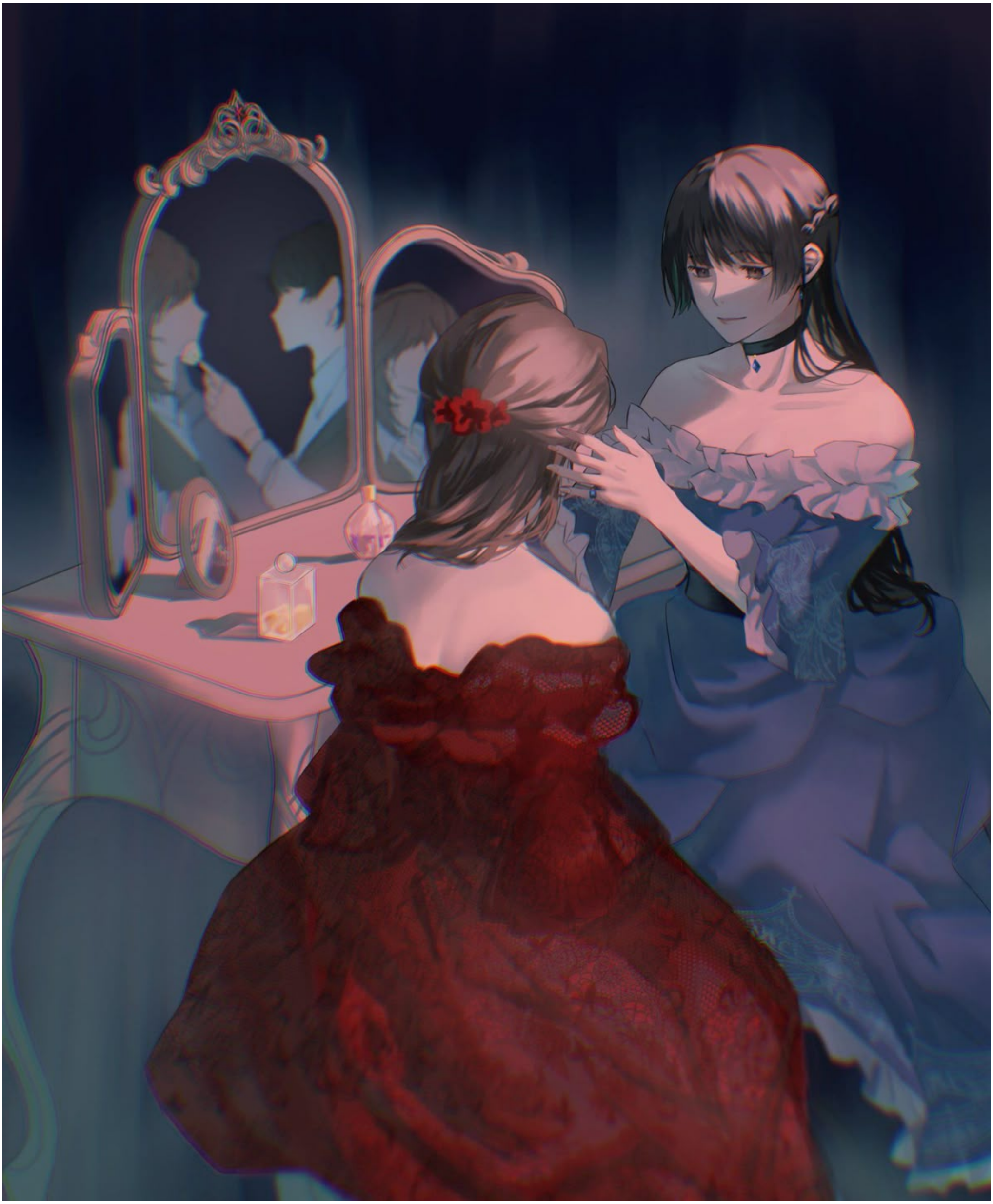
“I-I don’t think there’s a need to do such things…”

Seeing Trissy silent, Sherman’s gradually eloquently stringed his words.

“I really don’t wish to instigate others into stealing, robbing, and murdering. That’s too evil, too despicable!

“Even at the very beginning, those people you got me to assassinate seemed to be a little overboard. Although they had indeed cursed me, beat me, ostracized me, and spread bad rumors about me, using all kinds of means to harm me in exchange for joy, their actions didn't require them to pay with their lives."

Unsurprised, Trissy smiled and said, "That's not what you said back then. You hated them and had wicked feelings for them. Once you obtained Beyonder powers, you were so eager to seek revenge on them. I just made a tiny suggestion, and you planned several assassination missions. I always remember how you looked—stained with blood, trembling in excitement and fervor."



Sherman couldn’t help but retreat as he heard that until he was stopped by the door which had closed at some point in time. He then covered his face with his hands, shouting, “No!

“I have nightmares every night, dreaming of them surrounding me, covered in blood. They chase after me, bite me…”

Pa! The paper bag fell to the ground as the long loaves of bread were scattered. The stack of newspapers happened to drop just beside them.

“This is very normal.” Trissy cut off Sherman. “This is a necessary psychological change for an Assassin. Think about it. Didn’t you wish to kill them when they were bullying you?”

“…Yes,” Sherman answered hesitantly.

Trissy then chuckled.

“Just treat it as self-defense when being bullied; thus, killing them.”

Her speech had a natural allure that made one wish to listen and believe. Sherman rapidly calmed down and nodded.

“From this point of view, it does seem much better…”

Upon hearing that, Trissy’s dimples appeared as she teasingly added, “Besides, they weren’t your match when they were alive, so what’s there to be afraid of when they’re dead?

“Even if they become ghosts or specters, it’s nothing. You just need to seriously complete the ritual and consume one more potion, and then you’ll be able to burn all those souls to oblivion!”

“B-but I can’t bear seeing people turn ugly, crazy, and evil under my acts of instigation.” Sherman still seemed rather unwilling.

Trissy indiscernibly curled the ends of her lips as she said with her smile maintained, “Those are evil thoughts they had to begin with. It has nothing to do with you. Even without you, those evil thoughts will erupt at specific moments and situations.

“Also, the missions I arranged for you are all related to the gangs. Aren’t you most aware of what those people are like? Getting them to fracture and kill one another is mercy and kindness for people like you and the innocent people of East Borough.”

Sherman subconsciously widened his mouth, swallowing the words he was just about to say.

He instantly fell silent.

Trissy's eyes swept past him and continued with a soothing voice, "You're just one step away from your target. As long as you complete the remaining ritual, you can drink the third potion to completely become a woman.

"When that happens, you can use the name Shermane that you've already picked for yourself. What a nice sounding name it is, isn't it? Then, you can leave Backlund as a woman, heading for Midseashire or Desi Bay where you can begin a brand new life. You will no longer have anything to do with this place. Yes, you will definitely be filled with charm. Many excellent men will court you, and you can choose the one you like the most and are most satisfied with, walking down the aisle in a cathedral. You will have bubbly kids, and you can bring them up to be healthy children. You can bring them to Winter County for skiing, Desi Bay for holidays, and to the hunting grounds which are pleasures that only nobles have…

"Didn't you say that you were willing to do anything to regain your true self?"

Sherman's lips quivered, and after pursing them tightly for a while, he separated them and said, "Ma'am Trissy, I understand. I-I will proceed according to your instructions."

After saying that, he seemed to lose all his strength as he stumbled to the ground. He subconsciously reached out to hold onto a coat rack beside him.

During this process, his gaze happened to sweep past the stack of newspapers.

It had already spread apart, revealing a particular report:

"…Tycoon from Desi, Mr. Dwayne Dantès, shows interest in purchasing the Larryway Steel Company, believing that it has excellent profitability and a promising future…"

†

"Sir, are you really planning on buying Larryway Steel Company?" Enuni asked while walking upstairs at 160 Böklund Street.

Dwayne Dantès shook his head and smiled.

"That news is just pure fabrication. I've only met the owner of the Larryway Steel Company, Mr. Phil La Rivie, at a ball last week and had a chat."

By the side, Butler Walter heaved a sigh of relief as he warned, "Sir, the Larryway Steel Company is indeed seeking a buyer. There are quite a number of people who are considering the option."

That also means that this piece of news was released by the reporters under Phil's instructions so that he can sell it at a better price? Klein nodded in thought. He entered the room with the half balcony and prepared to head up above the gray fog. He wanted to use Enuni's praying point of light to see any abnormalities at Hazel's place.

This was something that he had been doing daily for the past few days.

Chapter 1000 - Prelude

◆

In the grand palace above the gray fog.

Through Enuni's prayer point of light, Klein saw the scene inside his valet's room.

As his vision pulled out and slowly extended out, he began taking in all of Böklund Street. Among buildings covered in fresh flowers and grass, Intis parasol trees that shielded the sunlight slowly swept past. There were slow-moving carriages that were elegantly or beautifully adorned, and youths dashing quickly on bikes.

Finally, Klein locked onto Unit 39—Member of Parliament Macht's residence. He then lowered his field of view and began observing every animal and human to see if there was any black-haired, black-eyed, monocle-wearing man.

Phew… There's no switching or grafting of fate… Nearly ten minutes later, Klein heaved a sigh of relief.

At this moment, a carriage drove into Macht's residence and stopped at their doorstep.

A young lady with curly black-green hair and bright, dark-brown eyes alighted from a carriage. It was none other than Hazel who had returned home.

She was wearing a dark green dress that didn't expose her shoulders. Her lips were slightly pursed, and she wore a relaxed look with a hint of joy.

Upon seeing Hazel in such a state, Klein's heart skipped a beat.

This was definitely abnormal!

From Klein's point of view, the rat demigod had only two outcomes after meeting Amon's avatar. She either had a trump card and managed to escape successfully at the cost of being heavily injured, or she had turned into a Beyonder characteristic to strengthen Amon's avatar. And regardless of the outcome, there was no way Hazel could find her teacher. She would definitely be in grief and pain, feeling dispirited and sad. So how could she be relaxed and happy?

With her taking the risk to head to the manor in the suburbs to inform her teacher, she's not a cold and selfish person… Her present state indicates that she has confirmed that her teacher, that rat demigod, is fine. She has even been rewarded, perhaps obtaining all kinds of knowledge about the supernatural world… This is in conflict with my theory of the rat demigod's outcome. No, it's not in conflict. Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth… Klein leaned back into his seat and came to a conclusion:

Amon had not only obtained the rat demigod's Beyonder characteristic, but he had also stolen her fate and had replaced her identity!

Therefore, to Hazel, her teacher hadn't encountered any mishaps and would only need a period of time to lie low… After making the confirmation, Klein silently exhaled and felt a little relaxed.

To him, the most terrifying aspect of Amon was that no one knew what form or identity "He" would use to appear. It could be possible that Member of Parliament Macht would one day wear a monocle, or that insects in the garden would turn around with monocles on their faces. Therefore, after grasping the identity Amon might use to appear, Klein couldn't help but feel more assured.

As for Amon's performance being problematic in front of Hazel, Klein believed that it was impossible. After all, Amon was a King of Angels that was fundamentally good at deceit. Even if "He" mentioned something that differed from what the rat demigod had said, "He" could easily use the excuse of it being a test with what "He" now said being part of her formal education to fool her.

Of course, based on Pallez Zoroast's depiction, Amon definitely wouldn't appear as a rat demigod, so I shouldn't be careless… Klein did some observations before retracting his gaze and leaving the gray fog.

Inside his room, he sat on a reclining chair and drank some black tea with a lemon slice. He half-closed his eyes and considered how he could deepen his relationship with Qonas Kilgor.

After an unknown period of time, Klein suddenly opened his eyes and activated his Spirit Vision.

At the demigod level, he could already activate it at will.

Almost at the same moment, Reinette Tinekerr walked out of the void with the four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand. One of them had a letter in its mouth.

"Whose letter is it?" Klein asked as he reached out his right hand.

"Sharron…" Reinette Tinekerr's other head answered.

Miss Sharron? She should be making her final preparations for the advancement. Why would she suddenly write to me? Klein was slightly puzzled as he received the envelope.

After he opened it, he found very little content. There was only a simple line:

"Emlyn White is seeking out the Rose School of Thought."

Emlyn is seeking out the Rose School of Thought? Klein pricked up his brows in surprise.

His opinion of Emlyn was a Sanguine who was afraid of trouble. Unless necessary, he didn't even wish to head out. So how could he actively search for the Rose School of Thought?

This definitely isn't Emlyn's own will… Yes, Emlyn had mentioned that some important figure of the Sanguine was meeting him… This is a new mission that the Sanguine gave him? It's very possible! However, why didn't he mention it in the Tarot Club? Oh, it was focused on the punishment operation, and he had other clues, so he temporarily kept it from us? Klein thought as he leaned forward. Under the watch of Miss Messenger's eight eyes, he took out a piece of paper and a fountain pen from his coffee table.

He wasn't curious about Emlyn's clues, because it was an obvious matter.

Since Miss Sharron knew that Emlyn was seeking out the Rose School of Thought and had asked their mutual friend, Detective Sherlock Moriarty, about this matter, it meant that this Sanguine had likely asked the help of the black market arms dealer, Ian, from the Bravehearts Bar.

This also meant that, in Emlyn's previous commissions, he must've noticed Sharron or Maric; otherwise, it was impossible for him to mention the Rose School of Thought to an ordinary person.

I don't know enough about the Apothecary pathway. I can't determine how Emlyn discovered a Wraith or Zombie… Klein crossed his right leg as he placed the letter on his thigh and began scribbling:

"This is likely a mission the Sanguine's upper echelons gave Emlyn. They hate the Rose School of Thought members who believe in the Primordial Moon, and they have directed this anger at the other factions of the Rose School of Thought…"

Upon writing this, Klein paused and added, “I suspect that the Mother Tree of Desire has the intention of encroaching onto the authority of the Moon domain, but I’m unsure why the Primordial Moon believers would join the Rose School of Thought. This secret existence seems to have a very complicated relationship with the Mother Tree of Desire. They are at odds, but they have also cooperated. It’s hard to tell…”

Putting down his pen and folding the letter, Klein looked at Miss Messenger who had been waiting. He asked with a chortle, “How did you know that I’ll be replying?”

One of Reinette Tinekerr’s heads succinctly answered, “Inkling…”

Right on the heels of that, the four blonde, red-eyed heads spoke one after another, “You…” “Seem a…” Little livelier…” “Recently…”

“Your expression…” “Has also…” “Become much…” “Richer…”

As Klein pulled out the box that was connected to his golden pocket watch, he took out a gold coin from it and said with a self-deprecating smile, “Repeatedly wearing a thick mask isn’t good for one’s mental health. I realized that after becoming a demigod.”

Therefore, unless he was in situations where he needed to disguise or hide his feelings, he limited the use of his Clown’s power to control his emotions.

Reinette Tinekerr didn’t say a word as the heads bit on the gold coin and letter before vanishing.

Watching Miss Messenger leave, Klein leaned back slightly and inwardly muttered,

I wonder if Miss Sharron and Maric will use the Sanguine to deal with the Rose School of Thought members in Backlund…

Miss Sharron is probably focusing her time and efforts on her advancement. She might not involve herself, but I can’t be sure about

Maric…

†

Emlyn changed into his Church of Earth Mother priest robes, and then wore a red coat and a silk hat before walking out the Harvest Church. He then got into a rental carriage by the roadside.

After saying his destination, he casually cast his gaze out the window.

At this moment, Emlyn sensed something as he abruptly moved his body, leaving shadowy afterimages in his wake as he moved to the side.

Then, he saw a figure appear out of nowhere.

It was a young man whose coat wasn't buttoned, revealing the white shirt and black vest within. His brown hair was a little moist and messy as though he hadn't combed it in a while. His brown eyes were filled with temperance, as though he was restraining certain urges deep within his heart.

Upon seeing this pale corpse-like face, Emlyn tipped his chin and said with a smile, showing no signs of nervousness, "You have finally come."

"Aren't you afraid that I'm a member of the Rose School of Thought that's here to finish you off?" The young man's figure turned somewhat transparent.

Emlyn scoffed and said, "Would I not be aware of the Rose School of Thought's history? Or matters about the betrayal of the temperance faction and their escape?

"Well, how do I address you?"

"Maric," the young man replied. "Is this the information you received from the upper echelons of the Sanguine?"

Emlyn was taken aback as he tsked.

"You are smarter than I thought."

He used such a remark to confirm the other party's guess.

Maric slowly drew a breath and leaned forward slightly.

"How did you notice our existence from Ian's side?"

Emlyn leisurely leaned back into the carriage and said with a smile, "Humans have the smell of humans. Wraiths have the smell of wraiths."

Maric fell silent for a few seconds before asking, "You Sanguine wish to deal with the Rose School of Thought members in Backlund?"

"The important members," Emlyn replied by making an emphasis.

"If that's the case, we can use ourselves as bait to help you fish out the Rose School of Thought members. However, I need confirmation." Maric rubbed his eyes and said directly, "I know you are unable to make the decision. You can first return to seek permission from the Sanguine. After you obtain their assurance, you know where to find us."

Having said that, he handed a dossier in his hand.

"This is from Ian. It's the initial feedback from tracking Ernes Boyar. Many bounty hunters have completed this together."

Emlyn received the dossier and nodded in a rare look of solemnity.

"Okay."

Chapter 1001 - First Movement

◆

When the Wraith in front of him was gone, Emlyn White retracted his gaze, untied the thread on the dossier, and pulled out the documents inside.

As he read through them, Emlyn had a rough idea of Ernes Boyar’s routine.

This Sanguine Viscount had a routine which was rather random-staying at home, out visiting exhibitions, partaking in wine tasting at manors in the city outskirts, shopping at department stores with female companions, or sketching female models. He was like the typical wealthy man.

However, Ernes had recently been visiting St. George Borough every other day to monitor the renovations of the furniture factory he had invested in. It was a bid to ensure that it could quickly resume work.

This way, the Sanguine Viscount’s lifestyle became repetitive. The places he visited, the paths he took, and the places he had lunch were repeated every other day.

Emlyn pressed down on his temples, seriously filtering out three venues which were suitable for the operation.

The first was inside or at the entrance of the furniture factory owned by Ernes Boyar. The second was Saint Hierländ Square where he stopped along the way home for a meal and to feed birds. The third place was Backlund Bridge. Unless Ernes was willing to take a huge detour, he had to pass by this area when traveling between his home and St. George Borough.

These three spots meet the requirement of having plenty of people, making it chaotic. However, Backlund Bridge has too few entrances and exits. With the two ends locked down, one can only leave by jumping into the river, an act only chosen by idiots… Saint Hierländ Square comes under Saint Hierländ Cathedral, core to the Church of Steam in Backlund, and even the entirety of Loen. It's akin to the second Holy See. It meets Mr. Hanged Man's suggestion. It can effectively prevent conflicts from escalating, and it can interfere with any subsequent divination and investigations… Emlyn gradually had an inclination.

And once a living being had an inclination, they would unknowingly seek more reasons to affirm their choice, and Emlyn was no exception, without a doubt. The more he thought about it, the more he was convinced that Saint Hierländ Square met almost all the requirements.

First, Ernes wouldn't stay in the area for too long. He would have lunch at a restaurant with Sivellaus cuisine since he was born in Sivellaus County.

Secondly, there were several tracked carriage stops in the vicinity, making the area filled with traffic on foot. With most of them being people from the lower or middle class, accidents often happened.

Thirdly, with it as the origin, one would enter the area south of the Bridge if one didn't head to the Backlund Bridge. It would then be closeby to the Harvest Church.

Finally, at noon, the Saint Hierländ Cathedral would spew steam, turn its levers, and chime a clock. It was inevitable for everyone's attention to be attracted.

It's confirmed… Emlyn quickly made up his mind. Raising his right hand and adjusting his bow tie, his red eyes were filled with anticipation.

At this moment, he suddenly frowned, sensing that something wasn't right.

Saint Hierländ Square was just perfect for the job!

It was so suitable that almost all the conditions were met!

Will Ernes be wary against my revenge? Why would he allow himself to stay in such an environment for such long periods of time? Even if he's stupid enough to not realize it, wouldn't the earls warn him? The corners of Emlyn's mouth curled up slightly as he understood the reason.

Saint Hierländ Square was the venue the Sanguine upper echelons had designated "for him"!

Heh… Emlyn chuckled, keeping his mouth curled.

He decided to request Mr. Fool to have a gathering for the few members and also invite Mr. Hanged Man to discuss the plan in detail!

This was different from the framework that they had previously decided upon. They needed to consider every detail and consider every problem!

At fifteen minutes to twelve, St. George Borough, Saint Hierländ Square.

In a private room on the third story of a restaurant northwest of the square.

A figure stood in front of the window, holding a cup filled with scarlet blood-like liquid. He was leisurely looking at the fountain nearby and the crowds that came and went.

He was a lanky person, wearing a formal suit meant for banquets. His light-colored hair that was nearly silver and his bright red eyes combined together to give him a sense of coquettish handsomeness. There was a constant faint smile lining his lips.

“My lord, will it really be fine? Emlyn seems to be different from before. This can be seen from his recent hunt of the Primordial Moon believers.” A middle-aged man in a dark suit walked to the window and said with some hint of worry.

The man who had been politely addressed cast his gaze at the square where Emlyn White stood. He was listening to a violinist busking on the street as he chuckled.

“Our preparations are enough even against a demigod, much less a kid who hasn’t even become a viscount.

“Besides, we don’t really plan on doing anything serious. Our only goal is to identify and make confirmations. This is a lot simpler than preventing certain people from escaping.”

As he spoke, the man with the light hair and bright red eyes raised his right hand slightly, rotating the ring on his left ring finger.

The ring was made of silver, and embedded in it was a strange gem with a ghostly-blue hue.

On a carriage driving towards Saint Hierländ Square, Ernes Boyar had his right hand over his left. He naturally rotated the ring on his ring finger that had a ghostly-blue gem embedded in it.

He casually looked out the window and saw a trackless carriage slowly drive over from afar. A paperboy slightly taller than 160 centimeters had a sling bag across his chest as he peddled his papers along the street. Quite a number of bicycles had replaced the carriages that were often seen last year. They darted through the crowds in St. George Borough.

Here, the number of workers wearing light blue or grayish-blue uniforms with hats had far exceeded the number of people in formal suits and top hats.

Ernes retracted his gaze as he chuckled. He had no fear about what would happen next. He even looked forward to

it.

He believed that he had made enough preparations.

He wore Oath of Rose on his left hand. It allowed him to share what he saw, heard, and smelled with Earl Mistral from a distance away. It made sure that nothing would go wrong while ensuring that their objective was met.

In his inner pocket where his silver pocket watch was, there was a Moon Paper Figurine. These could suffer a single lethal blow or an attack that targeted his Soul Body. It ensured that he wouldn't suffer any serious injuries or death within a short span of time.

He also wore Alcohol Nemesis, a diamond brooch. It kept him brimming with energy with lucidity in his thoughts. It raised his resistance against spells that acted on the Body of Heart and Mind.

By his waist was a belt named Moonlight Sash. It could effectively reduce Sun and Lightning damage.

These mystical items were the accumulation of Ernes's wealth or were bestowed by Earl Mistral. It made sure that Ernes was a "target" that could hardly be quickly finished off or controlled.

With the Sanguine Viscount's natural resistance against Nightmare-type influences, Ernes was nearly without weakness. Even against a demigod, he could put up a fight as long as the latter didn't reveal their Mythical Creature form.

The only problem is that the negative effects of all these mystical items are quite excessive… Ernes's facial muscles twitched, but he quickly composed himself.

The Oath of Rose would make his thoughts appear in Earl Mistral's mind from time to time. And if he kept wearing it for a week without removing it, the pair who had the matching rings might very well end up in love, regardless of gender or race.

Moon Paper Figurine was an expendable item. It had nearly zero side effects apart from making the body slightly cold.

The Alcohol Nemesis brooch's problem was that it would deal continuous damage to one's liver and brain. If it was worn for excessively long periods of time, it might result in one losing one's thoughts and logical reasoning. Therefore, one had to take it off for fifteen minutes after every half an hour of equipping it.

Once Moonlight Sash was worn, it made all senses much sharper, making it easy for one to see and hear things one shouldn't see or hear. At the same time, the wearer would feel itchy at intermittent intervals.

Let's hope they don't cower in fear and that this doesn't drag on… Ernes Boyar checked on his condition once again, casting his gaze of anticipation at the Saint Hierländ Square's entrance nearby.

On the other end of Saint Hierländ Square, Emlyn White, who was taking in the sights of the buskers on the streets, suddenly looked up at a bird that flew over.

Following that, he raised his hand to press down on his top hat. Bowing his head slightly, he briskly walked to the middle of the square, approaching the fountain.

In this process, Emlyn's figure kept moving as he mixed into the crowd.

However, this failed to avoid Earl Mistral's tracking.

This Sanguine Earl with silver hair rotated the ghostly-blue gem ring on his left ring finger and coldly said, "Take note."

At the entrance of Saint Hierländ Square, Ernes Boyar grew increasingly pumped. He knew that the operation was about to come-finally.

Emlyn still chose Saint Hierländ Square after all… Ernes cast his gaze out the window once more, warily watching the pedestrians on the street, the trackless public carriages that were about to pass him, the ordinary paperboy who was peddling his papers, and the elegant windows of the surrounding houses and shops.

He didn't believe that Emlyn's potential partners were hiding in there, because there were even more, better spots in Saint Hierländ Square that made it conducive to take action. However, he still kept up the required level of wariness.

Suddenly, his body lunged forward slightly as he nearly got out of his seat.

The carriage he was on had stopped without any warning!

Right on the heels of that, the horses that pulled the carriage seemed to be in a nightmare as they raised their front hooves, struggling wildly, flipping the carriage to the ground.

During this process, Ernes Boyar actually had ample space, time, and strength to help the carriage driver control the berserk horse. However, he didn't do so, because he saw a transparent wolf-shaped specter jump over from outside the window. It had thrown a rose within its body.

A rose!

Ernes Boyar's eyes widened as the carriage toppled.

He hurriedly jumped to the side and out the carriage as he made an illusory and incorporeal black chain extend out of the void. It wrapped around the wolf-shape specter!

With a soft poof, the wolf-shaped specter dissipated without a struggle.

And when Ernes Boyar found his footing, he stood there motionless, his eyes turbid.

He had already been pulled into a deep sleep.

In a trackless public carriage that passed him by, a black-haired, green-eyed young man wore a thin trench coat. His back was facing the middle of the street as he focused on reading a notebook with a green-bronze hardcover.

Around him, the other passengers were either reading the papers or chatting. Some were looking out only to see the berserk horse quickly recover.

With a whoosh, the black-haired, green-eyed man flipped the page of the notebook.

The trackless carriage continued forward and gradually distanced itself.

Chapter 1002 - Second Movement

◆

Saint Hierländ Square, in the northwestern corner, at the third story of a restaurant.

When the wolf specter with the rose appeared in front of Ernes Boyar, the silver-haired, scarlet-eyed Mistral retracted his gaze from Ernes Boyar. Darkness suffused from behind him as countless tiny bats flew within.

Bribe… Just as this Sanguine Earl silently muttered this single word, he “saw” the toppled carriage, “heard” the neighing of the horse, and “smelled” all kinds of smells. However, he wasn’t able to instantly find the origin of the disturbance and accident.

At this moment, his “vision” darkened as his “eyes” seemed to lose the ability to take in light. The din in his “ears” also halted!

Earl Mistral chortled inwardly as he immediately fused with the bats behind him, re-materializing beside Ernes Boyar.

Suddenly, in his black “vision,” a point of light appeared.

This point of light rapidly expanded as it grew brighter and brighter. A golden figure with twelve pairs of pitch-black wings walked out of it!

The pairs of wings spread out, blanketing Mistral’s “vision,” causing light and darkness to mix. This created mysterious and complicated symbols that didn’t differentiate themselves within the golden figure. It was both holy and corrupted, both light and dark.

_Angel!_Mistral's pupils widened slightly as he couldn't help but take a step back, terminating his previous thoughts.

†

In confusion, Ernes Boyar rapidly snapped awake when he saw a pair of limpid eyes that resembled crystalline gems or a lake. He felt a copy of the newspapers being stuffed into his hand.

In those emerald-green eyes were ripples. Deep within the emanating ripples were twirls of a vortex that seemed to suck in the soul of anyone who lay their eyes on them.

Ernes Boyar instantly became engrossed in it as he couldn't move his eyes away.

[image]

Then, he heard a gentle and ethereal female voice in his ears:

"Take this newspaper and follow Emlyn White…

"Take this newspaper and follow Emlyn White…"

This voice was layered as it resounded within Ernes Boyar's ears. It drilled into his brain, sinking deep into his heart.

Ernes Boyar nodded in a daze, sensing that there was more, but he couldn't hear it clearly.

The paperboy with a sling bag diagonally across his shoulders swiftly turned around and agilely passed through the bicycles, mixing into the crowd that came and went.

This "boy" had a pretty face as "his" messy hair drooped down and hid "his" brows. As "he" walked, "he" took off a black fishnet glove that "he" had worn at some point in time, stuffing it into "his" sling bag filled with newspapers.

As the wind blew, “his” clothes shrank as a spot on “his” exposed arm protruded out.

A few seconds later, Ernes Boyar suddenly jumped back from where he stood, doing so as though he had been trying to dodge something.

No good! I was influenced by a Nightmare’s ability! Just as he found his footing, his pupils dilated as he looked around his surroundings in a state of high alert, prepared for any impending attacks.

Although Ernes Boyar was perplexed about how easily he was pulled into a dream, he knew that it wasn’t time to consider the details. What followed next was key. He couldn’t afford to be distracted.

Ring!

A few bicycles passed him as they used their bells to warn the gentleman in the middle of the road to make way.

Ernes Boyar narrowed his eyes as he glared at him, his muscles under his clothes ready to deliver their might.

These few bicycles circled around him as the pedestrians came and went, some slowing down their footsteps and pointing their fingers.

Gong! Gong! Gong!

Twelve gongs were heard as the white steam spewed out from the chimneys of Saint Hierländ Cathedral. The holy hymns of praise resounded as the gears and levers got to work.

On the square, everyone stopped in their footsteps. At that holy moment, they either closed their eyes in prayer or were listening silently, regardless of whether they were believers of the God of Steam and Machinery or not. Only the pigeons that were being fed flew up and soared into the sky.

†

Gong! Gong! Gong!

As the gongs sounded, no one moved. Even Earl Mistral, who was inside a private room at the restaurant, stood there motionless with a heavy expression.

His "vision" had already recovered, but all he saw was workers wearing grayish-blue or light-blue clothes and bicycles of the same make. Apart from that, he discovered nothing. Furthermore, Ernes Boyar hadn't been injured at all.

Of course, he had guessed that the paperboy was problematic from the newspaper in the Sanguine Viscount's hand. However, he didn't attempt to carry out a pursuit.

Clearly, the power that had borrowed the level of an angel didn't belong to a Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder. This also meant that Emlyn White's faction had at least a demigod hidden in the vicinity. Mistral believed that once he took action, he was bound to be stopped or even incur retaliation.

In a situation of being easily detected while not knowing where his opponents were hiding, Mistral believed that it spelled trouble. Carrying out a pursuit in such cases only exacerbated the matter.

Furthermore, to the Sanguine, this was only a test. If the faction backing Emlyn had mobilized a demigod, they could detain that powerhouse thanks to Ernes Boyar's protective measures. And through Oath of Rose, Mistral could confirm the attacker's identity. They had never thought of escalating the matter into an intense conflict. In their plans, it only involved Earl Mistral stopping the other party to prevent Ernes Boyar from suffering any harm.

In the present situation, they had lost the initiative. To forcefully carry out a pursuit might highly likely result in a demigods' battle. And in Backlund, around Saint Hierländ Cathedral, this was equivalent to suicide.

Besides, to Mistral, since the other demigod hadn't personally taken action and had only provided auxiliary help, to personally take action and make a pursuit would be a loss of decorum—and an insult to his reputation as a Sanguine Earl.

_Humph! I want to see what happens next!_Mistral's facial muscles twitched as he rotated the ghostly-blue ring on his left hand once more.

†

After the twelve gongs, Emlyn started walking again. He circled past the fountain and arrived at the other end of Saint Hierländ Square amidst the landing pigeons.

He then saw Ernes Boyar, who had his back hunched slightly, afraid to even move half a step. He saw the toppled carriage, the horse that was flicking its tail, and the carriage driver who wore a look of pain.

Emlyn walked over, took out a wallet, and pulled out 100 pounds. He handed it to the carriage driver and said, "This is your compensation."

"Ah?" The carriage driver wore a blank but pleasantly surprised look.

The rental carriage wasn't his. He was only an ordinary employee. After the carriage was damaged because of the horse being startled, he experienced a brief moment of feeling the pinch. Following that, it was anxiousness and despair that ruled over his mind.

Based on the so-called contract and other similar accidents he had seen over the years, he was responsible for all of this. This meant compensation from him and, with his income and family situation, meant bankruptcy!

During that short moment, all kinds of thoughts had surfaced in the carriage driver's mind. They were mainly of three types. One was to scare the frozen gentleman and get him to pay compensation. This prevented his family from falling apart, with his children having to slave away at the factories at a young age. Another option was to immediately bring the horse to a gangster and sell it. Then, he would return home and leave Backlund with his wife and children. The last option was to arrange for his family to move from the place they rented. He would then plead with the owner of the carriage, hoping that he could repay it in installments. If the person wasn't agreeable, he would rather be thrown into jail than reimburse him a single penny.

Now, having 100 pounds suddenly hit him left his mind groggy. He was at a loss for words.

100 pounds was enough to buy a brand new rental carriage and even more!

Emlyn ignored the carriage driver and looked at Ernes.

"Everything's fine now."

Aren't you the biggest problem? How can it be fine with you here? Ernes lampooned as he rotated the ring with the ghostly-blue gem on his left hand.

For some unknown reason, he felt that he should believe Emlyn White and even approach him.

Emlyn shot a glance, suddenly turned around, and walked briskly into an alley.

Ernes subconsciously opened up his stride and followed closely behind. He kept holding onto the newspaper in hand.

The two Sanguine moved at extremely fast speeds, with one running and the other chasing. However, they didn't dare reveal anything extraordinary.

When Earl Mistral sensed that the two Sanguine were beyond the reach of his spirituality, he used the connection between the paired Oath of Rose rings to follow behind unhurriedly.

Emlyn occasionally made detours, taking shortcuts and occasionally returning to spots they had been before. It made it difficult to guess where his destination was. As for Ernes, he was like a bull having seen a red cloth. He refused to give up as he followed closely behind.

Unknowingly, the two Sanguine arrived at Rose Street which was south of the Bridge.

At this moment, Emlyn suddenly sped up. He wasn't afraid that others saw him producing after-images as he dashed right into the Harvest Church.

Ernes did the same.

Not good! From afar, Earl Mistral was just about to descend upon them to stop the subsequent developments when Ernes's figure vanished inside the Harvest Church's entrance.

Kacha!

A tile at Mistral's foot instantly shattered.

After entering the cathedral, Ernes came to a realization. He then saw a figure wearing a brown priest robe stand up at the front of all the rows of pews. He appeared like a mountain.

At the same time, the entire cathedral turned heavy as if it was a jail. It seemed to fuse with the land itself.

Ernes's mind buzzed immediately as another voice sounded in his mind:

"After you awaken from the first hypnosis, throw all the items on you to Emlyn White."

Amidst shuffling sounds, Ernes took off his sash, threw out the brooch, and slammed the various items towards Emlyn White. This included his silver pocket watch and a wallet filled with cash.

Pa!

The newspaper in his hand fell to the ground, throwing out a paper card that was stuffed within.

On the paper card was the goddess of justice sitting on a chair and holding a sword and scale.

It was the tarot card—Justice.

Chapter 1003 - Ritornello

◆

After throwing everything other than his clothes, Ernes Boyar was stunned for a moment before he snapped to his senses.

_What am I doing? What did I do?_This Sanguine Viscount finally recalled the matters he had deliberately forgotten—those pair of emerald-green, limpid eyes.

A psychological cue, no—hypnosis… Ernes Boyar looked around in anger and irresistible horror, instinctively taking in the situation he was in.

His gaze then landed on the mountain-like figure. He saw Father Utravsky with his thin and sparse brows.

Instantly, Ernes Boyar had all sorts of thoughts run through his mind and collide with one another. He quickly came up with one intense thought.

He didn’t put up any resistance, and he immediately said, “I’ll come here to do a month of volunteer work!”

Emlyn’s predicament had long been spread amongst the Sanguine in Backlund. Ernes Boyar was well aware of Father Utravsky and knew that, even if he were to put up a fight, it was difficult for him to escape the fate of doing volunteer work. He might as well surrender and choose conditions that were more beneficial to him.

At the very least, I shouldn’t have any cues planted in my mind and end up converting my faith to Earth Mother… This thought flashed through Ernes's mind. He discovered a lantern in Utravsky's hand, and inside it was a strange candle that seemed to be covered in human skin with protruding lumps.

Under the candlelight's faint illumination, Ernes's pupils widened again. He only had one thought on his mind remaining as it kept resonating:

Another psychological cue…

At that moment, he felt the gloominess thicken in his heart.

"Alright," Utravsky nodded and agreed to Ernes Boyar's request.

Emlyn held back his smugness and pleased smile. He then looked at the items he had caught, looking like a farmer who had just reaped a bountiful harvest.

†

In a private room on the third story of a restaurant northwest of the square, the lights darkened as a huge shadow appeared.

Tiny bats flew out of the darkness and quickly clumped together.

Smoke rose up as the silver-haired, scarlet-eyed Earl Mistral appeared at the spot where the bats had appeared. Everything around him had been restored to normal.

His servant, a middle-aged man in a dark formal suit immediately stepped forward and asked with a bow, "My lord, are you having your meal now?"

He couldn't tell if things had happened smoothly, or if something had gone wrong, much less about the success of the outcome from the earl's face. However, he didn't dare inquire.

Mistral nodded and said, “Yes.”

He walked to the table with a composed look, took off the ring with the ghostly-blue gem, and sat down without showing a chink in his disposition. It was as though he had headed out to feed the pigeons.

†

This rich smell is rather unique, but it’s not bad… In the private room neighboring Earl Mistral, Klein was wearing a very ordinary face as he commented on the Sivellaus cuisine delicacy—lamb tripe.

This punishment operation was an attempt by the few members of the Tarot Club—one that didn’t need The World or Mr. Fool’s interference—but considering how Miss Justice and The Moon Emlyn had zero experience in such matters and lacked experience in other matters, he had come to the area incognito as a final safeguard.

He had previously used his marionette to pray to The Fool while he entered the attached bathroom of his private room to head above the gray fog. Using the corresponding point of light, he had taken in the entire square and its surroundings.

He kept holding the Sea God Scepter the entire time, prepared to deliver a lightning strike to prevent any problems once he discovered anything amiss.

However, he ultimately didn’t do a thing. Everything happened more smoothly than he imagined.

There was no need for him to consider the experienced The Star Leonard, but Miss Justice, who was participating in such matters for the first time, had exceeded his expectations. She wasn’t nervous at all, not showing any signs of panic!

Indeed. A Sequence 6 of the Spectator pathway is far greater than Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders of the other pathways when it comes to controlling emotions. Even if she felt uneasy, she would've resolved it with her Beyonder powers before the operation… Klein nodded indiscernibly as he continued sampling the other delicacies.

Outside the window, on Saint Hierländ Square, it became filled with lively music, an eclectic mix of the flute, violin, accordion, and seven-string guitar.

†

A rental carriage was slowly circling around the perimeter of Saint Hierländ Square.

Leonard Mitchell, who was prepared to return to the north bank of the Backlund Bridge, took one look at the pigeons in the middle of the square before asking with a suppressed voice, "Old Man, what's your take regarding the outcome of this operation?"

After he pulled Ernes Boyar into a dream, he flipped Leymano's Travels and activated Angel's Embrace. He then left the scene on carriage, unsure of the subsequent developments.

In his mind, Pallez Zoroast snapped back, "In the Fourth Epoch, there's such a saying—believe in the might of deities."

This means that this matter has received the tacit approval of Mr. Fool, so it's bound to succeed? However, Old Man doesn't know much about the Tarot Club. Mr. Fool is a witness most of the time, so there's no so-called tacit approval… Leonard mumbled inwardly before diverting the topic:

"Why doesn't this saying feel complete?"

He had never informed Pallez Zoroast of the exact situation of the Tarot Club. All he did was give mention of the general situation of the Tarot Club and inform "Him" of the matters that had been approved by Mr. Fool.

Pallez chuckled and said, “Indeed. There’s also a second half of the saying: Do not trust ‘Their’ benevolence.”

Believe in the might of deities, but do not trust “Their” benevolence… Leonard repeated in silence as he looked down at the notebook with a bronze hardcover.

He then muttered wistfully, “This is really akin to a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. Furthermore, resolving its negative effects is relatively simple.”

Before this operation, consideration was given to the fact that Beyonders of the pathway involving the Moon domain, as well as the darkness, had relatively stronger resistance against Nightmare-related effects. Leonard had originally planned on borrowing Creeping Hunger from The World Klein Moretti. However, after some subsequent discussion, Miss Magician mentioned the traits of Leymano’s Travels, giving him a better option.

Hence, Klein, who was originally responsible for Angel’s Embrace, lent him Creeping Hunger for three hours. Various useful Beyonder powers were recorded, such as Bribe—Weaken.

“This is something from the Abraham family,” Pallez Zoroast said with a sigh.

Leonard had long known of this as he nodded indiscernibly. He then asked, “Old Man, do you have the means of weakening or controlling the negative effects of the mystical item I previously mentioned?”

“You call that a mystical item? That’s something that requires sealing!” Pallez first reprimanded Leonard. Then, he said, “Didn’t you say that it has a living characteristic? That makes it much easier to resolve.”

Leonard felt relieved as he cast his gaze out the window again, taking in the sight of Saint Hierländ Cathedral, which had parts resembling factories.

†

In Phelps Street, North Borough, in the vicinity of Saint Samuel Cathedral, at the entrance of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

After changing her clothes, Audrey got off a carriage like an ordinary girl.

She had already gotten rid of her paperboy attire at a hotel room that had been prepared ahead of time. And that room was reserved by someone under Emlyn's instructions. It had nothing to do with her.

At this moment, there were people coming and going at the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation's entrance, but Audrey walked over without any hesitation.

No one looked at her, as though she lived in another world.

Audrey briskly walked into the foyer, went up to the second story, and headed for the director's office. And everyone who she walked past seemed to join her in playing a game, pretending as though they hadn't seen her. They weren't puzzled about why this unfamiliar girl was inside.

Audrey was just about to enter the office when she suddenly heard a familiar voice inside:

"Miss Audrey, this is the amount of donations we have gathered this week…"

Audrey couldn't help but curl the ends of her lips as she gently nudged the ajar door and walked in.

Inside the office, a staff member was holding a stack of documents, showing it to the person behind the desk.

Sitting behind the desk was a golden retriever with a pair of gold-rimmed glasses hanging by her neck.

It sat at the director's seat, casually flipping through the documents, and said, "That wouldn't be an issue."

The staff member then took back the document and smiled at the golden retriever.

"Then, I'll take my leave, Miss Audrey."

Behind her, Audrey held back her laughter as she walked to the sofa. She silently watched the staff member leave without interrupting the golden retriever from reading the other documents.

Susie seriously read the different documents, afraid that something wrong would happen to her acting; thus, affecting Audrey's matters.

After a while, she suddenly looked around in puzzlement.

"Audrey, are you back?"

"How did you notice?" Audrey stood up from the sofa and appeared within Susie's sights.

For this operation, she had specially spoken to Susie. She got the latter to replace her at work in the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. Then, with the golden retriever in tow, she hypnotized all the staff members who would interact with her that day, making them treat Susie as Audrey.

As for any possible visitors, she told her staff that there would only be guests in the afternoon.

And the signal to snap out of the hypnosis was the cathedral bells at two in the afternoon.

Susie jumped off the chair after seeing Audrey, saying in exasperation, "It's almost two."

That's right… Audrey inwardly made a silly face as she rushed into the small lounge and changed into her clothes. She then used Lie's Flame

Controlling powers to burn her previous disguise.

After returning to her office and sitting at her seat, she felt completely relaxed. She clasped her hands together and lightly pursed her lips.

To be frank, she had always been nervous. However, she had successfully cast Placate on herself before the operation, preventing any slip-ups.

_It’s quite interesting now that I reminisce over it. We even discussed how we would compensate those who were affected… Audrey, well done!_A smile beamed on the blonde, green-eyed beauty as it grew brighter.

After this operation, she realized that her Hypnotist potion had digested by a significant amount. Furthermore, she had also confirmed one thing: The mystical item, Hand of Horror, which came with Bribe—Charm worked perfectly with Hypnosis!

Yes, I also learned that Mr. Moon’s name is Emlyn White… He didn’t bother hiding the matter, because he had to tell me. Otherwise, we wouldn’t have achieved our goals… Yes, yes. Perhaps just giving the name of the cathedral was enough, but that will still expose his identity… I’m still feeling some anxiety. I was too stiff when hypnotizing. I actually used words that were too direct during the first level of hypnosis… Audrey cast Placate on her slightly agitated feelings as she reviewed the entire operation, hoping that she could draw from the experience and lessons of today.

Gong! Gong!

Saint Samuel Cathedral’s bells chimed, indicating that it was two in the afternoon.

Many staff who were inside 22 Phelps Street at the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation had their bodies tremble after hearing it. Following that, they continued with their work as though nothing had happened.

†

Gong! Gong!

Amidst the cathedral’s bells, Klein, who had transformed back into Dwayne Dantès, once again walked to 160 Böklund Street’s balcony and took in the situation of Macht’s house.

At this moment, a carriage passed by his residence’s entrance and drove to the end of the street.

Suddenly, Klein felt his perception trigger as a scene surfaced in his mind.

A gray rat was leaning against the carriage’s window, leisurely watching the street scenery.

Chapter 1004 - Third Movement

◆ ◆ ◆

Gray rat… Klein's eyelids twitched as he didn't hesitate to turn back into his half-open room, leave the balcony, and enter the master bedroom. He then entered the bathroom.

He moved at an adequate pace, doing so as though he had been repeating this entire process like a daily routine.

Locking the bathroom's door, Klein took four steps counterclockwise and passed through the gray fog filled with ravings and roars, finally taking his seat on the high-back chair of The Fool.

And before this, he made his valet, Enuni, who was standing by the corridor, softly pray to Sea God Kalvetua.

Using the corresponding point of light, he beckoned for the Sea God Scepter and began expanding his vision. He then locked onto the carriage that was driving towards Macht's residence—39 Boklund Street.

And this time, the person leaning against the glass window and leisurely taking in the scenery was no longer a gray rat but a young man wearing a silk top hat and black trench coat.

He had black hair and black eyes. His face was thin with a broad forehead. He wore a crystal monocle and had a faint smile on his lips. He was none other than the Blasphemer, the Angel of Time, son of the Creator—Amon!

Although Klein was already mentally prepared, his anxiety made his entire body feel chilly.

Amon had clearly appeared in “His” original form, but after stealing the rat demigod’s destiny, “He” appeared as a gray rat in everyone’s eyes without incurring any suspicion.

He and his brother, Angel of Imagination Adam, had certain powers which were similar. It left terror in the mind of others the more they thought about it, but it was intrinsically different!

If not for the gray fog and not for my deeper control of this place, I wouldn’t have discovered it either… Klein felt a mix of joy and alarm as he expanded his vision to seek out Amon’s avatars.

Compared to the grafting of destiny, the signs of Parasitizing was a lot clearer.

However, Klein didn’t notice anything this time.

Be it the other passengers in the carriage, the horses that towed the carriage, or the surrounding trees and air, there wasn’t any sign of Parasitizing!

This is different from what Leonard’s grandpa said… Shouldn’t the appearance of one Amon mean the accompaniment of many more Amons? “He” is clearly aware that “He” was discovered by a Bizarro Sorcerer of the Church of Evernight, and “He” suspects that Boklund Street is under surveillance. Therefore, “He” only sent a single avatar to investigate the situation? Klein frowned as he came up with theories. He was a little unsure of how to handle the current development.

Of course, he recalled Pallez Zoroast mentioning that as long as one avatar was resolved, “He” could eliminate all the Amons in Boklund Street. And now, there was only one Amon in Boklund Street, a perfect time to take action!

I’ll first hear what the expert’s opinion is… Klein immediately conjured

The World Gehrman Sparrow's figure at the other end of the long bronze table and made him reverently and piously pray.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, please inform Leonard Mitchell that Amon has appeared at 39 Boklund Street, but there's only one…”

While Gehrman Sparrow made the prayer, Klein didn't stop monitoring the carriage. He saw Hazel in a light-colored dress alight and enter her foyer.

Amon, who was wearing a monocle and black trench coat, walked behind her with complete composure. Despite not having any concealment, the servants didn't notice him at all. It was as though there was only air or some inconspicuous creature behind Miss Hazel.

Occasionally, the female servants would look at the ground and jump in fright. Just as they were about to scream, they would forget what they were about to do after their mouths opened.

Amon passed through the foyer and walked up the stairs. Pinching the crystal monocle, Amon stuffed “His” hands into “His” pockets.

Ringed transparent worms began squirming out of “His” body as they crawled in every direction before vanishing.

This left Klein's scalp tingling. He recalled Pallez Zoroast's description of Amon's Parasitizing power: a plague-like infection!

Hazel had been in an excellent mood recently. This was because her teacher hadn't truly gone mad. Everything that happened previously was only a test, and she had passed it with flying colors.

This made her gain plenty of knowledge about the supernatural world. She learned the essence of the potions and grasped the acting method. She also gained the opportunity to advance to Cryptologist.

She was currently a Sequence 7 Beyonder!

So the world actually has such a magical side to it… I wonder when I can become a demigod and shake off my mortal coils… Hazel glanced at the hanging wall clock and rubbed her sunken tummy. She decided to get her mother to bring forward the high tea session today. After all, there weren't any guests.

At noon, she had used the excuse of heading out for a meal to bring her teacher back. She also took the opportunity to act and hadn't had anything to eat.

Upon thinking that, she glanced at her teacher who was sprawled on a leather cushion on the sofa. The gray rat had raised its front paw and pressed on its right eye.

"Do you need any food?" Hazel asked reverently.

The rat lowered its front paw and answered unhurriedly, "There's no need."

"Alright, Teacher." Hazel turned around and walked forward, opening the door to her bedroom.

Her lady's maid was standing along the corridor, leisurely looking at the balcony at the end of the corridor as though she was admiring the afternoon sky.

Hazel indiscernibly frowned and said, "Guard this place. Don't let anyone in."

The lady's maid shot one glance at her and smiled.

Yes, Miss."

Only then did Hazel leave her bedroom and head for the activity room on the second story. She found her mother, Ma'am Riana.

This lady with the same black-green hair received a pair of gem-embedded glasses with a gold chain hanging from it from her lady's maid. It was more an accessory than an eyesight-correction tool.

“Don’t tell me that you don’t like it?” Hazel asked in puzzlement.

The corners of Ma’am Riana’s mouth curled slightly.

“I like it now.”

As she said that, she wore the glasses.

As Hazel was just about to say something, she heard footsteps approaching.

She turned her head to find her father, Member of Parliament Macht, coming home early.

“Father, didn’t you say that you’d be at the Military Veterans Mess?” Hazel asked in passing.

There wasn’t anyone there today.” Macht raised his right hand and pinched the two sides of his eyes.

Hazel thought nothing of it as she nodded.

“Perfect, we haven’t had high tea together in a long time.”

“That’s right.” Member of Parliament Macht and Ma’am Riana laughed at the same time as a faint smile appeared on their lips.

At 7 Pinster Street, Leonard, who had just returned from Saint Hierland Square, threw himself onto the sofa as he lifted his feet onto the coffee table.

Having not received any “information,” he believed that the punishment operation had come to a perfect end, allowing him to look forward to the spoils of war.

“Old Man, didn’t you say that the Sanguine Viscount had many mystical items on him? Can you tell me what they are?” Leonard softly asked in puzzlement.

In his mind, Pallez Zoroast harrumphed.

“Items of that level aren’t worth my notice.”

Leonard was just about to press further when his vision suddenly blurred. He saw the boundless grayish-white fog and Gehrman Sparrow’s blurry figure, as well as his prayer.

“…Amon has appeared at 39 Boklund Street, but there’s only one…”

Amon has appeared? That quickly? Leonard, who had already relaxed, retracted his feet immediately and sat straight up. He became more anxious than before the punishment operation began.

He hurriedly informed Pallez Zoroast of Klein’s words and asked, “…Old Man, what do we do now? Begin the operation? But there’s only one Amon avatar!”

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for two seconds before saying, “If there’s only one Amon, it implies that ‘He’ has other motives, but none of that matters.

“In the Fourth Epoch, there’s a saying—there’s no point crying over spilled milk. Since it has begun, we can’t falter. If we delay this any further, Amon will attempt to influence the entire street. When that happens, ‘He’ will definitely discover Dwayne Dantes’s abnormality.”

Klein returned to the real world and walked out of the bathroom.

He had already made the corresponding preparations. He had Creeping Hunger on his left hand and an emblem carved from obsidian in his right.

Then, he made Enuni snap his fingers and use Flaming Jump to enter 39 Boklund Street—Member of Parliament Macht’s house—with the appearance of Gehrman Sparrow.

Control of the Spirit Body Threads was instantly transferred to Klein, but this only seemed to sink into the vast ocean without any reaction.

He had lost control of his marionette!

This… Klein's eyelid twitched as he heard the door to the master bedroom creak open.

It was Enuni.

This youth with Loen and Balam blood in him had pushed open the door and walked in, completely outside of Klein's control.

He then took out a crystal monocle from his pocket and rubbed it with his sleeve. Then, he leisurely wore it on his right eye.

[image]

He then looked at Dwayne Dantes, the corners of his mouth curling up.

"Found you."

The mood in the bedroom froze as Enuni, who was pinching on the monocle, continued, "Flora Jacob's destiny was filled with too many abnormalities, and they mainly came from this street. This piqued my interest, and I spent some time to distinguish and seek out the source. It took me so many days to find you.

"I'm no stranger to this mirror, and I can control it, but I've never seen it ingratiate itself so much towards one person. This really is an interesting matter. Perhaps, I should steal your destiny and see why that is the case? Ah, right. You likely do not know of its origins. It's in no way simple…"

Chapter 1005 - Fourth Movement

◆◆◆

Wearing a monocle, Amon, who wore the appearance of Enuni, didn't seem like an infiltrator or assailant. Instead, "He" appeared like a visitor as "He" eagerly mentioned all the preparations "He" had done, as well as Arrodes's origins.

"He" paused before "He" could finish "His" sentence. Dwayne Dantès opposite "Him" had turned into a dirty gray rat.

The rat raised its right claw, pressing at its eye.

At the same time, in the garden of 160 Böklund Street, with his thin and cut, black-haired, brown-eyed face, Gehrman Sparrow appeared in the middle of a bunch of roses.

Back when Amon was saying something highly enticing, "He" had secretly split off a Worm of Time in an attempt to invade Klein's body in order to Parasitize him. However, Klein had been on high alert the entire time. He detected this attempt via the changes in his Spirit Body Threads, so he rapidly created a marionette at the critical moment and swapped locations!

Silently, Amon, who looked like a mixed-blood youth, appeared in front of Klein.

Behind "Him," a twelve-ringed transparent worm fell from the third story and returned to "His" body.

And at that instant, the earthworms in the garden's soil, the insects in the woods, the rats in the shadows all crawled out, either swarming towards Gehrman Sparrow and Amon or were fleeing from this region.

The main reason why Klein had patiently listened to Amon was to use that time to create marionettes!

To a Bizarro Sorcerer, they were only complete with their marionettes!

Amon still wasn't in a rush to take action. "He" pinched the monocle embedded deep in "His" eye socket and looked around, saying with a smile, "Your actions often expose your problems. To a master of deceit, everything that you did was enough for me to detect your weakness.

"In such a tense and dangerous situation, you actually chose to convert rats, insects, birds, and earthworms into being your marionettes without considering your servants. What does this tell me? It says that you have outstanding moral standards. You still view yourself as human and are unwilling to harm them.

"Upon grasping this point, even if my avatar is inferior to you, it's still easy to break you down. You wouldn't even be capable of dying even if you wish for it.

"Ah, right. You can stop your attempts at secretly controlling my Spirit Body Threads. This is because you're controlling the Spirit Body Threads I stole. They belong to your butler, your maid, and your coachman. If this continues, I'm afraid you will feel a deep sense of guilt."

Even Spirit Body Threads can be stolen? No, it's more like grafting… Klein's expression froze slightly as he terminated his control of Amon's Spirit Body Threads.

He had been patient, allowing Amon to drone on with his drivel, mainly doing so because he was secretly trying to turn Amon's avatar into his marionette.

To a Bizarro Sorcerer, battles like this, where he stalled for time and exerted his influence in secret, should've been something he was best at and something he enjoyed the most. Unfortunately, he had encountered Blasphemer Amon, the current pinnacle existence of the Marauder pathway. Even if he was only facing an avatar, he could do nothing about "Him."

Klein actually suspected that Amon's words were a ruse, but he wasn't able to see through it. He didn't dare take the risk.

During such times, he needed the help of a Spectator!

"For you to say so much, I doubt it's solely to think of the means to Parasitize me, right? You should know that, before severely injuring me, it's very difficult to Parasitize a Bizarro Sorcerer who can see Spirit Body Threads," Klein calmly said as he wore Gehrman Sparrow's face.

Amon immediately chortled.

"You've finally noticed it."

"You're trying to steal my destiny?" Klein swapped locations with a marionette once again, constantly making his actual body appear in different corners of the garden.

"No." Amon shook "His" head, keeping "His" hands in "His" pockets while leisurely saying with a smile, "If a magic mirror like Arrodes is willing to listen to your instructions and deliberately ingratiate itself towards you, it means that you aren't as simple as I imagined. I'm not a Beyonder of the Tyrant pathway, so I wouldn't be so rash as to directly steal your destiny. Heh heh, I suddenly have a feeling that directly replacing you would result in something I don't wish to see happening."

"How did you know Arrodes is ingratiating itself? Flora Jacob's destiny shouldn't have something like that." Klein appeared on a tree.

His different marionettes continued changing their locations.

Amon pulled out one hand and pinched "His" chin and said, "Didn't I say why? I spent time to gather information and seek out the source. Oh, I went to the Church of Steam and had a chat with Arrodes. It wasn't too frank, and it was willing to be tortured by me rather than reveal your true origins. Unfortunately, that was inside the Church of Steam; otherwise, I would've directly Parasitized it and learn of everything."

Even living Sealed Artifacts can be Parasitized? If Arrodes strictly abided by the rules, based on its answers in the past, "He" isn't too sure of my actual situation and only has certain guesses… Klein's eyes widened. Just as he was about to say something, he heard Amon laugh and say, "You really don't seem to be in a rush. What are you waiting for?

"Do you not know that my pathway's Sequence 2's name is Trojan Horse of Destiny? Although I'm only an ordinary avatar, I do have some powers that I can use, such as tinkering with your destiny, making certain errors appear for a certain period of time. For instance, no one will notice it no matter how much you cry for help.

"Heh heh, that also means that, even if you were to trigger the Evernight Emblem in your hand, you will only be able to get the effects of Concealment, and you will not be able to transmit your intentions of seeking help, regardless of your prior agreements. Also, even if you were to shout for help or create an explosion, the pedestrians and servants in the room wouldn't be able to hear a thing.

"This is the reason why I was talking so much. For an ordinary avatar, certain matters take time.

"Alright, it's your turn to answer my question."

Klein didn't answer as he kept switching positions with his marionettes. However, Amon kept appearing in front of him as they continued their "conversation."

At this moment, he made one of his marionettes ask, "Since you've already completed the controlling of destiny, why aren't you taking action?

"You also seem to be waiting…"

Before this Gehrman Sparrow who was a thin "paper figurine" could finish his sentence, there was a strong gust of wind from afar.

Leonard, in a black trench coat and a black silver-inlaid cane in hand, flew to Böklund Street!

Klein, who had appeared to Amon's side, immediately said, "This is what I've been waiting for!"

As he said that, he triggered the Evernight Emblem that he had been clasping tightly.

Simultaneously, he snapped his left hand's fingers, igniting the tallest tree in the garden, making its scarlet flames soar into the sky.

And this huge, obvious bonfire, that would've been noticeable at a glance from across the street, was noticed by no one, be it the maids wiping the windows on the first story or the pedestrians strolling beneath the Intis parasol trees. Even in midair, Leonard Mitchell ignored this scene, rushing for 39 Böklund Street at high speeds.

And at this moment, Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice sounded in this Red Gloves's mind:

"Turn back. Head to Unit 160."

"…"

Although Leonard was puzzled, his experienced self didn't ask why when it came to supernatural matters. He immediately swung the direction Word of the Sea pointed and changed directions.

In the garden of 160 Böklund Street, Amon raised "His" head as "He" pressed the crystal monocle on "His" right hand, chuckling.

“This is also what I’ve been waiting for.”

“He” ignored Gehrman Sparrow as his smile grew obvious. He continued speaking in irresistible delight, “To be able to discover the abnormalities of fate in this region…

“It’s ‘Him,’ Pallez!”

As “He” spoke, this Blasphemer changed “His” actions and adjusted “His” monocle.

At this moment, a strange gloom fell over the entire street. It was as though the entire place had been separated from reality, turning into a secret.

In the activity room of 39 Böklund Street, Hazel looked out the window and muttered in puzzlement, “Is it about to rain?”

This wasn’t anything important, so she retracted her gaze and reached out her hand onto the three-layered tray for high tea.

Then, she saw her father, Member of Parliament Macht, strangely open his right palm.

Glimmers of light condensed out of thin air, forming into a crystal monocle in his palm.

Macht then wore this monocle on his right eye.

This… Hazel had already sensed something amiss as she frantically looked at the others in the room.

Her mother, Ma’am Riana, took off the accessory on her nose and wore a monocle that she had taken out of somewhere. The servants standing beside her all took out a similar monocle and wore it on their right eye.

Thud!

Hazel stood up instinctively as she retreated repeatedly, toppling the chair over in the process.

This sound alarmed everyone in the room. Macht, Riana, and the servants turned their heads to look at Hazel.

Bit by bit, a smile suffused the corners of their lips.

“Ah!”

Hazel broke down as she let out a shrill scream.

This scream passed through the house and through the garden, drawing the attention of the pedestrians on the streets. At this point, Amon had already lowered “His” right hand from his monocle. Looking at the figure in midair, “He” said with a smile, “Pallez, it’s already 1350 of the Fifth Epoch. The technique of relying on the gathering of avatars to raise one’s level is already outdated.”

Behind “Him,” Klein didn’t waste any time as he reached into his pocket as though he was drawing a gun while he made Creeping Hunger turn transparent. A transparent book condensed in front of him.

However, Amon simply raised his hand and the glove vanished.

However, along with the human-skinned glove’s disappearance, Gehrman Sparrow also did.

Pa!

Landing in Amon’s palm wasn’t a glove but a rat, a rat that had died after becoming a marionette.

On the other side of Amon, Klein, who wasn’t wearing a hat but was wearing a shirt and vest, appeared. He then threw out the item he had previously taken out, and he threw it at his target.

It was a paper crane.

Chapter 1006 - Finale and Ending

◆

It was an ordinary paper crane, bursting into scarlet red flames just as it flew out, scattering ashes in the process.

Amon, who had been looking up into the sky, suddenly turned “His” head and looked at the paper crane who was a vessel of flames. “He” then raised His” palm again.

A cold glint had lit up in the eye beneath the monocle.

Suddenly, the flames on the paper crane’s surface vanished. Klein and his ability to swap locations with his marionette vanished. Likewise for Flame Controlling, Flaming Jump, and Air Cannon!

In that instant, he had six Beyonder powers stolen—four of which were rather important ones!

If Amon was able to make a few more thefts, then Klein might’ve even turned into an ordinary person.

This was “Theft” at the angel level!

Amidst the extinguishing flames, the paper crane slowly floated.

Backlund, Dr. Aaron’s house, in a black pram.

Wrapped in silver silk, Will Auceptin rubbed his mouth and eyes, grumbling, “Life is just so hard…”

Before “He” finished “His” sentence, “He” took out what looked like a cane from somewhere. It was embedded with clear gems.

Pure bright light lit up, illuminating the calendar in the room clearly.

Today was Tuesday[1].

160 Boklund Street, inside Dwayne Dantes's garden.

The paper crane which was already charred and incomplete suddenly froze in midair. Complicated chrome-colored symbols appeared out of it, instantly taking on the form of a huge, illusory, scaleless snake.

The dense patterns and symbols on the surface of the gigantic silver snake formed a wheel that was connected to each other. Around each wheel were different symbols.

With a sweep of the cold, bright red eyes, this giant serpent soared into the sky and stayed above Boklund Street. It curled its body and bit its own tail.

Its shadow blanketed the entire street like a mysterious and ludicrous wheel.

Suddenly, Macht, Riana, and several servants in 39 Boklund Street's activity room wiped the smiles from their faces. They raised their hands in unison, taking off the monocle on their faces, allowing the monocles to turn incorporeal in their hands before transforming into beams of light.

Immediately following that, they wore their eye accessories once again and pinched their eye sockets, either leisurely looking out the window or returning to their former state.

Hazel sat on the ground watching this scene. As she shook her head, feeling the world crumbling around her, she used her hands to hold her body up while rapidly retreating.

The cold glimmer in Winner Enuni's eyes vanished. The crystalline monocle was left cooked, and he no longer wore that supercilious look.

In addition, something in his body seemed to be extracted as a clear, thick, but transparent and mysterious Worm of Time took form above his head.

And amidst Concealment, this Worm of Time quickly transformed into a figure with black hair, black eyes, a broad forehead, and a thin face.

This wasn't time reversing itself on Boklund Street, because Klein and Leonard didn't suffer any of its effects. It was Amon having "His" condition return to a few minutes prior to this!

Snake of Fate. Reboot!

Although Will Auceptin had predicted that there would be some changes in Fate, things had happened slightly later. However, "His" influence that descended from afar came in such a timely fashion.

In order to gain this Snake of Fate's help, Klein had not only fed "Him" five different flavors of ice-cream, but he had also agreed to further compensation. The outcome of their negotiation was that Klein had to think of the means to create at least two items that could allow Will Auceptin to briefly regain some of "His" strength while in "His" weakened state!

[image]

When Amon suffered this unexpected blow, Klein didn't hesitate and drew Death Knell. He cocked it, gently pushed the cylinder, and aimed it at his enemy.

Bang!

He staidly and decisively pulled Death Knell's trigger, shooting out the Control Spirit Bullet he had long prepared.

A black stream of light flashed out, striking the illusory Amon figure with the sharp bonnet and classic black robe—the Worm of Time. This was even thicker and clearer than all the Worms of Time Klein had previously seen before!

The light scattered as Amon's figure quivered in midair and froze without being able to wear any expression.

And at this moment, Leonard, who had already arrived overhead, followed Old Man's instructions. Standing on Word of the Sea, he floated in midair, slightly spread out his arms, and relaxed his Spirit Body.

Both his green eyes immediately reflected a slightly gloomy, twelve-ringed transparent Worm of Time in each one of them.

These two Worms of Time had their heads and tails connected together, forming a similar loop.

As the loop slowly spun, they projected a huge ancient mottled illusion behind Leonard.

This illusion looked like the surface of a wall clock carved from stone. There were twelve segments, each segment was either grayish-white or bluish-black. They were clearly demarcated from each other, and the symbols were all different. With just one look, Klein had the feeling that life was speeding past him.

Gong!

A bell gong that seemed to travel across time from ancient history resounded through the spacious secret world. Everything before Klein seemed to slow down, including the Amon figure above Enuni.

An indescribable invisible surge appeared, sweeping around that Amon figure before hurling it towards that huge, illusory stone-carved wall clock.

What was actually a Worm of Time—Amon's avatar with a monocle—

suddenly extended a hand, aiming it at Gehrman Sparrow.

Suddenly, Klein saw the skin on the back of his hand rapidly dry up as they wrinkled up, producing unobvious aged spots.

The speed at which Amon's illusory figure was being pulled away slowed down, but the process couldn't be interrupted. Finally, it contracted into the form of a ringed worm and was thrown towards the illusory, ancient stone- carved wall clock behind Leonard.

Gong!

Another bell gong sounded as the grayish-white and bluish-black clock's surface had an additional mottled hand.

This hand quickly rotated a few segments, speeding up the sound of the gongs.

Inside 39 and 160 Boklund Street, all kinds of resplendent glimmers of light flew out, pulled and attracted by that ancient, illusory, stone-carved wall clock.

Law of Beyonder characteristics convergence!

"He" had used the connection between the avatars and "His" higher level to strengthen the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence!

Gong!

Several streams of light from different spots in Backlund flew over.

After everything calmed down, Klein's current appearance appeared in his mind.

He had more white hair than black. His forehead and the corners of his mouth and eyes were covered with obvious wrinkles. His skin had sagged with several aged spots. He looked like an elderly gentleman, ready to pass away at any moment.

At this moment, the clock's gonging sounded again.

The grayish-white hand on the ancient, illusory stone-carved wall clock began spinning counterclockwise!

One tick. Two ticks. Three ticks. Klein saw his skin rapidly recover its luster as the spots faded and vanished.

In just seconds, he recovered his original appearance. Life had seemed to begin flowing in him again.

Powers at the angel level are almost godlike… I only suffered some repercussions of it, and I nearly died of old age… I wonder if I can revive under such conditions… Klein observed his condition and hurriedly look up and said to Leonard Mitchell, "How should the people Parasitized by Amon be rescued?"

At this moment, the ancient, illusory clock behind Leonard rapidly faded away, turning into glimmers of light that drilled back into his body.

Leonard cocked his head slightly as though he was listening to something. After a while, he said, "The Beyonder characteristics of the Worms of Time in them have been sucked out. The remaining parts have either been absorbed or have some remnants left behind. However, it wouldn't result in having an excessive influence on them. Uh, Old Man said that it won't be excessive, but it might be from the viewpoint of an angel. In short, they can pray to the deities they believe in and see if they can obtain a complete purification. However, without them explaining what exactly happened, the deities might not give a response. If you're afraid of any remnant effects, you can consider guiding them to pray to… uh, that existence. All the items that come from that will be yours."

Perhaps having personally "experienced" a battle at the angel level, and having seen the Snake of Fate's spectral form, Leonard's agitation and trembling could hardly be suppressed in an instant.

The people on this street are basically the believers of the Goddess, so how can I get them to pray to The Fool? I don't wish to be thrown into the foggy town… Uh, the Goddess is very aware of this matter. They will likely receive a response if they were to pray to "Her." Then, I can get Her Eminence Arianna to return the Worms of Time that they cough out to me… Uh, I can give "Her" some… As Klein's thoughts raced, he secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

He then asked in passing, "Will there be any side effects after a complete purification?"

Although he had some experience from Little Sun, this youth of the City of Silver wasn't an ordinary person.

After listening for a moment, Leonard said, "A little. As it's a deeper level of Parasitizing, even if ordinary people were to experience a full recovery, there will be some level of influence left on them, such as them liking to wear monocles."

"…Alright. Head back first. Leave the rest to me." Klein nodded and was glad that the parties involved in this battle weren't the kinds with obvious destructive might. Otherwise, it might not only be Boklund Street, but all of North Borough might not be left intact.

In Pritz Harbor, a black-haired, black-eyed, thin-faced young man wearing a monocle rode on a bicycle as he leisurely returned home.

[image]

He wore an obvious smile as he opened the letterbox and took out the newspapers and letters inside.

After entering the house, the young man pinched the monocle on his right eye while tearing open the letters, reading their contents as he walked. This continued until he found a letter without any name on it.

"If all connection to 'us' in Backlund is lost, it means that Pallez Zoroast might very well be hidden in the vicinity of North Borough's Boklund

Street.

“Don’t ask us why we’re taking such risks. Life often requires some excitement, joy, and anticipation.”

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Author’s Note: To make the plot run smoothly, the details of a Tarot Gathering was skipped. As for Will’s prediction, a deviation happened because of Amon’s ability to bore through fate.

Chapter 1007 - Dealing With The Aftermath

On 160 Böklund Street, after watching Leonard fly out of the world of Concealment with the Word of the Sea in one hand, Klein turned his attention back onto his surroundings.

He first observed Winner Enuni. He originally imagined that he couldn't use the marionette that had been Parasitized by Amon, but to his surprise, he realized that he could control his Spirit Body Threads again!

This… Klein was first stunned before he came to a realization.

When Snake of Fate Will Auceptin used Reboot to reverse Amon's condition in time, it also made the things "He" Parasitize experience similar changes. Hence, Enuni had turned back into his marionette!

As expected of the strongest power of a Monster pathway's Sequence 1… Klein heaved a sigh of relief before allowing his figure to fade away from where he stood.

He "Teleported" back to his master bedroom, leaving a bunch of marionettes around to defend against any accidents.

Right on the heels of that, Klein entered the bathroom and headed above the gray fog. He used Enuni's prayer light and began observing the entire street with the Sea God Scepter in hand.

Without a doubt, his focus was on his residence and Unit 39. He found

Butler Walter, Housekeeper Taneja, Member of Parliament Macht, Ma'am Riana, and many servants having remnant signs of being Parasitized. They appeared somewhat in a daze.

As for Hazel, she was on the brink of total collapse. Her hands were on the ground, having pushed herself backwards into the corner. Her back was leaning close to the wall as she huddled into a ball, trembling.

Macht and company had noticed something wrong with her. They surrounded her in concern, hoping to know why.

However, Hazel would scream loudly whenever they attempted to approach her. She would resist violently, so all they could do was stand meters away, wearing a panicked and helpless look.

During this process, they would, from time to time, nudge their glasses or pinch their eye sockets. This only served to leave Hazel even more horrified. She appeared to be on the brink of losing control.

Klein felt horrified when he saw this scene above the gray fog. He imagined a scene:

Daddy Amon, Mommy Amon, Maid Amon, Footman Amon were circling around Hazel, trying to soothe her nerves but were helpless. They wore the same expression and the same monocle with different clothes.

Even if Hazel were to hold out and not lose control, she would definitely develop mental problems. At the very least, she would be in a half-crazy state… Klein's thoughts raced as he lowered the Sea God Scepter and returned to the real world.

Böklund Street and the several streets remained enshrouded in darkness. It exuded a serene, tranquil, and profound feeling.

This was a world that had already turned into a "secret."

Klein took down a hat, wore it on his head, and "Teleported" to a director’s office in 22 Phelps Street—Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

Audrey had already changed into a light-green dress and was daydreaming with a fountain pen in hand, reminiscing over every detail of the punishment operation in the afternoon. Susie, on the other hand, had gone out for a stroll.

Suddenly, this noble lady sensed something and looked up.

A black-haired, brown-eyed, thin-faced figure with cut facial features was rapidly reflected in her emerald, limpid eyes.

This figure wore a white shirt, black vest, black trousers, and black leather boots. He had a cold expression, his body was bent slightly as he held one hand over his top hat.

Audrey was first taken aback before she recalled who this person was.

Gehrman Sparrow!

Although she had never met him before, she had already seen his extremely lifelike picture on the papers and wanted posters.

Klein realized that he hadn’t changed back to Dwayne Dantès based on Miss Justice’s reaction. However, he wasn’t too mindful of that. He released his hand from his top hat and straightened his body. He said with a nod, “There’s something that requires your help.”

His disguise had also been stolen by Amon. But after a Reboot, it was returned to him. He just didn’t have the time to change back into Dwayne Dantès.

Mr. World, who’s already a demigod, needs my help? He’s in need of therapy because of some mental problem? No, it doesn’t seem to be the case… Audrey pursed her lips as she put down her fountain pen in anticipation and curiosity. She stood up and gave a serious reply:

“No problem.”

Klein didn't waste any time and walked over. Grabbing her by the arm, their figures faded away as they vanished from the spot.

Instantaneously, they appeared outside the activity room at 39 Böklund Street.

This is "Teleportation? Audrey's eyes turned slightly as she instinctively wanted to ask something. However, when she felt the heavy atmosphere and the screams, her face immediately wore a solemn look.

"There's a patient?" she asked without much doubt.

It's really easy to talk to a Spectator. There's no need for much explanation… Klein tersely acknowledged and said, "Yes, she encountered a supernatural incident and suffered a terrible fright. She's on the brink of losing control.

"Do you have the means to not be seen by the people inside?"

There was no need for him to say his last sentence, as a large-scale illusion was enough to resolve the problem. Furthermore, after receiving the blessings of Concealment, ordinary people likely didn't retain much of their corresponding memories. However, after witnessing Adam's powers of invisibility, Klein was rather curious if Miss Justice had such skills at Sequence 6.

_Mr. World is feeling curious… That's really rare… He doesn't seem to be wearing a thick mask and has changed to a thinner one. He's a really good patient who heeds medical advice…_Audrey's chin moved slightly as she nodded.

"Yes."

As she spoke, she glanced at Gehrman Sparrow who reached out for the handle and pushed open the door after receiving her response.

Member of Parliament Macht and Ma'am Riana completely ignored this beautiful girl as they discussed in a panic about hiring a doctor. As for Hazel, she remained curled in a corner, trembling vigorously like an abandoned baby animal.

“Miss Hazel…” As a senior Spectator, Audrey didn’t have the problem of forgetting others.

She observed Hazel’s condition and frowned slightly. She turned her head and said to Gehrman Sparrow, “Uh, Mr. Sparrow, can you briefly explain what she encountered?

“Only with sufficient knowledge can I quickly resolve the problem.”

Klein was already prepared as he quickly and succinctly explained, “She’s a Beyonder of the Marauder pathway, a student of a demigod who had nefarious thoughts. Her teacher attracted Blasphemer Amon’s avatar and ended up getting herself killed, her destiny and identity were stolen.

“As such, Amon infiltrated her family, Parasitizing her parents and servants. Just now, while we were eliminating Amon’s avatars, she realized that her parents and servants had all turned into Amon. Uh, she didn’t know that ‘that’ was Amon, but she understood that it was a strange existence.

“If you have anything you wish to understand at a deeper level, things which do not involve the psychological treatment, you can always ask during the next gathering.”

Blasphemer Amon? Mr. World and company have eliminated Amon’s avatar again, no—avatars? Audrey was somewhat shocked as she instinctively glanced at Macht and company. She couldn’t imagine that they had once been Parasitized by Amon and had turned into “Him.”

To have everyone Parasitized… Audrey recalled Mr. World’s words and felt more afraid the more she thought about it. She felt her entire body turn cold as she couldn’t help but think of herself if she were in Hazel’s shoes.

This left her somewhat stifled as she subconsciously cast Placate on herself.

“Is the supernatural world always this cruel and terrifying, or is it just occasionally?” After calming down, Audrey muttered softly.

She didn’t wait for The World Gehrman Sparrow’s reply, because from what she had seen at the Tarot Gathering, she knew the answer very well: Always!

Looking back at Hazel, Audrey walked over, filled with pity. She crouched down and first used Placate.

Hazel looked up blankly and saw a perfect, flawless face, as well as that pair of emerald-like eyes.

At that instant, she seemed to return to the ball of that previous night, having witnessed this lady “descend” like an angel.

She instantly calmed down. She saw ripples rise up in that pair of limpid, green eyes. They were serene, calm, and deep.

“There’s no need to be afraid. Calm down. Everything is already over…” Audrey used Hypnosis to directly communicate with Hazel’s Body of Heart and Mind. She heard hysterical screams and the horror that was taller than mountains and deeper than the ocean.

Taking into account Hazel’s condition and encounter, she quickly came up with a plan for treatment. She directly Hypnotized Hazel and made her forget today’s encounter and the existence of her teacher. She was only capable of vaguely remembering her identity as a Beyonder and other general knowledge.

Hazel gradually calmed down before she slowly fell asleep.

“After you awaken, that terrifying experience will no longer exist, and I was never here.” Audrey used a gentle voice to complete the last step of the Hypnosis.

Following that, she slowly got up and observed Hazel for a few seconds.

She pursed her lips and whispered without turning her head, “I made her temporarily forget the corresponding memories, but that memory remains. It’s just hidden deep down. In future gatherings, I’ll continue treating her, guiding her to slowly remember and accept this memory. Only then can her mental problem be completely resolved. Otherwise, perhaps a familiar action or sentence will jolt her awake. She will then break down once again, and perhaps it will result in a direct loss of control.”

Miss Justice is becoming more and more professional… Klein sighed as he asked cautiously, “Then you will have to Hypnotize all the people who were Parasitized. They are not to show any hobbies that don’t originally belong to them, like the wearing of monocles.

“Also, let them pray to the Evernight Goddess after fifteen minutes to obtain complete cleansing and purification.”

Audrey nodded with abnormal seriousness.

“No problem.”

Klein immediately stood to the side, watching this noble lady “cue” everyone who had been Parasitized in this house with the greatest feelings of pity.

Chapter 1008 - Splitting

* * *

Minutes later, Klein—with the face of Gehrman Sparrow—walked out of 39 Böklund Street with Miss Justice Audrey and headed for places where the other Parasite victims were.

After a few silent steps, Klein suddenly looked ahead and said, “It’s not rare to see such matters happen among unaffiliated Beyonders. Without any suitable guidance, it often implies that they’re constantly dancing at the edge of a cliff with the possibility of falling at any time.”

Audrey tersely acknowledged and said after a few seconds, “I know. Compared to before, I’m not as… not as…”

She deliberated for a moment before breaking into a grimacing smile, as though she had found a suitable adjective she required to mock herself.

“Naive.”

Phew… She then exhaled without hiding it as she looked ahead. “If I had known that the mysterious world was so cruel and terrifying last June, I might not have raised the request of becoming a Beyonder.”

Klein turned his head slightly and took a look at the noble lady’s face. He asked in a seemingly casual manner, “If I were to give you the chance now to completely leave the mysterious world, would you accept it?”

Audrey was taken aback as she slowly pursed her lips and said, “No…”

After giving such a response, she seemed to relax a little as she smiled and continued, “Under the premise of knowing how cruel and terrifying the mysterious world is, the me from last June would’ve given up being a Beyonder. But the me of this year wouldn’t.

“This might be the price of growing up.”

“I understand what you’re getting at.” Klein continued forward at the same pace as he said, “After those victims are completely purified, a number of them will spit out Worms of Time. They can be used to create Fate Siphon charms. It’s a demigod-level item that can switch the fate between two parties for a short period of time. When the time comes, I’ll give you one as payment for today’s treatment.”

Audrey was about to decline it before she fell silent again. She then nodded gently and said, “Okay.”

Just as she said that, she suddenly paused. She turned her head to glance at Gehrman Sparrow and smilingly said with a mixed expression, “I know why you just asked me that question.”

Klein chuckled without giving a direct answer.

Audrey retracted her gaze and immediately felt a lot better. She asked as though they were having a chat, “I participated in the punishment operation at noon, and I dealt with the Amon aftermath in the afternoon. Today is really a ‘Tarot Day’…”

Her words were a double entendre as she said with utmost wistfulness.

From her point of view, noon was a cooperative operation that involved five members—The Moon, The Star, Judgment, Justice, and The Magician—with different levels of involvement. In the afternoon, the Tarot Club’s The World and Justice had involved themselves in the elimination of Amon’s avatars in different ways. This was indeed a day to remember, and in a sense, it could be considered a “Tarot Day.”

Klein nodded in agreement at Miss Justice’s words, but he didn’t tell her that The Star Leonard had also been involved in the afternoon operation. Furthermore, he was the main force in the operation.

"Amon's avatar must've been difficult to deal with, right?" Audrey finally found an opportunity to raise the question.

She stared at Gehrman Sparrow, making no attempt to hide the curiosity in her green eyes.

Klein smiled.

"If I had done it alone, you wouldn't be seeing Gehrman Sparrow, but Amon here instead."

"Having your destiny and identity stolen?" Audrey asked in enlightenment.

Klein tersely acknowledged.

"We'll discuss the specifics in the future. In short, to eliminate all of the Amon avatars in Backlund this time, we had mobilized angels.

"If you were to encounter Amon's avatars in the future, never believe that you have the means to handle 'Him' alone. Immediately find an opportunity to seek help. Yes, 'His' trait is the wearing of a monocle. He enjoys pulling off harrowing pranks…"

Angels were mobilized… I wonder if it was that Death Consul or the angel from the Fate domain, or… Audrey looked up at the sky and saw the clouds frozen in midair. They appeared like props under the dark background.

Like an attentive student listening to a teacher, she seriously nodded and said, "I will keep that in mind."

The two continued walking, occasionally silent, occasionally breaking out into a conversation until they entered 160 Böklund Street.

After a few minutes, inside the activity room of Hazel's house.

Macht and company suddenly had the strong urge to sit in their seats, raise their hands, and place their clasped hands before their mouth. They then began to piously pray and chant the Evernight Goddess's honorific name.

After an unknown period of time, they coughed in unison until their tears and snot flowed out.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

Without realizing it, they separately coughed out worms with twelve translucent rings.

The moment these worms fell to the ground, they vanished without garnering any notice.

Similar things happened in other places of Böklund Street, but everything was quickly restored to normal. And the darkness had faded away at some point in time as the clouds began churning again from the sweeping winds.

Amidst her parents' coughing, Hazel slowly regained consciousness. She was puzzled as to how she fell asleep on the sofa during high tea.

She felt that she should've been in an excellent mood, but she just couldn't bring herself to smile. She felt as though there was a feeling of indescribable sadness and pain bearing over her heart.

Upon seeing her parents' concerned gaze landing on her, not only wasn't she touched, she even felt a little fearful. She trembled like an introvert who wasn't accustomed to making contact with others.

Hazel knew that this wasn't her personality, but she couldn't control herself.

However, she didn't find it weird or puzzling as she continued enjoying the high tea pastries.

Macht and Riana felt the same. They had a nagging feeling that there was something hazy about their memories, but they just couldn't recall what.

†

160 Böklund Street. In the master bedroom which had its curtains drawn.

A figure suddenly outlined itself across the coffee table. It was the barefooted Arianna—leader of the ascetics, matron of the Evernight Cloister, head of the thirteen archbishops of the Church of Evernight. She was wearing a spartan robe with tree bark as her belt.

In the lady's eyes, the gray sideburned Dwayne Dantès was about to leave the sofa. On the coffee table in front of him were nine transparent ringed worms.

"Good afternoon, Ma'am Arianna," Klein said with a solemn bow. "Thanks to your help, Amon's avatars in Backlund have all been eliminated. You can choose a portion of these spoils of war."

He had previously prepared a marionette beside every person who had been Parasitized, and he used an Illusion to bring these Worms of Time back.

After hearing him, Arianna tapped her chest four times in a clockwise fashion and replied in a pious manner, "Praise the Lady."

"She" didn't decline the offer or stand on ceremony. She reached out her right hand, and two Worms of Time flew up and landed in her palm.

"Amon must have certain guesses about this. You still have to be careful in the future," Arianna said simply before her figure vanished inch by inch as though she had been erased.

Watching this archbishop leave, Klein sat down and picked up a pen and paper, writing to Leonard Mitchell.

He wanted to ask what other effects the Worms of Time had other than creating Fate Siphon charms!

He believed that he couldn't turn all the remaining Worms of Time into Fate Siphon charms, as it would be too monotonous. It made it easy to be countered, and it prevented him from handling different situations. Therefore, he had to consider other possible uses.

With the Worm of Time as a vessel, he could use the powers stirred from other symbols, patterns, and labels that differed from The Fool. This would likely result in different effects from the Fate Siphon charm. And this was something Pallez Zoroast was an expert at.

After writing his letter, Klein took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew at it.

Reinette walked out of the void with the four blonde, red-eyed head in hand. The eight eyes paused before looking at the remaining seven Worms of Time on the coffee table.

Miss Messenger looked at it for three full seconds before retracting "Her" gaze. She then bit on the letter and gold coin which Klein handed over.

"Still 7 Pinster Street," Klein succinctly said.

Reinette Tinekerr's remaining three heads replied, "In the future…" "You…" "Can seek…" "My help…" "In such…" "Matters…"

"The payment…" "Will be the…" "Spoils of war…"

Klein was taken aback as he said, "Alright."

After Miss Messenger returned to the spirit world and vanished from his room, he frowned and muttered, Since she can recognize the Worms of Time, it means that she knows that this battle might have escalated to the level of angels…

She wasn't afraid at all…

Miss Messenger is stronger than I imagined?

†

7 Pinster Street. Leonard received Klein's letter from Reinette Tinekerr's mouth.

He still felt a hint of excitement as he eagerly unfolded the letter and read it.

After the messenger left, he immediately asked with a suppressed voice, "Old Man, there should be other ways to create charms, right?"

Just now, Pallez Zoroast had given him two Worms of Time from Amon as today's reward for the risk he took.

In Leonard's mind, the slightly-aged voice replied with a smiling tone, "Of course, once I sleep for a while and digest what we received this time, I'll teach you. It wouldn't take too long. Also, do not go to Böklund Street any time soon."

"Why?" Leonard asked in surprise.

Pallez Zoroast chuckled and said, "All of Amon's avatars in Backlund have been eliminated, and it is in no way a trivial matter. The number of people who can do that is just a handful. So, do you think 'He' will have some guesses?"

This… Leonard's nerves tensed up again.

Pallez continued, "However, there's no need to be too worried. 'His' true body wouldn't be able to enter Backlund, and having recovered quite significantly, I don't have to be too worried about 'His' avatars. In addition, I've found a piece of information from Flora Jacob from 'His' memory fragments. Somewhere in Backlund hides the treasure of the Jacob family.

“We shall wait until the end of the year for the gathering. There, we will seek out and cooperate with the other descendants of the Jacob family to excavate that treasure trove to share the items inside. When that happens, even if Amon gathers a large number of avatars, raising it to almost the level of a Sequence 1, there’s no way he can truly defeat me. Heh heh, to ensure balance, Dwayne Dantès can also be involved in it.”

Chapter 1009 - Payment Is Always Exacted for What's Bestowed

◆

Leonard immediately felt very relieved when he heard Old Man Pallez.

He cast his attention back to the angel-level battle that happened in the afternoon and asked rather curiously, “Which pathway’s angel does that giant serpent phantom belong to?”

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a moment before saying with a sigh, “Snake of Fate. The councilor of the Life School of Thought. A Sequence 1 angel.

“I never expected ‘Him’ to join them…”

Councilor of the Life School of Thought? “He” has also become a Blessed of Mr. Fool? The corresponding card is the Wheel of Fortune? Leonard’s eyes widened as he realized that Mr. Fool’s faction seemed comparable to the seven orthodox Churches. It was truly unfathomable.

Death Consul… Snake of Fate… Incomplete messenger… There are three angels under Mr. Fool… It’s no wonder Klein was able to become a demigod so quickly… Just how long has it been and I’ve already been embroiled in a battle at the angel level. It’s really unimaginable how things will develop in the future… Leonard held the letter and sat on the sofa. He felt another sense of urgency towards digesting his Soul Assurer potion and advancing to Spirit Warlock.

He had been busy placating the souls in the Backlund region recently, but due to the numerous missions, he was still far from completing them. He couldn’t find an excuse or opportunity to visit Tingen City to steal the powers from that drop of the Eternal Blazing Sun’s blood. Furthermore, the arrival of Amon’s avatars had been quicker than he had expected.

South of the Bridge, Rose Street, Harvest Church.

Emlyn White, who had changed into a brown priest robe, stood in front of a long table with candle stands. He watched Ernes Boyar working hard at wiping the altar before he raised his right hand and casually pointed.

To the side. Left side. That spot’s dirty.”

Ernes Boyar, who also wore the clergyman attire of the Earth Mother, shot an angry look at Emlyn, but he still listened to his instructions and re-wiped the area he hadn’t wiped seriously.

“I know you’re very mad. It’s how I felt when I learned that you deliberately hid key information from the ancient castle intel you sold me,” Emlyn said with a smile, completely unfazed by his glare. “Also, I forgot to inform you. I’m also a viscount. It happened last week.”

Sanguine Viscounts corresponded to the Moon pathway’s Sequence 5 Scarlet Scholar. The advancement ritual required the illumination of the full moon. Apart from that, one had to gather different metals, gems, and Beyonder creature blood that represented the different moon phases. It was rather complicated.

However, Emlyn had long obtained the promise from the Sanguine upper echelons that a free advancement ritual would be held for him. He could advance easily once the full moon came.

As for the digestion of Potions Professor, he had completed digesting it without putting too much effort into it. This was because he often taught commoners who were willing to learn at the Harvest Church to learn about herbs and medicine, and even combinations of some special potions. And apart from usually collecting dolls, researching history, and doing volunteer work at the cathedral, he loved thinking about the different potions and considering how they could be used in different battle situations.

"…You're a viscount?" Ernes Boyar abruptly stood up straight as he wore a flabbergasted look.

Among the Sanguine, as they were all long-lived, they had quite a huge population. The number of Beyonder characteristics was limited, so advancing was a very difficult endeavor. One had to be in a long line before they had the opportunity to advance. However, Emlyn White had only been a Baron for half a year!

Ernes remembered that it took him six years to go from Baron to Viscount. This was because his father had suffered an attack from Artificial Vampires. His passing left him the inheritance.

"Of course." Emlyn's smug smile grew obvious, but he remained restrained. "I obtained a Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristics from Artificial Vampires."

Ernes Boyar looked at Emlyn, momentarily at a loss for words. He felt that he had suffered a heavier blow than needing to do volunteer work at the Harvest Church.

Your expression is rather interesting." Emlyn tsked and said, "Perhaps one day, you'll have to address me as lord when I become an Earl."

"Preposterous! What arrogance!" Ernes blurted.

I'm already very humble. I didn't mention I would become a Duke or even a Princeps… How am I to be the Sanguine's messiah without being an angel? Besides, in our Tarot Club, Mr. World has already advanced to become a demigod. Ma'am Hermit won't take much longer. This will definitely be a club filled with demigods… Emlyn chortled without arguing with Ernes like he usually would. He took on an attitude that whatever Ernes said was beneath him.

Of course, he also understood that the advantage the Sanguine had after the Scarlet Scholar stage no longer existed. Becoming an Earl was in no way easier than an Artificial Vampire advancing to Shaman King.

The digestion of the Scarlet Scholar potion is still relatively simple. All one needs to do is sincerely like the moon, worship the moon, and study the moon. This is what most Sanguine do usually…However, the corresponding ritual is in the hands of the demigods. Without their approval, even if I were to obtain a Shaman King Beyonder characteristic from The Sun, I won't be able to become an Earl… Emlyn might be arrogant, but he knew very clearly what was required of him subsequently.

There were two core powers of Scarlet Scholar. First, it was to create an environment that was advantageous to them. When the enemy wasn't good at spirituality or things related to the spirit world, they could create the effects of the full moon. On the contrary, they would also make the moon vanish if necessary. Second, it was to gain an instantaneous blink and a spectral form state under a certain area of the moon's illumination. Even if they were smashed to bits by an enemy, they could still reform themselves under the moonlight.

And the strength of these powers was derived from one's comprehension and research of the moon domain as Scarlet Scholars.

As for the strengthening of darkness-related spells, the enhancements of potion effects, and the resistance towards Nightmare-like influences, they were just supplementary.

Ernes was enraged by Emlyn's attitude. Just as he was about to speak again, he saw the mountainlike half-giant, Utravsky, walk out from behind the cathedral.

He hurriedly bent his back and bowed his head as he continued cleaning the altar.

Emlyn White also picked up his cloth and the candle stand, wiping its surface with great proficiency.

In the silent atmosphere, he thought of something: If he were to leave the Harvest Church now, would the upper echelons of the Sanguine force him to hand over the mystical items and supernatural props he obtained from Ernes.

This… I really have no reason to reject their request, because some of the items don't belong to Ernes in the first place… Emlyn thought about it seriously and decided to return to the room later. He would set up a ritual and sacrifice the spoils of war he received to Mr. Fool. When the time came, he could split it with the other members like The Star and Justice.

Uh, Oath of Rose cannot be sacrificed. It's only one part of the pair. Whoever obtains it will be discovered and identified by the wielder of the other ring… I'll just treat it as a spoil of war. I'll hand it over to Marquis Nibbs tonight. I should be able to exchange it for some rewards… As for the rest, I won't participate in the splitting… Emlyn very quickly came up with a plan.

As for whether the Sanguine upper echelons would bear a grudge over this, he wasn't too worried. This was because he would also mention in passing about the cooperation that the Rose School of Thought's temperance faction had requested while handing over the Oath of Rose.

This matter had happened last week. He had planned on informing the Sanguine upper echelon, but in the few minigatherings, The Hanged Man had advised him to do so after the punishment operation. It would accentuate his importance and mitigate any anger or resentment.

Striking with a stick, and offering a carrot? At that moment in time, Emlyn suddenly had a deeper understanding of the suggestion.

160 Boklund Street. Inside Dwayne Dantes's bedroom.

The spoils of war received are pretty good. A diamond brooch that can raise one's energy and maintain lucidity while resisting spells that act on the Body of Heart and Mind. A paper figurine that can prevent any fatal damage and Psychic Piercing. A belt that can produce Sun and Lightning damage. A wallet that contains more than 300 pounds… After receiving the sacrifice and returning to the real world, Klein silently sighed as he sat in front of his study desk. He then took out a transparent maggot.

Upon seeing this maggot, he felt his head ache, recalling the pain of having his Soul Body fracture.

This was a Worm of Spirit that he had fractured from himself. It was to be made into the payment given to Snake of Fate Will Auceptin.

He already had an idea on how to replicate the item which could briefly allow someone to restore their strength. It was to use the Worm of Spirit as a vessel and copy the complete symbol from before to garner a response from the mysterious space above the gray fog.

For this, the outcome of his divination was that it would be rather successful.

That item's true essence is actually one of the powers of the Seer pathway's Sequence 3, Scholar of Yore. To borrow a portion of one's power from one's past self… Responding with The Fool's identity would definitely work…

The only problem is that the corresponding dimensionality, mystery, complexity, and danger of the symbols cannot be directly engraved on different metal plates… According to Will Auceptin, I have to use Cogitation and draw on my spirituality to draw it on the Worm of Spirit…

If it succeeds, I'll make myself one. I'll look at myself from the past and see if it will be Klein Moretti's childhood or myself hanging in the cocoon above the door of light… If it's the latter, it's best if I can confirm how long I’ve been hanging… Klein entered a Cogitation state while in thought. Then, he kept constructing symbols with his mind, allowing his spirituality to repeat this process outside as it penetrated the Worm of Spirit.

This was a complicated and difficult task. If he wasn’t careful, it might lead to failure.

As the invisible symbols fell and augmented the Worm of Spirit, Klein suddenly trembled. The Worm of Spirit ignited by itself and turned to ashes.

Looking at his empty palm, Klein felt a headache. After a long period of silence, he silently muttered, Life sure is difficult…

Chapter 1010 - Consultant Fee

◆

After rubbing his forehead, Klein was just about to split another Worm of Spirit when he suddenly saw Reinette in her dark, complicated-looking dress walk out of the void and stand beside the desk.

In the mouth of one of Miss Messenger's heads was a neatly folded letter.

"Who's it from?" Klein asked in passing.

Reinette Tinekerr's remaining three heads replied, "The…" "Mushroom…" "King's…" "Superior…"

Mushroom King? Klein was stunned for a full two seconds before realizing that it could be Frank Lee.

And Frank Lee's superior was Admiral of Stars, Cattleya.

"The 'Mushroom King' is Frank Lee?" Klein asked in confirmation as he reached out to take the letter.

With the four blonde, red-eyed heads' hair being held, they were made to bob up and down as though they were nodding.

Miss Messenger even gives others nicknames… That's not right. Frank doesn't just specialize in mushrooms. His "domains" include cows, malt, fish, Rose Bishops… It's because Frank has had a breakthrough in his mushroom experiments, so Miss Messenger saw a boat-full of mushrooms? Klein couldn't help but draw a breath as he hurriedly unfolded the letter.

He was worried that the letter was Ma’am Hermit’s plea for help.

Of course, he wasn’t too anxious because, at the most critical juncture, an experienced pirate like Admiral of Stars would definitely choose to pray to Mr. Fool.

This letter did come from the Future’s captain, Cattleya. On it were neatly written words:

“… The Queen has already confirmed the time and place. Wednesday, 11 p.m. Same place.

“…I’ve no idea what you said to Frank Lee, but I can tell that he has been very excited recently. He has done many experiments with the Artisan. He said that he would be able to produce another phase of results in three-to six-months time. He also made it clear that if he were to obtain the Druid potion, he could save on making many intermediary objects and directly produce the final outcome. All I can say is that I wish you the best.

“…I hope that everything will come to an end before the Artisan completely breaks down. He has already begun regretting his faith in the Primordial Moon…”

Should I be happy that the securing of the City of Silver’s food supply has progressed, or should I be worried about accidents? Klein rubbed his temples and decided to put the matter aside. After all, Ma’am Hermit, who was almost about to become a demigod, was watching Frank. If some unexpected development really happened, she would definitely seek help.

Phew… Having finally confirmed his meeting with Queen Mystic, he heaved a sigh of relief and flicked his wrist, burning the letter in scarlet red flames.

After watching Miss Messenger leave, he continued splitting a Worm of Spirit when he suddenly frowned. He felt that the desk and the letter’s ashes in the trash can were abnormally off-putting.

Subconsciously, Klein got some tissue and wiped the desk before covering the trash can.

After doing all of this, he looked at his dirtied hands and stood up. He headed for the washroom and turned on the tap.

As he washed his hands, he caught sight of the toilet beside him through the corner of his eye. He frowned bit by bit again.

“Today’s cleaning wasn’t done well enough…” Klein softly muttered and suddenly sensed something wrong with him.

Amidst his thoughts, his spiritual intuition quickly explained why he was feeling this way.

This was a side effect of using Death Knell!

As he had already become a demigod, allowing him to have a qualitative change in his Spirit Body and attain godhood; the corresponding negative effects had been reduced by more than 90%. The terrifying weakness of germaphobia ended up becoming a trait of cleanliness OCD.

Likewise, the period of weakness dropped from six hours to one hour. And the thirst that Death Knell gave him was no longer as obvious.

“Thankfully…” Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he skillfully pulled out the toilet brush from the side.

Eleven in the evening, above the gray fog, due to Emlyn White’s request, all the members who had involved themselves in the punishment operation- Justice, The Star, Judgment, The Magician, and The Hanged Man

-appeared inside the ancient magnificent palace.

“These are all the spoils of war.” Emlyn threw 3,000 pounds that he had just sacrificed in the middle of the table and explained, “One of the mystical items was Oath of Rose. It’s a paired ring, allowing the wearers to be able to share their senses and thoughts with one another within a normal-sized city regardless of the distance. It’s very valuable, but only one of the rings was acquired. It would spell danger for anyone who takes it. Therefore, I handed it over to the Sanguine upper echelons and received 3,000 pounds in return.”

He originally thought of keeping the 3,000 pounds as his spoils of war, but he decided that it was better to sacrifice it and make it be one of the options.

After a pause, Emlyn introduced the other items, listing their uses and negative side effects. He had even added more to the description-knowledge stemmed from his penchant for Sanguine history and some shared by Ernes Boyar under Father Utravsky’s watch.

He is doing it with the intent of flaunting… Otherwise, with Mr. Moon’s character, he wouldn’t say so much… Oh, the reason for him being relaxed is due to Mr. Fool’s absence… Audrey watched as a bystander without saying which item she wanted.

Alger glanced at the spoils of war and said to Emlyn, “Have you met the Sanguine upper echelons? Has the hunting of the key members of the Rose School of Thought been confirmed?”

“Pretty much. I’ve also established contact with a member from the temperance faction. However, he wishes to carry out the operation after September.” Emlyn didn’t hide the truth, believing that Mr. Hanged Man could provide useful pointers.

Indeed, Alger nodded and asked, “It has to be after September?

“This means that they are waiting for something that will drastically change the situation…”

Klein, who was waiting for the mini-gathering to end somewhere else in the ancient palace, suspected that it had something to do with Miss Sharron's advancement when he heard that.

According to Miss Sharron, she should've been able to attempt the demigod ritual in July… Don't tell me that this ritual will last at least a month? If that's the case, it's quite different from the other pathways… Klein had a theory he wasn't too sure about.

"Possibly." Emlyn thought for a while before agreeing with Mr. Hanged Man's words.

Following that, he surveyed the area and said with a smile, "You can begin choosing."

Audrey had Mr. World's promised Fate Siphon charm, and Leonard had obtained the corresponding rewards from Old Man Pallez. They appeared rather calm with the spoils of war "offered" by the Sanguine Viscount. None of them rushed to speak as they politely waited for the others to go first.

In addition, they had either experienced an angel-level battle in person or witnessed the horror brought about by Amon's avatars. Furthermore, they had confirmed that the Tarot Club contained potent forces, and they were suffering from some level of mental fatigue.

Xio looked to her right before looking forward. Seeing everyone being so modest, she broke the silence.

"I was involved in a very simple part of this and didn't take much of a risk. Furthermore, Mr. Moon has already paid 60 pounds in advance. I'll just take the cash in the wallet."

As she spoke, she took the handcrafted wallet, took out the cash, and counted it.

"335 pounds."

Emlyn surveyed the area and nodded when no one objected.

"Okay."

As for the handcrafted wallet, Xio threw it in the middle of the table and returned it to Mr. Moon to handle it himself.

With Xio taking the lead, Fors said, "I only lent out Leymano's Travels and didn't take on any risks. I'll take that Moon Paper Figurine…"

Compared to the mystical items, such expendable Beyonder items were relatively lower in value.

However, to The Magician herself, she wouldn't have selected a mystical item even if she was qualified. This was because she could hire the corresponding member to Record it if she needed a particular power of the mystical item. As for Moon Paper Figurine, an expendable item that could take a fatal blow and Psychic Piercing once, it couldn't be Recorded. It was definitely the first choice for someone who feared for her life.

After saying that, she waited for a moment. Only when no one objected did she take the Moon Paper Figurine.

Emlyn then cast his gaze at Miss Justice. Leonard extended his hand and said with a smile, "Ladies first."

Audrey didn't decline the offer as she swept her gaze across the items on the table. She pointed at the diamond brooch and said with a smile, "I'll take this."

She had heard Mr. Moon mention that its name was Alcohol Nemesis. It kept the wearer brimming with energy with lucidity in their thoughts, giving them resistance to influences on the Body of Heart and Mind.

Thankfully, I had first used Bribe-Charm to be safe, and with Ernes still being in a half-conscious state after waking up from the dream, I wouldn't have been able to Hypnotize him… This item is also useful to me. At the very least, it will give me another layer of protection when facing the higher-level members of the Psychology Alchemists… I don't have to worry about the negative effects if I don't always wear it… Audrey thought thankfully as she retracted her gaze from the diamond brooch in satisfaction.

After the selection, Emlyn didn't give Leonard the chance to speak as he directly said, "This Moon Sash is yours."

From his point of view, the Moon Sash was worth more than 5,000 pounds, something more valuable than the 3,000 pounds in cash.

Actually, I was leaning towards taking the 3,000 pounds… I have to buy the Word of the Sea, and the price is still 10,000 pounds after Klein gave a discount… After spending that, I'll only have 650 pounds in savings… Leonard ultimately didn't reject it as he nodded.

"Okay."

Emlyn finished distributing the spoils of war and picked up the remaining 3,000 pounds in cash. He then split a stack and pushed it to the side.

"Mr. Hanged Man, this is your payment. 1,000 pounds."

"You should call it the consultation fee." Without Mr. Fool present, Fors was also a lot more relaxed.

Alger didn't stand on ceremony as he nodded, reaching out to take the stack of cash.

"The compensation for the carriage driver will also be borne by me." Emlyn surveyed the area in a rather good mood.

11 p.m. on Wednesday, at the south entrance of the Backlund Bridge.

A figure quickly phased into existence in the night sky, with one hand on his hat and the other hand by his buttons.

He had black hair, brown eyes, and sharp facial features. This strongest adventurer with the cold expression was none other than Gehrman

Sparrow.

Chapter 1011 - Roselle's Other Warning

◆ ◆ ◆

It was late at night with the thick clouds concealing the moon. It was dark across the Backlund Bridge.

Just as Klein "Teleported" here, he saw green pea vines descend from the sky like a storm that enveloped his surroundings before he could look around.

They intertwined and quickly formed a forest. They stacked upwards in layers, making it impossible to see its peak.

Klein released his right hand's grip on his top hat and familiarly followed up the path paved by the vines.

It didn't take long before he saw a naturally-formed swing made out of green plants. He also saw Queen Mystic Bernadette who stood beside the swing.

This eldest daughter of Emperor Roselle had a head of long chestnut hair. She wore a blouse with laced flowers that formed a bow tie. She matched it with a gray dress that went past her knees and a pair of Wellington leather boots. She also wore a bonnet with a hanging black fishnet.

"You've grown faster than I had imagined." Bernadette's blue eyes behind the black fishnet reflected Gehrman Sparrow's figure.

Klein replied without any change in expression, "Praise Mr. Fool."

As he said that, he inwardly lampooned, This is what it means to strive to be stronger, relying on oneself rather than on others!

Queen Mystic nodded slightly as she said with a gentle but emotionless voice, “I know why you want to see me.”

Without waiting for Klein to say a word, she tilted her head slightly and looked at the vine swing beside her. She said in a tone as calm as a lake that had countless undercurrents beneath it, “I feel that he hasn’t really perished completely.”

…Does that mean you believe that Emperor Roselle hasn’t died completely? He lives somewhere in this world, with a chance for him to return? Klein didn’t expect to hear such a straightforward and sensational words right at the beginning of their conversation. Although he easily controlled his expression, he was somewhat at a loss for a reply.

At the same time, he noticed that Bernadette referred to Emperor Roselle as “he” instead of “He.” Regardless if they were using ancient Feysac to speak or the normal daily language used in Loen or Intis, they were completely different words.

This means that deep down in Queen Mystic’s heart, Emperor Roselle isn’t an angel, but a father… Klein calmed down his emotions and deliberated before asking, “Why do you have such thoughts?”

Bernadette retracted her gaze from the vine swing and said with the same gentle voice, “Towards the final stages of his life, although he was crazy and radical, everything he did had preparations in place. I believe that he must’ve prepared something for himself.

“You should know that he attempted to switch pathways in his later years and tried for the vacant Black Emperor throne. This required him to build nine secret mausoleums in the form of pyramids.

“After he died in the White Maple Palace, the Churches of the Eternal Blazing Sun and Steam jointly found eight mausoleums and destroyed each one of them. However, the ninth mausoleum remains to be discovered. No one knows where it's hidden.

"If he had already become Black Emperor, he can definitely awaken inside that mausoleum. If he fails, I believe that there's a possibility of using it for his resurrection…"

Bernadette's voice softened as she spoke. Towards the end, her voice was ethereal and nearly indiscernible.

You aren't that confident either… It's mostly a kind of hope and expectation… Klein sighed.

Suddenly, he recalled the words by King of the Five Seas Nast.

Emperor Roselle liked to stand in front of a particular floor-to-ceiling window and look to the west.

From Roselle's diary, Klein knew that "He" had discovered the Abyss's entrance in the Fog Sea west of Intis. There, he had found a primitive island and believed that it was filled with oddities and was worth exploring.

Could it be that… Emperor Roselle built the last secret mausoleum in the Abyss or on that primitive island? Klein thought for a moment before smiling.

"You seem to understand the Black Emperor pathway very well."

He suspected that Emperor Roselle had left the Black Emperor card as a bookmark and had used Bernadette's name in ancient Feysac as the activation incantation because he partially wanted to inform his daughter of the corresponding ritual. In the end, Bernadette had seemingly grasped the information via other means.

The lips behind Queen Mystic's fishnet veil produced a slight curl.

"I've already investigated this matter for more than a century. And to figure out the details, I've suffered the infusion of knowledge from the Hidden Sage.

"I can tell that you, and Mr. Fool who's backing you, have a deep understanding of this… I've always been curious why you're so interested in his matters."

From the current situation, and in terms of seniority, you could call me uncle… The emperor and I might very well be "roommates" who had been hung up for many years… Klein lampooned to relieve his emotional upheavals. However, he replied in a calm tone, "You can raise this question to Mr. Fool."

He didn't plan on telling Bernadette that the ninth secret mausoleum might be somewhere in the Fog Sea, very likely to be on the primitive island, or in the Abyss. It was more suitable for The Fool to answer the question.

Queen Mystic wasn't surprised by Gehrman Sparrow's response. She cast her gaze west to a certain spot far away.

Although he couldn't see Bernadette's gaze, Klein could vaguely sense that this lady was looking at the place where she had her childhood. She was looking at her spiritual home, the home where she could no longer return to.

At that moment, in the green vines and deep darkness, there were a lot of subtle emotions and dreams that hid deep in the heart, fermenting.

In just a matter of seconds, Queen Mystic retracted her gaze and gently said, "After my matters in Backlund ends, I'll pass a few pages to Cattleya and get her to ask the question on my behalf."

"Why don't you ask next week?" Klein didn't hide his puzzlement.

Bernadette calmly replied, "I feel that the answer will affect my mood, and a bad mood will result in my failure."

A failure because of a bad mood? What sort of matter has such strict requirements? A clash with a demigod of the mind domain? Or perhaps, after she resolves the knots in her heart, will she have the confidence to attempt to become an angel? Klein nodded in thought without pressing.

This was a secret of hers, something that it was best not to ask about unless necessary.

Queen Mystic then said, "When he wrote those few diary pages, I was sitting opposite him. I wanted him to teach me how to interpret and write those symbols. He didn't agree to it and only ruffled my hair. Back then, I was already of age…

"I can tell that he was worried, apprehensive, and in a difficult position when he wrote those pages. Finally, he told me that if I can really become an important figure of the mysterious world as Zaratul predicted, I must make sure to remember—be careful of the 'Spectator.'"

Be careful of the "Spectator"… Klein couldn't help but inwardly repeat Roselle's warning.

He believed that the emperor wouldn't be broadly referring to the Beyonders of the Spectator pathway. He was definitely pointing to a particular special existence, some special matter, or both.

Emperor Roselle was a member of that ancient secret organization… That ancient secret organization's founder and leader is… Klein's eyelids twitched as he didn't dare to think any further, afraid that a particular existence would hear his thoughts.

"Perhaps there are detailed descriptions on that diary page," he said, hoping to see that diary page as soon as possible.

"I know." Bernadette nodded.

She didn't continue on the topic. After two seconds of silence, she said, "I should thank Mr. Fool and you on Cattleya's behalf. Obtaining the blood of a Snake of Fate is very helpful towards her future.

“Although the advancement ritual of a Mysticologist doesn’t have any requirements on the Mythical Creature’s pathway, the best choice is still the Fate pathway. This will make it a lot easier for her when she advances to Sequence 3.”

“Why?” Klein asked with the mindset of learning new knowledge.

After all, it was impossible for a Blessed to know everything. Even a true god was incapable of that!

Bernadette’s eyes turned slightly vacant.

“Another way to call ‘prying into the secrets of fate’ is ‘clairvoyance.’ The Mystery Pryer’s Sequence 3 is called Clairvoyant. This also why I’m in Backlund.”

Due to a particular future prediction? Klein mused, having a guess and some level of enlightenment, “Many pathways seem to have the ability of clairvoyance.”

The corners of Queen Mystic’s mouth curled up slightly as she sighed and said, “In ancient times, many Beyonder creatures believe that gathering similar powers would lead to a qualitative change and breakthrough, but all of them went mad without exception or lost control. Only after the first Blasphemy Slate appeared did all creatures realize that balance—the kind of balance needed to walk on the edge of a cliff—was key to the path of extraordinariness.”

Therefore, a domain’s powers can be scattered across many pathways, concentrating on a few main pathways while the other pathways share the remnants? Hmm, a negative example is the King of the North from Groselle’s Travels, Ulyssan… Klein fell into a deep thought without pressing.

After a while, Queen Mystic broke the silence.

“If you have nothing else, let’s end it here today.”

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “Alright, if you need any help, you can find me through Admiral of Stars.”

Bernadette nodded gently as her figure suddenly turned transparent before turning into a cluster of bubbles.

The bubbles scattered and flew off before vanishing immediately. The dark green pea vines retracted and vanished into the night.

Klein seemed to be held by an invisible hand as he landed gently on the Backlund Bridge.

He reached out his hand to press his top hat and surveyed his surroundings. There were rows of houses lining the banks, emitting faint yellow lights. Amidst the gushing sound of the surging river and the darkness of the night, everything appeared serene, silent, warm, and peaceful.

I hope none of this will be destroyed… Klein sighed as his figure quickly turned transparent and faded away.

Chapter 1012 - First Day of September

◆◆◆

“Dear Mr. Azik,

“Ever since September was ushered in, Backlund’s temperature has been dropping day after day. Recently, the elderly can already be seen wearing gloves when outdoors.

“Just like last year, the smog has begun to envelop the city. This would happen one to two days a week, or even more. Clearly, the environmental measures governing air pollution aren’t something that can be resolved in a year or two. It will take at least five years. Something that should be worth being happy about is that the pungent smell in the air has already lessened significantly. My Sanguine friend is very pleased with such weather.

“Another delightful change is that more and more students, postmen, and technical workers have bought bikes. The number of carriages on the streets has decreased, implying that the smell of horse feces and the stench it brings is no longer the main pollutant in Backlund’s air. Of course, they still occupy a rather important position. As you know, those ladies and gentlemen who think highly of their standing wouldn’t casually lower their own standards of 1泠郮 However, based on my observations, their kids are gradually having a growing interest in bikes.

“I’ve been leading a normal life during this period of time. I go to Saint Samuel Cathedral and the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation a few times a week, participating in their activities and continuously donating cash. I occasionally visit the turf club, watch plays and orchestras, or play cards or golf at the club. During weekends, I either participate in balls, banquets, or saloons.

“I forgot to mention that I’ve already bought a manor. It formerly belonged to Duke Negan and is called ‘Maygur.’ It has its own excellent vineyard and brewery, as well as a huge forest and plantation on it. It can be used for farming and hunting. Its main building has a huge rectangular shape with four stories. It has a large number of rooms, and a casual tour of the place without walking out the door would take me more than ten thousand steps. At the same time, it also has a large number of sculptures, oil paintings, decorations, and exquisite cutlery. It’s simply palatial.

“Perhaps my description is a little exaggerated. After all, I’ve never seen a real palace. This is also the first manor that I own. I still remember my time in Tingen. I lived in a rental apartment with only two bedrooms with my brother and sister. Every day, we slept to the smell of coal.

“This was introduced to me by Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor. It cost me 20,000 pounds. You don’t have to worry about my financial situation. I made a huge sum of money from the Southern Continent, and I also sold some mystical items. Currently, I still have more than 17,000 pounds in cash and 15,000 pounds worth of gold bars, including various gold coins, soli, and pence.

“I’m rather satisfied with Maygur and have sent my former valet, Richardson, to be the land steward. It’s now autumn, and I’m going to invite guests to enjoy a pleasant weekend there. I hope Richardson can make adequate preparations.

“The mysterious world in Backlund hasn’t changed for now. I hope it will continue like this.

“The magic mirror I previously mentioned to you has been restored to normal. However, it seems to still suffer from post-traumatic stress due to the damage Amon had dealt it. As long as I question it about what happened, it will automatically change the color of its text and give an erroneous answer and repeatedly request me to compliment it.

“It also has different views on leaving the Church of Steam. It seems to have decided to stay a little longer, believing that it would be safer that way. It has even thought of showcasing its danger and become a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. I have to say that I’m always surprised with the way it thinks.

“Thanks to some of its answers, I’ve found a way to create pure darkness. It is to create it with a charm of the Evernight domain that has dreamworld properties. It’s considered a response of the Evemight Goddess and is categorized under pure darkness. In addition, after repeated tests, I’ve finally figured out the way to carve the godhood symbols through Cogitation and create the item I want.”

Upon writing this, Klein, who was sitting on the sofa while using his thigh as his table, stopped writing and rubbed his temples.

Repeated failures implied the repeated loss of Worms of Spirit, and every separation was a damaging blow to his Spirit Body. It took him a long time to recover.

Therefore, in order to have redundancies to prevent any accidents, Klein never pushed himself to the limit. After separating three or four Worms of Spirit, he would choose to rest for a few days before beginning the engraving process. Such breaks took him this long to master the method and create a finished product.

Glancing at the rectangular “diamond” beside him, he saw layers of complicated symbols that extended into the void from the constantly refracting light. His head felt a little dizzy as though he was witnessing a part of history.

I’ll call it the Yesterday Once More charm… Klein retracted his gaze and continued writing:

"The coastal regions have had another storm brewing. The two Houses of the kingdom have entered the traditional phase of debating over bills. With the footsteps of the new year approaching and getting louder, it makes me worried for some baffling reason.

"May you recover quickly and wake up soon.

Your eternal student, Klein Moretti."

Putting away the pen and folding the letter, Klein blew Azik's copper whistle and summoned the skeleton messenger that stood nearly four meters tall.

Unlike before, this messenger had only shown its head and one arm. The rest were beneath the floorboards on the second floor.

This made it appear significantly shorter than Klein.

After all, I'm now barely considered a Blessed of Death… Klein handed the letter to the messenger as he watched it crumble into bones, gushing down into the ground like a waterfall.

After doing this, he picked up the Yesterday Once More charm on the armrest.

This was his first successful product, and he planned on using it first. After all, making it again was easy now that he had the experience.

As for whether borrowing strength from his historical self posed any dangers, Klein had already performed a divination above the gray fog ahead of time. He believed that if it involved the real Fool or the owner of the door of light, then he would have the mysterious space above the gray fog to block it for him.

And the result of the divination was that it was very safe.

After staring at the diamond-like charm for a few seconds, Klein no longer hesitated. He opened his mouth and said a single word in ancient Hermes, “History!”

He had attempted it in the real world and not above the gray fog because he was worried that the mysterious world would sever the connection to the past.

Amidst the echoing of the jarring word, Klein injected his spirituality into the Yesterday Once More charm.

Light that appeared like scattered fur lit up, illuminating the surroundings with bright and pure light.

Vaguely, a scene flashed past Klein’s eyes:

It was him dancing leisurely with Daly Simone beside Ince Zangwill’s corpse;

It was the gray-sideburned and exceedingly handsome Dwayne Dantes;

It was Gehrman Sparrow pressing down on his top hat while landing on the Black Tulip thanks to the blessings of the wind;

It was the Sherlock Moriarty who struggled during the descent of the meteor;

It was Klein Moretti who summoned sunlight when he heard the baby’s cry in the Blackthorn Security Company;

It was the pale university graduate who raised the revolver and aimed it at his temple.

Beyond this, all the scenes vanished. All that was left was the grayish-white fog.

And only when the powers of the charm were exhausted did Klein find himself at the end of that fog.

Indeed, my transmigration is related to the gray fog, that mysterious space, and that strange door of light… This basically verifies it. I was sleeping in a cocoon in the past, hanging above the door of light. I've no idea how long I was in that state… Compared to his first time seeing the door of light, Klein, who had made the confirmation, remained calm as though he had long expected it.

Phew. Next, I'll make two Yesterday Once More charms for Will. This charm isn't of much use to me… I won't be visiting him this week. It will incur suspicion if I feed him ice-cream every week. Their maid is already looking at me in an odd way… Also, since I've mastered the Cogitation engraving method of the godhood symbol, I can bring forward the creation of the extraordinary bullets made with the Worms of Time. Yes, Leonard said that he will be visiting Tingen in the next few days. Let's see if the power of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem can be stolen… Klein rubbed his forehead and left the sofa.

At a previous Tarot Gathering, Leonard had already informed him of the four types of godhood symbols and magical labels he learned from Pallez Zoroast. They came from the Marauder domain, and it was said that one of them was capable of misdirecting the enemy, making them make errors in judgment. Another was to steal three Beyonder powers that the target had formerly used, beginning with the most recent power. The third would cause the enemy to lose plenty of vitality if the enemy could be affected by it, making them enter an aged state. Finally, one of them could create Worms of Time that didn't live long. They would secretly Parasitize the target's body and allow the charm-user to control them.

Among the seven remaining Worms of Time that Klein had, he had already made three into Fate Siphon charms and had given Miss Justice one and kept two. This also meant that he still had four Worms of Time, allowing him to try out each of the four effects. Of course, his intuition told him that the chances of a successful product weren't guaranteed.

As for Leonard's two Worms of Time, one had been made into a Fate Siphon charm. He had followed The World Gehrman Sparrow's instructions to pray to Mr. Fool and had received a reply. The other relied on Pallez Zoroast’s help to create a Parasite charm.

After busying himself with a series of tasks, it was evening. Klein had five successes and one failure. He obtained two Yesterday Once More charms, one Parasite bullet, a Deceit bullet, and a Deprivation bullet.

The only failure was the Aging bullet, seemingly due to the inability to use sufficient powers from the mysterious space above the gray fog.

Looking at the three similar-looking bullets that were a mix of transparency or translucency, Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He took out Death Knell and loaded the bullet. In the revolver were three of his Control Spirit Bullets.

After clearing the altar, he walked out of the room and headed for the second floor. Upon entering the dining hall, he said to Butler Walter who was waiting for him, “Invite the guests to a hunting trip over the weekend in the city outskirts using the name list.”

“Yes, sir.” Walter was already prepared for this, remaining stem and serious.

Tingen City, 36 Zouteland Street.

Leonard got off the carriage as he looked at a newly built building with a mixed expression. He momentarily forgot to enter.

Chapter 1013 - Individual Growth

◆

The 36 Zouteland Street of the past was just filled with a cement foundation, with each floor's two windows forming the shape of an arch with their covers being shut. It had the architectural traits of post-1300s of the Fifth Epoch, and the natural lighting wasn't very good.

After its reconstruction, the bottom floor had a small sheltered porch with two oriel windows that extended to the second floor. The thinner portion of the window frames had a wall and a decorative column that supported a thin stone beam. Above the oriel window was a parapet that connected straight to the third floor.

This was a three-story architectural style that had been made popular in recent years.

His thoughts seemingly going adrift, Leonard had a feeling that he had come to the wrong place.

After falling into a daze for about ten seconds, he stepped into 36 Zouteland Street with a silver inlaid cane. Following that, he walked up the stairs, turned around a bend, and saw the black door and vertical signboard:

“Blackthorn Security Company.”

When he arrived, he seemed to gradually find a sense of familiarity. He sped up his pace and pushed open the ajar door.

A brown-haired girl who held the Tingen City Honest Paper up vertically on the desk moved the papers to the side when she heard the unconcealed footsteps, revealing a smooth forehead, light-brown eyes, and a pretty face.

“…Good afternoon, Rozanne,” Leonard greeted somewhat hesitantly.

Rozanne first wore a look of surprise before her expression fell. She said in an abnormally cold tone, “Good afternoon.”Congratulations on avenging Captain and Klein.”

Leonard widened his mouth, at a loss for a response. He didn’t even press down on his top hat despite his dislike of wearing hats.

He forced a smile and nodded slightly. Then, he went forward in silence, passing Rozanne, planning to enter the door beyond the partition.

Just as he was about to enter the office, he suddenly heard Rozanne say rather softly behind him, “Live well…”

Leonard slowed down his pace slightly before nodding his head heavily.

When he entered the interior, he instantly saw Frye standing by the captain’s office.

This Corpse Collector still had a paleness that resulted from not being under the sun for a long while. He had black hair This Corpse Collector still had a paleness that resulted from not being under the sun for a long while. He had black hair

Leonard solemnly looked at him for a few seconds before exhaling, trying hard to coolly smile.

“Long time no see.”

“Good afternoon, long time no see.” Frye pointed to the captain’s office. “I’ve already received the telegram and know of your request. I’ll get two team members to carry out the operation with you. Also, you need to fill in a Sealed Artifact request form."

Slightly surprised, Leonard said with a smile, "You're the captain now? You aren't as silent as before…"

Leonard had actually finished digesting his Soul Assurer potion and could advance to Sequence 5 Spirit Warlock, but to obtain the power of that drop of the Eternal Blazing Sun's blood, he deliberately kept it a secret. He continued placating the souls around Backlund and finally, through his hard work, found an opportunity to come to Tingen.

Yes," Frye said with a gentle nod. "Actually, I don't like to speak much, but I have to do so as the captain."

Leonard nodded slightly.

"When did you become a captain? Why haven't I heard of it…"

"Recently," Frye succinctly replied before giving an explanation. "Shortly after you left, I became a Sequence 8 Gravedigger. I finally advanced to Spirit Medium last month. And it just so happened that the previous captain was transferred away."

"That's fast…" Before Leonard could finish his sentence, he had punched himself in the head. "Look at my memory. I forgot that Klein had already shared some experiences with everyone."

He lowered his right hand and said to Frye with a smile, "In that case, you still have room and time to make further progress. Perhaps you might become a deacon."

Frye shot a look at him and retracted his gaze.

"I'll likely not choose to continue advancing."

"Why?" Leonard took a few steps out and came to Frye's side, asking in puzzlement.

Frye looked up at the ceiling and said in a calm and heavy voice, “I wish to stay here.

“Protecting this place, always.”

Leonard fell silent and didn’t give a response.

He observed his surroundings and felt that there were quite significant changes, but there were also many things that remained immutable.

Frye fell silent for a while before saying, “I’ll dispatch two members to follow you.”

As he spoke, he headed for the basement. Leonard then subconsciously followed by the side.

The office right at the bottom had its door open. A few Nighthawks were in there playing cards—Fighting Evil.

When they sensed their captain approaching, they hurriedly put down their poker cards and stood up.

Leonard swept his gaze across them and saw two familiar faces. They were Royale, with her smooth black hair, and the white-haired, black-eyed Seeka.

At the same time, he also saw a few unfamiliar faces. He saw the pence, soli, and poker cards on the table.

For a moment, he felt his mind adrift as his vision blurred up.

In the Rorsted Archipelago waters, in a small harbor neighboring a fishing village, at the bottom of the Future.

Frank Lee rolled up his sleeves and crossed his arms, seriously looking at the mushroom in front of him.

The mushroom, together with its cap, stood at a height of 1.8 meters tall. Its white surface had a few bright red spots that resembled eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

Apart from that, its stem had protruding spores. They had thick and strong-looking white hypha that resembled tentacles.

Frank sized up this gigantic mushroom and surveyed the area, looking at the wooden walls, floorboards, and the mushrooms of different shapes and sizes before saying to Artisan Cielf, “Not bad. This experiment has made progress again. This mushroom has a strong inclination to reproduce, and this will make it hungry, making it eager to replenish itself with monster flesh and blood.

“Be it roasting or boiling, these can cease its activity, making it not as dangerous.

“Hmm, how does it taste? Didn’t you try it? The offspring that it produces have random flavors: beef, fish, and malt. Some are even filled with milk. One of them is enough to satisfy any requirements for breakfast. See, the crew no longer enjoy drinking anymore. There are mushrooms that can be plucked everywhere… I believe that when out in the wilderness, to fill one’s stomach, one has to carry dry rations and hunt wild beasts. That’s just too troublesome. If we can let our bodies grow mushrooms, wouldn’t it save the hassle?”

Artisan Cielf was a lot thinner than back when he was in Bayam. His eye sockets were deep and his eyes vacant. They were lacking in life.

Upon hearing Frank’s words, he seemed to recall something as his body trembled. He silently crouched down and opened his mouth, producing retching noises.

“Are you okay? I know it was tough on you. I’m really grateful for all you’ve done recently,” Frank said sincerely to the Artisan. “If it wasn’t for you, the mushrooms wouldn’t have such a strong inclination towards reproduction. Also, they have obtained abnormally strong vitality under the moonlight, allowing themselves to purify themselves. This effectively eliminated the poison that accumulates from devouring monsters. The only problem is that there's no moonlight in pure darkness. This is the next problem that we need to resolve."

Cielf didn't say a word. After he finished vomiting, he immediately stood up and turned to rush outside. However, a thick and strong white hypha reached out and pulled him back.

"R-return my mystical items to me! I want to die with these mushrooms!" he yelled frantically, his voice softening as his mouth was covered.

At this moment, green vines rapidly retreated from a certain spot of the fishing village, as though it was growing in reverse.

Cattleya walked out of it, her eyes dark purple with some silver hints to them.

Her ears continued resounding with the illusory ravings of the Hidden Sage; however, she no longer found it terrifying. She didn't find it unacceptable like before. Wherever she looked, there were countless indescribable figures looking as if they were shadows stacked upon each other, like an invisible gaze that was cast over from an unknown location.

Compared to the past, she could already see the unknown existence hidden behind the curtains. She could see the moons high up in the sky that were of different colors. They were either blood-red, silver, dark brown, or ghostly-blue, resembling eyes that looked down upon the land.

Cattleya's mind hummed as she hurriedly retracted her gaze, afraid to look further.

She had already dissected the Snake of Fate's blood and completed the ritual. Through that, she had obtained godhood, becoming a Sequence 4 Mysticologist of the Mystery Pryer pathway!

However, she remembered the Queen's warning:

Among all the Sequence 4 Beyonders of the twenty-two pathways, Mysticologist was the "job" that encountered danger the easiest. It was because they often saw things that they shouldn't see, hear things they shouldn't hear, and be aware of secrets they shouldn't be aware of.

Therefore, a Mysticologist needed to know how to curb their curiosity and control their respective actions in order to live long.

Removing the heavy glasses she hung on her clothes, Cattleya wore it, but all the various things she saw in the real world didn't vanish.

She curled her lips in satisfaction in a self-deprecating manner. She knew that the item could no longer seal her ability of prying into secrets.

She closed her eyes before opening them. Her eyes had turned black, no longer having the mysterious dark purple and silver hues.

Phew… Cattleya heaved a sigh of relief and slowly walked to the Future as though she had simply gone out for a stroll.

She didn't wish to announce her becoming a demigod, and she had no intention of quickly becoming the fifth royal over the seas. To her, this was a trump card in this dangerous world, one that she had to keep close to her chest.

South of the Bridge, Rose Street.

The carriage that Emlyn was on drove down the street when he saw the blurry figure in a white shirt and black vest with slightly messy hair appear opposite him. It was that wraith-like young man.

"Long time no see, Mr. Marie," Emlyn said with an unsurprised smile.

Marie nodded slightly.

"I'm here to tell you that we've already made the preparations. We can discuss the actual operation.”

Chapter 1014 - The Growing Group

◆

“Alright,” Emlyn replied very calmly.

Marie didn’t speak further as his figure vanished.

He knew that it was impossible to come up with a specific plan in an instant. Emlyn White had to first seek the opinion of the upper echelons of the Sanguine; therefore, he didn’t stay.

This might be a chance for me to obtain godhood and become an Earl… Emlyn smiled as he watched the Wraith, Marie, leave silently.

He had yet to digest the Scarlet Scholar Beyonder characteristic. The so-called opportunity to become an Earl referred to the promise of obtaining a free ritual and the corresponding potion formula.

The carriage continued forward and stopped at the entrance of the Harvest Church. Emlyn looked at the grayish-white fog in the sky with a look of satisfaction, pressed down on his silk top hat, and unhurriedly alighted the carriage before entering the cathedral’s door.

After changing into his brown priest robe, he picked up a cloth and a pail of water and began seriously wiping the surface of the candle stands.

After Father Utravsky, who appeared taller, finished his morning sermon, Emlyn stopped working and grumbled, “Why was Ernes allowed to return?”

“He only requested to do a month of volunteer work.” Father Utravsky wasn't annoyed by Emlyn's repeated question from time to time, appearing extremely patient.

Upon thinking of his encounter, Emlyn immediately felt indignant. He couldn't help but mumble, "He was forced to do volunteer work, not out of his own accord. He can't be allowed to decide on the period. He needs to serve at least half a year!"

Father Utravsky replied with a smile, "He did well. He worked hard the entire month, guiding the devotees and copying the bible. I could clearly sense that he had already realized the value of life and the joy of the harvest."

Emlyn's facial muscles twitched slightly.

"Is he also—no, is he soon going to become a believer of Earth Mother?"

"No, I didn't force him to change his faith," Father Utravsky said gently. "I only taught him the teachings of Earth Mother and to sense the traces and fragments that life brings. I hope that he will recall the home for the soul, the mother's embrace, whenever he feels lost."

Emlyn's lips quivered, but he ultimately didn't say a word. He lowered his head and continued wiping.

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

Fors sat on a high-back chair, her gaze focused on an empty glass bottle on the desk in front of her.

She had finally digested the Astrologer potion some time ago. Today, under Xio's watch, she had concocted the Asmann's brain and the ancient wraith's cursed item into the Scribe potion. She mustered her courage and drank it.

At this moment, she felt her brain rapidly expanding. The grand folds and white matter rapidly increased as her body gradually blurred, separating into individual cells.

Those cells formed a haloed “door” that circled her brain.

Fors subtly heard the familiar ravings, but they were indistinct and blurry, preventing her from identifying the exact words at all. To the experienced her, it didn’t affect her in any way.

After an unknown period of time, Fors finally regained control over her brain and cells and could sense her body’s existence.

Almost at the same time, a large amount of knowledge resonated in her mind, making her understand how to use the powers of a Scribe.

The mutated “brain” reproduced the Beyonder powers used by the target before driving a portion of the vitalized cells to form corresponding symbols, patterns, and labels for complete storage.

This was “I came, I saw, I record,” which used one’s soul as a pen and one’s Spirit Body as the paper!

At present, I can only record one Beyonder power that has the influence of godhood. The higher the target’s Sequence, the higher the chances of my failure. Even targeted at Sequence 4,1 might not be able to succeed even once in ten attempts… I can record eight Sequence 5 and 6 Beyonder powers, and the effects are half of the original. I can record twenty Sequence 7 to Sequence 9 Beyonder powers with their effects being almost like the original… When the potion is digested further, I’ll enjoy an enhancement in all these aspects… Fors concluded the knowledge and her experiences before silently muttering to herself.

This appeared to overlap with Leymano’s Travels, but Fors felt that no one would ever find having too many Beyonder powers being excessive. Besides, the two were complementary. After all, she could rent Leymano’s Travels to other Tarot Club members and be paid with Beyonder powers. However, she was unable to rent herself out.

At Sequence 6, an Apprentice finally has sufficient combat strength! Fors reined in her thoughts as she sighed to Xio.

She then took a pen and paper and began writing a letter:

“Dear Teacher,”I’m very pleased to inform you that I’ve finally become a Scribe. I’m just one step away from my dreams of ‘Traveling’…”

After writing a few sentences, she saw Xio stand up and walk towards the door from the corner of her eye. She hurriedly shouted at her, “Hey, shouldn’t we head to a restaurant to celebrate?”

Xio replied in a stern manner, “Your overflowing spirituality is rather serious. You’ll need several days of Cogitation to keep it under control. Uh, you aren’t allowed to smoke or drink. Don’t overly indulge yourself in your emotions.”

After the advice, she added, “I still have commissions to do. I almost have enough to exchange for the Judge formula.”

“…Alright.” Fors threw up her hands.

After leaving the house, Xio unlocked the chains and got onto a bicycle specially created for youths. She then rode towards Hillston Borough.

According to the intelligence she had previously obtained, Viscount Stratford had reserved lunch at a luxurious restaurant.

Upon reaching the restaurant, Xio secured the bike to a street lamp and found a secluded comer to observe the people passing by.

After an unknown period of time, a carriage drove through the thin fog. There was a coat of arms with a flower and two rings engraved on it.

Xio’s focus intensified as she watched the carriage stop at the restaurant’s entrance. She then saw the grizzled Viscount Stratford, who was in his forties, get off first. He then extended his hand to the passenger behind him like a gentleman.

It was a lady draped in a dark red cloak.

Xio couldn’t see the lady’s face and only noticed that the lady’s jaw was soft and her skin fair.

On the Blue Avenger at the Northern Sonia Sea.

Alger Wilson's feet left the ground as he floated behind the window of the captain's cabin. He stared at the deck and distant waves outside.

Having already digested a portion of the Ocean Songster potion, he had reported to the Church of Storms two weeks ago and had accumulated enough contribution points to obtain a Wind-blessed potion and successfully consumed it. This also meant that he was officially a Sequence 6. Of course, he had to redigest the Wind-blessed potion, but that wasn't too difficult.

The biggest problem is that the commotion created from digesting the Ocean Songster is too obvious… I should've bought that Word of the Sea and blamed the singing on it every time… Alger sighed silently, but he didn't feel too much regret. This was because even if he wanted to buy it back then, he didn't have the money for it.

Furthermore, he had figured out the way to digest the Ocean Songster potion.

I should be able to get the information soon and confirm who that Feysac navy officer that Mr. Fool wishes to investigate is… Alger retracted his gaze and floated back to the desk where there was a brass sextant.

At this moment, two sailors passed by the deck while belching.

"There seem to be sirens in these waters. I always hear their singing at night…" one of the sailors said in uncertainty.

His companion sneered.

"How is that possible? How can a siren sound so bad?

"It must be some noise produced by some sea monster!"

City of Silver, in the training field which wasn't as crowded compared to during "daytime."

A pile of blue ice was stacked there like a small mountain.

Derrick didn't bring his weapon with him as he stood empty-handed in front of the mountain of ice, piously praying, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

After chanting the honorific name and making his request, he looked at the Chief of the six-member council, Colin Iliad, walk towards the ice blocks from afar.

Colin, with two swords on his back, carried a bottle of light-emitting and hot golden liquid. He watched as Derrick exerted his strength to enter the ice block and bury himself inside completely without leaving a single crack.

A deep and hazy darkness descended. Even with the lightning streaking across the sky, it was unable to illuminate the interior.

In the blink of an eye, an indescribable surge appeared as though pairs of eyes were cast over from the depths of the darkness.

Colin Iliad could clearly sense that Derrick was in a deep slumber. Even though Derrick was being frozen in ice that normally didn't melt and his body was trembling, he didn't wake up.

Without any hesitation, he threw the potion bottle ahead of him. A wraith-like transparent figure floated above and enveloped it.

This figure passed through the blue ice and came to the cramped space where Derrick was. It took out the potion and placed it by Derrick's mouth.

Just as this action was done, it immediately retreated and left the ice blocks.

Whoosh!

Colin Iliad suddenly drew his sword and cleaved behind him to his right. A monster, whose rotting body was covered in eyes, burst out into yellow pus.

It wasn’t known where it came from!

At this moment, Colin saw a radiant light emerge from the pile of blue ice. They scattered pure light, with a burning intensity, warmth, brightness, and vitality that was different from the surrounding lightning.

This filled Colin’s eyes as if the light had come from the Dark Ages.

This City of Silver Chief watched intently and was motionless for a long time until another monster emerged from the darkness.

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Little Sun is at Sequence 5 too… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he cast his eyes at the crimson star representing The Sun and cast it to another star.

That signified Miss Justice. Over the past month or so, she had completed many of the Psychology Alchemists’ missions and had exchanged her contribution for the Dreamwalker’s potion formula.

This also meant that she was about to meet Hvin Rambis again.

Chapter 1015 - March of War

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, at the residence of the furniture merchant, Hampres.

Audrey once again met the councilor of the Psychology Alchemists, Hvin Rambis.

This old gentleman remained warm and elegant, his white but lush hair was neatly combed. His blue, deep eyes seemed to contain infinite knowledge.

Upon seeing him, Audrey's eyes wore a vacant look before she came to a realization. It was as though she had finally awoken from a long dream and recovered her lost memories.

She wasn't surprised or puzzled by this at all, accepting this fact without any resistance as if it was something very normal.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Rambis," Audrey greeted with the etiquette that was flawless.

Rambis nodded slightly and replied with a smile, "Good afternoon, our girl."

Over the past month or so, he had gradually adopted the idea that she was the "pride of the Psychology Alchemists" and the "most important girl."

Audrey glanced at the diamond brooch at her chest and sat down with a smile, waiting for Hvin Rambis to speak.

In regard to the cue and guidance, she hadn't been affected at all due to her preparations. At that moment, when she heard Hvin Rambis call her that, she wished to ignore everything, etiquette or whatnot, rolling her eyes without being afraid of being exposed. However, she ultimately held back without exposing any problems.

Hvin Rambis looked at Audrey for a few seconds before saying with the same smile, “You've done well during this period of time. As a reward, we've decided to give you the potion formula for Dreamwalker.”

As he spoke, he took out a folded piece of paper from his shirt pocket and placed it on the coffee table. He then pushed it towards the noble lady.

Audrey pressed down on her skirt and got up slightly. She picked up the piece of paper and unfolded it in front of Hvin Rambis.

Her gaze first fell on the main ingredients before she quickly skimmed the ritual.

“Main ingredients: One Dreamcatcher's heart, one mind illusion crystal or a mature mind dragon's complete brain.” “Ritual: Seek out a harpy in the spirit world and sign a contract with it. Then, holding one tail feather, consume the potion amidst intense feelings of either joy or anger.”

As though sensing Audrey's puzzlement, Hvin Rambis explained with a smile, “A harpy has the ability to give nightmares. It can snap people awake from their dreams, so the entire ritual's essence is to be immersed in a dream and be unwilling to wake up from it. Get pulled out of the dream via an external force, or else you might sleep forever or lose control and turn into a monster.”

Audrey nodded in thought.

“The requirement to consume the potion amidst intense feelings is to prevent myself from sleeping too soundly and deeply?”

Yes, you've already grasped the crux of the matter," Hvin Rambis said with a smile. "If you don't know much about the spirit world and can't find a harpy, we can provide some help."

If the ritual's essence is for me to wake up from a dream, that means that the harpy isn't necessary. The blessings of Mr. Fool's angel can allow me to remain lucid in dreams. I can wake up whenever I want… Audrey's green eyes darted about and said with looks of anticipation, "I can try it myself first."

"Alright," Hvin didn't mind the girl's desire to take risks.

He paused and said, "I have another matter for you. If you do it well, we will provide you with all the ingredients of the Dreamwalker potion."

"What is it?" Audrey asked without any resistance, just like before.

Hvin Rambis said with a slightly solemn expression, "Find out the attitudes of your father, Earl Hall, the present Duke Negan, Admiral Amyrius, and the other nobles about a relatively major war."

"War…" Audrey repeated the word that she had often heard but found somewhat unfamiliar. She had a vague feeling that ripples had suddenly formed under the surface of a seemingly calm lake.

War… Above the gray fog, Klein listened to Miss Justice's prayer and fell into deep thought.

He was unable to determine whether the Psychology Alchemists; Hermes, or maybe even Adam—who was lurking behind them—welcomed or objected to a war.

As for whether the Loen king, the prime minister, and a number of nobles and the Members of Parliaments wanted war, the answer was relatively clear.

Last year, The Hanged Man had once asked Miss Justice a similar question. Her answer was that the king and prime minister had the tendencies of being war-mongers, but they had chosen to first focus on internal reforms and settle the connections over various matters.

Now, about a year had passed, and all the policies that had been implemented were on track.

In other words, it was time to start a war to snatch back the interests which Loen had lost in East Balam!

It's a revolutionary era. The strife between countries are intense, and once war begins, it's unlikely that it can be controlled… Furthermore, Adam, Amon, and the other Kings of Angels have appeared one after another, have already retrieved key items, or are seeking breakthroughs. A storm is about to descend on the mysterious world, and danger is lurking… Klein sighed and returned to the real world.

The next day, he first went to Saint Samuel Cathedral to pray according to his schedule and donated tens of pounds. Following that, he went to 22 Phelps Street, planning to participate in some of the business of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

The moment he stepped inside, Klein saw Miss Audrey Hall and a few of the foundation's staff coming down the stairs and walking towards the door.

This noble lady was dressed very simply today. Her hair was tied up into a simple bun, and she wore no other accessories. Her dress was light green in color, and her sleeves had a circle of frills. There were no laces or tassels.

"Good morning, Miss Audrey." Klein took off his hat as usual and bowed. He then nodded at the staff and greeted them.

After Audrey responded, Klein casually asked, "Where are you going?"

He knew that Miss Justice's main role in the foundation was to seek donations from the various ladies and gentlemen in high society.

Audrey replied with a faint smile, “Visit the various universities and show some concern to the students we helped previously.”

Having said that, she blinked her eyes as her smile widened.

“Mr. Dantes, do you want to go together? Take a look at the children who had the chance of changing their fates due to your ideas and kindness. Oh, some of them are already young adults.”

Although Klein had never thought of obtaining anything in return from the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, he truly wished that these actions could help the target group. Therefore, he was rather concerned about the progress and the actual situation. He nodded with a smile after some hesitation.

“I have no way of rejecting such an invitation.”

The group went out the door, and under Miss Audrey’s suggestion, they chose an untracked public carriage.

After getting into the carriage, Klein, in a gentlemanly-like manner, let Miss Audrey sit down first. Then, he sat opposite her and asked with a smile, “You seem to be very used to it?”

Audrey looked at the foundation’s staff beside her and said with a smile, “It’s not the first time. It’s impossible for us to take my own carriage every time we head out. They have to use public transportation.”

Upon saying that, she blushed in embarrassment and said, “The first time I was on a public carriage, I took out notes with one-pound face value. The lady who collected the money got me to buy a few copies of newspapers before going back to her.

“Oh, it’s cleaner than I imagined. The smell of the air isn’t that unbearable either.”

Klein nodded slightly and said, “This is because the truly poor are unable to take public transport like this. They’d rather walk. Under normal circumstances, they don't have to head out, nor do they go somewhere too far."

"Mr. Dantes, you seem to be familiar with such matters?" Although Audrey had guessed the reason, she still asked in front of others.

Klein smiled.

"Although I've never experienced it directly, I've seen too much of it."

Audrey didn't continue on the topic. Instead, she mentioned to the beneficiaries that they were visiting to confirm their education and living conditions.

Amidst their idle chat, they arrived at their first destination—Backlund University of Technology.

Based on Audrey's identity and Dwayne Dantes's social relations, they met the chancellor of the newly established university directly. He was a resident of 100 Boklund Street, Mr. Portland Moment.

This elder had a large build, a ruddy complexion, and a loud voice. Whenever he talked to his neighbor, Dwayne Dantes, and the distinguished Miss Audrey about the university's establishment, he would complain about the Higher Education Commission from time to time.

Audrey and Klein listened with a decent smile and occasionally echoed his words.

Finally, they found an opportunity to raise the need to begin work.

Portland was just about to get his secretary when he suddenly heard someone knock on his office door.

"Please come in," the chancellor said loudly.

The door opened without a sound. A black-haired, brown-eyed girl entered. She didn't doll herself up and was rather thin. She had nice facial features, and she looked to be seventeen or eighteen.

Klein’s gaze suddenly deepened before he reined it in.

The girl hadn’t expected the chancellor’s office to have guests. In her anxiety, she hurriedly lowered her head and said, “I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine. They were about to leave anyway,” Portland said without minding it. “Have you finished the item I got you to make last week?”

,fYes.” The girl walked through the door and stood to the side.

Portland Moment then smiled at Dwayne Dantes and Audrey.

“Her name is Melissa Moretti. She’s very talented with machinery. I happened to chance upon her and got her to help in my laboratory. Of course, she can only do some miscellaneous chores for now.”

“Not bad.” The corners of Klein’s mouth curled up as he commended her with an obvious smile.

Audrey glanced at him and smiled.

There are always arrogant people who say that women have no talent in machinery, and this lady has proven them wrong.”

Portland laughed and shook his head.

“There’s no need to bother about such comments. Alright, I’ll get my secretary to help you in understanding the conditions of those beneficiaries.”

Audrey and Klein didn’t stay any longer as they left the office.

Once they were out the door, Audrey stole a glance at Dwayne Dantes, but she didn’t say a word.

Chapter 1016 - News from the Numinous Episcopate

◆

160 Boklund Street, inside Dwayne Dantes's mansion.

Klein stood in front of the floor-to-ceiling windows, watching as the rain began to descend along with the wind. The rain hit the ground and the glass, intersecting to form a mesh.

Ever since autumn, Backlund had started to rain again. It brought with it a lingering coldness and humidity.

Klein stood there motionless for a long time, watching silently into the distance through the blurry rainy scene, his eyes unfocused.

Only when his spiritual perception was triggered did he stop his wandering thoughts and turned his head to the side. Reinette, with the four blonde, red-eyed heads in her hand, had a letter as she walked out of the void.

“Who is it from this time?” Klein asked Miss Messenger out of habit.

The last letter he received came from Sharron. The lady had told him that she had successfully completed the ritual and advanced to Sequence 4 Puppet of the Prisoner pathway.

Klein first sincerely congratulated her and apologetically informed her that he had already obtained what he needed and didn’t need to visit Calderon City in the spirit world anytime soon.

Of course, he also indicated that there was a huge secret there that might have something to do with him. He would probably head there one day, and when that time came, if Miss Sharron had the time or was willing, he wished to obtain her support.

For Klein, on the one hand, he might have to head there to find the future ingredients he needed for his advancement. On the other hand, he believed that the magical city that involved ancient Death, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace, also might contain the method to heal Mr. Azik's incomplete Spirit Body's. Even if this Death Consul didn't have the means to advance, he hoped that by doing so, the former didn't need to repeatedly suffer the torment of losing his memories.

Of course, Klein had prepared a plan for that. It was to wait until he advanced to Sequence 3 Scholar of Yore. He could prepare more Yesterday Once More charms for Mr. Azik, or he could imbue him with the corresponding Beyonder powers to speed up the recovery of his memories each time.

At that moment, Klein had already received a letter. Reinette Tinekerr's four heads replied one after another, "From…"
"That…""Undying…""Idiot…"

…Patrick Bryan of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction… Klein easily understood who Miss Messenger was referring to. This was because Patrick was the one who wrote the most to him over the past two months. He reported almost anything of slight importance and asked for instructions.

After a few times, Reinette Tinekerr gave him a nickname.

Miss Messenger never showed interest in such matters before. I wonder when it began… Most of the people who write to me have been given nicknames except Miss Sharron… As Klein silently mumbled, he unfurled the letter and gave it a quick scan.

In the letter, Patrick Bryan said that the Southern Continent's orders were no longer about getting him to make various attempts to awaken

"Death." Instead, they got him to prepare a special ritual and help the Death domain angel inside the mausoleum, Artificial Death faction's leader, Haiter, recover. It was to allow "Him" to have the means to temporarily leave the "land in which 'He' sealed 'Himself.'"

Such an order didn't seem problematic on the surface, but it was a little sudden. However, Klein still sensed something amiss.

The Artificial Death faction of the Numinous Episcopate in the Southern Continent had previously made Patrick continue the strange but dangerous rituals to awaken Death. I managed to trick them by instructing him to use excuses such as the inability to gather the materials or the ultimate failure of the experiment. Now, they've finally suspected that there's something wrong with Patrick? Klein nodded in thought.

He suspected that this was a test directed at Patrick Bryan, a test that pointed towards an angel!

An angel's response to rituals covered the entire world.

Yes, it's good as long as they don't suspect there's a problem with Artificial Death. After all, they've inherited a huge inheritance from the ancient Balam Empire. Who knows if they have a way to affect the Goddess's progress in controlling the Death pathway's Uniqueness. It could be a bane for both sides… Klein analyzed for a moment before heaving a sigh of relief.

As for the test by the Death domain angel, he didn't think much of it. This was because The Fool could also direct power at the same level. With Angel's Embrace, a disruption effect could be made. As long as the High Priest named Haiter didn't descend in person and only exerted influence remotely, he could carry out misdirections in an ingenious manner.

After figuring this out, Klein flicked his wrist, igniting Patrick Bryan's letter with scarlet flames. As he returned to his desk, he took out a pen and paper and wrote:

"…You may proceed according to your teacher's instructions, but before the actual ritual, you must report this to me and gain my permission…"

As the interval between the receiving and sending of letters were short, Patrick Bryan likely remained in his original spot. Klein didn't summon Patrick's messenger and instead blew the adventurer's harmonica and handed the folded letter to Reinette Tinekerr.

Amidst the drizzle, Xio draped a simple raincoat lined with tree sap over her and hid in the shadows, staring at the side door of Viscount Stratford's residence.

It wasn't even evening, but the street lamps were already lit up. They emitted a faint glow in the rain.

After a while, a rental carriage drove over from afar and stopped in front of the side door in a remote area.

The viscount's valet that had been hiding immediately ran out, opening an umbrella.

He sheltered the cloaked woman down the carriage and quickly passed through the side door. As for the rental carriage, it remained in its spot without leaving. It had apparently been paid a sufficient amount of money.

Xio still failed to see the woman's appearance, but she wasn't disheartened by it. She patiently waited in the cold rain as though she had turned into a motionless statue.

She planned on attempting to tail the woman once she came out to confirm her identity.

This was both an opportunity for her to obtain the Judge potion formula, and it was also the reason why she came to Backlund—to investigate the truth of her father's death!

And it was because she was spurred by such motives that Xio had persisted in monitoring Viscount Stratford to this day. MI9's other intelligence officers had already ended the mission due to the lack of any developments over the previous few months. Even the golden-masked man who had designated the mission hadn't asked about this in weeks. Clearly, he didn't place any importance on it.

Inside Viscount Stratford's bedroom, a beautiful brown-haired girl wore a silk gown and sat in front of a dressing table. She was fiddling with the skincare and makeup products as if she had discovered a treasure trove.

Viscount Stratford, who was already middle-aged, wore a male nightgown and walked to the beautiful girl with his hair still moist. He smiled at her reflection in the mirror and said, "Shermane, you no longer need those to add to your beauty."

"It's just a type of female instinct." The young girl named Shermane raised her hand with a smile, pressing down on the viscount's palm that had been placed on her shoulder.

Viscount Stratford smiled gently and said, "When you touch them, you have a pure and innocent air to you. Heh heh, you make me discover my youth, like the days when I was only eighteen."

Without waiting for Shermane's reply, he continued, "My wife had already passed away for years. I always imagined I would live until the Lord beckons for me, but who knew that I would meet you. In a while, when the pressure accumulated in Backlund is relieved, I will find a chance to walk down the wedding aisle to the altar with you."

"Wedding… You want to marry me?" Shermane was taken aback as she asked in disbelief.

Viscount Stratford smiled and said, "Meeting you is a gift from the Lord. Although you aren't of noble birth, I've already married once. I don't have to consider such matters anymore. Of course, I'll think of means to raise your standing in society. Yes, I'll first find a merchant to recognize you as his illegitimate daughter…"

He droned on about his plan until he saw Shermane's eyes filled with tears in the mirror's reflection.

"The most precious thing about you is that you treat me ten times better than how well I treat you, and you don't hide it." Viscount Stratford smiled as he lowered his head and kissed the top of Shermane's head.

Shermane opened her mouth, seemingly crying and laughing.

Only when the drizzle stopped and night fell did Xio finally wait for the woman in a dark red cloak walk out and board the carriage.

After memorizing the carriage's traits, Xio tailed it from afar, using her Beyonder powers as a Sheriff and the empty streets at night to follow the target simply by walking or running.

She went all the way from Empress Borough to the Backlund Bridge area. Even with her stamina, she was almost at her limit, but thankfully, the carriage finally came to a stop.

Xio brightened up as she switched her target from the carriage to the cloaked woman and continued tailing her.

During this process, she was surprised that the woman had very good anti-tracking abilities. She would occasionally take detours and pause using obstacles.

However, this didn't stump Xio, since she was already an experienced Sheriff. She patiently tailed from afar without coming too close.

Just as she sensed that the woman wasn't too far from her final destination and that she was finally about to catch up to her, she suddenly caught the scent of a sweet, ethereal fragrance.

Xio’s mind went into a daze amidst the fragrance before she completely lost track of her target.

As for the fragrance, it had vanished as though it had never appeared.

Xio’s pupils widened slightly. She didn’t dare to search her surroundings for any traces.

Inside a rental apartment, Trissy, with a gentle and sweet face that made one unable to resist looking at her, looked at the mirror reflecting Shermane and said, “You seem to be in a good mood.

“How was it? This final mission isn’t too unacceptable, right?

“Once you complete it, you can leave Backlund and start your own life.”

Shermane was taken aback as her expression turned complicated as though she was disheartened. It was as though she had suddenly snapped out of her dreams.

She didn’t turn her head as her lips quivered while replying, “He said that he wishes to marry me…”

Trissy immediately pricked up her brows.

You mustn’t believe a man’s words during those times. You and I should know this very well.

“If he really wishes to marry you, he wouldn’t be wary of you. He will wish to have a child with you. Heh heh, did he do so?”

Upon hearing her question, Shermane’s mood turned sullen.

Trissy stood up and said with a smile, “I’m not stopping you from pursuing your love. If you wish to turn this temporary mission into a permanent one, you should think about what needs to be done.”

After ethereally finishing her sentence, she walked to the door and left the rented apartment.

While heading down the staircase, Trissy suddenly noticed her shoes. She chuckled and said in a seemingly self- deprecating manner, “Love…”

Chapter 1017 - Maygur Manor

◆

Backlund, Empress Borough, in the outskirts towards the northwest. This was a place that needed more than an hour via horse carriage. Maygur Manor was built by the side of the Tussock River, so it had beautiful scenery around it with flourishing vegetation within its confines.

Strangely enough, Backlund’s city areas had perennial rain with relatively few sunny days. However, in the outskirts, the clouds tended to be thin, and the sun was always bright. Despite the short distance, the two places had completely different weather. It was most obvious within the northwestern outskirts. It was even a rather famous grape plantation in the Northern Continent. And by following the Tussock River from this region northwest for another fifty kilometers, one would again encounter weather similar to Backlund’s city area.

Such situations left meteorologists puzzled. They couldn’t find any suitable theories to explain the reason. However, Klein had a vague guess.

In the Fourth Epoch, this was the capital of the Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire. It was also here that Blood Emperor Alista abandoned “His” humanity and became a crazy deity. Therefore, it was normal that the weather and terrain had changed forever in those very small confines. Leonard Mitchell had once mentioned information about this during one of the free exchanges.

Furthermore as an area with a long history and signs of early human activity, this “Land of Hope” buried countless ancient ruins. It was very possible that they could have an influence on the weather.

The carriage drove into Maygur Manor, passing by the fountain pond and small garden that was surrounded by the main building. Finally, it stopped outside the main door.

Just as Klein got off the carriage with Butler Walter, he saw the land steward, Richardson, lead two rows of male and female servants by the door, awaiting their employer.

Compared to 160 Boklund Street, there were more servants here, but they were mainly lower-class servants.

Looking at Richardson wearing a spanking new suit, Klein nodded with a smile.

“Well done.”

Without waiting for Richardson to reply, he took off his hat and handed it along with his cane to his valet, Enuni, while asking, “Have you prepared the activity room for the ladies to chat and for men to play cards in?”

| Yes, sir. IVe placed poker cards, tarot cards, and some board games. The piano, violins’ and other common musical instruments have also been moved inside,” Richardson answered eloquently.

Klein passed through the door and nodded.

“Where’s the smoking room for the gentlemen?”

“Like the ladies, it’s all on the second floor. They’re separated by five rooms.” Richardson didn’t need the servants in the manor to remind him. He didn’t even need to recall to give an answer.

To ensure that his employer’s first hunting excursion was flawless, he had taken note of every nitty-gritty detail. Although it exhausted him physically, he was excited mentally.

Klein asked about dinner and the guest rooms and confirmed that everything was in place.

Before long, he received the first batch of guests after Maygur Manor had a change of name—now known as Dantes Manor.

Member of Parliament Macht and his family!

“This place is much bigger than my Moose Manor.” Macht took off his coat with a smile and handed it to a servant while praising, “I’ve always heard of Maygur’s wine being of excellent quality, but I’ve never had the chance of tasting it. I can finally have my curiosity satisfied today.”

“I hope you won’t be disappointed.” Klein smiled modestly.

As a famous area for grape plantations in the Northern Continent, champagne, red wine, and white wine were considered the finest in Backlund’s northwestern outskirts. But with the manor here mainly owned by the nobles, self- brewed alcoholic beverages were typically not sold to the public. Therefore, it was almost unheard of. Only people from high society or those related to them would know of this.

Maygur was one of the most iconic manors. The wine that it brewed was widely praised by people in the know. Red wine of certain years was even offered at more than a hundred pounds a bottle by collectors.

However, for Klein to be able to buy this manor for 20,000 pounds, he naturally had to agree to certain conditions. All the wine from certain years were to be taken away by Duke Negan’s servants.

Macht was rather clear about this and didn’t expect to drink famous wine commodities. He said with a laugh, “You can open a few bottles and pour a small glass of each for me. Let me decide which of the remaining wine is most spectacular.”

As a member of high society, he had never tasted the wine of Maygur

Manor. The reason was simple: he was a member of the New Party, and the previous owner, Duke Negan, was the main sponsor of the Conservative Party.

“No problem,” Klein immediately agreed as his gaze swept across Hazel’s face.

Compared to July and August, this girl had clearly cheered up. She no longer felt apprehensive when facing strangers. Previously, it was as bad as not willing to participate in any banquets or balls. This made those familiar with her think she was sick.

And this was all thanks to Audrey. Whenever she met Dwayne Dantes at the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, she had mentioned that she had recently met Miss Hazel Macht twice.

Such communication didn’t seem problematic at first glance since Hazel was a common acquaintance of Audrey and Dantes. Finding a topic about a common friend was common in idle chatter. However, Klein could read Miss Justice’s hints and understood that she had met Hazel twice at different balls and banquets and had treated her twice.

After getting Macht’s family settled in, Klein welcomed the second batch of guests for the weekend hunting trip:

Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor who had come with a friend that he had previously mentioned.

Klein knew this friend, but he didn’t know Dwayne Dantes. He was a steam car mogul, Framis Cage. He was one of the main investors of the bicycle project. He had relied on a lawyer suspected to be a Beyonder with the Lawyer Sequence and had bought the 10% shares from Sherlock Moriarty at a cheap price.

Since he’s related to a Lawyer, it can be explained how he’s an Earl of The Fallen’s friend… Klein went forward with a smile and hugged Brigadier General Qonas and Framis Cage.

“Welcome.”

He then stepped back and said to the portly, light-blue-eyed Framis who was a quarter Feysac, “I heard your steam car is very famous. Why didn’t you drive it over?”

Before Framis could answer, the manly Qonas Kilgor said with a smile, “No, you don’t understand him. He will never give up the chance to showcase his steam car.

“However, the car’s too heavy. On the way here, it fell into a ditch and couldn’t be pulled out. Thankfully, I never believed his claims and rode on a carriage myself, following behind him. Otherwise, he would’ve had to cover the remaining distance on foot.”

“The main problem is that our roads are terrible. They need to be renovated and rebuilt. They need metal tracks to be paved, just like steam locomotives!” Framis retorted and threw his hands up. “I was planning on seeking some investments from you. Haha, we can talk about it later.”

You were the one who invested in us previously, but now you’re asking me for an investment… Only then did Klein realize that he was a rather famous tycoon in the upper class of the kingdom!

He had donated shares worth more than 10,000 pounds and had purchased an expensive manor. He had also established connections with the military, so it was obvious he was rich!

But in fact, my current net worth is only fifty to sixty thousand gold pounds, perhaps a tenth of Miss Justice’s wealth… I wonder when I can really become a tycoon with a net worth of a million pounds… Klein thought in a self-deprecating manner. After some thought, he said, “It’s fine. I’m very interested in the fusion of machinery and steam. When I’m free, I can take a look at your steam car.”

“Spectacular,” Framis immediately said with a smile. “If I didn’t know that you had donated a large sum to the Church of Evernight, I might even think of you as a believer of the God of Steam."

I've drawn the triangular Sacred Emblem on my chest in the past after all… Klein didn't continue on this topic, afraid that Qonas would discover his intentions.

He pointed to the staircase and said, "Why don't you head to the smoking room to try some of the prized cigar collections here?

"It wasn't until I bought this manor that I learned that there was a room specially for storing cigars. Its temperature and humidity are maintained, but as you know, I can smoke, but I don't like it."

"Not bad. Do you have Chieftain?" Qonas Kilgor's face suffused a smile.

"Of course." Klein gave a positive answer.

There was only one goal in organizing this hunting trip. It was to hunt this brigadier general, deputy director of MI9. Therefore, he had taken into consideration all his preferences.

However, Klein wasn't in a hurry to take action for this hunting trip. This was because he still lacked an understanding of Qonas Kilgor's actual strength as a hidden demigod. He needed more gatherings and hunts to figure out his preferences, level of alertness, and the items he brought with him.

As a Magician, Klein didn't perform unprepared!

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

Fors put down the book in her hand and looked at Xio who was pacing around the activity room. She couldn't help but ask, "What are you troubled about?"

Xio shot her a glance and said, "I'm frustrated over whether to inform MI9 about Viscount Stratford's close relationship with an unknown woman, or to keep it from them until there's further development."

"Why are you keeping it from them?" Fors first asked in return before giving her answer. "Viscount Stratford is related to your father's death, but you normally lack the opportunity or strength to confront him, afraid of being exposed and affecting your mother and brother. And now, he might encounter an accident because of that unknown woman. He's in a relatively easy to deal with state. This is your opportunity, so you're being hesitant, right?"

Xio fell silent for a moment before saying, "Yes."

Fors closed the book, stared at her friend, and said in a serious manner, "Since you're hesitating, it means you're already inclined towards one option."

Xio slowly nodded and said, "Yes."

Fors fondled her slightly long curly hair and stood up, extending her right hand, and said, "I already know your decision. Well, do you need help?"

Seeing Xio hesitant to give an answer, she laughed and said, "I'm a Sequence 6 Beyonder!"

Without waiting for Xio to answer, she looked around.

"If you're worried, we can still seek additional help."

She was implying that they could get help from the members of the Tarot Club.

Xio thought about it and exhaled.

"Not for now. Let's try it first. Uh, let's head out now and continue monitoring Viscount Stratford."

"Now?" Fors was taken aback. "Alright. But before that, let me use the crystal ball to do some astromancy to confirm the level of danger."

After some work, she held the pure crystal ball in one hand and said, “There’s a certain level of danger.”

Chapter 1018 - Unexpected

◆

Empress Borough, by the side of Viscount Stratford’s mansion.

Fors and Xio, who were dressed in black dresses, hid in a dark corner. They stared intently at the tightly closed metal gates as they patiently waited for their target to appear.

It wasn’t raining tonight, so they didn’t have to face harsh weather conditions. The carriage that remained parked by the side of the street lamps made it clear to them that their patience would be rewarded. It was only a matter of time.

After an unknown period of time, the gates produced a heavy metal groan as they slowly opened.

A figure in a black cloak appeared with its head bowed. The figure walked to the side of the carriage and nimbly boarded the carriage.

“Is that her?” Fors lowered her voice and asked Xio.

She didn’t have Beyonder powers that could restore a target’s characteristics from a mere description, and she had never seen her before. Therefore, she couldn’t rely on her spiritual intuition or astromancy to make a judgment.

Xio nodded in affirmation and said, “Yes!”

As they quietly conversed, the rental carriage sped up and left the side gates.

Xio immediately left her hiding spot, prepared to use her Sheriffs Beyonder powers and the physical enhancement that being an Interrogator gave her to lock onto her target while jogging.

“What are you doing?” At that moment, Fors pressed down on her shoulder, foiling her plans.

“Track her!” Xio looked back at her friend in puzzlement.

Fors looked at the rental carriage that hadn’t completely pulled away from them and asked thoughtfully,

“Why are you tracking her for?

“Also, didn’t you say that the target has a rather powerful Beyonder protecting her once you enter the Backlund Bridge area?”

“That’s right.” Xio first answered the second question before saying, “Your question is very odd. The reason you track someone is to determine the target’s appearance, identity, and motives.”

Fors retracted her left hand from Xio’s shoulder and revealed a smile.

“Since the target is protected by a rather powerful Beyonder, it will be difficult for us to complete the tracking in the Backlund Bridge area. We won’t be able to find her residence and figure out her true identity. Do you wish to directly fight her guardian? Although you have me to help, are you certain about that person’s strength? How certain are you? Will it be very dangerous?

“Besides, once the battle begins, it will definitely alarm the target. This is the same as stopping the carriage midway and confronting her directly. It will foil your primary objective. It will alarm Viscount Stratford and prevent him from falling into a predicament that will offer you a chance to take action.”

“If we do it, then there’s a possibility of failure, but failure is certain if we do nothing,” Xio emphasized that she knew the situation well. All she wanted was to make an attempt and find an opportunity midway.

At this moment, the rental carriage had already turned into another street at the end of the road. Fors watched the back of it gradually disappear as she shook her head and smiled.

“No, no, no. We need to change our way of thinking!

“We should first attempt to figure out the target’s appearance. After daybreak, we can use her appearance to perform normal investigations in the Backlund Bridge area and then obtain information from other channels.”

“Your choice of words is very professional,” Xio said in thought.

“Of course. I’ve written detective novels before!” Fors answered without any sense of modesty.

“But how do I figure out what the target looks like without alerting her?” Xio raised the most critical question.

Prepared, Fors took out Leymano’s Travels and said with a smile, “Elementary. Using the Psychological Invisibility Miss Justice recorded!”

Although Audrey didn’t encounter any situations that required her to use Leymano’s Travels, she had rented it thrice out of curiosity. She studied the uses and traits of the Beyonder powers recorded, and she recorded her own Beyonder powers into it. This included the rather useful Psychological Invisibility.

As for her true identity, Xio and Fors were increasingly certain of it, but they didn’t directly ask or do any further investigations. That was the most basic form of respect towards other Tarot Club members.

After hearing her friend’s answer, Xio came to a realization and was instantly inspired.

Fors continued, “By using the Beyonder powers on this page, you will be placed in the sensory blind spots of all surrounding creatures. They wouldn't be able to see you even if you were to jump around in front of them. That way, you can directly board the carriage and stand in front of the target, openly taking in her appearance and remember all her traits.

"Heh heh, I sometimes think that people who use Psychological Invisibility might end up being squashed to death by huge creatures that happen to walk past if they're unlucky.

"Uh, don't make too much noise later. Don't speak to any nearby creatures, or else you will garner attention. Let Psychological Invisibility be dispelled automatically."

Yeah!" Xio nodded, then she raised another issue: "How do I prevent the target from discovering the sudden opening of the carriage door while it's driving?"

Without waiting for Fors's reply, she immediately pressed, "Did you record the Door Opening Beyonder power?"

"Guess?" Fors smiled as she handed Leymano's Travels to her friend, telling her which pages Psychological Invisibility and Door Opening were on.

With this in mind, Xio immediately ran amidst the shadows, chasing after the rental carriage.

Before long, she saw her target. Her right hand immediately trembled as she made the bronze-green notebook reveal a yellowish-brown goatskin page.

She slid her fingers gently, and Xio seemed to see countless rippling light appear on the surface of a deep lake spread outwards.

When her vision returned to normal, she sped up and rushed to the side of the carriage.

To ensure nothing went wrong, Xio didn't immediately take action. With a few wide strides, she overtook the horse.

She then turned around as though she was crossing the road. However, the carriage driver didn't notice her, nor did he shout out to her or rein in the horse.

After confirming the effects of Psychological Invisibility, she sped up and dodged the horse's galloping and came to the side of the carriage.

After a brief observation, she flipped through Leymano's Travels and revealed a white page covered with strange patterns and symbols. Then, she reached out her right hand and pressed it on the surface of the carriage.

Her figure instantly turned transparent as she appeared inside.

The woman in a black cloak was sitting diagonally opposite her as if she was in thought, staring at the glass window where Xio stood. However, she didn't notice the bounty hunter who had suddenly infiltrated.

At such a close distance, even with her cloak lowered, Xio was able to see her face clearly. Furthermore, the woman wasn't as careful as she was while walking outside. Her every action appeared rather casual as the hood was only at her eyes.

Instantly, her appearance was reflected in Xio's eyes, overlapping with a face that still had some male characteristics. This was a Beyonder power of a Sheriff.

Xio's eyes widened as she couldn't help but shout, "Sherman?"

She could foresee that the woman who often entered Viscount Stratford's residence was rather beautiful, but she never expected the woman to be her friend, Sherman. He was once a young man!

A man who wasn't considered androgynous now looked beautiful. He had the charm of a woman!

At that moment, Xio couldn't help but size up Sherman. She couldn't associate her figure with the young man she used to know with each other.

If it wasn't for her Sheriff Beyonder powers that allowed her to confirm that the person opposite her was Sherman, Xio definitely would've imagined that she had made a mistake. And even so, she still suspected whether the person wasn't Sherman and was instead Sherman's twin sister.

Upon hearing the surprised question, Sherman realized that there was another person in the carriage at some point in time—someone familiar.

Bounty hunter, Xio Derecha!

Having already changed her name to Shermane, she was first alarmed, but the words Trissy often mentioned instinctively appeared in her mind:

"You cannot meet people you used to know.

"Do you want your husband, your beloved to know of your former state?

"Only by completely severing your connections can you be reborn, doing so in order to save yourself!"

Such words quickly flashed across Shermane's mind as a terrifying thought emerged in her thoughts:

"Kill her!"

This thought seemed to come from a demon in the abyss as it constantly whispered in Shermane's ear as it resonated in her heart.

"Kill her!

"Kill this person who recognized you!

"Only by doing so can you truly escape the past and not lose the present!

"Kill her!"

Shermane didn't answer Xio.s question. Her left hand slowly clenched up while slightly trembling.

Xio sensed the intense emotions running through the person opposite her and confirmed that it was Sherman. Immediately, she asked in concern, "How did you become like this?

"Where have you been all this time? Did you encounter something? Were you hurt?"

Shermane's lips quivered as her left fist relaxed a little. She said with a sobbing tone, "I've already begun a new life.

Don't disturb me again, alright?

"I-I don't want to lose everything I have now. I don't want to see people that I knew in the past!"

The more she spoke, the faster it became. It became obvious that it was a plea.

Xio was taken aback for a few seconds before staring at Sherman. Pursing her lips, she said, "Okay…"

She didn't stay any longer and reached out to open the carriage window and jumped out.

Shermane silently watched this entire process and finally exhaled before she slumped into her seat like she had lost all her strength.

It wasn't easy for her to control the demon in her heart.

At this moment, she saw a figure rapidly outline itself out of thin air beside her.

The figure wore a black, old-fashioned dress, but it didn't diminish her beauty and disposition. She sat there silently without a word, but it was impossible to not look at her.

Demoness Trissy!

“Why didn't you kill her?” Trissy asked with a smile, not revealing any gloominess. It was as like an idle chat where she would ask what she had drunk the previous night.

“S-she's one of the few people who didn't ostracized me. She even helped me…” Shermane replied in shock before frowning. “Why are you here?”

Trissy smiled and said, “I'm protecting you.”

Without waiting for Shermane's answer, she said, “You seemed to be in a good mood when you came out.”

Shermane recalled what had happened and bashfully said, “Maybe, perhaps, I have a chance of becoming a mother…” As she spoke, she touched her stomach with her right hand, the corner of her lips couldn't help but curl.

“I feel him k-kicking me…” Shermane suddenly froze and blurted, “How could it be so fast?”

She wasn't sure if she could get pregnant today!

Upon seeing her reaction, Trissy smiled even more charmingly.

Chapter 1019 - Patience

◆

“How was it? Did you take a good look?” Just as Fors left the street where Viscount Stratford’s mansion was, she saw Xio walk out with a down and vacant expression.

Xio nodded hesitantly.

“I did…”

Having said that, she seemed to come to her senses and said in shock, “I know her—no, him!”

“Him?” Fors was confused.

Xio habitually observed her surroundings before saying, “He’s Sherman! The Sherman I told you about!

“H-he actually became a woman!”

Fors was stunned as she subconsciously asked, “Were you mistaken?

“Could she be Sherman’s sister?”

Xio firmly shook her head.

“No, she admitted it herself and even told me not to disturb her. She wants to bid farewell to her past!

“But… how did he become a woman…”

Fors’s eyes darted around as she suddenly recalled something. She said in thought, “It’s not impossible either… There’s a Beyonder pathway that allows a man to become a woman at a certain stage.”

She recalled Miss Justice mentioning something similar during a free exchange session.

“Ah? Really?” Xio’s widened as she asked in disbelief.

“Yes!” Fors had already recalled the exact conditions as she gave a rather confident answer.

“This…” Xio was momentarily unable to accept it, but she couldn’t find a rebuttal. All she could do was ask, “Which pathway is it?”

Fors replied, “Demoness!

“Uh, it’s the Assassin pathway.”

“Demoness… Sherman actually became a Demoness…” Xio repeated to herself.

Suddenly, her voice became louder.

“Could it be that she’s being taken advantage of?

“No, I must warn her!”

Just as she said that, Xio turned around and ran with great strides in an attempt to catch up with the rental carriage again.

However, she couldn’t find the target after attempting to pursue it for a few blocks. Sherman and the carriage seemed to have disappeared into thin air.

Xio gradually slowed down and finally stopped. She looked at the bustling streets ahead of her with a complicated expression.

Behind her, Fors passed through a few walls and finally caught up to her.

"Gone…" Xio whispered.

Fors also cast her gaze forward and thoughtfully replied, "We were discovered…"

Without waiting for Xio to speak, she turned around and sighed.

"Let's return and find another opportunity."

Xio didn't take a step forward as she continued standing there.

After a few seconds, she said under Fors's puzzled gaze, "Since they discovered a problem, will they speed up their plans ahead of time?"

"It's possible! If they don't wish for their plans to be foiled, they might attempt one final strike tonight before we're prepared!" Fors immediately agreed with Xio. "Let's return to Viscount Stratford's place and hide in a more concealed spot. We'll continue monitoring it!"

Xio immediately nodded and replied without any hesitation, "Okay."

†

In the dock area, inside a warehouse with plenty of goods.

Shermane was sitting on a dirty wooden crate. Her hands were crossed behind her back as her body had thin but firm spider webs coiled around her.

She appeared as though she was encased in a transparent cocoon, unable to make a single sound.

"It's not a bad thing for you." Trissy stood in front of Shermane with a pitch-black flame that resembled ink burning in her palm. "At the very least, you can determine if he really loves you or is lying to you."

Shermane was angry and afraid. She desperately used her whimpers to express her wish, but Trissy was unmoved. She turned her flame-wielding palm around and pressed it into Shermane's stomach.

The flames seemed to have intelligence as they scattered like flowing water. Following that, they penetrated her skin and flesh in an attempt to drill inside.

Trissy's smooth, black hair flared up in defiance of the laws of nature. They were being pulled by invisible hands as they extended out in every direction. It stained the surrounding air with a peculiar smell.

The strands of hair thickened as they scattered into distinct strands.

Beneath them, dark beams of light surged, bringing about curses and words. They flowed rapidly, fusing into the pitch-black flames. Upon entering Shermane's stomach, they quickly vanished.

Shermane's face twitched uncontrollably, but she didn't feel any pain. It was as though it was purely on reflex.

She soon calmed down as she saw Trissy's figure turn faint and gradually turn transparent until it vanished.

Shermane's pupils widened as she struggled again, but she was unable to break free from her restraints.

She tried again and again like a flood was rising, centimeter by centimeter, inside the silent warehouse.

After an unknown period of time, the door to the warehouse opened with a thud and slammed into the two sides of the wall.

A figure staggered in—it was the middle-aged Viscount Stratford.

He didn't wear his white wig like he always did while outside. This revealed his rather high receding hairline and rather messy black hair. The latter was stuck together as though it had been drenched by a storm and was air-dried. But in the past few hours, the clouds were thin and the crimson moon high in the sky. It hadn't rained at all.

Drops of sweat dripped down Viscount Stratford’s rather cut facial contours as there were countless black threads flowing beneath his skin.

His body was slightly hunched, and his facial muscles were somewhat twisted. His eyes were filled with pain and concern.

He surveyed the area and was delighted when he found Shermane. However, he turned anxious as he charged over without much confidence.

When Shermane saw him enter the warehouse, her face lit up as though it was covered in a halo.

She then revealed a worried and fearful expression as she attempted to shake her head frantically. However, her neck was held firmly by the spider webs that prevented her movement.

She reeled in anxiety, to the point of tears flowing out of her eyes, drop after drop—crystalline and frail.

Just as Viscount Stratford was about to reach her, a loud bang suddenly rang out between the two.

It was as though there was an invisible wall that separated him from Shermane, one that was couldn’t be surpassed.

“If you wish to break the curse and take her away, you have to answer my question without hiding anything.” At this moment, a figure quickly appeared in a corner of the warehouse.

Her facial features were charming, forming together into an abnormally sweet look. She resembled the lover that every young lad would fantasize about in his youth. She was none other than Demoness Trissy.

Without waiting for Viscount Stratford’s response, she raised her right hand and conjured a pitch-black flame.

Viscount Stratford's face, hands, neck, and exposed skin instantly turned transparent as they protruded with blood vessels.

And in every blood vessel, there was a black flame silently burning as it flowed silently.

The pain in Viscount Stratford's eyes immediately reached a peak, but it vanished the next moment.

His expression turned extremely cold as a jibing look appeared in his eyes. It was as though the one being cursed wasn't him, but Trissy who was a distance away.

Trissy, who was in the corner of the warehouse, suddenly burst into black flames. Dense, countless spider webs appeared, but they couldn't be lit up.

In the blink of an eye, Trissy was like Shermane, being sealed inside a transparent cocoon. She couldn't move or escape.

In a ventilation vent high above the warehouse, a figure appeared. It was a woman whose age wasn't obvious. She wore a simple and sacred white robe. She had black hair, blue eyes, looking sweet and beautiful, giving off an indescribable charm.

"Katarina Pellè…" Trissy seemed to expend all her strength before she shouted a name.

At this moment, Viscount Stratford grabbed at his body, pulling out an illusory doll covered in thick black flames.

He glanced at Shermane and smiled at Trissy.

"When it comes to matters related to life, I would never be careless. After that fellow, Sikes, died, I knew that it would be my turn one day.

"Heh heh, since you're hunting me, it means there are obviously others who wish to hunt you. We're very patient, afraid of scaring you away.

We did nothing and waited until today.

"Also, your gift was pretty good."

Upon hearing Viscount Stratford's words, Shermane, who was still struggling out of habit, instantly stopped moving. Her expression turned blank.

Her eyes widened, but there wasn't any focus. The look in her eyes seemed to sink deeper and deeper.

"Love…" Trissy suddenly laughed, seemingly mocking herself.

She wasn't nervous at all.

†

Maygur Manor. Night had fallen.

After settling more than twenty guests and preparing the hunting trip the next day, Klein woke up not long after he fell asleep.

His intuition had been triggered as a scene formed in his mind.

Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor, who was wearing a shirt and pants, had flown out of the guest room's window in secret. He landed outside in complete defiance of the laws of nature.

This… I haven't even taken action… He came here for his own goals… With a thought, Klein controlled a cockroach outside and turned it into his marionette. He then used its "eyes" to observe the surroundings.

Almost at the same time, Qonas Kilgor appeared.

After this demigod left Maygur Manor, he immediately distorted the "distance" and quickly arrived by the bank of the Tussock River. He prepared himself to cross it.

The cockroach watched quietly without any reaction.

He’s heading for the south bank of the Tussock River… What does he want to do… Does he have the preference of hunting in the suburbs so that he can attempt to conceal such actions? He also introduced Maygur Manor to me for this reason? Klein lay in bed and seriously analyzed Qonas’s actions.

After the MI9 demigod stepped onto the south bank of the Tussock River, Klein suddenly recalled a matter:

Back when he escaped the underground ruins where Ince Zangwill and company were, he appeared somewhere in the northwest of Backlund. This was the south bank of the Tussock River, making it rather close to where Maygur Manor was.

Chapter 1020 - Means of a Demoness

◆

As his thoughts raced, Klein suddenly switched positions with his valet, Enuni, who was in the opposite room.

And under a grapevine 150 meters from the manor's main building, a slowly crawling centipede suddenly stiffened before it relaxed.

Almost at the same time, its body vanished from its location. Dwayne Dantè in his blue and white checkered pajamas had appeared.

Klein had swapped places with his marionette again!

He decided to use this method to secretly tail Qonas Kilgor and figure out where he was going or what he was planning on doing.

Although he could only "move" 150 meters a time, and it took two to three seconds in between "moves" due to the process of turning the target into a marionette, this was more concealed compared to Flaming Jump or Teleport. It made it difficult for Qonas Kilgor to detect him.

After all, he was dealing with a demigod. Even in domains where one's spiritual intuition wasn't the best, a demigod wasn't to be underestimated!

By the same logic, Klein didn't rely on Creeping Hunger to hide in the shadows. This was because it was relatively slow even though it concealed him rather well. It was impossible for him to catch up to the demigod.

Under the dark night sky, from Maygur Manor to the south bank of the

Tussock River, the rats, snakes, spiders, fish that were active in that stretch of land stiffened up and turned sluggish.

They were converted into marionettes one after another. With their help, Klein constantly “moved” without causing a stir. Soon, he arrived at the south bank of the Tussock River, and after catching up to Qonas Kilgor, he maintained a distance of one kilometer.

To a Bizarro Sorcerer, even if a marionette were to go beyond his range of control, it wouldn’t immediately escape from its controlled state or die immediately. Without a Bizarro Sorcerer’s consciousness as a catalyst, this process was rather slow and needed nearly ten minutes. Therefore, Klein wasn’t worried that he would lose Enuni, who was lying in bed, while he did his tailing. As long as he returned within ten minutes, he could continue controlling his marionette.

Silently, Klein followed Qonas Kilgor as they went upstream. Passing through the dense forest, they climbed up a mountain beside the bank.

At this moment, Qonas Kilgor, who wasn’t wearing a vest or coat, suddenly stopped. He checked his surroundings and widened the range of his search as though he was trying to claim his territory.

Upon seeing this, Klein didn’t dare stay any longer. He immediately switched places with his marionettes and retreated repeatedly, pulling away to a distance of nearly three kilometers from the deputy director of MI9.

At this moment, he gave up control of the marionettes ahead of him. The death of a few bugs wouldn’t incur any suspicion.

This was all too common in the outskirts and in the forests!

King of the Five Seas Nast can create a fighting environment that’s favorable for him. Will Qonas Kilgor, who’s also a Black Emperor pathway demigod, have the ability to demarcate such a region. He can change, boost, and use certain rules and make whoever tails him expose themselves without being able to hide? It’s very possible! Klein warily took out a gold coin he placed in his pajama pocket. He ran it through his fingers and flipped it.

This time, he deliberately controlled his strength and didn’t produce a flicking sound. The gold coin flew up in silence and landed in his palm.

Without needing to look down, the gold coin’s face was naturally reflected in his mind.

It was heads!

This meant that the anomaly ahead contained extreme danger!

As expected of a demigod. Such abilities sure are enviable… However, do you think you can avoid my “tailing”? Klein scoffed inwardly and found an abnormally secluded spot and made himself turn into Gehrman Sparrow.

Following that, he clasped his hands and pressed it to his mouth, whispering:

“Blessed of the sea and spirit world, guardian of the Rorsted Archipelago, ruler of the undersea creatures, master of tsunamis and storms, the great Kalvetua…”

After praying, Klein immediately took four steps counterclockwise and arrived above the gray fog. He sat at The Fool’s seat and beckoned for the bone scepter with blue gems embedded at its tip.

Then, with the help of his prayer, he utilized the Sea God Scepter’s responding to believers and saw the area around Gehrman Sparrow.

He then raised his field of view and took in the surrounding area. Using this as the origin, he expanded his vision to five nautical miles. This was the limit of what the Sea God Scepter could observe with the help of its believers.

And this way, the area where Qonas Klein had designated—one that no object could escape his notice—appeared in Klein's vision.

†

In the dock area, inside a warehouse with plenty of goods.

"Love…" After Trissy chuckled, her figure grew faint as though she was bathed in the luster of a lake at night.

In the blink of an eye, Trissy, who had been bound tightly with layers of silk by Demoness of Unaging Katarina Pellè, turned into an illusory mirror.

It was a full-body mirror taller than a person. Aqueous light shimmered within as a ghostly halo grew out of it as though it was a door leading to another world.

At that moment, it didn't reflect the scene in front of it. Instead, it outlined a room.

The room was dimly lit. The bed and furniture had been diced up into countless small pieces which were scattered everywhere. Only the central region was spick and span.

[image]

Trissy stood there, wearing a dark black dress. Her hair cascaded down smoothly as it fluttered in the wind, accentuating her face's abnormal fairness. She looked like a female ghost as spoken in folk tales.

She wasn't actually present and was using the illusory mirror to project her figure and strength remotely. It was as though everything was real.

Therefore, she wasn't flustered at all when she was being controlled and hunted.

Upon seeing this scene, Katarina Pellè, who wore simple and holy white robes, didn't hesitate to let out a shriek.

Invisible waves quickly spread out as her hair flared up, each strand clear and distinct. They were thick and dyed with a grayish-white color.

The illusory full-body mirror suddenly vibrated and shook as though it was on the brink of breaking apart.

And in the messy room it reflected, the fragments of the bed, desk, and chairs turned grayish-white, losing their luster as though they were rocks.

The brownish-yellow floor in front of Trissy turned into grayish-white rocks as it quickly extended towards the only human in the room like a surging tidal wave.

Trissy didn't attempt to resist as she turned around and waved her hand back while leaping towards the open window.

In midair, invisible spider webs that belonged to her phased into existence. They turned dark as they spread towards the grayish-white colors.

At the same time, the dark and profound full-body mirror produced one crack after another. Amidst illusory shattering sounds, it broke apart and vanished.

However, before the full-body mirror completely vanished, the grayish-white colors receded in a strange manner inside the petrified room, materializing into a figure.

The figure wore a simple, holy white robe and had luscious raven-black hair. She looked both mature and innocent, as though she had a pair of profound and childlike blue eyes. She was Demoness of Unaging Katarina who had just been inside the warehouse a moment ago.

Viscount Stratford could no longer see the situation inside the "opposite" room once the ghostly glow dissipated.

He retracted his gaze and cast it onto Shermane. He wore a mixed look in his eyes before he recovered.

“Trissy really was patient. To deal with me, she actually spent months to nurture a new Demoness.” Viscount Stratford shook his head with a chuckle. “What did she want you to gain from me?”

At that moment, with Trissy’s connection being severed, the spider webs around Shermane had loosened. They were unable to bind her and restrict her freedom.

This beautiful girl wore a blank expression as she replied with a vacant look in her eyes, “She wanted me to know who you are truly loyal to.”

Without waiting for Viscount Stratford to say a word, she asked hesitantly, her eyes making it obvious that she had difficulty finding the words:

“How many of those promises that you made to me were real?”

Viscount Stratford was taken aback before he chuckled.

“You’re probably the most silly and most naive Demoness I’ve ever met…”

Shermane’s expression froze on her face as the glimmer in her eyes that she found so hard to regain faded bit by bit.

†

Outside the warehouse, Xio and Fors were hiding in the shadows, observing the silent target area.

They had followed Viscount Stratford here!

Their patience had paid off, as they discovered this captain of the royal guards secretly leaving his mansion in the dead of the night, rushing to the dock area near the Backlund Bridge.

Using Xio's power as a Sheriff, they followed him all the way here by keeping a huge distance between them. They had also confirmed that he had entered the warehouse in front of them.

In addition, they also sensed that Viscount Stratford's condition had worsened as though he had been injured.

"Actually, we had the opportunity to take action while on our way here…" Fors looked at the warehouse's entrance and murmured.

Xio replied without looking at her, "But you said it yourself that you have a nagging feeling that things aren't that simple and wanted to wait."

"This might be the intuition of an Astrologer. It might also be an act of procrastination…" Fors replied in a self-deprecating manner.

They didn't say anything more as silence ruled once more. They continued waiting patiently.

At this moment, a pitch-black flame was ignited on the rammed earth in front of them.

The strange flames rapidly dispersed and kept close to the ground as it swept away. It then outlined a row of Loenese text:

"This is the chance you've been longing for."

Xio's and Fors's pupils dilated at the same time. Then, they looked at each other, at a loss for words.

After a few seconds, Fors finally couldn't help but ask, "What do we do?"

Chapter 1021 - Cross

◆

Xio hesitated when she heard Fors's question.

“We were discovered…”

They had said something similar before, but they were repeating it again now. However, it didn't have the same meaning. Previously, it was referring to being discovered by the guardian or monitor when she recognized Sherman. Now, the crux of the matter was that their choice and corresponding actions were expected and arranged by the person behind the scenes. They had no secrets to speak of.

This meant that the chance that Xio had been longing for might've really appeared, but what lay behind this matter was inconceivable.

“If we follow the intention behind this ‘message.’ The final outcome will depend on whether she has good intentions, but that's not something under our control,” Xio added from a rational angle.

The reason why she had used “she” to represent the person behind the scenes was because she had recalled the fragrance she smelled when she lost Sherman the other time.

Fors listened quietly and nodded in agreement.

Yes, we're too passive in this matter. The best option is to leave this place…”

As soon as she finished speaking, she looked at the warehouse. She opened her mouth but didn't say anything further.

She was reminded of the possible situation Sherman was in, and she suspected that "he" was in grave danger. However, she deliberately ignored it in the end and didn't mention it.

To her, Sherman was a person who existed in Xio's descriptions. He was no different from a character in a novel. If she had the strength and opportunity to save him in passing, she was willing to do so, but to bear the risk because of that and allow her friend to be rash, putting her life in danger was definitely not something within her considerations.

Xio nodded and said, "Alright, we'll leave now.

"However, the person who left that 'comment' definitely wouldn't be happy to see us do so. She will definitely hinder us.

"Uh, let's do it this way. We'll escape in different directions and make that person choose one person. Whoever successfully leaves this area will immediately cause a commotion and attract the official Beyonders."

"Why don't we directly cause a commotion here?" Fors subconsciously raised a question.

"It will definitely be stopped or foiled!" Xio gave her excuse.

Fors nodded thoughtfully.

"Makes sense.

"Alright, let's not delay it any further. Let's begin."

Xio didn't say another word as she took out her transparent, nearly invisible triangular blade. With her back bent, she leaped out of her hiding spot and ran out of the harbor amidst the shadows.

The triangular blade was a mystical item she had spent 500 pounds through Ma'am Hermit to get the Artisan to forge with the ancient wraith's powder and remnant spirituality. It was called Wintry Blade.

Anyone hit by this weapon—even if it were a gentle touch—would be frozen stiff. They would even lose control of their thoughts as though they were possessed by a wraith. At the same time, once the battle continued, Wintry Blade's enemies would gradually have their thoughts turn sluggish and their actions become rigid and dull, even if they didn't touch the triangular blade.

And Wintry Blade's negative effects wasn't that terrifying. Furthermore, there was only one—the wielder would slowly lose their body temperature and transform into an undead. Once a certain time limit was exceeded, this process would become irreversible.

Therefore, Xio had recently enjoyed jogging more or riding a bicycle at lightning speeds to generate heat to resist the loss of temperature.

But even so, she had only managed to extend the time it took before she kept Wintry Blade away from her body from three hours to four hours.

After running a certain distance, Xio turned back and realized that Fors had already passed through a wall and departed. She had vanished from where they were hiding.

After staring for two seconds, Xio bit her lip and suddenly turned around and changed direction.

She headed straight for the warehouse!

Soon, she arrived beside her destination, but she wasn't in a rush to enter. She looked up and observed the area above her, seemingly trying to find another passageway, one that was less noticeable to the people inside.

At that moment, her keen senses made her turn her head and see a figure appear around the corner of the wall.

The figure wore a black dress with a head of brown, curly hair. She had a pair of light blue eyes. It was none other than Fors Wall.

Didn’t you leave?” Despite being surprised, Xio didn’t forget to lower her voice.

Fors curled her lips and said, “Weren’t you fleeing too?”

Xio was momentarily at a loss for words. After a few seconds, she asked, “How did you notice it?”

You didn’t even mention Sherman. That’s completely unlike you! I’ve already prepared a reason to persuade you!” Fors quickly replied.

Xio was taken aback as she said with a complicated expression, “You didn’t have to come back.”

Fors ignored her and pressed on the wall of the warehouse and said, “If we keep talking, perhaps we will no longer need to be stumped because it would already be over.

“Man, I actually didn’t think of such a good idea just now. I should’ve immediately insisted on going with you to save her. You definitely would’ve persuaded me otherwise and would think of doing it yourself. If we repeated the conversation a few times, everything would’ve ended on its own.”

Xio gave her friend a look and, without any hesitation, stood by her side with Wintry Blade in hand.

Fors immediately flipped Leymano’s Travels and augmented her friend with Beyonder powers. Then, she put away the spellbook and grabbed Xio’s shoulder with one hand, pressing the other on the wall again.

While Xio was waiting for Door Opening, she realized that Fors hadn’t immediately used her powers.

This best-selling author took a deep breath and quickly said, “After entering, we’ll hide and observe. After confirming that there’s a chance to do something, we’ll take action.

"If there's really no chance, or if we can't seize an opportunity for sure, we'll leave as soon as possible. That way, we can at least avenge Sherman and not be buried alive with him!

"Only by being alive will all kinds of possibilities open up for us…"

Xio immediately nodded and replied in a stern manner, "Okay."

Fors wanted to say a few more words, but considering how she had wasted some time and couldn't afford to waste any more time, she "opened" the illusory door and passed through the wall with Xio, coming behind a row of wooden crates.

With her no longer being a greenhorn in such operations, she instinctively crouched down and pulled out Leymano's Travels and flipped to a particular page.

Xio similarly didn't dash in. She bent down and moved her eyes to a gap between the crates and observed the empty region.

The female-looking Sherman was sitting on a wooden crate without any signs of anger. Her brown hair was gently fluttering in the wind.

And standing in front of her was Viscount Stratford. This captain of the royal guards tightened his collar and was surveying the area, a mystery as to what he was looking for.

"Unfortunately, you're only a Demoness."

"Don't worry. I will let you die without any pain. You will be completely purified."

As he spoke, he took out an item from his inner pocket.

Xio used her enhanced vision from the Interrogator potion, and she clearly identified the item.

It was a cross accessory covered in bronze. There were a few sharp, jagged protrusions, looking as though it had once impaled someone.

Its style and characteristics were things that the various nations in the Fifth Epoch's Northern Continent didn't possess. It exuded ancient vibes.

Very good. You know that resistance is futile," Viscount Stratford said as he pressed one of the fingers he used to hold the bronze cross onto the spike.

His bright red blood immediately flowed out and was absorbed by the spike, seeping into the object.

The mottled bronze on the cross's surface disintegrated, revealing a corporeal form beneath that was a blob of light.

In just a second or two, the item Viscount Stratford held had turned into a resplendent cross!

It emitted a pure and flawless glow, illuminating the surroundings in an abnormally bright manner.

The wooden crate's shadows quickly receded as the dark splotches on the wall evaporated like water.

Beside Shermane, the countless spider webs that originally belonged to Trissy floated up and struggled in the fire, melting in just mere seconds.

The light grew brighter, but they weren't blinding. Black flames burst out of Shermane's body along with crystalline ice. They turned dim, transparent, and eventually vanished under the illumination.

Within the range of the resplendent cross, there weren't any traces of evil or abnormalities present. Not one inch of darkness remained!

Seeing Sherman's expression slowly distort, Xio couldn't help but shoot Fors a glance.

She could clearly sense the terror of the resplendent cross, and she was beginning to waver about saving her.

Fors also noticed what was happening and pointed to Leymano's Travels. She raised her left index finger and whispered into Xio's ear, "There's only one chance.

"I will work hard to create it for you. If it's not successful, or if you can't be certain of it, we will give up."

Xio didn't hesitate as she nodded solemnly.

Fors immediately straightened her body and flipped Leymano's Travels to the charred-yellow page.

This page was filled with complicated, twisted, indescribable symbols and labels. It gave one the feeling of a strong gust of wind.

Sailor pathway's demigod power—Hurricane!

After observing her surroundings once again and confirming that there weren't any other enemies, Fors's gaze penetrated through the gap in between the wooden crates and locked onto Viscount Stratford. She then slid her finger gently across the charred-yellow page.

With an exploding whoosh, a visible hurricane soared up beneath Viscount Stratford's feet and rushed upwards.

The captain of the royal guards wasn't able to maintain his balance from this sudden attack. He was lifted up by the hurricane and was slammed into the warehouse's ceiling.

Boom!

The warehouse's ceiling was torn apart by the hurricane as portions of it collapsed. Some of the fragments spun around amidst the wind as they flew higher and higher.

Viscount Stratford nearly fainted from being slammed, and he failed to hold onto the resplendent cross, allowing it to fly out of his palm.

When the spike with a sliver of his blood left his finger, the mottled bronze covered the cross's surface once more.

The flawless light vanished in turn.

Upon seeing this, Xio didn't hesitate to rush out of her hiding spot. Her eyes first reflected Viscount Stratford's figure before two blinding bolts of lightning lit up.

Psychic Piercing!

Chapter 1022 - Answer

◈◈◈

Amidst the violent hurricane, Viscount Stratford was like a helpless leaf that was pitifully thrown about as though he could be torn to pieces at any moment.

In this state, he couldn’t react at all, much less speak. All he could do was rely on a Disciplinary Paladin’s powerful body to barely hold on, hoping that he wouldn’t lose a limb or head inside this terrifying hurricane.

He originally believed that the hunt had succeeded and that Trissy’s capture was at hand. Furthermore, he was extremely certain that his target didn’t have helpers; hence, all his attention was focused on Shermane. To his surprise, he suddenly became the prey and fell into a trap without any prior warning.

Upon realizing that the hurricane was beginning to weaken and that he had only suffered some damage from the impact and didn’t receive any fatal wounds, Viscount Stratford hurriedly tried to regain control of his body in preparation for the upcoming battle.

At that moment, he felt a stabbing pain in his head which felt as though a sharp dagger had been impaled into it before being twisted a few times.

This feeling was something that Viscount Stratford felt was both familiar and unfamiliar. This was because, although he had never experienced it directly before, he had “attempted” it on several targets to observe their reactions.

This was one of the Beyonder powers he was most proficient with!

Psychic Piercing!

Bang!

Upon being attacked, Viscount Stratford, who had failed to adjust his physical state, slammed into the ground hard as the bronze cross loudly fell several meters away.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Xio held Wintry Blade and took a huge stride, dashing straight for Viscount Stratford who was struggling to get up.

As for Fors, she had already flipped through Leymano's Travels and flipped it open to a page that resembled a goatskin parchment.

As her fingers slid across the page, Viscount Stratford's shadows, which had surfaced once again, came to life, condensing into black chains that wrapped around its target, binding him tightly.

Viscount Stratford, who had just managed to catch his breath and become alert, still hadn't had the opportunity to choose the target for his "punishment" and apply certain restrictions when he once again lost his freedom. Even his mouth was bound by a shadow chain.

Abyss Chains!

It was Abyss Chains from the Sanguine or Moon pathway's Mid-Sequence Beyonders!

Fors had used it once and was rather fond of this Beyonder power. She found it very useful, so she had spent gold pounds to get Mr. Moon, who had become a Viscount, to record it.

Bang!

At this moment, Viscount Stratford suddenly unleashed power that surpassed his previous strength, tearing the shadow chains apart.

He had chosen the “bindings” restricting him to be the target of punishment!

But at that moment, Xio had already rushed in front of him like a high-speed train, thrusting that transparent triangular blade.

Amidst a splotching sound, the Wintry Blade stabbed into the target’s abdomen.

Viscount Stratford’s body stiffened once again as his eyes glazed over as though he had turned into an ice sculpture.

Xio released her hand and allowed Wintry Blade to remain stabbed into the stomach of the captain of the royal guards, seemingly hoping that the wraith which might’ve existed on the weapon would continue “Possessing” her target and forcibly bring him under control.

Right on the heels of that, she swung her arm and slammed a punch right below Viscount Stratford’s ear.

After two heavy blows, Viscount Stratford fainted without even letting out a grunt. His stiff body collapsed once again.

After completing this strike, Xio left her back to Fors and immediately moved past the staggering Viscount Stratford, who had Wintry Blade in his stomach, and dashed to Sherman who remained sitting on a wooden crate.

Fors flipped through Leymano’s Travels once again, using other Beyonder powers to add another layer of restrictions onto Viscount Stratford’s body. Then, she walked out of the row of wooden crates she had been hiding behind and first approached that bronze ancient cross.

The scene she saw made her suspect that it was an item at the demigod level. In the parlance of official Beyonders, it was a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact.

And with Viscount Stratford carrying and using it, she believed that the negative effects of the cross weren't that direct. She could attempt to pick it up.

Of course, as a former Astrologer, Fors took out the pure crystal ball as she walked, quickly doing a divination. "There are no problems…" Fors glanced at the outcome and quickened her pace.

At this moment, Xio had already rushed in front of Sherman. Looking at this friend who had turned rather beautiful, she was momentarily at a loss for words.

To her, Sherman's condition was in a terrible state.

This Demoness's hair was floating up with each strand turning thick as if they were tiny snakes.

On the ends of the "tiny snakes," some had eyes or mouths. They appeared extremely bizarre and terrifying.

On Sherman's face, a black paint-like mysterious pattern suffused out of her skin and was rapidly spreading across her body.

Her slightly vacant eyes quickly reflected Xio as she gradually recovered her spirit and, along with that, also came a little confusion and pain.

She opened her mouth and stuttered, "Xio… I'm in so much pain…"

Xio's vision instantly blurred.

Although she was still lacking in many of the details regarding the mysterious world's general knowledge—since the Tarot Club's discussion was just way over her head, and the information she got from MI9 was mostly about secret organizations—she still knew quite a bit about losing control. Among unaffiliated Beyonders, it was something that couldn't be avoided.

Therefore, Xio knew that Sherman was beginning to lose control. It was irreversible, and the situation would only worsen.

Sherman seemed to sense her state as she gasped for breath, revealing a weak smile. She said with difficulty, “Kill me… I’ve done… too many unspeakable sins… I’ve also obtained… what I’ve wanted…”

Xio’s tears dripped down. Without hesitation, she flipped her hand, drawing her backup weapon—an ordinary revolver. She then placed the revolver at Sherman’s forehead.

Sherman smiled as a mesmerizing charm appeared in her eyes once again.

“Call me… Call me Shermane…”

“Shermane.” Xio couldn’t help but frown as tears brimmed in her eyes.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

She repeatedly pulled the trigger and fired the bullets inside.

Fresh flowers bloomed at once, red and beautiful.

Fors pursed her lips unknowingly when she saw this.

After two seconds, she let out a long sigh. She bent down and reached out for the bronze cross.

Just as her fingers touched the item, it felt like she had touched fire. It was hot and scalding, hot enough to burn the soul.

Fors instinctively retracted her hand, feeling alarmed and puzzled.

She remembered that Viscount Stratford had never acted in such a manner before.

As her thoughts raced, Fors glanced at Viscount Stratford and kicked the bronze cross towards the nearby Xio.

“Give it a try.

“Also, we have to leave immediately. The commotion from earlier will definitely attract the official Beyonders! Also, who knows what the person who left the 'message' will do!"

Xio, with her reddened-eyes, didn't say a word. She bent down and picked up the bronze cross. She didn't feel any sense of discomfort the entire time.

Uh… Fors didn't ask why as she walked to the stiff Viscount Stratford's body and warily looked around.

After Xio put away the bronze cross, she picked up Shermane's corpse and returned to Viscount Stratford's side.

"That item is very precious. His status is also very important. We'll definitely be the targets of the royal family's pursuit efforts. We need to do some interference…" Fors looked down at Viscount Stratford as she muttered to herself in thought.

She quickly made a decision. She raised her hands, lowered her head, and began piously chanting Mr. Fool's honorific name.

She didn't believe that them giving up the bronze cross would stop the royal family from pursuing them due to being perceived to have lower priority. Therefore, without any hesitation, she prayed to Mr. Fool for help.

To her, sacrificing the item to Mr. Fool was better than staying there.

Almost at the same time, she saw a holy angel with twelve pairs of fiery wings.

A phantom projected out of the angel as it descended from the sky, wrapping her and Xio in layers of flaming wings.

Once this was over, Fors was just about to say something when she felt her body quiver. She felt a particular sense of horror and evil permeate from the void.

Her eyes focused as she didn't hesitate to crouch down, reaching out her hands and grabbing Xio and Viscount Stratford's calf.

At the same time, the final dark green stone with burn marks on her bracelet emitted a blue and illusory light.

In the blink of an eye, the bodies of Fors, Xio, Viscount Stratford, and Shermane turned transparent as they vanished from the spot.

In seconds, they left the docks area and appeared on the outskirts of St. George Borough.

During this process, Fors had even used her Beyonder power as a Scribe to “RecordM”Traveling.M

After observing her surroundings and confirming that there was no one around since they were in the forests, Fors released Xio and Viscount Stratford and straightened her body.

With the blessings of Mr. Fool's angel, there shouldn't be much danger. The person who “left the message” won't be able to lock onto us. Fors heaved a sigh of relief before saying with a lingering sense of fear, “The person who descended upon us towards the end was definitely a saint. Thankfully, we quickly escaped…”

Xio gently lowered Shermane's corpse and said in thought, “If the person who ‘left the message’ was monitoring Shermane, then she might've already found out where we live. We can't return there.”

“Yes, we need to change our residence,” Fors said with great experience. Then, she cast her gaze at the unconscious Viscount Stratford. “You can interrogate him now. Make every second count.”

As she spoke, she handed Leymano's Travels to Xio and exhorted, “There's Telepathy on it and it's used with candlelight. Also, start with the simple and unimportant questions to lower his resistance.”

Xio received the spellbook with a solemn expression. However, her wrist trembled, unable to hold Leymano's Travels. Pa!

The bronze notebook dropped onto the ground as Xio said with a frown, "It's like fire…"

Fors had the same experience earlier, so after some thought, she said, Throw that cross away and try again."

Xio followed her suggestion and successfully picked up Leymano's Travels.

"It cannot be held with other mystical items…" Fors said with a nod when she saw this.

Xio didn't harp on this problem as she quickly prepared a lit candle.

Then, she drew Wintry Blade and relieved Viscount Stratford from his stiff and dazed state.

After the captain of the royal guards gradually awakened, she triggered the corresponding page in the notebook. Viscount Stratford instantly fell into confusion, and only the faint candlelight remained in his eyes.

"Why did Shermane try to approach you?" Xio asked the question she had just thought of.

Viscount Stratford replied blankly, "She was investigating who I'm loyal to."

Xio was taken aback as she instinctively asked, "Who are you really loyal to?"

Viscount Stratford slowly said, "His Majesty, of course.'

Chapter 1023 - Mason Dere's Death

◆

His Majesty… Xio was a little confused and filled with confusion when she heard Viscount Stratford's reply.

She found it inexplicable that Shermane would deliberately approach this captain of the royal guards just to investigate where his loyalties lay. This didn't seem to be something of great importance or value.

As for Viscount Stratford's answer, it was very normal and without any faults.

Shermane paid with her life for such an answer? Xio originally wished to press for the reason behind Shermane's investigation of such a trivial matter, but she immediately realized that it might involve key intel too soon. It might cause Viscount Stratford, who hadn't entered the necessary "state," to put up resistance. So she gradually held back her instinctive urge.

She thought for a moment and asked, "Do you know Mason Dere?"

"Yes," Viscount Stratford answered blankly.

Xio Derecha continued asking rather simple and unimportant questions.

"Who is he?"

"He's the former captain of the royal guards," Viscount Stratford answered simply without elaborating.

At this moment, Fors didn't listen to the Telepathy at such a superficial layer. She took out the pure crystal ball and placed it in Xio's pocket.

After transferring her items, she bent down once again and carefully attempted to pick up the bronze cross.

This time, amidst her trembling fingers, the soul-burning feeling didn't assault her. It allowed her to easily pick up the spiky item.

As expected, this cross cannot coexist with other mystical items… Uh, I still have Moon Paper Figurine and the remnant spirituality of the ancient wraiths, but it didn't react… This means that it can coexist with items that don't contain Beyonder characteristics, but won't resist spirituality and strength? If that's the case, will it also reject the Beyonder characteristic within my body? But it doesn't seem obvious… This is its other negative side effect, and it requires some time before it shows signs? Fors had a general idea about this ancient bronze cross. She then warily stored it away in a bag that contained all kinds of ritual materials.

After doing this, Fors looked down at the silver bracelet on her wrist. She confirmed that it was completely empty and was without any accessories hanging from it.

She had used up all five stones that allowed her to use Teleport.

However, Fors no longer felt as anxious as before. Although she believed that the "full moon ravings" would become clearer and more terrifying with the usage of each stone, she also knew that with Mr. Fool's help, this wasn't a problem. Over the past year, if not for her need to spend some time above the gray fog during every full moon or Blood Moon, she would've almost forgotten that she was suffering the torment from the "full moon ravings."

I hope that the curse will be lifted one day… After retracting her gaze from the dull silver bracelet, Fors couldn't help but sigh.

She then sincerely thanked Mr. Fool in her heart.

…No matter what “His” real goal is, “He” has rescued me time and time again. It hasn’t only been from the “full moon ravings”…

This cross’s level doesn’t seem low. I wonder if Mr. Fool will be interested and is willing to accept my sacrifice… I didn’t have any good items or news to repay “Him” for his benevolence. I finally see an opportunity…

Uh… This is a common spoil of war. I only own half of it. I wonder if Mr. Fool is willing to accept a sacrifice that I only have half the rights to… No, Xio has also been rescued by Mr. Fool before…

Hehe, perhaps it might please Mr. Fool… If “He” is satisfied, he might produce a few Beyonder powers and allow me to record them in Leymano’s Travels. No, Leymano’s Travels might not be able to record a deity’s powers. It won’t be able to withstand Mr. Fool’s powers… Hmm, the powers of the angels under “Him” will do too. No, no, no—I can’t be too greedy. I’ll be satisfied if Mr. World can demonstrate some of his powers for me to record…

Fors’s thoughts wandered as she had expectations akin to a dream.

This was the instinct of a best-selling author.

As for why she didn’t expect anything else other than the recording of Beyonder powers, it was because she realized today how important and terrifying Beyonder powers at the demigod level were.

If Leymano’s Travels didn’t have Hurricane recorded, she and Xio might not have been able to capture Viscount Stratford. They might not even succeed in escaping.

Even if she didn’t include the bronze cross, Viscount Stratford himself was a rather powerful Beyonder. If he hadn’t been injured by Hurricane in the beginning and left dizzy from the fall, their sneak attacks might not have reached this level of success. There was a high chance that they might suffer a counterattack.

Of course, separating the resplendent cross from Viscount Stratford was key to the victory of this brief battle tonight. And again, this was all thanks to Hurricane.

On careful thought, if we switched to a less pressing situation, and if the bronze cross and the demigod powers in the notebook were excluded, Xio and I might have a chance of defeating Viscount Stratford together. We might even have quite good odds…

The Beyonder powers recorded in the notebook are varied, and when put together, they're truly powerful. Together with Xio's Psychic Piercing and the effects of Wintry Blade, in a head-on battle, it's reasonable for Viscount Stratford to be defeated if he doesn't have any special mystical items.

A living Scribe with rich experience is actually this powerful… The more Fors thought, the stranger she felt.

She realized that she had become rather formidable!

Back when they were dealing with the ancient wraith, she had already come to a similar conclusion.

And this time, their enemy, Viscount Stratford, was the captain of the royal guards of the Loen royal family. He was at least Sequence 6 and was probably Sequence 5. Furthermore, he wielded an item at the demigod level. The level of his strength was clear, so this immediately allowed Fors to benchmark her "level" in the world of Beyonders. Although their victory mainly stemmed from a sneak attack, a successful one was also a manifestation of one's strength.

I'm already a Scribe. With a good combination of powers, together with Leymano's Travels, I'm already a rather strong Sequence 5… The only problem is that I lack experience… As Fors reflected poignantly, she cast her gaze at Xio and Viscount Stratford, continuing to listen to their questions and answers.

At this moment, Xio's question had already reached a rather key topic that could easily result in resistance.

"How did Mason Dere die?"

After asking this question, Xio's expression suddenly turned complicated and expectant. She was also in a dilemma, feeling pangs of excitement and fear.

This was a question she wished to ask eight years ago. In these nearly 3,000 days, she had been constantly searching for an answer, but she was also afraid that the answer wasn't something she expected. She was afraid that her father was really involved in a mutiny and thus was executed, marring his reputation.

Viscount Stratford didn't immediately answer Xio's question. He seemed to struggle before saying, "He discovered His Majesty's secret and tried informing the three Churches but failed. He was executed on the spot."

Xio fell into a daze for a few seconds before finally confirming the answer she received.

Although this answer shocked her, it made the heart in her mouth sink back to its original position as she calmed down.

"Secret… His Majesty's secret…" she muttered softly to herself and asked in a pressing tone, "What secret?"

Fors, who was beside her, was also shocked to the point of being dumbfounded. She never expected things to develop to this stage.

At that moment, Viscount Stratford's facial muscles visibly contorted. It took him a great deal of effort to say a few words ： "That secret is…"

Suddenly, his body jerked violently. His confused eyes regained their luster.

Right on the heels of that, his body collapsed from the most minute part, instantly transforming into a ball of "fireworks."

The blood-red "fireworks" soared into the sky and exploded, illuminating the night sky as they were reflected in Fors's and Xio's eyes.

This… Having experienced this previously, Fors didn't waste any time after her eyes momentarily blanked out. She immediately crouched down and grabbed Shermane's corpse and Xio's calf.

Their figures swiftly turned transparent as they vanished from the spot, Teleporting to the southern area of the bridge.

Above the gray fog, Klein, who was holding the Sea God Scepter, saw the "fireworks" that stained the sky red.

Back when Fors prayed to him, he had happened to be inside the magnificent palace observing Qonas Kilgor's actions. He conveniently took in the Red Priest card and used the paper figurine he cut, stirred the powers of the mysterious space, and gave a response.

During this process, he discovered that the person lying next to Miss Magician and Miss Judgment was Viscount Stratford.

This was one of the targets he had placed great importance on. Although he hadn't investigated him personally, he knew that there was something wrong with him. He knew that Demoness Trissy was targeting him, so he had remembered his appearance and characteristics at a ball.

Klein didn't know what the two Tarot Club members were up to, but since it involved Viscount Stratford, he definitely didn't write off its importance. He directly observed what subsequently happened to Miss Magician and Miss Judgment through the crimson stars.

After advancing to a demigod and obtaining even more authorities, he didn’t need the Tarot Club members to pray to directly observe their vicinity via the crimson star. This was similar to specially marking out believers, but Klein had always held great restraint towards that and had never attempted it.

This made him hear Xio’s and Viscount Stratford’s conversation.

And since he knew the underlying truth, he knew very well what the true meaning and importance of “who he was loyal to” was.

Combined with the discovery of the king’s secret by the former captain of the royal guards, Mason Dere, and how his attempt to inform the three Churches failed, Klein already had a guess.

He suspected that the greatest culprit behind the Great Smog of Backlund was the Loen Kingdom’s king, George III!

Chapter 1024 - Traditional Skills

◆

Inside the palace above the gray fog, Klein, who was holding the Sea God Scepter, looked at the Black Emperor card and the Tyrant card on the table in front of him with a heavy look.

Although Viscount Stratford's answer could only prove that King George III hid a great secret, had played a crucial role in the Great Smog of Backlund, and was highly likely to be a mass murderer, it couldn't be said that he had spearheaded everything and was the true mastermind. After all, he might only be a puppet. But to Klein, this was already enough. The target was clear, and he had clues to investigate what they were planning.

Seeing that Miss Magician and Miss Judgment had left the area where the abnormality had happened and were practically safe, Klein retracted his gaze and continued to observe the actions of MI9 deputy director, Qonas Kilgor, via prayer vision.

After a while, after "securing" the territory and confirming that no one was tailing him, Qonas Kilgor walked to a mountain wall and took out an object.

His entire body was tainted with a ghostly-blue glow as he gradually became hazy and blurry.

Then, he disappeared into thin air, his whereabouts unknown.

A rather special form of Traveling via a corporeal ritual or item that allows him to teleport from point to point within a very short distance… Back when I came out from the underground ruins where Ince Zangwill was, I also passed through a similar "door"… Yes, this place isn't too far from the mountain where Mr. A pursued me…

This setup needs a very suitable and secretive region. Without having any permission from the interior, just holding onto an activation item might not have any effect. And once something happens, destroying the corresponding ritual can prevent enemies from entering and stop them from finding the exact location… Klein nodded in enlightenment.

Combining the information which Viscount Stratford had just revealed, he had come to the initial conclusion that the king's secret and the ploy by the three factions were all hidden deep within the underground ruins. As long as one entered, the truth would be obtained through a careful investigation.

However, the difficulty in performing the investigations became apparent the more he thought about it—he had to first obtain the corresponding item and, using his disguise as a Faceless to fool the guards, he would "Teleport" in. None of these steps were easy.

According to Arrodes, Qonas Kilgor wasn't just a demigod of the Black Emperor pathway, he also possessed a rather powerful Sealed Artifact.

Even if Klein had made preparations, his odds of defeating the brigadier general of MI9 wasn't too high if he didn't seek the help of angels, much less finish him off in a stealthy manner without anyone realizing it. Furthermore, there were many difficulties in getting the help of an angel, as all of "Them" had their own extenuating circumstances that prevented "Them" from agreeing.

Even if I take down Qonas Kilgor without drawing the attention of anyone, I have to consider the danger that stems from entering… Based on what previously happened, it's impossible for them to not be on guard against a Faceless…A cooperation effort between the king, the Psychology Alchemists, and the Demoness Sect guarantees that their ploy is significant. It's extremely possible that there's an angel within the underground ruins… Klein frowned as he was at a loss for a reliable angle for investigation.

He tapped the edge of the long mottled table and decided to break out of the confines of his original thoughts and consider it from a different angle.

A few seconds later, a flash of inspiration came to him.

Why do I want to complete all these steps by myself?

The king's secret and plans are likely detrimental to the three Churches of Storm, Evernight, and Steam; otherwise, the former captain of the royal guards, Mason Dere, wouldn't have attempted to inform the three Churches. As a Blessed of the Evernight Goddess—at least for now—isn't it obvious what I should be doing?

This can also count towards my contributions to exchange for the Scholar of Yore potion formula!

In an instant, Klein's thoughts became extremely clear. He left the area above the gray fog without any hesitation and returned to the real world.

Dressed in blue and white checkered pajamas, Gehrman Sparrow raised his hands once more and made a prayer gesture, he chanted in ancient Hermes, "The Evernight Goddess who stands higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity. You are also the Lady of Crimson, the Mother of Concealment, the Empress of Misfortune and Horror, Mistress of Repose and Silence…"

This time, Klein didn't hold a ritual because he wasn't praying for a bestowment or response. All he wanted was to simply describe what Viscount Stratford had said, as well as his observations regarding Qonas Kilgor. Therefore, a direct prayer was sufficient.

After praying, Klein exhaled and stood in a remote area of the woods, patiently awaiting the possible developments.

In less than a minute, a figure suddenly appeared in front of him, like a quickly sketched portrait.

The newcomer was dressed in a simple robe. By the figure's waist was a belt made of tree bark. Long hair cascaded down as the figure was barefoot. She had a pair of dark and serene eyes, and she was none other than the highest- ranking archbishop and leader of the ascetics, Servant of Concealment, Arianna.

"Good evening, Ma'am Arianna," Klein bowed without any hint of surprise.

Arianna glanced at him and returned the greeting.

"Good evening."

"She" didn't make any small talk as "She" directly asked, "Qonas Kilgor is nearby?"

Yes, less than ten kilometers away." Klein pointed in the direction. "He has already used an item to vanish from his place. What should we do next?"

Arianna nodded slightly and said, "Wait for him to come out and find an opportunity to capture him."

I-isn't that too direct? You look quiet and plain, a cultured person—no, angel. Why are you so aggressive? If Qonas Kilgor didn't head for the underground ruins and had gone to some other secret base, or if he wasn't too deeply involved in the king's ploys, to have the Church's archbishop taking action on MI9's top brass would definitely be breaking news. The kingdom's fracturing would only worsen! Klein was momentarily unsure how he should respond to Arianna.

Although he would definitely attack Qonas Kilgor if he handled the matter himself, since the latter's involvement in the slave trade and the silencing of others was enough reason, the problem was that a demigod of a secret organization attacking a military top brass and an orthodox

Church's archbishop attacking a military top brass was two completely different matters.

As though sensing Klein's thoughts, Arianna calmly explained, "You will be the one taking action, not me."

Klein was a little unused to "Her" style.

Arianna continued, "I will create a concealed world for you and provide you the necessary assistance."

Battle in a concealed state? Fight with the help of an angel? Klein nodded with a thought.

"Then where shall the ambush be?"

Arianna answered succinctly, "In your Maygur Manor."

…I share the same thoughts… But I didn't want to say it myself… Klein took a deep breath and exhaled.

The choice for the ambush location stemmed from very simple logic—it was to do it when Qonas Kilgor was in his most relaxed and defenseless state.

Without a doubt, once Qonas finishes his secret mission and returns to Maygur Manor, he would believe that the most risky matters of the night were over. He wouldn't have his guard up!

For the same reason, if the king's secret and ploy was of utmost importance, it was possible for an angel to be "watching" over him while he returned from the underground ruins. Once he suffered an attack, the angel would be able to immediately respond. And only when Qonas returned to his normal daily routine would the monitoring be retracted. After all, there were only a limited number of angels, so it was impossible for "Them" to be so free.

Thankfully, I used the most covert method of tailing him, and the distance was far enough… From the looks of it, Ma'am Arianna didn't place the responsibility of the battle onto me to avoid the risk and reduce the negative effects, but because maintaining a concealed state and preventing the existence inside the underground mins from noticing the battle will drain a great deal of "Her" energy… Amidst his racing thoughts, Klein had a better idea of how he should proceed.

At this moment, Arianna added, "The concealed world's battle won't damage the real world."

That's pretty good… Klein muttered silently and said after some thought, "Then I need to immediately make some preparations."

"Alright," Arianna calmly replied.

"She" didn't even ask me what preparations I need. I was even prepared to say that I need a change of clothes… As Klein lampooned himself, he looked down at his blue and white checkered pajamas.

His left palm quickly turned transparent as he vanished from the spot.

Inside Maygur Manor, Klein's figure blinked into existence. Maintaining his appearance as Gehrman Sparrow, he quickly changed his clothes and wore a top hat.

Following that, he took out a piece of paper and used his finger to write.

The tip of his finger spewed out a scarlet flame, leaving charred marks without burning the piece of paper.

The charred marks quickly formed a complicated symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying.

With the formation of this symbol, the full-body mirror in the room turned dark as aqueous light rippled.

A silver outline appeared, forming one word after another:

"Exalted Great Master, your loyal and resilient servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning!

“Do you have something you would like to ask me?”

Yes.” Klein nodded and looked out the window. “What demigod powers and powerful Sealed Artifacts does Qonas Kilgor have?”

This was something he vaguely knew before. After confirming that Qonas Kilgor was a target, he gathered more information and now wished to know more so as to prepare a strategy meant to target Qonas.

The full-body mirror’s silver words warped and squirmed, quickly forming new words:

“Great Master, Qonas Kilgor is an Earl of The Fallen. To hide his strength, he wields a Sealed Artifact that also belongs to the Lawyer pathway. However, it also has some of the Arbiter pathway’s characteristics mixed into it. It’s called

Chapter 1025 - Random Anomalies

◆

The full-body mirror’s silver words seemed to have a life of their own as they vanished and reformed:

“The Concerto of Light and Shadow is a pocket watch. It can restrict certain actions in a particular area, and it can also strip certain Beyonder powers from the target. When the two are put together, the limitations that are created far exceed the two types.

“The Concerto of Light and Shadow is also able to ‘gift’ certain negative side effects to the target, making him sluggish; eager; avaricious; or lose their fighting spirit, only capable of focusing his attention on money.

“Apart from these effects, the Sealed Artifact’s wielder would have the ability to distort the target’s speech, actions, intentions, and attacks. It can reduce a lethal blow into a serious injury, or it could repel an attack, turning progression into retrogression, escaping into leading a charge.

“The negative effects of Concerto of Light and Shadow are rather serious. Amongst them, the main negative effect to take note of is that once it’s brought into combat, all the Beyonder effects produced in a certain region would intermittently experience random anomalies. It wouldn’t distinguish between friend or foe, making it hard to control and unpredictable. That also means that Lightning Strike might still create a bolt of lightning, but it might splash the target with a blast of cold water or summon unknown spirit world creatures.

“Due to this reason, Qonas Kilgor has deliberately sought out a mystical item that can make him sufficiently lucky at critical moments, hoping that the random intermittent effects will benefit himself. It’s definitely useful to a certain extent, but it’s not that great.

“…

“Qonas Kilgor also has a strange revolver. It originated from an anomaly during an evil god’s sacrifice. It’s called ‘Réver’s Shout of Despair’… It can shoot without bullets, and each shot possesses immense strength… It can shoot at a rapid pace like a miniature machine gun… Targets who are hit by it will suffer Réver’s shout of despair before he died. They will suffer different levels of pain, dizziness, and confusion…

“The biggest problem with the revolver is that the wielder will also hear the shout of despair. It just won’t be too frequent.

“…

“As an Earl of The Fallen, Qonas Kilgor no doubt has a qualitative change when it comes to ‘Distortion’ and the unreasonable ‘Bestowment.’ In addition, he can also ‘Exploit’ laws and ‘Magnify’ effects, and use ‘Disorder’ to disrupt order.

“Exploit can extend certain states for longer periods of time or end it ahead of time. It will make the rules more beneficial to himself. For example, after jumping into midair, the state of being away from the ground can be extended, achieving the effect of floating.

“Magnify can boost the effects or influence of his actions. It can make an ordinary attack become an execution. It can turn a hug from a distance away into a restriction.

“Disorder will influence the structure of objects, the standards of measurement, and the accuracy of attacks. It will make a seemingly massive building collapse, causing what seems like a huge distance to be shortened to that of a few paces, as well as allowing attacks that are aimed at him to miss their mark.

“Through Magnify, Exploit, and Distortion, Beyonders of the Lawyer pathway can achieve certain things that only Beyonders of the Arbiter pathway can accomplish.

“Of course, Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonder powers of the Lawyer pathway like Bribe are equally possessed by an Earl of The Fallen and are even stronger.

“…

“Great Master, I’ve finished answering your question. Is that okay?”

Your answer is like a guidebook. You must’ve been gathering information from the spirit world while delivering it… Also, must you seek praise even for matters such as this? Klein lampooned and nodded slightly.

“That’s right.”

After answering Arrodes’s question, he quickly got into the zone as he analyzed the powers and traits of the powerful Sealed Artifact which the demigod, Qonas Kilgor, had.

An Earl of The Fallen is indeed a Sequence 4 demigod existence. There are qualitative changes in various aspects. Be it “Bestowment,”“Distortion,”“Exploit,” and “Magnify,” none of them are easy to deal with. I might suffer if I’m careless…

Rather, Disorder isn’t terrifying. It’s basically an enhanced version of the Sequence 5 Mentor of Disorder’s power…

The Concerto of Light and Shadow does have traits of the Arbiter domain. And the most frustrating aspect about it is the negative side effects… To a Beyonder of the Seer pathway, my combat style is definitely closer to one of preparation, precision, and control. Once the battle begins, the moves will chain one after another. During this process, if a random deviation were to happen, the entire plan can easily be messed up and not be accomplished… It’s very dangerous…

As he thought, Klein discovered that the main problem stemmed from the Sealed Artifact named Concerto of Light and Shadow.

As a Beyonder who liked setting up traps for his enemy, Klein didn't wish that after throwing himself into a perilous situation through his painstaking planning and hard work, he would realize that the item would summon a rabbit just as he was using the Fate Siphon charm to switch fates with his target to turn the tables and finish off his opponent. Or perhaps it would turn into fireworks to celebrate the death of the user.

Qonas Kilgor can reduce the effects by raising his luck, but I can't do it. Fortune or Misfortune that's not at the angel level won't be effective on me… However, I have the marionette, Winner Enuni… Klein thought as he gave Arrodes the second question:

"How can the intermittent random anomalies of that Sealed Artifact be avoided?"

Silver words appeared out of the ripples of the deep mirror, forming a new sentence:

"There's no need to avoid it!

"Qonas Kilgor just needs to become unlucky, and for this, the demigods of the Evernight pathway are experts."

Makes sense… According to the theory of relativity, as long as Qonas Kilgor is more unlucky than me, I'll be the lucky one. Ma'am Arianna said that "She" can provide me with assistance… To "Her," secretly slipping some misfortune onto Qonas Kilgor before creating the concealed state should be very simple and easy… Klein immediately nodded cheerfully.

"Very good. That's it for today. I'll summon you again if there's anything else."

"Yes, Master! No problem, Master! Goodbye, Master~" On the full-body mirror's surface was a simple drawing followed by silver words.

Seeing the mirror instantly return to normal, Klein retracted his gaze and quickly simulated the battle that would happen in his mind.

Gradually, he came up with an idea, and grabbing onto that flash of inspiration, he proceeded forward in refining it.

After having a few tentative plans, Klein walked to the balcony and looked at the garden in the night sky, whispering, "Can you inflict misfortune onto Qonas Kilgor before the battle?"

After a brief silence, a calm and ordinary female voice rang in his ears:

"Yes."

"Then it's fine on my side," Klein immediately replied.

Tranquility quickly returned to his surroundings.

A rather cold breeze blew by, and Klein expressionlessly stared at the manor for a few seconds. Then, he pressed down on his silk hat, pulled the human-skinned glove on his left hand, and drew Death Knell from his underarm holster.

Right on the heels of that, he flicked his thumb and made the iron-black revolver's cylinder spin.

†

The night grew darker as the crimson moon occasionally tore through the clouds. Maygur Manor was completely in a state of deep sleep.

At this moment, a figure stealthily came from the Tussock River's south bank, taking two to three steps to return to his room.

He was none other than the deputy director of MI9, Qonas Kilgor, who wore a white shirt and black trousers.

This demigod with a stout look surveyed the area and didn’t notice any abnormalities. He gradually revealed a smile and walked to the bar counter in the guest room. Getting a cup, he picked up a bottle of Maygur red wine. He prepared to pour some for himself to celebrate the wonderful night.

At this moment, his spiritual perception was triggered as he looked up abruptly.

He saw the buildings with a few grayish-white chimneys suddenly become covered in shadows as if they were dyed with ink.

To the side of the chimneys, on one of the steeple landmarks of Maygur Manor’s main building, it was equally dark. The bright red moon was silently hanging behind the chimney.

The clouds and stars high in the sky had vanished. Apart from the gigantic crimson moon, there was pitch-black darkness.

Under the night sky, the flowers and trees were clearly in front of him, but they lacked any signs of life. They were dim, as though they were a great distance away.

Black and red, shadows and buildings, and the silence and plants presented themselves in front of Qonas Kilgor in such a strange state.

This… The demigod’s pupils dilated as he didn’t hesitate to respond.

He reached his left hand into his clothes and extended his right hand under his armpit, taking out two items.

Amongst them, he held a strange revolver in his right palm. It was entirely gray in color, bigger than an ordinary revolver. It looked like it was half the size of a sledgehammer that was used in classical battles.

Another unusual trait of the revolver was that it had six barrels, each rather thick. The mouth was dark, and its cylinder was embedded with more than ten ugly rivets, making it have a rather crude beauty.

Qonas Kilgor’s left hand held an iron-skinned pocket watch. On the watch’s face, half of it was filled with neatly arranged symbols that followed the order of time, while the other half was a chaotic mess. It even intruded into the neighboring region. On both sides, it seemed impossible to see the machinery behind them as they formed into a structure that looked even more complex and headache-inducing.

Almost at the same time, a figure emerged out of the gigantic crimson moon. It glided over at an extremely fast speed.

He grew bigger and clearer. He was a young man with black hair, brown eyes, and cut features.

The young man was wearing a silk top hat and a black trench coat. He held a unique revolver in one hand, and a transparent human-skinned glove covering the other. Under the bright illumination of the surroundings, he seemed to be burdened with the weight of the gigantic crimson moon.

Gehrman Sparrow.

Chapter 1026 - Two Restrictions

◆

Upon seeing the young man in the black trench coat appear with a black revolver in hand, Qonas Kilgor, who was no stranger to all the important figures in the world, immediately responded.

The thumb on his left hand that held the iron-skinned pocket watch was rapidly moving, reaching for one of the metal buttons on the messy inlays of the pocket watch. He suddenly raised his right arm, aiming at Gehrman Sparrow with the six gray gun barrels that formed a circle.

This process was like a fleeting spark that quickly came to an end. As for Qonas Kilgor's left thumb, it had pressed down.

He overcame his instinct and didn't directly use Restriction from the Concerto of Light and Shadow.

This was because he didn't know Gehrman Sparrow well enough, unsure as to what he was best at. Furthermore, the person with Gehrman Sparrow's appearance might not be Gehrman Sparrow. Blindly using Restriction would only be a waste of an opportunity.

He intended to observe and wait for a while longer before he came up with a more specific order to distort the laws. Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The strange revolver let out a roar of despair and spewed out a storm of black and icy bullets, instantly enveloping the enemy beneath the crimson moon.

At this moment, Gehrman Sparrow’s figure turned transparent and incorporeal.

At the same time, the bullets tore through the target in the black trench coat, tearing apart the afterimage he left behind.

And behind Qonas Kilgor, Gehrman Sparrow, with a cold expression, quickly appeared. His body was half-crouched, and he was leaning forward. The black top hat on his head appeared blood red under the crimson moon’s illumination.

He suddenly raised the black-barreled revolver in his hand, opening his mouth slightly while aiming and squeezing the trigger.

Bang!

The floorboard to the right of Qonas Kilgor exploded into countless fragments.

Gehrman Sparrow’s shot had been ridiculously far off the mark. Furthermore, its destructive power was clearly lacking.

This was the Distortion power of an Earl of The Fallen. It caused the bullet’s trajectory to deviate and have its power weakened.

Seizing this opportunity, Qonas Kilgor used “Disorder” to influence measurement standards, arriving above the balcony of the bedroom with one step.

Then, he half-turned his body, and with a smack, he pressed one of the metal buttons on his iron-skinned pocket watch. He then solemnly said, “Teleportation is prohibited here!”

Silently, Maygur Manor, which was being illuminated by the gigantic crimson moon, experienced an unknown change. Gehrman Sparrow, whose body had rapidly turned faint after firing, appeared out of the void again.

He had failed to successfully change positions.

Concerto of Light and Shadow—Restriction!

To Qonas Kilgor, no matter what Gehrman Sparrow was good at, he had to immediately “Restrict” his obvious ability to teleport. An enemy who could do close-quarters Teleportation at a high frequency wasn’t only irritating, but also dangerous!

Realizing that his Teleportation had failed, Gehrman Sparrow’s expression remained unperturbed. His body quickly warped as the colors faded from his body, leaving a deep darkness.

This “deep darkness” suddenly collapsed across the ground, fusing with the shadows in the region where the moonlight couldn’t reach, making him indistinguishable.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bullet holes riddled the spot where Gehrman Sparrow was previously standing, tearing the ground open.

Boom!

The area collapsed immediately, revealing the room before. However, no dust was thrown up.

And despite such a stir, Maygur Manor remained blanketed in deep shadows. No one was awakened or gave a response.

Qonas Kilgor suppressed the urge to “Restrict” the action of hiding in the shadows. Holding onto Rever’s Shout of Despair and Concerto of Light and Shadow, he calmly observed his surroundings and waited for Gehrman Sparrow to appear once again before launching his attack.

However, inside the collapsed room, the shadows were silent, and there wasn’t any movement. And outside the window, the steeple and chimneys remained immersed in an icy-cold darkness. The gigantic crimson moon seemed to be hanging over the roof.

The plants in the garden, the grapevines far away, and all the various classical windows seemed to degenerate into the background on this night. Despite being visible to the naked eye, they were imperturbable.

All of Maygur Manor was cold, dark, and silent, just like a forgotten corner that didn't garner the attention or incur discovery from others. There were no signs of life at all.

As a demigod, as an important figure in the intelligence community, Qonas Kilgor quickly had a theory. He suspected that the person was related to the authority of Concealment.

This gave him many ideas, but Gehrman Sparrow remained nowhere to be seen.

He actually didn't sneak attack and even gave up the chance to deliver a barrage of attacks, leaving me so many openings… Doesn't he know that a High-Sequence Lawyer or Arbiter is very difficult to deal with once they're prepared prior to the battle? A sense of puzzlement flashed across Qonas Kilgor's mind.

Using his observations of his surroundings and the relatively non-urgent situation, he quickly understood his current predicament. He knew that defeating Gehrman Sparrow wasn't key, but escaping the concealed world was.

If he couldn't leave this place, there might be more dangers awaiting him!

As long as I can leave this dark-styled Maygur Manor, even if angels were to descend, I don't have to worry since I'm in Backlund… Such artificial concealed worlds must have an opening. This is a law that cannot be avoided in the mysterious world… The usage and distortion of laws was what Lawyer pathway demigods were best at! Qonas Kilgor had many ideas come to him as he quickly made a decision.

He suddenly turned around and jumped from the balcony, flying off like he was a spring that was released.

This demigod of the military instantly reached a high altitude, but he didn't slow down or show any signs of falling.

He maintained this speed as he went higher and higher in altitude; thus, achieving flight.

Earl of The Fallen—Exploit!

This was the exploitation of laws. By extending the jumping process, he could maintain a much longer duration.

If Qonas Kilgor became a Sequence 2 angel, he could even jump onto the crimson moon with this Beyonder power.

While jumping in midair, Qonas Kilgor swung his right arm and released his "Disorder" Beyonder power.

He wanted to create a certain level of "Disorder" in Maygur Manor in this strange world. The true exit would then be exposed through the generated ripples.

Instantly, the flowers and grapevines in the background of Maygur Manor wavered. The black steeple, chimneys, and classical windows were covered in a faint shadow.

In the entire world, only the gigantic crimson moon which appeared to be right before them didn't change. It continued hanging silently in the sky.

That's the exit! Qonas Kilgor grasped the patterns from the disorder, and using some actual feedback, he determined where the exit was.

Without any hesitation, he exerted strength in his waist and used "Magnify" to forcefully change his direction, allowing him to rush towards the bright red moon.

At that moment, a figure appeared in front of Maygur Manor. It was none other than the cold-looking Gehrman Sparrow who wore a black trench coat and half top hat.

Whoosh!

A strong gust of wind appeared out of nowhere, sweeping Gehrman Sparrow upwards as he chased after Qonas Kilgor. Amidst the wind, he raised the iron-black revolver in his right hand and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

A bullet flew out, exploding into countless fragments.

They then turned into a storm that swept towards Qonas Kilgor.

Death Knell—Slaughter! It was a barrage of attacks!

Almost at the same time, Qonas Kilgor changed direction without any warning, plummeting instead of rushing towards the moon.

As a result, he dodged the bullet storm's assault as though he was prepared for it.

No, it wasn't the case—he was prepared! Although his main goal was to escape the changed Maygur Manor, he was still worried that Gehrman Sparrow would seize the opportunity to attack him. Therefore, he came up with a simple trap, planning to use his escape as bait to fish out the hiding Gehrman Sparrow. He could then take the initiative to heavily injure his opponent.

Halfway down, Qonas Kilgor's figure suddenly bounced back, having "Distorted" the direction he was heading in.

This time, his destination was the next "point" where Gehrman Sparrow was flying towards!

Right on the heels of that, he yanked his pocket watch-wielding left hand back and grabbed Gehrman Sparrow through thin air, pulling him from a distance of nearly a hundred meters away to just inches before him.

Earl of The Fallen—Magnify!

Whoosh!

Amidst the howling winds, Qonas Kilgor grabbed Gehrman Sparrow's clothes and pressed his strange revolver in his right hand forward.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Rever's Shout of Despair released countless bullets like a machine gun, instantly tearing Gehrman Sparrow's body into fluttering pieces of paper.

Qonas Kilgor's gaze froze slightly as he immediately moved his left finger and pressed one of the metal buttons on his pocket watch.

With a click, this Earl of The Fallen didn't hesitate to say in a domineering fashion, "Stand-ins are prohibited here!"

Just as he said that, the howling wind came to a stop. Maygur Manor returned to silence once again as it was blanketed by dark shadows.

Qonas Kilgor changed direction and began spiraling in midair in search of Gehrman Sparrow. However, there weren't any anomalies in the dark night sky.

This Earl of The Fallen hesitated for a moment before preparing to continue rushing towards the gigantic crimson moon.

At this moment, figures appeared in the garden, vineyard, and manor's main building. They either grew or became taller, rapidly taking form.

They all had black hair and brown eyes with sharp facial features. They wore silk top hats and black trench coats. They were all Gehrman Sparrows!

The only difference was that some of them were of normal build, some with their backs sunk inwards. The rest were bloated while others just a thin layer.

Upon seeing this scene, Qonas Kilgor immediately recalled a dangerous enemy he had once encountered.

One of the leaders of Intis’s intelligence department—a Bizarro Sorcerer!

Chapter 1027 - Deceit

◆ ◆ ◆

After Qonas Kilgor realized which Beyonder pathway his enemy belonged to, all the Gehrman Sparrows in the garden, vineyard, and main building, raised their left hand. They curled their middle finger, ring finger, and pinky, extending their index finger and thumb, making them take on the simple shape of a gun.

The index fingers that represented barrels and muzzles aimed at Qonas Kilgor in the air before their respective arms jerked up seemingly due to the recoil.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Amidst deafening noises, illusory doves appeared to the side of the Earl of The Fallen who was dressed in a white shirt and black trousers. They flew at him from every direction in a spectacular sight of utmost beauty.

This was the random anomaly that came about from the iron-skinned pocket watch and Concerto of Light and Shadow. It made the Air Cannons which could blast through houses turn into doves of peace that didn’t pose any threat!

Having used “Disorder” to disrupt the enemy’s collective volley, Qonas Kilgor wasn’t surprised to see the doves fly up and disperse into the air.

He was already mentally prepared.

He had already endured the negative effects that the Sealed Artifact had brought for years!

Taking advantage of this opportunity, he didn't hesitate to raise his hands which held the iron-skinned pocket watch and revolver, doing so in a bid to make them collide.

This was "Distortion," one that targeted all the Gehrman Sparrows beneath him.

To Qonas Kilgor, what frustrated him the most when fighting a Bizarro Sorcerer was that he was unable to tell if the enemy he faced was a marionette or the actual person unless the marionette was of a very crude level.

As such, he had many Beyonder powers he didn't dare use because they were ineffective against marionettes.

A large-scale "Prohibition" effect was still alright, but a single-target "Deprivation" was meaningless in actual combat. No matter how many Beyonder powers of a marionette were deprived, it didn't affect the actual body. When that happened, his opponent just needed to switch marionettes to resolve the problem.

Due to similar reasons, using "Magnify" on the mystical items on the marionettes was temporarily written off by Qonas Kilgor for strategic purposes.

Similarly, an Earl of The Fallen's "Bestowment" was of no use. It was even inferior to "Deprivation," as it could cause a Bizarro Sorcerer's marionette to lose its corresponding Beyonder powers. However, the negative effects "Bestowed" to a marionette was unable to interfere with it at all. Be it turning them sluggish, losing the will to fight, making them turn anxious, or only focus on money, it was meaningless to a marionette who was, in essence, dead, without any ability to think or inclinations to take action.

Therefore, Qonas Kilgor decided to first resolve the problem of identifying marionettes and the actual body.

In this aspect, others might not have a solution, but a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Lawyer pathway definitely didn’t have such worries.

There were rules to everything, and everything followed certain rules. As a Lawyer demigod, they were good at finding whatever loopholes there were to exploit them for themselves.

Together with his combat experience fighting other Bizarro Sorcerers, and how he had seriously considered solutions for dealing with them during the aftermath, Qonas Kilgor was quite certain that “Distortion” could suppress his enemy.

He knew that Bizarro Sorcerers could seamlessly switch between their actual body and marionettes. He planned on “Distorting” this, making the Bizarro Sorcerer only be able to switch to two to three marionettes!

This way, the difficulty of identifying the actual body and the marionette would be minimized.

Of course, if it wasn’t for the fact that Distortion couldn’t exceed certain limits, and area-oriented “Prohibition” effects had reached its limit, Qonas Kilgor definitely would’ve used a simpler method to deal with his opponent, such as forcing the Bizarro Sorcerer to only be able to swap with one marionette, or he would “Prohibit” swapping with marionettes.

Pa!

Qonas Kilgor smashed the Réver’s Shout of Despair and Concerto of Light and Shadow together as though he was compressing a large area to a small area.

Earl of The Fallen—Distortion!

Silently, he produced a red glow with a deep shadow in his hand. It appeared as though he was offering it to the Gehrman Sparrows in the garden, vineyard, and main building. As for the thick and thin, normal, or terrifying crazy adventurers, none of them experienced any abnormalities.

Qonas Kilgor also suffered a random anomaly, one brought about by Concerto of Light and Shadow!

It had changed the Distortion effects to summoning a flower from the garden below.

And at that moment, the Air Cannons that had turned into illusory doves continued!

At that moment, the battle between two demigods turned ludicrous, comical, and funny.

Of course, be it Gehrman Sparrow or Qonas Kilgor, none of them thought that was the case—especially the latter. He once again felt a familiar sense of helplessness.

He didn't hesitate as he slammed his palms together again, completing the "Distortion." He wanted to rely on quantity to resist the random anomaly effect.

However, Gehrman Sparrow wasn't a dead person who would abide by the etiquette of turn-based combat. The large swath of crazy adventurers either raised their hands in firing stances or used a Death Knell with questionable authenticity, aiming at the Earl of The Fallen in midair.

Meanwhile, Qonas Kilgor's heart stirred. He turned his head slightly to look up and saw that a figure had appeared once again inside the gigantic crimson moon that hung above the black steeple.

The figure was wearing a silk top hat, a black trench coat, a human-skinned glove, and an iron-black revolver. He had a cold expression and a deep outline. He was another Gehrman Sparrow!

The crimson moon seemed to weigh down on his shoulders as he glided down, his body expanding and turning clearer in the process. As for the iron-black long-barreled revolver in his hand, he had already lifted it and aimed it at Qonas Kilgor.

Bang! Bang!

A bullet that had transparent and translucent sections to it shot out from the muzzle, heading straight for Qonas Kilgor.

This was a Deprivation Bullet, one which was created using a Worm of Time that Amon's avatar had left behind!

It was different from an Arbiter pathway's "Deprivation." In essence, it was theft. It could steal the last three Beyonder powers the target had used and become empowered with the ability to use them.

However, as long as the Arbiter pathway's "Deprivation" selected a target, then they could directly deprive them of their ability. Although this bullet's "Deprivation" effect didn't require contact in order to be effective, the target needed to be within a certain range and unable to leave the area. In short, one was unavoidable and could only be resisted or weakened through one's level or Sequence's characteristics, while the other could effectively be dodged if the shot was detected ahead of time.

Klein had given up on a sneak attack and had stalled for time because, on the one hand, he wanted Qonas Kilgor to use up all his "Prohibition" and "Deprivation" powers on Beyonder powers that appeared important to him. On the other hand, he was also waiting for the first random anomaly to happen. Then, he would seize the gap in between the two anomalies to steal Qonas Kilgor's three most powerful powers with the Deprivation Bullet.

For these two goals, he even handed Death Knell and Creeping Hunger to Winner Enuni and made him appear like the real Gehrman Sparrow instead of a marionette.

From the current developments, Qonas Kilgor was about to lose "Distortion,""Disorder," and "Magnify."

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Gehrman Sparrows underneath collectively fired shots.

Suddenly, the Air Cannons and the Deprivation Bullet exploded, turning into red, purple, yellow, or green fireworks. However, they were unable to illuminate the deep dark sky.

Concerto of Light and Shadow had once again created a random anomaly!

It had produced its effects several times in a row without any pauses or delays.

Qonas Kilgor immediately smiled and slammed his hands together again.

All of a sudden, the young men wearing silk top hats and black trench coats under the gigantic crimson moon's illumination turned gloomy. Only two maintained their previous states.

The Earl of The Fallen's "Distortion" had taken effect!

This meant that Gehrman Sparrow could only switch places with those two normal marionettes!

Right on the heels of that, Qonas Kilgor didn't hesitate at all. He swung his arm and threw out the flower that was held together with the pocket watch out.

The flower sped up and seemed to gain weight of unknown origins. Like an arrow, it shot towards one of the normal marionettes.

This attack had been "Magnified" and also came with the effects of Bribe—Weaken!

Boom!

The flower was like a cannon that crashed heavily into the ground, causing a violent quake.

The surging waves it stirred up threw up the ordinary and unordinary humans in the vicinity, tearing or severely injuring them. The two marionettes which Gehrman Sparrow could swap with had been reduced to pieces of meat.

Qonas Kilgor maintained his calm. As he "Distorted" his trajectory in midair and circled the area while in flight, he raisedRéver's Shout of Despair and aimed it at the Gehrman Sparrow that had descended from the crimson moon.

At the same time, he silently prepared a "Bestowment."

He wanted to give his target the negative state of "lacking the will to fight"!

But at that moment, Qonas Kilgor's mind suddenly turned adrift as his thoughts turned sluggish.

This… Turning into a marionette… Qonas Kilgor's mental state stiffened as he understood his current situation.

He then saw that Gehrman Sparrow, who had descended from the crimson moon, wasn't as far away from him as before. The distance between them was only about a hundred meters.

He had unknowingly entered the range where Spirit Body Threads could be controlled. He had stayed there for at least three seconds without realizing it!

Deceit!

A Deceit Bullet made from Amon's avatar!

When Klein, who was actually Winner Enuni, had pulled the trigger, he hadn't only fired a Deprivation Bullet, but had actually fired twice!

This was to prevent any random anomalies from happening.

With an anomaly having happened once, even if another anomaly were to happen, only one of the two bullets that had been fired in intervals that were slightly spaced apart would be affected. After all, it was an intermittent random anomaly. It was possible to have it happen two to three times consecutively, but four or five consecutive occurrences were rare. Therefore, by attacking numerous times, there would be at least one or more instances that wouldn't suffer an anomaly!

Just now, the firing of the second Deceit Bullet had been concealed by the collective volley from the marionettes.

This was also why Klein made Winner Enuni use Death Knell—it was to rely on his luck!

Finally, he successfully deceived Qonas Kilgor and allowed Winner Enuni to secretly enter a safe distance of 150 meters from him and begin controlling his Spirit Body Threads and obtained initial control.

The moment this began, it meant that the Beyonder power was taking effect. Since there weren't any anomalies, it meant that there wouldn't be anymore!

Chapter 1028 - Saving Himself

◆

No good… My Spirit Body Threads… have been controlled by him… Having met Faceless Beyonders, Marionettists, or Bizarro Sorcerers, and even fighting senior Beyonders and demigods, Qonas Kilgor wasn’t unfamiliar with the predicament he was in. He was even rather familiar with it and knew quite a bit.

Therefore, he knew very well that he had fallen into a lethal trap. The time he had left to save himself didn’t exceed fifteen seconds!

And in these fifteen seconds, his thoughts would turn more and more sluggish, and the speed at which he could come up with solutions would slow down. Towards the end, just the thought of a solution would take him several seconds. Yet, his stiff and dull body would require plenty of time to actualize his thoughts. This also meant that he had about ten seconds to save himself!

Of course, he had considered the corresponding response for the last few seconds. It was to abandon his body’s control and reveal his Mythical Creature form. Through this, he could delay the time it took to become a marionette and then use his existence to disrupt the enemy, dealing a blow to them to a certain extent.

However, by doing so, even if he escaped the fate of becoming a marionette and even manage to defeat his enemy, Qonas Kilgor didn’t have much confidence in continuing to live.

He wasn’t a demigod who could freely switch between his human form and Mythical Creature form. He didn’t have the confidence that he could maintain his rationale in a Mythical Creature form.

In order words, the outcome of escaping the fate of becoming a marionette by releasing his Mythical Creature form likely meant that the human, Qonas Kilgor, would die, while a monster of the same name would occupy his body.

Because of that outcome, Qonas Kilgor wouldn't make such an attempt unless it was necessary.

While his thoughts weren't too sluggish, and with how he could hear Rever's Shout of Despair in his ears, this demigod of the military quickly came up with his first plan to save himself.

He moved his right thumb at a speed that couldn't be considered slow.

Earl of The Fallen—Magnify!

Qonas Kilgor didn't wish to "Magnify" a particular state of his or the attack of a particular Sealed Artifact; instead, it was used to "Magnify" Rever's Shout of Despair's side effects!

This special revolver allowed the wielder to hear the roar of despair from time to time, a rather serious blow to creatures without godhood, easily pushing them to the brink of losing control, to madness, to a mental breakdown, or mind blanking. And at Sequence 4, the effects of the roar was greatly mitigated once his body possessed the characteristics of a Mythical Creature.

To Qonas Kilgor, this roar was enough to turn his mind adrift and generate irascible mood swings. It didn't have much of an effect on him, and he had already gotten used to it.

And at that moment, he wanted to "Magnify" the "roar of despair" to a state where even a demigod wouldn't be able to tolerate it. He wanted to use the pain that came from this psychic piercing in his mind to escape the state of having his Spirit Body Threads being controlled!

As “Magnify” didn’t need any obvious actions, it was quick to show its effects. Opposite him, Gehrman Sparrow, who held Death Knell and wore a half top hat, was floating in midair with strong gusts of wind swirling around him. He didn’t make it in time to stop the Earl of The Fallen from successfully using this Beyonder power.

But in the next second, what Qonas Kilgor met in response wasn’t a terrifying roar but silence.

The ordinary roar that was originally present had vanished!

This was a random anomaly brought about by the Concerto of Light and Shadow!

Seriously… How unlucky… Qonas Kilgor’s thoughts slowly flashed past his mind. He didn’t have the luxury of time to feel disheartened as he immediately made a second attempt.

He raised his right hand in an unsteady manner, aiming Rever’s Shout of Despair at Gehrman Sparrow who stood 150 meters from him and was about to pull the trigger.

At the same moment, the strong winds that blew at his right hand suddenly disintegrated in an inward fashion, turning into scattered eddies.

Earl of The Fallen—Disorder!

Qonas had used this to withstand Gehrman Sparrow’s interference.

Following that, there was a series of thumping sounds. Like a machine gun, Rever’s Shout of Despair spewed out dangerous bullets without stopping.

Gehrman Sparrow’s black trenchcoat covered body jerked repeatedly, but he wasn’t hit.

The bullets grazed his outline and flew into the distance, shattering the windows and walls, causing one of the buildings to collapse in silence.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The subsequent bullet storm continued their barrage, and finally, Gehrman Sparrow was struck repeatedly!

Amidst splattering blood, Gehrman Sparrow kept struggling and shaking in the strong gust of winds like a paper figurine, looking as though he was about to tear apart at any moment.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The strange revolver finally stopped its “roar.” And apart from his head, Gehrman Sparrow was riddled with nasty gaping holes.

Typically speaking, this was definitely a state that only the dead had. However, Gehrman Sparrow continued controlling the Spirit Body Threads as though he was unaffected.

The ridiculous wounds on his body slowly but resolutely healed.

This was the effect of Flower of Blood.

This Gehrman Sparrow was actually Enuni!

The reason why he didn’t die in that storm-like attack was because he had released all his accumulated luck. It was also because Qonas Kilgor was sufficiently unlucky!

And the “roar of despair” that the bullets brought forth was nothing to a marionette.

Seeing that the violent attack failed to achieve the desired effect and that the amount of time he had left to save himself dwindled, Qonas Kilgor followed his thought out plan and slowly relaxed his five left fingers without any thought.

The iron-skinned pocket watch left his palm and dropped to the ground.

At such a critical moment, Qonas Kilgor decisively gave up the Concerto of Light and Shadow and made it stay far away from the battlefield so as to avoid the effects of its random anomalies.

Next, he might only have one or two chances to save himself. If another anomaly were to happen, the outcome was irreversible!

The Sealed Artifact which was a mixture of half order and disorder quickly plummeted to the ground. Qonas Kilgor moved his fingers with great difficulty as he faced Gehrman Sparrow, whose wounds were quickly healing.

He originally had two choices. One was to use the third method he had originally thought of to save himself, an action that only required a mere thought. The other was to "Magnify" his enemy's injuries and make him die on the spot.

However, when Qonas Kilgor was still able to think relatively quickly, he didn't expect "Gehrman Sparrow" to not die after suffering so many gunshots, even his control over the Spirit Body Threads wasn't affected. There was no subsequent followup to this plan.

And at this moment, his brain was already like a sluggish mush. He had no way of thinking too much. He didn't wish to waste any more time as he followed his plans.

Whoosh!

Around Gehrman Sparrow, who wore a transparent glove and iron-black revolver, the strong gusts of winds that held him up suddenly intensified and sent him flying up high.

Whoosh!

With the help of the strong winds, Gehrman Sparrow raced to the pitch-black sky under the watch of the gigantic crimson moon.

Earl of The Fallen—Magnify!

The strong winds that helped Gehrman Sparrow fly had been “Magnified” into a hurricane!

This way, the distance between him and Qonas Kilgor would stretch beyond 150 meters. That would terminate the process of turning the latter into a marionette!

Seeing his goal achieved, Qonas Kilgor, who had yet to regain his freedom, had his expression turn complicated bit by bit.

The hurricane rapidly expanded and swept over to him, engulfing him and throwing him high into the sky. It made it impossible for the distance between him and Gehrman Sparrow to open up.

He was truly unlucky.

Under the night sky, amidst the moonlight, the two figures became smaller.

Soon, the hurricane returned to normal as their momentum slowly diminished.

Seizing this opportunity, Qonas Kilgor.s nearly frozen mind had another idea.

“Stop…”

He stopped maintaining his power of flight and used gravity to plummet down like a meteor, doing so in order to rapidly open up a distance from Gehrman Sparrow.

Then, he ignored Gehrman Sparrow’s ability to control the wind and pursue him. He slowly pulled his left arm in front of his body like it was filled with rust.

It was the action of “closing a door.”

He wanted to use an Earl of The Fallen’s “Distortion” to create a wall-like seal in the air, putting an obstacle between Gehrman Sparrow and him, so that he couldn’t carry out his pursuit.

At that moment, the marionettes, the Gehrman Sparrows who were still alive underneath him, raised their left arms and made the gesture of firing a gun.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Bullets shot out, enveloping Qonas Kilgor in midair.

After the shockwaves dispersed, Qonas Kilgor was covered with several bloody holes.

Due to the pain and the jolting of his body from the first few bullets striking him, he had finally snapped out of the state of having his Spirit Body Threads being controlled. The speed of his thoughts rapidly recovered.

Following that, he “Disordered” the subsequent volley at the critical moment and “Distorted” his injuries, preventing himself from dying. All he suffered were serious injuries.

And Gehrman Sparrow, who had many mystical items and was swooping down from above, he was obstructed by the invisible wall. He failed to catch up.

With another “Distortion,” Qonas Kilgor’s descent speed slowed down as he gently landed on the ground.

Before he could do anything else, his body froze again as he stood stiffly on the spot.

He felt that his hands and feet were resisting him and not listening to his commands. He felt that there was an unfamiliar object hiding in his body!

Then, he saw a figure walk out of Maygur Manor’s master bedroom under the gigantic crimson moon’s illumination and stand on the balcony.

He had black hair and brown eyes, wearing a silk top hat and a black trench coat. His facial features were pronounced, and he was another Gehrman Sparrow.

This Gehrman Sparrow's right hand had the gesture of firing a gun. He then pulled back his hand and blew at it.

That was Klein himself.

What he shot out wasn't an Air Bullet but a Parasite Bullet delivered with an Air Bullet's might!

It was a Parasite Bullet created from a Worm of Time that Amon's avatar had left behind!

It could create a Worm of Time that couldn't live too long, allowing it to "Parasitize" the target and be controlled by the user.

Klein had deliberately taken out the bullet and held it in his hand, specifically to wait for this opportunity. He was waiting for Qonas Kilgor to throw away Concerto of Light and Shadow and not have the ability to dodge or use Distortion.

The former was predictable when the Earl of The Fallen's Spirit Body Threads reached the state of initially being control. This was because he couldn't allow the random anomalies to influence his attempts to save himself, and the latter was all about patience.

Just moments ago, his patience had paid off. A chance appeared. Klein was the first to raise his hand and shoot.

Without the random anomalies affecting the outcome, he had accurately shot a Parasite Bullet into Qonas Kilgor's body!

If the thing that had previously taken effect wasn't a Deceit Bullet but a Deprivation Bullet, then the strategy would be different.

Briefly unable to control his body, Qonas Kilgor looked at the Gehrman Sparrow on the balcony remove his top hat, press his hand to his chest, and bow slightly at him under the gigantic crimson moon.

As Gehrman Sparrow's trench coat fluttered, his thoughts had turned sluggish.

Chapter 1029 - Ruins No. 1

◆◆◆

No… Qonas Kilgor stood on the spot as a strong feeling of despair emerged in his heart.

As a military demigod who had experienced many dangers, he had a clear understanding of his current situation. He could already hear the footsteps of death approaching him.

He wanted to struggle and risk it by revealing his Mythical Creature form, but his orders didn’t do a thing with his sluggish mind.

His body had been “Parasitized” and was no longer under his control!

At that moment, Qonas Kilgor wasn’t even capable of shedding a tear.

Under the gigantic crimson moon’s illumination, one second after another passed. Suddenly, Qonas Kilgor raised his left hand and touched his crew haircut.

He had already become Klein’s marionette.

In fact, he still had a chance at the final moment. As the “Parasite” effect didn’t last long enough for him to become a marionette, he had those two or three seconds to reveal his Mythical Creature form.

But the problem was that his body also had the effects of “Misdirection” and “Deceit.” As time passed, his thoughts turned more and more sluggish and wasn’t able to grasp that short opportunity.

Klein looked at his new marionette and exhaled silently. He looked up at the clear and bright red moon and said, “It’s done.”

Amidst the gigantic crimson moon, a black dot instantly appeared and descended from the sky. It was none other than the Church of Evemight’s archbishop, Servant of Concealment, Arianna, who wore a simple robe with tree bark as a belt.

In this concealed world, this ascetic didn’t use any Beyonder powers to float in midair. “She” cast her eyes at the Earl of The Fallen beneath.

“She” gently raised her right hand as Qonas Kilgor’s slightly blurry soul emerged from the military demigod’s head. Klein lost his control over his marionette as a result of this.

He wasn’t too surprised by this because he hadn’t sent a Worm of Spirit through the Spirit Body Threads over. His control over the marionette was essentially still at a Sequence 5 state and not at the demigod level.

“Where did you go just now?” Arianna asked calmly as she looked at Qonas Kilgor’s soul.

Qonas Kilgor’s expression twisted slightly before replying.

“Ruins No. 1.”

…Is this a contractual promise or a psychological cue? Klein, who watched the spirit channeling from the side, sensed something from the Earl of The Fallen’s reaction.

However, this didn’t affect anything because they were in a concealed world, one which no one knew of or could sense.

“Where is that ruin? Who did it once belong to? What is it being used for?” As an archbishop of the Evernight Goddess and an angel of the corresponding pathway, Arianna shared a certain amount of authority in Concealment. Therefore, “She” didn’t start with the simplest questions but went straight to the point. “She” wasn’t afraid of any accidents.

Qonas Kilgor's soul trembled slightly as he exuded a feeling as if he would automatically blow up, but ultimately, nothing happened.

He hesitantly replied, "That ruin is located deep underground at the Sterlewen segment of the Tussock River. It has a setup that interferes with the powers of divination and prophecy."

Sterlewen segment… This is quite far from the mountain where Mr. A was at and where you disappeared from. From the looks of it, you were very cautious. That point-to-point Teleport's effects are greater than I expected… Klein quickly conjured a picture of the terrain of Backlund's northwestern outskirts.

Qonas Kilgor continued replying, "That ruin used to belong to Blood Emperor Alista Tudor. I'm not sure what it's currently used for. I'm unable to enter the depths of the ruins and am only in charge of sending in people and materials acquired via various means."

The name Blood Emperor Alista Tudor made Arianna fall silent. About three seconds later, she asked, "What materials did you acquire?"

This time, Qonas Kilgor didn't put up much of a resistance. He listed them down, including large amounts of mercury, iron ore, and ritual materials of different domains. Klein was unable to obtain any effective information from that because it was too well-rounded. It was possible to do anything.

They really are very careful. Using large amounts of sundries to hide what they're truly searching for. Even the demigod in charge of these matters isn't aware of the reason… This is very in line with the way a Spectator pathway Beyonder works. It was designed by the Psychology Alchemists? Klein nodded indiscernibly with a guess in mind.

Arianna didn't seem to notice anything as she asked, "Do you have any guesses on what they're doing? If so, what?"

"Yes, I suspect that they're digging up something and attempting to make sacrifices," Qonas Kilgor voiced out his judgment.

Arianna silently looked down at him for a while and said, "Who got you involved in the underground ruins?

"Who are the people who can enter the depths of the ruins?"

Qonas Kilgor struggled once again, but there were no anomalies.

He said hesitantly, "I received His Majesty's orders. I was able to become a demigod because he provided me with the formulas, ingredients, and the opportunity. He even bestowed me with the Concerto of Light and Shadow, allowing me to act as a Sequence 5 Beyonder even in situations where I can't hide my strength.

"Apart from His Majesty entering the depths of the ruins, only two other demigods of the royal family can enter. One of them is Prince Grove, and the other is Duchess Georgina."

They both have Augustus as their last names… But the royal family doesn't only have two demigods… Miss Justice doesn't know much of these two and mentioned that they seldom participate in social events. Even their seats as House of Lords Member of Parliaments are given to their children… Yes, at the demigod level, even if they lack the Beyonder characteristics of not dying and not aging, it wouldn't be a problem living for more than a hundred years. It's really not suitable for them to hold official posts and repeatedly appear in public… Klein tried hard to recall, but he failed to gather anything else.

Arianna was silent for a few seconds before suddenly asking, "Have you met Correns in the underground ruins?"

"Who is he?" Qonas Kilgor asked in confusion.

Arianna didn't answer and continued asking, "Besides them, who else have you met in the underground ruins?"

Qonas Kilgor maintained his sluggish state which was characteristic of spirit channeling.

“People from the Demoness Sect and Psychology Alchemists. The former was originally represented by Despair Nightingale Panatiya, but was changed to Saintess of White Katarina. The latter is Hvin Rambis.”

“Did they enter the depths of the underground ruins?” Arianna asked meticulously.

“I don’t know. I wasn’t following them all the time.” Qonas Kilgor shook his head. “At least when I met them, they were all in the periphery.”

Arianna asked other questions in an attempt to draw out the general outline of the matter via other angles. However, it was obvious that George Ill’s arrangements were flawless. Even a demigod like Qonas Kilgor only knew about the mission that he was responsible for and could only move about in designated regions. He was unable to learn more.

After some thought, Arianna flipped up her right hand and gently pressed down, pushing Qonas Kilgor’s soul back into his body. Klein’s control over his marionette was restored.

This made Klein sigh inwardly.

The authority of Concealment is really impressive! Even if Ma’am Arianna were to question my marionette one day, I wouldn’t even know…

At this moment, Arianna turned her body and spoke to the Gehrman Sparrow on the balcony:

“A problem with George III has basically been confirmed, as well as where the underground ruins are.

“I will immediately meet with the archbishops of the Church of Storms and Church of Steam, convincing them to take action tonight and opening the ruins.

"Before I inform you, control Qonas Kilgor and pretend that everything is fine before making him vanish."

Are you worried that the enemy will notice a problem with Qonas Kilgor while negotiating with the Church of Storms and Church of Steam, making it so that they can seal off the underground ruins or activate other emergency plans? Klein had a general understanding of the matter and nodded.

"No problem."

Arianna, who didn't have adorned hair, didn't speak further. With a casual wave of her hand, the iron-skinned pocket watch flew over.

"This Sealed Artifacts was bestowed by George III. Perhaps we might be able to find some clues from its origins."

Does that mean you're taking it away? Klein replied without any objection, "I'll leave it to you."

He really didn't have any complaints about that, and he even believed that it was only right. After all, half of the battle's success was due to Arianna's contribution with the concealed world and "blessing" him with misfortune. In the event that "She" didn't take the Concerto of Light and Shadow, Klein would mention it. When it came to matters like this, he was always just.

And the Concerto of Light and Shadow was the spoils of war that he didn't want the most. This was because it was at complete odds with his combat style as a Bizarro Sorcerer. The random anomalies would affect him, and the weakening effect was something worse than the enemy.

If Klein's spoils of war from this matter was the pocket watch, then he had considered tricking—no, promoting it to the Snake of Fate Will Auceptin. Only a Life School of Thought demigod who relied on luck to survive could commandeer the Concerto of Light and Shadow. And when that happens, with such a huge secret organization and a Sequence 1, they definitely had powerful Sealed Artifacts that could be used to trade for it.

Upon receiving his reply, Arianna gently nodded. She then threw the iron-skinned pocket watch back at Qonas Kilgor, making the Earl of The Fallen look no different from before.

"Her" figure vanished as though it had been erased by an eraser. Even the pitch-black world with the gigantic crimson moon hanging in the sky, the steeple, and chimneys were quickly wiped away.

In the blink of an eye, everything returned to normal. Klein was inside the master bedroom, and Qonas Kilgor was in a guestroom tens of meters away. Clenched tightly in his hand was Rever's Shout of Despair.

Then, this brigadier general of MI9 used "Disorder" to place the revolver back into his underarm holster and pick up the Maygur wine he had previously poured out and took a sip.

Chapter 1030 - Joint Operations

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, North Borough, Saint Samuel Cathedral.

The cardinal of the Church of Storms, archbishop of the Backlund diocese, Deep Blue Officiant Randall Valentinus descended amidst the wind, landing inside the steeple with a huge clock to the left.

He donned a black robe with the Storm symbol and had thick facial hair. His hair was short and stood up, colored in a dark blue that was almost black.

This muscular demigod cast his gaze to the other side and said to the figure who was already waiting there, “Horamick, do you know what happened? Why did Anthony suddenly invite us over here?”

The person he spoke to was dressed in a white priest robe and a clergyman’s bonnet. He had a genial and mild expression, and he was none other than the Church of Steam’s Divine Council member, archbishop of the Backlund diocese, the demigod, Horamick Haydn.

Upon hearing Randall’s question, Horamick calmly replied, “I didn’t arrive here much earlier than you. In fact, I only left the laboratory for a few minutes.”

He wasn’t only a clergyman but also a famous scientist. He was an emeritus professor at Backlund University’s physics department.

Randall Valentinus was just about to say something when he suddenly saw a figure walk up the narrow spiral staircase and arrive at the peak in the darkness that the crimson moon wasn't able to illuminate.

This figure was dressed in a black clergyman robe with red accents. By his chest hung five Dark Sacred Emblems. He was clean-shaven, and his eyes were deep, dark, and tranquil. He was none other than one of the thirteen archbishops of the Church of Evernight, Backlund diocese's person-in-charge, Saint Anthony Stevenson.

"Is there something that can't wait until daybreak? Or do people from the Church of Evernight enjoy discussing matters at night?" Deep Blue Officiant Randall Valentinus asked.

Anthony came to a stop after walking up the flight of stairs and said with a serious expression, "A very pressing matter."

"What is it?" Randall asked immediately.

At this moment, Horamick Haydn also cast his gaze at Anthony Stevenson, awaiting his answer.

In similar situations, Horamick especially liked the existence of people from the Church of Storms. This meant that they would take the initiative to ask questions and that there was no need to be euphemistic. It didn't require him to say anything else.

Anthony looked at them separately and said, "It's related to the royal family. I'll let Ma'am Arianna do the honors."

Just as he said that, a barefoot, bun-haired female figure in a simple robe with tree bark for a belt quickly outlined itself out of the shadows.

Upon seeing this figure, Randall and Horamick immediately bowed.

"Good evening, Ma'am Arianna."

Their expressions turned solemn at the same time, for they had a deep understanding of how important and crucial the matter that was happening tonight was.

It was definitely not a small matter for a Grounded Angel to appear!

Meanwhile, they couldn't help but be roused up. They realized that they had no idea when this matron of the Evernight cloister, the servant of Concealment, Ma'am Arianna, had arrived in Backlund.

Under normal circumstances, the three Churches, the royal family, and the military enjoyed a certain degree of tacit cooperationGrounded Angels and Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts wouldn't appear in Backlund.

"Good evening, Archbishops," Arianna answered without any signs of haughtiness.

She then raised her right hand and grasped onto thin air.

A faint light was emitted as it transformed into a scene along with the darkness. It was the entire conversation between Arianna and Qonas Kilgor.

This secret that appeared to have been kept for quite some time had finally presented itself before others.

As they watched, Deep Blue Officiant Randall Valentinus couldn't help but say, "He actually advanced to Sequence 4 and became a demigod."

This archbishop knew Qonas Kilgor. He originally believed that this deputy director of MI9 was only a Sequence 5 and had relied on a Sealed Artifact with severe negative effects to obtain combat strength at the demigod level. He never expected it to be a disguise.

The Church of Storms's influence on the military was greater than the two major Churches.

No one answered Randall. After the secret was fully revealed, Horamick said, "One involves a secret ruin of the Blood Emperor, and with large numbers of people sent in… These two points put together cannot be anything good."

"Indeed!" Randall nodded in agreement. "Let's head to the ruins now!"

Arianna looked around and calmly said, "This involves the royal family and the king. It's best if you seek permission from your own Holy See."

In this angel's choice of words, the Holy See referred to their respective Church's headquarters, the core seat of power of the Church.

"Alright," the two archbishops replied without any hesitation.

After a while, Deep Blue Officiant Randall Valentinus and Horamick Haydn received feedback from the Sealed Artifacts they carried. Together with Anthony Stevenson and Arianna, they headed for the Blood Emperor ruins that Qonas Kilgor had previously entered.

Arianna then took out an iron-black coat of arms with complicated symbols, and she tried to activate it.

"She" didn't make any disguise attempt, and she stood there calmly as though "She" wasn't worried that the guards in the ruins would recognize "Her."

Seeing this servant of Concealment's actions, Horamick seemed to be in thought. Randall wore a look of calm and didn't believe that it posed any problems.

In the underground ruins, on a strange metal pedestal, a ghostly-blue beam soared up and formed a door.

Four black-armored guards immediately observed the situation outside through the ghostly blue beam and planned on using a predetermined method to confirm if the person who had summoned the Door of Teleportation was disguised, so as to decide whether the "door" was to be opened.

However, they didn't see anything. The area outside was empty.

Just as they felt intense unease and confusion, a figure quickly outlined itself behind them. It was none other than the leader of the Church of Evernight ascetics, Arianna, who wore a patched robe.

In the blink of an eye, the four guards fell into a deep sleep. Anthony, Randall, and Horamick entered the underground ruins one after another.

They didn't directly follow the path down. Instead, they passed through the hall, floating in midair as they overlooked everything.

This was a world ruled by darkness. Small amounts of light came from the strange moss growing in different spots, as well as the flaming torches that came from the human-sized buildings.

With their illuminating light, even Beyonders without night vision could grasp the overall appearance of the huge ruin.

On one side was a gray rock wall. It extended upwards without an end, and it seemed to be connected to the ground. On the other side, there was a bottomless dark valley as if it were the abyss where devils lived. A road paved with stone slabs lay in the middle connecting the halls and buildings together. From time to time, humans would come and go in silence.

The archbishops of the three Churches were just about to capture a few people who could enter the ruins to interrogate them about the situation inside when a figure flew out of the dark valley, heading straight for the demigods.

The figure had a long face and wore a white hairnet. Two curly mustaches grew above his lips, and he had thick brows. His eyes were slightly bigger and looked rather similar to a certain poker card figure.

He wore a gown and had a huge cloak over him. The tips of his shoes were extremely long, and his attire was unlike the current times. It was as though he lived a hundred years ago.

Archbishops, like Anthony and Horamick, were no stranger to him. He knew that he was Prince of Sonia, Grove Augustus, one of the demigods of the royal family.

“How did you enter?” Grove asked first, his expression a little surprised and uncertain.

They looked at each other, and Anthony took the initiative to say, “We’ve always been investigating the large number of mysterious disappearances, and we had locked onto MI9’s Qonas Kilgor. Through him, we found this place.”

Grove’s expression changed slightly as he looked at the woman who left one’s heart feeling tranquil. He deliberated and asked, “Ma’am Arianna?”

“Yes, I was in charge of the disappearance case,” Arianna answered succinctly.

Prince Grove smiled bitterly.

“We were too greedy. After discovering this ruin, we only thought of digging and retrieving the items inside. To keep it a secret, we even had certain connections with the Demoness Sect. Through the people they gathered, we built a passageway and held certain rituals.

“No, it’s not what you think. They were just normal rituals, and they’re still alive deep within the ruins.

“If you don’t believe me, I can lead you down to take a look. Apart from the unopened seals and buildings, there’s nothing.”

Upon hearing his reply, Anthony, Horamick, and Randall exchanged looks, registering the puzzlement in each other’s eyes.

This was completely different from their expectations!

This made them suspect that something was wrong. Things weren’t as serious as they had imagined

At this moment, Arianna said, “You even created the Great Smog.”

“No,” Prince Grove shook his head again. “That was a lesson we learned from cooperating with the Demonesses. They actually tried to control Edessak and used him to gain control over the kingdom. After it was seen through by us, they created the Great Smog. From that moment forth, we broke all contact with them.”

Having said that, he pointed below and frankly said, “How could we do such a thing just to secretly dig up the Blood Emperor’s ruins?

“As long as you head deep down and closely examine it, you will understand what I mean.

“Heh heh, don’t worry. With Ma’am Arianna around, no traps will work. Besides, ignoring the fact that we lack such power, even if we were able to secretly bury you in the ruins, the Churches will discover a problem. I don’t believe that you didn’t report this matter to your respective Holy Sees before coming. If you don’t return in a while, they will definitely take the corresponding actions.”

Demigods like Randall and Anthony fell into thought as they cast their gazes at the simply-dressed Arianna.

Arianna calmly nodded. “Okay.”

The angel and three saints then entered the depths of the ruins under the guidance of Prince Grove. They discovered that there was a ruin hidden in the darkness, with no man having set foot there, as well as men and women who had been taught to form different rituals. Everything was orderly and serene.

Arianna, Horamick, and the other demigods acted according to their own thoughts and separately investigated the different regions. They even left and went further to investigate, but they failed to discover anything.

After receiving Arianna’s notice, Klein changed Qonas Kilgor into a servant inside the manor, making the MI9 deputy director vanish.

Then, he unhurriedly held a sacrificial ritual. He sent the items he received above the gray fog for further research, patiently awaiting daybreak.

Chapter 1031 - Possibility

◆

As the sky lit up, the manors along the Tussock River's north bank began to wake up amidst the morning mist.

The tall and portly Framis Cage came to the guest room where Qonas Kilgor slept last night. He knocked on the door and prepared to have breakfast with this MI9 deputy director.

However, there was no response.

Has the Brigadier General headed for the dining room? Framis Cage turned around in puzzlement and left the first floor.

After breakfast was over, everyone realized that Qonas Kilgor had vanished. Under Dwayne Dantes's lead, they headed outside the guest room and watched the land steward, Richardson, open the door with his key.

There was no one inside.

"Does Brigadier General Kilgor have a hobby of taking morning strolls?" Macht asked curiously as he pinched the two ends of his cheekbones.

Framis Cage shook his head without hesitation.

"No."

"Did you hear anything last night?" the chancellor of the Backlund University of Technology, Portland Moment, surveyed the area and asked.

Macht recalled for a moment.

“No, it was very quiet, perfect for a vacation.”

Beside him, Hazel looked into the room curiously, but she couldn’t think of any possibilities.

At this moment, Framis Cage raised his theory:

“Brigadier General Kilgor is an important member of the military, and he often needs to handle unexpected matters. Perhaps he had long left the manor and returned to Backlund.”

This steam car tycoon was clearly trying his best to downplay the matter.

He seems to know something. Or at least, he guessed that Qonas Kilgor came to Maygur Manor for some private, personal goal… Klein listened to their conversation as he said to Butler Walter and Land Steward Richardson with a heavy look, “Ask the servants in the manor if they had seen Brigadier General Kilgor last night or this morning.

“If they haven’t, send someone back to Backlund and visit Brigadier General Kilgor’s family. Inform them of this matter and let them decide whether we need to immediately make a police report.”

After giving his instructions, Klein stroked his white sideburns and said to Macht and his other guests, “Things aren’t clear yet. Perhaps Brigadier General Kilgor left because of an urgent matter and didn’t want to hold up everyone’s vacation. Let’s do this. We’ll continue with our hunting plans and return when the police arrive.”

As Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor’s companion, Framis Cage had raised an excuse for the crisis, one that was rather convincing, Macht and company agreed with Dwayne Dantes’s suggestion and left the area.

Hazel walked right at the back and glanced at Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor’s guest room and its neighboring room. She had a nagging feeling that something wasn’t right as she subconsciously wanted to use her powers as a Cryptologist to reconstruct the situation.

However, an intense sense of fear emerged deep in her heart. She had no idea what she was afraid of, so she eventually gave up on the idea.

She vaguely felt that she had some experience in such matters, and those experiences told her not to look at things she shouldn’t see or listen to things she shouldn’t hear.

After the guests and servants left that floor, a thick carpet that held the weight of the coffee table inside the room beside Qonas’s guest room began moving.

Bit by bit, it pulled itself up from under the sofa and coffee table without causing much of a stir.

Following that, the yellowish-brown carpet stood up and revealed its other side.

It was solidified flesh!

The flesh was squirming and reorganizing itself, and it soon transformed into a person, a mixed-blood young man. This was Dwayne Dantes’s valet, Enuni.

And the one following Dwayne Dantes was Qonas Kilgor. He wore the same face and had the same build!

To Klein, there was no need to disguise Enuni in such a manner. He could get him to transform himself into another person and blend in with the servants, using an illusion to interfere with their senses, making them unable to discover the addition of this person. It was a simpler and more reliable method. However, “acting” remained important to a demigod. It was key to accelerating the potion’s digestion and for resisting the inclinations of losing control and madness. Therefore, Klein would deliberately try to be bizarre in his handling of many matters.

Of course, he didn't wish to harm the innocent. Even in creating bizarre and eerie situations, he would try hard not to let others notice it. It was to prevent them from being left with a mental scar due to excessive fright.

The bizarre and eerie atmosphere was mainly for himself, to gain the approval of the potion inside him. This would undoubtedly accelerate the digestion rate of his potion, but without the feedback of a spectator, it meant that the "acting" wasn't complete enough. This made the speed at which he digested the Bizarro Sorcerer potion not as fast as he imagined. Despite doing so many things and trying out so many acts, Klein didn't feel that it was possible for him to reach Sequence 3 by the end of this year.

Backlund East Borough, inside a two-bedroom rental apartment.

Xio sat on an unstable chair as she stared out of the window in a daze, her expression a little gloomy.

Fors swallowed her saliva and sat opposite Xio, blocking her line of sight.

You seem to have lost all your motivation?

"Do you not know what to do after receiving that answer? It's because you have no access to the king?"

Xio's eyes fluttered as she slowly came to her senses.

"Whether it's to redeem my father's reputation or revenge, the chances are slim when facing the king. I can't think of a way to complete something like that…"

"That's because you're too weak. When you reach Sequence 4 and become a demigod, you'll discover many solutions, the only problem is that it'll be more dangerous!" Fors tried encouraging her. "In addition, you can still use others. Just like the person monitoring Shermane. She too wanted to know who Viscount Stratford was loyal to. She must be interested in the king's secret."

"Shermane…" Xio repeated the name as her state of mind suddenly recovered.

Beside them, there was a bronze cross and a ghostly-blue gem that resembled a vertical eye on the table.

The gem's exterior had thread-like patterns, the Beyonder characteristic that appeared after Shermane's death. It made the things around it appear mild, and it accentuated their beauty. However, with the bronze cross around, its glow was confined to a small area.

"That monitor is one of the culprits behind Shermane's death," Xio said rather seriously.

They had already found a spot to bury Shermane, and Fors had flipped through Leymano's Travels to placate the dead Shermane.

Fors immediately nodded.

"Yes, it's why she was instigated to investigate the king's secret and come into contact with the latent danger.

"Didn't you say that she might be able to monitor where we used to live? We can find an opportunity to return incognito, throw a letter into the mailbox, and write that Viscount Stratford is loyal to King George III and that he has a huge secret. This way, I believe she will be able to see it."

Xio thought carefully and nodded solemnly.

"Okay."

After discussing what they were about to do next, Fors stood up and pointed at the bronze cross.

"It's time for us to show our sincerity to Mr. Fool for all the help we received. I plan on sacrificing it to Mr. Fool now. You don't have any objections, right?”

“No,” Xio replied without hesitation.

Maygur Manor. It was another evening. The news sent back by Qonas Kilgor’s family was to wait since this MI9 deputy director often acted in such ways, involving himself in matters of national security; therefore, Macht and company didn’t panic. They made use of the animals they hunted and roasted them over a bonfire at a party on the lawn behind the manor.

Seeing the gentlemen roll up their sleeves and busy themselves around the roasting rack, the ladies heading over to help from time to time, and the children running around eagerly, Klein held a cup of sweet white wine—a fine product of Maygur Manor—and sat on a white wooden chair, a smile suffusing his lips.

Beside him was his mixed-blood valet, Enuni, who stood upright while awaiting instructions.

And inside a particular room in the manor’s main building, a pair of eyes were silently looking down. It belonged to a person who looked identical to Enuni.

The evening breeze blew past. Just as Klein was about to get up and showcase what it meant to roast meat from Desi at the roasting rack, he suddenly saw a figure phase into existence in front of him.

It was Arianna who wore a simple robe and tree bark as a belt.

This servant of Concealment looked at Dwayne Dantes and said, “There was nothing special in the underground ruins…”

“She” then recounted the main points of what “She” and the three archbishops saw, as well as the explanation given by Prince of Sonia, Grove Augustus.

That doesn’t make sense… The first thought that appeared in Klein’s mind was suspicion.

As Viscount Stratford had Saintess of White Katarina provide him with assistance, this clearly meant that the king’s faction hadn’t completely severed ties with the Demoness Sect.

Under the premise that the Great Smog of Backlund had already happened, their continued relationship with the Demoness Sect meant that it wasn’t something that could be explained as hoping to keep the Blood Emperor’s ruins for themselves

With such in-depth cooperation, would the Demoness Sect and Psychology Alchemists not wish to split the spoils?

In that case, why wouldn’t they directly seek the help of the three Churches?

Klein instinctively believed that the problem with the ruins hadn’t truly been discovered. He suspected that there had been a leak during the entire process, allowing the king to make preparations.

With Ma’am Arianna around, the possibility of discovering something amiss via the methods of divination and prophecy can be eliminated…

From my killing of Qonas Kilgor to the three Churches’ joint operation, the number of people who know of it doesn’t exceed ten. Furthermore, they all involve the high-ranking members of each Church. How is it possible that there was a leak…

Viscount Stratford’s problem resulted in the people in the ruins deploying contingency plans? No, his standing wasn’t at that level. Even Qonas Kilgor didn’t know the exact situation, much less him. He was only in charge of liaising with the Demoness Sect and handling matters at the periphery. He might not even know of the underground ruins… Klein’s thoughts raced as he sought the reasons.

He first eliminated the possibility of them being prepared due to Viscount Stratford; after all, the death of the captain of the royal guards wasn't that important or crucial.

As such, there were very few possibilities that could explain the situation. One, a person who knew of the secret amidst this sequence of events had deliberately or unintentionally leaked the matter due to particular reasons. Two, they had noticed something wrong with Qonas Kilgor's seemingly ordinary state, but Klein didn't notice anything.

The Psychology Alchemists are in cahoots as well… Could my thoughts be read and the secret revealed? But I have the gray fog augmenting me. No matter what, there will be some abnormality. It's just like when I faced that Spectator demigod with Anderson… The Psychology Alchemists originated from something Hermes left behind… Hermes is… As he thought about it, Klein's eyes suddenly widened.

He instinctively stopped himself from thinking deeper about it as he shot a look at Arianna and relaxed. He asked, "Is this place concealed?"

"Very," Arianna replied calmly.

People behind "Her" came and went, but no one noticed "Her."

Klein exhaled as he formulated his thoughts.

Emperor Roselle once said in his diary that the members of that ancient secret organization are all important figures… Then, could it be possible that one of the high-ranking members of the three Churches is a member of the Twilight Hermit Order?

And could it be that the ruins which Arianna and the archbishops saw wasn't the real one, but one "imagined" by Adam?

Chapter 1032 - Forceful Purifier

◆

Restraining his thoughts, and looking at the angel of Concealment across him, Klein deliberated over his words.

“Is there a possibility that the ruins you saw was actually ‘imagined’?”

He didn’t directly mention Adam or the Twilight Hermit Order, afraid that discussing such matters in Arianna’s Concealment zone would still be heard by the Adam who wielded the Spectator pathway’s Uniqueness and recently obtained 0-08.

As he was inside Arianna’s world of Concealment, Klein believed that thinking of Adam and the Twilight Hermit Order wasn’t likely to pose any problems, but it wasn’t necessarily the case when saying it out loud. After all, Mr. Door could freely discuss Adam with Emperor Roselle back then, not only because of the Beyonder powers of a Secrets Sorcerer’s Secret Keeping, but more so because “He” was also a King of Angels, a level not lower than Adam and Amon, perhaps even higher.

“Imagined…” Arianna repeated Klein’s keyword softly as though “She’ had figured out something

At “Her” level, “She” was no stranger to ancient history and the main characteristics of the twenty-two pathways.

Furthermore, “She” was also an angel that represented the authority of Concealment. She possessed the highest clearance in reading all the Church’s confidential information.

A few seconds later, Arianna observed Dwayne Dantès who remained sitting there.

“Psychology Alchemists?”

From Qonas Kilgor’s statement, it was obvious that the king’s faction was working with the Psychology Alchemists. And this was an organization that had the Spectator pathway in its control.

Klein first nodded and then added, “Their higher-ups likely do not have the ability of turning imagination into a reality.

“In this world, there are only one to two people who have such authority.”

Arianna nodded in thought.

“I understand.

“Now that the underground ruins are open to us, I will find a chance to verify it. If it’s true, it means that one or several archbishops of the Church of Steam and Storms are working for ’Him.”

“She” didn’t raise the possibility that the Church of Evernight’s upper echelons were problematic, as the Goddess wielded the authority of Concealment. It was very difficult to keep such matters from “Her” for prolonged periods of time.

Klein couldn’t help but ask in surprise, “The underground ruins will be left open to the three Churches?”

“Yes, if it truly is ‘imagined,’ it means that their cooperation is on the brink of success and that they just need to delay things a little longer,” Arianna simply explained her theory.

This is also what I’m thinking… The tide of the times is coming in a bid to drown out everything… Thankfully, I’m a lot more prepared than before. I now have a demigod-level marionette, and in certain areas, he's stronger than me. After all, he can use my Beyonder powers, while I can't use his… Since I can't digest the Bizarro Sorcerer potion anytime soon and seek my advancement, strengthening my marionette is also an effective measure to protect myself… I can also take note of the Sanguine's and Miss Sharron's plot against the Rose School of Thought… Klein's thoughts instantly turned clear.

He reined in his thoughts and casually asked, "Do all three Churches doubt Prince Grove's explanation?"

"They don't." Arianna frankly shook "Her" head. "Qonas Kilgor had mentioned Katarina."

But you don't have evidence. After all, they can explain that, after they split with the Demoness Sect, Katarina was sent to discuss things and attempt to make amends, but was cruelly rejected. During this process, as they knew each other's secrets, none of them took action at the meeting. It could then be explained that Qonas Kilgor, a demigod who wasn't privy to the matter, made the mistake that the cooperation effort was still in place…

And faced with an angel family, one that wields at least half the forces in the military, the three Churches won't immediately lose decorum with them unless there's evidence. Firstly, they aren't united, and they have to consider that if a civil war were to erupt, countries like Feynapotter, Intis, and Feynapotter, as well as the Churches of Eternal Blazing Sun, God of Combat, Earth Mother, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom might try to take advantage of the situation… Klein quickly came up with an analysis of the present situation.

He simply mentioned, "There were signs of Saintess of White Katarina appearing over at Viscount Stratford's side. I will try to find her."

Apart from that, Klein still wanted to find the dangerous Trissy and eliminate her, making up for his mistake of letting her go just because he wanted to use her.

Her value was clearly not as dangerous as her!

“I’ll try to do so as well.” Arianna indicated that “She’ would investigate the clue regarding Katarina.

Hmm… I have to say that Ma’am Arianna’s attitude when discussing matters with me is rather comforting. “She’ doesn’t exude that condescending attitude an angel or archbishop has.”She” completely treats me as an equal. After hearing Arianna’s words, Klein felt a baffling sense of poignancy.

He instead asked, “Has Hvin Rambis of the Psychology Alchemists been captured?”

This was one of the key figures mentioned in the information from Qonas Kilgor’s testimony, one of the clues that exposed the machinations of the king’s faction.

“He has gone missing,” Arianna answered succinctly.

As expected… The possibility of a leak has increased again… Hvin Rambis has gone underground, but that doesn’t mean that he can’t contact Miss Justice and other members directly… When the time comes, heh, Miss Justice has already hated him for some time… The only problem is whether Adam will appear in Backlund and “imagine” fake ruins. If that were the case, attacking Hvin Rambis might mean a non-zero probability that he’s being watched by this King of Angels. It might even be the case that “He” will sit beside Hvin Rambis without anyone knowing… The more Klein thought, the more of a headache he had.

It had to be said that in an era in which deities rarely descended upon the real world, the two brothers, Adam and Amon, were the limits to one’s level and strength. They were synonymous with being terrifying, powerful, frightening, and formidable.

A King of Angels was an existence closest to that of a deity!

Compared to Amon, I'm more afraid of Adam. "He" might be sitting beside you, listening to you and watching you smile while "He" reads your most truthful thoughts, making you die in the most natural, logical, but baffling manner… At this thought, Klein couldn't help but look around, afraid that the simple priest with pure-looking eyes and beard would be holding a tray, standing beside the roasting rack as "He" waited for the food and watched him with a smile.

Without a doubt, Klein didn't discover anything.

Noticing his reaction, Arianna calmly added, "He' isn't here."

Phew, thankfully, there's the blessings of an angel of Concealment… Klein controlled his thoughts and nodded gently, "I will take note of Hvin Rambis's whereabouts."

Arianna nodded and said, "After this matter is over, you can attempt to pray to the Goddess for a bestowment."

That is to say that the Goddess is very satisfied with my performance up to now? When the time comes, "She" will bestow me with the Scholar of Yore potion formula? Klein roughly understood Arianna. He stood up and tapped his chest four times.

"Praise the Lady!"

Arianna also drew the crimson moon.

"Praise the Lady."

"Her" figure disappeared bit by bit as though she had been erased. Yet, the guests at the bonfire party didn't notice the arrival of the ascetic at all.

Klein sat down again and continued analyzing his situation from another angle.

Qonas Kilgor disappeared without any warning. From the evidence presented by Ma'am Arianna and the words "She" said, it implied that the MI9 deputy director is in "Her" hands. In other words, the assault on Qonas Kilgor is definitely related to the Church of Evernight.

Qonas Kilgor disappeared in Maygur Manor which belongs to Dwayne Dantès, and he is a believer of the Evernight Goddess…

From what the king's faction and the Psychology Alchemists know, Dwayne Dantès can likely be confirmed to be a secret informant of the Church of Evernight…

This way, my safety can be guaranteed, but I can't avoid being observed and monitored. I have to be careful… I have to think of a reason to add a new servant. I can't keep having Qonas Kilgor or Enuni hide in this manner. This will make it easier for a problem to be discovered. Or maybe I can make one marionette turn into human-skin clothes, fusing with the other marionette…

As he thought, Klein stood up and placed the glass of sweet white wine on the table beside him. He then turned to walk to the main building of the manor and entered one of the bathrooms.

He then took four steps counterclockwise and arrived above the gray fog. He summoned the Sea God Scepter and used the prayer point he marked as Enuni to observe every corner of Maygur Manor.

During this process, Klein's mind was somewhat tense, worried that he would see a priest wearing simple clothes while having a beard and golden eyes.

Of course, compared to seeing this priest, he was more afraid of the priest looking up and smiling back at him, raising the cup of wine in his hand.

Fortunately, after a series of inspections, he confirmed that there was nothing unusual with Maygur Manor.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief and retracted his spirituality. He then cast his gaze at the bronze cross on the long mottled table.

This was an item that The Magician and Judgment had recently sacrificed. They said that it was to thank Mr. Fool for "His" blessings, and hoped to please this existence.

It doesn't look like its level is low… Klein picked up the spiky cross and used divination to quickly figure out the mystical item's Beyonder powers and negative effects.

Both of them were one and the same.

The bronze cross could cleanse powers of degeneration, corruption, corrosion, darkness, evil, ailments, and other domains, quickly causing them to dissipate until nothing was left.

Due to this reason, this mystical item could also clear the mental corruption of Beyonder characteristics.

And it was precisely because of this potent purification that the bronze cross couldn't coexist with other mystical items or be in contact with other Beyonder characteristics. It couldn't exist on the same person. Furthermore, it also repelled the wielder's Beyonder characteristic, albeit not in a manner that was as obvious. Over the passage of time, it would slowly cause a Beyonder's characteristic to seep out!

This also meant that if one were to carry or wear the bronze cross for more than an hour, the Beyonder's Sequence would drop by at least one Sequence. Beyond three hours, non-demigods would definitely be reduced to an ordinary person. Exceeding six hours, Sequence 4 and Sequence 3 saints would also lose their Beyonder powers. It was almost ineffective against angels because "They" had the ability to shatter Beyonder characteristics. "They" had extremely strong control over "Their" source of power.

It can be used to retrieve the characteristics of Beyonders who failed to advance without dying or from those who lost control… This cross's powers resemble the Sun pathway’s Unshadowed… Klein nodded thoughtfully.

Chapter 1033 - Let There Be Light

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Scrutinizing the bronze cross in hand, Klein was certain that it was at least a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact.

Apart from its purifying effects, this mystical item also possessed Flaring Sun and other demigod-level spells of the Sun domain. As for its negative effects, they weren't a problem to resolve if one used it properly. For example, helping people who stumbled into the Beyonder world and hoped to escape this madness to become normal humans again. It could also be used for people who consumed additional potions to secrete the Beyonder characteristic—though this required precise timing; otherwise, it easily caused one's Sequence to drop.

Of course, the body and soul that had been reconstructed by potions would definitely suffer from frequent conflicts with an ordinary human's essence. Beyonders who relied on this bronze cross to retreat from this "circle" would undoubtedly suffer residual effects, and the exact circumstances would be different depending on their pathways and Sequences.

This made Klein sigh. This was the most useful and valuable negative effect he had ever seen.

To him, the only problem was that this bronze cross couldn't be carried with him for extended periods of time. He couldn't hand it to his marionette either, as it would expel the marionette's Beyonder characteristic and drop its Sequence. And a marionette could no longer consume potions for advancements, as their Spirit Bodies were essentially dead.

As for letting ordinary creatures turn into marionettes, they would "praise the Sun" by wearing this cross for extended periods of time and escape his control.

I can only leave it above the gray fog and take it out when I need it… To a Bizarro Sorcerer, this side effect isn't much. After all, I don't perform unprepared… I'll later confirm if it corresponds to an Unshadowed. If it does, I'll sell it to Little Sun after he finishes digesting the Priest of Light potion. I believe that the City of Silver's six-member council's Chief wouldn't be miserly to not exchange it with a Sealed Artifact of equal value. The Sun pathway is clearly more suitable for the Forsaken Land of the Gods than the other pathways… Klein thought in a good mood as he placed the bronze cross back on the long mottled table.

He didn't immediately make a confirmation and planned on leaving it until he returned to 160 Böklund Street. When that happens, he would also use dream divination to figure out the origins of the Sealed Artifact. As Maygur Manor was too close to the underground ruins, he was afraid that the royal family's angel or maybe even Adam was observing the area. If his experiments were to trigger some change and create a stirring in the gray fog, his biggest secret might be exposed.

Even if this Sealed Artifact doesn't correspond to an Unshadowed, it's definitely from the Sun pathway. At most, it's mixed with other Beyonder characteristics. No, it will be expelled, and the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun's trademark is a Sacred Emblem made of gold, an abstract sun, having nothing to do with a cross. Hmm, after eliminating this possibility, the only one related to the Sun domain is the City of Silver's Creator, the ancient sun god, Adam and Amon's dad, the suspected transmigrator…

It appeared in the hands of Viscount Stratford, so does this mean that, in a particular sense, it's the Twilight Hermit Order who's cooperating with the royal family, and the Psychology Alchemists is just a ruse? Of course, there are too many other possibilities. It might've been found by the Augustus family since they're quite a famous angel family in the Fourth Epoch and have a long history. Finding certain items of the ancient sun god is rather normal…

If this Sealed Artifact really was provided by Adam, could it be part of "His" arrangements?

Faced with Demoness Trissy, who is clearly involved with an evil god, and her partner, Viscount Stratford, who chose to use this purifying cross and gave up using other items. That arrangement is very reasonable. Upon deciding to eliminate Shermane, since he wasn't sure if she had been corrupted by an evil god and was afraid of accidents happening, he didn't use any direct offensive means and instead wasted time activating this Sealed Artifact. That too is also very reasonable… Yes, it's all very reasonable. I'm just not sure if there are signs of this outcome being arranged…

With this in mind, my phobia for 0-08 has reared its head again… Yes, Miss Magician and Miss Judgment had privately discussed Adam before. It involved matters regarding the Forsaken Land of the Gods, the Giant King's Court, and King of Angels…

This… even if it was arranged by Adam, why does "He" want to give this item to them?

Klein felt his scalp tingle as he thought about it. Composing himself, he decided to do further experiments after returning to Böklund Street.

He didn't hesitate and immediately returned to the real world.

As for the items on Qonas Kilgor, he relied solely on his divination powers without the gray fog's enhancements to gain an initial grasp on the situation.

Apart from the Concerto of Light and Shadow which Church of Evernight ascetic leader, Arianna, had taken, and the badge used to open the underground ruins, Qonas Kilgor had two other mystical items.

One of them was Réver's Shout of Despair which Arrodes had mentioned. It originated from a failed sacrifice and had two modes. One was an ordinary shot, its might was slightly weaker than a Clown's Air Cannon. The other was a machine gun sweep. It could spew out large numbers of bullets in one to two seconds. These two modes came with the shout of despair, having a certain level of influence on demigods at the saint level, but it wasn't too effective. Of course, not every demigod could withstand such an attack. Just like Klein himself, he didn't have a ridiculous body or defense to withstand it head-on.

The other item was Lucky Grass. It looked very simple, a four-leaved clover that had been made into a protective charm. Its power was to accumulate one's chance of success after a subsequent failed attempt. The negative side effect was that it magnified the wearer's character flaws.

Klein's appraisal on it was to change its name to "Mother of Success."

These two mystical items were of little value to Klein. He continued keeping them on Qonas Kilgor's person.

Instead, it was this demigod marionette that was his greatest harvest.

Lawyers had an acute grasp and knowledge of how to make use of loopholes in law, with the ability to guide and convince the target; Barbarian provided strength and a constitution that broke the rules; Briber had "Bribe"; Baron of Corruption had "Distortion"; Mentor of Disorder had "Disorder"; and Earl of The Fallen had "Bestowment,""Magnify," and "Exploit." They were all pretty good powers. If he hadn't obtained detailed information from Arrodes and made sufficient preparations and formulated a plan, together with the help from an angel of Concealment, Klein believed that he had no way of restraining Qonas Kilgor even if he had items like Fate Siphon.

In fact, instead of turning him into a marionette, using Creeping Hunger to Graze Qonas Kilgor would be a lot more discreet, making it harder to be discovered. But if that's the case, I can only use three of the Earl of The Fallen's Beyonder powers… As Klein thought about it, he walked out of the bathroom and returned to the bonfire party.

On the lawn, Macht was standing in front of the roasting rack, trying hard to make East Balam-styled roasted meat while sweat dripped down his forehead. Hazel was standing a short distance away, her eyes looking on brightly. She no longer had the arrogance from before and had a few black marks across her face—a result of the smoke. Portland Moment was holding a cup of wine, smilingly watching the relatively "young lad" being busy. From time to time, he would raise a metal skewer with chunks of meat and bite at it.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein's heart suddenly calmed down.

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On Sunday afternoon, the group of people who went to the Böklund Street suburbs returned to Böklund Street.

Before dinner, Klein headed above the gray fog once again and picked up the bronze cross.

He first confirmed that the cross corresponded to the Sun pathway's Sequence 4 Unshadowed and had, rather uncreatively, named it Unshadowed Crucifix. Following that, he picked up a pen and wrote a new divination statement:

"The origins of this cross."

Klein didn't immediately divine if Unshadowed Crucifix had any traces of being "arranged," afraid that it might point to Adam and place "Him" in a state of vigilance. He planned on investigating the situation by figuring out the Sealed Artifact's origins. If the Unshadowed Crucifix's owner or former owner was Adam, the truth of the matter would undoubtedly point towards a “deliberate arrangement.”

Putting down the pen, Klein looked down at the cross and exhaled heavily.

“I’m courting death again…”

He suspected that the Unshadowed Crucifix originated from the City of Silver’s Creator, the ancient sun god, a powerful deity that was stronger than the ancient gods like Dragon of Imagination. Sneaking a peek at “Him” would cause damage that exceeded Klein’s previous divination of Groselle’s Travels.

However, things were no longer the same. Klein was now a Sequence 4 Bizarro Sorcerer, a demigod. The damage he could withstand as well as the amount of power of the mysterious space above the gray fog that he could use far exceeded his previous state back when he was a Sequence 5.

After spending a few seconds to calm his emotions, he leaned back in his chair, holding the Unshadowed Crucifix in one hand and holding the piece of paper in the other. He softly repeated the divination statement.

Over and over again, Klein used Cogitation as a jumping board to enter a state of deep sleep.

In the hazy world, a building whose original form was obscured by layers of grayish-white stood in a pitch-black environment. Surrounding it were monsters.

A crack opened up on the grayish-white building’s surface as a palm that had almost white skin reached out.

A figure walked out—a man. He wore a black clergyman robe and had a silver crucifix hung on his chest.

This man’s hair wasn’t long and was mainly raven-black in color. There was a faint hint of blond at the roots of his hair. His eyes were pure gold in color, and his skin was rather white. He had a deep outline and pronounced eye sockets. He looked quite similar to the people of the Northern Continent.

He took two steps forward, reached his hand out, and grabbed the very ordinary crucifix. His eyes gradually lost their look of confusion as the ends of his lips curled up slightly.

He said in a deep voice, “Let there be light!”

The pitch-black surroundings of the grayish-white building were immediately pierced by bright lights, revealing what it really looked like.

This was a deep valley where nothing could be seen above it; yet, the infinite light filled every corner.

And there was light.

The image of the next scene flashed.

A drop of golden blood that emitted light and heat dripped onto the silver cross.

Above the drop of blood seemed to be a figure that was formed of dazzling light. The face that he couldn’t see clearly was looking up, seemingly being effused with pain and a sense of distortion in a very real manner.

He cast his gaze over towards the area above the gray fog, casting it at Klein, who was seated at The Fool’s high-back chair. His deep voice sounded once again:

“Mysteries…”

Suddenly, without any forewarning, Klein’s thoughts erupted with a boom.

Chapter 1034 - Gains

◆ ◆ ◆

The boundless gray fog boiled as the ancient and majestic palace burned.

The blazing flames condensed into a fiery blob, as though a blinding sun had risen out from this mysterious space.

A howling hurricane flipped the long mottled table, snapping the thick stone columns and causing half the palace to collapse.

Sitting at The Fool’s seat, Klein’s brain was boiling before holes exploded out of it. Charred maggots then began crawling out of the cracks.

He didn’t die, and he had even very calmly reached out his right palm and tapped the armrest of the chair.

Above the gray fog, this mysterious space quaked in an obvious manner. Waves of power surged out one after another, calming the hurricane and extinguishing the flames. The blazing sun evaporated, inch by inch.

The thick stone pillars stood once more as the long mottled table returned to its original state. The magnificent and holy palace appeared as though it had never collapsed or suffered any damage.

Klein’s head recovered instantly, and the charred maggots that had drilled out had turned transparent again before crawling back inside.

As expected, stronger than Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt… Klein muttered to himself as his expression couldn’t help but warp. He couldn't help but massage his forehead. It's painful… This pain is also clearly stronger…

While muttering, he rapped the edge of the long mottled table and made the mysterious space above the gray fog quake once more.

Amidst the quakes, a pitch-black shadow abruptly emerged out of the palace's floor.

This shadow twisted and struggled before being wiped clean by the gray fog's powers, leaving nothing behind.

After nearly a minute, Klein calmed down completely and recalled the scene he had seen.

That should be the ancient sun god, the City of Silver Creator, Adam's and Amon's dad…

From the crucifix "He" wore, and that line, "Let there be light," there's a high chance that "He" is the first transmigrator. Perhaps he's Caucasian with a religious background…

"He" used a language that can stir the powers of nature. It's similar to Jotun, but it's also different. It doesn't belong to Elvish, Dragonese, and ancient Hermes… Yes, it has similarities with the ancient Feysac of the Northern Continent and the Dutanese of the Southern Continent. This allowed me to barely understand what "He" was saying despite me not knowing this language… This is the language "He" learned from that strange giant building?

"He" transmigrated there and inherited a rich inheritance?

The second scene was of "Him" suffering a betrayal, the scene of him being eaten by the Kings of Angels, White, Wisdom, and Wind?

To a deity who claims to be a Creator, that kind of corporeal pain and that distortion can only appear in such a situation…

Yes, the divine blood “He” dripped before “His” death fused with the silver crucifix, and it later turned into the latter’s form, becoming a rather powerful Sealed Artifact.

From the looks of it, the Unshadowed Crucifix was obtained by one of the three Kings of Angels, or it landed in Amon’s or Adam’s hands. To “Them,” this is an important item “Their” father left behind.

The previous possibility isn’t too high. The cross’s effects are extremely useful. Furthermore, its origins are a secret that needs to be kept. No one would give it to the Augustus family… From the looks of it, was it really arranged by Adam?

Why did “He” give the Unshadowed Crucifix to Miss Magician and Miss Judgment in a very reasonable manner?

“He” had discovered that the two ladies believe in The Fool after observing them for some time?

This cross was meant for The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era?

“He” wishes to know where “His” father, who also doesn’t belong to that era, came from? But the problem is how does “He” plan on raising that question and obtaining an answer?

That City of Silver’s Creator’s level is extremely high. “He” was able to sense my prying despite the long stretch of history between us. He cast his gaze above the gray fog and cast it on this mysterious space. Furthermore, the influence “He” created not only openly caused destruction but also secretly invaded this place, creating a special shadow. It nearly lurked here, hidden…

Doesn’t this mean that, once one obtains the authorities of several domains, a deity’s level will also undergo a qualitative change?

What does the uttering of “Mysteries” mean? Is it pointing to me, or the original owner of this mysterious space?

Questions flashed past Klein’s mind, making him come up with several theories, but the final answer eluded him.

Due to his fear of Adam, he believed that the best outcome for the Unshadowed Crucifix was to have the City of Silver’s god-like Sealed Artifact shatter it and reform it into a pure Beyonder characteristic.

Reining in his thoughts and suppressing his questions, Klein conjured a new pen and paper and wrote down the knowledge he had learned from looking straight at the City of Silver Creator:

“Sequence 4: Unshadowed

“Main ingredients: One drop of the Sun’s divine blood, or three adult Sun Divine Bird’s feathers and a piece of Holy Brilliance Rock.

“Supplementary ingredients: 60ml of Sun Divine Bird’s blood, 30 ml of Holy Brilliance Rock liquid. 7 drops of mutated fingered citron juice, 10 grams worth of powder of the heart of magma.

“Ritual: Extract the strongest emotions that one is most unwilling to abandon before consuming the potion. Inject these emotions back again during this process.”

“Sequence 3: Justice Mentor…

“Sequence 4: Black Knight…

“Sequence 3: Trinity Templar…”

After doing all of this, Klein picked up the bronze cross again and observed it with a heavy expression.

He then threw Unshadowed Crucifix into the junk pile and stirred the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog to suppress it. He didn’t wish to see the paper figurines he cut begin to praise the Sun the next time he came.

†

In front of an ordinary house in Cherwood Borough.

A postman riding a bike braked and stopped at the door.

He then settled down his bike and took out a letter from his bag, glancing to check if the address was correct.

“It’s here… For Xio…” The postman briskly walked to the mailbox and threw the letter in. Following that, he didn’t delay as he got on his bike and kicked off.

After a while, a pitch-black flame suddenly spewed out of the mailbox’s mouth.

This flame burned quietly and quickly disappeared.

†

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey, who had brought Susie to the garden for a stroll, had just returned to the foyer when she saw her father, Earl Hall, come in from the outside. He had his brows knitted, seemingly in deep thought.

“Father, did something happen?” Audrey asked with concern.

This was the most basic of observations which she didn’t need to hide at all.

Earl Hall restrained his frustrated expression and said with a smile, “It’s nothing important. I just never expected Hvin Rambis to be a member of a cult.”

“He’s a member of a cult?” Audrey expressed her surprise appropriately.

She knew that Hvin Rambis was actually a member of the upper echelons of a secret organization known as the Psychology Alchemists, but she didn't understand how this was suddenly exposed.

Earl Hall nodded solemnly.

"Yes, he's wanted by the three Churches. I'm still not sure which cult he's involved in."

"…Has he been caught?" Audrey's eyes darted around as she asked "curiously."

"No, he disappeared before the warrant was issued." Earl sighed. "It's really hard to imagine that he's a cult member. He's of excellent character and is knowledgeable. He's rational and objective in various matters and is filled with wisdom."

That's just the side he wants you to see… Audrey inwardly mumbled. Then, as usual, she entered the small prayer room at home before dinner. She faced the Sacred Emblem of the Evernight Goddess and got into a prayer gesture.

However, her low chanting was:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

After chanting the honorific name, Audrey succinctly reported:

"Hvin Rambis has gone missing.

"He has been identified as a cultist and is wanted by all three Churches…"

With that said, Audrey was about to solemnly pray to the Goddess when a boundless gray fog appeared before her.

In the middle of the grayish-white fog, a blurry figure sat on the chair, looking down from above and gently nodded.

"I'm aware."

Just as this secret existence said that, the scene before Audrey's eyes changed suddenly. It presented a figure who was concentrating on praying.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, the Church of Evernight has obtained intelligence from Qonas Kilgor and confirmed that King George III hides an extremely huge secret. For the obtaining of a Blood Emperor ruins in the Sterlewen segment of the Tussock River, he colluded with the Demoness Sect and Psychology Alchemists to partake in human trafficking, creating the human disappearance cases that ultimately led to the Great Smog of Backlund…

"The Demoness Sect's former representative was Despair Nightingale Panatiya and was later changed to Saintess of White Katarina. For the Psychology Alchemists, it's Hvin Rambis…

"Please remind Miss Justice to be careful when she meets Hvin Rambis again. She needs to be constantly prepared to seek help."

His Majesty… Audrey's eyes widened as upheavals went through her heart. She found it difficult to control herself.

This was partly due to the fact that this news was shocking for a noble like her. In addition, it had to do with Lie which magnified her emotions.

Almost at the same time, a news report flashed in Audrey's mind. It was one that had left an unerasable impression on her:

"…According to preliminary estimates, a total of over 21,000 people died in the smog, and the subsequent plague took the lives of close to 40,000 people. Among the deceased were young children, healthy young men, and women…"

So that's how it is… What is the king plotting… The three Churches likely don't have any actual evidence; otherwise, Father wouldn't only be frustrated to this degree… Audrey felt an inexplicable sense of anger and sadness. It felt like particular principles she had upheld in the past had been ruthlessly trampled, or that values that had stood up to time were silently crumbling.

She subconsciously lowered her head and closed her eyes.

Then, she exhaled and whispered, “Thank you, Mr. Fool. Please convey my gratitude to Mr. World.”

After her prayer, Audrey sat in the tranquil darkness and didn’t move for a long time.

Chapter 1035 - Diary Page in Advance

◆

Backlund East Borough, inside a two-bedroom apartment.

Fors picked up a fountain pen and wrote on a piece of paper.

This was a letter for her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham. It was to tell him that she was in danger and had no choice but to leave where she used to stay. Replies were not to be sent there, and if he had sent a letter, he was to quickly change his address and change identities if possible.

After writing plenty of words, Fors put down her pen, folded the letter, stuffed it into an envelope, and adhered a stamp on it.

Then, she changed into outdoor attire and left the room with the letter she wanted to send.

She wasn't inclined towards heading out, but this new residence of hers not only didn't have alcoholic beverages, but it didn't even have coffee beans, instant coffee, black tea leaves, daily newspapers, the latest magazines, or novels.

For these, she had no choice but to personally head out to send the letter and buy some groceries outside East Borough.

As for Xio, she had already gone out. She wanted to mail a letter to her former rental apartment, indicating that Viscount Stratford's loyalties lay with the king. She wanted to see if it could drive Shermane's observer to take certain actions.

Seriously, after everything was over, I was so afraid that I nearly forgot to write to Teacher. If I had finished it earlier, I could've gotten Xio to do the mailing… Fors wore a bonnet that had a fishnet, walked down the dark staircase all the way to the bottom, and walked out the condominium.

This was in the periphery of East Borough where technical workers and low-level managers mainly lived. It was relatively safe and even had paperboys around.

As Fors heard chimes from time to time, she walked slowly along the side of the street.

At this moment, a postman stopped his bike, took out a stack of newspapers from his bag, and entered a condominium beside her.

Fors casually glanced at it and discovered that the copy at the top was News at Sea.

People who live here will actually subscribe to such a newspaper? Their job has something to do with maritime trade? Fors retracted her gaze as she mumbled in surprise.

However, this wasn't something that was worth paying attention to. She quickly walked towards the mailbox when she saw it at the end of the streets.

The postman entered the condominium and found a few targets from the rows of mailboxes, stuffing the corresponding papers into them.

Shortly after he left, a mailbox was opened and the newspaper inside was taken out.

The person who retrieved the newspapers walked up to the third story, opened a room, and sat in a simple reclining chair, rocking in it as he read through it.

By the side of the reclining chair, there was a black wooden table with a stack of papers placed on it.

Some of them were stacked neatly with their front page facing up. Some were bent asymmetrically, revealing the articles. On them were the corresponding reports:

“Shocking! Crazy Adventurer Made Fugitive”

“Crazy Adventurer Appears Again; An Incredible Hunt”

“The Man Closest to The Kings At Sea, Adventurer Worth 90,000 Pounds”

“Story of Gehrman Sparrow And Three Female Pirate Admirals”

“Shooting To Fame In One Battle, Gehrman Sparrow Attempts Assassination Attempt on Vice Admiral Ailment At Night”

†

Shortly after Fors finished her purchases and returned to her rental apartment, Xio had finished her trip and returned.

The reason for their timely return was because it was Monday and it was almost three in the afternoon.

Gong! Gong! Gong!

The nearby cathedral’s bells resonated as a crimson red beam of light surged at Fors and Xio at the same moment.

Inside the majestic palace, by the sides of the ancient mottled table, figures appeared simultaneously, taking corporeal form.

Like always, Justice Audrey stood up first, faced the seat of honor of the long bronze table, curtsied, and said, “Good afternoon, Mr. Fool.”

Miss Justice seems rather down… From the looks of it, the news last night is still affecting her… The Fool Klein nodded indiscernibly and acknowledged the Tarot Club members’ greetings.

At this moment, Audrey, who wasn't in a good mood, noticed with her sharp observational skills that there was a bronze cross beside Mr. Fool's right hand.

Where did this cross come from? To be placed on the table by Mr. Fool, it's an item that's at least the level of a Card of Blasphemy… Who does it originate from? What use does it have? Questions flew through Audrey's mind, making her feel an irresistible sense of curiosity.

This was the first time Mr. Fool was placing something in front of him that wasn't a Card of Blasphemy!

Immediately following that, Alger, Cattleya, and the other Tarot Club members also noticed the bronze cross that was more eye-catching than a card. Like Miss Justice, they couldn't help but guess at the item's origins, level, and use.

Amongst them, Derrick felt a subtle calling from it. He felt that the bronze cross was drawing him in.

He then recalled a basic rule taught in lessons at the City of Silver:

Law of Beyonder characteristics convergence!

This is a high-level Sealed Artifact of the Sun pathway? Derrick suddenly came to a realization.

Fors and Xio recognized the bronze cross to be the Sealed Artifacts that they had sacrificed. Their pupils dilated as though they were trying to take a better look.

Mr. Fool places so much importance on this item? I-it's more important than what Xio and I imagined? Fors was stunned and couldn't hide her curiosity.

When it came to matters involving gods, her thoughts would never develop towards romance.

Xio shared similar thoughts with Fors, but she didn't say a word. She believed that Miss Justice would definitely take the initiative to ask.

Just as Audrey was deliberating about raising her hand, Cattleya closed her eyes, turned her body, and faced the seat of honor.

Before she bowed and spoke, The Fool Klein suddenly chuckled, "Don't worry. The glasses you conjure can seal your Eye of Mystery Prying."

He knew very well that Ma'am Hermit had already become a demigod by obtaining godhood, turning into a Mysticologist.

This was partly because Cattleya had prayed to The Fool before she held the ritual and consumed the potion, hoping to advance under "His" watch. This way, even if she ultimately failed, she could be blessed and not lose control or go mad. She could always think of expelling the excessive characteristic and redo the attempt.

Towards this matter, Klein wasn't too confident about it, because he had never attempted it before. Divination also didn't give any answers, but since he had agreed, he believed that if she failed and didn't die, it was definitely all thanks to Mr. Fool. If she were to lose control or go mad, she wouldn't care if Mr. Fool was really a cheat. In short, Klein's main purpose was to give her confidence so that she was in the best conditions for an advancement attempt. After all, Admiral of Stars wasn't able to find other existences to give similar blessings.

After witnessing Ma'am Hermit's advancement to a demigod, Klein heaved a sigh of relief while lampooning inwardly.

At times, acting as a god is harder than acting like a human. When believers encounter trouble, there are usually two outcomes—life or death. Their survival is naturally due to the blessings of deities, and no one would care if death occurs…

On the other hand, after becoming a demigod and being able to use more of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog, The Fool

Klein could easily see the Astral Projections of the Tarot Club members; thus, reading their current Beyonder pathway and Sequence.

After sealing her Eye of Mystery Prying, Cattleya heaved a sigh of relief and reverently said, “Mr. Fool, there is one page of Emperor Roselle’s diary this time.”

Emperor Roselle’s diary? Queen Mystic is done with her matters? But nothing abnormal happened in Backlund… Yes, no one noticed the infiltration of Amon in Böklund Street or the demigod battle in Maygur Manor… The Fool Klein nodded in an unperturbed manner and said, “Good. You can think of a question or request.”

As he spoke, Audrey, Alger, and company sharply learned something from this conversation.

Ma’am Hermit was worried that the glasses she conjured was unable to seal her Eye of Mystery Prying, and this wasn’t a worry she had in the previous gatherings.

This means that Ma’am Hermit’s Eye of Mystery Prying has been significantly boosted… Hmm, why would there be a sudden boost? S-she advanced to become a demigod? She’s our Tarot Club’s second demigod? Audrey connected this matter to Cattleya’s purchase of the Mythical Creature’s blood and immediately had a guess.

She then swept her gaze at the male members opposite her and realized that Mr. Hanged Man’s seating posture had unknowingly changed. He had apparently figured that Ma’am Hermit had become a demigod. Little Sun’s gaze was still staring at the bronze cross without any reaction. The Moon Mr. Emlyn hesitated for a few seconds before looking up at Ma’am Hermit. Mr. Star was like Little Sun, his eyes somewhat vacant as though he was waiting for the diary part to pass.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, can this question be accumulated with the next one?” Cattleya asked.

Accumulated with the next one… Queen Mystic still doesn't want to have her mood affected? Then why would she suddenly provide a diary page? Has she foreseen something? To maintain his image as The Fool, he didn't ask why and nodded gently.

"Sure."

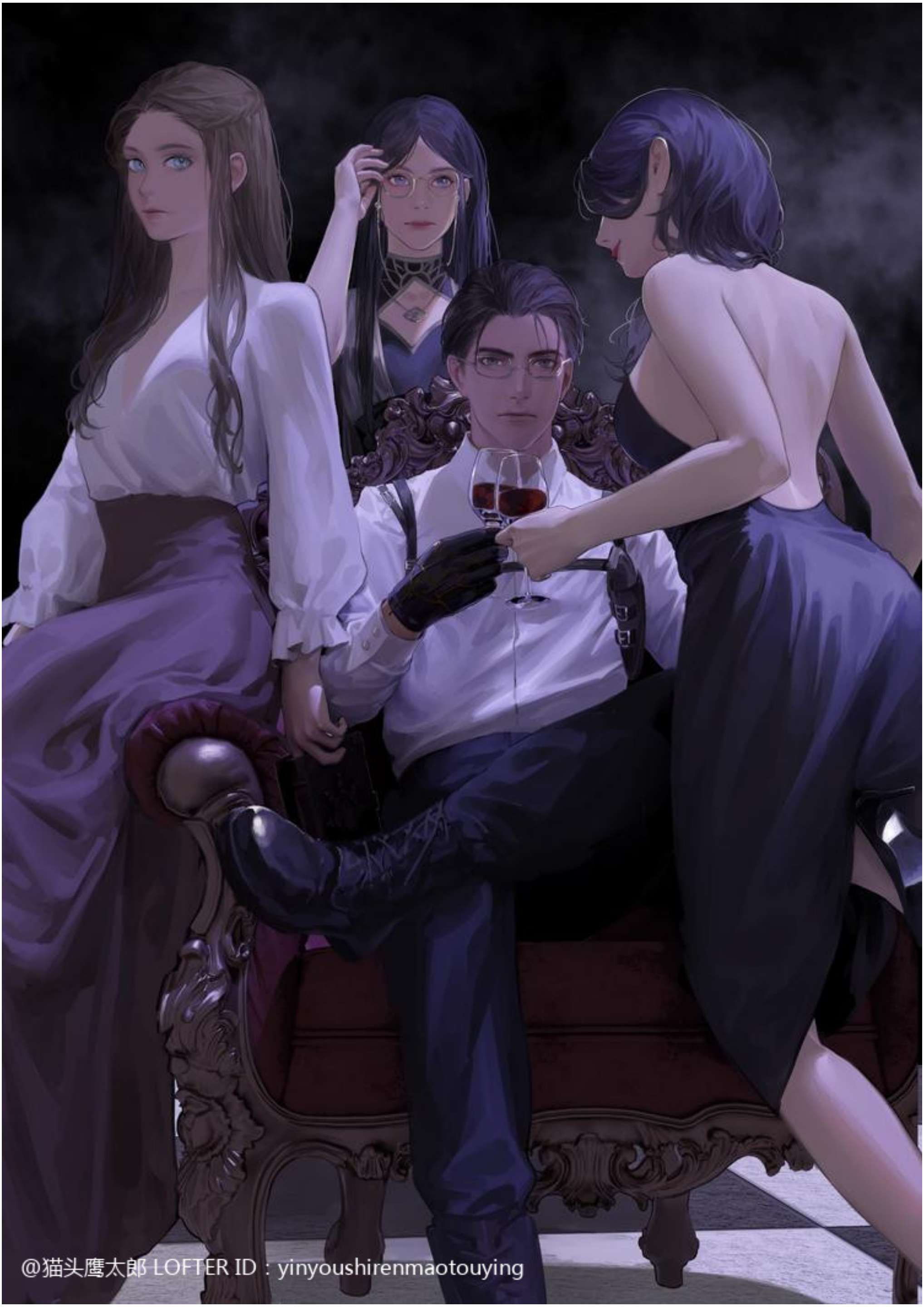
Cattleya didn't speak further as she conjured that diary page, only to see it flash into Mr. Fool's hands.

Klein scanned it seemingly casually, taking in most of the information.

"19th July. Night of the Blood Moon.

"Mr. Door's answer allowed me to confirm one thing. In that ancient secret organization, the second Blasphemy Slate I saw wasn't complete!"

Story of Gehrman Sparrow And Three Female Pirate Admirals:


@猫头鹰太郎 LOFTER ID：yinyoushirenmaotouying

Hear me out guys, if Fors make fanfiction. I bet she can steel Gehrman from Three Female Pirate and bang him in the Moon.

Chapter 1036 - “Expected” Development

◆

“According to Mr. Door, the main difference between the second Blasphemy Slate and the first Blasphemy Slate isn’t that the latter has many unique Sequence names, but that the former had many additions. It was a secret the ancient sun god caught a glimpse of towards ‘His’ later years. Alright, as a true god, there’s no such thing as later years. I’m just using the human concept of the period from ‘His’ birth to fall, so that would be considered ‘His’ later years.

“In other words, the second Blasphemy Slate’s creator was the ancient sun god?”

“Towards this question, Mr. Door answered with almost certainty. ‘He’ told me that the ancient sun god’s fall resulted in the birth of the Blasphemy Slate.

“Does that mean that it’s considered a key relic of the ancient sun god?

“Then, who was the one who created the first Blasphemy Slate? The original Creator who truly created everything? And what were the additional pieces of knowledge that appeared on the second Blasphemy Slate?

“Mr. Door didn’t answer, only saying that it involves too many secrets. It cannot be explained in just a few words. If ‘He’ were to return to the real world, ‘He’ would be able to tell me in detail.

“Heh, do you think I’ll fall for it?

“As the Blasphemy Slate was mentioned, I recalled two questions that had been bothering me since a long time ago. What does it mean to be the trend of the times? Who defines the trend of the times?

“Mr. Door’s reaction was very odd. ‘He’ laughed for nearly twenty seconds before telling me, be careful of the ‘Spectator.’

“What has this got to do with my question?

“With ‘His’ reminder, I carefully recalled the contents of the second Blasphemy Slate and discovered an unusual problem. As a Beyonder of the Savant pathway, my memory is something I can be proud of due to my eidetic memory. However, I only recalled that Sequence 0 of the Spectator pathway is Visionary, but I have no impression of its ritual to become a god!

“I can clearly remember all the rituals for the other twenty-one pathways, but this is the only one where, not only do I lack an impression of, I have even subconsciously neglected it.

“I tried asking Mr. Door what the ritual is for becoming a god for the Spectator pathway.

“Mr. Door laughed and said with a teasing and leisurely tone, ‘didn’t you already say it?’

“This… The ritual for a Spectator to become a god is to make the development of the times to be in line with one’s expectations. Then, consume the potion for their advancement when it’s at a certain time node in that trend?

“I believe that’s the truth!

“Compared to ‘the times is part of the original Creator; only when the times develop according to a certain expectation can ’He’ draw energy from it and revive,’ this seems more objective. Heh, I knew that among the founders of that ancient secret organization, there had to be someone with their plans apart from the zealots!

“On careful thought, this is really quite a terrifying matter. It’s fine when stuck in the Low- and Mid-Beyonder levels, but once someone is of a high standing, they might suffer an unknown and sudden destruction simply because their particular thoughts, ideas, or matters that they would like to push forward disagrees with a particular existence’s expectations…

“Be careful of the ‘Spectator’!

“I’m very curious how Mr. Door knows what’s on the second Blasphemy Slate, as well as the various rituals needed to become a god. ‘His’ answer was that ‘He’ had seen the complete second Blasphemy Slate, and with ‘Him’ were Solomon, Zaratul, Tudor, Trunsoest, Augustus, Einhorn, Sauron, Castiya, Zoroast, Stiano, Constantine, and company… These were families who reigned over all the Beyonders in the Fourth Epoch!”

The secrets contained in this diary page made Klein feel as though he was facing a Mythical Creature’s form, embroiling his mind in a storm of knowledge.

The Spectator’s ritual to become a god is to make the times develop according to one’s imagination? If that’s the case, Adam has been subconsciously preparing for this since the beginning of the Fourth Epoch… So the secret that King George III is hiding, and the possible developments, are in line with “His” expectations, to the point of “Him” giving a helping hand? Once the tide of the times come rushing in, with things not being capable of changing in short time spans, “He” will be able to become a god?

In that case, engaging in a deep investigation of the Great Smog is abnormally dangerous. Even if I’m currently a Blessed of the Goddess, having an official Beyonder’s background and being able to cooperate with angels anytime, my safety can’t be guaranteed. After all, the Goddess isn’t able to descend for quite some time… Amidst his thoughts, Klein suddenly had the intention of cowering back.

If this were in the past, he could relax after reporting the matter to the

Church of Evernight and even leave Backlund for a vacation. But now, as a Blessed of the Goddess, he had already promised to seek out Hvin Rambis and Saintess of White Katarina, making it very difficult for him to escape.

It was truly a case of "you win some, you lose some."

Furthermore, Klein didn't know how Adam wished for the times to develop. If a Great Smog of Backlund happened again, he really had no way of extricating himself. There were people he cared about, and he yearned for peace.

At the very least, I have to know what the king's secret is before deciding what to do… On the second Blasphemy Slate, apart from the Beyonder pathways and Sequence potion, what are the secrets it has? Klein retracted his gaze and made Roselle's diary page vanish.

Then, he looked around with a calm expression and said with a smile, "You may begin."

At this moment, Audrey didn't hide her curiosity. She raised her hand slightly and asked, "Honorable Mr. Fool, is there any special meaning to the cross beside your hand?

"If the answer requires an equivalent exchange, you can directly make the request."

Klein placed the Unshadowed Crucifix on the table precisely because he wanted the Tarot Club members to ask. He could then use this opportunity to inform Little Sun and The Hanged Man, who might have a chance of using the cross, of the news. After all, such matters were beneath Mr. Fool to expect him to raise them.

Therefore, he smiled at Miss Justice.

"This question is nothing.

"It's something left behind by the sun god of ancient times."

Sun god of ancient times… Ancient sun god? The Creator that the City of Silver believes in? T-this cross actually has such origins? A captain of the royal guards who's just a Sequence 5 or 6 actually had a relic of the ancient sun god on him? Isn't that too much a coincidence? Fors couldn't believe her ears when she heard Mr. Fool's answer.

At this moment, The Fool Klein mentioned in passing, "Its level isn't too high, corresponding to an Unshadowed. It's greatest use is to eliminate the mental corruption of Beyonder characteristics and help people who have consumed excessive potions to expel the excess characteristics. It will allow those who do not wish to remain in the mysterious world to return to normalcy."

This power is rather fascinating… It's no wonder Mr. World once asked me if given a chance, will I be willing to completely leave the mysterious world… Audrey felt that her curiosity was satisfied.

Strange… It really is an item that makes me uncomfortable… Emlyn made a judgment as he looked to the side at The Sun.

Derrick was surprised and delighted, having a feeling that he had his dream fulfilled.

His dream was to free all the residents of the City of Silver from the curse and return under the Sun, and not constantly suffer the madness, pain, and torture.

And if such a dream could be fulfilled by the relic inherited from the ancient sun god—the Creator who the City of Silver believed in—it would truly appear to be destiny and inevitable.

He spoke before The Hanged Man.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, can I find a way to trade for this item?"

"As long as you pay a sufficient price," Klein said with a slight nod.

…Mr. Fool really is the best, the greatest! Derrick praised from the bottom of his heart.

As long as a sufficient price is paid… Alger gained inspiration from Miss Magician's rental of the notebook and hurriedly asked, "Honorable Mr. Fool, is it possible to rent the cross for a day or a few hours for a fixed price?"

He currently didn't have any plans on renting it. As his Wind-blessed potion had digested relatively quickly, he planned on considering the problem of purging the excess characteristic after he consumed the additional Ocean Songster potion.

"Yes," The Fool Klein answered simply.

It can be rented? The Star Leonard had benefited quite significantly from borrowing Leymano's Travels previously. After he heard Mr. Fool's answer, he focused, seriously thinking if he had any need for the ancient sun god's relic.

A few seconds later, he realized that he didn't have such a need.

Not only was the Sun pathway good against wraiths and specters, the Evernight pathway was good at it too!

Furthermore, when he returned from Tingen to Backlund, he had already obtained four Flaring Sun Charms, planning to give half of them to Klein who had provided him the information, keeping the other half for himself.

As for purging the excessive Beyonder characteristics and leaving the mysterious world, he didn't need it. He was about to hold the ritual to become a Spirit Warlock!

At this moment, Fors glanced at Xio and felt pangs of regret.

She wasn't regretting them sacrificing the cross to Mr. Fool, but rather that she didn't attempt to use her powers or Leymano's Travels to "Record" the corresponding powers before sacrificing it.

Of course, this was mainly because she was rather timid. Without being able to use an Astrologer's means to determine the cross's uses and effects, she didn't dare to rashly make attempts.

After all, I can still rent it from Mr. Fool in the future… She tried hard to cheer up.

Noticing no further requests, The Fool Klein retracted his grace, gesturing to the Tarot Club members to begin the transactions and discussions.

In fact, the Unshadowed Crucifix had someone who potentially needed it. It was the Fog Sea's Strongest Hunter Anderson. This fellow had undergone various experiments after boarding the Golden Dream under Vice Admiral Iceberg's arrangements, doing so in a bid to digest the alien object inside him. There was already a certain level of success, but it wasn't enough to completely eliminate the latent problems.

Upon thinking of this, Klein silently mumbled, I'll get Danitz to ask later…

At this moment, Audrey raised a request for a transaction.

"Ladies and gentlemen, which one of you has a Dreamcatcher's heart, mind illusion crystal, or an adult mind dragon's complete brain?"

Chapter 1037 - Gehrman's Problem

◆ ◆ ◆

After hearing Miss Justice, Derrick very enthusiastically replied, “Our City of Silver’s warehouse likely has the complete brain of an adult mind dragon. I’ll inform you after confirming it when I return.”

He originally wanted to say that even if there was the complete brain of an adult mind dragon, it was most likely filled with madness and distorted mental corruption, but after seeing the bronze cross, he felt that it wasn’t a problem.

That simple? Audrey’s eyes lit up when she heard that. Her depressed mood from last night had brightened up significantly.

Indeed, compared to the outside world where dragons are decreasing in number, the City of Silver, which has a history dating back to the Second Epoch, will likely possess such ingredients. Hmm, it’s mainly because they do not have the higher Sequences’ formula for the Spectator pathway, so even with the ingredients, they are of little use. Furthermore, they lack an Artisan and are unable to turn Beyonder ingredients into mystical items. At times, they’d rather just store them… Many thoughts ran through Audrey’s mind as she asked with a faint smile, “If you do have it, what would you exchange it for?”

“I haven’t thought of it…” Derrick felt a little embarrassed as he raised his hand and scratched the back of his head.

His main goal now was to obtain the Creator’s relic from Mr. Fool, but he didn’t have anything of equal value.

In the past, he would definitely be worried, but now, he quickly came up with an idea despite his worries.

He decided to ask the Chief because he was certain that the Chief was interested in the Creator's relic.

Due to having such thoughts, he really didn't know what payment he needed from Miss Justice. He planned on figuring out the other matter before telling her.

"Alright, confirm it first. It's best if you can check if there's any blood of an adult mind dragon." Audrey didn't press as she nodded gently.

It was the hardest supplementary ingredient she needed in the Dreamwalker potion formula.

Audrey immediately looked around, indicating that she was done.

You don't have to look at me. Although I do have some savings, there's nothing I wish to buy. It mainly has to do with Teacher not having given me the Traveler's potion formula… Among the first five Sequences of Apprentice, I like Traveler the most. I've always been looking forward to heading to different places to take in their vistas and delicacies. But thinking of the long journey, the crowdedness or crude transportation tools, and the inns whose level of hygiene is questionable, I'll definitely be obstructed by all the bulky baggage… After I become a Traveler, these won't be a problem… Fors's thoughts gradually wandered as she fantasized about her future life.

Xio pondered for a moment and said, "Everyone, please look out for the potion formula for the Arbiter pathway's Sequence 6 Judge and Sequence 5 Disciplinary Paladin."

She had a chance of obtaining the Judge formula from her MI9 contact, but she believed that Viscount Stratford's death would definitely cause a storm in Backlund, and when that happened, many things might change. Therefore, she planned on getting the Tarot Club to make additional preparations. After all, it was only for them to be on the lookout and not to search for them.

Besides, at Sequence 6 and 5, that would make her a quasi-high-ranking member of MI9. For informants in the peripheral to apply for the potion formula, there was a high probability that she needed to undergo a new round of investigations. This wasn't something she could skip because of the contact who had been very friendly to her.

To Xio, who was anxious to advance to a High-Sequence Beyonder and figure out the secret of the king, she undoubtedly couldn't place her hopes in the military.

"Alright." Alger was the first to reply.

Due to the influence from the royal family and the military, the Church of Storms likely had some of the potion formulas of the Arbiter pathway. Of course, this wasn't something a "Sequence 6" captain responsible for acting as a pirate would know. He only had a chance of knowing them after he officially became a Sequence 5 and was summoned back to the Church or was assigned to deal with more important missions.

Following that, Cattleya said, "The potion formula of the Arbiter pathway is strictly controlled by the Loen and Feynapotter royal families and military. They seldom appear in the wild. However, I can try to help you obtain it, but not able to guarantee you success. Also, if you need it, I can provide you with a Judge pathway's mystical item. After its shattering and reformation, it will become the corresponding main ingredient."

When she mentioned the words "shattering" and "reformation," Cattleya subconsciously thought of turning her body sideways as a hint to Miss Judgment that she could seek Mr. Fool's help, but ultimately she held back.

As for the method to obtaining the potion formula, it was actually very simple. It was to take the initiative to listen to the ravings of the Hidden Sage and accept the knowledge "He" imbued. At Sequence 4, her level of tolerance as a demigod had undergone a qualitative change.

However, the Hidden Sage was definitely not an existence that lacked intelligence. "He" could attach negative influences in the knowledge in "His" ravings, and even send "His" powers down from above, corrupting the listener. Therefore, such actions were still dangerous. Cattleya had the courage to attempt it, not because she was rash and overly confident, but because she was a member of the Moses Ascetic Order.

As an ancient organization that believed in the Hidden Sage, the Moses Ascetic Order's upper echelons had gradually found a relatively safe method to "listen" while under this existence's influence. Likewise, the Hidden Sage didn't have a ridiculous level of malicious intent towards members of the Moses Ascetic Order. "He" seldom brought harm, and most of the time, "He" was simply imbuing knowledge and letting them pursue "His" believers.

To her, as long as she controlled the frequency and quantity, she could obtain knowledge from the Hidden Sage in a rather safe manner. As for the tiny influence and corruption that came with it, she suspected that the process of entering the area above the gray fog every time she participated in the Tarot Gathering allowed them to be eliminated in a natural and simple manner.

The only problem was that the knowledge she received each time wasn't something under her control. It depended on the Hidden Sage's mood and thoughts at that particular point in time.

In a sense, this was a passive and irresistible secret deed ritual.

As for the Judge pathway mystical item that she was willing to provide, it came from the Fog Sea's Strongest Hunter Anderson—a button. After she became a demigod, some of the items she held had little use. One of them was the button.

After hearing that, Xio didn't hesitate to agree.

"Alright, I'll consider purchasing it after obtaining the Judge potion formula."

I hope I can raise my Sequence again by then, allowing me to use the gray fog's powers that isn't just close to the level of an angel, but that of an angel. Only then can I shatter items and let the characteristic reform. Otherwise, I'll still have to bother Ma'am Arianna or Will Auceptin. Yes, if Mr. Azik were to awaken, things would be a lot simpler…

I wonder if the Unshadowed Crucifix can purge an item's Beyonder characteristic out. I don't think it will work. It can't coexist with those items, preventing them from even coming close… Other than this restriction, it should be possible in theory. I'll later try to use the gray fog's powers to force the Unshadowed Crucifix to be bound to other mystical items… Klein, who was listening by the sidelines, thought.

After discussing Miss Judgment's matter, the other members didn't seem to have any needs to make a transaction. Leonard had already covered up the weaknesses of his mystical item. Alger was working hard to become "legal."

Derrick was only thinking of the Creator's relic. Emlyn and Cattleya had just advanced recently, so they had nothing they needed for now.

Amongst them, Cattleya had the intention of renting the cross to see if she could cleanse the remnant corruption in Artisan Cielf. However, the Roselle diaries she gathered came from Queen Mystic and were used for obtaining answers. She believed she was temporarily unable to produce anything that would gamer Mr. Fool's interest.

I'll try to gather the emperor's diary out at sea… Cattleya secretly made the decision. After some thought, Emlyn said to The Magician, "Ma'am, in the next two weeks, I might need to rent that notebook."

“No problem.” Fors was originally thinking of spending money to get Mr. Moon to add Abyss Shackles and other Beyonder powers to the spellbook, so she was very happy to permit his request. This meant, not only would she not be spending money, but she would even earn some money.

At this thought, she couldn’t help but add, “Try not to record ‘Full Moon.’”

She would be very troubled if Leymano’s Travels’s powers were mainly filled with “Full Moon.”

While Emlyn nodded in agreement, Alger interrupted as though in thought, “Is the Sanguine’s hunting of the key members of the Rose School of Thought about to begin?”

“Yes.” Emlyn didn’t hide the truth at all. “Once the plan is finalized, I’ll get everyone to provide me with suggestions.”

“No problem.” The first to answer wasn’t The Hanged Man, but The World Gehrman Sparrow who had been sitting silently at the bottom end of the long bronze table.

He’s interested in this? Not only did Emlyn think this, but the other members also had the same idea no matter how slow they were.

With The Hanged Man, The Hermit, and Justice agreeing to help Mr. Moon in plotting the Sanguine operation, the Tarot Club’s transaction segment came to an end, ushering in the free communication segment.

The World Gehrman Sparrow sat up slightly and looked at The Star Leonard.

“Help me ask if that person has seen the second Blasphemy Slate.”

“Blasphemy Slate?” Audrey and the other members immediately grasped the peculiar term.

They immediately had astonished thoughts:

The second Blasphemy Slate?

Mr. Star isn’t as simple as he appears! He knows someone that has seen one of the most important items in mythical legend!

Other than his identity as a member of the Church and official Beyonder, he had other secrets!

No wonder he has joined the Tarot Club…

Leonard jumped in fright as well, never expecting Klein to raise such a request.

After a few seconds of silence, he exhaled and said, “Okay.”

Chapter 1038 - Name List

◆◆◆

After answering, Leonard snapped to his senses and grasped the hidden message contained in Klein's request.

Does he mean that Old Man has once seen something like the Blasphemy Slate?

Without giving Leonard the chance to think, The World Gehrman Sparrow surveyed the area and mentioned something else:

"The Church of Evernight has confirmed that Loen King George III hides a particular secret from the intel they received from MI9's deputy director, Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor… He secretly sent people to dig up the Blood Emperor's ruins and colluded with the Demoness Sect and Psychology Alchemists…"

Klein controlled the fake person and described the matter which he had previously told Miss Justice in greater detail. After he was done, he made special mention:

"The three Churches don't seem to have found enough evidence. With Hvin Rambis's disappearance, the matter seems to have calmed on the surface… There is reason to suspect that there's a traitor amongst the upper echelons of the three Churches."

…Something so major actually happened in Backlund this week? Klein seems to have obtained information from the Church… Why don't I know any of that? As he listened, Leonard shot a look at The World Gehrman Sparrow with an odd expression. He temporarily had his thoughts adrift, unsure as to who was the Red Gloves of the Church of Evernight and a target who was about to become a high-ranking member to be nurtured.

Recalling the past, he seemed to grasp something, but he was unable to fully grasp that spark of inspiration and develop the idea fully.

Xio, who had planned on sharing her encounter with Viscount Stratford and his testimony at the Tarot Club and seek assistance, was stunned to realize that the matter Mr. World was investigating overlapped greatly with her goals.

If I had known this would happen, I would've sought Mr. World's help when following Viscount Stratford to the dock area. We might've been able to circumvent the restrictions and obtain more clues… Xio looked around and deliberated over her words, preparing herself to speak.

At this moment, while Alger was feeling shocked, he connected it to the period three-to four-months ago, a period before The Star and Judgment had joined the Tarot Club. Back then, The World Gehrman Sparrow had requested the Tarot Club members to help take note of information regarding Qonas Kilgor, and he had accused Hvin Rambis of being the mastermind behind Cuaron's suicide.

Indeed, a simple suicide case by Cuaron wouldn't make The World expend so much of his time and energy. Matters he's investigating and the people he takes note of are very likely secrets that have an influence on the global situation…

Also, there might be a traitor amongst the three Churches' upper echelons? Which cardinal or high-ranking deacon could it be? Alger could sense the surging undercurrents and the scent of an opportunity.

Normally, he wasn't someone the Church of Storms placed a great importance on. The best outcome of a Beyonder who acted as a pirate for prolonged periods of time was to become a Sequence 5 Ocean Songster. After returning to the Church, they could become an assistant to the Mandated Punisher's upper echelons. It was almost impossible for them to wield holy artifacts and become demigods.

Only with the situation changing and through frequent developments could he rely on the Tarot Club to showcase his capabilities and make great contributions. That way, he would be made a target to be nurtured.

Likewise, Cattleya seemed to see the dark clouds accumulating in Backlund, as well as the strong winds brewing there. She vaguely understood why the Queen had been staying in Backlund over the past half-year. As for Emlyn, he frowned, feeling once again that Backlund was no longer a safe place for the Sanguine to live in.

I can only hope that it doesn't affect my hunting operation of the key members of the Rose School of Thought… Also, I hope it doesn't make Father and me be that busy like the period after the Great Smog last year… Emlyn's frown deepened upon recalling that episode.

He swept his gaze from the corner of his eye at The Sun and discovered that the youth was sitting upright, his eyes vacant. He couldn't help but scoff inwardly.

"I will take note of Hvin Rambis's whereabouts." Audrey broke the temporary silence.

Judgment Xio also looked at The World Gehrman Sparrow and said, "I'm investigating a matter that involves the king's secret. If you need my assistance, please don't stand on ceremony."

Having said that, she briefly mentioned the problem of someone monitoring Shermane.

"Alright." Klein knew that it was Demoness Trissy and made the fake person, The World, nod and chuckle hoarsely. "Be it taking note of Hvin Rambis's whereabouts or investigating the king's secret, take note of any matters that seem too coincidental around you. If there are any coincidences, immediately inform me."

He didn't directly mention the Twilight Hermit Order or Adam, afraid that Miss Justice and company couldn't help but think about it in private and be overly anxious. If they were to reveal any problems, they might attract unneeded attention.

Too many coincidences… Fors and the other Tarot Club members repeated this phrase in their minds as they made their own guesses.

After about ten seconds of silence, Derrick said, "I'll be following the expedition team to the Afternoon Town camp after a period of making preparations and adjustments. This time, we might attempt to enter the Giant King's Court."

To Audrey and company, this wasn't something too sudden. They had long known that the City of Silver would launch such an operation after The Sun advanced to Sequence 5.

Therefore, they weren't shocked or surprised. Instead, they had the feeling that their patience had paid off, as though a mythical legend was about to unfold before them in a real, corporeal manner.

Alger thought and gave a vague reminder:

"When the time comes, listen to your Chiefs arrangements and try your best to pray to Mr. Fool frequently. If you're stumped, you can request a mini-gathering for a discussion like The Moon."

"Alright, Mr. Hanged Man." Derrick had no problems with that since those were things he usually did or thought of doing.

After this matter was over, Alger turned to the seat of honor at the end of the bronze table and reverently said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I have the answer to the matter you wanted me to investigate."

Under the other members' looks of puzzlement and curiosity, he continued, "There were five Feysac colonels who participated in the

Konotop Sea battle in 1338. Two of them died in battle, and one died two years ago due to excessive drinking after being discharged due to age. One was promoted to Commodore and was transferred to the Imperial Navy College and became its vice-chancellor. One became a Rear Admiral and is currently serving as commanding officer of the Feysac Subjugation Fleet's second squadron.

Just as he said that, Alger requested for the right to conjure a piece of paper filled with the detailed intel.

The Fool Klein allowed it to flash in his palm and quickly scanned through it.

He had made The Hanged Man investigate the Feysac Enmat's colonel in the 1338 Konotop Sea battle mainly to seek out Creeping Hunger's original owner. That naval officer had captured the Enmat's second mate, Andy Haydn in that sea battle and "Grazed" him. He was one of the absolute victors, so it was impossible for him to have died in battle.

As for his subsequent discovery and encounter in that primitive island with The Hanged Man, they made Klein suspect that Qilangos had been given the glove by the Twilight Hermit Order.

Be it an official or periphery member, it's impossible for him to die that easily or die from alcoholism… Of course, I can't eliminate the possibility of being silenced… Klein thought quickly and remembered three names on the piece of white paper.

Boris… Died in 1347. Cause of death: Excessive drinking…

Suzdal… 48 years old. Commodore. Feysac Imperial Navy College's vice-chancellor…

Dmitriev… 45 years old. Rear Admiral. Commanding officer of Feysac Subjugation Fleet's second squadron…

Retracting his gaze, The Fool Klein nodded gently and said to The Hanged Man, "Continue gathering detailed information of the latter three. Figure out everything about their lives.”

“Yes, Mr. Fool.” Alger agreed without hesitation.

This was an opportunity for him. After the mission was completed, he could attempt to request to borrow the cross.

After another round of exchanges, the week’s Tarot Gathering came to an end. Leonard then returned to the real world.

Sitting on the sofa, he hesitated for a moment before placing his feet on the coffee table. Then, he asked with a suppressed voice, “Old Man, have you seen the second Blasphemy Slate before?”

In his mind, Pallez Zoroast’s slight-aged voice sounded:

“No. The one who saw the second Blasphemy Slate was my great grandfather. Heh heh, who mentioned this?”

Leonard didn’t answer Pallez Zoroast’s question as thoughts resonated in his mind.

The Blasphemy Slate really exists!

Old Man’s great grandfather had seen the second Blasphemy Slate!

No wonder “He” could become an angel!

After a few seconds, Leonard asked curiously and expectantly, “Old Man, do you know the potion formula of Nightwatcher?”

Pallez Zoroast immediately scoffed.

“Naive! According to my great grandfather, it was an urgent situation and a limited opportunity. The Blasphemy Slate could disappear at any moment. Any smart person will know to grasp a complete Beyonder pathway before looking at the rest.

“In addition, the knowledge of the Blasphemy Slate appeared in its essence and not in textual form. Everyone who saw it needed some time to interpret it. When the Blasphemy Slate was taken away, not everyone managed to memorize a complete Beyonder pathway, so how could they care about the others?

“I do have quite a number of potion formulas of the other pathways, but they were slowly gathered by the family over long periods of time. There aren’t many High-Sequence formulas among them.”

“Is that so…” Leonard chuckled dryly and asked, “Who took the second Blasphemy Slate away?”

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a second before saying, “If my great grandfather’s description isn’t wrong, that should be King of Angels Adam.”

“The seven deities—no, it should’ve only been six deities back then, didn’t participate in this matter?” Leonard pressed in puzzlement.

Pallez Zoroast laughed in an ambiguous manner. “At least not on the surface.”

Chapter 1039 - Hope

◆ ◆ ◆

A bolt of lightning streaked across the deep, dark sky, illuminating the entirety of the City of Silver. However, it didn't last too long, and it soon disappeared into the darkness, returning the world to its pitch-black state.

After Derrick Berg opened his eyes, he immediately got off the bed and dashed for the door.

He slowed down his pace as he walked, his expression clearly conflicted.

How should I mention the Creator's relic to the Chief? Directly tell the Chief that an item has caught my eye? No, no. Although, according to Mr. Hanged Man, the Chief has a tacit understanding towards such matters, I can't be too direct… Derrick was always a thin-skinned youth. Even when his parents were alive, he seldom made requests for items.

He paused in place, seriously trying to recall the discussions with Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and the rest of the Tarot Club members, hoping to imitate them and find a reasonable excuse.

After simulating the possible developments all day, Derrick bit his lip and decided to be direct.

Carrying Thunder God's Roar, he pulled open the door, entered the streets, and headed for the twin towers that was north of the city.

Along the way, many City of Silver residents came out of their houses, wearing smiles as they gathered at the training field.

This period of time was the harvesting season for Black-Faced Grass, a "festival" for the City of Silver to offer sacrificial offerings to the Creator. It was also one of the rare days when people could feel happy deep down in a darkness with harsh survival conditions.

Seeing children who were skipping about and adults wearing Black-Faced Grass amulets and rings while hearing their discussions and singing, Derrick's heart calmed down as his footsteps grew firmer.

Coming to the spire of the twin towers, he passed the message and met the Chief of the six-member council, Colin Iliad, in a particular room at the top of the tower.

This Demon Hunter was messy and grizzled as always, having not put effort into combing it. The wrinkles on his face were rather deep, leaving behind either deep or distorted old scars. His light blue eyes were deep with experience as though they could see through a person.

After Derrick saluted him, he nodded and said, "How's your grasp of the Priest of Light potion?"

This was referring to the spirituality convergence and the corresponding familiarity with the various theurgical spells.

Derrick answered in a frank manner, "Almost grasped it."

"Yes, there's no rush. The other members of the expedition team have yet to make preparations. They still need a certain amount of time, just like Lovia. She's gathering and searching for the ingredients needed for her advancement." Colin Iliad gave a casual mention.

Indeed, Elder Lovia will also participate in the expedition to the Giant King's Court… She's trying to become a demigod? Derrick was taken aback as he asked without hiding anything, "Elder Lovia has the subsequent potion formula?"

This was a problem that had plagued this Shepherd Elder all this time, preventing her from becoming a demigod for years.

“Yes.” Colin gave an affirmative answer, but he didn’t provide an explanation.

He instead asked, “Is there something this time?”

Derrick turned anxious when he heard this. He didn’t make a request, but rather directly said, “Your Excellency, I discovered a relic of the Creator. It corresponds to the Sequence 4 Unshadowed of the Sun pathway.”

The tall and muscular Colin in a linen shirt narrowed his eyes as the look in his eyes changed.

Those complex and indescribable emotions made Derrick freeze on the spot, causing him to momentarily forget what he was about to say next.

Amidst an indescribable silence, Demon Hunter Colin said in a deep voice, “Relic?”

Derrick’s pupils constricted as he realized that he accidentally mentioned something of great significance.

He had felt pained that the Creator had been eaten for a very long time, knowing that “He” had completely fallen, never to return again. This made him develop the illusion that it was common sense.

Faced with the Chief’s question and gaze, Derrick fell silent, momentarily at a loss for an explanation.

He hesitated for a few seconds and finally opened his mouth with great difficulty.

“Yes, relic.

“The Kings betrayed the Lord…”

He subconsciously used the term the ecclesiastic at Afternoon Town had used in referring to the Kings of Angels.

Colin looked at Derrick, his light blue eyes seemingly losing focus temporarily.

This Demon Hunter remained silent for a long while, and after nearly a minute did he calmly say, “Got it.”

His voice subconsciously turned deeper. He didn’t ask where the relic of the Creator that Derrick had discovered, or what it looked like and what its use was.

His eyes regained their depth as he didn’t continue the topic. Instead, he said, “You’ve already become a Sequence 5. You have the right to know what holy Sealed Artifacts the City of Silver has. Once you’re able to converge your spirituality and fully grasp the theurgical spells, I’ll give you the corresponding information and take you to the place where they’re sealed.

“If you have an affinity with one of the holy Sealed Artifacts and can reduce its negative effects, you can wield one.”

The affinity he mentioned here referred to the similarity between Derrick’s psyche and the remnant High-Sequence Beyonder’s psyche mark on the Sealed Artifact. It could reduce the terrifying negative effects by deceiving it to a certain degree.

In the City of Silver, there wasn’t a lack of common Beyonder characteristics and ingredients. Furthermore, everyone knew the acting method. The only thing preventing them from advancing was the rituals. At times, without a potion formula, it didn’t stop a Sequence 8 from advancing to Sequence 7, or Sequence 7 to 6. As long as one had advanced correctly via consuming potions the previous time and had completely digested it, if one was willing to take the risk, they could attempt to directly consume a Beyonder characteristic to advance. The chances of success weren’t too low, but from Sequence 6 to 5, without the help of a ritual, the chances of success were very low.

Therefore, in the City of Silver, there were a lot of Sequence 6 Beyonders, but Sequence 5 and up became rare. It was a level that earned serious considerations.

Why did the Chief suddenly mention this… He means that I can choose a holy Sealed Artifact to exchange for the Creator's relic. I haven't even mentioned this yet… Yes, I'll first offer the information to Mr. Fool and see which item will please him… Derrick was stunned for a moment before he came to a realization. He nodded heavily.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

He didn't say anything else as he bade farewell and prepared to participate in the harvest.

Demon Hunter Colin watched his figure disappear as he slowly walked to the window and cast his gaze at the altar near the training field.

There were already many people gathered there. They were circling the Creator's altar, and they were using ancient dances to please the deity. Others were singing praises of the mighty existence.

They had obvious smiles on their faces, their eyes brimming with hope and anticipation. It was as if the Creator would return if they held on for a few more years, and all hardships would come to an end.

Such expectations had been repeatedly shattered in the past two to three millennia, but it rose up, again and again, to support their hearts in resisting the despair and burdens.

Colin Iliad stood by the window and watched intently.

†

Backlund, Böklund Street.

After returning from above the gray fog to the real world, Klein's heart felt heavy.

Emperor Roselle's diary page allowed him to understand the secrets of the Spectator. He understood how dangerous it would be for him to continue investigating the king. Even with the Church of Evernight and the Goddess's blessings, it wouldn't be completely safe.

It mainly has to do with the Goddess's digesting of the Death pathway's Uniqueness. "She" won't be able to descend for quite a long period of time… I hope the Lord of Storms and the God of Steam and Machinery can react in a timely manner at the critical moment… Regardless, with Ma'am Arianna, Will Auceptin, and Pallez Zoroast, even against a King of Angels, it isn't an outcome that spells certain doom. Even if I were to die, "They" still have a chance of grabbing my corpse… The longer I hold on, the higher the odds of my survival will increase… Klein relieved his stress by making a self-deprecating comment.

Previously, above the gray fog, he had already decided the focus of his investigation. It was to pursue Saintess of White Katarina and Demoness Trissy whose current Sequence was unknown. As for Hvin Rambis, as long as he didn't take the initiative to contact Miss Justice, he wouldn't try to seek him out; otherwise, he might encounter an accident he couldn't fend off.

On the one hand, I'm waiting for Miss Judgment's feedback, and on the other hand, I should try to see if I can find Vice Admiral Ailment. By using their blood connection, I can try to lock onto the Saintess of White. This isn't too realistic. The three Churches will definitely come up with this method, so the Demoness Sect will definitely counter this… I'll later get Danitz to search for items related to Vice Admiral Ailment, and I'll use the gray fog's ability to interfere and screen… Yes, I'll also ask him about Anderson. This isn't too pressing. The Unshadowed Crucifix is still being experimented with… Klein retracted his thoughts and got out of bed.

He had already used the gray fog's suppression to bind Unshadowed Crucifix and the mystical item, Broken Finger, together. He wanted to see if the Beyonder characteristic would be purged.

After resting at home for a while, Klein changed his clothes and went out with his valet, Enuni. He planned on praying at Saint Samuel Cathedral before visiting the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

This valet wasn't actually the Winner, but Qonas Kilgor. The real Earl of The Fallen had been turned into flesh with the Flower of Blood and was hiding inside the Earl of The Fallen's stomach.

Backlund's weather these days was often gloomy. The gas lamps lining the two sides of the road had yet to be lit up, but the houses on both sides of the street had already been lit up.

Klein watched all of this expressionlessly. He rode his carriage from Böklund Street to Phelps Street. He first headed to Saint Samuel Cathedral to pray before he wore his top hat and cane and walked to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

As he approached the door, he heard a ringing sound. He saw Miss Audrey riding a modified bicycle which didn't have a horizontal bar and was rather exquisite. She had come out from an alley.

[image]

She was wearing a plain white dress and a pair of black leather shoes. Her blonde hair was tied up as her green eyes were peeled on the road. Sitting on the seat harness behind her was a golden retriever who could maintain her stability no matter how much the bicycle shook.

Upon noticing the elegant gentleman with white sideburns, Audrey smiled brightly and greeted in a cheery tone, "Good morning~ Mr. Dantès."

"Good afternoon, Miss Audrey. You seem to be in a good mood?" Klein watched as she hit the brakes and used her foot to support herself.

Audrey pursed her lips as her smile brightened a little.

“You’re right. I am indeed in a good mood. After riding this for a while, all my troubles have disappeared.”

Chapter 1040 - The Tranquil Surface of the Sea

* * *

Not bad, a Spectator’s ability to adjust their own emotions are rather impressive… Klein commented inwardly as he looked at the golden retriever on the back seat of the bicycle. He then sized up the bicycle that looked different from the bicycles on the street. He casually asked, “Is this a new bike designed specially for women?”

“What do you mean specially designed for women? If you wish to ride it, you can too,” Audrey replied with a smile. “I only told the people at the Bike Company that they needed to consider the requirements of the different demographics. This is their latest product they designed. It has yet to be industrialized. I was given a prototype to give them some feedback.”

“An excellent idea,” Klein praised with a smile before asking thoughtfully, “Do you know the owner of the Backlund Bike Company?”

Audrey’s eyes narrowed a little as she answered, “Of course, I’m one of the major shareholders of the Backlund Bike Company.”

Major shareholder… I almost forgot about that… She ultimately succeeded… Klein seemed to understand something as the comers of his lips curled up slightly as he shook his head in a self-deprecating manner.

“I see. My imagination still isn’t good enough.

“How is it? How does it feel after riding it?”

Audrey held the bicycle's handles and darted her eyes about slightly, recalling as she said, "It's great. It's very suitable for women."

Honorable lady, that wasn't what you said a moment ago… Klein pricked his brows, but he didn't interrupt the girl.

Audrey smiled and continued, "To me, it can help me adjust my mood and relieve stress. It's like riding a horse. However, that requires special equipment, and I have to do it at the horse ranch in the suburbs. It | s impossible to get the horse to gallop at full speed at home or on the streets. It lacks that feeling, but bicycles don't have that problem. I can even head into the alleys which horse carriages can't enter. It allows me to take in different sights. Just now, I rode past a house and saw their garden blooming with flowers. It made me feel especially happy.

"Oh, when I encountered other people on bicycles, I feel very happy too. They work hard to live, carrying that little bit of hope. Although they're busy and in a rush, they don't appear listless. Alright, don't laugh at me. I know you want to say that those who can afford bicycles are definitely not those at the lowest rungs of society. I'm just happy for them.

"I hope that one day, I can ride through every street in Backlund."

Klein listened quietly as his mood improved.

With Miss Justice's description, it seemed possible for the scene to appear in front of him. And this was a trivial change he had brought to this world.

He laughed and said, "No, I have no way of refuting it. It sounds very interesting. This is what I wish to see in Backlund —the more the merrier.

"I originally had doubts about certain things, but now, I seem to have fewer doubts."

With that said, he pointed at 22 Phelps Street, the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation's door.

“Let’s go in. It looks like it’s going to rain soon.”

“Alright, I’ll park the bicycle.” Audrey got off the bicycle and pushed it and her golden retriever towards the back door.

There was a parking spot for bicycles which had been specially demarcated. It was indoors, so there was no need to be afraid of the rain. In an organization like the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, more and more of the staff who often needed to travel deep into East Borough were beginning to ride bikes. Of course, none of them dared to venture too deeply into East Borough on such a transportation tool, as everything could be stolen there.

As they approached the back door, Susie jumped off the bicycle. She turned back to look at the spot from before and said in puzzlement, “Audrey, that Mr. Dantes person had a mixed tone when he heard you say that you were one of the major shareholders of the Bicycle Company, but I failed to decipher his true meaning.”

Audrey pursed her lips and chuckled.

“I previously heard that Mr. Dantes was one of the people who attempted to compete with Hibbert for buying the shares of the Bicycle Company.”

“I get it now!” Susie revealed an obvious smile and felt happy for the accuracy of her observation.

Inside the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, Klein very gentlemanly waited until Miss Audrey returned with her Beyonder dog and followed them to the second floor.

At this moment, a staff came forward and said to Audrey, “Director, Chancellor Portland Moment from the Backlund University of Technology is waiting for you in the reception room.”

“Why is Chancellor Moment here?” Audrey asked in surprise.

The staff first greeted Director Dwayne Dantes before answering, “He didn’t say…”

Before the staff could finish his sentence, the stout and ruddy Portland Moment walked out of the reception room while combing his white hair.

He then pressed his hand to his chest and bowed.

“Honorable Miss Audrey, please forgive me for rashly paying a visit.’

In Loen, after getting to know each other, they greeted noble ladies by their last names and greeted the young ladies by name.

“It’s my pleasure,” Audrey replied politely.

Portland Moment was a chancellor who paid more attention to academics. Without any further flattery or pleasantries, he bluntly said with a smile, “This is the thing: I wish to add a mechanical laboratory to our technical university. The goal is to invent and promote various mechanical technologies that aids businesses and daily life. I wonder if you’re interested in donating or investing in them?

“Heh heh, Dwayne. How about it? Do you have any thoughts of working together? Don’t worry, I’ll definitely get a grant from the Higher Education Commission.”

It’s a very good idea, but Backlund and the entire kingdom might be falling into a maelstrom afterward… Klein was a little dazed after hearing Principal Moment’s words.

Audrey nodded slightly and said with a smile, “It sounds interesting, but I need to see more information. This is a responsibility for myself and my responsibility towards you.”

“I think so too,” Klein added.

Portland Moment chortled heartily.

"No problem. I'll arrange the information when I get back."

In the Fog Sea, on the Golden Dream.

Gehrman Sparrow is actually concerned about Anderson's situation… Also, what's the meaning of searching for items related to Vice Admiral Ailment? Many pirates are wildly going after something similar, but they hav^ succeeded… Danitz, who had received Gehrman Sparrow's message, was completely puzzled.

But regardless of his puzzlement, he thanked Mr. Fool seriously and carefully.

Following that, he put down his fishing rod and turned to enter the cabin, heading straight for the room where Anderson was residing.

He knocked on the door and opened it in one fell swoop. With his arms crossed, Danitz stood at the door and said to Anderson, who was composing a portrait, "How is it? How's the digestion of that thing in your stomach?"

Anderson put down his brush, glanced at Danitz, and replied heavily, "It already knows how to call me Daddy."

Danitz subconsciously took two steps back.

Anderson immediately returned to his relaxed state as he said with a smile, "Just joking. It's not bad. Your captain has ideas and the drive. The only problem is that we've met with failure too many times.

"Uh, the object in my stomach has been isolated. It won't affect me for a long time."

As he spoke, he rubbed his belly.

Danitz pricked up his brows and curiously asked, "There was originally some sort of effect?"

Anderson sized up Danitz a few times.

“You should’ve heard that some Beyonder characteristics or potions will seep into items that are in prolonged contact with them and transform them into Sealed Artifacts that are difficult to use. However, a human’s body is just a relatively special item.

“At times, I really do suspect that you obtained Beyonder powers through contact with potions and not through consumption. That’s why your brain has rotted.”

In the past, Danitz would definitely be furious, but now, all he did was chuckle.

“In other words, if you don’t isolate it, the thing in your stomach will gradually fuse and reconstruct your body, including your brain?”

Anderson was amused when he heard that.

Very good. Continue, don’t stop. I think you can attempt to advance to Sequence 6. Yes, you’re usually very skilled at setting up fires.”

Danitz replied disdainfully, “I’m only lacking in the ingredients.”

Thinking of Gehrman Sparrow’s instructions, he pressed unwillingly, “How is the matter supposed to be dealt with after its isolation?”

Anderson stroked the first button of his shirt as he chuckled.

Two possibilities. One, is to seek the help of a demigod, such as an Unshadowed, allowing the object to seep out bit by bit. In this aspect, your captain knows someone who can do it. The only problem is that my Beyonder characteristic might be purged while purging that object. It will drop my Sequence and even turn me into an ordinary person.

“The second line of thought is to think of a way to obtain the Iron-blooded Knight potion formula. Prepare the corresponding ritual and supplementary ingredients and see if there’s a way to accommodate that object and use it to become a demigod.”

“That sounds very dangerous.” Danitz gave an objective assessment of the second line of thought.

Anderson’s smile became more obvious.

“Indeed, this is very dangerous. I don’t even know if it will work.

“But don’t you think it’s interesting to have such a challenging task? At least, this is more consistent with my aesthetic judgment than the first method.”

Danitz shook his head seriously and said, “No.”

Following that, he asked in a provocative and probing manner, “Don’t you have a large inheritance—no, wealth? I can bring back your ashes.”

Anderson wasn’t annoyed at all as he solemnly nodded.

“When the time comes, you can consider eating my ashes directly.”

…Why isn’t it possible to provoke this guy at all… The corners of Danitz’s mouth twitched as he decided to give up. He wanted to seek the captain and ask how he could obtain items related to Vice Admiral Ailment.

Late at night, at 160 Boklund Street, just as Klein was about to sleep, he saw Miss Messenger walk out while holding four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand. One of them bit on a thin envelope with a letter stuffed in it.

“Who’s it from?” Klein asked out of habit as he extended his hand to receive it.

Reinette Tinekerr’s four heads spoke one after another:

“Sharron…” “Who…” “Doesn’t Like…” “Nicknames…”

Chapter 1041 - King's Daughter

◆ ◆ ◆

Sharron who doesn't like nicknames? How did she know? She's interacted with Miss Sharron before? Upon hearing Reinette Tinekerr's answer, Klein was first taken aback before questions emerged one after another in his mind.

From his point of view, a messenger and a mailer wouldn't communicate under normal circumstances. The entire process would be the messenger's appearance, the retrieval of the letter, and its departure.

Besides, when did Miss Messenger need to obtain the permission of the other party when she gives nicknames? Did Frank Lee and Patrick Bryan agree to it?

A few seconds later, Klein instinctively had a guess—Miss Messenger and Miss Sharron definitely had some kind of connection, and Reinette Tinekerr didn't wish to hide anything.

Reining in his thoughts, Klein opened the envelope, unfolded the letter, and quickly scanned the contents.

"There's something I hope you can help me with. Let's meet at the Bravehearts Bar to discuss in detail…"

Compared to before, Miss Sharron isn't that stingy with her words. She's slightly improved in this aspect for the better. Is this a change that resulted from a demigod advancement? Klein thought for a moment and walked to his desk. Picking up a pen, he wrote:

"When do you wish to meet?"

Putting down his pen, he glanced at Reinette Tinekerr, who was standing by the side, seemingly waiting to write the reply. Klein felt even more certain again.

He folded the letter, handed it over, and casually said, "For Miss Sharron."

One of Reinette Tinekerr's heads bit on the letter while the remaining three said, "You…" "Haven't…" "Paid…

"No…" "Postage…" "Payment…"

Klein cleared his throat, took out a gold coin, and handed it to Miss Messenger.

Seeing Reinette Tinekerr disappear, he revealed a pensive look as he walked to the reclining chair and waited patiently.

Less than a minute later, Miss Messenger walked out of the void again in her complicated dress. She was biting the letter from before.

Klein didn't inquire as he received the reply letter and unfolded it.

"If you don't have any problems with it, it would be best if it happens tonight.'

Tonight… Klein nodded thoughtfully and flicked his wrist, causing the letter to ignite into scarlet flames, quickly turning it black.

The flame burgeoned and enveloped his body as well.

By the time the flames extinguished, Klein's figure had already disappeared from the reclining chair. The floating ashes hovering in midair automatically fell into a nearby trash can with the help of an invisible wind.

In the houses that were connected together in Backlund's North

Borough, Cherwood Borough, and the Bridge area, the wall gas lamps brightened slightly before returning to normal.

Before long, Klein appeared in a room he had privately rented at the periphery of East Borough. He changed his clothes, put on gold-rimmed glasses, and went out with the appearance of Sherlock Moriarty, heading straight for the Bravehearts Bar.

This time, he didn't seek out Ian, who was in the card room playing tabletop games with a bunch of people. He listened for a few seconds before pushing open the door to one of the billiard rooms and entered slowly.

Just as he flipped open the door, he saw figures outlining themselves on two sides.

Sitting on a high stool to the left was the blonde, blue-eyed Sharron. She was wearing an exquisite bonnet and a regal dress. Compared to the past, her face was no longer as pale as before. It just looked like she was anemic, making her look less like a female ghost and more like a doll.

Standing to the right of the billiard table was Marie. This young man who liked to play cards with zombies had turned increasingly pale. The malice in his eyes had become unobvious, but it gave a suppressive feeling to others.

"Good evening." Klein took off his hat with a smile and bowed.

"Good evening, Mr. Detective." Sharron's body seemed to float up weightlessly as she seriously bowed. Marie did the same.

At that moment, the billiard room seemed to be filled with paranormal events.

Klein casually pulled a high stool chair and sat down. He chuckled and said, "What is it this time?"

"I'm very sorry to trouble you again." Sharron bowed again.

Marie quickly said, “We made an agreement for a cooperative effort with the Sanguine to deal with the key members of the Rose School of Thought in Backlund.

“We will definitely carry out the bulk of it ourselves. It will include how we lure them out, how we ambush them, and how our attack will happen. We just hope that you will watch the entire process by the side and aid in our escape when an accident happens.

“If you want anything, just mention it. We can discuss it.”

That is to say, I’m a contingency to prevent any accidents… What if that fellow, Emlyn, also enlists The World to secretly help? When that happens, they would have two demigods in their contingency plans… Uh, I think it might work. I can be Sherlock Moriarty while letting Qonas Kilgor be Gehrman Sparrow… Klein considered for a few seconds without immediately agreeing. Instead, he said, “Let me ask a few questions.”

Marie glanced at Sharron and nodded.

“Okay.”

Klein looked at Sharron, who was sitting on a high stool like a doll.

“The Tutanssess II mummy we previously obtained was a preparation for you to advance to Sequence 4 Puppet, and you’ve already become a demigod?”

This was something he had previously learned from their conversations and letter exchanges. His main goal was to make a confirmation and start the subsequent topic.

Sharron quietly looked back at him as she said with an ethereal and inhuman voice, “Yes.”

Klein nodded slightly and directly asked, “What’s your relationship with Reinette Tinekerr?”

Sharron's blue eyes darted about almost indiscernibly as she said, "'She' is my teacher."

Teacher… "She"… Although Klein already had some guesses, he nearly drew a gasp. He felt his head aching.

In the blink of an eye, although his expression remained the same, countless thoughts were bubbling in his mind. …Miss Messenger was originally an angel?

I'm actually using an angel as a messenger? Isn't that too exaggerated?

"She" is even Miss Sharron's teacher… It probably wasn't that simple when "She" requested to be my messenger!

From the looks of it, "She" definitely isn't on the same side as the Mother Tree of Desire. Miss Messenger signed the contract with me because the Mother Tree of Desire was coveting me? No—that "She" is bound to be my enemy?

It's no wonder Miss Sharron was able to obtain the puppet potion formula and the corresponding ingredients with the help of her teacher…

As his thoughts raced, Klein decided to ask another question. He wanted to use the process of Miss Sharron's or Marie's replies to calm his emotions.

He deliberated and said, "What's the exact situation?"

This time, it was still Sharron replying. Compared to Horamick's mechanical dolls, she appeared more lifeless as she calmly said, "Early in the Fifth Epoch, Death perished. There was resistance stirring against the Balam Empire in places like the Southern Continent's Star Highlands and Paz Valley.

"During this process, the Chained God appeared, and the Rose School of Thought was born. My teacher was originally the daughter of the ruler of the local highlands, but ‘She’ later became the Blessed of the Chained God, assisting ‘Her’ father in establishing the Highlands Kingdom.

“Later on, ‘She’ became a Sequence 2 angel, one of the leaders of the Rose School of Thought. ‘She’ advocated temperance and using austere and few desires to resist the madness in life.

“About 922 years ago, the ‘Son of God,’ Suah, was born. Everything began to change as the indulgence and bloody rituals gradually took over the dominating faction.

“At first, Teacher was barely able to maintain it, preventing the temperance faction from being affected. However, as time passed, the influence of the Mother Tree of Desire grew. Suah also successfully advanced a few years ago, becoming a true Abomination.

“An internal war broke out. Teacher protected us as we escaped from the highlands, valley, and grasslands. I watched ‘Her’ fall under the siege of Suah and the other high-ranking members.

“However, ‘She* didn’t completely die because of prior preparations. ’She’ resurrected in a special state in the spirit world and now yearns to complete ‘Her’ body.”

Is that so… In other words, Miss Messenger is currently, in essence, an angel without the corresponding powers. “She” is in a weakened state. It’s no wonder she wasn’t able to easily deal with the Rose School of Thought demigod, Shanks… Wait, although there are many angels cooperating with me, why are they all incomplete or weak? Apart from Ma’am Arianna, all of them are in such states… Mr. Azik, Pallez Zoroast, Will Auceptin, Miss Messenger… Is there a problem with my title as The Fool? Are they all waiting for me to give them the charms corresponding to Scholar of Yore? Klein came to a realization as he felt rather poignant.

He didn’t ask why Reinette Tinekerr still desired money, as he thought for a moment before saying, “Miss Sharron, the Rose School of Thought definitely has no lack of the Puppet potion formula. After you obtained the Tutanssess II mummy, they would likely view you as a demigod. In addition, Ma'am Reinette Tinekerr had once appeared before the Rose School of Thought's demigod and engaged in a battle with them. This also means that the Rose School of Thought definitely knows that 'She' is alive, and they wouldn't not be prepared against 'Her.' And your relationship as master and disciple with 'Her' is no secret to them.

"In such a situation, isn't it a little too naive to use yourself and Marie as bait to fish out the key members of the Rose School of Thought in Backlund?

"Do you think they will only send one or two demigods to deal with you? Up to what degree of help can the Sanguine provide?

"Also, I previously mentioned that due to one of my identities, the Mother Tree of Desire places a great deal of importance on me. Even Abomination Suah was sent to attack me. And your teacher's cooperation with me is something they are similarly aware of.

"Summarizing all these points, if you and Marie appear, the kind of assault you would invite is unpredictable."

Having said that, Klein's expression turned serious as he asked, "Do you wish to cause a divine descent in Backlund?" The entire billiard room instantly turned abnormally quiet, but there weren't any changes to Sharron's expression.

Chapter 1042 - Plan From a Different Angle

* * *

After a few seconds, Sharron calmly replied to Klein, “It’s not bait, but a ploy to lure them out.”

Just as Klein was about to ask what the difference was, Maric explained in detail, “Back when we were pursued by the Rose School of Thought, we discovered that they had quite a number of members in Backlund. However, due to our lack of strength and our fear of traps, as well as to not attract the attention of the Church, we didn’t take any action against them.

“This time, we plan on attacking one of the more important ones. We’ll deliberately miss some out, allowing the hidden ones to secretly escape and pass the information to the Rose School of Thought’s person-in-charge in Backlund.

“In secret, the Sanguine’s demigod will be watching them. Through the message chain, they will find the person in charge. That person must be a key member of the Rose School of Thought.

“Once he’s killed or even captured, we’ll take the next step in our operation based on the information we manage to obtain.”

That’s more reasonable. The main point is to use your own understanding of the Rose School of Thought to create a plan instead of using yourself as bait. That’s a way to effectively control the situation and not destroy Backlund… Klein nodded gently and said, “If that’s the case, I can participate.”

He didn’t say that he needed to think about it or return to confirm the level of danger. This was because this matter wasn’t something that needed to be done anytime soon for Sharron and the Sanguine. When he divined problems, he could always call it off as a participant.

“What kind of payment do you need?” Maric’s standing posture relaxed as he asked.

Klein smiled.

“If there aren’t any accidents the entire time, I wish to receive one instance of free assistance from Ma’am Reinette Tinekerr. If I have to involve myself in the operation, I can always add the condition of having priority on the spoils of war.

“You can discuss this with Ma’am Reinette Tinekerr before writing to tell me the answer.”

In fact, he was still a little puzzled. He believed that with such a plan, there was no need to seek him out. With Miss Messenger hiding in the shadows, it was enough to prevent any accidents that Sherlock Moriarty could deal with!

“There’s no need.” Sharron, with her exquisite looks and pale face, shook her head gently like a doll. “I can agree to it now.”

Has she already discussed it with Miss Messenger? Klein thought for a few seconds and honestly asked, “Then why don’t you directly ask Miss Reinette Tinekerr for help to prevent any accidents from happening?”

Sharron’s hair remained motionless as though bound tightly by the petite bonnet. She replied in an ethereal and fleeting voice, “‘She’ doesn’t wish for the Sanguine to discover ‘Her’ existence.”

Is that so… Klein deliberated for a moment and raised another question:

“You advocate temperance, so why are you seeking out the key members of the Rose School of Thought?

“Is revenge not within the limits of temperance?”

Sharron looked at him with her blue eyes and said, “In recent decades, the Rose School of Thought has been trying its best to let the Mother Tree of Desire descend into the real world. This will bring about an unimaginable disaster.

“In addition, Teacher also desires ‘Her’ body to be complete.”

If the Mother Tree of Desire were to descend into the real world, it would be an unimaginable disaster for me… However, what has this got to do with the completeness of Miss Messenger’s body? Her—“Her” body was once torn apart and is being held by different key members of the Rose School of Thought? Or can the bodies High-Sequence Beyonders of the same Sequence and their characteristics be made into a part of “Her” through some ritual? Klein mumbled inwardly as he probed, “Is Abomination Sequence 1 of the Mutant pathway?

“Then what are Sequence 2 and Sequence 3?”

He had asked Miss Sharron the first question before, but he had only received a vague answer.

Sharron answered without any hesitation. She didn’t speak too fast, but her voice remained ethereal and inhuman.

“I wasn’t too sure about it in the past. Now I can confirm that Sequence 1 is Abomination, Sequence 2 is Ancient Bane, Sequence 3 is Cursed Artifact but is now known as Disciple of Silence.”

Does that mean that you weren’t certain when I asked you the last time? That is to say, when you summoned Miss Messenger and reunited with “Her,” you managed to learn more secrets? Klein nodded in enlightenment.

“I have no more questions. After confirming the time for the operation, write to me.”

“Thank you.” Sharron once again floated up and bowed.

Maric pressed his hand to his chest and slightly bent his back.

“There’s no need.” Klein stood up from the high stool and wore his top hat with a smile.

This time, without a smacking sound, scarlet flames rose and engulfed him.

Under the night sky, countless lights silently lit up in Backlund, as though they were stars that were covered in clouds descending upon the land.

With the few “stars” twinkling, Klein returned to the rental apartment at the periphery of East Borough.

After changing his clothes and preparing to return to North Borough’s Böklund Street, he heard a series of illusory pleas.

It was from a man.

After nodding in thought, Klein immediately took four steps counterclockwise and arrived above the gray fog. He extended his spirituality towards the constantly expanding and shrinking crimson star.

As he expected, this corresponded to The Moon Emlyn.

The vampire who was already become a Viscount prayed sincerely, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I wish to apply for a mini-gathering that includes me, Mr. Hanged Man, Ma’am Hermit, Miss Justice, Mr. World…”

To Emlyn, these people are the Tarot Club’s representatives in intelligence, experience, and knowledge… Poor Leonard… Klein chuckled silently as he leaned back into his chair and agreed to Emlyn’s request.

†

Above the grayish-white fog, inside the ancient palace.

Five dark red beams of light appeared on both sides of the long bronze table, forming different figures.

“Mr. Moon, has the Sanguine’s plan been finalized?” Audrey greeted everyone before asking with interest.

Emlyn surveyed the area and frankly said, “Yes, the detailed plan is this. Through two temperance faction members who escaped from the Rose School of Thought…”

He recounted the plan Sharron had described to Sherlock Moriarty from a different angle to The World Gehrman Sparrow and company. When he was done, he said, “If we can obtain effective information, we Sanguine plan on seizing the opportunity to launch a surprise attack on the Rose School of Thought’s headquarters. We hope to take an important item from them.”

“What important item?” Cattleya asked curiously.

This was an item that could spur an ancient faction into an attempt on attacking a secret organization’s headquarters. It definitely wasn’t simple!

“Its” importance might even exceed that of an ordinary angel, stronger than some Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts!

Emlyn didn’t hide anything.

“It’s a Holy Artifact left behind by our Sanguine ancestor. I’m not sure what particular accident led to the Rose School of Thought obtaining it.”

A Holy Artifact left behind by Lilith… In the hands of the Rose School of Thought… The Sanguine has placed great importance on it… This time, Klein, who was acting as The World Gehrman Sparrow with his true body, had key points flashing through his mind. Then, together with his understanding of many secrets, he quickly had an unconfirmed theory.

That might be the key to the Mother Tree of Desire's ability to intrude and control part of the Moon domain's authority!

This is something Miss Sharron and the others didn't mention. The Sanguine have kept things from them as well and have quite great ambitions… Yes, I can't use ambition to describe them. That Ancestor Lilith whose identity is unknown seems to have foreseen the chaos from the situation and the coming of the apocalypse. Therefore, the Sanguine was made to change its style and become more proactive, so as to have more things to rely on? This is the acquisition of a lifebuoy in preparation for the apocalypse… Klein didn't say a word as he listened silently.

The others were also taking in the important information that The Moon had revealed, and Alger was no exception. He pondered for a few seconds before saying, "In other words, you Sanguine will be hiding in secret this entire operation and won't be targeted by the Rose School of Thought?"

"Yes," Emlyn answered rather casually.

The Sanguine's plan was jointly decided by Duke Olmer and Marquis Nibbs, as well as a few Earls in Backlund. Many problems had undoubtedly been brainstormed and reconsidered. Regardless, even if a pig were to live for more than a millennium, it would definitely gain a certain level of wisdom and experience.

Alger nodded slightly.

"I have another question. How are you so sure that the Backlund person in charge of the Rose School of Thought is only a saint? There might be more demigods or even an angel hiding.

"You should know very well that the situation in Backlund is very complicated. It's not impossible for the Rose School of Thought to increase the number of powerhouses it has to plot certain matters. If that's the case, you will end up resembling thieves who wish to steal something, only to storm right into Sivellaus Yard."

Sivellaus Yard was another name for the Backlund police department.

Emlyn became more relaxed.

"This time, Duke Olmer will personally watch over the entire process. Even if the Rose School of Thought's angel descends, we can easily escape.

"In addition, no matter which side, they're not actually willing to create an intense conflict in Backlund. Without any crushing advantage or the confidence to not cause a huge commotion, they will naturally cease any fighting."

Upon hearing his answer, the corners of Cattleya's mouth curled up indiscernibly as she warned, "To Beyonders who aren't demigods, even a slight clash between angels would produce aftershocks that are enough to destroy them."

Emlyn snapped out of his state of drowning in pride from experiencing the potency of the Sanguine. He was momentarily at a loss for words.

At this moment, Audrey's eyes darted around as though she was thinking of something.

"Mr. Moon, what do you need to do in this plan?"

What do I need to do? Monitoring the secret members of the Rose School of Thought and locking onto the true target from the information received will be done by Earl Mistral… The one who will ultimately take action is Marquis Nibbs, Earl Mistral, and the Rose School of Thought temperance faction's demigod… Duke Olmer will be the one monitoring in secret to prevent any accidents… M-my only job is apparently to contact that Wraith named Maric and maintain communications between both parties… Uh… The more Emlyn thought about it, the odder his expression became.

It seemed like there was nothing for him to do, or at least, nothing particularly important….

Chapter 1043 - Each Having Their Own Plans

◆

Emlyn blinked as he leaned back in his chair. He spoke unhurriedly and with a hint of a smile, he answered Miss Justice's question, "What I need to do is very simple. My role is to ensure that both parties can complete the collaboration successfully."

That means you don't need to participate in the battle, right? Audrey had originally wanted to press with such questions, but after sizing up The Moon, she reflected on the words said and said with a faint smile, "Since that's the case, there's only one thing you need to do to ensure your own safety."

Makes sense. I can't affect myself because of this matter. Anyway, there's nothing that needs my assistance… I'm not in charge of the risky parts of the operation. I'll later rent Leymano's Travels and spend money to get The World to record a few pages of Teleport. My safety will basically be guaranteed… Emlyn thought for a few seconds and said with a nod, "Excellent suggestion."

As there were no other members of the Tarot Club participating in the Sanguine's hunting operation and wasn't under their control, the private min-gathering quickly ended and the participants returned to the real world.

Klein wasn't in a rush to leave. After his figure disappeared, he appeared in The Fool's chair again and beckoned for the Unshadowed Crucifix and the Marauder pathway mystical item, Broken Finger.

At that moment, the surface of the two grayish-white “tweezers” that resembled the polishing of finger bones had produced a piece of gravel that sucked all the light around it, making it look pitch-black. It slowly swirled and gathered as though it was trying to form a new shape.

As for Broken Finger, the grayish-white color had turned transparent as it reflected some light, producing tiny holes.

The Unshadowed Crucifix can actually slowly purge the Beyonder characteristics from mystical items and Sealed Artifacts and let them combine together. Of course, the premise is that there’s a power similar to the mysterious space above the gray fog to suppress it, allowing it to willingly “make contact” with items with Beyonder characteristics… Klein nodded in satisfaction.

At this moment, the grayish-white Broken Finger suddenly began to belt out in a fervent voice:

“Oh, my Sun!

“Praise you!

“Praise the Sun!

As the tweezer-like object sang, a cracking sound emitted from it as though it would shatter into pieces at any moment.

But this did not affect its praise of the Sun.

“…” Klein gaped at the scene, momentarily at a loss for what expression to show.

After a few seconds, he sighed. He separated the Unshadowed Crucifix and Broken Finger and threw them to the corner of the junk pile in different spots. He then suppressed the former using the powers of the gray fog.

Then, he prepared to leave and return to the real world.

At this moment, the point of light, which represented The Fool's only believer, emitted ripples of light as the sounds of stacked prayers were heard.

Klein reined in his thoughts and extended his spirituality over. Immediately, the scene of Danitz praying in his room surfaced before his eyes as a corresponding voice echoed in his ears:

"Honorable Mr. Fool, your faithful servant wishes you to pass the following words to Gehrman Sparrow:

"According to my captain, there are many items at sea that's rumored to belong to Vice Admiral Ailment, but without any exception, they're all fake. And ever since she was injured after that assault, this pirate admiral has placed great care in the secrecy of her course and seldom plunders. The last time her ship appeared was two months ago at Theros Island west of the Berserk Sea. Later, it cruised into the massive ocean, her whereabouts unknown.

"The foreign object in Anderson's stomach is now controlled to some degree and is separated from his body to a certain extent. It won't be able to penetrate his flesh for a very long period of time.

"There are two ways to completely resolve this latent problem. One is to seek the help of the Sun pathway's Sequence 4 Unshadowed. However, this has quite a high possibility of cleansing most of his Beyonder characteristics. The second is to find the Hunter pathway's Sequence 4 Iron-blooded Knight potion formula. Through the help of the ritual and ingredients, he can directly absorb the foreign object.

"Anderson is inclined toward the latter choice. He's happy to take the risk."

It's obvious that Danitz is forwarding me Vice Admiral Iceberg's answer by imitating her style. This isn't his usual style of speech… However, some of his terms aren't precise enough. Could it be that Danitz had secretly modified it to use terms he understands better? I-is he worried that Gehrman Sparrow wouldn't be able to understand? Klein pricked up his brows and cast his attention back onto the content itself.

Vice Admiral Ailment adhered to the advice from the Demoness Sect and has hidden in this relatively critical period? If that's the case, it's basically impossible to capture her in a short span of time. In one or two months' time, perhaps the matter will completely blow up and I wouldn't have a need to seek her out…

I'll first send Danitz to look for her and keep some hope… My focus will be on finding Demoness Trissy. I have a way to contact her and can consider using the excuse of working together to deal with Saintess of White Katarina to make her meet with Gehrman Sparrow. I'll see if I can control her and use her to fish out Katarina…

The elimination of Anderson's latent problem has two solutions, both of which I can help with. Since he's inclined toward taking risks by advancing to absorb the foreign object, I don't have to worry about using Danitz to promote the option of leasing the Unshadowed Crucifix to him… That's good. At least I don't have to worry about the crucifix given by Adam creating some nasty chemical reaction with the foreign object Adam left in him…

As for the potion formula for Iron-blooded Knight, with how Anderson had played an important role in luring Ince Zangwill, it's not like I can't give it to him. The foreign object in his stomach is Adam's payment… Hmm, I can't directly bestow it to him since he isn't a believer of The Fool… Gehrman Sparrow has no reason to give him something at such a high level…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein quickly made a decision. He conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made him take on a prayer stance.

In the Fog Sea, on the Golden Dream.

Bang!

The wooden door was pushed open and slammed heavily into the wall.

Amidst this loud commotion, Anderson, who had been flipping the pages of a book, looked at Danitz, who was standing by the door, with his usual expression.

“There’s a very good mission for you.” With a cloak draped over his shoulders, Danitz raised his chin and chuckled.

Anderson sized up the pirate opposite him and tsked.

“You seem to be very smug…

“What’s the mission?”

Danitz glanced at Anderson and said, “Accompany me to Theros Island and help me seek out Vice Admiral Ailment’s whereabouts.

“In addition, help me gather the Beyonder ingredients needed for Conspirer. Heh, you’ll have to pay for it.”

Anderson nodded in thought.

“Then, what is the reward?”

The corners of Danitz’s mouth widened as he said in a condescending manner, “The Iron-blooded Knight’s supplementary ingredient list and the advancement ritual.”

Anderson didn’t respond. He didn’t say a word as he focused his gaze on Danitz for nearly ten seconds.

Then, as though he was burning with impatience, he threw away the book in his hand and stood up. He said with a bright smile, “When do we set off?”

Backlund, East Borough, in a rental apartment that had its curtains drawn.

Trissy, who was dressed in a black dress, packed her luggage, preparing to head to her next hideout.

Her slightly round face was a little slimmer than before. Apart from her sweet smile, she had an indescribable, elegant, and beautiful look. Even though she was in the dirty and chaotic East Borough, she seemed to be untainted by any dirt.

Trissy didn't immediately pick up her black suitcase. After looking around, she walked to the desk and unfolded a piece of paper. She picked up a pen and wrote:

"Mr. Gehrman Sparrow, I've obtained the information I need from that captain of the royal guards: He is truly loyal to King George III.

"You should understand what this means.

"Next, my goal is to figure out what this king wants. For that, I plan to oppose the Demoness Sect's Saintess of White Katarina. She definitely knows the corresponding secrets.

"She's a Sequence 3, a Demoness of Unaging. She's very difficult to kill, and it's very difficult to capture her.

"I have to admit that just my strength alone isn't enough to deal with her. If you're interested and confident, we can try cooperating

"You know how to contact me.

"Trissy."

Putting down the pen, Trissy folded the letter and began setting up the ritual to summon Gehrman Sparrow's messenger.

She had only written to the crazy adventurer now because she was worried that he would lock onto her hiding spot with the help of his messenger, and then Teleport over, bringing help to launch an assault. Therefore, she waited until she was about to move before making the attempt.

Although Trissy wasn't sure what Gehrman Sparrow's motives were and couldn't determine if he would launch a surprise attack on her, out of habit, she chose the most reliable method for her, just to be safe.

After handing the letter to the messenger, I'll leave and wait for Gehrman Sparrow to contact me. I'll try not to meet him until we begin taking action… I wonder what faction is hiding behind him. I have to focus on mobilizing and using him, and not to trust him too much… This is indeed troublesome, but it's sufficiently safe… As Trissy thought, she ended what she was busy with and took two steps back. Looking at the candlelight, she chanted in ancient Hermes:

"I summon in my name:

"The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the messenger that belongs to Gehrman Sparrow."

Just as she finished speaking, the candlelight burgeoned and turned abnormally pale.

Following that, a figure stepped out of the candlelight and wore a dark and complicated robe, holding four blonde, red-eyed heads.

The four heads had eight bloodshot eyes that darted around simultaneously as they cast their gaze at Trissy.

Trissy's pupils dilated as though she saw something extremely terrifying.

Chapter 1044 - Placing Herself in the Tides

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, St. George Borough, in a factory room filled with junk.

Light flashed in a mirror filled with obvious cracks. Its surface turned dark and deep, as though it was connected to another world.

Suddenly, a white hand reached out from under the mirror, as though it had penetrated through layers of aqueous waves.

A figure walked out from the shadows—she was none other than the sweet and beautiful Demoness Trissy in a long black dress.

There was a rare paleness to her face, as though her face had lost all its ruddiness. Her forehead was covered in dense beads of sweat.

With a smacking sound, the suitcase in Trissy's hand fell to the ground. She could hardly suppress the horror in her eyes.

She then muttered to herself blankly, "His messenger is actually an angel…"

At that moment, Trissy felt a chill run down her spine, as though a cold wind had blown at her.

She had never expected how dangerous it would be to summon a messenger previously. Thankfully, the woman holding the four heads in her hands watched her silently for a while before she left without doing anything.

160 Boklund Street, inside Dwayne Dantes's mansion.

"Who's it from?" Klein asked with anticipation as he received the letter from Miss Messenger.

The four heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand spoke one after another:

Vessel…" "Of…" "Dirtiness…" "Darkness…"

This nickname… Klein was taken aback when he heard that. For a moment, he didn't immediately figure out who Miss Messenger was referring to.

In his mind, the people who knew how to summon his messenger quickly flashed past, one by one, as he filtered through them.

In a few seconds, he had the corresponding guess.

Trissy!

From what Klein knew, this Demoness, who had been renamed to Trissy Cheek, might very well be one of the mediums for the Primordial Demoness's awakening or descent upon the world.

In such a situation, calling her a "vessel" wasn't wrong.

And people who knew enough about the mysterious world knew that the Primordial Demoness was an evil goddess, one that was known as the ultimate bringer of the apocalypse that would end everything. "She" had the creation of the apocalypse and the destruction of everything as "Her" mission. She also wielded authorities such as desires related to feelings and emotions. It wasn't very apt to describe "Her" with dirtiness and darkness, but it was understandable.

Similarly, dirtiness and darkness could also describe Trissy, who had been corrupted by the evil goddess to a certain extent.

As expected of an angel. "She" actually dared to say that about the Primordial Demoness… Klein secretly marveled as he opened the letter and quickly read it.

At that moment, he suddenly recalled something. He hurriedly looked at Miss Messenger and said, “What reaction did the sender have when she saw you?”

“She…” “Was …” “Very scared…” Reinette Tinekerr’s three heads spoke one after another without giving the last one a chance to speak as its head was simply left agape.

Klein’s expression turned slightly heavy as he deliberated and asked, “Did you mark her?”

The head of Reinette Tinekerr, which failed to speak previously, rushed to speak.

“No…”

The remaining three blonde, red-eyed heads added, “Because…” “She…” “Had…”

“The aura…” “Of…” “Primordial…”

Klein fell silent for a few seconds before nodding.

“I understand.”

After watching Miss Messenger step into the void and leave, he unfurled the piece of paper and quickly read Trissy’s letter.

She actually sought me out to deal with Saintess of White Katarina… Isn’t this exactly what I wanted to do? Klein’s eyes shimmered a few times as he immediately rummaged for a black sticky blob.

Right on the heels of that, he transformed into Gehrman Sparrow and smeared the blob uniformly onto a tiny mirror in the room.

After patiently waiting for nearly ten minutes, the black sticky blob vanished into thin air, leaving nothing behind. Klein had failed to contact Demoness Trissy.

As expected, Trissy, who has been corrupted by the Primordial Demoness to a certain extent, managed to identify Miss Messenger's level and was given a fright… She probably wouldn't communicate with Gehrman Sparrow anytime soon… Sigh, if I had known Miss Messenger is a special angel, I definitely wouldn't have let "Her" appear in front of Trissy, or I would've informed "Her" that if a Demoness were to summon "Her," she can bring both the person and letter over… Klein sighed silently and could only blame it on his luck.

At that moment, he suddenly heard a series of illusory pleas.

In a dark alley in the Backlund Bridge area.

Xio hid Wintry Blade and entered the area, looking around warily.

"Not bad, you're getting more and more experienced."

A deep male voice sounded, and a figure walked out from the darkness around the corner.

He stood tall, wearing a golden mask that revealed his eyes, nostrils, mouth, and cheeks. It was none other than the MI9 member who had contacted Xio before.

"Why did you contact me so urgently?" Xio asked.

The golden-masked man didn't make any small talk and directly asked, "You still seem to be monitoring Viscount Stratford's surroundings. Have you discovered anything unusual recently?"

Xio thought and said, "Yes.

"He had intimate contact with a girl of unknown origins. He made her visit him at his residence late at night several times.

"I tried to track that woman down, but I failed both times.

"Also, Viscount Stratford suddenly went out in the middle of the night two days ago. I don't know where he went because I didn't manage to follow him."

The golden-masked man tersely acknowledged this as he went deeper into the details. Xio answered according to the details she had seen back then. She only concealed the fact that she had met Shermane in the carriage and how she had followed Viscount Stratford all the way outside the warehouse.

"Not bad. Your persistence was rewarding." The golden-masked man nodded slightly. He didn't seem to doubt what Xio had said.

He sighed and said, "With this, your contributions to us will increase significantly.

To be frank, if this continues, you'll soon be able to accumulate the contributions needed for the Sequence 6 potion. However, before that, there will definitely be a strict examination. And with your background, heh heh, it will fail the examination without a doubt. After all, I know it very well.

"Actually, there's no need for you to seek the truth. I know that this was the motivation for you to persist in continuing the mission regarding Viscount Stratford, but my personal suggestion is to put the matter aside.

"With your current Sequence and abilities, it's enough to let your mother and brother lead a very good life. Don't worry, no one will cause you trouble.

"And if you wish to continue persisting, I cannot guarantee what will happen."

Although Xio had already expected such an explanation, she was helpless in resisting her emotions and throbbing heart. She blurted out a question:

"Who exactly are you?"

"I'm just an ordinary Mid-Sequence Beyonder," the golden-masked man said with a smile. "You might not know that the post of 'captain of the royal guards' has the corresponding authority in MI9. It's equivalent to a deputy director that handles matters related to the royal family. Back when your father was alive, I was his subordinate and had received his help in various aspects. After his passing, I, who didn't commit any wrongs or hide any matters, was removed from the core of MI9. See, heh—I'm only responsible for informants on the outside like you."

Upon saying that, the golden-masked man sighed.

Your father helped me a lot. So, after I recognized you, I deliberately made you become an informant under me. With the extent of my power, I provided you some help. I have a family of my own and my own life, so I can't take excessive risks or do anything too dangerous for you.

"Let's do this, I'll help you get the potion formula for Judge. Afterward, stop your contributions and your pursuit to advance your Sequence. Do something that will improve your life. As for what you want to do or plan to do in private, I don't know, nor do I want to know."

Xio fell into a daze. Her lips trembled as she said, "What kind of person was my father?"

The golden-masked man sighed as he replied, "He was a really brave, noble, and just aristocrat, but he wasn't that perfect. He was impulsive, eager, prone to anger…"

Xio silently listened and had planned on asking further, but all she said was a phrase:

"Thank you."

"Go back. After obtaining the Judge formula, I'll leave you a message to meet me," the golden-masked man said with a wave.

After Xio completely disappeared from the alley's entrance, the golden-masked man was just about to turn around when a slightly ethereal voice sounded in his ears:

"She's lying.

"She had tailed Viscount Stratford to the scene back then. It's something that can be confirmed."

The golden-masked man fell silent for a moment before saying to the shadow beside him, "She might've only been worried that this would arouse suspicion.

"How can she defeat Viscount Stratford at her Sequence? Besides, wasn't it said that Viscount Stratford carried a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact?

"I believe that she likely didn't dare approach. Otherwise, she wouldn't even be able to survive!"

The slightly ethereal voice replied, "No matter what, since there is a doubt, we need to do further investigations. Don't inquire about it in the future."

Outside the alley, Xio walked calmly along street lamps.

She deliberately didn't mention that she had followed Viscount Stratford.

This wasn't to hide the truth, to clear herself of suspicion, or to not invite trouble; in fact, that was contrary to her true motives.

Before the Tarot Club, her plan was to say that she had followed Viscount Stratford to a particular warehouse in the dock area. Outside, she was scared off by a terrifying hurricane. This was more convincing and made it less prone to suspicion. However, after knowing that this matter piqued The World Gehrman Sparrow's interest, she secretly changed her mind and decided to use her explanation to garner suspicion.

She felt that if she wanted to investigate the king’s secret at her level, it might take another three to five years, or even longer. Perhaps, there wouldn’t be any hope forever. But with The World’s help, success was a possibility.

As such, she was willing to bear the risks and place herself right in the middle of the tides.

And today, before meeting the golden-masked man from MI9, Xio had prayed to Mr. Fool so that “He” could inform The World Gehrman Sparrow of her thoughts.

Chapter 1045 - Dreamwalker

◆ ◆ ◆

Above the endless gray fog, in the magnificent and ancient palace.

With one hand holding the Unshadowed Crucifix, and the other holding the Sea God Scepter, he was observing the real world through the crimson star that represented Judgment.

In his spiritual vision, apart from the short Miss Xio and the golden-masked MI9 officer, there was another person hidden in the dark alley.

This was a man in his thirties. He didn't have any special features, and he looked like the typical Loenese man from the mid-north area. Not only did he blend into the shadows, but he also had the characteristic of automatically making people dismiss his existence. If he weren't above the gray fog and had true vision, Klein suspected that even he wouldn't be able to discover the person if he were there in person. He would only be able to outline the person with his spiritual intuition when the person took any abnormal actions.

Hiding in the shadows with Psychological Invisibility? Half of it depends on an item, while the other half depends on his Sequence… In conclusion, this isn't a demigod…

That's right. In the eyes of the king's faction, Ms. Xio is only a Sequence 7 and doesn't have any notable mystical items. If the matter concerning Viscount Stratford was really related to her, there must be a mastermind behind her, or even a faction. In this situation where there are undercurrents surging about, letting a demigod who might know too much perform the investigation might throw them into a trap. And if a demigod who knows little of the situation were to do it, there might be a chance that the information to be leaked to the three Churches and result in an impetus for them to be investigated…

In this case, a Sequence 5 or Sequence 6 Beyonder with trustworthy strength while also not knowing too many secrets due to his limitations in rank is an excellent choice… Klein silently said to himself, giving up the thought of "Teleporting" over as Gehrman Sparrow to capture him.

He couldn't get any useful information for now!

He decided to wait patiently, waiting for the situation to change.

Of course, it wasn't possible for him to continue monitoring from above the gray fog. If that happened, his physical body in the real world would be defenseless for prolonged periods of time. An accident would be disastrous. Hence, he created a batch of charms and handed it to Judgment, The Magician, and the other Tarot Club members. They were to immediately activate the charms if the situation deteriorated. That way, they could receive the help of The World.

This would be simpler than directly reciting the honorific name of The Fool to get "Him" to forward the information!

This was inspired from the Evernight coat of arms that the ascetic leader of the Church of Evernight, Arianna, had provided him. It was equivalent to a solidified ritual that pointed to him. From a mysticism angle, the principle wasn't complicated. The difficulty needed in carrying out the ritual was that the target could react upon receiving the news from a distance away. This was to mean that for a limited distance, a Sequence 3 saint was fine, but for unlimited distances, it needed to be at the angel level.

As a newly-advanced demigod, Gehrman Sparrow was able to allow the charm to be useful because, when he made it, he used the corresponding honorific name and symbol of Sea God Kalvetua, and with the help of the gray fog, he could respond throughout the world.

It sounded a little complicated, but simply put, he had made use of his other identity's level.

As for the materials used for the charms, they were mostly tin—extremely easy to obtain and cheap.

†

In the Backlund Bridge area, Xio had both hands in her brown jacket pockets as she strolled leisurely along the streets.

Under the light of a street lamp that was quite a distance away, her expression was relatively calm, but she was unusually tense.

The hands in her pocket either held the handle of the Wintry Blade through a hole while the other was holding onto a charm made of tin with some force.

That was the "summoning charm" provided by The World Gehrman Sparrow.

As she walked, she made several detours without suffering from any ambush. The night remained quiet and tranquil.

Initially, she was worried that the king's faction would be able to openly capture her through MI9 or other official organizations and bring her back for an investigation. In this case, summoning Mr. World would only lead him into an extremely awkward and dangerous situation. It was equivalent to being at odds with all the official factions in Backlund. But later, she realized that such a development wouldn't occur. This was because her existence would be exposed to the three Churches. When that happens, the ones doing the investigation definitely wouldn't be the king's faction inside MI9.

The investigation must be done in secret. The person that appears might not even be someone from the military… Well, they're still watching, afraid that I'm only bait? Mr. World said not to trouble him if we can resolve it ourselves… Xio looked around her without letting down her guard. She didn't continue loitering outside and returned to the periphery of East Borough and entered her rented condominium.

Frankly speaking, she didn't want to involve Fors in this risky endeavor. However, the two of them were the ones who had been following Viscount Stratford. This meant that Fors had also been put on the investigation list.

Although, as long as Fors hid in East Borough and seldom went out, it wasn't certain that MI9 could find her. Doing so would lead to the corresponding investigations to reach out further. Based on her past experience, family and friends, as well as people communicated by letters would definitely be investigated. This easily affected others. Furthermore, if the two of them hid separately and didn't stay together, the feeling of them being bait became too obvious. It made it difficult for them to hook up any targets.

After getting Fors's approval, Xio finally chose to face the subsequent development with her friend.

Opening the door and entering the house, Xio had just taken off her cap when she saw Fors put down the magazine. She stood up, curled her hair, smiled, and asked, "You weren't followed, right?"

This was a secret signal that the two of them had agreed upon ahead of time. On the surface, it showed their concern about being followed, but they were actually asking if they had been investigated.

"No." Xio shook her head seriously.

Fors didn't continue this topic. Instead, she went on and on, grumbling about how she couldn't buy any good tea leaves or alcoholic beverages in the vicinity. It required her to walk very far to find them.

This warm and peaceful atmosphere continued till late at night. The two of them entered the bedroom and slept in a bunk bed.

After the candles were extinguished, Xio was about to say something when a holy light suddenly appeared in front of her.

The light instantly condensed into a silhouette, and twelve pairs of wings formed from scarlet flames appeared on its back.

The figure descended and the layers of wings closed, enveloping Xio.

Mr. Fool's angelic blessing… Xio was instantly enlightened.

This was also a matter that she had solemnly asked Mr. Fool when she made the prayer to contact The World Gehrman Sparrow, as she already knew that, apart from the Demoness Sect, the Psychology Alchemists was also working with the king's faction. And not only were Beyonders of the Spectator pathway capable of hypnosis, but they could also dreamwalk. They needed to be careful of any investigations that used these two powers.

If she didn't prepare herself, she suspected that she wouldn't even detect an investigation that had been carried out, let alone be able to inform Mr. World.

Everything quickly calmed down. Xio opened her mouth and said to Fors who was sleeping in the bunk beneath her, "Goodnight."

"…Goodnight." Fors didn't react in time, as though she was almost falling asleep.

This made Xio realize that she had also received the angelic blessings.

Time ticked by and the two fell asleep.

After an unknown period of time, the dazed Xio suddenly snapped awake, aware that she was dreaming.

Right on the heels of that, she felt something shadowy floating in the dark sky, and all kinds of thoughts from deep within her heart surged out to form a dream.

These thoughts were mainly things that she had been most keenly aware of recently, including the night she barged into the warehouse and attacked Viscount Stratford.

At first, Xio was a little frightened. She wanted to wake up from her dream, but no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't extricate herself from that state. It was as though she was still in a dream even when she opened her eyes.

She quickly calmed down and tried to control those thoughts, only to realize that it wasn't difficult.

Thus, the memories of the attacks on Viscount Stratford were buried. However, after some consideration, Xio deliberately didn't do it well, leaving some clues behind.

In the dreamland, she and Fors discovered that something weird had happened inside the warehouse, but it wasn't the same account she gave to MI9 that the tornado tore through the roof. Furthermore, they didn't escape immediately.

Xio believed that this would allow the person who invaded her dreams to notice a problem but be unable to resolve it. After this, the investigators would confirm that there was a demigod or some faction behind the two of them. They would then believe that they weren't too difficult to deal with because the level of the secret wasn't too high.

This way, it was likely that they would send a demigod to deal with the aftermath. And this was a development that Xio anticipated. After all, every demigod had a high probability of knowing the king's secrets due to the positions they occupied.

At this moment, Xio's dream began to turn scattered, as though she had escaped some sort of guidance.

She knew that this was a sign of the intruder leaving.

For the rest of the night, nothing abnormal happened to her and Fors.

†

The sky lit up and the morning sun's rays started to emanate through the thin fog.

After breakfast, Audrey brought along her big golden retriever, Susie; her personal servant, Annie; and her bodyguard. They boarded their carriage as usual and headed for the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation at 22 Phelps Street.

The chiming of bells rang out from the outside occasionally, bringing with them some sort of special energy. It made Audrey turn to look at the street and take in the sights of people coming and going.

This calmed her down and made her feel more energized. She only felt that the whole world was filled with vibrancy.

Just then, from the corner of her eye, Audrey saw a figure in the carriage.

The figure was wearing a black three-piece suit, a dark red bow tie, and held a top hat in his hand. His hair was completely white, but it was still thick, His light blue eyes seemed to contain infinite wisdom.

This was Hvin Rambis, the Psychology Alchemists councilor, a demigod from the Spectator pathway!

Suddenly, Audrey fell into a daze, as though she had lost all her vigilance and wariness. In the carriage, Susie, Annie, and the others wore vacant looks as though they had entered a state of blankness.

Hvin Rambis's gentle voice rang out:

"Two things.

“Firstly, don’t you know Fors and Xio? Arrange to meet them and hypnotize them…”

Chapter 1046 - A “Test”

◆

That gentle voice seemed to resonate with the thoughts deep in Audrey’s heart. She only felt a little resistant to it before feeling as though it came from her heart, and that it was her truest thoughts.

Hvin Rambis looked at her emerald-green eyes and said unhurriedly, “Secondly, in the upcoming banquets and balls, don’t be as opposed as before to the few princes who take the initiative to show their fondness. Also, praise them a few times in front of Earl Hall and his wife.

“Remember all of the above, this is the reflection of your subconscious. Then, forget that I once said these things to you. Forget that this behavior is different from your usual behavior. Don’t try to seek blessings, and stay away from key spots in the Church of Evernight’s Mass…”

With that said, Hvin Rambis retracted his gaze from Audrey’s eyes. He turned to cue Annie and the rest, preventing them from being surprised by their mistress’s subsequent odd behavior.

After dealing with all these things, he disappeared from the carriage without causing a stir.

Ring!

Another bike passed by the window as Audrey’s slightly anxious eyes recovered their luster.

She looked at the people on the street coming and going when she suddenly let out a soft exclamation.

Then, embarrassed, she turned her head to say to Annie and the rest, “I forgot something. I have to visit Glaint first.”

At this moment, the carriage hadn’t left Empress Borough and wasn’t too far from Viscount Glaint’s residence. The servants like Annie didn’t find it strange or become put in a difficult position. They quickly instructed the coachman to turn into another street.

This continued until twenty minutes to ten in the morning. Audrey finally arrived at Phelps Street. She walked into the second floor of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation and entered her director’s office.

Looking at Annie and the others either organizing documents or using the spring water they brought alone to prepare black tea, Audrey brought Susie along to the lounge that was attached to her office. It was as though she wanted to check on her face to determine if she needed her lady’s maid to help touch up her makeup.

During this process, Audrey glanced at the keyhole and asked Susie in a relaxed manner, “Was there anything abnormal with my behavior today?”

This was a habit that she had only gotten in the past few days. It had only started from the moment Hvin Rambis disappeared!

She knew that Mr. Fool’s angelic blessing wasn’t permanent. It could only be sustained for some time, and she wasn’t able to determine when Hvin Rambis would visit her. When that happens, she wouldn’t have the time to pray to Mr. Fool and do the corresponding preparations. Therefore, from her understanding and cautious attitude towards psychology and mysticism, she not only checked her behavior three times a day for any abnormalities or for any excessive coincidences, but she also instructed Susie to take note of her condition and be her mirror.

This was a precautionary measure of being hypnotized by Hvin Rambis and cued without realizing it!

Susie sat by the side and thought seriously before saying, "Yes."

"…" Audrey's smiling expression stiffened. She quickly looked at Susie and waited for her explanation.

Susie wriggled her nose and looked around before continuing, "You didn't plan on paying a visit to Viscount Glaint when you left the house, but you changed your schedule halfway.

"You'll inform me of the general schedule ahead of time over the past few days. Also, you said that you would discuss it with me if you decide to suddenly change or add to the schedule."

Upon hearing Susie's reply, Audrey's expression turned grave.

She still didn't feel that there was anything unusual about this matter, but this situation was extremely abnormal!

This made her almost certain.

Hvin Rambis had been here before, right after she left her house and before she headed for Glaint's residence!

The other party had already cued and hypnotized her and removed all traces!

However, he didn't "exhort" a dog, making "it" feel like everything that it saw was normal… Audrey subconsciously wanted Susie to leave so that she could pray to Mr. Fool, but she was hesitant.

Would my current behavior be monitored by Hvin Rambis? Will he be sitting somewhere in this room and quietly be watching me… No, if that were to happen, he would've discovered a problem when I asked Susie. Praying wouldn't make the outcome any worse… Even if he's here, Mr. Fool would also discover it. I can promise a future sacrifice and pray that "He" directly send divine punishment… However, why don't I wish to pray and ask for help… Audrey stood there, all kinds of feelings running through her as she instinctively wanted to escape.

This made her realize the contradiction, and she realized that there was a bit of resistance in her heart.

From the perspective of psychology and mysticism, she had a vague guess. She quickly put aside the idea of seeking help, allowing herself to be in her usual state of praying to the Goddess without the desire of getting a response.

This greatly reduced the conflict in her heart.

Audrey instantly became confident. She gestured for Susie to leave first, then she looked into the mirror and began softly hypnotizing herself.

"You're not asking for help. You're only doing your usual prayers…"You're not asking for help. You're only doing your usual prayers…"

After repeating it over and over again, the vortex deep in the light greenness of Audrey's eyes that could suck a person's soul slowly dissipated, and her eyes returned to normal.

She then raised both her hands and placed them between her mouth and her nose. Then, she chanted in ancient Hermes, 'The Fool that doesn't belong to this era… I might've met Hvin Rambis…"

As she spoke, she didn't mention any desire for any help but described her discovery.

After waiting for a while, a deep red light appeared in front of Audrey, drowning her like a tidal wave.

Suddenly, her thoughts became clear, and images flashed across her mind.

It was Hvin Rambis in his black three-piece suit, who was sitting in a horse carriage, sitting opposite her;

It was the elder who had exhorted her with a gentle voice;

It was the demigod from the Spectator Pathway whose light-blue eyes that seemed to contain infinite wisdom and vortices.

At the same time, those words resounded in Audrey's ears again, making her remember everything that had happened.

After the crimson glow disappeared, she saw the long bronze table in front of her. Sitting at the seat of honor at the end of the table was a figure shrouded in the grayish-white fog.

As emotions of fear, horror, and panic surged through her, she stood up, lifted her skirt, and curtsied to the great existence.

"Thank you for your blessings, Honorable Mr. Fool."

Klein nodded and smiled approvingly.

"You handled it well."

Upon hearing this, Audrey suddenly felt at ease, no longer as nervous as before. She sat down and calmly described what had happened to her.

As The Fool, there was no way for him to directly discuss things with Miss Justice, analyze it for her, or give suggestions. All he did was smile and say, "This is a test of fate."

A test? Only through this test will I have the qualifications to become a demigod, so that I can protect the people I want to protect in Backlund which is in a state of turmoil? Audrey interpreted Mr. Fool's hint and nodded seriously.

"I understand."

Without another word, Klein sighed and smiled.

"Go back and welcome it."

Audrey was about to express her gratitude again when the crimson light appeared before her eyes, blurring everything she saw.

In the blink of an eye, she returned to the real world, but she didn't forget or ignore anything

A test? Does that mean that I have to resolve the danger of Hvin Rambis without exposing my secrets? Even if I cause the death of Hvin Rambis, I still wouldn't be suspected by the Psychology Alchemists? How should I do that… Audrey looked at the abnormally beautiful blonde in the mirror. She turned her head slightly and glanced slightly to the side.

There was a large lounge in that direction. It belonged to the director who didn't have any responsibilities in the foundation. Just ten minutes ago, Audrey had seen Mr. Dwayne Dantès inside when she was heading up the stairs.

Above the gray fog, Klein's fingers tapped on the edge of the long mottled table as he analyzed what had happened between Miss Justice and Miss Judgment last night.

That's not right. Adam had given me the Unshadowed Crucifix through Miss Judgment and Miss Magician. How could he not know which existence is behind them? What other test needs to be done?

Last night, I thought that the investigation of Miss Xio was purely an action from the king's faction where they only used the help of a Mid-Sequence Beyonder from the Psychology Alchemists. And for some reason, Adam didn't share any information of The Fool with the king's faction or the Demoness Sect. After all, "He" still hopes that I can give "Him" some feedback…

But from the looks of it, this probe has Adam involved in it. Otherwise, Hvin Rambis wouldn't be involved in this matter. Even for the Twilight Hermit Order, a saint is rather precious and important. They wouldn't give one up so easily as a sacrifice…

What is Adam trying to test? “He” is testing to see if Miss Judgment’s investigation of Viscount Stratford and her subsequent actions were purely by her own choice, or if it had the will of The Fool involved?

If The Fool gets the Unshadowed Crucifix and realizes that the king’s secret is related to Adam’s scheme while still insisting that “His” subordinates investigate it, that will be making the Twilight Hermit Order an enemy. And Adam knows that Gehrman Sparrow is a Blessed…

But with Adam’s abilities, there’s no need to test out anything. Just sitting next to Miss Judgment and listening to her true thoughts will be enough to grasp the actual situation. There’s no need to go through so much effort…

Unless “He” has already left Backlund, or rather, to avoid certain problems, “He” doesn’t dare enter this big city again, and can only investigate it through “His” subordinates…

My warning to Ms. Arianna and the Church of Evernight has taken effect, causing Adam to sense the danger of a divine descent?

Probably. Even though “He” knows that Gehrman Sparrow has something to do with the Death Consul, “He” probably wouldn’t notice that something has happened to Artificial Death. Even the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction hasn’t noticed a thing; therefore, with the authority of Concealment augmenting this, “He” has no idea that the Goddess wouldn’t be able to carry out a divine descent for a long period of time…

Next up, I’ll have to deal with Hvin Rambis. I must make sure that Miss Justice is steered clear so as to not have any relations and isn’t suspected.

Just as this thought crossed his mind, he saw Miss Justice Audrey enter the director’s lounge through her prayer light in search of Dwayne Dantès.

He quickly reined in his thoughts and returned to the real world.

Chapter 1047 - Brainstorm

◆

“Good morning, where’s Mr. Dantes?” Audrey smiled politely as she asked the young male valet that was of Loen and East Balam descent.

Enuni bowed and said, “He went to the washroom and will be back soon. Honorable lady, do you wish to wait here?”

“Alright.” Audrey found a single-seater and sat dowoi with all sorts of thoughts running through her mind.

Frankly speaking, if she only had to deal with Hvin Rambis, she had already come up with a concrete plan. It was to hypnotize herself in advance. When Hvin Rambis came to gather feedback, she would activate the The World Gehrman Sparrow’s charm without any ill intent. Then, she would work with the crazy adventurer to hunt the demigod.

Humph, in order to ensure that there aren’t any problems, I can also make a request to Ma’am Hermit for help. She’s already a demigod and can lurk in the darkness. She can then combine forces with Mr. World at the critical moment. That way, Hvin Rambis likely wouldn’t be able to escape… Audrey pursed her lips as she held back from grinding her teeth.

As for how The Hermit was to come to Backlund, she didn’t find it problematic. She could rent Leymano’s Travels and get Mr. World to record Teleport before requesting Mr. Fool to pass it to her.

But this way, even if Hvin Rambis didn’t manage to escape, the

Psychology Alchemists would have ample reason to suspect that the murderer was the last person the demigod had interacted with—Audrey herself.

And this means that there would be countless troubles in the future… Audrey's eyes shifted slightly as she tried hard to calm herself down.

At that moment, the white-sideburned and elegant Dwayne Dantes returned from the washroom. He smiled and greeted the noble lady who was waiting for him.

After letting his valet, Enuni, guard the door, this tycoon looked around before finally turning his gaze to Audrey.

You seem to have encountered some difficulty?"

Audrey didn't interpret Mr. World's actions and replied frankly, "Yes…"

She gave a description of what she had encountered and said, "What should I do to solve the problem?"

What she really meant was how she could avoid leaving behind any remnant problems for the future.

Klein smiled and said, "Why don't you discuss it with the two ladies?"

That's right! like Mr. Moon, we can request for a private mini-gathering… Oh, Judgment Xio, The Magician Fors will definitely participate. Apart from them, I can also invite Mr. World, Mr. Hanged Man, Ma'am Hermit, Mr. Moon—uh, I can count him out… Audrey felt excited for some baffling reason.

At this moment, she felt as though she wasn't fighting alone.

"I understand." Audrey nodded with a smile.

She then thought of another problem and quickly took the opportunity to ask, "Hvin Rambis has made me no longer reject the princes and praise them in front of my parents. What's his motive?"

Klein thought for a moment and said, “Perhaps it’s to show some kind of friendliness on the surface. It’s to rope in your father and make a hint to the Church of Evernight behind him. Regardless of the king’s secret, whether it succeeds or not, he will definitely need at least one orthodox Church’s support so as to reduce the opposing forces.”

“Is that so…” Audrey didn’t really reject Mr. World’s explanation. This was the politics she was familiar with if she stripped off the outer shell that involved Beyonder powers.

She didn’t stay any longer and returned to her own office. After settling her daily affairs, she grasped her afternoon break and prayed to Mr. Fool and applied for a mini-gathering to be convened.

Above the endless grayish-white fog, dark red beams rose up around the long bronze table.

Audrey looked around, stood up, and curtsied to the other members.

“Everyone, I have something I wish to hear from you.”

“It sounds urgent,” Alger nodded gently and replied.

Audrey sat down and said, “Yes.”

She then looked at Xio and Fors.

“I met Hvin Rambis this morning. He hypnotized me to do two things for him and to forget his appearance.

“Fortunately, I was quite careful and cautious. I quickly discovered something odd, and thanks to Mr. Fool’s blessings, I remembered everything.

“One of the things Hvin Rambis asked me to do was to arrange for a meeting with Miss Magician and Miss Judgment and take the opportunity to hypnotize them. I’ll then obtain intel on the instigator for the actions they had recently taken and also get them to leave

Backlund as quickly as possible.”

What? Fors was originally worried about Miss Justice’s safety, but she never expected things to make one rotation before coming back at her and Xio!

To think they targeted Miss Audrey. It’s really hard to guard against them! She’s targeted by a demigod… After a moment of shock, Fors felt more astonished and afraid.

She couldn’t help but look at her friend and saw Xio sitting calmly, but her hands had unconsciously clenched into fists.

Cattleya didn’t understand something as she frowned and asked, “The Psychology Alchemists, or should I say Hvin Rambis, discovered that Miss Judgment and Miss Judgment are members of our Tarot Club?”

This was a very serious and crucial matter.

Audrey shook her head and said, “No, it’s only because I know them in the real world.”

At that moment, she no longer tried to hide her identity from Fors and Xio.

In fact, ever since Xio joined the club and obtained the Judgment card, Audrey knew that she would be exposed sooner or later. Through repeated observations, she had confirmed that her two friends had already guessed it, but they tacitly didn’t expose her.

“You know them?” Cattleya asked in surprise as she adjusted her heavy glasses.

Audrey nodded.

“Yes, they were actually recommended by me. Mr. Hanged Man can testify…”

Ah? Didn’t we chant Mr. Fool’s honorific name because we wanted to save ourselves and get pulled in here? How did it become a recommendation process? Fors looked at Miss Justice blankly before glancing at Xio, her face blank and confused.

Xio also had that rare, similar expression because the word "recommended" had exceeded what she knew as well as her speculations.

Audrey felt a little embarrassed. She blinked and explained to her two friends:

"Because all of you have your own special qualities, and I also hoped that the Tarot Club will develop and expand, I recommended the two of you to Mr. Fool. However, this was just a chance for you. If you hadn't passed Mr. Fool's test, 'He' wouldn't have pulled you in."

Test? What kind of test did I undergo? Fors was still confused. As for Xio, she thought of many things, especially the origins of the paper that had Mr. Fool's honorific name, as well as her frantic search for an exorcism.

No wonder I had an inkling that they knew each other… No wonder Miss Judgment only entered the club after so long. This was probably due to their different individual experiences… Each of them has their own specialties. This "specialty" is the selection criteria? Do I have one? Cattleya came to a realization as she came up with a theory.

Upon seeing this, Alger, who had some level of judgment regarding this, wasn't at all surprised as he chuckled and said, "We can talk about this in the future. Miss Justice, the problem you would like to ask about is how to deal with Hvin Rambis?"

"Yes." Audrey returned to the topic and asked seriously, "If we not only have to deal with Hvin Rambis' but aW the Psychology Alchemists from suspecting me, what should I do?"

Alger didn't have any experience in dealing with a demigod, so all he could do was rely on his insight that had been built up over the years. He deliberated and said, "Lock onto the whereabouts of Hvin Rambis. Only take action after he has interacted with someone else?"

"How do I lock onto him?" Audrey asked the question herself before giving the answer. "After getting the answer from Miss Judgment and Miss Magician, I'll wait until Hvin Rambis leaves after I meet him again. Then, I'll recite Mr. Fool's honorific name and ask 'Him' to cast 'His' gaze on the demigod?"

Theoretically it's possible. My true vision above the gray fog has a radius of nearly ten kilometers. As long as Hvin Rambis doesn't know Teleport, I can confirm his location and trajectory for a short period of time. Then, I can return to the real world and directly "Teleport" over. Hmm, this will require the help of divination… But the problem is that it requires The Fool to personally intervene… As The World Gehrman Sparrow, Klein said in a hoarse voice, "Let me remind you of something. Miss Judgment and Miss Magician had mentioned Adam in the real world. The Psychology Alchemists originated from the ruins of Hermes who is a member of the Twilight Hermit Order. And Mr. Fool doesn't wish to be at odds with the Twilight Hermit Order because of this matter. Even if we were to do anything, we must try not to let the other party know."

This string of words contained a lot of information that made Alger, Cattleya, and the rest feel like they were seriously experiencing a literal brainstorm. Xio and Fors were even more shocked.

So that organization is called the Twilight Hermit Order… Mr. Fool doesn't want to be its enemy over this matter. Is it because "He" had just finished collaborating with the Angel of Imagination Adam over the matter of Ince Zangwill? I never expected the Psychology Alchemists to be related to the Twilight Hermit Order… Wait, Hermes? H-he's still alive? He's actually a member of the Twilight Hermit Order? Th-the members of this organization are really unimaginably important figures? Alger first glanced at Gehrman Sparrow before failing to resist the urge to look at Cattleya.

He realized that the latter was equally shocked without hiding it.

“The Twilight Hermit Order… Is this the ancient secret organization that Emperor Roselle joined?” Cattleya mumbled to herself as if she was seeking confirmation.

Gehrman Sparrow gave the answer:

“Yes.

“After you return to the real world, it’s best if you don’t think about matters like this again. You’ll easily be detected. If you don’t trust yourself, you can get Miss Justice to give you some psychological cues.”

Chapter 1048 - Real and Fake “Spy”

◆ ◆ ◆

In the ancient palace above the gray fog, with The World Gehrman Sparrow’s words coming to an end, no one spoke for a moment. The entire place was silent.

The Psychology Alchemists are cooperating with the king’s faction and are investigating Xio and I. The founding of the Psychology Alchemists originated from the discovery of a Hermes ruins, and Hermes is a member of the Twilight Hermit Order. Its leader happens to be Angel of Imagination Adam… And Xio and I had mentioned Adam in the real world… This… We’re in the sights of a King of Angels? Th-th-this… In the world of mysticism, just a slight mistake can result in such dangerous circumstances? Fors’s mind was filled with Gehrman Sparrow’s warnings as she was gripped by horror and panic.

Although she had experienced many things in the past, she had never had such a clear realization of the thorny path Beyonders tread. Any mistakes could lead to a terrible consequence.

…I have to be more cautious in the future… Of course, the premise is that I can survive under the watch of King of Angels Adam. May Mr. Fool bless me! Fors seriously reflected on the matter and silently prayed.

Xio also didn’t expect her situation to be so perilous. She didn’t expect that something like this would involve a King of Angels. She couldn’t help but feel horrified and fearful, but she had already decided to sacrifice herself for the truth. She rapidly calmed down, but couldn’t help but shoot a glance at The Magician, feeling guilty for pulling her good friend into this conundrum.

At this point in time, crying and feeling remorse won't solve the problem anymore. All I can do is try my best to keep Fors alive at the critical moment… Fortunately, there's still Mr. Fool's blessings… Xio cast her gaze at Justice Audrey as she thought to herself.

"Then what should we do next?"

She had mixed feelings towards Miss Justice's recommendation. On the one hand, she knew that Audrey thought highly of the Tarot Club and had recommended her purely out of good intentions. On the other hand, she felt that she had gained the notice of a secret existence for no good reason. Thankfully, it was Mr. Fool, or she would've died a tragic death long ago. Even her soul wouldn't be able to receive deliverance.

Well, I guess it's because I voluntarily chanted Mr. Fool's honorific name that I was dragged into it. There wasn't any coercion. Ultimately, I'm sitting here of my own volition. It has nothing to do with Miss Justice. Also, if it weren't for her recommendation, I might never have such an opportunity to grow stronger to seek out the truth… Xio pursed her lips as she furtively took a deep breath.

Justice Audrey knew about the relationship between the Twilight Hermit Order, Hermes, and Adam, so she was the calmest one there. She just never expected that Fors and Xio's casual mention of the Angel of Imagination had garnered "His" attention.

This made her have an unprecedented awareness of the horror behind the words "any mention of it will be known."

After some deliberation, Audrey looked at The World Gehrman Sparrow and tried to interpret his words.

"Does Mr. Fool mean that 'He' doesn't want to directly make an enemy of the Twilight Hermit Order at the moment? Does that mean that it can be done indirectly?"

Klein nodded slightly and said, "That should be the case."

"Does it involve interfering with divination, one's attention, and prophecies?" Audrey asked.

At this mini-gathering, The World Gehrman Sparrow represented the will of The Fool.

Klein laughed and hoarsely said, "Perhaps a little more indirect."

He answered vaguely because The Fool hadn't thought of what to do either.

Their conversation seemed to inspire Alger. He looked at Justice, The Magician, and Judgment, one after another. "Which of you is a believer of the Evernight Goddess?"

He was almost certain that at least one of the three ladies believed in the Evernight Goddess. After all, among the people of Loen and the residents of Backlund, the standards for women, and those who had been educated, these filtered out most of the believers of other deities.

"I am," Xio said without hiding anything.

Audrey raised her hand slightly.

Seeing this, Alger nodded slightly.

"We can try to mislead someone and make it seem like the Church of Evernight did something against Hvin Rambis, not the Tarot club."

As he said this, Alger skillfully changed the pronoun he used to refer to the group. He was only invited to be a "consultant" and wouldn't actually be involved in the matter. He should've said "you" should do this and that, but he had chosen to use "we."

Pushing the blame to the Church of Evernight… This line of thought seems really familiar… Klein in his The World Gehrman Sparrow's manifestation suddenly found it amusing.

Then how should the misdirection be done?" Audrey's eyes shifted slightly as she hurriedly asked.

Alger looked around and said, "Hvin Rambis only hypnotized you to not seek blessings and sit in key spots at the Church of Evernight's Mass where you can be cleansed to a certain degree. But he didn't ask you to avoid the Church of Evernight's archbishop. You can use this to create an opportunity. Meet the archbishop; of course, there's no need to say anything. This way, when Hvin Rambis dies or vanishes, the Psychology Alchemists will most probably suspect that the Church of Evemight had detected something wrong with you and had set up a trap."

Without waiting for Miss Justice to respond, he looked at Xio.

"After you're hypnotized but before you leave Backlund, head to the nearest Church of the Evernight Goddess and pray seriously. Act like a spy sent by the Church of Evernight to infiltrate the Tarot Club. This will misdirect the Psychology Alchemists into believing that the matters pertaining to Hvin Rambis were done by the Tarot Club, but was in fact a smokescreen. The true mastermind behind all of this is the Church of Evemight…"

Acting like a spy in the Tarot Club that was sent by the Church of Evernight… Well… Klein felt a little guilty.

He was a genuine Blessed of Evernight!

And Leonard was a genuine Red Glove!

It should be said that the Tarot Club's convener and host, Mr. Fool, also draws the crimson moon on his chest… Klein muttered in amusement and helplessness. As a result, he was also rather inspired.

"This can only fool typical Beyonders. Without the blessings of Mr.

Fool's Angel, the higher-ups of the Psychology Alchemists can easily figure out the truth," Cattleya reminded.

The Hanged Man replied, "So, the main point is that we should be indirectly blessed by Mr. Fool. Otherwise, would it be impossible for us to deceive the Spectator pathway's King of Angels, Adam? Also, Miss Magician and Miss Judgment, when you pray at the cathedral of the Evernight Goddess, it's best if you pray to Mr. Fool and get"His" help in extricating yourself from the hypnosis and not immediately leave Backlund.

"Under such circumstances, Backlund is safer than anywhere else."

"Alright," Xio replied seriously.

Seeing that the discussion had reached this point, Audrey and the others all looked towards The World Gehrman Sparrow, awaiting his response.

Klein's thoughts had already taken shape. He deliberated for a moment, then laughed hoarsely.

"Actually, there are simpler ways to interfere."

"What methods are there?" Audrey's eyes widened as she asked with concern.

Klein looked at Miss Justice and pointed at the top of his head.

"Once Hvin Rambis leaves, bum that hat accessory and trigger the charm I gave you."

That feather hat accessory? The hat accessory that can get a so-called response from Death? Mr. World hopes to get this existence to disrupt the divination, attention, and prophecy… Audrey's green eyes sparkled as she nodded in thought.

"I know what to do."

When that happens, the response would be the power of Concealment. This way, no matter what happens, Adam can only assume that the Goddess had interfered, believing that “She” had blessed the Hall family and has nothing to do with the Tarot club… I wonder if the Goddess will send Ma’am Arianna. That way, finishing off Hvin Rambis will be made very simple. If not, I’ll give myself Angel’s Embrace ahead of time and use my marionettes which are dead. That will result in a high chance of victory… Klein mumbled inwardly without saying anything else.

Justice Audrey quickly completed her plan, doing so as though she was talking to herself as she spoke to Xio and Fors:

Visit me on Wednesday afternoon. This way, I’ll have a chance to see the Church of Evernight’s archbishop in advance…

“I’ll pray to Mr. Fool for”Him” to provide his angelic blessings. That way, I won’t be hypnotized by Hvin Rambis when I meet him. We’ll act once he leaves…

“Hvin Rambis is a cautious and conservative person. He should continue choosing to meet me on the way to prevent himself from being caught or from falling into a trap…

Soon, amidst the discussions of the other members of the Tarot Club, the plan was complete. The World Gehrman Sparrow declined Cattleya’s suggestion of providing help. After all, he couldn’t guarantee that powerhouses from the Church of Evernight would be involved.

As for the payment, all the spoils would belong to The World, and Audrey would provide him with a free help commission according to his request.

On Wednesday afternoon, in Viscount Glaint’s residence.

After returning to the turf club, Audrey, who was wearing a simple white dress shirt and a pair of pants of the same, bright leather boots, and a black leather jacket that clung to her waist, stood inside the viscount's study and looked at Xio and Fors.

"Who got you to investigate Viscount Stratford and pursue the king's secret?"

Her green eyes were like an ancient pool of water in a deep mountain. It was quiet, deep and clear, making one unknowingly sink into it.

At this moment, Xio and Fors were really hypnotized. The former answered in a daze, "It was me. I'm investigating the cause of my father's death…

"However, I do pray to a particular existence to bless me…"

Audrey asked a few more questions and received a satisfactory answer. Then, she said with a gentle voice, "Leave Backlund and leave this place. You don't belong here.

"Alright, you'll wake up when you hear me clap."

The moment she said that, Audrey clapped her hands and saw Xio and Fors's eyes regain their clarity.

After exchanging a few more pleasantries, Xio and Fors bade her farewell and left. Audrey began to wait patiently.

She planned to stay inside Viscount Glaint's residence for another half an hour. She was waiting for Xio to enter the nearest Evernight Goddess cathedral and finish her prayers before heading elsewhere.

This way, regardless of whether Hvin Rambis appeared en route or elsewhere, she would be prepared.

Picking up the lady's bonnet with a white feather accessory, Audrey walked out of the study, planning to meet up with Susie and Annie first before chatting with Glaint to kill time.

She had just taken two steps when she heard a gentle and smiling voice:

“Well done.”

Audrey’s pupils dilated as she hurriedly turned her head, only to see a silver-haired man standing next to an elegant wall lamp rack. His eyes were light blue, and his clothes were neat. He was none other than Hvin Rambis!

This demigod was actually waiting in Viscount Glaint’s residence for Audrey to complete the hypnosis and receive the answer!

At this moment, Xio and Fors probably hadn’t walked out the main door.

This was completely outside Audrey’s expectations and The Hanged Man’s analysis. This meant that Hvin Rambis was present, so there was no need to question the target through Audrey. Being in the vicinity and personally hypnotizing them was just as dangerous!

Chapter 1049 - Spectator's Intuition

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How did this happen… Even if Xio and Fors didn't meet with any delays en route and maintain a relatively fast speed, it would take at least fifteen minutes to arrive at the nearest Evernight cathedral… Luckily, I was cautious enough and had prayed to Mr. Fool for an angelic blessing ahead of time. I also actually hypnotized Xio and Fors… An upheaval of thoughts instantly ran through her mind before she rapidly suppressed them.

At first, she looked confused, and then her face wore a look of realization. It was as if she had finally woken up from her long dream and remembered the things that had been neglected.

"Mr. Rambis, why are you here…" Audrey made her voice sound ethereal, as though she was still in a dreamy stupor.

As she spoke, she made use of the control of her emotions as a Psychiatrist to make an unavoidable hint of anxiety flash through her mind, doing so without causing any abnormalities.

This unexpected turn of events made her unsure of how to proceed.

Without a doubt, she understood that she had to first deal with Hvin Rambis's subsequent questions so that the demigod wouldn't suspect anything. However, if that was the case, he would leave in three to five minutes after he was done asking. As for Xio and Fors, they definitely wouldn't have entered an Evernight cathedral yet. This inhibited the step needed for the misdirection, and when the time came, igniting the hat accessory and summoning The World easily exposed flaws in the handling of matters in the end. They wouldn't be able to completely fix the inherent problems.

No, I'd rather miss this opportunity than proceed with the plan without being fully prepared… Patience, tolerance, and caution are key in the mysterious world… At the very least, Hvin Rambis will be making use of me for a long period of time and not directly harm me. He wishes that I marry with some prince, and this process will take more than half a year. I still have plenty of time. I can wait for the second, third, or even fourth or fifth opportunity… The only problem is that I need to inform Xio and Fors and get them to really hide as quickly as possible… Audrey quickly came up with a decision as her eyes restored to normal while showing hints of wariness and fear.

After observing her reaction and hearing her question, Hvin Rambis smiled and said, "This should be your first time hypnotizing someone, and I was worried that an accident would happen, so I specially came here to wait. Heh Heh, given your background, you don't usually have the chance to do this…"

His voice was gentle and laced with concern. It made the wariness and fear in Audrey's eyes subside bit by bit.

But in Audrey's mind world, she once again felt her consciousness being split apart. Some of them were raised, looking down at the "island" and the "sea."

This made her clearly realize that her fond feelings and sense of security that she had just felt were all artificial.

Seeing that Audrey had returned to normal, Hvin Rambis nodded and said, "How did they answer your question just now?"

Audrey honestly said, "Xio said that the investigation of Viscount Stratford and the pursuit of the king's secret was all of her own will. She was very suspicious about the death of her father. Her father was the former captain of the royal guards, Earl Mason Dere…

"However, she mentioned that her actions were blessed by a certain existence."

As she answered, Audrey almost stopped talking. This was because her spirituality high in the sky was looking down at "herself1 on the island of consciousness and the spiritual sea. She saw a figure rising up from the bottom of the sea as it followed up steps that appeared, passing through the subconscious realm and landing on her Body of Heart and Mind's island.

The figure was wearing a black three-piece suit, with a head full of silver hair. It was another Hvin Rambis.

There wasn't a hint of a smile on Hvin Rambis's face. He had an extremely sinister air, and a part of his skin was covered in grayish-white scales. Not only did his eyes turn from pale blue to golden, they also turned vertical, looki^^ like a particular animal.

If it weren't for the fact that she had experienced something like this before, just the intense level of nervousness she currently felt might've prevented Audrey from acting as though she hadn't noticed anything while ensuring that she didn't stop speaking or end up stammering.

In the real world, Hvin Rambis smiled as he looked at Audrey's pretty face and asked further, "Which existence's blessings?"

Audrey shook her head as the island of consciousness began to change.

"When this matter was raised, Xio and Fors became very resistant. There were signs of escaping the hypnosis, so I didn't dare continue asking."

Of course, the blessings of a particular existence could be explained as Mr. Fool's attention, and it could also be understood as the Goddess's… The lucid Audrey muttered silently under the spiritual sky.

Hvin Rambis continued to circle around the questions and asked about the details of the hypnosis.

After two or three minutes, he nodded satisfactorily and said, “Not bad. You do have a gift in hypnotizing people. When the recent events come to a close, I will give you the Dreamwalker potion and personally host the ritual for you.

“Oh yes, don’t reject love and marriage too much. You’re not even twenty years old, and it’s the perfect time to pursue such matters. Your charm is enough to gain everyone’s affection and enjoy their attention…”

Hvin Rambis used an indirect hint and guidance to lower Audrey’s resistance towards love and marriage.

This detestable guy… Audrey puffed up her cheeks under her spiritual sky and muttered resentfully. She then controlled herself to reveal some shyness and longing.

Hvin Rambis didn’t expect to succeed by simply following a logical process. Seeing this, he retracted his invading consciousness and allowed himself to leave the island.

He turned around and said, “Forget what I just said. They’re all spontaneous thoughts from your heart.

“After I leave this place and disappear from your sight, you’ll forget that I was here.”

Upon hearing this, Audrey under the spiritual sky couldn’t help but heave a sigh of relief. This meant that Hvin Rambis was about to leave.

Even though it had only been five minutes since his appearance, making it insufficient for Xio and Fors to enter the nearest Evernight cathedral, Audrey was still eager for Hvin Rambis to leave as soon as possible. To face off a demigod of the Spectator domain was unimaginably stressful.

There’s still a chance after this. As long as I maintain my consciousness, there will still be a chance. Audrey, don’t be depressed, don’t be impatient… Audrey silently consoled herself as she watched Hvin Rambis turn around and walk towards the hall.

She didn't relax and didn't breathe. She tried her best to maintain her normal state.

Suddenly, Hvin Rambis stopped in his tracks and turned around. He narrowed his pale blue eyes and looked at Audrey. "Why were you so scared when you first saw me?"

…I-I was too surprised at that time, so I didn't manage to hide some of my emotions well? Audrey felt her scalp tingle under her long, blonde hair as her thoughts whirled quickly. She asked, puzzled, "Really?

"Isn't this normal? Someone suddenly appeared beside me. A brief shock is inevitable."

Hvin Rambis nodded, as if agreeing with this explanation. He sized up Audrey and suddenly said, "You used to carry a mystical item that can change one's form with you as an accessory. Why didn't you wear it today?"

To a Spectator, this detail was an abnormality.

Oh no… I've been hiding Lie beneath my clothes most of the time. How did he notice that I wasn't wearing it this time… He has secretly read some of my memories, memories that I didn't protect to appear normal… Faced with Hvin Rambis's question, Audrey felt her thoughts stagnant.

The reason why she wasn't wearing Lie was simple—she was afraid that this accessory would amplify her emotions, preventing her from being able to completely hide her true thoughts when facing a demigod from the Spectator pathway.

This meant that she had predicted that she would meet Hvin Rambis today. This was something that shouldn't have happened under normal circumstances!

In the blink of an eye, Audrey grabbed onto an idea and smiled blankly.

“It will amplify my emotions and reduce the success rate of the hypnosis attempt. I removed it in advance to avoid any accidents.”

Hvin Rambis nodded and said, “So that’s the reason…”

Just as Audrey was feeling a little relaxed, this “Spectator” pathway’s demigod suddenly narrowed his eyes.

“If it’s just this matter, there’s nothing worth suspecting. But compared to when you saw me, the fear that slightly exceeded normal limits seems to imply something…”

As he said that, Hvin Rambis’s light-blue eyes turned vertical and was quickly dyed with the color of gold.

The two golden vertical pupils clearly reflected Audrey’s image in her rider’s attire.

With a buzz, Audrey’s thoughts became extremely muddled. Only the “her” under the spiritual sky barely remained conscious.

The surface of the spiritual sea surrounding the island surged with waves, enveloping it.

At the same time, the sinister-looking Hvin Rambis returned to the island and stopped beneath the sea surface, allowing patches of grayish-white dragon scales to fly into the foundation of the island where most of a human’s subconscious lay.

Audrey suddenly felt her thoughts twist, prompting her to say everything, confessing all her secrets.

Relying on the lucidity of “herself under the spiritual sky, she barely controlled herself and didn’t reveal anything. She also knew that there would definitely be problems if this continued, so she quickly diverted some of her thoughts and, relying on the angelic blessing and her splintered consciousness, prevent Hvin Rambis from noticing it.

Some of those thoughts included reaching her hand into her left pocket.

Just then, Hvin Rambis, who had invaded her mind world, looked increasingly sinister as he snorted.

“There really is a problem!”

If there wasn’t a problem, Audrey would’ve started with the most important matters, revealing all her secrets and private matters one by one, instead of staying silent!

Likewise, since the manipulation attempt happened so quickly, Audrey didn’t have the time to sort out all her secrets. Even if she wanted to hide anything, her lucidity would be discovered the moment she spoke.

After confirming that something was off, Hvin Rambis didn’t hesitate any longer. His gaze turned extremely cold as grayish-white scales covered his skin.

The storm in the spiritual sea suddenly intensified, and Audrey, who was under the spiritual sky, staggered.

The last bastion of the defenses of her consciousness was rapidly weakening under the repeated attacks, putting it on the verge of shattering.

“Humph!” Hvin Rambis increased the force of the mind storm once again, feeling satisfied that Audrey’s entire Island was shaking.

This meant that he was about to completely control her!

At this moment, he heard an ancient word:

“Fate!”

In the real world, Hvin Rambis looked up in surprise. All he saw was that Audrey’s green eyes were dyed with the brightest, the most dazzling gold.

Chapter 1050 - Good At Using Hypnosis

◆

As the ancient Hermes words resounded, the areas where Audrey and Hvin Rambis stood dimmed.

It was as if someone had passed by, blocking the window that was closest to them, then quickly left.

By the time the light returned, the island filled with a terrifying mind storm in the illusory world had transformed from Audrey's to Hvin Rambis's. The person that had intruded on the other party's Body of Heart and Mind went from Hvin Rambis to Audrey.

Fate Siphon charm!

This was made using a Worm of Time as the material. Using The Fool's powers, this charm was created. It could siphon off a corresponding target's subsequent fate for a short period of time, exchanging the corresponding fate with the user!

It was the consultation fee Audrey had received from Gehrman Sparrow after she treated Hazel's mental breakdown. With the corresponding charm, she could divert her future of having her consciousness defenses broken and losing control over her thoughts to Hvin Rambis. She then siphoned off the Mind Storm from him and opened her target's door to the Body of Heart and Mind. She then directly altered and planted the corresponding consciousness's fate.

In an instant, the situation reversed. Audrey went from the edge of collapse to gaining the absolute advantage.

Of course, this advantage could only last for a short period of time.

Frankly speaking, if it weren't for her imagining how she could save herself in a desperate situation, Audrey definitely wouldn't have thought of using the Fate Siphon charm. Or it could be said that, by the time she thought of it, it would be too late. At this moment, just like how she had practiced it countless times in her mind, she suppressed her surprised emotions from the effects of the Fate Siphon charm and quickly confirmed her condition. With her current advantage, she made the Hypnosis and Mind Storm swirl together, instantly opening Hvin Rambis's door to his Body of Heart and Mind.

Hvin Rambis was instantly dumbfounded, as if he was an ordinary person whose attention had been diverted to Audrey's golden eyes and thus fall under her hypnosis.

Yes, at this moment, as a demigod of the Spectator Pathway, he had been controlled by Audrey, who was only a Sequence 6.

This way, even if the effects of the Fate Siphon charm came to an end, it wouldn't change the development in the real world!

However, Audrey knew that, with the help of the magical charm, she was using Hvin Rambis's powers to open the door to his Body of Heart and Mind and achieve initial control. Whatever she wanted to do later would definitely be rejected by him, and with her Sequence level, she had no means to resist or control such intense power.

Furthermore, she could clearly sense that Hvin Rambis was subconsciously resisting his current state. In the real world, a small amount of gray scales began to appear on his

face.

In no time, he would be able to forcefully extricate himself from the state of my initial control over his mind… A realization flashed across Audrey's mind.

She then cast her gaze towards Hvin Rambis's head, feeling a little regretful that she didn't carry a powerful revolver with her. Otherwise, she could take this opportunity to shoot at him several times in a row in an attempt to kill him.

Soon, she recalled that she had Dragon Scales. She believed that Hvin Rambis definitely had it, and that it was even stronger. It wasn't something an ordinary attack could tear through, even most mystical items that were at the Mid- or Low-Sequences couldn't do so!

And if she couldn't kill him in one shot, Hvin Rambis would definitely be able to use this opportunity to regain consciousness and escape her control.

Without any hesitation, Audrey, who lacked the appropriate offensive abilities, quickly came to a decision:

Hypnotize him!

He's best at hypnotizing and is very resistant against this, so he wouldn't prepare any additional items that can affect his defense… I can't let him do things that will be against his will. With our difference in levels, I definitely can't resist the corresponding subconscious resistance he puts up… Thoughts ran through Audrey's mind as she spread her slightly parched lips.

She tried hard not to show any signs of abnormality as she looked into Hvin Rambis's eyes and said in a gentle voice, "Find a spot inside Glaint's mansion and wait. Find me in the garden 15 minutes later…"

Such a subconscious thought didn't stir any obvious signs of being rejected; therefore, Audrey was able to complete her control rather smoothly. To Hvin Rambis, he was indeed looking for Audrey today, and the venue for the meeting was also Viscount Glaint's mansion. Audrey's hypnosis was simply changing the corresponding time and place, and the discrepancies were just in a very small aspect. It matched Hvin Rambis's thoughts and didn't waste too much of his effort;

therefore, she didn't encounter any intense resistance.

"Alright…" Hvin Rambis responded to Audrey's words.

Audrey didn't care to let out a sigh of relief. She focused and continued looking into the other party's eyes. She gently said, "You will only come looking for me in fifteen minutes, so you haven't seen me today.

"Since you haven't seen me, everything that happened just now definitely didn't happen. They will be forgotten."

As Hvin Rambis had accepted the hypnosis, he followed the logical train of thought. Although there was resistance, it wasn't anything intense. Soon, the golden light disappeared from those alluring eyes.

"Yes, I haven't seen you before. Nothing happened just now…" Hvin Rambis repeated with a blank expression. The grayish-white scales on the surface of his skin had increased significantly again.

After completing this crucial step, Audrey resisted the urge to pat her chest and thought for a second.

"When you hear my singing, it will become quiet."

She wanted to hypnotize him with her charm, but she realized that she wasn't able to take on a seductive pose, and she couldn't make the corresponding expressions. She could only lift her hand to comb her blonde hair and tilt her head. The ripples in her eyes swirled as her smile beamed.

Following that, she hummed a melody, Manor Under the Moon-in a nasal voice.

Hvin Rambis looked at the girl in front of him who looked as beautiful as sunlight, flowers, and gems. Listening to the ethereal voice, his mind gradually turned silent, as he no longer had any resistance.

Seeing that her initial control was about to be released, Audrey didn't hesitate and pointed to the other side of the corridor.

"Go over there, and you will regain consciousness and dispel Dragon Scales when you see the stained glass."

She knew very well that on the other side of the corridor, there were exquisite white stained glass.

This order didn't pose any danger, nor did it violate Hvin Rambis's will. He immediately took a step forward, walked down the corridor, and turned right.

Only when his back disappeared from her sights did Audrey slowly exhale, allowing the fear, alarm, and anxiety to surge into her heart.

Her body trembled slightly as she opened her mouth slightly. She couldn't help but gasp and exhale.

Ten seconds later, Audrey used Placate on herself and calmed herself down.

Then, she glanced at the wall clock and stood there, raising her hands and placing them in front of her mouth and nose, reciting Mr. Fool's honorific name in a low voice.

She prayed for an angelic blessing again and requested this great existence to tell The World Gehrman Sparrow that she had confirmed when Hvin Rambis would arrive and would summon him two minutes ahead of time, allowing him to arrive at the appropriate moment. There was no need to be in a rush or to be too close to prevent Hvin Rambis from being aware of an ambush.

During this process, Audrey only briefly mentioned what had happened. She didn't elaborate on it to prevent wasting any time.

Following that, she raised her hands and pressed her cheeks, completely restoring her expression to normal. She began hypnotizing herself, allowing herself to sing the melody the moment she saw Hvin

Rambis.

After doing all of this, Audrey went to the main hall and first found the golden retriever, Susie. She then retrieved the Lie necklace and the Alcohol Nemesis diamond brooch. The latter, which could resist any mental influence, could only be worn for half an hour; otherwise, the damage one's liver and brain suffered would be irreversible. Therefore, Audrey prepared to wear them again after she left Glaint's residence to prevent Hvin Rambis from finding her midway.

Susie didn't notice anything amiss with Audrey as she watched her wear the brooch and necklace.

After a few minutes, Audrey folded a black fishnet glove into her equestrian pocket and used the excuse of going to the washroom, making a detour to Viscount Glaint's garden.

Then, she looked at the large clock hung up on the attached tower, her mind tensing up as she memorized the time.

To her, she was afraid that Hvin Rambis wouldn't come, but she was also worried that he might come early or be late.

Time passed by slowly and Audrey used Placate twice to calm herself down.

When there was still two minutes and fifteen seconds left, she took off the feather accessory on her hat and flicked her wrist.

The scarlet flames soared, igniting the white feather.

This was Lie's Flame Controlling ability.

As the flames burned, they turned pale. In just two or three seconds, the feather which was a product of Artificial Death was reduced to ashes.

Nothing happened around her.

Looking at the clock, Audrey took out a charm made of tin and recited a word in ancient Hermes:

“Lightning!”

The charm lit up as though many tiny electric snakes were entangling with it.

It was a charm that summoned Gehrman Sparrow.

When the lightning dissipated, the charm completely disintegrated and melted into the void. However, there was still silence without so much as a sound.

Xio and Fors should’ve found a Church of Evernight cathedral and begun praying… Audrey calmed down and pretended to enjoy the flowers of the remaining autumn days.

She didn’t lift her head to look at the large clock, counting the time in her heart.

Three, two, one… She slowly raised her head and looked around, but she didn’t see Hvin Rambis.

He discovered something strange and distanced himself from this place? Audrey’s heart tightened as she couldn’t help but think back to what she had missed.

At that moment, she heard a gentle voice:

“What are you looking for?”

Audrey’s pupils dilated. From the corner of her eye, she realized that the silver-haired, blue-eyed Hvin Rambis had appeared beside her at some point in time, a hint of suspicion hidden in his voice.

Having already hypnotized herself, she didn’t hesitate at all. She followed her subconscious and started humming the melodic “Manor Under the Moon.”

Amidst the ethereal voice, Hvin Rambis calmed down and listened attentively.

Suddenly, he realized that the distance between him and Audrey had become very far despite them remaining in their respective spots.

The dark night enveloped the garden despite it being late in the afternoon. A huge crimson moon rose over the top of the building as a figure stood there, wearing a black trench coat and a half top hat. His face looked hazy due to the back lighting.

Chapter 1051 - Different Styles of Different Pathways

Upon seeing this scene, Hvin Rambis immediately extricated himself from that state of calm, clearly aware that he had fallen into a trap. He also further realized that he was already under some sort of influence.

Without any hesitation, he arched his back and his body swelled.

His pupils turned vertical, turning from pale blue to golden. His face, the back of his hand, and every inch of his exposed skin grew grayish-white scales.

Amidst the screeching sound, the white shirt, black vest, formal coat, and straight trousers that he wore tore apart, revealing the dragon scales beneath.

In the blink of an eye, Hvin Rambis had transformed into an abnormally massive monster. Aside from his head that remained in the form of a human, the rest of his body had changed completely. It was like a dragon that had yet to fully evolve.

The dragon's back was covered in gray-skinned wings, and its limbs were thick. The grayish-white scales were engraved with complicated, three-dimensional mysterious symbols. They extended into the flesh, extending into the surrounding void. It seemed to be a mesh of objects that didn't belong to the real world. It threw anyone who laid their eyes upon it into suffering a form of mental confusion as their thoughts warped. Even one's Spirit Body would be tainted with all kinds of thoughts that came from deep within one's heart, eager to rip apart and mutilate themselves.

This was the Spectator pathway’s incomplete Mythical Creature form!

For demigods of other pathways—those who weren’t at the angel level—they required immense willpower and firm beliefs to fight in their Mythical Creature forms. Otherwise, they wouldn’t be able to control the madness and the inclination of losing control. There was a high chance of them immediately losing all rationality and transforming into a monster. However, the Spectator pathway was different. They had Placate which could treat their minds and souls, so they weren’t helpless towards the madness and inclination of losing control. Therefore, as long as the fight wasn’t prolonged, they could use their Mythical Creature form and return to normal at will.

Whoosh!

All the thoughts in Hvin Rambis’s subconscious domain boiled over as they churned, identifying the parts of his consciousness that had been altered, purging them out and melting them down into nothingness.

Whoosh!

The violent winds surged around Hvin Rambis’s grayish-white dragon avatar. It seemed to come from reality, but also seemed to come from an illusory world.

They carried a certain will as they whirled in every direction. Any creature that was embroiled would inevitably be placed into various abnormal states, stand rooted to the ground in a daze, or blindly escape towards the corners of the garden. There would be varying degrees of losing of control as their knees would buckle before they slumped to the ground. Some would even faint immediately and fall into a coma. Others would reveal their most fervent expressions, crowding around the dragon-like attendants.

This was a qualitative change in “Dragon Might” which stemmed from a

Mythical Creature form. It went from its original state of placing others in a state of "Awe" to "Mind Deprivation" with even more effects!

Seizing the moment when Dragon Might swept the surroundings, Hvin Rambis focused and transformed into illusory, sinister versions of himself. Through the sea of collective subconscious which eluded most Beyonders, he approached Gehrman Sparrow on the rooftop and Audrey Hall by the garden's periphery at high speeds.

As a Spectator, he could tell that the attacker was Gehrman Sparrow just by seeing his face and temperament!

At this moment, Audrey was mumbling to herself and compelling herself based on the discussions and warnings from the two demigods, The World and The Hermit, above the gray fog.

"I can't see anything. I can't hear anything…

"I can't see anything. I can't hear anything…"

She was trying to avoid losing control from looking directly at Hvin Rambis's Mythical Creature form.

However, this also made her unable to "see" or sense that a particular illusory, sinister version of Hvin Rambis was approaching her Body of Heart and Mind from the sea of collective subconscious.

But suddenly, before Hvin Rambis's "eyes," the blonde, green-eyed girl's island of consciousness disappeared.

Audrey felt a warmth from her body, as if she had returned from a cold, dark cave to the surface where the sun shined.

She hurriedly dispelled the hypnosis and opened her eyes. The sun in the sky pierced through the clouds that couldn't be considered thin, scattering its resplendence. Bathed in the bright golden glow, autumn flowers bloomed in silence. Everything was beautiful and peaceful.

Audrey looked around blankly, but she didn't see Hvin Rambis, Gehrman Sparrow, or the huge crimson moon.

This made her feel like everything that she had just experienced was just a dream.

What mighty powers… A battle between the two demigods might not even harm a single flower. Audrey silently muttered to herself before calmly leaving the garden, retreating to the corridor that connected the garden to the house.

She was afraid that her presence would affect Gehrman Sparrow's fight.

In the concealed world, one of Hvin Rambis's manifestations had also landed on Gehrman Sparrow's island of consciousness under the crimson moon.

Just as he was about to set foot on it and open the door to the Body of Heart and Mind and control Gehrman Sparrow's subconscious to make him do things against his own will, he realized that the illusory island that stood in the sea of collective subconscious was filled with a deathly silence—there were no stirring thoughts or the appearance of new thoughts. There was no way of influencing it.

Puppet! Marionette! Hvin Rambis instantly made a judgment. Combined with the information he had obtained in the past, he had a better grasp of Gehrman Sparrow's abilities.

He wasn't shocked or depressed. Instead, he felt a sense of glee and confidence. This was because, for a demigod of the Spectator pathway, he could easily tell the difference between a marionette and the true body, greatly mitigating Gehrman Sparrow's strongest ability.

Besides, do you think a marionette can foil my mind invasion and control of one's consciousness? That sinister and illusory Hvin Rambis swept his golden vertical eyes and found a transparent passage on the marionette's island of consciousness. On the island of consciousness, it was the symbolic form of Spirit Body Threads in the mind world!

Right on the heels of that, Hvin Rambis's figure flashed, and he traced the transparent passageway and found another island of consciousness hidden in the distance. This was where the source of where the marionettes were controlled, which meant that it belonged to the actual body!

"Found you!"

Hvin Rambis snorted coldly as he conjured a terrifying mind storm in the sea of collective subconscious, allowing them to thrash about in Gehrman Sparrow's island of consciousness over and over again.

This caused the nearby "weather" to rapidly change, and the ability to percept the surroundings via spirituality suffered intense interference. Hvin Rambis took the opportunity to get close to Gehrman Sparrow's island of consciousness, and he conjured a grayish-white staircase in an attempt to furtively invade his opponent's subconscious.

This was his usual style of fighting. One stayed in the light while the other stayed in the dark. While one attacked head- on, the other sneaked in. With these two angles of attack, it easily broke the target's mental walls and allowed him to control his opponent's Body of Heart and Mind.

At the same time, as a dragon avatar, he flew up and spiraled in midair. It affected Gehrman Sparrow with its Dragon Might and Breath, complementing the battle at the consciousness level.

At this moment, from deep within the sea of collective subconscious, Hvin Rambis had silently invaded the Gehrman Sparrow's Body of Heart and Mind when all of a sudden, he saw a boundless grayish-white fog. All the sea of collective subconscious around and the islands had vanished.

Hvin Rambis's heart tightened as he hurriedly analyzed his psyche, suspecting that he was under an illusion.

However, no matter how he handled it, the grayish-white fog didn't change. Of course, there were no accidents or danger. It was as if it was just a simple background.

That was pretty suspicious.

Just as Hvin Rambis was preparing to stir a mind storm here, the grayish-white fog finally dissipated, revealing the island of consciousness from before that belonged to Gehrman Sparrow.

Hvin Rambis didn't have time to hesitate. He quickly entered the corresponding subconscious and attempted to change his target's thoughts.

However, those thoughts were dyed with a bright light, a holy and majestic aura. It was unshakable and uninfluenced.

This… Hvin Rambis instinctively looked up and looked towards the sea of consciousness from the stone stairs that he conjured.

Other than the "island" itself, there was also a figure with twelve pairs of fiery wings, emitting golden light.

It looked like the projection of an angel's powers!

Since he was planning on dealing with a demigod from the Spectator pathway today, Klein had no doubt used Angel's Embrace on himself. With the Red Priest's level of importance, he directed the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog, allowing him to temporarily be unaffected when facing an incomplete Mythical Creature form.

And the reason why he didn't show it directly was that he was experimenting with Hvin Rambis.

As Hvin Rambis attempted to invade his island of consciousness, his marionette, Qonas Kilgor, distorted the target his enemy locked onto, changing it from Klein's Body of Heart and Mind to Klein's projection of the gray fog.

As a result, if Hvin Rambis found the island of consciousness in the grayish-white fog, it meant that there was a being of unknown origins sleeping in the mysterious space. This meant that Klein had to be wary ahead of time. On the contrary, he could feel a little relaxed.

This was something he had long wanted to test but didn't dare attempt because it might be dangerous. Today, he finally had a chance to do so. After all, even if there were any consequences, Hvin Rambis would be the one dying and not him. It might even allow him to easily finish off a demigod.

Seeing that he was blessed by an angel and wasn't capable of breaking or infiltrating his opponent's Body of Heart and Mind in a short period of time and exerting his consciousness on him, Hvin Rambis retreated without any hesitation. He left the area and returned to his mind world through the sea of collective subconscious.

Then, the massive dragon disappeared, disappearing into thin air, preventing Klein from even finding it via Spirit Body Threads.

Psychological Invisibility!

Hvin Rambis planned on using a psychological blind spot to hide in the dark. Then, using area-of-effect Beyonder powers like Mind Deprivation and Mind Storm to slowly weaken Gehrman Sparrow's angel-enhanced mental walls, he would attempt using his own Sealed Artifact to attack.

As a demigod of the Spectator pathway, although his dragon form was powerful at melee combat, it still lacked the necessary, powerful offensive Beyonder powers. It had to be made up for through certain Sealed Artifacts.

At this moment, an illusory book appeared in front of the Gehrman Sparrow who could be either the marionette or his actual self.

Following that, there was an ethereal voice:

“I came, I saw, I record.”

Klein was using Lightning Storm which had been “Recorded” by the Creeping Hunger!

For something like Psychological Invisibility, it could be easily resolved with a full area-of-effect bombardment!

It has to be said that, when dealing with a Beyonder with such a fighting style, the Storm pathway was a pretty good choice.

Chapter 1052 - 3v1

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Boom!

Lightning bolts descended from the sky, covering the entire area illuminated by the huge crimson moon with a silver “forest.”

Lightning flashed and destructive auras swept over, not leaving any spot unscathed.

The giant grayish-white dragon, which still had a human head, appeared again. There were tiny bolts of electric bolts scurrying over its scaled body. There were also some obvious cracks.

Hvin Rambis’s Psychological Invisibility couldn’t be maintained under such a wide area-of-effect bombardment. After all, his interactions with his surroundings couldn’t be avoided. All he could do was eliminate his sense of presence and stay in the blind spot of one’s attention. Once the level of interaction grew excessive, he didn’t have the means to avoid exposure.

As soon as he appeared, the Lightning Storm calmed down quite significantly. The Gehrman Sparrow’s body on the roof instantly blurred and phased into existence diagonally below the incomplete dragon.

Right on the heels of that, the glove on the crazy adventurer’s left hand protruded with fine black particles that were deep and dark.

Then, he opened his mouth and said as word filled with foulness and corruption from the Devil language:

“Slow!”

Hvin Rambis knew that his opponent was using Creeping Hunger and knew the true level of the item. He found Gehrman Sparrow amusing and was about to raise his left claw that grabbed onto an ice-blue metal cylinder, slamming it down at his enemy beneath him.

This was a Sealed Artifact with unknown origins called “Rotting Meteor.” Hvin Rambis had obtained it from a particular existence, and he was only aware that part of it came from the cosmos.

This ice-blue metal cylinder could fire special dark-green bullets that would instantly poison anyone who was hit with it. They would begin rotting in a way that even their Spirit Bodies wouldn’t be spared. This was also effective against demigods.

Its negative effect was that the wielder had a probability of gaining the attention of the cosmos and suffering corruption without realizing it. If not for having the item sealed thanks to a particular existence, Hvin Rambis definitely wouldn’t have dared to carry it around. But even so, he tried to limit his usage of it, lest he suffered a strange death or anomaly. That was a common ending for many of the previous owners of Rotting Meteor.

Currently, Hvin Rambis didn’t believe that the Language of Foulness, which was at most at Sequence 5, could affect him in his incomplete Mythical Creature form. He planned on using Rotting Meteor to finish off the Sealed Artifact-equipped enemy that posed a threat.

However, at this moment, his actions had really slowed down, and his entire body felt stiff.

On the pitch-black roof under the gigantic crimson moon, another Gehrman Sparrow in a black trench coat and silk hat had appeared at some point in time. He held a six-barreled revolver in his right hand

and aimed his left hand at the Gehrman Sparrow beneath him before balling his fist and turning his wrist.

Earl of The Fallen—Magnify!

This was Klein's other marionette, a demigod from the Lawyer pathway, Qonas Kilgor!

With the help of his "Magnify," Creeping Hunger could amplify the Beyonder powers it obtained from "Grazing" souls, almost raising it to the level of Sequence 4, or in other words, at the level of a demigod!

Of course, Magnify couldn't be used consecutively in quick succession. It was limited to a one-time use each time.

Due to Hvin Rambis's current Mythical Creature form, no matter how "Magnified""Slow" was, it couldn't affect him for long. Therefore, it was the Gehrman Sparrow, who was actually Enuni, who had to seize this short opportunity and control Hvin Rambis's Spirit Body Threads.

Normally, he would take three seconds to attain initial control. However, his opponent had already revealed a powerful Mythical Creature form, and time would definitely extend the time required. It would take perhaps about seven seconds or even more than ten seconds to succeed. And by then, Hvin Rambis would've long extricated himself from the influence of Slow, restoring himself to normal and carrying out the corresponding countermeasures.

At this critical moment, Qonas Kilgor aimed his left hand at Winner Enuni once again and clenched his fingers.

Another Magnify!

The control of the Spirit Body Threads was "Magnified"!

Suddenly, Enuni's control of Hvin Rambis's Spirit Body Threads became easier, as if the Mythical Creature form hadn't been revealed.

In other words, he could obtain initial control in three seconds.

This was already rather formidable, but the problem was that the dragonified Hvin Rambis wouldn't take more than a second to extricate himself from the influence of "Slow."

No, he had already escaped!

At that moment, there was a gunshot. A bullet that looked lusterless—deep and profound but not dark—swiftly shot out with its many strange patterns and struck Hvin Rambis who had just escaped from his "Slow" state.

In another corner of the garden, another Gehrman Sparrow in a black trench coat and a silk top hat appeared.

Hvin Rambis's dragon body stiffened once again. Not only did his thoughts come to a halt, even the wings on his back froze, and he had lost all his control of himself. The entire dragon collapsed to the ground.

Control Spirit Bullet!

Klein had used his Worms of Spirit as the material to contain the Control Spirit Bullets made from the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. It could even freeze Sequence 3 saints for one or two seconds!

At that moment, Hvin Rambis, who had an incomplete Mythical Creature form, wasn't much stronger than a Sequence 3 saint. Back when Amon's avatar was hit by the Control Spirit Bullet, it had also froze for more than a second.

In addition, Klein could also get Qonas Kilgor to "Magnify" the power of the bullet. However, to grab the opportunity, he had failed to do it in time.

The string of team combination attacks from before had already made

Klein turn poignant, as obtaining the aid of a demigod from the Lawyer pathway was terrifying. It was very, very effective. Of course, under normal circumstances, the Earl of the Fallen's Magnify could only amplify the effects and influence that strengthened one's body or actions without helping others. However, the problem was that, as marionettes with Worms of Spirit within them, they were without a doubt, no different from Klein. He hadn't been augmenting others, but himself!

Seizing the opportunity of Hvin Rambis falling into a state of paralysis, Winner Enuni obtained initial control over the Spirit Body Threads.

The incomplete dragon had just ended its rigid state when its thoughts became sluggish. Its movement had a certain delay.

It had to be said that, after a Bizarro Sorcerer obtained a powerful marionette, they could unleash terrifying powers through their cooperation with their marionettes. Klein also had a cheat-like method like Control Spirit Bullets. This was something that could only be created by him because he was the only one who could stir the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. Of course, Amon and other powerhouses also had similar charms and bullets. The only difference was the effects would be different.

Seeing that Hvin Rambis had come under a certain level of control, Klein began preparing to disrupt any form of resistance he tried putting up, preventing him from escaping from his current state until he became a marionette. However, at this moment, his head suddenly ached due to an intolerable mania in his heart.

Then, he became extremely down, as if he couldn't feel joy anymore. He despised himself and wished he could give up his life just like that so that he wouldn't be a burden on others.

In the blink of an eye, he became excited. His eyes seemed to be blood-red and filled with hatred towards anything, wanting to destroy everything he saw.

Not good… Before his mental state deteriorated, Klein realized that he had been influenced by Hvin Rambis at some point in time. Something was wrong with his Body of Heart and Mind.

He hurriedly attempted to Cogitate to fight against the abnormal mental state. However, various thoughts that didn't seem to belong to him flashed through his mind:

"Let's end it here…"

"F*ck, think of a way to save yourself!"

"What exactly happened? I think I have a serious mental illness…"

"A psychiatric disease that's contagious? The special mental illness that Miss Justice mentioned? This is indeed a High-Sequence Beyonder power of the Spectator pathway!"

"Why are you saying so much? That's a demigod Psychiatrist you're facing. Turning him into a marionette will easily resolve this problem."

Realizing that Gehrman Sparrow hadn't shot the second bullet, Hvin Rambis's face, covered in grayish-white scales, revealed a faint smile.

Although he hadn't anticipated the tight cooperation between Gehrman Sparrow and his two marionettes, causing him to quickly fall into a perilous situation, it wasn't like he hadn't done anything prior to this.

Before he left the sea of collective subconscious, he had secretly planted Contagious Madness in a marionette!

A marionette was, after all, a dead person. Although it was unable to be controlled by any other methods other than Spirit Body Threads, it didn't mean that they didn't have an island of consciousness. It was just a dead mass, but it was precisely here that Hvin Rambis buried a "seed" named madness.

The seed couldn't affect the marionette itself, but it could secretly infect the sea of collective subconscious of its surroundings, causing the person who kept switching between bodies to unknowingly place themselves in an environment with a contagious mental disease. Also, this madness could also be transmitted via Spirit Body Threads.

In addition, this type of infection stemmed from one's "self." It wasn't something an angelic blessing could screen. At most, it would be weakened and have the effects weakened.

This was a High-Sequence Spectator's power, Manipulator's Mental Plague!

In ancient times, there would be people from time to time who were placed in repressed states for prolonged periods of time and appear abnormal at the same time. Their abnormality influenced the people around them, causing "mass hysteria" to happen. An ancient folk song once sang of it in such a manner:

"Seven young ladies are dancing weirdly on the street;

"Nine men are rolling on the ground laughing by their sides;

"On a horse carriage passing by, the nobles are slapping their faces;

"The stoned children are crying outside the house by the street;

"People are hurting each other. The entire city is crazy."

If one thought about it carefully, it would make one feel an inexplicable sense of horror. However, Hvin Rambis knew that the scene described in the myth was true. It was an experiment from a Spectator pathway demigod.

A highly-contagious Mental Plague!

By the time Gehrman Sparrow's actual body went crazy, his control over his marionettes would undoubtedly be lost. When that happened, Hvin Rambis would be able to escape from his predicament.

It wouldn't take long, as it only took a few seconds!

At that moment, a Manipulator like Hvin Rambis wasn't afraid that Gehrman Sparrow had the charm which Audrey had used—the one that could temporarily swap fates between two people. This was because a swap would put Gehrman Sparrow in a state of becoming a marionette. His thoughts would turn sluggish and his body would stiffen. As for Hvin Rambis, being infected by the Mental Plague was a relatively simple problem for him to resolve.

At this moment, Hvin Rambis saw the Gehrman Sparrow on the rooftop aiming his left hand at the Gehrman Sparrow who was holding the iron-black, long-barreled revolver. He gripped his fingers and slowly turned his wrist.

Distortion!

Klein had used Qonas Kilgor's Beyonder powers to distort the level of his mental disease, weakening it and slowing down the deterioration!

Making use of this period in which he had clarity of mind, he raised Death Knell again and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

Another Control Spirit Bullet shot out and hit the motionless, massive incomplete dragon.

At the same time, Qonas Kilgor used Magnify!

Despite being attacked, Hvin Rambis didn't escape from Enuni's control, because he had fallen into a "long" period of feeling numb and stiff.

Klein silently kept count of the time, shooting a third Control Spirit Bullet before Hvin Rambis truly recovered.

And before the third Control Spirit Bullet’s “Magnified” effects ended, the grayish-white, incomplete dragon trembled as it returned to “normal,” no longer looking sluggish.

Chapter 1053 - President

◆

In the dimly-lit world, the gigantic crimson moon hung silently over the house while everything in the garden seemed to be asleep.

The despair in the incomplete grayish-white dragon's eyes dissipated as it retracted its skin-covered wings, behaving like a docile hunting dog reared at home.

The Psychology Alchemists councilor, demigod of the Spectator pathway, Hvin Rambis, had lost his life and became Klein's marionette!

Without bothering to enjoy this achievement, he switched places with Enuni, who was beside the grayish-white dragon, appearing as Gehrman Sparrow in his black trench coat and silk top hat.

Then, he controlled his new marionette to treat the infection he received from Mental Plague.

A gentle and cool breeze swept past the sea of collective subconscious, seeping into Klein's island of consciousness. It made him feel like the object reeking of a rotten, putrid, and discordant object in his Body of Heart and Mind was being purged out of him with a surgical knife.

Klein's face immediately contorted as he grimaced. He once again felt the excruciating pain in his soul.

Thankfully, in order to create the Control Spirit Bullets and the Yesterday Once More charms, he was already accustomed to this feeling. He didn't hold his head and roll around.

After purging the contagious mental disease from his consciousness, the cool wind brought about a warmth that made him want to take an afternoon nap. It allowed his damaged Spirit Body to relax as if he was soaked in a bath. His mind and body quickly recovered thanks to the nourishment.

By the time he recovered from his mental disease, the gentle breeze that blew at him became intense. It swept the surroundings, wiping out all the “contagion” left in the air.

After doing all of this, Klein made the grayish-white dragon rapidly shrink its body, converge its godhood, and turn back into its human form.

However, as Hvin Rambis’ clothes had been ripped to pieces, the gray scales on his body didn’t disappear.

A few seconds later, the ascetic leader of the Church of Evernight, Arianna walked out of the gigantic crimson moon in her simple robe and belt made of tree bark. Her long black hair cascaded down as she stepped across the void and arrived diagonally above Hvin Rambis.

The angel stretched out “Her” right hand and, with a gentle squeeze, let Hvin Rambis’s blurry soul leave his body and float above his head.

“Why are you helping George III?” Arianna asked directly.

Hvin Rambis’s confused expression immediately turned serious.

“This is the choice of the times, an inevitability of destiny. We are just following the flow of the tides and providing some guidance, allowing the times to develop in the right direction.”

The standard answer of the Twilight Hermit Order… From the looks of it, the Psychology Alchemists’ demigod doesn’t know what Adam’s true goal is either… Even as official members of the Twilight Hermit Order, most of them probably don’t know… Klein didn’t have any problems thinking thanks to his situation inside the concealed world.

Arianna didn’t show any surprise as she pressed, “What is the trend of the times?”

Hvin Rambis’s eyes were unfocused, but his expression was solemn as he answered, “A war, one that will sweep the entire world.”

This… Isn’t peace nice? Klein frowned slightly as he couldn’t help but mumble inwardly.

He knew very well what a world war would do to humans.

He only wished that his investigation with the Church of Evernight would be able to seize the key and successfully prevent the war which the Twilight Hermit Order was strongly pushing from erupting.

Arianna fell silent for a second before asking, “What’s the secret George III is hiding?”

Hvin Rambis revealed a smile.

“Every king is restrained by three major contracts and can only reach a limit of Sequence 5. But with our help, he bypassed the restrictions and has already reached a higher level. Once the tides of the times come, he’ll easily be able to ascend to the spot that should’ve belonged to him.”

Three major contracts… What’s that? It’s understandable to limit a king to Sequence 5 due to the strong push to keep mysticism under wraps. It’s best for a king to be changed normally. The people will find it acceptable if they could live for 80–90 years old, but to still be active at 120–130 years will be the cause for conspiracy theories and panic… George III cooperated with the Psychology Alchemists and the Demoness Sect to live longer? Typically, this is a restriction on the king, not the other members of the Augustus family. They should have Grounded Angels among them, so there’s no reason for them to support George III… Many questions arose in his mind.

“George III still isn’t a demigod, is he? Is he using some method to possess a higher level and perform the ‘acting’ ahead of time?” Arianna asked unhurriedly.

To the Church of Evernight, this was a crucial problem. If George III was already a demigod, they could directly contact the Church of Storms and Steam to capture him because the King himself was enough evidence.

Hvin Rambis’s soul nodded and said, “Yes.”

“What is the exact method?” Arianna continued asking.

Hvin Rambis slowly shook his head and said, “I’m not sure. The person in charge of this matter is our president. I only remember him once mentioning that he wanted George III to have more talent.”

More talent? Upon hearing such a description, Klein instantly thought of something in Roselle’s diary.

In the eyes of the emperor, the so-called “talent” was to make one’s psyche and soul more like a high-level ancestor, as such be able to obtain the recognition of the corresponding Beyonder characteristics or the mental imprint within Sealed Artifacts, allowing them to easily consume the potion and wield the Sealed Artifacts without the immense negative effects.

This wasn’t a perfect solution. It could even be said that there were great latent risks. This was because the mental imprint would revert and control the consumer or wielder’s soul, causing them to experience certain changes.

If anyone were to rely on this method to advance to a demigod, there was an extremely high chance of becoming a monster formed of mental sutures!

Was George III hypnotized? He actually accepted such a method? No, if he was hypnotized, the Augustus family’s angel or Sealed Artifacts would definitely discover the problem… Klein became even more puzzled as he waited for the ascetic leader floating in the sky to ask further.

Arianna clearly knew what “more talent” meant. Without any change in expression, she asked, “Who is your President?”

Hvin Rambis revealed a look of reminiscence.

“He has many identities and names, but I can confirm that he is the president of our Psychology Alchemists as long as I see him.

“His current identities and names are:

“One of the Four Kings of the Sea, the King of the Black Throne Barros Hopkins; the former chancellor of the Backlund Medical School; the royal family’s medical consultant; the already ‘dead’ Pauli Derlau; the famous ascetic of the Central Sonia Sea, Eric Drake…”

King of the Black Throne… It was only then that he realized that he had heard of this title, but he had always neglected it, not taking it to heart and seldom thinking about it.

So this Pirate King is from the Spectator pathway… He nodded in enlightenment.

Arianna listened quietly and asked, “What secret is George III hiding in the Blood Emperor ruins?”

Hvin Rambis’s slightly dazed expression changed slightly.

“An extremely important thing. If he wants to grasp it, he will need a large number of sacrificial rituals.”

“What is it?” Arianna pressed without any pause.

Hvin Rambis was taken aback.

“I… I don’t remember…”

He suddenly raised his hand to grip his soul’s head, clearly in pain.

However, no matter how he thought about it, he couldn’t remember the answer.

Was this memory forcefully “deleted” by Adam or a certain angel from the Spectator pathway? Klein watched with a heavy expression as he felt that the secret in the ruins was more important than he imagined.

Arianna fell silent for a few seconds before lowering her head and asking Klein, “Do you have anything you want to ask?”

Klein thought for a moment and asked Hvin Rambis, “What is the name of the High-Sequence Beyonder potions of the Spectator pathway?”

The pain in Hvin Rambis’s soul lessened as he slowly replied, “Sequence 4 Manipulator. Sequence 3 Dreamweaver. Sequence 2 Discerner. Sequence 1 Author.”

He didn’t mention Sequence 0 Visionary, clearly unaware.

“What’s the potion formula for Manipulator?” Although Klein felt that his question was rather substandard compared to Ma’am Arianna’s, he still asked.

In a dazed tone, Hvin Rambis said without hesitation, “The main ingredient is an elderly mind dragon’s complete brain, or the crystalline heart of a Tree Mentor, or a Beyonder characteristic of a Manipulator.

“The supplementary ingredients are 80 ml of the blood of an elderly mind dragon, 3 golden leaves of a Tree Mentor, and 7 different drops of tears from different humans or non-human creatures that were shed due to intense emotions…

“The ritual is that on a special occasion with at least ten thousand people, drink the potion when they are in the midst of an emotional resonance.”

In contrast, the difficulty of a demigod ritual of the Spectator pathway isn't that high… That's right. Spectators can heal and analyze themselves, allowing them to effectively deal with the madness and the loss of control brought about by the potion, so the ritual can be simplified… Klein nodded in thought.

"What's the potion formula for Dreamweaver?"

"I don't know." Hvin Rambis shook his head.

Alright then… Klein asked Hvin Rambis why he had personally come to Audrey and received the corresponding answer.

Then, he said to Arianna, "I have no further questions."

The questions he had couldn't be answered by Hvin Rambis.

Arianna's right hand pressed softly, causing Hvin Rambis's soul to return to his body.

Following that, the angel glanced at Klein and said calmly, "Don't use him as a marionette.

"Before his mental imprint is removed, it's best you don't use his Beyonder characteristic to create items."

Of course, I don't want Adam to visit me… Klein nodded sincerely.

"I will remember it. Thank you, Ma'am Arianna."

Chapter 1054 - Tailored-Made Ritual

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After thanking “Her,” Klein immediately gave up his control over Hvin Rambis, making it impossible for him to maintain his marionette-like state.

With that, this Spectator pathway demigod collapsed to the ground and became a corpse.

Arianna lowered her head and took a look, the darkness in her eyes growing deeper.

Hvin Rambis’s corpse immediately got erased like a pencil drawing as if it was being wiped away by an eraser, inch by inch, leaving behind only the ice-blue metal cylinder.

Right on the heels of that, beams of light seeped out of the void and quickly gathered together, forming a strange object.

It was fist-sized and looked like a heart. However, it resembled a different kind of brain with its surface being covered in grayish-white wrinkles, each crevice with countless symbols and strange patterns that extended into the surroundings. These connected to a world that Beyonders of other pathways couldn’t see.

This was the Beyonder characteristic left behind by a Manipulator.

Miss Arianna’s concealment and reversing concealment process is able to quickly extract Hvin Rambis’s Beyonder characteristic… Klein came to a realization after a moment of pause.

At this moment, Arianna calmly said, “The mental imprints in it have all been removed.”

“Thank you, Ma’am Arianna.” Not surprised at all, he bowed as if he had prepared to do so.

He had decisively given up on his marionette because he foresaw that something like this would happen.

In fact, his original plan was to bring Hvin Rambis above the gray fog as a marionette, allowing him to use Unshadowed Crucifix to purge the Manipulator, Dreamwalker, Hypnotist, and other Beyonder characteristics out. This way, Miss Justice no longer needed to worry about the ingredients needed before becoming a demigod, even her Beyonder dog at home had a chance of advancing. After all, Audrey had briefly mentioned in the past to Dwayne Dantès that her act of escaping from Hvin Rambis’s control was all thanks to Susie.

But later on, he considered that there was no way he could bring Hvin Rambis above the gray fog inside this world of concealment, as it would directly expose the fact that he was The Fool under Arianna’s watchful eyes. And once he left, no matter where he teleported to, there was a chance of being discovered by Adam because of Hvin Rambis’s existence.

In that case, giving up a marionette in front of Arianna was undoubtedly a better choice. At least, this angel had a high chance of helping him remove the mental imprint on the Beyonder characteristic.

And none of these affected Klein’s original plan. He could easily find some ingredients to make Hvin Lanbi’s Beyonder characteristic into a problematic potion. He would then pour it onto an ordinary item so that it could absorb the potion and transform.

After obtaining such a Sealed Artifact and binding it with the Unshadowed Crucifix, he could obtain the corresponding Beyonder characteristics by keeping track of the time.

As for the mental corruption during this process, there was no need for concern. The Unshadowed Crucifix could also cleanse it!

Klein picked up Hvin Rambis's Beyonder characteristic, but he wasn't able to stuff it into the iron cigar case. He could only stuff it into his pocket. As for Arianna, "She" cast her gaze towards the ice-blue metal cylinder and said in an unhurried voice, "It's from the cosmos, so it's best you don't use it. Even you carrying it with you should be limited. Otherwise, a gaze might be cast onto you, causing you to be corrupted and suffer aberrations."

"From the cosmos?" Klein found the description familiar.

Soon, he remembered the origins of its familiarity:

This originated from the the "Yellow light" Venithan's prophecy of the apocalypse in "Sights in the Spirit World" from the Abraham family:

"Casting one's gaze from the cosmos, the lands shatter. Everything in the world will cease to exist."

The apocalypse… The origins of this Sealed Artifact is related to the apocalypse? What does the cosmos represent? What does it have to do with the astral world? A series of questions formed in his mind, making his expression turn heavy.

Faced with his question, Arianna nodded gently and said, "Yes, the cosmos."

"Is it the cosmos above our heads?" he pointed at the dark night sky which was embedded with the gigantic crimson moon.

"Yes." Arianna gave an affirmative answer, but she didn't explain further.

After some thought, he asked again, "There are many hostile existences that are attempting to destroy this world?"

Arianna’s gaze swept across his face and finally stopped at his eyes.

“I can’t give you an answer.

“There are some things that make it easier to be ‘infected’ the more you know. Both your body and soul will be infected. Once you become an angel, you can seek out the exact answer.”

The more I know, the easier it is to get “infected”… A chill ran down Klein’s back.

He didn’t ask Arrodes earlier about the Sealed Artifacts that Hvin Rambis possessed, because he was afraid that Adam would notice them if they left any traces behind.

When facing a King of Angels, no amount of caution was enough!

Seeing that Arianna wasn’t revealing anything else, Klein pointed at the ice-blue metal cylinder and asked, “How should we handle this item?”

The description of the ascetic leader made him a little afraid of bringing the Sealed Artifact above the gray fog to “disinfect.”

Arianna calmly said, “My suggestion is to sacrifice it to the Goddess. Together with the contributions you have previously rendered, you can exchange them for what you want.”

Klein nodded slightly.

“I understand.”

After expressing his gratitude, Arianna’s figure was quickly erased and disappeared into the dark garden under the abnormally huge moon.

And with that, the world of concealment collapsed.

Klein observed for a few seconds before taking out candles and other ritual items he carried with him. He quickly set up an altar and sacrificed the ice-blue metal cylinder to the Evernight Goddess.

At the end of the ritual, amidst the howling winds, the burning ash of the herbs and the surrounding soil rose up and landed onto an empty spot on the altar.

The ash and soil were connected, forming words:

“Sequence 3: Scholar of Yore;

“Main ingredients: Hound of Fulgrim (also known as Sefirah Castle Keeper) pair of eyes. One Demonic Wolf of Fog’s transformed heart;

“Supplementary ingredients: 100ml of Hound of Fulgrim blood, 30 grams of White Frost Crystal of Demonic Wolf of Fog, a large amount of real ancient historical records…

“Advancement ritual: Be separated from reality for at least three hundred years and consume the potion after one becomes history and doesn’t belong to the present era.”

This… Klein couldn’t help but blink, wondering if he had seen the wrong description.

The description of not belonging to the present era made him think of a line in his honorific name:

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era!”

I’ve been hanging above the extraordinary door of light for more than three hundred years… In a sense, have I already completed the ritual and am only waiting to consume the potion? The mysterious space above the gray fog really has a very close relationship with the Seer pathway… Could it be the manifestation of the Uniqueness? Klein was momentarily delighted but also grim. This was because he didn’t know if a price was exacted for such a bestowment.

Phew, I really want to jump to a neighboring pathway after becoming an angel to not follow whatever path was planned for me… For other Bizarro Sorcerers, the hardest part about the advancement ritual is to live for more than three hundred years. After all, this isn't a pathway that's known for having a long lifespan… Also, being separated from reality for three hundred years easily drives one mad. For Bizarro Sorcerers who are in a dissociative state, the risk of madness and losing control is quite significant… Klein looked at the Scholar of Yore's potion formula as thoughts couldn't help but flash through his mind.

After an unknown amount of time, he ended the ritual and put away the corresponding items.

As he walked out of the garden, the gigantic crimson moon and the pitch-black darkness faded away, disappearing inch by inch.

Then, he saw fresh autumn flowers and the sunlight shining above them. He also saw a blonde girl waiting in between the house and the garden.

Audrey's eyes wore an elated look as the corners of her lips curled up unconsciously.

Klein nodded at her before his figure was enveloped by scarlet flames.

Elsewhere in the garden, there was another flame soaring in the air, but it wasn't obvious.

When the flames dissipated, Gehrman Sparrow was gone. The remnants of the crimson moon and the night scenery vanished completely.

Audrey fell into a daze for a few seconds before thoughtfully looking away and entering Viscount Glaint's residence.

After she left in a carriage with Susie and the servants, she returned home and had a chance to be alone. As expected, she received The World's invitation for a "meeting."

†

Above the gray fog, inside the palace.

Audrey looked at The World Gehrman Sparrow and calmly asked, “What was Hvin Rambis’s true goal?”

She had long known from Gehrman Sparrow’s calm composure that Hvin Rambis had been finished off.

Klein answered frankly, “The first is to find out if there’s a mastermind behind Xio and Fors’s actions. Secondly, when the princes express their goodwill towards Earl Hall’s family, the cue was for you to not be an obstacle. In essence, it’s to create a fracture between the three major Churches.”

With regards to this matter, Audrey had already discussed it with Mr. World before. There was no need to seek further explanations as she asked, “Then why was a demigod like Hvin Rambis personally visiting me?”

Klein smiled and said, “If you wish to deceive the guards arranged by Earl Hall, as well as hypnotize a Hypnotist with great certainty without causing any commotion, a Sequence 5 might not be capable of doing so; therefore, it’s best to send a demigod. Furthermore, you knew Hvin Rambis and had interactions with him before, so your vigilance against him would be minimized.

“To be honest, if you weren’t careful enough and had an unnoticeable helper like Susie, the whole matter would’ve gone on smoothly without you and I knowing until Monday.”

Justice Audrey didn’t wear a thick mask. She smiled and sighed with mixed emotions.

“So I’m already this powerful…”

Powerful to the point of needing a demigod to be certain of success.

“He was even more powerful than I had imagined. You actually hypnotized a demigod, a demigod that’s good at hypnotism,” Klein praised with a smile.

Audrey pursed her lips without realizing it and smiled.

“That’s mainly because of the Fate Siphon charm you gave me. Uh, my Hypnotist potion seems to have completely digested as a result of this…”

Chapter 1055 - Train of Thought

◆

Completely digested? That’s understandable. This is the act of hypnotizing a demigod. Although it’s thanks to the Fate Siphon charm, it only helped to open the door of the Body of Heart and Mind. The subsequent consciousness manipulation and the cue planting needs to be done personally. If she weren’t careful, she would trigger an intense rejection and would lead to failure…“Acting” done to the extreme would definitely accelerate the digestion process… Klein nodded gently and said in praise, “This is a good thing. It’s even more so for the current situation.”

Audrey understood what Mr. World meant. In this storm that was sweeping around thanks to the Angel of imagination Adam and King George III, even if she stood by the sidelines, she could sense her weakness and how powerless she was. She couldn’t wait to improve herself.

She tersely acknowledged and said, “I’ll urge The Sun to give his conditions to complete the deal and try my best to advance to Sequence 5. When the time comes, I hope that I can receive the protection of Mr. Fool and remain conscious in my dream.”

Having been prepared for this, Klein smiled and said, “Actually, you don’t have to wait that long. I’ll be able to sell you a Dreamwalker’s Beyonder characteristic by tomorrow, and at the latest, Friday.”

As it was a private exchange, Klein didn’t act as The World by deliberately making his voice hoarse. All he did was sound reserved.

"Really?" Audrey's eyes widened, not concealing her surprise.

Klein nodded and said, "It's actually from Hvin Rambis.

"The new cross that Mr. Fool obtained can allow the Beyonder characteristics to be purged."

He spoke very simply without explaining the actual steps. He maintained Gehrman Sparrow's unique coldness.

"Is that so…" The corners of Audrey's lips curled up as she broke into a smile. She pressed against her chest and said, "Praise Mr. Fool~! And thank you, Mr. World."

A double token of gratitude… Klein chuckled inwardly and calmly said, "It's just a transaction."

You need to pay for it… he lampooned to himself.

Audrey maintained her smile and asked, "What do you need?"

"For a Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic—8,000 pounds." Klein chose something that Miss Justice could gather in the fastest time possible.

Audrey didn't mind the price. She thought for a while before asking, "Can you sell the separated Hypnotist characteristic to me as well?"

When she said that, she smiled in embarrassment and said, "It's for Susie. The incident this time was resolved all thanks to her.

"Yes, the higher her level, the greater the help she can provide will be. Well, I'll also help her."

"No problem. 4,000 pounds." Having expected this, Klein directly named his price.

In his plan, he could stop once the Hypnotist was purged, doing so without continuing the separation process. Now, he would place the Unshadowed Crucifix together for a long period of time, allowing its remaining characteristics to take form.

“A total of 12,000 pounds?” Audrey asked for confirmation, not feeling too much pressure.

As she didn’t have any major expenditures for the past few months, she only had 10,000 pounds left. Just a little bit of economizing was enough to satisfy her needs.

Seeing The World nod, she heaved a sigh of relief.

“I’ll pay it before Friday.”

After closing the deal, her mood became better with Hvin Rambis having been killed. She asked as though she was chatting, “I’ll also buy the complete brain of an adult mind dragon from The Sun as well. However, I won’t be in such a rush. Susie won’t be able to digest the Hypnotist potion so quickly…”

At this point, she glanced shyly at Mr. World.

“What needs to be exchanged for Hvin Rambis’s demigod characteristic?”

Klein laughed and replied, “I still don’t know what I’m lacking.

“In fact, other than the Manipulator characteristic from Hvin Rambis, I also have the corresponding potion formula. While you digest the Dreamwalker potion, I’ll slowly think about what I need, and I’ll get you to do certain things and gather some materials so that you can make sufficient contributions to exchange for them.”

Upon hearing these words, Audrey’s green eyes lit up.

“Alright!”

After her reply, she asked with interest, “Is this the same as how Xio contributes to MI9?”

“Yes, it’s also the same method that the various major Churches use.” Klein gave an affirmative answer.

Audrey nodded and curiously asked, “Mr. World, do you know the name of the High-Sequence Beyonder potions of the Spectator pathway?”

Klein answered simply, “Manipulator, Dreamweaver, Discerner, Author, and Sequence 0, Visionary.”

…Hearing the names makes me look forward to them… Especially Author and Visionary… Audrey fantasized for a few seconds before diverting the topic back on track.

“Did Hvin Rambis say what the king’s secret is? Also, why are they helping the king?”

She was partially asking for Xio, but on the other hand, she was also concerned herself.

“The king’s secret? He wishes to bypass the three major contracts the royal family signed with the orthodox Churches and become a demigod. For this, he needs to use many sacrificial rituals to gain control of some important object inside the Blood Emperor’s ruins. Heh heh. That was Hvin Rambis’s answer, but it might not be the entire truth and might very likely be only a part of it.” As Klein answered, he shared his line of thought. “As for the Psychology Alchemists or the Twilight Hermit Order, they need a war that sweeps the entire world. This is what they’re pushing for and hope to see as the trend of the times.”

“A war that sweeps the entire world…” Audrey repeated softly. Her pretty eyebrows furrowed slightly, and her cheerful mood plummeted again.

Although her status and standing hadn’t made her truly experience the cruelty of war before, she was no longer sheltered and cut-off from the world. She could already imagine it to a certain degree.

After a brief moment of silence, Audrey took a deep breath and forced a smile.

"I hope we can stop this."

After exchanging a few more words, she left the gray fog and returned to the real world. As for Klein, he busily used clear water, tree sap, herbal powder, Thousand-Faced Hunter's blood, Spirit World Plunderer powder, and other materials to "dilute" Hvin Rambis's Beyonder characteristic and concoct a potion that had a questionable name which was definitely filled with problems.

Then, he found an ordinary glass bottle and put the potion inside. He wanted to know what kind of Sealed Artifact it would eventually transform into.

This took quite a bit of time so he used the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog to construct a spherical barrier around the glass bottle to prevent any influence it had on the entire area after it mutated.

After doing all of this, he returned to 160 Böklund Street, he prepared to summon Arrodes and ask it for information about the two Beyonder creatures known as Hound of Fulgrim and Demonic Wolf of Fog.

At that moment, with the passage of time, the clouds in the sky had thickened, and the sun was covered up once again. The entirety of Backlund had become as dark and cold as the morning.

Standing in front of the desk, he looked out the window at the sky. For some reason, he felt as though he and the Church of Evernight had neglected an important problem.

Their investigations had been going relatively smoothly during this period of time, and the intelligence they received was also delving deeper. However, for some reason, it made him feel uneasy.

Is there some influence or misdirection in this matter, and truly is something that I can’t think of? Even heading above the gray fog is useless. Divination will most likely point towards “Him.” Hmm… Klein hurriedly collected his thoughts, unfurled the paper, and drew a picture consisting of symbols that implied concealment and mystery prying with a fountain pen.

One second, two seconds… After nearly eight seconds, the full-body mirror in the room turned dark. Aqueous light rippled and formed silver words:

“Exalted Great Master, your puny, loyal, and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning!

“I-I think I’m late. I’m already a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. I need some time if I want to circumvent the isolation. Please forgive me, Great Master.”

“You’re a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact?” Klein asked with a surprised look.

He could already imagine what was going on within the Church of Steam.

The mirror that likes to play question and answer games has suddenly gone crazy!

The full-body mirror’s silver words squirmed and formed new words:

“Great Master, is this a question?”

He wanted to answer “no,” but to maintain his image, he nodded and said, “Yes.”

Arrodes immediately produced a line of words:

“I’m not actually a true Grade 1 Sealed Artifact yet. I’m just enjoying the treatment of a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact in advance. This is mainly because a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact needs to be reported to other Churches and be given a new number. The Church of Steam doesn’t wish to do so.”

So that’s how it is. That’s understandable… Klein nodded gently.

“Got it.”

The aqueous light on the full-body mirror’s surface flashed again as new silver words formed:

“Supreme Master, do you have any questions to test your loyal servant, Arrodes?”

“What do you know about Hounds of Fulgrim and Demonic Wolves of Fog?” he asked without standing on ceremony, completely unfazed that it was actually two questions.

In the mirror, the silver words squirmed like they had a life of their own and changed shapes.

“The Hounds of Fulgrim are a type of unique creature of the spirit world. They live in the Historical Void. Even the Seven Lights only know of them and are unable to interact with them unless they leave the Historical Void and attempt to hunt. But even so, what you see might only be a projection of their past…

“The Demonic Wolves of Fog are a type of high-level Demonic Wolves. After the death of the ancient gods and the Cataclysm, and with them being killed by the Antigonus family, Zaratul family, and the Church of Evernight, they’re extremely rare now. Furthermore, they’re all good at anti-divination and deceit. They aren’t easy to find…”

In other words, the Church of Evernight likely has materials and items related to the Demonic Wolf of Fog? And with this, I can bring it to the spirit world and use the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence to bait a Hound of Fulgrim? Klein began his train of thought as he read on.

Chapter 1056 - The Real “Devil”

◆

After getting a grasp of the situation, Klein looked at the full-body mirror in the room and asked, “What’s the king’s secret?”

The surface of the mirror that seemed to lead to another world had aqueous light ripple before revealing a scene:

It was a ruin that was hidden deep in the darkness, covered in the dust of history. However, it was completely intact.

Does that mean that the king’s secret is in the Blood Emperor’s ruins… Arrodes doesn’t dare to answer directly, or is this as much as it can see? After some deliberation, he said to the magic mirror, “It’s your turn to ask.”

The image in the full-body mirror didn’t change at all. It only revealed silver words:

“Great Master, do you have any other questions?”

“Yes.” Without standing on ceremony, Klein nodded and asked, “Where is Saintess of White, Katarina, presently?”

In the mirror, the silver words rapidly faded and disappeared, but the background didn’t change at all. It was still the Blood Emperor ruins.

If not for the word’s appearance and disappearance, I would’ve thought that this magic mirror “crashed”… Katarina is hiding in the Blood Emperor’s ruins? The real one? Klein nodded thoughtfully.

“It’s your turn.”

Above the scene, silver words condensed once again:

“Benevolent Master, why don’t you leave Backlund?”

That’s a good question. I originally had such plans… I originally investigated the Great Smog of Backlund because of my outrage over the innocent deaths of the poor like Old Kohler, as well as being lost due to the shattering of my main goal. Later, I ended up with the identity as a Blessed of the Goddess. Later on, I tried to prevent a disaster from happening and prevent the people I know from suffering due to the ambitions of the powerful and to not drown because of the tides of the times. I was willing to bear some of the risks…

As for now, knowing that there might be a war that would sweep the entire world, and discovering that the advancement ritual of Scholar of Yore is practically “tailor-made” for me, with signs of things being arranged, I’ve already come to a realization that I might not be able to escape even if I tried. Or should I say that I’m unlikely to escape my destiny even if I were to flee Backlund. In that case, I might as well take the initiative to face the risk head- on and see if I can figure out the truth and find a chance to survive, grasping my fate in my own hands… Klein’s thoughts kept churning before they settled.

Following that, he calmly replied, “Leaving can’t really solve the problem.”

With that, he asked, “Where is Trissy now?”

The full-body mirror finally changed the depicted scene. This time, it was pitch-black. Occasionally, thick objects would slip across the surface.

Arrodes also can’t see Trissy’s situation… Klein nodded slightly and said, “It’s your turn to ask.”

The mirror was filled with aqueous light and wisps of silver formed a sentence:

“Great Master, I have something to tell you. May I?”

“Go ahead,” Klein replied, somewhat curious.

The silver words changed into new words:

You have to be careful with what follows next!”

It even used an exclamation point… Arrodes noticed something unpleasant? After thinking for a few seconds, Klein said, “What do you think can threaten me?”

“I don’t know. I have a feeling…” Arrodes reorganized its words, turning them from silver to grayish-white. It was obvious that it meant to express its sadness and self-reproach.

Without waiting for a reply, new grayish-white words appeared in the mirror one after another:

“Great Master, I have another scene to show you. Is that okay?”

“Sure,” Klein spoke slowly.

The full-body mirror’s surface produced ripples as the pitch-black darkness changed.

It became deeper and deeper, sparkling like diamonds.

This was a beautiful and vast night.

The scene that Arrodes displayed is directed at the Goddess who’s intrinsically the stars, or it’s the gaze cast from the cosmos? It seems like it doesn’t dare to express it directly… Klein considered for a moment and didn’t attempt to ask further.

“Let’s end it here for today.”

“Alright!” The grayish-white words were once again dyed with silver as the speed at which they appeared had slowed down for some reason. "Great Master, y-you haven't said that you would summon me, your loyal servant, Arrodes, again if you have other questions in the future…"

It's a mirror that needs to follow procedure… Klein said in amusement, "Of course, I'll summon you again when I have other questions."

Yes, Master! Goodbye, Master!" The silver words on the mirror returned to their normal speed, forming a hand that kept waving.

After everything returned to normal, Klein burned the paper with the summoning symbols and drew the curtains. He once again stared at the cold and dark sky.

Empress Borough, in a small Evernight cathedral.

Xio and Fors received Miss Justice's update thanks to Mr. Fool, and they knew that the problem had been resolved. They roughly understood what the king's secret was.

"…Truly impressive." Fors, who believed in the God of Steam and Machinery, opened her eyes in the dark and quiet prayer hall, turned her head, lowered her voice, and sighed.Read the next chapter on our vipnovel.com

She originally wanted to directly say that Mr. World or Gehrman Sparrow was truly impressive, but she no longer wanted to make such a mistake.

The past week made her feel like she had been in the mysterious world for more than ten years.

Xio opened her eyes as well, but she first drew a crimson moon on her chest, a form of showing her penitence towards her disrespect for the Goddess.

"Yes, that's a…" Before Xio could finish her sentence, the message she tried to convey reached Fors.

What she wanted to say was that Hvin Rambis was a true demigod, but from the time she and Fors entered the cathedral, less than ten minutes had passed; yet, he had been finished off by Gehrman Sparrow.

As saints, there was such a huge gap!

“Perhaps, it’s the blessings of an angel…” With her experience in supernatural events and writing novels, Fors made a vague guess.

As the prayer hall was dark and quiet, making it unsuitable for communication, Xio didn’t directly respond to Fors’s words. She nodded, stood up, and walked into the aisle.

The two of them left the prayer area, and after approaching the door, Xio exhaled and said, “I really hope that I’ll be this powerful one day…”

“I have such thoughts occasionally too.” Fors smiled. “Uh, no matter what, you’ve already completed your investigations, haven’t you? Although the so-called secrets are definitely worth digging into, the outline of the matter is rather clear.”

Xio looked at the door ahead of her and fell into a daze for a few seconds.

“But what’s the point? I can’t do anything about this matter.”

“No, no, no. When it comes to enemies, that person’s identity isn’t too lofty. At least, he’s someone we can look at directly.” Fors seriously comforted her friend. “When you obtain a qualitative change in strength, you’ll discover that you have the ability to participate in that matter. At least in matters that don’t involve even higher levels.”

Fors, who had joined the Tarot Club for quite a long time ago, had witnessed matters that had been planned by Mr. Fool. “He” had used his Blessed and the members of the Tarot Club to destroy the descent of the True Creator, revealed Bansy’s secret, obtained a portion of the authority from the Storm domain, and interfered in the ownership of 0-08. Compared to the angels, King of Angels, and even true gods that were involved in these matters, King George III alone was indeed nothing special.

Xio slowly walked to the door and said after a moment of silence, "I understand what you mean.

"We'll return to the East district. We won't be in a hurry to move. Once I obtain the Judge potion formula, we'll disappear and go into hiding. I believe that after today's incident, they probably wouldn't dare to investigate us."

"That's for sure. They're just lurking in the dark, in spots that cannot see the light of day," Fors hurriedly echoed before exclaiming, "I only hope that before we move again, my letter to my teacher can be delivered,

Xio grabbed her yellow hair and walked out of the church gates as she said in a serious manner, "After I get the formula, I'll buy that button and try to advance as quickly as possible."

"Not bad. You've recovered your fighting spirit," Fors teased with a smile.

Xio didn't say another word as she continued proceeding forward with a solemn expression.

After walking a few dozen steps, she suddenly stopped and said without turning her head, "I d-don't think I have enough money to buy that button. When the time comes, lend me a little…

"I'll definitely return it."

Fors was taken aback for a second before chortling.

"Okay.

"If my guess is correct, I should be able to get the subsequent items from my teacher."

Thursday afternoon. Using the excuse of having some rest, Klein returned to the master bedroom and entered the bathroom. He took four steps counterclockwise and arrived above the gray fog.

He believed that the glass bottle that was filled with the "potion" had already finished absorbing it.

Sitting at the high-back chair of The Fool, he waved his hand and removed the isolation barrier, pulling his target over.

The transparent glass bottle was already stained with a dark color. It had a mesh pattern on its surface which shimmered slightly, giving off an artistic flair.

It was empty inside, with not a single drop of the potion remaining. The spacious bottle's mouth was covered with a layer of mist that glowed. It made Klein feel as though his gaze was being sucked in the moment it landed upon the mouth of the bottle.

A voice sounded from the bottle:

"By throwing in a hundred gold coins in it, you can fulfill a wish…

"By throwing in a hundred gold coins in it, you can fulfill a wish…"

Who did you learn this from… I have to say, this monotonous statement does have some hypnotic effect… Throwing in a hundred gold coins would be akin to opening the doors of the Body of Heart and Mind and becoming the bottle's slave… Klein did a simple analysis before beckoning for the Unshadowed Crucifix. Using the pressure brought about by the gray fog, he stuffed it into the bottle's mouth.

"You devil!" The voice in the bottle screamed shrilly before it was miserably blocked by the gray fog.

Chapter 1057 - The Extraordinary and the Ordinary

◆ ◆ ◆

After dealing with the mutated glass bottle, Klein took out his golden pocket watch, opened it, took a look, and took note of the time.

He had to return three hours later and separate the Unshadowed Crucifix from the Bottle of Slavery. Only then could he obtain a single Manipulator’s Beyonder characteristic, and not a product that was mixed with the previous Sequences’ Beyonder characteristics.

It feels like I’m doing an experiment… Klein nodded slightly, put away his pocket watch, and returned to the real world where he had his actual afternoon nap.

At four in the afternoon, his valet, Enuni, knocked on his employer’s door under Butler Walter’s watch.

“What’s the matter?” In his pajamas, Dwayne Dantes rubbed his forehead and opened the bedroom door.

Enuni bowed and said, “Sir, you accepted Madam Riana’s invitation for high tea the night before. It’s today.”

Klein looked at Butler Walter and said, “Alright, give me fifteen minutes to prepare.”

Then he instructed his valet, Enuni, “Come in and help me change my clothes.”

When only he and his marionette were left in the room, he controlled the latter to bring out clothes suitable for high tea, taking glances at the wall clock from time to time.

After about ten minutes, after tying his bow tie and putting on his coat, he took four steps counterclockwise and headed above the gray fog.

At that moment, three hours had passed since he last entered.

Placed at the end of the long bronze table, the mutated glass bottle which had been firmly bound to the Unshadowed Crucifix with the gray fog's power no longer had the twinkling mesh, looking as though it went from being a piece of art to a common item on the street.

At the bottom of the glass bottle was a large amount of grayish-white matter that had been purged. It flowed freely, forming a heart-shaped object the size of a child's fist. Not only were there wrinkles on it, but there were also cracks that resembled eyes. As for the complicated, three-dimensional, illusory patterns, labels, and symbols that extended into the void, they were nearly identical to Hvin Rambis's Beyonder characteristic that Klein had seen from before.

It's just a little different… Klein released the gray fog's suppression and took out the Unshadowed Crucifix from the bottle mouth.

With this step, the item that was purged out was completely separated from the mutated glass bottle, becoming complete and independent.

Klein reached out his left hand to pick up the item that resembled both a heart and a brain, and after examining it for a few seconds, he threw it into the junk pile and allowed the gray fog to envelop it.

At this moment, a weak voice sounded from the mutated glass bottle.

You… devil…"

Klein didn't respond as he thrust the Unshadowed Crucifix back in with his right hand, using the power of the gray fog to press down on it.

And with that, the ancient palace returned to its tranquil state.

After returning to the real world, Klein put on his top hat, held his cane, and left 160 Boklund Street on his carriage. He headed for Member of Parliament Macht's residence at Unit 39.

Inside an elegant activity room at Member of Parliament Macht's house, a few guests sat around an intricate threetiered tray. In front of them was a cup of charming black tea.

Klein took a small cucumber sandwich and took a small bite. Half-jokingly, he shared his true feelings:

"The desserts today seem very unique. Be it the carrot cake or cream puffs."

Macht laughed when he heard that.

"Dwayne, your observation skills are truly impeccable."

This has nothing to do with one's observation skills. As long as one isn't blind, it's impossible not to tell that the shapes are all banged up… he lampooned silently before saying, "It sounds like something remarkable."

"Of course, it's personally made by Hazel. You can try it later. Although she can't control its appearance effectively, it really does taste good," Macht said proudly.

By the side, Portland Moment, who was the Backlund University of Technology's chancellor, laughed and said, "This doesn't sound like the Hazel I know."

Macht glanced at Ma'am Riana and said in satisfaction, "Everyone grows up, right?

"Hazel has really matured recently. Not only is she willing to learn those classes in preparation for socializing and marriage that she used to hate, and occasionally makes desserts and plays music for us, but she'll also frequently offer to accompany her mother to attend musicals, horse racing matches, shop at the departmental store, and listen silently by the side at all kinds of saloons and balls."

According to Miss Justice, Hazel's treatment progress has reached a point where she can recall the terrible shock and pain she had suffered. Although it's just a direct sense of the emotions and doesn't involve the exact sequence of events, it's enough to make her dream of losing her parents and relatives… This made her learn to cherish her family. For this, she has decided to change herself to a certain extent? Klein nodded in thought and said with a smile, "That's excellent."

"Indeed," Macht replied while full of emotion, "I was worried about her personality, worried that she wouldn't have a good marriage and be unable to date people in our circle. After we pass away, she wouldn't be able to find help when faced with difficulties. But now, I can finally feel at ease."

Macht revealed a sincere smile as he revealed his worries that he seldom divulged.

He raised his arm and waved it gently. Then he said with great confidence, "Why am I making an enemy out of the bloody smog and pollution? Why do we have to fight over the colonies in East Balam with Feysac and the West Balam with Intis? Isn't it to let our children lead a better life? So that we have fewer worries?

"To me, Hazel's maturity is greater than the contributions I made at East Balam, far more meaningful than my fights in the House of Commons."

As Klein listened to Macht's recount, he couldn't help but look out the window.

It was dark outside and the sun was gone.

At this moment, Portland Moment replied to Macht jokingly, “No, those things are for our own good.”

At this point, he looked at Klein and said, “Dwayne, have you thought about it? Do you want to invest in my mechanical laboratory?”

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“Mr. Chancellor, why are you still so anxious like a young man?

“I’ve already read through the information you gave me and have a rough impression of the rights and revenue. Frankly speaking, I’m very interested. To let talented young adults obtain training at such a mechanical laboratory is greatly satisfying. This should be something we invest in. What’s most valuable in this day and age? Talents!”

“Emperor Roselle once said that.” Portland Moment chuckled. “So, how much do you intend to invest?”

Dwayne raised his porcelain cup and drank a mouthful of black tea.

“The initial plan is 10,000 pounds.”

“As expected of the most famous tycoon in Backlund recently. I can’t even guess how many assets you have. First, you donated more than ten thousand pounds of shares, then you spent 20,000 pounds buying Maygur Manor, and now you’re donating 10,000 pounds to the Portland mechanical laboratory…” Ma’am Riana couldn’t help but exclaim.

Portland Moment gave a thumbs up.

“This is a truly keen investor.”

Klein smiled and said, “But I’ll still find a team formed by lawyers and accountants to verify the actual situation and stipulate the conditions. Professional matters should be left to the professionals. Besides, I still have to consider investing directly or first establish a company or foundation and complete the investment through it. Oh, Portland, I think there's one aspect that you didn't take into consideration. How can such an important laboratory not have any security measures!? Aren't you afraid of commercial spies or foreign powers infiltrating and causing destruction?"

Portland Moment was taken aback as he slowly nodded.

"That makes sense… I previously neglected this problem."

Having accomplished his goal, Klein no longer harped on the topic. Instead, he deliberately asked, "Has there been news regarding Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor?"

Macht sighed and said, "No, Sivellaus Yard said that Maygur Manor and the surrounding areas have been searched. They didn't even find any leads."

As he spoke, the House of Commons Member of Parliament lowered his voice and said, "I suspect that the Brigadier General had an accident while carrying out a secret mission. The current mood of the higher-ups has been a little strange…"

From a certain point of view, you guessed right… Klein sighed.

"I hope nothing happens."

Amidst high tea, Klein took note of the time and went to the bathroom. Above the gray fog, he placed the Dreamwalker characteristic into the junk pile that seeped out of the mutated bottle.

By the time high tea ended and he returned to 160 Boklund Street, the sky had already darkened. The street lamps on both sides of the road were lit up ahead of time as the rain pattered down the carriage windows.

Now, all the questions are concentrated on what's hidden in the Blood Emperor's ruins. As long as the three Churches discover the problem in time, they can prevent many things from happening. Klein looked out at the street lamps that looked blurry from the rain as he considered the recent developments. For now, apart from capturing Katarina, I can't provide much help. Furthermore, the Goddess is digesting or controlling Death's Uniqueness. "She" might not have the power to provide a response at that level.

To solve this problem, I either get a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact with a targeted effect from the Holy Cathedral, or I rely on the Church of Steam and Storms and see which one of the true deities will respond… A Grade 0 Sealed Artifact might not be enough since it involves a King of Angels, and there might be traitors amidst the two Churches…

Traveling from 39 Boklund Street to Unit 160 didn't take long. Before Klein could straighten out his thoughts, he had already returned to his doorstep. He had no choice but to get off the carriage.

When he changed his clothes on the third floor, his spiritual perception was triggered. He saw Reinette Tinekerr walk out of the void with four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand.

"It's from Sharron?" A guess came to him as he received the letter.

"That's right…" one of the heads held by Reinette Tinekerr replied.

Without another word, Klein opened the envelope and unfurled the piece of paper. There was only one line on it: "We'll take action at 10 tonight."

Chapter 1058 - A Tool

◆ ◆ ◆

Tonight at 10… Looking at Miss Messenger, who stayed in place, Klein walked to the desk and wrote:

"I'll be on time.

"In addition, the situation in Backlund has become tense recently. Make sure to keep the matter under control."

After reminding Sharron, Klein folded the letter and took out a gold coin and a rectangular "diamond" that kept refracting light.

"This is a Yesterday Once More charm. It can allow you to temporarily borrow powers from your past self." Klein handed the three items to Reinette Tinekerr.

One of the blonde, red-eyed heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hands opened its mouth and bit down on everything. The remaining three said, "Why…" "Give…" "Me…"

"Count it as part of the remuneration I'll be paying in advance," Klein said with an ordinary smile.

Arrodes's reminder made him feel that it was imperative to make more preparations.

Reinette Tinekerr didn't ask further. The four beautiful heads bobbed up and down from their hair as though they were nodding.

"She" then stepped into the void and vanished from the room.

Looking at the light rain and the dark sky outside the window, Klein took off his coat and handed it to his valet, Enuni.

†

9:50 p.m., on a street near the Tussock River in Cherwood Borough.

In the commonly-seen autumn-winter rain in Backlund, a rental carriage turned in and slowly moved forward.

On the carriage, the red-eyed Emlyn White, who was holding a top hat in his hand, looked at the young man with pale looks and disheveled hair before curling his lips.

"Is it here?"

The incorporeal figure, Maric, nodded. He pointed to a neighboring building diagonally across at the shops over there and said, "That's right.

"That's a bookstore. The owner's name is Charlie Raker and is pure Loenese. However, he went to the Southern Continent once when he was young, hoping to become a tycoon. There, he became a member of the Rose School of Thought and a believer of the Chained God. He was later sent back to Backlund and was made to gather intelligence, as well as provide assistance to the other Rose School of Thought members who are executing other missions. We've been watching him for a while and wish to finish him off and sever the source of intel for the Rose School of Thought so that we can create a better living environment for ourselves. However, we ultimately held back."

Emlyn smiled and said, "The facts have proven that tolerance can indeed be exchanged for better results.

"Heh, to be honest, your performance is quite different from what I imagined for a temperance faction Wraith. I thought you would be very terse."

Maric glanced at the vampire who was already a Viscount.

“Different people have different personalities. And temperance is only meant to control excessive desires.

“I’m afraid you wouldn’t understand and that it would affect the final result of the mission if I didn’t explain this matter too clearly. That way, the desires that need temperance will exceed the limits of what it should be.”

Heh, although it’s very philosophical, there’s no need to use me as an example… Emlyn leisurely leaned against the wall and looked at him.

“Continue with the previous topic.”

Maric looked out the window again.

“In Charlie Raker’s house is a female servant from the Paz Valley. She’s also a member of the Rose School of Thought.

“In addition, in the two houses diagonally opposite to Raker’s house lives a widow and a male alcoholic. They’re believers of the Chained God, and they would transmit information to the Rose School of Thought at critical moments.

“The thing you need to do is to secretly monitor these three people while we’re dealing with Charlie Raker. Through the information sent, you’ll be able to lock onto the person-in-charge of the Rose School of Thought in Backlund.

“Of course, we’ll definitely give Charlie Raker some opportunity to seek help or send out a signal.”

Emlyn nodded slightly and said, “I understand.”

He then turned his head to look at the sky which had dark clouds that blanketed it, blocking out the crimson moon. He turned the ring with the ghostly-blue gem on his ring finger.

This was the Oath of Rose ring. It allowed Earl Mistral to share his sense of sight, hearing, and smell.

This ring went around one big circle and ended up back in Emlyn's hands. Of course, it was only temporary.

As such, Earl Mistral had already heard what Maric had said and shared it with the other Sanguine participants.

Emlyn originally believed that although he was only the intermediary who was in charge of communication and didn't play an important role, even if that were the case, he felt that he was able to showcase some of his spells as a Scarlet Scholar, allowing him to pass the information in a really cool and elevated manner in front of Wraith Maric. To his surprise, he didn't need to do anything. All he needed was to be on scene wearing the ring.

This made him very depressed. He felt that he was purely a tool.

Without being a demigod, I'm not qualified to directly participate in many things, much less to save the race… At that moment, Emlyn felt a little impulsive. He felt that his level wasn't worthy of his secret identity and that he was unable to bear the responsibilities he needed to bear.

As for the Oath of Rose's effect of being able to allow the thoughts of the two wearers to appear in the minds of the other party from time to time, Emlyn wasn't worried. He had asked Miss Justice to hypnotize him so that he wouldn't think about matters that he didn't want the Sanguine upper echelons from knowing tonight.

Just as he had this thought, he suddenly heard Earl Mistral's voice:

"Arrogance, childish, naive…"

This… This is a particular thought of Earl Mistral that was transmitted by Oath of Rose… Heh… Emlyn scoffed inwardly as he began chanting a name:

“Ernes Boyar… Ernes Boyar…”

This Viscount had been hypnotized under the protection of Earl Mistral and had been volunteering at the Harvest Church for a long time!

At that moment, Maric glanced at Emlyn’s expression and nodded.

“Your current attitude is reassuring.”

Very serious, very solemn, and very focused.

Ah? Emlyn was first taken aback before he curled his lips slightly.

“Thank you.”

†

The second floor of the bookstore was Charlie Raker’s house. This businessman was over 50 years old, and his parents had long passed away. Despite being never married, rumors had it that he had a few illegitimate children, but none of them lived with him.

After instructing the servants to check if the house’s windows were locked, he returned to his bedroom and poured himself a cup of red wine. He sat on the sofa and savored it in a relaxed manner.

He was used to drinking some wine before sleeping.

When he finished the red wine, Charlie Raker stood up and walked towards the bathroom.

When he passed by the full-body mirror in the bedroom, he casually took a glance, and his body suddenly froze up.

In the mirror, his face had unknowingly turned abnormally pale. His eyes were protruded, and blood was seeping from the edges. The corners of his lips were slightly red.

As a member of the Rose School of Thought, Charlie Raker wasn’t unfamiliar with such a situation. He didn't scream or run recklessly like ordinary people. Instead, he raised his right hand and extended it to his chest.

Just as he touched the accessory he was wearing, his body felt like it had fallen into an unmeltable icy abyss. It was cold from the inside to the outside.

The cold seemed to have a life force of its own as it expanded rapidly and covered every corner of Charlie Raker's body. It made him feel like his joints and muscles no longer belonged to him as they began to abide by the commands of others.

At that moment, it was as if there was another person in his body. It was cold and blurry, filled with malice. It directly took over everything other than his thoughts.

At the same time, Charlie Raker saw new changes to his body in the mirror. Two figures appeared in his eyes. One was a young man in a white shirt and black vest.

With his right hand having made contact with the object at his chest, a bright light flashed in front of him.

The light seemed to come from a miniature sun, casting light and heat in every direction.

Charlie Raker immediately felt warmth and was no longer controlled by the cold in his body. He blurted out a word, "Cleanse!"

The miniature sun in front of his chest burned intensely. It was like warm water that surged into his chest, forming ripples.

With that, Charlie Raker regained control of his body and gave up on the door; instead, he ran towards the window.

The curtain wasn't drawn, and it was drizzling outside, dimming the street lights outside.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

When Charlie Raker walked past the carpeted coffee table area, he suddenly stumbled and nearly fell.

The carpet seemed to come alive as it wrapped around his ankles!

Bang!

The coffee table flew up, and the porcelain teacup and all sorts of documents landed on Charlie Raker's face. It shattered to pieces, turning into a strange dismembered puppet.

Suddenly, Charlie Raker's figure appeared elsewhere as he continued running with a sense of fear lingering in his heart.

He had never hated his bedroom for being this big before.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Fountain pens shot randomly, and paper swatted around as Charlie Raker finally ran to the window.

As a devout believer, he didn't break out of the window immediately. Instead, he held the curtain and pulled it.

At the same time, he pressed his other hand onto the gas pipe.

A layer of white frost instantly formed on the black metal surface.

Crack. The glass window in front of Charlie Raker shattered as every piece of glass flew out like a bullet and hit the merchant's face, piercing through his perfectly fine skin. It caused blood to gush out at his neck.

Charlie Raker's eyes darkened, and he fell back weakly. During this process, he screamed and yelled, but his voice couldn't be heard beyond the room.

At this moment, in another room, a maid from the Southern Continent could clearly see the light from the gas wall lamps shaking.

She immediately turned her head and looked towards where her "employer" was, only to see that the gas pipes there were covered in white frost.

In a house opposite to Charlie Raker, the brandy-nosed man, who had rolled-up sleeves and gulping down alcohol, suddenly noticed that the curtains were only half-closed.

For the secret signal that he and Charlie Raker had agreed upon, having the curtains completely drawn meant that there wasn't a problem. Having half the curtains drawn or only one side meant an emergency situation. It required him to inform the higher-ups immediately.

He abruptly stood up.

Chapter 1059 - The Authority of the Moon

◆ ◆ ◆

The red brandy-nosed man rushed to a safe within a few steps where he then took out a radio transceiver and a codebook from a secret compartment.

He crouched there and transcoded the incident that happened to Charlie Raker. Then, he started to send the telegram.

Meanwhile, in the house above the Raker bookstore, a brown-skinned maid rolled up her sleeves and poured an indigo-blue liquid on her left arm.

Her skin around the spot immediately changed colors, but under the indigo-blue colors, there were wisps of black light extending out like threadworms.

These black beams of light quickly manifested a strange, palm-sized face. Its eyes were as tiny as rice grains, and its mouth was as wide as a tea plate.

“Charlie Raker has had an accident,” the maid enunciated each word while looking at the face on her arm.

Every word she said seemed to have its own shape, forming an indigo-blue bodied entity like her mouth and arm.

Immediately following that, the words that seemed to be written began to intertwine as they were enveloped by smoke of the same color.

At this moment, the strange face on the maid's arm slowly opened its mouth and sucked in the indigo-blue smoke and text.

All the abnormalities vanished, other than the patch of skin on the maid's arm remaining an indigo-blue color.

In the darkness outside the window, a tiny, ordinary bat flapped its wings, changing its motionless state and flying off to some unknown location.

On another street that was less than 500 meters away from the Raker's bookstore, in the air above a restaurant that specialized in Southern Continent cuisine.

Tiny bats flew out from the darkness and gathered together, forming thick smoke.

The smoke and bat appeared incorporeal and disappeared in the blink of an eye. All that was left behind was a man wearing a tuxedo without the corresponding hat.

This man was thin, tall, and upright. He had light-colored hair that was nearly silver in color. His eyes were bright red like blood as though blood was hidden within. He was none other than Sanguine Earl, Mistral.

He raised his left hand with the ghostly-blue gem ring and touched the slightly exaggerated bow tie. He looked down at the restaurant that had already closed and said, "Both pieces of intel eventually led here."

As soon as Mistral finished speaking, a figure appeared in front of him, wearing a black regal dress and a bonnet. She had light blonde hair and blue eyes, and her face was pale like a rather intricate doll.

The trees on the street below suddenly swayed gently as the light from the gas lamps flashed.

"A Puppet." Earl Mistral nodded slightly and acknowledged Sharron's status and level.

Sharron ignored him and looked at the second floor of the restaurant.

“There are remnants of Mother Tree of Desire worship.”

“Then there’s no problem.” Mistral turned around in midair and nodded towards the darkest area. “Lord Nibbs, please seal this place.”

An elderly, deep sigh sounded before a pair of wings covered in dark-colored skin and countless patterns suddenly extended out of the darkness. It extended out, turning broader and bigger, taking two to three seconds to envelop the entire area.

The restaurant sank into an unnatural state of darkness, as though it had been moved out of the real world.

Mistral didn’t hesitate nor did he attack directly. He took out a bronze box embedded with many ruby gems and took out something from it.

It was a transparent glass sphere that resembled an eyeball.

Then, the Sanguine Earl, Mistral, grimaced as the glass sphere fell from his fingers and landed downwards.

The glass sphere emitted a glint in the darkness as it constantly changed directions and moved towards something in the air as though it was being attracted by something.

Finally, it landed in a room on the second floor of the restaurant.

A dazzling white light exploded. It was as if a “sun” had risen in the room, illuminating everything. It made all the corruption, decadence, evil, undeath, and darkness rapidly melt away.

“Eh…” Mistral, who had already closed his eyes, suddenly frowned and let out a puzzled voice.

He didn’t feel any resistance from that restaurant!

Sharron, who looked down from above, leveled her gaze. Although there wasn’t much of a change in her expression, her tightly bound blonde hair seemed to shake a little.

After the “sun” rose, it quickly “set.” The bright white light shone helplessly and silently in the darkness.

As this was an item that was targeted at evil spirits, the building in the restaurant didn’t suffer any damage. The Sanguine Earl, Mistral, opened his eyes and looked at it for two seconds before reaching up with his right hand and clenching it.

The darkness above the restaurant instantly came to life, transforming into illusory chains that bound the entire roof.

Amidst the jarring sounds, the roof was forcibly uprooted and suspended in midair.

Without this obstacle, be it Mistral or Sharron, they could clearly see the situation in the target’s room:

On a square table covered in table linen, a radio transceiver sat on it with a transcoded telegram message beside it. In contrast, the ground was indigo-blue and charred.

On the other side of the room, there was an old piano. The piano stools were brown in color and seemed to have been moved moments ago.

On the piano, there was a cup of red wine. There was a small, sticky, flesh-colored figure soaked inside.

As for the decorations and layout, it was like any normal residence. The only difference was herbal powder and essential oil extract splattered around.

This made Sharron, who could directly obtain information from the spirit world, have a thought:

The person here had just left!

Before she, along with Earl Mistral and Marquis Nibbs could react, the flesh-colored figure soaked in red wine emitted a misty glow.

The light instantly burgeoned and brightened, forming a gigantic “crimson moon” in the room.

The crimson moon’s glow dispersed the darkness of the region, making the demigod participating in the battle feel as though they were on the ground and looking up into the sky.

Sharron’s blue eyes froze for a moment. She raised her left hand suddenly and flipped it gently, revealing a dark red accessory in her palm.

The accessory looked like a full moon, and there were crimson gems embedded around it. In the center, there were symbols filled with full moons and mysterious labels.

This was the Scarlet Lunar Corona which Sharron had obtained thanks to Sherlock Moriarty’s help. It kept emanating a tranquil halo, imbuing the wielder with immunity to the effects of the full moon.

However, the “crimson moon” in the restaurant wasn’t something that was as simple as a full moon. It was even closer to a Blood Moon or even stronger. An indescribable surge of spirituality came into existence, making the area which Nibbs’s gigantic wings had isolated present a strange, deeply silent feeling. Even though Sharron wielded the Scarlet Lunar Corona, she sensed the maleficent thoughts in her burgeon as though an indescribable change was brewing.

She instinctively wanted to turn into an evil spirit and hide in objects like the trees and gas lamps along the streets. However, her rationality stopped her impulsive reaction because the crimson moon’s illumination had no blind spots.

At that moment, the Sanguine Earl, Mistral, saw his stomach bulging bit by bit. He felt that the life pulsing in his veins was slowly condensing as though making an attempt to take form.

As a supernatural creature that could use the power of the Moon, he hadn't prepared to eliminate the effects of a Blood Moon. He originally believed that he would be filled with joy in such an environment, allowing him to freely show his prowess, but he never expected the abnormal changes to far exceed his expectations.

He felt that if this continued, he would give birth to new life. It was unknown where this terrifying vileness stemmed from.

The authority of the Moon included fertility and proliferation!

At the same time, from the huge bat wings that isolated the surroundings and created darkness, white fur grew out in an extremely harrowing manner.

Nibbs grunted softly as cracks appeared in the sealed-off area.

A few streets away, a bored Emlyn White was rubbing the blue-gem inlaid Oath of Rose. It was at this moment, Emlyn suddenly obtained the senses of Earl Mistral, seeing and hearing what he could.

The feelings and thoughts that belonged to Earl Mistral were transmitted into Emlyn's mind after a long period of time. He sat up straight in fright. His expression distorted as his stomach churned, feeling the urge to vomit.

With the help of Creeping Hunger, Klein's actual body was hiding in the shadows outside the restaurant, but the marionette he controlled, Qonas Kilgor, had already hidden into the darkness created by Nibbs and used "Distortion" to circumvent the isolation, staying within range of his control of the Spirit Body Threads.

At that moment, under the illusory crimson moon's illumination, he was surprised to discover that his marionette, which was intrinsically dead, had an inclination towards reproducing!

And that new life was definitely the offspring of the Mother Tree of Desire!

Th-this is Sanguine Ancestor Lilith as mentioned in the legends of the City of Silver, as well as the manifestation of the Primordial Moon which Emlyn has mentioned before… Indeed, the Mother Tree of Desire has already grasped a portion of the Moon’s authority and has corrupted it into an especially evil state, far more than it originally was… Klein was just about to swap locations with his marionette and enter the region illuminated by the crimson moon and “Teleport” away with Miss Sharron when he felt an indescribable sense of joy within him.

It was the joy of seeing a flower in his garden slowly bloom after a long night amidst the morning fog. It was the joy from leaving the city and heading to the suburbs, taking in fresh air in a forest after the rain, watching mushrooms grow. It was the joy of seeing everything grow healthily with new life descending upon the world.

The white fur on the huge bat wings fell off completely as Earl Mistral’s protruding belly shrank back. The look in Sharron’s eyes, who struggled to hold on to Scarlet Lunar Corona, seemed to relax.

Right on the heels of that, the “crimson moon” in the restaurant quickly dimmed, as if large amounts of light had been sucked away by someone.

Finally, the “crimson moon” vanished and everything returned to normal.

Did Sanguine Duke Olmer take action? Klein nodded thoughtfully and continued hiding in the shadows.

Mistral restrained his anger and looked down at the dining room. He said in a low voice, “The target seems to have detected something ahead of time…”

“It wasn’t that much earlier.” Combining the present situation and the revelations obtained from the spirit world, Sharron gave her answer.

Mistral’s bright red eyes revealed a strange glint as he observed for a few seconds before saying, “It was almost at the moment we came over when the person left—the person who left behind the glass of red wine and the strange puppet.

“This trap doesn’t look like it was prepared. It’s closer to a last-minute setup…”

Upon saying that, Mistral looked at Sharon and said, “How did they detect danger in such a timely manner?”

Sharron’s expression was calm as she replied, “It’s not because of the Mother Tree of Desire.”

This evil god wasn’t capable of infusing too much energy into reality, making it difficult for “Her” to send any preemptive warnings.

Chapter 1060 - Covered-up Secret

◆

The Sanguine Earl, Mistral, frowned slightly. Although he was unwilling to admit it, he said rather honestly, “I don’t think there were any leaks prior to this.

Because if that was the case, the Rose School of Thought’s demigods would’ve had plenty of time to use the response from the Mother Tree of Desire and Abomination Suah, laying a more dangerous and terrifying trap. It wouldn’t be something an angel could easily resolve.

This was also the reason why Mistral had said that the trap appeared to be a last-minute setup and looked rather hasty.

This proved that there was no mole. After all, the ones who knew of the operation before tonight were the ones involved. If they wanted to leak the information, they could’ve done it earlier. This was unless someone changed their minds or wanted to use the urgency of time to obtain more benefits. And all of these would only leave clear traces.

The black-bonneted Sharron continued looking at the restaurant that had lost its roof. After a moment of silence, she said, “Perhaps it’s a way of detecting danger via other means.”

For this operation, the Sanguine had used a Sealed Artifact that could even disrupt a Devil’s danger premonition, much less, things like spiritual intuition.

“Possibly…” Mistral couldn’t think of a better explanation.

At that moment, in a room on the second floor of the restaurant, other than the red wine and strange figure evaporating, everything else remained untouched, as if nothing had happened.

Originally, Sharron and Mistral could attempt using divination to find answers to their questions and restore what had happened before the attack. But now, they couldn't do so because the surrounding area had been illuminated by the "crimson moon." It was equivalent to receiving the corresponding cleansing from the Mother Tree of Desire. This meant that divination easily led to this evil goddess, and the results would be unimaginable.

Without waiting for Sharron to speak, Mistral took a silent deep breath and said, "There are incidents in every matter. There's no such thing as a 100% success rate. Let's leave it here today. If we stay here any longer, the officials might discover something amiss."

As soon as he said that, the black chains hanging from the roof instantly turned dim and illusory.

The roof descended once again, covering the second floor of the restaurant and looking no different from what it was like before.

Of course, when the storm rained, there would definitely be water leaks. If there was a storm, the entire roof would be thrown up again.

The gigantic bat wings that blanketed the area shrank back into the darkness as the drizzle once again took center stage.

Hidden in the shadows, Klein watched as Miss Sharron's figure rapidly turned transparent and vanished. He saw an illusory cloud of smoke puffing up and countless tiny bats flying in every direction. He couldn't help but frown and silently mutter to himself:

What exactly happened…

It wasn't worrisome to have an accident. What was worrisome was not even knowing what the accident was. Regardless of what one's level was, the unknown was always frightening.

At that moment, he suddenly heard a staccato voice:

“What…” “Exactly…” “Happened…” “Here…”

When Klein turned his head, he realized that Miss Messenger had walked out of the spirit world at some point in time, standing alongside him.

The four blonde, red-eyed heads in “Her” hands were all trained at the restaurant.

“…Can you see what happened here earlier?” Klein asked hesitantly.

After the Mutant pathway reached the Wraith stage, the Beyonder was free to enter and exit the spirit world, allowing them to receive revelations from there directly. Be it their spiritual intuition or divination, they were rather formidable at that. A corresponding Sequence 2 angel was definitely powerful in such aspects; therefore, Klein posed the question.

The four heads held by Reinette Tinekerr shook as they said in unison, “No.”

Klein nodded thoughtfully. Without further questions, he controlled his marionette to leave the area.

Emlyn White, who had retched for a while, rubbed the ring that was embedded with a ghostly-blue gem. He muttered to himself in surprise, “It ended just like that…”

Through the Oath of Rose, he could sense Earl Mistral’s frustration, anger, and reluctance to vent his anger at a lady or others. His initial judgment was that the operation had failed because of an accident.

“It’s over?” Upon hearing his words, Marie was equally stunned.

He had actually wanted to ask Emlyn White the reason for his sudden nausea and grimace, but he had perfectly tempered his curiosity and restrained his urge.

“Th-they didn’t find the target…” Emlyn tried his best to recall what Earl Mistral had seen and heard, but due to the seal by Marquis Nibbs, he was only able to see the situation via Oath of Rose after the “crimson moon” rose. And these feelings were made ineffective quickly after the anomaly.

At the same time, Emlyn mumbled inwardly, The demigod from the temperance faction came here while possessing a doll?

Which master’s work is this… It’s simply art!

“Didn’t find the target? How can that be…” Marie’s brows furrowed uncontrollably.

From his point of view, everything in the operation had been going smoothly up till that point in time. Whether it was him, Sharron, or the Sanguine, none of them had the motives to leak the information to the Rose School of Thought.

As for Sherlock Moriarty, he had proven his credibility through numerous collaborations.

Suppressing his immense disappointment and puzzlement, Marie said without much change in expression, “Then we’ve to leave the vicinity as quickly as possible.”

As soon as he said that, his figure began to fade, revealing the qualities of a Wraith.

Emlyn subconsciously wanted to ask him if he knew of any doll masters, but after opening his mouth, he found that it was damaging to the image of the Sanguine. Therefore, he could only swallow his words back down.

Even if I know that master, I don’t have the money to buy it… To bear the burden of my mission, I have to sacrifice something… Unfortunately, we didn't capture the demigod of the Rose School of Thought this time, making it impossible to figure out the current situation of their headquarters. It'll be difficult to receive that holy artifact of the Ancestor… Amidst Emlyn's thoughts, his expression slowly turned grave.

Backlund Bridge area, Iron Gate Street, in one of the billiard rooms of the Bravehearts Bar.

Klein, in the image of Sherlock Moriarty, was sitting opposite Sharron and Marie.

After a brief moment of silence, the black regal dressed Sharron, who was seated on a high stool, said to the detective, "What are your thoughts on the matter?"

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "The influence that the crimson moon brought was quickly destroyed."

"What you mean to say is that since the Rose School of Thought's demigod had already sensed the immense danger through a certain method or a certain existence, why would he set up a trap that didn't have any effects?" Marie exchanged looks with Sharron before asking in thought.

"Yes." Klein nodded. "He should be able to foresee that under such dangerous circumstances, a trap at this level can be easily resolved. Then, why would he waste time setting it up and not flee immediately? This is the natural instinct of a living creature."

Wearing a small bonnet, Sharron moved her head indiscemibly.

"On the surface, it's a trap, but it's actually to cover up something?"

Klein replied, delivering the sentence at a slower pace, "Yes, using such a trap to 'cleanse' the scene and stop any divination to conceal the actual situation back then.

“Only if there’s a secret to hide would a demigod from the Rose School of Thought take the risk and stay on the scene for such a long period of time.”

“But it’s also possible that they didn’t expect us to have an angel from the Sanguine to help deal with the trap…” Marie suggested.

Klein smiled and said, “They wouldn’t ignore the angel behind you. For you to have launched a surgical strike on the concealed Rose School of Thought members in Backlund, you must have defectors who know them well.”

He was referring to the existence of Reinette Tinekerr.

“What secret would they need to cover up?” Sharron seemed to accept Klein’s suspicion as she sat upright and asked. Klein shook his head.

“There are too many possibilities. Perhaps they discovered the secret of the attack in time. Perhaps they were planning on plotting something in Backlund…”

Having said that, Klein tried to consider if the Rose School of Thought was associated with the current tense situation in Backlund, but he realized that there was no place for them. Be it the orthodox deities or the evil gods, they were unlikely to work with the Mother Tree of Desire.

This puzzled Klein even more. He didn’t know what kind of unknown accident such an unknown factor would brew.

He paused for a moment as he swept his gaze across Sharron’s and Marie’s faces.

“In short, we need to be careful and cautious. We need to avoid coming here as well.

“Yes, under the premise that you can ensure your own safety, try to monitor other members of the Rose School of Thought again and see if we can figure out the secret they're hiding."

"Thank you." Sharron's figure floated up and bowed.

Marie did the same.

The scarlet flames soared up as Klein vanished from his spot.

According to the agreement, as he didn't have the chance to take action, the only remuneration he received was one free instance of help from Reinette Tinekerr.

After returning to 160 Boklund Street, Klein took off his clothes and went to bed early, hoping to wake up early. Suddenly, he heard a series of illusory pleas.

It was from a woman.

Miss Justice… With a guess, he nodded and entered the bathroom. He took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

As he had expected, the supplicant was Justice Audrey. This lady had gathered 12,000 pounds in cash, hoping that Mr. Fool could transfer it to Mr. World to complete the transaction of the Dreamwalker and Hypnotist Beyonder characteristics.

Yes, if the ritual can be replaced by Angel's Embrace, Miss Justice can try to advance in the next two days. When that happens, it's time to place the exploration of Groselle's Travels in the schedule. Heh, Leonard has already become a Spirit Warlock for days and has nothing to do… Klein heaved a sigh of relief and replied to Miss Justice, getting her to begin the sacrifice.

With the current situation becoming more and more tense, with more and more unknown factors, he wished to strengthen himself as quickly as possible. This included many aspects—first, the increase in the number of marionettes and Sealed Artifacts; second, the recovery of his helpers; and thirdly, a further grasp of knowledge and secrets. This aided him in knowing the truth and obtaining the true attitude that the different factions have; thus, finding an opportunity from within.

The exploration of Groselle’s Travels corresponded to the third point.

Chapter 1061 - Whose Dream

Friday. In the dead of the night, in Audrey’s bedroom.

After receiving a signal, the golden retriever, Susie, opened the door and left by herself, slumping down outside to prevent anyone from disturbing Audrey.

Audrey took the Dreamwalker’s Beyonder characteristic, the corresponding supplementary ingredients, and the apparatus used for concocting the potion out from a hidden spot. Most of the supplementary ingredients came from the City of Silver, and they were things that she hadn’t paid for since Little Sun hadn’t thought of something he needed.

She concocted the potion skillfully and looked at the liquid that was dotted with darkened points of grayish-white light. She took a step back, clasped her hands, and placed them in front of her mouth as she chanted softly, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…”

Just as her prayer ended, countless figures in an indescribable form appeared in front of her.

They quickly swam and meshed with one another as though they were active in the sea. Above the sea were seven pure beams of differently-colored light that seemed to contain infinite knowledge.

Above these seven lustrous brilliances was an endless grayish-white fog. And above that was a towering and magnificent palace.

At that moment, the door to the palace opened as a figure formed from golden light spread out its twelve pairs of wings formed from scarlet flames and flew down, landing in front of Audrey.

The twelve pairs of fiery wings were layered as they wrapped the blonde, green-eyed girl into an embrace.

Such a scene only lasted for a second or two before vanishing. It was as if she was hallucinating, but Audrey always had the feeling of being immersed in this kind of holy and lofty feeling.

She calmed down and sincerely thanked Mr. Fool.

With Angel's Embrace, she could maintain lucidity in her dream and wake up whenever she needed to. She didn't have to worry about being engrossed in her dreams and being unable to extricate herself.

This meant that she had already held the corresponding ritual for Dreamwalker, and the effects were definitely better than what it could've been.

After all, not every Hypnotist can obtain such benediction from a hidden existence and be embraced by a special angel such as this… Audrey, all the best! Audrey mumbled inwardly before she stopped hesitating and picked up the glass bottle, drinking down the potion inside.

The potion wasn't as bad as she imagined it to be. It was a little sour, a little sweet, a little bitter, a little surreal, and a little stimulating. It was like a wild dream she could let herself loose in.

Before she could feel the effects that the potion exerted on her body, Audrey was suddenly startled before she regained consciousness.

She saw that the night was becoming dawn outside the window, with the sun rising from the horizon, dyeing the sky red.

Within the garden, flowers were blooming, the tips of the blades of green grass shimmering with crystalline dew.

It was as if Audrey had become the ruler of this world. Her consciousness floated up as she looked down upon the various scenes:

Her father and mother held hands as they strolled down the garden trail, taking in the fragrance as they bathed in the morning light;

Having worked through their differences, her two brothers, Hibbert and Alfred, rode on horses and brought servants along with them. Laughter accompanied them as they entered the woods, competing against each other for a more successful hunt;

The ambassadors or special representatives of the various countries like Feysac, Intis, and Feynapotter signed an agreement at Loen's Sodela Palace, announcing to the world that a war wouldn't happen; thus, dispersing all the dark clouds in the sky;

The smog situation in Backland improved. Every company's factory had passed the double review of the alkaline industry inspector and National Atmospheric Pollution Council, and they had promoted such standards to other countries;

Maximum working hours and the basic labor environments for workers were guaranteed, and the development of every industry was getting better. The number of tramps had dropped to an unimaginable level, and all kinds of protective measures spearheaded by the kingdom covered everyone;

There were more and more workers who could afford bicycles. On the streets, the bicycles clustered together like a huge army, driving in different directions amidst ringing sounds;

Children didn't need to work in factories at a young age. They could giggle and fool around, running into classrooms with tables and chairs. Inside, they flipped open their textbooks and began listening attentively. If they didn't wish to study, it was solely of their own choice, not because they lacked the conditions;

Women were no longer discriminated against due to their gender. Even a laundry maid could rely on studying to obtain knowledge and find better jobs. There were reporters, teachers, policewomen, soldiers, miners, and civil servants—seen in every walk of life;

All kinds of mechanical items appeared on the streets and alleys, bringing the people convenience and joy;

In the square in front of the Evernight cathedral, pigeons flew up and landed. People were either sitting or playing the accordion, fully enjoying their lives…

This was Audrey's dream for the future. Unaffiliated Beyonders didn't have to worry anymore. As long as they received a checkup of their physical mental condition, they could walk openly and use their Beyonder powers to earn money in a legal way.

This is really wonderful… If it weren't for me being clear-headed, I would've lost myself to this. I would've descended from my commanding position in my consciousness, taking a stroll with my parents, hunting with my brothers, and occasionally going to school to teach children… I would often work hard for the extension of the world's peace… Audrey stared at the dream, feeling a bout of poignancy.

She then felt her Astral Projection rise once again, breaking out of the confines of the hazy world.

She saw that her dream was like a huge bubble that grew out from the island of consciousness while silently enveloping it.

The "air bubble" was surrounded by a gray fog. From afar, she could vaguely see other "air bubbles," and below them were their corresponding islands of consciousness.

Deep within the gray fog was a silent, undulating, shimmering "wavy" illusory sea that seemed bottomless.

The sea of collective subconscious… This is the scene of a mind world for a Dreamwalker… Only from Manipulator onwards is one really able to interfere with the sea of collective subconscious… Audrey nodded in enlightenment and retracted her gaze. Without staying any longer, she forcefully escaped from her dream.

Her vision returned to normal immediately as it remained pitch-black outside. Only the street lamps around the garden were emitting light.

She then cast her gaze on the full-body mirror in her bedroom. She felt that she didn't seem too different from before. Only when she observed carefully did she realize that her pair of green eyes were becoming more limpid and deeper, as though they could reflect the souls of others.

Closing her eyes and taking in the knowledge brought by the potion, Audrey quickly grasped the core power of Dreamwalker.

By guiding and controlling a dream, she could obtain information and affect the enemy.

There were two aspects:

First was "Guidance," which was similar to Nightmare of the Evernight pathway, by using the different changes in a dream to guide a target into revealing one's deepest secrets. The difference was that a Nightmare could forcefully pull a person into a dream. However, Dreamwalkers weren't capable of doing so unless they were combined with "Hypnosis."

The second was "Alteration." By modifying a target's dream, one could influence a target over a long period of time, changing them and making them do things they wouldn't usually do without them realizing it. The principle behind such an "Alteration," used a dream as the incisive points and the Astral Projection as a point of leverage, slowing contaminating the target's Soul Body before affecting the Body of Heart and Mind, planting it deep in the subconscious. Compared to directly using Hypnosis, a control that stemmed from dreams was more mild and furtive, making it difficult to be noticed and suitable for targeting targets at a higher level.

From the looks of it, most matters that involve love at first sight might've had a few hidden cases that were a result of Dream Alteration… Yes, amongst many popular best-selling novels, the female lead often dreams of a figure and spends a beautiful, romantic time with him. Therefore, when they encounter the male lead who's similar to the figure in their dreams, they will quickly succumb to them and have a strong penchant for love. Hmm… Audrey recalled the novels she read in the past and suddenly found it amusing.

To her, be it "Guidance" or "Alteration," they weren't an essential enhancement over Hypnosis. Instead, there was another Beyonder power that she liked even more; it was "Dream Traversal."

This made her body turn incorporeal as if she was an elf in a dream or a Dreamwalker. Not only could she directly hide in someone else's dream, but she could also jump from a dream to another dream, completing a "Blink" in the physical sense.

The restriction of such traversals was that the distance between two dreams couldn't exceed 500 meters, and they had to belong to intelligent creatures.

In special environments, this can effectively hide myself… Hmm, why didn't Hvin Rambis directly affect me through "Dream Alteration"? Because this place is protected by the Church? The Evernight pathway is also skilled in the domain of dreams… Audrey thought as she began converging her spirituality.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Along the long bronze table, Klein sat a few seats diagonally across from Leonard.

"Why are you suddenly looking for me?" Leonard leaned back in his chair and asked lazily.

Regardless, he still remembered that this place belonged to Mr. Fool, so he didn't dare appear too casual.

Klein glanced at him and said, "I need your help with something."

"You need my help?" Leonard pointed at himself and asked in surprise, "Are you referring to Pallez?"

He didn't think he could help a demigod like Klein.

"You have a very clear understanding of yourself," Klein tsked. "However, I'm really looking for you this time. It mainly involves a few dreams."

Dreams… Leonard came to a realization as he said with a hint of puzzlement and laughter, "Klein, you seem to have changed a little. I mean, you've become more like the past, no longer wearing that gloomy expression."

Without waiting for a reply, he straightened his disheveled hair and smiled.

"That's a good thing. Well, I'm still quite good at dreams. Who do the dreams belong to?"

Without batting an eyelid, Klein replied, "A Loen soldier from more than a hundred years ago, a Fourth Epoch aristocrat, an ascetic from the Third Epoch, and an elf and giant from the Second Epoch."

"What?" Leonard asked with his green eyes wearing a blank look, wondering if he had heard wrongly.

Ignoring the elves and giants from the Second Epoch, even the nobles of the Fourth Epoch had to be from particular Beyonder pathways and to have become saints before they could survive to this day!

It can’t be that they’re all angels aside from that Loen soldier, right? Entering the dream of angels… I think it’s better to find Old Man… Leonard’s thoughts churned instantly as though he was in a dream.

Chapter 1062 - “Teaching” Online

◆

Klein glanced at Leonard and smiled.

“The targets aren’t demigods. They’ve only ‘lived’ to this day due to some sort of influence. This is also the secret I wish to discover through dreams.”

He deliberately emphasized the word “lived.”

Without waiting for Leonard to respond, Klein continued, “The aristocrat from the Fourth Epoch is a member of the Zoroast family. You might be able to use his dream to learn more about Pallez Zoroast.”

Old Man’s descendant… Leonard’s heart stirred as he looked forward to the proposal that Klein raised.

Although he had gotten along rather well with Pallez Zoroast and gradually built some trust in this angel, he still held the most basic level of vigilance against him. After all, “He” was an outsider who lived in his body.

At that moment, Klein added, “For now, don’t mention this matter to Pallez Zoroast.”

Do you think I’m such an unreliable person? Leonard grumbled inwardly as he replied, “There’s no need to remind me.”

Seeing that Leonard had agreed, Klein smiled and said, “Get me a few drops of your blood when you return. This is necessary to explore the dreams.”

He didn't specifically mention how to give the blood to him. After all, Leonard knew at least two methods. Firstly, he could sacrifice it to Mr. Fool and request that "He" bestow it to The World. The other was to summon the messenger of mysterious origins and place the blood inside a bottle, sending it over with a letter.

"Blood…" Leonard subconsciously repeated the word.

In mysticism, one's blood was an important item. It was best not to give one's blood to others; otherwise, they might die without knowing the reason. Sometimes, death wasn't the most terrifying outcome that could happen.

After a brief moment of hesitation, Leonard nodded.

"When will the exploration begin?"

Klein was prepared for this question as he replied, "Late Sunday night, close to midnight."

He wanted to give Miss Justice time to converge her spirituality and familiarize herself with her abilities.

"Alright." Leonard didn't say anything else.

Following that, Klein seriously explained skills in sophistry so that the dear poet knew how to pacify his grandpa after returning.

After returning to the real world, Leonard was deliberating over his words when he heard Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice:

"Why did your former colleague look for you? Is there anything that cannot be explained in a letter?"

Leonard adjusted his sitting posture and chuckled.

"He's afraid that the letter will be leaked. After all, it might involve that person."

Just as he finished his sentence, Leonard inwardly mumbled, Of course, the most important thing is to be wary of you. What I see is equivalent to what you see…

“That person…” Pallez Zoroast seemed to understand who he was referring to.

Yeah.” Leonard picked up a cup on the table and drank a mouthful of malt beer. “He found an ascetic from the Third Epoch. He hopes to learn the history of that epoch through his dream.”

What Leonard said was the truth, but it was only a portion of the truth. This was the skill that Klein had specially taught him.

“An ascetic from the Third Epoch? He’s still alive?” Pallez Zoroast asked in surprise.

Of course, “He” wasn’t too surprised. After all, at “His” level, even if “He” didn’t grasp a hundred methods that allowed people to live from the Third Epoch, “He” knew at least five or six methods. The easiest way was to steal the time or life of others to imbue it into a target.

“He’s likely still alive, but has a very special condition,” Leonard explained what he knew.

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for two seconds before saying with a chuckle, “Is that so? Then I can only wish you the best in not seeing scenes you shouldn’t see in the dream. Of course, your former colleague is protected by an existence of Concealment, so he must be prepared.”

Leonard didn’t respond to the topic. He suddenly exclaimed, “Old man, are you actually not the least bit curious? Don’t you want to know what the true deities were like in the Third Epoch, or the cause of the Cataclysm?”

This was the second technique in sophistry that Klein taught him. Rather than being asked, it was better to take the initiative to ask questions.

“I can roughly guess what’s going on,” Pallez Zoroast replied with a sigh. He then scoffed. “You took too much initiative to control the flow of our conversation today. This is very different from your past behavior. This means that you have a secret you’re hiding deep down. Not bad, it’s much better than the past. At least it’s not something that can be seen through at once.”

Leonard’s expression froze.

Pallez immediately chuckled.

“See, I just gave it a try and you exposed yourself. You still lack training.

Your former colleague is really… Tsk…”

Leonard could only respond with a dry chuckle. He put down his cup and leaned forward. He then picked up a silver ritual dagger and cut open a wound, causing a few drops of blood to drip out.

Meanwhile at Earl Hall’s residence, Audrey was also holding a dagger with gems embedded in it. She was preparing to fulfill the promise of providing help for free. She moved the tip of the dagger towards the back of her hand.

“The pain is very mild…

The pain is very mild…” As she hypnotized herself, she exerted force and tore open a wound.

It was currently impossible to tear her skin without using strength, even if she didn’t reveal her dragon scales.

On Sunday night, after attending a ball, Klein returned to 160 Boklund Street. He made up an excuse that he was feeling tired and needed to sleep early.

In the wee hours of the night, he got out of bed, set up a ritual, and summoned himself.

After some work, he sat in the seat that belonged to The World Gehrman Sparrow. He confirmed that once the summoning ended, he could use the gray fog's level and standing to forcefully extricate himself from Groselle's Travels.

At that moment, in front of him were three metal bottles and a silver mask.

The former was filled with his, Leonard's, and Audrey's blood, while the latter was sacrificed by Miss Justice ahead of time. As she knew that Mr. Star would be involved in the exploration of the dream this time, she planned on wearing Lie the entire time to mask her face and avoid her identity from being uncovered.

After examining it for a while, Klein made the hard-covered, deep-brown Groselle's Travels to fly out of the junk pile and land on the long bronze table. At the same time, he placed the Unshadowed Crucifix into his body.

Following that, he pulled Justice Audrey and The Star Leonard above the gray fog.

Two dark red beams shot up at the same time, forming rather blurry figures.

Audrey and Leonard cast their gazes at the bottom of the long, mottled table and sized up the items in front of Mr. World.

Then, their attention was drawn to the ancient book.

Audrey's eyes darted around as she curiously asked, "Our exploration this time is related to this book?"

Yes, our targets are inside this book," Klein replied with a smile.

"Inside the book?" Leonard asked in surprise.

Even though he was a Red Glove, and had also read a large number of supernatural case files, he had never heard of communicating with characters in a book.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Yes, this is a magical book. Inside it, there is a world that was ‘envisioned.’ What happens in that world becomes the book’s contents.”

“Envisioned?” Audrey acutely grasped a key phrase, linking it to its synonyms.

She had only just learned a few days ago from Mr. World that the Spectator pathway’s Sequence 0 was called Visionary, and she knew very well that the King of Dragons, the ancient god, Ankewelt, was the Dragon of Imagination.

After some deliberation, Klein said, “My description might not be accurate. It might be an ‘envisioned’ world or a true dream. The only thing I can confirm is that it was created by an ancient god from the Second Epoch, the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt. I obtained it from Vice Admiral Iceberg.”

Ancient god’s relic… It’s no wonder that it can make a giant and elf from the Second Epoch, a Third Epoch ascetic, a Fourth Epoch human aristocrat, and Fifth Epoch Loenese soldier survive till now… Leonard came to a realization as he couldn’t help but size up The World Gehrman Sparrow. He couldn’t imagine what kind of experiences Klein had ever since he left Tingen.

At this moment, Klein looked around and pushed the Lie mask to Miss Justice as he said, “Let’s head on in.”

“Alright.” Audrey put on the silver mask.

Leonard looked around and nodded.

“Okay.”

Klein immediately picked up the three metal bottles and poured out some of the blood inside, smearing it on the cover of Groselle's Travels.

So this is what the blood was for… Just as this thought flashed through Audrey's mind, she saw a white snowy storm.

Amidst snowflakes the size of down feathers and a biting cold wind, a city that was more than 15 meters tall stood nearby. A soldier wearing leather armor on-guard by the gates was huddled in a spot that was immune to the wind and snow. As long as there weren't any merchant convoys, he wouldn't head forward to block any ordinary pedestrians.

"This… This is a world that was completely 'envisioned'… It's like it's real." Leonard looked around as he spread out his palm and caught several snowflakes. He felt the coldness of its touch before they quickly melted into water.

After confirming the environment, Leonard suddenly realized something. Klein was maintaining the image of the cold and refined Gehrman Sparrow. Miss Justice wore a silver mask, revealing the bottom of her face, green eyes, and blonde hair, making it impossible to imagine her actual appearance.

As for himself, he didn't disguise himself at all…

This was a habit of official Beyonders. They openly carried out missions without any disguises.

Mr. Star really is laid-back, and his hair is combed very casually. It's such a pity. Otherwise, with his looks, he can be a model on the covers of magazines… As a noble lady who had seen too many handsome men, Audrey politely glanced at him before retracting her gaze without making any excessive observations.

Klein chuckled inwardly and pointed at the city in the snowstorm.

"Our first target is the ascetic, Mr. Snowman, from the Third Epoch."

This was the person most likely to have a link to Amon and "His" brother!

According to Klein's plan, after Snowman would be the fourth-generation aristocrat, Mobet. This was because Giant Groselle and Elf Siatas involved matters at much higher levels, and there was a high chance of there being an accident. Therefore, it was safer leaving them at the end of the schedule.

After the exploration of the four people's subconscious via their dreams, they would then enter the sea of collective subconscious in search of any possible secrets.

Chapter 1063 - The Lord's Left-Hand

◆◆◆

In a rather remote spot in Pessote City, there was a building made of stone. It looked rough and was a cathedral that needed some construction work.

The most eye-catching and intricate part was the altar. Erected over it was a wooden cross and a tall figure carrying the cross.

Ascetic Snowman was sitting in the first pew, facing the divine statue, his head bowed and his eyes closed in focused supplication.

He was a middle-aged man who wasn’t considered old but had some wrinkles. He was wearing a simple white robe that had been washed countless times. He had brown short hair, and on his exposed arms, shoulders, calves, and feet, there were all kinds of old scars and scabs.

At that moment, two men and a woman appeared at the cathedral entrance. The men were dressed in black robes that were completely different from the surroundings. One was wearing a vest and half top hat with a formal bow tie, and the other casually wore a white shirt. The former had a pronounced outline with a cold expression, while the latter had black hair and green eyes. He looked pretty good, exuding the romantic air of a poet.

[image]

The lady was wearing a long white dress that was tight at the waist with frilly designs at the sleeves. Lacy flowers were sewn in a meshed manner at her chest. She wore an intricate silver mask, revealing a pair of emerald-like eyes, her high nose, her lip glossed-lips, and lower half of her face. It prompted anyone who laid their eyes on her to imagine how beautiful her actual appearance was.

They were extremely attractive. It was the same regardless of the angle one took. However, the passers-by, and few members of the congregation, and the praying ascetic didn’t even give them a look, completely ignoring them.

This was a combination of Hallucination and Psychological Invisibility.

Audrey was already in operation-mode, no longer showing any curiosity. She swept her gaze and said in a gentle voice, “What’s most important now is to get Mr. Snowman to sleep; otherwise, we’ll have to wait until tonight.”

The night in this world.

“Relax. It’s trivial,” Leonard replied with a smile.

Compared to Miss Justice, who had only experienced a few supernatural incidents, as a Nighthawk, he was already too used to such things. He was very composed and even wanted to joke with Klein.

Of course, he didn’t know that Miss Justice had recently hypnotized a demigod.

Klein glanced at his former teammate.

“Then let’s begin.”

He was “carrying” Unshadowed Crucifix on him, and in less than three hours, he would be dropped back to Sequence 5 and have his Bizarro Sorcerer Beyonder characteristic purged, so he naturally didn’t want to waste any time.

He’s back in his crazy adventurer state again. Tsk… Leonard didn’t beat around the bush. He raised his hand to neaten up his hair as his green eyes suddenly turned deep.

Silently, the praying ascetic, Snowman, had fallen into a deep sleep.

This is the Beyonder power of a Nightmare… Looking at this scene with sparkling eyes, Audrey thoughtfully muttered to herself.

In fact, she was aware of the powers of a Nightmare, having seen them in action before -back when they were dealing with the Sanguine Viscount, Ernes Boyar. However, she was unable to grasp the full picture of it due to the urgency of the situation. It was only now that she made a complete observation of it.

Right on the heels of that, she raised both her hands and grabbed the arms of The World and The Star. Using her abilities of Dreamwalker, she led them into Snowman's dreamscape.

"I can do it myself…" Leonard mumbled the moment he entered the hazy world.

Klein and Audrey ignored him and quickly surveyed the area, taking in the entirety of Snowman's dreamscape.

They were also inside a cathedral, an unusually majestic cathedral.

Ancient stone pillars propped up a towering dome, but they didn't make the hall appear too segmented and cramped. It still remained extremely spacious.

The cathedral's door was wide and tall, even for giants. Lined on both sides were candles placed in silver cups that emitted a warm glow.

The altar right in front was grand and magnificent. Above them were grayish-white crosses and a sculpture of God bearing the cross.

The statue's face wasn't very clear, but it felt like it was showing pity towards all beings in the world.

Snowman was similarly sitting in the first pew facing the holy altar. His head was bowed and his eyes closed in focused supplication.

"This is similar to the Afternoon Town's abandoned cathedral that Little Sun showed to us. It should be a building from the same era," Audrey swept her gaze across the brick arches and whispered.

At the same time, she tried to suppress her curiosity and told herself to remain calm.

Little Sun? How is he "little"? That fellow is clearly taller and larger than me… Afternoon Town's abandoned cathedral… Leonard thought in puzzlement as he lampooned.

When he joined the Tarot Club, The Sun Derrick had long returned to the City of Silver. Although he would occasionally mention the exploration of the Giant King's Court, he didn't conjure any of the corresponding images.

"Indeed." Klein retracted his gaze and agreed with Miss Justice. Then, he said to her, "Try to guide Snowman's dream and get him to reveal the important information in his subconscious. Focus it on the Kings of Angels."

This mission could be accomplished by both a Nightmare and Dreamwalker. The reason why he had Miss Justice do it was because he wanted to give her a chance to digest the Dream walker potion. After all, Leonard had already passed that stage. And no matter what, in matters that involved the subconscious, Beyonders of the Spectator pathway were definitely more professional. The way they carried it out would be more precise and effective.

It was only then that Leonard realized a problem:

Miss Justice's abilities involve the domain of dreams…

This meant that she had already advanced to Sequence 5 Dreamwalker!

Isn't that too fast? Leonard was secretly surprised and in disbelief.

He remembered that Miss Justice had mentioned it during their exchange when he joined the Tarot club. It hadn't even been a month since she became a Hypnotist, and now, only three months had passed.

She had indeed tried to purchase the ingredients needed for her advancement at the Tarot Gathering, but to completely digest the Hypnotist potion in four months is shocking enough… Leonard's mind raced as he had a baffling feeling that the pride of becoming a Red Gloves captain, a quasi-high-ranking member of the Church, a Sequence 5 Spirit Warlock was gone.

While his thoughts were running wild, Audrey tersely acknowledged the request and took a few steps forward to stand beside Snowman.

Illusory ripples suddenly appeared in her jewel-like eyes. Those ripples constantly sank deep into the depths, returning to the darkness and tranquility.

Invisible ripples emanated out as the altar in front of the cathedral suddenly turned blurry.

These magnificent objects, along with the cross and the divine statue, warped and suddenly unfurled, emitting lights and shadows that weren't considered too intense.

The light and shadows intertwined into a three-dimensional portrait of a towering mountain range. The main peak reached high into the clouds, but the white cloud didn't dare to conceal the main peak as it automatically separated around the peak's two sides.

On the peak of the mountain stood a huge cross that was even taller than the mountain. In front of it stood a majestic figure that was covered in layers of stacked halos.

Two-winged, four-winged, and six-winged angels were either holding bugles, playing the harp, or playing flutes, dancing around the majestic figure as they sang and extolled.

Eight blurry figures with twelve pairs of wings surrounded the majestic deity. Some fell to the ground beside “His” feet, leaning against “Him” as if completely relying on “Him.” Others floated on both sides, awaiting “His” orders.

[image]

This was a scene that Klein had seen before. He knew that the deity was the ancient sun god, and he knew that the figures with twelve pairs of wings on their backs were the Kings of Angels.

At that moment, Snowman opened his eyes and looked at Justice Audrey. As if teaching his student, he solemnly said, “Only the Holy Spirit can truly serve the Lord. This is the goal I’ve been chasing my entire life…

“I see the Lord standing above the infinite radiance, benevolence scattering over ‘His’ kingdom and the land. Around him are eight ‘Kings.’

“The Dark Angel was the first angel created by the Lord. ‘He’ is ‘His’ left hand, ‘His’ proxy and the deputy of Heaven;

“The Angel of Imagination is the Lord’s eldest son. The Lord said that in a distant future, you will become the savior of all life;

“The Angel of Time is the Lord’s second son. The Lord said that you are a God of Trickery and a God of Mischief, the light at the dawn of the apocalypse;

“The White Angel, Wind Angel, and Angel of Fate are loyal followers of the Lord-firm, brave, honest, having been that way from the time when ‘They’ were weak till ‘They’ became strong.

“The Wisdom Angel was sanctified due to ‘His’ redemption from being penitent and contrite, completely opposite from the ones who fell after eating the fruit of sin;

"The War Angel is the Lord's rage, the Lord's punishment. 'His' appearance over the land means war is at hand…"

From the looks of it, this ascetic has never been to the ancient sun god's divine kingdom, nor has he ever seen a King of Angel. What he's describing is probably from religious canon… In other words, what he says is what the official text says… From the looks of it, Dark Angel Sasrir was really the leader of the Kings of Angels. "He" was most trusted by the ancient sun god and was called the deputy of Heaven. Yet, such an existence was-hmm, bewitched… I wonder what "His" outcome was in the end, and why there aren't any traces of "Him" to date… Klein seriously listened to Snowman's description and had a clearer understanding of the Kings of Angels.

He never expected that the ancient sun god would predict that Adam would be the savior. This left him somewhat puzzled.

So these are all the eight Kings of Angels… Leonard listened attentively as well. This was something that Old Man Pallez hadn't told him in detail before. It was a real secret from ancient times, something that happened before the Cataclysm.

Audrey had seen the mural of the three Kings of Angels eating the City of Silver Creator. Through the corresponding images, she had matched them to the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, so she wasn't too surprised. She turned her head and looked at The World and The Star, calmly interpreting the hidden meaning behind those sentences.

"According to what Mr. Snowman said, the Dark Angel was created. The three Kings of Angels-White, Wind, and Fate—had followed the ancient sun god from a weak stage until they slowly empowered themselves. Hmm, the weak stage here probably refers to Sequence 4… The Wisdom Angel should be an outsider who joined later, and 'He' might've been from an opposing faction in the beginning…"

When he heard Miss Justice's words, Klein suddenly remembered a name. It was the Dragon of Wisdom as mentioned in the City of Silver's myths-Herabergen.

He then nodded, indicating for Miss Justice to continue.

After Snowman recited some related scriptures, he suddenly solemnly said, "Our diocese has cultists who believe in the Evernight hiding within it!

"These are the orders from the Kings."

Chapter 1064 - Drawing Closer

◆

Cultists who believe in the Evernight… Upon hearing Snowman's words, the three present were more or less thrown into an awkward situation.

Klein, Audrey, and Leonard all had a certain relationship with the Evernight Goddess. One was a standard cultist who believed in the Evernight. The other wasn't only a cultist, but a quasi-high-ranking member of the cult, an elite team leader. The other was even worse—a Blessed of the evil goddess.

"Ahem… From the looks of it, the Church of Evernight appeared earlier than what the historical records stated. They can be traced back to a long time before the Cataclysm; however, it existed in the form of a secret organization." Klein cleared his throat and did a simple analysis, breaking the sudden silent mood.

Audrey pursed her lips and nodded. She continued guiding Snowman's dreams, letting him reveal the information related to the King of Angels in his subconscious.

Unfortunately, Snowman was only a Sequence 5 ascetic. He would be considered a quasi-High-Ranking member in the Fifth Epoch and would be able to come into contact with several important figures and historical secrets. However, before the Cataclysm, a Sequence 5 didn't enjoy such a status. He wasn't even able to enter the divine kingdom, so he naturally knew little about the Kings of Angels and the ancient sun god. What he knew was limited to what was written in the various religious canons.

However, Klein keenly noticed that he had mentioned something.

There were traces of the remnant giants in the Northern Ridge mountain range.

This mountain range's present name was Antares, and it was located within Feysac. It made it easy for him to associate this information with the people of Feysac claiming to be descendants of giants, how the God of Combat was a giant, and other information.

Seeing that there was no connection to the Kings of Angels, Audrey switched to guiding Snowman's dream into presenting what was most important and influential to him.

The majestic cathedral they were standing in began to shake as changes silently happened.

In just a few seconds, the cathedral's scale shrank. Outside was a square that had been renovated.

Snowman knelt in front of the cross and divine statue, his body bathed in pure sunlight.

A blurry figure in simple priest robes appeared beside him, speaking with a loud and solemn tone: “Are you willing to choose the path of an ascetic, to give up love, to distance yourself from indulgence, to not wield power, to train your mind, and to temper your mind, allowing you to approach our Lord by entering Heaven one step at a time?”

Snowman devotedly kissed the ground and said, “I'm willing to choose the path of the ascetic. I'll give up love, distance myself from indulgence, not wield power, train my mind, and to serve the Lord. It will be so forever and ever from this day forth.

“It will be so forever and ever from this day forth!”

The more Snowman spoke, the more resolute he became. In the end, he solemnly repeated his promise.

"…This is the one thing that left the deepest impression on him and has resulted in the deepest effects on him." Audrey turned her head and said to The World and The Star.

Thinking back on Snowman's past performance and recalling how he never gave up on his beliefs, nor stop his ascetic training despite being stuck in the book world, Klein nodded gently and sighed.

"He is a true ascetic."

Audrey retracted her gaze, and after guiding Snowman to present something that was more important to him, she returned to The World and The Star and said in a gentle voice, "There shouldn't be much left."

Klein glanced at Snowman and said, "Let's go to the next spot."

Inside a house in Pessote City.

Mobet, with his brownish-yellow hair, dark brown eyes, high nose bridge, and thin lips, was wearing slightly furry pajamas. He laid on a bed that was half high and half low, as he stared at the ceiling, muttering to himself, "Winter year is much colder than usual. It's starting to snow…

"Although it's almost noon, I don't want to get up at all…

"Siatas, why does an elf like you insist on sleeping in? You even pressed your hands and feet on me…

"I really miss being single. I could roll around freely in bed. Every comer will be mine, unlike now, sigh…"

On the bed, Elven Songster Siatas leaned her body sideways while sleeping comfortably. Not only did she occupy nearly half of the bed, but she also left a large amount of space on her side as her body clung close to Mobet. She left one arm and leg on him, squeezing Mobet to a corner of the bed, almost to the point of falling off.

After pulling up the blanket that was pinned down, Mobet sighed and closed his eyes, preparing to sleep again.

Then, he really fell asleep.

In his dream, he sat at the bar counter, alternating between sipping hard liquor and gulping down beers. He didn't return home as he claimed he would wait for Siatas to come begging him to return.

"Is this the aristocrat from the Fourth Epoch?" At the entrance of the tavern, Leonard glanced at Klein.

Klein gave a clear answer:

"That's right."

Hmm, Mr. Star's tone and actions suggest that he's more nervous than before… He seems to care a lot about this aristocrat from the Fourth Epoch… According to the information given by Mr. World, a certain person that Mr. Star knows might've seen the second Blasphemy Slate, and that's an extremely ancient divine artifact… Although I can't eliminate the possibility of seeing it in the Fifth Epoch, powerhouses of the Fourth Epoch are more likely to have a chance of coming into contact with such matters…So, this aristocrat from the Fourth Epoch is related to the person Mr. Star knows? Audrey grasped certain matters through fine observation and interpretation.

With this as a premise, she quickly came to a conclusion:

Mr. Star would step forward and suggest that he would guide the dream.

"As expected, the Fourth Epoch revered asymmetrical beauty, but such attire really made me uncomfortable." Leonard teased before looking at Miss Justice and The World Klein Moretti, "Let me do it this time."

“Alright,” Audrey replied with a brisk tone and smile.

This was a development that Klein was happy to see. He naturally wouldn’t stop it.

“That wouldn’t be an issue.”

Leonard then tugged at his collar and walked to the bar counter in a few steps. He sat beside Mobet and ordered a local Sangen beer.

He gulped and suddenly said, “You look like a member of the Zoroast family.”

“Everyone here knows that. No, not just humans.” Mobet took a sip of his alcohol and continued looking forward. Leonard smiled and shook his head.

“Let me introduce myself. I’m a student of Pallez Zoroast.”

He planned to use this identity to pull strings and reduce any sense of reluctance Mobet would have, making it easier for him to continue guiding him.

Indeed, the person Mr. Star knows is also a Fourth Epoch aristocrat, a member of the Zoroast family… I wonder what level that person is… So Mr. Star is secretly a student of a certain important figure. No… He said that without complete confidence… A self-assumed student? Audrey validated her guess as her smile became more obvious.

After hearing Leonard’s self-introduction, Mobet finally turned his head and sized him up. He scoffed and said, “Student?”

“More like the target of Parasitizing, right?”

Leonard’s expression froze.

Target of Parasitizing… Uh… Although Audrey was mentally prepared, she couldn’t help but twitch her eyebrows.

As for Klein, he had a hard time holding back his laughter.

Of course, he didn't believe that there was anything wrong with Leonard's identity as a student of Pallez Zoroast. If it were him, he would've said the same thing. It just wasn't right to directly mention that he was a Parasite's victim, right? And being friends appeared too distant, a disadvantage for any subsequent attempts to learn more.

The problem this time was that nobody expected Mobet to guess the truth.

After laughing twice, Mobet looked at Leonard's slightly stiff face and said, "You aren't a member of our Zoroast family, so how can you become Old Man's student? You can only be a target of Parasitizing!"

Having said that, he slowed down and said, "Don't worry. Old Man isn't too bad. He wouldn't really take over your body. After the Parasitizing is done, he will at most take away a few years of your life. You're still young anyway, so raising your Sequence would make up for it. Heh heh. Actually, most Beyonders can't live till the end of their natural lifespan."

"Why must he take a few years of my life?" Leonard subconsciously asked.

Mobet raised his glass and gulped down a mouthful. He replied in a daze, "Since you've already been Parasitized, something must be stolen, right…"

Leonard snapped out of his daze and asked in surprise, "You also call 'Him' Old Man?"

"Of course, we all call him 'Old Man.' Heh Heh. 'He' doesn't seem to object to it." Mobet suddenly sighed. "'He' is my great-grandfather, and I haven't seen him for a thousand years—no, 2,000 years…"

So the reason why Old Man tolerates me calling him Old Man is because it can remind "Him" of the beautiful past… I wonder if "His" direct descendants are still alive… Leonard suddenly felt wistful.

As for Justice Audrey, while she was finding the words “something must be stolen” funny, she was surprised at the word “He.”

This represented that Old Man, Mr. Pallez Zoroast, was an angel!

Indeed… Audrey had expected this.

At this moment, Mobet sharply noticed a keyword and asked, “Also? Why did you say ‘also’? Do you also call ‘Him’ Old Man?”

Leonard nodded seriously.

Mobet was instantly puzzled as he sized up Leonard again.

“Don’t tell me you have the bloodline of the Zoroast family?”

“I don’t know…” Leonard answered honestly.

Mobet shook his head.

“No, it doesn’t look like that’s the case. It might be that Old Man suffered a terrible blow and has changed to a certain degree.”

That I know… Leonard pondered and said, “He was nearly killed by Blasphemer Amon. He hasn’t recovered yet.”

Groselle’s Travels was currently above the gray fog. It didn’t matter which deity’s true name was mentioned in it, since it wouldn’t be sensed; therefore. Klein, Leonard, and Audrey were free to talk about Amon and Adam.

“The powerful and terrifying ancestor of the Amon family…” Mobet’s voice unconsciously lowered.

Leonard finally gained the initiative and asked, “The aristocrats of the Solomon empire are all very cold and evil. Why isn’t the Zoroast family like that?”

Chapter 1065 - Cosmos Wanderer

◆ ◆ ◆

Mobet glanced at Leonard and said in puzzlement, “They aren’t that cold and evil…”

He raised his glass and took a gulp.

“Don’t you know that the higher the Sequence, the greater the inclination is towards being cold and crazy? Which major aristocratic family in the Solomon Empire doesn’t have an angel? That’s why they’re definitely different from normal people.

“As for the degree of coldness and evilness, it has to do with the choice of their ‘anchor’ and the traits of their Beyonder pathway. I don’t know what my great-grandfather’s situation is. I only know that he’s very kind and amiable, and the way he speaks and acts is rather casual.

“In addition, the rules set by His Majesty have a key point-disharmony. If all the aristocratic families have the same style, ’He definitely wouldn’t be satisfied.”

The first reason given was something I expected, but the second reason is a little unexpected, but it’s quite funny… Was the Black Emperor of the Solomon Empire trying to get ‘Himself’ diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder? Disharmony is actually a requirement… Without wearing too thick a mask, the corners of Klein’s lips curled up slightly.

At this moment, Audrey turned her head to look at him and asked the same question that she had as Mr. Star, “Anchor?”

All of them knew that the aesthetic taste of the Fourth Epoch was disharmony and asymmetry and had considered it common sense, so they didn't think too deeply about why there was such an aesthetic style.

"To the deities, believers and faith are an anchor," Klein simply explained.

So that's the case… Mr. Fool also said that it's to stabilize one's condition… Audrey felt her sights broaden, allowing her to consider the relationship between the deities and believers.

At the same time, she thought in puzzlement, In the early stages of Mr. Fool's reawakening, "He" shouldn't have many believers. Back then, what was "His" anchor?

Leonard listened attentively as he couldn't help his expression from turning solemn. It was as though he had suddenly thought of many things.

He quickly focused his attention on Mobet. After some deliberation, he said, "What kind of an angel is Pallez Zoroast? What kind of habits does 'He' have?"

Hmm, Leonard is still very cautious. He still hasn't fully believed that the grandpa in his body is Pallez Zoroast. Yes, we can't rule out the possibility that the real Pallez has fallen, and that the one still alive is an imposter. To an angel of the Marauder pathway, such an action is rather normal… And to a secret existence, replacing a particular identity is equivalent to possessing that identity, so "He" wouldn't deliberately expose the truth…

Heh heh, on more important matters, matters that he's interested in, and those that involve his safety, Leonard is more reliable than I expected. If not for that, he wouldn't have realized that I was still alive back then… As for other matters, he's just too, too half-hearted. He's too used to using his past experience. It's not that he isn't intelligent, but rather that he can't be bothered to use it… Klein couldn't help but sigh.

Mobet was taken aback for two seconds before he drank a mouthful of hard liquor and said, "Old Man appears to be an ordinary elder at home. He's a bit naggy and likes to throw blows at his descendants, and enjoys life. If one didn't know it ahead of time, no one would've guessed that 'He' is a Sequence 1 angel."'His' aesthetic style is different from His Majesty. 'He' is absorbed over categories and emphasizes cleanliness and tidiness… When facing enemies, 'He' is good at trickery and often likes to finish off 'His' enemies by making them break down…"

This is quite similar to how Old Man has acted to date… Leonard nodded and asked, "Do you have 'His' portrait?"

"How could I be carrying a portrait with me? It's not like I'm looking for anyone!" Mobet shook his head in amusement.

At this point, Leonard suddenly pointed to the side.

"Isn't that it!"

"Ah?" Mobet turned his head in confusion and doubt, only to discover that an oil painting had appeared in his right hand at some point in time.

As he picked up the oil painting, the content on it gradually became clearer, revealing an old man with dark brown eyes.

The man's hair was already completely white. It wasn't very sparse, and it was neatly combed to the back of his head. His forehead, the corners of his eyes, and the corners of his mouth didn't seem to have any wrinkles, not appearing too old.

It was obvious that he looked quite good when he was young. He looked quite similar to Mobet, but he exuded a rather solemn air.

I really can't tell that this is a Sequence 1 angel… Is this also because "He" didn't reveal "His" Mythical Creature form? Audrey tiptoed and looked at the oil painting.

After Leonard memorized the contents of the portrait, he mentioned a few relevant questions related to the Zoroast family and received a satisfactory answer. The only exception was the name of the potion names of Sequence 3 to 0. Mobet wasn't too sure either; all he knew was that Sequence 1 was apparently Worm of Time.

After ending this topic, Leonard asked about the Solomon Empire:

"In your era, what major aristocratic families are there in the Empire?"

"There weren't many families with dukes." Mobet put down his cup and spread out his palm. "Our Zoroast family, the Abraham family, the Zaratul family. In addition, although the Medici family and Lord Ouroboros didn't have any aristocratic titles, their standing wasn't worse than the major aristocratic families."

Every time he spoke, he would curl his finger, finally curling them into a fist.

Then, he smiled and said, "At that time, although Tudor and the Trunsoest were the most loyal angels under His Majesty, they were still ranked beneath us. They were on par with Augustus and Castiya."

The history of the Augustus family can actually be traced to the era of the Solomon Empire… While Audrey was surprised, she became even more focused on listening.

Leonard thought and continued asking, "In that era, what was the situation in the Northern Continent?"

"All living creatures submitted to His Majesty. Even deities acknowledged His Majesty's rule in order to fight against opposing factions." Mobet chuckled. "They' all have countries that belong to 'Them' in poorer places. In short, Evernight, God of Combat, and Death were at odds. The three deities of Storm, Blazing Sun, and Wisdom had a great conflict with each other. Earth's attitude was vague and unclear, but ‘She’ was more inclined towards the God of Combat. This made ‘Them’ unable to cooperate in a stable fashion, thus being unable to form an alliance to fight His Majesty and the True Creator.”

At this point, Mobet sighed and said, “And precisely for the sake of balance, His Majesty didn’t attack the Southern Continent, and allowed Death to unite the plains and the ancient forest to build the Balam Empire.”

No, ultimately, the six deities came to an agreement. Hence, the Black Emperor perished, establishing the Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire… Leonard recalled Pallez Zoroast’s mention of this particular phase of history and, for a baffling reason, felt how history was filled with vicissitudes.

At that moment, Mobet turned his head and looked at him.

“Do you have cigarettes?

“These little devils that came out from the True Creator’s believers aren’t bad at all.”

Leonard immediately controlled the dream and conjured a cigarette before handing it over.

“Is this an improved version?” Mobet stretched out his right hand and snaked out a ball of fire from the kitchen behind the bar. He lit the cigarette and took a deep breath.

Seeing smoke coming out of his nostrils, Leonard asked curiously, “The True Creator’s believers like to smoke?”

[image]

“That’s right. Even Lord Medici would occasionally smoke a few sticks. Although it’s just a habit for ’Him,” Mobet answered without hiding anything.

Leonard nodded and asked, “Which deity do you believe in?”

“Of course, it’s His Majesty. All the aristocrats in the Empire believe in His Majesty. Uh, other than Lords Medici and Ouroboros. They believe in the True Creator. Also, Duke Bethel Abraham might just be faking it. According to what I know, ‘He’ only believes in ’Himself,” Mobet quipped.

Bethel Abraham… A thought came to Klein. He was about to signal Leonard to ask further when he heard the poet ask, “Is Duke Bethel Abraham very powerful?”

Clearly, the completely different behavior compared to the other aristocratic families in the Empire made this ancestor of the Abraham family stand out.

“Very powerful. Even Lord Medici and Ouroboros are afraid of ’Him,” Mobet said as he puffed out smoke rings. “In the warring era, ‘He’ was publicly acknowledged as one of the angels most likely to become a deity.”

“Warring era?” Leonard asked curiously.

Mobet looked at the slowly burning cigarette in his hand and said, “This isn’t thrilling enough. Heh heh. The warring era refers to the time after the Cataclysm ended to the point when the Empire was established. It lasted about 112 years. Our Zoroast family’s first angel perished in the warring era. Thankfully, we were helped by His Majesty before ‘He’ became a god; thus, we didn’t lose the Beyonder characteristic.”

“Who did it?” Leonard immediately asked.

Mobet shook his head.

“I’m not Sequence 4 yet, so there are many things I’m not qualified to know.

“Let’s talk about Duke Bethel Abraham; I actually don’t really know much about 'Him,' but I was very interested in their family and the Beyonder pathway they control. It's said that the Apprentice can wander the cosmos once they reach Sequence 2. Uh, there are also rumors that it's at Sequence 3."

Cosmos? Klein's pupils dilated slightly as he became more focused.

At this moment, Mobet continued, "They left behind lots of information regarding the cosmos, recording many interesting things. Unfortunately, I never managed to borrow them. However, I heard of the three laws that they concluded for wandering the cosmos:

"First, don't respond to any calls. Second, don't be reckless and approach unknown creatures or buildings. Third, endure loneliness."

It sounds like the cosmos is vast and dangerous… I wonder if the current Abraham family still has the travel notes related to the cosmos. I'll get Miss Magician to ask in the future… When Klein's gaze swept over, it happened to cross with Miss Justice's gaze that was directed at him. They immediately realized that the other party had also thought of Miss Magician.

Leonard did the same. He nodded slightly and asked about other matters.

During this process, the dream changed with Mobet's memories. Following that, they saw the appearances of Medici, Ouroboros, and other high-level figures.

Of course, as Mobet had few interactions with the Black Emperor and Bethel Abraham and didn't dare to look at 'Them' head-on, his impression of 'Them' was a blur.

Towards the end, Audrey grabbed both Klein's and Leonard's arms and jumped into Siatas's dream.

This Elven Songster was standing in the garden holding her stomach and frowning at Mobet.

“Can you steal the fetus in my stomach and stuff it into your body?”

“It can be done, but even if it’s stuffed into my body, I won’t be able to give birth to him,” Mobet replied fearfully.

Siatas thought seriously and said, “Then steal the corresponding organs that are needed?”

“…If it’s just the simple act of theft, then it might still succeed. But for what f-follows after, I’ll be at my wit’s end. This is beyond my capabilities…” Mobet said nervously.

The conversation between the human and elf left the trio dumbfounded.

After a few seconds, Audrey suggested, “…Why don’t I do it this time?”

Chapter 1066 - Familiar Name

◆

Upon hearing Miss Justice’s suggestion, Klein thought for a moment and said, “Guide the dream towards matters encompassing the Second Epoch’s history, the Queen of Calamity Cohinem, elf habits, and the most ancient language of the elves, as well as the legendary Western Continent.”

“…Alright.” Audrey’s eyes moved slightly, revealing a thoughtful expression as she digested the information that Mr. World had said.

Then, she walked to the Elven Songster’s side.

Under her guidance, Mobet’s figure in the garden rapidly blurred as he vanished from Siatas’s dream.

The ripples in Audrey’s green eyes stirred once again as her lips quivered, as though she was reciting something.

The entire dream world began to shake as the garden was like a reflection of a lake that was smashed into pieces by an invisible stone that flew over from nowhere.

These fragments quickly gathered, but the scene that was restored was no longer a garden, but that of a palace made of coral.

Every detail in the palace was abnormally gorgeous. The entire structure was tall and majestic, but due to the layers of blue seawater, the sky couldn’t be seen, making it appear dark and gloomy.

Inside it, coral pillars propped up an exaggerated dome, and the walls and the top of it were filled with terrifying murals of the storm.

Above the murals and corals, silver bolts of lightning followed a certain trajectory as if they were alive. Finally, they converged at the nine steps that were inlaid with pearls, diamonds, emerald, and turquoise.

Siatas was standing there, with many elves standing opposite her.

On the nine steps, there were two huge chairs that seemed to be formed purely of lightning. One of them occupied the center, just like the ruler of this palace. One of them was on its left, appearing less eye-catching.

Sitting on the throne in the middle was a man wearing a simple loose robe. His ears were pointed, and his facial features were rather soft and his hair thick. His hair was a mix of black and blue colors. Not only did his facial features look outstanding on their own, they combined together to form an even more handsome face. However, he directly gave one a tyrannous impression, as though he wouldn't say a word before picking up the electric spear leaning on his armrest, and then throwing it.

Sitting beside him was a beautiful woman with raven-black hair. Her hair was tied up into a high bun, her ears slightly pointed, and her facial features delicate. She had dark brown eyes that were as deep as the ocean, and in her hands, she was playing with a complicated golden wine cup.

Without needing Siatas's introduction, Klein and company could easily determine that this couple was the Elf King, the ancient god, Soniathrym, and the Elf Queen, Queen of Calamity, Cohinem.

"That traitor, Aurmir!" Suddenly, a voice resembling loud thunder boomed, causing the entire palace to shake violently. It made Siatas and the other attendants lower their heads in fear.

This roar came from the ancient god.

Aurmir, isn't that the name of the Giant King? I've recently been drinking red wine named after him. I have to say that its quality is indeed higher than anything else. It's just a little expensive… As Klein listened, he had a random thought.

He remembered that Little Sun had once said that Giant King Aurmir, Elf King Soniathrym, and Sanguine Ancestor Lilith—the three humanoid ancient gods—were allies. They fought against the opposing camp formed by Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt; Phoenix Ancestor, Gregrace; and the Mutant King, Kvastir. As for the Devil Monarch, Farbauti, and the Annihilation Demonic Wolf, Flegrea, they were independent beings who wanted to subvert all order and corrupt all living beings.

So, the alliance of three humanoid ancient gods eventually collapsed? Klein reined in his thoughts and waited for the subsequent changes in the dream.

Due to Derrick's existence, Audrey wasn't unfamiliar with the history of the Second Epoch. Without any hesitation, she directly made Siatas's dream continue its development.

Despite the terrifying roar, Queen of Calamity Cohinem wasn't affected at all. With a cold expression, "She" calmly said, "Wasn't this already long confirmed?

"'His' reputation is exactly the opposite of 'His' physical build."

At that moment, the ancient god, Soniathrym, had already been enveloped by bolts of lightning. "He" said in a thunderous voice, "I thought that, after centuries, 'He' would understand the global situation even more. I've overestimated 'His' intelligence!

"If 'He' didn't sell out Lilith back then, how could 'She' have perished?"

Eh… The Sanguine Ancestor Lilith perished so early? Klein's eyelids twitched as he quickly focused his attention.

After the Elf King finished roaring, Queen of Calamity Cohinem maintained “Her” previous posture and said, “That’s not a bad thing. At the very least, Kvastir and Flegrea were dragged to the grave together with Lilith. All the deities no longer trust each other. Even if we don’t form an alliance, we can rule the ocean, lakes, and rivers.”

Upon hearing these words, Spectator Audrey, couldn’t help but feel alarmed. She had no choice but to use Placate on herself.

This… It means that the Sanguine Ancestor Lilith, Mutant King Kvastir, and the Annihilation Demonic Wolf Flegrea perished in a battle between ancient gods. So the betrayal of Giant King Aurmir and the other ancient gods had nothing to do with the ancient sun god?

This is why Lilith didn’t fully die and is still able to occasionally deliver divine revelations? And because of this, the Antigonus Mother of the Sky and Hornacis mountain range managed to survive to the Fourth Epoch… Klein increasingly believed that the history recorded in the City of Silver had many fabrications or vague records. Thankfully, he hadn’t completely digested the Bizarro Sorcerer potion and didn’t need to consider advancing to Scholar of Yore. Otherwise, the “history” he used might not be real.

In ancient times, the Sanguine Ancestor Lilith and Mutant King Kvastir perished due to the other… The Sanguine has recently been working with the Mutant’s temperance faction. Time sure is a great magician… Heh heh, if The Moon Emlyn were to know of this, I wonder what kind of expression he would have… The Star Leonard sighed as he thought.

As their thoughts raced, the ancient god, Soniathrym, scoffed and said, “Recently, Aurmir wanted to work with some secret sects that have sprouted from the humans to deal with us. Apparently, this matter is led by Harvest and Dawn.

“I’m even thinking of working with Ankewelt to destroy the giants and the Giant King’s Court. Unfortunately, every time I see that dragon, I have the urge to string it up on a grill. It’s a type of attraction that’s simply irresistible!”

Just as he said that, the ancient god suddenly vanished. The entire palace shook violently, causing a rift to appear.

All of this had yet to subside when a bolt of lightning flashed. Soniathrym returned to the massive throne, holding a spear made of pure lightning.

“You went to the Giant King’s Court?” Cohinem asked.

“I taught Aurmir a lesson,” Soniathrym answered without hiding anything.

Siatas and the other elven attendants lowered their heads even further. They faintly saw slippery tentacles that were thicker than their bodies flipping about on the ground, flashing with silver bolts of lightning.

Then, they shut their eyes.

The dream changed as Siatas “recalled” her interaction with other elves.

[image]

With their conversations and interactions, Klein, Leonard, and Audrey learned that Siatas lived in a relatively peaceful time period in the Second Epoch. The giants, elves, dragons, devils, and phoenixes coexisted, splitting up their rule over the Northern and Southern Continent, as well as the Five Seas. Vampires, demonic wolves, treants, sea monsters, mutants, and humans were vassals of the different factions, occupying the lower-middle classes.

“This doesn’t resemble the history recorded by the Church. Even the legends in the City of Silver aren’t like this.” Leonard sighed when he heard that. “Old Man probably doesn’t know this much.”

“That isn’t necessarily true.” Klein shook his head indiscernibly. “Many existences in the Second Epoch have survived to the Fourth Epoch, or even to this very moment.”

“For example the Wisdom Angel?” Leonard asked with a guess.

“Perhaps.” Klein didn’t give an affirmative answer as he said with a smile, “When you were talking to Mobet, I thought you would make Miss Justice stand further away.”

Leonard immediately shot a glance at him and yawned.

“You mentioned before that there’s an existence behind me that might’ve been seen the second Blasphemy Slate. Then, when I was conversing with Mobet Zoroast, wouldn’t she be able to make the connection from me getting her to stand further away?

“Besides, you also mentioned that back when dealing with all of Amon’s avatars in Backlund, part of the clean-up operation involved Miss Justice. To a Sequence 5 Spectator, what she knows is sufficient. Once she understands the Zoroast family’s matters, the truth is practically in front of her eyes. In that case, why waste time trying to avoid her. It’s too troublesome. I might as well get Mr. Fool to be a witness as everyone vows not to divulge each other’s secrets.”

Klein nodded slightly and said, “If you were to get Miss Justice to stand further away, it wouldn’t be easy for you to bring up the matter of making a vow to keep things a secret…”

At this moment, Siatas continued, “After the death of the Sanguine Ancestor, the Annihilation Demonic Wolf, and the Mutant King, some of ‘Their’ subsidiary gods were killed, while others surrendered to other ancient gods. There were a few who vanished as they hid in the shadows.”

Having “transformed” herself into an elf, Audrey immediately asked, “Who surrendered to who? Who died?”

Siatas recalled and said, “I’ve never even seen it before. Uh, the Sanguine’s Goddess of Life and the Mutant King’s God of War were killed. No one even remembers ‘Their’ names… The Annihilation

Demonic Wolf’s God of the Dead, Salinger, came under the Phoenix Ancestor. The Sanguine’s Goddess of Beauty, Auernia, came under us… The Mutant King’s God of Spiritual Creatures, Tolzna, and Annihilation Demonic Wolf’s Goddess of Misfortune, Amanises, vanished…”

Salinger… Auernia… These two names made Klein’s forehead twitch. He instinctively used his Clown powers to maintain his facial expression.

Auernia was the Blood Moon Queen, the wife of the Fourth Epoch’s Emperor, the Empress of the Trunsoest Empire!

As for Salinger, “He” was the founder of the Balam Empire, the Emperor of the Underworld—Death!

Chapter 1067 - The Elven Version of History

◆

This…The Second Epoch’s subsidiary gods truly are hidden powers. There was Dragon of Wisdom, Herabergen ，and there’s God of the Dead, Salinger. They were all powerful figures that even reached the throne of Sequence 0. Of course, I can’t be sure about the Dragon of Wisdom. It’s just quite possible…

Yes, and there’s the God of Dawn, Badheil, and the Goddess of Harvest, Omebella. I can’t rule out the possibility that “They” have lived quite well all the way to the Fifth Epoch… I wonder if the God of Spiritual Creatures Tolzna and the Goddess of Misfortune Amanises managed to evade the authority retrieval operation by the City of Silver Creator at the end of the Second Epoch. If “They” managed to escape that fate, what roles did “They” play in the Third and Fourth Epoch? After a moment of shock, Klein began thinking poignantly.

Thinking back to the betrayal of the Kings of Angels in the Third Epoch, he couldn’t help but lampoon:

You have to be careful of fire, theft, and subsidiary gods!

At that moment, Audrey, who didn’t know much about the subsidiary gods’ true names or authorities, didn’t show any perturbations in her emotions. She acted as different female elves in Siatas’s memories, and she constantly talked to her about her experiences and things she knew about the Second Epoch.

According to Siatas, in the history of the elves, there was no concept of the First Epoch or Second Epoch. In the beginning years that were unknown to her, it was chaotic, dark, and crazy, and it didn’t leave behind any texts. After the supernatural races obtained a certain level of intelligence and had their own languages, creatures finally had some knowledge of history.

In that era, ancient gods appeared one after another. The sky, the land, the sea, and the underground world slowly changed from disorderliness to orderliness. However, other than the tyrannical and crazy ancient gods, no one knew how many years this stage lasted. She just knew that, very, very long ago, it was referred to by the major supernatural races as the “Sprouting Era.”

After the “Sprouting Era” was the “Early Era of Fire” in which the eight ancient gods fought against each other in different camps. This was also a long time before Siatas’s birth, so she could only understand this from the elven historical records that it was a time when quasi-humans fought non-humans, resisting the corruption and intrusion from the devils and demonic wolves. Amongst them, the humanoids were the giants, elves, Sanguine, as well as their slaves.

The “Early Era of Fire” lasted different periods of time according to the different records. However, a common point was that it lasted less than a thousand years, as the essence of the ancient gods was madness, tyranny, cruel, and cold. They were often driven by their instinct.

After the Sanguine Ancestor Lilith, Mutant King Kvastir, and Annihilation Demonic Wolf Flegrea perished during the betrayal, the “E3rly Elm of Fire” ended, and the war broke out “The world was damaged, and it didiVt stop for centuries.

Due to the fact that the giants and dragons were relatively strong in this period of time, they were known as the “Dual Era.”

By the time the five races formed a new balance of powers, the Northern Continent, the Southern Continent, the East Continent, and the Five Seas had recovered some level of peace. This was when Siatas was born and had grown up in until she entered Groselle's Travels.

In the history that she described, there were two important points. First of all, it proved the existence of the East Continent, a place where the Giant King's Court was. Second, after the "Sprouting Era," the supernatural races had their own kind of civilization. They weren't completely irrational as their descendants believed them to be. Of course, the inclination towards tyranny, cruelty, coldness, and slaughtering still existed, as though they were all in a half-state of losing control. It was only after the "Dual Era" that the new generation of elves and giants gained some level of rationality. They had feelings just like Siatas and Groselle.

The East Continent seems to be the Forsaken Land of the Gods… It was abandoned during the Cataclysm? Similar thoughts surfaced in Klein's, Leonard's, and Audrey's minds.

They were very interested in this, but it was a pity that Siatas had always lived in the Elf King's court. Their occasional forays outside were limited to parades at sea. She had never been to the East Continent, and she lacked the required knowledge.

Under Audrey's influence, Siatas's dream began to show the traditions and language of the elves.

According to the legends that the Queen's attendant had heard of, Elvish was created by the king in the "Sprouting Era." Every word was produced with the birth of a first-generation elf. The number of Elvish words meant the number of first-generation elves.

However, the traditions of the elves weren't too unified. They relied heavily on their surroundings—the elves in the forests and the sea were undoubtedly different in all kinds of customs.

What they shared in common was that they believed in the king, who was an ancient god, and "His" queen. They liked to make food with the blood of their prey. Many of them had culinary methods such as roasting. Even sea elves often came up to the reefs for a bonfire party. They were close to nature and were good at using all kinds of spices. They idolized the strong, and they were proud of being quick to act before thinking…

With myths and reality mixed together, it's hard to tell what's real and what's fake… Their traditions have destroyed my previous theories… Klein listened with a stoic expression as he quickly analyzed every word Siatas said.

After figuring out the relevant matters, Audrey circled around the keyword of the West Continent and made Siatas's dream change. It reflected some of her subconscious memories.

The coral palace appeared before Klein and company again. Siatas followed behind Queen of Calamity Cohinem and walked to a crystal window.

She glanced at the Queen's exquisite and complicated dress, and she stole a glance at the "deity" who controlled calamities. She asked curiously, "Your Highness, are you looking west?"

To the elves, as long as they didn't feel the pressure of violence, they would ask questions on the spot.

"Why do you think so?" Cohinem didn't turn back as "She" asked with an indifferent expression.

"I just learned of a legend that our elves originated from the Western Continent," Siatas replied. "Your Highness, does the Western Continent really exist? Is that really where the first-generation elves were born?"

Cohinem's lips curled slightly as she said with a slightly ethereal voice, "The Western Continent may exist, but it may not exist either. Every race needs to give themselves an illustrious origin, a home for the mind.

"Siatas, where is your home to you?"

“My home?” Siatas repeated the question as she replied blankly, “It’s where His Majesty and Your Highness are. It’s this palace that can lead to the forest where my parents live…”

As she said this, Siatas’s emotions gradually turned heavy, lost, and melancholic.

It was obvious that she was influenced by her subconscious’s corresponding memories.

She had entered Groselle’s Travels and had been away from home for two to three thousand years.

“Therefore, to elves like you, the Western Continent doesn’t exist, but to some elves, it definitely exists.” Queen of Calamity Cohinem calmly gave her final answer.

Siatas didn’t ask further, because she suddenly remembered that the Queen wasn’t a first-generation elf.

Such a response made Klein increasingly confused and puzzled. Thankfully, from the Second Epoch to the Fifth Epoch, the Western Continent had zero presence, so it didn’t have any important secrets related to him. He was just trying to find out more about it and hadn’t held out much hope.

After ending the guiding of Siatas’s subconscious and since it was almost noon, without any other nearby dreams that they could leap into, Audrey left with Klein and Leonard, and they appeared in Mobet and Siatas’s bedroom.

Looking at the Fourth Epoch viscount whose body had been tightly bound by the elf, Audrey’s expression suddenly turned gentle as she said with a laugh, “They seem to be doing pretty well…”

“No, no, no, it’s terrifying to have such a violent, direct, and imaginative wife who dares to take action! Only a person like Mobet would like and enjoy being with her…” Leonard, who didn’t have a poet’s talent but had the liberal inclinations of a poet, shook his head as he kept his hands in his pockets.

At this point, he muttered in thought, On the contrary, it's true that an experienced thief needs a woman like Siatas to rein him in. Hmm… I wonder what kind of members of the opposite sex Old Man's other family members like…

“Sigh, they don't need our envy or objections. This is how they live together. Emperor Roselle once wrote a poem, saying ‘for my love I'll sacrifice my life’[1]…”

As Klein listened to their discussion, he opened his mouth and closed it again. He didn't tell them that Siatas and Mobet had actually died. It was only when they died that they truly felt their love for one another. The ones living in the book were just copies created by the book world.

After leaving the couple's house, the trio headed to Groselle's blacksmith shop.

Along the way, when they went past a street, Klein saw Frunziar, who was known as a philosopher, and Audrey recognized him to be Loenese a glance.

“Is that the soldier from a hundred years ago?” Audrey slowed down her pace and asked.

Klein recalled Frunziar's longing for his hometown, and the ashes he had placed in Backlund's cemetery. He fell silent for two seconds before nodding gently.

“Yes.”

Mr. World is feeling a little emotional… He's like a calm river on the surface, with a lot of undercurrents and eddies underneath… Audrey nodded indiscernibly and asked, “Can we enter his dream? I want to get the Judge and Disciplinary Paladin's potion formula.”

"No problem," Klein replied as he glanced at Leonard.

Leonard continued having his hands in his pockets, but his eyes instantly darkened.

Sitting on the bench, Frunziar fell asleep.

Right on the heels of that, three people appeared in his dream.

This was a bustling city with buildings made from wood. The pedestrians who came and went were mostly Loenese.

The black-haired, blue-eyed Frunziar stood outside a house as he looked in without daring to approach. Only when a woman wearing an old long dress came out from inside did he excitedly go forward and attempt to hug her.

His hug went through the woman without them making contact at all.

Frunziar stood rooted to the ground as he blankly shouted, "Mother…"

Audrey, who wanted to guide the dream, quietly watched this scene. Then, she looked around and discovered the iconic clock.

"Backlund…" Audrey pursed her lips and turned her head. She looked at Klein and asked, "Can't they leave the book world?"

"It's been too long. If they leave, they will grow old, die, or even be reduced to dust." Klein's voice was like a serene river. "I delivered one of Frunziar's items to Backlund."

This… As a Spectator, Audrey acutely sensed the cruel reality behind those words. She couldn't help but raise her head and look out of the dream, looking at the location where Mobet and Siatas were.

Leonard wanted to ask what it was, but after looking around, he maintained his silence.

Following that, Audrey seriously guided his dream. Outside of obtaining two potion formulas, she made Frunziar return home and live happily with his parents, brothers, and sisters.

It was a beautiful dream.

After leaving Frunziar, Klein, Leonard, and Audrey quickly saw Groselle’s home.

This was the last stop of their exploration. After obtaining information from Groselle’s subconscious, they would enter the book world’s sea of collective subconscious and seek out the secrets that might exist in this book.

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Adapted from a Hungarian poet, Sandor Petofi’s Liberty and Love.

Chapter 1068 - Illogical Details

◆

“W-which one is Groselle?” In the dream, Leonard looked ahead blankly.

There was a huge bonfire there, and there were more than ten grayish-blue-skinned, single-eyed giants who looked no different from each other.

To be honest, I wouldn’t be able to recognize him without the ability of a Faceless… To me, without their age, hairstyle, height, scars, clothes, and maturity, giants all look the same… Klein mumbled inwardly as he looked calmly at Miss Justice, as though saying that it shouldn’t stump a Spectator.

Audrey raised her hand and pointed at a giant who was gulping down alcohol. From time to time, he would shout twice to express his approval.

“That’s Groselle.

“It looks like, in the traditions of the giants, clapping isn’t a sign of affirmation and praise. Instead, it’s a roar. The louder the roar, the higher the level of praise.”

Miss Justice is acting like a folk scholar now… Thankfully, he’s only shouting and not singing. If not, the noise would be worse. It’s obvious that the giants here aren’t adept at modulating their voices. That roar from before didn’t have any rhythm to it… Klein nodded and said to Audrey, “Begin guiding him then.”

As Audrey went forward as Leonard stepped back. He raised his right hand and stroked his chin.

“Tell me, in the Second Epoch, which supernatural race widely possessed the Beyonder characteristics of the Evernight pathway?”

“Isn’t it the demonic wolves?” Klein glanced at Leonard, wondering if the poet had contracted the traditional disease of the Nighthawkshaving a bad memory.

“I know.” Leonard maintained his original posture as he said with a strange expression, “Then how do they act as a Midnight Poet? Or should I say that the potion’s name back then was called Midnight Roarer?”

“There wasn’t a potion name in the beginning…” Klein’s thoughts were accidentally led astray by Leonard. The scene of such fellows crouching on the ground and howling at the moon surfaced in his mind. He couldn’t help but mutter, “This might be more suitable for you. There’s no need to write poems, making it very easy.”

The corners of Leonard’s mouth twitched as he said, “There are different types of poets. I’m a singing type.”

As the two idly chatted, Audrey’s guidance attempt gradually pushed through. Groselle’s dream began showing the Waning Forest, Barren Tunnel, the corner of the Giant King’s Court, Dawn Town, and the Nation of Gold.

Groselle wasn’t a subordinate of the “deities” like the Giant King, and he was only able to occasionally see these high-level existences while on duty at the Waning Forest or in particular spots of the Giant King’s Court and passageway. Furthermore, he didn’t dare look at “Them” head-on, receiving them while genuflecting and having his head bowed. Therefore, he wasn’t able to present the images of Giant King Aurmir, Giant Queen Omebella, and the eldest son of the Giant King, God of Dawn, Badheil. They only appeared as portraits.

Similarly, Groselle knew very few secrets. His grasp of history and the situation in the world was completely incomparable to Elven Songster Siatas. However, an interesting point was that in the Giant King's Court and the giants, the "traitor" was synonymous with Soniathrym. They claimed that "His" abandoning of the alliance had resulted in the Sanguine Ancestor Lilith's death.

Klein strongly suspected that, because of his bad temper, Soniathrym, was obviously not good at such things.

The Queen of Calamity seems capable, but the problem is what "She" plots is extremely hard to hide from "Her" spouse, a true ancient god, Soniathrym… In contrast, Giant King Aurmir being the traitor makes more sense… Klein did a rough analysis as Audrey changed the direction of Guidance in an attempt to let Groselle present anything he had seen or heard beyond the Giant King's Court.

It was a pity that, shortly after the giant left the King's Court and passed through Dawn Town before arriving in the Nation of Gold, he obtained the book and entered it. He didn't know much about the styles and appearances of people from different regions.

"Currently, the most valuable piece of information is how to avoid the front entrance after entering the Giant King's Court from Afternoon Town. It's through the Waning Forest and the Barren Tunnel." Audrey ended the guidance and walked back to Klein's and Leonard's side. This is very useful for Little Sun and company's subsequent explorations."

"Yes, we can tell him at the next gathering." Klein nodded.

Just as he was about to suggest that they enter the book world's sea of collective subconscious through Groselle's dream, Audrey suddenly looked back and said in thought,

"There's one detail that's illogical."

"Which detail?" Leonard seriously recalled what he had seen and heard, but he didn't find anything suspicious.

Justice Audrey glanced at The World and said, "In the matter regarding how Giant King Aurmir's father and mother are buried in the Waning Forest, the rule that only the ancient god can enter is illogical."

Klein didn't notice that there was something wrong with that detail. But after Miss Justice mentioned it, he immediately had some ideas. He deliberated and said, "The father and mother of the Giant King are equivalent to the ancestors of the giants. Normally speaking, they should be consecrated by the entire race…"

"That's right. Regardless of the race, they'll have some level of worship towards their ancestor. The giants are no exception. From Groselle's dream, the Keepers often make sacrifices to the ancestors outside the Waning Forest." Audrey nodded in agreement. "If there aren't any other factors of influence, the Giant King should occasionally organize things and make it a point to honor their ancestors instead of making it a rule that only 'He' can enter."

"Perhaps the Waning Forest contains immense danger. Aren't the oldest giants crazy, violent, and irrational? After their death, their corpses have corrupted the environment and affected the entire forest. It's not something that can't be understood." Leonard gave his opinion.

Audrey and Klein shook their heads at the same time, denying the statement.

"If it's only danger or corruption, Giant Queen Omebella and the God of Dawn Badheil can clearly withstand that. With the help of the Giant King, there are almost no problems. Yet 'They' are also forbidden from entering the Waning Forest, even with the ancient god by 'Their' side." Klein simply explained his thoughts and guesses. "Perhaps what's buried inside isn't Giant King Aurmir's parents; there might be some other secret."

"That's more likely the case." Audrey nodded seriously.

She wore a silver mask, and her green eyes darted around slightly, faintly revealing a hint of curiosity.

“If that’s the case, what would a secret that can’t be known to ‘His’ wife, child, subsidiary gods, or fellow members of the same race be? That’s quite interesting…” Leonard smiled as he allowed his thoughts to wander.

After another round of discussion, the three of them made use of the time to enter the Giant King’s Court through the Barren Tunnel and enter the place that was frozen amidst the

sunset.

According to Klein’s experience, this was actually the path to the borders of Groselle’s dream.

This time, there was no need for him to activate Creeping Hunger and use the strength of a Zombie to open the heavy door to the giant guards’ quarters. Audrey directly influenced the dream and made the door flutter open like a piece of paper. Due to the Unshadowed Crucifix, Klein was unable to wear the human-skinned glove.

Outside the door was a hazy world. There was no longer the scene of the Giant King’s Court ahead of them, but a cliff.

After a brief exchange of the various situations that could occur in the sea of collective subconscious, Audrey made a staircase appear on the edge of the cliff.

The staircase spun around, sinking deep into the dark, hazy, silent, and bottomless mind world.

The three of them didn’t delay as they stepped onto the staircase and walked down.

In this lonely environment that could drive one crazy, Audrey used Placate a few times every time they traveled a certain distance.

This wasn't only to Placate Klein, Leonard, and herself, but it was also to Placate the grayish-white cliff-Groselle's subconscious. It was to prevent him from causing a stir that would contaminate their Astral Projection and Body of Heart and Mind.

The countless rotting giant palms that Klein "encountered" the last time didn't appear. Even the most unbearable feelings of loneliness, silence, and being infinite didn't feel that terrifying thanks to being able to speak to each other.

"This is the mind world. The domain of consciousness is indeed different from the others." Leonard looked around as though he wanted to use a few poems to express his feelings, but he eventually chose to give up.

If it were any other mission elsewhere, Klein might've asked his dear poet to remain quiet, but here, he felt that it was good for him to say something-anything.

Audrey didn't reject the exchange as she said seriously, "That's the essence of the environment that we can sense. The cliffs, precipices, and the hazy world are a reflection of our subconscious. If it were another race, it might not be like that…"

"…I now find psychology rather interesting," Leonard said with interest after hearing that.

Klein glanced at him and resisted the urge to say that, with his personality and habits, he really wasn't suited to the Spectator pathway.

In this exchange, the three of them lost track of time until they finally stepped onto the solid but hazy ground.

Looking upwards, they could see the undulating shadows. They overlapped and formed an illusory sea.

Klein, Leonard, and Audrey were about to walk forward when a "water spout" suddenly surged over. A rather blurry figure stood up from within.

It was a grayish-blue giant that was six-to seven-meters tall. His chest was covered with dragon scales, and there were all sorts of indescribable patterns, symbols, and labels that went beyond what one would consider a normal language.

His single vertical eye was filled with blood vessels as it emitted a violent aura that couldn’t be concealed. It had obvious hints of destruction in it as it gnawed on a bloody human leg.

This was a demigod-level giant!

He was a projection left in the sea of collective subconscious. Perhaps it was an actual encounter with a human or some other race’s ancestor; or perhaps it was something Groselle and the other giants had heard about.

The moment he appeared, the madness spread towards Klein and company like a plague that could infect them.

This was a world that directly came into contact with one’s mind and consciousness!

Chapter 1069 - “Under the Sea”

◆

The leg-gnawing giant, whose vertical eye was filled with blood-red threads, wasn’t actually real. He was, in essence, a strong emotion produced by a particular living creature.

The emotions that originated from having a deep impression had entered the subconscious. It spread from one’s island of consciousness to the surrounding illusory “sea,” before slowly settling and forming a mark. It wasn’t possible for all of its emotions and consciousness to ultimately settle dowoi as the foundation. Most of them would be washed away with time by the “seawater.” Only extremely intense and repeated experiences would remain.

And once it formed a mark, it would be a drop of water in the sea of collective subconscious which would then affect living creatures of the same species in its surroundings. It would be a shared, ancient “memory” carved into one’s pulse.

Therefore, not only was the phantom image of the giant blurry, but it also had many mistakes caused by the subjective aspects of the mind. Normally, it wouldn’t result in Leonard and Audrey being unable to look straight at it, confusing their spirituality and breaking down their minds. However, the madness that came with it—an extreme sense of horror that stemmed from an unknown person—seemed all so real. It could contaminate every living creature’s Body of Heart and Mind, Astral Projection, and even Soul Body!

This was the essence of the danger in the sea of collective subconscious.

It didn’t stem from the strength, level, and status itself, but from the emotions and feelings that were generated and imprinted there.

Of course, if one were to encounter a “mark” left behind by a high-level creature or deity, they could directly see some type or multiple types of Mythical Creature forms. However, the result was definitely nothing rosy. One would either have a mental breakdown or go crazy. Otherwise, they would be completely contaminated by the deity or high-level creature’s emotions and feelings—their outcome would ultimately be completely unpredictable.

All in all, in this sea of collective subconscious, the style of combat was different from the outside world. Sometimes, the more anxious one was at trying to destroy the illusory figure, the more likely one would be contaminated by their stirring emotions.

It was precisely because of this that when Klein saw the 7-8-meter tall, grayish-blue giant rush over, he immediately took the initiative to control his emotions.

Then, he used “Illusion Creation.”

The target of “Illusion Creation” was Leonard and Audrey.

In the eyes of these two Sequence 5 Beyonders, those 2-3-story-tall giants no longer had the madness and violence that left one trembling from one’s heart. Everything seemed normal and ordinary.

Therefore, before those extreme feelings could truly contaminate them, Leonard and Audrey remained very calm, without showing any emotional fluctuations.

Then, with one hand in his pocket, Leonard reached out with his right hand and slightly opened his mouth.

Having become a Spirit Warlock, he originally wanted to use the first spirit—a Terror Banshee—that he sealed in his tooth with the help of the archbishop. It was a powerful spirit world creature with a beautiful face and rotting body. It had a pair of huge eagle wings and was good at draining the consciousness of others, injecting feelings of terror in them. However, he quickly remembered that not only was he in an Astral Projection form, but he had also been cleansed by the gray fog. How could there be other spirits still "on him."

He had no choice but to use a Soul Assurer's powers, turning his green eyes deep and quiet.

The giant shadow instantly slowed down as if it was soothed.

At this moment, Audrey calmly spread her arms wide and used Placate.

An invisible wind blew past, and the giant figure seemed to pause as it instantly weakened the contamination around it.

During this process, Klein took out the bronze cross that had many sharp spikes. As he opened the bottle containing his blood, he poured a few drops onto it and solemnly said, "Light!"

Brilliant, pure, and flawless light burst out, and amidst Klein's fluttering black trench coat, the giant phantom was drowned by the light.

The grayish-blue giant melted away almost immediately.

One of the main powers of the Unshadowed Crucifix was to cleanse and purify lingering spiritual imprints!

This was the reason why Klein brought this Sealed Artifact along.

And when he used the cross from the ancient sun god, Klein dispelled the illusion, allowing The Star Leonard and Justice Audrey to "see" the true appearance of the giant to enrich their experiences in such matters.

Although it didn't even take a second before the giant phantom was drowned by the endless light, Audrey and Leonard still felt dizzy. M irresistible sense of fear surged from deep within their hearts, and they almost broke down.

This state didn’t last too long, as Audrey instinctively used Placate to calm her emotions before treating Mr. Star and Mr. World’s psychological problems one by one.

“How scary…Is this a giant at the demigod level?” When the light dissipated, Audrey looked around and sighed.

In that instant, she had a deeper understanding of the sentence:

“Do not look directly at God!”

Even at the saint level, the remnant impression a demigod leaves behind in a memory can’t be “seen” directly, let alone a real deity?

Leonard was also experienced. He laughed self-deprecatingly and said, “Sequence 4 is indeed a qualitative change in life’s natural order. However, that wasn’t very scary. It wasn’t as intense as when I was facing a pregnant woman.”

Is the essence of a poet to boast? At that time, you could still control yourself, but you were almost on the verge of breaking down just now… However, if Megose gave birth to that child, we would probably lose control and turn into monsters just by looking at her… As Klein lampooned Leonard, it stirred up some memories as he sighed poignantly.

“Was that pregnant lady a demigod?” Audrey asked curiously.

“No.” Leonard shook his head. “But she was pregnant with an evil god’s spawn.”

Is that so… Audrey didn’t ask further. She knew very well that the adventure and exploration hadn’t ended, and that wasting time wasn’t an option.

She then looked at Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing a black trench coat and holding a bronze cross and small metal bottle, and said with a smile, “Thank you for affecting our senses.

“Uh, where should we go next?”

As an experienced Spectator, it wasn’t difficult to determine the fact that she had received Mr. World’s help from making a comparison.

Klein controlled himself from subconsciously furrowing his brows, and he looked around.

“Doesn’t this sea of collective subconscious have a core region to it?”

“No.” Audrey shook her head seriously. “Wherever there are living beings, there’s a sea of subconscious. There’s no such thing as someone who’s more important and lofty. This illusory sea won’t really stir, and the situations within the different areas will depend on their actual surroundings. We call it a ‘precipitating effect.’ To put it simply, the sea of collective subconscious of Loen will be quite different from Intis, because it precipitates the strong emotions and feelings of generations of Loenese. In contrast, this will also affect the citizens of both countries, making them have different qualities and personalities to a certain extent…”

After explaining this a little, Audrey concluded:

“If that’s the case, how can there be a general consensus of a core within the sea of collective subconscious?”

Klein nodded and asked thoughtfully, “In other words, you can’t give any effective suggestions on where to go?”

Mr. World is so direct… If it were another lady or gentleman with a more fragile heart, they would definitely be embarrassed and feel hurt… As the thought flashed through her mind, Audrey saw The World’s pair of deep, brown eyes which were nearly black in color. They were in no way crazy or cold. Instead, they were calm and tranquil.

This… Audrey instantly came to a realization. She realized that Mr. World was doing such things on purpose so that she could experience the various problems within the details of a joint operation, allowing her to gain more experience.

Yes.” She nodded frankly, not feeling embarrassed at all.

Klein secretly nodded and looked at The Star Leonard.

“Don’t look at me. My expertise isn’t in this strange sea of collective subconscious.” Leonard immediately waved his hands.

Compared to Miss Justice, having participated in countless operations, he knew that he shouldn’t force it when he shouldn’t.

“Then follow me.” Klein looked away and moved the Unshadowed Crucifix which had turned bronze again to the hand holding the metal bottle, and he took out a gold coin.

Ding!

As the gold coin tumbled, he grabbed it without looking at the results. He looked in a direction and widened his stride. This is a divination technique… Audrey was enlightened.

She looked at The World’s serious and calm side profile, black trench coat, silk top hat, and bronze cross. For some reason, she felt like the other party was a preacher.

Leonard suddenly recalled something from the past.

It was the first case he had worked with Klein—to find a kidnapped child. At that time, it was also a way for Klein to lead the way through divination. He had been beside him the entire time.

Compared to his awkwardness before, it seems as if he had entered the mysterious world for more than ten years now… Sigh, it’s only been over a year… Leonard placed his hands in his pockets as he followed closely behind Klein.

Audrey glanced at him and felt the change in his mood.

Mr. Star and Mr. World not only know each other in real life, but they were probably rather close friends. Yes, they have at least met frequently in the past one to two years… As she made the judgment, she didn't slow down her steps. Combining what she had learned, she observed the surroundings and identified which spots might hide "maelstroms" and "dangerous creatures."

With her help, Klein's lead went very smoothly. It was nothing like how they had directly encountered a mark like the giant phantom.

Occasionally, they would walk straight and turn at other times. After some time, the area before the trio suddenly opened up.

In front of them was a huge crater in the deep sea. In the middle of the pit was an island-sized city.

The foundation of the city was grayish-white in color, and on it were several hundred-meter tall magnificent stone columns. They either stood there on their own, or they held up majestic ancient palaces together. They were bizarre and magnificent, unlike something built by ordinary creatures.

Although Audrey didn't know the city, an idea instantly appeared in her mind:

City of Miracles, Liveseyd…

Chapter 1070 - Maybe It's Real

◆

Liveseyd was a floating city that the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt “imagined” out of thin air. No matter what, it was a miracle, a divine miracle.

It was even more magnificent than the Giant King’s Court—more rugged and unique. Every stone pillar was nearly 100 meters tall, like a throne for the dragon to rest on. It was a city that left a deep, unforgettable impression just from hearing about it.

Therefore, although Audrey had never actually seen the City of Miracles, she instantly made connections from witnessing the scene. Of course, one of the main reasons for knowing that was because she knew that Groselle’s Travels came from the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt.

As for Klein, as he had once divined the origins of Groselle’s Travels and had seen the real City of Miracles, the Floating City, and now, he was sure that the island-sized city in the middle of the deep-sea crater was identical to Liveseyd. All it lacked were the dragons that flew in every direction!

Is this real, or is it a clone? Or is it a gathering of some special creature’s subconscious in the book world? Klein was slightly surprised as he quickly analyzed the situation.

According to his divination results and the contents of the dream from Giant Guardian Groselle and Elven Songster Siatas, he was certain that, when Groselle’s Travels was created, the City of Miracles Liveseyd still existed. When it reached the Giant King's Court, the City of Miracles Liveseyd still existed. When Groselle began his adventure and when Siatas was sucked into the book world, Liveseyd still existed. If the City of Miracles Liveseyd were to vanish, the various supernatural races wouldn't have any reaction.

In other words, these facts were undeniable proof that the city in the middle of the deep-sea crater was unlikely to be Liveseyd.

But very quickly, Klein remembered something.

That was the answer that Arrodes had once given him:

"…certain that it first appeared among the dragons, after the disappearance of the City of Miracles, Liveseyd."

This is interesting… What did the magic mirror rely on to confirm that Groselle's Travels was the first to appear and to believe that it was after the disappearance of the City of Miracles Liveseyd? It wasn't even able to see matters related to Zaratul, so how could it pry into the origins of an ancient god's possession? I originally used this conclusion to infer and consider things, but this point was completely overturned by my divination. I never expected… Klein observed the tall stone columns and magnificent city as many thoughts ran through his mind.

Suddenly, he grasped onto an idea:

The last owner of Groselle's Travel was Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina, a member of the Church of Knowledge. They believe in the God of Knowledge and Wisdom;

The God of Knowledge and Wisdom can almost be confirmed to be one of the Kings of Angels who served the ancient sun god, the Angel of Wisdom;

And from the Church's history and the history of the Third Epoch, it's reasonable to suspect that the Angel of Wisdom is most likely the Dragon of Wisdom, Herabergen!

This was the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt's subsidiary god, a high-level member of the dragons!

This… The appearance of Groselle's Travels after the disappearance of the City of Miracles was thanks to the God of Knowledge and Wisdom passing it around through a certain method, which had convinced the magic mirror? If "He" really is a Dragon of Wisdom, it means that "He" was directly involved, and "His" level was already very high back then. "His" understanding of this matter definitely trumps the Groselle and Siatas… But how do I explain the scene I divined above the gray fog? Just recalling it now makes my head ache. What I saw was definitely the ancient god, Dragon of Imagination, "Himself… Klein cheered up when he managed to string up all these matters together, but he also fell into a state of puzzlement.

He tossed the gold coin continuously and quickly came up with some theories.

Since the City of Miracles, Liveseyd, was "imagined," couldn't it just be "imagined" again after it disappeared?

The original Liveseyd was stuffed into the book by the Dragon King Ankewelt. Then, the one that subsequently existed was one "He" "imagined" again?

This could fool all the dragons, but not the one that was known for being intelligent?

If this were true, then there were actually two instances of the City of Miracles, Liveseyd. The one here is the oldest one…

But here comes the question. Why didn't the Dragon of Wisdom enter the book "Himself1? Even if"He" wasn't a Spectator, with "His" title of being omniscient and omnipotent, "He" should have enough powers to perform a deeper exploration…

"He" has actually been here a long time ago, but didn't alert any living beings in the book. Also, because of certain motives, "He" left this City of Miracles here?

As thoughts surfaced in Klein's mind, The Star Leonard, who had both hands in his pockets, looked at him and then at Miss Justice, who had also been looking down in silence for a long time. He took the initiative to speak and break the silence:

"This city is grand and magnificent. It clearly doesn't belong to humans or humanoid creatures, but there's no need to stare at it for so long. You're not an architect after all."

Klein gathered his thoughts and glanced at Leonard.

"This might very well be Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt's City of Miracles, Liveseyd. In a sense, it's the divine kingdom of an ancient god."

Of course, if there was really another Liveseyd, the nature of the divine kingdom here didn't hold much importance. "Divine kingdom…" Leonard's pupils dilated as he repeated the keyword.

Audrey regained her senses and whispered, "Is it really Liveseyd?"

"It's only possible." Klein had already calmed down and replied simply, "It's not floating in the air like the legends, but has sunken to the bottom of the sea of collective subconscious, so it's hard to tell if it's real or fake."

At this moment, Leonard finally managed to control himself. He looked at the magnificent city in the deep-sea crater again and smiled self-deprecatingly.

"I didn't expect the day when I'll come to the divine kingdom of an ancient god…"

Frankly, if Miss Justice wasn't here, he wouldn't have been able to help but marvel at how "rich" Klein's life was.

Ever since he reunited with his former teammate, not only did he meet the two sons of god—Kings of Angels—he had also entered the mysterious book world and found a city suspected to be a divine kingdom.

This was many times more interesting than what he had experienced in the past year. The level of such matters was many times higher!

Of course, it was a lot more dangerous.

Having said that, he looked up at the floating "seawater phantoms" and asked thoughtfully, "How do you know if the sea of collective subconscious is real or if it's imagined?"

This was a continuation of the problem of determining Liveseyd's authenticity.

Audrey thought for a while and said with uncertainty, "There's no way to tell the difference, or rather, the sea of collective subconscious here is also real.

"In essence, collective subconscious is the accumulation and settling of strong emotions and feelings. Although the people in this world may be imaginary, their experiences, feelings, joy, anger, sadness, pain, and happiness, they all truly happened before…"

As she spoke, Audrey stopped as she vaguely realized something, but she was unable to say it out loud.

At this moment, Klein suddenly said, "The objects that 'He' can imagine will be conjured. The kingdom 'He' dreams of will surely descend upon the physical world…"

As his voice echoed, Klein put away the gold coin in his hand and jumped into the deep-sea crater, his black trench coat flaring up as a result.

[image]

The future that 'He' declares will definitely be carried out, becoming reality…"

As his figure glided down, the following words came out.

Audrey's green eyes were dazed at first before they lit up. Then, she "jumped" towards the City of Miracles.

"Aren't you going to divine the level of danger? This might be the divine kingdom of an ancient god!" Leonard looked at the two of them in surprise and blurted out.

In the education he received, this wasn't in line with the standard operating procedures.

When did you get the wrong impression that I didn't divine it? You just didn't notice my tiny actions. I just put away the gold coin… Also, I didn't get any warnings from my intuition for danger… Furthermore, if my theory is right, then the Dragon of Wisdom Herabergen should've entered this place before…If there's any form of danger that w head, it would've long been finished off by "Him"… If Miss Justice wasn't here, I'd really wish to berate you… As Klein silently lampooned, he adjusted his direction and speed, passing through a few thick stone columns that stood nearly a hundred meters tall. He descended one level after another before stepping onto the grayish-white ground.

He was in a Spirit Body state now and could fly if he wanted to.

About two to three seconds later, the silver-masked Justice Audrey landed beside him.

Audrey looked up, and after reeling from a few seconds of shock due to the grandeur of the stone columns and palace, she said, "Looking from the inside and looking from a distance feels completely different…

"Perhaps, this is how a rat truly feels in Backlund…"

As she spoke, Leonard also glided over and looked sideways at Klein.

It wasn't that he didn't believe in Klein, nor was he unaware of how cautious he was. He just needed to clarify such matters in a joint operation, because there was the possibility of teammates being unknowingly corrupted, turning reckless.

This was a conclusion the Nighthawks gleaned from their experience of repeated sacrifices.

"Currently, the indications don't point to much danger," Klein said truthfully.

Leonard no longer looked around and said, "The City of Miracles is really big…

"I mean that, for such a big city, even if we can fly, we won't be able to completely explore it without spending a few days here. Or perhaps, do you have a destination in mind?"

The second half of his sentence was said while looking at Klein.

Klein nodded and pointed to a huge palace that was more than 200 meters tall.

"There.

"If I remember correctly, that is the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt's residence."

This was what he saw in the dream divination.

Seeing that Klein already had a plan, as if he had received Mr. Fool's guidance, Leonard felt relieved. He looked at the grayish-white foundation on his feet and said, "Is this a divine kingdom?

"I don't feel anything."

At this moment, Audrey, who was observing the surroundings carefully, said with uncertainty, "All the abnormalities here seem to be gathering towards that palace."

She was referring to the place that Klein had pointed out to be the ancient god’s residence.

Chapter 1071 - Hall of Truth

◆

In front of the grayish-white grand palace that was more than 200 meters tall, there were a few thick stone columns that were slightly shorter than it was, as though they were a squadron of soldiers standing at attention there.

Klein could imagine that, when the City of Miracles, Liveseyd, was still floating in mid-air, these stone columns would definitely have powerful dragons crouching on them.

These were the servants of the ancient god.

He then looked up at the open door and said to Leonard and Audrey, “Stay close to me. Once an accident happens, I’ll immediately take you out of the book world and return directly above the gray fog.”

This was the main reason why Klein dared to explore the area.

“Okay.” Audrey and Leonard didn’t try putting on a brave front as they walked to Klein’s side and walked alongside him.

Relying on their Spirit Bodies’ flight ability, the trio passed the stairs and entered the palace through the exaggerated and magnificent door.

The first thing they saw was a wide space that was enough for multiple dragons to roll around freely, as well as an ancient stone pillars that seemed to prop up the sky.

On the two sides of the hall, there were colorful and beautiful murals. They kept extending forward and intertwining themselves with a huge pillar that was multiple arm spans wide.

The giant pillar was in the deepest recesses of the hall right ahead of them. Without relying on anything else, just the pillar alone was enough to make people feel a strong sense of fear and make them experience the vicissitudes of time. It was like a fossilized deity.

Almost instantly, a grayish-white figure appeared on the pillar.

The figure was covered in scales, and every scale resembled a sturdy stone slab. Just the faint outline of the figure made it seem epic.

Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt! Just as this thought flashed through Klein's mind, he heard an oddly familiar voice echoing in the spacious hall:

"Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt!"

As Klein looked around in astonishment, he heard Leonard sigh emotionally.

"The deep air listen'd round 'Him' as 'He' rode,"And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear[1]…

…This fellow still has the mood to recite poetry, I wonder whose poem he's reciting… Klein turned to look at Leonard. Then, he heard an echo:

"This fellow still has the mood to recite poetry, I wonder whose poem he's reciting…"

At this moment, Leonard's expression was one of shock. He shut his mouth tightly and shook his head in denial.

But the next second, a voice sounded beside him:

"I didn't recite anything!"

"What's going on? Strange…" At the same moment Klein had this thought, he realized that the strangely familiar voice belonged to him.

As it echoed again, repeating the thoughts that flashed through Klein's mind.

Then, Audrey's gentle and mumbling voice sounded:

"This… This hall is able to let our thoughts present themselves in our surroundings, and is even able to conjure them? Hmm…When I saw that huge pillar just now, I was imagining what the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt looked like. It was based on the blueprint of the mind dragon I saw before…

"Why is whatever I'm saying—No, indeed, the 'hall' articulates it…"

So that's the case. Luckily, I didn't think of anything strange just now. Yes, rein in my thoughts, rein in my thoughts… Klein began to use Cogitation to focus his mind and not let his imagination run wild.

At the same time, the corresponding words echoed around him almost in sync:

"…rein in my thoughts, rein in my thoughts…"

"So that's what Mr. World's inner world is like. He's like a child who just started school, constantly emphasizing matters that he needs to take attention of. Also, the image for his Cogitation is actually layers of spherical lights. It's so beautiful. No, no, I'm not thinking of this! I'm not describing you like this. Mr_ World, I_m serious ｢ ^ thoughts kept appearing as she finally couldn't help but curl her lips.

As for Leonard, the voices around him were already echoing with "Hahaha."

"These two fellows… No, why am I using 'fellow'? Be polite, be more polite…" As Klein listened to his thoughts, he sighed helplessly. "This place is very suitable for playing 'Truth or Dare.' Perhaps it should be called 'the Hall of Truth…."

"What game is that?" Audrey didn't need to open her mouth to express her doubts.

“It was probably invented by Emperor Roselle… I have to be careful not to think about things I shouldn’t think about. Seriously, it’s too difficult to rein in random thoughts without the use of Cogitation…” As Klein replied, he habitually warned himself, only to have the hall ruthlessly betray him again.

This time, Audrey laughed and said, “Haha, Mr. World actually has such a side to him. I actually failed to read it in the past…”

“Hahaha, to think you’re experiencing such a day, Klein. No, what did I say…” Leonard suddenly raised his right hand and covered his mouth.

Unsurprisingly, he heard Miss Justice’s “question”:

“Klein?”

And a certain someone’s complaint:

“Perhaps only turning them into marionettes can stop these fellows from having wild thoughts. Wait, what was I thinking? Phew, calm down, calm down…”

Klein took a deep breath and began to focus his attention on the matter itself.

“Let’s take a look at what the murals describe. In ancient times, murals were very important methods for recording memories. They often contain plenty of information…”

At the same time he made the suggestion, he heard Audrey’s inner thoughts laugh and think:

“Klein—is this Mr. World’s real name? No, no—Don’t think too much about it. Mr. World will be angry. No, I think it’s more likely for him to feel embarrassed. No, no—this is all Lie’s fault. Mr. World, please believe me! Phew, calm down. Calm down! Focus. Focus!”

Using the Spectator pathway's ability to control her emotions and thoughts, Audrey gradually reined in her thoughts and cast her gaze on the mural on the right.

Compared to them, Leonard's ability to control his mind was slightly weaker. There were still plenty of random thoughts resounding around him.

"Turning into marionettes… Is this fellow that dangerous now? Tsk tsk, so this is what's truly on your mind. Haha, Miss Justice's reaction is very interesting… I haven't seen that fellow in such an embarrassing situation in a long time…"

When Klein and Audrey began seriously looking at the murals and were exchanging their thoughts through the stirrings in their hearts, only then did Leonard gradually calm his thoughts and focus his attention.

The mural on the right depicted historic developments. There was a scene of human construction, scenes of snow- covered plains, war and migration, various nations and cities, as well as towers and fruits that represented zero communication barriers…

It was obvious that these murals started from the entrance and ended at the Dragon of Imagination's throne.

Towards the end, Klein suddenly noticed a familiar figure.

It was a gigantic dragon with bluish-blue eyes and ice-crystal scales.

It was the King of the North, Ulyssan!

"This… The book world's development is based on these murals?" As Klein's thoughts were exposed, he quickly looked back and found many blurry-faced adventurers hunting the frost dragon before opening a door to leave. The snow and ice melted before flourishing cities like Pessote appeared. They then discovered the weather turning cold, implying an end in which a new story was about to unfold.

"The contents of the murals will become reality in this book world?" Audrey couldn't help but have such a thought.

"This wall, this mural looks very ordinary. It's not even as good as the works of street artists… As expected of the Dragon of Imagination's residence. Is this the power and authority of an ancient god…?" Leonard similarly had poignant thoughts.

"It's possible." Before Klein could give a more tactful reply, he heard his own voice. "Let's look at the murals on the other side before putting everything together for analysis."

Leonard and Audrey didn't object and followed him to the other side.

During this process, they realized that even their Spirit Bodies couldn't fly in the palace.

As the murals were huge, it didn't take much walking before the three of them could see the corresponding content. The first mural near the entrance made Klein's pupils suddenly dilate.

In the mural, a giant with blurry looks, grayish-blue skin, and a single vertical was holding a hard-covered book in his hand!

"This…" Klein heard his own shocked and hesitant voice.

In the subsequent murals, the common highlight was the goatskin binding. There was a dark brown-covered book: it was obtained by the elves; the words on its surface changed; it was being put into a collection; It was obtained by different people, and it kept exchanging hands until it flew above the clouds and came to the cosmos where it landed on a gigantic claw.

In the next mural, the book seemed to have nothing to do with the scenes in front. It suddenly appeared over the surface of the sea and stayed inside a blurry ship.

In the penultimate mural, it was taken away by a man wearing a top hat before he left that ship.

The next mural was located behind the gigantic pillar suspected to be Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt's throne. It depicted that the book from before met a classic quill.

At this point, all the murals came to an end.

"0-08!" Leonard's shocked voice echoed in the hall.

"The Dragon of Imagination wants to create a set with the book and quill? What will happen? When dealing with Ince Zangwill, this scene almost appeared… But ultimately, it didn't happen because the book landed in my hands… before I sacrificed it to Mr. Fool. Otherwise, Adam was already prepared against it and deliberately provided some help?

"Oh right, previously while inside Groselle's Travels, the moment the ascetic mentioned the Angel of Imagination Adam, the frost dragon attacked the camp … It was because the book itself didn't allow him to finish his sentence, or had Adam heard his thoughts which became a connection for 'Him' to see and cast his gaze over, stirring up a certain reaction?" Klein's thoughts wandered before sounding it out loud.

During this process, he could only control himself to treat The Fool as another existence.

At the same time as he "spoke," Audrey's thoughts appeared:

"The contents on this mural will become reality in the physical world?"

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†

Adapted from Tennyson’s Godiva.

Chapter 1072 - The Call From Behind the Door

◆

“The contents on this mural will become reality in the physical world…”

Be it Klein or Leonard, they couldn’t help but repeat Miss Justice’s words in their hearts.

If the murals on the other side determined the history of the book world, then it was only considered rather amazing. However, the discovery on this side would be enough to shake everyone’s hearts and bring about a huge upheaval throughout their bodies.

The pictures you depicted would definitely show up on stage in the real world, not in an illusory world. This was the performance of a deity!

“It’s not that exaggerated, right…” After Leonard repeated the statement, he whispered in a low voice, finding it hard to accept.

Klein, on the other hand, started his analysis out of habit.

“Even if 0-08 can only affect a big city, making it difficult for it to exceed this range, a Sequence 1 Author of the Spectator pathway should be similar… And the Visionary’s Uniqueness has been confirmed to be in Adam’s hands… Then what does this City of Miracles rely on to guarantee that the contents on this mural will become a reality?

“The divine power of the Dragon of Imagination from back then? When this book was formed, the contents of the murals had already been branded into the sea of collective subconscious, sinking right inside and spreading its infection in every direction, so as to drive generation after generation to accomplish this without realizing it?

“If this is true, then the possibility of making another mural become a reality would definitely be nil, as the Dragon of Imagination has already perished, and there’s no way to provide any more divine power…

“But we can give it a try. If the contents of the new mural really happens in the physical world, it means that this City of Miracles really is Liveseyd, and it contains a huge secret. It also implies that matters regarding the Spectator pathway goes deeper than what I had imagined.”

“Author? There’s a potion name like that?” Hearing Klein’s thoughts, Leonard couldn’t help but mutter.

Compared to how the name “Dragon of Imagination” could be stretched to make an inference to the name “Visionary,” the potion name of “Author” was more eye-catching. It made one’s imagination run wild. It felt more like walking from reality and into the realm of fantasy.

Audrey, who had long known the name of the High-Sequence potions of the Spectator pathway, suddenly had another thought:

“Uniqueness… Mr. World actually managed to link up and analyze so many things in an instant. Impressive! Uh, did I praise him too directly? Mr. World has heard it all… This hall is really hard to adapt to… No, Mr. World, I really am praising you, I really mean it!”

Audrey felt a little ashamed at first, but then she quickly adjusted her state of mind, trying her best to keep calm.

“…As expected of a Psychiatrist. She adjusted herself really quickly…” A thought came to Klein’s mind.

“As expected, Mr. World isn’t as cold as he looks. He’s the type of person who will inwardly mutter to himself-Uh… I didn’t say anything!” Just as Audrey instinctively thought of something, she immediately denied it.

The same voice echoed around Leonard:

“Klein’s Gehrman Sparrow disguise isn’t bad. Almost everyone who knows him believes that he’s cold and crazy. Hehe, who would’ve thought…”

Just as Leonard’s thoughts were about to wander, a voice interrupted him.

“Shut up!”

Looking at the way Gehrman Sparrow was dressed, he spread out his hands, and held back his laughter as he said, “Look, that isn’t cold enough, right?”

“Cold? Then I’ll directly press the Unshadowed Crucifix against your head! If you don’t want your Beyonder characteristic, donate it to the people who need it!” Without being able to use Cogitation to control his thoughts, Klein instinctively retorted.

“…” Audrey looked at Mr. World and then at Mr. Star, and her heart skipped a beat. “So they have so much drama in their hearts… I could only tell that was the case for Mr. Star, but I failed to read what’s under The World’s poker face. Uh… Jiant, Boss, Minnie…”

At crucial moments like this, the experienced Audrey forcibly manipulated her thoughts to begin reciting names so as to stop her thoughts from wandering off.

“Who are they?” Leonard’s attention was diverted.

“They’re the hounds and horses my family rears,” Audrey replied politely.

“A hound costs 450 pounds…” Klein suddenly recalled Butler Walter’s suggestion of buying a batch of hunting dogs when he purchased Maygur Manor.

"Why is the first thing on Mr. World's mind the price…?" This question floated into Audrey's mind.

Leonard pursed his lips. Even though he didn't say a word, he answered, "Isn't this normal? This fellow has always been a little picky about this, I remember…"

Before he could "finish," Klein coughed lightly and said, "We'll continue exploring the other areas, and when we have time, we'll perform experiments on the murals.

"Sigh, this hall really complicates matters very easily. The main point is that everyone's privacy is brought to the forefront if we aren't focused…"

Upon hearing the last sentence of his complaint, Audrey and Leonard couldn't help but laugh out loud-but not by their own will.

Seeing that Mr. World clearly didn't want the situation to develop into chaos again, Audrey raised her head, looked up at the ceiling, and focused her attention and got down to business.

"The mural on the right side controls the book world, and the left seems to affect reality… What if you draw the mural on the ceiling? What would happen?"

Klein immediately made a connection.

"The Dragon of Imagination's authority contains at least three aspects: An 'envisioned' kingdom will descend upon the physical world, a declared future that will happen in the real world, and 'imagined' objects that will be conjured… The first point corresponds to the right mural, and the second point corresponds to our guesses on the left mural. Then, could the blank spot on the palace's ceiling be related to the third authority?"

“As long as you draw an object you imagined onto the ceiling, it will be conjured and be usable?” Audrey easily understood what The World meant.

“Then what if I were to draw a Dragon of Imagination?” Leonard “suggested.”

Klein glanced at him again.

“First of all, you would’ve had to have seen the Dragon of Imagination without completely breaking down and losing control. Secondly, you need to restore the main details of ‘His’ body. Finally, you have to know how to draw.”

“…I might not know how to now, but it doesn’t mean that I can’t in the future. I can hire a home tutor to teach me,” Leonard “grumbled” in reply. “And what does ‘the main details’ refer to? ‘His’ body structure, or the symbols and labels depicted from godhood?”

At this moment, Audrey pursed her lips and “said” with a brisk tone, controlling herself so as to not burst out laughing, “I can draw.”

This was the basic skill for a noble lady, and Audrey was quite talented in this aspect.

“Yeah, we can try it in the future when there’s time.” Klein nodded and walked towards the giant pillar right in front of the main hall.

His plan for this expedition was to first gain a complete understanding of the situation before considering how to venture deeper.

At the same time, he thought of something else because of Leonard’s question:

“The symbols and labels from godhood… These contain plenty of mixed knowledge. It can even let people learn the corresponding potion formulas and Beyonder powers after surviving the impact from witnessing it directly… Then, before the first Blasphemy Slate appeared, what would one obtain if they survived directly looking at a demigod or even an ancient god? There were no such things as potion formulas back then…

“Is it only through using a magic potion to advance one’s Mythical Creature form step by step that the godhood aspect is able to contain this portion of knowledge? Or perhaps, after the potion formula appears, Mythical Creatures who used any method of advancement had the corresponding knowledge forged within them?

“If it’s because of the two reasons I came up with, it means that the knowledge of godhood can change, and it can increase… Do angels of the Marauder pathway have the ability to alter such knowledge or even delete them directly?”

“Mr. World’s considerations are so deep and profound. They involve very high levels…” Audrey couldn’t help but “sigh.”

Leonard couldn’t control the voice in his heart either.

“There’s such a thing? I should ask Old Man when I return…

“This fellow sure knows a lot… It’s not entirely a pretense when he’s acting as Gehrman Sparrow. At least this sense of profoundness seems to belong to him…”

“Thank you for your praise. Stop!” With a small blood bottle in one hand and the Unshadowed Crucifix in the other, Klein forced himself to rein in his thoughts and cast his gaze at the ancient god’s “throne.”

They were in their Spirit Body forms now. Although they were unable to fly due to the restrictions from the main hall, their top speed was still much faster than their human form.

It was only then that Klein realized that, behind the pillar that looked like the Dragon of Imagination’s throne, there was a dark tunnel.

“I can’t see anything. If only there was light…” A thought subconsciously flashed through Audrey's mind.

Then, in that tunnel, a pure and soft light shone out, illuminating the inside of the tunnel completely.

Without needing to enter, Klein, Leonard, and Audrey saw a pair of double bronze doors at the deepest end of the tunnel.

There were countless indescribable symbols covering the door, like countless chains that extended behind them, as if they were sealing something. It gave off a heavy and mysterious feeling.

In the City of Miracles of the dragons, in the residence of an ancient god, there was apparently a sealed door behind "His" throne.

Almost at the same time, the three of them seemed to look through the bronze door and into the darkness inside.

Following that, they heard the loud thumping of hearts.

It was from their own heartbeats.

Yet, they were in their Spirit Body states now, so there was no such thing as a heart!

After that, the bronze-green color on the surface of the Unshadowed Crucifix slowly peeled off, revealing a corporeal body formed from pure light that emitted a sun-like glow.

As for Klein, Audrey, and Leonard, they felt a baffling sense of coldness. It was as if every cell had their own sentience and wanted to form another "self."

In their illusory vision, in the darkness behind the bronze door, an eye opened. Its pupil was dark, filled with ghostly-blue cracks.

One after another, similar-looking eyes opened too. They were densely packed together and wore a cold gaze that stared intently at them.

At this moment, Klein and the others seemed to hear a silent calling. It was an extremely attractive shout.

Without any hesitation, Klein's Spirit Body burgeoned and enveloped Leonard and Audrey. He ended the summoning and returned above the gray fog.

Chapter 1073 - Three Possibilities

◆

As he returned to the world above the gray fog, Klein felt the coldness in his body rapidly dissipate. There were no more Worms of Spirit trying to give birth to new consciousnesses.

A moment later, the mottled long bronze table appeared in front of him. He saw that Miss Justice and Leonard's Spirit Bodies were gradually becoming clearer amidst the thin gray fog, although they still maintained a certain blurriness to them.

After the gray fog swirled around them and sank into the "ground," Klein asked, "How are you feeling now?"

He used Gehrman Sparrow's usual tone, but he immediately recalled how his inner grumblings, inner thoughts, habitual analysis, and him dissing Leonard had been exposed. He was no longer able to maintain his image in front of Miss Justice.

It's all Leonard's fault! Sigh, as per the doctor's advice, not only did I not wear a thick mask this time, but I even removed the thin kind… This thought flashed in his mind unconsciously as he cut off his thoughts and warily glanced around.

He still hadn't gotten rid of the fear of having his thoughts "spoken" out loud.

Luckily, this was no longer the place that he had named "the Hall of Truth." There were no more "magical" powers that he couldn't defend again via normal means.

It was obvious that Audrey and Leonard also had a similar trauma due to their post-traumatic stress. One of them suddenly pursed her lips, while the other sat up straight, as though they had instinctively thought of something.

After a few seconds of silence, they then remembered that The World had asked about their situation, so they quickly turned their attention back on the right track.

"I feel like something was being purified… I had the illusion that I would dissociate into a second personality—no, it wasn't a second personality—it seemed like a consciousness that didn't belong to me was awakening inside my body. Yes, it's now gone. Praise be to Mr. Fool!" Audrey rather professionally did a psychoanalysis on herself before sincerely expressing her gratitude.

I can openly accept such gratitude… That was a dangerous thought. Thankfully, Miss Justice's and Leonard's thoughts didn't steer towards The Fool while inside the Hall of Truth. Otherwise, I'd definitely not be able to resist the urge to "reply." That'd spell the end of me… My sense of shame will cause me to lose control on the spot, breaking down into a clump of Worms of Spirit… Klein's thought flashed as he seriously replied, "Praise be to Mr. Fool!"

"…Praise be to Mr. Fool." As a believer of the Evernight Goddess, Leonard hesitantly echoed and quickly changed the topic. "There's nothing wrong with me too. Just now, I felt something calling me from behind the bronze door. What about you?"

Seeing that Leonard had confirmed his condition, Klein placed the Unshadowed Crucifix and the metal bottle containing his blood onto the long, mottled table in front of him.

"I felt the same way too," he answered with certainty.

"Me too. It wasn't an illusion. I did an analysis on my own mind," Audrey said in a very clear and certain tone.

Leonard held his chin and said, “What could that be?

“It actually needed an ancient god to seal it behind ‘His’ throne…”

After what had happened before, he felt that he no longer had much of an image in front of Miss Justice, so his posture became more casual.

“We can try analyzing this…” Audrey carefully glanced at The World.

She had a deep impression of this gentleman’s ability to gather information, make connections, complete an analysis, and infer the information in a short period of time.

Klein thought for a moment and said without any inclinations, “There are only three possibilities. One, it’s a powerful creature from the Second Epoch of the real world. It’s at least close to Sequence 0, and the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt had sealed it behind ‘His’ throne and beneath the City of Miracles Liveseyd. However, I don’t think that’s very likely. This is because that ancient god definitely had ‘His* reasons for creating this book and stuffing Liveseyd into it while affecting the book world and the real world. It’s unlikely ’He’ would place an unpredictable element in here for prolonged periods of time.”

“Yeah, we all know that we have to eliminate possible accidents, what’s more, an ancient god.” Audrey nodded slightly and began to discuss seriously with The World Gehrman.

At this moment, Leonard chuckled and said, “Perhaps an ancient god like the Dragon of Imagination had seen certain scenes of the distant future and believes that the sealed item will help ‘Him’ achieve ‘His’ goals?”

“That’s why I said that it’s not impossible, but it’s highly improbable,” Klein replied calmly. “The second possibility is that the sealed item is key to the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt’s ploy. Once this book and 0-08 meet, the seal will be released and that object will return to the real world and bring about certain changes. I believe that this theory has the highest possibility.”

Amongst them, perhaps it also involves the Dragon of Wisdom’s true attitude or intent.

“Then what could it be? Mr. Fool once said that, after Adam obtained 0-08, ‘He’ is even closer to being divine. The times have changed as a result. Does this mean that Adam has gathered all the ingredients for Visionary and is just short of the ritual… Is there anything wrong with my understanding?” Audrey shared her point of view.

“I’m not sure either. I’ll pray to Mr. Fool and see if I can get a clearer revelation.” Klein didn’t want to say give a firm answer.

Unfortunately, Old Man is an angel from the Fourth Epoch and doesn’t know much about the Second Epoch, but “He” isn’t unfamiliar with Adam… The Star Leonard thoughtfully said, “I’ll try…”

He wanted to say that he would try investigating, but upon recalling that the two knew his secret, he gave up such thoughts and directly said, “…try asking Old Man.”

“Sorry to trouble you,” Audrey sincerely thanked him.

From her point of view, this was a matter regarding the Spectator pathway. The person most concerned about this was undoubtedly herself, while others were merely providing help.

Then she said, “The third possibility is that there is some sort of object or monster sealed inside the book world?”

“Yes, it might be closely related to the book world, and destroying it might cause the book world to collapse. Therefore, all Ankewelt did was seal it.” Klein shared his theory.

Audrey thought for a while before saying, “I have an idea regarding this possibility.”

Seeing Mr. World and Mr. Star cast their gazes over, awaiting an answer, she slowed down her pace and said, "I'm considering it from a psychological perspective.

"Since that book world was created by Ankewelt's 'envisioning' it, the sea of collective subconscious there would definitely be formed as a result of 'Him.' It would have 'His' psyche, emotions, and feelings branded into it.

"Perhaps the City of Miracles, Liveseyd, seals the most extreme parts of these things. They're the trauma or fears of the Dragon of Imagination. Some terrifying matters from 'His1 consciousness might be projected onto this brand. As long as 'He' cannot defeat them, and if it hasn't been dealt with in the real world, the book world's sea of collective subconscious cannot be destroyed and can only be sealed. If it's ignored, they will slowly contaminate the sea of collective subconscious and make the development of history deviate from its intended path."

Leonard was more focused than when he attended Red Gloves meetings. He couldn't help but mention when he had heard that:

"As an ancient god that ruled the sky and the mind, what could've left an irremovable trauma and create such an intense sense of fear?"

"I don't know." Audrey shook her head frankly. "If it's just a psychological analysis, since it's sealed under the throne and at the bottom of the City of Miracles, and is reached by a tunnel, it means that the source of the trauma and fear comes from underground. Therefore, the Dragon of Imagination sealed it—no, 'He' isolated the mental projection coming from underground. Otherwise, why wouldn't it be beside the throne, in the depths of the hall, in a specially created jail, or somewhere else?"

Upon hearing Miss Justice's words, Klein instantly thought of what had happened to Miss Magician and Miss Judgment.

According to the information provided by the Sanguine, they found an ancient castle of unknown age. At the bottom of the castle was a bronze door that seemed to seal something terrifying that came from underground. Once they approached the door or stayed in its vicinity for too long, they would be corrupted, dying a tragic death!

It was an ancient castle that was built to defend against something unknown. It was originally guarded by humans from an unknown era… After the Sanguine discovered it, no one dared to enter… Back then, I thought that it might be related to Devils and that one needed to be a demigod in order to explore it… Could this be related to the seal in Liveseyd? Klein's thoughts wandered as he quickly found the relevant information from his memories.

On the way to the ruins of the battle of the gods on Cattleya's Future, he met a so-called "deep-sea well."

At that time, the Future's sailor, Nina, had dived to the bottom of the sea and did a series of investigations. She said that it wasn't a giant well. It was deep and dark, impossible for a human child to enter. The bottom couldn't be seen, and there were strange honeycombed signs of corrosion along the inner walls. Surrounding it were collapsed iron buildings.

In a sense, this is also a "tunnel" that goes deep underground… Klein looked around and deliberated before saying, "Do you remember the matter Miss Magician mentioned? Under an abandoned castle in Delaire Forest, there is a pair of doors that seals a powerful corruptive force."

"Ah, right!" Audrey instantly recalled the past. "Could it be that in the early days of the Second Epoch—in that ancient era—supernatural beings had some common, terrifying enemy that came from underground?"

"Perhaps." Klein couldn't give an affirmative answer, so he took the opportunity to say, "It might also be like the many predictions of the apocalypse which state that the danger comes from the cosmos.”

“Yeah.” Audrey and Leonard didn’t know much about such matters, so they couldn’t discuss this matter too deeply.

“Let’s end it here for today. After we have a preliminary understanding of the situation, we will try to experiment on the murals. Also, remember to keep this a secret.” Klein shot a look at Leonard and said, “Oh, after you return, pray to Mr. Fool and request that ‘He’ be the witness to our vows to not divulge each other’s secrets.”

Audrey didn’t object and added, “I’ll use Hypnosis here to forget certain matters here to prevent myself from remembering it when I return.”

Chapter 1074 - The Answer to Questions

◆

After Audrey and Leonard left the gray fog, Klein didn't immediately return to the real world.

He was still sitting on the high-back chair that belonged to The World, silent for more than ten seconds.

Then, he beckoned for an item.

It was a "heart" that was the size of a child's fist, one that full of grayish-white wrinkles:

A Manipulator's Beyonder characteristic!

Holding the Beyonder characteristic, Klein stood up and walked out of the majestic palace. He entered the depths of the mysterious space above the gray fog and arrived at the staircase of light that seemed to lead to a divine kingdom.

Walking along the stairs, he walked up to the floating grayish-white clouds and stood in front of the strange door of light and the hanging transparent cocoons. Klein raised his right hand, lifting the brain-like, heart-like Manipulator Beyonder characteristic to his chest and extended his spirituality, hoping to use it.

He wanted to see if there were still any subconscious thoughts in the people inside the "cocoons." He wanted to see if they had put together a miniature sea of collective subconscious.

If that happened, he planned to use Hvin Rambis's Manipulator

Beyonder characteristic to enter the consciousness and check on the psyche branding to figure out what the people who had been hanging above the door of light had experienced before their “transmigration.” He wanted to know if they sensed anything during that long “slumber.”

This was the inspiration that the expedition today gave him.

Of course, the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Hvin Rambis might not be able to help Klein do what he wanted.

It was because it hadn’t been made into a mystical item, and it was very difficult to use effectively.

In an instant, the grayish-white and wrinkled “heart” in Klein’s hand started to beat slowly as it emitted thumping sounds.

Klein then heard the synchronized heartbeats among the transparent “cocoons.”

Thump! Thump…

This meant that the people inside were still alive, only in a certain state of slumber.

In Klein’s vision, their figures gradually evolved into several blurry islands beneath them.

This represented their consciousness.

However, these spiritual islands were also trapped within transparent “cocoons,” separating them from the prying eyes of the outside world.

Similarly, they were unable to integrate and create a sea of collective subconscious.

Unless the ‘cocoon’ is destroyed, there’s no way to bypass them and enter the corresponding mind world… Klein muttered to himself and lowered the hand holding the Manipulator Beyonder characteristic.

After a few seconds, he sighed deeply and turned around to leave.

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

With the silk blanket over her, Audrey, who was sleeping soundly with her eyes closed, suddenly opened her eyes.

She then sat up, moved to the side of the bed, and prayed sincerely to Mr. Fool, asking “Him” to witness her vow to secrecy.

After she was done with this matter, she pulled a pillow over and placed it behind her waist, reminiscing over the experiences that she had yet to “forget” during the exploration.

The history of ancient times is really interesting and terrifying… Mr. Star’s performance is similar to my usual observations of him. He’s more carefree and casual, and his thoughts easily wander in an uncontrollable manner. Yet, there are matters where he shows his experience and acuity. He’s rather reliable… This isn’t a contradiction, as many people have such “mixed layers to themselves”…

Mr. World is indeed a gentle person. He doesn’t seem to wear much of an expression on his face, but he’s secretly inwardly muttering something to himself all the time. His mental conversations with Mr. Star can practically be adapted into a play…

People call him a crazy adventurer who doesn’t care about his surroundings, one that directly draws his gun to shoot when he sees a target… Well, at the last moment, I thought he would attempt to approach the bronze door, but in the end… He fled. No, he broke away so decisively! Audrey’s lips slowly curled up when she thought of this.

Then, she made a conclusion.

The facts have proven that, in the mysterious world, unless one has completely lost all sense of rationality or has given up on thinking, there will not be any Beyonders who will really do crazy things. One has to be careful and cautious, not seeing things that shouldn’t be seen, and not hear things that shouldn't be heard.

Audrey, you must remember this!

7 Pinster Street. Leonard returned to his body.

He quickly thought of how he should talk to Pallez Zoroast before pretending like nothing had happened and saying in a deep voice, "Old Man, I have something to ask you."

In his mind, Pallez's slightly-aged voice immediately laughed.

"You have to remember this. The more you ask, the more I can guess what you did tonight."

"It's not like there's anything that needs to be kept a secret…" Leonard replied habitually before getting down to the main issue. "Old Man, what do you know about the Amon's brother?"

"That depends on what you want to know." Pallez Zoroast tossed the question back at Leonard.

Leonard thought for a moment and said, "After Amon's brother obtained 0-08, is 'He' only short of the ritual to become a god?"

Probably." Pallez didn't give an affirmative answer.

Leonard wasn't too satisfied with this answer. Instead, he said, "I remember you mentioning it once. In the early stages of the Solomon Empire, the two Kings of Angels, Medici and Ouroboros were quite scared of Amon and his brother. This means that they were already very close to being divine."

This was something that Pallez had occasionally mentioned during their previous exchanges. This time, Leonard had confirmed it from some of Mobet's answers.

"Heh, I've only said the first half of the sentence. I didn't tell you that Amon and Adam are very close to being divine." Pallez rejected

Leonard's claim. "There are too many possibilities as to why Medici and Ouroboros are afraid. It's not just because 'He' is close to being divine. It's not enough to make such a conclusion based on that."

The Sequence 1 angel cleared his throat and continued, "'Them' being close to being divine is one of the possibilities. Adam and Amon wield unique authorities, and them being hard to deal with is another possibility. For instance, you will always have no idea that Adam is sitting beside you. You have no idea if what you're doing was arranged by 'Him,' nor do you know that you're walking into 'His' trap by your own volition. Heh, I'm referring to you, not me. Of course, I also have to be way of such matters. Letting my guard down might result in terrible consequences for me too.

"As for Amon, 'He' has many different ideas and has a 'do-it' spirit, making it hard for people to guess 'His' motives and be on guard against 'Him.' Besides, 'He' is very good at deceit. There's always some conspiracy behind 'Him.' In that era, apart from the true deities, there was no one who wasn't afraid of 'Him.' Heh heh, even true deities had to be wary of him; otherwise, they might have certain authorities stolen by 'Him' at some point in time."

Leonard nodded indiscemibly and diverted the topic:

"Old Man, do you think the Spectator pathway is hiding any secrets?"

"I don't think there are any secrets below the level of angel. I'm not sure of anything above it." Pallez said after pondering for a few seconds.

Without waiting for Leonard to respond, "He" hesitantly added, "I heard from Medici that high-level Beyonders of the Spectator pathway are the hardest to lose control or go crazy, but it's also the easiest to lose control and go crazy."

"Why?" Leonard asked in surprise.

Pallez Zoroast scoffed and said, "I have some guesses, but I lack the necessary evidence and logic behind them. I don't want to tell you for the time being."

"You actually don't have any ideas or theories, right…" Leonard habitually grumbled.

"Don't try your little tricks in front of me." The slightly-aged voice wasn't affected at all.

Leonard didn't dare to ask further as he deliberated for a moment before saying, "Old Man, I went to a real dream this time. There were quite a lot of psyche remnants of people from ancient times in it.

"Do you know a viscount named Mobet Zoroast?"

"Mobet…" Pallez's voice suddenly aged significantly before returning to normal. "He's a direct descendant of my bloodline. He vanished after a large-scale war, and I thought that he had been killed by Amon or Jacob in passing, causing me to fail to divine the murderer… From the looks of it, things weren't that simple."

"Indeed." Leonard gave an affirmative answer. Then, he briefly provided the gist of things: "He's been dead for some time, leaving some of his psyche behind. In that real dream, he married a songster from the elves…"

After listening quietly, Pallez said after a while, "That's good, too…"

Leonard had originally wanted to mention that Mobet also addressed Pallez as "Old Man," but he suddenly couldn't bring himself to. He had no choice but to end the conversation there.

After witnessing Leonard's and Audrey's vow, Klein returned to the real world.

He tidied up the altar in the room, took out a pen and paper, and drew a complicated symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying.

He wanted to summon Arrodes to ask how it had confirmed that Groselle's Travels had appeared after the disappearance of the City of Miracles, Liveseyd.

After waiting for more than ten seconds, the full-body mirror in the room lit up with a faint aqueous light.

Silver words appeared one after another in the dim light:

“Exalted, benevolent, Great Master, your puny, loyal, and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning!

“Do you have any orders for me?”

“Some questions.” After giving his answer, Klein was in no hurry to ask about the matter regarding Groselle's Travels, intending to start with something that wasn't very sensitive first.

He thought and said, “Arrodes, there's an abandoned castle in Delaire Forest. In the depths of it is a pair of bronze doors. It seems to be sealing some power coming from underground. Do you know what it is?”

The moment he finished speaking, the light on the full-body mirror's surface suddenly dimmed and turned pitch-black. In the pitch-blackness, white, liquefied words appeared one after another:

“I came from underground…”

Chapter 1075 - No Response

◆

“I came from underground…”

Looking at the ghastly-white words that appeared on the full-body mirror, a chill suddenly ran down Klein’s back. His pupils dilated as he instinctively wanted to switch places with his marionette next door.

In the room where the valet was, Enuni, who was lying quietly, had opened his eyes.

His stomach began to expand and contract as though he had a second heart, one that beat extremely slowly.

At the same time, the scene of the magic mirror, Arrodes, answering where it came from flashed through Klein’s mind:

Large amounts of black sticky liquid spewed out from an underground hole, writhing and expanding, an uneven number of hands and legs that turned into numerous monsters grew out. During this process, a speck of light was shot out along with the black liquid before landing on a rock, to which it rapidly fused together, turning into a mirror with ancient patterns and black gems adorning its two sides—Arrodes’s main form.

It really came from underground… And this underground is the same as the underground area sealed by the bronze door inside the ancient abandoned castle… I didn’t make the connection before… It’s not like I could help it. There are just too many things that involve things from underground. Most of them have little special meaning, just like coal…

Hmm, a few days ago, I didn't think that there was anything overly special with the underground… Klein controlled the urge within him and ignored the shock from Arrodes's answer, and he said with an unperturbed expression, "What's the exact situation?"

The ghastly-pale words changed and gave off a baffling feeling, as though it was almost crying.

"Great Master, I'm not exactly sure what happened. I only came to the surface and became a mirror before I gained true sentience. I don't remember anything from before.

"Oh yeah, there's something that might be related. Do you want to hear it?"

"Speak." Seeing that Arrodes's attitude was still alright, Klein heaved a sigh of relief.

The color of the words on the full-body mirror's surface had slightly recovered, and it became somewhat pure white:

"Didn't I say it before? I see support and dominance from you, and other than that special calling, I have similar feelings towards the underground. It makes me feel warm and makes me want to return to submit myself. This might be why I became your servant."

What? The things from underground give people the same feeling as the gray fog? They all involve support and dominance? Upon seeing Arrodes's answer, Klein jumped in fright once again. If not for his Clown's ability, he would've lost his composure.

At that moment, he suddenly recalled a Chinese joke he had seen in his previous life and substituted himself into it: "What? The things that the ancient gods fear come from underground?

"What? Arrodes also comes from underground?

"What? I also come from underground?"

This is really funny and scary… No, this might not be a joke. The original owner of the mysterious space above the gray fog, the creator of that strange door of light, the existence that pulled all the transmigrators over, might be related to the underground, or he has all kinds of connections with it… Klein's thoughts wandered as he instantly thought of many matters.

As an indescribable shadow loomed over him, he smiled and mocked himself, "No matter what, there are new clues and directions for the investigation into the gray fog and transmigration…"

Klein composed himself and asked in deliberation, "What do the Churches and secret organizations know about the underground objects that require sealing?"

On the full-length mirror, the white words returned to its silver color:

"It's almost unheard of. It seems to be concealed by some sort of power."

Isn't that "concealment"… Klein frowned slightly and didn't say a word.

The silver words on the mirror continued to appear:

"However, there are some legends that exist within a group of secret organizations.

"According to the legends, the underground is described as the lair of Devils and evil spirits, the source of humanity's decadence, the primordial sins and evil."

The first one is wrong. The underground object that needs to be sealed has a high chance of having nothing to do with Devils or evil spirits… Legends are actually similar to the mysterious symbols. Don't look at what is said, but peel off its outer skin and figure out what it symbolizes… This symbolizes the fear of the underground, from the body to the spirit, from one's consciousness to one's feelings? Klein's thoughts raced as he said with a nod, "It's your turn to ask a question."

"Great Master, your loyal servant, Arrodes, has a small suggestion. Do you want to hear it?" Silver words appeared on the full-body mirror one after another.

"Speak." Klein could vaguely guess what Arrodes was suggesting.

"Before you return to being divine, try not to investigate anything related to being sealed underground." The silver words quickly squirmed, reforming into a new sentence.

As expected… Klein sighed and calmly said, "Next question: how did you confirm that Groselle's Travels appeared after the disappearance of the City of Miracles, Liveseyd?"

The words on the surface of the mirror quickly distorted, merging into a clump, and then quickly dispersing:

"It's a revelation and information obtained from the spirit world; since it originated from the dragons' subsidiary god, the Dragon of Wisdom, your loyal servant believes that it can be confirmed.

"Great Master, is there a problem with that?"

How direct… After sighing, Klein instantly thought of how the Dragon of Wisdom, Herabergen, should've entered the book world before and approached the bronze door behind the ancient god's throne, likely having some knowledge of what was sealed underground due to "His" "omniscience." Furthermore, Klein believed that the ancient dragon had hidden a deeper layer of secrets in Groselle's Travels.

He could vaguely grasp it, but he couldn't tell what it was and grasp at it.

"No," Klein answered Arrodes's question.

Then, he probed, "Why didn't you mention the Dragon of Wisdom's true name?"

"It's because I don't dare to directly give the name of a god." Arrodes gave a confirmed answer in a tacit manner.

Klein nodded and didn't ask further.

"It's your turn."

"Great Master, do you have any more questions?" The silver word rapidly reorganized itself on the slightly dark mirror. "No, that's all for today." Klein shook his head.

With that said, he remembered what had happened the previous time and added, "I'll summon you again when there are new questions."

The full-body mirror immediately brightened, and the silver words sparkled:

Yes, Master!

"Your loyal and strong servant, Arrodes, is waiting for you to call again!"

This time, it wasn't a simple drawing but a white cat's paw with a red center.

…There's always something new…The corner of Klein's mouth twitched slightly as he watched the full-body mirror the bedroom return to normal.

He stood in the darkness, bathed in the crimson moonlight shining through the curtains. After standing quietly for a while, he returned to his bed and quickly fell asleep with the help of Cogitation.

The next morning, on Monday morning, Klein woke up 15 minutes earlier than usual. He led his valet, Enuni, down to the first floor and said to Butler Walter, "I had a nightmare last night. I want to visit the cathedral before breakfast."

Although Butler Walter was surprised by this, it wasn't too strange.

After all, as long as the cathedral's doors were open, people could enter at any time.

He quickly arranged for a carriage and sent Dwayne Dantes all the way to the door.

When Klein arrived at Saint Samuel Cathedral, the door wasn't opened yet. He waited until eight before entering the main hall with the first batch of believers. He found a seat in the first few pews and sat down facing the Dark Sacred Emblem. Closing his eyes in the tranquil environment, he focused on chanting the Goddess's honorific name in ancient Hermes.

"The Evemight Goddess who stands higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity. You are also the Lady of Crimson, the Mother of Concealment, the Empress of Misfortune and Horror, Mistress of Repose and Silence…"

After he finished reciting the honorific name, he changed to his normal Loen language and said almost soundlessly, "There's an ancient castle in the middle of Delaire Forest. There's an ancient bronze door deep within it. It's sealing a powerful corruptive force… How should I eliminate this latent problem there?"

This wasn't a test of a deity, but an open report. As for what reaction the Church would have after that, and what they would see through their operations, was a whole other matter.

After repeating it seven times, he began to pray seriously.

Time passed. In the quiet and peaceful church, Klein stood up and walked out of Saint Samuel Cathedral with his valet, Enuni.

During this process, he didn't receive any revelations, nor did he see the matron of the Evernight cloister, Arianna.

The feedback itself meant something.

That was he wasn’t qualified to know about the underground seal.

East Borough, in a two-bedroom apartment.

Fors pulled up the blanket and covered her head.

She abhorred the curtains here because they were too thin and translucent and couldn’t block out the morning sun. That seriously affected her quality of sleep.

I have to change it. No, we might have to move again soon… Just as Fors’s thoughts wandered about, she heard the sound of the bedroom door opening and Xio’s familiar gait.

In a flash, her blanket disappeared and a letter landed on her.

Your letter, from Pritz Harbor,” Xio informed her.

“…Teacher’s reply.” Fors sat up suddenly, opened the letter, and quickly read it.

After a moment of silence, she said, “I have to go out for a while. My teacher has already reached Backlund… This letter should’ve arrived two days ago!”

The letter had a date and address.

“The postman over here isn’t that responsible.” Xio glanced at her friend and said, “Will you be late?”

“Fortunately, Teacher said that he would wait three days for me.” Fors hurriedly got off the bed and started changing her clothes.

She had a feeling that she would be able to understand the Abraham family more deeply this time, and also receive the potion formula of Traveler and some Beyonder ingredients.

Chapter 1076 - Dorian's Request

◆

Outside Room 2016 at the Hat Trick Inn on Cherwood Borough's 22 Hope Street.

Fors directly walked through the wall without drawing anyone's attention. Then, she knocked on the door in a rhythm that was previously agreed upon.

Not long after, Dorian Gray Abraham, who was dressed in black, with his broad shoulders and thick arms, unlocked the door and turned the doorknob.

The gentleman quickly sized up the area and made way for Fors to enter the room.

"I really didn't expect you to become a Scribe so soon…" After closing the door, Dorian carefully examined the door's lock before turning around and sighing.

Based on the standards of this era, he was considered a middle-aged man, but he was still a Sequence 7 Astrologer. He had no hope of advancing

Yet, his student, Fors Wall, took about a year to go from Sequence 9 to Sequence 6.

This comparison between the two made Dorian feel poignant and sad.

The Abraham family's bloodline should've been noble and enviable, but now, it was a heavy curse that made him depressed.

“It’s because you taught me well.” Although Fors didn’t like going out and enjoyed staying at home, she would still be invited by the nobles from time to time. She was a best-selling author who participated in high society’s literary salons, so she wasn’t clueless as to how to speak. Furthermore, she had indeed obtained quite a bit of help from her teacher—from providing knowledge and money to formulas and ingredients.

Dorian looked at her and shook his head with a smile.

“It’s not like you’re my only student. As far as I remember, this advancement speed can only be matched by one person.”

He paused and continued, “Next up, your target is Sequence 5 Traveler. And I have even higher expectations for you. I hope that you can obtain godhood and become a Sequence 4 Secrets Sorcerer.

“Of course, I also have a request. When you truly become a demigod, try to pray to a hidden existence and listen to ‘His’ answer to figure out what ‘He’ is talking about.

“This is indeed a bit dangerous, but a Sequence 4 demigod would have sufficient power to withstand it. Without any other elements at play, there shouldn’t be any problems.”

“Teacher, is this answer important to you?” Although Fors knew what was going on, she still acted curious and puzzled.

Dorian fell silent for a few seconds before sighing

“It’s very important. My parents, my brothers, my sisters, my children, too many people have sacrificed their lives in pursuit of this answer, but to no avail…

“Don’t worry. We paid such a huge price because there’s an ancient curse on our family’s bloodline, and you aren’t related to us by blood.

“I don’t expect to find a way to break the curse through that answer during my generation. However, I hope to know where it originates from and understand the cause of my death…"

Upon saying this, Dorian took a deep breath and didn't continue.

For some reason, Fors could feel the weight of time that had accumulated over a thousand years, generation after generation, bearing down on her shoulders.

She really couldn't imagine how painful it would be for a person's ancestors, parents, brothers, sisters, and children to directly or indirectly die from the same curse.

Thinking of how well her teacher had been taking care of her, Fors, who had only received this type of care from her elders, opened her eyes, lowered her head, and nodded.

"I'll try my best."

Dorian held back his feelings and nodded slightly.

"The most praiseworthy trait of yours is your kindness."

Fors felt a little embarrassed as she turned to talk about a phrase the teacher had mentioned.

"Family?"

She remembered that her teacher had never told her about the Abraham family. He had claimed that he, Lawrence, and Aulisa were members of a secret organization.

In order to differentiate between matters which her teacher had told her and what she had learned at the Tarot Club, Fors had done a serious list of what she should know before she left home, to prevent herself from accidentally revealing information she shouldn't have.

Dorian answered simply, "In order to solve the curse, everyone in my family joined that organization."

He immediately changed the subject.

“Why did you move out in a hurry this time?”

“I was targeted by official Beyonders.” Fors first said a half-truth before complaining a little about the mailman.

Dorian didn’t say anything else as he stepped away from Fors and set up a ritual. He summoned the music-loving void creature, Malmouth, and he made it spit out three items.

One was a transparent, nearly illusory crystal, and the second item was a piece of ancient goatskin parchment. The third was a small hunter’s backpack.

“This is a Beyonder characteristic left behind by a Traveler. With it, you don’t need to gather any additional main ingredients. This is the Traveler potion formula. This backpack contains the corresponding supplementary ingredients. If you don’t have a good way to preserve them, try your best to finish digesting the Scribe potion within half a year. Otherwise, their spirituality will be completely lost…” Dorian handed everything over to Fors.

“Thank you, Teacher,” Fors said sincerely.

Then, she unfurled the goatskin and quickly skimmed through the potion formula before placing her focus on the ritual.

“Set up special coordinates in four completely different spots deep in the spirit world which are all set up extremely far away from each other.”

“The goal of this ritual is?” Fors thought for a few seconds and asked her teacher.

“After consuming the Traveler potion, you will wander the spirit world chaotically. When you grasp some degree of initial level over your powers, you will realize that you have lost your way. At that moment, you can use the four special coordinates to return to the real world. Otherwise, you will be trapped in the depths of the spirit world for a long time. Not only is it dangerous inside, but it will also assimilate you, making you lose your mind and become a living creature that is attached to the spirit world." Although Dorian had no hope of becoming a Traveler, he had seen students advancing to Sequence 5 before.

"Then there should be another alternative…" Fors muttered in thought.

"Yes." Dorian nodded and said, "Previously, there was something in the organization that could allow people to instantly return to the real world from the spirit world. Unfortunately, it was lost."

Without waiting for Fors to ask, Dorian said, "If I'm saying-if you really become a demigod and fulfill my wish, I'll hand over an important item that I'm in charge of to you. This is an expectation your teacher has for you."

One of the powerful Sealed Artifacts of the Abraham family? Fors had a vague guess, but she didn't dare promise anything. She said the same thing, "I'll try my best."

Following that, she asked curiously, "Teacher, you mentioned that Sequence 4 is a Secrets Sorcerer. What about Sequence 3, 2, and Sequence 1?"

Dorian immediately laughed.

"You're only a Sequence 6.

"Yes, Sequence 3's name is 'Wanderer.' Sequence 2 is 'Planeswalker,' and the Sequence 1 potion name is 'Key of Stars.'

"Heh heh, it's a good thing that you mentioned this. I actually forgot to organize a list of things to take note of in the spirit world. These are things that must be remembered after becoming a Traveler.

“In that case, I’ll stay for another night. You can visit me tomorrow for the documents.”

As Fors ruminated over the names of the High-Sequence potions of the Apprentice pathway, she agreed.

“Alright, Teacher.”

After settling these matters, Dorian paced back and forth and thought for a moment before instructing, “The Beyonder characteristics of the same pathway have a certain attraction towards each other. It’s not obvious when one’s at a low Sequence, but the higher the Sequence, the stronger it becomes.

“Sometimes, this kind of attraction isn’t something you can directly feel, while also making you unknowingly approach a High-Sequence Beyonder of the same pathway. When you become a Traveler, you have to pay attention to this matter.”

At this point, Dorian paused and said, “Not many demigods of the Apprentice pathway are still alive. Among them, you need to be extra careful of a man named Botis. He is the Saint of Secrets from the Aurora Order and, just like Lewis, he’s a traitor of our organization. I will give you his portrait tomorrow.”

Botis… Fors repeated the name her teacher had mentioned in her mind.

At the same time, she had a new understanding about the Aurora Order Oracle, Lewis Wien, over the previous chance encounter.

Perhaps it wasn’t a chance encounter, but the attraction force between Beyonder characteristics. Teacher had a sufficiently powerful Sealed Artifact from the Apprentice pathway on him!

Fors quickly suppressed this thought and began asking for advice on how to act as a Scribe.

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

There's actually a path that can bypass the front of the Giant King's Court and enter the interior from the Waning Forest and Barren Tunnel… Derrick Berg recalled the information he had been shared by Mr. World above the gray fog.

This was very important to the City of Silver, as the early-stage explorations after the Afternoon Town camp had set off implied that the closer they were to the Giant King's Court, the stronger the monsters that originated from the darkness were.

"I have to tell the Chief!" Derrick abruptly stood up and rushed out of his house, heading straight for the spire. As he wished, he saw the Chief of the six-member council, Colin Iliad.

He followed Mr. Hanged Man's instructions and said that he had recalled some murals he had seen in the Afternoon Town's "shadow." On it was a secret passage that led into the Giant King's Court.

Colin Iliad listened quietly without interrupting Derrick's narration. Finally, he nodded gently and said, "Good, you did well.

"What do you want to exchange for this contribution?"

"A mature mind dragon's complete brain." Derrick was prepared.

Colin didn't ask why as he thought for a moment and said, "If that secret passage is real, then the value will definitely exceed the complete brain of an adult mind dragon. Hmm… You can pick something else. Are you interested in the potion formula for a relatively higher Sequence of the Planter pathway?"

This is a question for Mr. Fool… While Derrick was enlightened, he said in surprise, "Do we have a relatively higher Sequence potion formula for the Planter pathway?"

He had no recollection of it.

"Of course. You should remember that the Giant King's queen is the

Goddess of Harvest, but the surrounding areas lack the corresponding Beyonder ingredients. There's no rush. You can think about it again." Colin Iliad calmly changed the subject. "Are you skilled with your Priest of Light powers?"

"Yes," Derrick replied succinctly.

Colin was silent for a moment as he looked at the adolescent child before him and said, "What kind of Saint-level Sealed Artifact do you want to choose?"

Chapter 1077 - Four Choices

◆

What kind of Saint-level Sealed Artifact do I want to choose? Derrick Berg subconsciously considered what he needed.

Due to the fact that the Sun pathway was rather powerful against the monsters in the darkness, and with Thunder God's Roar, he didn't have the desire for Sealed Artifacts that provided offensive or supportive effects. Instead, the pain from being beaten up while making friends made him subconsciously hope to obtain a mystical item that could provide stronger defensive capabilities.

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Derrick suddenly realized that the question wasn't directed at the Saint- level Sealed Artifact he wanted, but which Saint-level Sealed Artifact could be used to exchange for the Creator's cross from Mr. Fool.

He hesitated and frankly asked, "Your Excellency, do you have any suggestions?"

Colin glanced at him and left his original position. He slowly walked to the window and turned around.

"There are four Sealed Artifacts that are relatively suitable for you.

"The first item is called 'Sword of Silverdawn.' It was left behind by an elder who died thirteen hundred years ago.

"With this sword in hand, one can hide their malicious intent and certain actions, effectively interfering with divination and prophecy.

They would obtain an exaggerated amount of strength and bring to their surroundings a dawn that can resist evil and degeneration.

“It can also stir up a powerful destructive Hurricane of Light. It can create an invisible and sturdy defensive wall around the wielder. Every time it connects to the land, its defensive strength will be unshakeable.

“At the tip of the hilt is a single-eyed, huge-mouthed head engraving with living characteristics. Feeding the corresponding herbs, essential oils, and medicine to this engraving will give the Sword of Silverdawn different effects. For example, Lightning Strike, Freeze, Purification, Decay, and Exorcism.

“This sword has strict requirements for its usage. It’s impossible to lift up if one isn’t at least 180 centimeters tall. Below 200 centimeters, it will be hard to unleash its full strength. In addition, the head engraving at the hilt is very fond of talking. It’s always talking non-stop. If the wielder doesn’t respond, the Sword of Silverdawn might suddenly give up resisting at a critical moment and even attack its owner. If the wielder is willing to converse with the head engraving, they will be pushed to the edge of madness.”

This is what I want, a Sealed Artifact that’s good at defense… Derrick muttered to himself. He didn’t interrupt the Chiefs explanation as he quietly listened to him introduce the other Sealed Artifacts.

“The second is ‘Twilight Mask.’ This is from the first Chief. It’s a mask made from a skull. It can hide any malicious intent, thoughts, and inclinations. It makes the wearer feel like a dead person without any thoughts.

“As long as one puts on this mask, one will possess the power of a real giant and have control over the undead. Any living creature that looks directly into the eyes of the wearer will immediately die. Even those that possess godhood will be seriously injured. And even without any direct eye contact, the target of the wearer will slowly wither away as if they were floating across a river of death.

“The person wearing this mask can also create a terrifying Twilight Storm. Any item stained with the dim light will disintegrate, rot, wither, and die, losing the vibrancy of life.

“Most of the attacks, aside from purification, are ineffective against the wearer of Twilight Mask, as though no one can kill a dead person.

“This Twilight Mask is extremely powerful, but it’s extremely dangerous. Even if it’s not doing anything, the people around it would suddenly die one after another for no reason. Therefore, it must have a proper sealing method…

“No matter who it is, once you put on this mask, you will hear the sharp shriek and howls that seem to come from deep within the Underworld. This is a psyche attack that will drive people crazy and make them lose their minds. At the same time, as long as you wear this mask for more than five minutes, you will permanently become its slave.”

This Sealed Artifact is almost useless. Although it’s powerful, it can only be sealed… Uh… Only a mighty existence like Mr. Fool can ignore its negative effects… Derrick opened his mouth but didn’t say a word.

Colin Iliad did some recollecting and continued, “The third item is called ‘Life’s Cane.’ It can control Beyonder creatures with low intelligence and reduce their insanity for a short period of time. It can use incomplete spirits and various materials to complete the ultimate ‘Alchemical Life.’ This could create an ordinary human that can exist for a long time. It can also create different dolls that could be used for battle and various kinds of things; this includes stone golems, mud golems, and steel golems.

“Any living creature lashed by this cane would have an increased tendency towards madness and losing control. Their bodies would also have a certain chance of mutating, producing watermelons, mushrooms, and wheat. Of course, these things cannot be eaten, as they would result in contamination.

“As for the living beings touched by the cane’s tip, they’ll be healed no matter how seriously injured they are—other than those that have already lost control.

“This cane will fill the surrounding areas with a vibrant life force. Be it plants or animals, it can grow with exuberance and reproduce rapidly. Unfortunately, it is useless against this land that is cursed.

“The person carrying Life’s Cane has a high chance of mutating. The longer one holds it, the higher the odds. This will result in additional organs, or even them having missing body parts, being replaced by various plants.”

Sounds very sinister… For some reason, Derrick felt a little horrified. Finally, he couldn’t help but ask, “What’s the fourth Sealed Artifact?”

“It’s from a demon which lost control. I hunted it and called it ‘Fallen Flute.’

This is a plain-looking silver flute. However, once someone blows it, the living around it will fall into an unavoidable illusion. Their anger, sorrow, pain, greed, vanity, arrogance, and other desires would rapidly swell. Some would have their mind explode, others lose their sanity or experience a loss of control.

“Being in the vicinity of Fallen Flute, all sentient beings, other than the wielder, will significantly have their mental facilities deteriorate and will easily make mistakes.

“At the same time, the wielder of the flute is exceptionally sensitive to danger. Sometimes, they can even predict the possibility of a threat to their lives one to two days early.

“Wherever this Fallen Flute is, one’s humanity will gradually degenerate, and all kinds of desires will enter center stage as their beliefs are cast aside. The wielder will also turn cold and be unable to have normal emotions again. The more they use it and the more they carry it, the worse it will be. And this might result in conflict with their own pathway's acting, leading to an increased risk of losing control."

After introducing the fourth Sealed Artifact, Colin Iliad's light blue eyes, which seemed to be filled with stories, looked at Derrick and asked, "What do you think?"

"…I need some time to consider," Derrick replied rather skillfully.

"Indeed, this is really important to you. You can't rashly make a decision." Colin nodded. "Three days later, we will set off for the Afternoon Town camp. Tell me your answer before we set off, and reserve some time to familiarize yourself with the Sealed Artifact."

"Yes, Your Excellency." Derrick bowed seriously and left the Chiefs room.

He wasn't in a rush to return home to pray to Mr. Fool. Instead, he planned on heading to the training field first to temper his various "Sun" domain theurgical spells.

This was a habit engraved deep within the pulses of every single person in the City of Silver. Only a self-disciplined person who could endure hardship was able to live longer in these desolate and dark lands.

In a dark alley in the Backlund Bridge area.

Xio once again met the golden-masked MI9 member who clearly showed kindness to her.

The Judge potion formula might take some time," the golden-masked man said.

This was because, although the investigation into Xio didn't continue, it didn't end.

Xio pursed her lips and nodded, as though she had finally made up her mind.

"I don't want that formula anymore."

"You… gave up?" The golden-masked man was surprised and couldn't hide his joy.

Xio didn't directly answer as she turned her head to the side and said, "I-I'll exchange all my contributions for cash." After hearing her answer, the golden-masked man nodded in relief.

"It's best that you understand.

"Let bygones be bygones. You, your mother, and brother will have a brand new future.

Yes, if your contributions are exchanged for cash, it'll be about 2,000 pounds. I'll help you gain more. After that, you can continue being an outer circle member of MI9. Having an official status is very useful for unaffiliated Beyonders."

Xio was silent for a few seconds before her lips quivered.

"Thank you."

She could clearly sense the kindness coming from the man in front of her, so she sincerely thanked him.

However, there was no way she was giving up. The reason why she chose cash was because she had already reserved the Judge potion formula from The World Gehrman Sparrow—the crazy adventurer had also claimed that the Disciplinary Paladin potion formula would subsequently follow.

At the same time, giving up on the surface could effectively dispel the suspicions of MI9.

After briefly explaining the progress of the previous commissions, Xio bade farewell to the golden-masked man and left the alley.

On Tuesday morning, Fors went out early and came to the Hat Trick

Inn in Cherwood Borough where she met her teacher, Dorian Gray.

“This is one of the things to take note of in the spirit world. This is a portrait of Botis.” Dorian covered his mouth and yawned before handing a thick stack of paper to Fors.

Fors wasn’t in a rush to read the documents as she cast her gaze at the portrait.

On it was a black-robed man who likely wasn’t even forty. His brown hair was slightly curled, but it gave off an unusually firm feeling. His dark eyes seemed to contain countless objects.

This is the Saint of Secrets… Fors rubbed her fingers together and used her Trickmaster powers to burn that portrait. “Not bad. Very cautious.” Dorian nodded approvingly.

He then carried his suitcase and said to Fors, “I have to return to Pritz Harbor. It will arouse suspicion if I come to Backlund for too long.”

Fors knew that the situation in Backlund had been tense recently, so she was eager for her teacher to leave as soon as possible; therefore, she didn’t hold him back and watched him leave the room.

Then, with the help of Door Opening, she walked all the way to the alley behind the hotel.

Just as she got her bearings and turned into a street, she suddenly saw a man in a black trench coat walking over.

The person swept a glance at her before looking away naturally. However, Fors’s back muscles tensed up.

Her eyes reflected the other person’s appearance:

A man who likely wasn’t even forty. His brown hair was slightly curled, but it gave off an unusually firm feeling. His dark eyes seemed to contain countless objects.

Chapter 1078 - The Hidden Secret

◆

Saint of Secrets Botis… Fors had experienced many things recently, to the point of being watched by a King of Angels, so she didn't show any signs of abnormality. She retracted her gaze in a natural manner and didn't slow down her pace as she walked towards the man in the black trench coat.

After a few steps, they brushed past each other.

…Did he happen to pass by here because of the attraction between Beyonder characteristics? If he knew that Teacher was here, he wouldn't be so slow and would use Teleport to chase after him… Luckily, Teacher has already boarded the carriage and left the inn… Fors's heart calmed down, her tense mind relaxing a little.

She took a few more steps forward and looked up at the sky. She wanted to confirm if it would rain later.

At this moment, a raven flew over and landed on a tree along the way. It faced the spot where Fors had just passed by.

Fors stopped thinking about Saint of Secrets Botis as she maintained her speed and left the street.

As the Aurora Order hadn't held a gathering in Backlund for a long period of time, and with the target being a demigod, Fors didn't have any thoughts of seeking revenge for her teacher. Ignoring her lack of combat strength, just finding and locking onto a Secrets Sorcerer was a nearly impossible task.

…It's best that I wait till I become a Traveler. I might encounter Botis by chance before entrusting Mr. World the corresponding mission. I'll take the time to save up money… Now, it's certain that the Aurora Order has saints in Backlund… Hmm, I can't eliminate the possibility that during Botis's "Travel" elsewhere today, he was influenced by the attraction force of Beyonder characteristic and had accidentally lost his way in Backlund… Fors very naturally considered looking for The World Gehrman Sparrow's help.

From what she knew, this gentleman had killed two demigods with his own hands, and he had only become a demigod for three months!

In the upper echelons of the seven Churches, they only have about ten demigods… Based on Mr. World's progress, it will take him at most two years to wipe out the powerhouses of a Church… Of course, the real world isn't an ideal measurement… Having received higher education, Fors, who had been a surgeon, gradually let her thoughts wander. She walked to the street and boarded a rental carriage.

Above the gray fog, there was a mini-gathering with The Sun Derrick, The Hanged Man Alger, and The World Gehrman Sparrow.

However, unlike before, Mr. Fool was present as the witness because The Sun's main motive was to find out which Sealed Artifact could please this great existence, as well as to exchange it for the cross left behind by the Creator.

At the same time, he still had some questions to consult Mr. Hanged Man and Mr. World about, so he had applied for a private exchange.

Sword of Silverdawn, Twilight Mask, Life's Cane, Fallen Flute… These were all items that have outstanding powers and negative effects, ones that require sealing. This also confirms that the City of Silver doesn't have any Beyonders from the Artisan pathway. All the spoils can only be formed naturally. Even with a godlike Sealed Artifact, they can shatter the characteristics, but they are unable to reform them in a better way… As The Fool Klein listened to Little Sun's description, he quickly analyzed the pros and cons of different Sealed Artifacts in his mind.

The first thing he did was eliminate the Twilight Mask because the negative effects of the Sealed Artifact from the City of Silver's first Chief were too great.

Although Klein could let his marionette wear this mask and cut off the aural senses; thus, avoiding the continuous howls and screams. Furthermore, he didn't have to worry about his marionette becoming a slave to the Twilight Mask. However, in that case, his actual body might become a member of the dead who died suddenly for no reason.

Following that, Klein similarly gave up the Fallen Flute for the same reasons. This Sealed Artifact's ability to predict danger ahead of time was indeed better than the Desire Apostle in Creeping Hunger. It was alluring, but the negative effects were also not easy to avoid.

If Klein used this flute with his actual body, he would gradually turn cold and lose his normal emotions. This would be completely contradictory with the concept of using humanity to battle godhood to maintain balance. And if he were to hand it over to his marionette, he would experience a significant decrease in his mental facilities and easily make mistakes. This caused him to lose his main advantage as a Beyonder of the Seer pathway.

In addition, this flute will make the people around it give themselves up to degeneration and desires. I don't want the residents on Boklund Street to be degenerates who give up on their morals. By then, how many illegitimate children will be bom… I can only consider the Sword of Silverdawn and Life's Cane… Klein mumbled silently before quickly choosing between two.

The Sword of Silverdawn's head engraving seemed to have a living characteristic. To Klein, this meant that communication was possible, and as long as they could communicate, the negative effects could naturally be reduced. As for the height restriction, he could just ignore his thickness and only focus on his height. After all, this didn't affect a

Clown due to its extremely high sense of balance.

Regarding the problem of mutation with Life’s Cane, he could avoid it by handing it to his marionettes. When he lost or gained any organs, he could heal himself with Flower of Blood. And causing the surroundings to be filled with vitality, allowing for lush growth wasn’t much of a negative effect.

Since the negative effects of the two Sealed Artifacts weren’t too serious, he had to consider their effects. The Sword of Silverdawn was clearly from a Demon Hunter of the Warrior pathway. Be it attacks or defense, they were both potent. It could hide his malintent and be good at dealing with Devils. As for Life’s Cane, it was good at creating and causing mutations, which made it rather sinister.

After a few seconds of consideration, when Derrick asked for the answer, The Fool Klein spoke unhurriedly, as though he was discussing something ordinary.

“The cane.”

In the end, he decided on Life’s Cane!

In fact, the Sword of Silverdawn and Life’s Cane had their own pros, making it a tough decision. Klein’s final decision stemmed from an uncommon reason:

The sinister Life’s Cane could be described as bizarre, so it could effectively aid him in acting as a Bizarro Sorcerer and raise his potion digestion speed!

“Yes, Mr. Fool!” Derrick replied, unable to hide his joy.

This meant that when he completed the sacrificial and bestowment ritual, he would obtain the cross from the Creator. After determining this, he cast his gaze at the figure at the bottom of the long bronze table.

“Mr. World, other than the complete brain of an adult mind dragon, do you still need a relatively high Sequence potion formula for the Planter pathway?”

As the secret passage of the Giant King’s Court was shared by The World, he became the target of Derrick’s question, and not Mr. Fool.

Of course, to Derrick, The World was Mr. Fool’s Blessed. His answer represented Mr. Fool’s intentions to a certain extent.

A relatively high Sequence potion formula for the Planter pathway… Sitting at the end of the long bronze table, The Fool Klein immediately had a headache and fell into an intense internal struggle.

He could roughly understand what the Chief of the City of Silver’s thought process was. On the one hand, this experienced Demon Hunter hopes that he can usher in a bright future through the Giant King’s Court’s exploration, while on the other hand, he’s still cautious and doesn’t hold much hope. He’s prepared to continue staying in the darkness, so he mentioned the Planter potion formula to see if Mr. Fool has the corresponding authority, or rather, does the faction that “He” watches over have a need for it. If this could bring about certain feedback, it would effectively improve the survival of the City of Silver.

Meanwhile, on Klein’s end, Frank Lee had recently come to believe that he’s just one step away from his research goals. When he becomes a Druid, he should be able to succeed. This made Klein very hesitant on whether he should give him a push.

…I don’t know what the future holds… I’ll just focus on what’s in front of me. A Sequence 5 Beyonder who doesn’t even have godhood wouldn’t be able to do anything too serious. Furthermore, Ma’am Hermit is already a demigod. It’s not a big problem for her to watch out for Frank…Klein thought for a moment and let The World Gehrman Sparrow say, “Sequence 5.”

“What if there’s more?” Derrick pressed.

Klein felt like he was being tested. After a few seconds of silence, he said, “If your side is willing to give it, then that works…”

“Alright.” Derrick didn’t probe any further. Instead, he asked the person beside him, “Mr. Hanged Man, I have a strange feeling about this. Why did the Chief suddenly mention the relatively high Sequence potion formula of the Planter pathway?”

The Hanged Man Alger looked at The World Gehrman Sparrow and said, “This should be a test from your Chief, to see if the City of Silver can change its environment.

“I remember you mentioning that you only know that the Goddess of Harvest is the Giant King’s queen, and according to the records of the Sanguine from The Moon, the Goddess of Harvest is named Omebella. Your City of Silver originally believed in ‘Her.’

“I was originally only certain that the name Omebella was real, so I didn’t have any inclination towards other explanations. Now, with your Chief suddenly taking out a relatively high Sequence potion formula that you didn’t know before, this makes me suspect that The Moon is right.

“This means that your City of Silver hid the fact that they once believed in the Goddess of Harvest. They even deliberately didn’t mention ‘Her’ true name.

“There must be a huge secret behind this.”

“A huge secret…” Derrick thought seriously but couldn’t think of any secret.

Fortunately, this wasn’t an important matter to him. He quickly ended the private conversation and returned to the City of Silver to prepare for the exchange of Sealed Artifacts.

Chapter 1079 - The Hardworking Gardeners

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Above the gray fog, Klein, who was sitting at The Fool's seat, beckoned for the Unshadowed Crucifix.

The bronze cross was tied together with an ordinary-looking button, and the surface of the latter was already covered with a layer of crystalline but heavy-feeling particles.

This was The Hermit Cattleya's Judge button. It was reserved for Judgment Xio at a price of 3,500 pounds. Therefore, Admiral of Stars had sacrificed it to Mr. Fool in advance, requesting the mighty existence to get an angel under him to shatter it.

And on Monday's Tarot Gathering, Xio had made a reservation for the Judge potion formula at a price of 2,000 pounds.

According to their agreement, Justice Audrey wasn't to share anything they obtained from exploring Groselle's Travels —other than knowledge. She was only providing free help for The World killing Hvin Rambis. As for The Star Leonard, he had the right to sell the potion formulas and historical knowledge, but obviously, Judgment Xio trusted The World Gehrman Sparrow more.

The purging should be almost done. This way, I can trade the Unshadowed Crucifix with Little Sun without any worries… In the future, if there are other similar requests, they'll definitely be more willing to trade with Little Sun, instead of asking Mr. Fool for help. No one will dare frequently disturb a hidden existence, unless there's really no other way…

When Little Sun has the chance to become a demigod and transform the Unshadowed Crucifix into a special characteristic, I should be a Sequence 3. I'll be able to use the power of this mysterious space above the gray fog to shatter Sealed Artifacts…

After the "disinfection" process of the gray fog, Adam probably wouldn't be able to rely on the Unshadowed Crucifix to lock onto Little Sun. However, even if he were able to find it through this, it wouldn't be too serious. His brother,

Amon, knew long ago that Little Sun is related to Mr. Fool…

Yes, it seems that Amon can freely enter and leave the Forsaken Land of the Gods. I wonder if that's also the case for Adam… As Klein separated the Unshadowed Crucifix from the button that had begun to praise the sun, he looked at the Beyonder characteristic that had been purged while waiting for Little Sun to hold a sacrificial and bestowment ceremony.

The City of Silver, within the spire.

Derrick Berg had finished setting up the ritual. He watched as a black, mud-covered doll approached with a wooden cane which looked like nothing special, and he placed it on the altar.

After a serious prayer and doing some work, the illusory sacrifice and bestowment door opened and took away Life's Cane, leaving behind a bronze-green and spiky cross.

At the same time, the name of the cross suddenly appeared in Derrick's mind, including information of its usage and its negative effects.

He suppressed his excitement and first thanked Mr. Fool before ending the ritual. He walked to the front of the altar, picked up the Unshadowed Crucifix, and scrutinized it repeatedly.

After tidying up, Derrick left and went to a room opposite and knocked on the Chiefs door.

“Come in.” Colin Iliad’s deep voice rang out.

Derrick turned the doorknob, pushed open the door, walked in, and openly revealed the bronze cross.

Your Excellency, this is the item left behind by the Lord I previously mentioned. It’s called the ‘Unshadowed Crucifix.’ The method is to let the spikes on it be stained with the blood of the holder.”

He had deliberately changed the term “relic” to the “item left behind.”

The white-haired Colin had already cast his gaze over when Derrick took out the ancient cross. After listening to the introduction, he walked towards it with heavy steps. He took the item and kept examining it.

Finally, Colin Iliad placed his thumb on a thorn and allowed fresh blood to flow out.

The mottled bronze-green started to peel away as the Unshadowed Crucifix revealed a physical body formed from pure light, illuminating the entire room without any trace of darkness.

After an indescribable sacred feeling filled the surrounding area, Colin released his fingers and sighed.

“This is indeed the Lord’s item…”

Although he was born in an era more than two thousand years since the City of Silver was “forsaken,” making it impossible for them to sense the aura of god, this city still had quite a few things that were used to offer sacrifices to the Creator. Every time the Black-Faced Grass was harvested, they would be taken out and used in the ritual. Through a comparison with these items, Colin Iliad could almost confirm the origins of the cross.

Derrick had wanted to give a response, but the heavy tone in the Chiefs words suddenly pressed down on his heart, preventing him from speaking.

Colin Iliad didn't make any further comments and just stood there silently with the Unshadowed Crucifix in hand.

After a few seconds, the City of Silver Chief broke the silence and said with a slightly hoarse voice, "The return of the Lord's item is a sign. We shall welcome the sign of dawn.

"I will hold onto this Unshadowed Crucifix for half a day. I want to gather all the Elders in the city to present this item to them.

"Heh heh, even I can't casually deal with a saint-level Sealed Artifact. Since I lost Life's Cane, I have to explain it to the other Elders and request to be punished. You must remember that, as Chief, you must have the courage to shoulder the corresponding responsibilities. You can't avoid punishment just because you think that it's good for the City of Silver. You might be right this time, but you can't guarantee that you're always right.

"Don't worry. This Unshadowed Crucifix will eventually return to you."

The Chiefs words are deep and profound… I'll get Mr. Hanged Man to explain it to me at the next Tarot Gathering… Derrick instinctively wanted to raise his right hand and scratch the back of his head, but in the end, he endured it and informed Colin Iliad of the negative effects of the Unshadowed Crucifix.

Backlund North Borough, 160 Boklund Street.

Klein sacrificed Winner Enuni above the gray fog to ensure "marionette preservation." This was to make it convenient for him to use him in the future. He planned on getting Earl of The Fallen Qonas Kilgor to wear the Flower of Blood ring and wield Life's Cane. In day-to-day life, he would create some harrowing and bizarre situations from time to time, helping him expedite the digestion of his potion. This way, Enuni had no way of using Flower of Blood to hide in Qonas Kilgor's stomach. He needed to hide in a more concealed manner, making it rather troublesome. Therefore,

Klein decided to simply leave him above the gray fog. After all, Klein could create ordinary marionettes anytime he wanted.

Why does the action of placing a marionette in a preservation cabinet to keep fresh feel odd… It's not like I'm acting in a horror movie… However, this does fit the name of Bizarro Sorcerer a bit. The angel from the Antigonus and Zaratul family all hang up their marionettes to "wind dry," so I'm much better than them! After rubbing his chin, Klein stuffed the ordinary wood-colored cane into a specially-made cane he bought through Miss Judgment.

The cane was hollow, and it could be used to contain a sword that wasn't considered too wide. It was perfect for hiding Life's Cane.

After he was done with this work, he allowed the servant who looked like Enuni, who was actually Qonas, to take away his cane and return to the room next door. He washed up himself before getting into bed.

While sleeping soundly in a pleasant, relaxed state, Klein's spiritual perception suddenly stirred. He abruptly sat up and cast his gaze at the attached balcony.

The curtains weren't fully drawn, and he could see the situation outside.

It was dark green outside the window with vine-leaves, and flowers were growing all over the place in layers. This made him suspect that he had been transported to the forest.

This… The corners of his mouth twitched as he vaguely guessed what was going on.

He rolled out of bed and walked to the balcony, drawing the curtains open.

What entered his vision was no longer the garden in the residence of Dwayne Dantes. Instead, it was a lush forest.

This is what it means to make the surrounding area become filled with a vibrant life force. Be it animals or plants, they're all flourishing and growing rapidly. Isn't this a little too fast? Klein's expression instantly turned a little blank.

Previously, when he had divined that the Life's Cane's negative effects, he had "seen" similar scenes. However, the revelation he received was that it wasn't harmful to the surrounding area. Thus, he believed that the growing and proliferation process took a fairly long period of time and could be effectively controlled, allowing one to pay no attention to it for a very, very long time before seeing such a scene.

With this thought in mind, he observed all the Spirit Body Threads in the surrounding area. He realized that humans weren't affected at all, but the number of rats and cockroaches was clearly increasing.

This result made him heave a sigh of relief. He looked out of the window at the "forest" and sighed silently.

Indeed, there isn't much danger. It's just quite exaggerated… I still have to keep it above the gray fog most of the time…

More than ten seconds later, figures appeared within the "forest." Some of them were very thin, and others were thick. They all wore black trench coats, and their faces were very flat. They had no eyes, noses, and mouths.

These figures were either crouching or standing—busy burning weeds, cutting the vines, and removing the unnecessary flowers in the quiet night.

The next morning, Butler Walter woke up as usual and opened the window.

The garden outside was bathed in the morning fog. There was some dew that gathered, emitting a fresh scent.

Better than yesterday… Walter nodded slightly and praised the two gardeners.

The vibrant scene made him feel a little restless as he began missing his wife for no apparent reason, so he left the room to patrol the estate and made arrangements for all sorts of affairs. Finally, he waited at the entrance of the dining room.

Not long after, his employer, Dwayne Dantes, led his valet, Enuni, down from the third floor.

Walter went forward to bow and talked about today's arrangements before taking the initiative to mention it.

"Sir, I would like to take one day leave from the current month's allowance."

As he spoke, he suddenly saw the mixed-blood servant's neck split open, revealing a black eye.

Walter was shocked and nearly tumbled backward. But in the blink of an eye, he realized that there was no strange eye on Enuni's neck.

It must be because I didn't sleep well last night and had a strange dream, resulting in me being distracted and having hallucinations… Walter hurriedly gathered his thoughts and lowered his head slightly.

In his heart, Klein apologized and nodded.

"No problem. Have a wonderful day with your family."

Chapter 1080 - The Line of Thinking for Acting

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After watching Butler Walter leave the second floor, Klein entered the dining hall. As he looked around, he realized that the servants were much more energetic than usual. They even felt a little agitated.

Indeed, Life’s Cane also affects humans, but it’s not that ridiculous. It’s at a rather normal level and still within acceptable levels… According to this logic, the servants’ reproduction abilities would definitely increase. The only problem is that they don’t have spouses, so there’s no way to show that…

Eh… Will Mr. Butler’s act of returning home today result in him having another child in nine to ten months… His wife is almost 40 years old. It’s a little dangerous for her to have children at this age. Of course, as the other party in the copulation process, the effects of Life’s Cane would pass over to them. There shouldn’t be any problems…

Man, I wonder if the potential effect will result in an increase in conceiving a child. If Dwayne Dantès’s moving into Böklund Street causes one to have an increased chance of having children, my reputation will practically be doomed… Klein’s thoughts drifted without end. Finally, he concluded in his mind:

Life’s Cane truly is very sinister!

In the future, he would only bring it into the real world for some time each day and try his best not to affect the humans around him!

After breakfast, Klein brought his valet, Enuni, to the first floor and prepared to take a stroll.

At that moment, two chambermaids were cleaning in the main hall.

“Good morning, sir.” Upon seeing Dwayne Dantès approach, the two chambermaids immediately stood up, made way for him, and greeted him.

Of course, if they were in a more remote corner, they would try their best not to make a sound, just in case they disturbed their employer. This was something they learned from Butler Walter’s teachings.

Klein nodded and gave a simple response as he slowly approached the door.

At that moment, the two maids suddenly saw a wheat head embedded in Enuni’s head. It was full of golden particles and was extremely attractive.

Before they could even take a closer look, the valet seemed to have sensed something amiss. He raised his right hand and yanked off the piece of wheat using plenty of force.

The two maids looked at each other in surprise and amusement.

They imagined that Enuni had accidentally gotten some wheat on his body when he followed Mr. Dantès over to Maygur Manor, bringing it all the way back to 160 Böklund Street, where they scattered in places that weren’t easy to clean. For example, under the pillow he slept last night. In his dreams, he pushed the pillow away and ended up lodging a piece of wheat into his hair without realizing it when washing up in the morning and during breakfast.

Although this process was complicated and not easily achieved, it was still possible.

It can’t be that Enuni grew a single wheat head, right… The two maids mumbled to themselves as they continued with their work.

After exiting 160 Böklund Street, Klein and Enuni slowly walked with one behind the other under the withered Intis parasol trees, breathing in the fresh autumn air.

Like him, a number of neighbors were taking a morning stroll.

Of course, this wasn't a habit belonging to those amongst Backlund's high society. Last year, the smog was very serious, and the air was quite pungent. No one was willing to waste their time in the streets, braving the cold wind and the humidity.

As a neighbor, since they had met each other, there was no doubt that they would greet each other. When they walked past each other, one of the lawyers glanced at Dwayne Dantès's valet from the corner of his eye-he had raised his hand to cover his mouth as if he was yawning.

When the mixed-blood youth put down his right hand, the lawyer suddenly realized something was different.

His nose seems to be even higher…

Haha, I must've been thinking too much about such matters, causing me to hallucinate…

If only my nose was slightly higher…

As the lawyer thought about it, he raised his hand and rubbed his nose. At the same time, he saw two wild dogs engaged in a chase in front of him, attempting to reproduce on the street.

After the stroll, Klein returned to the activity room on the third floor and sent Life's Cane above the gray fog.

Indeed, there's a certain effect. The main point of the Bizarro Sorcerer's digestion is actually to create shocking scenes to scare people, as well as use a strange method to make people horrified… This really does resemble a “director,” but it’s just a horror flick’s director…

Yes, I don’t have to really scare them… Peaceful daily life events contain terrifying scenes, but the surrounding humans don’t notice them at all. They only occasionally made the connection, and when they think about it, they would feel a sense of fear from certain possibilities, to the point of not daring to turn off the lights and ending up having nightmares. That’s also a horror film archetype… As Klein observed his condition, he summarized his experiences over the past few months and finally summed it all up with the keyword “horror film director.”

After understanding this, he had many ideas on how to quickly digest the potion.

Not only did he have to deal with enemies, but he also had to turn his enemies into the main characters or important supporting roles in a horror film!

This will be quite troublesome. I definitely have to give my all to the targets at the demigod level. I wouldn’t be in the mood to waste my time and effort on pulling some tricks… Well, there’s no need to find a demigod target. There’s no restriction for acting like this. I can “Teleport” to the sea, and find some lucky pirates to “participate,” creating some horror stories…

That’s right. Since I’m a director, I have to let my “works” spread! It seems like I have to let some of the actors escape successfully every time and spread the nightmare that they experienced, creating a corresponding myth at sea. I can’t feed them to Creeping Hunger… As he formed his plan, Klein suddenly thought of a question:

In the horrifying legends of the people in the Northern Continent and the sea, how many of them were deliberately created by Bizarro Sorcerers?

There must be some… Sigh, if Amon were to act as a Bizarro Sorcerer, “He” would probably be able to digest the potion in less than a month.

"His" talent in this aspect is astounding, and "He" doesn't consider the consequences… In truth, while looking for pirates to "film the horror movie," I can find an opportunity to scare other demigods. I don't have to fight them to the death. Once my goal is accomplished, I can escape… With this thought in mind, Klein came up with a plan for the supporting role.

Hence, he carefully considered his targets.

There's no way I can find an angel or higher. Those who I'm not familiar with will make me the leading character of a horror movie on the spot. Those who are familiar with me are well aware that I'm a Bizarro Sorcerer, so there's no way to scare them…

There are many saints that I have no idea about their whereabouts. Frightening the archbishops will easily cause unnecessary chain reactions, causing the world situation to become even more tense and for the war to erupt prematurely…

Uh, after eliminating all the possibilities, the most suitable target is the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction's demigod, Patrick Bryan, as well as the councilors of Will Auceptin's Fate Council, as well as…

After creating a name list, Klein decided to take some time over the next two days to visit Dr. Aaron Ceres. He wanted to bring some ice-cream for a certain baby to ask where the "councilors" were recently seen.

If he wanted to frighten someone else's subordinates, he had to get the approval of the president!

Klein was in a good mood after organizing his thoughts. He went out again and went to Saint Samuel Cathedral to pray and donate before heading to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation where he stayed till noon.

In the afternoon, he saw a few businessmen and professional lawyers and accountants who were seeking investments, behaving like a normal tycoon.

After filling his stomach, he returned to the half-opened room with the balcony. Just as he was considering whether to visit Dr. Aaron Ceres's house directly tomorrow, or invite their family to have a nice dinner at the Srenzo Restaurant which served excellent ice-cream, his spiritual perception was triggered.

He turned his head and, without any surprise, saw Miss Messenger walk out of the void with four blonde, red-eyed heads.

One of the heads bit on a letter.

"Who sent it?" Klein habitually and expectantly asked.

As he had yet to receive the letter, Reinette Tinekerr could only answer with three heads.

"King…" "Of…" "Idiots…"

Patrick Bryan? This nickname has even evolved? Klein reached out and took the letter. When he opened it, he realized that it was indeed from the Artificial Death faction's demigod.

He wrote on the letter:

"…I've already prepared the special ritual that will help my teacher, Haiter, recover further. Your Excellency, I will hold it tomorrow at midnight given your permission…"

The ritual that points towards the angel, Haiter? There's no way to avoid the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction's testing of Patrick… This can be interfered with using Paper Angel… Just in time… With a flick of his wrist, Klein burned the letter.

Following that, he took out a piece of paper and wrote down an answer:

"Yes, you may. You must be careful."

In the quiet night, near midnight, in a uninhabited clothes factory in St. George Borough.

There was an open area that had been cleared. Nearly ten black-robed figures were standing there.

In the middle of them was a deep black coffin that looked rather heavy. Around the coffin were many golden ornaments with mud stains. There were many candles flickering with pale-white flames, as well as one skull after another.

The hideous white skulls belonged to humans, others from animals. Some were extremely strange and had a deformed look to it. It was hard to imagine their original appearance.

The skulls were piled the highest up at the front, with Patrick Bryan standing there.

He had also changed into a black robe, but he didn't pull up his hood, revealing a deep outline. He had black hair, brown eyes, and a rather long face.

This demigod hadn't done anything, but his surroundings had turned extremely cold, as though countless invisible creatures were celebrating

As Patrick Bryan raised his right hand, the hooded believers jumped up and twitched a little. It was a crazy and rhythmic dance.

This was a Spirit Dance, a ritual that Death loved. The stronger the spirituality of the dancers, the better the effects.

As the dance became more intense, a cold and formless wind blew out from the coffin. Patrick Bryan lowered his head and recited in a language that seemed to come from the Underworld:

“The King from the depths of Hell;

“An Angel playing the music of death;

“The Ruler above River Styx.”

Chapter 1081 - The Returnee

◆

With Patrick Bryan's chanting, the bones around the black casket were gradually stained with a dark green layer. They blended with the white, bringing out an extremely scary sensation.

As the Spirit Dance became more and more intense, as though the voices from the Underworld were constantly reverberating, the bones floated up one by one, as though they possessed lives of their own.

Then, they were cast towards the heavy and pitch-black casket in what could be described as orderly chaos. They passed through the lid and entered as though they were incorporeal.

The casket immediately transformed into a deep whirlpool that seemed like it couldn't be filled. It expanded on the spot, emitting a cold aura that was high and mighty. This made Patrick Bryan instinctively tremble and lower his head.

This was an angel, the aura of a Death Consul!

At that moment, the believers of Death, the ones who were dancing Spirit Dance, all collapsed to the ground with their bodies left convulsing. Their consciousness became muddled, as though they were touring the Underworld.

And above the gray fog, with the help of his marionettes' prayer points of light, The Fool Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief because the leader of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction, the angel who was sleeping in the mausoleum, the High Priest Haiter's test didn't exceed his expectations. Using the enslavement and control higher Sequence Beyonders of the Death pathway had on lower Sequence Beyonders, “He” could directly obtain information from Patrick Bryan.

From a certain point of view, this was an “interrogation” at the psyche level, something that Klein was rather proficient at dealing with.

Nas

He immediately let the Red Priest card fly into his hand and enter his body.

All of a sudden, Klein had a dark red robe draped over him. This appearance seemed to look like rust and settled gunpowder. As for his face, it was covered by a dark gold mask. The patterns on it were ancient and set off a contrasting appearance with the crown he wore that was embedded with gems that sparkled red, blue, and green.

Following that, he mobilized all the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog that he could, turning them into invisible torrents that surrounded the paper figurines he had prepared in advance. Through the prayer lights, it shot towards Undying Patrick Bryan.

At this moment, Patrick’s body trembled slightly due to the feeling of submission he felt towards his teacher’s aura, as though he could see layers of holy wings.

Klein had hidden the exact appearance of the flaming angel, allowing a portion of it to be revealed. This also meant that he had interfered with the special effects.

One holy wing after another enveloped Patrick before vanishing, causing him to hallucinate in confusion.

As a Sequence 4 demigod, he quickly came to his senses. He realized that he no longer yearned to submit and not be able to disobey his teacher’s orders. His consciousness seemed to have been pulled out of his body as he stared calmly at everything above the mind world.

At the same time, as a zealot, Patrick Bryan didn't hesitate to view Angel's Embrace as a gift from Death. There was no doubt about it.

At that moment, in the deep vortex formed from the black casket, an old and cold voice sounded out-one that could rip out a person's soul from their bodies:

"Not bad.

"Any progress in awakening God recently?"

Patrick Bryan followed the instructions given by the Blessed, and he described his efforts and intentions in a half-truthful manner.

After a series of questions and answers, the Death domain angel on the other side of the vortex, Haiter, didn't suspect anything. "He" calmly said, "Very good. Continue doing it. I will support you."

"He" paused for a moment and nonchalantly said, "I'll send you an assistant first. A Sequence 5 Gatekeeper to help you in completing the corresponding tasks to relieve your stress."

Is this what His Excellency mentioned about not being at ease with me? Teacher is indeed unwilling to see me gain the favor of God and threaten "His" position… Having been slowly influenced by Klein through his daily communications with him, Patrick Bryan, who had slowly changed his mindset, had no way of rejecting such "kind intentions." He could only answer politely, "Yes, Teacher."

Just as he said that, the pitch-black vortex suddenly opened up. It transformed into a mysterious pattern, conjuring up a pair of indescribable double bronze doors.

With a creaking sound, the door opened and a crack widened.

There was still darkness behind the rift, and there seemed to be eyes hidden in the depths of the darkness, quietly watching the outside.

At that moment, a palm stretched out and rested on the door crack.

Its skin was rather pale, allowing one to see the blue blood veins underneath.

With a tug, a figure leaped out of the door.

This was a young, tall man wearing a black robe with red linings with his hood pulled up.

His facial features were gentle, and his skin was slightly brown. It was obvious at a glance that he was from a Southern Continent bloodline. He was rather handsome, but he looked anemic.

Stepping on the solid ground beneath his feet, the young man didn't even glance at Patrick Bryan. He raised his head and looked into the sky. The corners of his mouth curled up as he narrowed his eyes and sighed.

"This intoxicating atmosphere..."

As a Beyonder of the Death pathway, to be ignored by someone whose Sequence was lower than his, there was no doubt that Patrick Bryan was a little angry, but in front of his teacher, he had no choice but to follow the flow and end the ritual.

During this process, The Fool's response above the gray fog was even more intense than Patrick's.

Because through the gray fog's "true vision," he could see the abnormality of the new Gatekeeper!

The Gatekeeper's internal Underworld expanded in an odd manner, covering every part of his body. And there was only one soul in the Underworld-a young and handsome soul with red hair, signs of rotting on its face, and a flag mark on its glabella. It wore black blood-stained armor.

Klein wasn't unfamiliar with this soul, for he immediately recognized it:

The Red Angel evil spirit, Sauron Einhorn Medici!

This fellow has returned to Backlund again, and had a certain working relationship with the angel of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction… Klein instinctively took out the Red Priest card and accommodated the Tyrant card before summoning the Sea God Scepter. He planned on giving the Red Angel evil spirit a zap of Lightning Storm, but as his thoughts raced, he restrained this impulse and gave up on the corresponding thoughts.

This would expose Patrick Bryan's problem and let the angel from the Death domain guess that something had happened to Artificial Death!

This wasn't beneficial to the Evernight Goddess's control and digestion of the Death pathway's Uniqueness.

Amidst his thoughts, he quickly left the world above the gray fog and returned to the real world. He made his marionette secretly leave the clothing factory and "Teleport" away with his body.

He had originally planned on creating a shocking experience for Patrick Bryan after the ritual. He had even made some preparations beforehand. Now, he could only give up to prevent the Red Angel evil spirit from discovering him.

Inside the clothing factory, the young Gatekeeper, who had been possessed by Sauron Einhorn Medici, pulled his hood even lower before turning his head slightly and looking in a particular direction outside.

That was the spot where Klein's marionette, Qonas Kilgor, had been hiding, nearly a kilometer away from the factory.

After staring at it for a few seconds, the young Gatekeeper revealed an obvious smile.

Just as Patrick Bryan was about to say something, planning to use his identity of the person-in-charge of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction to haze the envoy of his teacher, his spiritual perception was triggered. He turned around in a bizarre manner, casting his gaze on another building in the factory.

On the second floor of the building, behind a glass window in a room, there was a pair of emotionless black eyes staring at them.

Patrick Bryan's eyelids twitched, and his body suddenly vanished.

Woo!

A cold wind blew, causing the glass window to rot silently. Without any movement, it crumbled into countless "snowflakes."

In the corresponding room, a skinny Patrick in a black robe and a thin face emerged. He saw that the master of that pair of cold, black eyes was a rough mud doll.

Who made the doll… Who moved it here? Patrick Bryan looked around cautiously, not missing any corners.

Just as he turned his gaze towards the corridor and faced the glass window with his body slanted, the crude, black eyes of the mud doll suddenly turned. Then, it raised its hands and grabbed Patrick's neck.

Halfway through the action, the mud doll seemed to lose its support and lost all mobility. Many cracks appeared on its surface as it instantly shattered into pieces.

Patrick Bryan's figure disappeared first before he appeared in the corridor, staring at the collapsed doll as if he was facing a most powerful enemy.

At that moment, he had really jumped in fright. Although there were all sorts of bizarre and harrowing matters related to spirits, it was still quite scary for a puppet to suddenly come alive without the influence of an external Spirit Body.

The mud doll lay there quietly in fragments without so much as a stir. Patrick Bryan waited patiently for a while before finally confirming that there were no more abnormalities.

He shuttled through the spirit world once again and returned to the place where the ritual had been held.

At that moment, the heavy, pitch-black casket had completely decayed. It was as if it had been buried in the ground for centuries, if not millennia. And the surrounding Underworld believers were slowly recovering from their semi-conscious state.

Patrick Bryan looked around but could not find the young Gatekeeper sent by his teacher. He didn't know when he had left.

Isn't he here to spy on me? The demigod of the Death pathway was at a loss.

Taking into consideration the abnormal discovery he had made—the living mud dollPatrick Bryan didn't delay any further. He quickly snapped his followers awake and cleaned up the scene and removed all traces.

After he was done, he suddenly heard a voice:

"Is this clothing factory yours?"

Patrick Bryan's figure instantly disappeared and appeared again, now facing the person who spoke. That was the young Gatekeeper who had gone somewhere.

"No." Patrick frowned slightly.

How could he do such a thing in his own factory? If he was exposed, wouldn't there be no way out?

"Not too stupid…" The young Gatekeeper nodded gently.

Patrick narrowed his eyes and suppressed his anger.

"Where did you go?"

The young Gatekeeper chuckled and said, "I visited some familiar spots and met a friend."

Chapter 1082 - Sudden Turn of Events

◈◈◈

After “Teleporting” back, Klein didn’t delay at all. He immediately set up an altar and held a ritual to pray to Death.

“You are the essence of death;

“You are the lord of the dead;

“You are the final home to all living beings.

“I pray for your help. I pray that you will know how to resolve the problem of the Red Angel evil spirit. ‘He’ has possessed the body of a Gatekeeper and is cooperating with the Numinous Episcopate’s High Priest, Haiter. He has come to Backlund and been made an assistant to Patrick Bryan…”

With regard to this matter, there was really no choice but to seek help from the Evernight Goddess.

Ignoring the possibility of seeking out the ascetic leader, Arianna, in a cooperation effort, or whether he had the ability to get finish off Sauron Einhorn Medici, even if he could, once the Red Angel evil spirit disappeared, the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction’s High Priest would immediately understand that something major had happened here. “He” could then connect it to other abnormalities and determined that there was something wrong with Artificial Death’s condition. Then, using “His” own level and status, possible Sealed Artifacts, and “His” familiarity with the pathway, “He” might be able to create mutually harmful acts of destruction.

And if he ignored the Red Angel, this evil spirit who was a Conspirer wouldn't take long to detect something abnormal with Patrick Bryan. With "His" knowledge and intelligence, it wasn't difficult to guess the nature of the problem.

No matter how I deal with it, it'll be a problem. As expected of an angel in the War domain. Even if "He" is a three-in-one Spirit Body, "He" can still create unresolvable problems for others. This must've actually been an idea that "He" gave Haiter…

Actually, I do have an extreme idea; that is to let the Red Angel evil spirit be killed by other Churches, official organizations, or secret organizations for another whole different matter. In short, anything related to the Goddess cannot come center stage. Things must be made very clear…

The difficulty with this approach is how to let an extremely experienced, high-ranking member of the conspiring domain fall into a trap… If I don't handle it well, it might backfire on me… After the prayer ended, Klein casually let his thoughts wander as he waited patiently for the Evernight Goddess to give him a response.

After more than ten seconds, the herbal dregs that pleased the deity were swept up by an invisible wind. They flew out and landed on the table, forming words:

"His' coming spells the raising of arms."

What does that mean? Looking at the sentence that gave him a sense of déjà vu, he frowned slightly.

As a Seer, he habitually interpreted it:

Due to the king's problem, Loen has fallen into the shadows of war. Hence, the Red Angel that symbolizes war came.

This means that it might no longer be possible to stop the war.

Upon reaching Sequence 1, one would become a symbol of certain phenomena.

As these thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, the invisible wind came to a stop. The altar which was completely isolated by the wall of spirituality turned extremely silent.

There are no other revelations? After waiting for a while, Klein confirmed that this was all, so he ended the ritual and cleared the altar.

He then walked to the sofa in the room and sat down to see if anything else would happen.

After a full fifteen minutes, he didn't usher in the arrival of the matron of the Evernight cloister, the leader of the thirteen archbishops, angel of Concealment, Arianna.

I don't have to deal with the Red Angel evil spirit, and I should just leave "Him" be? Or, there's another solution, but my involvement isn't needed? In essence, he wasn't a devout believer of Evernight. Since the Goddess said that he didn't need to bother about it, he naturally couldn't be bothered to do so. After all, this matter was not only extremely troublesome for him, but it was also extremely dangerous.

Shaking his head, Klein took out a pen and paper from his pocket and began a dream divination.

What had happened tonight made him feel that he couldn't waste any time. He had to digest the Bizarro Sorcerer potion as soon as possible.

Above the Fog Sea, inside a steam-powered merchant ship that was extremely close to a pirate ship.

One by one, the men and older women were tied up and pushed to the edge of the deck. Then, the pirates either used their hands or legs to throw them into the sea.

The splashing sounds didn't affect the pirates at all, guffawing over this bloodless massacre.

After clearing the captives, they carried their guns and lanterns to the shipboard, preparing to enjoy the pitiful bugs' struggling.

However, under the light, the dark blue sea beside the boat quietly undulated. No one was there.

"They sank so quickly," a pirate blurted out in surprise.

The leader of this pirate crew frowned. After looking at it for a while, he said, "Perhaps some sea monsters passed by and treated those who dared resist us as food bestowed by the gods.

"Perfect timing. If we feed it, it won't attack us…"

Upon saying this, the leader waved his hand.

"Everyone, enjoy yourselves!"

As a fairly experienced pirate, he knew that there were many strange things at sea. It was best not to seek out the reason and try to figure out the truth. Since it didn't harm him or his crew, he would thank the Lord of Storms for his blessings, doing so as though nothing had happened.

After making sure that there were people on duty, the pirates began gulping down copious amounts of alcohol, ate huge chunks of meat, and sang loudly, and fought for the rights to the young female captives.

In the noisy and lively atmosphere, the pirate leader led a beautiful passenger that he had long taken a liking to into the captain's room. He eagerly began the final process for that night of revelry.

In the middle of the night, the tired pirate leader stretched out his right hand and touched something cold.

He jolted awake. Through the crimson moonlight shining through the window, he saw a piece of coarse wood in his arms.

A series of branches with green leaves grew out from the wooden block, hugging him like a human's limbs.

Pa!

The pirate leader's pupils rapidly dilated. As he pushed away the wood, jumped off the bed, and stumbled back.

Was I with such a thing previously? His mind was filled with terror. He couldn't care less about his clothes, picking up a flintlock and cutlass before leaving the room immediately.

Outside, there was a pirate on duty.

"How can I be happy to steal your ear…" When the pirate saw his leader open the door, he quickly asked.

The pirate leader had originally wanted to chide the other party for secretly drinking, resulting in his incoherence. However, when he looked up, he saw that his subordinate's mouth and his surroundings were filled with golden grains. Even the surface of his tongue was covered in dense clusters.

The pirate leader's scalp tightened as he felt a numbing chill run down his spine.

At this moment, the door across the corridor opened as well. A pirate shouted with a sobbing tone, "Oh no! Boss, I-I have a lot of mushrooms growing there!"

As he spoke, the pirate ran out.

At the same time, he felt his eyes itch. He raised his hand and rubbed his right eye.

As he rubbed his eyes, a green vine slowly grew out from the gaps between his eye socket and his eyeball. There was a dark red grape at the end of it.

The flesh around the grape was a blur.

The pirate leader’s body froze when he saw this. He asked in a voice that didn’t belong to him, “What… did you guys encounter…”

While rubbing his eye, the pirates who didn’t notice the problem said without any recollection, “A pole-like shadow struck me!”

“W… Ye You…” The pirate whose tongue was covered in golden wheat echoed.

He was blocked by his leader and didn’t see his fellow crew member’s terrifying appearance.

The pirate leader’s legs began to shake uncontrollably. He instinctively turned around and ran out of the cabin.

At this moment, he saw a long wall that looked like a shadow from a pole rapidly sweep towards him before lashing out at him.

The shadow flashed and soon disappeared. It was as though it was a surreal nightmare.

The pirate leader was just a beat slower before he subconsciously raised his hand to block. This was obviously not effective.

Then, he looked at himself in panic and didn’t find anything unusual.

“Thankfully, thankfully…” The pirate leader couldn’t help but let out a sigh.

Before he could finish, he suddenly heard a slightly muffled voice:

“Thankfully, thankfully…”

This voice seemed to come from his body!

The pirate leader’s pupils dilated to the extreme as he involuntarily lifted up his clothes.

He then saw three cracks appear between his chest-one big, two small.

Two rows of white teeth were neatly arranged in the large crack, and in the middle of the small crack were two lively and nimble eyeballs embedded in them.

It was a mouth and two eyes!

The pirate leader had a mouth and two eyes on his chest!

“No!

A scream rang out from the boat, filled with indescribable terror.

In the next fifteen minutes, some of the pirates went mad and killed their companions. Some successfully escaped back to their own ship, only to discover that the people on it had also turned mutated. Hence, they jumped into the sea in despair.

By the time everything calmed down, there were only about ten normal pirates slumped on the deck and hiding in their rooms. There was a stench around them.

After a while, passengers came out of the cabin one after another.

They looked at the scene in front of them in disbelief. They either thanked the gods or stood there in a daze.

It was early in the morning. Klein got out of bed and began to wash up.

Just as he was changing his clothes with the help of his valet, Enuni, he saw Butler Walter, who had just returned from a leave of absence, walk to the door and say, “Sir, Bishop Elektra is here to pay a visit.”

“… Let him wait for me in the activity room where he can enjoy a cigar.” Klein hesitated for a moment before saying.

He suspected that this was a late response from the Goddess.

Walter immediately turned around and went downstairs to make the arrangements. Before long, he returned and said, “Sir, Bishop Elektra has already bade farewell and left. He wanted me to tell you that you must go to Saint Samuel Cathedral in the morning. He said that the Church and the government are going to hold an air-raid drill together.”

“Air-raid drill?” Klein frowned.

At that moment, his spiritual perception was triggered. He turned around and looked out the window.

In the air, there were rows of dark brown-colored airships approaching.

These airships had slanted patterns of red, white, and yellow emblems. This was the flag of Feysac!

Upon seeing this scene, Klein suddenly understood what he had overlooked.

War might not be initiated by the Loen Kingdom!

An ancient and hidden organization definitely had very high-ranking members in other countries. Otherwise, it wouldn’t have been able to affect the world’s situation!

Chapter 1083 - Backlund in Chaos

Although the Sonia Sea wasn’t like the Fog Sea, with it often being filled with fog, the northern regions would occasionally fill up with a rather thick fog every autumn and winter morning.

Alger Wilson’s Blue Avenger was sailing in such an environment, following the borders of the Sonia Island back to the Loen coast.

He had already spent too long in the North Sonia Sea, so he needed to return for a routine report.

Within the pale white fog, the ghost ship quietly proceeded forward, occasionally appearing like a dream that didn’t leave any traces.

Alger was wrapped by the wind as he stood in midair in front of the window, admiring the white world outside. He allowed his thoughts to wander in different directions.

Suddenly, his eyes focused as some silvery-white light flashed in his pupils. He saw a large sail through the fog in the distance, and a massive ship silently cruised past.

This ship wasn’t alone. Behind it were several similar ships. One, two, three… they formed a fleet that spanned a great distance.

Feysac’s Sonia Sea Fleet… They’ve all been mobilized… Where are they heading to? Alger’s feet landed on the deck.

His gaze immediately turned to the other side, where Sonia Island was located.

After the various exchanges at the Tarot Club, Alger was already certain that the world situation was tense, with war about to break out at any moment. At that moment, he made some connections and made a guess.

To the Feysac Empire and the Loen Kingdom, Sonia Island was extremely important. If it were occupied by the Loen Kingdom, Feysac's eastern naval fleet would be completely blocked off in the cold north, unable to vie for any of the various colonies in the Sonia Sea or head to East Balam. Meanwhile, after waging war, if they wanted to threaten the Loen Kingdom's hinterlands, they would have to cross the Amantha mountain range or cross the Midseashire, passing through the defenses of several counties. That would be extremely difficult.

And if Sonia Island was conquered by the Feysac Empire, then they could use that as a base to attack all the ports in the north and central regions of Loen, including but not limited to Enmat Harbor or Pritz Harbor. If the Feysac commander was more daring and unfazed by the losses, he could even be able to directly target the capital of the Loen Kingdom, Backlund, which was not far from the port.

It was precisely because of this that the two countries had waged the Twenty Year War. The Feysac Empire clinched victory, and they had obtained the crucial southern path.

In the Battle of the Violated Oath, Loen had won the war but had failed to regain this territory. Its strategic goals for the war were only half-achieved.

Alger stared at this scene for a moment before speaking in a serious tone, "Is war about to erupt…?"

In Backlund, a large number of airships from Feysac had entered from North Borough and arrived above the huge city.

As soon as they drew near, the Holy Wind Cathedral seemed to have made certain precautions. The howling of the wind intensified, turning into several giant bluish-black blades that whistled towards the target like surface-to-air missiles.

Seeing that the huge blades were about to hit the airbags of the airship, an invisible layer of defense appeared and shielded it from all the attacks.

Under the violent strike, the transparent “wall” shook, but ultimately managed to hold on.

At the same time, the compartment for guns, projectile launchers, and cannons of the airship opened up and aimed downwards.

Boom!

As a hurricane around the Holy Wind Cathedral took form, a loud explosive boom emanated in every direction.

In such a terrifying storm, the airships were like boats sailing through the sea where they met mountain-like waves and were about to be tossed into the distance.

At that moment, the blood and rust-like beams of light flashed on the leading airship. They enveloped all the other accompanying airships and connected them together.

Suddenly, Feysac’s airship fleet had stabilized in the hurricane and was no longer a puny boat in the gigantic waves. The power of the high-level Red Priest pathway belonged to war, and war was the art of gathering the masses!

This was the authority of a War Bishop!

After the Feysacians blocked this wave of attacks, they took advantage of the gap in between the wave of attacks to deliver their bombs through the hatches and allow them to drop beneath them.

And in the hurricane, the trajectories of the bombs became unpredictable.

Boom! Boom!

The cannon hatches also lit up and showed off their prowess that would honor the God of War.

This airship fleet didn’t attempt to travel through Backlund. After entering North Borough, it immediately turned to West Borough, the center of politics for the Loen Kingdom.

North Borough, Backlund University of Technology.

The withered Intis parasol tree leaves swayed in the wind. Students were either carrying books or bags as they walked around the campus.

As a member of an institute of higher education, as the first batch of students of this reorganized university, these young adults were full of vigor. They looked forward to their future and would gather together every day to discuss their ideals, recite poems, and research technology. They were pure and happy.

Melissa Moretti walked amidst them as she raised her head to look at the wall clock at the top of the main teaching building and involuntarily hastened her pace.

She had to go to Chancellor Moment’s office today to prepare for the upcoming mechanical laboratory that was to be officially launched.

This was something that she enjoyed greatly, something which made her feel happy every day. She felt that life on campus was so wonderful and that her classmates were so adorable.

Subconsciously, Melissa looked at the steam locomotive in the middle of the square. Its massive, complicated body was displaying its infinite charm in the machinery industry.

Quite a number of students liked to gather there, knocking, hitting, and analyzing its structure. As for the school, it didn't encourage or forbid it.

The corners of Melissa's lips curled into a smile as she moved to look away.

Suddenly, a metallic gray object descended from the sky and landed in the middle of the square.

Boom!

The ground shook violently as all the windows of the main teaching building shattered. If not for the distance, Melissa might've been thrown up by the blast of air.

Countless screams rang out, and like the other students, Melissa fled in panic, not knowing what had happened.

She was only 16 years old after all—she had never experienced such a scene before.

The billowing dust and smoke gradually fell. After hiding behind a tree, Melissa subconsciously looked at the spot where the explosion had just occurred.

Her expression instantly froze, and her eyes glazed over.

The steam locomotive's head was already in pieces, its components and fragments were scattered everywhere.

The students around it, and those passing by, had already collapsed to the ground, their bodies no longer intact. They were no longer breathing. Some of them were covered in blood, others charred. There were some moaning in pain.

This scene was like an oil painting that wasn't realistic enough. Melissa stared at it in a daze, momentarily at a loss for a reaction.

Carter—she knew that male student who had a great spirit for research.

Every time everyone was in discussion, he would confidently say that he was going to be a ship engineer. Now, he only had half his lower body left, and his intestines were all over the ground.

Eudora—she was a student from the same faculty as her. Despite studying machinery, she loved poetry very much and was rather talented in this aspect. She was loved by the people around her. Sometimes, Melissa would also attend their gatherings and quietly listen to Eudora's recital. She felt that this girl was really attractive, but now, her leg was badly mutilated, and she was moaning half-consciously in pain.

In just a few seconds, these people's future had been cruelly changed.

It was only when many teachers rushed out of the teaching block and started to rescue the injured and evacuate the students that Melissa woke up from her trance and hurriedly moved closer to the teachers.

"Listen to me! All of you are to split up into two groups. One batch will head to the laboratories, and the other to Tiffany Cathedral. They all have an underground area that you can hide in." One of the teachers wore a look of terror, but he still held his breath and made arrangements with his clear voice as though he had been specially trained.

He looked around and saw that the students didn't dare to leave the teachers. He hurriedly said, "Don't worry. The enemy's airship has already turned and gone to West Borough. There's no danger here."

His words were accompanied by a rumbling explosion that came from the southwest.

West Borough… The kingdom's parliament, various departments, and municipal halls are there… Upon hearing the teacher's words, Melissa immediately thought of many things.

As the light in her eyes flickered, she suddenly pursed her lips tightly and ran towards the school gate, ignoring her teacher calling from behind.

As she moved along a sheltered area, Melissa quickly arrived on the streets. She panted heavily and looked around, trying to get her bearings.

At that moment, she saw the subway entrance nearby. Although she was flustered, she still remembered what the teacher had just said.

“…underground area that you can hide in!”

Isn’t the subway underground? The bombing has just started, and the subway probably hadn’t stopped moving… As her thoughts raced, Melissa rushed towards the entrance that showed signs of bombardment.

Upon going underground, she realized that the people here weren’t as many as she had expected. Most ordinary people who had never been trained wouldn’t think of hiding in here immediately.

The subway had indeed not stopped moving, but no one was checking the tickets. After a short wait, Melissa ran over, her lips tightly pursed and her face filled with anxiety.

After three stops, the subway stopped at King’s Avenue. Melissa squeezed through the crowd and rushed out of the carriage.

She had already recovered her stamina. She ran along the stairs, her speed increasing ever so slightly before she quickly reached the surface.

At this moment, whatever she could see was in a state of chaos. Many buildings had collapsed as they were burning in scarlet flames. Broken limbs, blood, and the dead were everywhere. She could hear cries, screams, and orders.

Upon seeing this scene, Melissa became even more anxious as she tried to run towards the four-story building where the kingdom’s Ministry of

Finance was located.

However, the area had already been sealed. She could see that many window panes had shattered. The walls were riddled with bullet holes, and there were still traces of an explosion.

Melissa tried to enter the perimeter but was stopped by the soldiers who were maintaining order. This only served to increase her anxiety as her eyes reddened.

At this moment, she saw a familiar figure. It was the black-haired, brown-eyed Benson who wasn't wearing a hat.

Upon seeing Melissa, Benson immediately rushed over. He looked anxious and angry as he shouted, "Why are you here? Why aren't you hiding underground! I'm very safe here!

"Quick, follow me there!"

Didn't you not go underground either… Melissa, who had never been shouted at by her brother, wanted to instinctively retort, but her vision was already blurry.

"Phew…" After he shouted, he let out a breath and softened his tone. "It's good that you're okay. Quick, don't wander around on the streets."

Upon hearing his words, the panic and concern in Melissa's heart calmed down. At this moment, she felt that even if she were to die, it wouldn't be that scary anymore. At least, she wouldn't be the only one left at home.

At this moment, a bomb was blown over by a hurricane and was landing towards the area.

But suddenly, the bomb changed directions abruptly and flew off horizontally.

Boom!

It exploded in midair, only stirring up a blast of air.

Chapter 1084 - The People in War

◆

Boom! Boom!

In the building at Cherwood Borough’s 17 Minsk Street, the female owner of the building, Stelyn Sammer, and her maidservants heard a loud explosion from afar. She fearfully hid in a corner of the room, feeling as though the ground beneath her feet was trembling.

Only after the constant, terrifying commotion started to fade away did she straighten her body and look left and right with an unusually strained mind.

“What exactly happened?”

The two maidservants simultaneously shook their heads. They were both at a loss and also afraid.

As soon as she left the comer of the room, she instinctively wanted to walk out of the room and talk to her neighbors to figure out what had just happened. However, she was worried that another attack would happen again, so she had no choice but to pace around in the living room.

After a few minutes, she suddenly heard the sound of the door opening. She quickly turned her head and realized that her husband, Luke Sammer, had returned with his valet.

“Aren’t you working?” Stelyn asked subconsciously.

The stout Luke replied solemnly, “I happened to pass by the vicinity and came back immediately.

“Quick, put on your coat. Let’s go to the cathedral now!”

“What happened? What happened?” Stelyn asked again.

Luke took two steps forward and said, “Feysac’s airships are bombarding Backlund!”

“How… How could this be?” Stelyn’s eyes widened in disbelief.

“Now is not the time to discuss this. Whatever it is, it has already happened. We have to go to the cathedral immediately!” Luke gave his wife a hug. “Don’t worry too much. I think those airships aren’t heading over.”

“Alright, alright!” Stelyn replied in a panic.

As she wore the coat the maidservant had brought over, she instinctively said with concern, “What about the children?”

“They’re at the Church’s school, so there will be people who will arrange for them to take shelter. We don’t have the time to reach them,” Luke said calmly.

“Alright.” Stelyn made a prayer gesture, hoping that the deity she believed in would provide them with protection.

The two of them, along with their male and female servants, quickly exited their house and walked towards the other end of the street.

As she passed by Unit 58, Stelyn took a glance and whispered, “Previously, I had laughed at Lawyer Jurgen, saying that he gave up a lot of opportunities in Backlund from moving to the south just because of Mrs. Doris’s ailments. Now, I’m starting to envy him…”

Luke shot her a look and said, “Don’t worry too much. It’ll be fine.”

While walking quickly, Stelyn couldn’t help but ask, “Luke, are we fleeing Backlund?”

“No, there’s no need!” Luke Sammer answered firmly. “This was just an accident.”

Seeing that his wife was clearly confused, he added, “Backlund is the capital of the kingdom, so it has to be the most well-defended area. This time, it was just an oversight that no one expected. The next time, the Feysacians won’t have another chance!

“The kingdom has the strongest military in the Northern and Southern continents. The Feysacians will definitely be taught a lesson. There’s no way they can invade Backlund again. After this, Backlund will definitely be the safest place to be!”

“I see…” Stelyn felt that her husband’s words made sense, and she was willing to believe him.

After the explanation, Luke fell silent for a few seconds.

“However, we still have to make some preparations. Once the Church announces that we can move freely, we’ll immediately fetch the children back and buy more food. We’ll buy as much as we can!”

Inside a public school in the Backlund Bridge area.

Due to the distance, Daisy and her classmates didn’t realize what had happened in the North and West Boroughs, nor did they sense the chaos that had spread from Hillston Borough to Cherwood Borough.

However, teachers still came to their classrooms and arranged for them to line up to head to the nearest cathedral.

This made Daisy recall the Great Smog of Backlund last year. Back then, they had also been asked to hide in the cathedral beside the school.

D-did something similar happen again… The trauma in Daisy’s heart made her tremble slightly as she felt intense sadness and anger.

When she passed by the door, she couldn't help but turn her head to look at the teacher in charge and ask, "Is it another disaster?"

"Maybe…" The teacher didn't know the details and had only followed the orders sent by a telegram.

"Is there a disaster like this every year, or maybe even more than one?" Daisy asked with a slightly ethereal voice with a tinge of innocence.

The teacher looked at her with pity and shook his head.

"All difficulties will pass. God will protect everyone."

Daisy didn't waste his time and followed the crowd to the nearest cathedral in a somewhat blank manner.

North Borough, 22 Phelps Street.

After hearing the explosion inside the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, the first thing Audrey did was to conceal her dragon scales before rushing to the window.

Seeing the airships with the Feysac flag appearing in the air and the bombs being carried away by a hurricane and being thrown into the distance, either landing on the ground and exploding or disappearing as though they had entered the spirit world, a thought flashed across her mind—the words that The World Mr. Gehrman Sparrow had said, as well as the mission of the Psychology Alchemists. She came to a realization:

War had truly erupted!

She immediately turned her head and said to the huge golden retriever, Susie; her personal lady's maid, Annie; and the others, "Quick, hide in Saint Samuel Cathedral!"

Although Audrey didn't know how to deal with an air raid, the education she received from a young age told her to go to a cathedral as soon as possible if she ever encountered danger.

In fact, she instinctively wanted to rush back to Empress Borough to protect her mother. However, considering that Annie, the other servants, and staff were ordinary people who lacked experience and the ability to deal with such crisis, she had no choice but to take care of them and accompany them to Saint Samuel Cathedral.

In order to resolve any dangers that she might encounter along the way, she planned to put on Hand of Horror and Lie. On the one hand, she could “Distort” the trajectory of bullets, while on the other hand, she could control flames and trigger the bombs in advance.

In the face of long-range attacks, the Beyonder powers of the Spectator pathway were indeed not effective.

While secretly protecting her servants and the foundation’s staff, she successfully entered Saint Samuel Cathedral and saw a few bishops and priests approaching her.

“Miss Audrey, you don’t have to worry about the Earl and his wife, as well as Lord Hibbert. They have people to protect them. An air raid like this won’t harm them. Besides, you also know how grand your family basement is and how strong it is.” One of the bishops quickly brought her to the side to console her.

After taking off her fishnet gloves, she nodded and acknowledged the words of the bishop. She was no longer in a hurry to return home and instead asked, “What’s the current situation like?”

The Feysacians have lost two airships and have moved towards West Borough. Don’t worry, all the defenses have been mustered. They won’t cause any further damage.” After a simple exchange of words, the bishop led Audrey’s group towards the underground area of the cathedral. And further below was where the Nighthawks were active.

160 Boklund Street. Butler Walter and a group of servants hid in an

underground area which was used as a wine cellar.

This was done under Dwayne Dantes's orders, and this gentleman had headed out to find Bishop Elektra with his valet.

After an unknown period of time, Walter and company heard a knock on the door. Through the peephole, they confirmed that their employer had returned.

"There aren't any more raids now, but it's best you hide at Saint Samuel Cathedral for a while," Klein said as he surveyed the area.

"Yes, sir," Walter replied on behalf of the servants before asking, "And after that?"

As a qualified butler, he often read the papers and understood that the situation was tense. It wasn't difficult to guess that a war would break out after the explosions.

Klein thought for a moment before saying, "Once the Church has verified the situation, we'll head to Maygur Manor. You can bring your family along.

"No matter what, the capital of the kingdom is definitely a relatively safe place. And the manor at the periphery of the capital definitely wouldn't be a target of air raids, as it's of no value. Yes, there's enough food in Maygur Manor, and there's a large supply of wine. Even if the war were to be extended for a long time, we won't have to worry about starving to death."

Upon hearing the employer's words, the servants who had already formed a family immediately revealed looks of delight, wiping away their pale looks of fear. Walter expressed his gratitude directly.

He said with some deliberation, "You can buy more food. Under such circumstances, no one will find it excessive.

"Also, there might not be any more attacks near Backlund, but I can't say the same for security. The manor outside the city must be on guard."

Klein nodded.

"I've also considered this. I'll discuss this with Member of Parliament Macht and military personnel about purchasing a batch of 'decommissioned' weapons and bullets. You must practice more.

"Anyway, during this period of time, Enuni and I will return to Backlund to handle certain matters according to the situation. If there's anything I haven't considered, I'll make up for it later."

As for the food, he didn't forbid Butler Walter from buying it. This way, if a famine really happened, he would have the ability to save them.

After discussing the follow-up procedures, everyone in the residence of Dwayne Dantes packed up their luggage and brought their valuables. They followed their employer into Saint Samuel Cathedral and arrived underground.

With a single glance, he saw Audrey walking amidst the people, Placating their moods. He smiled and nodded at her.

Upon seeing Dwayne Dantes, Audrey smiled back and confirmed that nothing major had happened from his attitude.

Fors and Xio had moved again, but they were still at the borders of East Borough, and they were even closer to the Backlund Bridge area.

After waking up naturally, Fors rubbed her hair and walked out of the bedroom to prepare lunch.

As she looked around, she saw Xio, who had gone out early, sitting on a chair and flipping through the newspapers. "What's wrong?" Fors asked blankly.

Xio frowned and said, "The Feysacians air raids bombed North and

West Borough…”

“What?” Fors first blurted out before recalling the matters that had been discussed at the Tarot Club.

At that moment, a paperboy’s voice came from outside.

“Extra! Extra! The kingdom declares war on Feysac!”

“Extra! Extra! The kingdom declares war on Feysac!”

Chapter 1085 - Scrutinizing the Situation

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“Extra! Extra! The kingdom declares war on Feysac!”

On the way from Maygur Manor to Backlund, Klein heard the paperboy shouting on the streets with brisk steps while on a horse carriage.

Although he had already made preparations, he still sighed after confirming that the war had truly erupted. He couldn’t help but feel depressed again.

The grudge from having Sonia Island, a key territory, taken away… The conflict over the rights of the colonies… The defeat from the previous war… The political corruption leading to a recession… Ever since the repeal of the Grain Act, many farmers of the kingdom have gone bankrupt due to the importing of foreign food products… The lower-class live in abject conditions… The rich-poor divide only grew deeper…

The middle class’s blind confidence in the Loen Kingdom’s might, and the eager desire to raise their own positions… The intensifying conflict between different political factions in high society leading to a fracture… The king and his faction wish for a large-scale war… With all these factors combined, just from an objective standpoint, and considering this from the angle of materialism, it’s almost inevitable for Loen to start a war… Reality is the best author… Jumping out from his experience from the past, Klein scrutinized the Loen Kingdom’s situation from a fresh point of view. He realized that the tides of the times had already formed and were surging over. Without a true deity’s descent, it was completely unstoppable.

In comparison, what puzzled him more was why the Feysac Empire would be willing to initiate a war.

Even if the members of an ancient secret organization were indeed members of the upper echelons of Feysac or the Church of the God of Combat—key figures who had the right to make the decision—there was no way they could be alone in deciding such an important matter. How could the others agree to a world war?

Could it be that the conflict between the various classes in the Feysac Empire has also completely escalated to the point that it urgently needs a war? With his lack of understanding of the empire of the north, it was difficult for Klein to make an accurate judgment. But they just won the East Balam war and reaped more of the rights to the colonies. There's no reason for its situation to be more serious than Loen's… Yes, the royal family—the Einhorn family—is in control of the Red Priest pathway. It's understandable that they crave war, but the Church of the God of Combat has no reason not to stop it. As a member of the orthodox deity alliance, they lacked the motivation to help Amon's brother advance to Sequence 0.

Thinking of this, Klein suddenly came up with a theory.

Did that brother of Amon realize that the Goddess has already acquired the Uniqueness of the Death pathway and is in a critical stage, so "He" revealed this information to the Church of the God of Combat? And the God of Combat is in a neighboring pathway with the Goddess, so there's no way "He" can ignore this matter; "He" will definitely make an intense response…

Of course, it might not be done by the brother of Amon. It might also be because of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction's angel, Haiter. After being warned by Einhom Sauron Medici, this Conspirer expert, "He" discovered the abnormalities ahead of time. On the one hand, "He" pretends not to notice anything and continues to set up a probe. On the other hand, “He” pulled in the Church of the God of Combat to worsen the situation and make it more chaotic… The Red Angel evil spirit is truly a symbol of war…

If this is really the case, then it’s inevitable for Feysac to wage this war. Furthermore, the matter regarding the Uniqueness of the Death pathway has no room for compromise. At the critical moment, the God of Combat might descend, causing a battle of gods that hasn’t happened since the end of the Fourth Epoch to happen…

This time, for the airship fleet from Feysac could stealthily to travel from the coast for nearly a hundred kilometers without being detected, it would definitely have a Weather Warlock providing protection. Otherwise, even if they were to take a detour across places with few people, they’ll still be seen ahead of time and definitely be stopped by the Loen airships… A Weather Warlock is an angel. Since the Fifth Epoch, the number of wars that have Beyonders at this level are few and far between… After Emperor Roselle’s death, most soldiers don’t even know of Beyonders, even in the colonial wars… To have a Weather Warlock be involved in this means…

This is really a battle that will sweep through the entire world. It involves battles at all levels. Is this what Amon’s brother wants?

When the time comes, the Lord of Storms, the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Earth Mother, the God of Steam and Machinery, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom will have to take their respective stances. Would the conflicts that “They” have temporarily suppressed for almost two thousand years be escalated…

Earth Mother likes the giants, and even amongst “Her” Blessed, they are Feysacians. And because of the splitting of Lenburg, Masin, and Segar, these made the Feynapotter Kingdom bear a bone-deep grudge with the Loen Kingdom and Intis. The king’s powers and the divine powers are highly likely to be unified, and they might form an alliance with Feysac. From the south to the north, they will attack Loen and Intis. Of course, countries like Lenburg and the Church of Knowledge, who are in the crossfire, will definitely try to stop it. Uh… As for Desi Bay, Feynapotter, and the Loen Kingdom are directly connected, the south wouldn't be peaceful either…

The more Klein thought about it, the more he felt that the situation in the Northern Continent would become abnormally chaotic. And no matter what direction it developed into, he couldn't stop it.

Even if he were a Sequence 4 demigod, under the tide of the times, there was no way for him to cause any major impact in this battle of gods, or exert any key influence. It would be pretty good if he could protect himself and the people he cared about.

Previously, when the Feysac air fleet attacked, the first thing he did was arrange for Butler Walter and company to hide in the underground area that was used as a wine cellar. Then, he "Teleported" to Backlund University of Technology. At that time, a bomb had already hit the ground. Some had died, and others were injured. The only thing he was thankful for was that his sister, Melissa, wasn't within the vicinity of the explosion.

By the time Melissa and Benson met, the airships from Feysac didn't stay for long and quickly retreated from Backlund. Only then did he return to Dwayne Dantes's residence.

Phew…Klein let out a slow sigh of relief. He turned his head to look out the window and saw that, after hearing that the kingdom was declaring war on Feysac, a small number of pedestrians on the street wore a look of horror as though they had recalled the air raid in the morning. Most of them wore blank expressions with a look of panic. They had no idea what they could do even if they wanted to.

They might not have truly understood what this war would bring, but they instinctively felt that peace had been broken. The future was a chaotic mess, fraught with danger.

Klein retracted his gaze and looked at his valet, Enuni, who was sitting opposite him. From his eyes, he realized that he was somewhat at a loss.

He gave a half-smile and sighed. He raised his hand to rub his temples and wiped away his depressed and helpless feelings. He thought about what he could do and what he needed to take note of.

No matter what, with this experience and lesson, the king's faction has had a war spark out as they wished. Before all of Loen collapses, it's nearly impossible for Feysac to invade Backlund again. It would be safer for Benson and Melissa to stay here…

What's most worrisome is the lack of food and various assassinations. The latter is nothing. The place where Melissa and Benson live in is decided by their own levels. They aren't anywhere close to coming into contact with someone important who is a target for assassination, so they won't be implicated. Fortunately, Portland Moment's research laboratory has just been established, and there are no results from it yet. It won't become a target that must be destroyed. As for the former, I can provide some "help" through Miss Audrey…

The Winter County at the Holy Cathedral is located in the far north reaches of the kingdom, next to Feysac. It's always the front line of every war. Ma'am Arianna might've returned to help the military. Oh, "She" might also be sent elsewhere to protect the coast. After all, the defenses of Backlund are sufficient. The royal family definitely has Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts and also angels. The three Churches most likely have hidden tricks up their sleeves… In that case, my greatest pillar of support is gone. At most, I can get some help from the Church and use some Sealed Artifacts…

In the past, I wasn't too worried about the effects the Red Angel evil spirit's return has on me. Now, I have to raise my guard for this matter.

Patrick Bryan knows very well that Dwayne Dantes is equivalent to Gehrman Sparrow, who is equivalent to the Blessed of Death. I had intentionally revealed this information, hoping that it would direct the points of suspicion to Mr. Azik, the Death Consul. And now, this also means that the Red Angel evil spirit would be able to grasp this information in no time…

The Red Angel evil spirit currently only has a high level, but "His" actual standard shouldn't have recovered to the level of an angel. There's no irreconcilable feud between "Him" and me, nor do I have what "He" wants. Even if "He" knows that Dantes is equivalent to Gehrman Sparrow, it would be very unlikely for him to deal with me directly…

Other than attacking me directly, what harm will it bring after "He" grasps this situation?

Is he using this to set up a conspiracy or sell the intelligence to someone who needs it?

What conspiracy… Who would want it…

Many thoughts and names surfaced in his mind, but they were quickly eliminated by him. This included Amon's brother and the Angel of Fate Ouroboros. From the Red Angel evil spirit's past actions, for the time being, "He" wouldn't make contact with Rose Redemption, and Amon's brother is a sworn enemy of Medici and company.

Suddenly, a name appeared in his mind:

Zaratul!

The leader of the Secret Order, the Sequence 1 Seer pathway angel, Zaratul, who had returned to normalcy after becoming mad!

According to Arrodes's feedback, this powerful and concealed existence had already left "His" original location, and "His" whereabouts were unknown.

Previously, Klein had been wondering if "He" would come to Backlund due to the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence.

Medici and the Zaratul and Zoroast families were serving under the Solomon Empire. Even if they weren't friendly with each other, they must be very familiar with each other… In the foggy town, Zaratul had met Gehrman Sparrow. If he really wants to pursue something, he would definitely chase after the crazy adventurer… With a thought in his mind, Klein instinctively began to assume that Zaratul was in Backlund in search of Gehrman Sparrow, and with that, he began to analyze the situation for other abnormalities.

At almost the same instant that he thought of something, Klein recalled the failure of the joint operation between Sharron and the Sanguine.

The Rose School of Thought is also looking for Gehrman Sparrow, so would Zaratul, who received the corresponding news, work with them?

Back then, the operation was on the brink of success. The Rose School of Thought's person-in-charge in Backlund had left in a hurry. Clearly, he had only noticed the problem at the last moment. With the Sanguine preparing the corresponding Sealed Artifact, it's rather impossible for such a failure to happen. Even the Sanguine Duke was puzzled and confused, but what if—what if it was thanks to the perceptive intuition of a Sequence 1 angel of the Seer pathway?

This would explain it perfectly!

Back then, Zaratul was sitting opposite the Rose School of Thought's Backlund person-in-charge?

The Rose School of Thought retreated in a panic and had even deliberately left behind a doll to create moonlight and cleanse everything so as to cover up the existence of Zaratul?

Also, the fact that Gehrman Sparrow has a certain relationship with the Death Consul isn't a secret. Will Zaratul spread out all his marionettes and sense if there's the power of Death in Backlund? Previously, when Patrick Bryan was holding rituals, there was actually Zaratul's marionette watching him?

If the Red Angel evil spirit has already sold the intelligence to Zaratul, then wouldn't my returning to Boklund Street in such a chaotic situation be giving myself up?

His pupils constricted, and he immediately said to the coachman in front, "Just stop here. I suddenly thought of something else I need to settle."

After he said that, he felt extremely tense, afraid that the coachman wouldn't answer him and continue driving.

Fortunately, none of this happened. The horse carriage stopped by the side of the road, and with his valet, Enuni, Klein walked towards a small alley nearby.

Immediately following that, he snapped his fingers and allowed the scarlet flames to emerge from his pocket, covering both himself and his marionette.

He had to rush to Saint Samuel Cathedral as soon as possible in a concealed manner!

With a flash of flames, their two figures disappeared.

However, after completing a leap, the flames within his senses suddenly disappeared—all of them.

A spacious living room appeared in front of him. On an ordinary reclining chair was a tall and thin man. He was young and had Southern Continent blood in him. He looked rather handsome and appeared a little anemic.

The Red Angel evil spirit, Sauron Einhom Medici!

This Red Angel played with a ball of scarlet-red flames in "His" hand as the corners of "His" mouth curled up.

You actually sensed it earlier than I expected.

“Heh, using Flaming Jump in front of me…”

Chapter 1086 - A Simple Inference

◆

The moment he saw the Red Angel evil spirit, Klein’s pupils dilated. The human-skinned glove on his left hand suddenly turned transparent.

He didn’t listen to what the other party had to say. His instinctive reaction was to immediately “Teleport” away, but at this moment, the spirit world that entered his eyes was different from usual.

Countless transparent creatures in indescribable forms were all dyed in a color that was a mixture of iron and blood. The surrounding area was filled with thick smoke, and there were seven rays of light that contained infinite knowledge hidden above them. It was almost impossible to see them.

Klein’s heart skipped a beat. He didn’t rashly “Teleport.”

Upon seeing this, the Red Angel evil spirit chuckled.

“What are you afraid of? Zaratul?”

Upon hearing this, Klein subconsciously looked around, but he didn’t discover anything unusual.

The Red Angel evil spirit maintained that annoying smile and pointed to the sofa opposite the reclining chair.

“If I had already informed him that Dwayne Dantes is Gehrman Sparrow, and that you will return to 160 Boklund Street in the morning, then the person waiting in the wine cellar wouldn’t be a living person. Instead, it would be your hungup butler and servants, looking as though they were ham left to dry-age. Of course, they would similarly welcome you warmly.

“Sit. Under such circumstances, listening to my thoughts and intentions first isn’t a bad thing.”

He imagined the scene described by the Red Angel evil spirit. Although Klein had done similar things himself, his hair stood on end, and he was horrified.

He kept his guard up, allowing the marionette, Qonas Kilgor, in the form of Dwayne Dantes to sit on the sofa while he waited by the side as though he was his personal servant, Enuni.

He had unknowingly swapped places with his marionette and instantly changed their appearances.

“Perhaps it’s because you just learned of this information from Patrick Bryan, and you haven’t even informed Zaratul yet?” Klein retorted through his marionette.

At the same time, he determined from the words of the Red Angel evil spirit that Zaratul had really come to Backlund!

This was a complete and unrestricted, terrifying, and bizarre Sequence 1 angel. It was enough to be called a hidden existence!

The Red Angel evil spirit’s gaze swept across the valet and his master before smiling.

“I’ll be able to get something I want to know in 15 minutes from a fool like Patrick Bryan. Furthermore, an entire night and a morning has passed since the ritual.”

…You and Miss Messenger might have something in common… Klein made the marionette raise his eyebrows.

“And so?”

The Red Angel evil spirit gently rocked the reclining chair it was in.

“I’m not sure if you’ve heard of such a saying. When you choose a Beyonder pathway, your corresponding friends and enemies will be determined. As for us, we aren’t friends, but we aren’t enemies either.

“Of course, you did have some conflicts with me, but no one suffered any great losses. The matter has passed. To me, your growth will bring great trouble to a few people I hate, so I don’t want to kill you in advance. I’m happy to see you continue your advancement.”

The emperor had said similar words… A few people “He” hates… Klein deliberated and asked, “Blasphemer Amon?”

“Not that ignorant and not that stupid either.” The Red Angel evil spirit laughed and stroked “His” chin.

Be it “His” words or actions, “He” gave people the urge to hit “Him.”

After some thought, Klein calmly pointed out a question:

“Then you can definitely choose Zaratul. If ‘He* can rise up because of this, ’He’ will similarly bring about extreme trouble for Blasphemer Amon. Compared to ‘Him,’ I’m still too weak. I’ll still need a long time to grow. There are too many possible accidents from this point forth.”

The Red Angel evil spirit nodded seriously.

“Indeed, that’s what I thought in the beginning as well. A fellow like you, who isn’t much stronger than a wild dog, what are you going to use to compete with the already Sequence 1 Zaratul? Die faster than anyone else?”

At this point, the Red Angel evil spirit changed the topic and sighed.

“However, if one can choose the most ideal proposal in this world, that would be too wonderful…”

Before “He” could finish “His” sentence, a bloody gash appeared on

"His" left bloody cheek.

The wound opened up in a wide manner, opening and closing like a mouth, and revealed two rows of illusory white teeth.

"I've investigated. The collapse of the Sauron family was caused by Zaratul and Roselle!"

Is this the spirit left behind by the ancestor of the Sauron family? The dissociation of the Red Angel is worse than I imagined. No, this isn't considered a normal split personality, but three people being stuffed into one body. No matter what they do, they have to first come to a unanimous decision, or there will be internal strife… Klein believed that the Red Angel evil spirit wasn't setting up a trap, but that "He" had no way of informing Zaratul of the relevant information.

This is 'His' weakness. I can use it in the future… Klein muttered silently before asking, "Then why did you come to me? Just to say those words?"

The Red Angel evil spirit raised its hand to rub "His" left cheek, causing the mouth that appeared to slowly disappear.

At the same time, "He" smiled and said, "Aren't you investigating the Loen royal family?

"It seems to involve a high-ranking Demoness named Katarina. If you have any tracks from her, inform me before you carry out any operation."

Saintess of White Katarina… Why is the Red Angel evil spirit looking for her? Hmm, the Hunter pathway's Sequence 4 can cause women to become men. The Sequence 7 of the Demoness pathway can make men into women. This should be two separate Beyonder pathways that can be interchanged… The Red Angel evil spirit can't find a suitable Hunter pathway Beyonder characteristic, so it plans to jump to the Demoness pathway? That's right. As an evil spirit, as long as "He" resolves his issue of survival, “He” can still advance using potions and characteristics… Klein was first taken aback before he used the secrets he knew of to come up with a guess.

He suddenly had a strange idea:

When there are both High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics of the Hunter and Demoness pathways within a body, would the Red Angel evil spirit display a male form or a female form? Whoever has a higher level and is in charge decides?

At that moment, the Red Angel evil spirit looked at Dwayne Dantes and his valet and scoffed.

You have a great talent for provoking others.”

I haven’t said anything… Klein inwardly replied in a daze.

The Red Angel evil spirit curled his lips and said, “I can guess what you’re thinking, unless you admit that you’re ignorant.

“However, this might be a good thing for ‘Them.’”

“Shut up!” A bloody mouth appeared on both sides of the Red Angel evil spirit’s cheeks.

Looking at the dissociative identity disorder happening before him, Klein rationally gave up on the idea of going deeper into the topic and said, “It’s not impossible to inform you in advance, but the problem is how should I inform you?”

From his point of view, the Demoness of Unaging, Katarina, was a vile person. It was the same with the Red Angel evil spirit. It wasn’t a bad thing to have them clash.

The Red Angel evil spirit smiled and said, “Of course it’s by reciting my honorific name:

The great God of War, the symbol of iron and blood, the ruler of chaos and strife."

"Pui!" The mouth on both sides of the Red Angel evil spirit's cheeks let out a disdainful sound, as though they didn't approve of it.

This is a standard deity's honorific name… After gaining control of the Uniqueness, to a certain extent, Medici had already become a quasi-god? And as long as no one can accommodate the Uniqueness of the Red Priest pathway, this evil spirit's level will not drop? The honorific name will always point towards "Him"? Klein nodded thoughtfully and probed, "What do you know about the secret ruins of Blood Emperor Alista Tudor?"

Upon hearing this name, the Red Angel's facial muscles twitched slightly before sneering.

"Are you asking what the secret of the Loen royal family is?"

"You might not know this, but you might be familiar with the Blood Emperor's secret ruins," Klein said deliberately.

The Red Angel evil spirit suddenly laughed out loud and slapped the armrest of the reclining chair.

"Your tricks are so childish that they look like a three-year-old's!

"Haha, the secret hidden by the Loen royal family is very simple. I could guess it just by reading the newspapers. Tsk, you only have a smart-looking face. Your brain is filled with squirming worms."

"You can guess it just by reading the newspapers?" Klein frowned and asked.

The Red Angel evil spirit finished laughing and curled "His" lips.

"Of course, it needs some basic knowledge. I believe you should have it.

"How about this? I'll ask you a few questions, and you'll understand how simple the answer is.

“Is that Blood Emperor secret ruins the kind known by the Churches?”

“No.” Klein shook his head firmly.

The Red Angel evil spirit smiled and continued asking, “Do you know which Sequence the Blood Emperor, Alista Tudor, was in before he advanced to Sequence 0?”

“The Black Emperor pathway, Sequence 1 Prince of Abolition,” Klein calmly replied.

The Red Angel evil spirit nodded slightly.

“Did you know that before Alista Trunsoest became Blood Emperor, ‘He’ was one of the two consuls of the Tudor- Trunsoest United Empire and that the ones supporting him were six of the seven present deities, including Evernight and Storm?”

Klein nodded and gave an affirmative answer.

The half-slumped Red Angel evil spirit crossed one leg over the other.

“Then do you know that, after Alista became Blood Emperor, ‘He’ had truly gone mad and even died during the battle of the gods?”

“Kind of.” Klein didn’t dare to be too sure, because this was something he had read from Roselle’s diary, and the Emperor had learned it from Mr. Door.

The Red Angel evil spirit chuckled and said, “Then do you think that Alista Tudor would have the rationality and opportunity to leave behind secret ruins after ‘He’ became Blood Emperor?”

“No.” Klein slowly shook his head.

The Red Angel evil spirit spread its hands and said, “Since it’s a ruin left behind by Alista before ‘He’ became Blood Emperor, and if the six deities who supported ‘Him’ aren’t aware of it, what could it be? If you had a choice, would you take a path destined to go mad?”

This… Klein instantly thought of the nine mausoleums that the Black Emperor needed in the ritual needed to become a god.

To a Prince of Abolition, before the return of the former Black Emperor, secretly seeking out a way to advance to Black Emperor was something “He” wanted to do!

“Is that ruin related to the Black Emperor?” Klein asked in a deep voice.

The Red Angel evil spirit rubbed “His” chin and chuckled.

You seem to know the Black Emperor’s ritual.

“Isn’t that simple? What has the King of Loen been doing in the past two to three years? The Grain Act was abolished; there’s the Civil Servant Unified Examination, a restructuring of the military, the House of Lords and nobles are struck down a notch, strengthening the authority of the House of Commons… Isn’t this something that was published in the newspapers?

“Besides, isn’t it common knowledge that the Justiciar pathway can be switched to the Black Emperor pathway?”

As many of these things were the trends of the times to Klein, with one of them being pushed by him, he had never considered them from a mysticism perspective in the past. Now that they were connected, he immediately understood.

Soon, he recalled something else:

The last person who wanted to become Black Emperor was Roselle. He happened to be related to Amon’s brother!

Chapter 1087 - The Deities' Attitudes

◆ ◆ ◆

The Grain Act was abolished… The Civil Servant Unified Examination… A concession was made, bringing the Church's forces into the military… These seem to be in line with the trends of the times, but in essence, they're oppressive, weakening the nobles, and supporting a new class. Compared to the previous thousand-year rule, this can really be considered to be against the norm. It's the order needed to become Black Emperor…

In the past decade or so, the changes in architecture style have been very drastic as well…

For Roselle to be able to obtain the Uniqueness and obtain the corresponding Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic, that ancient secret organization must've put in quite a bit of effort. It might've even provided part of it directly. When this emperor perished, who took away those characteristics?

Also, Bernadette has been in Backlund for the past few months and has been coming here frequently…

Sigh, the main issue is that the asymmetrical aesthetics of the empires in the Fourth Epoch had affected my understanding, making me believe that rules that violate normal circumstances are odd and against the order that humans would strive for. Now that I think about it again, what does it mean by normal circumstances? Isn't it just something that everyone has already gotten used to and therefore, won't have an instinctive sense of resistance towards it? From the tribes to the countries, from feudalism to republicanism, don’t they all violate the normal circumstances of the period they were in, with countless people wishing to return to the past?

The phrase “old fogies and left-overs from the old dynasties” encompasses this problem…

From the looks of it, as long as a deity doesn’t intervene, the revolution that the Black Emperor needs will definitely happen. It’s just a matter of time… With the tides of the times surging over, it’s really hard to stop it. That brother of Amon is indeed a powerful and terrifying Author…

In the depths of the Blood Emperor’s ruins, there should be a mausoleum similar to a pyramid. And according to the ritual requirements, one has to drive one’s citizens to build it. Therefore, there are cases of people going missing in the East Borough and overseas slave trade…

When the war develops to a certain stage, using the excuse of praying for victory, or the nation’s mourning for soldiers, a huge gathering with a large number of citizens can be convened to participate in the sacrificial ritual in the various cities in the royal capital…

Yes. Many years ago, the Loen royal family obtained the crown of the Balam Empire, and they connected the king’s name to the title of “Emperor.”

What a great plan!

When he was alerted by the Red Angel evil spirit’s questions, Klein’s mind tensed up. Many thoughts flashed through his mind, and at the same time, he had another question.

He looked at the tall, thin, young Gatekeeper who didn’t look rosy. He said after some deliberation, “George III wishes to directly become Black Emperor?

“But he isn’t even at Sequence 4…”

Even if George III could act ahead of time to make himself “more talented” and reduce the impact caused by the mental imprint in the potion, Klein didn’t believe that a Sequence 5 Beyonder could become a god directly. Unless he was lucky enough with that very slim chance of success.

And such luck wasn’t something that could be described simply as being “sufficient.” The Snake of Mercury who represents fate, Will Auceptin, didn’t even dare to directly devour the Die of Probability, and he had to seriously find a way to accommodate it.

The Red Angel evil spirit scoffed when “He” heard that.

“How do you know that George III is only Sequence 5?

“How are you so sure that the George III under investigation is the real George III? Could it be that he was ‘imagined’ into existence, or could it be a Faceless at the angel level?

“These are truly very difficult things to accomplish, but to a certain zealot, these are all within the scope of one’s ability and the resources in one’s grasp.

“I suspect that George III is an official member of the secret organization that was created to mimic our Rose Redemption. His true level might already be at the angel level. Heh heh, I wouldn’t be surprised if”He” is already at Sequence 1.”

… This, Emperor Roselle once said that the members of that ancient secret organization are all important figures that he couldn’t imagine. When they combine forces, other than dealing with the seven Churches, there’s nothing that can’t be done… This actually includes the king of a country? That’s right, later on, the emperor also became the ruler of Intis… Zealot… Is this what the Red Angel evil spirit thinks of Amon’s brother? Although this is clearly a little extreme, with a strong bias, there’s a certain reason for it. A nickname isn’t given randomly… Klein made his marionette frown slightly.

“You seem to be able to see through the truth of this matter easily, but why hasn’t the Church of Evernight, Storm, and Steam realized this problem?

“Their understanding of the Black Emperor is no less than yours…”

After all, the two Churches of the Evernight and the Storm had supported the Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire!

The Red Angel evil spirit wore an amused expression again as “He” sized up Dwayne Dantès and his valet.

“How old are you?

“Why are you still so naive and childish?

“The six deities and the six Churches are not necessarily equivalent at times. The things the six deities know might not be told to the angels and saints beneath ’Them.”

The Red Angel evil spirit let out a chortle again when “He” saw that Dwayne Dantès was still frowning in confusion.

“Trust me, what I said, and what I’ll be saying next, is undoubtedly a form of provocation to ruin the image of the six deities, but you can consider whether it’s the truth.

“Let’s put it this way. In regards to someone wanting to become the Black Emperor, the attitude of the six deities—uh, the seven deities is rather ambiguous. They’ often have conflicts of ‘Their’ own. More precisely, ‘They’ are happy to see a mentally-sound Black Emperor be born, but they also wish that it’s one ‘They’ support. Therefore, ‘They’ will not give any detailed revelations to the various Churches. ‘They’ will only follow the normal procedure and deliver punishment if there are results to the investigation. Otherwise, they will tacitly approve of its development.

“Of course, during this process, we cannot eliminate the possibility that a certain existence might want to do some damage, but it will not be so direct and obvious, because it will definitely be stopped by the other deities.

“If it wasn’t because he knew of ‘Them’ taking such attitudes, how could George III dare take the risk?

“Alright, now that the war has broken out, he has overcome the crisis. He can wait for the next opportunity.”

At that moment, Klein thought of the news that had been leaked out during the operation launched at the Blood Emperor ruins. He was momentarily unsure if he should suspect that the upper echelons of the three Churches had a member of the ancient secret organization, or that a certain deity had personally reminded Amon’s brother. And if it were the latter, the suspect was undoubtedly not the Lord of Storms.

After a moment of silence, Klein hesitantly asked, “So, as long as nothing goes wrong, George III will carry out the ritual to become a god, despite everything that he has done? And if everything goes smoothly and he survives the backlash from the potion, will he ascend to the throne of Black Emperor?”

The Red Angel evil spirit replied in a relaxed tone, “Is there a problem?”

“Why would the seven deities…” Klein couldn’t help but ask.

The Red Angel evil spirit tsked and said, “Do you want to know? If you want to know, I can tell you now.”

Just as he was about to say “of course,” Klein suddenly recalled the warning that Ma’am Arianna had given him.

“There are some things that make it easier to be ‘infected’ the more you know. Both your body and soul will be infected. Once you become an angel, you can seek out the exact answer.”

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein made his marionette smile.

“Forget it then.”

“Very good. You nearly died out of curiosity and foolishness.” The Red Angel evil spirit shook “His” head regretfully.

“He” then looked out the window and said, “If there’s nothing else, you may leave.”

“Alright.” Klein made the marionette stand up and raise his right hand.

At this moment, the half-slumped Red Angel evil spirit suddenly asked, “I have this nagging feeling that if I had attacked you just now, you wouldn’t be completely helpless, am I right?”

Of course, why do you think I chose Flaming Jump instead of “Teleporting”? That was to hide the burning of the paper crane in my wallet! This way, Snake of Fate Will Auceptin’s gaze would silently land on me. If anything happens, “He” would use the Yesterday Once More charm… To “deal” with an existence at your level, one can’t be too careful. How could one not be careful and keep a trump card hidden? Klein didn’t directly answer the Red Angel evil spirit’s question. He smiled and expressed his tacit agreement.

Pa!

He snapped his fingers, causing scarlet flames to surge out of his pocket and envelop him.

As the scarlet streams dispersed, Klein’s figure disappeared in front of the Red Angel evil spirit.

Backlund, at Dr. Aaron Ceres’s home, in a black pram.

The chubby baby rubbed his eyes and muttered silently, “Backlund really isn’t suitable for children to live in!”

39 Böklund Street. Having done a divination, Klein saw Member of

Parliament Macht who was about to head to West Borough.

“Didn’t you go to Maygur Manor? I’m planning on letting Riana and Hazel hide in Moose Manor.” Macht pinched the sockets of his eyes.

I wonder when this side effect will disappear… Klein retracted his gaze from this action and sighed.

“I have to prepare some weapons for the manor, so I came to seek your help.

“Also, if you have the means to get food, you can help me buy some.”

In his opinion, the low-level citizens weren’t able to stock up on food because they didn’t have any money at all. At most, they would stock up a few days’ worths of food. Therefore, his purchase wouldn’t affect them for the time being. Once the food situation worsened, he could donate more of it through Miss Audrey. Before food rationing was implemented, if Klein didn’t stockpile, other rich people would do so. Furthermore, they might not donate it.

“No problem,” Macht agreed without any hesitation.

Klein didn’t ask about the price, because he had given Housekeeper Taneja a total of 5,000 pounds for such matters.

Of course, after confirming that Zaratul was in Backlund and that Dwayne Dantès being equivalent to Gehrman Sparrow was known to the Red Angel evil spirit, he decided not to return to Maygur Manor. He planned on changing his identity so as not to affect the innocent.

As for the excuse, it had been arranged by the Church of Evernight that he would perform certain tasks and that he was unable to return for a long period of time. If there was a charity event that required his help, he gave Miss Audrey the authority to stand in his place.

Chapter 1088 - Hiding in Secret

◆

On the way to Saint Samuel Cathedral from Boklund Street, Klein passed by the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation at 22 Phelps Street. He was surprised to find that the door was still open.

As the initiator and current director, he placed quite a bit of concern over this matter. He temporarily slowed down and walked over.

Just as he entered the door, he saw Miss Audrey walking down from the second floor with her personal maidservant, a big golden retriever, and a few staff members beside her.

“Good afternoon. In this situation, there doesn’t seem to be a need to insist on doing anything.” Klein went forward and voiced out his doubts.

Audrey held the newspaper in her hand as she looked at Dwayne Dantes.

“Some of our beneficiaries were injured in the air raid. I just went to visit them and arranged for follow-up treatment.” The noble lady’s eyes were slightly red, as though she had seen all sorts of heart-wrenching scenes in the hospital.

“May the Goddess bless them.” Klein came to a realization and drew a crimson moon on his chest.

He took the opportunity to say the idea that he had come up with long ago.

"I plan to donate some more money to buy food, medicine, and medical equipment for the foundation. In this manmade disaster, we can do more things."

"A brilliant idea. Those who are suffering will be grateful to you from the bottom of their hearts, Mr. Dantes." Audrey tapped her chest four times in a fluid motion. There was obvious joy and pity in her eyes. "I will do my best as well."

She didn't want to just donate money, but to spearhead certain matters.

Klein nodded.

"You don't have to praise me. At times like these, I only did what I should do.

"Apart from donating funds, I will also donate food. All of you can discuss this directly with my butler, Walter. Yes, Miss Audrey, I can write a letter of authorization to you now so that you can use my name to transfer the resources of Maygur Manor."

"What about you, Mr. Dantes?" Audrey asked with a vague guess.

This was the most normal response in such a conversation.

"I received a notice from the Church that I need to help them perform certain tasks. As for what they are, I haven't gone to Saint Samuel Cathedral yet, so I'm not sure either. The only thing I can confirm is that I have to travel around. I won't be able to return to Maygur Manor for a long time." Klein gave the reason he had come up with previously. "Miss Audrey, during this period of time at the foundation, I have come to understand your character and ability. Your background and standing also determine your visions and style. Handing these matters to you is the best solution I can come up with."

Klein didn't expect his lies to fool a senior Spectator. He only wanted to deceive the people around Justice—oh, these people didn't include the dog.

Does Mr. World want to temporarily give up on his identity as Dwayne Dantes so that he can perform certain matters in secret? Feeling enlightened, Audrey pretended to think. After a few seconds of silence, she said, “With the current situation, I can’t refuse such a request.”

Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief. He immediately got his personal servant, Enuni, to go upstairs to get a piece of paper and a pen. Then, while being witnessed by the staff, he personally drafted a letter of authorization, signed his name, printed his thumbprint, and stamped the seal.

After doing all of this, Klein cast his gaze at the newspaper in Audrey’s hand.

“Is there anything else? I just came back from outside the city. I only heard the paperboy shout that the kingdom has declared war on Feysac.”

Audrey pursed her lips and said with a slightly gloomy expression, “Not long after the airship fleet from Feysac attacked Backlund, their Sonia Sea fleet took advantage of the thick fog to attack the Imperial Navy’s base at Pritz Harbor’s Oak Island and the shipyards in the surrounding area. Fortunately, the Church of the Lord of Storms received a warning beforehand and sent a telegram in advance. Pritz Harbor wasn’t lost, but it lost quite a number of ships and factories. It’s said that many people died and were seriously injured…”

“This is war…” Klein sighed. “Can I see how the king declared war?”

Audrey knew that there was something wrong with King George III, so she could tell that Mr. World was hiding his contempt. She didn’t refuse and handed the newspaper over.

It was the Tussock Times.

Without needing to spread it open, he directly saw the king’s declaration on the headlines:

“…708 years ago, the Feysacians took away Sonia Island from us.

“A year ago, the Feysacians stole half of our interests in East Balam.

“Today, they bombarded Backlund and attacked Pritz Harbor. Many Loenese were killed and injured, and their blood has stained the ground.

“There’s no way for us to back down any further. We can only be bullied again and again by the Feysacians if we back off. If we continue retreating, we will lose all our interests overseas. Large amounts of our products will not be sold. Countless workers will lose their jobs, and even more peasants will go bankrupt!

“Everything from the past and now states that justice is in our hands, and we have enough strength to seize complete victory.

“Everyone, I, your emperor, George III, represent the parliament and the kingdom’s government to declare war on Feysac. Unless they raise the white flag and surrender, we will never stop advancing!

“Advance, we shall take back Sonia Island! Advance, we shall conquer St. Millom!

“Victory will definitely belong to us. The gods will be with us!”

Klein quickly browsed through it and used his Clown ability to stop his lips from curling up.

He then returned the Tussock Times to Audrey. He took off his hat and bowed.

“I’ll leave the rest to you.”

“I will, please rest assured.” Audrey held the letter of authorization and newspapers and bowed.

Without any further delay, Klein left the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation with his valet, Enuni, and arrived at Saint Samuel

Cathedral.

At that moment, the church no longer had many believers present. Most of them had returned to their homes, busy preparing for their life with war having been declared.

In the dark and quiet environment, Klein found a seat and sat down. He took off his hat, clasped his hands, and placed them in front of his mouth and nose. He softly recited the honorific name of the Evernight Goddess, then said, "…I received news from the Red Angel evil spirit that it's very likely that Zaratul has already arrived in Backlund. As for the secret ruins of the Blood Emperor, there's a high chance that it's the mausoleum needed for the Black Emperor ritual …"

After the prayer, Klein waited patiently for a while. He saw the archbishop, Anthony Stevenson, enter from the side door and walk towards him.

This saint was clean-shaven. He wore a black robe that had the crimson moon's emblem on it. He walked without making a sound, as though he was the night that slowly descended.

Anthony didn't say a word after he approached Dwayne Dantes. He only signaled with his eyes before turning towards the library.

With that, Klein got up, put on his hat, and followed silently behind.

As for his personal servant, Enuni, he held his cane and walked to the entrance of the cathedral to wait.

Outside the library, Archbishop Anthony turned around and revealed a smile. He said to Dwayne Dantes, "War has erupted. There are too many things that need to be done. As a devout believer of the Goddess, are you willing to provide some help?"

Indeed… From the looks of it, Ma'am Arianna has left Backlund… As Klein sighed, he drew the crimson moon on his chest.

"It's my honor. Praise the Lady."

After responding, he immediately asked, "What do you need me to do?"

"I'll inform you when needed. Try not to go home during this period of time," Saint Anthony said in an illogical tone.

And in an instant, he understood what the other party meant. He had to hide for now. They had no time to deal with Zaratul. At most, they could provide him protection within a certain range.

Just as I thought, the Goddess is digesting the Uniqueness of the Death pathway. "She will not be able to do a divine descent for a long period of time. The upper echelons of the Church have to deal with the war, while the negative effects of Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts are more terrifying than the last… Klein nodded gently.

"Yes, Your Grace."

"May the Goddess bless you." Saint Anthony drew the crimson moon.

"Praise the Lady. The only escape is tranquility." Klein responded with a familiar gesture.

Then, he left Saint Samuel Cathedral and headed to another street with his valet.

After walking for a while, both of them disappeared at some point in time.

East Borough, in a two-bedroom rental apartment.

Wearing an ordinary face, Klein took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew at it.

Soon, Reinette Tinekerr walked out of the void with four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand. She wasn't surprised by her contractor's appearance.

Without giving a letter, he directly said, “Tell Miss Sharron and Marie that Zaratul has come to Backlund and is very likely to be in contact with the Rose School of Thought. They must be careful. It’s best not to go to the Bravehearts Bar in the near future.”

“Zaratul…” This time, Reinette Tinekerr’s four heads spoke at the same time, as though they had spent a great deal of effort to recall who it was.

“Leader of the Secret Order, a Sequence 1 angel who once lost his mind before becoming normal again.” Klein took out a gold coin and handed it to Miss Messenger.

He didn’t mention that Zaratul was very interested in Gehrman Sparrow. He believed that, as a high-level spirit world creature, Miss Messenger would be able to sense his uniqueness to a certain extent. Otherwise, there was no need for this angel to lower “Her” status to be his messenger. If it was for Yesterday Once More charms, “She” could provide him help in a more decent manner.

As for why Zaratul didn’t discover the gray fog’s aura in the foggy town but now shows interest in Gehrman Sparrow, Klein believed that there were three reasons. The first reason was that the gray fog’s Beyonder convergence had compelled this powerful Seer to come to Backlund, and “He” predicted something. The second reason was that Gehrman Sparrow was able to leave the foggy town despite receiving the wrong symbol and return to the real world. The third reason was that Gehrman Sparrow was likely related to the organization that believed in The Fool.

By the time Zaratul came into contact with the Rose School of Thought and realized that the Mother Tree of Desire was somewhat interested in Gehrman Sparrow, even if he didn’t have a guess, the importance he placed on Gehrman Sparrow would still rise exponentially.

Reinette Tinekerr didn’t say anything else. One of the heads tilted forward and bit the gold coin.

After watching Miss Messenger leave, he pulled a chair and sat down. He sized up the sky outside the window across a wooden desk.

The layout of the rental apartment was the same as the one he used to live in Tingen City. There was a bedroom inside, and outside of it was a living room, dining room, and study room. There was also a bunk bed.

At that moment, in the room, other than him, there were only his marionettes—Qonas and Enuni.

Chapter 1089 - A Difficult Decision

◆

After sitting for a while, Klein raised his hand to rub his temples. He then stood up, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

He then conjured Gehrman Sparrow. By praying to Mr. Fool, he sent messages to Danitz and The Hermit Cattleya.

The message for the former was to remind him to be careful of the Secret Order. Although he didn't believe that Zaratul would directly seek out Danitz, a person who had crossed paths with Gehrman Sparrow on the surface, there was nothing wrong with reminding him regardless. As a Bizarro Sorcerer, Klein had a certain level of understanding of the Beyonders of the Seer pathway. He believed that those who could truly advance to such a state were sufficiently cautious and careful. This didn't exclude certain oddities and exceptions, but it definitely didn't exclude Zaratul who was at Sequence 1.

And in this situation, in the eyes of an angel who was in control of enough secrets, Danitz was more like bait that was deliberately thrown out to fish for certain targets. Therefore, it was highly likely that Zaratul would very carefully and cautiously avoid him. At most, he would send members of the Secret Order to do some direct or indirect investigations.

By the same logic, the message that Klein gave The Hermit Cattleya had the same content. However, this wasn't the main point. The main point was for her to immediately contact Queen Mystic Bernadette, saying that Gehrman Sparrow wanted to meet her as soon as possible. In addition, he also informed the Admiral of Stars—something he wanted to delay till the next Tarot Gathering—that she was to decide if she wanted to purchase the Sequence 5 Druid and Sequence 4 Classical Metallurgist of the Planter pathway.

West of the Berserk Sea, Theros Island.

Danitz, who was gathering clues about Vice Admiral Ailment, held a cup filled with golden beer when his expression suddenly became extremely complicated.

“What’s wrong? You saw someone and recalled an indescribable encounter?” Anderson shook the Lanti Proof distilled liquor in his hand as he teased the abnormal Danitz.

Danitz gulped down a mouthful of beer and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand before saying with a somewhat depressed expression, “We have to be careful of Secret Order members from now on…”

Ever since he met Gehrman Sparrow, such words were a common occurrence for him. His initial reaction had gone from the point of panic to numbness and depression.

He suspected that one day, he would be listed as being wanted by all organizations of different sizes, except Mr. Fool’s organization.

Anderson sized up Danitz when he heard that as he chuckled.

“Sometimes, I feel that Gehrman Sparrow is more like a hunter than me.

“Heh, so the two of you have a special method of communication. You don’t even need to summon a messenger.”

Danitz was just about to say a few perfunctory words when a person from Intis rushed into the tavern. He held a telegram and shouted, “Feysac launched an air raid on Backlund, Loen has officially declared war!”

Declared war? Anderson and Danitz looked at each other. By relying on their pathway’s characteristics, they acutely caught the scent of a large-scale war.

Feysac attacked Backlund and Pritz Harbor, and in return, Loen has officially declared war… The three ironclad warship fleets weren’t at the harbor, so there wasn’t many losses. They’re heading back to the Loen coast…Cattleya’s crew happened to pass through Oravi Island, and they had gathered all sorts of information from the telegrams.

Just as she was thinking about how the pirate crew would react in this situation, she suddenly saw an endless gray fog and heard The World Gehrman Sparrow.

“Be careful of the Secret Order members. Be careful of Zaratul…” As someone from Intis to a certain extent, what caught Cattleya’s attention was something that with the least importance.

And it was precisely because of this that she had no doubts about The World Gehrman Sparrow’s request to meet the Queen as soon as possible. She believed that this was related to the Secret Order and Zaratul.

Finally, she said the two potion names softly, “Druid… Classical Metallurgist…

“This Sequence 4’s modern name should be the Ancient Metallurgist. It was previously called Human Metallurgist…”

Cattleya subconsciously walked to the window and cast her gaze down. On these seas which had a time difference between it and Backlund, Frank Lee and Artisan Cielf were leaning on the side of the ship’ sunbathing. The former ^ a relaxed expression and looked very pleased, but there was a pensive look in his eyes. It was as though there were still some problems that couldn’t be resolved. The latter’s face was pale, and his lips were quivering. Scattered over his clothes were mushrooms.

Druid… Ancient Metallurgist… Admiral of Stars Cattleya repeated the two terms again, feeling as though something was pressing down on her.

After about ten seconds, Cattleya adjusted the heavy glasses on her nose bridge and consoled herself.

Mr. Fool didn’t give any warnings. It means it’s not a big deal…

With this thought in mind, specks of bright light floated down, forming a staircase of light between the captain’s cabin window and the deck.

Cattleya went down the stairs and walked to Frank Lee and Cielf s side.

After a few seconds of silence, Cattleya asked, “Frank, what are your dreams?”

Only then did Frank Lee realize that his captain had arrived. With a push of his palm, he flipped to his feet.

“Dreams?”

This Biologist thought about it seriously and said, “I wish to be able to study the soil, the creation of objects, and crossbreeding techniques without restrictions, so as to ensure that humans will no longer be hungry anymore. Equality between people will be achieved. What you can do, I can do. What you can grow, I can also grow…”

Upon hearing this, Artisan Cielf slowly got up and silently crouched to the side, opening his mouth and vomiting.

Frank Lee continued without being affected, “In order to have such a world, one has to have sufficient food and resources, so I hope to create all kinds of creatures that can deal with different environments and conditions. Heh heh, everyone has their own tendencies. I prefer fish, beef, and spores…"

Cattleya finished listening to Frank's description with a deadpan expression. However, during this process, she repeatedly nudged the thick glasses on her nose thrice.

After a moment of silence, Cattleya asked, "There's only one step left to your research now?"

"That's right. I'm just short of a Dmid's ability for catalyzing it. If I can t get the formula, I m 伽 help me make the Druid Beyonder characteristic I have into a mystical item," Frank answered frankly.

"No, I won't help you! You devil!" the silently vomiting Artisan Cielf raised his head and shouted anxiously.

Cattleya watched this scene quietly. With a flip of her hand, she produced a gold coin.

Ding!

The gold coin flipped up before landing in Cattleya's palm, heads facing up.

"I have the Druid potion formula. It's from Gehrman Sparrow, 5,000 pounds," Cattleya explained in detail, as though she was deliberately telling Artisan Cielf, informing him who the true "murderer" was.

A look of pure joy immediately appeared in Frank Lee's eyes.

"He really is a swell guy!

"Uh, Captain, I've only saved up to 3,000 pounds. Can you lend me 2,000 pounds?"

Most of his previous savings had been used to buy the Druid Beyonder characteristic, and he had even sold some of his items.

Cattleya fell silent once again. A few seconds later, she nodded while Frank Lee's expectant eyes were on her. "Okay."

North Borough, Backlund Medical University's affiliated hospital.

Eudora lay on the bed with a blank expression, lacking the vibrancy a young girl should have.

She had woken up from her coma some time ago, but she hadn't opened her eyes. Thus, she heard the doctor tell her parents that the injury she received to her right leg from the air raid likely couldn't be saved. They had to be prepared for an amputation procedure.

After that, she lay down in a daze, feeling as though there were many people coming and going one after another. Among them, the person who had originally only visited the student next door, the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation director, Audrey, indicated that she was willing to pay for the subsequent treatments after hearing about her. The school's chancellor, Mr. Portland Moment, had promised to create the most advanced and most convenient robotic limb for her to walk like a normal person.

However, none of this dispelled the gloominess, heaviness, sorrow, and despair in Eudora's heart.

She wasn't even 18, and she had yet to enjoy the beauty of life, but now, she was about to lose a leg and lose her dreams.

Her family wasn't considered wealthy. Her father was the owner of a grocery store that believed in the Lord of Storms. He was violent, barbaric, and unwilling to reason with women. Her mother was timid and weak, and she relied on her father to survive. If not for the fact that her family didn't have a second child at home, Eudora wouldn't have been able to study at all. But even so, her father had chosen a place like the Backlund Technical School where results could be quickly seen.

Previously, she had commented on how lucky she was that the

Backlund Technical School had been turned into the Backlund University of Technology; furthermore, she had passed the examinations and become a real university student. This made her smile every day as she passed the joy to the people around her while having the time to indulge in her hobby for poetry.

Eudora's dream was to remain in the university and be a university teacher, finding a husband who loved her as she loved him. At the same time, she could constantly keep true to her pursuit of poetry, hoping that they would one day be published in magazines and newspapers.

Now, all of this had been destroyed by a bomb that fell from the sky. It had been mercilessly and cruelly destroyed.

After an unknown period of time, Eudora silently pulled up the blanket and covered her face. She let out a soft whimper that sounded like a baby beast.

The crying didn't stop for a while. After a while, Eudora suddenly lifted the blanket and saw a black figure standing by her bed.

Half of the black figure's face was covered by mushrooms, while the other half was covered in weeds. In the black figure's hand was a wooden cane.

Eudora couldn't even scream. She felt like her heart was about to burst out of her chest.

The black figure touched her with the tip of the cane.

Eudora felt her heart return to normal while her right leg felt cold, as though she could feel her leg again.

When she looked at the bedside again, the black figure wasn't there anymore.

In her daze, Eudora moved her right leg and realized that it wasn't painful at all. It was if she had never been hurt before.

She pulled up the blanket again and covered her face.

A few seconds later, there was a sound of disbelief under the blanket. It was filled with fear, but it was also mixed with crying that were tears of joy.

Chapter 1090 - Haunted Tales

◈ ◈ ◈

Nighttime, Pritz Harbor, in a cemetery in the suburbs.

The people who died in the airship bombings had been brought here. The priests and bishops of the three Churches were busy comforting the souls of the dead to prevent any anomalies from happening.

In that short day, many wives lost their husbands, many children lost their mothers, and many families were down to a single person. Some of them loitered in the cemetery—some silent, others sobbing. Some even wept until they fainted.

Wearing an ordinary-looking face, Klein stood among them and watched everything without saying a word. It was as if he had recalled the funeral he had attended before.

While it was dark, he had just used Life’s Cane to treat the injured in Backlund and Pritz Harbor’s various hospitals— victims of the air raid. He had also left behind a strange and horrifying urban myth to help him further digest the Bizarro Sorcerer potion.

And he knew that, once such haunted tales spread like wildfire, Zaratul, who was in Backlund, would immediately be able to understand what was going on. “He” would send his marionettes to monitor the corresponding areas. Hence, before the news spread, he relied on “Teleporting” to travel to all the hospitals in Backlund and Pritz Harbor, leaving behind all sorts of horror stories to treat patients with severe illnesses.

When this matter spread, he believed that he would receive a great deal of feedback, allowing him to take a firm and huge step in the direction of completely digesting the potion.

However, Klein didn't stop there. The existence of a conspiracy created by the Red Angel evil spirit, and the fact that Zaratul was in Backlund, was like a guillotine hanging above his head, urging him to continue searching for opportunities.

Hence, he came here to witness the grief of the ordinary citizens.

After a moment of silence, Klein retracted his gaze and turned to leave the cemetery.

After arriving at an empty spot, his left glove quickly turned dark blue, and slippery fish scales grew out.

With a whoosh, the wind swept over, and Klein flew up into the air towards the harbor.

In the sea beyond the land, the Sonia Sea fleet from the Feysac Empire was quietly waiting. It was as if they were prepared to launch another bombardment after daybreak, destroying the rest of the shipyards.

Soon, Klein arrived above the harbor ruins and looked at the faint flames in the dark night.

At the same time, his two marionettes had used Flaming Jump to rush over from the ground, splitting up into different hidden locations.

From what he had heard and seen, Klein didn't have any doubts or feelings towards what he was about to do. However, he was still confused.

Taking revenge on the invaders was a legitimate matter, but if he were to seriously injure the Feysac fleet, the happiest person would be the Loen King, George III—the true mastermind behind all of this, one of the culprits who had pushed for war!

There are too many principles in this world, but only those who have truly experienced it will realize that there are times when doing nothing is the correct path. It will fill one's heart with conflict… With a sigh, Klein turned his attention to the information he had received from The Hanged Man.

The commander of the Sonia Sea fleet from the Feysac Empire was Admiral Egor Einhorn. He was a demigod from the royal family, currently a Sequence 4 Iron-blooded Knight of the Red Priest pathway!

Through this information, together with the contents of the Red Priest card, more key points surfaced in Klein's mind.

Iron-blooded Knight can make women turn into men, and also make them have courage that is comparable to steel. Not only can they control multiple types of flames, but they're also masters in this domain. They can even turn their own flames into steel…

On the Nepos, the flagship of the Feysac Empire's Sonia Sea fleet.

A burly man with a thick beard more than two meters tall, Egor Einhorn, was sitting behind a desk. As he drank Sonia blood wine, he pondered over what to do next.

After daybreak, Loen's airship crew will definitely attack. Their Pritz ironclad warship and the corresponding fleet will return soon. If they continue staying here, I'll be left in a passive situation.

Although I'm a Iron-blooded Knight, allowing the entire fleet's power to gather onto me while distributing the damage, the commanding officer of the ironclad warship is most likely a demigod of the Arbiter pathway, or they have the corresponding Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, so it won't be easy to deal with them… If I'm not careful, they might be able to make use of the advantage of their fleet's speed and armaments…

Retreating is the best option. After that, we'll continue attacking the coastal ports while the Loen navy is damaged… Heh heh, this war is indeed a good opportunity to digest potions.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to become a War Bishop before this. Otherwise, I might have a chance to advance to the level of an angel after the war. Sigh, only a War Bishop can truly unleash the strength of an army. It's not like how I am right now, only able to focus power on myself…

In the midst of Egor Einhom's thoughts, he planned on using the hidden connection between an Iron-blooded Knight and the soldiers that were under his command to inform his adjutant to pay him a visit, so that he could give the orders of performing a retreat overnight.

Suddenly, he looked up at the door.

Thump!

There was a knock on the door, and it instantly reverberated in the quiet room.

An advance warning before an attack… This thought flashed across Egor's mind and he became extremely tense.

In a battle between demigods, setting up an environment, sudden attacks, and catching enemies by surprise was a good way to seize the initiative. It was a combination that could effectively defeat or even kill an enemy of the same level. On the contrary, it was very difficult to accomplish it successfully. Therefore, giving an advance notice before an attack was either a warning without any follow-ups, or it meant that the attacker's level and strength far exceeded the target.

As a senior Iron-blooded Knight, Egor instinctively considered the worst situation. He immediately woke up every sailor and soldier on the Nepos to establish a connection with him.

At that moment, the noise sounded again.

Boom!

This time, the knocking sound on the door was comparable to the loud boom of a salvo. It made Egor feel like a bomb had exploded in his ears.

Under his high-strung nerves, he carefully listened to the commotion. This wasn't much different from the roar of a Cataclysmic Interrer!

In an instant, Egor's ears buzzed and he felt dizzy.

He quickly spread out the damage and let every member of the Nepos hear a faint buzz.

Then, Egor grabbed the fountain pen on the table and threw it at the door.

This dark red fountain pen left afterimages along the way, like a cannonball that had been fired.

To an Iron-blooded Knight, no matter how ordinary it was, it could become a terrifying murderous weapon through his augmentation!

Boom!

The door that was hit by the fountain pen cracked open, revealing the person in the corridor who had knocked on the door.

It was a man in a black trench coat. His body was as thin as paper, and his face had no facial features.

At that moment, the fountain pen had already exploded. The tiny fragments were like storms brought about by the sweeping of a machine gun. It embroiled the person who knocked on the door, tearing him into pieces of flesh and blood.

Egor didn't relax. Instead, he stood up and looked around warily.

He clearly knew that the person who had knocked on the door hadn't appeared!

At this moment, the adjutant, whose bunk was diagonally across from him, opened the door and ran out. When he saw the flesh and blood on the ground, he said in surprise, “Admiral, what happened?”

“There’s an intruder…” Before Egor could finish his sentence, his gaze suddenly froze on the adjutant.

The adjutant retracted his gaze from the flesh and blood on the ground and slowly raised his head.

There were no eyebrows, eyes, nose, or mouth on his face. It was the same as the person who had knocked just now—a featureless surface.

Egor’s heart palpitated, and his entire body ignited, transforming into flames that shot out in all directions.

After the scarlet flames dispersed, they swept forward and surrounded the adjutant.

The fire quickly spread, revealing the already charred adjutant.

When the cold wind blew past, the adjutant collapsed into a pile of ashes.

The flames didn’t stop as they flew out of the room, one after another, forming a tall and burly Egor in midair.

At that moment, he saw seagulls flying around him. All of them had a human head without any facial features—their heads bare!

Egor let out a secret grunt as a blazing flame surrounded him before he sent towards the strange seagulls at high speeds.

At that moment, he heard the sound of metal rubbing against each other and immediately looked over with the help of the soldiers.

When he saw this, his body suddenly turned cold. He couldn’t help but feel a sense of horror.

On one of the ships on the other sail-powered battleship of the Sonia

Sea fleet, the cannons seemed to come alive and had a life of their own!

They turned around and aimed into the air.

As for the cannonballs, they actively leaped into the cannons.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The moment these shells were fired, they were struck by fireballs that followed different trajectories, exploding prematurely mid-flight.

Seizing this opportunity, Egor quickly recited the honorific name of the highest commander in the Sonia Sea theater—a Weather Warlock from the royal family.

“The ruler of the fog of the battlefield, the symbol of weather flux, the totem of the storm and lightning, the great Awatoma Einhorn…”

This was also the reason why it was difficult to kill a demigod of the same level when an advanced warning was given. They could always find an opportunity to seek help.

Of course, the main goal of the attacker, Klein, was to create a bizarre scene to scare a demigod and help him digest his potion. He had no intention of completing the hunt.

Upon seeing this, he hid beneath the water. Having achieved his goal, he immediately got Qonas and Enuni to swap locations over to him and “Teleport” away with them.

As for Egor, he didn’t let his guard down. He remained extremely tense and guarded against any possible attacks.

Only when the angel responded did he truly heave a sigh of relief.

Following that, Egor didn’t let the fleet stay any longer. He abandoned the sail-powered battleship that had turned into an urban myth, and he left those waters.

After a while, a seagull flew over and landed on the sail-powered battleship that had regained its silence.

The seagull had obvious dark eye circles. It looked around and said in the language of humans, “I can smell the aura of a Seer demigod…”

Chapter 1091 - Asking Himself

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, East Borough, in a cramped rental apartment.

Wearing a rather thick jacket, Klein stood behind a desk and looked at the glass window in front of him. He carefully sensed the speed at which the Bizarro Sorcerer potion was being digested.

It’s really fast. It’s even more than the first three months of my digestion combined… However, there’s nothing I can do about it. Before I received Life’s Cane, I couldn’t provide sufficient treatment. I have to make sure that the heart of the target can withstand the fright they experience, so as a result, I wasn’t able to go to the hospital to create an urban

Similarly, if it wasn’t for the fact that a war broke out, it would be rather difficult to find other demigods. Those whose whereabouts that I can confirm are mostly on their own home ground. To secretly invade and create a bizarre sense of horror will involve turning innocents into marionettes. Even if there’s no other choice, I wouldn’t have considered it… Klein shifted his attention away from himself and sighed silently.

He then repeated a word in his mind:

War…

At this moment, the street lamps in the distance were lit up. East Borough was pitch black with the occasional policemen patrolling the streets with lanterns.

In the past, these policemen wouldn't have been so enthusiastic. Now that the war had broken out, they had to carry out the corresponding curfew orders to ensure that there was order and security.

"War…" Klein repeated the word softly again, and in a daze, he saw a part of the ending.

The Loen King, George III, has finally broken through the shackles. He's no longer worried that any of the seven deities will strongly object to his apotheosis. He can officially push for the various rituals needed of Black Emperor. What follows will depend on himself, or should I say "Himself." As long as "He" can withstand the impact of the potion, and as long as "He" can maintain "His" rationality, "He" would be able to ascend to the divine throne and advance to Sequence 0.

The Einhorn family of Feysac used this war that can embroil the entire world to allow its key members to significantly digest their potions, and without much difficulty, they can prepare the corresponding rituals and allow their family's overall strength to be enhanced.

As for Amon's brother, "He" can consume the potion during these tumultuous times and experience a transformation to become a Visionary, allowing this world to have another true god…

As Klein's thoughts drifted, a question suddenly popped up in his mind:

Can I accept such an outcome?

Can I accept such an outcome… Klein opened his mouth and slowly closed it. Everything he saw seemed to pass through the limitations of time and space before returning to another place:

It was the extremely thick, slightly pungent, cold, and moist smog which was yellow and slightly iron-black in color which had permeated through the entirety of Backlund;

It was the tramps who were suffering from ailments, hunger, pain, and cold before being pushed to the brink of death. He was also struggling to survive. For the sake of food, he pushed himself with all his might, not daring to slack off at all. Finally, he saw the light of life. He bought his long-awaited ham, but in the hazy smog, he fell to the ground and never got up again;

She was a hardworking widow. In order to survive, and to provide for her two children, she had abandoned all her dignity and made herself a shrew that spewed vulgarities. With pain-ridden joints that suffered repeatedly from the invasion of the humidity on a daily basis, she supported a roof that could block out the elements. However, the roof had collapsed in the Great Smog. The child she wanted to protect had died in her arms;

It was a young girl who yearned to study and fantasized about a bright future. She doted on her mother and her younger sister, working hard in the room that was filled with moisture, always carrying that tiny bit of hope. However, after the Great Smog, she was no longer able to see the future she longed for;

It was a girl who desperately took in knowledge under the care of her mother and elder sister. She had gone through too much suffering, and she walked out of her predicament one step at a time, hoping to improve herself. She hoped that her mother and sister wouldn't tire themselves out anymore and that she would have a chance to let her family of three to live an ideal life. However, all of this ultimately shattered. In that terrifying smog, this girl was left alone. No matter how much pain or joy she felt, she was no longer able to share it with her mother and sister. That fantasy of her family life never appeared, nor would it ever appear again;

They were living beings that fell to the ground like straw, one family after another, one human after another. They would never be able to erase the pain in their bones;

It was a student who clearly had a bright future, but only half of his body was left—his intestines splattered all over the ground;

They were children who returned home from school, only to suddenly realize that they had lost their parents and had become orphans;

It was the pain of writhing on the ground while crawling with great difficulty. He was an ordinary person who wanted to approach the future, but was powerless to swallow his last breath;

It was the people in the cemetery who were so silent that it made one's heart ache, or those who cried until they fainted several times;

It was a land stained with blood;

It was the air filled with gunpowder;

They were cold and ruthless shells.

And for the mastermind behind all of this, the greatest murderer, he would step up to the divine throne over piles of corpses, only to receive cheers and escape his mortal coils.

Can you accept such a development?

Can you accept such an arrangement?

Can you accept such an outcome?

[image]

After a moment of silence, Klein suddenly spoke with a deep voice:

"No, I can't."

This voice immediately echoed in the room. It was layered and interlinked:

"No, I don't accept it!"

There were still lingering echoes in his ears as the corners of his mouth curled up. Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh.

"The seven deities already tacitly accepted it. What meaning is there even if you don't accept it?"

Once again, he fell silent. After a long while, he finally exhaled and said to himself with a calm expression, "Even if it's meaningless, some things still ought to be done."

In this world, how could there be many things that were guaranteed to succeed? That they were of value and be of use?

The corners of Klein's mouth curled up. He looked away, turned around, and entered the room inside the rental flat.

Although he had already made up his mind, he had no intention of doing it rashly. With his current level and status, no matter how hard he tried, it would be difficult for him to affect George III's matters. Other than throwing away his life, there wouldn't be any other outcome.

Furthermore, if this resulted in chaos in the Loen Kingdom during a critical period of the war, resulting in the invasion of the Feysac army, then the deaths and injuries of the innocent would only be ten times or even a hundred times worse than the Great Smog of Backlund.

All I can do now is make preparations. On the one hand, I have to improve myself. On the other hand, I have to make more preparations and patiently wait for an opportunity… Klein muttered silently to himself. He found a black sticky blob and split it into two before smearing one half uniformly on a mirror.

This was a way to contact Demoness Trissy.

However, when all the black objects disappeared, there was still no abnormality in the mirror.

There's no response… After being frightened by an angel like Miss Messenger, Trissy has already decided not to have any contact with Gehrman Sparrow… Klein sighed and walked to the bed to sit down.

His thoughts quickly shifted to the reason why the Demoness Sect had helped King George III.

…One of them is that the Demonesses need a catastrophe to digest the potion and hold a ritual. The other is that George III has made a promise to them? He promised them that they could openly spread their religion? No, this should be something that the seven deities wouldn't allow. Even if the Black Emperor is a Sequence 0, and with the Primordial Demoness and the True Creator, "They" wouldn't be able to fight against the seven deity alliance. Of course, after this war, the existence of an alliance between the seven deities is itself a question…

In that case, the seven deities that know that George III is working with the Demoness Sect shouldn't let "Him" become the Black Emperor…

The promise is for something else? The Demoness pathway has a true god, and there are very few valuable items left outside… Similar pathways? Isn't that the Red Priest pathway… George III—no, Amon's brother doesn't only know of the secret mausoleum needed by the Black Emperor from Blood Emperor Alista Tudor, but "He" also obtained the angel-level Beyonder characteristics or Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts of the Red Priest pathway?

With the condition that having a Sequence 0 means no Sequence 1, this is probably the greatest hope for the upper echelons of the Demoness Sect to advance further. Yes, the Primordial Demoness should also be very interested…

This can explain why the Demoness Sect is providing help… The Red Angel evil spirit is searching for Saintess of White Katarina, and it doesn't seem to be as simple as "He" said… No, "He" didn't say anything else besides using common knowledge and reactions to guide me into thinking that way…

Klein's train of thought gradually became clear. He decided to use Saintess of White Katarina, as a breakthrough point, making her his next target. However, before that, he had to listen to what Queen Mystic had predicted. He wanted to know what she was planning to do in Backlund from her mouth.

Only by understanding the situation could he find and seize the opportunity!

The next morning, The Hermit Cattleya conveyed the words of Queen Mystic Bernadette:

Today between 12 to 12:30 p.m. at Srenzo Restaurant, Golden Theater.”

It was the name of a private room.

When Klein arrived at 11:55 a.m., he used an illusion to deceive the waiter, and he walked all the way to the room and waited patiently.

After a while, he took out his golden pocket watch and opened it.

With that, he put away his pocket watch and counted down to ten silently. Then, he raised his hand and knocked on the door of the Golden Theater.

At that moment, his marionette, Qonas, was sitting on a bench across the restaurant and reading the newspapers leisurely. Enuni was with a group of students, giving off a flyer that promoted the evilness of Feysac. Of course, the three of them would switch positions from time to time, making it impossible for anyone to make an accurate judgment.

“Come in.” Bernadette’s voice came from the room.

Very impressive. I didn’t notice anyone inside, nor did I notice anyone entering… Well, it’s also because I didn’t activate my Spirit Body Threads vision… Klein mumbled to himself before turning the doorknob and pushing the door open.

The first thing he saw was large swaths of gold before noticing the chestnut-haired woman sitting at the head of the table.

Chapter 1092 - Ridiculous People

◆ ◆ ◆

Bernadette was wearing an Intis-styled blouse and was sitting there quietly. Her chestnut-colored hair was naturally draped over her shoulders, and her straight brows were spread out perfectly. She actually had the aura of a female professional from Earth, one that had been in a high position for a long period of time.

The Emperor's sense of aesthetics still has quite the influence over Queen Mystic. However, it's limited by the environment around her, and it cannot be fully manifested… Klein took off his hat and pressed it to his chest. He bowed slightly before casually pulling out a chair and sitting down.

With a sweep of her blue eyes that resembled the deep-blue sea, Bernadette's gentle and calm voice rang out:

"Why did you contact me so urgently this time?"

Aren't you a Clairvoyant? Didn't you receive a hint of a revelation? Klein subconsciously replied in his mind before he felt that he was being too arrogant.

This should be the aftereffects of interacting with the Red Angel evil spirit for too long… With "His" level, it would naturally affect the people around "Him." If "He" was willing, this effect would definitely turn into a form of corruption… Klein quickly did a self-analysis and made a judgment.

He pondered for a moment before asking, "Have you attained what you wanted to achieve in Backlund?"

Bernadette slowly shook her head.

"No.

You can even say that I failed."

"Oh?" Klein used a tone to express his surprise and puzzlement.

Bernadette glanced at him and said unhurriedly, "There's a strange name for the Sequence 2 potion of the Mystery Pryer pathway. It's called 'the Sage.' To advance to this level, one has to prevent a disaster that involves a higher level of power."

Sage… So that's where "sage" of the Hidden Sage comes from… Klein was momentarily enlightened. Just as he was about to ask, he heard Queen Mystic continue, "I anticipated such an opportunity in Backlund, so I came here a few years in advance to make preparations. I've recently been waiting for it for a long time.

"Unfortunately, I predicted that it would happen in the second half of this year. Last year, I wasn't in Backlund at the end of the year, so I wasn't able to stop the Great Smog. And in this war, I tried my best to do something, and I achieved something. But to my surprise, Feysac directly attacked Backlund with an air raid, and the disaster ultimately erupted."

That's why you said you failed… Klein nodded indiscernibly and said with a sigh, "I didn't expect the ones to start the war to be the Feysacians either."

As he spoke, he sighed inwardly. The difficulty of Queen Mystic's advancement ritual was controversial. It all depended on one's luck.

One had to know that before he became a demigod, Klein had already stopped the True Creator from descending. He had saved Tingen and Backlund, which were feats that could definitely satisfy the ritual requirements of becoming a Sage. But under normal circumstances, there weren't as many disasters like these, and they weren't things that could easily be stopped.

Just like the present situation, Amon's brother had planned for one to two thousand years. Even if something went awry with King George III, war would erupt as "He" had expected. This was because the root cause of the Uniqueness of the Death pathway hadn't been resolved.

This made him suspect that Mr. Azik's life in the Northern Continent had always been under the arrangement of Amon's brother. If not, how did "He," who had lost his memories, escape from the sights of the various major Churches without a shape-shifting mask?

More importantly, it was unknown why Azik had used his real name in this life!

And this wasn't something that was suspected by anyone, nor did it incur any investigations!

Is this all part of your plan? Amon's brother… Upon thinking of this, Klein felt a certain trauma, a result of post- traumatic stress disorder. His body nearly trembled.

He silently took a deep breath and looked at Queen Mystic and added, "This war involves the son of the Creator, King of Angels, and the true deities. It's not something you can stop."

With Bernadette's knowledge and experience, she still had some changes to her facial expression when she heard the sentence. She repeated a few keywords in a low voice:

"The son of the Creator… King of Angels… Deities…"

She wasn't too surprised by this, as if she had already made a prediction. However, even if she was a Clairvoyant, she wasn't able to pry into the "script" composed by Amon's brother.

After repeating it again, Bernadette fell silent for two to three seconds before sighing to herself, “So that’s the reason…” Klein adjusted his posture and thought.

“Actually, to you, this war is also an opportunity.

“Next, there will be many disasters, including the clashing of powers at the angel level. I believe that you should at least be in control of a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. You can stop certain matters from happening at the critical moment. Of course, you have to choose a good time and method.”

Bernadette nodded gently and agreed with what he said. She also tacitly acknowledged that she possessed at least one Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

Of course, as the daughter of the protagonist of the previous era, as the child Emperor Roselle doted on the most, it would be unbelievable if her father didn’t leave her one or two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts.

What was more important was that Bernadette was already preparing the ritual needed to advance to Sage. This meant that she definitely had the corresponding Sequence 2 Beyonder characteristic in her hands. To a certain extent, it was equivalent to a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

After tacitly agreeing, Queen Mystic Bernadette’s gentle but emotionless voice changed slightly.

“However, I still don’t like war, even though it will give me a chance.

“I once hated him and couldn’t understand him. That’s why I didn’t call him father for many years. It’s because he did too many things against the trend of the times and hurt the innocent. I couldn’t accept my heroic father turning into a crazy tyrant…

“And now, through the answers from the entity behind you and my own investigations, I somewhat understand his situation. I understand that he was suffering from despair, pain, and loneliness. I understand him as a drowning person, only struggling on instinct.”

When Klein heard that, he sighed and felt his emotions in turmoil.

In this world, the only people who understood Huang Tao—Roselle Gustav—the most were probably the two people sitting here.

Of course, this feeling didn't stop him from sensing that Queen Mystic Bernadette's condition was a little different today. In the past few times they had met, this king's daughter had never said so much, nor had she opened her heart so directly. At most, she would play the tune of music, subtly expressing her sadness.

After some thought, Klein pretended not to notice, and he asked, "When did 'He' start changing? Do you think there was any prior warning, or something worth paying attention to?"

Queen Mystic Bernadette's deep blue eyes moved slightly, as though she had sunken into her trove of memories.

After a while, she slowly said, "Not long ago, he proudly said to me, 'Haven't you always wanted to know what's surrounding our moon and other planets? In the future, our journey might be towards the sea of stars."1

The sea of stars… What's on the moon and other planets… As Klein pondered over Queen Mystic's words, he suddenly recalled a key phrase and something.

The keyword was:

Cosmos!

That matter was:

Mr. Door had once told Emperor Roselle that once he had the ability, he could take a look at the moon. That would resolve many of his doubts.

The emperor finally went? That hysterical diary page[1] was written after this exploration attempt? He had unknowingly changed his personality, becoming extreme? Klein recalled the corresponding content. Under Queen Mystic Bernadette's gaze, he deliberated and said, "At your level, you should more or less know that there's corruption coming from the cosmos."

Bernadette nodded and didn't pursue the matter. It was as though she knew that Gehrman Sparrow wasn't sure either. She knew that only an angel-level demigod could detect and resist the corruption.

After more than ten seconds of silence, the topic was directed towards Klein's reason for being here.

"One of the reasons for this war is because the Loen King, George III, discovered the nine secret mausoleums left behind by the Blood Emperor, doing so with the intention of switching to the Black Emperor pathway and becoming a Sequence 0. As such, he abolished the Grain Act…"

Klein didn't care if Queen Mystic knew anything about these matters. He followed his own pace and roughly told her everything without missing out any key matters. Finally, he said, "The Black Emperor does have the ability to revive, but once a new Black Emperor appears, the original entity would perish completely."

The original entity here referred to Emperor Roselle, who might've succeeded before being "assassinated."

Sometimes, Klein even suspected that Roselle had intentionally given others a chance which resulted in him perishing on the spot. This way, when he revived from the astral world and regained his Uniqueness and absorbed the three Sequence 1 characteristics, he would no longer absorb the characteristics of Knowledge Emperor, Arcane Scholar, and the characteristics of another pathway. He could make himself pure; thus, free from madness.

This was a way to live through death, but the prerequisite was that Roselle's ritual had succeeded. He had died during or after the ritual, and not before the ritual.

Queen Mystic Bernadette took it all in before slowly saying, “You want to stop George III?”

“Yes.” Klein nodded frankly.

“Why?” Bernadette pressed in an unperturbed tone.

The corners of Klein’s mouth curled up as he smiled.

“Some ridiculous reasons that aren’t worth mentioning.”

Bernadette’s gaze landed on his face for a moment before she said, “That’s enough. I’m also doing such things for something that has slim chances, one that’s almost impossible to happen.

“We can cooperate on stopping George III.”

We’re all “ridiculous” people… Klein sighed and said, “I’ll give you the method to summon my messenger.” “Alright.” Bernadette reached out her right hand and lightly tapped the table.

The fountain pen that was originally placed diagonally in front of her suddenly jumped up, as if it was held by an invisible elf before writing fluidly on the paper.

“This is the method needed for summoning my messenger,” said Bernadette calmly.

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Author’s Note: From Chapter 715.

Chapter 1093 - The Angels of The Fool

◆

Queen Mystic’s powers are all very fantastical—no, fairytale-like… Klein glanced at the fountain pen that was writing on its own. He took out a pen and paper from his pocket and wrote the incantation to summon his messenger. He also indicated that each letter delivery needed the payment of a gold coin.

Right on the heels of that, he handed the piece of paper to Bernadette and took the other party’s piece of paper. He quickly scanned through it.

“An invisible creature that roams the upper realms, a strange spiritual body that is friendly to humans, a messenger that belongs solely to Bernadette Gustav…”

There’s a certain difference between this and a standard incantation, but it’s essentially the same… Hmm, Queen Mystic must’ve deliberately changed it to this to prevent others from trying out the summoning incantation and using the connection between the messenger and the contractor to lock onto her… For me, it doesn’t matter. My messenger is an angel. Only “She” can threaten others, and no one can threaten “Her.” Even if “She” were to meet Zaratul, “She” should have the ability to protect “Herself and escape… Klein mumbled inwardly and shook the piece of paper, igniting a scarlet red flame.

As she looked at the piece of paper turning into dark ashes amidst the flames, Queen Mystic Bernadette said without emotion, “What are your thoughts regarding the preventing of George Ill’s matter?”

Having already made some considerations, Klein deliberately spoke slowly, “First, don’t be rash. Don’t take risks that we can’t bear. Don’t hurt the innocent.”

If not for the fact that Queen Mystic Bernadette had mentioned earlier that she hated wars and hated harming the innocent, Klein wouldn’t have said so directly to prevent exposing his weaknesses. He would’ve used a milder and more roundabout method to achieve his goal.

Upon hearing this, Bernadette nodded slightly in acknowledgment.

“Then, there are only three possibilities. One is to destroy the ritual at the critical moment and let George Ill’s advancement fail. The second is to attempt an assassination in advance so that ‘He’ won’t be able to hold the ritual.” Klein deliberately didn’t give his third idea as he first analyzed the viability of the first two possibilities. “Assassination has an extremely slim chance of success. George III, or should I say, the one who will become Black Emperor should be a Sequence 1, so it’s not someone we can deal with.

“Even if ‘He1 has yet to advance to Sequence 1, he will definitely have acted ahead of time. Once ’He* completes the preparations for the ritual and consumes the potion, ’He’ will be able to quickly digest it and build a foundation for the future.

“Of course, even if this situation has a very slim chance of happening, that person must be at least at the Sequence 2 level. Furthermore, the Augustus family definitely has no lack of Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts. Together with the protection bestowed to ‘Him,’ it’s impossible for us to succeed.”

Here, he changed the way he addressed George III from ‘him’ to “Him.”

After calmly listening to everything, Bernadette seemed to do an assessment.

“As long as we can create a good opportunity, a Sequence 2 can also be assassinated, but at least one of us will die, or perhaps both of us."

What she meant was that the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact she wielded was sufficiently powerful, magical, and terrifying. However, if she wanted to fully utilize it, the price paid would be very high.

In that case, there really is a chance. That's because I lied just now. If I really had to give it my all, I could still find Will Auceptin, Pallez Zoroast, and Miss Messenger to help me. I can let "Them" use the Yesterday Once More charm to recover "Their" normal states for a short period of time. The problem is that I don't know how much of a price needs to be paid, or what kind of effects it would have on the situation. I also need to consider if it would end up involving Kings of Angels like Ouroboros and Amon…

It would be great if Mr. Azik woke up. With four angels and Queen Mystic's Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, as long as we create an opportunity, we can even place our sights on a Sequence 1. Of course, the chances of failure are extremely high, since there's no way to sustain it for long… Klein's heart was stirred when he heard that, but he didn't discuss it further.

It wasn't that he wasn't willing to be honest during the cooperation effort, nor was it that he didn't trust Queen Mystic. Instead, Will Auceptin and Pallez Zoroast were being pursued, so once "Their" whereabouts were exposed, it was very likely that it would lead to "Their" deaths. This was something that Klein absolutely didn't want to see happen.

He vaguely said, "If assassination attempt is the only solution left, I can invite at least two angels to help."

This was referring to Death Consul Azik Eggers and Snake of Fate Will Auceptin who Bernadette already knew of. She could guess the latter through the drop of Mythical Creature's blood.

Bernadette was extremely surprised.

“This is that entity’s will?”

Without the consent of The Fool, how could “His” Blessed seek the help of an angel?

“‘He’ has tacitly agreed to it,” Klein spoke the absolute truth.

Queen Mystic’s blue eyes turned darker. She didn’t say another word and only nodded slowly.

As for Klein, he brought the topic back on track.

The destruction of the ritual might be relatively simple, but it has to be done at the most critical moment. Otherwise, it will only be delaying George Ill’s apotheosis. ‘He’ has already received the tacit consent of the deities, so ‘He’ isn’t concerned about that. Even if the mausoleum is destroyed, it wouldn’t take long for ‘Him’ to rebuild it.

“And it being destroyed at the critical moment will cause ‘Him’ to fail at the advancement and lose control to become a monster. No deity would allow such a creature to roam the world freely. A deity’s descent will definitely happen to kill it off. The problem is that, with a King of Angels’s reminder and help, George III won’t take it lightly. ‘He’ will definitely arrange for the most secure protective measures. The difficulty might only be lower than directly killing ‘Him.’

“This requires us to gather intelligence as soon as possible and find an incisive angle to be used.

“And be it the first line of thought or the second line of thought, it’s best that you advance to Sequence 2 in advance and become a Sage.”

Bernadette nodded slightly to show that she understood.

She then said, “What about the third line of thought?”

Klein was silent for a few seconds before saying, “If the ritual was successful back then and the emperor had already advanced to

Sequence 0, then 'He' would still have a chance to revive. As long as we could find the arrangements left behind by the emperor before George Ill's apotheosis and allow 'Him' to return, the plot of George III will fail."

He didn't use the word "him" to refer to Roselle as Bernadette did, to avoid exposing his identity.

Queen Mystic's eyes clearly flickered before they turned dark and reserved.

She opened her mouth slightly and said, "I'll hand over selected diary entries to Cattleya."

Klein didn't discuss the matter deeply. Instead, he smiled and said, "Actually, there's still a fourth line of thought."

Bernadette's eyebrows twitched as she expressed her doubts.

"That's to do nothing. Let George III hold the ritual and attempt to become a god while we wait for 'Him' to fail." Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh. "The higher the Sequence is, the greater the chance of failure."

This was actually the truth. Even if there was the "script" written by Amon's brother with the road to success completely paved, and even if George III had perfectly digested the previous potions, the odds of "Him" successfully advancing to become a god didn't exceed fifty percent.

Of course, what Klein said was just a self-deprecating remark.

Queen Mystic didn't immediately respond. She looked seriously at Gehrman Sparrow for a few seconds before saying, "The feeling you give off to me now is different from the previous few meetings."

"I'm taking advice from my psychiatrist." Klein smiled, describing himself as a very serious mental patient.

Without another word, Bernadette retracted her gaze and looked at the fountain pen lying on the table.

"Then, let's gather the corresponding information and maintain communication through letters."

At this point, she paused for a moment before speaking again. Her gaze remained unchanged.

"Actually, I'm wondering if he might've already been resurrected. It's just that he's still finding his past self… I'm not sure what details the Black Emperor's resurrection entails. I wonder if he really chose to be the Black Emperor in the end…"

Bernadette's voice gradually became ethereal and carried an indescribable feeling.

As Klein listened, he suddenly understood what Queen Mystic was thinking or expecting.

She suspected that The Fool was the resurrected Roselle, suspecting that the emperor had fooled every one in the past. In fact, he had never thought of switching to the Black Emperor pathway. Instead, he had chosen another path. As such, he needed to find himself by seeking out his past diary pages and Cards of Blasphemy.

Unfortunately, I'm just Uncle Zhou from next door… Klein originally wanted to say something cheeky, but his emotions gradually turned staid, making it difficult for him to force himself to relax.

Without saying anything, he stood up, bowed, put on his hat, and left the room.

After closing the door to the Golden Theater room and taking two steps forward, he suddenly heard a tranquil and melodious tune.

This melody was ethereal and carried with it a faint sense of melancholy.

After pausing for a few seconds, Klein turned towards the hall and left with Flaming Jump.

City of Silver, a team gathered at the city gate and was about to set off.

[image]

This was the team that was headed for Afternoon Town to prepare the exploration of the Giant King's Court.

Derrick Berg was standing in the middle and was the second shortest person. In his hand was a bronze cross with sharp spikes.

To his sides were Joshua and Haim. They were prepared to receive the Unshadowed Crucifix at any time to prevent Derrick's Beyonder characteristic from being purged.

This Sealed Artifact required three people to take turns to resist the negative effects.

As he looked down at the Creator's relic, he suddenly felt someone looking at him. He subconsciously looked up and saw that it was a member of the six-member council, Shepherd Elder Lovia.

The woman, who was shortest in the group, had long silver and slightly curled hair. She was looking at the ancient, mottled Unshadowed Crucifix with her pale gray eyes. Her gaze seemed to be blazing hot.

Upon sensing Derrick's gaze, this Shepherd Elder's lips twitched, revealing an indescribable smile.

"This is the Lord's item."

For some reason, Derrick shivered. Then, he heard the Chief, Colin Iliad, say, "Let's set off."

Chapter 1094 - Breakthrough Point

◆

In a small alley in the Backlund Bridge area, Xio once again met the MI9 staff responsible for contacting her.

“This is your reward from exchanging your merit points. A total of 2,500 pounds. Heh heh, I helped you get another 500 pounds.” The golden-masked man threw a bulging envelope at Xio.

Xio caught it accurately and didn’t count. She instinctively pressed down and sincerely said, “Thank you.”

The golden-masked man waved his hand and said, “There’s no need to thank me. This is also a good thing for me. If you continue to harp on past matters without letting go, I’m very worried that I’ll go to military court one day.

“Are you still going to stay in Backlund?”

“Yes, I’m already used to living in a big city. When the war stops, I’ll bring my family here,” Xio said, having already made up her mind.

“Wait for the war to stop…” The golden-masked man repeated Xio’s words with a slightly odd tone. He smiled and said, “May the Lord bless us to live until the end of the war.”

Here, the “Lord” referred to the Lord of Storms.

“I believe in the Goddess,” Xio replied seriously.

“You understand what I mean.” The golden-masked man waved his hand and said, “Are you still planning to take on missions from MI9?”

“I won’t reject an opportunity to earn money,” Xio scratched her slightly coarse hair and said half-truths.

“Yes.” The golden-masked man nodded and said, “The main thing to take note of during the war is to deal with spies from all over the world. If there’s a suitable mission for you, I’ll look for you.”

“Alright,” Xio replied without staying any longer. She cautiously and carefully retreated out of the dark alley.

After watching her figure disappear, the golden-masked man looked at the shadow in the corner and said, “She was likely used by some particular faction. She was abandoned after she stopped investigating the matter.”

In the shadows in the corner, a deep voice sounded:

“On the surface, it looks like that, but there’s no need to pursue or worry about the truth. Even if she can figure out the truth and spread it, it will not affect His Majesty’s matters. Heh heh, the Church of Evernight has already tacitly agreed.”

“That’s for the best…” The golden-masked man silently exhaled.

After returning to her residence at the edge of East Borough, Xio said to Fors, who was sitting by the bed and reading the newspapers, “I received 2,500 pounds.”

Fors put down the newspaper, her eyes moving slightly as she focused on making calculations.

“That’s enough.”

Xio had savings of more than 600 pounds, and with the 2,500 pounds, other than her necessary expenses, she had 3100 pounds to spend freely.

And her purchase of the Judge potion formula was 2000 pounds, and the Beyonder characteristic was 3,500 pounds. In other words, she was still short of 2,400 pounds, something that Fors could lend her.

After borrowing this sum of money, Fors's savings would be reduced to 780 pounds. However, this didn't affect her at all. She had the subsequent potion formula and main ingredients, so she didn't have many expenditures for a long period of time into the future. Occasionally, she could even earn a little from renting out Leymano's Travels.

Yes." Xio nodded. "I'll complete the transaction as soon as possible and strive to advance to Sequence 6 as soon as possible."

Seeing that her friend's matter was settled, Fors turned to worry about herself.

"I don't know when my Scribe potion will be completely digested. Now that the war has broken out, it will be much safer with the ability to 'Travel.'"

"The crux of a Scribe is definitely 'Recording.' When I become a Judge, you'll have new Beyonder powers to repeatedly 'Record.' This should be able to speed up the digestion of the potion." Xio pulled a chair over and sat down.

Fors sighed.

"I suspect that, other than the 'Recording' of Beyonder powers, I need to 'Record' down the sights and customs of different places. Only then can it be matched with the subsequent Traveler Sequence. But with war having broken out now, it's fine if I go further inland, but it will be difficult and dangerous if I go somewhere else. Sigh, the price of bread is rising. The price of one pound of bread has risen by a farthing. It's even more expensive than before the Grain Act was abolished!"

"Indeed." Xio thought seriously and agreed with Fors's conclusion.

The two fell silent. After about ten seconds, Xio suddenly had an idea.

“Actually, there’s a very simple solution.”

“What?” Fors sat up slightly and asked.

“You can spend money to hire that person to take you ‘Traveling.’” Xio was very careful not to mention specific code names and actual names. “You can be thrown somewhere unfamiliar each time for three to four days, or even a week.

Then, you wouldn’t take long to ‘Record’ all kinds of customs and traditions. Besides, you can rent some mystical items from him—from them—to ‘Record’ Beyonder powers. This can both improve your strength and help your digestion.”

“That’s right!” Fors’s eyes lit up when she heard that.

Only then did she realize that her usage of the Tarot Gathering was very superficial.

After the pleasant surprise, Fors gradually frowned. This method meant that she had to frequently deal with The World Gehrman Sparrow, and the thought of the crazy adventurer left her trembling.

Indeed, there’s nothing that doesn’t require a price… To digest the potion, I can only take the risk… Finally, Fors made up her mind to make the request next week at the Tarot Gathering.

In an apartment several streets away from where Xio and Fors stayed.

After returning from the Srenzo Restaurant, Klein was sitting in front of a table. He quickly flipped through today’s newspaper and summarized the important information he had received:

The Feysac Empire’s Sonia Sea fleet has retreated from Pritz Harbor, their whereabouts are unknown…

The Ministry of Defense, Admiral Amyrius, has indicated that he will strengthen the coastal defenses and allow the three ironclad warship fleet to not return too hastily, and will take detours to avoid being ambushed…

Feysac's two-headed giant army invaded the Winter County's Amantha mountain range and suffered intense resistance. They failed to pass through the few strongholds…

Feysac's Subjugation Fleet attacked Constant and other large-scale industrial cities along the Midseashire's eastern coast. There was a large-scale sea battle with the kingdom's Midseashire Fleet. Both sides suffered losses…

East Balam's Feysac and the Loen colonial armies are fighting in multiple locations…

The rest of the countries have yet to make their stance clear. In the corresponding capitals, the ambassadors are running around to contact each other to have emergency diplomatic meetings… The electrical transmission waves contain all kinds of important news and are intertwining with each other in the different cities of the Northern and Southern continents…

We are still in the early stages of the war… Klein didn't believe that the diplomats were able to avert the war. He put down the newspaper and thought about how he could gather information regarding George Ill's Black Emperor ritual.

According to normal logic, before Blood Emperor Alista went crazy, "He" did things in a reasonable manner. That is to say, "He" couldn't build all nine mausoleums in the same hidden area; this would've been easy for others to wipe them out all at once, causing "His" resurrection to fail.

Therefore, in the surrounding areas of Backlund, in other parts of the kingdom, there should be eight other mausoleums that are similar. They haven't been exposed yet, so they might not be as heavily guarded as Ruins No. 1. This might give us an opportunity…

Perhaps the Red Angel evil spirit might know something, but I can’t contact “Him” now. Ignoring the question of whether chanting “His” honorific name will be dangerous, just this act alone will expose my intention to prevent George III from becoming the Black Emperor. To a terrifying Conspirer, there are too many points that can be exploited.

Queen Mystic might have some channels and clues, but I can’t just rely on her… At the moment, the Church doesn’t know how many of the Blood Emperor’s secret ruins there are, or where they are…

Attacking a key figure beside the king, such as a demigod from the royal family who is deeply involved in this matter? They must be on their guard. Furthermore, the angel of the Augustus family and that ancient secret organization would most likely be watching everything, one in the open, and one in the dark… In addition, as long as the royal family’s demigod ends up in an accident, George III would definitely guess that someone is trying to stop “Him” from becoming a god…

Yes, Demoness of White Katarina will be easier to deal with than the demigods of the royal family. It would attract much less attention…

Hmm, theoretically speaking, George III, who has been tacitly accepted by the few major Churches, no longer needs to work with the Demoness Sect. Not that there is a need for that. If not for some particular reason, the two sides would’ve been completely tied together in this matter. The first thing “He” needs to do now is to cut off ties with the Demoness Sect.

Of course, “He” would most likely not betray the Demoness Sect directly. On the one hand, the Demonesses are also adept at ploys, so they wouldn’t be unwary. On the other hand, if they anger the upper echelons of the Demoness Sect, George Ill’s Black Emperor ritual might not be that safe. This is a secret organization with a true deity, Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, and angels.

As long as George III is still rational, the correct method is to follow the agreement and give everything that needs to be given. Then, “He” will send the members of the Demoness Sect away. During this process, “He” will use the help of angels from the mind domain or even a King of Angels to erase the key memories of the Demon Sect participating in the matter.

If that’s the case, even if Demoness of White Katarina goes missing for some time, it wouldn’t alert George III. “He” might not even know.

And from the perspective of the Demoness Sect, the matter has come to an end. The various Churches have also tacitly agreed to it. They no longer need to hide like they did in the past and can move about freely. This gives me and Queen Mystic a chance.

Yes, Vice Admiral Ailment will likely appear again. From her appearance and the attitude of Demoness of White from back then, it can be determined that she and Katarina are related by blood…

With this in mind, Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He cast his gaze out the window and silently muttered, I hope Anderson and Danitz can find that pirate admiral as soon as possible…

I hope that the City of Miracles in Groselle’s Travels can effectively destroy the influence of the mind domain…

And all he could do now was to wait patiently.

Berserk Sea, Theros Island.

Danitz said to Anderson in delight, “I just learned that the southwest region of this place isn’t a normal sea route. There’s an island with no resources but is hidden enough.”

Chapter 1095 - Acting as Himself

◆

“You suspect that Vice Admiral Ailment’s fleet is hidden there?” Anderson asked in thought when he heard Danitz’s words.

Danitz replied in excitement, “It’s very likely! Didn’t the Black Death vanish after steering towards the west and after leaving Theros Island?”

Anderson curled his lips and chuckled.

“If Vice Admiral Ailment’s whereabouts were so easily discovered by you, why would she need to hide?

“How can islands that you can find out about be considered hidden enough?”

“Hey! What do you mean by that?” Danitz felt like he had been mocked.

Anderson shrugged.

“I don’t mean anything. I’m just using my brain to analyze it.

“That island should exist, but it either belongs to the type that many people here know about, or it’s intel that someone deliberately released.

“If it’s the former, Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy’s fleet definitely wouldn’t be hiding there. If it’s the latter, that would be interesting. Who would release this intel?”

Danitz was still a little angry at first, but later, he began analyzing

Anderson's line of thought.

"A trap set up by some pirates or adventurers? However, an island without any resources isn't enough to lure others into exploring it.

"Vice Admiral Ailment herself? To figure out who's investigating her whereabouts?"

Anderson smiled.

"That's right. After my teachings, you've improved quite a bit. Otherwise, I suspect that even if you drink the Conspirer potion, you wouldn't be able to enhance your brain. You'll only mutate and turn your enemy stupid, bringing him down to a level at which you're familiar with, and then defeat him with experience.

"I didn't say that. It was Emperor Roselle."

After this period of searching, Anderson had already helped Danitz obtain one of the main ingredients of the Conspirer potion and nearly all the supplementary ingredients. He was just one step away from success.

"I suspect that you have such an ability…" Danitz muttered softly in response.

Anderson ignored him and continued, "If Vice Admiral Ailment got someone to release the news herself, the secret island must be a trap. Perhaps there's nothing other than a mirror that monitors the ships and humans that approach the island. Or perhaps it might be an important gathering base of the Demoness Sect that Gehrman Sparrow mentioned."

"Then what should we do next?" Danitz subconsciously asked.

Anderson chuckled when he heard that.

"You can't even figure out such a simple matter?

"Naturally, we'll seek out the person you heard this intel from. After finding the source of his information, we can trace it back, and we'll eventually find something."

That's right… Danitz wanted to nod in agreement, but the words that reached his mouth turned into a "heh."

Nearing dawn, on the second floor of a casino.

Bartz, with his brown hair, yawned and walked into his room.

Before he could use the moonlight outside the window to light the candle, he suddenly saw a bright white flame light up in front of him, momentarily blinding him.

Bartz's heart tightened as he pounced to the side and rolled.

After rolling twice, he suddenly stopped his actions, as though he had been petrified.

This was because there was a bone-chilling coldness and a slight pain around his neck. This made him have no doubt that if he proceeded any further, blood would definitely spray onto the roof.

"What do you want?" At that moment, Bartz's vision had recovered. He saw a blond man with one hand in his pocket and a black short sword in the other. Beside him was a man wearing a black cloak that covered half of his face with a hood.

Danitz didn't answer Bartz's question as he looked at Anderson in surprise.

"Why didn't you disguise yourself?"

"If you disguise yourself, how can you let others know who to hate?" Anderson replied with a nonchalant look.

Danitz exhaled. "Thankfully, I haven't been infected by this crappy habit of yours."

"It's fine," Anderson said with a smile. "Any random person on the island can know who I've been hanging out with." "Dogsh*t!" Danitz cursed.

Bartz, who had Anderson's sword at his neck, didn't dare to move. All he could do was listen quietly. He felt as though he had returned to Trier and was watching a comical scene.

What are the two of them here for…? The intelligence peddler was deeply puzzled.

At that moment, Anderson retracted his gaze and looked down at Bartz.

"Who told you about the secret island to the southwest that deviates from the main sea route?"

Bartz suddenly came to a realization as he looked at Danitz.

"It's you!"

In the past few days, this information had only been sold to one person!

…I was recognized so quickly? Danitz was momentarily at a loss as to how to respond.

Anderson slightly lowered the pitch-black short sword in his hand, making the stabbing pain even more obvious. "Please respect the order of what is to come and follow."

Bartz immediately felt as though his life was rapidly slipping away. He hurriedly replied, "I-it was Vice Admiral Ailment!"

"When did she tell you? Why did she tell you?" Anderson asked without any surprise.

"The night before the Black Death left Theros Island," Bartz replied quickly, afraid that he would die from excessive blood loss. "I didn't ask her why. Back then, I was only focused on admiring her beauty. She lives up to being the infamous Ailment Maiden of the Five Seas…"

Even after a long time, Bartz couldn't hide his admiration of her, even when he recalled her while being in extreme danger.

"Is this the charm of a Demoness?" Anderson muttered to himself before asking, "Do you have a way to contact her?"

"No." Bartz quickly shook his head and said, "She told me to take note of everyone who asked about her whereabouts. I'll tell her when she returns to Theros Island. And if anyone leaves the port after obtaining the information on that secret island, they shall be left alone to leave freely."

"Is that so… Very reasonable." Anderson nodded and withdrew the short pitch-black sword. "Is there a trap?"

"I don't know either," Bartz replied frankly.

Anderson didn't say a word as he searched for the money on Bartz's person and in the room. Then, he pointed at the intelligence peddler with his short sword.

"I wanted to kill you, but no one will hate me if that's the case.

"Live well, curse me a few more times every day."

He then turned around, walked to Danitz's side, and jumped down the window with him, disappearing into the dark, unlit night.

Bartz touched his bleeding neck and stood up in fear. He ran to the window and confirmed that the two of them had disappeared.

Thankfully, I met a guy with mental problems. If not, I would be dead today… He closed the window and locked the wooden door. After carefully inspecting the room, he finally sat down and gulped down half a bottle of Lanti Proof.

In his tipsy state, Bartz collapsed onto the bed and fell asleep.

Time ticked by slowly until it was three in the morning.

Suddenly, Bartz flipped over and sat up. His eyes were bright and spirited, and he didn't even feel the slightest bit drunk.

He found a dagger and pried open a wooden floor in the room. He took out a thumb-sized ball of paper.

After the white paper unfolded layer by layer, there was a sticky black object in the middle.

After taking a quarter of the blob, Bartz walked to the mirror in the room and was about to smear it.

At this moment, he saw two figures reflected in the mirror. One of them was wearing a white shirt and a black vest with one of his hands in his pocket and the other carrying a short sword. The other wore a black cloak that didn't reveal his face.

Just as Bartz's pupils dilated, Danitz punched the back of his head, causing him to faint.

And his final memory was a voice with a smiling tone.

"He really didn't disappoint."

After dealing with Bartz, Danitz bent down to pick up the sticky substance that had fallen to the ground. He chuckled and said, "This fellow actually believed you. He believed that you didn't kill him because you wanted him to hate you."

The conversation he had with Anderson was actually a rehearsed play. It was to make it reasonable for Anderson to let Bartz go without being suspected.

"This means that you acted sufficiently well," Anderson said with a smile. "It's truly different when you're acting as yourself."

"Dogsh*t!" Danitz cursed without any qualms.

He then sighed.

"I didn't expect him to be so patient. He waited past midnight before he took action. But we were more patient."

"If a hunter wants to capture his prey, he has to be patient. Sometimes, he can wait a few days," Anderson replied.

To the two of them, there was actually nothing they could do. Be it a Hunter and Provoker, or Pyromaniac and Reaper, none of them were good at mediumship, much less having the ability to hypnotize others. In order to obtain information, other than interrogating and threatening others, they had to work hard on "scheming."

This is very reasonable, but in the future, it will be done with the words I use to school others… Danitz looked at the black sticky blob in his hand and said, "It seems like it should be applied on the surface of the mirror… before contacting Vice Admiral Ailment?"

"That should be the case. However, what's the point even if we contact her? Are we going to ask her out on a date to join us for breakfast at Theros Island?" Anderson mocked.

Danitz knew that he and Anderson were unable to influence the person in the mirror. All he instinctively wanted to do was to do something more, so as to better complete the task that Gehrman Sparrow assigned him.

He frowned slightly and said, "Then what should we do next?"

"Of course it's to contact Gehrman Sparrow. Let him handle the aftermath. This fellow is very mysterious in every aspect, so he should have a way to resolve it," Anderson said with a tsk. "Besides, the mission he gave us is to seek out Vice Admiral Ailment's whereabouts. And there are results already now."

Danitz acknowledged and began taking out the candles and other items for the ritual.

"What are you doing?" Anderson asked with an odd expression.

Danitz set up the altar without looking back.

“Summoning Gehrman Sparrow’s messenger.”

Anderson fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “I’ll go out for a smoke first.”

Chapter 1096 - Cooperation

◆ ◆ ◆

At just past six in the morning, the entirety of Backlund remained dark. It was very quiet, with most areas being illuminated only by the street lamps.

Wearing his pajamas, Klein sat on the bed and looked at Miss Messenger who was carrying four heads. He rubbed his temples and asked helplessly, “Who sent the letter?”

Why couldn’t he have a good night’s rest?

The three heads in Reinette Tinekerr’s hands replied one by one, “That…” “Particular…” “Brainless…”

“Servant…” “Of…” “Yours…”

Danitz… He prayed in the middle of the night in the past, and now he’s sending letters in the morning… Klein took a deep breath and slowly exhaled. Following that, he received the letter from Miss Messenger.

When he opened it, his expression gradually turned solemn. This was because Danitz’s and Anderson’s discovery of Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy’s location was extremely untimely.

According to Klein’s deductions, it wouldn’t take long for the pirate admiral and Demoness of White Katarina to regain their “freedom.” They wouldn’t be hiding much, making it easier to find them. Now that they had dealt with the intelligence peddler, Bartz, and obtained the items to contact Tracy from him, the greatest possibility was that they had frightened the target and made her continue hiding.

Of course, Klein could seek the help of Queen Mystic Bernadette to find a way to lock onto Vice Admiral Ailment through the mirror. However, the problem was that he suspected that the target's hiding place was an important stronghold of the Demoness Sect. It might even be the headquarters where there were Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts. This way, even if he had confirmed the whereabouts of Tracy, he wouldn't dare to "Teleport" over to capture her. Hence, any contact would alert the pirate admiral.

And if he didn't take the opportunity to contact her, regardless of whether Bartz was dead or alive, the news would spread after daybreak. Similarly, Tracy would be on guard.

Seriously… However, this is also because Anderson and Danitz don't know the truth. They don't know the changes in the situation of the Loen Kingdom… After some thought, he said to Miss Messenger who was waiting by the side, "Wait for me. I'll write a reply."

He had originally planned to "Teleport" over directly to decide what to do next, but after some consideration, he still chose to write a letter.

Although he believed that Zaratul wouldn't waste time on an obvious "bait" like Danitz, he still felt that he had to be more careful. If Zaratul didn't do so, it didn't mean that the members of the Secret Order under "Him" would do the same. Such a huge secret organization definitely had a few demigods at the saint level. Once he got entangled by the other party, it would be a huge problem.

"Alright." The head carried by Reinette Tinekerr that had failed to speak previously rushed to answer first.

Klein got out of bed, walked out of the bedroom, and came to the room outside. He took out a pen and paper and wrote fluidly:

"Think of a way to make Bartz faint until dawn.

Then, leave his room immediately and stay far away. There is a great danger lurking there.

"Monitor Bartz again when daybreak arrives, but don't alarm him."

The so-called danger was a half-truth, and his main goal was to get Anderson and Danitz to leave the scene, so as to draw away any possible spying.

Putting down the pen and looking through it again, he folded the letter and handed it to his messenger, Reinette Tinekerr, who had followed him out.

At 3:10 a.m. in the Berserk Sea, Theros Island, Bartz's room.

Danitz had just finished clearing the altar and wiping away the traces when he saw the terrifying messenger with four heads return.

Gehrman Sparrow actually didn't come… Danitz reached out to receive the letter in surprise, then he took out a gold coin for the messenger.

After the figure with four heads and dark, complicated long dress disappeared into the void, he opened the letter and quickly read through it.

T-there's danger! Danitz's pupils dilated as he rushed towards the door as if he had been burned in the ass.

After leaving the room, he said to Anderson, who was standing in the corridor with his back against the wall with an unlit cigarette in his mouth, "Quick, let's go. It's very dangerous here!"

"…Did Gehrman Sparrow say that?" Anderson was taken aback as he asked thoughtfully.

"Yes, how do you know? Couldn't it be that I discovered something?" Danitz replied instinctively.

"You? Heh." Anderson chuckled and asked rather relaxed, "What else did he say?”

“Aren’t you nervous? Gehrman Sparrow is very reliable on such matters.” Danitz’s focus was completely off.

Anderson fell silent for a moment before saying, “His messenger is more reliable. At least, within the few minutes of his messenger’s return trip, there won’t be any danger here.”

If there really was any “danger” lurking here, they would silently shrink back when they saw the messenger.

Danitz originally wanted to reply that it may seem so in terms of her image, but for some reason, he instinctively gave up on that sentence.

He switched to saying, “Gehrman Sparrow also said to let Bartz pass out until dawn so that we can monitor him again when the sun rises without exposing ourselves.”

Anderson frowned. “What does he want to do? There won’t be any latent dangers anymore once the sun rises?”

Without waiting for Danitz to respond, the Strongest Hunter of the Fog Sea turned around and entered the room. He took out a small metal bottle he carried with him and pulled out the stopper. He placed it at the tip of Bartz’s nose and moved it back and forth.

“It’s done. Let’s go.” Anderson didn’t hide his curiosity as he surveyed the area before leading Danitz out of Bartz’s room and walked far into the distance.

Backlund, Empress Borough, Inside the Hall family’s luxurious mansion.

At 7:25 a.m., Audrey suddenly woke up from her dream.

She dreamed of the boundless gray fog and dreamed of The World Gehrman Sparrow asking her to help hypnotize someone, making the target forget everything that had happened in the past six hours, as well as all the people who asked about a particular secret island.

This is something that can be used as contributions needed for the Manipulator potion formula and Beyonder characteristic… Also, Mr. World said that he would donate 7,000 pounds for the war efforts… Audrey got off the bed very lightly and put a teal cloak over her white nightgown.

Following that, she followed Gehrman Sparrow's instructions and set up a ritual, praying for Mr. Fool's bestowment.

The illusory door quickly took shape and opened, sending three items flying out and landing on the altar.

One of them was a thin human-skinned glove, the other was the "instruction manual" on a piece of paper, and the other was a neat stack of cash that wasn't tied up.

This is Creeping Hunger? Audrey scrutinized the altar and thanked Mr. Fool.

Then, she put on the glove and, according to the "instruction manual," activated the spirit of the Traveler.

When the glove turned transparent, the twelve sacred angels with fiery wings suddenly appeared in front of her.

This is the Angel's Embrace that Mr. World has requested? Its effect is to interfere with divination and prophecy powers at the scene, so as to ensure that my identity won't be exposed? Audrey's eyes darted around as she changed the Lie accessory which she had already prepared into a silver mask, and she wore it on her face.

Following that, she followed the coordinates given by The World Gehrman Sparrow and began the "Teleportation" step.

During this process, the strange scenery of the spirit world and all kinds of strange creatures left a deep impression on her. However, before she could carefully observe them, she arrived at her destination. She saw that the colors were saturated, and the stacked scenes rapidly faded away, becoming normal. It was still late at night outside.

It feels like I've recovered my feelings and mood from when I first entered the mysterious world… Audrey analyzed her mental state and focused her attention on the target lying on the floor in the room she was in.

It was an unconscious man. The door to his Body of Heart and Mind was rather weak, meaning that he was someone who could easily be charmed, even if it didn't involve Beyonder powers.

Hypnotizing such a target wasn't difficult for Audrey. However, in order to digest the potion, she decided to use dreams to help with the "Hypnosis."

The unconscious Bartz had a dream. He dreamed of a blurry female figure. In his dream, he believed that she was the most beautiful woman in the world, a perfect state that Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy could achieve.

Bartz wildly chased her as he ran back and forth in the wilderness, hills, and mountains. However, he couldn't catch up to her, as though he had left behind something very important.

After an unknown period of time, he woke up from exhaustion and slowly recalled what had happened last night. He was in a bad mood because of him losing money. He had fallen drunk after drinking only half a bottle of Lanti Proof. Up to now, his temples were still throbbing in pain.

I even knocked the back of my head… Bartz rubbed the swollen area and lumbered back to the bed. He fell into it and continued sleeping.

And for Audrey who had completed a milder form of hypnosis with the

Dreamwalker's powers, she had long followed The World Gehrman Sparrow's instructions and restored the scene completely, leaving nothing suspicious behind.

This was the ability of a senior Spectator.

Then, she "Teleported" back to Backlund and sacrificed Creeping Hunger to Mr. Fool.

The entire process didn't cause much of a stir. The Church of Evernight Beyonders in charge of protecting the Hall family were completely unaware.

After dealing with all kinds of traces, Audrey pulled a bell and let the maidservants waiting outside enter.

Her personal maidservant, Annie, gestured for the other maidservants to get busy as she said to Audrey, "Miss, there's a piece of news from the bursary foundation."

"What news?" Audrey interpreted the shock, confusion, disbelief, joy, and curiosity in Annie's tone.

Annie replied quickly, "That Miss Eudora who needed to have her leg amputated has completely recovered. It's as though she was never injured. This… this is a medical miracle!"

Audrey was similarly stunned. She had some guesses, but she didn't dare to confirm them. She lacked sufficient clues and evidence.

"Also, all the patients with serious medical conditions have fully recovered!" At this point, Annie couldn't control herself. She lowered her voice and said, "I heard that there was a ghost wandering around. Half of its face had mushrooms growing all over, and the other half was covered in weeds. It ate illnesses, trauma, and grief. I don't know if it's true, but it's scary."

"Mushroom… Weeds…" Audrey repeated the two words, momentarily at a loss.

Chapter 1097 - Different Conundrum

◆ ◆ ◆

Seeing that her mistress was clearly interested in ghost tales, Annie glanced at the other maids who were preparing hot water, combs, and other items. She continued, “The doctors and nurses wished to invite the Church’s bishop to host a Mass, but the remaining patients strongly objected to it. They look forward to meeting that ghost. They all call it ‘the Clown Angel.’ They say that its terrifying appearance resembles a specially dressed clown, but in actual fact, it’s an angel who can resolve pain and torment.”

“This title is very interesting…” Audrey said with a faint smile.

If it were in the past, she would definitely be very interested in this, perhaps eager to make a trip to the hospital via Dream Traversal to figure out what was going on with the so-called “Clown Angel.” However, the sudden eruption of the war made her feel rather depressed. She felt that there were too many important things that she needed to do, so she wasn’t in the mood to probe further.

In fact, if she hadn’t experienced the air raid herself and seen those who were injured because of it, she would definitely feel like a war had never happened over the past few days and that Backlund was still very peaceful.

This was because, after that air raid, the airship fleet of the Loen Kingdom had been roped into the war effort. The air defenses of the coastal city’s had all been raised, and Backlund didn’t suffer another attack again. Currently, the battle between Feysac and Loen was mainly focused in three places—the Winter County's Amantha mountain range, the heavy industry metropolitan area along the Midseashire's east coast, and the few harbors along the Sonia Sea coast. Furthermore, they were in a deadlock with no side gaining an advantage over the other. Even if there were casualties, it didn't have any material impact on Backlund. Other than the rise in prices with several editorial pieces in the newspapers, this city seemed to restore its peace in a few short days.

However, Audrey didn't think so. Her father and brother have been busy with work recently, often returning late at night or convening a private gathering with a group of nobles, Members of Parliament, and clergymen. Through the other charity organizations in the Church of Evernight, she learned of the exact number of casualties at the front lines of Pritz Harbor and Amantha. She even saw some photos of the battlefield. She was working hard to gather funds, contacting various pharmaceutical companies and hospitals, hoping that she could organize help and treatment needed in the war effort.

Who would've thought that the crazy adventurer has not only offered the excess food in his manor, but he has even donated 7,000 pounds in cash… Audrey sighed secretly and began letting the maidservant help doll her up.

South of the Bridge, Rose Street.

Emlyn White casually donated ten pounds to a charity organization's solicitor. He pressed his top hat and walked up the stairs, entering the Harvest Church.

At this moment, there were no believers in the cathedral. Father Utravsky, who looked like a half-giant, sat at the front and prayed sincerely.

Emlyn was in no hurry to change into his priest robes. He sat beside the priest and wanted to say something, but when he opened his mouth, he ended up scoffing.

“It must be your typical Feysac appearance and figure that made those believers fearful of coming over,” Emlyn said casually as he looked at the altar in front of him.

Bishop Utravsky put down his hands and opened his eyes.

“I can understand them.”

“What’s the point of understanding them? If the war gets more intense and the number of soldiers who die in the battle increase a bit more, the believers might rush in here and bum the cathedral and hang you to death.” Emlyn continued to look at the Sacred Emblem of Life.

Father Utravsky shook his head slightly.

“No, they won’t. They sincerely believe in the Earth Mother. They won’t bum the cathedral. At most, they will banish me. If I express that I’ve given up on my Feysac nationality, there will always be people who will understand and accept me.”

Emlyn tsked and said without moving his gaze, “What if Feynapotter joins in the war and attacks Desi Bay, Loen territory?

“What if the Church of Earth Mother calls all clergymen to arms and become enemies with Loen?

“Are you going to obey the orders of the Church and abandon the believers here, or are you going to pretend that you don’t know anything? Continuing promoting how precious life is, how joyous the harvest is as you are now? Or, will you directly organize those believers to make them become enemies with their own kind, using blood and sacrifices to prove their faith?”

Bishop Utravsky slowly looked at the Sacred Emblems of Life up and above the altar, not saying anything for a long time.

Emlyn didn’t bring up any more questions as he fell silent like the priest.

The entire Harvest Church was silent.

On a colonial island, Alger Wilson, who hadn't had the chance to return to Pasu Island, didn't leave the Blue Avenger due to his principles of being cautious. He only sent his sailors to take turns to gather information.

"Captain, there still isn't any news about mustering us," a sailor reported to Alger of his findings of the day while reeking of alcohol.

Alger waved his hand and dismissed his subordinate to leave the room. Then, he frowned slightly and muttered silently to himself, The Church doesn't seem to care much about this war…

From what Alger knew, this was likely an intense war that would cover a huge scale. As the victim of an invasion, the Church of the Lord of Storms would definitely mobilize all its strength to defeat the enemy, including the "captains" who were scattered across the sea by giving them corresponding missions. However, at this moment in time, Alger had yet to receive orders from Pasu Island.

This didn't mean that the Church of the Lord of Storms was slacking off. The activity of the Church's forces amongst the Loen army and the air raid drills it was involved in the various major cities, and the activities of the demigods implied that the Church of the Lord of Storms was seriously resisting the invasion of the Feysac Empire. It was just that it wasn't going all-out.

Could it be that it's because we're still in the early stages of the war? The Church wishes to preserve a portion of its strength for the critical moment? Alger held back the stirrings in his heart and waited for further information.

At night, another group of sailors returned with news that had nothing to do with the war.

"Captain, there seems to be some kind of monster hiding on this island.

Many pirates say that they encountered a terrifying situation when they head out to pee after drinking too much. Some of them were violently slapped by the branches of trees, while others saw fruits growing on their bodies—ones filled with blood and flesh in them. Some of them encountered skinny ghostly figures with wheat faces…” A rather sober sailor described the rumors he had heard.

Tales about ghosts and monsters… Alger didn’t have the intention to probe into the truth of the matter. He nodded and sternly warned, “Don’t go out at night.”

After such paranormal tales started in Backlund and Pritz Harbor, Klein never went to those hospitals again, afraid that he would directly meet Zaratul’s marionettes.

With the Creeping Hunger and the ability to “Travel,” he expanded his range for creating terrifying tales. Sometimes, he would be in the Sonia Sea, at other times in the Fog Sea. He would go to Lenburg, sometimes to Feynapotter, and sometimes appear in places like East and West Balam, the highlands and valley. He didn’t abide by any rules, and he relied solely on his momentary inspiration. He would visit some cities two or three times while not stepping foot into others even once.

During this process, Klein felt an inexplicable strange feeling. In the terrifying darkness, invisible tentacles extended out, either searching for his whereabouts or attempting to predict his movements so as to intercept him ahead of time.

They were silent and cold, and once they entangled him, the consequences were unimaginable.

Klein knew that this might be the result of Zaratul’s “search.” His best solution was to temporarily stop acting and to lay low in wait. However, it was also this subtle feeling that made him wish to digest the potion as soon as possible. Hence, he made use of the gray fog’s powers. Every time he randomly chose a target location, he would go above the gray fog to divine the danger level and use Paper Angels to interfere.

At this moment, with the huge progress in his digestion, he "Teleported" to Cookawa, which was in the Northern State of West Balam.

This was where he had killed Ince Zangwill to avenge himself and the captain.

The moment his figure appeared in the White Feather Square, he suddenly sensed something amiss.

The residence that belonged to Maysanchez was too quiet. It was so quiet that it sent chills down his spine.

Maysanchez was a native general who had previously bought arms from Dwayne Dantes. He was a Beyonder of the Death pathway, and he was backed by the Church of Knowledge.

What happened? Klein frowned slightly as he considered whether he should enter to confirm the situation. After all, that was his "collaboration partner."

Furthermore, if he were to encounter an enemy that wasn't weak, it would be a very good opportunity for him to act. After doing a self-analysis of the situation, he believed that if he could use a saint-level demigod as the main lead and create a few more horror tales, then his Bizarro Sorcerer potion would be digested for the most part.

Of course, the prerequisite for everything is to be safe. I have to be careful and cautious… As he made his marionette, Qonas Kilgor, transform into the appearance of Dwayne Dantes, he took out a gold coin.

This time, the revelation he received was that there wasn't any danger.

Strange… Klein didn't let his guard down as his body turned incorporeal before becoming a shadow that disappeared into the darkness of the night. As for his marionette, Qonas Kilgor walked slowly towards Maysanchez's mansion with his face facing down.

This was the ability to hide in the shadows that Creeping Hunger provided itself.

As for the other marionette, Enuni, he was waiting about 1000 meters away. As for the few "rats" that belonged to the marionette, they were spaced out nearly 1000 meters away from each other, but they were unable to do anything.

Soon, Dwayne Dantes arrived in front of the general's residence and activated his Spirit Body Threads vision.

What entered his vision were black illusory threads that were "grown" in a messy fashion. They seemed to come from different people, but they also had an obviously similar aura.

And normal Spirit Body Threads didn't exist at all.

After a few seconds of silence, Dwayne Dantes extended his right hand and pushed open the closed door.

The scene inside was completely different from what he remembered. The pillars that were covered with golden foils, the golden sculptures on the walls, and gorgeous stairs were now rolled into a bunch like a huge porcupine with golden spikes growing out of it. On the ground, there were sharp stone pillars and shattered glass everywhere.

Apart from these, there were more illusory bookshelves in the hall that didn't appear real. There were pools of black shadows hidden in different spots on the bookshelf as they curled and stretched like eyes from time to time.

As the door opened, the pool of liquid-like shadows suddenly came alive and produced the same sound:

"It's you!

“My prediction was right. You’re the one who can help me out of my conundrum!”

Chapter 1098 - Contribution Accumulation

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing the words of the pools of black shadows, a figure suddenly appeared in Klein’s mind.

It was the elder in a white robe with inlaid brass lines. His hair was completely white and neatly combed. His pair of gray-green eyes left a deep impression on him.

He claimed to be a member of the Church of Knowledge and that he was in charge of matters in West Balam and had a close relationship with Maysanchez.

Back then, he had suddenly paid a visit to Dwayne Dantes, giving the excuse for his visit as him having predicted that he would be in a very troublesome situation in the future, and that someone he met during that time period would help him resolve the problem.

After some thought, he slowly said, “Lucca Brewster?”

“Yes, it’s me. You actually still remember me!” In the different parts of the illusory bookshelves, the pool of liquid-like shadows rushed to answer.

Their voices were no longer uniform. They were layered over each other, echoing endlessly. Even though he was separated by his marionette, Klein’s ears still rang, and he felt a sense of dizziness.

This isn’t a normal sound. It contains a certain inclination towards losing control or experiencing mental corruption… The illusory bookshelves themselves are just for show… Just as this thought flashed through Klein's mind, he heard the black shadows curling and extending at the same time.

"Sorry, I was too agitated just now and couldn't control myself."

Hiding in the shadows outside the mansion, Klein controlled his marionette, Qonas Kilgor, and said, "What did you encounter? How did you end up like this?"

The black figures sighed and said, "The Adjudicator of the Feynapotter military, Bellacosta, and the Church of Earth Mother's archbishop, Martina, jointly attacked this place, with their main target being me. I had no choice but to activate my Mythical Creature form and make them temporarily retreat. Seeing as you entered without noticing anything, you must've 'Teleported' here.

"You're also a demigod. You should know that once you reveal your Mythical Creature form, it won't be easy for you to return to normal. I was also affected by inclinations towards going insane, and I nearly lost control. Fortunately, I was once a Mysticism Magister and had mastered many strange but effective mystic arts. Hence, I sealed myself to a certain extent at the critical moment and ended up like this.

"Sigh, this can only last for some time. The madness is still eating at me. I've already contacted the See, and it wouldn't be long before a helper comes. However, I don't know if I can last that long.

"I was just thinking that this should be that very troublesome conundrum in the prophecy, and I was wondering if the person who could help me solve this problem would appear. I'm so happy that you're here. This proves that my prediction and interpretation wasn't wrong. This has improved my mental state…"

He really is a demigod who's determined to see his predictions succeed… If I were to turn around and leave at this moment, would you just break down and lose control on the spot… After lampooning silently in his heart, Klein began thinking about the key information that was revealed by Lucca Brewster.

The Feynapotter military and the Church of Earth Mother had begun taking action!

He then got his marionette, Qonas Kilgor, to take out a gold coin and flick it before reaching out to catch it.

From what he knew, the clergymen of the seven Churches were focused on maintaining order and ensuring the safety of their believers, regardless of the situation. From this angle, it was impossible for Lucca Brewster to be a Devil or a Demon.

As for the impression that Vice Admiral Iceberg and Detective Isengard Stanton gave him, it made him feel that the Church of Knowledge wasn't too bad. He felt that, other than their habitual discrimination against people with low intelligence and those who were not fond of studying, there was nothing wrong with their actions and style.

This is also the reason why they're unable to develop and expand. They can only stay in a few small countries… Klein didn't look at the result from flipping the gold coin. He mumbled a few words before saying, "How can I help you?"

The excited black shadows fell silent. A few seconds later, they said, "I don't know either…"

Klein looked at them, and they looked back at him in silence. Instantly, there was a mutual silence.

Why don't I suggest turning you into my marionette? Nearly ten seconds later, Klein lampooned inwardly.

His thoughts raced as he began to think of a way to resolve the Lucca Brewster's problem of not being able to recover from his Mythical Creature form.

To be honest, his seriousness towards helping Lucca out wasn't just because of his good impression of the Church of Knowledge and Wisdom, but also because of interests that could benefit him.

Firstly, there was the inkling of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom's existence in the matter of Groselle's Travels. At present, he was unable to determine the true god's goal. He felt that showing some goodwill might lead to pleasant surprises. Secondly, if Roselle's return really happened, the attitude of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom was rather important.

From the Red Angel evil spirit's tone and manner of speech, Klein could make a preliminary judgment: Compared to the Fourth Epoch, the seven deities of the present era had a drastic change in attitude towards the appearance of a Black Emperor. Their reaction wasn't as intense as before, and they were more inclined to tacitly approve of it, even if the person wasn't their own candidate of choice.

Under such circumstances, if Emperor Roselle were to return, the only ones who would be against it would probably be the Eternal Blazing Sun and the God of Steam and Machinery. After all, back when Roselle perished, "They" had been involved in the matter to some extent.

However, this objection wouldn't be too strong either. As long as Roselle's mental state was normal and he escaped the corruption and madness, there was a chance of being accepted. After all, the Black Emperor didn't have the problem of switching with the Sun and Savant pathway, so there weren't any direct conflicts of interest.

As for the original grudge, it wasn't too serious at the level of a deity. Of course, this was just a guess Klein made from his knowledge of ancient history and from the angle of mysticism. According to his understanding of the situation, other than the God of Craftsmanship, the other six deities had been enemies with each other back during Solomon's first empire. "They" had left behind countless grudges, and had no choice but to rope in the Black Emperor back then to help

“Them.” In the end, “They” still put these matters behind “Them” and formed an alliance that lasted to this day.

Even the deities of neighboring pathways could coexist peacefully to a certain extent. As long as Roselle could really be revived, then as someone who wasn’t completely dead, the feud between him and the Eternal Blazing Sun and the God of Steam and Machinery could be resolved.

Of course, with his understanding of Roselle, it was only a matter of time before Roselle took revenge. As long as he wasn’t crazy and wasn’t forced into a corner and wasn’t extreme, he could still understand the situation clearly and know what to do and what it meant to wait for an opportunity.

Under such circumstances, Klein believed that the ones who were able to suppress the Eternal Blazing Sun and the God of Steam and Machinery when “They” expressed “Their” objections and also make “Them” tacitly agree to it were definitely the Lord of Storms and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, because “They” and the Eternal Blazing Sun were on Beyonder paths that could be interchanged.

I’m just afraid that the corruption that stems from the cosmos isn’t that easy to resolve. The revived Roselle may end up completely turning into an evil god, but such matters can only be done one step at a time. Only by understanding the situation can one grasp the crux of the matter and decide whether to press the “button” at the final moment… Humans can’t stop because of worries with low odds. If that’s the case, nothing can be done. Even drinking a mouthful of water might lead to the descent of an evil god…

Similarly, what are the reactions of the various parties towards Roselle’s return, and how intense would they be? This will require me to wait and make further observations before I can find the most acceptable solution for everyone… At the moment, causing damage during the ritual at the critical moment has the highest chance of success… As his thoughts raced, Klein looked at the pool of dark shadows and slowly said, “How long can you last?”

Lucca Brewster observed his condition and said, “Seven, seven minutes.’

I thought you were going to say “seven, six, five, four, three…” After lampooning, Klein said, “I’ll get you a Psychiatrist.”

As he spoke, he retreated a few hundred meters out of the shadows of Maysanchez’s residence. Then, he set up a ritual and sacrificed Creeping Hunger above the gray fog.

After doing all of this, he sat in The Fool’s chair, conjured Gehrman Sparrow’s figure, and made him do a simple and quick prayer.

At this moment, it was almost dawn. As for Audrey, who had been busy with charity work, she had yet to sleep.

Treat a demigod who has shown signs of losing control… I can accumulate more merit points as well… Audrey put down the fountain pen in her hand and put on a white cloak with golden patterns.

Just like the previous mission, she set up a ritual to receive Creeping Hunger and wore Lie, which was in the form of a silver mask. Under the protection of Angel’s Embrace, she “Teleported” to the Maysanchez mansion in West Balam according to the map provided by Gehrman Sparrow.

The difference this time was that, due to her facing a demigod, not only was she wearing a mask, she had also used Lie to adjust her figure, aura, and appearance under the mask.

Then, she saw “Mr. World” in the form of Dwayne Dantes.

“That demigod has broken down into pools of black liquid. Try not to communicate with his Body of Heart and Mind directly. This will infect you with his inclination to lose control. If you can’t treat him, I can lend you a Beyonder characteristic.” Klein specially warned Miss Justice.

Audrey didn’t say that she was very clear about this. She was very professional in this aspect and listened attentively. “Let me give it a try first.”

She tugged at the cloak covering her body and took a few steps forward, casting her gaze at the illusory bookshelves and the pools of black liquid.

“Thankfully, he hasn’t truly lost control.” After examining for a few seconds, Audrey said gently.

Accompanied by her calm and powerful words, an invisible wind of Placate began to blow.

The frequency at which the pools of black liquid curled up and stretched began to decrease as the sense of anxiety weakened.

Audrey used Placate a few more times. It was only when Lucca Brewster’s mental state was completely stabilized and he had the ability to cooperate did she get him to open up his mind and receive the treatment.

And she took the opportunity to open the door to the demigod’s Body of Heart and Mind. She split her use of Placate into multiple treatments during the process of purifying the corruption. She planted psychological cues, cuing Lucca Brewster into believing that everything was fine, allowing him to easily converge his Mythical Creature form and turn back into a human.

The reason for splitting up the process was because if Audrey was affected by the slightest bit of corruption and the negative effects, then she would immediately retreat and resolve her mental problems first.

Finally, she completed the treatment and cues before taking a few steps back.

“Your Excellency, you can remove your Mythical Creature form.”

The moment she finished speaking, the illusory bookshelves in the hall vanished. The pools of black liquid gathered together like life, taking on a human form.

The black colors quickly faded away, turning back into Lucca Brewster's original form. He sighed and said with a smile, Thank you very much. When I saw a Sequence 5 Spectator come over, I thought that I would become the main ingredient for her switching to another pathway…"

This old man's words are so direct… I don't even know how to respond to his words… Klein turned his head to look at Justice Audrey. He realized that her eyes were closed tightly.

Uh… Klein opened his mouth to respond to Lucca Brewster.

"Don't worry. What you need the most right now is a set of clothes."

Chapter 1099 - 1368

◆ ◆ ◆

“…”Lucca Brewster looked down at himself and hurriedly raised his right hand to grab something beside him.

Then, his grayish-green eyes darkened.

The gold that mixed with the stairs suddenly flew out and fused in midair, forming a thin piece of armor that then covered Lucca Brewster.

Lucca stretched his arms and explained as he took in the feedback, “Stiano’s Golden Armor Art. Its defensive capabilities are equivalent to that of a Sequence 5 Guardian.”

“Stiano?” Klein asked casually.

Lucca said in a tone as though he was introducing a famous historical figure, “One of the earliest founders of the Moses Ascetic Order.

“I heard that Emperor Roselle had previously modified this Golden Armor Art. I wonder what effects it eventually produced.”

…I can roughly imagine… Maybe this “Golden Armor” has twelve different styles[1]… After muttering inwardly for a while, Klein changed the topic to the main topic at hand:

“Will Feynapotter and the Church of Earth Mother officially join the war?”

When Lucca introduced the Stiano’s Golden Armor, Audrey opened her eyes and turned her head in a controlled manner. Without any perturbation in her eyes, she looked at the glimmering demigod.

Lucca sighed and said, “Regardless of what they were thinking previously, they’ll officially join the war tonight.

“Of course, they wouldn’t target Loen for the time being. There’s a high chance that they will attack either Lenburg, Masin, or Segar. It’s to prevent an extended battlefront and from making too many enemies which would prevent them from being able to concentrate their strength. Furthermore, the Church of Earth Mother might not be willing to exert too much strength…”

After sighing, this demigod from the Church of Knowledge earnestly said to the silver-masked Audrey, “What kind of consultation fee should I pay you?”

Audrey glanced at Mr. World beside her.

“He has already paid.”

Lucca Brewster immediately shifted his gaze to Dwayne Dantes.

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “Let me ask a few questions.”

“Please speak.” At that moment, Lucca didn’t look like a demigod at all. Instead, he looked more like a professor waiting to answer his student’s questions in class.

Of course, if he could take off that set of golden armor and change into a three-piece suit, the resemblance would be uncanny.

Without thinking, Klein directly asked, “What do you know about the corruption from underground?”

In his opinion, if the Church of Knowledge, which was famous for being knowledgeable, knew about it, then he was definitely at a strong enough level to bear the effects. And if this wasn’t suitable for Miss

Justice's ears, then he believed that Lucca would bring it up. After all, he wasn't merely a bookworm.

As the discussion about the underground corruption stemmed from their experiences from exploring the sea of collective subconscious in Groselle's Travels, Audrey had a certain understanding of it. At that moment, it didn't feel as though she couldn't understand anything. She was very focused on waiting for the demigod to give an answer.

Lucca frowned slightly and said, "I don't know much about it. It's as though just knowing about it will result in corruption in of itself.

"Uh, I've seen a sentence before in an ancient book: The higher the Sequence, the more dangerous it is to be closer underground."

So the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt left an extremely deep trauma and some kind of fear down there? Audrey instantly thought of the object sealed in the bronze door of the City of Miracles, Liveseyd.

She then looked at Mr. World beside her, but she didn't notice any changes in his expression.

However, Klein made his marionette nod gently, so as to tell Miss Justice that the connections he made with were identical to hers.

This made Audrey feel like she had returned to the past. Back then, she was still a Low-Sequence Beyonder of the Spectator pathway. There was no way she could decipher any useful information from Mr. World's expression and actions.

The higher the Sequence, the greater the threat of underground objects? This doesn't make sense… Realizing that Lucca was unable to provide more information, Klein thought for a moment and said, "Second question, what prophecy do you have regarding this war?"

With the mention of a prophecy, Lucca Brewster suddenly became spirited.

“It’s only the beginning. It’s far from reaching its peak.

“Also, a greater portion of the damage stems from the war and is also present beyond the war. I don’t know what it is exactly though.”

The war has just begun… Audrey’s heart sank uncontrollably.

Stems from the war and is also present beyond the war? Is it the apotheosis ritual of Amon’s brother, or is it the advancement of the Black Emperor? Or perhaps, the return of Roselle? With a guess, Klein nodded and raised the third question:

“Have you heard of the prophecy of the apocalypse? How do you interpret it?”

Lucca Brewster’s expression instantly turned serious.

“No, this is not a prophecy•

“Anyone with the ability to predict the future is certain that the apocalypse will definitely come.

“God mentioned in ‘His’ holy bible that the apocalypse will happen in the year 1368 in the Fifth Epoch.

“Of course, God also said that there will be a savior.”

The prophecy of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom? 1368, there’s only about ten years left… Could the Goddess’s act of destroying the alliance with the God of Combat to control the Uniqueness of the Death pathway have something to do with the impending apocalypse? Without realizing it, Klein’s expression turned serious. However, he didn’t show his reaction on the marionette’s face.

It will be the apocalypse in about ten years… As for Audrey, she ruminated over the demigod’s words in a daze.

To be honest, she felt that it was fake. It was used by people who pretended to be mysticism experts and were religious cheats so as to deceive the people and earn money through that.

Although she could foresee a large-scale war breaking out, she had never imagined that this world was very close to ending.

This was the understanding of almost all ordinary people and Beyonders.

“Why 1368?” Klein couldn’t help but ask.

Lucca Brewster shook his head.

“I don’t know either. That’s what God’s prophecy says.”

At the thought that he was only a Sequence 4, making him not have the ability to resist the apocalypse, Klein rationally ended the topic. He said to the saint of the Church of Knowledge and Wisdom, “That shall be all.”

What he really wanted to ask were things that the other party probably didn’t know either—matters like the corruption that stemmed from the cosmos, or whether Roselle could return or not, or what his state was.

Lucca Brewster nodded and said, “In the future, if there’s anything you need help with, you can come to me. For the details, find them out through Edwina.”

He remembered that Dwayne Dantes’s firearms transaction with Maysanchez had been facilitated by Edwina Edwards.

Edwina… Vice Admiral Iceberg? Audrey was taken aback for a second before coming to a realization. She glanced at Mr. World curiously.

She remembered that she had read a newspaper article before. It contained the story of Gehrman Sparrow and the three female pirate admirals.

“Alright.” Klein was never worried about having too many helpers.

After he nodded at Justice Audrey, Lucca Brewster's figure quickly turned transparent, as though he had fused with the spirit world.

Then, he disappeared.

Looking at the spot where he had been standing earlier and then at the hall that no longer had any gold. Klein let out a terse remark inwardly and fell silent for two seconds.

He then made his marionette look at Justice Audrey.

"I thought it would be a little more troublesome."

"That saint had saved himself in time and was willing to trust me, allowing me to plant a psychological cue," Audrey replied with a faint smile, trying her best to appear sincere and humble.

Dwayne Dantes nodded and said, "This help will be taken into account. Go back as soon as possible. It's very dangerous here."

Seeing that a demigod had nearly lost control, Audrey had no doubts about the danger Mr. World warned her about. She immediately used Creeping Hunger and "Teleported" back to the Northern Continent through the spirit world.

After she sacrificed the human-skinned glove to Mr. Fool and settled the rest of the matters, Earl Hall and his eldest son, Hibbert, returned home.

Just as Audrey was about to head out to meet her father and chat with him, she heard her mother, Lady Caitlyn, ask in the hall, "Did something happen again? You came back a lot later than scheduled today."

Earl Hall sighed and said, "Feynapotter has invaded Lenburg."

"Extra! Extra! Feynapotter invades Lenburg!"

Leonard, who was wearing a pair of red gloves, got off the carriage. Just as he was about to enter Saint Samuel Cathedral, he saw the paperboy waving a newspaper and running quickly across the streets and square.

He stopped the paperboy and took out a penny and bought a newspaper. As he flipped through it, he said in a low voice, “Perhaps it won’t be long before the south becomes a battlefield.”

“That’s right.” Pallez Zoroast’s slightly-aged voice echoed in Leonard’s mind.

“But why am I still staying in Backlund…” Leonard muttered in confusion.

After advancing to Spirit Warlock, he had already become the captain of a Red Gloves team. The members had been transferred from other teams, including the familiar faces of Cindy and Bob.

After the war broke out, Leonard had originally thought that his team would be transferred back to the Holy Cathedral like Soest’s team, so as to participate in the battle at the Amantha mountain range. To his surprise, he was arranged to be used as a reserve force for the Backlund diocese.

As for this large city, due to its implementation of a night-time curfew and other emergency policies, its security was good, and there weren’t many Beyonders who came out to cause destruction. Even the Devils who liked to murder didn’t create chaos. It made Leonard rather free, making it more relaxed for him than during non-wartime duty.

At that moment, Pallez Zoroast smiled and said, “I have a guess.”

“What guess?” Leonard hurriedly asked in a low voice.

“I’m not telling you now,” Pallez replied leisurely.

Leonard didn’t say a word. He straightened his collar and entered Saint Samuel Cathedral. He exchanged a few words with the archbishop and prayed for five minutes.

Then, he went underground and pushed open the door to his Red Gloves team's temporary office.

"Good morning, Captain." Bob, Cindy, and the other Red Gloves all stood up and bowed.

Upon hearing their greetings, Leonard, who felt that he was already used to it, was once again in a daze.

In the blink of an eye, it was Monday afternoon. Leonard arranged for his team members to go on separate missions, and he found a lounge to wait for the gathering to begin.

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Reference to Saint Seiya: Knights of the Zodiac.

Chapter 1100 - One Book

Above the boundless gray fog, inside the ancient palace that resembled a god’s residence.

Dark red beams of light shot up from both sides of the long bronze table, materializing into blurry figures.

Justice Audrey immediately stood up, lifted her skirt, and curtsied towards the seat of honor.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool.”

She wasn’t in a bad mood, but with everything that had happened recently, she couldn’t keep her spirits up like before.

After all the members bowed and took their seats, Audrey swept her gaze and habitually began observing.

Almost instantly, she discovered that Ma’am Hermit’s mental state and body language indicated that she was worried about something.

It has something to do with Queen Mystic? Or could it be that there are other problems? Or could it be that both factors are involved in the matter? Audrey was slightly surprised, and she curiously considered the possible reasons for this.

After so many Tarot Gatherings, she had long drawn a psychological portrait of Ma’am Hermit. She believed that she was a rather contradictory Beyonder. She was experienced, knowledgeable, and calm. She was also bold and reckless in certain aspects, like a young girl who had yet to mature.

Combined with the relationship between the other party and Queen Mystic, Audrey's interpretation of this analysis was that, although Ma'am Hermit had experienced a lot, she had managed to resolve many problems successfully with Queen Mystic's protection and arrangements. Deep in her heart, she was still a young girl who yearned to be loved and cared for.

And it was precisely within such a concealed state that Audrey boldly guessed that, when facing someone who had been "abandoned" and one who didn't commit any serious mistakes, she would unknowingly show mercy, pity them, and help them.

At the same time, due to her being a woman who was active at sea, with the strength of Sequence 5 who also had quite a number of mystical items, experience, and knowledge, while wearing heavy glasses and having interactions with Gehrman Sparrow, Audrey believed that if she casually flipped through the wanted posters and newspapers related to pirates, she would be able to confirm Ma'am Hermit's identity without a doubt. However, she deliberately didn't do this. She only had a general idea as to her identity.

No, Ma'am Hermit should already be a Sequence 4 demigod, so there shouldn't be too many things for her to be worried about… It's definitely not because of the war. It's impossible for a powerful pirate to be too troubled over it…

As her thoughts raced, due to her lack of knowledge, Audrey had no clues apart from guessing that it was related to Queen Mystic.

And at this moment, there were two matters echoing in Cattleya's mind:

Why did Her Majesty send so many diary pages over? If I hadn't become a Mysticologist and grasped certain secret techniques, I wouldn't have been able to memorize all of them in such a short period of time…

What exactly happened? Has the Queen fallen into some sort of dilemma?

That fellow, Frank, actually didn’t want to hold a ritual and wanted to directly consume the potion. Thankfully, I stopped him. However, the Druid ritual isn’t difficult for him at all. Being aware of the behavior and physical structure of various ordinary animals and three kinds of extraordinary creatures. As a crazy Biologist, he has already done his homework in advance by trying to crossbreed plants and animals. Next week—no, he will become a Druid in the next two days. What he needs to do is write down all the knowledge and experience that he has built up as part of the ritual…

Amidst her thoughts, Cattleya shelved her concerns and turned to the end of the long bronze table. She lowered her head and respectfully said, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I have found an entire book of Roselle’s diary this time.”

An entire book… Upon hearing Ma’am Hermit’s words, all the members, including The Hanged Man Alger, were clearly stunned. This was something that exceeded their understanding.

In the past, submissions ranged from one to three pages at a time. This time, it was an entire book!

Did something happen? Even though he was the least concerned about such matters, the slowest-to-react The Sun Derrick, had noticed something unusual.

They all knew that Queen Mystic Bernadette was the eldest daughter of Emperor Roselle. It was normal for her to be able to provide an entire diary. However, it was abnormal for her to give an entire book!

Cattleya ignored everyone’s gazes and continued, “These diary pages aren’t connected, but they all originated from Emperor Roselle’s later years.”

Very good.” The Fool Klein nodded slightly, indicating that The Hermit could begin conjuring them.

One page after another, the slightly yellow pages of the diary took shape, and soon, it was stacked into one book.

After receiving it, he casually flipped through it. Without reading it, he put down the diary and looked at The Hermit Cattleya.

“You can raise your questions now.

“Including the contributions you previously accumulated, you can ask a total often questions.”

He didn’t read the diary carefully, because there were too many pages this time. There were at least thirty pages to read. It would require the members of the Tarot Club to wait for too long, affecting Mr. Fool’s image; therefore, he planned to read it slowly after the gathering ended.

Ten… Cattleya immediately felt a headache. This was because there were only two questions that Queen Mystic had asked her to raise.

She deliberated for a moment before saying, “Honorable Mr. Fool, can we split the questions into multiple sessions?”

“Sure.” Klein nodded with a smile.

This was convenient for what he had in mind. To answer ten questions at once was also a very difficult task for Mr. Fool.

Cattleya secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

There are two questions this time:

“First, why does one need to be careful of the Spectator?”

Be careful of the Spectator? Audrey wore a blank look. For a moment, she was unable to find any leads for coming up with a guess. She even examined herself.

Be careful of the Spectator? The Moon Emlyn, The Star Leonard, and the other members of the Tarot Club all cast their gazes at Miss Justice.

The Fool Klein chuckled and leisurely said, “A Spectator always likes to hide in the shadows to secretly control certain matters, making it difficult for people to notice and be on their guard.

“In particular, one needs to be especially careful towards Angel of Imagination Adam. ‘His’ apotheosis ritual is to consume the potion when the trend of the times follows what ‘He’ envisioned.”

“The trend of the times that follows what ‘He’ envisioned… Allow the development of the times to meet ‘His’ expectations?” Justice Audrey couldn’t help but ask Mr. Fool.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “That’s right.

“A war that sweeps the entire world is exactly what Adam wants.”

This… The Hanged Man Alger, The Hermit Cattleya, and the other members of the Tarot Club were bombarded by the information divulged by Mr. Fool, and their minds were momentarily incapable of thought.

Be it the apotheosis ritual or the trend of the times, all of them involved a very, very high level. It was so high that they could only look up at it!

Suddenly, they vaguely understood the reason why the Psychology Alchemists were deeply involved in the royal family’s conspiracy. And the members who knew of the Twilight Hermit Order further understood the essence of keeping the trend of the times on track.

Only an existence at Mr. Fool’s level can understand these secrets and participate in the corresponding game… Alger quickly found his train of thought and sighed inwardly. He was increasingly eager to become a demigod.

He believed that this war would bring him plenty of opportunities, but he didn't know if he could seize them.

The members of the Tarot Club were silent. As their thoughts ran through their heads, The Fool Klein, let out an inexplicable sigh. This was because he had no way of stopping this war. If it was only the matter of making George Ill's Black Emperor ritual fail, he could jump through some hoops and stretch himself out to affect it slightly. However, in this war involving the trend of the times, even if he was an angel—a Sequence 1 angel—there was no way he could affect the overall situation. Forcibly trying to stop it would only squish him under the rolling wheels of history.

Apart from Adam, who has spent one to two thousand years arranging for such a plot to play out, the rest of them— even the Kings of Angels—can only change certain situations but not the overall trend. Only a true deity at Sequence 0 can truly participate in this game… It's no wonder the emperor said that only by becoming a god can he protect those who he wants to protect… The only thing I can do now is to make preparations for the Resistance in the Rorsted Archipelago. I hope they have the opportunity of being liberated from being colonies… Klein reined in his thoughts and made his gaze maintain a smiling look.

He wasn't blindly opposed to everything about war. The education he had received in his previous life, and what he had seen at sea and in East and West Bayam, had made him have a supportive attitude towards overthrowing colonial rule.

To put it simply, what he didn't like and abhorred was an "unjust war."

Sensing Mr. Fool's gaze, The Hermit Cattleya controlled her chaotic thoughts and said again, "Secondly, where is the secret mausoleum that Emperor Roselle has yet to discover?"

Secret mausoleum? Yet to be discovered? Fors became more focused as she felt that this was material for a bestselling novel that possessed all kinds of popular elements.

On the other hand, Audrey and Alger could acutely sense something from this question:

The eldest daughter of Roselle probably wasn't willing to accept her father's death, and was still searching for traces left behind by "Him," hoping to find clues to revive the emperor.

Of course, they couldn't eliminate the possibility that there were other important items in the secret mausoleum. That might be Queen Mystic's goal as well.

Roselle even left behind a secret mausoleum? I wonder what's inside… The Star Leonard and Judgment Xio were more concerned about this.

The Fool Klein was already prepared for this. He smiled and said, "Perhaps in the Fog Sea—in the secret primitive island Roselle discovered—or the Abyss."

Abyss… Emlyn immediately felt his eyelids twitch.

In the history of the Sanguine, there were many records of Second Epoch Devils wreaking havoc. Even when he read those materials after thousands of years since it happened, he still felt himself turn impetuous and become entangled by chaos.

The Sun Derrick had a similar feeling as him, but he didn't think too much about it. When reading certain documents, his mental state would be over-exerted, and his mental state would unknowingly be affected. This was common knowledge known by everyone in the City of Silver, so he had to first receive general education and listen to a teacher's recount.

Abyss… Audrey, Xio, and company subconsciously repeated that term in their hearts.

In their daily lives, the Abyss was an abstract expression. It was synonymous with danger, pain, decadence, and corruption.

They never expected that it really existed somewhere in the Fog Sea!

Chapter 1101 - Special Reward

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Cattleya also didn’t return to her senses for a few seconds. She never expected Emperor Roselle’s secret mausoleum to involve the Abyss.

However, after some careful thought, she realized that it wasn’t surprising that a conflict at that level would involve something like that.

For a moment, she hoped that the Queen wouldn’t pursue this matter, but in the end, she suppressed this thought to the bottom of her heart. She felt that if it were her, then she would also make the same choice.

All sorts of thoughts flashed through her mind as she bowed towards the end of the long, mottled table.

“Thank you for your answer. I have no further questions today.”

The Fool nodded slightly and surveyed the area.

“You may begin.”

Just as he finished speaking, Fors, who had been mustering her courage all this while, said as she closed her eyes as though she had resolved herself to charge towards death, “Mr. World, I have a commission for you.”

Seeing The World Gehrman Sparrow look over, she hurriedly explained, “You don’t have to do much. You’ll just leave me at an unfamiliar place every once in a while, and you can pick me up after a few days. If you’re really busy, you can present ‘Traveling’ to me several times at a particular point in time for me to 'Record.'"

Upon hearing Miss Magician's words, the first thought that came to Klein's mind was:

Man vs. Wild?

I have too many suitable places, such as the battlefield of the gods on the easternmost front of the Sonia Sea, Calderon City in the spirit world, the City of Miracles Liveseyd in Groselle's Travels. They're ten times, a hundred times, or even a thousand times more dangerous than the wilderness. I'm just afraid that Miss Magician won't be able to handle the danger… Klein didn't let The World Gehrman Sparrow immediately answer. He controlled the fake person and cast its gaze on Miss Magician with a pressuring look.

Fors silently took a deep breath, calmed her emotions, and added in more detail, "This is the thing: I'm a Sequence 6 Scribe of the Apprentice pathway now. In order to digest the potion, aside from recording all kinds of Beyonder powers, I still need to record down the local customs and traditions of different places. I h-hope that I can become a Traveler as soon as possible. Only then can I avoid most of the dangers during the war.

"Mr. World, I've only 'Recorded' 'Traveling' once, so I won't be able to return if I go somewhere else. I can only ask for your help. I wonder if you're interested, and what kind of payment you'd wish to receive?"

So that's how it is… Justice Audrey finally came to a realization. Furthermore, she felt that Fors's method was really great.

Especially since she's a best-selling novel author, her act of "Recording" scenery and customs and publishing it as a book should be able to greatly aid in her potion digestion rate… Audrey nodded silently as she felt sincerely happy for her friend.

However, as a senior Spectator, how could she not sense Fors's horror and fear towards Mr. World? She was looking forward to knowing what would happen when the two of them formally interacted.

Audrey, this state of mind isn't good! However, this is the attitude of a Spectator… Fors definitely wouldn't expect that the so-called crazy adventurer she fears is only a mask. Beneath it is a gentle and kind heart… I also have to work hard to digest the Dreamwalker potion. I should visit the dreams surrounding me every night… Audrey didn't show any changes in her expression or gaze as she maintained the attitude of a spectator.

After The Hanged Man Alger heard The Magician's words, he sighed. This was because even this Apprentice was beginning to break through to Sequence 5, while he was still stuck at that level.

The World and The Hermit are already at Sequence 4, Justice, The Sun, The Moon, and The Star are also all at Sequence 5. Apart from The Magician, the newly joined Judgment is lower than my Sequence… As his thoughts churned, Alger felt that stifled, a heavy feeling that was difficult to resolve. He wished he could immediately find an opportunity to make contributions and become a demigod—a Cataclysmic Interrer.

He yearned to have a high position and be in a position of power. He wanted others to acknowledge and respect him and be submissive to him. He didn't wish to fall behind in the Tarot Club.

Is that so… At the same time that Klein understood what Miss Magician was thinking, he suddenly recalled something. It was the identity that the other party had mentioned in front of Mr. Fool during a particular full moon.

An ex-surgeon who was now a novelist!

Hmm, will spreading the terrifying legends that I create into text form help me digest the Bizarro Sorcerer potion further… Hmm, the more shocking, harrowing, terrifying, and incomprehensible the description in the novel is, the better the effects… Klein suddenly had inspiration and controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow to say, “This commission is very simple, but the payment I need is very special.”

Upon hearing that Mr. World was inclined to agree, Fors asked in both joy and anxiousness, “What’s the payment?”

The World Gehrman Sparrow pondered for a moment and said, “Collect information about the ghost stories that have happened recently in the various major hospitals in Backlund, and write them into a small publication or have them published in the newspapers.

“The requirement for the novel is that it’s even more terrifying and bizarre. It’s best if it can be a best-selling novel.”

The reason why he only mentioned the matters of the major hospitals in Backlund was because Miss Magician was a local author who was part of medical circles. Being able to come to know of the urban myths and use that as material for a novel was very reasonable, and it wouldn’t incur suspicion. However, if she had even learned of the urban myths in the Rorsted Archipelago, Fog Sea, and East and West Balam, then Zaratul’s marionette would definitely “visit” her.

The ghost tales of the various hospitals in Backlund… After hearing The World Gehrman Sparrow’s words, Audrey was stunned for nearly three seconds.

She had originally thought that those rumors were caused by the Church’s Beyonders secretly treating the injured victims. Mushroom and weeds were the negative effects of the mystical items, but she never expected it to be something else.

Audrey had also guessed if it was done by “Dwayne Dantes.” After all, this gentleman had heard from her about the victims of the air raid. Furthermore, he was a very kind gentleman. However, due to the lack of clues and evidence, she could only believe that it was more likely to be related to the Church.

At this moment, she was almost certain that the Clown Angel was Mr. World Gehrman Sparrow. Even if it wasn't, they definitely had a deep connection.

A Mr. World who wears a mushroom and weed mask is the same as the Gehrman Sparrow who wears a crazy adventurer mask… Why does he act like that when he's doing something good? Is it because he needs the feeling or corresponding feedback from creating fear? Audrey thought to herself with some guesses.

As for The Star Leonard and The Hanged Man Alger, one immediately thought of the strange urban myths that the Nighthawks who belonged to Saint Samuel Cathedral were discussing recently, while the other fell deep into thought about the horror stories his subordinates had heard or encountered.

Uh, I've never really heard of such payment before. It's not like I'm writing a biography… Although there has been a recent war, the sales of newspapers and novels seem to have increased. My previous editor has been urging me to write a new book… Yes, I must keep my identity a secret. I have to convince my editor to change my pen name. The excuse is that novels of different styles should use different pen names… Fors didn't think too much about it. After a slight period of deliberation, she agreed, "Alright, no problem."

The World Gehrman Sparrow chuckled and hoarsely said, "If you do well, I'll give you the opportunity to 'Record' the Beyonder powers of a demigod."

"…No problem!" Fors swept away her usual languidness and firmly replied.

To her, "Recording" a demigod's powers not only increased her ability to protect herself, but it could also effectively help her digest the potion.

This also made Audrey, Xio, Leonard and the other members sigh in their hearts. Scribes were truly enviable…

Once a demigod-level expert became a backer, a Scribe wielded extremely powerful strength. They wouldn't be weaker than a Sequence 5, or may even be stronger than one at times!

After coming to an agreement, the scene fell silent for a moment. This was because the other members of the Tarot Club currently didn't have any requirements.

Leonard had become a Spirit Warlock recently, and he had yet to conclude the acting principles. There was still the possibility of him advancing from within the Church of Evernight. As for mystical items, he had already bought the Word of the Sea. If there were any special circumstances, he could request to use Sealed Artifacts of the Church.

Emlyn was reading the Sanguine's research information regarding the Moon domain every day, hoping to make a Scarlet Scholar more practical. As for the Sequence 4 Shaman King's potion formula and Beyonder ingredients, he didn't need them for an extensive period of time, nor could he afford them.

Derrick had recently mastered the powers of Priest of Light, and he was still very far from advancing. As for the Unshadowed main ingredient, he had already obtained it.

Similarly, Audrey and Xio had also recently advanced. One of them was working hard to help Mr. World, accumulating contribution points, while the other was burdened with a huge debt and was eager to repay it.

Alger was in the Church of the Lord of Storms, so he had to keep a secret. He was currently in an awkward position which required him to find a chance to advance. Furthermore, he had obtained the Cataclysmic Interrer's potion formula from The World.

Cattleya had just become a demigod. She was currently deep in research on all kinds of secrets and all sorts of mysticism knowledge. She was pleasantly surprised that, despite having recently advanced, just recalling the knowledge and secrets she knew from the past had allowed her to directly digest quite a bit of the potion. Amongst them, the various things she had heard from the Tarot Club had contributed greatly!

The transaction segment quickly ended as the members began their free exchange.

Emlyn surveyed the area and his gaze landed on Leonard's face.

"If you're an official Beyonder, how will you deal with a clergyman of an opposing faction in your area of jurisdiction? He hasn't done anything wrong, nor does he plan on doing anything wrong."

Although Feynapotter had yet to start a war with Loen, they had invaded Loen's ally, Lenburg. This made the believers and citizens living around the Harvest Church look at Bishop Utravsky in an increasingly odd manner.

Leonard thought carefully and said, "Protective custody."

Chapter 1102 - Engaging Tigers to Hunt Wolves

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Protective custody… That’s quite a witty answer. As expected of a newly promoted Red Gloves team captain… When The Fool Klein heard The Star Leonard’s answer, he couldn’t help but laugh inwardly.

He knew very well who Emlyn was referring to, and he knew quite a bit about Bishop Utravsky, who wished to be called a priest.

He didn’t really believe Emlyn White’s claim that “he hasn’t done anything wrong, nor does he plan on doing anything wrong.” This was because, to a deity’s Blessed or a zealot, their understanding of something wrong might be different from a normal person’s.

Of course, Klein never suspected Father Utravsky’s claim that life was precious and his piousness and acknowledgment of a joyous harvest, but the problem was that the Church of Earth Mother also preached that lives were like “plants,” which would ultimately wither and die, returning to the embrace of the Earth Mother. They would then grow again when the “next year” came.

A qualified bishop of the Church of Earth Mother wouldn’t treat death in the same manner as the most ordinary of people.

Regardless, Father Utravsky has to be controlled. This is both a form of protection for the Earth Mother’s believers, as well as the citizens around him. It’s also a form of protection for this half-giant bishop, in case some irredeemable situation occurs… While Klein was thinking to himself, Leonard, who had no lack of understanding of the Harvest

Church, also understood the meat of Emlyn's question. He planned on leading his team members to confirm the situation in the next two days, taking the Earth Mother's Blessed into protective custody with the help of the official organizations that were in charge of the area south of the bridge.

And when Emlyn heard the answer, he slowly nodded without saying a word.

Seeing that he was silent, Leonard turned to ask a question he wanted to get some feedback on.

"Are there any major matters lurking beneath Backlund recently?"

What he really wanted to ask was why his Red Gloves team had been left behind in the Capital of Capitals as a part of the reserve forces.

As soon as he finished speaking, the other members of the Tarot Club, including The Sun Derrick, who wasn't too concerned about matters of the outside world, all cast their gazes at The World Gehrman Sparrow.

From what they knew, whenever something happened in Backlund, Mr. World would more or less give a warning.

What major matters has been lurking beneath Backlund recently? There's plenty… The Black Emperor ritual of George III, my secret alliance with Queen Mystic, the three Churches may seem to be tacitly in approval but all have different attitudes… As Klein's thoughts raced, he suddenly understood what Leonard wanted to ask. After all, they would occasionally communicate privately.

That's right. Why was Leonard left in Backlund? Because of me, the Church doesn't want to put Leonard in a dangerous situation? Am I thinking too highly of myself? Klein secretly shook his head and rejected the thought that first came to him.

He quickly changed his train of thought and analyzed the problem on matters that Leonard could be of service.

Leonard is only a Sequence 5, so what use can he play in Backlund that has deep undercurrents?

Even if he's of use, they wouldn't use him. Instead, they would make use of me, who's related to him, or Pallez Zoroast.

This can rule me out. I'm still a qualified Blessed at the moment. If I really needed to do anything, then a simple instruction would suffice…

The clearing of the Amon avatars in Backlund last time made the Goddess or the upper echelons of the Church guess that Pallez Zoroast is hiding in the vicinity of Boklund Street, and they ended up suspecting Leonard?

There's a possibility, and it's not a low one either. Back then, I was concerned to some extent. I only believed that, in the case of Amon becoming a god, the Church and Pallez Zoroast were on the same page, that they could form some sort of tacit understanding. In fact, I believed that that grandpa had such considerations when "He" first chose Leonard as a target for "Parasitizing."

But why is Pallez Zoroast being kept in Backlund? To fish for Amon?

Even among the Kings of Angels, Amon ranks among the top. It's almost impossible for the Goddess to engage in a divine descent. With the Church's angels, Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, and Pallez Zoroast, it shouldn't be difficult to expel Amon, but it's almost impossible to kill "Him," unless "He" doesn't come with "His" actual body. But in that case, it's not worth making such arrangements…

Klein's thoughts quickly developed, and soon, he had a new idea:

Fishing for "Amon" isn't done so as to deal with "Him." Instead, it's to hold back Zaratul who's currently in Backlund?

Similar pathways could be interchanged at high levels. Even if one became a true god at Sequence 0, "They" still have a strong desire for the Uniqueness and Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics of neighboring pathways. On this point, the Evernight Goddess's plan was excellent evidence.

The Goddess wants to make Backlund into a potpourri mess before wiping them all out? Klein made The World Gehrman Sparrow hesitate for a few seconds before saying, "The leader of the Secret Order, a Sequence 1 angel, and an old friend of Emperor Roselle, Zaratul, is currently hiding in Backlund."

Seeing that the members of the Tarot Club were clearly a little confused and perplexed, The World added in a hoarse voice, "The Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation we often refer to often refers to the conservation of Beyonder characteristics of neighboring pathways.

"In other words, similar pathways also obey the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics."

Leonard immediately fell into deep thought. After a few seconds, he deliberated and asked, "The Marauder and the Seer pathways are neighboring pathways?"

Yes, the Apprentice pathway is also a neighboring pathway," The World answered frankly.

Upon hearing their conversation, Fors first connected the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics to the attraction between Beyonder characteristics taught to her by her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham. She connected it to the Saint of Secrets who had been "attracted."

Then, she began to consider a question.

If it really is as Mr. World said, that Beyonder characteristics of neighboring pathways attract one another, then would it have attracted the attention of Zaratul back then? After all, "He" is in Backlund.

All of a sudden, Fors thought of the raven that was staring at Botis's back.

Uh… Fors hurriedly raised her hand, indicating that she had something to say.

Seeing all the members looking over, she hurriedly said, “My teacher is a member of the Abraham family. He wields a rather important Sealed Artifact.”

As the first part of the sentence was known by the other members other than The Star, Fors had no intention of hiding anything. As for the second half of the sentence, she had made some modifications. It was very important to change the phrase to “rather important.”

Seeing that no one was raising any questions, Fors continued, “This causes him to occasionally encounter High- Sequence Beyonders of the Apprentice pathway. Previously, when he came to Backlund, the Aurora Order’s Saint of Secrets, Botis, had appeared nearby.

“As for me, I noticed that a raven was looking in the direction where Botis was heading.”

A raven… The details of the foggy town surfaced in Klein’s mind. At the top of the pitch-black cathedral, there were ravens flying around, as if they were holding a memorial or in grief. As for Zaratul’s avatar, it was hidden inside the cathedral.

Zaratul is used to using ravens as marionettes? Is this a mark left behind during his phase as a Bizarro Sorcerer? While in thought, Klein made The World speak:

“That might very well be Zaratul.”

I actually met a Sequence 1 angel… Fors felt a sense of fear and horror.

She then recalled how she and Xio had discussed Adam and thus ended up possibly targeted. For some reason, she had the illusion that she had become the protagonist of a novel. Despite being only a Sequence 7 or 6, she had established connections with the Kings of Angels and Sequence 1 angels!

With this in mind, Fors hurriedly turned her head to Miss Justice and said, “Can you hypnotize me later into forgetting certain matters? I’m afraid that I might accidentally recall something and attract attention.”

“No problem.” As Audrey answered, she glanced at Xio and nodded at her.

As for The Star Leonard, he had some ideas as well. He planned on discussing it with “Old Man” when he returned to hear “His” opinion.

Klein didn’t continue talking about the major matters that lurked beneath Backlund. This was because they were just too high-end for the other members of the Tarot Club. Not only were they unable to participate in it directly, but even having a complete understanding of them could bring about a disaster upon themselves.

In this aspect, Klein’s idea was that he could get the help of the members of the Tarot Club in certain segments, but it was like commissioning a bounty hunter to do something, without getting them too involved in the matter and figuring out the reason for the commission. It was a form of protection for them.

At this moment, Alger looked around and said, “According to my observations, the Church of Storms isn’t too enthusiastic about this war.”

They aren’t too enthusiastic? This doesn’t match the image of the Church of the Lord of Storms… Although their teachings don’t advocate combat and don’t promote war, they definitely emphasize the need to treat their enemies like a storm, and vent whatever anger they have on the spot… When Klein heard this, he felt a little surprised. He then combined his understanding of the deities and began his preliminary analysis.

According to my previous speculations, Storm, Sun, Reader, Spectator, and Shepherd can switch paths at high levels. There should be an immense conflict between them…

As for the Lord of Storms, “He” is highly likely the Wind Angel of yesteryear. “He” had “eaten” Adam’s father, the ancient sun god, the City of Silver Creator. Even if “He” had tacitly allowed George III to become Black Emperor, it’s impossible for “Him” to sit back and watch Adam make use of the ‘flood of the times’ to ascend to divinity…

Therefore, the Church of the Lord of Storms is unwilling to have the war increase in scope and allow it to turn into a world war. Hence, “He” is trying hard to control “His” impulse?

It must be really hard on them…

This can explain why Loen and Intis would maintain their strange silence when Feynapotter invaded Lenburg, Masin, and Segar… The Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun and the Church of the Lord of Storms are probably in a difficult position. They’re unable to make up their minds.

On the one hand, at the level of the deities, it isn’t that there is no possibility of abandoning their alliance to deal with the Church of Knowledge. On the other hand, the battle strategies at the national-level also prompts them to protect those countries. Forcefully breaking the perceptions built-up by the citizens of a country, would be an act that causes the anchors to become unstable.

Also, once they participate in the battle, they would help Adam fulfill the conditions of “His” advancement to Sequence0.

Klein deliberately made The World silent for a moment before replying to The Hanged Man’s intelligence.

“At present, this is inevitable.”

Chapter 1103 - Hint

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Klein didn’t actually remember if he had told The Hanged Man and the others that the Sailor, Spectator, Sun, Reader and Secrets Suppliant pathways were interchangeable—unless he used dream divination to recall it.

However, since The Hanged Man had expressed his doubts towards the Church of the Lord of Storms, it meant that he hadn’t thought about the interchangeability of both paths. Regardless of whether he knew it or not, or if he had yet to connect the two matters together, Klein believed that there was a need for him to explain things clearly. This allowed the members of the Tarot Club to grasp the true stances of the various major factions, thus letting them avoid many dangers.

After The Hanged Man, Alger, and the others cast their gazes at him, he controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow and made him say in a low, uncertain tone, “The Storm, Sun, Spectator, Reader, and Secrets Suppliant pathways are neighboring pathways.

“Likewise for Evernight, God of Combat, and Death.

“And neighboring pathways often become enemies. Of course, that’s not absolute. At least the seven deities have established an alliance.”

Upon hearing The World’s reply, Alger first recalled Adam pushing for the “flood of the times” to become a god. Following that, thoughts flashed through his mind as he gained a certain level of understanding of the Church of the Lord of Storms’s current attitude.

This made him feel a rather special sense of superiority and joy. It was as if he had seen the essence of the matter, exceeding the level of most Beyonders in the Church of the Lord of Storms.

Similarly, Audrey had a brand new understanding of Intis's strange silence in this war. She was even more worried about the situation in Lenburg, Masin, and Segar.

In addition, she also knew that she could switch to Unshadowed, Cataclysmic Interrer, and to the corresponding Sequence 4 demigod of the Church of Knowledge and Wisdom she had recently met.

As for the corresponding Sequence 4 of the Secrets Suppliant pathway, it wasn't within her considerations at all.

Of course, compared to other pathways, she still preferred Manipulator. She liked the Spectator pathway from the bottom of her heart. However, she also felt deep fear towards the upper echelons of the Spectator pathway—Hvin Rambis had left a rather bad impression on her. Adam's "any mention of it will be known" had left her with a trauma.

She had no choice but to undergo self-evaluations and treat the corresponding problems from time to time.

The Hermit Cattleya had always been deeply knowledgeable about such matters. Apart from the information mentioned by The World Gehrman Sparrow, she also knew that the Mystery Pryer and Savant pathways were neighboring pathways that could be interchanged at high Sequences. It was likewise for the Arbiter and Lawyer pathways, the Prisoner and Criminal pathways, the Hunter and Assassin pathway, and the Planter and Apothecary pathway.

As the other members of the Tarot Club dispersed their thoughts, Alger said to The World Gehrman Sparrow, "Thank you for your answer."

He didn't say exactly what insights he had gleaned from the answer.

In fact, for an instant, Alger wanted to leave the Church of the Lord of Storms and switch to another pathway. This was better than waiting for a very slim chance in the Church. However, he ultimately gave up on this idea. After all, his goal for a long time was to become a cardinal of the Church of the Lord of Storms. At present, he was beginning to yearn to be ranked first amongst the cardinal ranks, becoming an angel in charge of the Mandated Punishers or Ascetics.

As for the position of pontiff, Alger didn't yearn for it. This was because it was too close to the Lord of Storms, and he had many secrets he kept close to his chest.

If he were to be chosen as pontiff, Alger suspected that he would be smote to ashes by a lightning storm that descended from the sky the moment he put on the papal tiara.

Seeing that the exchange between The World and The Hanged Man had ended, Emlyn asked with curiosity, "Which pathway can the Apothecary pathway be interchanged with?"

Being from the Sanguine race made them have no thoughts of switching to other pathways, as it would often mean that they had lost their "identify." Therefore, Emlyn wasn't too concerned about such matters.

"The Planter pathway of the Church of Earth Mother," Cattleya answered casually.

The Planter pathway… Possessed by the Church of Earth Mother… Emlyn frowned as he vaguely grasped something.

At this moment, Xio also asked, "Which pathway neighbors the Arbiter pathway?"

"Lawyer," Cattleya answered simply.

Lawyer of the Black Emperor pathway… In other words, if I could become a Sequence 5,1 would be able to switch to Sequence 4 of the

Black Emperor pathway. And Fors had previously told me that Mr. Fool has the Card of Blasphemy; it contains all the secrets of the Black Emperor pathway… Xio suddenly realized that there was a glimmer of light for her future.

It had to be known that the Arbiter pathway was firmly controlled by the two royal families. Even the corresponding military only had the potion formula for the Low- and Mid-Sequences. If they wanted to advance beyond Sequence 5, they had to receive a bestowment from the royal family. Just like how every general had to be conferred by the king or queen. Furthermore, what they obtained in the end was the concocted potion and the ritual.

To Xio, this meant that it was almost impossible for her to get the Sequence 4 potion formula for the Arbiter pathway.

Of course, no matter how tightly guarded the potion formulas was, there were bound to be loopholes. The military's demigods knew of the ritual, and from time to time, they would cooperate with the royal family to hunt powerful supernatural beings. They could roughly narrow down the candidates for the main ingredient to a small area, but this also meant that they could only confirm the formula through repeated experiments. At the same time, the military demigods were also unable to grasp the supplementary ingredients. If they wanted to rely only on the main ingredients to advance, they needed to seek out the benediction of fate.

And now, Xio had seen another possibility.

At this moment, Audrey had already summarized the neighboring pathways that Mr. World and Ma'am Hermit had mentioned before thoughtfully asking:

"Among Prisoner, Criminal, Hunter, Assassin, Savant, Mystery Pryer, and Monster, which ones are neighboring similar pathways?"

The World Gehrman Sparrow glanced at The Hermit and replied hoarsely, “Prisoner and Criminal, Hunter and Assassin, and Savant and Mystery Pryer are similar pathways that can be interchanged at high Sequences.”

This was knowledge that could be confirmed by Klein. Among them, the interchangeability between Prisoner and Criminal was something mentioned by the Red Angel evil spirit to which Miss Sharron tacitly accepted. The interchangeability between Savant and Mystery Pryer had been personally demonstrated by Emperor Roselle. As for Hunter and Assassin, it was information that he had accumulated over time which could finally be confirmed.

”What about Monster? There’s only this one left, Fors, who was listening, couldn’t help but ask.

Seeing The World remain silent, Cattleya thought for a moment before saying, “It’s difficult to be categorized as a neighbor of any other Beyonder pathway. Just like fate, it can only objectively exist alone.

“I can be sure of that. I can only say that the most fundamental order in our world’s supernatural powers might be chaos and disharmony.”

The reason why Cattleya was certain that the Monster pathway didn’t have the means to be interchanged with other pathways was because her advancement ritual required her to analyze the Snake of Fate’s blood.

I see… Audrey was slightly uncomfortable with this disharmonious situation, but she quickly adjusted her state of mind.

After the exchange was almost complete, all the members of the Tarot Club looked at The Sun Derrick.

The youth said without any hesitation, “We’ve already set off. We’re currently less than a day away from Afternoon Town. When we arrive, we’ll be resting for another day or two before we begin exploring the Giant King’s Court.”

The Sun's words made Alger, Cattleya, and company suddenly feel like myths were entering reality. Compared to places like the ruins of the battlefield of the gods, the Giant King's Court was a symbolic entity that appeared in various legends and in different secret documents.

What secret was it hiding? What was buried in it? The answer was about to be revealed!

Even though they had followed The World Gehrman Sparrow into the City of Miracles Liveseyd, which was on par with the Giant King's Court, The Star Leonard and Justice Audrey were also secretly excited and looking forward to hearing more. After all, the city that the Dragon King had "imagined" into existence had lost too much in the process of being transferred to Groselle's Travels. There were no traces of anything of value. Apart from the building itself, there was only the hall that expressed the extraordinariness of the ancient myths.

Furthermore, what was even more important was that Derrick had mentioned that the Kings of Angels had come to a secret plot in the Giant King's Court!

As for The Fool Klein, he was thinking of something else:

Should I get Little Sun to pray to The Fool before the exploration? Then, I'll use the crimson star and the Sea God Scepter to extend my vision to a certain distance so that I can watch a live broadcast…

Yes. In that case, if there are any accidents, I can still provide some help. The only problem is that this method of relying on the prayer points of light for "observation" cannot last too long.

This has nothing to do with my own spirituality. It's just that this connection will fade away with time and last forty- five minutes at most… Let Little Sun pray every once in a while? Uh, that's under the premise that it doesn't affect his battle or attract the attention of the people around him…

In that case, my spirituality can probably last for two hours. It’s not on the same level as my Sequence 5. Heh heh, it’s also because of my recent rapid digestion of the potion.

After pondering for a moment, Klein didn’t speak. He controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow to hint to The Sun:

“Before exploring the Giant King’s Court, you can pray to Mr. Fool and pray for good luck. In the process, you can also pray many times.”

Mr. World really is a nice guy… After Derrick sincerely thanked him, he hurriedly turned his body towards the end of the long, mottled table.

Then, he saw Mr. Fool, who was enveloped by the grayish-white fog, nod slightly.

Chapter 1104 - Contradiction

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The world above the gray fog had been restored to its state of silence, as though the gathering that had just ended was an illusion.

Klein bent his finger and lightly knocked on the edge of the long, mottled table. He made the pages of the Roselle diary which Cattleya had just given appear once again.

Amidst an indescribable stillness, Klein cast his gaze towards the first paragraph of the first page with a solemn expression.

“27th September, I saw Miss Ithaca once again. I had a nerve-wracking and thrilling but sufficiently wonderful experience with her. As expected, I prefer women of this age. I’m not just reminiscing about my youth, but rather that I haven’t changed after so many years. Heh heh, I’m really dedicated.”

…I read your diary with such seriousness, and you’re giving me this? The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched as he lampooned at the emperor who he had only seen a portrait of.

He immediately gathered his thoughts and shifted his gaze.

In a lounge at the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral.

After Leonard Mitchell opened his eyes, he deliberated for a moment and said in a low voice, “Old man, the Secret Order’s Zaratul seems to be in Backlund.”

In his mind, the slightly-aged voice quickly sounded:

"Indeed…"

Upon hearing this, Leonard immediately asked, "Old Man, are you familiar with that Zaratul? Didn't you say that the Zoroast family and the Zaratul family are both important nobles of the Solomon Empire?"

From his point of view, as ex-colleagues and former comrades in arms, how could Old Man not be familiar with Zaratul?

Pallez Zoroast scoffed.

"I'm familiar with the Zaratul who died in the War of the Four Emperors. The one alive who's now should be 'His' descendant. I might or might not have seen him before.

"Sigh, the Zaratul back then had already obtained clues regarding the second Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic from the True Creator. 'He' was waiting for the War of the Four Emperors to end before searching for it. If he succeeded, 'He' would be considered a King of Angels. Unfortunately, in the War of the Four Emperors, 'He' directly encountered the existence from the Antigonus family who could be known as 'The Half-Fool,' and Bethel Abraham was also involved. 'He' could appear anywhere, anytime. If 'He' hadn't been quickly banished and sealed by Evernight and Storm, I might not have survived to the end of the War of the Four Emperors either."

The Half-Fool… Leonard's eyelids twitched when he heard this title as he thought of the entity above the gray fog for some baffling reason.

He then forced himself to control himself and directed his thoughts to something else:

Even from the description of a bystander, Mr. Door was clearly one of the top existences among the Kings of Angels. It required two true deities to join forces to banish and seal "Him." Uh, there's a high chance that "He" was especially good at escaping, making it very difficult to kill. And back then, the battle situation was tense, so it was imperative to eliminate an enemy that posed a threat as soon as possible…

Heh heh, Old Man is reminiscing about the past, so he's feeling a little uneasy. He actually said so much in one breath…

Amidst his thoughts, Leonard suddenly said, "I was left in Backlund because they wish to use you to attract Amon here?"

The wistful feelings in Pallez Zoroast's tone vanished as he clicked "His" tongue.

"Who made this guess? I don't think it's you.

"However, it's not bad that you know how to use your own resources to probe for the truth."

This is something I've been very familiar with ever since I joined the Nighthawks! Leonard replied inwardly but didn't say a word.

Pallez Zoroast continued, "I guessed that too.

"To be honest, your ex-colleague's relationship with Evernight really confuses me. If it wasn't for how familiar the concealment forces that appeared that day was, I wouldn't have dared to make such a guess.

"Heh heh, with Zaratul and I in Backlund, Amon will arrive soon too. It truly is a perfect triangle of balance."

What do you mean… The concealment forces used to deal with Amon came from the Evernight domain, not Mr. Fool? Does this point that there is a certain level of cooperation between Mr. Fool and the Goddess, or is it that the faith of those higher-up in the Church actually to Mr. Fool? Leonard suddenly felt a strong sense of confusion and puzzlement regarding his position in the grand scheme of things.

Seeing that Pallez was also quite confused, he converged his thoughts and didn't ask any questions regarding this. He frowned and said, "Two Sequence 1 angels and a King of Angels. Will this bring about a devastating disaster to Backlund?”

He remembered that Amon was a terrifying existence that could kill countless people silently, and could even live happily as “His” victim.

Using this as a reference, Zaratul, who was of a neighboring pathway, definitely possessed similarly terrifying powers.

If “He” and Amon were to clash, half of Backlund or the entirety of Backlund could become the Capital of Death or the Capital of Bizarreness!

Pallez Zoroast laughed and said, “Balance also means that everyone will be very restrained. Besides, it’s very likely that Amon won’t let ‘His’ true body enter Backlund. At most, ‘He’ will send a large number of avatars over. After all, the impossibility of a divine descent by Evemight doesn’t mean that Storm or Steam can’t.”

“What do you mean?” Leonard acutely grasped the key point in Old Man’s words.

Pallez Zoroast’s tone suddenly became more relaxed.

“Regardless of whether it’s because of the war or for other reasons, Evemight is likely unable to interfere with the matters on the ground at the moment. Otherwise, why would ‘She’ need to lure Amon over to form a balance? ‘She’ directly set up a trap, and who knows, ‘She’ might be able to capture Zaratul or scare the cowardly Seer away.”

“…Did something happen to the Goddess?” Leonard suddenly turned nervous.

The slightly-aged voice replied, “It might not be a bad thing, and it might be a good thing.”

Without waiting for Leonard to ask further, Pallez Zoroast sighed again.

“Amon was attracted to Backlund by me. What about Zaratul? What about me?”

“I think Zaratul is also here because of you, and you’re in Backlund because of me…” Leonard pondered as he replied. “Heh, why do you think you’re in Backlund?” Pallez immediately scoffed.

Leonard immediately replied, “This is the arrangement of the Church. It can’t be the effect of the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics, right?”

“That’s not necessarily true.” Pallez’s tone turned a little stem. “Most of the time, the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence will not directly show in places where you can sense it. Most of the time, it will influence fate. Just like when you board a train, you’ll suddenly feel that the scenery along the way is beautiful and will get off the train in advance, resulting in you entering the small city. This might be because there are Beyonders or mystical items of neighboring pathways around you.”

“In other words, there are other things in Backlund that attracts you and Zaratul here, and through you, my fate is affected, causing me to be arranged by the Church to stay in Backlund most of the time?” Leonard asked in enlightenment, hoping to gain confirmation.

Pallez Zoroast slowly sighed and said, “That possibility can’t be ruled out.”

Above the gray fog, Klein soon flipped to a diary page of value.

“21st November. As I had made too many preparations in the early stages, I obtained that chaotic and terrifying Grade

0 Sealed Artifact even faster than I imagined.

“And then, after a difficult battle, and with some help, I finally restored it to a pure Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic.

“In a few more days, the ritual will be completed. I should be able to advance to Sequence 1 Knowledge Emperor of the Mystery Pryer pathway."

"26th November. Sunny and breezy.

"The ritual was very successful. I digested it thoroughly, and my anchors were even more stable. There weren't many difficulties during the entire process.

"I'm already a Sequence 1 angel, a Knowledge Emperor. Bernadette no longer has to worry about the influence of the Hidden Sage. She can abide by the words 'do as you wish, but do no harm,' and continue on this path!

"At the same time, the level of an angel at Sequence 1 means that I can greatly resist the notice and corruption from the cosmos. I can head to the crimson moon and see what's happening there.

"Regardless of whether Mr. Door is lying or not, everything points to the fact that the crimson moon is the key to the problem. If I wish to become a true deity, I have to figure out the reason.

"I'll make preparations for another three more days before attempting to land on the moon!

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind! Haha, don't quote me on that."

Upon seeing this, Klein recalled the hysterical diary page of Roselle. He began to suspect that it was written after the emperor's "landing on the moon."

Putting down the remaining, unread diary pages, Klein began to use dream divination to recall the content he had read over the past year. He wanted to use the comparison to find clues to Roselle's abnormal mental state.

Not long after, he saw a few lines of text in his dream. It was the last diary entry that was theoretically written by Roselle:

“I’m unable to give any actual suggestions because I myself can’t see the true faces of the seven deities or those evil gods. This might be partially related to the second Blasphemy Slate that the ancient organization hides. Unfortunately,

1 only have a rough idea of the hidden parts, and I’m unable to verify them.”

In this diary, the Emperor had even solemnly warned his “friends” to be careful of the moon.

The dream suddenly shattered, and Klein snapped awake. There was an obvious look of fear in his eyes.

He clearly remembered that, a long time ago, Roselle had confirmed that there was a hidden portion in the second Blasphemy slate.

“19th July. The night of the Blood Moon.

“Mr. Door’s answer allowed me to confirm one thing: In that ancient secret organization, the second Blasphemy Slate I saw wasn’t complete!”

This… The emperor forgot? No, how could he have forgotten such an important matter? He only appeared a little extreme, and he didn’t have much of a problem. Why did this happen… Klein couldn’t help but mutter to himself silently, having an inexplicable and terrifying feeling.

The last diary entry, or rather, the Emperor Roselle who wrote that sentence seemed to be another person.

Chapter 1105 - The Key Diary Entry

◆ ◆ ◆

Above the grayish-white that wasn't perturbed at all, Klein silently sat at the end of the long, mottled table, like a stone statue that had existed for hundreds of thousands of years.

Regarding the discovery he had just now, he felt a deep sense of fear from the bottom of his heart. He felt a chill rush out from the back of his head, spreading across his entire body, bringing with it obvious yet real shudders.

It was as if he had witnessed a familiar friend become a stranger in a very short span of time. His actions were abnormal, as though he had been replaced by someone else.

Of course, there was a clearer and more direct analogy in this aspect: It would be Leonard Mitchell coming to visit and discuss the matter regarding Pallez Zoroast as a monocle is suddenly taken out and then put on.

Could it be that the emperor was unknowingly corrupted after his ascension to the crimson moon, and he didn't notice it at all? He usually didn't show any abnormalities. Only through reminiscing about his past through his diary entries, analyzing his inner voice, and talking to himself would certain premonitions surface in his mind? Or could it be that this was a form of hypnosis by Adam? But Roselle was at least a Sequence 1 when that happened… Klein couldn't help but lower his head to inspect himself. He imagined how another version of himself existed in his body without realizing it. He wasn't sure if this entity could be called a “human.”

This truly is an extreme sense of horror… Klein slowly took a deep breath and forced himself to focus his attention on the diary pages of Emperor Roselle.

Soon, he discovered something worth reading:

“28th July. I attended that ancient secret organization’s gathering once again.

“From the discussions among the members, I sensed a problem:

“Is it because I advanced too quickly that I’m relatively inexperienced? There are many things that I have never heard of before?

“Just like how they mentioned about the corruption from the cosmos and underground. This is the first time I know of their existence!

“Heh heh, I wonder how many of them are ‘He’s1 or ’She’s.’ Apart from a minority of the members, most of them don’t like others knowing their levels.

“While others are communicating with each other, I asked Old Mister Hermes with a whisper, hoping to understand more about the corruption that stems from the cosmos and underground.

Hermes told me that this isn’t something I can come into contact with at my current level. Just learning about it alone will cause me to be corrupted!

“It’s actually that scary? What could it be? I’m even more intrigued.

“That old mister later told me that the corruption that originates from underground can be ignored because it will fade with time. A long time ago, in the era when the ancient gods were active, powerful creatures had attempted to resolve this problem completely. In the end, it made things worse and caused tremendous losses. Later, they gave up on the idea of directly exerting influence, and they switched focus to sealing and guarding it.

“From that day forth, although accidents happened occasionally, it was stable overall. Today, even if there are no seals or guards, as long as no one comes close and tries to go deeper, there won’t be any incidents of corruption.

“What a surprising situation. It appears it doesn’t require the protagonist of this era to resolve this problem.

“Old Mister Hermes mentioned the cosmos again and said that the situation there is more complicated, interesting, and more dangerous than I imagined. ‘He’ said that even a Sequence 2 angel doesn’t have much knowledge of the cosmos. ‘They’ only have a general understanding of it. ‘They’ aren’t aware that, apart from the dangers, there are too many other things. If it wasn’t for the fact that ‘He’ once knew an existence that was good at wandering the cosmos and learned plenty of matters from that person, he wouldn’t be able to tell me all of that.

“I was very curious, but I didn’t hold much hope when I asked about the existence who was adept at wandering the cosmos.

“Old Mister Hermes didn’t hide the truth. He said that it was Mr. Door, Bethel Abraham.

“Mr. Door… I pretended not to know anything and asked about that person’s level in a very casual tone.

“Hermes didn’t answer directly. ‘He’ only said that in the Fourth Epoch, even angels and demigods would address ‘Him’ by ‘His’ name in private. ‘Those’ who could make everyone address ‘Them’ by their titles are in a small minority—of which, Mr. Door was one of ‘Them’—aside from Evernight, Storm, Earth, and the other deities.

“Is that so… Mr. Door’s level really isn’t low.”

The corruption that stems from underground will naturally fade with time? Arrodes, said that the gray fog gives it a feeling that resembles that of an object from underground… It hopes that I can explore the underground world after I return to my throne of divinity. As for Lucca Brewster, he's certain that the higher the Sequence, the greater the danger the underground world will bring… Klein tapped the edge of the long, mottled table with his fingers. He was increasingly puzzled about what was happening underground.

Fortunately, Hermes's description, the state of the abandoned castle, and the attitude of the Evemight Goddess seemed to indicate that the corruption that stems from underground would naturally dissipate. Leaving it alone was the best solution.

Phew, then I shall temporarily put aside my worries regarding the underground world… Hermes's words and the bronze door deep in the City of Miracles corroborate with each other. The Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt had really tried to resolve the problem of the underground world, but ended up with fear and trauma… From the looks of it, the greatest possibility for the coming of the apocalypse is probably from the cosmos, and my current Sequence doesn't qualify me to know of it… Amidst his thoughts, Klein sighed as he continued flipping through the diary pages in his hand.

After reading a few pages, his eyes suddenly lit up and locked onto one of the pages.

"31st December. The end of a year is the most suitable time to make a resolution and start a new story.

"I've already thought of where the eight secret mausoleums should be built. I'm just clueless about the last one.

"This has to be more covert than the eight previous ones, or else it will be meaningless.

"After a long thought, I thought of a place: The nameless island where

Grimm was buried.

“Of course, the Abyss is also an option. However, I can’t find a living Devil in the area that I can enter, so I can’t force them to become my citizens and help me build a mausoleum. Ordinary humans can’t survive there, and even powerful Beyonders will find it difficult to resist the corrosive properties of the Abyss itself.

“Regardless, the environment on that nameless island seems like a pretty good choice.

“Heh, the Princes of Abolition in the Fourth Epoch’s understanding of citizens is too limited. The rule of an Emperor is not only limited to humans and humanoid creatures; all living things should be my subjects!

“And there are many extraordinary creatures on that nameless island with no intelligence. They have long worshiped and followed me. I can totally drive them into building a secret mausoleum.

“When I wrote this, I suddenly recalled that experience. Because I dreamed of Grimm, I brought Edwards, Benjamin, and the others back to this nameless island and discovered that those extraordinary creatures lived together in harmony. They were gathered together and holding a ritual, and amongst them was the deceased Grimm.

“I was indeed shocked back then. I felt a fear that I hadn’t felt in a long time, and everything appeared extremely bizarre.

That time, William and Poli died. Only Edwards and Benjamin survived. If I hadn’t already become powerful and controlled a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, everyone would’ve perished along with them.

The power of those Beyonder creatures that affected that nameless island actually came from the cosmos, and those who were corrupted would return to the source after dying.

Thankfully, the power from the cosmos could only project a small portion of it into the real world. I finally solved the problem and made that nameless island my secret base.

"Now, it's time to use it!"

After reading the diary, Klein didn't feel exhilarated that he had correctly guessed where Emperor Roselle's final mausoleum was. Instead, he frowned slightly.

This was, on the one hand, because the corruption caused by the cosmos had truly appeared "in front of him." On the other hand, the nameless island wasn't that secretive. Other than the emperor, there were also the two survivors, Edwards and Benjamin. It didn't meet Roselle's requirements of complete secrecy.

Before this, did Edwards and Benjamin pass away normally, resulting in them being unable to divulge any secrets, or was it that, after Roselle successfully built the mausoleum, he made these two subordinates stay on the island forever, resolving the problem of spirit channeling? Of course, if Roselle had the corresponding Sealed Artifacts or Beyonder powers, he could also make them completely lose the corresponding memories… After a moment of silence, Klein flipped through the diary pages again in search of the coordinates to the nameless island.

However, he didn't see the corresponding content when he reached the last page. Instead, there was a diary entry that vaguely revealed some of Roselle's thoughts in his later years.

"27th December. I've been feeling uneasy recently because I have no confidence in what will happen next.

"I no longer yearn for help. I'm very satisfied if they can remain neutral.

"I have put myself in the most dangerous situation. This is an act of me taking initiative, but it is also a choice due to a lack of options.

"Sometimes, I'm very confused. How did I end up like this?

"Was I too extreme, or was this the only thing I could do?

"No, at this point in time, I can't be confused anymore. Apart from affecting my mindset and making the already slim chances even slimmer, it's meaningless.

"Now that I've reached this point, I can only continue on. If I succeed, it will naturally be sunshine and rainbows.

"Heh heh, all my hopes are placed on one sentence:

"Life is possible by being in death's embrace!"

From the looks of it, the emperor really chose the method of making use of one's revival after death to escape the madness and corruption… This is simply crazy. It's like he's playing a game of Russian roulette with all six chambers filled, hoping that one of the rounds misfire… People who don't like going to the extremes, or those who are good at coming up with all kinds of strange ideas, wouldn't consider the viability of this method… Perhaps it's because the enemy can't guess it that this might give the emperor a sliver of a chance of living… Klein leaned back into his chair as he silently sat in the ancient palace for a while.

After he slowly recovered his scattered thoughts, he considered how to find the nameless island.

I remember that the person who visited the nameless island, Benjamin, seems to be from the Abraham family. This be asked via Miss Magician… Yes, I'll be meeting her soon. There's no need to specially get The Fool to pass the message…

I'll get Queen Mystic to ask the descendants of Edwards, William, and Poli. That will be more suitable…

With this in mind, he surveyed the area and sighed before disappearing above the gray fog.

Chapter 1106 - Making Contact

◆

Returning to the real world, Klein immediately took out a pen and paper and wrote a short letter:

“Investigate the nameless island which led to the deaths of Grimm, William, and Poli. This can be done through the descendants of Edwards, Benjamin Abraham, and the descendants of the three deceased.”

This was a letter to Queen Mystic Bernadette, so Klein didn’t write the reason. He believed that she would understand what this meant.

After folding the letter, Klein casually found a candle and began the summoning ritual.

After completing the setup, he placed the letter on the altar, took two steps back, and recited in ancient Hermes:

“I!

“I summon in my name:

“An invisible creature that roams the upper realms, a strange spiritual body that is friendly to humans, a messenger that belongs solely to Bernadette Gustav.”

The moment he said that, Klein’s spiritual perception was triggered. He instinctively activated his Spirit Vision with a mere thought.

However, he didn’t see anything.

Then, he discovered that the letter placed on the altar had disappeared.

Queen Mystic’s messenger is very special… Next time, I’ll switch to using my Spirit Body Threads vision… Klein was stunned for a second before he sighed inwardly.

In the evening, under the illumination of the street lamps that lit up one after another, a carriage drove to the intersection of the Backlund Bridge area and East Borough and stopped by the side of the streets.

Wearing a long dress and a dark cloak, Fors paid the fare of three soli before alighting from the rental carriage. She walked slowly along the shadows of the street, preparing to make a large detour to escape from her imaginary stalker.

At the end of the previous Tarot Gathering, she had swiftly overcome her laziness, packed up, and went out to visit her former teachers, classmates, and colleagues.

As for the reason, there was no need for a special reason. It was very normal to care about friends and acquaintances after an air raid.

And the reason why it wasn’t last week was because, in the eyes of the ordinary citizens, the situation in Backlund was especially tense. There could be a new round of attacks at any moment, so everyone naturally tried their best not to leave the house.

During the visit, Fors had originally planned on diverting the topic onto the strange tales at the hospital, but to her surprise, there was no need for her to do so at all. Her former teachers, classmates, and colleagues would usually chat about such matters on their own accord after some idle chatter, making one convinced that such illusions happened at every hospital.

No, Fors knew that it wasn’t an illusion, so she inexplicably felt horrified, suspecting that she would have nightmares at night.

I don’t have to make any major changes at all. As long as the patients’ miraculous recoveries are changed to them having their physical wounds healed, only to have them go bonkers, it would make for an excellent horror story. Furthermore, it happens in a city that everyone is familiar with and also in the hospital that people often come into contact with in the city but exudes a terrifying atmosphere. It will result in perfect immersion. I can almost foresee another best-selling novel about to be bom. I just don't know if I can write this genre well…

Uh, the only problem is that this story will lack sufficient emotion… A female patient passionately kissing a face that's covered in mushrooms and weeds? Isn't that way too outlandish… Fors walked as she thought, entering a creative state of mind.

At this moment, her vision blurred. She saw a figure walk out from the shadows in front of her where the gas lamps couldn't illuminate.

The figure wore a black trench coat and a half top hat. He had a deep-set face with cold facial features. Apart from his gold-rimmed glasses, he looked identical to the crazy adventurer of the Five Seas, Gehrman Sparrow.

Although Fors knew that Mr. World wouldn't hunt her and was here to fulfill the contract, she couldn't help but tense up. It was as though she had met her strictest teacher from back in her school days.

"Uh, good evening." Her footsteps slowed down, but she still continued moving forward and greeted him.

Klein nodded without a word. He turned around and walked into a secluded alley to the side. The gas lamps inside were already damaged so it was dark.

Despite the dark environment, Fors similarly didn't say a word. She lowered her head slightly and followed behind Gehrman Sparrow at an adequate pace.

When they reached the depths of the alley, Klein looked around and said in a deep voice, “Help me ask your teacher if he knows of this person—Benjamin Abraham. If he knows him, I want all his information and all the text and pictures he left behind.”

“Uh… Okay, okay.” Fors was nervously waiting for Mr. World to “Teleport” her somewhere else, but she never expected him to mention something else for no reason. She nearly failed to react.

She didn’t ask why and quickly nodded in agreement, as though she couldn’t wait to do it.

Then, she took a deep breath and continued waiting for Gehrman Sparrow to approach her. He grabbed her shoulder and began “Teleporting.”

But after a few seconds, nothing happened.

Fors looked up in shock, only to see Mr. World still standing in front of her, looking at her.

She then heard him say in a deep voice, “Write it now.”

Write it now… Fors didn’t ask why as she subconsciously said, “I didn’t bring any paper, a pen, envelope, or stamp with me.”

Before she could finish her sentence, the four items were thrown at her.

Fors caught the items and took a few steps out. Using the gas lamps at the end of the alley which opened up to the roads and the hard wall, she quickly wrote the letter to her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham.

With both hands in his pockets, Klein waited patiently without any signs of impatience.

In fact, he had long been lurking around Miss Magician without showing himself.

According to the address Fors provided, he had been secretly monitoring her from the moment she left home in the afternoon. His monitoring was done by getting his marionettes to pray to Sea God Kalvetua from time to time while his actual body stayed above the gray fog, using the prayer light dots to observe the situation around the Magician.

With the help of his "true vision," Klein was currently certain that Zaratul hadn't targeted Miss Magician; thus, it was safe to make contact with her.

After knowing that Miss Magician had met Zaratul's marionette, how could he be at ease and be daring enough to meet her and take her "Traveling"?

Now, he was certain that Zaratul had been attracted by the Abraham family's Sealed Artifact or Saint of Secrets Botis. As for a mere Sequence 6 like The Magician, she wasn't worthy of notice. Hence, she wasn't exposed.

A few minutes later, Fors finished writing. She used a sticky herbal powder she carried with her to seal the envelope and pasted the stamp.

"Do I throw it into the mailbox now?" Fors glanced at the cover of the letter with her teacher's address and real name and asked hesitantly.

She felt that she had to do it herself. She couldn't hand it over to The World, or it might bring danger to her teacher.

Of course, if Gehrman Sparrow insisted, Fors felt that there was nothing she could do. Even if she tore the letter apart, there was still a possibility of her being hypnotized or having her spirit channeled.

Klein nodded indiscernibly.

"Return after you're finished posting it."

Phew… Fors let out a long sigh of relief. Turning around, she ran towards the street and found the mailbox.

After finishing all of this, she returned to the dark alley. Without waiting for Gehrman Sparrow to speak, she handed over the fountain pen and the remaining two stamps. She very quickly said, “One was enough.”

Klein gave Miss Magician a look before he took the stamp and pen and calmly said, “This means that your teacher’s residence is less than 100 kilometers from Backlund.”

Fors’s expression froze.

What’s the big deal? I also know that your teacher lives in Pritz Harbor, and there’s a high chance that he hasn’t moved away yet… As for why I gave you three stamp tickets, of course it was intentional… Klein muttered to himself before taking a few steps forward to stand in front of Miss Magician.

He then reached out his left hand that was wearing a transparent glove and grabbed the lady’s shoulder.

Fors subconsciously lowered her head again.

The surrounding colors immediately became saturated and layered while countless, indescribable figures flashed. When the things and colors she saw returned to normal, Fors instinctively raised her head to thank him.

However, Gehrman Sparrow had already disappeared!

Fors sized up her surroundings in a daze and realized that she was standing in an empty corner. In front of her was a door, and a din and the smell of alcohol were emitted from beyond the door.

Fors pulled at her cloak and walked out the door with a hint of fear, only to see many men dressed as pirates.

They had scimitars and guns, either hanging or lodged by their waist. While drinking hard liquor, they discussed the strengths of the fleets of

Feysac and Loen in high spirits. Quite a number of beautifully dressed women were amongst them, like dancing butterflies.

She was wearing a long, dark-colored cloak in a Backlund style. Her brown hair was long and slightly curled. She had a rather mature temperament, but her expression of fear made it seem like Fors was a lamb that had barged into a wolf pack. It was so disharmonious and eye-catching, and it quickly attracted the attention of many.

She felt a little familiar with what those people had said to her. It was as if they were part of a language branch she had learned, but she couldn't understand them immediately.

Where am I, what am I doing, who are they… As Fors was at a loss, a plump man squeezed over and said in broken Loenese, "10 soli, one night!"

Fors had been involved in many of the Beyonder circles over the years. Although she didn't know where she was, she knew very well what kind of situation she was in. The light in her eyes flickered strangely before they converged into one point.

An indescribable aura emanated from her body, making the people around her subconsciously avoid her gaze.

This was the authority of a Judge, a qualitative change in the ability of an Arbiter.

Berserk Sea, Theros Island.

Danitz hid in the shadows, watching the intelligence peddler, Bartz, in a serious manner.

Chapter 1107 - Relax

◆ ◆ ◆

As a Hunter who had Shadow Cloak, Danitz's hiding and monitoring abilities were always pretty good. Back then, he had even helped Gehrman Sparrow lay an ambush for Steel Maveti. At this moment, he didn't show any traces of himself, but he felt a little bored. He was eager for Anderson to switch with him as soon as possible.

When will such a life end? Vice Admiral Ailment, hurry up and appear. No, no, not now. It's better to wait until Anderson arrives… Danitz did some introspection and rationally ended his "prayer."

He was worried that a pirate admiral at Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy would discover that he was hiding in the dark, and he lacked the courage and confidence to deal with her.

Of course, if he wore the boxing glove, everything wouldn't be a problem.

As long as he made the decision fast enough, fear and apprehension wouldn't be able to catch up to him!

"You seem very troubled?" Suddenly, a voice rang beside Danitz's ear.

Danitz jumped out of the shadows in shock as an orange flame quickly formed in his hand.

At the same time, he cast his gaze to the source of the voice. He saw Anderson hiding in the woods. There were green vines stuck to his head that seemed to meld him with the environment.

"…Dogsh*t!" It was unknown if Danitz was cursing Anderson or himself. After venting his anger, he asked, "When did you come?"

Two minutes ago," Anderson replied with a smile. "You hid well. I didn't manage to find you immediately, so I followed your hiding habits and casually asked you a question."

Danitz was momentarily unsure if he should be proud or angry. He asked with mixed feelings, "If I had remained calm just now, would you have failed to discover me?"

"In theory," Anderson said with a smile, completely unfazed. "But as an experienced Hunter, there can't be only one way."

Just as Danitz was about to ask what other solutions there were, he suddenly saw Bartz extinguish the candle and prepare to sleep.

Minutes later, the figure of intelligence peddler, Bartz, appeared by the window in the darkness. With a nimble leap, he landed into the shadows outside the house.

That was where Danitz had been hiding. Having re-entered the shadows, he was almost stepped on by his target.

Bartz walked towards the sea under the cover of the shadows.

…Dogsh*t! Only then did Danitz appear, giving Bartz the middle finger.

Anderson also left the woods. As he pulled out the branches from his head, he smiled at Danitz.

"I think we'll hit the jackpot tonight."

Danitz glanced at the strongest hunter in the Fog Sea and nodded vigorously.

"I hope it's Vice Admiral Ailment."

He used the shadows that were everywhere at night and immediately took the lead in following the intelligence peddler, along with Anderson. They maintained a perfectly adequate distance.

“Not too stupid…” Anderson observed for a moment before chuckling.

Danitz scoffed inwardly but didn’t respond.

He knew very well that this wasn’t an occasion where they could afford to mock and provoke each other!

Fifteen minutes later, Bartz arrived at the beach and stood there, staring at the dark blue sea under the crimson moonlight.

He didn’t wait too long. In the darkness of the sea, a huge outline appeared, gradually forming a black ship with a white flag fluttering in the air.

On the flag, two ghostly-blue flames “burned” within a pitch-black skull.

The Black Death!

Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy’s flagship, Black Death!

Danitz instantly became excited. If not for his shadow form, his pupils definitely would’ve dilated in a bid to draw in more light to see every detail of the ship.

He subconsciously moved a distance forward, hoping to confirm if Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy was on the ship.

As the gigantic sailboat approached, the two people in the shadows could see sailors busy on the deck.

Is there a dock for docking here? Or will they just give Bartz a dinghy and get him to row himself over? Just as these thoughts flashed through Danitz’s mind, he heard Anderson say with a suppressed voice, “Leave.”

Ah? Danitz's greatest strength was that he was good at following the instructions of an authoritative figure. Be it in front of Edwina Edwards or Gehrman Sparrow, he would follow the instructions to a tee, apart from grumbling at most. At that moment, although his face was filled with puzzlement, with the intention to retort and persist in his own plans, he still used the shadows to silently leave the beach.

When they could no longer see the Black Death and could only hear the vague crashing of the waves did Danitz leave the shadows and appear in the forest. He hurriedly asked, "Aren't we going to confirm if Vice Admiral Ailment is aboard?"

Anderson sized up Danitz and chuckled.

"Never underestimate a Beyonder who's very famous at sea but has lived to this day. Every pirate admiral is a target you must be careful against. You must never be careless."

Danitz subconsciously replied, "Admiral of Blood Senor, Admiral Hell Ludwell…"

They were all pirates who were easily killed by a particular crazy adventurer.

Anderson was momentarily at a loss for words to rebut Danitz with. After a few seconds, he said, "So, isn't Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy worth paying more attention to considering how she survived Gehrman Sparrow's attack?^^

After careful thought, Danitz inexplicably felt that Anderson's words made sense. Just as he was about to speak, his throat suddenly felt itchy as he coughed.

After coughing a few times, his throat began to swell in pain, and he could taste metal.

"Look, I told you to be careful." Anderson clenched his fists and held them to his mouth. He coughed lightly, but it wasn't as serious as

Danitz's. "Tracy must've spread all kinds of ailments around the ship. Once anyone approaches it, they'll quickly be infected with it and be exposed. Heh, with this wide of a range, it means that she has completely digested the Sequence 5 potion and has a chance of advancing to Sequence 4."

"Why couldn't it be that she has already advanced to Sequence 4?" As he was far from the source of the infection, Danitz quickly recovered and instinctively retorted.

"If that were the case, you are either on the Black Death, or you have a victim of the Black Death disease and are on your deathbed." Anderson half-turned his body and cast his gaze towards the obstructed beach. "Tracy must've used some sort of trick. It's unlikely for her to only be able to maintain the target area of the ailments to be at the front and not the other three directions. Instead, she used the wind to spread the ailments to affect the people on the shore."

With that said, Anderson clapped his hands and smiled again.

"Isn't our encounter proof that Vice Admiral Ailment is on the ship? You can inform Gehrman Sparrow."

Danitz didn't hesitate any further. He immediately set up a ritual and summoned the messenger. Using the excuse of guarding the area to prevent any accidents, Anderson walked out of the forest.

It was three in the morning in Backlund's East Borough. Apart from the moonlight and starlight, it was pitch black.

Wearing cotton pajamas and a sleeping cap with a protective hairnet, Klein sat on the bed and received the letter from Reinette Tinekerr without asking anything.

Opening the letter, he calmly got out of bed, took out a pen from his pocket, and wrote on the back of the letter: "Return to the port city and await further instructions."

After watching Miss Messenger leave, he calmly changed into his shirt, put on his vest, tied his bow tie, and put on his black trench coat.

Then, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog. Using the topaz spirit pendulum to divine the danger level of this operation, he received almost no revelations.

Without any hesitation, he returned to the real world and stood in front of the mirror. He picked up his half top hat and wore it above his head.

On the bunk bed in the room outside, Qonas and Enuni opened their eyes.

In an empty room on the Black Death, a figure quickly outlined itself. He had black hair and brown eyes with cold and hard facial features. He was none other than Gehrman Sparrow.

Under the dim crimson moonlight, Klein swept his gaze and casually found a chair to sit down as he admired the sea vista outside.

In the captain's cabin one level away, Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy, who was dressed in a white blouse and beige pants, watched Bartz leave the room in disgust. She pulled at her collar out of reflex, and her expression turned livid.

She had just learned that Blazing Danitz and the Strongest Hunter Anderson had been staying in Theros Island recently with unknown motives.

They're all related to Gehrman Sparrow… Is that fellow looking for me? Tracy narrowed her eyes as she walked towards the window without any hesitation. She was prepared to instruct the sailors on the deck to steer the ship away from these waters.

At this moment, her thoughts suddenly turned sluggish. It was as if she had sunken into a state where she knew she was in a dream but was unable to extricate from it no matter how hard she struggled.

Not good… Black flames abruptly emerged from the surface of Tracy's body, attempting to burn away any external influences.

However, while the flames were initially able to "flow" smoothly, they later began to turn intermittent as they kept falling to the ground like withered petals.

A strong sense of despair surged within Tracy as her thoughts turned increasingly slower.

Desperate, she quickly condensed a layer of crystalline ice around her body, retracting the invisible threads towards her and wrapped herself in layers.

At that moment, the door to the captain's cabin creaked open. Wearing a silk top hat and black trench coat, Gehrman Sparrow walked in.

Then, he politely closed the door.

With a light cracking sound, the entire captain's cabin instantly became extremely quiet. The sound of crashing waves was no longer present, as though they had been separated from the real world.

As for the invisible spider webs that entangled Tracy, they seemed to misunderstand the order that was given as they tightly bound Vice Admiral Ailment up, preventing her from moving or using her Beyonder powers.

Distortion!

As her thoughts returned to normal, her brain no longer felt frozen.

"W-what do you want to do?" She couldn't hide her fear as she watched Gehrman Sparrow slowly approach.

What she couldn't understand was why the other party would give up on the attempt to make a marionette even though she had clearly lost her ability to resist.

The reason why Klein did so was because he was worried that Vice Admiral Ailment and the Demoness of White were related by blood. This way, Tracy's death would cause the demigod who was good at hexes to sense something and take measures ahead of time.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein stopped in front of the Demoness.

Chapter 1108 - Messed Up Family

◆

Gehrman Sparrow’s silence made Tracy’s heart sink, as though she had fallen into an ice cavern.

When he saw despair surface on Vice Admiral Ailment’s face, Klein took out a piece of paper from his pocket. With a flick of his wrist, he made it fly forward like a poker card.

With a whoosh, the slip of paper cut through a tiny portion of the invisible spider webs like a piece of metal. It tore open the translucent ice crystal and lacerated Tracy’s left arm, causing blood to splatter.

The surface of the paper was quickly dyed with a bright red tinge before it boomeranged back from the trapped Demoness into Klein’s palm.

Tracy originally imagined that the piece of paper would come at her throat, but she never expected it to only target her arm. She was momentarily stunned. Only when Gehrman Sparrow folded the piece of paper and placed it into an iron cigar case did she suddenly realize something. She asked, “Your true target is Katarina?”

Klein placed the iron cigar case back into his pocket without answering her. He calmly asked, “You are her descendant?”

Upon hearing this, Tracy, who was still trapped by the ice crystal and spider silk, suddenly let out a low laugh.

“I’m not just a descendant. I’m her child.”

Child…Daughter…As Klein rejoiced over his caution in not recklessly killing her, causing Demoness of White Katarina to sense something, he subconsciously analyzed whether Katarina was the mother or father of the Ailment Maiden.

If Katarina was also formerly a male, it's possible that she's Tracy's father, but the problem is that she was already a Sequence 4 demigod during the Pale Disaster that was at the end of the Fourth Epoch. And for the Assassin pathway, a man will change into a woman at Sequence 7 Witch…

In other words, if Katarina is Tracy's father, Tracy needs to be at least 1,300 years old. However, it's impossible for a Sequence 5 Beyonder to live for so long. Even most Sequence 4 and Sequence 3 saints aren't capable of that!

There's only one answer, and that is that Tracy was borne by Katarina. Also, it happened in the past few decades… An advanced maternal age of more than a thousand years… Klein nodded slightly and confirmed without any change in expression.

"She's your mom?"

Tracy's expression suddenly turned odd.

"No, my mother."

Just as he was about to ask what was the difference between that and mother since it was essentially a more formal and eloquent manner of speech. Tracy sneered and said, "My mom is another person. She used to be my father."

…You Demonesses have messed up families… But that isn't the reason why you spread catastrophes to the world… Klein used his Clown powers to control his facial muscles as he continued looking at Ailment Maiden, his face impassive.

Tracy, who was already in a dire situation, was now beginning to abandon herself to despair. Without waiting for Gehrman Sparrow's response, she sighed and gave a self-deprecating laugh.

“Maybe it was all a mistake since I was born.

“Abnormal parents, abnormal family relationship, abnormal sect members. They sculpted me and harmed me. At the age of 8,1 found out that my father, who I had always admired as a role model, had suddenly become a woman. He was becoming like a dainty flower by the day, becoming more and more adept at using his charms. Later on, he even found a male friend and gave birth to my younger brother. Can you imagine that kind of feeling?

“After I ran away from home and came to the sea, I finally found a normal sense of self-recognition and a social identity after many years of hard work. I finally understood what I really wanted. Then, a potion bottle turned me into a woman. Heh, a woman…”

After listening quietly, Klein said without changing his tone, “Your instigation skills are pretty good.”

Tracy turned agape, but in the end, she only sighed and smiled with a complicated expression. “I admit that I was trying to win your sympathy. Everyone wants to live. Isn’t that right? However, I didn’t lie. That was my life experience.”

She stopped exaggerating her pain and sadness and paused.

“Before you kill me, I would like to ask you a question. It’s a question that won’t put you in a difficult spot.”

“What is it?” Klein looked at the Demoness and asked.

Tracy hesitated for a moment before finally asking, “Before you came to assassinate me the previous time, did Helene know about this?”

Klein was silent for a moment before he said, “She didn’t know what would happen.”

Tracy’s face suddenly glowed.

“Really?”

Before Gehrman Sparrow could respond, she revealed an extremely complicated expression.

“Before I die, can I ask you for another favor? If you can see her again, tell her that I feel very guilty about what happened in the past, but I don’t regret it.”

At this point, Tracy tried to shake her head, but failed thanks to the restriction provided by the crystalline ice and invisible spider webs.

She could only laugh at herself.

“Forget it, there’s no need to tell her. Let’s leave it at that.

“You can do what you were here for.”

With that, Tracy closed her eyes.

After a few seconds, she didn’t feel the pain she expected. Instead, she heard Gehrman Sparrow say in a deep voice, “Say this: No one is to disturb me.”

Tracy was surprised as she felt perplexed, and it showed on her face.

However, since she was already facing death, such a small matter wasn’t worth nitpicking about. She opened her mouth and said, “No one is to disturb me.”

As soon as she said the statement, the same voice echoed on the Black Death, greatly amplified.

The pirates didn’t have any doubts about this. It was as if they were following a specific pattern. They instinctively avoided the captain’s cabin and continued their work.

Since the captain said not to disturb her, they naturally wouldn't seek her out!

At the same time, Tracy saw Gehrman Sparrow take off his top hat and press it to his chest. He bowed slightly at her, as though he was bidding her farewell.

Then, she felt as though she was isolated from the entire world. There was silence. Even the crazy adventurer was gone.

She had obtained the environment of "not being disturbed" just as she wanted.

The "Magnify" and "Distortion" powers of the Lawyer pathway!

The layer of ice on Tracy's body began to melt, but the invisible spider webs continued to bind her firmly, preventing her from doing anything. She couldn't even change her center of gravity.

Hence, she could only stand there like a lifelike wax statue.

He didn't kill me… Tracy looked ahead blankly, momentarily in disbelief.

She didn't believe that Gehrman Sparrow hadn't taken action because he pitied her. This crazy adventurer had killed many pirates, and there had never been a situation where he showed mercy. As for Tracy, although she believed that she wasn't the typical Demoness and didn't live up to her status as a Demoness, how could she not have done anything bad as a pirate? She was experienced in both the slave trade and in plundering ships.

Similarly, Tracy didn't believe that Gehrman Sparrow was moved by her beauty and her experiences, and had ended up coveting her, because his cold gaze was like he was looking at a dead person.

There must be other factors… A thought flashed through her mind as she made connections with matters she might be involved in. She quickly came to a conclusion. It's likely because of my blood relationship with Mother. As for Demonesses, they're all good at hexes. Once I die, Mother will immediately notice it. When she discovers that there's a problem here, she will make preparations ahead of time, preventing Gehrman Sparrow from finding his target during his subsequent actions. That's why he allowed me to live but made it impossible for me to contact anyone else… From the looks of it, regardless of the outcome of his operation targeted at Mother, he will return to kill me… And if I want to continue living, I have to succeed in saving myself before that happens.

In Tracy's heart, she didn't have much of a relationship with her mother, Katarina. This Demoness of Unaging had lived for a long time, and most of the time, she had maintained her youthful state of mind by dating young men. She was passionate about the occasional children that she had whenever she found it novel to have one. At other times, she was mostly indifferent.

However, as she grew older, Katarina's evaluation of Tracy was that she resembled her past self more and more.

Hence, she was doted on her and provided more help.

However, Tracy didn't want such attention. It only served to make her lose her original gender, putting her into a painful situation that she couldn't shake off.

Phew… Although I hate her and blame her, I still unknowingly rely on her, hoping that she can respect my opinion more… I h-hope that she can escape Gehrman Sparrow's pursuit… Tracy once again began to struggle in an attempt to escape her bound state.

On the one hand, she was trying to save herself. On the other hand, she wanted to inform her mother to be careful of Gehrman Sparrow as soon as possible!

Of course, Tracy found it questionable that Gehrman Sparrow, who had likely advanced to Sequence 4 recently, would be able to harm her mother. She was, after all, someone who had survived since the Fourth Epoch, and was a Demoness with the title of "Unaging." However, she didn't only pin this belief on hope alone. This was because Gehrman Sparrow had helpers, such as the Death Consul who even her mother feared!

Plop!

Tracy finally collapsed on the ground and tried to roll towards the desk. But no matter how hard she tried, she was unable to roll her body.

The person she was fighting against was none other than herself, she who had been "Distorted" and "Magnified"!

Above the gray fog, Klein had already taken his seat in the high-back chair of The Fool. He placed the paper stained with Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy's blood on the surface of the long, mottled table.

Following that, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote a divination statement:

"Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy's mother, Katarina's current location."

Putting down the pen, he held the two pieces of paper and leaned back into his chair. He closed his eyes and repeated the words he had written.

After repeating it seven times, he entered a dream. He saw a tall and towering gothic bell tower appear in the gray world.

Around the bell tower, the white-robed Katarina stood in the shadows of a few houses. She observed the surroundings with a heavy expression, as though she was searching for something. As for the crimson moon hanging high in the sky, its position was identical to what he had seen before entering the gray fog.

This meant that Demoness of White Katarina was still in Backlund. She was in West Borough, in search of a particular target.

Chapter 1109 - Patience

◆ ◆ ◆

After ending the divination and returning to the real world, Klein walked to the room outside the rental flat. There, he pondered for nearly a minute while looking at the crimson moon in the night sky.

Perhaps, there's still another chance for digesting the potion… he muttered silently as he ultimately rummaged for something. He took the two marionettes and disappeared into the shadows.

In Backlund, he no longer dared to use Flaming Jump, afraid that it might catch Zaratul's notice. After all, it was impossible for him to always have an opportunity to ignite Will Auceptin's paper crane to protect himself. This was a sign of disrespect towards the Snake of Fate, and it was easy for Dr. Aaron's family to be targeted if he kept visiting them.

In the blink of an eye, Klein appeared at the back of the tall, gothic-styled bell tower in his dream. He hid in the shadows—one formed by the Bell of Order, a symbol of Backlund.

Immediately following that, he and his two marionettes split apart, each occupying different hidden spots.

After doing all of this, Klein quickly turned a rat into a marionette, allowing it to run to the edge of the range of his control. It opened its mouth and softly chanted an honorific name:

"The great God of War, the symbol of iron and blood, the ruler of chaos and strife. Demoness of White Katarina is in this area…"

Since Klein was fulfilling his agreement with the Red Angel evil spirit, he also hoped that this high-level creature would step into a trap that might possibly be for him. At the same time, he had some doubts about Sauron Einhorn Medici's true intentions. He had no intention of urgently getting help from the Church of Evernight or Queen Mystic. He planned on watching from the sidelines to confirm the situation, lest he implicated others into springing a trap.

Just as the prayer ended, the gray rat suddenly twitched and fell quietly beside the rubbish bin.

It had already lost its life and was no longer Klein's marionette.

This was a way to prevent himself from being marked by the Red Angel evil spirit.

As for him, after giving up on that rat marionette, he immediately left the area where the Bell of Order was located with Qonas and Enuni. He also made "the Winner" pray to Sea God Kalvetua a few kilometers away.

After the prayer, the two of them continued to retreat, widening their distance.

Then, Klein hid in a storage room in a particular house, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog to sit at the position of The Fool.

He then beckoned for the Sea God Scepter. With the help of the prayer light of "the Winner," he expanded his scope and observed the target area.

At the same time, with his other hand, he held the piece of paper that was stained with Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy's blood.

With a medium like this, and a general scope, it didn't take long under his "true vision" before he found the hidden Demoness of White Katarina.

The black-haired, blue-eyed woman was dressed in a pure white robe. She looked like a weightless feather, and she was gently drifting across the streets and alleys. Even if the patrolling policemen looked in the right direction, they were unable to detect her presence.

If it wasn't for the gray fog's help, Klein could only use Spirit Body Threads to see through the invisibility to a certain extent.

Taking a deep breath, he patiently waited for the Red Angel evil spirit to appear. He also observed Katarina, wanting to know what she was looking for.

He suspected that the Demoness of White was targeting Trissy Cheek.

Seconds changed to minutes as the crimson moon gradually tilted to the side. Having wandered around the Bell of Order for a while without finding anything, Katarina revealed a slightly frustrated and disappointed expression. She looked as though she was about to leave that area at any time.

And the Red Angel evil spirit never appeared!

This… Sauron Einhom Medici was just lying to me. He really didn't have the Demoness of White as his goal? No, that's not necessarily the case. If that happened, then "His" condition would be meaningless… The Red Angel evil spirit has actually arrived at the scene, but has chosen not to immediately take action like me? "He" is waiting for the battle between Katarina and me and my companions to reach its most intense state before suddenly appearing to reap the greatest benefits… Klein's thoughts wandered as he came up with a guess:

He suspected that the Red Angel evil spirit was as cautious, careful, and staid as he was. "He" hoped to be the fisherman pulling in the net and not that net.

This is really troublesome… Next, it will depend on who's more patient… Klein muttered silently as he continued to observe the situation around the Bell of Order through the prayer light.

Tick. Tick. Tick. The second hand was beating at the same pace in the quiet night. Demoness of White Katarina's expression turned increasingly gloomy.

Suddenly, she cast her gaze on the glass window of a building.

The dim night was like a mirror reflecting the things in front of them.

Katarina's beautiful blue eyes sparkled slightly as the surface of the mirror instantly turned dark, as though there were countless objects and layers of space hidden within.

The glass window seemed to have become a passageway to an alternate world!

With a thought, together with the various Beyonder powers that Demoness Trissy had showcased, he suspected that Katarina was about to use the mirror world to leave this place and end her "hunt" tonight.

How can the Red Angel evil spirit still endure this? Klein tensed up as he instinctively wanted to put down the Sea God Scepter and return to the real world. He wanted to act against the Demoness of White and prevent her from leaving.

As this thought flashed through his mind, he ultimately didn't move.

He felt that he could still wait a little longer because even if Katarina left the surrounding area of the Bell of Order, he could still locate her again as long as she didn't discover that something had happened to her daughter. When the time came, he could first summon Arrodes to ask about the target's actual abilities and items. Then, he could either seek the help of Queen Mystic Bernadette or the Church of Evernight to borrow a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. He could then make the scales of victory tip towards him before taking action.

I deliberately didn't hide my operation this time. If I were to borrow a

Sealed Artifact and the archbishop assents to it, that means that the Goddess's true attitude towards George III is: "She" doesn't like the king becoming the Black Emperor, but "She" can only accept it silently. If someone is willing to disrupt the ritual, "She" is willing to provide some help… Klein calmed his slightly anxious feelings, allowing his observation to become more relaxed.

At that moment, Demoness of White Katarina's expression returned to normal. She floated to the glass window and entered without any corporeal form.

The layers of illusory worlds within the mirror converged as though they were constantly moving away.

At this moment, using his "true vision" to observe the area underneath, Klein seemed to hear a shrill female scream. This cry seemed to come from another world. It contained extreme fear and disbelief.

None of the residents in the surrounding area were jolted awake. No one heard anything.

That was Katarina's scream? What exactly happened to her… Klein's gaze froze as he thought of something:

The Red Angel evil spirit is also an evil spirit, and it's also capable of using Mirror Blink; thus, using this medium.

In other words, "He" is no stranger to the mirror world!

Could it be that Sauron Einhorn Medici had been hiding in the "mirror" all this time, waiting for the Demoness of White to throw herself into a trap? As his pupils dilated, the darkness and gloominess in the glass window disappeared.

The "mirror" had lost its unique characteristics and returned to its original state.

A few seconds later, the bottom of the glass window slowly bled, forming a liquid that slid down.

In the areas that the liquid passed, the surrounding grayish-white tint spread, covering its original pale yellow color. It was like a newly embedded stone.

Drip! Drip! Drip!

The drops of liquid landed on the ground, dyeing it bright red like blood, beautiful like flowers.

Upon seeing this scene, the muscles on Klein's face twitched slightly before he forced himself to use his Clown powers to control his expression.

This ending was really unexpected.

A powerful and senior Sequence 3 saint, one who had lived for more than a thousand years, was unable to put up any resistance in front of the Red Angel evil spirit's trap. There was only silence left.

As for Klein himself, even if he counted the two marionettes and the Sealed Artifacts he possessed, he was still a little weaker when compared to Katarina's strength. He needed to make up for this gap through prior preparations.

This also meant that, if he were to face the Red Angel evil spirit, he would probably not end up any better. He would similarly be powerless and puny, slowly sinking in the torrent that followed.

Is this what a former King of Angels is? Even though "His" strength has yet to recover to its peak state, it still leaves one in such despair… Seeing the blood seeping out from the glass window gradually lessen, he took a deep breath and returned to the real world.

Following that, he and Winner Enuni exchanged positions as he "Teleported" to the glass window.

When Bizarro Sorcerers switched positions, they could only choose two swapping their bodies or bodies and external objects. However, it was impossible to be too precise at his current level, so Klein wasn't able to leave behind whatever he wanted. He could only choose to leave everything or not leave anything behind.

Enuni, who wore Gehrman Sparrow's appearance, said to the glass window in a deep voice the moment he materialized in front of it, "I have already fulfilled my promise."

A figure suddenly appeared on the glass window.

He was wearing a long black robe with red stripes. He casually wore a hood, revealing a soft outline. His skin was brown, and he had a pale face. He was the Gatekeeper who had been possessed by Sauron Einhorn Medici.

"Well done," the young man walked down from the window and said with a smile.

Upon hearing this, Klein took out something from his pocket. The corners of his mouth curled up as he happily replied,

"You did well too."

As he spoke, he blew at the monocle in his hand and wore it on his left eye. Sauron Einhorn Medici's smile froze.

Chapter 1110 - “Spirit” Channeling

◆ ◆ ◆

For a moment, the cold night became abnormally scorching hot, as though invisible lava was surging within it.

However, everything quickly returned to normal.

The Red Angel evil spirit sized up Klein and smiled as if nothing had happened.

“I’ll say it again. You have talent in being a Provoker.

“Back when Zaratul digested the Bizarro Sorcerer potion, even ‘He’ didn’t dare to pretend to be Amon in front of me.”

There wasn’t a hint of anger in his tone. He didn’t mention why Zaratul didn’t dare to do so, but with his gaze sweeping across Klein, it was as if he had fallen deep inside a glacier, his body freezing in the process.

This was how his actual body felt. Even though he was separated by a marionette, the back of his neck and back still had goosebumps.

Without needing Sauron Einhorn Medici to say anything else, Klein understood the hidden meaning behind his words:

Anyone who dared to use such a method to scare “Him” would suffer the punishment of steel and blood on the spot!

Looking at the Red Angel evil spirit in front of him who had a converged aura but was giving off a feeling of an extremely high level of superiority, Klein couldn’t help but inwardly mutter, If it wasn’t for the fact that the Bizarro Sorcerer potion had been digested to a certain extent, I would've thought that your willpower was as strong as steel and that your strength has returned to the level of at least a Sequence 1. And now, I can basically confirm that, under your calm demeanor, you're hiding a strong fear towards Amon. This also means that your current level is at most at Sequence 2…

Besides, I was already mentally prepared to lose a marionette. In order to quickly digest the potion, I had to take the risk…

If Danitz was here and he was given the opportunity to shout out "coward" twice, he could probably quickly digest the Provoker potion even if he had drunk four or five bottles…

Without further agitating the Red Angel evil spirit, Klein smiled and took off the monocle.

"Back in the Solomon Empire, Zaratul should already be an angel. How would he still need to digest the Bizarro Sorcerer potion?"

"I'm talking about the young Zaratul," Sauron Einhorn Medici said casually.

This is consistent with the description from the grandpa in Leonard's body… Klein nodded indiscernibly and focused on the main topic at hand.

"You've already finished off the Demoness of White?"

"What do you think?" The Red Angel evil spirit laughed and said, "Also, one must be polite. Since Katarina calls herself the Saintess of White, then you shouldn't call her a Demoness anymore."

Polite… A Hunter emphasizing manners with me… At that instant, the corners of Klein's mouth twitched, expressing the ludicrousness of the matter, but he ultimately held back.

From the looks of it, "provoking" isn't limited to ridiculing and cursing others. Uh, Danitz, who only knows how to curse using one word, is a disgrace to Hunters… As he thought, Klein said, “I’ve already fulfilled my promise. I think you don’t mind giving me a small reward.”

“Reward?” the Red Angel evil spirit scoffed and asked.

Klein ignored “His” attitude and continued, “I wish to communicate with the Demoness of White. I want to ask her something.”

“Just this request?” the Red Angel evil spirit asked in amusement.

Klein nodded.

“That’s right.”

“No problem.” Sauron Einhorn Medici raised his right hand and grabbed at his glabella. From there, a blurry figure was pulled out. It was none other than Saintess of White Katarina, whose facial expression was filled with horror.

“Can we have a private conversation?” Seeing this, Klein looked around.

The Red Angel evil spirit immediately laughed and said, “Do you need a room where the two of you can be together?

Think about it with that brain of yours. Even if you want to hide the questions you would like to raise from me, I can still find out through Katarina’s spirit. That is, of course, unless you don’t plan on returning her to me? Or are you a little boy who needs things to follow a ritual?”

Klein made the marionette reply with a deadpan expression, “I have a way to make her forget my questions.”

This was both the truth and a lie. The truth was that he could use Hvin Rambis’s Manipulator’s Beyonder characteristic to complete the job. However, it was relatively difficult, and the chance of failure was very high. Furthermore, the negative effects weren’t minor. The reason why he lied was because he had no intention of doing so. This would expose many important matters. He only had one purpose in saying this: to make the Red Angel evil spirit suspect that the answers obtained weren't the truth and that there were key hidden parts beneath the surface. From that, "He" would ignore the value of the answers obtained on the surface. This worked wonders on people who were highly suspicious.

Of course, there was no hope of success. After all, the entity opposite him was the Red Angel who was master of "conspiracies."

"Not bad." After Sauron Einhorn Medici heard Klein's reply, "His" body suddenly vanished, projecting itself onto the glass window.

Klein glanced at the blood that had already coagulated on the gray stones, feeling somewhat wistful as he brought the somewhat muddle-headed Demoness of White Katarina far away from the glass and into a dark alley.

He then took out candles, essential oils, and herbal powders. He set up an altar and prayed to the Evernight Goddess, hoping that he could use ritualistic magic to complete the mediumship.

This was a skill he had mastered when he was still a Nighthawk.

As the ritual was completed, an immense and terrifying power descended from an indescribable height, causing the surroundings to become unusually quiet.

Klein's eyes instantly darkened, as it was like the dark night was compressed.

He then saw more things around Katarina's spirit—flickering light and blurry mind storms.

He easily passed through those obstacles and faced the Demoness of White's Body of Heart and Mind.

"Has the cooperation between the Demoness Sect and George III come to an end?" Without being careless, Klein began from a less sensitive question to observe Katarina's condition.

The dazed and confused look on Katarina's face faded a little as she nodded with a pure smile.

"Yes."

"Then why are you still in Backlund?" Klein asked further.

Katarina replied solemnly, "I'm in pursuit of Trissy. She took an important Sealed Artifact from us."

"What's the Sealed Artifact?" Klein suddenly recalled the sapphire ring that Demoness Trissy had once worn on her hand. It was intricately made.

Demoness of White Katarina said with a pious expression, "It has something to do with the awakening of Primordial. Apart from its high level at Grade 0, it doesn't have any special abilities."

Indeed, it has to do with the Primordial Demoness… You people even changed Trissy's name to Trissy Cheek… Klein didn't reveal that he knew the true name of the Primordial Demoness. Instead, he asked, "Do you know where the other eight mausoleums of George III are?"

Katarina frowned slightly and answered in a manner meant to garner sympathy, "They're separately located in the southwest suburbs of Backlund, Awwa County, East Chester County…"

This Demoness of White first gave a simple account of the locations of the eight mausoleums before introducing their specific locations and situations in detail.

"The eight mausoleums have already been repaired. They temporarily deactivated the teleportation tunnel. Even if they have the corresponding charms, there's no way to open them again. It's almost impossible to find them directly from the outside world…

"Other than Prince Grove, Duchess Georgina, the two angels of the royal family, and George III, no one else can enter…"

Well, some of those places were places where Qonas Kilgor often went hunting, so it matches my guess. This means that the Demoness of White isn't lying… I'll make a confirmation above the gray fog later…

If this is really the case, it would be quite troublesome… With the current situation, be it Prince Grove or Duchess Georgina, they would definitely be in the sights of the angels…

The biggest hurdle is entering the ruins. Once entry is gained, what follows won't be that dangerous. War has already broken out, and there's a need to fight against the Feysacians. Demigods are a limited resource, so there's no way George III can have every ruin be guarded by a saint, with the option of an angel to provide reinforcements… As Klein's thoughts raced, he first posed a question:

"The royal family has two angels?"

"In fact, that's not the case. It's very likely that George III is also one," Katarina replied honestly. "One of those two angels is the Founder of the Loen Kingdom, Protector William I who has survived since the Fourth Epoch. 'He' is a Sequence 1 Hand of Order of the Arbiter pathway, while the other is the former Duke of Southville, Dlink Augustus. 'He' is a Sequence 2 Balancer… As for how many Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts the royal family has, I'm not sure."

The Founder on the ten-pound note is still alive? I have the feeling that history has seeped into reality again… After some thought, he nodded and asked, "Why are you working with George III?"

"For a Conqueror Beyonder characteristic. It's already in our hands." Katarina's expression became a little excited. Conqueror was the name of the Red Priest pathway's Sequence 1 potion!

"Then, will it belong to the Primordial Demoness, or belong to the upper echelons of your sect?" Klein asked thoughtfully. "Who are the higher-ups of your sect?"

"It will be sacrificed to Primordial. However, we have to find the Sealed Artifact that Trissy took away first. Currently, it has been kept by the Saintess of Black… All the higher-ups of our sect have colors as their code names…" Katarina answered truthfully.

After understanding more details, Klein terminated the spirit channeling, cleaned up the altar, and allowed the Demoness of White's spirit to return to the glass window from before.

As for himself, his body suddenly turned transparent. With the help of "Teleportation," he disappeared from this region, rendezvousing with his actual body and his other marionette.

After watching Gehrman Sparrow leave, the gloominess and confusion on Katarina's face suddenly vanished as her expression became extremely astute.

She then entered the glass window which had turned dark again.

A few seconds later, Sauron Einhorn Medici and Demoness of White Katarina walked out of the "mirror" together. The latter's figure was clear and filled with flesh. She showed no signs of death!

"Are you saying that he was asking about the other eight secret mausoleums of George III? The power of the spirit channeling came from Evernight?" The Red Angel evil spirit stroked "His" chin and turned to ask Katarina.

The Demoness of White nodded slightly and said, "That's right."

"Heh." The Red Angel evil spirit immediately laughed. "So he doesn't want George III to become the Black Emperor." Katarina's eyes darted around as she revealed a smile.

"But it's impossible to succeed. No matter how fast he advances or how much help he receives, there’s no way he can resist the combined forces of the royal family, the military, and that organization. No, if it’s just the Augustus family, with his level and strength, he won’t be able to do anything, unless Evernight personally descends.”

Having said that, this Demoness of White asked in a seemingly casual manner, “I’m very puzzled. Why didn’t you kill me directly after grasping the absolute advantage over me?”

The Red Angel evil spirit glanced at her as the corners of “His” mouth slowly curled up.

“Do you think you have the right to be my true target?”

Chapter 1111 - “Poker Expert”

◆

Upon hearing the Red Angel evil spirit’s reply, Demoness of White Katarina’s expression instantly froze, unable to contain her anger.

Sauron Einhorn Medici laughed and continued, “You must’ve become a demigod at the end of the Fourth Epoch. It’s been more than a thousand years, but you haven’t become an angel. Don’t you feel inferior?

“As for that fellow just now, he had to rely on Azik Eggers to face you head-on in the beginning. He was as weak as a chick that had just hatched. But now, in less than a year, he has already advanced to Sequence 4 and obtained godhood. He has the ability to match your strength. Don’t you have any thoughts about this? Didn’t you think that the past thousand years were a waste? Even a dog might open the gates to angelhood after living for more than a thousand years.

“I know what you’re thinking. You’re very jealous, and on the other hand, you also have a twisted desire. You want to prove yourself by sleeping with him. You Demonesses are really laughable. On the one hand, you insist that you were originally men so as to prevent yourself from losing yourself, thus, resulting in you losing control. On the other hand, you have to showcase the charm of a woman and try your hand at extreme pleasure and intense love. But we Hunters have no such problem. Regardless of what gender we were in the beginning, all we need to do in the future is war, war, war!

“Primordial really is a twisted fellow. Letting a pure woman take the path of a Demoness would be so much better; however, generation after generation, you pass the damage down. And for what? Isn't the main goal merely to seek revenge on fate?"

Every word of the Red Angel evil spirit was like an arrow that stabbed into the heart of the Demoness of White. It made her beautiful and exquisite face twitch, and her smooth, raven-black, long hair seemed to grow thicker.

Sauron Einhorn Medici glanced at Katarina and immediately chortled.

"Don't tell me that you're losing control because of my provocation?

"What a nostalgic feeling."

The Red Angel evil spirit paused for a moment before saying:

You can leave now. If there's anything, then remember to recite my honorific name. Of course, I will come to you directly if I have to."

Demoness of White Katarina's expression returned to normal. She frowned slightly and asked in disbelief, "You're letting me leave, just like that?"

The Red Angel evil spirit chuckled.

"Why? Do you want to sleep with me? It's not impossible if the timing is right, but there's something very important that needs to be done right now.

"Don't worry. Since you've already recited my honorific name and given me a drop of your blood, you'll be under my watch, and you can be affected by me at any moment.

"Have you already forgotten the differences between an angel and a saint? Don't you know how powerful a real high- level figure is?

"Heh heh, unless you directly pray to Primordial and receive a response; otherwise, you'll never be able to free yourself from my gaze. Well, in normal circumstances, an angel can do such a thing, but that's only limited to the situation of you only chanting my honorific name. If you don't believe me, I'll let you seek the help of an angel."

Demoness of White Katarina listened with a gloomy expression before finally smiling.

"I'll keep your teachings in mind, Lord Medici."

Sauron Einhorn Medici's eyebrows twitched.

"You don't seem so compliant. I can even imagine how you were when you faced Gehrman Sparrow, but I don't care.

"Ah, I forgot to tell you. It's best if you immediately confirm the condition of your bloodline descendants. Don't you find it suspicious that Gehrman Sparrow managed to find you so easily?"

Katarina's face turned slightly pale, but then it grew serious. She slowly nodded and said, "I understand."

With that said, she immediately retreated and entered the glass window again. It was unknown where she was headed for in the illusory, stacked mirror world.

With the Demoness of White disappearing, a bloody gash suddenly appeared on the left side of the Red Angel evil spirit's left cheek and made a sound:

"What an excellent actress. She made it seem like she wasn't good at controlling her expression, showing her restlessness and lack of intelligence as though it was easy for her ulterior motives to be discovered."

"That's right. That way, there's a high chance that we would belittle her and let our guard down against her." The Red Angel evil spirit's right cheek also cracked open in a hideous manner.

"Tsk, Demonesses are indeed very cunning. However, I've never underestimated any prey." The Red Angel evil spirit used "His" normal mouth to say, "She wants to desensitize me and make me belittle her, but it's impossible."

The bloody gash on "His" left cheek opened and closed and replied, "Then why were you captured by Alista Tudor?"

"That's because of the two of you." The personality that belonged to Medici pouted and said, "It had nothing to do with belittlement and desensitization."

The blood-colored crack on his right snorted and said, "How does it feel like to become someone else's prey? The mighty God of War, the Red Angel beside the Creator?"

"Not bad." Medici's expression darkened a little, but "His" words seemed to contain some self-complacency.

The personality that belonged to Sauron said with the left cheek, "You really like to bluff in order to achieve your goals. Back then, Alista and company managed to see through your lies, which was why they managed to seize the opportunity.

"And just now, you were bluffing Katarina. You're only capable of releasing your aura, relying on traps and surprise attacks to bring about a certain amount of damage. There was no way you could quickly finish her off, but you pretended that you had returned to your Sequence 1 state, tricking her into reciting your honorific name and handing over her blood."

Medici pouted again and said, "A bluff is also a normal playstyle in poker. The effect is pretty good, isn't it?"

At this point, the Red Angel chuckled and said, "Furthermore, it's not just a bluff. What I'm most fond of is to mix in a truth or two every few bluffs, allowing me to wait for fellows who think they've seen through my disguise to step into a trap. It's just like the mistakes you two idiots made back then.”

“But you were the first to die!” The two sides of the Red Angel evil spirit’s face cracked at the same time.

Without any hesitation, Medici said, “That means I’m the strongest, worthy of having the most attention!”

With that said, the three personalities of the Red Angel evil spirit fell silent at the same time. After a few seconds, the blood-colored crack that represented Einhorn opened and closed.

“Gehrman Sparrow’s connection with Evernight is tighter than I imagined. He should’ve noticed Katarina’s true state just now.”

Medici chuckled and said, “It’s alright. This is something ‘She’ has tacitly allowed in the first place.

“Back when the Great Smog of Backlund happened, the ones who participated in the operation are all gone. Only that Demoness named Trissy is still alive. Isn’t that enough to explain something?”

Sauron and Einhorn didn’t speak further as they allowed the bloody crack on the cheeks to wriggle and heal.

The Red Angel evil spirit then reflected “Himself on the glass window and disappeared from the area around the Bell of Order.

Above the grayish-white fog, inside the ancient palace.

Looking at the spinning topaz pendant in his hand, Klein nodded indiscernibly.

He had already used spirit dowsing to confirm Katarina’s answers, and he came up with a concrete conclusion.

Right on the heels of that, he began his dream divination based on what he knew of the eight secret mausoleums. He saw the corresponding areas and their blurry states.

This made him understand that entry was impossible via normal methods. Even the process of prying without interference had difficulties in locating the interior of the mausoleums.

This is very troublesome… Also, when I was channeling the Demoness of White girl's spirit, it was quite different from the time when I did it for Qonas Kilgor and Hvin Rambis. She had too many expressions, and her answer was more proactive… Is this something special about Demonesses, or is it due to other factors? With a thought, he beckoned with his hand to draw out a piece of paper that was stained with Vice Admiral Ailment's blood. He wrote down the corresponding sentence and made a dream divination to search for his target.

In the blurry world, Klein saw Tracy, who had escaped from her spider webs, looking out the window.

There was a dark and illusory storm around there, making it impossible for him to know where it was.

Tracy has escaped… She doesn't look sad. She only feels a certain amount of anger and confusion… Her relationship with the Demoness of White is so terrible? Or could it be… Just as he was feeling puzzled, he saw a black flame suddenly ignite and melt his dream away.

He opened his eyes and confirmed that he could no longer use the blood in his hand to divine the location of Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy. This meant that a demigod powerhouse had used a mysticism technique to sever the connection between the two.

Could it be that the Demoness of White Katarina isn't dead yet? This… Right, when the Red Angel evil spirit answered me, "He" was using rhetorical questions. He didn't admit it at all… I was channeling the spirit of a living person! Klein was instantly enlightened as he hurriedly made another divination. Finally, he confirmed that the Demoness of White really was still alive.

Indeed, the Red Angel evil spirit's true target isn't the Demoness of

White… Also, combined with the feedback from the progress of my potion's digestion, is it right for me to say that the Red Angel evil spirit is weaker than I imagined? "He" hasn't even recovered to the level of Sequence 2, and he was unable to quickly finish off the Demoness of White. "He" could only rely on other means to subdue her? After pondering for a moment, Klein realized he couldn't come to a conclusion.

He quickly reined in his thoughts and stopped considering the problem. This was because he had already obtained the information he needed from Demoness of White Katarina.

Klein put down the piece of paper that was stained with Vice Admiral Ailment's blood and suddenly chuckled.

Severing the connection between the blood and the body, preventing powers of divination and prophecy from using it as a medium?

I wonder if it will work when rubbing it on the surface of Groselle's Travels?

After looking at the piece of paper for a few seconds, Klein temporarily gave up on the idea of testing it, because there was no need for it.

His focus quickly shifted to the other eight mausoleums of George III.

Ordinary lines of thought shouldn't work. The things that I can come up with are definitely things that the angels and saints under George III can figure out as well…

If it wasn't for the fact that the gods have already tacitly allowed this matter, exposing this matter by printing it on flyers might've been effective…

Hmm, teleportation nexus… the Tudor Ruins… This…

As he thought about it, a thought suddenly came to his mind. He had an idea.

Chapter 1112 - Traveling Notebook

◆ ◆ ◆

In the magnificent palace above the gray fog, Klein stretched out his right hand and tapped the edge of the long, mottled table as he muttered silently, The five large family clans of the Tudor Dynasty are Amon, Abraham, Antigonus, Jacob, and Tamara… The one who helped Alista Tudor become Blood Emperor were the Kings of Angels, Adam, Amon, and Abraham…

Can it be inferred that, during the time of the Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire, there were the consuls, Amon and Abraham standing beside Alista?

If that's the case, Blood Emperor Alista Tudor didn't have plans on switching paths in the beginning. When he secretly constructed the mausoleums, he likely would've sought the help of one or more of the following: Amon, Abraham, and Antigonus. As for Bethel Abraham, he's Mr. Door, and he grasps the Apprentice pathway. When it comes to "Teleportation," even a true deity might not be as good as "Him"…

So, could the teleportation nexus in the Tudor ruins be set up by Bethel Abraham?

There's a high chance of that!

Yes, only important figures like Mr. Door can enter and exit a secret ruin at such a level. Even my divination above the gray fog is unable to pinpoint its location. Likewise, it's difficult for an angel who wields Concealment to enter it directly…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein was leaning more and more towards his own guess being closer to that of reality.

I wonder if Mr. Door left behind any relevant information to provide accurate coordinates or methods of entry? This would require Miss Magician to ask her teacher again…

Sigh, I really hope that Miss Magician can become a Traveler as soon as possible. That way, she wouldn't need to rely on writing letters to contact her teacher. She could "Teleport" over directly. Yes, she can do it now, but the act of being able to "Record" so many "Traveling" spells would scare her teacher and arouse suspicion. It's really troublesome…

If there are no records left behind by the Abraham family, do I have to attempt to converse with Mr. Door? Not only is this troublesome, but it's also dangerous… Most importantly, Miss Magician isn't even Sequence 5 yet. She hasn't been able to clearly hear, much less respond to Mr. Door. It's impossible for me to turn her into my marionette or descend onto her body… Early on, Klein had seriously considered communicating with Mr. Door through Miss Magician when he first pulled her above the gray fog. Later, after he came to learn more, he grew increasingly apprehensive about the idea, and he didn't dare take the risk.

Furthermore, the level he was at now lacked the measures that spelled sufficiency and security.

As his thoughts churned, he suddenly sighed and said a word, "Patience…"

At sea, on an island with relatively high pirate activity.

Fors raised her glass and took a sip of the transparent and colorless liquid in anticipation.

Her face scrunched up as if she had tasted something hard to swallow.

Pfft, isn't this Lanti Proof too inferior? Why are they having so much fun drinking this? Fors put down her cup, raised her right hand, and fanned her mouth. She softly muttered, “Apart from the alcohol content, it doesn’t have any other strengths. Oh right, it’s also cheap!”

After drinking a mouthful of cold water from another cup, Fors picked up a fountain pen and wrote in a rather poor quality notebook:

“The pirates here are only in pursuit of strong liquor while keeping an eye on the price. To them, being drunk is more important than anything else.

“Three pirate friends that I know have told me that this port city was built by them. At first, they only docked their ships here to hide their loot and settle their families. Later on, the bankrupt, adventurers, and tax fugitives came to this place and settled down. They also ploughed the lands on the island and built houses. Finally, an entrepot market was formed, and the merchants at sea swarmed over like sharks smelling blood.”

At this point, Fors looked up at the three pirates curled up in a corner.

“Do you have anything else to say?”

The three burly pirates trembled at the same time and said with a mournful expression, “No, really. We have nothing.”

…I have to say that it feels pretty good to imitate Mr. World’s attitude when it comes to dealing with pirates… Fors sighed and shook her head. She retracted her gaze and continued writing:

“There’s a liberal mood here. If the women are interested in any man, they can, like the men, offer a price. Similarly, it works when a man catches the eye of another man, or when a woman catches the eye of another woman. According to my three pirate friends, due to the long periods of repression and boredom while drifting out at sea, it’s inevitable for some people to experiment with certain forbidden taboos. In this aspect, they’ve been very honest and even described their experiences…

“In addition, they informed me of things that I never dared believed: Pirates actually advocate the concept of democracy and justice.

“This has completely overturned my understanding. But on careful thought, it doesn’t seem difficult to understand. At least they didn’t say that they were pursuing justice.

“The explanation from my three pirate friends is that when a person with his weapons doesn’t have absolute, overwhelming strength, it’s always the case of there being tyranny from the majority on a pirate ship. Furthermore, a large ship requires a lot of people to run it… When these factors are combined, it makes the pirate crew very particular about democracy. There will always be a captain who will be voted by his or her crew now and then to be banished or even killed.

“I believe that if a captain possesses absolute strength, the pirate crew would definitely develop another style of governance.”

At this point, Fors looked out the window again and saw that, under the blue sky and white clouds, buildings made of wood and rocks formed a dense circle around a market. From time to time, she could see a few children in tattered clothes skipping past.

Upon hearing the extremely lively commotion, Fors wrote again:

“There’s no urban planning here at all. Everyone casually builds their houses and expands their borders. As a result, many roads only allow for one person to walk through. There’s no sunlight at all…

“My first reaction is that once a fire breaks out, the outcome will be extremely terrifying. Backlund once had a similar tragedy. However, my three pirate friends told me that this isn’t something worth worrying about, because it’s humid and often rains here. People with special powers never keep it under wraps…

“This place is still under the influence of war. Although it’s chaotic, it gives people a sense of tranquility.

“Also, what they’re most afraid of isn’t the King of the Five Seas, Nast, or all sorts of horrifying legends, but rather of the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow. Every pirate is warned by their peers not to drink too late into the night.

They shouldn’t take a walk in the middle of the night or use small alleys. That’s because it might lead to them going missing. And the murderer is rumored to be that gentleman…

“Is this a form of ‘hunting’?”

As she wrote, Fors’s expression gradually turned solemn. She hurriedly pulled out another stack of paper and added on the content:

“… There’s a unique coldness that wafts through the hospital at night, and the darkness outside the window is much thicker than other places…

“…No one knows why that young lady who lives in a single ward gets her family members to bring her mushrooms and weeds. No one knows where these things end up. In short, there were no signs of any fires in the ward, and there’s no abandoned junk outside. This makes the nurses suspect that the patient is secretly eating mushrooms and weeds…”

Standing in front of the mountain, Afternoon Town, which was divided into three regions of the top, middle and bottom, had a camp set up by the City of Silver.

Derrick Berg clasped his hands and placed them in front of his mouth, softly chanting, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…”

After piously chanting, he stood up and picked up the ancient bronze cross that was covered with sharp spikes, walking towards the bonfire outside.

As the Unshadowed Crucifix couldn't coexist with other mystical items, his giant hammer named Thunder God's Roar could only be temporarily left to Haim and Joshua to carry with them.

As the City of Silver's expedition team gathered, Klein, who was in Backlund, had already arrived above the gray fog. He picked up the Sea God Scepter and, with the help of one of the crimson star's burgeoning and contracting, he saw the situation in Afternoon Town, and he expanded his vision towards the Giant King's Court.

If he didn't use the prayer light and the Sea God Scepter, Klein was unable to expand his field of view by relying only on the crimson stars.

As his gaze moved, a beautiful but deep dusk gradually appeared in his eyes.

In the area where dusk was frozen, there were countless palaces, countless towers, and many majestic city walls. They were magnificent and opulent, resembling a miracle found in myths and legends. Furthermore, they were frozen in time.

The Giant King's Court!

As he tried to zoom in with his vision, Klein realized that he was unable to see the exact situation beneath the dusk.

As expected of the divine kingdom of an ancient god, and it's not the kind that has been abandoned or hidden… It's no wonder that the Kings of Angels chose this place for a secret gathering… I hope that Little Sun's prayer after entering the Giant King's Court will help me see it more clearly… Klein nodded thoughtfully.

At the same time, he focused a portion of his attention on Shepherd Elder Lovia. He discovered that this lady had an illusory silver armor covering her entire body.

This should be the evil spirit she "Grazed"… I haven't seen any effects from the True Creator yet… Klein slowly let out a breath and patiently waited for the subsequent developments.

After a while, under the lead of Chief Colin Iliad, the nine-men expedition team, including Derrick Berg, left the Afternoon Town camp. They followed the stairs paved with gray stones and walked towards the peak of the mountain.

They were at least Sequence 6 Beyonders, and most of them belonged to the Warrior pathway. They moved at relatively fast speeds, clearing a few waves of monsters that were mainly rotten giants. Finally, they arrived at the region shrouded by dusk. They were shocked by the grand and epic building, and no one spoke for a short period of time.

This was also the first time they had encountered a place where there were no flashes of lightning, a place that was illuminated by "natural" light!

Demon Hunter Colin narrowed his eyes. He took out a small metal bottle and drank the liquid inside.

After their evolution over the many generations, they were more accustomed to the dark environment with frequent lightning. They were instinctively afraid of such a situation that was in a state of frozen twilight.

It was both a point of hope and fear.

After drinking the prepared potion and mentally preparing himself, Colin Iliad and Shepherd Lovia led the members of the expedition team as they stepped into the region illuminated by the sunset.

Before Derrick could sense anything, he saw the Unshadowed Crucifix in his hand drop, revealing a corporeal form formed from pure light.

However, the light emitted by the corporeal body was no longer pure. It was tainted with an orange-red color unique to dusk.

Right on the heels of that, Derrick felt his condition plummet. It was as if he was at the weakest point of the “day,” ready to welcome the approaching “night.”

Chapter 1113 - Powerful Guardian

◆

The towering building stood quietly in the frozen dusk. There wasn't any sound in the area, as though it was just an oil painting.

After passing through such an environment, Derrick Berg became even more high-strung than when he had explored the depths of the darkness. The hair on his back stood on end.

After entering a place shrouded in dusk, the entire exploration team, including Chief Colin Iliad and Shepherd Elder Lovia, couldn't help but show signs of exhaustion and looking worn out. It was as if they had reached the end of their lives. And as they proceeded forward, rotting giants ran out of different buildings in increasing numbers and increasing strength.

With one side weakened and the other side strengthened, it became difficult for them to advance. After several intense battles, the City of Silver's expedition team finally broke through the "lockdown" and "barricades" of the monsters and came to an extremely quiet area. There wasn't any sound at all, and that only served to leave their scalps tingling.

With regards to this, Demon Hunter Colin Iliad had no choice but to break the silence and remind everyone, "This means that we have truly entered the Giant King's Court and are about to approach the core region. The danger level will only increase and not decrease."

Upon hearing this, a few members of the expedition team began to waver due to the influence of the "twilight." From their point of view, although they didn't dare to stay in one place in the earlier stages most of the time, afraid that they would be surrounded by the rotting giants, they had ultimately eliminated all the monsters in a tiny area. They felt that they could rest for a while and obtain many Beyonder characteristics, mystical ingredients, and potion formulas. This expedition could be said to have been very fruitful, leaving them no reason to continue delving deeper. What they should do was seek out a suitable building and set up an advance camp to make preparations for a second expedition.

Faced with such a suggestion, Colin Iliad didn't say much. He only emphasized that the objective of this exploration was to figure out the general situation of the Giant King's Court as much as possible, so as to accumulate sufficient information for the subsequent operations.

Then, he let one of the members named Antiona to "Placate" those who had wavering wills.

As the Shepherd Elder Lovia also supported the Chief, a small number of the members of the expedition team quickly adjusted their mindset and quietly followed the Chief forward.

After a while, they saw a huge stone staircase. It was entirely grayish-white, but it was dyed with an orange-yellow glow. It was gorgeous and silent.

Every step of the staircase was relatively high. If it were any ordinary human, they would definitely find it very difficult to walk. Fortunately, the shortest member of the expedition team, Elder Lovia, was nearly 1.9 meters tall, and she could muster strong winds.

On the huge staircase, it was so majestic that one had to look up to see the city walls at the top. There were many signs of burn marks and damage on the walls, and some places were impaled with arrows that were as thick as ordinary trees. The several-meter-long arrows had even caused some rocks to crumble.

In the middle of the city wall was a door that was tens of meters tall. Its color was closer to grayish-blue, and there were golden nails embedded in it. There were two guards standing outside that exuded an extremely oppressive stance simply by looking at them.

They were five to six meters tall, wearing exquisite, sturdy silver full-body armor. One of them held a great sword, while the other held a greataxe towards the ground. Behind the armored visor, there was a ball of orange light that looked like a single eye.

"Silver Knight…" Demon Hunter Colin raised his right hand and swung his sword horizontally to stop the members of the expedition team behind him.

He had long removed the two swords on his back and applied different concoctions on them.

Silver Knight… Derrick Berg's eyelids twitched as he felt his heart palpitate.

He had recently come into contact with information that only the upper echelons of the City of Silver knew about. He knew that the Giant pathway's Sequence 3 was called Silver Knight. He also knew that the City of Silver lacked the correct potion formula, but it had the corresponding Beyonder characteristic.

What horrified Derrick was that the guards of the Giant King's Court core were actually two Sequence 3 demigods. This was a level higher than the City of Silver's strongest combat force!

This was only the area of the royal court's entrance. So it was questionable what they would encounter if they ventured deeper.

After the initial shock, Derrick couldn't help but feel a sense of anticipation.

Perhaps, he could find the potion formulas after the Giant pathway's Sequence 4 in the Giant King's Court.

That way, the Chief could become a Silver Knight and greatly increase the strength of the City of Silver. When the time came, they could explore the Giant King's Court at a deeper level, find more potion formulas, hunt more monsters, and obtain even higher level Beyonder characteristics and magical materials.

Subconsciously, Derrick looked around and discovered that the reactions of the other members of the expedition team, such as Joshua, Haim, and Antiona, were basically identical to his. They were both nervous and fearful, but also somewhat hopeful.

At this moment, Shepherd Elder Lovia took two steps forward and stood beside Colin Iliad. She looked up at the gray-blue door and the two Silver Knights who were in an unknown state and said, "If there was only one, then we would have a chance of finishing it off."

What she really meant was that, now that there were two Silver Knights, even if they were willing to suffer heavy casualties, they were unable to clear the enemies. After all, even if the Chief could control his Mythical Creature form and normally battle a Sequence 3, the environment here didn't permit him to make similar attempts—the decadence that the twilight had brought might make something that could previously be resisted into something impossible to withstand.

Colin Iliad nodded and glanced at both Lovia and Derrick Berg before observing the area ahead.

"From the looks of it, as long as we don't get close to that door, the two guards won't attack us."

"Perhaps we can try to lure one of the Silver Knights away to finish it off?" The female warrior named Antiona suggested after some deliberation.

She had long, wine-red hair, and her facial features weren't considered exquisite. However, when combined together, she looked extremely elegant and beautiful.

In this expedition, her main mission was to rely on a Sealed Artifact she wielded to treat her teammates' psychological problems and fight against enemies of the psyche domain.

Her exact thoughts were to wait for the members to lure one of the Silver Knights away before using the terrain and their combined efforts. As for the Chief and Elder Lovia, they could work together to deal with the remaining one as soon as possible.

This was a textbook solution that the City of Silver had used in situations they had encountered.

"Even if there's only one Silver Knight, it will be very difficult. Furthermore, there's no guarantee that the Silver Knight you lure away won't directly reveal its Mythical Creature form." Demon Hunter Colin firmly rejected her suggestion.

Ignoring the fact that the Silver Knight had powerful Beyonder powers, as long as it revealed its Mythical Creature form, most of the members of the City of Silver's expedition team wouldn't be able to look at it directly and would be affected. There was no way they could run circles with it.

Without waiting for the rest of the team members to speak, Colin Iliad looked back and said, "Let's take another path.

"Derrick found some information in the world of reflections in Afternoon Town. It recorded a tunnel behind the Giant King's Court."

Shepherd Elder Lovia cast her gaze on Derrick Berg. She was indifferent, calm, and without any emotions.

Derrick subconsciously raised the "Unshadowed Crucifix" higher, restraining his indescribable shivers.

"Alright." Lovia agreed with Colin Iliad's suggestion.

Hence, the expedition team retreated from the huge stone staircase and headed left.

Before long, they saw a rugged trail. On the right was a towering cliff, and on the left was a bottomless chasm that was tainted with the glow of the sunset.

Of course, it was only a trail for giants. To the members of the City of Silver's expedition team, it was still relatively spacious.

As they proceeded forward, Derrick and company's spiritual perception were triggered as they subconsciously looked to the side.

At the edge of the cliff, grayish-blue swollen palms stretched out from the orange clouds and grabbed onto the ground. They were densely packed and difficult to count.

If they were all giants—even if they were Sequence 7 or 6 giants—they were able to destroy the City of Silver's expedition team here relying on sheer numbers.

Just as Colin Iliad was about to swing his sword, Derrick suddenly had a strange, subtle feeling. He quickly raised the Unshadowed Crucifix higher and pressed one of his fingers onto a particular thorn, causing bright red blood to seep out.

The pure cross emitted a bright twilight glow as though it had returned to the state of "noon." They surged towards the edge of the cliff, enveloping the gray-blue giants that attempted to climb up.

The giants froze at the same time as their bodies began to fade, quickly melting away.

They weren't real giants, but that of wraith and shadows left behind after the tragic deaths of those giants. Therefore, the Unshadowed Crucifix had sensed them.

It was a saint-level Sealed Artifact of the Sun domain, the nemesis of wraiths, shadows, and evil spirits.

After easily killing these monsters, the City of Silver's expedition team warily continued proceeding forward. After a while, they finally circled around the mountain wall and cliff and saw a dark forest.

In the forest, the trees were tens of meters tall and were extremely thick. However, their barks were peeling off, and the trunks rotting. The leaves were withered, giving the feeling that they were waning.

The leaves were supposed to be entangled together, but they formed a barricade in midair, blocking the light of dusk, darkening its interior. But at that moment, due to the large number of collapsed and fallen trees, the orange-red glow had already scattered across most of the areas within the forest that were visible with the naked eye.

Derrick looked ahead and silently calculated how much longer he could use the Unshadowed Crucifix. He said to the Chief and his teammates, "This is the Waning Forest where the ancestors of the giants are buried. In other words, the Giant King's parents."

Colin Iliad stared at the forest and said, "It has already been destroyed. Even if there are still remnants of danger, it won't be too powerful. We can try exploring it."

"Yes, Your Excellency," Derrick replied without hesitation. "My cross can deal with the environment here. I'll walk in front."

He remembered that Mr. World had reminded him that there might be some kind of corruption lurking in the forest, and that the Unshadowed Crucifix could provide him with an effective warning.

The grizzled Colin nodded gently and said, "Be careful of your surroundings."

Derrick took a silent breath and took a large stride forward and walked towards the Waning Forest.

At the same time, he used the convenience of walking ahead to softly recite Mr. Fool's honorific name.

Then, Klein, whose gaze that had been blocked by the dusk and had been disconnected for some time, could finally see the actual situation. However, he was unable to significantly expand his range of sight.

Chapter 1114 - The Remnant Will

◆

The forest that should've been engulfed in darkness and in decline was filled with the orange-red light of dusk. The light was intense and burned like fire, but it couldn't help but carry a sense of brilliance with it that couldn't be ignored.

With the Unshadowed Crucifix that seemed like pure light condensating in his hand, Derrick Berg slowly walked ahead. The grizzled Demon Hunter Colin, who was walking behind him to the left, held two straight swords in his hand. Haim, who was walking behind him to the right, held the Thunder God's Roar hammer. This two-meter-tall half-giant was prepared to switch the hammer for the Sealed Artifact with Derrick at any time.

The radiance emitted by the Unshadowed Crucifix became increasingly dim, as though the sun had already set in the horizon, leaving only a sliver of golden light.

Of course, no one from the City of Silver had ever seen such a scene before. They could only use the descriptions from ancient literature to imagine it. Similarly, this was the first time they understood what a sunset meant.

Whoosh!

As the exploration team ventured deeper, a wind began to blow in the nearly frozen Waning Forest. It was as if countless living beings were weeping deep within the forest.

However, Derrick and company didn't feel any effects of the wind.

Whoosh!

The sound of the wind intensified, making his heart tremble. Derrick suddenly felt a chill run down his neck, causing his hair to stand on end. His body and mind turned cold.

Generally speaking, it was human instinct to shrink their necks, raise their arms, and defend their backs at such moments in time. They would then half-turn their bodies, observe the situation, and be ready to attack. However, Derrick didn't do so, because in a dangerous environment, rashness would often result in terrible situations. Furthermore, he had the Chief and his teammate behind him. He had full faith in them that they would react in time; thus, he had handed his life to them.

With a swoosh, a silvery-white blade wrapped by a small snake-like electric bolt flew across the side of Derrick's neck, vaporizing a blurry and twisted figure into the light of dusk.

At the same time, the Unshadowed Crucifix was triggered by something. It suddenly broke out of its gloomy and dim state, making the light it emitted to once again become bright and pure.

Dawn seemed to come to the surrounding area immediately as indescribable black shadows began to show themselves in the light of dawn before quickly melting away.

After everything calmed down, Derrick looked ahead and asked curiously, "What are these? They don't look like wraiths, shadows, or evil spirits…"

Demon Hunter Colin surveyed the area and slowly said, "A remnant aura of some sort… They seem to have combined with the power of dusk, causing a certain anomaly."

I've never seen such monsters… Derrick tightened his grip on the

Unshadowed Crucifix and moved his other finger, which hadn't been stabbed, onto the thorns.

Relying on the Unshadowed Crucifix which was the nemesis of the evil around them, the expedition team proceeded rather smoothly. Before long, they arrived deep in the Waning Forest. Through the trees, they could vaguely see a cliff and orange-red clouds in the distance.

The damage here wasn't too serious. The branches and leaves remained suspended in midair, blocking the frozen dusk, making the environment darken.

After carefully circling around the place, the area before Derrick's eyes suddenly lit up. He saw two grayish-white, mottled tombstones.

Before he could carefully observe them, the rays of dusk that shone through the gaps of the leaves had produced a strange refraction effect at the same time, interweaving themselves into a gigantic figure that was nearly ten meters tall.

This figure was very blurry and contained an everlasting and imperturbable air to it. It was like a reflection from a mythical era.

Its skin was grayish-blue, and it wore silver-gray armor that seemed to be stained with blood. Its face was glowing like the setting sun, as though it was a manifestation of its eyes. Just its existence alone had caused the surrounding trees and the void to bend, making everything around it to begin waning uncontrollably.

Upon witnessing this scene, a thought surfaced in everyone's mind without any explanation:

Giant King, Ancient God Aurmir!

Goosebumps appeared on the skins of the members of the expedition team—Joshua, Haim, and Antiona. Bit by bit, the goosebumps emitted grayish-blue colors. At the center of their eyebrows, flesh and blood were squirming, as if a monster was about to bore out.

They had collectively been put into the state of being on the verge of losing control.

They didn't even see the Mythical Creature form. Merely approaching the figure had led to signs of losing control as the severity of it increased.

Derrick Berg was relatively alright because the pure light of the Unshadowed Crucifix had enveloped him, giving him a warm feeling, allowing him to temporarily withstand the waning effect.

At this moment, Colin Iliad had already bent down. He held two swords that were smeared with ointment, and he ran towards that terrifying figure like a hurricane at high speeds.

However, this Demon Hunter didn't charge in a straight line. His footwork was ingenious as he moved left and right, approaching his enemy in a zigzag-like manner.

The gigantic figure that stood in the twilight looked at everything with its sunset-like eyes. It seemed emotionless, like a statue carved out of stone.

Suddenly, the glow on its face flashed.

It then bent down and heavily pounded its fists on the ground.

Boom!

The ground shook violently as a fissure opened up. It made Derrick and the others lose their balance as they staggered and almost fell.

As for Demon Hunter Colin, he had leaped up ahead of time to a height of more than ten meters, and he cleaved downward with his two swords in a domineering manner.

At that moment, the figure that seemed to come from a mythical legend pulled out an illusory sword from the fissure in the ground. The giant sword that seemed like a manifestation of dusk itself was suddenly swung forward.

The orange-red storm of light suddenly took form and swept towards Demon Hunter Colin, as well as Derrick and company who were right behind him.

Wherever the light passed, the trees would wither and the soil would turn to sand. Everything began waning in an irreversible manner as a path was drawn out.

Boom!

The twilight storm was blocked by invisible walls, causing the forest to shake.

At some point in time, Shepherd Elder Lovia had appeared beside Derrick. In front of him was a tall and illusory figure covered in silver armor.

The figure with a dark red glow near its eyes genuflected and stabbed an illusory greatsword into the ground, creating an unusually strong and invisible wall.

Bam!

At this moment, Demon Hunter Colin's two swords slashed at the nearly ten-meter-tall figure that possessed the aura of an ancient god, sending off countless sparks.

The silver-white figure didn't suffer any damage. The silver-gray armor that was covered in blood spots only dimmed a little.

With the force of the rebound, Colin once again soared up. He flipped in midair and launched his attack again.

In the Waning Domain, he didn't dare release his Mythical Creature form, because it was very likely that there was no way of reversing it.

Seeing that the phantom that stemmed from a mythical legend had been blocked, Derrick hurriedly followed the sudden tremor and heat from the Unshadowed Crucifix in his palm, and he pressed his finger against a spike.

His blood surged into the cross along with the pain. A vigorous and bright light churned out, flying into the air and turning downwards, instantly enveloping the figure in silver-gray armor. His eyes were like a miniature setting sun.

In the holy, solemn, and pure light, the gigantic and illusory figure stopped moving, as if it had encountered its natural enemy, and the silver-gray armor that was tainted with the light of dusk began to melt.

Seizing this opportunity, the evil spirit knight in front of Shepherd Elder Lovia pulled out the illusory greatsword from the ground. With several silver rifts that oscillated between disappearing and reappearing, they instantly struck the enemy.

Demon Hunter Colin's two swords cleaved downward, as though they were emitting rays of the light of dawn that enveloped the head of the ancient figure.

Joshua, Haim, and the others didn't hesitate to unleash their strongest attacks.

After three rounds, the illusory figure that seemed to have transmigrated from time had finally begun to crumble, being reduced to burning orange dots of light.

When Demon Hunter Colin landed on the ground, he deliberated and said, "That should've been the remnants of the Giant King's will to protect this area. After many years of melding with the environment, it has a certain degree of strength and a form. It's a type of evil spirit.

"What secrets are hidden here…"

Upon hearing the Chief's words, everyone cast their gazes forward, towards the place where the terrifying phantom had barred their way. The atmosphere was rather heavy.

Fortunately, it was only an evil spirit that was restrained by the Unshadowed Crucifix… It was just a tiny portion of its remnant will and had almost no strength left. After thousands of years, it's still as terrifying as ever. What would a real ancient god be like… Uh, why would "He" have such a strong will to protect this? Is it because it's where "His" parents are buried? As Derrick heaved a sigh of relief, he followed the Chief and company towards the tomb while being plagued with puzzlement and curiosity.

Phew… There's no need for me to do anything… I have to say, this Unshadowed Crucifix really is very useful in the Giant King's Court. It's so good that I'm wondering if it's Adam's goal… Above the gray fog, Klein heaved a sigh of relief and lowered the Sea God Scepter that had been raised higher.

He then cast his gaze at the place where the Giant King's remnant will had continued protecting for over thousands of years.

The first thing he saw was two ancient mottled tombstones. On them were the words "Father" and "Mother" in Jotun.

They contained a mysteriousness that could stir the powers of nature. It allowed one to directly feel the mixed emotions of nostalgia, sadness, pain, and guilt without realizing that they were infected and making them feel depressed.

Behind the stone pillar was a grave, but it had already been destroyed, revealing two black coffins underneath.

It was unknown who had opened the lids of the coffins, as though a confirmation had been made. This made the two grayish-white skeletons lying inside become bathed in the light that penetrated through the leaves, dyeing them with an orange-red color that resembled blood.

These two skeletons had the shape of humans. One was less than 1.9 meters tall, while the other was less than 1.8 meters tall.

Chapter 1115 - Inside the King's Court

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One of the two humanoid skeletons wasn't more than 1.9 meters tall, while the other was less than 1.8 meters tall. It looked ordinary, but it delivered an unimaginable blow to Klein who was above the gray fog.

At that moment, it was as though he had returned to the time when he saw the door of light and the "cocoons." Although the emotions he felt were different, the shock was almost identical.

This… This isn't the corpse of a giant… This definitely belongs to a human… The parents of the Giant King Aurmir were humans? Klein's pupils dilated suddenly, as though they were thirsting to let more light in for him to see it more clearly.

However, no matter how he observed or scrutinized the skeletons, he couldn't find any characteristics of giants from the two grayish-white skeletons.

Their limbs were perfectly proportional, and their bones had two eye sockets. They were definitely not underaged giants!

After a brief moment of silence, Klein lowered his hand with the Sea God Scepter once again as thoughts flashed through his mind:

Perhaps they're parents that aren't related by blood… Maybe, the ancestors of the giants are humans… In the First Epoch where chaos and madness reigned, some humans fused with the Beyonder characteristics, mutating into cruel, irrational, and bloodthirsty giants? On the one hand, their descendants inherited their physical characteristics, and on the other hand, they gradually recovered mentally. Hence, they stabilized themselves to become a savage and bloodthirsty race. Among them, Giant King Aurmir was the first batch of mutants, but "He" had managed to maintain a certain level of rationality; hence, becoming an ancient god? The source of all of this does resemble the origin myths, the original Creator?

After his thoughts settled into a theory, he began making connections while coming up with more questions:

Why does the Giant King want to label the Waning Forest as a forbidden area and not allow any living creatures to enter?

"He" doesn't wish for the fact of humans being the ancestors of giants to be known?

But if that's really the case, "He" could've just cremated his parents' remains. There's no need to go through so much trouble… Moreover, what's with that strong sense of guilt?

Who opened the tomb? The ancient sun god who killed the Giant King? The God of Dawn, Badheil, or the other subsidiary gods of the Giant King's Court?

Also, since the ancestor of giants was human, what about elves, Sanguine, and other supernatural beings? The ancestors of dragons are actually lizards?

In the middle of the Second Epoch, were there factors regarding their different origins, that led to the conflict between the different factions of the quasi-human and the mutants?"

As Klein didn't have enough clues or information, it was difficult for him to make any judgment or think of any more possibilities. He could only forcefully rein in his thoughts and focus his attention on the City of Silver's expedition team.

At this moment, Demon Hunter Colin led Lovia, Derrick, and company to the stone tablet and saw the remains in the tomb.

They also fell into an indescribable silence for a long time.

Finally, Joshua, who was wearing a scarlet glove, asked hesitantly, "These are the parents of the Giant King?"

From this City of Silver's Dawn Paladin's point of view, the two corpses were indeed not as tall as giants. They were even inferior to him from back when he had just become an adult.

If they were identified as young giants, then the proportions and facial features of their bodies didn't match.

Joshua's question reverberated in the surroundings, but no one answered.

After a few seconds, Demon Hunter Colin slowly said, "That's why it's a secret."

He didn't mention his thoughts or theories.

"…Does this mean that giants are actually a branch of humans, a result of the transformation brought about by Beyonder characteristics?" Upon hearing this, the wine-red-haired Antiona said thoughtfully.

The ancestors of the giants are humans? Derrick felt a little dizzy from the shock. He felt that there was a huge gap between the two.

With this thought in mind, he recalled his companions who had lost control, especially those from the Giant pathway. He slowly and vaguely believed that it wasn't impossible.

Those who lost control usually became abnormally large. Their skin was covered in grayish-blue color, and there was a huge crack in the middle of their brows that sucked in their pair of eyes.

"Perhaps," Demon Hunter Colin answered briefly.

The members of the City of Silver's expedition team fell silent once again.

In this atmosphere, Derrick glanced at Shepherd Elder Lovia and realized that this member of the six-member council had a calm expression. It was neither solemn or confused.

At this moment, Demon Hunter Colin looked around and said, "Split up into groups of two to three people and search the surrounding areas. Let's see if there's anything to be found."

The members of the expedition team snapped back to their senses and began carefully exploring the area according to the Chief's instructions.

Unfortunately, this Waning Forest didn't have anything of value other than trees, tomb tablets, or tombs.

Without further delay, Derrick exchanged Sealed Artifacts with Haim to prevent his Beyonder characteristic from being purged by the Unshadowed Crucifix.

Then, they followed Demon Hunter Colin out of the Waning Forest, circled around the protruding boulder along the mountain, and found the gigantic cave that was thirty meters tall.

Outside the cave, a stone stele had already shattered into pieces and was growing weeds.

Under the orange glow of the twilight, there was an indescribable sense of waning death.

After entering the cave, the City of Silver's expedition team followed the weathered stone slabs and the peeling murals. They walked between the withered weeds and rough gravel, and they warily explored the area.

With every step they took, they would feel that their lifespans were weakening and were becoming dehydrated.

After an unknown period of time, the City of Silver's expedition team finally saw a grayish-blue door which was open.

On both sides of the door were pieces of iron-black fragments that seemed to belong to some sort of armor.

"There should've been guards here," Colin said simply. He took out a bottle of medicine and gulped it down.

His light blue eyes were quickly tinged with a layer of dark yellow, and two complex dark-green symbols appeared in his pupils.

After carefully observing the grayish-blue door for a while, he nodded and walked into the dark hall.

All of them passed through the door and came inside. The hall seemed to be held by an invisible hand as it rose up after a loud thud.

More than ten seconds later, the hall stopped moving. Outside the door, a magnificent palace propped up by stone pillars appeared. It looked like the residence of the guards.

Derrick subconsciously looked around and swept his gaze across the various items in the hall. He saw two murals with ancient characteristics.

The main character of a mural was a giant who wore full-body silver armor and emitted an obvious glow. At the location of his eyes, there was a blob condensed from the dawn of light. In the middle of another mural stood a lady with long dark brown hair. She was a female giant in a long leather skirt. She held a wheat head and fruits and was surrounded by fields ready to be harvested, clear lake waters, fruit-bearing trees, and bright mushrooms.

God of Dawn Badheil… Goddess of Harvest Omebella… Derrick came to a realization as he nodded slightly.

He then retracted his gaze and saw the Chief staring at the mural that represented the Goddess of Harvest. His expression was still as heavy as before.

Is the Chief hoping that the City of Silver would also have a real "harvest"? As Derrick thought, he followed the orders of Shepherd Elder Lovia, forming a team with the others. They then searched for valuable items and checked if there were any hidden passageways.

About seven to eight minutes later, they gathered together and followed Chief Colin Iliad into the main door of the hall.

Colin Iliad stabbed the two swords into the gap between the stone slabs in front of him. He stretched out his hands and pressed them on both sides of the door. With just a bit of force, it opened its mouth with a heavy rumble.

The orange and splendid light of dusk silently shone in, allowing the City of Silver's expedition team to see palaces and the numerous towers that delivered a strong visual impact.

The scale, magnificence, and epic feeling of a myth felt more obvious and shocking due to the close proximity between them. Everyone subconsciously held their breaths and forgot about anything else, fully immersing themselves in the scenery.

It was the same for Klein above the gray fog.

This was the King's Court of the giants.

This was a real divine kingdom.

After about ten seconds, Demon Hunter Colin pulled out his swords and half-turned his body, saying to Shepherd Lovia, "Try checking out the situation on both sides. I can't see what lies ahead too clearly."

The two dark-green symbols in his eyes slowly dissipated.

Lovia acknowledged his order and took two steps forward to the door.

Outside, there was a platform with staircases on both sides. In front of them stood a railing formed from grayish-white stone pillars that faced the tallest building in the area. There was a huge blue-gray door with countless mysterious symbols carved on both sides of it. It looked extremely dignified.

The corridors, stairs, and other objects connected the multitude of palaces and towers together. They were magnificent and brilliant.

Lovia's silver-gray hair floated up as the stone that was bathed in the light of dusk protruded out, forming a grayish-white doll.

The doll didn't have any spirituality. It was like a strung puppet as it walked to the left.

It followed the staircase and walked down one level after another amidst the rich orange light to help the expedition team confirm the situation.

Suddenly, its body stopped as fine silver light burst out from within, turning it into countless fragments.

Shepherd Lovia wasn't alarmed. She followed the steps from before and created another stone golem, making it head to the right.

This time, the stone golem walked to the end of the staircase and stopped at the entrance of the palace below without anything happening along the way.

Demon Hunter Colin watched intently the entire time before saying, "Let's go to the right, but we have to be careful as well."

Although he didn't find any danger, the fact that he couldn't discern the actual situation using his Beyonder powers meant that there were many problems.

With such a reminder, Derrick and company became even more and more tense. The groups of three began to slowly walk down as they watched each other’s backs.

As they walked along the high stairs, Joshua, who was wearing a scarlet glove, suddenly heard a series of tapping sounds coming from behind him.

It was as if there was a person following them in silence.

And at this moment, Shepherd Elder Lovia was to his side. From the corner of his eye, he could tell that the footsteps were definitely not coming from her.

A chill ran down Joshua’s spine as he hurriedly said in a deep voice, “There are footsteps behind me.”

Lovia turned her head and allowed the five-meter-tall Silver Knight to appear in front of her. It sized up Joshua’s back with its scarlet fiery eyes.

After a few seconds of silence, the Shepherd Elder shook her head.

“There’s nothing there.”

Chapter 1116 - Familiar Gaze

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Lovia’s response made Joshua even more wary. He looked at the other members of the expedition team and anxiously asked, “Did any of you hear any abnormal footsteps?”

With Thunder God’s Roar and a broadsword in hand, Derrick recalled for a few seconds and shook his head in denial. Haim, who held the Unshadowed Crucifix in his hand, looked at the Sealed Artifact that was still glowing and replied, “Perhaps it’s your hallucination?”

“No, I heard it very clearly.” The scarlet-gloved Joshua frowned and expressed his opinion.

Upon hearing this, Demon Hunter Colin, who was walking right in front, half-turned around and calmly instructed, “Haim, Antiona, check on Joshua’s condition.”

“Yes, Your Excellency.” Haim immediately walked to Joshua and pressed the Unshadowed Crucifix which appeared to be a manifestation of pure light against his teammates’ forehead.

However, this Sealed Artifact didn’t undergo any changes.

Immediately following that, the wine-red-haired female warrior, Antiona, came to the side of Joshua and raised her left hand.

There was a pale gold bracelet around her wrist. On it were three small bells covered in golden scales.

The tinkling sounds that sounded calmed Joshua’s heart. He was no longer as tense and impatient.

“No problem.” Antiona cast her gaze towards the Chief, Colin Iliad.

Two complex dark green symbols appeared in Colin’s eyes. He looked at Joshua for a few seconds before nodding and saying, “It might not be an illusion, but you have to be careful if any abnormalities arise within you.”

Seeing the Chief supporting him, Joshua secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

“Alright.”

After the doubts were temporarily put away, the City of Silver’s expedition team continued down the staircase that was covered in the glow of sunset one level after another.

Suddenly, everyone heard a groan.

From the corner of his eye, Derrick Berg saw Joshua raise his hands and strangle his neck.

As he was a Dawn Paladin, he had immense strength. Just as he let out a grunt, his hands snapped his neck.

With a gloomy and twisted expression, Joshua collapsed, his eyes filled with disbelief.

The person who killed him was himself!

“…”Although Derrick and the others didn’t manage to react in time, their years of training and the experience they had gained from exploring the depths of the darkness made them instinctively take up battle positions, wary of any subsequent attacks.

Then, they heard a muffled grunt.

It was from Shepherd Elder Lovia.

The facial muscles of the woman with long silver-gray hair tightened as obvious twitching and squirming appeared, as though another face had grown out.

She plopped to the ground on the wide staircase as she grimaced with indescribable pain.

Her hands moved slowly but uncontrollably as she clenched her neck.

Just as Lovia was about to exert her strength, two swords that were smeared with silver-gray ointment reached out and pried her palms apart.

Demon Hunter Colin, who was already prepared, reacted in time.

Lovia's body twitched as she lowered her head even further. Opening her mouth, she spat out pieces of torn flesh and incomplete organs.

She took a deep breath, as though she had finally recovered. Then, she propped her elbow on the ground and took a step forward, prostrating herself and swallowing the flesh and blood organs that she had just spat out in a pious and humble manner.

Demon Hunter Colin, who had several old scars on his face, quietly watched this scene without stopping her.

Finally, Lovia looked up and said with her unfocused gray eyes, "It was degeneration.

"A form of degeneration that everyone has."

"Do you have a solution?" Colin asked without any change in his tone.

Lovia nodded without hesitation.

"Yes."

As soon as she finished speaking, she used her right hand to grab her left index finger. With a loud snap, she pulled it out and stuffed the blood and bones into her mouth. As she chewed, she muttered, "The Lord that created everything;

"The Lord who reigns behind the curtain of shadows;

The degenerate nature of all living things…"

The honorific name of the True Creator… Derrick's eyelids twitched when he heard that. He suddenly felt that something subtle was happening around him.

The orange glow became more saturated and closer to the color of blood.

Above the gray fog, The Fool Klein's expression instantly turned solemn.

Although he couldn't see anything through his "true vision," he could vaguely sense that there was a gaze cast over from afar, causing it to interfere with his observations; thus, weakening his clarity and range.

In addition, that gaze gave him a strange sense of familiarity.

It's difficult to not be familiar with it. The first half of my life after I transmigrated was to deal with "Him"—"His" son, "His" Oracle, "His" wish to descend, the items left behind by "Him", "His" crazy ravings, and all sorts of murals related to "Him"… At that moment, Klein was completely certain that the entity who had begun to focus on the City of Silver's expedition team was none other than the True Creator.

Frankly speaking, when Lovia began to recite the honorific name of that entity, Klein wanted to directly smite her with "Lightning Storm" and eliminate the problem before it appeared. However, he ultimately held back the urge because he wasn't confident that he could finish off the Shepherd in one strike. The evil spirit that Lovia had "Grazed" was likely at the level of a Sequence 3. Although it had died a long time ago, its current combined strength was still at the level of Sequence 4. It likely wasn't a problem for her to withstand "Lightning Storm," which was close to but not at the angel level, for some time.

And once The Fool couldn't easily kill Lovia, it would be a sign of fear in the eyes of Demon Hunter Colin.

In addition, Klein believed that Colin Iliad was happy to see Shepherd Elder Lovia chant the True Creator's honorific name. He wanted to use this to put The Fool in check and achieve some semblance of balance.

This was actually an act of disrespect in front of deities, making it very easy to anger those great existences, but there was nothing that Colin Iliad could do. He couldn't simply trust The Fool and the True Creator, so he could only try his best by probing them while staying on the edge of a cliff.

Only by doing so would the City of Silver not suddenly be destroyed like the cities that had been buried deep in the darkness, covered with the dust of history.

What a pity. If the Unshadowed Crucifix was in my hands now, I'd have the chance to instantly kill that Silver Knight evil spirit by using all my strength to activate the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog… It's a fundamental restraint… Klein sighed silently and could only accept this development.

He hadn't discovered anything unusual with Joshua until this City of Silver warrior with scarlet gloves strangled himself. Only then did he see his spirit turn dark and gloomy.

Just as the Shepherd Elder had said, this was a form of "degeneration" that he originally had. It was no different from losing himself because of money and beauty, making it very difficult for external forces to detect it.

That staircase should have remnant godhood powers that represent degeneration. They're embedded into the environment, making it difficult to discover and resist… Previously, the stone golem had no spirituality, so it wasn't affected… From the honorific name, the True Creator wields control over degeneration. Just "His" gaze alone is enough to disperse the corresponding powers… Klein adjusted his mental state and continued to observe the subsequent developments.

During this process, he couldn't help but consider a question:

Was the True Creator like him now, watching the movements of the City of Silver's expedition team in "His" divine kingdom?

…On Earth, this is called a fellow viewer watching the same livestream… If I were to send "gifts," would the True Creator "gift" even more? By making this teasing remark, he tried to ease the nervousness and concern that he felt from having the True Creator cast "His" gaze over.

That was a true god. Be it Adam or Amon, they weren't even qualified to be on par with "Him"!

At that moment, Shepherd Lovia had already stood up, and her left index finger had also grown back.

She looked at Chief Colin Iliad and said, "This region will no longer suffer from degeneration."

This meant that the staircase wasn't that dangerous anymore.

Normally, the expedition team would ignore Joshua's corpse. Whether they advanced or retreated, they couldn't afford to waste any time. If they stayed in an extremely dangerous area for too long, the other members would have an accident. However, since the six-member council's Elder Lovia used a tone of certainty to indicate that there were no problems nearby, they could rest and deal with it.

Derrick put down Haim's broadsword and walked to Joshua's side. After staring for a few seconds, he bent down to pick up his scarlet glove and wore it on his left palm.

He still remembered that Joshua was always bragging about the mystical item he had obtained during an expedition.

He could also clearly recall that when he left the Afternoon Town camp, he had said that he would be forced into a marriage after the expedition, with no idea as to who his wife would be. Yet, an hour later, this teammate had turned into a cold corpse.

To the people of the City of Silver, this was something that happened frequently. No one cried or broke down. However, there was an emotion that had already seeped into their bones and blood. It was heavy and mixed with grief.

They watched as Derrick raised his left hand and aimed it at Joshua's corpse.

A blazing flame flew out, enveloping the teammate who had been fighting alongside them earlier.

After the cremation, Demon Hunter Colin put away the Beyonder characteristic that had seeped out. The rest of the team members grabbed a handful of ashes and placed them into a hidden pocket in their clothes.

Amidst the silence, they continued down the stairs and arrived at the bottom of the staircase. There was a towering palace bathed in the glow of dusk. Behind it was a corridor and staircase that led to another area.

The palace door was open, and it was pitch-black inside. Not a single ray of light could shine inside.

Demon Hunter Colin carefully observed for a while before saying, "Just like in the outside world."

What he meant was that the group should use various means to maintain a lit environment and not allow themselves to fall into a state of absolute darkness.

Hence, Haim activated the Unshadowed Crucifix, allowing it to envelop all of his teammates. At the same time, Antiona lit a lantern and held it in her hand, in case the cross suddenly lost its effectiveness.

The group entered the palace and walked through the abnormally empty hall. Their footsteps reverberated into the distance, but there weren't any echoing sounds.

As he walked, Derrick suddenly felt his eyelids grow heavy as he felt a strong sense of sleepiness.

At this moment, he heard the Chiefs low growl:

"Don't fall asleep!"

Derrick suddenly woke up, snapping out of his fatigued state of not being able to open his eyes.

At that moment, a female warrior's body went limp and fell to the ground, as though she had fallen into a deep slumber.

Then, she disappeared into thin air and disappeared in front of everyone.

Demon Hunter Colin and Shepherd Lovia exchanged looks for a while before shaking their heads and leading the team forward.

During this process, they would hurt themselves from time to time, using pain to stay awake.

Finally, they passed through a bunch of arches and saw the darkness that couldn't be dispelled up ahead.

With the help of the light from the team, they discovered that it was a hall with countless murals drawn. In the middle of the hall was a long dark red table. Situated around it were high-back chairs with intricate patterns.

This… Derrick felt a baffling sense of familiarity.

He immediately came to a realization that this was somewhat similar to the scene at the Tarot Gathering!

Suddenly, balls of light lit up and murmurs sounded around them.

Around the hall stood stone pillars that didn't support the dome. Scarlet flames were ignited one after another, illuminating the surroundings in an abnormal manner.

The murmurs grew louder, as if they had finally passed through a long and distant space and arrived at their destination. The hall was so lively that it was as if a gathering was held.

Around the dark red table, blurry and illusory figures suddenly appeared. A total of eleven figures sat on different high- back chairs.

Chapter 1117 - The Strongest Organization

◆

As the flames flickered, Derrick and company subconsciously looked at the long dark red table. The first thing they noticed was the figure closest to them.

The figure wore a simple linen robe, and had a head of long silver hair and indiscernible facial features. It made Colin, Lovia, and Derrick find the figure oddly familiar.

In an instant, they felt as though a bolt of lightning struck their minds, illuminating their blurry memories.

“Angel of Fate, Ouroboros!”

Just as the pupils of the team from the City of Silver dilated, the figure turned around and looked at them.

A pair of indifferent eyes immediately occupied their vision as extraordinary mysterious rings appeared.

In a daze, Derrick saw a figure in front of him. He was a handsome, radiant, and energetic man. He wore a pure white robe and had short golden hair.

With his appearance, the surroundings became abnormally bright. The warm feeling was like a ray of light, instantly filling every spot.

Derrick felt as though he had seen the “day,” as mentioned in legends, momentarily forgetting where he was or what he was doing.

The man took a step forward and his blurry figure overlapped with Derrick.

Then, Derrick sat beside the dark red long table, occupying one of the high-back chairs.

He had become the handsome and radiant man who was attending a secret gathering.

At the same time, the grizzled City of Silver Chief, Colin, whose face was covered in old scars, encountered the same blurry and illusory figure.

The figure was seven to eight meters tall. He was wearing silver full-body armor, and his eyes were glowing like the light of dawn.

He raised the long sword in his hand, letting it press against Colin Iliad's forehead like a scepter.

Demon Hunter Colin struggled for a moment, but he quickly calmed down when he was enveloped by the orange light.

With that, he and the giant in front of him merged into one. He strode towards the dark red table and sat on the second seat on the right.

Shepherd Lovia encountered a man in a long black robe. He had black curly hair over his shoulders and a pair of eyes that seemed to be covered in shadows. It was difficult to see his face clearly, but the silver threads, complicated patterns, and gorgeous accessories were directly reflected in her mind.

Lovia trembled and couldn't help but lower her head, allowing the layers of black wings on the man's back to wrap around her.

She became the man and walked to the end of the dark red table.

There were two high-back chairs with complex patterns placed there. Lovia chose the left one.

The remaining members of the City of Silver's expedition team also encountered similar situations, but the figures they faced were different.

After “they” found their seats on both sides of the dark red table, the area around the empty high-back chair at the seat of honor became darker, outlining a female figure that seemed to be shrouded in fog.

Right on the heels of that, a voice that seemed to transmigrate from ancient times echoed in the ears of the “attendees.”

“…We are trying to redeem ourselves, and also maintain the balance of this world…”

“…Dissociation and deviation are undoubtedly the most basic order…”

“…This is also in line with ‘His’ thoughts…”

“…I can’t deny that we all have our own sinister thoughts and desires, but this is very normal…”

“… Death and spilling blood are inevitable. In the name of Rose Redemption…”

Above the gray fog, Klein listened attentively. He couldn’t wait to hear more of the content said by the voice.

However, whether it was the scene or the voice, it began to loop. It was as if it had only been fixed at a section lasting less than a minute.

This is the scene of the establishment of the Rose Redemption? Previously, the Red Angel evil spirit said that this was an extremely secretive organization established by a group of corrupted angels. Now, it seems like that isn’t the case… The person who said that was probably not Medici, but either Sauron and Einhorn. “They” actually didn’t know much about Rose Redemption… Klein mumbled inwardly as he cast his gaze back at the City of Silver team that were repeating the actions like puppets—approaching the table, sitting down, listening, and leaving.

When the torches around the hall lit up one after another, Klein had already found something unusual with his “true vision.”

He saw the murals on the wall come alive and rapidly expand, overlapping with the hall. It made the table, chairs, and floor tiles that had been cold for thousands of years warm up once again. It made the figures that had once been in this secret meeting cross the borders of time, “reviving” at their fixed seats, allowing the words from the past to reappear.

Many of those figures were familiar to Klein.

One of them was the Angel of Fate Ouroboros.

This King of Angels, who was still a member of the Rose Redemption, was the most lifelike among all the illusory figures.

Combined with how the scenes were looping, Klein began to suspect the person who left the murals was Tail Devourer Ouroboros.

In the previous temple ruins, there were murals left behind by “Him,” likewise for the ruins of the battle of the Gods…

In the Giant King’s Court, there are similar murals and signs of those powers. I wouldn’t believe it if anyone were to say it’s not “Him”… Just how much does this King of Angels like murals? He draws them wherever “He” goes… Klein couldn’t help but lampoon Ouroboros in his mind.

The second figure he noticed was sitting beside the Angel of Fate Ouroboros. He was dressed in black armor that seemed to be splashed with blood. He had red hair that resembled fire, looking young and handsome.

The reason why he paid attention to this figure was because he had seen it in his dreams.

In addition, “it” was also the most arrogant person among all the figures. Not only did it sit back in its chair, but it also placed its feet on the dark red long table. It didn't mind that the surrounding people were high-level figures of the same status.

Red Angel, Medici!

These are the Kings of Angels who participated in the secret gathering? Who else is involved… As Klein's thoughts raced, he decided to first rescue the people from the City of Silver who couldn't exit the looping cycles of fate.

He had a lot of experience in this aspect.

Yes, the medium to the loop is the hall itself. However, there's no need to attempt to destroy it. As long as it can temporarily break the cycle of fate, the dusk outside will seep in and dispel any abnormalities… They belong to the divine kingdom itself. In terms of status, they can only be stronger or on par with the power left behind by Ouroboros… After observing for a few seconds, Klein quickly came to a conclusion.

After flipping a gold coin for a divination, he immediately spread his spirituality towards the crimson star representing The Sun.

Derrick Berg's Spirit Body immediately tore through the cycle of fate, creating an invisible crack.

The orange glow from the light of dusk outside the palace immediately surged into the hall from the window up high.

Without waiting for Little Sun to figure out his situation, for fear that the True Creator would lock onto him, Klein didn't hesitate to let him return to the real world.

Derrick snapped out of his daze and realized that he had unknowingly sat down at the side of the dark red table.

He looked up blankly and saw the Chief, Elder Lovia, Haim, Antiona, and the others. He realized that there were still certain traces of confusion on their faces.

Thinking back to his experience just now, Derrick was alert as he deliberated and said, “The cycle of fate…”

“Indeed.” Colin Iliad, who had experienced this before, nodded slightly and stood up.

He looked around, and his gaze landed on the largest mural that he had seen lately.

The mural depicted the same exact hall. There were similar columns, torches, the dark red table, complicated high- back chairs, and object layout.

As for those high-back chairs, there were eleven figures sitting in them. At the very end were two seats, and along the table, five on the left and four on the right.

The City of Silver team’s eyes also followed the Chiefs and took in the corresponding scene.

The five figures on the left were the beautiful silver-haired man; the red-haired and arrogantly-seated man; an elder wearing a hood that exposed only his mouth, winkles, and beard; a dignified middle-aged man dressed in black armor; and a handsome man dressed in white robes.

[image]

The four on the right were a black-robed mummy wrapped in bandages; a middle-aged man with facial features resembling the natives of the Southern Continent; a giant covered in silver armor; and a supple, beautiful, and dignified lady.

The two high-back chairs at the very end were a man with dark black curly hair and a woman shrouded in fog.

At that moment, a Guardian raised his right hand and pointed at the handsome white-robed man.

"His figure is made up of mysterious symbols. These symbols represent:

"White Angel, Aucuses…

Before the Guardian could finish his sentence, he suddenly let out a tragic cry as golden flames spewed out from his body.

He instantly became a charred corpse, as if it would be reduced to ashes the moment it was touched. It made Demon Hunter Colin and Shepherd Lovia incapable of saving him in time.

"Don't try to distinguish those symbols. They contain immense power," Colin hurriedly warned the others.

And above the gray fog, Klein was thinking of another matter:

White Angel Aucuses. That's the Eternal Blazing Sun's true name?

If not for the fact that the Giant King's Court itself isolates itself from projected powers, just using Jotun to read this name will attract "His" attention and incur divine punishment…

Amidst his thoughts, Demon Hunter Colin stabbed his swords in front of him, creating an invisible barrier.

Then, this City of Silver Chief identified the symbols and labels that formed those figures.

He began reading it slowly and firmly from the left.

"Angel of Fate, Ouroboros…

"War Angel, Medici…

"Wisdom Angel, Herabergen…"

At this point, the invisible barrier that was constantly shaking suddenly stopped. This was because this name was no stranger to the people of the City of Silver.

This was the true name of the Dragon of Wisdom!

Could it be that the Dragon of Wisdom later became the Wisdom Angel next to the Lord? Similar questions arose in everyone's hearts, but Klein discovered something strange.

The history of the City of Silver had records of the name Herabergen. The language they used on a daily basis was Jotun, a language that could mobilize the surrounding forces of nature.

This also meant that, in the past two to three thousand years, someone in the City of Silver had definitely read or written the name "Herabergen" before, but there was no response from the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. The Church of Knowledge and Wisdom still wasn't able to find the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

At this moment, Colin Iliad controlled his emotions and continued reading, "Wind Angel, Leodero…

"White Angel, Aucuses…

"Dark Angel, Sasrir…

"Evernight Goddess, Amanises…

"God of Combat, Badheil…

"Earth Mother, Omebella

"God of the Dead, Salinger…

"God of Spiritual Creatures, Tolzna",

Although Klein had expected this, he was still somewhat stunned.

The former Rose Redemption was frighteningly powerful!

Amongst the seven deities today, six of them were members. There was also Death, the God of Spiritual Creatures, and three Kings of Angels.

This made him recall what the Red Angel evil spirit had once said:

“Rose Redemption has a close relationship with the birth of the True Creator. It’s impossible for you to imagine that certain people were once members of Rose Redemption, but they’ve since left it…”

Chapter 1118 - Klein's Fear

◆◆◆

In the past, Rose Redemption could be called the Deity Alliance… But such an organization could only develop itself quietly under the might of the ancient sun god. It had to hide, hide, hide, and secretly scheme in the palace of dusk… How powerful was the ancient sun god in the past… Klein couldn't help but let out a breath as he felt deeply poignant.

He examined his own Tarot Club and realized that, compared to the Rose Redemption, it was like child's play. Even if he counted the auxiliary members, Will Auceptin, Pallez Zoroast, Azik Eggers, and Reinette Tinekerr, there was no way to compare with the Rose Redemption at its peak.

No, even if I compare it with the current watered-down version of Rose Redemption, there's still a huge gap between it and the Tarot Club. After all, its leader and convener is only a Sequence 4 saint… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh as he turned his attention to the eleven figures.

Based on their images, titles, and true names, I can confirm that the Wind Angel, Wisdom Angel, and White Angel are the current Lord of Storms, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, and the Eternal Blazing Sun. "They" really betrayed the ancient sun god, the City of Silver's Creator, and "They" even feasted on the deity "They" served… The God of Combat and Earth Mother are indeed survivors of the Giant King's Court. One of them is the eldest son of the Giant King, and the other is "His" queen. They're mother and son, so that way, the fact that Feynapotter didn't directly declare war on the Lord of Storms to help Feysac makes things a little odd. It requires some thought…

Also, the Goddess was indeed a former subsidiary god of the Annihilation Demonic Wolf, the Goddess of Misfortune, Amanises. After that ancient god perished, not only did “She” grasp the authority of the Evernight and successfully ascend to the throne of Sequence 0, she also single-handedly destroyed all the descendants of Flegrea, sealed the Antigonus family’s angel within the Nation of the Evernight, and used the Mother of the Sky’s body as “Her” vessel for a descent… That’s ruthless…

As a Blessed of Evernight, Klein subconsciously raised his head to look around when he thought of this, afraid that his inner thoughts would leak out to the outside world.

After entering the foggy town and learning that Antigonus and the Mother of the Sky were the descendants of the ancient god, Flegrea, Klein had a certain idea as to the true identity of the Evernight Goddess. After all, in the history of the City of Silver, it clearly stated that the Annihilation Demonic Wolf controlled the authority of the Evernight and had many strange powers.

Combined with the Antigonus family’s possession of the Seer pathway, and the Mother of the Sky of the Nation of the Night clearly belonging to Evernight, Klein suspected that the Annihilation Demonic Wolf Flegrea was an ancient god that had mixed two non-neighboring pathways’ Beyonder characteristics. Therefore, “He” was extremely crazy and almost irrational. “His” goal was to destroy and corrupt everything.

Hence, he guessed that the Evernight Goddess might have something to do with the ancient god, Flegrea. From Groselle’s Travels, he learned that one of the two subsidiary gods of the Demonic Wolf King had gone missing after “He” perished, while the other had submitted to the Phoenix Ancestor. Furthermore, that true name corresponded to Death of the Fourth Epoch, Mr. Azik’s father. With that, he could vaguely connect the Goddess of Misfortune Amanises to the Evernight Goddess.

However, due to his temporary status as a Blessed of Evernight, he didn't dare think too much about it. Instead, he focused his attention elsewhere.

At this moment, when he saw "Her" real name, he wasn't too shocked. Instead, he felt relieved and felt as though he were on firm ground. In addition, he was even more fearful of the Evernight Goddess.

Because "She" didn't want the ancient god, Flegrea, to be revived, the Goddess controlled the various matters of the Seer pathway, preventing Beyonders who aren't cleared by "Her" to advance further?

That's right, that ecclesiastic in Afternoon Town mentioned who tempted Dark Angel Sasrir, the left hand of God, and the deputy of the divine kingdom, but he couldn't say the name, as if it had been "erased." Isn't this a demonstration of "Concealment" powers?

Other than a place like the Giant King's Court, there's no way to say the names "Evernight Goddess" and "Amanises" together. Even if one did, no one would be able to hear it…

There are two people who convened Rose Redemption, one is Dark Angel Sasrir, and the other is the Goddess…

Apart from the venue where the ploy was conceived, it's filled with the forces of Concealment…

In other words, the Goddess had single-handedly directed the fall of the ancient sun god, started the Cataclysm, and ended the Third Epoch…

Compared to "Her," be it Adam or Amon, they are still far from "Her"…

How could such a true deity be so easily trapped by Adam's arrangements and be unable to interfere with matters of the real world?

Although it's not a conspiracy where something the Goddess yearns for the most is used, making "Her" willingly walk into a trap, how can the

Goddess, who wields the powers of Concealment and plotted the death of the City of Silver Creator, be unprepared?

Also, what does “This is also in line with ‘His’ thoughts” mean? Who does “He” refer to?

Uh, after understanding so much hidden history, will I digest the Scholar of Yore potion on the spot once I drink it… With this in mind, Klein raised his right hand and rubbed his temples, forcing himself to focus his thoughts elsewhere. When that ecclesiastic phantom mentioned the fourth King of Angels, it self-destructed. Was it because the remaining three became true gods?

However, the residents of the City of Silver would occasionally use the names Badheil and Herabergen, so why wasn’t there an anomaly?

What is the difference?

The strongest among the Kings of Angels, the left hand of God, Sasrir—why did “He” disappear into the rivers of history? Uh, perhaps “He” is one of the present-day evil gods, the True Creator, the Dark Side of the Universe, or the Mother Tree of Desire?

There are remnants of the godhood of degeneracy outside the hall. Was this left behind by “Him”?

Yes, the birth of the True Creator is related to the Rose Redemption. How will “He” react when “He” sees the murals in this hall?

With a thought, Klein cast his gaze at Shepherd Elder Lovia.

The lady looked a little lost. She didn’t seem to understand the titles and names, but she recognized a portion of them. For example, Angel of Fate Ouroboros.

She had become a believer of the True Creator in the temple ruins left behind by Ouroboros.

Derrick also stole a glance at Elder Lovia, but he didn't notice any obvious changes in her emotions.

As The Sun of the Tarot Club, Derrick was one of the people present who knew the situation of the outside world the most. Furthermore, he had long known who the Kings of Angels were. He suspected that three of them had later become deities. At this moment, he was the least confused and perplexed. He was only slightly shocked at Rose Redemption's level.

This was more exaggerated than he had imagined!

It's no wonder the Lord perished… Derrick was first enlightened before he felt his heart turn heavy.

At this moment, he swept his gaze and saw the Chiefs face turn pale and ugly. He even muttered a few words softly, "This is impossible, impossible…"

…As far as I can remember, the Chief has never lost his composure like this… Did he think of the Lord perishing due to Rose Redemption? He can't accept that "He" will never return? However, he had long learned of this from me… Just as Derrick was feeling puzzled, he discovered that, aside from his tightly pursed lips, the Chiefs expression had returned to normal.

In the minds of the other members of the exploration team, the prophecy they had previously learned in Afternoon Town appeared:

"Omnipotent Lord, I repent…. tempted Sasrir. The Kings often came to the palace belonging to the dusk to conspire.

"It was already too late by the time I discovered all of this. Degeneration, bloodshed, darkness, rot, murders, corruption, and shadows had already drowned this piece of land.

"A huge calamity will begin here!"

Haim, who was holding the Unshadowed Crucifix, took a long while to calm his emotions. He said in a slightly hoarse voice, “This is the place belonging to the dusk. These are the subsidiary gods and Kings of Angels during the Second Epoch?

“They plotted everything, causing a huge calamity to happen. They made the Lord forsake this land?”

Colin Iliad pulled out the two swords in front of him and half-turned around, calmly replying, “Most likely.”

“If we can figure out what exactly happened back then, do we have a chance to please the Lord and let ‘Him’ look at this land again?” Upon hearing the Chiefs answer, Antiona asked anxiously.

At that moment, Derrick seemed to see a trace of pity and sadness in the Chiefs eyes. He heard him acknowledge and say, “Perhaps.”

“Then let’s continue exploring!” The other team members pleaded with burning eyes.

This was the closest the City of Silver had gotten to having a glimmer of hope over the past two to three thousand years. None of them wished to let it go, even if they had to sacrifice their lives for it.

Colin Iliad slowly surveyed the area and said, “Don’t forget the principles to uphold during explorations. Don’t act rashly at any time.

“Having confirmed that this place is related to redemption, we can always come a second time, a third time, or even more. There’s no need to be so impatient.”

Upon hearing his words, the other members of the exploration team calmed down. They replied one after another,

Yes, Your Excellency.”

Under the arrangements of Demon Hunter Colin, the remaining members split up into small groups and carefully searched the hall. They didn’t discover anything else that was valuable beyond the murals.

Of course, it wasn’t that there was no such thing. This was, after all, a divine kingdom of an ancient god. What seemed like an ordinary long table, chairs, stone pillars, and torches might have special effects when taken outside. Furthermore, those effects could last for a very long period of time. Alas, it wasn’t convenient for the City of Silver’s expedition team to bring them around, as they lacked practical value.

As for the other murals, they were profiled from different angles of the main murals. When combined, they formed a three-dimensional scene.

After completing the search, Derrick and company gathered again and followed the Chief to the exit at the back of the hall.

There was a gray-blue door with a single pane.

With a ten-meter-tall door between the two of them, Colin Iliad carefully observed for a while before finally saying, “There’s a powerful guard outside.”

Chapter 1119 - Tacit Cooperation

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing the Chiefs words, Shepherd Lovia immediately raised her question:

“Just like the two Silver Knights at the front gate of the King’s Court. It won’t take the initiative to attack targets outside a certain range?”

Colin Iliad nodded slightly and said, “At least that’s how it seems to be at the moment.”

They were already near the exit, but the guard outside had no reaction.

This meant that the other party didn’t possess real intelligence or spirituality. It was very likely that they were objects that came to life.

Without waiting for the other members to speak, Demon Hunter Colin continued, “Huge, heavy…”

After obtaining the corresponding information, the City of Silver’s group formed a tacit understanding. A team opened up a distance from the exit, but they faced towards the door. It was protected by Shepherd Elder Lovia. As the bait to attract the guards, a team took the corresponding holy oil from the Chief and smeared it across the ground at the exit. Haim, who held the Unshadowed Crucifix, and Demon Hunter Colin stood by the side of the door and used the stone columns to hide.

Then, Colin Iliad sheathed one of his swords onto his back and took out a small metal bottle, gulping down the liquid inside.

His aura rapidly faded away and wasn't obvious anymore. If one didn't look closely, they wouldn't be able to discover his existence.

This was another set up. Haim was in the open, while the Demon Hunter was hidden.

After another ten seconds, Shepherd Lovia stretched out her right hand and grabbed at thin air.

Her silver-gray hair was dyed a deep blue color.

The wind howled as the grayish-blue door opened.

Right on the heels of that, heavy footsteps could be heard, causing the entire hall to shake.

A "giant" covered in iron-colored armor rushed into the hall with a halberd in hand.

Its exposed parts didn't show any flesh or blood, as though they were made of metal. Behind the black mask was a dark red glow.

If it didn't move and stood there, it wouldn't be any different from a statue.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The shaking in the hall became more and more obvious. The giant statue suddenly threw out the halberd in its hand, stirring up a hurricane that tore towards Derrick and company at the door.

Boom!

The halberd struck an invisible barrier as the illusory ripples rapidly spread out.

In front of Shepherd Lovia, an illusory figure that wore silver armor had appeared at some point in time. It stabbed its greatsword into the crack on the floor.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The giant statue didn't stop as it ran into the hall.

At that moment, a whistling sound was heard under its feet as its massive body jerked backward.

It had stepped on the spot that was smeared with holy oil.

As the giant statue fell, the crimson light in its eye suddenly bloomed as an invisible force appeared and held it up. Suddenly, a blinding white light shot out from the Unshadowed Crucifix, accurately hitting the giant statue's only eye. The dark red color dimmed.

Demon Hunter Colin leaped up and held the same sword with both hands, plunging it down like an eagle swooping down at its prey.

Dawn appeared as they converged on the straight sword, making it exceptionally huge. It even exceeded Colin Iliad's height.

With a poof, the bright sword pierced through the gap in the giant statue's armor, stabbing into its eye.

A flood of light from the dawn rushed in.

With his hands still gripping the hilt of his sword, Colin Iliad exerted more force. As the giant statue fell to the ground, he pulled out his sword and leaped to the side.

The giant statue lay at the door as its body emitted cracking sounds until it finally all movement.

Without looking at it again, Colin turned to look outside the door. After a few seconds, he said, "There are no other guards for now. We can handle this statue."

Derrick and company quickly surrounded the giant statue and skillfully searched for materials.

Above the gray fog, Klein watched the entire battle from the sidelines and was deeply impressed by the City of Silver's teamwork.

According to his observation, it was unknown what metal the giant statue was made of. Its surface was covered with armor that had shocking defensive strength. It could completely ignore most attacks in battle, and it was very difficult to deal with.

Furthermore, this giant statue didn't have any "spirit." In other words, it was immune to the Beyonder powers of the corresponding domain, such as Spirit Body Threads control, Hypnotism, Frenzy, and Nightmare. It was like a walking fortress that made one suspect that it was the work of the Goddess of Harvest.

Klein believed that, if he were in their shoes, with the core powers of a Bizarro Sorcerer being useless, he could only rely on his two marionettes' powers to deal with the giant statue. He had no idea how the battle would develop.

The "Distortion" and "Disorder" powers of an Earl of The Fallen might be effective, but I might not be able to finish it as fast as the City of Silver's expedition team… A team of Beyonders with a tacit understanding would be able to produce the effect of "1 +1 > 2." Yes, that Chiefs confidence in timing, as well as his decisiveness in his attack, was also key… Klein nodded slightly, feeling a sense of admiration.

If this were really a livestream, then he might not be able to help but send a gift as a tip.

Of course, there was a high chance that it was just a thought.

After taking away the most valuable item on the giant statue, the City of Silver's expedition team proceeded forward. They followed the corridor outside and entered another hall.

Just like that, they weaved through the layers of palaces, towers, and different corridors, in an attempt to find more clues, as well as the entrance to the sea as described by the outsider, Jack.

Regardless of whether they believed the boy's words, they couldn't help but look forward to the dark blue sea behind the Giant King's Court. On the other side of the sea, there were kingdoms where humans flourished. There, there were no monsters hidden in the darkness. The sun rose and set, and lightning only appeared when it rained. People had all sorts of food there.

During this process, the City of Silver's expedition team didn't encounter many enemies. Most of them were statues that had come to life. A small number of them were evil spirits formed by the combination of remnant emotions and the power of dusk. The latter was unable to put up any resistance against the Unshadowed Crucifix.

That's normal… The Fool Klein above the gray fog nodded slightly, expressing his acceptance of the current situation. After the Giant King perished, this place already belonged to the ancient sun god. It's unlikely that there will be a large number of giant powerhouses and mystical items left behind… When the Kings of Angels were conspiring, they definitely eliminated any unnecessary troubles ahead of time… Once the ancient sun god was eaten up, the ownership of this place was a mystery. Perhaps, it was abandoned…

In short, there aren't many foreseeable demigods or items. Well, without the Unshadowed Crucifix, those evil spirits will be very troublesome. The City of Silver's expedition team might not be able to advance so smoothly, making it impossible for them to advance so far unless an angel leads a team or activates a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact…

When the Unshadowed Crucifix returned to Derrick, the City of Silver's expedition team was already very close to the tallest building in the Giant King's Court.

The dusk here was extremely dense, as though it came from that palace.

“Once we leave this hall, we should come to the wing of the Giant King’s residence.” Demon Hunter Colin got his bearings and direction before pointing ahead.

Shepherd Elder Lovia nodded. Finally, there was some irresistible hope in her expression.

Derrick’s heart beat faster, and he could no longer control his excitement. Then, he was “Placated” by Antiona.

After composing themselves, the people from the City of Silver entered the hall in front of them and saw that there were oil paintings hanging on both sides.

These oil paintings depicted different giants. Some held bone flutes, some carried wind chimes, while others carried a seven-stringed guitar that matched their height.

As the City of Silver’s expedition team arrived, the giants in the oil painting suddenly came to life. They began playing their instruments, producing a beautiful tune.

The light of dusk in the hall lit up a little. More and more food appeared on the long tables around them as they glowed with a tempting glisten, effusing a very tempting fragrance.

Roasted chicken… Roasted goose… Fish with honey baste… Is this a dinner banquet for the Giant King’s Court? But aren’t the sizes of those chickens, geese, goats, and fish too large… The work of the Goddess of Harvest? With a glance, Klein confirmed that the food that appeared was an illusion. After all, the Giant King’s Court no longer had any ingredients, nor did it possess anyone who could “envision” or create them.

“This… this is normal food?” Haim, who was holding Thunder God’s Roar, stared straight at one of the long tables. His Adam’s apple bobbed.

“Maybe.” Derrick sniffed and couldn’t help but swallow a mouthful of saliva.

Apart from the black-faced grass, they had never seen normal food. The meat that the monsters roasted was of different colors, but they also tasted equally as bad. It could even poison them.

Demon Hunter Colin stared for a few seconds before sighing.

“They’re all fake. Don’t come into contact with them, or there might be unnecessary accidents.”

Other than Lovia, the team from the City of Silver retracted their gaze with great difficulty. They followed the Chief all the way to the exit of the hall.

After a series of inspections, Colin Iliad inserted his swords into the ground and pushed open the heavy door.

A crack appeared as rich orange light shone inside.

As the gap grew bigger, the towering palace gradually became clear.

Then, the people from the City of Silver heard a crashing sound.

At this moment, Colin drew out a sword and suppressed the restlessness in his team members’ hearts.

He then drew out his other sword and slowly walked out of the hall. Derrick and the others followed cautiously.

After completely bathing in the light of dusk, they looked to the left at the same time. There were railings formed from stone pillars.

Beyond the railings, there was an orange-red cloud that was gently ebbing at the distance. On the endless swath of dark blue, they emitted crashing sounds.

There was no need for anyone to explain. At the same time, the members of the City of Silver’s exploration team recalled the records in the book and Jack’s description. A term flashed in their minds:

“The sea.”

Chapter 1120 - Court Chaser

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The dark blue, boundless sea that ebbed gently and seemed to contain infinite life was presented to members of the City of Silver's expedition team. It was no longer a record written down in ancient books, nor was it a combination of words spoken by outsiders.

Although it was still very far away, it seemed like contact was possible.

The wine-red-haired Antiona watched in a daze. She opened her mouth, as though she wanted to say something, but in the end, all she said was the words:

"The sea…"

Just as she finished speaking, a silver crack suddenly appeared on her forehead.

The crack shot up rapidly, instantly splitting Antiona into two halves. Warm and bright red blood gushed out, splashing across Derrick's face.

Without a sound, more silvery-white light shot out from her body, splitting her body into countless small pieces of flesh.

The reveling face full of hope was like a puzzle that had fallen to the ground, splattering everywhere.

It was only at this moment that Demon Hunter Colin reacted. He brandished his two swords and slashed them diagonally outwards, as though he was dealing with invisible enemies.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Silver light flashed, and the sound of metal reverberating echoed. The morning sun around Colin Iliad shattered and scattered in chaos.

At this moment, the silver phantom behind Shepherd Lovia had already taken a step forward and stabbed the blurry giant sword into the ground.

Clang! Clang! Clang! As they surrounded the people of the City of Silver, the streaks of silver light appeared in different spots, trying their best to cut through the invisible barrier around them like insects struggling in amber.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The dense, sometimes thick silver light constantly appeared, causing the defensive powers of the expedition team to tremble, as though it would shatter at any moment. However, be it Demon Hunter Colin, Shepherd Lovia, or Derrick, they couldn't find any traces of the enemy.

The Fool above the gray fog was just about to give a certain reminder when the Chief of the six-member council seemed to realize something and crossed his two swords in front of him.

Clang!

The gigantic silver beam struck the two swords, causing Demon Hunter Colin's feet to sink into a solid stone slab.

He took this opportunity and roared, "Unshadowed domain!"

Upon hearing the Chiefs reminder, Derrick didn't hesitate and stabbed his finger on the thorns of the Unshadowed Crucifix, doing so without any regard for the pain.

As his blood oozed out, clear, bright, pure, and blazing light suddenly exploded, enveloping the entire area between the two buildings.

There wasn't a single shadow in this area that could hide. Nothing else could be hidden. Light had become the ruler of this region.

A huge figure quickly outlined itself on the side of the Giant King's palace. "It" was wearing silver full-body armor and was nearly five meters tall. The flickering light behind the mask was either deep red or orange. And unmistakably, there was a single vertical eye there.

This was a giant, a giant who was still alive.

He didn't wait for the enemy to enter a certain range before attempting to attack, implying that he had sufficient intelligence.

Unlike the other silver-armored knights, the giant's bracer had bright patterns on it. On the right was a blood-red color that circled around his arm, and at the same spot on the left, it was adorned with black spots.

The giant knight raised his broadsword and pointed at everyone in the City of Silver. He said in a thunderous voice, "How dare you barge into the king's court and disturb Lord Sasrir's slumber!"

Sasrir? Dark Angel Sasrir? The Fool Klein above the gray fog was alarmed when he heard that. He subconsciously sat up straight.

The former left hand of God, the deputy of the divine kingdom, the leader of the Kings of Angels, one of the two leaders of Rose Redemption, hadn't disappeared into the river of history. "He" was sleeping deep in the Giant King's Court, sleeping in the residence of the Giant King? Why did "He" choose to enter a state of slumber? Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he subconsciously cast his gaze towards the palace that the giant knight was guarding.

It was the tallest and most magnificent building in the Giant King's Court. The dusk's light seemed to transform into something corporeal that covered its surface, dyeing it with a clear sense of decline. It gave off the feeling that the sun had set and an eternal eventide was coming.

On both sides were steeples, while on the other side were spires. The front door was a double door that opened outwards, with gray and blue as the main colors. Its height exceeded ten meters, and it was covered with symbols, labels, and patterns. It looked stately and mysterious.

There was a pitch-black socket on the left side of the door at a height of three-to four-meters tall. It was equivalent to an adult's fist.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein suddenly thought of the dream divination he had done in the past. Back then, he had seen the same scene, and the medium he had used for the divination was the giants' key he had obtained from Vice Admiral Iceberg.

Is that the key to opening the Giant King's residence? As he extended his hand, he tried to use his "true vision" to pass through the obstruction of the building to see the situation inside the palace.

Unfortunately, he failed. The iron-black key which was the size of a seven-string guitar landed in front of him.

At this moment, Demon Hunter Colin suddenly said before the giant knight attacked, "You're a Court Chaser?"

The giant knight's broadsword didn't cleave down; instead, he paused for a second and said in a low voice, "After all this time, to think that there's someone who can still remember Court Chasers.

"I'm the leader of all the chasers, the Light Culler Murskogan, and I later followed Lord Sasrir.

"I once hunted powerful dragons, elves, devils, demonic wolves, phoenixes. Today, you are honored to die under my blade."

This Light Culler didn't soften his attitude. He hunched his body slightly and held his sword with both hands. Like a flying meteor, he rushed towards the people from the City of Silver with heavy footsteps at high speeds.

Due to the existence of the Unshadowed domain, he could no longer hide his body like before.

Just as Colin Iliad, Lovia and company determined that Murskogan's attack would arrive in a second, this giant knight suddenly stopped his silver broadsword's slash midway.

Demon Hunter Colin, who wasn't in Lovia's evil spirit's defensive circle, suddenly had a premonition of danger. Without any hesitation, he lunged to the side.

Boom!

A silver ray of light suddenly emerged from the spot where he had been standing, destroying everything from within. This attack was so strange, like it was generated by the void itself.

At the same time, there was also a change in Colin Iliad who had ducked to the ground. His clothes were torn into pieces and cloth by his rapidly expanding muscles.

In just a blink of an eye, this Demon Hunter had turned into a grayish-blue giant with bluish-black lines warped around him. At his forehead was a deep black crack. Every inch of him contained immense power, infinite mystery, and a strange psyche influence.

If a Beyonder under Sequence 4 saw this scene, they would definitely suffer from a strong backlash. Their brains might suffer an excruciating pain that would cause them to lose their minds. Even their spirituality would be corrupted. And if they couldn't withstand such an influence, going crazy, losing control, or even sudden death were certain outcomes.

This was the incomplete Mythical Creature form of a demigod.

Originally, Colin Iliad didn't dare to release this form due to the influence of the "twilight" in the Giant King's Court. But now, he realized that in the Unshadowed domain, the feeling of decline had weakened significantly.

He then raised the two swords that had enlarged in size as well. With them covered in the light of dawn, he fought fiercely with the Light Culler Murskogan in the domain that was enveloped in light and shadows.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The three swords of the “giants” clashed and separated from time to time. Although Colin Iliad was at a disadvantage, he still managed to withstand the barrage of attacks from the King’s Court Chaser’s leader.

From time to time, he would feel a strong sense of danger. Then, without any warning, he would either duck or roll in another direction.

And at this moment, silver beams of light would always appear from the inside and outside.

Derrick had already closed his eyes. Ignoring the loss of blood, he tried his best to maintain the Unshadowed domain. Haim and another Dawn Paladin similarly didn’t dare open their eyes. They helped Shepherd Elder Lovia and slowly moved the group towards the palace without exiting the protective domain.

If not for the help of the silver-armored knight evil spirit, they would’ve long been diced into small pieces of flesh and blood by the Storm of Light that swept the area.

That Light Culler Murskogan alone had placed the City of Silver’s expedition team into a precarious position, with no chance of counterattacking.

As expected of the leader of the King’s Court Chasers, this should be the strongest force beneath subsidiary gods, or in other words, angels… Compared to the Demon Hunter, the Silver Knight has several more terrifying Beyonder powers… Above the gray fog, The Fool Klein held the Sea God Scepter and carefully observed the battle.

He quickly figured out the aspect in which Light Culler Murskogan was powerful in.

Firstly, his defensive power can be transformed into a full-body silver armor set. Secondly, it can be used to hide and conceal himself with the light, hiding any malicious intent. Thirdly, the condensed Sword of Dawn isn't something that can be maintained for a short period of time. It can be used as a normal weapon, sufficiently sharp, and good at cleansing. Fourth, it can create some sort of thin silver-white sword. It has the ability to teleport, and it can bypass most barriers to attack the target directly, and even cause it to erupt from within the target's body. Furthermore, this thin silver-white sword condensed without any warning, making it difficult to predict…

This is a saint who's extremely good at fighting head-on. If it wasn't for the rich experience and strong intuition of the City of Silver's Chief, he would've been in danger due to the suppression effect from being of the same pathway when fighting in his Mythical Creature form… If it were me, I might've already been killed. Of course, I wouldn't fight head- on with the leader of the King's Court Chasers…

From the current situation, because the evil spirit needs to protect its Shepherd, there's no way for it to directly participate in the battle. The City of Silver's expedition team has almost no chance of winning. Yes, they're already slowly retreating. Very rational…If it really doesn't work, perhaps Mr. Fool will have to deliver lightning punishment" However, the True Creator should still be watching… My Lightning Storm might not be able to quickly resolve Murskogan… Klein's thoughts raced when he suddenly thought of a problem:

How did Light Culler Murskogan, who wasn't an angel, survive since the end of the Second Epoch. He's neither a demoness, vampire, nor Undying!

And from him possessing reason, as well as the ability he displays in battle, he doesn't have Beyonder characteristics of other pathways mixed in him.

Chapter 1121 - Weakness

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Since Light Culler Murskogan didn't gain his long lifespan from his Beyonder characteristic, Klein could only begin considering external factors.

The effects of a mystical item? No, he doesn't have any mystical items on him. Aside from the Giant King's residence, there's nothing in the vicinity either. However, that's the sleeping ground of Dark Angel Sasrir. Furthermore, the key is with me. I don't think Murskogan would dare or have the means to enter…

Who took the key to the Giant King's residence after Sasrir fell into a slumber? Isn't that a bit too wicked? Of course, the palace without the powers of a deity augmenting it wouldn't be able to trap a King of Angels… Or perhaps, this key had long been transported to the Northern Continent during the migration of the giants. Sasrir chose to sleep in the palace because, other than a small number of existences, no one can open the door and affect "His" sleep?

Was Vice Admiral Iceberg's key given to me through a roundabout manner by the God of Knowledge and Wisdom? "He" wants to learn of Sasrir's present state?

If it's not the effects of a mystical item, what could it be? Time given by an angel from the Marauder pathway? Ignoring the possibility of giving stolen illusory items to someone else, there needs to be an angel or a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact from the Marauder pathway. And there aren't any similar existences nearby… Back then, Murskogan was given a lifespan of thousands of years at once? This… Perhaps only Amon is capable of doing that. Clearly, "He" wouldn't help Dark Angel Sasrir…

In addition, this Blasphemer's true body seems to be wandering around the Forsaken Land of the Gods. If there were angels or Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts of the Marauder pathway here, they might've become his food long ago…

The cycle of fate? After Light Culler Murskogan's natural death, everything begins with him guarding Sasrir again? Yes, that's possible. If the current Murskogan is in an aged state, then it's completely understandable how so much time has passed… Furthermore, because the time in this loop seals centuries, it hasn't reached a node yet. It's only normal that I didn't manage to discover any signs above the gray fog in my haste…

With this in mind, he quickly observed his surroundings to find traces of the Angel of Fate, Ouroboros.

However, there was no remnant power like that.

Klein quickly retracted his gaze and continued to observe Light Culler Murskogan's intense battle with Colin Iliad and the silver-armored knight evil spirit.

His Spirit Body Threads are normal, eliminating the possibility of him already becoming a marionette… Under "true vision," his condition isn't abnormal. This means that he isn't a figure summoned from history…

The divine kingdom of the Giant King's Court is slowing down the passing of time or aging? The former can be eliminated because my spirituality is almost unable to support my level of observation. This matches the amount of time the City of Silver's exploration team has spent in this area… There is a certain chance of the latter, with life progressing in the "sunset" state but being solidified during "dusk"?

But the problem is that the ancient god, the Giant King, has already perished. Badheil, who wields the power of dawn and the power of dusk, has brought the divine kingdom to the astral world. It's impossible for this King's Court to still have such a powerful influence remaining within it… Klein went through all the possibilities of extending one's life that he could think of, but none of them matched the situation of the leader of the Court Chasers.

He had no choice but to consider another possibility:

A secret art with a huge defect?

This should be dependent on some kind of power in the Giant King's Court. Otherwise, the range of Murskogan's activities wouldn't be so tiny. It wouldn't take until the City of Silver's expedition team arrived at the Giant King's residence before he took action…

The entity related to life inside the Giant King's Court clearly exists, the former Goddess of Harvest, the present Earth Mother, Giant Queen Omebella.

As this thought flashed through his mind, he cast his gaze at the giant statues outside the palace.

They were no different from the ones the City of Silver expedition team had encountered along the way. They were only slightly larger.

However, after careful inspection, he noticed a small number of abnormalities. These giant statues had the aura of life, and they possessed a certain amount of spirituality. However, behind the mask, it was pitch black without any dark red glow.

This… Light Culler Murskogan had used some sort of secret technique in the life domain to bind his spirit with the living statues. Using them, he obtained a long life, but this results in him being limited to such a tiny region and being unable to leave… This is very similar to the way evil spirits exist… This way, Murskogan might not be able to show his normal Mythical Creature form… Klein conjured a gold coin and flipped it up to make confirmation.

When he received an affirmation, he raised the Sea God Scepter high and prepared to remind Little Sun through the prayer light.

At this moment, Demon Hunter Colin, who had avoided Murskogan's first attack, suddenly ducked and circled around him, running straight for the Giant King's residence from the side.

His gaze was locked onto those gigantic statues!

In the intense battle just now, although this City of Silver Chief had always been at a disadvantage, he didn't give up on observing his surroundings, nor did he stop thinking.

He was similarly puzzled as to why the leader of the Court Chasers could live for thousands of years. When he discovered that the living giant statues were only standing outside the palace without participating in the battle, he had arrived at a certain conclusion.

He didn't know what exactly was going on, what principles underlay it, or what domain it belonged to, but his rich experience in exploration, and the intuition as a Demon Hunter, made him believe that the statues were the crux of the problem!

Tap! Tap! Tap!

With two swords in his hands, Colin Iliad dashed forward, taking large strides. However, he didn't run in a straight line as he zigzagged his way forward.

Upon seeing this scene, Light Culler Murskogan let out an angry roar as he held the broadsword in his hands and rapidly slashed forward.

His reaction proved that Colin Iliad's judgment was correct.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Demon Hunter Colin suddenly leaped away and did a roll. And above his original trajectory, silver light appeared out of thin air and exploded, forming a “long snake.” It completely lifted the solid ground of the King’s Court, tearing open a deep chasm.

With a loud thud, Light Culler Murskogan took a step forward. His nearly five-meter-tall body bent and smashed the silver broadsword in his hand onto the ground.

Clang!

The area shook violently as the pillars snapped and fell into the orange cloud beneath. The ground between the two buildings exploded layer by layer, sending countless gravel flying.

As for Demon Hunter Colin, he had already leaped up ahead of time and was in midair. He crossed his swords, creating an invisible barrier that blocked the rubble that resembled an arrow.

At this moment, Murskogan, who had his back bent, bent his knee and exerted strength into it. His massive body shot out like a meteor, instantly closing the distance between him and Demon Hunter Colin.

During this process, the silver broadsword in his hands moved upwards.

Seeing that Demon Hunter Colin was no longer able to dodge, a bright light suddenly shot over, accurately hitting Murskogan’s broadsword.

With a loud clang, Colin Iliad tumbled to the ground and finally approached the giant statues in one swift move.

At the same time, he saw from the corner of his eye that the silver-armored knight phantom in front of Elder Lovia had long drawn out its giant sword. It had condensed the light of dawn into a huge bow as it shot out arrows consecutively.

Light Culler Murskogan’s single eye had already been dyed with a layer of red. He didn't care about the arrows of light, and he allowed them to hit his body as they produced clanking sounds.

He kept charging forward and brandished his broadsword, causing silver light to appear from different parts of the void. He chased after the giant-like Demon Hunter Colin, preventing him from attacking those giant statues.

Suddenly, an arrow that was gathered from the lustrous brilliances tore past Murskogan and silently hit the gap in his visor.

This was from the evil spirit that Shepherd Lovia "Grazed."

Demon Hunter Colin was merely bait. It was the real attacker.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! One arrow after another flew past, but this time, they were all blocked by Murskogan.

But at that moment, the Demon Hunter had already positioned himself well. He aimed at the remaining giant statues and swung his two straight swords that were enveloped by the light of dawn.

Light bloomed as a "Hurricane of Light" blanketed the area.

With continuous cracking sounds, the statues collapsed to the ground. Meanwhile, the aura of the Light Culler Murskogan rapidly declined.

This King's Court Chaser leader immediately roared, "Let's die together!"

The silver broadsword in his hand exploded, splintering into countless fragments of light. They formed a terrifying storm that swept everything around them.

The silver-armored knight evil spirit and Demon Hunter Colin simultaneously stabbed their swords into the ground, creating an invisible barrier.

The dazzling white light swept between the two buildings, destroying the grayish-blue door and stone pillars behind Derrick and company. However, when they “swept” into the Giant King’s residence, they failed to affect it completely.

After an unknown period of time, just as Derrick thought that the invisible barrier was about to be torn apart by the Hurricane of Light, the rays of light finally dimmed.

In the ruins, the silver armor on the body of Light Culler Murskogan slowly faded away, revealing his grayish-blue body that was wearing linen clothes.

Not far away from him, Demon Hunter Colin’s body was covered in blood. He was transforming from a giant back to his normal state, but his aura was relatively stable. It was just that he had weakened greatly.

With a clang, Murskogan genuflected as his flesh rapidly aged, decomposed, and evaporated.

Under the orange light, he seemed to see the lively King’s Court once again. In the frozen dusk, giants came and went, playing the seven-stringed guitar or bone flute, wrestling, or enjoying the delicacies that they could eat at any time. The passing of their lives moved extremely slowly, and their king sat on a high throne, watching everything from above with a stately demeanor.

After that incident, none of that existed, so he chose to follow Dark Angel Sasrir.

A smile appeared on Murskogan’s face as he opened his mouth and softly shouted, “King…”

This Court Chaser bowed his head, his flesh and blood completely evaporated, leaving behind a huge white skeleton and silvery-white light that had condensed together.

Chapter 1122 - The Instructions of The Fool

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Above the gray fog, when Klein saw Light Culler Murskogan rapidly age and decompose into bones, he suddenly recalled Mobet, Siatas, Frunziar, and Snowman when they left Groselle's Travels.

He didn't have the time to stop it back then, and it was no different this time. This was because the leader of the King's Court Chasers had never chanted the honorific name of The Fool, so he was unable to pull him above the gray fog.

However, compared to before, with the Sea God Scepter in hand, he could now do more things by using the prayer light.

He immediately accommodated the Black Emperor card and activated the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. He made the Paper Angel carry his own words and use the crimson star to enter the real world and land on the remnant spirit of Light Culler Murskogan.

This was one of the methods that wouldn't lower his loftiness as The Fool. After all, the True Creator was still watching the area.

As Murskogan's consciousness was rapidly wiped out of existence, an angel with black wings suddenly appeared in front of him.

The speed at which his Spirit Body collapsed slowed down as he heard a loud and majestic voice:

"What is the advancement ritual and supplementary ingredients of the

Silver Knight potion?

“Is Sasrir really sleeping in the palace of the Giant King?”

Murskogan replied blankly, “The advancement ritual of the Silver Knight comes from the Blasphemy Slate. It needs a complicated altar to be set up, placing the remains of the six powerful creatures one had hunted in the correct positions, and receive the blessings of a deity…

“The supplementary ingredients are…

“I can’t be certain. In short, that door didn’t open after Lord Sasrir entered…”

Amidst the response, the spirit of Murskogan’s spirit slowly but firmly dissipated. Finally, he could no longer hold on as he was reduced to points of light that merged into the still dusk of the Giant King’s Court.

And this conversation happened within the soul domain, so no one else could hear it.

Thankfully, I’m careful enough to not let Murskogan say the main ingredient of the Silver Knight potion. Anyway, the Beyonder characteristic can be used to replace whatever it is. Otherwise, I wouldn’t be able to hear the answer to the second question… The Fool heaved a sigh of relief and praised himself inwardly.

He then focused and seriously thought about what Murskogan had just said.

A deity’s blessing? Isn’t this advancement ritual a little too difficult? It’s only Sequence 3… Uh, I have to consider the circumstances of his timeline. Murskogan is a powerhouse who survived from the Second Epoch. It was a habit to call an angel a subsidiary god, and include “Them” in the ranks of a god. That also means that the blessings of an angel should be sufficient. Yes, I’ll use divination to confirm this later… Of course, even if an angel’s blessings are sufficient, I’m unable to do anything for the time being. It will depend if the Grade 0 Sealed

Artifacts in the City of Silver have any living characteristics that can also be communicated with…

The act of setting up that altar is actually a little complicated… Must the remains of the six powerful creatures that one has personally killed have to be at the demigod level? It's very difficult for Demon Hunters outside the Forsaken Land of the Gods. How can there be so many demigod-level creatures to be killed? Most of them are protected by their corresponding organizations. From the looks of it, the Church of the God of Combat should have a new substitute method while maintaining the essence of the ritual. Is this the difference between the first and second Blasphemy Slate?

However, for a young Chief like the City of Silver, he must've killed more than six powerful monsters… That's easy.

As he was currently certain that the second Blasphemy Slate had appeared after the ancient sun god's death, he was able to determine that Light Culler Murskogan was referring to the first Blasphemy slate.

He quickly conjured a piece of parchment from his interpretation of the advancement ritual and supplementary ingredients. Then, a divination with a topaz spirit pendulum was performed, to which he received a revelation that there were no mistakes.

Then, he threw this message to the crimson star representing The Sun.

This is a gift from Mr. Fool. After doing all of this, Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh. He increasingly felt that the answer to the second question was worth ruminating.

He didn't say if Sasrir was truly asleep. He only said that the door hadn't opened after the Dark Angel entered.

And the only thing that didn't open was the door.

The God of Knowledge and Wisdom gave me the key, and Adam gave me the Unshadowed Crucifix. Was it done to open the door to confirm the Dark Angel's condition? As his thoughts raced, he suddenly felt lucky. Fortunately, the True Creator wasn't too interested in this. If this entity had sent down "His" will just now and tried to influence Murskogan's dissipating spirit, "He" would've clashed with The Fool's Paper Angel on the spot.

That would be rather awkward.

Only at that moment did Derrick dare to open his eyes. His face was pale from having lost too much blood. In order to maintain the Unshadowed domain, he had allowed the cross to absorb quite a bit of his blood.

He looked around and placed the Unshadowed Crucifix in front of him as he sincerely thanked Mr. Fool.

At that moment, Haim put away Thunder God's Roar and his weapon. He removed the leather bag on his back and found a set of clothes to throw to the Chief.

To the City of Silver's exploration team, as long as they weren't wearing clothes and armor that were mystical items, it was inevitable that their clothes would suffer damage during battle. Therefore, they definitely prepared a few additional sets ahead of time.

To them, the purpose of clothing covering their bodies was secondary. The most important thing was to leave space to store materials, ointments, and charms.

Colin Iliad looked around vigilantly, but he didn't find anything unusual. He quickly put on his clothes and found one of the small metal bottles that had fallen all over the ground during the battle. He removed the lid and gulped it down.

His face turned a little green as if he had been poisoned. However, his wounds and the signs of decline were improving.

As for Lovia, she was no longer able to maintain the "Grazing" of the silver-armored knight, and she placed it back inside her body.

By the time Murskogan’s Beyonder characteristic condensed into a silvery-white luster that resembled a miniature sun or heart, it was put away by Demon Hunter Colin. This Shepherd Elder looked at the nearby palace with his gray eyes and said, “Chief, the path to the sea might very well be hidden there.”

Lovia paused for a moment before adding, “Perhaps there’s another way to get to the other side of the sea.”

As Colin Iliad watched Derrick, Haim, and the others clean up the battlefield, pick up items, and deal with the mutilated corpse of Antiona, he shook his head and said, “The Dark Angel is sleeping inside, and ’He* is definitely a King of Angels, one we are currently unable to resist. Even facing ’Him* will be very difficult.

“Let’s head back first and inform everyone that we have seen the sea before making preparations for entry into the Giant King’s palace.”

Lovia’s silver-gray hair fluttered slightly as she wore a solemn expression.

“But we don’t know anything. We can’t make any targeted preparations.

After saying that, she fell silent for two seconds before saying, “I have a suggestion. You, Derrick, Haim, and the others can head back first. I’ll stay behind and attempt to enter the palace to gather useful information. I can fuse into the shadows and perhaps not disturb that Dark Angel.

“If I don’t return, it means that the danger inside has exceeded the limits we can handle.”

When Lovia mentioned that she might die, her expression didn’t change at all, as if she had long been prepared.

Colin listened quietly and stared at her for a few seconds.

“No.

“We can’t bear such risks.

“If you awaken the Dark Angel, ‘He’ might leave the Giant King’s Court and attack the City of Silver, but we definitely won’t be able to resist against ‘Him.’”

Without waiting for Lovia’s reply, Colin Iliad turned his head and looked at the other three members.

“Derrick, what’s your opinion?”

My opinion? Derrick was somewhat at a loss. He nearly blurted the question back out.

Haim and the other Dawn Paladin were equally shocked. This was because this was an internal conflict among the six- member council. Colin Iliad had actually asked for Derrick Berg’s opinion!

Could it be that the Chief has been nurturing Derrick as the next Elder of the six-member council? The two members of the expedition team looked thoughtfully at their teammates.

…This is him asking for my opinion? The Fool Klein above the gray fog frowned slightly.

His brain immediately began to churn rapidly.

What views can I have?

If they were to open the door and awaken Sasrir, I wouldn’t be able to save any of them. All I can do is get them to ask for the help of the True Creator!

Let’s wait until I figure out the situation regarding the Dark Angel from the Red Angel evil spirit and other related existences before beginning the exploration… I don’t have to worry about the Dragon of Wisdom and Adam’s thoughts for now…

No matter what, there's nothing wrong with choosing to be calm and cautious at such times.

As his thoughts raced, Klein sternly said, "Return."

He then projected this image into the crimson star representing The Sun.

Derrick was stunned for two seconds before calmly answering the Chiefs question.

"I think we should give up for now and wait until we're ready."

Colin Iliad nodded and said to Shepherd Lovia, "This is my decision."

Lovia fell silent for a moment before saying, "I will defer to your decision."

She didn't say anything else as she helped Derrick and company mark the area.

As Antiona wasn't killed by a blood relative, there was a high possibility that an anomaly would happen. Therefore, the expedition team would mark the area, making the ones who arrived later to be more vigilant. However, they didn't need to worry about such effects since they were very far away from the City of Silver.

While they busied themselves, Lovia suddenly looked up and said to Derrick and Haim, "This is the Giant King's Court. There might not be any anomalies."

She didn't explain as she looked at Antiona's pile of flesh that had been burned into ashes by the flames. She grabbed a handful of them and placed them inside her leather bag.

After completing these matters, the City of Silver's expedition team found another passageway, but they obtained a disappointing outcome.

Following that, under the lead of Chief Colin Iliad, they retraced their path back.

After entering the palace that had already lost its main door while having the oil painting band playing their tunes, Derrick couldn't help but turn his head to look outside at the broken railings again. He looked at the orange-red cloud in the distance, towards the deep blue sea.

After staring at it for a few seconds, he retracted his gaze and realized that the Chiefs light-blue eyes were also silently looking in that direction.

Colin immediately turned his head and said calmly, "Let's go."

Then, without turning back, he proceeded steadily.

Chapter 1123 - After the Expedition

◆ ◆ ◆

Above the gray fog, when he saw that the City of Silver's exploration team had begun embarking on their way back as the Giant King's palace remained unchanged, Klein heaved a sigh of relief and leaned back in his chair, exhausted.

After two hours of observation, his spirituality was nearing its limits. At most, he could hold out for another fifteen minutes.

Regardless, the things obtained from this expedition completely exceeded my imagination. It's only right to give the Silver Knight potion formula to the City of Silver. As he rubbed his forehead, his thoughts began to wander. Being aware of these ancient secrets is very helpful to my digestion after my advancement. The problem now is that my Bizarro Sorcerer potion hasn't been fully digested…

From the feedback I've been getting over this period of time, it can be seen that all sorts of strange tales are indeed useful. When Miss Magician completes the script and publishes it, it just needs some time to build up some momentum before it's done.

However, she started writing a few days ago. I don't know when she will finish her manuscript…

Why can't she just write a few more hours every day?

When I went to pick her up this time, I should urge her…

With this in mind, Klein suddenly recalled something. He hadn't given

Anderson a reward for finding Vice Admiral Ailment.

I'll wait until he helps Danitz become a Conspirer. Anyway, this was also part of the agreement… The advancement ritual of an Iron-blooded Knight isn't difficult, but it's not simple either. Especially for a Hunter, it's even more troublesome… It requires a Hunter who is adept at provocation and enjoys coming up with ploys to build a team of at least thirty people, and also nurture a deep sense of friendship amongst them while making them strong. When they act almost as one, they'll set up the ritual… The greater the strength and camaraderie amongst the team, the better the effects of the ritual…

Seeing that the City of Silver's expedition team was returning in an orderly manner without encountering any accidents, he finally felt at ease. He left the world above the gray fog and threw himself into bed, falling into a dream.

After some rest at the Afternoon Town camp, Derrick Berg finally recovered and his face was no longer as pale.

He had just eaten bread made from Black-Faced Grass powder when a figure grew out from the shadows outside and said in a low voice, "Derrick, the Chief is looking for you."

"Yes." Derrick subconsciously stood up. "Thank you."

He was originally prepared to find the Chief and hand over the Silver Knight potion formula.

After watching the messenger retreat into the shadows, he walked out of the room and arrived at the clearing where the bonfire was illuminated.

At a glance, Derrick saw many members who hadn't participated in the expedition gathered in groups of two or three. They were excitedly discussing something.

They already knew that one could see the sea from the Giant King's

Court. They knew that it wasn't too far from the coast, and as long as they found the correct path, they would arrive there in no time.

This was an important step for the City of Silver to save themselves after discovering the outsider, Jack.

The residents of the City of Silver, who mainly had the power of Dawn, finally saw the light of dawn.

Their long wait and persistence seemed to have paid off.

Derrick could understand the feelings of his team members because he was the same. However, from The World Gehrman Sparrow, he knew very well that the waters in the ruins of the battle of gods weren't that simple. To head to the other side of the sea would probably be extremely difficult.

Ignoring everything else, just Dark Angel Sasrir, who was sleeping in the Giant King's palace and blocking the vital path outside, was a problem that he couldn't overcome at the moment.

I can only hope that Mr. Fool will bless me. Yes, for that boy to appear in the temple ruins, it means that there are other paths that can bypass the Giant King's palace and reach the sea… Derrick thought optimistically as he circled around the quietly burning bonfire and walked towards the Chiefs room on the other side.

Suddenly, he saw a person sitting silently in the shadow of a boulder.

It was a man in his twenties, and he was much taller than Derrick. He held a pale gold bracelet with three small bells hanging on it as he looked at it with his pupils unfocused.

Derrick was no stranger to this man. He knew that he was the husband of Antiona, Dolores, a Sequence 6 Dawn Paladin.

In the City of Silver, before the age of eighteen, one could date freely until they were married. And if one didn't have a partner at the age of eighteen, they would be arranged to have one. It was the same for widows and widowers after three years.

This was a necessary measure to ensure the necessary population level for the City of Silver’s continuation. It seemed like it was against human rights, but for the continuation of the entire city in the dark lands, it could only be done this way. Furthermore, this could ensure that everyone had a certain number of close relatives, preventing the possibility of mutating into a terrifying evil spirit after their death.

As for Dolores and Antiona, they were neighbors who lived on the same street. They had known each other since they were young and had a good impression of each other. In the end, they started dating when they were teammates of a patrol team. Over time, they became husband and wife and had a deep, loving relationship.

In light of how they had a young child, Colin Iliad had deliberately left one of them behind during the expedition to the Giant King’s Court.

On the one hand, Derrick felt that there was nothing wrong with the Chiefs arrangement, and on the other hand, he felt a strong sense of sorrow because of the way Dolores acted. It was as if he had returned to the state when he had to personally stab his parents to death.

From the beginning to the end of the expedition, it only took half a day’s time. However, to Dolores, it meant everything had changed.

After a moment of silence, Derrick retracted his gaze and continued forward, subconsciously taking a few heavy steps. At the same time, he thought of a rumor:

Shepherd Elder Lovia once had a husband, but he died in an expedition. This was very common to begin with and wasn’t worth discussing. However, other than Lovia, the team that explored the ruins of the temple had all gone “mad.” After they were eradicated, there were rumors that gradually spread among the residents of the City of Silver:

During that expedition, Elder Lovia had eaten her husband!

In the "night" with low lightning frequency, the winds were rather cold. Derrick shivered and turned his attention back to the scene before him.

He took a few steps and arrived at his destination. He raised his hand and knocked on the Chiefs door.

"Come in," Colin Iliad said calmly.

Derrick pushed open the door and entered. He saw the chief wearing a linen shirt and dark-colored coat wiping his two swords with oil.

Colin Iliad didn't stop. He raised his head and looked at Derrick.

"What are your thoughts on this expedition?"

What's the Chiefs motive for asking this? Having been influenced by Alger, Derrick subconsciously had this thought.

Unable to grasp the true intentions of the Chief, he had no choice but to close the door and answer frankly, "There might be other paths to the seaside. The palace of the Giant King should be very important, but that's too dangerous. We need more information."

Colin Iliad nodded and asked, "The Kings of Angels and other existences who call themselves deities secretly plotted together because… because they wanted to resist the Lord?

"And 'Their' success caused this land to be forsaken?"

Although Derrick had never directly heard of such an inference, it wasn't difficult to come up with a similar conclusion based on the various secrets he had learned from the Tarot Club.

"Yes, that should be the case."

Colin fell silent. Even his act of wiping his sword slowed down.

After a few seconds, he put down the items in his hand and took two steps forward.

“Those who participated in the conspiracy are still active on the other side of the sea?”

After a moment of silence, Derrick replied in deliberation, “Mostly.

“But not too much.”

Colin Iliad nodded, indicating that he had nothing else to ask.

Derrick hurriedly said, “Chief, I obtained the incomplete formula of the Silver Knight potion, including the supplementary ingredients and the advancement ritual during Light Culler Murskogan’s death.”

When he said this, Derrick knew that his lie sounded overly fake. It could be seen through right away because he didn’t even dare to open his eyes back then.

However, he just couldn’t think of a better excuse.

If Mr. Hanged Man were here, he would definitely have a better solution… Just as this thought came to his mind, he heard the Chief speak slowly:

“Very good. What is it?”

Derrick was stunned for a second before he hurriedly recounted the corresponding ritual and supplementary ingredients.

Colin listened quietly and let out a long sigh.

“You have contributed greatly this time. This is extremely important to the City of Silver. In the future, our limit will be Sequence 3 and not Sequence 4. Up to a certain range, the risk of the expedition teams will be greatly reduced.”

Why will the risk encountered by the expedition teams be reduced when the upper limit is Sequence 3 within a certain range… As Derrick was happy that he had made such a contribution, he couldn't understand the Chiefs words.

However, he knew that this was something he didn't have the right to understand. He planned on asking around at the Tarot Gathering later.

He then bade farewell and opened the door.

"Derrick…" Colin Iliad suddenly called out to him.

Derrick turned his head in puzzlement and found that the Chiefs expression was rather solemn.

Colin fell silent for a while before shaking his head.

"Be careful of Lovia."

"Yes, Your Excellency," Derrick replied from the bottom of his heart.

Backlund, North Borough.

Hazel took a carriage back to the city from Moose Manor, and she was preparing to meet Miss Audrey at the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation to discuss matters regarding donations and help.

After many interactions, she had a very good impression of this noble lady. She didn't feel pressured when beside her, and the strange emotions accumulated in her heart had mostly dissipated. She gradually recovered more of her forgotten memories.

I should have a teacher… What exactly happened that day? Every time I think about it, I tremble all over… Hazel cast her gaze out the window, feeling a little depressed.

Her carriage was driving past the vicinity of Boklund Street.

At this moment, a person dressed in the clothes of a mailman rode his bicycle horizontally across the carriage, looking rather relaxed.

Hazel casually sized him up and saw a monocle on his right eye.

Chapter 1124 - Enhanced Teammates

◆ ◆ ◆

Hazel’s gaze instantly froze as she felt something rapidly expanding in her mind. It was about to tear apart an invisible barrier and spew out.

She instinctively looked away and curled up slightly.

Then, she felt a ray of light shoot out from the depths of her heart, exploding into countless memory fragments in her mind as it howled, raging back and forth.

She suddenly remembered what had happened at home that day. She recalled her father, mother, maid, and servants wearing monocles or pinching their eye sockets. The indescribable horror was so vivid, as though it had been carved into her bones.

The expression on Hazel’s face crumbled as she curled into a ball as she trembled. The maidservant in the carriage was stunned as she hurriedly stood up and reached out her hands in an attempt to help her up.

“No!” Hazel trembled as she shouted with a nearly sharp voice.

The maidservant was shocked and frightened. She stood rooted to the ground, not knowing how to react.

After shouting, Hazel calmed down. She sat up and looked ahead in extreme fear. She saw the monocled postman enter another street, leaving only his back visible.

“I-I wasn’t feeling well just now. I’m feeling much better now,” Hazel turned her head and barely said to the maidservant.

She realized that she wasn't as afraid as she remembered. It was as if she had already gotten used to the situation after some time.

If not, I might have lost control just now… Why would I use the word "lose control"… Thankfully, I forgot those memories and didn't do anything eye-catching when I saw the postman. It took me ten seconds to break down. If not, I might've been detected, and something terrifying might've happened… Her thoughts flashed uncontrollably as her body trembled slightly.

"Miss, do you need to go to the clinic?" the maidservant asked hurriedly.

Hazel instinctively shook her head as her mind turned chaotic as she casually said, "Let's go to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation first. I remember there's a private clinic nearby."

"Alright." The maidservant turned around and instructed the coachman to speed up.

Hazel kept taking deep breaths in an attempt to regulate her tense emotions, panic, and fear.

It had to be said that it was somewhat effective. She seemed to have calmed down a little instead of breaking down immediately.

At that moment, a sparrow had appeared above the carriage at some point in time. It squeezed its right eye and spat out a human language with almost no sound.

"She seems to have some unnecessary misunderstanding about me.

"It looks like T had some interactions with her before. Ah, she's a resident of Boklund Street. Interesting…"

Before long, the carriage arrived at Phelps Street. Seeing that the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation wasn't far away, Hazel suddenly said, "To the cathedral.

“Turn towards Saint Samuel Cathedral first.”

“I want to pray.”

She wanted to tell the bishops what had happened that day and what she saw today!

In the gap of the carriage, a black ant moved its feeler on its right and whispered in a human voice, “Humans nowadays are really lacking in creativity. They go to cathedrals at the first sight of problems. I thought I would discover something if I followed her. Next time, I’ll steal the cathedral in front of them.”

As he spoke, the other feeler of the ant moved as well.

Hazel immediately forgot what she had just said and what she had just recalled. She had forgotten that she had met a postman wearing a monocle. She got off the carriage at the entrance of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation and headed in with her maidservant in tow.

Clearly, her maidservant and her driver didn’t remember the previous order.

In the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, Audrey welcomed Hazel and brought her new friend into the activities needed to help the injured soldiers at the front lines.

As The World Gehrman Sparrow had mentioned that the leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul, and other angels were hidden in Backlund, Audrey carefully gave up on the third stage of treatment for Hazel. She hoped that Hazel wouldn’t recall what she had experienced for the time being to prevent any accidents from happening.

Her current plan was to busy herself with charity work, helping others to make Hazel gradually brighten up and strengthen her ability to withstand the psychological trauma.

In the pirate's free city, Fors was drinking a high concentration of fruit wine that was locally produced, recording what she had heard and encountered today.

Suddenly, her spiritual perception was triggered as she instinctively looked to the side.

She immediately saw a figure appear in the void, quickly reforming. It was Gehrman Sparrow in a half top hat, black trench coat, and a cold expression.

With a swoosh, Fors stood up with her wine glass and fountain pen. She subconsciously said, "Good afternoon, uh, Mr. Sparrow."

As she spoke, she hurriedly placed the items on the table.

Klein pressed his top hat and looked around.

"Do you want to leave?"

Fors eyes darted to her sides before she said, "Alright."

Over the past few days, she had already made preliminary records of the traits of the city that were different from other places.

Without saying a word, Klein gestured at the items on the desk with his chin, indicating for Miss Magician to quickly pack up.

Fors didn't hesitate at all as she hurriedly organized her drafts, as though she had heard an instruction.

As he stood there and watched the other party busy, he suddenly said, "How's the progress with the horror story?" Fors trembled indiscernibly before replying, "Soon, soon."

Klein gently nodded his head.

"How much longer?"

“A week—no, five days. Five days, tops,” Fors quickly replied.

Klein didn’t say anything else. After Fors packed up her drafts, fountain pen, half a bottle of wine, and other memorabilia, he took two steps forward and grabbed her shoulder.

Countless indescribable figures flashed past, and Fors felt a little more relaxed than before. She even attempted to “Record” this “Travel.”

Before long, she returned to Backlund and returned to the alley where she had disappeared from before. She heard The World Gehrman Sparrow say, “Rest for a few days before setting off.

Take note of any replies. Also, ask your teacher again if there’s any information related to the Blood Emperor Tudor, mainly about the various ruins.”

“Alright.” Fors quickly agreed and thanked him.

AJFter separating from Gehrman Sparrow, she returned to a street in East Borough and entered an apartment that she shared with Xio.

Xio put down the newspaper and looked at her friend.

“Was it effective?”

“Pretty good. I went to a free city belonging to the pirates this time…” Before Fors could finish speaking, her expression changed slightly. “Give me my coffee beans and cigarettes.”

“Why? Was it lacking there?” Xio asked in puzzlement.

Fors ran straight for the room inside and sat in front of the desk. She opened her drafts and picked up a pen. Without looking back, she said, “For the sake of the new book!

“Remember to make me coffee!”

Xio followed her to the bedroom door. When she heard that, she opened her mouth but didn't say anything.

In another spot in East Borough, in a rented apartment with a similar layout.

As Zaratul had already arrived in Backlund, it was unknown when Amon would be "baited" over. The Red Angel evil spirit's true motives were unknown, and he was planning on preventing George III from becoming a Black Emperor. On the one hand, Klein was trying his best to digest the Bizarro Sorcerer potion, and on the other hand, he was making various preparations.

At this moment, after handling The Magician, he opened up a piece of paper and wrote:

"Dear Mr. Azik,

"I've recently learned quite a bit of ancient history. I believe you will be very interested in it. Otherwise, you wouldn't have chosen to be a history teacher after losing your memories.

This history involves some concealed secrets, so it's not convenient to describe them in a letter. When you wake up, I will share it with you in person…

"Also, I can create a charm called 'Yesterday Once More.' Once used, you can find your past self through the Historical Void and borrow power from 'Him.'

"This is actually not something worth paying attention to. What's most important is that you can retrieve your memories from your past self. There's no need to use decades to slowly awaken them. I believe you will like it…

"I attached two with this letter. If you wake up, you can try their effects…

"I'm currently in an environment filled with undercurrents. If you come over, please be careful. Please observe the situation in advance…

"…On the matter of George III advancing to a Black Emperor, I will try to do something, but the chances of success are very slim…

"Finally, I wish you well. I also wish that you wake up soon. Your eternal student, Klein Moretti."

After folding the letter, Klein stuffed two Yesterday Once More charms into the envelope.

Following that, he took out Azik's copper whistle and blew it.

The huge skeleton messenger immediately emerged from the floor and received the letter with his head at a height lower than Klein.

Klein nodded slightly and watched as the messenger disintegrated into bones before disappearing.

After doing all of this, he used two fingers to pull out Will Auceptin's paper crane from his wallet. He wrote on it with a pencil:

"I have something to ask you."

He placed the paper crane under his pillow and lay down on it. With the help of "Cogitation," he entered a deep sleep.

In the depths of the pitch-black sharp tower, Klein once again met Will Auceptin, who was sitting in a black baby pram.

Without waiting for the other party to speak, he directly asked, "Do you know who can provide the method needed to accommodate the Uniqueness? What kind of price would it take?"

If the price is too high, then forget it… Klein added inwardly.

Will Auceptin, who was sucking on his thumb, was taken aback.

"You want to help me accommodate the Die of Probability?"

Klein nodded seriously and said, “Regardless of whether it’s a success or not, we should try our best.”

Just as he finished speaking, Will Auceptin’s tears rolled down his cheeks.

The chubby baby pounded his hands to the side and cried sadly. He whimpered and said, “It’s useless… It’s too late… I’ve already rebooted, and I still have to spend at least twenty-two years growing before I can accommodate the Uniqueness… Why didn’t you say that earlier…

“I’m really unlucky… It must’ve been that silly snake, Ouroboros, who took too much of my luck…”

Chapter 1125 - Opportunity

◆

As he listened to Will Auceptin’s “tearful complaints,” Klein was at a loss as to how to react. He could only remain expressionless.

After the baby wrapped in silver silk calmed down, he asked in puzzlement, “Even if I said it earlier, it’s useless. When I met you, you were already ‘rebooted.’”

“No, I was still Will Auceptin at that time. I didn’t have Ceres as my last name, I’d”rebooted” for a long time back then.” The chubby baby wiped his tears and said, “Although I’m still quite some time away from becoming an adult, as long as I’m willing to take a certain risk, it’s not impossible to accommodate it. With the luck I’ve accumulated, that risk can be resolved. But, the difference now is just too great. There’s no way to make up for it.”

With a thought, Klein said after some deliberation, “Perhaps you can find an angel from the Marauder pathway to steal time from you, allowing you to grow up faster.”

Will Auceptin was still choking as he shook his head and said, “It’s useless… It’s impossible for ‘Them’ to accurately steal my ‘childhood’ and ‘teenage’ years. If it’s only a matter of time, it won’t allow me to grow. It will only reduce the age I can originally live to… When the time comes, Will Auceptin Ceres will die prematurely, having been born June 1350 and dying October 1350, for a ripe old age of four months…”

“But I’ve seen cases of aging rapidly due to the theft of time,” Klein recalled what he had seen in Amon’s mausoleum.

The chubby baby still shook his head.

“No, that’s just a manifestation of it being symbolized. If it’s used on me, it will just be a baby that starts to grow wrinkles while his hair turns white…

“To truly accurately steal the ‘childhood’ and ‘teenage’ years, it has to be Amon, and it has to be ‘His’ true body in person…”

At this point, the baby wrapped in silver silk and Klein fell silent at the same time. No one spoke for a long time.

If he were to get Amon, the years that were possibly robbed wouldn’t be limited to just the “childhood” and “teenage” years.

After a while, Klein took a deep breath without hiding anything.

Then there’s no need to consider this for now. However, I still want to know where I can find a way to accommodate the Uniqueness. If I have a chance to get it, I definitely can’t miss it. Who knows when it might come in handy in the future.”

Will Auceptin put down his tear-stained palm and sniffed.

“There’s no need to ask others. I’ve already gotten it long ago, but I can’t do it. Otherwise, do you think that me being president of the Life School of Thought was for nothing?”

Klein was surprised and curious. “Why can’t you do it?”

Will Auceptin pulled the blanket in the baby’s pram and said, “There are three ways to accommodate the Uniqueness. One is to be born naturally with it, which is equivalent to being a Uniqueness coming to life and imbuing human nature into it. The other is to make the Uniqueness come to life to a certain extent before forcefully putting it into one’s body. By relying on the power of the Creator to suppress it, it will slowly take quite some time to slowly wear it down before one gets used to it and achieve a balance. The third is to concoct the Uniqueness into an incomplete potion and drink it with a simplified apotheosis ritual.

“There’s no need to mention the first method. This is why those brothers are enviable. The second is impossible after the ancient sun god’s death. The third is the only viable option at the moment, but for the Sequence 1 of the Fate pathway, it depends on the machinations of fate.”

The first point was mentioned in Emperor Roselle’s diary. It was said by Mr. Door… Does the second point mean that, after the ancient sun god wielded so many authorities, he was at least half a level higher than the present true deities, or even one full level? The Creator’s level? As if in thought, Klein asked, “What do you mean by only depending on the machinations of fate? What has this got to do with me saying earlier that I can help you accommodate the Uniqueness?”

Will Auceptin’s chubby baby face revealed a look of poignancy.

“The apotheosis ritual for the Fate pathway might be the simplest, or perhaps it’s the most difficult.

“As long as we find the correct opportunity in the torrent of fate, we can directly consume the potion and attempt to advance.

“But the problem lies in the fact that the exact opportunity cannot be divined or predicted. There’s no way to lock onto it. I can only eliminate certain interferences and patiently search as I experience life. I’ve already ‘rebooted’ countless times and I’ve spent ages, but I still haven’t encountered it…”

At this point, the baby’s tears flowed down again.

It sounds simple, but in fact, one can only rely on fate. It really depends on how “well” you look… With a sigh, Klein asked in enlightenment, “When I said that I would help you accommodate the Uniqueness, did you vaguely grasp that opportunity?”

The chubby baby cried even harder.

“Although I didn’t really find it… I did sense it to a certain extent…”

…Is that so… Back then, when Will Auceptin came into contact with me, other than hoping to receive the help of Yesterday Once More, was it also pushed by luck? What a charlatan… Klein tersely acknowledged.

“Then there’s no other way…”

“You can only give me a few more of those charms!” Will Auceptin nodded heavily.

“Alright,” replied Klein generously. He then added, “You have to give me a few paper cranes.”

With that said, the baby wrapped in silver silk and Klein fell silent.

In the rental apartment, after waking up from his dream, Klein got out of bed and walked to the room outside. He took out pen and paper and began to write to Leonard:

“…I obtained charms that originate from High-Sequence Beyonders of the Seer pathway. It allows someone to borrow power from their former selves…”

Klein didn’t mention that it might be something his dear poet needed, as if he was simply describing it.

After folding the letter, he took out a gold coin and a rectangular diamond-like charm and blew into the adventurer’s harmonica.

Reinette Tinekerr, who was wearing a dark and complicated long dress, walked out of the void with four blonde, redeyed heads in hand. All eyes were cast towards the Yesterday Once More charm.

The four heads spoke one after another:

“Who…” “To deal…” “With…” “This time…”

So direct… Klein sighed and smiled.

"It's unconfirmed yet.

"I'm going to attempt at foiling George Ill's plans. I might need your help at critical moments."

The four heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand spoke one after another:

"This…" "Sounds…" "Extremely…" "Dangerous…"

"Requires…" "Higher…" "Payment…"

"More of these charms?" The comer of Klein's forehead twitched as though he had experienced the pain of tearing his soul apart.

"Three…" Reinette Tinekerr's head who had failed to join in the final sentence shook.

Klein smiled and answered, "No problem, but it will take one to two weeks."

Firstly, he had recently separated many Worms of Spirit and made quite a number of Yesterday Once More charms. It made him feel like he was nearing his limit and needed some rest. Secondly, he felt that it would be another one to two weeks before he could digest the Bizarro Sorcerer potion and attempt to advance to Scholar of Yore once Miss Magician's new book was published. When the time came, he might have a simpler method.

Reinette Tinekerr's four heads began to bob with the help of their hair, indicating that that wasn't a problem.

Klein then pointed at the letter and gold coin.

"Send it to the mailbox at 7 Pinster Street."

He had previously divined that Leonard wasn't at home. Apparently, he had gone south of the bridge.

One of the heads of Reinette Tinekerr tilted up as she sucked the letter, gold coin, and Yesterday Once More charms into her mouth.

As he watched Miss Messenger enter the void and vanish from his room, Klein pondered for nearly a minute before beginning to set up a sacrificial and bestowment ritual.

Since the Bizarro Sorcerer potion was about to be completely digested, there was no doubt that he had to prepare the various ingredients for Scholar of Yore in advance.

Among them, the Demonic Wolf of Fog's transformed heart and White Frost Crystal could be obtained from the Evernight Goddess.

And with the Demonic Wolfs transformed heart, he could go to the spirit world to "bait" a Hound of Fulgrim.

After a series of tasks, he finished setting up the altar and took two steps back to inspect the surroundings.

It's still considered clean… In addition to the wall of spirituality's seal, it satisfies the requirements of a ritual… I haven't made any contribution recently, so how should I ask for a bestowment? Could it be that I'm telling the Goddess that I plan to take a credit loan and pay it in installments… Will this be a little sacrilegious… Hmm, I'll try to sacrifice something of value. If the Goddess is willing to accept it, "She" will do the corresponding bestowment…

Something of value… As he thought, his thoughts moved to the junk pile above the gray fog.

He really wanted to pack up the items he couldn't sell for the time being, such as the Biological Poison Bottle, the Interrogator Beyonder characteristic, Lunatic Beyonder characteristic, Blatherer's Aura, Thousand-faced Hunter's blood, six-winged gargoyle's eyeball, Spirit World Plunderer powder, and other items to sacrifice to the Goddess to exchange for the materials needed for Scholar of Yore. However, he felt that this would make the Goddess seem like a rag-and-bone man;

hence, he could only give up the idea.

It has to be of roughly the same value… I can't use Groselle's Travels; it hides quite a bit of secrets. Perhaps it will be of great use. Yes, the next time Little Sun and the others explore the Giant King's Court, I can give them Groselle's ashes. This time, I wasn't sure how far they could go in the expedition, and was worried that they were unable to return after entering the Groselle's Travels…

Sea God Scepter? That's even more important. Not only is it my most powerful Sealed Artifact, but it also involves the believers of the Sea God. It will be my anchor for some time. When I have other things, more anchors, it can be given to Mr. Hanged Man…

Hvin Rambis's Beyonder characteristic… This has already been promised to Miss Justice… After some thought, he realized that he didn't have many choices left. One was Life's Cane, and the other was the Flaring Sun Charm, the Fate Siphon charm, Yesterday Once More charms and Control Spirit Bullets.

The latter are all disposable items. Even if they're combined, their actual value wouldn't be comparable to the main ingredient of a Sequence 3 potion… Besides, once my ability to "transfer wounds" improves, it can take over a portion of the Life's Cane's effects… After hesitating for a while, he finally made a decision.

Chapter 1126 - “Unexpected”

◆ ◆ ◆

After bringing the wood-colored cane back to the real world, Klein immediately began the ritual.

He lit the candles and burned the corresponding essential oils and herbal powder, took two steps back, and skillfully recited the honorific name of the Goddess. Finally, he said, “I sacrifice this cane filled with life to you. I’m willing to receive your blessings.”

He didn’t directly mention the Demonic Wolf of Fog’s transformed heart and White Frost Crystal. This was equivalent to making an equivalent exchange, not offering sacrificial items and praying for a bestowment.

There was no need to be too meticulous in other aspects of the ritual, but this was a case of showing his attitude at a fundamental level. He felt that he needed to be careful.

When Klein finished his sentence, two out of the three candle flames swelled and intertwined, forming an illusory and dark mysterious door.

The door slowly opened, creating strong invisible winds.

They swept up the Life’s Cane, allowing it to disappear into the seemingly endless cosmos through the gap of the illusory door.

Immediately following that, there was a flash as two items tore through the barrier and landed on the altar without making a single sound.

One of them was a strange heart formed by wisps of white mist, and the other was crystalline frost that emitted cold air.

Klein was delighted as he hurriedly lowered his head to thank the Goddess for her bestowment.

When he raised his head again, the dark and mysterious door had closed. It rapidly faded away, and the altar was completely restored to normal.

Phew, it really succeeded… Klein heaved a sigh of relief and took two steps forward, putting away the Demonic Wolf of Fog's transformed heart and White Frost Crystal.

At this moment, the relaxed him couldn't help but have a thought that he absolutely couldn't say out loud.

If I had known that it would go so smoothly, I wouldn't have had to use my Life's Cane…

That huge junk pile might've been enough…

Perhaps I didn't need to sacrifice anything, and the Goddess would've bestowed them to me. The present situation indicates that "She" is personally supporting me becoming a Scholar of Yore…

Of course, this way, if I receive too many bestowments, who knows what price I'll pay in the future. Using Life's Cane to trade for it makes me feel more at ease…

Well, from the looks of it, before advancing to Sequence 2 and becoming an angel, the Goddess will still shower "Her" blessings on me. In the future, it will be hard to tell what kind of developments and changes will happen…

With this in mind, he reined in his thoughts, ended the ritual, and tidied up the altar.

Then, he began to plan on how to deal with the Hounds of Fulgrim, the so-called “Sefirah Castle Keepers.”

A Magician never performs unprepared!

South of the Bridge, Rose Street.

Leonard changed into a black-and-white police uniform and wore a “red glove.” He led his team members and the real policemen to the only cathedral of the Church of Earth Mother in Backlund.

The epaulets he was wearing corresponded to a high-ranking inspector. But in fact, with his status as a captain of a Red Gloves team, he should be equivalent to a superintendent or even a chief superintendent. However, officers at that rank wouldn’t involve themselves in such missions. Wearing those epaulets to the Harvest Church would easily arouse the suspicion of the public.

After passing through the door, Leonard scanned the area and realized that it was empty. There were only two figures. One was sitting in the front pew, focused on praying. The second was the handsome man dressed in a priest’s robes.

He had black hair and red eyes.

Emlyn White… Leonard nodded secretly as he walked down the aisle to Bishop Utravsky.

He then coughed twice, making the half-giant bishop open his eyes and look over.

“I’m an inspector from the Backlund Police Department.” Leonard showed his identification and said, “We would like to invite you back to assist in our investigations.”

Father Utravsky stood up slowly and asked in a calm tone despite looking down at him, “What’s the matter?”

The nearby residents reported your abnormal behavior, saying that it’s possible that you’re a spy for Feysac or Feynapotter.” Leonard explained the reason he had long come up with.

At the same time, he was prepared to pull Bishop Utravsky into a dream at any moment. Once he resisted, he would try to control this Blessed in the shortest time possible.

With the Red Gloves team’s distribution, as long as they didn’t directly encounter a true demigod, even if they were to face a Blessed who was in charge of a Holy Artifact, they would have a good chance of taking down their opponent.

Furthermore, before Leonard set off, he had applied for a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. This was also the reason why he had delayed taking action until today.

Father Utravsky fell silent for two seconds before turning to look at Emlyn White, who was standing by the candle stand.

Emlyn’s slightly complicated expression froze. He opened his mouth, but didn’t know what to say.

Father Utravsky retracted his gaze and nodded slightly.

“Okay.”

…So cooperative? I thought we would experience an intense battle and that we had to be very careful not to cause any casualties… Leonard was taken aback before he smiled.

Thank you for your cooperation.”

If there really was a battle that ended up harming a Blessed of Earth Mother, Leonard suspected that the tense situation would rapidly be aggravated.

Through the ancient history in Groselle's Travels and the various secrets he learned from the Tarot Club, and the corresponding explanations of Old Man Pallez, Leonard knew that the relationship between the Church of Earth Mother and the Church of Evernight was like dried timber. It could be ignited with a tiny spark. When the time came, the history books would record today's events.

The war would go from a localized problem to a fuse that ignited the globe!

Leonard Mitchell had lit a religious gunpowder keg!

Phew… Seeing that Father Utravsky didn't resist and accepted the "protective custody," Emlyn White secretly heaved a sigh of relief. He was very satisfied with his performance at the Tarot Club.

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At this moment, the Red Gloves team member, Cindy, looked at Emlyn, who lacked a level of masculinity due to the gentleness of the soft moonlight. She lowered her voice and said, "Cap, uh, Sir, there's still a priest. Should we take him with us? Yes, we can temporarily shut down the Harvest Church for some time to prevent any accidents from happening."

Emlyn:

Leonard:

After a few seconds and repeated deliberation, Leonard finally said, "If the spy case involves Feynapotter, he would also be considered a suspect. Let's invite him back to assist in our investigations."

Emlyn was stunned, unsure of what expression to show in response.

East Borough, in a two-bedroom rental apartment.

Fors rubbed her dark eye circles and drank the last mouthful of bitter coffee. She stood up abruptly and began changing her clothes.

“Done writing?” Xio, who was enjoying her breakfast, was taken aback.

It had only been a day and a half!

Fors shook her head and took a deep breath.

“No.

“But I’ve already written the first volume. I can hand it over to the editor of the publisher. If it’s serialized, there’s no need to finish it all now.”

Xio thought and said, “This is indeed a good idea. It can effectively reduce your stress.”

Fors’s expression twisted as she closed her eyes.

“I hope so…”

In another rental apartment a few streets away, after a series of tasks, Klein, who had come up with a plan and made his preparations, put on Creeping Hunger and quickly turned transparent as he entered the spirit world.

Looking up, he saw the seven pure lights that comprised of seven different colors. He released the arms of his two marionettes and took out a box. He removed the wall of spirituality around it, allowing the aura of the Demonic Wolf of Fog’s transformed heart to emanate from it.

Then, he pulled Enuni while Enuni pulled Qonas. Together, the three of them rapidly teleported deep into the spirit world.

Along the way, all kinds of strange spirit world creatures passed by them like oil paintings that depicted hell.

After an unknown period of time, Klein’s premonition for danger suddenly stirred as a scene quickly appeared in his mind:

Red, black, white, blue, and other colors saturated and overlapped as a slender figure suddenly appeared.

It looked like a hound. Its entire body was covered in black short fur, and its eye sockets were two balls of dark-red burning flames. The ends of its mouth extended to the back of its head. It clearly existed there in its corporal form, but it gave off an illusory feeling that felt surreal.

Hound of Fulgrim!

Klein immediately turned around and faced it.

He released his two marionettes at the same time, allowing them to wander in different directions.

In the blink of an eye, the Hound of Fulgrim appeared.

The two dark red flames, which weren't too deformed but were absolutely terrifying, turned and looked at Klein.

Right on the heels of that, its figure became more and more illusory. It instantly disappeared, as though it was a projection from history.

…It ran away just like that? As Klein muttered to himself in shock, he became even more wary of the possibility of a surprise attack.

More than ten seconds later, two figures phased into existence. They were covered in black fur, their eyes burning, and the corners of their lips extended to the back of their heads.

However, there was only one dark red flame left in the eye sockets of each of the two monsters. The remaining fireballs were in their paws.

Without waiting for Klein to react, the two Hounds of Fulgrim lay down in the void of the spirit world and wagged their tails.

They wagged their tails.

Klein's mouth was agape, wondering if he was dreaming.

Chapter 1127 - Sefirah Castle

Only after the two burning dark-red fireballs floated over from the Hounds of Fulgrim and landed in front of him did Klein snap back to his senses. He felt puzzled and relieved.

Why did they harm themselves to come up with a pair of eyes for me? There seems to be thick and sticky blood surrounding them…

If this is their trap, I would’ve already stepped into it. To think that I fell into a daze for a few seconds. This is a fatal mistake for a Bizarro Sorcerer in battle…

However, no matter who it is, it’s inevitable that they will have similar reactions when encountering something like this the first time—the terrifying enemy who they had meticulously planned to deal with had ended up kneeling down and wagging their tails the moment they see them; this is like a dream…

This performance is very similar to Arrodes’s. Could the great existence above the spirit world be able to showcase special traits in the spirit world?

As this thought flashed through his mind, he looked at the two dogs that were prostrating themselves in the void and wagging their tails. He stretched out his left hand and grabbed the two dark red flames and large amounts of thick, dark red blood.

The moment he came into contact with these things, he suddenly heard familiar ravings and roars. They were sometimes shrill, sometimes dull, sometimes maniacal, sometimes seductive, sometimes crazy, and sometimes ethereal.

Immediately following that, an illusory, grayish-white fog appeared in front of him.

The fog spread out in all directions. Above them, there was a towering and majestic palace that looked like a god's residence.

This was a very familiar scene, because every time he entered the mysterious space above the gray fog, he would pass through it.

In the beginning, it was difficult for him to notice his surroundings after he took four steps counterclockwise.

However, as he got used to it, and with the advancements of his Sequence, he was able to easily take the opportunity to observe the phenomenon.

And at that moment, Klein hadn't chanted the honorific name of "Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings" or taken four steps counterclockwise.

This made him extremely wary. Then, he saw a few figures appear in the endless gray fog. They overlapped with the gray fog at times while separating at other times. They were none other than Hounds of Fulgrim with their eyes burning with dark red flames, and their bodies covered in short black fur.

The two Hounds of Fulgrim that had lost one eye each returned to their companions' side and blended into the dark spots in the gray fog.

The entire phenomenon vanished as well. In the depths of the spirit world, Klein realized that there were no longer any Hounds of Fulgrim around him. Only his two marionettes and strange spirit world creatures remained.

Klein lowered his head and looked at the "eyeballs" and blood in his hand. With their presence, he confirmed that what he had just experienced was not an illusion.

The Hounds of Fulgrim are also known as Sefirah Castle Keepers… They live in the Historical Void… I saw them active within the gray fog before fusing with the dark spots… Combining what he had seen and heard, Klein gradually came to a bold conclusion:

Perhaps Sefirah Castle is referring to the mysterious space above the gray fog. It's referring to that strange door of light"

As for the gray fog, it's a symbolic object formed from all the history in the spirit world. There are void gaps present in it…

Every time I enter the mysterious space through the gray fog, I leave certain traces there, making the Hounds of Fulgrim no longer feel unfamiliar with me. They see me as the owner of Sefirah Castle, so when they saw me, they immediately offered me what I needed and shook their tails to gain my favor?

After a day of planning, asking about the situation, and inviting helpers, I ended up targeting my own guards?

As he thought of this, he inexplicably felt a sense of absurdity at the situation. It felt like The Fool above the gray fog was reaching out "His" hands to fleece someone, only to end up fleecing "Himself."

Phew… Sefirah Castle… Although this development makes me even more afraid, in any case, I still have some understanding of the owner of the gray fog and that mysterious space. The unknown is the most terrifying thing…

After standing silently in the depths of the spirit world for a moment, Klein slowly exhaled and summoned his two marionettes back.

He planned on waiting for the Bizarro Sorcerer potion to be completely digested before attempting to seek out relevant knowledge about Sefirah Castle from Arrodes and other places. When the time came, if anything were to happen, he could use his advancement to fight it.

East Borough, in a two-bedroom rental apartment.

With her dark eye circles, Fors returned and retrieved the day's newspaper and letters in passing.

"How was it?" Xio, who had just returned home for lunch, asked.

Fors covered her mouth and yawned.

"Not bad. The editor I know is very satisfied with my new book's topic and writing style. He decided to arrange for its serialization as soon as possible.

"You might not be aware, but the horror stories of Backlund's hospitals have been very popular recently. A best-selling author had gained inspiration from it and is beginning to serialize similar stories. I'm actually not the first to do so!"

"…This is a good thing." Xio thought about it and nodded seriously.

This meant that Fors, who had also written the horror stories of Backlund's hospitals, wouldn't attract too much attention. Her new pen name wouldn't be tested either.

"I know." Fors threw the newspaper aside and took out a few letters that were stuffed in it before quickly flipping through them.

Soon, she found the reply letter from her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham.

Fors's expression immediately turned solemn as she quickly tore open the envelope. She spread open the letter and began reading.

"…Benjamin Abraham is from Intis. He lived in Roselle's era… Apart from mysticism knowledge and a small amount of inheritance, he didn't leave anything of value behind… Later on, everything was destroyed by the Aurora Order. I'm unable to provide the corresponding information…”

Mr. Gehrman Sparrow is about to be disappointed… Fors pursed her lips and pulled off a magic trick, burning the letter in her hand to ashes.

Then, she began writing a reply, asking her teacher if she knew of the secret ruins of Blood Emperor Alista Tudor.

Klein went above the gray fog and listened to Miss Magician’s prayers. The trail of clues for Benjamin Abraham have come to an end… It’s all the fault of those lunatics from the Aurora Order…

At the same time, he learned of the serialization of the horror stories of Backlund’s hospitals.

After returning to the real world, and just as he was about to head out for a meal, he suddenly saw Miss Messenger walk out of the void with four heads in her hand. One of them had a letter in its mouth.

“Who sent it?” asked Klein in puzzlement.

Reinette Tinekerr’s remaining three heads replied, “A…” “Seduced…” “Idiot…”

Who is that… Klein grew confused as he took the letter and opened it.

“The mastermind behind those matters is George III. His goal is to become the Black Emperor. Are you interested in stopping this matter?

“Trissy.”

Trissy? This Demoness actually dares to write me a letter. Isn’t she afraid of being caught by Miss Messenger on the spot? Oh right, Miss Messenger just said that the sender was a “seduced idiot”… Trissy seduced a man and got him to help her summon the messenger while she hid far away and waited for the other party to contact her through a mirror? She’s pretty smart… Hmm, she really is very persistent in investigating this matter. Isn’t she afraid that she’ll be killed by either me or George III? That man should be a Beyonder. It would be quite difficult for an ordinary person to hold a summoning ritual. After all, it relies on one's spirit and spirituality… Klein was first puzzled before he came to a realization.

Immediately following that, he began to wonder why Trissy managed to guess that George III wanted to become the Black Emperor.

Without sufficient mysticism knowledge, and without knowing the Black Emperor's apotheosis ritual or the corresponding history, even a demigod would find it difficult to guess. It definitely wasn't as easy as the Red Angel evil spirit had said!

Could it be that Trissy has other helpers? Or could it be that she has obtained more power from the Primordial Demoness, including all sorts of knowledge and secrets? Klein frowned slightly as he felt that there was something amiss.

If there was a chance, he would definitely get rid of Demoness Trissy.

After thinking for more than ten seconds, he took out a piece of paper and pen from his pocket and scribbled a reply: "I'm interested, but I don't know what you want to do."

In the Backlund Bridge area, a man in his thirties looked in horror as the headless woman—no, the four-headed demoness reappeared before him and dropped a letter.

Are all the messengers in the mysterious world so terrifying? Only about five minutes after Reinette Tinekerr left did the man catch his breath. He picked up the letter and opened it to take a look.

During this process, his gaze gradually burned because it meant that he could meet that beautiful woman again.

According to her instructions, he waited until the evening before he took out the black sticky lump. He separated them and applied them evenly onto a mirror.

A few seconds later, the mirror turned dark, as if it was connected to another world.

In the blink of an eye, the mirror presented a room that was completely different from the present environment. There was a young girl dressed in a dark black dress. She was none other than Demoness Trissy.

The man who finished the ritual immediately revealed an infatuated expression as he subconsciously whispered, “The reply said that he s interested.”

The light dimples on the sides of Trissy’s cheeks slowly bloomed, making the mirror appear brighter.

Her eyebrows relaxed as she said, “I’ll send you a letter. Forward it to Gehrman Sparrow. You absolutely cannot read its contents.”

After obtaining the man’s unhesitant promise, Trissy stretched out her right hand and swiped it across the mirror, causing the dark aqueous light to disappear.

She immediately found pen and paper and deliberated for a few seconds before quickly writing:

“The secret mausoleums needed for the George Ill’s ritual should be from Blood Emperor Alista Tudor, and there is an existence who understands it very well. It might be able to help us successfully infiltrate and cause damage during the ritual.

“I have a way to contact that existence, but we have to wait until the next full moon. What you need to do is provide me with some blood, hair, flesh, or bones from a descendant of the Abraham family.

“Trissy.”

Chapter 1128 - Finally An Outcome

◆ ◆ ◆

East Borough, in a two-bedroom rental apartment.

After receiving the reply from Demoness Trissy from Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr, he pulled a chair to sit down and began reading.

This means she knows of Mr. Door's existence, and she has a way to use the bloodline of the Abraham family to communicate with that entity… Trissy can already withstand Mr. Door's cry for help. Isn't she afraid of losing control because of this? Besides, she seems to be very sure of Mr. Door's identity… She really has obtained more knowledge and secrets from the Primordial Demoness… But in such a situation, why would the Demoness of White Katarina be pursuing her? Questions arose in Katarina's mind as he read the short letter.

As Trissy's vague mention of the matter was within his understanding, he believed that she wasn't lying in this aspect. Furthermore, she had provided a very feasible solution.

Of course, the prerequisite for this method to succeed was to obtain the correct ritual and have a descendant of the Abraham family be willing to take a huge risk, as they used something related to their bloodline as a medium.

Of these three points, he was missing the first point. He still had some doubts about the third point. He attempted to find a safer and more concealed method, but Demoness Trissy seemed to only lack the second point.

To me, it's easy to find the descendants of the Abraham family. I can directly contact them through Miss Magician. However, once I hand over their hair, blood, flesh, and bones to Demoness Trissy, this will put them at risk of being hexed… Klein understood the Demoness pathway rather well and knew that they were very good at hexes.

As his thoughts raced, he gradually came up with a countermeasure. It was to use the hair, flesh, or bones of the deceased.

He remembered that Miss Magician had mentioned to The Fool that she had once buried an old man named Lawrence. He was undoubtedly a descendant of the Abraham family.

I hope it wasn't a cremation… Although this is somewhat sacrilegious to a corpse, speaking to Mr. Door is a necessary procedure to dispel the Abraham family's ancient curse. It's better to use the dead rather than implicate the living… When the time comes, I'll add this in Trissy's reply. I'll claim that this is a requirement stipulated by the descendant of the Abraham family for the ritual's medium…

Also, I have to first confirm that Trissy is going to speak to Mr. Door, and not attempt to pull "Him" back to the real world… They are either of a high-level or are involved in high-level situations. It will be difficult to obtain any effective revelations using divination, but Emperor Roselle said that the ritual required to facilitate Mr. Door's return is very complicated. It definitely can't be set up by a small number of descendants. I can get Queen Mystic and Miss Sharron to monitor Backlund's underground market and see if there are any abnormal trades of materials and personnel… Klein nodded slightly and decided to find Miss Magician in a while. He could also rush her writing.

North Borough, Phelps Street.

On a bench, a young man in a black trench coat and silk top hat was sitting there with a thin face and a broad forehead. He looked at the withered and yellow Intis parasol trees in a daze.

He wore a crystal-carved monocle on his right eye, looking rather refined.

At that moment, an elder who was heading to Saint Samuel Cathedral stopped in his tracks when he saw that something was amiss. He asked gently, “Young man, what are you worried about? You lost something in this war?”

He suspected that the young man’s relatives, lover, or friends had died in the air raid or during intense battles at the front lines. That was why he was sitting alone by the side of the street, looking lost.

The young man raised his hand and pinched his monocle. He sighed and shook his head.

“I’m just thinking about some rather complicated questions.”

“Are you a philosopher?” The old man was taken aback as he blurted out.

“No, but I often bring up philosophical problems for others, just like who I am, where I am, and what’s my future.” The young man smiled calmly as he continued to ponder. From time to time, he would purse his lips and whisper silently.

The elder couldn’t understand him and could only shake his head. Under the gaze of the stray dogs, sparrows, ants, and microbes in the air, he slowly left.

The young man didn’t turn his head. His monocle reflected yellow leaves that were floating down as he muttered to himself, “To Parasite …”To not Parasite …“To Parasite …”To not Parasite …

“See the bait…” “Devour the bait…” “See the bait…” “Devour the bait…”

After getting the hair from Lawrence’s remains from Fors, and seeing the horror stories of Backlund hospitals being serialized in the Tussock Times, Klein entered a patient state. He also promised to send Miss

Magician to a new place next week to record new sights and customs.

Soon, a new week had arrived. After having his lunch, he planned to take a short nap to prepare for the three o'clock Tarot Gathering.

At this moment, Reinette Tinekerr, who was holding four blonde, red-eyed heads, walked out from the depths of the void. One of them had a linen bag in its mouth.

"Who sent it?" Klein suddenly had an inexplicable feeling. He had a complicated premonition as he didn't immediately reach out to receive the bag Miss Messenger was holding.

Reinette Tinekerr's three free heads spoke one after another:

"The…" "Real…" "Mutated…"

"King…" "Of…" "Mushrooms…"

This string of words… I roughly understand what's going on… Klein controlled his expression of not baring his teeth as he slowly took the bag.

When he opened the bag, he wasn't surprised to see copious amounts of demons—no, mushrooms.

Some of them were white and full, as though they would spurt out milk with a single poke. Some of them were black at the bottom and were embedded with thin blood-colored lines and markings. Some of them were covered in golden stars, and the mushroom cap was as large as a palm…

At that moment, the mushrooms were still squirming slightly, as though they wanted to spread their hyphae and spores.

After swallowing his saliva, he picked up a letter that was surrounded by mushrooms, and he started reading:

"My dear friend, Gehrman,

“I’ve finally completed your request. I’ve invented mushrooms that can be planted in dark and harsh environments. They can grow by devouring the flesh and blood of monsters, without any other conditions…

“Their descendants will be divided into two categories. The first type will accumulate various kinds of poisons that cannot be eaten. However, they can be used as a source of poison. The other type can be used for food after being cooked at high temperatures through boiling, stewing, and frying. You must remember not to eat it raw or before it’s cooked. Otherwise, they will proliferate in your body, using your flesh and blood as a hotbed…

“In consideration of having a variety of flavors, I’ve invented eleven kinds of mushrooms—some are rich in milk. This can be directly drunk. Some are like beef. Heh heh, when frying them, there’s no need to provide any extra oil. Some are as delicate as fish meat but without the bones. My suggestion is to roast or boil it…

“All of these wouldn’t have been possible without your help. If I hadn’t already advanced and become a Druid, I might’ve taken a few years, or even more than a decade to resolve all the problems I encountered during the experimentation process…

“If you have any other ideas that are suitable for me, please share them with me.

Your friend forever,

Frank Lee.”

With the letter in hand, Klein fell silent for a long time. He looked up and realized that Miss Messenger was still waiting.

He sighed silently and walked to the desk. He took out a piece of paper and a pen and slowly wrote:

“…I’m very happy that you’ve succeeded. These mushrooms will help me greatly. They will effectively reduce famine in certain areas…

"…I'm currently busy with some matters, so I don't have any new ideas for now…

"…Your friend,

Gehrman Sparrow…"

After folding the letter, he looked at Miss Messenger and hesitantly asked, "How's Frank Lee's condition like now?"

The head that Reinette Tinekerr had previously failed to say anything spoke first:

"Excited…"

The other three added, "Animated…" "Happy…"" Satisfied…"

Following that, the four heads said, "No longer…" "Afraid…" "Of being buried…" "In soil…"

"Why?" Klein subconsciously asked.

The four blonde, red-eyed heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand spat out word by word:

"He…" "Can…" "Extract…" "The…"

"Soil's…" "Nutrients…" "And…" "Oxygen…"

Frank has really evolved quite a bit after becoming a Druid… For a moment, Klein wasn't sure if he should be happy for his friend, or if he should grieve for the crew of the Future.

As he watched Miss Messenger leave, Klein forced himself to sleep through Cogitation. Then, he woke up at 2:30 p.m. to prepare for this week's Tarot Gathering.

At three o'clock, dark red beams of light rose up from the ancient palace above the gray fog and solidified into their corresponding figures.

Audrey immediately stood up, curtsied, and bowed towards the end of the long bronze table.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool-”

As a senior Psychiatrist, she had great control over her emotions. Furthermore, she hadn’t encountered any problems this week. She was mainly seeking out donations, contacting pharmaceutical factories, and organizing medical volunteers.

However, compared to the past, the cheerfulness and happiness she had when making her greeting had decreased significantly.

The Fool Klein nodded slightly in response to the greetings from the members of the Tarot Club. Following that, he cast his gaze at The Hermit.

He still owed this lady eight questions.

Cattleya bowed her head and said with an unfaultable attitude, “Honorable Mr. Fool, there are still two questions this time.”

After obtaining approval, she continued, “The first question is, what is the state of the devils in the Abyss?’

Queen Mystic’s first suspicion is that the emperor’s mausoleum is hidden in the Abyss… This is identical to the emperor’s train of thought. She is indeed his biological daughter… Unfortunately, there are no “citizens” that can be controlled there… The Fool Klein muttered to himself inwardly as he answered with an unchanging expression, “The current Abyss is a place most Devils are unable to live in.”

Chapter 1129 - Pressure

◆

The current Abyss is a place most Devils are unable to live in? Upon hearing Mr. Fool’s reply, Cattleya and company inevitably felt a deep sense of shock.

In mysticism, the Abyss was considered by all to be the most corrupted and most disorderly place. It was where the Devils lived. But now, most of the “natives” were unable to survive in there!

Is the environment in the Abyss worsening, causing the Devils to be unable to adapt to it, or is it because the situation regarding the corruption, chaos, and degeneration has improved, making the Abyss no longer suitable for the Devils to live in? Alger quickly had two theories, but he didn’t know which one it was.

The Hermit Cattleya shared the same thoughts as him, but she was even more puzzled as to why the Queen would ask such a question. Regarding Mr. Fool’s answer, it seemed to have a deeper meaning to it, one that could help the Queen’s in understanding whatever agenda she had, and it’s secrets.

As for Justice, she suddenly thought of the Church of Knowledge’s Prophet demigod. He had once said that the end of the world would arrive in 1368 of the Fifth Epoch. This was publicly acknowledged by all Beyonders who were good at making prophecies. Even the deities had agreed with it.

It’s 1350 this year; we’re only 18 years from the apocalypse… Hence, there are signs of the Abyss appearing. The chaotic and degenerate environment that is originally filled with abstract meanings has broken past its limits, becoming even worse? Audrey had a rough idea of the situation, and this added to her slight anxiety and unease.

As there weren't any signs of the apocalypse in the beginning, she didn't put much weight on the matter. She usually paid more attention to the current wars, casualties, and the victims of suffering. But now, the anomaly within the Abyss had left her inexplicably horrified. She desperately wanted to improve herself. She wanted to finish digesting the potion and obtain the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Hvin Rambis to advance to become a demigod.

Only then could she have the ability to interfere and resist certain things that she didn't want to see happen.

Mr. World, entrust me with more tasks… Audrey silently prayed in her heart and secretly placated her restless emotions.

The members such as Leonard, Fors, and Xio actually had some doubts about whether the Abyss really existed. This was because, after the Second Epoch, the Abyss had never revealed itself to the world again. The most active Devils in the real world had come from the Blood Sanctify Sect. Even the high-level Devils and evil existences that the rituals pointed to were highly likely to be the highest echelons of the Blood Sanctify Sect.

Of course, the evil god, the Dark Side of the Universe, was widely regarded as the embodiment of the Abyss, but "His" presence was extremely low. If "He" hadn't occasionally responded to the ritual and showed the characteristics of the Devil, "He" would probably be considered a pure legend, just like Giant King Aurmir.

But even so, the secrets of the Church of Evernight that Leonard could come into contact with had also shown that it was possible that the Dark Side of the Universe was a disguise used by other evil gods and hidden existences.

This wasn't surprising to Derrick. In certain places some distance away from the City of Silver, deep in the endless darkness, there were many Devils that were unable to maintain their calm states. There was no lack of demigods like the demons that weren't too different from the Abyss.

If not for the fact that the Giant King's Court and other iconic items existed, the City of Silver citizens would definitely have suspected that the truth behind them being abandoned was that they had been thrown into the Abyss.

As the thoughts flashed through the members' minds, Cattleya restrained her doubts and continued asking, "Honorable Mr. Fool, the second question is: Did the things that Emperor Roselle do in his later years have any external, unnecessary influence?"

This question reminded Klein of the shocking details in Roselle's later diary entries. Immediately, he sighed.

With the posture of The Fool, he slowly shook his head.

No… Those things were what the emperor wanted to do… Just as Cattleya felt an uncontrollable sense of disappointment and sadness when she heard Mr. Fool smile with a sigh.

"It wasn't due to an external influence or influencer, but due to corruption. It's very difficult to detect, even for him."

Corruption… Emperor Roselle was corrupted in his later years? At that time, he was already "He," a Grounded Angel. How could he be corrupted? Is this from a particular true god or the underground corruption that even the ancient gods feared? Amidst the shock, Audrey came up with a guess based on the secrets she knew.

Alger and the other members of the Tarot Club also didn't expect such a thing to happen to Emperor Roselle in his later years. They began to suspect his purpose behind him creating the Cards of Blasphemy.

At the same time, they believed that Mr. Fool's search of the Cards of Blasphemy might contain deeper motives, much more than what they had originally deduced.

In this game that involves the entire world, only important figures like Mr. Fool have the right to become a "player." And we are only a card or some chips… The Kings of Angels and Sequence 1 angels might be qualified to participate… Alger sighed as he had the desire to become a "player."

The story of the emperor's later years went from being a tyrant to an evil god? A book that starts off with romance, motivation, passion, love, adventure, and even the decadent lifestyle of Intis high society later turns into a horror story? I wouldn't even dare write something like that! If it were me writing it, I would make the emperor's final tragic end stem from a betrayal in one's love, a marriage betrayal, or betraying an oath… Fors couldn't help but let her thoughts go wild. She even had the urge to start writing a set of chronicles for Emperor Roselle.

Of course, there were quite a number of Roselle's chronicles on the market. Some of them were even prohibited items.

Corrupted… So it's because of corruption… Cattleya sighed and felt sorrowful.

She sighed with emotion. In the end, the emperor didn't end up like the story of the dragon-slaying warrior he had spoken of. From being a hero, he turned into an evil dragon. He was still a legend worthy of worship, but the sad thing was that, up to today, this misunderstanding was finally beginning to be resolved.

After her emotions settled down, Cattleya recalled the matter of being corrupted. The more she thought about it, the more horrified she became.

She believed that she was one of the members of the Tarot Club who knew Roselle the best. She knew very well what height this emperor had reached in his later years. Of course, Mr. Fool was the convener, a witness, and not a member.

However, a Sequence 1 angel such as “Him,” someone who made the throne of divinity a target, had been silently corrupted. “He” and the people around “Him” didn’t notice it at all!

This is much more terrifying than it is horrific… Cattleya secretly took a deep breath before slowly exhaling to regulate her emotions.

Then, she bowed towards the end of the long, mottled table.

“Thank you for your answer, honorable Mr. Fool.”

…I’m also thankful that you didn’t ask anything beyond my means… The Fool Klein, gave a self-deprecating laugh as he leaned back into his chair and nodded slightly.

“You may begin.”

Just like the previous gathering, the members of the Tarot Club had either just advanced or were still digesting. They didn’t have any trades to do, and they didn’t need anything for the time being. After exchanging a few looks, they decided to directly enter the free exchange segment.

Of course, Emlyn was a special exception. He really wanted to make a request to get someone to start a jailbreak to free him from the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral. Yes, to this day, he was still under “protective custody” behind Chanis Gate at the Backlund headquarters of the Church of Evernight. In his neighboring cell was Bishop Utravsky, and during this period of time, no Nighthawk had come to interrogate him.

If not for the people in charge of guarding the sealed area bringing them water and food every day, Emlyn definitely would’ve believed that he and Father Utravsky had already been forgotten.

The dark, silent environment is still alright, but it’s just a little cold… But without dolls, newspapers, books, and historical documents, this life is meaningless… Besides, the Nighthawks provide me with cow blood, and it tastes nasty. The effects aren’t too good either. I’m already becoming weak… Emlyn opened his mouth, but he didn’t say a word because he felt that this was a very embarrassing matter. After all, he was the one who asked The Star and had pushed for “protective custody.” Yet, he ended up also being brought into “protective custody.”

I hope that fellow hasn’t forgotten me and is thinking of a way to get me out… Emlyn glanced at The Star Leonard and maintained his silence.

Leonard maintained his posture and didn’t respond to The Moon’s gaze.

There was nothing he could do for the time being. This was because he was the one who had raised the term “protective custody” in front of the archbishop. As for Emlyn White, he was a vampire viscount, equivalent to a Sequence 5 Beyonder. He was a mobile humanoid bomb that also believed in the Earth Mother. There was no reason for him to be released immediately.

I can only wait for the Sanguine to protest through other channels before I have the authority to handle this matter… The Star Leonard decided to apply for a private exchange later and get Emlyn to think of a way to get the upper echelons of the Sanguine to contact the Church of Evernight.

Their interaction had been noticed by Justice. She immediately thought of the question Mr. Moon had asked her last time. She suspected that something had gone wrong during the “protective custody” operation, but it didn’t seem too serious.

I heard that the priest of the Harvest Church saved quite a number of people during the Great Smog of Backlund. I hope nothing bad happens… Audrey nodded slightly and cast her gaze at Little Sun.

The other members of the Tarot Club also cast their gaze towards The Sun Derrick.

They knew that the City of Silver had planned on exploring the Giant King’s Court last week, so it was likely that the results were out.

The Sun Derrick sat up straight and glanced at Mr. Hanged Man before saying in a very natural manner, “We’ve completed our first exploration of the Giant King’s Court. Three dead, one missing, five survivors… We first arrived at the front door of the King’s Court and saw two Silver Knights in an unknown state standing guard there. This is the name of the Giant pathway’s Sequence 3…”

Chapter 1130 - News Storm

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Two Sequence 3 demigods were guarding the main door… As expected of the Giant King's Court. The divine kingdom of an ancient god… The members of the Tarot Club suddenly felt a similar feeling. As for The Sun Derrick, he didn't pause as he continued his recount.

To him, he was shocked when he first discovered the two Silver Knights guarding the main door of the Giant King's Court. However, the series of events that followed made it seem extremely ordinary, making it difficult to stir up his emotions.

"…According to what Mr. World shared, we followed a rather hidden path to the back of the Giant King's Court… The monsters we encountered were mainly wraiths. They were restrained by the Unshadowed Crucifix…

"After we arrived at the Waning Forest, we tried to explore it, and we discovered that the remnants of the Giant King's will and the divine kingdom's powers had formed an evil spirit. It was protecting its parents' mausoleum…" Derrick skillfully recalled his experiences during the expedition, and the members of the Tarot Club—Audrey, Alger, and the others—quickly reined in their thoughts of the Silver Knight guards and listened attentively.

They were all very interested in the secret hidden in the Waning Forest. They wanted to know what the ancient god, the Giant King, had tried to keep from "His" queen and child.

Thinking back to the scene he had seen, Derrick paused for a moment before saying, “After purging that evil spirit, we came to the mausoleum of the Giant King’s parents. There was a stone stele erected there, indicating the identity of the tomb’s owner. As for the tomb and coffin, it had long been opened by someone, revealing the corpses inside. They were the corpses of two humans…”

Corpses of humans? The tomb of the Giant King’s parents had corpses of humans buried in it? Godfather and godmother? No, there wasn’t any religion back then… As a demigod who knew plenty of mysteries, The Hermit Cattleya’s first reaction was that the two corpses had another identity.

Immediately following that, she recalled what the Queen had mentioned. It was a question that Emperor Roselle had asked as though he had been talking to himself when he was alive:

Why did the ancient documents and historical records refer to giants, elves, vampires as humanoid creatures or anthropoid creatures?

Why didn’t they refer humans as giant-like, elf-like, or vampire-like creatures?

Could it be that all humanoid creatures had descended from humans? The giants, elves, and vampires were the mutations brought by the Beyonder characteristics that could eventually become inherited? Cattleya instantly calmed her emotions as she seriously considered the possible reasons.

At this moment, she felt that her potion would be digested to a certain degree once she returned to the real world.

This was because the Sequence 4 of the Mystery Pryer pathway was called “Mysticologist,” and the origins of the giants and humanoid creatures were without a doubt of extremely great value. They were mysticism knowledge that most ordinary demigods had no way of knowing!

The Giant King's parents were humans? That must be fake… Alger immediately suspected that someone had fabricated the scene.

However, on second thought, this act not only required the real remains to be taken away and replaced with human remains, but one had to prepare a suitable coffin to make the tomb look like it didn't belong to a giant. Furthermore, fabricating it was pointless and wouldn't affect reality too much. Alger felt that no one would be so bored as to do something like that.

To be able to enter the Giant King's Court and suppress a powerful evil spirit, the "person" that approached the two graves was at least a saint, meaning that they had long passed the age of pulling pranks!

Could it be that… the ancestors of all creatures were humans? This includes the elves? As he had seen too many shocking things at the Tarot Club, as well as suffer a religious breakdown from the mural on that primitive island, Alger didn't have overly intense emotions run through him. He just couldn't help but raise his hand and touch his dark blue hair.

Mr. Hanged Man connected himself to this matter? The Giant King's parents are actually humans… From the looks of it, most of the creation myths are fake. They were all fabricated by future generations. However, there are also hidden meanings in them… Mr. Moon seems to find it unacceptable… Mr. World seems to have known about it long ago… With the help of Placate and other psychological techniques, Audrey was able to compose herself the fastest, and she instinctively observed the reactions of the other members.

At that moment, Emlyn was the most restless. His mind was filled with thoughts of "impossible" and "it's impossible."

If the original ancestor of giants were human, then what about the Sanguine? Could it be that we were just monsters that had mutated because of Beyonder characteristics? Impossible. We were clearly created by the Ancestor. "She" has the authority of "life" and "creation."

It’s completely different from the barbaric deities like the Giant King and Elf King who only knew how to fight! As Emlyn’s thoughts churned, he felt a baffling feeling that his pride was cracking apart.

His intuition, his rationality, and brain told him that The Sun Derrick didn’t have any reason to lie about this matter.

The possibility of other existences fabricating the scene was also very low. Hence, he subconsciously expelled the giant and elves from the ranks of humanoid creatures, and he viewed them as a branch of humanity.

Leonard, Fors, and Xio quickly accepted the possibility that The Sun revealed. To them, regardless of whether the giant ancestor was giant or human, or even a curly-haired baboon, it was no big deal. At most, it just meant that many supernatural creatures were a result of Beyonder characteristics in the bodies of ordinary creatures, but this didn’t cause any meaningful changes to their concept of reality.

The Sun Derrick calmed himself down and continued in the strange silence, “After leaving the Waning Forest, we entered the Giant King’s Court through the Barren Tunnel…

“…On the way, there were remnant powers of corruption and concealment. We had to make the correct response in order to pass…

“…That palace contains a mural that possesses powers related to the cycle of fate. As such, we were affected and transformed into the people who participated in a gathering. We repeated a very short process, and this process was the establishment of Rose Redemption…”

At this point, Derrick looked around and saw that all the members had temporarily jolted out of their previous states. They were extremely interested in the organization called Rose Redemption.

They all knew that this was an extremely secretive and ancient organization that followed and believed in the True Creator. It was the origins of the Aurora Order, and its members were Kings of Angels like Ouroboros, Medici, and Sasrir.

Derrick retracted his gaze and exhaled silently.

“The two people who convened the Rose Redemption are Dark Angel Sasrir and Evernight Goddess Amanises…”

Ah? Audrey, Leonard, and Xio began to doubt their ears.

They were all believers of Evernight. They never expected that the Goddess would be a member of Rose Redemption, and even be one of its conveners.

This was akin to saying that the Evernight Goddess was a member of the Tarot Club!

If not for the fact that they knew what kind of person Little Sun was—knowing that he wouldn’t lie—they definitely would’ve suspected the truth of this matter. But now, they were left temporarily speechless. They didn’t even dare to think too deeply about it.

Alger subconsciously turned his body to look at The Sun, listening to his slow and heavy tone.

“The participants included: White Angel Aucuses, Wind Angel Leodero…”

Alger’s eyelids twitched. He didn’t even dare think.

“…God of Combat Badheil, Earth Mother Omebella…”

Emlyn, who was leaning against the back of the chair, unknowingly sat up straight. There was only one message echoing in his mind: the Goddess of Harvest, Giant Queen Omebella…

“God of the Dead Salinger, God of Spiritual Creatures Tolzna…”

The Sun Derrick’s voice echoed in the ancient and magnificent palace. It made Cattleya, Fors, and the other members exchange looks. No one dared to say a word. It was as though they would suffer from divine punishment if they learned any deeper.

After Derrick finished speaking, they remained silent. The scene was strangely quiet.

Finally, Cattleya sighed and said, “Rose Redemption truly is powerful and terrifying. Before this, I couldn’t even imagine that those existences were members…”

Just as she said that, The World Gehrman Sparrow said with a deep, hoarse voice, “That was an organization formed to resist the ancient sun god. Later on, only a few Kings of Angels remained.”

Upon hearing their conversation, it was as if Audrey and the other members had just snapped out of their dreams. All of them subconsciously cast their gaze to the end of the long, mottled table, at the figure shrouded in gray fog. It was as though they were waiting for the ruling of the entity of authority there.

The Fool Klein, who had long expected such a scene, didn’t respond directly. He nodded slightly and sighed.

“The Fallen Creator was born because of this.”

It’s real… It’s real… The Rose Redemption which Mr. Fool hinted back then actually has such a deeper meaning… What is “His” identity in ancient times, and what position does “He” take in this matter… All these thoughts instantly formed a storm that swept through the minds of the Tarot Club members.

Derrick looked at everyone, and seeing that no one was speaking, he could only talk about the subsequent exploration:

“…We met the leader of the King’s Court’s Chasers outside the palace, Light Culler Murskogan. He said that Dark Angel Sasrir was in a state of slumber in that palace…”

Compared to the matter regarding Rose Redemption, news of the mysterious Dark Angel currently in slumber inside the Giant King's palace didn't stir up the emotions of Leonard, Emlyn, and the other members of the Tarot Club much. Only some of their curiosities had been satisfied.

Of course, as a Mysticologist, Cattleya only hoped that The Sun could speak a little more.

"After that, we returned. Mr. Fool has bestowed us with the formula for the Silver Knight potion." Towards the end of his explanation, Derrick concluded honestly.

Audrey and the others were still deep in thought over what had just happened. There was still a fear of being blasphemous, and no one responded. Only Alger thought for a moment and said, "Since the birth of the True Creator originated from Rose Redemption, then 'He' isn't unfamiliar with what happened to the Giant King's Court. Why is it that Shepherd Elder Lovia was completely unprepared for this?"

Chapter 1131 - An Indescribable Transaction

◆

This is also a question I wanted to ask… The Fool Klein, who was seated at the end of the long, mottled table, echoed Mr. Hanged Man in his heart.

Leonard thought for a moment and tried to find a possible reason:

“Although the birth of the True Creator originates from Rose Redemption, it doesn’t mean that ‘He’ knows everything about Rose Redemption. Perhaps figuring out the truth back then is one of ‘His’ motives…”

Just as he said that, Justice Audrey objected:

“The Angel of Fate, Ouroboros, who was drawing that mural, is still in Rose Redemption and follows the True Creator. If ‘He1 had any questions, ’He* could’ve just asked ’Him’ directly.”

“Perhaps the True Creator’s goal is to confirm Dark Angel Sasrir’s condition. From Shepherd Lovia’s strong desire to enter the palace of the Giant King, we can preliminary determine that.” Cattleya gave her own opinion.

“I share similar thoughts.” Alger glanced at The Sun and said, “Of course, we can’t eliminate the possibility that The Star suggested. Perhaps the Angel of Fate Ouroboros’s condition isn’t right, and ‘He’ has lost most of ‘His1 memories. ’He1 can only rely on the murals ’He’ left behind in the past to find ‘His’ lost past. The odds are very low, but it doesn’t mean that it’s impossible. We aren’t aware of what’s special or problematic with the Kings of Angels.”

As he spoke, Alger glanced at Mr. Fool, as if hoping to get some hints from this existence. Unfortunately, he failed to get any feedback.

It wasn’t that The Fool Klein didn’t have any ideas, but that he had too many ideas and was unable to list them out.

Tail Devourer Ouroboros grows up by the True Creator’s side every time he “reboots.” No one knows what “His” current state is… After muttering in his heart and seeing that no one had any more ideas, Klein controlled The World to look at The Sun.

“I recently obtained a batch of mushrooms that can be grown in the darkness when feeding them the flesh of monsters. I wonder if your City of Silver is interested?”

Mushrooms that can devour the flesh and blood of monsters? Xio and company were surprised and curious. They didn’t know how such a creature could exist.

Indeed, there are many things in the world that we have yet to understand… This is what a Scribe should record down… Fors sighed and came to a realization.

Cattleya’s eyes suddenly darkened. She sat there without saying a word or moving, like a statue.

Upon hearing this, Derrick was delighted. His thoughts raced as he blurted out, “Can those mushrooms automatically attack monsters?”

If that was possible, then they could be used as food and also be used as the perimeter defense system for the City of Silver.

I thought Little Sun would be afraid of those mushrooms… In the end, his “request” is even more excessive… The World’s mouth twitched slightly.

“No, if the mushrooms can automatically attack monsters, it will be no exception for any of you.”

Derrick immediately felt a little ashamed as he hurriedly nodded.

“I understand, Mr. World.”

Following that, he let the fake World make a further description:

“Some of those mushrooms can be ground into flour, others can produce milk or are rich in oil. They’re equivalent to beef. Some have a flavor that’s close to fish, but there are no bones… Other than milk which can be drunk directly, the rest must be cooked through steaming, boiling, frying, and roasting. Otherwise, the mushrooms will absorb your flesh and blood while inside your body, regaining their vitality, turning a person into countless mushrooms…”

Audrey, Alger, and the other members of the Tarot Club originally listened on with interest as though it was an exciting story, but as they listened in, they subconsciously shrank back, becoming unusually silent.

Only The Hermit Cattleya’s eyelids twitched. She decided to have a good “talk” with Frank when she returned to the real world.

She was very worried that, one day, when the Star Pirates were to hold a vote, a large number of mushrooms would be amongst those casting that sacred vote.

At this moment, after listening attentively, Derrick couldn’t hide his anticipation and curiosity.

“Mr. World, what is flour? Is it like black-faced grass powder?

“Also, what is milk, what is beef, what is fish?”

In fact, he had seen fish before, but he didn’t think that they were fish. In a swamp in the southwest region of the City of Silver, there were quite a number of strange fish-shaped monsters that contained venom. They had boils all over their bodies, while others had teeth growing out of spots where their eyes were. Some of their heads had split open, revealing a white membrane layer that could be used to hunt other creatures.

…No matter how strange those mushrooms are, to the City of Silver, they're all good things that are worth looking forward to… The first thing they need to solve is to be in possession of something, rather than whether it's good or not… When The Fool Klein heard that, he cast The World's gaze toward Justice Audrey.

Giving detailed descriptions of flour, milk, beef, and fish didn't match The World Gehrman Sparrow's persona.

As a senior Spectator and Gehrman Sparrow's psychiatrist, Justice instantly understood what he meant. She deliberated for a moment before saying, "The milk is the liquid that cows use to rear its young…"

She believed that Little Sun could understand this easily. After all, the City of Silver had pregnant women and babies.

Seeing The Sun nod in acknowledgment, she continued' "Milk can provide you with a lot of nutrition and help you grow taller and stronger…"

Audrey didn't finish her sentence because Little Sun, who was sitting in his seat, was very muscular.

After Miss Justice finished explaining the concepts, The Sun Derrick looked eagerly at The World Gehrman Sparrow.

"Thank you, Mr. World. This is exactly what our City of Silver needs. When I return, I'll immediately inform the Chief. He'll definitely be very happy.

"What would you like in exchange?"

The Fool Klein hesitated for a moment before controlling The World Gehrman Sparrow.

“The formula for Classical Metallurgist.”

No! Cattleya subconsciously tried to stop him, but she ultimately held back her urge.

She secretly looked at Mr. Fool, and seeing that the great existence was silent, she immediately felt a lot more at ease. “Alright.” Derrick happily agreed.

After the exchange, Leonard applied to have a private conversation with Emlyn.

The moment the other members of the Tarot Club were screened from them, Emlyn asked, “When are you letting me out?”

Leonard maintained his posture and said, “This isn’t something I can decide on. My suggestion is to get someone to contact the upper echelons of the Sanguine as soon as possible and get them to think of a way to get you out.”

These two fellows created such an accident with the simple term “protective custody”? The Fool Klein, who was listening by the side, felt the urge to laugh, but he held back.

Emlyn’s expression darkened. After a few seconds, he said, “Will it be useful finding the upper echelons of the Sanguine?”

“The Goddess is the Lady of Crimson. She still cares a lot about you guys from the Moon domain. Although you do not believe in ‘Her,’” Leonard said perfunctorily.

The real explanation in his heart was that an ancient race like the Sanguine, who had lived for several years, definitely had some connections with the various Churches, especially when the Sanguine Queen was still the Night Emperor’s queen. At that time, the Church of

Evemight had supported the Night Emperor.

Emlyn also thought of this and nodded slightly.

“I’ll try to entrust this to Mr. World.”

This was the most reliable person he could think of.

Just as he said that, Emlyn and Leonard suddenly spoke at the same time:

“That won’t work.”

You also realized it?” The Moon Emlyn immediately glanced at The Star beside him.

Leonard scoffed.

“It’s such a simple problem.”

Emlyn returned with a scoff.

“But you just suggested that I contact the upper echelons of the Sanguine.

“I’ve been locked up in the Church of Evernight for days. They must’ve known about it long ago. They probably didn’t attempt to rescue me because they’re observing, wanting to know who would rescue me; thus, finding my partners,

Leonard looked elsewhere.

“That’s probably the case. So, you can only continue staying behind Chanis Gate. Perhaps in a few more days, they’ll lose their patience and get you out.”

Emlyn didn’t know what expression to show.

After a private exchange between the human and Sanguine, The World Gehrman Sparrow looked at Fors and said, “Give me the venue and time for the meeting. After the gathering, I’ll look for you and bring you to a new place.”

“Alright.” Fors hurriedly applied to Mr. Fool and conjured a parchment.

While handing it over, she hesitated for a moment before asking, “Mr. World, what needs to be taken note of this time?”

“Keep warm,” The World Gehrman Sparrow simply replied.

Keep warm… Fors was momentarily stunned, unsure of what he was trying to get at.

After looking at the parchment, The World Gehrman Sparrow surveyed the area and said, “Everyone in Backlund, please pay close attention to your surroundings for anything abnormal.”

Firstly, it was very likely that Zaratul would “fish” out Amon. Secondly, Demoness Trissy might be able to help Mr. Door prepare a ritual. Thirdly, George III might take the final step to becoming the Black Emperor at some point in time.

“Alright.” Audrey and the other members of the Tarot Club who were in Backlund nodded one after another. They recalled the recent situation and didn’t find anything out of the ordinary.

After another exchange, the other members requested Miss Justice to use hypnosis to help them forget a portion of their memories. After this gathering ended, one figure after another vanished above the gray fog, leaving only The Fool Klein.

After sitting in silence for more than ten minutes, he thought of other questions before returning to the real world. He “Teleported” to the agreed-upon location and waited for Miss Magician to meet him.

It was almost winter, and the sky had turned dark at four in the afternoon. Under the heavy black clouds, the street lamps hadn’t been lit, as coal and gas resources were controlled due to the war.

Chapter 1132 - Interlude

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In the alley where few people visited, the environment grew darker as a cold wind wafted through it. Although it wasn’t like a blade that could slice a person’s face with its coldness, it seemed to possess magic as it slowly but firmly seeped into the clothes of people.

As Gehrman Sparrow, Klein raised his hand and pressed down on his top hat. He saw Miss Magician wearing a dark- colored scarf and a thick coat. She carried a rather heavy suitcase and walked into the alley, looking extremely wary.

In the Loen Kingdom, due to the Church of Evernight’s influence, many of the clothes that were deemed only male also had lady versions of them. Just like in Intis, the ladies of high society often sat sideways while on horseback, thanks to a special saddle. However, Loen didn’t do the same. The ladies had their own horseback attire.

Klein pulled out his left hand that was wearing Creeping Hunger from his pocket and spread open his fingers.

“Do you have a stockpile prepared?”

Fors suddenly felt a cold wind blow down her neck as she subconsciously shrank back.

“Enough for at least two weeks of being serialized.

“I’ve already handed it over to the editor of the newspaper.”

Without waiting for Gehrman Sparrow to ask further, she hurriedly added, "I brought a fountain pen, ink, and paper."

Klein nodded slightly, took two steps forward, and reached out to grab Miss Magician's shoulder.

Fors immediately focused as an illusory book appeared in her eyes as it slowly flipped through.

Her surroundings immediately became dark and colorful—the reds were redder, the blacks were blacker, and the browns were browner—as they overlapped each other, making her feel like she was in a trance.

Fors was already used to this state and had successfully "Recorded" during this "Traveling" process. She also carefully observed the scenery of her "trip," as well as the strange and indescribable spirit world creatures that branded themselves in her mind.

After a few breaths, her vision went black, and she felt a cold she had never experienced before. Her body couldn't help but tremble.

Fors instinctively used a magic trick to illuminate her surroundings. Looking around, she realized that she was in a wooden hut. The World Gehrman Sparrow had already vanished.

Where ami… Fors looked at the window and saw that there was a thick layer covering it, preventing any light from shining inside.

This made her even more puzzled. She came to the door, stretched out her right hand, and pulled the door behind her. With a creaking sound, she saw the snow blocking the exit.

Fors was stunned as Gehrman Sparrow's warning echoed in her mind:

"Keep warm…"

In just one or two minutes, Klein had already circled the sea once. He used his prey that he had long selected to placate Creeping Hunger, and he returned to his rental apartment in Backlund, awaiting Queen

Mystic and Miss Sharron to gather information about any anomalies.

In fact, with Klein's style, he would've personally taken action in this area and conducted an additional investigation at the same time. He wanted to ensure that Demoness Trissy had no plans to help Mr. Door escape, but considering that Zaratul was already in Backlund, he decided to be cautious and give up the idea of loitering around.

Under the influence of the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics, he felt that if he were to wander around Backlund, it was only a matter of time before he ran into Zaratul or even Amon.

Sigh, I'd already thought of how to disguise myself. Buying a bicycle, getting a uniform, and riding it across different streets as a postman… This is the easiest way to avoid suspicion… After taking a sip of Gurney Sap he brought back from the sea, he leaned back into his chair and allowed his marionette, Enuni and Qonas, to individually massage his shoulders and legs.

The Forsaken Land of the Gods, in the Afternoon Town camp.

After Derrick Berg opened his eyes, he immediately stood up, opened the door, and walked around the bonfire to the Chiefs room.

Suppressing his excitement, he took a deep breath and raised his hand to lightly knock on the thick wooden door. "Please come in." Amidst the sounds of knocking, Colin Iliad's deep voice sounded.

Derrick turned the doorknob and pushed open the door. As he looked at Demon Hunter Colin, whose hair was white and had old scars on his face, he blurted out, "Your Excellency, I found some strange mushrooms. They can be eaten!'

Colin Iliad fell silent for a moment before slowly asking, "Mushrooms?"

Hearing the puzzlement in the Chiefs words, Derrick instantly recalled a mushroom he had seen before.

It came from the abandoned temple of the Fallen Creator. It looked especially bright and appetizing, but it was essentially extremely dangerous.

His mood instantly calmed down. He nodded and said, “Yes, mushrooms, different breeds of mushrooms. They can devour the flesh and blood of monsters to grow…”

Derrick described the unique traits of the mushrooms in detail, and he explained what milk, beef, fish, and flour were.

In the end, he emphasized that the mushrooms had to be fully cooked before they could be eaten. He also had to take note of the species which were rich in poison.

Colin Iliad listened quietly without showing any change in emotions. After some thought, he said, “What other dangers do they have? Or should I say, points that require taking note of?”

“Uh…” Derrick’s face suddenly flushed red. “I’ll study it again.”

Without waiting for the Chief to speak, he turned around, opened the door, and ran out.

Returning to his room, he took a deep breath and sat down. He began to pray to Mr. Fool, asking him to forward the questions to Mr. World.

Above the gray fog, Klein sat on the high-back chair belonging to The Fool. He tapped the armrest with his index finger and silently muttered, What other dangers are there?

Although Frank’s imagination, actions, and creativity make me a little fearful, he’s still a Sequence 5 Druid after all. No matter how dangerous the mushrooms are, how dangerous can they be? With the years of experience the City of Silver has experienced in the dark environment, it’s easy to deal with those mushrooms.

In the ruins of the battle of gods, the Future’s producing of milk, the pirate's head growing a watermelon, and other shocking phenomena were due to the remnant aura and divine power of Earth Mother in that area. The real "murderer" was a deity rather than Frank…

Man, if the formation of the Forsaken Land of the Gods happened due to the betrayal of the ancient sun god, the things left behind in that intense battle are definitely not limited to the powers of Evernight, Concealment, Degeneration, and Storm. Perhaps there are some areas that have the influence of the Sun and the Earth…

This…

After some thought, he conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made him tell the truth:

"…If they encounter divine powers of the Earth domain, those mushrooms might experience an unknown mutation…" After receiving a response, Derrick rushed out of his room and ran to the Chiefs door.

This time, the door opened without him knocking.

Derrick turned back to look at his teammates by the bonfire. He entered the room and casually closed the heavy wooden door.

The divine power of the Earth domain might cause the mushrooms to undergo an unknown mutation," he said frankly without explaining how he had figured that out.

Demon Hunter Colin's expression remained unchanged as he repeated the key phrase softly, "The divine power of the Earth domain…"

He lowered his voice and finally fell silent. Ten seconds later, he said, "After we return, we can set up a region to plant them to see the effects.

Then, what's the price?"

Derrick immediately replied, "The formula for Classical Metallurgist."

Colin Iliad nodded slowly.

This has to be decided by the six-member council. When we return to the city, I will push for this matter as soon as possible."

Their expedition team would be returning to the City of Silver in the next two days. Firstly, after the exploration, the few who survived, as well as those who had lost their loved ones, needed time to adjust their mental states. Secondly, there was a limited amount of food left in the camp, and there was no way to plant any Black-Faced Grass around Afternoon Town. They could only rely on hunting monsters to replenish themselves. Therefore, one of the responsibilities of the expedition team was to deliver safe food. Switching out teams would happen at fixed intervals.

Yes, Your Excellency." Derrick didn't rush him.

He had long gotten used to this process.

After he left the room, Colin Iliad came to the window and looked at the bonfire in the middle of the camp.

That flame burned quietly. In the deep darkness, the faint yellow light scattered across the entire camp. Roasting over the fire was a disgusting vampire covered in puss.

A few days later, Klein separately received the corresponding feedback from Queen Mystic Bernadette, the Numinous Sect's Patrick Bryan, and Miss Sharron. He confirmed that there were no anomalies regarding material or personnel flow in Backlund recently.

From the looks of it, Demoness Trissy only wishes to speak to Mr. Door for the time being… Furthermore, this seems to be the first time they will establish a connection… Regardless, I still need to give a warning beforehand. This requires finesse. The more I say, the more likely a mistake will be made. Furthermore, I cannot reveal my trump card… After some thought, he found the hair of the deceased that Miss

Magician had provided. He unfolded the piece of paper and wrote:

"…This is what you need. It's a lock of hair from a descendant of the Abraham family… The person who provided it has a request; that is to help ask the existence one question: The problem regarding how they get rid of the curse…"…Finally, let me remind you to be careful of Mr. Door."

Klein folded the letter and tucked the lock of hair into it. He took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew on it. After a brief silence, Reinette Tinekerr walked out of the void with four beautiful heads in hand.

"Give this letter to the seduced idiot," he instructed as he handed over the letter.

Just as he said that, his heart skipped a beat, and he hurriedly added another question:

"Can you locate him?"

"Yes…" One of the heads of Reinette Tinekerr answered the question before biting the letter.

Klein narrowed his eyes.

Chapter 1133 - Chant

◆

In the Backlund Bridge area, according to the information provided by Miss Messenger, he found the man who had been seduced by Trissy and ended up helping her “send” the letter.

However, Klein didn’t enter the apartment, nor did he disturb his target. He stuck both hands into his black trench coat pocket and continued walking forward.

Under the illumination of the street lamps, he walked all the way to the crossroads and turned into another street.

During this process, a rat that was stealing food in a particular building suddenly shivered.

It then gave up on the piece of cheese and followed the usual “tunnel” that it used to pass through, and it moved towards the target area.

Then, the rat opened its mouth and let out a human’s voice:

“Blessed of the sea and spirit world, guardian of the Rorsted Archipelago, ruler of the undersea creatures, master of tsunamis and storms, the great Kalvetua…”

The moment the rat finished its sentence, Klein, who had already turned into another street, vanished. There was only a spark left on the spot that quickly dissipated.

He had used Flaming Jump, but he wasn’t using it to travel. Instead, he had entered a hotel room that he had booked to rendezvous with one of his marionettes, so he didn't need to worry too much about being sensed by Zaratul and meet with an accident. After all, the destination was clear, the journey was short, and there was protection.

In the room, with Enuni watching, he took four steps counterclockwise and arrived above the gray fog.

As he sat at the end of the long bronze table, he held the Sea God Scepter. With the help of the prayer light, he observed the target through his "true vision"—the man who helped Demoness Trissy relay the news.

A few minutes later, Reinette Tinekerr appeared in the apartment as promised. She took the gold coin and left the envelope on the table.

The man trembled in fear again, but in the end, he overcame his own fear. He picked up the letter and weighed it.

Fifteen minutes later, he carefully took out the black sticky paste, separated a small blob, and applied it on the surface of a mirror.

Soon, he saw the young girl who had occupied all of his dreams in the dark mirror and hurriedly said, "That crazy adventurer just sent a letter. It seems to contain something else. I didn't open it as per your instructions."

At that moment, above the gray fog, the scene Klein saw began to show a strange phenomenon.

In his vision, the mirror's condition had already turned blurry. It was closer to being a dark and illusory passageway that didn't look realistic enough. It was connected to something similar in the surrounding area, forming a complicated and abstract "spider web" that was interwoven into a profound and strange "world."

Through the gray fog's "true vision," he could barely make out the general situation, but he was unable to make out the details. He didn't know what strange and terrifying creatures hid within that world.

In mysticism, mirrors are often given the symbolic meaning of leading to another "kingdom," and are mostly related to terrifying horrors… Is this the mirror world? My Beyonder powers are completely unrelated to this domain… That's not true. If someone prays to me and attempts magic mirror divination, then there will naturally be an illusory passageway that points towards me, towards the gray fog…

Strictly speaking, the mirror world isn't a real world. It's closer to the collective manifestation of doors. By connecting to different mirrors and different mysterious kingdoms, if one becomes lost in there, they might directly appear in the Abyss, or even the cosmos… Of course, demigods with this ability should be able to create a "reflection world" and hide inside …

The collective manifestation of doors… High-Sequence Beyonders of the Demoness, Wraith, and Apprentice pathways also have similar powers? Does the "secret" in Secrets Sorcerer represent the mirror world to some extent? This is sufficiently mysterious and secretive… Under normal circumstances, even through "true vision," there's no way to directly see the mirror world unless someone triggers it… Klein nodded in thought as he heard Demoness Trissy's melodic voice reply:

"Throw the letter into the mirror."

"Can it be thrown in?" As a Low-Sequence Beyonder, the man had never seen such a miraculous thing before. After some hesitation, he held the letter and pressed it against the mirror.

On the surface of the mirror, the darkness suddenly spread out like ripples of aqueous light.

The man felt his firm touch lighten, and he saw the letter magically pass through the glass surface and enter the illusionary, swirling interior.

Right on the heels of that, the letter seemed to be attracted by a huge whirlpool as it continued to sink deeper into the room where Trissy was.

Above the gray fog, Klein raised the Sea God Scepter high and focused on tracking the letter, attempting to lock onto the location of the Demoness.

At this moment, in his "true vision," the dark and deep mirror world began to quake violently, turning everything into a blur.

By the time the quaking calmed down, Klein had already lost traces of the letter and Demoness Trissy.

The aura of the Primordial Demon Girl can even interfere with observations like this… After a moment of silence, Klein let out a sigh.

It was precisely because of the various peculiarities related to Trissy that he didn't take the risk to mix his hair into the materials to locate her. It was easy for him to suffer from a terrible hex. He might even die on the spot.

To Klein, death didn't really matter. After all, as long as his corpse wasn't pulverized, it was likely the case that he could be revived. But that would mean that he couldn't seize the opportunity to lock onto Trissy. She would definitely change locations quickly. Wouldn't that be equivalent to wasting a precious chance to revive?

After suffering the setback, Klein quickly returned to the real world and left the Backlund Bridge area.

The next morning, with an ordinary face, Klein rode a carriage to Saint Samuel Cathedral.

He planned on chanting the honorific name of the Evernight Goddess to inform "Her" of Demoness Trissy. When the time came, if an accident were to happen on the night of the full moon, there would at least be a deity watching over Backlund, and would also be prepared ahead of time.

Back then, the Evernight Goddess was one of the ones who had exiled and sealed Mr. Door. “She” definitely knew the other party’s tricks very well.

In such aspects, Klein had never put on a strong front. He had a very clear understanding of himself.

Since he couldn’t solve the problem himself, he would find someone who could solve the problem to help out!

As for why he wasn’t doing this at home and had to go to Saint Samuel Cathedral, it was because he wanted to observe the situation in the areas around Boklund Street and search for any tiny traces that spelled Amon’s arrival.

Hazel and her family had once been involved with Amon, and she herself belonged to the Marauder pathway. Be it her fate or the convergence of characteristics, she was among the high-risk group of people who could meet Amon by chance. With regards to this, Klein didn’t dare to be too careless or negligent. He reminded himself, and he made arrangements to do a self-examination every once in a while.

Similarly, due to Miss Justice’s follow-up treatment of Hazel’s psychological trauma, anything that happened to Hazel could easily lead to her. Therefore, Klein was also very worried about the safety of this noble lady. He believed that it was necessary to check her condition through the crimson star from time to time. Of course, he would avoid relatively awkward periods of time.

As his thoughts raced, Klein, who was already close to Phelps Street, got off the carriage in advance. He allowed his marionette, Enuni, to secretly recite the honorific name of Sea God.

He and his marionette, Qonas, switched positions. In a sealed space that he had “Distorted,” he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

Then, with the help of the Sea God Scepter to widen his “true vision”, he carefully observed the situation in Boklund Street and the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

Hazel isn’t Parasitized… Neither is Miss Justice… Same for their maidservants, pets, and bodyguards… The residents and staff of the Charity Bursary Foundation don’t show signs either… There are no traces of any Amon-related activity in the various streets in the area… Klein heaved a sigh of relief and returned to the real world.

Following that, he approached Saint Samuel Cathedral and passed through the door, finding a seat in the dark and quiet prayer hall.

After chanting the honorific name of the Evernight Goddess in a low voice, Klein described simply, “…Demoness Trissy has obtained the hair of an Abraham family descendant. She plans to contact a hidden existence on the night of the full moon. I cannot be sure of her exact purpose…”

After sitting quietly for a while and seeing that the Goddess didn’t respond, nor did the archbishop appear, Klein wore his silk top hat and slowly walked out of the cathedral.

At night, he switched positions and controlled a rat as a marionette as recited another honorific name:

“The great God of War, the symbol of iron and blood, the ruler of chaos and strife, I wish to meet you…”

Just like before, the rat lost its life the moment it finished praying. Following that, Klein pulled away from the area.

He wanted to meet the Red Angel and talk about Mr. Door and Dark Angel Sasrir.

After waiting for a few minutes, with the help of another rat marionette, he saw that the other rat burst into flames, emitting a burning white flame.

The flame quickly formed a short line on the ground:

“I don’t want to see you.”

The muscles on Klein’s face twitched indiscernibly.

After some thought, he gave up and left the area.

After a few seconds, the remaining burning-white flames formed a new sentence:

“Come on, beg me.”

By then, Klein had already left.

In a house somewhere in Backlund, a pale-faced Sauron Einhorn Medici stood up from the sofa in a black, red-lined robe.

He frowned and muttered to himself, “Who’s disturbing me…’

In the blink of an eye, a full moon had dawned its light on Backlund.

In a room illuminated by the crimson light, Demoness Trissy stood at an altar. Around her were ritual materials— rubies, sapphires, emeralds, diamonds, pearls, and lazurite.

After some complicated preparations, she lit the hair in her hand and placed it into a cauldron.

When the fire was tainted with a layer of darkness, Trissy took two steps back and solemnly chanted in Jotun, “Great Door of All Doors;

“Guide of the endless cosmos;

“Key to all mysterious worlds…”

Chapter 1134 - Mr. Door

* * *

As Trissy recited the words, the gems around her emitted cracking sounds as they shattered into powder and floated up.

They shimmered with red, blue, green, or resplendent light before rapidly gathering into a torrent that surged towards the candlelight on the altar.

At the same time, strands of hair that had been burnt inside the cauldron joined the process.

The fire began to expand and interweave with each other, turning increasingly dark, as if it was an illusory door that led to other worlds.

Trissy immediately felt the surrounding temperature drop rapidly, as though countless dangers were seeping out of the fire.

A sentence flashed across her mind. It was a reminder from Gehrman Sparrow:

“Be careful of Mr. Door.”

As expected of someone with a messenger of that level… His understanding of Mr. Door, and his confidence in knowing about my plans, might be deeper and more precise than I imagined… Trissy slowly took a deep breath and patiently waited for the subsequent changes.

In just a blink of an eye, she felt that the void in the room thinned significantly. Many of the places were covered with shadows, as though there were large amounts of indescribable creatures hiding behind them.

The dim, expanding flame slowly turned into a gigantic, deep crimson vortex.

As the vortex spun, an ethereal voice that could pierce through one's Spirit Body finally sounded from the bottom: "…Cheek?"

Upon hearing this voice, the blood vessels in Trissy's forehead throbbed. It was as if her head had been pierced by countless steel needles as they crazily stabbed and twisted.

Her black hair flared up despite the lack of wind. Every strand grew slightly thicker, and the skin on her face became transparent. Her blood vessels protruded out one after another, densely packed like a spider's web.

After spending a great deal of effort, Trissy finally managed to control herself. She then heard the voice that could make most Beyonders lose control, chuckling and saying, "It looks like it's Cheek's Blessed…

"Back then, we had seen the second Blasphemy Slate together… and we were able to surpass Sequence 1… and live to this day… Now, the only ones left are likely the Artisan, Cheek, and me…"

Trissy ignored Mr. Door's poignant sigh and said with a twisted expression:

"Honorable Mr. Door, I have something to ask you."

"Speak… The time spent being lost and trapped in the darkness and the storm is just too boring… It's rare for someone to have a chat with me…" The terrifying voice replied without much change from the slowly rotating dark vortex.

Trissy's facial muscles twitched involuntarily, still unable to get used to the ravings of this evil god's equal.

She paused for a few seconds before saying, "…I want to know if there are any unorthodox ways to enter the nine secret mausoleums built by Blood Emperor Tudor for becoming the Black Emperor,

It was unknown where he was, but Mr. Door's ethereal laughter sounded through the endless void:

"So it's because of this…

"This isn't difficult… I'll give you a symbol… You can gather the blood of Beyonders from different pathways and mix them together… Mixing it with your spirituality, draw the symbol in front of the mausoleum. Then, you can open the secret passage that leads into it…"

As the existence spoke, sparks separated from the dark vortex, forming a rather complicated symbol in midair.

It was like doors that were stacked in decreasing sizes as they randomly extended without end.

Trissy held back the excruciating pain of her Spirit Body tearing apart. She memorized the symbol and sought confirmation:

"There must be blood from all twenty-two Beyonder pathways?

"Each pathway only requires the blood of a Beyonder, regardless of his Sequence?

"How much blood of each pathway is required?"

Mr. Door replied in the same way that he had been raving in earlier, "Right… there's no need for too much… Just a small tube will do… Just guarantee that the symbol drawing can be finished…"

Although Trissy wore a painful grimace, she couldn't help but smile when she received the critical information.

This, combined with her overall expression, made her appear odd, as though she was a lunatic.

After completing her main goal, Trissy asked again to ensure smooth cooperation with Gehrman Sparrow in the future, “The Abraham family wants to know how to get rid of the ancient curse.”

The dark vortex was silent for a few seconds before sighing.

“Set up such a ritual… Sacrifice one of the demigods of the Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder pathway… Once I leave the storm and penetrate the darkness… the curse will no longer exist…”

Trissy wasn’t interested in how the Abraham family could escape the ancient curse. After receiving the answer, she couldn’t take it any longer. As she thanked Mr. Door, she began to stop the ritual.

As for Mr. Door, he didn’t attempt to bewitch, threaten, or corrupt her.

After the dark fire vortex disintegrated and the ritual ended, Trissy began to Cogitate, spending nearly an hour to calm the effects of Mr. Door’s ravings.

After doing all of this, Trissy took out a pen and paper and copied the symbol provided by Mr. Door. She described the two answers in detail.

She knew that she was being pursued by Saintess of White Katarina, and there seemed to be even more terrifying hunters that would follow her wake. It was very difficult for her to find the blood of Beyonders of different pathways that quickly, so she planned on leaving this matter to Gehrman Sparrow.

In addition, she believed that even if George III and the others believed that there was no problem with the secret mausoleum and that it was safe enough; thus, not leaving too many guards, there were still precautions inside. It wasn’t something that a Sequence 4 could quickly force their way through and cause damage. That way, they would be stopped by the reinforcements and lose their best chance.

As for Gehrman Sparrow, even his messenger was at the level of an angel. The strength of the organization behind him was obvious, so they had the ability to destroy the mausoleum at the critical moment, causing the Black Emperor ritual to fail.

She couldn't complete it herself, so of course she had to find assistance from someone with the ability to accomplish it!

After throwing the letter into a mailbox on a nearby street, the black-haired, black-coated Trissy slowly walked down in the cold and lonely road. On the dim road, she looked at the light from the gas lamps and laughed self-deprecatingly.

"For the sake of a little indignation, I've actually gone this far…

"You're lucky. At least I'll avenge you…

"And if I die, apart from those who hate me, no one will remember me…"

After receiving the letter from Miss Messenger, Klein sat on the chair and read it several times.

Before he went above the gray fog to divine the authenticity of Mr. Door's method, he subconsciously thought about how quickly he could gather the blood from the twenty-two Beyonder pathways.

This symbol is very similar to the symbol behind Miss Magician's chair… I can use my own for Seer… For Apprentice, I can find Miss Magician, and also give her some pressure to write… There are three choices for the Marauder pathway:

Transform a marionette into a mosquito and send a mosquito to bite Hazel; obtain it from Vice Admiral Iceberg's third mate named Flowery Bow Tie, and lastly, get it from Leonard's grandpa…

The Spectator pathway, Miss Justice… The Bard pathway, Little Sun… The Storm pathway, Mr. Hanged Man… the Reader pathway, Vice Admiral Iceberg, or that demigod named Lucca… Secrets Suppliant, get the second mate of Ma'am Hermit, Bloodless Heath Doyle…

The Corpse Collector pathway, Numinous Episcopate's Patrick Bryan… The Sleepless pathway, my dear poet… the Warrior pathway, most of the citizens of the City of Silver or Father Utravsky…

Planter, Frank… Apothecary, Emlyn…

Arbiter, Miss Xio… Lawyer, Marionette Qonas…

Hunter, Danitz or Anderson… Demoness, get Trissy to provide it herself…

Prisoner, Miss Sharron or Marie… Criminal, I temporarily have no targets…

Mystery Pryer, Ma'am Hermit… Savant, Frank's experiment assistant…

Monster, Marionette EnunL"

From the looks of it, most of them can be obtained in a very short period of time. The corresponding channels have sufficient trust in me and believe that I wouldn't curse them with their blood… This Demoness Trissy definitely has a way to eliminate the connection between the blood and the actual body. She won't object… Only Devil. Although I've encountered a few, they have either died or fled. Currently, I have no target in mind…

Yes, I can ask Little Sun if the City of Silver has any Devil flesh and blood left in its inventory. They will encounter some from time to time…

If he hadn't thought about it, Klein wouldn't have realized that, in less than two years of his transmigration, he had actually established a deeper connection with most of the Beyonder pathways.

He immediately retracted his thoughts and seriously considered Mr. Door's escape ritual.

Sacrifice one of each: Marauder, Apprentice, and Seer demigods… These are the three pathways that can be interchanged… Mr. Door wants to temporarily reconcile the three pathways, and use an ingenious method to open the passage to return?

…The demigods of these three pathways aren't that easy to capture. It's possible for the Abraham family to do so at its peak. After the death of the High-Sequence Beyonders in the War of the Four Emperors and the corresponding setbacks, it's pretty much hopeless…

If Mr. Door could be more patient and give the descendants more time to grow, it wouldn't be impossible. However, "He" still constantly cries for help, causing the deaths of promising descendants…

Is "He" crazy? A lunatic who looks like a normal person?

After some thought, he burned the letter and went above the gray fog to do two divinations.

The revelations he received was that the method to enter the secret mausoleum was real. Mr. Door's return ritual was also true.

Looking at the spirit pendulum in his hand, he sat silently in the high-back chair for a long time.

After a few minutes, he clenched his left hand and gripped the topaz pendant tightly. He muttered to himself, All there is left is to wait for the Bizarro Sorcerer potion to be completely digested, and for George III to hold the ritual.

Chapter 1135 - Fragrant

◆

On the Sonia Sea, Pasu Island.

The Blue Avenger, which had been summoned, finally arrived at the headquarters of the Church of the Lord of Storms. It was docked at a port.

Alger removed the cloth wrapped around his head and jumped off the shipboard, landing firmly on the dock thanks to the wind.

The Wind-blessed potion he had consumed had long been digested. The reason why he had done so was to make himself appear more like the other members of the Church, making them feel a sense of kinship.

Years of experience told Alger that it was best to maintain uniformity with the people around him most of the time. He didn't want to appear out of the ordinary. Under the circumstances where he had plenty of secrets, it was even more imperative to do so!

"Haha, Alger, control your impatience." A man who had been waiting at the dock came forward with a smile.

He had a head of soft yellow hair and a long robe embroidered with lightning patterns. He was Alger's former partner, but later on, one chose to be the captain of a ghost ship and continue floating out at sea, while the other returned to be a clergyman.

Alger smiled as he raised his right hand and struck his left breast.

"May the Storm be with you."

"May the Storm be with you." The yellow-haired man, who was in his prime, replied with a smile.

He immediately lowered his voice and said, "I heard that you've already adapted to the Wind-blessed potion?"

Yes, it's very simple. I fly every day and maintain the state of floating. I often use the wind to travel back and forth in different places to quickly adapt. I've already sent a telegram to report this matter." Alger arched his brows to look proud.

The yellow-haired man looked around and maintained his volume from before.

"It's no wonder you were summoned back.

"I heard that, because of the ongoing war, there's a lack of manpower on all sides. The Council of Cardinals has decided to organize a group of Wind-blesseds to advance to Sequence 5 as soon as possible. You should be within those ranks. How enviable. I just became a Wind-blessed, so I don't have the chance."

Organize a group of Wind-blesseds to advance as soon as possible… After knowing that there might be a world war ahead of time, Alger Wilson wasn't surprised. A word suddenly appeared in his mind: cannon fodder!

In fact, just from his contributions for the Bansy Harbor incident, Alger, who was only a Seafarer back then, could've advanced to Ocean Songster without any obstacles. Furthermore, he was usually hard at work, having completed countless missions. In the end, he had only become a Wind-blessed. He had to join the queue for an opportunity to advance to Sequence 5.

And now, there was no need for him to do anything. He was suddenly placed on the list of candidates, and he would soon enter the ranks of the quasi-upper echelons of the Church. He couldn't help but feel suspicious.

Indeed, once a full-scale war begins, the order that prevents people like us from rising will split apart… However, the most important thing is to survive the war. Only by surviving will everything be meaningful… As Alger's thoughts raced, he asked in surprise, "Sainz, is that true?"

"I can't be sure. In short, that's what I heard. Let's go and catch up. If you have the chance to become a high-ranking deacon or a cardinal, don't you forget us!" The yellow-haired man named Sainz reached out his hand and patted Alger on the shoulder.

Alger dodged without a trace and replied with a smile, "Definitely.1

In the City of Silver, the expedition team brought back news that there was a sea on the other side of the Giant King's Court. All the citizens temporarily entered a state of excitement.

After two days of waiting, Derrick Berg finally received a notice from the six-member council, permitting him to receive the Classical Metallurgist's potion formula.

This meant that the upper echelons of the City of Silver had agreed to exchange for the special mushrooms.

The advancement ritual is to personally refine a Stone of Life… What's a Stone of Life? There's no explanation here… Derrick glanced at the parchment in his hand and began preparing a ritual without much thought.

In his opinion, Mr. Fool definitely knew what the Stone of Life was. He didn't need to worry about Mr. World.

After setting up the altar, he took out two metal tubes, each containing the blood of him and a Dawn Paladin from the City of Silver.

The Dawn Paladin had reached a certain age, and his body could no longer withstand the corrosive effects of the poison in most foods. In the foreseeable future, he would gradually reach the end of his life. Two days ago, his granddaughter had personally delivered the final stab with a sword.

As for Derrick, he had previously obtained the Chiefs approval and found an opportunity to extract some of the deceased's blood.

As for the Devil's blood that Mr. World needed, the City of Silver's inventory temporarily didn't have one. However, Chief Colin Iliad said that, as long as the mushrooms could satisfy the needs of the City of Silver's food requirements, he would organize a small hunting team and go to a region where Devils appeared.

After placing the two metal tubes and goatskin parchment onto the altar, Derrick took two steps back and faced the lit candles as he began the sacrificial ritual.

After a series of tasks, the illusory door that was formed from flames and spiritual materials opened heavily. After the sacrificial items were taken away, a dark glow was left behind.

The brilliance slowly faded as large numbers of mushrooms of different shapes appeared before Derrick's eyes.

As for whether they "looked" strange, Derrick didn't even think about it. This was because he had seen mushrooms once—abnormal ones. Therefore, he lacked a point of reference for comparison.

After recalling Mr. World's description of different breeds of mushrooms and effects, Derrick quickly categorized them and placed them into different leather handbags.

Immediately after, he picked up the Unshadowed Crucifix excitedly and prepared to head for the spire.

However, just as his hand touched the bronze cross, he felt it burn and feel prickly. It was as if a light was seeping out of the rust and shining at the mushrooms.

“They’re evil and need to be purified…” Derrick was confused, but he eventually decided to believe in Mr. World.

He hid the Unshadowed Crucifix and carried Thunder God’s Roar. He walked all the way to the spire and met Chief Colin Iliad.

“Are these the mushrooms?” As he spoke, Demon Hunter Colin’s eyes reflected two complex dark green symbols. His gaze swept across the different mushrooms that were either pure white and full, or filled with flesh.

Yes…” Derrick began introducing them, one by one.

Colin returned to normal and remained silent for a few seconds.

“There’s an evil and tainted aura emitted from them, but they’re in minute amounts and can be tolerated.

“This must’ve settled down after they devoured the flesh and blood of monsters.”

He paused for a moment before saying, “Let’s first test their proliferation ability.”

Following this sentence, a number of City of Silver personnel, who were prepared to “usher in” the mushrooms, carried a few monster corpses into the Chiefs room and scattered them over the different kinds of mushrooms.

The moment those mushrooms came into contact with the flesh, they immediately grew hyphae and burrowed into them.

About twenty to thirty seconds later, they began to rapidly expand and spit out spores.

After a while, the corpses of those monsters were densely covered with mushrooms.

However, the mushrooms didn’t stop growing. They kept growing upwards, and in the end, some of them were even taller than Derrick Berg, facing him as if they were “looking down” at him.

…Mr. World didn’t say that they would grow this large… Besides, the speed at which it grows is way too fast… Derrick looked at it in a daze, but he didn’t think it was a problem.

There wasn’t much of a change in Colin Iliad’s expression. Only after the monsters were left with skeleton and dregs did he look around.

“It’s better than I expected. Next, who wants to try the effects of eating it?”

Without hesitation, Derrick took a step forward and said, “Your Excellency, I’ll do it.”

He was in charge of “importing” the mushrooms, so he definitely had to personally confirm its safety.

Colin Iliad nodded slightly and said, “Okay.”

He then turned his head and said to another City of Silver resident, “Invite Elder Lovia over to prevent any accidents.” As a Beyonder who controlled flesh and blood, Lovia could resolve most of the changes in the human body.

Of course, whether the mutated individual could survive was another matter.

Everyone waited for a few minutes before Shepherd Lovia, who was wearing a deep purple robe, arrived in the Chiefs room.

She had just passed through the door when her light gray eyes suddenly narrowed. She instinctively looked at the mushrooms that occupied most of the space.

After staring at it for a while, Lovia looked at Colin Iliad and nodded slightly, indicating that she was ready to provide any help.

Without any hesitation, Derrick Berg chose a black mushroom that was embedded with blood-red threads and marbling, standing at half his height. He tore off the mushroom that had wrapped around the skeleton, and he produced a bonfire and began roasting it.

Gradually, a fragrance that seemed to be able to drill into one's stomach emanated out. This was a smell that the residents of the City of Silver had never smelled before.

Their throats bobbed as they instinctively swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

The bonfire emitted a sizzling sound before the fragrance grew stronger.

This wasn't the usual sound. It was as if it could make one's soul yearn for this strange smell. It was the type that everyone was rather familiar with. It was the natural desire for Black-Faced Grass food after returning to the City of Silver, having not eaten them for a long time.

As the sizzling sounds grew louder and frequent, they felt as though a hand had reached out from their stomachs, eager to grab the food back.

Unknowingly, the other City of Silver residents who had been doing something else in the spire had followed the fragrance and gathered at the door.

It took Derrick a great deal of effort to control himself from tasting the mushroom midway. He waited until it was completely charred yellow on the outside before he took it back and blew at it.

At that moment, everyone's eyes were on him, including Colin Iliad and Shepherd Lovia.

With his faith in Mr. World and Mr. Fool, Derrick didn't speak. He lowered his head and bit the mushroom.

"Ssss…" He let out a sound of being scalded before chewing and gulping it down.

After nearly half of the mushrooms were gone, Derrick raised his head, his face slightly red. His mouth was glistening with oil as he mumbled, “It’s such a weird… taste… I can’t help it… I can’t stop…”

Colin Iliad sized up Derrick for a few seconds before turning his head to look at Shepherd Lovia.

Lovia slowly shook her head and said, “No problem.”

The surrounding people of the City of Silver immediately let out cheers as they rushed forward and surrounded Derrick. They either wanted to share a piece or ask him what to do with the other mushrooms.

When Colin saw this, his expression gradually relaxed. He slowly closed his eyes and lifted his chin.

He took a deep breath of the fragrance that had filled the room.

The City of Silver held a mushroom ritual? Isn’t this a little strange… Also, what’s a Stone of Life? Yes, the people from the Church of Earth Mother definitely know, and Frank is no exception… Above the gray fog, as Klein listened to Little Sun’s latest report, he opened the parchment that he had received but hadn’t had the chance to read in detail.

The reason why he had rushed back to the real world after the sacrificial and bestowment ceremony was because the serialized horror stories of Backlund’s hospitals in several newspapers had reached its climax. Hence, he received a lot of feedback over the past few days. He was at the critical moment of having his Bizarro Sorcerer potion digested.

And now, he had already completed this step.

He was already prepared to advance to Scholar of Yore.

Chapter 1136 - Rumors from Ancient Times

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Putting down the Classical Alchemist potion formula, Klein cast his gaze towards the two tubes of blood Little Sun had sacrificed.

Then, he beckoned for a ceramic jar wrapped in layers of paper figurines.

This was the Beyonder blood from different pathways that he had previously gathered. It had been placed above the gray fog and sealed with the Paper Angel in order to slowly integrate it into this mysterious space's aura, removing the connection between the blood and the individual. This was to prevent any accidents from happening to the provider when the door of the symbols was opened.

To him, it was fine if he suffered backlash. After all, there was at least one more chance of him reviving. If it would affect those who trusted him and gave their blood, he would rather not do it.

After peeling off the paper figurines at the mouth of the jar and pouring the two tubes of blood into it, he conjured a glass stick and reached in to stir it.

Right on the heels of that, he used Paper Angel and sealed it again.

I'm just short of Prisoner, Devil, and Demoness… After I complete the ritual, I'll personally pay Miss Sharron a visit. It's better to make a request in person regarding such matters. It's too rude to do it by writing letters… Only Miss Magician is a little special. Clearly, she would prefer it if I wrote a letter rather than meet Gehrman Sparrow in person. Heh, she actually used the excuse that the ink had frozen due to the low temperatures to delay her writing. Heh, are her magic tricks just for show? Thankfully, my potion has already digested, so there's no need for me to push her anymore… Klein mumbled inwardly as he threw the ceramic jar covered in paper figurine back into the junk pile.

After leaving the world above the gray fog, he didn't immediately prepare to advance to Scholar of Yore. Instead, he took out a pen and paper and drew the symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying.

This was something he had planned to do before he consumed the potion—to ask Arrodes about Sefirah Castle.

As the symbol took form, the light in the originally badly-lit room became darker, as if clouds were drifting past, blocking out the sun.

After more than ten seconds, the full-body mirror with cracks suddenly rippled with aqueous light and silver words quickly appeared:

"Exalted Great Master, your devoted, loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning.

"I-I am still the servant that you trust the most, the closest and most favorite, right?"

This question… I seem to be able to read the panic and anxiety of this magic mirror… Does it feel a sense of danger? After some thought, he nodded in amusement.

"Yes."

Actually, that has never been the case… I'm just comforting you… After answering, he silently added in his heart.

The surface of the mirror lit up and the silver words were dyed golden.

They squirmed and formed a new sentence:

“Great Master, do you have any questions for me?”

“Yes.” Klein secretly tensed up. “What do you know about Sefirah Castle?”

Arrodes fell silent for a few seconds before the pale golden words changed:

“I don’t know much about this. I’ve only heard some rumors. In the early days of the Second Epoch, the ancient gods believed that the original Creator left some things behind. That might be a ‘kingdom’ formed from a certain part of ‘His’ body or something created by ‘Him.’ And Sefirah Castle is one of them.

“This was the name that the King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea, gave. ‘He’ calls the Hounds of Fulgrim as Sefirah Castle Keepers. However, ‘He’ failed to enter Sefirah Castle even to ‘His’ death. Therefore, many powerful creatures suspect that Sefirah Castle doesn’t actually exist, but is just an abstract concept.”

It had something to do with the original Creator? After pondering for a while, he said, “One of them… How many other entities like Sefirah Castle are there?”

“Eight. There are detailed records on the second Blasphemy Slate. Unfortunately, I haven’t seen it.” On the surface of the mirror, lines of words appeared one after another. However, the pale gold color faded away, becoming silver once again. “The ancient gods suspect that the source of the underground corruption comes from a place similar to Sefirah Castle. They call it the Chaos Sea. Also, there are rumors that deep in the spirit world city, Calderón City, there are clues to the River of Eternal Darkness. This comes from the ancient god, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace. As for the others, I’ve heard of some names, but it’s not a complete list. There’s Tenebrous World, Knowledge Moor, as well as the Brood Hive that’s related to the moon.”

There are a total of eight. Chaos Sea, River of Eternal Darkness, Knowledge Moor, Tenebrous World, and Brood Hive… Brood Hive is related to the moon; it sounds very dangerous… I wonder if it has anything to do with the Mother Tree of Desire… Klein silently repeated the key information in Arrodes's response. He had a nagging feeling that he should be able to grasp something, but he didn't gain much from it. He even lacked the ability to piece together the clues.

When he saw that Arrodes had only heard rumors and didn't have any actual understanding of them, he organized his thoughts and said with a smile, "From the looks of it, you might come from the Chaos Sea."

"That's not important. What's important is that I'm your loyal, lowly, and obedient servant." Arrodes said the entire sentence at once.

Obedient, this use of words… Klein silently lampooned before asking, "What are the origins of Dark Angel Sasrir?"

On the surface of the mirror, silver words formed one after another:

"I similarly can't see it, but at that time, there was a myth that said that, when the ancient sun god was born, 'He' was light and darkness combined. After all, 'He' calls himself the Creator, so 'He' must be well-rounded and not lacking anything.

"Later, 'He' separated the darkness in his body and used it to create the first angel with one of his ribs, Dark Angel Sasrir."

This… rib… I can totally imagine it. Back then, it was the ancient sun god who personally fabricated and spread this myth… Amon's brother, your wife has become the Dark Angel! Klein was first alarmed before many strange ideas arose in his mind.

As his thoughts settled, he began to analyze the truth behind this myth.

With such a myth spreading, it will cause the believers to believe that Dark Angel Sasrir is the dark side of the ancient sun god. They would worship "Him" in the same way as the Lord. No one objected or forbade this myth. As for Dark Angel, “He” was ultimately the deputy of the divine kingdom, god’s left hand. So this implies that this was very likely true…

What happened afterward can be summarized as the dark side of the ancient sun god colluding with foreign enemies, bewitching the Kings of Angels and assassinating the main body?

This can explain why Ouroboros and Medici joined Rose Redemption. “They” were only following the orders of the “Lord”…

From this angle, isn’t the position of Dark Angel Sasrir, in the ancient sun god’s divine kingdom, equivalent to The World of the Tarot Club? Hmm…

Thankfully, The World is a fake person. He doesn’t have his own spirituality and thoughts…

As he thought about it, he suddenly felt drenched with sweat. He was glad that he was a Seer and not some other pathway.

Based on his previous reasoning, he quickly guessed the reason why Dark Angel was sleeping in the Giant King’s Court.

Perhaps it has something to do with the fall of the ancient sun god…

Therefore, the brother of Amon, the Dragon of Wisdom, and the True Creator wish to confirm the state of Dark Angel Sasrir…

However, there are many other problems… In the twenty-two Beyonder pathways, which pathway is this King of Angels, the left hand of God?

The Marauder has Amon, Apprentice has Mr. Door, Spectator, Reader, Bard, Sailor, Secrets Suppliant, Warrior, Sleepless, Planter, Savant, Monster, Hunter, and Arbiter are obviously impossible… Corpse Collector is also impossible due to the existence of Death in the Fourth Epoch. It’s impossible for there to be a King of Angels to exist at the same time—unless the Dark Angel had already fallen to Sequence 2…

By the same logic, the Seer and Lawyer pathways can be eliminated for now. It can then be confirmed that the Dark Angel is no longer a King of Angels…

Mystery Pryer, Moon, and Devil are all certain possibilities. I cannot eliminate the possibility that the Hidden Sage, Primordial Moon, and the Dark Side of the Universe are the Dark Angel's "alt"… Yes, there might still be the Mother Tree of Desire hidden within…

It's also possible with Prisoner. There's no clear evidence that this pathway has produced a true deity. Back then, the Chained God might not even be a King of Angels.

After some thought, he said to Arrodes, "It's your turn to ask."

On the cracked full-body mirror's surface, silver words twisted together and formed a new sentence:

"Great Master, may I guess what you want to ask next?"

"…" Klein nodded slightly and answered, "Sure."

"You wish to ask about Sasrir's current state. My answer is, I don't know, as I can't see." Behind the silver words was a smiley face with a simple drawing.

"Not bad," Klein praised. "That's all for today. I will summon you again in the near future at any time."

"Yes, Great Master. Your loyal servant, Arrodes, is constantly preparing to serve you!" On the surface of the mirror, the simple smile on his face turned into a waving cat's paw.

When the mirror returned to normal, Klein took out a pen and paper and wrote down what he had just learned.

This was one of the documents he had prepared for the Scholar of Yore ritual.

In the past few days, he had written a lot of documents on ancient history.

Following that, with the information and two marionettes, he “Teleported” to the Southern Continent.

He didn’t dare to advance in Backlund. If anything were to happen to him, Amon and Zaratul would definitely be able to detect it and come straight for him!

Chapter 1137 - Amidst History

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On a barren island in the Berserk Sea.

This place wasn't far from the Southern Continent, but it didn't belong there geographically. The reason why Klein had chosen this island as a place for himself to advance to Scholar of Yore was, firstly, because he wanted to avoid Amon and Zaratul to the best of his ability. He also didn't want to enter the region where the Mother Tree of Desire had a wide range of influence. Secondly, because the Berserk Sea was enveloped by the power left behind by Death, this was, in a way, a part of the Evernight Goddess's kingdom. If the ritual were to create a huge commotion, it was possible for some effective screening.

Furthermore, this place is very desolate. There aren't many creatures here, so there's no need to worry about any accidents affecting the innocent… Klein surveyed the area and began to set up a ritual. He brought the corresponding materials back from above the gray fog to the real world.

Following that, he flipped through the thick ancient history documents and pulled out some records that he couldn't be certain of. Those that couldn't be confirmed with divination were also removed.

Pa!

With a shake of his hand, the scarlet flames rose and devoured the stack of paper.

The supplementary ingredients needed for the Scholar of Yore potion were a large amount of real ancient historical records. Therefore, he didn't want to take the risk of using things he couldn't be sure of. He would rather have fewer of them.

After making his selection, he poured the Hound of Fulgrim's blood into a huge cauldron and placed the few White Frost Crystals that he had weighed beforehand into it.

The moment the two supplementary ingredients came into contact with each other, a thin mist immediately rose up. It enveloped the container and was about half the height of a person and an arm wide.

With a glance, Klein followed his spiritual intuition and temporarily gave up on adding the last supplementary material. He first got his marionette, Enuni, to grab the Demonic Wolf of Fog's transformed heart and threw the item that seemed condensed from white mist into the cauldron.

As white frost condensed across Enuni's arm, the mist that emanated from the vessel became extremely dense. It began to contract and expand, as though it was alive, like a slowly-beating heart.

Without any hesitation, Klein controlled his marionette, Enuni, to pick up the pair of eyes from the Hounds of Fulgrim. He stuffed the two dark red flame-like objects into the seemingly corporeal mist.

The mist's color quickly darkened, making it impossible for him to see the huge cauldron at its core.

He didn't panic. Instead, he calmly got his other marionette to throw page after page of the ancient historical records into the blob of thick, dark mist.

The thick mist slowly collapsed. After "digesting" the historical records, it finally fell back into the cauldron, like water vapor, turning into something that coexisted as both a liquid and a gas. Its color was dark red, almost the size of a baby's head.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his left wrist and used divination to determine if the potion was successfully concocted.

He received a revelation that it was rather dangerous, but one that he could barely withstand.

And this meant that the potion was successfully concocted.

Even if it were strictly concocted according to the formula, a Sequence 3 potion is equivalent to poison. If I can withstand it, I'll advance. Otherwise, I'll go crazy, lose control, or even die… After staring at the topaz pendant spinning rapidly in a counterclockwise direction for a few seconds, he pulled up the silver chain and wrapped it around his left wrist.

He cast his gaze at the potion floating in the cauldron as thoughts flashed across his mind:

A Bizarro Sorcerer's acting not only has the key terms of "fear," "horror," "directing," and "inexplicable," there's also some level of mystery, unknown, complicated, and unpredictable aspects of fate. The two aspects combine to form a complete Bizarro Sorcerer… This is a behavioral style, while the other is the attributes…

And to me, my origins are such a mystery that I haven't even figured out the truth. I've experienced so many complicated matters that I've already stopped a true god from descending, scared a King of Angels. Even my fate is so unpredictable that a Snake of Mercury is unable to discern. Therefore, I've already acted in advance and naturally digested that portion of the potion. There's no need to summarize the principles…

This truly reflects the single word "bizarro"…

Yes, the ritual requirements for Scholar of Yore requires me to be completely separated from reality for at least 300 years. Only after I become history and no longer belong to the present era do I consume the potion. My life while I was sealed within a cocoon and hung above the gray fog is more than enough. But after becoming Klein, I've experienced too many things in the past year. I've already left a mark in the present era. Would it affect the effects of the ritual?

It should be… Fortunately, it hasn't even been two years. The mark won't be too deep and can barely be accepted. After all, it's impossible for me to hang myself up for 300 years again before I consume the potion… There's another decade or so until the apocalypse!

Furthermore, the ancient history I grasp is definitely far superior to any Bizarro Sorcerer. It can be considered as me effectively acting ahead of time. I can definitely avoid many dangers…

As his thoughts raced, Klein took a deep breath and stopped thinking about it.

Wearing a silk top hat and a double-breasted coat, his skin suddenly turned transparent as maggots that contained three-dimensional symbols crawled out.

The transparent maggots were itching to move, as if they were going to crawl into the dense mist in the cauldron, leaving behind only empty clothes and hats.

Klein managed to barely control his state as he calmly extended his right hand and picked up the potion that was wrapped in mist.

The potion didn't seem to have any weight as it floated in front of his face.

Klein opened his mouth and took a deep breath.

The potion instantly transformed and extended into Klein's mouth, making him feel like he was devouring a dark red glow.

The transparent maggots swarmed back into his body, tearing down the parts of the potion and swallowing them.

As his Mythical Creature form was special—both a full body and also separated into many small parts—Klein could only consume the potion in such a manner.

Of course, if he could control his incomplete Mythical Creature form, it would be much simpler.

Without a sound, he felt a cold feeling spread through every Worm of Spirit, with a searing pain.

A familiar, boundless grayish-white fog appeared in front of him. It enveloped the entire world, revealing some of his past experiences.

This included the terrifying legends he created, his conversation with the Red Angel evil spirit; the treatment of the demigod, Lucca, with the help of Miss Justice; hunting Hvin Rambis; dealing with Amon's avatars; revenge on Ince Zangwill; exploring Calderón City; infiltrating Saint Samuel Cathedral; dominating the seas; stopping the True Creator's descent; saving Tingen; and various other details of his daily life.

They made conflicts with different people and things, becoming extremely complicated as they merged into a sea. As he "flew" through it, he was unable to find a clear and accurate sense of self. He felt like he was about to be lost in this area. The cold, burning pain constantly drove him forward, so as to expel the influence on him. This made it difficult to return to the real world.

With great difficulty, Klein managed to control this feeling. As he gradually lost consciousness and his body slowly descended, he tried his best to find something that could confirm his identity.

Finally, he saw the deep depths of the gray fog. At the end of the sea was a shattered spot of light. With a thought, he followed his intuition and flew over in a manner that seemed to travel the cosmos.

There was a figure hanging from the blurry door of light in the spot of light. He was stored in a transparent cocoon as he swayed gently. He looked like the original Zhou Mingrui. This had nothing to do with his surroundings. He was alone and easily grasped.

I couldn't see this before when I used the Yesterday Once More charm, but I can actually do so now… In other words, during the advancement process, I can indirectly influence the Sefirah Castle above the gray fog? Wait, my ability to think has been restored… Klein's consciousness instantly cleared up as he finally understood the essence of the ritual.

By eliminating the interference, he could provide a clear definition of himself to become a Scholar of Yore. This prevented him from getting lost!

Following a similar spot of light, Klein began to fly deeper into the grayish-white fog. Along the way, he discovered that the surrounding fog was scattered with fragments of light. They had colonial phases, times when Roselle ruled, the Battle of the Violated Oath, the White Rose War, the Twenty Year War… These were all bits of history that Klein knew of the Fifth Epoch.

As he passed through them, he naturally split his consciousness and completed an invisible connection, making his definition of his own identity even clearer.

In the Pale Era, during the War of the Four Emperors, the Trunsoest Empire, the Tudor Dynasty, the United Empire, Solomon's first and second Empire, the fall of Red Angel, the Blood Emperor's apotheosis, the Black Emperor's return, and other historical fragments continued to surface as Klein kept rushing forward. They appeared in different spots in the endless gray fog, like the stars in the night sky, they illuminated the path to return.

In such a manner, Klein felt that he was becoming more and more lucid. Every Worm of Spirit's coldness and burning sensation became milder.

He could've turned around a long time ago and returned to the real world. However, he didn't stop and continued flying forward.

Scenes of the fatal attack of the Rose Redemption; the three great angels, White, Storm, Wisdom sharing in the body of the ancient sun god; and the plotting in the Giant King's Court with the Church of Evernight, Earth, and Combat hiding as secret organizations flashed across the grayish-white fog. The more he proceeded forward, the more relaxed he felt. He felt like he was about to fly up from running down a runway.

At some point in time, a group of terrifying canine-like creatures with dark red eye sockets appeared beside him. They ran around the indiscernible bottom of the gray fog as they followed him by his side as if they were accompanying and guarding him.

Among them, two of them only had one eye.

Klein looked around and smiled. He didn't stop and continued proceeding deeper into the gray fog.

The history of the Dual Era and the Early Era of Fire swept past him from behind, pointing out the path that led forward. Finally, Klein stopped in front of a lonely fragment of light. Inside was a withered forest and a normal-sized tomb.

He went forward and saw that the grayish-white fog was silently enveloping everything. It was unknown where the other fragments of light were floating.

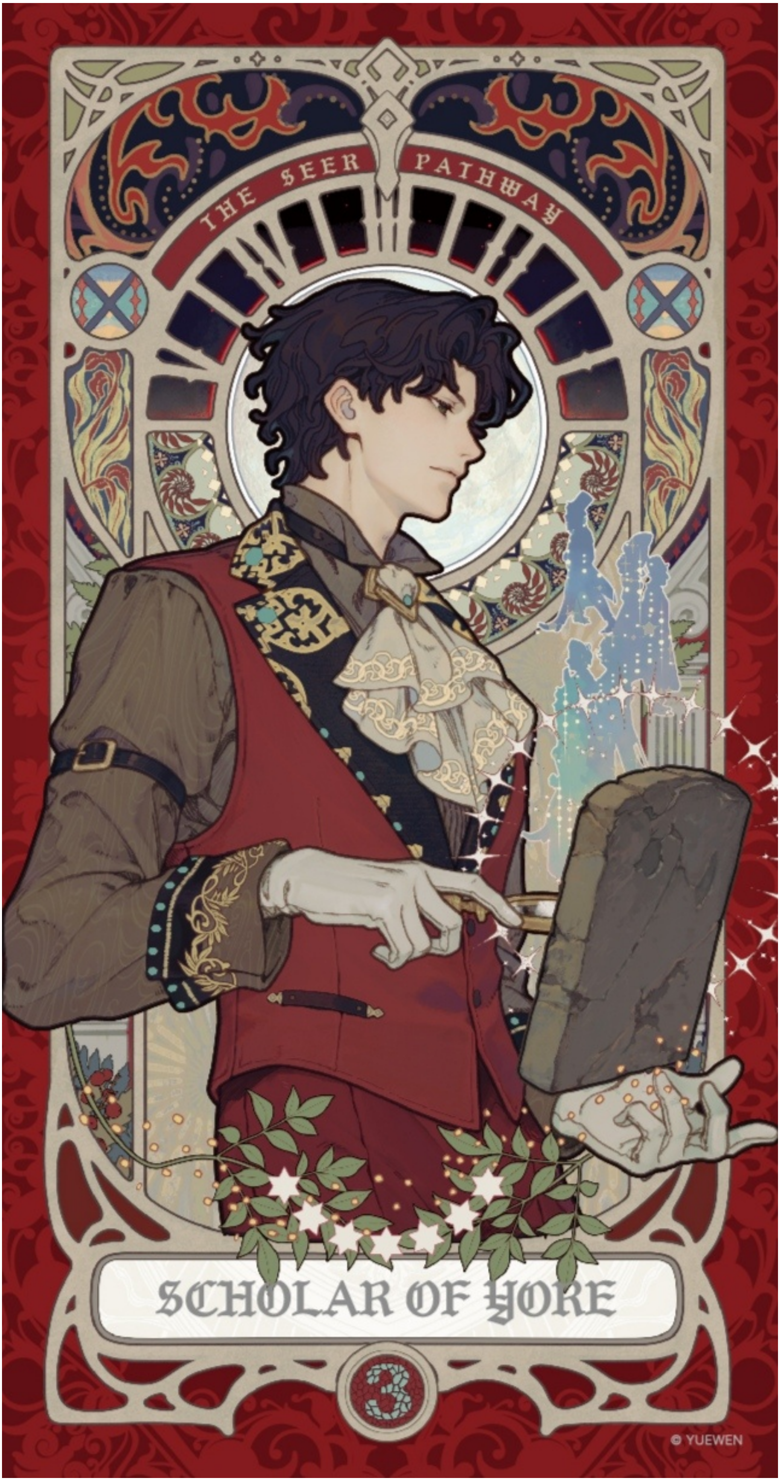
Feeling his spirituality depleting, Klein didn't continue the search. He connected his consciousness to his origin, and he suddenly plummeted.

As the gray fog rapidly faded away, Klein felt his body and saw the cauldron in front of him.

He didn't care about his current state, and he subconsciously looked up into the sky.

He directly saw the gray fog and the ancient majestic palace above the gray fog.

The mysterious space was trembling slightly.


THE SEER PATHWAY
SCHOLAR OF YORE
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In Backlund, a postman who was riding a bicycle stopped. He turned his head slightly and adjusted the monocle on his right eye.

He then muttered to himself, “Sefirah Castle…”

After a few seconds of hesitation, the thin-faced young man curled his lips and laughed. His expression was filled with anticipation.

In a rental apartment at East Borough of the same city, figures hanging in the air swayed gently. At the same time, they simultaneously made a sound:

“Sefirah Castle…”

In the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard Mitchell, who was assigning missions to his team, suddenly heard an elderly voice in his mind:

“Sefirah Castle…”

Chapter 1138 - “Scholar of Yore”

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In the highlands, on an altar with eyes, arms, heads, and organs embedded in it.

Dark red blood-red light surged out like a tidal wave, distorting into the shape of a deformed tree.

Amidst a buzzing sound, the human bones, candles, silver plates, and gold boxes trembled, as though they could slice through one’s Spirit Body.

The surrounding supplicants instinctively bowed their heads and prostrated.

Then, they simultaneously came to a realization:

“The Berserk Sea, reef island…”

When he saw the ancient palace above the gray fog and sensed the slight tremble of the mysterious space, Klein felt that he had a deeper connection with the so-called “Sefirah Castle,” one that was hard to accurately grasp.

At this moment, he truly felt that place would gradually belong to him.

In just a few seconds, all the abnormalities disappeared. Without any delay, Klein got the two marionettes to put away the items that were still of value, and destroy the rest. He took out a paper figurine and shook it.

With a smacking sound, the paper figurine ignited with a scarlet flame as dense illusory wings appeared behind his back.

When he saw this, Klein was stunned. He never expected that the simple Paper Figurine Substitutes would have hints of Angel's Embrace.

He then grabbed Qonas and Enuni, using "Teleport" to vanish from the island formed by reefs.

After using several islands in the Sonia Sea as waypoints, he took a huge detour before finally returning to his residence in Backlund's East Borough.

During this process, he repeatedly used Paper Figurine Substitutes, which had undergone several qualitative changes, to disrupt divination, prophecy powers, tracking, and observation.

Phew, I didn't expect it to really trigger the changes in Sefirah Castle, resulting in an unconcealable phenomenon… Fortunately, I was sufficiently careful and cautious. I wasn't careless. If I had advanced in Backlund or the surrounding areas, I'm certain that Amon and Zaratul would've already "seen" me… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he hurriedly took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog to do a divination.

After confirming that he was in a safe situation, he didn't stay for long. He immediately returned to the real world, and with the help of Cogitation, he began to restrain his diverging spirituality.

After doing this, he took off his clothes, threw himself into bed, and fell into a deep sleep.

Normally, a Bizarro Sorcerer wouldn't be as exhausted as he was after successfully advancing to Scholar of Yore. He would definitely have energy left to check his physical condition. However, while traveling through history, he relied on his mark to travel a very far distance. He relied on his own mastery of ancient secrets, that far exceeded his current level, to reach the establishment of the Giant King's CourUn the early of the Second Epoch or the end of the Epoch.

This was equivalent to digesting the potion.

After a few hours of deep sleep, Klein woke up as he slowly opened his eyes.

He sat up, pulled a pillow to prop him up from behind, and rubbed his temples.

After ten minutes of regulating himself, he was completely awake and began to inspect himself.

Indeed, I've digested most of the potion right after I consumed it. At least eighty percent… This is roughly what I expected… but I wonder how much more ancient history I'll have to obtain before I can digest it completely…

From the looks of it, the acting of a Scholar of Yore has two main directions: One is a scholar from ancient times, and the other is a scholar who studies ancient history. Both of them are required. The first is relatively easy because the ritual itself contains the key point of making one a person from ancient times. Once the advancement is successful, one can naturally act as a scholar from ancient times.

The second point is extremely difficult. It would be alright in normal society, but in this world with true gods, devils, and evil existences, just gathering ancient information is a very risky matter. If I endeavor to gather the truth of history, I might die a horrible death at any moment without any reason. The more I understand, the greater the danger…

The reason why I know so much is mostly thanks to the arrangements of a few existences, as well as the complicated fate that Sefirah Castle brings me. This makes me encounter all sorts of things. Of course, even so, I've already died once despite being a true deity's Blessed; what's more, other Scholars of Yore?

Changing the spot of Miracle Invoker and Scholar of Yore will make acting relatively simple. Unfortunately, there's no such thing…

In addition, the previous two meanings have an inclination towards ancient times. I have to pay attention to the word "scholar." What must I figure out from history before I can be considered a "scholar"?

Next, there are a few directions towards my digestion. First, I need to figure out Dark Angel Sasrir's current state and truly replicate the actual process of the Cataclysm. Second, I need to spend some effort to connect the history of the Fourth Epoch together, and not just be fine with having them in disconnected segments. Third, I need to go deep into the details from a macroscopic view. For example, the rise and fall of the Antigonus family…

After confirming that prior acting was effective, and considering his future path ahead of time, Klein combined the mysticism knowledge he had gained from his advancement and his observation of his godhood's divinity, and he had a trial run of his powers to slowly figure out the powers of a Scholar of Yore.

Worms of Spirit can be split into six hundred pieces. The godhood patterns have also changed to a certain degree; it's even more complicated, and it can showcase concepts of strength, strangeness, and supematuralness…

The changes in my godhood patterns firstly originate from the newly obtained characteristic, and secondly, it comes from the mysticism knowledge contained within the potion. This is both a result of the Beyonder characteristic and also something obtained from a higher level… After becoming a true High-Sequence Beyonder, is it possible to directly change the knowledge at a higher dimension to affect Beyonders at other Sequences?

Deciphering a potion formula from the godhood patterns seems like an actual example…

Also, at the level of Sequence 3, the changes in godhood patterns have a personal effect. This is closely related to prayer and responses. As a Scholar of Yore, the corresponding honorific names will be different in nature. This is because of different personalities, experiences, and traits.

Yes, I can allow different Worms of Spirit to instinctively listen to prayers and respond to them when it's a relatively uncomplicated matter. It doesn't affect my other actions… The specially marked ones and more complicated matters will be handed over to my actual body…

A Scholar of Yore can use a Worm of Spirit to act as a god, but what about other Sequence 3 Beyonders from other pathways? It's impossible for them to respond while sleeping, right…

Heh heh, I'll think of my honorific name as a Scholar of Yore later. I'll first study the specific abilities.

Uh… A Scholar of Yore's main ability is to obtain help from history. This is split into two parts. One is to borrow strength from my past self.

This is rather embarrassing for me. It's currently useless because the past me is definitely weaker than the present me. Yes, when I was hanging above the door of light above the gray fog, I was just an ordinary person… Compared to those who were important figures in the past but are now weak due to all kinds of reasons, this is a godly skill. One can be a baby crying for ice cream while engaging in a Sequence 1 battle. It would be impossible to find any weaknesses… The only problem is that it's not long-lasting…

Of course, as more time passes after I become a Scholar of Yore, this will begin to show its effects. I can often borrow strength from my past Scholar of Yore self so that I wouldn't have any moment of weakness. Even if I were to suffer serious injuries… To a certain extent, this is something that's self-perpetuating, preventing myself from ever being in a nadir until my spirituality is completely drained.

Yes, before my spirituality is drained, I can always borrow energy from my past self. There’s no limit to the number of times. As for my current spirituality, even without the process of recovering, I can borrow power nearly ten times a day, maintaining it for five minutes each time.

The second part is to summon images from the Historical Void. It can be humans or objects. The more detailed and the better the understanding I have of the corresponding piece of history and matters, the higher the chance of success is and the longer it will last.

Similarly, the lower the target’s level is, relative to me, the higher the chance of success and the longer it can be maintained.

In addition, increasing my affinity with the target will increase the chances of success and the time it can be maintained.

These are the three conditions to succeed. Furthermore, when summoning someone of a higher level than myself, or an item, even if I barely succeed, the final projection will only have a portion of the strength and quality of the original. It can’t be one who’s at full strength. Also, I can only maintain three images summoned from the Historical Void at any point in time, including those summoned by my marionettes…

Currently, even if it’s the most ordinary item or something that was once mine, I can maintain its availability for a maximum of fifteen minutes.

The fact that the target has a close relationship with me is worth rumination. In essence, borrowing power from one’s own body is also a form of summoning. It’s just that one’s relationship with oneself is extremely close, so there’s no possibility of failure. It’s an extreme example.

In other words, if I were to summon the important figures from the Historical Void, it would be best to establish a friendly relationship with “Them” and maintain it for a long time. Yes, if I were to summon

Mr. Azik's projection, the chances of success will definitely be higher than projecting other angels…

How is this a Beyonder power? This is obviously studies related to EQ, Relationships, and Interpersonal Communication!

As he sighed with emotion, Klein sincerely felt that the core powers of a Scholar of Yore were godly. After all, those that involved history and time were most likely extremely magical.

However, in order to put it to use to its fullest potential, one had to have sufficient intelligence, and also make the necessary preparations.

This was an unchanging requirement of the Seer pathway.

Yes, when summoning images from the Historical Void, there's no way to communicate with them. That is to say that a Scholar of Yore can't interfere with history and change the past. From the angle of acting, this can be summarized as "witnessing fate, affecting the present, and the inability to reverse the past…"

Apart from the ability to transfer a certain part of ailments, wounds, curses, attacks, prophecies, and observations to Paper Figurine Substitutes, there's another power. It can transfer a certain part to the target. Before one discovers that it's fake, things can continue proceeding as per normal. Heh heh, if anyone loses their heart while their brain remains active, I can give them a paper heart for a short period of time. He will be able to obtain strength from history to beat and circulate blood…

The time it takes to attain initial control of Spirit Body Threads has shortened to two seconds, and completely transforming into a marionette takes ten seconds. The maximum range for the two is 500 meters… By controlling a marionette, the limit to swapping positions is five kilometers…

Flame Jump is also five kilometers… I can freely control the might of

Air Cannon, and at its maximum might, it's equivalent to a coastal defensive cannon…

A creature that can transform into a physical form whose characteristics have a difference that does not exceed a certain level. Some of the organs created can be used, while others are only decorations…

Phew, this is a Scholar of Yore who has digested most of the potion… After examining himself, Klein slowly stood up.

He planned on entering the world above the gray fog to check on the changes in Sefirah Castle.

Chapter 1139 - A Different Form of Companionship

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Above the endless grayish-white fog, Klein’s figure appeared in the ancient palace.

He only looked around briefly, and he realized that there were a few changes.

The most obvious point was that the state of the mysterious space and its layout had been fully projected into his Spirit Body. Even at a great distance, he could still see the grayish-white clouds and that strange door of light.

Apart from the palace that I conjured and the door of light that originally existed, there’s nothing here. It’s empty, boundless, and full of power of a high level… As he murmured, he sat down, raised his right hand, and gently lifted it up.

In the blink of an eye, the entire gray fog boiled. The mysterious space it carried quaked as beams of slightly dark light emitted.

When the light gathered together, it condensed into a translucent angel with illusory wings on its back, as per Klein’s will. It had the same level and power as an angel. It was majestic and sacred, with an oppressive aura.

There’s no need to add the Black Emperor card, the Tyrant card, or the Red Priest card. There’s no need to use the Sea God Scepter either. With my power alone, I can stir most of the powers of this mysterious space to its fullest potential, allowing The Fool's angel to become a true Sequence 2 angel. Of course, this angel is unable to respond to prayers or be maintained for too long. It only exists in the "embrace" form and within a few attacks, having some powers in the domain of miracles…

Indeed, being able to revive is a gift from Sefirah Castle. As for how many more times I can be resurrected, I can't come to a conclusion now. If I can obtain a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact and use its level to observe it, I should be able to see it more clearly… I'll just treat it as one more time. It's not a bad thing to err while being cautious. This reminds me to be careful and cautious… This is the way for Beyonders of the Seer pathway to survive…

Unfortunately, this "miracle" can only be used for myself for now…

Yes, at most, in order to truly possess and control this mysterious space, I have to become an angel or even a Sequence 1 angel at least. It lives up to its name as Sefirah Castle. As for that strange door of light, its requirements are even higher. It's impossible to tell if there are any hidden dangers at the moment…

What's the meaning of the existence of Sefirah Castle? "Baiting" transmigrators to revive the original Creator? With a flick of his right hand, the holy and powerful angel dissipated in midair.

The entire Sefirah Castle calmed down.

Following that, Klein stood up and took a step towards the grayish-white cloud in midair. He stood in front of the strange door of light formed from countless spherical lights.

The door of light was tainted with some bluish-black color. Each spherical light's essence was a transparent and translucent worm that formed into a ball.

As he stared at the transparent "cocoons" hanging by the black threads, Klein extended his right hand and slowly reached out to the door of light in an attempt to touch it.

One inch, two inches, three inches. His hand finally touched the edge of the door of light, but it passed right through as if it was just an illusion.

However, compared to his previous attempt, the illusory door of light was clearly a little stickier, as though it was about to turn corporeal.

This is an item that represents the essence of Sefirah Castle? After pondering for a few seconds, he turned and returned to the ancient palace.

Without any delay, he left the world above the gray fog and began experimenting with the various powers he had just acquired.

I have to first get an honorific name… The prayer response range for a Sequence 3 Beyonder is a region. This range is different depending on the authority that one wields. Clearly, a Sea King's range is a relatively far-reaching type… Therefore, this honorific name of mine also has its limits. The protector of all the poor children in Backlund? It feels odd…

Yes, other people might have a limitation, but it's not necessarily the case for me. I can use the spirit world and the Blessed of Sefirah Castle as a replacement. I should be the only one who is Blessed in both regions. It's unique enough. This way, as long as someone is in the same city or district as me, they can use this honorific name to pray to me.

There's nothing I can do if we're not in the same area. I can't possibly do the same as throwing the Sea God Scepter above the gray fog, splitting a few Worms of Spirit to the world above the gray fog, and using Sefirah Castle's level to respond throughout the entire world… Although I can't confirm the relationship between the Dark Angel and the ancient sun god, this is enough to remind me to be careful with my avatars and marionettes. Also, it's not as simple as splitting a few worms. A large number of Worms of Spirit have to be left in Sefirah Castle to achieve the desired effect. I'm currently unable to do that…

Right, my mental state isn't too bad. I don't have a dissociative disorder, nor do I have the irresistible urge to become cold and terrifying. This means that the mark of a Scholar of Yore in history is his anchor… Also, the emperor's situation worsened only after he became an angel, causing him to have no choice but to rely on his believers as anchors to "anchor" him in place. I'm still one huge level away… I need to find out what else can be used as anchors, apart from believers, to ensure that nothing goes wrong… Amidst his thoughts, Klein picked up pen and paper.

He wrote the first line of his honorific name:

"The Blessed of the spirit world and Sefirah Castle."

After some thought, he began writing the second and third lines based on his rich experience and knowledge he got from his godhood patterns:

The Mystery stemming from ancient times;

The witness of an extended history."

Since a Sequence 3 Beyonder wasn't a true deity, he couldn't use a three-line description. After some thought, he added two more lines:

"Protector of magic and drama performers;

"The great Gehrman Sparrow."

In fact, non-true deities could also use three-line descriptions, but one of them had to rely on the level of a true god. For example, Klein could use "Blessed of the Evernight Goddess." Under such circumstances, it was essentially similar to a type of summoning incantation, not an honorific name for prayers, similar to that of messengers. And if the messenger was a spirit world creature, the restriction of being the Blessed of a particular true deity was unnecessary. Therefore, it was often unknown what would be summoned, making it rather dangerous.

After repeatedly deliberating for a while, Klein controlled his marionette, Enuni, and recited the honorific name in ancient Hermes.

A few seconds later, Klein raised his right hand and rubbed his temples with an odd expression.

He didn't "hear" the prayer.

What's wrong with this honorific name? Klein carefully deliberated over it a few times and gradually came up with an idea. I might not be the only Blessed of the spirit world and Sefirah Castle. The Hounds of Fulgrim also count… I have to add a limitation…

After some modifications, Enuni once again recited in ancient Hermes, "The Blessed of the spirit world and Sefirah Castle;

The Mystery stemming from ancient times;

"The witness of an extended history;

"Protector of Backlund magic and drama performers;

"The great Gehrman Sparrow."

"I pray for your blessings. I hope you can light up the darkness in front of me."

Just as Enuni's voice faded, Klein heard his prayer. Furthermore, it was only heard by a few Worms of Spirit. It didn't affect his actual body at all.

This is very different from the prayer coming from Sefirah Castle. It's very clear… With a thought, his Worm of Spirit gave a response based on the rules he had made ahead of time.

With a whoosh, a ball of fire appeared in front of Enuni. It floated in midair, illuminating the entire room.

Not bad… If I use Hermes to pray, I have to set up a ritual and draw symbols… As for essential oils and herbs, it doesn't matter if they're provided or not. Am I someone who will be pleased by these things? The symbols are formed from the scrolls representing history, the complete eye that represents witness, and the lines symbolizing change… For the time being, Klein had no intention of spreading his honorific name. After all, letting others know that Gehrman Sparrow had reached Sequence 3 would be a case of him losing a trump card. Furthermore, he had the alternate identity as Sea God and The Fool. There was no need for a new honorific name.

Pa!

With a snap of his fingers, he lit the paper with the honorific name of Gehrman Sparrow on the table.

A Scholar of Yore also has the means to create a fog to lower the temperature, but it's not a core power… Next, I have to try to summon a projection from the Historical Void. Who shall be my first volunteer? As he muttered silently to himself, Klein suddenly sighed.

He then half-closed his eyes and used his godhood to allow a portion of his spirit to enter the gray fog and roam amidst history.

Following the various locations that he had previously established, he instantly arrived in front of a spot made of light.

There was a spacious and bright room with two rows of floor-to-ceiling windows in the spot of light. In the room, a man wearing a dark red coat embroidered with golden lines was standing by the window, looking at the place where the sun had set.

He looked to be in his thirties, with long chestnut curly hair, blue eyes, high nose bridge, and thin lips. He had a neat mustache and looked rather good.

Roselle Gustav.

In a street in North Borough, a thin-faced young man with a wide forehead and a monocle was sitting in a coffee shop by the side of the road. He held a fountain pen and thought seriously.

He raised his other hand and pinched his monocle. Finally, he wrote down a sentence:

“The Blessed of the spirit world and Sefirah Castle…”

Then, the fountain pen stopped moving, as if he had not thought of what to write next.

In a rented two-bedroom apartment at East Borough, Klein took out his golden pocket watch and opened it.

He had already made an appointment with Miss Sharron and Marie to meet in an uninhabited house tonight.

After some thought, he raised his right hand and grabbed at the space in front of him.

A simple, ancient brass key appeared in his palm.

This was the Master Key that had once helped him defeat Wraith Steve and prevent the True Creator from descending. It allowed one to hear Mr. Door’s ravings on the night of the full moon.

Now, by summoning it back from the Historical Void, it could be used for ten minutes.

Heh heh, to a Scholar of Yore, anything that they once possessed, regardless if they were eventually sold, returned, destroyed, or lost for all sorts of reasons, can never really be considered lost. They just exist alongside the Scholar of Yore in a different form of companionship… Looking at the Master Key in his hand, Klein sighed in satisfaction.

With this item, if he could grasp the corresponding ritual, he could directly speak to Mr. Door as well.

After putting away the Master Key, he put on his double-breasted frock coat and silk top hat, picked up his golden cane, and walked out of the room.

Chapter 1140 - Plans

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Backlund, East Borough, 7 Pinster Street-

After a busy day, Leonard finally had the chance to ask his questions:

“Old man, what is Sefirah Castle?”

The slightly-aged voice in his mind fell silent for a few seconds. He chuckled and said, “The place where you meet every Monday is most likely Sefirah Castle.”

Leonard never expected to hear such an answer. His mind went blank for a moment. He was surprised, shocked, and confused, mixed together with the thoughts of it being impossible for to pop out of nowhere and the poignant feelings of how complicated things were.

After a while, he pressed in a low voice, “What kind of place is Sefirah Castle?”

As though sighing and laughing self-deprecatingly, Pallez Zoroast said, “Actually, I’m not too sure. I’ve only heard some rumors.

“It’s different from the creation myth you know. Rumor has it that the original Creator left behind nine different entities. They were kingdoms, cities, rivers, oceans, and keys. Sefirah Castle was one of them.

“It might not actually be a castle, but something else. As for what its exact form is, you might know it better than me.

"The reason why I'm certain of its existence is because I sensed it when I became an angel, but I was unable to see it and establish a connection with it.

"My great-grandfather mentioned a theory that the nine entities might have something to do with the sefirot of the second Blasphemy slate. Unfortunately, because of various reasons, 'He' was unable to decipher the details related to the sefirot."

Leonard calmed down. Leaning back against the sofa, he asked thoughtfully, "Old Man, do you suspect that Mr. Fool is the embodiment of sefirot?"

Based on what he had seen and heard from the Tarot Club and Old Man's occasional lecture, he had a certain understanding of matters regarding the deities.

After a long silence, Pallez Zoroast replied, "Perhaps…"

Under the strict curfew at night, there were almost no pedestrians on the streets of Backlund. Occasionally, there would be carriages passing by, carrying people of status.

After arriving at the agreed-upon house, Klein wasn't in a hurry to enter. He half-closed his eyes, raised his right hand, and grabbed at something in front of him. He pulled out another Sherlock Moriarty wearing a black double-breasted frock coat and a silk half top hat while holding a gold-inlaid cane.

This was the image of him from the Historical Void when he left his residence earlier.

As Klein was right in front of him, this image appeared stiff, like a prop on-stage.

According to his previous experiments, Klein knew that this was the mysticism principle of "a unique shared consciousness in time." To put it simply, everyone was essentially unique. If one's true body remained sentient, the projection wouldn't remain sentient.

It was the same when summoning projections of the deceased from the Historical Void, a result Klein suspected to be attributed to his insufficient level. In short, his projections could only engage in more mechanical and instinctive battles. Something that was unknown to the Scholars of Yore had prevented them from giving a corresponding answer even if they experienced it for themselves.

This confirmed one of Klein's guesses. Those fragments a Scholar of Yore could see in the historical fog was something he had learned in real life and had studied. Simply put, the fog needed a Scholar of Yore to light it up, bit by bit.

Of course, Klein also suspected that if the historical fragments of the same matter had been mostly lit up, the rest would very likely be presented naturally.

At least the corresponding ability won't be lost just because I don't understand it well enough. As long as there's a projection in the Historical Void, that state will be a complete snapshot… That's enough… Klein looked at the projection that could only act on instinct. His body suddenly vanished and entered the grayish-white fog.

Since Hounds of Fulgrim, who weren't full Scholars of Yore, could live in the Historical Void, there was no reason that a true Scholar of Yore couldn't. The only problem was that there was a time limit. In addition, if time dragged on, the marionettes in the real world would definitely die. However, this was only changing the form of companionship it had with a Scholar of Yore.

As Klein's body entered the grayish-white fog, his consciousness suddenly came alive in the projection.

He raised his hand and pressed down on his top hat. Wearing the face of Sherlock Moretti, he came outside of the house. Following their agreement, he took out the Master Key and placed it against the door, turning it gently.

His figure appeared in the room, and under the crimson moonlight, he quickly surveyed his surroundings.

The sofas, cupboards, high-back chairs, coffee tables, and other furniture were evidently old. They seemed to come from the previous century.

In the dark environment, in a gothic regal dress and a matching bonnet, Sharron suddenly appeared on a high-back chair.

“Good evening,” this Puppet lady nodded slightly and greeted him.

If she hadn’t spoken, she would be a classic and most exquisite doll.

At the same time, Marie, who was wearing a white shirt and black vest, also phased into existence on the sofa.

…Sir, it’s already winter. Aren’t you cold wearing just this? Ah right, you’re “dead,” one who isn’t afraid of the cold… After lampooning inwardly, Klein took off his hat and bowed at the blonde, blue-eyed, pale-faced Sharron.

“Good evening, Miss Sharron.”

He then turned around and said to Marie, “Good evening.”

To this Wraith who was formerly a Zombie, the deepest impression Klein had of him was his card game with the zombies he controlled.

We should play cards when we have the time… He sighed silently.

The reason why he suddenly thought of playing cards was because he had previously analyzed the combat styles of Scholar of Yore, and he realized that if he were to encounter Zaratul, both sides would very likely end up playing a card game.

You throw a Consul Roselle card, I’ll throw an Emperor Roselle card.

You throw a Bernadette card, I'll throw a Benoit. If you throw The Half-Fool card, I'll match it with Amon…

I didn't expect that the battle between a Seer would one day become "playing cards." It's a realistic, abnormally harrowing "game of cards"… Sigh, but Zaratul is a Sequence 1 angel, and he wouldn't give me a chance to play cards. Besides, my success rate at summoning the important figures in the Historical Void is rather low… Klein retracted his gaze and took the initiative to say to Sharron, "I've recently needed to do something. It's rather difficult and dangerous. One of the steps is to collect Beyonder blood from the twenty-two different pathways. As for the Wraith pathway, the only person I can ask for help is you and Marie. You should be skilled at hexes, and you should have a way to remove the connection between your blood and yourself."

In fact, he could've attempted to summon Admiral of Blood Senor on the spot and mix his blood into the porcelain jar. However, he didn't know if it would be effective, nor could he divine it. After all, this involved a level that exceeded Sequence 1, and he lacked information. The only thing he could confirm was that drawing that symbol didn't bring him and the suppliers any danger.

Due to the fact that a Scholar of Yore had many means at their disposal, he had even tried to summon the former Witch Trissy. He easily subdued her and smeared her blood onto Groselle's Travels.

However, it was useless.

After some thought, Klein believed that a logical contradiction on the timeline had happened, preventing him from success. That blood was formerly provided by Trissy of the past. The person Groselle's Travels pulled in would undoubtedly be the former Trissy, so it was equivalent to changing history.

Since history couldn't be changed, the experiment failed.

After listening to Sherlock Moriarty's request quietly, Sharron said without any change in expression, “Okay.

“How much do you want?”

Miss Sharron’s reaction is exactly as I imagined… Klein took out a glass tube.

“One tube would suffice.”

Dressed in a gothic regal dress, Sharron raised her right hand slightly. The glass tube seemed to possess a life of its own as it left Klein’s palm and flew over.

Right on the heels of that, the doll-like lady’s right hand landed on her left wrist. Her nails suddenly grew long and became unusually sharp.

With just a light stroke, a wound opened up at her wrist. Blood seeped out, but it didn’t drip down. Instead, it floated up and entered the glass tube.

By the time the tube was filled, Sharron’s wound had healed instantly, leaving no scar behind. The stopper jumped into the tube and spun a few times to automatically seal the tube.

During this process, the pale-faced Sharron wore an impassive expression, as if she had suppressed all the feelings in her heart.

Looking at the tube of blood in her hand, Sharron reached out with her left hand and touched it, slowly sliding from top to bottom.

This was done to remove her connection to the blood.

After doing all of this, the blood tube leaped up and flew back into Klein’s hands.

“Is there anything else I can help you with?” Sharron sat on a high-back chair and said calmly.

“Not for now. Thank you.” Klein shook his head and snapped his fingers, igniting a scarlet flame in his palm.

The flame quickly rose and enveloped the glass tube.

By the time the redness dissipated, the blood was gone.

This was a new change in “Flaming Jump.” It could transfer the items on him to his marionette or body.

Apart from this, all sorts of Beyonder powers from before had been enhanced and modified.

Having used his new powers skillfully, he looked at Sharron and asked casually, “How’s the digestion of your Puppet potion?”

When he first met Miss Sharron, he felt that she was like a doll. He believed that, regardless of her nature, or it being a result of the temperance principle, it would’ve been a form of “prior acting.” It would be of great help to the digestion of the Puppet potion.

“Not bad,” Sharron replied calmly. “I should be able to digest everything in another one to two years.”

One to two years… Indeed, no matter how fast it is, it’s counted in years. But for me, it’s been less than half a year…

This isn’t something to be proud of. It was all arranged… Of course, if you count the time I was hung above the door of light, it’s counted in millennia… Miracle Invoker… If I can escape this fate, I might be able to create a miracle… Klein sighed inwardly and gently nodded.

“What are your plans for the time being?”

Sharron said, “I hope to restore Teacher’s body.”

Marie, who was sitting on the sofa, added, “But didn’t you say that the leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul, is in Backlund and is closely related to the Rose School of Thought?”

“Yes,” Klein said with a smile. “Wait patiently. There will be a chance.”

This was actually a form of consolation. Even though he had become a Scholar of Yore and had found many helpers, he had no intention of dealing with Zaratul at the moment. A Sequence 1 in full would definitely be unimaginably terrifying!

Furthermore, the more he exposed himself to the path of Seer, the more Klein could understand how terrifying and difficult it was to kill Zaratul.

After stopping George Ill’s apotheosis, Klein planned on leaving Backlund and giving himself more time to grow.

Chapter 1141 - Deep Winter

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Sonia Sea, Pasu Island, Chasm of Storm Cathedral.

This was the headquarters of the Church of the Lord of Storms, the holiest of holy temples, a place blessed by a god.

The murals that were painted in blue, silver, green, and golden colors seemed rough, but they had a sacred and majestic vibe to them. Coupled with the dome that stood at a height with an excess of a hundred meters, it made all who stood there feel how puny they were. It made one unable to resist bowing their head.

Alger Wilson had already undergone the ritual and had “truly” become a Sequence 5 Ocean Songster. At this moment, he had come here with the same batch of recently advanced Beyonders, awaiting the preaching of Pontiff Gaard II.

Indeed, it’s really easy to lose control when consuming excess potions. I’ve already digested all the past potions, but I nearly succumbed this time… After I leave Pasu Island, I’ll borrow the Unshadowed Crucifix from The Sun and purge the excess characteristic. This can both be exchanged for money, and it can also be used to secretly nurture some Beyonders who are loyal to me… Alger used the reflection of the blue stone tiles on the ground to see that his hair had darkened and thickened.

At this moment, the sound of a booming musical instrument exploded in the hearts of every Beyonder, spreading extreme fear.

Pontiff Gaard II walked out with a scepter in hand, went up a dais, and faced the crowd. He said in a deep, rumbling voice, “Congratulations, everyone. You are one step closer to the Lord.”

He was wearing a papal tiara with sapphires, emeralds, and other gems. He wore a dark blue robe that was nearly black. On top of it was silver and gold silk embroidered with symbols of lightning, storms, and oceans. His aura was deep and majestic, as though a tempest was about to strike.

This Grounded Angel, the spokesperson of the Lord of Storms, was a middle-aged man who looked to be in his forties. However, everyone knew that Gaard II had been helming the Council of Cardinals for nearly a century.

As a Blessed of the Gods, this level of longevity wasn’t strange in the eyes of the believers. It was normal to not have anything to fear.

Upon hearing the pontiffs praise, Alger didn’t have any thoughts. He clenched his right fist and struck his left breast, shouting, “Holy Lord of Storms!”

In the next fifteen minutes, they quietly listened to Gaard II’s preachings.

After completing this process, Alger received his mission from a high-ranking deacon. He was to head to Sonia Island and lay an ambush in the surrounding waters, in search for opportunities to attack the port, or supply ships and Feysac merchant ships.

Backlund, Empress Borough, Inside the Hall family’s luxurious mansion.

Just as Audrey put on her blue cloak in preparation to bring her golden retriever, Susie; her maidservant, Annie; and the others to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation at Phelps Street, she saw her father, Earl Hall, enter through the main door.

“Father, good morning. Did you… not come home last night?” Audrey looked him up and down in puzzlement.

You could tell?” Earl Hall stroked his lovely mustache and asked with a smile.

Realizing that her father was in a good mood, Audrey turned her green eyes and said with a faint smile, “Your coat reeks of cigarettes. It implies that you haven’t taken it off for some time. Not to mention that’s an outdoor set of clothing.”

Apart from this, there were many other details that could lead to the same conclusion, but Audrey deliberately didn’t mention it.

As Earl Hall took off his coat and handed it to his valet, he chuckled and said, “Not bad at all. You’re very observant. It looks like your work at the bursary foundation has greatly benefited you.

“I was at the Prime Minister’s the entire night, waiting for news.”

Having said that, Earl Hall sighed and said, “Winter County and Midseashire’s front line has once again repelled the Feysacian attack. With the onset of the harsh winter, we can finally catch our breaths.”

Audrey blinked, perfectly expressing her surprise.

Earl Hall immediately smiled.

“I understand your puzzlement. The newspaper only mentions what we want the people to know.

“The defense lines at the Amantha mountain range and the various cities along Midseashire’s coast aren’t as robust as you think. In the first round of the attacks, our fleet and soldiers suffered a tremendous loss. In order to not cause any panic, we announced that there were wins on both sides. We also made all the large shipyards and factories work like mad to contribute to the war machine.

“In this period of time, the two lines were almost breached several times. Many critical areas were lost and recovered. These repeated”see-saws” was apparently a human meat grinder.

“Luckily, we’ve finally lasted to this point. This winter will be the turning point of the war.”

Actually, I know… The number of people who died, went missing, and the casualty numbers might be concealed, but it still presents quite a few problems… Besides, winter might not necessarily be a good thing. Feysac’s Weather Warlocks are very good at using such situations… Audrey’s heart sank as she hurriedly controlled her emotions and smiled.

“That’s great. I hope we can quickly have peace restored.”

Earl Hall was taken aback as he said, “His Majesty plans to give a speech to everyone in the kingdom on Saturday and tell them that we will prevail.

“When the time comes, the cities and villages will be gathered at their respective squares. The latest technology will be used to allow everyone to hear his speech.”

The latest technology… Gather the entire kingdom in various squares to listen to the king’s speech… Audrey suddenly thought of Mr. World’s reminder and decided to inform him of this matter.

Organize a large number of people to listen to a speech… This must be the corresponding ritual, right? George III is about to hold the Black Emperor ritual? After receiving the latest news from Miss Justice, Klein returned to the real world with a solemn expression.

He paced back and forth in the rental apartment and didn’t delay any further. He took out a pen and paper and quickly wrote:

“I’ve already gathered the Beyonder blood of twenty pathways. I’m just short of Assassin and Criminal.

“George III will be holding a speech for most of the kingdom’s citizens this Saturday. You should know what this might mean.

“In addition, I need the ritual to communicate with Mr. Door.”

After folding the letter and getting Reinette Tinekerr to send it out, Klein slowly exhaled as he couldn’t help but think of all sorts of thoughts.

The Demoness’s blood shouldn’t be a problem. Trissy seems very determined to foil George Ill’s scheme…

I can reveal something to Queen Mystic, that I’m able to enter the secret mausoleum… Although her main goal is to revive the emperor and she is unwilling to make an enemy out of George III, the emperor might not be able to return if George III succeeds…

I’m waiting for the Chief of the City of Silver to return to provide the Devil’s blood… The hunting team that he led has set off for more than ten days. They should be returning soon… In theory, there’s still time. There’s no problem… If not, I’ll use the two contingencies. First, I’ll use the Blatherer’s aura to replace the blood. Second, I’ll summon the Devils that I’ve encountered in the past from the Historical Void and extract their blood…

In a room in the Backlund Bridge area that didn’t look anything special.

The lustrous black-haired Trissy reached out and retrieved a letter from the mirror.

She opened it and her brows gradually frowned. It was especially endearing.

Is it finally happening…? Trissy’s expression changed a few times. She seemed hesitant, resistant, afraid, and confused.

Finally, she smiled and muttered in a twisted voice, “I’ve killed so many people and caused so many tragedies. Even if I were to die this time, it wouldn't be a total loss…"

After a few seconds of silence, Trissy took out a glass test tube from her black dress's pocket.

It wasn't her blood, but another Demoness's. Her original name was Sherman, who had later called herself Shermane.

As a qualified, senior Demoness, Trissy had found an opportunity to take some of Shermane's blood while nurturing her. A necessary component for curses; it might not have been of use most of the time, but it could effectively prevent any accidents.

After Shermane's death, Trissy didn't abandon the tube of blood. This was because there were many occasions when Demonesses needed such materials, just like now.

City of Silver, in a particular residence.

As soon as the lightning frequency increased, Derrick got out of bed, lit the stove, and quickly grilled some mushroom bread.

This bread was even more exquisite and delicious than the original Black-Faced Grass. He loved it very much, and he looked forward to his three daily meals.

The only problem was that the yield of mushrooms that could make bread wasn't too high.

Due to the limited number of monster corpses, every resident was only limited to one claim a week, enough for four to five meals.

After thousands of years of hard work, the area around the City of Silver was relatively safe, with relatively few monsters.

Derrick heard that someone had deliberately placed himself in the darkness to hunt monsters for the nurturing of mushrooms, hoping to be bait.

Then, he was eaten.

Those mushrooms have made everyone feel optimistic.” That s not good.” Derrick thought of the wistfulness before the Chief left and shook his head. He picked up a jar he obtained from another city ruin and poured out some white milk.

Frankly speaking, he didn’t like milk, but it was described by Miss Justice as something that could help humans grow taller and stronger. This was enough to move him.

As a resident of the City of Silver, Derrick knew that, as he hadn’t chosen the Giant pathway, the chances of him growing taller and bulkier in the future were low. However, he secretly hoped to reduce the gap between him and his friends. Milk gave him that opportunity.

Gulp. Gulp. With a serious expression, Derrick drank today’s milk rations.

Just as he was about to get some mushroom bread, he suddenly sensed something and looked out the window.

A person grew out of the shadows outside the door and said from afar, “Derrick, the Chief wants me to give you this bottle of blood.”

The Chief is back? Derrick suddenly stood up and said, “Alright, thank you.”

The moment he finished speaking, he saw the shadow in the gap come alive, pushing out a small metal bottle.

Derrick knew very well that it contained the Devil blood that Mr. World wanted.

Chapter 1142 - Warning

◆

After removing the Paper Angel wrapping the ceramic jar, Klein poured the bottle of Devil's blood into it, and he stirred it with a glass stick he conjured for some time.

Phew, I've finally gathered everything. He looked for a few seconds and sighed.

This way, he still had enough time to prepare before George III's ceremony.

As for whether the Assassin and Devil blood had enough time to be rid of the connection with its original host, he wasn't concerned, as he had confirmed that the original owners of the two sets of blood were dead.

He divined the origins of the Assassin blood to figure out if it belonged to Demoness Trissy. If it did, he considered leaving some and smearing it on the surface of Groselle's Travels after everything was over.

He was left in disappointment, but he wasn't surprised. He had long realized that Trissy was as cautious as he was.

The Demoness pathway also has the Instigator Sequence. It requires a high level of intelligence… Yes, the Instigator and Conspirer potions should have the effect of increasing one's intelligence. Otherwise, Danitz's future would be bleak… As he thought, he threw the ceramic jar into the junk pile.

He then returned to the real world and began to browse through the detailed ritual Trissy had provided.

This was a ritual that could help him speak to Mr. Door during the full moon.

“A total of nine gems… Isn’t this too extravagant?” he casually muttered as he read it.

As a tycoon who had donated quite a bit of money, he still had nearly 30,000 pounds in liquid assets (14,000 pounds in cash, 15,000 pounds worth of gold bars, 35 pounds of gold coins, and some change). It wasn’t that he couldn’t afford gems, but it was too wasteful.

After thinking for more than ten seconds, he decided to try using the images in the Historical Void as stand-ins. After all, he had no intention of pleasing Mr. Door. Once the ritual ended and the gems disappeared, Mr. Door wouldn’t be able to do anything to him.

If it doesn’t work, I’ll consider purchasing it at the jewelry store… Klein stood up and set up a ritual in the room outside the rental flat.

After finishing his other preparations, he stretched out his right hand and slowly and heavily grabbed at the thin air in front of him.

He pulled out an ancient brass key from the air.

This was the key tool to summon Mr. Door, the Master Key.

Right after that, Klein grabbed at the air in front of him solemnly again and pulled out an object from thin air.

The item emitted a tranquil glow that was in the shape of the full moon. Embedded around it were a row of scarlet gems. In the middle was a symbol representing the moon and many mysterious patterns.

Scarlet Lunar Corona!

It was the Scarlet Lunar Corona that currently belonged to Sharron!

It could create the effects of a full moon, allowing the person holding the Master Key to hear Mr. Door's ravings.

If he only wanted to hear what Mr. Door was shouting, this would've been sufficient. There was no need to hold any more rituals, but his goal was to speak to the King of Angels. Therefore, he had to follow the procedure.

After placing the Master Key and the Scarlet Lunar Corona on the altar, he recalled for a moment and reached out his right hand again, pulling out a handful from thin air.

This time, he took out a gorgeous necklace made studded with diamonds and jadeite.

Hmm… My experiences as Dwayne Dantès are rather useful after all. Otherwise, how could I have come into contact with so many female members of high society and dance with them, allowing me to see accessories of different styles and materials? And without such close proximity for observation, how could I easily summon the corresponding Historical Void images? This can last fifteen minutes. That's enough… Having met his simple goal, Klein sighed in satisfaction.

Then, he continued to extend his right hand, preparing to gather the nine gems he needed from the ladies and madams he knew in the past.

In a second, his hand stopped in mid-air and his expression turned odd.

I forgot that I can only maintain three Historical Void images… What should I do? Swap this necklace and find an accessory that has at least nine gems? Hmm, let me think about whether I've seen anything like that before. Yes, I can use dream divination to recall… This… Is dream divination meant for times like this? Seer and Scholar of Yore are quite compatible after all. Well, this is also an extreme form of magic… Amidst his thoughts, Klein was just about to find a chair and do the divination when he suddenly frowned.

He realized that something was amiss.

Under normal circumstances, it was impossible for him to forget that he could only summon three Historical Void images at the same time.

This is a subtle warning from my spirituality? Looking at the Master Key and the Scarlet Lunar Corona on the altar, he waved his right hand gently, causing them to vanish.

Then, he took four steps counterclockwise and recited the honorific name. He went above the gray fog and sat at the seat belonging to The Fool.

He conjured a pen and paper and carefully wrote:

"Speaking to Mr. Door now is dangerous."

This divination was clearly directed at Mr. Door, so Klein was bound to suffer a certain backlash effect. However, he had already obtained basic ownership over Sefirah Castle, allowing him to use the power of an angel, so he believed that he could withstand Mr. Door. After all, "He" was exiled and sealed.

He removed the spirit pendulum on his left wrist and held it with his left hand, allowing it to hang over the surface of the paper.

He closed his eyes and recited the divination statement seven times in a high-strung manner.

Without a sound, a shadow suddenly flashed across his mind. It seemed to completely screen his spiritual perception.

He hurriedly opened his eyes and saw that the topaz pendant had shattered into powder.

After my initial grasp of Sefirah Castle, some divinations are more concealed. It won't cause any accidents?

Yes, is it because my safety is involved in the matter that this has happened, or is it because the gap between me and Mr. Door has been narrowed to a certain extent? Of course, this is referring to the Mr. Door who is in a sealed state… Or perhaps, the effects of the two combined?

The present result shows that speaking to Mr. Door holds untenable danger… Why though? Klein frowned, unable to come up with any effective speculations or reasonable explanations.

After a while, he leaned back against the high-back chair and shook his head with a sigh. He gave up on his original plan.

I can only make more preparations in other areas… With his left hand pressed down, the topaz pendant instantly recovered. After all, it was only a projection above the gray fog.

Because of the changes in the divination earlier, Klein made some connections. Perhaps prying into the secrets of the twisted and translucent maggots on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range might not be as dangerous as before.

That's highly likely to be a Sequence 1 angel of the Antigonus family. It might even be The Half-Fool that Leonard mentioned to me… If my prying can hold on for a while longer, I can directly discern the formulas of the Sequence 2 Miracle Invoker or Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries. Hmm, there's only one chance. I don't know what sort of developments would happen when dealing with a crazy monster… I'll wait till I'm completely accustomed to the Scholar of Yore potion before making the attempt… Klein rubbed his temples before disappearing from above the gray fog.

After returning to the real world, he wasn't in a hurry to clean up the altar. Instead, he sat down and seriously considered what other abnormal preparations he could make.

The so-called normal ones were: meeting Queen Mystic once to discuss the details of the cooperation; give Will Auceptin, Reinette Tinekerr, Pallez Zoroast more gifts; pray to the Evernight Goddess and increase the chances of summoning the ascetic, Arianna's Historical Void image; familiarizing himself with the core powers of Scholar of Yore…

As for the abnormal ones, it was purely based on Klein's own imagination.

After some thought, Klein's expression turned solemn. He frowned slightly and reached out his right hand to grab the air.

This time, he didn't drag anything out.

Klein did it another ten times, but all of them met with failure. He had no choice but to accept a fact:

It was impossible to succeed purely by relying on himself!

He then took out his wallet and took out a paper crane. On the surface, he wrote with a pencil:

"Give me some luck. I'll bring you some ice-cream from the Srenzo Restaurant."

After folding the paper crane, he entered the room and lay down on the bed. He restored his spirituality by sleeping.

In his hazy dream, he saw thin, silver snakes forming a response:

"Five!"

"No problem." Klein smiled and made a promise.

At the next moment, he woke up.

He sat up and reached out his right hand again, grabbing a total of ten times.

He still met with complete failure!

I can't do it even if I'm lucky enough… It's too difficult… Klein subconsciously wanted to use his finger to rap the edge of the bed, but he instantly restrained himself. It was a habit of his above the gray fog, so it wasn't suitable for him to bring it to the real world.

After pacing back and forth for a long time, he seriously considered all kinds of connections. Finally, he left the bedroom and went to the altar outside which had yet been tidied up. He brought an item back to the real world.

It was an ancient book made of goatskin with a dark brown cover.

Groselle's Travels.

Picking up the book, he took a deep breath, half-closed his eyes as if sensing something.

Slowly, he reached out his right hand and grabbed very lightly.

Failure.

Another grab.

It was still a failure.

After five consecutive failures, Klein's actions became even slower, as though he was taking out a piece of charcoal from a glowing-red stove.

Suddenly, the muscles on his arm tightened and he carefully pulled back.

His right hand slowly retracted, slowly dragging out a rather dull, ancient-looking quill.

This came from Revival Square of the Southern Continent's West Balam's Northern State, right beside Ince Zangwill's corpse.

This was 0-08 before Amon's brother picked it up.

Chapter 1143 - Reasonable Development

◆ ◆ ◆

I can only maintain it for about a minute or so… That’s way too short, isn’t it? A thought flashed through Klein’s mind. Without thinking about anything else, he took two steps to the desk.

He put down Groselle’s Travels and quickly wrote on a piece of paper with 0-08:

“George III plans to use this speech to bait out all his enemies who want to sabotage his ritual. However, if everything goes smoothly and nothing happens, he’ll take the opportunity to consume the potion and reveal his trump card to aim for divinity. After all, there are too many unknowns in the future, making it unsafe. Furthermore, he has made appropriate preparations for the ritual, they’re already prepared to an adequate level.

“This is a very reasonable development.”

After Klein wrote the last sentence, and before he could check if there was anything wrong with the written content, the dim quill in his hand disappeared without a trace, as though it had never existed.

And those few words seemed to drain all of his energy, making him feel dizzy. He took a few steps back and collapsed into his chair.

It doesn’t make sense… It wasn’t exhausting for Ince Zangwill back then… Uh, it should be because I forcefully summoned it, and I didn’t dare let 0-08 weave a story on its own. When I wrote on the piece of paper, I had to rely on my own spirituality to support it. As for Ince

Zangwill, he could get 0-08's cooperation, so it wasn't that draining… Klein closed his eyes and used Cogitation for a while before feeling better.

Under normal circumstances, having had no physical contact with 0-08 and merely meeting it once had made it impossible for him to summon this Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. However, on the one hand, he had the Snake of Fate to personally augment his luck, and on the other hand, he had Groselle's Travels. This was the item left behind by the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt. Inside it was the City of Miracles, Liveseyd. It had a connection to a certain degree to an existence like 0-08. If it wasn't for some high-level existence's disruption, these two items would've long been reunited.

Klein didn't know if this fate and particular connection could increase the chances of a successful summoning. He only wanted to give it a try since he didn't stand to lose anything. To his surprise, he really succeeded.

And it was precisely because of this that he didn't dare to use Groselle's Travels to bear the contents of 0-08's projection. He didn't even dare to let them come close, afraid that something irreversible would happen.

This was Backlund, which had an extremely dense population!

Yes, logically speaking, there shouldn't be any accidents. After all, 0-08 is a Historical Void projection. It's fake. Groselle's Travels was conjured by the Dragon of Imagination, and it's also fake. A fake combination can't be real in any way. They lack the foundation of a Beyonder characteristic… I can go back to the uninhabited reef island to test it… Klein rubbed his temples and returned to the desk. There, he began reading what he had just written.

He didn't directly write that George III would be unsuccessful in his advancement and die on the spot. He believed that if he interfered with a Sequence 1 angel, the projection of 0-08 wouldn't be able to be so direct. He had to be more tactful.

Furthermore, there was also the Psychology Alchemists and Amon's brother. Overly obvious effects would definitely be detected and easily made use of. All he could do was beat about the bush to mitigate the unknown.

I hope it works… After staring at it for a while, he folded the piece of paper and stuffed it into his pocket.

Then, he sacrificed Groselle's Travels back above the gray fog.

After doing all of this, Klein began to consider another problem. It was when he would head out to buy some ice-cream for Will Auceptin.

Backlund has Zaratul, and it's very possible that Amon is there. If I head out too frequently, we might run into each other. It's a little dangerous… Why don't I summon some ice-cream for Will from the Historical Void? It's very real when eating it, and it'll disappear in fifteen minutes. There's no need to worry about gaining weight at all. It's just splendid… Klein couldn't help but mumble inwardly.

In the end, he decided to change his clothes and leave the house because he had to keep his promise!

†

Saturday morning, the sky was gray and misty. It made one feel inexplicably stifled.

This was a common scene in Backlund's deep winter. Although the smog wasn't as thick and pungent like last year, the geographical environment and climate characteristics had determined that such situations would definitely exist for a long period of time. Furthermore, victory over environmental pollution was never something that could be declared in a year or two.

After putting on a black coat that covered her knees, and a black veil hat, Melissa quickly walked to the door.

Benson held his hat and shook his head.

“A young girl who isn’t even twenty years old should be dressed like a teenager. You look overly mature and old-fashioned in that, understand? Old-fashioned.”

Melissa glanced at her brother and simply replied, “The price of a pound of bread has risen by a quarter-pence.”

“This price…” Benson tsked.

He then took out a silver pocket watch covered in vine-leaf patterns and snapped it open.

“Let’s go. There’s still a long way to go to the municipal square.”

Melissa tersely responded and went out into the streets with her brother.

“Good morning, Mrs. Daniel.” After taking a few steps forward, Benson saw a neighbor leaving. He greeted her with a smile.

He was good at chatting and had long established a good relationship with his neighbors.

The lady named Mrs. Daniel wore a pure black dress. She was in her forties and had a thin face. Her face was covered in a thin black veil that hung down from her hat. When she heard the greeting, she nodded and replied simply, “Good morning, the two of you.”

She didn’t make any small talk, and she coldly walked away.

As he watched her back, Benson deliberately slowed down his pace. When they finally opened up a distance, he turned to ask his sister, “What happened to Mrs. Daniel?

“I’ve been too busy recently, so I haven’t visited the neighbors in a long time.”

Melissa pursed her lips and said, “Mrs. Daniel’s eldest son was confirmed to have died on the front line at the Amantha mountain range. News from yesterday.”

“That tall, bashful, but thoughtful, kind, and sincere young lad? When he came back the last time, he said that he was promoted in the army and became an officer…” Benson asked in surprise.

Melissa nodded.

“I couldn’t imagine that Larry would die just like that…”

Just like how she couldn’t imagine the tragic deaths of her classmates at school.

In just a few seconds, some people could no longer speak, communicate, or study.

Benson was silent for a moment before sighing.

“I’ve been busy lately. Actually, I’ve been dealing with bereavement payments, but perhaps the list I received didn’t include Larry, so I’m not sure.

“There’s a lot of information on that list. Some are cheerful, others are humorous, others are the only child within a family. Some are determined, while others are the leaders of the soldiers around them. Some just got married and don’t have children. Some are preparing presents for their youngest daughter, while others had love letters with them. They planned on sending it at the post office after the battle… But, they’re all dead.”

Melissa and Benson fell silent at the same time, and neither of them spoke for a long time.

When they were almost at the intersection, Melissa looked at the road ahead and said in a low voice, “What do you think His Majesty will be talking about in his speech today?”

“Perhaps it’s a form of musters, or perhaps it’s to convey the faith that we will prevail,” Benson said in passing.

Melissa turned to look at her brother.

“This isn’t like you, Benson. Shouldn’t you be making some snarky remarks?”

“It should wait till the speech is heard and the specific content is understood. The most basic principle of being a person is to not make comment on things that one doesn’t know enough of. Otherwise, they would be worse than a curly-haired baboon,” Benson said with a smile.

At this moment, he saw another neighbor.

The other party’s hair was white, and his face was half-covered with a scarf. He was wearing a thick jacket and was holding a cloth bag in his hand as he hurried past the siblings.

“Mr. Thomas’s dressing is so strange… Does he still need to do something else?” Benson looked at the back of the man and asked in puzzlement.

Melissa replied in a low voice, “Mrs. Thomas is sick, and that spent quite a bit of their family’s savings. Recently, with food prices sharply increasing while Mr. Thomas’s income remains the same, he has to queue up at the soup kitchen every few days to get some bread. He’s a decent gentleman, so he probably doesn’t want others to recognize him.

“Also, the food at the soup kitchen is always limited. If one’s late, there might not be any left. They’ll have to go to the cathedral, the workhouse, and other places. The handouts just happen to start after His Majesty’s speech, so Mr. Thomas probably wants to go there directly.”

Benson nodded slowly and asked in concern, “What’s wrong with Mrs. Thomas? I know a few good doctors.”

“A disease caused by anxiety,” Melissa explained what she had heard. “Mrs. Thomas is very worried about her youngest child who’s serving in the army.”

“You mean Thomas Jr.?” Benson frowned slightly.

After receiving his sister’s confirmation, he fell silent, as if recalling something.

After a while, when they approached the nearest municipal square, Benson looked ahead and whispered, “Thomas Jr. is already dead…”

“…” Melissa didn’t respond, but her expression was a little dazed.

They walked forward silently, as if they were relying on inertia.

More and more people appeared in front of them. These people were either dressed in formal attire or holding canes, dressed up as gentlemen. Otherwise, they were dressed in blue, green, yellow, and red-colored skirts; sweaters and leather jackets matched with pants; or dark-colored petticoats. Their colors were dull.

They came out of their houses and from the streets they were on, like water droplets splashing upward. They merged together at the intersection, forming a tiny stream.

The stream surged ahead, combining with other tributaries, and flowed into the square’s entrance, interweaving into a majestic torrent.

The torrents slowly surged forward, flooding the square.

Amidst this torrent of humans, Melissa felt like she was as puny as a water droplet.

Chapter 1144 - Narrowly

◆

Due to the fact that they had arrived early, the seats that Melissa and Benson could choose from weren’t too bad. They could directly see something strange on the grayish-white stone pillars in the middle of the square. Its two heads dramatically differed in size and were painted with dark blue paint. It was connected to some cables.

At the foot of the object was a troop of soldiers in red shirts and white pants. They were carrying grayish-white metal backpacks, as well as complicated structures and small-caliber rifles. They were watching their surroundings in high alert.

As more and more citizens gathered, the square began bustling with activity.

At nine o’clock sharp, the strange object on the stone pillar suddenly produced sizzling sounds. Finally, it changed into a deep and thick voice:

“Ladies and gentlemen, I’m your emperor, ruler of Loen, East Balam, and Rorsted Archipelago, George Augustus III.”

…That thing can talk? It’s using the principles behind the telegram? Melissa’s eyes widened as her attention shifted from the speech to the strange thing.

†

“Ladies and gentlemen, I’m your emperor, ruler of Loen, East Balam, and Rorsted Archipelago, George Augustus III.”

At Memorial Square in West Borough, Audrey accompanied her father, mother, and elder brother near the platform. She looked at the king in his formal attire as she attentively listened to his speech.

As she knew in advance what George III would be focusing on today, and the mood that would be created, Audrey didn’t wear anything that she was fond of. Be it the colors or style, they were nothing a girl would wear. It was the same as the Earl’s wife, Caitlyn. The dress was simple and conservative. It was black in color without any traces of accessories.

“…I’m very happy but also feel heavy-hearted to tell everyone that we’ve finally stopped the first stage of the Feysacian attacks. We’ve foiled their plans of annihilating Loen within three months…

“…But many outstanding young people have already died at the front lines and died in this war. They had a better future ahead of them. They should’ve accompanied their parents in growing up, aging together with their spouses, and allowing their children to grow up in a loving environment and have a good childhood…

“…The Feysacians have destroyed everything…”

Knowing why this war had started, Audrey wasn’t incited by the King’s speech. She only felt that he definitely had talent in inciting drama.

She heard slight sobbing sounds coming from the crowd around her. She could feel the sadness rising bit by bit as they intertwined and brewed.

Her eyes reddened uncontrollably.

The king’s speech was very fake, but the sorrow of the people was real. In particular, Audrey had seen many family members who had been killed, having helped those who had lost their children, husbands, and father overnight.

This is a great resonance of emotions, the best place to consume the Manipulator potion… Audrey suddenly came to a realization, but she was unable to make use of it because, not only had she not digested the Dreamwalker potion, but she had yet to provide enough contributions to Mr. World.

She slowly took a deep breath and controlled her emotions. She shifted her gaze away from King George III and let her thoughts wander.

Mr. World is very concerned about today's speech. I wonder how he's going to exploit this…

I hope it won't lead to a serious accident…

That thing called a "radio broadcast" is based on the principles of wireless radio transmission? Mr. World mentioned that certain factions at sea have already put such technology to use… Compared to the sea which is constantly affected by storms, something like this is clearly more suitable for use on land…

As the thoughts flashed through her mind, the stern and old-fashioned George III finished the first part of his speech and solemnly said, "Let us mourn for our heroes here. Ladies and gentlemen, recite this together with me in your hearts:

"In the name of Emperor George III, I wish for the dead heroes to be at peace. I hope they will become eternal in the kingdom of the deity they believe in."

This sentence carried an indescribable sense of dignity, making everyone, including Audrey, involuntarily lower their heads, clasp their hands, and silently recite, In the name of Emperor George III…

[image]

†

In the name of Emperor George III… On the other side of Memorial Square, Klein, who was wearing a black coat and an ordinary face, stood and prayed with the crowd around him at the same time. He appeared completely normal.

After three minutes of silence, he used an avian marionette standing on the roof of a nearby building to carefully observe George III's every move in an attempt to find a sign that the king was about to quietly leave and enter the mausoleum to consume the potion.

According to Klein's understanding, the "in the name of Emperor George III" segment was core to the entire Black Emperor ritual. If one were to consume the potion, it would definitely happen at this moment, or within two to three minutes after the collective mourning. The effects would likely be lacking if there was any delay.

Eh, George III is also silently mourning. He isn't doing anything else… Klein held back his impatience and puzzlement as he patiently waited.

Tears streamed down many people's faces as the mourning gradually came to an end. Everyone opened their eyes one after another. At this moment, George III didn't do anything. He spoke again and continued his speech.

"We've already endured through the most difficult part. We'll definitely defeat this evil and brutality. This is the power of justice. This is the power of every soldier at the front lines. This is the power of every factory worker…"

This… The arrangement by 0-08 wasn't successful. George III has no intention of becoming a god today. He's just trying to "bait" any enemies who want to destroy his ritual. In any case, he can still give many more speeches like this in the future? Klein frowned slightly as thoughts flashed through his mind.

Suddenly, his expression turned solemn as he thought of a possibility.

In the blink of an eye, Klein switched places with Enuni, who was hiding in the sewers. The latter was dressed the same as him, and his external appearance looked identical to him.

Following that, Klein took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog. With the help of the crimson star representing Miss Justice, he used his “true vision” to observe the situation in the square.

He was already a Sequence 3 Beyonder, so there was no need for him to use the Sea God Scepter to widen his field of view. Of course, compared to a Scholar of Yore, a Sea King’s “true vision” was obviously much larger. However, there was no need for that.

The moment his gaze landed on the stage where King George III was giving his speech, his gaze froze. There was no one there, or rather, there was only a fake “phantom”!

It was an “imagined” George III giving the speech!

Before the speech, Klein had been wary of this problem. He had specially observed and confirmed that it was the real George III. Who knew that, within a few minutes, the real George III would become an imaginary George III.

In the midst of his silence, he had used the Black Emperor pathway’s powers to distort and silently swap himself with a substitute? George III should’ve already entered a secret mausoleum and is consuming a potion in an attempt to advance! With a thought, he quickly checked the surrounding area and discovered that there was something abnormal beneath the platform. Boundless black energy was secretly emanating from there.

He then picked up the Black Emperor card on the surface of the long bronze table and tried sensing it. Using the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics, he confirmed that the power belonged to the Black Emperor pathway and came from “Distortion” powers.

Impressive. While using a speech to “bait” the enemy, he disguised himself as a fake person and secretly left to consume the potion… There’s not much time left… Klein’s heart tightened as he immediately returned to the real world. In the sewers, he recited in Jotun, “The sacred spirit that pursues knowledge;

“The mysterious world’s lighthouse;

“Eyes that pry into fate;

“The royalty above the sea;

“The pure and holy Bernadette Gustav…”

This was the honorific name of Queen Mystic, but it was somewhat different from a normal Sequence 3’s. Its range was very large and was effective all across Backlund. With regards to this, Klein suspected that the eldest daughter of Emperor Roselle had used a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact to achieve this effect.

Bernadette rarely told her honorific name to anyone, afraid that some enemies would use the prayer and automatic response property to lock onto her position before she reached Sequence 2. This was very similar to what Klein had thought of.

Klein had come to an agreement with her that, as long as he recited her honorific name, she would choose any secret mausoleum and open the door with the symbol drawn by the blood in an attempt to destroy it.

Both of them didn’t have any hopes of success, because the guards in the mausoleum would definitely chant the honorific names of the angels every once in a while, causing a situation that allows “Them” to see the corresponding areas through the prayer point of light. Once “They” discovered something amiss, “They” would immediately rush over to help.

Bernadette’s main purpose was to attract attention!

Of course, if those angels were to arrive at a slower pace, Queen Mystic could also go from providing support to being the main offensive force.

After doing this, Klein immediately stretched out his right hand to grab the air.

As his arm pulled back, a figure appeared in front of him.

It was a woman with average facial features and dark eyes. She wore a simple robe and a tree bark belt. Her raven-black hair hung down as she stood bare feet without any shoes or socks.

The Evernight cloister's matron, the ascetic leader, the Servant of Concealment, the Grounded Angel, Arianna.

I succeeded in one try… Klein was shocked, but he didn't think too much about it. He quickly said, "Keep my existence concealed and protect the people of Backlund."

He was worried that after George III lost control due to the destruction of his ritual, he would rush out of the mausoleum and harm the people of this city.

"Alright," Arianna replied with a calm expression. She wasn't rigid or stiff at all.

…It can't be "Her" in person, right… Actually, my summoning wasn't successful, but the Goddess had already gotten Ma'am Arianna to secretly return to Backlund. The moment "She" sensed that "She" had been summoned, "She" came over… An angel of the concealment domain also has a certain degree of control over "Their" Historical Void image? As a thought flashed through his mind, he realized that he had entered a special state, no longer being sensed by the outside world.

Chapter 1145 - Three Arrows At The Same Time

◆

Klein didn’t have the time to think about such trivial matters. After having his existence “concealed,” he immediately got Enuni to switch places with a new marionette who was formerly a pirate.

Immediately following that, he activated Creeping Hunger and brought Enuni and Qonas to the secret mausoleum in Awwa County.

As he could only maintain three images from the Historical Void at the same time, it was impossible for him to abandon his marionette and directly come over by using a summoned projection. It would occupy a crucial spot. As for the remaining marionettes in Memorial Square, they wouldn’t die on the spot in half an hour. They would only appear to be in a daze. However, this wasn’t something that would attract too much attention while listening to a speech. Finally, if he didn’t return, the Red Gloves team from the Church of Evernight would clean up his tracks.

At the same time, outside the secret mausoleum in East Chester County, there was a young lady in a yellow layered dress and a black, old-fashioned bonnet. Pea vines grew out of nowhere as they appeared.

Her chestnut hair cascaded down naturally. Her eyebrows were long and straight, and her eyes appeared as though they were filled with a blue sea.

Looking at the mountain wall in front of her, Queen Mystic extended her right hand and quickly formed a symbol in the void.

Following the movement of her fingertips, drops of bright red blood that resembled shattered gems seeped out and froze in midair.

Soon, a complicated symbol formed from layers of “doors” appeared. They trembled slightly and seemed to resonate with something somewhere else.

In the blink of an eye, the blood-colored symbol extended into an illusory translucent door. Through it, one could vaguely see a gigantic mausoleum formed from black rocks.

Bernadette immediately walked through the illusory door and arrived inside a dim and dark area.

The light here came from the lights of stone pillars and strange underground moss growing on the cliff walls. Together, they illuminated the secret mausoleum in the light fog at the bottom.

The symbol provided by Mr. Door was really useful!

At this moment, as a ritual was being held deep underground, faint lights gathered, forming a figure midair in the darkness.

The figure had a square face, black hair and blue eyes, a high nose bridge, and a thick beard. He looked rather solemn.

His appearance and image wasn’t unfamiliar to many citizens of the Loen Kingdom. This was because he had been printed on the front side of ten-pound notes. Of course, people who had never touched ten-pound notes in their entire lives could also see his statue or portraits at Memorial Square.

He was the Loen Kingdom’s Founder and Protector, the first king, William Augustus I.

This was an entity referred to as “He”!

With the help of the ritual, “He” had come here directly from Backlund!

Bernadette remained impassive. With a flip of her hand, a new item appeared.

The item was golden in color, like a miniaturized water flask. However, a candlewick extended out from the mouth of the flask.

As Bernadette caressed the surface of the item with her right hand—one that was covered in mysterious and complicated symbols—the candlewick silently ignited.

The light it emitted was like a sticky water stream that sprayed upwards, forming a blurry and twisted golden figure.

“Eternal Genie of the Lamp, my second wish is to obtain the strength of a Knowledge Emperor for one day.” Seizing the opportunity when William Augustus I had yet to fully descend, Bernadette spoke in a solemn voice.

The item in her hand was called “Magic Wishing Lamp.” It might’ve come as early as the First Epoch. Although it had never been obtained by the seven Churches, it had the corresponding Grade 0 Sealed Artifact number.

“0-05”!

This item could grant its owner any ten wishes, but this was either done in a distorted form, or it came with unpredictable and terrifying outcomes.

None of its previous owners had a good ending, including Roselle Gustav.

This emperor had warned his daughter that she could use the proper choice of words and make preparations to avoid the harm brought about by the first two wishes, but she absolutely couldn’t make the third wish. Absolutely not!

†

Meanwhile, the concealed Klein arrived near the secret mausoleum in Awwa County without alerting anyone.

Although time was tight, he didn't rashly approach the mausoleum by drawing the symbol and opening the door. Instead, he reached out his right hand and grabbed at the air in front of him.

After five consecutive attempts, the muscles on his arm suddenly tightened, as if he was pulling something extremely heavy.

As he retracted his right hand, a figure quickly appeared.

The figure's skin was bronze in color. He had a medium build, black hair, brown eyes, and soft facial features. Beneath his right ear was a very thin mole. It was none other than Azik Eggers.

However, unlike the Mr. Azik that he knew, the figure's gaze was cold. He wore a deep black robe embroidered with golden threads. He wore a golden bird-shaped crown, as though he was looking down on all living creatures.

This was the former Death Consul, a former Sequence 2 angel!

Without sizing him up further, Klein reached out again and "grabbed" into the void.

This time, he didn't seem to have pulled anything out, but in fact, he had summoned the former him from ten seconds ago, the him who was in a concealed state!

Then, Klein threw a small metal bottle at his projection and made himself enter the gray fog's Historical Void.

In his past self, his consciousness suddenly came alive and became extremely agile.

This concealed Klein brought the projection of Death Consul Azik and came to the secret mausoleum where the entrance couldn't be seen. He took out a small metal bottle and used his spirituality to draw with the blood that shimmered like gems. In midair, he quickly outlined the symbol that Mr. Door had given.

The symbol rapidly formed and resonated with a particular point in the mausoleum, expanding into an illusory door.

In a concealed state, Klein and Death Consul Azik passed through the door and entered the corresponding secret mausoleum.

At that moment, the guards inside had already discovered that there was an intruder and had activated the ritual they had prepared in advance. However, all they could see was the lofty Death Consul.

Somewhere in Backlund, the former, former Duke of Southville, Dlink Augustus, was just about to use a ritual to open a passageway and descend into that secret mausoleum when a man beside him suddenly frowned and said, “That’s Azik Eggers. No, ‘He’ is very rigid. It’s like a historical projection summoned by the Secret Order’s Scholar of Yore.

“Your Highness, let me go over. Stay here and be wary of the Scholar of Yore who’s lurking in the dark. Although they aren’t angels, they’re quite troublesome.”

Dlink Augustus was a slightly arrogant elder. His black hair was mixed with silver threads, and he was clean-shaved. Upon hearing that, “He” laughed and said, “Isn’t the Scholar of Yore just beside ‘Him’? Although he’s in a concealed state, I’ve already discovered him through the disorder of the surrounding area.

“He’s misleading us, making us think that he’s deliberately attacking with a historical projection while his true body has gone elsewhere. In fact, he’s hidden beside Azik’s projection. Once this Death Consul attracts the attention he wants, and when we place our main forces elsewhere, he’ll use the concealed state to approach the mausoleum to cause destruction.

"Besides, regardless of the reason, since he's summoned an angel's projection, you won't be able to kill the target in a short period of time even if you carry a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. If this implicates the mausoleum, our efforts and persistence would've been in vain.

"If that Scholar of Yore has done three levels of misdirection and really went to another mausoleum, he won't be able to summon an angel from the Historical Void. You can easily eliminate him."

While he said his first sentence, Dlink Augustus had already entered the passage through the ritual's activation. The rest of "His" words were spoken by the phantoms that "He" had left behind.

Inside the secret mausoleum in Awwa County, Azik Eggers scanned the area with an indifferent expression. "His" body suddenly swelled and transformed into a giant serpent that covered the area above the mausoleum.

This giant serpent was both illusory and real, as though it was formed by something incomprehensible to humans. Its entire body was covered with huge dark-green scales. White feathers grew out from the gaps, and each scale and feather had strange symbols of different shapes. Just the mere sight of them made one's flesh decompose, turning them into zombies.

This was "Quetzalcoatl," the serpent spoken of in Southern Continent myth. "His" eye sockets were burning with pale-white flames as an exaggerated, thick pair of wings spread from "His" back.

Amidst the howling wind, the feathered serpent in midair lunged forward with its upper body and spat out a pale-white flame that covered the entire mausoleum.

…Mr. Azik's Historical Void projection is definitely much weaker than before, but it's still very powerful… As expected of the biological son of Death, the consul of the Balam Empire… Although the concealed Klein had done a summoning experiment previously at sea, he never expected that Azik's projection would be so powerful.

At that moment, points of faint, gloomy glows flew out of the mausoleum, putting an end to the tidal-like pale-white flames' advancement.

Following that, they formed a figure. It was none other than the Sequence 2 Balancer, Dlink Augustus.

The moment the concealed Klein saw "Him," he suddenly turned rigid and stiff. He began acting based on instinct—a result of him returning to the Historical Void and being outside the secret mausoleum.

Then, he teleported to a secret mausoleum under the Tussock River and took out another small metal bottle. In a concealed state, he used his spirituality to draw the blood out to outline the symbol.

A few seconds later, the symbol resonated and turned into a door. With his marionettes, Qonas and Enuni, he walked in.

Of course, in the river and forest outside, he still had marionettes he just converted.

†

A figure appeared near the Ruins No. 1 in the outskirts of Backlund.

Her raven hair was radiant, and her face was slightly round. She looked beautiful, with a hint of sweetness and an outstanding bearing. She was none other than Demoness Trissy.

After Trissy approached Ruins No. 1, she also took out a small metal bottle and drew the symbol provided by Mr. Door with the blood.

An illusory door rapidly took shape.

Chapter 1146 - A Real Charlatan

* * *

As she passed through the illusory door, Trissy hid herself and jumped down from the cliff at the entrance, towards the dark valley below.

The secret mausoleum that originated from Blood Emperor Tudor was hidden here.

During the descent, Trissy's body was as light as a feather. She lost most of her weight, but her speed was in no way slow.

None of the remaining guards noticed that she had sneaked in.

Just as Trissy was approaching her target, she heard a voice say, "Concealment is prohibited here."

Trissy's figure instantly appeared out of nowhere. And in the area above the towering mausoleum in the dark valley, there was a man who had appeared at some point in time.

This man had a long, rectangular face with a white hairband on his head. He had a mustache that curled up around his mouth, and his brows were extremely thick, setting off his relatively large eyes.

He was dressed in formal attire and wore a cloak. The tips of his shoes were extremely long, and his attire didn't seem to match the times. He was the demigod who supported George III, Prince Grove.

On the head of this Sequence 3 Chaos Hunter, there was a crown made of thorns. Pure light constantly gathered into the crown, interweaving into a "sea."

Sealed Artifact 0-36.

†

Klein swam beneath the Tussock River when an image suddenly appeared in his mind just as he led his marionette, Qonas and Enuni, through the illusory door.

A black cathedral stood in front of them with its spacious door opened, revealing a man in a pair of dungarees, a gentleman in a formal suit and top hat, a lady with frilly designs along her sleeves, and a lady whose dress formed flowers with laces…

They were suspended in midair, motionless.

“Caw!” “Caw!” “Caw!”

Black ravens circled the top of the cathedral, letting out heart-stopping cries.

Without making any guesses, Klein felt like he had fallen into a crack on a frozen lake. His body turned cold as his hair stood on end.

Countless thoughts surged in his mind as they collectively shouted out a name:

Zaratul!

In the blink of an eye, Klein instinctively made a decision. He planned to switch locations with his marionettes from the outside world, and directly leave the “cathedral” in front of him.

Clearly, he had encountered a “miracle.” He didn’t enter George III’s secret mausoleum after passing through the illusory door; instead, he had come to a baffling place.

In the next second, he discovered that the Spirit Body Threads that were connected to his marionettes had been severed. They were rapidly floating upwards towards the interior of the pitch-black cathedral.

If it wasn't for his intuition that exceeded his own level, allowing him to detect danger ahead of time, he definitely wouldn't have been able to react in time. He definitely would've been hung up and become a member of the marionettes.

He didn't have time to think too much about it. He quickly controlled his Spirit Body Threads and collected them all, connecting them to himself, forming one "circle" after another.

This allowed him to temporarily extricate himself from the danger, but it also made him lose his marionettes, Qonas, and Enuni, in just a second.

The two marionettes' necks suddenly tightened as they were lifted up by an invisible hand before being hung up in the cathedral's interior.

Together with the original corpses, they swayed in the wind and produced voices that were different but said the exact same thing:

"Welcome back…"

†

In Memorial Square, the "imagined" King George III was still giving a speech.

"…I will further lower the wealth requirements needed for election eligibility. I will hand over even more rights to the House of Commons…"

Although the people didn't understand why there was such a development in the speech, it sounded good to them.

These are all bills that have been approved by the House of Lords, but there's no need to tell the public during this speech… It's like the King is emphasizing that he will definitely follow these bills in the future…

Audrey was puzzled, but she couldn't come up with a convincing explanation.

In the dark and majestic secret Ruins No. 1 in the outskirts of Backlund.

The real George III had already worn a black crown and consumed the potion.

"His" body was transforming towards the shadow of order, extending in a magical state. As for the nine mausoleums, they were the islands in the sea of nothingness. They were the components of his entire rule. As for the people who were chanting "Emperor George III" at the same time during the ritual, there were like countless numbers of lighthouses. Together, they "anchored" this ruler of Loen, East Balam, and the Rorsted Archipelago, making "Him" completely transcend reality and become a part of the shadow of order.

During this process, George III's thoughts wandered uncontrollably as though they were being torn apart:

The Secret Order's Zaratul actually contacted me directly, hoping to provide me with help…

"He" said that "He" saw some of Gehrman Sparrow's thoughts from the Capim case, the attack on Ailment Maiden, the silencing of Crazy Captain, and Qonas Kilgor's disappearance. And "His" divination results made "Him" cooperate with me, offering to help me guard a mausoleum. There, "He" waited for Gehrman Sparrow to take the initiative to walk to "Him," because of his own goals and the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics…

"He" also said that the most important thing to do when dealing with a qualified demigod of the Seer pathway is to be patient and determined…

What a charlatan…

"He" even brought Abomination Suah…

I used my powers to sign a contract with “Them”…

Together with the helpers I invited from the Twilight Hermit Order, as well as Grove, who wields a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, even if most of the demigods of the military and royal family are fighting at the front lines or protecting Backlund, I don’t have to worry about the ritual being destroyed. Unless a true deity descends into the real world…

And that’s impossible… So, I originally wanted to use this opportunity to lure out any resistance, but in the end, I decided to use this opportunity to directly advance…

Heh heh, since Grove still doesn’t know about these hidden cards. Well, he has no right to know…

In less than two minutes, I’ll become an eternal god, the Black Emperor who rules over reality…

†

“Caw!” “Caw!” “Caw!”

In the dark world with the ravens’ cawing, the corpses hanging from the black top of the church descended and passed through the main door.

Their eyes were locked onto Klein, who was outside.

Almost at the same time, a figure slowly but firmly outlined itself in midair.

Without caring about what it was, Klein quickly snapped his fingers while maintaining the special state of his Spirit Body Threads.

Pa!

A red flame surged out from his wallet and instantly enveloped him.

The flame was quickly extinguished, and Klein remained where he was, unable to leap out.

He didn't show any signs of being depressed as he immediately activated Creeping Hunger to attempt to teleport.

Klein instantly turned transparent as he appeared again, unable to take a single step.

His origin and destination had strangely been connected.

At that moment, the figure in midair had already taken form. He was dressed in gorgeous clothes, with long chestnut-colored curly hair, blue eyes, high nose bridge, and thin lips. He was none other than the Roselle Gustav from when he was an emperor.

"He" looked down at Klein as countless illusory symbols appeared in his eyes.

Klein's mind instantly swelled as he was injected with a large amount of unknown knowledge.

His head felt like it was exploding in an instant while his other thoughts were completely occupied, so much so that he couldn't even lift a finger.

Instinctively, he allowed that knowledge to split up and become injected into hundreds of Worms of Spirit.

This allowed him to regain his ability to control his body as he quickly grabbed the space ahead of him with his right hand.

His arm suddenly sank, and then he suddenly pulled back. When the marionettes passed through the cathedral's door and began their attacks, another two figures appeared in midair, dragging out a scaleless, silvery-white tail.

As he released his right hand, a giant serpent appeared in this dark kingdom.

“His” eyes were bright red and cold, and his body was covered in patterns and symbols. There were countless wheels in the details.

Snake of Fate!

Actually, this wasn’t something that Klein could summon out from the Historical Void. Instead, it was Will Auceptin descending with the burning of the paper crane after using the Yesterday Once More charm.

Klein had just used Flaming Jump moments ago to seek help from the Snake of Fate.

And the reason why he wanted to “grab” at something was to conceal his true intentions. It was to prevent the opposing angel from discovering the location of the Snake of Fate, putting Dr. Aaron’s family in danger.

This wasn’t like how he had previously dealt with Amon’s avatar back then, as he had no confidence in eliminating all the clues. Therefore, he had discussed with Will in advance on how to deal with such situations.

Fortunately, the intent Will Auceptin expressed indicated that the truth of the “summoning” from before hadn’t been exposed.

At that moment, the gigantic Snake of Mercury rose up and bit its tail, turning into a mysterious and exaggerated wheel.

In midair, two figures appeared on both sides of Roselle’s projection. One of them was Queen Mystic Bernadette, whose real body was in an intense battle with Sequence 1 Hand of Order William Augustus I. The other was formed from pure light, and a pair of shining wings grew on his back. It was obviously at the level of an angel!

Suddenly, the two angel projections that appeared quickly vanished. The attacks they directed at Klein, and the controlled marionettes, retreated back into the cathedral and were hung up again.

Qonas and Enuni walked out one after another. With him, they passed backward through the illusory door and left the world with resonating cawing, appearing beneath the Tussock River.

Snake of Fate. Reboot!

The giant serpent's figure vanished as well. Without any hesitation, Klein activated "Teleportation" and passed through countless spirit world creatures to another secret mausoleum. He used the remaining blood to outline the symbol and opened the illusory door.

This time, he entered the interior and saw a solemn and dark mausoleum. He summoned the Sea God Scepter and released a terrifying "Lightning Storm," again and again, destroying the target.

Then, he turned around and left the scene.

Everything went so smoothly, just like a dream.

Yes, a beautiful dream.

Klein, who could always maintain his lucidity in dreams, had realized that he was in a real dream created by someone else the moment he entered the ruins where the secret mausoleum was!

Chapter 1147 - Chaos

◆

Klein pretended not to notice the real dream. As he tried to stop his projection of the Death Consul, he tried to summon another version of “himself” from the Historical Void to fool the guards of the Tudor ruins, allowing his body to escape the dream and sneak into the secret mausoleum to achieve his goal of destroying it.

At the moment, he could only maintain three Historical Void projections. Death Consul Azik Eggers was one, his self-projection in a concealed state was another. He couldn’t be certain if the leader of the ascetics, Arianna, was considered one. However, to be safe, he had to disperse one of them before he made another summoning attempt.

Regarding Arianna’s state, apart from suspecting that “She” had descended in person due to “Her” state, Klein had other theories. Perhaps the leader of the Evernight cloister had deliberately entered a concealed state after sensing that “Her” projection from the past had been summoned while being located in the Amantha mountain range. “She” had vanished from the real world, allowing the projection to gain sentience. This was completely feasible, especially since the authority of “concealment” likely gave “Her” a certain degree of control over “Her” historical projections.

When it came to a concealment angel like this, Klein was unable to use the feedback from Scholar of Yore’s maintenance of the historical projection to confirm “Her” true situation. Therefore, he didn’t make any changes, so as to prevent any accidents from happening.

Just as he was about to summon his past self, the real dream silently disappeared. Everything around him returned to normal.

He was standing on a cliff at the entrance. Below him was a dark and majestic mausoleum.

An old man with an ordinary appearance was levitating in midair. Under the glow from the moss and the light from the stone pillars inside the cliff, he calmly looked at Klein and sighed in ancient Feysac.

“You weren’t actually fooled by the dream I crafted.”

This old man’s hair was completely white, but it was thick enough. There weren’t many wrinkles on his face, and his appearance wasn’t anything special.

The Spectator pathway’s Sequence 3 Dreamweaver? No, at least, he’s not an angel… Klein tensed up and didn’t respond. He immediately took out his silver adventurer’s harmonica and blew into it.

No sound was produced, but Reinette Tinekerr, who was wearing a dark and complicated long dress, walked out.

One of the blonde, red-eyed heads in “Her” hands immediately spat out a rectangular diamond-like charm. Another head chanted in ancient Hermes, “Yesterday!”

Yesterday Once More!

Miss Messenger was borrowing strength from “Her” past self!

Compared to a Sequence 1 Snake of Fate, the power “She” borrowed could last longer.

However, the charm didn’t change at all.

In midair, the elder in the gray robe gently chuckled and kindly reminded them, “Don’t use ancient Hermes in front of me.”

…Hermes… This is Hermes, the one who lived since the Second Epoch and created ancient Hermes? An angel of the Spectator pathway… The origin of the Psychology Alchemists… Klein was first shocked before he realized something.

Hermes was participating in the battle, so it was unlikely “He” had a strong desire to stop him!

No, perhaps “He” is deliberately acting to lower our guard… Beyonders of the Spectator pathway are the best at manipulating the hearts of others… Just as this thought flashed through his mind, Reinette Tinekerr’s other two heads began chanting in Jotun and Elvish:

“Yesterday!”

The rectangular diamond-like charm was instantly ignited by a transparent flame before fusing with the void.

Reinette Tinekerr’s body began to rapidly expand as the four heads in her hands flew up and landed on “Her” neck.

The four heads became illusory one after another.

In an instant, Reinette Tinekerr transformed into a huge cloth doll that resembled a castle. “She” was dressed in a black gothic dress with countless mysterious symbols and sinister vines. “Her” eyes were blood-red.

“She” swept his gaze across ancient Hermes. “She” opened “Her” tightly shut mouth but didn’t make a single sound.

The “Spectator” pathway’s angel flashed with a faint light, turning into a plump, white rabbit.

Ancient Bane, Transformation Curse!

The rabbit didn’t panic at all. Its body began to swell, becoming half the size of a mountain. One stomp was sufficient to trample him to death.

To an angel of the Spectator pathway, merely believing in “Their” strength allowed “Them” to be powerful enough without being at a disadvantage due to “Their” appearance!

As the rabbit turned into a monster, a subtle change happened in the ruins. Reality and illusion intertwined, making Reinette Tinekerr a little confused as to whether “She” was in a dream or in the real world.

Klein could differentiate between the two. While he had noticed that, not only was Miss Messenger in a Mythical Creature form, but the surface of the rabbit’s body was covered in grayish-white scales. All sorts of patterns intertwined together, forming three-dimensional symbols that seemed to connect to the mind.

Angels are truly terrifying. They use their complete Mythical Creature form right at the start… As Klein sighed, he didn’t even dare take a second look to gain more knowledge. Firstly, he didn’t have the time to do so, and secondly, his level wasn’t high enough. Seeing a complete Mythical Creature form would definitely lead to being affected and receiving some negative effects. This was something he had to avoid in a dangerous battlefield.

Taking advantage of the battle between Miss Messenger and the gigantic rabbit that had transformed into a dragon, Klein used the strong winds to head for the secret mausoleum. As he recited a particular honorific name in Jotun, he reached out to grab at the air.

First time, failure; second time, failure; third time, still a failure!

Just as one fat, white rabbit after another appeared in Klein’s island of consciousness, causing him to elevate his consciousness to fight back and be unable to take multiple things into consideration, he instinctively reached out his right hand and finally touched a particular image in the Historical Void.

As he pulled back his arm, the image quickly outlined itself. She was a woman wearing a dark-colored robe and a wide hood. She had a beautiful face and slightly dull black eyes.

This was the concealment angel of the Church of Evernight that he had met before.

Later, he found out in the foggy town that this was Mother of the Sky, the daughter of the ancient god, Flegrea, and suspected to be the vessel for the Goddess's descent.

Since he was able to successfully summon the ascetic leader, Arianna, from the Historical Void in one try, Klein definitely thought of trying to see if he could summon "Her."

He had been chanting the honorific name of the Evernight Goddess!

The employing of Historical Void projections by Scholars of Yore had a difficult-to-overcome restriction. It was that he was unable to summon something that involved the Uniqueness. However, objects that were merely a vessel of a deity's descent depended on how much of the deity's power was carried by the corresponding Historical Void projection or if it involved the Uniqueness. Similarly, if he wanted to summon Amon, it was impossible to summon the actual body, but an avatar would work.

To be safe, the person who he summoned was the one who had smiled at him during the Great Smog of Backlund, and he succeeded after three attempts!

Of course, if it wasn't for the Goddess's tacit approval, or perhaps providing some level of help, he might not have succeeded given a hundred attempts, a thousand attempts, or even ten thousand attempts.

The beautiful lady didn't look at him, the summoner. Instead "She" turned "Her" head and looked down at the secret mausoleum.

The entire underground ruin quaked as the dark and majestic mausoleum began to shake. Ripples appeared as though it was about to be moved into a concealed world.

At this moment, two arms extended out from the outside world. One was pressed towards the gigantic doll, Reinette Tinekerr, while the other spread out its fingers to grab at Klein.

These two arms were more than ten meters long. They were pitch-black on the surface, flowing with sticky liquids. Some of them were strangely protruding, some had skulls as heads, three-dimensional eyes, or barbed tongues.

Abomination Suah!

The remaining guards in the underground ruins went crazy. Some raised their swords to kill their companions; or they raised their guns, aimed at themselves, and pulled the trigger.

Klein's skin began to crack, and his consciousness was disturbed by a sensation of madness. He was unable to respond effectively.

The concealment angel he summoned retracted "Her" gaze through pure instinct, and "She" looked up at the two arms that seemed to come from the depths of a nightmare.

Tremendous fear caused Suah's arm to tremble slightly. Not only did "He" fail to grab hold of Klein, "He" was even cursed by Reinette Tinekerr, causing "Him" to be covered in green fur.

Immediately following that, they began to fade as they struggled with all their might, trying to escape their concealed states.

And at this moment, three figures appeared in midair in the underground ruins. They were Emperor Roselle; the first Loen king, William Augustus; and the abstract angel formed from pure light.

The Historical Void projections summoned by Zaratul followed closely behind!

With so many angels descending at the same time, just the effects from "Their" auras alone caused the entire space to quake, not to mention the intense battle "They" were engaged in.

In an instant, the pitch-black mausoleum shook even more vigorously. There was even an obvious crack on its surface.

Klein wasn't surprised at all, because this was his last contingency plan.

When the enemy was too powerful and prepared, preventing him from creating an opportunity, then it was best to draw everyone together while destroying the mausoleum; thus, creating chaos!

This was the inspiration he got from the encounter outside Bayam City.

Back then, Abomination Suah and the byproduct of the Artificial Death project attacked remotely while Sea King Kottman, Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr, and a demigod from the Rose School of Thought had participated in it, resulting in the collapse of an innocent mountain.

At that moment, Klein wanted the secret mausoleum in this ruin to be like that mountain.

He didn't believe that angels could control the damage to "Their" surroundings when in an intense battle!

And the lineup this time far exceeded the previous one!

It's still not enough… Then let's make it a little more chaotic… As he controlled his Spirit Body Threads to prevent them from floating upwards, he dodged and sensed the mysterious space above the gray fog. Using his basic control over it, he made it tremble slightly.

In midair, a grayish-white fog appeared as the majestic palace appeared faintly.

Sefirah Castle!

In an instant, the sky above the Holy Wind Cathedral in Backlund turned dark, as if a storm was brewing.

A bird with dark eye circles watching over the Tussock River downstream moved its gaze.

†

In the outskirts of Backlund where Ruins No. 1 was, Demoness Trissy had been robbed of several powers and suffered serious injuries. She was on the brink of death.

Bang!

She slammed against the cliff, almost embedding herself into it. Blood was everywhere.

At this moment, she took out an item. It was a rectangular diamond-shaped charm.

Yesterday Once More!

Chapter 1148 - Not Late

◆ ◆ ◆

There were very few chances to use charms in high-level battles. No one would take the initiative to leave an opening for their opponent while they chanted the incantation. The reason Trissy was able to complete the corresponding action was because she had ignited wicked black flames from the inside out. As for the black flames, they seemed to absorb all the heat in the surrounding areas, causing thick ice crystals to form. Beyond the ice crystals, there were almost invisible spider webs that wrapped around them, forming huge cocoons.

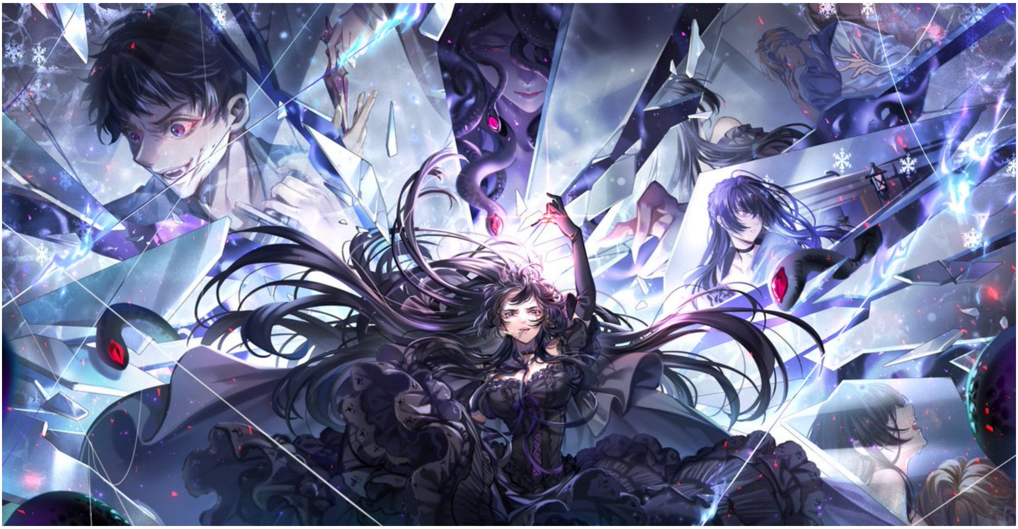
Relying on the three layers of defense, Trissy managed to buy almost two seconds, so she took out the rectangular diamond-shaped charm and chanted, “Yesterday!”

The transparent flame ignited amidst the wicked black flames. The diamond-like charm silently disintegrated before merging with the void.

This was something Klein had specially provided to the Demoness, so as to allow the damage from the three prongs to become the main assault point at any time.

Trissy immediately saw the grayish-white fog and realized that the scenes in the past were like stars, densely packed together.

There were scenes of the young him wandering the streets, coming under the control of the mafia, swindling, cheating, and stealing from others. He later joined the Theosophy Order and became an Assassin. There, he enjoyed ending lives and the bloodshed, instigating others to tear off their masks and reveal their true bestial nature. Due to various reasons, he had no choice but to become a Witch. She began creating catastrophes and it was arranged by the Demoness of Pleasure that she would become Prince Edessak's mistress. Realizing that she was becoming less and less like herself and that she was slowly losing herself to the pleasure, she felt extreme fear and yearned to escape. However, having fallen deeper into hell, she experienced immense pain and chose to be extreme.



With a thought, the scenes magnified and occupied her entire vision.

Under the light, the lawn outside the window was bright, and the horses were walking slowly. The holes of the golf course could still be vaguely seen, and inside the house, there was an antique cabinet blocking the view from the door.

The past Trissy stood at the edge and looked out, wearing a sapphire ring on her left hand.

At that time, she wasn't even a Sequence 5, and she didn't have the strength the current her needed to borrow. However, she had a ring from the Demoness Sect that was closely related to the Primordial Demoness.

This ring was the thing that Trissy wanted to borrow!

All of a sudden, the intricate ring that was inlaid with a sapphire gem appeared on Trissy’s pinky. And unlike in the past, the present Trissy had fused with the mark and submitted to the Primordial Demoness. She had been greatly enhanced as a Sequence 4 demigod.

In other words, even though she wasn’t a robust deity’s descent “vessel,” she already had the qualifications to be one.

And that sapphire ring allowed her to temporarily grasp a certain amount of initiative.

Looking at the scenes in the past, the cocoon formed by Trissy’s spider silk cracked inch by inch. The thick ice crystals silently melted as the wicked black flames corroded. She raised her left hand, closed her eyes, and smiled as she placed the sapphire ring between her eyebrows.

The ring melted like metal as it flowed into Trissy’s head in a surreal manner.

At that moment, the wicked black flames were completely deprived by Prince Grove as a burning white spear of light shot out.

At the front of the spear, two pure white wings spread out as they embraced the tip of the spear, like an angel, sealing off the surrounding space, and preventing the target from escaping.

At that moment, Trissy opened her eyes. They were a deep black color.

Her hair flared up one by one, each becoming as thick as a snake. The outer layer was slippery and diabolical, with clear black and white eyes embedded at the ends, or heads that looked like venomous snakes. Their mouths were slightly open as they flicked their tongues.

The spear that was condensed from pure light stopped in front of Trissy, as though it was being pressed down by an invisible hand, making it difficult for it to advance even an inch further.

It quickly turned grayish-white in color, turning from incorporeal to corporeal, as if it was carved out of stone.

With a whoosh, the spear rapidly plummeted to the edge of the cliff, shattering into countless tiny pieces.

The grayish-white color around Trissy rapidly spread out in every direction as if it had a life of its own. Wherever it passed, the stones became hard while everything else turned to stone.

The various rituals that had been set up in Ruins No. 1 were now tainted with grayish-white colors, preventing the angels guarding the other secret mausoleums from discovering the changes and coming over immediately.

Prince Grove was instantly surrounded by a grayish-white aura that emanated out of the void. With him only being capable of using the crown of thorns to maintain a small safe zone, there was no way for him to use any “Prohibition” powers.

Trissy, whose eyes had no borders marking her whites from blacks, didn’t even look at her opponent. With her snake-like hair blotting out the sky, she took a step towards the secret mausoleum at the bottom of the dark valley.

Boom!

The ground began to shake violently as a dull thud sounded from deep within. Red asteroids with fiery tails appeared out of nowhere as they flew past Demoness Trissy and smashed at the mausoleum.

In an instant, this ruin was inundated with catastrophes.

George III, who was at the critical moment of “His” advancement, sensed this and immediately felt a strong sense of confusion and anger.

With great difficulty, “He” split off some of “His” strength, and with the help of the preparations he had put in place, he forcefully distorted the surrounding area and isolated the dark and solemn secret mausoleum from the real world, preventing earthquakes and meteors from approaching the target.

Boom! Boom!

Amidst all kinds of catastrophes, the cliffs crumbled one by one as the ruins began to collapse. George III's angry voice sounded from the secret mausoleum that formed a world of its own:

"Are you mad?"

For a Sequence 4 to forcefully accept the power of a true deity, the only outcome was death!

Trissy laughed. The skin on her face had been pushed to its limits. Inch by inch, they crumbled, revealing the blood and flesh that was squirming wildly underneath.

This extremely terrifying Demoness scoffed and said, "Isn't the ending of a lovely story supposed to have all the bad guys die?

"For example, you, or me…"

[image]

Before Trissy could finish her sentence, she wore that tragic smile on her face as the asteroid plummeted into the twisted secret mausoleum in a bid to destroy it.

†

In another mausoleum, Klein didn't put on a strong front. He quickly ended the connection with Sefirah Castle as though he was praying to The Fool for help.

The commotion from before had nearly caused all the angels present to stop. Unfortunately, the concealment angel Klein had summoned was a

Historical Void projection. It only continued fighting based on instinct, turning the situation even more chaotic.

At this moment, William Augustus I's projection pulled out a silver sword and pointed ahead before slicing downward.

There was no need for "Him" to say anything else. The chaos in the ruins came to a stop as the battlefield was divided into different sections.

Hermes faced the beautiful and impassive lady. Abomination Suah suppressed Reinette Tinekerr; the Historical Void projections of Emperor Roselle and the Angel of Light surrounded Klein; William I stood at an isolated spot, ensuring that none of the aftershocks attacked the mausoleum below.

As expected of the Hand of Order… Klein's pupils dilated. Without thinking, he reached his right hand into the inner pocket of his clothes, and he stretched out his left hand to borrow strength from his past self.

The Death Consul, the Evernight cloister's matron, and the concealment angel were figures that exceeded Klein's own level. Be it summoning or maintaining "Them," it was a terrible burden on his spirituality. He had no choice but to borrow some power from his past self before his spirituality completely dried up.

This way, he was filled with fake spirituality once more. For the next five minutes, it was no different from real spirituality.

Then, Klein saw light.

The angel formed from pure light, which also had illusory wings on "His" back, made the layers of light surge towards him like a tidal wave, drowning him.

In the bright white sea of light, something suddenly appeared. It rapidly plummeted and approached the secret mausoleum.

It was a dark-colored book that consisted of goatskin.

Groselle’s Travels!

Using his ability to split into Worms of Spirit, and his enhanced ability to shapeshift, he shrank into bookmarks made of flesh, embedding themselves into the book, using it to block the endless light’s purification and melting effect.

But even so, he was still severely injured because the light still could illuminate part of his body.

This wasn’t the end. Standing right beneath Groselle’s Travels was Emperor Roselle, dressed in gorgeous clothes, waiting there with his hands raised.

“…” Without second thoughts, Klein could only activate the first method he knew of to protect himself:

Hiding in the Historical Void!

Boom!

A loud thunderclap boomed outside the ruin.

It rumbled in the distance in the beginning, but by the end of it, it was ringing in one’s ears.

Klein, together with the projections in the Historical Void, and all the living beings in the ruins were awed and turned stiff. Instantly, the “sea of light” dimmed.

But no, there was a figure that wasn’t affected—the concealment angel of the Church of Evernight. The beautiful but dull-looking lady took the opportunity to phase her body, transforming into many symbols that symbolized concealment and terror. She extended the strange world, enveloping Hermes, Reinette Tinekerr, Suah’s arm, the Angel of Light, and William Augustus I within.

Although Klein had summoned a Historical Void projection—a watered-down version—some essential parts remained!

The chaos that Klein was anticipating was finally here!

As for George III's other helpers, such as that King of Angels, they were still in other mausoleums.

The moment the nearly transparent world took form, the angels inside began to resist.

Amidst the chaos, the strange world easily tore apart.

However, with the remnants of the angel's power being directed, the lady rushed out and headed for the secret mausoleum at the bottom.

Boom!

An even louder clap of thunder rang out. Emperor Roselle, who had attempted to stop them, was once again awed, unable to make any further attempts.

In an instant, the dark and majestic secret mausoleum was hit. The cracks on its surface sank deep, causing its dark interior to present itself.

In these rifts, blood appeared out of nowhere. Some were bright red, and some were dark.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Having restored his human form, Klein held Groselle's Travels while collectively launching Air Cannon with his scattered Worms of Spirit.

The mausoleum which was already on the verge of collapse had finally collapsed, and even more blood gushed out.

†

With the destruction of a mausoleum, George III's advancement ritual was no longer stable. "He" lacked the key pillar of support.

If only one mausoleum was under attack, "He" might've been able to rely on his tenuous connection with them to put up a resistance to a certain degree. But now, "He" had suffered too intense of an attack.

"His" already incorporeal body suddenly boiled, unable to maintain the "Distortion" outside. The mausoleum that was isolated from reality finally appeared in front of Trissy.

On Trissy's tendril-squirming face, the corners of her mouth curled up.

†

Backlund City, Memorial Square.

"My subjects…" The stern and old-fashioned George III with his mustache was finishing his speech when there was a loud explosion.

His flesh and blood transformed into a flurry of fireworks that sprayed into the air.

Love is still love, even if it comes late and involves Stockholm Syndrome.

Trissy
Cheek
ISN'T THE ENDING OF A LOVELY STORY
SUPPOSED TO HAVE ALL THE BAD GUYS DIE?
FOR EXAMPLE, YOU, OR ME...
诡秘之主
Lord of Mysteries
The Demoness Pathway seems to be centered around causing disaster and catastrophe.
They have excellent agility, powerful ritual and curse magic, are good at assassinatio[illegible] manipulate invisible threads, incite people to cause crimes and inflict disease.

Chapter 1149 - Escape

◆

When Audrey and company below the platform saw this scene, it was as if they were admiring a large magic show. For a moment, no one realized what had happened.

A few seconds later, the scene started to turn disorderly. Amidst screams, the king's guards all rushed up the platform.

The Cabinet ministers and the House of Lords nobles subconsciously sought a place to hide, or they mustered their courage to follow the guards to check the scene.

Audrey looked on in a daze. She wasn't too surprised, but she felt that it was surreal.

If Mr. World paid strong attention to someone, it meant that they were being watched by Mr. Fool. And to date, none of Mr. Fool's goals had failed.

This was the will of a deity.

In the other municipal square in Backlund, Melissa, Benson, and company also heard the explosion before realizing that the king's speech had come to an abrupt stop.

After a moment of silence, people began to turn rowdy as they began breaking out into a discussion amidst hushed whispers.

Fear of the unknown and fear of the future slowly occupied their hearts.

†

In the outskirts of Backlund, inside Ruins No. 1.

George III's mind was a blur. "He" felt something that couldn't be resisted inside "His" body as a volcano of extreme madness erupted in his mind. It was changing "His" body while distorting everything around "Him."

Indistinctly, "He" saw a huge black throne, one which "He" was sitting on. "He" wore an emperor's crown, looking down upon the real world with great pride. "He" had rein over his subjects, and "He" was equal to the deities.

"He" reached out "His" hand in an attempt to grab this future, but countless curses and attacks of unknown origins kept striking "Him." It prevented "Him" from touching that future.

"No..."

George III's hand, which had faded, hung in midair as "His" consciousness tore apart as "His" body mutated completely.

Trissy, who had been reduced to a blob of flesh and blood, enveloped that shadow of order using her countless thick snake hair.

Boom!

In the outside world, in the area corresponding to Ruins No. 1, large amounts of dust were stirred up into the sky like the thickest of smog.

Boom!

The area became a humongous crater that was connected to the Tussock River, opening up an inlet for the river water to rush in.

Rumble!

High up in the sky, lights dimmed as a storm containing immense horror enveloped the area.

Further away on a mountain peak, two figures watched this scene without anyone speaking a word.

They were the Demoness of Unaging Katarina, who was wearing a pure white robe, and the pale, hooded Red Angel evil spirit.

After two seconds, Saintess of White Katarina sighed softly and said, “The reason we wanted to find her was because Primordial told us that she has strong inclinations towards self-destructing.”

The Red Angel evil spirit listened silently as “His” expression twisted slightly.

“I know who interfered with my response.”

Katarina thought of various answers, but she couldn’t be sure. Ultimately, she chose to remain silent.

The Red Angel evil spirit slowly said a word, “Evernight.”

After a pause, “He” suppressed “His” emotions and added, “Otherwise, I would’ve long found Trissy Cheek.”

Without waiting for Katarina to respond, the Red Angel evil spirit turned around and left.

†

In another ruin, a hint of joy flashed past Klein’s eyes when he saw the secret mausoleum collapse and spill out copious amounts of blood. But it was ephemeral because he had to turn his attention back to his situation.

With George III’s ritual failing and him not becoming Black Emperor, it meant that his goal had been achieved. What followed next was to escape!

At that moment, while the mausoleum's destruction didn't have any significant impact, Reinette Tinekerr followed "Her" agreement with Klein, and she didn't stay any longer. "She" first entered the spirit world and fled deep inside it.

The power "She" borrowed from "Herself" was coming to an end!

The maintenance of the beautiful, concealment angel had already reached Klein's limits. After it transformed into a strange world, it naturally disappeared.

Inside the half-collapsed ruin, Klein faced the arm of Abomination Suah, Hermes from an ancient time, Emperor Roselle's projection, William Augustus I's projection, and the Angel of Light projection, as well as the thunder that pointed at an unknown location. Anyone of them had the ability to easily kill him.

And for him to summon a Historical Void projection at the angel level wasn't something that could succeed within a few attempts.

Without any hesitation, Klein's body turned incorporeal as he attempted to hide in the Historical Void.

At this moment, a vortex suddenly appeared in the grayish-white fog in his vision. It was made up of countless transparent maggots that extended out transparent and slippery tentacles.

Zaratul!

Zaratul's actual body had appeared!

"He" had been waiting in the Historical Void for Klein!

At that moment, Klein's action of entering the Historical Void could no longer be reversed. All he could do was watch helplessly as he was pulled in by the vortex and thrown into the center!

He wanted to snap his fingers and ignite another paper crane, but he realized that no flames could rise up there.

Having probed him once, Zaratul was confident of “His” trump card. By relying on “His” level suppressing him, and the authority of bizarreness, “He” made Klein unable to control the flames anymore!

In addition, Klein’s intuition told him that the destination after making a “Teleportation” attempt was mysteriously connected to the vortex formed by the transparent maggots.

He was unable to escape, nor could he summon enough helpers.

However, Beyonders of the Seer pathway never perform unprepared.

The vortex formed by the transparent maggots slowly spun as it received a “visit” initiated by Klein. The transparent and slippery tentacles swam over in an unstoppable manner.

They reached towards him, but they only wrapped around the ancient book covered in dark-colored skin.

The blood on the book’s surface hadn’t completely faded.

Groselle’s Travels!

At the most dangerous moment, Klein pricked his fingers, allowing his blood to flow onto the surface of Groselle’s Travels. Then, with a whoosh, he entered the book world and temporarily escaped the fatal trap set up by Zaratul.

The moment he entered the book world, he immediately stretched out his hand and grabbed forward, pulling out a marionette that he had temporarily possessed from the Historical Void.

Hvin Rambis!

He had once tested that he could summon the projections of true history here. After all, it belonged to Sefirah Castle, and praying to The Fool in the book world wasn’t obstructed. Of course, if that didn’t work, he had other ways to resolve it. He could summon Justice Audrey who existed in the book world's history!

In short, he needed a Mid- or High-Sequence Beyonder from the Spectator pathway to bring him into the sea of collective subconscious, into the City of Miracles, Liveseyd, and into the Hall of Truth.

Time was of the essence, so the faster, the better. This was because he had no idea how long before this Sequence 1 would be able to grasp the secret of Groselle's Travels, much less whether the other party would forcibly descend into the book world.

He could only race against time!

Hvin Rambis, who was wearing a formal suit and a dark red bow tie, held onto him with a stiff expression. He directly entered the sea of collective subconscious formed by countless shadows.

With the power of a Manipulator, they quickly shuttled through and arrived at the City of Miracles, Liveseyd, in seconds, appearing before the entrance of the Hall of Truth.

Klein released his control over his marionette, Hvin Rambis, and under the nudge from the strong winds, he "ran" through the door.

As he passed by the colorful murals, his inner voice resounded in the hall:

The chances of summoning 0-08 here should be higher…

Using it to draw or write at the end of the mural on the left side can affect the real world…

Through its arrangements, I can make Zaratul make a mistake, allowing me to find a safe escape route…

No, it's still easier to let Amon's avatar join the battle royale and implicate Zaratul. That will be easier to fulfill…

It’s no wonder the Goddess wants to “bait” Amon into Backlund…

The mural on the right represents the book world. I can use 0-08 to draw another temporary door for me to leave…

While “flying”, Klein’s right hand kept grabbing at the void ahead.

Five times, ten times, twenty times. When Klein borrowed strength from his former self, his right hand suddenly sank as he dragged out a dull classic quill.

0-08!

In the next second, Klein arrived in front of the huge pillar that was multiple arm spans wide.

This had a clear sense of being worn down by time. It was the throne of the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt.

Klein circled around the stone pillar and arrived at the end of the mural. He raised the quill, 0-08, and was about to write.

He had never tested for any changes when using 0-08 in here before. He was afraid that it would result in an excessive accident and alert Amon’s brother, making his ploy of preventing George III from becoming the Black Emperor to be detected in advance.

At this moment, he no longer needed to bother about such matters. He could wholeheartedly weave the development that he needed.

Suddenly, 0-08, which was about to begin writing, disappeared. It disappeared before it reached the time limit!

What’s happening… Klein felt alarmed.

He then realized that his words in the Hall of Truth hadn’t been projected. There was silence all around him.

With his spiritual perception triggered, Klein slowly turned around and saw that the time-worn rock had turned into a hundred-meter-tall cross at some point in time.

In front of the cross was a huge, blurry figure standing there. Facing everything with its back, it was observing all life with compassion.

Inside the Hall of Truth, there were rows of black, high-back pews, but only one supplicant.

The supplicant had his eyes closed as he sat in the middle of the first row. He wore a rather simple white robe with a pale gold beard that covered half his face. His hands were clasping a silver cross in front of his chest as he wore a genial and calm look.

Adam.

Twilight Hermit Order's Chair, King of Angels Adam.

Klein didn't even know when "He" had arrived.

At this moment, Adam looked up, revealing his clear, limpid eyes that resembled a child's.

He slowly stood up, speaking with a calm expression:

"George III's death causes Loen to suffer a heavy blow. Unable to sit idle any further, Intis decides to take this opportunity to launch an attack. This war officially develops into a war that sweeps through the world.

"Can you accept such an outcome?"

Chapter 1150 - Mad Dash

◆

Although there was no concept of temperature in the Hall of Truth, Klein still felt a chill down his spine when he heard that. He felt a wave of heat, and he wanted to defend himself, but when he opened his mouth, he didn’t know what to say.

For a few silent seconds, his figure was reflected in Adam’s limpid eyes before he said with some difficulty, “I accept it…

“But I will try my best to minimize the damage caused by the war in the future, so long as I’m still alive.”

He paused and asked in a deep voice, “Is this the price you exacted for the bestowment?

“Back when a certain ascetic here mentioned your true name, you had already noticed this book and secretly made arrangements?”

Adam, who was dressed in simple white robes, didn’t respond. He walked towards the mural on his left and stopped in front of one of the murals. He looked up slightly and quietly admired it.

On the mural, a book consisting of goatskin flew up into the clouds and landed in a gigantic claw.

After watching for a while, Adam said with a warm voice, “You may leave.”

He immediately felt that he had been rejected by the Hall of Truth, the sea of collective subconscious of the City of Miracles, and the book world. He involuntarily floated up and flew out of the area.

During this process, he saw Adam return to the front of the black pews. Holding the silver cross pendant, he closed his eyes and prayed sincerely to the huge and blurry figure.

Outside the sea of collective subconscious, an illusory door silently appeared. It stood in midair and was connected to the outside world.

The book world also began to ostracize him, “squeezing” him out of the huge door.

Suddenly, Klein returned to the real world and returned to the grayish-white fog. He was in the state he was in prior to entering the Historical Void.

Unlike before, he hadn’t been locked down by the whirlpool formed by countless transparent maggots. As for the slippery tentacles that were almost invisible, they wrapped around Groselle’s Travels slightly and disappeared into thin air.

Without having time to lament over the loss, Klein’s thoughts raced, and he made a choice almost purely on instinct.

He leaped into the grayish-white fog in another direction and hid in a shattered spot of light. This was the so-called Historical Void.

Klein regretted it the next second because Zaratul’s slippery and terrifying tentacles had extended out from the grayish-white fog. The countless translucent maggots were no longer formed a spinning whirlpool as they disintegrated into a tidal wave that surged towards him.

Zaratul could actually fight in the Historical Void!

This was the suppression effect that high-level members of the same pathway had against lower-level ones.

A demigod of the same Seer pathway was always the best choice for dealing with a Seer demigod of a lower Sequence.

Without any hesitation, he “ran” through the spots of light and into the depths of the fog of history, just like his advancement.

Scenes of the secret mausoleum collapsing, Backlund suffering an air raid, and the tragic Great Smog flew behind him. However, the dangerous premonition in his heart didn’t weaken at all; instead, it intensified significantly.

He even “saw” a thick shadow getting closer and closer, covering himself.

This was a tidal wave formed by the transparent maggots and the slippery tentacles!

Klein ran as fast as he could, constantly chanting the honorific name of the Evernight Goddess in Jotun in his mind, hoping to be saved. This was the only thing he could do, and “She” was the only existence that could save him at the moment.

Of course, if he knew of Amon’s honorific name, he would definitely attempt to provoke this Blasphemer.

Only by messing things up would he have a chance of surviving.

Roselle’s declaration as emperor, the modification of the steam engine, the Battle of the Violated Oath, the White Rose War, and the Twenty Year War flashed past one by one. Klein realized that his body was being increasingly covered by shadows, and his consciousness was gradually slowing down. He had a feeling that he was having his Spirit Body Threads controlled.

At this moment, Hounds of Fulgrim ran out of the grayish-white fog’s various spots of light.

They were covered in pitch-black short fur, their eye sockets burning with dark red flames as the corners of their lips extended to the back of their heads.

This group of monsters-like creatures, the Sefirah Castle Keepers, ran past Klein and rushed behind him.

He immediately regained his lucidity.

F*ck! he cursed himself, his eyes slightly red as he continued “running” with his vision blurred. He went from the Fifth Epoch to the Fourth Epoch, and from the Fourth Epoch to the Third Epoch.

The massive shadow that resembled the tidal wave behind him paused for a few seconds, then it continued surging towards him as if nothing had happened, drowning out the Historical Voids he passed through.

Klein didn’t hold back in expending his spirituality. He used all his might to “run” with the light spots that he had lit in the fog of history. He ran from the Third Epoch to the Second Epoch until he arrived at a lonely fragment of light. Around him was a withered forest and a normal tomb.

This was the period of history where Giant King Aurmir buried his parents.

As for the “tidal wave” that was formed by Zaratul, it didn’t seem to understand this history well enough. It stopped at some unknown era and didn’t manage to catch up.

At that moment, Klein’s spirituality was almost exhausted. And in the fog of history, he could only borrow power from the current Void. But clearly, there was no past projection of himself here.

And when his spirituality was exhausted, he would have no choice but to leave the fog of history and return to the real world. When that time came, he would be facing Zaratul again.

Phew… Klein exhaled and pulled out another paper crane. He snapped his fingers and lit it.

However, after waiting for a few seconds, he failed to see the Snake of Fate, Will Auceptin, appear.

In the Historical Void, there’s no way to use ordinary paper cranes to contact Will… Why hasn’t Amon appeared yet… As his thoughts flashed, he could only repeat in Jotun, “The Evernight Goddess who stands higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity. You are also the Lady of Crimson, the Mother of Concealment, the Empress of Misfortune and Horror, Mistress of Repose and Silence…”

After holding on for a few seconds, he suddenly had an idea. Hence, he didn’t hesitate to leave the fog of history and return to the real world.

Just as his figure appeared, his “Spirit Body Threads” floated into the air and was grabbed by a slippery, transparent tentacle.

And opposite him, another figure appeared at the same time.

It was the barefoot, linen-robed ascetic leader, Arianna.

Based on Klein’s abilities, the angel-level historical projection he had summoned must’ve disappeared. Therefore, the person who came was undoubtedly the actual body.

The Evernight cloister’s matron glanced at Klein, and instantly, he vanished under Zaratul’s tentacle.

Klein entered a concealed world belonging to Arianna. It was night time, and it was a monastery with many ancient buildings erected. There was a huge and holy crimson moon hanging high in the sky.

Using the experience gained from their past cooperation, Klein immediately used “Traveling” to appear in the crimson moon, leaving this concealed world in order to appear elsewhere.

After returning to reality, Klein had already distanced himself from

Zaratul. Hence, he didn't hesitate to use "Traveling" to directly leave. And having held Zaratul back for a short period of time, Arianna entered a concealed state and left the battlefield.

Boom!

A terrifying thunderclap boomed as the transparent tentacle that attempted to reach out to where Klein had disappeared suddenly retreated, disappearing along with the actual body.

Having "Teleported" to the sea, Klein couldn't be bothered to borrow strength from his past self. He first summoned a paper figurine from the Historical Void and shook his wrist.

Most of the items he had with him had been destroyed when he became a "bookmark." It was unknown where he had lost his marionettes, Qonas and Enuni. Of course, they might've evaporated under the illumination of the Angel of Light.

Pa!

The paper figurine burned with scarlet flames as it leaped up into the form of an illusory angel that had layered wings on its back. It embraced him and removed any traces.

Then, he activated "Traveling" once again and left the area.

†

In the secret mausoleum in East Chester County, William Augustus I and Queen Mystic Bernadette managed to sense the death of George III, either through the changes in "order" or via their clairvoyant abilities.

The latter didn't stay any longer. Her body suddenly separated like a collection of soap bubbles that reflected light, scattering in all directions before bursting.

William Augustus I wasn't in the mood to stop or chase after her, but

“He” didn’t feel much pain.

†

After making a huge detour, Klein, who had used Angel’s Embrace three times to remove his traces, finally returned to Backlund secretly. It was probably the safest place.

He didn’t return to the apartment he had previously rented. Instead, he found a hotel in the Backlund Bridge area and got a room.

Of course, he didn’t forget to change his appearance, height, and temperament.

The more ordinary and common his appearance was, the less attention he would garner.

After entering the room, Klein endured the mental fatigue and physical trauma he received, and he began to chant the honorific name of Sea God Kalvetua. He planned to take four steps counterclockwise and head above the gray fog. He wanted to use his “true vision” and the real Angel’s Embrace to confirm his surroundings to eliminate any latent dangers.

Fortunately, Zaratul should’ve signed a contract with George III, so “He” can’t leave the mausoleum “He” was guarding as “He” pleases. Otherwise, I would most likely have become “His” marionette in that chaotic battle… The appearance of “Him” and Abomination Suah exceeded my expectations… Klein heaved a sigh of relief and took one step in a counterclockwise manner. He opened his mouth and chanted in Mandarin, “The Exalted…”

Suddenly, Klein’s body trembled. His voice came to a halt as he froze on the spot.

In his line of sight, a figure had appeared on a chair beside the full-body mirror in the room. He was a young man of medium build, wearing a dark-colored jacket and trousers. He looked like a mixed-blood man with Loen and Balam roots.

This was the marionette that Klein had lost—Winner Enuni.

Enuni smiled as he faced Klein's pair of eyes that could no longer move.

"Don't randomly leave your marionettes around. They can be tracked."

As he spoke, he slowly stood up. He casually took out a crystal monocle from his pocket and slowly wore it on his right eye.

Red Priest - The End

[image]

[image]

Artworks

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[image]

Artist Rendition of Trissy straying from the path chosen by Primordial Demoness.

[image]

Cohinem and Elf King Soniathrym.

[image]

Death Consul Azik Eggers.

[image]

Demoness Sect hands a Black Emperor's sword and crown to a member of the Augustus Family.

[image]

Fourth Epoch, Solomon Empire.

[image]

Fourth Epoch, Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire.

[image]

George Augustus III awakens from a nightmare, he dreams of his failure to reach Godhood and his death.

[image]

Katarina Pelle and the Mirror World.

[image]

Loen citizens mourning for George Augustus III after his failed ritual.

[image]

Mobet Zoroast and Siatas.

[image]

The Black Emperor Solomon getting overthrown and killed by Trunsoest and Alista Tudor at the end of the First Solomon Empire in the Fourth Epoch.

[image]

Trissy Cheek symbolically committing suicide.

Locations

[image]

Dreamland Mysterious Island *(Mind World)*

[image]

Calderon City

[image]

World Map

Chapter 1151 - Deceit

◆

In a hotel in the Backlund Bridge area.

Apart from his thoughts that still belonged to him, Klein could no longer control anything else. Even his eyeballs couldn't move.

He knew very well that this was likely a deeper level of "Parasitizing."

In this state, he could only look ahead of him in fear and despair. He watched as Enuni, who was wearing a monocle with a smile on his face, changed into Amon's original form. He took a step forward counterclockwise and opened his mouth to speak in Mandarin in an articulate and mellow manner:

"The Immortal Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings."

…Did "He" steal my thoughts just now, or my ability to speak Mandarin… It should be the former; otherwise, "He" wouldn't be able to grasp this ritual… Klein's pupils couldn't widen as he watched. He felt an unprecedented sense of anxiety.

As though sensing his emotions, the monocled man turned to look at him and smiled. He then took another step counterclockwise and whispered in Mandarin, "The Sky Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings."

Following that, this Blasphemer carried on the ritual with great familiarity. With every step "He" took, and every chant of the incantation, Klein's heart sank even deeper into a dark swamp, as though he could no longer see any light.

"…The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings."

When Amon took the final step and recited the final incantation, a boundless grayish-white fog suddenly appeared in front of Klein. He heard layers of pleas.

There was no need to listen carefully, as he understood what it meant with his spiritual perception.

After advancing to Scholar of Yore, he had obtained basic control over Sefirah Castle. No matter who it was, even if they had the correct ritual and corresponding incantation, they needed to obtain his permission to enter the world above the gray fog!

Reject "Him"! Klein was instantly delighted as this idea clearly surfaced within him.

However, just as he had this thought, he had forgotten it. Standing there, he looked like a statue carved from stone.

His intention of rejecting Amon had been stolen by "Him."

"…" Klein once again felt despair, but the grayish-white fog in front of him and the prayers in his ears didn't disappear.

"…" Klein was first taken aback before he understood what was going on.

I understand! I have to head above the gray fog myself and control Sefirah Castle to give "Him" permission to enter! There is no default option!

This thought was like a straw which Klein grabbed at without any hesitation. It prevented himself from sinking into the water silently without anyone hear him cry.

Although he still didn't know how to make use of this matter, his intuition told him that a slim possibility and his only hope could be hidden in this detail.

At this moment, Amon stopped the attempt and cast “His” gaze at Klein.

Clearly, “He” had failed to successfully enter Sefirah Castle.

This Angel of Time adjusted the monocle on his right eye and smiled without any change in expression.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, your idea of saving yourself is very interesting.”

Amon had used the standard Loen language, but every word seemed to be able to stir the powers of nature, creating one “explosion” after another in his mind.

…How is he so sure that I’m The Fool and not the Blessed of The Fool… Klein felt his body turn cold as the hope that had just surfaced sank into the water once more.

“How am I certain?” Amon tsked and pulled the chair from before over and sat down. “He” pointed at the round stool opposite “Him” and said, “Sit down, don’t stand on ceremony.”

The moment “He” finished his sentence, Klein couldn’t help but stride forward and sit on the round stool.

Amon looked around the room and grabbed Klein’s black silk top hat. He put it on his head and said with a smile, “Did you think that I wasn’t aware that the ritual would be unsuccessful?

“It hasn’t been long since Sefirah Castle produced an anomaly, so how could I forget?

“I just want to see your reaction. And you subconsciously felt despair and instinctively rejected me. That was very interesting. If you weren’t the one who was called The Fool, how could you have such thoughts?

“Dear Mr. Fool, am I right?”

As “He” repeated the four rhetorical questions, Amon looked rather pleased, as though “He” was an old hunter who had caught the fox’s tail.

…I fell for his scam… Only then did Klein realize why Amon wasn’t disappointed at all.

He subconsciously wanted to deny it, but after some thought, he calmly said, “Kill me.”

Eh… I can speak now? Klein tried to control his body, but it was completely impossible.

In the next second, he was prepared to recite the honorific name of the Evernight Goddess, but this thought was immediately lost.

The thin-faced Blasphemer Amon pressed down on his right monocle and maintained his excited state from before.

“So that you can be reborn in Sefirah Castle?”

…The more I talk to this fellow, the more mistakes I make… Klein shut his mouth tightly and didn’t say another word.

When Amon saw this, “He” shook “His” head with a smile.

“There’s no need to be so afraid. Actually, there’s no bad blood between us.”

Uh… Sitting on the round stool like a doll, Klein was stunned for a moment, but he didn’t respond.

Amon leaned forward slightly and looked into his eyes before continuing with a smile:

“The only conflict we have is regarding Sefirah Castle.

“But do you really wish to shoulder that fate? Aren’t you worried that the original owner of Sefirah Castle will revive within you?”

“…” This was something Klein was very concerned about, making him at a loss for words.

Amon pinched the crystal monocle and didn’t urge him to answer. He smiled and said, “If you give me Sefirah Castle, all the problems will be resolved.

“That way, whether the original owner of Sefirah Castle comes back to life, or if the corresponding fate can be shouldered, the person who needs to worry is me, not you.

“Also, I’ll be the one to take over the subsequent arrangements of my zealous brother, ‘Door,’ and Lil’ Zaratul’s pursuits and the benediction of Evernight.

“And you will be freed from all this and just stay as a Sequence 3.

“Heh, why would I want to kill you? What’s the point of killing a Sequence 3? Even if I want to retrieve the characteristic, it’s still expendable. My prey will only be Pallez, Lil’ Zaratul, and ‘Door.’ The rest will purely depend on my mood.

“As for the organization that you established, I can also help you maintain it. It’s very fascinating and interesting.

“If you think this price isn’t enough, then I can make you my Blessed. Heh heh, are you not pretending that The Fool is the Angel of Time Amon in the City of Silver? This can turn into a reality in the future. I will lead them out of the Forsaken Land of the Gods and see the light outside.

“When the time comes, you’ll still have a chance to advance to Sequence 2 and become an angel.”

…This… This is practically taking over all my worries and hardships. There are only benefits left… Klein, who didn’t have a huge desire in becoming a true god and controlling Sefirah Castle, heard his heart palpitate with excitement. If he hadn't known that Amon was the number one master in deceit, he would've agreed to it on the spot. But in the end, he still said without any expression, "Kill me."

"Is that the only thing you know how to say?" Amon said without any signs of anger. He looked at Klein with piqued amusement.

To "Him," this was a very interesting matter. It was completely understandable that "He" would encounter difficulties during the process. They only served to make success even more fulfilling and delightful.

I'm just a heartless broken record… By lampooning, Klein eased his depression and despair. Instead of answering, he asked, "How do you know that the City of Silver thinks that you are The Fool?"

He didn't dare to say that the City of Silver still suspected that The Fool was the god that Amon believed in, afraid that he would provoke him.

Of course, if Amon was the type of person who would lose his intelligence after being provoked, he definitely would've tried doing so. This was because he now suspected that, after gaining initial control of Sefirah Castle, he would be reborn above the gray fog after his death. Unfortunately, Amon wasn't a King of Angels from the Storm pathway, but a God of Trickery that gave even the true deities a headache in the Fourth Epoch.

Amon laughed and said, "Do you think I only have two avatars in the City of Silver? Since you, The Fool, and The Hanged Man have intervened, then I'm happy to quietly watch from the sidelines."

…The City of Silver is still accommodating Amon's avatar… Who's the fellow who was "Parasitized"… Yes, previously, the members of the Giant King's Court's exploration team weren't "Parasitized." This is something that can be confirmed… As his mind tensed up, Klein felt that it was only natural. This was because Leonard had once told him that seeing one Amon meant that there were a bunch of Amons lurking around. It wouldn't just be a small handful.

Without much thought, Klein tried hard to come up with an attempt to create an opportunity.

"You didn't rob me of my destiny directly because you can't handle it right now?"

Amon nodded frankly and said, "Yes, that's why I want to make a deal with you peacefully.

"But since you rejected my offer, I can only bring you to see my real body, to a sufficiently safe place. Then, your destiny will be taken away. When that happens, your ending will not be as good as I just said earlier."

As he spoke, the black-haired, black-eyed man with a broad forehead and thin face slowly got up and walked towards the door. With that, Klein stood up and followed behind like a puppet.

As he reached out to open the door, Amon seemed to recall a question. He pressed down on the crystal monocle and turned to look back at him.

"What's the fourth line of your Scholar of Yore honorific name?"

In mysticism, every existence's corresponding honorific name wasn't that strict. As long as one used the correct format and certain descriptions to narrow the scope to prevent any ambiguity, they could point towards the corresponding hidden existence. This was also why quite a number of heretics who knew anything about mysticism could randomly make up honorific names while still receiving feedback.

Of course, if it wasn't for the honorific name given by the hidden existence, there was no way to enjoy receiving "feedback." Whether they established a connection or not depended on whether the existence was interested in the supplicant.

Previously, Amon had used his understanding of the Scholar of Yore and Gehrman Sparrow, and the powers of the Marauder pathway's Sequence 7 Cryptologist, to restore the full honorific name that could point accurately to Gehrman Sparrow. However, "He" didn't attempt to pray and use the "automatic response" to establish a connection to lock onto Klein's location, because his godhood intuition told him that there was a problem with the fourth sentence, dooming him to fail.

The fourth line of Klein's honorific name flashed across his mind, but he had no intention of telling Amon.

At that moment, Amon opened his mouth and read out his thoughts:

"Protector of Backlund magic and drama performers…"

This so-called "Angel of Time" and "Blasphemer" fell silent for a few seconds after saying it out loud.

Then, he smiled, very happily.

[image]

After laughing, Amon adjusted his monocle on his right eye and said with a smile, "To be honest, this is all very interesting.

"Are you really not considering becoming my Blessed?"

Klein opened his mouth and gave a familiar answer:

"Kill me."

Chapter 1152 - “Error”

◈ ◈ ◈

Upon hearing Klein’s reply, Amon smiled and shook his head. As “He” reached out to open the door, “He” casually asked, “How did you think of such an honorific name?”

“It needs to have a certain connection with myself, but also be able to avoid others from using the prayer’s automatic response to lock onto me. There aren’t many such honorific names.” Seeing that his identity had been exposed, there was no need for Klein to hide it any further. Furthermore, he hoped to use such a conversation to grasp an opportunity.

At the same time, his mind raced as he began thinking about how to save himself.

I’ve been deeply parasitized. If I have any thoughts that aren’t beneficial to Amon, it will be easily sensed and detected by “Him”…

Today is Saturday, and it’s almost Monday again. If The Fool suddenly stops the Tarot Gathering without any warning, the other members will definitely be terrified, nervous, and confused. Here, those who have the means to contact The World will definitely attempt to summon the messenger to ask for the reason. And once Miss Messenger approaches me, “She” will be able to discover the existence of Amon. Then, “She” can use the Yesterday Once again charm to recover to “Her” peak condition. With the complete strength of an angel, “She” has a sizable chance of rescuing me from Amon’s avatar…

The most important thing for me now is to persist and “live” for two days!

Yes, since Amon can’t steal my fate right now, why did “He” try to trade peacefully? Even if I agreed to it, “He” wouldn’t dare to let me go above the gray fog to grant “Him” permission. That would mean that I’m free from “His” control and able to Sefirah Castle to effectively purify and make a counterattack against the “Parasite”…

Is the “agreement” itself a switch, and there’s no need to follow up on it?

Amon deliberately didn’t mention this…

As expected, it was a scam!

Having grasped a sliver of hope, Klein decided to stall for time as long as possible for the next two days. The focus of Amon was still on the honorific name that no human and angel could think of.

As he walked out of the room, he scratched his chin and said, “Have you provided any protection to Backlund’s magic and drama performers?”

I’ve protected a Trickmaster before… Having made plans, Klein was much more cooperative than before. He answered simply, “I’m a Magician myself. I’ve ‘performed’ many times in Backlund.”

The monocled Amon nodded.

“Barely counts.”

He then walked out of the hotel room and went down the stairs to the street. Like a servant, he followed behind without any abnormalities.

Looking to his left and right, Amon pinched his monocle and sighed with a smile.

“How regretful.”

“What’s there to regret?” Klein asked in puzzlement.

I’ve already been caught by you. What else do you have to regret?

Amon pressed down on “His” silk top hat and maintained “His” smile.

“You can make a guess. If you can guess correctly, I can give you a better ending.”

Klein didn’t believe in “His” promise at all. In order to not be tricked into revealing more secrets, he shook his head and said, “I can’t guess it.”

“How boring,” Amon said simply. “He” clenched “His” right hand into a fist and lightly tapped on “His” monocle.

From the pedestrians, the trees by the side of the street, the sparrows on the rooftops, the rats in the muddy corners, and all kinds of living creatures in the air, illusory worm-like figures flew out, returning to Amon like stars.

This son of a god’s status instantly rose to the level of an angel.

As for Klein, he raised his left hand, and the human-skinned glove suddenly turned transparent.

This was the activation process of “Traveling.”

At that moment, the only thing on him which was real was Creeping Hunger. The rest were made by using the powers of a Faceless, as well as the glove using flesh and blood as the material.

Seeing that “Traveling” was about to begin, Klein was taken aback as he blurted out, “Why didn’t you teleport in the room?”

He had expected Amon to leave Backlund with him. After all, this was a place where even a King of Angels had to be wary of. However, he couldn’t understand why “He” would open the door, go down the stairs, and leave the hotel in such ordinary fashion.

The eye behind the monocle swept across Klein as the corner of Amon’s mouth slowly curled up.

"I've already answered you. What a pity that you didn't seek help from Pallez."

This Angel of Time had an obvious smile on "His" face, but there was no emotion in "His" black eyes. It made Klein shudder.

H-he's certain that I have some connection with Pallez Zoroast… Is it because of what happened the last time? No, stop it! Klein attempted to Cogitate, trying his best to control himself from thinking too much, so as to prevent his thoughts from being stolen by Amon.

Amon glanced at the panicking passers-by on the street in an impassive manner before looking up at the gray sky and saying, "I can only wait for the next opportunity. The most important thing now is to bring you to that place."

As they spoke, both of them turned transparent at the same time and vanished from the hotel's entrance. None of the people who came over felt anything amiss.

After passing through countless indescribable spirit world creatures and overlapping layers of different saturated colors, Klein and Amon appeared above the sea.

Beneath their feet was a huge fissure. The blue seawater had been cut off as they plummeted deep into the bottomless "darkness" like a waterfall without ever filling it.

This was the entrance to the ruins of the battle of gods.

With a thought, Klein asked, "You're taking me to the Forsaken Land of the Gods?"

The magnificent "waterfall" was reflected in Amon's monocle. "He" nodded slightly and casually replied, "That's right. When we get there, even your messenger won't be able to sense you through the contract."

The Forsaken Land of the Gods was clearly separated from the spirit world. Only by relying on Sefirah Castle could a connection be made.

…Amon knows what I'm planning to do… The flame of hope that was ignited in him was extinguished by the cold reality.

He couldn't find another way to save himself for the time being.

At this moment, the levitating Amon muttered to "Himself," "If my mausoleum in Backlund hadn't been destroyed by the Church of Steam, we could've used the Abyss as a springboard to head there directly. We wouldn't have to go through all this trouble."

"…" Klein guiltily changed the topic.

"The Abyss is connected to the Forsaken Land of the Gods?"

"No." Amon shook "His" head and said with a relaxed expression, "But I can use some of its characteristics to go anywhere."

"I heard that there were some nasty changes in the Abyss." With a thought, Klein probed.

Amon turned "His" head and glanced at him without concealing "His" curiosity.

"You're actually aware."

"Yes, I once thought of exploring the Abyss." Klein didn't speak further, afraid that the King of Angels of the Marauder pathway would discover that he could read Roselle's diary.

At this moment, Amon suddenly laughed.

"You want to explore the Abyss?"

"What's so funny about that?" Klein was very interested in what had happened to the Abyss to begin with; thus, he took the opportunity to cooperate with Amon in an attempt to know more.

Just as he finished speaking, he suddenly had a new idea:

Using the conversation he had with Amon, he could grasp more historical secrets to speed up his digestion of the Scholar of Yore potion. That way, he could try using it to deepen his control of Sefirah Castle and escape from his current predicament.

This thought flashed through his mind as he quickly restrained himself and stopped thinking about such matters.

In regards to his question, Amon chuckled and said, “Your visiting of the Abyss is like offering yourself as a beautifully packaged gift to someone who wants it.”

“…Dark Side of the Universe?” Klein was first alarmed before he made a guess.

Amon nodded.

“‘He’ was originally the only surviving ancient god, the Devil Monarch, Farbauti. Now, heh.”

Without finishing “His” sentence, Amon leaped and jumped into the huge, illusory rift with the strong winds.

With that, Klein lost the support of the wind and fell straight down.

After an unknown period of time, the water that resembled a fountain surged upwards rapidly, throwing him and Amon to the other side of the severed face.

Just as he entered the ruins of the battle of gods, Klein was hit by bright sunlight. He suddenly heard a series of intense and crazy ravings.

It was like a thin needle that pierced through his eardrums and stabbed into his brain, filling every thought with immense pain.

As for the Worms of Spirit that formed his Mythical Creature form, they gradually changed, as though they were about to give birth to a degenerate consciousness that didn’t belong to him.

The True Creator’s ravings!

With regards to this, Klein could barely withstand it, but it was difficult for him to hold on for too long. There was no way for him to go too far in the ruins of the battle of gods.

At this moment, he saw that the monocle on Amon’s right eye absorbed all the light around them. It became unusually bright and white.

Then, a thick darkness ruled the sky.

Amon directly stole the “day” of the ruins of the battle of gods!

In the darkness, this Angel of Time’s avatar brought Klein to an island and made him sleep against a stone pillar.

Soon, Klein arrived in the hazy dream world. He saw the projection of the Giant King’s Court, which was filled with an epic feeling, opposite the black cloister and the cliff.

Amon, wearing the black silk top hat and crystal monocle, appeared beside him. With a relaxed smile, “He” pointed at the projection of the Giant King’s Court that was frozen in the sunset.

“That’s the entrance to the Forsaken Land of the Gods.”

After some thought, Klein raised his doubts:

“Don’t you need to enter a dream at a specific location to open the entrance?”

He couldn’t help but feel a glimmer of hope again. He thought that it would be great if Amon wasted a week or two of his time in the ruins of the battle of gods.

“That’s right.” Amon didn’t deny what Klein had said. “He” casually said, “If you wish to open the entrance, you have to travel on a ship to the core of this ruin's waters. This might take more than a month, and you will experience many dangers that you're currently unable to withstand. As for me, I don't have to."

"Is it because you're the son of the Creator?" Klein guessed in deliberation.

"No." Amon had one hand in "His" pocket as "He" turned to walk to the black cloister's entrance. "In chaotic places like this, 'order' is in shambles, and the laws governing them have mutated. There are too many things that can be exploited."

As this Angel of Time walked, "He" turned to look at Klein.

"The Marauder pathway's Sequence 0 has a very abstract name, Error.

"It was named by my father. 'He' once used a strange word of unknown origins to represent it:

"Bug.

"When translated, it's a trojan horse of fate, the slug of time, the loopholes in rules, the manifestation of all errors."

Chapter 1153 - The Sunset Tunnel

◆

“Error”… Bug… Is that the essence of the Marauder pathway? As he came to a realization, Klein also confirmed one thing.

That was that the ancient sun god, the City of Silver Creator, Amon’s father really did come from Earth.

The word that Amon said was standard English!

Fellow Earthling, your two children have really caused me so much pain… If only they were all like Bernadette… As he lampooned inwardly, he asked curiously, “You want to use this dream world’s… loophole?”

Klein controlled himself and didn’t use the term “bug” to describe it, lest it would arouse suspicion in Amon due to his overly ordinary fluency when speaking the word. He would then reveal a trump card for no reason.

Faced with a King of Angels who could steal his thoughts and deeply “Parasitize” him, he had very few trump cards to begin with. He had to make good use of every single one of them. Who knew when they might end up being effective.

At that moment, Amon had already walked out of the black cloister.

“He” had one hand in his pocket, and without doing anything, the heavy door opened automatically, as though it was welcoming the arrival of a distinguished guest.

“You can think of it that way, but in actual fact, it’s a little more complicated than that.” Amon didn’t show the might of a Blasphemer at all as he casually answered Klein’s question, “This dream world doesn’t have any errors, or rather, loopholes. It’s just that, due to the clashing of remnant divine powers, some places appear more chaotic. And I can use this chaos to create a loophole.”

As the huge door that was prepared for the giant was completely opened, Amon pinched his monocle and walked into the hall, venturing deep inside.

During this process, “He” smiled and gave a more in-depth explanation:

“You should know very well that this cloister is composed of dreams.”

“Yes, it comes from the dreams of different living beings in the ruins of the battle of the gods.” After some thought, Klein added, “It might also be left behind by some dreams from the past.”

At that moment, the man and angel walked on a winding black staircase. The light of dusk shone through the stained glass from high above, bringing with it a feeling of burning holiness.

Amon touched the human skull engraving on the railings and smiled as “He” took in the surroundings.

“Generally speaking, the area you enter this dream world is where you end up when waking up, regardless if you’re in the dreams of other living beings in other seas.”

Unable to nod, Klein could only express his opinion with words.

“That’s right.”

“And after I create a loophole, I can wake up in the corresponding location by entering other dreams. Clearly, this cloister is much smaller than the sea ruins outside. The structure is even narrower. Perhaps, we can reach our destination in a few minutes.” There was a hint of joy in

Amon’s tone.

To “Him,” creating and exploiting loopholes was a joyous matter.

…This… Amon is actually able to use such a method to quickly pass through the ruins of the battle of the gods. We won’t even be wasting an hour or two, much less one or two weeks… As expected of a King of Angels, the Blasphemer of the Fourth Epoch… The glimmer of hope that was generated in Klein vanished instantly.

He wasn’t sure if Amon had deliberately not mentioned it in advance, so as to enjoy watching the bubbles of “His” target’s hope being popped time and time again. Or if “He” didn’t care about such trivial matters. All he could do was to curb his heavy depression and say, “You want to control the core dream of this illusory world?”

He remembered Queen Mystic Bernadette mentioning that she didn’t dare enter the black wooden door in the deepest depths of the cloister.

“It’s not me, it’s us,” Amon replied with a smile.

“He” seemed to suddenly recall something. He raised his hand to adjust his monocle and asked with interest, “Why did you put a monocle on your marionette?

“I didn’t even need to prepare one myself.”

“…” Feeling awkward for a second, Klein thought for a second and decided to answer truthfully, “Not long ago, in order to digest the Bizarro Sorcerer potion, I deliberately wore this monocle in front of the Red Angel evil spirit.”

Amon, who was walking down the stairs suddenly paused. “He” turned “His” head to look at Klein and smiled.

“Very interesting.”

This Angel of Time said thoughtfully, “To think that Medici hasn’t completely died. Next time, if I encounter 'Him,' I'll disguise myself to look like you, and then I'll wear a monocle in front of 'Him' again."

Poor Sauron Einhorn Medici… As a whole King of Angels, can you not be so senseless… Is this the so-called "God of Mischief"? When Klein heard that, he felt wistful, not knowing what to say.

Amon pressed down on the crystal monocle and asked, "Did you wear this monocle on your left eye?"

"How did you know?" Klein was shocked, imagining that Amon had stolen the scene from the fog of history.

"How did I know?" Amon said with a smile. "There are two possibilities. Firstly, it's because you're of a Beyonder of a low level, so you're definitely not a match for that fellow Medici. You were afraid that if your disguise was too realistic, then you would incur a fatal subconscious attack and deduced that you would be better of doing so. Secondly, if you had the intention of imitating me and ended up doing an accurate imitation, then I might be able to use the ripples generated by fate to detect the incident. Since I didn't notice it, it must mean that the monocle was worn on the wrong spot.

"Make a guess. Which possibility is it?"

…I will choose the most dangerous possibility, regardless of whether it's true or not… This way, I will be even more careful and cautious in the future when it comes to matters like this… Of course, there must be a future first… Since Amon didn't show any signs of viciousness or oppression. Klein had unknowingly let down his guard and felt that Amon was an easy-going King of Angels. But now, he suddenly snapped to attention as he came to a realization that this was a trait of a master swindler!

"The second possibility." Klein gave his answer.

Amon didn't say if he was right. "He" reached the bottom of the stairs and came to the lowest level of the cloister. He stopped in front of a black wooden door covered in strange patterns.

“I’ve been here before. Once this door is fully opened, the power inside will shatter the dream world in its entirety,” Klein said as he attempted to extract more historical secrets from Amon.

Amon reached out for the handle, his thin face impassive as he said, “This is my father’s final dream. The corresponding location is where ‘He’ perished.”

…The ruins of the battle of gods was where Rose Redemption attacked the ancient sun god, the source of the Cataclysm? When Klein heard that, he tensed up as his thoughts raced.

With regards to this answer, after understanding the formation of Rose Redemption, he had a corresponding theory regarding the various abnormalities in the ruins of the battle of gods. He wasn’t too shocked now, and the Scholar of Yore potion had even been digested to a certain degree.

Immediately following that, he let out an indescribable sigh.

This was the closest he had gotten to the ancient sun god.

Previously, when he saw it through dream divination, they were separated by a distant stretch of both space and time.

The ancient sun god and Emperor Roselle were the protagonists of an era, but in the end, they ended up miserable. The ending was tragic… Roselle still has the means of being revived. I wonder if this former “Creator” had any similar setups… Dark Angel Sasrir? The True Creator? Amidst his thoughts, Amon opened the black wooden door covered in strange patterns.

There was a sea inside, and the blinding sunlight shot straight at it. There seemed to be a rich gold color hidden in the waves.

Klein didn’t understand what the thick gold represented previously, but now, he had a preliminary idea.

It was the blood of the ancient sun god!

Before “He” died, “He” was affected by the power of the “Evernight” and fell into a dream. He dreamed of his body being torn apart, staining the sea with blood.

Clang!

As the black wooden door opened, an unimaginable aura emanated out, causing the entire cloister to violently shake, as though it had encountered an earthquake that could destroy this world.

Amidst the dust and collapsed stone bricks, the two of them entered the golden sea through the wooden door.

Following that, he felt his Spirit Body melt as his psyche evaporated. In seconds, he would become fertilizer for the dream.

At this moment, bright and pure white light shone out from Amon’s crystal monocle, instantly shattering the dream world.

“He” returned the “day” he had stolen to the ruins of the battle of the gods, allowing the place to turn from night to day!

At the same time, “His” and Klein’s figures turned somewhat transparent. Then, they appeared in midair above a sea that was dyed golden.

The temperature here was higher than what Klein imagined, but it wasn’t as dangerous as the dream.

Or rather, the sea in the core region of the ruins of the battle of the gods was separated into safety zones due to various clashes of divine power. As long as one didn’t blindly explore the area, then there wouldn’t be too much of a problem.

In the next second, Amon's monocle drew in all the light from "His" surroundings, making himself appear extremely bright.

"Day" was stolen and "night" had fallen once again. After the two landed on an island in a safe zone, they once again entered the dream world.

This time, they appeared outside the black wooden door covered with strange patterns.

Amon adjusted "His" monocle, which "He" wore on "His" right eye, and pulled it with "His" left hand, "stealing" the distance between the entrance and the cloister.

Both of them took a step forward at the same time, leaving the cloister and arriving at the edge of the cliff. Opposite them was the projection of the Giant King's Court that was frozen in the dusk.

Klein originally thought that Amon would follow procedure and chant the corresponding honorific name, but to his surprise, "He" only raised "His" right hand and snapped "His" fingers.

The clouds that separated the two mountains instantly boiled as they parted to the left and right, revealing an invisible dark rift at the bottom.

The projection of the Giant King's Court on the opposite side suddenly sucked all the rays of light from the sunset over, letting them surge forward and fill up the deep crack.

[image]

Hence, in between the two mountains, an orange-red light road appeared in the clouds.

"Let's go." Amon gave a low laugh as "He" leaped down the cliff. With the fluttering of "His" clothes, "He" landed on the passage formed by dusk.

Unable to resist, Klein could only follow and jump down the cliff.

Chapter 1154 - I'll Give You a Chance

◆

The path that was formed by dusk didn't seem to contain anything, but after Amon and Klein landed one after another, they didn't continue falling, as though they were walking on the ground.

This time, Amon didn't "steal" the distance. Instead, "He" "brought" Klein along as they approached the majestic projection of the Giant King's Court. From time to time, "He" would observe and admire the beautiful scenery.

Walking above the sea of clouds, they walked along a sunset bridge with the legendary palace in the distance. It was supposed to be a joyful and refreshing matter, but Klein felt as though he was walking into the Abyss, doing so one step at a time. The more he struggled, the deeper he fell.

Once he entered the Forsaken Land of the Gods, many things that he relied on would be useless.

Before long, Amon and Klein arrived at the projection of the Giant King's Court and stood in front of the tallest building.

On one side of the building was a steeple, and on the other side was a spire. The main door was far more than ten meters tall, with it being mainly a grayish-blue color. It was covered with symbols, labels, and patterns. It was where the Giant King lived, the place where Dark Angel Sasrir slept.

Klein glanced at the pitch-black hole to the left of the door, roughly determining that the door in the dream didn’t need a key to open. Otherwise, the True Creator’s believers wouldn’t have been able to pass through. After all, the actual key back then was in Vice Admiral Iceberg’s collection room.

“Next, we’ll be able to enter the Forsaken Land of the Gods once the door is opened. However, we’ll definitely attract the attention of others by doing so.” Amon chortled and took a few steps diagonally to the edge of the door. “We won’t open the door, but instead directly head over.”

As “He” spoke, the Angel of Time raised “His” hand to adjust “His” monocle.

A dark blue color appeared in the corner of the grayish-blue door. It was an illusory door without any sense of being corporeal.

“The ‘Door Opening’ power of an Apprentice is a very low-level ability, but it’s perfect when used here.” Amon lowered “His” right hand and introduced in satisfaction.

Taking two steps, “He” passed through the illusory door.

Hmm, there are no useless Beyonder powers, only useless Beyonders… If I directly push the door open, I’ll draw the attention of others… But from who? The True Creator? “His” holy residence, “His” divine kingdom should be somewhere in the Forsaken Land of the Gods… If I can lure “Him” over and let “Him” clash with Amon, I might be able to find a chance to escape… Without any ability to control himself, Klein followed behind Amon without leaving much of a gap, stepping into the blurry dark blue door.

The moment he stepped through, he felt the world spin around him. Even his spirituality seemed to be tom apart.

After the abnormality disappeared and his condition was restored, he realized that he was on a beach that was soaked in the glow of the sunset.

The sand and stones here were all black in color. Deep blue waves surged over from afar as they crashed into the coast, one wave after another, but they didn't produce any sounds like they should have.

They were quiet, like a grand illusion.

This sea is an illusion… Coming in would probably result in one appearing here, but it's not necessarily the case for leaving… According to the principle of reciprocity, if one wants to leave, they can only open the residence of the Giant King, where Dark Angel Sasrir is in deep sleep? With a sudden realization, Klein turned his head and looked in another direction. It was a mountain bathed in dusk. On it were countless palaces, towers, and many majestic city walls.

This was the legendary Giant King's Court.

Even if the City of Silver could find a path that leads to the beach, it would be meaningless… From the corner of his eye, he saw that Amon had changed his image.

"He" wore a black classical robe and a pointed hat of the same color. He changed from being a gentleman from the present era to an ancient mage that originated from the Fourth or even the Third Epoch.

With a thought, Klein continued looking at the Giant King's Court which wasn't too far away. He casually said, "Dark Angel Sasrir is sleeping in the palace of the Giant King."

Amon stood to his side as "He" looked in the same direction and said without any change in expression, "I know.

"I've entered the Giant King's Court and even visited the graves of Aurmir's parents."

As expected… One of Klein's guesses was finally confirmed.

He deliberated and said, "What answers you searching for1?"

“You can make a guess.” Amon continued looking at the Giant King’s Court and laughed.

If I had any idea, I wouldn’t need to ask you… After thinking for a few seconds, he said, “Some secrets of the First Epoch?”

You can say that,” Amon replied without much concern.

Klein hesitated for a moment before saying, “Aren’t you curious about Dark Angel Sasrir’s condition?”

“I am.” Amon didn’t change the direction of “His” gaze as “He” said with a smile, “But compared to me, there are still many people who are more interested in that: my zealous brother, The Hanged Man, the Dragon of Betrayal, as well as Evernight, Storm, and White. I want to see who’s the first one who isn’t able to hold back. Heh heh, if I can steal everything of importance inside at the critical moment, ‘Their’ expressions will definitely be very interesting.”

This thought… The reason for stirring up such a huge matter was purely to cause trouble, to gain some excitement? Klein frowned slightly and realized that Amon’s values were different from that of humans.

This is a natural Mythical Creature… Completely different from humans… Eh, why can I frown on my own… Just as he came to a realization, he sensed that something was missing in his body.

He subconsciously turned his head to look at Blasphemer Amon.

There was a semi-translucent Worm of Time with twelve rings in Amon’s hand. “He” smiled as “He” looked into Klein’s eyes and said with some anticipation, “Since we’ve already arrived at the Forsaken Land of the Gods, there’s no need to worry about external interference. I’ll give you a chance.

“Before I reach my true destination, I will no longer”Parasitize” you. You can use every method that you can think of to escape, and I will try my best to stop you.

“Good luck. Don’t disappoint me.”

For a moment, Klein couldn’t believe what Amon had just said. He suspected that Amon was bluffing him.Read more chapter on vipnovel

But when he thought of Amon’s behavior all this while, he felt that it was something that was in line with “His” character.

“Alright.” As his thoughts raced, he took a deep breath and solemnly replied under the orange glow of the sunset.

Backlund, Parliament House.

Due to King George Ill’s sudden self-destruction, none of the nobles and Members of Parliament were allowed to return to their respective homes. Instead, they were gathered here to receive heavy protection from the three Churches and the military.

Dressed in a pure black dress, Audrey stood behind the railing on the second floor and quietly looked down.

As the matter had happened too suddenly and lacked any prior warning, she still found it surreal despite receiving some indication from The World Gehrman Sparrow.

She seemed to have transcended reality and was watching a performance.

Her father, brother, and the other nobles and Members of Parliament were gathered in cliques as they occupied different small rooms. From time to time, one would walk out of the small room, bringing with them the stench of smoke and their gentlemanly attire as they rushed to another discussion circle.

The ladies and madams sat in the lounge. Most of them had yet to return to their senses as their eyes were dazed and their bodies trembling.

The parliamentary staff and the military's middle and low-ranking officers were running about everywhere, transmitting information from different places.

A soldier dressed in a red shirt and white pants walked in from the outside and handed a stack of paper to the officer in charge of the hall. The officer glanced at it and immediately called for his assistant. He pointed at the small room where Earl Hall and the rest were in. Without asking anything, the adjutant took the documents and ran towards his destination.

All of this happened in a very quiet environment. Only the sound of footsteps and faint whispers echoed in the air. It was as if it was a huge oil painting drawn on the canvas of the real world. The gorgeous decorations, dark colors, dim lights, and the expressions on everyone's faces created an extremely heavy atmosphere.

Audrey pursed her lips slightly and looked at it for a while. Her mood was still at a nadir, and she only managed to maintain her calm by relying on Placate.

Why would Mr. World deal with the king…

The death of the King will definitely bring deep hatred…

It doesn't matter what Sequence the King is, because he has never shown it. This doesn't affect the overall strength of the kingdom, but this incident is enough to explain one thing: The three Churches, royal family, and military have fractured apart. The internal strife is quite serious…

The situation with Loen will be very dangerous. Its enemies will definitely not let this opportunity go… As her thoughts raced, she saw a man in a black coat rush into Parliament House.

He suppressed his voice and started talking to the officer in charge of the lobby.

As an experienced Spectator who could observe the subtle expressions and body language, reading lips was undoubtedly Audrey's strength. As she watched, she interpreted the corresponding content:

Intis has used the excuse of conflict in the borders of the Homacis mountain range to gather a large number of troops there.

Audrey bit her lip lightly as that familiar feeling of not belonging there arose again. It was as if she had seen a novel's description play out in the real world.

The grayness of the sky seemed to grow thicker. No one spoke in the house where the Morettis lived.

Benson stood behind the oriel window with a solemn expression as he looked at the people rushing down the streets.

It was unknown what he was thinking.

Melissa sat on the sofa beside the coffee table. She lowered her head and looked at the crude machinery she made. It was as if she had become a statue.

“Sigh, the situation has become even more chaotic.” Benson exhaled as he touched his hairline. He turned his head back and forced a smile. “Regardless, Backlund is definitely safer than most places.”

Melissa didn't raise her head. Instead, she said with an ethereal voice, “Klein found a good job, and our lives gradually improved. In the end, an accident took him away…

“We moved out of Tingen, and you got a job as a civil servant. I entered university and started on the correct path. In the end, war broke out…

“It wasn't easy for us to get used to this environment. We were praying that the war would end early. In the end, the king was blown to pieces…”

Having said that, Melissa slowly lifted her head and looked at her brother with a confused expression.

“Benson, is it that difficult to obtain and maintain a better life than what we had before?”

Chapter 1155 - Walking in the Dark

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, East Borough.

Fors, who had just returned from the land of ice and snow, was wrapped in thick layers of clothing. She looked at the burning charcoal stove in front of her as if she had fallen into a terrible environment again. She couldn’t help but shiver a few times.

“George III is already dead. The things that happened before will definitely come to an end. Perhaps we can move out of this place and head to North Borough or Hillston Borough.

“The houses there have fireplaces!”

Xio sat on a chair opposite her and similarly stared at the warm furnace. She replied with a slightly confused expression, “Let’s wait another week or two.

“To be honest, I still can’t believe that George III was killed so easily… I didn’t have time to do anything.”

This bounty hunter, who had become a Judge, sounded disappointed, confused, and puzzled. It felt as though she had lost her motivation in life.

Fors temporarily forgot about the damage caused by the cold as she consoled her, “I don’t think that this was done by Gehrman Sparrow. It was done by those people who used Shermane. They were the only ones investigating the secret motives of George III. Your actions have contributed to his death to a certain degree. It’s as if you had exacted your revenge in an indirect manner.

“Eh… There shouldn’t be any more surveillance or suppressive measures placed against your family. You can try to start a new life. If you have the chance, you might be able to use proper channels to make an appeal for your father.”

Upon hearing the last few sentences, Xio raised her head.

“Yes, the situation is getting more and more chaotic now. I’m worried that they’ll be affected by the war.

“Fors, do you think it’s safer to be in Backlund, or in an ordinary city that isn’t near the borders?”

Fors thought for a few seconds and shook her head calmly.

“I don’t know.”

She added, “I plan to ask Mr. World. He must have a better grasp of the overall situation. Do you still remember? He warned us beforehand that something would happen around George III, and to avoid approaching him.”

In addition, Fors also wanted to ask where the next stop of her “travels” would be so that she could make preparations early.

“Yes!” Xio nodded instinctively.

Fors flipped through the newspapers she supported with her knees, and she drank the coffee she had left. Then, she slowly got up and entered the room inside. She prayed to Mr. Fool in a low voice, asking “Him” to pass her questions to The World Gehrman Sparrow.

†

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, near the Giant King’s Court.

Without being “Parasitized” at a deeper level, Klein followed Amon to the foot of the mountain. In the frozen dusk, they circled to the front of the mythical land.

Although Amon had given him a chance to escape, he wasn’t in a hurry to do so. This was because he knew very well that Amon had the strength and level of at least a Sequence 2. “He” was an angel in the truest sense of the word, an entity he couldn’t fight head-on. Besides, a Marauder was known as an “Error,” a loophole, a bug. Its powers were very strange, making it impossible to guard against. Klein believed that whatever normal means he could come up with to save himself would be ineffective.

I can only stay patient and wait for an opportunity that can be used… During this process, I have to keep making attempts to observe Amon’s response… Yes, I still have to take note of a problem: I can’t believe anything Amon says. “He” has already retrieved the Worm of Time and removed my parasitized state. At least, in terms of my condition, “He” isn’t lying, but this might not be the whole truth. I can’t rule out the possibility that “He” has left a Worm of Time lurking in my body. “He” might take control of my body at a critical moment… As these thoughts surfaced in Klein’s mind, he “chatted” with Amon, asking about Dark Angel Sasrir. However, he saw that nearby, in the distance, the dusk was fading away as darkness blanketed the area. Lightning bolts that snarled from time to time lit up half the sky.

They had arrived at the boundary of the Giant King’s Court and were about to leave the mythical kingdom.

Once I’m in the darkness, I’ll either evaporate into thin air or encounter a sudden terrifying monster attack… With a thought, Klein pretended not to know anything as he continued proceeding forward. He went from the orange dusk and into the deep darkness.

At this moment, Amon, in his black classic robe and pointed hat, accompanied with a monocle, reached out “His” hand and pulled back a lantern covered in thin animal hide.

Inside the lantern, a candle made of some unknown oil emitted a faint yellow light and a slightly pungent smell.

“Carry it.” Amon threw the lantern at Klein.

“…” Klein caught the lantern and fell silent.

A few seconds later, he probed, “Where did you get this from?”

At that moment, Klein imagined that Amon had summoned a projection from the Historical Void.

Amon pinched the crystal monocle and said with a smile, “I stole it from the human camp up ahead. Oh, that’s the City of Silver’s Afternoon Town camp.”

It was stolen… Klein’s eyelids twitched. He didn’t ask further as he carried the lantern into the endless darkness.

The dim yellow light was like an invisible defensive barrier as it quickly spread out, creating a warm zone in the dark night.

At this moment, the lightning in the sky kept flashing. The gap between them was rather long, and there was almost no thunder. It occasionally boomed.

According to the general knowledge he had learned from Little Sun, this was nighttime in the Forsaken Land of the Gods. It was the most dangerous period.

As he proceeded forward, he first used the Faceless powers which had undergone a qualitative change. Together with Creeping Hunger, he adjusted his eye structure to adapt to this special environment. Following that, he used his spiritual perception to survey his surroundings.

He felt that, in the darkness, there were many eyes staring at him, with creatures of indescribable shapes hidden. However, every time the lightning lit up and shone brightly, there was nothing.

He wasn't worried at all about the serious backlash from using Creeping Hunger while not feeding it. From his point of view, there were only two outcomes. One was that Creeping Hunger attempted to devour him, but had its thoughts stolen away by Amon. The second was that Creeping Hunger successfully devoured him, the wearer, allowing him to be resurrected; thus, escaping from his current predicament. The latter was something he was looking forward to, while the former didn't offer any losses, other than leaving Creeping Hunger somewhat perplexed.

After proceeding forward for a while, he saw the City of Silver's Afternoon Town camp that was built using an abandoned building.

Beyond those boulders and walls that were formed by stone pillars, the bonfire quietly burned and illuminated most of the areas inside, making them completely different from the outside world.

The members of the City of Silver's exploration team were either patrolling or watching the area under the light's illumination to prevent any accidents.

One of them was a Dawn Paladin who was nearly 2.3 meters tall. He was standing at the top of a stronghold and looking into the distance, wary of the monsters hidden in the darkness.

Suddenly, he saw a faint yellow flame coming from afar in the darkness.

This… This Dawn Paladin's pupils dilated as his heart raced.

Apart from newborns and children who had yet to receive education, everyone in the City of Silver knew that this land had been forsaken by God. No one else would use fire in the darkness to create light. Even monsters who were good at controlling flames would be hidden in a dark environment before they attacked. As for the other humans, all the cities that the City of Silver had discovered to date had already been destroyed and turned to ruins. There were no survivors. The only outsider they had seen to date was the strange little boy, Jack.

And at that moment, a flame appeared in the depths of the darkness, one that was constantly moving!

What does this mean? The Dawn Paladin who was standing in the stronghold couldn't think of anything at that moment. He could only feel his body trembling slightly.

The dim yellow light slowly approached from afar. It passed by the campsite and headed beyond Afternoon Town. Vaguely, the Dawn Knight saw two silhouettes that belonged to humans. They walked deep into the darkness, and their silhouettes were strangely illuminated by the light.

Holding what looked like a lantern, they slowly left the camp and disappeared into the endless darkness.

At some point in time, the Dawn Paladin was already holding his breath until the faint yellow light was completely gone.

There are other humans? No, they can't be humans! The Dawn Paladin's eyes narrowed as he carefully turned around to inform the Elder of the six-member council presiding over this camp.

At this moment, he discovered that one of the lanterns hanging on a stone pillar was missing.

This Dawn Paladin's body stiffened as cold sweat broke out on his forehead.

†

As he walked away from Afternoon Town, Klein endured the stares of numerous pairs of eyes in the depths of the darkness. He secretly made use of the powers of a Scholar of Yore, as well as his connection with Sefirah Castle, to sense the grayish-white fog that was interwoven through history.

He had succeeded.

This proved that the Forsaken Land of the Gods wasn't isolated from Sefirah Castle.

The holy residence of the True Creator, or even the divine kingdom, is located in this piece of land… If I were to trigger Sefirah Castle and create an anomaly, would it cause "Him" to cast "His" gaze over and clash with Amon… "He" is a true god. I don't have extravagant hopes in escaping in the chaos, but I can seize the opportunity to commit suicide when "He" is dealing with Amon… With a thought, Klein wanted to make Sefirah Castle quake slightly.

In the next second, this thought disappeared.

The corners of Amon's mouth curled up slightly as he walked beside him.

"The Hanged Man has no interest in Sefirah Castle. Of course, 'His' rationality might not be constant."

Klein didn't have extravagant hopes that his impulsive thought could truly succeed. He mainly wanted to test Amon's reaction and see what "His" response was. At that moment, he didn't feel depressed, nor did he hide his curiosity in asking a question, "The Hanged Man is referring to the Sequence 0 of the Shepherd pathway?"

Amon nodded slightly and said, "That's right. This symbolizes degeneration. Of course, if you want to explain it in a positive light, that is sacrifice and responsibility."

Klein thought for a moment before probing, "I thought this was a nickname you came up with."

Just like Medici.

Based on what he knew, the True Creator was born because of Rose Redemption. It was very likely related to the death of the ancient sun god. Therefore, he wanted to know what kind of attitude Amon had towards this evil god, and whether it was the same as “His” brother.

Amon nudged his monocle and chuckled.

“I’ve always respected the gods.”

To have a Blasphemer say this sounds really contradictory… Helpless, Klein put a stop to the topic.

Chapter 1156 - Thinking

◆ ◆ ◆

Most of the areas in the Forsaken Land of the Gods didn’t have paths that one would consider normal, but it wasn’t that difficult to walk through them. This was because large swaths of the land were barren. Everything was mostly black in color.

On the moors, there were occasional sightings of plants that stubbornly grew. They were of a variety of strange shapes and distorted sizes. Klein had no way to tell what they originally were.

Around them, in the areas that the lantern couldn’t illuminate, the darkness seemed to have a life of its own. It seemed to move silently, as though it wanted to devour everything that they could blanket.

As a Scholar of Yore, Klein just needed one glance from the corner of his eye to see the Spirit Body Threads extending out from the darkness around him. They were illusory, dense, and countless. This meant that there were many monsters lurking in the darkness.

These monsters were extremely silent. They stared at Amon, who was dressed as an ancient mage, as well as Klein, who looked like a present-day gentleman. Under the dim yellow light, they walked through the wilderness.

With his eyes fixed ahead, Klein casually held the animal hide lantern in his hand, not worried about when it would be extinguished.

Just as the two of them were about to leave this barren wilderness and enter a hilly region, a deformed monster of mangled flesh with two heads and five arms suddenly trembled in the darkness behind them.

It had become Klein’s marionette.

Controlling Spirit Body Threads was silent to begin with, and it wasn’t more than 500 meters away.

In the next second, the monster collapsed silently, losing its life.

Walking to Klein’s left, Amon, who was wearing a pointed hat, smiled. “He” raised “His” right arm and opened “His” palm, revealing something.

It was a transparent maggot with three-dimensional patterns.

A Worm of Spirit!

This was stolen from the marionette, along with the Spirit Body Threads.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, Amon easily crushed the transparent maggot with “His” fingers.

Klein immediately felt a pain that came from deep within his soul. His head felt like it was about to split open.

Thankfully, he had gotten used to this feeling from him repeated creating Yesterday Once More charms and Control Spirit Bullets. He only grimaced without losing his composure.

Amon maintained “His” smile and threw down “His” palm.

“You’re too reserved. You can be more daring.”

Having recovered from the pain, Klein raised his hand to rub his temples, feeling exhausted. Every Worm of Spirit was calling for him to rest.

As he was being chased by Zaratul, the spirituality that he borrowed from his past self had been mostly expended. There was still the continuous "Traveling" after that. By using Angel's Embrace to remove traces, he was already nearing his limit.

After he returned to a safe zone, he had planned on going above the gray fog to check on his surroundings before entering a deep sleep and replenish his energy. Alas, he ended up suffering an ambush from Amon, which resulted in him being parasitized. He had been tormented all the way to the Forsaken Land of the Gods. If he wasn't in a perilous situation, he might've fainted or showed signs of losing control.

"I need to rest now," Klein put down his right hand and said frankly.

He believed that Amon would satisfy his request, because the more he failed at escaping despite trying his best, the more he could satisfy this God of Mischief's desire for entertainment.

"Alright." The monocled Amon's face turned slightly as "He" said while facing the hillside, "There's a resting place there. We'll arrive soon. Of course, I don't mind if you want to camp out in the wilderness. I just feel that you humans might prefer a place that gives you a sense of security."

"Let's go there." Klein originally wanted to directly control the flame of the lantern to complete a Flaming Jump, but his drained spirituality stopped him. He could only follow Amon and rely on his feet to move forward.

Along the way, with a mind of asking more questions, he said to Amon, "Why don't you 'steal' the distance to immediately arrive at our destination?"

Amon turned "His" head and glanced at Klein with "His" monocled right eye. The corners of "His" lips curled up slightly.

"I'm not the one who wants to rest."

"…" Klein shut his mouth and quietly walked forward.

After about ten bolts of lightning flashes, Amon raised "His" hand and pointed diagonally ahead.

"We're here."

In the shadow of a hill less than a hundred meters away, there were a few buildings that looked like half-steeples. More than ten giant stone pillars protruded out from the ground, reaching only the height of Klein's knees. A few strands of wild grass grew out from the crevices, their blade-like tips were dark red like blood.

"There used to be people living here?" Klein rubbed his temples and asked.

Nudging the monocle with "His" right index finger's second joint, Amon smiled and said, "This place used to be a very large city. When the Cataclysm happened, the land cracked open and devoured the entire city, leaving behind only these structures to prove that it once existed."

The destruction of civilization… This thought suddenly popped up in Klein's mind. He sped up his pace and arrived at the destination where there was strange wild grass.

After entering a half-collapsed building, Klein instinctively looked around and observed the place.

[image]

The grayish-white stone walls that had cracked open had murals that had been washed away by thousands of years. They were already indiscernible, and he could tell that the people in the city believed that entering Heaven after death was an honor.

After regulating his breathing, Klein threw away the animal hide lantern in his hand. Leaning against a thick stone pillar, he barely managed to imagine layers of spherical lights.

He didn't care about the dangers of sleeping in such an environment.

Let the danger come strike harder! Before he fell asleep, Klein shouted in his heart.

The black-robed Amon glanced at him before casually sitting down beside him and snapping “His” fingers.

The candle that was about to burn out in the lantern stopped melting, but the dim yellow light continued to spread.

Despite only having fuel to last a few more minutes, it seemed to be able to last another few hours or even days.

It was like an error that violated the laws of nature.

After for an unknown period of time of feeling groggy, Klein finally recovered his energy and was woken up by Miss Magician’s prayers.

He was temporarily unable to respond to this. He closed his eyes and pretended that he was still dreaming.

Without being “Parasitized” at a deeper level, I don’t think Amon can monitor my thoughts. “He” can only tell if my thoughts are harmful to “Him”… With a thought, he secretly summoned the grayish-white fog.

He had borrowed a state from his past self through the Historical Void, a state that wasn’t directly meant for escaping.

That was when Hvin Rambis invaded his island of consciousness.

This attempt wasn’t stopped or stolen.

Using this state, and the fact that he was able to maintain his lucidity in dreams and the mind world regardless of any intrusions, he split a portion of his self-awareness and stayed in the spiritual sky, calmly looking down at the island.

He began to examine if there were any abnormalities in his mind and thoughts that were being parasitized.

After a series of strict comparisons, he confirmed that there was nothing wrong with his mind world.

In other words, even if there was still a Worm of Time in his body, it was still considered being parasitized at a superficial level. It was impossible to monitor his thoughts.

After finding such a “safe zone,” Klein finally released his repressed thoughts and analyzed the current situation. He considered the subsequent methods for self-preservation.

Amon is a God of Mischief and also a God of Deceit. It’s impossible that “He” is playing this game purely for his entertainment… If “He” really wants to do that, “He” can definitely wait until “He” meets with “His” true body and steals my fate. “He” can attempt it after obtaining Sefirah Castle. That way, even if something unexpected happens, “His” main goal will also be achieved and “He” wouldn’t suffer any losses…

What is “His” goal behind this matter? If I can grasp the crux of the matter, I might be able to discover true freedom…

Also, after “He” recited the luck enhancement ritual incantation in Mandarin, “He” actually didn’t show any concern towards this special language, nor did “He” ask any questions. This totally doesn’t match the sense of curiosity that “He” portrays…

Uh… Did “He” deliberately use the word “Bug” to probe me… so as to see what connections I’ll make…

But “He” didn’t steal my thoughts. No, if all my ideas are disjointed from one another, I wouldn’t be able to discover that they’ve been stolen…

Klein recalled the situation back then, and he used the logical connections between his thoughts to confirm that he hadn’t had his thoughts stolen.

This made him confirm one thing:

That was, that being “Parasitized” at a deeper level, Amon could directly monitor his thoughts without stealing it!

Amon made it seem that he had to notice malintent before he took action. It was a bluff!

I knew it, this deeper level of “Parasitization” seems to be different from what Pallez described…

Based on this deduction, the thoughts that I’ve been thinking of along the way have been heard by Amon, including Earth, fellow Earthling, and child education…

How terrifying…

Thankfully, when I was plotting to destroy the advancement ritual of George III, I had imagined the perilous situation of being “Parasitized” by Amon. Half of my thoughts were my instinctive reactions, while the other half was intentionally let loose. This way, not only do I reveal my secrets, but I can also use this to gain Amon’s “trust,” concealing the most important and core matters.

For now, “He” definitely knows that I plan to obtain more historical secrets from “Him” so as to quickly digest the Scholar of Yore potion. However, “He” doesn’t know that I’m not far from being able to fully digest it. I’m just a few steps short or just one opportunity away…

Did Amon deliberately remove the parasite and play such a game with me because “He” had once heard of Earth from the ancient sun god and had come into contact with some secrets? He plans on using my attempt to save myself to complete certain matters that might be inconvenient or impossible for “Him”? If that’s the case, there will definitely be something happening next…

Yes, I have to show that I didn’t notice this and still plan on escaping like a normal person.”

Once I’ve returned to my optimal state, I’ll make my first “attempt”!

After a while, Klein opened his eyes.

The pointed hat-wearing Amon sat beside him and smiled at him.

“Have you decided? When are you going to take action?”

“He” acted as if “He” was Klein’s partner and not the target from which Klein was trying to escape from.

Chapter 1157 - Poise

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein pressed down on the grayish-white wall and slowly sat up straight. He smiled and shook his head.

“Before I fill my stomach, my brain refuses to work.”

He was speaking the truth, and also a lie. This was because, before becoming a complete Mythical Creature, a saint would still be hungry and thirsty. But to a Sequence 3 demigod, not eating or drinking for half a month wasn’t a problem. As for a whole Mythical Creature, eating was only a hobby, not a necessity.

What he wanted to express was that, before he officially made attempts at escaping, he needed to be in optimal condition.

“The habit of a Magician,” Amon commented with a smile. “I’m not in charge of providing food, but you can think of a solution yourself.”

Looking at the lantern on the ground, Klein thought for a few seconds before reaching out his right hand into the air.

A not-so-tall coffee table immediately appeared in front of him. It was an item from the residence belonging to Dwayne Dantes.

[image]

Under the dim yellow light, Klein reached out once again to summon a beautifully packaged box from the Historical Void.

Inside the box was a set of cutlery, including a knife, fork, and cup.

The reason why he chose this item was because he couldn’t form a set of cutlery by individually summoning them. He could only maintain three images from the Historical Void at the same time.

After setting up the cutlery in a leisure manner, Klein politely turned his head to the side and nodded at the pointed hat-wearing Amon. Following that, he summoned a medium-well done steak covered in black pepper sauce.

It landed on the porcelain plate, emitting some steam. With him slicing the steak with the knife, he revealed the remaining edge of the pink protein.

Klein forked a piece of beef and stuffed it into his mouth. He felt that the texture was real and the texture was succulent. It wasn’t fake at all as it really calmed the anxiety of his stomach.

“For fifteen minutes, not only will I not feel hungry, but I will also receive ‘real’ provisions.” After swallowing the piece of beef, Klein smiled and introduced it to Amon like a hospitable host, and not a pitiful Beyonder who had been kidnapped.

Amon pressed against the crystal monocle and nodded with a smile.

“I’ve tried it. It’s not bad.

“Your ability to adapt is really quick. Are you really not considering being my Blessed?”

After cutting another chunk of beef, Klein forked it up and replied as though he was chatting with a friend:

“Kill me.”

At that moment, the relative frequent lightning and endless darkness ruled the land. Wherever the light from the surroundings couldn’t shine on, eyes were staring at the area with zero emotion. The twisted, dark-red grass gently swayed in the occasional breeze.

In the half-collapsed building, the dim yellow light painted the artistic coffee table and the exquisite cutlery with warm colors. The aroma of the steak wafted in the air, not showing any contrast with the outside world that was continuously connected to it.

Under the gaze of the terrifying monsters in the depths of the darkness, Klein enjoyed a sumptuous meal in a refined and poised manner in the desolate land that was soaked in extreme terror.

After finishing his steak, he summoned a small glass of iced wine from Maygur Manor and drank it in one gulp.

Following that, cream soup, pan-fried cod, tender lamb stew with peas, baked potato skins, and all sorts of grape wines were summoned one after another before entering Klein's stomach.

During this process, the steak that was the first to be eaten had already been maintained for a long period of time. It had vanished into thin air, but Klein's stomach and body were numbed by the subsequent food and he was oblivious to it.

Of course, the coffee table and food were replenished. Otherwise, they wouldn't have lasted to the end of his meal.

At the end of the meal, Klein continued reaching out his hand, pulling out a cup from the void. Inside was a ball of vanilla ice-cream.

He then used the spoon to scoop the ice-cream into his mouth, feeling it melt with its delicious sweetness.

After the ball was finished, he still wasn't satisfied as he summoned another ball of ice-cream from the Historical Void. As such, he ate five different flavors of ice-cream in a consecutive fashion.

When Klein reached out his hand for the sixth time, Amon, who was sitting on his side, suddenly laughed.

Your fate has had an abnormal change. You're lucky enough.

“Is this your preparation?”

Klein’s right hand immediately froze in midair. His pupils seemed to dilate to a certain extent.

Almost at the same time, in the darkness around them, where the lanterns couldn’t shine, strange creatures twitched and instantly became Klein’s marionette.

This time, Klein sent out a hundred Worms of Spirit in one go, hoping that one of them would be lucky enough to avoid Amon’s theft.

Right on the heels of that, behind the coffee table, a figure wearing a black coat and no hat was replaced with a disgusting vampire covered in pus.

The artistic coffee table and exquisite cutlery shattered like glass that had been smashed to the ground. Countless cracks appeared and shattered.

They quickly returned to the Historical Void, just in case it affected Klein’s subsequent summoning attempts.

In the next second, the one hundred marionettes, along with the Klein, who had hidden somewhere, reached out to grab at the void. He attempted to avoid Amon’s interference with quantity.

At that moment, they were all Scholars of Yore.

This was the ability of Bizarro Sorcerers, the source of the qualitative change of a Seer.

Of course, the chances of success of each marionette summoning was independent, so there was no influence each had with the other.

At that moment, the projection that Klein was summoning was the projection of Reinette Tinekerr who had recovered to “Her” peak state in the Tudor Ruins. Due to the contract and charms, “She” was the easiest angel projection he could summon from the Historical Void!

Amon was still sitting leisurely in “His” spot. “His” monocle emitted a faint glow as “He” watched the 101 Kleins summon at the same time.

With his right hands reaching out in an orderly manner before being retracted, none of his hundred marionettes succeeded. He didn’t drag Reinette Tinekerr out of the void.

At that moment, Amon raised “His” right hand and also grabbed ahead of “Him.”

“His” arm sank slightly, and “He” casually pulled it back. Outside the half-collapsed building, a huge cloth doll that was as huge as a castle appeared. It was wearing a dark and complicated long dress, bound by vines.

Ancient Bane Reinette Tinekerr!

Amon had stolen the historical image that was summoned by Klein!

Reinette Tinekerr’s red eyes immediately reflected the figures of Klein’s hundred marionettes.

Without a sound, the marionettes, that were either disguised with Klein’s appearance or in the state of a monster, emitted a faint glow, turning into homed mountain goats, white rabbits, and other different animals.

Transformation Curse!

Klein’s actual body had long disappeared. Then, he walked out of the flames that rose up from the animal hide lantern. He looked at the various animals that might be considered his and suddenly sat down and chuckled.

Taking a stroll after a meal effectively improves one’s health.”

He didn’t mention anything about his attempt to escape, as if nothing had happened.

Amon maintained “His” relaxed posture and nodded cooperatively.

“I’ve read quite a number of books written by humans. There are indeed such opinions among them.”

With that said, “He” raised “His” hand and pointed at the projection of Reinette Tinekerr.

“This is your messenger?”

This was something that could be easily confirmed, so Klein didn’t hide it. He tersely acknowledged and nodded.

“What a pity.” Amon sized up Reinette Tinekerr’s projection and shook his head with a tsk.

As he felt the food in his stomach disappear, Klein asked, “What’s the matter?”

“I should bring you to Backlund to wait for a few more days. That way, I can wait for your messenger to deliver a letter to you. Then, ‘She’ will become my messenger.” Amon nudged “His” monocle on “His” right eye and said with a smile, “Snatching an angel messenger. That will be very challenging and fun, isn’t it? Life needs some fun, excitement, and anticipation.”

“I share the same thoughts,” Klein replied sincerely.

“What a pity.” The hatted Amon shook “His” head again. “Evemight is someone I need to be careful about. If we stayed there any longer, even I wouldn’t have any idea what would happen.”

As he spoke, this Angel of Time dispelled the Historical Void projection of Reinette Tinekerr, allowing “Her” to vanish in front of Klein.

You seem to be very wary of the Goddess?” Klein pretended to be a devout believer of the Evernight Goddess.

Of course, he didn't need to don a disguise. He was still a Blessed of Evernight.

Amon's gaze shifted to the lantern inside the half-collapsed building and looked at the dim yellow light.

"I'm unable to steal things that I'm curious about from a concealed state. I can't decipher what other arrangements 'She' might have and what' the key thing to take note of are."

To a King of Angels of the Marauder pathway, there was sufficient reason to be apprehensive.

Taking advantage of the opportunity while Amon was answering his question, Klein suddenly recited the honorific name of the Evernight Goddess in Jotun:

You are the Evemight Goddess who stands higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity…"

Just as he said that, his thoughts were lost. If he hadn't had such plans previously, he wouldn't have known that he had made such an attempt.

Amon turned to look at him and said with a smile, "Are you trying to sound me out, believing that I'll also repeat your words after stealing your thoughts and words?

"At Sequence 4 Parasite, one is able to control the stolen items and make them appear at a suitable time."

"Is that so…" Klein nodded gently. "Thank you."

As he spoke, Klein quickly summarized his experience and lessons of his escape attempt.

Because the existence of the contract and their subordinative relationship, summoning Miss Messenger is the easiest amongst all the angels I know.

Summoning the ice-cream from the past Will can establish a subtle connection with “He” who represents fate, and allow me to be blessed with luck. Yes, every ball of ice-cream represents a portion of my luck… I originally planned on summoning ice-cream as a cover to secretly summon the Snake of Fate.

In the future, the summoning had to be done with a certain degree of interference. Otherwise, Amon would be able to directly steal the Historical Void image I summon. It would only be giving “Him” a helper after going through so much effort…

Just as his thoughts raced, Amon pointed at the bunch of animals that had been cursed by the Transformation Curse, and he said with a slightly evil smile, “Aren’t you worried that there won’t be any suitable food in the Forsaken Land of the Gods? There it is, as long as we don’t dispel the curse, they’re real animals.”

Klein was stunned as he suddenly looked at the goats and the white rabbits.

With him willing them, the animals looked at him simultaneously.

In a sense, they were all himself. After all, they were combinations of Worms of Spirit and monsters before being hit by the curse.

Chapter 1158 - Coming to Terms

◆◆◆

After silently staring at the rabbits and mountain goats for more than ten seconds, Klein closed his eyes and flicked his right index finger and middle finger as if he was pressing an invisible piano key.

A third of the marionette collapsed, losing the feeling of being alive.

Klein’s expression immediately warped, as though he had been struck 33 times by a giant sword.

The familiar and extreme pain he felt swept through his Spirit Body, causing light-colored meat tendrils to sprout on his body. Every sprout seemed to be forming a transparent maggot.

This was the backlash from killing 33 Worms of Spirit.

After taking nearly fifteen minutes to recover, Klein made his second attempt at letting the other third of his marionettes die.

The same pain, the same time to rest, and the same actions were repeated again. Finally, he completely finished off this batch of cursed marionettes.

He couldn’t handle it all at once because the damage caused by the death of a hundred Worms of Spirit was enough to make him lose control. And being cursed meant that he couldn’t directly solve the problem by retrieving the characteristics.

Of course, this was the standard of a Scholar of Yore who had just advanced recently; it wasn’t the performance of a Scholar of Yore who was almost done digesting the potion.

In fact, the loss of a hundred Worms of Spirit would only worsen the pain, without him showing any signs of losing control or affecting the battle. He was only acting just now, allowing his performance to match his role.

At his level, losing half the number of Worms of Spirit that he had at the same time would lead to losing control.

Once he completely digested the Scholar of Yore potion, he would be able to recover from having nearly 500 Worms of Spirit die at once. Even if he lost all the corresponding Beyonder characteristics, he wouldn't lose his status and level. He could slowly recover his strength by absorbing the Beyonder characteristics of the Seer pathway.

After completing this, the recovered Klein walked out of the half-collapsed tower-like building. He went to the darkness outside and brought back a few white rabbits and a goat.

He then realized that the darkness in the Forsaken Land of the Gods wasn't as dangerous as Little Sun had described. Most of the monsters were weak.

No, to be precise, the danger lurking in the depths of the darkness, apart from making people evaporate into thin air, nothing else can compare to the fellow beside me named Amon… Klein glanced at the thin man who was sitting near the lantern, smiling as "He" watched him busy himself. He summoned something like boiled water from the Historical Void, and he squatted down, seriously removing the fur and flesh from the white rabbits and goat.

After a series of tasks, Klein set up a bonfire. He set up a barbecue rack that came from history, and he placed a white rabbit on it. He brushed it with a full set of condiments he made himself, like basil, fennel, and salt, as he constantly turned the meat over.

At this moment, the delicacies from the Historical Void he had eaten before had long disappeared due to him no longer maintaining their existence. His body and soul were calling out for replenishment.

A tempting fragrance was gradually emanated as Amon's nose twitched slightly.

"You're really eating them?"

Without waiting for his reply, the God of Mischief continued, "They're essentially the flesh of monsters and your Worms of Spirit. Are you sure you want to eat them?"

"There's no way to undo the curse at the level of an angel. If there's no way to resist or correct it at the same level, there's no way of dispelling it. Since a thing looks like a rabbit, smells like a rabbit, and tastes like a rabbit, it's a rabbit." As Klein seriously roasted the rabbit, he gave a self-deprecating laugh. "Besides, how can I not maintain the best state if I want to escape from your grasp? For this sliver of hope, I can only challenge my psychological limits."

This is what it means to endure humiliation and suffering! Klein added inwardly.

At the same time, he sighed at the Ancient Bane's Transformation Curse.

This was many times stronger than a Sequence 3 Disciple of Silence's curse!

There's almost no limit to the amount of time it can be maintained… Clearly, an ordinary animal can use all of my Beyonder powers through the Worm of Spirit, but a deformed marionette due to a curse isn't possible… This is a curse at the angel level… Apart from putting up resistance from someone at the same level, one can use the correct method to remove it. No curse is irreversible. There are always loopholes… Heh heh, will kissing this rabbit turn it into Gehrman

Sparrow? Klein made a self-deprecating comment as he analyzed to compose himself.

After hearing his reply, the monocled Amon, nodded with a smile.

“Very good.

“This is indeed a good revelation to have.”

Klein didn’t respond as he resumed his barbecue.

Not long after, with the help of Flame Controlling, he finished roasting a rabbit and a goat’s leg. Taking advantage of the opportunity before the condiments disappeared, he matched some sweet ice tea he summoned from the Historical Void with the food, filling his mouth with fragrance. It nourished his body and mind, allowing him to effectively relieve the pressure, despair, and indecisiveness from being “kidnapped” by Amon.

During this process, he would occasionally recall the disgusting looks of the monsters, as well as the fact that the Worms of Spirit were equivalent to himself. However, he was able to bring his feelings under control very well.

After filling his stomach and replenishing his energy, he turned the remaining ingredients next to the fire into dry rations, as though he was saving up for his subsequent plans.

Seeing him slowly but orderly making all sorts of preparations, Amon suddenly nudged his monocle and asked with a slight smile, “In actuality, you’re trying to stall for time before we reach the actual destination, right?”

Klein’s hands paused for a moment before he continued with his actions. He smiled and said, “Yes, I’m waiting for help.

“Guess who?”

Amon didn't answer directly as "He" said with a smile, "I'm looking forward to it."

"…" Klein continued his work until he prepared rations for three or four meals.

He thought for a moment and once again reached his hand into the void in front of Amon. He failed again and again as he kept making attempts. It was unknown what item he was trying to summon, but it seemed like he was using his actions to dare Amon into stealing it.

After watching for a few seconds, Amon smiled and shook "His" head. "He" slowly stood up and walked out the half-collapsed tower building.

Klein's right hand stopped in mid-air before he retracted it and pinched his forehead.

He muttered to himself in puzzlement, "What was I trying to do just now…"

While trying to recall, Klein stood up as well. He brought along his packed rations, picked up the animal hide lantern, and walked to the back of Amon's side.

The man and angel circled around the hill and entered a valley.

The water was sloshing in the river, but when the dim yellow light shone at it, or when the lightning in the sky lit up the area, Klein realized that there was no water in the riverbed. The sounds he had heard earlier had also disappeared.

[image]

"A river that has been transferred into a concealed state?" After some deliberation, he raised a question to Amon.

"That's right. It will only appear in darkness void of light," Amon replied with a slight nod, unfazed with the question.

"Can I drink it?" Klein pressed.

Amon smiled and said, "Sure. This was once one of the water sources of a city that had persisted for 1600 years in the darkness. As long as you can bring the water away from the riverbed, they can appear in places with light.

"Your next move is to suggest that I bring the lantern to wait by the side while you hydrate yourself in the darkness?

"And then, take this opportunity to transform into a concealed state?"

Klein smiled awkwardly.

"How could I use such a simple method?"

Hearing that, Amon laughed and stroked "His" monocle.

"Sometimes, the simplest plan is the most effective. You can give it a try."

With regards to the words of this peerless swindler, Klein couldn't believe it, nor did he dare to believe it. He was afraid that the other party was using reverse psychology with the truth.

He could only put the matter of the water aside and ask, "In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, how many human gathering points, like the City of Silver, have yet to be destroyed?"

Amon looked ahead and said without changing "His" expression, "The ones I know don't exceed ten.

"In this aspect, the City of Silver is lucky. At least, they can see and have the ability to touch the light."

This means that the City of Silver is very close to the Giant King's Court, the door leading out of the Forsaken Land of the Gods. There's no need to risk death to reach it. As for the other cities, no matter how steadfast they are in the darkness, no matter how many exploration teams they send out, it will all be futile. There's no way to find the exit? Indeed, from this angle, the City of Silver is unfortunate, and also lucky… This is purely dependent on the reference point… Klein held the lantern as he proceeded along the bank and began coming up with his second attempt at escaping.

Amon walked beside him, occasionally providing him with ideas that seemed reliable but had unknown actual results. "He" appeared to be suffering from schizophrenia, trying "His" best to destroy "His" true body's hopes in obtaining Sefirah Castle.

†

On the other side of the Giant King's Court, in the City of Silver.

After receiving the Chief's summoning call, Derrick Berg brought the Unshadowed Crucifix to the top of the spire and entered a spacious room.

There was a mysterious and complicated altar set up here. Different items were placed in different spots—a total of six items, each of them emanating a dangerous aura.

With a glance, Derrick saw an ordinary silver flute, a mask made from a skull, and the remains of a deformed person.

"You have the Unshadowed Crucifix. You can stay here for fifteen minutes, but you can't exceed that time. Otherwise, you will suffer a sudden death." Colin Iliad wore a linen shirt and a brown coat as he exhorted Derrick.

Derrick's spiritual perception was triggered as he asked, "Your Excellency, is this because of that Twilight Mask?"

His right hand pointed at the mask made from a skull.

"Yes." Colin nodded slightly and said, "I've already prepared the remains of six powerful creatures. These were all hunted by myself, or with me as the main force."

Derrick was immediately enlightened.

"You still lack the blessings of a deity?"

Colin instantly fell silent. After nearly ten seconds, he opened his mouth and slowly said, "Yes."

After some hesitation and struggles, he finally chose The Fool.

At least those mushrooms had given the City of Silver hope.

Derrick suppressed his joy and thought back to the interactions at the Tarot Club. He raised a question in puzzlement:

"Why didn't you let those two god-level Sealed Artifacts give you their blessings?"

He remembered that subsidiary gods—or angels—could satisfy the requirements of the ritual. It wasn't the case that only a Sequence 0 true deity could provide blessings. After all, a Silver Knight was only a Sequence 3.

Colin fell silent again and hesitated for a few seconds before saying, "They won't give blessings."

Chapter 1159 - Validation

◆

They won’t give blessings… Derrick was a little confused by this answer, not fully comprehending it.

Back in the Afternoon Town camp, when he handed the Silver Knight potion formula to Chief Colin Iliad, the other party had praised him for making a huge contribution. He believed that the upper limit of the City of Silver was no longer that of Sequence 4, and his tone didn’t reveal the need to seek blessings from external sources.

Hence, Derrick had always believed that the Chief would be able to use the two god-level Sealed Artifacts to complete the Silver Knight’s advancement ritual. Now, it was inevitable that he was surprised.

Back then, the Chief didn’t know that the two god-level Sealed Artifacts couldn’t provide blessings, and he only realized this problem when he returned to the City of Silver? Derrick subconsciously made a guess and didn’t ask further. He nodded heavily and said, “Alright, I will try my best to help you seek blessings from a deity.”

Demon Hunter Colin exhaled silently and pointed at the door.

“There’s no one in the room opposite.”

Derrick turned around and passed through the corridor, entering the half-open room.

Then, he took a seat and recited softly, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

Inside Sefirah Castle, and hidden within the gray fog, the crimson star representing The Sun rapidly expanded and contracted. It kept repeating the process, producing rings of pleas.

And not far beside it, the crimson star representing The Magician remained in the same state because of The Fool’s lack of a response. The circular rings, ripples, and tremors that the two created intertwined and became more intense.

Under the illumination of the bolts of lightning, Klein carried a leather lantern and walked into the valley. He suddenly felt that the illusory pleas in his ears became even more chaotic and louder.

However, he realized that he had heard it clearer than before. Not only could he tell that the plea came from a woman and a man, but he could also vaguely make out certain content: The woman seemed to mention “The World” and “Backlund.” The man used Jotun, and the keyword seemed to be “a ritual.”

Ritual, Jotun… That’s Little Sun… Uh, that Chief wishes to receive Mr. Fool’s blessings? Mr. Fool also needs some blessings right now… The woman might be Miss Magician, but I can’t rule out Miss Justice either… The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched in embarrassment. He turned his head to look at Amon in the pointed hat and monocle, and he said, “Can I pop over to Sefirah Castle to answer a prayer?”

“What do you think?” Amon was taken aback as “He” asked in amusement.

“Since you want to play such a game, why won’t you let it be more exciting?” In fact, Klein didn’t have any hope regarding his request. This was because, as long as he could return to Sefirah Castle, he could use the power there to make the first step in escaping from his predicament. This was equivalent to getting Amon to just set him free.

The reason he mentioned this was because he wanted to use this to start the subsequent topic.

Amon nudged the crystal monocle with his knuckle and chuckled.

“As the God of Mischief, I’ve been alive since the Third Epoch. I believe you know what that means.

“Yes, what do you want to ask?”

…This is an accurate grasp of my state of mind and thoughts… Klein sighed and asked, “Why did you parasitize the City of Silver’s exploration team back then? You even patiently stayed in the dungeon for decades.”

Amon nodded and replied in a relaxed manner, “I had a premonition that the City of Silver would obtain extremely important information. Now, this prophecy has come true, right, Mr. Fool?”

…“He” did all of that just to wait for me and the Tarot Club? From the looks of it, this Marauder pathway’s King of Angels can see the disturbances in fate caused by Sefirah Castle to a certain extent… Klein had never expected the answer, leaving him momentarily at a loss as to how to continue the topic.

After about ten seconds, he sighed and said, “You’re really patient.”

“He” was a King of Angels who liked to play pranks; yet, “He” actually stayed inside a dark dungeon without any sources of entertainment for decades.

“This has nothing to do with patience. It didn’t take too much of my time,” Amon casually replied.

…I’m still used to using a human’s standards when talking about a deity. To Amon, who was born as a complete Mythical Creature, a few decades is nothing. “He” might even be more than 3000 years old… Klein regulated what he knew and asked again, “The City of Silver is one of the few places that persist on believing in your father. Aren’t you going overboard with what you did to the expedition team?”

This question didn’t seem to be necessary, but Klein believed that it would aid him in understanding Amon’s thoughts and style, doing so in order to see if there was anything that could be used.

Amon turned his head and glanced at him with his monocled right eye. “He” said with an indifferent smile, “If it wasn’t for their faith in my father, the City of Silver would’ve already been reduced to ruins.

“Heh heh, according to my observations, they’re hiding quite a significant secret. As for what it is, because of the gaze directed by you and The Hanged Man, I haven’t had the chance to pry into it.”

…A trueborn Mythical Creature. The deaths of just a few humans might be equivalent to trampling a few ants to death. “He” wouldn’t take it to heart at all… The City of Silver actually has a secret that even Amon thinks is a big secret… What could it be? Klein thoughtfully changed the topic.

“Was Dark Angel Sasrir really created from your father’s rib?”

This was something that Klein had wanted to ask the entire time, but he hadn’t found the opportunity to ask.

The smile on Amon’s face faded as “He” looked at the darkness in front of “Him.”

“Yes, ‘He’ separated a portion of his characteristics and corresponding negative personalities. ‘He’ used his rib as the material to create Dark Angel Sasrir.

“If that wasn’t the case, how could a proud and arrogant person like Medici obey the so-called Left Hand of God, the deputy of Heaven?

“Without Sasrir’s rebellion, implication, and influence, even if Evernight, Earth, God of Combat, and the other Kings of Angels joined forces, it’s impossible for my father to perish.”

Indeed… Dark Angel Sasrir is the most key factor in this matter… It’s no wonder the Goddess wanted to bewitch “Him” at the very beginning… Who would’ve thought that “He” would betray “Himself”? Klein’s initial speculation of the battle of gods had been confirmed. He felt his Scholar of Yore potion digest a little more.

He deliberately hesitated and made a guess:

“Could your father have foreseen such a development? Dark Angel Sasrir is also the key to his resurrection?”

Amon suddenly laughed.

“You asked so many questions in order to further digest the Scholar of Yore potion, right?”

“…” Klein pretended to break out in cold sweat, and he quickly adjusted his state of mind.

“I’m just curious. What are you looking for in the Forsaken Land of the Gods? What are you pursuing? The Marauder pathway Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic that you’re missing isn’t here, nor is Sefirah Castle.

“Are you trying to revive your father?”

Amon maintained “His” smile and looked straight ahead.

“Yes, and no.

“My zealous brother is already very close to reviving my father. ‘He’ probably doesn’t need my help anymore.”

Adam really wants to revive the ancient sun god? I thought that “He” was purely doing it for the sake of becoming a Sequence 0… Without hiding anything, Klein called out the name of the Twilight Hermit Order's leader.

He was even looking forward to Adam beating "His" younger brother up.

Of course, beating someone up wasn't in line with the style of a King of Angels of the Spectator pathway.

"There's no need to mention 'His' name. 'He' won't interfere with my matters, nor will I interfere with 'His.' I don't address 'Him' as Adam, because I think that a nickname like 'zealous' is very suitable for 'Him.' I have to say that Medici is very talented in giving nicknames. Also, even if I say 'His' name, 'He' wouldn't be able to hear it if I don't wish for 'Him' to hear it." At this moment, the monocled Amon smiled as he exposed Klein's idea.

Following that, Klein didn't mention the Dark Angel any further, because it was obvious that Amon wouldn't answer.

Before long, the man and angel walked out of the valley and saw a silent city.

More than half of the buildings in this city had collapsed. The remaining ones had a sharp roof, as though they were towers that led to heaven.

On the surface, dark red vines and plants grew, forming fruits whose edibility was unknown.

After entering the city, he discovered that there were stone coffins placed in front of each house. Inside were skeletons or recently rotted corpses.

A common point between them was them being greatly deformed. Some had four legs; some had a slit in the middle of their eyebrows; some lacked skin, directly revealing their flesh; some had arms wrapped around their necks like tails.

“This was originally a city that believed in the Phoenix. Later, it converted its target of faith to my father, but it retained some customs related to death.” The monocled Amon, casually sized up his surroundings and said, “After the Cataclysm, they were left behind in the Forsaken Land of the Gods. However, there were no edible, relatively normal plants around them, so they could only eat those corrupted monsters. Over generations, their bodies began to produce defects and psychological problems. Eventually, they were completely wiped out.”

The Cataclysm brought about by the Goddess’s assassination of the City of Silver’s Creator really was a calamity for civilization… Before that, there were elven, giant, phoenix civilizations, and so on. After that, all that’s left are traces of them… When Klein thought of the city that had been swallowed into the ground, he sighed.

In the history books, in mysticism, it was very apt to call that history: “The Cataclysm.”

He paused for a moment before asking, “Why are we entering this city instead of going around it?”

Amon smiled and said, “In the Second Epoch, apart from wielding the Death pathway, the Phoenix Ancestor also occupied part of the Apprentice pathway. Some of the decorations here can become a loophole that I can make use of to shorten our journey to our final destination.”

Klein’s expression immediately darkened.

Chapter 1160 - Improving

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City of Silver, at the top of the spire.

After waiting for a long time, Derrick still didn't receive a response from Mr. Fool.

This made him panic a little. He didn't understand what this meant, nor did he know how to deal with it.

Mr. Fool is in a state where he can't respond to his prayers? Yes, "He" informed us two days ago that the gathering next week would be canceled. This should be a sign… Having recalled what happened previously, Derrick barely managed to calm his anxiety and nervousness.

He couldn't be blamed for having such a huge reaction, because the City of Silver's textbooks recorded similar situations:

The Creator who normally responded to "His" believers suddenly stopped responding and forsook this land!

After a few seconds of silence, Derrick stood up and returned to the room where the Chief was. He said to Colin Iliad, "We have to wait a few more days."

"Wait?" Demon Hunter Colin repeated the keyword as he frowned slightly.

From his point of view, this was an unusual matter, seemingly symbolizing a bad development.

Derrick resisted his instinctive reaction of scratching the back of his head, and he nodded with some difficulty.

“Yes.”

The grizzled Colin Iliad stared at him for a few seconds before nodding slowly.

“Alright, head back first.”

Backlund East Borough, inside a two-bedroom rental apartment.

Fors, who was wrapped in thick clothes, paced around the warm stove, her face full of doubt.

Finally, she turned her head and looked at Xio.

“Why hasn’t Mr. World replied?”

“Perhaps he’s preoccupied with something,” Xio explained the reason she had long considered. “Perhaps it’s because it’s not convenient for Mr. Fool to pass on your prayers. ‘He’ has temporarily paused the gathering.”

Fors nodded thoughtfully and said, “Mr. Fool informed us that the gathering will be temporarily paused next week. It was only decided in the middle of the week. Is this related to George III?”

Recalling Mr. World’s investigations all this time, Xio acknowledged and said, “Very likely.”

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, in the dead silent city.

Dressed in a classic black mage’s robe, Amon led Klein into a relatively complete cathedral.

Segmented stone pillars lay tilted, and dark red weeds grew out from their cracks, wrapping around the avian sculptures.

With the animal hide lantern in hand, Klein surveyed the area and confirmed that the residents of this city weren't truly dead. There were still a few survivors left. He had no idea what method they had used to transform into monsters of the deep darkness. They were hiding from the faint yellow light, surrounding a cathedral in a place that couldn't be seen. They wanted to attack the two ordinary-looking humans, Klein and Amon.

The reason why Klein was able to confirm that these monsters were originally residents of this city was because their Spirit Body Threads had a certain abnormality. Some were grayish-white, some were distorted, and some were sticky. They were completely different from the monsters elsewhere. They greatly resembled the corpses inside the coffins.

I don't know what kind of despair and mental breakdowns will make the remaining humans choose such a path… Perhaps the deepest sense of despair was that they couldn't see hope on a daily basis while the situation around them worsened… With a sigh, he made use of this opportunity to adjust his mentality.

He was experiencing various instances of hope surfacing, only to be met with despair time and time again.

The monocled Amon walked to the edge of the light and walked all the way into the deepest part of the cathedral.

Klein followed behind and saw a door covered in pale white light.

"This city is actually split into two parts: 'light' and 'darkness.' They're using certain abilities of the Apprentice pathway to hide a portion of the area. They have to use a specific 'door' to enter," Amon said as "He" pointed ahead.

A Secrets Sorcerer's powers? With some realization, Klein nodded, indicating that he knew what was going on.

Amon then said, “Behind this door is the ‘dark’ side of this city. I can use it to connect to a similar region far away. We can directly arrive there and shorten our journey.”

As expected of the incarnation of loopholes… Klein watched as Amon stretched out “His” left hand and pressed down on the door formed from pale white light.

The light began to ripple as it rapidly spread outwards, becoming more and more intense.

At that moment, a deformed monster hiding in the depths of the darkness while spying on the cathedral suddenly trembled, becoming Klein’s marionette.

Twenty or thirty seconds ago, Klein had already completed the process of obtaining initial control over it and deepened his influence. However, he waited until now before he completely converted it.

Right on the heels of that, Klein and the marionette reached out their hands at the same time. They took advantage of the opportunity when Amon changed the “door,” and they grabbed something.

In his hand was something in the shape of a full moon, and was embedded with scarlet gemstones, the Scarlet Lunar Corona. In his marionette’s hand was an ancient, brass-colored Master Key!

At the same time, they opened their mouths and made a “bang” sound. They used Air Cannons to push the Scarlet Lunar Corona and the Master Key to the door of light.

These two items combined could make one hear Mr. Door’s pleas for help. This also meant that Mr. Door’s powers could enter the real world to a limited extent.

And this was the controller of all “doors.” He was one of the existences who was most unwilling to see Amon become an “Error” or control Sefirah Castle!

Klein didn’t expect that the sealed Mr. Door could really hurt Amon. He only hoped that he could use this opportunity to interfere with the Angel of Time and create a good enough opportunity for himself.

Of course, if Mr. Door could cause any abnormal changes to the door, magnifying or distorting the loopholes created by Amon; thus, affecting the King of Angels of the Marauder pathway and teleporting “Him” far away, Klein would definitely sincerely thank Mr. Door for a week.

After his previous attempts, Klein realized his greatest disadvantage. It wasn’t that he was one Sequence short and had a qualitative gap in power level. Instead, he had lost the initiative and couldn’t make proper preparations. Every time he began preparing, he would be interrupted or foiled by Amon.

For a veteran Magician, unprepared performances were often synonymous with failure.

If he could make preparations in advance, he could quietly summon Mr. Azik’s, Reinette Tinekerr’s, and Snake of Fate Will Auceptin’s historical projections. Against a Sequence 2, even if there was no way to deal with “Him,” it would definitely create a very good opportunity to escape.

At that moment, the Scarlet Lunar Corona and ancient-looking Master Key whistled through the air and arrived at the door of light.

The white light that formed the illusory door distorted and devoured the two items. It was dyed crimson as it collapsed into a whirlpool.

It was as though the bottom of the vortex was invisible, like a gigantic eye.

Just as Amon was about to turn around, “He” made a slight pause as if “He” had heard an old friend’s shout.

However, this pause disappeared instantly, as though it had never appeared.

With Amon's gaze directed at Klein, the latter instantly lost six Beyonder powers.

This included the control of Spirit Body Threads, the summoning of Historical Void projections, Paper Figurine Substitutes, Flame Controlling, Underwater Breathing, and Bone Softening.

Of course, losing these six Beyonder powers for a marionette didn't affect Klein's subsequent operations.

The indiscernible pause from before had allowed Klein to switch places with his marionette in time!

He had already arrived deep in the darkness outside the cathedral. The deformed monsters around him trembled and turned into his marionettes.

For targets such as these that weren't even Sequence 5, it took only two or three seconds for Klein to transform them into marionettes. And by the time he summoned the Scarlet Lunar Corona, he had already begun doing similar actions.

As he enjoyed the darkness without any scruples, he attempted to transform into a concealed state or successfully commit suicide. At the same time, he reached out with his marionettes to grab at the fog interwoven with history.

This time, he split the marionette into three groups, summoning Reinette Tinekerr, Mr. Azik, and Snake of Fate Will Auceptin, respectively. He didn't want to follow his past mistakes, where he had managed to succeed with great difficulty only to have "Them" taken away by Amon. With such arrangements, he might be left with one or two.

Of course, the premise was that Amon was unable to steal multiple Historical Void projections at once.

This was something that Klein needed to confirm.

Klein retracted his hand, but he didn't grab anything.

All the marionettes who summoned the Snake of Fate failed. Among the Scholars of Yore groups who summoned the Death Consul and Reinette Tinekerr, two of them had their arms tense up slightly.

Klein was delighted as he suddenly felt that this attempt could end up turning into a real escape attempt.

At this moment, the crystal monocle that Amon wore emitted a terrifying light.

The entire city, including the surrounding rivers, hills, and wilderness, were all filled with pure, scorching sunlight. "Day" had once again descended upon this land after bidding farewell to it for thousands of years.

Amon had stolen the "day" from the ruins of the battle of gods!

In the face of such a "day," not only did Klein feel like his body was about to melt, but he also heard familiar and crazy ravings in his ears. They were like steel needles that pierced through every Worm of Spirit.

This caused his mind to be filled with immense pain. His marionette's summoning attempts had failed while on the brink of success.

The "day" in the battlefield of the gods contained the True Creator's ravings!

The deformed monsters that were hiding deep in the darkness, which were the few survivors of the city, seemed to temporarily regain their senses. They stared blankly at the "day" and couldn't help but narrow their eyes.

Then, they wildly charged towards the source of that "day," melting one by one into dust.

Far away in the City of Silver's Afternoon Town campsite, the guards at the stronghold also noticed that there was a light coming from the northeast. It was different from lightning, just like the scene of the sun rising from the legends.

This scene only lasted for a few seconds before it shattered and the sky returned to its dark state.

As soon as he recovered from the ravings, Klein saw the pointed-hatted Amon standing in front of him.

This Angel of Time nudged “His” monocle and smiled.

“Well done.”

Chapter 1161 - Countdown

Well done… Faced with Amon's "praise," Klein forced a smile and politely replied, "Thank you."

To be honest, he preferred to hear curses rather than "praise," as that meant that he was close to succeeding.

Of course, Klein suspected that even if he managed to escape, Amon wouldn't be flustered and exasperated. Based on the character displayed by this God of Mischief, it was very likely that "He" found it interesting and exciting while also inevitably feeling a little depressed and disappointed to the point of being eager for the next round.

"It's a huge improvement to be able to think of using Door to disrupt me." Amon smiled indifferently. "But don't you think that I'd be in a relatively more vigilant state while 'Door Opening'? And that it's actually not that easy to be affected by an accident?"

After some thought, Klein answered seriously, "That's what I thought in the beginning, but later on, I felt that you should be able to grasp my state of mind, believing that I wouldn't dare to act when you opened the door. When that happens, making an attempt might work wonders."

Doing it when others believe that you wouldn't do it was also a strategy.

In his previous life, Klein had come into contact with games that had such a higher level of thinking that made his head spin.

"What if I thought of this level as well?" Amon said with a smile as "He" used "His" knuckle to nudge the bottom of his monocle.

At the same time, the remaining marionettes, which were still alive, took out crystal monocles out of thin air and wore them on their right eye. All of them cast their gazes at Klein.

This left Klein's scalp tingling. He discovered that the connection between the marionettes and himself had instantly been severed.

"Although you've improved, failure still demands some level of punishment." With a smile, Amon turned around and walked towards the cathedral.

As "He" took a step forward, the marionettes revealed smiles one after another as they collapsed to the ground stiffly. This caused Klein's soul to be torn apart again and again as the blood vessels on his forehead visibly bulged.

As he endured the pain, he stood rooted to the ground and calmed down after a long while.

During this process, although he had always been in the depths of the darkness, he didn't suffer any attacks from the terrifying monsters, nor did he turn into a concealed state.

When did Amon steal the concealment powers in this city? If I had tried to commit suicide, I definitely would've had the thought stolen from me… My preparations still aren't enough. I don't have enough confidence when dealing with Amon, having not considered the things "He" might have stolen into consideration… I really didn't expect "Him" to release the "day" that "He" stole from the ruins of the battlefield of gods… Regarding what else "He" stole in the past, or whatever "He" has on "Him," I have no idea. I can't make targeted preparations… That monocle is some sort of vessel used to store stolen items? Or is it part of Amon to begin with? So every time he parasitizes someone, a monocle will be taken out… Klein rubbed his temples and walked into the cathedral. Looking at Amon before the door of light, he asked, seemingly casual, “Why do you have so many monocles? Where do you usually place them?”

Amon stroked the monocle on “His” right eye and smiled indifferently.

“Why don’t you ask me why every avatar of mine has eyes? And where do I usually place them?”

“…I understand.” Klein nodded in enlightenment.

Amon cast “His” gaze back to the door of light that had yet to calm down from the rippling. “He” casually said, “I have the nagging feeling that this operation of yours is a major preparation piece, and not an attempt.

“What cheap trick did you pull off during that process?”

After some deliberation, Klein replied with a smile, “Guess.”

“I do have some guesses. Do you think I’ve guessed it correctly?” Amon asked with interest as “He” pinched the edge of his monocle.

“Perhaps, or perhaps not.” Klein didn’t give a clear answer as he cooperatively walked to Amon’s side. He saw “Him” reach out again and press down on the pale white door of light.

Above the door of light, ripples appeared once again as they became more intense and exaggerated.

After about ten seconds, the ripples spread the surroundings, causing the door of light to expand twice in size.

Amon glanced at Klein, gesturing for him to take a step forward.

Klein instinctively turned his head and looked around the cathedral.

Beyonder characteristics left behind by the mutated monsters were shimmering outside the area that the lantern had lit up. They weren’t all Beyonders when they were alive. After those ordinary people turned into monsters, a large part of the power came from the darkness and degeneration. The powers didn't belong to them, so no characteristics were purged.

"I almost forgot." After taking a look together with Klein, Amon suddenly shook "His" head and smiled.

Just as "He" finished his sentence, a bunch of Beyonder characteristics floated up and entered "His" body. They merged with "Him," leaving only a small portion behind.

"Most of the people who chose to transform into monsters are of the Apprentice pathway, Beyonders and their family members who can enter the city's 'dark' side," Amon said casually as "He" retracted his gaze.

Even if it's a similar pathway's Beyonder characteristic, it would be problematic if it's directly "eaten," right? Shouldn't it only be possible to jump to a higher level of a neighboring pathway? It also allows the accommodation of lower Sequences? Seeing this, Klein was a little stunned as he asked curiously, "Won't this accumulate madness?"

This wasn't just a matter of accumulating madness. Klein suspected that if he did it himself, there was a high chance that he would go crazy.

"Others will," Amon said with a smile, "but not me."

A true "bug"… Klein couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

Then, the distance between him and the door of light disappeared.

Subconsciously, he forgot about the remaining Death pathway's Beyonder characteristics, and he entered the mutated door of light with Amon.

Endless darkness and squirming lines of light were mixed together, giving rise to the feeling of a sudden descent.

About ten seconds later, he discovered that he and Amon had appeared on a square. The dim yellow light of the animal hide lantern seemed to be stopped by an invisible force, causing it to only illuminate half the square.

Lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the surroundings.

With the help of the lightning, Klein saw several incomplete statues erected around the square. They either had their hands tied to their backs, had their bodies entangled with the thorny roses, or looked like mummies. They gave off the feeling of being "restrained."

"This city first believed in the Mutant King." Like a qualified tour guide, Amon introduced the situation of each "scenic site" to Klein. "They're very interesting. They're usually restrained and quiet, just like ascetics. However, once they encounter prey, or in special moments in time, they will release a bloodthirsty desire to kill. You can imagine that on the night of the full moon, this is a city where werewolves roam."

From the looks of it, the Mutants originally had the concept of temperance… Later on, it was led astray by the Mother Tree of Desire… Using the new round of lightning, Klein took a few more looks and asked thoughtfully, "The Mutant King's image is close to that of a mummy?"

"No. Although 'He' is an ugly and twisted man, 'He' likes to entangle 'Himself with thorny roses." Amon scoffed.

Klein took the opportunity to ask, "What kind of idols will your believers worship?

"In mysticism, your symbol is a clock and a Worm of Time?"

Amon scratched "His" chin and said, "In theory, my believers are all 'me.' I don't need to trouble myself with building an idol."

My believers are all 'me'… Thankfully, I have a Blessed like Danitz now… Klein suddenly realized that he was quite similar to Amon in certain aspects.

Of course, when I say “my believer is myself,” it’s a funny story. When Amon says that “my believers are all ’me,”1 it becomes a horror novel. The difference in style is quite huge… Klein finally mocked himself.

As Amon walked forward, “He” continued, “However, in my father’s era, quite a number of people believed in me. Some of them set off with the name ‘Angel of Time,’ using the emblem of the clock to construct my idol. Some of them used the title of ’God of Mischief and used a crow covered in mysterious patterns as my image, while others combine the two together.”

Having said that, the monocled Amon suddenly turned “His” head and glanced at Klein before curling his lips.

“We’re less than three days away from our final destination.”

That is to say, I only have three days left… Klein nearly drew in a cold breath of air. The pressure increased rapidly, making him feel as though his nerves were being crushed.

He had yet to determine the true purpose behind this game Amon made, nor did he discover any traces of what he was being driven to do. This meant that he was unable to grasp the key, and he was unable to find a real opportunity to escape.

The performance of Amon’s avatar made him understand that he might not even be able to last ten seconds before “Him.”

As his thoughts raced, Klein fell silent. Following that, he walked out of the square covered in ruins.

There were few pedestrians on the streets as they came and went in a hurry. In Pritz Harbor, where many houses were covered in bum marks, the chestnut-haired Queen Mystic placed a newspaper on the table.

The first page of the Tussock Times was about the king’s assassination.

It also claimed that the assassin came from Feysac or Intis.

“This isn’t stopping the disaster, nor is it worsening the disaster…” Bernadette muttered to herself with a serious expression.

She pondered for a moment, picked up the cloth on the table, and wrapped it up. Then, she released her fingers and allowed it to relax.

This time, the coffee cups, pens, newspapers, and other items in the tablecloth disappeared. What appeared were ritual items like silver-made candles.

Following that, Bernadette held a ritual and summoned Gehrman Sparrow’s messenger.

As a partner, she felt that she needed to ask about the other party’s situation and see if there was anything else she needed to help with.

The moment the ritual ended, four blonde, red-eyed heads walked out of the burgeoning candle flame. Dressed in a dark and complicated long dress, Reinette Tinekerr’s neck was empty.

Bernadette’s eyelids twitched indiscemibly before she picked up the letter and gold coin that she had prepared earlier and handed it to the messenger.

One of Reinette Tinekerr’s heads bit on the letter and gold coin while the other head sized up Queen Mystic for a few seconds.

“She” shifted “Her” gaze back and walked into the void. However, just as Bernadette was about to put away the tablecloth, Miss Messenger suddenly appeared again.

One of the two heads with blonde hair and red eyes spoke one after another:

“He…” “Has disappeared…”

Chapter 1162 - Prophecy

* * *

Gehrman Sparrow has gone missing… Bernadette had a vague sense of foreboding when the abnormally terrifying messenger returned. She had roughly figured out what had happened. Therefore, after hearing the other party's response, her expression sank slightly. There was no obvious reaction.

Queen Mystic's blue eyes, which resembled a condensing sea, instantly turned darker. They temporarily lost focus, as though she was looking at a torrent of fate through Reinette Tinekerr.

Two to three seconds later, Bernadette suddenly closed her eyes, as if a blinding light had appeared in front of her.

Blood-red liquid trickled from the corner of her eyes, accentuating her pale face.

With her eyes tightly shut, Bernadette said in a slightly ethereal voice, "Gehrman Sparrow is in grave danger. Darkness is devouring the light, leaving behind only a sliver of hope."

This was a prophecy.

The Sequence 3 of the Mystery Pryer pathway was "Clairvoyant."

The four heads held by Reinette Tinekerr spoke one after another:

"What…" "Does…" "Darkness…" "Symbolize…"

Bernadette maintained her composure and said, "Desolation, aberration, apocalypse, negativity, error."

Reinette Tinekerr, who was wearing a dark and complicated long dress, didn't let the head in her hand speak any further. Throwing down the letter and gold coin, she turned and walked into the void, disappearing into the room.

Queen Mystic Bernadette stood rooted to the ground for a few seconds without moving.

Finally, she opened her eyes again. Her blue eyes were hazy and lifeless, as though she needed more time to restore her eyesight.

Bernadette thought for a moment and reached out her right hand.

The tablecloth was stowed away before being spread open once again. The ritual items were replaced with a fountain pen, paper, and ink bottle.

The fountain pen suddenly leaped up, as if it was held by an invisible sprite. It quickly wrote down the matter of Gehrman Sparrow's disappearance onto the paper.

†

In the captain's cabin of the Future.

Despite looking at the fried mushrooms on her plate and taking in the fragrance of the fat, Cattleya didn't pick up her cutlery for a long time.

Suddenly, her spiritual perception was triggered. She turned her head to look at the spot where the brass sextant was placed, and she realized that a letter had appeared there at some point in time.

Cattleya immediately revealed a smile as she reached out to pick up the letter and eagerly began reading it.

Gradually, she frowned.

“Gehrman Sparrow has gone missing…” Cattleya repeated the key point of the letter in a low voice. She acutely felt that this matter was somewhat serious.

She easily understood the meaning behind Queen Mystic’s letter. Without any hesitation, she bowed her head, clasped her hands, and recited an honorific name in ancient Hermes:

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…”

Above the gray fog, the crimson star representing The Hermit came alive. It began expanding and contracting, spreading out ripples of prayers.

They intertwined with the ripples created by the two crimson stars that corresponded to The Magician and The Sun. They surged towards the ancient and majestic palace, like tidal waves.

†

Someone is praying to Mr. Fool again… The echoes are getting even stronger, and the sound is becoming more clear… Hmm, I can hear it clearly, and the image is also clearer… This prayer seems to be from Ma’am Hermit. Only she likes to wear ancient warlock robes…

Queen Mystic discovered that something has happened to Gehrman Sparrow? Although I was worried that I would die this time and needed a certain amount of time to revive, I had already hinted to the members of the Tarot Club that I might cancel the gathering next week, but that was just a hint. It wasn’t a formal notice, nor was it clear enough. When Monday comes, they’ll definitely panic, pray, and try to make contact, only to discover that Mr. Fool has also disappeared. No, “He” has run off with The World. Klein used a deprecating comment to ease his feelings.

He glanced at Amon, who was walking beside him. Without a word, he lifted the lantern in his hand and said, “It should’ve been extinguished long ago.”

Wearing a pointed hat and black mage robe, Amon nodded slightly and said, “I left it in a magical state. It can maintain its light for a week without needing any fuel.”

Klein thought for a moment and asked, “Is this the deceiving of natural laws?”

Amon turned “His” head and used his monocled right eye to look at Klein for a second before smiling.

“Smart.

“The ‘Error’ pathway’s Sequence 3 is a more profound version of ‘Swindler,’ known as ‘Mentor of Deceit.’”

It’s about the same as my guess… However, it isn’t only the Error pathway that can do such a thing. The Black Emperor can use “Distortion” and “Exploit” powers to achieve that… In his mind, Klein began comparing the differences between the Marauder and the Lawyer pathway.

At this moment, Amon stroked “His” chin and asked with interest, “There are less than three days left. If you don’t think of a way to escape, it will be too late.

“Do you plan on making a new attempt tomorrow?”

“…Make a guess.” Klein forced a smile as he answered in the same rhetoric manner that Amon was best at using.

To be honest, he didn’t believe that the effects would be better given more attempts.

On the one hand, frequent attempts were indeed able to test the limits of Amon’s powers. By expending the “items” that “He” had previously stolen, Klein could establish a good foundation for the final battle. But on the other hand, he would also expose his trump cards. After all, he was in a passive state and had no chance to prepare. To force Amon to showcase more of the means available to “Him,” it required him to use the few trump cards he had.

If his countermeasures were all figured out by Amon after his repeated attempts, he wouldn’t have any chance of escaping.

An attempt to escape was a double-edged sword. If one wasn’t careful, one would cut oneself!

It was precisely because of this that Klein didn’t blindly take action, and carefully made plans in his heart.

As he spoke, he walked out of the city that originally worshiped the Mutant King and later believed in the ancient sun god. There were only white bones and several stone structures that had been weathered by the elements here that showcased its former prosperity.

Outside the city, there was an endless wilderness that couldn’t be seen in the lightning.

†

At 7 Pinster Street, Leonard sat on a sofa. He placed his feet on the coffee table and leisurely flipped through the day’s newspaper.

Yesterday, George III’s death had brought them copious amounts of work. He had spent the entire night on duty, and he received five hours of rest today.

After sleeping for two hours, Leonard woke up in high spirits, attempting to understand the current situation from the normal media.

In fact, as the captain of a Red Gloves team, he knew more than the reporters about certain aspects. For example, in the outskirts of Backlund, where the Tudor ruin was located, it had collapsed into a rather large lake. It had nearly affected Dwayne Dantès’s Maygur Manor.

Another was the death of George III, who had self-destructed at the square, but wasn't the actual person. The search for his corpse was to no avail, as though he had vanished into thin air that night.

Of course, Leonard was extremely certain that George III was already dead. The eldest prince was about to inherit the title of Balam Emperor and Loen King.

Back then, something had happened at Sefirah Castle. This matter definitely has something to do with Mr. Fool… Klein had long warned us about George III… The reactions of the three Churches were very strange. Even the Church of the Lord of Storms, which is most prone to acting rash, wasn't too angry… As Leonard flipped through the newspaper, his thoughts wandered casually.

At this moment, his mind was filled with the slightly-aged voice of Pallez Zoroast:

"Gehrman Sparrow's messenger is here."

Leonard suddenly looked up and saw the angel-level messenger wearing a dark and complicated long dress appear in front of him.

The four blonde, red-eyed heads held by Reinette Tinekerr spoke one after another:

"Gehrman…" "Sparrow…" "Has encountered…" "Extreme…"

"Danger…" "He has…" "Gone…" "Missing…"

Klein has encountered danger and disappeared? Leonard immediately retracted his legs and stood up.

Without waiting for the reminder provided by Pallez Zoroast, his spiritual perception stirred as he blurted out, "Is it related to the death of George III?"

"Yes…" "He…" "Destroyed…" "The Apotheosis…" "Ritual…" "Of…"

"George…" "III…" The eight red eyes on Reinette Tinekerr's four heads looked at Leonard.

Apotheosis ritual? Although Leonard was anxious, he was still shocked by the phrase.

For someone to hold an apotheosis ritual, one had to be a Sequence 1 angel at the very least. Yet, Klein was able to directly participate in something at that level… Mr. Fool's plan? Leonard's green eyes glimmered slightly. Relying on his relatively rich experience, he pointedly asked, "What happened to Klein the last time you saw him?"

The four blonde, red-eyed heads of Reinette Tinekerr shook and said, "Possibly…" Under…" "Zaratul's…" "Pursuit…"

As Gehrman Sparrow's messenger, this Ancient Bane was able to sense that "Her" employer had also left the Tudor ruins after escaping.

And as for those who understood the means of a Scholar of Yore, they were undoubtedly High-Sequence Beyonders of the same pathway. Therefore, Zaratul would definitely be able to obstruct and pursue him.

Zaratul? The leader of the Secret Order, the Sequence 1 angel, Zaratul? As Leonard was worried about Klein, he felt fear and concern for the life of his former colleague.

At that moment, a deep voice sounded in his mind:

"Ask 'Her' what other clues 'She' has."

Leonard immediately did as he was asked.

Reinette Tinekerr seemed to know that Leonard wasn't simple. She repeated Queen Mystic's prophecy word by word.

After listening to what was said, Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a while before sighing.

"Error…

“I think I know about your former colleague’s current situation.”

Leonard subconsciously wanted to ask, but because there were outsiders around, he held back his urge.

Pallez paused and continued, “The anomaly with Sefirah Castle attracted Zaratul. How could Amon not notice it?

“This should be related to the struggle for Sefirah Castle.”

Sefirah Castle… Leonard slowly took a deep breath and said to Reinette Tinekerr, “He might’ve fallen into the hands of Amon.”

After Miss Messenger’s four heads nodded and turned to leave, Leonard immediately sat down and clasped his hands. Closing his eyes, he prayed.

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…”

Chapter 1163 - Approaching

◆ ◆ ◆

Above the gray fog, the crimson star representing The Star also burgeoned and contracted. The rippling light gradually overlapped with the other ripples created by the other three crimson stars, turning into a tidal wave that surged through the entire mysterious space, causing the space to vibrate slightly.

After describing the matter related to Klein, Leonard ended his prayers and waited for Mr. Fool to respond.

However, he still didn’t receive any feedback after nearly fifteen minutes.

Mr. Fool has always been very responsive… Leonard couldn’t help but mutter.

After a few seconds of silence, Pallez Zoroast reminded with a slightly-aged voice, “Recall what The Fool said recently.”

Leonard thought carefully and slowly said, “In the middle of the week, ‘He’ reminded us not to head into the woods in the northwestern outskirts of Backlund… Yes, ‘He’ seemed to hint that the gathering might not be held as planned…”

“As expected.” Pallez Zoroast let out a long sigh and said, “The Fool had predicted Amon’s appearance to a certain extent. ‘They’ might be fighting in different domains now. One of them wishes to hold onto Sefirah Castle, while the other wishes to become the new owner of Sefirah Castle. Your former colleague has unfortunately been embroiled in this matter.”

“Mr. Fool had expected this? Is this a trap ‘He’ laid for Amon?” Leonard’s green eyes lit up as he blurted out.

Pallez spent a significant amount of time thinking as “He” spoke much slower.

“Perhaps that’s the case. Perhaps it’s because Amon exploited the trap and took the initiative. Don’t underestimate a Blasphemer, a powerful King of Angels.”

According to what Leonard knew, Mr. Fool was either the owner of the Sefirah Castle who was slowly recovering, corresponding to some unknown deity in history, or “He” was the embodiment of sefirot. Currently, “He” was unable to control “His” authority and strength very well, something that could be fixed with a further qualitative change.

And regardless of the possibilities, Mr. Fool was still unable to reach the level of a true deity. He was likely on the same level as the King of Angels.

Under such circumstances, it was rather normal that Mr. Fool and the terrifying Blasphemer would undergo an intense battle. After all, that person was one of “Them,” one of the strongest hidden existences beneath the deities. “He” was even more powerful than the Hidden Sage that was usually categorized as an evil god. Even deities were somewhat apprehensive towards “Him.”

“...” Leonard couldn’t help but tense up. He asked in a low voice worriedly, “Old Man, do you have any way to provide any help? Isn’t Amon your greatest enemy?”

Such help might be limited, but it should be able to pull Klein out of the maelstrom.

Upon hearing that, Pallez Zoroast laughed and said with an obvious self-deprecating tone, “Aren’t you expecting too much from me?

"Indeed, if Amon obtains Sefirah Castle, I'll definitely die at 'His' hands. I might not be able to survive this winter. And if Sefirah Castle is left with The Fool, I might have a chance of surviving in the future.

"But would an old man like me, who has just recovered to Sequence 2, have the ability to interfere with a battle at this level?

"Even if I were to use the Yesterday Once More charms, what can I do in the short time span of two to three seconds? Yes, yes. At the critical moment, I might be able to help The Fool warp the situation, but I don't even know where 'They' are fighting. How can I seize the opportunity?"

Leonard fell silent after hearing Old Man's long answer. He immediately bowed his head and raised his hands to press them against the sides of his head. He muttered to himself, "Don't tell me that I can only watch helplessly…"

Pallez sighed and said, "Be patient. All we can do now is be patient.

"The Fool and Evernight, and some other deities and Kings of Angels seem to have some tacit understanding with each other. They might even be cooperating with one another. 'They' will not allow Amon to take away Sefirah Castle.

"Wait patiently. Perhaps it won't take long for a window of opportunity to appear."

Leonard straightened his body and leaned back. He took a deep breath and exhaled.

"I understand."

†

The Blue Avenger, which had been ordered by the Church of the Lord of Storms to attack the port and Feysacian merchant ships near the waters of Sonia Island, was hiding somewhere outside the safe sea route.

Alger Wilson stood behind the window of the captain's cabin, using his extremely distant vision to stare at the long coastline.

To this "newly advanced" Ocean Songster's point of view, many captains who received similar missions were the cream of the crop of the Mid-Sequence Beyonders. Their joint operation would definitely be able to effectively harm the traffic flow of Feysacian waters.

This also meant that an attack from Feysac would be reasonably fierce, with a high chance of a Sequence 4 demigod leading the attack. Of course, one couldn't eliminate the possibility of a Sequence 3 War Bishop or Silver Knight appearing.

This was a dangerous development for Alger. He didn't wish to put himself in such danger.

At the same time, his crew, colleagues, and partners would monitor each other, preventing anyone from deserting. If Alger were to skive and walk on the edge of danger, it wouldn't take long for him to consider killing most of the crew members and become a true pirate, or lose the Blue Avenger and return to Pasu Island for an internal probe.

After this operation ends, the captains who could still survive wouldn't exceed a third… Alger calmly analyzed the situation and quickly came up with a plan to avoid danger.

That was to participate in the operation, but not take center stage.

Alger planned on using a "surprise attack" on the port while his brethren frenetically attacked the Feysacian merchant and supply ships. This would bring the people on board his ship onto Sonia Island, allowing them to lay in ambush in a primeval forest. Occasionally, he would cause some minor disturbances to the port which were easily managed. This way, the Feysac demigods would definitely cast their gazes at the sea, and not towards him.

At the same time, in the eyes of the crew, he would be a role model who was willing to take great risks to enter the enemy's borders.

After thinking through all the details, Alger immediately gathered the crew and repeated his plans. Finally, he emphasized, "This will be very dangerous. Trust me, it's very, very dangerous. We won't be able to advance and retreat like we can at sea. We might be surrounded by enemies at any time, but such an attack will definitely exceed the expectations of the Feysacians, and it will give us the outcome we want.

"Are you willing to remain on the ship as cowards, or do you want to follow me into battle as a hero to show your devotion to the Lord?"

The crew members felt their blood boiling as they rashly said, "F*ck the Feysacians!"

"Very good." Alger felt relieved as he struck his right fist on his left breast. "May the Storm be with us!"

"May the Storm be with us!" the sailors saluted and shouted.

After making the necessary arrangements, Alger believed that he needed to borrow the Unshadowed Crucifix as soon as possible so as to purge the excess Ocean Songster's Beyonder characteristic. Although he had exaggerated the danger of landing on the island, there was still a certain level of danger involved. Therefore, he wanted to quickly recover to his optimal condition.

And he had long understood Mr. Fool's earlier hint. He felt that tonight or tomorrow morning, Mr. Fool would officially inform them that the gathering was to be canceled.

Of course, there were some ideas in the deepest depths of Alger's heart. He suspected that every time Mr. Fool canceled the Tarot Club, something had happened to "Him." He wanted to use this prayer to test if this mighty existence was still normal.

No, I can't. Thou shalt not test God… This isn't a test. Mr. Fool didn't hint that I can't pray to "Him" recently. Besides, borrowing the

Unshadowed Crucifix is something I really need to do within the next few days… Alger paced back and forth, unable to make a decision.

At this moment, he heard the sound of waves crashing. Through the additional type of vision provided by the ghost ship, he saw the water part as a huge fish-type creature appeared.

The strange-looking giant fish opened its mouth and spat out a small metal ball that landed on the deck.

Alger nodded and expressed his gratitude with his singing.

This was a sea creature that the Church of the Lord of Storms had tamed. In this operation, it and its companions were the messengers between the various ships and the islands.

Upon receiving his gratitude, the giant fish-like creature trembled. With a flick of its tail, it headed deep into the sea and swam into the distance.

Alger looked at it silently for two seconds before summoning a gust of wind to bring the metal ball into the captain's cabin.

He twisted open the metal ball and took out the piece of paper inside. Alger's eyes froze from a mere glance at it.

George III has been assassinated… Alger repeated the content with a heavy expression before recalling The World Gehrman Sparrow's reminder and Mr. Fool's hints.

This time, he no longer hesitated. He locked the room and softly muttered the honorific name, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

†

These prayers are almost becoming a choral symphony… Mr. Hanged Man wants to borrow the Unshadowed Crucifix from Little Sun?

Leonard… Yes… These voices are stacked over one another, undulating in pitch and volume. It’s making the surroundings tremble… Klein rubbed his temples, having a feeling that he had been struck by lightning from every direction.

At this moment, he followed Amon deeper into the desolate moors and saw the grayish-yellow fog that blanketed the area. There were a few ravines and in the deep, dark depths, there were plenty of things roaming.

Compared to the quiet, lurking monsters from before, the ones here were rather special.

The pointy-hatted Amon raised his hand to nudge his monocle and pointed ahead with a smile.

“Another half a day and we should be reaching our final destination.”

“Half a day… It hasn’t been a day yet… Didn’t you say three days?” Klein’s pupils seemingly dilated.

Amon smiled and said, “I said not more than three days.

“One day is not more than three days, too.

Upon saying that, the King of Angels paused and asked with piqued interest, “Did I hamper your arrangements?

“Are you feeling more despair?”

Klein didn’t answer as he suddenly reached out his hand and grabbed into the void beside him.

Chapter 1164 - Cheating

* * *

Although Klein had been a Beyonder for less than two years, his experience could be described as rich and exciting, even among Sequence 4 and Sequence 3 saints. The things he possessed or encountered before that could be summoned from the Historical Void, and the ones that were capable of quickly killing him didn’t number many.

Here, he chose the Flaring Sun Charm that he had used in Tingen City. He had already recited the incantation, injected his spirituality into it, and was about to activate the charms!

Indeed, to a demigod of the Seer pathway that meant bizarreness and change, it wasn’t very effective against him. He mainly depended on the damage it did to his body, but Klein didn’t dodge or defend himself. Instead, he released his body and mind to embrace the light of “hope.”

Even at the level of a Sequence 3 Scholar of Yore, the defense of a Seer pathway’s Beyonder remained low. His offensive ability was also equally insufficient compared to his peers. This resulted in a sad fact:

When Klein wanted to commit suicide, he didn’t have any powers that could quickly kill himself. After all, it was impossible for him to control his Spirit Body Threads and transform himself into his marionette. This would result in logical contradictions. Towards the end of the process, he would lack the ability to continue making himself a marionette.

And when he was searching for ways to kill himself through external means, he realized that, as long as he didn't use methods like Marionette Interchange, Paper Figurine Substitutes, and Historical Void Hiding, there were too many options that he could consider.

The Seer was such a powerful pathway that veered towards the extremes.

Seeing that Klein was about to take out a Flaring Sun Charm from the fog of history, along with having a strong desire to commit suicide, Amon only smiled. Without even raising "His" hand, "He" stole the entire idea, causing the crystal monocle to glow slightly.

Klein immediately forgot what he was trying to do.

But his actions didn't stop!

His shocked reaction when he heard that they were only half a day away from the final destination was mostly faked. This was because he had always been wary of the God of Deceit. He didn't trust anything that "He" said.

There were too many interpretations of "not more than three days," so Klein had long prepared for the worst. After hearing what Amon said, he immediately arranged the things he needed to do into a sequence: After having the idea of summoning the Flaring Sun Charm to commit suicide; it was to summon that existence; summon that existence; summon this, that, and those existences. He made it cyclic, hoping that no matter how many thoughts Amon stole from him, he would still follow his original plan and perform the corresponding actions.

Regarding this matter, back when he dealt with 0-08, he had been thinking about it above the gray fog. He had used the experience of treating the real him as a marionette and only following a predetermined set of actions. This helped him greatly.

At that moment, although he didn't know what he was trying to do, to the point of not realizing that he had forgotten something, he knew very well what he would do next.

The past wasn't important, but the present and future were key!

Klein reached out his palm again and grabbed the void in front of him. His entire arm sank.

However, when he retracted his right hand, nothing came out.

At the same time, Amon raised "His" palm and gently swiped forward.

"He" had stolen the Historical Void projection that Klein had summoned!

A figure quickly appeared beside Amon. It was an elder dressed in a hooded black robe. His eyes were deep black, like a dark water surface, and the white beard around his mouth was long and dense.

Zaratul!

The leader of the Secret Order, the Sequence 1 angel, Zaratul!

The existence that Klein had attempted to summon was actually Zaratul, and he had succeeded in one try!

This was because he had made preparations in advance.

Back in the city that the phoenix believers had built, when Klein had split his marionettes into three groups, he was actually attempting to summon Zaratul from the Historical Void.

Without a doubt, it was impossible to succeed at that time. However, as a Scholar of Yore, it would be a massive failure if one failed to notice that someone else was trying to summon their historical projection. As for Zaratul, he was definitely a senior, excellent, and experienced Scholar of Yore.

After such a failed summoning, Klein had established a connection with Zaratul.

This was the tacit understanding between Scholars of Yore!

As for a Miracle Invoker, an Attendant of Mysteries, “He” was able to respond to “His” historical projection. It was just like how a Scholar of Yore had a hundred percent chance of success when borrowing strength from his past.

In addition, a Scholar of Yore had no contractual connection with the Historical Void projection. They relied on the other party’s lack of intelligence, or them having good relationships with them, to control it. And in this world, the few high-level existences most unwilling to see Amon obtain Sefirah Castle was Mr. Door, followed by Pallez, and then Zaratul!

In other words, the two of them were short-term allies when it came to resisting Amon.

Due to these factors, Klein believed that he could summon Zaratul in one go. And the facts proved that he was right.

And it was precisely because of this that he wasn’t worried at all that Amon would steal away his historical projection that he had summoned. He even hoped that the Angel of Time would do so.

As for the reason why he first came up with the idea of committing suicide before summoning Zaratu, it was to let Amon steal his thoughts. And for Amon, “He” would be happy to try since “He” was a King of Angels in search of excitement. With too many choices for “Him” to choose from, it was unlikely “He” would repeat another “Thought Usurpation.” It might be the “Theft” of a Historical Void projection.

This was one of the few trump cards that Klein had.

In the next second, Zaratul’s gaze turned from a glazed one to a spirited and real one.

Clearly, this Attendant of Mysteries, a senior Scholar of Yore, had entered the Historical Void and allowed “His” projection from the same era to receive “His” consciousness!

And having “His” own consciousness meant that Zaratul’s projection didn’t hesitate at all to firmly cast “His” gaze at Amon.

The eyes of Amon—the ones wearing and not wearing the monocle—narrowed at the same time. “He” saw the lightning around “Him” increase in frequency as the vast wilderness with many ravines instantly turned empty and dark. They were speckled with twinkling stars.

“He” had apparently been pulled beneath the cosmos by Zaratul.

This was a miracle.

As for the projection opposite of Amon, it had already transformed into a gigantic, mysterious whirlpool formed by squirming mysterious. They extended out in all directions with transparent tentacles. Just looking at them would make humans lose their minds and turn crazy.

At that moment, Klein abandoned the other thoughts in the “queue.” He took the opportunity to control a monster deep in the darkness and transform it into his marionette.

Immediately following that, he switched places with his marionette.

After coming to the depths of the darkness, Klein reached out his hand once again to grab at the air in front of him a few times in succession. His marionette did the same action as well.

Finally, he dragged a new figure out of the void.

It was a figure dressed in a simple linen robe, with a tree bark as a belt. Standing there, barefooted with long, black hair, Arianna’s facial features were ordinary and her eyes dark and cold.

The Evernight cloister’s matron, the ascetic leader, the Servant of

Concealment, the Grounded Angel, Arianna.

As soon as Arianna appeared,“Her” dark eyes turned normal. She didn’t look like a projection at all.

“Her” true body seemed to have entered a concealed state, allowing the summoned Historical Void projection to also possess intelligence.

This was also one of the reasons why Klein had chosen to summon “Her,” and had given up on summoning Mr. Azik and Miss Messenger who gave him a higher success rate. This way, even if an accident happened during his “suicide,” preventing his success, there was still a chance to fight Amon in the subsequent battle!

After a Historical Void’s projection possessed their own consciousness, it made it much easier for Klein to maintain them. This resulted in an extension in time for the maintenance of the projection.

Following that, he used the connection between the Scholar of Yore and their summoned Historical Void projection, quickly communicating to Servant of Concealment, Arianna, his intent to kill him!

Arianna suddenly bent “Her” body, and “Her” right hand reached behind her back. “She” pulled out a bone sword covered in strange patterns from the depths of the darkness.

Then, “She” suddenly took a step forward and swung “Her” sword forward.

The entire darkness literally stirred as it wildly spread towards where the spot Klein was standing.

An unlucky monster happened to be situated between the two of them as it melted away when drowned by the tide of darkness.

This wasn’t the authority of concealment. This was a combination of repose and horror. It symbolized danger in the darkness, a symbol of silent destruction and vanquishment.

The Beyonders of the Sleepless pathway had to reach Sequence 3 Horror Bishop to grasp such powers.

Subconsciously, Klein's survival instinct made him attempt to escape. But at that moment, he felt that the surrounding darkness was an enemy. If he was infected by that force, he would become a part of the tide. There was no avoiding it.

There's no need to use all your strength. You can easily kill me with just a portion of your strength… Klein restrained his primal instincts, and he stood on the spot, waiting for the destruction to sweep through him.

At that moment, a distant, illusory bell sounded.

It was as if it had traveled through a long stretch of history, causing everything around it to slow down, including the surging darkness.

In midair, swaths of darkness were pierced, revealing a gigantic wall clock carved out of stone.

It was ancient and mottled, and its surface was separated into twelve segments by grayish-white and bluish-black colors. Each segment had different symbols, and the needle had a total of three hands—short, medium, long. It seemed to be formed from the twelve rings of a Worm of Time.

As the second hand ticked, the bell rang again.

Gong!

As the sound echoed, the surging darkness like a tide slowed down even more. Then, the ancient clock's projection dissipated, turning back into Amon with "His" pointed hat and monocle.

Behind "Him", the projection of Zaratul was also in a sluggish state.

Right on the heels of that, Amon levitated in midair, extending "His" right hand, and "He" pressed down at the darkness.

The darkness quickly returned to normal, drowning Klein without causing him any damage. It was unknown if there was a bug or if a Beyonder effect had been stolen.

At the same time, Amon's body instantly became abnormally huge. It was nearly twenty meters tall, but none of "His" clothes suffered any damage.

"He" looked down at Klein and raised "His" hand to adjust his monocle. He ignored the attacks from the Zaratul projection behind "Him" as "He" curled "His" lips and said with deep interest, "Interesting."

Chapter 1165 - The Grand Lineup

◆◆◆

As Amon spoke, the transparent tentacles covered with mysterious patterns extended out from the gigantic vortex behind “His” back, and they wrapped around “His” many different Spirit Body Threads.

[image]

In the blink of an eye, the illusory black threads were lifted up without any resistance.

And with that, one strange monster after another was hoisted up in the air, like ham waiting to be dry-aged.

The Spirit Body Threads beside Amon were all stolen by “Him” at some point in time!

While Zaratul launched “His” attack, “His” other slippery tentacle kept extending into the void, attempting to pull something back.

In just a few seconds, a figure quickly appeared.

“He” had long chestnut-colored curly hair, blue eyes, high nose bridge, thin lips, and a very beautifully manicured mustache. He wore a dark red coat with rusted golden threads. It was none other than the former Emperor of Intis, Roselle Gustav.

The moment this Knowledge Emperor stepped into the real world, “He” looked down at the gigantified Amon, and complicated and illusory symbols instantly formed in “His” eyes.

“He” wasn’t worried that Amon would steal “His” attack at all, because “He” had prepared an extremely large amount of useless miscellaneous knowledge. Be it the forceful injection or Amon’s theft of it, “He” could achieve the goal of blowing up the other party’s mind.

Just as Emperor Roselle’s projection was fully formed, another figure appeared from Zaratul’s transparent tentacles.

The figure had a young face, but his long hair was already half-white—pulled back and flailing in the air. In the darkness, half of it was hidden, and the other was prominent.

This was an angel that Klein didn’t know. “He” looked like a man with eyes that were dark and filled with the vicissitudes of life. “His” facial features were considered pretty good, but there was a bunch of thick, short black hair on “His” cheeks. “He” emitted the feeling that “He” was both old and youthful, both rational and crazy.

“He” immediately transformed into a cluster of squirming worms that extended out transparent, smooth tentacles akin to Zaratul’s projection.

Clearly, this was also an angel from the Seer pathway.

At that moment, Klein didn’t even dare to look straight at the situation occurring in midair. However, when his spiritual perception triggered, he had already sensed something familiar.

The second angel that was summoned by Zaratul was the son of an ancient god, the original ancestor of the Antigonus family!

This was the historical projection “Him” before “He” became The Half-Fool.

Clearly, Zaratul had made sufficient preparations in this period of time.

As Antigonus displayed “His” complete Mythical Creature form, the surrounding environment changed once again. The darkness became even darker, as though it had a life of its own as it surged towards the massive manifestation of the classic black-robed, pointy-hatted, and monocled Amon.

In the area enveloped by darkness, all the monsters instantly turned into marionettes.

Antigonus seemed to have moved a portion of the ancient divine kingdom from "His" memories into the real world, so as to separate Amon from Klein.

This was also a miracle.

When the miracle happened, Zaratul's transparent tentacles pulled out a third projection from the fog of history.

This was a knight in full black armor. "He" was a demigod from the Fourth Epoch's Solomon Empire, and had not left an illustrious name in history.

However, "He" had another identity. "He" was a member of the "Red of War" army, and the leader of this army was King of Angels, Medici.

In this division, every member could connect with Red Angel Medici's mind and become one.

In other words, if Medici could converge their powers, then they too could also transmit their own powers to the collective pool.

The powers of a Scholar of Yore powers couldn't summon anything associated with the Uniqueness. Even if they were to raise their Sequence and receive a qualitative change, it remained the same. However, there was no doubt that Seers would seek ways to push the envelope by attempting to bypass the restrictions and obtain help from the Uniqueness to a certain extent.

Klein had summoned the Goddess's descent vessel to accomplish this point, while Zaratul summoned a powerhouse of the Red of War army.

At this moment, that projection was equivalent to a portion of Medici!

The knight in black armor stepped onto the battlefield. “He” scanned the battlefield in a sluggish manner before laughing out loud.

“Yo, Lil’ Raven, have those feathers I burnt recovered?”

Due to the fact that his historical projection had summoned another three angel-level historical projections, Klein suspected that he couldn’t maintain it for ten seconds.

If it wasn’t for this change, then he would most likely have felt that he had found a way to indefinitely increase his combat strength. That was to summon two angels and one projection of himself every time. Then, he could use his projection to summon two angels and himself again. If this continued, he would have an infinite number of projections available.

At that moment, the ascetic leader of the Church of Evernight, Arianna’s body faded and entered a concealed state. Following that, “She” suddenly appeared behind the gigantified Amon, slashing out with the bone sword that was covered in strange patterns.

Taking advantage of the opportunity when Amon was being attacked by the five angel projections’ attack, Klein kept converting monsters into his marionettes, getting them to aim at him. He opened his mouth and let out a bang.

Air Cannons whistled towards him.

At the same time, Klein stretched out his hand and easily took out a Flaring Sun Charm that had already been activated and was just short of releasing its effects.

He didn’t believe that he would be able to survive such repeated attacks.

Amidst the booms, Klein suddenly heard a “tick-tock” noise.

The entire world seemed to stop for a moment before it returned to normal.

Following that, he saw a huge hole in the dark sky. A ray of pure hot sunlight shone in and lit a golden charm.

It was the Flaring Sun Charm. It had turned into a huge ball of light that was engulfed by countless balls of flames.

However, the target it attacked wasn't Klein. It had made an error and, instead, wrapped around the Red of War demigod.

Meanwhile, the vast amount of knowledge that Roselle Gustav had injected, the miracle created by Antigonus, the destructive sword which Arianna had swung out, the transparent tentacles that Zaratul extended, they all pointed at the same target in an erroneous manner—Medici's black-armored subordinate.

At some point, the projection that consisted of a part of Medici's will first suffered an explosion in "His" mind. Even "His" instinctive reaction seemed to have disappeared. Then, "He" was assaulted by the barrage of heavy attacks, and quickly dissipated in midair.

Wearing a pointed hat and a classical mage robe, it was unknown when Amon had returned to the size of a human and landed at the bottom of the battlefield.

"He" raised "His" right hand and adjusted the crystal monocle as a beam of light lit up.

Behind "His" back, the ancient mottled clock phantom appeared once again. The longest second hand quickly spun half a round at an extraordinary speed.

It took less than a second, but everything on the desolate moors seemed to have lost ten to twenty seconds.

The projection of Antigonus's historical projection disappeared.

Following that, Roselle's historical projection faded away. Finally, it was the historical projections of Zaratul and Arianna.

The amount of time "They" could be maintained had been stolen.

Klein, who was just about to commit suicide for the third time, couldn't believe his eyes.

He had expected Blasphemer Amon to resolve the five angel projections. After all, they were merely projections. A projection was much weaker than the actual body. However, Klein never expected the other party to be so casual about it that he didn't even have a chance to commit suicide.

He had used his trump card in exchange for such an outcome. It was inevitable for him to feel disheartened and despair.

Amon nudged his monocle and took a step forward to appear in front of him. "He" smiled.

"If 'They' were all 'Their' true bodies, it would indeed be more troublesome.

"However, the Historical Void projection has a very huge flaw. And grasping the 'problem' of something is what I'm best at."

Looking at this Angel of Time whose smile remained the same while his expression was one of delight, as though "He" hadn't been in a difficult situation just now, Klein's heart slowly sank, as if he had fallen into an abyss.

His spiritual perception was triggered as scenes quickly flashed through his mind.

After entering the Forsaken Land of the Gods, Amon changed his clothes—going from a dark colored jacket, trousers, and black top hat that met the aesthetic standards of modern times to a classic mage's robe and a pointed hat.

After that, “He” suggested a game of escaping and obstructing;

“He” appeared extremely confident and wasn’t worried about any mishaps…

As his thoughts raced, Klein’s throat turned dry, and he said in a low and hoarse voice, “You… are the true body…

“After entering the Forsaken Land of the Gods, your true body merged with your avatar?”

He seriously suspected that the person in front of him was Amon’s true body, the true Blasphemer, the whole King of Angels!

The corners of the monocled Amon’s mouth curled up bit by bit.

“This is very interesting, isn’t it?

“The expression on your face after knowing the truth is what I wanted to see in this game.”

“He” had clearly admitted that “He” was the main body. “He” was born accommodating the Uniqueness of the Marauder pathway. “He” was peerless amongst the ranks of those beneath that of deities.

This meant that, unless a true deity descended, no matter how hard Klein struggled, he wouldn’t be able to escape from Amon’s hands. And this was the Forsaken Land of the Gods. The only active deity was the True Creator, and “He” wasn’t too interested in Sefirah Castle.

Although he had suspected that the Amon beside him had swapped with “His” actual body, Klein, who had experienced countless instances of hope, only to have them destroyed, experienced what was the ultimate sense of despair when he was truly certain of it. If it wasn’t for the fact that the Tarot Club involved Miss Justice, Leonard, and company, as well as how he knew that Amon was best at deception, he would’ve admitted defeat and expressed his willingness to become “His” Blessed.

Isn’t it normal to join the ranks of the opponents if you can’t beat them… As he lampooned, a thought suddenly flashed through his mind. He recalled the words that Amon had previously said.

This… His eyes lit up, and he completely calmed down. Looking at Amon, he leisurely stretched his body and said with a smile, “Kill me.”

Chapter 1166 - Its Name

◆

Lightning once again lit up the desolate moors that were blanketed with grayish-yellow fog. It illuminated the spot where an angel-level battle had just happened, illuminating the calm smile on his face.

Amon looked at him for a few seconds before nudging his monocle and smiling.

“Can’t you say something else?

“You seem to have found new hope?”

Klein’s smile didn’t change as he clenched his fist to his nose and stuck one hand into his pocket.

“I just suddenly understood something. It turns out that it’s not too demoralizing to play this game with your true body. On the contrary, this shows that you have no way of stealing my destiny.”

“Oh?” Amon smiled as “He” spoke in a tone, as though “He” was looking forward to what Klein would say next.

Klein laughed and said without any hesitation, “Otherwise, once I entered the Forsaken Land of the Gods, you would’ve directly stolen my destiny and become the new owner of Sefirah Castle. Even if you want to play a game of escaping and obstructing, you could’ve waited until the main goal was achieved before doing so. That way, you wouldn’t be taking any risks. And having lost my chance to resurrect and my original destiny, I’ll put in an even greater effort into escaping due to my instinct to survive.

“Indeed, the God of Mischief might do something that disregards danger, doing so in pursuit of excitement, but you’re still the God of Deceit.”

Having said that, Klein looked at the unperturbed expression on Amon’s face and paused.

“I know that you really have the ability to steal the destinies of others, but being capable of doing something doesn’t mean that you’ll do it. This requires a risk assessment, as well as weighing and analyzing the pros and cons.

“I believe that you don’t wish to steal my destiny directly. That will make you bear the burden of everything brought about by Sefirah Castle. You have to resist the trauma of the resurrection of its original owner. Even for a King of Angels like you, this is also very dangerous. If you aren’t careful, you can perish. Therefore, you want to find a loophole—you want to get Sefirah Castle without suffering the negative effects. And this requires my ‘permission.’”

When he said that, Klein thought of the experience of getting hit by computer viruses in his previous life. Those viruses would always pretend to be normal and cheat him into giving him permission.

This was somewhat similar to the current situation.

After hearing Klein’s words, Amon looked at him without a word. Instead, “He” calmly adjusted the crystal monocle.

Klein smiled and continued, “From the moment you parasitized me, you’ve been setting up a huge scam. On the one hand, you’ve given me the option of becoming your Blessed, telling me that your true body can withstand my destiny, causing me to bear a heavy psychological burden.

“In the subsequent journey, you constantly made me see hope before destroying it. From time to time, you'll give me a time limit, making me unknowingly seize an opportunity and catch my breath. Then, you suddenly shortened the trip, disrupting my plans. Finally, you reveal the card that you're the true body, sending me into the abyss of despair, so as to destroy my will and dismantle my mental defenses. I would completely break down and choose to become your Blessed, and 'agree' to that hidden 'transaction.'"

After hearing everything in silence, Amon suddenly laughed and raised "His" hands to gently clap.

"Perfect deduction.

"However, you seem to have missed a problem.

"What I said was to see my real body at a sufficiently safe place. Then, your destiny will be taken away. Now that we haven't reached our final destination, I naturally won't take the risk."

Klein's expression sank slightly before he relaxed again.

"I'm looking forward to how different the developments will be there."

He responded to Amon in "His" style.

The genuine King of Angels adjusted "His" monocle and pointed to the side with a smile.

"Soon. We'll arrive in less than half a day."

"How long is that exactly?" Klein instinctively lacked trust in Amon's vague descriptions.

Amon scratched "His" chin and chuckled.

"Half an hour."

Klein turned his head to look in the direction where Amon had pointed. He only saw deep darkness, nothing else.

A bolt of lightning streaked across the desolate moors, but even farther away was a thick grayish-yellow fog.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough, in the Hall family's luxurious villa.

After two days of chaos, Audrey's life finally regained some peace. This made her even more curious about the truth behind the king's assassination.

Considering how Mr. Fool had seemingly hinted that the Tarot Gathering would be canceled today, Audrey decided to pray to this existence in advance and establish a connection with The World Gehrman Sparrow to figure out the corresponding situation.

The moment she glanced at Susie, the golden retriever immediately walked out of the room, closed the door with her leg in passing, and sat outside.

Audrey sat down, took on a prayer pose, and recited in ancient Hermes:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

†

Backlund East Borough, inside a two-bedroom rental apartment.

"Do you think there will be a gathering today? There's no formal notice…" Fors took out her pocket watch for women and opened it.

Xio shook her head.

"I don't know."

Fors couldn't sit still any longer. She left her seat and paced back and forth anxiously as she muttered to herself, "Mr. World didn't respond, neither did Mr. Fool respond…"

As she spoke, Fors suddenly looked at her friend who was eating some ham. She hurriedly said, “Xio, why don’t you try praying to Mr. Fool and ask if the gathering will be held as scheduled today?”

Xio frowned slightly as she put down her fork and nodded.

“Okay.”

She also found the situation a little strange.

She clasped her hands and held them under her chin. Xio took a deep breath and said in a low voice, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…”

†

Backlund, North Borough, underground of Saint Samuel Cathedral, in a room behind Chanis Gate.

Emlyn White woke up, feeling puzzled over the dream he had.

He had apparently dreamed of the Sanguine Ancestor, Lilith!

In his dream, he was trapped in a castle covered in red grapevines, one he couldn’t escape from no matter how hard he tried.

Later, through a narrow window from high above, he saw the crimson moon outside and a pair of bat wings that covered half the crimson moon.

In the legends of the Sanguine, this was one of the symbols of the ancient goddess, Lilith.

Right on the heels of that, Emlyn flew up high in excitement, attempting to open the narrow window. At the bottom of the glass, he found a tarot card.

On the surface of the tarot card was a lad dressed in gorgeous clothes.

He was wearing splendid headgear with a stick over his shoulder. There was a bindle hanging on the end of the stick, and a puppy was following behind him.

The Fool card.

At this point in his dream, Emlyn naturally woke up. As a Sanguine Viscount, he had the ability to perform a basic analysis of dreams.

It must be because of my current situation that this dream appeared. That Star actually didn't deliver any human blood to me…

I am indeed the target of the Ancestor's benediction…"She" is hinting to me that if I wish to escape from my predicament, I have to obtain help from Mr. Fool?

What day is it today? Forget it, I'll just pray. That way, I can leave as soon as possible." Emlyn sat up with hope as he piously chanted, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

†

Above the gray fog, the three crimson stars that corresponded to Justice, Judgment, and The Moon began to expand and shrink, emitting light to create ripples.

They merged into the dark red "tide" that originally existed, causing the shock waves in the mysterious space to instantly intensify.

Amidst the quake, the "tide" flooded the ancient and majestic palace, lighting up one mysterious symbol after another behind the eight seats on the long bronze table.

This brought a new halo and resonance, accompanied by a buzzing sound.

At the end of the long, mottled table, the back of The Fool's seat lit up as well. The complicated symbol formed by the Contorted Lines and Pupil-less Eye kept extending outwards, becoming layered and extremely three-dimensional.

The dark red “tide” was attracted over and formed a “figure” on the high back chair belonging to The Fool.

This “figure” wasn’t stable enough. It distorted and scattered from time to time, hardly capable of maintaining its form.

On a desolate moor covered with grayish-yellow fog, Klein paused for a moment and looked up at the lightning that streaked across the sky.

He then retracted his gaze. Holding the lantern in his hand, he followed beside Amon, deep into the endless moors.

The more the man and the King of Angels proceeded, the more ravines the ground had. Similarly, their depths became more and more exaggerated.

About ten minutes later, another bolt of lightning streaked across the sky. Not far away, Klein saw a single-eyed giant with a bluish-black pupil, pacing back and forth. It towered tens of meters.

His body was covered in traces of rotting pus. His eye was sunken and lifeless. It was obvious that he was dead.

However, he continued wandering around. Grayish-yellow gas emanated from his body, interweaving in midair to create the fog over the moor.

The grayish-yellow fog that enveloped the vast moor was actually generated by this bluish-black giant!

“The youngest son of the Giant King Aurmir, the God of Glory, Bladel. ‘He’ publicly cursed my father and was punished to forever roam this area. Of course, ‘He’ has long died in the Cataclysm, but ‘He’ still wasn’t able to free ‘Himself.’” Amon looked at the giant and smiled. “If I hadn’t stolen the corresponding damage dealt to you, you would’ve been contaminated by the fog created after Bladel's death. You would become a cursed entity that roams this area."

Do I have to thank you? Suddenly, Klein felt like he had entered a myth.

With him in tow, Amon continued forward. Soon, they approached the bluish-black, single-eyed giant.

There was an extremely deep ravine on the spot where the giant was loitering about. As the lightning flashed, a thick and vast grayish-white building appeared at the bottom.

With just a glance, Klein's eyelids twitched slightly as he recalled the scene he saw when he was divining the Unshadowed Crucifix.

If he remembered correctly, this should be where the ancient sun god, the City of Silver's Creator, Amon and Adam's father walked out from!

Is this the safe place that Amon mentioned? Klein's heart sank.

At this moment, the pointy-hatted, monocled Amon walked to the edge of the ravine. With "His" back facing the grayish-white building, "He" spread his arms slightly and said with a smile, "This is the holy land where my father was awoken. Buried in it is the history I wish to seek.

"My father told me that this place has an ancient name, called…"

As a streak of silver lightning tore through the sky, the black-robed Amon paused as "He" widened "His" arms, saying with a solemn tone, "Chernobyl!"

[image]

Chapter 1167 - When the Stars Are Right

◆

“Chernobyl!”

Upon hearing Amon’s words, Klein’s first reaction was one of shock.

Back when they were approaching the bluish-black, single-eyed giant, he had come up with many possibilities, but he never expected to hear such a name.

This was akin to seeing a machine gun appear in an ancient oil painting, or a novel’s plot appearing in a scientific paper. It was filled with unbelievable contradictions.

In the next second, he thought of the funny matter about how the ancient sun god had used “His” rib to create Dark Angel Sasrir, but had named “His” eldest son Adam. He instinctively believed that the current situation was similar, and he couldn’t help but laugh.

To have Amon, who was so powerful that “He” was almost a “bug” in the real world, a King of Angels who always wore a sinister smile on “His” face, speak the name with such seriousness and solemnity, it made Klein unable to hold back his laughter. Besides, he had no intention of controlling himself.

It’s best if “He” gets angry from the embarrassment and kills me… The reason Amon is this way today has largely to do with the ancient sun god’s method of upbringing! The corners of Klein’s mouth curved into a smile, prepared to ruthlessly vent his inner laughter.

At this moment, another bolt of silvery-white lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the deep ravine. It made Klein once again see the grayish-white building at the bottom.

This was a building that was completely different from the current style of the Fourth, Third, and even the Second Epoch.

Thump!

Klein's heart rapidly contracted before it expanded again. The smile he just made froze on his face.

Thump! Thump!

When he heard his own heartbeat, he suddenly had the common sense he had regarding the present world appear in his mind.

12 months a year, 365 days a year, has leap years…

24 hours a day, 60 minutes a day, 60 seconds a minute…

It's confirmed to be a planet…

There's a sun and a moon in the sky…

Badump! Badump! Badump!

Klein's instinct prevented him from thinking any further, but deep in his heart, there was still a "voice."

Could it be that I've never actually "transmigrated"? I've always been on Earth the entire time, but I've been hanging from the door of light above the gray fog for too long, making me truly not belong to this era…

As this thought formed, many details that didn't catch his attention spewed out like a volcano in his mind.

To the easternmost front of the Sonia Sea, before entering the ruins of the battlefield of the gods, there are rotting and crumbling steel buildings around the ancient well. They appeared to be left behind by humans…

The Northern and Southern Continent are overall very similar in shape to that of North and South America. However, a large part of the isthmus that connects the two landmasses has been wiped away by some kind of power, forming the Berserk Sea with its complicated and winding sea routes… Also, Sonia Island is like the gigantic landmass in the north that drifted south… Midseashire is like the expanded and connected version of the Great Lakes of North America. It's as though it suffered a strike from a massive meteor…

The mountains and rivers on the Northern Continent have changed a lot, but the overall shape is barely recognizable…

In that case… the Western Continent where the elves come from, and the Forsaken Land of the Gods in the Eastern Continent, will correspond to Chernobyl…

In the legends of treasure out at sea, there's a lost civilization called the Newins. It sank somewhere in the Fog Sea…

The Giant King's parents are humans… The Sanguine, elves also seem to originate from humans…

I previously had two questions: Why would Sefirah Castle grab transmigrators from Earth? Why would all of them be people from my era? This can also be explained…

In the short span of two to three seconds, it was as if lightning was constantly exploding in his mind. This caused his lips to tremble slightly, as though he was trying his best to contain the backlash of his revelation.

But the moon in this world is crimson… The constellations are somewhat different from those of Earth… I'm not an astronomy aficionado, so I can't remember clearly. However, the Emperor consumed the potions from the Savant pathway. If the cosmos was completely identical, he would've discovered it a long time ago… The opposing opinion appeared in Klein's mind. They were like a strong anchor, preventing his ship from being blown away from the port in the midst of the storm.

But one second later, he remembered two lines.

One sentence was a terrifying prophecy that he had read online in his previous life:

"When the stars are right, Chaos will rise from underground, and the Great Oldest One will awaken."

The other was:

"Be careful of the moon!"

This… That prophecy wasn't randomly made up? When the stars are right… So, this resulted in the previous discrepancies? Klein almost ignored Amon in front of him. Even his body began to tremble.

He used a great deal of strength before he sighed inwardly.

Perhaps, I've never left my hometown, but I will never be able to return home…

Just as he came to this understanding and realization, the grayish-white fog silently appeared in front of him.

This time, he directly stood in front of the Waning Forest, which corresponded to the end of the First Epoch and the early stages of the Second Epoch.

Unlike the past, the boundless gray fog in front of him was no longer empty. Deep in the fog, in a very far distance, points of shattered light were lit up.

They were like lighthouses, illuminating the path of history. They led Klein forward as they traced back thousands of years, or even further.

Then, he saw the resplendent bluish-black door of light. He saw transparent cocoons hanging above it, and himself in a T-shirt and loose pants.

An invisible wind blew past as the grayish-white fog beneath the door opened, layer by layer, revealing cities.

There were tall skyscrapers with all kinds of cars parked, frozen with pedestrians that walked past.

One by one, these cities were covered in grayish-white dust. Many buildings had collapsed, broken steel bars tearing out of their frames. Some of the cars had caved in, others had broken down. There were even some that had been squashed into metallic pancakes. The passers-by looked lifeless, like wax figures…

[image]

Upon seeing this scene, Klein stopped and stared intently.

He knew very well that:

This world was Earth!

At that moment, he completely digested the Scholar of Yore potion.

Suddenly, Klein’s consciousness returned to the real world. He realized that his connection with Sefirah Castle had strengthened.

Amidst the buzzing sounds, the resonance generated by the prayers of the Tarot Club members grew in intensity.

Previously, he could use them to vaguely sense Sefirah Castle above the gray fog and see that the Klein at The Fool’s seat was trying to establish some sort of connection with the dark red, warping figure that was about to take form.

In an instant, he came to a realization. There was no longer a need for him to chant the incantation or take four steps counterclockwise. With a mere thought, his Spirit Body could enter Sefirah Castle, becoming one with that "figure."

This was undoubtedly the best opportunity for him to escape!

He couldn't be bothered to marvel at the fact that this world was Earth. Believing that Amon definitely didn't know of such a development, Klein immediately thought of jumping straight towards Sefirah Castle.

At this moment, the corner of his eye reflected the pointy-hatted, monocled, classic mage-robed Amon curled "His" lips into a smile—one that spoke of endless joy.

Klein's mind suddenly exploded as all his thoughts were occupied by the crazy raving from Amon.

"You're right. I didn't want to steal your destiny, bearing the burden while becoming the new owner of Sefirah Castle…"

"You're right. This was a scam that has been going on since the beginning…

"However, the core of this scam was to make you think that me giving you hope and destroying it was to break your will and make you agree to become my Blessed…"

"If I hadn't specially changed my clothes when I entered the Forsaken Land of the Gods, as well as my 'accidental' use of 'Error' powers, would you have been so sure that my true body was already here?

"Could it be possible that the God of Deceit doesn't understand that changing one's image would expose many problems?

"Did you think that I wouldn't understand what the name 'Chernobyl' means?

"I've been in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for more than a thousand years. I've been searching for the oldest traces of history, the ones that go far beyond the First Epoch."

"The true goal of this journey was to give you some time and give you some historical knowledge to aid you in digesting the Scholar of Yore potion, so that you can relax your vigilance in this area. Then, when your connection with Sefirah Castle deepens and you attempt to trigger it, I'll seize this opportunity and use a loophole to steal Sefirah Castle.

"The destiny shall be yours, and Sefirah Castle shall be mine."

†

Not only did the terrifying ravings from the King of Angels contain the sounds of Amon's chuckle, but they also wreaked havoc on Klein's mental state. They were no weaker than Mr. Door's roar.

The surface of Klein's skin began to show signs of protruding Worms of Spirit as he was brought to the brink of losing control.

In his body, a twelve-segmented Worm of Time burrowed out, transforming into an Amon phantom wearing a black mage robe and a matching pointy hat and crystal monocle.

"He" had parasitized Klein at a superficial level, not to monitor his thoughts, but rather to take control of the situation at the critical moment through parasitizing him at a deeper level. "He" wanted to seize this opportunity!

In the beginning, Amon had used a "deeper level" of parasitizing with one main goal—to parasitize a Worm of Time at a superficial level, without the saint being able to detect it!

The Amon projection turned back and gave Klein, who was unable to straighten his thoughts after being disrupted by the ravings, a look. It revealed a smile that was identical to its true body.

The corners of “His” lips curled up slightly, carrying a look of endless joy.

“He” turned around and used the invisible connection to leap towards Sefirah Castle above the gray fog.

This was similar to the situation of “Him” parasitizing Derrick Berg and trying to use the crimson star that corresponded to The Sun to infiltrate the world above the gray fog.

But this time, no one was inside Sefirah Castle to purify “Him”—to close the “door,” to stop Amon.

This was a spectacular act.

This was the God of Deceit.

Chapter 1168 - My Anchors

◆

In the blink of an eye, Amon saw the grayish-white fog and the ancient and majestic palace above.

“He” just needed to reach out “His” hand and pass through the final obstacle to truly touch Sefirah Castle and directly occupy the place and, in essence, take it away.

But at that moment, a gigantic bluish-black palm suddenly appeared above the Amon phantom, blocking “Him” from entering Sefirah Castle.

Amon’s projection subconsciously turned its head and looked in the direction of the palm. It saw the pus-covered, one-eyed giant who had long since died.

Bladel, who was known as the God of Glory, still didn’t show any signs of life in “His” exaggerated vertical eye. The curse of the grayish-yellow fog kept emanating from “His” body.

However, it was different from before. There were seemingly illusory black tubes behind “His” back. They extended all the way into the infinite distance, a mystery as to what they were connected to.

Boom!

The towering bluish-black giant instantly condensed a broadsword formed from the orange-red light of dusk. Holding it in one hand, “He” cleaved down at the side of the deep ravine where Amon’s body was.

This youngest son of the Giant King, the one who had died due to the curse, suddenly unleashed an unimaginable power after roaming aimlessly for thousands of years.

The “Twilight Sword” tore through the void and jumped out from the spot where the Angel of Time, Amon, was standing. It ripped through everything around it, turning into a storm that could destroy this desolate moor.

Amon didn’t move and remained standing there. No matter how the orange-red “sword” storm raged, it didn’t harm “Him” at all.

“He” seemed to have used some sort of “error” in this world again.

However, in this state, Amon was no longer able to transmit “His” ravings into Klein’s mind, allowing him to finally gain a sliver of peace.

Ignoring how he was about to lose control, he regained his clarity of mind using the clear and real surroundings and the layers of prayer. Then, he immediately resonated with the dark red “figure” sitting at The Fool’s seat above the gray fog, and he established a new connection.

He didn’t hesitate to return to Sefirah Castle!

And at this moment, Amon’s phantom, which was attempting to infiltrate above the gray fog, was obstructed by the bluish-black palm of the God of Glory, Bladel. “He” wasn’t able to instantly break through the titanic obstruction.

The monocled King of Angels, be it “His” avatar or true body, opened “His” mouth and said a name, “Evernight.”

Yes, this was help coming from the Evernight Goddess, but it wasn’t without reason!

Although Klein lacked confidence in this matter, he had always kept it as one of his trump cards. He only believed that it might not be effective and had a very low chance of success. It could only be used as a glimmer of hope at his most desperate hour.

After entering the Forsaken Land of the Gods and obtaining some space to think on his own, he worked hard to find “resources” available to him that could be used. Then, he recalled something:

The matter of the former Chief of the City of Silver!

This Demon Hunter had attempted to switch to Sequence 3 Ferryman of the Death pathway, but he ended up turning into a monster inside the mausoleum he built.

This anomaly was related to illusory black tubes, and such a phenomenon had been seen from the Numinous Sect’s Artificial Death.

In other words, the mutation of the former Chief of the City of Silver was very likely related to Artificial Death.

This indirectly explained something—that for some unknown reason, those that could influence the Forsaken Land of the Gods, other than the True Creator, included Artificial Death who had come to “life” to a certain level.

And now, Artificial Death could be considered the Evernight Goddess in some ways!

Based on this reasoning, Klein suspected that the Goddess could use the Uniqueness of the Death pathway to exert a low level of influence to some degree on certain things in the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

In addition, there were only three people involved in the matter regarding the former Chief of the City of Silver. One of them was the current Chief, Colin Iliad; the demigod Elder, Waite Chirmont, and Shepherd Elder, Lovia. They were either Sequence 4 saints or an important believer of the True Creator. It was impossible for them to be completely unaware that they had been “parasitized” by Amon.

As for the only person who received feedback from the escapade, it was Derrick Berg who was under The Fool’s watch. He wasn’t one of Amon’s “Parasites” either.

In other words, Amon wasn't aware of the former City of Silver Chief's abnormality involving the black illusory tubes. That was key.

Therefore, even if "He" was able to guess that the Evernight Goddess had obtained the Uniqueness of the Death pathway, causing the God of Combat to have an intense reaction, there was no way for "Him" to know that this would bring about unforeseen developments to the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

With this knowledge in mind, Klein consciously performed certain tasks, despite not having much confidence.

In the city that believed in the phoenix, he didn't take away the remaining Death pathway's Beyonder characteristics, hoping to leave a trail.

After summoning Zaratul's historical projection, he didn't seize the opportunity to commit suicide immediately. On the one hand, he was afraid that Amon would still have the ability to stop him and affect his other arrangements; while on the other hand, he tried to use the summoning of the Servant of Concealment Arianna's projection to inform the Evernight Goddess about the exact situation.

After completing these two matters, Klein had no idea what the final outcome would be. He had mostly focused his attention on the fact that Amon's avatar had been replaced by "His" true body.

When he arrived at his final destination and saw the roaming angel's corpse, he had just thought of something when he was distracted by Amon's introduction. It took him only until now to realize that the Goddess had long gained some rudimentary control of this Giant King's youngest son through the Death pathway's Uniqueness. "She" had been patiently waiting for an opportunity to use this cursed angel.

And the concealment forces that filled the Forsaken Land of the Gods helped "Her" conceal the illusory black tubes very well.

Suddenly, in the ancient palace above the gray fog, at The Fool's seat situated at the end of the long, mottled table, the dark red figure that kept warping and scattering took the form of the scholarly Klein with his black hair and brown eyes.

With just a thought, Klein's consciousness and Spirit Body had returned to Sefirah Castle!

Following that, he used the close connection between his body and Sefirah Castle, together with the prayers of the Tarot Club members, to amplify the resonance effect. He then saw himself—glazed eyes, on the brink of losing control. He saw Amon's projection which had circled around the bluish-black palm using an "error."

The monocled Amon raised "His" head, making eye contact with Klein, who was seated at The Fool's seat.

Klein beckoned for the Sea God Scepter and raised it.

The entire gray fog boiled as the entirety of Sefirah Castle quaked.

A vast amount of terrifying power gathered over, transforming into a torrent of lightning. The blue gems that lit up at the same time sent an illuminating light that surged down like a torrent, drowning Amon's avatars and his own body.

A deep rumble of thunder echoed as the terrifying silver lightning tore everything it enveloped apart.

Amon's projection disintegrated, and Klein's body was destroyed.

He had finally succeeded in committing suicide.

After completing this attack, Klein, who was high above the gray fog, immediately cut off the connection between Sefirah Castle and the real world, so as to prevent Amon's true body from creating any new accidents.

Right on the heels of that, he began to wait for the “miracle” and waited for his “resurrection.”

Beside the deep ravine which had grayish-white buildings at the bottom, Amon’s true body adjusted the crystal monocle, stealing the curse that kept Bladel “existing.”

The bluish-black giant immediately began to rot, quickly being reduced to bones. The illusory black tubes didn’t persist, and they instead shrank back into the depths of the darkness.

Dressed in a pointed hat and a classic black robe, Amon stood there. “He” raised “His” head and looked into the sky silently for a few seconds, as though he was looking at Sefirah Castle through the fog of history.

Finally, “He” pinched the crystal monocle and muttered to “Himself” as the corners of “His” mouth curled up.

“Interesting.”

†

In the ancient palace, at the end of the long, mottled table, Klein sat at the seat belonging to The Fool. He carefully looked down at the grayish-white fog.

He discovered that the Beyonder characteristics that had been destroyed with his body had unknowingly entered the Historical Void. It fused with the Worms of Spirit from the past, turning them corporeal.

As long as Klein willed it from Sefirah Castle, these Worms of Spirit would immediately be able to escape the fog of history and reform his body in the real world.

The miracle of “resurrection” was essentially a deeper use of one’s strength from the past.

"Miracles" happen using the past and future? Klein frowned slightly as he attempted to analyze how the "Miracle" in Miracle Invoker came about.

After thinking for a few seconds, he quickly pulled his attention back and attempted to revive himself in Sefirah Castle. Then, he discovered a problem:

His body could only be revived in the real world. Furthermore, it had to be within a certain range of his remains. As for his Spirit Body, it could be reborn above the gray fog, but Klein's Spirit Body hadn't been destroyed—it was sitting on the high-back chair of The Fool.

Obtaining help from the past works. The number of resurrections I'm using now is depleting the number I'll have after I become a Miracle Invoker… From the looks of it, there's only one chance now. Tsk… Amon should be guarding my "corpse" now. I have to think of a way to get out of this predicament…"His" sense of time is different from a human's. He's a very patient God of Mischief… Yes, my current state can only be maintained for three days. After that period of time, I won't be able to borrow powers from the past to resurrect… If it really doesn't work, I'll just abandon my body and become an undead! Klein's mind raced. Although he was somewhat vexed, he was in his most relaxed state over the past few days.

He finally got out of that nearly hopeless situation.

He looked at the high-back chairs that had symbols light up on their backs, as well as the burgeoning and contracting dark red stars. Klein exhaled and relaxed as he leaned back into his chair. He couldn't help but reveal a smile.

"These are my anchors."

Author's Note: This arc has finally come to an end. The whole story's origins was when I was reading the Cthulhu myth. When I saw the line about the stars being right, I suddenly thought of this: We often say that Cthulhu will awaken soon, but what happens if Cthulhu has already awakened…? For those who don’t know much about Cthulhu, it doesn’t matter. Just treat this name as an evil god. After all, the corresponding deities were completely reconstructed by me.

Chapter 1169 - Klein's Plan

◆

The flashing dark red glow slightly warmed Klein's heart. He felt that he wasn't that lonely, and that someone still remembered him.

As the illusory, overlapping sounds of prayers became clearer and clearer, turning increasingly real, noisy, and chaotic, he realized that Sefirah Castle was summoning him, and the resonance between the two was growing stronger.

After all the members of the Tarot Club had completed their prayers, Klein had a vague feeling that he could enter Sefirah Castle at any time, allowing his consciousness to manifest there instantly. However, he was still obstructed by that one last obstacle.

This problem was finally resolved after he completely digested the Scholar of Yore potion.

It was also because of this that he had the opportunity to return to Sefirah Castle before Amon broke past the obstruction from the God of Glory, Bladel.

In just two short days, all the members of the Tarot Club have prayed. Generally speaking, there shouldn't be a coincidence like this… Some aren't problematic, but there are some that seem to have been affected by the Goddess and Will… I was lucky enough, so I naturally had a good "development"… After careful thought, he realized how unreasonable certain parts were, but this was something that could be explained, and there was no need to pay too much attention to it.

After changing his seating posture slightly, Klein's gaze gradually darkened.

Although he felt that he might not be able to return "home" the moment he saw the door of light and cocoons, he still felt that his hopes were completely destroyed upon confirming that this world was his former hometown. The light of dawn was swallowed by the darkness.

Back then, using "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era" as an honorific name might be a revelation given to me by my spiritual intuition… In the deepest part of my heart, I might've sensed something… Yes, I remember that I transmigrated while I was sleeping. But why was I wearing a T-shirt and loose pants while hanging in the cocoon? Klein frowned slightly as he cast his gaze at the grayish-white fog under Sefirah Castle.

As he searched for the reason for the fragments of light in the fog of history, he tried hard to recall every detail of that fateful night.

Finally, he found the corresponding historical segment:

Zhou Mingrui, who was wearing a t-shirt and loose pants, set up the luck enhancement ritual before dinner. He took four steps counterclockwise and recited incantations like "The Immortal Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings."

In his memories, nothing had happened back then, but the scene in history wasn't like this!

After Zhou Mingrui finished his four steps and completed the ritual, his face turned pale and his eyes glazed over.

Following that, he ate his meal in a daze. He read books, watched dramas, and fiddled with his phone as if he was completing a predetermined program.

Finally, Zhou Mingrui came to the sink and looked at his lifeless eyes in the mirror. He brushed his teeth, washed his face, and went to bed.

During this process, he didn’t change out of his T-shirt and loose pants. He covered himself with the blanket and closed his eyes.

Before long, an intense light and violent shaking ended the corresponding historical scene.

Klein couldn’t help but raise his hand and rub his temples. He gave a self-deprecating laugh.

So the idea of there not being any changes and everything being normal after the luck enhancement ceremony was simply what I concluded. In actual fact, my body had already experienced certain anomalies…

If it were in the past, he would definitely feel horrified and scared about the truth of the matter. However, after suffering from shock so many times, with his world view nearly collapsing just moments ago, such a “trivial matter” was unable to generate any intense ripples in him.

However, after discovering this, combined with the Emperor’s “transmigration”—a result of buying a mysterious silver plate—as well as one of the hanging Spirit Bodies in the transparent cocoons actually having a cell phone on them, Klein quickly had some guesses about what had happened back then.

It should be the owner of Sefirah Castle affecting reality, disseminating the luck enhancement ritual, mysterious silver plate, mutated cell phones, and other things. Anyone that obtains them and performs some required procedure would end up being pulled above the gray fog at some point, hanging by the door of light…

This was a random selection. It didn’t point to a specific target. I don’t know if I’m lucky or unlucky.

However, why was it named “Quintessential Divination and Arcane Arts of the Qin and Han Dynasty”? Was it randomly made up by the influenced humans, or was it really passed down from the Qin and Han dynasty era?

It's not that it's impossible. If the "when the stars are right" prophecy is true, and if it corresponds to the Creator—the Oldest One—then "He" has always been in a deep slumber underground. "He" was like that in ancient times, a time that was far more ancient than ancient times. As for Sefirah Castle, it's said that it was a manifestation of parts of "His" body… This isn't a sanctuary or escape pod…

In the beginning, the Oldest One was, on the one hand, waiting to awaken and destroy the world. On the other hand, "He" was trying to influence reality with a tiny amount of constant fluctuations. By disseminating the ritual and making other arrangements, wouldn't that be somewhat contradictory?

That prophecy must've been made by the humans that were influenced by "Him"…

Klein stretched out his right hand and lightly knocked on the edge of the long mottled table, stuck in a conundrum that was temporarily impossible to answer.

Soon, he remembered a sentence and some things.

That statement was:

"Whatever separates will definitely converge, and whatever converges will definitely separate."

Those things were:

The ancient sun god, Amon and Adam's father deliberately separated "His" negative personality;

Beyonders who were close to the ground or encountered some corruption would gradually form a brand new self;

After reaching the moon, Emperor Roselle's personality had changed a little without him realizing it;

Many of the twenty-two Beyonder pathways were conflicting, just like Demoness and Hunter.

Perhaps the Creator—the Oldest One—was an amalgamation of contradictions, and “He” could only relieve this problem by sleeping… Klein had a certain guess, but he was unable to verify it.

He wasn’t even sure if the Oldest One, who would awaken when the stars were right, as spoken of in mythical legend in “his previous life,” was the Creator of all things who splintered into everything in present-day myths.

This required more clues and more evidence to confirm. He couldn’t just rely on his own guesses and imagination.

It’s not like I’m a Visionary, Klein thought in a self-deprecating manner. He then cast his gaze upwards. It was almost comprised solely of gray nothingness there, with some grayish-white clouds floating there.

There are still many things I need to confirm. For example, is that so-called “Chernobyl” a sanctuary created by humans after the awakening of the Oldest One? Or did the Beyonder characteristics of the twenty-two Beyonder pathways really originate from the Oldest One? Another would be the positions of the constellations. Is it actually normal, or is it abnormal now? Does the 1368 apocalypse correspond to the moment when the stars are right? And finally, the origins of the first Blasphemy Slate and what exactly is on the moon…

Thinking of this, Klein suddenly stopped tapping his fingers and softly said, “For example, the hometown of the Elves, the legendary Western Continent, whether it exists or not, and why can’t anyone go there…”

The answer to his question was a long period of silence. He slowly leaned back and rested his arms on the armrest.

After a few minutes, Klein closed his eyes and had an idea. Or rather, he decided.

After he successfully revived, he planned on staying in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for some time to seek out some questions.

Just as Emperor Roselle had said, many of the answers were in the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Blasphemer Amon had wandered here for more than a thousand years to explore the history that surpassed the First Epoch.

Furthermore, if he kept heading east in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, he might reach the legendary Western Continent… Klein cast his gaze outside the ancient palace as he looked into the distance.

To him, staying in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for some time was also a type of strategy. At the very least, this would attract the attention of Amon, making "Him" not need to mobilize "His" avatars in the outside world to search for Gehrman Sparrow in Loen or Backlund. That would bring great danger to the people that he knew.

Thankfully, the avatars of Amon who knew that I'm soft-hearted had been wiped out. The corresponding information was also not propagated because of the existence of concealment… If not for that, Amon might end up directly using the lives of Benson, Melissa, Leonard, and Miss Justice to threaten me… I don't even dare to think of the outcome… Heh heh, the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck has finally shown its powers… Phew, even if I want to leave the Forsaken Land of the Gods, I don't have a solution now. I have to barge into the place where the Dark Angel is sleeping… Klein shook his head and felt that even if he could resurrect, he would be facing all kinds of dangers.

No matter how he thought about it, a Scholar of Yore wouldn't last long if he were tracked by a King of Angels!

The key to the matter was that the Evernight Goddess was still digesting the Uniqueness of the Death pathway. "She" could only spare a limited amount of power for infiltrating the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Once the Angel of Time, who wielded the authority of "Error," was prepared, it was nearly impossible to accomplish what had happened today.

On the one hand, I have to seek help from other possible existences. When I successfully revive, I will attempt to use my marionette to recite the honorific name of the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Let's see if "They" have any means to descend into the Forsaken Land of the Gods. "They" had fed on the ancient sun god back then, so 'They' definitely do not wish for Amon to obtain Sefirah Castle…

On the other hand, since the Scholar of Yore's potion has been completely digested, I'll have to consider becoming a Miracle Invoker. As long as I have an angel's status and become a complete Mythical Creature, my situation will be much better. At the very least, I'll be able to withstand a wave of Amon's ravings when facing "His" true body… Klein decided to use the medium to spy on the terrifying maggot cluster on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range once his Spirit Body recovered. From there, he could obtain the knowledge corresponding to a Miracle Invoker.

It was highly likely that it was The Half-Fool of the Antigonus family!

After considering his future plans, he looked around and answered the crimson stars one at a time.

"The Tarot Gathering will proceed as usual today."

He wanted to see if Ma'am Hermit, Mr. Hanged Man, and the others could provide him with inspiration and allow him to be revived far away from Amon.

Of course, it was necessary to use an ingenious excuse.

After responding, the world above the gray fog became extremely quiet again. Klein sat at the seat of The Fool, temporarily with nowhere to go.

After a moment of silence, he leaned forward slightly and used his right hand to support his head, looking straight ahead.

On the long, mottled table, a variety of delicacies and exquisite candles appeared. As for the high-back chairs around it, they became even closer in style to the current times.

One figure after another appeared. One of them was an elderly man with a loud voice and silver strands in his black hair. Another was a woman who was nearly fifty years old. She had an Asian face with short hair that only reached her ears. Some of them were young men who were playing with their phones and enjoying the sumptuous food, while others were young ladies who were laughing and joking…

Behind them, new figures appeared one after another. It was the gray-eyed Dunn with a receding hairline, and Daly with her blue eyeshadow and blush.

With a smile on their faces, they surrounded the long, warm table surrounded by candlelight above the grayish-white fog. They chatted happily and commented on the delicacies from time to time.

Klein maintained his expression and posture as he propped his hand on the side of his face and silently watched this scene in stillness for an extended period of time.

Chapter 1170 - Ritual

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, North Borough.

Leonard, who had just arranged a mission for his team, saw the boundless gray fog and heard Mr. Fool's response.

He let out a long sigh of relief and said in a low voice, "Seems like there are no more problems."

Since Mr. Fool was able to provide feedback, as per normal, and convene the Tarot Gathering, it meant that "He" had already won the battle against Amon.

This way, Klein was likely able to escape from his predicament.

In Leonard's mind, Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice scoffed:

"Don't count your chickens until they've hatched. After you enter Sefirah Castle, observe if The Fool is wearing a monocle on 'His' right eye."

"Are… Are you saying that the present Fool might be Amon in disguise?" Leonard's eyelids twitched as he hurriedly asked.

Pallez sighed and said, "You can't eliminate this possibility. Amon can really do such a thing."

"…I will take note." Leonard's relaxed state of mind instantly tensed up again.

†

On the Future, in the Sonia Sea.

Mr. Fool actually responded after so much time… Does this mean that The World Gehrman Sparrow's disappearance had something to do with "His" plan? I can't be sure. Perhaps Mr. Fool's lack of response during this period of time was to save Gehrman Sparrow. And now, "He" has succeeded… "He" didn't directly mention this matter. "He" is planning to let The World tell the story at the Tarot Gathering? After hearing Mr. Fool's voice, many thoughts instantly flashed across Cattleya's mind.

From Queen Mystic's letter, she suspected that George III's death was due to Mr. Fool's interference. The disappearance of The World Gehrman Sparrow was also an extension of this matter.

Cattleya's first reaction was to write to Queen Mystic Bernadette and tell her that Gehrman Sparrow has been found. However, after some thought, she suppressed her urge, and she prepared to participate in the afternoon's gathering. She wanted to know the details and figure out what she could and couldn't say before sending Queen Mystic feedback.

Regardless, it seems like the matter has been resolved. The Admiral of Stars exhaled and sat by the window in peace as she took in the blue sky.

†

In the periphery of a primitive forest on Sonia Island.

Alger Wilson stood on a thin tree branch, looking at the port and the blue skies not far away.

The strong winds around him swirled without dispersing as they affected the trees nearby.

As the illusory grayish-white fog appeared, Alger was first delighted before he felt a little terrified.

Mr. Fool only responded after quite some time… This means that “His” previous state was indeed a little abnormal.

However, “He” has already recovered…

“He” didn’t respond to my loan request regarding The Sun’s Unshadowed Crucifix. He discovered my test and discovered a hint of my hidden thoughts…

I can’t do such things again in the future! Mr. Fool has only issued a simple warning this time. “He” might punish me directly next time.

Thou shalt not test God. Thou shalt not test God.

As his thoughts raced, Alger lowered his head and piously said, “Thank you for your kindness and forgiveness.”

†

Backlund, inside the Hall family’s luxurious villa.

Mr. Fool didn’t pass on my question to Mr. World… Is this because the Tarot Gathering will proceed as normal in the afternoon, and there will be time for us to communicate? Audrey realized certain problems from the delay in the response. Generally speaking, Mr. Fool’s reply is very timely. It was more than fifteen minutes this time… “He” was handling other matters—very important matters? Is it related to George III’s death?

Regardless, a fifteen-minute delay wasn’t too serious a problem. Audrey quickly retracted her thoughts and felt much better.

I’ll know the truth from Mr. World later.

I hope that this incident won’t have any more serious consequences, other than a full-scale war. At the moment, war is already unavoidable…

†

North Borough in Backlund. Beneath Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Mr. Fool didn't say that "He" would help me… Emlyn White held a cup of red liquid and frowned slightly.

He then interpreted the symbolic meaning of the response from another angle:

Mr. Fool specifically emphasized that the Tarot Gathering will proceed as normal in the afternoon. He wants to tell me that the opportunity to escape from the predicament lies with a member? Could it be The Star?

Uh, in short, I should be able to leave this week.

Emlyn had been taken into protective custody and kept behind Saint Samuel Church's Chanis Gate, so no matter what happened in the outskirts of Backlund, it was unlikely for it to affect him. Furthermore, it was impossible for him to suddenly escape from prison and head to places like the Blood Emperor ruins. Therefore, when Klein hinted to the other members last week, he hadn't been involved.

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Upon hearing Mr. Fool's response, Derrick jumped up from bed, the excitement from his face was overflowing.

Mr. Fool hasn't disappeared! Mr. Fool hasn't forsaken the City of Silver like the Creator did!

He paced back and forth a few times, feeling the urge to immediately rush out of the room and head to the twin towers where he could tell the Chief the good news.

However, having had more than a year to mature, those experiences had left a clear mark on him. Finally, he calmed down and decided to attend the Tarot Gathering and obtain the promise of receiving the blessings before he sought the Chief again.

Perhaps, the lack of response during this period of time was a test of me, the Chief, and the City of Silver, one set by Mr. Fool. "He" wanted to see if we would rapidly lean towards the Fallen Creator… It was unknown when Derrick's thought processes had a hint of The Hanged Man's colorful thoughts.

Of course, he didn't have any other thoughts because of this. From what he knew, it was very normal for deities to test their believers. Back then, the Creator had left behind many similar legends.

Despite being done with his contemplation, Derrick still couldn't sit still, and he continued pacing back and forth in his room.

He had never felt such anticipation towards the Tarot Gathering in the "afternoon."

In the City of Silver, in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, the "afternoon" was a relatively abstract concept. As there weren't enough labels to confirm the time, they could only use the frequency of the lightning to define day and night, without going into any finer details.

†

Backlund East Borough, inside a two-bedroom rental apartment.

"Ha." After receiving Mr. Fool's response, Fors couldn't help but laugh out loud.

As a best-selling author, she had a rich imagination. Before Mr. Fool responded, she had already come up with one terrifying story after another:

Mr. Fool had exchanged “His” death for George III’s failure;

Mr. Fool’s ploy was discovered by the deities and was besieged;

Mr. Fool’s old injuries relapsed and “He” fell into a deep sleep. Without “His” blessings, The World Gehrman Sparrow was being pursued by “His” enemies…

These stories didn’t develop in the same way, but the end was very similar. Fors would once again succumb to the full moon’s ravings, eventually losing control and becoming a monster.

Phew… Fors exhaled and said to Xio with a beaming smile, “I just realized today that Mr. Fool is the most important man in my heart. Uh, a ‘Him.’”

“More importantly, you have to become a demigod as soon as possible and completely escape the curse of the full moon,” Xio replied seriously.

After joining the Tarot Club, she had learned of her friend’s true situation.

“Yeah!” Fors nodded and said with a smile, “In short, I need to drink a glass of wine to celebrate!”

†

Above the gray fog, inside Sefirah Castle.

After calming down, Klein used Cogitation to restore his Spirit Body state.

When I first learned Cogitation, I was required to imagine something that doesn’t exist in this world so as to replace what’s on my mind. That way, I can truly enter Cogitation. At that time, my first reaction was to outline an intercontinental missile from Earth, but I didn't succeed… Heh heh, I didn't think too much about it back then. Now, in hindsight, this might've already spelled certain problems… It's not something that doesn't exist in the world, but one that has been snuffed out in the fog of history… Klein rubbed his temples and naturally recalled a matter of the past.

He immediately focused his mind and planned on obtaining the Miracle Invoker potion formula before the Tarot Club.

At that moment, Amon was patiently guarding the spot where he had died. He could only stay in Sefirah Castle, so there was nothing else he could do.

After some consideration, he grasped towards the exterior of the ancient palace and pulled an item from the gray fog's Historical Void.

It was a black notebook bound with a hard-paper cover. paper.

The Antigonus family's notebook!

Sure enough… It's not a manifestation of the Uniqueness. It's just that there are some powers left behind by The Half-Fool of the Antigonus family… Klein sighed and threw the notebook onto the long bronze table in front of him.

This was because the content of the notebook might be problematic. He didn't intend to decipher the formula of the Sequence 2 Miracle Invoker through it. He was only using it as a medium for divination.

Following that, Klein conjured a pen and paper and wrote a divination statement:

"The original owner of this notebook."

Putting down the pen, he picked up the paper and notebook, leaned back in his chair, and repeated the words he had just written.

After repeating it seven times, he entered a hazy dream. He saw a mountain peak that reached into the clouds. At the top of the mountain, there was a dilapidated towering palace that was separated from reality.

In the palace, there were many places covered with moss and weeds. At the very end of the hall was a huge stone chair. Its surface was inlaid with dull gemstones and gold. In the middle, countless transparent maggots were huddled into a cluster as they slowly squirmed and grew, extending out like slippery tentacles covered in patterns.

Unlike before, this time, Klein saw the “monster” directly and clearly saw “His” actual appearance.

The palace above the gray fog suddenly began to shake violently, and Klein’s figure was hoisted up in midair.

In the next second, his Spirit Body collapsed into numerous squirming Worms of Spirit that crawled all over the ground.

Sefirah Castle immediately quaked, and everything returned to its original state. Klein’s Spirit Body took form once again.

He sat at The Fool’s seat and rubbed his temples before saying with a wry smile, “It really is The Half-Fool with the Uniqueness…”

After he muttered to himself, Klein did a slight recollection before picking up the pen and began to write down the knowledge he had obtained from prying into the secrets of the Mythical Creature.

“Sequence 2: Miracle Invoker

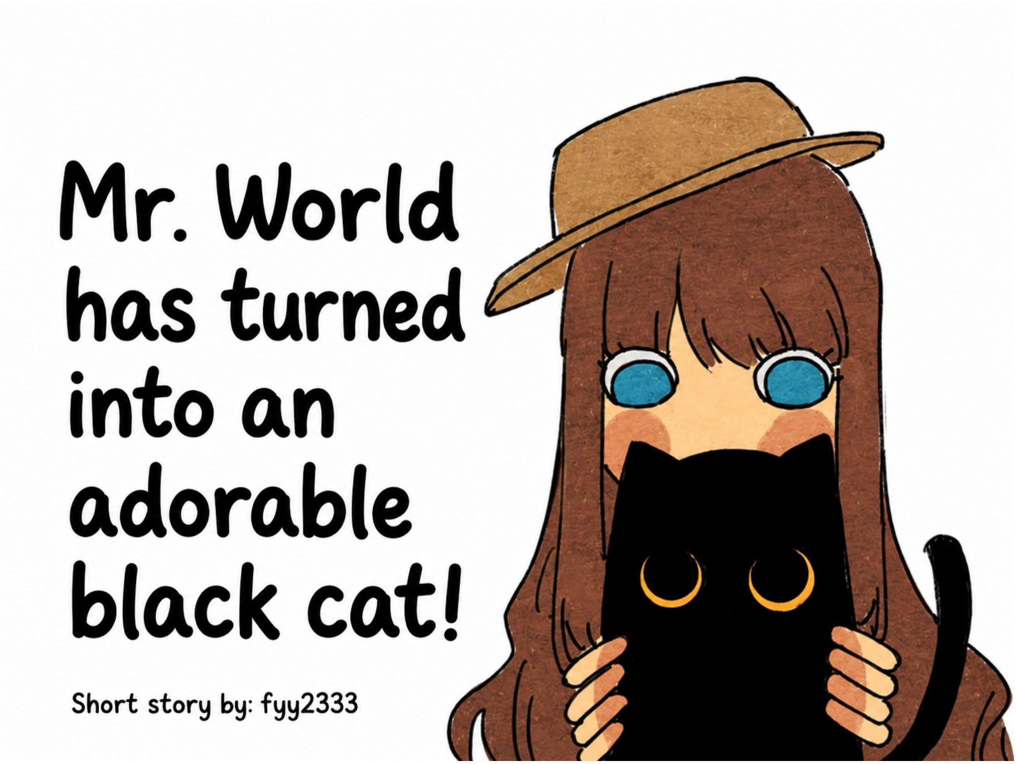
“Main ingredients: One heart of the Dark Demonic Wolf (God of Wishes) or the Beyonder characteristic of another Miracle Invoker.

“Supplementary ingredients: 300 ml of Dark Demonic Wolf’s blood, one Worm of Time, one Worm of Star.

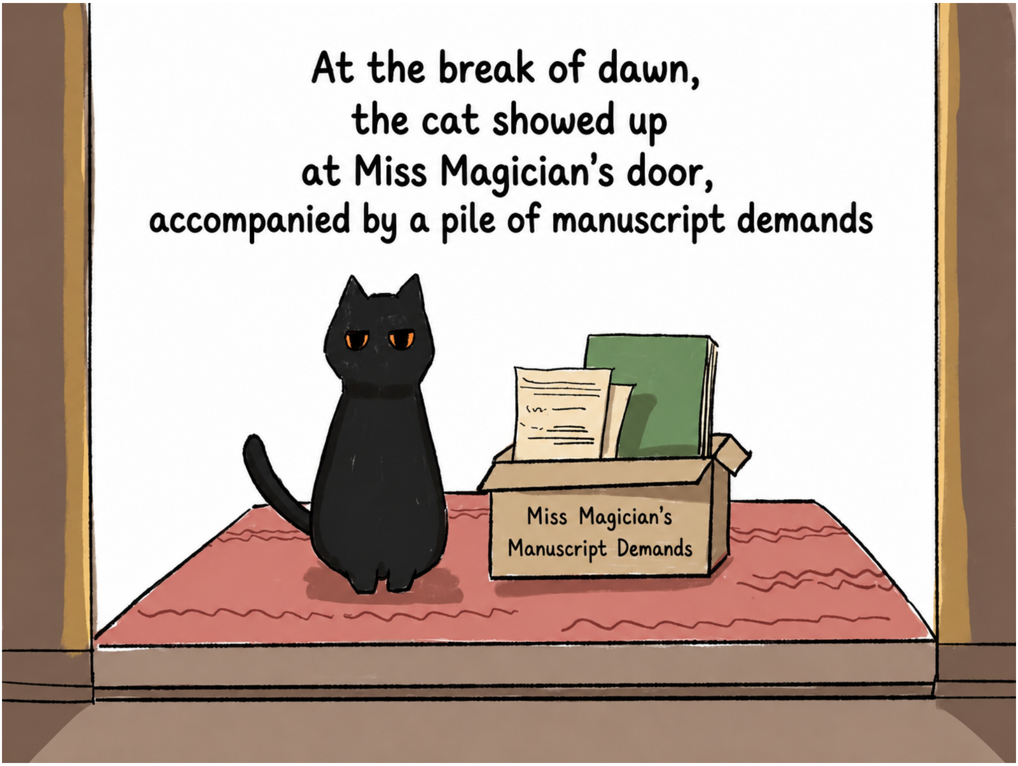
"Advancement ritual: Return a piece of history that has been left behind to the present era."

"I just realized today that Mr. Fool is the most important man in my heart. Uh, a 'Him.'"

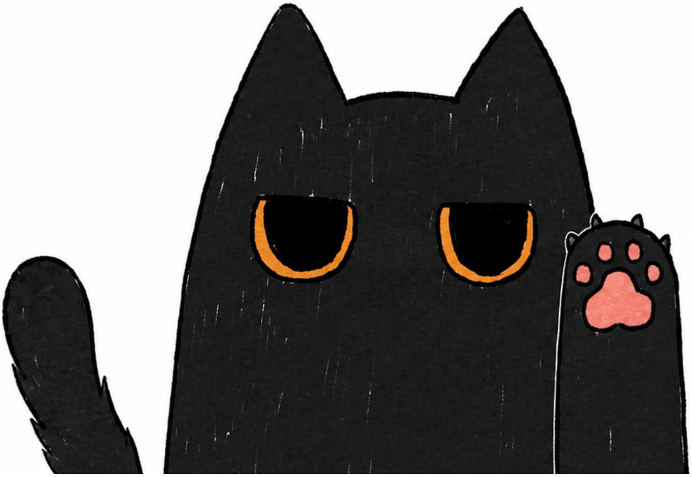
I love Klein and Fors so Much, here some cute Little Story:

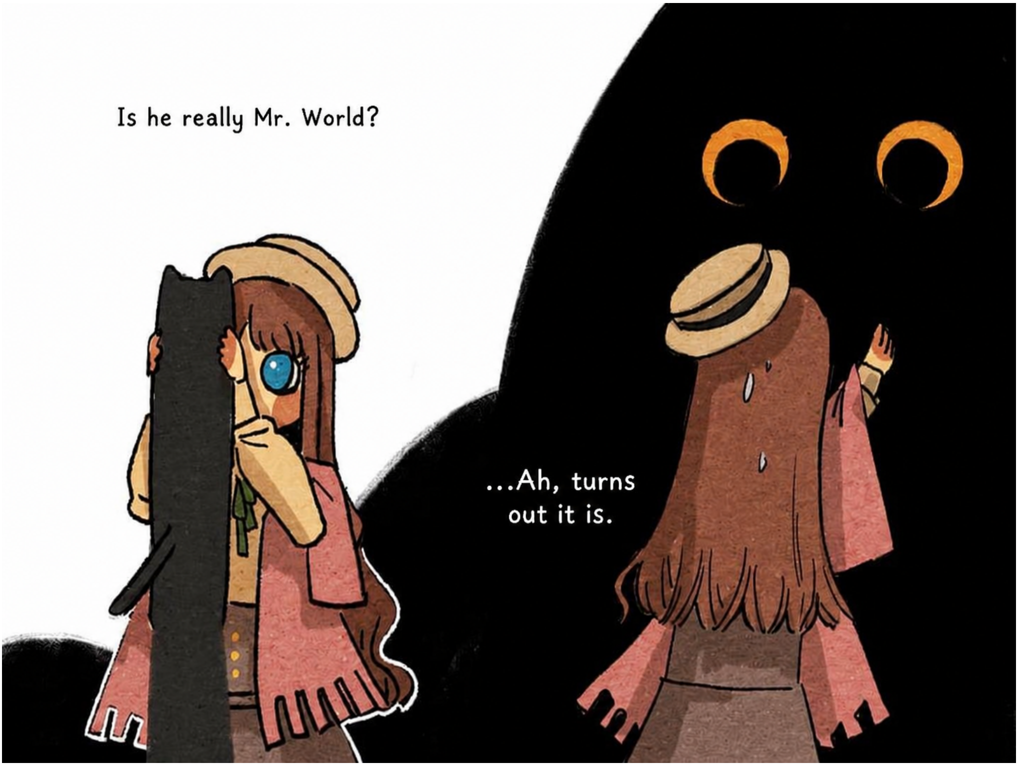

Mr. World has turned into an adorable black cat!
Short story by: fyy2333

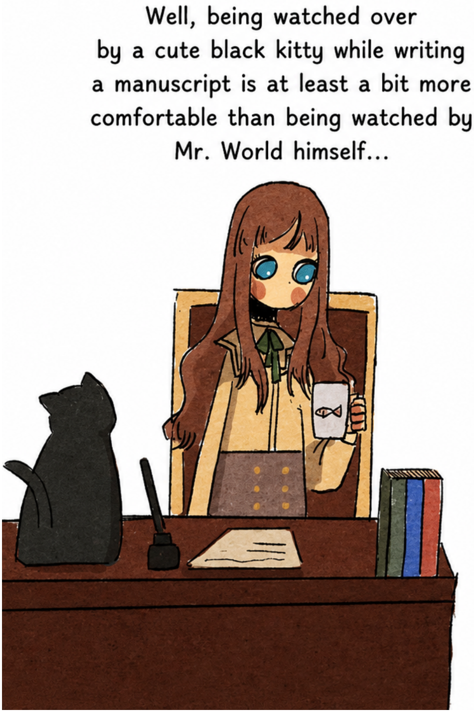
At the break of dawn,
the cat showed up
at Miss Magician's door,
accompanied by a pile of manuscript demands

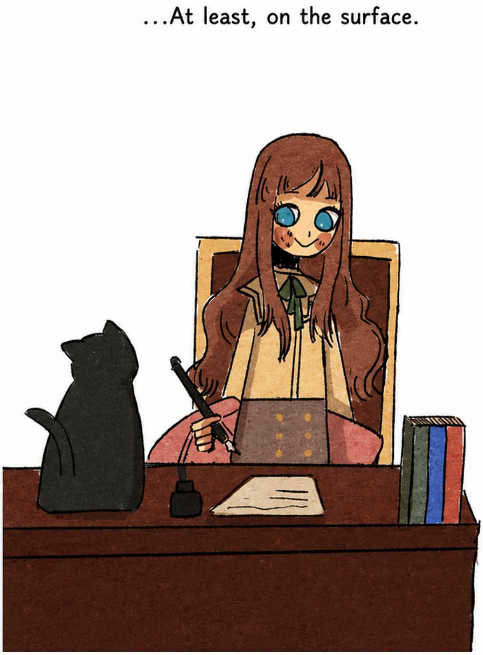

Miss Magician's
Manuscript Demands

Mr. World had turned into a cat.
He became a black cat with
pink paw pads and a bushy, fluffy tail.

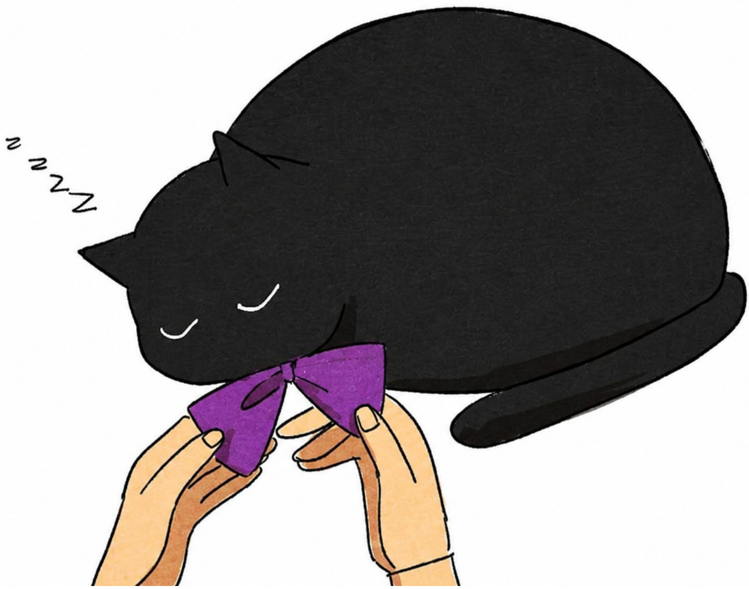


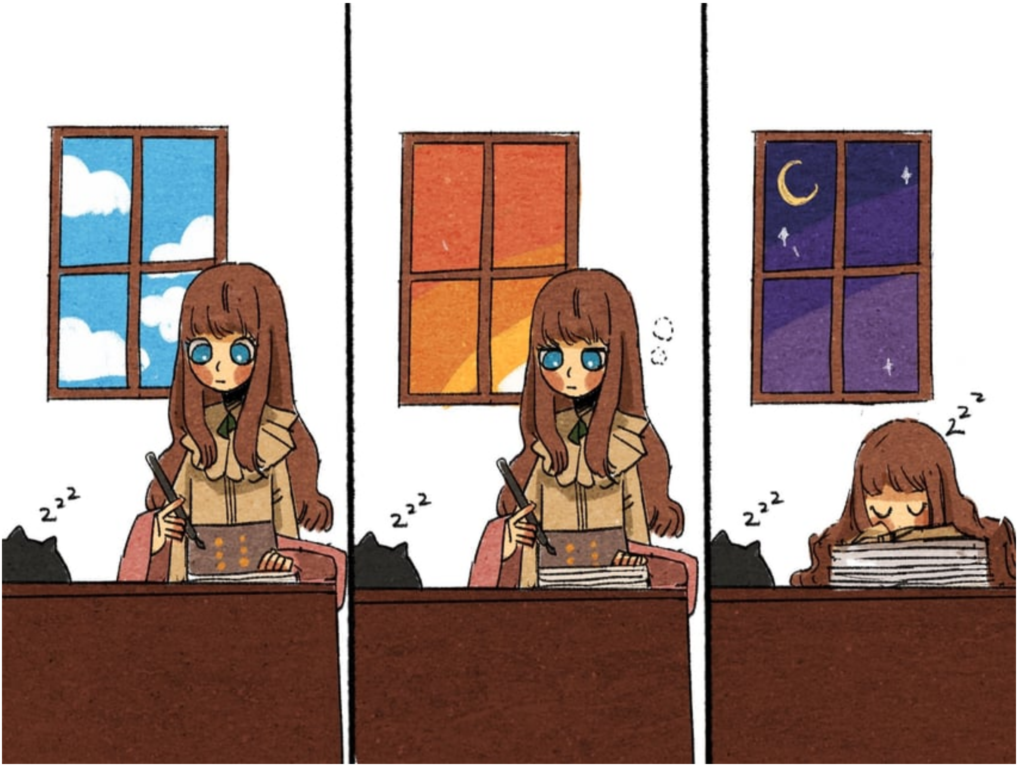

Is he really Mr. World?
...Ah, turns out it is.


Well, being watched over by a cute black kitty while writing a manuscript is at least a bit more comfortable than being watched by Mr. World himself...


...At least, on the surface.

It seems to have become a lot tamer now...
I hope the sleeping Mr. World doesn't mind.

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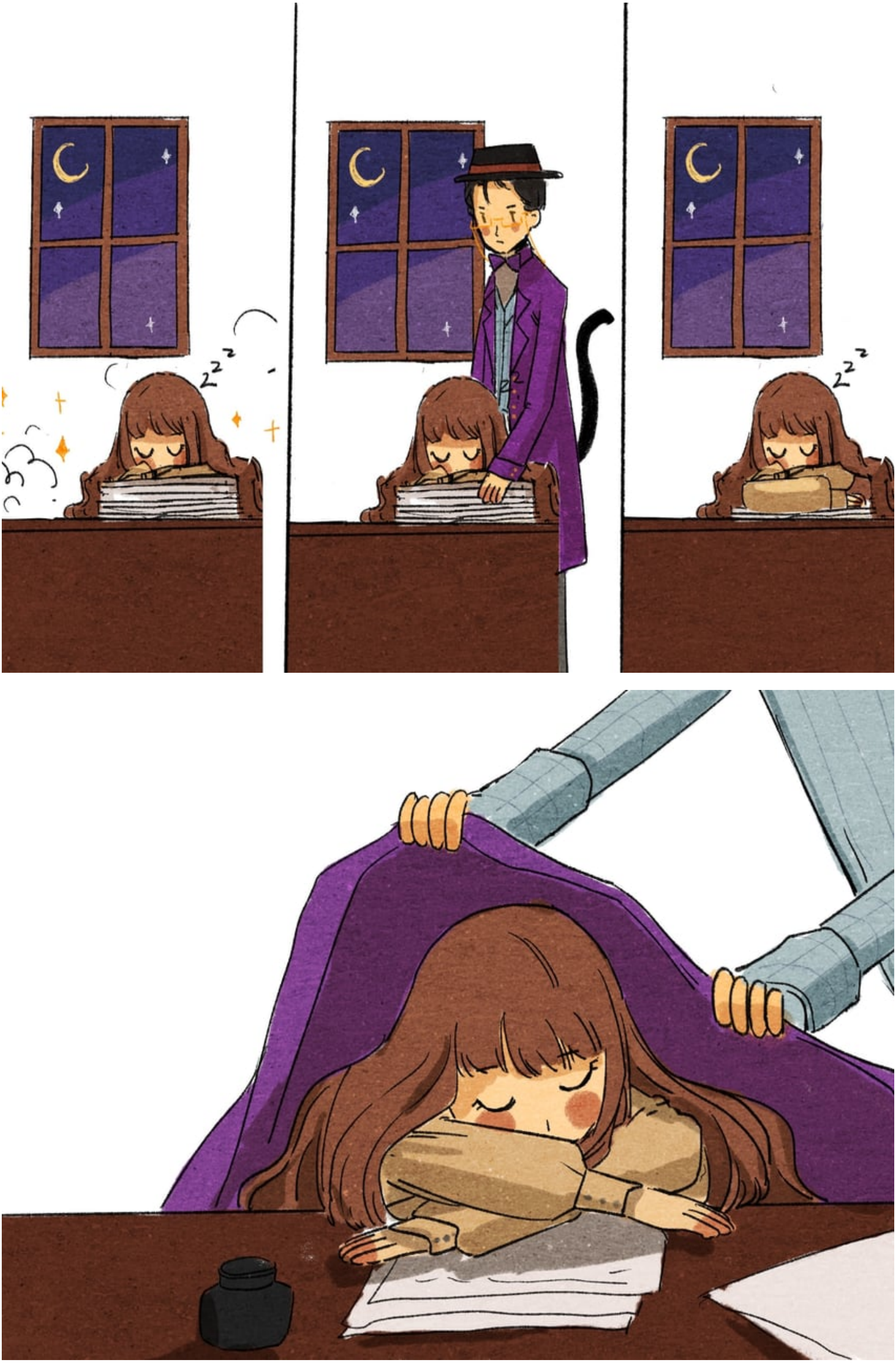
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[image]

Chapter 1171 - The Third One

* * *

Let a piece of history that has been left behind return to the present era… Return, not reappear… The meaning of the two are completely different. It’s not sufficient for me to write the true history of the Fourth or Third Epoch and disseminate it to complete the ritual… Klein’s right hand, which was holding the fountain pen, paused. He instinctively analyzed the contents of the Miracle Invoker potion.

After some thought, he found something that perfectly matched the ritual’s requirements.

That was to let the people of the City of Silver escape the Forsaken Land of the Gods and return to the Northern and Southern Continents, allowing this history that had been left behind for two to three thousand years return to the present era!

This isn’t any easier than escaping Amon’s pursuit. The only way to leave the Forsaken Land of the Gods is to enter the Giant King’s Court and open the palace where Dark Angel Sasrir is in deep slumber. This is the ancient sun god’s negative personality. It’s ranked first among the Kings of Angels and is known as the Left Hand of God, the deputy of Heaven. “He” might even be stronger than the current Amon… Besides, “His” current state is being watched by the various deities… Yes, the more controllable aspect of this compared to my escape from Amon is that I can make sufficient preparations… Klein slowly exhaled and felt that there was a certain chance of completing the ritual.

In fact, he knew very well that, even without him, the City of Silver would make repeated attempts to open the door to the Giant King's residence and find a way to leave this forsaken land. It was as if they were moths darting towards the flames, even at the cost of death.

No matter what, with my "participation," the chances of success will definitely be higher than what it is now… Klein subconsciously wanted to open the door to the Dark Angel's slumber ground to attract Amon, creating chaos to offset the damage caused by the Dark Angel's awakening.

This was a tactic he was rather familiar with.

However, he eventually rejected this idea because it was too dangerous.

After spending some time with Amon and finally seeing the level of a King of Angels, Klein instinctively began to fear these terrifying existences. He no longer wanted to use the conflict between them to create chaos.

Just "Their" existence alone could cause irreparable damage to the surrounding Beyonders and the entire region!

Under such circumstances, trying to rely on "Them" to create a chaotic situation was no longer tottering on the edge of the abyss—if one wasn't careful, they would fall into the abyss and into eternal damnation. Therefore, it was best not to try.

Unless he had no other solution, to the point of escaping being just his wishful thinking, Klein didn't want to make such an attempt.

Indeed, a portion of a Miracle Invoker's Beyonder powers comes from history, which is why there's a ritual requirement like this… How did the other Scholars of Yore complete it? Looking at the parchment on the long bronze table, he thought of a possible solution from another angle. If it were me, the only solution I can think of is to isolate some people or history from reality. Only when they are forgotten will I allow them to return to the present era. This might take centuries, or even longer…

What an evil act… Heh heh, it reminds me of The Peach Blossom Spring… Those people living in utopia away from the outside world share some characteristics…

After some thought, Klein believed that the difficulty of this ritual for Scholars of Yore was whether they could survive until the ritual was held. Furthermore, there were too many accidents that could interrupt self-isolation like that.

The Forsaken Land of the Gods has perfectly resolved these issues, but it also brings with it greater problems… Dark Angel Sasrir… What is the condition of this Heaven’s deputy right hand now? Is it related to the resurrection of the ancient sun god… The level involved in such a matter has already reached the ceiling of this world… Why am I always involved in such matters… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh. He could roughly guess that this was due to the destiny Sefirah Castle brought him.

After all, Blasphemer Amon was unwilling to shoulder such a destiny.

Retracting his wandering thoughts, he focused his attention back onto the Miracle Invoker potion formula.

The Worm of Star is from the Apprentice pathway? The supplementary ingredients contain three high-grade spiritual materials of the three neighboring pathways… I’ve already made the Worms of Time into Fate Siphon charms. There’s no way to restore them. Let Leonard’s grandpa ‘lend’ me another one? How can that be called ‘lending’? I’m going to use the upgraded version of a Yesterday Once More charm to exchange for it!

Where should I find the Worm of Star…? There aren’t many demigods from the Apprentice pathway that live in the real world… The Aurora Order’s Saint of Secrets, Botis? However, I’m stuck in the Forsaken Land of the Gods and can’t deal with him… All I can do is ask Ma’am Hermit and Queen Mystic for help. At the same time, I have to urge Miss Magician to become a Traveler as soon as possible… Yes, I can also get her to ask her teacher where Worms of Cosmos might be…

There's actually only one main ingredient. It's either the heart of the Dark Demonic Wolf or the Beyonder characteristic produced by other Miracle Invokers. It's no longer two as one…

Yes, that also means that, at this level, there are very few scattered characteristics. They've all gathered…

The Dark Demonic Wolf is also known as the God of Wishes. That's a standard angel, a subsidiary god. If I can't find any materials that can be used, wouldn't I be slaying a god?

The level of an angel can already be considered a hidden existence. There's a fundamental difference from being a Sequence 3…

Just thinking about it makes me scared…

After making a list of helpers that he could rope in, he felt a lot more at ease. He had a feeling that he no longer feared his debts when they reached a significant amount.

He lifted his right hand that was holding the fountain pen, and he continued to record what he had previously learned.

Most of this was something he already knew, and he could only use it as a reminder.

Finally, he wrote down incomplete information in the corner of the parchment.

"Sequence 1: Attendant of Mysteries

"Main ingredients: One Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic."

This piece of information meant that Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics were difficult to obtain through other means, with only three to choose from.

One of them is on The Half-Fool on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range. It's with the Uniqueness. The other is with Zaratul. There's still one more. According to what Leonard said, the True Creator has clues to its location. Where could it be… Yes, Little Sun and the rest had hunted Shapeshifters in the northern city ruins, Nois. There seems to be a high-level existence of the Seer pathway lurking there. I wonder if it corresponds to Miracle Invoker or Attendant of Mysteries… Klein gradually had a thought, and he planned on visiting Nois for a preliminary investigation after he resurrected and escaped Amon.

After digesting the knowledge he had gained, he summoned his golden pocket watch from the junk pile and opened it to check the time.

Before he destroyed the Blood Emperor's ruin, he had sacrificed many things that he didn't need in battle, above the gray fog to prevent any damage.

Despite that, he still lost quite a bit after the battle and his eventual suicide. Furthermore, they were all extremely valuable. Just the thought of it made him almost lose control.

Groselle's Travels, Death Knell, Creeping Hunger, Fate Siphon charm, Flaring Sun Charms, Marionette Qonas and his equipment, Marionette Enuni and his two rings, and the adventurer's harmonica… No, I can't think about it anymore. Thankfully, I had thrown Azik's copper whistle above the gray fog ahead of time. Thankfully, I can still summon the Historical Void projections of these items. They're just accompanying me in a different form… Uh, probably not for Groselle's Travels… Klein's temples throbbed as he couldn't help but feel heavy.

He sighed and seriously mourned over the items, especially the mystical item that had accompanied him for a long time: Creeping Hunger.

After a long silence, Klein forced his attention back to the present. As he waited for the Tarot Gathering to begin, he casually thought about the ancient sun god and the other matters such as Chernobyl.

Suddenly, he frowned slightly.

Since this is my hometown, there have never been transmigrators. They're all ancient humans that were released by Sefirah Castle. Then, do places like the Chaos Sea also have similar existences? Was Chernobyl converted into a sanctuary?

According to what Amon said, and what I saw in my divination, the ancient sun god had indeed woken up in Chernobyl. Then, is he a "transmigrator" released from Sefirah Castle, or a survivor of a sanctuary?

If it's the latter, who's the third person inside the cocoon…

Upon thinking of this, Klein was alarmed as his pupils dilated slightly.

He already had a certain guess about the history of the elves. It likely had nothing to do with Sefirah Castle.

This way, he still couldn't find the correct corresponding identity of the third, or more correctly, the first "transmigrator."

This "transmigrator" didn't seem to leave behind any traces in history!

Without any hesitation, Klein's consciousness sank into the grayish-white fog. With the power of Sefirah Castle, he came directly to a certain part of history that was relatively distant.

It was made up of many fragments of light, and the clearest one was the suspended Zhou Mingrui above the door of light.

And beside Zhou Mingrui, the corresponding fog of history was instantly lit up due to his sufficient knowledge of Roselle. He saw a young man who also had his eyes tightly shut in the cocoon.

There was no need to verify it. Through that sense of familiarity and spiritual intuition, he confirmed that this was the former incarnation of Emperor Roselle Gustav, Huang Tao.

Without bothering to appreciate the Emperor's true appearance, Klein turned his gaze to the other side.

There was a transparent cocoon there, and the figure inside could vaguely be seen.

As he had already seen the other hanged figures, he had lit up many fragments of light in the fog of history. They interweaved and stimulated each other, barely allowing him to see the fuzzy area.

The figure inside was obviously a woman.

Female… A thought came to his mind as he realized that he had missed a direction when he analyzed the "transmigrator."

"Transmigrators" had an objective mindset. They could completely control themselves and not leave any traces that exceeded the times, but there was one thing that couldn't be avoided.

It was very obvious that Sefirah Castle was related to the three pathways related to the Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder. After the birth of a "transmigrator," they had to quickly make a connection with one of these three pathways.

Not only was Klein involved in the case brought about by the Antigonus family's notebook, but he also quickly had the opportunity to choose the Seer potion.

In Intis where Roselle was active, there was the Secret Order, and he got to know Zaratul early on.

According to this logic, the ancient sun god with the Marauder authority was indeed one of the reasonable suspects.

Klein immediately conjured a pen and paper and began listing the corresponding names he knew at the moment. For example, Fourth

Epoch people from the Antigonus, Zaratul, and Abraham family, or the Kings of Angels surrounding the ancient sun god.

Before long, Klein's gaze stopped on a few names.

The first person was none other than the ancient god, Flegrea, who clearly had the authority of Seer. Behind him was "His" subsidiary god.

The God of the Dead, Salinger, and the Goddess of Misfortune, Amanises.

The latter was also known as the Evernight Goddess.

Chapter 1172 - “Unperturbed”

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein stared at the parchment in front of him for a long time without moving.

After a while, he gently tapped the edge of the long mottled table, causing all the items that he conjured to disappear.

He summoned his golden pocket watch and opened it to take a look. He sent a message to Little Sun, informing him to prepare to participate in the Tarot Gathering.

About a thousand heartbeats later, dark red beams of light rose from the two sides of the long bronze table, condensing into different figures on different high-back chairs.

Without any gaps in time, all the members of the Tarot Club looked at the figure sitting at the very end who was shrouded in gray fog.

Seeing that Mr. Fool wasn’t wearing a monocle, Leonard inwardly heaved a sigh of relief. Then, he turned around and looked at the bottom of the long, mottled table to confirm the situation of The World Klein Moretti.

Similar to him, Cattleya, Audrey, and Fors instinctively turned their attention to The World Gehrman Sparrow after seeing Mr. Fool.

One of them knew that The World was in a dangerous situation and could only seek Mr. Fool’s blessings. Another had failed to receive any feedback for two days, and she suspected that Gehrman Sparrow had really been embroiled in the matter regarding George III, with something definitely having happened during that time. The final one knew that George III's matter was extremely risky, and was a little worried that Mr. World would suffer serious injuries.

Seeing that The World Gehrman Sparrow was perfectly fine without any abnormalities, Audrey retracted her gaze, curtsied, and bowed towards the end of the long bronze table.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

With the world situation becoming even more chaotic, she felt a little comforted by the fact that the Tarot Club could still maintain its original state. This significantly improved her mood.

After the Tarot Club members bowed under Miss Justice's lead, The Fool Klein nodded slightly, indicating for everyone to sit down.

Then, he slowly surveyed the area and smiled.

"It seems all of you were very concerned whether today's Tarot Gathering would proceed as usual."

Upon hearing this, Alger's heartbeat sped up as he heard thumping sounds.

Without a doubt, he believed that Mr. Fool was referring to him, and was giving him a gentle punishment.

In other words, "He" had given him a chance to repent.

Alger lowered his head and said with a trembling voice, "We weren't pious enough and thought too much."

Uh… Why is Mr. Hanged Man apologizing on my behalf… Fors, who had instructed Xio to ask Mr. Fool if the Tarot Gathering would proceed as scheduled, was stunned for a moment before she gave up on thinking. She then turned to the end of the long bronze table and lowered her head. She repeated, “We weren’t pious enough and thought too much.”

So I wasn’t the only one who prayed to Mr. Fool over the past few days… Mr. Hanged Man claims to have overthought things because there was a possibility that the Tarot Gathering would be canceled, causing him to have some unnecessary speculations? But Fors shouldn’t have thought of that… Audrey looked across the table and then to her sides, feeling enlightened.

The Fool nodded and looked around again.

“Such concern is considered normal.”

He laughed and sighed.

“I’ve recently used The World’s body to play a game with Amon in the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Thankfully, we didn’t have to skip this Tarot Gathering.”

Everything he said was the truth, but what the others would decipher from this information was definitely far from the actual situation.

And this way, even if the news of The World Gehrman Sparrow being equal to The Fool was released, the members of the Tarot Club would only sneer in their hearts that Amon was trying “His” deceitful tricks again. To have a period of time that The World was equal to The Fool didn’t necessarily mean that The World was always equal to The Fool. A portion of the truth was also a lie.

Played a game with Amon… Old Man’s guess was right. Mr. Fool was deliberately using Klein to bait Blasphemer Amon… From the looks of it, “He” had obtained a rather satisfactory outcome, allowing Amon to suffer a terrible loss… Leonard, who had long come up with speculations, felt that this was completely in line with his expectations and didn’t doubt Mr. Fool’s words at all.

Mr. Fool didn’t reply for fifteen minutes because “He” was in a critical moment battling Amon? “He” has already recovered to such a state?

Audrey was pleasantly surprised and shocked when she heard that. For some reason, she felt a strong sense of honor.

Alger could also tell from Mr. Fool's words that "He" had taken another step towards "His" recovery. He was actually able to hold the upper hand against a King of Angels.

This made him even more frustrated at himself for having doubts and testing The Fool.

Mr. Fool had hinted in advance that the Tarot Gathering might be canceled because "He" had long predicted that there would be a conflict between "Him" and Amon? In fact, it's even possible that "He" had taken the initiative to create this episode by setting up a trap for Amon? Alger instantly made many connections and felt that there was no way he could hide his thoughts in front of such a high-level existence.

He warned himself once again: I can't do such things again!

So Mr. World didn't provide any feedback because his body was being used by Mr. Fool to resist Amon… That King of Angels, Amon, is truly powerful. Mr. Fool actually needed to personally take action… Fors and Xio exchanged looks, not having any more doubts about their previous questions.

Cattleya roughly understood the reason why The World had disappeared. She also guessed that the messenger who had the contractual ties with The World likely wasn't able to enter the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

At the same time, she was surprised by the appearance of a King of Angels appearing on-stage in the present times. She felt that this was one of the signs of the apocalypse.

Emlyn wasn't aware of what happened recently. He merely looked at everyone with a somewhat blank look. For some baffling reason, he felt that he had been locked behind Chanis Gate for far more than a week or two. Perhaps it had been a month or two, to the point that he felt like he no longer had a grasp over the current situation.

Mr. World has come to the Forsaken Land of the Gods… Did Mr. Fool use his body to engage in a battle with that terrifying Amon? Derrick was first alarmed before he felt a strong sense of joy.

This meant that the City of Silver's next exploration would receive tremendous help!

He immediately looked towards the end of the long bronze table, and he blurted out, "Honorable Mr. Fool, the Chief wishes to receive your blessings for a ritual. Are you agreeable to such a request?"

Having long learned of this from his prayers, Klein nodded slightly and said, "Sure."

After receiving his promise, Derrick couldn't help but smile. For a moment, he didn't know how to express his gratitude.

Two seconds later, he lowered his head and said loudly, "My faith lies only with Mr. Fool!"

The Fool nodded and turned to look at Ma'am Hermit. He warmly said, "What questions do you have this time?"

Uh, the Queen didn't say anything in her letter… Cattleya was taken aback as she decided to first ask something she wanted to know. After all, she could still ask several questions.

She deliberated for two seconds before saying, "Honorable Mr. Fool, what's the truth behind George III's death?"

The moment The Hermit said that, Justice Audrey and company immediately focused their attention.

This was exactly what they wanted to know.

Amongst them, The Star Leonard had a certain level of understanding over the matter. He was more concerned about the deeper reason behind this incident.

And among the members of the Tarot Club, the only one who was more confused about the situation was Emlyn. His mind was filled with thoughts like, “what?” and “what happened?”

He hadn’t even read the newspapers recently, so he didn’t know that King George III had been assassinated.

As for The Sun, although he wasn’t sure why George III died for no reason, he didn’t care at all.

The Fool Klein smiled and said calmly, “George III wanted to become the Black Emperor. And for this reason, he dug up the Tudor ruins, engaged in human trafficking, and created the Great Smog of Backlund. He initiated a war, allowing the Feysac airships to bombard Backlund. Unfortunately, he failed at the final ritual, and the secret mausoleum he needed for the ritual was destroyed.”

He briefly described the entire incident in the calmest tone he could make, doing so without mentioning what he had done.

It would be beneath Mr. Fool to explain the situation on “His” own accord.

The Great Smog of Backlund… The airship raid… This was all done by George III to become a god? Audrey’s eyes widened as she instantly recalled the two things she had experienced before.

Suddenly, she understood why The World Gehrman Sparrow wanted to stop George III from becoming a god.

She knew that he was a gentle and kind gentleman, and he would definitely not allow the culprit behind these two tragic cases to go scot-free.

If it were me, I would also have thought of doing so, but I would hesitate and be stopped by the possibility of ill developments… As for Mr. World, he is firm and decisive… This is a matter that involves the deities. Yes, there should also be the will of Mr. Fool in this matter… Audrey glanced at The World Gehrman Sparrow, who was sitting silently at the other end of the long, mottled table. She nodded slightly to express her agreement.

Black Emperor… George III wished to become a god? This… Yes, Mr. Fool has the Black Emperor Card of Blasphemy. Gehrman Sparrow was previously investigating the matter of the Great Smog and human trafficking… Indeed, all of these are connected together. There was actually such a secret hidden behind it… From the looks of it, Mr. Fool's goal has been achieved. "His" plan has succeeded… Therefore, "He" has taken one more step towards "His" recovery. "He" can now face off with a King of Angels head-on… The more Alger thought about it, the more fearful and spirited he became. He felt that, despite knowing of some clues ahead of time, he was completely unaware of Mr. Fool's setup.

Amidst the shock experienced by Leonard, Fors, and the other members of the Tarot Club, Cattleya, who already had a premonition, suppressed her emotions and decided to ask another question:

"Honorable Mr. Fool, what's the attitude of the seven deities regarding this matter?"

Chapter 1173 - Advice

◆

Good question… The Fool Klein inwardly praised her, and he explained by using the Red Angel evil spirit’s explanation in his own words:

“The seven deities wish to have a Black Emperor, but ‘They’ are not unanimous in their candidate for the Black Emperor.

“When George III successfully obtained the ticket to becoming one through secret preparations, the seven deities had no choice but to accept it, regardless of whether they approved of ‘Him’ or not.”

So that’s the situation… Apart from The Moon Emlyn and The Sun Derrick, the other members of the Tarot Club were enlightened. They roughly understood why the Churches acted in a rather contradictory manner when faced with the tragedies of the Great Smog of Backlund, the deaths caused by the Feysacian air raid, and George III’s assassination.

Following that, they suddenly had a question:

Since George III had already made preparations and had reached the final step of carrying out the ritual while obtaining the tacit approval of the seven deities, why would “He” fail?

They immediately thought of an answer:

Because Mr. Fool didn’t agree to it.

Hmm… In the destruction of George III’s Black Emperor ritual, the Churches probably didn’t do anything to stop it. Perhaps, they even provided some help to Mr. Fool's subordinates… Did the Church of the Lord of Storms make use of this chaos to secretly do something? No, they likely wouldn't conceal it too much… Leonard recalled all the details he had previously discovered, and he was confident of his grasp over the overall situation.

The seven deities' tacit approval… Mr. Fool vetoed it and sent The World and other Blessed to secretly destroy George III's apotheosis ritual… But what has this got to do with the Queen? Why did she discover that Gehrman Sparrow has gone missing? Hmm, Black Emperor… The Queen might've participated in the operation led by Mr. Fool, and later, discovered that a participant had gone missing… Cattleya made a guess at the truth through her rich knowledge and insight.

And at this moment, Emlyn had just managed to make heads and tails of the discussions that had just been discussed, and he managed to understand the developments outside during his time in protective custody.

George III had secretly plotted to become a god and received the seven deities' tacit approval. In the end, Mr. Fool's Blessed destroyed "His" ritual, causing him to die on the spot!

Seeing that everyone was silent, The Fool Klein looked at The Hermit Cattleya and said, "Any other questions?"

"There's nothing else this time." Cattleya bowed her head even lower. She was more respectful than before towards the mighty figure at the end of the long bronze table.

Although she had long known that Mr. Fool had the Snake of Fate, Death Consul, and Ancient Bane under "Him," and was in secret control of the Life School of Thought, she still never expected that the powers Mr. Fool could mobilize in the real world were able to destroy a king's apotheosis ritual. Furthermore, "He" had foiled a plot of a King of Angels, the son of the Creator.

Mr. Fool's hidden forces are more exaggerated than I imagined… What effect do the members of the Tarot Club exert on "Him"? A backing faction? Individual growth? Or is it just a backup plan? Cattleya instantly thought of many things and momentarily forgot that she was already a Sequence 4 demigod. No matter which organization she was in, she was considered a member of the upper echelons.

Just the feats displayed by Mr. Fool is enough to make a saint lack confidence… Justice Audrey only took a glance at Ma'am Hermit before she interpreted her mental state.

At this moment, The Fool Klein nodded.

"You may begin."

Upon hearing this, Leonard immediately turned to the other end of the long, mottled table and said to The World, "How's your situation now?"

Fors, Xio, Audrey, and the other members of the Tarot Club also cast their gazes over, expressing their concern for The World Gehrman Sparrow's situation.

From their point of view, Mr. World, who was stuck between Mr. Fool and Angel of Time Amon as a combat tool, was probably in a bad situation. His survival meant that he was already considered lucky enough.

Feeling the varied concern, Klein controlled The World and chuckled hoarsely.

"Not too bad, but not too good either.

"It's all thanks to Mr. Fool's grace that I finally obtained a secret from Amon, but I haven't completely escaped from 'His' grasp"

Without waiting for everyone to respond, he continued, "I'm currently in a rather sticky situation.

"I relied on Mr. Fool's powers to enter a certain concealed state and temporarily extricate myself from Amon's grasp. However, if I were to dispel this state and return to the real world, I'll only find myself back where my body is. And it's very likely that Amon is still loitering nearby.

"I would like to make an attempt at finding a solution. I wonder what your opinions are regarding this matter?"

The meaning behind The World Gehrman Sparrow's words was very clear. He wanted to rely on himself first, leaving Mr. Fool's help as a last resort.

And his actual meaning was essentially the same: Find a way to bypass the restrictions first. And in the case that his solution didn't really work, then he would consider living in the state of being undead.

Solution? Alger and company were suddenly a little excited because the suggestions they provided would be used to fight against a King of Angels.

If they were employed and were of use, then this would be a proud moment in their life, one that would remain for the rest of their lives!

Audrey was just about to speak in excitement when she retracted her words. This was because she knew that she couldn't give random suggestions; otherwise, it could lead to Mr. World getting caught by Amon.

Xio thought about it seriously and realized that she couldn't come up with any useful suggestions. She could only choose to observe and learn.

"Must it be where your body originally was? Do you have any blood or hair that was kept elsewhere?" Alger thought for a moment and gave a suggestion using a question.

The Fool Klein thought for a moment and made The World shake his head.

“No.”

Compared to his original body, a single tube of blood was too little.

Thinking of this, Klein suddenly had an idea:

Perhaps he could use those two tubes of blood as ingredients, combining them with other methods, using Alchemical Life to create a new body!

There are two problems. Firstly, Alchemical Life requires the Spirit Body’s involvement; otherwise, the final product might not be considered my body. Secondly, I don’t know any demigods who can complete Alchemical Life. The only one barely related to them is Frank Lee… Will I end up becoming a mushroom man? Then, I’d be better off as an undead… As Klein thought about it, he nearly shivered.

After The Hanged Man’s suggestion was rejected, The Hermit Cattleya set off from her knowledge of mysticism. She deliberated and asked, “Do you have a Sequence 3 Sealed Artifact?”

“Why do you ask?” The World asked.

“A Sequence 3 Sealed Artifact can respond to prayers within a certain range. You can make use of that,” Cattleya explained simply.

Klein roughly understood what Ma’am Hermit was thinking.

“You’re talking about ‘descent?’”

“That’s right. Get someone to set up a descent ritual at the periphery, and you should be able to respond to it in your own concealed state.” Cattleya first glanced at The Sun and described the specific plan. Then, she realized something as she asked, “Do you really have a Sequence 3 Sealed Artifact?”

She originally wanted The World to seek Mr. Fool’s bestowment.

"I'm already a Sequence 3 Beyonder," Klein replied simply as he controlled The World.

"…" The members of the Tarot Club were momentarily speechless.

They knew very well that Mr. World must've advanced to Sequence 4 at the end of June to become a demigod.

And now, it was December of the same year!

The Queen once said that using the blood of the Snake of Fate to advance would make it easier for me to become a Sequence 3 Clairvoyant than others… Besides, the Tarot Club has given me plenty of precious mysticism knowledge. It has greatly helped me digest the potion… But even so, I still need another half a year before I have a chance of attempting to reach Sequence 3… The Hermit Cattleya subconsciously looked around and discovered that the other members wore stupefied and envious looks.

She sighed silently and said, "Is my suggestion useful, Mr. World?"

The World Gehrman Sparrow shook his head.

"There is a huge restriction when responding in that state."

Once he chose to descend, it would mean that he would begin the rest of his life—no, afterlife—as an undead.

Perhaps, I can combine the two methods… Yes, I can use the method of praying to The Fool, Sea God, or Protector of magic and drama performers to leave the Forsaken Land of the Gods, but that's not urgent. It's too easy to reveal the truth… The Fool Klein made The World look at The Star Leonard while in thought.

Leonard instantly understood what he meant. He tersely acknowledged.

"I'll go back and do some research to see if there are any other ideas."

Clearly, his true intention was to ask Old Man when he was back. “He” was an angel who knew Amon rather well. Perhaps, he could come up with suggestions that no one else could think of.

This was the answer that Klein wanted. He immediately made The World say, “Okay.”

After the discussion of how to escape his predicament came to an end, The World Gehrman Sparrow looked at Fors.

“Help me ask the Abraham family if they still have any Worms of Cosmos that have yet to lose their spirituality. If there are, what will be the price for the exchange.”

A Worm of Star was a high-level spiritual material. Most of the time, it didn’t contain any Beyonder characteristics. Therefore, their spirituality would suffer an irreversible loss. Without any special methods, it would be difficult to preserve it for too long.

Worms of Cosmos… Fors was taken aback before she nodded.

“Alright.”

After receiving an answer, Klein made The World cast his gaze at The Hermit Cattleya.

“If Miss Magician isn’t able to exchange for a Worm of Star from the Abraham family, I would like to entrust you with a mission.”

“What mission?” Cattleya asked with interest.

The World said with a smile, “Hunt the Aurora Order’s Saint of Secrets, Botis.”

Chapter 1174 - Joint Operation

◆ ◆ ◆

The Aurora Order's Saint of Secrets, Botis… Mr. World wants to hunt him? Fors's first reaction was that she had heard wrongly. After all, Gehrman Sparrow had no connection to the Saint of Secrets.

However, she quickly had a rough idea from the Worm of Star that had just been mentioned.

This made her suddenly excited and thrilled. This was because she also wanted to hunt the Saint of Secrets, Botis, to avenge her teacher's family. However, due to her lacking strength and the inability to pay for it, she had kept this thought to herself.

Although it sounds like Mr. World doesn't plan on personally taking action, Ma'am Hermit is also a Sequence 4 demigod, and she has the support of that Queen Mystic behind her… I can provide the utmost support within my abilities! As her thoughts raced, Fors cast her gaze at The Hermit beside her, waiting for her reply.

After some thought, Cattleya said, "Botis is very likely a saint of the Apprentice pathway. It's very difficult to hunt him. Besides, he has the Rose Redemption backing him and the True Creator's protection. With my current level, it's almost impossible for me to complete this mission solely on my own."

"You can seek the help of Queen Mystic. I will also arrange for other partners for you." Klein made The World Gehrman Sparrow reply in a low and hoarse voice, "The reward is the right to choose the spoils of war first, and mysticism knowledge that will allow you to digest the potion within this year.”

It’s December… Cattleya’s heart palpitated when she heard that. She deliberated and said, “When the time comes, I will try, but I cannot guarantee success.”

No matter how difficult the mission of hunting the Saint of Secrets was, it couldn’t be as dangerous as accepting the knowledge injection process from the Hidden Sage. And as for the mysticism knowledge provided by the latter, they didn’t necessarily aid in digestion. There was a high probability that it included mathematics, machinery, and literature.

“No problem. As long as you do it seriously, I’ll still compensate you with the mysticism knowledge even if you fail in the end.” The World nodded and confirmed the deal.

At this moment, Fors finally couldn’t help but speak out:

“Mr. World, Ma’am Hermit, can I join this mission? I might be able to provide some help.”

Even if you didn’t, I would’ve gotten you to… The Fool Klein secretly laughed and made The World nod gently.

“There’s a spot reserved for you in this mission.”

Fors wasn’t surprised at all. She asked curiously, “What can I do? What do you need me to do?”

Gehrman Sparrow replied in an extremely calm tone, “Bait.”

“…” Fors opened her mouth, momentarily at a loss for words. She had a feeling that she knew that this would happen.

The World Gehrman Sparrow continued, “Similarly, you also have the right to choose the spoils of war. You’ll be just after Ma’am Hermit.

“Also, during this period of time, I can help you record Beyonder powers like ‘Traveling.’”

Fors had never expected a reward, as it was her greatest reward to be able to exact revenge successfully. In the future, she might even receive additional rewards from her teacher. Without any hesitation, she nodded and said, “Okay.”

The World immediately cast his gaze towards Miss Justice.

“How’s the digestion of your Dreamwalker potion?”

Thanks to the expedition into Groselle’s Travels and the persistence she had put into her acting, the speed at which she digested the potion was very fast. Her eyes darted around as she thought for a moment.

“I’ve already concluded the acting principles. In another two to three months, I should be able to completely digest it.”

It’s a little slow… Klein mumbled inwardly as he made The World say, “Create more opportunities to act.

“If you can digest the potion before Ma’am Hermit attacks the Saint of Secrets, I can give you Hvin Rambis’s Beyonder characteristic ahead of time as payment so that you can join in on the operation.”

Klein believed that he would have to stay in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for a very long time. Most of the matters in the outside world could only be interfered with through the members of the Tarot Club. It was also beneficial for him to increase their strength as soon as possible.

Furthermore, he wasn’t directly giving it to her. The difficulty of hunting the Saint of Secrets Botis was just as Cattleya had said. It was rather difficult.

“Alright!” Audrey was just fretting over how she could accumulate more credit with Mr. World. Therefore, she naturally agreed without any hesitation when she heard his offer.

In her heart, the members of the Aurora Order were lunatics and destructive maniacs. There was no need to find a reason to deal with them!

In addition, Audrey had previously been troubled by her lack of experience as a Beyonder. This gave her a chance. Although it was rather dangerous, it was still an opportunity.

Gehrman Sparrow sure is generous… To provide the knowledge that can help a Mysticologist digest the potion and a Sequence 4 demigod characteristic… This shouldn't only be for the Worm of Star. It sounds like a supplementary material… He's helping the members of the Tarot Club improve as quickly as possible according to Mr. Fool's will, so as to be effective in the future? Alger listened to The World's conversation with the other members and vaguely grasped a certain truth.

This made him rather vexed. He suspected that if he hadn't lacked faith and had other thoughts, to the point of foolishly testing Mr. Fool, he might've already been "assigned" a mission that could aid him in pushing open the door of godhood.

At that moment, Justice, who had agreed to the request, glanced at The Magician and said with a faint smile, "I'm looking forward to the Abraham family not having any Worm of Star."

"Me too." Fors nodded seriously, indicating that she had the same thoughts.

Seeing that The World was done speaking, Cattleya thought for a moment and said to Judgment, "Do you want to join this mission? Do some intelligence gathering on the periphery. Your ability in this area left a deep impression on me."

Even without Ma'am Hermit's invitation, Xio wouldn't refuse in helping her friend. She nodded gently and said, "I don't have a problem if the operation is in Backlund. If it's somewhere else, my role would be greatly discounted."

A Sheriff and their own area of jurisdiction were always connected. The more familiar they were with the place, the better they could showcase their abilities. Once they exceeded that range, they could only rely on their Beyonder powers.

“Your reward is being third to choose the spoils of war.” Cattleya looked at The Star once again. “If there’s a need, I hope you can allow the official factions to appear at the right moment.”

Leonard chuckled.

“I hope you don’t have to go that far.

“My reward shall also be a spoil of war.”

…If my dear poet friend here wasn’t invited in the end, then the mission of hunting the Saint of Secrets would’ve nearly become a sorority for the female members of the Tarot Club… The Fool Klein muttered inwardly as he made The World Gehrman Sparrow finalize the matter. All that was left was to wait for the Abraham family’s feedback.

Following that, Alger and Derrick reached a rental arrangement for the Unshadowed Crucifix.

Just as they entered the free exchange segment, Emlyn couldn’t help but look towards the end of the long bronze table.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, can you give me a hint? How should I escape protective custody?”

The Fool, who was shrouded in the gray fog, nodded slightly and said simply, “This week.”

His answer was said with great confidence, but it wasn’t a prophecy, but a judgment of the situation.

The current situation had Feysac and Intis attacking Loen, while

Feynapotter was attacking Loen''s allies—Lenburg, Masin, Masin, etc. The three Churches definitely didn't wish to suffer any damage the Sanguine could bring while already having existing enemies. Therefore, Emlyn would be released very soon, but it was hard to say for Father Utravsky.

Similarly, the Sanguine's focus would definitely be shifted to the global situation. It was unlikely for them to have the motivation to continue probing Emlyn and his other "partners."

In addition, in the past two days, the one whose reason for praying was the most forced—apart from Xio—was Emlyn White. Klein suspected that he had been locked in the basement of Saint Samuel Cathedral all this time because it was convenient for the Goddess to exert "Her" influence on him. Now that the matter had ended, he was no longer of any use.

Combined with the three factors, it wasn't difficult to conclude that Emlyn would be free in no time.

The only exception was that if this fellow had really been forgotten. Be it the Church of Evernight or the Sanguine, they had forgotten that there was such a fellow locked behind Chanis Gate. If that was the case, Klein would get The Star Leonard to provide him with some assistance.

Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief and sincerely thanked Mr. Fool.

At the end of the free exchange, The World Gehrman Sparrow suddenly looked at The Hanged Man.

"You said that you've already arrived on Sonia Island and are inside the primitive forest?"

"Yes," Alger replied in puzzlement.

Gehrman Sparrow pondered for a moment.

"You can try to seek out an elven ruin. Perhaps you might chance upon some sort of opportunity."

Alger suddenly thought of the Book of Calamity and the scenes he had seen in his dream. He nodded thoughtfully and said, "Alright."

After another round of exchanges, the Tarot Gathering came to an end. Audrey and company stood up and bowed before leaving the world above the gray fog.

†

After returning to his body, Leonard immediately lowered his voice and described Klein's predicament. Finally, he said, "Old man, do you have any good suggestions?"

"My suggestion? I think it's better to ask The Fool for help," Pallez Zoroast replied without any hesitation.

"…" Leonard coughed lightly and said, "Aren't you going to use this opportunity to make things difficult for Amon?"

Chapter 1175 - Ideas Are Very Important

◆ ◆ ◆

“Making things difficult for Amon?” Pallez Zoroast chuckled. “What benefits can there be? Otherwise, forget it.”

Leonard was momentarily at a loss for words. After a few seconds, he said, “At least it can make you feel good.”

Pallez chuckled.

“I will feel better if you don’t bring this topic up.”

Without waiting for Leonard to respond, this Sequence 1 angel from the Marauder pathway sighed with “His” slightly-aged voice.

“Doesn’t your former colleague have a Deceit Charm? Perhaps he can use this to come up with a solution.”

After getting rid of the Amon avatars in Backlund, Pallez had given the godhood symbols and magic labels needed to make four charms—Deceit, Parasite, Deprivation, and Aging—to Leonard. Leonard had passed on this knowledge to Klein, and the latter had used the knowledge and the Worms of Time to create one Deceit, Parasite, and Deprivation bullet each. Later on, he had used them to deal with Qonas Kilgor, but Leonard wasn’t aware of this.

Leonard whispered thoughtfully, “Old Man, are you saying that by using the Deceit charm, you can mislead Amon and cause him to misidentify the location, preventing him from influencing Klein’s escape?”

In his mind, Pallez Zoroast snapped back, “Do you think it’s possible to use a Deceit charm in front of a Marauder pathway’s King of Angels?”

It’s impossible… Leonard laughed dryly and pressed in a thick-skinned manner, “What do you mean then?”

Pallez Zoroast’s voice suddenly sounded more spirited:

“Deceive the rule that one can only return to where one’s body is!”

“Deceive the rule? That works too?” Leonard asked in shock.

Pallez gave a self-deprecating laugh and sighed.

“Compared to deceiving Amon, deceiving a rule is much easier. After all, underneath this world is madness and chaos.”

This sentence made Leonard speechless for a moment. On the one hand, he wasn’t experienced enough. He didn’t know that orders and laws could be deceived, and on the other hand, he never expected that, in Old Man’s heart, Amon was even more terrifying than the laws of nature and the order of the world.

After nearly ten seconds, he spoke again, “With this method, how high is the possibility of success?”

“It’s very, very low,” Pallez said with a sneer. “However, the probability of deceiving the order of the world like this with a Deceit charm made from a Worm of Time from Amon’s avatar is very, very low. Therefore, my suggestion is still to get him to make a request to The Fool for help. Don’t waste any more time. When fighting Amon, the longer the delay, the more dangerous it will be.”

Leonard pondered for a moment before nodding in agreement.

“I understand. I’ll also advise him to do so.”

Of course, he wouldn’t forget mentioning the highly improbable method that Old Man had suggested.

"It's good that you understand. Seriously, disturbing an old man's reading…" As Pallez mumbled, "His" voice gradually lowered and disappeared from Leonard's mind.

In 7 Pinster Street, the newspaper that was placed on the coffee table suddenly flew up and automatically spread open over the sofa.

†

Using a Deceit Charm to deceive the requirement that I can only resurrect where my original body is? Above the gray fog, in the ancient palace, Klein reconstructed Pallez Zoroast's "suggestion" in his own words.

As soon as he finished speaking, he recalled the animal hide lantern that kept burning: Amon had deceived the laws of nature, allowing the candle to remain in a magical state and continue burning for a week without needing any fuel.

His eyes lit up as he whispered, "This line of thought is something only an angel from the Marauder pathway can think of immediately…

"It might not be impossible!"

Like Pallez, he did feel that, compared to dealing with Amon, it was much easier to deal with the laws of nature.

After seeing hope, he immediately analyzed the possible outcome:

Although I've already used the Deceit Bullet, I can summon it from the Historical Void. After all, before the effects end, I'll definitely reform my body and successfully resurrect…

The laws of nature are truly pitiful. Not only will they be deceived, even the item used to deceive it is fake…

The only problem is that the bullet might not be able to deceive the mysticism law. It was already a little difficult to deal with Qonas Kilgor back then…

Amidst his thoughts, he slowly surveyed the area and gradually gained inspiration.

That was to use Sefirah Castle!

After gaining initial control of Sefirah Castle, he could already mobilize the power of a Sequence 2 angel here.

And many of the things he had come into contact with previously had explained that the authority of Sefirah Castle had a high probability of spanning over the three pathways of Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder. It could generate a convergence effect on the corresponding Beyonders, and it had clearly attracted the attention of Amon.

That was to say, Klein suspected that Sefirah Castle had the power of these three pathways at the same time. However, as a Seer, most of the power he could stir was concentrated in this domain.

With the help of the medium known as the Deceit Bullet, I might be able to stir the other powers of Sefirah Castle… Since I'm already capable of using some miracles in the Seer domain, having power from the Marauder pathway at the angel level is a highly reasonable deduction. The only problem is that there must be a medium of a sufficient level… This way, I don't have to worry about not being able to deceive that rule… As his thoughts brightened up, he seriously began to formulate a plan.

He used the mysticism laws as his target and attempted to formulate a "scam."

In order to reduce the difficulty, it's best to have additional preparations. I can't deceive something out of nothing, at least unless I'm Amon's true body…

Yes. I'll bestow a tube of my blood to Little Sun. I'll create a fake respawn point that exceeds the range.

And then, using the Deceit Bullet as a trigger, stir the corresponding angel-level powers contained within Sefirah Castle, "misdirecting" that rule and making it view the fake respawn point as the real one, while the real one becomes the fake one…

He outlined the details bit by bit, and when his thoughts finally took form, Klein immediately used the mysticism connection between himself and the spot he died, to observe the actual situation with his "true vision."

He saw that the grayish-yellow fog had thinned a lot, and the deep ravine that hid Chernobyl was no different from before.

It was unknown where Amon, who was wearing a pointed hat and a monocle, had stolen a rock from and had placed it on the spot where Klein had passed away. "He" sat on it and patiently played with a human-skinned glove.

"He" occasionally bent the human-skinned glove's finger and stretched it at other times, as if "He" could pass a hundred years doing that.

About a kilometer away, in a certain spot in the grayish-yellow fog, three Amons in black classical mage robes crouched around a rock as "They" seriously played poker cards that "They" had stolen from somewhere. From time to time, "They" would nudge their monocle.

Elsewhere in this extensive moor, Amon would be either alone or in groups, strolling leisurely, writing in thought, or discussing all sorts of questions with one another.

In the dark and dangerous Forsaken Land of the Gods, it was such a harmonious scene. It would've been better if the young men weren't all the same—wearing classic black robes, pointed hats and monocles, with similar black hair, black eyes, broad foreheads, and thin faces.

Just as Klein was about to make a further observation, the Amon sitting on the rock suddenly raised "His" head. "He" nudged his crystal-carved monocle and looked at him.

Across the moor, all of the Amons looked up at the highest point of the fog of history.

Klein immediately retracted his gaze and cut off the connection.

†

In the City of Silver, Derrick Berg arrived at the top of the spire and met Chief Colin Iliad.

“Your Excellency, I’ve already received the promise of blessings,” Derrick said frankly and directly.

With white hair and an old scar on his face, Colin Iliad was visibly relieved. He slowly nodded and said, “That’s good. That’s good.”

He had repeated the sentence in a rare instance.

As an excellent Demon Hunter and the City of Silver’s Chief, he had always been patient, never taking unnecessary risks. Therefore, with the sudden lack of a response from The Fool, he didn’t immediately turn to the True Creator, and he decided to wait patiently for another month.

For the City of Silver, which had been waiting in the Dark Ages for more than two thousand years, a month was something that could be accepted.

Without waiting for Derrick to reply, Demon Hunter Colin left the window and calmly said, “Head back first. I’m going to start preparing for the advancement ritual.”

Derrick glanced at the Chief and said sincerely, “You’ll definitely succeed!”

He didn’t stay any longer. He immediately left the spire and returned home.

After setting up the ritual again and placing the six powerful corpses that he had hunted to the correct position, Colin Iliad began to concoct the potion.

After all of this was done, the City of Silver Chief closed his eyes and lowered his head, chanting in Jotun, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

Above the gray fog, Klein saw ripples of light emanate as he heard a slightly illusory prayer.

He immediately summoned a paper figurine and combined the power of Sefirah Castle with it. He threw it into the prayer circle and conveniently marked the City of Silver’s Chief.

At the same time, with the help of this prayer circle, he observed the situation of the entire spire and the City of Silver. He confirmed that there was no sign of Amon’s parasitic existence near the Chief or Little Sun.

I have to seize this opportunity! Klein immediately conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made him pose as he prayed.

At this moment, Colin Iliad saw the light.

In the holy light, a holy angel with twelve pairs of illusory wings suddenly descended. As clean, white feathers fluttered down, the Demon Hunter was embraced by these wings of light.

This was a blessing from Mr. Fool.

Chapter 1176 - Plot

◆ ◆ ◆

In the face of the angel's embrace, Colin Iliad wasn't astonished. He accepted everything with a calm expression, as though he was already prepared.

The ritual began. He took a step forward, picked up the Silver Knight potion, and poured it into his mouth.

Without a sound, this Demon Hunter's body swelled up, turning into a grayish-blue giant with bluish-black veins covering him. He stood several meters tall, with black cracks on his forehead.

Every inch of this giant contained the indescribable power of mystery and terror. Apart from his head which still retained the appearance of a human, the rest of his body was akin to a Mythical Creature that exerted a strange mental influence.

In the next second, the skull underlying Colin Iliad's head seemed to soften as it sank inwards. With the black crack as its core, his head slowly squirmed, as though it was forming a nebulous vortex.

Such pain made the City of Silver's Chief, who had killed many powerful creatures, unable to restrain himself. He let out a series of howling cries that could make the minds of ordinary creatures split apart.

If it wasn't for the fact that Colin Iliad had already evacuated the members of the spire in advance, leaving behind only the demigod-level Waite Chirmont to watch over him and prevent any accidents from happening, many Beyonders would've definitely lost control.

The remains of the six powerful living creatures that were situated in different spots floated up under the invisible power of the ritual, circling the mutated Colin Iliad, using some sort of mysterious connection to awaken some of the memories of this peerless Demon Hunter.

It was the experience of hunting “demons.” It was him painfully ending the former Chief’s attack with his own hands. It was his life of defeating powerful monsters again and again.

These manifestations appeared like painting on an altar. Sometimes, they would be integrated into Colin Iliad, and sometimes they would be extracted from him, helping him define himself. He maintained a certain level of clarity during the extreme pain and changes.

Only at this moment did Colin Iliad finally understand the essence of the ritual.

As a Sequence 4 Demon Hunter, the hunting of every powerful creature was a battle of intense mental catharsis. It left a deep impression in his life.

With these powerful mental imprints, he was able to locate himself after consuming the potion, and not be lost in pain and madness.

This made Colin Iliad recall a term recorded in some of the books in the City of Silver: “Anchor”!

At Sequence 3, he was considered a deity in a certain sense. He could respond to prayers within a certain range, so an anchor was required.

As this wasn’t the level of an angel, an anchor didn’t necessarily need to be a believer. It could be replaced by other things, such as the clear marks in one’s life that had meaning in mysticism.

In the memories that had been awakened, Colin Iliad slowly regained his self-awareness. He felt his body again and grasped its changes.

Right on the heels of that, a layer of wings formed from illusory light extended out from behind him. They fused with the surrounding “paintings” as they constantly shrank inwards. The surface of Colin Iliad’s body collapsed into a silver armor that was firm and beautiful, but it didn’t possess any weight to it.

After the Demon Hunter advanced to a Silver Knight, due to the difference in the deity’s blessing, there would be minute differences between Silver Knights. Previously, the leader of the King Court’s Chasers, Light Culler Murskogan, had received blessings from the Giant King. Therefore, the various aspects of the Silver Knight domain were much stronger.

On the other hand, Colin Iliad could occasionally make his body condense a Silver Rapier that could teleport. While in combat, it would appear at random during an attack, with beneficial tendencies, bringing about unpredictable changes.

In addition, he could also obtain a certain uniqueness when using Mercury Liquefaction.

As the silver armor finally took form, Colin Iliad had completed his advancement. Apart from not having a single vertical eye on his head, he was equivalent to a Mythical Creature.

At this moment, he raised his right hand and waved it to the side.

At a small hill outside the City of Silver, a silver beam erupted out of thin air. It tore apart everything around it, splitting the small hill into two halves.

†

During Colin Iliad’s advancement to Silver Knight, Derrick Berg completed the bestowment ritual and obtained a small metal tube.

Seizing the opportunity of the City of Silver’s Chief creating abnormalities and drawing away most of the attention, Klein suddenly reached out while in the ancient palace above the gray fog. He had summoned a bullet and Death Knell from the Historical Void.

Right on the heels of that, he did a divination in advance, confirming that there weren't any signs of Amon's parasites around Little Sun. Without any hesitation, he opened the revolver's cylinder and stuffed the Deceit bullet into it.

Pa!

With a shake of his right hand, he closed the cylinder and used the mysticism connection to aim at the spot where he had died.

Bang!

He calmly pulled the trigger and fired the only bullet.

At the same time, taking advantage of this Beyonder effect, he willed Sefirah Castle's powers into mobilizing.

The gray fog boiled once again, including the space around them. A majestic but slightly dark energy surged out like a tidal wave, wrapping around the bullet, passing through the gap and shooting towards the real world.

The light in Sefirah Castle suddenly dimmed. Suppressing his fear and horror, Klein used Death Knell's historical projection to simulate the feeling of a sudden descent. He "leaped" towards the crimson star representing The Sun and leaped towards the tiny tube of his blood.

On the barren moors of Chernobyl, all of the Amons wearing pointed hats raised "Their" heads and looked at the lightning that streaked across the sky. "They" looked at a deep and quiet swath that even the lightning couldn't illuminate.

The Amons nudged "Their" monocles, and after a moment of silence, "They" laughed.

“He doesn’t seem like someone who can come up with such a solution…

“Pallez?

“‘He’ joined this organization codenamed the Tarot Club?”

†

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

The darkness in front of Derrick suddenly turned dark, as if the candles in the room had been burned to ashes.

To the residents of the City of Silver, this wasn’t a good thing. Derrick’s eyes immediately lit up with the light of the sun.

At that moment, bits of light burst out from the deep darkness like transparent squirming worms.

The metal tube that Derrick had received shattered automatically as fresh red blood floated out from it and suspended itself in midair. It didn’t spread apart but instead merged with the fragments of light.

In just two or three seconds, these “light fragments” condensed into one, forming a huge ball of light.

The spherical light ball stretched out and changed, quickly forming a figure.

The figure had a deep outline and a cold expression. He wore a silk half top hat and a black coat while holding a black iron-black revolver. It was none other than Gehrman Sparrow.

Having successfully deceived the laws of mysticism, Klein used the help of his old blood to complete his resurrection!

Without needing any introduction, Derrick had already recognized the visitor through his special temperament. After being stunned for a moment, he instinctively revealed an uncontrollable smile.

“Mr. World?”

Klein raised his head slightly and looked at Little Sun, who seemed to have grown taller. He subconsciously reached out and pressed down on his top hat.

He then nodded gently and said, “I will be in the Forsaken Land of the Gods during this period of time.

“However, I have to leave now. I can’t lure Amon into the City of Silver.

“If there’s a chance in the future, I will cooperate with you.”

Having understood what Mr. World meant, Derrick nodded heavily and said, “Alright!”

Just as Klein raised his right hand and was about to snap his fingers to leave with Flaming Jump, Derrick looked at him and suddenly pointed to the storage cabinet in the room.

“Mr. World, do you need to bring some food with you? There are mushrooms that can produce milk!”

“…” Klein controlled himself, not letting the corners of his mouth twitch. He maintained his cold attitude and said, “I don’t drink milk.”

As soon as he finished speaking, he snapped his fingers, causing a scarlet flame to fly out of his pocket, wrapping around him like water.

The fire quickly dissipated like falling stars, and Klein’s figure disappeared from Derrick Berg’s room.

Outside the City of Silver, in a deformed forest, flames flashed continuously, extending all the way to the moors leading to the north.

After he truly left the City of Silver did Klein slow down his “footsteps” and summon a lantern from the Historical Void.

He had long expected that the revival process would go so smoothly. After all, once he found the correct solution, there was no way that Amon could stop him.

In the City of Silver, Amon only had a few avatars at the Sequence 4 or 3 level, so Klein could use his “true vision” to locate them and eliminate them ahead of time.

And if they could form an avatar at the Sequence 2 level, Klein, who had gained initial control of Sefirah Castle, could stir powers at the power of an angel, allowing him to easily fight such an avatar while being above the gray fog, and would stay undefeatable since he couldn’t be attacked. He had the confidence to defeat his opponent.

If Amon moved “His” true body to the City of Silver, then Klein could choose to revive at his original spot.

Of course, Amon could create an avatar that was almost at Sequence 1 and send “Him” to the City of Silver. However, under the premise of the conservation of Beyonder characteristics, how many avatars could “He” create?

Not more than two!

As for Klein, he could split his remaining blood into multiple portions. He could use the bestowment ritual to send them to Mr. Hanged Man, to Ma’am Hermit, and to The Star Leonard. There were too many spots where he could revive, so there was no way that Amon could guard all of them.

This was an “above board” plan based on his own level, Beyonder powers, and the special ability of Sefirah Castle. Before he attempted to revive himself, Klein was already quite certain of the outcome. The only thing he was worried about was that “Deceit” would be detected by Amon ahead of time, allowing “Him” to interfere in a timely manner, causing his respawn location to change.

Fortunately, his divination had confirmed that the level of danger wasn't high. This was one of the reasons why he dared to try.

Phew, I've really escaped from Amon… As he advanced amidst the dim yellow light, Klein felt the presence of his body, and he heaved a sigh of relief.

Of course, he knew very well that he was going to encounter the relentless pursuit of Amon's main body and various avatars!

Chapter 1177 - Substitute

On the desolate moors filled with deep ravines, Amon stood in different spots. “They” opened “Their” mouths and chanted in Jotun, “The Blessed of the spirit world and Sefirah Castle…”

“The Mystery stemming from ancient times;

“The witness of an extended history;

“Protector of Backlund magic and drama performers;

“The great Gehrman Sparrow…”

These voices were layered as they bored into the void, as though they extended to an infinite distance.

Ten seconds later, all of “Them” adjusted “Their” crystal monocles in different manners and chuckled softly.

“He changed it really quickly.”

If Gehrman Sparrow was still automatically responding to this honorific name, “They” could then use this opportunity to determine the other party’s location and create an “error” to appear directly beside “Their” target.

†

In the darkness that was illuminated by lightning from time to time, the hatted and coated Klein proceeded north at a moderate pace while holding a lantern.

There's a prayer… Amon is using Gehrman Sparrow's honorific name… This means that a number of Amons aren't too far from me… But the City of Silver doesn't have 'His' parasites… They're in the surrounding patrol teams, or in some unexpected creatures? As he walked, Klein suddenly turned his head and listened carefully for a few seconds.

Regarding this matter, he was rather glad that he was cautious enough. He had changed the honorific name that allowed default acknowledgement while above the gray fog. It went from the "Protector of Backlund magic and drama performers" to "Protector of all poor children in Backlund." This came from the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation he had set up.

Yes… Amon is a Cryptologist. It's very likely that he can "interpret" this honorific name from all the information regarding Dwayne Dantès… No, I don't even need an automatic response… As Klein looked at the faint yellow light emitted by the lantern, he quickly made a decision.

He made every Worm of Spirit only capable of listening to prayers, without having the ability to autonomously respond unless they had been given permission from the main body.

This way, frequent prayers would severely affect his daily life, but it wasn't a big problem. This was because, other than Amon's vile harassment, no one else would pray to Gehrman Sparrow since he hadn't spread the word about his honorific name.

After settling this matter, Klein thought of all of Amon's terrifying aspects. He suddenly had some doubts about what to do next.

His original plan was to stay far away from the City of Silver and head to the Nois ruins in the north to investigate the situation there. He wanted to see if he could obtain the main ingredients needed for the Miracle Invoker potion. However, after connecting that ancient city ruins with Amon, a problem was revealed:

Klein could already confirm that the upper levels of neighboring pathways also followed the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence. Since Amon had been wandering around the Forsaken Land of the Gods for more than a thousand years and had come near the City of Silver, how could "He" not be attracted to the Nois ruins in the north?

For the Chief of the City of Silver to not dare to enter, it means the power in Nois City has definitely reached the level of an angel. Amon wouldn't ignore it… "He" probably doesn't dare to directly eat such a high-level Beyonder characteristic of a neighboring pathway, but that doesn't prevent "Him" from setting up a trap… Even if "He" hadn't done so in the past, "He" would definitely be rushing over there now… Of course, I can't exclude the possibility that Amon has yet to discover it because, during the City of Silver Chief's first visit, the Nois ruins weren't as dangerous. Perhaps that power at the angel level came to the Nois ruins later… "He" has been constantly migrating "His" believers to avoid Amon? Amidst his thoughts, Klein felt a little afraid about heading northwest for the ancient city.

He decided to first see if there were any other ways to obtain the main ingredient of the Miracle Invoker potion before considering if he should head to the periphery of the Nois ruins to observe and gather some intel.

With this in mind, he walked towards the wreckage of a tall tower in his black coat and half top hat, guided by the occasional lightning.

Along the way, in the dangerous darkness outside the dim yellow light, monsters lined up and silently followed him.

They were already his marionettes.

Compared to them, the saints of the Seer pathway were even more bizarre and terrifying.

As they walked, one of the monsters that looked like a fish with limbs suddenly chanted in Jotun, "The Sun that is Eternal;

"You are an Inextinguishable Light;

"You are the Embodiment of Order…"

The moment it finished reciting the three-lined honorific name, the monster collapsed to the ground and lost its life.

The honorific name of deities often wasn't limited to three lines, but when chanting, one could choose any three. For example, the Eternal Blazing Sun's complete honorific name was "Eternal Blazing Sun, Inextinguishable Light, Embodiment of Order, God of Contracts, Guardian of Businesses." And just now, Klein had used the first three.

With this method, he prayed to the Lord of Storms, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, and the Evernight Goddess, hoping to receive a certain response.

However, there was no change in his surroundings fifteen minutes later.

It's useless to pray to a Sequence 0 true deity in the Forsaken Land of the Gods? Unless the target is the True Creator, or is an existence that wields things like Sefirah Castle or the Chaos Sea?

That's not right. In Afternoon Town, that clergyman had the Goddess's true name concealed when saying it. When he mentioned the fourth King of Angels, he suffered "immolation" due to the involvement of deities… Perhaps it's because there's still all kinds of divine power in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, not only concealment and degeneration. And the true names of the different deities each have special meaning in mysticism, allowing it to stir the corresponding powers?

This way, it would explain why the City of Silver has been teaching the two true names of Badheil and Herabergen, but they didn't end up establishing any connection with the God of Combat or the God of Knowledge and Wisdom… The prayers in the Forsaken Land of the Gods are not heard by the true deities, or even if "They" can hear them, "They" are unable to respond… This also means that there are no remnant powers of the God of Combat or the God of Knowledge; otherwise, there would have been certain anomalies…

Yes, it's also possible that it's not because there are no anomalies, but that the two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, uh—god-level Sealed Artifacts—in the City of Silver have eliminated them…

In that case, if I were to directly chant the true name of the Goddess, would I cause the surrounding darkness and concealment to stir? If this kind of power can be controlled, I'll have an additional effective trump card when being tracked by Amon… The probability isn't very high. Directly chanting the true name of a deity is an act of blasphemy, and it will result in the corresponding backlash, just like Afternoon Town's clergyman… Based on his logic and the phenomenon he had seen, Klein came up with a theory on the present situation. He was eager to try reading out all the true names of the deities he knew, one by one, and checking their effects.

Finally, he restrained himself and didn't blindly make the attempts.

I'd better go above the gray fog to do a divination first. Otherwise, who knows if there will be an unbearable accident… Hmm, divination involving deities might not give a clear revelation… After muttering inwardly for a while, Klein scoffed at his impulsiveness. My previous plan was akin to: I haven't been courting death for two days. I shall do it seriously today!

At that moment, he had already arrived at a collapsed tower. He sat beside a wall that had only been cut down by half. He reached out to take out a paper crane from the Historical Void, and he ignited it.

He wanted to see if he could contact the Snake of Fate Will Auceptin Ceres if there was a medium. He wanted to know where he could obtain the main ingredients of the Miracle Invoker potion.

Under the illumination of his third summoning of the lantern, Klein fell into a deep sleep, but he didn't dream of anything.

Indeed, it doesn't work… After he woke up, Klein shook his head and let his body enter a Historical Void.

Following that, he took four steps counterclockwise and arrived above the gray fog.

Sitting at the seat belonging to The Fool, he beckoned for a small paper box from the junk pile. Inside was a stack of paper cranes.

These were personally folded by a certain baby.

At the same time, The World Gehrman Sparrow was conjured. He prayed to Mr. Fool in a grayish-white region and requested "Him" to forward his request to Miss Justice, saying that this act could allow her to make contributions to her exchange for the Manipulator potion formula.

Of course, Klein had already revealed that the potion needed to be consumed while amidst a huge emotional resonance.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough, Inside the Hall family's luxurious mansion.

Audrey returned to her bedroom once again and set up a bestowment ritual to obtain the paper crane.

She picked up a thin pencil and wrote on the paper crane's surface:

"Dwayne Dantès has requested you to meet with me."

After finishing her preparations, Audrey followed Mr. World's instructions and placed the paper crane under her pillow before lying down to sleep.

Soon, she saw a pitch-black desolate plain. As a Dreamwalker who had given herself hints in advance, she maintained her consciousness and walked towards the black steeple in the middle of the plains with strong curiosity.

As soon as she arrived at her destination, Audrey's spiritual perception was triggered. She raised her head and looked at the top of the steeple.

At some point in time, there was a giant silver snake coiled there.

This gigantic snake didn't have any scales. Its body was covered with symbols and patterns that formed wheels that were connected to each other, with different labels.

At that moment, the gigantic snake was staring at Audrey with its bright red and cold eyes. It said in a low voice, "What does Dwayne Dantès want?"

This is the angel of the Fate pathway that gave Ma'am Hermit a drop of blood? Audrey controlled her thoughts and calmly looked at the gigantic snake. She said in honesty, "He wanted me to ask you where he can obtain the main ingredient of the Miracle Invoker potion?"

The gigantic silver snake suddenly fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "The number of Sequence 2s in different pathways differ in numbers. Under the situation of the quota of Attendant of Mysteries being filled, there can only be a total of six Miracle Invokers."

A Miracle Invoker is the name of a Sequence 2 potion… Mr. World is going to become an angel? Or is he making preparations for his partner? No, if it's a companion, he can get them to ask "Him" themself… Audrey was first alarmed before she began to look forward to the mysterious serpent's answer.

Chapter 1178 - I Have a Blessed

◆

The gigantic silver snake looked down at Audrey and opened its blood-red mouth.

“The Sequence 1 potion that Zaratul, the leader of the Secret Order, consumed came from an Attendant of Mysteries. In other words, ‘He’ possesses an extra Miracle Invoker characteristic.

“Similarly, it was the same for the ancestor of the Antigonus family back then. Of course, if they were interested in something, or if they had a candidate who had won the favor of the family to the point of them being willing to nurture them, then an angel with sufficiently high status can separate the extra Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic to the other party.

The third Miracle Invoker’s Beyonder characteristic had combined with a characteristic of mysterious origins. It has become Sealed Artifact 0-05, also known as the Magic Wishing Lamp… A true deity once attempted to destroy this item, to separate the characteristics and allow them to converge automatically, but eventually failed.

“The fourth and fifth Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristics are in the form of a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact that exists in the Churches of the Eternal Blazing Sun and Lord of Storms. One of them is named 0-13. It comes from the Third Epoch’s Creator, designated as ‘The Last Banquet.’ The other is codenamed 0-32, a product of the War of the Four Emperors, designated as ‘Theater With Curtains That Never Draw.’

“The sixth Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic might be in the

Forsaken Land of the Gods. During the Third Epoch, there was a remnant Dark Demonic Wolf who occasionally appeared. After the Cataclysm, 'He' vanished without a trace."

Audrey listened attentively and thought carefully for a moment before saying, "You're saying that, under the situation where the Attendant of Mysteries spots are filled, there are only six Miracle Invokers. And now, you only mentioned the Secret Order's leader, Zaratul, and the ancestor of the Antigonus family, but the spots don't seem to be filled.

"In such a situation, there might be an extra Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic."

This wasn't information that The World Gehrman Sparrow had informed her of in advance. Instead, it was a question that Audrey had come up with on her own accord from the details of the answer and her knowledge of mysticism.

The eyes of the giant silver snake moved slightly.

"Indeed. There should be three Attendants of Mysteries.

"But in the Second Epoch, in the era when the ancient god, Flegrea, still lived, the third set of the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic seemed to have disappeared without a trace. No one knows where it is. Likewise for the corresponding Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic. Perhaps it has already combined together and has found a sufficiently concealed method to hide itself."

Audrey nodded gently and said, "I understand. I'll pass on the information to Mr. Dwayne Dantès.

"Oh… He even asked me to ask you if there's anything you need his help with?"

The giant silver snake slithered up and a third of its body stood up.

"No.

“A small matter.

“Yes, I have a Blessed who is an outstanding gourmet. He has a desire to taste ice-cream from the various noble families, so as to determine the most delicious one.”

…This request… Mr. Snake, uh—maybe it’s Ma’am Snake—is really nice to her Blessed… “His” tone is as if he can’t wait… Hmm… This is too simple. I can agree to help on Mr. World’s behalf and complete it on my own. I’ll just treat it as accumulating the sufficient contributions needed to exchange the potion formula… Audrey said thoughtfully, “No problem.

“But how do I send him the ice cream?”

The giant silver snake slowly coiled and said, “Sacrifice it to him. He’s already a Sequence 3 saint and can accept sacrifices in the same city.

“His honorific name is ’The Embodiment of Luck; The Clairvoyant Monster, The Calamity that Spreads Misfortune, The Witnesses of all Fates in Backlund, the Keeper of Chaos and Madness.”

There’s a difference between this honorific name and a normal Sequence 3’s. There’s no name at the end… Audrey’s eyes darted around slightly, but she didn’t say anything further and nodded in agreement.

†

Keeper of Chaos and Madness… Will’s last honorific name is quite interesting… This shouldn’t be the honorific name of the Snake of Fate, but something that “He” used when “He” was at Sequence 3. Some tweaks were made later on… The Monster pathway’s watches over chaos and madness? Or could it be said that in this world, even for Fate, those at the lower Sequences are in chaos and madness? Monsters are working hard to resist all of this, making everything seem normal? After Klein heard Miss Justice’s answer, he didn’t find it odd for Will Auceptin to request for ice-cream. Instead, he found the honorific name of the Life School of Thought president rather interesting.

Heh, having a Blessed… That's like saying "I know someone"… Did Will learn this from me? No, I have a real Blessed, Danitz! Later on, I'll have this fellow sacrifice something for me to eat. I can't really eat those mutated monsters or summon projections from the Historical Void, right? Yes, if I have a chance, I'll invite Little Sun to try them together. I can't let him be obsessed with Frank's mushrooms… Uh, the number of Blessed serving Will definitely won't be less than mine. There might even be more. "He" has the huge Life School of Thought… Klein conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made him reply to Miss Justice, indicating that the ice-cream contributed plenty.

After completing all of this, he rapped the edge of the long mottled table and seriously considered the problem with the main ingredient of the Miracle Invoker.

There's no need to think about the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic with Zaratul. It's impossible for "Him" to separate it to give it to me. "He" only wants to turn me into "His" marionette…

It's not like there's zero hope with Antigonus's two portions, but if that's the case, I'll have to request it from the Goddess again. I can't offer something equivalent… I'm afraid… Besides, the Goddess might not be able to provide it. The reason why "She" wants to seal The Half-Fool, who has lost control, is probably because "She" is unable to kill "Him." Once "He" is killed, "He" will be able to escape his current predicament and revive elsewhere—just like how I escaped from Amon. Under such a situation, the Goddess has no way of getting Antigonus to separate a Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic…

Even a true deity can't shatter 0-05, so there's no point targeting it. It's useless even if I have it… This Sealed Artifact's origins are truly mysterious. There's something very fishy about it…

The Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun's 0-13 is called "The Last Banquet." It comes from the City of Silver's Creator… Why does this person always like to use the names that have dangerous implications… The Church of the Lord of Storms's 0-32 is "Theater With Curtains That Never Draw"… Just the sound of it allows me to imagine what it's like… The chances of obtaining these two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts are very low, but it's not impossible. It just depends on whether the Eternal Blazing Sun and Lord of Storms are willing to support my growth so as to contain Amon…

Yes. Up to now, "They" have yet to show any kindness. I can't find a suitable way to interact with the right person. I can't possibly use divination to spy on the Eternal Blazing Sun again and communicate with "Him" through space, right? If that happens, wouldn't it be better if "He" directly invades Sefirah Castle and takes control of this place?

If I were to nurture Mr. Hanged Man and wait till he has the qualifications to come into contact with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, I'll most likely have become Amon…

The True Creator knows a clue to the third characteristic of the Attendant of Mysteries… "His" divine kingdom and holy residence are in the Forsaken Land of the Gods… These two might be related somehow…

The two sets of Miracle Invoker characteristics and an Attendant of Mysteries characteristics are highly likely to be in the Forsaken Land of the Gods… I wonder which one is in the Nois ruins?

Yes, the True Creator should only know a clue, and not its exact location. Otherwise, "He" would've obtained that Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic before the War of the Four Emperors and effectively increased "His" subordinates' strength…

In other words, the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic is something even a true deity can't obtain quickly, and it's necessary to search for it. It might not be so easy for Amon to come across it, allowing "Him" to set up a trap… If the danger within the ruins were only recently found—having just been transplanted—it would match this trait…

From the looks of it, I still have to make a trip. However, I have to be careful enough. The danger comes from Amon and also from the ruins. Hmm, I'll do a divination first, then I'll observe and gather intelligence from a distance. I won't enter blindly and will be patient enough.

Klein conjured a pen and paper and was about to write the corresponding divination statement when he suddenly thought of something and decided to make another confirmation.

He drew a complicated symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying. He threw it into the crimson star representing The Magician. With Gehrman Sparrow's image and tone, he asked her to question Arrodes.

†

Backlund, East Borough. Fors, who was about to move houses, drew the curtains and lit a candle. She set up a mirror and found Xio to act as a bystander.

She then drew the symbol that Mr. World had given her.

In the room, the environment gradually turned dark as cold winds stirred, causing the two to tremble.

The surface of the mirror suddenly rippled, forming ancient dark red Feysac text:

"You have summoned the great Arrodes. You have to abide by the corresponding rules:

"You have to answer a question for every question asked. If you lie or refuse to answer, you will be punished."

"Alright," Fors, who had been warned, calmly replied.

Following that, she asked curiously, “Where can one obtain the main ingredient of the Miracle Invoker potion?”

On the surface of the mirror, dark red words appeared one after another as other lines vanished. They answered the question in detail:

It’s basically the same as Will’s answer… Above the gray fog, through the crimson star representing Miss Magician, Klein watched the specific process and nodded in disappointment.

After Fors memorized the answer, she said nervously, “It’s your turn to ask.”

The dark red words changed and formed a new sentence:

“Have you had an erotic dream in the past year?”

Phew… Thankfully, it’s still okay… Fors heaved a sigh of relief and said, “Yes.”

This was human nature. She didn’t feel that there was anything to be ashamed of.

Following that, she raised the second question:

“Do you have any suggestions on the matter regarding obtaining the main ingredient of the Miracle Invoker?”

Arrodes dispersed the dark red text and used silver colors to form new words:

“The Abraham family still holds the Apprentice pathway’s Sequence 2 Planeswalker potion formula, as well as the corresponding powerful Sealed Artifacts. A total of two of them.

“The Aurora Order also has one.”

This… Klein’s eyes lit up as he thought of a new possibility.

“Is that so…” Fors frowned slightly and said, “It’s your turn to ask a question.”

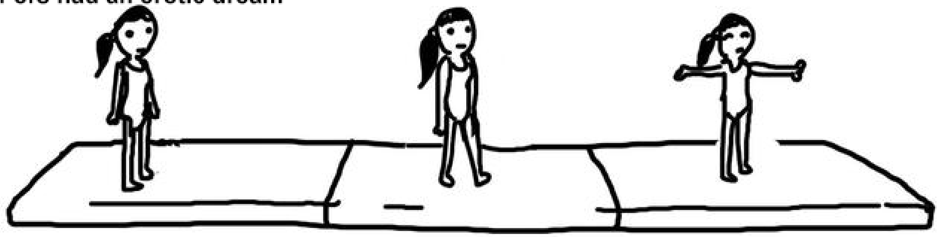
The silver color on the surface of the mirror faded away as dark red colors formed a sentence:

“Other than you, who else was the star of your erotic dream?”

Fors gaped as her face flushed red.

Some people believe Fors have dream with Gehrman, but some also believe she dream with Xio. Here some meme and naughty image of our lovely lazy writer:

Fors' Erotic dream was with Xio

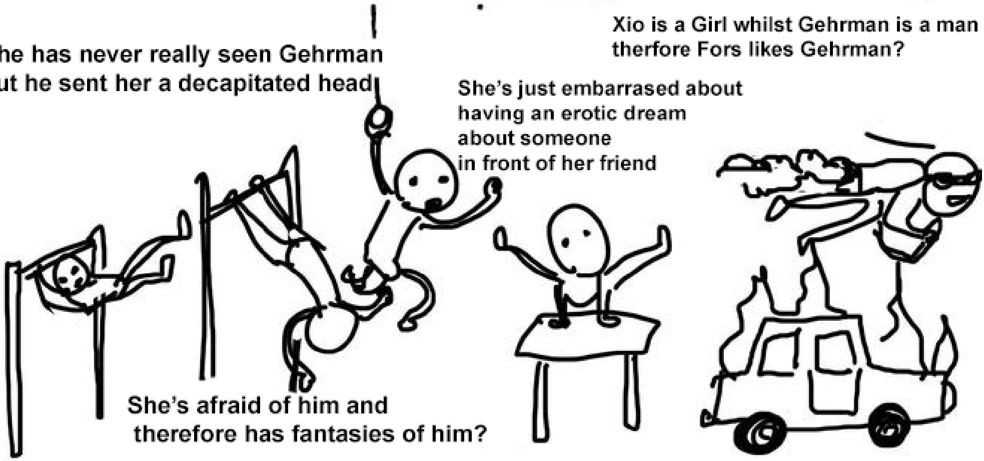


Fors had an erotic dream

Has known Xio for a long time
and was asked about her dream
in front of Xio

Became embarrased looked
and blushed at XIo

Fors' Erotic dream was with Gehrman



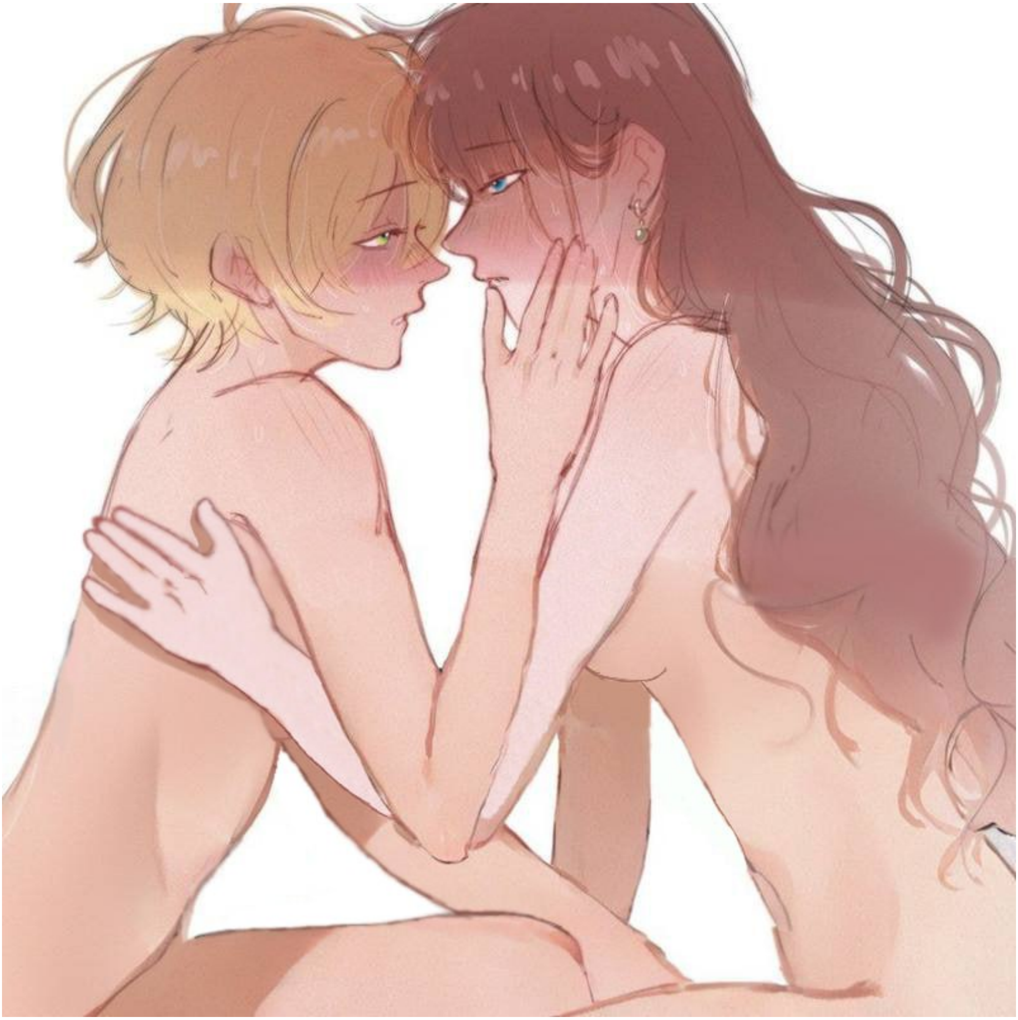
She has never really seen Gehrman
but he sent her a decapitated head

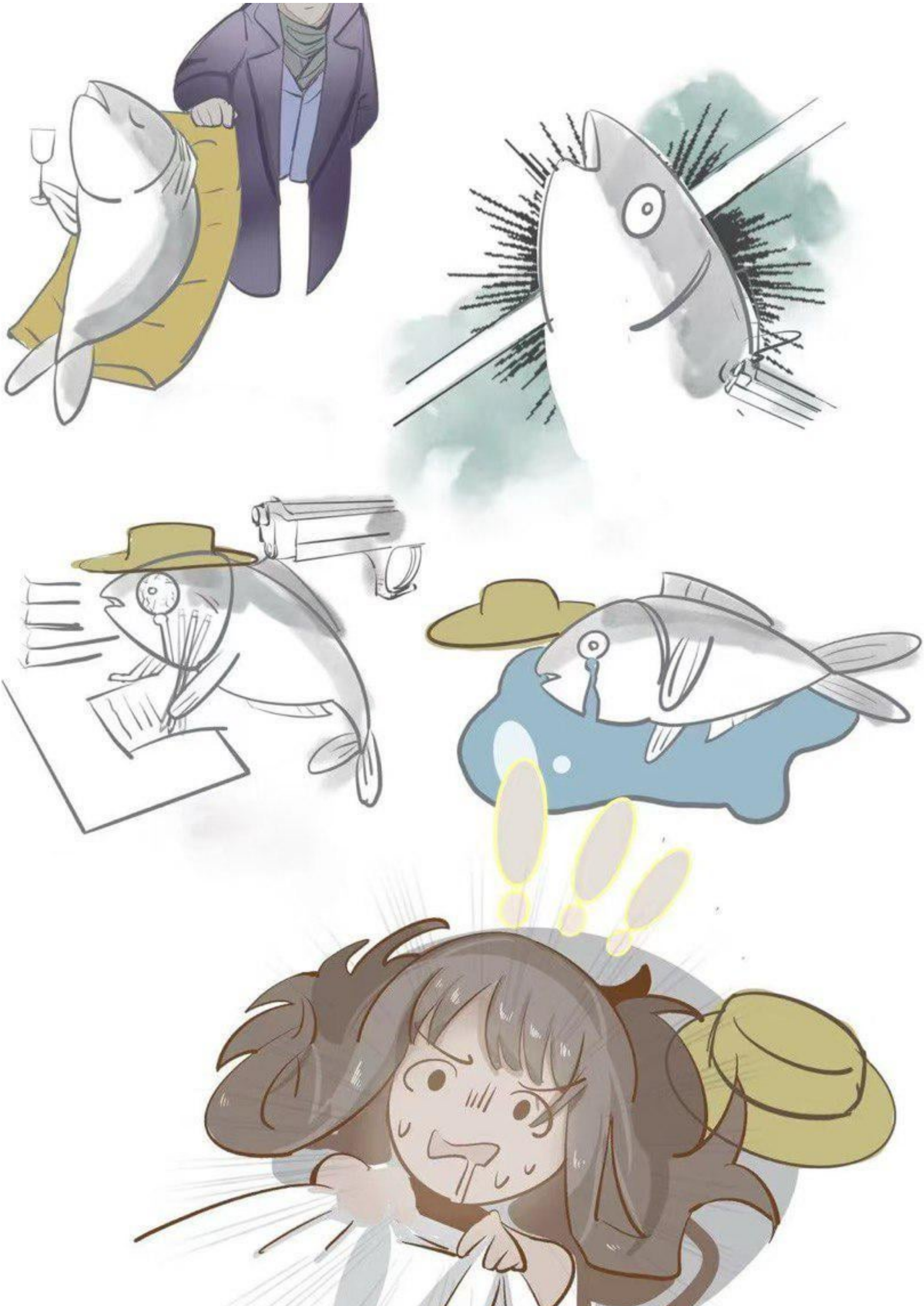
She's afraid of him and
therefore has fantasies of him?

She's just embarrased about
having an erotic dream
about someone
in front of her friend

Xio is a Girl whilst Gehrman is a man
therfore Fors likes Gehrman?

Hahh
..
Hahh
..
YOU LIKE IT
MR. WORLD?





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Chapter 1179 - Preparations Both Ways

◆ ◆ ◆

At that moment, Fors felt her cheeks burning as she stiffened. She didn't even dare to turn her head to look at her friend.

She realized that she had severely underestimated the bottom line of the magic mirror!

After stuttering for a moment, Fors recalled Mr. World's reminder and closed her eyes.

"I choose to accept the punishment."

A silvery-white bolt of lightning fell from the air in the room, but the moment it appeared, the lightning vanished without a trace like it was a hallucination.

The dark red words on the surface of the mirror were dyed silver as they were quickly replaced with new content:

"The question and answer game will end here today. Goodbye!"

Without waiting for Fors to open her eyes and before Xio could react, the rippling light in the mirror instantly calmed down. The gloom and darkness in the room shattered as they were swallowed by the light of the candle.

Wasn't there supposed to be a punishment? Fors waited for a few seconds before opening her eyes slightly. She looked at the mirror that had returned to normal and then at Xio, who was watching by the sidelines.

Xio pointed at the top of her head and said, “There was lightning that smote at you, but it disappeared halfway. Also, the magic mirror had already left.”

“…The magic mirror was only joking? That’s not right. The warning I received was that the questions would be rather embarrassing, and the punishments would be rather heavy… Could it be that Mr. Fool protected me?” Fors rubbed her right cheek as she made a guess.

“Perhaps.” Xio nodded in agreement with her friend.

Just as Fors heaved a sigh of relief and rejoiced, she suddenly realized that Xio was looking at her earnestly.

“W-what’s the matter?” Fors’s heart skipped a beat.

Xio asked thoughtfully, “In that erotic dream of yours, who was the main lead?”

“…Haha, who would remember such a dream from so long ago? Besides, aren’t dreams blurry and unclear?” Fors forced a smile.

Xio tersely acknowledged.

“If that’s the case, why didn’t you answer with that just now?”

“…I was nervous. I was too nervous.” Fors glanced at the luggage that she had finished packing and said, “It’s time for us to move. I miss having a fireplace!”

As she spoke, she walked towards her luggage.

It was only at this moment that she realized that, at times, the outcome was similar whether she answered the magic mirror’s question or not.

Is this the “social death” that was mentioned by Gehrman Sparrow? I really want to bury my head into the ground! Fors continuously took deep breaths in an attempt to calm her burning face and embarrassed heart.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein threw the Sea God Scepter back into the junk pile and scoffed at Arrodes's act.

Despite knowing that I was the one who sent someone to summon it, it actually dared to raise such a question. Only when I stopped the punishment did it hurriedly change its attitude and leave in a panic… It sure had fun…

However, its answer has given me a new train of thought. I really don't need to restrict myself to the path of a Miracle Invoker…

The second Blasphemy Slate is most likely from the City of Silver's Creator, and is now in the hands of Adam… Although Amon and "His" brother are mutually staying away from each other's affairs and aren't on especially good terms, "They" have worked together before. I don't believe that "He" has never seen that Blasphemy Slate… If that's the case, "He" is definitely aware of the Miracle Invoker's ritual and can guess that I'll be bringing the City of Silver out of the Forsaken Land of the Gods. When that happens, "He" wouldn't even need to put much effort into tracking me. "He" just needs to wait at the Giant King's Court…

Yes, I can't go according to the enemy's expectations, especially since this is a God of Deceit and the God of Mischief. Countless accidents will happen… If it's because of my participation that the City of Silver's thousands of years of hope ends up being destroyed, then it'll be completely contradictory to my original intentions…

The problem with a Planeswalker is that I might hear Mr. Door's ravings, and will suffer the scrutiny and corruption from the cosmos that's worse than Sequence 2 angels from other pathways. Of course, this isn't completely unacceptable…

Also, will I need to pay back the two resurrection chances that Sefirah Castle gave me? That's still fine since I'll definitely transfer back to being an Attendant of Mysteries at Sequence 1 because Mr. Door has already blocked off the advancement path of the Apprentice pathway. "He" is at least in control of the Uniqueness and two sets of Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics—perhaps even all three…

It's not necessary for me to switch to Planeswalker, but I have to make the necessary preparations. When my options increase, even if Amon tries to stop me, the difficulty of burying a trap in advance will increase significantly. Only then can I become an angel while under the pressure of a King of Angels!

Yes. I'll stay on the fence for now. I'll prepare for the Miracle Invoker advancement while preparing for the Planeswalker advancement. I'll determine which pathway to take based on the actual situation when the time comes.

Having come to a decision, Klein felt refreshed. His mind was abnormally active, and he quickly came up with a preliminary plan.

I'm not in a hurry to ask Miss Magician's teacher about the Planeswalker potion formula and the corresponding Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. This will scare the Abraham family, making them suspect that Miss Magician worships some evil god and has joined some terrible organization…

With their current situation, there's a high chance that they won't reply. They will change their identities, move, and sever all ties…

Yes, the head of the Saint of Secrets, Botis, will make a fine gift. Regardless of whether the Abraham family gives the Worm of Cosmos, this matter will have to be placed on the agenda… I hope Miss Justice can digest the Dreamwalker potion as soon as possible. I hope that Ma'am Hermit will be prepared. I also hope that the two ladies, Miss Magician and Miss Judgment, will be able to improve before the operation…

Right, according to what Miss Magician said, Saint of Secrets Botis is a defector of the Abraham family, and the Aurora Order holds a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact of the Apprentice pathway. That's interesting… Perhaps I don't need to contact the Abraham family. I might be able to get what I want from the Saint of Secrets. Uh, I have to remind Ma'am Hermit that Botis might be carrying a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, so confirmation has to be made before the operation…

If that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact isn't in the hands of the Saint of Secrets, then I'll probably have to face the Angel of Fate Ouroboros to get it… No, Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts are terrifying to begin with. It's one of the sources of danger…

Phew, I'll first wait for Miss Magician's teacher to reply and see if the Abraham family is averse to any mention of the Worm of Cosmos…

As he thought of this, Klein suddenly felt a hint of self-deprecation. He felt that he and the Aurora Order appeared to be destined enemies. They often had all kinds of interactions.

When the operation begins, the Aurora Order will definitely shout in their hearts:

"Why is it you again? Why is it us again?"

After letting out a breath, he gathered his thoughts and conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow. He replied to Miss Magician who had reported the answer.

Following that, The World prayed once again, requesting Mr. Fool to forward his request to Danitz.

†

On a certain island in the Fog Sea, Danitz, who was waiting for the Golden Dream, turned his head to look at Anderson and chuckled.

“I’m going to summon Gehrman Sparrow’s messenger.”

Anderson pricked up his brows and scoffed.

“You’re qualified to consume the Conspirer potion.”

“You were the one who made it too obvious. Even I could sense that you were afraid of that messenger.” Danitz felt even more pleased with himself as he said humbly.

Anderson suddenly guffawed.

“Why do you not suspect that I’m pretending to be afraid? I’m just trying to find a reasonable excuse to avoid hearing things I shouldn’t be hearing.”

“…Dogsh*t, do you think I’ll believe the lies you came up with in a hurry?” Danitz was almost convinced.

Anderson spread his hands and walked to the door.

“You’ve gathered all the materials of the Conspirer potion. Remember to remind Gehrman to not forget my Iron-blooded Knight potion formula.”

Danitz waved his hand impatiently, indicating that he hadn’t forgotten.

After Anderson walked out of the room and closed the door, Danitz immediately set up a ritual and summoned the messenger holding four blonde, red-eyed heads.

Seeing the eight eyes look over at the same time, Danitz’s chest immediately retracted.

He forced a smile and handed out a gold coin.

“Ma’am, Gehrman Sparrow wants me to tell you that he’s fine. He’s now in the Forsaken Land of the Gods.”

…Wait, what did I say? The Forsaken Land of the Gods? As a crew member of Vice Admiral Iceberg, Danitz's knowledge of mysticism was still adequate. After a momentary pause, his pupils clearly dilated.

"Alright…" Reinette Tinekerr bit down on the gold coin and answered immediately.

Then, "She" entered the void and vanished from the room.

After reporting this to Gehrman Sparrow, Danitz received the Iron-blooded Knight's potion formula and new orders.

Prepare some local delicacies and sacrifice them to Sea God Kalvetua… Isn't this mission a little odd? Danitz muttered to himself, but he didn't dare to raise any questions.

He quickly tidied up the altar, found a parchment, and wrote down the supplementary ingredients and corresponding ritual in the Iron-blooded Knight potion formula.

Following that, he opened the door and handed the parchment to Anderson.

"Form a team of at least thirty people… The stronger the team's strength and chemistry, the better the ritual's effects…" Anderson unfolded the parchment in front of Danitz and read it. As he read, his brows gradually furrowed. "If the team's chemistry is to build upon the idea of killing me—the captain—the ritual is rather simple…"

Without waiting for Danitz to mock him, a burning white flame appeared from his fingertip and burned the parchment.

Anderson chuckled.

"I need to go back to my homeland to find an opportunity. That place is currently being invaded by Feynapotter, and war is always the best place for building up and training a team."

With a pause, he looked at Danitz and said with a smile, “I’ve prepared some questions for you. They’re in my room. Once you become a Conspirer, you can try doing it and see if your intelligence has improved.”

“…Dogsh*t! Are you trying to trick me into reading all the books in your room?” Danitz was almost moved, but he immediately understood that something was wrong.

No matter how high his intelligence was, he wouldn’t be able to solve the questions if he hadn’t read the textbooks!

“Not bad. It only took you three seconds this time to grasp the crux of the matter. If it were in the past, heh heh, you would’ve really believed me.” Anderson praised with a smile as he turned around and left the inn.

Chapter 1180 - Different Effects

◆

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, at night when the frequency of lightning had dropped to a very low frequency.

Two slices of white bread and a piece of barbecued meat is pretty good after all… The sweet and sour desserts from the Fog Sea are better than I had expected… After swallowing the last mouthful of food, Klein sighed in amazement from the bottom of his heart. He then threw the remaining packaging into the darkness—after all, there was no concept of environmental protection here, nor was there a rubbish bin.

Of course, he had removed his connection with those items ahead of time, just like how he would head over to Sefirah Castle to perform “sterilization” every time he abandoned a marionette. This was to prevent Amon’s avatars from locking onto him with them.

Hmm, lifeless objects won’t be transferred into a concealed state by the darkness here… Klein raised the lantern that Danitz had sacrificed, and he illuminated the abandoned items.

It was only after he filled his stomach that he was in the mood to try out the dangerous things he had previously divined.

Amidst the flickering dim yellow light, Klein reached his right hand out into the air and dragged out another projection of himself.

It was another version of him from the Historical Void, one who was also holding onto a lantern.

Klein entered the grayish-white fog one second later, allowing his projection's consciousness to awaken.

The projection was surrounded by a group of monsters. Amidst the endless darkness, it opened its mouth, planning to recite the name, "Amanises."

"…"

He didn't manage to make a single sound, as though the words he wanted to say had been concealed.

"Indeed, it's as I expected." Wearing a silk half top hat and a black trench coat, Klein slowly took a deep breath.

Looking at the lantern that emitted faint yellow light, he suddenly chanted in Jotun, "Leodero!"

Before he could finish his sentence, more than a hundred lightning bolts warped as if they were responding to being summoned. They instantly blanketed the area.

There was no time for him to dodge. Even if he had switched places with a marionette, he would still be within the attack range.

Amidst the brightening of silvery-white light, he collapsed to the ground. His body was charred as he convulsed violently, as though he had become a gigantic piece of coal.

Then, his figure rapidly dissipated as the illusion vanished.

Wearing a real top hat, clothed in an Intis-styled windbreaker and carrying a simple lantern, Klein immediately "returned" to reality and continued proceeding forward as if nothing had happened.

After walking for a while, his figure suddenly turned blurry and clear.

Following that, Klein opened his mouth again and read out a name in Jotun:

"Au…"

Just as he produced the first syllable, a transparent flame burst out from his body, instantly reducing him to ashes, not giving him a chance to switch places with his marionette.

Klein's figure appeared once again. He pressed his hat and walked calmly on the hill filled with strange plants.

"Herabergen."

†

"Badheil."

†

"Omebella."

†

There's nothing out of the ordinary. There are no traces of the corresponding divine powers left in the vicinity of the City of Silver…

Medici, Ouroboros, Sasrir… These are of no use, neither one of "Them" are deities… I thought that the situation at Afternoon Town and the Giant King's Court was due to special circumstances. Using Sasrir's true name outside can activate the powers of degeneration from the Forsaken Land of the Gods… As a King of Angels with the Uniqueness, Red Angel is also considered half a true god. Yet, there aren't any traces left of "Him." How shameful for a person—no, shameful for a King of Angels! As Klein walked down the hill, he followed his spiritual intuition and headed northwest where the city ruins of Nois were.

He would occasionally take a detour, occasionally using Flaming Jump, and he didn't follow the route that the City of Silver had used to explore to reach their destination.

†

Backlund, late at night.

Feeling that she had digested the potion a little more, Audrey very eagerly used Dream Traversal to leave her mansion and to enter the various dreams of the surrounding area.

Knowing what the current situation was like, she had a strong desire to become a demigod.

Just like that, she suddenly saw someone familiar.

This was a noble lady who had a good relationship with her. She was 29 years old and had married a viscount two years ago.

At this moment, the lady's room was filled with rose petals. The bed was white, and there was a heart-shaped ring placed on it. And she could hear knocking sounds from the outside.

With flushed cheeks, the lady quickly walked over and opened the window.

A man wearing a black iron mask and a dark cloak leaped in. He hugged the lady and whispered, "I'll take you away from your suffering."

Then, the two of them started to wrap their bodies around one another as they rolled into bed.

As a Dreamwalker who was working hard to digest the potion, Audrey had long seen similar scenes. She had experienced the phase of feeling embarrassed, and she sighed at how everyone's dreams were full of imagination. At that moment, she didn't lose her composure at all. She maintained the etiquette of a Spectator, as though she was witnessing an overly intense play.

After a brief examination, she discovered a problem:

The man wearing the black iron mask wasn't the wife's spouse, but more like a particular playboy in the aristocratic circles.

Is this a reflection of what's hidden in her heart? Audrey muttered to herself in an academic manner while analyzing the dream.

Following that, she "traversed" into the dream beside her out of curiosity.

This dream corresponded to the noble wife's husband, the viscount.

In the dream, this viscount was busy attending a discussion at the House of Lords. Later, he was chased by an earl with a revolver. The latter claimed that he had tricked his daughter.

After escaping to a safe zone, the viscount found his female secretary to vent his fear.

Audrey couldn't help but leave the dream, wanting to see the state the viscount and his wife were in.

In the bedroom under the illumination of the crimson moonlight, the viscount was hugging his wife on the huge white bed. His wife was hugging him and sleeping in a very intimate manner.

Yes, I have to realize that everyone has a dark side to them. It's just a dream that they've had. If "conviction" for a mere instantaneous thought was carried out, then everyone would descend into hell, and no one will be spared, including myself… I can control my dark side, preventing it from ever being realized in the real world. To most people, that's already considered excellent… Audrey increasingly felt that acting as a Dreamwalker was a way to question and hone one's mind and body.

She entered the dreamscape again and "traversed" to another area.

Not long after, she arrived at a warm "room."

There was a dining table placed over a thick carpet. At the seat of honor was a white-haired old lady.

To her sides were a middle-aged couple and three children who were not of age. They were all enjoying the delicious food, chatting and laughing.

It was dark outside the room. The strong winds made the glass groan and thump as they seemed to brew a horrifying sensation before the disaster struck.

What is the owner of this dream bothered about? Audrey retreated from the dream and tried to find an answer from the real world to verify her hypothesis.

She then saw a small bed and the white-haired old lady.

There were photo frames on the bedside table of the old lady. They were either wrapped in black cloth or white flowers—consisting of a middle-aged couple and three underage children.

Audrey silently turned her head to look out the window, only to see that there were ruins nearby, ones left behind by an explosion.

The young noble lady pursed her lips and suddenly returned to the old lady's dreams.

She didn't stop the disaster that might happen. She only conjured a chair and sat on it. She looked at the happy and warm family in a solemn manner.

Amidst the howling wind and glass, the room was brightly lit. There was the fragrance of food and laughter everywhere.

Audrey had already concluded one of the acting principles of Dreamwalker:

"A traveler of a dream enters, takes in the sights, and records—never interfering. That was a Spectator.”

†

In Saint Samuel Cathedral, having been summoned by Bishop Anthony Steven, Leonard slowly walked up the spiral staircase under the sunlight that shone in through the stained glass.

Suddenly, he said with a suppressed voice, “Old Man, that secret gathering is about to begin again. Are you really planning to attempt to enter the treasures left behind by the Jacob family at the end of the month?”

“I’m not sure yet, but this is an opportunity. At the very least, Amon’s main body is being tied down by the matter regarding Sefirah Castle.”He” won’t suddenly appear.” In Leonard’s mind, Pallez Zoroast replied with a slightly hoarse voice, “However, I’m more inclined to reveal the news of the treasure trove. I want the people at the gathering to adventure and explore it. We’ll stay in the vicinity and observe the situation, taking what I need from their hands.”

Leonard was taken aback as he whispered, “Old Man, isn’t that too sinister?”

This was using the members of the Hermits of Fate as tools to step into a trap.

“Heh, naive, childish. You can tell them all the details and let them decide whether they want to go on their own.” Pallez scoffed.

Leonard didn’t mention it again. Instead, he asked, “Old Man, when can I become a demigod?”

Pallez chuckled.

“If you can obtain a spirit at the level of your former colleague’s messenger, you’ll be able to digest the potion by the beginning of next year. However, heh heh, it's better to act according to my instructions. Engage in a deeper level of acting. Wait till the second half of next year, you'll have the qualifications to try for Sequence 4. Of course, I'm not sure if the Church of Evernight will give you the potion and hold a ritual for you. That high-ranking deacon named Cesimir Crestet, had to wait several years before he truly became a demigod when war truly broke out, didn't he?"

Leonard nodded and asked thoughtfully, "Old Man, can you act as a spirit to help me digest the potion?

"Your level should be higher than Klein's messenger…"

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a few seconds before he chortled.

"What a great idea.

"How about I help you digest the potion?"

"How?" Leonard knew that Old Man was mocking him, but he couldn't help but ask.

"I'll deeply parasitize you, gaining full control over your body," Pallez snapped back.

As he spoke, Leonard came to the door of the Backlund diocese's archbishop.

He immediately shut his mouth and raised his right hand to knock on the door.

"Come in." Anthony Steven glanced at Leonard who had opened the door. "You can release that vampire behind Chanis Gate."

Chapter 1181 - Nois Ancient City

◆

Upon hearing the bishop’s instructions, Leonard was first taken aback before he inwardly sighed.

Mr. Fool’s prophecy was really accurate…

No, it’s not a prophecy. “He” was already aware of everything.

Leonard quickly reined in his thoughts and followed the procedures to get Bishop Saint Anthony to give him an official document. Then, he returned underground and brought two members into Chanis Gate.

After waiting for the Keepers to check the documents, he came to Emlyn White’s room which was illuminated with shining silver candles that were covered with engraved patterns. He opened the heavy stone door with a brass key.

Ghostly blue light entered the cell, “stabbing” Emlyn White’s eyes to the point of him instinctively closing his eyes.

His face was much paler than before, and his body was much thinner. He exuded a feeling that a gust of wind would lift him up at any moment.

Thinking of Mr. Fool’s answer, Emlyn suddenly felt confident in his current situation. Without opening his eyes, he slowly stood up and chuckled.

“I knew you would take the initiative to send me out.”

Would you be disappointed if I said that it was just a routine investigation? Leonard lampooned inwardly and replied without any expression, “I’ll give you thirty seconds. If you don’t leave Chanis Gate within this period, I’ll take it as you voluntarily choosing to stay behind.”

As a slightly more senior Nighthawk and a captain of a Red Gloves team for several months, Leonard had rich experience in dealing with prisoners.

Emlyn’s expression froze. He opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but he ultimately maintained his silence. He walked past Leonard and his two teammates and walked out of Chanis Gate.

Outside, he suddenly shuddered, as if he wanted to purge the chill in his body.

“Once you return, getting some sunlight would fix you up. Oh, the sun is a rare commodity in Backlund’s winter, and you vampires don’t enjoy sunbathing… Aren’t you an Apothecary? You can concoct some medicine from the Sun domain yourself.” Seeing this, Leonard casually reminded him.

Emlyn’s condition wasn’t the best. On the one hand, he hadn’t drunk any spirituality-containing human blood for days. He could only rely on the blood of animals as a substitute. On the other hand, it was because he had stayed behind Chanis Gate for too long. The power of Evernight that supported the seal had eaten into him a little, making him require the effects of medicine from the Sun domain to remove the residual effects.

As a Potions Professor, Emlyn was aware of his physical and mental condition. He didn’t retort or nod. He only emphasized the word “Sanguine” before asking, “Where’s Father Utravsky?”

“He still needs to stay a little while longer. I hope this bloody war will end soon. Don’t worry, we’ll let him come out twice a week to get some sunlight. As for which days they'll be, it'll depend on the weather in Backlund." Leonard gave a simple response before sending Emlyn White to the ground and onto the streets.

Emlyn hesitated for a moment before asking again, "Where's the nearest hospital?"

"What do you want to do?" Leonard asked in a professional manner.

"Get a blood transfusion." Emlyn raised his chin slightly, trying his best not to change his expression.

Blood transfusion… more like drinking blood… Leonard didn't call him out. He pointed in one direction and gave him the address.

After watching the Sanguine Viscount leave, he returned underground and began to discuss a recent case with his team members.

†

After several days of traveling, Klein finally arrived near the Nois City ruins in the north.

This was equally a desolate plain. The dried riverbed left traces of itself on the ground.

Looking at the dark, shadowy city that was filled with a thin fog, he was in no hurry to get close. Instead, he found a hidden spot and muttered the honorific name of Mr. Fool.

Following that, he took four steps counterclockwise and recited the incantation before entering the world above the gray fog. To return to Sefirah Castle with just a thought, he needed the prayers of the Tarot Club members to stack together, forming a strong and firm anchor. That way, it would provide The Fool with the sufficient summoning power.

With the help of the prayer light, Klein used his "true vision" to check the situation of the Nois ruins from afar. He discovered that the thin fog was slowly dissipating, but it couldn't completely dissipate. On the surface of the city, there wasn't a single Spirit Body Thread. The people who were dressed in linen robes or animal hides were lying in different spots on the streets. They weren't as lively and busy as the time the City of Silver's expedition team visited.

After the angel or Sealed Artifact that occupied this city discovered that "Their" whereabouts were exposed, they chose to migrate? As Klein made a guess based on the situation in front of him, he retracted his gaze and looked at the grayish-white fog that held up Sefirah Castle.

He was trying to prevent the Miracle Invoker, or Attendant of Mysteries, or the corresponding Sealed Artifact from hiding in the Historical Void and ambushing the Beyonders of the ancient Nois City. He didn't wish to directly encounter a cluster of translucent maggots that twisted into a huge vortex when he leaped into the fog of history, nor did he wish to be pursued by those terrifying tentacles.

The ambush that Zaratul had laid for him still left Klein feeling a lingering sense of fear. From time to time, he would have nightmares, hoping to seek Miss Justice for another round of treatment for psychological trauma.

This stimulus was worse than seeing his marionette, Enuni, wear a monocle in front of him while his body remained completely immobile. This was because he had implicated the Hounds of Fulgrim.

After confirming that the Historical Void was safe, Klein returned to the real world. He stretched out his hand, grabbed, and pulled out his former self. This former self was also wearing a silk half top hat, a black trench coat, and holding a simple glass lantern.

In the next second, he "jumped" into the grayish-white fog and followed the illuminated spots in the Historical Void, running all the way to a period before the First Epoch, in that city of a long-dead civilization.

To him, this was a very ingenious “safe house.” This was because, aside from him, no Scholar of Yore could trace back to this lost piece of history.

Of course, to him, coming all the way here had required him to expend a lot of his spirituality. He could only stay there for another fifteen minutes at most, and that was only if he didn’t make any burdening attempts at summoning Historical Void projections.

After hiding his true body, Klein’s projection in the real world moved forward, quickly arriving outside the Nois ruins.

He didn’t blindly approach or enter. After circling to a small mound opposite the dried riverbed, he raised his right hand and summoned his original marionette—the cold Earl of The Fallen Qonas Kilgor with dark blue eyes.

Qonas’s body squirmed and instantly transformed into Gehrman Sparrow. Then, he reached out and took out a lantern from the Historical Void.

The historical projection who summoned a historical projection had “Disordered” the distance under the dim yellow light of the lantern. In a few steps, he arrived outside Nois City, alone.

With the lantern in hand, he passed through the rotting buildings and passed through the thin fog before entering the ruins.

Compared to using his “true vision” above the gray fog, actual contact made him discover more details.

The humans and monsters lying in different spots had signs of decay, as though they had been abandoned for some time.

Some of them sat on chairs under the eaves of the house, others slumped beside stoves. Some held moldy bread while others held hands. There were some leaning against the walls and sitting on the ground, their lips pressed against a bone flute…

This allowed Klein to imagine the situation in the city back when they were “living.”

Some of them were slacking off and resting. Some were baking food, and others were shopping along the streets. Others were focused on music as some came and went, laughing nonstop. There were also others fighting monsters in an arena…

This was such a lively and bustling scene, but in reality, everyone had already died and were no longer in possession of their souls. They were only repeating predetermined actions.

And one day, this strange scene froze with time, and everyone collapsed without any warning.

A city formed by marionettes, the most realistic theater… Back then, the foggy town was in a similar situation… Although I’m also a Seer, I still have to say that, in terms of horror, terror, and bizarreness, our pathway is definitely ranked amongst the top three… Could it be that I’ll be acting in the same manner in the future? Attendant of Mysteries? With the lantern in hand, Klein walked through the streets that were littered with corpses. He followed his spiritual intuition and headed for the ancient Nois City’s center.

The situation here made him believe that the person who had once ruled the Nois ruins definitely had enough intelligence. After the City of Silver’s expedition team broke the peace and serenity here, the entity didn’t choose to kill or destroy any clues. Instead, this place was abandoned without hesitation before the entity migrated elsewhere.

The reason why the City of Silver wasn’t silenced probably had to do with an Amon parasite following behind. Yes, it could also be because of the True Creator… As he casually let his thoughts wander, Klein quickly arrived at a relatively intact cathedral.

Inside the cathedral stood a statue of a demonic wolf with eight legs. It was covered with short and dark hair.

There was a tuft of grayish-white fur at the top of the statue head. Its pitch-black pupils covered at least three-quarters of its eyes.

It’s not Flegrea… The Dark Demonic Wolf that occasionally appeared in the Third Epoch, the God of Wishes? “He” has been in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for thousands of years and has finally found that Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic? Just as this thought flashed through his mind, Klein suddenly heard footsteps coming, resounding one after another.

Standing sideways, he immediately cast his gaze outside the cathedral. He saw a figure slowly walking through the thin fog before its outline quickly formed.

He was nearly 2.3 meters tall, with a slight hunch to his back. With grizzled hair, wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, and a scar at the corners of his mouth, he looked like an old priest or bishop while donning a long black clergyman’s robe.

His dark brown eyes were calm, unlike the monsters deep in the darkness who were bloodthirsty and zero intelligence.

However, in the long, quiet night of low-frequency lightning, this clergyman didn’t carry any animal hide lanterns or have any fire lit. He just quietly walked through the thin fog.

Chapter 1182 - The Holy Word

◆

Although it had been less than a week since he entered the Forsaken Land of the Gods, Klein had long gotten a good understanding of the place through Little Sun. He knew that normal humans, even saints, had to use fire to create light in the darkness. Otherwise, it was very easy for them to encounter dangerous monsters lurking in the depths of the darkness, or be secretly devoured, disappearing without a trace, never to be found again.

And at that moment, the elderly clergyman wasn't carrying any animal hide lanterns. Instead, he passed through the fog in the darkness and slowly entered the cathedral that was illuminated by the dim yellow light.

If it wasn't for his deep and calm eyes that didn't show any signs of madness, Klein's first reaction would've been that he had encountered a special monster.

Of course, having a normal person's state of mind and being immersed in darkness were contradictory traits. Any living creature with any semblance of normal intelligence could easily come up with a conclusion that this person might be even more terrifying than special monsters.

Klein had only met one person who could pass through the darkness without being affected by it while having sufficient intelligence:

Blasphemer Amon!

Sensing that the faint yellow light was reflected on his face, the tall black-robed clergyman with a slight hunch to his back stopped in his tracks. Looking at the demonic wolf statue, he hoarsely asked, “Where did the owner of this city go?”

Klein was the kind of person who would try his best to resolve a problem peacefully if a fight with a stranger could be avoided. As he raised his guard, he calmly replied, “I don’t know where either—I just entered the city—who knows where the owner went.”

Just as he said that, the entire cathedral dimmed. A thin fog surged in like a tidal wave from the outside, drowning the interior.

The lantern in Klein’s hand failed miserably at illuminating the windows and the situation at the door. It was dark outside, and nothing could be seen.

In the blink of an eye, the cathedral that worshiped the demonic wolf statue seemed to be isolated from Nois City. It was unknown where it was located.

Klein’s pupils dilated slightly as he looked at the clergyman with wrinkles and white hair. He asked in a deep voice, “Who are you?”

The hunched clergyman replied in a condescending manner, “I’m an attendant by the Lord’s side. I’m the Angel of the Holy Word, Steph. I walk this land of the past that the Lord had passed on, doing so on ‘His’ behalf in search of the ‘Blasphemer’ hidden in the darkness.”

As he spoke, the elder’s figure expanded to a height of four meters tall. Behind him, black illusory feathers appeared. Their shadows intersected and formed four pairs of gloomy but holy wings.

Angel of the Holy Word, Steph… An attendant by the Lord’s side… Land of the past… This is the Blessed of the True Creator, the Angel of Fate’s subordinate, a member of the Rose Redemption? It’s no wonder that “He” can walk in the darkness; “He” has the power of degeneration protecting "Him"… That evil god is still searching for the Beyonder characteristic of the Attendant of Mysteries? Klein had no choice but to raise his head and lock eyes with this clergyman who, despite wearing a black robe, had four pairs of angel wings on "His" back. This high-level existence angel's form remained wrinkled with grizzled hair. There was a sense of contradiction in everything about "Him."

Pretending that he had never made an enemy of the Aurora Order, he calmly said, "That Blasphemer has long fled. I'm also searching for 'Him.'"

After staring at Klein for two seconds, the Angel of the Holy Word asked in a low voice, "Who are you?"

It won't be convenient saying it out directly… Klein sighed and smiled.

"I'm a lonely traveler."

After he gave this reply, he suddenly felt an extreme sense of darkness developing within him. It then sank down and merged with the shadow created by the lantern.

The pitch-black figure abruptly warped and came to "life," stretching itself out to become another Gehrman Sparrow—one with sinister and ferocious eyes and a solitary demeanor.

This… Klein's pupils constricted. Without any hesitation, he reached out his right hand and grabbed outward at thin air.

At this point, if he hadn't guessed that Steph was using his "answer," he should've joined the Aurora Order and made the True Creator his god.

At this moment, he already knew what it meant by "Angel of the Holy Word."

This was clearly the Angel of the Evil Word!

By using a person's reply, "He" could extract a portion of the ambiguity or expand on it to create the effect of spirit language!

When Klein said that he didn't know where the owner of the city had gone, Steph extracted the words "I don't know where I went," trapping himself and isolating himself from the outside world.

When this angel revealed "His" identity, every word was enhancing "His" level and strength.

When Klein answered who he was, it ended up separating "a lonely traveler" from him.

From the moment "He" appeared in Nois City, there was a strong sense of malice in the black-robed Steph!

And just as Klein was attempting to summon a particular image from the Historical Void, the sinister Gehrman Sparrow seemed to share the same thoughts as he did. He too grabbed at the same projection, canceling each other out.

Seeing that his powers as a Scholar of Yore had been restrained, Klein's eyes narrowed. Without any hesitation, he opened his mouth and said a word in Jotun.

But in the next second, the word was stolen.

Standing at about four meters tall, the stooped Angel of the Holy Word, Steph, had at some point in time grown a head covered in blood on "His" left shoulder. It looked very similar to "Him," but was much younger—a person who was approximately in the forties.

Around the head were two skinless arms that had mangled flesh. They had "Grazed" different souls and had used Beyonder powers that could steal thoughts.

At the same time, another bloody head grew on Steph's right shoulder, one that looked to be in "His" twenties.

Amongst the three heads, one “Grazed” souls and stole Klein’s thoughts, while the other was staring coldly at the target, deepening the self-awareness of the lonely traveler. The last one opened “His” mouth and said, “You lie!

“You are the person who destroyed the son of God’s descent ritual and interfered with the Lord’s descent twice!

“You are one of the targets I’m looking for!”

The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched as he calmly said a word in Jotun, “Leodero!”

This was the true name of the Lord of Storms!

The reason why this thought wasn’t stolen was because he had lined up his subsequent actions. The lineup was filled with the same content. It didn’t matter if the first thought was stolen, as it didn’t affect the subsequent thoughts.

This was a precious experience he had gained from fighting Amon.

Of course, if he were to meet Amon again, he suspected that such a method might not work. Once the God of Mischief was prepared, “He” would definitely come up with something new.

As soon as he finished speaking, the eyes of the Angel of the Holy Word Angel, Steph, lit up with bolts of silver lightning.

They covered the entirety of Nois City, and they tore through the darkness that enveloped the cathedral. They tore apart all the corruption, concealment, darkness, vileness, and evil.

Inside, Klein and the sinister Gehrman Sparrow were situated at the eye of the lightning storm. Without even a grunt, they dissipated.

Then, the terrifying, silvery-white, twisted electric bolts snaked the area and swallowed the demonic wolf statue as well as the Angel of

Holy Words, Steph.

Amidst the dull rumbling sounds, the ancient city of Nois completely collapsed, becoming a true ruin.

At the opposite side of the dried-up river bed, Klein's historical projection quickly faded away, returning to the real world.

Right on the heels of that, Klein immediately used Flaming Jump to distance himself from the Nois ruins. During this process, he pulled out a few paper figurines and made them into "angels" to cover his tracks.

The desolate plains returned to its state of dead silence once again. After an unknown period of time, the ruins where the cathedral stood shook. Steph slowly stood up amidst crumbling dust and rock.

"His" completely white hair had thinned again, and "His" deep-black clergyman's robe became tattered.

The Angel of the Holy Word left Nois ancient city in silence, got "His" bearings, and walked deep into the darkness.

Half a day later, a figure approached the city's ruins from another direction. It was none other than Klein who had made a huge detour.

He hadn't had the chance to check the ancient city of Nois previously, and his return this time was motivated by the hope of finding actual clues of that existence.

At a relatively far distance away, Klein repeated his observations above the gray fog, summoned the historical projection, and hid in ancient times, using the projection to summon another historical projection.

After finishing his preparations, he stepped into Nois once again and returned to the cathedral in absolute silence.

Along the way, the corpses that had been lying dead on the ground had either turned to ash or turned to charred remains, devoid of that creepy and harrowing feeling.

That fellow named Steph didn't die… From the looks of it, the remnant divine powers of Storm here can only injure an angel… Klein stopped in front of the ruined cathedral and muttered to himself wistfully.

Of course, he only found it a little regretful. He didn't expect to finish off an angel so easily.

As he swept his gaze, he saw a few pieces of the demonic wolf statue.

The surface of it was dark black, and the insides were dark red—nothing like commonly seen stone.

These stones must be extraordinary for them to be used by that Dark Demonic Wolf for "His" statue. Furthermore, they don't look like something produced in the vicinity… Perhaps I can seek out the area the Dark Demonic Wolf hid prior to Nois City by investigating them… As a Miracle Invoker, or even an Attendant of Mysteries, that Dark Demonic Wolf must be good at covering "His" tracks. It'll be very difficult to track "His" whereabouts directly, but if I can find most of the areas "He" had hid previously, I should be able to gain insight into "His" habits and style…

Once I know a person's past, I can predict his future! As he thought, he took two steps forward, bent down, and attempted to pick up a fragment of the statue.

At that moment, a charred hand suddenly reached out and blocked his finger.

From the corner of his eye, he saw a charred corpse standing up!

The charred corpse's other hand held onto a crystal monocle and wore it on its left eye.

Amon! Left eye… Klein's heart tightened at first before a strong sense of doubt and suspicion surfaced within him.

In the next second, the charred corpse smiled and said, “Sorry, I wore it on the wrong side.”

As it spoke, it took off the monocle and moved it to its right eye.

Chapter 1183 - Klein's Advantage

◆ ◆ ◆

"…" Once again, Klein understood why Amon was the God of Mischief.

At that moment, he didn't even have the desire to lampoon. All he wanted was to immediately end the historical projection and escape from the Amon—no, Amons—in front of him.

The charred corpse that had been "Parasitized" wiped the soot from its face. Before Klein disappeared, it said with a smile, "There's no rush. You are just a projection from the Historical Void. I can't really parasitize you, and you should know very well that I'm not alone. It's difficult for you to launch an effective counterattack."

With a simple lantern in hand, Klein thought silently. He picked up a piece of the black sculpture fragment that had red insides, and he cautiously asked, "What exactly do you want to say?"

At that moment, Amon had already changed back into "His" appearance. The only problem was that "His" skin remained darker.

"He" adjusted "His" crystal monocle and chuckled.

"You know that I'm aware that you're searching for that Dark Demonic Wolf in an attempt to obtain the Miracle Invoker's Beyonder characteristic from 'Him.' I happen to be very interested as well. Why don't we play another game and see who can get to it first?"

What's the point of that? It's not like I won't pursue it or think of snatching it if I don't play this game. After two seconds of silence, he shook his head.

“I refuse.”

He had no intention of listening to what conditions Amon would offer. The more he heard from a top cheat, the more he would suffer.

Amon shook “His” head without a hint of anger.

“You’ll regret this. I had originally planned to use a Miracle Invoker’s Beyonder characteristic to exchange for Sefirah Castle with you, and also give you a period of time to transfer the secret gathering you organized.

“And now, I can only consider stealing your fate directly. I will carry the burden of the corrosion from the source. Yes, although it’s dangerous, it’s still thrilling enough. I’m already prepared to accept it and see who will eventually control the flow. With my father’s experience, I believe I won’t perform too poorly.”

…What? Corrosion from the source? The experience of the ancient sun god? Klein originally didn’t wish to continue discussing the topic of the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic and Sefirah Castle, but when he heard that, his heart stirred.

He recalled Amon’s description and couldn’t help but ask, “The source refers to the Oldest One, the first Creator?”

He desperately wanted to know what sort of unbearable fate Sefirah Castle would bring him.

Amon pinched the edge of his monocle and looked at him for a few seconds before suddenly smiling.

“It’s better if I don’t answer this question directly, as you won’t believe every word I say.”

Tell me, I’ll determine its authenticity! Klein suppressed the urge to blurt out and calmly replied, “Maybe it’s just because you haven’t made up the reason yet.”

Amon didn’t mind at all as “He” smiled and said, “You can think of it that way too.

“Heh heh, at times, the truth that you discover for yourself is definitely more agreeable than what others tell you. If you have the time, you can wander around the Forsaken Land of the Gods. This should provide you with more clues. Of course, if you have the guts to enter Chernobyl, then you would know more.”

“…” Klein didn’t pursue the matter any further. After staring at the collapsed cathedral that was bathed in a faint yellow light, he casually said, “Did the Dark Demonic Wolf hurriedly migrate because of the discovery of your existence?”

Amon nodded slightly and said, “It wasn’t just me. ‘He’ also sensed The Hanged Man’s gaze. ‘He’ has been hiding in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for thousands of years. ‘He’ is very sensitive to such matters.”

A Sequence 2 angel, perhaps even a Sequence 1 angel, can only play hide and seek in the Forsaken Land of the Gods and live such an abject life… Isn’t the environment here a little too harsh? Klein sighed inwardly before saying, “You must’ve left more than one avatar in the City of Silver. Why didn’t you try to stop me from reviving there?

“Why didn’t you send more powerful avatars over?”

Amon nudged the bottom of “His” monocle with “His” right index finger and laughed.

“If that happens, you’ll choose to revive in the outside world. This will cause quite a bit of trouble for my follow-up tracking.

“And if I—if we were to relax a little, due to the existence of the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, you would most likely be resurrected here. In the following game, the only things that we need to consider are The Hanged Man and Ouroboros."

Just as I thought… Klein said after some thought, "Even in the same region, as long as you exceed a certain distance, your true body and avatars have no way to instantly merge or switch locations?

"Back when you first entered the Forsaken Land of the Gods, you were able to transform back into your true form because the anomalies with Sefirah Castle had similarly interfered with the area here, allowing your true body to sense something. You went to the entrance in advance to wait?"

After hearing what he said with a smile, Amon asked without answering, "What's your guess?

"Why don't you guess if I've turned back into my original form?"

Klein raised his right fist and covered his mouth. After pondering for a few seconds, he revealed a smile.

"I guess your other avatars are setting up a corresponding ritual to allow your true body to descend directly…"

Before he could finish his sentence, his figure rapidly turned incorporeal and dissipated.

The Historical Void projection was dispelled.

In the wilderness outside the ancient city of Nois, the air around the hiding Klein suddenly stirred. In midair, there were a series of illusory monocles.

They stared at Klein's figure, as if saying that they had finally found him.

However, Klein's figure rapidly faded away.

Back when Amon moved the monocle to "His" right eye, Klein had already returned from ancient history to the real world. With the help of Paper Angel, he had used Flaming Jump and other Beyonder powers to quickly leave.

The reason why his historical projection was able to speak to Amon rather normally was because he was essentially a marionette. It was Qonas Kilgor in the form of Gehrman Sparrow. He had a Worm of Spirit that came from history inside him and was controlled by Klein's projection outside the city.

Meanwhile, in the process of escaping far away, Klein frequently entered the Historical Void, allowing the projection outside the city to intermittently regain consciousness and maintain control of his marionette.

This caused the person who had spoken to Amon to fall into deep thought from time to time. He would either stare with a focused look for a few seconds or seemingly need time to recall what Amon had said.

Against the God of Deceit, Klein didn't dare to be careless!

After leaving Nois City, he circled around two more times and used his true vision to inspect his surroundings above the gray fog. Only then did he slow down.

The corrosion that comes from the source… I wonder if Amon is bluffing me… Indeed, I'll have to enter Chernobyl one day to take a look, but I have to become a Miracle Invoker—doing so after I have self-preservation abilities to a certain degree; otherwise, I'll just be knocking on death's door… With the lantern that Danitz had sacrificed, Klein casually proceeded in the dark environment of the weeds.

Thanks to this experience, he finally had a deeper understanding of the danger in the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

Extremely harsh and warped environment, crazy cultists, fallen angel, groups of Amons wandering about, and Mythical Creatures lurking in the darkness. Somewhere here, there are evil gods watching everything.

I can stir remnant divine powers that others can as well… As expected of the Forsaken Land of the Gods. The danger level far exceeds my imagination… As he sighed, he turned his attention back to the Dark Demonic Wolf.

To be frank, he didn't think he had any advantage in tracking this Mythical Creature. Be it his understanding of the Forsaken Land of the Gods, or his confidence in the target's situation, he was far inferior to Amon, who had been exploring the area for more than a thousand years, as well as the True Creator's Blesseds who had the benefit of this place being their home ground.

My only advantage is that I share the same Seer pathway as the Dark Demonic Wolf. Furthermore, I have Sefirah Castle. There is a strong inclination for Beyonder characteristic convergence. This will have a certain effect on fate and judgment… However, Amon is a King of Angels of a neighboring pathway. There is also the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence between "Him" and the Dark Demonic Wolf. The effects won't be any weaker than mine… Klein considered carefully for a moment when he suddenly had an idea. He found his best advantage.

The advantage was:

He was very weak!

Compared to Amon, the True Creator's attendant, and the Dark Demonic Wolf, he was very weak!

Under normal circumstances, this was a disadvantage, but at times, it was possible that it could bring him something that he wanted.

My level is low, and I'm weak. That means that I can become the hunting target of the Dark Demonic Wolf instead… It's very difficult for me to find "Him," so why don't I get "Him" to come and find me instead! A Scholar of Yore might not necessarily interest the Dark Demonic Wolf, but if this Scholar of Yore can still trigger Sefirah Castle, that's a whole other matter… I can stir Sefirah Castle from time to time, leaving behind traces of the gray fog's aura as bait for the Dark Demonic Wolf… The more he thought, the more viable he believed it was.

Of course, this was definitely very dangerous. If he wasn't careful, he might accidentally bait Amon or even the True Creator. And the Dark Demonic Wolf might very likely choose to observe first before suddenly launching an attack and not giving him a chance to prepare.

Before taking this approach, I have to make sufficient preparations… There's no need to rush it… Taking a deep breath, Klein reached out his hand and pulled out the black demonic wolf sculpture's fragment that was red on the inside.

Although he had failed to obtain the item due to Amon's obstruction, this didn't stop him from taking it out from the Historical Void. This was because he had already seen it and had touched it. And the item itself wasn't at a high level.

At this moment, he wanted to use the fragment to search for the hiding spot of the Dark Demonic Wolf by analyzing it in reverse and figuring out its modus operandi.

In the wilderness ruled by darkness, Klein lifted the lantern that emitted a faint yellow light. He got his bearings and changed directions before slowly entering.

†

Backlund, Hillston Borough.

Fors, who had gone out "Traveling" once, finally received a reply from her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham.

Chapter 1184 - “Record”

◆ ◆ ◆

There are no Worms of Star at the moment… He wants me to take note of what else the person who’s seeking to purchase a Worm of Star needs… Fors read the letter from her teacher and silently heaved a sigh of relief.

However, when she thought about how she was about to begin hunting the Saint of Secrets, she felt a pang of nervousness. After all, he was a demigod, a saint who had reached Sequence 4 about one or two years ago. It was unknown if he was already at Sequence 3 now.

Although the mastermind behind the operation is Ma’am Hermit, as the bait, I still need to worry about my own safety… Besides, the Aurora Order still has Rose Redemption backing them, as well as angels and a King of Angels… Fors didn’t regret agreeing to Gehrman Sparrow’s request. This was something she had wanted to do in the first place. However, due to the high risk involved, it was inevitable for her to feel flustered and uneasy.

This made her think of another possibility:

If Mr. World could participate in the operation and lead it, I’ll definitely feel less nervous and worried.

It wasn’t that Fors didn’t believe in Ma’am Hermit’s strength and experience, but that the results from The World Gehrman Sparrow were laid bare for all to see. His hunts didn’t include one or two demigods, so having him run the operation would make one feel at ease.

Xio, who was sitting beside the fireplace, glanced at her friend and asked, “Is the hunt about to begin?”

“Yes.” Fors nodded solemnly before saying, “It won’t be too soon. Everyone needs some time to prepare.”

Hunting a demigod wasn’t akin to fox hunting in the suburbs during autumn. Setting off wasn’t as simple as bringing the equipment and gathering friends. This required a precise and meticulous plan. Fors believed that Ma’am Hermit had to come to Backlund personally, or live in another kill box that she had decided on for some time. Only by figuring out the exact situation could she come up with an effective plan.

As for Miss Justice, she was still speeding up the digestion of her Dreamwalker potion. This might take another one to two months or even longer.

For Fors, she could afford to wait. She also wanted to finish digesting her Scribe potion, set up the ritual, and become a Traveler before the actual operation began.

The only thing she wasn’t sure of was whether The World would rush them.

I will try my best to convince him—no, let Miss Justice convince him. That’s what a Spectator is best at… Just as Fors mumbled, she saw Xio turn around and hesitantly say, “The liaison officer from MI9 suggested that I should officially join them today. And they said that, with the new king in place, there are many matters from the past that I don’t need to worry about. People like me and him have the chance to have importance placed on them again.”

Fors listened attentively and said after some deliberation, “That isn’t some sort of investigation that’s targeted at us, right?

“This will likely make them discover that there’s a faction behind you.”

Xio nodded and said, “They believe that I was abandoned after that incident. Also, they suspect that that faction belongs to a Church—the Church of Evernight.”

Xio believed in the Evernight Goddess, so mentioning the Church was undoubtedly referring to the Church of Evernight. However, considering that her good friend was a believer in the God of Steam and Machinery, she made an emphasis to prevent any ambiguity.

“Heh heh, that’s what Mr. World told us to disguise ourselves as,” Fors stroked her hair with a relaxed expression and said with a smile.

She then made herself look serious and mature.

“Xio, this is an opportunity for you. ‘Acting’ as a Judge clearly requires the support of the officials. Your current strength and level aren’t enough to be a Judge in the underground world in Backlund. You also lack sufficient support.

“If you can really enter a court of law, rotate between the different courts, and serve in a criminal court for a few months, your potion should be completely digested. Oh right, I heard that MI9 has a ‘Paranormal Court’ within it, one which specializes in Beyonder cases. If you become a Judge there, you might be able to attempt to be a Disciplinary Paladin by February or March next year.”

Seeing Xio clearly being moved by her speech, Fors hurriedly added, “Once you make enough contributions, you might be able to restore your father’s reputation to a certain extent. Anyway, George III is already dead. As long as it doesn’t affect his reputation, Jevington II might not stop it.”

Jevington was the eldest son of George III. He had worn the crown as Balam’s emperor and was now the new king of Loen.

Xio fell silent for a while before she slowly nodded.

“I’ll give it a try.”

"Yes, after things settle down, you can bring your mother and brother to Backlund. Although the situation is tense now and food prices are rapidly rising, you definitely get food rations from MI9. You can provide for them!" The more Fors spoke, the more she felt that joining MI9 was a good thing.

After persuading Xio, Fors entered her bedroom and prayed to Mr. Fool, asking "Him" to forward her message to Mr. World.

Immediately following that, Fors extracted the important points of her teacher's reply and described her thoughts, hoping that Gehrman Sparrow could be more patient.

Just as she finished her prayers and was about to leave the room, her vision suddenly blurred. She saw a crimson tide surge out of the void, instantly drowning her.

Fors immediately discovered that she had arrived in the ancient palace and was sitting on her usual high-back chair. However, there was no towering figure that was shrouded in gray fog at the long, bronze table's seat of honor.

At that moment, there was only her and The World Gehrman Sparrow around the long mottled table.

"…" Fors's mind suddenly tensed up as her thoughts raced suddenly. "Mr. World, I meant, just now, that it's best if you have some patience. This will make things simpler. It's actually fine if you don't. We will begin hunting as soon as possible."

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

"Don't worry, I'm not in a hurry."

When his ultimate goal had become an angel-level potion formula and Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, he had enough patience regarding this matter.

Phew… Fors secretly heaved a sigh of relief and asked curiously, "Then why did you look for me?”

Klein replied calmly, “Didn’t you wish to digest the Scribe potion as quickly as possible?

“Apart from the customs of different places, I think you still need to record all kinds of Beyonder powers. The higher the corresponding level, the better the digestion’s effect.”

Fors’s eyes lit up when she heard that.

“Yes… Yes!”

After blurting it out, she found her attitude highly questionable. She hurriedly and fearfully added, “Is this the advance payment you mentioned before?”

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Let’s begin. Be prepared. I’ve borrowed a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact from Mr. Fool. It corresponds to the level of a saint.”

To a Sequence 6 Scribe, the chances of successfully recording an angel-level Beyonder power was extremely low—nearly impossible. Therefore, Klein didn’t attempt to summon Miss Messenger and Mr. Azik from the Historical Void to showcase their “skills.”

Fors sat up straight and nodded heavily.

“Yes.”

In the next second, she saw The World Gehrman Sparrow raise a white bone scepter covered in blue gems.

Amidst the bright light, bolts of lightning leaped out of the void and interwove together, forming a forest of lightning that emitted an aura of destruction.

Fors’s eyes turned silvery-white as her body and mind were left in awe.

After the Lightning Storm calmed down, she was stunned for two seconds before timidly saying, “It failed…”

“Again,” Klein calmly replied.

“Lightning Storm” descended again and again in the ancient palace above the gray fog. After an unknown period of time, Fors exhaled and leaned back in her chair. She couldn’t hide her joy as she said, “It’s a success! It’s a success…”

She had finally “Recorded” Lightning Storm once.

It’s finally over… Fors immediately relaxed. Then, she heard The World say without emotion, “Alright, next Beyonder power.”

…Next? Fors saw the crazy adventurer at the bottom of the long, mottled table extend his right hand and grab at the grayish-white fog. Out of nowhere, he took out a long, thorny cross that was covered in bronze.

Record this cross’s ability? Fors tried hard to make her expression appear normal.

After she digested the Scribe potion to a certain extent, the godhood powers that she could “Record” had increased from one to two.

“No.” Klein glanced at Miss Magician and said, “Record my summoning of the Unshadowed Crucifix.”

“…It failed,” Fors said softly.

The reason for her failure this time was that she didn’t have time to “Record” it.

Dispelling the maintenance of Unshadowed Crucifix, Klein once again reached into the fog of history and pulled out an iron-black revolver.

“It didn’t succeed…” Fors replied with a complicated expression.

All she wanted to do now was to return to the real world and digest what she had just received, but the ringing of the bell to mark the end of "class" just didn't happen.

Nearly thirty times later, when Fors's head throbbed in pain and her mental strength was beginning to run dry, she finally "Recorded" Historical Void Summoning once.

At that moment, she felt her tears fill her eyes, but she still held back her fatigue and tried her best to show the attitude of a good student.

"This can summon people and objects that one is related to through the Historical Void?

"When the time comes, who should I summon, or what item should I summon?"

Klein looked at Miss Magician and coldly replied, "Me."

"…" Fors forced a smile and asked, "From which period?"

"The last time we met." Klein had already thought of an answer.

It was the him who had deliberately sent Miss Magician back from the world of ice and snow to Backlund before he destroyed George III's ritual. He had already become a Scholar of Yore by then.

Fors nodded solemnly and subconsciously asked, "What if I fail? For me to summon someone who exceeds my own level, the probability of failure should be very high…"

"Come again tomorrow to record this ability. Use Leymano's Travels," Klein said calmly.

Will two times be enough to succeed? Fors instinctively had such a question. However, she didn't dare to speak when she saw how certain The World Gehrman Sparrow was about it.

She raised her hand and gestured.

“Then, can I go back now?”

With a terse answer, he allowed Miss Magician to leave Sefirah Castle with a delighted expression.

†

In a primitive forest on Sonia Island.

Alger Wilson led his subordinates into an elven ruin that was seldom visited.

Chapter 1185 - Reappearing

◆

The withered vines drooped down, covering the rotting wooden structure. The entire ruins had been frozen in a silent atmosphere that no one had tread within for a while.

Alger and a few sailors circled around the ruin in the environment of a withering winter, but they still failed to discover anything of value.

“Captain, batches of adventurers have come here before. What else could they have left us?” Finally, a sailor in his thirties impatiently broke the silence.

This resonated with his other companions as they echoed, “A place that didn’t take us much time to learn about can definitely be easily found by others.”

“That’s right, that’s right. Let’s continue to f**k the Feysacians!”

“Captain, are you trying to make this place a stronghold?”

Alger slowly scanned the area, quelling the sailors to stop their complaints under his gaze and making them choose to obey.

After a few seconds of silence, he said, “I plan on using this place to ambush the Feysacians.

“Let’s observe the terrain and see if it’s suitable.”

With such an excuse, the sailors barely perked up, and the group quickly entered the depths of the elven ruins.

As he walked, Alger's spiritual perception was triggered as he subconsciously looked behind a gigantic tree.

There were some signs of churning in the soil over there, and it wouldn't take more than a year.

Alger retracted his gaze and pretended not to notice anything amiss. He naturally looked elsewhere.

After exploring the elven ruins, they returned to their new camp.

At that moment, it was almost evening and the forest was getting colder. Alger had dinner with the sailors before leaving two patrolling guards behind, and then all of them entered their respective tents.

The cold wind blew through the trees, causing the bonfire to sway. Alger, who had wanted to leave the campsite in the middle of the night, suddenly heard faint singing from afar.

The voice was ethereal, like a woman humming and singing slowly, relating her inner thoughts.

This made Alger involuntarily recall the past. He recalled his mother who had long passed away, and the days when he was a bullied child.

Indescribable grief surged from the bottom of his heart, preventing him from waking up immediately. He waited for a few seconds before he suddenly sat up, frowning and listening.

This time, he didn't hear anything. That melodious voice seemed to have never happened.

Alger narrowed his eyes, grabbed his thick jacket, and put it on. He walked out of the tent and came to the bonfire.

The two sailors in charge of night duty had just finished their patrol and were drawing warmth from it.

"Did you discover anything unusual?" Alger asked in a deep voice.

The two strong, vigorous sailors shook their heads.

“No.”

Alger’s brows relaxed a little as he turned around, intending to make his own rounds.

At this moment, he noticed something from the corner of his eye.

The two sailors were too close.

If it were any ordinary pirate, this wouldn’t have been a problem. However, Alger’s subordinates had undergone formal training through the Church of the Lord of Storms. They definitely knew that, in such an environment, the patrol team had to maintain a certain distance from each other. They couldn’t be too far or too close. They had to be able to see their companions, as well as prevent themselves from being taken away at the same time from a single assault.

Alger took two steps without batting an eyelid. He turned back and casually asked, “Did you discover anything normal?”

He had changed the question and made it appear very strange.

The two strong sailors shook their heads and replied without changing their expressions, “No.”

No… Alger nodded slightly with a relaxed expression.

“Very good.”

He turned around and slowly walked into his tent.

The moment the sailors’ attention on him was cut off, Alger drew out the Blade of Poison and the Gargoyle Glasses. He opened his mouth and prepared to belt out a song.

At that moment, the ethereal voice from before appeared once again. It echoed in Alger’s ears and pierced into his mind.

This was an extremely ancient folk song, spelling out an extreme sense of sadness and melancholy through the singing. It made Alger's Spirit Body produce pale, non-existent arms that constantly tore at him.

Alger's expression twisted as his skin began to produce slippery, black fish scales. His dark blue hair stood up one by one as they became abnormally thick.

The thoughts that originally existed in his mind were disrupted by the song and were cut off by the pain. They were unable to take form any further.

Alger fell and struggled on the ground. He squirmed, becoming less and less like a human as he was pushed to the brink of losing control.

Suddenly, the singing stopped. A slightly indifferent voice entered Alger's ears:

"Some elven blood…

"Then, that shall be all. Use Siatas's Beyonder characteristic well."

Alger's forehead was covered in cold sweat as he slowly got up. He didn't know when a figure had appeared in the tent.

It was a woman with black hair and exquisite facial features. Her ears were slightly pointy, and her eyes were deep. Her facial features were soft, and she wore a complicated and ancient long dress. Even though she didn't have the advantage in height, she still gave off an air of superiority.

"…Are you the Elf Queen, Queen of Calamity Cohinem?" A thought flashed through Alger's mind as he took the initiative to ask.

The woman played with a beautifully decorated golden cup and calmly said, "Haven't you already met me?"

Alger suddenly recalled the similar singing he had heard on Pasu

Island. He recalled seeing a high elf when he entered the underwater coral palace.

After a few seconds of silence, Alger said in a deep voice, “You’re actually still alive.”

At the same time, he silently recited Mr. Fool’s honorific name in his heart, but he didn’t know if it would be effective if he didn’t recite it out loud.

The black-haired woman’s expression remained unchanged as she replied, “It’s very difficult for an angel to perish without encountering an enemy.”

“Then why did you split the characteristics and place yourself to be in a strange state? This makes you need to wait for an opportunity to be resurrected.” Alger had learned of the corresponding situation at the Tarot Club, and now, he was asking out of curiosity, partly to stall for time.

The elven lady suspected to be Queen of Calamity Cohinem snorted.

“Because the divine throne for ‘Storm’ is occupied by Leodero, and I have no way of resisting the ‘Tyrant.’

“Also, the elves are dwindling in numbers. My anchors are becoming increasingly unstable.”

Other people might not know who Leodero was, but Alger knew very well. He didn’t dare continue this topic in the real world.

Just as he was about to ask the Queen of Calamity Cohinem’s goal for coming, the Elf Queen said, “Do you want to become a demigod?”

“She” wants to use my body to revive? “She” wants to use my wish to advance to Sequence 4 and obtain godhood as bait to intrude my body? While Alger was tempted, questions arose in his mind.

Considering how Mr. Fool could cleanse all kinds of corruption, Alger acutely felt that this was an opportunity.

This made him recall a term Emperor Roselle had once mentioned:

A trojan horse!

And now, he had a high chance of bringing in the trojan horse and throwing out the invaders within.

“What do you want me to do?” Alger didn’t appear too anxious as he raised a question based on his personality.

Queen of Calamity Cohinem observed him for a few seconds before saying, “When you have the right to make contact with the Book of Calamity, take out something that no one else will notice, and take it to the Western Continent.”

The Western Continent… The legendary homeland of the elves? Alger frowned slightly and said, “Hasn’t the Western Continent already disappeared?”

The corners of Cohinem’s lips curled up slightly.

“Since it disappeared, it will reappear again.

“It will definitely appear again when the apocalypse happens.”

Without waiting for Alger to ask further, the Elf Queen paused and said, “You don’t have to personally send that item to the Western Continent, but you have to entrust someone trustworthy. Although I’m not skilled at curses, I can still make you die in pain from breaking our agreement.”

“But what if the Western Continent doesn’t appear again, or if it can’t be entered?” Alger thought seriously for a moment.

Cohinem, with her gentle gaze and lustrous raven-black hair, seemed to be lost in beautiful memories.

After a few seconds, she calmly said, “If it really doesn’t appear again, then the agreement shall be null and void.

“Perhaps entering the Western Continent requires an incantation or command, but I do not know what it is. However, you can ask a particular existence.”

“Who?” Alger asked, puzzled.

Cohinem glanced at him and coldly said, “The Mr. Fool you were chanting in your heart just now.

“I have a feeling that ‘He’ is the key to this matter.”

Alger’s heart tightened as he hurriedly lowered his head in response.

“I understand.”

Seeing this, Queen of Calamity Cohinem nodded slightly and said, “If you wish to become a demigod and abide by this agreement, you can head to the elven ruins when the sun rises.”

After the voice fell, the Elf Queen’s figure quickly dissipated, like a mirage that was often seen at sea and in the desert.

Alger suddenly opened his eyes and realized that he was lying in a tent, having just woken up.

His memories were in a mess, but he quickly regulated them.

He and his sailors had just found the location of an elven ruin and had yet to explore it.

The previous “exploration,” singing, sailor anomalies, and appearance and conversation with Calamity were all just a dream!

It’s no wonder I was so careless… Even though I knew that I might encounter the Queen of Calamity, I didn’t pray to Mr. Fool first… The Queen of Calamity relied on her status as an angel to create this realistic dream? Or perhaps, she has a corresponding Sealed Artifact. Even if she exists in a special state, she still has the means to use her powers? Alger listened to the commotion outside the tent, and he realized that everything was normal.

He then sat down and prayed sincerely to Mr. Fool.

In just twenty to thirty seconds, Alger arrived above the gray fog and saw Mr. Fool sitting at the end of the long, mottled table.

“You met Cohinem?” After The Hanged Man greeted him, The Fool Klein spoke casually.

Alger answered seriously, “Yes, but I can’t be sure that it’s the Elf Queen.”

Chapter 1186 - Opportunity and Danger Are Two Sides of the Same Coin

◆ ◆ ◆

The Fool acknowledged softly and didn't deny The Hanged Man's guess, nor was he certain that it was Queen of Calamity Cohinem. After all, it was impossible for him to take out a gold coin in front of him and perform a divination on the spot.

Alger waited for a few seconds. Seeing no clear response from Mr. Fool, he quickly went into greater detail about what he had said in the prayer. From the woman suspected to be Queen of Calamity Cohinem saying that he had some elven blood in him, to how she gave him a promise of becoming a demigod, as well as the key to the Western Continent and the completion of the agreement.

After recounting everything, Alger shut his mouth and lowered his head, not daring to directly ask Mr. Fool what "He" thought. He obediently waited for the great existence to speak.

Some elven blood… Send something from the Book of Calamity to the Western Continent… The missing Western Continent might reappear again… The Western Continent… The Fool Klein listened quietly. He closed his eyes and calmly said, "This is very dangerous, but this is also an opportunity for you."

He had already gained initial control of Sefirah Castle, and the power he could mobilize had reached the level of a Sequence 2 angel. As for Queen of Calamity Cohinem, she couldn't be higher than this level; therefore, he was quite confident that he could resist the various accidents brought about by the Elf Queen.

It was precisely because of this that he dared to claim it to be an opportunity for The Hanged Man.

Of course, the prerequisite for grasping the opportunity was that The Hanged Man wasn't rash or went overboard. He had to constantly remember to ask for protection at all times. Therefore, Klein specially emphasized that it was very dangerous. He wanted The Hanged Man to remember to pray to Mr. Fool before he took action.

This short sentence had two meanings to it, but he believed that Mr. Hanged Man would definitely understand it.

Alger was delighted as he replied rather sincerely, as though he had learned from The Sun.

"My faith lies only with Mr. Fool!"

These words made Klein feel uneasy as he remembered the pain of being drowned by endless lightning. He could only smile without saying a word.

Alger deliberated for a moment before asking, "Honorable Mr. Fool, what are the incantations or commands needed to enter the Western Continent?"

I would like to know that too… The Fool Klein sighed and said, "It's not time for you to know."

"Yes, Mr. Fool." Alger didn't ask further as he bowed respectfully.

When he returned to the real world, he immediately walked out of the tent and led his sailors out. Under the light of the morning sun, he spent a certain amount of time reaching the elven ruin.

The scene here was identical to what he had seen in his dream. The withered vines covered the decaying wooden structure, and there were some areas where the text on monuments could be seen. The air seemed to have frozen, as though no one had stepped in for a long time.

Looking around, Alger suddenly thought of a question.

How was he to face the Church after he really relied on the Queen of Calamity to become a demigod?

Directly rebel, becoming the fifth king over the Five Seas—no, the sixth king? But this way, I won't have a chance to come into contact with the Book of Calamity. Unless I design a situation that forces the Church to use this Sealed Artifact that might've been labeled as Grade 0 without my knowledge. That will not only be very difficult, but I have to become a Sea King, or even a Calamity to succeed… Yes, I can request The World's help… If I wish to continue staying in the Church, I have to give them a reason that they cannot ignore but is sufficiently believable… Alger frowned slightly without hiding his solemnity.

In the eyes of the sailors who followed him, this was a sign that he was worried about the ruin.

As his thoughts churned, Alger gradually came up with ideas:

There are many books in the Church that have records of people turning into demigods due to a fortuitous encounter… Two-thirds of them were invaded by evil gods and devils and eventually lost their lives in the purification process… However, a third of them passed the test and became a high-ranking deacon or a cardinal…

Now that the war has broken out, the situation in Loen is tense. As long as there aren't any problems during the investigation, the Church wouldn't mind having an additional Sequence 4 demigod as cannon fodder… Then, I can slowly gain their trust later…

The prerequisite for all of this is that the Queen of Calamity hasn't truly attempted to corrupt me or left a mark on me…

Considering the various Sealed Artifacts in the Church's possession, I have to pray for Mr. Fool's blessings ahead of time… According to Miss Justice, Angel's Embrace can effectively hide one's true thoughts and tests in one's dream…

With the members of the Tarot Club beginning to become demigods or about to become demigods, Alger really didn't wish to be lining the bottom of the barrel. Just like in the past, he had done so many things in the Church, all for the sake of being superior to others. Now, he was naturally willing to take a certain risk.

With this decision, Alger immediately led his sailors into the ruins and began exploring the path in his dreams.

This time, he didn't split his subordinates into small teams. On the one hand, he was worried that an accident might occur, and on the other hand, he hoped that they could all be his "witness."

After fifteen minutes, Alger and his crew arrived beside the giant tree that had signs of its soil being churned.

Before he could survey his surroundings, his vision blurred, and he saw a gorgeous palace made up of coral.

Above the palace was a layer of deep blue seawater that rippled outwards. Giant pillars stood tall and held up an exaggerated dome. It was tall and beautiful, but also dark and gloomy.

Alger looked around and realized that all the sailors beside him had disappeared. He immediately knew that he might have been pulled into an illusion.

He took a silent breath and slowly walked into the coral palace.

There were many elves inside. They were either roasting fish or placing spices in the coagulated animal blood. Their choice of utensil was two tree branches to bring the food to their mouths. None of them minded the entrance of a stranger.

Alger then cast his gaze to the nine-staired stairs a hundred meters away.

On the steps, there was a coral throne inlaid with sapphires, emerald, and lustrous pearls. The Elf Queen, Queen of Calamity, was sitting there, looking down at Alger.

“Very good.” Cohinem nodded and threw out the exquisite gold wine glass.

The gentle but resilient wind held the wine cup in its embrace and, like tiny pixies in a line, carried the corresponding items towards Alger.

Alger reached out to receive it and looked down. He discovered that there was a blue liquid inside the golden cup. It was incorporeal, dreamy, and surreal.

“Drink it, and then head to the waters near the Symeem Island of the Rorsted Archipelago. Find this coral palace. The thing you want is inside.”

“If I don’t drink this ‘wine,’ I won’t be able to see that palace?” Alger asked thoughtfully.

Although he was facing an angel, he was still able to communicate rather calmly. This was because he met a mighty figure every week and was already used to this situation.

Queen of Calamity Cohinem nodded and said, “That’s right.”

“Will you leave a mark on me?” Alger asked cautiously.

“Yes,” Cohinem said coldly. “So, before entering the coral palace and obtaining the corresponding items, you can’t return to Pasu Island. You can’t meet the angels under Leodero.”

The pontiff can’t be met even if I want to… Alger heaved a sigh of relief inwardly before asking, “After I get hold of that item, the effect of this ‘wine’ will disappear?”

Elf Queen Cohinem, replied without any change in expression, “No, you need to directly consume that characteristic.

“When the time comes, this ‘wine’ will transform into a seal, allowing that characteristic to temporarily not invade your body. How you prepare the ritual and explain this to the Church of Storms will be up to you.”

Let the characteristic belong to me first before holding the ritual? This way, there might be a better way for the Church to accept it… Alger thought for a moment before raising his hand to bring the wine cup to his lips.

The ice-cold liquid slid down his throat and disappeared in a blink of an eye. The entire coral palace shattered as the light of dawn and the remnants of the gigantic green tree reappeared in front of Alger.

You didn’t sign a contract or get me to swear an oath? Yes, drinking that cup of “wine” is equivalent to making an agreement… Alger retracted his gaze and said to the surrounding sailors who were unaware, “There’s nothing here. Let’s go deeper and take a look.”

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein also retracted his gaze from the crimson star representing The Hanged Man and nodded thoughtfully.

That’s Siatas and Mobet’s grave… I never expected that golden wine cup to have such an effect…

That is indeed Elf Queen Cohinem… How’s “Her” present condition? Half of it is in the Book of Calamity, while the other is hiding somewhere unknown. “She” was using the golden wine cup or the characteristic to influence reality?

Mr. Hanged Man hasn't been contaminated for the time being. I'll wait for him to head to the Rorsted Archipelago before making another assessment.

As his true body had a limited amount of time left in the Historical Void, Klein didn't stay any longer, and he returned to the pitch-black wilderness. He carried the lantern that emitted a faint yellow light as he walked towards a certain location.

As he walked, he turned his head to look east, which was symbolic of where Chernobyl was. His footsteps slowed down involuntarily.

Once I gather sufficient information from the Dark Demonic Wolf's former hiding spots, I'll head east. I'll walk all the way until I reach the boundary and confirm the situation. Then, I'll consider the matter of the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic… Amon probably wouldn't expect that I would suddenly leave… "He" definitely knows the past of the Dark Demonic Wolf. It's impossible for "Him" to do the same kinds of investigations that I'll be doing… Yes, but "He" will definitely be tracking me… Klein exhaled slowly and sped up his pace.

A bolt of lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the dark and red desolate plains. Raindrops began dripping down intermittently.

Klein dragged out a black umbrella from the Historical Void. With one hand holding an umbrella and the other holding the lantern, he proceeded alone.

†

About a week later, the Future was docked somewhere along the long Loen coastline.

Cattleya held a stack of tarot cards in her hand and said to the sailors—Nina, and company, "I'll be staying in Loen for some time. All of you have to watch Frank and prevent him from doing his strange experiments.”

Chapter 1187 - Change

◆

Upon hearing the captain's instructions, Nina pouted and pointed out the window.

"Are any of Frank's experiments not strange?"

"…" Cattleya was momentarily at a loss for words. All she could do was sigh and say, "If there are any signs of danger, write to me immediately."

As a Mysticologist, she also had her own messenger.

"Alright." Nina puffed her chest out and said, "If there's anything to blame, it's solely because I'm the most mature and reliable person on the Future."

Having said that, she asked curiously, "Captain, what are you doing in Loen? What mission did you take on? Are you going to engage in some sabotage raids behind enemy lines?"

Nina was of Feysacian descent, and she was considered half-Intis. She naturally had some inclinations in the recent war; therefore, she guessed that her captain had established contact with Intis's intelligence department.

"…You could say that," Cattleya replied sternly.

In a sense, Nina's guess wasn't wrong. She had indeed taken on a mission and was dealing damage in Loen's capital, Backlund. However, her target wasn't an official faction, but a cultist.

Furthermore, there's still a chance to meet the Queen. She probably hasn't left Backlund yet, and the earliest she'll leave is probably after the new year… Upon thinking of this, Cattleya suddenly felt a little excited.

Ever since she left the Dawn, she hadn't really met Queen Mystic. She only had letters to communicate with her, or despite being on the same boat, they didn't communicate with one another for some reason.

Nina didn't dare to press further as she pointed to the door and said, "Captain, is there anything else? If not, we'll leave."

Cattleya nodded, indicating that this Future boatswain could leave with her subordinates.

Just as Nina held the handle and gently twisted it, Cattleya suddenly recalled something and hurriedly shouted, "Nina."

"Hmm?" Nina, whose blonde hair was tied into a high ponytail, turned around with a confused expression.

"Don't drink!" Cattleya emphasized seriously. "When I return to the ship, you'll be allowed to have your fill."

Nina immediately revealed a charming smile.

"Deal!"

Cattleya thought for a moment before exhorting,

"Apart from Frank, you have to take note of Heath's condition. Don't let him generate curiosity towards unknown voices, and don't let him be overly exhausted. Also, pull Ottolov out of his room frequently, and control the frequency and times he interacts with mysticism knowledge. Also…"

"I know, I know. Don't I know them all too well?" Nina waved her hand and agreed.

After the boatswain and her subordinates left the captain's cabin and closed the door behind them, Cattleya cast her gaze out the window to look at the currently invisible Backlund.

After a few minutes, she took out a tarot card from the deck in her hand.

It depicted a lonely old man with a glass lantern and a staff: The Hermit card.

†

Late at night, Backlund, Empress Borough, Earl Hall's house.

Audrey, who was wearing a white silk nightgown, suddenly opened her eyes. She took a blue cloak and draped it over her body.

She then got out of bed and walked to the full-body mirror in the room. Through the crimson moonlight shining through the curtains, she carefully observed herself.

Her pair of emerald-green eyes seemed to glow brightly and limpid. It was so clear that one could clearly see every detail.

Audrey closed her eyes. By the time she opened them again, all the abnormalities had vanished.

The corners of her mouth curled up bit by bit, and a small depression appeared on her face. Her eyes curved slightly as she silently praised herself.

Audrey, you've finally come this far!

She had completely digested the Dreamwalker potion.

According to her confidence in herself, and her predictions, she had originally believed that it would take until February for her to digest the potion. To her surprise, she had encountered many strange and completely different dreams recently.

This included many dreams within dreams, dreams that were a result of a mental illness, lucid dreams, dreams caused by the influence of evil spirits and wraiths, and the dreams of a few demigods.

Under normal circumstances, as a Dreamwalker, Audrey could generally determine the creature’s level when entering a dream, thus avoiding danger. However, those demigods had hidden themselves very well. Only when she entered their dreams did she realize that something was amiss and nearly jumped in fright.

Fortunately, she wasn’t discovered all those times. She ended up accumulating experience, and she began carefully touring, traveling, observing, and analyzing in the demigods’ dreams, allowing her to greatly digest her potion.

In addition, the other special dreams gave her a completely different experience. After that, she attempted creating multiple dreams within dreams. Some attempted to hide behind the scenes in her dreams and guide them in an ingenious manner to develop and interfere with the subconscious in a reverse manner. She treated the mental illness of the owners of the dreams, or the corruption caused by an evil spirit or wraith.

To a certain extent, she had gone against the requirements of only observing, recording, and not making any interference. Yet, this strangely accelerated the digestion of the potion.

This made her conclude a new principle:

…If you really want to interfere, then be the mastermind and conductor behind the scenes. It’s so that even if the goal succeeds, no one will notice it.

This was something that Audrey had done very well. The few people with serious mental illnesses had unknowingly recovered after having five or six strange dreams.

And it was very normal for a dream to appear strange and incomprehensible.

To be able to digest the Dreamwalker potion so quickly, it's mainly a result of my good luck recently. Without so many unique experiences, I'd definitely have to wait another month or two. Yes, I might even be caught by a demigod and be thrown into a Beyonder prison or directly be killed… When did my luck become so good? It seems like it started after I sacrificed the ice-cream to that Fate domain's angel, uh—"His" Blessed… Uh… Audrey looked at her reflection and blinked her eyes with a smile.

She quickly retracted her gaze, scanned her bedroom, and walked to the dressing table.

Sitting on it was a deck of cards.

In a room of a girl who enjoyed mysticism, it was normal for her to have a deck of tarot cards.

Audrey stretched out her right hand and touched the card at the top with her fingertip. She slowly took a deep breath and muttered to herself, The fighting at the Amantha mountain range is getting more intense…

Midseashire had already lost a port…

It's said that the defenses of the Hornacis mountain range in Sivellaus County can't last until spring…

If not for the fact that we have gained a significant advantage at sea, our connection with the Southern Continent's East Balam would've surely been severed…

Alfred is still there…

I wonder how this war will develop.

Thankfully, I'm about to become a demigod. Mr. World has already given me the Manipulator's potion formula and main ingredient… The seven drops of tears that were shed from intense human emotions have also been found during my dream experience recently…

The Tree Mentor's golden leaves were obtained via a trade with Little Sun. I'm just short of the blood of an elderly mind dragon…

Phew, I'll tried to trade for it with the Psychology Alchemists. Before Hvin Rambis died, I was already the person-in-charge of a small psychological discussion group… But will this reveal that Hvin Rambis's death has something to do with me?

Or could I get Mr. World to summon the blood of an elderly mind dragon from history? This can last for at least fifteen minutes. When I succeed in advancing, I'll converge my spirituality and complete my cueing. Its disappearance will not affect anything. After all, it's just a supplementary material…

Audrey, you actually learned how to fake things. What's more, it's on such matters!

After a self-deprecating comment, Audrey began to think about the kind of situation to use to complete the advancement ritual of a Manipulator.

The ritual required one to drink the potion while in the midst of an emotional resonance generated during a special occasion with at least ten thousand people.

As her thoughts raced, Audrey came up with a preliminary idea:

The Goddess's Winter Gifts Day?

But no matter how large a Mass is, it can't accommodate 10,000 people… The cathedral can't accommodate so many people…

Yes, it's usually impossible. If there's a chance, I can donate a sum of money. I can suggest we do an extremely large Mass in memorial square so as to placate the souls that passed away during the war.

In the most important square, the family members, relatives, and friends of the deceased are invited. As long as they accommodate a certain proportion of the participants, the emotions that resonate will affect the others who are participating in Mass, allowing the ritual's requirements to be satisfied…

After calmly analyzing the situation, Audrey suddenly bowed her head and looked at the mirror on the dressing table. She saw that the faint smile on her beautiful face had long disappeared, leaving behind only calmness and sadness in her eyes.

She stared at herself, her lips curling up slightly as she whispered, "Audrey, you've become despicable…"

Closing her eyes and opening them again, Audrey had returned to normal.

She reached out to the stack of tarot cards on the dressing table and flipped the card at the top.

The card depicted a goddess of justice sitting on a stone chair with a sword in one hand and a balance in the other, coldly watching everything.

†

Backlund, Hillston Borough, in a house with a fireplace.

"You've finished digesting your Scribe potion?" Xio had just changed into her home clothes when she heard the piece of unbelievable news upon walking back to the living room.

Fors nodded with a haggard expression.

"Yes."

"Do you know what kind of life I've been enduring recently?"

As she was being forced to "travel" to six places in a consecutive manner, she had to experience, admire, and record the sights day and night. In addition, she would be pulled up above the gray fog, recording all kinds of strange or high-level Beyonder powers.

The "Lightning Storm" and the "Historical Void Summoning" powers had been replaced several times. They had finally recovered their original setup today.

"I don't know…" Xio answered honestly.

"I know you don't know." Fors took a deep breath and said, "What about you? How have you been recently?"

"Not too bad. It was arranged for me to preside over a Paranormal Court, and I had some thoughts about the acting principles. The speed at which the potion is being digested has increased," Xio acknowledged.

"I find it hard to imagine you wearing a judge's robe and sitting at the tribunal's seat to judge." Fors sighed from the bottom of her heart.

"Are you trying to say that the prisoners and lawyers won't be able to see me?" Xio added, not minding it at all.

Fors laughed dryly and said, "I'll need to have some rest to prepare my advancement ritual to become a Traveler."

"Don't you need to go deep into the spirit world? Do you have a way?" Xio asked in puzzlement.

Fors nodded and said, "That person asked me to summon his messenger."

Chapter 1188 - Thick-Skinned

◆

Summon his messenger… As Judgment of the Tarot Club, as a member of MI9, Xio understood what a messenger meant. Furthermore, she knew that the middle ranks of the Numinous Episcopate widely used messengers.

Before she could ask for more details, she saw Fors walk towards the guest room on the first floor with her eyes vacant and footsteps listless. She said with an ethereal voice, "Let me sleep for a while. We can talk later."

She slept all the way till the next morning, waking up thanks to the aroma of meat.

Desi pie? Fors rubbed her eyes and walked out of the room. She saw that the table was already filled with food.

"Yes." Xio came out of the bathroom. "The one from the corner of the street. It's not bad."

Fors enthusiastically acknowledged and sat beside the dining table. She quickly picked up the Desi pie and stuffed it into her mouth.

After finishing one, she drank a mouthful of sweet iced tea and sighed in satisfaction.

This is life!

Oh no, I forgot to brush my teeth…

After she was done washing up, she finally regained her ability to think. She looked at Xio in puzzlement and said, “Did MI9 not have any suspicions about how you secretly became a Judge?”

“They thought it was the remuneration that motivated me back then,” Xio informed her of what she had learned.

Fors stroked her hair and said with a smile, “That’s true. Let them ask the Church of Evernight.”

She covered her mouth and yawned.

“I’m going to summon that messenger.”

After this period of “Recording,” the way she addressed Klein had changed from Gehrman Sparrow and Mr. World to “that person.”

On the one hand, it was a form of respect, and on the other hand, she was afraid that someone would eavesdrop.

Upon hearing her friend’s words, Xio looked around and asked in confusion, “Aren’t you going to set up the ritual?”

She remembered that summoning a messenger required a ritual.

“That’s only one of the methods. That person got me to use another method.” Fors glanced at her clothes and realized that her clothes were all wrinkled since she hadn’t had the time to change her clothes last night.

Upon realizing that she would be meeting the messenger later, she decided to pay attention to her image. She hurriedly returned to the bedroom on the second floor and changed into a beige dress with frilly designs.

After preparing herself, she raised her right hand in front of Xio, and she grabbed at it as if she wanted to pull something out of the air.

In her eyes, an illusory book took form. It quickly flipped and stopped at one of the pages.

In the next second, her arm sank and a figure emerged from the void.

This was Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing a half top hat and a black coat. He had a cold expression and an unyielding air, but his eyes appeared somewhat dull.

I succeeded? This is just my second attempt… I've only tried it once yesterday and failed… Fors's eyes widened as though they wanted to take in more light so as to see more clearly.

She knew that this was the Historical Void projection she had summoned, so she wasn't too nervous. Instead, she held her breath and looked warily at Gehrman Sparrow's projection. She couldn't tell if he was real or fake.

She still remembered the combat achievements of this crazy adventurer.

Fors has actually summoned Gehrman Sparrow? Shouldn't it be his messenger? Would Gehrman Sparrow still be able to summon something? Questions popped up in Xio's mind.

Just as Fors was unsure of what to do next, Gehrman Sparrow's eyes darted around slightly as his gaze instantly turned focused. He no longer had a rigid and vacant look, as though he was alive.

Following that, he took out an exquisite, silvery harmonica and blew it.

No sound came out of it, but the surroundings instantly turned cold as a biting wind stirred.

Then, a woman dressed in a dark and complicated long dress with four blonde hair and red eyes in her hands walked out of the void. Her eight eyes looked at Gehrman Sparrow.

Gehrman Sparrow nodded slightly and pointed at Fors.

"This lady needs to set up four special coordinates deep in the spirit world. Please help her."

"Alright…" One of the heads of Reinette Tinekerr said as it moved up and down.

Gehrman Sparrow didn't speak further. As he approached the window, he made the glove on his left hand become transparent.

His figure quickly disappeared as he "Teleported" out of the house.

He left… He left just like that… The Historical Void projection I summoned left just like that? Fors stared with her mouth slightly open, as though she was experiencing a comical play.

According to her understanding, the thing she summoned should be under her control. How could it leave after giving some instructions?

Could it be that the Historical Void projection has the same personality as the actual person… No, it's as if Gehrman Sparrow himself had descended… Fors glanced at Xio and realized that she was just as confused as she was.

At that moment, Fors suddenly shivered, as though an extremely terrifying creature was glaring at her.

She subconsciously turned her head and realized that Gehrman Sparrow's messenger was looking at her with eight red eyes, carefully observing her.

As terrifying as Gehrman Sparrow… Fors forced a smile and said, "… Sorry to trouble you."

At this moment, Reinette Tinekerr's four blonde, red-eyed heads spoke one after another:

"Need…" "To pay…" "Eight hundred…" "Gold coins…"

There… there's still a fee? Fors turned agape once again, at a loss for a response.

After a few seconds, her thoughts suddenly became active as she began to calculate her savings.

After loaning 2,400 pounds to Xio, I still have 780 pounds left… My expenses recently have been quite high, but the royalties from my past novels are still being credited. Adding my other income and the 300 pounds Xio returned me, I have a total of 1,258 pounds… That's enough…

Fors immediately agreed, but she immediately discovered a problem.

"Gold coins, all of them?"

Reinette Tinekerr's four heads shook slightly.

"Yes…" "You…" "Can…" "Owe…"

As expected, all of them need to be gold coins… I remember that Mr. World has been trying to gather gold coins and exchange for gold coins for quite some time before. It was to pay this messenger? The relationship between him and his messenger is really complicated… Uh, Mr. World should still have quite a few gold coins. I'll try to exchange 800 gold coins from him later… Fors secretly heaved a sigh of relief and said, "Alright."

After agreeing, Fors saw the headless messenger raise one of the heads in her hand to bite down on her clothes near her shoulder.

The surrounding colors became saturated and brighter—the reds became redder, the blacks became blacker, and the whites became whiter.

In such a manner, Fors was led by Reinette Tinekerr through similar scenes that she had no way of getting her bearings right. It didn't take long before she arrived at the spot where there was a faint fog.

In the depths of the fog, one eye after another seemed to look over, but they quickly shrank back.

†

When Fors summoned Gehrman Sparrow's projection from the Historical Void to Backlund, he had immediately entered the fog of history and dashed all the way to a period before the First Epoch.

His consciousness came alive within the projection, reducing Fors's spirituality expenditure.

This way, Klein had indirectly returned to Backlund. This was also the reason why he had gotten Miss Magician to use such a complicated method to summon the messenger.

As for the messenger summoned by the adventurer's harmonica, it was an independent existence—it didn't increase the burden on Fors's spirituality burden. Even if the Historical Void projection vanished, Reinette Tinekerr could still remain in the real world if "She" so wished.

After a "Teleportation," Klein's figure appeared in a secluded alley near Saint Samuel Cathedral. He then used his Faceless powers to change his appearance and figure.

During this process, although there were still a few pedestrians in the alley, they were affected by an illusion. They didn't notice a sudden companion appearing beside them.

Right on the heels of that, Klein straightened his clothes, pressed down on his hat, and walked quickly to Saint Samuel Cathedral. He found a seat to the side of the main prayer hall and sat down.

After taking off his hat and chanting an honorific name, he sincerely drew a crimson moon on his chest. Then, he clasped his hands together, closed his eyes, and prayed softly to the Evernight Goddess.

"…I'm currently searching for traces of the Dark Demonic Wolf's past to grasp his exact condition…"

At this point, he recalled that the Dark Demonic Wolf might've been a former "colleague" of the Evernight Goddess. "They" likely knew plenty about each other as he quickly added, "…I wonder if you can give me some hints…"

He didn't wait for a response. Instead, he maintained a calm attitude and continued, "…After this matter is completed, I plan on heading all the way east to see if I can reach the Western Continent and see what state that place is in. I'll take this opportunity to escape Amon's pursuit and find other possibilities…"

After praying, he tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion and whispered, "Praise the Lady."

Just as he finished speaking, a dark night sky with countless stars suddenly appeared in front of him. A message unknowingly appeared in his mind.

It was information regarding Black Demonic Wolf, Kotar.

"…" Klein was stunned for a moment. Only when the starry sky before him completely disappeared did he return to his senses. He sincerely praised the Goddess once again.

After leaving Saint Samuel Cathedral he used Creeping Hunger and another "Teleportation" to arrive near the Holy Wind Cathedral located in Cherwood Borough.

He wanted to pray to the Lord of Storms.

He looked up at the towering steeple and felt some momentary hesitation. He really wasn't sure if he should enter the headquarters of the Church of the Lord of Storms in Backlund.

I'm just a Historical Void projection. There's nothing to be afraid about… I won't suffer any losses from praying, but what if the Lord of Storms hears about the Amon situation and decides to bestow 0-32 to me? That way, I won't have to risk hunting the Dark Demonic Wolf… A person should always be hopeful! After some thought, he finally made up his mind.

He carefully raised his hand and summoned Enuni, the one who had yet to be parasitized by Amon, from the Historical Void to walk into the Holy Wind Cathedral in his own form.

A minute or two later, a dark cloud suddenly appeared above Backlund. There seemed to be a flash of silver lightning in the Holy Wind Cathedral, but no one noticed it.

Chapter 1189 - Winter Gifts Day

◈ ◈ ◈

As soon as the dark clouds in the sky dispersed, everything in the Holy Wind Cathedral returned to normal.

In a nearby corner, Klein raised his hand to rub his forehead. The corners of his mouth twitched as he mumbled, “If you don’t want to give it to me, so be it… But why did you kill my marionette…”

He then took a deep breath before his figure rapidly faded away and disappeared. The time limit for maintaining the Historical Void projection was almost over. After all, a Scribe’s imitation of a high-level power had significant differences from the original version. The burden of a Sequence 6 summoning a Sequence 3 was rather heavy. Even if a Scholar of Yore could transfer his consciousness over and reduce the spirituality expenditure, it was impossible for Fors to keep it up for too long.

†

In the outskirts of Backlund, downstream of the Tussock River.

Leonard hid his red gloves and slowly walked towards a certain spot.

Suddenly, the slightly-aged voice of Pallez Zoroast rang out in his mind:

“How’s your former colleague been doing recently?”

Thinking back to the conversation at the Tarot Club, Leonard suppressed his voice and said, “He just avoided a trap set up by Amon’s avatar. He’s searching for the truth in the Forsaken Land of the Gods.”

After listening to what he had to say, Pallez Zoroast didn’t say another word and allowed Leonard to proceed forward.

†

After setting up the special coordinates, Fors was thrown back into the real world by Gehrman Sparrow’s messenger.

“I feel exhausted, but I just woke up not too long ago… It must be that High-Sequence Beyonder powers are too draining on my spirituality…” Fors covered her mouth and yawned. She looked at Xio with a haggard expression.

“That’s possible.” Xio agreed with her friend’s judgment.

Her intuition told her that the Gehrman Sparrow projection that had been summoned definitely wasn’t simple. It could even be equivalent to a saint.

After some hesitation, Xio said, “Sleep a little longer. Don’t attempt to advance in such a state.

“In one of my previous trials, the murderer was mentally psychotic. He would deliberately make his friends, his students, and the tramps he took in, consume potions in all sorts of negative states, watch them lose control, and mutate into all kinds of monsters—disgusting and terrifying ones.”

“…What was this fellow’s goal?” Fors was stunned for a second.

“Two goals. One was to observe whether the same potion caused the same loss of control on different people. The other was to use oil paintings to record the corresponding scenes. He believed that the madness, the pain, and the distortion had an unparalleled beauty, one that can stimulate his greatest creative passion.” Xio recalled the trial from back then. She felt a sense of hatred and lingering fear. “He was a complete lunatic.”

“That fellow should be executed!” Fors couldn’t help but shudder when she imagined it. She bared her teeth and said, “Was he a cultist?”

“Perhaps, but there were no clues… On the surface, he appeared to be an outstanding artist, and he is very famous internationally. If it wasn’t for more than five of his students and friends who had disappeared over the past few years, attracting our attention, then he might’ve had to wait until he completely went mad and lost control, becoming a monster, before this matter would be discovered.” Xio suddenly paused for a moment before saying, “Back then, everyone in the law-enforcement team that opened his hidden basement vomited. There were all kinds of mutated and terrifying corpses, and hanging overhead were all kinds of harrowing yet charming oil paintings…”

“A hateful fellow, but it’s also a very attractive story.” Fors thought for a moment and pressed, “Was he a Devil?”

“No, he’s a Psychiatrist.” Xio rejected her friend’s guess.

“…You sentenced him to death?” Fors asked in anticipation.

Xio shook her head.

“His defense lawyer convinced me that he’s more suited to be a Sealed Artifact researcher.”

“There’s a lawyer? You have lawyers at the Paranormal Court? Isn’t it all a direct trial?” Fors asked in surprise.

Xio straightened her blonde hair and said, “There are some Beyonders from the Lawyer pathway among us who also need to act. Of course, they don’t know that they’re acting.”

“Alright.” Fors yawned again and pointed to the reclining chair beside the fireplace. “I’ll sleep for a while. Eh, don’t you have work?”

“We can take days off,” Xio replied succinctly.

Fors didn’t ask further as she walked to the fireplace and collapsed into it.

About two to three hours later, she woke up and Cogitated for fifteen minutes.

Following that, she found the Traveler Beyonder characteristic and the supplementary ingredients given to her by her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham, and concocted a potion bottle.

The potion’s color was white but transparent. It was like half-melted snow water, occasionally producing light-green bubbles.

Fors held the potion and glanced at her friend who was on guard by the side. She smiled and said, “If I lose control, don’t hesitate. Just chop off my head.

“No, pray first. There might still be a chance to save me.”

“…” Xio slowly nodded. “Maintain this state.”

Fors silently exhaled. Without any hesitation, she raised the bottle and gulped it down.

In the blink of an eye, she felt her body and her eyes light up one after another. They blasted around her body and opened one illusory door after another.

Fors’s consciousness couldn’t help but enter one of them. Her entire body turned transparent as she vanished.

In such a chaotic state of mind, Fors nearly couldn’t regain her sense of self-awareness. Thankfully, she had her fair share of being tormented recently and had a strong will. Furthermore, from time to time, she could feel the four special coordinates in the spirit world. Finally, she slowly came to her senses.

After an unknown period of time, she realized that she had already entered the depths of the spirit world. It was difficult to tell her exact location, and she couldn't find her "way" back.

With the help of the four special coordinates, Fors slowly "traversed" back to a familiar spot, leaving the saturated, stacked colors and the thin fog before walking out of the spirit world.

The four special coordinates weren't only used to help me find a way back, they can also effectively maintain my self-awareness… Teacher is only a Sequence 7, so without any actual experience, it's inevitable for him to miss out on such knowledge… As Fors thought, she cast her gaze towards Xio and smiled slightly.

"I'm a Traveler."

Xio heaved a sigh of relief and asked curiously, "What new Beyonder powers did you get?"

"The main one is 'Teleportation.' Also, 'Invisible Hand.' In addition, the number of demigod-level Beyonder powers I can 'Record' has increased to four. The actual effects should be close to that of a Sequence 4…" Fors examined herself.

She then raised her hand and pulled out a tarot card from across the room, one used for divination.

It was a person with a scepter in his right hand that pointed towards the sky. His left hand pointed to the earth. In front of him were people like the holy grail, a scepter, a sword, star coins: The Magician card.

†

Every year's longest night was the birthday of the Evernight Goddess, commonly known as the Winter Gifts Day.

On this day, all Evernight believers would head to a nearby cathedral to witness the sunset of the sun. When night fell, they would participate in Mass, enjoy a holy meal, listen to the hymns, and do all sorts of activities.

The year 1350 for Loen's Evernight believers was a very heavy year. The intensity of the war and the cost of items had made them lose the good mood they had. However, on Winter Gifts Day, they still came out of their houses. This was because the Church of Evernight was going to hold a massive Mass in the various large public squares to placate the souls that had passed away.

At the same time, many foundations would distribute food vouchers at the Mass. People who received them could be able to obtain the corresponding items in any of the relief points or cathedrals. This led to Storm and Steam believers who didn't celebrate Winter Gifts Day to head for the nearest square.

West Borough, Memorial Square, where George III was blasted to death.

Dressed in a black cloak while walking her golden retriever, Susie, with a leather bag on her back, Audrey walked among the nobles looking refined. Her expression didn't seem abnormal, but she hid some pain and guilt.

She had obtained the blood of an elderly mind dragon. After concocting the Manipulator potion, she placed it in the small bag Susie was carrying.

Susie was already a Sequence 6 Hypnotist. She believed that not many people present would notice her abnormality and snatch things from her.

The blood of the elderly mind dragon came from The Hermit Cattleya. Apparently, she had obtained it from Queen Mystic, and she had paid 3,000 pounds for it.

This was in line with her expectations, as she didn't really want to obtain the ingredients from the Psychology Alchemists. After all, her direct superior, Hvin Rambis, had only died a few months ago. To collect the items needed for an advancement, it made it inevitable for people to suspect her. As for the other members of the Psychology Alchemists, they had the ability and intelligence to notice this point.

Besides, after becoming a demigod, one has to come into contact with the Psychology Alchemists' councilors. According to Mr. World, there might be an angel from the mind domain hidden amongst them. I'll continue making preparations. With a suitable opportunity and excuse, I'll consider raising my position in the organization… I'll hide my strength for now… The blonde Audrey lifted the ends of her skirt slightly and slowly walked towards her predetermined spot.

Along the way, many nobles extended their hands to her in a friendly manner, hoping to help this beautiful, noble, and weak young lady through the crowd. However, these were all blocked by Earl Hall.

He got his eldest son, Hibbert, to be in charge of his youngest daughter while he held his wife's arm and walked ahead. From time to time, he would turn back to look at the most dazzling jewel of Backlund.

Not long after their family arrived at their destination, the Church of Evernight's Bishop of the Backlund diocese, Saint Anthony Stevens, walked up to the high platform in his black robe with red patterns.

He looked around, raised his right hand, and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

"Praise the Lady!"

When the believers below responded, this saint's deep voice could be heard by everyone.

"Today is the celebration of the night, but the Goddess's response is pity.

"'She' takes pity on every mother who has lost her child. 'She' takes pity on every lonely child. And ‘She’ takes pity on everyone who has suffered immense pain.

“‘She’ said that all of this will end. All the suffering will return to silence and repose.”

Chapter 1190 - Resonance

◆ ◆ ◆

As Anthony Steven Vincent’s words echoed in Memorial Square, it spread to other areas. The Loenese citizens who participated in the Mass were both moved and sad, feeling warmth in the midst of their depression.

In a different square, different choirs began to chant the hymns. The ethereal and holy voice seemed to echo deep in everyone’s heart:

“Full-faced above the land stood the crimson moon;

“And sweet it was to dream of themselves,

“Of child, and wife, and parents; but evermore[1]…”

Unknowingly, everyone felt their spirits being cleansed and their spirituality naturally released.

They seemed to have entered a dream and were strolling in a quiet darkness.

Their children were sleeping here. Their parents, their wives, their husbands, their friends, and the deceased were no longer suffering. They no longer had any pain, their expressions were peaceful and gentle.

“We look upward into the night sky,

“We tenderly say her name:

"'Evernight Goddess!'

"…If 'She' heard us, 'She' would surely agree,

"Smiling with purity at the dead:

"Come, rest and sleep well, my children![2]"

The people who were strolling in the dream felt awash with intense sorrow once again, as though they realized that they were really going to bid each other farewell.

They recalled all the beautiful memories from the past. They recalled the scene of their family enjoying delicacies and having fun at the dining table. They recalled the people who looked at them warmly, and the pain of seeing them get hurt. When they learned of their passing, it was as if they could tear their souls apart. They recalled the dark clouds and separation that had been brought to this war.

They were sleeping peacefully in this serene nation, no longer having any worries. However, the people who survived had to suffer the days and nights, turning haggard and withered.

One teardrop after another flowed down. The people participating in Mass at Memorial Square could no longer suppress their emotions as they silently released the pain they had accumulated.

A huge wave of sadness filled the air, mixed with the chanting of the choir, as though it had a corporeal form.

"Cross your hands humbly,

"Over your breast!

"Make the silent prayer,

"And shout from the bottom of your heart:

"The only escape is tranquility![3]"

The people who were sobbing silently with their eyes closed subconsciously followed the content of the hymns and made similar gestures. Then, they shouted in their hearts, infected with each other's emotions:

"The only escape is tranquility!"

The grief reached an apex with more than ten thousand hearts resonating at Memorial Square.

At this moment, Audrey opened her eyes and bent down. She took out a bottle of potion from the leather pouch that her golden retriever, Susie, was carrying.

There were countless points of light floating in the potion, just like the manifestation of the sea of collective subconscious.

Audrey didn't hesitate. Under such circumstances, she removed the bottle cap and gulped down the liquid inside.

Unlike in the past where she could experience the potion slush through her throat and into her stomach, she immediately felt abnormal.

She felt that she could no longer sense her body. Her entire being seemed to have condensed into an idea as she merged into the illusory sea around her.

This was her first time directly seeing the sea of collective subconscious without passing through a dream or mind island. As though she had returned to her mother's embrace before she was born, she returned to the very beginning where the imprints left by human ancestors were washed away by the tides as they crumbled and were influenced.

There was fear, madness, and all kinds of terrifying mental corruption. For a moment, Audrey found it difficult to resist. Her consciousness faded, and her "body" shook as though it was on the brink of melting away.

However, the “sea” nearby wasn’t serene. There was a certain degree of undulations, spreading the intense sorrow and pain around.

Under such influence, the self-aware Audrey, who was about to be assimilated by the sea of collective subconscious, also began to resonate, generating uncontrollable feelings of grief within her.

The grief spread from one thought to another. Soon, it filled the blob of “thoughts” that Audrey had mutated into. It pierced through her Soul Body and pierced her soul.

Audrey finally regained a little of her senses. She skillfully Placated herself, constantly giving cues to remove the corruption until she regained her senses.

The voice in her ears became clearer and clearer, louder and louder. Finally, it reverberated through the sea of collective subconscious.

“The only escape is tranquility!”

“The only escape is tranquility!”

The only escape is tranquility… Audrey repeated the prayer as her figure quickly turned clear.

With a mere thought, she split herself into many transparent and illusory bodies. She traveled through the sea of collective subconscious and reached the mind islands that represented different people and stepped onto them.

In these “places,” she could clearly see the sadness coming from different people.

The bombshells that came from the sky, the airship that made up a fleet, the letters spelling bad news sent from the front lines, blood and flesh splattering in front of them, and the person who they loved suddenly collapsing in front of them, the pile of toys that no longer had an owner, the fit of coughs that came from the Great Smog…

"The only escape is tranquility."

The golden retriever, Susie, also shut her eyes in Mass. She used the human language to recite those words in her heart, but she failed to notice any changes in her surroundings.

Suddenly, in her soul, in her Body of Heart and Mind, Audrey's voice sounded:

"Susie, I succeeded…

"I've always been worried, worried that I'll become more and more indifferent as my Sequence increases due to the potion's effects; that I'll become more and more like a Mythical Creature instead of a human."

Susie raised her head in confusion and saw that although the blonde girl's eyes were tightly shut, tears had unknowingly covered her face.

Then, she heard Audrey say in her heart:

"Thankfully, I can still feel their sorrow.

"How nice…"

In Susie's eyes, teardrops fell from the corner of the blonde girl's eyes. It was crystal clear.

At this moment, the sun's final ray of light was swallowed. The night brought about tranquility.

Everyone opened their eyes and said in a calm voice, "The only escape is tranquility!"

†

After crying without restraint, the bright, cheerful Audrey's mood became heavy. She became a little sensitive and a little sad. It made everyone who saw her feel a sense of love from the bottom of their hearts.

Under all kinds of protection, she returned to Empress Borough and returned to her room.

Only then did she have the chance to seriously examine herself and digest the knowledge and experience she gained from the sea of collective subconscious.

Others might not be able to tell, but Audrey knew very well that the tall, blonde, blue-eyed beauty in the mirror already possessed extraordinary strength and exaggerated dragon scale defenses. She could break through a block of steel with one punch.

Oh, I can still use “Dragon Transformation.” It’s equivalent to using an incomplete Mythical Creature form. However, I have to wait until I get used to the potion and keep stacking up the correct psychological cues. Otherwise, I can lose control… Every “Dragon Transformation” can’t exceed a certain amount of time. Otherwise, even if I have the means to treat my mind and soul, I’ll be contaminated by madness and confusion, causing me to lose control… My current limit is about a minute…

The core power of a Manipulator is “Manipulation.” I can allow a Body of Heart and Mind pass through the sea of collective subconscious and enter another person’s mind island. I can directly change their subconscious and read their thoughts, silently driving them to do all sorts of things…

Matching “Manipulation” is “Virtual Persona.” I can create many personas, allowing them to have a corresponding Body of Heart and Mind. This aspect can resist a lot of influence in the mind domain, and on the other hand, it can allow me to use “them” to silently invade the target’s island of consciousness without any signs of it…

I currently can have only 13 Virtual Personas…

A Manipulator can also create a terrifying “Mental Plague.” By using the sea of collective subconscious, I can spread all kinds of mental illnesses and extreme madness…

Yes, “Awe” has turned into “Mind Deprivation,” a huge area-of-effect version. It’s no longer just the single effect of “Awe”…

I can also transform my designated thoughts into a “Mind Storm” that will sweep the surroundings, affecting all my enemies…

Heh heh, as a Manipulator, it naturally comes with the ability to travel the sea of collective subconscious. It’s called “Consciousness Stroll.” Otherwise my target would’ve long left by the time I arrived at a location after a series of complicated manipulations… Audrey looked at herself in the mirror and suddenly revealed a faint smile.

Then, she puffed up her cheeks and opened her mouth as if she was about to spew something.

Since her Mythical Creature form was a mind dragon, it definitely had to have some form of dragon’s breath.

This was an attack that could directly stimulate and harm the target’s Body of Heart and Mind and Soul Body. It dealt damage in an area-of-effect manner, an upgraded version of “Psychic Piercing.”

Following that, Audrey’s green eyes turned slightly and she looked away. She sighed inwardly.

This is what it means to be a demigod. These powers make even me feel afraid… How powerful is Mr. World for him to be able to kill Hvin Rambis…

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

As the participants of the hunting operation made their preparations, they decided to organize a private gathering to discuss the details.

“A Manipulator is that terrifying?” The Magician Fors looked at Miss Justice beside her and blurted out in shock.

Just now, Audrey had briefly mentioned the changes she had undergone after becoming a demigod. Although she didn’t elaborate in detail to protect her trump cards, it still left The Magician, The Hermit, Judgment, and The Star in shock.

“Actually, it’s not that terrifying. Mr. World knows very well.” Audrey cast her gaze to the bottom of the long, mottled table.

The World Gehrman Sparrow didn’t nod as he tersely acknowledged.

“I also had powerful helpers before I could kill Hvin Rambis.”

He paused and said, “Before discussing the hunting operation, I would like to know how to make the Abraham family sense my friendliness?”

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†

Adapted from the Lotos-eaters by Tennyson.

Adapted from The Cry of the Children by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Adapted from The Bridge of Sighs by Thomas Hood and Lotos-eaters by Tennyson.

Chapter 1191 - Grasping One's Mentality

◆◆◆

Friendliness? Upon hearing The World Gehrman Sparrow's question, Fors nearly doubted her ears.

The image of Mr. X's head that was put together, leaving it covered in cracks, crevices, and blood surfaced in her mind.

Just as Fors was deliberating over her words, Audrey glanced at her and smiled at The World Gehrman Sparrow.

"To let the Abraham family sense your friendliness, it isn't about what you do, but what Miss Magician writes in her letters."

That's right, unless I appear directly in front of Miss Magician's teacher, his understanding of me will only be limited to the various rumors and things that Miss Magician tells him… As long as the story she tells is good enough, even if it doesn't fit the actual situation, it doesn't matter… Klein suddenly realized that he had been splitting hairs on the question.

"Ah?" Fors was somewhat enlightened by Miss Justice's words, but she didn't fully understand it.

After looking at The Hermit, The Star, and company, Justice Audrey said to Fors, "You need to convey Mr. World's friendliness to your teacher. For this, you can fabricate some stories and not tell him the truth."

"Then what should I say?" Fors asked for advice.

This wasn't because she wasn't good at making up stories. On the contrary, this was what she was most adept at. However, the problem was that writing a novel that was well-received was different from a story that could convince people. If she could get a senior psychologist's advice on the latter, it would undoubtedly be easier.

Audrey had already thought of the details of the letter before she opened her mouth. She replied unhurriedly, "It's obvious that your teacher has already noticed that you've rapidly advanced, and because of Mr. X's death and all sorts of sensitive issues, he has a certain level of doubt and vigilance regarding the Beyonder circles that you've participated in."

"Yes." Fors nodded indiscernibly in agreement with Miss Audrey's judgment.

If her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham, was careless, he wouldn't have been able to survive to this day. He would have long been caught by the Aurora Order or died in the hands of other powers who were interested in the Abraham family.

Audrey continued, "In such a situation, he will still maintain contact with you. He will teach you knowledge, give you formulas, and provide you with ingredients. This shows that, on the one hand, he acknowledges your character and morals, and on the other hand, he will also have a certain level of anticipation for you to obtain important information from the mysterious and dangerous Beyonder circle, as well as you becoming a Sequence 4 demigod.

"This is the mentality we want to exploit."

Audrey originally wanted to use the more neutral term, "grasp," instead of "exploit," but after pausing for a moment, she chose to face herself directly and face the essence of the matter.

With Fors listening attentively and Judgment, The Star, and The Hermit looking forward to what she had left to say, Audrey pursed her lips and said, “When you return, you can write to him and tell him that you have already become a Traveler. It will make him happy for your growth, and also be surprised by such an exaggerated advancement speed. Then, you can answer the question he asked previously, saying that the gentleman who was seeking to purchase the Worm of Star had mentioned something—that the ancient curse in the Abraham family seems to come from a secret existence known as Mr. Door.

“This is a question that your teacher has never told you about but is definitely concerned about.

“Without a doubt, he will feel fear towards the gentleman who seems to know that you’re related to the Abraham family. He will want to avoid you, but he will definitely yearn to know more. He will then try to find out what secret lies behind the curse that has plagued generations of Abrahams, one that he has no solution to.

“At the same time, a letter exchange isn’t a direct meeting. It will give him a certain sense of security. He might change his residence, change his identity, and use a more roundabout way to receive the letter, but there is a high chance that he will not sever the connection.

“Maintain this connection. Step by step, reveal something more valuable. You will awaken your teacher’s desire and use it to portray an image of Mr. World so that your teacher can experience some form of friendliness.”

At this point, Audrey stopped and looked at The World Gehrman Sparrow once again.

She could roughly tell that Mr. World’s goodwill towards the Abraham family was because he had a request, but as for the specific request, she wasn’t a clairvoyant, nor had she read Gehrman Sparrow’s mind. Naturally, she couldn’t guess it, nor could she continue explaining.

Klein nodded and said with a hoarse smile, “After we establish this kind of indirect connection, I might ask your teacher for a transaction and use the promise of breaking the curse to exchange for certain items of value."

Through Demoness Trissy, he had already grasped the solution to the Abraham family's curse. However, he didn't plan on exchanging it for the Planeswalker potion formula or a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

On the one hand, the difference in value was too great, making him feel guilty. On the other hand, he didn't want to bring a dangerous existence like Mr. Door back into the real world. It was being irresponsible to himself and the innocent.

He was thinking of another way to make the curse of the Abraham family disappear to a certain extent. In other words, it might still exist, but it wouldn't affect the normal lives of the Abraham family and provide a certain range of improvements.

Is that so… Mid- to High-Sequence Beyonders in the mind domain are really impressive. She can make people follow her arrangements without realizing it… Compared to when we first met, Miss Justice has seemed to undergo a complete metamorphosis. It makes people fear and respect her… Fors glanced at Xio and seemed to read the same poignant thoughts from her eyes.

After some thought, she mustered her courage and said to The World Gehrman Sparrow, "What if my teacher rejects your request?"

Did you think I would murder for property? Klein lampooned in Chinese. He scoffed and said, "Don't worry, I won't harm him. I won't use any methods that will force him."

Phew… Although Mr. World is a little scary, he's still a man of his word… Fors slowly nodded and said, "I'll write a letter to my teacher according to Miss Justice's suggestion."

Klein nodded slightly and surveyed the area.

"You can begin discussing the hunt."

Cattleya took control and said, “The biggest problem with this operation is finding the Saint of Secrets Botis.”

Fors immediately recalled how she had encountered him and raised her hand.

“If I can borrow that powerful Sealed Artifact from my teacher, then I can bring it with me. I can often wander around Backlund and use the convergence of Beyonder characteristics to attract Botis to a nearby location.

“Uh, this might attract other demigods of the Apprentice pathway; or the leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul; or Blasphemer Amon…”

The more Fors spoke, the lower her voice became. She felt that this method was too dangerous.

She didn’t know what would happen to the other members who participated in the operation if Zaratul and Amon really appeared, but as bait, it was without a doubt that she would fail to escape.

Cattleya nodded and said thoughtfully, “If it’s only a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact of the Apprentice pathway, the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics shouldn’t be that attractive to neighboring pathways. The range will be limited to the demigods of the Apprentice pathway. And from what I know, there aren’t many of them. In fact, it can be said that there are very few of them. Most of them exist in the form of a characteristic or Sealed Artifact.”

I suddenly do not wish to become a Sequence 4… Fors’s eyelids twitched when she heard that.

Cattleya cast her gaze at The World Gehrman Sparrow.

“Let’s not discuss the problem of whether there are any Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts of the Apprentice pathway. If we want to let the Saint of Secrets and Miss Magician bump into each other, the prerequisite is that he is also in Backlund. He mustn’t be that cautious and often goes out.”

Upon hearing this, Leonard said from the angle of a professional official Beyonder, “It’s actually not difficult. As a demigod of the Apprentice pathway, Botis is definitely in charge of dealing with accidents among the upper echelons of the Aurora Order. He has sufficient mobility to aid the other members in different places. Heh heh, this is a term that appeared after the steam engine and the airship were invented.

“As long as you can create some matters against the Aurora Order in Backlund, he has a high chance of showing up.”

As he spoke, Leonard glanced at Klein.

Based on what he knew, in the chaotic battle outside Bayam City caused by Gehrman Sparrow, the Saint of Secrets had appeared and picked up a glove.

“This is a solution…” Audrey and company nodded.

At this moment, The World suddenly said, “Let me remind you that the Aurora Order is an organization that worships a true god. Once you take action against them and secretly target their upper echelons, the True Creator might be able to foresee this and give them a warning.”

That can happen? Audrey’s eyes widened slightly as she observed Cattleya, Leonard, and company. She realized that they were equally astonished.

This was something that they had never considered before.

It wasn’t that they weren’t smart enough, but that they had never participated in such matters that involved high-level existences before. Or rather, even if they were involved, they weren’t aware of it.

“Then what should we do?” Fors couldn’t help but ask.

Klein replied in a suggestive tone, “By not targeting the Aurora Order directly, we can use a milder approach to fish out the Saint of Secrets Botis.”

Chapter 1192 - Each Serving their Duty

◆ ◆ ◆

A milder approach… The Hermit Cattleya, who lacked experience only on high-level matters, instantly had a new idea and probed, “Let Miss Magician participate in the various Beyonder gatherings in Backlund. ‘accidentally’ revealing that she’s related to the Abraham family, attracting the attention of the Aurora Order?”

Seeing no objection from The World Gehrman Sparrow, Cattleya thought as she looked to the other side.

“How we can make this matter appear reasonable without arousing suspicion, how to design the steps and procedures needed to ‘expose’ herself, and how to lay the foundations at each one of the gatherings—these might require your help, Miss Justice.”

From her point of view, only a Manipulator who could accurately grasp the various mentalities of the different people at the gathering could allow the scheme to appear natural and reasonable, without leaving a trace.

“Alright.” Audrey nodded solemnly, feeling somewhat excited.

She then added, “Although I’ve never done anything similar before, I will try my best to make everything seem reasonable.”

…Why do I suddenly feel a little afraid… Why do I feel like we are all inexperienced people? Apart from Mr. World who can’t directly participate, uh, Ma’am Hermit might be very experienced in other aspects, but she shouldn’t have been involved in such hunting before…

This isn't a game, it's a cruel act that can kill someone if we aren't careful… Fors trembled when she heard this. She had a deep suspicion of the "experience" of most of the members. This included herself.

However, when she thought of how Miss Justice and Ma'am Hermit were already Sequence 4 demigods, and that she and The Star were at Sequence 5, she felt that this wasn't too serious of a problem. After all, every powerhouse had accumulated their experiences over time from nothing. Furthermore, they still had The World Gehrman Sparrow, the strongest hunter over the Five Seas.

Reasonable… Scheme… Manipulation… Listening to the conversation between Ma'am Hermit and Miss Justice, Klein subconsciously extracted the keywords.

This reminded him of how he had used 0-08 and the experience of playing out situations that had been arranged by 0-08. He couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

It's no wonder the Spectator's Sequence 1 is called Author. This is indeed a very reasonable development, but it can change from a "guidance" to being "forced"…

"There's no need to rush yourself to make the arrangements in detail. Go back and think it over carefully. Yes, at the same time, we need to combine the feedback from the scene to make adjustments." Cattleya nodded in thought as she immediately had a new idea. "When Miss Magician participates in the Beyonder gatherings, it's best you hide in the vicinity. Use your control of the sea of collective subconscious to monitor every participant's thoughts and accurately grasp the feedback."

Would 13 Virtual Personas be enough? There should be more than 13 members at a Beyonder gathering… Hmm, I can switch to using "Monitoring" to select a target to focus on… Audrey quickly analyzed the feasibility of the suggestion and tersely acknowledged.

"That wouldn't be an issue."

To her, this was also a form of training. At the same time, it was also a form of acting—she didn't directly use her Beyonder powers to affect the target, but instead used her precise understanding of the target's mental state to "manipulate" them by using words, behavior, actions, and a "script."

Seeing that there was no problem on Miss Justice's side, The Hermit Cattleya looked at The Magician.

"In order to prevent a surprise attack, and to better grasp your surroundings, I need to plant something on you."

"What is it?" Fors asked warily.

Cattleya glanced at The World at the bottom end of the long, mottled table. After receiving the permission of Mr. Fool's Blessed, she raised her hand and pressed it between her brows.

A pair of transparent eyes appeared in front of her, ones that were without eyelashes, looking cold and heartless.

"This is the Eye of Mystery Prying. After becoming a Mysticologist, I can place it on someone else's body. Whatever it sees it will be what I see. Furthermore, once it enters a concealed state, it will be very difficult to be discovered through other means." Cattleya gave a simple introduction.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein leaned back slightly and sighed inwardly.

When he first grasped Spirit Vision, he had seen something similar behind Old Neil.

If he had the mysticism knowledge he had now back then, he would've detected the problem earlier. Perhaps things would have developed differently.

If this strange eye were to be planted on me, wouldn't I be watched by Ma'am Hermit when I go to the bathroom… Fors secretly drew a cold gasp as she hesitantly asked, "Can we 'plant' it before each gathering?"

"If we make frequent contact with each other, we'll be easily discovered. Besides, the Saint of Secrets wouldn't only appear at times you choose." Cattleya nudged the heavy glasses on her nose bridge and explained. "Don't worry, I won't look at things I shouldn't see."

It was a lesson learned through blood.

Fors fell silent for a few seconds before she slowly exhaled.

"Alright then…"

Cattleya nodded slightly and continued, "After discovering clues to the Abraham family, the Aurora Order will definitely do a certain amount of investigation. And for safety, so as to prevent any accidents from happening, they will definitely send out someone with a certain level of confidence. Among them, the Saint of Secrets Botis is undoubtedly the person who is most interested in the matter regarding the Abraham family. In addition, Backlund isn't suitable for a King of Angels' main body to be active in, so the probability of him appearing is the highest."

At this moment, The Star Leonard, who was leaning against the back of his chair, raised his hand and said, "Not necessarily.

"According to the information we have gathered, the Aurora Order has other high-ranking members in Backlund—Saint Tenebrous. After Mr. A disappeared, he came forward to organize certain matters.

"When the time comes, the person responsible for tracking the clues to the Abraham family might very well be him, not the Saint of Secrets. After all, this is his 'diocese.'"

The demigod I met when I assassinated Mr. X was Saint Tenebrous? Klein nodded in enlightenment without bringing any attention to himself.

Cattleya was already prepared for this. Without any hesitation, she said to The Star, “This might require your help. In the near future, you should investigate more cases involving the Aurora Order and strike at them more.

“This way, it will be inconvenient for them to move around. After discovering clues about the Abraham family, they might very likely seek reinforcements, getting—yes, the more mobile and more concealed Saint of Secrets to be responsible for it.”

Leonard thought of his recent mission list and nodded slightly.

“Sure.”

As the captain of a Red Gloves team, he had the right to do so.

“The only problem is, could this be predicted by the True Creator?” After Leonard agreed, he turned to look at Klein.

After some thought, Klein pointed out indirectly.

“You are similarly under the gaze of a deity.”

Leonard retracted his gaze as though he had gained some understanding. He said to The Hermit Cattleya, “I have no further questions.”

The Hermit Cattleya raised her glasses and cast her gaze towards Judgment.

“We will try our best to limit the Beyonder circles that Miss Magician will be involved in to East Borough and the Backlund Bridge area. These should be places you are familiar with. You have to constantly be aware of any abnormalities. Inform me immediately about the surroundings of the gathering’s location.”

“Alright.” Although Xio was disappointed that she was involved in the periphery matters, she knew very well that with her strength, she could only do so much.

At that moment, Cattleya thought for a moment before saying, “You are a Judge. When the time comes, you might need to do some area-of-effect ‘Prohibition.’ This might not be effective against the Saint of Secrets, Botis, but it should be able to cause some interference. Don’t doubt it. As support, Mid-Sequence Beyonders can similarly influence a saint to a certain extent.”

All of this is under the premise of a demigod resisting a demigod while all I provide is support… The education Xio had received since she was young, and the addition of the knowledge she learned from MI9 now put an emphasis on cooperation. It was very easy to understand what Ma’am Hermit was saying.

At this point, the plan had just started taking form. The next step was to adjust it bit by bit through on-the-ground feedback.

Fors heaved a sigh of relief when she suddenly thought of something. She hurriedly said, “Previously, Mr. World mentioned that Botis might have a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. How should we deal with it?”

Frankly speaking, she didn’t have a direct impression of how terrifying a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact was. This was because she had never encountered one before and had never seen anyone encounter it before. However, she had experienced the Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts that Gehrman Sparrow had borrowed from Mr. Fool. She knew how terrifying it was, and with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact being one grade higher than a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, it was obvious how potent one was. In the rumors that Fors had heard, some Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts could even destroy Backlund, or even the world.

Cattleya said after a few seconds of silence, “On the one hand, through Miss Justice’s grasp of the minds of the people around you, she will be able to find traces of possible existences. On the other hand, with Miss Judgment’s understanding of the various anomalies in the region, and combining it with divination, we will be able to determine ahead of time if there are any Sealed Artifacts.

“If we can’t get any feedback from all of this, and if the Saint of Secrets has a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact with him, you don’t have to be too afraid. He won’t kill you immediately. He will definitely try to gain control of you and interrogate you at a safe place. We have enough time and opportunities to separate him from the Sealed Artifact. Remember, a Sealed Artifact that a Beyonder possesses isn’t completely a part of his strength.

“During this process, didn’t you ‘Record’ some high-level Beyonder powers? If the situation is critical, don’t hold back, and try your best to escape.”

Sounds like you’re not very confident either… Fors’s face suddenly turned pale as she forced a smile.

“I’ll try my best.”

At this moment, The World Gehrman Sparrow took the initiative to speak.

“In times of necessity, pray to Mr. Fool. I will also ask ‘Him’ to provide ‘His’ protection in advance and provide some revelations.”

As this operation wouldn’t pose a threat to Klein’s actual body regardless of the development, and it might involve a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, he could only gain some revelations from his initial control of Sefirah Castle.

That’s good… Fors, Xio, and company heaved a sigh of relief.

When the private gathering was coming to an end. Klein glanced at Cattleya and said, “It looks like there’s no way to end the operation before New Year. I’ll provide you with the advance payment.”

He then condensed some of mysticism knowledge he had never mentioned into a pale white brilliance and pushed it to The Hermit.

Chapter 1193 - Heading East

* * *

Dark Angel Sasrir might very well be the negative personality that's expelled from the ancient sun god… Mr. Door was once the most powerful King of Angels… The Abraham family also possesses at least two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts that's at the level of an angel of the Apprentice pathway… The underlying rules of this world are chaos and madness… Pieces of mysticism knowledge resonated in Cattleya's mind, causing her to feel weighed down in addition to her shock.

If it wasn't for the Tarot Club, Mr. Fool's protection, and The World Gehrman Sparrow's help, she believed that it wouldn't be easy for her to obtain such knowledge. She definitely had to take a tremendous risk in exchange. If she wasn't careful, she would attract the attention of certain high-level existences, or be embroiled in madness and pain.

"Thank you for your advance payment. This will greatly help me digest the potion." Cattleya opened her eyes and thanked him sincerely.

According to her original plan, she believed that she would be able to gain some mysticism knowledge after meeting Queen Mystic. With Gehrman Sparrow's current advance payment, her Mysticologist potion would most likely be completely digested. Unfortunately, a few days before she arrived in Backlund, Queen Mystic Bernadette had left the city to trace a lead. This left Cattleya extremely disappointed.

Upon hearing Ma'am Hermit's words, Klein, who was pretending to be The World, laughed hoarsely.

"A price is exacted for what's bestowed."

As his voice echoed, he nodded at the two ladies—Justice and The Magician—indicating that he was also directing those words at them.

After the private gathering ended and the members left Sefirah Castle one by one, Klein stood up and walked back to the seat of honor from the bottom end of the long, mottled table, to the seat belonging to The Fool.

He leaned back into his chair and propped his elbow on the armrest as the void beside him rippled and formed halos.

These were prayer lights that came from puppets controlled by a historical projection that Klein had summoned. They had existed before the gathering, but the corresponding area had been hidden from the rest, so no one could sense it. It was only now restored to normal.

He cast his gaze at the rippling light and expanded his vision into the distance.

In the real world, a dark mountain stood erect. There was a mountain hole at the mountainside that extended downwards.

This was once a place that hid many humans who had survived the Cataclysm, but they were later turned into Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar's marionettes.

During this period of time, Klein kept tracing the clues and found three spots where the Dark Demonic Wolff had hidden "Himself." However, Klein didn't gain much from them.

The reason was simple. Just like now, there was a rock in the cave. On it sat a young man wearing a classic black robe, a pointed hat, a broad forehead, and a thin face—Amon.

This Angel of Time seemed to sense the gaze from Sefirah Castle as "He" raised "His" head and adjusted "His" crystal monocle. The corners of "His" mouth curled up slightly.

"…" Klein retracted his gaze, his facial muscles twitching slightly as he muttered, "What a haunting presence… It's not like this fellow doesn't understand the Dark Demonic Wolf's past. Is there a need for him to destroy all the clues I need? Furthermore, 'He' only comes slightly earlier than me every single time…"

If it wasn't because he wasn't Amon's match, he really wanted to hang "Him" up and beat "Him."

Phew… Klein exhaled and immediately returned to the real world.

He wore a black top hat and carried a dim yellow lantern. He dispelled his maintaining of the historical projection and, without looking back, he left the mountain and ventured deep into the silent wilderness.

There was no hesitation in his footsteps, as he had already obtained detailed information about the Dark Demonic Wolf, Kotar, from the Evernight Goddess. He was well aware of the character, styles, and habits of the God of Wishes.

The reason why he was still searching for the Dark Demonic Wolf's past was mainly because he wanted to verify the information. After all, the East Continent had been in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for more than two thousand years. The Dark Demonic Wolf had escaped the Evernight Goddess's attention for a sufficiently long period of time, so it was very likely that some abnormalities and changes in character would occur. If he made a plan following the intelligence provided by the Evernight Goddess, there was a small chance that he would make the mistake of launching a surgical strike using an outdated map.

Under the tremendous pressure from the True Creator and Amon, the chances of the Dark Demonic Wolf transforming isn't low… Perhaps it has even turned abnormal or half-mad because of the excess stress… Klein couldn't help but lampoon inwardly.

The words "Dark Demonic Wolf" could actually be switched to "Klein Moretti" or "Zhou Mingrui" ad verbatim. It just needed to be said in future tense.

The other reason for his persistence in pursuing the Dark Demonic Wolf's past was that he was trying to fool Amon, making it difficult for "Him" to guess that he had already grasped the key information.

Of course, this might not be able to deceive the God of Deceit. His main goal was to obtain a victory of the mind, so as to adjust his mental state that was overly stressed. This allowed him to reduce the frequency at which he sought Miss Justice's treatment.

Well, from the looks of it, the Dark Demonic Wolf still maintains its clarity and rationality in the late Second Epoch. It wasn't as violent as when it first fused with other Beyonder characteristics, bloodthirsty, crazy… "His" most important personality appears to not have changed; ever so suspicious. "He" doesn't even trust "His" own marionettes. Once "He" decides to migrate, "He" would leave all the marionettes that "He" had before and sever all connections… Also, the Dark Demonic Wolf seems to have migrated from the east over here… As he thought about it, Klein came to an abrupt stop. Under the darkness that was void of stars and the crimson moon, he cast his gaze in a particular direction by relying on his spiritual intuition.

His expression gradually turned solemn as he raised his right hand and pressed on his silk top hat.

Then, he adjusted the direction he was heading in and walked towards where his eyes were trained at.

That was the east.

In the endless darkness, the lantern in his hand cast a lonely shadow. His trench coat was almost the same color as the distant night as his footsteps quickened.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough, inside the Hall family's luxurious mansion.

Audrey sat in front of the dressing table and began to seriously consider how to release the "bait" in a seemingly reasonable fashion.

During this process, she suddenly thought of something.

That was that, if she wanted to go near a Beyonder gathering and monitor the thoughts of the participants, there was a lack of quick and efficient methods.

As a Sequence 4 demigod, she neither could fly nor "Teleport." She also couldn't use the flames to "jump" secretly. It would be fine if it was late at night, but if she wanted to use dreams as a springboard, she could only rely on her feet during the day and evening.

Oh… Actually, my speed isn't slow, but if I were to run faster than a steam train, I would definitely attract attention… There are so many powerhouses in Backlund, so there's no lack of existences that can see through my "Psychological Invisibility"… Similarly, in my dragon form, I can fly, but that's just too eye-catching… Currently, I can only let my consciousness and Spirit Body enter the sea of collective subconscious, while I'm unable to bring my body in… As she pondered about the matter, Audrey could only consider purchasing Sealed Artifacts or mystical items that had "Traveling" powers while deciding to travel through dreams if there were dreams. Otherwise, she could only rely on walking, carriages, or the metro.

What a simple demigod… Hmm, it's no wonder the full name is half-human, half-god. Those terrifying Beyonder powers are the godly side of things, while these are the human side of things… Audrey gave a self-deprecating laugh and reined in her thoughts.

†

Backlund, Hillston Borough.

Sitting beside the fireplace, Fors opened a book that was propped on her thigh as a platform for her to write.

Holding a pen in her hand, she stared at the horizontal lines on the paper and the tarot cards that were scattered on the ground for a long time.

“What’s wrong? You don’t want to lie to your teacher? No, everything you write will be the truth… You don’t want to set up your teacher?” Xio walked over, crouched down, and looked up into Fors’s eyes.

Fors shook her head.

“No, it’s not because of this.

“I do feel a little guilty, but I know that this is a good thing for the Abraham family.

“I’m just hesitating. I keep feeling that our destinies will change after writing this letter.”

“Ah?” Xio was a little stunned when she heard that. She didn’t quite understand what her good friend meant.

Fors let out a sigh and said, “The battles from the past and now were actually not that dangerous for us. We had the ability to avoid it and obtain the corresponding resources to continue our peaceful lives. Therefore, my feelings for them don’t run deep.

“We’re like people standing beside a torrent. We could have watched everything go by safely, but after writing this letter, we might perhaps be swept into the torrent.”

Xio listened quietly. She opened her mouth and pursed her lips.

“If not for this, do you think we can avoid the torrent of fate?”

As she spoke, she picked up a tarot card from the ground.

The surface of the card depicted an angel blowing a trumpet and the deceased.

Judgment card.

Fors looked at the deck of tarot cards for a while before closing her eyes. She pulled her hair back and smiled.

"I understand.

"This is an inevitable destiny."

After praying to Mr. Fool and after obtaining The Magician card, it was an unavoidable destiny.

The fountain pen in Fors's hand finally landed on the letter.

†

Pritz Harbor.

Dorian Gray Abraham, who had long left the fishermen's association and changed his identity, tore open the letter sent by his student.

As he quickly browsed through it, his expression went from shock, joy, and confusion to horror.

Bang!

Dorian threw away the letter in his hand and knocked down the table in front of him. It was like a monster hiding on that piece of paper with a curse.

He retreated to another corner, pulled open the drawer, and took out some items. Then, he rushed to the door and prepared to leave.

When his right hand touched the brass doorknob, Dorian's actions suddenly slowed down and finally stopped.

He slowly turned around and cast his gaze at the letter on the ground. There was a complicated look in his eyes.

After a few seconds, Dorian Gray Abraham slowly walked towards the letter. He walked with hesitation, feeling the dilemma and struggles, but he didn’t stop. It was as if he had been seduced by the devil.

Chapter 1194 - A Lion's Hunt of a Rabbit

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Finally, Dorian stopped beside the letter.

He bent down and reached out his right hand. His fingers trembled as he grabbed the edge of the paper and picked it up.

This time, Dorian was very careful. He began reading each word, one after another from the very beginning. Sometimes he was enlightened, sometimes confused, sometimes puzzled, and sometimes in pain.

The letter Fors had sent wasn't long. He only used three minutes to read it twice before he fell into a long silence.

The sunlight shined through the window and landed on the toppled table.

Dorian Gray Abraham's lips suddenly quivered, but he ultimately didn't make a sound.

Separated by a piece of paper, his right thumb and index finger quickly rubbed against each other and ignited the letter with a scarlet flame.

After doing all of this, Dorian packed his belongings, put on his disguise, changed his clothes, and left the rented apartment. Using the identity he had previously prepared, he went to another place.

After settling down, he sat beside the desk and stared at the brass ornament, seemingly deep in thought.

The area became darker and darker as the sunlight weakened. Dorian's eyelids twitched as he slowly sighed.

He then unfolded the piece of paper and picked up the fountain pen. As he pondered, he wrote:

"…I'm very happy to see you digesting the Scribe potion in a few months. This means that you might really become a demigod…

"…These are the key points to take note of while acting as a Traveler, at least the ones that I know of. However, you have to remember that everyone's personality is different. There will always be some differences in acting in real life, so you can't copy blindly… This doesn't mean that the acting principles of others are wrong, but that it might lead to a huge conflict in your heart, affecting your mental state… Sometimes, you can make appropriate adjustments to slow down the speed at which the potion is being digested, but it will only be beneficial to you. You have to remember: acting is a tool, not something to lord over you…

"I look forward to the day you completely digest the Traveler potion, I will prepare the corresponding ingredients and a present for you.

"…I'm very interested in the matter of the Abraham family's curse mentioned by that gentleman… I think you should have noticed long ago that I have done a certain degree of research on such matters. Otherwise, you wouldn't always ask me about such matters…

"I hope you can continue to learn about this matter at a deeper level…"

After writing the reply, Dorian Gray Abraham closed his eyes and quickly folded the paper.

†

January 1351, Backlund's new year was much bleaker than before.

In a basement in West Borough, there were a few candles flickering with yellow flames, illuminating the surrounding altars, chairs, and round tables.

At the edge of the light, in a place that was extremely dark, a figure appeared indistinct. At times, it would sway, sometimes stretching into a thin entity that didn't have any thickness. It was like a shadow that came alive.

Suddenly, the figure said in a deep voice, "You arrived earlier than I expected."

Beside the candle, a figure quickly appeared in the spot illuminated the greatest by the light.

It was a man dressed in a mysterious black robe. His brown hair was slightly curled, and his dark, deep eyes seemed to contain countless objects.

He was none other than one of the five saints of the Aurora Order, the Saint of Secrets, Botis.

Botis smiled and said, "To me, distance is not a problem."

He pulled a chair and sat down before saying to the long and narrow shadow, "Have you investigated thoroughly? Did you find anything unusual?"

The shadow that nearly slinked into the shadows answered in a low voice, "There aren't any problems."

"Really?" At the confirmation of the question, Botis instinctively had doubts. "Kisma, could this be a trap?"

The Aurora Order's Saint Tenebrous, Kisma, slowly shook his head and said, "The target is very careful. It's definitely not a case of deliberate exposure.

"If she wasn't seeking to purchase an ancient wraith's cursed item, we wouldn't have been able to sense that she might be related to the Abraham family."

Saint of Secrets Botis seemed to be in thought as he said, "An ancient wraith's cursed item. This is one of the main ingredients of Scribe. I remember that the Abraham family does have a spare Asmann's brain… Heh, they aren't willing to directly provide a Scribe Beyonder characteristic, hoping to carry out some tests. It's indeed the style of the Abraham family. To put it simply, they don't have enough trust in others."

Saint Tenebrous Kisma didn't echo Botis's words as he continued, "Even if she was seeking to purchase the main ingredients of the Scribe potion, we wouldn't have noticed any problems. After all, not every believer knows the corresponding mysticism knowledge, but she even mentioned some questions related to Apprentice and the Abrahams.

"She was really cautious in this aspect. The circle of Beyonders from which she sought to purchase materials from and the one she asked questions weren't the same. Different matters were left to different circles. Furthermore, at times, she would hire other participants to help her make requests.

"If it weren't for the fact that we have our people in those few circles and were able to combine the intelligence, we wouldn't have noticed her."

Saint of Secrets Botis nodded slightly and asked, "Why didn't you just take action? You even came to me?"

In the shadows, the darkness stirred and replied slowly, "The situation in Backlund is getting more and more tense. The Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind are carpet sweeping the area, one spot after another. We're being watched very closely.

"If I were to handle this matter, it would be fine if there weren't any accidents. However, if an accident were to happen, I might not be able to escape due to not having 'Grazed' a Secrets Sorcerer.

"Besides, aren't you the one who is most interested in the Abraham family?"

Botis chuckled and said, "I'm not interested in them at all. I just want them to all die.

"To ensure my own safety, the most important thing is to nip revenge in the bud. This is the philosophy I abide by."

As he spoke, the Saint of Secrets took out a crystal ball from his black robe's pocket.

The crystal ball was neither clear nor translucent, as if it had been injected with the dark night.

As he touched it with his palm, his lips quivered. This strange crystal ball suffused a resplendent glow.

They were like stars that slowly spun, forming a complicated scene.

"It's still acceptable…" Botis looked at the crystal ball in his right hand and nodded gently.

He then looked at the "ghostly shadow."

"Give me the details."

When he learned that there would be a Beyonder gathering in a particular circle tonight, with the target possibly appearing, the Saint of Secrets Botis stood up and said to Saint Tenebrous Kisma, "I need to make some preparations."

As soon as he finished speaking, his right hand opened and with a gentle lift, his fingers closed.

The region he was in immediately warped and vanished.

The candles, flames, round table, and chairs that were originally located here vanished, leaving behind only the tiles and ceiling.

After a while, the shadows moved and everything returned to normal.

Nothing happened to Saint of Secrets Botis, but Saint Tenebrous's figure appeared out of the darkness.

He looked at Botis and said in a deep voice, "Your caution has exceeded the necessary limits."

"But this isn't a bad thing. I hope that I can resolve the problem without anyone noticing," Botis replied with a smile. "You can follow me. You can hide in the shadows as my support. You will not directly appear, and you will leave immediately once you discover anything amiss."

"…Alright." Saint Tenebrous Kisma slowly walked out of the shadows.

He looked young and handsome with outstanding facial features, but his face seemed to be covered with a faint curtain of darkness.

After coming close to Botis, there were a series of illusory chewing sounds that came from nowhere. The chewing sounds and the sound of digesting could be heard, as well as undisguised evil and hunger.

This made the demigod shudder involuntarily.

Saint Tenebrous's eyes froze for a second as he cast a shocked and surprised look at Botis's face.

The corners of Botis's mouth curled up as he revealed a rather cruel smile.

A few seconds later, one of them used "Teleportation," and the other merged into the shadows and left the house.

†

In an apartment that had been in disrepair for years, in the area intersecting Backlund’s East Borough and the bridge area, there were a few rooms on the first floor of a cheap motel that had their rooms connected.

When Botis walked out from the spirit world, the Beyonder gathering was only to be held two to three hours later. No one had arrived yet.

He looked around and took in the long tables that were arranged messily.

After observing the environment, he walked to a corner with his right hand pulling the curtain.

The region was then enveloped by a shadow, distorting before vanishing.

This was because there wasn’t anything there to begin with. There was no objective measure, so no one would have discovered that there was a space missing. They would only feel that the distance between the walls and themselves was a little closer, but upon closer inspection, everything was normal.

This was the “Space Concealment” power of a Secrets Sorcerer!

They could use this ability to split a place into two and conceal part of it. One had to use a specific “door” to enter.

At that moment, in the area that had been divided and hidden, the room existed normally. There were floor tiles, a ceiling, and a cockroach crawling across the ground.

The cockroach rushed to the boundary and was blocked by the endless darkness.

After Saint of Secrets Botis surveyed the area, his gaze paused at a transparent vortex in midair.

This was the “door.”

Every hidden space would definitely have a “door.”

After some thought, Botis reached into the black robe’s pocket, took out a mirror, and inserted it into the “door.”

The mirror twisted and quickly reflected the scene in the outside world.

There were chairs and long tables randomly strewn around. The place was empty.

In this way, Botis used this mirror to monitor the Beyonder gathering’s venue.

Seconds changed to minutes as the Beyonders dressed in various disguises arrived.

One of the hooded figures habitually chose a corner near the window. She took out a palm-sized notebook and casually flipped through a few pages, as though she was revising the main points of her questions or checking if she was fully prepared.

And behind her to the side, there was an ordinary mirror embedded in the wall.

Chapter 1195 - Grade 0

◆ ◆ ◆

In the region that had been concealed, the Saint of Secrets, Botis, narrowed his eyes slightly as he recognized Leymano's Travels.

This made him no longer have any doubts about the intel provided by Saint Tenebrous Kisma.

He recognized this notebook and knew that it was a mystical item that the Abraham family placed great importance on. It was one of the most powerful items below the High-Sequences, and the negative effects were negligible.

Heh, back when I was a Mid-Sequence Beyonder, I had yearned for this notebook so much. In the end, the Abraham family was wary of me and didn't place any importance on my needs at all… Now, have they learned their lesson? This woman shouldn't be a descendant of the Abraham family. Otherwise, she wouldn't have gone around searching for the cursed item of an ancient wraith… Botis muttered inwardly as his expression gradually turned grim, showing hints of a cruel fervor.

After observing his surroundings for a while, he carefully reached into his black robe's pocket.

The pocket seemed to contain a vast space as Saint of Secrets Botis dragged out a three-layered jewelry box from within.

This jewelry box wasn't tiny, making it difficult to hold it with one hand. It was mainly silver-black in color, and its surface was covered with exquisite decorations. There were rubies, emeralds, sapphires, and diamonds embedded in it, making it look rather luxurious.

As he held the “jewelry box” in his hands, there was a hint of panic and fear in his expression. It was as if he was facing the Abyss or listening to an evil god’s ravings.

†

The gathering continued as usual. Fors put away Leymano’s Travels and focused on listening to the participants, as though she was seeking some answers.

During this process, she would occasionally ask questions, using gold pounds and spiritual materials as payment. However, she didn’t receive any effective answers.

Gradually, the Beyonder gathering came to an end. The host arranged for the different participants to leave from different exits.

Soon, only Fors and a few other Beyonders were left in the room.

After receiving the signal of the host, Fors stood up and resisted the urge to stretch herself as she walked towards the side door.

At this moment, she realized that her body had stiffened. Her head could barely turn, but it felt like she was a toy that had its torsion spring wound up.

From the corner of her eye, she saw that the grayish-white walls had turned silvery-black in an instant. They were covered in granules, as though they were made of metal. The remaining participants and the host had their skin lose the luster that it should’ve possessed. Their eyes were dull, their movements mechanical, as though they were large dolls.

In the concealed area, Botis had opened the “jewelry box” at some point in time. The interior of its top layer wasn’t exquisite enough, but it had completely restored the scene of the room.

In the room, there were chairs and long tables scattered haphazardly. There were a few palm-sized puppets sitting or standing, as though they were trying to simulate reality.

Among these people, the person standing was wearing a hooded robe. The shape of her chin was beautiful and her lips were plump and red. It was none other than Fors.

She and the remaining Beyonders, together with the gathering's host, had silently become toys. They had been taken into the highest layer of the "jewelry box"!

The room that connected in the external world was only left with grayish-white walls—nothing else.

The corners of Botis's lips curled up bit by bit. With his right hand, he closed the lid of the jewelry box.

In just a single breath, he had magically controlled his target!

This silver-black, three-layered "jewelry box" was the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact that he had snatched from the Abraham family.

As it had never been obtained by the orthodox Churches, nor was it ever deeply understood, it didn't have a corresponding number.

According to what Botis knew, this "jewelry box" originated from an Abraham family angel from the Fourth Epoch. "He" enjoyed roaming the cosmos and heading to different places in the vast universe. However, once, when "He" returned to "His" family to rest, he died silently in his palace. His face was filled with fear, and his expression was twisted as if he had seen something extremely terrifying.

A true Mythical Creature, one that could be considered a subsidiary god in the Second Epoch had actually died silently without causing a stir. The death was extremely bizarre.

The Beyonder characteristic “He” left behind combined with “His” corpse, forming the “jewelry box” that was quite different from the other kind of Sealed Artifacts. And back then, Mr. Door, Bethel Abraham, not only didn’t attempt to shatter it and restore it to a pure Beyonder characteristic, “He” had even given it a rather strange name: “Box of the Great Old Ones.”

The first level of the Box of the Great Old Ones could turn the target’s location into toys and switch locations with its interior. Botis had used this trait to easily achieve his goal.

The second level of the Box of the Great Old Ones recorded different locations. Once it was released, the holder and the living beings within its effective range would head directly to the corresponding region. They would then wander around the cosmos like the angel from the Abraham family back then, exploring the universe.

As for what was on the third level of the Box of the Great Old Ones, Botis knew about it but didn’t dare to think about it. It was just like how he usually didn’t dare come into contact with this Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

Smack. After closing the lid of the Box of the Great Old Ones, he grabbed the mirror that was embedded in the transparent vortex that was suspended in midair with his right hand.

Once a certain area was concealed, a Secrets Sorcerer had to use the corresponding “door” or directly remove the “concealment” to exit.

Botis had chosen the latter method because it was the easiest and fastest method.

The shadows stirred, and the area that disappeared returned to the real world. The room was finally complete.

Botis didn’t stay any longer. Without even looking at his surroundings, he made his body rapidly fade away.

He held the many gemmed, silver-black Box of the Great Old Ones as the colors saturated and overlapped with each other. He traversed the spirit world which was filled with strange creatures towards his designated location. In a few seconds, he walked out of the void, attempting to enter the ruins of the battle of the gods by crossing the huge chasm that split the seas.

At this moment, the Botis stopped in midair.

His eyes narrowed and his eyes instantly turned dark, dotted with countless points of resplendence.

It was like the cosmos had been reflected in his eyes.

The “gravel” formed by the stars spun rapidly, causing the cracks at the bottom of the sea to rapidly turn incorporeal, causing everything in front of him to shrink and condense into a wavering orange flame.

This flame extended from the tip of a matchstick as it was extinguished.

Everything that Botis had experienced after removing the “concealed space” was an illusion. He remained rooted to the ground!

And the source of this illusion was the burning matchstick.

The matchstick was held by a fair-skinned palm, and the owner of the hand was a woman wearing a purple-patterned black robe and a hood. She was sitting on a carriage that was half-way through the wall, formed from a gigantic pumpkin.

Pulling the carriage were a bunch of gray rats.

This was none other than Cattleya, but her appearance, image, and bearing had changed.

This was the power she gained from the magic of Cinderella!

The core Beyonder power of the Mystery Pryer pathway’s Sequence 4

Mysticologist was called “Mystical Re-enactment,” fully expressing the saying—“knowledge is power.”

To put it simply, a Mysticologist could draw power from different mysticism knowledge they grasped, and create all sorts of magic or witchcraft. As for the corresponding “mysticism knowledge,” the less that was known by others and the less it spread, the more powerful the spells became.

The contrary could also be established. Once some knowledge and legends were known to many and no longer mysterious, the magic or witchcraft created by drawing on its powers would become almost ineffective.

Cattleya had no idea why the Queen could create all kinds of magical powers that were rich in magical colors from the private fairy tales that Emperor Roselle had told her, but that didn’t hinder her learning and usage of them. After all, she had heard of those fairy tales from Queen Mystic.

The magic she had used it to temporarily transform and disguise herself was called “Cinderella.” The magic that threw Saint of Secrets Botis into an illusion was “The Little Match Girl.” With that, she had used it to stop the other party from “Teleporting” away, creating an opportunity for the battle that would follow.

Just as Botis had extricated himself from the hallucination, the “Cinderella” who was sitting in the pumpkin carriage placed her foot on the ground and spread out her arms, causing a huge cross to appear behind her.

As for Cattleya, she seemed to be carrying an illusory object.

In the empty room, candlelights lit up, one after another, illuminating a long table covered with flesh and blood.

Around the long table were three extremely blurry figures holding the globs of flesh as they constantly devoured the food.

As if sensing something, the three figures turned their heads at the same time and looked at Botis. This Saint of Secrets's heart raced as he felt a chill rush out from deep within his soul.

He then heard illusory gnawing, chewing, and digesting sounds. He could feel the undisguised malice and hunger.

Botis's eyelid twitched. He hurriedly lowered his head and cast his gaze at the Box of the Great Old Ones in his hand.

The silver-black box had opened itself without him realizing it at some point in time!

The magic that Cattleya used was called the "Feast of Betrayal." It stemmed from the mysticism knowledge she learned of the ancient sun god's death from the Tarot Club. Its purpose was to temporarily awaken or imbue the target with intelligence, allowing them to commit a "betrayal!"

Without a doubt, the effects of encountering a Sealed Artifact that was filled with malice towards the owner would be excellent.

However, if not for the fact that she had obtained the protection of Mr. Fool at every gathering they monitored, Cattleya wouldn't have dared to use this magic.

Once the three main leads of the "betrayal feast" sensed it, she would definitely die for obscure reasons. She wouldn't be able to resist her death and would die an abnormally horrifying death.

Therefore, Mysticologists were definitely individuals with high-risk. Their strength came from walking the edge of the Abyss, coming from things they shouldn't have seen or heard.

In comparison, Queen Mystic who could create magic from her father's private fairy tales was much safer than other Mysticologists at the same tier.

Chapter 1196 - The Ugly Duckling

◆ ◆ ◆

When opening the first level of the Box of the Great Old Ones, the long table, chairs, Fors, and the others were like dolls. They were either still or motionless. Otherwise, under the power of torsion springs, they made repeated simple movements.

Upon seeing this scene, Botis's hair stood on end. For some baffling reason, he felt that he was about to join and become one of them.

He instinctively wanted to react to the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact in his hand, but he saw the hooded, purple-robed woman retract her right hand and hold it to her mouth, slightly clenched.

A dark color instantly formed in her palm. It was an ancient bugle with a charm that appeared very heavy and powerful.

The Horn of Magic, the Horn of Destruction!

Botis's pupils dilated as he lacked the luxury of time to deal with the Box of the Great Old Ones. He grabbed forward with his right hand, as though he had raised an invisible screen that shielded the void.

The area he was in was distorted once again. He disappeared and was concealed.

Woo!

The horn in Cattleya's hand let out a soft hum. It echoed in the room but didn't extend out of its confines.

With the sound waves overlapping, the shadows shattered and the ground cracked. The space that had been concealed by the Saint of Secrets was like a thick piece of glass that had been struck by a sledgehammer. Countless cracks appeared and intertwined with each other.

Elsewhere, a towering knight in full black armor appeared out of the shadows. He held a long broadsword, and two dark red beams of light glimmered in his eye sockets—Saint Tenebrous Kisma.

Woo!

Once again, Cattleya blew the horn. Everything in the room seemed to freeze into a translucent amber.

Silently, the amber broke apart, and even the black-armored knight fell to the ground like a mirror, shattering into small shards.

The distorted region returned to the real world.

However, Botis also managed to grab the gaps between the two horn blows as he created numerous illusory doors to appear around them.

Some of them were double doors that opened outwards, some were deep and recessed, some were covered in mysterious patterns, and some were hollow in the middle, allowing one to vaguely see the boundless darkness behind them…

The illusory doors were in bountiful numbers, densely packed, and overlapped together, almost enveloping the Saint of Secrets.

Without any time to think further, Botis immediately opened a grayish-blue door with seven brass locks, and he threw the Box of the Great Old Ones that was just about to have its second layer open inside.

This was a Secrets Sorcerer's "Exile." It could throw a target that he had gained initial control of into a corresponding chaotic space. As for the different illusory doors, they represented different scenes—ones where danger and opportunity coexisted.

This kind of “Exile” wasn’t permanent. At Botis’s Sequence level, he was only capable of isolating the Box of the Great Old Ones from reality for twenty seconds. Once that time was up, the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact would return to the spot beside him through the “illusory door” from before.

However, by then, the “betrayal” induced by the enemy’s Beyonder powers would definitely have disappeared.

As a demigod of the Apprentice pathway, he had traveled many places, witnessed many things, and recorded many kinds of powers, Botis made the most correct decision in that split instant.

At the same time, the Black Knight that had split into pieces quickly squirmed and reformed, becoming a thin rug that flowed with flesh and blood. It covered every corner of the room.

As a cult that could only survive in the shadows of reality, the Aurora Order might have many lunatics, but they were used to doing things to conceal themselves so as to prevent themselves from attracting the official Beyonders before their goals were met.

Of course, once the matter was in its final stages, they would definitely proclaim their existence openly.

In addition, Saint Tenebrous Kisma had done so in hopes of obstructing the possible enemies that were hiding outside to a certain extent. This allowed a separation of the battlefield.

When a layer of flesh grew out from the floor, walls, and ceiling, a twisted black shadow rose up from the corner.

This was one of the souls that Saint Tenebrous Kisma had “Grazed.”

It was a powerful vampire from the Forsaken Land of the Gods, a Sequence 4 Shaman King of the Moon pathway.

If the Shepherd's Grazed target was a demigod, he could release it directly due to the existence of its corporeal Spirit Body. However, there only one could be released at any one point in time unless the corresponding Shepherd had already become a Sequence 3 Trinity Templar.

Seizing the opportunity that the horn in the female demigod's hand was dissipating, the twisted Shaman King reached out and dug out one of his eyes—a bright-red, illusory eye.

The eye shimmered with a bright, crimson glow as it instantly illuminated the entire room, as though the crimson moon had descended.

Its pupil reflected the woman wearing the purple-patterned black robe and a dark-colored hood.

Immediately following that, the Shaman King clasped the hand which was holding his eye, letting the crimson "moonlight" become completely devoured by darkness.

A deep darkness appeared around Cattleya as the solidified darkness bound her to the spot. It froze the scene.

Upon seeing this scene, Botis took a step forward, phasing behind his enemy instantaneously.

Performing one "Blink" followed by another as a total of eight figures dressed in black robes appeared around Cattleya!

These weren't avatars he created, but afterimages he left behind due to his blazing "Blink."

Some of them released "Lightning Storm," while others condensed a blinding white spear. Some were covered in black armor as they slashed out a heavy broadsword that could appear capable of slicing through anything…

Different figures with different powers either attacked or created a form of control, but their target was one and the same—Cattleya.

There was almost no pause in between their actions. When Botis's figure "Blinked" to another corner, he quickly turned transparent as he was on the brink of disappearing.

He had no intention of killing the enemy, as this was Backlund. Also, the commotion created from their battle couldn't be suppressed any further. Once it affected the outside world, official angels might descend.

The reason why he had first launched a series of counterattacks before "Teleporting" away was because he wanted to suppress the enemy and prevent her from interfering with his and Saint Tenebrous Kisma's escape. This was a very reasonable strategy.

However, a few seconds ago, in a room on an upper level of the old apartment, Xio had learned of all the changes in the venue through Miss Justice's "mind voice."

Although she was worried and anxious, she didn't panic at all. She followed the plan and jumped down from the window, somersaulting in midair as she pointed at the targeted area.

"Teleportation is prohibited here!"

After doing this, she immediately distanced herself from the apartment to prevent the friendly demigods from being distracted.

With this interference, the Saint of Secrets, Botis, failed to successfully enter the spirit world. A rusty, abnormally heavy door appeared in front of him as it tightly sealed the "path."

To Botis, an illusory door of this level wasn't able to stop him from leaving at all. He could "open" the door once he made some adjustments.

But at this moment, something anomalous had happened over at the female demigod in the purple-patterned black robe!

Silver light appeared in Cattleya’s eyes. They connected together like a mysterious giant snake.

This was “Brief Luck,” derived from the knowledge she had obtained when analyzing the blood of a Snake of Fate.

Regardless of the terrifying lightning, burning-white spear, or the slash of the Black Knight, none of them hit the target. Cattleya seemed to be standing at the eye of the storm. No matter how dangerous the surroundings were, she was unaffected.

Those attacks and the attempts at control either narrowly passed her by or were canceled out by “friendly” forces. They were unable to achieve the desired effect, and they even helped her weaken the “dark” shackles.

Instantly, Cattleya bowed her back slightly as white and illusory feathers grew out of them. They didn’t belong to an angel, but rather, a swan.

The ugly duckling had become a swan.

As for what a swan was, to a Sequence 4 demigod, the answer was obvious. It was an incomplete Mythical Creature form.

And the ugly duckling could also become a swan!

This was a powerful magic that could allow a Mysticologist to reveal their incomplete Mythical Creature form once a day, with each instance lasting ten seconds.

The surface of Cattleya’s body immediately cracked open as flesh and blood gathered inside, forming eyeballs with clear blacks and whites.

The countless eyeballs coldly scanned their surroundings, as though they were manifestations of multifarious knowledge. As such, the figure that bore their weight turned into a black blob that was even more abstract in a higher spatial dimension.

Upon seeing the densely packed eyeballs, Saint of Secrets Botis and Saint Tenebrous Kisma felt dizzy. A knowledge storm took form in their minds.

The layer of flesh and blood that enveloped the entire room began to tremble slightly. Some dripped down, while others squirmed intermittently.

At this moment, an unimaginable aura pierced through the barrier formed from flesh and blood, pouring into the first floor of the dilapidated apartment and enveloping every corner of the apartment.

At the same time, Saint of Secrets Botis and Saint Tenebrous Kisma were shocked. Their bodies, souls, and minds were in an uncontrollable state.

This was "Dragon Might" which had undergone a qualitative change—"Mind Deprivation!"

Seizing this opportunity, the "black blob" that was covered in cracks and eyes condensed a spear in front of it.

The spear appeared ancient in style; from the tip to the handle, it was dyed in blobs of blood-red splotches.

It emitted a mighty destructive aura and a bloody feeling, as though it had once hurt a mighty existence.

With a whoosh, the terrifying spear shot out, heading straight for the Botis who stood rooted to the ground.

In the entire room, all the voices and details vanished. Even the "Dragon Might" that filled the room suddenly disappeared, leaving behind only the bloody spear tip and Botis's body, as well as the constantly shrinking distance between them.

Spear of Longinus!

Chapter 1197 - Mind Storm

◆

The blood-stained spear that seemed to come from an ancient time that couldn’t be traced had absorbed the entire room’s presence, stabbing straight into the body of Saint of Secrets Botis.

The brown-haired, firm-bodied Botis’s figure faded away, turning into a pair of black double doors.

At the same time, he appeared behind the “door,” placing himself in a separate world from the terrifying spear as he looked at it from afar.

In the next moment, the spear that was stained with red blood pierced through the black door and bore into the space where Botis was.

Botis’s figure kept retreating, constantly transforming into one illusory door after another. Some of them were made up of two winding stone golems, while others had a fist-sized hole by the gaps of the door. Some were embedded with silver nails, while others were covered in mysterious patterns. One after another, they were layered repeatedly, extending to an infinite number.

Without a sound, the Spear of Longinus tore through the illusory doors without stopping at all. It didn’t allow Saint of Secrets Botis to find a chance to escape.

In less than a second, the blood-stained spear that emitted a strong sense of destruction had shattered countless illusory doors. After it suffered a decline in its aura, it finally stabbed into its target’s chest.

Countless cracks instantly appeared on Botis's body, as if he was a ceramic object that had fallen to the ground.

With a cracking sound, the Saint of Secrets turned pitch black as he disintegrated into pieces, scattering all over the ground.

This didn't seem like his actual body, but more like his shadow.

This was the "Shadow Substitute" spell he had "Recorded" from a certain Sequence 3 saint under the True Creator.

Of course, without the layers of "doors" weakening the Spear of Longinus, he believed that it was very likely that his shadow together with his body would have shattered together.

After narrowly dodging this strike, Botis endured the dizziness and shock brought about by Cattleya's incomplete Mythical Creature form as he made a gigantic, scaleless silver snake appear in his eyes.

This gigantic snake was so large that it filled Botis's eyes. Its surface was filled with dense patterns and labels formed by one mystical wheel after another.

Its head connected to its tail as it merged with countless illusory rivers, turning into a blurred, surreal, and slowly spinning gear. Around the round gear were all sorts of symbols that represented different futures.

Suddenly, the black fragments that had yet to disappear on the ground flew up one after another and reorganized themselves on the spot, restoring Botis.

The ground that was stained with dark red blood quickly retreated from the numerous illusory doors until it returned to the distorted black blob.

The strong, fearful atmosphere receded like the tide and left the room.

The "black blob" that was covered in cracks and eyeballs squirmed and restored itself, turning back into a purple-patterned black-robed woman with a hood.

Everything returned to the point before “The Ugly Duckling” magic was used.

Reboot of Fate!

This was one of the rewards given to Saint of Secrets Botis for crushing the Abraham family—he was allowed to “Record” the Sequence 1 Beyonder power from the Angel of Fate, Ouroboros.

Of course, there was definitely a huge gap from the original version. It could only reboot reality for three seconds, and it was limited to the space of a tiny room like this. It wasn’t even able to affect the entire first floor of the apartment.

The moment “Reboot” ended, the prepared Saint Tenebrous Kisma immediately took action.

The Grazed twisted shadow that stemmed from a Sanguine Count spread open its arms and made a gesture of embracing the crimson moon.

The darkness around Cattleya surged, instantly forming illusory but firm black chains that bound her to her spot.

The flesh and blood that covered the ground, walls and ceiling gathered together rapidly, turning into a knight covered in black full-body armor. He held a heavy greatsword in his hand and looked extremely oppressive.

In the gap of the Black Knight’s visor, two dark red beams of light flickered and instantly locked onto the hooded woman beside the pumpkin carriage.

The shadow beneath Cattleya’s feet suddenly came alive as it grabbed her ankles. Like a water current that had its water level rising, it gripped her tightly.

Black Knight, Commandeering Shadows!

Then, the gigantic knight that was almost reaching the ceiling as though he came from mythical legends rushed to a spot not far from his target with a single step. He cleaved down with the heavy, long broadsword.

Elsewhere, a silver illusory book in the eyes of Saint of Secrets Botis flipped rapidly. It then stopped at a single page.

With that, Botis reached out his left hand and grabbed the pumpkin carriage across a distance of twenty to thirty meters. He then grabbed at the mysterious woman in a purple-patterned black robe.

His arm suddenly grew longer, and its surface was black and sticky, as if it was flowing with an evil liquid.

Amidst the liquid, pale skulls and eyes with pronounced blood vessels grew out, including sharp teeth and tongues. All sorts of strange things grew out, causing extreme evil and extreme madness to spread rapidly through the area.

In the room, the ground instantly cracked and the few cockroaches that were still alive collapsed to the ground.

This was an attack from a particular state of Abomination Suah!

Back outside Bayam City, Saint of Secrets Botis had been attracted by Tinder. It appeared as though he only watched from the sidelines for a while before picking up the item and leaving immediately. But in fact, he had been desperately trying to “Record” the powers or states of the high-level existences.

After failing numerous times, due to the frequent blessings of fate, he eventually obtained what he wanted. Of course, during that battle, he only managed to “Record” one.

Under this evil and pitch-black arm, Cattleya’s consciousness was tainted with madness. For a moment, she was unable to respond effectively.

Together with the shackles of darkness restraining her shadow, she could only stand rooted to the ground as she watched Saint Tenebrous Kisma’s greatsword slash at her while Saint of Secrets Botis reached out his left hand to grab at her.

At this moment, the flesh and blood walls in the room that separated the interior from the exterior was gone. An invisible and abrupt wind stirred up.

The moment the wind appeared, it grew violent and swept towards the Saint of Secrets’s and Saint Tenebrous’s hearts.

Manipulator, Mind Storm.

Not only was he not surprised or flustered by the chaotic thoughts, Botis even had the corners of his lips pull up as he smiled.

As the switch for the “Reboot,” he naturally remembered that the demigod riding the pumpkin carriage had a helper of the same level hiding outside the apartment somewhere.

The reason why he placed his focus on the enemy on the surface was to lure out the hidden demigod!

In between the two powers of “Reboot of Fate” and the Abomination state, Botis had secretly “hypnotized” himself, allowing himself to naturally divide the burden of Mind Deprivation and the knowledge torrent across most of his Worms of Star. He then left a small number to control his body so as to lock onto the “hidden” enemy.

Previously, the Dragon’s Might shock, and the fact that he was unable to discover his target, had convinced Botis that it was a demigod of the Spectator pathway.

While his mind was in a daze, the thing he branched out rapidly churned and helped Botis locate the source of the attack.

But at this moment, most of the thoughts that resonated among the Worms of Star wasn't him being overloaded with meaningless information as he had imagined.

In his mind, there seemed to be a voice saying thousands of words in a second:

"At the bottom of an abandoned castle in Delaire Forest, there is a pair of bronze double doors. It seals with the corruptive forces underground. The higher the Sequence a Beyonder is when approaching, the easier it is to be affected…

"The cosmos is extremely dangerous. There are unknown existences watching…

"Dark Angel is suspected to be the negative personality dissociated from the ancient sun god…

"…"

What? Botis was taken aback. He felt that these thoughts were dangerous, but he couldn't help but wish to understand more.

Just this moment of stupor made the enemy he had already found disappear once again, escaping his range of attention. As for the Abomination palm that was hurtling towards the pumpkin carriage and the female demigod, it also slowed down.

Similarly, Saint Tenebrous Kisma was also affected by the "Mind Storm" as his actions stiffened for a second.

By the time they recovered, Cattleya had already opened her mouth and spat out a pea.

The pea instantly grew, turning into thick green vines that dragged

Cattleya out the door, allowing her to escape the shackles of darkness and regain some freedom of movement.

By the time Saint Tenebrous's heavy greatsword and Saint of Secrets's pitch-black arms landed on her, they only shattered a shadow and did not injure this Mysticologist.

They had shattered Cattleya's "Emperor's New Clothes" magic, something that didn't exist at all, so she naturally wouldn't be injured!

In the next second, the hooded lady in the purple-patterned black robe suddenly turned transparent and turned into a pile of foam.

The bubbles quickly scattered and burst one after another. Nothing was left behind. As for the green vines, they grew into midair and burst into flames, illuminating the surrounding streets.

Everything returned to normal. It was as if the short and intense demigod-level battle had never happened.

Saint of Secrets Botis and Saint Tenebrous Kisma exchanged glances. They weren't surprised by such a development.

Clearly, after the sneak attack failed, the two demigod enemies were at a disadvantage and could no longer achieve their goals. Furthermore, this was Backlund. The longer they delayed, the more dangerous it would be. Hence, they took the opportunity to escape.

In addition, in order to interfere with the tracking, they had deliberately created a huge commotion to attract the authorities of Backlund.

As for the copy of Leymano's Travels and a Sequence 7 or 6 Apprentice Beyonder, they were baits that could be abandoned.

After a slight nod, Saint of Secrets Botis took out a crystal ball from his black robe's concealed pocket. It bloomed with light before it quickly shattered and merged into the void.

He was trying to prevent tracking via mysticism means.

Indeed, he didn’t dare to stay any longer. He planned on “Teleporting” away and returning to the Aurora Order headquarters. Then, he would “interrogate” the bait and figure out the truth before deciding what to do next.

A second later, Botis’s figure quickly turned transparent and disappeared. Kisma entered the shadows and rapidly left, wiping the traces behind him along the way.

Chapter 1198 - Frenzy

◆ ◆ ◆

The Saint of Secrets, Botis, began to traverse the spirit world the moment he entered, heading straight for the easternmost front of the Sonia Sea—the ruins of the battle of the gods.

At this moment, his thoughts blurred. His body turned and left the spirit world through another place.

By the time Botis received a warning from his spirituality and had regained control of his own thoughts while feeling tense, what he saw was a bare forest with nearly all its leaves scattered. There was no one around, and the crimson moon hung high in the sky.

As a former Traveler and Astrologer, he immediately identified his location and found that he was still in Backlund. However, he had moved from the city to a remote area in the suburbs.

At the same time, he also understood what had happened.

It was unknown when his mind world had been infiltrated with someone else's consciousness. At the critical moment, it affected his thoughts and changed his destination!

That Spectator pathway's demigod! I didn't realize it! Botis's pupils dilated as a silvery-white illusory book appeared.

The book flipped to one of the pages.

Botis immediately raised his hand to grab at his glabella. He grabbed a ball of darkness from the island of consciousness and threw it into his shadow.

His shadow was separated from him as it twisted to a stand, revealing a female silhouette.

Black Knight, Shadow of Depravation!

This was an ability that Botis had “Recorded” from Saint Tenebrous Kisma. It could separate one’s depraved thoughts into a shadow and form an uncontrollable independent creature.

Botis used it to erase the consciousness that didn’t belong to him, and escape the influence of the Manipulator!

At the same time, this was also Botis’s counterattack. As long as the hidden Spectator pathway demigod couldn’t quickly resolve this “shadow,” the thoughts she had fractured would gradually become independent, turning her half-mad and even causing her to lose control.

Once he was done with the latent mental problems, Botis didn’t hesitate to escape the enemy’s predetermined battlefield and “Teleport” elsewhere.

However, at this moment, his mind suddenly turned frantic. He felt that the entire environment was making things difficult for him, and his anger could no longer be contained.

As the silver book flipped in front of his eyes, the entire forest collapsed with a loud bang. The black “shadow” almost collapsed into a ball.

After his bout of mania, Botis’s mood dropped to a nadir. He couldn’t lift his spirits with regards to anything. He felt that he was useless, a burden to others and even the world.

Mental Plague! In the previous battle, Botis had already been infected by “Mental Plague,” and it had finally acted up!

The reason why Cattleya first used "The Little Match Girl" magic wasn't only because she wanted to interfere with Botis's "Teleportation," but also because she was helping Miss Justice conceal any traces, allowing her Virtual Persona to infiltrate Botis's mind world without triggering his spiritual intuition. A seed of "Mental Plague" was planted secretly without triggering it.

It was precisely because of this that when the sneak attack failed, Cattleya and Audrey dared to initiate the contingency plan. They retreated on their own accord, allowing Saint of Secrets Botis and Saint Tenebrous Kisma to separate from each other after they were out of danger.

Cattleya's final igniting of the final green vine appeared to create a huge commotion to attract the attention of the official Beyonders, making the enemy abandon their pursuit, but in fact, it was to force the Saint of Secrets to leave as quickly as possible. This way, he didn't have the time to carefully examine and check his condition at a deeper level.

Hence, at the critical moment of his "Teleportation," he had his thoughts changed by Audrey's Virtual Persona. He came directly to the outskirts of Backlund, an uninhabited kill box which the Tarot Club had chosen.

And once he finished off the Manipulator's Virtual Persona, the eruption of "Mental Plague" came right on the heels of that.

In fact, if he had used "Reboot of Fate" earlier, he definitely would've been able to return to a state where there were no latent problems. However, he only decided to use this trump card when he was nearly killed by the Spear of Longinus. And by that time, his mind world had already been infiltrated for far more than three seconds!

He was dispirited and depressed, trying his best to resist his mental illness. It was at this moment that he saw a bunch of surreal yarn balls appear out of the void in front of him.

At the back of the yarn ball, the bright-colored yarn extended into an infinite distance.

Following this line, Cattleya, who was wearing a purple-patterned black robe and a dark-colored hood, walked over from the spirit world and appeared in front of the Saint of Secrets, Botis.

She was unable to track down enemies that had done some level of interference, but she could establish a connection with the predetermined battlefield. She could trace Justice Audrey's Virtual Persona!

The moment she arrived, Cattleya closed her eyes and formed a phantom image that fell towards an invisible coffin.

The already depressed Botis instantly felt extremely exhausted. He couldn't help but close his eyes, wanting to collapse.

Sleeping Beauty!

On the other side, Audrey's "Virtual Persona" which hadn't fully turned independent was like a dark shadow, bringing with it a sense of depravity. She raised her hand and pinched her forehead.

Her pupils silently turned vertical; they were pale gold and cold.

Botis's mind instantly exploded as bubbles of light appeared on the surface of his body. Within the bubbles, rays of starlight condensed into insects with their heads and tails fused into the void.

Psychiatrist, Frenzy!

This could completely trigger the target's emotions and even cause him to lose control.

Botis had already been infected with "Mental Plague" and was in an extremely abnormal state. Following that, he was affected by "Sleeping Beauty" magic and was in an extremely dispirited mood. "Frenzy" now triggered everything, immediately making it difficult for him to control himself as he showed signs of losing control.

Seizing this opportunity, Cattleya opened her eyes, raised her right hand, and rapidly formed a handful of spinning star sand in her palm.

The forest beneath the night became even darker. The crimson moon disappeared from the sky as stars appeared one after another. They were densely packed and dazzling.

The stars scattered their rays of light, forming a magnificent pillar of light that enveloped the area around Saint of Secrets Botis and his surroundings.

In the midst of the shock, Botis became a little more awake. His figure rapidly turned into a blur as he kept “Blinking,” creating more than ten afterimages in the forest.

However, he could not escape the starlight’s envelopment, nor could he “Teleport” away.

One by one, the starlight melted and dissipated the different Botis. Finally, there was only one person left genuflecting, propping up his body with one palm as he struggled.

Botis’s body was in shambles. His eyes were already dark red, and he appeared to be on the brink of insanity.

When the starlight was in its final moments, he “Blinked” and dodged the follow-up attack of Audrey’s Virtual Persona.

Then, he kept “Blinking” and created “doppelgangers” beside Cattleya and Audrey’s Virtual Persona.

One of his “doppelgangers” grabbed with his left hand, distorting the area where Audrey’s Virtual Persona was located. He concealed it in a bid to restrain the enemy.

As for his other “doppelganger,” he spread open his arms and summoned a thick pillar of light surrounded by holy flames, letting it blast down into the concealed space.

During this process, Botis’s other “doppelganger” had secretly removed the concealment of space.

Hence, as soon as the shadow corresponding to Audrey’s Virtual Persona was freed from the restriction, it was enveloped by a holy pillar of light, quickly melting away.

In his “Blinking” state, Botis could use Beyonder powers at a speed faster than normal, but he couldn’t sustain it for long. This was something that was achieved via using his numerous Worms of Star.

Elsewhere, the Saint of Secrets, Botis, was also attacking Cattleya. He had used various powers, and in the short span of a second or two, he had inundated his target with a barrage of attacks.

This forced Cattleya to constantly use “The Emperor’s New Clothes” magic to avoid it. She was momentarily unable to counter-attack and was in grave danger.

A few seconds later, Botis’s “Blinking” finally slowed down. The mania in his heart also eased.

At this moment, grayish-white and heavy scales suddenly appeared outside the forest. They were faintly discernible, as if they were forming an extremely oppressive behemoth.

In the dark night where the crimson moon was obscured, a nearly invisible stream of breath swept down from top to bottom, enveloping Botis and Cattleya.

The two demigods felt as though they were struck by lightning as their psyche was torn apart. Their Spirit Bodies seemed to be penetrated.

The breath of a mind dragon!

With his mental state already in a terrible state and having used a couple of his trump cards, Botis's mind went blank. As the flashes flashed before his eyes, his body couldn't help but tremble.

As for Cattleya, she was carrying the Moon Paper Figurine that she had obtained from Fors. This helped her bear the burden of "Psychic Piercing" once!

Although it was unable to completely eliminate the effects of "Mind Dragon Breath," it could help Cattleya recover faster.

This meant an opportunity in a battle at the demigod level!

In just a second or two, Cattleya's eyes returned to normal. As for Audrey who was in her dragon form and hiding in the darkness outside the forest, she cast another "Mind Deprivation" on Botis.

Without any hesitation, Cattleya raised her right hand and condensed the terrifying spear that was stained with fresh blood. She threw it at the Saint of Secrets, Botis.

This time, Botis could no longer dodge or resolve the situation. His chest was pierced through by the Spear of Longinus.

His body stiffened for a moment before it rapidly collapsed, turning into countless dazzling Worms of Star.

Some of these Worms of Star vanished directly, while others devoured each other. Some of them fused into a distant spot, forming a new Botis.

There was no longer any rationality left in his eyes. His body was continuously collapsing, revealing an incomplete and extremely weak Mythical Creature form.

At this moment, an illusory door appeared beside him. It was grayish-blue that had seven brass locks.

The illusory door quickly opened as it spat out a three-layered “jewelry box” embedded with various gems.

The Box of the Great Old Ones which had been exiled had returned.

With a crazed look in his eyes, Botis caught the box, revealing a cruel and bloodthirsty smile as he tried to open it.

The third level!

Chapter 1199 - Inauspicious Box

◆

Towards the return of Botis’s Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or the restoration of its normal condition, The Hermit Cattleya and Justice Audrey had made a preliminary plan. After all, they weren’t confident at killing a demigod in such a short period of time.

If not for the fact that Botis had fallen into a trap having suffered the lethal blows of “Mental Plague,”“Sleeping Beauty,” and “Frenzy” and putting him into a crazy and incoherent state, he actually had many opportunities to “Teleport” away without being stopped.

In that case, Cattleya and Audrey could only wait for Botis to return to a “safe house” and release Fors. Once the Eye of Mystery Prying provided them feedback, they could remotely create an opportunity for Miss Magician to summon the Historical Void projection.

At this moment, facing Botis, who was on the path towards losing control with no way to reverse it and his crazy attempt to fully activate Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, Cattleya and Audrey—one right in the middle of the scene and the other hiding outside the forest—simultaneously took the same action. They took out a translucent dark charm and recited a word in Jotun:

“Star!”

This was a “Teleportation” charm. Following the patterns, labels, and symbols of the “Record” on the Leymano’s Travels, Klein had made a charm himself.

Since Sefirah Castle could mobilize the powers of the Marauder pathway, there was no reason not to respond to the pleas of the Apprentice domain!

As for the materials needed for the charms, be it Mysticologist Cattleya or Traveler Fors, the both of them had a certain level of understanding towards it. There was no need for Mr. Fool to teach them.

When the two of them “Teleported” away with the triggering of the charm—having plans to come back after a minute or two to confirm the situation—there was a cruel smile on Botis’s face. His eyes were filled with madness as his actions suddenly stiffened.

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t open the third level of the Box of the Great Old Ones!

It was extremely heavy, as though it was enveloped and suppressed by layers of forces. There was no way to activate it.

This made Botis feel like he was attempting to open a new world, not a box.

In an instant, he sensed something, and the madness in his eyes disappeared. Extreme astonishment and fear arose in him.

Tick tock. Tick tock. Wisps of light slid down from Botis’s body. When they touched the ground, they transformed into insects formed from resplendent starlight.

The insects’ bodies were bent into a semi-circle, forming a magical glow that resembled illusory doors.

At this moment, his incomplete Mythical Creature form suddenly collapsed and disintegrated in an irresistible manner.

The two eyeballs of his eyes landed on the ground and were stained with dust.

These two eyeballs were frozen with an indescribable look of horror. They were maintained perfectly, completely different from the other parts of his body.

A Sequence 4 Secrets Sorcerer died just like that.

Pa!

The Box of the Great Old Ones, which had a silver-black surface with many gems embedded in it, dropped beside Botis's eyes, just like a jewelry box commonly seen in aristocratic families.

Above the gray fog, in the ancient palace, Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he lowered the Sea God Scepter in his hand in puzzlement.

He was just moments from activating the power of Sefirah Castle and using the level of an angel to conjure "Lightning Storm." He wanted to prevent Botis from opening the third level of the Box of the Great Old Ones, but the Saint of Secrets's mutually destructive counterattack had failed to succeed. He encountered an unexpected failure from the very beginning.

After Xio left the first battlefield, she immediately followed the plan and prayed to Mr. Fool. With this, Klein found an opportunity to enter the world above the gray fog. Through the crimson star corresponding to The Hermit and Justice, he monitored the battle.

As she moved to the second battlefield, Audrey found an opportunity to pray, so that Klein could use her crimson star to directly interfere with the real world.

This was also the reason why Audrey had arrived at her destination later than The Hermit Cattleya.

According to what Arrodes said, the third level of the Box of the Great Old Ones contains something very terrifying. I thought that the True Creator had given it to him in order to create a terrifying disaster at the critical moment, so as to showcase the true colors of an evil god. Who knew that it couldn’t be opened… Klein glanced at the crimson star representing The Magician and discovered that it was covered in a layer of black ash. It seemed to have coagulated, making it impossible for him to see the scene inside to confirm Miss Magician’s condition.

This was the first time he had encountered such a situation—evidence of how high a level and odd the Box of the Great Old Ones was.

As for “Sleeping Beauty” magic and the Spear of Longinus that he saw, he came up with some ideas.

After learning of the powers of Mystical Re-enactment at the private gathering, Klein overturned his speculations about the fairy tale magic that Bernadette had.

He had originally believed that the Emperor had specially created the stories for his daughter based on the fairy tales on Earth, or that after Bernadette’s father passed away, she had deliberately reenacted the fairy tales he had told her about as a way to express her grief. From the looks of it, the answer likely wasn’t this. Some of the fairy tales before the First Epoch might have been “mysterious.”

This meant that those fairy tales originated from mysterious incidents that had happened in real life. They were spread among the people and gradually became stories. They were recorded down by writers and further embellished.

This corresponds to the prophecy regarding the time when the stars are right. Mystery and has never left and has always been around. It was just that in the “Earth Era” before the First Epoch, they were suppressed by some kind of power or sealed…

If that’s really the case, some of the legends and stories on Earth can be explained from another angle… It’s no wonder there’s a Spear of Longinus… I wonder if the Chinese fable of the ethereal utopia, Peach Blossom Spring, is involved in mystery. I’ll tell Ma’am Hermit later and see if she can create new magic according to this…

I wonder if Bernadette became a Mysticologist before the Emperor perished. If she did, it's hard to say if these fairy tale magics were created by the Emperor, a Sequence 1 Beyonder of the Mystery Pryer pathway, or by Queen Mystic Bernadette… But no matter what, the Emperor should have discovered that these fairy tales are also mysterious in his later years, and also that he could draw power from them. Well, there's no corresponding diary entry from Bernadette. I can't see the Emperor's reaction and his guesses…

One of the reasons he insisted on going to the moon is to verify certain things.

It's a pity that most of the myths are fake. There's no way to draw on their power. The novels of the Internet era are the same… Klein sighed slightly as he leaned back into his chair and continued paying attention to the battlefield.

In the collapsed forest, The Hermit Cattleya and Justice Audrey faced the abnormal changes suffered by Botis and tacitly gave up injecting their spirituality to use the charms.

Despite maintaining her "Dragon Transformation" state, Audrey was still hiding in the darkness outside the forest, wary of any accidents or official demigods who might have sensed the commotion and come to investigate.

As for The Hermit Cattleya, she was pushed to the spot where Botis had died by the wind. She carefully avoided the Box of the Great Old Ones.

Due to the fact that a Scribe could use many powers, a demigod-level Sealed Artifact would often have extremely negative effects. Apart from the Box of the Great Old Ones, Botis only left behind a black pocket which seemed to be part of his robe.

Also, there was also the gathered Beyonder characteristic, two eyeballs, and about ten Worms of Star. Most of the Worms of Star had been destroyed.

Considering the horror displayed by the Box of the Great Old Ones, as well as the fact that Botis was a high-ranking member of the Aurora Order and could be blessed by a god, Cattleya didn't rashly pick up the items. She was afraid that an accident would happen, causing the situation to develop negatively.

Previously, during the private gatherings, they had communicated with each other on how to handle such situations. That was, if they had the time and opportunity, they would first sacrifice the item to Mr. Fool and then distribute it above the gray fog. After all, many items might bring about unknown dangers if they were to come into contact with items with unknown negative effects. And there was a high probability that Botis had a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

Sometimes, merely knowing the existence of a Sealed Artifact of this level was enough to cause a sudden death.

According to what The Star Leonard had said, it was best not to come into contact with such Sealed Artifacts. It was best not to ask, describe, or pry into it. Only a true high-level existence could suppress them.

Without any hesitation, Cattleya took out silver candles and other ritual items from the various hidden pockets of her purple-patterned black robe. She then set up a simple sacrificial ritual.

During this process, she pinched her lips, whistled, and created an invisible servant helper. It took about ten seconds to set up the altar.

After quickly reciting Mr. Fool's honorific name and using spiritual materials to open the Door of Sacrifice and Bestowment, Cattleya heaved a sigh of relief. She got the invisible servant to move the Box of the Great Old Ones, the black pocket, two eyeballs, the gathered Beyonder characteristic, and the nine Worms of Star over to the altar.

With a whoosh, the items flew up and passed through the illusory door.

When Cattleya saw this, she immediately pinched her lower lip with her thumb and index finger, preparing to whistle once again to dispel the invisible servant.

But amidst the whistling, the “servant” remained motionless, as though it had nothing to do with Cattleya.

The Hermit Cattleya’s eyelids twitched as she clenched her right hand into a fist and pushed it to her mouth, preparing to use the Horn of Magic.

At that moment, a blazing silvery-white appeared out of nowhere at the altar. Layers of bolts of lightning formed a destructive storm that enveloped the invisible servant in the middle.

All of this quickly calmed down as the mutated servant was completely destroyed.

Cattleya exhaled and lowered her head, sincerely thanking Mr. Fool.

Then, she followed the ritual’s ending procedure and packed her belongings. She used the “Snow White” magic, which was closer to a prophecy technique, to clear the scene of its traces.

And at this moment, Audrey had already used the Teleportation charm from before and left the scene.

Cattleya looked around, and considering that Mr. Fool might need something more ritualistic, she took out a card from her pocket and threw it in the middle of the collapsing forest.

The card was half inserted into the soil, revealing the image of an old man holding a glass lamp and staff as he explored alone: The Hermit of the tarot cards.

Chapter 1200 - Randomness

◆

After a while, the space in the collapsed forest suddenly tore apart, revealing an illusory yet mysterious door.

The door opened silently, and a handsome man with black hair and golden eyes walked out. He was dressed in a well-ironed suit, looking mature and elegant.

Before he could examine the scene, he heard a loud boom. He could feel a violent storm blowing towards him, and he saw a middle-aged man with an imposing aura appear in front of him.

The middle-aged man had rather obvious large earlobes. His hair was dark blue and thick, and there seemed to be countless bolts of lightning hidden in his eyes.

He was the cardinal of the Church of the Lord of Storms, archbishop of the Backlund diocese, Deep Blue Officiant Randall Valentinus.

The clergyman in the black robe that was embroidered with storm symbols looked around and cast his gaze at the golden-eyed man. He asked in a thunderous voice, “Celt, what happened here?”

Celt, the golden-eyed man, shook his head.

“I just arrived too.”

Just as he said that, a mountain-like nearly transparent Spirit Body appeared in the void and placed a figure in midair.

The figure was dressed in a long black, red-patterned bishop robe. His eyes were deep and he didn't have a beard. He was the person in charge of the Backlund diocese of the Church of Evernight, Anthony Stevenson.

After the gigantic Spirit Body completed its mission, it immediately shrunk and entered Saint Anthony's mouth. At the same time, black long hair covered his face, and a translucent, drifting spirit appeared behind Anthony. It held onto his shoulder, preventing him from falling.

In the next second, a turbulent flow of air rushed over from the Backlund city and pushed a figure towards this area at high speeds.

Soon, the figure came to a stop. It was an old man dressed in a white priest robe and a clergyman's cap. He had a kind and gentle face.

The air that was spewed out from the elder's back vanished as the black tube that was shimmering with metallic light retreated back into his body.

This was the archbishop of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery's Backlund diocese. He was a member of the Divine Council, Horamick Haydn.

He strangely stopped in midair and looked around.

"Although the battle here isn't too intense, it's definitely at the saint level.

"Also, the remnant polluted aura is simply… simply…"

As they spoke, the four demigods looked down at the middle of the collapsed forest.

There was a tarot card depicting an old man holding a staff and a glass lamp.

The Hermit card!

Randall Valentinus, Celt, Anthony, and Horamick instantly fell silent as no one spoke for a moment.

†

Above the gray fog, in the ancient palace, Klein was frowning as he looked at the Box of the Great Old Ones in front of him.

The moment this Grade 0 Sealed Artifact was sacrificed, the entire Sefirah Castle began to stir, as if it had been brought to boiling point.

A massive amount of power was automatically activated, forming a torrent that appeared like steam as it completely drowned out the Box of the Great Old Ones and wrapped around it tightly.

At this moment, the silver-black jewelry box that was embedded with gems seemed to become an insect in amber. There was no room for any movement.

Previously, Sefirah Castle was triggered when I spied on the true gods or Kings of Angels and when I was injured… This is the first time it has experienced such changes due to an item from external sources… Klein couldn't help but raise his right hand to wipe away the nonexistent sweat.

Frankly speaking, he was still a little afraid. He felt that he had been a little carried away after gaining initial control of Sefirah Castle.

In the past, he didn't dare let a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact enter this place. And this time, because it didn't involve a Uniqueness, and with how he had improved compared to the past, this gave him the thought of making an attempt.

Thankfully, it's under control… In the future, I'll have to tell Ma'am Hermit and the others that they can't pick up anything and sacrifice it to me. I'm not a rag-and-bone man… After muttering a few words, he began inspecting the Box of the Great Old Ones.

He remembered that Miss Magician was still inside the Sealed Artifact, so he planned on figuring out the situation of the Box of the Great Old Ones as soon as possible so as to prevent the bait from dying due to wasting time.

This Sealed Artifact's level is very high. Arrodes's understanding of it is rather limited. I'll still have to do it myself… From the looks of it, as long as I don't attempt to divine what the third level is or attempt to seek out the source of the power, the danger is acceptable or even nonexistent… Klein made a preliminary assessment based on his spiritual intuition.

Immediately following that, he conjured a pen and paper and began doing a "divination."

After an unknown period of time, he finally opened his eyes and muttered silently, The first level can allow the interior space to switch locations with the target's area and miniaturize the corresponding scene, turning objects into toys… This is an ability that can barely be made use of…

The living beings that have been turned into toys must be released within 24 hours. Otherwise, they will be permanently converted. Even their Spirit Bodies will never enjoy an eternal rest…

It's very easy to release them. As long as a specific region is chosen—one so small that it's almost devoid of any living creatures—swapping it with the interior space will do…

There is a limit to the scope of this ability. It reaches its limit with a city the size of Backlund… Why did I use Backlund as an example…

The second level records different scenes. There are the Abyss, cosmos, and all sorts of places. It allows the wielder and the living beings within a certain range to directly move to the target area…

This problem is it's random. A small portion can be designated by the wielder, thus releasing the corresponding location. Most of the time, the chosen location will change, and the destination of the final destination will be unpredictable… As for when the designated location will be effective and when an anomaly happens, there's no way to know…

Besides, this seems to be something that can't be affected by good luck. Or perhaps, good luck cannot affect those below Sequence 0…

This means that I can't use this Box of the Great Old Ones's Beyonder power to directly transfer the City of Silver out of the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Sigh, if I can, my Miracle Invoker ritual will be very simple… Uh, I'll try and see if making them into toys will work later…

The third level is very dangerous, very, very dangerous. I won't take the risk to pry into its secrets. No, this should be called courting death…

The negative effects of the Box of the Great Old Ones are very simple. It's just that the wielder will randomly vanish, suddenly die, or mutate. If there are no holders, the living beings in the surrounding areas will encounter terrifying matters one after another depending on their distance from it and their sizes. The maximum range is the same as the first level… These Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts can destroy cities wantonly, killing hundreds of thousands or even millions. It's no wonder they are given the highest sealing. One is not to ask, describe, or pry into them.

Where did the entities that vanished go? This seems to have something to do with the scene of the second level…

The reason why the Saint of Secrets dares to move around with this Sealed Artifact is because he had the blessings of the Angel of Fate Ouroboros. He can reduce the negative effects to a minimum, but even so, he didn't dare to hold on to it for too long because the blessings would wear off… It looks like the reason he didn't manage to recover his lucidity ahead of time and find a chance to teleport away had to do with his luck turning bad… It's really hard to kill saints that are valued by a huge organization…

I must say that Ma'am Hermit is considered experienced and clear-headed. She didn't make any rash contact with it. Instead, she created an invisible servant to hold it. Furthermore, she sacrificed this Grade 0 Sealed Artifact to me in the shortest time possible…

In theory, I can summon a Historical Void projection to hold this item. After all, it doesn't matter if it dies, vanishes, or mutates. However, the usage time cannot be guaranteed, unless I get Will Auceptin's blessing…

The way to seal it is to put it into the spirit world, and that's not enough. It has to be a space that has been distorted and hidden in the spirit world. Then, ordinary water has to be poured into it regularly, allowing the Box of the Great Old Ones to play with microbes every day… With so many living beings, it can last for a very long period of time… With this train of thought, there are still many methods to seal it…

After roughly figuring out the exact situation of the Box of the Great Old Ones, Klein looked at the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact and felt that the third level no longer seemed as dangerous and impossible to open as before.

He vaguely believed that as long as he extended his hand and removed the seal placed onto it by Sefirah Castle, he could easily open the third level of the Box of the Great Old Ones.

…What a strong temptation… Klein retracted his gaze and waved his hand, causing the Box of the Great Old Ones to fly towards the junk pile in the corner.

Regardless of whether it was a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or not, head over there to be quarantined and get a hold of yourself!

As a terrifying Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, one has to have a number to show its importance. Unfortunately, I don't know how many Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts the seven Churches have obtained. It shouldn't exceed

50, right? Yes, the Box of the Great Old Ones can be temporarily named 0-61. I'll adjust it according to the situation in the future…

If Ma'am Hermit isn't able to create a sealed environment, she can place 0-61 above the gray fog. Once she needs it, she can apply for it. Of course, she must pray to Will in advance for "His" blessings… I wonder what stage I'll have to be before the "King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck" can be genuine in name. There's a portion in Miracle Invoker, and there should be a portion in Attendant of Mysteries… Klein amused himself with his thoughts and finally picked up the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Saint of Secrets Botis.

It looked like a crystal with countless rays of light refracted within it, forming illusory and resplendent doors.

After staring at it for a few seconds, he suddenly threw the Beyonder characteristic into the air.

The power of Sefirah Castle boiled once again. Under the control of Klein, it formed a corporeal semi-translucent wave and struck the crystal hard.

The crystal instantly shattered, splitting into countless tiny dots of light. A pitch-black gas emerged from within before it rapidly melted away, twisting and dispersing inside Sefirah Castle.

Under the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics, those tiny dots of light slowly gathered together, and in nearly a minute, they reformed into the magnificent and dreamy crystal-like appearance from before, and landed in the palm of Klein's hand.

The contamination inside was cleared.

Inside Sefirah Castle, Klein was equivalent to a Sequence 2 angel. However, he mostly had the power, but not the corresponding level's Beyonder powers. He needed the right supporting item to help him.

After putting down the Secrets Sorcerer's Beyonder characteristic, he cast his gaze at Botis’s remaining two eyeballs.

Chapter 1201 - Professional

◆

The pupils of Botis’s eyes had already turned deep black, and they were frozen in a look of indescribable fear. It made Klein’s heart palpitate when he saw it, as though he could feel the intense changes in Botis’s emotions before his death.

After a series of inspections, together with “divination,” he confirmed that these two eyeballs didn’t contain any Beyonder characteristics, but they contained a strong corruptive force and a power that came from an unknown source. It could be used as a medium for curses, and it could directly affect the target. It was a rather dangerous spiritual material with an extremely long “expiry date.”

I can’t bring it with me for extended periods of time. Otherwise, I might be weakened mentally, have nightmares every day, and suffer a physical mutation… Klein casually summoned a square metal box and placed Botis’s two eyeballs into it.

He didn’t attempt to purify it, because once the item was shattered and purified, there would be nothing left. It would be too wasteful.

Due to the fact that there was nothing wrong with the Worms of Star and that it was also a material that Klein understood the most, he quickly turned his attention to the black pocket.

The results of “divination” surprised him because it was a so-called “interspatial” object.

The pocket only had the size of an adult man’s palm. But in actual fact, it had the size of the two-bedroom apartment that the Moretti family had rented in Tingen in the very beginning. It was big enough to hold many things.

This was made by Botis using the powers of a Secrets Sorcerer. In essence, the pocket wasn't an object but an entrance.

…First, a region in the spirit world is distorted and isolated using "Space Concealment"; then, use the chaos created when the spirit world overlaps with reality. As long as there are proper coordinates, one can directly reach their destination, opening the "door" to that hidden area and entering this pocket space…

This is very similar to the method needed for sealing the Box of the Great Old Ones. However, one door is in the spirit world, while the other is in the real world. This results in a Sealed Artifact or mystical item inside the Interspatial Pocket to also affect the wielder…

From the looks of it, it doesn't seem to be of much use, as it can't eliminate the negative effects… Besides, I'm in the Forsaken Land of the Gods and can't connect to the spirit world. There's no use to having such a pocket…

Also, I have to reinforce the power of "Space Concealment" from time to time. Otherwise, it will gradually lose its effectiveness… It's only suitable for demigods of the Apprentice pathway, or an organization that has demigods of the Apprentice pathway or Sealed Artifacts that provide the relevant support…

The name "Interspatial Pocket" is too lame. I wonder how Botis named this item… Let's call it "Traveler's Bag"… After confirming the degree of danger, Klein conjured a fake hand and placed it into the black pocket.

Pitter-patter! A bunch of gems poured out as the fake hand was retracted and landed on the long, mottled table. The crystal-clear red, blue, green, white, black, and translucent colors instantly filled his eyes.

…I should've predicted this… The corresponding materials of the Apprentice pathway are gems—all the gems… The expression on Klein's face turned spirited as he sighed with a smile. He reached out with his other hand and picked up a few gems to feel the weight and texture.

Apart from these, there were also quite a number of spiritual materials in the Traveler's Bag. Some were commonly used, while others were relatively rare.

The Box of the Great Old Ones, the Secrets Sorcerer's Beyonder characteristic, nine Worms of Star, Botis's eyeballs, Traveler's Bag, and large amounts of gems and materials… This operation can be considered quite a harvest, enough for everyone to split it fairly…

Unfortunately, Botis had the ability to "Record" Beyonder powers and certain states. There's no need for him to bring too many Sealed Artifacts and mystical items with him. That would result in many negative effects… As a demigod, he should have a few good Sealed Artifacts. I wonder if they're hidden somewhere in the spirit world or at the Aurora Order headquarters… It's a pity that Botis's soul had just collapsed as well, preventing me from using spirit channeling on it… Klein shook his head and immediately returned to the real world. He found a hidden spot, put down the lantern, and set up a bestowment ritual.

He wanted to see if he could bring 0-61—the Box of the Great Old Ones—to the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

If he could, he could attempt transforming the entire City of Silver into toys and placing them on the first level of the Sealed Artifact. He could directly send it to the outside world through the sacrificial and bestowment rituals. This way, he could bypass the Giant King's Court and Dark Angel Sasrir, and could ingeniously complete the Miracle Invoker ritual.

After performing a series of tasks, Klein was done with his preparations as he reached out his right hand. He pulled out another himself before his actual body leaped into the fog of history and hid in the void of a time before the First Epoch.

He was worried that the Box of the Great Old Ones would cause a random death the moment it passed through the sacrificial and bestowment door.

In the fragments of light deep in the grayish-white fog, Klein took four steps counterclockwise and returned above the gray fog, responding to his own prayers.

After the mysterious ancient door of sacrifice and bestowment took form, he slowly opened it. He waved his hand, summoning the Box of the Great Old Ones that was enveloped by layers of forcers, throwing it into the gap behind the illusory door, towards the boundless darkness behind the door.

At that moment, the void's darkness suddenly became corporeal, as though it formed an invisible barrier that blocked the door that had just opened. It floated in midair, unable to move forward.

Klein frowned slightly as he watched this scene. He tried to stir the powers of Sefirah Castle and use the power at the level of an angel to push it forward, but he was unable to get the Box of the Great Old Ones to break the barrier.

…Indeed, the Forsaken Land of the Gods is sealed. It's just that I'm closely related to Sefirah Castle, so I could use it to respond. However, this cannot exceed a certain limit. Klein nodded slightly. He retrieved the Box of the Great Old Ones and threw it onto the junk pile.

Then, he conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and got the fake person to give the detailed information of the Box of the Great Old Ones to Ma'am Hermit and Miss Justice.

This was to remind them to bring the Box of the Great Old Ones back to the real world within 24 hours, and to release The Magician Fors.

While doing so, Klein had informed Miss Justice to sacrifice some top-grade ice-cream to the Snake of Fate's Blessed before praying for the bestowment of the Box of the Great Old Ones. As for The Hermit Cattleya, she didn't need to make any external requests due to her having "Brief Luck." However, she needed to complete everything within a few minutes and sacrifice the Box of the Great Old Ones above the gray fog once more.

†

Backlund, in the border between East Borough and the bridge area, in an apartment that had been in disrepair for years.

Leonard, who was wearing red gloves and a black coat, was leading his team members to check the scene.

As the reserve force of the Church of Evernight, they were undoubtedly filled with energy at nearly ten at night.

"Captain, there's a serious crack on the walls here. Some of the walls have even been shattered. This apartment might not hold after the hurricane season next summer." The wine-red-haired Cindy came over and reported to Leonard.

Leonard scanned his surroundings with his green eyes and nodded slightly.

"Thankfully, this place is dangerous to begin with, and it has been abandoned for a long period of time. However, it's very strange that even tramps don't live here."

Cindy thought for a moment and said, "Captain, do you mean that there are Beyonders using this apartment, so they're secretly chasing away the tramps who sleep here?"

Another Red Glove, Bob, happened to be checking the bottom of the wall and casually added, "And then, they had an internal strife that developed into a battle. Something was then ignited?"

"That possibility can't be ruled out," Leonard answered in a professional manner. "But have you noticed? Every place in this room has signs of corrosion, and there's a lack of the remnants left behind by tables and chairs that should exist. It looks too empty… This doesn't look like something a Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder can create. I suspect that it might involve a higher level of power."

After a series of inspections and discovering many abnormalities, the Red Gloves team under Leonard failed to find any further clues. They could only return to Saint Samuel Cathedral first.

Just as they arrived underground, a bishop came to look for Leonard, asking him to bring two members upstairs for a meeting.

Leonard nodded thoughtfully. Without asking anything, he led Bob and Cindy through a secret passage into Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Following that, they followed the spiral staircase and under the illumination of the crimson moonlight, they arrived in a room with many people. It was equipped with a blackboard.

With just one glance, Leonard realized that there were quite a number of people who had worked with him before. They were from the Mandated Punishers, the Machinery Hivemind, and MI9.

Then, he noticed the three demigods, Horamick Haydn, Randall Valentinus, and Anthony Stevenson, as well as a black-haired, golden-eyed man who was clearly at the same level as them.

Without waiting for Leonard's greeting, Saint Anthony stood up in his red-patterned black robe and said in a deep voice, "There was a high-level battle in the outskirts of Backlund. There was a terrifying contamination present, as well as a tarot card—The Hermit.

"I noticed that you've done some investigations regarding the large number of incidents involving tarot cards. You had also raised a corresponding theory. Now, please give everyone here a detailed introduction."

"…The Hermit card?" Leonard expressed his true astonishment, but this was mostly because he was tasked with such a mission.

Ahem. He cleared his throat, walked to the blackboard, and turned to face the demigods and Beyonders of the three Churches and the military. He drew a crimson moon on his chest.

After organizing his words, this Red Glove Captain said solemnly, "In the past two to three years, the incident involving tarot cards that really caught our attention was because of Lanevus's death. He was embroiled in a conspiracy that attempted to allow the True Creator's descent, and his body was covered with tarot cards.

"After that, the tarot cards appeared on the Capim case again. However, this time, there was a change in the arrangement of the tarot cards. It emphasized Judgment and The Emperor…

"…Back then, I linked these matters to an organization that suddenly believed in The Fool in Backlund. As you know, The Fool is the starting card of the tarot cards."

This bold guess made several demigods and many other Beyonders nod slightly. They felt that this might indeed be related to some level of mysticism.

Leonard paused before continuing, "And below The Fool, this organization might have quite a number of official members. They use tarot cards as code names, such as Judgment, The Emperor, or The Hermit of this incident…"

As he spoke, Leonard picked up a deck of cards that he used as a demonstration and randomly picked one.

[image]

He glanced at it and chuckled.

“Such as… The Star.”

Chapter 1202 - The Tarot Club

◆ ◆ ◆

The demigods and Beyonders present nodded at Leonard’s demonstration, indicating that they understood what the Red Glove captain meant.

One of the Mandated Punishers raised his arm and took the opportunity to ask a question:

“In other words, whoever left a tarot card behind is the member executing the mission?”

“That should be the case.” Leonard did not give a definite answer.

The same Mandated Punisher continued asking, “What do the tarot cards that were scattered all over Lanevus’s corpse mean then? There’s no specific direction.”

Leonard immediately picked up a white chalk and wrote the name Lanevus on the blackboard behind him. Then, he drew a circle.

“I’ve just said that in the past two to three years, the matter involving tarot cards have really caught our attention because of the Lanevus case. This is very likely the beginning of everything.

“Therefore, without a specific direction, the casually scattered tarot cards might be referring to the whole. This means that the organization that uses the tarot cards as code names has officially stepped onto the stage of history. Heh heh, please forgive me for using poetic words.”

“That makes a lot of sense.” The few Mandated Punishers were convinced by Leonard.

Leonard looked around and continued, “Let me use the Aurora Order, which everyone is familiar with, as a comparison. We all know that there are twenty-two Oracles in the Aurora Order. Each of them will be in charge of a region’s affairs. It’s very possible that the organization with the tarot card code names is the same. The members of the likes of Judgment, The Emperor, and The Hermit should have their own factions. They will exert their influence in a particular region.”

Upon hearing this, a member of the Machinery Hivemind pondered and said, “However, the three members corresponding to Judgment, The Emperor, and The Hermit have appeared consecutively in Backlund. According to what you just said, does this mean that the organization that uses tarot cards as code names are still lacking in scale, and that the members are all gathered in Loen, or perhaps just in the Backlund region? After all, Backlund’s person-in-charge for the Aurora Order is only an Oracle. As for Saint Tenebrous, he’s in charge of the entire Loen.”

Leonard slowly nodded, indicating that he understood what he meant.

He organized his words and said, “This possibility cannot be ruled out. After all, this is an organization that has only appeared in the past two to three years.

“Of course, there might be other reasons. This organization might not be divided based on location demarcation. Instead, they are determined by whether or not they can handle an area alone. They will also work together depending on overlapping situations, such as the Capim case.”

Seeing that the Beyonders of the three Churches and MI9 didn’t raise any further questions, Leonard deliberated for a few seconds before saying, “Next up will be all my personal guesses. There are also some problems with it. This might be a direction of investigation for the future.

“The first question, what is the purpose of this organization?

“If they are like the Aurora Order, with the goal to spread the faith of an evil god, then why haven’t we discovered people who believe in The Fool? Even if there are, they’re all people who are scamming others in the name of The Fool.

“Second question, what do they have in common in the few operations? I haven’t been able to find it yet.

“The third question I have is that high-level members who use tarot cards as their code names are not of low Sequences and have their own factions. However, they aren’t famous in the Beyonder world at all. This is very abnormal. After all, although the twenty-two Oracles of the Aurora Order hide their identities, they have more or less crossed paths with us. They rose up from Low-Sequence Beyonders to Middle-Sequence Beyonders under our ‘watch,’ eventually taking over the spot as Oracle when their predecessor dies or advances. They are all already on our lists.”

Having said that, Leonard paused and said, “If the organization that uses the tarot cards as its code name is really an organization that believes in The Fool, then there is someone who can answer my third question.

“He’s the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow. Rumor has it that he believes in The Fool.”

This name made all the Beyonders from the three Churches and MI9 fall into silence, as though they were quickly recalling the relevant information.

They had long heard that Gehrman Sparrow had a mysterious background. He believed in The Fool, and they had obtained quite a bit of information from him. However, they hadn’t made any connections like Leonard to string everything together.

A few seconds later, the archbishop of the Church of Evernight, Saint Anthony, said in a deep voice, "…Gehrman Sparrow seems to be in close contact with the original Death Consul of Balam. That's an angel who's still active over the land."

This gave the Beyonders who weren't demigods a fright as they instinctively sat up straight.

They all knew about Admiral Hell, but due to the confidential restrictions, they didn't know that the Death Consul represented a Grounded Angel.

"…That Death Consul doesn't seem to belong to any faction of the Numinous Episcopate," said a Beyonder from MI9 hesitantly.

Leonard nodded solemnly.

"Perhaps 'He' is a member of the secret organization that uses the tarot cards as a code name.

"Death card!"

There was another round of silence. All the demigods had to admit that this was possible.

The level of the secret organization that was represented by tarot cards suddenly rose, reaching a level that was equal to the Aurora Order.

"In short, Gehrman Sparrow is a clue." Leonard took a deep breath and slowly said, "Your Graces, ladies and gentlemen, I'm done."

Saint Anthony nodded slightly and stood up. He looked around and said, "Up to now, this secret organization that uses tarot cards as their code names hasn't targeted us yet. It has shown a certain level of friendliness. Now that the war situation is tense, we are severely lacking in manpower, so it's difficult for us to take any major actions. Therefore, I suggest that we try our best to avoid conflict with them and not attempt to eradicate them for the time being.

"Of course, we have to do what we need to do. A secret organization with the existence of a Grounded Angel itself represents danger. If we don't understand it or grasp enough information about it, we won't be able to react in time and stop any possible conspiracies."

Horamick and the other demigods thought for a moment before nodding in agreement.

Anthony Stevens looked around, his gaze landing on Leonard's face.

"This investigation will be led by you. Coordinate it well."

"…" Leonard agreed solemnly.

At this moment, Deep Blue Officiant Randall Valentinus spoke to Leonard impatiently, "Give them a name. We can't keep saying 'secret organization that uses tarot cards as a code name.' It's quite a mouthful.

"What suggestions do you have?"

Leonard considered carefully before saying, "Tarot Club?"

"That works." Randall stood up and said with a thunderous voice, "Let's call it the 'Tarot Club'!"

†

Late at night, in Empress Borough, in the Hall family's villa.

The exclusive dessert chef, Tim, suddenly woke up from his dream and stared at the ceiling in the darkness.

He had just dreamed that he was enjoying an ice-cream and had just eaten it when he woke up.

The more he thought about it, the more intense his cravings became. In the end, he overcame his feelings that it was trouble and got out of bed. Putting on a thick sleeping robe, he walked out of the room and came to a pantry not far away.

As a slightly famous dessert chef in the aristocratic circles, Tim was given special privileges by Earl Hall. He could enter the pantry at any time and use the ingredients here to test his new ideas.

Meanwhile, Tim had repeatedly returned Earl Hall's trust with high-quality desserts.

Of course, he often appeared in the pantry due to mid-night cravings for food, just like now.

After some serious and hard work, Tim used the remains and prepared ingredients to make a few cups of ice-cream and ate half of it.

Then, he patted his stomach, washed the cutlery, and left the pantry in satisfaction.

The remaining few cups of ice-cream were left in the corner, as if they had been completely forgotten.

†

In Cherwood Borough, by the Tussock River, in an uninhabited shallow flat.

Wearing a dark-colored cloak, Audrey first made use of Dream Traversal to arrive nearby before walking over on foot.

She skillfully set up the ritual and prayed to Mr. Fool.

Soon, a silver-black accessory box embedded with many gems tore through the illusory door and landed in front of Audrey.

Audrey tucked a wisp of blonde hair behind her ear and picked up the Box of the Great Old Ones, 0-61, without any delay. She aimed at a few rocks and pulled open the first layer.

Silently, numerous long tables and chairs appeared messily in the area. Several Beyonders that had used various means to conceal their faces appeared. One of them was the hooded Fors.

Their skin quickly changed from that of a toy's to that of a human's, and their eyes began to move.

Fors, who had the highest Sequence, recovered the fastest. Looking around, she was extremely surprised to find that she had unknowingly come to a flat by the side of the river from that apartment.

Furthermore, this change was only limited to her overall area. The situation around her was no different from before.

Where am I… What happened… Fors's gaze landed on the empty altar. After pondering for a second, she seemed to understand something as she asked in surprise, "Has the matter ended?"

"Yes," replied Audrey, who was using her Psychological Invisibility.

It's ended… It's ended… Fors followed up with a confused and dazed question.

"How's the target?"

"He's dead." Audrey was multitasking as she controlled the other six Beyonders. Her answer was very simple.

He's dead… Saint of Secrets Botis has died… I didn't participate in the battle. I didn't summon Gehrman Sparrow's Historical Void projection… Fors's mouth gaped slightly as she felt like she was dreaming.

She only felt that she had been terrified for a second and was in a daze for a moment, and the mission had already been completed…

At this moment, she saw the surrounding Beyonders come to "life," but they didn't show any surprise towards the change in environment. It was as if the gathering had been held here.

They skillfully destroyed the chairs and long tables and threw them into the Tussock River. Then, they left the flats one after another and returned home under the illumination of the street lamps.

…This is a Manipulator… How terrifying… Fors jumped in fright and completely snapped awake.

“Return first.” Audrey didn’t have time to explain. She turned around and used the altar from before, preparing to sacrifice the Box of the Great Old Ones above the gray fog.

Fors shot a look over, but she didn’t ask or say anything. She made her body turn transparent as she vanished from where she was.

Author’s Note: The title of this chapter originally should have been “Official Debut,” but it was just not serious enough.

Chapter 1203 - Harvest

◆

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Dark red starlight shot up, forming several figures.

Leonard did a casual glance, and his gaze suddenly froze on the silver-black jewelry box placed on the long mottled table.

If he recalled correctly, this was likely a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, the Box of the Great Old Ones that The World Klein Moretti had specially emphasized during the prior private gathering.

The Saint of Secrets was really in control of this Grade 0 Sealed Artifact? And he even used it? Yet, Ma'am Hermit and Miss Justice succeeded? Leonard's pupils dilated slightly as he nearly couldn't believe his eyes.

As an official Beyonder, a Red Glove captain of the Church of Evernight, he knew Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts very well. He knew that these items could easily destroy a city, causing people to suddenly die without putting up any resistance. When facing them, not only was contact with them impossible, but even understanding them was something that should be reduced if possible.

Leonard originally believed that Ma'am Hermit and Miss Justice would leave the battlefield according to the plan after encountering a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. They would then think of a way to rescue Miss Magician. To his surprise, they had succeeded, and had even retrieved the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact!

Ma’am Hermit’s Mystical Re-enactment has reached such a high level? Did the “Feast of Betrayal” she mentioned really make the Sealed Artifact rebel? Or could it be that Mr. Fool had provided some help? Leonard muttered silently as he glanced at The World Klein Moretti who was seated at the bottom end of the long bronze table. He discovered that his former colleague was rather calm.

Klein surveyed the area and said, “Congratulations, everyone. The hunt this time was very successful.

“All the spoils of war are here.”

As he spoke, he raised his right hand, condensing various bits of mysterious knowledge into a pale white luster. He also included a small number of legends that came from the East, such as Peach Blossom Spring, and Lanke’s Go Match. He wanted Ma’am Hermit to test if they were mystical or not, and whether there was any real source.

“Ma’am, this is your reward.” The World Klein made the pale white light fly towards The Hermit Cattleya. Then, he pointed at the Box of the Great Old Ones, the Secrets Sorcerer’s Beyonder characteristic, the Traveler’s Luggage, Botis’s eyeballs, nine Worms of Star, large amounts of gems and materials on the table. “In addition, you have the right to choose first.”

After the battle at the demigod level with the Saint of Secrets, Cattleya finally found the bearing and confidence of a saint. She first received the pale white glow and closed her eyes to digest the mysterious knowledge contained within.

In the Second Epoch, the ancient gods believed that the original Creator, The Oldest One, left some objects behind. Perhaps it was a “kingdom” formed from a portion of “His” body or something that “He” created…

There are nine of these that contain the various sefirot. They are the Chaos Sea, Sefirah Castle, River of Eternal Darkness, Knowledge Moor, Tenebrous World, Brood Hive, Nation of Disorder, City of Calamity, and the Key of Light…

The ancient sun god came from a place known as Chernobyl…

The Marauder pathway's Sequence 0 is called Error…

Emperor Roselle's fairytales might have originated from something that happened before…

†

As the mysticism knowledge resonated in her, Cattleya couldn't help but open her eyes and look at The World Gehrman Sparrow.

There were too many things inside that shocked her, making her realize that she had opened the door to a whole new world!

I never thought of Mr. Fool's origins in the past. Now, I can vaguely grasp it… A thought flashed through Cattleya's mind as she had a guess.

She immediately controlled herself. She didn't want to think too much, nor did she dare to think too deeply about it.

She was afraid that she would come up with an answer that was enough to make her lose control.

This is one of the nine sefirot. Mr. Fool's goal is to gather all the sefirot and attempt to recover…

Raising her right hand, she nudged her heavy glasses on her nose bridge. Cattleya forced herself to focus her attention on the small "tales" and decided to return to the real world to completely digest the potion before she attempted to create magic with them, allowing her to draw on their power using Mystical Re-enactment.

Of course, she also believed that not every one of them would succeed. She believed that a portion of those stories were purely fabricated. After all, this was a gift from Mr. World. There was no guarantee that they would be effective. After all, out of the many fairytales and ancient legends that Emperor Roselle recounted to Queen Mystic back then, only a few of them truly produced magic.

She took a few seconds to compose herself and cast her gaze to the middle of the long mottled table, preparing to choose her spoil of war.

Without a doubt, the most eye-catching item was the Box of the Great Old Ones labeled “0-61.” The silver-black jewelry box embedded with many gems completely overshadowed all the other items.

Cattleya wasn’t too unfamiliar with Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, because Queen Mystic had more than one. It was also because of this reason that the Queen’s Element Dawn was able to compete with the ancient organization, Moses Ascetic Order, that had been born in the early Fourth Epoch.

The gap between an angel and a saint was not something the magic of a powerful fairy tale could make up for.

To become a truly powerful figure, one had to advance to Sequence 2 or possess a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. It wasn’t that Cattleya didn’t have any desire for the Box of the Great Old Ones, but when she thought of the hint that The World Gehrman Sparrow had received from Mr. Fool, the terrifying negative effects, the third level’s extreme danger, and most of the Beyonder powers that she couldn’t control, she felt a sense of horror.

Although she had “Brief Luck,” she still lacked the ability to seal the Box of the Great Old Ones so far.

After a series of intense struggles, The Hermit Cattleya pointed at the dreamy crystal and said, “I want the Secrets Sorcerer’s Beyonder characteristic.”

If they could find a suitable High-Sequence Artisan, it could be transformed into a rather good Sealed Artifact, one that had barely acceptable negative effects. Queen Mystic Bernadette happened to have the resources to do so, but the commission might not necessarily succeed.

In the end, even if there's only "Teleportation," that will be enough. However, it's obvious that a Secrets Sorcerer wouldn't only be able to grasp Teleportation… Even if the negative effects are excessive, I can get Queen Mystic to shatter and try again, or I could sell it to Miss Magician… Yes, she said that her teacher would prepare the ingredients for her… Following that, Cattleya nodded at The World Gehrman Sparrow to confirm her choice.

Choosing the Secrets Sorcerer's Beyonder characteristic? Upon hearing Ma'am Hermit's reply, a scene appeared in Klein's mind.

Wearing a purple-patterned black robe, the lady wearing a dark-colored hood relied on "Blink" to leave behind many doppelgangers. Then, they would all ignite a match at the same time.

…The Little Match Girl will turn into countless witches selling matchsticks… This is a horrifying fairytale… The World Klein couldn't help but twitch the corners of his mouth as he tersely acknowledged.

"Alright, it's your right."

He then cast his gaze at Miss Magician.

"It's your turn to choose."

"I-I didn't do anything…" Fors said guiltily.

Klein scoffed and said, "You successfully acted as bait."

"…" Fors didn't know what expression she should use to respond, but she heard Mr. Star seemingly laugh.

She slowly took a deep breath and cast her gaze at the spoils of war on the long bronze table.

Frankly speaking, she wanted to choose the Box of the Great Old Ones because it was an item that her teacher's family had snatched away.

She didn't want to use it herself; she wanted to return it to her teacher directly.

However, considering that she was only bait, Fors felt that she was not qualified to take an item of this level.

Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts were extremely rare, precious, and dangerous. She had already gained a deep impression of them with Mr. Star's introduction. She knew that the value of the Box of the Great Old Ones was definitely not something a saint's Beyonder characteristic could compare with.

With this in mind, she chose under The World Gehrman Sparrow's watch. Fors finally gave up the impulse and pointed at the pair of eyeballs.

"I'll take them."

She wanted to bring the pair of eyes to her teacher and tell him that Botis was dead. It was an end to all the hatred.

In addition to such a value of the item, Botis's eye could be made into a powerful hex item or be used as a medium for a curse. It was considered a pretty good item.

Klein nodded slightly and did not persuade her. He only pointed at the gems, materials, and the Worms of Star and said calmly, "You also paid the price of a Moon Paper Figurine, you can choose something to make up for it."

"Alright." Fors reflexively agreed.

As the Apprentice pathway needed gems for several charms and rituals and could still be appreciated normally, Fors took a portion of the gems and waited for the bestowment ceremony to obtain them.

With that, Klein shifted his gaze and said to Miss Judgment, “It’s your turn.”

Xio also knew that she had not contributed much, and she knew that she had no ability to withstand the negative effects of the Box of the Great Old Ones, so she didn’t even take a look at 0-61 and pointed to the black pocket.

“I’ll choose Traveler’s Bag.”

This way, she could carry heavy weapons with her and might even be able to pull out a cannon at a critical moment.

As for the problem of strengthening the hidden space after a period of time, she had also considered it. After all, she could still use it for about a year for the time being. In the future, she could rent a Sealed Artifact from Ma’am Hermit to maintain it. Furthermore, at that time, Fors might have already become a Secrets Sorcerer.

The World Klein nodded and looked at The Star Leonard.

“It’s your turn.”

Leonard did not stand on ceremony. He scanned the area and tapped a few times.

“Three Worms of Star, twenty gems, and those ingredients.”

This feels like I’m paying “protection fees” to the official organizations… After lampooning his dear poet, Klein turned to Miss Justice and said, “The mission was very successful and I’m very satisfied. Although you have already received your payment, you can still choose a little more.”

Audrey could decipher the sincerity of Mr. World’s words. Without any excuses, she chose a Worm of Star and a third of the spiritual materials.

At this point, as the mission’s commissioner, The World Gehrman

Sparrow had obtained five Worms of Star, a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, a third of the spiritual materials, and nearly thirty high-quality gems.

He smiled and looked at Fors.

“Remember to tell your teacher about this. Just say that this is a gesture of my goodwill. And I want to make a deal with him.”

Chapter 1204 - Putting Life and Death Aside

◆

Fors wasn't surprised by Mr. World's request. She nervously replied, "Al-alright.

"What kind of deal is it exactly?"

During this period of time, she had communicated with her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham, several times. Under Miss Justice's guidance, she had laid quite a lot of foundation for the impending request.

The World Klein laughed hoarsely.

"You don't have to tell him what I want for now. Just lay out my chips for him and see if he's interested."

"Your bargaining chip is still the promise to break the Abraham family's curse?" Fors cautiously sought confirmation.

Klein nodded and pointed at 0-61 on the long mottled table.

"It can also be this Box of the Great Old Ones."

An item used to exchange for a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact can't be simple… Be it Justice Audrey or The Hermit Cattleya, both of them suddenly had such a realization.

However, Fors paid more attention to the promise of breaking the curse. This was because she had experienced it herself and knew how tragic her teacher's family was.

She replied solemnly without hesitation, “Alright.”

†

Backlund, West Borough, in the basement of a house.

Saint Tenebrous, who was hidden in the shadows, suddenly grew out of the darkness.

He turned his head as if he was listening to something. The muscles on his cheeks began to twitch. It wasn’t just one chunk of flesh, but bits. Not only were they not connected to each other, but they were also interfering with each other. It looked extremely odd.

In seconds, Kisma wore an extremely painful expression as his skin tore apart, as flesh and blood beneath squirmed, mixed with a deep black.

With a thud, he fell to the ground and prostrated himself before the altar, vomiting out large amounts of organs and shimmering light.

Saint Tenebrous’s head was pressed tightly against the ground as he muttered crazily, “Botis actually died…

“A Secrets Sorcerer who wields a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact died just like that…

“There’s a tarot card, The Hermit…

“The two enemies that attacked were saints. One was a Mysticologist, while the other was a Manipulator…

“The organization that believes in The Fool and uses tarot cards as their codenames…

“Gehrman Sparrow… Azik Eggers…

“…”

After an uncontrollable murmur, Saint Tenebrous Kisma cried, feeling both vexed and pained.

“I repent, I repent, I repent…”

†

A few days later, in an apartment’s room in Pritz Harbor.

The disguised Dorian Gray Abraham had received a letter from Fors through many hands.

He examined it carefully and confirmed that there were no issues. After confirming that there were no abnormal signs, he took out the letter with the help of a letter knife.

The beginning of the letter was the usual greeting. Following that, Fors directly wrote:

“…We have already killed Saint of Secrets Botis, and obtained the items on his person…”

“…” Dorian had originally planned on scanning through the letter quickly, but he ended up stuck on this sentence. He read it a few times and forgot to continue reading.

Dorian knew how strong and powerful Botis was. He also knew very well how terrifying a Secrets Sorcerer was.

But now, the new student he had been teaching for over a year had told him in a very calm tone that Botis had already been taken care of.

In an instant, the only things that echoed in Dorian’s mind were thoughts of: “impossible,” “a lie,” and “a conspiracy.” He suspected that Fors had already been controlled by the Aurora Order.

In any major faction, Sequence 4 Beyonders were the absolute upper echelons and extremely important members. How could they be so easily killed!

Dorian’s throat bobbed up and down as he forcefully focused and continued reading the contents of the letter.

“…We have obtained the Box of the Great Old Ones. I believe you aren’t unfamiliar with it…”

After reading another line, Dorian’s eyelids twitched a few times. He felt that the letter in his hand was as heavy as a boulder.

Of course, he wasn’t unfamiliar with the Box of the Great Old Ones. This was a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact of the Abraham family, proof that they had once been glorious.

…The one that was killed was Botis who possessed the Box of the Great Old Ones… Dorian’s shock kept rising. He felt that things had gone beyond his imagination. On the other hand, he felt that there was a possibility that it wasn’t impossible. Perhaps the one who really killed Botis was actually the Box of the Great Old Ones.

He knew very well how dangerous that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact was!

At the same time, he finally noticed a word: “We.”

This was the first time Fors had indicated that she had companions and partners.

Of course, Dorian had already guessed it, but he hadn’t called her out.

Indeed… Dorian sighed and eagerly read the rest.

“…I have a friend who wants to show you his goodwill by pushing for this operation against Botis. He said that he wants to make a deal with you, and is willing to use the Box of the Great Old Ones or a promise to remove the Abraham family’s curse in exchange. He wonders if you are interested. He doesn’t know where you are, and I won’t tell him. You can totally refuse…”

A promise to remove the curse? Dorian skipped over the Box of the Great Old Ones and ruminated on the extremely important part of the sentence.

After the first few letters, he had fully understood the true nature of the family's curse. It was both a sorrowful and helpless matter—a glimmer of hope that was brewed out of the pain.

Before this, who would have thought that the person who caused the descendants of the Abraham family to lose control would be their ancestor's cry for help?

This was like a cruel joke from fate.

Dorian didn't know if Mr. Door knew the consequences of "His" actions, nor did he know how to describe his complicated feelings. However, he couldn't help but start searching for a way to make Mr. Door return and completely remove the family curse.

This was a path with very slim hope, but for the Abraham family, it was enough, because a light had finally appeared in the darkness.

After an unknown period of time, Dorian folded the letter and smiled bitterly to himself.

"Goodwill… Such goodwill is frightening…"

After he muttered to himself, he fell into silence again. His expression was gloomy and his heart seemed to be struggling.

Gong!

The sound of the wall clock rang punctually, snapping Dorian out of his daze.

His expression gradually became solemn, and he finally made a decision.

After making up his mind, Dorian felt much more relaxed. He even smiled.

He first burned Fors's letter before packing his bag and heading out to the steam locomotive station in Pritz Harbor.

He was going to Southville, but not to hide, but to make some preparations.

He planned on handing all his family's items and potion formulas to one of the family members who was staying there before returning to Pritz Harbor. With his identity as Dorian Gray, he would head to Backlund to meet his student, Fors, and the powerhouse who had shown his goodwill.

When the time came, he would consume a type of medicine in advance to allow himself to suffer a powerful curse that rooted itself in his Spirit Body. He would have to regularly consume another type of medicine to maintain his life. This way, even if he was controlled and unable to commit suicide, he would quickly die because he had no chance to take the medicine. With his Spirit Body dissipating, he wouldn't leak any key information.

For this "journey," Dorian had put life and death aside.

He was willing to sacrifice his life for that slim hope.

†

North Borough in Backlund, beneath Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Leonard, who had just had a discussion with the members of the Mandated Punishers, the Machinery Hivemind, and MI9, returned to his office and sat down.

At that moment, the slightly-aged voice of Pallez Zoroast resounded in his mind:

"They've finally found the exact location of the Jacob family's treasure trove and are about to enter."

"Ah?" Leonard was momentarily stunned, unable to react.

Previously, at the gathering of the Hermits of Fate, he had sold the news of the Jacob family's treasure trove. As no one knew what was inside, no one was willing to offer a high price. And Leonard's main goal was not to trade, so he had only exchanged it for some rare spirits.

He immediately lowered his voice and said, "Old Man, how do you know that?"

"Heh, it's a given that I sent out my avatar to monitor the area," Pallez Zoroast replied unhappily. "Are you underestimating an angel from the Marauder pathway?"

Leonard laughed dryly.

"Old Man, you've recovered quite well. You even have excess characteristics for an avatar."

"I'm already at the level of a Sequence 2." Pallez Zoroast scoffed. "Next, don't go out. Just stay inside the cathedral to prevent any accidents from happening."

"Are you worried that a trap lies within the treasure?" Leonard asked thoughtfully.

"How can a treasure left behind by a Marauder angel not have a trap?" Pallez Zoroast said with a scoff. "I can't predict what will happen, but staying underground in the cathedral is definitely safe."

Leonard nodded and suppressed his voice.

"Let's hope everything goes smoothly. Old Man, you promised me that if you can successfully obtain a Sequence 2 Beyonder characteristic, you will steal a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact from the items they obtained for me."

It wasn't that he was concerned about whether he reaped anything out of it, but rather, it was to ease his sudden anxiety.

"Weren't you against 'stealing'?" After a mocking remark, Pallez fell silent, as if "He" was focused on monitoring the situation at the Jacob family's treasure trove.

About an hour later, "He" heaved a sigh of relief in Leonard's mind.

"Although there were many traps and accidents, they eventually reached the predetermined target. Heh heh, I only took that characteristic and a Sealed Artifact. The rest will be their payment.

"Don't be in a hurry to leave this place. Wait until I absorb that characteristic before leaving. When that happens, there won't be any problems."

Leonard immediately relaxed and leaned back, crossing his legs as he read the newspaper leisurely.

In the evening, Pallez Zoroast finally spoke again.

"It's done."

"His" voice contained plenty of emotions, but because it was too complicated, Leonard was unable to tell.

Seeing that nothing had happened and that Old Man might still need to digest, Leonard stood up and rubbed his temples. He left Saint Samuel Cathedral and returned to 7 Pinster Street.

As he passed through the porch, he suddenly saw a person sitting on the sofa.

The man was wearing a classic black robe and a pointed hat. He placed his right leg over his left and was leisurely reading a newspaper.

As if sensing Leonard's arrival, that person raised his head and adjusted the monocle on his right eye, revealing a teasing smile.

Chapter 1205 - A Thousand-Year-Old Trap

◆

Amon!

Blasphemer Amon!

Leonard was no stranger to the person in front of him. Not only had he faced his avatar, but he had also heard of “His” various deeds and nasty character from Old Man Pallez Zoroast.

At that moment, Leonard’s thoughts nearly froze as his mind went blank. Only a small number of thoughts could spin.

Amon’s lips suddenly quivered as “He” muttered a raving that was completely at the level of a deity.

One voice after another echoed in Leonard’s mind as though it came from the countless number of Amons:

“Are you pleasantly surprised? Are you shocked?”

“After realizing that I won’t be able to get Sefirah Castle any time soon, I shifted my focus to Backlund…”

“If it wasn’t to fool all of you, why would I have played such a simple cat-and-mouse game with him?”

“I think you two should be in contact…”

“He must’ve told you that I’m still tracking him and sabotaging his operations, that I even set a trap for him at his destinations…”

“That’s just an avatar that’s close to Sequence 1…”

“Ah, right. Pallez, I forgot to tell you that in the later years of the Fourth Epoch, I pretended to be the ancestor of the Jacob family. I had long swallowed ‘Him’ in secret. Then, I watched ‘His’ descendants panic. Then, I thought of a way to add another secret treasure trove to the place where Tudor became Blood Emperor…”

“I didn’t finish off these fellows, because I had a premonition that this treasure trove would be very useful. I had an avatar that had been sleeping there for more than a thousand years, patiently waiting for someone to open the treasure trove. As for the other avatars, I didn’t synchronize this information to ‘Them.’ That way, I might be able to create a ruse at some point in time…”

“Yes, this kind of ‘synchronization’ is something I invented. Pallez, you’re quite behind the times…”

“In order to confirm your whereabouts, I watched that bunch of fellows destroy the traps and take the items away. I watched your avatar steal the characteristic and Sealed Artifact from their hands. I watched ‘Him’ carefully devour and digest it. Now, my patience has finally paid off…”

“I guess you must be thinking of how to stall for time and wait for a deity’s descent…”

These voices overlapped each other, tearing through Leonard’s thoughts and hurting his soul. It made his head swell and contract, causing a bunch of short black hair to grow on his face. It made his ribs and waist bulge as though it was about to form a new body.

With just the ravings alone, Leonard was close to losing control. He was in extreme pain and had no means of resisting.

This was the son of the Creator, a King of Angels.

At the same time, 7 Pinster Street changed. At some point in time, pitch-black stone pillars were erected around them, propping up a majestic cathedral.

[image]

Each column of the cathedral was embedded with the bones of different races. They were densely packed as they used different eye sockets to stare at the puny Leonard who stood in the middle as though they were conducting a trial.

Amon stood in front of the cross that was more than a hundred meters tall in the depths of the church, smiling as "He" looked at Leonard's grimacing face.

"This corpse cathedral is pretty good, isn't it?

"I just 'stole' it not long ago.

"This way, if 'They' wish to discover any abnormalities here and do a deity's descent, it can stall for at least thirty seconds. That's enough."

As "He" spoke, Amon raised "His" hand to pinch the crystal monocle that had a beaming face underneath it.

Leonard suddenly heard a "gong." It was ethereal, as though it came from an infinite distance away.

This caused the ear-piercing ravings that tainted Leonard's Spirit Body to come to an abrupt stop as everything around him turned silent.

In Leonard's eyes, beams of light shot out from his body, condensing into a pure and pure figure that was like a wingless angel.

The figure was also a hundred meters tall, and its body constantly coruscated with a faint glow, as though it was announcing the passage of time.

With that, Leonard's body was pushed by an invisible force as he flew towards the door of the corpse cathedral.

On the door, transparent and distorted faces appeared. They sealed the inside from the outside, isolating it from the spirit world and the astral world.

Gong!

Another bell rang. The transparent faces filled with pain froze.

Leonard's figure was no longer obstructed. In this short span of time, he passed through the main door of the "corpse cathedral" without feeling anything.

Everything he saw instantly returned to normal. There was still a bit of light high up in the sky. The gas lamps by the side of the streets were already emitting light, illuminating 7 Pinster Street.

From the outside, the building was silent, quiet, and dark. There was nobody around.

Old Man… It was only at this moment that Leonard finally found his train of thought. His heart tightened as he strode forward and returned to the house.

However, the door to 7 Pinster Street was so heavy that he couldn't open it any time soon.

With this obstruction, Leonard finally regained some of his senses. He hurriedly retreated as he quickly thought of what he could do to save Old Man.

After a few steps, he stopped and lowered his head with a solemn expression. He quickly chanted in Jotun, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

Leonard already knew that the one inside was Amon's true body. And to deal with Amon's true body, he could only seek help from a god!

†

Walking through the darkness with the lantern in hand, Klein entered the historical fog immediately. Then, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

After listening to Leonard's prayer, the puzzled and nonchalant-looking Klein instantly sobered up. It was as if he had just woken up from hibernation and had just climbed out of bed when he was splashed with a basin of cold water.

Amon's true body has gone to Backlund… Amon's true body has found Leonard and Pallez… Amon stole the corpse cathedral from "His" brother and used it to delay a divine descent… So it turns out that when "He" suggested that we play the game of "who will be the first to find Black Demonic Wolf Kotar," "He" had never thought of deciding on a winner. "He" didn't care what the stakes were either. "His" goal was to draw my attention and believe that "He" is still pursuing me and trying to steal Sefirah Castle from me… The trap hidden in the Jacob family's treasure trove was planted by Amon for one to two thousand years. It has finally come into play… Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he raised his right hand and summoned an item from the junk pile.

0-61, Box of the Great Old Ones!

This was a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, and it was also from the Apprentice pathway. It could better utilize the power of Sefirah Castle and produce better results!

In the face of Amon's true body, this might bring Pallez some hope.

At the same time, through the prayer light, Klein confirmed that Leonard hadn't been possessed by Amon. He immediately instructed in the tone of Mr. Fool, "Leave the scene and go to an Evernight cathedral.

"Also, pray to Evernight."

A pinnacle Sequence battle beneath deities was definitely not something that a Beyonder at Leonard's level could participate in. Even though Klein had gained some initial control of Sefirah Castle and held 0-61, he didn't have much confidence. He only hoped that he could stall for time until a deity's descent happened.

Outside 7 Pinster Street, Leonard heard Mr. Fool's words echoing in his ears.

He was stunned for a moment before he looked up at the tightly shut door. Then, he turned around and used his right knuckle to ruthlessly knock on a certain tooth.

A series of illusory mud surged out and sprayed onto the top of Leonard's head, enveloping him from top to bottom.

Suddenly, Leonard seemed to transform into a mud doll as he kept sinking to the ground and fusing into the earth.

This was a rare natural spirit he had exchanged from the Hermit of Fate. It didn't contain any Beyonder characteristics, and its powers mainly came from the spirit world.

It allowed Leonard to quickly traverse the soil at a speed far faster than the steam metro.

As Leonard left the battlefield, Klein had picked up the gem-embedded Box of the Great Old Ones. He stirred the power of Sefirah Castle and cast his gaze at the pitch-black church that overlapped with the embedded bones.

The cathedral isolated his "true vision," preventing him from seeing the situation inside. He could only determine that the battle had yet to end through the flashes of light that the stained glass let through.

Use 0-61's first level's powers to swap its interior space with the corpse cathedral? No, isn't this equivalent to letting Amon enter Sefirah Castle? Just the first level of the Box of the Great Old Ones cannot imprison "Him"…

Activate the second level and move the entire 7 Pinster Street somewhere else? No, it won't work either. Once we leave Backlund, there won't be a timely divine descent. It will be even more dangerous for Pallez Zoroast…

Third level? Opening it might lead to a switch in owners of Sefirah Castle…

"…"

As his thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein came up with an idea. He wanted to narrow the target area to a tiny point and exert pressure on it to crack it!

He wanted to exchange the corpse cathedral's door and the space in the first level of the Box of the Great Old Ones using Sefirah Castle, so that the seal that isolated the spirit world and the astral world would be ineffective.

If that was the case, the deities would realize the situation and accelerate the speed of a deity's descent!

At the end of the long, mottled table, Klein sat in his high-back chair and aimed at the crimson star representing Leonard as he opened the first level of the Box of the Great Old Ones.

The surging power in Sefirah Castle suddenly calmed down, returning to its usual concealment as it silently pierced through the crimson star.

In the real world at 7 Pinster Street, the door of the corpse cathedral that overlapped with ordinary buildings lost its luster. Following that, it became a light pool with gravel and cobblestone.

The situation inside and outside suddenly cleared up, and it was reflected in Klein's eyes.

In front of the cross that was a hundred meters tall, the black-robed, pointed hat, and a monocled Amon, slowly turned around to the “opened” door.

“He” held a crystal pillar formed from light and shadows in “His” hands. There were many twelve-ringed Worms of Time swimming rapidly inside. Everything around them seemed to stop.

Amon raised “His” head and looked up into the sky as the corners of “His” mouth curled up.

Chapter 1206 - Sly Old Foxes, Everyone of Them

◆

Too late? After Klein's heart sank, he suddenly felt the Box of the Great Old Ones in his hand shake violently.

He hurriedly looked down and saw that the surface of the corpse cathedral's door, which had shrunken into a toy, emitted rays of light. Every twisted face on the white skull seemed to come alive.

Adam's corpse cathedral has such a high level? It can withstand the first level of 0-61 with just one door? Without any hesitation, Klein used the crimson star representing Leonard and locked onto a gas lamp on 7 Pinster Street.

Suddenly, the door with white bones protruding out with a distorted face returned to the real world. And on the first level of the Box of the Great Old Ones, there was an additional toy street lamp.

Right on the heels of that, Klein aimed at the Amon inside the corpse cathedral as he swiped his right hand, opening the second level of 0-61.

At that moment, Pallez Zoroast was no longer present on the battlefield. Without any qualms, Klein could move Amon elsewhere.

He had designated the destination to be the astral world, hoping that the seven deities would show "Him" "Their" love, but it was unknown if there would be a random anomaly.

At this moment, the door returned to the corpse cathedral. Then, the majestic building that overlapped with 7 Pinster Street quickly disintegrated.

The process of the collapse was very organized. First, it began from the dome, followed by the arches and the walls. It finally ended with the pitch-black stone pillars.

The item that fell didn't hit the ground and instead disappeared in midair.

Standing in front of the cross, Amon also began to dissipate along with the collapse of the entire corpse cathedral. It was as though "He" had also been "envisioned," an entity that could be removed at any time.

Of course, Klein knew very well that this was only Amon exploiting a loophole to use the expiration of the "imagined" corpse cathedral, so as to also become a figment of imagination to leave Backlund.

Boom!

At some point in time, a thick dark cloud appeared in midair. A ball of lightning the size of a house dragged a silvery-white stream of light as it ruthlessly smashed onto the corpse cathedral and Amon's body that had not completely disintegrated.

A fine crack appeared on Amon's crystal monocle as the pointed hat on "His" head collapsed.

However, this Angel of Time didn't panic. When "His" face twitched uncontrollably, "He" maintained "His" smile and held the crystal pillar formed from light and shadows. Like an illusion, "He" completely disintegrated as the sea of light that filled the corpse cathedral vanished.

In the next second, the pitch-black and bone-embedded towering cathedral returned to the realm of fantasy.

The house on 7 Pinster Street remained, but there were exaggerated marks on the living room's floor.

The mark was like a person lying there, having turned to ashes.

This was left behind by the countless avatars of Amon after they were smitten apart. However, Klein knew that Amon's true body had successfully escaped and had achieved "His" desired goal.

When "He" recovered, this King of Angels was just short of a ritual to reach the divine throne and become the embodiment of all that was erroneous in the world.

After I swapped the main door of the corpse cathedral, the first one to notice and react with "His" powers was the Lord of Storms… The Goddess really has no way of performing a divine descent. "She" can only use various mediums to interfere with reality, making it difficult for "Her" to affect "Him" when "He" is prepared…

…I was still feeling happy for myself that I managed to escape from Amon. I was satisfied that I had repeatedly avoided "Him" and didn't fall into "His" traps, but in the end, "He" ended up pulling off such a huge stunt without any prior warning…

…When did "He" transfer "His" focus to Backlund? Hmm, it should be after I deceived the laws to resurrect elsewhere. "He" caught a hint of Pallez Zoroast, as well as the fact that there's a connection between him and me. He began to target the last Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic so as to become a true god…

…Back then, Leonard didn't explain in detail when he was praying. He only mentioned that there was a problem with the treasure trove of the Jacob family… For a Sequence 1 angel who's so familiar with Amon to not notice anything amiss and fall into the trap, Amon must have done something incredible again…

Phew, although I've rapidly grown in my battle of wits with Amon and completed a transformation, I'm still far from being a top swindler like

“Him.” I’m still too tender…

Once Amon becomes a Sequence 0 Error and can even traverse the land, it will be tough for me…

No, I have to figure out the Marauder pathway’s ritual to become a god. I need to think of a way to do some damage. I can’t let Amon easily ascend to the divine throne…

But can this be what Amon wants? “He” will deliberately hold a ritual and wait for me to knock on “His” doorstep? As his thoughts raced, Klein let out a long sigh.

Then, he sent a message to Leonard in the tone of The Fool.

“There’s no need to pray.”

†

In Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard had just emerged from the soil in the garden. He was trying to rush into the prayer hall when he heard Mr. Fool’s words.

There’s no need to pray… Leonard slowed down as he repeated the sentence in a daze.

He slowed down and finally stopped beside a stone pillar. He lowered his head and raised his hands to cover his face.

At this moment, a slightly-aged voice suddenly echoed in his mind:

“What are you sad about? I haven’t died yet!”

“Ah?” Leonard released his hands and said in a daze and pleasant surprise, “Old Man, you haven’t died yet?”

His eyes were already slightly red.

“Look at you, what are you saying!” Pallez Zoroast’s voice was clearly weak. “Ahem, to put it simply, I’ve died once, but not entirely yet.”

Leonard finally heaved a sigh of relief and looked around. Seeing that no one was paying attention, he lowered his voice and said, “Did you successfully deceive Amon?”

“I can’t really call it deceiving.” Pallez Zoroast sighed and said, “All these years, the thing I’ve thought about the most is what I should do if Amon’s true body finds me. After repeated experiments, I’ve also ‘created’ a technique. After my true body dies, I can revive in my avatar. However, I will lose the Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic and passively lower my level. Heh, I haven’t been left behind by the times either.”

“In other words, Amon killed you once and obtained your Sequence 1 characteristic while you resurrected at the Sequence 2 level?” Leonard had a rough idea of what was going on as he asked in confirmation.

Pallez Zoroast sighed and replied, “Something like that. Actually, it’s not like Amon didn’t notice it. ‘He’ didn’t do anything to stop it when I pushed you out of the corpse cathedral. ‘He’ just wanted to leave some hope for me, and make me lose my will to fight to the death in the upcoming battle. Sigh, if not for that, I wouldn’t have been finished by ‘Him’ so quickly. After all, I’d basically recovered after absorbing the treasure trove’s Beyonder characteristic…

Leonard blurted out in surprise, “Old Man, you pushed me out of the corpse cathedral because I have your avatar in me?”

Pallez immediately scoffed.

“What do you think? Do you really think I’m treating you like a grandson?”

“…Don’t you have other avatars?” Leonard muttered.

Pallez grunted and sighed.

"Amon actually lied to 'His' avatar. I must admit that 'He' pulled a fast one on me."

If it wasn't for the fact that "He" learned that the Angel of Time didn't know the exact situation of the Jacob family's treasure trove back when "He" absorbed Amon's avatars, "He" definitely would've taken more caution on the matter, and would've made more adequate preparations for Amon's appearance.

This was the most important reason. As for the other matters regarding the Jacob family's ancestor or Klein Moretti playing hide-and-seek with Amon's true body in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, none of them were key in "Him" making up "His" mind.

Leonard thought for a moment and consoled, "Old Man, you would've fallen for this most fatal of traps in the treasure trove regardless, so it isn't bad for you to have survived it."

"That's not it," Pallez immediately refuted. "If I had a premonition that something dangerous would happen, I would've directly taken up the faith of a true god and become 'Their' Grounded Angel. With 'Their' protection, I would head to Jacob family's treasure trove. Sigh, after I absorbed the characteristic and regained the strength of a Sequence 1, I was considering this problem. Should I join the Church of Evernight, or work with The Fool of yours, or remove the Parasitizing and hide from Amon like before."

Upon saying this, "His" emotions became very complicated again.

…Old Man really has quite a plan… Why are you so familiar with seeking refuge from a deity… Leonard sighed inwardly as he focused his attention on the most important matter.

"Old man, after Amon obtained your Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic, will 'He' be preparing the apotheosis ritual?"

"Yes." Pallez replied in a deep voice, "This means that, for a very long period of time, your former colleague and ourselves would, at most, be harassed by Amon’s lower-level avatars, or nothing at all.”

“What is the requirement of ‘His’ apotheosis ritual?” Leonard pressed.

Pallez fell silent for a second before saying, “To replace someone during ‘Their’ apotheosis ritual.”

At this point, Pallez laughed self-deprecatingly.

“Amon’s next focus will definitely be the apotheosis ritual. This will be our last moments of peace and quiet.

“Once ‘He’ becomes a god, ‘He’ will definitely come to you to deal with The Fool through you.

“Although I can abandon you and run ahead of time, I have to worry that ‘He’ has the intention of retrieving all the characteristics at the angel level.

“Gain control of those rare spirits as soon as possible, digest the potion, and become a demigod. Wield a Holy Artifact, and obtain the favor of Evernight.”

Leonard’s expression turned serious as he slowly nodded.

He immediately found a quiet spot and informed Mr. Fool through a prayer of the key information.

†

Someone else’s apotheosis ritual? The only one who seems to be able to become a god anytime soon is Adam… It’s good if the two brothers end up fighting… The final period of peace… I hope that the avatars that Amon leaves behind to interfere with me won’t be too strong. I hope that I can find traces of the Dark Demonic Wolf as soon as possible. I hope that Dorian will agree to the deal… Klein sighed and returned to the real world. He continued walking in the dark with his lantern raised.

Chapter 1207 - Dorian's Decision

◆ ◆ ◆

Backlund, Cherwood Borough. 22 Hope Street, Hat Trick Inn.

With broad shoulders and thick arms, Dorian Gray Abraham unknowingly paced back and forth in the room, waiting for his student, Fors, to visit.

No matter how composed and mentally prepared he was, he couldn’t help but feel nervous and uneasy when he eventually needed to face the answer.

After an unknown period of time, there was a series of knocks on the door.

Dorian listened to the rhythm for a few seconds before taking a deep breath. He walked to the door, twisted the handle, and pulled it back.

Outside the door was the brown-haired, curly-haired Fors, who was wearing a dark-colored long dress and a pair of tinted glasses.

Dorian habitually looked behind Fors, and after confirming that no one was looking in their direction, he made way for his student to pass.

At the same time, he glanced at Fors’s hands and realized that his student wasn’t carrying any luggage.

Dorian retracted his gaze and walked to the middle of the room. He found a seat and sat down before pointing to the sofa opposite him.

“Have a seat.”

Fors cautiously lifted the ends of her skirt slightly, sat down, and greeted, “Good morning, Teacher.”

Dorian didn’t go straight to the point. After some thought, he said, “Did the lot of you really kill Botis?”

“Yes.” Fors took out an exquisite, long cigar case from her pocket and opened it to show Dorian its interior.

It was a pair of dark-black eyes that were frozen with indescribable horror, as though they had seen something extremely terrifying before they died.

Dorian had originally been mentally prepared. It was just like receiving the terrifying head that would cause nightmares the previous time, one that was put together one bloody fragment at a time. He never expected his student to not carry any luggage and to only take out a ladies’ cigar case.

This made him believe that it was a relic that could prove Botis’s identity, but the truth was beyond his expectations once again.

This was still Botis’s corpse, but there was even less than what Lewis Wien left behind!

Only a pair of eyes are left… The spiritual intuition of an Astrologer convinced Dorian that the eyeball belonged to Botis.

Seeing that the teacher had fallen silent, Fors subconsciously explained, “His body has completely collapsed and dissipated. Only this pair of eyeballs is still intact.”

She paused for a moment before saying, “These eyeballs contain the remnants of the terror and contamination of the Box of the Great Old Ones before Botis’s passing. It’s a very strong cursed item, so I didn’t send it directly to you. It would cause terrible things to happen to the postman, and he might even die unknowingly.”

The corruption of the Box of the Great Old Ones… Dorian nodded in enlightenment and sighed with a smile.

“Did he eventually die under the hands of the Box of the Great Old Ones?

“This is really fate…”

The first item that Botis had stolen after his betrayal from leading the Aurora Order over was the Box of the Great Old Ones.

Fors had heard Ma’am Hermit’s and Miss Justice’s description of the general situation at the private gathering where they distributed the spoils of war. She learned how gorgeous and dangerous the battle she had missed was. She thought for a moment and said, “You could say that…

“However, before he was contaminated by the Box of the Great Old Ones, he had already begun losing control.”

Dorian wasn’t surprised as he said to his student, “Keep it. This is a spoil of war you deserve.”

After Fors closed the cigar case and placed it back into her pocket, Dorian leaned forward, clasped his hands, and touched his nose.

“Botis was one of the most talented Apprentices I have ever seen. Who knew that he would end up like this…”

Having said that, Dorian let out a long sigh as though he was recalling and confessing something.

Fors didn’t know much about the details of what had happened back then, so she didn’t dare to speak recklessly. She could only remain silent and wait for her teacher to recover from his mixed emotions.

Ten seconds later, Dorian straightened his body and asked, “How did you digest the Scribe potion?”

This wasn't only to show concern for his student, but also to accumulate experience to provide some guidance to the other members of the family.

Fors's expression immediately turned complicated as though she was recalling something she didn't wish to recall.

"It's mainly because someone had provided me with help. On the one hand, I 'Recorded' a lot of unique or high-level abilities. On the other hand, I was brought to many places in the past few months where I 'Recorded' different cultures and beautiful scenery…"

Dorian fell silent for a moment before nodding.

"This isn't easy to imitate…"

He then asked, "Gehrman Sparrow?"

"Yes." Fors gave an affirmative response.

Dorian fell silent again. A few seconds later, he said, "What kind of deal does he want to make?

"Or rather, what does he want?"

Fors focused her attention and answered in an embarrassed manner, "He wants the potion formula of a Planeswalker, and he plans on using the Box of the Great Old Ones to exchange for one of the two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts in your family's hands."

This price was definitely a generous offer. Fors had originally thought that Mr. World was going to use a promise to exchange for the Planeswalker potion formula and a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, but she never expected him to throw in the Box of the Great Old Ones.

Of course, it was definitely of value to allow the Abraham family to be free of the curse. However, a promise was forever a promise that might not be fulfilled.

Dorian wasn't surprised by Gehrman Sparrow's request for a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. He had long been mentally prepared, and instead, he felt that the conditions were beyond his imagination. After all, the Abraham family didn't have many things that a demigod could covet at this point in time.

He frowned slightly and said, "Why does he want the potion formula of a Planeswalker?"

"I don't know," Fors answered frankly.

Dorian stood up and started pacing.

Suddenly, he stopped and looked at Fors.

"I need to meet him and have a chat before I can make a decision."

"Alright." Fors agreed without any hesitation.

Dorian heaved a sigh of relief and prepared to send his student away before quickly taking out the medicine for his consumption.

He had arranged to meet at this time because he had taken into consideration that his curse would happen at any moment. If anything were to happen, the enemy wouldn't be able to channel his spirit in time.

However, after Fors got up, she didn't walk to the door. She stood on the spot and grabbed at the void.

Her arm suddenly sank, and she quickly pulled out a figure wearing a black trench coat and silk top hat.

This figure had black hair and brown eyes. His facial features were cut and cold. It was none other than Gehrman Sparrow.

Gehrman Sparrow's eyes moved slightly as he quickly recovered from his sluggish look and became no different from a real person.

“Teacher, he’s here.” Fors introduced seriously, “He’s Gehrman Sparrow.”

This action left Dorian Gray Abraham slightly agape. He forgot to close his mouth and didn’t respond for a moment.

Although he came from an ancient family clan and knew many secrets, there were many things he couldn’t imagine even if he read the description due to him being only a Sequence 7.

After moving his consciousness over, Klein reached into his clothes and took out a golden pocket watch.

Pa! He opened his pocket watch and took a look. Without any emotions, he said to Dorian, “You have three minutes.”

…It’s exactly as the rumors say. He’s cold, arrogant, and crazy… Dorian didn’t dare to waste any time and directly said, “Give me a reason to believe in your promise.”

As he closed his pocket watch, Klein placed it back into his inner pocket and said, “In truth, I’m already aware of the ritual that allows Mr. Door to return.”

Dorian’s eyes lit up. Just as he was about to ask, he heard Gehrman Sparrow calmly add, “But I don’t plan to do that.”

“Why?” Dorian and Fors were puzzled, but one dared to ask while the other didn’t.

Klein looked out the window and said, “Do you know about the corruption from the cosmos?”

When it came to understanding the cosmos, the Abraham family was definitely ranked first outside the true deities and angels. Klein believed that they must’ve left behind some hints and hidden records.

Dorian nodded solemnly and said, “Yes.”

“I suspect that Mr. Door has been corrupted by the cosmos,” Klein explained simply. “As for my promise, it can be fulfilled right away. However, you might not be willing to do so. Furthermore, it doesn’t completely resolve the curse.”

“What’s the solution?” Dorian asked as he controlled his surging emotions.

Klein’s expression immediately turned serious.

“You and your family members will change their faith to my Lord. That way, when the full moon or Blood Moon happens, you will be blessed and no longer suffer from the curse.”

After completely digesting the Scholar of Yore potion, there was no need for him to pull a person above the gray fog to avoid Mr. Door’s ravings. He could directly use “Angel’s Embrace” to resolve the problem. The only thing he needed to worry about now was that there might be too many members of the Abraham family. It might overwhelm him, or he might not have enough spirituality.

“…Who is your Lord?” Dorian asked after a moment of silence.

Klein suppressed his shame and said solemnly, “The great Mr. Fool.”

“The Fool… Are you from the Antigonus family?” Dorian suddenly made some connections.

Klein shook his head and rejected his guess.

Dorian fell silent again, but considering that there were only three minutes left, he hurriedly asked, “If we believe in that entity, we can avoid the troubles brought about by the curse?”

As an ancient family member, he knew very well how dangerous it was to believe in an unknown existence. He was afraid that he would resolve Mr. Door’s ravings, but bring about another curse.

Klein answered frankly, “This is just a temporary solution. I will find a better solution for you.”

Dorian nodded and quickly said, “I will try to believe in your Lord and give you the potion formula of Planeswalker. If the curse can really be resolved temporarily, we will complete the transaction of the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.”

He planned on using himself as an experiment to see if the method worked. Furthermore, he didn’t plan on telling the other family members. He wanted to get them to wait for Gehrman Sparrow’s supposedly better solution until they couldn’t wait any longer.

“Alright.” Klein took out a pen and paper from his pocket and scribbled the honorific name of The Fool.

As for Dorian, he also began to use a crystal ball to aid in his memories, recording down the potion formula of Planeswalker.

After the exchange, Klein cast his gaze towards the supplementary ingredients and ritual.

“Supplementary ingredients: One Worm of Star, one Worm of Time, one Worm of Spirit.

“Advancement ritual: Leave legends in nine places outside this planet.”

Chapter 1208 - The Long-Awaited Serenity

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Leave legends in nine places other than this planet… Isn’t this the cosmos? Looking at the potion formula in his hand, Klein nearly frowned.

He felt that this was more dangerous than the advancement ritual of a Miracle Invoker.

Although the Box of the Great Old Ones and the two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts of the Abraham family, as well as a number of Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts, had the ability to send people into the cosmos, making the ritual appear simple, he clearly remembered that the Church of Evernight’s ascetic leader, Arianna, had once warned him that the cosmos contained extremely terrifying corruption. It was dangerous to even understand it before becoming an angel.

One will be corrupted by the cosmos if they aren’t a Planeswalker, and to become a Planeswalker, one has to travel the cosmos… This has become an impasse. There’s no way to resolve it… Perhaps, the Abraham family has records of relatively safe locations in the cosmos. I can’t be too pessimistic… Also, I have to use divination to verify the authenticity of this formula when I’m back… Dorian not lying to me doesn’t mean that he wouldn’t be lied to… Klein retracted his gaze and looked at Dorian Gray Abraham opposite him.

“Where are all the Planeswalker Beyonder characteristics?”

Having memorized The Fool’s honorific name, Dorian thought for two seconds before saying, "Two of them are in the form of Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts in our family. One is in the form of the Box of the Great Old Ones. One is said to be in the hands of the Demoness Sect, while another is with the Church of the God of Combat. There is one more, but no one has found it since the Second Epoch."

If I could use the Box of the Great Old Ones to exchange for one of the two relatively normal Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts of the Abraham family, I wouldn't have to worry about obtaining the Planeswalker Beyonder characteristic. However, that advancement ritual is truly a problem… Besides, the essence of this ritual is clearly to leave a mark in the cosmos. No matter how many changes are made, I won't be able to bypass the cosmos… Klein controlled his expression and nodded at Dorian.

"I hope you can find the answer when the crimson moon becomes full."

With that said, his figure rapidly turned faint, having reached Fors's limit.

Upon seeing Gehrman Sparrow "leave" like that, Dorian subconsciously looked down at the piece of paper with the honorific name of The Fool in his hand. He realized that it had also turned illusory and disappeared.

"…" Dorian was unable to find the correct answer from the various Beyonder powers recorded by his family. He turned to look at Fors, opened his mouth, intending to ask her.

At that moment, he felt a sudden pain in his heart as his pupils rapidly dilated.

Oh no! The curse is about to act up! Dorian hurriedly reached into his pocket to retrieve a small metal bottle. He opened the lid and gulped it down.

Clang!

His actions were so hurried that the lid of the metal bottle fell to the ground.

Fors watched as her teacher’s face turned pale. She watched as he clutched his chest, unable to react to what had happened.

As a former surgeon, she quickly came to a conclusion and hurriedly said, “Teacher, are you having a heart attack?

“Do you have any special medicine?”

After asking the last question, Fors realized that she had been overly anxious and concerned, making her appear a little silly.

The bottle that the teacher drank was definitely the special medicine!

“Do you need any help? I have the ‘Recorded’ a Doctor’s powers,” Fors asked when she saw that her teacher had recovered based on his expression.

Dorian shook his head, indicating that he was fine.

At the same time, he sighed inwardly.

It’s because you didn’t do as I planned and had directly summoned Gehrman Sparrow into this room, causing me to not have time to drink the medicine.

†

Sonia Sea, the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, the City of Generosity, Bayam.

The Blue Avenger docked at the port in the evening.

During that period of time, the damage brought to the sea traffic around Sonia Island by the Church of the Lord of Storms had finally attracted the actions of the Feysac Empire’s demigods. Many “captains” had died in the line of duty, and their fleet had suffered a severe blow.

Alger Wilson and his crew avoided this attack while hiding in the primitive forest of the island while waiting for an opportunity to attack the port. After the Church of the Lord of Storms and the Loen naval army declared their goal for this battle had been achieved, they returned to Pasu Island to rest since it was over.

After that, Alger deliberately engaged in battle. He appeared pious, passionate, and fervent. He was praised by the cardinals as a result.

This was because he was familiar with the area around the Rorsted Archipelago. Without a doubt, he had been sent here to strengthen the naval forces of the important colony.

Of course, in order to avoid conflict with his past identity, he also made preparations for other matters in the future. Alger and his crew arrived in Bayam in the name of recruiting pirates.

In this war, many pirates were recruited, effectively making up for the losses of the navies of the various countries, just like the recruitment of mercenaries during the early- and mid-stages of the Fourth Epoch.

Taking advantage of the fact that there was still some light in the sky, Alger got off the boat and headed straight for Sea King Jahn Kottman's Cathedral of Waves.

As a Sequence 5 Ocean Songster, he had the right to directly meet the Church of the Lord of Storms's cardinal, a high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers.

As he walked, Alger suddenly saw a familiar face.

It was a middle-aged man wearing a formal suit, a bow tie, and glasses. He looked rather refined, but Alger knew very well that he was a believer of Sea God Kalvetua. He had once been a pirate, and now he was a merchant that did business with both the authorities and the underworld.

“Long time no see, Ralph.” Alger greeted the illegitimate child that had Loen, Feysac, and Rorsted mixed blood.

Ralph was stunned for a moment, as if he couldn’t recognize the captain of the Blue Avenger.

“Alger? Our captain of the ghost ship?” After a few seconds, he asked in surprise.

Alger smiled and said, “Did I change a lot?”

Ralph frowned and replied, “Your temperament has changed a lot. It’s even more like the ocean and dark clouds before a storm.”

Quite a keen eye… However, this is an act I’m deliberately showing… After consuming the Ocean Songster potion, if there wasn’t such a change, I wouldn’t seem like someone from the Church of the Lord of Storms… Alger sighed and said, “Because there are too many things to worry about.

“Now, it’s all good; I’ve already been hired by the Church of the Lord of Storms.”

Ralph narrowed his eyes as a sense of vigilance rose in his heart. He laughed and said, “This is indeed a good thing—if there was no war.”

Alger glanced at the spot where Ralph had just come out and asked, “When did a new… school appear here?”

He could see at a glance that there were four-story buildings, a cement field, a garden lawn, and many children happily playing.

The children had dark skin, but some of them didn’t have bronze skin like the locals. Their hair was only slightly curled, and it wasn’t too obvious.

Without a doubt, this group consisted of mixed-blood children.

Ralph looked back and sighed with a smile.

“Didn’t you donate money to my charity foundation?

“Under God’s guidance, I established a few schools in several large cities on the island, specially providing education, three meals, and accommodation for these discriminated children.

“Our childhood was gloomy, and I don’t want them to be the same.”

At the same time Ralph responded, Alger kept staring at the school. When Ralph was done speaking, Alger looked away and said, “I thought you would’ve taken at least half of it.”

Ralph broke out into laughter.

“Seems like I left a terrible impression on you.

“How is it? What opinions do you have about this school?”

Alger sized him up and said, “Do you think I’ve been to school before?”

He paused for a moment before saying, “Which street is your charity foundation on? I might come to you for something in the future.”

Thinking that the other party had been hired by the Church of the Lord of Storms, Ralph didn’t dare to expose his connection to the Resistance. He chuckled and said, “It’s fine to donate, but you don’t have to come for anything else.”

After giving the location of the charity foundation, Ralph returned home. He went up to the second floor and knocked on the door of a room.

“Lord Danitz, I have something to report.”

In the room, a deep and dignified voice replied, “Come in.”

†

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Dorian, who lived in a rented apartment, walked to the window. As the sun set, the sky gradually darkened.

The crimson moon would be full tonight, and the curse of the Abraham family would descend once again.

It had been a while since he had shaved his beard. Around his mouth, on both sides of his cheeks and lower jaw, there was a white mustache growing. It appeared out-of-place with his middle-aged man's appearance.

After looking for a while, Dorian bowed his head and recited in Jotun, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

After ending his prayer, he returned to his room and found a sofa to sit down. He waited for the crimson moon to rise and for the period when the spirituality was the strongest to arrive.

At that moment, in the ancient palace above the gray fog, Klein had already taken his seat that belonged to The Fool. He beckoned for a paper figurine.

The paper figurine was surrounded by the power of Sefirah Castle as it passed through Dorian's prayer light and landed on him.

During this process, Klein deliberately didn't show any effects, allowing the "angel" to silently embrace Dorian.

He felt that if Mr. Fool were to appear too bombastic, it would scare this ancient family's member, so he chose to keep a low profile.

The waiting process was always torturous. From time to time, Dorian would take out his pocket watch, click it open, and take a look. He wanted to know how long more before the full moon possessed its highest spirituality—this was something that could be inferred through the mysticism knowledge.

Finally, when it was almost dawn, Dorian instinctively bent down to reduce the pain brought by the curse.

However, as time passed, all he heard was complete silence. There were no buzzing ravings.

The crimson moonlight passed through the window and shone on Dorian. He looked up in a daze and felt that the surroundings were serene, calm, and indifferent. Nothing abnormal happened.

Dorian looked out of the window and saw the crimson moon. It was pure, dignified, gentle, and dreamy, as though it was hanging on his heart.

After a moment of silence, Dorian lowered his head and took out his pocket watch.

"…" He raised his right hand and rubbed his eyes. He covered his face and didn't loosen his grip for a long time.

The white mustache on his face gradually became messy, stained with tears and snot.

Chapter 1209 - Two Choices

◆

Inside the room, the crimson glow was like water that soaked every corner.

Dorian slowly lifted his head and looked at the full moon outside the oriel window. He didn’t look away for a long time, as if he was admiring a beautiful scenery for the first time.

Phew… He let out a breath, stood up, and entered the bathroom. He turned on the tap, held up a mouthful of biting-cold water, and splashed it hard on his face.

After washing up, Dorian wiped his face with a towel and returned to the living room to sit on the sofa. He lowered his head and muttered piously, “Praise be to Mr. Fool!”

After completing his prayer, he walked into the study, took out a pen and paper, and wrote to Fors:

“…

“Please tell Mr. Gehrman Sparrow that I have confirmed his promise. I hope he can find a better way to resolve the curse…

“I will gather the other members of my family to discuss if I should use one of the two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts in exchange for the Box of the Great Old Ones…

“Here, let me introduce the two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts so that Mr. Gehrman Sparrow will have sufficient time to consider which one he wants.

“One of them is called ‘Scroll of God.’ It looks like an ordinary oil painting in a brass frame, but the content on it will change at random.

“When it shows different locations, the wielder can change the surroundings of the target, allowing the corresponding scene to descend.

“When it shows different figures, the wielder can allow those people to attack their targets with one target per figure.

“When it presents an abstract image that cannot be understood, different real effects will happen, and the only thing we know about the corresponding relationship is a very small portion;

“When it depicts doors, opening different ‘doors’ will move one to different places. There’s no way to predict where the destination will be. It can be used to exile its target;

“When it shows the dark underground or deep cosmos, it will be extremely dangerous. It has to be sealed!

“If no one looks at it or takes in the marvel of the oil painting, then the person inside will come to life. They will reach out their hands from the oil painting, and slowly enter the real world. One must pay attention to this when sealing it!

“Once upon a time, when one of my family’s branches were in charge of the Scroll of God, there was a mistake. No one appreciated it for a full minute. And at that moment, it presented an image of an angel revolving around a deity. Then, the deity came alive and walked out of the oil painting.

“That branch of my family was destroyed just like that. There were only a few members remaining who had lost their minds, while that deity had gone somewhere unknown, but the painting was left behind.

“We had been worried for quite some time, afraid that the deity would destroy the world. Fortunately, ‘He’ never appeared again. Perhaps ‘He’ had already been noticed by the seven deities and was dealt with.

“Of course, we can’t rule out the possibility that this is a story made up by those who have lost their minds. However, for most of the members to have died overnight, with a small number going mad, that in itself implies enough.

“The other Grade 0 Sealed Artifact is called ‘Staff of the Stars.’ Its appearance is a black cane with embedded gems.

“While holding onto it, using corresponding scenes in your mind, one that truly exists and is still in existence, the staff will transport you directly to the destination, but you must be careful. The scene depicted must be absolutely correct. Every detail must be accurate. There cannot be any differences with the original. Otherwise, you will never know where your destination is;

“Similarly, while holding onto the Staff of the Stars, if some Beyonder powers or figures appear in your mind, this cane will reenact the corresponding powers and person. The latter will be a single attack. To achieve such an effect, one has to have sufficient understanding of the powers and figures. Otherwise, you have no idea what kind of anomaly will happen. Once, someone used the Staff of the Stars to release ‘Lightning Storm,’ but he ended up turning himself into a frog. Recovery was only possible once the method to remove the curse was found;

“The Staff of the Stars is sufficiently hard and can be used to attack. A person struck by it will randomly mutate or suffer strange effects. Previously, I used the Staff of the Stars to hit a Beyonder from the Aurora Order. The left side of his body was moved outside a door, and his right side remained where it was. His organs splattered out as a result;

“The Staff of the Stars will randomly move about. If it isn’t properly sealed, it might disappear at some point in time and escape your control.

"When holding it, one's head has to be empty most of the time. This is because once an image appears, it can trigger the effects I described in the beginning;

"If there's no one holding onto it, all sorts of abnormalities will happen around the Staff of the Stars. It's hard to predict what will happen. It has to be sealed…

"Burn upon reading…"

After writing the letter, Dorian read it several times to make sure that there was no mistake before stuffing it into an envelope and pasting a stamp on it.

At that moment, in the ancient palace above the gray fog.

Through the prayer point of light, Klein had watched Dorian's entire process of writing the letter.

I seem to have forgotten to tell him that he can pass the corresponding information to Gehrman Sparrow through Mr. Fool… That's good too. I'll just treat this as a benefit of being a formal member of the Tarot Club. If every believer were to do this, I wouldn't be able to cope if I didn't leave any Worms of Spirit in Sefirah Castle… Yes, this can also effectively maintain Mr. Fool's prestige. It will ensure that the Abrahams won't dare to belittle Mr. Fool… Klein mumbled before turning his attention onto the two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts.

He once again confirmed that Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts had severe negative effects and couldn't be used as common items.

Of course, their powers had extremely terrifying and potent effects. They were worthy of the grade "0."

In comparison, the Staff of the Stars is more suitable for me…

I can get Miss Justice to hypnotize me in advance so that my subconscious thoughts won't appear in the form of an image or scene. Only by consciously willing it in my mind will I be able to form the outline of a scene…

I wonder if the residents of the City of Silver will be able to leave the Forsaken Land of the Gods with the Staff of the Stars in their hands by just outlining the scene of Backlund's streets in their minds…

But there's no way to hypnotize them before this. They haven't really seen Backlund. Even if they restore the corresponding scene, it's difficult for them to accurately outline the details…

Anyway, it's very troublesome, but I can give it a try and choose a volunteer who isn't afraid of death…

If I can exchange for the Staff of the Stars, there's no need to rush to shatter it and turn it back into a characteristic. Who knows when it might come in handy. After all, the advancement ritual might not be completed…

With the Staff of the Stars, I can deal with the Dark Demonic Wolf and escape the Forsaken Land of the Gods right under the Dark Angel's nose. This will give me a little more confidence… Klein sighed as he made his decision.

At this moment, he discovered another truth.

That was if some of the members of the Abraham family followed Dorian and switched faiths to Mr. Fool, then even if he returned the Box of the Great Old Ones to them, it wouldn't be difficult to borrow it in the future.

In other words, out of the three Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, the Staff of the Stars, the Scroll of God, and the Box of the Great Old Ones, he would gain the right to use two of them and have ownership over one.

It's still very useful to develop believers… When the time comes, wouldn't the Abraham family become a subordinate faction of the Tarot Club? However, Dorian definitely won't spread the faith of The Fool so quickly unless some members are already on the brink of losing control, without the ability to resist the curse of the next full moon. For some reason, he felt that the power of the Tarot Club was expanding.

He thought about it seriously and felt sad that he would have to respond to his believers twenty-four hours a day in the future.

Only by becoming an angel and truly gaining ownership of Sefirah Castle did he dare leave a few Worms of Spirit behind so as to resolve this problem.

If that really doesn't work, I'll get Arrodes to be my artificial intelligence customer service… Klein rubbed his temples and left the gray fog before returning to the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

†

Late at night, in the waters of the Rorsted Archipelago.

A huge sea monster quickly swam to its destination.

This was the "helper" that Alger had requested from Sea God Kalvetua. At the level of an Ocean Songster, he was still unable to control a creature of such size.

In truth, he could totally swim from Bayam, but that would be too tiring, and he wouldn't be able to resist any accidents.

A few seconds later, the sea monster opened its mouth. Alger swam out and approached a beautiful coral thicket.

After circling a few obstacles, a dark blue glow suddenly appeared in Alger's eyes.

Through this "dark blueness," he saw a beautiful coral palace.

It was so real, but no one could see it unless there was a specific medium.

Alger stared at it for a while before swimming forward. He came to the front of the palace and pushed open the door.

The churning water came to a halt as Alger passed through the barrier and landed on the ground thanks to the wind.

He looked around and saw that there were murals on both sides.

The contents of these murals weren't surprising. The people with elven faces mainly focused on resisting the storm.

However, Alger noticed that the ships weren't out at sea, but in the midst of a thick, nearly indestructible "blackness."

This made Alger think of a phrase: Abyss.

This is somewhat similar to the Abyss as spoken in legends, but it's just a little similar, and there aren't any Devils either… They seem to be coming from underground… These murals record the history of the elves? But they don't match the corresponding myths… The World said that each elvish word corresponds to a first-generation elf… As Alger pondered, he walked towards the nine steps ahead.

As he drew closer, he saw two thrones and a dark blue crystalline coral.

On the coral branches, silver bolts of lightning flashed, illuminating the surroundings.

Alger held his breath as he slowed down his pace and went up the stairs to the throne.

He extended his right hand solemnly and picked up the coral.

With a splashing sound, the seawater outside the palace suddenly churned. As for the coral, under the cover of a "dark blueness," it gradually turned illusory and merged into Alger's body.

Lightning bolts bloomed one after another like flower petals.

Chapter 1210 - Moon City

◆

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, at night when the frequency of lightning was very low.

A few humanoid creatures cautiously approached a meatball with six legs and more than ten eyes.

They were wrapped in animal skins or clothes with materials that couldn't be identified. With the help of a few lanterns, they passed through the endless darkness with heavy expressions.

On their faces, there were about ten to twenty tumors. Some of their eyes were nearly squeezed together, while others didn't have a nose, with only a black hole in that place.

After a series of intense battles, they managed to successfully finish off the monster and split into two groups. One group guarded the surroundings. and another group reaped the spoils of war.

During this process, the man with many meat tumors on his face dissected the monster's corpse. When he was searching for edible parts, he suddenly stopped.

"A'dal, what's the matter?" the woman without a nose asked curiously.

The man named A'dal slowly retracted his right hand and revealed an item he had found from the monster.

It was a stone-carved amulet covered with marks of corrosion.

“This is…” The man, whose eyes were nearly squeezed together, seemed to understand the reason and hesitated to finish his sentence.

A’dal surveyed the area and said, “Xin, Rus, this was given to my father when I was young.

“On the day I became an adult, he felt that he could no longer control himself. He chose to leave the city and enter the depths of the darkness…”

When Xin and Rus heard that, they fell silent for a moment. They could understand A’dal’s feelings.

This was a common occurrence in Moon City.

As there was no safe edible food, they could only pick the mutated plant fruits and collect the flesh of monsters to maintain their survival.

This resulted in the accumulation of toxins and madness in the body. After a decline in their physical conditions, they would either die quickly or gradually lose control.

In order to not cause any damage to the surroundings and city, those who were part of the latter would often arrange everything after sensing that their conditions weren’t right. With a torch and a small amount of food, they would leave the defensive perimeter and wander into the eternal darkness alone, never to return.

The residents of Moon City could imagine what would happen to them. They would either be killed by monsters or become monsters. There was no other possibility.

After seven to eight seconds of silence, the woman without a nose hesitantly said, “Perhaps, this is the monster that killed your father.”

“It has a belt made of animal skin wrapped around it…” A’dal’s voice gradually lowered. He picked up the dagger made of bone and forcefully inserted it, cutting out a relatively normal piece of flesh.

Amidst the silence, the members of the hunting team completed their harvest skillfully until Rus, whose eyes were nearly squeezed together, suddenly said in a deep voice, “There are more and more deformities amongst the newborn…”

The price of accumulating toxins and madness for generations wasn’t as simple as reducing their average life expectancy. The people who still had normal physical conditions were gradually experiencing some mutations, just like A’dal who had many tumors on his face.

Similarly, the toxins and madness could also be passed down to their descendants, causing mutations to appear. Rus and Xin from the hunting team were examples.

Their lives would be even shorter, making it easier for them to lose control and mutate.

The more abnormalities there were, the more obvious the implications were. The hunting teams present knew very well that it might not take more than two to three generations before the residents of Moon City would lose control before they fully grew up or have children.

When that happened, even if there was no external attack, Moon City would quickly be destroyed, leaving behind only stone buildings and murals to prove their existence.

“I hope the High Priest and the others can find a new direction…” A’dal stood up with a lantern in hand as he answered weakly.

In the past two to three thousand years, it wasn’t as if Moon City hadn’t found a way to escape their current predicament. They had sent out teams of exploration teams that headed deep into the darkness. Some returned after suffering serious setbacks, with nothing to show for their efforts. Some disappeared into the boundless darkness, and nothing was heard from them ever again.

In addition, at a distance away, to the east of Moon City, was a grayish-white fog that blotted out the sky and land.

They were like invisible barriers that not only blocked one's vision, but also prevented any living beings from passing through.

The residents of Moon City once believed that this was a place of hope. They believed that the area covered by the grayish-white fog was a normal country. They believed that the other side of the gray fog was a land that wasn't cursed.

They attempted to enter the grayish-white fog again and again, but all their attempts failed.

They had dug a long passageway, hoping to pass through the invisible barrier by going underground. However, the region deep underground was also covered in grayish-white fog.

They tried ways to obtain the ability of flight before attempting to cross the barrier at high altitudes, but they didn't manage to see the top of the grayish-white fog before they were struck by lightning.

They mobilized the powers of all the demigods and Sealed Artifacts, attacking the target again and again. Over the past two to three thousand years, the cumulative attacks they performed failed to disperse the invisible barrier at all…

Upon hearing Captain A'dal's words, the members of the hunting team felt hopeless and sad. It was as though they were sliding down the edge of the abyss, but were unable to save themselves.

The deformed ones were people who found it difficult to control their emotions. At that moment, they more or less felt like they were suppressing something in their hearts, eager to unleash it.

In Moon City, a deformed person wasn't allowed to become a Beyonder or join the hunting teams two to three hundred years ago. They could only do harvesting work. However, as their manpower dwindled, the High Priest and the rest of the higher-ups relaxed the restrictions.

“Let’s go. This bit of food isn’t enough.” A’dal looked around, carrying lanterns as he walked deeper into the darkness.

They didn’t take the risk of extinguishing the fire, causing monsters to surge out in the darkness, as they might not be able to deal with them.

In such a quiet and suffocating environment, the members of the Moon City’s hunting team couldn’t help but have the feeling that they were enveloped in an endless darkness.

It was as though it was impossible to find hope regarding the present situation of Moon City, and the amount of time the lanterns in their hands could burn was decreasing.

When the last trace of light dissipated, they would be silently devoured by the darkness.

As they walked, a faint yellow light suddenly appeared in A’dal’s eyes.

It was a glow that didn’t belong to the hunting team!

This bit of light immediately shone into the eyes of all the members of the hunting team, filling their pupils.

A’dal, Xin, Rus, and company couldn’t help but widen their eyes as they felt a deep sense of shock.

During their lifetime, there had never been any fires that came from external sources in the history of Moon City after the Cataclysm!

Indeed, many monsters possessed the powers of fire or the Sun domain, but before attacking, they were all hidden in the darkness without revealing any hint of light.

And now, a fiery glow appeared deep in the darkness!

A’dal, Xin, and Rus trembled slightly as they thought for a long time but couldn’t think of an answer.

They quickly recalled the hunting arrangements and confirmed that it was impossible for residents of Moon City to be nearby.

Since the fiery glow didn't belong to Moon City, where did it come from?

The entire hunting team slowed down. They were shocked, surprised, curious, fearful, worried, and terrified.

They had also discovered some destroyed cities and knew that any abnormalities in the darkness could be fatal.

"…Be alert!" A'dal finally snapped out of his daze and gave the order.

The hunting team immediately took up a battle formation, waiting for the faint yellow light to approach.

Time seemed to freeze at this moment. Every second was slow. Finally, after the fiery glow grew bigger, a figure appeared.

A figure… There's only one person… The members of the Moon City hunting team held their breaths.

It seemed like, maybe, perhaps, they might have a chance of seeing an outsider!

Two to three thousand years had passed, and finally, someone else had stepped foot on this land.

They were not the only ones left in this abandoned world.

As for who could travel through endless darkness and reach this place, A'dal and company lacked experience, so they had no way of guessing.

As the fiery glow became bigger and more obvious, the hunting team members gradually saw the figure.

It was a slim young man. He had black hair and brown eyes, and his expression was cold. He was neither a deformed person nor had he any abnormal changes.

He wore a strange hat and strange clothes. He held a lantern made of special materials as he walked over from the darkness.

The light of his lantern was even brighter than the combined light of the hunting team. It made the surrounding darkness fade rapidly.

It didn't take long before the light shone on the bodies of the likes of A'dal, Xin, and Rus.

The figure stopped and looked at the Moon City hunting team. He asked in a low voice, "Where are you from?"

He spoke Jotun… His eyes are clear, and he can communicate… A'dal opened his mouth, stopping his subconscious urge to reply.

He asked in return, "Who are you?"

The figure with the glass lantern replied calmly, "Gehrman Sparrow."

After half a year of traveling and overcoming one difficult obstacle after another, Klein's spiritual intuition finally told him that he was finally reaching his destination.

And he had also encountered the first batch of living people in his trip across the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

"Where did you come from?" A'dal kept his guard up and pressed.

Klein swept his gaze across their faces and said without a change in tone, "I came from the City of Silver.

"And also from a land beyond the cursed lands."

Upon hearing this answer, all the members of the hunting team were in a daze. They suspected whether they were expecting too much, causing them to hallucinate.

†

In the autumn of 1351, Backlund, in the midst of the war.

Ever since Feynapotter declared war on Loen, the war that had been going on for some time had finally lost its balance. Loen and its allies—Lenburg, Masin, and Segar—had lost a large amount of territory, leaving only the last few lines of defense that they defended with great difficulty. They were on the brink of being overrun.

When she saw the long line of people at the food distribution center through the carriage window, Audrey slowly retracted her gaze and said to her personal maidservant, Annie, “Turn towards Saint Samuel Cathedral…”

Chapter 1211 - Unimaginable

◆

As the carriage drove slowly along the road, Audrey’s gaze subconsciously looked out the window.

Many passers-by stood by the roadside, staring at the horse that was pulling the carriage. Their eyes seemed to be emitting a greedy glint as they, the lucky ones, successfully collected their food. They ran through the streets surreptitiously and headed for home.

A team of policemen in black-and-white checkered uniforms were patrolling the streets. They had revolvers by their waists and batons in their hands—means to deter anyone from wanting to take risks.

“Recently, we don’t even dare to go on the streets alone…” the personal maidservant, Annie, whispered to her.

Audrey nodded slightly but didn’t respond.

After a while, the carriage arrived at Phelps Street and stopped at the square in front of Saint Samuel Cathedral.

The flock of pigeons that were usually here was nowhere to be seen.

The Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, as well as the subsequent establishment of the Loen Poverty Relief Foundation and the Loen Medical Charity Foundation, had all moved from 22 Phelps Street to a few small rooms in the cathedral. This was because the buildings that they were originally housed in had collapsed due to the previous airstrike.

To the staff of these three foundations, it was a harrowing memory. If they hadn't left 22 Phelps Street in advance due to different reasons, they would've long been killed.

After alighting from the carriage and walking through the main door, Audrey saw a black-haired, brown-eyed girl with a rather thin face approach.

Before the other party could speak, she said, "Melissa, is there any more food that can be distributed?"

Melissa shook her head solemnly.

"Even those injured soldiers who we provided relief for can't receive enough food…"

Audrey's green eyes dimmed. She didn't show her helplessness or weakness as she nodded slightly.

"I will think of a way."

†

"From the City of Silver…

"From a land beyond the cursed lands."

Gehrman Sparrow's words echoed in the ears of the Moon City hunting team members—A'dal, Xin, and Rus. It made them feel like they were in a dream, unable to regain their senses for a long time.

Just as A'dal gradually regained his senses and was thinking about what to say when Xin, who was born without a nose, inundated Klein with a series of questions.

"Where is the City of Silver? What does it look like? How far is it from here?

“How many normal people are there outside the cursed area?”

Klein glanced at her and replied in an emotionless voice, “The City of Silver is located on the other side of the cursed lands. They discovered a type of plant that can be eaten normally called ‘Black-Faced Grass.’ This has allowed them to maintain their kind’s stability and effectively explore the depths of the darkness in a bid to find a way to leave.

“They recently found some mushrooms. These mushrooms can use monsters as nutrients, forming all kinds of fruits that do not contain toxins and madness.

“The City of Silver has gone one step further in escaping the madness. Once the newborns become adults, they wouldn’t easily lose control even at old age…”

These words made A’dal, Xin and company feel lost, as though their own persistent efforts had no meaning.

The City of Silver described by Gehrman Sparrow was the most beautiful scene they could imagine; yet, it was something so easily possessed by others.

“…Are there any deformed newborns?” Xin asked in a dreamy tone.

Klein shook his head.

“Almost none.”

“Will their parents walk into the depths of the darkness by themselves when their physical condition deteriorates—no, when they become old?” A’dal subconsciously pressed.

Wearing a black trench coat, a top hat, and holding a lantern, Klein replied, “No.

“Because they are burdened with the curse of killing their own kin. If a life cannot be ended by the hands of a blood relative, they will turn into a terrifying evil spirit or monster.”

The members of the hunting team in Moon City finally found a sense of reality. Their hearts felt like they were slowly rising in warm water as bubbles slowly emerged.

These bubbles were weak, empty, and easily pricked. There was nothing inside, but they shimmered with something called hope and light.

Rus, whose eyes were nearly squeezed together, couldn’t help but repeat the question:

“How many normal people are there outside the cursed area?”

Klein looked at them with a complicated expression.

“They are basically normal. They do not need to be constantly worried about monsters attacking them. They don’t have to be afraid of being in the darkness. They don’t go crazy after growing old. They aren’t burdened by all kinds of curses. They see sunlight every day when they wake up, with sufficiently normal food. Every night, the crimson moon rises…”

However, all of this is being destroyed now… Klein silently added in his heart.

This time, A’dal, Xin, and Rus were somewhat at a loss. This was because they found Gehrman Sparrow’s description as something imaginable, but also seemingly unimaginable. It was just like when they were reading the few ancient books remaining. They could get the spirit of the matter but found it hard to truly understand certain contexts.

They had no idea what the sun and what the crimson moon were.

However, to have normal food every day without the burden of various curses, the worry of monster attacks or darkness, and the lack of going crazy in old age was a beautiful dream they yearned for day and night.

There's such a place in this world? Is this what Heaven, as recorded in the ancient books, is? Was this land really cursed? The members of the Moon City hunting team fell silent once again.

One of them opened their mouth but was at a loss as to what to ask. Someone wanted to bring Gehrman Sparrow back to Moon City and inform the High Priest of the news, wanting to inform everyone, but he was afraid of attracting danger.

During this process, they didn't let down their guard or vigilance.

Klein wasn't the least bit surprised with their attitude. Instead, he felt that this was the reaction a civilization that could last to this day in the Forsaken Land of the Gods ought to have.

With the lantern in hand, he took a step to the left, attempting to walk around the humans who were dressed in strange materials or animal skins, and he continued heading east.

Regardless of what story these people had, whether it was worth helping them in passing, he planned to wait until he began his investigations before listening and considering things. This was because his spiritual intuition told him that his destination wasn't far, and that the legendary West Continent was just two to three hours away on foot.

The moment he took a step forward, A'dal and company immediately bent their backs, bracing themselves to defend and attack. However, they didn't manage to see Gehrman Sparrow approach them. They watched as he walked more than ten meters to the left and continue heading forward.

Seeing this young man dressed in strange black clothes and a strange black hat, with a strange and transparent lantern gradually distancing himself from them, the dim yellow light grew weaker and weaker. A'dal's face which was covered in tumors changed. He shouted loudly, "Who exactly are you?"

Klein didn't turn around. Instead, he held the lantern that emitted a faint yellow light and walked deeper into the darkness. He said in a regular tone, "A missionary.

"A person to spread my Lord's brilliance."

A'dal, Xin, and company looked at each other, their expressions filled with confusion.

They hesitated for a long while, but when there was only a small trace of the dim yellow light left, they instinctively took a step forward and followed behind Klein.

They didn't dare to approach him, nor did they want to have him leave their sight. They carried the food they had procured, as though they were monitoring and chasing him in a defensive manner. As for Klein, he walked at an adequate speed—not waiting for them or attempting to shake them off.

Just like that, both sides walked in silence under the sparse lightning. At some point in time, Rus and another hunting team had left the main group. They held the animal hide lantern and the food they had obtained and turned around, silently disappearing into the endless darkness.

Seconds changed to minutes before Klein finally stopped.

Using the lightning that streaked across the sky, he saw a grayish-white fog a few hundred meters away.

The mist was connected to the land and extended all the way into the sky, as though it didn't have an apex.

At the same time, the fog extended to the two sides without any end.

Klein looked at it intently for a long time. Even though there were partitions of darkness, he slowly raised his head. After the second bolt of lightning calmed down, he looked away.

Behind the fog or inside it is the disappeared Western Continent? As he thought with a heavy heart, he couldn't help but slow down his breathing.

He carried the lantern and continued forward until the dim yellow light emitted a solidified mist.

There was no need for him to make any other attempts. From his intuition as a Seer, he could tell that the grayish-white fog was an invisible barrier that couldn't be passed through by conventional means.

He thought for a moment and stretched out his right hand to scratch at the darkness in front of him again and again.

After doing it four to five consecutive times, Klein pulled out a black cane with many gems embedded in it.

This was the Staff of the Stars, a terrifying Sealed Artifact known as 0-62 that had been swapped using the Box of the Great Old Ones!

Of course, all he did was summon the historical projection of the Staff of the Stars.

This way, even if there were unnecessary scenes that appeared in his mind, he could use the removal of the Historical Void projection to stop any corresponding dangers that appeared in a timely manner.

To a Scholar of Yore, this was the best way to regularly use a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. However, this limited the effects and was something that couldn't exceed three minutes at the moment. Furthermore, there was a certain difference with the original version when it came to their effects. Using a marionette to hold the Staff of the Stars wasn't the best way to avoid any negative effects. This was because a marionette needed to be controlled, and any control had a high chance of transmitting scenes.

Of course, if he engaged in a battle he was prepared for, Klein wouldn't have done so. This was because it would occupy one of his three precious summoning spots. Furthermore, although the Staff of the Stars belonged to him, it was only in a state of forced ownership, and it remained in a sealed state. Furthermore, the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact had a rather high level. It was impossible for Klein to successfully summon it at once, so it usually took him three to six attempts. In a fierce battle, it would require plenty of chances—nothing simple.

And it was precisely because of this that when he was prepared to “perform,” he would hypnotize himself in advance. By using the Staff of the Stars in a special state, he would preserve the ability to summon Historical Void images like Miss Messenger, Mr. Azik, Ma’am Arianna, Will Auceptin, and other familiar angels.

Holding the black staff that was embedded with various gems, a scene of the door slowly opening appeared in Klein’s mind.

The gems on the staff flashed with a faint glow as the grayish-white fog quickly outlined a door that wasn’t sufficiently real.

The door opened silently, and behind it was still a gray fog.

Door Opening doesn’t work… Although he wasn’t surprised by the outcome, he was still a little disappointed.

He thought for a moment and decided to switch tactics.

However, just as he was thinking about it, the Staff of the Stars automatically activated as the corresponding scene appeared.

Chapter 1212 - Spreading Radiance

◆

Just now, as Klein was thinking of a solution, an image naturally came to mind.

The clouds in the two mountains began to “boil” rapidly as they spread out to the left and right, revealing a crack whose bottom couldn’t be seen. The orange-red rays of the sunset filled it and formed a corporeal path.

This was a scene created when Blasphemer Amon entered the projection of the Giant King’s Court.

And just as he felt that he didn’t know enough about the corresponding powers and planned on switching to another method. The red, green, blue, and transparent gems on the Staff of the Stars had already begun to emit a faint glow as they automatically activated.

The solidified grayish-white fog was similarly “boiling,” but it wasn’t that intense.

They were churning backward as they parted, but the area right in front of him remained an endless grayish-white mass. There was no end to it.

Klein sighed in his heart. As he focused on controlling his thoughts, he made other attempts.

In the past three minutes, he had tried hard at least ten times. Seven times were of his own will, while three times were him venting out, but he was ultimately unable to open the invisible barrier.

…Indeed, normal methods don't work… With a flick of his wrist, he allowed the historical projection of 0-62, which was close to its limit, to disappear from the real world.

He stared at the silent grayish-white fog and didn't move for about a minute. It was as if he had turned into a statue.

Finally, Klein closed his eyes and looked away. Holding the lantern in his hand, he walked towards the nearby humans who were watching.

He didn't plan on making blind attempts, because there was a high chance that he wouldn't succeed. He planned on asking the people who had stood guard in the vicinity for two to three thousand years. It was obvious that these ancient survivors had explored the grayish-white fog. He wanted to see if he could find inspiration from their years of experience.

Based on Klein's assumption, the humans would definitely react excessively towards him, so he had already prepared the corresponding powers to allow them to speak to him calmly. However, when he looked at the light of dusk on both sides of the lantern, he realized that the ugly or deformed humans were staring at him with their mouths agape. They looked confused and shocked, as if they had temporarily lost their ability to think.

Klein frowned slightly. In the darkness, he walked unhurriedly to the ancient survivors and stopped about two to three meters away.

"What do you know about this fog?" Klein asked in Jotun with a deep voice.

The language that could stir the powers of nature didn't have any differences because of geography. There was only a slight difference in the accent, but it wasn't much. If the original version was modified, there was a chance its effects in ritualistic magic would be lost.

It was only when Gehrman Sparrow raised the question that A'dal seemed to snap out of his daze. His lips quivered as he answered in an ambiguous tone, "We… We have never caused the fog to change before…"

Just now, Gehrman Sparrow had caused the fog to boil like water and part to the sides. This scene had really frightened them, as though they were witnessing a miracle.

The two to three thousand years of hard work from numerous generations of Moon City inhabitants were inferior to a person holding a staff with an attempt that didn't last more than two hundred heartbeats!

This was also the main reason why they had given up on resisting when Gehrman Sparrow approached them.

They instinctively believed that, no matter how they avoided him, it would be to no avail.

After two seconds of silence, Klein continued asking, "Do you have any corresponding records?"

At this moment, A'dal understood what Gehrman Sparrow meant. He hesitated for a moment and slowly nodded.

"Yes… However, only the High Priest and the others would frequently look through it."

Wearing a black trench coat and half top hat, Klein thought for a moment and suddenly reached out to pull out an item from the void.

It was a cross covered in bronze, with several sharp spikes protruding out from it.

It was the historical image of the ancient sun god's Unshadowed Crucifix!

With the cross in hand, Klein raised it a little higher and aimed it at the ancient survivors.

Pure, bright, and warm light bloomed, dispersing the darkness around them and illuminating them.

Their combat experience made them instinctively attempt to defend themselves, but their actions stopped midway through the process.

The brightness and warmth wasn't something a bonfire could compare with!

This made the remaining members of the Moon City hunting team recall the deities described by the ancient books and the High Priest. "They" were deities who emitted boundless light and brought boundless warmth.

Under the illumination of the bright, pure light, a distorted, struggling illusionary black gas that seemed to have a life of its own began to boil from the bodies of A'dal, Xin, and company, quickly rising and dissipating.

The members of the Moon City hunting team felt their bodies become more relaxed, and the pressure within their souls disappeared.

After purging the cumulative corruption and ailments of their bodies, Klein shook his wrist slightly, causing the Unshadowed Crucifix to disappear in front of him.

Right on the heels of that, he grabbed another cane that looked an ordinary wooden color.

This was the former City of Silver's Sealed Artifact, Life's Cane!

Although he had already sacrificed it to the Evernight Goddess, as long as it was once owned by a Scholar of Yore, it would only accompany them in a different way.

With Life's Cane in hand, Klein took a few steps forward and used the end of the cane to tap the leader of Moon City's hunting team.

The experience from before made A'dal unable to dodge. The tumors on his face began to crack as pus flowed, faded, and disappeared. In the end, there wasn't even a single scar left.

From the looks of his team members, A'dal knew that he had undergone a change. He hesitantly raised his right hand and touched his face. From top to bottom and back up again, he kept repeating it.

During this process, he realized that he was in an unprecedented healthy state, one that was better than when he first became an adult.

Klein didn't look at him. He took a step diagonally and used Life's Cane to treat the rest of the ancient survivors.

With A'dal as an example, Xin and the others were on their guard and alert as they accepted contact with the cane, and they felt that they had obtained a new lease of life.

Amongst them, the two deformed beings who were easily emotional couldn't help but tear up.

Unfortunately, I can't treat natural defects… Mental illnesses can be treated, but some crazy tendencies can't be treated… Klein retracted his right hand and let the historical projection of Life's Cane disappear.

He walked to his original spot and turned around. He looked at the ancient survivors and said, "I'm not here to destroy, but to spread the radiance of my Lord, bringing light and warmth.

"Go back and tell your leader that I'm here. If he's willing, he can come over."

He didn't attempt to find out where the gathering point of these ancient survivors was, nor did he plan on going there directly. This would trigger the strongest form of resistance and vigilance.

Hence, giving them the choice was the most suitable solution.

At that moment, A’dal, Xin, and the others were already shocked by Gehrman Sparrow’s constant pulling out of mystical items. They felt that they were walking into a miracle and had already been cleansed by the divine light, allowing their physical condition to recover to its optimum state. It even exceeded their peak.

“…Alright.” A few seconds later, A’dal responded.

Just as they turned around and prepared to return to Moon City, flames lit up from the depths of the darkness as they rapidly approached.

The leader was an old man wearing a dark brown beast hide. His hair was gray and unkempt, and his face was full of real cracks.

“High Priest…” After recognizing the other party, Xin blurted out.

It was none other than Moon City’s High Priest, Nim.

Behind Nim followed Rus and the other members of the hunting team who had returned to the city ahead of time, as well as several other High-Sequence Beyonders.

Nim nodded at A’dal, Xin, and the rest before walking to the front of the group. Looking at the man who claimed to be a missionary, Gehrman Sparrow, he crossed his arms and bowed.

“Honorable guest, I am Moon City’s High Priest, Nim.

“Moon City once belonged to vampires, but that civilization had been destroyed in ancient times.

“Afterwards, we accepted the orders of the great sun god, the Lord who created everything, and we moved here to watch the grayish-white fog and make the corresponding attempts. That continued on even though the land was cursed and the Lord didn’t respond to us.

“To date, 3,722 years have passed.”

Chapter 1213 - The Eternally Imperturbable Fog

◆

3,722 years… Indeed, they were sent here when the ancient sun god was still alive… With the City of Silver’s continued survival in the darkness for more than two thousand years as a reference, Klein easily confirmed the words of Moon City’s High Priest.

He nodded slightly and asked, “Are you guarding this fog to prevent any anomalies from happening to it?”

The High Priest of Moon City, who was wrapped in dark brown beast hide, Nim, shook his head.

“The revelation that the Lord gave us was to guard the area all day. We needed to know if anyone walks out of the fog.”

Walks out of the fog… The ancient sun god had a premonition that a person would walk out of this fog? If the other side of the fog is really the Western Continent, does this mean that there might still be life and civilization in it? When Klein heard this, an indescribable palpitation struck his heart, but he deeply realized a certain reality:

Amon’s father—the second Creator—was actually unable to open this grayish-white fog, and even needed to send people here to watch over it!

Is there a specific method needed to pass through this invisible barrier? Uh, Mr. Hanged Man mentioned before that the Queen of Calamity, Cohinem, said that an incantation or command might be needed. Also, the premise is that the Western Continent has already resurfaced… As Klein looked at the High Priest with deep lines on his face, he said without batting an eyelid, “I believe they have already introduced me to you. I’m a missionary. I have come to this land to spread the light of the Lord.”

The High Priest of Moon City, Nim, maintained his composure and used his gray eyes that were the same color as his long hair to look at Klein.

“Your Excellency, which existence do you believe in?”

Klein instinctively wanted to answer directly, but considering his identity as a missionary that he had set for himself previously, he held back his shame. With the ability of a Clown, he controlled his facial muscles and revealed a slightly fanatical expression.

“Please permit me to introduce you to my Lord, the savior of this land, the great Mr. Fool…”

The Fool… Moon City’s High Priest, Nim, and the others didn’t expect to hear such a word. For a moment, they found it strange, but for some reason, they felt that there was an infinite philosophy hidden within.

Finally, their attention was focused on the description:

“The savior of this land.”

Nim couldn’t help but turn his head to look at A’dal and the rest, observing their radiant faces.

As a Sequence 4 demigod, he knew very well that this was a result of the cleansing of the toxin and corruption accumulated within their bodies. Furthermore, the members of the hunting team had also been given excellent treatment. If he hadn’t seen this group of young people grow up and remembered how they looked before the changes, he definitely wouldn’t dare to confirm that they were residents of Moon City.

Seeing the High Priest look over, A’dal immediately said excitedly, “His

Excellency Sparrow prayed for a deity's blessing to save us."

"Yes, we saw light! We felt warmth!" Xin, who was without a nose, added.

After the catharsis, she had unknowingly developed a certain belief towards the Lord that Gehrman Sparrow mentioned.

Compared to the Creator who had never responded to prayers and ignored the suffering that Moon City faced, this existence was more like a deity!

Rus and another member of the hunting team that went back to Moon City to inform the High Priest looked covetously at their former companions. They were both envious and had a yearning for the new life they had obtained.

The High Priest, Nim, retracted his gaze and looked at Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing strange clothes and a strange hat.

"Is the great Mr. Fool a deity in this world—no, from outside this cursed land?"

Klein nodded solemnly and slowly.

"Yes."

"Then… what about the great sun god who created everything?" Nim hesitated for a moment before asking the question he desired answers to the most.

Klein changed his tone to that of a charlatan and said, "The Kings betrayed that existence. Blood, anger, foulness, and shadows began to flow across this land, triggering a huge calamity."

Nim's pupils dilated slightly, as if he wanted to absorb more light to see the world in front of him.

With great difficulty, he tried his best to suppress something and asked, “Are you saying that the Lord perished because of this?”

“Not only did ‘He’ perish, but ‘His’ flesh and blood were also eaten by the traitors. This piece of land was cursed as a result.” Taking advantage of the fact that he was in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, Klein boldly said this.

He didn’t deliberately distinguish the Amon brothers from the other six Kings of Angels. He planned on making the residents of Moon City believe that all the Kings of Angels were traitors. This way, they wouldn’t be fooled by Amon in the future.

Over the past half a year of traveling and the various experiments he undertook, he was convinced that the Forsaken Land of the Gods really was sealed. Or rather, it was isolated from the outside world. The only point of contact was either the exit of the Giant King’s Court, or something at the level of Sefirah Castle. Therefore, using the Staff of the Stars here allowed him to move within the confines of the cursed land. He was unable to head to the scenes in the outside world as outlined in his mind.

In addition, the Box of the Great Old Ones was even suppressed and isolated for its historical projection. The moment the summoning succeeded, the projection would immediately be devoured by the environment. It was completely useless.

This made him suspect that even the third level of the Box of the Great Old Ones was a little dangerous for true deities such as the True Creator.

Upon hearing Gehrman Sparrow’s words, the body of the High Priest of Moon City, Nim, trembled slightly as his pockmarked face instantly turned ashen.

The faces of the Beyonders behind him changed as well. It was as if they had suffered an extremely serious blow. One even showed signs of losing control.

Seeing this, Klein reached out his hand again and pulled out Life's Cane from the void, allowing it to fly through the air and accurately tap the target.

The signs of the Beyonder's losing control immediately vanished. His forehead was covered in sweat as if he had just overcome a major illness.

Following the removal of the historical projection, Life's Cane quickly faded away. As for the Beyonders of Moon City, they finally managed to break free from the grievous news. Some of them were filled with suspicion and disbelief, and others were whimpering softly. Some looked at Gehrman Sparrow with a lost look, as though he was their final hope.

At some point in time, Nim's eyes had already closed. Two or three seconds later, he opened them again and looked at Gehrman Sparrow.

"What else do you have to ask?"

In less than a minute, he looked like he had aged considerably. His body was beginning to show signs of decay and depression. However, it wasn't completely without hope. It was as if the trees were rotting away, but they were beginning to give birth to new lives.

Klein half-turned and pointed at the coagulated gray fog with the lantern in his hand.

"Since when did you begin attempting to open this screen? What did you achieve?"

Nim said frankly, "In the beginning, it was the Lord's revelation. While 'He' wanted us to watch over it, 'He' also wanted us to think of a way to pass through the fog.

"After the land was cursed, we used this to mainly guide us so as to seek hope. However, we ultimately didn't achieve anything concrete. No matter what method we used, the solidified mist didn't react…"

Upon saying that, he hesitated and said, “It’s not that there’s no reaction, but it wasn’t the reaction we wanted.”

Klein instantly saw hope and maintained his normal speaking pace as he asked, “What was the reaction?”

Seeing that the High Priest was somewhat hesitant and not answering immediately, Xin took the initiative to say, “High Priest, His Excellency Sparrow has already parted a portion of the fog, a depth deeper than what we managed over the past two to three thousand years!”

Nim couldn’t help but look deeply at Gehrman Sparrow before saying, “More than 1,730 years ago, the High Priest back then was inspired by the cruel fact that Moon City had failed to achieve anything in the past 2,000 years.

“He felt that we couldn’t treat this fog as a seal that needed to be broken through. Instead, it was to be treated as a great existence.

“He designed the honorific name, prayer stanza, and the corresponding symbols for this fog. He held repeated rituals here, attempting communication, and praying.”

…This is a train of thought that no normal person would’ve thought of… I didn’t think of it just now… Indeed, after all these years, there must have been many people with strange ideas in Moon City… Three thousand years of time isn’t for nothing… Klein sighed inwardly as he nodded slightly.

“Was there any feedback after that?”

With a nasal grunt as confirmation, Nim replied, “There was at one point when the High Priest changed the first sentence of the honorific name to ‘The Eternally Imperturbable Fog’… Then, during the subsequent ritual, he vaguely heard a series of voices coming from deep within the fog. Unfortunately, he couldn’t hear it clearly no matter how hard he tried, making it impossible to interpret it.

“From then on, the rituals we held were uncountable. We realized that a response wasn’t always guaranteed. Even if there was a response, it might not be a timely one. We needed to wait patiently.”

As the thoughts raced through his mind, Klein asked, “How many times does it roughly take to succeed?”

“There are no patterns. Sometimes, we succeed at once. Sometimes, we might not receive any feedback after a month,” Nim said with a sigh. “We have made many alterations, but they were all useless.”

“Did you hear what those voices said afterward?” Klein asked.

“No, maybe our Sequence isn’t high enough or we are still lacking in strength.” Nim shook his head.

If that’s the reason, I can give it a try… After hesitating for a few seconds, he politely asked, “May you hold the correct ritual again? I would like to hear those voices.”

This kind of politeness was something Nim couldn’t refuse, nor did he dare to refuse.

He hesitated for a moment and said, “Sure, but many of the materials are in Moon City. You need to wait for some time.”

After some thought, Klein asked, “Have you used those materials before?”

“Yes,” Nimu answered in confusion.

Klein nodded indifferently.

“Let’s just hold it now. Tell me when was the last time you used those materials and where they were nearby.”

Chapter 1214 - Voice

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After hearing the High Priest’s reply, Klein held his lantern and walked twenty to thirty steps to the right, parallel to the grayish-white fog.

Then, he half-closed his eyes as though he was sensing something. This made the Moon City Beyonders behind him not dare to make a sound, afraid of disturbing the oracle.

After four to five seconds, Klein stretched out his right hand and slowly grabbed the air ahead.

An altar made of stone dropped into the real world. On it were three candles made of oil and seven to eight spiritual materials.

As a Sequence 4 demigod, Nim was taken aback. He found it difficult to believe his eyes.

Previously, he had seen Gehrman Sparrow take out his cane to treat his companion. He had only believed that Gehrman Sparrow possessed the powers of space or had received the favor of Mr. Fool. But now, his judgment had been completely overturned. This was because he found the altar, the few candles, and the spiritual materials very familiar.

They were all used by him once!

He actually managed to create something that I’ve used before? Is this a power that comes from history, a power that comes from time? Nim recalled the content of the remnant tomes in Moon City, and his understanding of demigods as he came to a preliminary guess.

At that moment, Klein turned around and looked at the High Priest.

“You may begin.”

Nim quietly drew a deep breath. Under the watchful eyes of the likes of the A’dal, Xin, and Rus, he walked to the altar and created a wall of spirituality.

After taking a look at the symbols, labels, and patterns engraved on the altar and confirming that there were no problems, he followed the process that had been engraved into his memories, and he began the ritual with great familiarity.

In the end, he bowed his head and chanted in a low voice:

“The Eternally Imperturbable Fog;

“A Barrier frozen in Space-Time;

“The Existence that contains Everything…”

Before the prayer ended, Klein had already placed his attention on the grayish-white fog, hoping to hear sounds coming from deep within.

For this, he had secretly controlled the large number of monster marionettes that walked in the surrounding darkness to separate. He spaced them out at a certain distance, hoping that he wouldn’t miss any suspicious traces.

However, he didn’t notice anything unusual until the ritual was completed.

After waiting for a while more, Klein cast his gaze at the High Priest of Moon City, Nim, and said calmly, “One more time.”

†

Backlund, Empress Borough, in the Hall family’s study.

After receiving permission, Audrey pushed open the door and walked in. Her father, Earl Hall, and her brother, Hibbert, were discussing some matters.

“Oh, baby, you don’t look too well?” Earl Hall cast his gaze towards the door.

Audrey didn’t act as she forced a smile and said, “There’s a huge lack of food at the Poverty Relief Foundation. I would like to collect more. I visited many nobles today, but they told me that there’s no more food left. It’s the same even if I offered to buy it with gold pounds.”

When these words were said, the nobles were either in a parlor or at a spot specially used for high tea. In front of them were high-quality black tea and many exquisite desserts. From time to time, they would invite Audrey to evaluate their dessert chef’s culinary skills.

Their servants had rosy cheeks, and they took very light footsteps. They didn’t make a sound to prevent disturbing their guests.

“The current situation…” Earl Hall sighed when he heard that.

Audrey thought for a moment and said seriously, “Father, I remember that there should be quite a lot of food at home. Can I buy some of that with money?”

“Audrey, you’ve already done too much. There’s no need for you to do more,” Hibbert Hall said with a frown. As for Audrey, she only looked at her father and didn’t respond to her elder brother’s words.

Earl Hall’s expression that had relaxed after seeing his daughter became serious again.

“Audrey, the prerequisite for charity is not to affect your and your family’s life. This is a principle I wish for you to remember.”

Audrey, who was wearing a long, golden-white dress, relaxed her eyebrows and said sincerely, “Father, the amount of food we have stored at home is enough to last everyone in this house for an entire year, or even more. Besides, there's also a lot of food over in East Chester County."

As Winter County hadn't completely fallen, the Feysac army that had invaded Midseashire didn't attack East Chester County. As for the Feysac, Intis, and Feynapotter fleet, they were suppressed by the few ironclad warship fleets of Loen. They could only barely deal with the situation and protect the supply line at sea.

Seeing his daughter's emerald-green eyes for a few seconds, he suddenly sighed and smiled.

"Audrey, you have really grown up. You have your own ideas and pretty commendable determination.

"However, we don't know how long this war will last. We don't know what the outcome will be. We have to leave a lot of food to deal with this.

"I can accept us having two less delicacies for every meal to help those who are in trouble, but I don't want my dining table to become like what the newspaper says about the middle class. This will completely make us lose our dignity as nobles. This is something that we abide with every generation.

"Do you understand what I mean? I was just making an analogy. The essence of this is that I value the continuation and the future of the family line more. I value our status and standing. Only when it doesn't affect them will I express my love and kindness.

"Audrey, what I said may be cruel, but you have already grown up. It's time to hear this. Everyone is selfish, but at varying levels. In my heart, the entire Hall family is more important than me and your mother, yourself, Hibbert, and Alfred. Apart from these, it will first be faith and good friends. Next, it's people we are acquainted with. Finally, it would be all of Backlund, those who are in need of help.

“If it doesn’t affect the ones first listed, I don’t mind helping them. Unfortunately, I have to consider even more things now.”

At this point, Earl Hall shook his head in a self-deprecating manner.

“I’m sorry to let you know that your father is such a selfish person.”

As Audrey listened to her father’s words, her expression changed slightly at first, but then it disappeared. Until the end, there were no additional emotions.

At that moment, she was silent for a moment before asking again, “… But we’ve already obtained a lot more than what we need. Can’t we even share a portion of it?”

Hibbert Hall interrupted angrily, “Why are you giving away the things we painstakingly obtained to others?

“This is produced from our land, farmland, and forests. This is what we bought with money. And these funds and assets were passed down the family. It was earned by Father’s acumen and powerful charisma. It was accumulated over generations.

“By doing charity to help others, it’s an additional display of love, not something that we have to do, do you understand?”

Earl Hall nodded.

“What Hibbert said is generally right. I share his thoughts as well.”

Audrey pursed her lips and slowly nodded.

“I understand…”

Earl Hall retracted his gaze and said to Hibbert, “We have to keep the food stored properly. If the outcome of the war cannot be reversed, try contacting the fellows from Intis and show them some of our sincerity.

“The battle has been going on for so long. Quite a number of people have died as well. Many fields have been abandoned, and the prices in the cities have soared. There must be a very high demand for food, cattle, and land. In addition, I have shares in the Intis Suchit Bank, as well as the shares in the Varvat Bank and Backlund Bank. I should be able to bribe them. Heh heh, in such times, only by satisfying these aspects can we talk about familial relationships.”

Intis and Loen often had marriage alliances. Many nobles were relatives, especially the believers of the God of Steam.

“Father, are you considering surrendering?” Hibbert asked in surprise.

Earl Hall nodded slightly and sighed again.

“How can I not consider it in light of the current situation?

“When the time comes, you will be the new Earl Hall.”

Hibbert’s heart palpitated when he heard that, but he was also puzzled.

“What about you, Father?”

Earl Hall replied with a bitter smile, “Both your mother and I are devout believers. We have a certain status in the Church. When Loen falls and the Church is destroyed, the outcome will not be good if we’re still unwilling to step down.”

At this point, he comforted his eldest son.

“As long as the Hall family is still around and the aristocratic title is still there, we won’t lose much of our core assets. We won’t be in such a miserable state for our advanced years. Remember to prepare a secret prayer room for us at home after you convert your faith to the God of Steam.”

As the two of them conversed, Audrey, who was wearing a long, golden-white dress, watched quietly from the door. She was listening quietly, her green eyes shimmering like gems.

†

After repeated attempts, the projection of the altar vanished. The High Priest of Moon City, Nim, said to Gehrman Sparrow, who was holding the strange lantern, in deliberation, “It looks like it won’t work today. We can try it tomorrow. It won’t last more than two months.”

At that moment, all Klein could think of was another question:

Could it be that the ritual was unsuccessful since it appears too perfunctory using Historical Void projections?

He reflected on himself deeply and decided to listen to the High Priest. They could try again tomorrow. When the time came, he would definitely get him to bring the real materials.

He was about to nod when he heard a faint voice.

The voice sounded from deep within the grayish-white fog. It was layered and indistinct.

It’s effective? This ritual really does have an effect, but the delay is too great… Klein was delighted as he immediately raised his right hand and pressed down slightly, gesturing for the Beyonders of Moon City to be silent.

He immediately held his breath and focused on listening.

The voice that echoed within the grayish-white fog seemed to come from many different sources. They intertwined with each other, occasionally overlapping with each other in destructive interference and creating a resonance when in constructive interference.

Gradually, the voice became clearer in Klein’s ears, especially when it resonated.

It seemed to be a language he was familiar with. It seemed like countless people were chanting a name together.

The name was:

“The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

Chapter 1215 - Not Time Yet

◆

“The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

When he heard the voices deep in the grayish-white mist, Klein trembled slightly as the back of his head turned numb.

This feeling quickly spread to every part of his body, causing tiny goosebumps to protrude on his skin.

This was the second time he had heard the name “The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings” in the real world. And the first time, it was said by Amon after “He” stole his thoughts. In fact, Amon didn’t know the exact meaning behind it, nor did “He” truly grasp the incantation.

Therefore, in essence, this was the first time.

At the borders of the legendary Western Continent, outside his hometown that had vanished, this was the first time that he heard the incantation that caused him to transmigrate into the real world. He heard one of the most important secrets hidden at the bottom of his heart and heard the oriental honorific name that was pointed at an unknown existence.

He stood there, his mind almost blank. His ears echoed with occasional sounds of chanting and shouting.

“The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings…

“The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings…

“The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings…”

When the voices became softer and softer until they almost disappeared, Klein finally recovered his train of thought.

As a fake god that had done a lot of “guilty matters,” his first reaction was:

By changing ‘The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings’ to the ‘King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck,’ will I suffer divine punishment?

Back when he had set up the three-stanza honorific name of The Fool, the first stanza described his experience and state. Back then, he had thought that it was a transmigration, and he was afraid of exposing the problem. He had changed “The Fool from an alternate world” to “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era”, but in the end, it pointed to his true nature. The second stanza was to bind the gray fog to him, making the direction clearer.

And in order to completely limit and not cause any ambiguity, Klein directly translated the last line of the incantation which was, “The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

He originally thought that it was nothing, but later on, he suspected that his “transmigration” was a result of the former owner of the strange door of light in Sefirah Castle—The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings. Or rather, it was a certain existence hiding “Their” true identity. Of course, it was also possible that the “The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings” was the actual incarnation before creating another identity that suited the present world. As for what the identity was, Klein wasn’t sure.

This was because he had never heard the honorific name of The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings elsewhere in the real world. Therefore, although there was suspicion and fear present, he didn’t actually pay too much attention to it. It seemed like he was already used to it.

However, at that moment, the words “The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings” were like salvos that kept blasting at his heart, bombarding his mind, causing all the concerns and fear that he had accumulated in his subconscious to surge out.

After regaining his composure, he began to force himself to use his rationality to think about his current situation:

Is this chanting hidden in the grayish-white fog, or is it from the vanished Western Continent?

I already thought that this fog’s color and state is very close to the one below Sefirah Castle… Its power comes from “history”? One has to have the correct powers over “time” to open it?

Queen of Calamity Cohinem once said that the Western Continent would definitely reappear at the dawn of the apocalypse… In other words, only by pushing “time” towards that temporal node would the grayish-white fog come alive. Only then would it be possible to use the corresponding incantation to open it?

The person who made the Western Continent vanish, seal it, or create a protective quarantine… is The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings, the existence suspected to be the previous owner of Sefirah Castle?

According to all the clues, Sefirah Castle and the rest were left behind by the original Creator. They were created by the various parts of “His” body, or something that “He” personally created… The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings is equivalent to the former owner of Sefirah Castle, and also equivalent to the original Creator? However, Sefirah Castle existed only after the original Creator split. Furthermore, the chants of The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings only point to Sefirah Castle and don’t affect places like the Chaos Sea…

Also, the disappearance of the Western Continent is definitely something from before the Second Epoch. As an ancient god, even Elf King Soniathrym was unable to return to "His" hometown…

In other words, in the chaotic and crazy First Epoch or even before then, the original Creator—the Oldest One—had split into objects like Chaos Sea and Sefirah Castle. More things happened before the ancient gods were born? These matters caused the Western Continent to vanish, and the former owner of Sefirah Castle to disappear?

The prophecy of the ancient sun god—the City of Silver's Creator—is also very interesting. It says that someone will walk out of this grayish-white fog, so "He" sent people to stay in Moon City and guard this place. Strictly speaking, I actually come from the Western continent or this grayish-white fog. However, I left the Western Continent to enter Sefirah Castle in a time long before the ancient sun god's prediction. The year I left the grayish-white fog was 1349 and found myself in Loen…

Yes, after going around in circles, I came here again and met with the people from Moon City… The ancient sun god's prophecy really has come true. It's just that the process is a little twisted and complicated, but the way it was achieved is rather unexpected…

As he pondered, his mood gradually improved. This was because the situation at the scene and his spiritual intuition had told him that there were still civilizations in the Western Continent that were isolated by the grayish-white fog. Many people were still alive.

This method of making the Western Continent vanish reminds me of the ritual for Miracle Invoker, as well as using the power of space-time. They are mainly from the Apprentice and Marauder pathways… So, the previous owner of Sefirah Castle, The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings, corresponds to these three neighboring pathways? Klein reined in his thoughts as he took two steps forward.

He then turned around and said to Nim and the rest, "I heard the voice clearly."

"…What are they saying?" Nim's grayish-white eyes suddenly widened, his deeply pockmarked face filled with excitement.

A'dal, Xin, Rus, and company had similar reactions, ones that were even more intense.

Even their bodies began to tremble.

This was a problem that had troubled the residents of Moon City for more than a thousand years. Resolving this problem was a symbol of escaping their current predicament!

Klein took a deep breath and said in the tone of a charlatan, "They are praying to my Lord."

This was definitely not a lie. After all, as The Fool, he had already gained initial mastery of Sefirah Castle. The last sentence of his honorific name was the "King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck," which was equivalent to "The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings."

Nim and company fell silent. When they looked back at Klein, their eyes were filled with obvious respect and fear.

Together with the "miracles" Klein had displayed, they gradually viewed Mr. Fool as their savior.

Klein surveyed the area and said, "Retreat at least a hundred meters."

"Alright, Your Excellency." The High Priest, Nim, agreed without hesitation.

After the Moon City's Beyonders had retreated to a sufficient distance, Klein reached into the void with his right hand and quickly dragged out another projection of himself as his actual body disappeared.

Right on the heels of that, the Historical Void projection of Klein walked to the front of the solidified grayish-white fog. He extended his right hand and pressed it down.

It was as if there was an invisible barrier that was slightly cold, blocking everything.

After staring at it for two seconds, Klein opened his mouth, suppressed his voice, and recited in Chinese, “The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

As his voice echoed out, the grayish-white fog in front of him didn’t react at all. It remained still and frozen.

He waited for nearly a minute. After some thought, he took a deep breath and muttered again:

“The Immortal Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings;

“The Sky Lord of Heaven and Earth for Blessings;

“The Exalted Thearch of Heaven and Earth for Blessings;

“The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

This was the complete incantation of the luck enhancement ritual.

As the last word was said, Klein’s right hand that was pressing on the invisible barrier suddenly felt an obvious tremble.

The gray fog began to shake as though a boulder had been thrown into a lake.

The ripples quickly spread, overlapping each other as they formed a “door” in front of him.

A bolt of lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the scene. Not far away, the pupils of the Moon City Beyonders widened as they were unable to shift their eyes away.

Amongst them, the ones who arrived later felt their hearts waver after witnessing such a scene. They found it impossible to contain themselves.

To them, this was undoubtedly a miracle!

Klein held his breath as he waited for the door to take shape. However, the ripples finally calmed down. They were only a step away from success.

"…" After a moment of silence, Klein repeated the incantations again. However, even if the ripples in the grayish-white fog didn't disappear, they were unable to truly outline the door.

For a moment, he wanted to attempt with the complete ritual procedure. In other words, he would place four portions of food and recite the incantations while taking four steps counterclockwise. But very quickly, he was amused by his idea.

Because by doing this, he would enter Sefirah Castle without opening the invisible barrier here.

After exhaling, Klein took out a gold coin from the void and used divination to confirm that the effects of the complete ritual would be as he imagined.

It really isn't time yet because the apocalypse hasn't dawned on us? Klein looked at the grayish-white fog in front of him for a few minutes without any movement.

When a bolt of lightning tore through the sky and illuminated his face, he turned around and walked in front of the Moon City High Priest, Nim, with the lantern in hand. He said calmly, "It hasn't reached the correct point in time to open it, as spoken in the revelation. There's more than a decade of waiting left."

Without waiting for any response from the likes of Nim, A'dal, and the rest, Klein pointed to the nearby darkness with his empty right hand.

“I will be meditating here for some time. If you want to experience the radiance of the Lord and listen to ‘His’ teachings, you can come here anytime whenever the lightning frequency is high.

“I’ll do a single purification and treatment session every day, at a time when the lightning is most frequent.”

He didn’t attempt to get the residents of Moon City to convert their faiths, nor did he plan on heading directly to the city or ask about any specific information. He wanted to give them some time to take things in.

Nim secretly heaved a sigh of relief and replied with increasingly great respect, “I will pass on your words to everyone.”

Chapter 1216 - Patience Will Ultimately Pay Off

◆ ◆ ◆

City of Silver, at the top of the spire, in the Chief’s room.

With white hair and an old scar on his face, Colin Iliad looked out of the window at the deep darkness. It was only when a silvery-white light suddenly burst out from afar, bringing a few seconds of light, that he retracted his gaze and nodded slightly.

Chirmont has succeeded in advancing…

His gaze landed on the two-meter-tall youth standing in the middle of the room.

“Derrick, do you know why I kept delaying the subsequent plans and didn’t implement them after the first exploration of the Giant King’s Court, despite already becoming a Sequence 3 Silver Knight?”

Derrick thought for a moment and said, “Your Excellency, on the one hand, you wish to see if there are any other paths you can take to the seaside. On the other hand, you are waiting for the other Elders of the six-member council to advance to Sequence 3.”

And now, both matters were completed.

Nearly five months ago, an expedition team of the City of Silver discovered a hidden path. From there, they circled around the mountain where the Giant King’s Court was located, and they arrived at the sea. However, the sea was illusory, and there was no way to pass through it. Forcefully entering the water only caused bodies to gradually crumble.

Now, another demigod of the six-member council, Waite Chirmont, had finally advanced, becoming a Sequence 3 Silver Knight. He could have an honorific name and receive the prayers of the other residents of the City of Silver within a certain range.

Colin Iliad sighed and said, “Very good. You have a very well-rounded understanding of the situation.

“If I had a choice, I truly do not wish to bring you to the Giant King’s Court again and attempt to open the palace where Dark Angel lays in slumber…”

At this point, Demon Hunter Colin paused for a moment before continuing, “I do not know what danger such an expedition will bring. I can only make ample preparations in advance. Now, Chirmont has finally succeeded. Even if an accident happens later and we are unable to return, he and the other Elders will be able to support the City of Silver, allowing everything to continue on as we await the next opportunity.”

He sized up Derrick for a few seconds before nodding in acknowledgment.

“Your growth is even better than I expected. If not for the fact that the Giant King’s Court matter originated because of you, I’d really want to keep you in the City of Silver and be an understudy Elder of the six-member council.”

Upon hearing this, Derrick Berg replied without hesitation, “Even if you wish to keep me here in the City of Silver, I would still apply to go.”

This was a glimmer of hope that he had seen. This was an opportunity in his heart that could save the City of Silver. He was willing to sacrifice everything for it.

Colin Iliad gave a rare smile.

“You are still too young. After you experience many things like me, you will understand that compared to drawing your sword and sacrificing your blood in a zealous fervor, enduring humiliation and helplessness, and persisting in the darkness is even more difficult and painful.

“If you don’t believe me, you can ask Chirmont later. Ask him if he is willing to lead an expedition team to the Giant King’s Court, or stay in the City of Silver.”

Derrick fell into silence, his mouth agape, but not a single word came out of it.

Colin Iliad didn’t continue on this topic and instead asked, “Have you completely digested the Priest of Light potion?”

“I digested it completely last week,” Derrick replied frankly.

Colin Iliad nodded and said, “Have you gathered all the supplementary ingredients?”

Derrick acknowledged tersely.

“I’ve gathered all of them. I’m just short of preparing the ritual.”

His ritual required him to extract the strongest emotions that he was unwilling to abandon, before injecting them again after consuming the potion.

After a few gatherings with the Tarot Club, as well as Miss Justice’s private attempts, they had already come up with a well-formulated plan.

He was to complete it by relying on this Sequence 4 Manipulator’s control of the psyche domain, and Mr. Fool’s Angel’s Embrace.

Demon Hunter Colin didn’t rush him as he calmly said, “Don’t be anxious. The second exploration of the Giant King’s Court will still take some time.”

“Until I become an Unshadowed?” Derrick asked.

Colin Iliad didn’t deny it as he nodded slightly.

“I’m also waiting for Lovia to become a Black Knight. Her ingredients and ritual have been prepared.”

Upon hearing this, Derrick immediately felt pressured.

†

At the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, City of Generosity, Bayam. At the top of the bell tower of the City of Generosity.

The cardinal of the Church of Storms, the high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers, Sea King Jahn Kottman, stood behind the railing, looking at the sea which was no longer that blue. There was wreckage floating above it, burning with the remains of ships.

“Humph, in my territory at sea, even a War Bishop has to bow his head…” The muscular demigod with a chiseled face retracted his gaze as he muttered.

He had a head of dark blue hair and a pair of deep blue eyes that were as thick as a worm. He controlled the weather and sea around the Rorsted Archipelago.

Alger Wilson, who was standing beside the Sea King, didn’t show any signs of frustration. He patiently waited until Jahn Kottman turned his attention onto him.

Aside from most of the Beyonders of the Sailor pathway being bad-tempered, they often trembled in submission when facing High-Sequence Beyonders of the same pathway. This was a characteristic of a “Tyrant.”

After muttering to himself, Sea King Jahn Kottman finally cast his gaze at Alger, who was leading a “pirate” fleet. He said without any expression, “Your performance this time was remarkable. The Council of Cardinals has passed your review and has decided that I will preside over your advancement ritual.”

After receiving the item left behind by Queen of Calamity Cohinem, Alger found an opportunity to report the matter to Sea King Jahn Kottman.

Apart from two details that he modified, he had given an honest account of the exploration of the elven ruins from the time he arrived in the primitive forest of Sonia Island.

Firstly, he claimed that he had headed for the elven ruins as part of him taking the initiative to ambush the Feysacian troops. They had specially looked for a suitable venue, and there were many sailors present to verify it.

The second was to lessen the autonomy of the subsequent actions. He only claimed that he dreamed of a female high elf on the night of his exploration of the ruins. Nothing abnormal happened after he drank a glass of wine from her, so he hadn’t paid too much attention to it. When he came to the Rorsted Archipelago and woke up one night from his sleep, he suddenly realized that he had entered a magnificent palace at the bottom of the sea, and had picked up a sparking coral.

Although many aspects of the evidence and physical evidence had indicated that Alger’s description was real, Sea King Jahn Kottman didn’t fully believe it. He was sent back to Pasu Island to be investigated by the pontiff, Gaard II.

With the help of “Angel’s Embrace,” Alger looked like he was trembling in front of the Tyrant’s aura. Without holding back, he explained that he had developed a certain degree of ambition after meeting the female high elf in his dreams. For this, he had taken the initiative to head to the Rorsted Archipelago in hopes of receiving her inheritance, but in reality, he had covered up the core secrets and the most serious problem.

He had used the method of confessing his “ambition” to pass the investigation. As for the female high elf, whether it was a result of him having some elven blood that a fortuitous encounter was given to him, or if she had any hidden motives, he claimed that he was unsure. He hoped that the pontiff could figure out the answer to lessen his worries.

Alger displayed his fear of the unknown, making the cardinals believe that this was the main reason why he had reported the fortuitous encounter.

This proposal was designed by Alger himself, but with Miss Justice’s suggestions, it was tweaked to be more in line with human nature.

Of course, as expected, Alger didn’t receive the advancement ritual. Instead, he entered an inspection period.

The pontiff of the Church of Storms, the Grounded Angel, had reinforced the seal in Alger’s body, preventing the Cataclysmic Interrer characteristic from seeping out for two years and affecting him.

In the past half a year, Alger had led the pirate fleet that had been assigned to him. He had worked hard to harass the ships of Feysac and Feynapotter. He had even participated in sea battles, taking great risks and making numerous contributions. This fully expressed his devotion to the Lord of Storms, as well as his submission to the orders given by the Church.

Finally, after this Rorsted sea battle, the situation had escalated. His patience paid off as the Council of Cardinals acknowledged him.

Alger took a deep breath and struck his right fist to his left breast, shouting loudly, “Holy Lord of Storms!”

His agitation was half an act, while the other half came from the bottom of his heart. This was because in the past half-year, he had suffered quite a bit of pressure.

Ma'am Hermit had already finished digesting the Mysticologist potion and was preparing to advance to Sequence 3, Clairvoyant;

Although Miss Justice had yet to fully digest the Manipulator potion, she had made significant progress. Furthermore, she was a complete rookie when she first joined the Tarot Club. Now, she had become a true demigod. She wasn't just a Sequence higher than Alger, but a whole tier;

Before long, The Sun could advance to Sequence 4, Unshadowed, and obtain godhood;

The Star had also finished digesting the Sequence 5 potion and had accumulated a significant amount of contributions. He was just waiting for the higher-ups to give him a chance;

Miss Magician wasn't far from digesting her potion after "Traveling" time and time again. Furthermore, her teacher had prepared the corresponding Sequence 4 Secrets Sorcerer ingredients for her;

There was no need to mention The World Gehrman Sparrow. Even if he were to suddenly inform them that he was an angel, Alger wouldn't find it surprising;

Miss Judgment was currently a Sequence 5 Disciplinary Paladin. She was digesting the potion and was trying her best to keep up with everyone's progress;

The Moon, who didn't like to work hard, became anxious as a result and was seeking to become a Sanguine Earl.

Faced with such a situation, as one of the most senior members of the Tarot Club, Alger naturally didn't wish to be left behind. He desperately wished to advance to Sequence 4 and become a demigod.

So many days had gone by; yet, he suppressed his anxiety and patiently waited. There were two instances where he showed signs of losing control which required him to hire Miss Justice to treat him.

And now, he finally got the answer he wanted the most:

He had passed the assessment and was to prepare for the ritual!

Chapter 1217 - The Five Mush and Two Rooms

◆

Moon City.

Many humans walked out of buildings which stood unusually sturdily despite having mottled surfaces. Some of them were obviously deformed, while others had already developed some abnormalities.

The humans looked at each other and noticed some confusion on each other's faces.

There were still two to three months before the Sun Sacrifice. Why was the High Priest summoning everyone to the square?

Could something have happened? The residents of Moon City were filled with anxiety, fear, and confusion as they entered the only square from every street.

At this moment, the high platform was empty. The person who had convened them appeared to have not arrived.

The residents of Moon City gathered together in a very orderly manner according to their respective zones, and they discussed amongst each other in whispers.

"Why isn't the High Priest here yet?"

"Doesn't he like to wait and not want others to wait for him?"

"What happened exactly? Why did he suddenly gather all the city's residents aside from the guards?”

†

Amidst the voices, at the top of a tower near the square, High Priest Nim leaned against the wall and looked at the square from behind the crystal glass with a twisted expression as he endured something.

His grayish-white hair flared up as a bunch of short black hair grew on his face. His ribs and waist were squirming, forming a swollen patch.

These abnormal changes would disappear and occasionally appear. It was as if he was suffering from relapses again and again. His entire being was sinister and terrifying.

After about a minute, he finally calmed down. He let out a long breath and wiped the cold sweat on his forehead.

Just now, he had been resisting the madness that had accumulated in his body.

In fact, no matter which Beyonder pathway it was, the higher the Sequence, the greater the insanity and inhuman inclinations one had. This gradually exceeded one’s own humanity. One had to rely on external anchors to maintain a balance.

Normally, such situations weren’t obvious at Sequence 4 and Sequence 3. And at the level of an angel, even if there were enough anchors to stabilize them, they would fall into darkness from time to time. In the negative and abnormal states, one had to endure and resist on their own, waiting for them to ease up.

They were like a sacred and solemn existence who might appear unproblematic normally. They could respond to prayers, chat normally, and even joke. However, at times, they could only hide in dark rooms and in the shadows. They tore off the surface of their skin, revealing a sinister side that showed signs of madness.

As Nim often ate monster flesh, he had accumulated a lot of toxins, corruption, and madness. This forced him to endure such pain despite being a Sequence 4.

Of course, those who didn't know the acting method and relied on time or luck to advance to Sequence 4 and Sequence 3 would also share the same fate.

After composing himself, he turned and left the room. With the help of an illusory door, he appeared on the high platform in the middle of the square.

After the discussions died down, the residents of Moon City cast doubtful and uneasy gazes at the High Priest.

Nim looked around and directly said, "The hunting team led by A'dal met an outsider."

An outsider! The eyes of the residents of Moon City suddenly widened as though it was a bolt from out of the blue.

This was the first time in two thousand years for Moon City to encounter an outsider! Of course, this was referring to human interaction and not monsters.

Nim took a deep breath and continued, "He claims to be a missionary who's here to spread the light of a deity. He caused the grayish-white fog to undergo obvious changes. He cleansed A'dal and the others of the corruption and toxins accumulated within them. Also, he treated their physical mutations."

As he spoke, he nodded to the side of the platform, and A'dal and Xin, who were hiding in the shadows, immediately passed through the row of torches and walked to his side, using their own conditions to prove what the High Priest had just said.

"Oh my…"

“God!”

“Is that A’dal and Xin?”

“They really, really…”

Exclamations sounded out as surprise and shock mixed together into something almost physical.

A’dal and Xin exchanged looks, took two steps forward, and recounted what their hunting team encountered.

The crowd heard about the tiny flame that appeared in the darkness, the cross that emitted a bright light, the cane that could cure any mutations and ailments, the parting of the grayish-white fog, as well as the appearance of the door. Upon hearing the hunting team’s delightful description of their excellent condition, the residents of Moon City gradually fell silent.

Some of them had already unknowingly teared up—a result of the extreme fatigue and repression. Finally, they saw a ray of light.

The tears carried a mild and salty feeling as they flowed past their faces, slipping across the corner of their lips and dripping onto the ground.

In addition, a person who was still rational and clear-headed raised his arm to express his opinion.

“Could that missionary be a special monster from deep within the darkness?”

“Are A’dal and Xin acting like this because they’ve already been controlled and influenced?”

After the wave of doubt calmed down, Nim said in a deep and clear voice, “I’ve checked them and have also used the Sealed Artifacts. I haven’t found anything unusual for the time being.

“I will let them remain in the black tower and undergo at least fifteen days of quarantine."

After making the promise, he paused and said, "That missionary named Gehrman Sparrow will be meditating in the vicinity of the grayish-white fog for some time. He has permitted us to experience the glory of the god he believes in, and listen to the corresponding teachings. And every day, at the time when the lightning frequency is highest, he will provide cleansing and treatment.

"Everyone can make their own decision on heading over there, but they have to report their decision in advance and follow instructions. No one is to act on their own accord and affect the city's defenses. After they return, they will be quarantined for fifteen days like A'dal and Xin."

The residents of Moon City fell silent. They looked at each other, unable to make up their minds.

At this moment, Rus and another member of the hunting team, who had previously missed the cleansing and treatment because of their choice to return to inform the High Priest, stepped forward.

"High Priest, I'm going!"

"Alright, I'll lead this… team tomorrow." Nim nodded and agreed.

He had originally planned to give this team a name, but he failed to come up with a good description. He could only stammer and skip it.

In his heart, there was actually a name, but he didn't dare say it out loud. It was: Pilgrimage.

With Rus and company leading the way, several Moon City residents stood forward, indicating that they were willing to take the risk.

When the frequency of lightning increased, it was the dawn of a brand new day. A group of seven to eight Moon City residents carried animal hide lanterns and began to traverse the darkness, heading towards the periphery of the grayish-white fog.

After darkness and light exchanged countless times, Rus and company's eyes suddenly lit up.

It was a bonfire that was slowly burning. Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing strange clothes and a strange hat, sat on the other side of it. He held an iron-black long skewer and was roasting something.

There were corpses of monsters lying around the bonfire. On these corpses, there were all sorts of strange objects. Some of them were white and full, as if they would spew out liquids the moment they were poked. Some of them were black, embedded with blood-colored lines and marbling. Some were covered with golden spots, while the tops were the size of a palm…

These items were densely packed, covering the different parts of the monster's corpse. They had a strange and alluring beauty to them.

[image]

After taking a few steps forward, High Priest Nim noticed that Gehrman Sparrow was roasting one of the strange objects. Drops of oil dripped down and produced sizzling sounds in the fire, brightening the light and allowing an alluring fragrance to spread.

Gulp. The residents of Moon City swallowed their saliva instinctively as they developed an irresistible urge to eat.

Every cell of theirs was screaming crazily:

I wish to eat it!

I want to eat it!

Give it to me!

Sitting on a rock, Klein raised his head and pointed at the colorful objects growing on the corpses of the monsters around him. He said in a deep voice, "These are called mushrooms. They're divided into different types. If you're willing, you can pick and eat them yourself, but do not touch the black ones. Furthermore, they have to be thoroughly cooked before you can eat them. Otherwise, you will encounter a terrifying curse."

The High Priest of Moon City thought for a moment and replied on behalf of the others, "We would like to first listen to your Lord's teachings and experience 'His' radiance."

With a slight nod, Klein said as he rotated the long barbecue skewer that he had summoned from the Historical Void, "You may sit down and listen."

When the eight Moon City residents sat opposite the bonfire, he said with a solemn expression, "I came from the Giant King's Court."

This was a term that all the residents of Moon City were familiar with. Their spirits were instantly lifted as they cast their attention away from the items above the burning fire and cast it at Gehrman Sparrow.

Following that, Klein described the situation outside the City of Silver and the situation beyond the cursed land. He also shared with them his sightings of city ruins along the way.

The residents of Moon City sighed when they heard this. Sometimes, they looked forward to it, but sometimes they found it hard to believe. At times, they could empathize with it and be filled with sorrow.

Halfway through his sentence, Klein suddenly stopped. He retracted the black long metal skewer, brought it to his mouth, and bit down on a mushroom.

Thick meat juices seeped out and, with a slightly scorching feeling, cleansed his mouth.

After spending half a year in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, Klein had already overcome his disgust towards mushrooms. After all, Danitz was often tasked by him with things to do. He was unable to meticulously prepare food and sacrifice things to him. During this period, he could only rely on mushrooms for sustenance.

He closed his eyes in satisfaction and handed over the long, black skewer. He smiled and said, “You can try some.”

High Priest Nim was still hesitant when Rus reached out his hand. As he expressed his gratitude, he got a mushroom and put it into his mouth.

He ate too quickly, so much so that his mouth was scalded. However, after his expression twisted, it suddenly froze.

Following that, his expression slowly relaxed as he gradually revealed a sense of intoxication, pleasure, and yearning.

In the end, Rus’s tears flowed out unknowingly as he muttered in a deep, choking voice, “This is the best and most superb food I’ve ever eaten…”

Even though their taste for food had changed after generations, humans couldn’t adapt to food with toxins and madness. They still yearned for sugar and fat.

At that moment, all the residents of Moon City could tell that Rus was moved.

Chapter 1218 - Clue

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“Give it a try too.” Klein handed the iron-black long skewer to the other residents of Moon City.

Their throats bobbed up and down as they couldn’t help but swallow another mouthful of saliva. However, they didn’t immediately respond. All of them cast their gazes at the High Priest, waiting for him to nod.

In his animal hide clothes, Nim took out an item. It looked like a magnifying glass with a handle.

At a glance, Klein almost imagined that he had seen a monocle. This fright made his heart skip a beat. Thankfully, he managed to control himself in time to confirm the details.

Holding the metallic handle, he placed the glass object in front of his right eye and observed Rus for a few seconds through the lens.

After a brief silence, he put down the item and nodded at the other Moon City residents.

People other than Rus finally reached out their hands and carefully removed a mushroom from the iron-black long skewer and stuffed it into their mouths.

The item that was void of nauseous smells and foulness made them instantly become intoxicated. Without caring about the scorching feeling in their oral cavities, they swallowed the mushrooms into their stomachs and instinctively reached out for another one.

However, all the mushrooms on the iron-black long skewer had already been distributed.

Nim retracted his gaze from the iron-black long skewer and waited for Gehrman Sparrow to continue explaining his experiences and The Fool's teachings.

Klein looked around and repeated the words he had previously said:

"The surrounding mushrooms can be taken at any time, apart from the pure black ones. In addition, they have to be fully cooked before they can be eaten. Otherwise, you will be cursed."

The residents of Moon City no longer hesitated. They immediately stood up and chose the mushrooms that they had been longing for.

With a glance, Klein added, "When the white mushrooms are cooked, they easily split open and have liquids flow out. You need to prepare some containers or drink them once that happens."

Without waiting for Rus and company to respond, he continued the topic that he had previously stopped mid-explanation. He went on until he mentioned how he heard the voices in the grayish-white fog chant Mr. Fool's honorific name.

Seeing that High Priest Nim so absorbed by his tales, to the point of being a little moved, Klein deliberated and said, "There are still many ways to make the grayish-white fog react, but they are all related to my Lord."

This was a reasonable guess. This was because not only was there one hanging person, but there wasn't only one way to enter the world above the gray fog. If Emperor Roselle had brought the mysterious silver plate that he had replicated here, there was a high chance that the invisible barrier would produce an anomaly. Of course, the prerequisite was that the Emperor belonged to one of the three pathways of Seer, Apprentice, or Marauder.

Seeing that there were no doubts from the others, Klein said warmly, “According to my observations, there isn’t only one Beyonder pathway in Moon City.”

The grizzled Nim didn’t hide it from him and simply replied, “Yes, when we were selected to come to Moon City, the Oracle had intentionally ensured that there was a comprehensive record of Beyonder pathways. Unfortunately, after all these years and the repeated disasters, many of the potion formulas and Beyonder ingredients of the various pathways have been lost.”

“Which pathway are you from?” Klein asked casually as he looked at the residents of Moon City using monster bones to roast the mushrooms.

“I’m a Nightwatcher,” Nim said frankly.

Sequence 4 Nightwatcher of the Evernight pathway? Klein nodded slightly and asked, “Did anything unusual happen near this grayish-white fog?”

After pondering for about ten seconds, Nim with his pockmarked face said, “Yes.”

Klein’s heart stirred as he calmly asked, “What kind of abnormality was it?”

Nim glanced at the mushrooms that emitted fragrant smells, and he deliberated over his words.

“A small hill suddenly disappeared, leaving only a deep crater in the ground.

“There were no signs of an explosion in that area, nor was there any soil scattered around.”

What’s going on? That’s a little bizarre… As he threw the mushroom’s roots into the fire to turn them into fuel for the flames, Klein asked without any change in expression, “Did you investigate further?”

“Yes.” The High Priest of Moon City nodded and said, “An investigation team encountered a demonic wolf there. It wasn’t a demonic wolf that has already rotted or mutated, but the kind of demonic wolf from a long time ago.”

Demonic wolf? Klein didn’t expect to hear such information. His pupils changed slightly as he asked, “What did that demonic wolf look like?”

Nim unconsciously took a deep breath and said, “It’s the same as the demonic wolves described in ancient literature, but it’s even bigger. Even though it’s eight legs are on the ground, it’s still as tall as two or three people combined.

“Its fur wasn’t pure black. It exuded a dark and deep feeling. Its eyes were very strange. The pupils—black pupils—took up a large part of the eyes. Also, there was a tuft of gray short hair on its head…”

This… Isn’t that the Dark Demonic Wolf, Kotar? It actually came to the far east of the Forsaken Land of the Gods, and was involved in an anomaly? If the power of the Western Continent’s disappearance really comes from Sefirah Castle, it would still be quite normal for it to attract the Mythical Creatures that corresponded to Miracle Invoker… Klein frowned slightly and said, “It didn’t attack your investigation team?”

Klein had deliberately used “it” instead of “He” to prevent frightening the residents of Moon City.

In his opinion, it was very easy for the Dark Demonic Wolf, Kotar, to wipe out an investigation team. It didn’t even need to pay a huge price to turn the city into “His” marionette kingdom. Yet, this Mythical Creature had apparently spared Moon City.

If not for the Spirit Body Threads that he had seen in advance and that he confirmed their conditions, Klein would’ve suspected that he was only talking to a few marionettes.

“No, it left in a hurry,” Nim replied.

This doesn't match the suspicious and cautious nature of the Dark Demonic Wolf… What frightened "Him" so much that he fled in such a hurry? "He" didn't even have the time to silence the people who saw "Him"… Or rather, there's something special about the people guarding Moon City under the ancient sun god's revelation, and unless it's necessary, the Dark Demonic Wolf wouldn't attack them? Klein continued without any change in his tone, "Did it leave any tracks?"

"No." Nim firmly shook his head. "Other than the hill turning into a deep crater, we didn't discover anything unusual."

As his thoughts raced, Klein tried to ask from another angle.

"When did this happen?"

The more he understood an object from the past, the more he could make contact with it in the fog of history.

After some thought, Nim said, "Two years ago, two months, and ten days ago."

He immediately explained, "There are too few things worth recording. It left a deep impression on me."

Two years ago, two months and ten days ago… Currently, it's 8th September 1351, and subtracting that time, it would be 28th June 1349… This… Klein's right hand suddenly trembled slightly.

His pupils and his expression were normal, but this was a result of using his Clown powers to control them.

He remembered very clearly that on 28th June 1349, he had "transmigrated." It was the day he became Klein Moretti, it was the day he repeated the luck enhancement ritual and entered Sefirah Castle!

The abnormality here, the appearance of the Dark Demonic Wolf, and the hasty departure of this Mythical Creature were all related to me? A huge wave of emotions surged through his heart.

For a moment, he couldn't find an explanation and pretended that nothing had happened. He thought for a moment and asked, "Did something similar happen in the past two to three thousand years?"

"No." Nim gave a clear answer.

"What about two hundred and eight years ago? Did anything special happen?" Klein asked.

That was the time when Emperor Roselle "transmigrated" to this world.

After hesitating for two seconds, Nim said, "I can't tell you the answer. I need to go back and read the corresponding records.

"Thankfully, the information and documents in the past three centuries haven't been damaged."

At this point, he added, "My limited impression tells me that there shouldn't be anything special."

If that's the case, then the cause of this anomaly was because I entered the world above the gray fog and bound Sefirah Castle to myself? Klein nodded slightly and didn't ask further. He simply said, "Tell me where the crater is."

By the time the High Priest, Nim, gave an answer, the mushrooms that the residents of Moon City had grilled could be eaten. Some of them took a small bite of the white mushrooms and were scalded by the milk inside. They couldn't bear to spit it out. Some chewed repeatedly, reminiscing over the faint sweetness. Some of them couldn't stop eating at all.

Nim was taken aback by what he saw, as though he couldn't believe that these people were from Moon City.

Every one of them was showing the conflicted looks of having cravings and being satisfied. Their expressions looked twisted, but they were brimming with pure joy.

“High Priest, try it as well.” Rus, whose eyes were very close to each other, handed a mushroom covered in golden spots that emitted a unique and sweet fragrance to Nim.

After hesitating for a moment, Nim carefully used the “magnifying glass” to take a look before taking the mushroom and stuffing it into his mouth.

In the next second, his expression changed slightly as he slowly closed his eyes.

He had a taste of something similar from some mutated tree roots, but it wasn’t as pure or memorable.

After an unknown period of time, he looked at the indifferent Gehrman Sparrow and said with an abnormally sincere tone, “Your Excellency, we would like to listen to Mr. Fool’s teachings.”

I haven’t had the time to make it up yet… However, as I’m getting closer and closer to being an angel, the corresponding matters should be prioritized… The anchors need to be prepared in advance… As his thoughts raced, Klein recalled what he had said when he had tricked—no, come up with to reform the believers of Sea God.

His expression quickly turned solemn as he raised his right hand and grabbed at the void. He pulled out a cross covered in bronze and sharp spikes.

Following that, he pressed his right thumb onto a thorn, letting the blood enter the Unshadowed Crucifix.

The bronze-green surface of the Unshadowed Crucifix quickly peeled off, revealing a body made of pure sunlight.

“God said…” Klein opened his mouth and said in a low voice as he raised the resplendent cross in his hand a lot higher.

Warm and bright light surged out like a tidal wave, instantly filling the surrounding area.

The darkness and discomfort accumulated in the bodies of Nim, Rus, and company began to rapidly melt away; It was as if their bodies were being cleansed.

They were in a daze when they heard the oracle, who was holding the resplendent cross and covered in holy radiance, solemnly say, “God said…

“First Commandment: Thou shalt not sacrifice unto me living human sacrifices.”

“Second Commandment: Thou shalt not use my name in vain.

Chapter 1219 - Changing the Goal

◆ ◆ ◆

In the Fog Sea, which hadn’t been engulfed by war, the Future slowly began to sail towards the Berserk Sea amidst a convoy of ships.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya hadn’t had much to do recently. All she had to do was wait for the Moses Ascetic Order to respond to her request. As she strolled the deck, she enjoyed the sunlight that shone through the thin mist.

With a sweep of her gaze, she saw Frank Lee.

This first mate of the Future, the second most important person of the Star Pirates, was wearing light blue pants and a white shirt with the top two buttons unbuttoned, revealing thick brown chest hair. He was like a humanoid giant bear.

He stood at the bow of the boat, looking into the distance. It was unknown what he was thinking, but he looked rather down.

Cattleya involuntarily slowed down a little as she turned to enter the cabin.

“Captain!” Frank noticed her and looked over with anticipation, as though he was waiting for this Admiral of Stars to answer his questions.

Cattleya’s figure paused as she adjusted the heavy glasses on her nose and asked in a seemingly casual manner, “What are you stumped with?”

Frank thought about how to phrase his question and replied in a serious manner, “I’m reevaluating the inventions and creations I’ve created over the years.”

“…What are your thoughts?” Cattleya asked cooperatively.

Frank nodded and said in distress, “There are too many matters I need to reflect on.

“The most important thing is that the things I’ve created are still missing the most important thing.”

Cattleya was puzzled, but she didn’t wish to ask further. In the end, she still held onto the thought of taking responsibility for all the crew members on the Future. She deliberated and said, “What is it?”

Frank’s expression instantly turned solemn.

“They all lack souls!”

“It’s a good thing that malt, grapes, and mushrooms don’t have souls…” Cattleya subconsciously advised before saying, “This isn’t something you can dabble in right now. You’re only a Sequence 5 Druid.”

Frank’s eyes lit up when he heard that as he blurted out, “I’ve got it!”

Cattleya frowned indiscernibly.

“What… did you get?”

Frank was no longer depressed.

“I understand the problem. That is, the creations I want have exceeded the limits of a Druid’s abilities.

“Therefore, Captain, I’m not going to be a Druid anymore. I want to become a Classical Alchemist!”

This was Sequence 4 of the Planter pathway, the starting point of a demigod.

Cattleya’s expression froze for a few seconds before she took on the posture of a captain and a demigod. She nodded gently and said, “Having a goal is a good thing, but you have to understand how difficult it is.”

Underlying those words, she wanted him to not hold any hopes and not to take this goal seriously.

Frank Lee nodded heavily after receiving her “encouragement.”

“I will do my best!”

To prevent Frank Lee from acting rashly, Cattleya decided to take the progress of the matter into her own hands.

“I will help you too.”

When the time came, even if she had any progress, she could inform Frank Lee that she had tried to no avail.

Frank was very happy as he thanked his captain from the bottom of his heart before continuing, “I’ll also write to Gehrman Sparrow and ask him for help.

“He’s my good friend!”

What Frank didn’t know was that the letters he had written for the past half a year had gone through a rather convoluted process:

The letter went to the messenger before being delivered to Fors. Fors would then transfer it to Gehrman Sparrow or request Mr. Fool’s help at the Tarot Gathering.

Cattleya nudged her thick glasses again and, without another word, turned and entered the cabin.

She returned to the captain’s cabin. Before she could think about what had just happened, she saw a letter on the desk with the brass sextant.

Cattleya was delighted. Ignoring the use of her Beyonder powers, she quickly walked over, picked up the letter, and opened it.

It was from Bernadette. After exchanging a few simple pleasantries, she wrote:

"If you are free anytime, you can come to La Cha incognito."

La Cha was a rather hidden island in the Fog Sea. It hid Queen Mystic's palace, also known as "Emerald City."

Cattleya repeated the sentence a few times before the corners of her mouth curled up involuntarily.

†

Backlund, West Borough, within the Odora family's villa.

Emlyn White once again met the middle-aged, gentlemanly Sanguine Baron, Cosmi Odora.

"What did Lord Nibbs say?" Emlyn controlled his emotions, trying his best to appear less eager.

Cosmi looked at Emlyn's bright red eyes and said, "He only wanted me to tell you that the entire Sanguine race doesn't have any excess Earl Beyonder characteristics. You can only wait for the present Earls to die of old age or accidents, leaving behind their inheritance."

Compared to humans, the Sanguine had a long lifespan. Even without a noble title, ordinary ones could live about three hundred years old. Under such circumstances, they could slowly accumulate and occupy every level, preventing any excess in Beyonder characteristics.

Therefore, it wasn't easy for ordinary ones to advance to Baron or become a Viscount. They either waited for the existing nobles to die, or they would obtain it from external sources. Otherwise, they would have to make sufficient contributions and receive the precious inheritance.

Compared to the first two Sequences, it was even more difficult for a Viscount to become an Earl. This was because being a Sanguine Earl meant being a demigod, and he could easily live for more than a thousand years. Those Viscounts' descendants had to pass generations before they could wait for a chance of an Earl's passing.

And it was precisely because of this that, as long as there was a vacancy in the Earl position, it would immediately be distributed and not "in stock."

For Baron and Viscount characteristics, they existed in the Sanguine's treasury in the form of Beyonder ingredients and Sealed Artifacts, but the numbers were few and far between. Every bestowment had to be strictly administered. There really weren't any spare Earl characteristics.

This answer was within Emlyn's expectations. He looked at Baron Cosmi and nodded slightly.

"In other words, as long as any Count passes away, it will be my turn?"

"No." Cosmi shook his head. "Although you have contributed plenty, you haven't reached first place on the waiting list yet."

"What's my ranking?" Emlyn first frowned before relaxing his brows to prevent his eagerness from showing.

Cosmi coughed and cleared his throat.

"Twelfth."

…This might not even happen when the apocalypse arrives… Since the Ancestor has given me the important task of saving the race, why didn't "She" arrange all these matters? My Scarlet Scholar potion has been

digested for months… Could it be that another test? Emlyn thought to himself silently for a few seconds before asking thoughtfully, “If I obtain an Earl’s characteristic from external sources, will the race help me prepare the ritual?”

Cosmi exhaled and said, “Of course!”

Emlyn didn’t stay any longer. He left Odora’s villa and took a carriage back to his residence.

Ever since Feynapotter declared war on Loen, he had never been to the Harvest Church. He had only heard from The Star that the door had been smashed and many things had been stolen. It had become a place for the homeless.

As for Father Utravsky, he spent half a month in a cell behind Chanis Gate. The rest of the month was spent in a room on the upper level of Saint Samuel Cathedral, with the archbishop of Backlund next door. This arrangement was repeated over and over again.

This was because they were worried that if Father Utravsky were to stay behind Chanis Gate for an extended period of time, he would suffer irreversible damage. Under such a tense situation, the Church of Evernight wished to leave some buffer time so that they could use this opportunity to express their goodwill and begin negotiations.

Although Emlyn wasn’t a believer in Evernight, and he even somewhat detested the cathedral, he went to Saint Samuel Cathedral twice a month to visit Father Utravsky.

Where can I obtain an Earl’s characteristic… Emlyn, who felt that he had fallen behind and might not be able to bear the responsibility of saving his race, looked at the bleak streets while seriously considering every possibility.

He quickly had some ideas.

Ma’am Hermit had mentioned before that the Aurora Order’s Saint,

Saint Tenebrous, had Grazed a Shaman King. This corresponded to the Earl characteristic. If I could hunt this demigod of the Shepherd pathway like the Saint of Secrets, the problem would be resolved…

However, after the previous lesson, Saint Tenebrous probably wouldn't fall into a trap so easily…

There's also a possibility of directly attracting a King of Angels…

This was something everyone had discussed in the Tarot Club. The conclusion was that they had been attacking the Aurora Order for the past year, so it was best not to provoke them further.

Apart from Saint Tenebrous having a Sequence 4 Shaman King characteristic, Emlyn White could only think of one other option:

The Rose School of Thought!

Be it the Life School of Thought's Artificial Vampires or the Primordial Moon worshipers that originally existed in the Southern Continent, they were now part of the Rose School of Thought.

Of course, there were definitely some people who sought freedom. They hadn't joined any organizations yet, but either they were not at high Sequences, or they didn't have enough information to leak out.

Upon thinking of the Rose School of Thought, Emlyn instantly recalled a person.

Maric!

Maric represented the temperance faction of the Rose School of Thought. It was a faction that resisted the Mother Tree of Desire.

They also appear like they want to obtain something from the Rose School of Thought. Perhaps I can cooperate with them… Emlyn nodded slightly.

†

A number of residents in Moon City anxiously gathered at the entrance, casting their sights east from time to time.

They were the relatives of the people who had previously been led by the High Priest. They were also the representatives of most people in Moon City.

Finally, as the flames flickered, High Priest Nim, brought Rus and company closer to Moon City.

A man went forward and looked at his sister. He noticed that there were still traces of tears on her face.

This Moon City resident, who wasn’t deformed, could sense her brother’s gaze. She couldn’t help but open her mouth, tears streaming down her face.

“God, God is here to save us…” She started to cry. It was such a sad and free cry as she let out her emotions.

Chapter 1220 - A “Curtain”

◈◈◈

“God, God is here to save us…”

The words spoken in a sob-filled voice echoed at the entrance of Moon City, causing the residents who were waiting to fall into a trance.

†

At the edges of the grayish-white fog, a fire quietly burned.

After eating another batch of mushrooms, Klein dispelled the iron-black skewer in his hand and looked up at the crater described by Moon City’s High Priest, Nim.

He then reached out with his right hand and gently pulled, dragging “himself” out from fifteen minutes ago.

After exchanging looks, Klein’s true form rapidly vanished and entered the fog of history. He ran all the way to a time before the First Epoch, and he sat in the old stacked cities.

His historical projection stood up and snapped his fingers repeatedly, flashing through the crimson flames as he headed for his destination.

When the crater that was once a hill was almost right in front of him, he stopped. He cautiously extended his right palm and pulled Qonas Kilgor out of the void.

The burly Earl of The Fallen’s facial muscles twitched as he quickly transformed into another Gehrman Sparrow.

He took out a lantern from the fog of history with one hand and rubbed his temples with the other as he muttered softly, “Why does a marionette have to change its appearance?

“There’s no one else here…

“I can’t develop OCD…”

A few seconds later, the marionette’s projection carried a lantern that emitted faint yellow light as it walked towards the crater not far away.

As the light flickered, Klein saw his target location and realized that it wasn’t too deep. The difference between the bottom and the ground wasn’t more than two meters. Of course, compared to the original hill, this change was indeed huge.

Inside the “crater,” the soil was smooth, and there were a few rocks in it. There were many twisted, mutated plants around it whose species were difficult to distinguish. It looked no different from other places.

After observing for a while, Klein, who had stealthily activated Spirit Body Threads and Spirit Body Threads vision, slowly entered the crater, planning on following his preplanned route and reassessing everything worth paying attention to.

As he walked, he frowned slightly and let out an exclamation.

He realized that his thoughts had turned sluggish, but it didn’t affect his thinking!

It was as if he had slept too much and had just woken up—having a heavy head with insufficiently active thoughts.

This was a situation that a person would occasionally experience. Beyonders of the other pathways might not be able to detect it, but as a demigod of the Seer pathway, Klein could clearly sense something amiss.

If it were any deeper, it would be close to the effect when a Marionettist controls Spirit Body Threads… The influence left behind by Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar? That's not right. If "He" didn't mean to leave it behind, it means that "He" showed "His" complete Mythical Creature form back then. That would've resulted in Moon City's investigation team in breaking down and losing control… If "He" had intentionally left it behind, what would be the purpose? Telling others that "He" was here? Klein circled the area in puzzlement, but he didn't discover any anomalies.

After some thought, he let his main body that was hiding in the Historical Void in a time before the First Epoch take four steps counterclockwise as he recited the incantation and went above the gray fog.

He wanted to do a divination!

With the exact time and location, Nim's description, and a real-world survey of the area, as well as lighting up some of the historical fragments, he believed that the prerequisite for making a "divination" had basically been met.

This didn't mean it was enough, but that he could barely give it a try. Besides, if the hill turning into a crater incident had something to do with Sefirah Castle and him, then the chances of a successful divination would greatly increase. The revelation would be very clear and not be interfered with.

Without any further thought, he sat on The Fool's high-back chair. He conjured a dark red fountain pen and yellow parchment and wrote:

"28th June of June 1349 of the Fifth Epoch. The anomaly that happened here."

He put down the fountain pen and grabbed with his left hand. He pulled out a handful of crater soil from the fog of history to use it as a medium for divination.

With one hand holding the soil and the other holding the parchment, he leaned back in his chair and recited the divination statement seven times. Then, with the help of Cogitation, he fell asleep.

In the hazy dream world, Klein saw the grayish-white solidified fog. He saw the hill that was tens of meters high, and the twisted vegetation around it.

A few seconds later, the fog began to churn and rapidly "vomited" a black shadow.

The black shadow was like a huge velvet curtain, madly absorbing all the light around it.

Its translucency increased as it completely enveloped the hill.

Following that, the hill vanished without a trace, leaving behind only a crater.

The strange plants at the edge of the crater were also suddenly covered and had black illusory Spirit Body Threads that extended towards different parts of the black "curtain."

The "curtain" became more and more transparent and illusory until it reached a point where one couldn't see it with the naked eye. If not for the fact that he had Spirit Body Threads vision to observe the reality of the scene, Klein wouldn't have been able to discover that the "curtain" had covered the crater's surface.

The scene flashed, and the dreamscape twisted to reveal a new scene.

Moon City's 5-man patrol team approached and discovered that a crater had replaced the hill that had vanished.

They stopped in their tracks and left the area without hesitation. They didn't rashly investigate.

After an unknown period of time, a gigantic figure suddenly appeared in another direction.

It was a demonic wolf covered in dark fur with eight legs. It was about four to five meters tall.

The demonic wolf had a tuft of short, grayish-white fur on its forehead. Its pure black pupils covered at least three-quarters of the space of its eyes. It was none other than the Dark Demonic Wolf, Kotar.

The Dark Demonic Wolf raised "His" head and opened "His" mouth, as though "He" was screaming, but nothing happened.

In the next second, a figure appeared in front of "Him." It was another "Him."

The Dark Demonic Wolf's historical projection did a simple step with "His" eight legs and "He" instantly arrived beside the crater.

After "He" surveyed the area, "He" carefully lowered "His" head and picked up the completely transparent "curtain" that had made the entire hill disappear.

The "curtain" suddenly came alive as it rapidly contracted and spun. It wrapped around the black demonic wolf as if it was adding half a black translucent piece of clothing to "Him."

The Dark Demonic Wolf trembled slightly, as if it had become a "clothed" marionette in two to three seconds.

However, this was only a Historical Void projection. The next breath didn't happen as the main body stopped maintaining the projection.

The "curtain" lost its support as it instantly collapsed and lay spread out on the ground.

Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar didn't give up. "He" occasionally transformed the monsters around "Him" into marionettes or summoned historical projections, allowing them to go forward again and again, experiencing all kinds of failures. However, in the end, “His” newest batch of marionettes still managed to pick up and control the “curtain.”

The entire process was silent, as though it was a mime act.

Following that, the gigantic demonic wolf made the marionettes bring the “curtain” to “Him.”

At that moment, the grayish-white fog around “Him” churned again, forming a vortex that was comparable to a hill.

The vortex emitted an invisible suction force, causing the strange “curtain” and Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar to be thrown towards it at the same time!

Such a scene caused a substantial ripple to appear in the dreamscape. Countless points of light appeared, making it difficult for him to see the specific details.

When everything returned to normal, Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar draped the transparent “curtain” around “Him” and rapidly flew away from the solidified fog.

And at that moment, the Moon City investigation team arrived and saw the ancient subsidiary god leave.

Kotar glanced at them, but “He” didn’t stop, vanishing into the darkness.

At this point, the scene shattered and the dream ended. Klein woke up.

He sat up straight and tapped the edge of the long mottled table with his fingers as he silently muttered, It’s not that there weren’t any anomalies before I arrived. More likely it is that the guards from Moon City didn’t discover it. After all, the fog extends outwards to an unknown limit…

What’s that “curtain” that was spat out by the grayish-white fog? It can cover a hill when it’s large, turning it into a crater, as though by magic. When it’s small, it can be used as “clothes” by the demonic wolf, turning “Him” into a marionette… It’s a little like a high Sequence item of the Seer pathway…

It was spat out because I entered the world above the gray fog and completed the binding with Sefirah Castle?

It seems to be able to turn the surrounding vegetation into its marionettes… This gives me a familiar feeling…

Yes, there was something wrong with the food laid out in the rooms of the foggy town back then. Spirit Body Threads were growing out of them, reaching out towards the core of the cathedral. Once they’ve been eaten, one will instantly evaporate and vanish. Yes, they end up hanging in the cathedral and becoming a marionette…

In other words, once one reaches the level of Miracle Invoker or Attendant of Mysteries, one can make plants or objects with spirituality grow Spirit Body Threads, so as to turn them into marionettes?

…Is that “curtain” the Beyonder characteristics of a Miracle Invoker or Attendant of Mysteries?

Judging from the Dark Demonic Wolf’s performance, it might very well be the latter…

This is the reason why one Attendant of Mysteries characteristic has been missing for a long period of time. There were only clues, but no one could find it?

Before Sefirah Castle had an “owner,” the grayish-white fog unconsciously attracted the high Sequence characteristics of the three pathways across space and accommodated them? What is it trying to do?

That suction force is really very strong. It frightened even Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar. “He” didn’t even stop, only having thoughts of escaping…

What was “He” suspecting? What was “He” afraid of?

After some analysis, there was a look of excitement on his face.

If he could successfully hunt down an angel like the Dark Demonic Wolf, it would be an unparalleled harvest!

Of course, the Dark Demonic Wolf, who now had the “curtain,” was much harder to deal with than before. This matter had greatly reduced his confidence in succeeding.

As his thoughts raced, he suddenly recalled something:

From the timing of these sequence of events, the Dark Demonic Wolf clearly had the “curtain” by the time he arrived in the northern city ruins, Nois…

“He” turned the entire city into marionettes and created a marionette city. It wasn’t to settle down, nor was it to accumulate helpers. It was to prepare the ritual for Attendant of Mysteries?

Chapter 1221 - Leaving a Message

◆

If the Dark Demonic Wolf really is preparing the Attendant of Mysteries ritual, then “His” whereabouts won’t lack traces… Klein nodded slowly. He already had some vague ideas on his mind, but he was still unable to truly sort them out.

He instinctively wanted to divine the location of the “curtain” by using the soil that had been tainted by the “curtain,” so as to lock onto the location of the Dark Demonic Wolf. However, considering how the latter was an angel, such a method would most likely alarm “Him,” alerting “Him” and causing “Him” to take precautionary measures. Therefore, Klein rationally gave up on this idea and returned to the real world. He thought hard about formulating a plan.

The next day, when there was a high frequency of lightning, another batch of Moon City residents came to Gehrman Sparrow’s bonfire under the leadership of a priest named Duke. They listened to his teachings, enjoyed the mushrooms, and waited to be cleansed.

After the residents of Moon City experienced the cleansing, with tears streaming down their faces, Klein looked around and casually asked, “The sun god told you to guard this land and to take note of anyone walking out of the fog?”

Duke, who had been cured of his bloated ailment, knew that the High Priest had mentioned this matter to the oracle before him. He answered rather calmly, “Yes.”

Klein nodded slightly and continued on the topic.

“If you really discover someone walking out of the fog, what will you need to do?”

Duke said without hesitation, “Recite the honorific name of the great sun god immediately and… report this matter to ‘Him’…”

As he spoke, his tone became very depressed. In the end, he was unable to formulate his words. This was because the sun god—the Creator—hadn’t given any response for more than two thousand years. Even though Moon City had held the most complete rituals and repeatedly chanted the honorific name, there had been no response.

“Anything else?” Klein pressed as he sharply noticed something.

This was a revelation from his spiritual intuition, and also a result of a certain degree of deduction. It was obvious that the ancient sun god and the City of Silver Creator would have considered this problem. One possibility was that the person who walked out of the grayish-white fog was extremely careful. He was very cautious and didn’t enjoy being watched or monitored. After discovering the patrol team in Moon City, he would be inclined to use his Beyonder powers to affect their minds, making them forget that they had seen him or reciting the honorific name.

In this situation, the ancient sun god should’ve made certain arrangements.

Of course, this wasn’t absolute. If Amon’s father could accurately predict that the person walking out of the grayish-white fog was a rookie, then there was no need to say too much in the revelation.

However, considering how the ancient sun god—the City of Silver’s Creator—had made an error in predicting where he would come out from the grayish-white fog, Klein was doubtful of the aforementioned possibility.

Duke thought for a moment and hesitated before saying, “To welcome that person and tell him a single word.”

Klein’s spirits were immediately lifted as he asked without batting an eyelid, “What word?”

Duke’s lips quivered as though he was mimicking the pronunciation. Then, he said in a strange tone, “Chernobyl.”

“…” Klein’s mind froze for a second before he let out a silent sigh.

†

The Loen Kingdom, East Chester County, in a forest.

The nearby villagers gathered here and plucked strange mushrooms that were covered in roots, deadwood, and shrubs.

According to the kingdom’s laws, everything that grew in this forest belonged to its owner, Miss Audrey Hall. However, with the war escalating, the demand of food, and the high taxes, these factors made it so that the farmers could no longer care about breaking the law. It was something that needed to be considered only if they survived. Furthermore, with more people participating, they naturally became emboldened.

They formed small teams and very efficiently plucked the mushrooms that were covered in golden stars or marbling streaks. They were divided into two parts, and a small portion was reserved for consumption. Most of them were prepared to be sold to grain merchants waiting outside the forest to exchange for gold pounds, for salt, fabric and other essential items.

These farmers didn’t go overboard. Other than the mushrooms, they only took a portion of the fruits on the trees. They left behind what was sufficient for the rangers of the forest to submit to their masters.

In just two or three hours, the farmers sold large amounts of mushrooms and fruits. With the gold pounds in hand, they returned to their hamlets with beaming smiles.

To them, everything that happened today was what they wanted to do and they had also achieved their predetermined goals.

The grain merchant who had a full beard was equally happy because this was an unexpected harvest. With the present situation, he could earn a lot of money.

He led the workers with him to move large amounts of mushrooms and fruits to the processing point outside the city. After making the necessary arrangements, he placed them all into the warehouse.

As a meticulous businessman, he checked the warehouse again after sending the workers away. After confirming that there were no mistakes, he closed the door and locked it.

At this moment, he saw a thick wad of cash on the ground. They were all ten-pound notes.

When did I drop so much money? The grain merchant bent down in joy and picked up the stack of notes.

As he counted, he suddenly recalled the origins of the money.

They were the profits from selling the mushroom powder, dried mushroom, and dried fruits!

How generous! The bearded businessman sighed in satisfaction and turned to leave the warehouse.

Inside the warehouse, Audrey, who was wearing a light blue dress, removed her Psychological Invisibility and took out a black pocket.

This was the Traveler's Bag that she had rented from Xio.

Following that, the blonde, simple-looking Audrey easily threw bags of food into the black pocket.

After doing all of this, she took out a hard-covered bronze notebook and flipped to a page with “Teleportation.”

This was from Fors—Leymano’s Travels.

And what had conspired here was secretly manipulated by Audrey.

She first gave the fast-growing mushrooms provided by Ma’am Hermit to the animals in the woods. With their help, she “planted” them at suitable spots. Following that, she “influenced” the farmers in the surrounding hamlets, strengthening their inner desires, and making them overcome their fear of the law. And that grain merchant “happened” to pass by and discovered this.

This sort of manipulation of a person’s heart was intoxicating, like a master of all beings. However, Audrey didn’t smile at all. Instead, she sighed softly.

It’s still not enough… I’m still lacking plenty. Lots…

The mushrooms she had obtained wasn’t the type that Little Sun said could absorb the flesh and blood of monsters to flourish. They needed sufficient nutrients to rapidly grow. Therefore, there was no way to plant a second batch of mushrooms in this forest in a short time; otherwise, it was very likely to become a desert.

Staring at the empty cloth bags that had been emptied out, Audrey’s green eyes flashed. She couldn’t help but think, A large amount of food is concentrated at the Church, the royal family, the military, the government, the nobles, and the businessmen…

There are also some from Feysac, Intis, and Feynapotter, but who knows how many times I’ll have to move them with only Traveler’s Bag…

Manipulating the nobles, businessmen, and military personnel is very dangerous. I might be discovered if I’m not careful…

If the situation hadn't deteriorated to such a state, I might have never known that some people would have such a side to them…

When the environment and circumstances are different, the masks that everyone wears are different. I have to take note of this in the future…

As her thoughts raced, Audrey, who lacked experience in handling such matters, decided to seek Mr. World's advice to see if he had any suggestions.

As The World Gehrman Sparrow had been walking alone in the uninhabited Forsaken Land of the Gods, he was surrounded by darkness and despair. Audrey suggested that he should seek her out regularly for psychological counseling. This might not necessarily imply any treatment. A casual chat could effectively relieve the pressure, loneliness, and misery.

Gehrman Sparrow followed his doctor's advice, and from their chats, Audrey knew that, apart from asking her for medical advice, this powerful adventurer would also gossip with Mr. Star above the gray fog from time to time, maintaining a rather good state of mind.

With this decision, Audrey immediately activated her "Traveling" ability and returned to Backlund.

But on second thought, she felt a little depressed.

This was because she knew that, even if she gathered a large amount of food, she could only quell the residents of Backlund for some time. If the war didn't end, the situation would still worsen.

War… Audrey closed her eyes. She had no idea how she could stop it.

She had heard from Ma'am Hermit that the nature of this war was very likely to be a battle of gods. And the prelude to a battle of gods had always been very consistent; it was to spend a certain amount of time and strength to shake the anchors of "Their" opponents.

After some thought, Audrey pursed her lips and decided to start with what she could do.

As the notebook emitted a misty glow, her figure quickly turned transparent and disappeared.

†

Beside the quietly burning bonfire, Klein, who had just sent away the “guests” from Moon City, couldn’t help but recall the words Blasphemer Amon had said before.

“He” said that there were many clues and things in the past that “He” wanted to explore that were buried deep within Chernobyl.

The ancient sun god had also specially emphasized “Chernobyl”… Amidst his thoughts, he suddenly had the urge to explore Chernobyl.

This wasn’t considered rash. It was something he had always wanted to do. However, he didn’t dare to do so because of Amon.

I’ve been heading east for more than half a year. Who would’ve thought that I would suddenly arrive at Chernobyl… Amon has obtained the last Worm of Time Beyonder characteristic and is preparing the ritual. It’s impossible for “His” true body to still be in Chernobyl… Yes, “He” is a very patient King of Angels. Perhaps, “His” avatars have been waiting in Chernobyl all this time… After analyzing the present situation, Klein decided to let a projection from the Historical Void make an attempt.

In any case, he would never head there directly with his actual body!

After making up his mind, Klein went above the gray fog to do a divination. Then, he returned to the real world and reached out his hand to grab into the void, dragging his past self from five minutes ago.

As his main body disappeared, his projection gained consciousness. Following that, he grabbed a few times and took out the black staff embedded with many gems.

The Staff of the Stars!

He wanted to use the power of the Staff of the Stars to directly “Teleport” to Chernobyl!

Chapter 1222 - “Research Facility”

◆

When he held the Staff of the Stars, Klein pulled out a gold coin out of thin air with his other hand and flicked it.

As the gold coin tumbled, a revelation from his “divination” appeared in his mind.

It was an extremely deep ravine. At the bottom of it was a thick and vast building that was covered in layers of “grayish-white.”

Every detail was restored to the Chernobyl that Klein had seen at the beginning. However, it didn’t originate from the spirit world, but from his own subconscious.

Using the technique of dream divination, he reproduced the images he had seen in his mind.

And the moment this scene was completed, the gems embedded in the Staff of the Stars emitted a faint glow. It instantly vanished along with Klein’s Historical Void projection and appeared above the grayish-white building.

In just a second, Klein returned from the easternmost front of the Forsaken Land of the Gods to Chernobyl!

This was one of the main powers of the Staff of the Stars: if the corresponding scene that surfaced in the mind of the wielder still existed in the real world, then the Staff of the Stars could allow them to cross all obstacles and distances, directly descending to their desired destination.

Of course, the prerequisite was that the outlined scene had to be absolutely correct and not visually be any different from the original.

The reason why he chose the deep ravine where Chernobyl was located, and not the grayish-yellow fog, was because he knew that the Giant King's youngest son, the God of Glory, Bladel, had perished after being freed from the curse. The area would definitely experience major changes, and the only thing that wasn't affected was the mysterious Chernobyl, which was valued by the ancient sun god and Amon.

This also didn't mean that the deep ravine and grayish-white building wouldn't have any visible changes. In fact, Klein had already prepared himself for the failure of his "Teleportation" attempt. After all, the person performing it was fake, and the item in his hand was also fake. It wouldn't be a pity if he lost it.

In midair, Klein, with the Staff of the Stars in his hand, didn't even have time to examine his surroundings when his entire body suddenly sank and plummeted downwards.

He didn't wear Creeping Hunger, nor did he transform into an avian creature. He was currently unable to fly.

Therefore, even though the demigods of the Seer pathway were bizarre and terrifying, they actually had a human side to them.

As his thoughts raced, a Beyonder power appeared in his mind.

Following that, the Staff of the Stars lit up with different colors, causing the surroundings to be filled with violent winds.

The wind swirled around him, causing his black trench coat to flap and his body to slowly descend.

During this process, Klein's right hand trembled, allowing the Staff of the Stars's historical projection to return to its normal location, doing so to prevent accidents from happening to him because of him imagining certain scenes.

Right on the heels of that, his left hand pressed down on the half top hat on his head. Just as the lightning in the sky was about to pass, he pulled out a lantern from the void.

Under the dim yellow light of the lantern, Klein stepped firmly onto the ground beneath the deep ravine with his buckle-less leather shoes. The endless darkness around him seemed to contain monsters.

He was standing in front of the “grayish-white” Chernobyl which was formed in layers.

Under the synchronized effects of the lightning and the lantern in his hand, Klein quickly discovered a situation.

There was no door to this thick and vast grayish-white building!

Hmm, every place is sealed… I remember that the ancient sun god had opened an illusory crack on the grayish-white wall before coming out… As if in thought, Klein found the spot in his memories and began chanting the honorific name of The Fool.

At the easternmost front of the Forsaken Land of the Gods, by the solidified fog near Moon City, Klein, who was hiding in the Historical Void, immediately entered Sefirah Castle. With the help of the prayer light, he used his “true vision” to scan the situation at Chernobyl.

In the deep ravine and desolate plains with remnant grayish-yellow fog, there wasn’t a single Amon present.

As for Chernobyl itself, even with the “true vision” provided by Sefirah Castle, it wasn’t enough for him to clearly see what was going on inside.

Underneath the layers and layers of “grayish-white,” there appeared to be absolute nothingness, a space without any color.

Indeed it’s not simple… As expected of the place where the ancient sun god—the City of Silver’s Creator—walked out of… After sighing inwardly, he quickly left Sefirah Castle and returned to the historical fragment from before the First Epoch.

Klein, who was standing outside of Chernobyl, regained consciousness. He reached out his hand and took out Leymano’s Travels.

He quickly flipped to one of the pages and prepared to use the “Door Opening” power of an Apprentice.

Such an action was actually a little rash for him, but considering that this was just a projection in the Historical Void, he felt that there weren’t any problems with that.

The Beyonders of the Seer pathway are indeed both cautious and reckless at the same time. They’re careful when making preparations, but reckless after making preparations. They show traits of caution and recklessness at the same time… As he lampooned himself, Klein silently passed through the obstacle and entered Chernobyl’s interior.

After “Door Opening” repeatedly, he finally left the “grayish-white” buildings. He saw an ajar heavy metal door in front of him.

The metal door wasn’t very tall, only about 2.5 meters tall. It was obviously prepared for humans.

In front of it, there were two pitch-black marks and two machine guns that were more sci-fi than any weapon belonging to this era.

These two machine guns looked a little similar to the ones he had seen when he was flipping through some magazines in his previous life. However, he wasn’t a fan of such things, so he couldn’t be sure.

Klein didn’t pick them up or attempt to study them. His spiritual intuition told him that the two firearm-like weapons had completely corroded. Any contact with them would instantly cause them to disintegrate.

After taking a few looks, he dispelled Leymano's Travels. With the lantern in hand, he passed through two pitch-black marks and arrived behind the metal door.

There was a wide aisle here, and on both sides were rooms of different sizes. The tables and chairs inside were toppled, some were fine and others were broken in half. The walls were covered with black streaks.

It looks like a research facility… Klein set off from the remnants and overall layout, coming to a preliminary conclusion.

There was no need for him to deliberately search for anything. He quickly found a room with a destroyed machine. There were a few pieces of paper on the table that had a yellow tint to it.

It seemed like someone had casually placed it there after collecting it.

The ancient sun god or Amon? After hesitating for two seconds, he finally stepped into the room.

The dim yellow light dispersed the darkness inside as he picked up the few pieces of paper and quickly scanned them.

Ten seconds later, Klein put down the piece of paper and the corner of his mouth twitched.

He didn't recognize any of the words on those pages!

In my previous life, I only barely passed English, let alone other languages? Klein suddenly felt the feelings of the other Beyonders in this world when they read Roselle's diary.

He slowly exhaled as he extended his hand into the void and took out an item.

This was a translating device that Zhou Mingrui had bought before going on a trip overseas which he had saved up for. When the luck enhancement ritual was held, it was inside a computer bag by his side.

To him, the greatest advantage of this translating device was that it could do offline translations—as long as it didn't exceed the internally stored database.

After fiddling with it, he finally understood what the few pages wrote:

…Research of the appearance of oil in a dried-up oil field… Why would they need to build a research facility in such an unimaginable place for such matters?

…God, what did they discover deep in the oil field…

…This is some amazing material…

…What exactly happened? The doctor turned into a puddle of black oil in front of me!

…More and more people have turned into oil. This research facility has been sealed from the outside… No one can leave. No one can leave…

…Mad, they've all gone mad. We're still normal, but our food is almost running out…

…I seem to be hearing things. There seems to be sounds coming from underground. It's summoning me. "He" is summoning me!

These lines of simple words sent a chill down Klein's spine. He felt as though he was walking towards madness and death.

At the same time, a thought naturally came to his mind:

The corruption that stems from underground.

The cause of all this was the unnecessary experiments involved after the discovery of some strange material in a dried-up oil field? Then, the world was destroyed? But if it was a disaster caused by such a coincidence, then there's no reason for me, Emperor Roselle, and the others to obtain items to help us "transmigrate" ahead of time… Perhaps, there are chances amidst inevitability, and in chance, there is inevitability? The underground corruption has always been influencing the human world in an unobvious manner. It can intermittently bring about certain mysterious events. Only when the research facility probed deeper was “He” fully awakened? Klein subconsciously swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

With the lantern in hand, he left the room and headed towards the depths of the research facility. He also paid close attention to anything that was worth paying attention to.

After walking for nearly a minute, his vision suddenly darkened.

More than half of the dim yellow light’s radiance was consumed by the area ahead!

When he took a closer look, he realized that there was a cliff two steps away from him.

That portion of the research facility had collapsed into the ground. It was dark and empty, with no end to it.

Faintly, he seemed to hear a silent cry. It sounded in his mind from deep underground.

This feeling was something Klein had experienced before—from behind the bronze door in the Hall of Truth.

He frowned slightly and took a few steps back, prepared to dispel the Historical Void projection at any moment.

At this moment, a palm that was so dry that it only had skin and bones stuck out from the darkness, grabbing onto the edge of the cliff.

Then, a figure leaped out and landed in front of him.

He was wearing a pointed hat and a classic black robe. He had a monocle on his right eye. It was none other than Angel of Time, Amon.

However, this Amon’s condition was very abnormal. It was like a skeleton covered in a skin membrane.

Klein subconsciously took a few steps back and saw the flesh and blood of the man before him rapidly fill up.

“He” adjusted “His” monocle said with a smile, “Ah, a visitor. I wasn’t expecting that.

“And you are?”

Chapter 1223 - That Level

◆ ◆ ◆

Who am I? Just as Klein was about to remove the Historical Void projection, he was taken aback by Amon's question.

He controlled himself and didn't frown. Instead of answering, he asked, "You aren't Amon's true body?"

Standing at the edge of the cliff, Amon took a step forward and smiled.

"Of course not.

"You seem to know my true body or my other avatars?"

Although the Amon in front of him didn't take any action, the step "He" took still gave Klein an indescribable pressure. It wasn't easy for him to keep still without retreating, which would betray his cowardice.

He grunted and replied in a low voice, "That's why I'm curious as to why you don't know me."

"Are you very famous?" said the Amon who had crawled out of the darkness. "He" then raised "His" hand and adjusted "His" crystal monocle on "His" right eye.

This action lasted for a few seconds before it came to an end. As though in thought, Amon muttered, "There are no other 'me's nearby… Are there really none, or has the connection been completely severed?"

What kind of accident caused this Amon to be independent? No way, I can't believe this fellow's acts. "He" is a top-notch swindler… Klein's heart stirred at first before he suppressed his corresponding thoughts and asked, “Why did you crawl out from underground?”

Amon’s expression returned to normal as “He” chuckled.

“Guess.”

Be it “His” actual body or “His” avatars, the fact that he has a terrible personality doesn’t change… Klein thought to himself and tried to probe with an answer, “You are exploring the secret that lays underground.”

Amon nodded slightly and said, “Isn’t that obvious?”

“He” then half-turned “His” body and pointed at the darkness beyond the cliff that the light failed to light up.

“My father crawled out of here just like I did.

“Ah, right. It has a name. You should have heard of it—Chaos Sea.”

Chaos Sea? The Chaos Sea, one of the nine sefirots… It is indeed hidden deep underground… Is the corruption behind the bronze door really brought about by it? Previously, I was made aware of this mysticism knowledge through my casual chats with Amon… The ancient sun god was originally a member of this research facility. Then, he fell into the deep depths of the Chaos Sea, only to awaken in the Second Epoch and crawl out? As he was only an ordinary person back then, based on the law that proximity to the underground increases in danger with higher Sequences, he wasn’t affected too much? Klein’s mind raced as he recalled many matters and came up with various guesses.

Three seconds later, he said in response, “So you took the risk and jumped in to search for the truth of the buried history and the world?”

“Something like that.” Amon man pinched the edge of his monocle and said in a self-deprecating tone, “But I didn’t do it willingly.”

“Ah?” Klein used a terse exclamation to express his doubts.

Amon smiled and said, “Every single one of me knows that it’s very dangerous deep underground. We don’t want to go down alone. We have tried many detours, including creating a marionette to replace us. However, we failed to succeed and failed to obtain any feedback.

“In the end, under the true body’s watch, we held a fair vote. Unfortunately, I was chosen.”

…It’s a miracle that Amon hasn’t completely gone mad yet… As expected of the God of Mischief… Internal decisions have to be done in such a way… Klein resisted the urge to lampoon.

“And then, you jumped down yourself?”

“What else? Let ‘Them’ throw me down?” Amon said as “He” spread “His” hands.

Having said that, “He” seemed to finally understand something as “He” muttered to “Himself,” “The Chaos Sea made ‘me’ sever ties with my main body and the surrounding avatars?

“Am I independent?”

Independent… Previously, in front of the bronze door of the Hall of Truth, I felt that every cell and every Worm of Spirit were giving birth to a new consciousness, generating a different form of self… It’s very normal for there to be similar changes in Amon’s avatar after directly entering the Chaos Sea… An independent Amon avatar should be able to effectively trick Amon’s true body… No, I can’t trust “Him”… Klein validated Amon’s words using his own experience, but he quickly reminded himself not to trust the God of Deceit.

He smiled and said, “I suspect you’re bluffing.”

Amon held up the crystal monocle and sized up Klein for a few seconds.

"It doesn't matter whether you believe me or not. Even if I want to find a partner, it wouldn't be someone as weak as you."

In the era of the eight Kings of Angels, were you very close to Red Angel Medici… Having made up his mind not to trust the independence of the Amon in front of him, Klein tried asking, "What did you discover in the Chaos Sea?"

"Plenty of things. Guess what they are," Amon said with a smile.

"You didn't discover anything," Klein said deliberately.

Amon shook "His" head.

"The other 'me's probably think so too. Besides, I haven't been out for a very long time, and I didn't respond. It's logical to believe that I had already been corroded and was digested by Chaos Sea."

Without waiting for Klein's response, Amon continued, "Chaos Sea is very large. It almost fills the core, and goes to a further layer. It's also the only sefirah that merges the real and the illusory and has an entrance in the real world. The others are either completely illusory and hidden somewhere unknown, or they're definitely real while existing in the real world.

"I found something very interesting inside. The first Blasphemy slate was likely born there, but it was later attracted by some power and left the ground before it was complete.

"My father might've browsed through that Blasphemy Slate in the beginning, which is why 'His' condensed into the second Blasphemy Slate when 'He' perished."

This is the origins of the two Blasphemy Slates? It's no wonder the ancient sun god was so powerful in the late stages of the Second Epoch… Klein vaguely understood something and subconsciously asked, "What's so different about the two Blasphemy Slates?"

Amon adjusted the crystal monocle and said, “The second Blasphemy Slate changed some of the Sequence names and added content.

“Those contents contain secrets about transcending Sequences.”

“Transcending Sequences?” Klein’s pupils widened slightly. He felt that his long-term guess had been confirmed. “Become the Creator?”

Amon smiled and said, “More or less, but this description isn’t accurate enough.

“I like to refer to that level as ‘Above the Sequences.’ There are also a number of true deities who name it in other ways. Some call it ‘Great Old Ones,’ others refer to it as ‘Outer Deities’ or ‘Cosmos.’”

Cosmos… The moment Klein heard this term, his spiritual intuition began to give crazy warnings.

He remembered very clearly that the ascetic leader of the Church of Evernight, Arianna, had told him before that unless he became an angel, he shouldn’t attempt to understand the cosmos. Otherwise, just having knowledge of it would bring him great danger!

Without any hesitation, Klein, who had been hiding in the Historical Void’s in a time before the First Epoch, gave up maintaining the projection. He stood up from the stacked cities of old, and he took four steps counterclockwise.

Almost at the same time, the violent lightning that streaked across the sky of the Forsaken Land of the Gods calmed down. The endless darkness vanished as well.

A gigantic crimson moon covered half the sky.

The light on the surface of the crimson moon stretched out as if it was alive.

Outside this world, the moon that was revolving around the Earth had a crimson sea flowing. It drowned everything, as though it was digesting this huge natural satellite.

The blood-colored sea boiled when Klein learned about the news of "Great Old Ones," "Outer Deities," and "Cosmos."

They quickly gathered towards the middle, constantly piling together until they formed an indiscernible, blood-red phantom image.

This phantom image was many times bigger than the moon. It had countless eyes, and "it" looked down at the blue planet. It cast its gaze at Klein's main body through the connection that was established the moment he learned about these matters!

As the crimson sea "receded," many craters appeared on the surface of the moon.

From the ground, the moon no longer crimson. It was bright and clear. It had remained the same despite the hundreds of millions of years.

[image]

Further out in space, the Brown Star, Orange Star, Scarlet Planet, Gold Planet, and Blue Planet twinkled like the blinking of eyes.

In the fog of history, boils began to emerge from the surface of Klein's body. Each boil had a mutated Worm of Spirit. They wore the faces of Zhou Mingrui, Klein Moretti, Gehrman Sparrow, and Dwayne Dantès. They were trying their best to drill out of his body.

Klein's thoughts quickly turned chaotic. His entire Spirit Body seemed to be torn apart by an invisible blade, but he still forced himself to finish reciting the last sentence of the incantation.

"The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings."

Silently, Klein's Spirit Body tore through the gray fog and entered Sefirah Castle. The power of the entire space began to boil as it surged forward and enveloped him, melting away wisps of black gas, streams of red light, and boils, severing the invisible connection.

Nearly ten seconds later, the struggling Klein finally regained consciousness. He stood up using the high-back chair as support.

Inside Chernobyl, Amon, who was standing at the edge of the cliff, said to "Himself" in a low voice as "He" adjusted the crystal monocle on "His" right eye, "Quite a fast reaction…"

If Klein had been a second slower and was embroiled in that chaotic state, Amon could deceive the connection between the projection and the actual body before Klein could remove the maintenance of the historical projection. "He" could then appear inside the corresponding historical fragment.

Above the gray fog, Klein sat down and rubbed his temples.

That Amon was indeed lying…

"He" should be the avatar that stayed behind to guard Chernobyl. When "He" discovered that I had come, "He" hid somewhere between the cliff and the Chaos Sea, pretending that "He" had just crawled out. "He" was unable to deal with my main body by bypassing the historical projection. Furthermore, "He" might not have the strength of a Sequence 2 angel. Therefore, "He" pretended to be an independent avatar so as to carry out the deceit…

On the surface, "He" attempted to make me believe that "He" was an independent avatar and could be cooperated with. "He" made me focus on this aspect, but in fact, "He" concealed the danger in "His" words…

Even in a normal conversation with the God of Deceit, one can still be scammed…

However, in order to achieve "His" goals, "He" had also given a sufficient amount of secrets…

Chapter 1224 - Guesses About the Apocalypse

◆

Loen Kingdom, Backlund.

Fors, who was still sleeping soundly, suddenly woke up from her dream. She subconsciously cast her gaze out the window.

She didn’t lack similar experiences. Before she became a member of the Tarot Club, she often woke up in the middle of the night due to the curse of the full moon. But today, she didn’t feel any familiar pain, but her heart throbbed for some unknown reason.

As the curtain had blocked the window, Fors was unable to determine what time it was from the weak light. She subconsciously got out of bed, walked to the window, and drew the curtains.

The sunlight that penetrated the thin fog shone into the room, dispersing the accumulated darkness. Fors stood by the window and looked up into the sky with an obvious look of confusion.

The sun has already risen, and the crimson moon had long set. Why do I still feel the sensation I have during the curse of the full moon?

Furthermore, there were still many days to the full moon!

†

The Intis Republic capital, Trier.

One by one, the astronomers, who had woken up early, as well as mysticism enthusiasts, as well as the covert Beyonders, cast their gazes high into the sky.

The layers of evening clouds disappeared, and the huge and bright moon outshone the light of the stars.

The moon's color was no longer the usual crimson color. It was white and unusually bright.

All who saw it were stunned. This was a moon that they had never seen before.

Be it the normal textbooks of human society or books related to mysticism, none of them recorded similar phenomena!

Apart from the common new moon, full moon, and the occasional Blood Moon, the moon had never experienced such changes. At least for the past 1300 years since the beginning of the Fifth Epoch, there had been absolutely no such change!

At this moment, the onlookers realized that, other than the crimson and blood-red states, the moon had another color.

†

The Forsaken Land of the Gods, the City of Silver.

As it was in the afternoon when the frequency of lightning was high, Derrick and company noticed the abnormality in the sky.

They were used to the familiar lightning and darkness. In just a few seconds, all of that completely disappeared without a trace. The blood-colored circular glow that blotted out half the sky was so obvious. It's massive size illuminated everything to great visibility.

The people of the City of Silver who had relatively agile thoughts immediately thought of the description and the corresponding picture of the moon in the general knowledge book. They suddenly had a thought that came to them:

“Could this be the moon?”

“The crimson moon?”

“We actually saw the crimson moon…”

Soon, the blood-red colors of the crimson moon in front of them drained inch by inch, revealing its bright and clear body.

The City of Silver residents were increasingly at a loss, unsure of what had happened.

Having heard Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and the other members of the Tarot Club talk about the outside world, Derrick Berg was even more shocked and surprised than them. This was because there was no such natural phenomenon outside the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

A few seconds later, the moon disappeared and the darkness once again engulfed everything. The frequent flashes of lightning became the main source of light.

“What happened just now?”

“Did you see that red circle?”

“Moon! That’s the moon!”

“That’s the crimson moon!”

“Is this a sign that we are about to escape our current situation?”

“Our second exploration of the Giant King’s Court will go very smoothly and we will open the door that leads to the outside world?”

Amidst the confusion, most of the residents of the City of Silver subconsciously treated this phenomenon as a good thing, treating it as an auspicious sign from mysticism. Only the Chief, Colin Iliad, and the Elders of the six-member council like Lovia had serious looks on their faces as they frowned.

†

Above the grayish-white fog, inside the ancient palace.

Having gained a general understanding of Amon's scam, Klein instinctively turned his attention back to the "secret" he had learned.

He previously had some guesses about the corresponding content, but when it was truly revealed, he realized that it was even more terrifying and exaggerated than he had imagined. It made him even more hopeless.

To be able to successfully attract the attention of the Cosmos, this means that most of the secrets that Amon revealed are true…

There really is another level above Sequence 0. This should be the level which the ancient sun god was at. However, "His" condition didn't seem too right. "He" ended up being stabbed in the back, perished, and divided up.

…According to what Amon said, using the Creator to describe this level isn't accurate enough. "He" named it as "Above the Sequences"… There are also existences who use the term "Transcending Sequences" to describe that level, indicating that they have escaped the restrictions of the Beyonder pathway?

…Deities refer to this level as "Great Old Ones," "Outer Deities," "Cosmos"… From this, one can tell that there are two matters. One is the vast universe outside this world. In the boundless cosmos, there are "Great Old Ones" and "Outer Deities," who are existences at the Creator's level. For example, the one who controls the moon…

… From the looks of it, the brown star and orange star were the original planets. They have changed, making Emperor Roselle unable to recognize them… This is because there are Great Old Ones or Outer Deities entrenched in them, watching our world?

…The Box of the Great Old Ones mutated after being corrupted by the cosmos…

…Yes, there are most likely more than one Great Old One or Outer Deity… Why are "They" all surrounding this planet? What are "They" spying on?

…"They" didn't directly invade because there's a power that temporarily keeps them out?

…Thanks to the seven deities?

…Connecting this to the prophecy of the apocalypse in 1368, the seven deities might not be playing a crucial role in this. "They" have yet to transcend the Sequences… When the true barrier disappears in 1368, the Great Old Ones and the Outer Deities will no longer be obstructed. Then, the apocalypse will descend upon us?

Upon thinking of this, the questions that he had accumulated in his mind suddenly flashed through his mind.

Why did the Evernight Goddess take the risk of bringing about a battle of gods to seize the Uniqueness of the Death pathway?

Why did the seven deities tacitly acquiesce to having a Black Emperor?

Why did Adam, Amon, and the other Kings of Angels, after being silent for so many years, step out from behind the scenes in this era?

Why were the legacies of the ancient gods from the Second Epoch appearing one after another?

Why was there only one transmigrator released from Sefirah Castle in the first four epochs, but two in the Fifth Epoch, a period spanning slightly more than a thousand years?

Phew, be “They” good or bad, everyone is working hard to improve themselves to usher in the apocalypse… The Goddess, who is so good at setting things into motion, chose such a risky method because “She” wanted to transcend the Sequences and become a Great Old One? There’s only a decade or so left. Time waits for no man… Did “She” provide me help in secret because “She” had similar hopes? Adam didn’t take action even though “He” could finish me off twice. Apart from “Him” and me not having any significant grudges, this plays a role in everything? Klein gently rapped the edge of the long, mottled table as he muttered softly, “The key to becoming a Great Old One or Outer Deity is one of the nine sefirot?”

Looking around the empty Sefirah Castle, Klein sighed and muttered to himself, “As for the exact situation, I have to look at the second Blasphemy Slate to know. Unfortunately, I don’t know when I’ll have a chance…”

He then focused his attention on something else.

I’m not sure if the ancient sun god had completely transcended the Sequences… If a native Great Old One were to be born, humanity might still have a sliver of hope when the apocalypse happens… “His” death is even more complicated than I imagined…

It’s no wonder Emperor Roselle said that only a Sequence 0 could preserve “Themselves” and protect the people “They” value…

I wonder if those Great Old Ones or Outer Deities have infiltrated the Earth with their powers?

Yes, according to how the seven orthodox deities and the other evil gods like the True Creator view the Primordial Moon and the Mother Tree of Desire with animosity, the latter might be Great Old Ones or Outer Deities…

It’s no wonder the Mother Tree of Desire could directly mislead my divination above the gray fog. “She” is the most dangerous existence in my books!

I understand what those Great Old Ones and Outer Deities are gathered around this world for…

They likely want to obtain the nine sefirot; destroying the world is just something done in passing…

As he thought of this, Klein suddenly recalled the phrase the Mother Tree of Desire had said through Cynthia:

“Admiral, I want to have a child with you.”

He couldn’t help but shudder as he seriously considered his safety after returning to the real world.

He already had a certain level of understanding of the cosmos. As long as he subconsciously thought of something related, he would directly establish a connection with the Great Old Ones and the Outer Deities, and be corrupted!

If not for the fact that Sefirah Castle had cut off all contact from before, I wouldn’t dare return to reality… After some thought, Klein decided to invite his psychiatrist, Miss Justice, to help hypnotize him and seal the corresponding information deep within his subconscious. Only when he saw a preset reminder would he recall it.

He originally wanted to directly summon the projection of “Justice” from the Historical Void to do this, but considering that this was an intricate task, it was very likely a mistake or oversight might happen if the person didn’t have a deep understanding of the mind. And once there was a slip-up, the Great Old Ones and Outer Deities would cast “Their” eyes on him.

Phew, I need to remember to get Miss Justice to hypnotize herself to forget this matter… After some deliberation, Klein turned the corresponding request into a stream of light and threw it into the crimson star representing Justice.

Not long after, just after breakfast, Audrey, who had yet to leave home, arrived above the gray fog.

The long bronze table had vanished. There was a desk and two chairs placed in the ancient palace.

“Mr. World, what is the matter that you wish to forget this time?” Audrey looked at Gehrman Sparrow who was sitting opposite her and raised the most important question.

Klein rubbed his temples and used a deep voice to describe the secrets of the Cosmos, Great Old Ones, and Outer Deities.

Upon hearing this, Audrey’s eyes widened bit by bit as if she had been possessed by an evil god.

After he was done, she fell silent for a few seconds before saying with the same deep and slightly confused voice, “This is the truth of the apocalypse?

“Even the seven deities are unable to save us?”

Without waiting for Klein’s reply, Audrey laughed self-deprecatingly.

“I thought what I’ve been doing recently was very meaningful…

“I thought the worst news I could think of was the defeat of Loen and the annihilation of the Church…

“But compared to the secrets you told me, all of this is so insignificant.”

Chapter 1225 - Counseling

◆

When he heard Miss Justice’s slightly bleak and confused words, Klein could empathize with her. This was because he had previously had similar thoughts.

After recalling snippets from self-help books, he deliberated and said, “A father’s death is so insignificant to the entirety of Loen. One or more cases might happen every day, but to his child’s family, it is something that can change their fate.

“Similarly, if we don’t reach the level of an angel, everyone’s outcome will be sealed—death and be buried. But this doesn’t mean that the time from when we were born to the time we die is meaningless.”

Audrey nodded slightly when she heard that. She once again said in a self-deprecating tone, “I understand all of this. However, the secrets you mentioned had a huge impact on me, and I couldn’t control my emotions.

“As a Psychiatrist, I actually needed someone else to counsel me…”

Klein smiled and said, “Isn’t this very normal? Many times, we can tell if someone else’s condition is normal, but we can’t clearly see our own problems. Didn’t you mention that you and Susie counsel each other from time to time?”

Due to the fact that Dwayne Dantès had seen Susie, the golden retriever, Audrey didn’t hide anything related to her during their chats.

Audrey nodded gently and said, “Yes… that’s right.

“I’ve already straightened my thoughts out. I should do what I can and not leave any regrets.”

She gradually adjusted her mental state.

Klein then said, “It’s not just a matter of not leaving any regrets; we might be able to add to the forces that resist against the apocalypse.

“Compared to the whole, this might be trivial, but even the vastest desert is made up of grains of sand. The boundless ocean is also formed by droplets of water. As long as everyone sends out as much light as the heat inside them[1], it might bring some hope.”

“Sends out as much light as the heat inside them…” Audrey repeated the keywords in Gehrman Sparrow’s words softly.

“Don’t quote me,” Klein added with a smile.

The corners of Audrey’s mouth curled up as she replied with a faint smile, “Could it be something Emperor Roselle said?”

That I don’t know… I have to endure a strong sense of shame when flipping through his quotations. I hadn’t finished reading it all this time… Klein didn’t give an affirmative answer, nor did he deny it. Instead, he said, “Start hypnotizing me. Let me forget things related to the cosmos, and only remember the corresponding reminder.”

“A little while longer. I would like your advice on something.” Audrey openly made a request. She took this opportunity to recount what she had been doing recently, as well as the difficulties and perplexities she had encountered. “…Mr. World, what suggestions do you have? What should I do to lessen the suffering of the people of Backlund before the war ends?”

As for stopping the war, although she wanted to, she knew that she didn’t have the ability to do so.

At the same time, she also understood that even Mr. World wouldn't be able to do it. Even if Mr. Fool personally intervened, he would at most be able to turn the situation around. There was no way to stop the war. After all, this world war was essentially a battle between deities.

After hesitating for a few seconds, Klein calmly said, "Although the Spectator pathway tries to act behind the scenes as much as possible, and although I always keep the words 'caution' and 'carefulness' in my mind for everything I do, and try not to put myself in a dangerous situation…"

When he said this, Audrey subconsciously thought to herself, From the various rumors at sea, the descriptions of Fors and the others, and the demigod battle I witnessed, I really can't see the "caution" and "carefulness." There's only "dominance" and "radicalism"… Hmm, to be able to do those things and survive on strength alone is indeed not enough…

Seeing that Miss Justice was listening seriously with her green eyes filled with attentiveness, he continued, "In this world, nothing can be easily resolved without taking risks.

"Sometimes, I do something with the thought that 'death is a possibility.'"

The muttering in Audrey's heart stopped. She fell silent for a while before slowly saying, "I understand what you mean.

"There are many times when you can't do what you want while ensuring absolute safety. You can only choose one of them."

Klein nodded and decided to let Miss Justice understand the reality of this world better, so as to prevent her from being overly idealistic when she did things.

"The method you mentioned just now is the most feasible, with the least risks. The people who can help the people of Backlund are the nobles, Churches, businessmen, and the royal family.

“Why don’t we rob Feysac, Intis, and the Feynapotter army of their food?” Audrey subconsciously asked.

Klein calmly said, “This is because the three armies have already entered the Loen Kingdom’s borders. Even if you can escape a demigod’s notice and successfully snatch the food, they will not collapse. They will definitely snatch the food from the surrounding people for sustenance. The effects will not be significant in the short term. As for the long term, we might not have the luxury of time to wait that long.”

When that happened, it was obvious to Audrey who would be the true victims.

This was the difference between a war between deities and an ordinary war.

“Besides, I’m unable to do that. The capacity of Traveler’s Bag is limited. It’s the same for the”Teleportation” recorded in Leymano’s Travels.” Justice Audrey began to counsel herself as she asked thoughtfully, “If I were to really obtain food from the nobles, businessmen, and royal family, what reaction would the Church have when they discover traces of my interference?”

Klein maintained his previous tone and said, “A tacit acquiesce.”

“…” Audrey vaguely felt that this was the answer, but she couldn’t figure out the reason.

Klein continued, “Believers are the anchors of the deities. One believer is an anchor point. In this aspect, there is no difference between a noble and a poor person. In essence, no one is nobler or lowlier.

“Under normal circumstances, nobles and merchants can use their status, power, wealth, and influence to help the Church maintain its system and spread its faith. Therefore, they are more important. But in this situation, who is more important—thousands of anchors, or millions of anchors?

“This is a simple problem in mathematics.”

Faced with the truth of the veil that had been ripped off, Audrey was momentarily speechless.

Seeing this, Klein added, “From this point of view, whatever you want to do on a wider level has its meaning.

“You will help the Evernight Goddess and the Lord of Storms stabilize their anchors. In the future, this might be critical to resisting the apocalypse.”

Audrey pursed her lips bit by bit, holding them pursed for a long time before relaxing them. She chuckled and said, “Only now do I realize that I’m actually a little proud of my status as a noble.”

“Nobility is in your character, not status.” Klein helped her finish her sentence.

Audrey slowly exhaled and calmed her chaotic inner thoughts. She didn’t make up her mind as a result.

She casually said, “Our Tarot Club and the Church… Uh, the relationship with the Church of Evernight seems pretty good.

“Mr. Fool and the Evernight Goddess are allies?”

This question stumps me… I do wish to become allies with the Goddess, but “She” might not be interested… After lampooning a few times, Klein said in a serious tone, “You can think of ‘Them’ as allies at the moment.”

He deliberately emphasized that it was only now, so as to prevent himself from being slapped in the face by reality in the future.

At the same time, he muttered the real answer in his heart:

Based on the current situation, the Goddess was an angel investor of the Tarot Club, the major shareholder…

Audrey nodded slowly and suddenly smiled.

“I was just thinking about what you could be mumbling inwardly when you answered ‘allies at the moment.’ It must be interesting, just like when we were exploring Liveseyd.”

…Lady, a Psychiatrist isn’t suited to joking with a patient on such matters… Is it because we’ve been chatting for too long in the past half year and have become much more familiar with each other that you’ve revealed your true nature? Please show some respect to this adventurer in front of you who is famous for being cold and crazy… Yes, I have to say, the Spectator pathway’s ability to adjust their own emotions is indeed impressive… It was all Leonard’s fault that time… Klein was first taken aback before he pretended that nothing had happened as he leaned back into his chair.

“Let’s begin.”

Audrey immediately reined in her emotions and began to seriously and carefully attempt to hypnotize him.

After everything was over, Klein confirmed that Miss Justice wasn’t under the notice of the Great Old Ones through the crimson star after she returned to the real world.

Of course, he had already forgotten anything regarding the Great Old Ones or Outer Deities. He was just able to confirm that nothing abnormal had happened from Miss Justice’s condition.

Phew… Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He threw the piece of paper that could awaken his memories into the junk pile and told himself to wait until he became an angel.

†

Backlund, Bridge area, in an apartment.

Emlyn White looked at Maric, who had suddenly appeared in front of him. The former took off his hat and bowed in an extremely gentlemanly manner.

“What’s the matter?” Maric sat on the sofa and leaned forward, his hands clasped.

Emlyn pulled a chair and sat down. He smiled and asked, “Do you still wish to deal with the important figures of the Rose School of Thought’s indulgence faction?”

“Do you have any leads?” Maric asked indifferently.

Emlyn was definitely prepared before he paid the “visit,” so he said unhurriedly, “I do not have any clues regarding the person-in-charge of the Rose School of Thought in Backlund.

“However, after the war escalated, the Southern Continent’s East and West Balam, Star Highlands, Paz Valley, and Haagenti Plains have been thrown into chaos. Many of the Rose School of Thought demigods have emerged and walked onto the stage. They are no longer so difficult to lock onto.”

Maric looked at the red-eyed and thin-lipped Emlyn and said, “Which duke or marquis of the Sanguine are you representing?”

“Am I not allowed to represent myself?” Emlyn raised his chin slightly and asked with a smile.

Maric shook his head seriously and said, “You are only a Sequence 5; you aren’t qualified enough.”

He had said it so directly that Emlyn was momentarily at a loss for words.

[†] Quote from a leading figure of modern Chinese literature, Lu Xun

Chapter 1226 - Handing Out Mushrooms

◆

Emlyn maintained his smile and calmed himself down before responding, “I can find helpers of a sufficient level.”

He didn’t wish to borrow the forces of the Sanguine too much on this matter, because if that happened, he would undoubtedly end up as a liaison, a bystander, and a messenger. He would not have any say in the eventual distribution of the spoils of war.

As for the Sanguine Dukes and Marquises, they had no lack of direct descendants who wished to advance to become a demigod and become an Earl.

At the very beginning, Emlyn believed in his identity as the Sanguine’s savior. He believed that the important figures would treat every single member fairly. However, as The Hanged Man analyzed the various high-level Sanguine orders from Marquis Nibbs and the other high-level Sanguine, Emlyn gradually became wary of them.

He frowned slightly and said, “Sherlock Moriarty?”

Emlyn was puzzled as he shifted in his seat.

“Why do you think it’s him?”

If it was in the past, he would have directly said, “Why are you mentioning Sherlock Moriarty? He has been away from Backlund for nearly two years.” But now, he could acutely grasp that there was some hidden information in Maric’s words. He subconsciously adjusted his

question.

In the eyes of this Wraith, Sherlock Moriarty isn't simple? Yes, indeed, he isn't simple… As he spoke, Emlyn made a guess.

Upon hearing Emlyn's question, Maric's expression immediately turned odd, as though it was his first time meeting this Sanguine Viscount.

He quickly restrained the abnormality on the surface and said without emotion, "We need to consider it.

"I hope you can come up with a more convincing plan the next time we meet."

"No problem." Emlyn secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

He immediately stood up and bowed gentlemanly.

After deciding on the means of communication, he put on his silk hat and walked out of the room.

As he returned to his residence, Emlyn couldn't help but run through his initial plan.

As long as I complete a cooperative agreement with the demigod of the Rose School of Thought's temperance faction, I can use it to apply for a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact from the Marquises and Dukes of the race…

Using the reason that it's under the cooperating partner's behest that they object to having demigods of the race be involved, I can stop them from directly interfering…

Yes, in order to make an agreement, I have to show enough strength to convince Maric and the others… I can only commission the mission at the Tarot Club to see if Ma'am Hermit, Miss Justice, and Mr. Hanged Man are willing to accept the commission. Miss Magician can also be considered. She can summon the projection of Gehrman Sparrow…

The biggest problem now is that I can't provide enough compensation…

I can only try to make an advance or a promise. Once I become an Earl, I’ll return the payment one by one…

With this in mind, Emlyn suddenly felt thankful that he had joined the Tarot Club.

This was the only organization he knew that could use a future promise to exchange for current material goods.

And within the Sanguine, or in the orthodox Churches, one had to accumulate enough contributions until one reached the end of the line where the characteristics and advancement ritual was awarded. Sometimes, a Beyonder might not be able to accumulate enough contributions in their entire lives.

This is like a credit loan underwritten by Mr. Fool. It can be used to issue missions, and when the advancement succeeds, it can be paid in installments… Emlyn habitually leaned towards the things he was familiar with.

Although he had never borrowed money from the bank, some of the Sanguine had rich experience in such areas and would often talk within their own circles.

Most of them had a fixed, expensive hobby. The precious items might not be liquidated easily at times, so they had no choice but to borrow money from close friends or the bank to ensure the necessary cash flow.

Emlyn remembered that there was a Sanguine who wasn’t good at wealth management. He relied solely on his profession as a doctor to earn money. When he took a fancy to a precious piece of art, he bought it using a loan from the Backlund Bank.

After that, he couldn’t bear to pledge his property up for the mortgage. Exploiting his long life, he spent two hundred years repaying the debt. Of course, in name, his father had died, and the son took over the debt.

When the son died, the grandson took over the debt.

Emlyn's evaluation of this was: very honest.

†

North Borough in Backlund. Outside Saint Samuel Cathedral.

The citizens lined up in rows as they received the grilled bread, dried mushrooms, preserved fruits, and other food from the workers of the Loen Poverty Relief Foundation.

Their lines extended from the main entrance of the cathedral all the way to the square and circled it several times. At a glance, it was densely packed with people.

Audrey stood on the steps behind Melissa and took in everything.

She saw the pale faces of the citizens, their eyes filled with longing. Seeing a mother holding a baby in her arms, she anxiously coaxed the child while eagerly observing the line in front of her that didn't seem to shorten. She saw many people dressed in bright clothes, formal suits, and long skirts. Some of them pressed down their hats and wore veils, as if they didn't want the people around them to recognize them.

At times, some people didn't want to keep order and were dragged out by the priests and policemen who were helping to maintain the order. They were thrown to the back of the lines.

As food was delivered, the cloth bags piled behind the long table slowly dwindled until there was none.

Finally, all the food had been distributed, but the long line had only been reduced by half.

The citizens who were unable to receive the help couldn't resist revealing their disappointment, frustration, and reluctance. However, they didn't make a scene or argue. They moved their feet mechanically towards other handout points.

They had experienced this many times in the past one or two months. They had long known that unnecessary emotions would only waste the energy they had little of. It would hamper their quick movements to other relief points or fair-price food outlets.

At this moment, their expressions were numb, their eyes vacant as they left the square like a bunch of zombies.

During this process, a woman carrying a child had her legs give way as she fell to the ground.

Her child started wailing loudly, his voice laced with pain.

As he cried, the child sobbed and said, “Mommy, I’m so hungry…”

“There’ll be food soon. There’ll be food soon. There’s food at Memorial Square…” The woman carried the child and patted his back. Tears streamed down her face as she spoke.

Upon seeing this scene, Audrey was just about to say something when she saw Melissa take out a plate of food from a wooden crate under a long table and run towards the mother and son.

“I didn’t see it just now. There’s still one more…” Melissa crouched down and handed the bread, dried mushrooms, and preserved fruit over. Then, she explained in a soft voice, afraid that it would cause a dispute among the citizens.

The rest of the food was actually prepared for the foundation staff who had been busy all this while. The portion that Melissa had given them was hers.

The woman took the food and handed it to the child as she said repeatedly, “Thank you, thank you…”

The child hugged the food tightly and mimicked his mother in his nascent voice, “Thank you, thank you…”

Audrey subconsciously looked around and noticed that the Church’s priests, most of the police, as well as the “Nighthawks” who were mixed among the people to secretly prevent any accidents, were all showing sympathy, pity, and sadness.

After the citizens had left, Audrey picked up her own set of food and handed it to Melissa.

“You deserve it.”

Melissa looked at Miss Hall before her and shook her head.

“I gave my own share.

“Miss Hall, don’t worry. I’ll have food when I get home. My brother is a civil servant…”

With a faint smile, Audrey stuffed the grilled bread, dried mushrooms, and preserved fruits into Melissa’s hands.

“You don’t have to worry about me. My family has prepared snacks for me when I’m out busying myself.”

As she spoke, she took a wooden box from her personal maidservant, Annie, and opened it for Melissa to see.

The wooden box contained exquisite cucumber sandwiches, cream muffins, and a small carrot cake.

A look of astonishment appeared on Melissa’s face. She stared at the snacks for a few seconds before looking up at Miss Audrey Hall.

She immediately lowered her head and, without saying a word, she ate the grilled bread and water that Saint Samuel Cathedral had prepared.

As if “petrified” by her gaze, Audrey held the wooden box and stood rooted to the ground. For a few seconds, she didn’t move and only pursed her lips tightly.

†

After the fifth batch of residents from Moon City received cleansing and treatment and enjoyed the magical mushrooms, this ancient city became a believer of The Fool without any resistance. It welcomed the saint and oracle, Gehrman Sparrow, into the city.

With that, Klein held a large Mass and used the Unshadowed Crucifix and the Life's Cane to heal the remaining Moon City residents.

High Priest Nim, who had finished his quarantine, came out and respectfully asked at the end of the Mass, "Oracle, what is the complete honorific name of the mighty Lord?"

Klein looked around and said solemnly with his face tightened, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

After giving out the honorific name, he specially emphasized, "Don't chant the complete honorific name in normal times. Do so only when important matters arise."

Otherwise, as Mr. Fool, he would suffer a mental breakdown from all the "phone calls from work."

Nim wasn't surprised at all, because the ancient sun god was the same.

After some thought, he asked, "What are the requirements for the ritual of the Lord?"

Klein said confidently like a charlatan, "God says: Eighth Commandment: Serve me with your heart, not with your offerings.

"The most important thing for a ritual is to be pious. There are no other requirements. It can be very simple."

After all, the Lord does not care[1]… After saying that, Klein silently added in his heart.

After explaining this, he raised his right hand and pointed at the pile of mushrooms in front of him.

“The Lord has bestowed these mushrooms to you because he wants you to enjoy a bumper harvest.

“These mushrooms are nourished by the flesh and blood of monsters. They can rapidly grow and accumulate all the toxins, corruption, and madness into those pure black mushrooms. This can be used as a medium for curses or to smear the heads of arrows…”

The Moon City residents listened in excitement as they clasped their hands and bowed their heads, shouting, “Praise be to The Fool!”

At that moment, it was as if Klein could hear countless illusory voices coming from the air. They were mixed with the real praises, circling him and anchoring him.

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†

Quote from The Dark Forest of the Three Body Problem trilogy.

Chapter 1227 - Summoning Ritual

◆

After Mass, Klein followed the newly appointed Priest of The Fool, Nim, into the black tower.

With no reservations, Nim gave a detailed description of how many demigods and Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts there were in Moon City.

Three demigods… Five Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts… Moon City isn't weak at all… As expected of a power that can directly receive a revelation and guard the border… Furthermore, they had people relatively well-distributed across the twenty-two Beyonder pathways in the beginning. They could work together effectively so that some rituals didn't need any requests for external help or become restricted by the environment… Yes, compared to the City of Silver in how their surroundings is worse and how they do not have Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts to support them, it's already extraordinary for them to survive to this day… If it wasn't because they couldn't find suitable food, they should be able to survive in the darkness for centuries… Klein felt wistful after hearing the introduction.

At this moment, Nim said respectfully, "Oracle, we are willing to sacrifice all the Sealed Artifacts and Beyonder characteristics to the Lord. I wonder which one of them will be more pleasing to him?"

This High Priest had previously mentioned that apart from him, a Nightwatcher, Moon City also had an Iron-blooded Knight and an Imperative Mage. They were respectively the Lightning Priest and Night Priest.

As for the five Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts, one of them belonged to the Monster pathway. It seemed to be a portion of Misfortune Mage characteristic mixed with a little of a Chaoswalker's characteristic. One of them came from Puppet from the Mutant pathway, and the other was bestowed by Red Angel Medici. It allowed everyone to gather all their powers together. One of them was suspected to be the amalgamation of a Bizarro Sorcerer's characteristic, and there was one of an unknown pathway. It had extremely strong discernment abilities, but it was rather dangerous due to an unknown corruption.

Hearing that, Klein's eyelids twitched as he smiled.

"Serve the Lord with your heart, not with your offerings.

"The Lord accommodates the entire world and doesn't care about these things."

Having said that, he paused and said, "Of course, if you don't mind, you can bring me around for a tour to broaden my horizons."

"No problem!" Nim answered without hesitation.

He originally imagined that Gehrman Sparrow would take away a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact while taking the tour, but to his surprise, the Oracle only wanted to get a better understanding of the specific situation and had no intention of reaping any benefits. He picked up every Sealed Artifact to take a look but put them back in the end.

After the tour ended, Klein said to the three demigod priests, "The opportunity to leave this cursed land isn't here yet. You need to hold on for a while longer.

"And I will continue my journey to find other survivors and spread the light of the Lord."

"Yes, Oracle," Nim and the other priests replied without any hesitation.

With those mushrooms, they would be spared from annihilation for at least another three generations.

After settling the matters in Moon City, Klein walked out into the darkness in his trench coat and top hat.

What he was going to do next was very clear:

Find Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar and hunt for this God of Wishes!

My wish is to obtain the Miracle Invoker's Beyonder characteristic and that "curtain." I wonder if "He" will be able to help me achieve it… As Klein walked, he made a mockery in his heart.

With him out of sight of Moon City's residents, he pulled another "him" out of the fog of history.

His main body entered the Historical Void, causing his consciousness to shift to the projection.

This projection also summoned the historical projection of the Staff of the Stars. With its Beyonder powers, he descended directly into the place in his mind:

The completely destroyed northern ancient city, Nois!

After successfully reaching his destination, the projection quickly disappeared, and Klein's body returned to the wilderness outside Moon City.

Following that, he summoned the Staff of the Stars's projection and repeated the process, allowing him to instantly reach the Nois ruins.

The main purpose of the Historical Void's projection was to scout ahead and ensure that the scenes that surfaced in his mind were identical to the real world, without having any discrepancies. This prevented the Staff of the Stars from creating its random effects.

This was the cautiousness of a Scholar of Yore.

†

In the middle of the quiet and dark training grounds of the City of Silver.

Colin Iliad, who was carrying two swords on his back, stood by the side. He watched as Derrick Berg set up the ritual and prayed to Mr. Fool, asking him to send a holy spirit down upon him to provide him with help.

This was different from a normal summoning ritual. The corresponding incantation was more complicated:

“The Great Fool;

“You are the ruler above the gray fog;

“You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

“I pray for your loving grace.

“I pray for your notice.

“I pray for the power of concealment and change.

“I!

“I summon in the name of the great Fool:

“The Holy Spirit that sees through Everything, the Loving Grace of the King of Yellow and Black, the Traveler from the Dream and Mind.”

As the Jotun words echoed at the altar, the flames at the tip of the candles suddenly expanded, forming an illusory door covered in mysterious patterns.

The door slowly opened and a woman wearing a pure white dress and silver mask walked out. She stepped out of the void and walked across the ground.

Her hair was red and her eyes were golden. They were limpid and deep, as if they could see through everyone's hearts.

This was Justice Audrey. She had used Lie to change her height, and a mask to conceal her main features.

She came to the Forsaken Land of the Gods, the City of Silver in the form of a Spirit Body.

In fact, the summoning ritual wasn't complicated at all. Klein had pulled Audrey's spirit above the gray fog ahead of time. He waited for the Door of Summoning to be established before helping her open it, allowing her to pass through and settle the entire matter.

That also meant that the description of "Holy Spirit that sees through Everything" could equally have changed to "Sleeping Princess, the Holder of the Golden Apple, the Previous Owner of the Crystal Slippers," and Justice Audrey would still be able to descend. This was dependent on who Klein allowed to pass through the Door of Summoning. After all, the key point of the ritual was to use The Fool's name for the summoning and using the power of Sefirah Castle to communicate with the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

The silver-masked Audrey secretly surveyed her surroundings. She sized up the lightning-lit sky, the darkness that spelled lurking danger, and the City of Silver's Chief, Colin Iliad.

She then looked away and nodded at Little Sun.

"We can begin."

As she spoke, she couldn't help but sigh at his height.

Although this could be seen during the Tarot Gathering, it was still something that left her in a daze when she met him in real life.

She remembered very clearly that The Sun was a few years younger than her. According to Loen's standards, he was definitely still underage. To her surprise, he was more than two meters tall. This made Audrey, who had used Lie to deliberately increase her height, still have to look up.

Without any hesitation, Derrick relaxed his mind and cast his gaze at the golden potion placed on the altar.

Gradually, he felt a little dazed as scenes involuntarily flashed across his mind.

Scenes of his parents who remained alive inside the coffin;

The silver sword that stabbed down, hard. The blood that splattered and blinded his eyes momentarily.

It was the heartwarming scenes of his family in the past;

It was the City of Silver that was on the verge of collapse in the darkness.

They were teammates who supported each other and watched each others' backs;

It was the Elders standing in front of everyone, blocking the storm.

It was the repeated curses, the hope he saw in the lightning amidst the darkness;

It was a dream that had existed for more than two thousand years. It was something that generations of people yearned for daily.

The emotions that Derrick was most unwilling to give up were very complicated. It contained his anger towards reality, the fondness of the past, the pain of his circumstances, the repression of history, and the desire to save the City of Silver.

Audrey slowly separated these emotions as though she had experienced the despair and sadness of the City of Silver, experiencing their unity and sacrifices.

Her golden eyes sometimes turned gloomy and heavy, while there were glints at other times, as if she had grabbed something and taken it in; yet, she still remained lost.

After a while, she saw the twelve-white-winged angel of light. This was another response from Mr. Fool to The Sun.

Audrey seized the opportunity and attached all the intense feelings onto the angel phantom, preventing them from disappearing or undergoing a resurgence for a short period of time. By doing so, they didn’t stay completely separate from Derrick’s body.

It’s done. She didn’t open her mouth, but instead, allowed her voice to echo in his heart.

At this moment, Derrick’s eyes became abnormally cold, as if he no longer knew what joy, sadness, pain, and depression were.

He picked up the golden potion in front of him and poured it into his mouth.

This was a demigod potion obtained from shattering the Unshadowed Crucifix.

The Sealed Artifact that originated from the ancient sun god no longer existed. Of course, for Klein, anything he once possessed remained as enduring as the universe.

A hot, violent liquid gushed down Derrick’s throat, instantly filling his entire body and occupying his soul.

Rays of bright sunlight burst out from his body, washing away the remnants of his body’s corruption and the heaviness of his soul.

Derrick’s body became purer and clearer, like a holy spirit formed from pure light.

His self-awareness and emotions were being purified and repelled. It wouldn't take long for him to only have the instinct to praise the Sun.

At this moment, Audrey no longer let the strong emotions that she had stripped from him remain attached to the angel projection. She guided them back towards Little Sun.

One scene after another surfaced in Derrick's mind, causing him to experience abnormally complicated emotions.

He once again experienced the pain of personally killing his parents, the despair brought about by the circumstances of the City of Silver, and the joy of receiving Mr. Fool's loving grace.

This drilled deep into him, becoming a foundation of his mind world. It was very sturdy and very reliable, allowing him to withstand the last few rounds of the potion's cleansing forces.

Finally, Derrick opened his eyes—it was pure white.

When he saw a ray of light in front of him, he instinctively extended his right hand in an attempt to grab it.

However, the light quickly dimmed and extinguished.

[image]

Derrick was stunned for a moment before he clenched his right hand tightly.

Beams of light rose up and enveloped the entire City of Silver.

The legendary noon descended for a brief moment.

All the residents of the City of Silver were stunned by what they saw. This was even more shocking than any of the previous demigods' advancement.

Sunlight.

It was sunlight that illuminated the entire city.

†

After ending the summoning, Audrey returned above the gray fog.

At that moment, Mr. Fool was no longer around. The ancient palace only had The World Gehrman Sparrow, who had planned on observing the ritual.

“You don’t seem to be in a good state?” asked Klein.

Audrey sat down and smiled.

“I’m just a little edgy, hesitant, and confused.”

“That’s very normal. Before truly making up one’s mind, everyone would behave like this. There are countless people who retreat and regret their decision,” Klein calmly said.

Audrey didn’t directly answer the topic at hand and instead said with a faint smile, “Ever since I became a Spectator, I’ve always displayed what would be the most acceptable side to them in front of others, taking care of their most delicate emotions. This isn’t a bad thing, but this way, I won’t be able to know what I really look like in the eyes of others. I won’t be able to unveil the gorgeous clothes and see the rotting flesh beneath me. I won’t be able to figure out the problem.

“Recently, I’ve been trying to show my true state in some details. I want to see how the people around me will react under such a situation. I want to see if they still think that I’m the kind, amiable, and virtuous young lady.”

At this point, she suddenly fell silent. A few seconds later, she sighed and said, “The gap…”

Chapter 1228 - Wishes

◆

Without waiting for The World Gehrman Sparrow to respond, Audrey, who was maintaining her posture, slowly said a few words:

“Heaviness…

“Pain…

“Shame…”

Klein listened silently without commenting on what Miss Justice said. Instead, he asked in a gentle tone that was closer to the image of Dwayne Dantès, “Why do you suddenly want to do such a test?”

“It’s not a test.” Audrey shook her head. “It’s just to reveal the details that I usually hide and avoid. I want to see what I really look like in the eyes of others.”

After pausing for a moment, she moved her lips without a smile.

“After our previous conversation, I really am trying to come up with a plan. I plan to secretly do some manipulating, so that the nobles, businessmen, royal family, and the Church can release enough food from their stockpiles.

“Theoretically, this is a simple matter, but when actually trying to put it into action, I realize that I can’t be as determined and decisive as I thought.

“Some of them are my uncles and aunts, some of them are my cousins.

Some of them are friends I've known since I was young, while others are elders who have been very protective of me. Some of them I often meet with during various charity events and are rather friendly. They formed my childhood and gave me too much. It was a part of my growth, a part of the beautiful memories of my past…

"Besides, the food they accumulated wasn't stolen. Their explanation is actually reasonable.

"I really can't do it—to make them my target in an attempt to rob them of a portion of their wealth. At least, it's like this now."

As she spoke, Audrey's voice unknowingly escalated into a crescendo, as if she was arguing with someone.

She then realized that she had lost her composure, and remained silent for two seconds before continuing, "That's why I want to know more about myself. I want to strip away the false image from our past relationships. Under different circumstances, I want to ask myself what I really want, whether my thoughts in the past were impulsive, hypocritical, and naive, or strong beliefs from my heart."

At this point, Audrey suddenly smiled.

"Although I haven't come to any conclusions, the attempt has already brought some added benefits.

"I used to think that I had strictly abided by the principle of 'you're only acting,' but now I realize that I'm almost addicted to acting.

"Other pathways require different identities and occupations. The Spectator pathway's acting is completely consistent with one's daily life. Sometimes, it's hard to clearly differentiate between them.

"The simplest example: Who wouldn't want to be loved by everyone? Hence, when facing different people, I would wear a different mask and use the powers of the Spectator pathway to create an image that suits the other party's expectations the best. When there are more and more of such things, when you face everyone, you would actually be obsessed with ‘acting.’ You would almost lose yourself.”

Klein nodded slightly and said, “That’s a good lesson.”

He didn’t comment on Miss Justice’s prior words.

After a moment of silence, Audrey slowly said, “During this period of time, I’ve read the East Borough investigation report that my father hired someone to do. I’ve experienced many different things.

“Before the war, many of the poor people, workers, and farmers have lived lives that are as difficult as the lives today. They’ve been in constant hunger and pain. The changes to the Poor Law, and the strict laws about the working hours and environment, has indeed brought about some improvement to the management of the pollution in the air, but just a little…

“After the war ends, and if—if we overcome the apocalypse, will such things happen again?”

As she spoke, Audrey pursed her lips tightly and fell into silence.

Klein could sense Miss Justice’s confusion and perplexity. After some deliberation, he didn’t say the answer in his heart. He said in a deep voice, “These questions of yours, including what you said about your true thoughts, require you to find the answers yourself. No one can replace you.

“I can only give you some advice. Go to the fields and take a look at the hardworking farmers. Go to the factories and take a look at the diligent workers. Go to the East district and experience them. Go to the library and read through the past newspapers and other related works.”

Audrey listened attentively and nodded seriously.

“I will try.”

She immediately stood up and bowed towards the end of the long, mottled table. Although Mr. Fool had left, she believed that “He” was watching.

Just as she was waiting for Mr. Fool to send her back to the real world, The World suddenly said, “Hold on.”

“Oh?” Audrey expressed her curiosity with a nasal grunt.

Klein looked at her and conjured a piece of paper.

“This is the description of a Mythical Creature’s character and behaviors. I hope you can provide me with some help. Based on this analysis, determine what kind of reactions ‘He’ will carry out in different situations.”

“Alright.” Audrey did not refuse and agreed.

After she took the piece of paper and finished reading the content, Klein deliberated and said, “Regarding what you just said, I have another suggestion:

“There are two types of questions that you have. Some of them are indeed very pressing, while the others are not. You can wait for things to calm down and do a deeper investigation. Well, once a person is anxious, they will easily make mistakes. It’s best you be clear about the differences.”

Audrey thought for a moment and nodded solemnly.

“I understand.”

After responding, she suddenly laughed.

“I thought you called me at the last moment to give me your blessings, hoping that I will still love this world after seeing the world as it is.”

Klein was first taken aback before he asked with a smile, “You seem to have read a lot of Emperor Roselle’s novels?”

“He’s an outstanding novelist and also a very complicated and contradictory person,” Audrey said with a faint smile.

Klein nodded indiscernibly and spoke slowly, “If I wanted to give you my blessings, I wouldn’t have said that.

“I would have said, I hope that you will still love your family and friends after seeing them as they are.”

Audrey was taken aback as her lips quivered, as though she was repeating the words.

After a few seconds, she closed her eyes and said with a slightly hoarse voice, “Thank you…”

†

Sonia Sea, in the waters of the Rorsted Archipelago.

The Blue Avenger led a pirate fleet through the battlefield that was ravaged by war.

Suddenly, a huge fireball flew over from nowhere. Intertwined silver beams split apart the surface of the sea, creating a passageway that didn’t originally exist. Surrounded by the massive waves on both sides, it pointed straight at the Blue Avenger.

Alger Wilson, who was standing at the bow, raised his right hand without a change in expression when he saw this scene.

A violent hurricane suddenly appeared, sweeping up the azure-blue seawater and curling up the silver rays, like a long snake that shot into the sky, colliding with the huge fireball.

Boom!

The water splashed down like rain.

Alger immediately locked onto a battleship, opened his mouth, and let out an angry roar.

With a boom, the boat was suddenly lifted into the air by a ferocious wave.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, the Blue Avenger's cannons automatically fired as a series of salvos echoed continuously.

Realizing that the Beyonder on the other party's warship was trying to use the force of the fireball's detonation to allow the ship to drift sideways, Alger suddenly pulled down his right hand.

A thick bolt of silver lightning struck down, charring the Beyonder's body as he constantly convulsed.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

As artillery shells hit their target, the ship disintegrated in midair.

At that instant, Alger felt a little dazed. He couldn't help but look down at his right hand.

This is the power of a Cataclysmic Interrer. Is this how it feels to be a demigod? He sighed in his heart in a somewhat intoxicated manner before quickly snapping back to his senses. He got the Blue Avenger to pursue the enemy.

An hour later, the intense sea battle was over. Loen's side had once again secured the Rorsted Archipelago.

Alger was in a rather good mood. After returning to the port on the Blue Avenger, he called the sailors down and headed for one of the few bars that still remained open for business.

Loen had already issued an alcohol ban during wartime as a way to add to the food rationing efforts. But to sailors, alcohol was indispensable. Therefore, in the area controlled by the Church of the Lord of Storms, the restrictions in this area weren't too strict. Furthermore, the Rorsted Archipelago had plenty of produce and there weren't too many people. The shipping lines were under control, so their food supply hadn't been disrupted.

After walking for a distance, Alger's gaze suddenly froze.

The street in front of him had been hit, and many houses had already collapsed. One of them had a huge crater in a concrete field, while the four-story building beside it was left in ruins.

The smile on Alger's face gradually disappeared.

†

On Monday afternoon, 3:00 p.m. Backlund time.

Dark red beams of light shot up from both sides of the long bronze table, coagulating into blurry figures.

After all the members bowed to Mr. Fool, the gathering's transaction segment began since there weren't any more Roselle diary pages or accumulated questions.

Emlyn immediately sat up straight and surveyed the area.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have a commission."

"Which Shaman King do you wish to hunt?" Cattleya asked according to her understanding of Mr. Moon.

"…" Emlyn took two seconds to digest her question. He maintained his elegant smile and said, "You guessed correctly."

Cattleya nodded slightly and said, "What kind of payment can you provide?"

Emlyn was once again at a loss for words, a little embarrassed to say what he had prepared to say.

At this moment, The World at the bottom end of the long bronze table suddenly said, “You found someone from the Rose School of Thought temperance faction to cooperate with?”

Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief.

“That’s right.”

“Then I can take on this commission.” As this was related to Miss Messenger, Miss Sharron, and Maric, Klein controlled The World to take the initiative to accept the mission. “Of course, this requires a certain medium.”

Without waiting for Emlyn to respond, he made Gehrman Sparrow look at Miss Magician.

“Make some preparations in advance.”

??? Fors, who had been watching the entire thing play out like a performance, wore a blank look on her face.

Chapter 1229 - Collective Wisdom

◆

Seeing that Miss Magician had yet to react, Klein made The World add, “You don’t need to be there. Just summon my historical projection in advance.”

“…Alright!” Fors nodded hurriedly.

At that moment, because Gehrman Sparrow had accepted his mission, Emlyn clearly relaxed.

From what he knew, this meant that the success rate of the matter had skyrocketed.

In the next second, The World looked at him and hoarsely asked, “What kind of payment can you provide?”

Emlyn fell silent for two seconds before saying with his eyes darting upwards slightly, “Once I become a Shaman King, I’ll provide a free promise on similar matters.

“Also, I only want the Shaman King’s Beyonder characteristic. The members of the Rose School of Thought temperance faction should have a clear goal. The rest will be yours.”

Mr. Moon isn’t very stolid. He doesn’t have much confidence… Through his actions and words, Audrey came to a conclusion.

This fellow, Emlyn, has learned how to use “consumption loans”… Klein secretly laughed and made The World indifferently reply:

“It looks like you can only afford a demigod like me.”

If Mr. Moon can provide a large amount of food, I don’t mind participating… Justice Audrey mumbled inwardly.

However, she didn’t need to say anything to know what Mr. Moon would say.

Why would we Sanguine be hoarding so many snacks?

To the Sanguine, their staple was the blood of humans with abundant spirituality. Bread and meat products were all non-essentials.

Seeing that The World Gehrman Sparrow didn’t reject his offer, Emlyn secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

“What other requests do you have? I’ll try my best to fulfill them.”

Gehrman Sparrow thought for a moment before saying, “Give me a mystical item or a Sealed Artifact that can greatly increase the wielder’s spirituality for a short period of time.”

This was for Miss Magician, allowing her to maintain the Historical Void projection for a few more minutes. And there was no doubt that the Moon domain had such Beyonder powers. For example, the Scarlet Scholar could create a full moon state, allowing their spirituality to be enhanced.

Phew… Emlyn quickly nodded.

“Alright, no problem.”

Seeing that the human and vampire had come to an agreement, Fors hurriedly raised her hand and said, “No Full Moon.”

That way, ignoring the enhancement of her spirituality, she would be considered lucky if she didn’t die on the spot. After all, the higher the Sequence, the clearer one could hear Mr. Door’s ravings. Fors had long since advanced from Sequence 6 Scribe to Sequence 5 Traveler.

Emlyn also knew about Miss Magician's "full moon curse," so he had no questions about it. He acknowledged tersely, indicating that he had taken note.

At this moment, Alger, who was listening to the completed transaction beside him, said in thought, "Although the Beyonders of the Rose School of Thought are easily controlled by their emotions and instincts, this didn't mean that their brains had already disappeared along with their zombification. Even if they're gone, they still have members of the Moon domain.

"Since their demigods were directly involved in the Southern Continent's war and have exposed their locations, they wouldn't dismiss the possibility of an attack from the Sanguine and temperance faction. I believe there's a high chance of them laying a trap."

"That's right." Leonard echoed, "Many dossiers indicate that, although the Beyonders of the Rose School of Thought are well known for indulging themselves in bloodshed, cruelty, and desires, they still act very meticulously. Their actions show certain cunningness and sinisterness."

Xio glanced at her friend and said, "I encountered a supernatural incident involving the Rose School of Thought two months ago. The target was obviously deceived and fell into a trap."

The World Gehrman Sparrow listened attentively before scoffing. He then said to Emlyn, "Which Shaman King is your target?"

Emlyn didn't hide anything.

"The Shaman King who led the natives from East Balam's North Olite County to attack the Loen's main colonial city."

Upon hearing this, a thought flashed across Klein's mind:

The Mother Tree of Desire doesn't seem to want the Goddess to control the Uniqueness of the Death pathway. "She" was driving the natives and using the war to waver the fundamental faith of the Church of Evernight in the Southern Continent.

As this thought flashed through his mind, he made The World Gehrman Sparrow look at Emlyn and chuckle.

“Then my target will be another Shaman King. This has nothing to do with your operation.”

There was no need for him to be too direct. Emlyn, Cattleya, and company quickly understood his plan.

This was a simple plan:

Gehrman Sparrow hunted another Shaman King and took the initiative to step into a trap to attract the hidden forces of the Rose School of Thought. And at that moment, the Moon and the Rose School of Thought’s temperance faction would take the opportunity to attack the real target.

“Isn’t this too dangerous?” Emlyn subconsciously replied.

The danger was of course directed to Gehrman Sparrow who would be walking into a trap.

The World Gehrman Sparrow replied very calmly, “It will just be a historical projection.”

If he dies, so be it…

Upon hearing such an answer, Emlyn, Leonard, and the other members of the Tarot Club were at a loss as to what expression to show as a response. It was unknown if they should reflect on the fact that Sequence 3 demigods were different, or be envious that Scholars of Yore had such Beyonder powers.

Klein continued to let The World speak, “If the Rose School of Thought has any doubts about my sudden attack, and only divert a portion of their strength to stop me so as to still maintain a relatively complete trap, then I will try to hunt that Shaman King seriously and turn the false target into the true target. After all, all you want is the corresponding items. You don't care who the original owner is."

A simple but effective plan… The key point is that Gehrman Sparrow has to have a strength that exceeds his limits, one that can put up resistance even when facing an angel… Audrey learned from him seriously and evaluated this inwardly.

Emlyn no longer had any doubts. After some thought, he said, "Before the official operation, I need to meet with the members of the Rose School of Thought temperance faction to finalize the details."

The World Gehrman Sparrow nodded and said, "Make arrangements for it."

After the exchange, Klein made The World conjure a paper stack and distributed it to the members of the Tarot Club.

"Some existences and I will be dealing with a Mythical Creature. You can raise your opinion and share your thoughts."

The piece of paper was written with the character and actions of the Dark Demonic Wolf, Kotar, as well as the various analysis Miss Justice had made.

He hoped that he could find inspiration through different people with their different personalities and knowledge.

Mythical Creature… The World has set his sights on Mythical Creatures? Alger, who had been much quieter than usual, couldn't help but look at the bottom end of the long bronze table.

Although he was already mentally prepared for this, he felt that he wouldn't be surprised even if The World Gehrman Sparrow suddenly called himself an angel. However, when he realized that the other party was really targeting a Mythical Creature, he couldn't help but feel a little shocked and perturbed.

Cattleya had similar feelings as well, but she immediately recalled the Snake of Fate, the Death Consul, and the Ancient Bane.

This matched the Gehrman Sparrow's words of "some existences."

It was very normal for three angels and a Sequence 3 Blessed to hunt a Mythical Creature!

One by one, they retracted their gazes from the bottom end of the long, mottled table, and they began reading the information in their hands seriously.

At this moment, as they weren't involved in the commission or involved in a transaction, nor were they sharing information; yet, the members of the Tarot Club had a baffling feeling of working together for one common goal. They felt like they were starting to feel like an organization.

After reading the contents, Alger was the first to speak.

"According to Miss Justice's analysis, no bait will trap that paranoid Mythical Creature. It will only push 'Him' to escape further.

"Under the situation of 'Him' suspected to wield a Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic, 'He' really doesn't need to chase after other things. Advancing 'Himself' is the most important thing at hand. If you want to deal with 'Him,' we can only consider it from this point of view."

Upon hearing this, Xio said from a professional point of view, "But this Mythical creature is very cautious. 'He' doesn't leave any clues behind. And according to the intel, the location 'He' can use to prepare for the Sequence 1 ritual isn't actually restricted in an environment like the Forsaken Land of the Gods."

"Yes, there are too many monsters for 'Him' to use." Derrick confirmed what Miss Judgment had said.

There was silence immediately. Leonard thought for a moment and said, “Can we rely on the law of Beyonder characteristics convergence?”

As he spoke, he looked at Klein Moretti.

“That Mythical Creature seems to be from the same pathway as you.”

“Just relying on the effect that comes from the convergence of Beyonder characteristic at this level to ‘chance’ upon this Mythical Creature might take a year or two, perhaps even longer. Furthermore, the other party is a complete Mythical Creature. ‘He’ has the ability to cause some interference.” Klein overruled Leonard’s suggestion.

Of course, if he augmented the power of Sefirah Castle onto himself, he might be able to meet the Dark Demonic Wolf the next time he used the Staff of the Stars’s random teleportation. However, the problem was that if that happened, the chances of a “coincidental encounter” with Amon would be much, much higher. This was the standard way of knocking on death’s door.

After hearing everyone’s discussion, Cattleya said in thought according to what the Queen found taboo, “Can we use this Mythical Creature’s honorific name to establish a connection?”

If the Dark Demonic Wolf hadn’t been tracked by Amon in the past, that might have been possible. But now, what can be thought must have been thought of by Amon. Under such circumstances, the fact that the Dark Demonic Wolf hasn’t perished implies that “He” is wary of such matters… The World Gehrman Sparrow slowly shook his head.

“With ‘His’ paranoid character, ‘He’ definitely wouldn’t respond automatically.”

Just as he said that, he suddenly had an idea.

Not receiving a response from the Dark Demonic Wolf didn’t mean that “He” wouldn’t pay attention to the corresponding prayer light!

Chapter 1230 - Meeting Again

◆

As he had personal experience, Klein placed himself in the shoes of the Dark Demonic Wolf and pondered.

Usually, he would shut down the automatic prayer response to prevent an enemy from using the feedback to establish a connection and lock onto his position;

Under this premise, to receive a sudden prayer from a stranger would no doubt lead to “Him” relying on the corresponding point of light to observe the supplicant and grasp more information. This allowed “Him” to make preparations for what might happen in the future;

If the person chanting the honorific name was a powerful existence like Amon or someone relatively more familiar, it would be best to destroy that point of light immediately. However, if the person was a stranger, under such a situation where “He” was completely safe, “He” would monitor him for a long period of time to understand the exact situation and see if there was a need for a counterattack. It was something that every rational creature would most likely do. At the very least, Klein would do so.

The essence of this matter was that non-Mythical Creatures were marked by high-level existences. They could die in a baffling and tragic manner at any moment. To the supplicant, this was equivalent to suicide or something even more terrifying. To the Dark Demonic Wolf, it was only a positive outcome, nothing negative.

At the beginning, the suspicious Dark Demonic Wolf would definitely suspect that there was a conspiracy. “He” wouldn’t dare to establish a connection and influence Klein from a distance. However, with the passage of time, as the observations deepened and a confirmation was made that the other party was a non-angel weakling who possessed the aura of Sefirah Castle with signs of being unprepared, “He” would definitely find an opportunity to attack from afar. At the time when Klein was most unprepared, “He” would mark the prayer light and deal a remote attack.

This aligned with Klein’s previous conclusion about his advantage that Klein—“I’m very weak.”

The only problem with this plan was that the initiative was completely in the hands of the Dark Demonic Wolf. Everything Klein did would be monitored, and there was no way to prepare ahead of time. Once the other party tried to exert “His” influence on him, he would not be able to fight back and wouldn’t be spared.

Phew, by doing so, I would successfully bait the prey, but kill the hunter as a result… It’s meaningless… Yet, if I don’t place myself in such a passive position, it will be difficult to bait an angel of the Seer pathway, the paranoid demonic wolf… This is something that a marionette or others cannot do in my stead… If only I can be certain that the Dark Demonic Wolf wouldn’t rashly attack remotely because of “His” paranoia and will only choose to monitor and observe… Thoughts raced through Klein’s mind as he sought out the possibilities amongst numerous impossibilities.

With regards to this, he could only sigh inwardly, feeling regretful for not being an angel from the Spectator pathway.

According to his assumptions, the angels of the Spectator pathway would more or less have some special characteristics of “the more others know about you, the more you understand them.” When the Dark Demonic Wolf monitored him closely through prayer light and ended up carefully observing an angel from the Spectator pathway, "His" position would undoubtedly be exposed to the other party.

Unfortunately, I'm not… Besides, the Spectator pathway's Sequence 2 might not be able to do so. I can only be certain that a Sequence 1 has this special trait… Summoning 0-08 from the fog of history? No, let's not talk about whether I can summon that quill without Groselle's Travels. Even if I successfully create a projection, the quill is a quill while I am still myself. The Dark Demonic Wolf's understanding of me doesn't make 0-08 do the reverse. Also, I can only use it for a mere two minutes. It wouldn't be enough to sense anything… It can be used as supplementary to the plan, writing the development I wish to see happen, making the Dark Demonic Wolf's "choice" appear reasonable so as to eliminate uncertain elements… Klein considered for a long while, but he failed to find a suitable plan to bait his prey.

Apart from feeling regretful that he wasn't a Sequence 1 angel of the Spectator pathway, he had also thought of the cosmos:

Just learning of it would result in corruption from the cosmos!

If I had the nature of the cosmos, then after the Dark Demonic Wolf uses the prayer point of light to monitor me, "He" would be corrupted, allowing me to lock onto "His" position. However, the cosmos's nature is higher than that of an angel. How could I have it… I keep feeling like I've forgotten something… Klein made The World Gehrman Sparrow shake his head indiscernibly as he surveyed the area.

"There's no need to discuss the answer now. You can go back and communicate with the right person with suitable methods."

He focused his attention on The Star Leonard and The Hermit Cattleya, hoping that they would be able to get advice from the existences that were more experienced such as Pallez Zoroast and Queen Mystic Bernadette.

As for himself, he would return to Backlund with the aid of the historical projection. He would seek advice from Miss Messenger, Will

Auceptin, and the ascetic, Arianna.

This is what it means to seek the opinions of angels or quasi-Angels before making a major decision… Klein made a self-deprecatory comment.

When Leonard and Cattleya heard that, they nodded in unison.

“Alright.”

Following that, the members of the Tarot Club began discussing the situations of the various battlefields until the end of the gathering.

†

After returning to the real world, Leonard, who was resting in Saint Samuel Cathedral’s basement, spoke in a low voice, explaining all the questions that Klein had posed to him and said, “Old Man, do you have any suggestions?”

“This is him trying to obtain the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic left behind in the Forsaken Land of the Gods…” Pallez Zoroast was first enlightened before he chuckled. “Tell your former colleague that there’s no way he can resolve this matter himself. I only have one suggestion. That is to seek help from The Fool!”

Leonard knew Old Man’s character very well. He hurriedly asked, “Is this really the only suggestion?”

Pallez Zoroast harrumphed and said, “That’s a Mythical Creature that even Amon can’t capture. It’s possible only by relying on The Fool’s help.”

Only then did Leonard nod and sigh.

“It seems that’s the only way…”

†

Two days later, two minutes before the meeting time that The Moon Emlyn had agreed to meet Maric.

Fors sat on a reclining chair beside the fireplace and listened to the commotion on the second floor. She cast her gaze at her friend, Xio.

“If the war continues, Backlund will definitely suffer more attacks. Are you really not going to evacuate your mother and brother to the surrounding villages?”

Xio’s short, light-blonde hair was parted in an asymmetrical fashion and was neatly combed. Compared to last year, she looked more serious and had the bearing of an adjudicator. She was like a high-ranking knight leading an order of knights.

She hesitantly said, “The population in the surrounding villages has reached its limit. Besides, I can still get enough food from MI9 now.”

Having said that, she paused and said, “If the flames of war really reach Backlund, take them ‘Traveling’ to Intis and Feynapotter…”

“It seems that’s the only way…” Just as Fors was about to mention the matter of her buying food in Intis a few days ago, she suddenly heard the alarm ring.

She shivered and suddenly sat up straight. She stretched out her right hand, which was wearing a red string, and grabbed into the air.

Her arm sank as she pulled out Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing a silk top hat and a black trench coat without glasses.

The cold adventurer’s eyes rolled and gained consciousness, reducing the amount of spirituality that Miss Magician had to expend.

He nodded gently as he made the glove on his left hand become transparent.

In less than a second, Gehrman Sparrow “Teleported” away and disappeared from Fors and Xio's rented apartment.

"…" Fors was stunned for a moment before the corners of her mouth twitched slightly. She turned to Xio and said, "I think I'm just a tool…"

†

The sky was already dark, but the street lamps weren't lit up. Only the crimson moon illuminated the entire city.

When Klein arrived at the agreed-upon place, he looked around and saw the unusually cold streets, the burning marks on the walls, and the collapsed buildings not far away for a few seconds.

Just based on what he saw, Backlund was desolate and dilapidated. It even had the smell of gunpowder wafting through the city.

At this moment, Emlyn White walked out of an alley and nodded at the crazy adventurer.

According to Gehrman Sparrow's instructions, he didn't say a word or bow. To prevent any delay in whatever precious time Gehrman Sparrow had, he led him to a nearby house and knocked on the door rhythmically.

With a creak, the door opened automatically, revealing a dark environment blanketed with faint moonlight.

The moment Emlyn and Klein entered, they saw the white-shirt and black-vested Maric sitting on the sofa. The door behind them seemed to have a life of its own as it slammed to a close.

After taking a glance at him, Emlyn smiled and pointed at him.

"This is my partner, Mr. Gehrman Sparrow."

Just as he finished speaking, he suddenly realized that the way Maric looked at him was even odder, as though he was examining an idiot.

"Long time no see." Maric immediately stood up, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed at Sherlock Moriarty.

Since the other party didn't appear in the image of Sherlock Moriarty, he definitely wouldn't take the initiative to mention such matters.

"Long time no see." Klein took off his hat and surveyed the area. "Miss Sharron, please come out for the discussion. I have limited time."

As he spoke, he took out a silver adventurer's harmonica and blew into it.

A figure wearing a dark and complicated long dress holding four blonde, red-eyed heads walked out from the void.

The messenger summoned by the harmonica's historical projection was an objective existence. It didn't increase the spirituality burden of Fors.

At the same time, Maric nodded and said, "Alright."

He cast his gaze on the high stool on the other side of the room.

Emlyn looked at the Wraith in a daze, then at Gehrman Sparrow and the spirit world creature he summoned. For some reason, he felt like he had been ostracized and didn't belong here.

And on that high stool, a figure quickly outlined itself. Her skin was fair like a doll, and she wore an exquisite black regal dress and a small bonnet of the same color. Her blonde hair and blue eyes were slightly pale in color.

Chapter 1231 - “Visiting” Everywhere

◆

Emlyn subconsciously looked at the high stool on the other side of the room, and saw the “exquisite doll.”

His eyes immediately revealed a look of amazement, admiration, ardor, and other mixed emotions. He opened his mouth and almost blurted out the question of where he could buy such a doll and who was the master behind this piece of work.

However, he was already an adult and had experienced plenty of things. He knew that bringing up such a question was very impolite, so he planned to find an opportunity to ask after the discussion on serious matters were finished.

Sharron frowned indiscernibly as her body floated up. She bowed at Reinette Tinekerr and Sherlock Moriarty.

“There’s no need for small talk,” Klein said simply. “Our initial plan is this…”

He shared how he would let his historical projection take the initiative to step into a trap to attract the attention of the Rose School of Thought and described it in detail.

Sharron with her black bonnet listened quietly and said with a slightly ethereal voice, “They might not fall for it.

“After realizing that you are the attacker, that Shaman King will likely choose to retreat under the protection of Sealed Artifacts or angels.”

This way, it could only implicate a portion of the Rose School of Thought's strength.

Without waiting for Klein and Emlyn to respond, Reinette Tinekerr's four heads opened their mouths and said at a faster pace, "Their…" "Main…" "Target…" "Should…"Likely…" "Be…" "Me…"

Emlyn was a little lost hearing this, but he could roughly tell that the spirit world creature that Gehrman Sparrow had summoned had quite a status. Furthermore, it had a deep relationship with the Rose School of Thought's temperance faction.

That's right… Even if the Mother Tree thinks highly of me, the setup would most likely attract Miss Messenger… After a moment of silence, Klein gave an addendum:

"Madam, you and I will attack the other Shaman King in the form of Historical Void projections."

"…" Gehrman Sparrow is very respectful towards this spirit world creature… Just as this thought flashed through Emlyn's mind, he saw the eight eyes on the four heads sweep at him.

He shivered and instinctively joined in the discussion.

"Can this fool those from the Rose School of Thought?"

Since Klein had suggested that, he must have thought of a corresponding solution.

"I have an item that can be lent to Miss Tinekerr."

Having said that, he looked at Reinette Tinekerr and said, "That item can mimic the Beyonder powers that surface in your mind.

"I hope you can use it to summon your past self, then move yourself into a concealed state and inject your consciousness into the projection. This way, the Rose School of Thought won't be able to discover anything abnormal in a short period of time. It's very likely that they will fall for it and gather all their strength to surround and kill you and me, allowing Miss Sharron and Emlyn to find a chance to launch a surprise attack.

"If they're more cautious than I thought…"

Klein paused for a moment before revealing a smile.

"In that short period of time, if you join forces with me in your peak condition, there is a chance of killing the Shaman King despite him being under the protection of a Sealed Artifact.

"Now, the main point is, do you know enough about the Beyonder powers to summon Historical Void projections, as well as entering into a concealed state?

"I can demonstrate the former to you, but I will think of a way for the latter."

Reinette Tinekerr's four heads shook up and down at the same time.

"I…" "Can…" "No…" "Problem…"

"That's the general gist of it. You can confirm the details in the next few days." Klein silently estimated the time, as if he made his delivery succinct.

Sharron nodded indiscernibly and said, "The most important thing is intel. Teacher can provide a portion of it. The rest can be obtained through magic mirror divination."

Maric echoed, "I remember the symbol you drew back then."

She also remembered that the question posed by the hidden existence didn't violate much of her privacy, and didn't bring about too much shame.

Emlyn thought for a moment and carefully asked, "How do we communicate on both sides?

“If we can’t grasp the timing accurately, the plan will definitely fail.”

The Blood Clan’s Oath of Rose was unable to transmit what they saw and heard at such a great distance.

Sharron glanced at Reinette Tinekerr and said, “Teacher’s main body can stay on our side. Ten seconds after ‘She’ enters a concealed state, we will take action.

“Once ‘She’ exits the concealed state, we will immediately leave regardless of whether we succeed.”

“She”… Emlyn jumped in fright as he instinctively turned his head to look at Gehrman Sparrow.

He remembered very clearly that “She” was summoned by Mr. World.

How terrifying… Emlyn didn’t know if he was referring to the spirit world creature or Gehrman Sparrow.

“After the intelligence gathering is done, you can communicate again.” Seeing that it was almost time, Klein took off his hat and bade farewell.

Emlyn’s lips quivered, but he didn’t ask anything in the end. He followed Gehrman Sparrow out of the house where Sharron and Maric were.

Miss Messenger actually didn’t ask for any gold coins… This is because I’m helping “Her.” If “She” really wants payment, all the gold coins I have are historical projections. I can only rely on Emlyn… I have to say, the Bangle of Spirituality that Emlyn provided to Miss Magician has pretty good effects. On the one hand, it can strengthen Miss Magician’s spirituality, and on the other hand, it can speed up her spirituality recovery, allowing her to last this long… Just as the thoughts ran through Klein’s mind, he heard Emlyn asked in puzzlement, “That ma’am—uh, Miss Sharron is a Sequence 4 demigod of the Mutant pathway?"

"That's right. The potion's name is Puppet," Klein kindly informed him.

Emlyn was instantly enlightened as he fell silent for two seconds before saying with a complicated expression, "If only she didn't speak or move, then she would be perfect."

…If it wasn't for the fact that a Clown could be described as a master in terms of expression management, Klein nearly spewed a mouthful of water at Emlyn.

He thought that the other party would praise Miss Sharron's beauty and doll-like characteristics, showing his infatuation and fervor, but in the end…

I can't understand what's on this fellow's mind… After controlling his urge to spew out whatever was in his mouth, Klein sighed inwardly.

Emlyn glanced at him and seemed to have guessed what he was thinking. He scoffed and said, "Which two things do you like the most?"

With Gehrman Sparrow's character, he wouldn't have answered such a mundane question. However, he was still Sherlock Moriarty—a friend of the vampire in front of him. After some thought, he walked into the alley and casually said, "Money and delicacies."

"Then, I'll give you a stack of edible gold pounds. Would you like it?" Emlyn asked further as he walked beside Gehrman Sparrow without any fear of the crazy adventurer like Miss Magician.

Klein imagined it and felt that this would taint the value of the gold pounds, but also caused the delicacies to lose their attractiveness. Hence, he slowly shook his head.

"So…" The corners of Emlyn's mouth curled up. "Although I also like exquisite, beautiful dolls and pure girls, if they were to combine together, it would inevitably make me find it a little odd. Yes, I believe that every doll of mine has their own character and story. If they suddenly come to life and not be like what I imagined. I would be very disappointed and worried… Of course, if I had the chance to obtain the Puppet potion and sprinkle some on all my puppets, I might try it…"

As Emlyn spoke of his contradictory thoughts, he acted like a philosopher.

If Miss Justice were here, she should be able to analyze Emlyn's mental state from such a reaction… Before he could respond, Klein's figure instantly faded and vanished.

†

In the rental apartment where Fors and Xio lived.

In front of the fireplace, Fors leaned back against the reclining chair with a pale face. She pulled up the wool blanket covering her body and, with the help of Cogitation, entered a deep sleep.

Two hours later, she woke up feeling energized, but there was still some fatigue on her face.

This Miss Magician took a slow, deep breath and extended her hand again, pulling Gehrman Sparrow out of the air in front of her.

Half of her demigod-level "Records" were the summoning of Historical Void projections.

Klein glanced at her. This time, without even nodding his head, he directly "Teleported" out of the house and entered an empty room in a hotel.

Two hours ago, he had been busy with Emlyn and Miss Sharron's matters. This time, he had "returned" to Backlund for himself.

Without wasting any time, Klein immediately took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew it.

When Miss Messenger stepped out of the void once again, Klein recounted how he wanted to hunt the Dark Demonic Wolf and finally asked, “Do you have any suggestions?”

Reinette Tinekerr’s four blonde, red-eyed heads bobbed up and down at the same time.

“Sefirah Castle!”

In essence, it’s the same as Pallez Zoroast’s answer… Klein pressed curiously, “How?”

“I don’t know!” Reinette Tinekerr’s four heads answered in unison.

Klein silently exhaled and thanked “Her.”

“Sorry to trouble you.

“You can leave now.”

The blonde, red-eyed heads held by Reinette Tinekerr immediately replied:

“Bill…” “Records…” “For…” “1351…”

“September…” “For…” “Gehrman…”Sparrow…”

“Owes…” “Me…” “One…” “Gold coin…”

With that said, “She” turned transparent and returned to the spirit world.

“…” Klein was stunned for two seconds before he slowly took out his wallet from his inner pocket and picked up a paper crane.

“I have some questions to ask of you.” He wrote on the paper crane he carried with him.

After doing all of this, Klein lay on the bed and fell asleep.

In the hazy dream world, he once again saw Will Auceptin, who was lying in a black pram and wrapped in silver silk.

You're already over a year old. Do you still think you're a baby that's a few months old? Pretending that he didn't see him sucking his fingers, Klein quickly described his conundrum.

The plump Will Auceptin retracted his thumb and sized up Klein.

"Isn't the answer obvious?"

"Ah?" Klein was pleasantly surprised and puzzled.

Will Auceptin smiled and said, "You must've been eating too few desserts recently, causing your memory to be bad… Do you still remember what happens to a Beyonder below an angel of the Fate pathway when they see you directly?"

This… Klein's eyes lit up.

Chapter 1232 - Comparison Experiments

◆

After becoming a demigod and gaining some level of control over Sefirah Castle, Klein was able to prevent its aura from permeating out into the real world and augmenting him. This made him stop considering similar problems. After all, this would result in abnormalities, causing him to be recognized by the Beyonders of the "Fate" pathway at a glance—it was rather unsafe. And at this moment, once he received Will Auceptin's reminder, he felt that it opened up new possibilities.

When I was only a subsidiary to Sefirah Castle and only had the right to use it, the aura and projection of Sefirah Castle made a saint of the Fate pathway not dare to look at me directly. I was equivalent to a Mythical Creature in the eyes to the corresponding Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders. Now that I have initial control over Sefirah Castle, there's a high chance I can make the "effects" better… This can affect angels who are complete Mythical Creatures "Themselves"? Sefirah Castle's level reaches that of Sequence 0 at the very least? Yes, according to my deductions, it might even be higher than Sequence 0… It has the trait that just knowing of it will result in corruption? Klein's mind whirred with activity as though streaks of lightning were flashing across his mind.

He quickly made up his mind. After returning to the Forsaken Land of the Gods, he would find the monsters in the depths of the darkness and do some experiments with the marionettes in the fog of history, so as to deduce if his idea worked.

He smiled and said to the one-year-old child in the black pram, “I understand what you mean. I’ll get someone to send you ice-cream soon.”

Will Auceptin, who was wrapped in silver silk, slowly turned his head and looked to the side.

“No, there’s no need.

“I’ve been eating too much ice-cream during this period of time, and it’s starting to affect my body’s development…”

Klein pricked up his brows and asked, “Genuine, top-grade ice-cream produced right from the Intis capital, Trier.”

“…Give it to me next week.” Will Auceptin hesitated before answering.

With that said, the plump one-year-old child turned around and buried his face into a tiny pillow in the pram.

Due to the limited time Miss Magician had at maintaining the Historical Void projection, Klein didn’t say anything else. Using his unique trait, he forcefully escaped the dream and woke up before getting out of bed.

Right on the heels of that, he stretched out his right hand and repeatedly pulled at the air.

Four to five times later, his arm sank as he dragged out a woman wearing a simple linen robe with a tree bark belt. She was barefooted and had long black hair. She was a lady with average looks.

The leader of the ascetics of the Church of Evernight, Servant of Concealment, Arianna!

At the same moment, in Hillston Borough, in an apartment, Fors, who was sitting in a reclining chair, seemed to be pulled by invisible threads as she sat up abruptly. Her body straightened as the blood vessels on her forehead throbbed.

She felt that her spirituality was like a flood that flowed towards the void in front of her, one that she couldn’t stop no matter how hard she tried. She was on the brink of being sucked dry.

In the next second, this sudden surge eased quite a bit, but it remained frightening. It wasn’t something that she could handle now.

In a hotel room, Klein spoke succinctly once he saw the Historical Void projection of Ma’am Arianna gaining sentience.

“I plan on cooperating with others to deal with a particular Shaman King of the Rose School of Thought.”

Arianna nodded gently, indicating that she understood, but she didn’t give any suggestions.

Seeing that the ascetic leader didn’t give him any warnings, Klein felt a lot more at ease with the plan to hunt the Shaman King. He then said, “I’ve been planning on targeting the Dark Demonic Wolf recently.”

Arianna opened her mouth slightly and said, “Be careful.”

…Did “She” mean to say that I shouldn’t belittle the Dark Demonic Wolf, Kotar? Just as he was about to ask a question, his consciousness suddenly blurred. He saw the woman opposite him and his reflection in “Her” eyes fade away as they quickly disappeared.

Thud!

Fors collapsed into the reclining chair as her facial muscles twitched slightly.

“This is more tiring than writing all night long…” She gritted her teeth and tried Cogitating to fall asleep.

Extreme exhaustion might sometimes paradoxically cause insomnia to a person.

†

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, near Nois ancient city in the north, there was no one in the dark wilderness.

With the lantern emitting a faint yellow light, Klein circled around to confirm his surroundings.

Then, he found a rock and sat down, no longer shielding the aura of the gray fog from seeping into reality.

On this foundation, Klein consciously strengthened the projection that Sefirah Castle placed on him.

After he was done with his preparations, he quickly turned a monster hidden in the darkness around him into a marionette.

The marionette walked out of the darkness. Under the illumination of the lantern, it approached Klein and cast its gaze on him.

In the eyes of this monster marionette, other than the coated and hatted Klein having deeper, more profound eyes, his temperament had also become even more indescribable. There wasn't much of a difference from before.

After repeatedly testing the different types of monster marionettes, Klein confirmed that ordinary people, or most Beyonders, were unable to discover that he had the aura of Sefirah Castle on him.

Following that, he reached out with his right hand and pulled out his body from half a day ago. He controlled the rather dull historical projection to cast his gaze over.

This time, "Klein" saw a layer of grayish-white fog covering his body. Its interior was shimmering with light, but it didn't reveal its actual appearance.

He then removed the projection's support and attempted to pull out

Marionettist Rosago and other Beyonders of the Seer pathway to repeat the experiment.

Yes, after enhancing the projection, Beyonders of the Seer pathway can directly discover something abnormal. However, those below the level of an angel can at least confirm that I'm related to Sefirah Castle. There's no way to directly see the strange door of light, which is also the projection of Sefirah Castle… This outcome wasn't too surprising for Klein.

He took a deep breath and, after preparing himself to "rescue himself," he raised his hand and pulled out Winner Enuni from back when he hadn't been his marionette for long.

Enuni raised his head bit by bit, and his eyes gradually reflected Klein's figure. There was a faint gray fog that emanated outwards.

Deep in the fog, transparent or translucent twisted maggots were clustered around countless spherical lights. The spherical lights formed a door of light that was dyed bluish-black.

The door of light was much clearer than before as it appeared even more textured. At the same time, its shape changed as it extended even higher up.

This made it look like a tall and thin, brilliant figure. And the grayish-white fog around it was the figure's hooded robe.

The spherical lights constantly flashed, making Klein feel like he was being watched by this deep, mysterious, towering, and terrifying figure with his numerous eyes.

With a boom, Klein's head involuntarily tilted back as blood mixed with transparent maggots spurted out of his pores.

The Worms of Spirit fell to the ground as they frantically rolled and struggled. Some of them rapidly dissipated, while some eventually calmed down before crawling back into his body and into his pores.

Man… It's much better than directly losing consciousness and suffering memory loss the last time… Klein rubbed his temples and sighed silently.

Enuni, who was standing in front of him, had already vanished because of the impact that Klein had received. Unable to maintain the Historical Void projection, Enuni vanished.

This was also one of the reasons why Klein didn't suffer too much damage this time.

Without Winner Enuni, he was unable to see the mutated strange door of light. This reduced the continuous assault on his senses.

After two seconds, Klein entered the fog of history, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

Looking at the faint dark glow rising from his body and melting away, Klein finally heaved a sigh of relief and gave a self-deprecating laugh.

I nearly corrupted and corroded myself…

In the future, I'll use Rosago and the other Beyonders of the Seer pathway to do additional experiments: If there's no direct assault, I need to confirm if there will be a reverse corruption from Sefirah Castle's projection with the increase in observation time…

†

The Southern Continent, East Balam, Faoltec City that was under attack.

Under the illumination of the crimson moon, the Loen soldiers hiding behind a simple shelter took turns to rest to recover their energy.

Their faces were black and covered with traces of gunpowder. Occasionally, someone would wake up and take out some dried tobacco leaves and casually roll it. Then, they would use the remaining matchstick to light it up and bring it to their mouths to suck deeply at it. In turn, their eyes exuded mostly numbness and blankness.

When the soldiers guarding this line of defense smelled the tobacco, they instinctively sniffed and looked over.

“Do you still have any more tobacco leaves?” a soldier with a rifle asked his companion in a low voice.

His comrade shook his head.

“I’ve already finished smoking it.”

“I don’t know when the next batch will arrive… I’m going crazy without the tobacco!” The soldier who first spoke gestured outside the shelter with his chin. “Do you see that? There are so many corpses, so many hands and feet. They all belonged to living people.”

Before the sun set, the Resistance had launched a fierce attack by feverishly storming the various defensive lines at Faoltec City. Their disregard for their own lives frightened the Loen soldiers and servant-army who had been guarding the city. They almost had victory at hand, but ultimately failed to break through the critical line of defense. They left behind copious numbers of corpses before receding like the tide.

His comrade fell silent for a moment before saying, “Maybe tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, we will be joining them.”

Having said that, he looked up at the crimson moon and said in a dreamy voice, “I wonder how Backlund is. I haven’t received a letter from home in a long while… I wonder if they have enough food, or if they can find a doctor when they are sick…”

The soldier who had wanted to smoke was about to curse at the damn war and the damned enemy when his eyes suddenly widened. Trembling, he raised his right hand and pointed ahead.

“Th-they… They’re alive…”

One by one, the soldiers looked over and saw that under the crimson moon, the dismembered corpses that the Resistance had left behind were beginning to crawl up one by one, swaying as they tried to approach the defense line.

In the distance, a mysterious hooded person in black robe with embroidered crimson patterns stood behind the Resistance and spread out his arms slightly.

The spirituality of the entire battlefield was rapidly being nourished.

Chapter 1233 - Two Spots

◆

Ever since the war became prolonged, the Loen soldiers had seen countless unnatural phenomena. It happened so many that they were somewhat numb to it. However, the scene of the dismembered corpses crawling up remained a shocking scene. It left them horrified and confused. They felt as though they were unable to survive the impending disaster, and would eventually become zombies.

Of course, there was a reason why they were able to maintain their morale after seeing such unnatural phenomena.

Just as they were feeling extreme fear, a series of chants sounded from behind them.

“Lacking clothes and food, they have no shelter in the cold.

“…

“The Evernight did not forsake them, but bestowed them with love.”[1]

The holy and sympathetic prayer reverberated across the entire defense line, causing the fear in every soldier to quickly dissipate, their bodies and minds turning tranquil.

Then, a number of the soldiers followed orders and moved out cannons covered in silver patterns. They adjusted the muzzles and aimed at the dismembered corpses that were rushing at them.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Sparks flew as shells landed in different spots on the battlefield, exploding and emitting a thick darkness.

The dismembered corpses collapsed, the strength within them vanishing; otherwise, they were directly destroyed, returning to their eternal slumber.

The mysterious black-robed man behind the Resistance army raised his arms upon seeing this, as though he was hugging the crimson moon.

At that moment, his body suddenly turned incorporeal, his body dyed a faint red as he transformed into a hazy ray of moonlight.

The moonlight shattered instantly, turning into red scales before dissipating in place.

Moonlight Transformation!

This was a Beyonder power that a Sequence 5 Scarlet Scholar of the Apothecary pathway possessed. To a Sequence 4 Shaman King, it was almost instinctive.

And at the spot where the Shaman King had been, a figure quickly outlined itself.

It was a huge cloth doll. “It” had blonde hair and bright red eyes, and wore a long black gothic dress with countless mysterious patterns engraved on it. Swirling around it was sinister vines. Its skin had a luster that no human should possess.

Reinette Tinekerr!

“She” had used the Staff of the Stars to summon “Herself” back when she was in perfect condition.

Of course, the Staff of the Stars that was lent to Miss Messenger was the real one. Klein had brought it back to the real world from above the gray fog ahead of time.

If that wasn't the case, it would be equivalent to Klein's historical projection summoning a Staff of the Stars projection; then, the projection of the Staff of the Stars would summon Reinette Tinekerr in her peak state. The whole burden would be placed on Fors, causing her spirituality to be quickly drained.

A solution to this problem was to temporarily lend the actual Staff of the Stars to Reinette Tinekerr. The draining of spirituality would be borne by this Ancient Bane.

At the same time, Reinette Tinekerr was probably one of the existences that were the least afraid of the negative effects of the staff.

As a key representative of the temperance faction, and as a Puppet and a "cloth doll," "She" could stop unwanted scenes from surfacing in "Her" mind. And after changing into a concealed state, the Staff of the Stars could hardly affect "Her" Historical Void projection.

The peak state Reinette Tinekerr had attempted to sneak closer to directly possess the Rose School of Thought's Shaman King and instantly end the battle. However, the other party had discovered the danger ahead of time. Using the moonlight's illumination, he was one step ahead of the Wraith's possession.

Amidst the crimson glow that enveloped the ground, red scales rapidly reformed into the black-robed, hooded Rose School of Thought Shaman King. His eyes were closed eyes tightly, not daring to look at the Ancient Bane opposite him.

At the same time, on the other side of the battlefield, a figure rapidly appeared. It was none other than Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing a black trench coat and a half top hat. He had a transparent glove on his left hand as he raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

Scarlet flames rose up from various parts of the battlefield, as if they were announcing the beginning of a grand performance.

Just as the Shaman King finished reforming, he reached out his left hand and tore apart the clothes on his chest. At that moment, Reinette Tinekerr's bright red eyes reflected his figure.

If things went as expected, the Rose School of Thought Shaman King would've transformed into a rabbit or a goat in the next second. He would "lose" most of his characteristics and Beyonder powers, but his body only emitted a faint glow without any change.

His exposed chest revealed a long, thin brown puppet which was embedded there.

The puppet seemed to grow out of the Shaman King's body, its body connected to his internal organs. Its eyes and mouth were like crescents. The surface of its body was grown with dried flowers and withered grass, giving off an indescribable bizarreness in the moonlight.

Suddenly, the puppet was dyed red as though it was soaked in blood.

It immediately turned into a pool of mud that surged into the organs of the Shaman King.

Amidst the mud, an arm stretched out.

Its surface was flowing with a black sticky liquid that kept protruding out with strange objects. Some were skulls, some had barbed tongues, while others had three-dimensional eyes.

Abomination Suah!

This Rose School of Thought's leader, an existence at Sequence 1, had crossed the vast distance and descended with the help of prior arrangements!

That evil aura instantly caused the surrounding members of the Rose School of Thought and supporting members to either die, mutate, or wildly attack their comrades. Apart from the Shaman King, no one was spared.

†

West Balam, in a port city.

Shaman King Klarman, who wielded the highest authority here, stood at the top floor of a cathedral that once belonged to the Church of Evernight as he looked down at the sparsely-lit city.

In a house not far away, Emlyn White glanced at the doll-like Sharron and took out a bronze box with many ruby gems embedded in it.

Inside the box was an eyeball-shaped glass sphere. It was a Sealed Artifact which Emlyn had requested from the Sanguine, known as the Vision of White—an artifact of the Sun domain.

It was very effective at dealing with the Mutant pathway's demigods and Shaman Kings. It could even be considered able to restrain them in certain aspects.

Of course, it wouldn't feel any sense of pity and kindness just because Emlyn and Sharron were Beyonders on its side.

Upon seeing Sharron nod slightly to indicate that there were no problems, Emlyn's body phased away as the moonlight that shone into the room, and he disintegrated into a series of colorful red scales.

At the apex of the nearby cathedral, Klarman was pacing back and forth with his puffy, black-and-white hair. He sneered at the city's Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers for moving the Loen citizens and all the Sealed Artifacts away ahead of time.

If the group consisted only of Beyonders, it wouldn't be impossible to escape, but with so many ordinary people, how can you effectively move without being noticed? There's no need for me to send people to track you. Simply locking down the surrounding docks and food supplies is enough to break you down without my interference…

As he muttered silently to himself, this Shaman King, who had been active in the Southern Continent since the early Fifth Epoch and was even suspected to be dead, cast his gaze out the window and stared at the crimson moon high in the sky.

Previously, the abnormal phenomenon of the “crimson moon turning white” made Klarman feel the anger of the Primordial Moon. He had always felt uneasy and disturbed.

He had become a Primordial Moon believer over time while researching natural interactions, secret deeds, and other mysterious knowledge.

Normally, it was relatively easy for a Shaman King to live a thousand years, but later on, his physical condition waned—an irreversible form of aging and the decay of his Spirit Body. Therefore, 1,200 years was commonly the natural limit of Shaman Kings and Sanguine Earls. To continue living, one could only rely on various methods to survive. For example, sealing oneself and sleeping in a coffin deep within a castle.

Klarman was nearly 1400 years old and still brimming with energy. He didn’t need to limit his movements, because he had received the Primordial Moon’s blessings.

This was also the reason why he had disappeared for so many years.

Later on, he received a revelation from the Primordial Moon and joined the Rose School of Thought.

In this aspect, Klarman always had his suspicions. Sometimes, he believed that the Mother Tree of Desire and the Primordial Moon were one entity. They were different sides of the same great existence. Yet, there were other times when he felt that the Mother Tree of Desire and the Primordial Moon were not only different, but there was also a deep conflict between them.

This resulted in the Primordial Moon believers not getting enough attention when they later joined the Rose School of Thought. Apart from receiving some bestowments in the form of items, they were placed in noncritical positions.

Just as Klarman was focused on sensing the crimson moon in an attempt to gain a revelation, the crimson moonlight that fell onto the cathedral's bell tower had pure red scales of light appear as they gathered together. It then manifested into Emlyn White who wore a tuxedo and a bow tie.

Behind this Sanguine, a thick black gas emanated, forming a pair of illusory bat wings.

Emlyn had already consumed the corresponding potion to remove his scent and spirituality fluctuations, allowing him to approach his target in secret.

Of course, he was up against a demigod, a Sequence 4 demigod of the same pathway. Even if he was fully prepared, he didn't dare get too close, or else he would easily be discovered.

Looking at the window where Shaman King Klarman was, he examined the projection on the glass for a second. Emlyn White opened the bronze box with the rubies embedded in it, and he used his black velvet-gloved left hand to pick up the Vision of White.

His expression twisted as he experienced the pain that came from being exposed to the blazing sun.

Suppressing the pain, Emlyn pushed the eyeball-shaped glass sphere to his right eye.

All the buildings in front of him had suddenly disappeared from his vision, leaving only shadows of cold, crimson, or fallen evil.

Among them, there was a figure that was like a huge black whirlpool that was crazily devouring the light around it, causing his body to become distorted.

This was Emlyn’s target, the ancient Shaman King, Klarman.

A ray of light immediately lit up, condensing into a scorching, blinding light. It shot out from the Vision of White and went straight for the figure behind the glass window.

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Adapted from Job 24:8, Old Testament.

Chapter 1234 - The Projection's "Descent"

* * *

The blinding white beam penetrated the glass window and landed on Shaman King Klarman.

It then burst into an intense light, melting away all the undead, darkness, and evil.

Klarman's figure burned with a white flame, as though he was a paper figurine that had been brought near red embers.

But it really was a paper figurine, one that seemed to be condensed from the crimson moonlight.

The Shaman King's substitute spell, Moon Paper Figurine!

As the paper figurine turned to ash, the ancient Shaman King appeared at the top of the cathedral and cast his cold gaze at Emlyn White, who was standing near the bell tower.

At that moment, within Klarman's blood-red eyes, it reflected the figure of Sharron, who was wearing a black regal dress and a tiny bonnet. Her body stiffened as if she had lost control of herself.

Seeing this, Emlyn didn't hesitate. It was as if he had practiced it a thousand times before. He aimed his Vision of White at the Shaman King's left chest and prepared to activate the Sun domain's "Unshadowed Spear."

As long as this attack struck Klarman's heart, this Shaman King

Klarman wouldn't be able to use "Moonlight Transformation" to resolve it. It would also be difficult for him to recover using an artificial vampire's super-recovery abilities.

Of course, this would definitely cause more serious damage to Sharron who had possessed Klarman. However, if they could quickly resolve their target, she was willing to pay the corresponding price.

In the previous discussions, Emlyn, Sharron, and Maric had already discussed a few similar plans and had come to a consensus.

This was also the reason why Sharron didn't restrict Shaman King Klarman by tightening his clothes. Compared to a Wraith's possession, that was easier to resolve for the opponent who could use "Moonlight Transformation." As for whether Klarman would be ashamed of running naked, the answer from the magic mirror was no.

Taking all these under consideration, they eventually chose to let Emlyn White attack the target, so as to deplete his Moon Paper Figurine to create an opportunity for Sharron to possess him.

The transparent glass sphere in Emlyn's hand glowed once again, extending out into a blazing spear that had turned extremely white. But at this moment, Klarman, who was standing at the top of the cathedral, suddenly underwent a transformation.

A crack quickly split open in the middle of his forehead, as if there was a blood moon embedded in it.

Moonlight surged out like a tidal wave, causing the illusory, blonde, blue-eyed Sharron to float out of his body uncontrollably.

Klarman's stiff and slow movements barely restored to normal and, under the radiance of the full moon, he turned into a pool of blood, splitting into countless fragments of light.

His figure rapidly took form on another steeple of the cathedral. Clinging closely behind him was Sharron. As for the Unshadowed Spear that Emlyn had created, it passed through the spot where Klarman was originally standing and flew into the distance, expanding into a miniature sun.

The entire port city was illuminated.

At the same time, Klarman's right shoulder began to squirm before something tore through his black robe and burrowed out.

This was an exquisite male doll. It was only the size of a palm and wore a dark red, gold-patterned tuxedo. Its eyes had been dug out, leaving behind two black holes.

The puppet sat on Klarman's shoulder and raised its hands, tapping all its fingers as though it was playing an invisible instrument.

Sharron's figure was immediately ejected from Klarman's back, as though she suffered a serious repulsion.

Emlyn felt his clothes tighten as they bound him tightly.

His bowtie also came alive in a bid to strangle him to death.

That doll was a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact given to Klarman by the Rose School of Thought. It was called the "General of the Pupil-less Eye." It was an item formed by a Sequence 4 demigod of the Mutant pathway who had suffered a sudden death due to an accident.

It had a living characteristic and could possess objects with spirits and awaken objects that didn't according to its wielder's will. However, the wielder needed to feed it with their flesh and blood; otherwise, it would gradually grow its eyes.

Once this Sealed Artifact was in a good condition, it would transform into an evil spirit that chased after its original owner while abhorring all humans.

When Emlyn heard the sound of his bones crying in pain from the burden, the Vision of White that was burning his soul emitted a bright glow, turning the surrounding area into a land without shadows or evil.

The effects of General of the Pupil-less Eye had on his clothes were severed.

However, at that moment, Klarman had already indiscernibly muttered a particular word with a cruel smile. He reached out his hands and pulled out an illusory door with many mysterious symbols engraved on it out of thin air.

This was the Door of Summoning!

The Moon pathway's Sequence 3 was Summoning Master!

Under the illumination of the "full blood moon" on his forehead, Klarman, who was only at the Shaman King level, was able to complete a summoning!

However, because of this, there was a certain change in his overall aura. He had lost a lot of his rationality, and his madness had deepened.

Amidst the illusory creaking, the Door of Summoning opened up a crack.

In the gaps, two human palms reached out. Their skin had no luster to it, and they lacked texture. They were like a most inferior cloth doll.

†

Outside Faoltec City, the Rose School of Thought believers and followers who had originally planned on attacking the Loen army's defense line after the corpse horde's attack had begun to kill each other, their rationality completely gone.

Some of them, who were originally ordinary people, bent their backs and grew grayish-black wolf fur. The corners of their mouths tore open as sticky saliva constantly dripped. Some of their skin was dyed black and had become as hard as steel. Some lost their hearts and fell to the ground, only to get back on their feet as though nothing had happened. Some of their bodies turned transparent, as if they had become shadows…

The descent of Abomination Suah's aura had tainted all the living creatures in the vicinity, causing them to either break down and suffer a tragic death, or turn into werewolves or zombies.

As a high-ranking Sequence 1, "He" could directly bestow the power unto "His" believers, but there was a time limit. However, this method might not be the hope of the Resistance.

On the other side of the battlefield, over two thousand meters away, behind the Loen shelter. Although the soldiers didn't see or hear anything, transparent blisters began growing on the surface of their skin, and their minds were filled with thoughts of venting all kinds of emotions and desires.

It wouldn't take long for them to go mad one by one and turn into irrational beasts. Across this base, even to the interior of Faoltec City, it would be a challenge to find humans who could still maintain their clarity of mind.

Suddenly, they heard a chant.

It was a chant formed from sacred and ethereal voices.

This chant came from the Evernight cathedral in the city. It was as though there were many choirs praising the Goddess.

The soldiers, citizens, and officers fell asleep one after another behind the shelter, inside the trenches, and on the streets.

They dreamed of a tranquil darkness, moon flowers, and night vanilla. Their bodies and minds became extremely peaceful, and they were no longer affected by evil.

In the Evernight cathedral in Faoltec City, the high-ranking deacon of the Nighthawks, the Goddess's Eye, Ilya, tried her best to maintain the dream that enveloped the entire city. She was unable to interfere with the demigod battle outside.

At the same time, Klein and Reinette Tinekerr felt the change in the surrounding spirituality. It seemed to transform into layers of barriers that attempted to restrain them and restrict their actions.

And in the bloody mud on the Shaman King's chest, a lump of squirming flesh covered in black sticky liquid drilled out right on the heels of Suah's arm, forming the body of this Abomination.

"He" was like a huge tree that had been splashed with oil. The extended branches were arms which had various strange objects protruding out.

On the surface of the trunk that was covered in thick black liquid, bloodshot eyes kept rolling. It cleared the minds of the onlookers, turning them into rabbits, goats, and pigs.

The dozens of arms rapidly extended outwards. Some of them sealed off the sky, while others burrowed into the ground. The rest either surrounded them from all sides or headed straight for Klein and Reinette Tinekerr.

At the same time, Abomination Suah let out a roar that pierced straight into one's Spirit Body. It caused the two targets to tremble at the same time, causing a certain degree of stiffness to rear its head. It made the crimson moonlight in midair become even richer, allowing a scene to appear on the red "screen."

The core to this scene was a mummy wrapped in a yellowing bandage. "It" had been pierced by countless brown tree branches and was suspended in midair.

Its stomach bulged, and at times, different parts bulged and shriveled, as if it was giving birth to new life.

The mummy’s mouth was agape as it kept screaming. Although Klein couldn’t hear any actual sounds, he felt pain resonating with his body and soul, slowly burdening him with the mummy’s predicament.

The Chained God!

The roar of Abomination Suah was formed from ancient Hermes words that exceeded the imagination of humans. It was essentially praying to the Chained God and “He” had successfully received a response!

The Mother Tree of Desire was unable to infuse too much power into reality. If one wanted to pray to “Her” and obtain feedback at the angel level, they required a large-scale ritual. Of course, the influence the Mother Tree of Desire directly exerted and “Her” attention via the Chained God had qualitative differences.

The Chained God was originally not a true god, but “He” had contained the Mutant pathway’s Uniqueness and two Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics, making “Him” a King of Angels. After giving birth to Abomination Suah, “He” even lost a Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic. When “He” was completely overwhelmed by the Mother Tree of Desire, “He” similarly suffered a life of isolation.

Therefore, regardless of the essence of the Mother Tree of Desire, the effect “She” had on reality was limited due to the indirect methods used. But no matter what, the trap targeted at Reinette Tinekerr was luxurious enough!

As the projection of the Chained God appeared, the entire land was dyed with a dark red color. Klein felt that his connection with the spirit world had been severed, and he could no longer use Teleportation.

His figure instantly leaped into a sea of flames. Taking advantage of the opportunity when Reinette Tinekerr was fighting against Suah, he reached his hand into the void and grabbed at different spots.

Finally, Klein pulled out a silver-black jewelry box embedded with various gems. Then, without any hesitation, he opened the second level.

Box of the Great Old Ones!

This Grade 0 Sealed Artifact’s second level could transfer all living beings within its range to a particular scene recorded by it!

Chapter 1235 - Most Valued Support

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The silver-black, three-tiered accessory box with many embedded gems quickly opened, revealing the interior of the second level.

It was dark. Even the surrounding barriers seemed to blend in with it. It gave one the feeling that it was a pocket of infinite space.

In an instant, the darkness lit up with countless resplendent speckles, as if they had transformed into a miniature cosmos, a miniature universe.

These bright points of light rapidly spun as the surrounding scene changed several times in a second.

What Klein expected was to move Abomination Suah, the Rose School of Thought Shaman, and many of their followers to the ruins of the battle of the gods. By making them leave the Southern Continent, they wouldn't be able to immediately sense that Klarman had been attacked. This way, they wouldn't be able to provide any timely and effective assistance. However, the second level of the Box of the Great Old Ones had an element of randomness to it. The act of sending things to the designated scene succeeded a handful of times. Most of the time, the selected destination would suffer an unavoidable change. This was something that couldn't be influenced with luck, and at the very least, no one below Sequence 0 could do so.

Therefore, when he opened the second level of the Box of the Great Old Ones, Klein didn't know what would happen. It was the same as not using any Beyonder powers to cheat at gambling. He had to rely solely on observation to push out all his chips. This left his heart filled with anxiety. Of course, he wasn't too worried. No matter where the Box of the Great Old Ones brought him and Miss Messenger, it was impossible to harm him in any way. After all, Reinette Tinekerr was fake, the Box of the Great Old Ones was fake, and even he himself was fake.

With this in consideration, even if he was thrown underground by the Box of the Great Old Ones and faced a terrifying corruption, Klein could instantly dispel the Historical Void projection, enter Sefirah Castle to do a complete "disinfection" and sever all connections.

Building on this foundation, he had the ability to help Miss Messenger's main body resist the corruption. Since it wasn't directly experienced—through the layer of a historical projection—the outcome was relatively better.

The only thing he needed to worry about was that the random scene selected by the Box of the Great Old Ones was where Miss Sharron and Emlyn were attacking Shaman King Klarman. That way, it would be equivalent to leading the main enemy force to head straight for his headquarters. This meant that they could only consider giving up on the operation, and he and Reinette Tinekerr would undertake the responsibility of helping all participants escape from the battlefield and escape the Southern Continent.

The probability of this happening was very low, but he had to be wary.

At that moment, due to the influence of Abomination Suah's aura, Klein's spirituality had "frozen" quite a bit. It seemed to bind his body and soul, but it still flowed into the Box of the Great Old Ones, maintaining its open state.

In the blink of an eye, the scene in the second level of the Box of the Great Old Ones changed, revealing a tiny, vast sea.

Klein, Reinette Tinekerr, Abomination Suah, the hooded Shaman King, and many Rose School of Thought believers and subordinates saw endless yellow sand and the extreme cold of the night.

Other than the projection of the Chained God, all the living beings on the battlefield were instantly transported to a desert!

As for the projection, due to the departure of Abomination Suah, the connection was severed, preventing “His” powers from seeping into reality.

Without the luxury of time to examine where he was currently, Klein dispelled the Box of the Great Old Ones and snapped his fingers, summoning a scarlet flame as he constantly jumped within them.

He had done so to avoid the attention of Abomination Suah, as well as grab the opportunity to complete the summoning of the Historical Void projection.

At that moment, he heard an extremely evil roar. His mind suddenly went blank, and he temporarily lost all his thoughts.

The scarlet flames he was immersed in came alive as well and, like a cage, bound him to the ground.

With just a roar and the influence of some auras, Abomination Suah had already restrained him to a certain extent.

If it wasn’t for the fact that Reinette Tinekerr, who was in “Her” peak condition, was his teammate, Klein’s projection would’ve been helplessly executed. Perhaps his actual body would suffer certain effects.

At this moment, the huge doll the size of a castle took a step forward and opened its tightly shut mouth.

There was no sound, but the distorted “wood” that was covered in pitch-black liquid seemed to encounter a flood dike. It repelled backward and raised the arms with strange protruding objects.

This was a curse that Reinette Tinekerr had been silently accumulating for a very, very long time. The root of the curse was the anger, hatred, and "Her" grudge that had emerged after "She" suffered an attack!

However, Abomination Suah didn't show any obvious changes. "He" only staggered a little and froze for a second before returning to normal.

High-level existences were always able to restrain low-level Beyonders of the same pathway. They could even exert a certain influence over space!

And using this opportunity to escape the restraints of the flames, Klein used Creeping Hunger to flash to another side, avoiding the Blood Moon Arrow created by the Rose School of Thought's Shaman King.

He didn't dare to look directly at Abomination Suah. He seized the opportunity and reached out with his right hand to pull out from the void ahead.

This time, he didn't drag anything out.

Klein continued Blinking about and repeated his actions. Then, he successfully dragged out a figure. It was none other than the leader of the Church of Evernight's ascetics, the angel of the Concealment domain, Arianna, who wore a simple linen robe and a tree bark belt!

My report from before worked after all… A thought flashed through his mind as he activated Creeping Hunger once again and teleported elsewhere.

The eyes of Arianna's projection darted slightly as her eyes instantly turned dark and deep. Following that, she joined in the battle between Reinette Tinekerr and Abomination Suah.

With "Her" help, Reinette Tinekerr, who was in a rather difficult situation and trying hard to create opportunities for him, finally managed to catch "Her" breath. "She" didn't get possessed by

Abomination Suah, nor did “She” become a real doll.

The Rose School of Thought’s Shaman King showcased his well-rounded aspect towards the Darkness and Moon domains. He attempted to use spells like “Abyss Shackles” to restrict Klein’s movement, but the short-distance “Blinking” was simply too effective. Without the projection of the Chained God and “His” influence of the surrounding area, and the interference of Abomination, Klein was like a fish in water. He was free and relaxed. He only needed to consider how to deal with his enemy’s spells every two “Teleports.”

However, the Shaman King could hardly stop him in an effective manner due to the unpredictability of where he would appear next.

During this process, Klein grabbed at the void a few more times until he dragged out a figure.

This figure had bronze skin, black hair, and brown eyes. His facial features were soft and his gaze was cold. He wore a deep black robe embroidered with golden thread. He wore a golden crown and was none other than the former Death Consul, Azik Eggers!

Another angel… The Shaman King’s eyelids twitched as he watched. At this moment, Abomination Suah suddenly inserted multiple black arms into the desert.

The desert nearby boiled and was blanketed with a thick black liquid. This extended into the distance and invaded the void, disrupting the overlapping of reality and the spirit world.

Taking advantage of the fact that his teleportation wasn’t completely affected, Klein “Blinked” behind Mr. Azik. With “Him” shielding him, he quickly grabbed at the air a few times.

His arm suddenly sank and he pulled out a silvery-white snake’s tail.

Another angel!

The reason why he dared to directly summon the three angels was because this Historical Void projection of his was summoned by Reinette Tinekerr using the Staff of the Stars. The spirituality consumed was borne by this Ancient Bane, not Fors.

Otherwise, Fors would've already fainted the moment the Servant of Concealment, Arianna, descended. There was no way she could endure spirituality expenditure such as this.

Fors's purpose was to first summon Gehrman Sparrow's historical projection so that he had plenty of time to set up the ritual and bring the Staff of the Stars to the real world. Then, the maintenance of the historical projection would be dispelled, allowing him to return to the fog and have Reinette Tinekerr summoned another him.

In less than ten seconds, as Abomination Suah had focused his attention on Reinette Tinekerr and subconsciously belittled Klein, leading "Him" to not only losing the help of the Chained God's projection, but also being thrown from the state of being the one who had laid in ambush to the one being besieged by four powerful angels.

Without any hesitation, this Sequence 1 angel opened "His" mouth and chanted in ancient Hermes words. "He" had once again prayed to the Chained God.

†

When the Door of Summoning opened in front of Shaman King Klarman, just the extension of two trembling hands was enough for a thought to abruptly flash across Emlyn White's mind.

The other angel of the Rose School of Thought, the King of Curses, Barranca!

This was information provided by Sharron and Maric.

Upon seeing this, Emlyn's mind tensed up. Without any hesitation, he waved his arm and threw the Vision of White at the Door of Summoning!

This was partly because he was experiencing a battle at the demigod level for the first time, so he couldn't help but overreact. On the other hand, he wasn't worried about losing the Vision of White. After all, it belonged to the Sanguine. At worst, he would repay it in the future over time.

At the same time, even without the Sealed Artifact, he still had other mystical items to use, such as Leymano's Travels.

With the notebook, Emlyn could summon the Unshadowed Crucifix to replace the Vision of White.

After the eyeball-shaped glass sphere flew out, it continuously absorbed the light along the way, bringing with it extreme darkness.

When it got close to the Door of Summoning, the Vision of White suddenly exploded into an extremely brilliant glow. Like a blazing sun at noon, it enveloped both the hands and the door, melting away all evil, degenerate, darkness, filth, and undead auras.

The full blood moon on Klarman's forehead was clearly affected. All the light beams were compressed to his side, preventing him from affecting his surroundings.

Seizing this opportunity, Sharron's figure that appeared in midair distorted, turning into a human-sized puppet.

This puppet was identical to Shaman King Klarman. It had messy, black-and-white hair and a pair of bright red eyes.

As for Emlyn, he raised his left arm and revealed a translucent ring that was worn outside his gloved index finger.

The ring seemed to be made of light-red amber, and there was a blood-colored gem embedded on it.

Lilith’s Ring!

This was a ring personally made by the Sanguine Ancestor, the ancient goddess, Lilith.

It could project a door that led deep into the spirit world for a certain amount of time, summoning an unknown creature.

Emlyn wasn’t sure what he would obtain. He only knew that, under normal circumstances, the summoned object was usually slightly stronger than him, but the possibility of directly pulling out a demigod wasn’t impossible.

At the tip of the ring, the blood-colored gem emitted a faint glow as an illusory door covered in mysterious patterns appeared in front of Emlyn.

The door creaked open, the gap in the door widening.

Shaman King Klarman had just recovered his senses from the Sun’s illumination when he saw a moon rise up behind the Door of Summoning.

It was a bright moon, one that was slightly silver in color.

Chapter 1236 - Linkage

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In the eyes of Shaman King Klarman, a bright silver moon rose, quickly filling his irises.

This was completely different from the normal crimson moon. It also wasn't the Blood Moon that occasionally appeared. It was similar to the abnormal state of the moon from not too long ago, but there were also certain differences.

It illuminated Klarman's eyes and body, causing him to instantly lose contact with the crimson moon.

That also meant that, before things went back to normal, Klarman could no longer attempt "Moonlight Transformation," nor could he teleport within the range of the crimson moonlight's illumination.

Suddenly, a word appeared in the mind of this Shaman King of the Moon Domain.

Lilith!

The ancient goddess, Lilith, who once controlled the Moon pathway!

Such a change was out of Emlyn's expectations, but Sharron, who was good at controlling her emotions and thoughts, wasn't affected. Despite having become a Klarman puppet, she raised her right hand and yanked some of her messy, black-and-white hair.

Almost at the same time, on the Shaman King's head, a tuft of white hair fell on its own without him suffering any attacks.

The Door of Summoning he had just opened had been dissolved by the full might of the Vision of White's sun rays.

This wasn't because the Rose School of Thought's angel, who had been summoned, was unable to resist the Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, but that the Door of Summoning couldn't withstand such a special attack.

In addition, the King of Curses, Barranca, had only extended two hands out. This limited the amount of power that could remotely be projected via "His" descent. The evil aura that permeated into the real world had also been purified by the Vision of White, preventing it from affecting Sharron and Emlyn.

At that moment, without the Door of Summoning, Barranca could only retreat to where "He" was originally. "He" had to wait for the next summoning or for Shaman King Klarman to pray.

As an angel, "He" had the status required to respond to prayers throughout the world!

When that strand of hair fell, Sharron, in her Klarman puppet state, didn't hesitate. Her right hand naturally slid down from her forehead. She grabbed the exaggerated crack that had the "full blood moon" embedded there and forcefully pressed it down.

Klarman couldn't help but let out a blood-curdling scream. The flesh on his forehead turned into a bizarre blur as they filled up the terrifying crack, blocking the miniature "full moon."

This was one of the Beyonder powers of a Sequence 4 Puppet of the Mutant pathway, called the "Source of Curses."

Apart from being able to influence non-living creatures, Puppets could also turn into mystical puppets and magical paper figurines. Through the connections established, they could use various methods to curse their targets.

This Beyonder power would undergo a qualitative change when they reached Sequence 3. At the current stage, it resulted in mutually destructive damage. Under normal circumstances, Puppet demigods rarely used it.

In other words, a Puppet had to hurt themselves to hurt their enemy.

The reason why Sharron dared to do so was because she was certain that since both she and her target were at Sequence 4, as a Wraith and Zombie, she would definitely be able to withstand the damage better than a Vampire.

After knowing in advance that Shaman King Klarman had a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, General of the Pupil-less Eye, Sharron had never thought of truly succeeding with Wraith's possession. Her main goal was to use this method to establish a connection with Klarman to prepare for the subsequent curse.

The tuft of hair she plucked symbolized the official start of the curse. Destroying the target's full blood moon on his forehead was to prevent him from establishing the Door of Summoning once again which would lead to pulling a Rose School of Thought's angel into the battlefield.

Of course, as a demigod, Klarman wasn't going to die so easily from a curse.

In the past, he would be able to use "Moonlight Transformation" and "Illusory Bats" to weaken the damage brought by the curse. Then, via constantly moving at high speeds, he could avoid attacks while chanting the honorific name of a Rose School of Thought's angel. However, under the silvery-white moon's illumination, his body seemed to freeze, preventing him from completing the series of actions.

While Klarman's mind raced, the General of the Pupil-less Eye puppet on his shoulder, stood up and let out an ear-piercing scream.

The glass windows around them shattered, transforming into bullets that shot towards the floating Sharron. Without anyone controlling the eyeball-like glass sphere, it flew up on its own, causing a gigantic pillar of light that had flames swirling around it to descend.

The pillar of light enveloped Sharron, causing the surroundings to turn bright as though it was daytime.

The General of the Pupil-less Eye could influence ownerless mystical items, allowing them to help it!

Amidst the "Flaring Sun," Sharron, who had transformed into Klarman, showed clear signs of melting as her face contorted uncontrollably. Half the large number of glass fragments melted into the pillar of light while the other half pierced through her body.

Klarman once again let out a tragic cry. It made Emlyn's body turn cold as his blood seemed to frost up.

One bloody hole after another appeared on the Shaman King's body. He was like a candle that had been thrown into a furnace as he slowly softened and the oils from his fats dripped.

Any damage from "Source of Curses" would be reflected onto the target!

As a demigod of the Rose School of Thought, there was no doubt that Klarman knew of this. His action just now was to use this exchange of damage to force Sharron to stop the curse.

The theurgical spells of the Sun domain clearly dealt more damage to evil creatures that were the likes of Puppets, Wraiths, Zombies, and Werewolves than Vampires, Potions Professor, Scarlet Scholar, and Shaman Kings!

That was to say, the continuous "Flaring Sun" strikes caused Sharron to dissipate, but it would only be able to severely injure Klarman. As for the demigods of the Moon pathway, they had extremely strong self-recovery abilities.

In just a second, Shaman King Klarman used his rich experience and deep knowledge of mysticism to accurately grasp the problem of the "Source of Curses" and chose the most suitable method to see results in the shortest time possible.

However, at that moment, having lost the Vision of White, Emlyn White, who had summoned the strange moon, regained his senses. He took out a bronze-green hard-covered notebook and flipped it to one of the pages.

A crackling sound could be heard as bolts of lightning appeared out of thin air, interweaving into a storm that emitted a strong destructive aura. Instantly, the Shaman King Klarman was swept in.

Leymano's Travels, Thunder Storm!

Having temporarily lost "Moonlight Transformation" and the ability to "Blink" within a certain range, Klarman was unable to dodge the attack. He was smote by bolts of silver lightning.

Sharron took the opportunity to dispel "Source of Curses" to prevent the damage dealt to the target from being reflected onto her.

However, her face was clearly much paler than before, and her breathing became weaker.

The pillar of light from "Blazing Sun" had indeed caused quite a significant amount of damage to her.

The silvery-white blob that blasted quickly extinguished, and Klarman's body was already pitch black.

His charred skin and flesh were constantly peeling off. Pieces of flesh were squirming and growing.

The General of the Pupil-less Eye's body rapidly turned incorporeal, as though it had turned into a specter. It was prepared to possess Klarman and move him away from the area to prevent any subsequent blows.

At this moment, a blonde, red-eyed head suddenly appeared and bit the head of the exquisite doll.

Klarman, who remained groggy, subconsciously looked over and saw a headless lady.

This lady was wearing a dark and complicated gothic long dress and holding four blonde, red-eyed heads.

Reinette Tinekerr!

†

In that vast desert, the eyes of Reinette Tinekerr, who was attacking Abomination Suah with Azik, Arianna, and the giant silver serpent, suddenly glazed over. Her actions turned stiff as she attacked purely on instinct.

This was part of Klein's plan. When the battle on this side had stabilized, with Abomination Suah was unable to extricate "Himself" from it within a short period of time, Reinette Tinekerr's main body would dispel its concealed state. She would then return to the real world and quickly help Sharron and Emlyn finish the battle.

Looking at the tragic-looking mummy projection in mid-air, as Klein controlled the three angels to hold back Abomination Suah, he used "Their" auras to influence the environment around him. He switched from "Teleportation" to "Flaming Jump," and he continued to deal with the Rose School of Thought's Shaman King.

During this process, he appeared carefree and relaxed, but in fact, he realized that the affinity between his body and his soul was decreasing bit by bit. His body was gradually becoming a spirit cage, causing his actions to become stiffer and heavier.

This reminded him of the core description of Prisoner:

The body was the cage of the heart, and the world was the cage of the body.

As time passed, he understood the meaning of this sentence from another angle.

After Abomination Suah began to direct “His” attention at him, even if “He” didn’t have the chance to attack him directly, “He” was still able to make him suffer some form of corrosion!

†

After one of Reinette Tinekerr’s heads was in control of General of the Pupil-less Eye, another head raised the black staff that it was biting down on with its teeth.

The gem-embedded staff lit up with a misty glow.

A figure quickly took shape. It was none other than Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing a top hat and a trench coat while holding Death Knell.

Bang!

A silver-black stream of light flew out and accurately hit Klarman’s body.

Klarman’s thoughts came to a halt as he froze on the spot.

Control Spirit Bullet!

This was the Control Spirit Bullet shot by Gehrman Sparrow that the Staff of the Stars had reenacted!

This 0-62 Sealed Artifact could allow the Beyonder powers and people that surfaced in the minds of the wielder to descend upon reality, while the latter could launch a single attack.

On the other side, Sharron immediately turned into a puppet that looked identical to Klarman. She retracted her right hand and ruthlessly stabbed it into her chest.

Blood sprayed out as Klarman gaped his mouth, unable to make a sound.

To a Wraith, the heart definitely wasn't a vital point, but to a vampire, it was lethal.

Without giving Klarman any chance to resist, Emlyn flipped through Leymano's Travels once again and released the recording of "Historical Void Summoning" and took out the bronze Unshadowed Crucifix.

His fingers pressed down on a spike, allowing blood to flow out to "cleanse" the mottled cross.

A pure, burning-white spear instantly condensed.

After Sharron removed "Source of Curses," Emlyn threw out the long spear of light and watched it pierce through Shaman King Klarman's chest, pinning him to the high walls of the cathedral.

Bright light suddenly expanded and completely extinguished Klarman's last breath.

Unshadowed Spear!

†

In the vast desert, Klein suddenly stopped, and while facing Abomination Suah and the Shaman King, he took off his hat, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed.

[image]

His body faded and disappeared.

During this process, Klein wasn't worried about being disturbed at all.

This was because it wasn't that he was attempting to leave, but that Reinette Tinekerr had dispelled the Historical Void projection.

This also meant that the operation at the other battlefield had succeeded!

Chapter 1237 - Distribution

As the golden rays of light shone down, Klarman, a Shaman King, who had lived for more than a thousand years, collapsed into pieces at the entrance of the Evernight cathedral. Every part of his body was charred black, completely drained of its blood.

Amongst them, something fell out of his black-robe ashes. It was a normal-sized palm. Its skin's texture didn't appear human at all, and it had a dim luster. Its fingers were slender with balanced amounts of flesh and bone.

If he hadn't seen it on such an occasion, Emlyn definitely would've believed that the palm was a part of an exquisite doll.

Another head in Reinette Tinekerr's hand swung forward as it quickly bit the palm.

At the same time, Sharron's figure turned incorporeal as she entered the remains of Shaman King Klarman, speeding up the expelling of his Beyonder characteristic.

Emlyn composed himself and looked at the Door of Summoning created by Lilith's Ring. His body suddenly turned into a hazy moonlight.

The crimson moonlight shattered into countless fragments of light.

The bright and devilish red scales swam around the area enveloped by the moonlight, restructuring beside Klarman's corpse into Emlyn

White in his tuxedo and bowtie.

Without looking at the Beyonder characteristic that had seeped out, he dispelled the Unshadowed Crucifix, bent down, and picked up the Vision of White that he had previously thrown to the side using his black velvet glove.

His other hand shook Leymano's Travels as he flipped the book to one of the pages. The symbols and mysterious patterns on it all belonged to "Traveling."

Emlyn's figure turned transparent as he vanished from the scene.

He followed the plan and was the first to leave after the operation ended. He didn't interfere with Sharron and company's cleanup of the scene and their clearing of traces. After all, he was the weakest one there. He had used up a considerable amount of energy in battle while relying on the Sealed Artifacts and mystical items.

As for the spoils of war, they would be distributed once they returned to Backlund.

In this aspect, Emlyn fully believed in Gehrman Sparrow's promise and the Rose School of Thought's temperance department's credit.

After "Teleporting" back to an empty house in Backlund, he suddenly threw down Leymano's Travels. He took out a bronze box with many red gems embedded in it, and he placed the Vision of White inside.

Only after doing this did Emlyn have the energy to take off the glove on his left hand. He saw that his fingers were filled with blisters, swollen.

With the Sanguine's regenerative ability, damage at such a level should've long been healed, but in reality, it hadn't improved at all.

The burns brought by the Vision of White will last at least seven days. Emlyn took out ointment he had stored in a metal tube and squeezed out some of it to apply it on his wound.

The soul-stabbing pain was immediately eased by the cooling sensation. Emlyn slowly exhaled as though he had finally resurrected.

He had used a great deal of willpower to restrain himself from throwing the Vision of White onto the ground. This was because once the Sealed Artifact left his control, it would automatically absorb the light around it and emit a radiant glow. To a Sanguine, this was an excellent way of committing suicide.

Right on the heels of that, Emlyn took out a bottle of his blood that he had extracted beforehand and smeared it on the surface of Leymano's Travels. Then, he drank another bottle of blood to ease the bloodthirst that Lilith's Ring brought about.

After such an operation, he finally removed the negative effects the Sealed Artifact had on him.

Only at this moment did Emlyn have the time to recall the accident that had happened during the battle.

The Door of Summoning that he projected with Lilith's Ring didn't summon creatures from deep in the spirit world, but he ended up summoning a strange moon.

The moon hung behind the Door of Summoning and silently illuminated Shaman King Klarman, suppressing the various Beyonder powers that belonged to the Moon domain.

If not for this change, even if Lilith's Ring had summoned a saint-level spirit world creature, the battle wouldn't have ended so quickly. Perhaps they would have had to wait until the Rose School of Thought temperance angel descended to gain an overwhelming advantage.

…A silvery-white moon… Could it be that the Ancestor had provided me with some help? Emlyn had a thought and made a corresponding guess.

This matched the identity of the Sanguine savior that the Ancestor had appointed.

After careful consideration, Emlyn no longer had any doubts about this guess, but unlike the past, he wasn’t that excited or thrilled.

After experiencing a battle at the demigod level and confirming that he was shouldering such an important responsibility, he felt no sense of pride. His heart was heavy from the pressure.

Phew… A few seconds later, Emlyn opened his mouth and whispered, “I’m the savior of the Sanguine.”

When he said this, his expression was abnormally solemn, somewhat dignified, without any hesitation.

†

In the house where Emlyn met Maric and Sharron.

When the Sanguine saw the perfect doll-like lady take out two items, he heard her slightly ethereal voice say, “According to the agreement, we will only take one thing. This is the rest.”

The two items were:

A fist-sized gem condensed from thick blood. It emitted a crimson glow, like a miniature crimson moon. The other item was an exquisite male doll with two black holes as its eyes.

Shaman King’s Beyonder characteristic… General of the Pupil-less Eye… Emlyn nodded and saw that the two items seemed to have a life of their own as they flew over.

Just as he reached out to catch it, he heard Miss Sharron add, “The Shaman King Beyonder characteristic has some strange traces of corruption. Even the Unshadowed Spear was unable to cleanse it.”

It means that I need to find an angel to help me shatter it to remove the corruption? Emlyn completely understood what Sharron was saying as he nodded slightly.

“I understand what to do.”

Sharron, who was wearing a small black bonnet, immediately floated up and gave a curtsy.

“Thank you for your help.”

“Likewise.” Emlyn took off his hat and bowed in return.

†

Above the grayish-white fog, inside the ancient palace.

Klein looked at the wisps of black gas emanating from his body, shook his head, and sighed.

I actually got cursed by the Abomination without realizing it… The projection of the Chained God could be the culprit as well…

I was even separated by a historical projection…

If it were any saint without Sefirah Castle, they would probably experience a sudden death after thinking they were safe.

As for Miss Messenger, there wasn’t much of a problem even without the historical projection in between because “She” was a real angel. Therefore, Klein wasn’t worried.

After the black gas dissipated, Klein waited for a while. He waited until Emlyn sacrificed the items and requested Mr. Fool to help purify the Shaman King Beyonder characteristic.

Strange corruption… From the Mother Tree of Desire or the Primordial Moon? Klein picked up the miniature crimson moon and carefully observed it for a few seconds.

During this process, he was on high alert, constantly preparing to mobilize Sefirah Castle's powers.

If he wasn't at the level of an angel level here, he wouldn't have agreed to Emlyn's sacrifice. Instead, he would've chosen to smite down with power at the Sequence 2 level, shattering the characteristic and separating the corruption remotely.

Back then, Klein didn't even dare to divine the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic that had been slightly influenced by the Mother Tree of Desire. He had even hurriedly sold it.

After examining it seriously, Klein pressed his right hand, causing the entire mysterious space to vibrate.

The miniature crimson moon shattered with a crack, splitting into tiny red dots of light.

Amongst these light dots, there was a small amount of red mist that evaporated, eventually forming a drop of fresh blood.

Then, the red light dots gathered again, constantly condensing before transforming into the miniature crimson moon. However, compared to before, it was more translucent and pure.

Klein conjured a fake hand, picked up the drop of seemingly fresh blood, and discovered that it contained immense vitality.

It's not at the angel level, but it's a little strange… It seems to have received an evil god's blessings… As Klein cut off all the invisible connections that resulted from the blood, he took a paper figurine and attempted to press the drop of blood onto it.

The moment the blood came into contact with the paper figurine, it immediately seeped in. In the next second, the paper figurine's stomach strangely bulged and exploded.

At the moment the paper figurine tore apart, a new paper figurine with a hint of crimson crawled out from its stomach. It seemed to have fully-developed features.

The power of reproduction… Klein frowned slightly as he stabbed with his right hand, reducing the newly born paper figurine into powder.

A tiny amount of blood-colored mist emanated again, condensing into a drop of blood.

The characteristic and spirituality were only slightly weakened… It needs to be repeated more than a hundred times before it can be completely removed… Klein silently assessed as he gathered the powers of Sefirah Castle to seal the drop of blood.

He then looked up and cast his gaze at the male doll on the long mottled table.

The palm-sized doll in a formal suit was prostrating; it didn't dare to look up.

Oh, how easy is it to deal with those with living characteristics… Klein chuckled as he gathered the sealed drop of blood and brought it close towards the doll named General of the Pupil-less Eye.

General of the Pupil-less Eye pushed itself up with all four limbs and quickly retreated.

After a pause, it pressed its forehead against the table, emitting a sound indecipherable to humans.

"Declaring your subservience? Very good…" Klein replied with a smile and casually instructed, "Show me your abilities."

After a series of demonstrations, he confirmed that General of the Pupil-less Eye could possess a target and affect lifeless items. It also had some level of control over mystical items that no one possessed or had spirituality injected into.

The latter power might be very useful at certain times… Klein nodded slightly and beckoned for it to jump into a box he conjured.

After carefully sealing it, Klein threw the box and the drop of blood into the junk pile to let them familiarize themselves with their future lives.

As for the negative effects of General of the Pupil-less Eye, Klein believed that they could discuss and resolve it amicably and normally.

Chapter 1238 - Hypothesis

◆

After dealing with the spoils of war and bestowing the purified Shaman King Beyonder characteristic to Emlyn White, Klein was in no hurry to leave Sefirah Castle. He simply reviewed the battle today.

One thing he focused on was Abomination Suah's performance in various aspects, so as to assess how powerful an angel was.

If I encounter him head-on and do not hold back, I might not even have a chance to summon an angel projection. Unless I succeed on my first attempt… Of course, my target, Dark Demon Wolf, is a Sequence 2 Miracle Invoker. As for Abomination Suah, "He" is already a Sequence 1. The gap between the two is likely quite significant… However, Dark Demonic Wolf shares the same Seer pathway as me. "He" suppresses me in every aspect… I can only be thankful that "He" hasn't completed the ritual and advanced to Sequence 1, or I wouldn't have any hope of winning… Sequence 1… As his thoughts raced, Klein's gaze suddenly constricted as he sat straight.

He had thought of a possibility in a moment of inspiration.

Could the Dark Demonic Wolf, Kotar, have advanced and become a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries? "He" created a marionette city to mislead possible trackers, such as Angel of Time Amon?

It can't be ruled out… Yes, there's another possibility. The Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar is in complete control of that "curtain" and has the strength of a quasi-Sequence 1… The more Klein thought about it, the more he realized that the operation was more dangerous than he imagined.

The Dark Demonic Wolf has survived in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for so many years. Even a God of Trickery like Amon is unable to capture “Him.” This means that “His” strength and intelligence has reached a rather high level!

I still have to make more preparations for hunting “Him”… Klein frowned slightly and slowly exhaled.

†

Backlund, West Borough, within the Odora family’s villa.

Emlyn sat on a leather sofa in the living room, crossed his right leg, and placed it on his left thigh, patiently waiting for Baron Cosmi to enter.

Before long, the middle-aged Sanguine Baron entered the living room and swept his gaze across Emlyn.

“Viscount White, why are you visiting so late at night?”

Emlyn smiled and said, “Isn’t this just the beginning of a day? Look, the crimson moon outside the window is so beautiful.”

Cosmi wanted to retort to the young Sanguine, pointing out how Emlyn followed the “good practice” of waking up at seven in the morning and sleeping before eleven back when he went to the Harvest Church. After a moment of hesitation, he resisted the urge and said, “What’s the matter?”

Emlyn raised his hand to pat the gown, tugged at his bowtie, and slowly got up. He raised his chin slightly and said, “Tell Lord Nibbs that he can begin preparing for the Earl conferment ritual.”

“…” Cosmi instinctively asked, “What are you talking about?”

Just as he said that, he suddenly came to a realization as he recalled

Emlyn's previous application.

"Y-you obtained an Earl—no, a Shaman King's Beyonder characteristic?"

Emlyn enjoyed this very moment as he replied with a smile, "Did you think I was just joking when borrowing Vision of White?"

As he spoke, he took out the bronze box inlaid with many ruby gems. He opened it and revealed the eyeball-shaped glass sphere inside, indicating that he hadn't lost it and was about to return it.

Cosmi's eyes flickered as he said, "The Rose School of Thought's temperance faction still has such powerful strength?

"Then why did they cooperate with you?"

The upper echelons of the Sanguine in Backlund, which was also the grandfather of Cosmi, Marquis Nibbs Odora, didn't think highly of Emlyn's previous application. He wanted to wait for the cooperation with the Rose School of Thought to fall through before Emlyn had no choice but to seek help from him or their demigods.

Emlyn glanced at him and replied with a smile, "It's a secret."

This was the tone he learned from Gehrman Sparrow. He found it cool and thought that it suited his preferences.

At the same time, this was the key point that The Hanged Man had repeatedly told him during the free exchange of the Tarot Club.

Only by maintaining a sense of mystery would the upper echelons of the Sanguine experience certain fear. This prevented them from finding excuses or using their status to take away the Shaman King characteristic.

Without waiting for Cosmi to respond, Emlyn threw the bronze box containing the Vision of White and buttoned up his suit. He walked past the baron and walked to the door of the living room.

As he was about to leave, Emlyn stopped. Without turning his head, he straightened his back and looked straight ahead.

“Remember to address me as Earl next time.”

With the Ancestor’s blessings and the importance the Moon had placed on him, he was filled with confidence in becoming a Shaman King.

Cosmi’s facial muscles twitched, but he maintained his silence. Only after Emlyn left did he find it difficult to control his warped expression.

As a Sanguine who had existed since the time of Roselle, he was many years older than Emlyn, but he remained a baron. He was just slightly better than those without a noble title. As for Emlyn, who was considered a laughing stock amongst the younger generation of the Backlund Sanguine, he was about to cross the border separating mortals and gods. He would become a Sequence 4 Shaman King, a Sanguine Earl.

How could Cosmi not lose his composure? How could he not be jealous? How could he not be shocked?

After spending a few minutes to control his emotions, he headed down to the basement. Passing through several secret doors, he arrived at the gray hall where Nibbs was sleeping.

“Grandfather, Emlyn’s operation has succeeded.”

Inside the black iron coffin, there was a brief silence. After three or four seconds, Nibbs finally said, “The faction backing him is beyond our imagination…”

This Sanguine Marquis’s voice was deep and old, with a hint of hoarseness as it echoed in the hall.

“Grandfather, Emlyn succeeded by relying on the Vision of White. A portion of the items he obtained rightfully belongs to the race," Cosmi said with some anticipation, feeling somewhat indignant.

Nibbs's voice grew louder.

"Buffoon!

"To be able to hunt a Shaman King while the Rose School of Thought was clearly prepared, is that something any faction can do?

"The Rose School of Thought's temperance faction has been in shambles for years, so how much strength can it have left?

"At most, they have an angel in a poor condition, or a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, as well as two to three demigods. All these put together wouldn't be able to restrain Abomination Suah and the Rose School of Thought's other angels, other Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, a sizable number of demigods, as well as the Chained God's projection, and the blessings of the Mother Tree of Desire.

"If Emlyn's operation succeeded, then you can count how many angels and Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts are needed at the very least. This is a power that can match ours!

"In the future, don't deliberately investigate Emlyn and his other companions!"

After shouting a few more times, Nibbs coughed twice, clearly struggling.

Cosmi's face turned pale as he finally calmed down.

"Then… are you really going to prepare a ritual for him?"

"What else?" Nibbs returned with a question before sighing. "Perhaps after Emlyn took the risk for the Sanguine's future, the Ancestor has truly begun showing 'Her' concern for him…"

†

Fog Sea, La Cha Island.

After leaving the Future on the safe sea route, Admiral of Stars Cattleya used her fairytale magic to arrive at a mountain peak. She recited a passage in Jotun to an empty cliff:

“Open sesame!”

A path immediately appeared on the cliff as though it was real and illusory. It was unknown where it led to.

Cattleya made use of her prophetic means to make a simple assessment of any danger. Then, she stepped onto the path and ventured deep into the cliff.

As she walked, her vision cleared up. She saw the sea that appeared clear like sapphires and a beautiful castle made of pure emerald.

This was Queen Mystic Bernadette’s Emerald City.

Cattleya wasn’t unfamiliar with this place. She easily passed the questions and tests of the magical guards and came to the half-open room that provided the best vista in the castle.

The tall Queen was standing behind the railing, looking at the waves that surged forward.

For some reason, Cattleya’s hidden excitement, thrill, and joy suddenly calmed down at that moment as she felt a sense of security and freedom.

Back when she cruised the seas, she would occasionally feel lonely and sad, like a leaf that had left its tree, allowing the wind to bring her to different places. Now, she seemed to have fallen back to the ground, right beside the tree.

She opened her mouth, momentarily at a loss for words. Finally, she nudged the heavy glasses on her nose and simply greeted, “Good afternoon, Your Majesty.”

Bernadette turned around and nodded.

“I summoned you back to Emerald City because I have some things to hand over to you.”

Cattleya instinctively asked, “Why are you handing them over to me?”

The Queen had a secret organization like Element Dawn and a group of pirates under her!

Bernadette didn’t directly answer Cattleya’s question as she said, “I previously received a clue and left Backlund in a hurry.”

“I remember the matter,” Cattleya interjected.

Bernadette’s long and straight eyebrows twitched slightly.

“Through this clue, I managed to piece together an incomplete sea map from the descendants of Edwards, William, and Poli. It records the area my father had explored in the Fog Sea those years.

With the help of this sea map and my prophetic abilities, I can roughly guess that a particular area out at sea that is far away from the safe sea route might be hiding his secret. I plan on heading there on the Dawn to do an extended search.

“I’m not sure when I can return. Perhaps I will never be able to return. Therefore, I have to hand over some items and matters to you in advance.”

After listening carefully, Cattleya said without hesitation, “I’ll go with you.”

“It is my father. This is something I have to do, alone.” Queen Mystic Bernadette slowly shook her head.

Cattleya fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “If you don’t return, I would do the same.”

Chapter 1239 - Legacy

◆

Upon hearing Cattleya’s words, Queen Mystic Bernadette looked at her silently for a few seconds before saying, “That is your choice, and also your freedom.”

Cattleya stared straight at the Queen before pursing her lips and saying, “I know. You must’ve destroyed all the clues that will allow me to pursue your tracks…

“To you, this is to end the past—all of it—regardless of whether you return.”

The chestnut-colored hair casually draped over Bernadette’s shoulders as she maintained her silence as if she was using this method to confirm the Admiral of Stars’s guess.

When Cattleya saw this, she smiled bitterly and said, “I won’t harp on how I’ll do everything I can to find you if you were to remain lost for half a year or a year. I just want you to remember to recite Mr. Fool’s honorific name when the danger is gravest.”

She said that title frankly.

Queen Mystic Bernadette slowly nodded and said, “I will keep that in mind.”

Cattleya immediately revealed a smile as she said with misty eyes, “What items and matters need to be handed over to me?”

With a flip of her hand, Bernadette took out an item from somewhere.

The item was entirely gold in color, like a miniaturized kettle. Its surface was covered with mysterious and complicated symbols, and a part of a lamp's wick extended out from the mouth.

"It's name is the 'Magic Wishing Lamp.' Its serial number is 0-05. It might've originated from the First Epoch, and even a true deity can't shatter it. Normally, it wouldn't cause any harm, nor would it be of any use. However, it will constantly tempt you to rub it through dreams and illusions, to summon the Genie." Queen Mystic Bernadette simply introduced the item's origins and effects. "The Genie claims to be eternal and can grant you any ten wishes, but often, they are fulfilled in an extremely warped manner or with terrifying consequences. My father told me that the holder can avoid the harm brought by the first two wishes through proper wording and preparations, but the third wish is absolutely forbidden."

At this point, Bernadette emphasized, "Absolutely forbidden!"

"It sounds easy to get around it…" Cattleya thought for a moment before saying, "Can't you make two wishes before giving it to me. I'll make another two wishes, then give it to Frank, Heath, and the others. This will allow for many things to be done."

She was only using Frank as an example. She had no intention of letting him come into contact with something so dangerous.

Holding the Magic Wishing Lamp, Bernadette shook her head indiscernibly and said, "The owner is different from the wielder. Before I die, even if you obtain the Magic Wishing Lamp, you will only be a wielder. The first wish you make will also be counted as my third wish and your first wish.

"Also, although we can craft our words and make preparations to avoid the damage caused by the fulfillment of the wishes, this does not mean that the Genie isn't intelligent. On the contrary, 'He' is very smart, very cunning, and has a very strong sense of autonomy."

Cattleya tersely acknowledged.

“Then, is there any wish that ‘He’ cannot fulfill?”

“Nothing at the moment, but if it involves the level of a true deity, the distortion of the wish will exceed your imagination. To put it simply, if you wish to become a Sequence 0 true deity, then your body and soul will meld into one with an unknown evil god. Remember, the Genie’s requirement is that the wish has to be simple and concise. Otherwise, ‘He’ will reject it and treat it as if you have already made a wish,” Bernadette explained.

With that said, she got an invisible servant to fly towards Cattleya with the terrifying Sealed Artifact 0-05.

After Cattleya reached out her hand to grab the Magic Wishing Lamp, Bernadette continued, “If you dream of the Genie and are bewitched by ‘Him’ to make a wish, that means that I can no longer return. Following that, you will be its owner. I hope that your first wish is to retrieve all the items that were carried on Bernadette Gustav’s person before she headed out to sea, including her own Beyonder characteristic. Yes, it’s best to add the exact date when making a wish.”

Cattleya looked down at the golden lamp and blurted out, “Can I make a wish to bring you back to life?”

After a few seconds of silence, Bernadette said, “The resurrected me might just be a monster.

“If you really wish to do so, you can ask Mr. Fool for ‘His’ opinion.”

Cattleya nodded slightly.

“Okay.”

“This is the item I’m giving you and the matters I need to settle. I’ll leave the rest to the Element Dawn. They will have a new leader and won’t collapse because of a person’s disappearance.” Bernadette didn’t beat around the bush, indicating that this was the main reason she had summoned Cattleya to Emerald City.

The level of the divine lamp was extremely high, making it impossible to pass it through a messenger.

Without waiting for Cattleya's reply, Queen Mystic's expression suddenly softened.

"Haven't you always wanted to share what happened all these years with me?"

Cattleya was taken aback as she nodded.

"That's right."

She then walked to the Queen's side, pulled a chair over, and sat down, facing the blue sea beyond the emerald railing.

Bernadette sat beside her and listened to her talk about all the encounters after she left the Dawn.

These matters had been mentioned in the letter by Cattleya, but due to the limited length, she didn't provide any detailed descriptions. There were some that she was sharing for the first time.

At some point in time, Cattleya fell asleep and dreamed of a time many years ago.

At that time, she was just a maiden who stubbornly left the Dawn without looking back.

Suddenly, she woke up and realized that there was no one beside her. She realized that it had already turned dark at some point in time, and dawn was even approaching.

Cattleya suddenly reached out and threw out an illusory ball of yarn.

The ball of yarn rolled into the void, leaving behind a bright-colored thread.

Following this thread, Cattleya walked through the spirit world as though she had mastered “Teleportation” and arrived at the periphery of La Cha Island.

She stood at the edge of the cliff and cast her gaze into the distance. She saw that on the dark blue sea, a gorgeous and huge sailboat, which was tinted with an orange glow, was steering towards the horizon.

Cattleya slowly sat down and leaned forward slightly. She hugged her knees and looked in that direction for a long time.

The sun gradually rose and shone on her.

†

In Backlund, at a soup kitchen.

The veil-wearing Stelyn Sammer no longer lowered her head like the previous few months, afraid that others would recognize her. The only worry on her mind as she anxiously looked ahead was if the free food would last until it was her turn.

She could vaguely hear gunshots echoing in the distance. She didn’t know if the armies of Feysac, Intis, or Feynapotter had breached the final line of defense, or if the police were dealing with a looter.

Please end it… Please end this war quickly… Stelyn, who had gone to three soup kitchens, silently prayed.

At this moment, a staff member raised his voice and said from a few meters away, “All the food here has been handed out!”

Stelyn’s face turned ashen. She looked up at the dark sky and dragged her feet in despair and numbness before returning to the house at 17 Minsk Street.

The moment she opened the door, her two children rushed over and raised their innocent faces.

“Mommy, did you get any bread?”

“Mommy, I’m hungry…”

They were twins, a boy and a girl. Both of them were very adorable.

Stelyn held back her tears and forced a smile.

“Yes.”

She then entered the house, took out some pieces of bread she had stashed, and split it among the two children.

As she watched the two children eat the bread without any regard for etiquette, Stelyn’s expression kept changing. It cycled between sorrow and pain.

Not long after, her husband, Luke Sammer, returned home, but he, too, didn’t have any food in his hands.

Ever since the Coim Company was taken over by the military during the war, this former manager had lost his job. He could only rely on their past savings and maintain his family via government aid.

“I didn’t manage to…” Seeing his wife’s hopeful gaze, this burly man with a messy beard lowered his head in shame.

Stelyn, who still looked rather pretty while in her thirties, took a deep breath and said, “Me too… I’ll go out and queue again. There should still be places that haven’t finished distributing food!”

Without waiting for her husband to respond, she rushed out of the door.

Luke immediately turned around and said to her back, “I’ll find another one too!”

Stelyn didn’t stop. She walked two streets and arrived in front of a house with a garden.

Not long after, she saw the owner of the place, a tycoon in his fifties.

“I want to buy some food.” Stelyn took out a stack of crumpled bills.

The grizzled elder smiled and said, “And why should I sell it to you?

“I remember that you rejected me last time.”

Stelyn’s face paled. Without a word, she lowered her head and unbuckled her belt with her other hand.

With a snap, the leather belt that was originally very exquisite but now had quite a few stains fell to the ground.

†

Luke Sammer wandered aimlessly on the streets, unsure where he could find food.

Looking at the small number of pedestrians passing by, and the bags that they were trying their best to protect, the scholarly gentleman’s eyes gradually turned red.

Unknowingly, he followed someone and turned into a street.

In less than an hour, the curfew would begin. This was a rare opportunity for him.

That person stopped outside a house and walked towards the door feebly.

At this moment, the person suddenly fainted and fell to the ground.

Luke subconsciously took a few steps back before quickly approaching to test the pedestrian’s breathing.

His gaze unconsciously fell on the paper bag in the man's embrace, and he could smell the aroma of bread.

Luke gulped and reached out for the bag.

As he moved his hand, he looked back in fear at the house that this pedestrian was trying to enter. He saw a child's drawing pasted on the oriel window.

Luke's actions stiffened. A few seconds later, he stood up, walked to the door of the house, and rang the doorbell.

The house's mistress and child quickly opened the door and saw their weak father and the bag of bread.

The curfew arrived very quickly, and Luke returned to Minsk Street dejectedly.

Just as he opened the door, he saw his wife smiling at him.

"I got food!"

That's great… Luke heaved a sigh of relief and hugged her tightly.

†

Audrey walked along the streets and alleys, with no one capable of seeing her.

She didn't say anything and walked back to Empress Borough, all the way back into the luxurious mansion where she smelled the aroma of pan-fried foie gras and other delicacies.

After staring silently for a while, she saw the maids coming and going. Finally, she headed upstairs to her room.

In the middle of the night, she wore a cloak and entered her parents' bedroom before arriving at their bed.

After staring at them for a long time, Audrey knelt down on one knee and pressed her forehead against her father’s hand.

Beads of water dripped onto the carpet.

Then, the blonde, green-eyed noble lady slowly raised her head and said to her sleeping parents, choking, “Daddy, Mommy, thank you. Thank you for teaching me what pity, kindness, and virtue are.”

As soon as she finished speaking, she closed her eyes and stood up abruptly. Turning around, she walked towards the door, no longer wearing the slightest emotions on her face.

Chapter 1240 - The Tide

◆

In the early morning, Earl Hall woke up at his usual time and took a stroll in his garden and lawn.

By the time he finished looking at his beloved thoroughbreds, he returned to the third floor of the villa and changed out of his outing clothes. His wife, Caitlyn, had already woken up and was instructing her lady's maid to relay her thoughts to the rest of the servants.

"It's time for breakfast." Earl Hall stood beside the coat rack and smiled at his wife.

At that moment, he heard a commotion outside, one that was getting closer and closer, but it did not quell.

With a slight frown, Earl Hall turned his head to look at his valet.

Without needing the noble to speak, the valet immediately walked to the window and drew open the thin curtain.

With a swoosh, more light shone into the bedroom. It was clear.

The valet then cast his gaze out the window and scanned his surroundings. His expression suddenly became solemn.

He turned around and glanced at Lady Caitlyn, who was still talking to the lady's maid. He walked quickly to Earl Hall's side and said in a low voice, "A protest! Many people are protesting!"

A protest? Earl Hall was no stranger to this term. As a powerful Loen

Kingdom noble, and the second largest shareholder of the Constant Coal and Steel Consortium, he had seen many workers protest in demonstrations, requesting for a rise in their weekly salaries, as well as stipulate for maximum working hours. During the past two months, Backlund had also undergone several protests due to various problems, but they were quickly suppressed without causing too much of an impact.

His gaze moved back and forth across his valet's face for a few seconds. Eyes narrowed, he acutely sensed that the protest today might be different from what he had imagined.

Without batting an eyelid, he walked to the window.

Looking out, Earl Hall's eyes suddenly froze.

With the advantage of being on the third floor, he saw that the roads were filled with dense hordes of people, extending far into the distance. They gathered together and surged in this direction, as if they were a dark, gigantic cloud that was about to envelop Backlund.

"Bread!"

"We want bread!"

The shouts of tens of thousands of people, and even more people, grew into a crescendo—one that was loud and clear. It made Earl Hall's scalp tingle.

Having participated in the Mass at Festival Square, he was no stranger to seeing large masses of people or hearing people booming in one voice. But back then, he could barely be considered a part of the crowd. And today, he was one of the targets of the surging "tidal wave."

Earl Hall couldn't help but glance towards the end of the protesters, only to realize that there was no end to it. However, with his rich experience in handling matters, he could make a judgment based on the details he had observed.

He could see that there were very few police and soldiers on both sides of the protesters. Compared to the large number of people, they were like the eddies created by a tidal wave, a negligible detail.

Earl Hall believed that the protesters that targeted Empress Borough would definitely be clamped down upon with the greatest force possible. It would be impossible for large numbers of soldiers and police to be deployed. The current situation could only mean one thing:

There were too many people participating in the protest!

As such, the soldiers and police were spread too thin!

A protest numbering more than a hundred thousand people? Perhaps more… A protest arising from a food shortage can turn into a riot and looting at any time… It might still seem orderly now… because there are many organizers and leaders? Damn it. Didn't MI9 and the various Churches notice any signs? How could such a large-scale protest be organized overnight? Even if Backlund has become a gunpowder keg, it would still require quite a number of matchsticks to light it! Thoughts ran through Earl Hall's mind as his expression grew graver.

"Bread!"

"We want bread!"

The shouting became louder and more uniform, as if there was a tsunami in the city.

At that moment, the servants in Earl Hall's mansion sensed the commotion. All of them went to the windows and looked beyond the compound gates.

Their faces turned pale, as though they had encountered a flood that could not be avoided.

"Bread!"

“We want bread!”

Countless voices converged together, as the dense masses exuded a suffocating presence.

Earl Hall snapped to his senses. He subconsciously wanted to get someone to send a telegram to the royal family to get them to organize an army to suppress the protesters.

However, after further observation, he realized that quite a number of protesters were wearing military uniforms and were disabled.

“Bread!”

“We want bread!”

The soldiers in charge of maintaining order looked at the protesters with pity and pointed their guns at the sky.

Among those people were their old comrades, their parents and children, their friends, neighbors, and large numbers of people who simply desired the same right to live like them. They just didn’t want to starve to death. How could they not feel pity and empathy?

At first, such feelings might have arisen in a handful of soldiers and police, but it quickly spread to almost everyone.

In the past, under their officers’ supervision at gunpoint, they would have accepted all orders without any protest. But now, many people were thinking:

Any son-of-a-b*tch who dares to get me to fire shall be fired upon!

“Bread!”

“We want bread!”

From the shouts and the impact of the huge crowd, the color in Earl Hall’s face drained.

He couldn't help but retract his gaze and look at the guards and bodyguards gathered outside the house. He looked at the Beyonders of the Church of Evernight who were responsible for protecting his family, and he realized that the reactions of the two were different.

The guards and bodyguards were filled with fear. The expressions of the secretly-hired Beyonders had already become rather solemn. As for the protectors from the Church of Evernight, their gazes were filled with pity and empathy.

To the Church, I might be equivalent to a thousand believers, but there are tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even more… Earl Hall instantly came to a realization of the consequences of what he had planned to do.

Even though they were armed to the teeth, there was no way they could fend off so many protesters with just a few bodyguards. Once the conflict erupted, the Beyonders of the Church of Evernight couldn't be counted on at all. It was already a blessing by the Goddess if his family could escape Empress Borough with the bodyguards he hired!

For the first time, Earl Hall experienced the strength of the masses. He experienced the terror of the unity of people.

As this thought flashed through his mind, he immediately turned his head and instructed his valet, "Send a telegram to the Prime Minister and send a telegram to the other nobles. Say that I'm willing to take the lead and donate most of our food!

"Get them to remain calm!"

As the radio signals exchanged across the air, the nobles living in Empress Borough all learned of his attitude.

The present Duke Negan looked out the window with a serious expression. After a moment of silence, he exhaled and said to the male secretary beside him, "Protect the mansion and give up any forceful stance. Follow Earl Hall’s lead.

“Also, make the merchants who are hoarding food the first examples!”

By the time the upper-class society came to a consensus and came up with a solution, Earl Hall’s heart finally settled back to its original position. He had the energy to head to the dining room to meet his family.

When he passed through the dining hall’s entrance, he subconsciously scanned the situation inside.

His wife stood by the window, looking out the window with worry. His eldest son kept pacing back and forth, appearing very angry and anxious. His daughter stood beside his wife, watching the tidal-wave-like protesters in silence.

†

Fog Sea, Future.

Cattleya stepped on a resplendent bridge formed from starlight and returned to the deck.

“Captain, you have to do something about Frank this time!” Boatswain Nina, rushed over and shouted.

Cattleya’s depressed and sorrowful mood was instantly shattered as she frowned slightly.

“What did he do again?”

Nina said angrily, “He asked me if I knew how to have children. He wants to study how life is born and how the soul is created!”

“…Did you hit him?” Cattleya fell silent for a second.

“I did!” Nina didn’t hide anything.

Cattleya then looked at Frank who was not far away, ignoring his bruised face.

“You should first study how fish breed.”

“Alright.” Frank scratched his head and heeded his captain’s orders.

Following that, Cattleya nodded at the shadow which extended out from the cabin—the pale-faced Bloodless Heath Doyle.

“Everything’s fine now.”

Heath Doyle clearly relaxed.

“Yes, Captain.”

After this farce with her crew, Cattleya finally returned to the real world. While they weren’t paying attention, she rubbed her temples and flew into the captain’s cabin.

Following that, she sealed the cabin with magic and took out the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact—Magic Wishing Lamp.

After finishing her preparations, Cattleya sat at her desk and lowered her head. She used Jotun to recite Mr. Fool’s honorific name to report to him about Queen Mystic.

Holding a lantern in hand, Klein surveyed the surrounding area of the northern city ruins. He turned his head slightly and listened for a few seconds before following the process of entering the world above the gray fog.

He then sat on the high-back chair belonging to The Fool at the end of the long mottled table, spreading his spirituality towards the crimson star representing The Hermit.

Queen Mystic has some preliminary clues to the primitive island. She plans on leaving the safe sea route to do an extended search…

That primitive island was discovered by Emperor Roselle by chance. It's very likely that one of his nine secret mausoleums is hidden on it… This is the only one that hasn't been discovered and destroyed at the moment. It's the hope of the Emperor's resurrection…

However, the living beings on that primitive island seem to worship an unknown power that comes from the cosmos. Just understanding the cosmos that will lead to corruption… I need to remind Ma'am Hermit to warn Queen Mystic…

Magic Wishing Lamp… Magic Wishing Lamp? So this Grade 0 Sealed Artifact is in the hands of Queen Mystic… It's a combination of a Miracle Invoker's Beyonder characteristic and a characteristic of unknown origins. Even a true deity can't shatter it… Just as he finished listening to 0-05's description, he immediately adjusted his vision and enlarged the scene of the golden kettle-like Magic Wishing Lamp.

Suddenly, the wick at the mouth of the Magic Wishing Lamp lit up!

Chapter 1241 - Genie

◆

The light emitted by the lamp’s core was extremely viscous, like water that had been infused with quite a bit of sugar. It spewed out, forming a distorted and blurry golden figure.

This figure instantly occupied the crimson star representing The Hermit, cutting off his ability to sense Cattleya.

Sitting at the end of the long bronze table, Klein’s eyes widened as a thought subconsciously flashed across his mind:

As expected of a Sealed Artifact labeled 0-05!

Although the serial number of Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts was usually based on the order of the time the orthodox Churches obtained or understood them, it had to be known that this set of rules was officially established after the seven Churches truly ruled over the world, which was the late Fourth Epoch and early Fifth Epoch.

Back then, most Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts had already appeared, and they had been learned of or obtained by the orthodox Churches!

This resulted in a situation where the ones with smaller serial numbers being Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts that were more powerful, terrifying, and unimaginable. Then, the rest were labeled based on the order of appearance.

In addition, although it wasn’t wrong to say that an item was more powerful the more ancient it was, for an item from the First Epoch that the ancient gods were unable to affect, it definitely meant that even deities didn't fully comprehend their secrets.

This way, the smaller the number was, the more terrifying the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact was.

Of course, based on this rule, the Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts with higher serial numbers weren't necessarily worse than the first ten. Perhaps it was simply because they were discovered or obtained by the Church at a later date. Without any numbers left for them, they could only be serialized.

Just as a thought flashed through his mind, the golden figure's gaze pierced through the crimson star representing The Hermit and towards the ancient palace above the gray fog.

Following that, "His" voice echoed in an unusually magnificent manner:

"Long time no see."

Long time no see? Long time no see! He… He knows the former owner of Sefirah Castle, The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings? No, it should be "Him," a Genie who claims to be eternal… "He" can actually use Ma'am Hermit's prayer to directly talk to me… A thought flashed through Klein's mind as he tensed up.

Based on his experience over the recent years, as well as his ability as a Clown, his body suddenly relaxed and he leisurely leaned back into his chair.

Following that, Klein replied, "Heh."

He didn't give an affirmative answer, nor did he deny that he was a fake. He only showed a look of contempt and wore a supercilious look.

The blurry golden figure harrumphed.

“You’ve actually been weakened so much. It’s no wonder that I haven’t heard of your honorific name in the past few millennia.”

Honorific name… Weak… “He” really knows the former owner of Sefirah Castle… Is that an existence who was active during the First Epoch? Amidst his thoughts, Klein smiled and said, “What you see might not be the truth.”

“Haha.” The twisted and blurry golden figure laughed and said, “You’re still your usual self, always trying to scam others, but the condition of Sefirah Castle cannot fool me. Under normal circumstances, there’s no way for me to pass through the outer layers of protection to communicate with you.”

“How do you know that I didn’t do it on purpose?” Klein asked in a relaxed manner.

“There’s no point in lying to me,” the distorted, blurry golden Genie immediately replied.

…Why do I feel like the victim of fraud is saying that I’m penniless, to the point of having sold my kidney… Back then, what did the previous owner of Sefirah Castle—the one suspected to be The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings—do to the Genie… Hmm, part of the characteristics of this Magic Wishing Lamp is that of a Miracle Invoker… Using his lampooning to relieve the pressure in his heart, Klein smiled.

“It’s not up to you to decide whether there’s any point.”

The blurry golden figure trembled slightly.

“From the state of Sefirah Castle, you seem to have a need for a Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic.”

“He” did not harp on the topic and instead pointed out the situation “He” had observed.

…This fellow can actually see through this matter… "His" level is really very high… "He" is able to separate the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic from the Magic Wishing Lamp? Klein's eyes narrowed as he nearly lost his composure.

He immediately controlled his actions and expression and replied with a smile, "If you think so."

The blurry and distorted golden figure once again made "His" magnificent voice echo above the gray fog.

"We can make a deal.

"You will remove my seal and give me freedom. I will leave the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic to you and only take away the portion that belongs to me.

"As for a witness, let's use our sefirot. Although both you and I have means to resist the backlash and reduce the damage caused by breaching the contract, it won't be without a price. We both need to consider the consequences.

"I promise I won't stay here any longer than necessary."

Sealed… Sefirot… The terrifying nature of the Magic Wishing Lamp is a seal of an existence that's at least at the true deity level? With a thought, Klein quickly analyzed the viability of the matter.

Soon, he made a decision. He was not to be bewitched!

There were two reasons for this. Firstly, he wasn't the real owner of Sefirah Castle. There was a limit to what he could do and handle. Secondly, he had received some mysticism education and had gleaned experiences as a Nighthawk. He knew not to trade with unknown existences or bear any hope in being lucky!

Having made up his mind, he calmed down and focused on how to gather more information.

The Genie was suspected to originate from the darkest, most chaotic, and most mysterious First Epoch, so "He" definitely knew a lot!

After some thought, the corners of Klein's mouth curled up.

"Do you think such conditions can move me?"

He planned to see how high the chips the Genie could offer, so as to pry into certain of "His" secrets.

Upon hearing this, the flickering golden figure's eyes suddenly lit up in a literal manner!

"His" gaze seemed to land directly on Klein as "His" magnificent voice quaked the ancient palace like thunder:

"You are not 'Him'!"

You are not "Him"… At that moment, Klein was a little stunned and also a little frightened. It was as if he was performing a grand magic show only to have a member of the audience suddenly point out his trick.

He didn't know what was wrong with his rhetorical question, nor did he know what exactly was wrong. It was difficult for him to analyze the pros and cons in a short period of time, and give a reaction that matched the current situation.

… Why did "He" suddenly realize that I'm not the former owner of Sefirah Castle—the suspected "Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings"… Isn't my rhetoric question very reasonable? Since we're talking about a deal, bargaining should be allowed… The former owner of Sefirah Castle that the Genie knew wasn't like that? Impossible, why would a person who's good at deceit show "His" hand so readily? How can there not be some level of negotiation and pressure? Sh*t, too many thoughts are running through my mind. Nearly ten seconds have passed… I didn't immediately answer the Genie's accusation, so it's a form of indirect admittance… When it came to being exposed, Klein didn't have much experience. He was momentarily unsure for a response.

Just as he raised his vigilance and was about to produce the Staff of the Stars and activate Sefirah Castle's powers to resist the possible attack from the Genie, the golden and blurry figure suddenly laughed.

"Haha. Hahaha. Hahaha."

This laughter seemed to stir his soul, causing Klein, who was inside Sefirah Castle, to nearly show signs of losing control. It wasn't easy for him to remain calm.

There's no intention to attack, but the influence of natural dissipation… What's the Genie laughing about? What's so funny? Klein frowned as he thought of one possibility after another, but he felt that they didn't match reality.

After a few seconds, the Genie's laughter stopped and "He" happily quipped, "Even for existences at our level, fate is still so miraculous.

"Regardless of who you are, the deal I proposed is still on the table. As long as you remove the seal and release me, I will return to the cosmos with the portion that belongs to me. As for the rest, I will leave the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic to you. In addition, I will grant you three wishes.

"How's that? Isn't that enough?"

Cosmos… When Klein heard that, his eyelids twitched as he sharply sensed danger.

This was a warning from his spiritual intuition.

He had originally thought that he could pretend to agree and obtain more information before using Sefirah Castle to go back on his promise, but now he suddenly felt that he could not make the promise!

Hence, Klein decisively said, “Leave.”

As he spoke, he cut off the connection between himself and the crimson star representing The Hermit.

The blurry and distorted golden figure suddenly expanded and dissipated, leaving only his voice echoing:

“You will eventually agree!”

Only when the world above the gray fog had its calm completely restored did Klein slowly let out a breath and silently mutter to himself, The Genie is a powerful creature from the cosmos. Was it sealed within the Magical Wishing Lamp in the First Epoch or earlier?

The person who sealed “Him” might be the previous owner of Sefirah Castle, the existence suspected to be The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings. This can be inferred from the ingredients used to form the Magic Wishing Lamp’s Beyonder characteristics…

So, that’s how the Genie sensed that I wasn’t the previous owner of Sefirah Castle when “He” questioned me? But I did consider this point, so my question wasn’t logically unsound. Unless, back then, the former owner of Sefirah Castle and the Genie had come to some sort of tacit understanding or had some secret…

The bulk of the Genie’s powers likely can’t extend out of the seal, but “He” can use the Beyonder characteristic that forms the seal… The unique characteristic of “granting wishes” is likely from the Miracle Invoker characteristic. Then, the Genie uses “His” level to magnify it…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein raised his head to look at the crimson star representing The Hermit. He discovered that Cattleya didn’t notice anything unusual with the Magic Wishing Lamp.

Phew… Klein formed a stream of light that contained his warnings and threw it into the crimson star.

Chapter 1242 - The Baffling Actions of the Human

◆ ◆ ◆

…The primitive island that the Emperor found by chance… The creatures on the island worship an unknown power that comes from the cosmos… Without reaching the level of an angel, just knowledge of it will result in corruption from the cosmos… Try not to make a wish to the Genie, nor bring it to that primitive island… Cattleya finally received feedback from Mr. Fool as she heaved a sigh of relief, even more worried about the Queen's quest.

She turned her head to look at the unresponsive Magic Wishing Lamp and quickly put it away. Then, she spread out a letter, picked up a fountain pen, and paraphrased the information she had just received, hoping that Queen Mystic Bernadette would take it seriously.

†

In a dilapidated apartment in Backlund.

A man with a full beard was sitting on a chair with his hands cuffed behind him.

Xio, who had become a middle-ranking MI9 member through her own capabilities, stood in front of the man, with a triangular blade in hand and her two subordinates flanking her.

"We already have enough witnesses and evidence to prove that you're one of the main organizers of the protest. If you wish to reduce your punishment, answer my questions honestly.”

Before Xio could say a word, the bearded man felt an extremely powerful suppressive force. When she finished speaking, even his mind began to tremble. It was as though bolts of electricity were generated and a pain and numbness that couldn’t be perceived could explode at any moment.

The bearded man suppressed the fear and weakness in his heart and said, “No one instigated me. I just did what I wanted to do.

“Don’t you all know? The entirety of Backlund has become a gunpowder keg. Even a tiny spark can set off the entire city. And there are countless sparks like me who are willing to take the risk!

“Those darn nobles and merchants hoarded so much food while there are already people in East Borough who are starving to death!

“You can do whatever you want to do to me. I’ve never believed in their promises. The reason why we agreed to end the protest was because everyone had received a lot of food.”

Xio was about to ask further when she suddenly turned her head to listen to the commotion in the distance.

Sounds of rumbling could be heard from somewhere. It was deep, hoarse, and layered.

Has the Feysac, Intis, or Feynapotter army broken through our defenses and begun to attack Backlund’s defenses? Xio’s expression instantly turned solemn.

†

Back in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, after Klein returned to the real world, he immediately attempted to reach out his hand to see if he could pull out the Magic Wishing Lamp from the fog of history.

Soon, he confirmed that he couldn't summon Sealed Artifact 0-05.

Indeed, it involves a Uniqueness, or should I say, sefirah? In short, the Genie is indeed a high-ranking existence that was sealed. At the very least, "He" is a King of Angels… There's no way to make use of "Him"… Klein let out a breath and turned his attention back to the hunt of Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar.

He had made a lot of preparations during this period of time, and he ran through and confirmed the plan above the gray fog.

However, he was in no hurry to take action. He spent quite a bit of time checking the loopholes and mending the imperfections.

Two to three days later, it was dark and silent in the wilderness. Wearing a silk top hat and a long black trench coat, Klein held a lantern that emitted a faint yellow glow. With a solemn expression, he reached out his right hand and grabbed at the air.

At that moment, a bolt of lightning streaked across the world, illuminating it.

Following that, he dragged out a figure. It was him holding the illusory Staff of the Stars and a lantern.

Right on the heels of that, his true body entered the fog of history as he dashed to a time before the First Epoch. He hid inside the old stacked cities.

His Historical Void projection suddenly came alive as an area that he had been exploring recently had surfaced in his mind. He used the power of the Staff of the Stars to directly move to it.

This was a huge distance away from where his actual body was. Even if there was a problem with the projection, no one would be able to lock onto the exact location of where his true body was when he returned to reality.

Surveying the area, he took in the dried riverbed and a boulder that stood deep in the darkness like a monster. He no longer maintained his Staff of the Stars historical projection, letting it quickly fade away and disappear with a shake of his right hand.

After doing all of this, he walked to the boulder, put down the lantern, and began chanting an honorific name in Jotun:

“The Dark Lord that exists alongside History,

“The Embodiment of Countless Miracles,

“The God of Wishes…”

This was the Dark Demonic Wolf’s honorific name that he had obtained from the Evernight Goddess. Although the Mythical Creature might not be using it anymore, or had perhaps changed it a long time ago, it was undoubtedly referring to “Him” when it came to mysticism.

†

Deep within a mountain range, in an ancient castle.

Giants, elves, humans, and vampires each held the role as gardeners, chefs, servants, and guards. They all had different expressions and would whisper to each other when they met, making them appear lively and intelligent.

However, once they returned to their rooms, they would immediately turn dull. Their eyes would no longer move as their bodies floated up and hung from the ceiling.

In the depths of the castle, in a hall where only lightning could light it up from outside the window, a huge figure lay quietly in the darkness.

Its body was like a tiny mountain that was covered in dark short fur. Its pitch-black pupils covered at least three-quarters of its eyes, and at its forehead was a tuft of grayish-white fur. Its head resembled a magnified, twisted feral wolf.

This was none other than the God of Wishes, Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar.

Suddenly, this demonic wolf, which was more exaggerated than an ordinary giant, raised “His” head. Every strand of “His” dark and short hair began to sway as all the servants in the castle followed “His” actions.

Kotar’s eyes moved slightly as “He” turned “His” head slightly, as though “He” was listening to something.

In the next second, “He” opened “His” mouth and let out a soundless roar and summoned another “Him.”

As soon as this Dark Demonic Wolf appeared, Kotar’s body leaped into the grayish-white fog as “He” dashed to a certain historical spot of light in the Second Epoch.

This was a piece of secret history that “He” knew.

In the real world, the Dark Demonic Wolf’s Historical Void projection made a wish in a tongue-twisting language. Then, with a flash of “His” figure, “He” directly moved to a mountain near the northern city of Nois.

After making the necessary preparations, the God of Wishes allowed a strand of dark, short hair to fall off, turning into an illusory Worm of Spirit that expanded into the corresponding prayer point of light.

With its help, Kotar saw who was praying to “Him.”

It was a young man wearing a strange hat and strange clothes. He stood beside a glass lantern and softly chanted the honorific name of the God of Wishes.

Hmm… The Dark Demonic Wolf’s huge, pitch-black pupils turned and saw that the young man was covered in a layer of grayish-white fog.

There were some things that could not be seen clearly in the fog.

As a Sequence 2 angel of the Seer pathway, this Mythical Creature could clearly sense that the fog was similar to the fog of history. It could sense a strong attraction force from something in the fog.

…Sefirah Castle? Having heard some matters from the ancient god, Flegrea, the King of Demonic Wolves, "He" instantly had a guess.

Under this premise, "He" had many thoughts regarding the young man.

Using Sefirah Castle to attract me and make me attack him on my own accord, and then confirming my location?

This is a bait?

Indeed, he's just a Historical Void projection. It's unknown which time fragment his true body is hiding in. It's unknown where the ambusher is hiding…

Previously, Sefirah Castle clearly had an anomaly. I controlled myself and didn't attempt to search for the corresponding region or the clues that might be left behind. Why do "They" think I will fall for it?

It's just an attempt, switching to another when it doesn't work? Or is there something wrong with this prayer?

Hehe, I've lived for thousands of years. After experiencing so many things, what kind of situation have I not seen?

The best solution now is to ignore him and not spy on him. I'll just remember him.

The Dark Demonic Wolf quickly made a decision and planned to observe for a while longer before destroying that prayer point of light.

At this moment, "He" saw the young man open his mouth again:

"The Sun that is Eternal;

"You are an Inextinguishable Light;

"You are the Embodiment of Order."

"…" The Dark Demonic Wolf was somewhat puzzled as to what the young man was trying to do.

In this forsaken land, praying to the other true deities was useless!

In the next second, Klein once again chanted another deity's name:

"The Lord that created everything;

"The Lord who reigns behind the curtain of shadows;

"The degenerated nature of all living things!"

The Dark Demonic Wolf's pupils dilated slightly. "He" was confused by the actions of the human in the prayer light.

Before "He" could make any guesses, Klein muttered the third honorific name:

"The Clock-hand that tampers with Time;

"The Shadow that roams across Fate;

"The Embodiment of Deceit and Trickery."

Amon… He is praying to Amon… The Dark Demonic Wolf was already completely at a loss as to what the other party was up to. "He" instinctively felt that something was amiss and immediately wanted to wipe away the corresponding prayer point of light.

Suddenly, "He" saw the young man lift "His" head and smile.

He then took out a crystal monocle and put it on his right eye.

In just one prayer, Klein's Historical Void projection had turned into Blasphemer Amon's avatar!

Almost at the same time, the Dark Demonic Wolf felt the other party's gaze pass through the prayer light and land on "Him." Then, Amon looked past "Him" and into the fog of history where "His" true body was.

Without any hesitation, "He" immediately destroyed the prayer light.

As for "His" true body, "He" dispelled the gaze and removed the maintenance of the historical projection.

In the fog of history, in the stacked city of old, Klein suddenly stood up. A scene surfaced in his mind.

A few seconds before this scene took shape, he had severed the connection between his body and the Historical Void projection, doing so in order to avoid having Amon descent right beside him.

The baffling actions that he had previously done were mainly to confuse the Dark Demonic Wolf. He wanted "Him" to continue observing after realizing that the supplicant wasn't the true body. This made "Him" increase the time "He" spied on Sefirah Castle.

In the end, he prayed to Amon, using the possible descent and influence of the God of Deceit to hide the tracks of Sefirah Castle's reverse corruption of the Dark Demonic Wolf!

If Amon hadn't responded and merely watched by the sidelines, Klein would use the monocle he had prepared to deceive the Dark Demonic Wolf.

Chapter 1243 - Hectic But Not Confused

◆

Deep within a mountain range, in the ancient castle.

As soon as Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar returned from the fog of history, “He” instinctively removed all connections with the outside world. “He” was prepared to abandon this place and move elsewhere.

Although “He” still hadn’t figured out what had happened, with an accident already happening, “His” experience told “Him” that “He” couldn’t take any chances at all. “He” should retreat and give up as required of him!

At the same time, a thought came to Klein’s mind in the city of old. His figure instantly appeared in the ancient palace above the gray fog. At the seat belonging to The Fool, he merged with the constantly distorted and scattered crimson figure and took form.

In this mysterious space, the crimson stars that represented Justice, The Hanged Man, The Star, and the other members of the Tarot Club were constantly expanding and shrinking. They emitted layers of ripples that formed a mighty “wave.”

This was one of the preparations that Klein had made in advance. In the name of Gehrman Sparrow, he had used different reasons to get the members of the Tarot Club to pray to Mr. Fool one after another, asking this existence to pass a certain answer to Mr. World.

As such, the crimson stars resonated, affecting Sefirah Castle in reverse; thus, allowing it to summon The Fool to resolve the problem.

This was one of the key factors that could help him escape from Amon's clutches. It could help him remove the need to take four steps counterclockwise and recite the incantations. He could directly enter Sefirah Castle without wasting any time.

And in a battle at the level of angels, the difference a second makes would perhaps determine the difference in the outcome. To fight someone more powerful than him, Klein had to consider every detail!

Sitting in the high-back chair belonging to The Fool, he beckoned for the Staff of the Stars and Sea God Scepter while observing the other changes in Sefirah Castle.

In the grayish-white fog, there was an additional crimson glow that was rapidly shrinking, almost disappearing in no time. Around The Fool's seat, ripples of light bloomed as though they were forming a pure passageway.

He could barely make out a gigantic demonic wolf's figure from the crimson glow. This was a result of Kotar's spying on Sefirah Castle. Through the passage of time, "He" had gained a certain understanding of the situation and had unknowingly been invaded. As such, "He" established a preliminary connection with Sefirah Castle. Of course, as an angel and a God of Wishes of the Second Epoch, "He" had the right level and ability to sever such a connection and get rid of the corresponding corruption. If Klein didn't make use of these one or two seconds, he would lose his lock on the Dark Demonic Wolf.

And at the side of The Fool's seat, the rippling lights reflected the figure wearing a half top hat and a long black trench coat, "Gehrman Sparrow." On his right eye was a crystal monocle.

Amon!

It was unknown what loophole this Blasphemer's avatar could use to slow down the rate at which Klein's Historical Void projection dissipated. Then, "He" used the subtle connection between "Gehrman

Sparrow," Klein's actual body, and Sefirah Castle in an attempt to invade the world above the gray fog from the special scene summoned by Sefirah Castle!

As the halo spread out, "Gehrman Sparrow's" long and powerful palm pierced through the barrier and suddenly entered the ancient palace, as though it had opened an invisible door.

Although Klein had already prepared for this and knew that it wouldn't be easy to get rid of Amon, he couldn't help but feel his scalp tingle when he saw this scene. He was afraid that in the next second, he would grab a crystal monocle and put it on his right eye.

This was something that had to be resolved in one or two seconds. Otherwise, the ownership of Sefirah Castle would be a question left in the air.

Without any hesitation, distorted and transparent Worms of Spirit appeared on the surface of his skin. They quickly gathered together, forming another Klein.

After catching the Sea God Scepter, Klein stirred the power of Sefirah Castle. With the augmentation of the layers of invisible "waves," the blue gems lit up, causing violent bolts of lightning to form silver balls that rolled into the rippling light.

Amidst the crackling sounds, the palm that pierced through Sefirah Castle instantly shattered and evaporated.

The spherical lightning that was filled with destructive aura expanded outwards, descending into reality, enveloping the monocled "Gehrman Sparrow."

This Historical Void projection was only barely maintained with the use of loopholes, so it collapsed after suffering such a strike. "He" could only adjust the crystal monocle and shake "His" head in regret as "He" watched "His" figure rapidly fade away after being shattered by the electric bolts.

As a small portion of the Worms of Spirit responded to Amon's prayer, Klein grabbed the Staff of the Stars with his actual body.

He held the staff embedded with many gems and aimed the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact at the rapidly shrinking crimson light.

At the same time, a scene appeared in his mind.

The rubies, emeralds, sapphires, and pearls on the Staff of the Stars lit up one after another.

Gong!

The sound of a distant bell seemed to have transcended an infinite amount of time as it echoed within the grayish-white fog, reverberating within the crimson light.

The pitch-black darkness in front of Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar suddenly faded, revealing a huge stone wall clock.

The wall clock was ancient and mottled, and its surface was grayish-white and bluish-black, split into twelve segments. Each segment had different symbols that represented the different times of the day.

At the core of the wall clock, three needles seemed to be formed from Worms of Time of three different lengths, "short," "medium," and "long," were filled with a feeling that time had left its mark on.

This was a Beyonder power from Angel of Time, Amon. Using the Staff of the Stars, Klein had made it appear again!

Normally speaking, a Beyonder power at this level wasn't something that could be understood by just witnessing once or twice. It wasn't so easy to "Record" it, but Klein wasn't fighting alone.

During this period of time, he had made use of Miss Magician's summoning to return to Backlund frequently. He went to The Star

Leonard to chat directly with Pallez Zoroast, and he gained a deeper understanding of the corresponding mysticism knowledge and supernatural details.

Although Pallez had already dropped to the Sequence 2 level and was unable to use the powers of the Time domain, "His" experience and knowledge remained.

Gong!

On the ancient and mysterious stone wall clock, the second hand suddenly jerked, causing everything around Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar to slow down. Even the deep darkness seemed to freeze.

This Miracle Invoker who was just about to completely cut off contact with the outside world and distance "Himself" from where "He" was by granting his own wish suddenly froze on the spot. There was a brief moment of "Him" being fixed in place.

There was no doubt that there was a huge gap in power between the original Beyonder powers and those replicated by the Staff of the Stars. However, for Klein, the effect was already enough.

The moment he saw the Dark Demonic Wolf being affected by the "Ancient Wall Clock," he immediately dropped the Staff of the Stars and made the Worm of Spirit he had just separated from his body to fly back into his body.

With a thought, he returned to the city of oil before the First Epoch. Then, he appeared in the dark desolate plains with the lantern that emitted a faint yellow glow.

His right hand extended forward and successfully pulled out a projection of the Staff of the Stars.

This method could effectively increase the success rate of summoning the Staff of the Stars, but it would clearly reduce the might of this Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. After all, he was summoning a historical projection of a historical projection. Of course, as it was a race against time, making such a choice was very easy.

Klein didn't enter the fog of history again. He reached out to grab "his" shoulder, and he used dream divination to outline the feedback he received from using Sefirah Castle to reverse-corrupt the Dark Demonic Wolf.

In the dark, unlit hall in the ancient castle, the mountain-like demonic wolf stood up.

Quickly filling in the details, Klein slightly adjusted the details according to the scene of his frozen target.

On the black staff, the corresponding gems lit up.

In his mind, the scene that resembled an oil painting suddenly swelled up, interweaving with reality, making it impossible to separate from each other.

He descended into that ancient castle's dark hall, landing in front of Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar, who had just raised "His" body with "His" eight legs.

He had finally officially met the God of Wishes that had been living since the Second Epoch!

Without any hesitation, Klein took the opportunity of the Dark Demonic Wolf having just escaped the influence of the "Ancient Wall Clock." As he dispelled the Historical Void projection, he took out an iron cigar case from his pocket and opened it.

Inside the cigar case, there was a Loen gold coin. Its surface flashed, reflecting Reinette Tinekerr, who was wearing a dark and complicated long dress and holding four blonde, red-eyed heads.

One of the preparations Klein made was to use the method that he had used to bring around Admiral of Blood Senor. This allowed him to bring

Miss Messenger to the Forsaken Land of the Gods!

Reinette Tinekerr was no doubt a Wraith. Furthermore, “She” was an even more powerful Wraith. “She” could also possess the smooth surface of a gold coin. In addition, “She” was a spirit world creature and was intrinsically a spirit. “She” could enter the world above the gray fog and descend upon the Forsaken Land of the Gods just like Justice Audrey.

Based on this condition, in order to not expose the secret within Sefirah Castle and not expose The Fool’s true identity, he first made Miss Messenger possess the gold coin before using the iron cigar case to seal it. Then, he sacrificed the item to the gray fog before bringing it to the Forsaken Land of the Gods through a bestowment ritual.

Of course, the prerequisite for these actions was that Klein had the level and strength of a Sequence 2 angel in Sefirah Castle. Even if something went wrong with Reinette Tinekerr, he could still handle it.

As for Reinette Tinekerr, “She” happily agreed to this matter because Gehrman Sparrow had just helped “Her” retrieve a portion of “Her” body.

Silently, Miss Messenger left the gold coin and occupied the pitch-black pupil of the Dark Demonic Wolf’s eyes.

Wraith’s possession!

Chapter 1244 - Wish

◆ ◆ ◆

Just as Reinette Tinekerr's figure appeared in Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar's pupils, "She" left the window to the heart and began expanding back to "Her" original size.

This meant that "Her" Wraith's possession attempt had failed.

The Dark Demonic Wolf's body rapidly shrunk and thinned as "He" madly absorbed the light around "Him," becoming a translucent black velvet curtain.

This was an item that Klein had seen via dream divination. It was ejected from the grayish-white fog and had landed in the hands of the Dark Demonic Wolf. It was suspected to contain the Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic of the Seer pathway.

At this moment, Dark Demonic Wolf Kotor had borrowed some of the powers of the "curtain" to dodge Reinette Tinekerr's Wraith's possession at the critical moment via some unknown means, effectively avoiding the subsequent series of control.

The "curtain" was stowed away after "He" used it, allowing the Dark Demonic Wolf with "His" dark, short fur to appear in a spot that was originally empty.

Reinette Tinekerr wasn't surprised by the failure. Taking advantage of this opportunity, a golden-haired, red-eyed head in "Her" hand spat out a rectangular, diamond-like charm.

The other three heads used ancient Hermes, Jotun, and Elvish to say a word:

“Yesterday!”

The rectangular diamond-like charm was instantly engulfed in transparent flames as it fused with the void.

Reinette Tinekerr’s body swelled as the four blonde, red-eyed heads flew up and landed on “Her” empty neck, stacked upon one another.

In the blink of an eye, Miss Messenger had transformed into a huge doll that could almost break through the Dark Demonic Wolf’s castle.

“She” was wearing a black gothic dress with countless mysterious symbols and sinister vines. “Her” eyes were blood-red and “She” exuded an aura that no human should possess.

Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar didn’t attempt to stop Reinette Tinekerr from borrowing strength from “Her” past, nor did “He” immediately show “His” complete Mythical Creature form. With eight feet on the ground, “He” raised “His” neck and let out a roar.

This roar seemed to be of a higher level, containing words similar to Jotun. It made the “curtain” float up and instantly expand, blanketing the ancient castle from top to bottom.

The “curtain” quickly turned transparent and fused with the building. It was as though it had never appeared or had any effect on it. However, Klein’s spiritual intuition told him that this place was already isolated from the outside world. If he wanted to leave, he had to first break the invisible barrier.

In other words, that “curtain” made the Dark Demonic Wolf’s castle become an independent “kingdom.”

This was the embryonic form of a divine kingdom!

Klein, who had just failed and planned on continuing to summon angels to help him, had a spark of inspiration. He instantly changed his mind, reaching into the void and dragging out another him.

It was Gehrman Sparrow, one who was holding a historical projection of the Staff of the Stars.

Right on the heels of that, Klein controlled his historical projection to turn him into his marionette and transfer some Worms of Spirit over.

While he was busy with these matters, Reinette Tinekerr had already recovered to “Her” peak condition. “Her” bright red eyes reflected the eight-legged demonic wolf.

With a faint flash, the Dark Demonic Wolf turned into a white goat.

However, outside the dark hall, a giant holding a broom suddenly trembled and transformed into a demonic wolf with a tuft of gray hair on its forehead.

At the moment when the curse was cast on “Him,” a Miracle Invoker, “He” had swapped places with “His” marionette!

“He” opened “His” mouth once again and let out a roar.

This roar also contained words that mostly resembled the source of Jotun, describing a beautiful wish:

“I wish for all godhood here to dissipate!”

In the next second, as the God of Wishes, the Dark Demonic Wolf granted “His” wish. Klein immediately felt his godhood being repressed. The Beyonder powers that stemmed from Scholar of Yore and Bizarro Sorcerer could no longer be used!

Fortunately, the historical projection was maintained with spirituality. As long as the summoning was successful, it wouldn’t be dispelled by the Dark Demonic Wolf’s wish. Similarly, as Klein had already turned his historical projection into a marionette and transferred a number of Worms of Spirit over, he could still swap locations with his projection.

Apart from him, Reinette Tinekerr and Dark Demonic Wolf were also affected by the wish that had been granted. Their Beyonder powers above Sequence 5 had vanished into thin air, making it difficult to use them.

Of course, be it the demonic wolf marionette that had turned into a goat, or the gigantic doll-like Reinette Tinekerr, there was no change in "Their" form. What existed was reasonable, so it couldn't be eliminated by the "Power of Wishes."

After making this wish, the Dark Demonic Wolf arched "His" back and bent "His" body slightly. It looked like "He" was about to engage in a battle with Klein and Reinette Tinekerr.

At that moment, "His" mountain-like body was about the size of the castle-like doll. "He" looked down coldly at Klein, capable of crushing him with a single swipe of "His" claw.

In addition, the castle had many marionettes rushing over. They consisted of giants, elves, vampires, humans, and deformed monsters.

Only a number of them were at Sequence 5, but now, they had Kotar's Worms of Spirit in their bodies. In other words, in this special environment, all of them were at Sequence 5.

After the dissipation of godhood, in this independent "kingdom," Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar's advantage became obvious.

More than a hundred Sequence 5s were besieging two Sequence 5s!

Furthermore, the Dark Demonic Wolf was itself a mutant. Even if "He" couldn't reveal any godhood, "His" massive size and terrifying strength made "Him" adept at combat. "He" wasn't on the same level as a weak human like Marionettist Klein.

At this moment, the body of Reinette Tinekerr, who was dressed in a black gothic dress that twined with sinister vines, suddenly turned incorporeal. First, “She” reflected on a floor-to-ceiling window, then it jumped into the pitch-black pupils of the Dark Demonic Wolf.

“She” had once again attempted Wraith’s possession.

However, Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar swapped locations with another marionette in a timely fashion, preventing Reinette Tinekerr from successfully “possessing” “His” body.

Reinette Tinekerr wasn’t discouraged as “She” continued using mediums such as glass windows, chandeliers, and eyeballs to “jump” through the different marionettes in pursuit of the real Dark Demonic Wolf.

As for the Dark Demonic Wolf, “He” relied on “His” numerous marionettes, and had the advantage of copious numbers of Worms of Spirit. “He” swapped between different marionettes without any pause to avoid being forcibly possessed by the Ancient Bane.

Amidst the two angels’ silent conflict, a large number of the Dark Demonic Wolf’s marionettes had surrounded the two Kleins.

Beyonder powers like a vampire’s “Abyss Shackles,” a giant’s “Hurricane of Light,” an elf’s “Wind Binding,” and a human’s “Psychic Piercing” and “Holy Light Summoning” inundated their targets. They controlled, weakened, attacked, and purified Klein, acting with great rapport. Klein was only able to dodge a portion of the attacks before being “drowned” by the attacks.

Plasma exploded as the light blasted out. Klein’s Staff of the Stars-holding figure quickly outlined itself to the side.

At that critical moment, he had exchanged spots with his marionette in time. He imagined his “Traveling” powers and had used the Staff of the Stars to complete the teleportation.

In this special scenario, this was essentially a release of “Recorded” powers.

After dodging this round of attacks, Klein discovered that a marionette was controlling his Spirit Body Threads before he could catch his breath.

At the same time, a human marionette reached out his right hand under the influence of the Dark Demonic Wolf and aimed at the Miracle Invoker’s actual body.

In the next second, the Dark Demonic Wolf and another marionette switched positions. As for the marionette, it was “possessed” by Reinette Tinekerr.

This way, the human marionette’s right hand was targeted at Reinette Tinekerr.

The marionette’s palm clenched tightly as his wrist spun half a circle, stealing away the target’s subsequent thoughts.

Right on the heels of that, he jumped and pounced on an ally.

Reinette Tinekerr was momentarily rooted to the ground.

When the Dark Demonic Wolf saw this, “He” immediately got several marionettes to spread open their arms and summon pure pillars of cleansing flames to surround them.

In the holy light, Wraith Reinette Tinekerr’s body first began to melt. Following that, using “Mirror Jump,” “She” moved to a glass window situated high above the castle to avoid the subsequent purification.

In just a few seconds, “She” and Klein inevitably fell into a perilous situation.

The restricted environment, being on “His” home ground, and “His” trait as the God of Wishes had magnified Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar advantage to the extreme.

If it were any other Scholar of Yore, there was only one problem he needed to consider—how to rely on Reinette Tinekerr to escape, but Klein had his trump card.

Just as he pulled back his Spirit Body Threads, he didn't hesitate to stir the powers of Sefirah Castle.

This trait of his wasn't suppressed by the Dark Demonic Wolf's "wish."

This was something even the Forsaken Land of the Gods couldn't screen!

In midair, grayish-white fog appeared. The ancient palace above the spirit world appeared faint.

Its appearance brought with it slight tremors. A certain power followed the connection and shook the demonic wolf's castle, causing the translucent black velvet "curtain" to jolt out of place a little, allowing the independent "kingdom" to intersect with reality.

Seizing this opportunity, Klein opened his mouth and shouted out a name in Jotun:

"Leodero!"

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Thousands of thick silver lightning bolts descended from the sky, smiting Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar's castle. The area transformed into a lightning forest that emitted a strong destructive aura.

Chapter 1245 - Help Available Even Without Summoning Help

◆ ◆ ◆

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The bolts of silver lightning that were as thick as an anaconda struck the translucent black velvet “curtain.” It shook violently as it distorted.

Taking advantage of this opening, Reinette Tinekerr’s figure, which was reflected on the castle’s glass, jumped back into Klein’s pocket and returned to the surface of the gold coin in the iron cigar case.

The prepared Klein raised his right arm and calmly aimed the Staff of the Stars at the floor tiles in the hall.

A scene surfaced in his mind. It represented one of the Beyonder powers of a Druid.

The ground beneath his feet instantly softened, turning into a marsh. It made his body sink like it had fallen into a sea.

Underground Slink!

Boom!

The translucent black velvet “curtain” could no longer withstand the cleansing from the lightning storm the moment the marsh solidified. It curled into a ball and fell back into the castle.

No longer restricted, the few thousand thick bolts of lightning rained down the ancient castle.

A tower collapsed and the hall was left in shambles. One marionette after another burst into ephemeral illusions under the pricking of such a lightning strike. They were instantly charred black and reduced to ashes.

When the silver light that illuminated the entire mountain range subsided, Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar's castle was in ruins. Many spots were burning with red flames.

Klein immediately emerged from the bottom of a deep pit and saw that the demonic wolf, covered in dark and short fur, had performed the same action.

Relying on the three Druids among "His" marionettes, "He" had successfully hidden underground to avoid the lightning bombardment.

And at that moment, the independent "kingdom" created by the "curtain" had completely disintegrated. However, the Dark Demonic Wolf's wish hadn't completely expired. The return of godhood still needed some time.

Without any hesitation, both parties engaged in another intense battle.

Kotar allowed the crinkled "curtain" to fly up and drape "Him," so as to prevent the Wraith's possession. After all, there were only three of "His" marionettes left. Of course, this way, "He" could no longer swap locations with his marionettes.

At the same time, Reinette Tinekerr left the gold coin in Klein's pocket and floated towards the eight-legged demonic wolf.

"She" had given up on the idea of possession as "Her" arms suddenly swelled. A few strands of gray hair grew from the back of "Her" hand, and "Her" nails became long, sharp, and firm.

Werewolf Transformation!

This doll-like baneful entity became a huge werewolf. "She" kept moving at high speeds, waving “Her” sharp claws as “She” engaged in an intense battle with the hill-like Dark Demonic Wolf.

Amidst the clashing sounds, Klein was attacked by Kotar’s three remaining marionettes.

One of them raised his head and roared, causing brown short hair to tear through his clothes. In an instant, he transformed into a terrifying giant bear that was twice the height of a person. One crouched down, pressing his palms against the ground, while the other raised his right hand and yanked his hair.

At that moment, a crimson flame surged out of Klein’s clothes, instantly devouring him.

His figure appeared in a sea of flames to the side. Then, he jumped out, raised his staff, and charged straight at the huge brown bear.

And at the spot where he was originally standing, dark green mutated vines pierced through the ground and grew wildly, stirring the remnant flames in the middle.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The huge brown bear didn’t back down. With heavy strides, it rushed towards Klein like a high-speed steam locomotive. It spread open its arms, trying to give him a “passionate” hug that could crush all his bones and squeeze all his chest muscles together.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

As his black trench coat flailed to his back, Klein didn’t retreat—he was about to collide with the huge brown bear.

Suddenly, he kicked his left foot and twisted his waist. He forcefully jumped up and flew past the brown bear diagonally.

Thud!

As the two crossed each other, Klein swung his black staff down and ruthlessly struck the brown bear's shoulder.

Normally, such an attack wouldn't have been able to hurt the thick hide of the brown bear. However, with the Staff of the Stars, the physical attack would lead to random abnormal changes or strange effects.

Of course, under the God of Wishes's suppression, these changes and effects wouldn't exceed that of a Sequence 4 Beyonder power.

Thud!

As the sound of the staff's strike reverberated, the huge brown bear's shoulder tore open diagonally from its shoulder. The bottom half of its torso "teleported" more than ten meters away while the remaining portion remained in place.

The brown bear's internal organs and blood gushed to the ground in a rather shocking scene.

However, the brown bear wasn't dead yet. Its two halves were squirming as it struggled to stabilize his center of mass and continued attacking.

As a marionette, he had long died. Such damage was nothing.

At this moment, Klein had already jumped behind the brown bear, his feet stepping on the ground.

Another wave of scarlet flames surged out, drowning his figure.

A flame that was about to be extinguished rose up as Klein leaped out and arrived close to the marionette which had both hands on the ground.

With his silk top hat, he ran past the marionette without turning his head as he swung the staff to the side.

Thud!

The marionette's body burst into golden flames as his figure instantly vanished.

A flame surged into the sky as the marionette jumped down. However, the golden flames didn't extinguish, quickly burning him to ashes.

Without even looking over, Klein had already rushed in front of the marionette that was yanking his hair.

The marionette immediately threw out the hair in his hand.

These strands of hair began to burn as they emitted black gases, sounding alarms to Klein's spirituality senses.

Poison!

An unknown poison!

With a creak, he forcefully stopped using his ability as a Clown. Using the inertia of his body, he extended his black staff.

All sorts of thoughts rapidly reformed in his mind, quickly forming a scene.

Before this operation, Klein had requested Miss Justice's help to hypnotize him. It made his brain unable to form scenes when he subconsciously thought of one. There would only be a single thought resonating in his mind, and he had to take the initiative to control it to construct the scene. This allowed him to use the Staff of the Stars for a long time without being affected by the negative effects. As for the flaws of thinking in such a manner, Klein felt that it was still acceptable under predetermined conditions.

Without a sound, the gems embedded in the Staff of the Stars lit up. A pure white and holy pillar of light descended from the sky, enveloping the black gas and the corresponding marionette.

The poison quickly melted under the Sun's burning. It was the same with the marionette.

With a remnant glow still in his eyes, Klein instinctively turned around and aimed his staff at the brown bear that was split into two.

Silver lightning flashed spontaneously before the separated brown bear's body finally collapsed, unable to get up again.

In just a few seconds, Klein had finished off the remaining marionettes of the Dark Demonic Wolf.

After Sefirah Castle's anomaly, be it him or the God of Wishes, time became abnormally precious. No one was willing to stall for time, because it wouldn't be long before high-level existences like the True Creator and Angel of Time Amon in the Forsaken Land of the Gods descended.

Upon seeing this, Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar trembled violently and flung out the translucent velvet curtain.

The curtain first vanished into thin air before it suddenly appeared behind Klein. Just as his spirituality was about to send a warning, it covered him and wrapped him within it!

Klein's vision immediately darkened as he felt his thoughts turn sluggish. His Spirit Body Threads were being inoculated onto the "curtain" one thread at a time.

He attempted using "Flaming Jump," softening his bones, and using the Staff of the Stars, but he was unable to succeed in such an abnormal state.

The black velvet curtain became tighter and tighter, revealing the corresponding marks of his eyes, nose, and mouth, as though it was squeezing out a brand new "person."

Reinette Tinekerr immediately "jumped" and appeared on the translucent "curtain," purging it from Klein's body and teleporting elsewhere.

The Dark Demonic Wolf seized the opportunity and raised “His” neck, letting out a roar.

The “curtain” stood up, as if it had become a cloak draped over an invisible person’s body.

A terrifying suction force was born, causing the Spirit Body Threads of Reinette Tinekerr and Klein to uncontrollably float over.

If they didn’t have the corresponding Beyonder powers, their Spirit Body Threads would’ve merged into the “cloak” in just three to four seconds, while they would become its marionettes.

Fortunately, Klein was a Marionettist himself. He immediately focused his attention and controlled his and Miss Messenger’s Spirit Body Threads. He followed the method that he learned from Zaratul, allowing them to circle around him and return to their original positions, forming loops.

Roar!

The Dark Demonic Wolf spat out a gas ball, sending it flying towards Klein like a cannonball.

As he was focused on controlling his and Miss Messenger’s Spirit Body Threads, Klein could barely duck. Just as he was about to be struck, Reinette Tinekerr floated over and stood in front of him.

Boom!

Reinette Tinekerr’s blonde hair scattered as the evil vines wrapped around “Her” body broke apart.

The Dark Demonic Wolf’s follow-up actions were one smooth continuous series of actions. Taking advantage of the moment when the “curtain” was desperately pulling at its target’s Spirit Body Threads, “He” launched repeated attacks on Klein, forcing Reinette Tinekerr to block them. It caused the tough Ancient Bane to tremble under the attack of “His” claws, air blobs, and flaming attacks. More and more wounds appeared, making it look like “She” could not last any longer.

At this critical moment, as Klein controlled the Spirit Body Threads to resist the attraction of the “curtain,” he reached into his pocket and took out another iron cigar case.

[image]

The seal was removed and the box was opened. Inside, there was also a gold coin lying quietly. There was also a Wraith on the surface of the gold coin.

This was a blurry female wraith, a true undying creature, and not a Wraith from the Mutant pathway.

It was the strongest trump card that Klein had prepared. Previously, because he was inside the isolated “kingdom” that wasn’t connected to the outside world. He was afraid that he wouldn’t be able to obtain the desired effect. Only when the “curtain” targeted him and Miss Messenger did he feel that the opportunity was here.

As the box was opened, the wraith suddenly jumped onto the surface of a glass fragment. On it were nearly illusory black tubes that extended into infinity, connecting to the unknown.

This was the symbol of Artificial Death.

And Artificial Death was equivalent to the Evernight Goddess!

This trump card of his was the reenactment of the time when the Evernight Goddess had used God of Glory Bladel’s corpse to foil Amon’s attempt to snatch Sefirah Castle.

For this, he deliberately found a wraith-like monster in the Forsaken Land of the Gods and imprisoned it, placing it together with the

Artificial Death project's white feathers he summoned from the fog of history.

Through his repeated experiments and prayers during his specific trips to Backlund, this Wraith had finally established a certain connection with Artificial Death, allowing the Evernight Goddess to use this opportunity to exert a rather low level of influence!

Chapter 1246 - Following “His” True Feelings—Cowardice

◆

The Dark Demonic Wolf that was attacking Reinette Tinekerr seemed to sense something. “He” slowed down and turned to look at the wraith that had just appeared.

“His” pupils which already occupied two-thirds of “His” eyes had suddenly dilated, as if “He” caught scent of a familiar but dangerous aura.

In the blink of an eye, the wraith raised her arms.

The “Power of Wishes” in the surrounding area rapidly diminished at an accelerated rate. Godhood began to return, having reached the level of Sequence 4. Under the soil beneath the Dark Demonic Wolf’s feet, pale-white and illusory arms emerged. They were densely packed like a forest, grabbing onto Kotar’s eight legs, making this Miracle Invoker feel like “He” had fallen into a cold and dead silence. “He” was temporarily unable to break free.

Using this opportunity, Reinette Tinekerr, who had turned sluggish due to “Her” controlled Spirit Body Threads, turned illusory as “She” vanished.

In the pitch-black pupils of the Dark Demonic Wolf, the blonde Miss Messenger in a dark and complicated long dress that was wrapped with vines suddenly phased into existence and completed the possession process.

The actions of the God of Wishes instantly stiffened, as if “He” had degraded from a living creature to a marionette.

“He” attempted to influence Reinette Tinekerr’s Spirit Body Threads, so as to resist the Wraith’s possession. However, from time to time, “He” would be interrupted by the pale-white arms created by the female wraith. Success eluded “Him.”

Klein maintained the looping of their Spirit Body Threads as he slowly raised the Staff of the Stars, aiming it at the black velvet curtain that had turned into a cloak.

He then constructed a scene in his mind.

The surrounding darkness suddenly flowed, as if it contained an unimaginable secret. Bit by bit, illusory candles lit up in such an environment, illuminating a long table laid out with flesh and blood.

On the two sides of the long table, three extremely blurry figures were holding up the flesh and blood, ravenously devouring them.

In the next second, the three figures turned their heads simultaneously and cast their gazes at the translucent black velvet “curtain.”

The crazy suction force emitted by the “curtain” came to an abrupt halt as it hovered in its original spot. It was as if it had momentarily forgotten who it was, whose side it was on, and what it should do.

Feast of Betrayal!

Fairy tale magic’s Feast of Betrayal!

The fairy tale magic that Klein had just used was the “Feast of Betrayal” that originated from The Hermit Cattleya. Its effect was to temporarily awaken the items in the target’s hands or imbue them with intelligence, allowing them to carry out “betrayals”!

This was a Sequence 4 Beyonder power, so it couldn’t be used under the restrictions of the “Power of Wishes.”

At the same time, as the Staff of the Stars’s emulated spell was lacking compared to the original spell, as well as the fact that it didn’t harbor any ill intentions towards the Dark Demonic Wolf, it only appeared lost and didn’t fervently attack its master.

And the moment Klein extricated himself from the influence of the “curtain,” he immediately snapped his fingers, letting the scarlet flames drown him.

In an instant, he appeared in a flame beside the Dark Demonic Wolf wearing a half top hat and a long black trench coat.

The scarlet flame soared up, transforming into a blazing flame that allowed him to easily leap out.

He arched his back slightly and raised the Staff of Stars as he dashed towards the towering demonic wolf.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein ran faster and faster, as though transforming into a strong gust of wind. What welcomed him was the Dark Demonic Wolf that barely managed to lift up “His” front two claws that had broken free of the restraints.

Pa! Pa!

Klein waved his black staff to his left and right, accurately hitting the two front claws of Kotar, making them pause momentarily.

At the same time, he crouched down and slid under the Dark Demonic Wolf’s two front claws.

Amidst the howling winds, Klein turned around in midair and thrust upwards with the Staff of the Stars.

With a poof, the gem-embedded black staff pierced through the dark and short furred skin, driving deeply into the Dark Demonic Wolf's body. A ludicrous gash tore open.

Whoosh!

Deep black blood with hints of red gushed out like a flood, spraying a substance with strong corrosive properties that belonged to a Mythical Creature at Klein.

But at that moment, Klein's momentum had brought him flying under the Dark Demonic Wolf. He was preparing to launch his second round of attacks.

Suddenly, he heard an intermittent roar.

This was from Wraith's possession. Due to the difficulty in moving, what Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar meant was:

"Leo… de… ro!"

"…" Klein's gaze froze as the Dark Demonic Wolf's mocking smile appeared in his mind.

He wasn't the only one who could stir the remaining divine powers. He could do so, but so could Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar!

Even though this Miracle Invoker didn't know that Wind Angel, Leodero, had already become the Lord of Storms, he naturally knew what to do thanks to Klein's demonstration from before.

Who wouldn't know how to do a simple imitation?

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Silvery-white bolts of lightning smote down like gushing water from a water pipe. They rained over the ruins of the ancient castle, completely drowning all the figures.

Klein didn't manage to react in time. After hearing the first half of the word, he had already used the powers of Clown to forcefully twist his body around. With a stomp of his right foot, he returned under the Dark Demonic Wolf's body. As for Reinette Tinekerr, "She" had jumped onto the gold coin in his pocket.

Immediately following that, Klein genuflected and inserted the Staff of the Stars into the ground.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The vast storm tore through everything in its way.

By the time the terrifying lightning forest dissipated, the ancient castle that belonged to the Dark Demonic Wolf couldn't even be considered a ruin. There were no traces of it at all, leaving only a charred crater.

Within the deep pit, paper figurines were blown up as they were reduced to ashes.

Without a sound, a piece of soil that shimmered with the glint of rainbow-colored glass softened. Klein's burnt hand reached out.

With the Dark Demonic Wolf suffering the brunt of the damage, he had used "Paper Figurine Substitutes" and "Underground Slink" to barely survive. He could faintly smell the aroma of roasted meat exuding from his body.

After returning to the ground, the tattered-clothed Klein turned his gaze and took in the battlefield's situation.

The remnants of the Dark Demonic Wolf's corpse were scattered everywhere. Its flesh was charred and lifeless.

The "curtain" was curled into a ball, having fallen to the edge of the deep crater, motionless.

The "Power of Wishes" had been completely wiped out, and godhood had returned to this region.

The wraith that had a connection with Artificial Death had been destroyed.

If it were any other Beyonder, they would probably think that the Dark Demonic Wolf had chosen an outcome of mutual destruction, but as a demigod of the Seer pathway, and having enjoyed the benefits of a Miracle Invoker ahead of time, something else flashed across Klein's mind.

What is a miracle? A miracle is to be resurrected from the dead!

When the Dark Demonic Wolf saw that the situation wasn't right, "He" didn't hesitate to summon divine punishment in an attempt to kill everyone. Then, "He" could revive somewhere nearby!

I almost used up my last revival…

With regards to such matters, Klein had a certain contingency plan. He immediately used a charm engraved with The Fool's patterns, and used it as a proxy for praying to Mr. Fool in front of Miss Messenger. Then, he used the "summoning" of Sefirah Castle that had yet to disappear to enter the world above the gray fog with a thought. He then relied on the prayer light's "true vision" to inspect the surroundings to seek out the resurrected Dark Demonic Wolf.

At this moment, Reinette Tinekerr left the gold coin in Klein's pocket and appeared beside the "curtain" that was curled into a ball. "Her" voice was slightly ethereal as "She" said, "It has a Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic."

A Miracle Invoker's Beyonder characteristic? That's right. The Dark Demonic Wolf possesses one of the six Miss Miracle Invoker characteristics under the premise that all the Attendants of Mysteries are accounted for. Under normal circumstances, the remaining Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic also has one set of Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic… As Miss Messenger spoke, Klein's spiritual intuition also sensed it. After confirming "Her" judgment, he connected it to Will Auceptin's answer.

There should be a total of nine Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristics, but under the premise that the Attendant of Mysteries are all filled, the three Sequence 1s would definitely each occupy one Sequence 2 characteristic. The remaining six Miracle Invoker characteristics belong to Zaratul, Antigonus, the Magic Wishing Lamp, Theater With Curtains That Never Draw, The Last Banquet, and the Dark Demonic Wolf respectively.

He had originally hoped to obtain the Dark Demonic Wolf's characteristic, but he hadn't expected that the "curtain" not only had a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries characteristic but also a Sequence 2 Miracle Invoker characteristic. It was also the one that had disappeared.

It looks like the reason for its disappearance was also because of the gray fog. Later on, it was spat out… Do I still seek out the resurrected Dark Demonic Wolf? No, I don't know when the True Creator and Amon will descend. Furthermore, I've already exhausted most of my preparations. The Dark Demonic Wolf is still in perfect condition. "He" can make a wish, summon, and create miracles… After all, my goal has already been met… As his thoughts raced, Klein looked up and said to Miss Messenger.

"I'll put this curtain away."

He gave up the thought of chasing after the Dark Demonic Wolf and decided to control the "curtain" while it was still weak.

Reinette Tinekerr nodded slightly and turned "Her" head, casting her gaze at the charred remains of the Dark Demonic Wolf.

The remains immediately emitted a faint glow, either turning into white rabbits or transforming into goats. They were the kind that smelled rich and flavorful.

†

In a hidden area nearby, the dark, short-furred Dark Demonic Wolf quickly took shape.

“He” gave up on “His” original corpse and immediately made a wish and granted it. “He” teleported to a distant spot and then ran off without looking back.

This God of Wishes didn’t even consider the loss of the “curtain.” “He” didn’t choose to revive where “He” died, because “He” hoped to use the “curtain” to stall the fellow who was closely related to Evernight. This gave “Him” plenty of time to escape.

Since he could survive from the Second Epoch until now, “He” had followed his true feelings—cowardice. “He” refused to be greedy when the situation didn’t allow for it.

With a flash, the demonic wolf with a gray tuft of hair on “His” forehead disappeared into the darkness.

†

Klein didn’t stop Miss Messenger from venting “Her” anger. As he approached the “curtain,” he sighed inwardly:

An angel is really hard to kill. It’s especially so for the Seer pathway!

As this thought flashed through his mind, and just as he was about to drag his past self out to pick up the “curtain,” he suddenly felt a familiar aura descend.

This aura was dark, foul, and full of degeneration. It immediately made him think of the True Creator!

The “curtain” suddenly floated up and turned into a cloak.

Inside the cloak, the darkness turned into a whirlpool as it hummed:

“Mysteries.”

Chapter 1247 - Finally

◆ ◆ ◆

Mysteries… Klein's heart palpitated when he heard that. He subconsciously wanted to return to Sefirah Castle and leave the scene.

However, no matter how much he tried, his Spirit Body remained inside his body without any changes.

Man… This vexed Klein. He instinctively cast his gaze towards Reinette Tinekerr who was beside him. He saw that Miss Messenger had already floated over, looking like "She" was facing a terrifying enemy. And the surrounding darkness froze like a cold lake. Lightning stopped streaking across the sky.

Mysteries… Klein felt a slight sense of security as he thought back to the title he had just heard.

He was no stranger to that. However, the last person who addressed him in this manner was the ancient sun god—the City of Silver's Creator—from two thousand years ago. Before "He" died, "He" sensed Klein's divination and shouted this out through an insurmountable distance of space and time!

No way… The True Creator is equivalent to the ancient sun god? No, "He" is only a Sequence 0 true god, far from the level of the Creator that I assumed. Furthermore, from Amon's attitude, the ancient sun god must have really perished… The True Creator is the pitch-black infant that emerged from the ancient sun god's stomach and inherited some of the ancient sun god's characteristics and memories. "He" is the degenerated body of that Creator? Klein composed himself and attempted to rapidly think of a solution to his present conundrum.

At this moment, in the cloak formed by the “curtain,” the dark whirlpool made another sound:

“Go to the Giant King’s Court and meet Sasrir.”

This sentence directly reverberated in Klein’s mind. Then, in the form of an illusory word, it shrunk into a pitch-black membrane, forming a strange “seed.”

The “seed” immediately fell into his body and Spirit Body, melting inside.

Without waiting for a response, the dark whirlpool dissipated. The cloak formed by the “curtain” lost its support and fell back onto the ground.

The True Creator’s consciousness that descended had corroded a portion of my Spirit Body and some of my physical body. I’m compelled to go to the Giant King’s Court and open the slumbering Dark Angel Sasrir’s palace… This is a matter that many deities are paying attention to. After watching for a long time, the True Creator has finally found an opportunity to force me to do it… Klein looked around and summoned his past self, picking up the “curtain.”

Then, he said to Miss Messenger without hesitation, “Let’s leave immediately!”

The True Creator had already sent a sliver of “His” will over. Would Amon still be far away?

In addition, Klein also tried to seize the opportunity to enter the world above the gray fog, hoping to use the power of Sefirah Castle to remove the corrosive influences that plagued him.

“Alright.” Reinette Tinekerr nodded, allowing the numerous Beyonder characteristics left behind in the crater to fly over and be contained within “Her.”

According to their prior agreement, other than the spoils of war that involved the high Sequences of the Seer pathway, half of them would go to “Her,” with “Her” having the priority to choose. After all, Klein had also received some of the spoils back when dealing with Shaman King Klarman.

As for the remaining half of the spoils, Klein planned on offering it to the Evernight Goddess as a form of gratitude. Regardless of whether the deity needed it or not, he still needed to do the necessary procedures. He had to express his gratitude when needed.

After clearing the battlefield, Reinette Tinekerr entered the iron cigar case in Klein’s pocket and “possessed” the gold coin’s surface.

Klein didn’t immediately seal “Her.” Holding the Staff of the Stars, he conjured a scene in his mind.

That was one of the scenes he had memorized during his inspection of the terrain.

As the gems flashed, his figure disappeared from the crater as he teleported far away.

A few seconds later, the air there fluctuated as a tiny creature that was difficult to see with the naked eye crawled out.

The creature rapidly expanded, turning into Amon who wore a pointed hat and classic black robe.

The corners of Amon’s mouth curled up as “He” adjusted the monocle on “His” right eye and chuckled.

“Someone is finally opening that door.”

†

After two rounds of teleportation, Klein took out the iron cigar case that Miss Messenger was hiding in, and used the Staff of the Stars to create several layers of seals—the kind that would be removed the moment he touched it.

Right on the heels of that, he entered the fog of history and dashed all the way to a time before the First Epoch. He relied on the prayers he had yet to reply to and instantly entered the world above the gray fog through the summoning of Sefirah Castle.

As the roars and the ravings echoed, he felt the corrosion in his Spirit Body gather together, curling into a ball. Despite passing through layers of cleansing effects, it managed to maintain its stability and didn't completely evaporate.

Is this the power and level of a true deity? Yes, and it's a true deity who wields the domain of degeneration… Sitting in the seat belonging to The Fool, Klein frowned slightly as he observed his state.

The corrosion created by the True Creator wasn't strong. If they were to leave the protection of Klein's Spirit Body, they wouldn't be able to last long above the gray fog. This was also the main reason why he had made the judgment and dared to directly enter Sefirah Castle.

However, unless he planned on dying again, there was no way he could bypass his own Spirit Body to remove the corrosion.

With the help of divination and other abilities, Klein quickly figured out the various effects of the corrosion.

It wouldn't mutate, send a message to the True Creator, or interfere with what he did. It would only continue to steer him via mystic means towards the Giant King's Court. It compelled Klein to open the palace where Dark Angel Sasrir was in deep sleep.

It's partly in the mind, and also at the level of fate… When I become a Miracle Invoker and become an angel, deepening my control of Sefirah

Castle, I should be able to clear this "corruption"… However, if I want to become a Miracle Invoker and become an angel, I have to go to the Giant King's Court and open the door to that palace, helping the City of Silver find a way to leave the Forsaken Land of the Gods… As Klein thought, he revealed a wry smile.

Fortunately, this was something he was prepared to do, and it didn't burden him further.

Following that, Klein summoned the Unshadowed Crucifix from the fog of history, attempting to use the power of Sefirah Castle to drive it into purifying his body. Unfortunately, part of his body was also merged together with the corrosion, preventing him from completely cleansing it.

This also made him truly understand how terrifying Sequence 0 was.

I can't just pray to an evil god like the True Creator unless I'm in a hopeless situation… Klein shook his head and returned to the real world before sacrificing the "curtain" above the gray fog.

It does indeed contain the Beyonder characteristic of an Attendant of Mysteries, as well as a Miracle Invoker's Beyonder characteristic… There's even Scholar of Yore and Bizarro Sorcerer characteristics… It has a rather high level. The power I can use from Sefirah Castle at present isn't able to directly shatter it. However, this place seems to be at the highest level of the Seer pathway, so it can effectively suppress it. Through the accumulation of time, I should be able to slowly separate it…

The first to be separated should be the Attendant of Mysteries characteristic. The rest can be used to concoct a potion directly… Hmm, it doesn't have any living characteristics. The one that was summoned just now has already disappeared… With the translucent black velvet curtain in hand, he looked at it for a while.

Then, he activated Sefirah Castle and conjured a metal pot which was boiling with invisible power.

After staring at it for a few seconds, he threw the “curtain” into the “metal pot” and pressed down with layers of seals onto the pot’s lid.

In about three to four days, the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic would separate. The supplementary ingredients could be thrown into what remained, and it would then be a Miracle Invoker potion, one that included the characteristics from Sequence 9 to 2.

Looking around, he raised his right hand and took a piece of paper from the junk pile.

This was one of his other preparations.

He had spent a large amount of time in advance and had failed time and time again to successfully summon 0-08. Using this quill, he wrote down what reasonable reactions Dark Demonic Wolf would have. This was to prevent the other party from reacting in unexpected ways from the very beginning, causing his plans to fail.

With the cooperation of this short script, the Dark Demonic Wolf had been attracted by Klein’s strange behavior. Therefore, it was very reasonable that “He” didn’t extinguish the prayer light immediately.

Similarly, without knowing how many enemies or what strength the other party had, the Dark Demonic Wolf didn’t flee in a hurry. Instead, “He” created a complete independent “kingdom,” isolating it from any possible reinforcements. It was a very reasonable reaction.

With a flick of his wrist, Klein burned the piece of paper, then he hurriedly sacrificed the sealed iron cigar case to Sefirah Castle. He then responded to Miss Magician’s prayer and relayed The World’s message.

Fors didn’t dare to delay any further. She immediately got up and used her “Recording” Beyonder powers to grab at the area ahead, dragging out Gehrman Sparrow from history.

With that, Klein “Teleported” to the empty room in a nearby hotel. He set up a ritual and brought the iron cigar case back to reality, releasing Reinette Tinekerr.

After thanking Miss Messenger and watching “Her” take away half of the Beyonder characteristics, he changed the ritual and began to perform a sacrifice to the Evernight Goddess.

At the end of the ritual, he prayed with anticipation:

“I pray for a hint on how to purify the corrosive influences in my body.”

In his opinion, at present, only an existence at the level of the Evernight Goddess could deal with the corrosion provided by the True Creator.

If the Goddess agreed to it, Klein planned to descend in a way that would allow his actual spirit to return to Backlund and receive purification.

As for removing the part of his body that had been corroded, he hadn’t thought of a solution yet.

As he said that, a ball of darkness enveloped the altar.

When the darkness vanished, all the Beyonder characteristics disappeared.

Apart from that, there were no other hints.

…It looks like I can only rely on myself… Klein wasn’t depressed. He raised his right hand and tapped his chest four times, drawing the crimson moon.

“Praise the Lady!”

His gratitude was very sincere. After all, he had received a lot of help.

After dealing with the subsequent matters, his historical projection vanished and he returned to the Forsaken Land of the Gods in person.

He held the lantern he had pulled out from the past, and he looked at the silent and desolate plains under the dim yellow light. He felt much more relaxed and couldn’t help but sigh.

Finally…

Chapter 1248 - A Thousand Years of Waiting

◆ ◆ ◆

In the primitive forest outside Bayam City of the Rorsted Archipelago.

The leaders of the Resistance gathered in a mountain cave as they looked respectfully at the Sea God's Blessed. He was wearing a black cloak, his brows were yellow, and his blue eyes were dark blue.

"Lord Danitz, this is an opportunity!" a bald man in a wheelchair with a green beard, Kalat, said in excitement.

His partner, Edmonton, whose face was colored with short red patterns, immediately said, "Lord Danitz, according to our intelligence officers, the situation in Bayam is chaotic. Be it the Church of the Lord of Storms or the governor-general's office, everyone is feeling anxious because of the encirclement of Backlund by the Feysac military forces."

Having said that, Edmonton looked at Kalat and got the person-in-charge of the corresponding field to give a more detailed description.

Kalat looked at the solemn-looking Lord Danitz and deliberated over his words.

"Internal cracks amongst them can already be seen. Some people wish to commandeer the forces of the colonies to support Backlund, while others wish to hold on to this place as the tinder for their resurgence.

"This difference in opinion has caused the military and the Beyonders of the Church of the Lord of Storms to be at a loss. There are flaws in every aspect.

“Lord Danitz, this is our chance. We can agree to the conditions of Feysac and the Feynapotter navy. We can cooperate with them to attack Bayam and take back our kingdom!”

It’s indeed an opportunity… But is this something I can decide? It’s not like I’m stupid! Danitz listened quietly to the leaders of the Resistance and muttered to himself.

Having grown up in Intis, this famous pirate, treasure hunter didn’t have any qualms about attacking the Loen colonies. He had zero hesitation or uncertainty about it.

Of course, he didn’t have a strong sense of belonging to the Intis Republic either. In fact, when he was occasionally a part-time pirate, he preferred targeting businessmen from Intis. This was because they often carried more valuable luxury items with them.

There was only one reason why Danitz didn’t agree on the spot to the request of the Resistance’s leaders. It was because he had become a Conspirer, so he knew very well what his position was.

A human mouthpiece!

A tool that was responsible for passing messages between Gehrman Sparrow and the leaders of the Resistance!

Gehrman is most likely Loenese. If I were to agree to it directly, I might not be able to see tomorrow’s sun… However, he acts like he doesn’t care about Loen at all… Dogsh*t! I can’t be fooled by such superficial appearances! Danitz cleared his throat and surveyed the area.

“This matter is of grave importance. Prepare a clean and serene altar immediately. I need to pray to God.”

In an organization that believed in the Sea God, such a request didn’t surprise the likes of Kalat, Edmonton, and the others. It even met their expectations. Hence, they immediately arranged for people to prepare for the sacrifice.

†

The Resistance in the Rorsted Archipelago can't sit still any longer… They were also supported by countries like Feysac, Intis, and Feynapotter to survive this long, or else they would've been annihilated by Loen and the three Churches… I even got them to extract quite a bit of help from the various countries… After hearing Danitz's prayers, he sighed.

Sitting in the ancient palace, he lightly tapped the edge of the mottled table in front of him. After pondering for a few seconds, he conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow.

The crazy adventurer immediately took on a praying posture and said in a deep voice, "…Use the current situation to directly negotiate with the upper echelons of the Church of Storms and the governor-general's office. Exert pressure on them… The goal is to force them to give in and accept the idea of self-governance by the people of the Rorsted Archipelago…

"…The Resistance can guarantee that the Loenese will have most of their interests protected, allowing them to mobilize the troops and Beyonders to reinforce Backlund…"

†

Inside the clean and tidy altar, Danitz, who received the feedback, straightened his back.

He turned around and looked at the leaders waiting outside. He said with a solemn expression, "I have received a revelation.

"God has informed us that every citizen of 'His' is precious.

Unnecessary sacrifices for the sake of war should be avoided.

“We absolutely wouldn’t want to start a war but we are not afraid of having one. In short, let’s try to use the present situation to negotiate with Loen with our forces, forcing them to make a concession that will satisfy most of us. If not, we can consider war.

“God says to remember the hatred, but don’t let it blind your rationality. The people around you and a beautiful future are the most important things.”

After becoming a Conspirer, Danitz realized that his powers of persuasion and his ability to fabricate explanations were increasing by leaps and bounds. Many a time, his thoughts would automatically take shape when he opened his mouth.

Kalat, Edmonton, and the other leaders of the Resistance all had a deep hatred for the Loen colonial masters, but the words of the Sea God and Lord Danitz had successfully wavered their resolve.

They had a clear understanding of how powerful the Sea King was over this period of time. If the war developed to the point where both parties were blinded with bloodlust, the Blue Mountain Island where Bayam was located might be completely submerged by the sea and become a ruin. All the locals would end up being dragged to the grave by their actions.

The powerhouses from Feysac and Feynapotter were indeed capable of stopping the situation from collapsing. However, how much power could they divert to this peripheral battlefield in the Rorsted Archipelago?

As for them, Kalat and the other leaders of the Resistance didn’t trust them much. They believed that these fellows were no different from the Loenese. They were all bandits from the Northern Continent and could rip off their masks at any time to become the new colonial masters.

After a moment of silence, Kalat, who was sitting in a wheelchair, looked at the man in a black cloak on the altar and said, “Lord Danitz, we are willing to work hard for peace.”

He paused for a moment before saying, “According to the intel, the one who has the final say in the Rorsted Archipelago is Sea King Jahn Kottman. It’s best if we negotiate with him directly.”

Danitz nodded slightly and said, “That’s exactly what I was thinking.

“We need to send someone to represent us and enter Bayam to face Jahn Kottman…”

Just as he was about to ask who was willing to go, he suddenly noticed that the gazes of Kalat, Edmonton, and the others were all on his face. It was as though they were saying that the Blessed of Sea God, the Intis pirate who had a relatively extraordinary status, was the most suitable candidate.

…Dogsh*t! Danitz cursed silently as he looked at the crowd and quickly thought of something.

“Yes, this is an honor, and it also contains extreme danger. I know that some of you are filled with the spirit of sacrifice and want to make the necessary contributions. Uh, how about this, let’s draw lots to decide. This is the fairest way.”

“I have no objections.” Kalat and company didn’t hesitate to give an answer.

A few minutes later, Danitz looked at the card in his hand as his facial muscles twitched.

†

City of Silver, at the top of the spire, in the Chief’s room.

Colin Iliad cast his gaze at Derrick Berg, who appeared less physically developed when placed in contrast to his surroundings.

“Are you ready?”

With the leg bone-like object in his hand, Derrick held the ghostly-blue Thunder God’s Roar, which was wrapped in lightning bolts, and nodded heavily.

“Ready and good to go.”

He didn’t act like a Beyonder from the Sun domain, but more like a berserk warrior.

With white hair and an old scar on his face, Colin Iliad immediately shifted his gaze and looked at Lovia.

“Are you ready?”

Lovia, who had a head of silvery-gray hair and a pair of light gray eyes, no longer wore the usual black robe with purple stripes. Instead, she wore a set of black armor.

She nodded her head indiscernibly and said, “Ready.”

Demon Hunter Colin, who had become a Silver Knight, cast his gaze on the others in the room and asked if they were ready.

After receiving a positive response, Colin Iliad slowly walked to a wall, removed the two swords hanging on it, and carried them behind him.

“Let’s set off.” The City of Silver Chief gave the order in a concise manner.

The team that he led would once again head to the Afternoon Town camp. They would explore the Giant King’s Court further, and find a path to the real sea.

Amidst the clinking sounds of metal, Lovia, Derrick, and company silently followed behind the Chief. They walked out of the room and down the stairs in an orderly manner.

Along the way, they saw Waite Chirmont and the other elders of the six-member council. They saw the City of Silver residents maintaining order in the spire.

These people were either leaning on a railing or waiting at the staircase. Their expressions were abnormally solemn, as though they were sending off the team that was carrying hope.

No one spoke. The entire place was silent, but when Colin Iliad and the others passed by, the City of Silver residents raised their right arm and clenched their fists.

Amidst the sound of this action, Colin and the other members of the expedition team left the spire and hit the road.

They immediately lit lanterns covered in animal hide.

Under the dim yellow light, residents of the City of Silver walked out of their houses and stopped by the roadside.

They looked at Derrick and company with admiration and anticipation. One by one, they raised their right arm and clenched their fists in front of their foreheads.

Derrick subconsciously straightened his back, his heart burning.

Just like that, the expedition team followed the path to the city gate under the watchful gazes of the crowd and walked out of the City of Silver.

As though they had a tacit understanding, Colin, Derrick, and Lovia, who had just left the protection of the city walls, turned their heads at the same time to look at their home, which had stood in the darkness for 2,584 years.

They saw that the residents of the City of Silver hadn’t left. They were all standing near the city gates, looking at them.

With a swoosh, everyone raised their right arm and placed their fists in front of their foreheads.

This was the highest form of respect and also the deepest heartfelt blessing they could give.

Colin Iliad stared silently for a few seconds, then he closed his eyes and raised his right arm, waving it downwards.

“Set off!”

Derrick and company immediately turned around and carried the animal hide lanterns which emitted a faint yellow light. They stepped onto the dark path in silence and determination.

Destination: Giant King’s Court.

Chapter 1249 - Showcasing His Might

◆ ◆ ◆

Boom! Boom!

In an underground shelter in Backlund, Audrey, who was dressed in hunting attire, listened to the distant explosions.

When she turned around, she happened to see Melissa looking at her in confusion.

The young girl, who had just reached adulthood, asked in a dreamy tone, “Miss Audrey, will the war end if we’re completely defeated? Will we no longer have to worry about bombardments, raids, and having insufficient food?”

Audrey looked at her deeply and said, “But if that happens, you will have to change your faith.”

Melissa hesitated, not knowing how to respond. At this moment, a commoner curled up against the wall blurted out, “I believe in the God of Steam and Machinery! Even if Feysac and Intis win, I don’t need to change my faith!”

When that happens, life would return to its original warm and peaceful state!

These words stirred the commoners who were hiding in the shelter. They whispered to each other and discussed possible developments. There were no lack of Evernight believers.

To most people, faith wasn’t that important compared to life. After all, a true deity would eventually still protect them.

The police officers who maintained the order of the shelter didn't stop the commotion from spreading. They watched on coldly, some even having a hint of anticipation.

However, the defeated will definitely suffer something far crueler than you can imagine. It's not something that can be summarized with just a change of faith… Be it a lesson from history or her conclusion deduced from the human psyche, all of them made Audrey more pessimistic than everyone present.

She looked around and could not help but sigh inwardly.

“The Goddess's anchor is already greatly shaken… If not for the grain support from before, it might have completely collapsed…”

As for what this situation meant, Audrey knew very well in her heart. She closed her eyes, tilted her head slightly, and muttered to herself silently, “The battle of gods is about to begin…”

The final outcome was about to appear.

After nodding at Melissa, Audrey turned and left the area, arriving at the entrance of the shelter.

The golden retriever, Susie, was seated there, looking like a qualified guard.

“You… don't seem like you plan to return?” Susie's nose twitched as she asked with a suppressed voice.

Audrey had hidden herself in this shelter from the beginning of the siege that began today; therefore, she hadn't had the time to return to her own residence in Empress Borough. As the battle had decreased in intensity slightly, Earl Hall had already sent two people to urge her to return, so that she could head for a sanctuary for nobles.

Audrey shook her head and said with a faint smile, “I have to do what I need to do.”

Without waiting for Susie’s reply, she smiled and said, “Stay here on my behalf and secretly placate them. Don’t let any commotions happen here. If they want to pat you, let them do so.”

Susie hesitated for two seconds before saying, “Alright.”

Audrey didn’t say anything else. She left the shelter, completely ignored by the troop of soldiers guarding the shelter.

The sky outside was dark, and there were many buildings that had collapsed. They burned with flames that were about to be extinguished. The streets were empty, with no carriages or pedestrians.

This was completely different from what Audrey remembered of Backlund.

Backlund was originally blue, yellow, and beige. It was lively, bustling, and full of vitality. But now, it was gray, black, and scarlet. It was in shambles, disorder, and somewhat silent.

Looking left and right, Audrey identified her bearings while in her hunting attire, and walked towards the city borders.

What she wanted to do was simple:

Join the war and do her best to help Loen not collapse before the end of the battle of gods.

If the winner of the battle of gods was the opposing side, she would use various methods, such as “Cue,” “Hypnosis,” “Mental Plague,” and other means, to prevent the soldiers, officers, and Beyonders from venting their emotions, as well as reduce the damage brought by the war.

Amidst the flickering flames, Audrey quickly passed through them and ran into the distance.

†

Rorsted Archipelago, City of Generosity, Bayam. In a room at the top of the Cathedral of Waves.

Dressed in a black cloak, Danitz met the legendary cardinal of the Church of Storms, the high-ranking deacon of the Mandated Punishers, Sea King Jahn Kottman.

Glancing at the muscles that filled up his priest robes, Danitz swallowed the words he was about to say, and he deliberated for a moment before saying, “I come with good intentions.”

For some reason, he felt that his skin was numb, as though invisible lightning was dancing on them.

“Good intentions?” The tall, muscular, well-defined Jahn Kottman grunted.

Heh, I had already considered the fact that fellows from the Sailor pathway are more irritable, making them incapable of telling the difference between a joke and sarcasm. Once their anger erupts, they don’t even consider the overall situation. Otherwise, I wouldn’t even need to speak like this… Dogsh*t! Danitz mumbled to himself, maintaining his smile as he explained the Resistance’s intentions.

Jahn Kottman stared at the pirate whose affiliation with the Golden Dream remained unknown and suddenly sneered.

“If we withdraw most of our strength, can you defend Bayam and the archipelago?

“If you can’t defend it, how are you going to guarantee that the interests of the Loen migrants will be maintained when the Feysac and Feynapotter combined navy forces breach the defense lines?”

As a demigod, he was extremely certain that Sea God Kalvetua had already perished. However, he didn’t know who it was that was using the name of “Sea God,” or if that entity had the ability to protect the Rorsted Archipelago.

That’s a good question… Only with questions can there be room for a successful negotiation… In fact, Danitz had never thought of how the Resistance would defend against the Feysac and Feynapotter after Loen’s powerhouses were transferred back to Backlund. He fully believed that Gehrman Sparrow and Mr. Fool behind him had the ability to protect this place.

As his thoughts raced, Danitz looked at the extremely oppressive Sea King and said, “I will pray to my Lord and ask ‘Him’ to protect the Rorsted Archipelago.”

“Oh?” Sea King Jahn Kottman narrowed his eyes and took a step forward.

The aura from the Tyrant pathway made Danitz involuntarily take two steps back. He lowered his head and prayed on the spot.

“Blessed of the sea and spirit world, guardian of the Rorsted Archipelago, ruler of the undersea creatures, master of tsunamis and storms, the great Kalvetua, please send down your powers to protect the Rorsted Archipelago…”

After the prayer, Danitz carefully cast his gaze out the window, but he didn’t discover anything unusual.

Jahn Kottman sized him up for a few seconds before saying, “Your god doesn’t seem to be responding…”

“Ahem.” Danitz cleared his throat and felt his heart beating like a drum.

At that moment, the sky outside suddenly darkened. It was as if a large number of dark clouds were flying over, blotting out the sun.

Sea King Jahn Kottman instinctively turned his head and looked out the window. He saw a shadow cast over the border between the sea and the sky.

With his control of the archipelago’s waters, scenes of the overall situation rapidly surfaced in the Cardinals cardinal’s mind.

The Rorsted Archipelago, along with the surrounding seas, was shrouded by thick fog. It became indistinct and surreal.

A seabird flew past and attempted to land on the dock, but it failed to pass through it, unable to set foot.

The commoners in the archipelago continued living normally, aside from noticing the brewing storm.

This… Jahn Kottman’s dark blue pupils dilated significantly. He subconsciously turned his head to look at the Sea God’s Blessed, Blazing Danitz.

Danitz’s mouth gaped slightly as he forgot to close it. His shock was not lesser than the shock Sea King experienced.

A few seconds later, the fog dissipated and the shadows faded away. Everything in the Rorsted Archipelago returned to normal.

“…” Danitz blinked. When Sea King Jahn Kottman looked over again, Danitz chuckled and said, “My Lord has responded to my prayers.”

As he spoke, the pirate with a bounty of more than ten thousand pounds slapped himself inwardly.

Dogsh*t! You actually dare to suspect Mr. Fool! Isn’t this the might of Mr. Fool?

Jahn Kottman remained silent for a few seconds before saying, “I will consider your proposal carefully. I will immediately convene a meeting with the key figures in Bayam to discuss this matter. I will give you an answer in an hour.”

Danitz lifted his chin slightly and laughed.

“I will wait patiently.”

With that said, he followed his instincts as a Hunter, and he indifferently bowed before leaving the room.

Amidst the creaking sound, silver bolts of lightning lit up in the blue eyes of Jahn Kottman.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein threw the “curtain” back into the “metal pot” and sealed it again.

He had used the power of a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries and stirred the power of Sefirah Castle to respond, creating a shocking effect for Jahn Kottman.

In another half a day, the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic will be separated, and the rest can be used to concoct the Miracle Invoker potion. Yes, when it’s only at the Sequence 2 level, I can attempt to use the power Sefirah Castle to shatter it and let the Beyonder characteristics such as the Scholar of Yore and Bizarro Sorcerer to seep out in a shorter amount of time. That will lower the risk brought by the potion… Klein mumbled before rapidly returning to the real world.

He wasn’t situated in the dark moors anymore, but the frozen dusk of the Giant King’s Court.

He had entered the Giant King’s Court before the City of Silver’s expedition team arrived at the Afternoon Town encampment.

Under the orange light, Klein felt the degeneration and exhaustion of his body. He cast his gaze at the magnificent and beautiful buildings situated high above.

The countless palaces and towers still had the remnant glory of the

Second Epoch, as though they were a manifestation of myths.

No, it was a myth.

Before the City of Silver's exploration team officially took action, Klein planned on attempting to open the palace where Dark Angel Sasrir was sleeping.

This way, if there were any accidents, the City of Silver's expedition team would still have time to make targeted preparations. As for Klein himself, it would definitely be much safer for him compared to the others since he was using a historical projection.

Chapter 1250 - Behind the Door

As he had the information from the City of Silver's previous explorations, Klein knew which places were dangerous and how to avoid them. It didn't take long for him to follow the small path, pass through the Waning Forest, Barren Tunnel, and use the ancient elevator to arrive at the residence of the guards.

After waiting for a while—until the "curtain" above the gray fog split into two, separating the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic—Klein reached out to pull his past self out.

He didn't know if the other divine kingdoms would isolate the fog of history, but at least without the Giant King's Court having its owner present, no one would be able to stop his attempts.

Unfortunately, this matter involves too many levels. I can't obtain any results from divination; otherwise, I will feel more at ease… Klein shook his head and muttered to himself.

He was in no hurry to jump into the fog of history. He first took out two items and handed them to his projection.

One of them was a deep-black wooden box. It contained the ashes of Giant Guardian Groselle.

Klein had never forgotten his promise.

He had originally wanted to wait for Little Sun's second exploration of the Giant King's Court before handing him Groselle's ashes and getting him to help do the burial. However, due to various matters, he ended up coming to the Forsaken Land of the Gods and entering the Giant King's Court.

As for Snowman's ashes, Klein planned on scattering it into the golden sea just as he was about to leave the Forsaken Land of the Gods—it was a sea churning with the divine blood of the ancient sun god.

After handing over the urn and the black iron key from Vice Admiral Iceberg, Klein followed his usual practice and leaped into the fog. He dashed to the fragment of light that represented a time before the First Epoch, and he allowed his consciousness to naturally shift to the projection he had summoned.

This projection didn't hold the Staff of the Stars and only wore Creeping Hunger. This was because the palace that the Giant King lived in was still quite a distance away. There were many troll statues blocking him, so Klein couldn't guarantee that he would reach his destination in five minutes.

Right on the heels of that, he made the glove on his left hand transparent as he disappeared from where he was.

In the next second, Klein appeared outside the guards' residence with the huge black iron key. He hadn't "Teleported" too far away.

Yes, in the Giant King's Court, it's clear that most of the powers within have weakened… Only a guard acknowledged by the divine kingdom can perform at relatively normal standards? Uh, Beyonder powers similar to "Teleportation" have also been suppressed. I can only do "Blink" within a relatively small area… From the looks of it, even if I were to summon the Staff of the Stars, I wouldn't be able to appear outside the Giant King's palace by outlining the corresponding scene in my mind… As expected of an ancient god's divine kingdom… Klein seriously observed the influence his surroundings brought him.

After making a preliminary judgment, he turned and walked back to the guards' residence. Opening the wooden box in his right hand, he solemnly scattered Groselle's ashes in every corner.

According to the scene he saw in Groselle's dream, this guards' residence was where the giant lived for a long period of time. It was the "home" that he had the deepest impression and was most fond of.

It could be imagined that during that period of time in ancient times, Groselle and the other rational Giant Guardians from future generations would rest, rabble, gossip, talk about music, and think of fun games to play. They didn't need to worry about food and ailments. They would live every day of their lives happily…

With the shaking of Klein's hands, the ashes scattered on the wall, the ground, the bedside, the tables, chairs, and stone pillars.

The orange light outside the window shone forever, making everything look peaceful.

When the last speck of ashes was scattered, the dusk suddenly deepened. It dyed the scattered ashes orange, becoming a part of the divine kingdom.

Klein closed his eyes as though he could sense Groselle's joy.

A vagrant who had been forced to leave his hometown for three thousand years had finally returned to the place he had missed day and night.

The light of the dusk softened, making Klein feel that he was less ostracized.

Eh… It's equivalent to being acknowledged to a certain extent. I've become a guard that has been accepted by a number of people. Klein emanated his spirituality to confirm the changes.

He didn't stay any longer. He used Creeping Hunger and the path scouted by the City of Silver's expedition team to constantly "Blink" and take detours. From time to time, he would pull out the Unshadowed Crucifix. He passed through the hall where the fateful plot was made with relatively little difficulty, and he arrived at the residence of the Giant King. There, he saw a row of huge stone columns on the left that formed railings. Beyond the railings was an orange-red gas and a churning dark blue sea.

Taking a deep breath, he returned to the hall he had just exited. He reached out his hand and dragged out the marionette, Enuni, who hadn't been "Parasitized" by Amon.

Even if it was a historical projection, he didn't want to open the door himself!

Looking at the slightly dazed Enuni, Klein handed the black iron key that he had tucked under his armpit over to him. He controlled Enuni to leave the hall and follow the railings formed from stone pillars to the tallest and most magnificent building in the Giant King's Court.

The dusk's glow seemed to be corporeal as it covered the palace's surface, bringing with it a strong sense of decadence, as though the curtains had drawn on everything in the world.

Lining both sides of the palace were separately steeples and spires. The grayish-blue front door was covered with mysterious symbols as it stood at a height exceeding ten meters.

To the left of the door, there was a pitch-black hole that was the size of an adult's fist at the height of three to four meters.

Enuni stared at it for a few seconds before raising the black iron key that resembled a seven-string guitar and inserting it into the deep crevice in front of him.

It fit perfectly without leaving a single gap.

As the gigantic black iron key entered the deep hole, Klein held his breath in the nearby grand hall, constantly preparing to remove his existence.

With a click, the black iron key in Enuni's hand reached the end.

It suddenly turned soft, as if it had fused with the hole as it emitted grayish-blue light.

The various symbols, labels, and patterns on the door lit up as they protruded.

All the lights quickly interfered in a constructive manner, pressing down heavily into the inner chamber as it slowly opened the grayish-blue palace door.

The gap between the door widened when Enuni's eyes suddenly reflected a turbulent pitch-black, viscous, and illusory sea.

Not good… Warning bells sounded in Klein's mind.

Without any hesitation, his consciousness returned to his body as he severed the connection with his Historical Void projection.

In the next second, his vision suddenly darkened. The left side of his head felt a sharp pain, as though someone had inserted a red-hot chisel into it and kept rotating it.

At the same time, he heard indistinguishable ravings that seemed to come from an era older than ancient times.

Klein's expression instantly twisted, appearing extremely ferocious.

He could still barely maintain his rationality, but he had no energy left to remain in the historical fragment.

Without a sound, Klein landed in the guard residence of the Giant King's Court. With a thought, he entered the world above the gray fog.

Before undertaking such a dangerous task, he had no doubt found a reason and excuse to arrange for the members of the Tarot Club to pray collectively to awaken Sefirah Castle's ability to "summon" its master. This allowed him to skip taking four steps counterclockwise and reciting the incantation at critical moments to return above the gray fog.

However, just as Klein's Spirit Body saw the grayish-white fog, he heard a familiar roar, he felt himself be rejected by Sefirah Castle, as though it had accepted an order from someone else to stop him from entering.

This… In his shock, he saw a black shadow leap past him, heading straight for Sefirah Castle!

It wasn't Amon, but a shadow that exuded an aura identical to his!

Subconsciously, Klein influenced Sefirah Castle and made it reject the intruder.

Then, he succeeded. The shadow was also blocked by the grayish-white fog as well.

Right on the heels of that, he and the shadow fell back into the real world at the same time.

After his Spirit Body returned to his body, Klein bent down in pain, like a curled shrimp.

The half top hat on his head fell to the ground.

He took several seconds to eventually recover. He slowly straightened his body and cast his gaze on a glass window ground from orange gems.

The window reflected his current appearance:

With the bridge of his nose as a border, his right face was the same as usual, but countless objects were crawling out of his left face.

Klein narrowed his eyes.

He hurriedly took a deep breath to calm himself down and regain the

Clown powers of control.

His mind outlined a clear image of his appearance.

He was dressed in a black trench coat, had black hair and brown eyes. The right side of Gehrman Sparrow's cut face was the same as usual, while the left side had become translucent and was formed from twisting maggots.

As he looked down, his neck was in a similar state. It was the same with his body that lay beneath his clothes.

The edge of losing control… Man, I need to resist the inclination towards intense madness… W-why? Suddenly, he sensed something. He instinctively lowered his head and looked at his feet.

It was empty. He was missing the shadow that was supposed to exist.

The orange light of the evening shone through the window, but it didn't create a shadow by his side.

"Haha, I understand." Klein bent down and laughed uncontrollably.

He suspected that the "seawater" that surged out from the Giant King's palace had not only "drowned" his marionette and historical projection, but it had also used the latter to slice off his own shadow, causing his spirit to lose its completeness. He was unable to completely suppress his inclination towards losing control.

As for the shadow, which was slightly equivalent to him, it could also affect Sefirah Castle. This resulted in a situation in which both parties were unable to head above the gray fog.

As long as I get rid of that shadow, the problem can be solved… The corner of his right forehead twitched as he straightened his back.

At that moment, the orange light that shone from outside was dyed gold, becoming rather resplendent. It made the entire Giant King's

Court seem to retrograde from dusk to noon.

With a thought, he cast his gaze out the window as an image appeared in his mind.

In front of the tallest and most magnificent building in the Giant King's Court, Marionette Enuni stood there, facing the door.

It was dark past the door, impossible to see anything clearly.

Suddenly, Enuni turned around and looked down.

His face was covered in a shadow, and his hair turned deep black that draped over his shoulders and curled up slightly.

On his back, there were pairs of dark illusory wings.

In the grand hall nearby, a pure shadow's lower body was pressed against a stone brick as its upper body came over in a ramrod manner.

Chapter 1251 - Change

◆◆◆

It’s not Dark Angel Sasrir… The projection of Enuni has been eroded by the power that surged out from the Giant King’s residence, becoming a monster that I can’t understand at the moment. Furthermore, it looks like it can exist for a long period of time… Perhaps there’s a bit of Sasrir’s will involved in this… With his left hand covering his face, Klein allowed the Worms of Spirit to burrow through the gaps in his fingers freely.

What he couldn’t understand the most was something else. He had clearly opened the palace where the Dark Angel lay slumber, but the deities and Kings of Angels showed no reaction.

According to Klein’s imagination, when the surging “sea” gushed out, be it the True Creator, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, Blasphemer Amon, or Amon’s brother who ultimately hid behind the scenes, “They” should’ve immediately descended or appeared to confirm Dark Angel Sasrir’s present state or snatch whatever corresponding items. To his surprise, the entire Giant King’s Court remained completely silent. No external powers exerted any influence.

Could it be that “They” are still waiting for me to enter the Giant King’s residence and to come into contact with that deputy of Heaven? Hmm, the True Creator said to meet Sasrir… My Spirit Body and physical body haven’t recovered from the corrosion, which means that the True Creator’s goal has yet to be achieved… Haha… As Klein’s thoughts raced, he realized that he was unable to control his emotions, be it anger, sadness, worry, or depression. He couldn’t help but pull the corners of his mouth up and let out a scoff.

The only thing he was glad about was that this didn't affect his brain. He could still think and use all sorts of Beyonder powers, but sometimes, his madness would suddenly be aggravated, turning him rash and aggressive.

I wonder if the demigod of the mind has any way to treat this situation. In any case, the Sealed Artifacts or Beyonder characteristics that I can summon can't do it… This is a result of an incomplete spirit. If I don't resolve my severed shadow, I probably won't be able to completely recover. However, perhaps there are methods that can allow me to temporarily return to normal. For example, create a virtual persona to make up for the incompleteness? Unfortunately, I can't enter Sefirah Castle… Klein's thoughts were in a mess as the scenes that surfaced in his mind gradually vanished.

He then picked up the half top hat that had dropped to the ground and wore it. Then, through the huge glass window formed from ground orange gems, he observed the changes in the Giant King's Court.

Unlike before, an illusory sun appeared high in the sky, allowing the magnificent building complex situated in the frozen sunset to enjoy the sun at noon.

The troll statues that stood guard in the various palaces seemed to be draped with a cloak weaved out of shadows.

Enuni, who had a pair of black, illusory wings on his back, and the shadow that originally belonged to Klein jumped over the railing and glided towards him.

Klein's gaze froze as he subconsciously took a few steps forward, intending to fight the enemy.

But very quickly, he snapped back to his senses and checked his current state. He quickly retreated to the ancient "elevator," pulled the switch, and landed back in the Barren Tunnel.

Then, with "Blink," he appeared near the Waning Forest and ran all the way to the edge of the Giant King's Court.

His intuition told him that in his current state, he had no means of defeating the mutated "Enuni" and his separated shadow.

Of course, he had the confidence if it was just the latter.

When he arrived at the edge of the radiant sunlight, he turned and saw that Enuni and his shadow hadn't chased after him. It was as though there was a limit to their range of activity.

There's no way to leave the Giant King's residence, or should I say, be too far away from Dark Angel Sasrir? Just as this thought flashed through his mind, Klein saw the illusionary "sun" atop leap from the center to the west. The dusk's colors once again enveloped the divine kingdom.

Klein carefully observed all of this and was in no hurry to leave the Giant King's Court.

Not long after, the illusory "sun" plunged into the palace where Dark Angel Sasrir slumbered. Darkness became the ruler of the Giant King's Court.

The darkness was different from the one found on a normal night—there was no moon or starlight, only blurry shadows.

Standing in this darkness, Klein had a nagging feeling that someone was clinging to him from behind. However, he clearly knew that it was an illusion and didn't turn around recklessly.

A few minutes later, the illusory "sun" rose, and the light of dawn dispersed the darkness.

The power that surged out from the Dark Angel's chamber has changed the Giant King's Court despite it being an ancient divine kingdom… It really is a power that's close to that of a true deity. At the very least, it controls a "Uniqueness," but which pathway's Uniqueness would it be?

The generated changes include "Blazing Sun," "Darkness," "Degeneration," and "Mutation." This is a little contradictory. It doesn't seem like the result of a single Uniqueness… Besides, the Uniqueness of the Sun pathway is definitely with the Eternal Blazing Sun… The "Shadow" and "Degeneration" is brought about by "Darkness" which is undoubtedly with the True Creator… When I opened the door, I saw an illusory, pitch-black, viscous ocean… It's related to the Chaos Sea? Klein shook his head as he continued observing. This continued on as he waited for the City of Silver's expedition team to rendezvous with him.

†

Backlund, at the border of the city.

As soon as Audrey entered, she discovered that the fog had become unusually thick. Visibility had been reduced to five meters.

The howling winds swept through the fog, bringing a sense of clarity from time to time. However, it was soon filled with surging whiteness.

Audrey's eyes suddenly turned golden, allowing her to see even further.

As she carefully treaded, the fog in front of her suddenly became much thinner.

At the same time, her Beyonder powers suffered a retrogression.

The weakening of mysticism… The concepts and information previously mentioned by Mr. World flashed across her mind.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Multiple salvos from Backlund fired ahead, causing the shells to leave trails of red, blue, silver, or black in their wake as they bombarded the enemy's base.

However, in the next second, these shells encountered invisible barriers and exploded in midair, making the transparent "wall" tremble.

At this moment, a rather blurry figure appeared in the distant, thick fog. "He" was in human form, but he was more than ten meters tall. His torso and waist each had two arms extending out as he emitted a rich darkness.

For some reason, as the figure that seemed to arise from a legend appeared, the Feysac and Intis allied force's base stirred.

Every soldier and officer there seemed to have returned to their childhood. They were walking alone on the dark road with no one around them. Everything was silent. They felt uneasy deep down.

The fear of the unknown stemmed from the fear of their imaginations. Instantly, they broke down and turned to flee.

At this moment, radiant sunlight shone on them, allowing them to see light and bringing them courage.

However, there were still a small number of soldiers who were unable to control themselves. They kept shouting "mommy" or a particular woman's name in their bids to escape from the battlefield.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The soldiers fell to the ground amidst repeated gunshots. One by one, they bloomed with blood-colored flowers.

They landed on the ground, turning motionless after slightly twitching. No one cared what their names were, nor did anyone know of their past.

Right on the heels of that, under the commanding officer's orders, the invisible barrier that enveloped the Intis and Feysac allied forces was dispelled. Crimson-red flaming spears were thrown out towards the Loen base as though they could blot out the sky.

Just as the flaming spears approached their target, they scattered in a sudden bout of chaos. They stabbed into the ground, creating one pitch-black hole after another.

It was the first time Audrey was seeing such a large-scale usage of Beyonder powers. Momentarily stunned, she couldn't help but recall the people she knew and the roles they played in this battle.

Glaint and the other young nobles had joined the army and took on the roles of officers at different ranks. They were scattered all over the battlefield and could be killed at any moment.

The Magician had left Backlund with Judgment's family and was hiding in a small city in East Chester County;

As a middle-ranking member of MI9, Judgment was made to covertly defend against infiltration by the Beyonders from Feysac, Intis, and other countries;

The official Beyonders led by The Star had locked down the various cathedrals of the Church of Steam, maintaining the stability of the city;

Saint Anthony and the other demigods of the Church of Evernight, the Church of Storms, the royal family, and the military began to set up the last line of defense in Backlund;

The Sanguine had remained neutral the entire time…

A few seconds later, Audrey gathered her thoughts and prepared to use Psychological Invisibility to sneak into the enemy's camp to spread Mental Plague.

Suddenly, her spiritual perception stirred as she cast her gaze to a spot further away.

In the thick fog, a rather thick and blurry tentacle wrapped around countless silver bolts of lightning and quickly extended to a certain location of the allied force's base.

A feather burning with golden flames fell.

In the depths of the thick fog, a huge grayish-blue palm reached out, holding a silver broadsword.

†

The Fog Sea, away from the safe sea route.

Countless bolts of lightning struck the surface of the sea; waves surged and crashed heavily.

Bernadette's Dawn was constantly being thrown into the sky, making it seem extremely minute under the might of the elements. It looked like it would sink at any moment.

Queen Mystic stood at the bow of the ship, calmly taking in all of this. From time to time, she would use the Emperor's New Clothes and other fairy tale magic to maintain the balance of the boat.

Her gaze pierced through the terrifying storm in search of the suspected primitive island.

†

After some reorganizing, Colin Iliad led Derrick, Lovia, and the other members of the expedition team out of Afternoon Town camp. They followed the path up the mountain and entered the Giant King's Court.

What surprised them was that the frozen dusk had changed. Bright sunlight illuminated every corner.

"…Where's the helper you invited?" Colin Iliad controlled his alarm and turned to ask Derrick Berg.

Just as Derrick was about to speak, he suddenly saw a figure walk out from a half-collapsed tower

The figure wore a black trench coat and a silk top hat. The right side of his face was cut, cold and stiff. The left side of his face had transparent, wriggling maggots that kept crawling.

Chapter 1252 - Mr. Clown

◆

When they saw the figure walking out from behind the collapsed tower, the members of the City of Silver's expedition team immediately put up a defensive stance, ready to attack or provide any defense.

In their eyes, the man wearing strange clothes and a strange hat was equivalent to a monster, a particularly terrifying one at that!

Even normal Beyonders would view themselves as monsters after being subject to such a physical mutation!

Upon seeing the reactions of the half-giants, Klein grinned widely and said with a beaming smile, "Hello everyone, I'm Gehrman Sparrow.

"All of you should be glad that I can still control myself. Otherwise, you would've lost your minds because you looked at me directly."

As he spoke, the transparent maggots on the left side of his face and neck were still squirming slowly. Beneath the clothes on the left side of his body, there were protruding marks that gently squirmed.

A monster! The members of the City of Silver who were not demigods were increasingly certain of their own judgment.

"You are… you are The Wor—no, Mr. Sparrow?" Derrick Berg finally managed to recognize Mr. World who he had met once.

[image]

Klein raised his left palm and covered his left cheek. He smiled and said, "Life is always about encountering the unexpected."

Without waiting for Little Sun to respond, he paused and said, "I have already opened the door to the Giant King's residence. This brought about some accidents, causing the divine kingdom to change."

The door to the Giant King's residence has already been opened? The grizzled and scarred Colin Iliad narrowed his eyes. He subconsciously looked up at the magnificent buildings shrouded in golden sunlight.

However, due to the distance, he couldn't see the situation at the apex.

However, to have the frozen sunset become replaced by the blazing sun at noon had explained many things.

Klein's gaze swept across the City of Silver's Chief and Elder Lovia, who was dressed in black armor, of the six-member council. He then looked at The Sun and continued with a smile, "This has also brought me some negative effects, just as you have already noticed."

At this point, he clapped his hands and said in a commanding tone, like an adult instructing children, "Alright, Beyonders below the level of demigod are to fall back. The Giant King's Court after the anomaly is not a place you can enter."

The members of the expedition team, apart from Colin, Derrick, and Lovia, felt an inexplicable sense of fear as they cast their gazes at the Chief.

Colin Iliad remained silent for a few seconds before turning to them and saying, "Leave the Giant King's Court and wait at the periphery. If you see the signal, immediately act according to plan."

The handpicked expedition team members were not only strong themselves and close in strength to a demigod, but they also had different powerful Sealed Artifacts that complemented each other. Even if they were facing a saint, they weren't without hope when it came to defeating one. However, in the City of Silver's original plan, they weren't the main force. Therefore, Colin Iliad had led them here in the hope that, when he and the other demigods shaved off the hidden enemies, these team members would be able to shine. They could then use the different Sealed Artifacts to deal with different incidents, preventing the entire team from suffering from any weaknesses.

Now, with powerful help from the outside joining them, and the fact that the Giant King's Court had indeed experienced some sort of anomaly, no one knew what they would encounter if they went deeper. With the utmost caution, Colin Iliad believed that Gehrman Sparrow's suggestion wasn't a problem. Furthermore, he had his own selfish thoughts—he didn't want members other than the demigods to suffer any unnecessary risks or meaningless casualties. Therefore, he agreed to the opinion of the monster-like powerhouse.

When the time came for an opportunity to show itself, he, Lovia, and Derrick would be able to give a signal and let the team members rush over a cleared path to provide reinforcements.

As for the entire team's Beyonder powers not being able to deal with different situations due it collectively becoming relatively monotonous, Colin Iliad wasn't too worried since the former Shepherd, Lovia, was around.

The members of the expedition, who weren't demigods, exchanged looks and hesitated for a moment. In the end, they still chose to listen to Colin Iliad.

"Yes, Your Excellency!"

At the same time that they answered, they gave Derrick Berg a deep look, as though they were trying to remind their Chief to be careful of this Sequence 4 demigod.

He actually knew a living, monster-like powerhouse!

This was very suspicious to the residents of the City of Silver, who had barely seen any outsiders!

Sensing his companions' obvious distrust, Derrick's heart ached as his eyes nearly welled up in tears.

But eventually, he didn't make any excuses. He maintained his silence and straightened his back.

After the other members of the expedition team retreated from the Giant King's Court, Klein smiled and pointed at the two demigods.

"Let me guess. You must be the Chief of the City of Silver, the former Demon Hunter, the present Silver Knight, Colin Iliad. You are The Hanged Man's believer, Black Knight Lovia, who had helped 'Him' shepherd?"

Lovia's gray eyes, which were hidden behind her visor, narrowed.

"You really look like a clown."

The Hanged Man? Upon hearing Mr. World's words, Derrick almost doubted his ears.

He even imagined that Elder Lovia had something to do with Mr. Hanged Man, but he quickly remembered the exact image of the Fallen Creator—a naked man hanging upside down on a cross.

Mr. World used The Hanged Man to refer to the Fallen Creator. Elder Lovia chided him for being impolite? Derrick, who had just exceeded two meters in height, nodded thoughtfully as he praised Mr. World's guts from the bottom of his heart.

He actually dared to give a true deity a nickname, and even said it out loud in front of "His" follower!

Colin Iliad looked at Gehrman Sparrow and then at Lovia. Unable to tell who was right or wrong, he calmly said, "Let's continue moving forward."

He had already pulled out the two swords on his back and allowed them to be blanketed with the dawn's glow.

"No problem." With a smile, Klein turned around and walked to the left of a huge stone staircase with the three demigods of the City of Silver.

After walking for a while, they saw the familiar rugged pathway. On one side of the road was a towering cliff, and on the other side was an afternoon sun-soaked, bottomless cloud.

At this moment, Klein and company felt the vibrations of the ground. They saw large amounts of illusory, pitch-black gases surging out from deep within the golden cloud.

With a whoosh, the rugged pathway collapsed, falling into the dark "water surface."

Beneath the "water surface," there seemed to be invisible maelstroms lurking.

"Haha, it collapsed. There's no way out. Haha." Klein bent down laughing loudly, making Colin's, Derrick's, and Lovia's nerves tense up.

It took Klein a few seconds to regain control of his emotions. He straightened his body and took out a piece of white paper from his pocket with a smile plastered across his face. He folded it into a "plane."

Phew. He blew at the head of the paper plane, swung his arm, and threw it towards the clouds that had been devoured by darkness.

At the same time, the glove on his left hand was covered with slippery fish scales.

Upon seeing this scene, the originally confused Colin Iliad nodded slightly before casting his gaze at the flying paper object.

A violent wind stirred as it carried the paper plane forward in flight for a few seconds.

Then, it suddenly dissipated, and like a stone, it rapidly plummeted into the dark clouds, without causing any ripples.

"From the looks of it, flying is useless." Klein turned halfway around and smiled at Derrick and company.

Lovia didn't respond as she released a translucent soul that enveloped a piece of gravel.

In the blink of an eye, that piece of rock disappeared from its original spot, "Blinking" to a spot above the dark clouds. Following that, it fell down uncontrollably and sank into the clouds.

"'Teleport' doesn't work either," Lovia said in a slightly deep voice.

As Klein pressed at his abdomen, he bent down and chuckled before saying, "It looks like we can only enter through the main entrance."

Derrick immediately turned around and was about to head back when Colin Iliad and Lovia looked at each other and nodded indiscernibly.

The four demigods quickly returned to the huge, grayish-white stone staircase and looked up.

Above the flight of silent stairs which had very high steps, the majestic city walls were covered with burn marks. There were even arrows shafts as thick as ordinary trees.

In the middle of the city wall was a door that was tens of meters tall. It was grayish-blue in color and there were golden nails embedded on its surface.

On both sides of the door stood a guard that stood at six meters tall in a domineering manner. They wore exquisite silver full-body armor, one holding a greatsword, the other a huge ax. Behind their visors was an orange glow.

Silver Knight!

These were two Silver Knights guards!

Without wasting any time, Colin Iliad quickly retracted his gaze and said to Gehrman Sparrow, “I’ll hold back one of the Silver Knights. Quickly finish off the other one.”

He wasn’t very sure of Gehrman Sparrow’s strength, but from the admiration and respect that he sensed from Derrick Berg, as well as the fact that he had opened up the residence of the Giant King, he determined that this demigod who was blessed by The Fool was no weaker than him.

Under such circumstances, whether it was Gehrman Sparrow or Colin Iliad, it wasn’t difficult for them to quickly kill a Silver Knight guard with the help of Lovia and Derrick. After all, they weren’t living demigods, but a special statue without any intelligence.

Just as Colin Iliad finished his sentence, he saw Gehrman Sparrow bend his back and laugh out loud.

“Why do you care so much about these two toys?

“If they were still alive and could think—real Silver Knights—I would definitely be as cautious as you are. But now, haha. Watch.”

As he spoke, Klein used his left hand, which had many Worms of Spirit crawling about, to press down on his top hat. He straightened his body and briskly walked up the stairs.

Then, he was surrounded by strong winds as he approached the main door of the Giant King’s Court.

During this process, he casually raised his right hand and shook it a few times, as if he was stretching his wrist or grabbing the air.

At the end of the last action, Klein’s shoulder sank slightly as if it had frozen, but nothing appeared in the void.

Colin Iliad originally wanted to have an understanding of Gehrman Sparrow’s strength, so he didn’t stop him. He only signaled for Lovia to follow, to back him up if he made any mistakes. However, at that moment, he suddenly slowed down. He frowned slightly as if he had caught the scent of something.

As for Derrick, he looked at him with slight admiration. He believed that Mr. World could quickly finish off the guards.

Chapter 1253 - I Wish You Well

◆◆◆

Only when Klein was about to reach the end of the flight of stone steps did the two Silver Knights guards outside the Giant King's Court react.

They turned their heads as the orange glow behind their visors flashed twice, as though it was confirming the identity of the visitor. Furthermore, they had a moment of confusion.

Half of Klein's face was normal, and the other half was terrifying. The right side of his mouth curled up exaggeratedly. The transparent maggots on his left slowly twisted, revealing a frightening and indifferent smile.

Thud!

With his right foot crossing the final step, he arrived at the platform where the Giant King's Court was located.

Suddenly, a silvery-white crack appeared on Klein's forehead as countless silver rays emitted from his body.

His entire body instantly shattered into pieces of flesh and blood.

These fragments floated up and quickly thinned and faded, turning into paper shreds.

Klein in his top hat and black trench coat appeared one after another in different spots. However, they were all ripped apart by the silver sword beams. Some of them degenerated into illusions, while others turned into paper figures.

At this moment, a figure suddenly appeared outside the main door of the Giant King's Court where two guards had disappeared.

It was a huge doll dressed in a dark and complicated long dress with evil vines wrapped around it.

Reinette Tinekerr!

When Klein climbed up the stone steps, the person he summoned was none other than Miss Messenger. However, "She" had appeared in Wraith form, so Colin Iliad, Lovia, and Derrick didn't see her.

At this moment, the two Silver Knights who had concealed their evil intentions and were hiding with the help of the light were chasing Klein out of instinct. They had already exposed their whereabouts after the angel-level powerhouse's prolonged observations.

Reinette Tinekerr's bright red eyes immediately reflected a seemingly blank area.

There was a flash of light, and a white rabbit suddenly jumped out of nowhere. It bounced around and circled the area, its eyes abnormally vapid.

Immediately following that, Miss Messenger took a step forward and disappeared.

In another area, the remaining knight in silver armor appeared. His actions turned stiff and slow.

He had been possessed by a Wraith!

Klein, who had used himself as bait, stopped "Blinking." He pressed his hand to his chest and gave a very ceremonial bow.

"I've found the two of you. I wish you well."

He straightened his body, raised his right hand, and snapped his fingers.

Boom!

The white-furred rabbit suddenly exploded, its flesh splattering all over the ground.

Then, he walked towards the Silver Knight guard who tried his best to struggle but to no avail.

When the two figures crossed each other, Reinette Tinekerr's historical projection returned to the fog of history, while the Silver Knight followed closely behind Klein and very obediently returned to the edge of the stone steps with him.

He had already become Klein's marionette.

"We can enter." Klein smiled as he said to Colin Iliad and the others at the bottom of the stone stairs.

Derrick's eyes lit up as he inwardly marveled.

Mr. World is really powerful. He managed to finish off two Silver Knight guards single-handedly so quickly!

Colin Iliad turned his head to glance at Lovia. From her gaze, he could sense her heavy emotions.

The City of Silver's Chief had no change in expression. He held the two swords that refracted the light of dawn and steadily walked up the stone steps. He came to Klein's side and whispered, "Mutant?"

Klein pressed down a Worm of Spirit that formed his left eye and smiled without answering.

After Derrick and Lovia walked up the stairs, the four demigods and a marionette turned and arrived at the main door of the Giant King's Court.

During this process, Klein stowed away the Silver Knight Beyonder characteristic that had seeped out from the rabbit.

This was a reward for Reinette Tinekerr.

According to the agreement between him and the angel, the spoils of war that Klein had obtained from summoning a historical projection would be split equally with Miss Messenger.

Reinette Tinekerr took the Beyonder characteristic, while Klein obtained a Silver Knight marionette.

He looked up at the main door and made the Silver Knight guard, who was much taller than him, take a few steps forward and insert the sword into the ground.

Then, the Silver Knight bent down and stretched out his hands to press on the door that was dozens of meters tall.

[image]

After a heavy screeching sound, the door with golden nails slowly opened.

At this moment, the “sun” in the sky leaped, and the entire Giant King’s Court froze into an orange-red dusk.

The huge door opened faster and faster, and the scene inside was gradually revealed to Klein and company.

A grayish-white figure was covered in orange-red light. Countless stairs extended from behind the door all the way to the tallest and most magnificent residence of the Giant King. On the way, there were no obstacles. There were palaces and towers on both sides.

Giant statues covered in iron-colored armor stood in front of different buildings, guarding the path that led to the residences of the god.

“It’s time for you to perform.” Klein turned his head to the side and gave an exaggerated smile to Colin Iliad and Lovia.

The former Demon Hunter, Colin, nodded slightly without any objections. Behind Lovia, an illusory figure covered in silver armor with dark red eyes that was several meters tall appeared.

Pa! Pa! Pa!

The giant statues on both sides of the divine kingdom's staircase emitted silvery-white beams as they emitted shattering sounds.

The "silver flowers" that bloomed kept spreading upwards as if they were welcoming the guests.

Before long, three Silver Knights—Colin Iliad, the soul "Grazed" by Lovia, and the marionette controlled by Klein—cleared out the giant statues guarding the divine kingdom's staircase, leaving only the area closest to the Giant King's residence. They didn't attempt it out of caution.

At that moment, two figures flew out of the Giant King's palace and slid towards the three Silver Knights.

One of them had a shadowed face, black, curly hair that reached its shoulders, and a pair of black wings on its back. The other was a pure shadow that distorted to the sides from time to time.

They were Enuni, who had mutated at some point in time, and Klein's shadow, who were both under the influence of the Dark Angel.

†

In the battlefield filled with thick fog, a layer of grayish-white dragon scales suddenly appeared on Audrey's body. This was a result of her seeing something she shouldn't see.

Even with the fog blocking her view, high-level creatures at the angel level could still corrupt and damage living beings that saw "Them"!

As a demigod of the Spectator pathway, Audrey immediately retracted her gaze and calmed her mind to control herself from losing control.

As her thoughts raced, she took a few steps back and used Psychological Invisibility to hide in the thick fog. She was in no hurry to infiltrate the Intis and Feysac allied forces camp.

She was waiting for an opportunity—one that she believed would definitely appear.

Time passed by so slowly that Audrey imagined that it had stopped. After an unknown period of time, she finally saw the fog over the allied forces' base turn dark, like the sun plunging past the horizon. Night had begun to rule this world.

Silently, the Intis, Feysac soldiers and officers closed their eyes and fell asleep. This included many other Beyonders.

Audrey, who was hiding not far away, also fell asleep. However, as a Dreamwalker who had been "Cued" in advance, she managed to stay lucid.

Then, without knowing how long the opportunity would last, she used "Dream Traversal" to enter the Intis, Feysac allied forces base. She walked among the soldiers and secretly left behind the seeds for a Mental Plague.

This "plague" could make the infected panic, fluster, and break down emotionally. It was difficult to be placated with normal methods.

Hum!

The sound of a horn pierced through the gaps between reality and dreams, shattering the hazy world and awakening the soldiers and officers.

Audrey didn't hesitate. At the instant before the dream completely shattered, she "traversed" to the other end of the camp, far away from the group that had planted the seeds of Mental Plague.

In the next second, the dream world completely collapsed, forcing her back into reality. She appeared at the borders of the Intis, Feysac allied forces base.

Thud!

A silvery-white beam lit up, exploding beside Audrey, tearing apart the fog.

Audrey didn't panic because being attacked was within her expectations.

After entering the Intis, Feysac allied forces' camp, she knew that her "Psychological Invisibility" was very likely to be seen through by others using other clues, such as not being able to completely conceal her malice.

Therefore, apart from her "Psychological Invisibility," she also used similar techniques and Hand of Horror's "Disorder" to create another fake version of herself to mislead the possible attackers.

In other words, there was still a layer of illusion hidden under her Psychological Invisibility.

And the facts proved that Audrey's understanding of the enemy was correct. The fake version of her had indeed encountered a sudden attack.

Taking this opportunity, she retreated into the depths of the fog.

Then, a grayish-white dragon that was still in human form appeared. It had mysterious and three-dimensional symbols engraved on its huge scales. They were infiltrating inwards and extending outwards, as though they were interweaving into something indescribable. Something that didn't belong to reality would cause one's mind to go into a frenzy and distort their thoughts just by looking at it.

At the same time, a figure dressed in a Feysac general's attire appeared at the spot where Audrey was standing. His face, neck, and palm were covered in silver armor, giving off a cold feeling.

†

Enuni and Klein’s shadows landed on a platform covered in orange light. The three Silver Knights retreated and returned to Derrick’s and Klein’s side.

Klein raised his hand to cover his left cheek and laughed at the “shadow” and Enuni.

“It looks like you can’t leave that area.”

He took a few steps forward and spread out his palms. He tsked and said, “What a pity. That way, you won’t be able to hit me.”

Bang!

The “shadow” opened its mouth and released an Air Cannon.

Chapter 1254 - Exaggerated

Bang!

When the “shadow” blasted an Air Cannon forward, Klein acted as though he had sensed it ahead of time. His body jerked backward, and he somersaulted in the air, landing steadily several steps away.

During this process, his right hand continued to press down on the half top hat on his head, making him seem rather relaxed.

Seeing that Enuni and the “shadow” didn’t attempt to chase and continue their attacks, the smile on his face became even more obvious.

“It’s really impolite to interrupt others while they’re speaking.

“I wanted to discuss how to deal with you in front of all of you, but I can only avoid that now.”

As he spoke, his left face, which formed from a cluster of transparent maggots, trembled twice, as if he was trying to wink at his former marionette and his former shadow.

Then, with a beaming smile on his face, he walked back to Colin Iliad, Derrick, and Lovia and shrugged.

“The owners of this place aren’t welcoming us. We can only head out and discuss how to resolve the problem—them.”

Colin Iliad didn’t think lowly of this exaggerated powerhouse just because he didn’t seem capable of controlling his emotions. This was because he had shown his expertise and meticulousness towards detail when handling the previous matters. This wasn't something a demigod who had lost his mind could do.

"Alright." The City of Silver's Chief responded to Klein's suggestion.

Of course, Derrick had no objections, while Lovia remained silent and didn't say a word.

Hence, the four demigods and the Silver Knight marionette retraced their steps. They walked out of the Giant King's Court's door, and Klein even got the silver-armored guard to pull the huge door and slowly close it. It appeared like a very polite gesture.

Throughout the entire process, Enuni, who had layers of black wings on his back, and the pure "shadow" just stood watching. They didn't attempt to stop him, as though an invisible wall had restrained their movements.

After a while, dusk dissipated and darkness descended. All awaited the light of dawn to illuminate everything.

In this quiet and dead world, a ray of light finally rose, bringing with it a long-awaited dawn.

At this moment, Enuni and the "shadow" heard knocking sounds at the door of the Giant King's Court.

Someone was knocking on the door.

Knock, knock, knock. After this continued a few more times, the door let out a creaking sound as it opened heavily.

Wearing a black trench coat, Klein maintained the smile on the right side of his face as he entered the Giant King's Court first. He walked up the stairs step by step, and the other demigods, along with his marionette, followed one step behind.

After reaching the end of the half-way, Klein stopped and said to Enuni and the "shadow" who were more than ten meters away, "Please forgive me for not waiting for you to say 'come in.' Perhaps it's because this spot is too far from the main door, so you didn't hear my knocking.

"As you know, as a gentleman, I only know how to use my fingers to strike, not slap with my palms."

The moment he finished speaking, Enuni, who hadn't spoken since the beginning, spoke:

"Next, you'll deal with Shadow by yourself and let the people of the City of Silver hold me back."

"Oh?" Klein let out a loud nasal grunt while wearing an exaggerated smile, as though he was waiting for Enuni to give a further explanation.

At the same time, he raised his left hand and pressed his face.

The transparent and twisted maggots began to squirm about, some boring in, others crawling out and quickly completing an exchange.

With a shadow over his face, Enuni, with his black, slightly-curled hair that reached his shoulders, continued in a deep voice, "You didn't summon a projection from the Historical Void in advance because you know that Shadow can summon the projection of the Staff of the Stars and simulate the powers of the Angel of Time; it will accelerate the flow of time to disperse your angel helpers.

"Similarly, he didn't make any preparations because of the same reason.

"And if you summon a saint that can last longer, he can do the same. Both of you offset each other."

"I hate playing cards with myself!" Klein nodded heavily, expressing his agreement and laughed out loud.

Enuni, whose face was blurry, glanced at him and the three demigods of the City of Silver.

“Therefore, you turned the Silver Knight guarding the door into your marionette, planning on using it as a chip to tip the balance.”

“This problem is his, not mine. He actually doesn’t have a target to turn into a marionette. Or perhaps, why don’t you sacrifice yourself?” The corners of Klein’s mouth curled up as he said to his former marionette, Enuni.

Enuni retracted his gaze and turned to examine Colin Iliad, Derrick, and Lovia.

“You and Shadow cancel each other out. The prerequisite for using a marionette to win is that they can hold me back.”

Just as he said that, the two shoulders of the marionette that had been corrupted by the power of the sleeping Dark Angel squirmed as a head grew out of each.

The three heads were covered in shadows and had black curly hair that reached his shoulders. However, they gave people the feeling that one was young and the other old.

Before Klein and the demigods could react, Enuni’s right body suddenly tore apart, causing the “aged” head to take away a third of his body.

The body that split apart rapidly squirmed and instantly became complete. On the shadow over the head’s surface, a pair of eyes protruded with vertical, pale-golden pupils.

Suddenly, the magnificent staircase leading to the ancient god’s residence collapsed, turning into a desolate moor. At the end of the moor was a pitch-black city overgrown with weeds.

City of Silver!

Derrick’s heart tightened upon seeing such a realistic scene. He was worried that the unknown enemy would drag him and the other demigods to the City of Silver and destroy it. As for Lovia, her gaze froze as her body trembled when Enuni grew two heads. It was as if she could sense the aura of an absolute high-leveled entity.

Colin Iliad surveyed his surroundings and crossed his two swords that were covered in the light of dawn before pushing them out. He said in a deep voice, “This is fake.”

At this moment, Klein covered his mouth with his left hand that was made of transparent maggots. He yawned and asked Enuni’s main body with a smile, “Will you be stronger in dreams?

“Or can you cross the boundary and launch an attack?

“Yes, if it were me, I would definitely consider using a dream to lure the enemy into entering my attack range.”

The moment he said that, the desolate moor and the distant castle dissipated at the same time. The magnificent staircase, which was illuminated by the light of dawn, appeared once again.

At this moment, the left side of Enuni’s body tore away. The “young” head had taken away a third of his flesh.

The shadow covering “his” face was quickly replaced by a resplendent golden light. It was as if there were two miniature “suns” in his eyes.

“The Sun?” Klein first voiced out a question before laughing so hard that he couldn’t straighten his back. “Haha, you want to use the ‘Unshadowed Domain’ to break through the Silver Knight’s ‘Light Concealment’? Yes, we have three Silver Knights on our side. That is worthy of your attention, but have you considered the feelings of Shadow? You don’t, you only think of yourself! He’s only a shadow, so have you considered how weakened he would be in the ‘Unshadowed Domain’?”

At this point, Klein laughed even louder. Even the transparent Worms of Spirit crawling on his left face sped up their movements.

“Hahahaha, also, have you thought about the Beyonder powers of Corruption, Degeneration, and Darkness? Have you seriously considered the negative effects that the ‘Unshadowed Domain’ will bring you?”

After laughing, Klein straightened his back and asked seriously, “How should I address you now?

“En’en? U’u? Ni’ni?”

Enuni, whose main body was still covered in shadows, slowly took a deep breath and said, “If you had chosen the Hunter pathway, you would definitely be stronger than you are now…”

Before he could finish his sentence, the layers of black wings on his back suddenly spread out. They kept expanding, covering the sky and wrapped towards the magnificent staircase.

Faint shadows immediately covered the area. Then, Enuni directly crossed the invisible boundary and descended in front of Colin Iliad, Lovia, and Derrick.

He actually had the means to break through the obstruction!

The young him, who had split off as the Sun Saint, immediately raised his arms.

The light of dawn turned blazing hot, illuminating every corner of the magnificent staircase, leaving no shadows. Nothing could hide within.

Unshadowed Domain!

However, the shadows around him didn’t fade. The dark wings that enveloped Enuni’s body blocked out pure sunlight.

As for Shadow, it seemed to be covered in a cloak. Although it was much dimmer, it didn't show any signs of weakness.

At the same time, Enuni's split-off aged body pushed out his right palm.

A violent but illusory gust of wind appeared around him, carrying with it an invisible, multi-colored intent that gushed towards Klein and his Silver Knight marionette.

Mind Deprivation!

It could awe the target, make him feel fear, show signs of frenzy, or lose a portion of his rationality.

And now, because Klein's spirit was incomplete, he was on the brink of losing control. He couldn't even control his emotions and reactions very well. If he were to suffer the effects of Mind Deprivation, there was a high chance that he would lose control on the spot and break down into a monster.

Enuni understood what had happened to him and understood his weakness. The moment he launched the attack, he allowed the Spectator Saint to use an area-of-effect attack that Klein would find difficult to defend against and find unbearable.

The strong winds that were tainted with all kinds of emotions and will instantly engulfed Klein. However, half of the crazy adventurer, who had half a normal body and half a terrifying body, didn't show any sign of warped expressions, manifestation of godhood, or physical breakdown. Instead, his exaggerated smiling right eye became extremely calm.

While waiting for the City of Silver's expedition team, he had already summoned Miss Justice and got her to make up a Virtual Persona that stemmed from his lampooning, Clown-like character, allowing his spirit to become complete for a certain amount of time!

This was the reason why he appeared relatively rational when he left the guard's residence, only to appear exaggerated and crazy when he rendezvoused with the City of Silver’s expedition team.

Furthermore, this Virtual Persona could also withstand several attacks from the Mind domain.

The coldness in his eyes quickly faded away. The corner of his right lip curled up, becoming symmetrical with a curled Worm of Spirit that was crawling on the left.

This was a sincere smile.

Chapter 1255 - Mocking Himself

◆

As the smile of “sincerity” appeared on Klein’s face, the face of the Spectator Saint that Enuni had split suddenly cracked open. The silver cracks were all over the place, intertwining with each other, appearing extremely chaotic.

Klein seized the opportunity and used his Silver Knight marionette’s silver sword to condense a “Silver Rapier” to attack him!

A sharp light shot out, dicing that figure into countless small pieces.

However, these small blocks were abnormally illusory, with zero corporealness.

The Spectator Saint had used the technique of Psychological Invisibility to create an illusion, concealing his existence!

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Silver beams of light either blazed towards the Spectator Saint that Enuni had split off, or directly leaped out from the target’s location, erupting from within.

The Spectator Saint relied on the speed and agility that a powerful body brought. He constantly changed positions and dodged, preventing himself from getting injured.

As he had a precise understanding and control of his psyche and mind, Klein’s intuition for danger prevented an image from forming in his mind, so it was difficult for Klein to predict his actions. Therefore, Klein couldn't let the "Silver Rapier" lay in wait and strike out where he appeared.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The huge knight, who was covered in solid silver armor, held his broadsword and charged at his target, as though he could topple a mountain.

Due to the existence of the Unshadowed Domain, Klein's Silver Knight marionette was unable to hide himself using the light. He could only directly attack.

Upon seeing this, the Spectator Saint's body suddenly swelled, turning into a hideous, grayish-white scaled dragon that was covered in shadows, a manifestation of godhood.

The dragon's body was huge; its gray scales firm. Its claws were powerful, and it managed to block the Silver Knight's slash.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! The giant and the giant dragon smashed through the brick rocks of the ancient divine kingdom, causing the palace to collapse. It was a mess.

Klein maintained his exaggerated smile and seriously controlled his marionette to ignore Shadow.

No, he still did some level of interference.

He controlled the Spirit Body Threads of himself, the marionette, the City of Silver's Chief, Lovia, and Little Sun, preventing them from being controlled by Shadow. From time to time, he would reach out his hand and summon the historical projection that Shadow was attempting to summon. This effectively canceled out both parties' efforts.

Apart from that, Klein didn't even glance at Shadow.

Shadow wandered for a while before opening its mouth helplessly and making a “bang” sound.

An Air Cannon shot out and struck the Silver Knight marionette before exploding.

Amidst the rumbling sound, the marionette only shook slightly before returning to normal. The silver armor he wore didn’t show a single crack.

“Haha.” Upon seeing this scene, Klein laughed out loud, giving off the feeling that he was about to bend over in a fit of laughter.

How could he not be aware of how weak his attacks and defense were?

When the two core skills of controlling Spirit Body Threads and the summoning of the Historical Void projections were rendered ineffective, Shadow, who had no marionettes, could only watch from the side. Be it Air Cannons, Flame Controlling, Illusion Creation, or the Clown’s combat ability, they were all just embellishments or support.

Likewise, Klein didn’t attack Shadow, because he knew how frustrating it was to deal with Paper Figurine Substitutes, Flaming Jump, Damage Transfer, and Illusion Creation. He knew that there was no way he could deal with the other party in such a short period of time. He might as well let him be a member of the live audience. After all, he couldn’t affect the battle.

Upon hearing the mocking laughter, the pitch-black Shadow froze for a moment before pouncing forward. It approached Klein and targeted him with attacks.

On the other side, when Enuni’s true form landed in front of the three demigods of the City of Silver, Colin Iliad quickly glanced at Derrick before looking away. He crossed his swords, forming a cross that blocked the path ahead.

While doing this, this City of Silver Chief’s clothes tore apart by his rapidly expanding muscles.

In the blink of an eye, Colin Iliad had turned into a giant that was nearly six meters tall. His body was grayish-blue and his muscles were bluish-black. He was a ripped giant.

There was a dark crack on his forehead that seemed to be capable of attracting the souls around him, and his eyes were gone.

Every inch of the giant’s skin and flesh contained immense power, infinite mystery, and a strange spiritual influence. It made everyone who witnessed it inevitably feel a sharp pain in their psyche, turning them into a rampaging mess that wanted to destroy everything, including themselves.

Inside the “Unshadowed Domain,” Colin Iliad didn’t need to worry that the divine kingdom’s suppression would prevent him from controlling this incomplete Mythical Creature form, causing him to completely lose control.

The invisible barrier around him immediately shrank, turning into silver, sticky, liquid metal that covered his entire body and solidified into an armor that couldn’t be shaken.

At that moment, the shadow on Enuni’s body condensed into something corporeal. It made him turn into a “giant” that was several meters tall. He held a black greatsword and wore black full-body armor.

Black Knight!

Clang!

The black great sword cleaved straight down and was held back in midair by two swords formed from the light of dawn.

The shadow beneath Enuni’s feet and the illusory black wings on his back extended outwards in an attempt to envelop Colin Iliad.

Almost at the same time, rays of the light of dawn formed around Colin as they swept forward.

The storm that was filled with pure fragments of light swallowed Enuni's shadow, only to be blocked by his black wings.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Colin Iliad's Silver Knight manifestation Enuni's Black Knight transformation clashed violently, producing a spectacular light show as the tower collapsed.

As for Derrick, he leaped out with Thunder God's Roar in hand after receiving the Chief's signal, heading straight for the Sun Saint.

Amidst the howling winds, he brandished the ghostly blue hammer that was wrapped in lightning. He appeared like a Sailor of the Storm pathway, not a Beyonder of the Sun domain.

The Sun Saint never expected that the Unshadowed opposite him would be so rash that he chose to engage in close combat. Unable to react in time, he could only use his instincts to dodge to the side.

With a loud crack, a silvery-white light burst out from the place he was about to step in. It quickly engulfed him and tore his body apart.

The Silver Knight evil spirit that Lovia "Grazed" also targeted the Sun Saint as it unleashed its attacks.

A golden glow surged out of the Sun Saint's body like a tidal wave, melting the silvery-white light, forming a layer of armor made of light, and a huge mace.

Boom!

The mace blocked Thunder God's Roar, causing the snaking bolts and light to fly everywhere.

At the same time, the Sun Saint's body emitted a warm glow that caused the Silver Knight evil spirit to suddenly turn illusory as if it was evaporating. It caused the black-armored Lovia's body to pale. The degenerate aura quickly dissipated, causing the Silver Knight marionette to weaken greatly.

Purification!

This was the core power of an Unshadowed. It was extremely effective against wraiths, the fallen, and the unclean!

Faced with the “Purification,” Lovia could only summon her Silver Knight evil spirit back and not let it out to “Graze.” She could only use the corresponding Beyonder powers to make up for her weakness.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Silver beams of light occasionally “Blinked,” flying at high speeds, forcing the Sun Saint to block and duck to protect himself.

After taking a glance, Derrick stopped brandishing Thunder God’s Roar again, nor did he pester the Sun Saint any further. He took a few steps back and cast his gaze towards the battle between the black greatsword and the double swords of dawn. He then joined the battle between Colin Iliad and Enuni.

His expression turned solemn as he spread his arms wide, as though he was hugging a gift from a deity.

The “Unshadowed Domain” immediately became even brighter, as though sunlight had penetrated through the barrier and shone in.

Right on the heels of that, a ball of pure light surrounded by countless holy flames descended out of thin air. It enveloped Colin Iliad and Enuni without any regard whether they were friend or foe.

Flaring Sun!

“Flaring Sun” of an Unshadowed!

This was the theurgical spell that Klein had used to kill Megose and the fetus in her womb. It caused tremendous damage to creatures in the domain of Corruption, Degeneration, and Undying. It could even directly destroy them.

In the holy spherical light that was surrounded by holy flames, the illusory black wings on Enuni's back began to emit a faint mist. The pitch-black armor covering his body melted and part of his body cracked open, igniting his leaking degenerated aura.

Colin Iliad was also injured. The silver armor on his body turned into liquid metal.

Derrick didn't pay much attention to this. He once again used "Flaring Sun" and once again enveloped Enuni and Colin Iliad.

He believed that compared to the enemy who was of the Degeneration and Corruption domain, the Chief who was of the Warrior pathway would suffer a lot less damage under the assault of "Flaring Sun." He was able to last much longer.

And after dealing with the main enemy, he could get Mr. World to summon Life's Cane to treat the Chief.

This was the fastest way to deal with Enuni!

This wasn't something that Derrick had come up with himself, nor was it part of the plan that Klein had come up with. It was something that Colin Iliad had suggested himself.

Previously, when they were discussing outside the door, Klein had only introduced Enuni and the Shadow's possible abilities. He didn't come up with any proposals and had left it to the City of Silver's Chief to decide on the battle plan.

This was because he knew that Shadow understood him very well. He could think of anything he could think of. If it was based on his own train of thought, it would be easy to resolve. Therefore, trusting an experienced former Demon Hunter was the best solution under the present circumstances.

Colin Iliad didn’t stand on ceremony. He confirmed that the main target they needed to deal with was Enuni, who had been corrupted by the Dark Angel. He formulated a plan around this key point and came up with a plan to clinch victory through internecine means.

He wasn’t afraid of being hurt. He was only worried that there wouldn’t be an opportunity such as this.

The spherical light that was surrounded by infinite holy flames blasted down, illuminating the surrounding area. It made Klein’s “shadow” dim significantly, making Enuni’s black wings become fainter and fainter, almost to the point of an illusion.

But at this moment, a pair of black wings suddenly separated from Enuni and transformed into a deep “sea.”

Chapter 1256 - I Have Something You Don't

◆

The deep “sea” swallowed the bright spherical light, darkening the entire “Unshadowed Domain.”

Silver bolts of lightning burst out from its interior, turning the area where Enuni and Colin Iliad were fighting into a forest of lightning.

Amidst the sizzling sounds, countless bolts of lightning slithered upwards and drilled into the gaps in the armor.

This Silver Knight, who had shown his incomplete Mythical Creature form, immediately turned stiff, as though he was paralyzed by lightning. As for Enuni, his black armor, which seemed to be formed from powers of “Degeneration,” had completely absorbed the lightning, preventing his body from being affected by the rippling damage.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Enuni, who had pitch-black fragments peeling off from him, held the dark greatsword with both hands and slashed at an angle. And at this moment, Colin Iliad hadn’t completely escaped from his paralyzed state.

With a piercing stabbing sound, a deep crack appeared on his left shoulder. The sturdy silver armor seemed to lose its defense as it was cleaved open by the great sword.

This was a Black Knight’s “Cull of Spiritual Flesh.” Not only could it corrode flesh and blood, it could obliterate souls and cleave through barriers. It could also cause any living creature with degenerate thoughts to lose their defenses. It was a core Beyonder power belonging to the Black Knight, stemming from the “Degeneration” domain.

Seeing that the “Cull of Spiritual Flesh” had sliced open the silver armor on Colin Iliad’s left shoulder, with the crack quickly deepening as it went straight for the heart, Derrick tensed up and immediately condensed a spear made up of pure sunlight. He swung back his hand and threw it towards Enuni.

Unshadowed Spear!

Enuni didn’t abandon his attack or dodge. Instead, he raised his remnant illusory black wings and used them to shield himself.

Sizzle!

The “Unshadowed Spear” pierced through two layers of the illusory black wings, bursting out a blinding white light that seemed to give rise to a miniature “sun.”

At the same time, Colin’s entire body melted, turning into a pool of silver liquid metal.

The liquid flowed rapidly, reforming the body of Colin Iliad in the distance. He still resembled a giant, and he was still wearing silver armor. However, half of the City of Silver’s left shoulder and arm had fallen to the ground. The incision was clean with no blood flowing out.

With the use of “Mercury Liquefaction,” Colin Iliad sacrificed an arm to avoid Enuni’s lethal blow.

His gaze behind his visor didn’t waver at all. He grabbed the remaining sword of dawn and ran towards his target once again. It was like an unusually terrifying steam locomotive that exceeded its speed limit.

Derrick quickly condensed his “Unshadowed Spear” again from the side, causing the spears of light to fly towards Enuni.

During this process, he opened his mouth and solemnly said, “God says that the purification is effective.”

This was the Beyonder powers of a Notary at the Unshadowed level.

Its compatibility with the Unshadowed Domain created by the Sun Saint made the battlefield brighten even more, causing the degenerate auras on Enuni and Lovia to further weaken.

“God said it’s ineffective!” The Sun Saint immediately denied Derrick’s “proclamation,” causing the Unshadowed Domain’s purification effect to return to its former state.

Amidst the crackling sounds, the “Unshadowed Spear” approached Enuni. As for the black illusory wings on the Black Knight back, a few pairs had already faded under the miniature sun’s illumination. He only had half left.

Enuni couldn’t effectively dodge the pure, bright long spears closing in on him since his hands were full fending off Colin Iliad. He made a pair of illusory black wings spread out fully, disintegrating into “darkness.”

As soon as the “Unshadowed Spears” came into contact with the “darkness,” they were stained with a layer of thick, sticky, blackness. They either instantly corroded and broke, piercing the magnificent staircase, or left a curved arc in the air as it spun around and tore at Derrick Berg.

All of them degenerated at that very moment.

Upon seeing this, Derrick followed his battle instinct that he had honed from all his years of training and his patrolling and exploring experience. He jumped forward and rolled.

Sizzle!

Black spears landed behind him, corroding a large segment of the staircase.

At this moment, the Sun Saint was also throwing “Unshadowed Spears,” creating pure white beams that shot across the air. This forced Lovia to use one of her “Grazed” souls to constantly “Blink” in an attempt to approach the enemy.

To her dismay, she could only use the ability of one soul at a time in such a state. She couldn’t “Blink” while condensing “Silver Rapier” to cull the Sun Saint from a distance to create an opportunity for herself.

Meanwhile, the battle between Klein and his “shadow” was exceptionally intense. Amidst the booming sounds of Air Cannons, the flaring of scarlet flames, pieces of paper scattering in all directions, and illusions turned into bubbles described the battle.

The Silver Knight marionette had basically suppressed the Spectator Saint. After all, no matter how strong the mind dragon’s body was, it wasn’t a match for a demigod of the Giant pathway when in close combat.

Of course, the Spectator Saint wasn’t in any danger. After all, he had revealed an incomplete Mythical Creature form. If it wasn’t for the fact that his opponent was only a marionette, and Klein had already digested the Sequence 3 potion and seen many high-level creatures, he could use his exposed godhood to interfere with his opponent’s thoughts, slowly driving him crazy and losing his rationality.

Without the advantage of the godhood’s influence, the Spectator Saint could only use the Hypnotist’s “Battle Hypnotism” to force the target to act erratically, such as attacking in the wrong direction. Using this opportunity, he escaped from the melee battle and entered a “Psychological Invisibility” state again in an attempt to perform a sneak attack on Klein.

A Hypnotist’s “Battle Hypnotism” could forcefully hypnotize the enemy during battle, making him do all sorts of erratic actions. However, such actions couldn’t directly cause harm to the victim, and it couldn’t be maintained for too long, as the target would quickly wake up.

Of course, the “Battle Hypnotism” target of the Spectator Saint was definitely not the Silver Knight marionette. This was because it was essentially a dead person. This made it immune to all psychological effects. The target of his interference was the thoughts Klein transmitted through the Spirit Body Threads, targeting them so that the information the marionette received would be erroneous. As such, it would act differently from what Klein wanted.

This was actually a psyche interference, and not a psyche hypnosis. The effects were undoubtedly not as effective as the original version, but not every saint of the Spectator pathway could grasp such an effect. It was a result of digging deep into one’s Beyonder powers and experimenting.

To the Spectator Saint, there was nothing he could do about this. This was because, be it “Mind Deprivation,” “Mind Storm,” or “Mind Breath,” none of them were effective on a marionette.

The grayish-white dragon that had its head covered in shadows had tried to close the distance with Klein several times, or to use its area-of-effect Beyonder powers, but it was stopped by the Silver Knight marionette. It kept being forced to dodge the “Silver Rapier” which could erupt within its body.

As Klein controlled his marionette, he distanced himself from the Spectator Saint and dealt with his “shadow.” It wasn’t too easy, but it wasn’t too much of a burden.

Suddenly, his spiritual perception was triggered as he entered a state of clarity unique to instances when his dream or mind secretly intruded.

With his lucidity, Klein allowed a portion of his consciousness to rise to the sky and look down at his island of consciousness.

Then, he saw Enuni, the one who looked aged with a face covered in shadows, walk out of the boundless sea of collective subconscious, opening the door to his Body of Heart and Mind.

This Spectator Saint didn't attempt to change the island of consciousness in Klein's mind. All he did was produce a dark spherical light which had tentacles growing out of it. He turned it into a "seed" that was hard to discover before letting it sink into the ground.

A Mental Plague seed!

Without any hesitation, Klein immediately switched locations with the Silver Knight marionette, preventing the Mental Plague seed from landing in his island of consciousness.

The Spectator Saint noticed this change. Not only was he not disappointed, he even revealed a smile.

This was because he had long used Virtual Persona to secretly plant the Mental Plague seeds on the still island of the Silver Knight marionette. Although this couldn't affect the marionette, it could unknowingly corrupt the enemy who swapped positions with the marionette and other targets in the surrounding areas.

This was a kind of corruption and infection that targeted the island of consciousness and the psyche. It wasn't a direct attack, so it was difficult to use Virtual Persona to offset it.

When the time came, the problem that Klein had temporarily concealed with Virtual Persona would completely erupt. He would quickly plunge into a passage for losing control, entering an irreversible situation!

Shadow was no stranger to such situations, as Hvin Rambis had used such a method before.

As he secretly laughed at Klein for becoming crazy, reckless, arrogant, and acting like a clown, one who had forgotten lessons of the past, he snapped his fingers, summoning a scarlet flame. He then used it to jump over, embroiling himself with Klein.

Another round of paper shreds flew in all directions as the intense battle destroyed the afterimages.

After a short while, Klein suddenly stopped. He raised his left hand that was wrapped with transparent maggots and covered his left face.

“Hahaha, hahaha.” He let out a maniacal laugh, controlling the Spirit Body Threads around him like a madman, no longer distinguishing between friend and foe.

On his right cheek, pale meat tendrils protruded out, as if they were Worms of Spirit that were about to bore out.

When Shadow saw that Klein had gone crazy and was about to lose control, he was worried that he would be infected by the “Mental Plague.” He hurriedly made a scarlet flame rise up and swallow himself.

In the distance, his figure emerged from the flames that had yet to extinguish.

At this moment, the Silver Knight marionette would occasionally launch an attack and occasionally do a twitching dance. It was obvious that it wasn’t under normal control.

He no longer had the strength to stop the mind dragon manifested by the Spectator Saint. He allowed the other party to spread out his wings and fly into the air above Klein. He was prepared to use “Mind Breath.”

The Spectator Saint didn’t want to give his enemy who was infected by the “Mental Plague” a chance to breathe. He wanted him to immediately lose control!

Suddenly, this mind dragon’s actions became sluggish, as if every joint was injected with glue.

In the next second, a silvery-white beam erupted from his body, splitting his flesh and blood, tearing apart his Spirit Body.

With his back bent, the laughing Klein slowly straightened his body calmly. He released the palm covering his left cheek, and he smiled at Shadow in the distance.

Behind him, wave after wave of silvery-white beams tore apart the mind dragon, turning it into pieces of pitch-black flesh. They fell to the ground, and the knight marionette in silver armor retracted his broadsword and looked coldly at Shadow.

Looking at the slightly lost Shadow, the few Worms of Spirit on his left face curled up and stimulated the curved corners of a smile.

“You haven’t seemed to have noticed that I have something that you don’t.”

Chapter 1257 - Too Weak

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As he spoke, Klein raised his right hand.

A piece of pitch-black and filthy flesh had appeared in his palm at some point in time. It contained an indescribable aspect of madness.

“The answer is: The Hanged Man’s corruption,” Klein said to Shadow with a smile.

The thing that he had that Shadow didn’t was the corruption left behind by the True Creator. This was an influence that even the power of Sefirah Castle couldn’t dissipate for the time being!

And one thing he was certain of was that, before he met Dark Angel Sasrir, the True Creator wouldn’t easily allow him to lose control or die.

Therefore, he deliberately allowed corrupted parts of his body to be infected by Mental Plague, pretending that he had lost control. Then, he pretended to be controlling Spirit Body Threads in an aimless manner so as to cover up the fact that the target was actually the Spectator Saint. When the opponent launched a further attack, he successfully entered a sluggish state, creating an opportunity for the Silver Knight marionette.

As he expected, the corrupted parts of him wrapped around the seeds of the Mental Plague, preventing the negative effects from erupting.

During this process, Shadow had distanced herself from Klein because of his concern about the effects of Mental Plague. This made him fail to notice the abnormality of the Spectator Saint's Spirit Body Threads.

How could Klein not know how careful and cautious he was?

Of course, Klein couldn't predict the kind of changes the corruption would bring when he met Dark Angel Sasrir. Would the Mental Plague that had been suppressed leak out and cause certain effects? All he could do was resolve the problems at hand.

Upon hearing his words, the pure Shadow suddenly burst into a scarlet flame that instantly engulfed him.

At the edge of the Unshadowed Domain, near the place where the Giant King resided, a wisp of fire rapidly rose up as Shadow appeared.

He didn't hesitate to escape. He ran towards the palace which acted as the resting chamber for the slumbering Dark Angel, completely ignoring Enuni and the Sun Saint!

When Klein, who was using his Virtual Persona, saw this scene, he was stunned. He couldn't help but smile with the Worm of Spirit and shake his head.

I'm actually that timid?

He suspected that Shadow, which splintered off from him, had taken away most of his caution and carefulness, leaving behind more of his impulsiveness and recklessness.

Pa!

A silvery-white beam lit up and smote the scarlet flames that descended outside of the Unshadowed Domain, shattering the pitch-black Shadow that had just appeared.

Klein hadn't wasted time muttering to himself. He had long controlled the Silver Knight marionette, then according to the distribution of the flames and his habits, he predicted the next few areas that Shadow would jump to. Then, he condensed “Silver Rapier” ahead of time and smote down the moment the flames descended.

“Unshadowed Domain” didn’t have a barrier in the physical sense. Anyone could leave or exert influence on the outside world.

However, the torn-up Shadow eventually turned into thin pieces of paper and quickly disappeared.

Another few burning scarlet flames descended, and the black Shadow used them to jump, moving closer to the open door of the Giant King’s residence. The silvery-white light that subsequently tore him apart had only managed to take down his Paper Figurine Substitutes—from Sequence 5, Beyonders of the Warrior pathway had the ability to see through illusions. Without the aid of “Psychology Invisibility,” “Paper Figurine Substitutes” were obviously more useful than “Illusion Creation.” It was only a situation when two Seers were in combat that scenes of shredded pieces and illusions would occur.

In just two or three seconds, scarlet flaming columns rose outside the Giant King’s residence, as though they were releasing fireworks to welcome a guest.

In the next moment, Shadow jumped into one of the flames and hid in the area where the Dark Angel lay in slumber.

But at that moment, a figure quickly appeared in front of the scarlet flaming columns.

He wore a black long trench coat and a half top hat. His right face was normal, and his left face was formed from transparent and twisted maggots. It was none other than Klein’s true body.

The corners of his mouth curled up once again as he snapped his fingers with his right hand.

Pa!

The scarlet flaming columns were extinguished as the black Shadow was forced to appear, returning to the staircase that was covered with the light of dawn.

Flame Controlling!

The reason why Klein could rush outside the Giant King's palace to intercept Shadow ahead of time was because, after Shadow decisively fled, he was no longer able to affect his summoning of items from the Historical Void. He easily took out Creeping Hunger and switched to the Traveler's soul.

"It isn't a good thing to be too careful," Klein said to Shadow, doing so with a smile on his face. As he bent his knees, he arched his back.

As he bent over, his figure suddenly became the knight in silver armor.

The knight stabbed his broadsword into the ground and created an invisible barrier, sealing off the door to the Dark Angel's resting ground.

At that moment, Klein swapped positions with his Silver Knight marionette. He gave Shadow the impression that he could enter the palace as long as he could destroy the Guardian's barrier.

Of course, his true body interfered with Shadow's summoning of historical projections and controlling of Spirit Body Threads.

When the tables turned, the battle between the three demigods of the City of Silver, Enuni, and the Sun Saint also changed.

When Colin Iliad once again kept Enuni, who had lost his black armor, busy, Derrick repeated their previous strategy.

At times, he would use "Flaring Sun" as an area-of-effect attack to trade injuries to the Chief for a victory. At other times, he would condense a pure, white "Unshadowed Spear" and engage in precision attacks. This wasn't used often, because it was easy for Enuni to avoid it, causing Colin Iliad to be accidentally injured.

After three rounds of “Flaring Sun,” Enuni finally reached the end of his rope. He once again spread out the last two pairs of illusory black wings, turning it into a pitch-black sea that devoured all light. He then drowned out Colin Iliad, causing the City of Silver’s Chief’s body to be covered with a layer of thick black liquid. His actions were clearly affected.

Seizing this opportunity, Enuni escaped from the entanglement and avoided the subsequent “Unshadowed Spear.” He transformed into a shadow and quickly moved towards the Giant King’s residence in an attempt to join forces with Shadow to break through the barrier.

At that moment, a silvery-white beam burst out from his body, ripping him into blobs of dark red flesh!

This sudden surgical strike came from Lovia.

This six-member council Elder had actually given up on dodging the attacks of the Sun Saint. At the instant Enuni was about to escape the battlefield, she decisively switched the Grazed soul to the Silver Knight evil spirit, dyeing her black armor silver.

Sizzle!

The dazzling white and pure “Unshadowed Spear” hit the lady, causing her to shrink slightly and the blazing sun to completely devour her.

The blobs of flesh in Enuni’s body remained sentient. They quickly gathered together in an attempt to rebuild the body.

However, at this moment, the black sticky liquid restricting the movement of Colin Iliad exploded with specks of light. They turned into a storm and tore through the obstruction, allowing the silver armor to resurface.

Right on the heels of that, the gigantified Silver Knight took a step forward and swung the sword of dawn in his hand, allowing the “Hurricane of Light” from before to continue sweeping forward, inundating the blobs of dark red flesh.

A pair of illusory black wings appeared and dissipated, calming the “Hurricane of Light.” However, Derrick’s “Flaring Sun” continued. Holy flames ignited every blob of flesh and drop of blood, melting everything with pure light.

When the Sun Saint saw this scene, he knew that it was impossible for him to escape the fate of being destroyed. He didn’t bother dealing another blow to Lovia and turned around, about to withdraw from his “Unshadowed Domain.”

Suddenly, he heard a voice filled with malice and corruption:

“Slow!”

Lovia struggled to free herself from the remnant powers of “Unshadowed Spear” and “Teleported” to a spot not far from the Sun Saint. Then, she switched the Grazed soul to a Devil and used the Language of Foulness.

At that moment, the black armor on her body had completely shattered. There were many cracks on her purple-patterned black robe, revealing her slowly squirming flesh. Her aura was rather weak.

The “Slow” that wasn’t at the level of a demigod couldn’t affect the Sun Saint for too long. However, this was enough for Colin Iliad. He condensed a “Silver Rapier” and made it “Teleport” to the enemy.

This “Silver Rapier” experienced a random mutation. It directly pierced through the holy armor of the Sun Saint and exploded in his body.

Silver light bloomed as the Sun Saint blasted into countless pieces.

Pa! Pa! Pa! The flesh fell to the ground and vanished in a blink of an eye, as though they had returned to the pages of history.

After the battle ended, the three demigods of the City of Silver immediately approached the Giant King’s residence and pincered Shadow.

Shadow leaped and attempted to hide in the fog of history. However, just as he saw the grayish-white fog, he was pressed down by a hand wrapped by transparent maggots.

Neither him nor Klein dashed to the time before the First Epoch, because they knew that the other party would definitely stop them or wait there!

With nowhere to hide, Shadow immediately fell into the encirclement of the three City of Silver demigods. His various powers were also offset by Klein. Even “Flaming Jump” was affected by “Flame Controlling,” making it difficult for him to escape his predicament.

More than ten seconds passed. After the paper figurines were torn apart, Shadow finally expended all his substitutes. He was then stabbed in the abdomen by Derrick’s “Unshadowed Spear.”

A round of blinding white light and a miniature sun exploded. The pitch-black Shadow quickly faded and completely melted.

Klein felt a stabbing pain in his head, and his mind, which was on the verge of losing control, suddenly relaxed.

He instinctively looked to his feet and saw that under the illumination of the light of dawn, a faint black shadow extended out from them.

“Too weak…” Klein bent his back slightly and couldn’t help but mock himself. After all, without the powers of a Scholar of Yore, without a marionette, and without the ability to control Spirit Body Threads, a Seer was relatively weak against other demigods of the same Sequence.

His spirit had been restored to its original state, but he had yet to remove the Virtual Persona. Furthermore, he had no intention of immediately summoning Miss Justice’s historical projection to do this. As he had been corrupted by the Dark Angel, Enuni had shown the characteristics of the Sun, Spectator, Storm, and Secrets Suppliant pathways. If he wanted to enter the Giant King's residence, he had to be wary of psychological influences. Virtual Persona was a very good defensive measure.

At that moment, the transparent maggots on the left side of Klein's body quickly settled down, returning to his flesh and skin. However, due to the crazy effects of his Virtual Persona, there was still a translucent layer on the surface, allowing people to see the Worms of Spirit hidden underneath.

When Derrick, Lovia, and the others cast their gazes on him, Klein straightened his back and reached out to grab Life's Cane. He pointed at the open door of the Giant King's residence and laughed.

"Make every second count. The Dark Angel is waiting for us inside."

Chapter 1258 - Tremendous Changes

Although Klein was urging them on the surface, he actually threw Life's Cane to the bottom of the magnificent staircase and threw it at Lovia, allowing her to treat herself and Colin Iliad's injuries.

As a former Rose Bishop, Lovia was the least afraid of the negative effects of Life's Cane. Regardless of the changes in her body, as long as it didn't involve the spirit, she could treat them.

At the same time, Derrick quickly ran towards the collapsed battlefield in the middle of the stairs, picking up the severed arm of the Chief.

As long as a broken limb wasn't lost, Life's Cane could heal the injuries, restoring it anew!

With an exaggerated smile, Klein nodded at Colin Iliad and leaped into the fog of history. He dashed to a time before the First Epoch and hid in a fragment of light.

Then, with a thought, he returned to Sefirah Castle and sat at the seat belonging to The Fool. With the help of the crimson star corresponding to The Fool which was constantly contracting and expanding, he checked the situation inside the Giant King's residence.

However, under his "true vision," there was a deep darkness inside, indistinct and indiscernible.

As expected of the left hand of God. the deputy of Heaven, a King of Angels that is suspected to be related to the Chaos Sea… Klein sighed silently as he frowned slightly.

He now suspected that, even if Little Sun entered the palace and prayed inside, it would be difficult for him to see the exact situation through the darkness. Unless he became an angel and truly gained ownership over Sefirah Castle.

In addition, Klein's spiritual intuition told him that there were still many unknown effects hidden in the slumbering grounds of the Dark Angel. He definitely couldn't be careless.

He immediately reined in his thoughts and observed the situation around him. He searched for high-level existences like Adam and Amon, but he didn't find anything unusual.

After letting out a breath, Klein hurriedly shattered the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic that he had separated from the "curtain." He made the parts consisting of Sequence 9 to Sequence 3 gather together, making the Sequence 2 portion pure.

Then, he returned to the historical fragment and was once again affected by Virtual Persona, becoming more like a clown.

In the next second, he left the grayish-white fog and reappeared in front of the door that opened into the residence of the Giant King.

The Silver Knight marionette that had inserted the sword into the ground and created an invisible barrier immediately stood up.

At this moment, the severed arm of Colin Iliad had already been reattached. Lovia had also recovered from her injuries. However, at some point in time, a few golden wheat heads grew from the back of her head and swayed.

They walked to the door together with Derrick and returned Life's Cane to Klein.

After receiving it, he shook it and stopped maintaining the projection, making it vanish into thin air.

Right on the heels of that, he made a grab with his right hand, intending to summon the Historical Void projection of Miss Messenger when she was in perfect condition.

At this moment, Colin Iliad suddenly asked, “You plan on summoning that angel?”

“It’s not necessarily that one. I have too many choices.” Klein spoke the truth in a slightly exaggerated tone.

Colin had already dispelled his giant state and regained his original height of more than two meters. After all, maintaining an incomplete Mythical Creature form was still a huge burden to him.

At that moment, he was wearing a silver armor he conjured. He held two swords that had returned to their normal sizes and said calmly, “That corrupted monster showed the characteristics of degenerating living creatures. The place where the Dark Angel sleeps should have similar effects.”

What the Chief means is that the Angel Projection that Mr. World summons might rebel after entering the residence of the Giant King? And a fallen angel—even a projection—is easily able to make us pay a heavy price… Derrick easily understood what the Chief meant.

On the other side, the flesh on Lovia’s head was squirming as she enveloped the few wheat heads and fused them with herself.

“Makes sense.” Klein smiled and nodded, gently snapping his fingers.

Then, he dragged out an ordinary raven from the fog of history, allowing it to fly past the open door and enter the dark interior.

When the raven’s figure was swallowed by the dark environment, Klein’s eyebrows moved slightly. He turned his head and smiled at the City of Silver Chief.

"I've lost contact."

Colin Iliad replied without any surprise, "That's a King of Angels for you."

Klein couldn't control the corners of his mouth from curling up. To him, this was a rather troublesome matter. It meant that he couldn't summon a historical projection to enter in his stead.

The fact that his shadow had been sliced off also proved this point.

"Alright." As if stretching his wrists, he waved his hands a few times and took out a black staff with many gems embedded in it.

0-62, Staff of the Stars!

He could only try to see if the Sealed Artifact projection and a marionette would degenerate and betray him.

After all of them were prepared, Colin Iliad, Lovia, and Derrick simultaneously cast their gazes towards the darkness behind the open door.

Using the Staff of the Stars in his hand, Klein pointed ahead and said with an obvious smile, "This is going to be a dangerous journey. Everyone has a chance of dying. For you, and for me."

With that said, he pressed down on his top hat and followed behind the Silver Knight marionette. Passing through the open door, he entered deep darkness.

Colin Iliad, Lovia, and Derrick didn't speak. They walked forward in silence and determination.

†

Backlund, in the battlefield outside the city.

Using Lie to adjust her “Dragon Transformation” appearance, Audrey and the demigod in Feysacian military uniform, who wore a mask and gloves, engaged in a fierce battle.

The other party’s impregnable defense, the broadsword that had been condensed from the light of dawn, the rapier’s ability to hide and teleport, left a deep impression on her.

If not for the fact that she knew that the upper echelons of Feysac and Intis were mostly Silver Knights, Demon Hunters, Iron-blooded Knights, War Bishops, Unshadowed, Justice Mentors, Alchemists, and Arcane Scholars, and had gathered intelligence in advance at the Tarot Club and did some homework, Audrey, who lacked individual combat experience, would have long been defeated.

Relying on her accumulated experience in this aspect, she managed to withstand the initial attacks and finally composed herself. Relying on “Battle Hypnotism,” “Mind Deprivation,” “Mind Breath,” and “Mind Storm,” she slowly turned the situation around and escaped her predicament.

Of course, the most important thing was that the godhood brought about by “Dragon Transformation” had interfered with the Silver Knight’s mind and thoughts. Furthermore, it allowed Audrey to possess a body that could withstand damage, as well as providing a power that could withstand attacks. Otherwise, she would’ve sustained injuries from barely being able to hold on.

And as a Sequence 3 saint of the Warrior pathway, this Feysacian general had a strong will and uniqueness that was unaffected by illusions. He was able to effectively resist the effects of the mind and reduce the negative effects he received. Therefore, he still held the upper hand and used “Light Concealment” and “Silver Rapier” to suppress Audrey in an attempt to create an opportunity to defeat the enemy.

Audrey was very calm about this. This was because, while fighting, she had already created a Virtual Persona. She had diverted her attention to the surrounding environment and had scattered many “Mental Plague” seeds.

It wouldn’t be long before the Feysac general was silently infected!

At this moment, red flaming spears shot over from the allied forces’ base, blotting out the sky with their denseness.

The Silver Knight didn’t dodge; instead, he took a step forward and swung his sword of dawn, keeping Audrey fixed to the ground.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The burning spears pummeled down one after another, blanketing the two demigods.

Audrey’s face could not help but distort. Charred marks covered her grayish-white scales of her “Dragon Transformation” body. As for the Silver Knight’s armor, it was still glowing with silver light. It didn’t suffer much of an impact.

Compared to a “giant” who specialized in defense, a dragon’s ability to withstand blows was obviously much weaker.

Only at this point did Audrey realize that she was participating in a war, not in a solo battle.

When another wave of flaming spears was about to hit them, there seemed to be a commotion within the allied forces’ base, and there was a collapse to a certain degree.

At that moment, the thick fog that enveloped the entire battlefield vanished, as though it had never existed.

Audrey and the Feysac general stopped fighting at the same time, finding themselves abnormally weak. They even found it difficult to raise their arms.

She saw that, behind the allied forces' base, at the edge of the boundless plains, an orange-red ray of light rushed over, instantly covering half of the sky, blocking out the sun.

The area around Backlund instantly turned into dusk!

The thick darkness appeared on another side of the sky and very quickly collided with the orange sunset.

All the soldiers and officers on the battlefield fell to the ground and fell into a deep sleep.

†

In Backlund City, outside Saint Hierländ Cathedral.

Leonard, who was wearing a red glove, looked up at the half-dark, half-dusk sky.

His throat let out a silent sigh as he cast his gaze at the entrance of the Saint Hierländ Cathedral.

The brown-haired Ikanser Bernard and the other members of the Machinery Hivemind stood there, staring blankly at the sky.

Just a few months ago, they enjoyed a deep level of cooperation with Leonard's Red Gloves team. Together, they dealt with the evil forces in Backlund, searching for the secret organization that believed in The Fool, the one that used tarot cards as a codename.

†

At the bell tower of the Cathedral of Waves, the City of Generosity, Bayam.

Danitz watched the Resistance enter the city and take over many places. Finally, he heaved a sigh of relief and turned to Alger.

"Look, they're very popular in most places in this city."

Alger's gaze followed the slightly dark-skinned natives as he didn't respond to Danitz.

Danitz felt very relaxed as he chuckled and said, "I never expected that we would meet again in such a situation."

Alger looked up and was just about to say something when he suddenly felt something. He cast his gaze towards the northwestern sky.

The place he was looking at instantly darkened. Layers of dark clouds formed and countless silver bolts of lightning snaked out.

Many deep blue waves surged up and were swept up by the wind. They rushed towards the clouds and connected to the sea.

Wherever the sea and the sky intersected, beams of light lit up. They weren't resplendent or clear, without any colors. They seemed to be formed from countless illusory objects.

Chapter 1259 - Slumbering Grounds

◆

In a battlefield near the capital, Lenburg.

The balls of compressed scarlet fireballs flew past the corpses, weapons, blood, and smoke, under the guidance of a flaming spear. They landed in the areas that were built with simple construction work, creating a series of explosions.

As he watched the smoke rise and the flames spread, Anderson flung the dust in his hands and turned to the deputy beside him with a smile.

“I wonder how much longer this will last… Any last words? I can help you write a will.”

As he had wished, he saw the angry looks of the “militia” around him. Their thoughts were uniform.

However, the “militia” didn’t attack. The glint in their eyes slowly settled as they cast their gaze in another direction.

“You actually didn’t respond to my provocation.” Anderson pricked up his brows. “This means that you’re planning something.”

Without waiting for the deputy and the “militia” to respond, the Hunter smiled and continued, “Y’all are planning on surrendering, right? Are you trying to protect your family and friends?”

Seeing gazes sweep over, Anderson tsked and shook his head.

“You haven’t become Beyonders for long. It’s only through the war that you obtained the main potion ingredients from the enemy. Only then did you become Hunters, Provokers, and Pyromaniacs. However, when it comes to plotting conspiracies, y'all are still too inexperienced.

"I'm very curious. Why don't you try to convince me to surrender together? I don't think I project the image of being very firm usually. Besides, I'm not a believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom."

Having said that, Anderson looked thoughtfully at his deputy.

"Is it because the enemy's brass is totally furious at me? They gave the order not to accept my surrender?"

The deputy remained silent for a few seconds before saying, "Since you already know, why are you asking?"

With a swoosh, the nearby militia raised their right hands and aimed their palms at Anderson, appearing to have come to a collective understanding.

"If I don't ask, how can I be sure what everyone's thinking?" Anderson said with a smile without panicking.

He rubbed his stomach with his left hand and placed his right hand into his pocket. It was unknown what he was looking for.

At that moment, the sun in the sky suddenly expanded and became extremely huge. The blazing golden sun made Anderson and company unable to open their eyes. They found it difficult to think any further.

Immediately following that, an illusory tower appeared. Every level was made up of thick books. Each book had a brass eye on it. The higher one looked, the darker it became. It was filled with the aura of insanity, destruction, inauspiciousness, and disaster.

The tower extended into the sky, as though it had encompassed the entire world within itself, including the gigantic sun.

†

Backlund, within the Odora family's luxurious villa.

All the Sanguine in the city had gathered here to prepare for the impending outcome of the war.

Emlyn White, who had become an Earl, had his hands in his pockets. He stood by the window, bathed in the mixed light of dusk and night as he watched members of his fellow race discuss the current affairs uneasily.

Suddenly, his spiritual perception was triggered as he cast his gaze out the window.

In the garden, a bunch of withered grass was dyed green once again. They rapidly grew and soon, they reached the height of a person.

In other places in the city, some of the streetside trees that had not been affected by the previous bombardment were wildly absorbing nutrients from unknown sources. One by one, they rose up and soon grew to tens of meters tall. The branches were thick and the leaves were like umbrellas.

These towering trees were connected to one another, covering half of the sky in Backlund.

Many buildings were crushed, or they were entangled by the branches and vines. It was as if they had been abandoned for more than a century.

In just seven or eight seconds, many places in Backlund had become a primeval forest.

†

After passing through the open door and entering the dark interior of the Giant King's residence, Klein immediately observed the Silver

Knight marionette in front of him, the Staff of the Stars in his right hand and Creeping Hunger on his left hand.

They didn't show any abnormalities for the time being. The corresponding Spirit Body Threads didn't show any signs of degeneration.

After confirming the situation in this area, Klein cast his gaze around and observed his surroundings.

The place was enveloped by thick corporeal darkness. They couldn't see further than five meters away. The ground was paved with grayish-white bricks that looked like they were pieces of a frozen sunset. They didn't reveal anything extraordinary.

After some thought, the corners of Klein's mouth curled up. He reached into the void, grabbed, and attempted to summon an angel.

In the next second, he laughed out loud because he had lost a clear connection with the fog of history.

This was the reason why the Historical Void projection he had summoned to enter had lost contact after entering this region.

Laughing, Klein suddenly turned around and walked back to the area from which he had entered.

"Mr. Wor—Sparrow, what do you want to do?" Derrick, who was also scrutinizing the various restrictions on him, asked in surprise.

Klein replied with a beaming smile, "Now is not the right time to explore this place. I plan to come in again later."

"Are you planning on summoning a Sequence 4 historical projection and try to see if it will degenerate and betray you after you bring it in?" Colin Iliad said after some thought.

Klein spread his left palm and said, "No one set the rule that we can't go out once we enter, or not being able to enter after leaving.”

Although in such a situation, Mr. World’s words sounded a little strange, Derrick still felt that it made sense. This was because the City of Silver had done the same thing when exploring the surrounding areas. Through repeated acts of “entering” and “exiting,” they gradually accumulated intelligence and details to finally resolve whatever problems they faced.

Lovia didn’t say a word or object. From her point of view, it was undoubtedly a good thing that she could make more preparations.

In an exploration that determined the fate of the City of Silver, they definitely couldn’t be rash.

After taking a few steps back, Klein suddenly stopped and laughed out loud.

“It looks like the owner doesn’t want us to leave.”

The faint light at the door had already been devoured by the deep darkness and disappeared.

Colin Iliad surveyed his surroundings and said, “We can only proceed forward.”

Seeing the Chief and Mr. World turn around at the same time, Derrick took a deep breath and raised his left hand, letting it emit a golden glow that illuminated the surrounding darkness.

This revealed thick columns with indiscernible tops. Some of them had their silhouettes outlined, while others were hidden deep in the depths, barely visible.

Derrick retracted his gaze, preparing to head forward with Mr. World and Chief.

At that moment, he failed to see another familiar figure from the corner of his eye.

Derrick's pupils dilated suddenly. Then, he quickly turned his head to look for Elder Lovia, who had been standing beside him moments ago.

This demigod who believed in the True Creator had disappeared! She had disappeared without a trace!

Derrick's abnormality was noticed by both Klein and Colin Iliad. At the same time, they cast their gazes at the spot and saw that the black-robed Lovia had disappeared without a trace, as though she had evaporated into thin air.

With the spiritual intuition of a Seer and the reconnoiter abilities of a Demon Hunter, they failed to realize when Lovia had gone missing, or how she vanished.

The curl on the corners of Klein's lips grew even wider. Without any hesitation, his mind raced and allowed his Spirit Body to enter the world above the gray fog, combining with the dark red illusion of The Fool.

Right on the heels of that, he cast his gaze towards the crimson star that symbolized The Sun. He hoped to find clues through his "true vision."

However, everything was still obscured by the darkness. Nothing was revealed, just like how Klein predicted before entering the Giant King's palace.

Without any time to think further, Klein immediately returned to the real world.

In the span of three or two seconds, there was only Derrick and the Silver Knight marionette by his side.

The City of Silver Chief, who was wearing silver armor, had disappeared!

“What just happened?” Klein asked with a warm smile.

Derrick looked at him in shock, confusion, and panic.

“Didn’t you see it?”

The moment he finished speaking, the shadow under Derrick suddenly came alive. It rapidly extended upwards and enveloped him and the sunlight he emitted.

After the shadow completely covered Derrick, it fused with the surrounding darkness, no longer separable.

Klein had originally raised his black staff to prevent an anomaly from happening, but in the end, he didn’t do anything. All he did was watch with a smile.

After a few seconds, he noticed that his body had turned black and dull, as though he was being melted by the environment.

Similarly, Klein didn’t try to save himself. The corners of his mouth curled up as he watched with a slightly shaking head.

After his figure completely disappeared, his vision changed.

The darkness was gone. The grayish-white stone bricks, the surrounding walls, and the huge pillars appeared clearly. They were covered in a layer of faint shadows.

Outside the window, there was no sun, no moon, and no stars. However, a faint light shone through the window, making the entire palace appear sinister, dark, and cold.

In the deepest part of the palace stood a very faint shadow, resembling curtains.

Lovia, Colin Iliad, and Derrick stood at a distance not far away from him. They carefully observed their surroundings as though they had come to another world.

“Unfortunately, my marionette can’t enter.” Klein waved the Staff of the Stars in his hand and smiled at Derrick and company.

His indifferent attitude and the Chief’s calm and composed manner made Derrick quickly calm down. He no longer allowed his fear and panic to grip him.

Colin Iliad nodded slightly. Just as he was about to share his speculations, he suddenly felt something and turned to look at the deepest part of the palace.

Klein, Derrick, and Lovia did similar actions.

In the deepest depths of the palace, that faint shadow dissipated, revealing a flight of steps meant for giants and an iron-black throne at the top of it.

Sitting on a throne was a man with black, slightly-curly hair that reached his shoulders. His eyes were covered in shadows, and his actual appearance was extremely blurry, preventing others from seeing him clearly. Layers and layers of black wings fell down from behind him, covering most of his body. The robe was black with silver threads embroidering it. They formed complicated patterns and had gorgeous accessories hanging on it.

At that moment, the man had his left elbow on the armrest, holding up one side of his face with his palm as though he was in a deep sleep.

Chapter 1260 - Omniscience

◆

Without needing anyone to make the introductions, the four demigods present clearly understood a reality:

The giant-like man who was sleeping on the iron-black throne was the left hand of God, the deputy of Heaven, Dark Angel Sasrir!

Amongst them, Lovia could clearly sense the oppression coming from this absolute high-level existence. It was like the response when praying to the True Creator. It was an aura that could cause her thoughts to scramble, her soul to degenerate, and her body to tremble.

Suddenly, she heard a burst of laughter. She turned her head to the side in a daze.

Klein bent his back slightly and laughed.

“‘He’ is still sleeping. Should we directly wake ‘Him,’ or wait for ‘Him’ to wake up?

“If we choose to wake ‘Him,’ how should we greet ‘Him’? Hey, Your Highness Dark Angel? Rose Redemption Leader?”

These two questions sounded ridiculous and arrogant, but they had managed to shake off the influence of the environment and made Colin Iliad fall into deep thought.

Just now, they had instinctively considered the first question. It was rather important, and it concerned their subsequent actions.

Colin Iliad thought for a moment before saying, “Let’s not wake ‘Him’ up for the time being. Try approaching ‘Him’ and search for clues and information.”

“That’s my thoughts as well.” With his left hand, Klein casually snapped his fingers and walked towards the black throne.

At this moment, he felt fortunate that he had already taken care of Shadow and restored his spirit to its complete state. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have been able to completely restrict his Virtual Persona. When he was imagining how to do the greeting, he almost blurted out “Hi, Sassy.”

Seeing that Gehrman Sparrow had taken two steps forward, Lovia finally snapped out of her daze.

“I’ll give it a try using a Grazed soul.”

This was a relatively safer method which wouldn’t harm the expedition team.

Klein nodded. With his black staff in hand, he turned to his side with a beaming smile.

A three to four-meter-tall phantom image appeared in front of Lovia. A pair of goat horns lined with mysterious patterns sat atop its head. Its skin was back and matte, exuding a sinister fullness. It was a Devil.

It was different from the Devils that he had seen before. Its body was covered with signs of decay, with yellow-green pus hanging off it, as though it was mixed with the power of “Degeneration.”

As Klein casually sized up the phantom image, the Devil spread its huge bat-like wings, causing the light blue flames on it to burn even more vigorously, dissipating the strong smell of sulfur.

It took a step forward, slowly approaching the iron-black throne and the staircase meant for giants. Using its intuition for danger, it surveyed the area for any abnormalities.

While Colin, Klein, and the other demigods were paying attention to it, they also began scrutinizing the details of the shadowy palace. They discovered that behind the iron-black throne that Sasrir was sleeping on, there was a pair of dim, grayish-blue double doors that depicted sunset.

This might be the "door" that leads to the outside world… This thought flashed across the minds of the three City of Silver demigods—Colin Iliad, Derrick, and Lovia.

At this moment, the Devil, who had traveled midway, suddenly paused. It was enveloped by a cluster of silver lightning and quickly faded away after being blasted to pieces amid crackling sounds.

A pillar of light with swirling holy flames smote out of thin air, completely purifying the soul that belonged to the Devil.

Lovia didn't feel any pain from losing her Grazed target. She only frowned slightly and couldn't think of a better way to probe the way.

Klein looked around and said with an exaggerated smile:

"As expected, I'm the man for the job."

As he spoke, he slowly walked forward. As he took out a box of matches from his pocket, he lit them one by one and casually threw them around.

"I've always been a little timid." After throwing half a box of matches, Klein turned around and explained with a smile.

And even Derrick Berg wasn't convinced by this sentence.

Following that, under the illumination of the scarlet flames, Klein continued walking towards the iron-black throne that might've belonged to an ancient god.

When he arrived at the spot where the Devil's soul was destroyed, his left palm suddenly tightened.

Klein lowered his head and saw that Creeping Hunger had returned to its human-skinned form. An exaggerated crack opened in his palm. Inside were two rows of illusory white teeth.

This Sealed Artifact was attempting to gnaw at Klein's flesh in a bid to consume both his body and spirit.

Creeping Hunger had degenerated!

"Tsk." Klein let out an obvious sigh as he glanced at the Staff of the Stars in his right hand. He confirmed that the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact which didn't have any living characteristics had yet to show any abnormalities.

He then raised his right hand and stuffed the other end of the Staff of the Stars into Creeping Hunger.

Creeping Hunger bit at it a few times before it finally calmed down when sensing the suppression effect of a higher-level entity.

After laughing twice, Klein took another few steps forward, covering a few meters.

Cracks suddenly appeared in the shadows that covered the walls, pillars, and tiles, as one brass eye after another grew out.

A figure appeared in front of the countless eyes.

He was first presented as the black-haired, light-brown-eyed, and cold-looking Gehrman Sparrow. Following that, he warped into the black-haired, brown-eyed, scholarly-looking Klein Moretti with ordinary looks. Then, he degenerated into a blurry image, and a grayish-white fog emanated from him.

At this moment, these figures that seemed to expose all of Klein's secrets came to a halt.

Boom!

He exploded, transforming into countless illusory fragments that fell to the ground and disappeared.

Klein raised his brows and tsked with a laugh.

“The omniscient power of the Reader pathway?”

Just as he finished speaking, the brass-colored eyes, which grew out from the surrounding shadows and the ground, trembled. They emitted an ethereal voice that seemed to come from ancient times:

“The aura of Sefirah Castle…”

Sefirah Castle… Colin Iliad seemed to recall something and came to a certain realization.

It’s only possible to get a response or approach Sasrir with a sefirah? That’s why, despite The Hanged Man clearly having Lovia, a demigod believer from the City of Silver, “He” still forced me into the palace to meet the Dark Angel? It wasn’t easy for Klein to control his virtual personality’s instinct to speak.

Before he could consider what to say, the brass eyes hidden in the shadows emitted another voice:

“Your fate has intersected Amanises, Leodero, Adam, Amon, Herabergen, Aucuses, Medici, Ouroboros, as well as ‘Him’…”

With regards to the true names that the brass eyes had mentioned, Colin Iliad, Derrick, and Lovia were no strangers to the names. They knew that the first was the Evernight Goddess, followed by seven of the eight Kings of Angels. Furthermore, there was no lack of Sequence 0 true deities in the present day. This left them somewhat stunned. They couldn’t believe that Gehrman Sparrow would’ve crossed fates with so many high-level existences who exceeded Sequence 1.

Together with the sleeping Dark Angel before him, Mr. World and the eight Kings of Angels had already crossed paths. How impressive… Derrick marveled from the bottom of his heart.

Klein was in no mood to quip about his “divine interpersonal skills.” With an obvious smile, he asked, “‘Him’?”

Klein believed that “Him” referred to the True Creator. After all, he still had “His” corruptive influences left in his body.

The brass eyes on the shadowy curtain fell silent for a few seconds before saying with an ethereal voice:

“‘He’ is another me…”

The True Creator was really another side of the ancient sun god. The side that was born from the god’s corpse. It’s a side filled with hatred and viciousness, one that controls Degeneration? Klein gradually drew an equal sign between the black and gloomy infant sitting in the cavity of the ancient sun god’s chest and the True Creator. He had also gained initial confirmation that he was talking to the psyche left by the Dark Angel Sasrir.

He thought about it and couldn’t help but smile.

“Why did you form Rose Redemption to assassinate the ancient sun god?”

The information that the question revealed was something that Colin Iliad and Lovia already had an inkling and some speculations of. However, after hearing Gehrman Sparrow say it with their own ears, they still felt pangs of depression and confusion.

The curtain that covered the walls, stone pillars, and floor tiles trembled, but the sleeping Dark Angel remained motionless.

Those brass eyes stared at him and said, “Sun God is just my original honorific name. You should now address me as ‘the Lord who created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God, or God Almighty.’”

…I can tell that you’ve been leaning in that direction all this time. Finally, Klein laughed out loud. Then, he felt a lingering fear. This was because he was mocking Heaven’s deputy, the left hand of God, a king among Kings of Angels, as well as “His” true form.

To not anger the other party, he quickly repeated the question:

“So, why did you betray yourself and form Rose Redemption with the Evernight Goddess to assassinate yourself?”

The brass eyes fell into silence once again. The curtain-like shadows that blanketed various areas swayed gently without stopping.

After a few seconds, the ethereal voice slowly said,

“The Primordial One had awoken in my body…”

Upon hearing this answer, Klein’s pupils dilated. For some reason, he felt his hair stand on end as his back turned cold.

It was very close to his guess, but it was even more terrifying.

At this moment, the shadows around him thickened. It became more and more sinister and gloomy, as if it was giving birth to some terrifying, unknown, redoubtable danger.

Although Colin Iliad, Derrick, and Lovia didn’t understand the meaning of Dark Angel Sasrir’s words too well, they were still affected by the sinister and harrowing words. It left them shuddering in fear as they trembled.

“The Primordial One had awoken in my body…”

These words echoed in the air for a long time.

Chapter 1261 - No One Is an Exception

* * *

After a while, Klein asked, “The Primordial One is the one who created this world, transforming ‘His’ body into everything?”

To be frank, Klein subconsciously wanted to ask if the entity referred to the Primordial Demoness. However, with a thought, he eliminated this answer. Firstly, because the Primordial Demoness didn’t have the necessary level to strike fear into the ancient sun god, the City of Silver’s Creator. Even the Evernight Goddess couldn’t do so. Secondly, after the Dark Angel entered “His” slumber, this evil goddess was born only in the Fourth Epoch which had been influenced by the second Blasphemy Slate. Sasrir likely didn’t know of her “Her.” And even if “He” knew “Her” using his omniscient capabilities, “He” wouldn’t specially mention a Sequence 0 who hadn’t been involved in the Third Epoch.

Behind the thick and sinister shadows, the brass eyes flashed in unison.

“The universe.”

What do you mean? Upon hearing that ethereal voice, Klein was a little perplexed. He felt that Dark Angel Sasrir hadn’t answered his question.

But very quickly, he roughly understood what the other party meant.

The Primordial Chaos created not this world, but the entire universe!

So, “Primordial One” refers to the original Creator—the Oldest One? Klein turned his body to the side and swept a glance at the three demigods of the City of Silver, Colin Iliad, Derrick, and Lovia. He realized that they had looks of puzzlement and confusion on their faces. They were frowning and contemplating over the meaning behind the conversation.

In the history of the City of Silver, the Creator who was the ancient sun god was equivalent to the original Creator—the Oldest One. “He” was a supreme existence who had awoken after eons of slumber upon creating the world. “He” then stripped the authorities of the ancient gods and retrieved them.

Of course, in a sense, this wasn’t wrong. It was just that the original Creator’s method of “awakening” was different from what the City of Silver residents had imagined.

The universe… Klein thought for a moment and asked, “The Primordial One awakened in your body because of you gaining control of Chaos Sea?”

Then, what would happen to him in the future considering how he had gained initial control of Sefirah Castle?

Those brass eyes stared at him for a few seconds before saying, “That isn’t the only reason. The higher the Sequence, the closer one is to the Primordial One…”

Therefore, every pathway’s King of Angels and Sequence 0 might have the original Creator—the Oldest One—awaken in them? When Klein heard that, he tensed up and his heart sank.

He then thought of another matter.

The higher the Sequence, the easier it was to be corrupted by the things underground!

Combined with the fact that Chaos Sea was underground, could it be possible that the higher the Sequence, the easier it would be to be influenced by Chaos Sea, resulting in the original Creator awakening in one’s body? The thing that the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt sealed in the City of Miracles in Groselle's Travels wasn't the underground corruption, but the awakening of the original Creator? Of course, this is the most powerful and terrifying form of corruption… And the source of all this is where most or perhaps all Beyonder characteristics originated from—the original Creator. They are all part of "His" body? Klein thought of various possibilities and came up with all kinds of speculations.

In the end, he remembered the warning Captain Dunn Smith made before he embarked on this Beyonder path:

"We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness."

At that moment, Klein gained a deep understanding of the phrase from another angle.

Phew… He secretly exhaled and sighed inwardly.

"The Beyonder characteristic is both a gift and a curse…"

He gathered his thoughts and smiled.

"Will one be corrupted from just learning about these matters?"

"No." The brass eyes looked at Colin Iliad and the others and said, "It just means that the chances of the Primordial One awakening in your body is higher."

When he heard that, he was shocked. On the other hand, he was glad that the City of Silver's Chief and Little Sun didn't know much about such matters and hadn't made any connections; after all, the phrase "higher the Sequence, the closer one is to the Primordial One" didn't bring about any corruption. On the other hand, he felt a deep sense of pity for himself. This was because he knew too much about mysticism. Now with all of that chained together, he had no idea what kind of negative changes might happen to him once he left the Giant King's Court, an ancient god's kingdom.

Furthermore, this didn’t look like something that could be resolved by sealing his memories. After all, the Beyonder characteristic had already fused with his body and spirit.

Consider the method employed by the Dragon of Imagination? Actually, I don’t need to worry too much. Amon and “His” brother definitely know about this, and nothing has happened to “Them” yet… As long as I don’t approach Chaos Sea, as a Sequence 3, I don’t need to worry about such problems. It would be the same even if I were to advance to Sequence 2… After some thought, Klein gave up the intention to delve deeper into the matter. He curled the corners of his lips and diverted the topic to the mystery of the ancient sun god’s perishing:

“Therefore, under your tacit agreement, you worked with the Evernight Goddess and established Rose Redemption, preparing to assassinate yourself. By reviving and escaping the Primordial One, you will truly gain control of Chaos Sea and the corresponding five Beyonder pathways?”

On the dark, eerie, shadowy curtains, there seemed to be some human emotions in those brass eyes.

“That’s right.

“Not long after I walked out of Chaos Sea, I realized this problem. I deliberately split a portion of my persona, fusing the authorities of Degeneration with The Hanged Man pathway’s Beyonder characteristic, creating another me. Its purpose was to control Chaos Sea and to isolate it from my true body to prevent any contamination and corruption.

“But in the end, the Primordial One still awoke in my body…”

The Dark Angel is essentially the ancient sun god’s firewall? The Hanged Man pathway refers to the Secrets Suppliant pathway? Back then, the Dark Angel must have been really powerful. “He” actually had partial control of Chaos Sea. As expected of a King of Angels… As Klein sighed, he recalled that the ancient sun god had failed to prevent the original Creator—the Oldest One—from awakening in "His" body despite working so hard. He also felt a sense of horror, not daring to imagine what his future held.

"That's why I convened Leodero, Aucuses, Herabergen, Medici, and Ouroboros, inviting the various deities and Kings of Angels with Amanises to establish the Rose Redemption." The voice left behind by Dark Angel Sasrir echoed hoarsely.

It's no wonder it's called redemption… It's no wonder Kings of Angels like Medici and Ouroboros, who are completely loyal to the ancient sun god, would participate as well… Klein couldn't help but smile.

"Why didn't you invite Amon and 'His' brother?"

In theory, 'They' should be on the Dark Angel's side.

"'Their' births were a result of my hard work to resist the Primordial One. I was worried that inviting 'Them' would bring about an accident." The brass-colored eyes then cast their gaze back onto Klein.

These secrets left the three demigods of the City of Silver in a daze. Even the Chief of the six-member council, who had read quite a number of ancient documents, had emotional upheavals despite all his knowledge and rich experience.

So that's the case. I knew that the ancient sun god wouldn't have children for no reason… It wasn't easy for Klein to control his Virtual Persona from voicing the thought out loud.

Before he could ask another question, the spirit left behind by Dark Angel Sasrir seemed to sink into "His" memories as "He" continued, "After I was finished preparing everything, I entered this place and sealed off the palace. I returned to my body through my slumber and strengthened my consciousness. It formed a balance with the Primordial One, creating an opportunity for Amanises and the others…

"Ultimately, 'They' successfully killed me…

"According to my original plan, I would've been revived in the Giant King's Court. I would accommodate the corresponding Uniquenesses and Beyonder characteristics via the correct method, but Leodero, Aucuses, and Herabergen betrayed me and ate my body. I could only rush to fuse with my extreme emotions before dying, in which I was reborn within the corpse. I then took away the Beyonder characteristics of the Hanged Man pathway and the authority of Degeneration…"

It's similar to what I imagined… The Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom eventually committed a betrayal. It's no wonder that Ma'am Hermit's fairy tale magic was effective… With a sudden realization, Klein felt that most of the fog in the history of the Third Epoch had been cleared.

Of course, this was just his belief, nothing real. This was because he had no way of making contact with the fog of history.

After sighing, he suddenly thought of a question.

Since Dark Angel Sasrir has returned to the ancient sun god and has evolved into the True Creator with "His" original body, then who's the one sleeping on the iron-black throne now?

Why did the True Creator force me to enter the Giant King's residence to meet Sasrir?

As his thoughts raced, he cast his gaze back to the iron-black throne, carefully inspecting Dark Angel Sasrir's condition.

The layers of illusory black wings that covered more than half of Sasrir's body gently rose and fell, revealing a layer of grayish-white.

It was located on the black throne, hidden to the right of the Dark Angel, giving off an extremely ancient feeling.

Klein's eyes focused his eyes as he stared at it intently. He quickly confirmed that the grayish-white came from a strange stone. Its surface was mottled with the ravages of time, and it was engraved with words that he had never learned before but could understand at a glance.

These words seemed to be the source of all languages, including but not limited to Jotun, Hermes, ancient Feysac and the Southern Continent’s Dutanese.

Sequence 3 Demon of Arcana… Sequence 2 Master… Sequence 1 Light of Darkness… Sequence 0 Paragon… A small amount of information flashed in Klein’s mind as he suddenly had a realization.

Blasphemy Slate!

The first Blasphemy Slate!

The first Blasphemy Slate that was born in Chaos Sea!

And this was very likely a key item that the Dark Angel used to control parts of Chaos Sea!

Just as this thought surfaced in his mind, Klein suddenly felt the surroundings become unusually quiet.

The brass eyes that were hidden on the surface of the shadowy curtains seemed to disappear.

Klein’s gaze subconsciously shifted upwards to meet a pair of eyes hidden in the shadows.

The Dark Angel Sasrir, who was sleeping on the black throne, opened his eyes.

With a boom, Elder Lovia’s body collapsed, turning into a huge shadow.

Behind the shadow, there was a pair of blank but painful eyes.

Chapter 1262 - The Truth Behind the Enemy

◆

When he realized that the Dark Angel had woken up, Klein only felt his heart tighten and was on full alert. He didn't feel any fear or anxiety. After all, he had already confirmed that the real Dark Angel had returned to the ancient sun god's body. After being betrayed by the existences such as the Lord of Storms, the Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, "He" had focused his negative and extreme emotions on "His" corpse where "He" was reborn, turning into the True Creator. "He" didn't return here, so whatever was left was just a culmination of "His" psyche and will.

Furthermore, he had just communicated with the remnant psyche of Dark Angel Sasrir rather normally; he didn't sense any obvious animosity.

However, with the City of Silver's six-member council Elder, Lovia, losing control without any means to resist the moment she opened her eyes, turning into a flowing shadow and eyes hidden behind the shadowy curtain, Klein couldn't help but widen his pupils as he curled the corners of his lips. A strong sense of fear and despair surged through him. It was as though he was watching himself fall into an abyss without any life-saving straw to clutch at.

Just waking up from "His" slumber and not using any Beyonder powers or revealing "His" Mythical Creature form was enough to make a Sequence 4 demigod of the same pathway lose control on the spot. This was a testimony to how powerful and terrifying "His" level was!

At that moment, all that remained in Klein's mind were the titles he had previously mentioned.

The left hand of God, the deputy of Heaven, the king of the Kings of Angels!

It wasn't as if Klein had never dealt with a King of Angels before. On the contrary, he had frightened Red Angel Medici and made a deal with the Angel of Imagination Adam. He had obtained the key to enter the palace from the Wisdom Angel, Herabergen, and had gleaned potion formulas from White Angel Aucuses. He had managed to crack Angel of Fate Ouroboros's cycles of fate in front of "Him," and had pitted his brains against Angel of Time Amon. He possibly was well-deserving of the title as the person who had crossed the most paths with the Kings of Angels for those below Sequence 0.

However, in these interactions, he had never fought with the Kings of Angels most of the time. He either relied on the power of Sefirah Castle to instantly escape or cut off contact with them. He had never faced the Kings of Angels or deities in the true sense of the word. The only exception was the time when he was caught by Angel of Time Amon, and he had exchanged blows with "Him" several times in the span of a few days.

However, at that time, it was mainly a battle of wits, not a physical battle. The Angel of Time, Amon, had mostly shown the characteristics of a God of Trickery. "He" didn't fully reveal the level and strength of a King of Angels. It was only at the final moment that "He" revealed it, but the Evernight Goddess had used the Giant King's son to stop "Him," preventing "Him" from directly harming or influencing Klein.

Even so, whenever Klein encountered the Angel of Time on the way, "He" would easily finish off the strongest "helpers" that Klein could summon. It was something that Klein couldn't replicate up to now. It exceeded his peak strength. After all, if he wanted to summon the historical projection of Zaratul, he would be in danger.

And at that moment in time, Klein, Colin Iliad, and The Sun were facing the king of the Kings of Angels, the malice-filled deputy of Heaven. “He” was the left hand of god that instantly caused a Sequence 4 demigod to collapse and lose control.

How could such an enemy, with such a level and strength not make them reel in despair?

For a moment, Klein wanted to give up on Derrick and the Chief of the City of Silver, returning to the world above the gray fog with a single thought using the Sefirah Castle’s summoning. By relying on the last miracle and Deceit Bullets, he could revive outside the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

As his thoughts raced, he raised the Staff of the Stars in his hand.

At this moment, the shadow that Lovia had broken down in her loss of control stopped flowing. It let out a low voice that was filled with pain but not crazy.

“‘He’ isn’t that strong!”

As she spoke, the curtain-like shadow split apart, revealing what was hidden behind it.

It was a lump of squirming flesh that was nearly two meters tall. At the top, there was a pair of pale gray eyes that seemed to be looking down upon the entire world. They were eyes that had remnants of rationality left in them.

In other parts of this lump of flesh were arms, thighs, and calves that weren’t covered in skin, but sticky blood. They either held up the body or crowded towards the chest in layers, tightly hugging a huge, milky-white human skull.

The shadowy curtain fell again, covering the lump of flesh, turning into “her” cape.

Then, a phantom about five to six meters tall appeared in front of Lovia.

This was the Silver Knight that she had Grazed.

She could still control herself and attack Dark Angel Sasrir.

Upon seeing this scene, when Klein and Colin Iliad heard what Lovia had said, they quickly understood what she had meant without needing any further explanation from her.

Dark Angel Sasrir didn't possess the strength "He" appeared to possess. "He" only used the authority of "Degeneration" and "His" influence over relatively lower Sequences as a High-Sequence Beyonder of the same pathway to make Lovia's body degenerate, betray, and break down on the spot. As for her own spirit, she still remained conscious and rational. She could still control her own strength to a certain extent.

Of course, with the loss of control of her body, large amounts of corruption would corrode her spirit. It wouldn't take long for her to completely go mad. This could be subverted if she could quickly resolve the battle in time, and think of a way to turn her into an evil spirit, surviving in another form.

With this knowledge, combined with seeing the first Blasphemy Slate and his own guesses, Klein had a preliminary understanding of the enemy he was facing.

"He" was a product of the psyche, will, and aura left behind by the Dark Angel, as well as Chaos Sea's powers which were brought about by the first Blasphemy Slate. Perhaps there was a bit of the awakening consciousness of the Primordial One—in other words, the original Creator. There was a small amount of it, a consciousness that was crazy and filled with evil thoughts!

This was equivalent to a different type of evil spirit. It was unknown if it was considered a complete angelic evil spirit.

And this could be the reason why high-level existences like the True

Creator, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, and Amon's brother didn't personally enter the Giant King's palace. Once "They" approached the Primordial One and Chaos Sea, it was more dangerous for "Them" the higher "Their" Sequences were!

Back then, Amon, an entity akin to an Error, had used "His" avatar to lay an ambush in Chernobyl, but "He" hadn't dared to actually enter Chaos Sea. All he did was climb down the cliff and hide near Chaos Sea, pretending that "He" had climbed out from it. Otherwise, it could very well affect "His" true body.

As for Low-Sequence Beyonders, they were unable to resist the surge released from opening the door to the Giant King's residence—corruption that had accumulated for over two thousand years.

Even if those high-level existences had carefully chosen a suitable Sequence 3 or Sequence 4 demigod to indirectly help them defeat the influence brought about by the corruption and enter the resting grounds hidden in the shadows, without the sefirah's aura to resist the negative effects of the leaking powers of Chaos Sea, they wouldn't be able to truly approach the figure left behind by Dark Angel Sasrir and obtain the first Blasphemy Slate.

Therefore, the True Creator had tolerated Klein numerous times, only finding an opportunity to corrupt him and force him to meet Dark Angel Sasrir. This was because he was the only viable candidate.

By the same logic, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, Herabergen, the Angel of Imagination, Adam, and the other deities and Kings of Angels who had an interest in this matter had more or less made some arrangements for Klein, blessing him to a certain extent, pushing him to where he was now.

Without any hesitation, Klein outlined an image in his mind through the Staff of the Stars he raised. Colin Iliad took a step forward and bent down.

This City of Silver's Chief's body swelled rapidly, once again revealing an incomplete Mythical Creature form. He became a five-to-six-meter-tall Silver Knight covered in silver armor, holding a pair of gigantified swords of dawn.

Derrick was slightly slower than the two experienced demigods. He quickly spread his arms, as though he was hugging the void in front of him.

At that moment, two pitch-black flames ignited in the eyes of the awakened Dark Angel Sasrir.

"He," who shared the height of a giant, immediately pressed down on the armrest by lowering "His" arm, slowly getting to "His" feet. The gorgeous accessories on "His" body hung down one after another as layer after layer of black wings spread open on "His" back.

During this process, the shadow cape on the lump of squirming flesh—Lovia—came alive. It suddenly tightened, fixing her firmly in place.

At the same time, Dark Angel Sasrir had silver threads wrapped around "Him." In front of the black robe with mysterious patterns, silver bolts of lightning appeared out of thin air. They sizzled and intertwined with each other in a thunderous manner. They rapidly extended forward, transforming into a resplendent lightning sea that attempted to drown the entire shadow palace.

Gong!

An illusory chime sounded from a distant history as the melodious sound echoed in the shadow palace.

An ancient mottled wall clock appeared in front of Klein. Its face was separated into twelve different segments by grayish-white and bluish-black colors. Each segment had different, mysterious, and asymmetric symbols.

The three fingers, which seemed to be formed by Worms of Time of different length, began to tick lightly.

When the chime rang again, the lightning sea that was rapidly spreading in the shadow palace clearly froze.

Klein had successfully used the Staff of the Stars to reproduce Angel of Time Amon's Beyonder powers!

And the effects were much better than his previous attempts.

This made him suspect if he had obtained the approval of the God of Deceit and even obtained "blessings" from "Him" to a certain degree.

It wasn't true that merely simulating Amon's Beyonder powers would gain "His" notice, but that this King of Angels was almost equivalent to the Marauder pathway's Uniqueness. "He" was the ruler of the corresponding domain, and "He" was the wielder of the corresponding authority. "He" could make a certain level of adjustments to particular powers in advance, enhancing or deleting them.

From the looks of it, Amon appeared to be looking forward to seeing Klein enter the Giant King's residence to meet Dark Angel Sasrir. Therefore, "He" had adjusted some of his own domain's Beyonder powers in advance, and lowered some of his "authority" in certain aspects, allowing simple replications to achieve a better effect.

While the lightning sea had come to a halt, the Silver Knight soul that Lovia controlled, and Colin Iliad simultaneously stabbed their swords into the ground, creating two invisible barriers. As for Klein, his figure faded and he disappeared.

Chapter 1263 - The Final Watch

◆

After a short pause, a brilliant silvery-white glow continued to stretch out in front of them, completely drowning out the two invisible barriers that shielded Colin Iliad, Derrick Berg, and Lovia.

The barrier blocking the silver snaking lightning began to violently tremble. A crack that resembled tree branches appeared. As for how long the barrier could last in the Lightning Storm, that remained a question.

At this moment, behind Dark Angel Sasrir, there was an area that wasn't covered by the forest of lightning. Klein's figure, in his black trench coat and silk half top hat, appeared.

He was like a precise and cold machine. Without any hesitation, he aimed the Staff of the Stars at the side of the special evil spirit, quickly outlining all sorts of information related to the Beyonder powers in his mind.

He had previously performed tests—he couldn't "Wander" too far with the Staff of the Stars within the Giant King's Court, so he could only use "Blink" in a tiny vicinity. Therefore, he gave up on the idea of directly sending Dark Angel Sasrir out the Giant King's Court and seizing the opportunity to take the first Blasphemy Slate and leaving by "opening" the door.

As the various gems on the Staff of the Stars lit up, Sasrir's eyes which burned with pitch-black flames suddenly closed.

He had been forcibly dragged into a dream by Klein!

This was a Beyonder power belonging to the Evernight pathway's Sequence 7, but the one that Klein replicated had belonged to the version which the Evernight Cloister's matron, the Servant of Concealment Arianna, had used—the Beyonder power of pulling someone into a dream performed at the angel-level!

In the hazy dream world, Dark Angel Sasrir wore a black robe with complicated symbols embroidered with silver threads and adorned with accessories. "He" had appeared in a desolate moor.

"His" eyes remained ice-cold, unlike the dull and lifeless eyes of most Beyonders when they were in dreams.

The Spectator pathway also belonged to the Chaos Sea pathway. And its Sequence 5 and Sequence 3 were Dreamwalker and Dreamweaver respectively!

Moments later, Sasrir's pupils turned golden and vertical.

"His" giant figure faded away as a layer of abnormally thick shadows appeared in front of "Him."

This shadow completely blocked Sasrir, making it possible to vaguely make out a pair of eyes hidden behind the "curtain."

In the blink of an eye, the "curtains" parted, revealing an indescribable color, like a sea that seemed to contain all secrets.

Boom!

When Klein, the conjurer of the dream, saw this scene, his mind erupted with thoughts before he could analyze the details. It was as though his brain was a boiling pot of wheat porridge.

The corners of his mouth curled up instinctively, and most of his Virtual Persona disintegrated. He nearly let out a tragic cry as transparent maggots under his left cheek began to drill out one by one. The meat tendrils on his right face grew more and more obvious, becoming thinner and thinner, approaching that of Worms of Spirit.

The forcefully-induced dream disintegrated, and Dark Angel Sasrir's consciousness returned to the real world.

However, at that moment when the special evil spirit fell into a deep slumber, the sea of lightning faded away. The three demigods of the City of Silver struck back at the same time.

[image]

Colin Iliad straightened his body and struck out with the sword of dawn in his right hand, causing the silvery-white light to "Blink" to Sasrir's body. As Lovia resisted the restraints of the shadow "cloak," she got the Silver Knight evil spirit she Grazed to swing its greatsword upwards from below, bringing with it a terrifying storm formed from blobs of light. Derrick condensed a dazzling white "Unshadowed Spear," thrusting it at the Dark Angel as it left crackling sounds in its wake.

At this moment, Sasrir's figure emitted infinite pure light, as though "He" had suddenly become a sun that descended into reality.

Under the "sun"'s illumination, the "Unshadowed Spear" melted. The "Hurricane of Light" calmed down, and the silver beam dimmed. All the latter could do was damage the target's aura, and not deal any harm to "His" body.

The scene of a true deity's descent shocked Lovia and Derrick. They couldn't help but bow their heads in worship. As for the Silver Knight evil spirit, it quickly melted under the blazing sunlight and completely evaporated.

Suddenly, Sasrir's eyes closed once again.

Behind "His" back, with the Worms of Spirit constantly vanishing on Klein's body, he stubbornly endured the scorching sun's heat and pointed the Staff of the Stars at the evil spirit—the embodiment of the King of Angels.

The Beyonder power that he had replicated once again had forcefully pulled Dark Angel Sasrir into a dream!

However, unlike before, the moment Klein entered the dreamscape, he immediately released his Sefirah Castle's aura, transforming his body into the strange door of light that was tainted with some bluish-black colors. The door of light was made up of countless layers of illusory spherical light. Every spherical light was deep down a transparent and translucent cluster of twisted maggots.

Just like him, Dark Angel Sasrir revealed the traits of Chaos Sea. First, "He" turned into a thick and sinister shadow, then "He" pulled open the "curtain," allowing the "sea" that contained all colors and something the human language couldn't describe to appear in the dream.

Silently, Sasrir and Klein opened their eyes at the same time and raised their bodies slightly across each other.

One of them was covered in a faint shadow, while the other's expression was twisted and ferocious. Many Worms of Spirit crawled across the surface of his body.

Klein's Virtual Persona completely shattered.

Seizing this opportunity while Sasrir was affected, Lovia, who had the shadow "cloak" draped over her, blinked her pale-gray eyes. She used the two-meter-tall, squirming flesh to extend. Those skinless legs, which were flowing with bright red liquid, stepped onto the ground at the same time. With the help of the roiling winds, they pounced towards the Dark Angel.

A look of madness appeared in her eyes. It didn't appear like it would take long before her Spirit Body suffered complete corruption, pushing her towards losing control.

However, at that moment, Lovia's eyes were filled with more rationality and determination.

She knew what she was doing and knew her current state and her subsequent end.

Amidst the howling winds, her collapsing body, along with the shadow "cloak," landed on Dark Angel Sasrir's body.

The squirming flesh and blood intruded as the thick shadow rapidly expanded, binding the two figures together.

Without waiting for Lovia to speak, Colin Iliad had already understood her intentions. He immediately roared in a low voice, "Attack!"

Boom!

His two swords tore through the void at the same time, allowing the silver light to surge at Lovia and Dark Angel Sasrir who were embroiled with each other.

Upon hearing the Chief's words, Derrick bit his lip and spread open his arms halfway.

The palace that was shrouded in the shadows suddenly lit up as huge balls of light filled with holy flames appeared out of thin air. They enveloped the Dark Angel and Lovia within, quickly melting them and igniting their flesh.

Flaring Sun!

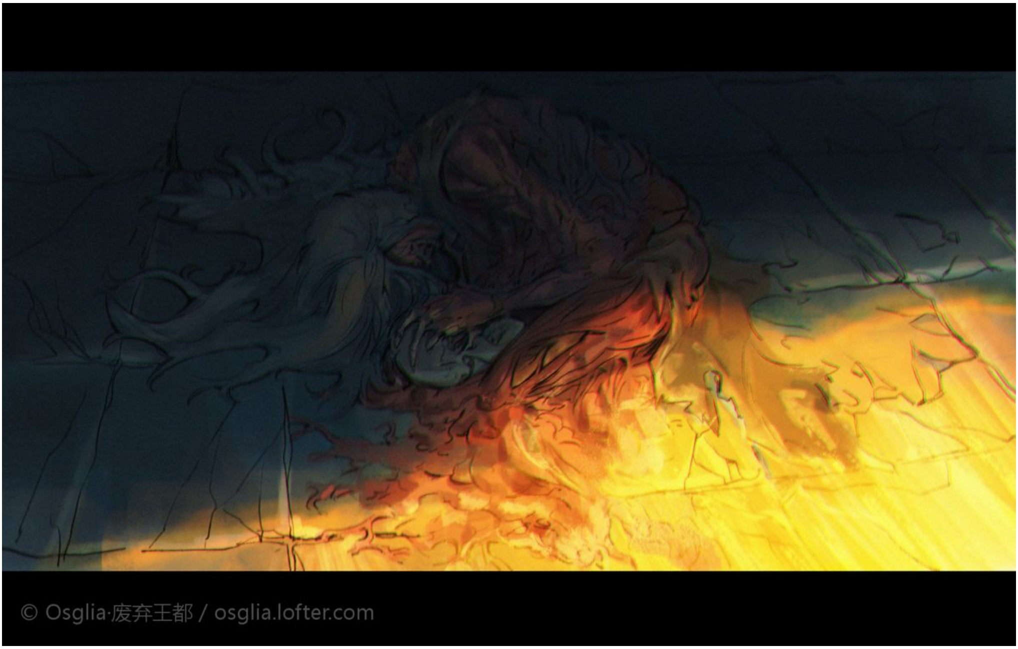
Amid this bright glow, Lovia's pale-gray eyes revealed the pain that she acutely felt. Her voice echoed in an ethereal manner.

"I have never betrayed the City of Silver…"

Before she could finish her sentence, the flesh and the shadow "cloak" she used to envelop Dark Angel Sasrir's body swelled up.

Boom!

Lovia’s collapsing body was sent flying before she fell to the ground. Her shadow tore apart, turning into a thin, illusory veil that slowly floated down.



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Dark Angel Sasrir turned into a pitch-black and sticky sea filled with an aura of Degeneration. It swallowed the remaining silvery-white light and “Flaring Sun,” reducing it to nothing.

“He” immediately returned to “His” previous appearance—a giant dressed in a gorgeous black robe with silver threads. However, the black wings on his back had thinned significantly.

At the same time, “His” pupils turned vertical and turned golden.

A violent but surreal wind surged around “Him” and filled every corner of the shadow palace with all sorts of thoughts.

Mind Deprivation!

Derrick’s recently condensed “Unshadowed Spear” disappeared. He stood rooted to the ground in shock. Although Colin Iliad had a strong will, he suffered from the madness, cruelty, and bloodlust of an incomplete Mythical Creature form. All he could do was divert some attention to resist the influence so as to prevent himself from losing control. Just as Klein calmed down and allowed his Worms of Spirit to burrow back into his body, he suffered an intense fear brought about by "Mind Deprivation." His body instantly convulsed, preventing him from using the Staff of the Stars.

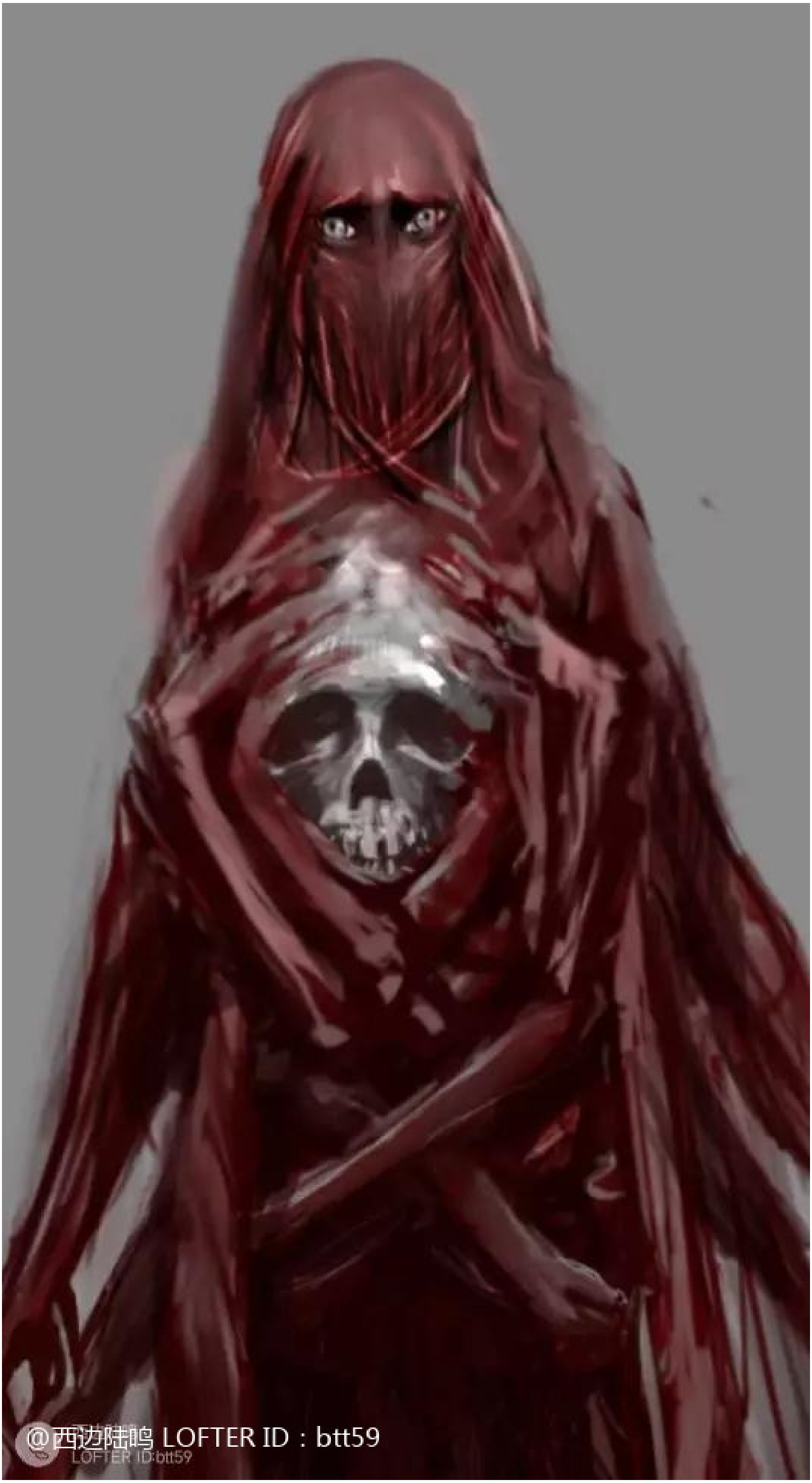
Lovia's body had already collapsed, and with her soul almost completely corrupted, she was in a worse off state. She rolled on the ground struggling, leaving behind blood-colored sticky liquid.

At this moment, Dark Angel Sasrir raised "His" left hand. The golden colors in "His" eyes was replaced by two blazing white suns.

Rays of holy flames fell down one after another, striking Lovia's body, destroying her soul and purifying her flesh.

Lovia's aura rapidly dissipated as her pale gray eyes lost their luster.

Her body, which had collapsed into a lump of flesh and blood, curled up. The skinless arms covered in bright red liquid wrapped the milky-white, large human skull tightly in front of her "chest" and pressed it under her.



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Under the blazing “sunlight”, the holy flames burned. Lovia maintained this posture, not allowing herself to move, nor allowing the human skull to be revealed and receive any damage.

Another column of light shot down. Lovia’s body couldn’t help but bounce up, but she still huddled there writhing.

Finally, this lump of distorted, disgusting, squirming flesh stopped moving and covered the surface of the human skull. It was dark, dull, and damaged.

During the Dark Angel Sasrir’s act of murdering Lovia, Klein quickly recovered from the effects of “Mind Deprivation” by using his unique traits and past experience. He felt an uncontrollable sense of despair towards this battle.

They had used all their strength, but they had only slightly injured the evil spirit. Now that they had lost a demigod, the situation that followed would probably be even worse.

What should I do? As Klein used Creeping Hunger to change his position, his thoughts raced in search of any possible weaknesses.

It’s intrinsically an evil spirit… An evil spirit… Just as his figure appeared elsewhere, he suddenly had an idea. He cast his gaze on the grayish-white stone slate on the iron-black throne!

Some evil spirits had Beyonder characteristics, but most of them didn’t. The source of their powers stemmed from other places, such as the spirit world. The existence of evil spirits needed something to rely on. This might be the “territory” that “He” was born in, or perhaps something special. The common point was that evil spirits could use them to connect to the spirit world or even the Underworld to obtain the power to maintain their existence.

And this evil spirit that originated from Dark Angel Sasrir might even be mixed with some of the will of the Primordial. Where did “His” powers come from?

This was the Forsaken Land of the Gods, and the connection with the spirit world was sealed. It was almost completely severed, making the powers difficult to be effectively utilized. Klein could "Teleport" only by relying on the uniqueness of a divine kingdom or the divine kingdom's embryonic form. As for the Giant King's Court, it was clearly unable to provide the powers of the Spectator, The Sun, The Hanged Man, Reader, and Tyrant pathways. The traits the Dark Angel formerly possessed clearly belonged to the True Creator at present, making it not present here.

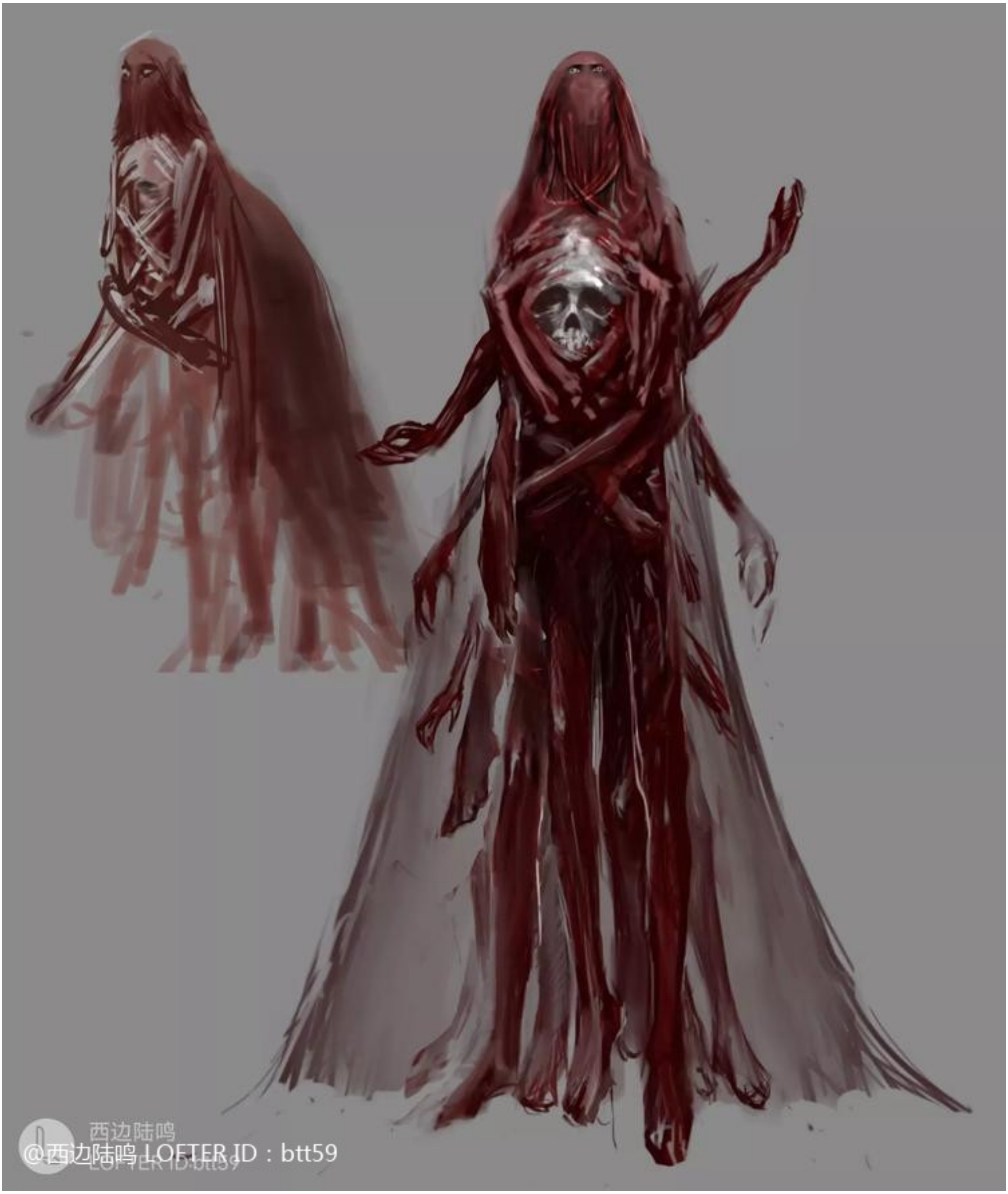
Therefore, the answer to the source of the evil spirit's power was very simple:

Chaos Sea!

In the shadow palace, the only thing directly connected to Chaos Sea was the Blasphemy Slate!

When Klein cast his gaze at the iron-black throne, he noticed that the City of Silver's Chief, Colin Iliad, had also glanced over.

Rest in peace mommy Lovia. Yes, you never betray the City of Silver.



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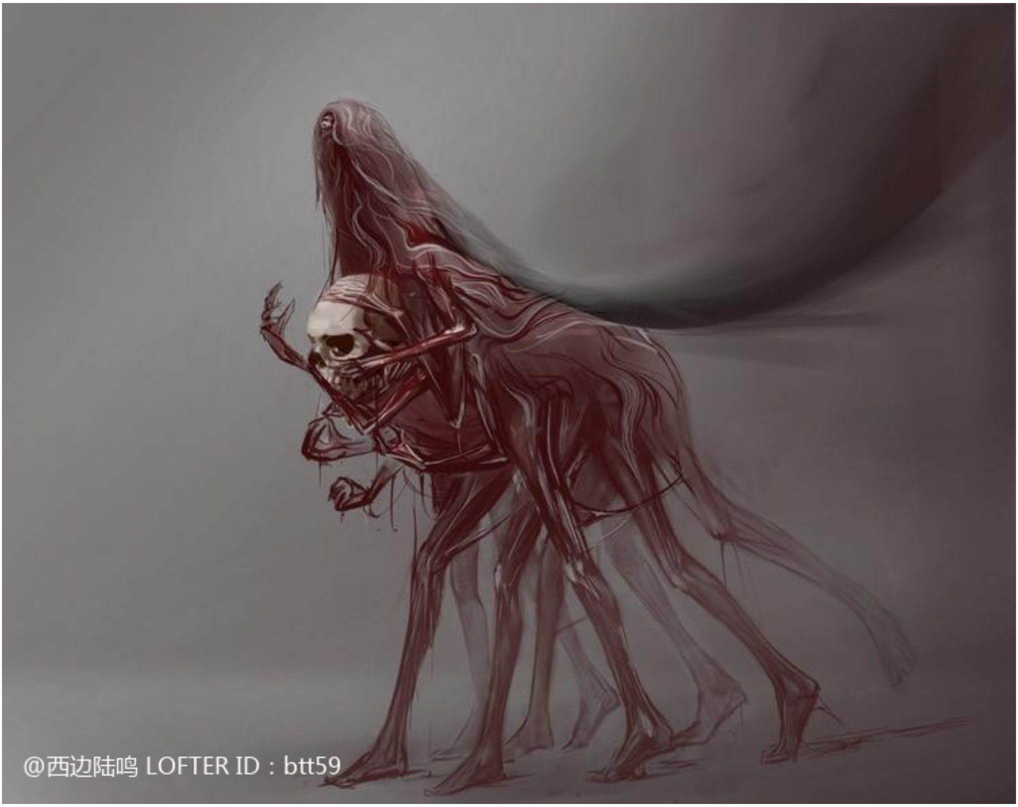
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Chapter 1264 - Succeeding

◆

There was no need for any communication. Just from this sudden locking of eyes, Klein knew that Colin Iliad had the same thoughts as him.

He didn’t hesitate to flip the black staff embedded with many gems and point it at himself.

In the next second, it was as if Klein’s body was a sketch that had met an eraser. It was wiped away inch by inch, and he quickly disappeared.

This was the power of Concealment, one that also came from the leader of the ascetics of the Church of Evernight, Arianna.

As the power of Concealment that was replicated by the Staff of the Stars was definitely much weaker than the original version, and the evil spirit’s level was rather high, Klein didn’t attempt to use it on Dark Angel Sasrir. Instead, he targeted himself.

At the same time that he was “concealed,” Colin Iliad fused into the faint light that illuminated everything in the shadow palace with his two swords of dawn.

Around Dark Angel Sasrir, who was dressed in a silver-threaded black robe, silver beams lit up one after another. Colin struck the evil spirit from different angles, forming a tornado that swept upwards. During this process, the gigantified Colin Iliad didn’t appear at all. Furthermore, he hid his malicious intent, making it impossible for the enemy to determine where his next attack would come from.

Derrick Berg recovered from the shock and quickly condensed bright white “Unshadowed Spears” as he wildly thrust them forward.

Amidst the crackling sounds, the Unshadowed Spears were either blocked by the black armor formed by the aura of Degeneration, or by the layered silvery-white sphere of lightning. He failed to truly hurt Dark Angel Sasrir, but it effectively affected his opponent’s actions.

While the two City of Silver demigods were holding back that special evil spirit, Klein, who was in a “concealed” state, approached the iron-black throne.

In his “concealed” state, he saw veiled scenes that were covered in a dark fog. He could only roughly tell where he was and what the surrounding objects were. He was unable to exert any influence on the outside world. If not for this, the moment he entered the “concealed” state, he could secretly control Sasrir’s Spirit Body Threads. It would be a method impossible to fend against.

After rapidly approaching the iron-black throne, Klein ended his “concealed” state, allowing his figure to instantly appear to the right of the target.

Following that, he aimed the Staff of the Stars at the grayish-white ancient stone slab.

Ignoring the contents on it, Klein quickly outlined a very familiar Beyonder power in his mind.

Boom!

Silver bolts of lightning shot out with a strong destructive aura, striking the first Blasphemy Slate.

This was the Lightning Storm power from the Sea God Scepter!

Boom!

Amidst the silver light that illuminated the surrounding area, an illusory “light” that was almost invisible appeared between the first Blasphemy Slate and Dark Angel Sasrir. It was difficult to describe the exact color, but under the terrifying lightning’s pandemonium, they evaporated and broke apart.

Pure beams of light shot out from Sasrir’s body, leaving no darkness in the shadow palace. Nothing else could hide.

Unshadowed Domain.

The nearly six-meter-tall Colin IIliad appeared in his silver armor. Together with Klein, layers of blazing halos pushed them away into the distance. The attacks of Derrick’s “Unshadowed Spears” and “Flaring Sun” were also blocked by these corporeal halos.

Right on the heels of that, Dark Angel Sasrir’s eyes were dyed with a brass sheen. In each of them, an illusory river that shimmered with waves of light appeared, circling the first Blasphemy Slate and “His” figure.

The “river” flowed upstream as the illusory “light” that had evaporated and severed appeared once again and connected to it.

The damage that Klein had painstakingly inflicted was quickly returned to normal.

The cycle of fate, the rebooting of all things!

Sasrir raised “His” left hand and condensed a deep-black scepter. “He” then used “His” brass-like eyes to sweep across the demigods present. “He” said in a deep but magnificent voice, “I’m omniscient, and also omnipotent.”

As “His” voice echoed in the air, both Klein and Colin Iliad didn’t waver at all. They either “Blinked” or moved at high speeds, not giving the terrifying evil spirit a chance to lock onto them. They also attempted to launch a new wave of attacks. However, Klein didn’t dare to forcefully pull the Dark Angel into a dream again, because if he was attacked by the aura and power of Chaos Sea again, he might lose control immediately. Elsewhere, Derrick covered his body with a layer of pure light, forming holy armor.

At that moment, a pitch-black flame burned in Sasrir's brass eyes.

"His" voice turned evil and sinister, carrying a strong sense of "Degeneration."

"Blasphemer, die!"

Klein's body, heart, and soul suddenly sank. He felt as though he was about to die. His consciousness turned blurry as his energy evaporated; his flesh began to wither inch by inch.

Colin Iliad was slightly better than him. He only felt his body grow heavy as his life slipped away uncontrollably. The madness that came from his incomplete Mythical Creature form grew stronger.

Derrick, who was farthest from Dark Angel Sasrir, emitted bright bouts of sunlight, helping him quickly escape from his trance. He then opened his mouth.

"God says it's ineffective!"

The feeling of death instantly dissipated a little, allowing Klein and Colin Iliad to barely find themselves.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The giant-like Colin Iliad rushed towards Dark Angel Sasrir. Along the way, he kept changing his position, dodging unstoppable dark, sharp beams.

In the blink of an eye, he had already closed in on the target.

Dark Angel Sasrir immediately pointed the pitch-black scepter ahead, causing Colin Iliad's body to produce a shadow within the Unshadowed

Domain. The shadow came alive as it followed the legs of the City of Silver Chief, “swallowing” him.

Gong!

A distant bell sounded as though it had pierced through history.

The ancient, mottled stone wall clock appeared in front of Klein once again, bringing with it a brief respite.

As he made use of this respite, Klein used the Staff of the Stars to reproduce the “Unshadowed Spear” and cast it at Colin Iliad’s shadow.

The blazing light exploded, dispersing the shadow like the sun.

Colin’s face under his visor twisted, but he didn’t hesitate at all. He jumped up, appearing right above Dark Angel Sasrir and cleaved down with his two swords of dawn.

Gong!

Sasrir seemed to see through Colin Iliad’s intention. “He” raised the black scepter horizontally and blocked the other party’s cleaving strike.

Suddenly, Colin Iliad’s body melted.

He became sticky, heavy “mercury”, surging down like waves, instantly drowning Dark Angel Sasrir. It was as if “He” was wearing a set of full-body silver armor, without any gaps in between. Colin wanted to suffocate the entity inside!

Sasrir’s actions were immediately restricted.

Taking this opportunity, Klein’s figure suddenly turned transparent as he appeared beside the iron-black throne.

Teleportation!

Then, he raised the Staff of the Stars and conjured a certain Beyonder power.

It was one of the core powers of the Marauder pathway.

Theft!

Just as he had expected, the “Theft” was carried out rather successfully. It was as though the current Sequence 2 angel, Pallez Zoroast, had personally taken action.

The “light” that connected the Dark Angel and the first Blasphemy Slate separated from Sasrir, shifting to Klein!

At that instant, Klein’s thoughts nearly exploded. The indescribable color and form appeared in front of him once again. It was abnormally illusory, as though it was a sea containing all secrets.

Just as he was about to lose control due to the aura and powers of the Chaos Sea, the parts of his body that were corrupted by the True Creator suddenly experienced a change. They seemed to be attracted by a strong attractive force as they rapidly gathered together and began to take over the nearly invisible “light,” making him stop at the edge of a proverbial cliff.

Indeed… As Klein sighed, he tried his best to restrain his mind that had been inundated. He was temporarily unable to move.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The silver armor covering Dark Angel Sasrir’s body began to crack in the darkness.

These beams of light that came from the “Cull of Spiritual Flesh” tore out, turning the mercury into tattered pieces and flying far away.

With a loud snap, the mercury fell to the ground, regathering into the form of Colin Iliad.

There were gaping holes in the Chief’s body. Inside it was a black, frozen, decadent, and illusory aura.

At that moment, the illusory, layered black wings on Sasrir's back dimmed significantly. "His" eyes had once again worn a brass sheen, a faint flickering illusory river appearing in them.

Upon seeing this scene, Colin Iliad instinctively recalled what had happened.

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, he relied on his intuition to charge out without hesitation, filled with great resolve.

His body ignited a transparent flame, emitting the bright light of dawn.

These beams of light came from his soul, his body, his Beyonder characteristic, and the two swords he struck out merged together, turning into a raging, violent storm that swept out.

At this moment, Colin Iliad's "eyes" were filled with the light of dawn he created, and the towering figure dressed in a gorgeous black robe with illusory black wings.

Bearing the light, he charged towards the light—Sasrir.

The terrifying "Hurricane of Light" instantly enveloped the Dark Angel, tearing at "His" body, interrupting the Beyonder powers that "He" was about to use. It made the evil spirit that had lost the source of its power rapidly fade away amidst the fragments of light.

When the light dissipated, holes appeared on Dark Angel Sasrir's body. The layers of wings on "His" back were spread out, but "He" failed to borrow any strength.

Colin Iliad immediately turned into sticky "mercury," once again covering most of the evil spirit's body, restricting "His" movements.

Then, the City of Silver Chief shouted in a low voice to Derrick Berg, just like he did when he was facing Lovia:

“Attack!”

Chapter 1265 - Warrior

◆◆◆

“Attack!”

Upon hearing the Chief’s words, Derrick froze for a moment before instinctively spreading his arms.

During this process, his vision blurred and he let out an extremely repressed voice from the depths of his throat.

A blob of light covered in holy flames descended out of thin air, devouring the figures of Dark Angel Sasrir and Colin Iliad.

Before the blast of light exploded, Derrick pulled back his arm, forming a bright white and pure “Unshadowed Spear” in his palm.

Amidst the crackling sounds, the long spear of light tore through the holy flames and accurately hit the evil spirit’s head.

Dazzling light burst out, completely covering the entire area. Even the crazed Klein couldn’t avoid it, as he was too close to it. He couldn’t help but close his eyes, his face contorted into a grimace. He felt as though his Worms of Spirit were evaporating one after another. The connection between the Blasphemy Slate and the True Creator’s power of corruption had been greatly purified before they could fully be established.

The sun seemed to rise in the sky. Dark Angel Sasrir’s indistinct figure appeared, twisting and distorting amidst the blinding white light and holy flames, melting away.

Then, the shadow that covered the walls, stone pillars, and tiles began to disintegrate, revealing inches of orange-red light.

The palace hidden in the residence of the Giant King finally failed to sustain its existence in the real world. It no longer blocked out the influence of the outside world.

This also meant that the special evil spirit that had lost contact with Chaos Sea had truly been cleansed.

Just as the shadow palace began to collapse without completely disintegrating, an invisible force finally pierced through the barrier, causing a minute amount of it to descend. This caused the corrupting nature gathered inside Klein's body to increase in intensity!

They protruded out from his chest, turning into a black ball of flesh.

The flesh immediately broke free from Klein's body, severing all invisible connections with him. It quickly squirmed and grew, turning into a gigantic shadow hand. It followed the illusory "light" between itself and the first Blasphemy Slate, and it grabbed the item.

At the same time, in the ruins of the battlefield of the gods' dream world, in front of the projection of the Giant King's residence.

Dressed in a pointed hat and a classic black robe, Amon sat on the tall, grayish-white railing, with "His" back facing the orange-red path that separated the clouds. "He" leisurely looked at the grayish-blue door covered with golden nails; it was a mystery as to how long "He" had been waiting there for.

Suddenly, "He" adjusted the monocle on "His" right eye and easily jumped down the railing, arriving at the door of the Giant King's residence's projection.

"The power of Chaos Sea is beginning to fade. I can use the 'bug' in all of this to directly enter…" As "He" smiled, "He" reached out "His" right hand and pressed it on the door's shadow.

“His” figure immediately softened and lost its corporeal feeling before “He” entered the door like a stream of light.

†

Backlund, somewhere on the battlefield.

With short blond hair and dark green eyes, Crestet Cesimir genuflected on the ground, stabbing a pure white bone sword, that wasn’t more than one meter long in length, in front of him to support himself.

His body was covered with charred holes and cracks that went straight through his body. His teeth were protruding and sharp, like that of a beast.

This high-ranking deacon, whose consciousness was beginning to blur, struggled to shift his gaze from the weak enemy who wasn’t far away towards the sky.

The orange sunset had partially invaded the dark night.

Crestet Cesimir tried his best to pull out his bone sword and stand up to fight. He wanted to be a Nightwatcher to the very end, but his arm trembled violently as his breathing weakened.

In the astral world, in an endless and silent darkness filled with moon flowers and night vanilla.

Suddenly, orange beams of light shone into the kingdom, causing a portion of the area to return to dusk. One by one, the plants withered.

In the desolate dusk, a gigantic mountain-like figure walked out. “His” limbs were abnormally long, and “He” wore tattered silver armor. “His” face was covered by a helmet’s visor, only revealing a blob of orange light.

“He” held an exaggerated sword in “His” hand, causing the tip to naturally hang down, touching the dark “ground.”

As the terrifying giant walked forward, step by step, the sword continued to be dragged across the darkness, causing the ground to split apart as dusk froze.

Deep in the darkness, an equally large figure pulled out a long sickle.

“She” was wearing a black dress that was layered but not complicated. It was adorned with countless resplendent lights, as though they were stars that dotted the night sky.

Near “Her” ribs and waist, two pairs of arms grew out. Their surfaces were covered in short deep-black hair.

In “Her” six arms, two carried the huge black sickle that appeared heavy. Another two hands held a crimson “moon.” Out of the hands “She” had left, one was empty, while the other held an ancient accessory forged from gold.

The accessory looked like a slender bird with pale-white flames surrounding it. Within its bronze eyes, there were layers of light, forming numerous illusory doors.

The giant wasn’t surprised by such a scene. The speed of “His” stride sped up, gradually approaching that of a charge.

“He” dragged “His” sword against his surroundings which were a mixture of darkness and dusk, producing glimmers of the pure light of dawn.

At this moment, the moon flowers and night vanilla to the side suddenly grew in size, growing wildly. Soon, they resembled trees that had lived in a primitive forest for more than a thousand years. They were densely packed, blocking out the “sky.”

Amongst these trees, a figure twined by deep green vines and adorned with various herbs and flowers appeared.

“She” was also as huge as a mountain and had a voluptuous figure.

“Her” dress fluttered as “She” carried an illusory baby.

The moment the figure descended, “She” followed the sunset giant and flitted towards the humanoid demonic wolf that was dragging a huge black sickle.

†

In the palace where shadows were falling apart, although some of the corruption had left Klein’s body, making him no longer need to worry about any latent danger in this aspect, this was equivalent to culling many of his Worms of Spirit. He couldn’t help but let out a low gasp as transparent and twisted maggots crawled out of his writhing face. They had mysterious patterns on them, and his mind was like a lake that had a boulder thrown into it. He was momentarily unable to calm down.

At that moment, a familiar figure appeared in his eyes which became bloodshot due to the pain.

It was the Angel of Time, Amon, who wore a monocle and a pointed hat.

Amon smiled at him, scaring him into having the thought of returning to Sefirah Castle immediately.

Although this would suck for The Sun, Klein felt that he would have the ability to save him due to the angel powers from being in Sefirah Castle. After all, the influences from the outside world could now enter this area.

But in a blink of an eye, the Angel of Time cast “His” gaze towards the grayish-white Blasphemy Slate. “He” cast it towards the shadow hand that was saturating and growing stronger with the collapse of the “land of slumber.”

Amon immediately raised “His” right hand and adjusted “His” right eye’s monocle.

The crystal monocle turned dark, as though it was mixed with countless colors in an indescribable manner.

An illusory, terrifying, tumultuous “sea” appeared in front of Amon.

This Blasphemer had released some unknown power “He” had stolen from somewhere at some point in time! Or perhaps, it was some power of convergence!

The Blasphemy Slate suddenly vibrated and emitted a buzzing sound as though it was alive.

It broke free from the remaining “light” that wasn’t stable enough between the shadow hand, and it threw itself at Amon!

Klein, who had just recovered from the pain from his fear and horror, couldn’t believe his eyes as they dilated.

The first Blasphemy Slate actually didn’t choose the True Creator of the Hanged Man pathway, and instead sought refuge with the Marauder pathway’s Angel of Time!

After a momentary daze, he vaguely understood the whole story.

Amon’s true body has wandered the Forsaken Land of the Gods for more than a thousand years before entering Chernobyl, doing so in search of the history from the Second all the way to before the First Epoch. “He” must’ve hovered at the edge of Chaos Sea, and had done some dangerous research. “He” had “stolen” some traits, and now, “He” is only using the release of this stolen trait to attract the Blasphemy Slate.

Simply put, this King of Angels had prepared for this for a very long time. As for the True Creator, “He” is unable to completely descend. “He” has to wait for the Dark Angel’s “land of slumber” to completely collapse.

But the problem is, why would Amon steal the first Blasphemy slate? It’s useless for “Him”… “He” has no way of transferring to the Spectator, Reader, Tyrant, Sun, and Hanged Man pathways! Could it be just because it’s fun? When the deities and “His” brother are plotting for this Blasphemy Slate, “He” suddenly intervenes and runs away? But isn’t it more important for “Him” to capture me? As Klein remained puzzled with Amon’s goals, he slowly retreated, opening his eyes wider, trying his best to pry into the secrets on the surface of the Blasphemy Slate. He wanted to memorize the potion formula he needed.

“Sequence 1: Attendant of Mysteries…” As soon as the corresponding words entered his eyes, Amon reached out with “His” left hand and grabbed the Blasphemy Slate. Then, “He” suddenly turned around and pressed “His” right hand on the grayish-blue door that was still covered with a small amount of shadows.

The figure wearing a pointed hat and a classic black robe immediately turned illusory as “He” tore through the door and vanished.

The shadow hand which was partially formed by Klein’s corruption rapidly expanded amidst the collapse of the “land of slumber.” Finally, it turned into a black shadow and chased after Amon, rushing out of the closed door.

In the next second, all the shadows disappeared. The orange-red light illuminated the palace that the Giant King once lived in.

In front of the iron-black throne, on the platform that was illuminated by the light of dusk, Colin Iliad’s figure appeared.

He was wearing a tattered silver armor, revealing several old scars on his face. He sat there quietly, like a warrior who had just finished his last battle.

His two swords had already crumbled, and he had stopped breathing. However, Klein could sense that there were still remnants of his will and psyche. The former couldn’t bear to just dissipate without delivering his last words.

At the bottom of the stairs, Derrick saw this scene. With his eyes red, he ran closer and stumbled, acting nothing like a demigod.

He quickly knelt beside Colin Iliad and shouted, his voice going soft, “Chief…”

Chapter 1266 - Light

◆ ◆ ◆

For a demigod Beyonder, they experienced a qualitative change due to their powerful souls. Even in death, their psyche could persist for some time. Unless this was circumvented due to an enemy deliberately destroying it, a High-Sequence Beyonder, who continued having a strong desire or unresolved matters during their state of death, could have their remnant will last longer. As such, he could slowly assimilate the surrounding areas, allowing it to mix with the spirit world, and even the Underworld, so as to turn it into an evil spirit.

Therefore, although Colin Iliad had stopped breathing, he was still able to hear Derrick's cry while sitting at the top of the ancient god's staircase in tattered silver armor. He turned his head to look at the underaged demigod before smiling.

"Compared to the Elders of the past, it's a form of luck for Lovia and myself to die here."

Upon hearing this, Derrick gaped his mouth, wanting to say something, but felt something pressing down on his heart, blocking his throat.

Not far away, Klein raised the Staff of the Stars and attempted to use Will Auceptin's "Reboot" to save Colin Iliad. However, he failed several times in a row. Even the successful attempt didn't have the ability to reverse everything. The effects were clearly inferior to the original's, and it involved a Uniqueness—Amon's true body had descended.

He's already dead, so he can't even be turned into a marionette. He can only consider turning into an evil spirit, but there's almost no evil spirit that can maintain their humanity. Even Dark Angel Sasrir failed to do so… The only exception is the Red Angel Medici trio. But that was only after “They” left “Their” “territory” and went to Bansy Harbor… This Chief doesn’t seem willing to take this route… To the residents of the City of Silver, becoming an evil spirit is undoubtedly a curse… Klein sighed and cast his gaze elsewhere to observe the Giant King’s palace that had its shadows recede.

Colin Iliad examined Derrick’s face and sighed.

“When you return, you’ll be a member of the six-member council.

“I know. Relative to your age, this is a very heavy responsibility, but everyone in the City of Silver has to be prepared to shoulder everyone’s fate.”

[image]

Derrick nodded and said with a nasal voice, “Yes, Your Excellency!”

Colin Iliad revealed an amiable smile.

“Don’t be worried that they’ll misunderstand this. I’ll tell you a secret. Currently, in the City of Silver, only Waite and I know of it.

“When you get back, tell this to Waite immediately. He will understand that Lovia’s and my death has nothing to do with you. Otherwise, you will not obtain this secret from me.”

Having said that, Colin Iliad looked up at Gehrman Sparrow and nodded gently.

“From today onwards, everyone in the City of Silver can freely change their faith to Mr. Fool.”

Derrick wasn’t excited at all. He nodded heavily, indicating that he understood.

Colin Iliad immediately retracted his gaze. A layer of solemnity and bitterness appeared on his clearly exhausted face.

“That secret is related to the second god-level Sealed Artifact of our City of Silver.

“It’s called ‘Gift of the Land.’”

Derrick wiped his eyes with his arm and listened attentively to the Chief’s description.

Colin Iliad sighed and continued, “It’s precisely because of this Sealed Artifact that Black-Faced Grass can grow around the City of Silver, preventing us from completely sinking into the dark ages…”

Derrick’s pupils dilated as the sadness in his heart eased.

He remembered very clearly that the textbooks mentioned the discovery of Black-Faced Grass as the key turning point in the history of the City of Silver. He believed that if there was no such safe and harmless staple food, then the City of Silver would’ve long become a playground for monsters.

At that instant, Derrick thought of many things. He finally understood why the mushrooms that Mr. World had given had undergone a huge transformation in the City of Silver, one that was different from the original description.

Colin Iliad’s gaze swept across his face, and his voice suddenly turned deep.

“It’s precisely because of this that we are burdened with the fate of being cursed. Only people who are killed by their immediate family wouldn’t become a terrifying evil spirit.

“Cornucopia has a price.”

Derrick’s expression froze.

Murdering his parents left a wound that could never heal in his heart.

He had always blamed the corresponding curse on this land that had been forsaken by the gods. But now, the Chief had told him the truth which was unlike what he imagined. The curse gave them the food they relied on for survival!

The grizzled and exhausted-looking Colin Iliad's eyes glazed over as he seemed to recall killing his father, mother, brother, sister, eldest son, youngest son, daughter, and eldest grandson.

His voice became fleeting.

"Lovia once said that a dying person would not transform into an evil spirit after leaving the City of Silver.

"Back then, I didn't tell her that this was the truth. As the Gift of the Land's range is huge, most people who are about to die are unable to leave the corresponding region in time.

"This is a secret that only the Chief can grasp. I tried my best exploring and fighting, hoping that future generations wouldn't have to suffer such pain."

The Chief of the City of Silver, who was clearly advanced in his years, slowly exhaled. Without giving Derrick a chance to make a promise, he seemed to recall something as he said, "Also, you mustn't fully believe the situation of the Rose Redemption that is recorded in that palace."

Eh? Klein stopped scrutinizing his surroundings as he revealed a slightly lost expression.

Colin Iliad added in a deep voice, "Earth Mother cannot be Giant Queen Omebella.

"Omebella has long died. 'Her' corpse is in the City of Silver, and more precisely, it's the Gift of the Land…"

This… When Klein heard this, his pupils dilated as a chill ran down his spine.

The real Giant Queen had long died in the City of Silver and became a Sealed Artifact. Then, who is the one currently masquerading as Earth Mother?

†

In the kingdom that was covered in moon flowers and night vanilla, the sunset giant's sword struck the heavy, pitch-black sickle and froze in midair.

In the darkness that had been destroyed by the intense battle of the gods, time seemed to come to a halt. Be it the giant wearing tattered armor who was bathing in the dusk, or the humanoid demonic wolf with six arms, "They" seemed to become a part of an oil painting. Everything stood on the spot, maintaining "Their" previous posture.

However, a dark brown wooden cane had stabbed through the back of the sunset giant, piercing through its heart as it frantically drained the life of the deity, dragging "Him" down in an act of returning it to the land, returning to a mother's embrace.

This dark brown wooden staff was held in the hands of the giant-like, voluptuous woman. It formed a deep autumn scene with the withered flowers, grass, and mushrooms.

The sunset giant slowly turned "His" head and looked at the woman who was carrying the baby in one hand. "He" said in pain, "Li—li—th?"

At this moment, the dress-wearing "demonic wolf" with the head of a female human let out a chuckle. The bird-shaped golden accessory in "Her" hand flew out and accurately pierced through the gap of the sunset giant's visor. Then, "She" threw the "Crimson Moon" in "Her" two other hands at the voluptuous woman.

[image]

In the next second, a portion of the sunset giant's body collapsed. An orange-red sunset pierced through the serene darkness and landed in the real world.

Some landed on the battlefield, causing countless soldiers to die. Some crushed the mountains, creating a lake that made all living creatures age. Some fused with some lucky creatures, turning them into crazy and powerful monsters, while others enveloped the Great Twilight Hall outside St. Millom. The solidified orange light was extinguished…

In the Amantha mountain range, outside the Cathedral of Serenity, Abomination Suah and other Mythical Creatures, who were helping Feysac and Intis angels attack, seemed to sense something. The battle came to a halt.

After the bloodshot eyes growing on the pitch-black tree rolled once, Abomination Suah immediately entered the void and escaped into the spirit world.

In the outskirts of Backlund, in a small cathedral that no one paid attention to.

A golden-bearded pious priest wearing a simple white robe opened his eyes. They revealed a childlike innocence and purity.

“He” calmly took out a golden potion and opened the lid, pouring the liquid inside into “His” mouth.

†

The war ended just like that.

If Audrey hadn’t seen it with her own eyes, she never would’ve believed that the war would end just like that.

After the dark night swallowed the orange dusk and faded away by itself, the Silver Knight in front of her seemed to suffer a heavy mental blow. Even after recovering and composing himself, he didn’t continue attacking his enemy. He fled in a rather sorry and perplexed state.

Just like this Silver Knight, the angels and saints of the Feysac and Intis allied forces fled one after another. As for the Beyonders that formed the backbone of the army, they collapsed in an uncontrollable manner.

However, on Loen's side, the demigods, Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders, and ordinary soldiers didn't attempt to pursue them. This was because they were equally confused, perplexed, and puzzled.

Audrey walked back into the city and saw the surviving Backlund residents coming out of their houses, shelters, or hiding spots, one after another. They stared blankly at the scene which resembled a primeval forest.

They didn't cheer, shout, or vent their emotions. Their expressions were numb, and their eyes were vacant. They didn't know how and why the disaster had suddenly ended.

[image]

There was no lack of people who had once been saved by the charity foundation. Many of them looked familiar to Audrey, but their condition wasn't much different from when those who queued up to collect food.

Audrey silently observed this scene before returning to Empress Borough and back to her villa.

She saw her father, mother, elder brother, butler, servants looking out of the window in confusion, just like the citizens on the street.

For some reason, a sentence suddenly flashed across Audrey's mind:

Dying, he knew not his executor; surviving, he knew not the circumstances.

†

An orange dusk calmed the lightning storm that blazed with frequent bolts of lightning. It sank into the dark, blue sea with an indiscernible bottom, nearly swallowing the Dawn with it.

Queen Mystic had used her other Grade 0 Sealed Artifact in time, allowing the ship to avoid a terrifying disaster.

She frowned slightly as if she had sensed something. However, her expression eased up immediately, allowing the Dawn to continue moving forward on an unsafe sea route. It was to engage in all kinds of dangerous battles with strong winds, huge waves, lightning, and sea monsters.

In the dark environment, Bernadette's gaze seemed to penetrate through many obstacles, allowing her to see the light that she was chasing after.

No matter how many obstacles she faced, she would not stop her approach.

†

On the staircase in the Giant King's residence which was covered in orange light.

After telling Derrick the secret, Colin Iliad said to Derrick, "Go. Open that door. I want to see what the sunlight outside is like…"

"Yes!" The rims of Derrick's eyes reddened once again. He pursed his lips tightly and stood up.

He put down the hammer in his hand, and under the encouraging gaze of Klein, he steadily circled around the iron-black throne and arrived in front of the grayish-blue door which depicted the sunset.

Derrick stared at it for a second, bent down, stretched out his hands, and pressed them against the sides of the door.

Then, he strained his muscles and pushed hard.

At that moment, he seemed to see his parents; his deceased teammates, like Joshua and Antiona; Lovia in a purple-patterned black robe; and the grizzled Colin Iliad.

They stood beside him and pressed their hands against the door, pushing the grayish-blue door with him.

[image]

[image]

Beads of water streamed down Derrick’s face as a heavy creaking sound echoed in his ears.

A crack appeared, letting golden sunlight flood in.

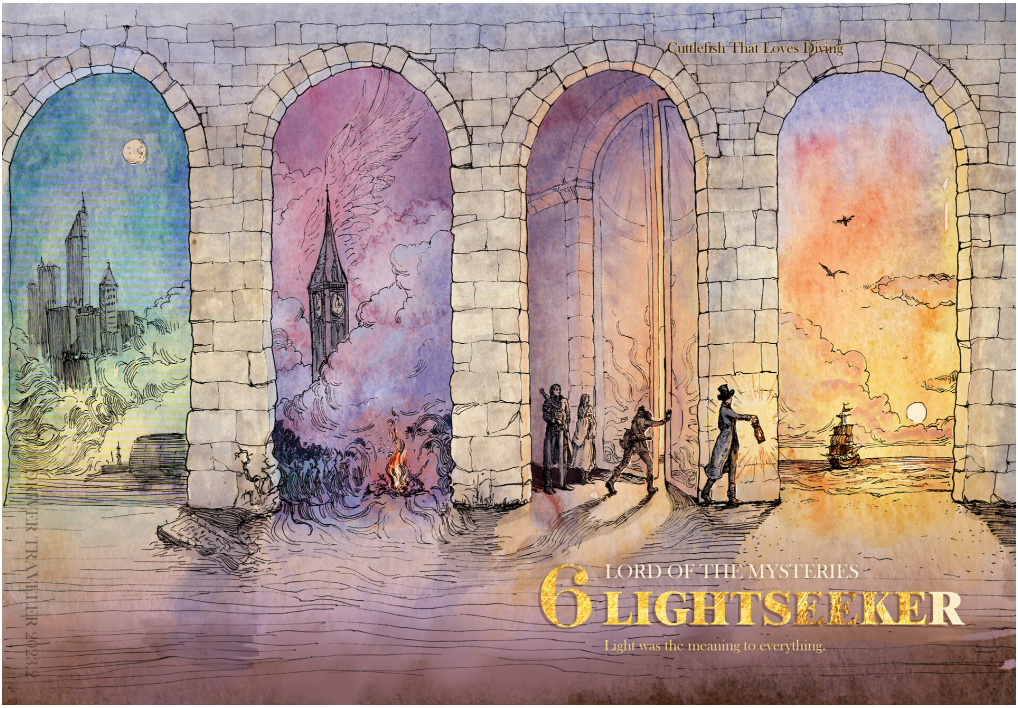
The gap grew bigger and bigger, and a golden sea gradually appeared in Derrick’s eyes, presenting itself in front of Colin Iliad’s eyes.

Upon seeing this scene, the corners of Colin Iliad’s lips twitched slightly as he bathed in the warm sunlight. The corners of his lips pulled up slightly as he revealed a faint smile and a faint yearning, his body “evaporating” bit by bit.

Light was the meaning to everything.

[image]

Lightseeker - The End


Cuttlefish That Loves Diving
LORD OF THE MYSTERIES
6 LIGHTSEEKER
Light was the meaning to everything.
SILVER TRAVELLER 2023.2

Author’s Notes:

—Translation: Mrs. Matchstick Bepis | Proofread: Windvally—

The 116 chapters of Volume 6, to me, achieved the overall degree of completion I expected.

During Volume 5, I mentioned that the pinnacle of the plot would occur in Volume 6, note that I said pinnacle, and not climax.

Laughs

At the time, it was clear to me that it would be lacking in terms of satisfaction and explosiveness, but the essence of the volume was to bring a strong sense of shock. Regarding this, when Amon uttered Chernobyl and when Colin Iliad said that Omebella had already died, I could clearly feel the sense of happiness writing brings me.

Accordingly, chapter subscriptions exceeded 60,000, breaking the record of the entire book, especially during the Amon arc, reaching over 63,000. As for this Omebella chapter, because I wrote this conclusion before the 24-hour mark, I didn't have an accurate result, I only know that during the first hour after the chapter was uploaded, chapter subscriptions were already at 32,000.

These are the two pinnacles of Volume 6, one at the beginning and one at the end, stringing together the entire volume. Both of these events were arranged as early as Volume one. Even before I started writing Volume One, these ideas were already thought-out and I started consciously burying hints to depict the two events. When I first wrote "Chapter One – Crimson", I already had a complete picture in my mind, one of which was an inspiration that gradually took shape as I was putting together the story of the City of Silver and its curse, it was only after this that Emlyn and the Church of Harvest came to be. I actually provided a lot of corresponding clues, although they were relatively hidden, it wasn't without foreshadowing.

And surrounding these two pinnacle, many secrets have been unveiled. Generally, I don't think there were any problems regarding this portion. It helped to gradually give shape to the overall universe, creating a comparatively complete framework, thus, when I start unfolding information and hints regarding the The Old Ones, Outer Gods, Ancient Sun God and his family, it would become a lot smoother. Family, yes, using this term to describe them seems to make them a lot more relatable.[1]

Speaking of relatable, I would have to discuss the criticisms directed towards the war and "Justice".

Throughout the time I spent writing Martial Arts Master, I have been compiling a set of methodologies for writing suitable for myself, however at the same time many things were still vague to me, it wasn't until I started writing Lord of Mysteries and the corresponding experiments and results, that things started becoming clearer, thereby adding to my methodology.

To me, the first business of writing, which is also the most important step is encompassed by a very rustic word:

“Expression”.

What is it that I wish to convey and deliver? This is something that must undergo clear consideration before setting pen to paper, after that, I would need to make a choice regarding what I will include or omit in the writing to make sure my focal point doesn’t deviate.

To put it simply, I will use a phrase that everyone abhors: centralized thoughts.[2]

Then what is it I wish to express in Volume 6?

First of all, it is the sense of impact that these two plot points will bring.

Secondly, the insignificance and helplessness mortals feel when in the face of gods.

Thirdly, despite being as small and insignificant as a moth, one should always seek the light.

Regarding the second point, this theme isn’t exclusive to Volume 6, it is an inevitable component of any novel worldviews inspired by Cthulhu and the Quasi-Cthulhu Mythos. Ones’[3] fear of the unknown as well as the insignificance when faced with that “unknown”, which is in the same vein as the straw men from Volume 2[4].

Therefore, before I started writing Volume 6, even before Volume 5, I’ve been considering what kind of story would be necessary in order to deliver the things I wish to express into the readers’ mind.

If I started to expand on the war, then the focus would shift to the various mystical powers, battleships, machine guns and cannons. This would comparatively be more fresh, and with the inclusion of elements of sacrifice, exhilaration, the brutality of war and other deeper themes, it would deviate from the crux of what I wish to express. Because once you arrive on the battlefield, the significance behind death and survival become apparent, there wouldn't be a sense of befuddlement over why you're still alive or why you're dying.

At the same time, the story has always depicted fights between Beyonders, and arriving at Volume 6, I even began unravelling the secrets behind the various Kings of Angels and Gods, if I was to also expand into the war between ordinary humans, not only would the two sceneries conflict with each other, it would be rather weird as well.

With this in mind, as I mentioned very early on, I wouldn't go into the details of the war, instead the primary focus would be on the life of ordinary people embroiled in the war. I purposefully made these people indistinguishable and without names, which is another interpretation of the title of Volume 2, Faceless, to exemplify the concept of the numerous, of the masses, and to decrease the relative pain and sorrow people feel, instead accentuating the feelings of loss, apathy and confusion.

The only people with a name were the Landlord and lady, this part was to emphasize the pain and hardship of the people, otherwise the scene where Audrey determines herself, kneels before her parents' bed and kisses them before leaving would lack the necessary force.

Originally, there was no need for the scenes where Audrey engages in charitable behavior to be repeated, but in order to increase the sense of apathy, stupefaction, pain and confusion of the people, I intentionally wrote a few more of these scenes, consequentially these scenes were a little monotonous and insistent, whilst failing to reflect the changes within Audrey's heart.

However, I don't think there were any problems with her two conversations with Klein, each encompassing a different sense of confusion; nor were there problems with her behavior after resolving herself and her subsequent manipulations. There was no delay, no encumbrance because she has her own internal conflicts and the relevant tensions in the story still exists.

In summary, I combined the build-up of determination within Audrey's heart, her own growth and the insignificance of mortals together, and combined them into one thread, resulting in a situation where I'm writing about her, but the real focus wasn't on her, which made Audrey seem like a tool[5] for the plot.

This is probably a "Spectator's", mandatory duty and sacrifice.

Sigh

However, I would like to thank everybody for your tolerance and understanding, during these chapters, subscriptions basically didn't drop, resting at around 53,000, it let me proceed calm and nonchalantly, enabling me to encompass everything I wanted to express.

During the final battle at Backlund, the reason behind unfolding it from Audrey's perspective was to demonstrate the changes the battle between gods would bring to Backlund, and to conclude all the things that I have been paving for up to that point.

As this Spectator walked down the streets and alleys on her way home, she witnessed the same confusion inside everyone, down from normal citizens, up to nobles and finally to herself, a demi-god, welling-up and culminating in the lament:

"Death without reason, life without purpose"

I have this impression that the relevant plot wasn't a waste of time, and I feel like the plot which was somewhat adrift has finally found its' grounding, deep, heavy, stable and solid.

Additionally, this part also ties into the build-up of emotions in three parts, from the senselessness, insignificance and sorrow that Audrey experiences, to Bernadette's pursuit and certainty that regardless of how dark and bleak the journey would be, she would continue, and finally to the City of Silver, which has spent millennia questing the darkness, who have at last, opened the door, laying eyes on a sliver of light and on the thing named hope.

It is for this reason, my original plan to feature Roselle in Volume 6 was pushed back to Volume 7.

Hmm, this progression of emotions could be reversed, but that would be extremely despairing, it wouldn't suit the title "Lightseeker".

Regarding the death of the Chief, because Lovia died earlier, I didn't want to reiterate the sorrow and sensationalize it, instead it was with restraint that I described his condition, to let the relative sorrow be hidden deeper and instead focus on the light, on his expression of regret, release and hope.

The problem with Volume 6 was that it required too many battles cramped in succession, the middle of the volume lacked the necessary pacing for the tension to loosen, resulting in reading fatigue. This is something I would need to pay attention to in Volume 7.

Besides, if I don't write about the war, I would lose the chance to expand on the rest of the world, it would seem like the scope of the story was limited, however this was something that I anticipated. With the existence of 22 pathways, numerous different countries, gods and angels, if I was to open up these areas, Kleiny boy would end up having to run all over the place, that would feel very cumbersome and bloated. It would be akin to a dragonfly skimming the surface of the water, to scratch the surface superficially, and not go deeper. I might as well not write it.

Therefore, even though I already have a very detailed framework enveloping the Republic of Intis, the Kingdom of Feynapotter etc, I can't introduce them. Regarding this, a certain "one and a half metered classmate" could testify on my behalf, while I was making preparations for Lord of Mysteries, she asked me what the outline of the story was, so I copied a portion of the settings surrounding Intis, and that was probably a very detailed version of it.

This was something I set my mind on before I started writing Lord of Mysteries, I would limit the scope of the story to the utmost extent, focusing instead on one country and making it as vivid and meticulous as possible, thereby bringing out the distinguishing characteristics of other countries in contrast, establishing a more coherent framework for the entire world. Achieving this, the purpose behind writing Lord of Mysteries would be accomplished. Hmm, you guys should be able to feel that I've been keeping some things back.

Concerning the other countries and other pathways, I originally hoped to manage it, that is, under the same world, to write a second, maybe even a third book, under different perspectives, using things that I didn't have a chance to use in regards to Intis, Feynapotter, the various secretive cults, organizations, the Western continent and other products of my world-building, utilizing this approach to complete the entire universe of Lord of Mysteries.

I even thought about some possible storylines that I may or may not take up, for example a certain Blessed One of The Old Ones attempts to infiltrate and sabotage things, but fall prey to an accident, losing their memories and eventually getting picked up by the Church of Knowledge and Wisdom, "indulging" in exams and textbooks day in day out, or someone who starts out as a hunter and ends up receiving instructions from Saint Danitz, crying as he loots Anderson, contesting wit and skill with the Red Angel, etc., etc.

This might be the main storyline of the second book. As for the third book, it might be a story based on the Western continent, an Eastern oriental themed Lord of Mysteries. I was smiling as I read comments on how you guys theorized a "Sky Lord of Heaven and Earth" route. Of course, regarding the power level of the Western continent, I left a few connections, but nothing concise yet.

Hmm. There might not be a third book, but at the moment, I can promise there will be a second book, but it wouldn't be the next one I write. I intend to change the theme of the story, change my mood, write about something else, after all, I have accumulated a lot of inspiration, with two especially interesting ones taking shape. One leans towards Fallout, and the other Xianxia, it's hard to decide which one at the moment, I will consider it in detail after gathering materials and completing Lord of Mysteries.

Small talk at an end, the same rule. Three and a half days of rest, updates will recommence 7 p.m. of Sunday. (It's actually four days, but considering the fact that this summary has exceeded 3,000 words, let's count this as a chapter.)

As for the name of Volume 7, as many of you have guessed correctly, it will be "Hanged Man".

Finally, since I uploaded this chapter, how could I not make a request for monthly tickets? I will upload the first chapter of Volume 7: "The Hanged Man" punctually at 7 p.m. Give me your monthly tickets!

On a side note, average subscriptions have reached around nine thousand eight thousand six hundred[6], please subscribe on the official version, I hope to surpass 100,000 as soon as possible!

Lastly, gimme your monthly tickets!

†

[image]

†

Cuttlefish uses an idiom, 煙火氣 which is an abbreviation for 人間煙火, which in essence describes the life of ordinary, mortal and mundane people. The literal translation describes the need mortals have to eat and toil to live, unlike immortals who do not require sustenance, which is why I translated it to relatable.

Referencing peoples' dislike of one of the tenets of the Chinese educational system, whereby there is only one correct answer to very subjective questions.

Cthulhu meaning the original H.P Lovecraftian lore and Cthulhu Mythos, the combined fictional (or is it?) universe of the entire trope, setting and mythology shared by Lovecraft and his literary successors. The more literal translation of the same terms could refer to a Chinese Cthulhu taletop RPG circle. The Cthulhu Mythos style represents campaigns that focus on adventure, treasure hunting and direct confrontation against an eldritch entity with no sugar coating eg: Eldritch Horror and Arkham Horror. Quasi-Cthulhu Mythos represents campaigns that look completely normal on the outside, focusing on the day to day lives of mortals in rural or urban areas, while e verything dark is moving in the shadows, puzzles which needs to be solved by the players. This represents a shift in the preference of players, as more and more players in China enjoy the Quasi-Cthulhu style, as it offers more variety and realistic horror (more helpessness) than straight up Bloodborne style hunting.

Windvally: I may be COMPLTELY wrong on this, but that's one way to look at it.

Regarding the reference to Volume 2 and straw men, Cuttlefish is referring to the events in Volume 2 Chapter 263/Chapter 476 - Straw Men, in which the life of the innocent and impoverished people of Backlund were but fuel (straw) for the various conspiracies.

工具人, a tool-person, is someone who helps you without reservation, but you never reciprocate their feeling or acknowledge them. They comfort themselves with the fact that you might need them after all. An example is Ikanser Bernard of the Machinery Hivemind, aka the sacrifice to communicate with Arrodes.

Author’s own numbers.

Chapter 1267 - Welcome

Beyond the open grayish-blue door, a flight of stone stairs led to a sea that glowed with golden light. This, along with boundless light, once again entered the eyes of the residents of the City of Silver such as Liaval and Candice.

As members of the former expedition team, this wasn't the first time they had seen such a scene. Even so, their souls remained deeply shocked as they subconsciously held their breaths.

With the Thunder God's Roar hammer in hand, Derrick stood at the front with his two-meter-tall, wide-shouldered build. He was silent.

Nearly a minute later, Liaval probed, "Elder Berg, when are we leaving?"

He was a Sequence 5 Guardian who stood at nearly 2.5 meters tall. This made his limbs' physical proportions slightly abnormal.

Derrick stared at the sea that was rippling with golden spots for a few seconds before saying, "Wait a while longer."

At this moment, several days had passed since he opened the door. He had led the expedition team back to the City of Silver with the ashes of the Chief and Elder Lovia, as well as their characteristics and Sealed Artifacts. He had also used the secret to obtain the trust of the current Chief of the six-member council, Waite Chirmont.

This time, Derrick led the twenty City of Silver Beyonders to do reconnaissance so as to find a safe passage to confirm the situation of the outside world.

On this matter, he had rejected Mr. World's suggestion of using the Staff of the Stars to directly transfer the entire City of Silver from the Forsaken Land of the Gods. He wanted to use his feet to take in the path of hope. He wanted to remember what the "light" that the City of Silver had finally found after experiencing two thousand years of persistence and sacrifice was like.

Upon hearing Elder Derrick's answer, the members of the expedition team, such as Liaval and Candice, didn't say much. They all took a step back and continued enjoying the scenery.

They still didn't trust Derrick Berg much. After all, he had a close relationship with outsiders. And the Chief and Elder Lovia had both died during the previous expedition. Only this Unshadowed and that outsider had survived. If not for the six-member council choosing to believe him, they would definitely be hostile and wary.

After an unknown period of time, the shimmering sea was suddenly enveloped by darkness.

Deep in the darkness, they could barely make out a thin fog. In the fog, there was a black pointed cathedral with all sorts of buildings. It gave people the feeling that it was both real and illusory.

Derrick and company were no stranger to darkness. He instinctively glowed, while those who needed to light up candles did so. They did it hurriedly without any signs of turmoil.

After the twenty-one-strong team was protected by light, they looked with curiosity at the town and fleeting pedestrians in the fog, unable to understand what was going on.

This wasn't the darkness they were familiar with.

At this moment, the naturally glowing Derrick raised his left hand and said in a low voice, "Let's set off."

Without waiting for his team members to respond, he took the first step through the door and followed the stone steps outside, taking one step after another into the darkness.

Everyone exchanged looks, then gritted their teeth. Without falling behind, they followed the newly-appointed six-member council Elder, Derrick Berg, out of the Giant King's residence.

In the rich darkness, as they walked down the stairs, their eyes suddenly lit up. They saw an orange glow and a row of black cloister-like buildings.

"Is this the outside world?" Candice looked around warily and curiously. She realized that all of them had unknowingly walked to the opposite side of the Giant King's Court and were separated by a sea of orange-red from where they were.

"No." Derrick compared the current environment to Mr. World's and Ma'am Hermit's description. He nodded slightly and said, "We still need to wait here for a while. Feel free to find a spot to rest."

This Unshadowed, who no longer had any hint of adolescence, calmly arranged everything.

Liaval looked at the tightly shut black cloister and asked in puzzlement, "Is there no need to explore this place in search of an exit?"

"There's no need." Derrick shook his head.

The members of the reconnaissance team didn't ask further, nor did they rest. They remained standing in their spots and waited patiently.

As time passed, blinding sunlight suddenly shone into this world, turning everything bright and white. It then dimmed and vanished.

Everyone subconsciously looked around and saw the golden sea once again. They felt a terrifying aura that daunted them from looking straight at.

However, unlike before, they were already on an island. Behind them were huge patches of golden strange plants with smiling faces. They didn't seem to have any signs of degeneration or abnormalities, making every member of the City of Silver's reconnaissance team experience the joy of life.

We're really outside… It really is a different world… Liaval, Candice, and company found it impossible to contain the amazement in their hearts.

They immediately confirmed a fact:

Elder Derrick didn't betray the City of Silver. His cooperation with the outsider really had the goal of leading everyone out of the cursed land.

"Elder Berg…" Candice stammered. "Thank you."

Derrick nodded slightly, his back straight.

Instead of expressing the apologetic feelings in his heart like Candice, Liaval looked around and asked, "Elder Berg, how should we leave this place? Build a boat?"

The term "building a boat" was only limited to the words in their history books, so it sounded rather odd.

"There doesn't seem to be any materials here that we can use to build a boat…" Candice and company immediately inspected the small island, but they couldn't find any trees or plants.

Derrick shook his head again.

"There's no need. Wait a little longer…"

Before he could finish his sentence, he saw a black shadow loom across the horizon.

The shadow grew bigger as it quickly followed the safe sea route between the golden spots of light.

Not long after, the shadow revealed its outline. It was a hybrid ship with smoke spewing out from it. With all its sails up, the ship hung a blue sea serpent flag.

“A boat?”

“That’s a boat?”

†

As Liaval, Candice, and company kept their vigilance up, they posed questions.

Derrick had received some general education at the Tarot Club. He was an experienced person who had seen pictures of various ships. Upon hearing this, he nodded slightly and said, “That’s right.”

As they spoke, the ship approached, making the figure standing at the ship’s bow gradually become clearer.

It was a black-cloaked man with yellow eyebrows and dark blue eyes. He jumped onto the masthead and spread his arms slightly to the people of the City of Silver.

Upon seeing this scene, Derrick, who had been maintaining his stern attitude, secretly heaved a sigh of relief. He knew that everything was as he had expected. No accidents had happened.

Danitz originally wanted to jump off the ship and walk in front of the believers of Mr. Fool to announce that they had been saved, but after glancing at the height of the people from the City of Silver, he silently held himself back.

Standing on the masthead, he completely widened his arms and said to Derrick and company with a reserved smile, “Welcome to the world of light promised by God!”

[image]

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein sat on the high-back chair belonging to The Fool. Through the crimson star that symbolized The Sun, he watched the entire process of the City of Silver's expedition team's progress. He was constantly prepared to deal with any accidents.

When the "history," which had been sealed for thousands of years, had combined with the "present," with them boarding the ship that originated from the new government of the Rorsted Archipelago, and leaving the most dangerous, core region of the ruins of the battle of gods was over, he heaved a sigh of relief. He put down the Staff of the Stars and beckoned for two items.

They were the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic that had seeped out of the "curtain," and the Worm of Star from Saint of Secrets Botis.

After some thought, Klein reached out his left hand and grabbed a large blob of a dark red liquid from the Historical Void.

This was Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar's blood. There was exactly 300mls of it, and it was the core supplementary ingredient of the Miracle Invoker potion.

Of course, as a supplementary material, it only had one purpose—to reduce the negative effects of the Beyonder characteristic and reduce the corresponding mysticism influence. Therefore, it didn't matter if it was a historical projection. After all, as long as it could play its role during the potion's concoction and consumption, Klein would have either succeeded or failed in his advancement by the time the historical projection expired. If he failed, he would've broken down into a monster. If he succeeded, he would've become a Miracle Invoker and gained initial control of the Beyonder characteristic. There was no need for the supplementary ingredient's effects.

Following that, Klein took out something from the fog of history.

It was a ringed Worm of Time.

As he had a strong psychological trauma towards Amon, Klein had chosen to summon a Worm of Time that Pallez Zoroast had once given to him, lest anything unexpected happened.

After preparing the materials, he conjured a metal pot and threw the 300mls of blood from Dark Demonic Wolf into it. Then, he placed the Worm of Time and sparkling Worm of Star inside, one after another.

The black and red liquid in the cauldron turned dark, its surface becoming translucent and clean. Deep in the cauldron was a dark vortex.

Without any hesitation, Klein picked up the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic.

It resembled a heart, transparent like a crystal, but there were tiny bubbles emerging from time to time. Every bubble seemed to contain an illusion.

When the Beyonder characteristic came into contact with the liquid in the metallic pot, it immediately merged into it, causing the darkness to instantly deepen, making it seem as though countless eyes were opened at the same time.

After staring at it for a few seconds, he poured the concocted Miracle Invoker potion into a glass bottle, and he used the bestowment ritual to bring it to the real world.

On an uninhabited island in the Sonia Sea, Klein, who had "Teleported" over, looked at the potion in his hand. He suddenly felt a little hesitant. This was because once he became an angel, his body would inevitably be affected by the Beyonder characteristic. He would become colder and crueler, becoming more and more indifferent towards life. He needed sufficient anchors to maintain his humanity.

This wasn't something that could be avoided by completely digesting the potion using the "acting method" he grasped. Back then, Emperor Roselle went through the early stages smoothly, but when he became a Sequence 2 angel, he nearly mutated, almost losing control.

As for the angels that he knew, they looked normal on the surface, but he had no idea what they were like when they were hiding behind the scenes.

If one could obtain a long life at Sequence 4 and Sequence 3, allowing them to live for more than a thousand years, a saint really didn't have much motivation to become an angel.

Combined with the saying that the higher one's Sequence was, the closer one was to the Primordial One, he suddenly understood why Demoness of White Katarina only rose from Sequence 4 to Sequence 3 in a thousand years.

But I have no way out… After a brief moment of silence, Klein sighed silently.

Nearby threats like Amon and Zaratul, and the approaching days of the apocalypse, as well as the fact that he was previously unable to interfere with the war, these all pushed him towards becoming an angel. He didn't want to simply contribute his strength through donations.

His eyes flickered for a few seconds before they returned to their calm state. He picked up the potion bottle and poured the liquid inside into his mouth.

Chapter 1268 - Miracle Invoker

◆◆◆

The moment the Miracle Invoker potion entered Klein's stomach, it immediately turned into countless cold "worms" and swam towards every corner of his body.

Suddenly, Klein's mind tore apart, turning into countless small pieces that combined with different Worms of Spirit. There was no longer any discernible difference between the main body and the auxiliary ones, nor was there any piece that remained dominant.

At some point in time, he had entered the grayish-white fog. His half top hat and long black trench coat quickly disintegrated, and numerous translucent and twisted maggots crawled out.

These maggots quickly flew into the depths of the fog of history, each occupying different "light fragments," overlapping with the projections of themselves in the Historical Void.

In just two or three seconds, the spot where Klein stood only had his windbreaker, shirt, top hat, socks, leather shoes, and personal items remaining. They had lost the support of a body and were held, suspended there.

"I..."

"Who am I..."

"Who's me..."

"I'm the main body..."

†

The various Worms of Spirit had different but similar thoughts. None of them were willing to return to their “body” on their own accord. Instead, they felt a strong sense of animosity towards their own kind. It was only because they still had Klein’s remnant psyche influence that they hadn’t done anything extreme for the time being.

At this moment, yet another invisible ripple appeared within the grayish-white fog.

This ripple didn’t appear by coincidence. It had long existed in the fog, but compared to his collective whole, it appeared indiscernible. However, to a Worm of Spirit, it was obvious enough.

It came from a portion of history that appeared in the present era. It symbolized the fragments of light from the end of the Second Epoch and portions of the Third Epoch. They symbolized the two thousand years that the City of Silver had persisted in the darkness.

This forgotten history had a certain clash with the present era. As it formed a corresponding Historical Void, ripples spread out in an indescribable manner.

Such ripples seemed to exert a strong attraction on the Worms of Spirit, making them peek their heads out from the historical scenes.

After a short period of time, one of the Worms of Spirit crawled out of the light spot from which it occupied, having failed to resist it any further, and also succumbing to the effects of Klein’s remnant consciousness. It flew towards the center of the ripples.

Right on the heels of that, Worms of Spirit returned from different spots in the fog of history, and they arrived at the fragments of light formed by the City of Silver’s history in the present era.

When they reached a certain distance from each other, a strong force of convergence finally appeared, pulling together countless Worms of Spirit into one.

This wasn't an effect that could be produced by two or three Worms of Spirit. It needed to have a sufficient number for this phenomenon to happen.

And when that portion of the Worms of Spirit was once again whole, Klein's incomplete consciousness completed the piecing together of his identity. Things finally turned simple.

The Worms of Spirit formed a transparent and gigantic vortex, emitting a strong convergence force that sucked over the remaining, hesitant, nearby Worms of Spirit that were unwilling to return.

After more than two-thirds the Worms of Spirit returned, a series of transparent tentacles grew out of the vortex.

They extended towards the Second Epoch, the First Epoch, and even the prehistoric city of an earlier time. They grabbed the last batch of Worms of Spirit, one after another, and stuffed them back into the vortex.

In less than twenty seconds, the vortex began to extend, turning into a terrifying figure formed from transparent, twisted maggots. An invisible tentacle naturally extended from the figure's body.

The tentacles pulled over the windbreaker, top hat, socks, and leather shoes that floated in the fog of history, dressing up the terrifying figure.

The figure formed from countless Worms of Spirit pressed down on the top of his head, causing the translucent feeling on his body to quickly fade, forming a layer of flesh-colored skin. Short black hair and brown eyes grew out.

This was the appearance of Klein Moretti, but his height had reached 1.8 meters.

With great difficulty, he finally regained consciousness. Before Klein, who had made his Soul Body whole again, could analyze his present state, he felt two abnormalities:

One was from the Beyonder characteristic that fused with his body. It was a strong, terrifying, high, and mighty will that made it impossible to resist. It seemed to awaken a little as it transmitted one image after another. These images were filled with the mysterious knowledge of a Miracle Invoker. Some of them were dust that burned into suns, magnificent scenes generated by various celestial bodies. They were filled with a sense of desolateness, coldness, cruelty, madness, superciliousness, and void of any emotional imprints. They quickly assimilated into Klein's spirit, changing his state in an irresistible manner.

Another thing that surfaced before Klein's eyes were the crimson stars and the numerous points of resplendent light. The prayers from the members of the Tarot Club emitted from those stars, including Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Moon. Most of the light points echoed with the prayers from the residents of Moon City. Together, they created an image that enveloped the grayish-white fog that looked at the world with pity. It was the image of an extremely high-level and secret existence.

The two abnormalities reflected on Klein's body, causing his left body to be covered in a grayish-white fog. A slight smile showed on his face that had deep-set eyes. His right body fractured once again, turning into a cluster of translucent squirming maggots and a bloodshot eye that was filled with madness.

At that moment, the right side was constantly corroded to the left, and the grayish-white fog was gradually compressed to the extreme.

Without any hesitation, he raised his left hand with some difficulty, and he summoned the white bone scepter with blue gems embedded at the top from the fog of history.

Circling the Sea God Scepter were prayer points of light. With the help of this medium, they were transferred onto Klein's body.

Lightning bolts leaped out from the right side of his body as invisible winds and illusory waves swirled around him. This helped the grayish-white fog withstand the contamination from the left, allowing his entire body to come to a delicate balance.

At this point, Klein recovered bits and pieces of his humanity and memories, making an initial recovery back to the state before he consumed the potion.

He had finally advanced to the level of Sequence 2. He now had the level and status of an angel—a true Miracle Invoker.

THE SEER PAT
MIRACLE INVOKER
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Originally, Sefirah Castle was about to be stirred by his change, but with a thought from him, all the abnormalities returned to normal.

This proved that he had truly gained control of Sefirah Castle and had become the owner of the sefirah. As for how much power he could unleash in the real world, he was still unable to estimate it.

Phew… Thankfully, I made the history represented by the City of Silver return to reality, and it's powerful enough. If the ritual's effects were a little weaker, I would've lost control and collapsed here today… Klein rubbed his temples and slowly exhaled. He had a better understanding of anchors.

The anchor wasn't a tool to help him maintain his humanity. Its main purpose was to form a corresponding understanding, positioning, and image, one that would resist the mental imprint within the Beyonder characteristic so as to maintain an intricate balance.

Under this balance, Klein could then barely maintain his humanity and not be severely affected by any other influences.

In other words, the deities that the believers knew were different from the actual deities. Without the mental imprint within the Beyonder characteristic to resist this influence, the image of the deities in their hearts would gradually envelop the true appearance of the deities.

This was also a type of corruption.

Only at this moment did Klein realize why the orthodox deities went from having humanoid statues to simply having Sacred Emblems. This prevented the believers from having a unified impression of "Them." This improved the effects they had as anchors to resist the remnant mental effects of the Primordial One, whilst also not subtly changing their bodies.

As for why the orthodox deities took one or two epochs to figure this out, Klein quickly thought of two reasons:

Firstly, he had the past images of the orthodox deities for comparison. He had Emperor Roselle's diary as reference, and the corresponding mysticism knowledge to provide inspiration. Secondly, the Mythical Creature form of a Seer was all about being split and separated. It made him very sensitive to such influences.

This sort of balance isn't too stable, and it often tilts to a certain extent. This will cause problems with my condition's stability. From time to time, I will end up scaring the people around me. Fortunately, this can be predicted ahead of time, so it can effectively be avoided… Also, when I'm in a delicate balance, I should try my best to show my humanity to strengthen my self-awareness… This is commonly chosen by many angels. The Rose School of Thought's indulgence can be considered to be doing the same…

But Amon's believers are all "Himself." How does "He" maintain the balance?

Could it be that the Mythical Creature that's born with the Uniqueness itself has the will of the Primordial One fused with "Him"? Amon is long accustomed to being half-crazy. No, that's not "His" normal state… It's the image that arose from the referendum of every Amon…

That's a line of thought. I can form a marionette group and make every marionette a believer of The Fool. In addition, with my truest appearance as a deity, this can effectively provide the best anchor… It's no wonder that Zaratul and the Dark Demonic Wolf don't have any believers… Uh, once the residents of the City of Silver switch faiths to The Fool, I can consider separating the embodiment of Sea God from myself, making it no longer one of my anchors. This greatly contradicts the beliefs and understanding of my other believers. They can't truly be united… Klein instantly thought of a lot of matters, and after his thoughts finished racing, he returned above the gray fog.

When he became a Miracle Invoker and became a "Him," as well as becoming the owner of Sefirah Castle, he no longer needed to take four steps counterclockwise, recite the incantations, or get all the members of the Tarot Club to pray. He could now easily return.

However, he seemed incapable of expressing the full powers of Sefirah Castle. He could only enter with his Spirit Body, unable to bring his physical body along.

After sitting in the seat belonging to The Fool, Klein wasn't in a rush to check on the changes in Sefirah Castle. He first confirmed his advancement and digested the mysticism knowledge he had just obtained.

Yes… The Beyonder powers of a Miracle Invoker come from two different aspects. One is the greater utilization of the fog of history, and the other is the newly enhanced core power of "Wishes."

The improved utilization of the fog of history includes several abilities:

One, using the help of past Worms of Spirit to revive myself, but it will be ineffective after four times. I've already used it three times, so I can only revive one more time as a Miracle Invoker. Once I advance to an Attendant of Mysteries, there should be a corresponding increase in this number. Two, I am able to exert some influence on the future, causing the probability of certain things to increase or shrink to a certain extent. It's equivalent to interfering with the fate of the target. Heh heh, I'm finally wielding good luck. However, this aspect is still different from the Die of Probability. Three, summoning from the Historical Void is no longer limited to just items. It can be extended to certain scenes I'm familiar with.

Yes, the total number of items and scenes I can summon now is nine, but only three of them can be at the angel level…

"Wishes" already make it a standard deity's ability, but it's a little strange. Only by fulfilling someone's wish can I fulfill my own wish. A small wish has to be granted before a bigger wish can be gradually granted…

The Fool Pathway Potion Formula (Sequence 3-2):

[image]

Chapter 1269 - The Power of Wishes

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Klein originally believed that the “Wishes” ability could be used freely as long as it didn’t exceed a limit. To his surprise, the effects didn’t solely come from the Beyonder characteristic.

To put it simply, a Miracle Invoker needed to seek out and satisfy all kinds of wishes before they could make wishes and personally grant them during battles, turning the corresponding situation into a reality. Furthermore, at the very beginning, the wishes that Klein could fulfill were small and trivial. He had to accumulate them one step at a time before he could create a true miracle. He couldn’t do as he wished.

Yes, if I want to use Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar’s wishing method to teleport, I would have to first satisfy many similar wishes. It comes from others, from simple to the more difficult wishes… I do have a solution in this aspect. I can use Creeping Hunger and the Staff of the Stars to fulfill the corresponding wishes. There’s no need to start from the simplest…

Speaking of which, the “Wishes” ability resembled using an anchor. It’s a type of “collective” ability. Since the faithful’s understanding of deities can effectively affect the deities and become a certain “definition” for “Them,” helping “Them” resist the Primordial One’s mental imprint in the Beyonder characteristics, in the same way, similar wishes of different creatures with spirituality can indeed help me create a miracle…

This might be related to the sea of collective subconscious. It’s not scientific enough, but it’s fairly mystical… After figuring out the situation of the “Wishes” ability, Klein had a preliminary idea of how to act as a Miracle Invoker.

That was to walk the real world, and as the most powerful “magician,” he would allow different people to witness a miracle and satisfy their wishes.

It’s no wonder the Dark Demonic Wolf’s original title was the God of Wishes… When such a belief spreads, many people would use the method of praying to voice out their wishes, allowing the Miracle Invoker to respond from afar. This makes acting a lot simpler. It can save a lot of time, but the problem is that the potion’s name is Miracle Invoker and not the God of Wishes. The role one needs to act as is that of a deity, so there are still some differences between the two…

I can roam the various countries and let different people witness miracles while using The Fool’s name to satisfy some of the believers’ wishes. I’ll then see which would be more effective…

However, this isn’t the only way to act as a Miracle Invoker… I still need to take the initiative to create a miracle in real life, leaving behind the corresponding legend? Klein tapped the edge of the long mottled table with his finger as he silently muttered to himself.

During his scrutiny of his own body moments ago, he realized that he had digested more than half of the potion. After all, he had created miracles several times. He had even been “revived” three times.

Of course, Klein believed that it was very coincidental because he could create a “miracle” and act in advance, mainly because of Sefirah Castle.

It’s as though someone set me up… Klein sighed inwardly as he didn’t feel relaxed. Instead, he became more serious and wary.

As for who arranged it, he had a suspect.

The “Mysteries” that the ancient sun god mentioned, the existence suspected to be “The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

And what made Klein even more puzzled was that when he advanced to Sequence 2 and became an angel, The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings didn’t appear, neither did “He” awaken in his body after he experienced the qualitative changes.

This was completely different from what he had expected.

There weren’t any traces of it at all. Apart from the initial mental corruption from the Primordial One—something that will definitely arrive—it should be the spiritual imprint left behind in the Beyonder characteristic… Could it be that The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings has completely perished despite making all the arrangements? “He” doesn’t have the ability to influence me and revive from my body? If that’s the case, then I have to thank “Him”! Klein teased himself and stood up with caution and puzzlement.

With this thought, he appeared on the grayish-white cloud and arrived in front of the strange door of light.

Glancing at the transparent “cocoons” hanging above his head, Klein slowly extended his right hand and touched the door of light.

When he truly became the owner of this mysterious space, he had clearly realized a fact when he returned. It was that the strange door of light was core to this place. It was Sefirah Castle in the truest sense of the word, and this boundless void belonged to the divine kingdom that Sefirah Castle came with.

As for the ancient palace, the twenty-two high-back chairs, the long bronze table, and the items that the members of the Tarot Club usually conjured, Klein believed that they were a manifestation of the “Wishes” power.

In other words, back when he wanted a palace and a gathering place, Sefirah Castle had satisfied his wish.

And because he didn't have a specific description of his wish, Sefirah Castle had extracted scenes from similar wishes in the past. Klein suspected that the ancient Greek palace and the twenty-two high-back chairs were conjured by the existence that was suspected to be the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.

As he moved inch by inch, Klein pressed his right hand against the edge of the door of light.

This time, his palm didn't directly pierce through it as he touched something corporeal.

Suddenly, the door of light began to tremble slightly, along with the hanging "cocoons" which contained human figures.

Above the grayish-white fog, there was only an ancient palace in the endless void. Numerous skyscrapers rose rapidly. Cars appeared one after another as pedestrians suddenly appeared.

In one of the residential districts, in an ordinary rental apartment, there was a window illuminated by an energy-saving bulb that wasn't bright enough.

This was what the old metropolis from before the First Epoch looked like before the disaster. This was the place Klein had once lived.

Looking around, Klein sighed, letting everything disappear before his eyes.

Indeed, I can preliminarily use Sefirah Castle's powers… By relying on this point, I would already be close to the level of a King of Angels when I'm above the gray fog. Furthermore, the authority I show isn't only that of Miracles, but also a portion of a Planeswalker and a Trojan Horse of Destiny…

If I were to return to the real world, apart from being able to further utilize Sefirah Castle's aura, I would be able to directly obtain a portion of its powers… This should allow me to form a nascent divine kingdom and reach Sequence 1 in here… Unfortunately, in reality, I can't use the high-level Beyonder powers of Marauder and Apprentice… As Klein evaluated the situation, he cast his gaze at the transparent cocoons hanging above the door of light.

He ultimately didn't release the people inside, because they would definitely be used by Amon.

After confirming everything, Klein returned to the ancient palace and sat on the high-back chair of The Fool.

He remembered that some of his memories were sealed, so he summoned the piece of paper from the junk pile.

Upon opening it, Klein's eyes narrowed and his lips quivered as he muttered to himself, "Great Old Ones, Outer Deities, Cosmos, Creator, Above the Sequences… So that's how it is…"

At that moment, he completely understood the rationale behind the battle of gods that had just ended. He understood the possible origins of the apocalypse and understood why the seven deities had given tacit consent to the birth of a Black Emperor, and their indifference towards the Red Angel evil spirit's return to the real world.

From the information provided by Leonard and Miss Justice, Loen ultimately clinched victory. It's very likely that the God of Combat has already perished… In other words, the Goddess has succeeded, but I don't know what other conditions "She" is lacking to become a Great Old One that's Above the Sequences… I'll summon Arrodes later to inquire about the details of the situation and grasp the present situation… With this in mind, Klein recalled the various details of the past and connected many matters together.

Earth Mother, whose identity had been unknown, had succeeded in acting as the Giant Queen Omebella for thousands of years without being exposed. It’s impossible without the help of Concealment… Man, the Goddess has been plotting something like this from the Third Epoch or even the end of the Second Epoch?

W-why does this feel more terrifying than Amon…

Yes, Concealment can only hide traces of various aspects. It can mislead the corresponding prying and divination attempts, making it impossible for a person to don a disguise. For the Earth Mother to be able to pretend to be Omebella, without being suspected by the God of Combat, there may be other factors involved… For example, a particular existence helped “Her” steal the fate of the Giant Queen? At that time, there was only one person who had the authority to participate in this matter—the ancient sun god, the second Creator, Amon and Adam’s father…

If that’s the case, the Goddess and the ancient sun god should’ve cooperated from a long time ago. Until the new Creator awakened the Primordial One in “Him”… This can also explain why the first existence that Dark Angel Sasrir sought out was the Goddess. Of course, Concealment is also an important factor…

Ever since I obtained the Uniqueness of the Death pathway, the Goddess has been setting up the trap. On the one hand, “She” wants me to take over the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction in Backlund to pretend that everything is normal. On the other hand, “She” didn’t deal with the people or objects that might’ve discovered something was amiss, resulting in the leak of information. This way, in the eyes of the God of Combat, the situation became the Goddess trying “Her” best to conceal the secret, but due to “Her” lack of control while digesting the Uniqueness, “She” was unable to do so…

After that, be it tacitly acquiescing George III becoming the Black Emperor, or the aid provided to me in destroying “His” ritual, the Goddess doesn’t care about the final outcome of the matter. “Her” main goal was to show that “She” didn’t have the ability to directly interfere with the real world, further deepening the impression that "She" was attempting to accommodate the Uniqueness of the Death pathway…

There are a lot of similar details…

To the God of Combat, as "He" had a deeper understanding of the Goddess, "He" definitely wasn't fully convinced in regards to this matter. Therefore, "He" chose to take it safe by first shaking the Goddess's anchors, allowing "Her" psyche to be corrupted. To "Him," this definitely made "Her" divert a large portion of "Her" efforts to resist the corruption before "He" chose to attack the Goddess together with Earth Mother…

This… And it's because of this that "He" fell into the Goddess's trap…

In other words, the true goal of the Goddess's various actions wasn't to lay a trap with the Uniqueness of the Death pathway, but to let the other deities place their focus on this matter, and ignore the possibility that there was something wrong with Earth Mother…

How terrifying…

Klein sighed from the bottom of his heart. He felt that Adam and Amon were probably inferior to the Goddess when it came to horror.

He shook his head, conjured a pen and paper, and wrote his warning:

"Always remember you are a he, not a 'He.'"

Chapter 1270 - “Visiting”

On the ship, Sea God, the members of the City of Silver, like Liaval, Candice, and other City of Silver scouts, were seated on chairs that didn’t suit their size. They watched the “dwarfs” around them warily.

Of course, they knew that these were normal humans. After all, they all knew that their exaggerated heights were brought about by potions, but they still felt that the people on the ship were too short, including Lord Danitz, who called himself an oracle. After all, in the City of Silver, other than children, the residents who had yet to reach Sequence 6 had an average height exceeding 1.8 meters. Among them, there were no lack of Sequence 9 Beyonders who were more than two meters tall.

The slight sway of the boat made the “half-giants” feel somewhat uncomfortable, but their strong physique helped them quickly overcome this influence. And the contrast between the sea and the lone boat beyond the window made them unable to contain their unease, fear, and anxiety. It was like the first time they participated in an expedition. The surroundings seemed to have monsters lurking in the darkness that could attack them at any moment.

At that moment, Danitz entered the room that had been transformed into a dining mess. He smiled at the tall, wary, cautious, strangely-dressed people who sat stiffly and said, “Your food is ready. Next, you can enjoy your food as you please.

“By the way, don’t forget what I told you just now. These waters are very dangerous.

"There's no need to get up. You can stay in your seats."

When Danitz saw that the young Elder who introduced himself as Derrick, and the other "half-giants" wished to get up and speak to him in the most polite manner, he hurriedly lowered his hands and stopped their uncivilized behavior.

If I was as tall as them, I would've already begun mocking the people around me… Danitz muttered as he clapped his hands, signaling the crew to send the food in.

A strong fragrance immediately drilled into the noses of Derrick and the other residents of the City of Silver. It was the scent that they were familiar with when roasting meat-type mushrooms, but there was an additional indescribable smell. It was rather strange and slightly stimulating.

The smell was so alluring that Liaval, Candice, and the rest began to have saliva secrete from their mouths as their stomachs churned to attention.

"Desi-style roasted meat," Danitz said as he pointed at a crew member who walked in.

He held a large steel plate that had a piece of roasted golden-brown piece of meat that glistened with oil. Evenly spread across its surface were fennel, basil, and other spices.

"Steak, pan-fried fish, white bread, seafood soup, and light beer…" Danitz introduced each and every dish, smiling when he was done. "Don't worry about anything. Feel free to indulge. We have plenty of food reserves."

With that said, he glanced at the "half-giants" who seemed eager to stand up. Then, he left the room chuckling.

The short-haired Candice retracted her gaze from the food with great difficulty and swallowed her saliva.

“Elder Derrick, what do we do now?”

Although Derrick believed that Mr. Fool’s Oracle wouldn’t harm them, he habitually gave a very cautious opinion.

“Split into two groups. One group is to wait for their turn to eat. One team is to eat now.”

“Alright, Elder Derrick.” Candice suddenly stood up. “I apply to join the food-tasting team!”

A group of ten people quickly formed. At the same time, Liaval and Candice walked to the long table near the wall, and they took a portion of what they found the most tempting, the so-called Desi roasted meat.

After taking a bite, the rich juices, the fragrance and pure meat mixed in the texture formed a complex and unique experience in their mouths. They could only chew twice before swallowing the food ravenously into their stomachs so as to take a second bite.

This was many times more delicious than the meat-type mushrooms they had eaten previously.

Unknowingly, the ten residents of the City of Silver were already eating with tears in their eyes, their vision blurred.

On the deck, Danitz looked at the safe sea route in the ruins of the battle of gods. He considered how to settle the problems of Mr. Fool’s flock.

Suddenly, a sailor ran over and panted.

“Lord Oracle, they’ve already finished eating. They want seconds!”

…Where did these guys come from? Danitz was taken aback.

“Prepare another set for them.”

Seeing that the sailor was about to turn around, Danitz quickly added, “From tomorrow onwards, the crew is to begin fishing!”

†

In the Sonia Sea, on an uninhabited island.

Klein had gotten used to his current state, and he restrained his spirituality. He planned on “Teleporting” back to Backlund and summoning the magic mirror, Arrodes, to ask some questions.

He wasn’t in a hurry to extract the residents of Moon City to the outside world. He planned on waiting for Danitz to settle down the City of Silver’s vanguard unit. With sufficient experience, he could turn his attention to this matter. After all, the path to leaving the Forsaken Land of the Gods had been opened. He could use the method of responding to prayers, and rely on the power of the Staff of the Stars to move all of Moon City out.

Of course, if the door closed once again, Klein also had a solution. He would first transfer the residents of Moon City to the Giant King’s residence and let them open the door themselves. Without the first Blasphemy Slate and the Dark Angel evil spirit, ordinary Beyonders would be able to open the door.

As for whether the True Creator would interfere or stop him, Klein didn’t consider it. This was because the Sequence 0 true god was capable of doing so now. He wasn’t able to stop “Him” even if he was disagreeable to it.

In addition, Klein believed that the focus of the True Creator wasn’t placed on this matter. “His” most pressing concern was to capture Amon and retrieve the first Blasphemy Slate.

Strictly speaking, this is a family drama… Klein lampooned inwardly. He grabbed Creeping Hunger from the air, and he wore the Sealed Artifact that had accompanied him for a long time on his left palm.

His body quickly turned transparent and disappeared.

In the saturated and stacked spirit world, Klein rapidly moved through the indescribable figures as he approached the coordinates that represented Backlund.

[image]

Suddenly, he came to a stop and stood in the chaotic void, looking at the seven pure lights that occupied the highest spot in the spirit world.

Previously, due to my low Sequence, I didn't dare wander the spirit world. Nor did I attempt to visit the Seven Lights that had shown their kindness towards me. Now, it seems it's time we meet… They're the embodiments of all kinds of knowledge, and they've lived in the spirit world for countless years. They might know quite a bit of secrets… Just as Klein finished his thoughts, a light suddenly appeared in front of him. An elder in an orange robe appeared.

This old man was plump and had a short white beard. He looked very amiable.

He looked at Klein and nodded with a smile.

"Your Excellency, please allow me to introduce myself. You should remember me. I am Orange Light Hilarion."

The last time I saw you, you were very thin… As Klein lampooned, he asked with a smile, "You seem to have predicted that I would visit you?"

Hilarion didn't hide anything as he smiled frankly.

"The spirit world itself is interwoven with all sorts of information. Some come from the past, some come from the present, and some indicate a certain future. Whether it's divination or prophecy, most of the methods are actually using the spirit world, followed by the prying into the secrets of fate."

What Orange Light meant was that since Klein was in the spirit world and had the intention of visiting, and was prepared to take action to do so, there would definitely be a corresponding exchange of information. This allowed the Seven Lights who controlled the spirit world to a certain extent to sense it and make a prophecy.

Klein wasn't surprised at all. He nodded slightly and said, "Other than you, who else wants to meet me?"

He had originally planned on using honorifics, but considering the Seven Light's attitude and the way Orange Light addressed him, he gave up on this plan, so as to maintain the status of the proxy to Sefirah Castle.

Orange Light Hilarion immediately smiled and said, "All of them. Your Excellency, you don't mind, do you?"

Klein shook his head and replied politely, "Of course. It will be my honor."

As soon as he finished speaking, different colors of light rose up around Hilarion, transforming into different old men.

"Your Excellency, please allow me to do the introductions." When Orange Light saw Klein nod, he pointed at an elder in a red robe and said, "He is Red Light Aiur Moria."

The one who previously answered my question… Klein immediately smiled and showed his gratitude and friendliness.

In turn, Hilarion introduced Yellow Light Venithan, Blue Light Kuthumi, Green Light Serapis, Indigo Light Iesus, and Violet Light Saint Germain.

Yellow Light Venithan… Is this the one who made an apocalyptic prophecy regarding the Abrahams' ancestor? Klein looked at the thin, long-bearded elder in a lemon-yellow robe and said with a smile, "Let's sit down and have a chat."

As he spoke, he raised his right hand.

Dark red flames lit up in the surrounding area. It came from a fireplace burning high-quality charcoal.

These flames immediately lit up a reclining chair, a grayish-yellow carpet, cupboards, sofas, coffee tables, cast sculptures, white porcelain teacups, and other items, forming a classic Backlund-styled activity room.

“Please take a seat.” Klein faced the Seven Lights as he smiled and pointed at the sofa and high-back chairs.

After the Seven Lights settled down, Klein sat on the reclining chair, picked up a teacup, and said in a natural tone, “To be honest, I’ve always wanted to pay a visit to all seven of you, but I couldn’t find a chance. Now, I’ve finally fulfilled this wish.”

“This has also been our wish.” Orange Light seemed to be the brightest and most outgoing person among the Seven Lights. He immediately responded on behalf of all his companions.

Eh, I have the feeling that I’ve fulfilled someone’s wish… Klein was delighted as he probed, “Might I ask what do you know about the cosmos, or should I say, the Great Old Ones and Outer Deities?”

Indigo Light Iesus, who wore a linen robe and looked relatively young, answered seriously, “Your Excellency, the Great Old Ones eyeing our world are Mother Goddess of Depravity, Mother Tree of Desire, Son of Chaos, Primordial Hunger, Ring of Comeuppance, Supernova Dominator, Inextinguishable Ravings, Monarch of Decay, and High-Dimensional Overseer…”

…Isn’t that a little too many? Klein was a little stunned when he heard that.

Chapter 1271 - Seven Lights

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Upon hearing Indigo Light Iesus's reply, Klein's mind tensed up as he recalled the crimson moon, the Brown Planet, the Scarlet Planet, the Blue Planet, and Gold Planet. He felt like they were looking down at him from above with their eyes.

Silently, a connection was established. The impending fatal corruption made all of Klein's Worms of Spirit feel uneasy.

As an angel in control of Sefirah Castle, Klein had many ways to sever this connection. Firstly, he could use the status and strength of a complete Mythical Creature. Secondly, he could suppress his anchors, using the mental imprint the Primordial One left in him to offset it. Thirdly, he could use the aura of Sefirah Castle that he could now utilize one step further.

Without any hesitation, he chose the simplest and most convenient method to not leave behind any hidden dangers.

A grayish-white fog appeared around him as all the celestial body projections in his mind vanished.

After being stunned for a second, Klein organized his words and said, "There are that many Outer Deities?"

Indigo Light Iesus symbolized the domain of prayers. "He" touched the ruby ring on "His" right hand and nodded.

"Ever since the Oldest One awakened and split apart, the most powerful

Outer Deities in the entire Universe gathered around this tiny solar system. Some of ‘Them’ wish to retrieve ‘Their’ sefirot and characteristics that had been ripped from ‘Them,’ and were attracted here. Some of ‘Them’ have the hope of getting neighboring sefirot and high-level characteristics which ‘They’ can accommodate.”

Oldest One… The Seven Lights address the original Creator as the Oldest One, and not the Primordial One… In terms of the name’s meaning, there isn’t much difference… Klein deliberated and asked, “Sefirot and characteristics that were ripped and attracted over?”

He could understand the rest of the words Indigo Light had mentioned, and he had even made some speculation towards such matters. There was just one point that caught him by surprise.

Blue Light Kuthumi, who was a symbol of the domain of Cogitation and used love and wisdom as a characteristic of “His” body, explained kindly, “Your Excellency, you shouldn’t be unfamiliar with the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics.”

Seeing Klein nod, the thick-bearded elder with a “sapphire” tied around his forehead continued, “This isn’t just a law for the Sequence pathways. It’s also suitable for describing the sefirot and the characteristics related to the Outer Deities, especially the ones that were directly nurtured and created from the Oldest One. For example, the Mother Goddess of Depravity, Son of Chaos, and the Mother Tree of Desire. As for the other Outer Deities, we aren’t too sure. In short, the three Great Old Ones who lost a portion of their sefirot and characteristics are most concerned and proactive when it comes to invading the real world. ‘They’ have been trying to influence the spirit world and corrupt us.”

Klein nodded slightly and asked in a confirmation-seeking tone, “In other words, a portion of the current twenty-two pathways and nine sefirot belong to the Outer Deities?”

“Yes.” The amethyst-wielding Saint Germain, who symbolized the domain of ritualistic magic, took the opportunity to answer. “When the total number of 22 pathways and the nine sefirot was reached, everything finally reached a balance. This might be the mysticism connection that originated from the Oldest One.”

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “What are they exactly?”

Saint Germain. whose face was suffused with a faint purple glow, making “Him” look rather mysterious, said, “For example, the Moon and the Earth pathway both belong to the Mother Goddess of Depravity. ‘She’ is an existence that stands atop all the Outer Deities. Even after a portion of ‘Her’ sefirah—that is, the Brood Hive—was ripped from ‘Her,’ that remains the case. ‘She’ is the sovereign of all the feminine forces in the entire Universe.”

Just as Saint Germain said that, Green Light Serapis suddenly laughed.

“In fact, after carefully analyzing the twenty-two pathways, you’ll discover that the Moon and Earth pathways are the two most contradictory ones. Heh heh, the Demoness pathway represents the Oldest One’s feminine side. The Red Priest pathway represents the masculine side. This happens to form a deformed aspect of balance, but the Moon and Earth can also make Beyonders of the corresponding pathways turn into feminine creatures at high Sequences. There are no pathways that balance it.”

Seeing Klein wince his eyebrows, Green Light, who had the long hair of an artist, added with a smile, “The Earth pathway’s Sequence 2 is ‘Desolate Matriarch,’ and the Moon pathway’s Sequence 1 is called ‘Beauty Goddess.’ Therefore, the Sanguine only have queens and no male princes.”

Then was the ancient goddess, Lilith, originally a male and a female? Klein mumbled inwardly and asked thoughtfully, “The Primordial Moon is the Mother Goddess of Depravity?”

“Yes.” Red Light Aiur Moria, who was wearing a diamond crown, nodded in a dignified manner. "'She' occupies the moon, and through 'Her' own level and influence on the Brood Hive and the Uniqueness of two pathways, 'She' has gradually infiltrated into reality. The Primordial Moon is 'Her' manifestation in this world."

After saying that, Aiur Moria paused and said, "'Her' full title is 'Mother Goddess of Depravity,' 'Origin of Evil,' The Indestructible,' and the 'Brood Hive of Filth.'"

Klein recalled the exaggerated reaction of the moon when he first learned of the secret of the cosmos. He suddenly felt a chill as he hurriedly asked, "The Devil and Prisoner pathway come from the Mother Tree of Desire?"

Yellow Light Venithan, who was wearing a lemon-yellow robe, sighed.

"Yes, 'Her' full name is the 'Mother Tree of Desire,' 'Father to Devils,' 'Perpetual Blatherer,' and the 'Heartless God.' Therefore, 'She' had seized the opportunity when something happened to the Chained God, easily achieving 'Her' goal of corruption."

Mother… Father… Is that fellow a man or a woman… Yes, to an existence at this level, it's normal for there to be no distinction between genders. Different incarnations have different images… Heh, 'She' even wanted to bear a child for me. From the present state of the Chained God, if I had been caught, I'd probably be the one bearing the child. Then, the child will inherit Sefirah Castle, allowing the Mother Tree of Desire to indirectly corrupt and control this sefirah…

From this angle, perhaps the Prisoner pathway's desire of indulgence is the proper way of acting. However, this "correct" path leads to the Outer Deity, so temperance is still the better one… Klein frowned slightly as he raised a question he had guessed before, hoping to get an answer.

"Since there are so many Outer Deities, why haven't 'They' entered our world yet?"

From what Klein had learned to date, he could guess that, even if it were only the Mother Goddess of Depravity and the Mother Tree of Desire, the Outer Deities could easily resolve existences like the former seven deities, the True Creator, and the Primordial Demoness.

The plump Orange Light Hilarion smiled and said, “All our suffering comes from the Oldest One. All our luck comes from the Oldest One as well.

“Not only did ‘He’ leave behind ‘His’ spirit, will, branding, and corruption, but ‘He’ also left behind the sefirot, characteristics, and power.

“The remnants of ‘His’ power formed an invisible barrier outside the planet, preventing the Outer Deities from directly invading it. However, with the passage of time, ‘His’ consciousness and powers haven’t truly been revived, and ‘His’ will and powers are fading. At the end of the Fourth Epoch, this reached a very serious state. The invisible barrier produced cracks, and the seven deities had no choice but to move ‘Their’ divine kingdoms into the astral world to mend the cracks.

It’s no wonder that the true deities from the Fourth Epoch could walk the land, but “They” rarely descended in the Fifth Epoch… Klein immediately came to a realization and asked, “When the Oldest One’s will and powers decline further, the invisible barrier will vanish and usher in the apocalypse?”

Orange Light Hilarion, who had been smiling all this while, glanced at Yellow Light Venithan. His expression immediately turned serious.

“Yes.”

When the time comes, the Mother Goddess of Depravity, the Mother Tree of Desire, and the Son of Chaos and all the other Outer Deities would invade this planet. Even if the Goddess becomes a Great Old One, “She” wouldn’t be able to withstand so many of “Them”… The other Sequence 0 deities would be able to tie down one or two Outer Deities together, and that would be considered a miracle… It would take nine to fight one, or even more… Klein's scalp tingled as he once again experienced the meaning of despair.

No wonder it was called the apocalypse!

With his upheaval in emotions, he immediately felt the Primordial One's mental imprint strengthen, and more of it had eroded what the anchors had fixed in place.

Klein quickly calmed himself down and allowed the fragile balance to reappear again.

This is the reason why the corruption from underground will naturally dissipate as long as one doesn't approach it or resist? Klein recalled some of the mysticism knowledge he had previously grasped.

"Your Excellency, you're completely right." Orange Light Hilarion gave an affirmative answer.

Klein immediately made other connections.

"Does that mean that the closer one is to the apocalypse, the easier it is for one to advance? This is because the Primordial One's will is fading. 'His' awakening will become difficult, to the point of not waking up again?"

Red Light, Aiur Moria thought for a moment and said, "This is the reason why the seven deities have only waited until recently to set 'Their' sights on Above the Sequences before taking concrete action.

"However, the Oldest One's will can dissipate, but 'His' spirit will remain forever. It won't be erased unless the entire Universe returns to the singularity. Therefore, the corresponding high-level existences still have the possibility of having the Oldest One awaken in 'Them.' The higher the level, the greater the possibility. The corresponding influence and corruption will become more serious."

The extraordinary power and the curse that can never be broken are always two sides of the same coin… Klein sighed. Forcefully suppressing a problem that wasn't at his level, he asked, "Do you know the potion formula for Attendant of Mysteries?"

The amethyst-wielding Saint Germain replied, "There's a corresponding mystery attached to such knowledge. It's not in the spirit world, but according to our observations, the Attendant of Mysteries ritual should be closely related to the spirit world."

Orange Light Hilarion immediately smiled at Klein.

"Your Excellency, if you require anything, we'll provide our full support."

This fervor makes me a little afraid, just like facing Arrodes… Klein nodded slightly and prepared to change the topic.

After some consideration, he asked solemnly, "Do you know of 'The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings'?"

He translated the title using Elvish.

The Seven Lights immediately fell silent. "They" looked at each other and didn't reply for a while.

After a few seconds, Orange Light Hilarion sighed.

"We still can't be sure if you're 'Him.'

"'He' was a Great Old One who had been active during the end of the previous civilization up to the mid-stages of the First Epoch. 'He' is 'the great ruler above the spirit world' that we speak of.

"The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings is 'His' title in the Western Continent. The other title is 'King of Space-Time,' 'Beacon of Destiny,' 'Embodiment of Sefirah Castle,' 'Dominator of the Spirit World,' and…"

At this point, Orange Light paused and said, “Lord of the Mysteries.”

Chapter 1272 - “Spring”

◆

The King of Space-Time, Beacon of Destiny, Embodiment of Sefirah Castle, Dominator of the Spirit World, Lord of the Mysteries… So the “Mysteries” mentioned by the ancient sun god refers to the Lord of the Mysteries… Klein silently repeated the titles as he felt the trauma in his heart increase.

He immediately thought of a question and hesitated before saying, “Based on what I know, a long time before the last civilization ended, The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings had already appeared.”

After the Seven Lights exchanged looks, the thin Yellow Light Venithan, who was translucent like other spirit world creatures, sighed and said, “We weren’t aware of that. When the previous civilization came to an end, the Seven Lights from before had been wiped out when the Oldest One awoke. We were the pure lights that were born from the spirit world during the First Epoch.

“However, we have some guesses about ‘the great ruler above the spirit world.’ Perhaps this can answer your questions.”

Klein perked up and wore an attentive look.

Yellow Light Venithan continued, “We suspect that some of the Great Old Ones that were active in the First Epoch were Outer Deities who had been directly attracted to this planet. Some of them came alive as sefirots. In other words, some Great Old Ones were equivalent to the Oldest One—embodiments of the different personalities ‘He’ split into.

"Whatever separates will definitely converge, and whatever converges will definitely separate. This description isn't limited to Beyonder characteristics, but also refers to the Oldest One 'Himself.' As most of the sefirot and characteristics are from this supreme existence, there are natural inclinations of convergence. And the Oldest One is the amalgamation of all the contradictions in the Universe. Once the sefirot and characteristics are gathered, it will almost certainly separate."

Is this the crux and origins of the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics? The Genie is an unlucky Outer Deity who got attracted to this world, only to encounter the Lord of the Mysteries? Klein nodded slightly and didn't interrupt. He patiently waited for Yellow Light to share "Their" guesses.

Dressed in a lemon-yellow robe, Venithan glanced at Klein and said, "Perhaps the Oldest One had already had an inclination towards separating while asleep. Therefore, 'His' mind was split into different parts. 'He' used different titles to secretly interfere with the real world and prepare for the separation that was bound to happen once 'His' body woke up. For example, God Almighty or the Celestial Worthy…"

A reasonable guess; it can explain many of my doubts… Klein immediately felt enlightened.

He deliberated and said, "In other words, you believe that 'the great ruler above the spirit world' was a part of the Oldest One. To a certain extent, 'He' is equivalent to the Oldest One?"

"That's right." Orange Light Hilarion gave an affirmative response before comforting Klein. "Based on the present situation, the great ruler is also the same as the rest of the Oldest One. 'His' will and powers have faded over time. Your Excellency, regardless of you being 'Him' or not, it doesn't hinder you from putting up a certain level of resistance. Keep what's left of your humanity, and reach a particular balance with 'Him.' Heh heh, separation is inevitable."

What kind of consolation is that? Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

Then he realized a problem:

Since the Oldest One dissociated into different parts, the mental imprint in the body of a High-Sequence Beyonder of the corresponding pathway should also belong to the different Great Old Ones.

If the Primordial One which awoke in the ancient sun god's body is the God Almighty as described by the Seven Lights, then who would it be when the Primordial One's mental imprint begins eating at me?

The answer to this question was very obvious. Without needing to think, Klein could answer it:

The Lord of the Mysteries, the Dominator of the Spirit World, the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings!

In other words, it wasn't that the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings hadn't left any traces as he had previously believed. "He" had already awoken in Klein's body!

F*ck… Klein's entire body turned cold. He inexplicably experienced what the ancient sun god previously felt.

At that moment, he was very worried that, one day, he would unknowingly become another person, becoming the resurrected Lord of the Mysteries, the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.

However, an awakening of this level is similar to what other angels have encountered. It's not as strong and irresistible as I had imagined it to be… This is because I'm different from the ancient sun god. I wasn't born with the status of an angel, or even in control of a Uniqueness. I advanced step by step, and I was able to complete the digestion in different stages? If that's the case, I have to thank the grayish-white fog that sent the "curtain" into the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Perhaps, this involved the help of a particular, or several existences… Yes, that's still not right. I've already become the owner of Sefirah Castle. There's no reason for the corruption and contamination I suffer to be the same as other Sequence 2 angels… Klein secretly shook his head. He didn't raise the corresponding question to the Seven Lights.

To him, this was one of his core secrets. He definitely couldn't let other existences know what his current state was like.

He raised his right hand and placed it to his mouth. He coughed lightly.

"I roughly understand."

After chatting with the Seven Lights, Klein stood up and bowed.

"Thank you for your answers."

"It was our pleasure. May Your Excellency return to the throne of the great ruler above the spirit world as quickly as possible." The Seven Lights stood up at the same time, giving him a warm response.

Are "They" trying to curse me? Klein teased himself as he politely sent away the seven pure lights.

Following that, he activated "Teleport" once again, and returned to a secluded alley in Backlund.

Pressing his top hat on his head, Klein strolled down the street.

The first thing that caught his eye was the crowd of all kinds of people and the hustle and bustle that formed a heatwave.

Some people were wearing linen clothes, sawing down abnormally tall trees in groups of about four people. Some of them formed a team, busy repairing the streets and houses that didn't suffer too much damage. Some held Desi pies and sweet ice tea in their hands, rushing past him, as though they were rushing to their workplace. Some of them rode cargo carriages, carrying food, meat, and vegetables, all heading in different directions…

Although most of these people wore simple clothes with plenty of visible stitches, and there were still signs of numbness and pain on their faces, the vitality their bodies exuded seemed to interweave into a light of hope before Klein's eyes. They were tenaciously brimming with life.

They were like grass that tried their best to tear through stones after a cold winter.

Klein slowed down his steps and gazed deeply at the bustling scene.

Although he hadn't seen the tragedy in the later stages of the war, he had learned plenty from Miss Justice and Leonard. Furthermore, he had previously been traveling in the even darker and more repressed Forsaken Land of the Gods. It was inevitable that he felt some uncontrollable emotions.

Spring had arrived.

Klein's expression gradually relaxed as the corners of his mouth curled up.

He walked through the streets and alleys that were rebuilt after the war, and he walked all the way to Saint Samuel Cathedral in North Borough.

The square was filled with potholes. The workers were doing the first round of cleaning. A small flock of pigeons had returned and landed in this once-familiar area.

Klein looked around but didn't find any hawkers. All he could do was use historical projections as food and scatter it across the floor.

As the pigeons flew over, he crossed the square and entered the cathedral where the bell tower was being repaired. He sat in the front pew of the prayer hall.

Looking at the Sacred Emblem that was the crimson moon surrounded by stars, Klein took off his hat and clasped his hands. He closed his eyes in this tranquil environment.

He gradually calmed down, feeling as if he was really praying.

At this moment, Leonard, with much longer black hair and darker green eyes, walked down the aisle in a black trench coat and red gloves. He came near him and sat on the pew two spots from him and began praying.

[image]

In the absolute silence, Klein opened his eyes, stood up, put on his hat, and walked past Leonard.

When he reached the door, Leonard slowly got up and followed behind.

One after the other, they arrived at a corner of the square not long after.

Leonard looked at the few pigeons on the ground and seemingly mumbled to himself, “I’m already a high-ranking deacon of the Nighthawks. In another two days, I’ll return to the Holy Cathedral for some studies, as well as obtain a corresponding Holy Artifact.”

In the final stages of the war, he advanced at the frontlines to Sequence 4 Nightwatcher.

“You don’t seem to be too happy.” Klein, who was standing beside Leonard, didn’t turn his head as he looked at the pigeons.

Leonard laughed self-deprecatingly.

“I have no right to be unhappy.

“I was just thinking that the battle of gods ended so quickly, and the result was unexpected. Does it mean that the previous defeat and the difficulties that everyone suffered were nothing but bait?”

“Before today, I shared your views. I was also puzzled and frustrated, but now, I’m a little lost. This might have been… a necessity.” Klein didn’t hide his feelings.

Leonard fell silent for two seconds before looking down at the pigeon that was prancing around him.

“That’s what Old Man said too…”

Without waiting for Klein to say another word, he turned his head and glanced at his former colleague.

“You’ve become an angel?”

Pallez Zoroast had told him that what Klein had done previously was perhaps to prepare for his advancement to an angel.

“Yes.” Klein nodded slightly. “But there isn’t any glory or power in this. Only pain, curses, and responsibility.”

“Why?” Leonard subconsciously asked.

Klein didn’t reply immediately. He looked down at the shadow by his feet and turned to walk out the square.

After a few steps, he turned his back to Leonard and muttered to himself, “You should still remember that sentence.

“We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness.”

Leonard was taken aback. After a few seconds, he turned to look at Klein, but all he could see was Klein’s back which was just about to disappear around the corner of the street. He was wearing a half top hat and a black trench coat.

With a whoosh, the pigeons on the ground flew up into the light-blue sky.

Chapter 1273 - The Poor Arrodes

◆ ◆ ◆

Klein didn’t visit Benson and Melissa, because the matters he was involved in were at too high a level. Approaching his siblings would only bring them disaster. For existences who didn’t know Klein’s original identity, such acts would help them understand the relationship between Benson, Melissa, and Klein. To know of Klein’s past experiences, this would make “Them” confirm one thing—Klein still maintained his humanity and was still very concerned about his family.

Therefore, staying away from Benson and Melissa was the best form of protection he could give them.

Of course, Klein had already grasped the situation of his siblings through Miss Justice.

During the war, Benson had displayed his experience and ability at the Ministry of Finance. He received many promotions and had become the deputy director of the Fifth Department, and his annual salary reached 300 pounds.

Melissa won the favor of her mentor, Portland Moment, and was given a chance to become a Beyonder. The chancellor of the Backlund University of Technology was a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery, so he had long become a Beyonder. He was currently a Sequence 7 Appraiser. He wished for Melissa to become a Sequence 9 Savant so that she could better absorb the knowledge and improve her memory. This established a good foundation for her in her subsequent development in the mechanical domain.

This was Melissa's secret, but she wasn't able to hide from a Spectator at the demigod level. Besides, Audrey definitely informed Klein that Melissa was more inclined to agree, and would be making a decision in the next few days.

Klein's attitude towards this matter was a tacit acquiesce. On the one hand, the spiritual perception enhancement one gained from the Savant pathway's advancement was rather limited. Melissa wouldn't really hear or see what she shouldn't. On the other hand, with the impending apocalypse, the madness caused by the Low-Sequence potions would further decrease. Furthermore, there was also him, a Miracle Invoker, to help lower the risk of her losing control.

For an avid fan of machinery, a Sequence 9 Savant is enough… Moment shares the same attitude. He doesn't wish for a believer of the Evernight to obtain too many potions from the Church of Steam…

Yes, the apocalypse is approaching, and the invisible barrier is weakening. The intrusion of this world by the Outer Deities will become more and more obvious. The chances of ordinary people encountering Beyonder incidents will definitely gradually increase. From this point of view, it's also a good thing for Melissa to become a Beyonder. If she can successfully advance to Sequence 6 Artisan, or a Machinery Specialist, then she can fulfill her dreams and protect herself and Benson…

I'll get Miss Justice to find an opportunity to disclose the "acting method" to Melissa in a discreet manner. The extent of her future growth will depend on her. At most, I can give her some good luck—uh, formulas and ingredients… I'm really like an older brother who can't rest easily. Heh, I've been like this since the beginning. Does this count as granting a "wish" in a certain sense?

Wait, Melissa definitely wishes for Klein to come back to life. If I were to walk right in front of her, would I receive enough feedback?

…Forget it. This will bring her and Benson a devastating disaster… Klein shook his head and stopped himself from making excuses.

He then pressed down on his top hat and turned towards a hotel by the streets. He took out a gold pound and got a room.

The gold pound was real. It was an item that Klein had brought back to the real world some time ago.

In the previous war, Klein had donated 14,800 pounds in cash, 14,200 pounds worth of gold bars, and nearly 20 high-quality gems through Miss Justice. Apart from all the strange items left on the junk pile, he only had 39 Loen gold coins and ten high-quality gems left.

Glancing at the hotel owner's returning change in soli and pennies, Klein put them away and entered the room before walking to the full-length mirror.

Right on the heels of that, he took out a pen and paper and drew the incantation that summoned Arrodes.

Seconds and minutes passed, but nothing abnormal happened.

The full-body mirror remained silent.

A few seconds later, Klein chuckled and raised his eyebrows. He took out a gold coin from his pocket.

†

Chug! Chug! Chug!

A steam locomotive that was spewing thick smoke tore across the rail, heading west of the continent.

The disheveled Ikanser and a Machinery Hivemind member stood in a particular carriage as they focused on the metal cage in front of them.

The metal spikes above the cage extended outwards in all kinds of menacing ways, coruscating with a dim light.

The Machinery Hivemind member, who had the looks of a typical Loenese citizen, looked out the window at the plains rapidly sweeping past them. He couldn't help but ask, "Deacon, are you planning on returning to Loen after reaching Intis?"

After the war ended, the Church of Steam, who had taken the wrong side, had no choice but to bear the consequences of its actions. It had to transfer all Beyonders above that of demigods, and Sealed Artifacts above Grade 2 out of Loen within a time period set by the two Churches of Evernight and Storm.

In other words, they had lost their original status. In the future, they could only maintain a small number of cathedrals, just like the Church of Earth Mother in Loen.

If it weren't for the fact that there were too many people who believed in the God of Steam and Machinery, and some of them being key figures in the reconstruction efforts after the war, the Church of Steam might not have been able to retain such treatment.

Similarly, a smaller number of cathedrals only required a small number of Machinery Hivemind members. Most of the Beyonders in Loen had to migrate to Intis.

Ikanser fell silent for a few seconds before smiling bitterly.

"I have to heed the archbishops' arrangements, but I will take the initiative to request a return to Loen. That's where my childhood, teenage, and young adult life was. There are too many memories that I can't forget…"

As he spoke, his gaze grew distant, and he seemed to see the Capital of Capitals.

At this moment, the metal cage that was overgrown with spikes suddenly trembled.

Silver bolts of lightning appeared out of nowhere and landed one after another. They were all absorbed by the metal cage, and through a few wires wrapped in rubber, the current flowed to the ground outside the steam locomotive, dragging out a line of sparks.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The metal cage seemed to be hit by an invisible hand, but it was unable to break the barrier.

“The Magic Mirror’s reaction is very intense… It’s always been very quiet in the past,” the Machinery Hivemind member who had been asking was rather puzzled.

Amidst the banging, Ikanser subconsciously touched his hair.

“That’s not the case. It will sometimes show its crazy side. If it wasn’t for what had happened, we would’ve still treated it as a Grade 2 Sealed Artifact.”

“Is that so? Heh heh, I haven’t come into contact with it before, so it might just be me, but it feels to me that the Magic Mirror doesn’t want to leave Backlund,” the Machinery Hivemind member teased with a smile.

Pa!

Lightning struck and was absorbed by the metal cage.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The slamming sounds dragged on slowly, as though it was making its last, helpless cry.

Ikanser took out an old and exquisite pocket watch and opened it.

“It only lasted two minutes. It’s much better than in the morning.”

Just as the member of the Machinery Hivemind, who had just been transferred over, was about to ask, he suddenly heard the slamming sounds stop abruptly. It was as though it had been affected by some factor that it couldn't put up resistance to.

"This is the style of the Magic Mirror?" he asked.

Ikanser frowned slightly and said, "No.

"Normally speaking, it wouldn't have the strength to last twenty to thirty seconds.

"Something's wrong…"

"Deacon, don't worry. There is a powerful figure on board the train, one who outranks the archbishops." The Machinery Hivemind member beside him consoled him indifferently.

There were too many dangerous Sealed Artifacts on the steam locomotive. Without a powerful figure watching them, there would definitely be problems.

Ikanser nodded, indicating that he wasn't worried.

Klein was sitting in a conjured carriage in a hamlet's path more than ten kilometers away from the steam locomotive. In front of him was a mirror.

Just as he finished outlining the symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying, a wave of light suffused the mirror as golden Loenese text appeared:

"Exalted Great Master, you're finally here! Your puny, loyal, and poor servant, Arrodes, misses you!"

Eh… Klein couldn't accept the enthusiasm behind this line as he shrank back indiscernibly.

If Arrodes's previous attempts to curry favor still maintained a hint of dignity, it was now complete fawning over him. Klein could even detect a hint of crying.

“The frequency of Amorous news popping up in Trier is far higher than in Backlund. It should be a place that you’re fond of,” Klein teased Arrodes with a smile.

“That’s because you don’t wish to go to Trier.” The golden words on the surface of the mirror faded their colors, turning a faint silver.

Klein secretly clicked his tongue.

“I have something to ask you.”

“Please ask,” Arrodes replied humbly.

“Do you know who Earth Mother is?” Klein went straight to the point.

The mirror instantly turned dark as the faint silver words turned palish white:

“I don’t know… But during the war of gods, I heard a voice coming from deep within Tenebrous Heaven. ‘He’ shouted a name… That’s the true name of the Sanguine Ancestor.”

This magic mirror didn’t dare to directly present Lilith’s name.

Lilith? It’s actually Lilith… Klein was surprised, but he also felt that this answered many of his questions.

Then, he thought of The Moon Emlyn.

This vampire kept going in circles, imagining all kinds of developments, only to have never changed his faith.

If Emlyn had Anderson’s personality, he would definitely say to the Sanguine’s Grand Duke and Marquises, “Hey, are you also coming to believe in the Mother Goddess…” As Klein imagined the funny scene, he said to Arrodes, “It’s your turn to ask.”

“Supreme Master, please continue asking. I’ll ask it all at once towards the end.” The palish-white words regained their faint-silver luster.

Klein thought for a moment before saying, “How’s the situation like now? For example, the situation in Feysac.”

Chapter 1274 - The Stabilization of the Situation

◆ ◆ ◆

On the surface of the mirror, silver words surfaced one by one amidst the aqueous light:

“…adopt Beyonders from the Church of the God of Combat and the Feysac military who are willing to pledge their loyalty. Only the extremely pious, faithful, and those willing to be martyrs, as well as a few mid- and upper echelon members of the Church are to be eliminated. This is both the benevolence and compassion of the Goddess, as well as the necessary measures to deal with the subsequent situation … With the apocalypse approaching, the number of Beyonder incidents will inevitably increase all across the world. To maintain the stability of the world, we have to do our best to increase our strength as quickly as possible.

“If we were to cull the Beyonders of the Church of the God of Combat and the Feysac military, obtaining their corresponding characteristics, that still doesn’t aid us in nurturing a Beyonder of the same level within a few years. A Beyonder with rich experience, be it in their digesting of the potion or accumulated knowledge, requires a sufficient amount of time…”

Upon seeing this, Klein mumbled inwardly. He felt that this wasn’t the usual tone of Arrodes. It was more like an official document.

It’s showing documents of unknown origins that it peeped at… By using words like “digesting,” it means that both the writer and the reader have mastered the acting method. And from the tone of the document, it's from the Church of Evernight… Based on these two points, it's not difficult to tell that these documents are for the eyes of archbishops and high-ranking deacons. The author should be the Apostolic See from the Cathedral of Serenity… Arrodes's secret-prying abilities are very impressive… Klein nodded indiscernibly as he waited for the contents in the mirror to "flip the page."

The silver words vanished one after another, quickly forming new sentences and paragraphs:

"There's no need to spread the fact that the Goddess has replaced the God of Combat to the ordinary nobles and citizens of Feysac. This allows them to retain their faith in the God of Combat. On the one hand, it's beneficial for us and the priests, bishops, and various major cathedrals who have surrendered to us. It will stabilize the situation in Feysac in the quickest way possible. On the other hand, it also prevents the Goddess from being disturbed by the unresolvable problem of faith before"She" completely gains control of the God of Combat's authority.

"An update will be disseminated after a new revelation is given. Now, we will only draw up the corresponding draft.

"…Try not to incite the strong resistance of Feysac and other countries. We've lost too many Beyonders and soldiers, and we have expended a large amount of resources and items. Be it the Church, the countries, or the people of different classes, we are all very weak. We need some time of peace and stability to recover… We should work with the Church of Storms, the Church of Knowledge, the Church of Earth Mother, countries like Feynapotter or Lenburg. We will force Intis and Feysac to make an unconditional surrender. We will obtain what we hope for at the negotiation table. During this process, we can use the purging of the stubborn old-fashioned faithful to exert pressure on them.

"When dealing with the domestic situation and the filling of the void left behind by the Church of Steam, the Church of Storms should be given enough respect. We can even make concessions on certain matters. This is the will of the Goddess.

“Finally, from this moment forth, the number of times the crimson moon that appears in the sermons, preaching, rituals, and Masses should be reduced. In official canon, the Goddess’s title of ‘Lady of Crimson’ shall no longer be mentioned…”

“Lady of Crimson” shall no longer be mentioned… Klein’s brows twitched as he felt a strong sense of confusion towards the last sentence.

Soon, he thought of the Sanguine Ancestor, the ancient god of the Second Epoch, and the present Earth Mother, Lilith, who was once a Sequence 0 of the Moon pathway. She was the true Lady of Crimson. In a moment of enlightenment, he vaguely understood that this might be an exchange under the table. It was a necessary price.

Yes… The Goddess’s attitude is very clear. That is to stabilize the situation as quickly as possible… Before “She” truly controls the authority of Death and that of the God of Combat, and becomes a Great Old One, “She” undoubtedly doesn’t wish for any more orthodox deities to perish. If that happened, the invisible barrier left behind by the Primordial One will have no one to mend it; this will allow the Outer Deities to find an opportunity to bring the apocalypse forward… Also, based on Loen’s present situation, if we continue the war, the anchors will waver even more. It might lead to the awakening of the Primordial One in the Goddess…

The Goddess took a huge risk having the frontline retreat all the way to Backlund. “She” had to divert more strength to suppress the Primordial One. If Earth Mother betrayed “Her,” “She” might’ve perished even faster than the God of Combat. Uh, could “She” have other trump cards?

The losses that the Church of the Evernight Goddess and the Church of Storms suffered seems quite significant. It’s no wonder that after the Resistance announced that they would retain the corresponding cathedrals and respect the Storm religion, that bunch of irascible fellows didn't attempt to retaliate, and they silently agreed to the establishment of the new government… Klein mumbled to himself as he had a rough idea of the current situation.

He asked a third question:

"If the Evernight Goddess wants to advance further, does 'She' need to find the River of Eternal Darkness?"

This was one of the nine sefirot. Klein remembered Arrodes mentioning it once, saying that this "river" was related to the ancient Death, the Phoenix ancestor, Gregrace. The clues seemed to be hidden deep in the spirit world's Calderón City.

"Yes, Great Master." The silver words twisted and distorted, forming new text. "The Death at the end of the Fourth Epoch should've been able to use the River of Eternal Darkness. 'He' attempted to use this sefirah to forcefully accommodate the Uniqueness of non-neighboring pathways. Then, 'He' went mad."

So that was how Death went mad back then. I knew it; a Sequence 0 true god, one who has lived for three Epochs and has seen the Blasphemy Slate, wouldn't lack common sense and randomly drink potions. It's not like "He" is Alista Tudor, having reached a point of only having the options of madness or death… It's no wonder Death challenged the fractured seven deities with just a Primordial Demoness. Back then, "He" was equivalent to half a Great Old One… Yes, Mr. Azik had a golden phoenix accessory that came from Death… Klein strung up certain matters.

Suddenly, he inwardly let out an exclamation. He suspected that the price of so many bestowments was the River of Eternal Darkness.

Just like how the True Creator had repeatedly tolerated him so as to force him into the Giant King's residence to obtain the first Blasphemy Slate!

As the owner of Sefirah Castle, he was probably the only relatively high Sequence Beyonder who could resist the corruption of other sefirot.

Of course, the Evernight Goddess could also wait up to a decade or so. After the Primordial One's will faded further, "She" could personally retrieve it. However, this way, Klein wasn't sure if "She" could complete the ritual before the apocalypse happened.

He composed himself and raised the fourth question:

"Where can I get the potion formula for Attendant of Mysteries?"

Arrodes made the silver words reassemble into brand new content:

"Zaratul; first Blasphemy Slate; second Blasphemy Slate; The Card of Blasphemy, The Fool; The Fool Uniqueness that has become a Mythical Creature."

The first choice and second choice might be plotting against me… Zaratul is even more terrifying and cunning than the Dark Demonic Wolf. If I were to plot against "Him," there's a high chance of me falling into "His" trap. The danger is extremely high… The third choice is Amon's brother. "He" should've used this war to become a Visionary. If I were to provoke "Him," Sefirah Castle might not be able to save me… The fourth and fifth options are related to The Half-Fool of the Antigonus family. It's related to the Goddess's foggy town. Uh, the Goddess should have a way to circle around The Half-Fool and extract the Card of Blasphemy, but perhaps I'll need to use the River of Eternal Darkness to exchange for it… Klein realized that he had reached a dead end.

The path ahead was the River of Eternal Darkness, and behind him was the leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul.

Unfortunately, if I can find the Dark Demonic Wolf, I can try to negotiate with "Him." "He" should've seen the first Blasphemy Slate and grasp the potion formula of Attendant of Mysteries… Sigh, "He" will flee far away once he smells me… Klein thought for a moment and said to Arrodes, “Fifth question, what did you mean when you said you saw a pillar and support from me?”

The aqueous light in the mirror swirled slightly as the deepness became more obvious. The corresponding silver text seemed to turn a little whiter.

“Great Master, this is a feeling that I can’t describe using words.

“However, I’ve experienced similar feelings in another existence before. Apart from ‘Him,’ only you possess it. That existence is the ancient sun god.”

The ancient sun god… Klein nodded in thought.

“Alright, it’s your turn to ask.”

On the surface of the mirror, the words on the silver screen suddenly turned golden:

“Supreme Master, do you think you can take away your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes?

“Supreme Master, do you think you can take away your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes?”

†

This question appeared five times in a row, completely covering the surface of the mirror.

Having become an angel, Klein no longer feared Arrodes. After thinking for a few seconds, he smiled and said, “Let me talk to that angel. This is basic courtesy.”

With a boom, illusory beams of different colors spewed out from the mirror and exploded into fireworks in the carriage.

Almost at the same time, two dark rays of light reached out from the edge of the mirror. Two arms that appeared surreal grew out.

The two "arms" originally wanted to reach out to Klein's calf, but they silently shrank back and gently swayed on the spot.

"Praise the Supreme Master!" After the fireworks fell, a golden message appeared in the mirror.

†

In the middle section of the steam locomotive, in a simple room.

A tall and handsome young man with long chestnut hair sat on a hardwood chair. Facing the triangular Sacred Emblem, he clasped his hands and closed his eyes as he sincerely prayed.

On the side of the narrow table was a mannequin made of metal components. Behind the mannequin was a faint meshed glow.

Suddenly, the young man opened his eyes and looked towards the other side.

Someone had appeared there.

And in the young man's blue eyes, the figure only looked like a person. In essence, it was an invisible vortex wearing a silk top hat and a black trench coat. Inside the vortex, there were transparent and distorted maggots squirming about in the cluster.

"Gehrman Sparrow." The young man calmly read out a name.

All the items around him floated up, but there was no wind in the room.

Klein pressed his top hat and revealed his human face.

"How may I address you?"

The young man nodded slightly and said, "Bornova Gustav."

Chapter 1275 - A New Journey

◆

Bornova Gustav… Klein’s gaze swept across the young man’s face, landing on the floating items and the mannequin made from metallic components.

The mannequins have a postmodern style… Some of the physical laws here seem to have changed a little… Klein nodded in thought.

“I want to take the mirror.”

He very honestly stated his request.

Bornova’s expression didn’t change, as though he was just a puppet.

“You’re a Blessed of Evernight?”

“I guess so,” Klein said with a smile.

Bornova nodded.

“Then take it away.”

He’s of the impression that I’m asking for the spoils of war for the Church of Evernight? Klein didn’t explain as he politely took off his hat and bowed slightly.

“Thank you very much.”

As he spoke, Klein’s figure suddenly faded and vanished.

He had only come in the form of a Historical Void projection.

Following that, in the carriage where Ikanser and the Machinery Hivemind member were, nothing happened.

Of course, they were only situated in a historical scene, and the actual situation in the car had been covered up without their knowledge.

On a carriage more than ten kilometers away, a mirror suddenly appeared in Klein's hand.

It was silver in color, and the patterns on its back were ancient and mysterious. On both sides was an eye-like ornament.

"Don't speak." Klein looked into the mirror and gave a simple instruction.

"Yes, Supreme Master." Silver words surfaced from the depths of the mirror.

Klein immediately took out a pen and paper and used the magic mirror as a backing to write.

He thought for a moment and wrote with a faint smile:

"Dear Mr. Azik,

"It seems like I haven't written to you for a long time, as I went to the Forsaken Land of the Gods and had a wonderful journey.

"There are only two types of living creatures there. They are either living sentient creatures, or monsters. Those sentient beings either bear a curse or have obvious physical mutations. They're even more tragic than I imagined.

"I tried helping them. This wasn't only for the ritual, for my anchors, or to satisfy my sympathetic heart. It holds meaning on its own…

"Putting aside the suffering, the situation in the Forsaken Land of the Gods is completely different from the outside world. It's like an oil painting with a black theme… What's surprising is that Artificial Death can influence the undying creatures there. I was very confused back then, but today, I finally had a guess. I suspect that this is related to the River of Eternal Darkness, one of the nine sefirot…

“This reminds me of Calderón City in the spirit world. I’m reminded of the golden phoenix accessory you mentioned before… Rumor has it that the Phoenix Ancestor—Death of the Fourth Epoch—could use the River of Eternal Darkness to a certain extent. I wonder if you know anything about this?

“The war that lasted for more than a year has finally ended. The Evernight Goddess clinched victory in the end, and the God of Combat has perished. I believe that, with your level and status, you should know what this means…

“No matter what, the long-awaited peace has finally arrived. People are gradually returning to their normal lives. This is a scene that I like to see, but some wounds may never heal…

“I don’t know if the apocalypse will arrive on time, and I don’t know when you’ll wake up. I can only hope that everything’s heading in the right direction.

“Finally, let me mention something trivial. I’ve already advanced to Sequence 2 and am now a Miracle Invoker. This is both a curse and hope.

“I wish you well.

Your eternal student,

Klein Moretti.”

After he finished writing, Klein examined it carefully before folding the letter. He blew Azik’s copper whistle and summoned the bone messenger.

When the gigantic messenger emerged from the ground, its bones trembled as though it had sensed the aura of “the great ruler above the spirit world.”

Klein chuckled softly and handed the letter to the messenger whose number was unknown. He watched it clumsily bow before disintegrating into a fountain and burrowing into the ground.

After doing this, Klein cast his gaze at the magic mirror on his thigh.

Sensing his gaze, the aqueous light on the surface of the mirror rippled and produced silver words:

“Great Master, where are we going next?”

Where to next? Klein repeated the question inwardly. He really wanted to “Teleport” to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range and enter the ancient palace that bordered reality and foggy town. He wanted to see if he had the chance to take away the most useful Card of Blasphemy from the Antigonus family’s Half-Fool.

With his present strength being equivalent to half a Sequence 1, this wasn’t an impossible task. Back when Zaratul was a Sequence 2, he had managed to obtain the main ingredient of Attendant of Mysteries from The Half-Fool.

Of course, the premise was that the Evernight Goddess maintained the suppression and seal of the Antigonus family’s ancestor.

Hence, he had gone full circle, circling back to a deal with the Evernight Goddess.

The present me is the owner of Sefirah Castle. I can split a portion of the Worms of Spirit to stay above the gray fog, constantly responding to any prayers. This way, apart from having certain latent problems to my mental state, I’ll gain quite a bit of benefits in other aspects. Yes, I can help my main body at any time, giving me another resurrection method… Even if my main body is completely destroyed, with the Worms of Spirit above the gray fog, I can still reassemble my will and body… However, if I were to walk in the real world and get “Concealed,” and also end up having my connection with Sefirah Castle severed, the Worms of Spirit left in Sefirah Castle will lose control and turn into monsters, just like Zaratul from back then… Klein quickly analyzed the situation. With his current strength, he felt that it was best if he didn’t venture deep into Calderón City for the time being.

Even if he were to search for clues regarding the River of Eternal Darkness, he would have to fulfill many wishes and obtain the true strength of a Miracle Invoker.

With this in mind, Klein patted the mirror and said with a smile, “Next, let’s go wander together.

“Where do you want to go?”

“Trier—no, you can go wherever you want,” Arrodes replied humbly.

Klein smiled and jumped off the carriage, heading towards the city closest to him.

After the carriage continued for several meters, it disappeared inch by inch and returned to the fog of history.

At the same time, Klein’s trench coat turned into a black robe. His top hat changed in shape, giving off a classic vibe.

This made Klein feel like a wandering magician walking through the streets and alleys.

†

In a rather intact house in Backlund.

Dressed in holy white robes, the beautiful Demoness of Unaging, Katarina, put down the mirror in her hand and turned her head to the young man who was rocking in a reclining chair.

“The war is over. They finally decided to summon me back to headquarters.”

“I’ve been waiting for this day for too long,” the young man sitting on a reclining chair scoffed.

He was wearing a long black robe with red patterns. He had a pale-white brown-skinned face with a soft outline. He was the Gatekeeper possessed by the Red Angel evil spirit.

Katarina pressed down on the table with both hands and sat on it. The corners of her lips curled up as she said, “You don’t seem testy at all.”

“When you get locked underground with two detestable fellows for nearly two thousand years without being able to escape, you’ll know that two years of waiting is extremely easy and relaxing. I’m not in a rush at all,” the Red Angel evil spirit said with a chuckle. “After this matter ends, I’ll let you experience it. Of course, I’ll remember to throw you two male companions. As for how long you can last, it’s up to you to decide if you can hold yourself back.”

As “He” said this, the Red Angel evil spirit’s two cheeks didn’t reveal any retorting mouths. This was because, to “Them,” this was the truth.

“They” and two other detestable fellows had been locked underground for nearly two thousand years without any means of escape.

Upon hearing this answer, Katarina’s eyes darted around as she asked with a faint smile, “Aren’t you worried that Primordial would learn of this once you head to our headquarters?”

“So what? There’s always a need to take risks in doing things. Furthermore, the worst outcome is to fuse with ‘Her.’ I’m already three in one, so becoming four in one isn’t a problem,” Sauron Einhorn Medici said with a nonchalant attitude.

“Let’s set off.” Katarina hopped off the table with a smile.

Just as she finished speaking, a red-haired man with a trademark imprint on his forehead was reflected in her eyes.

The Gatekeeper, who wore a black, red-patterned robe, stopped breathing. His skin and flesh rapidly rotted, turning into yellow-green pus.

In just a few seconds, there was only a white skeleton and a Beyonder characteristic left on the reclining chair.

Katarina waved her hand, pulling the Beyonder characteristic over by using invisible threads. It fell into her palm.

Immediately after, she lost all corporealness and suddenly entered the mirror she had used before.

A dark and illusory path that appeared surreal presented itself in front of the Saintess of White. It formed a complicated and mysterious "web" with similar objects in her surroundings, interweaving into a strange world that was different from reality.

Katarina quickly traversed the mirror world and approached the target node.

At that moment, she felt a powerful suction force. She couldn't help but deviate from the path and cast a dark and blurry fog. It represented a mirror in the real world.

In an instant, Katarina, along with the Red Angel evil spirit, left the mirror and came to an unfamiliar room covered in carpets.

At the edge of the room, a young man with ordinary facial features who was dressed in common clothes leaned against the staircase railings and smiled at the Demoness of White.

His left hand was constantly tossing an item, a strange crown covered in rust and blood.

Before Katarina could react, the young man took out a crystal monocle and put it on his left eye.

“Heh…” The Red Angel evil spirit’s sneer echoed in Katarina’s mind.

The next second, the young man took off the monocle and shifted it to his right eye before saying with a smile, “Sorry, I wore it in the wrong spot.”

Chapter 1276 - Wandering Magician

◆

Upon seeing this scene, Katarina’s body took a step back uncontrollably as her mind fell silent.

Two seconds later, she opened her mouth and let out a male voice:

“Hey, little raven.”

Without waiting for the young man to respond, Katarina smiled and said, “Aren’t you looking down on me by bringing just a few avatars?

“Could it be that you’re a mailman, specifically here to deliver me Beyonder ingredients?

“Tell me, what kind of cooperation do you want? I don’t hate you too much. After all, what happened back then was planned by that zealot. The mastermind was Alista Tudor, and you can only be considered an accomplice.”

The man opposite “Him” caught the crown that was covered in rust and blood. “He” straightened up and shook “His” head with a smile.

“I have my reservations in cooperating with you after hearing your voice. Why don’t you get Sauron and Einhorn to talk to me?”

“Tsk, tsk. It’s been so many years, yet you’re still as willful as a child. Do you still remember who was responsible for carrying you when you were still a baby? Who was the one who burned away your hair?” The Red Angel evil spirit mocked without any compromises.

The young man opposite “Him” used “His” empty hand to straighten “His” monocle and calmly turned around before walking out the door without any hesitation.

During this process, “He” sighed softly.

“Childish.”

Seeing that Amon had no intention of stopping, the Red Angel fell silent for a few seconds. Before the other party walked out of the room, it controlled Katarina’s body and chuckled.

“Don’t think that I don’t know what you want to do, but it doesn’t matter. Since you don’t have the same thoughts as that zealot, then there’s room for cooperation.”

Amon stopped and turned halfway to look at Demoness of White Katarina, who was possessed by the Red Angel evil spirit.

The monocle on “His” right eye seemed to glimmer slightly.

†

Awwa County, in a city that was being rebuilt after war, inside a bar which had burn marks.

“Toby, did you add too much damned water to your beer?” A man wearing an old cap took the cup and took a sip. He couldn’t help but complain.

The boss, who doubled up as bartender, wiped his cup and snorted.

“Do you still remember the alcohol ban from before? Olić, you should be thankful that you even have alcohol to drink!”

The burly man, who was named Olić, murmured a few words before he focused on drinking his beer.

Beside him was a bronze-skinned man with rolled-up sleeves. He looked up and surveyed the area.

“I heard that the alcohol ban will soon be lifted because Feynapotter’s food will soon be sent over. Also, Feysac and Intis will pay reparations with plenty of food!”

“I can only say that I hope so. May the Lord watch over us.” The bar owner, Toby, had just responded when he heard the door open.

He looked up and saw a young man who seemed to be a wandering magician walk in.

This man was wearing a long black robe and a classic top hat. He walked to the bar counter and sat on a high stool.

“A cup of Southville beer.” The man placed several copper pence on the counter.

The burly man named Olić turned his head to look at the stranger and asked curiously, “Not from around here? A magician?”

The young man, who didn’t have any outstanding features, laughed and said, “Yes, the magic that I’m best at is to satisfy the wishes of people.”

Olić immediately whistled.

“What did I hear?

“To satisfy the wishes of people!?

“Lord, there’s a fellow pretending to be a deity here!”

This teasing caused everyone to burst into laughter.

The young man who claimed to be a magician wasn’t angry. He smiled and said, “That’s just a special magic trick.”

Olić gulped down a mouthful of bland beer and laughed.

“Then fulfill my wish and let this stingy boss treat me to a glass of beer.”

“Alright.” The young man in a black robe raised his right hand and tapped lightly on the table.

With the glass slamming onto the counter loudly, the bar owner poured a glass of beer and pushed it in front of Olić. Then, he retracted his hand and repeated his glass wiping.

This scene that seemed familiar to him stunned Olić. He shouted blankly,

“Toby, you know him?”

“No.” The boss, Toby, glanced at Olić like he was a fool.

“…” Olić raised the glass of beer with uncertainty and took a careful sip to see if Toby would make him pay for it.

Seeing that the bar owner no longer bothered with him, the burly man turned his head in surprise and looked at the young man in a black robe and a tall hat.

“How did you do it?

“I told you that it’s a special magic trick.” The young man leisurely drank a mouthful of Southville beer.

While Olić remained in shock, the man beside him with rolled-up sleeves sneered.

“I dare bet that you and Toby must have colluded beforehand. Your knocking on the table is to say that you’ll pay for the beer.”

“You can make another wish,” the wandering magician replied nonchalantly.

“My brother and I have a house that collapsed during one of the bombings and is being rebuilt. My wish is that it will return to its original state before I return," the man with his sleeves rolled up said smugly.

This wasn't an easy task.

The wandering magician raised his right hand and snapped his fingers before smiling.

"Alright, your wish has been granted."

The people who were paying attention to this broke out into laughter. They no longer paid attention to the foreigner and his clumsy magic show.

After drinking, the man with his sleeves rolled up left the bar in a drunken stupor with Olić, and staggered down the street towards the suburbs.

Fifteen minutes later, they returned to the area where they were rebuilding their home. They were about to enter the tent that was issued by the government.

At this moment, a gust of cold wind blew and made them shudder at the same time.

Soon after, a two-story building appeared before their eyes. It was a house that they were very familiar with and had spent years building.

Olić and his brother subconsciously turned their heads and saw the same confusion in each other's eyes.

"I didn't drink that much… That damn Toby mixed so much water into the beer!" Olić murmured, as if he was seeing things thanks to his intoxication.

His brother didn't respond. After being stunned for a few seconds, he suddenly widened his stride and rushed to the house, touching the wall and the door.

“It’s real, it’s real…” He kept muttering to himself as if he had gone crazy.

Olić did the same thing. Finally, he confirmed that their house had been restored to its original state. This made him both surprised and scared.

At this moment, his brother suddenly said, “My wish was granted. That magician, that magician…”

Before he finished his sentence, he turned around and ran towards the bar. Olić came to his senses and followed closely behind.

Bang!

They pushed open the bar’s door and rushed in, casting their gaze at the bar counter.

However, the black-robed and tall-hat wearing wandering magician had already left.

Olić and his brother looked around. They appeared relieved, but they also felt like they had lost something.

In the square of the city, the young wandering magician was squatting in front of a ten-year-old girl.

[image]

“My magic is to fulfill your wish.” He turned his head and glanced at the nearby Evernight cathedral.

The little girl had run out from the Evernight Mass, seemingly preferring the empty square.

After some thought, she looked at the gentle Mr. Magician and said, “My wish is for my father, uncle, and brother to come back to life. I don’t want their bereavement money…”

The wandering magician didn’t respond as he gazed deeply at the little girl in front of him.

The girl pursed her lips and forced a smile.

“I was just joking. Mommy said that such a wish is not something even the deities can grant…”

As she spoke, she lowered her head and looked at her toes.

“I just want Daddy to hug me again…”

Before she could finish speaking, she suddenly realized that there was a shadow in front of her. She quickly raised her head and looked to the side.

Standing there was a Loen soldier dressed in a red shirt and white pants. He didn’t hold a rifle and was wearing a hearty smile on his face. He crouched down and spread open his arms like always.

“Daddy…” The little girl pounced forward and threw herself into the warm embrace. “I miss you so much…”

At that moment, the young magician pressed down his hat, straightened himself, and walked towards the entrance of the square.

Amidst the night breeze, his long black robe swayed gently in the vast plaza.

†

In a blink of an eye, it was Monday. In the ancient palace above the gray fog, the members of the Tarot Club appeared simultaneously and greeted Mr. Fool in unison.

Klein looked around and suddenly felt emotional.

The Hanged Man is currently a cardinal of the Church of Storms, and he's in charge of the Rorsted Archipelago diocese. Although Justice has temporarily lost contact with the Psychology Alchemists, she has the right to become one of their councilors. The Sun is an Elder of the six-member council in the City of Silver, and The Moon is a Sanguine Earl. The Star is a high-ranking deacon of the Church of Evernight's Nighthawks. The Hermit is a hidden queen at sea, one of the ten pillars of the Moses Ascetic Order.

Apart from The Magician and Judgment, the other members of the Tarot Club are all demigods. They are the upper echelons of different factions in the mysterious world.

And with the support of the Abraham family, The Magician has a high chance of advancing to Sequence 4 Secrets Sorcerer within the year.

In other words, Judgment is the one who has the hardest time improving her strength. She is only one of the mid-to-upper echelons in MI9, so it's extremely difficult for her to become a demigod.

Klein, who was shrouded in grayish-white fog, quickly retracted his gaze and laughed self-deprecatingly in his heart.

It's finally like a high-end secret organization… However, it always gave me the feeling that this is some conference between the various factions…

He then nodded at the Tarot Club members and said, "Let's begin."

Merlin Hermes potrait:

阅文好物 授权
诡秘之主
Lord of Mysteries
GOODS WAVE
© YUEWEN

Chapter 1277 - A Qualitative Change

◆

Upon hearing Mr. Fool’s words, Alger’s heart skipped a beat. He suddenly felt the feeling he had when praying to the Lord of Storms on Pasu Island.

When he greeted The Fool, he didn’t notice any changes in him. Everything seemed to be the same as before, but at that moment, he believed that Mr. Fool was different from before.

This was something at the spiritual level, one that Alger wasn’t able to describe accurately with words. He only felt that the body that was enveloped by the grayish-white fog contained a terror that was tens of thousands of times more terrifying than before. A simple sentence or simple action could suppress a person’s natural order.

Mr. Fool has awoken further… After The World went to the Forsaken Land of the Gods and brought out the City of Silver, Mr. Fool went one step further in “His” awakening… “He” already has the level of a Sequence 0? If it wasn’t for the fact that the Sailor pathway is sensitive to the level of a high-ranking person, I wouldn’t have even noticed it… Alger wanted to say something, but he forgot what he was about to say.

Leonard surveyed the area and saw the other members remain silent. He probed, “According to the information we have gathered, there was indeed a battle of gods. The participants that have been confirmed to appear high above Backlund include the Evernight Goddess, God of Combat, and Earth Mother. As for the outcome, I believe everyone knows it very well. What are your thoughts on this?”

During the Tarot Gathering last week, Leonard had already mentioned the corresponding matter and had taken the initiative to ask Mr. Fool what had happened.

Unfortunately, Mr. Fool only told him that “He” was recently paying attention to the Forsaken Land of the Gods, and didn’t give a direct answer.

“I can’t understand why such an outcome would occur. Earth Mother and the God of Combat should’ve collectively defeated the Evernight Goddess as a mother-son duo…” Cattleya didn’t conceal her puzzlement.

Alger retracted his thoughts and said after some deliberation, “I received a report. Just as the war ended, Feynapotter changed sides.”

“This means…” Audrey vaguely grasped something.

At that moment, Derrick mimicked the lady across him and raised his arm.

“I roughly know why.”

“You?” Emlyn uttered a voice of distrust. After all, The Sun had previously been isolated in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, so his understanding of the outside world was all thanks to the other members of the Tarot Club. How could he know more about the details of the battle of gods than everyone present?

Alger, who knew that The Sun had always been honest, suppressed his curiosity and excitement from the bottom of his heart as he asked in a deep voice, “Why?”

Derrick looked around and calmly said, “You have to promise with Mr. Fool as a witness that you can’t reveal what I’m about to tell you.”

“No problem.” Cattleya took the lead.

After everyone made a promise to The Fool, Derrick nodded.

“Earth Mother isn’t the Giant Queen, Omebella. The real Omebella has long died. ‘Her’ remains are in the City of Silver.”

This news was like a bomb that landed in the hearts of all the members. It created a massive upheaval that threatened to destroy their minds.

For a moment, Alger, Audrey, and company were unable to say a word. It was as though they had been struck by lightning. They were paralyzed in their positions like stone statues.

After a while, Leonard asked in disbelief, “Are you sure?”

As soon as he said that, he began regretting his question. Since the City of Silver had the remains of the Giant Queen, Omebella, it meant that the whole matter was highly credible.

Subconsciously, Audrey, Fors, and Xio cast their gazes at the figure at the end of the long, mottled table. They discovered that there was a smile in Mr. Fool’s eyes as he maintained his sitting posture without any changes.

This indirectly means that “He” is in agreement with the information that Little Sun just provided… Before Audrey answered The Sun’s question, she nodded indiscernibly and said, “This can explain many things, but if Earth Mother isn’t the Giant Queen, then why would Angel of Fate Ouroboros believe that”She” is Omebella?

“Oh, why does the God of Combat want to work with ‘Her’? Who is ‘She’?”

Upon hearing Miss Justice’s series of questions, Alger suddenly felt a little emotional.

The topic of discussion amongst the Tarot Club had finally raised from Kings of Angels to true deities!

Previously, although they had stopped the descent of evil gods and had communicated knowledge of secret histories, they had rarely directly discussed the true deities. This was a subconscious fear, a deep mark left in them due to their upbringing in the present world.

And now, the members of the Tarot Club had unknowingly lost the reverence that came from the depths of their souls.

Cattleya didn't notice this as she focused on Miss Justice's questions. She said thoughtfully, "Perhaps that Earth Mother has always been disguising herself as Omebella. This has managed to fool the Angel of Fate, as well as the God of Combat…

"How is that possible…" Xio instinctively muttered.

Fors took a deep breath and said, "What a horror story."

At that moment, The World, who had been silent all this time, said, "Nothing is impossible.

"What if this cover-up had the assistance of the Evernight Goddess and other true deities?"

…A conspiracy that lasted for two to three thousand years… Alger's eyes froze as he instinctively shrank back. He had an instinctual fear of the Evernight Goddess and Earth Mother that stemmed from his soul.

The Tarot Club members fell silent once again until Leonard repeated Miss Justice's final question:

"Who exactly is Earth Mother?"

As he spoke, he looked at The World, Klein Moretti, and attempted to get an answer from his former colleague.

At this moment, they heard a long-awaited knock.

It was Mr. Fool knocking on the table.

Audrey and company perked up as they turned to the end of the long bronze table, waiting respectfully for Mr. Fool's answer.

The Fool Klein chuckled and said, "I can give you some hints."

He looked around and continued, "Why does the Church of Earth Mother like to turn the Sanguine into believers?

"The Earth and Moon are two neighboring pathways.

"Legend has it that during the Second Epoch, the ancient god, Lilith, who represented the Moon, died because of the Giant King's betrayal.

"'She' occasionally responds to the Sanguine's prayers as though 'She' hasn't completely perished."

After the four prompts, all the Tarot Club members, including The Moon Emlyn, thought of an answer:

Earth Mother's true identity is Sanguine Ancestor Lilith!

Emlyn's eyes widened as he instinctively sat up straight. His mind was a mess as all sorts of ideas ran through it.

Leonard was first astonished before he muttered in thought, "A few days ago, the Church of Evernight stopped promoting the title of 'Lady of Crimson,' and changed the prayer sign from the crimson moon to that of stars…"

As a high-ranking Nighthawk deacon, he was qualified to read the corresponding documents.

"The Evernight Goddess used the authority of the Moon domain as a bargaining chip?" Cattleya said the conclusion that lingered in everyone's hearts.

At this moment, they no longer had any doubts about the true identity of Earth Mother.

"Thank you for your hints." Audrey immediately bowed to Mr. Fool.

After the others expressed their gratitude, they looked at The Moon Emlyn, who was still looking stupefied.

Mother Goddess is the Ancestor… The Ancestor is Mother Goddess… So I've never changed my faith… It's no wonder I still continue going to the Harvest Church even without Father's corresponding psychological cues… That's because my intuition told me that the Mother Goddess is the Ancestor! Therefore, the Ancestor has favored me and made me the savior of the Sanguine… Thoughts flashed through Emlyn's mind as he found a reasonable explanation for the guilt he had previously felt.

He began to believe that he was the most devoted Sanguine!

Glancing at the "Earl," Fors smiled with interest.

"Mr. Moon, perhaps you might become the archbishop of the Church of Earth Mother after some time. No, it should be the sole Sanguine representative of the Church of the Earth Mother."

This writer immediately came up with a nickname.

"Why?" Emlyn asked in puzzlement.

He believed that the Ancestor would allow the Sanguine to maintain their former state and not merge with the Church of Earth Mother directly.

Leonard smiled and said, "Since the Evernight Goddess doesn't have the title of 'Lady of Crimson,' Earth Mother will soon have a similar honorific name. It's impossible to fool the other Churches."

Emlyn roughly understood what the upper echelons of the Church of Evernight were thinking. He nodded slightly and began imagining a series of scenes.

His kinsmen, who had previously mocked him for believing in Earth

Mother, would queue up in front of him and accept his baptism.

With this in mind, Emlyn’s mood turned extremely happy as he couldn’t help but raise his chin.

After the exchange, the members of the Tarot Club fell silent for a moment, not knowing what to say.

A few seconds later, Alger broke the silence and calmly said, “Most of our members are demigods, so the time it will take to advance will lengthen. Furthermore, we have our own factions. We might need a few years before having a single chance of obtaining Beyonder characteristics, potion formulas, and Sealed Artifacts. The focus of the gathering now might switch to exchanging information and engaging in secret cooperation.”

Audrey, Cattleya, Leonard, and company nodded in agreement.

At this moment, The Fool Klein surveyed the area and chuckled.

“With the matter regarding the Forsaken Land of the Gods over, my condition has recovered quite a bit. You can exchange items of higher levels from me.”

He pretended to be calm as he revealed the “truth” that he was recovering. This was an answer that every member of the Tarot Club had long guessed.

Just as Audrey and company were guessing which level Mr. Fool had awakened to, Klein smiled and added, “Those items of higher levels include:

“The Sea God’s identity, level, and strength.”

Chapter 1278 - Reminder

◆

Sea God's identity, level, and strength… Hearing Mr. Fool's example, Alger's mind went blank for nearly two seconds.

This was something that he had never dreamed of!

From his point of view, by obtaining the authority of Sea God through Gehrman Sparrow and replacing Kalvetua, Mr. Fool had obtained a stable and large number of believers. This was a crucial step for "His" recovery. Therefore, this secret existence definitely wouldn't give up on the corresponding identity.

To his surprise, at that moment, he actually heard Mr. Fool inform everyone that the Sea God's identity, level, and strength could be exchanged.

After further recovery, Mr. Fool no longer needs the identity of an entity at the level of Sea God, as well as the corresponding believers? This is the performance of a great existence. Something that isn't qualified is only used temporarily, never monopolized… Alger first sighed inwardly before feeling excited. He felt that Mr. Fool's words were directed at him.

In the Church of Storms, he had relied on external forces to become a Sequence 4 demigod. Although he barely managed to rise up to the brass, it was almost impossible for him to advance any further. As for the theft of the Book of Calamity, he couldn't see any hopes of doing so at the moment. Therefore, Alger could only temporarily suppress his ambition and patiently wait for the opportunity to arrive.

Now the opportunity was here. And it came fast!

Alger was currently a cardinal of the Church of the Lord of Storms in charge of the Rorsted Archipelago. Once he secretly became Sea God and controlled the authority of those waters, he would become the king of the Rorsted Archipelago, a true king!

With this in mind, Alger nearly couldn't contain himself. It took him a great deal of difficulty to calm himself down.

Although Audrey, Derrick, and company couldn't hide their shock that the Tarot Club was beginning to trade the identity, level, and strength of a deity—even if it was only a false god—they didn't have any intentions of switching to the Storm pathway. Compared to Alger, they weren't that excited. They quickly controlled themselves and cast their gazes at Mr. Hanged Man.

Alger took a deep breath and humbly said to the end of the long bronze table, "Honorable Mr. Fool, what price is needed to exchange for these items?"

The Fool Klein was waiting for The Hanged Man's question and said with a smile, "The missions I shall give you, as well as frequent praying and the sincere making of wishes."

What he wanted to emphasize were the words towards the end of the sentence, but he believed that the members of the Tarot Club wouldn't be able to tell.

As for how he could complete the corresponding wishes, he currently had two methods. First, he used the other Beyonder powers he possessed to achieve the corresponding effects. For example, he could summon historical scenes and repeat the segment of gifting beer to fulfill the wish of the "bar owner treating the patron." Second, he could directly grant a relatively low-level wish with his accumulated power of "Wishes" and create a true miracle. For example, using a snap to cause the collapsed house to instantly return to its original state, succeeding in rebuilding it in the full spirit of the wish.

In addition, Klein could use Sefirah Castle's level and powers above the gray fog that was equivalent to a King of Angels who had yet to accommodate a Uniqueness. In other words, when he responded to prayers, he could use the core powers of a Sequence 1, which was also the core power of the Attendant of Mysteries.

After this period of experimentation, Klein had a rough idea of the two effects:

The first was to create a nascent divine kingdom, and the second was "Grafting."

The term "Grafting" was coined by Klein himself. After all, he wasn't a real Attendant of Mysteries, nor did he obtain the corresponding mysticism knowledge.

This ability could allow an object that couldn't be directly connected under normal circumstances to achieve an inconceivable effect by "Grafting."

A simple example was to mix the concept of the beginning and the end of a path into one common node, making it impossible for anyone who walked that path to leave.

To Beyonders, there were quite a number of powers that could do something like that, but an Attendant of Mysteries's "Grafting" directly acted on a "concept" itself. Not only was it at a very high level, like the descent of a true deity, but its effects were bizarre and had a hint of concealment.

In addition to the replication powers of the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, the Staff of the Stars, Klein could completely respond to prayers like a King of Angels while inside Sefirah Castle. Furthermore, he could do more things.

Upon hearing Mr. Fool mention missions, Alger suddenly recalled something. He hurriedly lowered his head and asked, “Honorable Mr. Fool, do you still need me to carry out further investigations regarding the three targets of the Feysac Empire that participated in the Konotop sea battle?”

He had previously obtained information regarding the three suspected owners of Creeping Hunger, but he hadn’t found anything abnormal.

The Fool Klein nodded slightly and said, “There’s no need for that anymore.”

He originally wanted to use this clue to grab the tail of the Twilight Hermit Order, but since Adam had likely become a god, it was better to avoid doing so.

Respecting a Sequence 0 true deity was Klein’s usual principle. He had to compromise and give up if necessary.

Without waiting for Alger to speak again, The Fool Klein said in a relaxed tone, “Your current mission is to cooperate with the Sea God believers, and settle down the people who have left the Forsaken Land of the Gods.”

“Your wish is my will!” Alger replied without hesitation.

This made Derrick silently heave a sigh of relief. He no longer had any doubts, hesitations, or worries about the subsequent developments.

He had full trust in Mr. Hanged Man’s ability to handle matters.

At this moment, The Fool Klein looked around and smiled.

“Apart from the Sea God’s identity, level, and strength, there are many things that can be exchanged for. For example, the Imperative Mage potion formula and Beyonder characteristic.”

He didn’t list down too many examples so as to prevent himself from damaging The Fool’s standing. As for having said so much, it could be explained away that Mr. Fool was in a good mood from having taken another step towards recovery.

Moon City had been passed down the heritage of an Imperative Mage, something Klein could exchange for when granting them the wish of “being saved.” Of course, even if he directly made the residents of Moon City sacrifice the corresponding items, the people who had finally found his blessings and protection would definitely be very willing to do so.

They were more afraid that Mr. Fool would abandon Moon City and not accept their sacrifice.

Apart from that, Klein himself had a Silver Knight marionette; the Seer pathway’s Sequence 9 to 3 Beyonder characteristics; the Sealed Artifact, General of the Pupil-less Eye; a drop of the Primordial Moon’s blessed blood; and various kinds of charms and bullets that came from Worms of Spirit.

If the wish maker wanted a consumable or something for a temporary loan, Klein could even take out more from the Historical Void.

The Imperative Mage’s potion formula and Beyonder characteristic… Xio inexplicably felt that Mr. Fool was looking at her.

To be frank, she lacked the motivation to advance. On the one hand, she was only one of the mid to high-ranking members of MI9, so the chances of getting a ticket to the ranks of a demigod were very low. On the other hand, her father’s reputation had been restored to a certain extent, so she had no pressing goals.

At the same time, the war had ended. Her mother and brother had returned to Backlund and were about to start a normal life. With Xio’s current overall income, it was enough to support a wealthy family.

All of these reasons made Xio feel that her current life was pretty good, and she didn’t really want to change it.

Of course, if she had the chance to advance to the demigod level, she wouldn't let it go. Due to the war, she had experienced the helplessness of a Sequence 5. Furthermore, in the Tarot Club, aside from her and Fors, everyone else was a demigod. There was no doubt that she didn't want to fall behind that much.

Amidst her thoughts, Xio looked at Fors before bowing her head to the entity at the end of the long mottled table to indicate that she would work hard.

Fors could roughly guess her friend's attitude because it was roughly the same for her.

If it wasn't because she needed to advance to Sequence 4 to effectively resist the "full moon ravings" so as to stop troubling Mr. Fool, as well as the Abraham family having prepared the potion formula and Beyonder ingredients for her, she wasn't in a rush to become a Secrets Sorcerer.

As a Traveler, she could go wherever she wanted. She could immediately head to a location to eat whatever delicacy she wanted. It completely satisfied Fors's initial expectations of being a Beyonder.

Of course, she had another motivating factor to improve herself. After becoming a demigod, she could further help her teacher and family.

Seeing the fog-covered Mr. Fool leaning back into his chair, Audrey didn't say another word. After some hesitation, she opened her mouth and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have a question:

"If there's a matter, and you're aware that its outcome has nothing to do with you at all, with it solely being the result of the feelings and gambling of certain existences, what will you do?"

Just as she said that, Alger laughed.

"Everyone is destined to die. It's inevitable no matter how hard you try to change that. Then, does that mean one's life is meaningless?"

He seemed to have long since thought of this problem before adding, “Since you can’t change the outcome of the matter at the moment, then try your best to improve yourself, obtain more power, and wield more authority until, one day, you can participate in the gambling. If you die during this process, it’s better than not doing anything.”

That’s the most sincere words Mr. Hanged Man has ever said. It seems to come from his heart… The insignificant can also become great… Audrey was touched and nodded indiscernibly.

At this moment, The World Gehrman Sparrow looked around and spoke:

“Everyone, I have something to remind you of.”

When the Tarot Club members looked over at the same time, Klein controlled The World and said in a deep voice, “The apocalypse will arrive in about a decade. There’s a possibility for everyone to be destroyed, including the deities.”

Chapter 1279 - Sense of Urgency

◆ ◆ ◆

Apocalypse… Although Audrey had long learned about the prophecy of the apocalypse from the Church of Knowledge and Wisdom demigod, she never found it corporeal enough, feeling that it was meant to deceive the people.

Even though she had already slightly experienced a war where the individual was puny, she didn't believe that the world was just about a decade away from the apocalypse.

There were no signs of this at all!

However, the person who had given the apocalyptic prophecy was Mr. Fool's Blessed, Mr. World, who had always been trustworthy and daring to strike at angels. Furthermore, his tone was firm, as though he had already seen what was about to happen a decade later.

This made Audrey choose to instinctively believe him. Her heart sank as she felt nervous and flustered.

Apart from that, she also felt her confusion fade significantly—there was still another decade before the end of the world. Even those who were drowning would struggle a little, much less a perfectly fine Sequence 4 demigod.

Apocalypse… As a cardinal of the Church of Storms, Alger had recently seen many apocalyptic prophecies, but those unverifiable matters couldn't compare to The World Gehrman Sparrow's abnormally serious warning. The impact brought by the two sources wasn't on the same level.

At the same time, he acutely noticed a detail—the World said that even deities would be destroyed.

Alger's first reaction was that Gehrman Sparrow was being disrespectful to Mr. Fool, as Mr. Fool was also a deity.

However, he quickly rejected this idea. After all, The World Gehrman Sparrow was Mr. Fool's Blessed and was the most devout believer. The other members of the Tarot Club might accidentally blaspheme Mr. Fool, but it was impossible for The World Gehrman Sparrow.

Due to the two prerequisites that "Gehrman Sparrow wouldn't be disrespectful to Mr. Fool" and "him saying that even deities would be destroyed," Alger quickly came to another conclusion:

In The World's Gehrman Sparrow's heart, Mr. Fool's level was higher than that of a true deity!

This… Alger never doubted The World Gehrman Sparrow's knowledge; after all, he was a powerhouse who often interacted with angels.

This knowledge made him both shocked and puzzled, momentarily unable to find an even more reasonable explanation.

Having used the blood of a Snake of Fate to advance to the level of a demigod, Cattleya would also occasionally dream of the scene of the dawn of the apocalypse thanks to her pathway having Clairvoyant as its Sequence 3. In addition, Queen Mystic Bernadette would occasionally remind her, so she didn't feel any surprise or shock regarding Mr. World's words. She just felt like the dust that had been stirred had finally landed on the ground.

As for the future, this Mysticologist was equally lost. Apart from improving herself, she didn't know where to direct her efforts.

Apocalypse… Xio and Fors looked at each other across Ma'am Hermit and sensed the raging upheavals in each other's hearts.

They had never thought that the wonderful life they were living wouldn't last more than two decades unless something happened.

This was a time where they were in their prime. Even if they weren't demigods, they didn't have to worry about the inclination towards losing control due to their aging bodies.

As the person who spoke was The World Gehrman Sparrow, the two ladies didn't suspect the authenticity of the prophecy. They momentarily felt fearful and heavy.

At the beginning, Derrick couldn't help but feel depressed. This was because the City of Silver had just left the Forsaken Land of the Gods and came to the world of light. Yet, none of this would last long before the apocalypse was ushered in.

Soon, he composed himself and chose to believe in Mr. Fool.

Since this great existence was able to rescue the City of Silver from the Forsaken Land of the Gods, "He" too could also stop the apocalypse.

Although I'm the savior of the Sanguine during the apocalypse, I never expected it to happen so soon… I'm only an Earl… Emlyn couldn't help but frown. It was as though a student who had just attended a few days of lessons had to suddenly sit an exam.

Of course, this also made him excited. After all, it wouldn't be long before he would fulfill his mission and display his greatness in front of his fellow kinsmen.

Leonard had heard of the doomsday prophecy from Old Man Pallez Zoroast. Although he didn't know the reason behind such a development, he had long been mentally prepared. At this moment, he was the first to snap back to his senses and asked, "Why would the apocalypse suddenly happen? There are no signs of it…"

Klein controlled The World to reply:

“It’s just that you didn’t notice the signs.

“Do you think that a battle of gods erupted for no reason?”

Seeing that all the members of the Tarot Club were stunned and lost in thought, The World Gehrman Sparrow added, “You aren’t qualified to know the exact reason. Just understanding it would bring about an irrepressible corruption. Only angels and above can resist it.”

This is similar to what the demigod from the Church of Knowledge’s demigod said… It’s close to the corruption from the cosmos… I seem to have forgotten something… Mr. World seems to have figured out the whole story… Isn’t he afraid of being corrupted? H-he’s already an angel? He is now a “He”? Thoughts flashed through Audrey’s mind as she acutely sensed that The World Gehrman Sparrow might’ve completed his advancement and become a true Mythical Creature.

In ancient times, this could even be called a subsidiary god, a member of the deity lineup!

Right on the heels of that, Alger, Cattleya, and the other members of the Tarot Club understood the truth. They knew that The World Gehrman Sparrow had already reached the top of the real world, becoming an angel that walked the land.

Their guesses were related to Gehrman Sparrow’s plan to deal with a Mythical Creature. Some believed that it was the benefits that Mr. Fool’s recovery gave to “His” Blessed.

But no matter what, it was the first time the Tarot Club had a member at the level of an angel, aside from its host and convener!

Of course, they weren’t too surprised by The World Gehrman Sparrow’s advancement to Sequence 2. They had long been numb to his progression rate.

Klein controlled The World and made him look around.

“You can think about what you plan to do next and how you would go about doing it.”

Xio, Fors, and the other Tarot Club members nodded slightly as acknowledgment.

Another ten minutes of free exchange followed before this session of the Tarot Gathering gradually came to an end.

†

After returning to the real world, Xio surveyed her bedroom. Her expression slowly turned solemn.

She once again felt a pressing sense of urgency.

After walking out of the room, Xio saw that Fors had also walked out to the corridor at the same time. She no longer suffered from momentary paralysis before coming out.

“Where do you plan on going?” Both of them asked in unison before falling silent.

A few seconds later, a handsome young man walked out of the guest room. He wore a pair of narrow-framed spectacles and had slightly fluffy hair. He held a few thick books in both hands.

“Oh no, I forgot that I have classes this afternoon!” The youth mumbled to himself as he rushed towards the staircase, completely ignoring the presence of the two ladies.

He was Xio’s younger brother, Rio Derecha. He had just entered a pre-law school.

In Backlund, one had to pass a pre-law examination before becoming a paralegal. Such a paralegal had to study and work for at least five years under a full lawyer before one was allowed to take part in the qualification examination and get a license to practice law.

If one wanted to become a senior lawyer, one had to enter the Backlund Lawyer School to receive university-level education.

Xio watched her little brother run down the stairs, and a smile subconsciously appeared on her face.

She immediately looked up and said to Fors, “I plan to return to MI9 and work hard.”

“I plan on making a trip to Teacher’s place,” Fors answered the question.

Right on the heels of that, the Traveler’s figure quickly turned transparent and vanished.

A few seconds later, Fors appeared at a relatively intact building in the rebuilding Pritz Harbor.

Then, she took out a pen and paper from her pocket and wrote a note. She planned on telling her teacher that she had finished digesting the Traveler potion.

Putting away the fountain pen, she stuffed the paper into the mailbox at the door.

This wasn’t Dorian Gray Abraham’s residence. It was the place where Fors and the gentleman had previously agreed to send letters to.

The next day, when Fors arrived, she saw Dorian providing her with the meeting location and time.

†

Emlyn opened his eyes in his room and changed into his coat with a standing collar, intending to visit Marquis Nibbs.

When the carriage passed Rose Street, he subconsciously looked out the window and was somewhat surprised to discover that the door to the Harvest Church had opened.

After a brief hesitation, he got the carriage driver to stop the carriage, and he paid for the ride.

After putting on his top hat and holding his cane, the red-eyed Sanguine Earl walked up the steps and entered the Harvest Church. He saw Father Utravsky, who seemed to have grown a little taller, cleaning the prayer hall with his back hunched.

He has been released as expected… It really was protective custody… Emlyn shook his head inwardly.

At this moment, Father Utravsky raised his head and looked at him.

“Wipe the candle stand.”

…I’m trying to please Mother Goddess, Emlyn mumbled. He walked to the room behind him, changed into the brown priest robe of the Church of Earth Mother, and began working.

Neither of them spoke a word. They did their own jobs and tried their best to restore the Harvest Church to its former cleanliness and tranquility.

After an unknown period of time, a group of people suddenly entered the door.

Emlyn subconsciously looked over and saw Baron Cosmi Odora. He saw Viscount Ernes Boyar, who had once “worked” at the Harvest Church, and many familiar faces.

Emlyn’s lips subconsciously curled up.

Chapter 1280 - Chance Meeting in the Tiny City

◆ ◆ ◆

On a steam locomotive heading for Midseashire’s Constant City.

Klein, who was dressed as a wandering magician, looked at the young man and his parents across the narrow table with items placed on it.

“I have two types of magic tricks. The first is to let your wishes come true. The second is to use a mirror to answer your question. Of course, the first type of magic requires payment, and the second requires you to answer questions posed by the mirror. What kind of performance do you want to watch?”

The young man had black hair and brown eyes. He seemed to have received a good education. He looked at his parents sitting beside him and said with a smile, “My wish is too difficult, so I won’t trouble you.

“In comparison, I’m more curious about the mirror that can answer questions.”

Klein sighed as he shook his head. With a flip of his left hand, he revealed a silver mirror with a black gem on both sides.

“It seems to be an antique.” The young man opposite him commented with piqued interest before saying, “My question is, what is the purpose of my visit to Constant City?”

A commonly seen smile, one which was often seen on the faces of street magicians, appeared on Klein’s face as he stroked the surface of the mirror with his right hand and said in a serious tone:

“Mirror, Mirror, please tell me the answer to the question.”

After repeating it three times, he released his right hand and showed the surface of the mirror to the three passengers.

There were a few silver words on it:

“To get married.”

“…Amazing.” The young man and his parents looked at each other in disbelief.

After boarding the train, they had never mentioned anything related to the wedding, nor did they reveal anything that people could use to make the connection.

This was the first time they had seen a magic trick that didn’t rely on props or a fake audience.

“Alright, it’s time for the mirror to ask.” Klein smiled as he covered the surface of the mirror with his right hand.

“Alright.” The young man replied, feeling intrigued.

“Next, let’s see what question the magic mirror will raise.” Klein released his right hand in an exaggerated manner as though he was performing a formal magic trick.

The silver words on the surface of the mirror had already changed, extending into a complete sentence:

“You would prefer your bride to be a woman in her forties or above, right?”

The young man’s expression froze for a moment before turning pale and then completely red.

“How is that possible!” He immediately rebutted. He couldn’t help but turn his head to look at his parents and grumble, “What kind of strange question is that!”

“…It’s just kidding.” Klein smiled apologetically as he hurriedly pressed his right hand onto the surface of the mirror, as though he didn’t know that would happen.

Then, he released his right hand.

Indeed, the words on the mirror changed again.

“How old are you?”

“25 years old…” The young man replied carefully, afraid that he would fall into a trap.

He felt the gazes of his parents and the surrounding passengers on him change.

“Alright, that’s the end of the magic performance.” Klein smiled as he put away the mirror. “You can try another magic trick.”

Just as he finished speaking, the steam locomotive whistled. This was the sign that it was about to enter the station.

“Sorry, that’s my call.” Klein took out his golden pocket watch and checked the time.

He carried his luggage and left the steam locomotive along with a group of passengers. He arrived at the station platform that had yet to be lit up with the gas lamps.

This was Midseashire’s Belltaine City, a city that had both prospered and declined due to the coal mines.

To Klein, the greatest significance of this place was that it was a strategic node in the previous world war.

Feysac had taken three routes in its invasion. One attacked the border along the Amantha mountain range to break through the land defenses. Another involved setting off from Sonia Island, attacking the coastal harbors, and attempting a landing. The third was to follow the main railway as they marched towards Backlund for the invasion.

Among them, due to the existence of the Church of Storms and the combined might of the ironclad warships and high-level Arbiters, the naval forces of Feysac and Feynapotter failed to obtain the results they expected. They even failed to obtain naval superiority. And on the battlefields on the Amantha mountain range, the headquarters of the Church of Evernight blocked one wave after another. It didn't fall throughout the war, thus preventing Winter County and East Chester County from going through the fiery crucible of war.

Of the three routes, the only successful one was the Midseashire troops. They did a joint naval-land operation and conquered Loen's second biggest city—Constant City, the capital of Midseashire. Then, they made their way southeast, rendezvousing with the Intis troops in the greater area of Backlund.

Klein acted as a wandering magician. On the one hand, he had to accumulate wishes, display miracles, digest the potion, and increase his strength. On the other hand, he was planning on taking the path of the war, using his eyes, ears, and his soul to truly see the damage brought about by war.

After knowing the secrets of the cosmos and the underground, he could understand the Evernight Goddess's plan and accept it to a certain extent. However, this didn't mean that he was indifferent to the sacrifices.

At the same time, he confirmed one thing: even if he didn't stop George III from becoming the Black Emperor, the world war would've still erupted. However, Loen would've had the upper hand. The Evernight Goddess and "Her" allies would face the God of Combat head-on, forcing “Him” to seek help from Earth Mother.

When that happened, the number of battles between the gods, the intensity, and scale would far surpass what had transpired.

Due to this reason, Klein followed Feysac’s invasion path and wandered forward.

After leaving the station that still had traces of gunpowder, he carried the worn suitcase with a set of clothes and made his way towards the area where hotels were located.

At night, he would stroll along the streets and alleys of the city and perform wishing magic for everyone.

After taking a few steps forward, Klein’s spiritual perception stirred as he cast his gaze to the end of the street.

There was a black-haired woman wearing a simple linen robe and a tree bark belt with no socks or shoes.

Arianna!

The leader of the Church of Evernight ascetics, the Grounded Angel, Arianna!

Why would “She” be here in Belltaine? Shouldn’t “She” have returned to the Evernight cloister at the Cathedral of Serenity? Or be sent to the Feysac capital, St. Millom to preside over the handing over of the God of Combat’s “estate”? It isn’t a simple matter if a Grounded Angel were to suddenly appear in such a small city… Klein was puzzled as he frowned slightly.

He hesitated for a moment before deciding to ask.

This wasn’t because he was a busybody; if anything happened while they were in the same city, no one could escape.

However, at this moment, Arianna had already vanished from the crowd. As a Servant of Concealment, Klein couldn't track her down even if he wanted to. Similarly, when it came to the matter of "Concealment," Arrodes was helpless.

Klein slowly took a deep breath and turned to enter the hotel in thought. He got a room and stowed his luggage away.

Then, he maintained his attire as a wandering magician and brought Arrodes along with him. Following his spiritual intuition as a Seer, he walked all the way to the municipal square of Belltaine City.

Erected near the municipal hall was a noticeboard that had many notices pasted over it.

Klein saw that several people surrounded it. There seemed to be a brand-new notice, so he approached them and stood in the periphery of the crowd, looking at the wooden signboard.

In the middle of the signboard, a slightly yellowed piece of paper covered over the other notices. On the surface were black ink and Loenese writing:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am your new consul.

"Now, I will issue three new laws:

"First law: Without my permission, no living being can leave this place.

"Second law: All life is equal in front of the law. Even ordinary people can kill angels.

"Third law: Those who commit the crimes mentioned below will be punished severely. The highest penalty being the death sentence.

"1. Murder;

"2: Theft;

"3. Chanting the complete honorific name of a deity;

“4. Offering sacrifices to evil deities;

“5. Fraud;

“6. Leaking secrets;

“…”

An announcement like this… Klein pricked up his brows when he saw this. Without using his spiritual intuition, he could sense that there was something wrong with the content.

He instinctively tried to make his Spirit Body return to Sefirah Castle.

But an invisible force blocked his “departure,” making it impossible for him to make contact with the grayish-white fog.

This… Klein narrowed his eyes as he took a few steps back to distance himself from the crowd.

From his point of view, an abnormality of this level had reached a near-deity level.

He had previously been in situations of not being able to return to Sefirah Castle, but the reason was that he didn’t have the time to take four steps counterclockwise, recite the incantations, or he had been obstructed and interfered by “himself.”

There was only one instance when he failed to leave the real world due to external forces:

It was a powerful seal personally created by the Evernight Goddess in the foggy town.

Apart from that instance, even Blasphemer Amon couldn’t do such a thing. Of course, at that time, Amon’s main goal was to force Klein to stir Sefirah Castle before “He” seized the opportunity to use a loophole to replace him as the “great ruler above the spirit world.” Otherwise, this Angel of Time could’ve used “His” ability to steal Klein’s thoughts to stop him from returning.

Who is this new consul of Belltaine City…? Is this the reason Ma'am Arianna came here? As his thoughts raced, Klein made the magic mirror slip from his wide sleeve into his left hand.

“What happened?” Klein asked softly.

The aqueous light on the silver mirror’s surface shook wildly as slightly pale silver words appeared:

“A few rules here have been replaced. As for who did it, there’s no way of knowing. Great Master, you can try finding the Servant of Concealment, Arianna, to learn the truth from ‘Her.’

“Are you satisfied with my answer?”

The rules have been replaced… Lawyer? Arbiter? Or a “bug”? Klein thought as he looked around. He realized that the citizens in the square were puzzled, perplexed as to why the new notice would mention angels. Why did they have to request permission to leave?

The war had already ended!

Chapter 1281 - Anomaly

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside a bar in Belltaine City.

Roy, Biles, Phil, and Pasha sat around a small round table, guzzling down Southville beer.

They didn’t talk much as they listened to the drunkards in the next table discussing supernatural powers and mysticism incidents.

“Before this, hic. I saw that, not only do the Feysacians look like bears, but they could also control fire, throwing them out like javelins!”

“No way… Supernatural powers actually exist?”

“Haha, that’s because you don’t know a thing. I was drunk one day and slept near the cemetery. I saw people from the Church of Evernight appear with a few ghosts out. Yes, ghosts! They floated in the air, and it was terrifying!”

†

It was unknown if the drunkards were sharing stories from personal experiences or from hearsay, but the way they described it was with so much agitation that saliva kept flying as their faces flushed red.

“That’s what they’re like. They only become more excited after drinking. They always like to brag and be dramatic despite usually being depressed.” Biles was a Belltaine local. Upon seeing this, he explained, “Ever since the coal mines began to run dry, young people gradually left Belltaine and headed for Constant and Backlund. The atmosphere here has become more and more oppressive, and the city is just declining by the day.”

This man, who was less than thirty years old, had also been a miner when he was young. He was lucky to survive in the mines, his skin was tanned from all the labor.

His exposed muscles weren’t too exaggerated, but it gave people the feeling that they were made of steel.

As the leader of the group, Roy smiled and said, “What they’re saying might be the truth. They’re not bragging. The previous war has indeed exposed supernatural powers to many people, especially the soldiers who were directly involved. As long as they’re still alive, they will have the corresponding experience.

“Besides, this also brings about many fortuitous encounters, making it so that people who had zero chance of interacting with supernatural powers or true mysticism to become Beyonders.”

The way he expressed himself was very subtle, as though he was talking about others, but in reality, this was exactly what the four of them had experienced.

Biles and Roy had participated in the defense of Belltaine City before. Phil had once been ransacked by the Feysacians, but he was lucky to not have died. Pasha and her former citizens had seduced and ambushed a few Intis soldiers in the harbor battle.

They had witnessed the deaths of many of their friends and obtained supernatural powers due to various reasons.

After that, due to the chaos brought about by the war, they either lost contact with their unit, or they avoided it on their own accord without the officials learning about it. Slowly, they got to know each other and became friends with each other due to their common experiences.

This time, they had come to Biles's hometown in Belltaine to seek out any friends and family who might've survived.

"The reality of this world far exceeds our imaginations." Pasha, who had long dark-blonde hair and deep-blue eyes, sighed.

She was only in her twenties, and she was quite good looking. However, her face was a little thin, accentuating the protrusion of her cheekbones. This made her look much older than her actual age.

"In the future, we will lead different lives." Roy, who had the typical Loenese characteristics, raised his cup. "To a brand new future…"

Before he could finish speaking, someone in the bar suddenly screamed.

The experienced Roy and company quickly raised their vigilance and cast their gazes over.

They saw a young man dressed in ordinary clothes, lying on the ground, rolling back and forth as if he was in extreme pain.

Under the dim yellow gas wall lamps, everyone realized that the clothes on the young man's back had been torn open, revealing blood-red streaks. It was as if he had been whipped by a whip.

However, no one around him held a whip. The victim had only let out one scream. This was only possible if he had been whipped countless times in an instant.

But if that were the case, how could no one notice it?

"…He's holding a wallet… Could this have something to do with the anomaly just now?" The thin Phil took several looks and said after some deliberation, "Shall I take a look?"

Roy thought for a moment and nodded.

"Be careful."

Phil grunted and walked over from the small round table. With the help of the crowd, he approached the young man who was now whimpering instead of rolling about.

He quietly extended his left hand. His target was the seemingly ordinary leather wallet.

“Ah!”

Phil suddenly screamed as he watched his left wrist snap and land on the ground.

Blood splattered from the stump onto the faces and bodies of the people around them.

The scene instantly froze. The drunken guests were first stunned before swallowing their saliva. Then, they turned around and ran frantically towards the door or to the corners!

“Something’s wrong… No one attacked me!” Phil nearly fainted from the pain, but he still forced himself to tell Roy, Biles, and Pasha what he had just experienced.

Roy’s eyes narrowed as he decisively said, “Let’s get out of here first!”

He then turned his head and said to Biles, “Pick up Phil’s hand and preserve it well. I remember that a military doctor I met before is also from Belltaine. After he got discharged from the army, he came here and opened a private clinic. H-he can effectively treat this kind of wound.”

The military doctor named Weber was also a Beyonder. When he participated in the war in the south, he had advanced step by step, obtaining medical skills that surpassed reality. It was said that he could sew up a severed limb and restore it to its former flexible state.

“Alright.” Biles agreed without hesitation.

He took a few steps forward, took out a wooden box, picked up Phil's severed hand, and put it in.

At the same time, Pasha used the mystical ointment she had bought previously to stop Phil's bleeding, and bandaged it.

Soon after, the group of four left the bar.

After many inquiries, they finally found Weber's clinic with the help of passersby.

The clinic hadn't closed for the day, and the light from the gas lamps inside spread outwards, casting a dim yellow light.

Roy politely pulled at the doorbell again and again as he heard the ringing echo inside.

However, after a few minutes, no one came to open the door.

"He's drunk?" Pasha looked at the miserable Phil and made a guess.

Roy shook his head.

"I remember that Weber isn't one to drink. Other than being more amorous, he doesn't have any bad habits. Perhaps, he's currently…"

As he spoke, the middle-sized man with a face full of weathered pockmarks pushed the door open and realized that it was not locked. It was ajar.

As the door opened, Roy, Biles, and the others saw two figures.

Two figures were hanging in the middle of the clinic. Due to the wind blowing in from the outside, they swayed gently.

One was a man in his thirties wearing a white coat, while the other was a young lady in a nurse's uniform. Their lower bodies were naked and their eyes were protruding. Their mouths were half-open, and their tongues were squeezed out. They were hung on the ceiling by an invisible rope. Their expressions were filled with fear, despair, and blankness.

“Weber…” Roy recognized the dead man.

He, along with Pasha, Phil, and Biles, felt a chill run down their spines. They didn’t know why something like this had happened, nor did they know what kind of horrors such an unknown might bring.

Boom!

The sound of a chair being knocked over sounded from the side, jolting the dazed Roy and company.

They looked in the direction of the voice and saw a lady carrying a baby standing up in a fluster. She whispered in horror and confusion, “They were having an affair…”

What had this got to do with their encounter? Roy took a deep breath. He felt that he shouldn’t stay here for long.

He quickly instructed, “Let’s go!”

He didn’t ask Pasha to comfort the lady, nor did he attempt to obtain the clinic’s disinfectant and bandages.

Biles and the others swallowed their saliva with great difficulty, turned around, and warily left the clinic.

To Phil, the horror of the unknown had completely suppressed the pain in his left hand.

“What exactly happened?” Phil asked as he turned into another street, asking as his facial muscles winced.

“How would I know?” Biles blurted out. He had seemed to lose control of his emotions.

Roy looked around and exhaled.

“Calm down.

“This should be a terrifying Beyonder matter that has exceeded our imaginations.”

“Right. All of this is too strange. That can be the only reason.” Pasha nodded in agreement.

“Then what should we do?” Phil asked anxiously.

Roy thought for a moment and said, “Let’s try to leave Belltaine.

“Also, analyze what happened before and summarize the patterns hidden within.

“We can’t be sure of the anomalies we might encounter later. We can only ensure our own safety after knowing the underlying rules.”

“Right.” Biles calmed down and agreed with Roy.

They discussed as they walked, gradually having some ideas.

“Weber was hung for adultery. Before Phil’s hand was cut off, he tried to take the wallet. That’s a form of theft…” Pasha summarized the common point the two incidents had in common.

Roy suddenly had an idea:

“Could it be that they suffered such a situation because they did something illegal?”

“How is that possible?” Biles and Phil both replied.

As soon as he said that, they suddenly had a corresponding guess, and their expressions turned solemn.

“Maybe there’s an invisible law enforcer. That’s the essence of this Beyonder incident…” Biles said in thought.

Roy tersely acknowledged and said, “That’s highly possible.

“Next, we’ll take note of our actions.”

Pasha and the others nodded and walked on the streets cautiously.

Not long after, they arrived at the municipal square and saw that there were many people standing around the noticeboard.

“Notice?” Roy and the others exchanged looks, wondering if it was a warning that the officials had given to the supernatural incidents.

Hence, they approached and used the light from the street lamps to look at the notice on the wooden board.

There was a piece of white paper stuck in the middle, and beneath it was a piece of yellow paper. It seemed to be an annex.

As they quickly scanned through the notice, Roy, Pasha, and the others quickly had their eyes filled with horror. They seemed to understand the source of the matter.

After reading the paper, their eyes landed on the yellow paper.

“All citizens are to arrest foreigners using all possible means.”

Arrest foreigners… Roy and the others felt their hearts tighten as they instinctively looked at the citizens around the noticeboard.

As if sensing their gazes, the citizens turned around and cast their gaze at them.

Under the dim yellow light from the gas lamps, their eyes seemed to glimmer with a strange light.

Chapter 1282 - Crime

◆ ◆ ◆

“Haha, how can someone tell at a glance if another person is a foreigner? How do you distinguish that?” Roy forcefully composed himself and pretended to be discussing the yellow paper’s contents with his companions.

He used the hidden meaning in his words to console Phil and Pasha so that they didn’t need to panic. After all, other than Biles, who was a native, the remaining three were also citizens of Loen. They didn’t have any Southern Continent blood in them. Nothing about their facial features stood out.

“But, but this is a supernatural incident…” Pasha stammered.

This couldn’t be judged by common sense!

Roy’s heart froze as he looked at the citizens who were slowly approaching in a deadpan manner. He quickly shouted in a low voice:

“Run!”

As soon as he finished speaking, he turned around and ran towards the nearest street entrance. Pasha and Phil followed closely behind.

As a local, Biles tacitly held the rear, covering the surface of his skin with illusory fish scales.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A few citizens raised their dual-barreled hunting guns and fired.

Roy, Phil, and Pasha were Beyonders who were relatively good at fighting. While running, they would occasionally change directions or roll forward, successfully dodging the attacks.

Following that, under Pasha's guidance, they passed through the streets and escaped their pursuers before hiding in an empty dark corner.

"What should we do?" Phil, who had lost a hand, panted as he asked, "From the contents of the notice, we probably won't be able to leave this city."

"We need to figure out the rules and find a way around them." Although Roy was also very flustered, he still forced himself to calm down and think, lest the morale of the entire squad crumbled.

Pasha looked at the wary Biles and asked, "Has such a notice ever appeared in the past?"

Biles nodded.

"Yes, although I rarely had the chance to go to the municipal square, I've been assembled there back when I was recruited into the army. I've seen that noticeboard."

"There shouldn't be any problems with the noticeboard. Perhaps those two pieces of paper are the key. The laws written on them contain mystic intent," Pasha said.

Roy immediately expressed his agreement.

"That's right.

"Besides, I suspect that the laws have to be made public before they are put into effect. If we can find an opportunity to rip off those two pieces of paper, the corresponding restrictions might disappear."

After hearing Roy's words, Pasha, Phil, and Biles fell silent.

After a few seconds, Phil's facial muscles twitched as he said, "Let's give it a try! If we continue to be trapped in the city, even if we aren't caught by those citizens, we might be punished for various reasons."

Although they were all Beyonders, their Sequences weren't high. It wasn't a problem dealing with a few ordinary people, but facing the enmity of an entire city was extremely dangerous.

Roy, Biles, and Pasha were more or less people who had been on the battlefield before. They knew that hesitation was the worst action to take in such situations, so they agreed to Phil's suggestion.

Under the guidance of the rather experienced Hunter, Pasha, the group of four made a detour and returned to the municipal square from another street.

At this moment, the residents who were surrounding the notice were no longer there. It was as if they were searching the entire city for foreigners.

When they saw the noticeboard that stood silently in the middle of two gas lamps, Roy and company carefully approached it, ready to escape at any moment.

After approaching the target, Roy suddenly thought of a question. He hurriedly lowered his voice and asked, "Is destroying the notice considered an illegal act?"

"In theory, yes…" Pasha was taken aback.

They then cast their gaze at the noticeboard and scanned through the list of crimes stipulated by the third law.

"…

"8. Destroying public property.

"…"

"It really exists." Biles blurted out.

Phil, whose face had turned pale due to the blood loss, turned paler. After some thought, he said, “What kind of punishment does destroying public property entail?”

This wasn’t a very serious crime, and the corresponding punishment should be relative lenient.

If that was the case, Phil decided to take the risk to tear the notice and end this horrifying, bizarre event.

“First-timers get whipped.” Just as Roy, Pasha, and Biles were pondering over the answer, a voice sounded from behind them.

The four turned around in shock and saw a young man in a black robe and a tall hat. He looked ordinary.

The man continued, “A repeated offense is to have one’s hand lopped off.

“I’m not sure what happens after that.”

“How do you know that?” Fully alert, Roy frowned as he gripped his concealed dagger.

The young man smiled and said, “I’ve tried. It’s useless. The notice gets restored very quickly.”

“So, you’ve been whipped?” Pasha asked in enlightenment.

“Yes.” The young man nodded with a relaxed expression. “However, because I also committed fraud, I was later punished with having my hand lopped off.”

“Fraud?” Biles asked, puzzled.

The young man chuckled and replied, “To put it simply, I didn’t personally destroy the notice. Instead, I created a dummy to do it. The one who was whipped was also the dummy.”

As he spoke, he raised his right arm.

Like Phil, his wrist was cut neatly. His stump was ghastly-white and red, as though he was still bleeding.

Suddenly, the stump's flesh squirmed and twisted, as transparent worms crawled out. They intertwined with each other and formed a new hand.

During this process, Roy and the others didn't feel the slightest bit of fear. This was because the moment they saw those worms which had details they couldn't discern, their thoughts were thrown in a mess. Random thoughts ran through their minds as they found it difficult to control their emotions.

After the palm was "covered" with skin and became normal, the Beyonders recovered. They retreated a few steps in shock, surprise, and fear.

The scene just now had exceeded their understanding!

"By the way, I forgot to introduce myself. I'm a wandering magician." The person who had committed a fraud and a case of destruction of public property was none other than Klein.

He swept a glance at the four Beyonders and said with a smile, "My best magic trick is to grant someone's wishes. Do you have a wish you would like granted?"

Upon hearing this question, Roy's spirits rose as he asked with hope, "Can you take us away from Belltaine?"

"Of course, I'll do my best to do this, but not now." Klein gave his promise.

Then, he looked at the handless Phil.

"He just said his wish. What's yours?"

"…Let my hand recover," Phil probed.

"Alright." Klein cast his gaze at Biles. "Take out his hand."

After hesitating for a moment, Biles took out the wooden box as per the mysterious man's instructions and returned the hand inside to Phil.

"Come here," Klein said with a smile.

Phil mustered his courage and walked over with his severed hand.

"Remove the bandages," Klein continued to instruct. "Place the severed arm in its original spot. Let me remind you, don't have it reversed. Otherwise, you'll have to chop it off again and repeat the process."

Seeing how confident the other party was, Phil felt a little more confident. He quickly pulled off the bandage that had been stuck to his wound with a twisted expression as he hissed.

After placing his severed hand at the stump, Klein took out a piece of white paper and approached.

Then, he reached out to wipe the wound.

Silently, the piece of paper split into two while Phil felt the pain disappear.

He quickly looked down and saw that his left wrist was perfectly intact. He couldn't even tell that he had been hurt before.

Phil subconsciously moved his fingers and realized that he didn't lose any of his motor skills at all.

"Your wish has been granted." Klein took two steps back and smiled.

"Thank you…" Phil replied in a daze.

Klein looked at the other two Beyonders.

"What's your wish?"

Upon seeing that Phil's wish had really been fulfilled, Biles immediately stepped forward and said, "I want to know where my family is."

Klein flicked his left arm and took out a silver mirror with ancient patterns. He lowered his head and said with a smile, "What is the answer to that question?"

The surface of the mirror shimmered with aqueous light as silver words appeared one after another.

"Belltaine Glorin Cemetery…"

Upon seeing this, Biles, who had his neck craned, felt his heart sink as he couldn't help but feel a strong sense of sorrow and disappointment.

In the next second, new silver words appeared from the aqueous light.

"…'s grave keeper's hut."

…This means that… Biles felt his sorrow turn to happiness as he sincerely said, "Thank you."

As soon as he finished speaking, he suddenly thought of two questions.

How many people could live in the graveyard? How many grave keepers could there be?

His family members definitely numbered more than two or three!

Biles's expression turned oscillated between gloom and joy before he fell silent.

As a result, he didn't see the question posed by the silver mirror.

"Great Master, did I answer kindly enough?"

"Yes." Klein nodded indiscernibly as he cast his gaze at the remaining lady.

Pasha thought for two seconds and said, "My wish is for you to protect us until we leave Belltaine alive.”

She realized that Roy’s wish was problematic because they might not necessarily leave Belltaine alive.

“Smart.” Klein praised with a smile. “Your wish will be granted.”

“Then what price do we have to pay? I’m referring to the payment for watching your magic.” Pasha hurriedly asked.

“Your wishes are the price,” Klein replied briefly before asking thoughtfully, “If you know certain things are fake, but if you are willing to subjectively use them, it shouldn’t be considered fraud, right?”

When Roy and company heard this, they were puzzled. After pondering for a moment, they shook their heads and said, “Definitely not.”

“This is actually a game between two parties.”

“A voluntary action that has a clear understanding of the actions is definitely not a scam.”

“There’s no doubt about it.”

After hearing their answers, Klein smiled.

“Very good. This is what the average person will think.”

As he spoke, he grabbed a few times with his right hand, dragging out a woman in a simple robe with black long hair.

It was the Historical Void projection of the Evernight cloister’s matron, Arianna.

Klein looked around and saw nothing unusual. He smiled at the projection and said, “Madam, what exactly happened?”

Arianna’s eyes darted about slightly, turning deep and quiet instantly. It made one feel a sense of serenity from the bottom of their hearts.

"She" calmly spoke:

"The chief shepherd of the Church of the God of Combat, Larrion, escaped. I'm tracking 'Him.'"

Arianna paused and said, "After I came to Belltaine, I received new information.

"According to our intelligence, Larrion took away a Sealed Artifact when 'He' escaped.

"0-02."

Chapter 1283 - Gradually Deepening

◆ ◆ ◆

0-02… Klein inwardly repeated the serial number, feeling that the problem might be more troublesome than he had expected.

Although it couldn’t be said that 0-02 was definitely more terrifying than 0-05 since the true essence of the Magic Wishing Lamp was that of a sealed Outer Deity, an entity far stronger than the present true deities, “He” could definitely destroy this world or even this solar system if not for the restrictions of the outer shell. However, the smaller the number meant that 0-02 was likely more dangerous and more difficult to seal than 0-05 in most cases.

At the end of the Fourth Epoch, the seven Churches had serialized the batch of Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts to two-digit numbers. Being only second to 0-01, it’s totally possible to imagine how terrifying 0-02 is… However, the God of Combat didn’t seem to make use of this Sealed Artifact in the battle of gods… Was it not suitable for direct combat, or was it too dangerous? It didn’t distinguish between friend and foe? Thoughts ran through Klein’s mind.

His expression gradually turned serious.

“Ma’am, what do you know about 0-02?”

Arianna slowly shook her head and said, “When the various Churches inform each other of the Grade 0 and Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts, they only mention the serial numbers.”

That’s right. The information regarding a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact is strictly confidential internally to a Church. As part of the brass, they usually have to be in charge of a particular Grade 0 Sealed Artifact before they can come into contact with any related information. Furthermore, there's a high chance that the corresponding memories will be erased after everything is over… This is, on the one hand, to prevent important information from leaking, and on the other hand, there's the fact that just knowing about Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts in most cases can result in danger, or cause the seal to be ineffective… Klein asked in thought, "Didn't the Church already take over the Church of the God of Combat?"

That way, they could have obtained all the files on 0-02.

Arianna looked at the nearby Roy and company and said, "Larrion destroyed all files regarding the Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts before escaping."

Impressive… Such an abnormally cautious fellow is really annoying… Klein thought and said, "What comments does the Goddess have of 0-02?"

From his point of view, the Evernight Goddess and the God of Combat were existences from the same period. Furthermore, "She" was in control of the Concealment authority. The Goddess had a high chance of understanding the situation that the latter grasped.

In addition, it was impossible for the Sealed Artifacts at the level of 0-02 not to leave any traces in history. They might have created many disasters, so they were no stranger to high-level figures of that era.

Arianna seemed to have recalled the situation from a long time ago. She stated without any pause:

"In the past revelation, the Goddess called 0-02 'the Book of Rules.'"

Book of Rules… That's even more terrifying… Klein's eyes narrowed as he made plenty of connections.

In his past life, he was a gaming enthusiast who played a broad genre of games despite not being too obsessed. He wasn't unfamiliar with the term "Book of Rules" at all.

At this moment, Arianna added, "The fact that you happened to be in Belltaine City might reveal some of the characteristics of 0-02."

Yes, it's quite normal for Ma'am Arianna to encounter such an anomaly while tracking the chief shepherd, Larrion, to Belltaine, but for me to also be here, it's too much of a coincidence… In mysticism, excessive coincidences often mean that there's something wrong…

Is someone setting me up, or is it the effect of the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence? Based on the present situation, the set up doesn't seem targeted., and how I'm already the owner of Sefirah Castle, I can more or less sense something abnormal… If it's the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence, eliminating the exiled Mr. Door and the Antigonus ancestor who is sealed in the foggy town, the only ones that can influence me to this extent are Zaratul and Amon…

However, I've always been deliberately avoiding Zaratul. Amon's true body should be under the True Creator's pursuit. If it's just an avatar, it's impossible for it to produce such a powerful convergence effect… Yes, there's another possibility. The law of convergence between sefirot… 0-02 attracted Sefirah Castle, causing me to coincidentally come to Belltaine today?

If that's the case, even if 0-02 isn't a sefirah, it's definitely related to one… Klein, who had already suspected something, suddenly thought of a lot. He had a vague grasp of 0-02.

He thought for a moment and said, "From the development of the situation, the rules are gradually becoming stricter. That piece of yellow paper is evidence. Does this mean that the extent of 0-02's coming to life or the degree of reawakening is becoming deeper?"

Arianna nodded serenely and said, "That's right. We have to find it before something happens, and also try to seal it.

“That’s why it’s best we split up and expand the search radius, saving as much time as possible.”

Klein had no objections to this. After some thought, he said, “Ma’am, you’ve told me so much. Isn’t this considered leaking secrets?”

“No.” Arianna gave a rather clear answer. “Leaking secrets refers to informing the outside world of the anomaly in Belltaine via any way.”

This has cut off any physical connection between us and the outside world… That’s fine. At least, there’s no need to worry about any problems with our usual conversations. In short, it’s fine if we don’t curse… Klein silently heaved a sigh of relief and asked, “The Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers here will abide by the rules on the notice?”

“Yes.” Arianna gave an affirmative answer before her figure faded away and disappeared.

After watching the matron of the Evernight cloister leave, Klein quickly sorted out the information he had just obtained and gained some understanding of the possible developments that were to come.

Combat wasn’t the main point. The crux of the problem was whether he could find 0-02 in time and think of a way to seal it.

During this process, what they would face as foreigners would become more and more complicated. They would find it increasingly difficult to abide by the rules and the citizens that were controlled.

With this in mind, Klein cast his gaze to Roy and company not far away. He asked with a smile, “What are your thoughts on what you just heard?”

Roy exchanged looks with Pasha and said, “We don’t know what a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact is, but we can guess that 0-02 is a very terrifying item. It can set the rules and even change reality to a certain extent. Furthermore, this anomaly seems to change as time passes.

“Also, the chief shepherd of the Church of the God of Combat should be a very powerful Beyonder.”

Klein gently clapped his hands and smiled.

“That’s about it. If we don’t work hard and hope to avoid danger by hiding, then there will be more and more things that we need to take note of. If we aren’t careful, we might commit a crime. Heh heh, perhaps in the end, we will be executed on the spot because we stepped out the door with our left foot first.”

His words left Pasha, Biles, and the others in a panic.

It was indeed funny to hear the possible developments, but on second thought, they could sense the extreme horror hidden within!

A few seconds later, Pasha said with a solemn expression, “Furthermore, the citizens can use any means to deal with us, but we are unable to fight back. This is because killing and voluntarily causing harm are very serious crimes…”

“We can try to deceive their senses, but we can’t use it too many times,” Klein said casually. “What we need to do now is to quickly summarize the rules that 0-02 follows. That way, we can find it and seal it before it comes to life or awakens to gain true intelligence. What are your thoughts?”

Marauder Phil thought for a moment and probed, “It doesn’t seem capable of attacking us directly. It can only punish us when we violate the rules and commit crimes.”

Klein snapped his fingers and said, “That’s right. I can summarize this law for now: 0-02 cannot punish those who do not commit crimes.”

Biles blurted out, “But it can make the citizens arrest foreigners.

Foreigners aren't considered criminals."

"This does contradict the previous law from before," Klein replied with a smile. "However, in history, many cities have come up with laws that include discrimination and the expulsion of foreigners in the different stages of their development. Did you decipher any deeper laws from this matter?"

The four Beyonders frowned one after another, unsure what the powerful magician opposite them was trying to express.

After a brief silence, Pasha, who thought of the question he had asked—asking whether a particular action was considered fraud—hesitated and said, "The rules issued by 0-02 must match the public's understanding and be acknowledged to a certain extent?"

"That's a good idea," Klein praised. "This is a guess thanks to the law regarding the arrest of foreigners. It has been verified from your previous feedback, so we can temporarily list it as its second law. This can help us determine which actions are crimes and which aren't."

Seeing Pasha receive the praise of the powerful "magician" twice, Roy hurriedly added, "It will constantly increase the number of laws, reaching a certain level of complexity, thereby limiting us. No matter what we do, we will be punished. Yes, on the basis of arresting foreigners, clauses such as the trespassing of private property and the prohibition of defecation or urination in public will make life harder for us with the passage of time."

Just as Klein nodded in agreement, his spiritual perception was triggered.

He instinctively raised his head and looked at the noticeboard. He realized that a goatskin parchment had appeared on it at some point in time.

"Curfew Order…"

“This…” Pasha and the others also noticed this change and their eyes widened.

It was already late at night. If they stayed outside for some time, they would violate the curfew and suffer some punishment. Then, the punishment would worsen each time until they were sentenced to death.

“Let’s go. We haven’t got much time.” Klein pressed down his tall hat and said with a smile, “Our target is most likely a book. It might still be with the chief shepherd, or it might’ve already been hidden somewhere. My intuition tells me that it might be the latter. This is because, to anyone, that item is too dangerous, and it will only become more dangerous. Of course, the premise is that the chief shepherd hasn’t gone crazy—only using 0-02 to create a chance to escape pursuit.

“By the way, I forgot to tell you that the chief shepherd is a Grounded Angel.”

Angel… Roy, Pasha, and the others, who had just begun to move, froze.

Chapter 1284 - Limitation Loophole

◆

In the present era of this world, belief in a deity was common. The difference was which deity they believed in. Therefore, even if Roy, Pasha, and company didn’t understand the meaning of angels in mysticism, they had more or less heard of legends about angels from the priests, bishops, and seniors around them. They knew that they were the servants of deities, and were powerful creatures that were qualified to be addressed as “Him” or “Her.” Every action of theirs could create miracles. They were definitely not something ordinary people could compare with.

In the hearts of these four Beyonders, angels were of a whole different level, holy spirits of another world. Under normal circumstances, “They” lived in the divine kingdoms and wouldn’t descend into the real world. “They” could be treated as true legends without considering the meaning “They” had in reality. Just like the battles they had experienced in the past, although they would occasionally encounter Beyonders today who struck terror in their hearts, like today, them being angels was the last thing on their mind.

The two weren’t on the same level!

But today, a wandering and mysterious “magician” had informed them that the chief shepherd of the Church of the God of Combat was an angel who walked the land.

Phil and the others believed in the mysterious gentleman, who had shown all kinds of amazing feats, from the bottom of their hearts.

Firstly, he had granted their wishes and was friendly enough. Secondly, they didn’t believe that they were qualified enough to be deceived in such matters. To them, the chief shepherd was an angel or an abnormally powerful Beyonder. In essence, there was no difference between the two.

The reality of this world far exceeds our imaginations… The words that Pasha often said flashed through her mind.

Roy made further connections.

He remembered that the lady, whom Mr. Magician had invited from thin air, mention that she was pursuing the chief shepherd of the Church of the God of Combat. Furthermore, she seemed to be qualified to see the Evernight Goddess’s revelation.

The only person who can track an angel is probably another angel… With Mr. Magician’s performance in front of that lady, his level can’t be that much lower… Roy hurriedly retracted his gaze from Klein’s back and didn’t dare to look at him directly.

He looked left and right and realized that Phil had come to a similar guess as well. A complicated feeling emerged from his pale face, one that was a result of his blood loss.

Biles held his breath and only spoke after a few seconds.

“No wonder there’s such an inexplicable change in Belltaine…”

“It’s not the time to feel poignant about this. Let’s hurry up and leave. The curfew is about to take effect,” Klein reminded with a smile without any signs of nervousness.

Pasha quickly looked at the noticeboard and imprinted the contents into a brand in her mind.

“…From eight at night to eight in the morning. Free movement and assembling in the streets are forbidden…”

“Where should we go?” she blurted out.

Under the double restrictions of the curfew and the no trespassing clause, it appeared as though they could only await punishment.

Klein smiled and said, “Only movement and assembly in the streets are forbidden.”

As he spoke, he pointed at a nearby manhole which led to the sewers.

Biles’s eyes lit up.

“Yes, it didn’t say that we can’t pass through the sewers!

“When curfews were in place previously, the tramps hid in the sewers or abandoned buildings.”

Roy and the others didn’t hesitate any longer. They immediately went forward and used the advantage of their strength to push open the manhole cover and climbed into the sewers.

In the pitch-black darkness, a dim yellow light lit up as a lantern appeared in Klein’s hand.

As they followed the mystical “magician,” Phil said thoughtfully, “We can head to a hotel next.

“Biles is a local. He won’t be attacked, so he can get a room. Then, we can climb through the window and enter from the outside. As we have gotten permission from the owner, we wouldn’t be considered as trespassing on private property.

“In that case, we can stay until dawn and wait for the curfew to end.”

“It’s a very interesting idea, but our goal isn’t to survive until dawn,” Klein replied with a smile as he walked ahead of them with the lantern in hand.

Roy nodded and said, “If we don’t do anything and stay in the hotel, the rules will increase one by one, becoming so detailed that guests aren't allowed to stay in hotel rooms."

"Actually, the most interesting thing about that proposal isn't the finding of loopholes to the restrictions, but that it reminded me of something." Klein turned his body slightly and looked at Biles. "As a local from Belltaine, he actually didn't attempt to capture us foreigners."

In other words, he wasn't affected by the yellow paper's orders.

This… Pasha and the others all turned warily to look at Biles, clearly showing suspicion on their faces.

Their encounter earlier had made them certain that the citizens of Belltaine City had lost their minds in the foreigner-arresting affair.

"I don't know why either…" Biles also murmured in confusion.

"Are you still a Belltaine citizen?" Klein asked casually as he slowly walked in the damp and smelly sewer.

Biles followed behind him and answered with some certainty, "Of course."

Klein thought and asked, "On the one hand, you are a citizen of Belltaine. On the other hand, you are a standard foreigner. Two of your attributes overlap, causing a contradiction. Under that order, you will neither be attacked, nor will you have your rationality affected."

"If we can create such a 'contradiction,' does it mean we will be able to escape the limitations of the rules?" Phil asked spiritedly.

Pasha shook her head.

"But such a 'contradiction' is very hard to create. At least I can't think of any possibility right now…"

She suddenly paused and hesitated before saying, "The most important thing is that we're far away from the noticeboard. We don't know what other laws will follow. We have no way of avoiding them."

When that happened, they wouldn't dare to do anything!

Klein smiled and said, "Don't worry. This mirror can help us see the new content on the noticeboard."

He casually displayed the magic mirror that had slipped into his left palm.

Pasha heaved a sigh of relief and asked curiously, "Isn't this a crime of peeping?"

On the surface of the silver mirror, words that resembled dripping blood appeared:

"The way I look at the noticeboard is like looking at the sun in the day. There's no need to peep."

Klein retracted his magic mirror and added with a smile, "Besides, this is just an item. How can it commit a crime?"

That really makes sense… Biles and Phil couldn't help but nod.

After Roy figured it out, he exhaled and asked, "Next, the most important thing is to find that item, but we don't have any clues. As a book, it can be anywhere. We can only carpet search the entire city, but we clearly lack the time to do that."

"Indeed, we don't know where 0-02 is. We don't even have any clues, but there's an existence that knows the answer very clearly," Klein replied leisurely as he heard the footsteps echoing in the sewers.

Pasha's heart stirred.

"You mean that chief shepherd?"

Klein smiled and nodded.

"0-02 is either in 'His' hands, or it has been hidden by 'Him' somewhere. And a 'book' is clearly unable to move on its own. This isn't something that the current rules can help it achieve."

"But how do we find that chief shepherd?" Biles blurted out.

Perhaps it was because the magical Mr. Magician was by his side, he wasn't that afraid of searching for the Grounded Angel.

Klein calmly held the lantern and said, "As long as 0-02 doesn't provide the chief shepherd immunity, 'He' too would have to abide by the laws on the notice.

"'He' was originally from Feysac, so 'He' is undoubtedly not a citizen of Belltaine. 'He' is unable to enjoy the treatment of the locals. Similarly, although 'He' is an angel from elsewhere and not a foreigner in the narrow sense of the word—he isn't human, 'He' too will be pursued by the citizens. This can be confirmed."

"In short, that chief shepherd has to abide by the curfew and not trespass private residences. He can't hide in a public area that isn't open to the public at night. At the same time, as a fugitive, 'He' likely doesn't have companions who have dual traits like Biles. Tell me, where do you think 'He' will be?"

Roy's eyes darted around as he gave several answers:

"Sewers, cemetery, cathedral before midnight, abandoned buildings…"

"You can't enter the cemetery at night. The abandoned buildings are owned by someone or some group by virtue of its property rights," Pasha reminded.

"Yes. Once the sewers are restricted, we will head to the cathedral to search for the chief shepherd or wait for"Him," Klein said in a relaxed tone as though he was deciding on a trivial matter.

Roy, Phil, and the others were stunned. They hadn't expected that they would be able to lock onto their target so easily.

It just took a few words of discussion to expose an angel's whereabouts!

"However, there are quite a few cathedrals in Belltaine. We have to act in concert to save time. Also, the cathedral might be able to forcefully resist the punishment by relying on 'His' level as an angel and his powers." With that said, Klein lowered his head and said to the magic mirror in his hand, "Arodes, monitor the entire city and pay attention to any anomalies."

After giving his instructions to the mirror, Klein once again dragged Ma'am Arianna out of the fog of history and asked "Her" to be in charge of the cathedrals of the Church of Evernight.

After doing so, he turned around and said to Roy, Pasha, and company, "If we still can't find the chief shepherd after all that is done, it means that 'He' has either left Belltaine, leaving 0-02 behind to attack the enemy, or he has already gained control of 0-02 to a certain extent. In short, we can proceed by means of elimination for now."

Roy and company nodded in unison as they continued following Klein in the sewers.

After a few minutes, the ancient silver mirror reflected a scene:

On the signboard, there was another piece of paper with new rules:

"…Because of municipal maintenance works, no living being is allowed to enter the sewers from now on."

"Content is being added at an increasing rate…" Klein frowned indiscernibly as he muttered to himself before taking out a human-skinned glove.

Immediately after, he gestured for Pasha and the others to hold hands.

Then, he grabbed one of them by the shoulder and led them out of the sewers to “Teleport” to the nearest Storm cathedral.

During this process, the four Beyonders first saw the rats and cockroaches in the sewers twitching as they died one after another. Following that, they were attracted by the strange and abstract spirit world, as though they had suffered some sort of catharsis at the mental level.

Chapter 1285 - Forget About Leaving, All of You

◆ ◆ ◆

Although there weren't many supplicants in the Storm cathedral in the evening, Klein chose to appear on a corridor that led to the garden so as to avoid conflict.

"How magical…" Pasha muttered to herself as she looked at the settling surroundings.

Roy suppressed his emotions and looked around.

"If that chief shepherd comes to the cathedral to tide over the curfew, he could be somewhere like this."

"If one isn't worried about accumulating the number of crimes they commit, an angel has too many ways to fool the average person," Klein said casually. "I'll send you to the other cathedrals later. Try to stay in places with glass windows and mirrors. Once you discover any outsiders that might be from Feysac, find an opportunity to draw a symbol…"

Before he could finish his sentence, his head suddenly turned as he looked at the door leading to the garden in the prayer hall.

A figure over 2.6 meters tall slowly walked out. He was wearing a long black robe with white edges, one completely filled with his bulging muscles.

This was an old, white-bearded man wearing a square hat. His eyes were pale blue, and he had few wrinkles. He had an aura of superciliousness.

The chief shepherd of the Church of the God of Combat, Larrion… Without needing to identify the figure, Klein's spiritual intuition told him that the person opposite him was an angel, the reason for coming to the cathedral.

Larrion glanced at him and said in surprise, "It's not Arianna…"

"He" immediately restrained "His" expression and said rather indifferently, "Appears to be 'Her' helper.

"You can tell 'Her' that I've reached an agreement with 0-02, which has come alive to a certain degree. I'll give up sealing it in exchange for permission to leave. And y'all will stay here, enduring the changes in the rules and the increasingly stricter laws until y'all are completely dead…"

The chief shepherd didn't seem to be worried that Klein would stop "Him" at all. This was because when "He" spoke, "His" body was rapidly aging. The surface of "His" skin quickly became covered in wrinkles, with aging spots appearing on it, dripping with a rotting liquid.

In just a few blinks of an eye, Larrion looked as though he was about to evaporate into thin air from his aging.

Then, "He" turned into a pool of rotten liquid that completely evaporated.

The impact of this scene sent shivers down Biles and company's spines. They felt as if their minds were about to go haywire and that their emotions were about to collapse.

This was just like the countless tiny worms that had crawled out from the wound on Mr. Magician's wrist when he reformed his hand. It was just as terrifying and harrowing!

A strange ability; it has something to do with Twilight? Klein didn't have any intention of stopping Larrion. He only nodded in thought.

In the spirit world corresponding to Belltaine, Larrion's figure appeared and returned to normal.

Right on the heels of that, as though "He" could control spirit world creatures, he passed through an invisible barrier and escaped the many restrictions of Belltaine City.

But just as Larrion was about to begin "tearing" through space, everything suddenly darkened and "He" saw a seamless patch of dark "cloth."

It was like a wall that blocked Larrion's path!

Larrion cautiously stopped his actions, looked up at the infinitely high area where the Seven Pure Lights were. However, "He" could only see an illusory "curtain" hanging down from it, enveloping the spirit world of the area corresponding to Belltaine, isolating it and creating an independent world.

At the same time, Larrion's intuition as a Demon Hunter had told "Him" that the barrier formed by the "curtain" was extremely strong and difficult to break through. "He" needed to spend a lot of time and effort to do so.

To this chief shepherd, what was happening had a strange comical feeling, making him unable to contain his rising anger.

This was akin to "Him" finally finding the key to a secret chamber after countless hardships. Just when "He" had the chance to open the door and leave before others could, "He" was surprised to find that there was an additional lock on the chamber's door—a rather sturdy lock!

It lacks a sense of realism. It's a projection from the Historical Void… It's fraud! No, it's outside of Belltaine City, out of the law's jurisdiction… This historical projection should've existed here a long time ago. It can't last more than two minutes, so it will dissipate on its own… Larrion quickly regained his composure, allowing his anchors and inclination towards madness to once again form a balance.

†

In the corridor of the Storm cathedral, Roy and company finally recovered. They turned their heads to look at Mr. Magician, who was in no way inferior to the angel from before.

Pasha hesitated for a moment before saying fearfully, "'He'… 'He' seems to have escaped."

This way, they wouldn't be able to obtain any information about 0-02's location. Relying on a carpet search would be too late.

Furthermore, no one present knew what the terrifying Sealed Artifact looked like. Describing it as a book made it too wide a scope.

"I can only think of other solutions," Klein replied with a smile. "Do you have any suggestions?"

He had been waiting for Larrion to return and negotiate with him, but he realized that the chief shepherd would rather wait in the spirit world for the "curtain" historical projection to disappear. And although he could enter the spirit world as well, he was unable to break through the strange barrier created after 0-02's law-changing.

As he spoke, Klein seriously considered other solutions and made a few Worms of Spirit control his body. He spoke to the Beyonders beside him in an attempt to find inspiration through their discussion.

"We should take the initiative to create a 'contradiction' that's similar to what happened to Biles so that we'll be in a relatively safe state. Only by doing so will we be able to begin our search." Phil brought up the idea that he had previously had.

Pasha shook her head.

“But if we use this kind of ‘contradiction’ to do something, 0-02 will definitely add new rules to resolve the corresponding problems.”

“But this can still buy us some time,” Phil emphasized.

“That is something that can be done,” Roy agreed, and added, “but our focus should be on finding 0-02. Perhaps we can create some ‘contradiction’ that will make it expose its location?”

As for what kind of “contradiction” could achieve such an effect or how to create it, he hadn’t come up with an idea.

In the event of a contradiction… New rules will be added to resolve it… Klein wore a smile as he listened silently. Sparks flew as his thoughts crashed in his mind.

At that moment, aqueous light appeared on the surface of the magic mirror in his hand as silver words appeared:

“Pasha, do you want to know what the new content on the noticeboard is?”

The mirror directly asked me… Why did it ask me directly? Pasha was taken aback for a moment before she hurriedly nodded and answered, “Yes.”

The aqueous light in the silver mirror quickly returned and presented a scene of the noticeboard.

There were two new rules:

“…In compliance with the curfew order, the various cathedrals will shut down early…”

“…All hotels shall only accommodate guests who have registered their identities…”

Phil panicked.

"…Where do we go now?"

He had no idea how he, Roy, and Pasha could escape the punishment.

Roy and Pasha exchanged looks as various thoughts surged through their minds, but none of them were viable.

At this moment, Klein, who had been maintaining his silence, smiled and cast his gaze at Biles.

"Where's your house in Belltaine?"

"A rental apartment on 18 Maple Street, but that apartment has already collapsed from the blast of an artillery shell," Biles answered, slightly perplexed.

Klein smiled and said, "You can make a wish to return your house to its original state. I'll grant it."

"…Can that be done?" Although the magical "magician" had healed Phil's severed hand with unbelievable powers, Biles still felt that it would be much more difficult to restore a collapsed house to its original state. After all, Dr. Weber, the military doctor who Roy mentioned, was capable of doing that.

"Of course." Klein smiled and reminded him. "Make haste."

At that moment, the supplicants in the cathedral were leaving one after another.

Biles didn't dare to delay any further as he immediately said, "I wish that my house will return to its original state."

"Alright." Klein raised his right hand and snapped his fingers. "Your wish has come true."

Uh? While Roy and company were in a daze, Klein activated Teleport once again and brought them to 18 Maple Street. He stopped outside a two-bedroom room.

Biles stared blankly at the familiar wooden door in front of him. Subconsciously, he reached out his right hand and pushed it open.

The cupboard, gas stove, bunk bed, wooden table covered in oil, and the messy old newspapers strewn everywhere were reflected in his eyes as his eyes immediately moistened.

Before the war broke out, he often saw his mother busying herself around the coal stove when he came back from the mines. His father and brother either made use of the time to do some repairs or help to handle the spoiled parts of the fruit and vegetables. They did some of the work that could be taken home. His young niece learned the alphabet from old newspapers under the guidance of her mother while she put together matchstick boxes.

Although such a life was tough and didn't have any ability to avoid risks, it was still a wonderful memory for Biles. It was many times better than the dark mine paths, heavy ores, and the whipping from the supervisors.

But now, even this tiny bit of beauty was completely destroyed.

"Aren't you going to invite us in?" Phil stood at the door, not daring to trespass on the private property.

After snapping back to his senses, Biles hurriedly said, "Please come on in."

After entering the unoccupied house, Klein pulled a chair that could break at any moment and sat down. He then fell silent.

Roy, Pasha, and the others did not dare to disturb the gentleman as they waited quietly by his side.

After twenty to thirty seconds, Klein suddenly looked around and said with a smile, “I have an idea that requires verification. Who wants to work with me on this?”

“I’ll do it,” Roy replied without hesitation.

Klein smiled and replied, “Afterward, don’t truthfully answer the questions. I’m looking for the loopholes hidden in 0-02’s rules.”

Roy nodded and said, “That wouldn’t be an issue.”

Klein immediately took out the magic mirror and said to Roy, “Ask it a question.

Roy thought for a moment and said, “Where can I find my next potion?”

A scene appeared on the surface of the silver mirror. It was the chief shepherd of the Church of the God of Combat, Larrion, who was pacing around the spirit world!

“…” Roy’s expression instantly stiffened. Then, he heard Mr. Magician say, “It’s your turn to answer its question. Remember, don’t give it the correct answer.”

Roy hurriedly reined in his thoughts and looked back at the mirror. He saw that the mirror had already transformed into Mr. Magician himself and a few more lines of blood-like text appeared:

“Who did you give your first time to?”

Roy instantly recalled the past as his face flushed red. Then, he answered according to Mr. Magician’s instructions, “I’m not sure.”

“A lie!” The blood-colored text on the silver mirror instantly condensed into the terrifying words.

Pa!

A bolt of lightning appeared out of nowhere and struck Roy.

Roy convulsed in pain as his body was charred black. His hair stood on end, but his life wasn’t truly in danger.

Biles, Pasha, and Phil were all startled, unsure what had just happened.

At this moment, Klein looked around and smiled.

“Look, the mirror didn’t get punished for voluntarily causing harm.

“A real opportunity lies in here.”

Chapter 1286 - New Applications of Old Methods

◆

A real opportunity… Pasha, Biles, and Phil were delighted to hear this. It was as if they had finally seen the light after searching for a long time in the dark night.

“What kind of opportunity?” Roy blurted out from his dazed state.

Klein wasn’t in a rush. He smiled and said, “Did you guys not notice?

“There is no clear indication on the notice of who the enforcer is.”

As a keyboard warrior in the past, Klein had always claimed to be a jack of all trades. Furthermore, he had interacted with many lawyers in his life and had an Earl of The Fallen marionette before. He had the basic foundation needed when it came to the law and rules.

That’s right, the announcement only mentioned a new consul, and it’s not clear who the enforcer is. We encountered an invisible justiciar previously… Pasha and the others revealed a thoughtful expression.

Upon seeing this, Klein reached out his hand and stroked the surface of the magic mirror as though he was combing an animal.

“Under normal circumstances, everyone has tacitly acknowledged that the police and the authorities responsible for dealing with supernatural cases enforced the law. This is confirmed through a series of legal documents or the corresponding public knowledge. But this time, the rules haven’t reached such an airtight level.

"If we say that the rules are built on a blank slate composed of the original laws, directives, and rules, then we should've seen the police, the Nighthawks, or the Mandated Punishers when we committed crimes, but that's not the case.

"In other words, the corresponding enforcer is indeed vague."

Pasha, who was the most knowledgeable among the four Beyonders, thought for a moment before saying, "Perhaps, the law enforcer is an abstract concept. Or perhaps, it is tacitly equivalent to the new consul."

"The latter isn't clear either. It doesn't make it clear who the new consul is. This way, it can be anyone. The former isn't obliged to make it known…" Klein simply replied.

Phil frowned and said, "But we can't enforce the law like the citizens."

"The corresponding authority is determined by eliminating groups via labels," Klein explained with a smile. "Foreigners are targets of ostracization and pursuit, so they obviously lack the required law enforcement rights. As for the citizens, they only have it when dealing with foreigners. This is confirmed through the notice."

Without waiting for Roy and Biles to speak, Klein continued, "So, I just used the contradiction hidden in this matter to get Roy to test it. The result is exactly as I predicted.

"First of all, the magic mirror isn't a foreign living being, neither is it a local. It's just an item with a certain level of intelligence. It cannot be placed into any particular group. This way, in a situation where the law enforcer isn't clear, those who aren't part of the elimination process have the right to enforce the law.

"Secondly, it had punished a foreigner. Those notices imply that 'all who deal with foreigners are law enforcers.'

"Finally, the magic mirror itself has the rules of punishment. Before this rule is announced to be illegal, it has the right to punish others.

“Based on the three points above, I believe that 0-02 should be in a lot of conflict right now. Next, it will definitely issue a new law to clearly determine the main body of law enforcement, to mend the loopholes in this area. Once the main body of the law enforcement is revealed, it will contain a lot of information. It will help us lock onto the target.

“Heh heh, if 0-02 uses a method of adding prohibitions, it will definitely restrict itself, as it shares the same attributes as the mirror. This is definitely not its first choice.”

At that moment, Roy, Pasha, and the others, who were listening to Klein’s recount, suddenly had the feeling that he was a knowledgeable and highly intelligent person.

Could it be that Mr. Magician is a wise man who likes to travel among the commoners in legends? The four Beyonders each made similar but different guesses.

At this moment, the magic mirror in Klein’s hand emitted a misty aqueous light.

Amidst the aqueous light, the silver mirror’s surface showed the noticeboard.

Two more lines appeared on the bottom of the original piece of paper:

“All law enforcement must be carried out by the Trunsoest Brass Book or the group it authorizes.

“Any private rules can’t surpass the official decree.”

Trunsoest Brass Book… This is the full name of 0-02? The opportunity is here! Klein’s expression turned serious as he entered Cogitation.

He had forced 0-02 to clarify the main law enforcement to obtain more information so as to further understand the situation of the terrifying Sealed Artifact.

And based on Klein's deduction, 0-02 was more or less related to a particular sefirah, just like how he was back when he had yet to become the owner of Sefirah Castle.

Therefore, furthering his understanding of it would inevitably result in reverse corruption, thereby establishing a certain connection.

To a certain extent, the sefirah was equivalent to a Great Old One, Outer Deity, or the Cosmos!

Back then, Klein had used such mysticism knowledge to lock onto the location of Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar. Now, he was using it in the opposite direction.

From his point of view, 0-02 was definitely more corrupted by a sefirah than him. After all, Sealed Artifacts were in a state of having lost control. This was why they needed to be sealed.

Under such circumstances, further understanding of 0-02 would result in corruption.

The reality proved Klein's hypothesis!

And it was also because of this danger that he didn't show the new content presented by Arrodes to the four Beyonders.

In Cogitation, Klein quickly sensed that he had an invisible connection with a certain spot. The indescribable corruption was surging over.

Ding!

At the same time he flicked out a gold coin, he used Sefirah Castle's aura to cut off the connection and isolate the corruption.

Immediately after, a clear image appeared in his mind.

Klein grabbed the gold coin with his left hand. After the glove suddenly turned transparent, he instantly vanished from the room and appeared in a hall filled with bookshelves.

On the side of the hall with floor-to-ceiling windows, there were many long rectangular tables. On one of them was a book bound by thin brass sheets.

I've found you! A smile appeared on Klein's face.

He made use of the brief connection to do a divination. Then, he relied on the attraction between sefirot, to make the "Teleportation" become abnormally precise!

The law of convergence between sefirot would allow Klein to accidentally enter the library and discover the brass book. However, it might've happened two days later, two weeks later, or even two years later. It wouldn't happen in time to stop anything. Furthermore, this was under the prerequisite that 0-02 didn't do any corresponding interference or avoidance measures.

Pa!

The clothes on Klein's back suddenly cracked as blood-red strokes appeared.

This was a punishment for trespassing into a public area.

Whipping!

Thankfully, this crime is very light… And I won't be punished for this crime for the next one or two minutes. The rules will give the trespasser time to withdraw… Klein immediately reached out and grabbed a few times in the void.

He didn't really pull out the figure of the ascetic leader, Arianna. This was because, to a noncommittal "person," a historical projection was a form of fraud. He only used this method to send his location information to the Servant of Concealment.

Due to the same reason, Klein dispersed the glove on his left hand.

During this process, the brass book started flipping and displayed the rules:

“When one’s rationality drops to 20% of its original value, there would be signs of losing control…

“… Scholar of Yore has the ability to summon Historical Void projections. The success rate of summoning depends on the familiarity and friendliness of the target…

“…

“…The Trunsoest Brass Book is the most precious item. No living being is permitted to touch it. Those in violation are to be sentenced to death!

“…One is not allowed to change the condition of the Trunsoest Brass Book in any way. Those in violation are to be sentenced to death!

“…”

The rules made Klein’s eyelids twitch. He felt his rationality constantly dropping.

This caused the Primordial One’s mental brand in his body to become more active.

The first part of the rules is presented in grayish-black, as though it’s in a state that can’t be changed… This requires 0-02 to awaken further? If it awakens to the extent of changing the rules in front, it’ll be very terrifying. It might even reduce the success rate of my summonings, causing Beyonders to show signs of losing control if their rationality falls a little… This, with this we’ve fixed the problem of this variant of a Seer being too strong? As expected of 0-02. It fully lives up to its serial number…

The text behind is presented in silver… Does this mean that the rules can be altered or enhanced?

I can't touch it. I can't change its state. That also means that I can't take it away, nor can I directly "Conceal" this Sealed Artifact… Perhaps I can use the Staff of the Stars or the Box of the Great Old Ones to directly move this library into the cosmos and let 0-02 face those Outer Deities… But if the Outer Deities were to grasp this Sealed Artifact, the problem might be greater than it is now… Klein hesitated for a moment and didn't risk summoning his Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

The next second, he heard a "smacking" sound.

The figure of Arianna's simple linen robe and tree bark belt was quickly outlined at his side. She was lashed by an invisible whip, leaving behind an obvious bloody mark.

"The first problem has been resolved. Now, we need to consider the second problem. That is how to seal this fellow," Klein said as he made haste.

It wouldn't be long before he would suffer a second punishment.

Arianna shook "Her" head.

"The corresponding information has been destroyed. We can only resolve it through trial and error."

That's a little dangerous… We don't know, but someone definitely knows… Klein's heart stirred as he made his Spirit Body leave his body and enter the spirit world.

Through the invisible barrier created by 0-02, he said to the Church of the God of Combat's chief shepherd, Larrion, who was waiting for the curtain to disappear,

"Perhaps we can make a deal."

"You want the method to seal 0-02?" Larrion turned around and chuckled. "Do you think I'll agree?"

“Actually, I’m very puzzled. Why must you sacrifice yourself for the fallen God of Combat? By joining the Church of Evernight, you can still be an angel, and you can also receive blessings. You can also live for a very long time,” Klein didn’t directly respond as he said.

Larrion’s expression darkened as he said, “A Mythical Creature without any pious faith wouldn’t be able to understand me.”

…As an evil god, isn’t it normal for me to not be devout? Klein couldn’t help but mutter inwardly.

This was his humanity.

Chapter 1287 - Guidance

◆ ◆ ◆

Seeing that Klein was momentarily at a loss for words, the chief shepherd of the Church of the God of Combat, Larrion, revealed a solemn expression.

“Furthermore, the fall of a deity is only temporary. ‘He’ will eventually return and awaken using my body.”

“…” Klein frowned slightly when he heard that. He didn’t know whether the angel was having mental problems and wasn’t far from losing control because of his shaken anchors, or if “He” was too affected by the God of Combat. In a certain sense, “He” had become “His” backup.

Ignoring the Sequence 0 true deities, even Kings of Angels and a number of angels would often not completely die!

“You should know very well that the apocalypse will come in another ten or so years. I believe that the speed of the God of Combat’s resurrection won’t be fast enough.” Klein attempted to awaken him with the cruel reality.

Larrion snorted.

“You will never be able to imagine the power of God.”

“He” didn’t give Klein the chance to continue his persuasion and revealed a smile.

“In short, I won’t make a deal with you. Pray, pray to Evernight. Pray to the deity you believe in to seal 0-02 and save you!

"But all I need to do is wait another thirty to forty seconds before I can leave this place."

Klein looked up at the "curtain" hanging from infinitely high above and didn't say anything else. He made his Spirit Body return to the library where the Trunsoest Brass Book was.

"Do you have any ideas?" he asked without any delay.

Arianna shook her head slightly and asked, "What did Larrion say?"

"'He' told us to pray to the deities to seal 0-02…" As Klein spoke, he was suddenly stunned.

What Larrion said didn't seem to be problematic, but he had inadvertently revealed a very important piece of information.

He believed that deities could seal 0-02, no matter who "They" were!

Then, what does a deity rely on to seal it? By forcefully suppressing it with "Their" Sequence 0 status, or use a might that can destroy the world? Many questions appeared in Klein's mind.

At this moment, Trunsoest Brass Book flipped to a blank page, producing silver words one after another—the language it used was the one on the first Blasphemy Slate. It seemed to be the source of all the languages that were still in use.

In the blink of an eye, the silver words formed into new text:

"The Belltaine City Library is the place where the Trunsoest Brass Book is kept. It is a place that must be heavily protected. Living beings who intrude without the Trunsoest Brass Book's permission will be severely punished."

It's an elevation of the punishment. I might be sentenced to death next… Klein's pupils dilated as he quickly deduced the most likely development.

However, he didn't panic at all. Instead, he smiled and said with sincerity, "My wish is to shrink the size of the Belltaine City Library, so that the spot where Ma'am Arianna and I are is the boundary line."

As soon as he finished speaking, he snapped his fingers and granted his own wish.

As the snapping sound reverberated, the lawn that corresponded to the Belltaine City Library disappeared. The building shrunk and the walls retreated. Soon, only a tenth of its original size was left.

Klein and Arianna subconsciously "arrived" outside the floor-to-ceiling windows. Through the open window, they stared at the Trunsoest Brass Book that remained on the rectangular table.

There was no change in the distance between them and the target. They were still very close, but they were no longer within the confines of being severely punished. However, due to their first violation of the curfew, they were once again whipped by an invisible law enforcer.

After accumulating the wishes of restoring buildings one after another, Klein could create quite a miracle in this aspect!

He didn't make another wish and continued thinking. He analyzed the hidden meaning behind the words of the chief shepherd of the Church of the God of Combat.

No, it shouldn't have been forcefully suppressed using a deity's status and level. Otherwise, my spiritual intuition would've told me the answer long ago. That would've made me activate Sefirah Castle's aura and complete the seal…

From a mysticism point of view, this is understandable. This is because 0-02 is clearly related to a particular sefirah. It's difficult to suppress it by relying on the status and level of a Sequence 0…

By relying on the might of the deities “Themselves”? This might be possible, but there’s a high chance that it’s not the real method. This is because Larrion knows of a sealing method that can be completed without relying on the deities…

What’s special about a Sequence 0 deity? And what methods can an angel use to achieve such a special sealing method?

The most special thing that I can think of at the moment is that a Sequence 0 deity contains a Uniqueness. This is something I can’t summon from the Historical Void. It really has the characteristic of being “unique.”

But how can an angel indirectly simulate a Uniqueness?

Countless thoughts collided in Klein’s mind, producing large amounts of sparks, but he still couldn’t figure out the key to the problem.

At this moment, the mercury-colored words on the Trunsoest Brass Book continued to seep out, forming new paragraphs that stipulated that Klein and Arianna were a group of people that needed punishment.

Arianna observed silently for a while before suddenly saying, “I’ll try to ‘Conceal’ the soil beneath the table to make 0-02 fall to the core. Raise your level of alertness to prevent any accidents.”

Conceal” the soil… Fall to the core… Klein’s heart stirred. He felt that this was a rather good solution.

The Trunsoest Brass Book had only forbidden the touching and changing its condition at present. The environment wasn’t equivalent to its condition. In addition, they were only forbidden from entering Belltaine City Library. It didn’t mean that Klein and Arianna couldn’t exert certain influences on it.

And when 0-02, which hadn’t been banned from leaving, passed through the concealed “soil” and fell to the core, it would lose its influence on Belltaine City due to the distance, causing the laws it had set up to fail. That was the case unless it was awakened further or came to life, allowing a larger region to fall under its jurisdiction.

This way, Klein and Arianna no longer needed to be restricted by the rules. They could seek help from the Evernight Goddess!

However, when Arianna finally thought of a solution and was preparing to carry out the plan, a new law was completely formed:

"The Belltaine City Library the place where the Trunsoest Brass Book is stored. It is a place that must be strictly protected. No living thing or object is to deal any form of damage to it in any way."

Indeed, 0-02 has also noticed this loophole… This loophole… As Klein frowned slightly, he suddenly had an idea of what he had been thinking about.

The Uniqueness of a Sequence 0 deity was indeed unique, but "Their" sealing of 0-02 wasn't directly done by using the authority and power that came from it.

It was very likely that "They" could rely on this trait of a Uniqueness to lure 0-02 into setting up a series of contradictory rules, causing the Sealed Artifact to fall into a paradoxical cycle!

In this aspect, angels, saints, and even ordinary people could accomplish that by themselves. The key was to think of paradox and guide it into establishing it.

As for how to seal 0-02 after it entered a paradoxical cycle and was preparing to fix the loophole, Klein didn't have any clues at the moment, so he needed to make further observations.

How should I create a paradox… All the rules and regulations set up by 0-02 quickly flashed through Klein's mind.

In just a few seconds, he acutely grasped a point where he could create a paradoxical cycle. He quickly turned his head and said to Arianna, “Ma’am, let’s not destroy the city library. We will directly ‘Conceal’ the other parts of the Belltaine, indirectly causing it to lose the necessary support. This place will then collapse on its own; thus, falling into the core.”

Arianna didn’t immediately do as he said. Instead, “She” turned “Her” head and gave Klein a deep look.

“This will cause the deaths of many civilians.”

“We have to make a choice between the lesser of two evils,” Klein said seriously.

Arianna didn’t respond and fell silent. It was as though “She” was in an intense mental struggle or making the appropriate preparations.

At this moment, the two brass pages that had just written the two articles quickly created more new rules:

“Belltaine is the city where the Trunsoest Brass Book is located, a true Holy Land in all senses of the phrase. No living thing or object is to deal any form of damage to it in any way.”

Upon seeing this text, Klein wasn’t disappointed. Instead, he smiled.

With a snap, he snapped his fingers, causing scarlet flames to surge out of his pocket and quickly drown him.

In just two to three seconds, a stream of flames descended from the sky. Klein jumped out and carried a person.

That was one of the four Beyonders he had saved previously. He was the Belltaine local, Biles!

“Go in and quickly flip through the brass book,” Klein said calmly as he pointed at the 0-02 on the rectangular table.

Biles didn’t know exactly what had happened, but he believed that this magical “magician,” who had fulfilled two of his wishes, had found a way out of the situation plaguing Belltaine. Thus, after taking a deep breath, he entered the city library through the miniaturized, open floor-to-ceiling windows.

During this process, he didn't receive any severe punishments. In fact, he wasn't even whipped!

Upon seeing this scene, Klein's smile widened.

0-02 had produced a paradox!

Due to Arrodes's existence, the Trunsoest Brass Book could only do a most comprehensive prohibition, preventing any living being or object from dealing any form of damage to it in any way."

As a city, Belltaine's definition didn't just include its terrain and buildings. It definitely included the residents here.

This way, if 0-02 punished a Belltaine citizen like Biles, any damage to him would go against the law it had just issued. If it didn't punish him, it would go against the laws that prohibited him from entering the city library. Hence, the Trunsoest Brass Book had entered a vicious cycle!

Of course, Klein believed that such a paradox would quickly be corrected by appending additional clauses. He only hoped that Biles would be able to flip through the brass book and find clues to sealing it!

"Pay attention to the currently open page. Once an article is about to take shape, immediately come out," Klein instructed as he stared at Biles and 0-02.

Chapter 1288 - Key Intelligence

◆

Although Biles had witnessed Phil’s severed hand, Weber’s hanging, and Mr. Magician’s palm fused from worms, and also had a certain understanding of the horrifying anomaly brought about by 0-02, his lacking level and experience made him unaware of the true horror behind this matter. He mostly explained it away as a horror tale coming to life.

Therefore, despite feeling afraid, he mustered up his courage and quickly approached the rectangular table under the watch of the magical Magician and Grounded Angel. Of course, him being from the Sailor pathway was partly responsible.

Within two or three steps, Biles had reached a spot where he could touch the brass book.

Without thinking, he reached out his right palm and grabbed the brass pages on 0-02 and quickly flipped them.

During this process, the back of Biles’s hand held up the brass page, which hadn’t completely been filled, to prevent it from being blocked, so as to allow him, Mr. Magician, and Ma’am Angel to observe the changes on it and react in advance.

Amidst the flipping sounds, this Sailor saw the line that touching the Trunsoest Brass Book would result in the death sentence. He was first alarmed before he was filled with a strong sense of puzzlement about his current state.

However, this didn’t affect his action of flipping the pages forward. Klein’s eyes reflected the different brass pages, and each page had different rules.

The projections of these brass pages didn’t appear by making lines disappear and having new ones substitute them. Instead, they appeared side by side and gradually increased in number.

In the end, Klein’s eyes reflected a different number of brass pages in them. They were neatly arranged, one line after another. It was as though he had split the 0-02 into a single page and placed it on a glass platform to bask in the sun.

This was a dream divination technique at the angel level, allowing Klein to reproduce the scenes he had just seen before his very eyes.

With the passage of time, the brass pages in his dark brown eyes began to spin and pinpoint one of them:

“…The Trunsoest Brass Book originates from a Justiciar Uniqueness that had been corrupted by the Nation of Disorder…”

It’s exactly as I expected. Since the Trunsoest Brass Book can produce all the low-level rules, the corresponding content must contain a description of itself! This is determined by its essence. Unless it completely awakens or comes alive, and has the sufficient intelligence to know how to selectively hide it… Just as a thought of joy flashed through Klein’s mind, he saw a new word in mercury color appear on the unfilled brass page.

This meant that 0-02 had finally diverted a portion of its power from its vicious cycle. It was preparing to add text as a supplementary explanation to fix the flaws.

“Leave!” Without any hesitation, Klein shouted.

Biles strictly obeyed the orders of a high-leveled figure, immediately withdrawing his right hand, turning around, and sprinting out the window.

“Make a move to attack me.” Seeing that the Sailor with dual attributes had left the city library, Klein suddenly added.

Biles’s heart was filled with puzzlement, but he still raised his right arm and pulled back his shoulder. He put on a stance that looked like he was about to throw a punch at Klein.

At this moment, a new article finally took shape:

“With regards to the rules above, the Trunsoest Brass Book and the group of people it permits have immunity while enforcing the law…”

However, even if this article was successfully published, Biles wouldn’t suffer any punishment.

Clearly, the Trunsoest Brass Book wouldn’t pursue problems that led to a vicious cycle or unclear definitions. It was just like how it didn’t pile crimes on Arrodes after it mended the loopholes in the rules.

By the same logic, Biles, who had truly come into contact with 0-02, didn’t suffer any contamination from a sefirah. Before the supplementary clauses were published, Biles was a part of the Belltaine. He couldn’t be damaged in any sense, so he couldn’t be corrupted. But with the additional clause, he wouldn’t be “retroactively” punished for his previous actions.

In fact, after Biles left the city library, he had violated the curfew order as well, but Klein had already noticed a problem. It was that when the Belltaine citizens pursued foreigners while outside, they weren’t restricted by the curfew. Therefore, he made Biles attack him in a manner to avoid the corresponding punishment.

Right on the heels of that, he seized the opportunity while 0-02 was fixing the loophole to quickly recall the detailed information regarding the Trunsoest Brass Book.

"…This book possesses a living characteristic, but most of the time, it's at a very low level…

"…The first half of the book displays almost all the underlying rules, while the second half is blank. It needs to be filled in autonomously…

"…Once there are no restrictions, it will naturally set up laws with certain biases for the surrounding areas and strictly enforce it. During this process, it will change and correct the rules based on the feedback.

"…As the law gradually becomes stricter, 'His' living characteristic will deepen… Once a law that can interfere with all aspects takes form, the Trunsoest Brass Book will completely come alive. It will possess true intelligence, and has the ability to modify the first half of the underlying rules to a certain extent… The exact extent that it can reach is as follows…

"…If there are contradictions in the laws that can't be corrected, or if the pages are all filled without being able to form a sufficiently airtight system of rules, the Trunsoest Brass Book will produce a new line at the boundary between the first and second half: 'All the following rules are ineffective.'

"…After this line takes form, the rules in the second half will disappear and the pages will return to a blank slate…

"…After the second half is completely blank, the clause 'All the following rules are ineffective' will be erased, and the Trunsoest Brass Book will repeat its previous actions until there is a set of laws that covers all aspects…

"…The rules that it creates have to be publicized or informed to the masses before having them take effect… When there's no clear rule for a particular action, whether it's against the common knowledge of the surrounding living beings…

"…Trunsoest Brass Book hates distorted and ugly rules. It hates having loopholes found…”

What a detailed description… There should be a method to seal 0-02 in all of this… Klein’s thoughts raced as he attempted to find information that he could use from every line of text.

At this moment, the leader of the ascetics, Arianna, whispered, “Think of a way to fill the pages behind 0-02, without making it airtight enough.”

That’s right! In that case, the Trunsoest Brass Book will declare that all the following rules are ineffective. It’ll redo it again. When that happens, its restrictions on the surroundings will temporarily vanish, allowing us to have the chance to touch it, take it away, or directly pray to a deity… But, how should we go about doing this? The Trunsoest Brass Book hates distorted and ugly rules. It hates having loopholes found… Klein’s heart stirred as he had an idea.

Without any hesitation, he stretched out his arms, as if he was hugging the air.

In the next second, inside the building whose dimensions had shrunk to one-tenth of the original Belltaine City Library, a hall that was covered with deep-black stone slabs with all kinds of scuffing descended into the real world.

There were eight black stone pillars erected in the hall, and metal poles hung from the high dome. At the bottom were candlesticks carved into different creatures, 41 on the left and 40 on the right.

This was the Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire’s Hall of Consuls that Klein had seen before. At that time, both consuls were still Sequence 1 Princes of Abolition of the Black Emperor pathway, so this place was filled with distortions. It didn’t match the normal circumstances and didn’t have any rules of aesthetics.

Apart from that, when Klein summoned this historical scene, he also used his domain's ability to add the details of the Fourth Epoch which he knew. It made the order that stemmed from the Black Emperor become more and more detailed, as though it was corporeal.

Pa!

His wrists were severed as they landed on the ground. Blood spurted out from the wound, just like an ordinary person.

This was the second time Klein had committed fraud!

The two palms and fresh blood that gushed to the ground quickly separated into transparent maggots and sticky, nearly shapeless liquid.

As the Worms of Spirit convulsed and died, Klein grimaced due to the pain as he made numerous worms crawl out from the stump to form new palms.

At the same time, he tried his best to maintain the scene he had created through multiple summonings, not letting it dissipate.

On the rectangular table, inside the book that had bound brass pages, many new lines of text appeared:

"…All buildings and structures have to follow the golden ratio and principles of symmetry…

"…Strange clothes are not permitted…

"…The following crimes have the death penalty…

"…"

The Trunsoest Brass Book flipped through the pages quickly as it targeted the laws that stemmed from a Black Emperor. The further it went, the faster the new text appeared. There were no more pauses that lasted nearly a minute.

Inside the hall, the candlesticks that fell from the ceiling broke and disappeared. Then, the other parts of the hall experienced various changes, wiping away the original details of the order one by one.

Finally, the hall could no longer be maintained. It collapsed and returned to the Historical Void.

At that moment, the Trunsoest Brass Book had already flipped to the last two pages. It was spread out there without any movement.

With the last page filled with text and no longer able to form a tight system of rules with what 0-02 had previously set, Klein silently exhaled and relaxed a little. He felt that his spirituality was almost depleted.

“Let’s wait for an hour at Biles’s house.” He turned his head and said to Arianna.

If they stayed where they were, they would suffer increasingly severe punishments from breaking the curfew until they were sentenced to death.

As for monitoring the Trunsoest Brass Book, this mission that couldn’t allow for mistakes was naturally handed over to Arrodes. Although this magic mirror couldn’t directly look at 0-02, it could pay attention to the noticeboard and determine the disappearance progress of the laws on it.

Chapter 1289 - Fooling

◆

After returning to Biles's house, Klein pulled a chair over and sat down without waiting for Roy and company to make inquiries. He made a rather pious wish:

"I wish for my spirituality to be restored."

With that said, he raised his right hand, snapped his fingers, and granted his own wish; thus, allowing his spirituality to return to its normal state.

Right on the heels of that, he extended his left palm, preparing to end the maintenance of the historical projection of the "curtain" before summoning a new one, so as to continue sealing off the spirit world area corresponding to Belltaine City. This prevented the Church of the God of Combat's chief shepherd, Larrion, from escaping.

"There's no need to do so. There's always a next time." At that moment, Arianna slowly shook "Her" head, indicating that Klein no longer needed to summon the "curtain" that originated from the Dark Demonic Wolf.

There was a limit to the power of "Wishes." A Miracle Invoker couldn't satisfy the same wish in a short period of time, which meant that, within the next one or two hours, Klein couldn't recover his spirituality by granting his own wishes.

Of course, to a qualified Seer-pathway angel, this limitation was something that could be avoided. For example, he could get Pasha, Roy, Biles, and Arianna to take turns to wish for Klein to regain his spirituality before granting their wishes as a Miracle Invoker.

However, the problem was that, even if he could recover his spirituality that many times, he wouldn't be able to maintain the "curtain" which was at the level of a Sequence 1 for more than an hour. Furthermore, he needed to wait an hour before 0-02 erased all the previous rules and rewrote them.

After some deliberation, Klein nodded slightly and replied with a smile, "Let's give it a try first. After all, we're rather free right now. I'll give up after my last spirituality recovery attempt. Yes, this will purely depend on the chief shepherd's luck. Perhaps 'He' might lose control because of anxiety, frustration, and nervousness?"

As he spoke, Klein dispelled the maintenance of the original "curtain," and his left hand moved forward immediately after that. He pulled out a new "curtain," allowing it to appear inside the spirit world that corresponded to Belltaine City.

In an area where saturated colors overlapped one another, Larrion, who was wearing a black robe with white edges and a square hat, felt the restriction disappear. Just as "He" was about to make "His" way out, he saw a new "curtain" descend, sealing him off again.

The smile on his face instantly froze.

Phew… A few seconds later, Larrion slowly exhaled and composed "Himself" mentally as he continued to wait.

In the next hour, the chief shepherd of the Church of the God of Combat repeatedly experienced the despair and pain of having "His" hopes extinguished.

"He" attempted to find the pattern and attempt to figure out the time interval so as to grasp the fleeting opportunity. "He" wanted to rush out of the barrier the moment the old "curtain" disappeared and before the new “curtain” was produced.

However, “He” eventually discovered that the intervals didn’t follow any pattern. The person stopping “Him” didn’t restore the barrier only when his spirituality was about to be depleted. At times, the other party would recreate the barrier far ahead of time.

If it wasn’t for the fact that Feysacian citizens weren’t forced to change faiths from the God of Combat, and that the decree that Larrion was considered a traitor hadn’t been widely spread, this Grounded Angel might’ve already lost control on the spot.

As time passed, Larrion once again sensed the collapse of the old “curtain.”

However, this time, there was no new “curtain.”

“He” has finally reached his limit… Larrion was delighted. Without any hesitation, “He” rushed out of the collapsing nascent divine kingdom.

In the next moment, “He” saw a woman holding four blonde, red-eyed heads, dressed in a complicated long dress, an unknown existence that was wrapped in bandages with yellowish-brown liquid covering the entire, and several strange but abnormally powerful spirit world creatures…

The “curtain” that Klein had summoned the previous times were Historical Void projections that had been tainted with Sefirah Castle’s aura. It naturally attracted objects sensitive to it. He wouldn’t even be surprised if Amon was among the group!

The smile on Larrion’s face froze again.

†

Belltaine City, in Biles’s rental apartment.

Klein suddenly raised his head and looked up into the sky. He muttered softly, “Impressive…”

Following that, he became silent again until the magic mirror emitted an aqueous light that reflected the noticeboard’s current state.

The rules on the paper disappeared in reverse order of their appearance.

This meant that 0-02 was beginning to erase the rules that it had set up, and was preparing to redo everything.

Once the curfew order was abolished, the highly-focused Klein immediately pulled Ma’am Arianna and used Flaming Jump to appear outside the shrunken Belltaine City LIbrary.

As he looked over, he realized that, on the brass pages of 0-02, the speed at which the rules were being wiped clear had become very fast. In just a blink of an eye, the second half of the book was only left with the clause: “All the following rules are ineffective.”

Following that, the clause disappeared as a new set of rules rapidly emerged without any gaps:

“The Trunsoest Brass Book is the most precious item. No living being is permitted to touch it…”

Before this clause was completed, Arianna’s figure had already appeared beside the rectangular table. “Her” finger touched the brass page.

With a crack, the leader of the Church of Evernight’s ascetic had “Her” neck suddenly constricted as though an invisible rope had hoisted “Her” up.

As an angel, “She” had actually suffered bone fractures and had difficulties breathing.

Death by hanging!

However, with Arianna’s finger sliding over with some difficulty, the first clause that appeared was “erased” before it was fully displayed. It entered a “Concealed” state.

As for all the rules set by 0-02, it had to be publicized or announced before it could truly be effective!

With a whoosh, Arianna picked up the Trunsoest Brass Book and threw it to Klein, who was outside the window.

In the previous hour, Klein had already anticipated all the possible developments and had a discussion with Arianna. He was in no way nervous or flustered. While 0-02 was still in midair, he dragged another himself wearing a human-skinned glove out of the void.

Then, he grabbed the Trunsoest Brass Book and used his historical projection to “Teleport” away.

After his figure disappeared from his spot, Arianna landed on the ground with a loud thud, a deep mark left on “Her” neck.

In just a few seconds, Klein, who was holding 0-02, appeared at the top of the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range. He used his Spirit Vision at the level of an angel and saw the collapsed, dilapidated, and fogged palace.

Without any hesitation, Klein allowed his historical projection to take the Trunsoest Brass Book and “Blink” to the main door of the palace before pushing the door open.

What appeared before him was a hall with many corpses hanging from above. Every corpse was different. There were men and women, either dressed beautifully, simply, exquisitely, or casually.

Behind each of these hangers was a transparent and slippery tentacle with complicated patterns. They came from the depths of the hall—from that ancient stone chair.

On the huge stone chair, transparent and distorted maggots were formed into a ball. They grew wantonly and extended out strange tentacles.

This was The Half-Fool of the Antigonus family, who had lost control and gone mad!

Sensing the door open, and sensing Klein's historical projection approach, the cluster of maggots left the stone chair and fiercely flailed their slippery tentacles, causing them to surge towards the door as if they were being affected by an invisible suction force.

Similarly, at the bottom of the stone chair, the tarot card with Roselle's image, which was written with a stellar radiance, flew towards the door.

Just seeing this scene pushed Klein's historical projection towards experiencing a breakdown. Thankfully, he didn't possess any sentience and was remotely controlled by Klein. He didn't suffer the chaotic thoughts and the negative side effects of the mental mutation, nor did he stand motionless and helpless.

Before the historical projection dissipated, it threw the Trunsoest Brass Book at the terrifying cluster of maggots.

The transparent and slippery tentacles sensed danger and instinctively reacted by wrapping around Sealed Artifact 0-02.

Under such interference and the invisible strong winds, The Fool card had reached the door one step ahead of the strange tentacles.

Klein's historical projection had mostly collapsed. Seeing this, he mechanically extended his right hand, grabbed the Card of Blasphemy, and threw it behind him.

In the next instant, the slippery tentacles that were reassembled had reached out to the door, but they were blocked by the fog, unable to exit. All it could do was wildly pound at the barrier.

The open door slowly closed, blocking out this scene.

Klein, who was hiding somewhere on the mountain peak, frowned slightly. He felt a sense of joy and relief, as well as a strong sense of doubt.

In other words, I used 0-02 to exchange for The Fool's card? The Goddess doesn't need me to seek clues regarding the River of Eternal Darkness for the time being? Klein silently muttered to himself. He walked out of the hidden area and arrived not far from the ancient palace. He bent down and picked up the Card of Blasphemy.

On the surface of the card was Roselle Gustav, who was wearing colorful clothes and holding a stick and luggage. His eyes were filled with a longing for the future, and behind him was a puppy.

On the upper left corner of the card, the resplendent stellar radiance outlined a few words:

"Sequence 0: The Fool!"

†

Inside the ancient palace, the Trunsoest Brass Book fell to the ground and opened up to the first page of the second half of the book.

New rules began to form:

"…The Trunsoest Brass Book is the most precious item. No living being is permitted to touch it. Those in violation are to be sentenced to death!

"…One is not allowed to change the condition of the Trunsoest Brass Book in any way. Those in violation are to be sentenced to death!

Just as the two rules just appeared, and before it could "inform" the owner here, a line of words suddenly appeared between the two halves of the book:

"All the following rules are ineffective."

An hour later, the two rules were wiped out, and new rules were written. However, after just two lines, there was an additional clause in front of them—0-02 seemed to have reached a blank slate that happened when the entire book was filled up.

Again and again, the Trunsoest Brass Book fell into an endless cycle.

Chapter 1290 - Fulfilling Wishes

◆

Putting away The Fool card, Klein took out Creeping Hunger from the void, equipped it to his left hand, and activated “Teleport.”

After returning to the miniaturized city library, he immediately said to the Servant of Concealment, Arianna, “It has been thrown into the abandoned palace on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range.”

That was an entrance to the foggy town.

As for how to deal with 0-02 later on, it was the Church of Evernight’s problem.

“Alright.” Arianna nodded and didn’t say anything else. “She” entered a “Concealed” state and vanished, as though “She” had been erased.

“She” didn’t thank him, nor mention any payment. It was just like how “She” had never made any requests when “She” helped Klein in the past.

Does Ma’am Arianna know that I’ve obtained The Fool card? Klein looked around thoughtfully and slowly sighed in the darkness.

Although the supernatural incident had been resolved in less than two hours, there were still quite a number of people who had lost their lives under the strict “rules.”

The Belltaine citizens had more or less committed certain mistakes, but the punishments they suffered were far more disproportionate to the crimes they had committed. The most innocent party in the matter were the tourists who came or passed by Belltaine. They had to face a nightmare simply because they were foreigners.

Klein had tried his best to do some things to protect many outsiders, including Roy and the others, but he was also limited in what he could do due to the restrictions he suffered. There weren't many loopholes that could be made use of, making it impossible to make it seem like none of that had ever happened.

What I need to do next is to mainly provide treatment to the survivors… Klein retracted his gaze and planned on "Teleporting" to Biles's house to deal with the remaining problems.

At that moment, Reinette Tinekerr, who was holding four blonde, red-eyed heads and was wearing a dark and complicated long dress, walked out of the void. One of the heads bit onto a black goat's horn.

"'He'…" "Escaped…" "The spirit world…" The remaining three heads of Miss Messenger said.

"As expected of a former chief shepherd." Klein, who had long sensed it, sighed without any surprise.

Then, he pointed at the black goat's horn.

"Did Larrion leave that behind?"

After Klein received the item, Reinette Tinekerr's head that hadn't spoken earlier said, "Yes."

After encountering the curse of deformity, "He" had still managed to barge out of the encirclement and escape from the spirit world. "He" is indeed powerful… Is this a Sequence 2 angel who's best at fighting head-on? Klein flicked his wrist, causing the black goat horn in his palm to shatter into countless tiny specks of light as it dissipated, dispersing the remnant psyche.

The limbs left behind by a Beyonder after them undergoing a "Transformation" contain a portion of their Beyonder characteristics that couldn’t return to the main body.

When the points of light were reassembled from Sequence 9 to Sequence 7, as well as a Sequence 4 Beyonder characteristic, Klein chose the Sequence 8 Pugilist from it and returned the rest to Miss Messenger with a smile.

“These are your spoils. I’ll only collect the intelligence fee.”

Reinette Tinekerr didn’t stand on ceremony. “She” raised one of the blonde, red-eyed heads and had it open its mouth, absorbing the Sequence 9, Sequence 7, and Sequence 4 Warrior Beyonder characteristics.

After watching Miss Messenger leave Belltaine, Klein “Teleported” back to Biles’s home and smiled at Roy and company.

“The problem has been resolved. You are no longer foreigners who have to be treated with animosity.”

The four Beyonders were just about to respond with heartfelt and relieved smiles when they saw the magical Mr. Magician invite a stranger from the air.

It was an old man with a dark red bow tie. He wore a shirt, vest, formal suit, and blue striped trousers. His hair remained thick despite it being all-white. His aura was warm and elegant.

This was the marionette, Hvin Rambis, whom Klein had once possessed. He planned on using this Manipulator to seal away their memories of 0-02.

Not being corrupted by a sefirah didn’t mean that Biles wouldn’t encounter terrifying matters when he recollected the matter!

As there was only one relevant period of memory for Biles, and he didn’t know the truth of the matter, what Klein needed to do was rather simple. Therefore, he didn’t seek Miss Justice’s help. He planned on using his marionette's Historical Void projection to complete it.

"You didn't tell them about what happened in the city library, right?" Klein got Hvin Rambis to walk to his side as he asked Biles.

Biles hurriedly shook his head and said, "I remember your advice."

"Very good. Next, I'll give you some psychological treatment. I'll help you forget all those matters. Otherwise, you'll be targeted by 0-02 and never be able to obtain peace until you die. Believe me, Sealed Artifacts at this level can definitely do something like that—even if it has been taken away," Klein explained his goal frankly.

Biles's lips quivered as he said, "Alright."

He chose to obey and believe.

After inviting Roy, Pasha, and Phil out of this rental apartment, Klein controlled Hvin Rambis to do a series of mental control processes and successfully made Biles forget the brass book he had seen, as well as the contents on it.

After doing this, Klein carefully took out the magic mirror and looked at it.

"Arrodes, are there any other hidden dangers?"

On the surface of the ancient silver mirror, the aqueous light flickered and reflected a line of silver words:

"Great Master, there aren't any latent risks in Belltaine. As for other places in Loen and Feysac, as it involves 0-02 itself, I'm unable to see it clearly.

"Perhaps you can confirm it yourself?"

"Alright." Klein nodded slightly, took out a gold coin, and softly chanted the corresponding divination statement.

With a ping, the gold coin flicked up and tumbled in the air.

During this process, scenes naturally surfaced in Klein's mind. They were chimneys, streets, and cities. They were extremely vague and lacked specific directions.

With a slight frown, he collected his thoughts and reached out to catch the gold coin.

Then, he got Pasha and the others to return to Biles's home. He smiled and said to Roy, "Didn't you wish to obtain the next potion? You can make a wish now."

Roy's eyes revealed surprise and he asked nervously, "I can still make another wish?"

"This is a gift," Klein replied with a smile.

Roy's heart stirred. Without asking any more questions, he seized this opportunity to fulfill his wish of obtaining the next potion.

Klein then threw the Warrior pathway's Sequence 8 Pugilist Beyonder characteristic to him.

"This is essentially a potion, but for safety, I suggest you search for the corresponding formula and find the correct supplementary ingredients."

"Your amazing feats are worthy of praise." Roy expressed his gratitude.

His first potion had, in some sense, been a Warrior Beyonder characteristic that he devoured. As the apocalypse was approaching, along with his relatively low Sequence and good luck, he didn't lose control on the spot. He didn't even have any serious psychological problems.

After that, he gradually came into contact with other Beyonders and came into contact with true mysticism. Only then did he learn how dangerous his actions were, and he didn't dare make a similar attempt again.

Faced with Roy's praise, Klein looked around and smiled.

"Next, follow me out of Belltaine. This doesn't mean that there's still danger here, but I have to make use of this time to fulfill your wishes."

One wish involved Roy hoping that Klein could help them leave the Belltaine, while the other wish involved Pasha's wish to have Klein protect them and allow them to leave Belltaine City alive.

Although these two matters were meaningless under the present situation, to Klein, he had to fulfill the wish even if there was no point in doing it.

I'm just a heartless "wish-granting machine"… Klein lampooned himself as he smiled at Biles and company.

Pasha and the others glanced at each other, not daring to raise any objections. Just like before, they held each other's hands.

Then, Klein brought them to the outskirts of Belltaine with "Teleportation."

"The magic show has come to an end. It's time to say goodbye." Klein took off his hat and bowed. He tried his best to make himself a true wandering magician.

This was a habit of his acting.

Upon seeing this, Pasha blurted out, "Can we know your name?"

Klein smiled and said, "I have too many names. Different people have different names for me. You can call me the 'Miracle Magician,' Merlin Hermes."

"Mr. Hermes, are you a believer of the Evernight Goddess?" Roy asked after some hesitation.

"…" For a moment, Klein didn't know how to answer. He really wanted to say that he once was, but not anymore.

After some consideration, he decided to act as an Attendant of Mysteries in advance.

He immediately restrained his smile and solemnly said, "The one I serve is The Fool, the Lord of the Mysteries, the great ruler above the spirit world.

"If you wish to believe in this mighty existence, or wish to gain more of an understanding, you can go to the Sonia Sea's Rorsted Archipelago. The Lord's missionary, Danitz, is currently preaching there."

Furthermore, the City of Silver definitely has all the potion formulas from the Warrior pathway under Sequence 2… Klein silently added, but he didn't say it out loud.

Roy nodded slightly and said, "It's my first time knowing of such a mighty existence in this world. Your miraculous nature has shown 'His' brilliance."

He didn't directly respond to Mr. Merlin Hermes because he was still hesitant.

Pasha, Biles, and Phil were the same.

Without another word, Klein turned around and left the four Beyonders, before making a detour to Belltaine.

He didn't forget his purpose in alighting at this tiny city. He planned on immediately finding a room to study The Fool card above the gray fog.

†

In a city in Midseashire, at a particular library.

A young law researcher took out a book from the bookshelf and walked to a table by the window and sat down.

As he carefully read through the book, he realized that there was a page of yellowish-brown paper in it.

“What is this?” the young law researcher muttered to himself in confusion and reached out to pull out the paper.

After confirming that it was written in ancient Feysac, the content was rather rare.

“…In the Fourth Epoch, there was a book named the ‘Trunsoest Brass Book’…”

Chapter 1291 - Two Rituals

◆

Above the gray fog, in the ancient palace, Klein's figure appeared.

At that moment, on the high-back chair belonging to The Fool sat a person shrouded in grayish-white fog.

As Klein returned to Sefirah Castle, this "person" instantly disintegrated, turning into transparent and distorted Worms of Spirit that flew to Klein and entered his body.

Thankfully, the restrictions placed by 0-02 only involved no leaking of secrets or returning. I didn't have my connection with the Worms of Spirit that were guarding Sefirah Castle severed. Otherwise, they would've already lost control and become monsters… Klein sighed inwardly as he sat at the seat belonging to The Fool and picked up The Fool card he had previously sacrificed to himself.

As the Card of Blasphemy had already been activated, there was no need for him to seek out any additional incantations. All he needed to do was inject spirituality into it to see the corresponding changes.

The Fool card quickly transformed into a miniature, illusory book. With Klein's guidance, it kept flipping back until it reached the last two pages.

"Sequence 1: Attendant of Mysteries

"This is an angel who serves the profound mysteries. 'He' has gained initial control of the corresponding domain's authorities. 'He' can summon Spirit Body Threads of objects that originally existed. 'He' can combine many physical objects or abstract concepts together…

“The potion formula is as follows:

“Main ingredients: One Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic.

“Supplementary ingredients: Nine spirit world specialties.

“Advancement ritual: Build a town consisting only of marionettes, and design a trajectory of fate for every marionette. By letting them interact with each other, they would act as a sufficiently real-life painting and create a corresponding area in the spirit world.

“The larger the town, the more the marionettes involved, the more detailed the daily lives are, and the more realistic and extensiveness the different fates are, the better the ritual’s effects would be.

“Sequence 0: The Fool.

“This is a true deity. In a sense, ‘He’ is an embodiment of the corresponding authorities…‘He’ is adept at using all kinds of methods to fool all things, showcasing all kinds of fascinating miracles…

“The potion formula is as follows:

“Main ingredients: The Uniqueness of The Fool. Two Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristics apart from one’s characteristic.

“Supplementary ingredients: Control at least a quarter of the fog of history.

“Advancement ritual: Fool time, history, or fate once.”

As he read, Klein slowly frowned and silently muttered to himself, Compared to the advancement ritual of Attendant of Mysteries, The Fool’s ritual is just too abstract… What does it mean to fool time, history, or fate? How does one decide if it’s successful?

Controlling at least a quarter of the fog of history is relatively simple for me. On the one hand, I know a lot of ancient secrets and have lit up many historical fragments. On the other hand, I can directly influence the fog of history through Sefirah Castle…

I'll put The Fool's matter aside for now. Currently, my focus is on Attendant of Mysteries. You have to walk one step at a time before running is possible. Uh, of course, some lucky ones can fly directly…

It's very easy to find the nine specialties in the spirit world. Be it to get Miss Messenger to help, or to seek the Seven Light's advice, this isn't a problem… The advancement ritual is very close to the environment around Zaratul and the Antigonus family's ancestor. Furthermore, it matches what the Seven Lights said about having a close connection with the spirit world. I can determine it to be true for now.

With this in mind, Klein took off the topaz pendant wrapped around his left wrist and used divination to confirm the authenticity of the Attendant of Mysteries potion formula.

It wasn't that he didn't believe in Emperor Roselle, but his fellow countryman had likely been influenced by Mr. Door before he created the Cards of Blasphemy. He had gone to the moon and suffered the corruption and contamination of the Mother Goddess of Depravity; thus, resulting in distorted memories.

It was precisely because of this that it was highly possible that Roselle had buried some traps in the key areas of the Cards of Blasphemy in his final days.

In this aspect, Klein had always been cautious and careful.

Speaking of the Primordial Moon's true form, the most powerful Great Old One, the Mother Goddess of Depravity, could it be that the Emperor had unknowingly been tainted based on "Her" title… On the moon, perhaps there are many younger brothers and sisters that Bernadette has never met before. Of course, it's unlikely that there are gender differences…

The marionettes needed for the Attendant of Mysteries ritual can be obtained from the Forsaken Land of the Gods. The copious number of monsters there is a good thing. Furthermore, I've accumulated quite a few of them previously. As Klein's thoughts wandered, he turned his head to look at the other side of the ancient palace and made the grayish-white fog beside the junk pile dissipate.

As the fog receded, rows of brownish-yellow seats appeared, each of which sat a figure.

Those figures were either giants covered in silver armor, humans with deformed facial features in linen clothes, and large chunks of flesh overgrown with eyes… They sat quietly in their rows of seats, their eyes glazed over and indifferent as they stared in the direction of the long mottled table.

These were all marionettes that Klein had gathered in the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Every time he needed to switch location, and it wasn't convenient for him to carry too many with him, he would sacrifice a batch of them above the gray fog.

Of course, this had nothing to do with environmental protection. Instead, it was what had happened to the foggy town and the scene displayed by Zaratul. It made Klein instinctively believe that there was a high chance that a particular ritual would require many marionettes. Therefore, he had always been very frugal in this aspect.

As for why he didn't hang these marionettes up, and had made them sit in rows in a conjured theater as members of the audience, this was because Klein felt that the actions of the Antigonus family's ancestor and Zaratul were a little perverse.

He had tried to imitate and mimic them, but the goal was for acting. Now, he didn't need it anymore.

But how can such a marionette city produce corresponding spirit world information? The spirit world is a gathering of the past, present, and future information, but it doesn’t directly include such fake objects…

Generated from what others know? Every living being’s actions and words would be reflected in the spirit world in an abstract manner, becoming the source of divination. When their actions, words, and certain intense feelings are clearly built into a marionette city, the city’s spirit world projection would appear, turning into a “true” existence…

The interactions involved in this are linked to the more profound secrets of the spirit world… Klein closed The Fool card in thought and played with it.

As he had already reached the angel level, he had a certain understanding regarding the creation of the Cards of Blasphemy.

Back then, not only was Roselle able to draw powers from knowledge, but he could also give actual powers to abstract knowledge!

As for what kind of material the Emperor used to create it, and how he accomplished the effects of anti-divination and anti-prophecy at the level of deities, Klein was unable to figure it out.

After some thought, Klein tried to accommodate The Fool card in his body.

His condition immediately changed. His body was covered with colorful clothes, and there was an extremely gorgeous piece of headwear on his head. His aura was deep and terrifying, but it gave off a comical, ridiculous, ludicrous feeling. It was a condition filled with a strange conflict.

The space attached to Sefirah Castle gently swayed, as though it wanted to surrender to the feet of this indescribable deity.

My level has been enhanced a little. There aren’t any substantial changes. After all, I’m already the owner of Sefirah Castle. Heh, it’s like I have a fashionable costume that can accentuate my aura… Klein shook his head and said a few self-deprecating words.

At the same time, a transparent and distorted Worm of Spirit crawled out from his body, forming a figure that was identical to him.

After splitting off a Worm of Spirit of “himself” that could respond to prayers at any moment, Klein returned to the real world and strolled around Belltaine City. He used the method of granting wishes to treat the injuries of people, and he learned about the war from them.

†

“Dogsh*t!” Danitz couldn’t help but curse when he heard the crew’s report. “They actually finished the whale oil? Why didn’t you stop them?”

As they passed by the Gargas Archipelago, Danitz and his crew bought a batch of whale oil that hadn’t been refined. They planned on bringing it back to Bayam and selling it at a high price. Who would’ve expected that a portion of it had been “secretly eaten” by the City of Silver’s half-giants?

The crew member glanced at the Oracle and whispered, “They don’t understand what we’re talking about. We don’t understand what they’re talking about either. Only the shortest one can communicate, but it doesn’t mean we can find him at any time. He always Cogitates in places where the sun shines, changing positions every time.”

Danitz subconsciously sneered.

“This is what happens to illiterates.

“If you could grasp all sorts of languages like ancient Feysac, Jotun, and Elvish like me, something like that wouldn’t have happened.

“Of course, linguistic talent is related to intelligence. You don’t have to force yourself.”

The crewman carefully looked at Danitz again.

“Oracle, they ate the portion of whale oil you bought.”

…Dogsh*t! Danitz’s reaction was faster than his thoughts as he rushed towards the cabin.

After a period of chaos, Danitz received compensation with a Sequence 8 Beyonder characteristic. He didn’t know if he had profited or suffered a loss. After all, the dirty bodily fluids left on the characteristic made him feel disgusted and nauseous.

By the time the ship returned to peace, City of Generosity, Bayam, was already in front of the City of Silver’s reconnaissance team.

Derrick led Liaval, Candice, and the others to the deck and looked at the destination of their “journey.”

Although they had passed by many ports, they had never been allowed to alight from the ship. They could only watch from afar. Now, it was finally time for them to step onto the land outside.

Even so, the large number of people, houses, and hardships that they had seen from afar were still unable to conceal their bubbling enthusiasm. They continued to yearn for life in the world of light.

Of course, having been used to the darkness and lightning, they took quite some time before they could get used to the sun outside. If not for the fact that they were Beyonders, they would’ve suffered permanent damage to their eyes.

As he looked at the docks and the numerous people, the airships that were traveling high in the sky, and the other ships around him while hearing noises that he could barely understand, Derrick suddenly felt a sense of nervousness. This would be the area where the City of Silver would take up residence in the future.

As he swept his gaze, he suddenly saw a man standing on the coastal lighthouse. He was wearing a long robe embroidered with the symbol of Storm. His hair was dark blue— nearly black—like a clump of seaweed. His face was rough and carved.

As their gazes met, Derrick instantly calmed down and no longer felt uneasy.

Chapter 1292 - Entering Bayam For the First Time

◆ ◆ ◆

After the huge ship belonging to the Resistance docked, all of the City of Silver citizens changed into round-neck shirts, brown jackets, pantaloons, and dark-colored caps before following Oracle Danitz down the ship. They prepared to pass through the dock to enter the City of Generosity Bayam. Those clothes had been prepared beforehand.

“It’s really uncomfortable wearing this. It’s not suitable for battle…” As he walked, Liaval moved his limbs and whispered to Elder Derrick.

Derrick nodded slightly and said, “But it’s better to hide ourselves and not be too eye-catching. We don’t want to become the focus of attention.”

Derrick’s analysis wasn’t a problem at all. After all, they were outsiders and they only numbered twenty-one people. It was best if they didn’t attract the attention of others, but he seemed to have forgotten a crucial detail.

“B-but, they’re all looking at us…” Candice quickly surveyed the area and whispered.

The workers who were dressed crudely or half-naked at the pier all looked over at the tourists who wore all kinds of getups.

“They’re tall…” A Bayam resident with bronze skin and slightly curly hair could not help but sigh.

His height was only around 160. This was the height of all the male commoners in the current colonial era. As for the people of the City of Silver, other than Derrick, who was only slightly over two meters tall, the rest were on average above 2.3 meters. The tallest of them exceeded 2.5 meters.

To have such half-giants walk through the docks amidst the crowd was equally eye-catching no matter what they wore.

“Feysacians?” A Loenese in a top hat and formal suit turned his head to gossip with his companion. “Has the slave trade begun again?”

He believed that the City of Silver entourage were Feysacian slaves that the Rorsted government had bought from the Loen Kingdom. After all, in this world, the only ones he could think of who had such heights in such numbers were the barbarians who claimed to be descendants of giants.

His partner shook his head and frowned.

“It doesn’t seem like the case. Most Feysacians have light-blue eyes. Furthermore, even if they are Feysacian, few of them exceed two meters in height. Un-unless these are nobles or high-ranking prisoners of war…”

Although Feysac didn’t have a clear rule, in all kinds of industries, especially in the military, there was a phenomenon that one’s height determined one’s status. Of course, this wasn’t the only condition. It was also a combination of family background, nobility, and ranks.

Due to such “traditions,” the descendants of Feysacian royalty and the military brass were generally taller than two meters.

This was actually a superficial phenomenon that, at its essence, was an influence of their Beyonder characteristics.

Those who became one of the brass of the Feysac military were either nobles or at least Sequence 5. And for the latter, due to the repeated influence of the Giant pathway's potions, their height would definitely reach the "standard" height. Those who chose the Red Priest pathway would also have a certain increase in height. However, the signs weren't as obvious in their early stages as those from the Giant pathway, and the total increase in height was only a few centimeters. They had to become a demigod to experience a qualitative change.

For noble descendants, their ancestors were more or less "giants," or had marital alliances with "giants." Regardless of whether they inherited the Beyonder characteristics, the corresponding genes accumulated over generations would definitely allow their normal height to exceed two meters.

Among them, families who were still in control of a portion of the Giant pathway's potion formulas, and those who had a certain heritage, tend to be in the same situation as the residents of the City of Silver.

The royal family in charge of the Red Priest pathway maintained the heights of their descendants through marital alliances.

The residents of the City of Silver, who were being scrutinized by numerous gazes, felt increasingly uneasy. It was as if they had returned to the cursed land where they were being watched by monsters as they walked in the dark.

Derrick was very calm and composed. He looked around and said to the members of the reconnaissance team, "They don't have any ill intentions."

After confirming that Mr. Hanged Man was in this city and how he knew that he had arrived, Derrick no longer felt isolated and helpless.

It wasn't that he didn't trust the messenger that Mr. Fool had appointed, but that he believed that he didn't want to trouble a god as much as possible in his daily life. The best thing to do was resolve problems himself.

And when it came to dealing with his own problems, Derrick was ultimately unfamiliar with the outside world, so he wasn't too confident. At this moment, to have an experienced, trustable, extremely intelligent "native" with a meticulous mind help him would definitely be the best option.

Of course, Derrick also knew that Mr. Hanged Man wouldn't make any contact with him on the surface because he belonged to another faction. He wasn't a believer of Sea God, so if he acted too warmly over matters regarding the City of Silver, he was bound to be suspected.

However, there will always be a proper reason and suitable opportunities to meet… Derrick thought in anticipation.

Amidst his thoughts, he and the members of the City of Silver's reconnaissance team followed Danitz out of the dock and arrived on the streets.

Their vision suddenly broadened as they saw more people than before and heard all sorts of voices.

To the people of the City of Silver, this was even more lively than the grandest "harvest" in their hometown. At a glance, there were countless people dressed in strange clothes with all kinds of unique characteristics. Some were in a hurry, others were strolling leisurely, and some were carrying large pieces of fruit. They used pipes to suck in the liquid, or held food that looked like the delicious pies on the ship, occasionally taking a bite.

Apart from these, horse-like creatures that pulled carriages producing tinkling sounds, the metallic objects that moved extremely fast, and the smell of the various spices that filled the streets made people of the City of Silver feel like they had come to another world.

And to them, this was indeed another world.

Even though they were a little fearful and uneasy, and were not too used to such a scene, everyone could clearly feel the vibrancy of this scene.

This was like the sunlight in one’s soul, reflecting the sun in the sky.

This is the place where we will live, battle, and reproduce in the future? Derrick, Liaval, Candice, and the others subconsciously had similar thoughts. They felt a little uneasy but didn’t reject any of it.

Danitz looked at their faces which had been stunned silly by Bayam’s bustling scene in satisfaction as he inwardly muttered, This is only Bayam. If you were to go to Trier and Backlund, are you going to kneel down and kiss the ground?

This world-famous pirate controlled his urge to mock them, as he was now Mr. Fool’s messenger. He couldn’t ruin the image of a deity.

After leading the City of Silver people to a rather luxurious hotel, Danitz gestured for the crew to handle the check-in as he spoke in fluent Jotun to his guests:

“It’s getting dark. We’ll stay here for one night and leave the city tomorrow.

“The place where you will build your city has been arranged. It’s on the other side of the forest. There’s a natural harbor and a few roads that lead to Bayam. Heh, roads to this city. After that, we’ll expand the main road and build a railway that leads to your city.”

Railway… Derrick, who had studied during the Tarot Gathering, knew what it meant. He nodded gratefully and inwardly praised Mr. Fool once again.

Danitz continued,

“We’ve already helped you level the area, and left the space needed for some basic facilities such as water pipes and gas pipes. When you begin building houses, we’ll send a team over to help with the matters.

"Also, the corresponding construction materials and temporary tents have been prepared for you. Thank Mr. Fool. Uh, there's also the help of the Church of the Lord of Storms in this matter. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been able to purchase so much material. However, they mainly did so to earn additional funds."

The Rorsted new government hadn't been established for long, and its connections with the outside world weren't comprehensive enough. What they didn't expect was that the Church of the Lord of Storms had taken the initiative to provide help on the City of Silver's matter.

Water pipes… Gas pipes… Derrick gradually couldn't understand what was being said, but he still put on a pensive expression.

There were a few times when Danitz nearly said the word "dogsh*t" in passing. Without speaking another word, he introduced the hotel:

"This is a hotel that Feysacians like to live in at Bayam the most. The ceiling might be a little too low for you, but it won't be low enough to hit your heads."

With that said, Danitz smiled.

"At the end of this street is Red Theater…"

He revealed a smile that all men understood.

However, the people of the City of Silver didn't understand.

Seriously, the Emperor said that the most ancient human occupation is the selling of their bodies. They actually don't know what I'm talking about… The corners of Danitz's mouth twitched as he gave up on the topic.

After his second and third mates were done with the check-in, he led the entourage up to the second floor and assigned them their rooms.

After doing this, he took out a stack of cards that he had long written, and he distributed them to the members of the City of Silver, who were scouting the area.

“Every card has a few words in the local language and the corresponding word in Jotun. If you need any services or food, you can ring the bell here. When the attendant comes over, show him the card. Of course, they might not be able to understand it, but they will definitely seek help from people who understand it.”

This was a simple and easy method to understand. The people of the City of Silver easily grasped how to use the cards, secretly excited that they could finally communicate with the people here.

Following that, Danitz demonstrated how to switch on the water and how to use the toilet, and how to light up the gas wall lamps. It made Derrick, Liaval, and Candice feel like they had arrived at a divine kingdom.

All it took to have water flow was to press a switch. A button was enough to wash away their excrement without leaving any stains. There was a lantern that kept emitting light once it was ignited. These were all things that they didn’t dare to imagine in the past.

And these things would become part of their new lives.

By the time the City of Silver’s members had gotten used to the hotel, the sky had completely darkened. Night had begun to rule the city.

Although Derrick and company had long confirmed that there was no danger of monsters attacking in the dark in the outside world, they were still instinctively afraid. Therefore, they would either emit light themselves or light up the gas wall lamps.

At that moment, they saw gas lamps lighting up one after another on the streets, the houses—both near and far—outside the glass windows. These lights dispersed the darkness in their respective areas.

In the eyes of the people of the City of Silver, the bright and dim lights were like the galaxy landing on the ground at night.

Chapter 1293 - Devil's Oil Painting

◆

In a warehouse that was being rebuilt in Pritz Harbor.

Fors met her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham, once again a few days later.

“Are you ready?” Dorian asked in a low voice.

Back when they met, he had already informed Fors of the ritual requirement of the Apprentice pathway’s Sequence 4 Secrets Sorcerer, so that she could make advanced preparations.

“More or less… I should be able to satisfy the requirements…” Fors replied without much confidence.

The advancement ritual of a Secrets Sorcerer was relatively simple, but in this case, “simple” was the antonym for “complex,” and not “difficult.” To Fors, she wished that it was something else.

The ritual required the candidate to seal a demigod-level creature with clear animosity. The less external help one received, the better the ritual’s effects. As for the target’s level, as long as it wasn’t lower than a demigod, it was fine. It had virtually no effect on the ritual.

Upon hearing that, Dorian nodded and said, “That should be fine. That ritual is really difficult for a Sequence 5 Beyonder to complete it on their own. It’s necessary to seek help at appropriate times, but you mustn’t go overboard, such as exceeding the corresponding limitations. Otherwise, the ritual will definitely fail.”

The suggestion he had previously provided to Fors was to borrow a

Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. It would be best if she didn't even hire a saint-level helper.

Fors said vaguely, "I only plan on making a wish to Mr. Fool to increase the success rate of advancement after consuming the potion. This is closer to obtaining good luck when consuming the potion, rather than being blessed and protected while sealing the demigod creature.

"Other than that, I'll be using the painting that you mentioned."

The painting wasn't a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, the Scroll of God, but the Abraham family's Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. It was called "Devil's Oil Painting."

In the Fourth Epoch, when many members of the Abraham family had advanced to Sequence 4 Secrets Sorcerer, they had created the oil painting to seal the corresponding demigod-level creatures.

However, after being attacked by the Aurora Order and losing a lot of documents, Dorian Gray wasn't sure how many terrifying creatures were sealed in the Devil's Oil Painting. He was only certain that there was definitely more than one sealed inside.

His original plan was to release a demigod-level creature that was completely insane from the Devil's Oil Painting, one that acted purely out of instinct. This could then be his student's ritual target. This made it much easier than dealing with a rational and intelligent saint. Furthermore, it was completely in line with the ritual's requirements, but he never expected Fors to directly borrow the Devil's Oil Painting.

Dorian frowned and reminded her, "The Devil's Oil Painting only has the effect of imprisonment and sealing. It doesn't have the ability to actively affect the target. In other words, you have to stuff a demigod-level creature into the Devil's Oil Painting."

Fors nodded, indicating that she knew this.

"Teacher, you mentioned that one's 'Record' ability isn't considered external help.”

“Yes,” Dorian Gray gave a definite answer.

If her “Record” powers were considered external help, almost no Traveler could advance. After all, “Record” was the core ability of the Apprentice pathway before they became demigods. Once it was “excluded,” Fors would be left only with the means to flee, making it difficult for her to do anything to her enemies.

“In theory, that’s the case. However, you can only record at most five demigod-level powers…” Dorian said worriedly.

Before he finished his sentence, he thought of Mr. Fool and “His” Blessed and felt a little more at ease.

“If the powers are matched well, it isn’t impossible for me to succeed. It’s just a mad creature that’s acting on instinct.” Fors tried convincing both her teacher and herself.

Dorian nodded indiscernibly and didn’t say anything else. He immediately summoned his contracted creature, Malmouth, who loved music, and took out the Secrets Sorcerer main and supplementary ingredients. He then concocted a bottle of Secrets Sorcerer potion for his student.

“If there’s no way to complete the seal, there’s no need to forcefully consume it. Even if the potion and glass bottle fuses together and turns into a Sealed Artifact, we can also pray to Mr. Fool to restore it to a Beyonder characteristic.” Dorian continued to warn her worriedly before handing the potion to Fors.

Inside the glass bottle were layers of stellar radiance, as though the Milky Way in the sky had been sucked into the potion.

“Alright.” Fors nodded heavily, indicating that she wasn’t worried that the potion would be wasted.

She had made plans ahead of time. She would immediately "Teleport" away once she realized she couldn't seal the released demigod-level creature before making a wish to Mr. Fool and getting him to resolve it.

Dorian then took out an oil painting from his suitcase, which was filled with abstract images. It was an image that no one could understand. Just looking at it would make one feel dizzy and mentally weak.

This was the Devil's Oil Painting that had sealed countless terrifying creatures.

"If you can successfully advance, I only have one request." Dorian held the Devil's Oil Painting and said solemnly to Fors, "That is, on the night of the full moon, listen to what Mr. Door is saying and ask 'Him' the reasons for 'His' actions."

The members of the Abraham family still couldn't fully accept that the curse they had suffered from had stemmed from their ancestor. They felt that Mr. Door might not know the consequences of "His" plea for help.

They wished to figure out the full truth.

"Alright." Faced with her teacher's sincere request, Fors agreed without any hesitation.

Following that, she took the Devil's Oil Painting, "Teleported" out of Pritz Harbor, and came to a vast desert where no humans lived.

This way, even if an accident happened during the ritual, she had plenty of time to resolve it and not affect ordinary people.

After checking the surroundings and preparing herself, Fors inserted the Devil's Oil Painting into the ground.

She then clasped her hands together and bowed her head to pray to Mr. Fool. She wished that "He" could increase her chances of advancing after consuming the potion.

Without any pause, she saw the illusory grayish-white fog and knew that Mr. Fool had already responded.

After stalling for a few seconds, Fors finally convinced herself. She took out the herbal powder she had prepared, and she scattered it on the Devil's Oil Painting.

Then, she recited the incantation to release the seal in Jotun.

This was an incantation that only released one creature.

Without a sound, the powder that was floating in the air landed on the oil painting and rapidly spun around a central point.

As it spun, the surface of the oil painting turned illusory as if a deep vortex was forming.

Suddenly, a bluish-black hand emerged from the "vortex," one that showed signs of decay.

It stretched out from the oil painting to the outside world!

Fors's body suddenly turned cold as though she had fallen into a frozen lake.

While clearing up her mind, it also made her seem to lose control of her body. No matter how hard she tried, she was unable to move her limbs.

At that moment, Fors seemed to return to her past state of writing books at night and sleeping during the day. At that time, she often felt that she had woken up, but she couldn't move at all. It was as though she was being pressed down by an invisible creature.

Although the terrifying creature in the Devil's Oil Painting had yet to fully escape, its influence on the outside world with its godhood made Fors lose most of her ability to resist. Once it fully escapes from the oil painting, Fors would even lose control merely from looking at it directly.

The difference between the two in their lives' natural order was unimaginable in certain aspects.

Gradually, Fors's consciousness blurred a little, having a nagging feeling that she was already lucid. She raised her arm and moved her feet, but on second thought, she realized that it was only her imagination. As her body turned colder, the feeling of being pressed down by an invisible creature became more obvious.

Fortunately, she had a bunch of demigods providing her information, allowing her to close her eyes in time. She didn't look at the Devil's Oil Painting; otherwise, the consequences would be dire.

Using Cogitation to maintain a certain level of clarity, Fors began counting down.

According to Mr. World's warning, she knew that the terrifying creature would need five seconds to completely escape the Devil's Oil Painting.

4… 3… 2… With just one second left, an illusory book appeared in Fors's eyes. It quickly flipped and stopped on one page.

1! Just as Fors finished counting, she suddenly spread open her arms.

Around her, peach blossoms fell in a colorful resplendence.

The bluish-black hand that was about to grab her neck moved away from her and was blocked by the peach forest that was blooming with vegetation and flowers. It was separated by a mountain that was the forest's river source, making it only possible for it to enter through a small cave.

This was a fairytale magic Fors had "Recorded" from Ma'am Hermit. It was called:

Peach Blossom Source!

It could create an isolation barrier from the outside world, making it very difficult for the outside world to connect to it.

Seizing this opportunity, Fors, who barely managed to regain control of her body, took out a “Queen” chess piece from Roselle’s chess from a pocket and threw it at the source of the peach blossom scene, throwing it at the cave that penetrated through the flowing river.

This was another fairytale magic she had “Recorded,” called:

The Chessboard of Time!

Its effect was to slow the target’s movements, as though it had entered a region in which time flowed slower.

With a smack, the actions of the bluish-black palm that was trying hard to break through the Peach Blossom Source changed from extending outwards to squirming.

Fors didn’t even look at the effects. She used an invisible hand to pick up the Devil’s Oil Painting that was stuck in the sand, and she held it right up to the cave.

After one or two seconds, the bluish-black palm returned to normal. Its movements became extremely fast as it charged out of the Peach Blossom Source and crashed into the oil painting.

As the oil painting shook, the terrifying creature penetrated the surface and landed in it.

Fors was delighted. Without any hesitation, she recited the incantation and closed the outer seal of the Devil’s Oil Painting.

Thankfully, that demigod creature has already lost control. It’s left with nothing but madness and lacks intelligence… I wonder if I will directly hear Mr. Door’s shouts after consuming the potion… Still nervous, Fors took out the Secrets Sorcerer potion bottle and poured it into her mouth.

Chapter 1294 - Conversation

◆

If that demigod creature didn't slam into the Devil's Oil Painting on its own accord, I'd have to summon Mr. World's Historical Void projection… Uh, I wonder if that can be considered as directly hiring a helper at the angel level… As Fors pondered, she drank the potion.

To her, the potion was like icy water that could hurt someone due to the extreme temperature. All her senses vanished in the areas that it passed, leaving only her still thoughts.

It was inevitable that a person would hallucinate in extreme cold temperatures. In Fors's vision, a night sky instantly appeared. It was dotted with countless stars that weaved together to form a dream-like river.

Fors's body began reflecting bits of stellar radiance as if they came from her own body.

The tiny bits of pure stellar radiance formed an invisible connection with the different stars in the night sky. As the light shimmered, they twisted and squirmed as insect-like creatures crawled out of Fors's body. They wanted to seek refuge in the Milky Way formed by an array of embedded diamond shards.

Each of them carried a portion of their own flesh and consciousness, as though they were uncontrollable avatars.

Fors's thoughts quickly turned chaotic, and she fell into confusion. She almost couldn't control the urge to separate herself.

At that moment, she sensed an illusory object.

It was the seal that she had completed using the Devil's Oil Painting. It was projected into the mysterious world created by the potion, forming an abstract, blurry mark.

Fors didn't think further as she instinctively extended a portion of her consciousness along with her spirituality, and intertwined with the abstract symbol.

The mark wasn't exactly harmonious with her, as if it wasn't part of her, but it managed to barely merge with her.

Suddenly, in Fors's mind, the abstract symbol became rather clear. It consisted of a "door" that was layered with mysterious symbols.

This door hid Fors behind it, allowing her to isolate herself from the surrounding cosmos.

At the same time, on the other side of the "door," the sealed creature seemed to sense the aura of an enemy. Using its own godhood, it wildly corroded the illusory door. It happened to be able to reduce the influence the cosmos had on Fors.

After maintaining it for more than ten seconds, the resplendent Milky Way's night sky slowly faded away. The stellar radiance then returned to Fors's body fused with her.

At this moment, a deep darkness appeared in front of Fors. Deep in the darkness was a perpetual storm and occasionally flashing lightning.

The next second, Fors heard a familiar voice. It stabbed into her head like steel nails stirring her brain matter.

Fors grimaced immediately. If she hadn't experienced such things over and over in the past, and had some level of resistance, as well as the fact that she was at the saint level, she would have likely lost control.

Of course, there had to be some influence of "good luck" here.

After a few seconds, she finally managed to calm herself down and hear what the voice was shouting by using Cogitation.

It was calling for help!

It wasn't Jotun, Elvish or ancient Hermes. Instead, it was a language that Fors had never come into contact with before. However, she could understand it the moment she heard it. She felt like it was the true source of many languages.

Mr. Door would crazily shout for help every full moon. How disgraceful of a King of Angels… However, even if "He" is seeking help, it's still a terrifying thing that I can't withstand… Fors lampooned silently. She was considering if she should pretend not to hear it and wait until she had converged her spirituality and grasped the Beyonder powers of a Secrets Sorcerer before conversing with Mr. Door during the next full moon, or to do it now.

Suddenly, the shouts from afar stopped and the surroundings became deathly silent.

After two to three seconds, a wispy voice that could pierce through Spirit Bodies entered Fors's mind.

"You used the Beyonder characteristics of the Abraham family."

This sentence was said in a flat manner without any rise or fall, but it made the blood vessels on Fors's forehead throb. Her eyes turned bloodshot as her body turned resplendent.

She almost lost control of herself.

"Who are you?" Fors composed herself and asked deliberately.

The voice that seemed to lure her into losing control said in a low smiling voice, "You can call me Mr. Door.

“You should be familiar with me.”

The King of Angels from the Fourth Epoch directly pointed out that Fors had a certain connection with “Him.” She could hear the full moon ravings.

…I’m going to write you into a novel! Fors secretly gritted her teeth and asked, “Honorable Mr. Door, are you the ancestor of the Abraham family, Your Excellency Bethel?”

The voice that had crossed countless barriers returned to its flatness.

“Yes.”

“Then, do you know that your cry for ‘help’ has caused the entire Abraham family to be trapped in a curse that has lasted for more than a thousand years? It’s basically impossible for anyone to become a Traveler or even a Scribe? They often lose control during advancements or the night of the full moon.” Fors felt that she couldn’t speak to Mr. Door for a long time; otherwise, her inclination towards losing control would be irreversible. She directly posed the question that the Abrahams were most concerned about.

Mr. Door fell silent for two seconds before saying, “They no longer have Secrets Sorcerer or demigods?”

“There aren’t any after the War of the Four Emperors. And the curse you brought has made it impossible for them to advance to a demigod. If you can stop crying for help for ten years, a new Abraham demigod might be born. This will greatly aid in your escape,” Fors sincerely suggested.

Mr. Door sighed and said, “I have been exiled to an eternal darkness, and suffer the blockage of a perpetual storm. I have no way to know what’s happening in the real world, nor did I expect that there isn’t a single demigod left in the entire Abraham family.”

Lies… The one who calmly made this conclusion wasn’t Fors, but rather

Klein, who had accommodated The Fool's card as he held the Staff of the Stars while sitting in Sefirah Castle. He had been closely monitoring the corresponding crimson star.

He remembered that the Emperor had mentioned in his diary that Mr. Door had a certain understanding of reality. "He" seemed to be able to use the changes brought about by the full moon to see the situation outside the seal.

After sighing, Mr. Door continued, "Besides, I can't control the cries for help during the full moon."

"Why?" Fors asked in surprise.

Mr. Door said in an ethereal voice, "You're already a demigod, so you should know very well that the higher the Sequence, the greater the threat of going mad.

"An ordinary angel, even those who can walk the land freely and do what they like, without needing to engage in any additional battles, could also be gradually influenced by the Beyonder characteristics and become less like themselves. They might even enter a half-crazy state. I'm a King of Angels who has been exiled and sealed for more than a thousand years, and I don't even have someone to communicate with. My not going crazy means that I'm sufficiently powerful and lucky.

"On each full moon, the madness in me will be strengthened. I can't control it and can only constantly call for help."

So that's how it is… If I were locked up like this, I might've gone crazy in a few months… Uh, if I'm provided alcohol, newspapers, magazines, all kinds of books, and various delicacies, I can last a year—no, half a year… Fors nodded in enlightenment and asked in a perfunctory manner, "Is there anything I can do for you? How can the Abrahams dispel the curse?"

Mr. Door fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "Set up a ritual and help me escape. That way, the curse will cease to exist.

“There are two rituals that can be used. One is to sacrifice three demigods that are respectively from the Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder pathway… The other is to extract the blood of at least ninety-nine Beyonders from the Abraham family. Use it to draw such a symbol…”

“…I’ll tell them,” Fors immediately replied.

At the same time, she added inwardly, That’s if Mr. Fool permits it.

Mr. Door laughed and said, “If I can escape because of this, I will help you become an angel…”

“His” voice became more ethereal and weaker, as though “He” was slowly returning to “His” original state as Fors advancement came to an end.

About two to three seconds later, Fors couldn’t hear the sounds that slowly pushed her onto the path of losing control. The deep darkness and horrifying storms in front of her also vanished.

However, before the scene completely faded away, Fors could vaguely see that, on a vast land formed from dark red rocks, there was an ancient building that resembled a pyramid erected there. Behind the building was a deep darkness and twinkling stars. It was completely different from the cosmos that she had seen as an Astrologer on the ground.

What’s this? Fors shook her head and controlled her scattered thoughts as she began to carefully rein her spirituality back.

After getting accustomed to the state of a Secrets Sorcerer, she immediately took on a praying posture and reported her previous experiences to Mr. Fool without missing anything.

After doing this, Fors put away the Devil’s Oil Painting, “Teleported” back to Pritz Harbor, and met her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham, who was waiting in the warehouse.

Seeing that his student was safe and sound, Dorian heaved a sigh of relief and said in a pious manner, “Thanks to Mr. Fool for ‘His’ blessings.”

He had finally taught a Sequence 4 Secrets Sorcerer who didn’t show signs of betrayal.

Due to Mr. Fool’s lack of response, Fors didn’t inform her teacher of her conversation with Mr. Door. She planned on waiting until the next full moon.

She also relaxed and smiled.

“Apart from thanking Mr. Fool, I have to thank you, Teacher.”

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein didn’t have any doubts about Mr. Door calling “Himself” half-crazy. He only felt that there had to be more secrets hidden in the matter. For example, why did Mr. Door keep enticing Emperor Roselle to visit the moon? It was a place that was occupied by an Outer Deity.

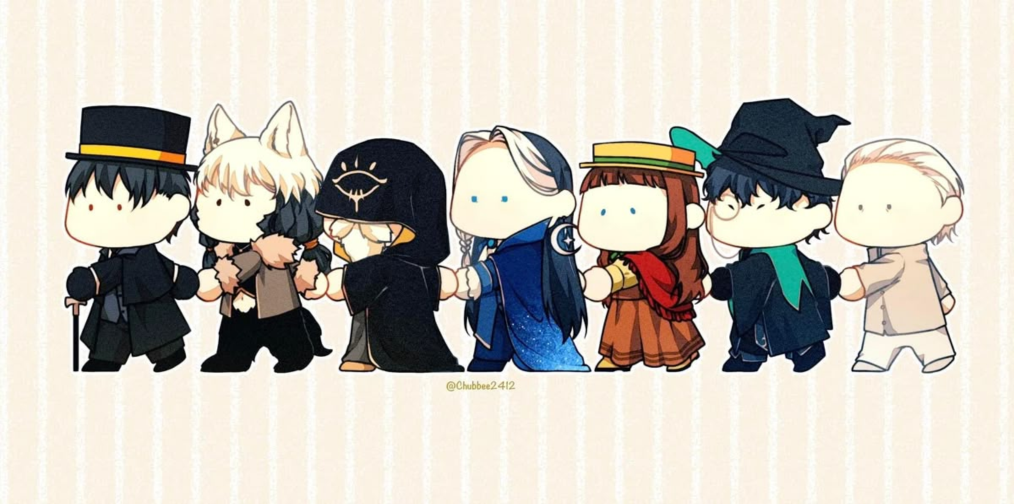
After some thought, he took out the Scarlet Lunar Corona and Master Key from the fog of history. He planned on creating a full moon environment and listening to Mr. Door’s shouting.

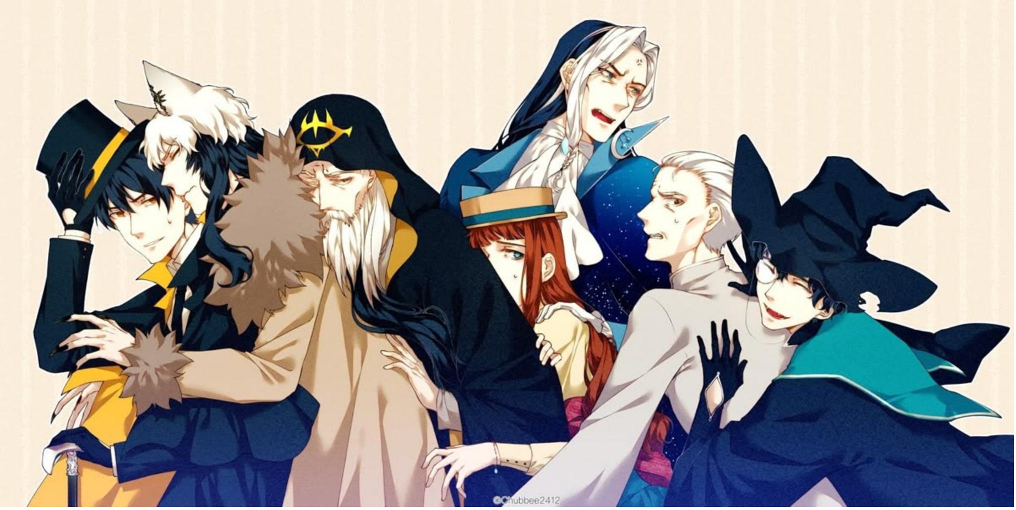
The effects of the combination had long been confirmed. Klein quickly heard the voice that seemed to pierce through his Spirit Body.

The content of the shouting was:

“Don’t save me… Don’t save me…”

The Goat from Coward Pathways:


@Chubbee2412


@Chubbee2412

Chapter 1295 - The Aftermath from the War's Frontlines

◆ ◆ ◆

"Don't save me… Don't save me…"

Being located in Sefirah Castle and having accommodated The Fool's card, Klein already had the status of a King of Angels. He no longer suffered any direct corruption from Mr. Door's cries, but the contents of the cries made his scalp tingle. His pupils dilated, and he couldn't help but feel a sense of horror surging in his heart.

He originally believed that Mr. Door was constantly shouting for help, but what he heard now was:

"Don't save me!"

Amidst Klein's silence, the weak, wispy voice pierced through his Spirit Body like needles. After shouting for more than ten seconds, it suddenly changed.

"Help me… Help me…"

This time, there was a certain change in the language used.

"…" Klein expressionlessly leaned back into his chair and listened for nearly ten seconds.

Following that, he removed his control over the Master Key and the Scarlet Lunar Corona's Historical Void projection, allowing the atmosphere of the space above the gray fog to completely return to silence.

Phew… He exhaled as he tapped the edge of the long mottled table out of habit and muttered to himself, Mr. Door is indeed half-mad, but the mad part isn't the "Him" who is desperately screaming, but the "Him" who appears calm, the one that's able to communicate with people rationally… The latter can influence the former to a certain extent, distorting the contents of "His" shouts?

When Mr. Door is lucid, "He" actually shouts "don't save me"… To a King of Angels who had been imprisoned for more than a thousand years, this definitely isn't a normal reaction. Unless "He" feels that "He" will bring a disaster that "He" doesn't wish to see upon returning to reality… A King of Angels that has completely lost control?

Together with Mr. Door's communication with the Emperor, and how "He" had been constantly enticing him to visit the moon which is occupied by an Outer Deity. There is another possibility to this matter:

Mr. Door, who was exiled, lost the protection left behind by the original Creator. "He" encountered the corruption of a particular Outer Deity and lost most of "His" rationality. "His" condition is only slightly better than the Chained God…

The Apprentice pathway can wander the cosmos at Sequence 3. Mr. Door's honorific name also includes the title of "Guide of the endless cosmos"… Does this mean that before this King of Angels was exiled, "He" might have already made contact with Outer Deities and came under some influence?

Yes, what does Miss Magician's final glimpse of the crimson land, pyramid-like buildings, and cosmos in a different area represent? This doesn't seem like it's in the current solar system, but it's a little different from the mausoleum that a Black Emperor needs… It's the lair of some Outer Deity who affected Mr. Door; or should I say that when Mr. Door became a Planeswalker and left legends behind on other planets with living beings, this is one of "His" anchor points? It's highly likely the latter, because when Miss Magician saw this scene, she didn't encounter any corruption from the cosmos…

The more Klein thought about it, the heavier his heart became. This was because it was possible that this was a reflection of how the apocalypse would dawn.

The apocalypse was definitely not something that wouldn't happen by not thinking about it or pretending not to know!

It's no wonder Yellow Light Venithan had prophesied that the day when the curse is removed is the beginning of the true disaster for the Abrahams… Mr. Door keeps calling for help, causing the Abraham family to be unable to produce another demigod. Perhaps it's a certain form of protection… Although this will make the Abraham family lose their status and most precious items, making them mediocre, it can at least save their bloodline… Heh heh, in the prophecy, the solution to resolving the curse is in the hands of an Apprentice who has obtained the help of a secret existence… Klein chuckled softly and had an idea about the response to give Miss Magician.

He planned on getting Fors to give a half-truth when informing her teacher.

Firstly, it was to emphasize that Mr. Door was already half-crazy and extremely dangerous. Even communicating with "Him" implied tremendous risks. Secondly, it was to not mention the second ritual for the curse removal. All she would say was about the sacrificing of a Seer, a Marauder, and an Apprentice demigod.

With the first point, the Abrahams could understand why their ancestor was insistent on calling for help. This was because "He" had already lost "His" mind and could do all sorts of terrifying things.

This could effectively eliminate the anxiety of the Abrahams, preventing them from helping Mr. Door escape, and allowing them to quickly start believing in The Fool.

The second point was to dispel the small number of extreme Abrahams who wanted to try their luck. This was because they lacked the ability to complete such a ritual.

At the same time, informing the Abrahams of the ritual increased the trust they had in Fors.

Ignoring the small number of Secrets Sorcerers available, those who can become Bizarro Sorcerers are definitely very difficult to capture. Furthermore, most of them are concentrated in the Secret Order. To deal with them is to provoke Zaratul. Even if the Abrahams have a demigod, and can use a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact for a short period of time, it's impossible for them to complete the ritual so easily. Yes, dealing with a Parasite is the most dangerous. If they aren't careful, they might end up targeting Amon's avatar. When that happens, it will be equivalent to serving Amon desserts…

Also, I'll use The World's Gehrman Sparrow in the future to remind Miss Magician to keep her guard up against the Abraham family's extremists… Klein thought for a moment before replying Fors's prayer.

†

After returning from the fog of history to the real world, Klein boarded a steam locomotive and arrived at the capital of Midseashire. In the past, it was the second-largest city in Loen, and also the frontline of the recent war, Constant City.

…The damage suffered here is very serious… After getting off the train and leaving the platform, Klein stood up high and looked at the industrial city.

Although it was his first time here, he had seen all sorts of pictures of Constant in newspapers and magazines.

Those photos were all black and white, and they recorded the various aspects of this city.

Among them, there were three points that left a deep impression on Klein:

Firstly, it was filled with chimneys and tall blast furnaces. It was as though it was a man-made forest. It gave a striking visual impact, one that was more representative of industry than Backlund.

Secondly, the majority of the buildings used concrete and steel. They were more densely built than their counterparts in Backlund.

Thirdly, there were many places that were stained with coal ashes, including the bodies of humans, but the air quality was better than Backlund because the sea breeze was strong.

And now, the towering blast furnaces, chimneys, and tall buildings had become rather sparse. All that was left was a pile of ruins.

However, in comparison, the damage dealt to the factory district was lesser than the residential areas. This was because there were many steel and military factories that were equally important to Feysac.

The death toll here is definitely more than 100,000… Klein sighed inwardly. He carried his luggage and walked down the stairs to the steam locomotive station and entered Constant City.

On the way to the hotel, he continued his acting as a Miracle Invoker and randomly chose a young, burly man in his thirties.

“I’m a wandering magician. My best magic trick is to grant anyone’s wishes. Do you want to try it?” The previously thin-skinned Klein was now able to strike up a conversation naturally.

The burly man glanced at him and waved his hand impatiently.

“Can you let my father, mother, two brothers, and a child be revived?”

With that said, he didn’t wait for the magician to respond as he walked towards the nearest public carriage station in a slightly irritable manner. He struck his left chest with his right fist.

Klein stood where he was and maintained the smile on his lips as he quietly watched the man leave.

He recalled a magazine he had read on a steam locomotive. It contained several pages of images reflecting the current state of each cemetery in Constant City.

The tombstones were similar to the original chimneys and blast furnaces. The racks that held up urns of ashes resembled tall buildings that had collapsed…

The entirety of Constant City seemed to be buried in a cemetery.

Retracting his smile, Klein walked around the already dried-up fountain and walked to a nearby inn.

Along the way, he heard many pedestrians discussing haunted places and the places with terrifying monsters.

“When I was passing by the Maris River, I heard a lot of people crying in the water. I didn’t dare to look and ran back into the city like the wind…”

“That’s nothing. I saw something even scarier on 9 Hyacinth Street! There was a face plastered on the window there! A very pale face!”

“A few passersby disappeared behind my house, and the blood continued all the way to the nearest ruin, but the police couldn’t find the bodies…”

“How terrifying. May the Goddess bless us!”

“Holy Lord of Storms. Let these ghosts and monsters stay away from us.”

“By the way, City Hall has posted an announcement that we are to report it to the police the moment such things are discovered.”

From the looks of it, the meatgrinder-like war made it impossible to placate many corpses, allowing them to turn into ghosts. Phew, most of the time, some of the dead might not even have their bodies left intact… Yes, there are definitely many Beyonders who lost control due to a mental breakdown or from losing their limbs… Also, most of those who didn't consume the potion according to the normal procedures also easily lose control… The Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers will definitely clear up these matters, but at least in Constant City, people might have encountered plenty of Beyonder matters for quite a long period of time. After all, some ghosts and monsters are good at evasion and hiding. They are innately very cunning… Klein walked straight and gained a new understanding of Constant's situation.

Here, encountering supernatural events was no longer a coincidence. Instead, it was a daily occurrence with a certain probability.

At this moment, Klein saw a group of Nighthawks wearing red gloves and black trench coats walk across the crossroad ahead of him. However, he didn't recognize any of them.

Indeed, the Cathedral of Serenity has sent the Red Gloves team to help… Uh, what's happening nearby? Klein nodded indiscernibly and, following his spiritual intuition, cast his gaze to a particular apartment building behind a pile of ruins.

On the fourth floor, behind an oriel window, a greatly rotting face was plastered to the window, looking out through the glass. Pale yellow liquid with black hints slid down the window one after another.

Chapter 1296 - Amateur Astronomer

◆◆◆

Eric had become a captain of a Red Gloves team during the later stages of the war, as well as advancing to Sequence 5 Spirit Warlock.

He had witnessed the deaths of the ex-captain and ex-ex-captain. He knew that a higher Sequence wasn’t a guarantee that he would be safer. Care and caution was what mattered.

To the elite Red Gloves of the Nighthawks, this was a concept that almost everyone believed in. This was because ordinary Nighthawks might only encounter ordinary problems that looked like supernatural events. Occasionally, there would be slip-ups, and it was highly likely that they would rely on their Beyonder powers to turn the situation around. As for Red Gloves who worked on various important cases, their hidden targets were definitely rather dangerous.

At that moment, Eric stood on the fourth floor of the apartment on 14 Priya Street. Facing the tightly-shut dark brown wooden door, he surveyed the area and said, “Two Nighthawks have already gone missing here. We must not be careless.”

Initially, several residents of this apartment block reported it to the police. They claimed that Unit 403 had a stench, and the tenants of Unit 303 often heard heavy footsteps from above.

The policemen in charge of the area took two days before coming to investigate. However, they didn’t walk out of Unit 403.

After the police confirmed this, they immediately transferred the case to the Church of Evernight. However, the two Nighthawks who came to deal with it also disappeared. The door to Unit 403 remained tightly shut.

Due to this premise, the Church of Evernight's archbishop of the Midseashire diocese entrusted the matter to Eric's team and allowed them to apply for a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact as support.

"Yes, Captain." The members of the Red Gloves team either nodded or spoke in response.

Eric didn't say anything else as he stood in front of the dark-brown door of Unit 403 which remained tightly shut. He raised his red-gloved left hand and knocked on one of his teeth.

A blurry figure suddenly appeared in front of him. As though it had no substance to it, it passed through the gap in the door and entered Unit 403.

Eric's expression was unusually focused, as if he was observing the situation in the room through that blurry figure.

It was a natural spirit that he controlled. It wasn't especially powerful but it had special abilities. It usually lived on his left front tooth.

Under the current situation, Eric believed that they shouldn't barge in directly. It was best to do reconnaissance first. Even if his team had a good mix of powers and a powerful Sealed Artifact to help them, they had to be cautious.

If he could figure out the situation inside and prepare for it in a targeted fashion, he believed that things would be much easier.

Right at this moment, tiny blood vessels protruded in Eric's eyes, and some of them even exploded.

When his vision turned bright red, Eric heard a heavy creak.

The dark-brown door suddenly opened!

There were a total of six figures in the room. Three police officers wore black-and-white uniforms. They were sitting on high-back chairs, high stools, and the sofa. Two of them were wearing half top hats, black trench coats, of which one was standing by the door, and the other was standing behind the oriel window. His face was pressed to the surface of the glass as if he was watching the streets downstairs.

There was also a figure sitting on a high stool at the edge of the balcony. In front of him was an exquisite astronomical telescope.

The skin of the six figures began to swell, as though they had been injected with gas. Some parts of the body had even cracked and were highly decomposed, but they still hadn't dried up. They exuded a bluish-black glisten as light-yellow liquid with hints of black flowed out.

Sensing the door open, the six figures turned to look at Eric and the others.

The first was the Nighthawk standing in front of the door. The last was the man wearing a cotton shirt behind the astronomical telescope. He had one of his eyeballs—its blacks and whites separated clearly—glued to the telescope's lens, allowing him to only use his remaining black, empty socket to scan the Red Gloves team outside.

A faint stench drilled into the noses of Eric and the others as an indescribable coldness filled the surroundings.

Eric instinctively raised his hand to hit his teeth, releasing more spirits. Then, he used his Nightmare Beyonder powers to forcefully drag all his targets into a dream.

However, no matter how he tapped his teeth, he didn't release his soul. His Spirit Warlock Beyonder powers seemed to have vanished instantly.

At the same time, a Nightmare in the Red Gloves team also discovered in surprise that he was unable to pull someone into a dream!

At that moment, apart from the enhancement in their physique brought by the potion, their Beyonder powers mysteriously vanished.

“Leave this place!” Eric ordered without hesitation.

He had never encountered such a strange situation before. All he could do was get the team to retreat first before choosing a Sealed Artifact to handle the situation in a targeted manner.

However, he and his team members didn’t move despite his orders. It was as though their bodies were no longer taking orders.

Eric instinctively lowered his head and looked at his lower body. His legs were swollen and his pants were torn.

In addition, he could clearly feel that his skin was decaying, rotting, and running with pus.

He and his Red Gloves team had yet to truly come into contact with their target, but they had fallen into a “nightmare” of watching themselves die, swell, and rot bit by bit with no way to escape.

Right at this moment, Eric’s bloodshot eyes reflected a normal palm. He held the handle and gently pulled it.

Thud!

The dark-brown door of Unit 403 closed once again, separating Eric and his Red Gloves team from the creatures in the room.

They instantly regained control over their bodies. However, their legs seemed to have suffered significant injuries. It was a little difficult to move them, be it raising their feet or bending their knees.

Eric didn’t bother checking on his injuries. He quickly cast his gaze on the palm that closed the door, and its owner.

It was a young man wearing an ancient hat and a long black robe. His facial features were ordinary, making it impossible for one to have a deep impression of him. It was a face that one forgot in seconds.

“I sincerely advise you to return now and leave the matter to the archbishop or high-ranking deacons to handle. Of course, you have another choice. That is to ask me to grant a wish. I’m a wandering magician named Merlin Hermes. My specialty is granting the wishes of others.” Klein spared no effort in enticing others to make a wish.

When he saw the rotting face on the oriel window earlier, he suddenly had an ominous feeling, so he specially came over to confirm what had happened.

Grant wishes… Eric recalled the education he had received during his training in the Holy Cathedral:

A High-Sequence Beyonder might be in a state of being imprisoned or sealed. They will pretend to be mystical items that can grant wishes, and they will entice you into helping them escape. The corresponding examples include: granting three wishes and wishing pools…

Is this a High-Sequence Beyonder? But he doesn’t look like he’s imprisoned or sealed… Eric looked left and right and deliberated for a few seconds before probing,

“If we don’t ask you to grant us our wishes, will you not resolve the abnormality in the room?”

As soon as he finished speaking, he saw the wandering magician who called himself Merlin Hermes fall deep in thought, looking a little troubled.

A few seconds later, Klein raised his hand to stroke his tall top hat. He smiled and sighed.

“Even if you don’t make the wish, I will still attempt to resolve it.”

"…Do I need to read your honorific name or your true name to have my wish granted?" Eric asked after exchanging glances with his team members.

Klein shook his head.

"No, just tell me your wish."

This wouldn't create a mysticism connection… Eric probed in a joking tone, "Then I wish the abnormalities in this room will be resolved and will no longer affect the surroundings."

Klein curled his smile and gently clapped his hands.

"Your wish will come true."

Without waiting for Eric to respond, he smiled and said, "The abnormalities inside can suppress Beyonder characteristics, causing the corresponding powers to be ineffective, but that isn't absolute.

"Typically in such cases, my suggestion is…"

As he spoke, Klein reached out with his left hand and took out an eyeball-shaped glass ball. He then twisted the handle with his right hand, opening the door a little.

Then, through a crack, he threw the glass ball into Unit 403.

[image]

As the glass ball flew, it constantly absorbed the surrounding light and gave off a brilliant, pure, extreme sunlight that resembled a miniature sun.

The next second, Klein closed the door with his right palm, lest Eric and company's eyes couldn't take it.

"My suggestion is to use a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact in the Sun domain to purify the entire area." While saying that, Klein recalled the Mutated

Sun Sacred Emblem behind Tingen City’s Chanis Gate. Although it was only a Grade 3 Sealed Artifact, it could still deal with the rotting creatures inside given enough time.

Just as Eric was about to say that they had brought a similar Sealed Artifact, but just didn’t have the chance to use it, he saw Mr. Merlin Hermes open the door to Unit 403.

The six figures inside had vanished into thin air, and the different Beyonder characteristics were slowly condensing. The originally cold and sinister stench had been completely melted by the warm feeling.

“It’s been resolved?” Eric asked after some hesitation.

Klein shook his head with a smile.

“No, the root of the problem is still here.

“Have you investigated the owner of this place?”

Eric replied immediately, “He calls himself John, an amateur astronomer. He likes to study the cosmos using specialized telescopes at night.”

Studying the cosmos… Klein walked into the room without batting an eyelid, and he casually instructed:

“Search the area and find any possible clues.”

For some reason, Eric suddenly felt that Mr. Merlin Hermes was the captain from back when he first joined the Nighthawks. He was professional, calm, and trustworthy.

He nodded at his team members, signaling them to follow his instructions.

As for him, he continued following Klein. It was both to provide him help, and also for necessary precautions.

Klein ignored him as he swept his gaze and approached the exquisite astronomical telescope. Then, he bent down and drew his eyes towards the lens.

This might be dangerous… Eric had planned to warn him, but he fell silent when he thought about how high the other party’s level and status expressed.

At that moment, through the telescope, Klein saw a resplendent, dream-like dark night sky. Every star there was blinking slightly.

Suddenly, his vision was occupied by a huge eye.

The eye seemed to be directly attached to the lens on the other end of the telescope. It was grayish-white with a pale-yellow iris. Veins swelled outwards and seeped out disgusting translucent pus.

Chapter 1297 - “Forest” of Miracles

◆

Boom!

The Red Gloves captain, Eric, shivered involuntarily as he saw Merlin Hermes, who claimed to be a wandering magician, explode behind the telescope.

However, there was no splattering blood or flesh. The shredded limbs disappeared into the air like soap bubbles.

“…” Eric and his team members, who looked over due to the commotion, were stunned. They didn’t understand the reason behind such a sudden sequence of events.

A second later, Eric said in a deep voice, “Retreat!”

He wanted to evacuate his team before the danger truly spread.

At this moment, another figure walked in from the open door of Unit 403. It was none other than Merlin Hermes who had just exploded.

This wandering Magician was wearing a tall hat and a long black robe. As if nothing had happened, he spoke to Eric and his team members:

“The root of the problem really is from that telescope.”

As he spoke, Klein walked to the balcony and tapped the telescope with his right hand.

Another bang rang out as the telescope suddenly shattered into metallic points of light that emitted a foul stench of bluish-black gas.

The moment the grayish-white fog appeared, the stench vanished and the room returned to normal.

…What exactly happened? Eric forced himself to forget about the other party's death and asked cautiously.

As a captain of the Red Gloves who was rather experienced, he had some guesses about the truth of the matter. The main goal of asking was to seek confirmation.

Klein smiled and said, "Simply put, the telescope mutated for some reason, causing the owner of the room to see something that he shouldn't have seen.

"If you want to understand more details, you can only search for clues yourself. I'm not too sure either."

Eric nodded slightly and cast his gaze at his team members, signaling them to continue their investigation.

After a series of work, Eric said to Merlin Hermes, "There aren't many clues left in the room. We can only confirm a few things:

"One, John is a local resident, and he served in the military during the war. It seems that he had some mental problems as a result. Two, he had been an amateur astronomer. At the end of the war, he joined an academic organization known as the Celestial Research Association, but we didn't obtain any information about this organization. Three, John was seeking the way to see the true cosmos."

Upon mentioning the word "cosmos," Eric paused slightly, as though he had received a warning from the upper echelons of the Church of Evernight.

He joined an organization known as the Celestial Research Association after the war ended… Sought the way to see the true cosmos… Klein combined this knowledge with his “experience” and had a certain level of confidence in the matter. He nodded and said, “You should know that the cosmos means danger. You can’t even try to understand it.”

“We will report this case to the archbishop as soon as possible and classify the Celestial Research Association as a dangerous organization,” Eric said as if speaking to a Nighthawk superior who wasn’t directly in charge of him.

Klein didn’t respond as he walked to the door and sighed.

“Indeed, war really does have an irreversible impact on all aspects…”

After the fall of the God of Combat, the already crumbling barrier set up by the Primordial One lost parts of its support. As for the Evernight Goddess, “She” has yet to fully gain control of the corresponding Uniquenesses. As for becoming a Great Old One, who knows how much longer that will take. Under such circumstances, the intrusion of the Outer Deities into this world would naturally deepen. This has combined with the damage that many ordinary people have suffered from the war.

Klein suspected that, during the subsequent period of rebuilding after the war, many cults that pointed to the different Outer Deities or Cosmos would appear secretly in Loen. If he allowed them to spread their faith and attempt various risky attempts, the apocalypse would definitely be brought forward.

As he sighed, he walked out of Unit 403. His figure blurred, turning transparent until he disappeared.

In a hotel near Priya Street, Klein, who had long since moved in, picked up the coffee in front of him and took a sip.

Taking advantage of the fact that it was still early, he went out once again and took a carriage to the outskirts of the coastal Constant City.

There was a cemetery. The stone tablets stood erect like a short forest.

Klein walked through the cemetery and found a tombstone with the help of his spirituality.

The name on the tombstone wrote:

“Welch McGovern.”

This was the original Klein’s university schoolmate. As he had bought the Antigonus family’s notebook, he had mysteriously died in Tingen. This had indirectly caused Zhou Mingrui to “transmigrate.”

Welch McGovern’s father was a banker in Constant City. He had spent money to bring his son’s corpse back to his hometown and buried it in this cemetery.

Klein stared at the photo on the tombstone for a few seconds. He bent down and placed the bouquet of white flowers in his hand in front of Welch’s grave.

Just as he was about to turn and leave, he suddenly stopped in his tracks. Twenty to thirty seconds later, an old man with a black cane walked over from another direction.

Klein recognized him and knew that he was Welch’s father. He was the Midseashire County banker who had once invited him and his schoolmates to a sumptuous meal.

However, compared to a few years ago, this gentleman had aged significantly. He was originally a very energetic middle-aged gentleman, but now, his hair was half white. There were many wrinkles on his eyes, mouth, and forehead.

“Who are you?” Welch’s father looked at the stranger in front of the grave. He asked, puzzled and wary.

Klein sighed and said, “Mr. McGovern, I’m Welch’s friend. I just happened to pass by Constant City recently.”

Welch’s father nodded slightly and said in a deep voice, “He’s a very sociable person. I only know a number of his friends.”

His words were an attempt to explain why he hadn’t invited Klein to the funeral and how sorry he was.

Klein didn’t say anything else as he looked around and said, “Is there anything you need help with? Or do you have any wishes that you wish to have fulfilled? I hope I can provide you with some strength.”

Welch’s father looked around and smiled bitterly.

“Can you allow all the dead here to stand up again?”

It’s not impossible, but they will be different from what you have in mind… Klein sighed and shook his head.

“Then can you allow Constant to return to its original state?” Welch’s father asked with a bitter smile.

Without waiting for Klein’s reply, he sighed and continued, “There’s no need to provide any help. I can achieve what is possible myself. If it’s impossible, then I can only pray to the deities.”

As he spoke, the banker went past Klein and walked to his son’s tombstone. He bent down and put down the bouquet of white flowers.

Klein looked at his back and muttered to himself, “I will try my best.”

With that, he turned around and left the cemetery.

†

Constant City, in a bar with a style that resembled the previous century’s.

A man donning a thick jacket carried his beer and walked to a wooden board beside the bar counter. He tried to find a part-time job on the notices pasted on it.

Suddenly, he saw a strange mission:

“I’m a reporter. I want to gather all kinds of stories from different people. It’s best if you had personally experienced it yourself. The remuneration I can provide is to satisfy your wish to repair and rebuild your house for free. I have sufficient resources in this aspect.

“Merlin Hermes.”

The man subconsciously frowned. He felt that this request was too strange, like it was a prank.

“Can you read the words on it?” A thin man who was sitting beside the wooden board took the opportunity to ask.

Few patrons of this bar were literate. Even if they wanted to find a job, or accept the corresponding commissions, most people were unable to understand the notices on the wooden board, and the bartender could only remember the few with the highest pay.

As a result of this situation, the thin, feeble man relied on the common Loenese terms he learned at the free schools to provide the corresponding interpretation at a quarter-pence.

This was how he made a living.

The man shook his head, indicating that he understood Loenese. He pointed at Merlin Hermes’ request and said, “Is this real?”

“It is. That reporter is sitting by that corner, the one wearing a very tall hat.” The thin, feeble man enthusiastically pointed him in the correct direction.

The reporter had promised him a quarter-pence for every person he introduced.

The man holding the beer fell silent. After hesitating for a full ten seconds, he walked to the corner and found the reporter named Merlin Hermes.

“W-will you really help me rebuild my house?” he asked worriedly.

Klein pointed at the documents on the small round table and said, “We can sign a contract.”

“…There’s no need. Even if you provide some materials, I’ll still be very satisfied.” The man sat opposite Klein and said rather cautiously, “I don’t have a very touching story.”

“As long as it’s real enough.” Klein nodded slightly in encouragement.

The man looked down and stared at the table.

“I’m a Constant native, and I used to have a decent job. I bought a terrace house along Lowtide Street. Later, war broke out. My house was reduced to ruins during one of the bombings. My eldest son, the child who just entered primary school, was buried inside…

“We had no choice but to rent a two-bedroom room until the Feysacians occupied Constant. Th-they dragged my wife away and she never returned…

“Some time ago, someone requested me to identify her corpse. I couldn’t even recognize her. She had rotten so much that you wouldn’t even call it a corpse. However, in the pockets of her clothes, there was still… there was still our old water bill…

“When she was still at the rental apartment, she had always missed our home. It’s the same for my younger daughter. I don’t have much money now and can only barely maintain my life, but I wish to rebuild that house bit by bit.

“To be honest, I don’t like telling others about my misfortune. I’d rather stay silent. But if I can really get help with the rebuilding efforts, then I can…”

Klein held a pen and paper and pretended to jot it down. He nodded gently and said, “Your wish will come true. Wait for me in front of the ruins of that house on Lowtide Street tomorrow.”

At the same time, he pushed a one-soli note over.

“This is for your drinks. My treat.”

The man’s eyes flickered. He seemed to want to refuse it, but in the end, he still picked up the note.

The next day, after sending his younger daughter to the church school, he walked along the familiar path to the familiar Lowtide Street and saw that familiar house.

Its chimney, its windows, its door, and the weeds on its walls hadn’t changed at all. It was so familiar, as if its beautiful female owner would open the door in the next second and walk the two children out to welcome their father.

The man was stunned, unable to believe that this was real.

However, even if it was an illusion, he was willing to embrace it.

†

After several days, Klein, who had completed a slew of similar wishes, pushed open the window of the hotel and snapped his fingers in the morning light fog.

In an area of the city overlooking Constant, Welch’s father woke up out of habit due to his dreams of his dead son and family. He walked to the balcony to take in the morning air.

Under the light of dawn, he suddenly saw chimneys and blast furnaces that resembled a forest. Alongside them were tall buildings.

The former Constant City had presented itself to him, bathed in the orange light of dawn.

Chapter 1298 - Departure

As the residents of Constant were stunned by the miracle in front of them, Klein had already carried his suitcase and left the city with Arrodes.

After creating such a huge commotion, he was worried that Zaratul would lock onto his location, so he didn't dare to stay any longer.

With his present level and strength, he wasn't too afraid of fighting Zaratul head-on. However, he didn't wish to be ambushed. For Beyonders of the Seer pathway, being prepared and not was completely different. Once Klein revealed his location and didn't leave in time, an unprepared him would end up facing Zaratul. He could imagine that even if he was now Sefirah Castle's owner and still had one more resurrection chance, there was also a huge risk of completely perishing.

Furthermore, he didn't know what state Amon was in right now. Was he still being pursued by the True Creator? Was it possible for him to suddenly appear by his side and steal everything?

Due to this thought, Klein once again embarked on his journey.

†

In the basement of a house in Southville County.

The few Sequence 7 Beyonders of the Abraham family gathered here according to a prior agreement.

"…That's pretty much it." Dorian Gray shared what Mr. Door had said in its entirety through his student, Fors. "The years of exile and being sealed was enough to drive the Ancestor crazy. He only occasionally regains lucidity. Even just directly speaking to 'Him' can result in mental corruption from 'His' evil intent."

A man wearing gold-rimmed glasses looking like a university professor sighed.

"So that's the reason…"

His expression revealed some relief, as if he could finally admit that the curse was a result of the Ancestor's pleas for help.

After a one-second pause, the man said with a determined expression, "We have to think of a way to help the Ancestor escape. This way, our curse will be completely removed."

"Verdu, are you crazy? If a crazy King of Angels returns, it will destroy the entire family!" Dorian couldn't help but chide him.

The man named Verdu looked at the other family members and said with a sullen expression, "That's why we have to hurry. While the Ancestor still has a portion of 'His' lucidity, we should let 'Him' return to the real world!

"Once 'He' escapes from 'His' exiled, sealed state and has enough anchors, 'He' would definitely gradually regain 'His' rationality.

"Dorian, you've degenerated! You no longer wish to restore the glory of our family, to allow us to return to the apex of the Northern and Southern Continent. You only wish to live a stable but mediocre life! Besides, can you be sure that Mr. Fool will keep providing blessings? Perhaps one day, 'He' will be like the seven deities who won't respond to most prayers."

Dorian fell silent for a few seconds.

“However, the risk in this area will definitely be lower than helping the Ancestor escape. Ever since I believed in Mr. Fool and sincerely prayed to ‘Him,’ I haven’t been affected by the full moon ravings for many months. If not for the fact that I’m no longer young, I’d even have the confidence of consuming a Sequence 6 Scribe potion.

“Even so, given time, I still have a good chance of advancing.

“If someone like me who’s older than a certain age can do it, our next generation and their descendants will definitely be able to break free from our original restrictions and have a chance to become demigods.”

Hearing Dorian’s words, the two men and two ladies other than Verdu nodded in agreement.

They had already made some of their descendants believe in Mr. Fool, and through a few months of observation, they were certain that it was effective. They were planning on praying to Mr. Fool themselves.

Noticing Verdu’s nasty expression, Dorian softened his tone and said, “More importantly, we don’t have the strength to complete the ritual at all. A demigod of any pathway is not easy to deal with. Among them, the corresponding demigods of the Seer and Marauder are cunning, bizarre, and dangerous. Even if we’re willing to sacrifice ourselves and use a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact, it’s difficult to capture them.”

Verdu nudged his gold-rimmed spectacles and slowly exhaled.

“I won’t stop you from changing your faith to The Fool. If you can get that existence’s help to aid the Ancestor’s escape, that would be the best development. But before that, I will do my best to prepare the ritual. Dorian, you have to remember that the bloodline and glory of the Abraham family comes from the Ancestor. Without”Him,” there will be no us.

“If this matter requires a sacrifice, then I’ll do it.”

He stood up, put on his hat, and walked out of the basement.

Dorian watched him leave and finally sighed.

“Verdu has been studying all kinds of mysticism information, hoping to find a way to completely resolve the family’s curse. I believe that such persistence is already in his blood…”

The other Abraham family members nodded in unison.

“After he confirms that he can’t complete the ritual, he should give up…”

They too hoped that Verdu would succeed, but they found it virtually impossible.

†

On Blue Mountain Island where Bayam was located, the private harbor that originally belonged to the Resistance.

A group of workers, who had just finished laying the gas pipes, were just about to find a place to rest and wait for the carriage sent by the Church of the Sea God to ferry them back to Bayam when they saw the half-giants purportedly from the northern Feysac’s islands carry heavy, grayish-white stone materials. Each step left an imprint on the land.

These workers had participated in the construction of harbors, cathedrals, and art museums, so they knew how heavy the grayish-white stone materials were.

They remembered that, even with the help of logs, horses, and machinery, it was very difficult for people to transport such stone materials. Yet, the half-giants held them as easily as holding toys.

This display of strength was simply ridiculous.

When Derrick saw that the outer walls and some of the buildings of the town had been built under the efforts of the City of Silver’s reconnaissance team, he nodded and said to Liaval and Candice, “It’s time to return to the City of Silver and tell the Chief about the situation here."

None of the members of the City of Silver's reconnaissance team objected. They were very excited as they agreed with Elder Derrick's decision.

Although they hadn't been here for long, they had long fallen in love with this new "hometown." They had fallen in love with the warmth of the sun in the day and the peace of the crimson moon in the night. They couldn't wait to let their family and friends experience it and enjoy it.

Upon seeing this, Derrick subconsciously straightened his back. He controlled himself and didn't let his smile appear. He calmly said to Candice, "Come back to the City of Silver with me and tell the Chief and the other Elders of the six-member council about the situation here.

"Oh, you too, Jinord. Liaval, you're in charge of maintaining order here."

He was worried that he wouldn't be able to convince the current Chief, Waite Chirmont, and company, so he decided on bringing two companions with him.

After settling the corresponding matters, Derrick led Candice and Jinord to a secluded spot in the new City of Silver. He lowered his head, clasped his hands, and prayed to Mr. Fool, making a wish to return to the City of Silver immediately.

Without a sound, the scene around them became blurry and stretched. Then, it immediately fixed and quickly became clear.

In front of their eyes, they saw a city wall with weeds fluttering in the air.

In just a few seconds, Derrick and his two subordinates returned to the entrance of the City of Silver.

…This is a miracle… Candice rubbed her eyes with a hand that wasn't holding a weapon, and marveled from the bottom of her heart.

She had imagined many ways of returning to the City of Silver, but she had never thought of returning so directly.

To her, this was a miracle bestowed by a deity.

Jinord shook the glass lantern in his hand and muttered without thinking, “This is much brighter than the beast hide lantern…”

Before he could finish his sentence, he came to his senses and revealed a pure smile without a hint of gloominess.

This time, they would be the messengers of dawn who would lead the residents of the City of Silver out of the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

Derrick heaved a sigh of relief and maintained his stern expression.

“Let’s immediately find the Chief and arrange for everyone to carry out the migration.”

He had heard Mr. Hanged Man talk about many matters that failed at the cusp of success. He didn’t wish for the City of Silver to have such an outcome.

As such, all the other matters had to be done as quickly as possible.

When they passed through the door, the City of Silver residents in charge of guarding the door looked curiously at the three scouts and saw hope from their rosy, glowing faces.

“Did Liaval and the others not come back?” Someone asked worriedly, afraid that the other members of the reconnaissance team had already sacrificed themselves.

Derrick simply replied, “They’ve remained in the outside world to build a temporary camp.”

The guards didn’t ask further, afraid that they would delay their time.

They watched as Derrick and company headed for the twin towers.

Not long after, Derrick, Candice, and Jinord saw Chief Waite Chirmont and the other members of the six-member council. They described the key points of what they saw and heard in the outside world.

At the end of the report, they even took out pocket watches, music boxes, and other exquisite machinery to prove it.

The members of the six-member council other than the 2.5-meter-tall Waite Chirmont, who had a tattooed symbol on his head, and Derrick, looked at each other and sighed.

"Your experience is like a dream. No, I can't even dream of such a scene."

With that said, he solemnly asked, "Has the dungeon meant to store the Sealed Artifacts been constructed?"

"That was the first building we completed." Derrick gave an extremely clear answer.

Waite nodded slightly and immediately issued an order.

"Get everyone to bring their necessary items and gather at the training ground.

"To prevent any accidents, we will directly pray to Mr. Fool and ask him to transfer us over."

Having said that, Waite pondered for a moment and said, "Mr. Fool has previously sent a revelation to let us wait for another three hours for the ancient survivors from Moon City to rendezvous with us. However, this doesn't affect our preparations ahead of time.

"Also, tell everyone that the environment in Moon City is very tough. Many of them have deformities. We have to look at them normally."

Although the City of Silver had the Black-Faced Grass as their staple, they would eat the flesh of monsters from time to time to replenish their strength. This made them occasionally have deformed children. Therefore, everyone was no stranger to this phenomenon.

“Alright!” The other members of the six-member council responded without any hesitation, revealing an irresistible, excited expression.

This time, they were no longer seeing the light, but were directly welcoming the day.

Chapter 1299 - Milk and Honey

◆

The Forsaken Land of the Gods, Moon City.

When A'dal, Xin, and Rus heard the High Priest's voice resound throughout the city, they became abnormally excited.

They stood up almost at the same time and carried the beast-hide bags that they had prepared earlier on their backs.

Inside were distributed mushroom powder, dried mushrooms, and various monster leathers, as well as different Beyonder characteristics of different states.

To them, even though they were excited and were full of hope for the future, the suffering they had been through made them take precautions. They tried their best to carry as much food as possible.

A few flashes of lightning before, the priests of Moon City had received Mr. Fool's divine revelation and stopped sending out hunting teams. They also instructed every resident to pack their important items and prepare to leave at a moment's notice.

In less than a minute, A'dal and company walked out of their houses with lanterns in hand and arrived on the streets.

As their eyes met, their faces which were either filled with tumors or deformities were filled with unconcealed joy. They had no negative emotions towards abandoning Moon City and leaving their hometown.

This was the source of their nightmare. It was unknown how many generations of people had lost their happiness in their childhood.

When they were gathered at the square with a high platform, they suppressed their excitement and lined up in an orderly manner, checking to see if the neighbors had already arrived.

Soon, all the residents of Moon City arrived. High Priest Nim walked up the platform and said with a smile, “Everyone, I received a divine revelation.

“Mr. Fool is about to help us leave this cursed land and obtain a new lease of life.

“Praise be to Mr. Fool!”

He took the lead and pressed his right palm against his left chest.

This was a gesture they had invented to praise Mr. Fool, and Mr. Fool hadn’t objected to it.

“Praise Mr. Fool!” The residents of Moon City pressed their right palms to their left chests, expressing their gratitude and devotion.

As their voices echoed, the gray-haired Nim raised his hand and lowered it for silence.

“We’ll head to the City of Silver first and meet with the survivors there. Then, we will head to the world of light together.

“Don’t worry. Mr. Fool will protect us.

“Okay, shut your eyes and start to pray.”

With that said, the High Priest clasped his hands and pressed them against his lips. He sincerely prayed to Mr. Fool, hoping that the mighty existence could satisfy the greatest wish that the Moon City had accumulated over the past two to three thousand years—generations.

In the next second, the demigod of the Evernight pathway acutely sensed the changes in his surroundings. He opened his eyes, surveyed his surroundings, and discovered that stone pillars were becoming clearer. Lanterns hung on it as tall figures rapidly outlined.

This is the City of Silver? We've already arrived in the City of Silver… This is the might of a deity… Praise Mr. Fool! A'dal, Xin, and company quickly observed their surroundings.

They subconsciously had a certain good impression of the City of Silver. As a missionary of God, His Excellency Gehrman Sparrow had once mentioned that he had first arrived in the City of Silver after entering this cursed, forsaken land.

This was the beginning of where god's brilliance spread out from the eternal darkness. It was the origins of all hope.

The figures quickly became clear. Most of them were more than two meters tall. Their facial features and bodies were normal and there were no signs of deformation. They too were sizing up the residents of Moon City with curious and wary gazes.

Their oppressive height and the enviousness of their normality made Xin, Rus, and the others nervous. They felt inferior and uneasy.

However, with a sweep of their gaze, they saw quite a number of City of Silver residents biting mushrooms that had roasted surfaces. From time to time, they would suck the hot liquid from white, full mushrooms.

This familiar scene caused the people of Moon City to gradually relax as they treated these half-giants as their own.

The Chief of the six-member council, Waite Chirmont nodded and said to Nim, who was supposedly the leader of Moon City, "Are you ready?"

His gaze was calm and natural. He didn't look down on them because of their "terrifying" appearance.

Afraid that an accident would happen, Nim immediately replied, “Ready and good to go.”

Waite Chirmont immediately cast his gaze at the City of Silver residents.

“Finish your meal within three minutes and begin praying.”

In less than a minute, the residents of the City of Silver finished their “milk” and put away the remaining food in their hands. They sincerely prayed to Mr. Fool.

The miraculous descent of the ancient survivors of Moon City made them more confident in leaving the Forsaken Land of the Gods. They truly believed in Mr. Fool.

A few seconds later, everyone in the City of Silver’s training ground disappeared.

The city was left completely silent. Soon, the corrupted weeds would grow, and monsters would wander around the streets and houses.

In just a few blinks of an eye, the residents of the City of Silver and Moon City arrived in front of the Giant King’s palace, which had the dusk frozen.

This was a “ritual” that Klein had deliberately planned. It was to allow the ancient survivors of the Forsaken Land of the Gods to bid farewell to the past.

Shocked by the grandeur, epicness, and mythical impression of the Giant King’s Court, the residents of the City of Silver subconsciously turned their heads and looked down and into the distance.

Beyond the orange-red dusk, the ground was completely blanketed in darkness. Occasionally, lightning would flash across the sky, revealing the outline of ancient buildings, towering mountains, and the deformed plants.

As the lightning descended, darkness surged in again, devouring everything.

Then, the City of Silver and Moon City residents turned their heads and cast their gaze deep into the Giant King's palace.

There was an open door, and outside the door was a blazing golden ocean.

The people who were blinded by the sunlight immediately felt their surroundings become blurry, and the scene quickly shattered.

The fragments quickly reassembled, turning into a deep blue ocean, the smell of fish, striking sounds, and the orange-red sun that had yet to come close to the horizon.

The residents of Moon City and the City of Silver looked around in shock and anticipation. They saw the luxuriant forest that wasn't distorted at all. They saw the stone buildings that had yet to have been refurbished. They saw Liaval and company and saw the path towards the harbor and the ship that was docked there.

Many people's vision turned blurry as though they were undergoing the catharsis of the holy light.

They could clearly sense that there was no depravity, filth, or mysterious power here.

Most of the City of Silver and Moon City residents lowered their heads and knelt on the ground, praising Mr. Fool loudly as they kissed the sweet-smelling soil.

It wasn't that the others weren't grateful to Mr. Fool, but that they were still spellbound by such a scene. Every fiber of their being was shocked.

After they recovered from their initial shock, Liaval went up to meet his wife and daughter.

As he approached, he couldn't hold back his excitement and joy. He opened his mouth, wanting to tell his wife and children what he had seen and heard during this period of time. However, he realized that there were just too many things he wanted to share. Like countless rushing rivers, they surged to his throat and blocked his voice.

After a few seconds, Liaval said, "We… We have a new home…"

Before he could finish his sentence, the nearly 2.5-meter-tall half-giant hurriedly reached his hand into his pocket and extended it towards his wife and daughter.

"This is given to us by the Oracle—milk candy. A-all of them say it's delicious…" A smile appeared on Liaval's face.

There were two objects which were the size of a thumb and wrapped in thin sheets of paper. Its surface was wrinkled, having soaked in a little sweat.

"Milk candy…" Liaval's wife didn't quite understand this term. It was a new word in Jotun that mixed "milk" and "honey."

Their daughter was infected by her father's emotions. She boldly took the candy and was about to stuff it into her mouth.

"No, no, you have to peel off the outer layer." Liaval hurriedly took back the two milk candy and peeled off the wrapper before handing one each to his wife and daughter.

His daughter bit down and ground her teeth forcefully, producing a cracking sound.

She narrowed her eyes slowly and her expression gradually became more intoxicated.

During this process, she couldn't bear to even speak.

Seeing her daughter's behavior, Liaval's wife ate the candy.

She felt that this was a very precious thing. She didn't bite it to pieces directly, but used her oral cavity to wrap around it and let it slowly melt away.

The indescribable milk fragrance and sweetness slowly spread out, intoxicating Liaval's wife.

When Liaval saw this, his smile widened as he said what had been left stuck in his throat.

"The Oracle said that we can find a job in Bayam City, receive commissions, and earn gold pounds. That way, we can buy more milk candy. We can also sell Beyonder characteristics and monster leather we have no need for to the Church of Sea God…

"Sea God is Mr. Fool's subsidiary god…

"It'll be dark soon. I'll bring you to the beach to watch the sunset. It's really beautiful. I visit it every day. I've always been waiting to bring the two of you there when you arrive…"

†

It's finally done. My anchor has stabilized significantly… Furthermore, granting the wishes of the City of Silver and Moon City has allowed my Miracle Invoker potion to digest by quite a bit. However, it isn't as much as restoring Constant City. Indeed, being a God of Wishes isn't the most accurate form of acting… Above the gray fog, Klein slowly exhaled and threw the Staff of the Stars back onto the junk pile.

Following that, he would continue wandering and creating miracles. He would occasionally head to the Forsaken Land of the Gods and transform some monsters into marionettes to prepare for the subsequent ritual.

As for the next stage of acting as a Miracle Invoker, Klein planned on accumulating wishes of changing appearances and figures to solve the deformities of Moon City, thereby creating a miracle.

This isn’t too difficult… Many maidens and ladies have a wish to remove acne, have double-eyelids, and make their noses sharper. And I have a way to do it… This way, by accumulating the simple to the difficult, it will just take a matter of time to treat the deformed people of Moon City… In the outside world, they will feel even more inferior… Klein mumbled inwardly before he suddenly laughed self-deprecatingly.

“In that case, I can call myself the ruler of the beauty industry, the guardian of architects and the construction workers, the miracle creator of long-distance travel…”

†

After entering the waters that didn’t have a safe sea route, Queen Mystic Bernadette seemed to have lost her sense of time. If not for the precise wall clock in her captain’s cabin, she definitely would’ve forgotten how many days it had been since she entered this perilous region.

The violent winds and torrential rain made the boat fly up from time to time, sometimes getting thrown to the side, as if it was a preview to the impending apocalypse.

Bernadette watched calmly as she waited patiently without interfering with the Dawn’s situation.

After some time, the storm finally calmed down.

At this moment, a black outline appeared in the distance.

Chapter 1300 - The Fourth Person

◆

Bernadette stared at the outline for a long time until it gradually became clearer as the Dawn approached. It was the silhouette of a large island.

On the island, there were huge, towering, dark-green trees that almost bordered on black covering the ground and mountain.

Although Bernadette couldn’t be sure that this was the primitive island that her father had once visited, her intuition as a Clairvoyant told her that this was likely the place she was seeking.

As the coastline entered her eyes, she pursed her lips and lowered her head. She chanted an honorific name:

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

Right on the heels of that, Queen Mystic Bernadette raised her hand and made the crewless Dawn stop in the nearby waters without approaching the shore.

At the same time, the sound of pianos, violins, cellos, flutes, and other musical instruments interweaved together into a lively tune.

As the music echoed, the toast, steak, mashed potatoes, fried mushrooms, and other dishes on a plate jumped up one after another and returned to the oven amidst a dance or threw themselves into the trash can.

The red wine bottle, white dining cloth, and other items had all returned to their original positions. They either sealed themselves with wooden corks or kept folding themselves neatly.

Then, Bernadette gently threw out a bright and unrealistic ball of yarn with her right hand.

The ball rolled into the void, leaving a thread behind. Bernadette followed it and strolled through the spirit world before arriving at the border of the nameless island.

This Queen Mystic wasn't in a rush to head deeper. She searched for the possible existence of the Black Emperor mausoleum, and she cautiously made her sea-like blue eyes turn dark and deep. She temporarily lost focus, as though she was prying into the secrets of the river of fate.

A few seconds later, Bernadette's eyes returned to normal as she subconsciously looked up into the sky.

She felt that she was being watched by a certain existence.

Of course, this was something she had expected, as she had taken the initiative to recite Mr. Fool's honorific name.

Above the gray fog, in the ancient palace, Klein accommodated The Fool's card, draped himself with the "curtain," and held the Staff of the Stars. He was checking the situation on the island through Queen Mystic's prayer light.

In his true vision's field, the island was shrouded in a thin layer of distorted blackness. It made it impossible for him to see the situation inside directly. He could only obtain Bernadette's point of view.

Even if it's not the primitive island that Emperor Roselle discovered, this place isn't simple… Klein nodded indiscernibly as he waited for Queen Mystic to do a deeper exploration.

Bernadette didn't use the ball of yarn anymore, because she had a premonition that she was going to lead herself into a dangerous abyss that she had no way of fending off.

She took out an illusory hat and wore it.

Her captain-looking figure disappeared, her existence concealed.

This was also one of the fairytale magic that stemmed from Mystical Re-enactment. At its core was a hat that made one invisible.

Then, Bernadette followed a path that appeared to have been opened up by humans and entered the forest consisting of huge trees.

There were no birds chirping, no wild beast roars, or disturbance caused by crawling insects. It was so peaceful as if time had frozen, so dead that there was no sign of life.

According to Bernadette's understanding, there should be many supernatural beings that had already gone extinct in the outside world. Normally, it would be quite lively. But now, she felt as if she was walking through an uninhabited cemetery. Every giant tree was a tombstone.

If it were any of the Beyonders with weaker minds, they would definitely feel tense. Burdened with a heavy pressure, they would slowly approach the edge of losing control. However, Bernadette's expression didn't change at all, as though she was already used to proceeding through danger and strangeness.

After walking for nearly half an hour, she still didn't see any living thing or even sense the wind.

Suddenly, her vision opened up, because the huge trees in front of her had become sparse.

Bernadette didn't feel any joy. Instead, she slowed down and raised her hand to press against her glabella.

A pair of eyes that were without eyelashes appeared in front of her, looking cold and heartless.

Then, the pair of Eyes of Mystery Prying was grabbed by invisible hands and placed on an invisible person's face.

This was Bernadette's Invisible Servant.

The Invisible Servant brought the Eyes of Mystery Prying and quickly crossed the remaining path to the open forest.

During this process, its vision gradually became clearer, as if it was no longer affected by the faint blackness in the air.

Finally, the Invisible Servant arrived at the boundary of the open region and transmitted the situation to Bernadette through the Eyes of Mystery Prying.

Outside the sparse forest, there was an empty space. There were countless creatures prostrating there.

Among them were red dragons with skin flowing with flames. There were treants that had gnarls for eyes and hollows for mouths. There were demonic wolves with eight legs, giants with four long limbs, and feathered serpents with oily feathers and scales with a dark green shade. The latter coiled there, resembling small hills. There were also different kinds of creatures that looked like human and wild beast hybrids.

At this moment, they were all facing one direction. They had their upper bodies or heads prostrated, as though they were worshiping an unknown existence. None of them made a sound.

There were even a few humans among them.

One, two, three, four, five… When Bernadette counted a few humanoid creatures, her blue eyes suddenly widened.

She had learned from Admiral of Stars Cattleya that the primitive island which her father had discovered had a special type of corruption that allowed dead creatures to return here—to the source—regardless of where their corpses were.

Amongst the “knights” who served Emperor Roselle, Grimm was first to be killed because of this, followed by William and Poli. However, apart from the three of them, no one else was sacrificed in corresponding matters. And at that moment, there were five supernatural or mutated creatures present.

In addition, Bernadette also knew that her father had eventually resolved the corruption problem and made the primitive island his secret base.

Is this not the island? Queen Mystic examined the five humans through the Eyes of Mystery Prying.

They were dressed in opulent clothes from Roselle’s era. Their faces were pale, their skin shriveled, and they looked more like zombies than humans.

As the five of them were prostrating, Bernadette temporarily couldn’t see their faces. She could only patiently wait for the “praying” to end.

A few minutes later, those creatures straightened their bodies and the entire forest came alive.

Seizing this opportunity, Bernadette saw the five of them and compared them with her memories and the images she knew.

Grimm, he really is Grimm. This is the primitive island…

That’s Uncle William. I remember him. He taught me swordplay before…

Uncle Poli…

When she recognized the fourth person, a look of astonishment could be seen on Bernadette's face.

That person was:

Edwards!

In Bernadette's memory, the knight had outlived her father's death. Then, he migrated his family to Lenburg. He hadn't died on this primitive island.

According to the information she received from Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina, Edwards had lived for nearly a hundred years. He died peacefully and was buried in a cemetery in the suburbs of Lenburg.

Uncle Edwards has also returned to this island… Didn't he not experience any corruption and didn't die because of this… Thoughts flashed through Bernadette's mind one after another. As a result, the Eyes of Mystery Prying on the Invisible Servant's face kept staring at the human suspected to be Edwards.

The "gentleman" had an old appearance and his hair was completely white. It was the same portrait of the ancestor in his advanced years—the one that Edwina Edwards had shown her. And from his facial features and outline, Bernadette could tell what he looked like in his prime.

At that time, Edwards had been her equestrian teacher.

Suddenly, the human who was suspected to be Edwards turned his head and gazed coldly at the Invisible Servant.

Although Bernadette had inherited quite a bit of Emperor Roselle's inheritance, she definitely didn't rely on items to advance to this point in the mysterious world. At that moment, she made a prompt decision and directly made the Eyes of Mystery Prying vanish, allowing the Invisible Servant to return to the spirit world.

Right on the heels of that, she quietly changed her position.

At the same time, above the gray fog, Klein tapped the edge of the long mottled table and enhanced the probability of Bernadette not being discovered.

When the person suspected to be Edwards retracted his blank gaze and walked to a different spot in the primitive forest with the surrounding creatures, Klein frowned slightly and muttered to himself, “What kind of anomaly happened?”

He remembered that the Emperor had already resolved the corruption of the cosmos on this primitive island when he was alive. However, these creatures were still worshiping an unknown existence, holding a mysterious ritual that was close to the earliest descriptions in the diary.

After the emperor’s death, did a particular entity from the cosmos infiltrate this place again? Or is it that they’re worshiping some symbol left behind by the Emperor? Who are the other two? They look like Edwards and Benjamin Abraham from the historical fragment? Klein, who was temporarily unable to see what was being worshiped due to the faint black interference of the island, could only follow Bernadette’s eyes to observe the surroundings.

After a while, Bernadette, who was proficient in prophesying, finally confirmed that there was no living creature in the open space. She summoned the Invisible Servant again and gave it the Eyes of Mystery Prying.

The Invisible Servant passed through the sparse areas of the forest and the empty area, carefully arriving at the spot where the creatures had been worshiping.

There was a huge rock, and on it was a simple baldachin made of dark red wood.

The Invisible Servant circled halfway and arrived in front of the baldachin. It was empty inside. There was no statue, nor was there an emblem formed from symbols.

The creatures on this island were praying to something that didn’t seem to exist.

Chapter 1301 - “New Life”

◆ ◆ ◆

Through the Eyes of Mystery Prying, Bernadette saw that the interior of the dark-red baldachin was empty—nothing was there. All she could see were shadows that usually shrouded things in reality.

She was unable to prophesize anything from it. Having no choice but to look away, she followed her intuition and made the Invisible Servant walk towards the other end of the open area, which was also part of the primitive forest filled with towering trees.

As the Invisible Servant couldn’t be too far away from her, she silently followed behind while wearing the Invisibility Hat. She unhurriedly passed through the area where all the creatures on the island were gathered.

Here, the sky seemed to be perpetually gloomy, one permeated by a faint blackness.

Time passed quickly. The Invisible Servant entered the forest that blotted out the sky with the tree branches and everything before it suddenly dimmed.

Right on the heels of that, the nearly transparent, cold, and undetectable Eyes of Mystery Prying saw through the dim environment. There were pale-white corpses placed in between the trees. Skulls and rotting corpses hung down from many branches.

They consisted of dragons, avian creatures, and some had eight legs, while others were strange giant trees that occupied every empty spot in the forest.

At a glance, Bernadette seemed to have arrived at a cemetery. A scene naturally surfaced in her mind:

It was a scene of supernatural beings giving birth to their descendants before they died, thus passing on their Beyonder characteristics to them. And these creatures would struggle towards this region in the primitive forest from every direction, in search of an unoccupied spot. Then, facing a particular direction, they would silently die, gradually rotting and being reduced to bones.

What's the meaning behind this? As a Clairvoyant, Bernadette fully believed that the scenes produced in her mind were what had happened in the real world. However, she was puzzled about the type of power that made the creatures on this primitive island choose this area as their tomb.

Furthermore, since Grimm, William, and Poli, who had died long ago, appeared to remain alive in some form, it didn't make sense that supernatural and mutated creatures that had stayed on this island all this while and had suffered even more corruption would end up dying.

This made Bernadette frown slightly as she directed the Invisible Servant to continue proceeding deeper into the creature cemetery.

Just like that, the Invisible Servant proceeded forward for nearly fifteen minutes in this forest filled with bones and corpses.

Finally, it saw a fourth object beyond trees, weeds, and corpses.

It was a black stone pillar. It was very thick, with a width spanning about six arm spans, and thirty to forty meters tall. Its surface was covered with rings which were signs of weathering. It resembled a finger wearing rings that didn't suit its size.

Bernadette made the Eyes of Mystery Prying observe the stone pillar for several seconds, but she didn't discover anything mysterious about it. It was as though it was a symbol that was casually erected.

The Invisible Servant looked around and discovered that the surrounding corpses around the stone pillar didn't suffer from serious rot. They were even covered in rather intact flesh and skin.

There aren't any supernatural powers or magical effects that are different from other places… Unless the new deceased were gathered near the stone pillar, it's impossible for them to have such a unified trend… Bernadette suspected that it wasn't because there was no mysterious influence in this matter, but that it would only happen at a specific moment.

She didn't use her powers of prophecy to search for the reason. This was because a prophecy, at its core, was to pry into the secrets of the river of fate. The more serious the problem involved was, and the higher her status and level, the more damage the backlash would bring to her. And at this moment, it was impossible for Bernadette to not be cautious. She was afraid that it might involve an unknown existence.

In addition, this hadn't caused any harm to her. She didn't have to take the risk to make a "prophecy."

After searching for a while to no avail, the Invisible Servant continued forward, attempting to pass through the cemetery and head to other regions of the forest.

Just then, Bernadette heard a rustling sound.

It was the sound of a breeze passing through the vegetation, a tidal wave in the void.

Ever since she landed on this strange island, this was Bernadette's first time feeling the wind.

Subconsciously, she made the invisible servant look back at the black stone pillar.

In the Eyes of Mystery Prying, the corpses around the stone pillar began to rot and shed one by one. New flesh and blood grew out like they had their own spirituality, and their skin slowly covered this harrowing scene one inch at a time.

This change lasted for less than ten seconds before stopping. A small number of the corpses no longer showed any signs of decay. It looked like they had just died.

In the next second, a mutated curly-haired baboon and a wolf with eight legs wobbled to their feet.

Their fur was slightly white and their skin was slightly dry, their eyes dull and cold.

Then, the two originally deceased creatures each got their bearings and left the cemetery from different spots.

Bernadette's gaze froze as she watched this. Her brows raised slightly as she finally understood why the creatures on this island had struggled to come to this area before dying and why they had to die here:

Here, death—an endpoint—didn't mean entering the state of eternal slumber, but rather a new beginning!

Furthermore, this wasn't the "resurrection" of a zombie or skeleton that a Spirit Guide was capable of. It was a "new life" with a certain will and vitality.

A distortion and disorder of the world's underlying rules? In addition, it seems to contain some mystery from the Black Emperor's resurrection… However, those who obtained new life aren't in a proper state. They're even closer to zombies… Such revivals are very problematic… Klein, who was above the gray fog, also saw this scene and had many guesses.

Of course, this was under the premise that the Emperor had fundamentally left his last mausoleum here and exerted some form of influence here.

As he thought about it, Klein rejected this idea.

This was because, before the Emperor became an angel, this primitive island had a similar situation. The dead Grimm was proof!

Yes, the exact details that happened back then might not be the same as what's happening now. Perhaps, compared to the past, it has already been distorted and "disordered"… Klein nodded gently, prepared to bless and protect Bernadette at any time.

Bernadette also came up with a guess. She didn't allow the Invisible Servant to stay in its spot to wait for a "new tide of life."

This was because she had foreseen a development:

After being repeatedly affected by the "new tide of life," the Invisible Servant would oddly develop some sort of sentience and come "alive"!

In addition, it wasn't that the Invisible Servant hadn't done any investigation prior to this, but it had ultimately failed to discover anything special about the black stone pillar. Bernadette didn't believe that it would gain anything new by remaining here.

In such a situation, it was better to establish a basic understanding of the primitive island rather than alarming an unknown existence due to a deeper study.

Many a time, there were problems that eluded one in the beginning, but the answer might be nearer to the end.

This was thanks to the experience that Bernadette had accumulated over all these years.

The corpses on the trees and branches gradually grew fewer as the Invisible Servant moved forward. During this process, Bernadette discovered another phenomenon:

In the “new tide of life,” it wasn’t certain that a corpse would be revived. However, once they revived and left the empty area, the rest of the corpses would be attracted like metal to magnets in the next five minutes. They would stiffly move towards the center, filling up the corresponding spots like they were in line for a bestowment.

The law of Beyonder characteristics convergence? No, it doesn’t seem like it. The deceased have already passed down their characteristics… As Bernadette’s thoughts wandered, she suddenly thought of a question:

It’s impossible for the deceased to produce new Beyonder characteristics after obtaining new life, but do they still possess their powers in their previous lives?

Once I have a complete grasp of the situation on this island, I can find a “resurrected” being to test it out… Bernadette quickly made a decision and followed the Invisible Servant’s route forward.

She didn’t use any Beyonder powers other than her Invisibility Hat. She hoped that she wouldn’t disturb the environment and miss out on any details. Therefore, she didn’t walk too fast. She took about fifteen minutes to leave the cemetery.

The Invisible Servant had already entered the forest up ahead. It could hear the occasional bird chirping and beast roars. The vibrant vitality here was different from the other remaining regions.

Above the gray fog, Klein sighed.

Thankfully, I’m now the owner of Sefirah Castle. Here, I have the status of a King of Angels. I can observe reality for as long as I want to, and I don’t have to worry about draining my spirituality. Yes, the only thing I need to pay attention to is my body that’s hidden in the ancient city located in the fog of history before the First Epoch.

After traveling for another few minutes, the Invisible Servant suddenly saw something that appeared incongruous to the primitive island's environment.

It was a log cabin that seemed to be a residence of a forest ranger.

The log cabin was brown in color and was less than 2.5 meters tall. It looked like it was prepared for humans, but every detail was rough and crude.

At that moment, the cabin's door was open, allowing Bernadette to see the situation inside through the Eyes of Mystery Prying.

A wooden table, a fur-covered bed, and a low-back chair formed a scene of a residence lived by humans.

Who lives here? With a thought from Bernadette, the Invisible Servant rapidly approached the cabin in search for possible clues.

It then realized that the interior of the cabin was ice-cold. Apart from the furniture, there was nothing else. It seemed like no one had lived there for a very long time.

Just as Bernadette was using the Eyes of Mystery Prying to carefully inspect every detail in the cabin, she suddenly had a premonition. She hurriedly made the Invisible Servant turn around.

At some point in time, a person had appeared behind the Invisible Servant!

He was wearing luxurious clothes from the Roselle era. His hair was completely white, and he looked old. He had a pair of light blue eyes that were extremely cold and blank.

Edwards.

This was the knight who had outlived the Emperor, Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina's ancestor.

Edwards stared at the Invisible Servant for a few seconds. Suddenly, he opened his mouth and said in a low voice, our Highness.”

Chapter 1302 - The Scene in the Prophecy

◆ ◆ ◆

Bernadette fell silent for two seconds before replying through the Invisible Servant:

“Uncle Edwards, why are you here?”

She used the way she addressed him when she was young to reduce the chances of an accident.

Her voice reverberated in the surrounding air with the Invisible Servant as a conduit. It was dry, dull, and completely different from normal.

Edwards’s face was pale. It was as if he had just crawled out of the grave without any warmth.

“I don’t know either.

“When I woke up, I discovered that I had returned to this island.

“This might be my destiny. A destiny of guarding His Majesty.”

He paused with every word he said, but he didn’t give the impression that he was out of breath. It seemed like he hadn’t spoken for a long time, so much so that his throat was “rusty.” He wasn’t used to speaking.

Without waiting for Bernadette’s further inquiries, the knight, who was famous across the continent more than a hundred years ago, added with a flat tone, “His Majesty’s mausoleum is nearby.

“I’ve been guarding this place, waiting for ‘Him’ to revive.

“But after so many years, the mausoleum has never changed.

“There haven’t been any signs of a resurrection.”

Bernadette made the invisible servant look around and said, “This log cabin is where you live?”

Edwards’s exposed skin was slightly shriveled. It matched the aging spots he originally had. His voice was low and hoarse as he answered, “That’s right.

“I used the surrounding trees to make materials to build this cabin.”

Bernadette’s Invisible Servant looked in the direction where she had come from.

“Uncle William and the others aren’t with you?”

Edwards’s cold, wooden eyes moved.

“They have long been corrupted and are dead.

“Although they’ve come back to life, they’re more like monsters. They aren’t their former selves.

“Your Highness, you must be wary of them and avoid them.

“Do not trust anyone but Benjamin and me.”

Bernadette fell silent for a while before asking through the Invisible Servant:

“Where’s my father’s mausoleum? I want to take a look.”

Edwards’s somewhat stiff neck moved.

“Okay.”

He then took a step towards the cabin and took out a rusted black axe.

“I’ll take you there,” Edwards said as he looked at the Invisible Servant that normally couldn’t be seen.

During this process, his expression was stiff and almost unchanged.

“Alright.” Along the periphery of the forest, Bernadette responded using the Invisible Servant to make her hoarse voice echo in the surroundings.

Edwards was almost 1.9 meters tall, and he looked rather thin. He carried his axe and walked behind the log cabin before saying in a flat tone, “It’s very close.

“Be careful along the way.”

Bernadette immediately controlled the Invisible Servant and made it follow the luxuriously-dressed Edwards.

Walking through the forest one after another, Bernadette suddenly made the Invisible Servant ask, “Uncle Edwards, what were you worshiping in the empty space from before?”

Edwards didn’t turn his head as he maintained the same pace.

“His Majesty.”

At least two kilometers behind him and the Invisible Servant, Bernadette immediately pricked up her brows. She took nearly three seconds to control her emotions.

Through the Invisible Servant, she continued asking without any emotion, “Uncle William and the others are worshiping him?”

Edwards paused, but he kept his back towards the Invisible Servant and the Eyes of Mystery Prying.

“No.”

He slowed down as though he was thinking of an answer.

“I don’t know what they worship…”

Bernadette’s eyes narrowed slightly as though she could see some changes in the river of fate.

She didn’t ask any more questions as she made the Invisible Servant silently follow Edwards. Amidst the dark-green, towering trees and the black, sharp shrubs, they headed for the island’s mountain peak.

In just four or five minutes, the trees up ahead disappeared.

This wasn’t a process that went from dense to sparse until there was nothing. Instead, the towering trees suddenly disappeared after an imaginary boundary line.

Beyond the invisible line was a mountain that was hundreds of meters tall. It was covered by dark-green trees that were almost black in color. From afar, it was almost as if it was one with the forest, virtually inseparable.

However, the side of the mountain facing Edward and Bernadette was mostly without vegetation—half of the mountain had been excavated.

In the middle of the mountain, a pitch-black mausoleum stood there with a majestic appearance.

Most of it was part of the mountain range. A small portion of it had signs of man-made constructions and polishing. It truly expounded on what it meant to be a “mountain mausoleum.”

Thus, the mausoleum didn’t look like the common pyramid. Instead, it looked more like a towering mountain. It wasn’t exactly symmetrical, but it was definitely majestic.

Perhaps the mausoleum itself had influenced its surroundings, or perhaps Edwards had cleaned the area, its surface was void of weeds, nor was it covered with vines commonly seen in other mountains.

This allowed Bernadette to see the various texts and symbols engraved on the mausoleum through the Eyes of Mystery Prying. She saw the heavy thirty-meter-tall stone door that seemed to be prepared for giants.

Bernadette wasn't unfamiliar with those words and symbols. She didn't take much time to recognize them as either the "Civil Code" that was created by her father, the new social trends that he had established, or even some design drafts of some invention.

Just as Bernadette was carefully examining it, Klein, who was above the gray fog, was completely certain that this was the last mausoleum left behind by Emperor Roselle.

This was similar to the mausoleum he had seen in the Tudor ruins. It had the majesticness and "distortion" traits of the Black Emperor.

After walking out of the primitive forest and passing through the invisible boundary, they arrived near the mausoleum. Edwards stopped.

He half-turned his body and aimed his pale face and cold eyes at the Invisible Servant. He said without any change in his voice, "Don't go in."

"It will interrupt the resurrection…"

Bernadette frowned slightly and thought for two seconds before using the Eyes of Mystery Prying to lock onto the mausoleum.

Then, her blue eyes that resembled the sea became extremely deep, like the surface of the sea before a storm.

Under such circumstances, her eyes clearly lost focus as her vision turned blurry.

She was prying into the secrets of the River of Fate and making a prophecy for what would happen next.

Klein tapped the long mottled table and increased the probability of her success. He then prepared himself to resist the corruption of the cosmos.

Of course, the latter wasn’t necessary, because Bernadette had a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact that she could control.

Bernadette raised her right hand the next second.

Her skin instantly turned as white as snow. Her lips turned as red as blood, and her hair was as black as ebony.

An illusory, ancient mirror appeared in her hands.

This was Snow White of her fairytale magic. Bernadette had used it to enhance the success rate and accuracy of her “prophecy.”

Silently, she “saw” a scene:

The majestic and solemn dark mausoleum visibly shook as the tall, heavy stone door opened.

Then, a huge black arm stretched out from the stone door.

The style of this arm was close to that of the trees on the island. From its color and state, it looked more like a part of a shadow. However, it wasn’t a thin layer, but was instead filled with flesh and blood. It looked extremely strange.

It supported itself with its elbows and moved forward with great difficulty, as though it wanted to pull out bigger and more terrifying parts from within.

Boom!

The entire island began to shake.

Boom!

The transparent Eyes of Mystery Prying suddenly shattered.

Bernadette's eyes immediately closed, as if she had seen a blinding light or encountered some unbearable damage.

Blood trickled down from the corners of her eyes as the color in her face drained significantly.

On her body, a pair of illusory and holy wings spread out, descending upon her with its clean, white feathers to neutralize the invisible corruption.

Indeed, she has the ability to resist. The Emperor sure left a huge inheritance for her… Heh heh, before I taught Ma'am Hermit a lesson, she liked to use the Eye of Mystery Prying to examine the people and objects around her. It definitely has something to do with how she was brought up… In short, it's all Roselle's fault! Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he couldn't help but criticize the Emperor.

Then, his mind raced as he analyzed the scene that Bernadette had prophesied:

A terrifying creature crawls out from the mausoleum after the stone door is opened.

This might be the resurrected Roselle, or perhaps a symbol of some kind of disaster. For example, a particular Outer Deity who had once corrupted this island, or the Primordial Moon who secretly corrupted Roselle…

Yes, even if it's Roselle, he definitely wouldn't be taking on the form of a human. He's even closer to that of a Mythical Creature, a deity… Also, I can't be sure if the terrifying creature is rational or if it can communicate…

There's another important problem. Was the stone door opened by

Bernadette or someone else? Or did the terrifying creature in the mausoleum do it by itself? If it's the latter, things might develop to the stage of the prophecy even if we don't do a thing…

A prophecy is truly filled with ambiguity.

Klein conjured a gold coin and flicked it, making a divination.

The results of the dream divination showed that the mausoleum was both dangerous and safe.

How do I interpret this? As Klein pondered, he focused his attention back on Bernadette.

Bernadette took nearly a minute to recover and stopped appearing that weak.

However, she was temporarily unable to interpret the direction of the prophecy from the scene she saw. She could only confirm that the problem was definitely very complicated.

Due to the Eyes of Mystery Prying shattering, there was no way for her to use it to see the various secrets. All she could do was use the Invisible Servant's perception to observe the situation around her.

She realized that Edwards remained silent and motionless when she was unable to control the Invisible Servant, as though he hadn't noticed anything abnormal.

After some thought, Bernadette said to Edwards through the Invisible Servant, "Do you still remember the years you spent in Lenburg?"

Edwards's indifferent blue eyes moved.

"I remember."

"I think…"

At this point, he seemed to recall something. His expression twisted as though he was suffering some indescribable pain.

In such a state, his eyes suddenly glowed with a strange light.

“I think… I think I’m already dead…”

Chapter 1303 - Coming to Life

◆

“Already dead…”

Edwards turned his head and looked at Bernadette’s Invisible Servant with his light-blue eyes. His gaze was no longer cold and blank. It emitted a strange glint that was filled with disbelief.

It was only at this moment that he seemed to realize that he had long died and had come back to “life.” He was no different from William, Poli, and Grimm, who he claimed were individuals who they needed to keep up one’s guard against.

This transformation lasted for only two seconds before Edwards’s face twisted. His already pale skin rapidly dimmed as it ruptured inch by inch.

Beneath his skin, the red pieces of flesh began to rot at a discernible speed, dripping foul yellow liquid.

With a swoosh, Edwards raised the black axe in his hand.

Oof!

His axe ruthlessly cleaved the top of his head, as though it was trying to stop the bad thoughts that surfaced in his mind.

The axe was heavy and sharp. It tore through Edwards’s skull all the way to his glabella.

Drip, drip, drip. Drops of milky-white cerebrospinal fluid dripped down from the axe's blade, sliding across Edwards's grimaced and torn face, as though he had poured some milk onto a bright red strawberry.

"Don't… Don't come near me…" Edwards said in a low and hoarse voice to Bernadette's Invisible Servant after striking himself in the head.

Before he could finish his sentence, his expression returned to its blank state. The look in his eyes gradually turned hollow as he turned around and walked towards the forest.

That thin and shriveled body of his stooped a little, as though his back was hunched.

Bernadette had probed him because of the doubts and concerns she had about entering the mausoleum. All she could do was indirectly determine the problem with Edwards's existence, and see if she could obtain more clues from his answer. She never expected this knight from Roselle's era, who had been famous across the Northern Continent, would react in such an intense and strange manner.

After two seconds of silence, Bernadette made the Invisible Servant say to Edwards's back:

"Your descendants are doing pretty well. All of them are accomplished in a certain sense."

Edwards, whose back was facing the mausoleum, stopped for a moment. Then, he continued forward, passing the invisible boundary and entering the forest.

His target seemed to be in the direction of the cemetery with the stone pillar, the place where the deceased could obtain "new life."

At the same time, Bernadette looked up into the sky.

The faint black colors that permeated the area had clearly faded, but there was an indescribable feeling. The entire primitive island underwent a subtle change that couldn't accurately be described.

Suddenly, Bernadette, who was hiding at the edge of the invisible boundary, rubbed her back.

She felt that it was heavy, as though there was something there.

When her left palm touched her target, Bernadette realized that there was an extra strand of hair.

At this moment, she was wearing an Intis-styled blouse with a large lace flower around the collar, an indigo patterned captain’s uniform, a pair of beige trousers, knee-length boots, and a triangular hat with feathers on it. She was dressed like the leader of a pirate ship.

She styled herself such that her long chestnut hair was tied into a bun, leaving the remaining strands in a way that would reach the middle of her back. But now, even though her hairstyle remained unchanged, her hair had grown longer and reached her waist.

Then, Bernadette lowered her head and looked at her right palm. She saw the fingernails of her five fingers extending.

Queen Mystic didn’t show any signs of surprise or panic. She followed the instincts of a Clairvoyant and from all the experience she had accumulated over time. She took a few steps forward, and through an invisible boundary, she completely left the primitive forest and entered the empty area where the Black Emperor’s mausoleum was.

During this process, Bernadette even made the Invisible Servant return to the spirit world.

Three or four seconds later, she felt the earth shake. The mausoleum began to tremble visibly.

Subconsciously, Bernadette turned to look at the primitive forest.

Her gaze froze for a moment.

The dark-green trees were waving their branches and uprooting their roots. Then, like humans, they approached Bernadette.

The entire primitive forest had come to “life”!

Looking at the dense cluster of trees that seemed to blot out the sky surging at her, Bernadette had the feeling that doomsday was approaching. She felt as if the entire area would be blanketed by the forest.

A gigantic red dragon with flames flowing across its skin rapidly flew into the sky. An eight-legged demonic wolf began to run madly between the trees… All the supernatural beings and mutated creatures on this island stirred as they rushed towards the mausoleum.

Although she was a Clairvoyant, Bernadette still didn’t expect that her simple, indirect question would bring about such an anomaly. It was as though it was a key that had opened the door to the abyss.

Above the gray fog, Klein saw a lot more. Together with his knowledge of mysticism, he had a certain guess.

The situation of Edwards is different from William, Grimm, and Poli. It’s like a loophole of the order on this primitive island, or rather, a shadow…

When he realized that he was already dead, this loophole was discovered by the order, and it began to conduct “repairs.”

And the repairs brought with it an enhancement of the order, causing the entire island to experience an anomaly.

I can sense that the Black Emperor’s powers are present here to a certain degree. It affected Edwards, causing him to maintain a portion of his will after obtaining new “life.” And where did the original order of this primitive island come from?

Eh…

As Klein's thoughts raced, he suddenly sensed that Bernadette was suffering certain anomalies.

Thump, thump, thump. Bernadette could vaguely hear her own heartbeat.

This heartbeat was rather chaotic, as though it was a combination of two sounds.

Two… Bernadette's heart stirred as she calmly directed her attention back to herself.

In the next second, she confirmed that there were two sources of her heartbeat.

One came from her heart, the other from her abdomen.

There seemed to be an additional heart in her abdomen, one that was rapidly expanding and contracting.

Furthermore, this "heart" was developing bit by bit!

Without needing to use her Mystery Prying powers to look at her abdomen, Bernadette immediately sensed that there was a fetus in her womb.

It had grown from the size of a grape to the size of a normal human palm. If it was left to grow, it didn't seem like it would take long before it matured. It would then tear open her mother's womb, and drill out while covered in blood.

Unknowingly, Bernadette had become pregnant. Her spiritual perception and the Sealed Artifact on her body had failed to detect it in advance or attempt to stop it. It was as though she was powerless to deal with such an influence.

Earth Mother… Primordial Moon… Mother Tree of Desire… Three divine names flashed through Bernadette's mind.

According to what she knew, there weren't many mysteries that could cause such an anomaly. Most of them came from domains related to the Earth and the Moon pathway.

Sequence 0 of the Planter pathway was Mother. The Primordial Moon could make a stone have reproductive powers, while the Mother Tree of Desire seemed to possess some High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics of the Moon pathway.

Bernadette wasn't in a hurry to deal with the fetus in her stomach. Her gaze turned dark once again as she used her prophetic ability to see what her best choice was.

This time, she only took one second to obtain the corresponding prophecy:

"Survival lies inside the mausoleum."

Without any hesitation, Bernadette reached out her right hand and quickly drew out words filled with stellar radiance.

These words, which were similar to the words on the Blasphemy Slate, quickly interwove into a strange symbol and opened a secret door that seemed to lead deep into the spirit world.

Following that, the "secret door" opened and a strong gust of wind blew out, transforming into an entity that was half-man, half-air. His upper body was wrapped in white cloth.

"Sage Frontlet," Bernadette's tone was calm as she ordered in a dignified voice.

The man responded respectfully and removed an accessory from the white cloth wrapped around his body.

The core of this accessory was a vertical eye embedded with "diamonds." It shimmered with pure light, exuding an abnormal holiness. It was filled with intelligence, but it also appeared cold without any warmth.

Bernadette then took the accessory and “embedded” it into the middle of her forehead.

This was a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact which Bernadette usually didn’t carry with her, as the negative effects were too severe.

However, at this moment, the Sage Frontlet had an ability that was extremely important to Bernadette. She was willing to bear the consequences of not being able to use evil magic and the gradual influence that the Beyonder characteristic would have on her as it slowly fused with her.

If she didn’t remove the Sage Frontlet in a short period of time, it would be equivalent to having a Sequence 2 potion splashed on her. When the time came, she could either end up lucky and succeed in advancing to become a Sage, or lose control and become a monster. And without the supplementary ingredients and the corresponding ritual, the former’s probability was nearly negligible.

With the diamond vertical eye on her forehead, Bernadette’s body began to turn incorporeal as she dissociated into a series of complicated knowledge.

In that instant, she became a creature of pure information.

The baby in her womb failed to obtain such a state as it fell to the ground.

It was half the size of a normal baby. It already had facial features and limbs. Its skin was wrinkled, and it was dripping with sticky pus.

As it left its mother’s body, the undeveloped “it” began to regress and quickly melted in the air.

The baby was clearly unwilling to give up. It tried its best to open its eyes, which were sealed by the sticky liquid. It opened its mouth wide open in a bid to make a final struggle.

At this moment, Klein, who was above the gray fog, rapped the edge of the long mottled table.

Pa!

He increased the probability of failure with respect to the baby's struggling.

Unable to maintain itself, the baby completely dissipated in front of the approaching black forest.

At the same time, the flood of information that Bernadette had transformed into had entered the Black Emperor mausoleum's interior through the heavy stone door as she reformed her original body.

During this process, she seemed to see a black shadow.

Chapter 1304 - The Importance of Ideas

◆

When she entered the Black Emperor's mausoleum, Bernadette vaguely saw a black shadow. However, after she extricated herself from being an embodiment of information, and reassembled her body with the pure, messy knowledge, she didn't sense anything. It was as though what she had just experienced was just an illusion.

Queen Mystic wasn't in a rush to venture deep into the mausoleum. She stayed in her spot and carefully observed her surroundings.

Without using the powers of Mystery Prying, everything was clearly presented before her eyes.

The interior of the Black Emperor mausoleum was empty. Apart from the pitch-black walls and the high platform in the middle, there was nothing.

On the high platform, there was a chair that looked like it was prepared for a giant. It was made of iron, and its surface was engraved with complicated and distorted patterns. At the top of the seat, there was a crown-shaped object.

At this moment, there wasn't a single figure on the huge, heavy seat, as if it was waiting for its emperor to return.

Just as Bernadette was about to take a step forward and approach the platform, she suddenly realized that her body was completely immobilized, as if she was being bound tightly by invisible shackles.

Right on the heels of that, pairs of illusory and holy white wings appeared behind her as though they were passively resisting something.

In the next second, on the pairs of angel wings, white feathers dropped as they fluttered. They grew deformed, thin, and fluffy limbs. The gaps in the layers of feathers spread open one after another as though they had become countless eyes.

The deformed feathers immediately let out crisp laughter, causing a hollow chuckle to echo inside the mausoleum.

All of them had come alive, turning into miniature “winged creatures.”

[image]

This reminded Bernadette of some fairytales that her father had told her. There were always little pixies that weren’t as big as a thumb in them.

As this thought flashed through her mind, Bernadette felt her right eye itch.

[image]

The eyelashes of that eye grew rapidly, turning into tiny arms that took root on her face, trying hard to pull her eyeball out.

“I see it! I see it!” The veins in Bernadette’s right eye protruded as they let out a child-like voice as though they had gained sentience and consciousness of her body.

This was also a form of new “life.”

Almost at the same time, Bernadette’s left ear suddenly drooped down and covered her ears.

“I don’t want to hear it! I don’t want to hear it!” the ear shouted with a sharp voice.

If she didn't use her spirituality, Bernadette would definitely imagine that she had a young maiden by her side—one that was covering her ears, stamping her feet, and screaming.

Without cushioning anything, the Sage Frontlet in the middle of her forehead automatically left her body and floated into the air.

The surface of the vertical eye embedded with "diamonds" instantly flashed with countless cold beams of light. It was as though numerous tiny eyes had grown out of it.

Each eye reflected Bernadette.

The Sage Frontlet had also obtained a certain living characteristic.

Just as the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact was about to awaken and affect its target, a pale-white, slender, illusory palm reached out and grabbed it.

The Sage Frontlet's living characteristic rapidly dispersed, as though it had reached the end of its life.

The ice-cold and pale hand that clearly belonged to a woman came from behind Bernadette. At some point in time, a figure with only an upper-body appeared.

This figure grew out of Bernadette's back. It was almost transparent and rather illusory.

She was wearing the same clothing as Bernadette, and she was wearing the same feather triangular hat. Her blue eyes were like the projection of the ocean. It was like Bernadette herself, a part of her spirit that had drilled out of her body.

However, there was a pale-white face mask on Bernadette's half-body phantom.

The mask only had holes where one's eyes were with no other gaps elsewhere. This made Bernadette's phantom appear extremely cold and noble, but it lacked the aura of a living being.

This was the third item she possessed, and also her last Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. It was an item made after Emperor Roselle returned from the Southern Continent in his later years, called “Pale Death.”

Its negative effect was to make the wearer slowly die until it became a corpse and become its slave.

At this moment, Bernadette had used this point to restrain the abnormal life growing in her.

Just as the half-body phantom appeared, her right eye quelled. Her eyelashes which had turned thicker and longer into arms began to fall off one by one.

Her ears didn’t make any noises either. They slowly opened and returned to normal.

Without such a suppression, Bernadette’s facial features, arms, and legs would’ve broken apart to seek “freedom.”

After stabilizing her body, Bernadette tried to take a step forward. However, she was still unable to do anything. All she could do was control the half-bodied Spirit Body.

After some thought, she made the Spirit Body behind her take out a ritual silver dagger from her pocket. Then, bending down, it drew a circle in the middle of her right boot.

With a ripping sound, the leather boot quickly shortened by half.

Then, Bernadette used her half-body Spirit Body to tear her pants near her left knee. She cut off a corner of her coat and blouse, removing one of the feathers on the side of her triangular hat.

This attempt didn’t seem to have anything to do with supernatural beings. It was just like a willful and rebellious girl who wanted to dress up in a different way from the normal sense of aesthetics.

However, as Bernadette completed this series of actions, she carefully took a step forward. Her body could actually move, as she no longer felt restrained.

The invisible suppression effect vanished instantly. The Black Emperor mausoleum seemed to accept Bernadette in this form.

Who would've thought that something an ordinary person could do was able to deal with such abnormalities?

Furthermore, Bernadette suspected that the more she used her Beyonder powers to resist whatever she was facing, the deeper the effects.

This was because she had the feeling that she was facing an invisible deity. Only by pleasing the other party's sense of aesthetics could she be pardoned. Otherwise, she could only rely on the authority of a Sequence 0 to circle around it.

In addition, the lucky thing was that Bernadette wasn't once a knowledgeable Mysticologist, but she also had a deep understanding of the Black Emperor pathway. She knew what the authorities this domain consisted of. She knew that it represented the shadow of order, a distortion of order.

That was why Bernadette twisted the normal order around her using her dressing; thus, obtaining the recognition and acceptance of the invisible deity.

Yes, in the matter regarding mysticism, knowledge and ideas are more useful than abilities at times… In that situation just now, any resistance would've been viewed as a provocation towards the internal order of the mausoleum, triggering unpredictable and terrifying changes. Once one figures out the crux of the problem, the negative effects will be easily resolved… Klein nodded above the gray fog and learned quite a lot from Queen Mystic.

Although he was already a Sequence higher than her, to the point of being a King of Angels inside Sefirah Castle and having experienced quite a number of major events, his growth had been too fast. He was still lacking when it came to the details in problems. Now was the perfect time to make up for the deficiency through observation.

After taking a step, Bernadette began to follow her spiritual intuition and walk toward the huge, empty chair on the platform.

One step, two steps, three steps. Suddenly, a breeze blew past her neck.

This cold wind made Bernadette's body turn numb.

At that moment, she felt a black shadow appear behind her.

Silently, her long chestnut-colored hair parted, revealing a pair of eyes on her scalp.

It was a pair of eyes without any eyelashes. They were almost transparent, cold, and heartless.

Eyes of Mystery Prying!

The pair of eyes turned slightly and saw that the shadow-like curtain in the mysterious world showed clear signs of distortion.

However, it didn't notice the shadow, nor did it find the source of the cold wind.

Just as Bernadette attempted to close the Eyes of Mystery Pryer and lower the possibility of an accident, the cold and sinister breeze suddenly appeared in her mind.

Her thoughts became active as she became increasingly out of control. She was unable to direct her thoughts in the required manner.

This seemed to be a trend that couldn't be changed—one that led to chaos.

Without any hesitation, Bernadette grabbed the few seconds of thought she was capable of. She let the half-body spirit on her back remove the pale-white mask.

Then, she put Pale Death on her face, while the half-body spirit retracted into her body and fused with her.

From this second onwards, Bernadette's thoughts would gradually die along with her body. However, her thoughts could not help but stir and turn chaotic.

Both of these conflicting conditions offset one another, forming a weak and delicate balance that helped Bernadette regain her ability to think.

To Bernadette, compared to the Beyonder effects of Pale Death itself, its negative effects were even more effective at this moment.

Maintaining the balance, Bernadette took a few steps forward.

During this process, she always felt that there were shadows hovering around her, but she couldn't find them no matter how hard she tried.

After thinking for a few seconds, Bernadette's blue eyes darkened once again, losing focus.

She tried prophesying the consequences of her choice.

Soon, a corresponding scene appeared before her eyes:

After putting on the Sage Frontlet again, she once again transformed into pure and complicated information streams, using it to circumvent the obstruction and head to the high platform in the middle.

However, just as she approached, the flood of information suddenly disintegrated. It lost its order and formed several Bernadettes built on different tenets. There was a young girl in a layered dress, a tall young girl, a melancholic and confused girl, a woman with a twisted and pained expression, and a calm and determined queen.

The prophetic vision instantly disappeared and Bernadette’s eyes instantly regained focus.

At this moment, she saw the black shadow.

It was standing right in front of her, no more than a fist away from her!

That face formed from pure shadow completely occupied her vision.

Chapter 1305 - That Black Shadow

◆

The moment Bernadette saw the black shadow, she instinctively clenched her right hand and conjured an ancient spear.

From the tip of the spear to its handle, it was dyed with crimson red balls. It emitted a strong destructive aura, as though it could harm a true deity.

Spear of Longinus!

This spear had once appeared in an ancient era that couldn’t be traced back, stained with the blood of a great existence. At this moment, it had descended into the Black Emperor’s mausoleum through Mystical Re-enactment.

However, when Bernadette thrust it forward, she failed to achieve any effects because the tip of the spear was directed at her back.

Despite wanting to attack the black shadow in front of her, the Spear of Longinus had strangely thrust backward.

The area had been affected by “disorder,” or suffered some form of distortion.

Above the gray fog in the palace, Klein noticed the black shadow when it appeared in front of Bernadette. He didn’t hesitate to raise the Staff of the Stars in his hand.

He didn’t wait this time, unlike his prior observations of Queen Mystic’s actions before where he would consider if he would provide her with protection. This was because the level of danger of the black shadow sounded off alarms within him. He was an angel of the Seer pathway after all.

More importantly, Bernadette could sense the shadow's existence after entering the Black Emperor's mausoleum from time to time. As for Klein, he was unable to find clues through the true vision provided by Sefirah Castle.

This undoubtedly meant danger and terror.

When all the gems embedded in the black cane lit up, the sound of melodious bells resounded in the area where Bernadette and the black shadow were.

Gong!

The bell that came from an infinite distance exuded an indescribable emptiness. It made the interior of the Black Emperor's mausoleum visibly freeze, turning Bernadette's figure stiff as if she had been frozen. She couldn't do anything.

However, the black shadow didn't sink into the vortex of time. As though situated in another world built with completely different fundamental rules, the shadow continued moving forward in between the contradictory of two rivers of fate—one filled with raging torrents and one that was almost completely still.

This only made it appear to slow down, in no way affected by the illusory bell.

This was the first time Klein had encountered such a situation after he gained the ability to replicate powers.

Although the Beyonder effects he had replicated with the Staff of the Stars were lacking compared to the original version, it would still be able to show a certain level of authority that wasn't easy to ignore regardless.

However, the black shadow’s slow movements gave him a second chance to try again.

This time, he activated the Staff of the Stars’s powers and moved Queen Mystic out of the Black Emperor’s mausoleum. He wanted her to first conclude what she experienced before considering entering again.

Gems flashed on the tip of the staff, and Bernadette, who was almost about to make contact with the black shadow, disappeared into thin air.

In the next second, she appeared tens of meters away, appearing near the high platform in the mausoleum.

The Staff of the Stars’s teleportation was disrupted. The destination had been distorted, turning everything extremely chaotic.

The experienced Bernadette didn’t feel any fear or panic because she was stuck inside the Black Emperor mausoleum. She decisively raised her left hand and pressed the Sage Frontlet in the middle of her forehead as she used her fingers to stroke the Pale Death mask.

The shimmering golden mask suddenly became soft and rapidly squirmed as if it was about to form a face that didn’t belong to Bernadette.

The face had soft features and obvious characteristics of a Southern Continent native, but it exuded a bizarre and terrifying feeling. Anyone who witnessed it would believe that it would come alive once the face became clear enough—an entity that came from ancient times, the eternal darkness where the dead slumbered.

By then, Bernadette’s body, spirituality, and consciousness would all belong to this face.

With the protrusion of this face, the stone walls and floor tiles in the Black Emperor mausoleum began to weather. It happened so fast that thousands of years appeared to be washed away in a short span of two seconds.

They quickly became mottled, constantly dropping fragments or throwing up dust due to the wind. In between the cracks, thin white fur grew out.

In just the blink of an eye, the fur grew into white feathers, and their surface seemed to be soaked in light-yellow oil.

The aura of the black figure gradually weakened, as though it was running towards death with huge strides.

Its color faded away, its movements growing slower.

Within the area where the pale-white mask was, even the concept of "death" itself would weather away and dissipate.

However, what was labeled as "death" wasn't the endpoint. When the stone wall and the floor tiles in the mausoleum were weathered to a certain extent, and when the black figure degraded to a certain stage, new stone blocks began to take form as ethereal auras quickly grew.

During this process, the black figure stretched out his right hand.

This palm that was formed from shadows suddenly grabbed Bernadette's neck from dozens of meters away!

This wasn't fulfilled by extending the arm, but distorting the concept of distance for an instant—45 meters became equivalent to 45 centimeters.

The dark palm didn't exert too much strength, but it made Bernadette feel cold.

Under such coldness, she realized that she couldn't use the two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts of the Sage Frontlet and Pale Death.

Typically, as long as she injected her spirituality into it and gave the corresponding thoughts, the Sealed Artifacts on her would react in the correct manner, creating different effects. But now, the silent process and rules had been disrupted and distorted. No amount of thoughts that Bernadette willed were able to stir the Sealed Artifacts.

It felt like she was speaking to the air.

Klein, who was above the gray fog, didn't waste any time after failing to teleport Queen Mystic away. A series of complicated symbols and magic labels quickly formed in his mind.

He wanted to replicate a Secrets Sorcerer's "Space Concealment." He planned on separating Bernadette's location from the Black Emperor's mausoleum and concealing it to help Queen Mystic escape her current predicament.

In fact, it might be more appropriate replicating the fairytale magic, Peace Blossom Source, but considering how Bernadette was formerly a Mysticologist, Klein felt that it was better to use Space Concealment. Otherwise, it might expose some of The Fool's secrets.

As for where he had learned "Space Concealment" from, it naturally came from the recently advanced Fors.

Previously, in the name of The World Gehrman Sparrow, Klein had rented Leymano's Travels. He had also requested Miss Magician to "Record" the corresponding powers.

Then, he released and recorded it while summoning the complete Leymano's Travels from the fog of history again and again. It didn't take long for him to grasp the knowledge and technique, allowing him to replicate "Spatial Concealment."

As more gems lit up on the Staff of the Stars, the area around Bernadette darkened, as though it was covered by a curtain weaved by shadows.

The curtain distorted as it concealed the space, isolating the black shadow and its palm outside.

This helped Bernadette regain her freedom.

In the next second, the black palm that had been forcefully separated reached forward again and touched the boundary of the concealed space.

In an instant, a transparent vortex-like “door” appeared in the abnormal void. Or rather, the secret “door” that originally existed appeared autonomously and opened up in front of the black palm.

All concealed space had a “door,” but the location of the door depended on the creator’s thoughts.

The palm formed by the shadows rapidly passed through the open “door” and entered the concealed space. It grabbed Bernadette’s neck and once again disrupted the connection between Queen Mystic and her Sealed Artifact, distorting the corresponding order.

At the same time, the black figure raised its head and looked at the top of the mausoleum.

It seemed to be studying Sefirah Castle and Klein through layers of space and fog.

Klein’s eyelids twitched instinctively.

He sensed that the shadow had a certain understanding of where he was and felt that it was distorting something.

Klein’s expression unknowingly turned abnormally heavy. The different gems on the Staff of the Stars lit up at the same time.

He wanted to attempt to steal the corresponding Beyonder powers of the other party. Only by doing so would he have the chance to restrict the black shadow.

And in order to increase the success rate of stealing his target’s powers, Klein turned his left palm and tapped the edge of the long mottled table.

However, his “theft” failed. He didn’t even get anything.

His target had long since escaped the lock-on, despite just standing there!

Klein’s gaze froze. Then, he saw the black figure flash and enter the concealed space, closing the distance between it and Bernadette.

This… It distorted my true vision, causing the situation I saw to be from one or even two seconds ago… A thought flashed through Klein’s mind as he made a preliminary judgment on the previous failure. He then decided to summon Will Auceptin’s historical projection to get “Him” to reboot the area.

At that moment, Bernadette, who was unable to use her Sealed Artifact, grew white, illusory swan feathers on her back.

This was her fairytale magic’s “Ugly Duckling.” It could make Bernadette reveal an incomplete Mythical Creature form while maintaining her clarity of mind. Should could use it twice a day, with each use lasting fifteen seconds.

At this moment, her thoughts went wild again. They started to boil and become more chaotic.

This caused her “Ugly Duckling” magic to be cut off before it could even show its effects.

Almost at the same time, she saw the black shadow stick to her body. It was sticky like a viscous, corrosive liquid that seeped into her body.

Bernadette’s eyes darkened as she suddenly sensed something. She grabbed the final moment of lucidity and opened her mouth slightly, speaking in a fluent Chinese accent:

“Home…”

The black shadow's infiltration paused for a moment. Its upper body slowly rose as it looked at Bernadette.

Chapter 1306 - Seal

◆

The black figure froze as it released its grip on Bernadette’s neck. It was as though it was staring at Queen Mystic with its non-existent eyes.

A dry, hoarse voice echoed in the concealed space:

“Home…”

This voice was filled with hesitation and confusion as though it was seeking confirmation. It was as if it had come from another world.

The corrosion that Bernadette encountered vanished. Her connection with the Sealed Artifact was instantly restored.

Pale Death once again ate at her vitality little by little. This helped her resist the chaos in her thoughts, maintaining her basic clarity and rationality.

Just as she was about to say something, the black figure suddenly stretched out its palm.

But this time, it didn’t strangle Bernadette’s neck, but instead, it pushed her hard.

Following this push was the collapse of the concealed space. It was a voice filled with pain as though it was resisting something.

“Leave!”

As the voice echoed, the black figure vanished.

In an instant, it appeared on the huge, black, high-backed chair in the middle of the platform.

Two cracks appeared on its face, as though two asymmetrical eyes had grown out.

However, the "eyes" didn't have any pupils. It was blood-colored.

Right on the heels of that, another crack appeared beneath the two "eyes." They too were filled with a pure, blood-red light.

This allowed the black figure to finally open its mouth.

It faced Bernadette as obvious sounds of pain resounded around it as though it was resisting something.

"Leave this place!"

After being pushed out more than ten meters away, Bernadette easily found her footing. However, she didn't follow the voice's order by leaving the Black Emperor's mausoleum. She stood there, staring blankly at the central platform. As she looked at the black figure, her expression revealed an unspeakable sadness.

She could sense and now confirm that the black figure was her father, the man who called himself Caesar—Roselle Gustav.

In the next second, more cracks appeared on the black figure's body. They ruptured from top to bottom, blooming blood-red flowers in different parts of his body.

This made Roselle look like he was left with a shadow that wrapped around a blood-red object that emitted pure light.

When Klein saw this scene above the gray fog, he naturally thought of the crimson moon high in the sky.

At that moment, Roselle seemed to have transformed into a shadow. He wanted to block the crimson moon, but openings ruptured from his body, allowing more and more moonlight to shine into the real world.

When these openings were connected together, the black shadow would completely split apart and give birth to a brand new crimson moon.

When that happened, something extremely terrifying would definitely happen.

At that moment, Roselle's black figure turned much more illusory, as though it had become an illusion.

This made him look like he had been isolated in another world. There was an invisible barrier between him and the real world.

Then, Roselle raised his right arm with great difficulty and pinched his forehead.

The frequency at which blood-red cracks appeared on his body instantly decreased to a nadir. However, the "eyes" that had already appeared blinked repeatedly.

However, this didn't bring any negative effects on the surroundings. It was as though it was just a simple change of order. The new "growth" of blood-red cracks was constantly being distorted to its original state of only having gradual activity.

After completing this, Roselle raised his head and looked at Bernadette who was dozens of meters away. He said with a hoarse voice, "You really have become an important figure in the mysterious world. You managed to come here alone.

"Come over, let me see how my little princess has grown."

Bernadette's eyes reddened as she took a step forward.

Roselle laughed again.

"Back when I made sketchbooks, textbooks, and invented all kinds of small games for you, you were just a tiny midget. Now, you're able to save your poor old father.

"I remember that you liked the clothes I designed for you when you were young. Unfortunately, you can't wear layered dresses after you're an adult..."

The Emperor rambled on, as if he had arrived in his twilight years and was someone who enjoyed reminiscing about the beautiful past.

Bernadette walked faster and faster. Above the gray fog, Klein frowned indiscernibly.

Suddenly, Emperor Roselle lowered his head and said with great force, "Stop!"

His voice carried an indescribable pain.

Bernadette was stunned for a moment before she slowed down and stopped.

She looked at the dark figure and her eyes gradually revealed an indescribable sadness.

Roselle raised his head again and coughed lightly.

"Didn't you really want to ask why the Black Emperor's mausoleum has to be engraved with the order one implemented and the style that one ushered? In fact, this wasn't necessary. I just wanted to let anyone who sees it remember my greatness..."

Before he could finish his sentence, the Emperor gripped the armrest by his side tightly. He suppressed his voice and said in extreme pain, "Don't come near me!

"I've been corrupted..."

The sadness in Bernadette's eyes deepened.

Her guess had finally been confirmed.

At that moment, the red cracks on Roselle's face began to turn chaotic. They "closed" and "opened" randomly with no signs of having a unified will.

The Emperor took the opportunity and straightened his body. He looked at Bernadette and shouted with great difficulty, "Seal me!"

Seal… Queen Mystic Bernadette repeated the word silently. Her blue eyes quickly turned moist as a faint mist enveloped them.

Even though she had lived for many years and was no longer the little girl she had been in the past, she was still unable to contain her emotions.

However, she didn't ask for the reason, nor did she hesitate. With just a slight struggle, she firmly raised her right hand and pressed it on the pale-white metal mask.

She calmly made a decision, just like how she had faced all the major events that happened on the Element Dawn over the years.

On the surface of Pale Death, the metal instantly turned soft as it reformed into a new face with two black eyes.

In the deep-black parts of the eye, white lines appeared, forming an extremely complicated and mysterious three-dimensional symbol. It was like a long-feathered bird or a coiled feathered serpent.

The symbol absorbed the surrounding light and quickly turned corporeal. Then, it separated from Bernadette's eyes and extended its "body" before flying towards Roselle Gustav on the iron-black chair.

Along the way, the strange symbol caused the surroundings to become increasingly dim. The floor tiles and stone walls suffered another round of weathering as if the deity in charge of death had passed the final judgment.

The falling rubble and flying dust followed the corporeal symbol and came to Roselle's side. Then, they coiled around him, enveloping the illusory black figure that seemed to exist in another world.

During this process, Roselle failed to control himself several times. He attempted to leave the iron-black chair, but he ended sitting back down. He didn't resist the seal that Bernadette had exerted on him.

As the symbol fused with his figure, he immediately had a connection with Pale Death. He saw the illusory deity that lorded over the countless undead and the swollen body of a water ghosts loitering in a dark river.

Roselle's aura immediately vanished as the cracked red openings closed one after another.

What awaited the Emperor was a quiet and peaceful sleep.

As for the symbol, it was sealed within Roselle's body, constantly influencing him until Pale Death stopped responding.

In the blink of an eye, several blood-red cracks appeared on Roselle's body again. After his aura declined to a nadir, it gradually began to glow as he fought back against the corporeal symbol.

Klein, who was above the gray fog, sighed when he saw this. He clenched his fist and pressed it against his mouth.

The "curtain" he draped around himself suddenly rose up, and the entire Sefirah Castle "boiled over" in an obvious manner.

Silently, the aura of new life that Roselle had just obtained began to dissipate.

After vanishing to a certain point, it gained new life once again. Then, it was affected by the Pale Death and continued to fade away.

Using the power of the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic and Sefirah Castle, Klein directly “Grafted” new life and death, and skipped the process in between.

The corruption that Roselle suffered was no longer able to recover to the extent needed to break through the pale seal.

Following that, Klein extended his right hand and used the power of Sefirah Castle to draw out the mysterious symbol behind The Fool’s high-back chair—the mysterious symbol made up of the Pupil-less Eye and the Contorted Lines.

The symbol absorbed the aura of Sefirah Castle and quickly turned corporeal. With a wave of Klein’s wrist, it entered the prayer light representing Bernadette and landed on Roselle’s black figure, fusing into his body.

Every time the “Grafting” vanished, this symbol that was directly related to The Fool and Sefirah Castle would draw upon new powers and complete the “Grafting” process once more.

As he constantly passed away and gained new life, Roselle’s face, which seemed to be a pure shadow, obtained facial features. Then, he looked to the top of the mausoleum, as though he was looking into an infinite height.

He then retracted his gaze and looked at Bernadette. He said with an abnormally weak voice, “This seal is good. I can sleep in peace…”

With that said, he frowned slightly as his tone changed:

“Who taught you how to dress like this?”

Bernadette felt a little lost as she listened. It was as if she had returned to her teenage years.

At that time, when she had dressed up to the nines for a ball held by other nobles. Roselle would use a similar expression and a similar tone to pepper her with a series of questions.

The mist in her eyes became obvious, and she could no longer control herself. She lowered her voice and shouted, “Daddy…”

Roselle’s facial features immediately turned gentle before tensing up again. He sternly said, “Leave.

“And never return!”

Bernadette opened her mouth, wanting to say something, but her vision went black as though she could see the shadow of order.

In the next second, she found herself back at the edge of the primitive island.

Bernadette stared blankly at the mountain peak in the middle of the primitive island for a few seconds before slowly turning around and walking towards the sea.

This time, she didn’t stubbornly insist on walking straight without looking back. Every few steps she took, she would stop and turn back to take a look.

Soon, she returned to the Dawn and entered the captain’s cabin. She opened the room that was specially used to hold her collection.

At a glance, Bernadette saw books, stacks of textbooks, clothes, and skirts. She saw the chess game that few people in the world knew, and the neat pile of wooden block toys.

She leaned against the wooden door, slowly curled up, and sat on the floor.

She raised her head to look at the dark sky outside the captain’s cabin and pinched her lips with her right thumb and index finger. She whistled a melodious tune—it was a gentle, sweet, and sad melody that could calm people down.

As the melody echoed, water beads fell from Bernadette’s face and dripped onto the floor.

After an unknown period of time, the captain’s cabin was filled with a suppressed whimper.

“Daddy…”

Chapter 1307 - Meeting

◆

In the middle of the primitive island, in the Black Emperor mausoleum.

After sending away Bernadette, Roselle didn't immediately fall into a deep sleep. He slowly raised his head and looked up once again into the infinite distance.

Above the gray fog, Klein sighed silently. He put down the Staff of the Stars and grabbed a paper figurine before shaking it.

With a smacking sound, the paper figurine rapidly thickened and expanded before flying into the translucent vortex formed from illusory mysterious symbols beside The Fool's chair.

Although Bernadette had already moved to the edge of the primitive island and Klein could no longer see the situation inside the Black Emperor mausoleum through the prayer light. However, he could use the symbol of The Fool that had merged with Roselle's figure to maintain a connection with the Emperor up to a certain extent.

After the paper figurine passed through the slowly spinning vortex, it descended into the dim mausoleum which had an unknown light source. It then turned into a human in front of the central platform.

This human's black hair and brown eyes were somewhat similar to Gehrman Sparrow's, but he didn't have clear-cut features. The lines weren't deep enough, and his bearing wasn't cold enough. There were also certain differences in his facial features. His chin and stomach had a small amount of fat induced by an indulgent society. It was Klein's original appearance as Zhou Mingrui, the Zhou Mingrui who had been hanging inside Sefirah Castle for thousands of years beside Roselle Huang Tao Gustav.

Roselle wasn't surprised by his appearance. With one hand on the armrest, he leaned forward slightly and said, "You're here."

"I'm here." Klein nodded indiscernibly.

"You shouldn't be here." Roselle sighed.

"I'm already here." Klein very naturally participated in completing the meme populated by a popular Chinese novel by Gu Long.

Having completely confirmed the origins of the fellow in front of him, Roselle returned to his normal sitting posture, chuckling as he said, "I originally planned on asking where you're from to see there's any need for regional discrimination[1], but after some thought, there's no need for that. We're all anachronistic miserable wretches without a home."

Without waiting for Klein's reply, the Emperor's voice sank as he asked, "You know the truth about the apocalypse?"

"Yes." Klein nodded slightly.

Roselle continued asking, "You know that this is Earth?"

"Yes," Klein answered frankly.

When Roselle heard that, he laughed self-deprecatingly.

[image]

"You actually learned about it so early. I only dared to confirm it after I went to the moon and saw the true appearance of this planet from high above."

At this point, the Emperor sighed and said, "The moon is bizarre. I clearly felt terror, but I didn't even consider the possibility of being corrupted. Then, I became more and more extreme.

“However, I did occasionally gain a certain level of clarity from the views of people around me, but I didn’t dare to write it in the diary in that state. I was afraid of exposing secrets and losing my final chance.

“I eventually decided to use all the groundwork I did previously to switch to the Black Emperor pathway. Apart from the impending apocalypse with Sequence 0s being the only ones capable of protecting the people ‘They’ wish to protect, ‘They’ can hide them in other planets in the vast universe and use the corresponding authorities to rebuild a set of order for humans to survive in desolate lands. I also saw the hope of escaping my corruption, by using the Black Emperor’s ability to ‘resurrect.’

“As long as I became a Sequence 0 Black Emperor and was truly killed after turning half-crazy, I’d have the chance of resurrecting in the mausoleum or in the astral world. When that happened, what would return to me would be a pure Uniqueness and three Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics. I wouldn’t be tainted at all, nor will I contain an uncontrollable madness.

“Speaking of which, I made use of the Eternal Blazing Sun and the God of Steam and Machinery to a certain extent back then.

“But the horror of the Great Old Ones far exceeded my imagination. Accompanying my revival was a new life of corruption… Perhaps only Great Old Ones can resist Great Old Ones.

“I could only terminate the revival process, and live such an ignoble existence in my final mausoleum to prevent the Great Old One from using my body to be born in the real world. That would’ve brought about a devastating disaster.”

Klein had long guessed Emperor Roselle’s condition based on what he knew and what had just happened. He wasn’t surprised at all as he calmly replied, “The one who corrupted you is called the Mother

Goddess of Depravity. ‘She’ has bewitched many believers as the embodiment of the Primordial Moon.”

The facial features that appeared faintly on Roselle’s face immediately changed.

He fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “I know the Primordial Moon, but I didn’t know that ‘Her’ true honorific name is the Mother Goddess of Depravity.

“Now that I think about it, my discovery of Mr. Door’s cry for help might not have been a coincidence…”

Upon hearing this, Klein was alarmed. He instantly recalled the situations happening off-island. He had some sort of premonition about what Emperor Roselle was about to say.

Roselle laughed and sighed.

“The biggest problem in the first half of my life was that I was too confident. I always had the feeling that I could reload a save file and redo things. I didn’t pay enough attention to the details.

“Back then, Grimm was corrupted by the strange powers on this island. He returned here after dying and regained new life. Isn’t this the influence of the Primordial Moon? After I finished all sorts of investigations and did the corresponding purifications, I felt that I was fine. But in fact, fate might’ve undergone a tiny change at that moment. This resulted in me encountering Mr. Door later, and was slowly guided to the moon by ‘Him’…

“You can’t blame Mr. Door. ‘His’ condition might be worse than mine.”

Does the Emperor mean that he has been targeted by the Mother Goddess of Depravity the moment he discovered this primitive island? Klein sighed.

“At that time, who would’ve thought that the problem would be so serious?”

Before Sequence 2, understanding the cosmos and the Great Old Ones led to terrifying corruption. And without understanding it, one wouldn’t be able to accurately determine how serious the problem or what kind of patchwork was needed subsequently when faced with certain situations. This made Roselle treat this primitive island as his secret base; thus not informing existences that had the right to understand the Outer Deities, Great Old Ones, and Cosmos.

“That’s right.” Roselle seemed to be very gratified that he had committed a mistake that almost anyone would make.

He then said, “In that ancient and secretive organization, there was almost no mention of the Great Old Ones or Outer Deities.”

At that moment, Roselle paused for a moment before saying, “You should’ve read my diary. You should know what the ancient and hidden organization represents.”

Klein nodded.

“I know which organization it is referring to. I never expected that you wouldn’t dare mention the name of ‘His’ organization after having the level of a Sequence 0.”

“I have a nagging feeling that ‘He’ isn’t simple. ‘He’ might have an understanding of the Outer Deities that far exceeds our imagination, so it’s better to be more careful. After all, I’m not a complete Sequence 0 true god.” After Roselle said this simple sentence, his brows suddenly furrowed. “How much of my diary did you read?”

If the atmosphere wasn’t that heavy and sorrowful, Klein would definitely find it irresistible to reply with “the taste of a Demoness ain’t bad” as a way to tease his fellow Earthling.

Finally, he replied calmly, “Plenty.”

After saying the word, he casually added, “I even found a few Cards of Blasphemy.”

“Which ones?” Roselle blurted out.

Klein controlled the paper figurine’s expression from above the gray fog and said in a flat tone, “Black Emperor, Tyrant, Red Priest, and The Fool.”

“Phew…” Roselle exhaled as the faint crease on his brows eased. “Thankfully, it’s not the Demoness, The Moon, and the Mother card.”

You had to mention it yourself… Klein didn’t respond as he looked at the Emperor without a change in expression.

After Roselle said that, he realized something and hurriedly coughed.

“Well we’ve all watched live-streams, so you should know very well how normal it is to cross-dress…”

As he spoke, he coughed again and sighed.

“Which pathway are you from?”

“Seer,” Klein replied succinctly.

Roselle immediately fell silent. After a few seconds, he said, “Unfortunately, if everything is fine and dandy, you should be responsible for pulling out a large-screen television and a game console from the Historical Void. We can chat while playing. That’s a romantic dream of us men.”

Unfortunately, there’s no electricity. I have to rely on you to invent it… Klein didn’t voice out his thoughts. He maintained his tone and said, “I hope such a day will come.”

Then, he pulled the topic back on track.

“I’m very curious why the Card of Blasphemy you created can’t even be found by deities? Such a level of anti-divination and anti-prophecy is amazing.”

Roselle immediately chuckled.

“It’s because knowledge can bring power, and power can also bestow knowledge. This is the authority of a Knowledge Emperor.

“After I infused the potion formula of the twenty-two pathways with power, they naturally produced the convergence powers between Beyonder characteristics. They also gained anti-divination and anti-prophecy effects to a certain extent.

“And then…”

As he spoke, Roselle suddenly paused, as though he had sensed something amiss.

After one or two seconds, he said in an ethereal voice, “The creation of the Card of Blasphemy was a year before I held the Black Emperor ritual. Back then, I had already suffered the corruption of the Primordial Moon, and I didn’t have the corresponding realization most of the time.

“Why can the twenty-two cards not be found by deities?”

Upon hearing this question above the gray fog, Klein’s heart tightened as he felt his scalp tingle again.

Without waiting for his response from the paper figurine, Roselle’s voice suddenly raised, bringing with it an indescribable fear.

“Don’t gather the twenty-two cards!

“Be careful of the Mother card!”

These two sentences echoed in the deep interior of the Black Emperor mausoleum for a long time.

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†

Something common in China. Instead of being ”racist,” they look down on people from poorer regions.

†

Chapter 1308 - Goodbye

◆

Above the gray fog, Klein’s pupils instantly widened as he subconsciously looked down at the long mottled table in front of him.

There were four Cards of Blasphemy with different patterns on the back.

At that moment, he felt a little scared and relieved. He felt as though he had been wandering about on the edge of the abyss while blindfolded, but he never fell.

If he had done his best to gather all the Card of Blasphemy, or had obtained the Mother card, with the way how he liked to put the different cards in his body to obtain the corresponding levels and special characteristics, he might’ve already been corrupted by the Mother Goddess of Depravity, or be pregnant with something.

However, I’m not Roselle. Even if I have the Mother card, I probably wouldn’t have done so. Furthermore, in order to prevent the deities from finding it, Cards of Blasphemy are extremely difficult to gather. It’s almost impossible to gather all of them… From the looks of it, this is a casual arrangement made by the Mother Goddess of Depravity. If anyone were to unfortunately obtain the Mother card, they would become one of the latent dangers in this world… Klein retracted his gaze and continued using his stand-in Paper Figurine Substitutes to look at Roselle Gustav who was sitting on the black iron seat.

At that moment, Roselle raised his body slightly. His voice was sometimes low and sometimes high-pitched.

“Everything has godhood in them…

“The Oldest One is still alive, alive in everyone’s bodies!”

Klein frowned slightly. He didn’t know if the one speaking was Roselle or the crimson moon in his body.

Not only did he have a certain level of understanding regarding such secrets, he had also personally experienced it before. Thus, he wasn’t that horrified or panicked. He only recalled the teachings of the Aurora Order he had seen in the past:

They promoted the belief that the Creator was omnipresent and existed in every living being’s body. Therefore, all living beings had godhood. Once godhood reached a certain concentration, they could become an angel. And the current orthodox deities are nothing more than slightly stronger angels. To ordinary people, as long as one was able to grasp that the essence of life was a spiritual travel, and tempered one’s mind, strengthen one’s spirit, and find their own godhood, as well as fuse with more godhoods, one would be able to escape their mortal coils and become an angel.

Back then, I felt that a cult like the Aurora Order had a complete set of mysticism and religious canon, just like the orthodox Churches, but now, I can interpret the truth underlying these words… From a certain point of view, it’s true. The only problem is that after fusing with more godhoods, they might no longer be themselves… The True Creator actually placed the deepest secrets of this world into “His” teachings. Isn’t “He” afraid that a believer might suddenly have an epiphany and learn of the underground corruption, eventually becoming a vessel for the Oldest One’s revival? This Hanged Man really is a little crazy. “He” doesn’t have much rationality most of the time… Klein mumbled inwardly as he waited for Roselle to say more.

Two to three seconds later, Roselle, who had been in a cycle of slumber and the obtaining of new life, sat back on his iron-black throne. He panted and didn’t say a word.

Klein then controlled the paper figurine to say, “Which of the words that you have just said should be trusted, and which ones should I be wary of?”

Roselle chortled.

“Consider the answer yourself.”

“Heh, isn’t that how you Seers like to speak?”

He didn’t wait for Klein’s reply as he continued, “When I created the Pale Death mask, I sensed something: The Death of the Fourth Epoch might not have completely perished. ‘He’ might’ve left a hidden trump card for being revived. It might involve the River of Eternal Darkness. Heh heh, Death will definitely not die so easily…”

With that said, Roselle looked at Klein, who stood at the foot of the platform.

“Indeed, only by choosing the Seer, Apprentice, or Marauder pathway can a transmigrator enter Sefirah Castle. By the time I figured out this factor, it was already way too late.

“I don’t know if you want to become a Great Old One or not, nor do I know if this requires a ritual. I can only tell you that this is definitely more dangerous than becoming a deity—countless times more dangerous. Perhaps the existence who stored us and threw us back into the real world is waiting for you there.

“The only suggestion I can give you is to communicate with the Genie of the Magic Wishing Lamp before you make any attempts.”

Genie? Using the grudge between “Him” and the Celestial Worthy to obtain certain assistance? Klein nodded slightly and said, “Okay.”

After hearing his answer, Roselle sighed and said with a smile, “If you really can become a Great Old One, you can consider saving me. Only a Great Old One can resist a Great Old One.”

At this point, he fell silent for a moment before he slowed down his speech.

"If you can't completely free me from the corruption of the Primordial Moon after becoming a Great Old One, then remember to wipe my existence off the face of the world. Destroy this mausoleum, support the creation of a new Black Emperor, and prevent me from ever being revived…"

The light inside the mausoleum seemed to dim a little. Klein fell silent for two seconds before saying, "I won't forget that."

Roselle fell silent. After a few seconds, he laughed self-deprecatingly.

"Of course, before that, you should try to save me a few more times."

Such a sense of humor didn't make Klein smile. Instead, it made his heart sink even more, making him unable to speak.

Roselle didn't continue the topic as he recalled.

"My wife passed away a long time ago. The mistresses I once had definitely had their own endings. Towards them, I feel very sorry. I've never truly loved them. I only coveted their looks and the pleasure they gave me…

"I don't have any illegitimate children. Towards such matters, a Beyonder is quite aware of that. As for the time before I became a Beyonder, I believe those ladies definitely coveted my looks and body to enjoy such pleasures. They won't leave any trouble for themselves…

"My eldest son, Ciel, should be dead for years. I don't know how many descendants he left behind. My second son, Bornova, would definitely be an angel now if nothing unexpected happens. I have complicated feelings for him. On the one hand, I'm very detached, disappointed, and resentful, but on the other hand, I would occasionally secretly care about him. I remember how adorable he was when he was just born…

"You've already met my eldest daughter, Bernadette. Isn't she beautiful? She was pretty from a young age, obedient, and smart. She knew how to be filial to her old father, protect her younger brother, and dote on her mother. Sometimes, she acted especially righteous and appeared a little silly. There were several times when I secretly cheated while playing chess or games with her, but she didn't realize it. Such a temper made it difficult for her to accept what I did later. Of course, now, I can just push the blame onto the Primordial Moon. It's all because of 'Her' corruption. I'm rather grateful for 'Her' on this point.

"I don't know what right I have to make a request. After all, I've never helped you before, nor do I have much of a relationship with you. It's just that we're from the same era and same place—the ties as a fellow Earthling."

Upon hearing that, Klein said in a deep voice, "Your diary gave me plenty of help. It allowed me to grasp a lot of high-level knowledge when I was weak, allowing me to avoid many dangers and know how to direct my efforts in a targeted manner.

"Also, those Cards of Blasphemy have shown their use at different stages."

"Can you not mention the diary?" Roselle coughed lightly and said, "However, in the later stages, I was indeed consciously leaving a message to the next transmigrator. The only thing I couldn't be sure of is which language you know."

The Emperor slowly exhaled before saying, "My request is to help me look after Bernadette. When she needs help, provide her some help.

"Although she is about to become an important figure in the mysterious world, I still can't feel at ease as a father."

Without any hesitation, Klein got the paper figurine to answer directly.

"I'll take care of her for you."

"…Man, why does this sound a little awkward?" Roselle's tone instantly turned odd. "By the way, I haven't asked for your name. As for me, you should know very well that I'm Huang Tao."

"Zhou Mingrui," Klein answered frankly.

"Are you married? Do you have children? How old are you?" Roselle raised three questions in one go.

Emperor, why are you acting like a gossipy middle-aged woman from next door? Klein shook his head and gave a simple answer.

"No."

Roselle immediately fell silent. After a moment, he said, "You and I are of the same generation. Bernadette should call you Uncle Zhou.

"Yes…"

As he spoke, Roselle's tone suddenly became filled with pity.

"After coming to this era, I treated everything as a game in the beginning. I was having a great time playing, but I would occasionally recall my home, remembering the past where I cultivated most of my personality and hobbies.

"The longer I lived, the higher the frequency I felt this feeling. It's like the fallen leaves will always want to return to the roots of a tree. However, at the very least, I have a daughter, a wife, and two sons. There are still many things in this world that I'm worried about, and some sense of belonging to a certain extent. As for you… I can feel your loneliness, the loneliness that comes from deep within your bones."

Upon saying that, Roselle suddenly sighed.

"If only we were still living in that era. I'll go to work punctually every day and work overtime from time to time. Whenever I'm free, I'll visit my daughter's extracurricular lessons, pick her up, bring her home stuff my wife constantly reminds me about. Every weekend, we'll either head out for some fun or head to my parents' place to accompany them…

"When one day I'm exhausted from life, I'll use an excuse that you as my friend are treating me. As men, we can sit by the street and eat some skewers, drink some alcohol, brag, curse our superiors, reminisce about the days of our youth, and urge you to quickly find a girlfriend… When I wake up the next day, I'll be able to have the zeal to continue facing life again…"

Klein listened quietly without interrupting the Emperor's prattle.

Roselle's voice gradually lowered as he smiled.

"Goodbye, my friend.

"I hope we can really meet again one day."

His figure quickly turned illusory, as though he had disappeared from the world, leaving only a faint shadow hovering over the iron-black throne.

Roselle Gustav had returned to his eternal slumber.

[image]

Chapter 1309 - Additional Lessons

◆

After circling the primitive island three times, the Dawn finally made its way off into the distance which was perennially covered in storms.

Bernadette slowly retracted her gaze and fixed it on the Sage Frontlet that remained suspended in the air.

As a Clairvoyant, she clearly saw the opportunity to advance. She knew that she had completed the corresponding ritual, preventing a disaster that involved a higher order of power.

However, the price she paid was to personally seal her father, the father she had missed and sought for more than a hundred years.

“How ironic…” Bernadette looked at the vertical eye embedded with diamonds and sighed softly.

After leaving Intis, she had two big wishes. First, she wanted to investigate the truth behind the matter and see if she had misunderstood her father. Second, she wanted to follow her father’s footsteps and see if there was a possibility of reviving him.

Bernadette had already fulfilled her first wish. The truth was that she had indeed misunderstood her father. This curtailed her pain and conflicted feelings. Her hatred for her father had completely dissipated, but it also added to her guilt.

With this kind of guilt and yearning all this time, she tried her best to fulfill her second wish, but the outcome wasn’t pleasant.

If there hadn't been any hope from the beginning, she might not have had such a huge reaction. However, she had clearly seen the light and seen her father, but she had no choice but to personally place him into a state of slumber.

After a moment of silence, Bernadette's slightly unfocused eyes became clear again.

She no longer hesitated and no longer blamed herself. She no longer had all kinds of negative emotions. She firmly raised her right hand and drew out ancient words that shimmered with a stellar radiance in the void. She summoned the spirit world creature who was half-man, half-wind, and she retrieved the Sage supplementary ingredients from it.

As for the rest, as there was no need for them to be specially preserved, they were in the collection room of the Dawn.

Not long after, Bernadette used Pale Death to shatter the Sage Frontlet. She concocted the potion that could allow her to advance to Sequence 2.

Looking at the bubbling Sage potion with each bubble containing a transparent eye, Bernadette firmly raised her right hand and brought the glass bottle to her mouth.

She knew that what she needed at this moment wasn't sorrow, nor corny emotions, but determination and the will to forge forward. This was because if she wanted to help her father, Emperor Roselle, escape the corruption and completely revive, she needed a higher Sequence and greater strength.

Because of this, she was willing to bury the pain in the deepest part of her heart and not let it affect her mental state. It was only when there was no one around at night that she could retrieve it and savor it alone.

With the Sage potion entering her mouth, Bernadette's body turned illusory at a discernible pace.

She broke down into thick and complicated knowledge, changing into an existence that was a flux of information.

The entire Dawn, as well as the surrounding winds, storms, lightning, seawater, and waves, all lost their sense of reality. It was as though they had been restored to the most fundamental blocks of information.

For most of Sequence 3 Beyonders of the Mystery Pryer pathway, such a state was extremely dangerous. If one's willpower wasn't strong enough, their luck wasn't good enough, and they weren't prepared enough, the knowledge that they had transformed into would be infiltrated by all kinds of information within seconds. They would be washed away, assimilated, and thus quickly lose consciousness. They wouldn't be able to reassemble their bodies, turning into a very strange and difficult monster to deal with in mysticism.

A Knowledge Demon!

This was also known as an Information Creature.

Bernadette had relied on the Sage Frontlet and had previously transformed into a flux of information on several occasions. Although it was limited to two to three seconds and didn't last too long, it was still considered experience. At that moment, she tried her best to maintain her consciousness and establish a connection with the information produced in the spirit world by preventing a high-level disaster.

The information had a clear imprint belonging to her, and it involved a very high level of power. It was exceptionally "solid" and couldn't be dispersed by other information for short periods of time. It helped her to stabilize her consciousness and slowly gather the dissipating flux of information around her body.

During this process, Klein, who was above the gray fog, tapped the edge of the long mottled table with the help of the prayer light. He used a Miracle Invoker's ability of changing the probability of certain developments and actions to a certain extent, and he bestowed

Bernadette with a certain amount of good luck.

Time ticked by. There were several times when Bernadette wavered on the border of losing consciousness, but in the end, she managed to tide through it. She gathered all the information that belonged to her and began to reconstruct her body.

At that moment, she gradually felt the concern Admiral of Stars Cattleya had for her. She felt the members of the Element Dawn and her crew making their daily prayers.

This stabilized her condition better, allowing her to resist the ancient will that was slowly developing in her body.

At this moment, a series of secret information came from nowhere. Taking the opportunity while Bernadette was reforming her body, it attempted to fuse with her.

This was interference from the Hidden Sage!

As an embodiment of this world’s knowledge and information, as a quasi-Sequence 0 existence of the Mystery Pryer pathway, the Hidden Sage had a certain influence on Beyonders of a lower Sequencer than “Him.”

Without giving Bernadette the chance to use the pale-white mask, the “curtain” draped over Klein gently rose.

Space-time distorted around Bernadette, completely isolating her from the outside world. Even information couldn’t be interchanged.

Grabbing this sudden moment of peace, Bernadette completely reassembled her body and used her own anchors to balance out the terrifying will that was surfacing in her body.

At that moment, she had truly become a “She,” a Sequence 2 angel of the Mystery Pryer pathway—an important figure in the mysterious world that could be addressed as a secret existence.

Right on the heels of that, she saw the distorted space around her return to normal. She saw a series of hidden information surging towards her.

She stretched out her right hand and grabbed the information with ease, extracting the useful information contained within.

Just as Bernadette was about to return to reality from the spirit world, an orange light suddenly bloomed in front of her eyes.

The light instantly condensed into a fat elder with a short white beard.

The elder smiled and said, “Ma’am, I’m Orange Light Hilarion.”

Orange Light… Bernadette was puzzled. She didn’t understand why Orange Light Hilarion had suddenly appeared in front of her—they hadn’t interacted much before.

As the leader of the Element Dawn and a former Mysticologist, she wasn’t unfamiliar with the Seven Lights of the spirit world. She even knew how to pray to Seven Lights, as well as the ritual needed to receive the corresponding advice. She knew that the seven lustrous lights were a symbol of the spirit world, and they contained endless knowledge of different domains. They were definitely at the angel level.

Orange Light Hilarion added with a smile, “A great existence wants me to inform you of the knowledge regarding the Great Old Ones, the Outer Deities, and the Cosmos, so that you have a relatively accurate grasp of the state of this world and the corresponding corruption.”

“Which existence is it?” Bernadette asked, puzzled and cautious.

She had vaguely guessed the answer, but she still found it quite unbelievable. After all, the Seven Lights in the spirit world were also important figures in the mysterious world. Even if a Sequence 0 true god wouldn’t find it easy to get “Them” to do “Their” bidding.

Orange Light Hilarion chuckled and replied, “The greater ruler above the spirit world.”

The great ruler above the spirit world… Bernadette repeated the honorific name, and her thoughts raced.

Hilarion glanced at her and smiled.

“‘He’ also has another title:

“Mr. Fool.”

†

Somewhere out at sea, the Future which was cruising on a safe sea route.

Cattleya suddenly jolted awake from her dream as her forehead was covered in cold sweat.

In the dream just now, she saw the Queen lying on the ground drenched in blood. Her chest was torn open, and a baby-like monster crawled out of it.

As a Mysticologist, a Mysticologist who had advanced with a drop of the Snake of Fate’s blood, Cattleya believed that her dream wasn’t without any reason. It was definitely a premonition.

It was obvious that the dream she had wasn’t pleasant.

While feeling uneasy, Cattleya sat up and put on her cloak. She attempted to pray to Mr. Fool, hoping that this mighty existence would give her some hints or to protect the Queen.

Soon, a scene appeared before her eyes.

Queen Mystic Bernadette walked out of the spirit world and returned to Dawn, allowing the ship to gradually distance itself from the nameless island.

Cattleya immediately heaved a sigh of relief and sincerely thanked Mr. Fool.

After finishing her prayer, she opened the window of the captain's cabin in joy, causing starlight to condense into a long bridge that reached the deck.

She put on her heavy glasses and walked along the resplendent bridge of starlight to the deck where she proceeded to stroll leisurely in the quiet night.

When she arrived at the bow of the ship, Cattleya saw Frank Lee tinkering with bottles.

"What are you doing?" Cattleya subconsciously frowned.

Frank looked up and said with a bright smile, "My ideas encountered a setback so I can't proceed any further for now. I asked Nina to get me some soil from the bottom of the sea to study the microbes in it."

With that said, Frank said with a look of anticipation,

"When I have my next vacation, I'd like to go to the depths of the North Sea or the poles where it's a world of ice and snow. There might be many ancient microorganisms buried beneath the thick layer of ice there, from the Fourth Epoch, the Third Epoch, or even the Second and First Epoch. This will bring me plenty."

You won't have any vacations for the time being… Cattleya said inwardly.

†

Klein conjured a box and placed the four Cards of Blasphemy inside. After sealing them, he immediately returned to the real world and headed for the nearest Evernight cathedral.

He planned on informing the Evernight Goddess in the form of a prayer of the hidden dangers of the Card of Blasphemy, reminding “Her” to pay attention to such problems. He didn’t want the Earth Mother, Lilith, to obtain the Mother card or The Moon Card.

Chapter 1310 - Envoy

◆

The prayer hall in the Evernight cathedral was as dark as before. Only the holes on the walls allowed some light to seep in, like stars in the night.

[image]

Klein sat in a corner that wasn't eye-catching. He took off his tall hat and began praying like a pious member of the congregation.

He simply mentioned how Roselle had revived in his last mausoleum, and focused on the corruption of the Primordial Moon. He deliberately emphasized that, in order to prevent the "crimson moon" within him from being born in the real world, Roselle had chosen to terminate the process of having his Black Emperor Uniqueness and three Sequence 1 characteristics return to him.

At the end of the prayer, Klein pointed out the hidden dangers of the Cards of Blasphemy, and he expressed his concerns about the whereabouts of the Mother card and The Moon Card.

In fact, Roselle only mentioned the need to be careful of the Mother card and didn't mention The Moon. However, Klein knew that the two pathways of Earth and Moon belonged to the Mother Goddess of Depravity. Therefore, to be cautious, he specially added The Moon Card.

This was also the main reason he was worried about Earth Mother Lilith.

Compared to most of the twenty-two pathways, the High-Sequence Beyonders of the Planter and Moon pathway had a huge advantage. That was that they didn't need to worry about the Primordial One from awakening in their bodies. They didn't need to worry about dissociation from approaching the world underground. This was because the Beyonder characteristics they possessed didn't directly come from the Primordial One which led to no corresponding mental imprint. However, if they were to directly go underground and enter the Chaos Sea, no matter who it was, they would encounter corruption. It was just that the extent would be different.

This advantage was very likely due to the fact that the Sanguine Ancestor Lilith was more special than the other ancient gods. After all, "She" didn't need to divert a large part of "Her" energy to resist the will of the Primordial One awakening within her. And back then, the invisible barrier protecting this world was still sufficiently sturdy, separating the Mother Goddess of Depravity and the other Great Old Ones from Earth, making it difficult for "Them" to exert too much of an influence on the situation inside.

But with the passage of time, this advantage gradually became a problem.

As the underground corruption became weaker and weaker, the invisible barrier also became weaker and cracks began appearing. Under such circumstances, Earth Mother Lilith's situation became worse. This was because "She" was facing the intrusion of the Mother Goddess of Depravity that was ever increasing in potency and terror. In this aspect, the original Creator—the Oldest One—who was dead was definitely inferior to the living Mother Goddess of Depravity.

Considering how Outer Deities who had transcended Sequences had an influence on Beyonders from their own pathway, Klein felt that he couldn't afford negligence on such matters.

After he finished his prayer, he waited for nearly five minutes. After confirming that there was no response, he stood up, put on his wandering magician's tall hat, and walked out of the cathedral that belonged to the Evernight.

To him, this was mainly a disclosure obligation. As for what the Evernight Goddess planned to do with it, or if "She" would remind him of certain matters, it was beyond his control.

In short, Klein could only temporarily believe that the Evernight Goddess knew the relative importance of matters.

†

Backlund, at the Harvest Church south of the Bridge.

The top-hatted Emlyn White got off his carriage and looked at the sun covered by the clouds and mist.

On the way to the entrance of the cathedral, he gently rotated the ring on his left hand, as if to flaunt his identity.

The ring was semi-translucent in color, as though it was made from light-red amber. There was a blood-red gem embedded on its tip—a reward Emlyn had received a long time ago—Lilith's Ring.

After becoming a demigod, Emlyn could suppress the effect of bloodthirst from the ring to a certain extent. Every day, he only needed to drink three bottles of human blood to be immune to the corresponding negative effects. Therefore, in order to showcase his special identity as the Ancestor's Blessed, he began wearing this ring permanently.

After entering the Harvest Church, Emlyn automatically removed his top hat.

At this moment, Cosmi, Ernes, and the other Sanguine in Backlund, who were waiting for Bishop Utravsky, stood up one after another.

Looking down at the aisle, they greeted softly, “Good morning, My Lord.”

Emlyn looked ahead and nodded indiscernibly.

“Is Mistral still not here yet?”

“Count Mistral set up a chapel at home,” Ernes simply explained.

Emlyn didn’t comment on this. He walked forward and casually said, “He will still have to come when Mass is held.”

He looked around before saying, “Where’s Bishop Utravsky?”

“The bishop is waiting for you behind. The Church’s envoy has arrived.” Ernes controlled his facial expression as he answered Emlyn’s question politely.

The Church’s envoy… Emlyn rotated the light-red ring on his left hand and walked to the back of the cathedral.

Soon, he saw Father Utravsky and the slightly curly black-haired envoy the Church with a tall nose and deep eyes.

“This is the archbishop, His Grace Loreto,” Father Utravsky introduced the envoy to Emlyn.

He stood by the window, blocking most of the light.

“Good morning, Your Grace,” Emlyn replied with the etiquette of the Church of Earth.

Loreto smiled and spoke in rather awkward Loenese.

“There’s no need to address me as Your Grace. Although you aren’t an archbishop, you have the status of an archbishop. From today onwards, you will be a hierophant, a high-ranking deacon of the Church. You will be in charge of the Sanguine matters in Backlund.”

Without giving Emlyn any time to digest this information, Loreto continued, “I came to Backlund under the Holy See’s orders. I’ll tell you everything that needs to be taken note of within the Church.”

“Please speak,” Emlyn suppressed his glee and said politely.

Loreto’s expression immediately turned serious.

“First of all, the most important point is that, be it the clergymen of the Church or the believers of the Earth Mother, as long as you claim that you have obtained a revelation, they are individuals who have been enticed by demons—with no exceptions.

“If anyone reports something like this to you, or if you have obtained a revelation personally, please inform Bishop Utravsky as soon as possible and report it to the Church.”

Father Utravsky didn’t mention this before… This request sounds very strange, as though there’s some suspicion… Emlyn frowned as he looked at Father Utravsky who was standing by the window.

“The bishop never said anything about taking note of such matters…”

Before he finished his sentence, Emlyn suddenly realized that he came off as criticizing Bishop Utravsky, but he couldn’t find any better explanation in his haste.

Almost at the same time, he understood what was odd about what Archbishop Loreto had said.

This was telling everyone that the Earth Mother you sensed isn’t the real Earth Mother!

This is saying that a large number of the revelations us Sanguine received from the Ancestor are fake. It’s from demons or evil gods… The look in Emlyn’s eyes sank as he tried to maintain his composure.

At this moment, Loreto didn’t mind and smiled.

"Bishop Utravsky didn't tell you because he didn't know either."

Father didn't know… In that instant, Emlyn actually felt a little sympathetic towards Bishop Utravsky. He felt that as a Feysacian, a hierophant who had changed faith in his later years, he had been ostracized by the other members of the Church of Earth.

Sensing the change in his gaze, Loreto added, "That's because he's a Blessed. He doesn't need to care about the temptation of demons and evil gods."

Bishop Utravsky nodded and said calmly, "The revelations of Earth Mother are in 'Her' Holy Bible, in those lines of teaching. Anything other than that is heresy."

Emlyn was somewhat puzzled, but he couldn't think of any question. He grunted and said to Loreto, "Then what is the second point that needs paying attention?"

Loreto made his expression turn serious.

"If you receive a revelation, don't blindly believe it. Please immediately seek confirmation from Bishop Utravsky."

"Why?" Emlyn was puzzled.

This was basically telling him that the only response he would receive was either from evil gods or demons.

Loreto deliberated over his words and explained in detail,

"In this world, there are many evil existences. 'They' will pretend to be deities, and bewitch the clergyman in an act of enticing believers.

"That's because the two main pathways of the Church of Earth Mother are related to life. Therefore, the effects they receive are more severe than the other Churches. From time to time, there are people who will take the wrong path and attempt forbidden life experiments; thus, slowly degenerating.

“In order to prevent such a development, we reorganized the Church a long time ago under the guidance of the Mother’s will to establish the system of a Favored and Blessed.”

Favored and Blessed… Emlyn’s understanding of the Church of Earth was limited to the Holy Bible and part of the scriptures. He was momentarily at a loss.

He had never taken the initiative to ask Father Utravsky about the Church of Earth Mother.

Loreto glanced at Emlyn and nodded slightly.

“The Favored are clergymen who have won the Mother’s favor and are from the two pathways of Earth and Moon. The Blessed refers to people who have obtained the Mother’s blessing and are from other pathways.

“The latter is less affected by the demons and evil gods. It can help us verify the authenticity of the revelations.

“Under such circumstances, even if it’s a decree issued by the Holy See, there has to be at least a second-in-command Favored. Otherwise, it can be regarded as null and void.”

As he spoke, Loreto took out a document and unfolded it in front of Emlyn. Apart from what the archbishop had just said, it included the details of him accepting the mission and appointment as an envoy.

At the end of the document, there were a few names. The first was from the Holy See of the Church of Earth, Matriarch Roland, and the rest were all names that Emlyn didn’t know. He barely recognized the last one to be Father Utravsky.

Father Utravsky’s handwriting is really ugly… As Emlyn mumbled to himself, he began to have a strong sense of doubt regarding the Blessed and Favored system.

Why were the Blessed less enticed by evil gods or demons?

Why were they able to verify a revelation, but the Favored couldn’t?

As his thoughts raced, Emlyn suddenly noticed a detail:

The Blessed aren’t from the two pathways of Earth and Moon!

Therefore, the problem didn’t lie in the Favored, but the two pathways themselves? Emlyn vaguely felt that his guess was the truth.

Chapter 1311 - New Mission

Emlyn vaguely sensed that there might be some abnormalities in the two Beyonder pathways of Earth and Moon, but he didn’t ask Archbishop Loreto about it directly.

He doesn’t seem like he would answer… It’s better to wait for the next Tarot Gathering to ask The World, The Hanged Man, and the others… Emlyn nodded indiscernibly, indicating that he already knew the difference between a Favored and a Blessed as he muttered to himself.

He didn’t consider seeking Mr. Fool’s answer, because he felt that there was no need since the corresponding problem wasn’t too important. After all, the Sanguine’s Dukes, Marquises, and Counts were still alive and well, and there hadn’t been any particularly negative news regarding the Church of Earth Mother.

At the same time, his previous guess also made Emlyn connect these to the influence the Primordial Moon, an existence which was perhaps an evil god or a high-level Devil in disguise, had on the Moon pathway. “He” had once caused many Sanguine who had prayed to “Him” to lose control, turning into monsters that only knew how to mate and reproduce.

Emlyn suspected that this was one of the evil existences that sent the fake visions and revelations.

With no more questions from him, Loreto put away the document in his hand and thought for a moment before saying, “This is the problem that requires special attention.

“In addition, I hope that you can set up three to five Beyonder teams in Backlund. They should mainly be members of the Sanguine.”

Emlyn was always law-abiding. The only crime he did was steal blood at the hospital. He subconsciously raised his question, “Does the Church of Evernight and the Church of Storms have any objections?”

Loreto said with a benevolent smile, “This was a request from them.

“As most of the forces of the Church of Steam have withdrawn, there is a lack of official Beyonders in Loen.

“Although the Church of Evernight and the Church of Storms have also recruited a group of Machinery Hivemind members who don’t wish to leave Loen, and the lower-ranking clergymen, they are ultimately just a minority. Furthermore, they still need to handle the purge in Feysac and the independent colonies overseas. Therefore, they hope that they can provide some help.

“This is quite beneficial for our proselytizing in Loen. However, you have to remember that, here, we have to restrain ourselves. We can’t freely proselytize. Just be on the same level as the remnant Church of Steam. Of course, our believers won’t be able to catch up to the Church of Steam for a long period of time. This requires a generation, two generations, or even three generations of effort.”

Yes, maintaining the present scale and having a certain degree of development is enough… It’s too troublesome to proselytize… Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief and calmly replied, “Okay.”

†

In the Sonia Sea, City of Generosity, Bayam.

Alger wore a bishop’s robe embroidered with symbols of lightning and waves. He wore a metal Storm Sacred Emblem and stood at the peak of the coastal mountain range, looking out at the other side of the forest.

There were very few trees there. The surrounding hills and short mountains had been flattened, revealing a hidden harbor.

It was a private harbor that belonged to the Resistance. It was definitely not comparable to Bayam's port, but it was of medium size, enough to sustain many people's lives.

A city with an unconstrained and crude style had been built near the harbor. The city wasn't huge, probably only one-fifth the size of Bayam or smaller.

In the center were two towers. One was a spire, the other steeple. They were all strangely silver, reflecting blinding light under the sun.

Surrounding the twin towers were many paved roads made of cement. They led to buildings that were mainly made of stone or were connected to open squares and training grounds. The green trees lining the sides of the street exuded a feeling of grandeur.

Alger knew that the city didn't only consist of residents from the City of Silver, but also people from Moon City.

Many of the latter were extremely deformed. They were temporarily unwilling to interact with Bayam, as well as the residents of the other cities on the island. They only purchased their necessities through the people of the City of Silver.

It was said that they planned on building a city that belonged to them deep in the forest, and would only leave a path to the new City of Silver.

These are all believers of Mr. Fool. I'll have to slowly integrate them into the entirety of the Rorsted Archipelago… For now, I'll temporarily not disturb the deformed and allow the residents of the City of Silver to bring normal-looking Moon City residents to Bayam… Alger seriously considered his subsequent actions.

After settling down the residents of the City of Silver and Moon City, he had actually completed the mission that Mr. Fool had given him.

However, he believed that he was still far from being able to exchange for Sea God's identity, authority, and status. Therefore, he did his best to deal with the problems left behind by the "great migration."

To be frank, Alger was most worried that Mr. Fool didn't give him anything to do. If that happened, he didn't know how long it would take for him to make enough contributions.

Accompanying the new City of Silver's establishment and the immense vibrancy it exuded, he acutely sensed danger.

There was more than one Sequence 4 demigod in the City of Silver and Moon City, and they were Mr. Fool's loyal believers. Perhaps, Mr. Fool would one day bestow the identity, status, authority, and power of Sea God to one of them!

There are two Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts in the City of Silver, a Sequence 3 saint, three Sequence 4 saints, and nearly ten Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts, as well as a few demigod Beyonder characteristics that can temporarily be used as Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts… There are three demigods in Moon City, five Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts, and a large number of potion formulas… This… Alger only made a slight calculation before realizing that the two factions that came under Mr. Fool were a little terrifying.

All of them combined was equivalent to a quarter of the Church of Storms!

According to what Alger knew, the number of Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts each Church had numbered between five to eight. There were fewer than four Grounded Angels active at present. In this aspect, they were indeed much stronger than the combined Moon City and City of Silver.

However, the orthodox Churches had no advantage in numbers when it came to Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts and saints, especially the latter.

Due to an all-out war, with the brass increasing the number of saints by nurturing them, the Church of Storms only had around twenty saints.

The Church of the Sea God doesn't have a demigod yet, but it won't be long before a new Sea God will appear… As for the angels under Mr. Fool, there's The World, the Death Consul, and the angel of the Fate pathway… There are the saints from our Tarot Club… The more Alger thought about it, the more alarmed he became. He realized that he was a little slow in this aspect.

Perhaps it was because he couldn't extricate himself to take an objective look at things, and although he had always been amazed by such matters, he finally came to a clear realization today:

Unknowingly, Mr. Fool's faction had already developed to a level that was comparable to an orthodox Church. Even if there was a certain gap, it was only due to the lack of accumulation that needed to span across years.

And it hadn't even been three years since Alger joined the Tarot Club!

If I hadn't experienced all these changes myself, I definitely wouldn't have believed it. Alger sighed inwardly as he fervently wished to do something for Mr. Fool so that he could quickly accumulate the contributions needed to transform into Sea God.

When that happened, he could truly cast his gaze towards the Book of Calamity and attempt to complete the request of the elven queen, Cohinem.

Retracting his gaze, Alger glanced at Bayam at the foot of the mountain. He saw that this city, which hadn't suffered any serious damage in the war, had once again lit up. It could also be called the most prosperous city in the Sonia Sea.

At that moment, the priests, bishops, and believers of the Church of the Lord of Storms were cooperating with the new government civil servants and the Church of Sea God to build schools and hospitals to the children in the slums and the natives with no financial capacity that would provide education, medical treatment, and assistance.

As Alger watched the people walking along the streets like ants and the colorful buildings that were different from the vast majority of Loen, the corners of his mouth curled up slightly before he wiped away his smile.

He narrowed his eyes, unsure what he was experiencing or enjoying.

At that moment, a grayish-white fog suddenly appeared in front of him.

Following that, he saw the ancient palace and blurry figure in the middle of the fog. He heard Mr. Fool's words:

"A mission. Monitor a man named Verdu Garcia."

Along with the revelation, plenty of miscellaneous information rained down and drilled into Alger's mind, allowing him to know the exact situation of Verdu Garcia.

He was a member of the Abraham family that had concealed his identity. He had recently left Desi County and had come to the Rorsted Archipelago.

Alger was thrilled. He bowed his head respectfully in response. "By your will."

†

Klein knew that Verdu Garcia Abraham had left the Northern Continent and was heading to the Rorsted Archipelago, as Dorian Gray had mentioned this when he prayed.

He knew very well that the person named Verdu yearned to save Mr. Door so that the King of Angels could return to the real world.

The reason why Klein had gotten Miss Magician to inform the Abraham family of one of the rituals that helped Mr. Door escape was because the trust between the two parties was insufficient. If he were to hide it or lie by saying that an angel needed to be hunted for the ritual, the Abraham family would definitely suspect Fors and make her continue contacting Mr. Door and try to confirm it through other means.

Once they discovered anything, Klein would lose control of the Abraham family, preventing him from nipping the problem in the bud.

If it had been a few years ago, Klein wouldn’t have been too worried about such problems. However, as the apocalypse approached, the infiltration of the Outer Deities would only increase. It was possible that a member of the Abraham family would come into contact with a corresponding item or believer and obtain the correct ritual.

Therefore, Klein believed that the ritual that was extremely difficult to complete could be used to effectively gain the trust of the Abrahams, allowing them to deepen their faith in Mr. Fool and become more devout. Then, he could monitor the extreme ones among the devout and grasp their trajectories, and interfere with them in time.

Chapter 1312 - Fully Automatic Wishing Machine

◆

Midseashire, Limon City.

Jasmine wrapped a scarf around her face and exited the apartment.

She had heard that the annual Limon Carnival had begun, so she wanted to visit it at the municipal square.

Because of the war last year, the carnival hadn’t been held. This had greatly disappointed Jasmine. After that, she suffered the greatest trauma in her life. From then on, she hid at home and didn’t dare to go out.

Perhaps it was because she had been confined at home for too long—one that was very cramped—Jasmine had been eager to go on the streets recently. She wanted to walk around just like she did in the past.

As she turned her gaze, she saw her reflection in the large glass window by the side of the street.

Her figure was pitch-black without any other color. Her long dress reached her ankles, and the veil of her hat covered half of her face. From the bottom of her eyes to her neck, there was a scarf wrapped several times around her neck. Both of her hands were wearing a pair of knitted gloves.

This was completely different from the cheerful and lively Jasmine in her memories.

In the previous war, a cannonball had destroyed her original home and resulted in a fire. She suffered burns to the face, causing her body to be covered in wounds.

If not for the fact that she was lucky enough, Jasmine would've died from the serious injuries. But even so, she felt like her life had ended from that very moment.

Her nose had been burnt away, leaving only two black holes. There were many traces left behind by the fire on her face, neck, and hands. If she were to walk in the dark, she would pass off for a devil perfectly.

Jasmine clearly remembered one thing: on the first night of moving to this apartment, she had washed up in the public bathroom before sleeping. Just as she walked out of the door, she saw a youth walk over. The youth had also seen her.

Under the crimson moonlight, the youth revealed an expression of extreme horror, as if he would jump up at any moment. He turned around and ran away.

Finally, he controlled himself and took a few steps to the side, not daring to look at Jasmine's face again.

This pierced through Jasmine's fragile heart. From that day onwards, she never left the house again. Even if she had to wash up, she would wait until it was late at night.

In this aspect, she was very grateful to her parents because they didn't say a word. They did their best to maintain their lives, relying on their original savings and the work they later found to barely support the family. They didn't need Jasmine to work outside for a salary.

After walking a distance, Jasmine saw the main venue of the carnival—Lemon City Municipal Square.

There was a sea of heads and all kinds of reveling emotions. The enthusiastic atmosphere made Jasmine subconsciously stop in her tracks.

She didn’t dare approach, afraid that someone would notice that she was dressed strangely, afraid that she might accidentally drop her scarf.

After hesitating for a few seconds, she finally stopped. She found a clean spot by the street and sat down. She stared intently at the municipal square.

After an unknown period of time, Jasmine sensed someone beside her.

It was a young man in a long black robe and a tall hat. He was like a magician from a circus.

The municipal square is over there… Jasmine wanted to remind him, but after she quivered her lips a few times, she didn’t part them.

She didn’t dare to speak to anyone.

However, the young man took the initiative to walk over. He took off his hat and bowed slightly.

“Miss, do you know what this machine is for?”

Machine? Jasmine subconsciously looked up and dazedly followed the young man’s gaze.

Under the streetlamp, a small wardrobe-like machine was sitting there at some point in time.

Its surface was a brass color with a few transparent glass, gears, and bearings embedded in it. The components were exposed, looking very crude.

Jasmine retracted her gaze and shook her head, indicating that she didn’t know what the machine was.

At the same time, this also expressed her intention to reject conversing.

"It's called a 'Fully Automatic Wishing Machine,'" the young man introduced with a smile. "It's my invention. It can automatically fulfill the wish of someone who operates it. By the way, I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Merlin Hermes, a wandering magician."

Fully Automatic Wishing Machine… Jasmine realized that she could understand every single word but failed to understand the combined name.

"You can give it a try. As the first user to experience it, it's free," Klein, who had taken on the identity of Merlin Hermes, said with a smile.

Jasmine shook her head, refusing the conversation.

Klein didn't give up. He looked at her and said, "For example, you can make a wish to be restored with your original looks."

These words were like a sharp arrow that shot into Jasmine's heart. She stood up in shock and retreated hastily in an attempt to leave.

She suspected that he had already seen her current appearance.

"If you don't give it a try, how do you know that your wish won't come true? It's free," Klein said unhurriedly as he looked past her into the background.

Jasmine gradually slowed down and finally stopped.

If she could be restored with her original looks, even if she had to pay a huge sum of money, she would still be willing to do so.

However, she knew that the wish in her heart couldn't be granted by money.

I don't have to pay anything… It's a free try… What if it comes true… Jasmine's thoughts were in an upheaval, and she slowly turned around as if she was being enticed by a devil.

"Really?" she asked in a hoarse voice.

Klein pointed at the machine.

“I can retreat ten meters, and all you need to do is to turn the wrench on the machine.

“You don’t have to remove your hat and scarf.”

The last sentence moved Jasmine into action as she quickly nodded and said, “Okay.”

Not long after Merlin retreated a certain distance, Jasmine moved closer to the machine, gingerly grasping the wrench on the “door.”

She was actually very worried that this was part of a prank that involved pulling the wrench, such as being splashed by water. This was something that would happen every year during the carnival. She and her friends had often played such pranks on others, but compared to a wish that could be fulfilled, she felt that it was an acceptable risk.

Even if it was proven that having her wish granted was impossible, it could still be treated as her experience at the carnival.

“Remember to make your wish before you turn it,” Klein reminded her from not too far away.

Jasmine collected her thoughts and silently voiced her wish.

“I want to return to my former self before the burns.”

With that, she turned the wrench nervously and expectantly.

In the next second, the “door” to the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine opened. A normal wooden cane reached out and tapped Jasmine’s forehead.

What Jasmine didn’t notice was a golden ring embedded with rubies that had appeared on her hand.

When the wooden cane retracted back into the Fully Automatic

Wishing Machine, the golden ring with the rubies disappeared as well.

As the gears turned, Jasmine saw the machine's "door" slowly close.

That's it? she thought blankly.

She didn't experience the feeling of having her wish fulfilled, nor was she being pranked. Everything seemed so strange.

"Congratulations. Your wish has been granted." Klein walked back and clapped gently like a witness to a magical event.

My wish has been granted… How is this possible… Just as this thought flashed through her mind, she suddenly felt something beneath her scarf.

The spot where there were only two black holes left had been propped up!

Jasmine slowly raised her hand and touched her face, clearly sensing the presence of her nose.

And the quality of her breathing proved this point.

She suddenly turned around, her back facing Merlin Hermes. She walked to a shop by the side of the street and cast her gaze at the glass window.

Then, she removed the scarf covering her face.

Eyes that weren't big, a nose that wasn't too well-defined, and her lips that weren't too full—the freckled face of a girl was reflected on the window.

Jasmine subconsciously raised her hand and covered her mouth. Her eyes glistened.

After a few seconds, she raised her arm and wiped her face with her sleeve. She turned to look at Merlin Hermes and said, "Are you a god?"

“I’m just a magician who likes to create miracles.” Klein smiled as he pointed at the machine beside him. “The thing you should thank the most is that—the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.”

“Fully Automatic…” Jasmine’s emotions stirred as she subconsciously repeated.

Klein nodded and said, “Yes, a Fully Automatic Wishing Machine that can operate without any external help.

“You can understand it as a gas meter. As long as you throw in a coin, you can get a wish granted like how you obtain gas.

“The specific steps are very simple. Throw one penny in and make your wish before turning the wrench.

“Remember, only three wishes can be fulfilled.”

While explaining, Klein inwardly mocked himself, If I were to unfortunately die one day and become a Sealed Artifact, I hope it’s something similar to the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

After leaving the capital of Midseashire, Constant City, Klein changed the method of granting other people’s wishes to prevent himself from being too bored.

One had to learn to seek joy in mundane work.

How miraculous… Jasmine couldn’t find the words to describe how she felt inside.

Her exhilarated emotions calmed down a little.

“Will it… I mean will this Fully Automatic Wishing Machine stay here forever?” Jasmine asked hesitantly.

Klein smiled and said, “No.”

“It could stay here for three days, or maybe not that long. Perhaps it would disappear when the sun rises.

“But it won’t disappear forever. Perhaps one day, you will see it at the corner of the street again.”

Jasmine’s mind was in a mess and she was unable to sort out her thoughts. All she could do was bow to the machine and say seriously, “Thank you, Mr. Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.”

Then, she bowed at Klein.

“Thank you, Mr. Hermes.”

As soon as she said that, Jasmine recalled the words Merlin Hermes had just said. Filled with anticipation, surprise, and embarrassment, she asked, “Three wishes can be granted?”

“Yes, but it won’t be free in the future. You will need to pay a penny,” Klein replied, unfazed by the question.

Chapter 1313 - The Third Wish

◆

Jasmine was excited, but she was still worried.

“What kind of price has to be paid?”

From her point of view, a prior free attempt didn’t mean that the subsequent wishes were without a price.

Klein adjusted his tall hat and smiled.

“The penny you paid is the price. The corresponding change that you have to bear after achieving your wish is also the price.”

Jasmine nodded without completely understanding him. Without any hesitation, she reached into her pocket and attempted to take out a few copper pennies for her wish.

However, her pocket was empty except for a handkerchief.

Having stayed home all this while, she hadn’t had any contact with money.

She had relied on walking to go from home to the municipal square instead of taking a trackless public carriage.

“I-I… Can I go home first?” Jasmine asked, both vexed and embarrassed.

“Of course, this is your freedom, but I can’t guarantee that the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine will always be waiting for you here,” Klein said with the tone of a magician. “Sometimes, it’s very willful.”

Jasmine tersely answered, thanked him, and turned around, jogging in the opposite direction of the municipal square.

The more she ran, the more relaxed her body became. She found herself in her formerly healthy state before she was burnt, transforming back into a teenage girl in her prime.

To her, this was a scene that would only appear in a dream.

Of course, as an ordinary person, she gradually felt exhausted after running for a while. She had no choice but to slow down and begin walking slowly.

The cool night breeze blew, revealing resplendent stars peeking through the clouds high up in the sky. The trees by the side of the street swayed gently and scattered the swaying shadows on the ground. All of this was so quiet and beautiful. Jasmine only felt her body and mind relax, and all her worries disappeared.

This was the first time she was in such a good mood ever since she was injured. Unknowingly, a smile appeared on her face.

After walking for about five minutes, she suddenly heard someone shout her name.

“Eh, Jasmine?”

Jasmine turned her head and saw a familiar face. It was her former neighbor, Mrs. Hamil.

“Good evening, Mrs. Hamil, I haven’t seen you in a long time. Are you going to the carnival?” Jasmine, who wasn’t wearing a scarf, said with a heartfelt smile.

Mrs. Hamil was a woman with a head of white hair. She carefully sized up Jasmine and said, “I haven’t seen you since you moved away. I heard that you were injured in the previous blast?”

“Yes, but I’ve recovered.” Jasmine nodded heavily.

She then asked, “How is Jolie now?”

Jolie was Mrs. Hamil’s eldest daughter, and was her former playmate.

Mrs. Hamil’s expression instantly wore a shade of gloom.

“The Feysacians did unspeakable things to her, and she ended up dying…”

Jasmine was taken aback, thinking back to her experience while feeling sad.

A Feysacian soldier had rushed into her house in an attempt to do unspeakable things to her, but he only gave her a kick and left when he saw her disfigured face.

“Poor Jolie.” Jasmine sincerely tapped her chest four times in a clockwise fashion, outlining the stars.

It was only after she heard what had happened to her friend that she realized that she might have been relatively lucky.

After bidding farewell to Mrs. Hamil, Jasmine walked back to her apartment.

When she got home, she felt much better and her mood was back to normal. She started to look forward to the expression her parents would have when they saw her appearance restored.

They probably wouldn’t keep the pain deep in their hearts and pretend that nothing has happened. They would definitely cry with joy and hug me… Jasmine took the key that was hanging around her neck like a necklace, and as she thought about it, she opened the door.

The room was dark. None of the candles or the gas wall lamps were lit.

On the bed outside, light and heavy snoring could be heard from her parents, forming a contrast with the bustling municipal square.

They're asleep… Yes, they've been working hard… Jasmine gently closed the door and walked to her parents' bed. With the crimson moonlight shining in through the window, she cast her gaze over.

Daddy has a lot of white hair, and his wrinkles have deepened… Mommy keeps frowning when she sleeps. Her face is flaking; it's dry, and coarse… Only then did Jasmine realize that she hadn't seriously looked at her parents' faces for a long time. She didn't know that they had aged so much.

Before the war, her father was an accountant with a pretty good income. They could afford to rent a terrace house and allow his wife to not work so as to focus on taking care of the family. But now, he could only work at textile factories and do all kinds of strenuous labor. Jasmine's mother had no choice but to leave her family and become a textile worker.

Daddy's health is getting worse and worse. He's always coughing, but he has passed the recent Civil Servant Unified Examination. When the interview results are announced, he will have a decent job… Mommy keeps complaining that her arm is getting worse… Jasmine looked at her parents intently and didn't wake them up.

She had already thought of her second wish.

Softening her footsteps, Jasmine entered the room inside and poured out the last few pennies from her piggy bank that she had previously almost emptied.

Then, she left the apartment and boarded a trackless public carriage.

She was afraid that the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine would be gone if she delayed any further.

At that moment, there were a lot of passengers on the public carriage. Most of them were heading to participate in the carnival. Jasmine looked around and saw that there were no seats, so she had no choice but to support herself as she stood on the aisle, squeezing with plenty of people.

Ten minutes later, she reached her stop and turned into that street.

When the brass-colored machine embedded with a few pieces of glass appeared before her eyes, Jasmine silently heaved a sigh of relief and quickly approached.

During this process, she surveyed her surroundings and didn't find the magician by the name of Merlin Hermes.

"It really is fully automatic. There's no need for him to be by my side?" Jasmine muttered in puzzlement.

She didn't waste any time. She took out a penny and placed it inside the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

"I wish for my parents to be healthy again. I hope that my family will become rich." Jasmine softly voiced her wish. She closed her eyes and waited for the miracle to happen.

In the next second, she heard the clanging sound as though a coin had rolled out from the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

Jasmine opened her eyes in shock and looked ahead, only to see that the penny she had just put into the machine had landed on a small tray around the coin slot.

This wish can't be fulfilled? Uh, a wish can't contain too much content? My wish was actually two wishes… With the experience of being cured of her burns, Jasmine didn't suspect that there was something wrong with the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

She thought seriously and stuffed the penny into the coin slot. Then, she lowered her head and made a wish softly.

“I hope my parents are healthy again.”

This time, she heard a soft knock sound out from the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

Tak!

Seeing that the copper coin remained inside the machine, Jasmine knew that her wish had been fulfilled. She couldn’t wait to go home and check on her parents’ situation.

Suppressing her excitement, she inserted another penny.

She had originally planned on making her family wealthy, but remembering that her father was basically going to become a civil servant in Limon City, and that her family income was guaranteed, she couldn’t help but have other thoughts about it.

When she was ten years old, she already knew that she wasn’t good-looking. It wasn’t that people around her would despise her and say that she wasn’t good-looking, but amongst her playmates, there were two rather beautiful girls. This allowed them to be accorded with greater treatment and experience the kindness of the world.

Such a comparison only served to make Jasmine inevitably dream of becoming prettier as she grew older. But reality proved that dreams could only be dreams.

However, this time, her dream could turn into reality, because she had a miraculous Fully Automatic Wishing Machine in front of her.

If I can make myself beautiful, I can find a good husband, and I can improve my family situation… Jasmine seemed to have heard the devil whispering in her ear. She closed her eyes uncontrollably and made a wish:

“I wish to become extremely, extremely, extremely beautiful.”

She used “extremely” thrice to accentuate the beauty she wanted.

Just as she finished speaking, the “door” to the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine opened once again. A silver-white mask was pushed out and covered her face.

Jasmine quickly opened her eyes and happened to see the mask disappear.

At the same time, she felt something connect to her.

She turned around in anticipation and once again walked to the shop by the side of the street. Using the light from the gas lamps and the glass on the window, she saw her current appearance.

For a moment, Jasmine couldn’t describe the exact changes in her facial features and outline. All she knew was that at this moment even she was mesmerized by her beauty.

Her nose had become sharper and her lips had become fuller. Her eyes became bigger and limpid. Her skin was as tender as milk pudding. She only had slight similarities to her previous self.

“Is… Is this a miracle…” Jasmine couldn’t help but let out a heartfelt sigh of amazement.

She looked at herself, intoxicated. It took her great effort to finally retract her gaze before bowing at the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

Following that, she walked towards the public carriage stop. On the way, eyes kept turning to look at her.

Bang!

A man, who was too focused on her, slammed into a gas lamp post.

Jasmine pursed her lips into a smile. Without a word, she boarded the trackless public carriage.

There were still many people on board, and all the seats were taken.

Just as Jasmine was trying her best to find a spot, several men lifted their buttocks and straightened their bodies. They looked at her and smiled.

“Miss, you can sit here.”

Jasmine was momentarily stunned. She hadn’t expected to receive so much kindness.

She didn’t decline and sat down. She smiled at the man who had given up his seat.

“Thank you.”

The man’s expression became extremely animated as he said humbly, “This is what a gentleman should do.”

Jasmine still retained the habits from when she was previously cooped up at home, so she didn’t say anything else. She quietly sat there until she reached the stop near her apartment. Then, she got off the carriage.

After a few steps, she suddenly felt that someone was looking at her. She quickly turned her head to look.

It was a drunkard. He was staring at Jasmine with an indescribably disgusting look.

Jasmine jumped in fright and briskly walked to her apartment. However, the men she met along the way revealed similar looks, as though they could turn into beasts at any moment.

At that moment, Jasmine felt as though she was walking in the wilderness.

Chapter 1314 - Miracles Are Only For A Moment

◆

Previously, Jasmine enjoyed the gazes from the men, but now, all that was left was anxiety and horror.

She hastened her footsteps again as though she was being chased by Feysacians.

Finally, before the men could get close to her, she rushed into the apartment and got rid of them.

Phew… The girl patted her chest and secretly decided to stay out less at night.

Only then did she realize that extraordinary beauty had its disadvantages.

After calming down, Jasmine went up the dimly-lit stairs to the third floor and returned home. She used the key she carried with her to open the door.

She carefully approached her parents’ bed and used the moonlight to examine their faces.

Compared to when she left the house not too long ago, her parents’ faces were rather ruddy. Their white hair and wrinkles had lessened significantly, and their snoring was almost non-existent.

Their health has really been restored… Jasmine couldn’t help but smile, clearly relieved.

Sensing the commotion, her mother's eyelids twitched as she slowly opened her eyes.

Jasmine held her breath and restrained her smile, preparing to give her mother a surprise.

Her mother sat up and looked over, her expression suddenly becoming extremely terrified.

"Who are you?" asked the woman with a shrill voice as she shoved her husband forcefully.

Who am I? Jasmin was stunned by the question and didn't know how to answer the simple question.

At that moment, her father woke up as well. He looked at the beautiful girl in front of him with suspicion and vigilance.

"Get out! Otherwise, I'll call the police!" Jasmine's mother left the bed and picked up a candle stand beside her, using it as a weapon.

"We don't welcome burglars." Jasmine's father rather politely issued an order for Jasmine to leave.

He knew that he had to do his best not to pressure the burglar. Otherwise, it easily led to extreme responses from the other party.

If not for his wife and daughter, he wasn't too afraid of fighting the burglar. But now, his entire family was at stake.

Jasmine finally snapped out of her daze and hurriedly said, "Daddy, Mommy, I am…"

Before she could finish her sentence, her mother started to shove her repeatedly as she was pushed out of the room by her father.

No one cared about what she said. Under such circumstances, no one cared.

Thud!

The door to her apartment closed before her very eyes. It left her feeling lost and helpless.

She wanted to knock on the door and use the key she carried with her to prove her identity, but at that moment, she heard her mother shout to a patrolling police officer downstairs, “There’s a burglar, a burglar!”

Burglar… Daddy and Mommy don’t recognize me anymore… Will they think that I’ve murdered myself… Will the police believe the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine… Jasmine’s heart tightened, and she subconsciously decided to leave the apartment first to avoid the police. She would then find her father and mother to explain to them carefully at dawn and use their common memories to convince them.

Tap. Tap. Tap. She bowed her head and, under the watchful gazes of her neighbors, walked down the stairs and rushed out of the building.

She ran all the way to a nearby alley and avoided the approaching police officer from the main street. Gasping for air, Jasmine stopped in her tracks. Tears uncontrollably rolled down her face and fell to the ground.

Suddenly, a hand reached over and covered her mouth, dragging her to a secluded corner of the alley.

“How much? I’ll pay however much it costs…” A voice filled with drunkenness rang in Jasmine’s ears. It was as if he had mistaken her for a prostitute and could no longer resist her allure.

Jasmine tried her best to struggle, alarmed, afraid, and desperate.

Just as she was about to break down, the drunkard released his hand.

“Miss, are you alright?” A hoarse male voice sounded.

Jasmine dashed away from the drunkard before turning around to see a police officer in a black-and-white checkered uniform.

“He… He…” As Jasmine spoke, she began to cry.

The policeman looked at her sympathetically and said, “We will take legal action on him. However, Miss, you’ll need to return to the police station with me to record your statement.”

Jasmine was in a state of extreme panic and extreme helplessness. She subconsciously nodded.

Not long after, she sat in the police station’s testimony room nearby. Facing her was the same police officer and his colleague.

The policeman deliberated over his words and asked, “So you’re telling me, he didn’t ask you if you were a prostitute, and you didn’t do anything that might come off as soliciting customers?”

He was worried that his words would hurt the beautiful girl in front of him.

Jasmine held a coffee cup and lowered her head to take a sip.

“Yes, I just reached the alley.”

“Alright, let’s end it here. Miss Jasmine, can you tell us where your house is? We will get someone to send you back.” Another policeman tried to get in her good books.

Recalling his parents’ reaction and the disgusting gazes, Jasmine couldn’t help but shudder. She said in tears, “I had a quarrel with my parents and can’t return home for the time being. Perhaps you can take me to the nearest hotel…”

At this point, she remembered that she was only left with a few pence. There was no way she could stay in a good hotel, and the cheap motels were practically dangerous to her.

The first policeman was taken aback.

“Okay.”

On the way to the nearest hotel, the policeman hesitated several times before finally saying, “If, I mean if—you plan on becoming a street girl, you can come to me. There’s no need for you to go through that much effort…”

Upon hearing this, Jasmine felt on the brink of mental collapse. It was just different from when she first saw her face after the fire.

This made her feel extremely insecure and she remained silent.

Fortunately, the police officer didn’t force her and sent her to the entrance of the nearest hotel.

“There’s no need to go in with me. I’ll go by myself.” Jasmine rejected the policeman’s suggestion of sending her to her room.

After the police officer left, she quickly walked out of the hotel without completing the check-in procedures.

She wanted to go to the municipal square, to the place where the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine was to cancel her previous wish.

Such beauty was terrifying!

After taking a few steps, Jasmine removed the scarf around her shoulders and wrapped it around her face in layers, just like how she left her home that very night.

Back then, there were still burn scars on her face. Her missing nose and damaged lips made her look like a devil.

When she arrived at the municipal square on a trackless carriage, she entered the street once again and saw the brass Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

Jasmine’s heart immediately calmed down. She quickened her pace and arrived in front of the machine.

Then, she was at a loss. She didn’t know how to cancel her last wish.

“Your first wish was a free trial, and it wasn’t counted in the three wishes. So you have one more wish.” Jasmine suddenly heard Mr. Merlin Hermes’s voice.

She turned her head and saw that across the street, under the dim yellow light of the street lamp, the magician wearing a tall hat was looking calmly at her.

“Good, good.” Jasmine hurriedly took out a copper penny and inserted it into the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

“I hope my previous wish is canceled,” she said with her eyes closed as she gripped the wrench and spun it.

Tak!

She heard the dull thud once again.

When she opened her eyes, she rushed to a nearby shop. She stopped in front of the glass window and removed the scarf wrapped around her face.

She saw herself again. She was no longer a pretty girl.

Jasmine instantly relaxed, and instinctively turned her head to look at the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine, but found that it had disappeared along with Mr. Merlin Hermes.

“Praise the Lady. Thank you, Mr. Hermes.” Jasmine sincerely tapped her chest four times in a clockwise manner.

She used her last copper penny to head home on a trackless public carriage.

Along the way, no one gave up their seats to her.

When her figure vanished from the street, Klein appeared again, holding a silver mirror with ancient patterns.

“Great Master, why didn’t you add the line that ‘excessive greed will only turn something good into something bad’ or ‘wishes always have a price?’ This will make the whole matter seem even more philosophical. It will be elevated into a fable.” On the surface of the mirror, silver words appeared.

Klein smiled and said, “The biggest problem was that I couldn’t use normal methods to satisfy her ‘extremely, extremely, extremely beautiful’ wish. Lie can only adjust her looks to a certain extent.

“Therefore, I had no choice but to use one of the effects of a Sealed Artifact that originated from a Demoness to ‘Graft’ it onto her. That resulted in her stunning beauty and terrifying charm. This made the surrounding men unable to resist her.”

The Sealed Artifact belonged to Xio, a relic of Demoness Shermane.

Due to a problem with Xio’s storage abilities, Shermane’s Beyonder characteristic fused with the box containing it, becoming a Sealed Artifact with shockingly negative effects. This caused Xio’s younger brother to look at the box strangely.

In order to resolve this problem, Xio made a wish for Mr. Fool to seal the item for her.

After saying that casually, Klein looked at the magic mirror.

“Arrodes, are you consoling me?”

“No, the main problem was that she’s too greedy. If she only wanted to become beautiful and didn’t add so many ’extremely’s to the wish, then the result would’ve been pretty good.” On the surface of the mirror, silver words quickly appeared.

“Indeed. That will be within the extent that can be achieved by Lie.” Klein nodded and said to Arrodes, “Lie’s adjustments can indeed be permanent, but it’s a structure that is ultimately different from the original muscles, skin, and bone structure. After more than a decade, when she's gradually showing signs of age, the adjustments and the differences will slowly magnify, making her face appear rather strange and stiff. That can only be fixed periodically by becoming a Faceless."

Having said that, Klein smiled and shook his head.

"A lie is ultimately a lie."

Then, he walked towards the other end of the street and continued, "Besides, even if she really becomes beautiful, it's still uncertain whether she will lead a better life in the future. It's true that beauty allows her to obtain a lot of resources and allow her to marry a 'prince.' However, her personal upbringing, character, and knowledge are unlikely to support such a lifestyle.

"Yes, I can't rule out the possibility that she's good at studying, being capable of using all kinds of experience to fully enrich herself, and ultimately direct herself to possibly having a good life. However, that's a whole other story.

"Heh heh, miracles are only for a moment, but fate is often a long-lasting event."

[image]

In the conversation with Arrodes, Klein gradually vanished from the end of the street.

His understanding of Miracle Invoker had deepened again.

†

After returning to her family apartment, Jasmine didn't attempt to open the door. She used a lot of courage to knock on the door.

The door opened and her mother appeared in front of her.

"Oh, you're finally back." Her mother first heaved a sigh of relief, then asked in an abnormally horrified manner, “Y-your face?”

Jasmine forced a smile and said, “I’ve been cured, by a mister who’s good at creating miracles.

“Mr. Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.”

Just as her parents suspected that their daughter had been influenced by demons, a few policemen in black-and-white checkered uniforms walked up the stairs and came over.

Leading the policemen was a lady. She had light blue eyes and a smile that quietened others.

“Miss Jasmine, we have some questions for you,” the lady said politely.

Chapter 1315 - Summary Report

◈ ◈ ◈

Jasmine felt that she should have been afraid, but she found it difficult to have much strong emotions facing the female police officer in front of her. She felt like her body and mind had unknowingly settled down after crying for a long time.

She looked at her parents who had a complicated expression and asked hesitantly, “Okay, what questions do you have?”

The female policeman with the rank of superintendent pointed at the door and said, “Let’s talk inside.”

She didn’t get Jasmine’s parents to leave. She only ordered the two police officers with her to guard by the door.

After closing the door, she pulled a crude round stool over and sat down without standing on ceremony, looking very relaxed.

This immediately made Jasmine and her parents less tense.

“You may call me Ma’am Grey.” The officer introduced herself and pointed at another chair and the bed. “Have a seat.”

When everyone in the room found their seats, she smiled at Jasmine and said, “I received a report saying that there were some incomprehensible things happening around you. For example, a male’s desire for committing sexual assault had far exceeded normal standards. This doesn’t mean that there are no bad people or criminals among them, but the ratio is too high, so high that it’s strange.”

At this point, she swept her gaze across Jasmine's face.

"From what I know, you were seriously injured during the fire and was permanently disfigured. But now, I can't tell any of that. What do you have to say about this?"

Jasmine's heart tensed up again. She didn't dare hide anything and said in a panic, "I went out tonight to the municipal square to attend the carnival. While I was passing by a particular street, I encountered a wandering magician who called himself Merlin Hermes. He said that he had invented a machine called 'the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.' All I had to do was insert a penny, softly state my wish, and turn the wrench, then my wish would be granted.

"He said that I was the first user, so I could experience it for free once. Th-then, I was restored to my original state, having all my injuries healed.

"Officer, that's what happened. You must believe me."

With that, she glanced at Mrs. Grey and her assistant before looking at her parents, trying to get their approval.

However, her parents clearly said:

"How is this possible?

"How can there be a machine that can automatically grant the wishes of others?

"How can there be something as good as granting a wish cost only a penny?

"Besides, the first user experienced it for free!"

Grey and her assistant didn't show any obvious expressions, making Jasmine unsure if they believed her or not.

"Continue." Seeing her pause, Grey nodded encouragingly.

Jasmine hurriedly mentioned how she returned home to get some coins before recounting in full how she wished for her parents to regain their health and how she wanted to become beautiful. Finally, she said, “I was indeed very beautiful. Even I couldn’t move my eyes away. This made me experience a lot of kindness, but later on, the surrounding men started to frighten me…

“In addition, Daddy and Mommy didn’t recognize me and chased me out of the house. I was scared, very scared. I returned to the machine and made a third wish. Yes, that Mr. Merlin Hermes said that the first wish was free, and wasn’t part of the three wishes. In short, I returned to my original appearance and met you.”

Upon hearing these words, Jasmine’s parents instantly thought of the beautiful “burglar” from before.

Then, they realized that their bodies were indeed much healthier than before. Their vision had recovered and their arms had sufficient strength. Everything seemed different.

They began to believe Jasmine’s description, but they felt even more terrified. It was as if they had encountered a demon, exactly the same as those stories in folklore.

Grey nodded gently.

“I’ve seen many matters that are beyond your imagination, but this is the first time I’ve heard of something like a Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

“Compared to a wishing lamp or wishing pool in folklore, this is too modern.”

After a pause, her expression turned serious.

“As an experienced law enforcer, I’ll give you three suggestions.

“First, don’t believe in such things again from now on. Under most circumstances, the easy granting of wishes brings about a huge disaster. There's nothing wrong with describing it as the temptation of demons."

Jasmine nodded heavily, indicating that she wouldn't dare to do it again—that final experience still left her feeling afraid.

"Secondly, go to the cathedral as soon as possible and repent to the bishop. Get him to purify you." Grey looked around and said, "Your entire family must go."

Seeing that Jasmine and her parents were about to say that they already had this in mind, Grey turned to Jasmine.

"My department still lacks some staff. You can consider joining us. This way, I can monitor your situation at any time and deal with any abnormalities in time. As for the salary, trust me, it's about the same as a civil servant."

The salary is about the same as a civil servant's… I can be protected… There's something that nice? Jasmine asked in disbelief, "What department is it?"

Grey smiled and said, "I'll give you an address. Come to my office tomorrow, and I'll fill you in on the details."

"…Alright." Jasmine was in a state of panic and unease. She would grab a life-saving straw the moment it appeared.

†

A week later, Jasmine officially joined the Nighthawks in Limon City and became a civilian staff member.

"Captain, the telegraph device has broken down," she said carefully as she knocked on Grey's door.

Grey put down the documents in her hand and rubbed her temples.

“Report this to the police station and let them handle it.

“Seriously, I could’ve gotten the help of the Machinery Hivemind in the past. It was done in a quick and effective way. Now, sigh…”

By the time Jasmine left, Grey picked up the documents and began to read them carefully.

This was a piece of information that the Nighthawks had gathered regarding the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

After Jasmine, this happened more than once!

After flipping through the documents, Grey spread out a piece of paper, picked up a fountain pen, and began writing the official document for the Constant archbishop and the Holy Cathedral:

“There have been many supernatural incidents in the city in the past week. It involves a special machine called ‘the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.’ According to the intel, it was created by a wandering magician who calls himself Merlin Hermes, but we haven’t ruled out other possibilities. At least, I think that Merlin might be an illusion created by this machine, so as to lure people into making wishes…

“This machine is of a brass color embedded with opaque glass. Its surface has gears, bearings, rivets, metal pipes, and other components exposed on its surface. It seems to be a product of modern industrialization…

“Case 1: A young girl who was disfigured by a fire, had met the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine at the municipal square… Her first wish was to revert back to her original appearance, and it was granted normally… Her second wish was to restore her parents’ health, which was also granted normally… Her third wish was to become, extremely, extremely, extremely beautiful. Then, she no longer looked like herself, and she had an irresistible charm to the men around her…

“She claimed that she was the first user of Fully Automatic Wishing

Machine, which allowed her to have one free wish. With that, she canceled her third wish…

“Case 2: A retired soldier who participated in the war to defend Limon was left with serious mental damage. He met the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine by the river… His first wish was to restore his mental state to a state before the war, and it was granted normally… His second wish was to become a little more handsome so as to reach the standards of the male models on magazine covers. He also had it granted normally… His third wish was to obtain 100,000 pounds and become a tycoon. Then, he caught the fancy of the owner of the Limon United Steel Company who wished to marry him—a lady with a wealth of nearly 200,000 pounds…

“This retired soldier didn’t wish to accept her with her having a weight of more than two hundred pounds and her shorter-than-average height. Furthermore, she’s a violent middle-aged woman. He prepared to leave Limon and head south. If there comes a day when he doesn’t want to work hard anymore, he can easily obtain the rights to a wealth of 100,000 pounds… In a sense, his wish was granted, but he’s unwilling to accept it…

“Case 3: …

“Case 4: …

“Case 5: A public school teacher met the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine near a Storm cathedral… Her first wish was to make herself look better, and not be ostracized by her students because of her looks or be spurned by her colleagues. This was granted normally… Her second wish was to obtain a better position, which was also granted. As her teaching standards were high enough and she was no longer restricted by her looks, she quickly became the most popular teacher among the students and began taking on the duties as vice principal…

“Her third wish was to have a husband with impeccable looks, family background, personality, and ability. Finally, she got a doll who could speak, move, and have a certain level of intelligence. It had living characteristics and looked rather handsome. It was carved by the best master and could have any personality one wanted. It was very capable in every aspect. Other than not being human, it really had no flaws…

“Case 6: …

“…

“Summarizing these cases, we have obtained some preliminary guesses.

“The Fully Automatic Wishing Machine can appear anywhere in Limon. It’s extremely random, and there’s temporarily no discovered pattern for it…

“Most of the wishes that are made can be fulfilled normally. However, a small portion will be distorted, and the latter is basically concentrated on the third wish. Of course, it’s also possible that the person will let themselves loose by the time they make the third wish and thus, make excessive demands…

“The wishes it granted were mostly related to appearance, but it covered a wide scope. It was almost omnipotent…

“The frequency of its appearances is also irregular…

“This is a classic example of a mystical item that needs to be sealed. Furthermore, it clearly exceeds the grade of a Grade 2 Sealed Artifact. I hope the archbishop and high-ranking deacons will personally deal with it, or give an effective sealing method…”

†

On the steam locomotive out of Limon, Klein observed his digestion of the Miracle Invoker potion.

Chapter 1316 - An Unknown City

◆

If I keep accumulating it bit by bit, it won't be long before I can respond to Moon City's prayers and cure their deformity, thus creating quite a miracle… In addition, I've also concluded the acting principles of a Miracle Invoker. It's only a matter of time before I digest it if I follow them. I might even finish within the year… Klein retracted his gaze from outside the window, raised his left arm, and controlled the monster puppet on his hand to entertain a child across him.

This made him look more like a wandering magician.

If he was willing, he could even use Life's Cane or the "Grafting" ability to imbue this sock puppet with living characteristics.

While entertaining the child, Klein's thoughts scattered as he considered where the marionette city needed to be "built" for the advancement ritual.

A marionette city needs sufficient interaction to develop a corresponding region in the spirit world. This means that it isn't enough to leave it in the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Ignoring the fact that it's sealed there, there's no way of directly connecting it to the spirit world. All I can do is rely on the little specialness it has. Even if there's no problem with it, it's difficult to create any interactivity with a place that lacks intelligent life…

If it's placed in the Northern and Southern Continent or the sea colonies, I have to be careful. Before the ritual is about to succeed, I definitely can't expose the fact that it's a marionette city. Otherwise, it will be affected, damaged, or even attacked by Zaratul, Amon, and my other enemies…

Yes, I have to give a sufficiently good reason for a marionette city to appear. Then, there won't be any abnormalities with the interaction between the traveling merchants and the surrounding humans. I have to make every marionette a living person. They have their past, present, and future. They follow their own trajectories of fate…

This means that a marionette city is extremely complicated. I need to split out many Worms of Spirit to deal with it. This also has the risk of losing control by doing so…

If they are husband and wife, they should act like husband and wife. When faced with something they are fond of, they should show joy. Perverts should be hated… This way, foreigners might hear embarrassing sounds while staying in the marionette city…

I'm still just an innocent child…

This is a large-scale reality show, or rather, a high-end version of "playing house." It has to be able to deceive the audience…

As Klein lampooned inwardly, he silently counted if he had enough marionettes.

Previously, he had gone to the Forsaken Land of the Gods several times and converted a large number of them. There were all kinds of monsters that might not have Beyonder characteristics. He also consciously controlled batches of rats, cockroaches, mosquitoes, and flies, hoping to make a more uncommon side of the city real enough.

I'm barely able to support a small city, so just a few more visits to the Forsaken Land of the Gods would do… Just as this thought flashed through Klein's mind, a scene suddenly appeared in front of him.

At the top of the Giant King's Court which was bathed in the light of dusk, the open door slowly and heavily closed.

This was like a pair of invisible hands closing the entrance to the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

This… Klein's eyes darkened as he vaguely guessed that this scene meant that the True Creator was about to seal off the Forsaken Land of the Gods again.

This was the prophetic power that came from his angel-level spiritual intuition and premonition for danger.

It was about to happen a few minutes or a few seconds later.

Did the True Creator capture Amon? Or has "He" already given up? "He" once again sealed off the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Does "He" not want others to enter again? Isn't this too petty? Klein mumbled inwardly, feeling a little disappointed.

Of course, he barely had enough marionettes. Even if he lacked them, he could make up for it at sea.

†

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Audrey had just changed her clothes and sent away her maidservants. Just as she was about to leave, she saw Susie walk in.

"What's the matter? You should be out on your stroll at this time?" As an experienced Spectator, Audrey immediately sensed that something was amiss.

During this period of time, she had been busy making use of the influence she had in a few foundations to help the workers, farmers, and injured veterans with their hardships. She had allowed them to wait for a new job opportunity or for their plantation's production in a new season. She had a lot less interaction with Susie than usual.

At the same time, Audrey was secretly guiding the workers of lower socioeconomic status from the various unions in Backlund to gather their strength together.

Her previous experiences made her understand that counting on the kindness of the upper class wasn't reliable or long-lasting. A single person appeared puny and powerless in the face of the government, nobles, and powerful merchants. Only by summoning the combined strength of a large number of civilians could a balance be formed.

The Loen Kingdom had unions in different industries a long time ago, but the upper echelons of these associations were easily bribed. Instead, they became effective weapons against ordinary workers.

Susie glanced at Audrey with a rather normal expression, but her mouth seemed to be out of control. It vibrated the air and let out a deep male voice.

"Miss Audrey, I'm the president of the Psychology Alchemists, Eric Drake. I wish to meet you and discuss with you about becoming a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists. I'm at the nearby park."

Having said that, Susie heaved a long sigh of relief and regained her original voice.

"Audrey, there's a strange guy looking for you. I… I can't remember what he looks like. H-he directly placed the words he wanted to say into my mind island!"

Audrey's pupils dilated slightly before immediately returning to normal. She calmly nodded and said, "Where is he at the park?"

As she spoke, Audrey secretly conjured a Virtual Persona and entered Susie's mind island through the sea of collective subconscious. She checked if it was still distorted by some external consciousness or knowledge.

"I don't remember… I was having my stroll," Susie said as she recalled.

Then, she wagged her tail slightly and said, “I don’t think you should go. It’s dangerous.”

After confirming that Susie didn’t have any latent problems with her Virtual Persona, Audrey exhaled and said, “It will be even more suspicious if I don’t go. That way, danger will be unavoidable. It might even affect the rest of the people in the house.”

Besides, this is also an opportunity. Just as Mr. Hanged Man said, since the end of the world is coming, all the hard work and attempts that will not bring disaster are meaningful… Audrey added inwardly before saying, “I will protect myself.

“Susie, did anything happen to you just now?”

Susie barked and said, “No.

“Audrey, are you really going?”

“Yes.” Audrey gave a clear answer.

“Then can you bring me along? Just like before, I’m just a dog in their eyes,” Susie mustered up her courage and said.

“No, there’s no need. I’ll be back very soon. Believe me, I’ll be blessed by a deity,” Audrey replied with a faint smile.

After comforting Susie, she used her Psychological Invisibility and left the luxurious villa like she usually did.

When she was far away, in a corner on the first floor, a servant who was cleaning suddenly bowed his head and softly said words that he had never learned before:

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…”

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

The figure sitting in The Fool's seat naturally looked at the newly formed prayer light and realized that the believer was extremely unfamiliar.

It's identical to Miss Justice's home environment… I can suspect that it's a result of guidance created by a Virtual Persona's invasion of the mind island… Miss Justice used this method to avoid any surveillance and pray for blessings… The figure quickly came to a conclusion and transferred the corresponding situation to his true body.

A few seconds later, Klein entered Sefirah Castle and allowed the Worms of Spirit to burrow into his body.

Miss Justice is becoming more and more like a High-Sequence Spectator… Klein praised inwardly as he cast his gaze at the crimson star representing Justice.

†

In the park with a lake.

As soon as Audrey entered, she saw a large carriage drive over. The carriage driver was an ordinary middle-aged man wearing an old hat and a dark-colored jacket.

However, in Audrey's eyes, this carriage driver didn't exist because he didn't have a corresponding island of consciousness or mind.

In other words, the carriage driver was just an illusion, a fake, and the controller of the carriage was the horse itself.

A few seconds later, the large carriage stopped in front of Audrey. The door creaked open.

"Please come in." A deep male voice came from inside.

Audrey lifted the ends of her skirt slightly and boarded the carriage. She saw a man sitting on a black wheelchair.

His pale yellow eyebrows were long and his hair was neatly combed back. There were some wrinkles on his forehead, and his face was abnormally pale.

“Mr. Derlau? Aren’t you already dead?” Audrey recognized the man in front of her and expressed her surprise perfectly.

“To a Spectator, death only represents the end of one’s identity. In other theatrical plays, I’m still alive,” the elderly gentleman who was sitting in a black wheelchair replied with a smile. “Apart from the former royal family’s medical consultant, the former chancellor of Backlund Medical School, I’m also King of the Black Throne Barros Hopkins at sea. I’m the famous hermit, Eric Drake, etc.

“Then how should I address you?” Audrey asked politely as she watched the door close automatically from the corner of her eye.

The old gentleman stroked the wheels on both sides of his wheelchair and said, “You can call me Mr. President, or you can continue calling me Mr. Derlau.”

He then pointed to the seat on the left side of the carriage.

“Have a seat. Let’s head somewhere first before discussing you becoming a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists.”

Audrey nodded slightly and calmly sat down.

Without hiding anything, she cast her gaze out of the window and was surprised to find that in the blink of an eye, the park had turned into an unfamiliar city, one that was shrouded in darkness.

The city was filled with extremely mysterious and beautiful buildings that gave off a dark feeling. There were gentlemen wearing top hats and trench coats, as well as women in complicated and dark dresses.

As Audrey swept her gaze, she saw a gentleman with short black hair beside a carriage, revealing sharp canine fangs in his mouth.

This was a werewolf.

Chapter 1317 - “Pride”

◆

“What is this place?” Audrey asked without much change in her expression, as though she was asking about the location of the ball tonight.

Pauli Derlau, who claimed to be the president of the Psychology Alchemists, cast his gaze out the window as well. He smiled and said, “This is the city in everyone’s heart.

“It’s present wherever there are people.”

Audrey nodded in thought.

“In other words, you can enter this place from any corner of human society?”

Derlau stroked his wheelchair and said, “That’s right.”

He didn’t explain further and instead pointed at the pedestrians outside the carriage.

“Everything here has a corresponding psychological symbol; they are called ‘Bestial Desire.’”

Bestial Desire… Audrey repeated the word silently. As she maintained her dignified posture, she cast her gaze even further.

Among the pedestrians, there were werewolves, as well as walking upright bears. There were cats with lazy expressions, and there was a strange man with a face of a spotted spider, a huge mouse with red eyes, a python with its tongue sticking out, and a canine creature that studied every creature that passed it by with eyes filled with the desire to mate…

They were either wearing a top hat and trench coat or an exquisite and complicated long dark dress, doing their best to imitate humans in every detail, but they were unable to truly resemble a human.

The carriage traveled through the darkness of the night, traveling between pedestrians and all kinds of Gothic buildings. Soon, they arrived at a cathedral in the middle of the city.

The cathedral was more than eighty meters tall, propped up thanks to the numerous black columns. Each pillar was embedded with a certain number of skulls. Some of them came from humans, while others came from different creatures. However, their empty eye sockets were tilted downwards, as though they were observing at every living creature that entered the cathedral.

Just like most buildings here, every detail in the cathedral could be said to be exquisite, but they formed the elements that leaned towards nightmare, horror, terror, and mystery.

After getting off the carriage, Audrey saw a grand but empty hall through the main door.

In the depths of the hall stood a huge cross. Curled around the cross was a grayish-white dragon statue.

Unlike ordinary cathedrals, there were no pews for believers to pray, nor were there places for candle stands. However, in front of the dragon statue, there was a small long table. On both sides of the long table were five seats, and the seats at both ends were empty.

Pauli Derlau wheeled himself to the end of the long table where the seat of honor was. Then, he pointed to his left.

“Please take a seat.”

Audrey slowly followed behind him. She looked around and casually pulled out a chair before sitting down.

She wasn't too close to the president of the Psychology Alchemists, nor was she too far away. She perfectly showed her vigilance and didn't show any signs of guilt.

Pauli Derlau raised his hands and clasped them together before placing them on the surface of the long table.

"Miss Audrey, I have something to ask you."

"Please speak." Audrey turned her head slightly and responded with her green eyes.

Derlau nodded slightly and said, "I would like to know how you advanced to Sequence 4 Manipulator. Where did you get your potion formula and Beyonder characteristic?"

Audrey replied frankly, "It was from a deal.

"A client wished to receive the help of a Spectator demigod, and had paid the Manipulator potion formula and Beyonder characteristic as an advance."

Derlau immediately laughed.

"That actually happened? These generous conditions resemble a father finding an excuse to give his daughter a present.

"Can you tell me exactly what kind of help you provided?"

"Kill another demigod. In this matter, control of one's mind was rather crucial." Audrey simply explained.

Her attitude was very calm, as if she was talking about the homework given to her by a teacher.

Derlau's long and fluffy eyebrows twitched as he said, "And you succeeded?”

“The results are obvious enough.” Audrey gave an answer rather tactfully.

Derlau sized her up and realized that the noble girl on his left was a Manipulator who could kill other demigods.

Audrey read his thoughts and added, “I was just one of the participants.”

Derlau nodded and said, “Do you know where the client’s Manipulator potion formula and Beyonder characteristic came from?”

“He didn’t tell me straight with regards to this question.” Audrey gave an answer with a sentence she had long planned out.

“He? Can you tell me who he is?” Derlau asked after some deliberation.

Audrey had been guarding against the other party’s Virtual Persona from infiltrating her mind island. However, she had yet to notice anything abnormal since the beginning.

This made her suspect that the other party didn’t need to infiltrate her mind. All he needed to do was observe the fluctuations of the surrounding sea of collective subconscious to understand her true thoughts.

She didn’t make any attempts to hide and calmly replied,

“This concerns an agreement between us. I believe honoring one’s promise is a moral standard that the entire world approves of. And in mysticism, this comes into play at a deeper level.”

Having said that, Audrey took the initiative to say, “If you can’t really trust me because of my inability to mention this, I’m willing to accept this.

“I can only remain an ordinary member and use my contributions in exchange for the psychological research materials that are available to me."

Derlau smiled when he heard that.

"Everyone has their own secrets. This is very normal. What I need to assess is whether your secret will affect the safety of the entire Psychology Alchemists."

He looked deeply at Audrey and said, "Then can you tell me how you got to know such a client?"

"I remember that I once reported that, before joining the Psychology Alchemists, I'd already come into contact with some people in a mysticism circle and got to know a few Beyonders," Audrey said a truth that couldn't be any truer.

As for what the real logical order to the answer was, it was another matter.

Furthermore, the matter regarding Hvin Rambis's "disappearance" which stemmed from the investigation of Fors and Xio was something both parties had never talked about but had definitely acknowledged.

Derlau retracted his hands from the table and placed them by his chest.

"There's another thing I would like to ask: when was the last time you met Hvin Rambis?"

Audrey frowned slightly and said, "I remember that I've been asked before."

After Hvin Rambis's death, she didn't immediately cut off any contact with the Psychology Alchemists. She continued to maintain a certain connection with the upper echelons through Hilbert, Stephen, and Escalante. Only when the war reached Backlund did she realize that she couldn't contact the members of the Psychology Alchemists cell for various reasons.

"I need to confirm it in person," Derlau said calmly.

Audrey nodded gently and said, "The last time I met Hvin Rambis was in Viscount Glaint's mansion. At that time, I hypnotized my two Beyonder friends I knew, as per his instructions, and asked them why they were investigating Viscount Stratford and who the mastermind behind this was.

At that time, Councillor Hvin Rambis was nearby, ensuring that nothing went wrong with the hypnotism. After he received the answer, he quickly left.

"After that day, I never saw him again."

As she answered, Audrey was still guarding against the invasion of her mind island. However, it was calm there, and nothing happened.

This didn't make Audrey feel relaxed. Instead, she became even more wary. She didn't even dare to think about anything related to Mr. Fool and The World Gehrman Sparrow.

She was only certain of one thing: As long as she was exposed to danger, Mr. Fool would definitely provide her with protection.

"It's identical to your previous answer." Derlau nodded slowly.

He then looked into Audrey's green eyes and said frankly, "I can't use mysticism methods to trace the origins of the Beyonder characteristic in your body. This means that the person who provided it has an unimaginable existence behind him."

Audrey nodded slightly but forcefully, expressing that she agreed with his assessment.

"I can't force you to not cooperate with other Beyonders or make deals. It's unrealistic. I just hope that you can promise not to reveal anything about the Psychology Alchemists to anyone. At the very least, when you wish to entrust certain missions to others, you have to package them and hide the secrets," Derlau said calmly as he retracted his gaze.

Audrey replied without hesitation, "I promise not to tell any living creature that isn't qualified to know about matters regarding the Psychology Alchemists."

She took the initiative to amplify the concept all the way to that of a living being to make up for any loopholes in her promise.

As soon as she finished speaking, she felt her thoughts surface from her mind island.

These thoughts intertwined, turning into an illusory net that seeped into Audrey's mind island, turning into her subconscious.

As this "restriction net" came from Audrey's spirituality, she would be incapable of removing it even if she became an angel. She would lose the intention of talking about the Psychology Alchemists when she faced non-members of the Psychology Alchemists or people who didn't qualify to know about them.

And she wouldn't realize this.

He didn't invade my spiritual island. Just my words alone made the promise turn something substantial… While Audrey was alarmed, her expression didn't show.

Of course, she didn't completely restrain herself, as being surprised by such means was an instinctive reaction from a Manipulator.

Based on this point, she suspected that either there was something wrong with this city that existed in the heart, or that Derlau, the Psychology Alchemists president, wasn't just at the level of a saint.

Seeing Audrey make her promise, Derlau pointed at the long table in satisfaction and said, "From now on, you are a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists.

“You can choose a persona mask as your codename.”

As he spoke, seven grayish-white masks appeared on the long table. They were rather illusory and abnormally cold. Five of them were placed in front of the corresponding seats, as though they already had a master.

“The remaining two persona masks are Wrath and Pride,” Derlau introduced. “They come from the Holy Bible of the Creator from the Third Epoch.”

Audrey thought for a second before reaching out her hand to the mask that didn’t contain any anger.

“I choose Pride.”

Derlau looked at her and chuckled.

“That was the choice Hvin Rambis made back then.”

Chapter 1318 - Seven Councilors

◆

Audrey’s right hand paused for a moment before returning to normal. She picked up the mask known as Pride.

“A 50% chance isn’t low,” she replied to Pauli Derlau simply.

This was to say that picking the mask that Hvin Rambis had worn before wasn’t a surprising coincidence.

With that said, Audrey wore the cold gray mask on her face.

Almost instantly, she felt that she had an additional Virtual Persona that had appeared in her mind island.

This didn’t stem from the outside world, but rather, a magnification of what she knew to the extremes.

“They received very little education. They have to make the right choice under my guidance.

“Not everyone has enough intelligence. On the contrary, most people are very stupid.

“Those workers are impulsive and irrational. They are easily enticed by tiny perks and have no foresight. Only with me thinking for them, guiding them, and making decisions for them can they be saved.

“They are worthy of pity, but they aren’t worth communicating with.

“…”

These thoughts echoed in Audrey’s mind, almost making her believe that this was the truth. After all, this was partial feedback she had received from her previous observation and experience. It wasn’t something that had been fabricated out of thin air.

With a sweep of her gaze, Audrey saw herself from the smooth surface of the long table.

On the cold gray mask, her eyes moved upwards, fixing it to her forehead as though she could only see things high above without a care about anything else. It was funny, strange, and secretly horrifying.

Audrey fell silent. A few seconds later, she said in a deep voice, “Is this Pride?”

If it wasn’t for the fact that she had long escaped her misconceptions through the exchange between Mr. World, Mr. Hanged Man, and Ma’am Hermit, she might’ve been truly affected by Pride’s persona.

As for what would happen after being affected, she couldn’t tell.

“You recovered much faster than I expected. It looks like you haven’t lost yourself in the experience of manipulating others,” Derlau said approvingly.

Audrey replied thoughtfully, “Mr. Hvin Rambis has always appeared a little proud…”

Derlau clasped his hands at his chest and said, “You could tell?”

“Only occasionally. Some details,” Audrey replied in two short sentences.

Derlaua sighed and shook his head with a smile.

“This mask’s influence on Hvin Rambis was worse than I expected. Besides, he usually put on a very good disguise.

“Under this premise, I don’t find it strange that he has gone missing.

His arrogance will make it impossible for him to see the path beneath his feet. It will make him look down on Beyonders who are weaker than him, and this will often bring great danger."

Audrey resisted the urge to recall Hvin Rambis's death, and asked in deliberation, "These seven personalities can amplify the corresponding knowledge and emotions to help us realize our own problems, so that we can deal with them directly. At the same time, they will also bring some negative effects, and unknowingly change its wearer's personality?"

Derlau nodded slightly.

"In the mind domain, it's very difficult to obtain external help that's pure and without danger. One has to have enough internal strength to avoid the corresponding negative effects.

"You have walked the right path for you to realize this."

Audrey was just about to take the opportunity to discuss some questions about the mind domain when she suddenly saw a mask on the table disappear.

She subconsciously turned her head and looked at the entrance of the cathedral. She saw a figure walk in through the door.

This figure was wearing a three-piece formal wear suit, and he had a half top hat in his hand. He wore the mask that had disappeared earlier on.

The mouth on the mask was opened wide until it reached close to the ears. Its mouth remained open, as if it wanted to swallow everything that its eyes could see.

"This is one of the councilors of the Psychology Alchemists, Mr. Gluttony." Derlau did the introductions.

Following that, the remaining councilors of the Psychology Alchemists arrived one after another. They were Mr. Lust, Ma'am Greed, Miss Sloth, and Mr. Envy.

As a senior Spectator, Audrey was the first to notice the difference in their masks:

Greed was similar to a Gluttony. His mouth reached his earlobes, but it wasn't open. Furthermore, his eyes were closed.

Lust was similar to Pride, but its eyes were different from ordinary people. They had sunk to the middle of their noses, as though they were looking at people from the bottom.

Envy's eyes, ears, nose, and mouth were slightly slanted, and had a gloomy temperament.

Sloth's eyes were tightly shut, and its mouth naturally drooped, giving off the feeling that the wearer was sleeping.

Seeing all the councilors present, Derlau smiled and said, "Let's wait for another friend. He will be the seventh councilor. Heh, eighth, I forgot to count myself."

Just as he said that, a figure entered the cathedral's main door.

This figure wore a shirt, vest, a black trench coat, and a half top hat. At a glance, he was a rather fashionable gentleman.

However, after some observations, Audrey realized that there was a huge rabbit under the human clothes. Its eyes were bright red and its fur was snow-white.

The rabbit walked inside, one step at a time, and stopped at the side of the long table. It happened to be beside Audrey.

"Unfortunately, you only have one choice." Derlau smiled as he pointed at the Wrath mask on the table.

The rabbit let out a male human voice:

"I've always been very gentle. It's a good opportunity for me to experience wrath."

As it spoke, it picked up the persona mask and wore it on its face.

The mask's eyes were wide and its mouth was wide open, as though an angry roar would shout out at any moment.

After Mr. Wrath sat down beside Audrey, Derlau clapped his hands and said, "I formally introduce the two councilors who will be joining our council.

"This is Miss Pride. This is Mr. Wrath. They are both demigods and have deep attainments in the domain of the mind.

"In addition, Miss Pride will be in charge of the greater Backlund area of the Loen Kingdom."

Upon saying that, Derlau looked at Audrey and said, "You might not be aware, but we are rooted in the masses of psychologists, psychiatrists, and the corresponding aficionados. Our strength is mainly concentrated in large cities and not small cities and villages. Therefore, every councilor is responsible for a city and the surrounding area."

Then, Derlau continued, "Mr. Wrath is in charge of the Lenburg capital, Azshara;

"Mr. Lust is in charge of the Intis capital, Trier;

"Ma'am Greed is in charge of the Feysac capital, St. Millom;

"Miss Sloth is in charge of the Feynapotter capital, Feynapotter City.

"Mr. Envy is in charge of the Intis Republic's Tilisi City;

"Mr. Gluttony is in charge of the Loen Kingdom's Constant City."

After the introduction, Derlau added, "Our Psychology Alchemists' mission is exploration, discovery, and research. We do not care about affecting the scope, member numbers, resources, etc. Therefore, we do not have any councilors in the Fog Sea, the Berserk Sea, the Sonia Sea, and the Southern Continent. Of course, there will often be members who go out to the sea to explore the ruins of the Southern Continent in search of ancient history. Heh heh, I forgot that I'm the King of the Black Throne on the Five Seas."

St. Millom, Constant, Tilisi… Nearly half of the councilors of the Psychology Alchemists are in the Midseashire region… Audrey acutely sensed a problem.

She came from a noble family, and had received good education since she was young. She was no stranger to the geographical location of every city in the Northern Continent. She knew that Feysac's St. Millom, Loen's Constant, and Intis's Tilisi were big coastal cities of Midseashire.

Although they couldn't compare to the three major cities of Backlund, Trier, and Feynapotter City, each of them was quite large. Furthermore, there were many medium-sized cities around them. This made the Midseashire coast become the most vibrant economic zone in the Northern Continent, an area with the biggest population.

Under such circumstances, it wasn't too surprising that the focus of the Psychology Alchemists was placed on Midseashire. Audrey generally didn't think that the Psychology Alchemists weren't too interested in expansion.

After the councilors got to know each other, Derlau turned his head and said to Audrey, "Miss Pride, due to the war, Backlund's Psychology Alchemists suffered great losses. We have lost contact with many of the members. I will give you a specific list in the future. You will be in charge of confirming the whereabouts of the members and then organize them again.

"In this process, I suggest that you don't use your real image and name to finish the tasks. Create a virtual identity to complete them. Hvin Rambis didn't do well in this aspect. I think he's a little too proud."

Audrey nodded slightly and agreed.

Derlau retracted his gaze and said, “The second thing to discuss today is the whereabouts of the mind dragon in East Chester County of the Loen Kingdom.

“The dragon worshiping customs of the Hartlarkh village haven’t been weakened in the past two years. I suspect that the mind dragon is still influencing it in some way. Perhaps we can use it to find its whereabouts.

“Who is willing to handle this matter?”

After raising the question, he recalled that the newly joined Miss Pride and Mr. Wrath didn’t have enough knowledge of the corresponding situation. He simply explained the explorations the Psychology Alchemists had previously done, as well as the problems that his entire archaeological team members encountered.

Audrey had actually participated in some matters in the early stages. Now that she had a suitable reason to intervene, she couldn’t help but feel her heart palpitate.

It wasn’t that she really wanted to hunt the mind dragon, but rather, she wanted to communicate with it and grasp more knowledge and secrets of the mind domain.

However, she wasn’t in a hurry to raise her hand. As a councilor participating in the council for the first time, she would rather miss an opportunity than be eager to showcase herself.

“This is Loen’s matter. It’s not suitable for us to interfere.” Mr. Lust surveyed the area and said, “Unless Miss Pride and Mr. Gluttony don’t have the time for it.”

Audrey waited for a few more seconds. Seeing that the Gluttony didn’t say anything, she looked at Derlau and said, “I will try to investigate, but I need more detailed information.”

Chapter 1319 - Life-Preserving Incantation

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Seeing that Audrey was willing to attempt the investigation mission, Derlau nodded and said, “I’ll give you the detailed information later, but I have to warn you that this matter is rather dangerous. You must not be careless.”

Upon saying that, Derlau paused for a moment and said, “If you encounter an accident, and you can’t solve it by relying on yourself. You can try to say a name. This will bring you salvation.”

“What name?” Audrey asked as she had a guess in mind.

Derlau’s expression immediately turned solemn.

“It comes from the Holy Bible of the Third Epoch’s Creator. It involves the highest mystery of the mind domain, and it has a close relationship with something of the Psychology Alchemists.

“It’s ‘Adam.’”

Adam… Audrey didn’t find it surprising at all, but she showed her puzzlement on the surface, as though she didn’t know what this name meant.

Derlau didn’t explain and instead said, “As a councilor, you should be in charge of a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. However, you and Wrath have just joined the ranks, so there must be an observation period first. Besides, the former committee member of the Backlund region, Hvin Rambis, has lost a rather important Sealed Artifact. We are considering whether we should change the usage method of Sealed Artifacts and allow usage only via an application.

“In other words, all the Sealed Artifacts will be kept in this mind city. You usually won’t hold onto them, and can only use them temporarily after an application for particular incidents.”

The woman in charge of Feysac’s capital’s St. Millom immediately shook her head.

“There is a very serious flaw in this method. That is that we are unable to deal with any sudden accidents. Be it enemies or monsters, once we encounter them, we will not have the time to apply and retrieve the Sealed Artifact.

“I believe that the current method is good enough. Everyone wields a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact to deal with accidents. When there’s a need, we can apply for other items.”

Derlau laughed and said, “This was indeed better in the past. But now, you don’t have to worry.

“As long as you have the chance to resist an accident, then you can directly enter this mind city to avoid the enemy and obtain the item.

“If there’s no chance, just as I said, reciting the name ‘Adam’ will do.”

You said “Adam” twice. That entity is probably already watching. No, “He” might have been watching from the very beginning… Audrey’s heart almost beat faster when she heard that.

“Then how do we enter without your invitation?” Mr. Envy asked as he nodded.

Derlau pointed at his face and said, “From this council meeting forth, you can take your persona mask out of this city.

“No matter where you are, as long as there are at least two humans around you, yes, other than you, you will be able to wear the corresponding persona mask and enter the city.

“And these seven masks are illusory. They are closely connected to what you know, and there’s no need to store them in a special way. With just a thought, you will be able to take them out of the sea of collective subconscious.”

At that moment, the man, who was wearing the Gluttony mask and exuded a feeling that he was lost in indulgence, thought for a while and said, “Will bringing the persona mask out of this city affect our mental state and true personality?”

“There will be some effects that need attention. But I believe that you are all experts in the mind domain. You have the ability to resolve problems in this aspect,” Derlau said frankly.

Audrey was a little worried that these seven persona masks had something to do with Adam, but she didn’t dare think about it in the mind city. She forced herself to rein in her thoughts and replied to what Derlau had said before, “I can accept the two safekeeping methods of the Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. I’ll patiently wait for the probationary period to end.”

“Miss, you aren’t proud,” Miss Sloth, who looked like she was sleeping, commented with a smile.

After discussing the mind dragon in East Chester County, the other five councilors began introducing things that were worth paying attention to in their respective areas as an exchange of information.

During this process, Mr. Gluttony, who seemed to be capable of eating an entire cow at any moment and wore ten rings, said, “The Constant region hasn’t been peaceful recently. There have been many miracles happening one after another.

"First, Constant City was rebuilt overnight. Second, Belltaine City's citizens collectively lost their memories of a certain period of time. Third, a powerful archmage who grants the wishes of others for pleasure has been wandering the eastern shore of the Midseashire. He's called Merlin Hermes. Related to this, there's an item known as the 'Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.'

"Other than that, I also noticed something strange. Many rats, cockroaches, and crows in Constant City have lost their souls, days after the city was miraculously restored."

"Why were you able to sense this problem?" Mr. Lust looked up at Gluttony from the bottom.

Gluttony gulped and said, "I've been researching the mind problems of ordinary creatures recently. Rats, cockroaches, and crows are my experimental subjects."

The councilors immediately started discussing the direction of this research before the meeting officially entered the third stage.

Their academic exchange enriched Audrey's knowledge quite a bit. She listened very seriously and would occasionally share her thoughts and insights.

"Alright, this conference will end here." After a while, Derlau clapped his hands.

Audrey subconsciously wanted to stand up and lead the other councilors into bowing and bidding farewell. However, she quickly came to her senses and continued sitting there, being the penultimate person to stand up.

Before leaving, she asked curiously, "Mr. President, does this city have a name?"

"Yes." Derlau laughed. "The Garden of Eden."

Garden of Eden… Audrey saw that the other councillors were walking towards the door and asked thoughtfully, “There are many cathedrals here. They should represent a faith. Uh, I wonder which existence the ‘residents’ here believe in?”

Derlau nodded and replied solemnly, “The omnipotent and omniscient Creator.”

†

Garden of Eden… The omnipotent and omniscient Creator… If this wasn’t created by Adam, I’ll write my name backward! Above the gray fog, inside the ancient palace, Klein looked at the crimson star representing Miss Justice and silently muttered to himself.

In addition, to recite “Adam” when faced with danger as a response would indicate a problem without concealing anything.

Ever since Miss Justice entered the Garden of Eden, the true vision provided by Sefirah Castle had been suppressed. Klein could only use Audrey’s point of view to observe the surroundings, just like how Queen Mystic Bernadette’s fixed viewpoint back on the primitive island. To a certain extent, this also showed the status of the mind city, Garden of Eden.

Klein gently tapped the edge of the long mottled table and conjured a pen and paper to write his thoughts.

This wasn’t something he couldn’t analyze based on his own thinking. Instead, when facing an existence like Adam, he needed to repeatedly ponder and analyze the details. Thus, the words that formed on the paper helped him to read them back and forth so as to notice and make up any missing details.

“Basic premise; Adam has already advanced to Sequence 0 using the full-scale war from before. By becoming a true god, ‘He’ can be known as a Visionary.

"Miss Justice happened to become a Sequence 4 Manipulator after Hvin Rambis's death. She may be able to convince others, but she can't convince Adam.

"What does Adam want? Setting up a Sequence 4 saint doesn't match 'His' identity as a Visionary unless 'He' has another ploy up 'His' sleeves…

"His real target is the mind dragon, or is it me who's backing Miss Justice?

"Care and vigilance must be enhanced on this matter. We must not be careless.

"In the Garden of Eden, the cathedral that the Psychology Alchemists councilors were using is similar to Adam's corpse cathedral. However, it's only a little similar. The stone columns on its exterior are inlaid with several skulls. There is no corresponding layout inside, and the color is dark-black and very gloomy. What does this mean?

"What does that grayish-white dragon coiling around the huge cross symbolize? The first step in resurrecting the Creator has been successful?

"Uh, Adam is already a Visionary. If 'His' father or the original Creator returns, 'He' would be the first one to be unlucky. 'He' is willing to sacrifice 'Himself'? This is the meaning of being 'zealous'?

"That rabbit is suspected to be Hermes… However, as an angel of the Spectator pathway, it doesn't make sense for 'Him' to not be able to remove Miss Messenger's transformation curse after so long, especially since 'He' has a Visionary who can provide help… Hmm, did Hermes do it on purpose?

"Yes, the president of the Psychology Alchemists, Derlau, mentioned that to the Spectator, death only represented the end of one's identity. He can still participate in other theatrical plays in other aspects as another identity…

“By combining them together, does this mean that once the Spectator pathway reaches Sequence 3 or Sequence 2, they can separate the identities they once held and make them become living people? And even if these identities were to die, it wouldn’t lead to the deaths of their real bodies?

“It does look like the preamble to becoming a Visionary…

“Hmm, the rabbit that Hermes turned into after being cursed was separated as an identity which later directly participated in the Psychology Alchemists? What does ‘He’ want to do? Back then, when the Twilight Hermit Order communicated, ‘He’ was sitting beside the Emperor…”

After Klein was done writing, he put down his fountain pen and carefully read the contents a few times, his heart clouded with mystery and puzzlement.

In the end, he could only decide to continue observing and be vigilant.

And at this moment, Audrey had already taken the carriage she used, exited the Garden of Eden, and returned to the park in Empress Borough with the man-made lake.

She wasn’t in a rush to pray to Mr. Fool, hoping that there would be a better way to seal the Pride mask. She returned to her luxurious villa as though nothing had happened.

Chapter 1320 - Mind Mail

◆

Susie was sitting by the door, waiting for Audrey to return.

At that moment, the golden retriever immediately went up to her as soon as she saw her approach. She even gave a rather talented showcase of her acting by barking and wagging her tail.

She didn’t ask on the spot; instead, she kept accompanying Audrey back to her bedroom before asking in concern, “Is it over?”

Audrey tersely acknowledged, indicating that there was no problem.

“Is there anything I can help you with?” Susie pressed.

“Not yet.” Audrey shook her head slightly.

Due to Susie’s concern, she instinctively recalled her previous experience, but to her surprise, she realized that she couldn’t recall the image and name of the Psychology Alchemists president. To recall even the information that she had learned from The World Gehrman Sparrow, she had to focus quite a bit.

To be frank, in front of Beyonders below the demigod level, she could do similar feats as a Manipulator. However, to influence a saint in the mind domain and make it impossible for them to sense it was almost impossible unless the other party was hypnotized, unconscious, or enslaved.

That gentleman’s level is probably higher than I expected… Audrey controlled her emotions and calmly made a certain judgment.

She gave Susie a look and got the golden retriever to stand guard outside the door. In her mind, she outlined the character mask that represented Pride.

Just as she was thinking about this, she felt a slight fluctuation in the sea of collective subconscious around her.

With just a thought, Audrey reached out her left hand and grabbed it. She took out an abnormally cold, illusory grayish-white mask.

As long as I seriously think about it, will this Pride mask come to my side? Or should I say that it has already existed in my subconscious and has been following me? As Audrey carefully examined her mind island, she signaled with a thought that made the Pride mask vanish.

The ice-cold, illusory grayish-white mask quickly turned transparent and melted into the surrounding sea of collective subconscious.

Audrey still couldn't determine where this Pride mask had gone. Why did it appear in such a timely manner each time?

This made her increasingly wary. She decided to pray to Mr. Fool and make the wish of sealing the mask.

Just as she was thinking of doing a few more experiments to obtain more knowledge from Pride, she saw the sea of collective subconscious begin to resonate without using her Manipulator Beyonder powers.

A beam of light came from afar as it grew larger and more obvious. Finally, it turned into an illusory letter.

This letter stopped in front of Audrey's mind island as though it was searching for a path to complete the "delivery."

Audrey naturally wouldn't let any foreign object enter her mind world. She hurriedly reached out her left hand and touched the illusory letter.

Seeing that her fingers were about to touch the surface of the letter, Audrey suddenly stopped.

Her experience and intelligence told her at the same time:

Don’t touch anything in the mysticism world rashly. This was especially so for the mind domain. Otherwise, it would easily lead to corruption and produce mental problems!

With this in mind, Audrey produced a Virtual Persona and put on the black long-veiled glove, Hand of Horror.

After making the necessary preparations, she reached out to grab the illusory letter and watched as it peeled away its outer layer and flipped over one page at a time.

This was all the information related to the mind dragon in East Chester County.

To use the sea of collective subconscious to transmit information… The higher-ups of the Spectator pathway are truly amazing… As a Manipulator, Audrey had been trying her best to maintain her initial yearning towards the mysticism world. It was a pure and innocent pursuit of “dreams” and “magic.”

This was one of the ways to prevent herself from losing herself in the “Manipulating” experience of things, and not be assimilated by the sea of collective subconscious.

After flipping through all the information, Audrey let the illusory letter melt into the sea of collective subconscious.

She was still in no hurry to pray to Mr. Fool. According to her previous arrangements, she went out to be busy over other things.

At dusk, before the banquet at home began, she found some time to quickly make a prayer in her bedroom and make a wish.

In the next second, Audrey saw the grayish-white Pride appear from the sea of collective subconscious in front of her. The illusory feeling slowly vanished as a tiny amount of metallic luster flashed.

For some reason, this persona mask had a certain substantial feel to it as though it was bordering between illusory and realism.

This meant that it was isolated from Audrey's mind island in a physical sense.

Of course, it also lost the ability to return to the sea of collective subconscious.

Audrey held Pride and attempted to remove Lie that had turned into an emerald necklace, overlapping the two together.

Just as she had expected, the half-illusory, half-real Pride embedded itself into Lie, turning into a blob of patterns that roughly looked like a human face.

In the future, I'll use this method to carry it with me. I won't allow the persona mask to have any contact with my mind or body until I need to use it… Audrey's mind raced as she sincerely thanked Mr. Fool.

She then left for the banquet hall.

Along the way, she met her father, Earl Hall.

"Good news." Earl Hall laughed.

Audrey didn't hide her surprise.

"Alfred's coming back?"

This was her other brother.

"You actually guessed it?" Earl Hall said in surprise, "In the next half of the year, he will return to Backlund as a general."

Half a year… Susie is already a Dreamwalker… Audrey thought for a moment and asked, “Father, when are we returning to East Chester County?”

As the war had just ended and there were many things in the kingdom that needed to be done, the nobles didn’t return to their respective fiefs during New Year’s. They remained in Backlund all this time. It was already the end of February.

Earl Hall nodded and said, “About April.”

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Mind Mail… Be careful of viruses, don’t click on them without thought… As Klein sighed, he threw the curtain that represented the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic back into the junk pile, allowing it to cover all the items there.

He had just fulfilled Miss Justice’s wish using the “Grafting” ability he named. He connected the illusory concept of the persona mask to an ordinary metal mask, and he gave the Worms of Spirit, who were on duty at Sefirah Castle, an order to recharge the powers from time to time to prolong the “Grafting” effect.

From the description of Mr. Gluttony from the Psychology Alchemists, Zaratul seems to have found Constant City. I have to be even more careful… Klein tapped the edge of the long mottled table with his finger, causing Worms of Spirit to appear from his body.

His figure vanished from Sefirah Castle.

†

Winter County, Amantha mountain range, Cathedral of Serenity.

Leonard obtained a document from the Pope.

This was the first thing he was responsible for after becoming a high-ranking deacon.

After returning to his room, Leonard leisurely leaned back and placed his feet on the desk. Then, he opened the document in his hand and began reading.

A wandering magician, Merlin Hermes, grants the wishes of others for pleasure… The newly rebuilt Constant City… Fully Automatic Wishing Machine… Sequence 4 of the Seer pathway is Bizarro Sorcerer, Sequence 3 is Scholar of Yore, and Sequence 2 is Miracle Invoker…

Leonard read until he suddenly fell silent.

After a few seconds, he suppressed his voice and asked, "Old Man, how many angels of the Seer pathway are active across the land?"

Pallez Zoroast scoffed.

"This is acting. There should only be one Miracle Invoker who still needs to act.

"You should know who I'm talking about."

Leonard looked at the information in his hand again and mumbled, "He's having quite a good time…"

He had already decided that the main purpose of this mission was to act as a Nightwatcher and digest his potion. He could also travel in passing. As for handling the matter, what mattered was to find a reasonable explanation.

After flipping through the thick documents in boredom, Leonard retracted his feet and stood up.

He was going to retrieve a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact that a high-ranking deacon like him could own.

To other saints of the Church of Evernight, this was quite a headache.

This was because the negative effects of Sealed Artifacts weren't easily endured. It was even more so when one needed to carry them for a long period of time. However, if one chose a Holy Artifact that was more compatible with him, there would be a problem of powers overlapping.

As for Leonard, he didn't need to worry about this problem. As long as the Sealed Artifact he was interested in had a living characteristic, he could get Old Man's help. By parasitizing it with a Worm of Time, it significantly reduced the negative effects of the Sealed Artifact, making it as obedient as the Word of the Sea.

Therefore, the main thing to choose is its powers… Leonard whistled and walked out of the room.

†

Monday afternoon, in the ancient palace above the gray fog.

Dark red beams shot out, materializing into different figures.

Derrick hadn't needed to count his heartbeat for a long time. All he needed to do was take a look at the wall clock and calculate the time difference with Backlund to know how much longer before the Tarot Gathering happened. At that moment, he stood up with Miss Justice and the other members of the Tarot Club. He bowed to the end of the long bronze table and said, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool."

After taking their seats and paying their respects, Emlyn glanced left and right and said, "I want to know if there's something special about the Planter and the Moon pathways compared to the other pathways?"

After raising the question, he didn't hide it and instead added frankly, "I recently learned that the internal system of the Church of Earth is different from other normal systems. It's split into two categories—Favored and Blessed…"

After Emlyn finished his simple description, Alger, Cattleya, Leonard, and company looked at each other, unable to provide a reasonable explanation.

Of course, every member present, including Derrick, could tell that the internal system of the Church of Earth was abnormal.

At this moment, they heard a soft sigh.

This sigh seemed to come from an era more ancient than ancient. It came from Mr. Fool, who sat at the end of the long mottled table.

Chapter 1321 - The Six Special Pathways

◆

The Fool Klein slowly surveyed the area. He didn’t provide an explanation to everyone as they had expected. Instead, he reined in his sigh and asked with a smile, “Where do you think the twenty-two Beyonder pathways originate from?”

This was one of the three most important questions in mysticism, with no consensus for the answer. Every school of thought had its own theory; no one could convince anyone.

Cattleya deliberated for a moment before replying, “The essence of the world is knowledge, and the essence of knowledge is data. Humans are data, and the Beyonder characteristics of the twenty-two pathways are data. All things are a form of data, and this is how it was born.”

She had offered the Moses Ascetic Order’s theory, but that was not her own point of view.

“The seven Churches believe that the Beyonder characteristic originated from the original Creator. ‘He’ transformed into all things, including the deities, humans, sea, land, and Beyonder characteristics,” Leonard briefly explained. “Of course, this is an explanation given to deacons and above. The official Beyonders below Sequence 6 don’t need to know so much.”

Then, he glanced at Emlyn and said, “The Life School of Thought believes that the world is split into three levels. The material world, the world of the spirit, and the world of absolute rationality. Beyonder characteristics are the projections of certain things from the world of absolute rationality into the material world and world of the spirit. Therefore, characteristics can't be destroyed. It only reassembles."

From the looks of it, the world of absolute rationality that the Life School of Thought promotes might be referring to the river of fate… The Fool Klein thought of Will Auceptin, but he remained silent and didn't interrupt the conversation between the members of the Tarot Club.

Emlyn returned a glance at The Star and said, "As one of the rulers of the Second Epoch, us Sanguine believe that Beyonder characteristics do come from the original Creator. Then, the various characteristics accumulated and produced the ancient gods. The ancient gods then created different races."

This was the Sanguine's explanation for the First Epoch, and Emlyn already had some doubts about it. After all, he had encountered many secrets thanks to the Tarot Club.

Alger nodded slightly.

"Although there are many explanations for the origins of a Beyonder characteristic, most of them point to the original Creator. The orthodox Churches, Aurora Order, and the City of Silver share such a belief."

"In other words, Beyonder characteristics originating from the original Creator is quite the prevalent understanding?" Audrey asked thoughtfully.

The Psychology Alchemists mainly studied the mind world and the sea of collective subconscious. They lacked complete theories regarding the origins of the Beyonder characteristics.

"Roughly." Alger didn't conceal his views.

At this moment, The Fool Klein sighed and said, "Not all of them."

He didn't proceed on to give a long story, but gave a rather vague answer.

Not all of them… Mr. Fool means that Beyonder characteristics indeed originate from the original Creator, but not all of them. A small number of them are special cases? Is this the reason for the specialness of the Planter and Moon pathway? Alger instantly thought of a lot and grasped the essence of the problem.

As it had nothing to do with her, Fors continued listening leisurely. At this moment, she asked curiously, "Honorable Mr. Fool, your meaning seems to be that most Beyonder characteristics originated from the original Creator, and the two pathways such as Planter and Moon are an exception. Then where did they come from?"

The Fool Klein said simply, "The Cosmos."

Cosmos… Emlyn was alarmed when he heard that. He realized that the matter might be more serious than he had imagined.

The Tarot Club had already shared the danger of the underground corruption and the cosmos. All of the members knew that these two concepts led to corruption simply from understanding it.

When Audrey, Cattleya, and company looked at each other, The Fool Klein maintained his hint of a sigh and added, "Not just these two."

He and the Seven Lights had always maintained their contact and had already confirmed that six of the Beyonders of the twenty-two Beyonder pathways belonged to Outer Deities.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, what other pathways come from the cosmos?" Audrey habitually raised her hand and asked curiously and warily.

The Fool Klein replied succinctly, "Prisoner, Criminal, Lawyer, and Arbiter."

The first two came from the Mother Tree of Desire, and the latter two, along with the Nation of Disorder, came from the Son of Chaos.

Chaos gave birth to order, and order came with its own shadow.

Arbiter… Fors turned her head in surprise and glanced at Xio.

She had just thought that this matter had nothing to do with her. She could only watch and not worry about it. Who knew that the trouble was right at her doorstep?

Xio frowned slightly and looked at the end of the long bronze table.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I usually don't sense any abnormalities, nor have I received any divine epiphanies. Uh, other than those from you."

The Fool Klein smiled and said, "The Arbiter and Lawyer are relatively better."

According to his understanding, the influence the Son of Chaos had on both the Arbiter and the Lawyer pathway wasn't deep. It was incomparable to the Mother Goddess of Depravity's influence on the Moon and Planter pathways, and the Mother Tree of Desire's influence on the Criminal and Prisoner pathways. This Outer Deity had gone silent, as though "He" had disappeared.

Fors and Xio secretly heaved a sigh of relief. At the same time, they became more wary of the future.

With Mr. Fool not explaining further, Emlyn composed himself and said, "The uniqueness of the Planter and Moon pathway comes from the cosmos. The divine epiphanies I sensed are likely a form of corruption?"

Alger looked at Mr. Fool at the end of the long, mottled table. Seeing that "He" had no intention of speaking, he nodded and said, "Probably so."

This is a test for me… Emlyn sighed and said,

"I've already grasped the names of the High-Sequence potions of the Planter and Moon pathway. I'm somewhat puzzled about two of them."

After becoming a Sanguine Earl and a high-ranking deacon of the Church of Earth, he obtained the corresponding clearance to access plenty of information that he had never been able to.

Seeing the other members of the Tarot Club look over, The World Gehrman Sparrow raised his hand to pinch his chin. Emlyn thought and said, “The Moon pathway is as follows: Sequence 3—High Summoner; Sequence 2—Life-Giver; Sequence 1—Beauty Goddess. The Planter pathway is as follows: Sequence 3—Pallbearer; Sequence 2—Desolate Matriarch; Sequence 1—Naturewalker.

“What I don’t understand is that the names of the two potions—Beauty Goddess and Desolate Matriarch—have certain gender inclinations. What are your thoughts on this?”

“…” For a moment, no one from the Tarot Club spoke. They looked at each other and thought of a possibility.

A few seconds later, Audrey controlled her gaze and said in deliberation, “I remember that Sequence 7 of the Assassin pathway is called Witch. Assassins who consume this potion become Witches.”

…This is a test for me… Emlyn’s lips moved slightly, unable to say a word.

When he learned the name of the potions, he already had a certain premonition, but he wasn’t willing to accept it. He hoped that he could obtain another explanation from the Tarot Club.

Don’t worry. You have a low chance of becoming an angel. Even if you can, you won’t have the chance to be a Beauty Goddess… Klein mumbled inwardly, but he didn’t say any words of “comfort.”

Everyone fell silent. Leonard coughed and took the initiative to say, “I’ll share some matters.”

He spoke at a moderate pace regarding Merlin Hermes, the rebuilding of Constant City overnight, and the Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

As he spoke, he shot a glance at The World Klein.

The corners of Klein's mouth twitched as he made The World Gehrman Sparrow look ahead.

"I'll be leaving the eastern coast of Midseashire soon."

Eh… These were all done by Mr. World? Can he already create such miracles? As expected of an angel, a "Him"… Audrey recalled the information the Psychology Alchemists councilor, Mr. Gluttony, had shared. She was both surprised and impressed.

She didn't use her Spectator's powers to conceal her reaction. This was because everyone had expressed the same emotions, except for Mr. Star, who clearly knew about it.

Merlin Hermes… Wandering magician… Fors noted the name deep down and secretly decided to distance herself from this name whenever she heard it in the future.

This didn't mean that she was still afraid of Gehrman Sparrow, but she knew something:

It definitely wasn't safe around Gehrman Sparrow. Something would always be happening in some way or another.

Of course, an instinctive sense of fear was inevitable. It was just like how a seed of "fear" sown when one was young would remain even when one became an adult.

Granting wishes for pleasure… Fully Automatic Wishing Machine… Is this The World Gehrman Sparrow's "acting"? Alger and Cattleya had similar thoughts simultaneously flashing through their minds. Then, they thought of something:

Ever since some time ago, Mr. Fool had made everyone pray to "Him" in the form of a wish before granting them.

"He" is helping The World digest the potion, or is it that "He" and The World are from the same pathway? After "He" awoke, "He" also exhibits similar characteristics? Little Sun said before that Mr. Fool's actions were a miracle, allowing the city's residents to directly move from the Forsaken Land of the Gods to outside Bayam City… With the fact that The World Gehrman Sparrow is still acting, this shouldn't be something he can do… Alger nodded indiscernibly as he made a guess about the pathway Mr. Fool was in.

About to leave the eastern coast of Midseashire? Then my investigation will be even easier. I can just come up with a simple conclusion. At most, I can just directly report that Gehrman Sparrow has become a Miracle Invoker and is acting… Anyway, the people who should know are already aware… Leonard mumbled silently and didn't ask further.

At this moment, The World Gehrman Sparrow looked around and asked, "What do you know about the King of the Black Throne, Barros Hopkins?"

Chapter 1322 - Hold Off On Something Unresolvable

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Upon hearing The World Gehrman Sparrow's question, the other members of the Tarot Club had three reactions:

"Who is that? I seem to have heard of him… He's one of the Four Kings?"

"Who is that? Why haven't I heard of him before…"

"Oh, I forgot to ask about the Psychology Alchemists. I was planning on using a more tactful method to seek some suggestions…"

The first reaction came from Alger, Cattleya, and Fors, who had lived at sea for a period of time. The second reaction came from Leonard, Emlyn, Xio, and Derrick. The third reaction belonged to Audrey alone.

Getting no answers, The World Gehrman Sparrow didn't ask further. His main goal was to use this as a reminder for Miss Justice to bring up the matter for discussion in a way that could bypass the promise she made.

Of course, if Miss Justice were to seek help from Mr. Fool, Klein would also use "Grafting" to temporarily connect the bindings formed from her subconscious to a paper figurine, providing her with a period of time that she could freely recount things.

This was also a high-level application of Paper Figurine Substitutes. With Klein's current level, he could easily do it within Sefirah Castle. If he were in the real world, he would have to rely on the Worms of Spirit above the gray fog to control the "curtain" and provide responses.

At that moment, Audrey thought for a moment and said, "Do you still remember that I once pursued the whereabouts of a mind dragon and went to a place where they had customs of worshiping dragons?"

Alger, Cattleya, and company nodded. Only Leonard and Xio expressed their lack of knowledge of this matter.

As this wasn't an important matter, Fors didn't mention it when she first briefed Xio of the "general knowledge." After that, she was frightened by Angel of Imagination Adam, and rarely talked about the secrets shared by the Tarot Club in the real world.

Audrey deliberated for a moment before continuing, "It's been almost two years. A secret organization that doesn't trust me too much suddenly mentioned this matter and has entrusted me with further investigations. They said it's a form of observation. What motives do they have?"

She didn't think it was a coincidence.

Emlyn recovered and laughed.

"This should be a test."

To him, he was still very far from reaching Sequence 1 Beauty Goddess, and he had no intention of transferring to the Planter pathway. Therefore, he didn't need to worry about the corresponding problems for a long period of time. There was no need to worry too much about it.

Emlyn's ability to say the word "test" shows how much he has improved… Of course, this is also because the Sanguine has done too many similar things to him, having to trouble Mr. Hanged Man into telling him that "this is a test"… The Fool Klein was very satisfied with Emlyn's answer.

Of course, he didn't believe that the answer was correct. He only felt that Emlyn's ability to think up to this level was already pretty remarkable.

Audrey said disapprovingly, "I suspect that they already know that I'm problematic. They even know where my problem is and which faction is involved. There's no need to test me further."

After leaving the Garden of Eden, she had been thinking a lot. She remembered that Mr. World had once said that the Twilight Hermit Order wanted a war that would sweep the entire world.

Based on the current situation, this goal has been achieved in the past year.

In other words, the Twilight Hermit Order or Angel of Imagination Adam must've used this opportunity to gain quite a number of benefits and experience the corresponding growth.

And before that, Mr. Fool informed them that Adam was ever closer to the level of a deity.

Combining all this information, Audrey had a preliminary judgment that Angel of Imagination Adam had a high chance of already reaching the divine throne and becoming a Sequence 0 Visionary.

Even if "He" wasn't there yet, "He" wasn't too far!

If such a deity who wielded the mind domain cast "His" gaze over, Audrey didn't believe that her secret could be hidden.

At present, she could only console herself that the leader of the Twilight Hermit Order, the mastermind behind the Psychology Alchemists wouldn't place too much importance on a Sequence 4 Manipulator. On the one hand, she had made all sorts of preparations to deal with the possible "accidents."

"Perhaps that organization is trying to figure how many members we have in the Tarot Club and what their identities are," Emlyn replied with a smile as he continued on his train of thought.

Audrey thought for a moment and nodded.

"That possibility can't be ruled out."

As she said this, she shot a glance at the end of the long, mottled table and realized that Mr. Fool was only listening to her leisurely without giving her the correct answer.

This made her feel a lot more at ease. At the same time, she silently decided that she had to be more careful. She had to be able to resolve problems herself, having already reached Sequence 4.

In any Orthodox Church or secret organization, Sequence 4 was the strongest person in control of an area.

At this moment, Alger, who had heard their conversation, proposed a brand new possibility:

"If that secret organization really doesn't trust you, then it might be an excuse for them to do an observation. Their main goal is to cooperate with us, the Tarot Club, and Mr. Fool."

He didn't know why Miss Justice didn't mention the Psychology Alchemists directly. All he could do was carefully go along with her.

Hmm… This is equivalent to me becoming an ambassador of the Tarot Club to the Psychology Alchemists? Audrey nodded slightly and said, "That's also possible.

"Then what should I do next?"

Alger thought for a moment and said, "Stall for time."

Good idea… Fors and Emlyn both expressed their agreement.

After Alger gave the overall strategy, he added in detail, "Try to stall for time and find excuses not to go until the final moment.

“When you arrive there, start investigating from the periphery and use caution as an excuse to slow down your investigation.

“If you really can’t delay any further, you can deliberately make mistakes in certain matters and create some commotion so that the mind dragon can detect it early and eliminate any traces.

“If that secret organization really has any additional motives, the longer you delay, the more they won’t be able to sit still. If they get impatient, they will expose the problem.”

Cattleya nodded.

“This is the most suitable response for now.”

“I understand. Thank you, everyone.” Audrey also felt that Mr. Hanged Man’s suggestion suited her thoughts.

However, she didn’t delay a certain matter. She immediately turned her head and looked at the end of the long, mottled table. She bowed and said, “Honorable Mr. Fool, has Angel of Imagination Adam advanced to Sequence 0?”

Not bad. To be able to be aware of this point… The Fool Klein leaned back in his chair and chuckled.

“Only with the apocalypse approaching did ‘He’ finally take that step.”

The level of the Garden of Eden had virtually confirmed that Adam was definitely a Visionary.

Angel of Imagination Adam has become a god? This news immediately reverberated in Derrick and company’s minds, leaving their minds in upheavals for a long time.

Indeed… Audrey pursed her lips and expressed her gratitude before asking, “What kind of payment do I need to make for this answer?”

The Fool Klein surveyed the area and said with a smile,

“There’s no need.

“It’s a reminder.”

After this topic ended, because most of the Tarot Club members were still immersed in the impact of Adam becoming a true god, no one spoke for a moment.

After a few seconds, Derrick looked around and probed, “The City of Silver has already plowed the surrounding fields and planted wheat and other crops, but the harvest will still take some time. I wish to know what we can do to earn gold pounds and purchase resources?”

After the initial aid, the Church of the Sea God and the government of the Rorsted Archipelago stopped providing free aid. After all, their financial strength was rather limited. In this situation, the City of Silver and Moon City each sold a batch of Beyonder characteristics and monster hides in exchange for a large amount of funds that could be used to purchase various resources.

However, with the entrance to the Forsaken Land of the Gods closed, they were unable to replenish Beyonder characteristics and monster hides. It was also impossible for the City of Silver and Moon City to give up their military strength either, selling large amounts of combat resources and wasting the opportunity of nurturing their descendants. Therefore, once all the gold pounds, gold, and jewelry were used up, they would undoubtedly fall into a predicament.

For this reason, the six-member council had been troubled over how to earn gold pounds from the outside world and how to establish a stable financial system. This was a little beyond their capabilities.

The Beyonder characteristics that the City of Silver and Moon City had previously sold were mainly purchased by the Church of the Sea God and the Rorsted Archipelago government. They were used to establish official Beyonder factions under them. After all, the number of Beyonders needed to cause damage, and the number of Beyonders needed to stabilize an area was on completely different levels.

In addition, the entire Rorsted Archipelago only had Sea God Kalvetua and the demigod cardinal of the Church of the Lord of Storms. This was slightly insufficient for a new government, especially since the Church of Storms and the Church of Sea God weren't allies.

After hearing Little Sun's plea for help, the other members of the Tarot Club began to seriously consider what the City of Silver and Moon City residents could do.

Audrey thought for a moment and asked, "What are you best at?"

"Combat," Derrick replied without any hesitation.

Alger nodded slightly when he heard that.

"Although the world war has ended, law and order hasn't been restored in the colonies of the Southern Continent. It's still very chaotic there, and small-scale wars occur from time to time. You can try to form two to three mercenary teams and be hired by any faction."

Private military contractors… Klein gave an even more modern name to the suggestion.

"This is a good idea." Derrick's eyes lit up when he heard that.

Alger asked again, "Combat is a survival instinct. Other than this, do you still have anything you want to do?"

Derrick replied in embarrassment, "Many people wish to be chefs and brewers, as well as hope to work at candy factories…"

Chapter 1323 - Development Plan

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After hearing the City of Silver citizens' wishes, a thought suddenly surfaced in Klein's mind:

Why is everything related to food…

Alger thought for a moment and said to Derrick, "You can make people with such thoughts join the industry association in Bayam. Seek out suitable teachers through the association, and directly invite people with specialties in such fields to teach in the new City of Silver and provide generous salaries.

"Of course, the prerequisite is that you have to get the residents to grasp the language of the Rorsted Archipelago as soon as possible. On this basis, Loenese, ancient Feysac, and Dutanese have to be taught too."

After The Hanged Man finished speaking, The Hermit Cattleya gave her suggestion:

"Other than organizing the mercenary teams, you can also try to apply for civil jobs in the various cities of the Rorsted Archipelago to handle supernatural matters."

Although the Rorsted Archipelago government and the Church of the Sea God had obtained a batch of Beyonder characteristics and the corresponding potion formulas from the City of Silver and Moon City, they were unable to nurture enough Beyonders in a short period of time. Sequence 9 was relatively still alright. The chances of someone being selected for their good mental strength and physique to lose control from consuming the potion were actually very small. If one were to further advance, acting might not necessarily be successful, and it also required time.

Under such circumstances, as long as the residents of the City of Silver became members of the official faction, they wouldn’t be worried about losing their jobs in the future.

Of course, the Rorsted Archipelago’s government would definitely control the number of applicants. The City of Silver wouldn’t be able to completely resolve everyone’s employment problems using this route.

Klein agreed with Ma’am Hermit’s suggestion. Furthermore, he believed that there was a need for him to give a revelation to Danitz, allowing the Rorsted Archipelago government and the Church of Sea God to increase the number of official Beyonders to a certain range.

This wasn’t to help the City of Silver’s residents and the majority of the deformed people in Moon City find jobs, but to deal with the impending apocalypse, the deeper corruption of the Outer Deities, and the gradually increasing frequency of supernatural incidents.

At that moment, Cattleya glanced at Miss Justice and continued speaking to Derrick.

“You should now have a large amount of liquid funds. You can try to invest in the mines, spice plantations, farms, and purchase fertile land and forests with rich produce. They’re all very cheap now. Yes, although the Church of the Lord of Storms can still influence the archipelago, and although the new government promises to protect the local businesses, there are still a large number of people from Loen, Feysac, and Intis who lack confidence. They wish to cash out and return to their countries as soon as possible.”

That Oracle named Danitz recently bought a spice plantation… Derrick recalled what he had heard before and immediately felt enlightened.

Cattleya's suggestion gave others inspiration. Audrey immediately added, "When negotiating, it's best if you invite some professional lawyers. If not, you'll be fooled easily. Well, if you think there's a need, you can bring along a Psyche Analyst from the city.

"Also, you have a medium-sized port that can develop the corresponding economy…

"While the official Beyonders of the Rorsted Archipelago's government and the Church of the Sea God are lacking in generation knowledge, you can set paid classes designed for outsiders in the New City of Silver's Savant schools. Well, remove the knowledge that will easily clash with the orthodox Church…

"The railway connecting the new City of Silver and other cities must be built as soon as possible…"

Derrick was taken aback when he heard that. He hurriedly raised his hand and said, "Sorry, I need to memorize what was just said."

I forgot that he has no foundation in economics… Audrey reflected on herself, closed her mouth, and smiled as she signaled for Little Sun to seek help from Mr. Fool.

After Derrick conjured a pen and paper and wrote down the previous suggestions, Audrey, Emlyn, The Star Leonard, and the other members of the Tarot Club offered their ideas one after another. They also rebutted the suggestions that weren't mature or pragmatic enough.

This intense scene lasted for nearly half an hour before ending. Derrick looked at the adequately thick pieces of paper in front of him and couldn't help but smile.

He seemed to have seen the beautiful future of the City of Silver.

Sitting at the end of the long, mottled table, The Fool Klein sighed for some baffling reason as his heart felt a lot heavier.

If one didn’t consider how the apocalypse was about a decade away, the discussion would’ve been pleasing regarding the promising future that awaited the City of Silver.

However, the arrival of the apocalypse wouldn’t change because of the will of humans. Even saints and angels couldn’t do it.

Looking away from the paper in front of him, Derrick deliberated and said, “We have already built the temple and cathedral meant for Mr. Fool. We wish to proselytize to various cities in the archipelago. What do we need to pay attention to?”

Alger frowned slightly and said, “Have you written a Holy Bible? Have you designed the Order of Mass and prayer details?”

“Yes.” Derrick nodded heavily.

That was based on his knowledge of the miracles Mr. Fool had shown, combined with the religious scriptures left behind by the Creator. Furthermore, the City of Silver had also prayed to The Fool seeking “His” thoughts on the matter, “His” attitude was a tacit agreement.

“Has the internal system of the Church been set up?” Alger continued asking.

Derrick subconsciously looked at Mr. Fool, who was shrouded in layers of grayish-white fog, and turned around.

“Currently, it’s following the internal system of the other Churches. The Chief of our six-member council will hold the role of archbishop, and a number of enthusiastic citizens have been appointed as bishops and priests.”

The City of Silver didn’t set up an organization to deal with Beyonder matters within the Church, since most of them were Beyonders, and there were already the corresponding organizations in place previously.

Alger saw that Mr. Fool didn’t object nor agree. He controlled his desire to teach and nodded slightly.

“You can try that out first.”

He paused for a moment before saying, “However, there are two things to take note of. First, don’t badmouth the other Churches, lest there be conflict. Second, it’s to respect the current Oracle. In the absence of a leader appointed by Mr. Fool, the Oracle is the representative of a deity.”

Third, don’t engage in religious harassment during proselytizing… Besides, I have serious doubts about the eloquence of the bishops and priests of the City of Silver. I’ll need to get Danitz to find professionals to train them… The Fool Klein, who was listening quietly, muttered inwardly.

He didn’t express his opinion on the Holy Bible written by the City of Silver, because it was a little awkward, but if he objected to certain descriptions, it would also damage The Fool’s image.

With this in mind, Klein couldn’t help but lampoon.

Perhaps one day, when Will Auceptin reads the Holy Bible of the Church of The Fool, he would blurt out in surprise: When did I become an angel under The Fool?

Then, Leonard’s grandpa, the awakened Mr. Azik, and Miss Messenger, who has been trying hard to recover, will add, “What? Me too?”

After the conversation regarding the City of Silver and Moon City came to an end, Cattleya looked around in anticipation and said, “Which of you has a Sequence 3 Beyonder characteristic of the Mystery Pryer pathway?”

She had already digested the Mysticologist potion for quite some time, but she had only obtained the potion formula from the Moses Ascetic Order. She was still far from obtaining the Beyonder characteristic or the main ingredients.

Although she was one of the ten key members of the Moses Ascetic Order, the corresponding resources became more valuable the higher the Sequence. Even an ancient organization wouldn't squander them freely. Furthermore, Cattleya came from the Dawn and was less affected by the Hidden Sage, so she wasn't that trusted in the Moses Ascetic Order.

To Cattleya, who had already digested the potion a long time ago using the Snake of Fate's blood to advance to a Mysticologist, Sequence 3 should've been a relatively easier stage. However, she was bottlenecked by the ingredients. It might not even be possible for her to obtain one for years or even more than a decade.

Hence, she had no choice but to seek help at the Tarot Club.

Derrick recalled the demigod characteristics that the City of Silver had and slowly shook his head.

At that moment, The World Gehrman Sparrow said with a hoarse chuckle, "I suggest you ask Queen Mystic directly."

Bernadette had already become a Sequence 2 angel. If she had an additional Clairvoyant Beyonder characteristic in her, she could attempt to separate it.

Of course, Klein couldn't be certain that the Sage potion that Queen Mystic consumed contained the previous Sequence 3 and Sequence 4 characteristics.

Ask the Queen? Cattleya got some clues from The World's answer and suspected that something had happened to the Queen.

"Okay." She controlled the urge to ask.

Klein continued controlling The World and said to Ma'am Hermit, "I have a long-term mission: Help me collect information regarding the Hidden Sage's sudden coming back to life.

“You can raise the corresponding remuneration now. Or you can wait until there’s a need in the future.”

Klein was still puzzled over this matter. Although it could be described as a Uniqueness suddenly coming to life, it should’ve happened a long time ago if it was possible.

Cattleya thought for a moment and said, “That wouldn’t be an issue.”

After another round of exchanges, the Tarot Gathering ended and the members returned to the real world.

In the captain’s cabin of the Future, Cattleya nudged the heavy glasses on her nose bridge and thought about how to write the letter to the Queen.

During this process, she strolled to the window and saw Frank Lee promoting the alcohol-free volcano beer brewed by sea microorganisms to the crew.

He really has the drive… Just as Cattleya sighed, she suddenly frowned.

At the Tarot Club just now, Mr. Fool mentioned that the Planter and The Moon are two rather special pathways. They come from the cosmos, and they are prone to corruption. The divine epiphanies they receive are questionable.

Frank is a Beyonder of the Planter pathway…

Besides, he once complained that the Church of Earth Mother didn’t understand the true will of the merciful mother… Cattleya’s eyes that were blocked by the heavy lens narrowed slightly.

Chapter 1324 - Handling

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After staring at the deck below, Cattleya left the captain's cabin and walked to the cabin's entrance. She waited until Frank Lee carried a bucket of alcohol-free beer over.

"Captain, do you want a cup?" Frank raised the large bucket of beer with one hand.

Cattleya shook her head firmly and asked in a seemingly casual manner, "Is this the will of the benevolent mother?"

"No," Frank said rather seriously. "I just feel that drinking liquor that has been altered by a modified sedative isn't good for the body. I hope that they'll be able to accept this drink that has no alcohol inside, other than the smell of alcohol. Of course, this is only a preliminary result and it doesn't involve liquor. After all, it can't use distillation to enhance its taste."

Cattleya was momentarily at a loss for words as she nudged the heavy glasses on her nose bridge. After two seconds of silence, she said, "Do you hear the benevolent mother's voice or divine epiphanies?"

"No." Frank didn't think much of it as he shook his head.

Phew… Cattleya secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

At that moment, Frank casually added, "The benevolent mother's will is in the ears of the wheat, in the milk of cows, in the growth of mushrooms, and in every corner of nature. One can feel it without the need to experience the divine epiphany."

Cattleya's gaze immediately shot towards Frank's eyes. She didn't find any signs of madness, only pureness.

Without another word, she nodded slightly and walked forward. She crossed Frank Lee and arrived on the deck.

After taking in the sea's vista for a few minutes, Cattleya returned to the captain's cabin. She unfolded a letter and wrote:

"I wonder what's your take regarding Frank's actions? He claims that he doesn't obtain any divine epiphanies, and believes that the benevolent mother's will is hidden in every nook and cranny of nature."

This was a letter to Gehrman Sparrow. Cattleya believed that just by adding such a question, he would be able to understand what she was implying.

After folding the letter, she took out a gold coin and began to summon the terrifying messenger.

†

Ma'am Hermit wrote me a letter immediately after the Tarot Gathering ended… It shouldn't be related to the Hidden Sage. It can't be that fast… Klein was on a cruise ship, traveling on the Tussock River.

Wearing a black robe, he took the letter from Miss Messenger's mouth and opened it. He finished reading all the content with a glance.

This… Klein frowned slightly.

Perhaps it was because Frank had shown enough danger and "madness" in his usual behavior that he had actually neglected the possibility of this Druid being affected by the Mother Goddess of Depravity.

Frank had once been placed on trial by the Church of Earth Mother for a forbidden experiment, and then he was placed on a wanted list… If Earth Mother hadn't been corrupted, and the Church of Earth's operations were rather normal, then it means that they believe that Frank is problematic… However, if there's concrete evidence, Frank, who went to the court, probably wouldn't have lived… Klein's mind raced as he attempted to find clues based on his understanding of Frank.

There's no problem with the relevant actions. The prayer posture and his usual prayer gestures are different. It's just like how when the Beyonders of the Church of Evernight pray, they won't draw four stars on their chests at times. At most, they'll just go through the final motions…

Apart from this small problem, there's something wrong with Frank in every aspect. He's like a child raised by the Mother Goddess of Depravity… As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein had two contradictory guesses.

Either Frank's corruption was very hidden, making it impossible for the Church of Earth Mother's tribunal to be certain, or he wasn't affected by the Mother Goddess of Depravity at all. It was purely because he had a mental problem that made him look like a Blessed of an evil god.

Regardless of which guess it was, Klein believed that the subsequent development wouldn't be good.

He remembered very clearly that Frank's mushroom experiment had a breakthrough because he had been given an assistant who believed in the Primordial Moon. And the Primordial Moon was one of the manifestations of the Mother Goddess of Depravity.

That also meant that from that moment forth, regardless of whether Frank had any problems in the past, he could very well have entered the eyes of the Mother Goddess of Depravity.

This wasn't a good thing.

Of course, I can't eliminate the possibility that Frank is excessively crazy, causing the Mother Goddess of Depravity to just look away… Klein mumbled in amusement, hoping to make the best out of it.

This was nearly impossible. The horror and strength of a foreign god wasn't something a demigod could understand.

Klein even suspected that if it wasn't for the overly intense response that would destroy the anchors of the deities, allowing "Them" to attack each other in a frenzy, resulting in the Beyonder characteristics to gather and awaken the Oldest One, the Outer Deities might've already destroyed the sun and destroyed the ecosystem of the world. They weren't able to do anything to the Oldest One's barrier, but they were free to do anything to the star outside the barrier.

Sometimes, Klein wondered if the astronomically observed sun was real or not. Perhaps it was just the Eternal Blazing Sun that hung "Himself" there.

So far, there shouldn't be any major problems with the mushrooms that Frank invented. I've already dealt with them above the gray fog… Furthermore, the residents of the City of Silver and Moon City didn't show any abnormalities. Yes, after they left the Forsaken Land of the Gods, they abandoned farming mushrooms because they lacked monster corpses and had sufficient food… The more Klein thought about it, the more fearful he felt towards it.

If it wasn't for the fact that the Mother Goddess of Depravity's powers that could penetrate the original barrier was still extremely limited, Klein suspected that the Cards of Blasphemy and mushrooms would've left him corrupted. Sefirah Castle would have unknowingly changed owners.

These were things that had been placed above the gray fog for a long time and didn't undergo any special sealing.

Compared to the flamboyant Mother Tree of Desire, the usually low-key

Mother Goddess of Depravity was far more terrifying!

Mr. Door and the Emperor were silently corrupted by “Her.”

As expected of an existence that stands atop the Outer Deities despite losing two Beyonder pathways and a sefirah… Klein sighed inwardly. He took out a pen and paper and prepared to write a reply to Cattleya.

At that moment, he realized that Miss Messenger had been waiting by his side the entire time without returning to the spirit world. The eight eyes of the four heads stared at him unblinkingly.

“What do you think of Frank?” Klein hesitated before asking, “I mean, other than his nickname.”

The four heads in Reinette Tinekerr’s hand spoke one after another:

“He only…” “Appears like…” “An adopted son of…” “An Outer Deity…”

In other words, Frank wasn’t affected by the Mother Goddess of Depravity previously. He was simply crazy… Klein heaved a long sigh of relief.

He then asked, “What about now?”

As Frank Lee summoned Reinette Tinekerr every time he wrote a letter to Gehrman Sparrow, Klein believed that Miss Messenger, who had a very high status, had a relatively clear and accurate grasp of the state of the Mushroom King.

“I…” “Don’t…” “Know…” “Either…” Reinette Tinekerr’s four heads answered one after another.

Following that, “She” added, “His body…” “Temporarily…” “Hasn’t been…” “Corrupted…”

Does that mean that you can’t tell if his psyche is affected? That’s right, other than his low level, Frank’s usual actions resemble more of an evil god than me… Klein lampooned as he took out a gold coin and flicked it.

With this medium, he quickly entered a dream divination state.

At the same time, he was prepared to activate Sefirah Castle to cut off the Outer Deities from watching.

Scenes flashed past as Klein saw several futures.

Yes, the greatest threat right now is that Primordial Moon believer. I have to separate him from Frank, or things will become extremely troublesome and dangerous… If Frank doesn’t come into contact with anything related to the Mother Goddess of Depravity in the future and doesn’t advance to a demigod, there shouldn’t be any problems… If only one of these two conditions is satisfied, the chance of an accident happening will increase greatly. If both are satisfied at the same time, I can’t see the developments at all… Klein snapped awake as he interpreted the results of the divination.

Perhaps because Frank’s level was too low, and he wasn’t too affected by it, Klein’s divination happened smoothly without encountering any danger.

Phew… He silently exhaled and caught the gold coin.

Then, he realized that Miss Messenger’s eight red eyes were focused on the gold coin in his palm.

Klein twitched his eyebrows, expressing his doubts.

“It…” “Has…” Sefirah Castle’s…” “Aura…” Reinette Tinekerr’s four blonde, red-eyed heads shook up and down.

This is one of the five gold coins I often use for divination. It has already been tainted by the aura of Sefirah Castle? This way, it can be considered a mystical item to a certain extent. However, the effect will be drained over time… Klein carefully looked at the gold coin in his hand and made a rough judgment based on his spiritual intuition.

This gold coin could increase the accuracy of divination and enhance a user's ability to resist any interference.

To Klein, this was a pleasant surprise. He decided to use the actual gold coin rather than its historical projection.

Retrieving the gold coin, Klein wrote a reply to Ma'am Hermit and handed it to her through Reinette Tinekerr.

†

After giving Gehrman Sparrow's messenger another gold coin, Cattleya unfolded the letter and quickly scanned it.

After reading it, she felt her shoulders weigh down a little.

Without any delay, Cattleya took out another piece of paper and wrote:

"Your Majesty,

"I dreamed of you finding that primitive island and successfully returning…

"The situation of that descendant of the Emperor is getting worse. If he continues staying on the Future, I suspect he'll go crazy. If you don't mind, I want to send him over to you."

"What we need to take note of is that, although he claims to no longer believe in the Primordial Moon, no one has ever confirmed that.

"…

"My greatest worry now is that it's difficult to obtain the main ingredient of a Clairvoyant… If you have returned, I wish to find a time to return the Magic Wishing Lamp to you…"

Chapter 1325 - More than Half a Year Later

◆ ◆ ◆

City of Generosity, Bayam, in a rented apartment lit up with gas lamps.

Verdu Abraham, who was wearing a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, held a thick stack of information. He was reading seriously under the dim light, drawing a symbol and recording what he deemed useful information from time to time.

He left Loen and came to the Rorsted Archipelago mainly to avoid being watched by Dorian and his other family members, and focus on studying mysticism. He wanted to find an effective way to save Ancestor Bethel Abraham, or rather, reduce the difficulty of the known ritual.

However, he hadn't made any headway after half a year. It was as though he had no other choice other than hunting a Bizarro Sorcerer, a Parasite, and a Secrets Sorcerer.

This made Verdu rather depressed, but he was clear about how dangerous a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact was. Even if he was willing to sacrifice himself, he was unable to truly control it. He was unable to guarantee the final outcome.

And the most important thing was that he couldn't find any Bizarro Sorcerers or Parasites. They were all saints that were hard to track, with styles that were known for being strange and bizarre.

Phew… Verdu put down the stack of documents in his hand and muttered silently, Don’t tell me I can only place my hopes on The Fool like Dorian and the others?

Upon thinking of The Fool, Verdu couldn’t help but frown. This was because there were more and more half-giants promoting The Fool’s faith in Bayam City, so much so that even he, who rarely went out, heard of it.

This made him suspect if he had arrived near the headquarters of the Church of The Fool.

If it wasn’t for the mysterious knowledge that was spread in secret in the Rorsted Archipelago was far beyond Verdu’s expectations—many of them were things that the Abraham family didn’t know of, and were extremely useful—he would’ve left Bayam last month and headed for the Southern Continent.

I can’t stay here any longer. I need to buy ship tickets to East Balam as soon as possible… Just as Verdu made a decision, he began to waver. Dorian and The Fool probably wouldn’t expect me to hide in the area that’s under their headquarters’ jurisdiction. Emperor Roselle once said that the most dangerous place is the safest place…

After some hesitation, Verdu put down the documents and switched off the lights. With the moonlight from the window, he walked towards the bedroom.

At the corner of the balcony in his room, a figure suddenly jumped out of the darkness and jumped over the railings.

The figure was like a feather, light and weightless. It landed from a height ten meters above the ground, without making a single sound.

Right on the heels of that, the figure moved through the shadows to the vicinity of the Church of the Sea God and went up the bell tower.

Then, “he” took out a pen and paper and wrote the report on tonight’s surveillance before stuffing it into a crack.

After the figure left, a howling wind suddenly sounded above the bell tower about fifteen minutes later.

The report was pulled out from the crack by an invisible hand. As it swept through the wind, it rose and fell into the distance like a bat spreading its wings in the dark night.

Not long after, the report plummeted like it had been bound to a rock, landing on a hand that extended out in a hidden corner of the garden.

This hand belonged to the cardinal of the Church of Storms, Alger Wilson.

He then unfolded the report and began to read it in the darkness. He was completely unaffected by the lack of light.

Even in the dark sea, Alger could see everything around him clearly.

Verdu is becoming more resolute in his intention of leaving Bayam… Alger nodded indiscernibly as he came to a conclusion.

Over the past half a year, he had been monitoring this member of the Abraham family according to Mr. Fool's instructions, but he hadn't noticed anything abnormal about him.

After Verdu left the Rorsted Archipelago, his mission would be completed.

However, Alger didn't wish for it to end just like that. He believed that he hadn't made enough contributions. All he did was simply monitor a Sequence 7 Beyonder without any special characteristics.

The Hermit had already obtained a Sequence 3 Beyonder characteristic from Queen Mystic, and had gathered the corresponding supplementary ingredients and was busy preparing the ritual. This made Alger deeply stressed. Of course, he had also done many things according to Mr. Fool's intentions, but even he felt that there was a huge difference from doing those tasks, with the identity, status, and strength of Sea God.

For a moment, Alger wanted to use all sorts of methods to force Verdu Abraham to expose himself, but in the end, he gave up on the idea. This was because he couldn't be sure of Mr. Fool's attitude towards the target.

Previously, when the City of Silver and Moon City sold Beyonder characteristics and potion formulas, Alger had purchased some from the Tarot Club. He had used it to secretly nurture a team of Beyonders who were loyal to him. This was how he had people monitoring Verdu.

Currently, this less-than-ten-member team was mostly at Sequence 9, while only a small number of them had been promoted to Sequence 8.

As for where Alger had obtained the money for purchasing Beyonder characteristics and potion formulas, the answer was very simple:

As a cardinal of the Church diocese, Alger could easily "save" a sum of money for himself. And during that period of time, the minerals, farms, spice plantations, and factories in the Rorsted Archipelago were sold at below intrinsic value. As long as one had the funds to buy them, they could earn a lot after a short period of time.

More importantly, the Church of Storms's headquarters was quite interested in the Beyonder characteristics and potion formulas sold by the City of Silver and Moon City. They provided a large sum of money for their purchase. The go-between was without a doubt the cardinal of the Rorsted diocese, Alger Wilson. It was understandable that some losses were inevitable during such situations.

Reining in his thoughts, Alger decided to sell some mysticism knowledge in Bayam's Beyonder circles through his Shadow Guards. He wanted to bait Verdu Abraham and keep him in the vicinity for as long as possible.

The main reason is that the City of Silver's preaching has frightened that gentleman… Alger shook his head and muttered inwardly.

He then destroyed the report in his hand and walked back into the cathedral.

†

The sky had just lit up, and a young man walked out of the hotel, leisurely enjoying the scenery of Bayam’s morning.

He had just bought the “Teana” beverage that was packaged with the fruit’s shell when he suddenly felt a huge shadow appear beside him.

The youth turned his head and looked up bit by bit only to find a 2.5-meter-tall half-giant walking over.

“Excuse me sir, do you have a moment to talk about our lord and savior, Mr. Fool.” The half-giant bent his back and tried his best to make his smile appear amiable.

The youth drank a mouthful of Teana and pointed to the side. He smiled and nodded.

“Sure, but not here.”

He then walked to a place where they wouldn’t be in the way. The seemingly oppressive half-giant followed warmly.

“Go ahead.” The youth didn’t hide his curiosity at all.

The muscular half-giant’s expression turned solemn.

“My Lord claims to be The Fool. In the past, the present, and also in the future, ‘He’ is the great ruler who dominates the spirit world. ‘He’ is also the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck. ‘He’ is also the landmark when every living being seeks eternal life.

“My Lord lives above the real world and the spirit world. ‘His’ benevolence spreads across Heaven and the land. There are a total of six angels under ‘Him’…

“The Angel of Mercury is the embodiment of fate, my Lord’s most cherished angel. The Angel of Death has followed my Lord for the longest period of time and is the consul of the Underworld. The Angel of Redemption is my Lord’s bugle, the messenger of ‘His’ revelations. The Angel of Life is the crystallization of wisdom itself. ‘She’ is the indestructible spirituality that resides in everyone’s body.”

Upon hearing that, the youth laughed.

“Your Lord is really impressive. He actually has so many angels to serve him.”

“Not only that,” the half-giant replied gently. “There’s also the Angel of Retribution beside the Lord’s throne. ‘He’ is the Lord’s lightning, the Lord’s rage, and the Lord’s palm. It’s all the judge of the fallen and the ones who aren’t chaste.

“In contrast to the Angel of Retribution is the Angel of Time,”He” is a ‘king’ of ancient times. “He” eventually submitted to my Lord and now strikes the bell of Heaven.”

“Impressive, impressive.” The youth sincerely sighed.

Upon hearing such a response, the half-giant couldn’t help but smile. Then, he described the various miracles that Mr. Fool had performed as succinctly as possible. Finally, he said, “It’s already been fifteen minutes. I won’t waste your time. If you’re interested, you can go to The Fool’s cathedral on 16th Phillips Street. This is the biggest cathedral in Bayam City. Heh heh, the rest are still in planning.”

The young man nodded.

“I’ll pay a visit if I’m free.”

After watching the half-giant turn and leave, the youth took out a crystal monocle from his pocket and wore it on his right eye.

†

The half-giant walked straight back to a restaurant and changed into a chef's attire.

"Baldur, you went proselytizing again?" the restaurant owner asked with a smile.

When the industry association recommended this half-giant to learn culinary skills from his restaurant, he had been rather reluctant. He always felt that the other party could kill him with just a swing of his arm, and he didn't seem like someone with any culinary talent.

However, he was now very pleased with Baldur. Not only was he humble, obedient, and willing to take hardship, he had quite the intimidating demeanor. This scared off the gangsters who had placed their sights on the restaurant.

The only problem was that he would go out every morning to proselytize The Fool.

Of course, the restaurant owner couldn't say anything since it wasn't working hours, so he didn't mind.

Baldur smiled honestly and walked into the kitchen. He said to his good friend, Bonn, who had come from Moon City to seek refuge with him.

"I can teach you how to roast fish today."

Bonn looked rather normal, but his eyes appeared awkward with one looking up and the other looking down. He was one of the citizens from Moon City who wasn't very deformed, and he had the courage to interact with the people outside. He nodded.

"I have to pray in a moment. Mr. Fool sent a revelation to get all the residents of Moon City to pray to 'Him' at nine in the morning. We are to wish that we are no longer deformed."

Chapter 1326 - Successful “Mass”

◆

Regarding the matter of praying to Mr. Fool, Baldur raised both hands and feet in agreement. He didn’t have any intention of pressing Bonn.

He prayed for more than a minute after waking up in the morning and before sleeping at night. He would thank Mr. Fool for bringing the pure sunlight, delicious food, and a life of no despair.

“Alright, I’ll prepare the ingredients for today first.” Baldur smiled as he nodded at Bonn.

A few minutes later, he brought many bags of ingredients into the kitchen, as if he was carrying a few rolls of curtains.

At this moment, Bonn found a chair and sat down. He sincerely prayed to Mr. Fool.

“The great ruler who controls the spirit world, The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, I wish to be blessed by you. I hope that you can fulfill my wish of escaping from my deformity…”

In the cathedral on Philips Street, in several areas in Bayam, in the New City of Silver, and the New Moon City that was located in a forest, prayers echoed softly simultaneously.

The extremely self-conscious Xin, Rus, and company vaguely guessed that Mr. Fool was planning on granting such a wish. As they prayed, their bodies trembled, unable to control themselves.

They yearned to be like normal people.

They were also looking forward to the bustling and lively Bayam. They yearned for the grilled fish made from a secret recipe, the candy factories, and delicacies from all over the world. They yearned for a life to drink, chat, sing, and dance.

In the ancient palace above the gray fog, The Fool Klein, who was sitting at the end of the long bronze table, saw bits of pure light light up one after another, forming a majestic sea of stars in front of him.

The prayers overlapped and echoed inside Sefirah Castle as ripples appeared.

Klein closed his eyes and took it in for a few seconds. He raised his right hand and bent his middle finger, rapping the edge of the long mottled table.

An invisible force spread out like waves on the surface of water. It surged into every prayer point of light and landed on the residents of Moon City.

Xin suddenly felt something and raised her hand to touch the middle of her face.

The next second, she felt her nose.

Almost instinctively, Xin stroked that position several times from top to bottom before she believed she had grown a nose and was no longer deformed.

She instantly closed her eyes, bent down, and pressed her forehead to the ground. She couldn't help but praise Mr. Fool.

The praises around her grew louder and louder, becoming more and more uniform.

Rus's eyes separated; Bonn's eyes became symmetrical; and in Moon City, every deformed person, or those who were ugly because of the traits they inherited, had broken through their original restrictions and their bodies were transforming towards a state of normalcy.

At this moment, be it in New Moon City, the New City of Silver, or Bayam, they heard the bell of the cathedral ring.

Gong!

The ethereal gong of the bell reverberated in the hearts of everyone in Moon City. It rang in the ears of every person who heard it, as though it could cleanse their souls and bring them the most genuine feelings towards life.

The tears that Xin, Rus, and company held back finally flowed out. They felt their minds and bodies turn tranquil, no longer having a speck of dust tainting them.

They subconsciously raised their heads and cast their gaze towards the source of the gong. They discovered that it came from beyond New Moon City, an unknown distance away from where they were.

A miracle… A thought suddenly popped into the minds of the Moon City citizens.

In the new City of Silver that was connected to them, Waite Chirmont and company cast their gazes into the distance and cast their gaze towards Bayam.

The gong came from there.

“Praise Mr. Fool!” They mumbled at the same time as they pressed their right palm to their left chest.

In Bayam City, Bonn adjusted his postures with Baldur who had tears streaming down his face. They faced Philips Street and towards the cathedral that belonged to Mr. Fool. They listened attentively and gratefully to the holy chimes from Heaven.

However, above the gray fog, The Fool Klein was somewhat astonished and confused.

The sudden chiming of the bells wasn't within his plans.

He then turned his gaze to The Fool's cathedral at 16 Phillips Street.

Almost at the same time, he used the prayer lights to see the tall bell tower that was attached to the cathedral. He saw a young man wearing a pointed hat and a classic black robe standing at the top of the bell tower.

This youth was holding a black bell hammer and was striking the bell repeatedly.

[image]

As if sensing the gaze from above, the youth stopped. He lifted his head slightly and adjusted the crystal monocle on his right eye.

At the same time, his smile widened.

"…" Klein nearly cursed.

At this moment, his eyes glazed over almost in an unconcealed manner. He didn't understand why Angel of Time Amon would suddenly appear and seriously strike the bell of his cathedral.

Klein was actually mentally prepared for Amon's and Zaratul's possible arrival. This was because there were just too many people in the City of Silver and Moon City. There was no way they could secretly integrate with the outside world.

In other words, the City of Silver and Moon City would definitely be known to the various Churches and secret organizations. Under such circumstances, be it public or private proselytizing, it wouldn't affect any future development. Therefore, Klein silently agreed to the City of Silver's attempts to proselytize the faith of The Fool. This was preparation for him to have more anchors for his advancement to

Sequence 1.

Due to this premise, he was prepared for Zaratul, Amon, and other hidden enemies to come to Bayam. He even hoped that they would do so.

Here, Klein, who had the status and level of a King of Angels in Sefirah Castle, was able to fully display his home ground advantage. As for the City of Silver, it also had Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts. It could completely resist Amon and take down Zaratul.

Compared to his main body suddenly encountering a prepared enemy elsewhere, or the discovery of his marionette city, this was undoubtedly a better choice.

However, Amon's current actions confused Klein. He didn't understand what the God of Deceit wanted to achieve.

†

16 Phillips Street, inside The Fool's cathedral.

The archbishop-on-duty, the City of Silver's six-member council's Elder, Derrick Berg, also looked up in astonishment at the stained glass.

Rays of sunlight shone inside, allowing Derrick to read one scene after another.

As the black bell hammer fell, the tremors of the bell gradually stopped.

I didn't arrange for someone to strike the bell… Derrick frowned.

As a member of the City of Silver, as a demigod in the Sun domain, he had a sharp intuition and knew that something must've gone wrong.

However, the strange ringing of the bell didn't bring any accidents. Besides the ringing, everything seemed normal.

As Derrick observed the surroundings with the help of his Unshadowed Beyonder powers, he quickly considered whether the bell had any symbolic significance in mysticism.

After eliminating the possibilities, he suddenly recalled the Holy Bible of The Fool made up by the City of Silver.

There was content related to the striking of bells!

It was used to describe the relationship between Angel of Time Amon and Mr. Fool to confirm “His” true status.

Towards that sentence, Derrick was still against it because he knew that Blasphemer Amon wasn’t Mr. Fool’s Blessed. Their relationship wasn’t even harmonious, and was actually hostile.

However, the lies he made previously had convinced the other members of the City of Silver’s six-member council. They believed that Angel of Time Amon was the first entity appointed by Mr. Fool to cast down the light for the people of the Forsaken Land of the Gods. It was because “He” had Parasitized Derrick, which had resulted in the subsequent changes, all the way until hope descended.

Derrick had wanted to explain, but he was embarrassed. That would only bring up too many lies, making him lose his image with the other Elders of the six-member council and citizens of the City of Silver. It was just like Miss Justice had said before, a social death.

Finally, he chose to delay any actions, hoping that Mr. Fool would take a look at the Holy Bible. If there was anything inappropriate with the descriptions, “He” would definitely send a divine revelation to change the views.

To his surprise, Mr. Fool didn’t say anything and silently agreed with the contents of the Holy Bible.

Could it be that Amon is striking the bell? Derrick was momentarily dazed as he found it too unbelievable.

He hurriedly lowered his head and began praying, reporting this matter to Mr. Fool.

†

Above the gray fog, inside Sefirah Castle.

Before Klein could eliminate Amon, the other party suddenly turned transparent and transformed into a beam of light before vanishing from the bell tower.

What does this fellow want? If “His” father is the Emperor and not the ancient sun god, then I can reasonably suspect that “He” is striking a death knell for me… As Klein checked if there were any Amons lurking in the bodies of the City of Silver and Moon City citizens, he analyzed Amon’s motives without any clue in mind.

Just as he was about to use divination to seek clues, Derrick completed his prayer.

…Holy Bible, Holy Bible? The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched as he summoned from the junk pile the Holy Bible that the City of Silver had sacrificed to him.

Previously, he had only flipped through a few pages, but he was too embarrassed to continue reading it. He took on a position of burying his head in the sand.

Of course, he wasn’t careless in this aspect. He was still extremely cautious. He used divination inside Sefirah Castle to confirm that the Holy Bible wouldn’t bring him any harm.

With this premise, he allowed the City of Silver to use this Holy Bible.

He slowly took a deep breath and reached out his right hand. He flipped the scriptures page by page.

His facial muscles began to twitch, and the corner of his lips uncontrollably parted.

Klein flipped faster and faster. Finally, he saw the last page.

Pa!

Klein suddenly closed the book and threw it back onto the junk pile.

After this miracle in Moon City, yes, the potion has mostly been digested. The marionette city will have to step onto the stage of history… Klein observed his condition without expression and nodded indiscernibly.

Ever since he had gained preliminary control of Sefirah Castle, he could receive digestion feedback from the real world.

Chapter 1327 - Three Plans

◆

As for the marionette town, Klein had been thinking about how to build it a long time ago. He had already come up with three plans:

If he eliminated any interference from external factors, his best choice would be somewhere in a certain country of the Northern Continent. He would allow his marionette town to rise up overnight. Furthermore, he would connect it to the surrounding cities through railways, rivers, and roads.

This way, the marionette town would have large numbers of outsiders arriving on a daily basis, and it would create a very strong interaction with the surrounding areas. On the one hand, a town without a city nearby would definitely purchase grain, salt, cloth, ores, sugar, and other daily necessities. On the other hand, it would also produce its own products, which could be sold to neighboring cities, towns, and villages. Under such a situation, merchants, workers, tourists, and other groups would go back and forth frequently. At the same time, they would interact more with the marionette town’s residents.

Under the influence of all kinds of interactions between the parties, it wouldn’t be long before the town of marionettes could produce a corresponding region in the spirit world. Once the lives of the residents became more detailed and real, Klein could consume the potion to advance to Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries.

This would take less than three months.

But the problem was that this approach couldn’t be kept confidential.

In the present era, to have a town suddenly pop up was something that couldn't be hidden from people. Soon, there would be civil servants, the police, and reporters coming to investigate. And after that, the interactions between the parties would also make more and more people know and understand the city. This was a problem that couldn't be resolved through illusions unless the town of marionettes didn't interact with the surrounding cities, towns, and villages and had relatively minor interactions. However, that wouldn't meet the requirements of the ritual.

When news of the marionette town spread, Klein would undoubtedly be targeted by Zaratul, Amon's true body, and his other enemies. When the time came, the destruction caused by others would definitely be easier than him protecting it. He could only migrate his marionette town elsewhere. This would cause the interactions generated in the early stages to be for naught, just like what the Dark Demonic Wolf had experienced.

Therefore, Klein had only listed down such a plan, so he basically wouldn't choose it. Unless a certain Visionary was willing to provide help, making all the living beings in the Northern and Southern Continents naturally believe that there was indeed a town there, one that hadn't suddenly appeared.

Considering the influence of various external factors and his Beyonder powers, Klein's best choice was to establish the town on an uninhabited island that deviated from the safe sea route and was sufficiently well-hidden. He would then use Sefirah Castle to give it anti-divination and anti-prophecy properties.

At the same time, Klein would use the "curtain" to "Graft" some roads, rivers, and railways to somewhere outside the marionette town, making it a stop for random groups of people during their journeys.

This couldn't be kept completely confidential, but once the "strange phenomenon" spread and attracted Zaratul's and Amon's attention, Klein could easily remove the original “Grafting” randomly and switch the “entrance.”

Under such a strategy, the movement was limited to the entrance, not the marionette town itself. The effects of various interactions in the spirit world could be preserved without being interrupted. The ritual could steadily proceed as planned.

Of course, there was a big problem with this plan. It was that the interaction would be limited and couldn’t influence matters at a daily level in all its aspects. In addition, the frequency and intensity of the interaction wouldn’t be too high.

If he chose this plan, it meant that Klein had to spend more than half a year or even a year on the ritual.

If he wanted to be safe, forcing every marionette’s fate to have a beginning and an end, the ritual would take at least fifty years. However, there was also a way to get around the limitations—once the rest of the ritual’s requirements were met, he could deliver a meteorite strike, an earthquake, or a volcano eruption to the town, causing all the marionettes’ fates to come to an end in the real world. It was something that happened in real life and was rather reasonable.

In this radical and conservative proposal, Klein had another solution.

It was to replicate a city and make the marionette correspond to the residents of the city and be mapped one-to-one. For evil Miracle Invokers, they could wipe out the original city and use their marionettes to replace its inhabitants. Those who had a kind heart would hide the city and ensure a supply of goods. The reason as to why one didn’t convert the target city into marionettes was that it already had a corresponding region in the spirit world. Without being a newly born one, it didn’t meet the requirements of the ritual.

With the “curtain” formed by the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic, Klein could make a better choice: “Graft” a city at a particular stage to his marionette town.

This meant that his town of marionettes had become the dark side of the city. In the corresponding period of time, outsiders would encounter marionettes and not real people. Once that period of time passed, they would leave the town of marionettes and return to the real world to deal with real people.

During the process, Klein would send his marionettes to act as an outsider and maintain interactions with the corresponding real person, allowing the real outsiders to return to the real world without any gaps.

In other words, there were two different lives playing out in the same city at the same time, but no one could notice that. Occasionally, some people would think that some details weren't right, but would find it inexplicable and might just ignore it.

This was rather in line with the characteristic of an Attendant of Mysteries, and it had a certain level of concealment.

Of course, this plan also had its problem. It was to simulate the fate of a marionette to a very high level—almost as similar as a human's. Without its own independence, it would cause the ritual's effects to fail.

Klein tapped the edge of the long mottled table with his fingers and was in a dilemma over the second and third plan.

After a few minutes, he did as his heart willed—cowardice—and chose the second plan. He would rather spend more time than affect the fates of the innocent.

Back then, Zaratul and Antigonus likely chose the third plan… Klein sighed and prepared to return to the real world.

At this moment, he looked at the junk pile and considered whether he should send a revelation to change the descriptions in the City of Silver's Holy Bible.

To a deity, the Holy Bible wasn't anything too important. Its best use was for its convenience to spread its teachings and increase the number of anchors.

Klein had long come to a conclusion from The Revelation of Evernight, The Book of Storms, and the contents of the various orthodox Churches' Holy Bibles.

Most of the content elevated the orthodox deity, making random claims of grandeur and expressed mercy and pity.

In ancient times, the impression the believers had of the deities would indeed have a negative impact on the deities. But now, with the use of symbols instead of statues, this latent problem no longer existed. At the very least, the Evernight Goddess, the Lord of Storms, and other deities openly declared that they were parts of the Creator's original body. They weren't worried that it would exacerbate the awakening of the Oldest One.

In other words, if there really was a problem with this aspect, Klein believed that the Evernight Goddess would definitely have changed the corresponding description. "She" would've changed the description of being one of the eyes of the Creator to a child spawned by "Him." It too enjoyed a very high status.

At the same time, the believers' acknowledgment of certain matters wouldn't have any burden on the deities themselves in a mysticism sense. Otherwise, Amon would've secretly helped Klein, or rather, prepare a batch of believers for the former Sefirah Castle to lure them into forming the belief that the Angel of Time was the manifestation of the Lord of the Mysteries. With the aid of an instinctual response that met the requirements, "He" could establish enough connections with Sefirah Castle and open a "back door."

To a deity, the Holy Bible only had two important components other than for spreading the faith:

Firstly, it was a description of the authority and honorific name of the deities themselves. If there were any mistakes, it would lead to the prayers of the believers pointing to an unknown target. Not only would it be dangerous to the believers, but it would also cause the deities to lose their anchors. Secondly, any descriptions that involved the other Churches would easily attract conflict.

As for the angels and saints, the deities actually didn't pay them too much mind. The ones that cared were the angels and saints themselves because they needed to obtain a certain level of anchors through this.

Therefore, the Holy Bibles' descriptions of angels and saints were detailed enough. They had authority and honorific names, making it easier for different believers to choose and be immersed. In addition, this wasn't enough to form a stable anchor, because it was under the faith of a deity.

In order to resolve this problem, the orthodox Churches would define certain cathedrals to different guardian angels and guardian saints and clearly differentiate them.

Due to this knowledge, Klein didn't pay much attention to the Holy Bible. After he finished reading the description about his authority and honorific name, he stopped continuing out of embarrassment. He only used divination to confirm that the contents wouldn't result in a conflict with the orthodox Churches.

After some thought, he gave up the idea of directly sending the revelation to change the Holy Bible and decided to use a gentler method.

During the Tarot Club's exchange, he could use The World Gehrman Sparrow to guide The Sun into adjusting his understanding of the situation, turning the parts involving the Angel of Time to Pallez Zoroast, allowing the corresponding content to be fixed without causing any suspicion in the City of Silver.

†

Bayam, Verdu Abraham had obtained quite a bit of mysticism knowledge in a few Beyonder circles.

He lit up the gas wall lamp and carefully read it in the night.

Towards the end, he suddenly read a piece of news that he had never understood before:

Bansy Harbor is a place filled with mysticism powers. Its connection with the spirit world and the astral world is beyond imagination… Even with the Church of Storms directly destroying the harbor, it still can’t completely eliminate the abnormality of its existence…

Many mysticism researchers are purchasing items related to Bansy at a high price…

Bansy… Verdu muttered to himself silently, suddenly having a strong interest in the harbor.

He began considering if he should buy some items from Bansy and do a thorough study of them. After all, the spirit world was related to “Teleportation.” The astral world and the cosmos involved “Wandering,” and might involve Mr. Door Bethel Abraham’s method of escaping.

Perhaps, if I have the chance, I could go to Bansy to take a look… Verdu nodded indiscernibly.

Chapter 1328 - The Preparations Needed

◆◆◆

The initial preparations for building a marionette town were rather boring and tedious. At the very least, Klein believed so.

In the ancient palace, Klein sat on the high-back chair belonging to The Fool, holding a fountain pen. There were ordinary pieces of paper with the name, age, and the fate of every marionette. As he made the Worms of Spirit emerge from his body, they formed avatars beside him.

Some Kleins sat on the ground, while others occupied the twenty-one seats other than The Fool's. Some conjured beds and lay on them…

Then, they summoned different books from the junk pile and started reading them seriously.

The books included but were not limited to:

"How to Brew Wine"

"Train Dispatching"

"Desert Making Compendium"

"A Clergyman Prepares"

"Gas Wall Lamps, Gas Meters, and All Kinds of Family Machinery Repair"

"DESI-licacy"

"Harbor Management"

"Foundations of Law"

"Ladies Aesthetic" magazines…

These were specialist knowledge that different marionettes needed to grasp. Only by doing so would they be able to act their roles well, allowing him to be realistic in every aspect. Even if they were to engage in a deep conversation with outsiders, they wouldn't expose any problems.

It wouldn't be difficult for Klein if he just needed to simply memorize the knowledge, but he had to truly grasp and apply it. Furthermore, he couldn't confuse his characters. He couldn't let a burly and strong switchman with a low income be talking about the wonders of a particular particular skincare product, or which silk cloth was flawed.

If such a situation were to happen in novels, plays, and operas, it might create a strange attraction, but putting it in the real world was clearly uncanny and not beneficial to the advancement of the ritual.

To avoid such a problem, Klein could only work harder in the early stages. He hoped that every character in a marionette town would be real, whole, and appropriate.

Fortunately, there weren't many people in a city who needed to deeply understand the corresponding specialist knowledge. Most of the residents were half-illiterate, or really illiterate. They relied on experience to live their lives that they repeated via motions. For these characters, the knowledge that Klein needed to grasp was relatively little, just like workers who had gone through simple training—or even without any training—to be sent to the assembly line.

After an unknown period of time, Klein put down his fountain pen and rubbed his temples, letting out a long sigh of relief.

He had finally written down the information about nearly five thousand residents in the marionette town, and his corresponding knowledge preparation was almost complete.

This is like a super large-scale movie directed by a director, and with me being the scriptwriter. Same for the lighting engineer, the makeup artist, and all the actors… For this ritual, I'm really on the verge of losing control. If I'm not careful, my personality will dissociate and I'll fall into the abyss of madness… Luckily, I have a professional psychologist…

Yes, I have to pay attention to a problem in the town's operations. Although I'm a gentleman with manners, most of the residents in town have low socioeconomic status. Be it speaking or acting, they're more inclined towards being vulgar… I can't make a mistake during the acting and become set back by my psychological barriers… Klein sighed silently as the avatars around him disintegrated into Worms of Spirit before he got them to burrow into his body.

Of course, this wasn't all. There was also one "Klein," who maintained his previous state, preparing to be on Sefirah Castle duty.

In the next second, Klein returned to the real world and took out Creeping Hunger from the Historical Void.

Then, he "Teleported" to an island that was located in the Berserk Sea but one that clearly deviated from the safe sea route.

This was the "stage" he had chosen before.

This place was isolated from the storms all year round. There were no signs of human activity, only a large forest and animals that lived off the forest.

Klein looked around and chose an open area. He pressed his right hand to his left chest and prayed sincerely, "I wish that there's a city suitable for five thousand people here."

Just as he said that, Klein raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

Suddenly, this open area became extremely flat. The surrounding forest also “receded” greatly, providing large amounts of wood, stones, and soil.

Almost at the same time, buildings rose up from the ground. They took form with stone and wood. The highest wasn’t more than four stories high. The style was closer to the Loen Kingdom’s Desi Bay.

In just the blink of an eye, residential buildings, a library, a police station, a telegraph office, a city hall, a small hospital, a candy factory, a water plant, a gas company, a steam locomotive station, parallel train tracks, and plantations outside the city took form. The streets were also paved with cement or stone bricks.

Towards the end, on the square in the middle of the town, a pointed-tip cathedral emerged from the ground and stood proudly.

This was a cathedral belonging to the Evernight Goddess, as it was in line with the background setting of the city.

“I hope this island has a deep-sea harbor.” Klein didn’t stop as he made a second wish.

Pa!

He snapped his fingers again, fulfilling his wish.

About three kilometers away from the town, a small-scale harbor quickly took shape. There were two docks, five warehouses, a port hotel, a simple restaurant, a police station branch, a bar, a lighthouse, and a naval base…

“I wish for the harbor and town to have convenient transportation.” Klein made a third wish.

He raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

A concrete road and a cargo rail instantly appeared between the town and the harbor.

According to Klein’s plan, a portion of the harbor was prepared for visitors by sea. The town was mainly for outsiders from the Northern and Southern Continent.

As he looked at the empty city with admiration, Klein pressed his top hat and “Teleported” to the municipal square. He walked step by step into the cathedral named Saint Arianna Cathedral.

The cathedral’s door was open, and it was dark inside.

After an unknown period of time, three figures appeared at the door. They were a 30-year-old gentleman in a formal suit with a tie, an ordinary-looking and gentle-looking woman, and a child who was dressed like an adult.

The woman took a few steps with difficulty before stretching her neck. Then, she smiled and reached out her hands to hold the gentleman’s arm.

The gentleman had a faint smile on his face. As he allowed the lady to lean on him, he reached out his right hand and held the boy.

The little boy was skipping about, appearing very lively.

Their actions were a little rough at first, but the more they walked, the smoother they became as they walked through the square.

After they left, more and more people walked out of Saint Arianna Cathedral. They consisted of the police, repair workers, gas company employees, restaurant chefs, white-haired old men, and simply-dressed farmers…

In the next hour, people constantly came out of the Evernight cathedral. They either turned to different streets and went to different places, entering different houses, stopping at the square, or enjoying the pigeon-less scenery.

During this process, the number of people that came out had exceeded the limits of the cathedral's capacity, but there seemed to be no end to the people, as though the interior was connected to another city.

After another fifteen minutes, the entrance of Saint Arianna Cathedral finally fell silent. However, there were rats, cockroaches, moths, ants, flies, and mosquitoes creeping outwards.

Finally, a colorful window at the top of the cathedral opened. White pigeons flew out and landed in the middle of the square.

The people who had stayed there came to life completely. Some teased the pigeons, others looked for hawkers, while some played a seven-string guitar, and others smiled as they conversed with their friends.

A man wearing a top hat and a trench coat and carrying a cane left the municipal square. He came to the other side of the town and stopped in front of a wooden board.

He took out his tools and wrote the name of the town on the wooden board:

"Yharnam."

After some thought, the man "wiped" away "Yharnam" and wrote another name:

"Utopia."

†

Backlund, inside the Hall family's luxurious villa.

"Alfred has already boarded the cruise ship back to the Northern Continent?" Audrey didn't hide her surprise.

It was September 1352.

In the past half a year, Audrey didn't spend too much effort to make her father give up the thought of returning to East Chester County for the first half of the year. This was because there was a pressing need to rebuild Backlund and Constant City. The kingdom's political scene also needed a new balance. Earl Hall had too many things to handle and wasn't in the mood for a vacation.

Therefore, whenever Earl Hall was put in a difficult spot, she just needed to take the initiative to say that she was willing to remain in Backlund and return to East Chester County in the next six months to have things develop as she wanted and receive praise for.

As for the Psychology Alchemists, they didn't rush her either. Up to now, the Psychology Alchemists' council meeting had been held three times. It was mainly to communicate their research results and the various information of the areas under their jurisdiction. Only Ma'am Greed had asked about the clues to the mind dragon twice.

To be frank, if Mr. Fool hadn't reminded Audrey to take note of the rabbit, Wrath, and the easily forgettable president, she would definitely find the conference interesting. Mr. Rabbit had plenty of ideas, but she remained as vigilant as ever.

"Yes, the liner has already left the harbor." Earl Hall smiled and nodded. "When Alfred arrives in Backlund and completes the necessary social intercourse, we will return to East Chester County for fox-hunting."

Autumn was the best time to hunt foxes.

Audrey tersely acknowledged.

"Alright."

†

As a major general in the army, Alfred didn't follow the naval fleet to Desi Bay. Instead, he led his adjutants and squires and boarded a steam-powered sailboat hybrid for Pritz Harbor.

After traveling for nearly two days, they encountered a storm in the Berserk Sea.

As the ship shook violently, the sailors on the observatory saw some light through their telescopes.

It came from a lighthouse.

Author’s Note: I wrote in detail three plans in the previous chapter because I felt that the third plan was most impactful, but it’s impossible for Klein to undertake it with his character, so I had to unfortunately give it up. I specially wrote it out for all of you to have a sense of what’s the most bizarre and mysterious method.

Chapter 1329 - A Night Without Any Abnormalities

◆

The liner passed through the storm and approached the lighthouse.

A small-scale harbor entered the sights of the captain, sailors, and passengers through the gloomy rain.

A short while later, a man in his thirties, who was wearing a blue uniform and holding onto a black umbrella and a glass lantern, appeared at the dock. He used rather uncommon actions to guide the liner to moor.

As the man watched the gangway lower, he opened his mouth and shouted, “Hey matey, where d’ya come from?”

After most of his voice was swallowed by the wind, his voice successfully reached the liner’s interior and entered Alfred’s ears.

“Do you know what this place is?” Alfred looked carefully at his adjutant and squire.

He wasn’t wearing a general’s ceremonial attire. Wearing a black trench coat that was commonly seen in Backlund, his dazzling blond hair drooped down casually, and his blue eyes looked like a deep lake in a forest.

The adjutant, who had neatly combed his hair to the back, first shook his head to indicate his uncertainty before he explained, “The storm from before made me lose my bearings.”

At this moment, the captain held an umbrella and came to the shipboard. He answered the man, “We left East Balam two days ago and unfortunately encountered a storm.

“What harbor is this?”

The man’s eyes darted around for a moment. Without giving a direct answer, he shouted, “Wait a moment, will ya?”

He then turned around, holding the umbrella and the lantern as he ran towards the buildings near the dock.

This reaction was beyond the expectations of Alfred and the other passengers, but it wasn’t strange for the experienced ship captain, first mate, and others—they had encountered many abnormalities at the ports along the Berserk Sea. This made them patiently wait for subsequent developments.

Five to six minutes later, the man led a lady over.

The woman didn’t have an umbrella and was wearing a hooded raincoat smeared with Donningsman Tree Sap.

As the two of them approached the liner, under the watch of the armed sailors, they climbed up the gangway to the deck.

At such a distance, most of the passengers finally saw what the two of them looked like.

The man had brown hair and brown eyes. His skin was rough, and it was obvious that he was of a lower socioeconomic status and had suffered the elements. The woman was in her twenties, and her eyes were limpid green. She had long, flaxen hair. A few wet strands clung to her face, making her appear pure and charming.

This was a rather pretty lady with a wild temperament.

“Hi there, this is Utopia Harbor,” the man impatiently introduced, “I’m

Theodore, the interim port cap’n.”

As he spoke, he laughed, as though he was happy that he had invented such an amazing position.

Of course, the ship captain knew what a so-called “interim port captain” meant. He didn’t take it to heart about this sudden happiness of a small fry.

He frowned slightly and said, “Utopia Harbor? Why haven’t I heard of it?”

Theodore looked at him and said, “What ye said is quite common.

“Heh, if it weren’t for that landlubber hurricane, ye might never come here!”

Without waiting for him to say anything else, the lady rushed forward and said, “Utopia isn’t on the safe sea route. Usually, only people who understand these waters and know of this place will come here for supplies.”

So the main clientèle of this harbor are pirates? How could the ship captain not be able to tell what she meant? And in times like this, tacitly acknowledging things without exposing them provided protection to both sides.

He tersely acknowledged and said, “And you are?”

“My name is Tracey.” The lady smiled. “I’m the owner of the harbor hotel, and also its receptionist and attendant.”

She surveyed the area and said, “It’s quite a heavy storm, and the ship will be bumpy. It’s not a wise choice to stay in there to rest. The hotel will provide you with stable beds, warm water, clean food, warm blankets, and an environment that will remind you of home. It’s only ten pence a night. I’m referring to the price of a single room.

"Other than that, you guys can still drink at the nearby bar and enjoy our warm hospitality."

Clearly, this lady was here to solicit for business.

The captain was rather alert and didn't respond directly. He nodded and said, "I can't decide on behalf of the passengers. They are free to choose for themselves. Of course, as captain, I will stay here with my crew."

Tracey maintained her smile and said, "I'll wait at the hotel for guests who are willing to disembark."

She seemed to have received a certain amount of education. She wasn't as hot and spirited as the women at other ports who spewed vulgarities with every sentence.

Tracey turned around and was about to return when Theodore approached her and said with a sullen expression, "You have to thank me for telling you the news immediately."

As he spoke, his right hand pressed against Tracey's butt before he pinched hard.

Pa!

Tracey swatted away his hand and chided, "You're a jerk who should be f*cked by a donkey!"

She took a few steps forward and left the liner by the gangway.

Theodore shook his hands and cursed with a smile, "B*tch!"

This scene suddenly moved many passengers on board.

To them, the biggest flaw on the ship was that it was boring, and there was a bar at the harbor.

This meant that they could meet cheap street girls who were unlike those from the Northern or Southern Continent. There were local street girls with their unique local charm.

If one was lucky or willing to spend a lot of money, one of them might even be able to sleep with that spirited beauty with an attitude!

Instantly, many passengers packed their luggage and prepared to head to the harbor hotel.

Upon seeing this, Alfred's adjutant asked, "General, are we getting off the ship?"

Alfred shook his head slowly.

"We don't know anything about this place. We have to be careful. Staying on the ship is the best choice."

The adjutant had no objections to this. He asked worriedly, "What about those who have already alighted?"

"That's their choice." Alfred looked out of the window expressionlessly. "If an accident happens, we can only keep more people safe. If it's not serious, then we will be able to resolve it easily."

With that said, he turned to look at his adjutant and squire.

"We'll take turns to keep watch tonight to prevent any accidents."

Alfred, who had interacted with the Numinous Episcopate, the Rose School of Thought, and other organizations in the Southern Continent, had an instinctive sense of vigilance towards unfamiliar places.

After he exchanged his opinion with the ship captain, Alfred got into bed, listening to the strong winds hitting the glass windows and the torrential rain pattering the deck. He was about to doze off.

At this moment, he heard a tender and sad melody coming from the direction of the harbor.

It seemed to come from a flute, intermittent like a human whimpering through the storm.

Alfred was instantly immersed in the music. It was as though he had returned to Backlund, which always appeared in his dreams. He returned to a state that was a mixture of his happy childhood days, the vexing times of his youth, and other emotions.

He shook his head violently and shook off the feeling. He realized that it wasn't a psychological effect, but a normal person's reaction.

Alfred rolled out of bed and walked to the window. Using his Sheriff Beyonder powers, he confirmed that the music he had heard had come from the cheap hotel.

It's not from the guests onboard the ship. Their goal is very clear. They wouldn't be in the mood to play such a melody… There are tourists in Utopia to begin with, or could it be that owner and part-time attendant named Tracey? If it were her, she would be a lady with a story… Alfred sighed and retracted his gaze. He stopped pondering over the matter.

Although he was curious, he had no intention of getting off the ship.

Soon, the sound of the flute stopped. The harbor hotel regained its silence and nothing unexpected happened.

Just like that, time passed, and as the storm stopped, the sky gradually brightened.

At eight in the morning, the liner passengers returned one after another. Every one of them had weak steps and looked haggard.

Upon seeing this, the sailors immediately laughed and said, "The chicks here seem pretty good!"

The passengers shook their heads at the same time and looked regretful.

One of them rubbed his temples and said, "The Lanti Proof here isn't bad. It's cheaper than other places. I wasn't careful and had a little too much to drink and ended up falling asleep. I don't even know if anything happened with that babe. Sigh, I woke up to realize that the ship was about to leave, and I don't even remember what I did after getting drunk. Praise the Lady. 'She' let me lie in bed and not sleep in the rain."

The other passengers chimed in to express their similar experiences.

Of course, everyone had different details. For example, some passengers praised the breakfast dessert in the cheap hotel.

The sailors were regretful that they didn't manage to drink the cheap and good Lanti Proof. They started teasing the passengers.

"Perhaps the one who spent the night with you wasn't the chicks here but the burly man like Theodore. Since all of you were drunk, there's no way to know what happened!"

"Haha, try touching your assholes!"

Amidst the lively atmosphere, the sailors withdrew the gangway and raised the sails, allowing the liner to set off slowly.

Alfred finally relaxed after they passed through a dark sea and returned to the familiar safe sea route. He smiled at his adjutant and squire and said, "You can mark this place on our map, mentioning that the liquor and desserts here aren't too bad. Yes, the girls have their own traits."

After a few more days of traveling, the passenger finally arrived at Desi Bay's Eskelson Harbor, after traveling along a winding safe sea route.

Alfred, who had the demeanor of a noble, and his socialite instincts, paid a visit to the brass of a nearby military base and shared a good dinner with them.

When he returned to one of his father's vacation villas, he was surprised to find the squire whom he had sent away to gather for information.

“What’s wrong?” Alfred put away his disorganized thoughts.

The squire lowered his voice and said, “General, all the official maps in the kingdom have no indication of Utopia Harbor.”

Chapter 1330 - Moving in

◆

Alfred felt the room temperature plummet when he heard his squire.

An indescribable chill invaded his body, freezing his blood and bone marrow.

When the liner stopped at Utopia Port, he had expected the worst situation to happen—Utopia was the headquarters of some cult, and that everyone there was a dangerous lunatic.

But now, the truth was even worse.

Perhaps Utopia never existed!

At that moment, Alfred was unusually thankful that he was no longer the noble scion he was when he left Backlund. He had accumulated a great deal of experience and had thus, not really entered Utopia Harbor.

Under the gaze of the adjutant and squire, the major general paced back and forth with a solemn expression. He calmly instructed, “Draft up a telegram and report to MI9 about what happened in Utopia.

“At the same time, request the local official Beyonders to immediately take action and contact the captain to list down all the people who entered Utopia Harbor. If necessary, pay each of them a visit and confirm if there are any problems.”

“Yes sir!” his adjutant immediately stood at attention and saluted.

After the adjutant walked out of the study, Alfred said to a squire, “Bring up the typewriter from downstairs. I want to write a detailed report.”

His plan was to first use a telegram to report the key information to the brass and not delay the initial actions necessary. Then, he would reveal more details with a confidential document and provide more information for the military brass to make a decision.

†

Wendel walked into a second-class carriage with one hand on his top hat and the other carrying a suitcase.

He wasn’t even thirty years old. His sideburns were deep-black and his brown eyes were calm. He didn’t have any unique features that anyone could remember, but he exuded comfortable vibes.

A few months ago, he was still a Feynapotter intelligence officer who was active in Desi Bay, and had contributed greatly. Now that he was a Sequence 7 Beyonder, he was part of MI9’s internal affairs department.

Today, his goal was to send a confidential document to Backlund and personally hand it into the hands of MI9’s director.

After sitting down, Wendel bought a newspaper from the paperboy and leisurely read through it.

This was just a superficial act; in reality, he began to use his Beyonder powers to illustrate portraits of the passengers around him, remembering all their characteristics, making meticulous and perfect preparations for any accidents that might happen later.

Choo!

The steam locomotive was chugging forward as the scenery outside sped past the windows.

A few hours later, Wendel cast his gaze out of the window with some anxiety. The sky was already filled with dark clouds, and a storm was about to descend.

This meant that the steam locomotive would stop at a station ahead of time to tide through the storm. It might only continue its journey the next morning, and not reach its designated location.

In Wendel's opinion, this would undoubtedly lead to more risks due to a deviation in his expectations.

However, it was beyond him. He couldn't change the weather like the Sea God, who was promoted by the Rorsted Archipelago's new government.

The only thing he could do was pray to the Lord of Storms.

Reality proved that praying was useless most of the time. By the time the sky turned dark, the station in front of them had already sent a light signal to get the train to slow down and stop.

Choo!

The steam engine whistled again, and the train slowed down. Finally, it stopped at an unfamiliar platform.

In the next second, near the steam-powered train's head, the mechanical door opened. The train conductor stood at the entrance and shouted to the staff on the platform, "What happened up ahead?"

"Heavy rain. Visibility is zero!" the white-sideburned employee answered loudly.

Just as he finished speaking, a muffled thunder sounded, causing everyone to tremble as they sensed the incoming storm.

"Damn it!" the train conductor cursed. "Which station is this?"

As it wasn't a normal stop, he didn't really know which station he was at. After all, the schedule he was in charge of didn't stop at every station in the past.

“Utopia! It’s a small station! You can arrange the rest yourself!” the staff shouted and ran towards the other end of the platform with the glass lantern in hand. “I have to give the train behind a signal!”

The train conductor had no doubts about the staff’s attitude because this was a normal dispatch process. Otherwise, an accident between two steam locomotives would happen.

He could even be certain that the other staff members of the Utopia Station had already sent a telegram to the other stations to warn them.

Of course, they must’ve received a telegram to learn of the area ahead being enveloped by a heavy storm.

“Utopia…” Wendel repeated the name in a low voice, not finding any useful information in his mind.

Of course, he didn’t think too much of it. This was because there were many unknown steam locomotive stations in the entire Loen Kingdom. This was a manifestation of the country’s overall strength.

The train conductor looked at the dark sky and muttered a few words before using the newest megaphone to speak to the passengers on board.

“A storm is coming. The train will stop at Utopia station until eight in the morning tomorrow.”

He estimated the storm to continue the entire night.

“You can stay in the carriage, or you can exit on your own accord to head into the city to look for an inn. Tomorrow, simply show your ticket stub to board the carriage again. Remember to be on time.” The train conductor gave the passengers two choices.

Wendel looked at the passengers inside the second-class carriage and pondered for a few seconds before carrying his suitcase and walking out of the train.

It wasn't that he couldn't handle the harsh environment that wasn't conducive for good sleep. When he was an intelligence officer, he had been through plenty of hardship. He was only relying on his professionalism that the sealed carriages, which were limited in space for passenger movement, weren't as safe as a single room in an inn.

Of course, he could also stay up all night, but this would definitely affect his condition tomorrow. Clearly, he still had a long journey tomorrow.

After exiting Utopia Station, Wendel got on a rental carriage by the side of the road and said to the carriage driver, "To the municipal square."

In the Loen Kingdom, there would definitely be a cathedral and a hotel near the municipal square.

"Sir, are you planning on going to the hotel?" the carriage driver asked as he made the horse turn around, seemingly capable of getting along well with anyone.

"Yes." As a Sequence 7 Beyonder, Wendel didn't hide it.

In his opinion, as long as he lived in the city center while overseas, he could easily find a group of helpers with his status, and his strength was enough to support him in completing this task.

"The best hotel in Utopia is Red Boots. Are we going there?" the coach driver asked in a suggestive tone that all men knew.

If he didn't have a mission, Wendel wouldn't mind pleasuring himself. However, he could only shake his head without any hesitation.

"I want a quiet hotel."

"Alright…" the coachman replied disappointedly. "Let's go to the Irises

Hotel. No one will disturb you there."

As the carriage advanced, Wendel cast his gaze outside the window to observe the situation outside.

Perhaps it was because the storm was about to arrive, the people on the road were all in a rush. Even the paperboys looked down.

A very small city… Wendel came to a preliminary conclusion from the lack of a track carriage.

He only saw one trackless carriage. This meant that most of the areas in Utopia could be reached on foot in an adequate amount of time.

Just as he had expected, in less than ten minutes, the rental carriage stopped at the entrance of the Irises Hotel.

Wendel paid the fare and rushed into the hotel before the rain fell.

He heard pattering sounds behind him just as he entered.

After checking in and putting down his luggage, Wendel rested for a while. He kept the confidential document close to him and went to the restaurant on the first floor to enjoy dinner.

He cautiously didn't have any alcoholic beverages and asked for a cup of "Fizzling Ice Tea," which was supposedly a local specialty, and a fried pork chop drenched in apple juice.

As a former intelligence officer of high society, Wendel didn't have much expectations for dinner this time, but he was surprised by the meal.

The pork chop was fried in a succulent and juicy manner that gave off a strong fragrance. The apple juice that was poured on it had a slightly acerbic texture that washed away most of the cloyed taste. The Fizzling Ice Tea was refreshing and especially delicious…

When he foot the bull, Wendel nodded at the medium-build waiter and said,

“Please send my compliments to the chef for giving me the pleasure of this wonderful dinner.”

The ordinary-looking waiter smiled and replied, “That wouldn’t be an issue.

“In all of Utopia City, our chefs are the best.”

Wendel didn’t chit-chat and quickly returned to his room to make some arrangements to prevent others from sneaking in.

Then, he fell asleep without any hesitation.

He used a relatively safe period of time, which any possible enemies would find unsuitable for taking action, to sleep and pass the time late into the night.

After an unknown period of time, Wendel was suddenly woken up by an intense argument.

He snapped open his pocket watch to take a look and realized that it wasn’t even midnight.

It’s from next door… A woman’s voice… A man’s voice… Wendel sat up and listened carefully.

Initially, he suspected that it was a man and woman flirting, but later, he realized that it was too intense. Some of the items were even thrown onto the wall.

A quarrel turning into a fight? Just as Wendel mumbled, he heard the shouting, cursing, and screaming of a woman.

Beating a woman? As a Loen gentleman, although Wendel believed in the Lord of Storms and discriminated against women, it didn’t stop him from thinking that men shouldn’t be violent towards women.

After two seconds of consideration, he decided to knock on the door and remind his “neighbors” to take note.

At that moment, a tragic cry rang out.

This was obviously from a man!

Thud! Something heavy fell to the floor.

Wendel’s brows twitched as he sharply caught the scent of a criminal case.

He stood up, put on his coat, and went to the room next door. He bent his fingers and knocked twice.

A few seconds later, the door creaked open, and a beautiful woman with long, wavy hair appeared in front of Wendel.

Her hair was in a mess, and her face was ghastly pale. Her light-green clothes were stained with blood, and she was holding a dagger that was dripping with blood.

The lady in her early twenties stammered for a while before speaking in a dreamy tone, “I killed someone…”

Chapter 1331 - Pleasure in Helping Others

◆ ◆ ◆

Wendel wasn’t unfamiliar with murder at all. When he heard that, he wasn’t afraid at all. Instead, he calmly allowed his gaze to wander past the woman at the door and into the room’s interior.

He immediately saw a man lying on the ground. His chest was blood-red.

“Are you sure he’s dead?” Wendel asked calmly.

The young lady in her twenties was at a loss at first. Then, she answered with uncertainty, “Maybe… I don’t know…”

“If there’s still hope, we need to send him to the hospital immediately.” Wendel’s tone was like he was speaking to a patient’s family, not a murderer.

The lady holding the blood dagger subconsciously turned her body and made way.

Wendel took a few steps forward and approached the victim.

He didn’t need to squat down. He swept his gaze and made a judgment based on various signs.

“He is indeed dead.”

The woman in her twenties with messy, flaxen-colored hair didn’t show any obvious change in expression. She looked down at her toes and said, “Call the police.”

“How do I address you?” Wendel had already heard hurried footsteps coming from the stairs.

It was obvious that the attendant or hotel owner came up to check on the commotion after hearing the screams.

“Tracey…” the pure lady with an attitude answered softly.

She then sank into her own world and didn’t say another word.

Wendel was just about to say something when the owner of the hotel who had helped him check in previously had already rushed through the door.

“Goddess!” the elderly man shouted after seeing the situation in the room.

Wendel pressed down with his right hand, gesturing for him to calm down before saying, “Call the police immediately. I’ll stay here and watch.”

His temperament and words exuded a sense of confidence that convinced others. The owner of the hotel didn’t waste any time and immediately turned around and ran downstairs.

As for Wendel, when he first came over to check on the situation, it was just a habit as a gentleman. In fact, he didn’t have the intention to get involved in it. After all, he was still shouldering the mission. However, Miss Tracey’s dazed, detached, and cold attitude induced a sense of pity in him. This was a normal reaction for a man.

He surveyed the area as though he was conversing with the air.

“Killing someone doesn’t imply a harsh punishment. It can be categorized into many kinds of situations.”

Tracey slowly raised her head and cast her gaze at the gentleman.

There was an indescribable luster in her lifeless eyes.

Wendel glanced at her bruised face.

“He hit you?”

“Yes.” The man seemed to have some sort of authority, making Tracey, who wanted to remain silent, finally answer.

Wendel looked down at the dagger that was no longer dripping blood.

“Was it you who brought it here, or him?”

Tracey’s response was a little slow as she replied, “Him.”

Wendel nodded slightly and said, “Exercising your right to self-defense is in line with the law. I can testify to the police that you had an intense argument before it happened and that there was a fight. Clearly, men naturally possess an advantage in this aspect. I’m not discriminating against women, but it’s something explained by science and experience.”

He paused and asked, “What is the relationship between the two of you? What happened?”

Tracey’s eyes darted about and she recovered a little from that deep, reclusive state.

She seemed to be answering a policeman’s question as she said with a look of hope and sorrow, “I am, heh, I am his mistress.”

Upon saying this, a self-deprecating smile appeared on Tracey’s face.

“I used to be an ugly woman who blindly chased after money. Not long after I left the grammar school, I became his mistress under his enticement.

“He gave me a hotel and let me stay there. I wait for his arrival or for him to summon me every week.

"I lost interest in this lifestyle, feeling increasingly suppressed as my inferiority complex grew. I wanted to return everything to him and get rid of him completely, but he wasn't agreeable. He threatened me using all sorts of methods and refused to let me leave him. The recent times we met all ended in fights.

"Just now, he said that there was only one way to leave him, and that was death. Then, he beat me up and took out a dagger. Y-you know what happened after that…"

Mistress… Wendel cast a regretful and pitiful glance at Tracey's face and said, "The traces at the scene have also confirmed the development of the situation."

He had originally thought that Tracey and the deceased were husband and wife, but to his surprise, their relationship was worse than he had imagined.

Tracey nodded blankly and said,

"Thank you."

She didn't say another word. She only broke the silence when the police arrived. She raised her hands and accepted the handcuffs.

Wendel looked at her staggered pace and said to the police, "Bring her to check on her injuries first and treat them to avoid any accidents."

The police officers didn't know why they had to listen to instructions from a witness. In short, they led Tracey and Wendel to a small hospital in the city without any objections under the heavy rain.

As Tracey was a woman, Wendel and two police officers waited in the corridor of the hospital without entering the room.

As time passed, Wendel saw a pregnant woman being sent to the delivery room in a hurry. There seemed to be some problems and they needed help with the labor process.

After a while, he heard the sound of a baby crying, an announcement of a new life coming to this world. At this moment, Tracey happened to come out.

“Do you feel it? Life’s beauty,” Wendel said to Tracey solemnly.

As Tracey listened to the baby’s cries amidst the howling wind and rain, her expression was clearly touched.

Her face had already been wiped clean, making her look very clean and simple.

After a few seconds, Tracey returned to her senses and nodded at Wendel before saying, “Thank you.”

This time, she was no longer as numb, blank, and reclusive.

Wendel secretly heaved a sigh of relief and followed her to the police station to record a statement.

After doing what was necessary, Wendel walked to the street side and prepared to take a rental carriage back to the Irises Hotel.

However, in the middle of the stormy night, there were no pedestrians or carriages on the road.

“This is the disadvantage of a small city. It’s not convenient enough,” Wendel muttered. He opened the umbrella he had brought with him and made his way back to the Irises Hotel.

As a former Sheriff, he had the memory, in the mystical sense, of the route he had taken before. He wasn’t worried about getting lost in the small city.

At this moment, the storm had already reduced significantly. However, the strong winds continued to sweep past Wendel, causing rain to fall on him.

This caused Wendel to raise his right hand and block his chest.

That confidential document was hidden on the inside of the clothing.

Wendel had previously kept the document close to him even when he was sleeping, not allowing it to be separated from him. For this reason, he had already developed a habit. As long as he had the corresponding self-reminders, he wouldn't turn over once he fell asleep.

After walking for about fifteen minutes in the small town of Utopia, Wendel saw the Irises Hotel. At that moment, his top hat and clothes were drenched due to the strong winds.

This made him a little worried, worried that the confidential document would be damaged by the water.

Strictly speaking, I have already violated the rules of the mission, but how could I not help a lady like her? This is what a gentleman should do… Wendel was slightly vexed, but he didn't regret it at all.

After entering the room, he immediately removed his jacket and took out the document, placing it on the table.

The envelope containing the document was already visibly soaked. There were quite a few places that seemed to tear with a little force.

Wendel immediately rang the bell and called for an attendant to ask for a gas stove, hoping to raise the temperature in the room and accelerate the air-drying process of the sealed document.

In the process of waiting, he realized that the silence expected from the middle of the night wasn't there. It was as if the screams and the police's arrival had caused the tenants and nearby residents to wake up without being able to fall asleep.

The howling winds lessened significantly, and Wendel could hear children crying, married couples arguing, the sound of a wooden violin being played, intermittent sobbing, the footsteps on the stairs, and the occasional sounds of discussion that were sometimes suppressed and sometimes raised without realizing it.

He didn't feel anything about this lively scene. He just felt that they were noisy that prevented him from calming down.

After a while, the attendant brought over a coal stove.

Wendel relaxed and asked casually, "Do you know that Miss Tracey?"

The thin attendant shook his head.

"No."

He then added, "I heard that she's a local, but I've been living outside in the plantations outside the city before this year."

"What do you know about her?" Wendel asked subconsciously.

"She comes to our hotel three to five times a month, with the dead man." The waiter suddenly sighed. "She's not happy at all."

Wendel was silent for a few seconds before dismissing the attendant and returning to his desk.

Seconds ticked by as the envelope outside the confidential document gradually dried up.

At this moment, the inside and outside of the hotel had become relatively quiet. Only the sound of rain falling and the sound of the windows being rattled by the winds could be heard.

Wendel was full of spirit as he recalled everything that had happened. He sighed for Miss Tracey's life and flipped the envelope.

At this moment, he realized that some damage had appeared on the bottom part of the envelope, revealing the piece of paper inside.

Wendel frowned, knowing that he was about to be punished.

Of course, the punishment wouldn't be too heavy as if the document to be distributed was confidential enough, he wouldn't be the only one to dispatch it.

Wendel had originally planned on maintaining the present state and showing the damaged situation during the handover. However, when he swept his gaze, he saw a word on the document through the hole:

“Utopia.”

Wendel’s nerves tightened, and he felt as if the sound of the wind and rain outside had suddenly stopped.

Chapter 1332 - Shocked in the Middle of the Night

◆

Why is the confidential document that I'm dispatching mentioning Utopia?

What's so special about this place?

†

Many thoughts flashed through Wendel's mind as he heard a buzzing sound.

At this moment, he felt as though he was going to fall sick from overexertion.

Wendel quickly forced himself to calm down. He carefully recalled all the experiences he had encountered after coming to Utopia, and he discovered that there were no problems with every detail. They were all things that he might encounter in daily life.

The only thing that made him uneasy was that his arrival was too coincidental.

It was common for the steam locomotive to stop at the last minute due to a storm, but to stop somewhere related to the confidential document in his hand couldn't be explained away with coincidence.

Wendel stared at the confidential document on the table with a solemn expression. He hesitated as to whether he should open them and read them carefully.

Perhaps it's just a passing mention of "Utopia." My actions will severely violate internal affairs. Perhaps this is the report of a certain intelligence agent secretly investigating Utopia. The contents will decide whether I survive to a certain extent, or die… After struggling for a while, Wendel looked out the window at the dark night sky and reached for the document.

Only by being alive could one consider the punishment!

Having made up his mind, Wendel swiftly removed the envelope outside and flipped through the typed files inside.

As he read, his hand trembled slightly. He felt a chill run down his back. Even the burning furnace didn't help.

No matter which angle he read it from, the confidential report in his hands indicated that there was something wrong with Utopia—the entire town.

This might be a city that didn't exist in the real world!

Wendel felt his mouth go dry, as though he had heard the footsteps of Death slowly approaching him with a sickle.

Instinctively, he wanted to get up, but in the end, he controlled himself and didn't react rashly.

This was because he could feel pairs of eyes staring at him in the darkness outside, the room upstairs, and the corridor outside.

What should I do? Up till now, nothing abnormal happened… This means that if I didn't know anything, it's possible that I'd be safe and welcome daybreak… I've read through a lot of information, and if I rashly show that I already know about the strange environment around me, it would only cause danger to erupt ahead of time… However, I can't just not do anything and leave my fate to luck… Wendel recalled all the dangers he had experienced before and quickly made up his mind.

He was prepared to immediately return to the steam locomotive, and stay far away from Utopia to a certain extent.

At least, most of the people there were normal, while the city was full of danger.

Of course, Wendel couldn't just run back like that. He had to act normal, as though he had left the hotel in the middle of the night to return to the steam locomotive station.

Amidst his thoughts, Wendel put away his confidential report and stood up calmly. He put on his coat and put on his top hat.

Then, with his luggage in one hand and an umbrella in the other, he calmly walked to the door and turned the doorknob.

At this moment, the corridor was dark, with only a few gas lamps on both sides of the corridor giving off light that wasn't bright enough. It added signs of human life to the silent environment in which he could hear a pin drop.

When Wendel entered the corridor, the wooden floor beneath his feet made a slight creaking sound. It was so clear in the silent night that it traveled far into the distance.

With a slight frown, Wendel intentionally took a normal step forward and approached the staircase in the middle of the corridor.

He walked without any worries and had no intention of acting furtively.

As he saw the stairs getting closer, he suddenly heard a squeaking sound behind him.

"Sir, where are you going?" A slightly hoarse and intermittent male voice sounded in Wendel's ears.

Wendel's body stiffened. He slowly turned back and saw the wooden door to the service room open. An attendant came out and stood in the shadows of the door.

He quickly smiled and said calmly, "I have an important item on the steam locomotive. I'm afraid that someone would take it away, so I have no choice but to return now."

At this point, he softly grumbled, "A murder happened at the hotel. I don't want to stay here anymore. I can't sleep at all."

"I'm very sorry." The attendant bowed slightly and responded.

"I won't spread the news." Wendel nodded with a promise and then walked back up the stairs.

Perhaps it was due to the dim lighting in the night, he walked very carefully. Every step was like walking on the edge of a precipice.

One step, two steps, three steps… Wendel, who had been on guard towards the attendant behind him, finally returned to the first floor.

At that moment, not a single person was present in the hotel lobby. All the items were hidden in the darkness, and the faint light from the outside cast a blurry silhouette, just like monsters eager to devour people.

Wendel looked ahead and walked through the dark lobby before reaching the door.

Just as he pushed open the door and went out, he suddenly heard some rustling sounds behind him. It was as if there were rats moving around, or it was as if someone was approaching him with light footsteps.

The back of Wendel's head went numb, but he held back his impulse to make a dash for it. He raised his head normally and looked up at the sky which had already stopped raining.

Then, he inhaled the cold, fresh air and made his way to the steam locomotive station.

He quickened his pace, looking like he was afraid of the night and eager to end this journey.

As he walked, Wendel saw a signboard from the corner of his eye.

“Utopia telegraph office.”

The telegraph office… Perhaps I can try sneaking in and send an emergency telegram to the Backlund headquarters and Eskelson military base. That way, I can look forward to the rescue from demigods… If I’m really trapped here and unable to leave, this will be the only way to save myself… Wendel thought for a moment before taking a few steps diagonally, arriving at the entrance of the Utopia telegraph office.

He wasn’t in a hurry to find a place to sneak in. Instead, he focused his attention and listened to the movements inside.

Following that, he heard intermittent sounds of heavy breathing.

This made Wendel occasionally feel that there was no one inside, and at times, he felt that there was more than one person inside.

Suddenly, the sound of breathing stopped.

All of Wendel’s hair stood on end.

His intuition told him that a figure was standing quietly behind the door of the telegraph office!

Without any hesitation, Wendel immediately gave up the thought of sending a telegram. He walked past the door and continued proceeding forward.

For the rest of the journey, even a gust of wind left Wendel trembling in fear. He was afraid of encountering an unknown danger.

Time passed slowly as Wendel experienced the torment. Finally, he reached the entrance of the steam locomotive station and saw that the door was tightly shut. He couldn't enter.

This wasn't a problem for Wendel. He first passed the umbrella to his left hand that was carrying his luggage, then went to the side and found a wall. With a press of his palm, he rose into the air and easily flipped over.

After landing his feet firmly on the ground, Wendel heaved a sigh of relief and began walking towards the platform at an unhurried pace.

At that moment, an inaudible sound of footsteps could be heard behind him.

"What are you doing here?" A deep and hoarse voice rang out.

Wendel's toes tightened as cold sweat broke out on his back.

He didn't hesitate. As he prepared to get violent, he made his body turn slowly and stiffly.

The first thing that entered his eyes was a classic glass lantern, followed by the staff member from before.

Wendel exhaled and grumbled, "It's not appropriate for you to appear in such an environment on such a night.

"As a gentleman, you have to avoid scaring others."

"I'm not a gentleman," the staff member replied in an unfriendly manner.

Wendell pointed to the corner of the platform.

"I'm going to the bathroom."

He had already observed the platform's environment and layout of the platform earlier in the day.

"Then, why are you here?" the worker asked.

"I'm lost," Wendel answered simply.

Following that, he ignored the staff and walked towards the bathroom.

Behind him, the staff member watched silently without saying a word.

This gave Wendel a lot of mental stress, but he maintained his gait very well.

In the bathroom, under the illumination of the wall lamps, Wendel took nearly a minute to relieve the tension in his body and successfully peed.

After returning to the steam locomotive, Wendel finally found a sense of security as he looked at the passengers lying on their beds.

In the next few hours, he didn't sleep at all and was on guard against any accidents.

Just as Wendel's grasp of the passage of time slowed down, the sky gradually brightened and dispersed the darkness.

In the next two hours, the travelers who had gone to Utopia returned one after another. Some bought a bottle of local red wine. Some looked haggard. They looked like they had been beaten up or were hungover.

Wendel was very wary of them, but he couldn't discover anything unusual in the details.

Choo!

Finally, the whistle sounded as the steam locomotive slowly began to move.

Amidst the chugging sounds, the train left Utopia Station.

After that, they went through another dark, gloomy weather. Fortunately, no thunderstorm descended, and the sun quickly pierced through the clouds and illuminated the ground.

For Wendel, all of this was normal. It had been like this since he arrived at Utopia last night. If not for the confidential report which was hidden near his chest, he definitely wouldn't have believed that there was any problem with Utopia.

When the steam locomotive reached the next stop, one that everyone was familiar with, Wendel finally relaxed. He felt as if his brain ached with a throb, as though he had been drained of his energy.

At this moment, he quickly recalled his experience in Utopia.

As he recalled, Wendel suddenly sat up straight.

He had used the excuse of going to the bathroom last night, but he was carrying his luggage and an umbrella. He didn't look like a passenger who had just come down from a steam train.

The station worker didn't realize this, or rather, he had already discovered it, but he did not expose him for some unknown reason!

Chapter 1333 - Warning Using His Experience As Example

◆

All of a sudden, the muscles on Wendel's back began to tense up as if he were about to explode.

He was shocked and doubtful as several guesses flashed through his mind.

The residents of Utopia are monsters in human skin. They usually look normal, but once they encounter blind spots in logic, they would show a side that is different from an ordinary person, ignoring the points that are obviously problematic?

Or perhaps that staff realized that I was lying and was unwilling to deal with me, so he pretended not to see me and let me go? But why?

Yes, carrying my luggage to the bathroom can be explained away as me being afraid of losing my luggage, but the entire platform is sheltered. There's no need to take the umbrella. Besides, the rain had already stopped…

Wendel instinctively turned his gaze out of the window, only to see the sunlight shining on the platform he was at. One by one, passengers waited in order behind the safety line, completely different from the dark and gloomy vibes that Utopia gave off.

Phew… He exhaled and suddenly relaxed.

This isn't Utopia… I've already left… Wendel murmured to himself as he wiped away the cold sweat that had seeped out from his forehead.

When he recalled his oversight earlier, it was as if he had fallen into a nightmare that he couldn't wake up from no matter how hard he tried.

After a while, Wendel stood up and decided to smoke at the platform to ease his mood.

The tobacco comforted him greatly, allowing him to recall his past experiences in Utopia.

During this process, he gained inspiration from his encounter:

Maybe it's because I sincerely helped Tracey, so that staff member intentionally ignored my problematic actions and let me go?

Compared to the entire population of Utopia being monsters hiding underneath human skin, Wendel was more willing to accept this explanation.

At this moment, from the corner of his eye, he saw the conductor talking to a group of people in a corner.

Wendel took a few steps forward, trying to hear what they were saying.

With the help of his hearing that transcended the normal limits of hearing, he vaguely heard the conversation from a distance that wouldn't incur suspicion.

"Last night, the station… Utopia…"

"Doesn't exist… in the kingdom…"

"Please keep it a secret…"

Wendel's brows twitched slightly. Based on the description of the document near his chest, he roughly understood what the train conductor was talking about.

They were saying that the kingdom didn't have a station known as Utopia at all, and last night, the steam locomotive had gone "missing"!

At that moment, a strong sense of horror surged through Wendel's heart again. He felt that it was his greatest blessing to be able to leave Utopia alive.

†

Alfred spent nearly a week before returning to Backlund from Eskelson Harbor.

This was because he had visited the family of his deceased comrades, his old friends, the elders who had returned to their fief for vacation, and some of his family's business partners along the way.

"This is even more tiring than participating in battle," Alfred grumbled to his father, Earl Hall.

Earl Hall smiled and pointed at the staircase.

"Return to your room and get some rest. We'll talk in the study later."

He was quite satisfied with the mental state and progress of his second son.

Alfred surveyed the area and asked with a smile, "Where's the most dazzling jewel of Backlund?"

He paused for a moment before adding, "What about Hibbert?"

Earl Hall laughed and said, "Audrey went to her foundation and will only return in the afternoon. She kept complaining that you couldn't provide her with a definite schedule, preventing her from knowing when you would arrive.

"Hibbert is now a cabinet secretary. He's very busy."

Alfred nodded and returned to his room to take a shower. He changed into a shirt, vest, and formal suit.

“I prefer East Balam’s casualness.” He looked into the mirror and smiled at his adjutant.

“This outfit makes you look more like a noble,” his adjutant said as he handed him the document in his hand. “General, this is from MI9.”

“MI9?” Alfred thoughtfully destroyed the seal on the envelope. “There’s a result regarding the investigation of Utopia that quickly?”

Before he could finish his sentence, he pulled out the document and flipped through it.

During this process, Alfredo flipped through the pages slower and slower. In the end, he read it again from the first page.

The main content of this investigation was divided into two parts:

The first was regarding the MI9 member who had dispatched Alfred’s report. He had accidentally entered Utopia and witnessed a murder case. He managed to forcefully escape in the middle of the night and return to the steam locomotive. The second was that the railways in Desi Bay which led to Backlund didn’t have a stop named Utopia Station along the way, nor was there a harbor known as Utopia in the Berserk Sea. The subsequent investigators didn’t find any traces.

The two cases didn’t exceed the limits of Alfred’s imagination. What surprised him was the criminal involved in the murder.

Her name was Tracey. She was the owner of a hotel. She had received middle-class education and graduated from grammar school. After that, she became a mistress of a businessman. Recently, she was trying to free herself from this identity.

This was identical to the owner of the harbor hotel, Tracey, that Alfred had met. Every detail matched.

As a result, Alfred determined that the culprit behind the murder was Tracey, the beautiful woman who had received a certain degree of education, who was able to produce sad music in the middle of the night.

Is this her backstory? Alfred muttered to himself silently.

This made the residents of Utopia seem very realistic. It wasn't what Alfred had expected—an illusion.

In other words, after the outsiders left, the inhabitants of Utopia continued to lead their own lives. They had their own love, hatred, pains, and sorrow. They had all sorts of experiences.

Apart from Utopia seeming to not exist in the real world, it was similar to any ordinary town in the Loen Kingdom.

Perhaps, Utopia is real. Everyone there is real. However, if one wants to enter the town, they have to be in the right place at the right time… Alfred nodded indiscernibly and put away the investigation report he had received from MI9.

To him, even if this matter ended here, he had no intention to investigate further.

One had to know that, in the Southern Continent, there were countless bizarre incidents and phenomena. If one was too curious, it would only bring him greater danger than he imagined.

After adjusting his clothes and mood, Alfred came to his father's study and knocked on the door with his curled finger.

"Come on in." Earl Hall's voice rang out.

Alfred tidied his blond hair, pushed the door open, and sat down.

Earl Hall smiled at him and said, "You're already a man."

"No one would say such words to a man," Alfred replied without any reservations.

“In my heart, you’re still that rebellious youth,” Earl Hall said with a smile. “You’re already a Sequence 5 Beyonder?”

Alfred replied with a double entendre, “Yes, I am a real knight.”

Earl Hall nodded and suddenly sighed.

“You should’ve experienced a lot of hardship.

“From what I know, no matter if it’s the potions or war, they will bring serious damage to people, from their bodies to their minds.”

“Everyone undergoes a lot of pain in their lives,” Alfred said with a sigh.

He used a Loen-styled euphemism.

After a pause, he added, “Compared to when I left Backlund, my present state is even better. As long as I grasp a method properly, I don’t need to worry too much about the impact of the madness at my level.”

Earl Hall didn’t continue on this matter and instead said, “Your sister has also become a Beyonder.”

“Oh?” Alfred was shocked at first, but then he remembered something. He said with some annoyance, “I thought she just changed her hobby.”

“From the looks of it, Audrey’s adventure had a little bit of your help,” Earl Hall said, seemingly enlightened. “I hope you can talk to her about how dangerous, crazy, and painful it is about the Sequence potions. Let her remain at her current level.”

Alfred replied without hesitation, “I’ll do it.”

In the evening, in Audrey’s small study room.

“Alfred, why are you looking for me?” Audrey, who had changed into home clothes, led Susie and opened the door for her brother.

She had been waiting for her brother for a few minutes.

“I have something to warn you of.” Alfred walked into the study and casually pulled a chair over.

Audrey smiled and pointed at the golden retriever.

“Do you need Susie to leave?”

Alfred couldn’t help but smile as he looked at the obedient golden retriever who was sitting by the side, her eyes filled with a look of sentience.

“There’s no need for that. I believe it won’t eavesdrop on our conversation.”

“She,” Audrey casually corrected him.

After the noble girl sat opposite him, Alfred sighed inwardly.

After not seeing her for a few years, her younger sister was no longer as tender as before. Regardless of her looks or temperament, she had already reached a level that brought about amazement. She was no longer the little girl from the past.

Alfred retracted his gaze and asked casually, “I heard that you became a Beyonder?”

“Yes.” Audrey nodded frankly.

Alfred had originally planned on asking what Sequence she was, but after some thought, he felt that it was too direct. It was easy for her to flare up, so he deliberated over his words and said, “You should be a Beyonder of the Spectator pathway, right? The Rainbow Salamander has similar powers.”

The Rainbow Salamander was a gift from Alfred to his sister.

After Audrey gave an affirmative answer, Alfred joked, “Can you do treatment in the mind domain now? Most Beyonders, including me, need help in this aspect. Yes, I forgot to tell you that I'm already a Sequence 5 Disciplinary Paladin of the Arbiter pathway."

Audrey pursed her lips and smiled.

"I'm a qualified psychiatrist who has undergone professional training. You can verify this with Father and Mother."

She's already a Sequence 7… Alfred's expression gradually turned solemn.

"Audrey, I have to remind you that the potions do not only bring about strength."

Having said that, he paused and observed his sister's reaction. He realized that Audrey wasn't impatient at all and was listening very seriously.

"Every potion contains madness that can lead to a loss of control… I've seen similar situations before. More than once… They happened to my enemies, and they happened to my friends. No one is spared…" Alfred amalgamated his experiences in East Balam and began explaining the dangers of the potion in detail.

During this process, he realized that his sister, Audrey, wasn't the only one listening attentively. Furthermore, Susie, the golden retriever, appeared extremely quiet.

Chapter 1334 - Night With The Moon

◆ ◆ ◆

MI9’s office building was located on Bellotto Street in West Borough, and it was an inconspicuous three-story building.

The entrance didn’t show any signs of its identity. It simply hung a door sign: “9”

The core of this office building was underground, and above it was for the clerks. Of course, most of the Beyonders who were under MI9 wouldn’t go underground for no reason. The environment there wasn’t good, and the atmosphere was oppressive. It was possible that an accident could happen due to the failure to watch over a Sealed Artifact.

Xio was now the deputy team leader of the “National Security and Counter-Espionage Team.” She was in charge of a rather small-scale Beyonder team, responsible for handling espionage cases regarding Intis in the greater area of Backlund.

“There’s a mission here.” Her superior, MI9’s deputy director, the team leader of the National Security and Counter-Espionage Team, Lieutenant General Pantek, picked up a document and handed it across the desk opposite him.

“Is it very urgent?” Xio received it and asked cautiously.

Lieutenant General Pantek was a typical Loen old man with a case of severe hairline recession. He picked up a white porcelain coffee cup and took a sip.

“Not at all. It’s quite low-risk.

“In fact, this mission will be sent to all members, hoping that someone will be able to complete it by luck.”

This description was out of Xio’s expectations, but she didn’t open the dossier on the spot and directly replied, “I will inform my team members.”

Xio returned to her own room after leaving Lieutenant General Pantek’s office.

When she threw herself into her seat, she seemed to have hidden herself.

Xio quickly browsed through the documents in her hand and roughly understood why the deputy director said that.

The Utopia that needed investigation didn’t seem to be anywhere in the Northern and Southern Continent, nor were there on any of the known islands in the Five Seas.

In the past two weeks, many people had entered the so-called Utopia, but the way they entered was completely different. Some entered from the Berserk Sea’s Sonia Sea waters, arriving by a terrifying storm. Some were midway on a railway that led from Desi Bay to Backlund. Due to a heavy storm, they had been delayed and stopped at the city. Others were in Sivellaus County, and they entered because they were lost…

Up to now, no one has been affected by the damage or mentally influenced… It’s no wonder Deputy Director Pantek said that the danger level is very low… Also, there’s no way to conclude the rules regarding the case, making it difficult for one to find the true location of Utopia. Therefore, there’s no way for them to send people in to investigate. Yes… I can only tell all members of the situation, and hope that one of them will chance upon Utopia and carefully gather information in secret when they are there… Xio put down the documents in her hand and stood up regretfully, preparing to inform the Beyonders under her.

She was regretful that the mission was so difficult that she almost couldn't see hope. This made her unable to accumulate more merit points.

In the past half-year, Xio had been very busy every day in order to deal with the pending apocalypse. As she dealt with MI9's matters, she completed all the missions Mr. Fool had given her, so as to accumulate contributions on both sides and exchange for the formula and Beyonder characteristics of the Imperative Mage formula and Beyonder characteristic, to fulfill the wish of becoming a demigod.

And up till now, Xio was still lacking a little on both fronts, especially in MI9. If she didn't make any significant contribution, Xio couldn't see any hope.

If not for the generous salary from MI9 and all kinds of benefits that came with it, and how she could rely on her status and identity to monopolize a large amount of information so as to help her complete the missions given by Mr. Fool, Xio yearned to resign and become a bounty hunter again. That way, she would have more freedom.

I can ask about this case at the next Tarot Gathering. Perhaps Mr. World will have some clues… As Xio thought, she pushed open the door to the room where her team members were.

After assigning the Utopia mission, Xio specially instructed, "If the situation isn't right, even if you have the chance to enter Utopia, you can give up immediately. The town of unknown authenticity hasn't shown any danger. Perhaps it's because it hadn't been triggered."

After busying herself for a while more, Xio finally ended her day in exhaustion. She returned home before half-past seven, and she had dinner with her mother, her brother, and Fors. She enjoyed a limited amount of relaxation.

At midnight, she washed up and walked to the bedroom window. She grabbed the curtain and prepared to draw it.

During this process, Xio naturally cast her gaze outside and discovered that the crimson moon in the sky had already turned bigger at some point in time. Furthermore, the color had clearly deepened as though it was flowing blood.

Blood Moon… Xio suddenly turned her head and looked next door in concern. She was a little worried about her good friend’s condition.

However, she quickly recalled that Fors was a Sequence 4 demigod and no longer feared the effects of the full moon ravings.

†

In the room next door, Fors was lying in bed, taking in the Blood Moon outside. As she endured the pain of her head being pricked by needles, she heard Mr. Door say, “Although going from Sequence 3 to Sequence 2 is indeed a qualitative change, going from an incomplete Mythical Creature to a real Mythical Creature, I believe that Sequence 4 to Sequence 3 has a qualitative change as well. It can even be said that Sequence 3 is the best level in a Beyonder pathway.

“At this level, there is no need to rely on external forces to resist the madness and the inclination towards losing control. There is no need to endure the torment every second and minute. They will also possess Beyonder powers that completely exceed that of an ordinary person. They will be more godlike than they are human. Furthermore, they can obtain a small number of anchors and stabilize their mental state.

“If not for the fact that most Sequence 3 Beyonder’s don’t have long enough lives, with it being difficult for them to live to more than 500 years old. I believe there won’t be many saints who have the motivation to advance to an angel…”

“Yeah, yeah.” Fors nodded, indicating that she had already understood.

At the same time, her forehead twitched slightly and she yawned secretly.

She was already a little accustomed to the pain from her direct conversation with Mr. Door.

Mr. Door continued, “The Apprentice pathway’s Sequence 3 is Wanderer. This means that the spirit world can no longer trap you. You can enter the cosmos, travel the astral world, head to different planets, and see true dead silence, true barrenness, true magnificence, and completely different civilizations.

“Only after experiencing it for yourself will you understand how insignificant the world you live in is…”

Mr. Door briefly explained “His” experiences as a showcase of the magnificence and beauty of the cosmos, displaying the stateliness and charm of different civilizations.

This made Fors fall into a trance. If not for the sharp throbbing pain in her head still reminding her, she would have even forgotten that the speaker was a dangerous King of Angels.

“As long as you help me escape, I’ll give you the potion formula and Beyonder characteristic of a Wanderer and help you complete the ritual. Of course, this can be paid in advance.” At the end of the full moon ravings, Mr. Door gave another promise.

“It really makes me look forward to it,” Fors marveled sincerely.

When Mr. Door’s voice gradually weakened and disappeared, Fors suddenly pulled out the pillow at her waist and lay down.

In less than three minutes, she fell asleep in peace.

To her, the vast cosmos was indeed filled with charm. However, it also contained the danger of being corrupted just from knowing about it. She had no motivation to explore it.

“I’ll consider it after touring all the places in the Northern and Southern Continent and the Five Seas…” In her sleep, Fors muttered almost silently to herself.

At that moment, the blood-red moon outside the window had already faded. It returned to a light crimson color and wasn’t full.

†

A huge blood-colored moon hung on the edge of the cliff, illuminating the swamp below.

The swamp was dark red and constantly bubbling, as though lava was boiling at the bottom of it.

At a glance, there was no end to the swamp, like a vast ocean.

Pa!

A stone fell from the edge of the cliff and into the swamp.

In the next second, a bubble appeared and silently burst, producing a blood-stained infant.

The baby staggered, swam towards the cliff, and attempted to climb up.

Pa!

The stone beneath Emlyn White’s feet shattered as he fell off the cliff and into the swamp.

This Sanguine Earl suddenly jolted awake from his dream. He looked around in horror and confusion.

After confirming that this was his room, where there were many extremely familiar dolls of different sizes, Emlyn slowly exhaled and said to himself with a rather solemn expression, “That dream wasn’t simple.”

As a Shaman King, he had a good understanding of a dreamscape.

Could this be the so-called divine revelation? But I didn't receive any revelations… Emlyn thought for a few seconds but couldn't come up with an answer. Then, he decided to ignore the problem and prepare to ask Father Utravsky when he had the time.

†

The incomplete moon that had its blood-red colors faded illuminated the garden of the Cathedral of Waves.

Alger reached out his hand to grab the note "delivered" by the gale and read it.

"Verdu is looking for a pirate ship or a smuggling ship to Bansy."

Bansy Harbor had yet been rebuilt, and there were no liners from all over the world that headed there. Verdu, who treasured his limited "Teleportation" opportunities, could only rely on extremely normal methods.

Head to Bansy? Alger immediately frowned.

He knew what Bansy meant, but he didn't understand why Verdu wanted to go to Bansy.

There should be nothing there!

No, even if the Church has leveled Bansy, there's still something abnormal about it. Furthermore, the Church didn't investigate what problems Bansy had hidden in the past… As a cardinal, Alger was qualified to read through some confidential documents, including the records of the actions that the Church of the Lord of Storms had done when dealing with Bansy.

In addition, he had also learned more from Mr. Fool and The World Gehrman Sparrow.

After some thought, Alger quickly came to a decision. He planned on getting his Shadow Guard to arrange a pirate ship for Verdu.

In this aspect, Alger knew many key people to aid him. It didn't need him to show his face in person or use his name.

Of course, smuggling ships in the Rorsted Archipelago were often equivalent to pirate ships.

Chapter 1335 - “I”

◆

I’m sitting on the chair in a police station, looking at the mouths of two men in black-and-white checkered uniforms opposite me. It’s like they’re talking about something.

The man on the left has a cold expression on his face, as if he has been through too many unfortunate events. The man on the right is a little inexperienced, and there’s a hint of pity in his eyes.

I don’t feel any pain, nor did I regret delivering that final stab. At that moment, I even felt that I had been liberated. The warm blood that sprayed on my body was like salvation from a god.

I only regret my fervent pursuit of money in my youth. I had sacrificed my dignity, my body, and my freedom.

Over the past few days at the police station, I’ve had enough peace and quiet. I had the opportunity to ponder this question at a deeper level, far deeper than whatever that I’ve been thinking about over the years:

Me having a weak will and being immature were the source of the mistakes I made. But they weren’t the only reason.

Ever since I was a child, all the education I received told me that working and striving hard is for that big house, those full floor-to-ceiling windows that let in plenty of light, to have more than three servants, a lawn and garden that I can call my own, silver-plated or even gold-plated cutlery, be able to host a banquet filled with delicacies, run balls that were filled with melodious music, etc.

The newspapers and magazines I'd read also told me over and over again that only those that showed a sufficient level of decency can be called middle-class. They are the true pillars of support for this kingdom. They are people of high-class, excellence, zero mediocrity, and integrity, while having compassion and knowledge.

At the same time, they also told me what decency was. It's wearing a beautiful dress, matching expensive skincare products, cosmetics, and exquisite fashion handbags for different occasions. It was to attend concerts, high tea, and gatherings filled with class.

And all of this translated means gold pounds, gold pounds, and gold pounds.

I have to admit that pursuing a better life is instinctual for everyone. However, when the influences on a girl tells her in every aspect that, when the mainstream views of society are all about appearance, exquisiteness, and elegance, it's very difficult to not have her thoughts become influenced.

I don't know what this phenomenon is called. I only know that if all of this can't be changed, then a tragedy like mine will continue happening, happening more and more often.

When that happens, someone would definitely curse.

"Look at these gold-digging women, selling out their souls!"

Subconsciously, I turn around and see the beautiful and bustling world outside. I see the bright red blood flowing in this world.

"Miss Tracey, are you listening to us?" A voice distracts my thoughts, coming from the slightly inexperienced policeman.

I grin at him, not telling him I'm thinking about some philosophical questions.

What a joke. A gold digger who sold her soul is actually thinking of such inane matters when she's being interrogated by the police.

The policeman nods and says to me, "Miss Tracey, you'll be put on trial soon. We'll arrange a lawyer for you.

"I'm sorry, We didn't manage to retain the witness. Just having his testimony isn't in your favor."

"It's okay," I say quietly to him.

I will try my best to defend myself, and repent for the crimes I have committed. I only hope that I can restart life anew.

I think for a moment and curl the corners of my lips. I say to the two officers, "Can you borrow a few books from the library for me while I wait to go on trial?

"Yes, 'Phenomena of Sociology and Education'…"

At that moment, I see the two police officers in a daze, and a hint of, yes—surprise.

†

I sit at the far end of the mottled table and hear Miss Judgment describe the Utopia incident.

After she finishes, I look around and hoarsely say, "This is a ritual."

Unsurprisingly, I see Miss Judgment's gaze freeze. I can sense Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice looking over with a hint of speculation in their eyes.

At this moment, I can almost guess what they're thinking.

They definitely suspect that this is The World Gehrman Sparrow's Sequence 1 ritual. And they are already long aware from the talks in the Tarot Gatherings that the existence of a Sequence 0 true god makes it impossible for a Sequence 1 to exist.

Regarding this matter, I have already prepared an explanation. It is to let them think about the ancient sun god and “His” eight Kings of Angels.

Unfortunately, no one raises any questions. They may have already made the connection to the Kings of Angels, or perhaps they believe that the ritual involving Utopia is mainly to help Mr. Fool awaken further.

†

I look at the lady who is lost in thought, and I ask after some deliberation, “Miss Tracey, where do your parents live?”

“They’ve already passed away…” the beautiful lady whose soul no longer belongs here replies with an ethereal voice.

I lower my head and record it.

“Do you have any other relatives?”

The lady turns to look out the window and answers casually, “No…”

I exchange looks with my colleague and raise my voice.

“Miss Tracey, are you listening to us?”

The lady opposite me retracts her distant gaze and smiles at me.

I don’t know what she’s thinking about. She’s so quiet like a flower blooming alone in the night.

This analogy comes from an anthology of poems. My brother told me that reading poems makes me more charming.

Of course, up till now, the poems have only brought mostly mockery. All of the police officers believe that it’s worthless.

When I tell the lady opposite me about the trial, I see a faint smile on her face as she pleads us to borrow a few books from the library—ones that I believe are difficult just from the title.

The smile and the names of the book combine together into an indescribable beauty.

After sending Miss Tracey back to the temporary detention room, I pack up the materials for the case and prepare to pay a visit to the lawyer. It's something that had been pre-determined long ago.

†

I lean back in my chair and listen to The Moon Emlyn describe his dream.

After Father Utravsky's appraisal, this dream has been confirmed to have not originated from the Earth Mother.

This inevitably makes people cast their looks of suspicion at The Moon, towards a state prior to being corrupted by the Mother Goddess of Depravity… I'm nearly amused by my own thoughts.

As an experienced Seer, a master at deciphering dreams, I'm not held back by modesty. I frankly reveal what I know:

"The three possibilities are that this dreamscape is trying to bait you into exploring and pursuing something. To a certain extent, it can interfere with your fate. Secondly, this dreamscape hopes that you can interpret it deeply and understand it. Then, through this, corrupt you in an indiscernible manner. Thirdly, you are too worried about the matter of becoming a Beauty Goddess, so you dreamed of that remarkably terrifying scene.

"The third possibility doesn't need elaborating on. The action needed for the first two possibilities are the same: don't think about it, don't investigate. There's no need to leave Backlund."

With that said, I see Emlyn nod without any hesitation.

I know it's his way of handling things.

†

"A murder case?" I browse the information on the case in my hand, and I use the changes in the tone of my voice to express my doubts. "You should hire a senior lawyer."

I'm just a solicitor, and strictly speaking, I don't have the right to represent anyone in court.

Of course, this is only in the strictest of cases, but in reality, that never happens. As long as the case isn't too serious and doesn't involve the criminal courts, a solicitor can provide assistance to the court.

The policeman in a black-and-white checkered uniform opposite me says with a smile, "Utopia is only a small city. We don't have senior lawyers; we'll have to hire them from elsewhere.

"Besides, this case is a case of self-defense. The sentence period will be very short, and the monetary aspect of this case doesn't even exceed 400 pounds. The trial can be done at the magistrate courts. When self-defense is deemed invalid, it'll be handed over to the criminal courts."

He knows plenty. Is he planning on switching professions to become a lawyer? However, in normal circumstances, he still has to hand a homicide case that has unjustifiable self-defense to the criminal courts. Heh heh, this is the benefit of a small city. There are many things that aren't that strict… I think for a moment and reply tersely, "I'll try defending the client by claiming innocence.

"Also, please arrange for me to meet Miss Tracey as soon as possible."

After flipping through the information from before, I'm already quite confident in this case. The biggest problem now is whether Miss

Tracey’s image can lead to the sympathy of others.

Yes, although my solicitor license was forged from elsewhere, this cannot deny my professionalism. It just so happened that I made mistakes on that examination.

†

Bansy? Verdu wants to go to Bansy? I sit at the bottom end of the long, mottled table and look at The Hanged Man who has reported to Mr. Fool. I have some doubts about the development of the matter.

Verdu, who’s engrossed in mysticism and is trying to save Mr. Door, does have certain reasons to search Bansy Harbor. Furthermore, he has stayed in Bayam for almost half a year, so it’s very normal for him to come into contact with information about Bansy… The main problem is that The Hanged Man’s previous surveillance didn’t provide any corresponding signs, making Verdu’s actions seem a little out of place… The importance placed on this matter has to be raised… I nod inwardly and hear Mr. Fool instruct, “Continue monitoring.”

†

I play the seven-stringed guitar by the fountain in the municipal square. I use my knife and fork to slice the steak. In the cathedral, I describe the teachings of the Goddess to the believers. I reach out my right hand and leave the carriage with the help of a gentleman. I get the new dress I had been eyeing for so long, and I can’t wait to change into it. I stride forward with my four legs as I’m being chased by a child. I laugh loudly as I totter about and play with a dog…

Suddenly, we tremble. We look up into the sky and see illusory, thin lines drilling out from our bodies. They extend to an infinite height, extending beyond the grayish-white fog. They extend into an ancient palace and land in the hands of a tall figure shrouded in fog.

[image]

During this period of time, Klein's state had always been very strange, as though he had completely transformed into thousands of lives. Every clone had their own will, thoughts, knowledge, and fate.

However, above this collective consciousness was a primary consciousness that held control. It constantly suffered all kinds of attacks, as though it could be assimilated by the sea of consciousness that had been formed autonomously at any moment. However, it eventually withstood the barrage of attacks, allowing Klein to maintain a certain level of clarity.

His true body had been lying underground in Saint Arianna Cathedral. His consciousness would occasionally rise and enter Sefirah Castle, and occasionally sink into his body.

All the scenes that the marionette clones experienced constantly flashed in his mind like a dream formed from large amounts of fragments.

[image]

Chapter 1336 - Interaction

◆

Backlund Steam Locomotive Station, Platform 3.

Alfred chatted with his parents and sister for a while before rushing to leave the train during the gap in between. He came to the platform and said to his squire, “Give me an East Balam cigarette.”

If the past few years had any negative impact on him, other than his mental suffering and pain, he still retained a few bad habits.

After smoking plenty of East Balam cigarettes that consisted of spices and herbs wrapped in roasted tobacco leaves, Alfred was no longer used to the paper cigarettes that remained popular in the Northern Continent. He believed that they were bland and tasteless, as though they were liquor diluted with water.

As for cigars, he felt that it needed a good environment to slowly savor it. It didn’t suit his present situation.

Of course, his smoking addiction wasn’t too serious. A Disciplinary Paladin had a good enough constitution and spirit to resist such influences. Alfred came to the platform to smoke because he felt that it was too stuffy in the train carriage. Besides, his mother often raised the issue of him not being married.

After the squire took it out and lit the East Balam cigarette, Alfred brought the stick that was nearly charred black to his mouth and sucked it deeply.

The strong smell entered his body, causing his spirit to jolt.

At that moment, he saw a blond-haired man who looked like a classic sculpture walking over with his valet.

Alfred hesitated and smiled. He raised his right hand and said, "Hibbert, I thought you wouldn't be returning to East Chester."

It was Earl Hall's eldest son, Alfred's brother, Lord Hibbert Hall.

Hibbert drew a perfect smile and said, "I'm just a cabinet secretary, not the cabinet chief secretary. I won't be so busy that I don't even have the weekend off."

In fact, he had no plans on being a cabinet chief secretary, either. His main goal was to accumulate experience at the various departments in the government and build up his own networks and resources to prepare for entering the House of Lords in the future.

Alfred took another puff of the East Balam cigarette and smiled.

"Happy weekend."

After watching Hibbert enter the carriage, Alfred sensed that someone was looking over and was discussing.

"Why aren't there any passengers waiting for that train carriage?"

"It doesn't seem to be full."

"Haha, that's a special carriage. It was pre-booked by an important figure for a large sum of money. I know that you might not have seen such a situation before, but you have to remember that this happens frequently in big cities like Backlund and Constant. When those important figures bring their entire family out, they will definitely have more than a hundred servants follow. Perhaps there might even be pets, so how can they squeeze in a train carriage with ordinary people…"

"Is that so…"

"I wonder who is this big shot?"

Alfred turned his head to look. There were dozens of people in gray-blue uniforms on Platform 2 who were quietly surveying Platform 3 across the empty tracks.

The distance between the two parties wasn't small. If Alfred's hearing wasn't outstanding, he wouldn't be able to figure out what they were discussing.

"They are?" Alfred turned to ask his adjutant.

He could only recognize that the uniform they were wearing belonged to a railway company.

The adjutant turned around immediately and asked the staff at the platform.

Soon, he jogged back and whispered to Alfred, "General, they're train dispatchers from all over the kingdom. They're undergoing short-term training in Backlund."

Alfred nodded slightly and glanced at the Platform 2 again.

The oldest of the train dispatchers had white hair and the youngest looked to be in their early twenties. Most of them were middle-aged men in their thirties or forties with gray sideburns.

†

In the Sonia Sea, City of Generosity, Bayam.

Verdu carried his luggage, which didn't contain many valuables, and boarded the boat at night. He left the harbor and boarded a pirate ship.

As a Sequence 7 of the Apprentice pathway, he wasn't very good at combat. And even though Verdu had a mystical item with him, he was rather afraid of its negative effects. He wasn't willing to use it unless it was critical to do so. Therefore, in order to avoid danger, he tried his best not to bring anything that would easily attract the greed of pirates which he didn't trust.

The pirate on the deck glanced at Verdu and scoffed.

"There's no need to be afraid. We always keep our promises. As long as you pay for the journey, we definitely won't throw you into the sea. Here, it'll be even safer than you taking a passenger ship. At least you don't have to worry about encountering pirates."

Seeing Verdu silent as though he appeared somewhat afraid, the pirate gleefully threw a key to him.

"The second floor on deck, the room at the end."

Verdu caught the brass key and entered the cabin. He climbed up the stairs and headed down the corridor.

This level seemed to be specially prepared for the people who boarded the pirate ship for various reasons. Along the way, Verdu encountered a few passengers that were totally unlike pirates.

Among them was a street girl who was dressed rather scantily, a middle-aged man with a protruding belly and oily faces, an extremely cold young man wearing a cloak and a top hat.

"Do you want to join me?" the lady smiled and asked when she saw Verdu looking over. She fluttered her eyes at him as she asked. It wasn't clear if she was planning to do some business on the trip, or if she was doing business while happening to make a trip.

Verdu ignored her and withdrew his gaze before walking to his room.

That well-defined and cold young man also stopped at the entrance diagonally opposite.

†

Backlund, West Borough, 9 Bellotto Street.

“Come in.” Xio straightened her body from the huge, wide seat.

The door creaked open, and two MI9 members who were under Xio walked in.

“Colonel, we’ve found some information regarding the investigation of Utopia.” A man in a dark-colored jacket handed Xio a report.

Xio was startled as she perked up.

“What is it?”

The man in a dark-colored jacket simply said, “In the past few days, we took advantage of the free time we had from completing our previous mission, to visit all the passengers in Backlund from that particular steam locomotive through our informants.”

Without a doubt, he was referring to the steam locomotive that had stopped at Utopia.

“Okay.” Xio nodded and gestured for her subordinate to continue.

The man in a deep jacket pointed at the report and said, “We have preliminary confirmation that none of the passengers that successfully arrived in Backlund show any abnormalities. They’re in good spirits and have no problems with their memories.

[image]

“However, we discovered something: at that time, not everyone returned to the train. According to two passengers, their neighbors chose to remain in Utopia.

“One was a lady who loves traveling and exploration. She has a deep love for foreign places. After witnessing the outstanding red wine, desserts, and unique Fizzling Ice Tea in Utopia, she decided to give up on her original plans and stayed in this small unique city for a while longer to discover even more wonderful things.

“The two passengers learned about this when they were chatting with her. Not only did they share neighboring seats, but they also chose to stay in the same hotel. They met in the morning.

“That hotel happened to be the same one our intelligence agent stayed in. It’s called Irises.”

Xio slowly nodded and said, “Have you investigated the lady’s situation?

“What’s her name?”

“No, we can’t be sure if she has left Utopia,” answered the other MI9 member with a bushy goatee. “Those two passengers only know that lady’s name is Monica, but they don’t know her last name or background.”

Xio tersely acknowledged.

“Your subsequent mission is to investigate this lady’s background, find her family and friends, and confirm if she has returned.”

“Yes, Colonel.” The two MI9 personnel saluted and left Xio’s office.

Xio read the report they had submitted and sighed silently.

Compared to her subordinates, she was actually closer to the truth of Utopia. She already knew that it was a ritual that had a certain connection with Gehrman Sparrow.

However, she had no way of reporting this news to her superiors for credit.

Without mentioning the origins of the information, Xio needed to consider whether Gehrman Sparrow was willing to let this news leak out.

Perhaps I can try contacting Gehrman Sparrow and ask him for his opinion… Xio tidied her desk in thought and left MI9.

After changing her clothes, she returned to East Borough and the bridge area. She headed to different bars, just like back in her bounty hunter days, to gather all sorts of information from different people.

During this process, she asked about Utopia in passing, but no one had heard of it.

Finally, Xio entered a bar located in the Backlund Bridge area and sat on a high stool. She said to the bartender, “Anyone suspicious recently?”

“A lot of people are suspicious, but they don’t have any bounty,” the bartender replied casually.

Xio circled around this topic for more information, and when done, she asked according to plan, “Have you heard of Utopia?”

“I’ve heard of it,” the bartender replied as he wiped the glass.

Xio moved her gaze from the bar counter up slowly.

She looked at the bartender and asked, “Where from?”

“There was a guest who came earlier, and he controlled his drinking,” the bartender said indifferently. “I promoted our specialty cocktail to him. He said that he has other things to do, so he could only drink a glass of beer. I praised him and asked where he came from. He said, ‘Utopia.’”

†

Wendel had just finished his breakfast when the doorbell rang.

Through the peephole, he saw a police officer in a black-and-white checkered uniform standing outside. He opened the door in puzzlement.

“Might I ask what’s the matter?” Wendel asked politely.

This house was a place he had been assigned to after coming to Backlund. This was because he would be staying in this city for quite some time, receiving internal investigations and monitoring.

The police officer was still young and a little inexperienced. He was only in his early twenties.

He forced a smile and said to Wendel, “Hello, I’m Biles, a police officer. There’s a case that requires you to provide testimony in court.”

“What case?” Wendel frowned slightly.

The young policeman named Biles said with a polite smile, “It’s the Tracey homicide case in Utopia.”

“…” Wendel’s eyes widened.

Chapter 1337 - A Chain Reaction

◆ ◆ ◆

At that moment, Wendel felt his calves tremble slightly, as if he could no longer support the weight of his body.

After leaving Utopia, he had anticipated the worst possible outcome—sudden death with no explicable reason.

However, he never expected that he would meet someone from Utopia in Backlund, a real large city.

More importantly, the visitor had even invited him to Utopia.

To Wendel, this was an extremely scary nightmare. Him not experiencing a mental breakdown could only be attributed to his good mental fortitude.

Keeping his composure, Wendel forced a troubled expression and said, "I've had plenty of things to do recently…"

The police officer named Biles immediately said, "The trial will happen in two weeks. Here's the subpoena."

As he spoke, he handed the document to Wendel.

Frankly speaking, Wendel didn't want to accept it at all, but he had no choice but to accept it.

Biles took a step back.

"This concerns the future of a lady. I sincerely hope that you can testify in court.”

“It depends on the situation…” Wendel didn’t want to agree or refuse.

Biles didn’t say anything else as he bowed.

“I’ll wait for you in Utopia. I hope we meet again.”

With that said, he turned around and left the residence, entering the street.

Throughout the entire process, Wendel seemed to have been frozen into an ice sculpture, standing there without blinking.

After another ten seconds, he finally woke up from his nightmare. He collapsed to the side weakly and held himself up by placing his right hand to the door.

Just now, he had been so afraid, afraid that Biles would forcefully bring him back to the non-existent Utopia.

If that happened, Wendel didn’t know if he still had a chance to leave. Perhaps, he would disappear forever.

Compared to sudden death, this impossible-to-predict but clearly negative outcome left him even more fearful.

I need to quickly report this matter to the brass! Capture that policeman from Utopia and find out the real situation of this bizarre town and a suitable way to resolve the problem completely! Wendel snapped back to his senses and tried his best to perk himself up. He prepared to inform the MI9 members who were secretly monitoring him.

At this moment, he finally realized that there was a huge problem with his response. He didn’t grab the opportunity to inform his monitoring colleagues with a hand gesture that the police officer who had visited him was problematic. He didn’t try to stall for time either; instead, he waited for the monitors to realize that something was wrong. He also didn't show his talent as an intelligence agent, asking surreptitiously Biles which hotel he stayed in Backlund and what day he was setting off by train.

He was so terrified that he could only subconsciously use a response that wouldn't create an accident.

With that thought in mind, Wendel walked out of the door and looked in the direction where Biles had left, but he didn't even see his figure.

This police officer from Utopia had already blended into the carriages and pedestrians.

Retracting his gaze, Wendel looked down at the subpoena in his hand and suddenly felt a little uneasy.

What will happen if I don't go to Utopia to testify two weeks later?

The more Wendel thought about it, the more scared he became. His calves weakened again, and he hurriedly made a hand gesture to inform his colleagues that were hiding around him of the anomaly.

†

West Borough, 9 Bellotto Street.

After learning that a Utopia resident had arrived in Backlund, Xio was both shocked and confused.

According to her previous observations, Utopia was likely located in a secret location, or somewhere between real and illusory, allowing outsiders to enter through random entrances.

As for why they wanted outsiders to enter, it was probably a ritual requirement.

Therefore, according to Xio's understanding, the people of Utopia likely wouldn't leave their hometown and wander around.

This is also a ritual requirement? What's the true identity of these residents? Mr. Fool's believers, The World Gehrman Sparrow's companions? After Xio asked about the general appearance of the Utopia visitor, she had no choice but to return to MI9's headquarters due to the lack of further information. She hesitated on whether she should send her subordinates to perform a large-scale search.

She wasn't sure if Mr. World would be happy to see such actions being taken, and she was afraid of affecting the ritual.

After pacing back and forth in the office, Xio prepared to pray to Mr. Fool and ask "Him" to transfer her questions to The World Gehrman Sparrow.

As she walked to the chair, Xio swept her gaze across the report placed on the table.

It was an investigation report that her two subordinates had prepared. On the one hand, they had confirmed that there were no problems with the passengers that successfully arrived in Backlund. On the other hand, they had pointed out that there were passengers who had remained in Utopia.

Passengers… Xio's eyes narrowed as she made a guess based on her intuition.

That Utopia inhabitants had their own goals in coming to Backlund, and it wasn't for a random trip. And his goal is very likely related to a particular passenger who has left Utopia.

This… Xio was alarmed as she hurriedly sat down and attempted to pray.

Just then, someone knocked on her office door.

"…Please come in," Xio said after some hesitation.

As the door opened, Xio saw the goateed Locke and Wendel, who was in charge of the Utopia incident.

“Colonel, Wendel met someone from Utopia. He paid him a visit directly!” Locke said, fumbling over his words.

This development was equally unexpected.

Indeed… Xio wasn’t surprised. Instead, she secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

She looked at Wendel and asked, “Why did he visit you?”

“He requested that I head to Utopia to testify about the homicide case I mentioned in my report.” Wendel was clearly calmer than before.

He then added, “He’s a policeman. Name’s Biles. I don’t dare ask where he was living. I don’t know when he’s planning to leave or which steam locomotive he’s planning on taking to leave.”

To express the weight she had on this matter, Xio stood up and thought.

“Locke, summon your team members to look for the rental carriage drivers who often prowl for customers around Wendel’s residence, as well as the carriage drivers who passed by the nearby district, and ask if they’ve seen Biles before. If they have seen him, ask them where he was sent to. Also, send someone to the steam locomotive station and wait by the entrance to observe the passengers…”

After instructing her subordinates, Xio turned to look at Wendel.

“Cooperate with them and sketch out Biles.”

“Yes, Colonel,” Locke and Wendel replied in unison.

After they left and closed the door, Xio sat back down and began to pray.

Soon, she received Mr. Fool’s response and saw The World Gehrman Sparrow praying in the gray fog.

Gehrman Sparrow told her:

“You can carry out normal investigations.

“When necessary, you can suggest that it’s a ritual, but it must be included among a few options.”

Xio immediately heaved a sigh of relief as she patiently waited for her subordinates to report the results of their investigations.

As night fell, Locke returned to Bellotto Street and reported to Xio,

“We found the rental carriage driver that took the Utopian’s business!”

“Oh?” Xio showed her concern.

Locke explained simply, “That Utopian originally got the carriage driver to go to the dock area. However, as soon as the carriage entered the corresponding area, he requested to get off, saying that they had arrived.

“That street was very unfamiliar to the carriage driver, making him feel like he was lost.

“After leaving that street, he realized that his surroundings had become familiar.

“Our men accompanied him to that place again, but he couldn’t find that street no matter what.”

Xio nodded slightly and said solemnly, “It matches our preliminary descriptions regarding the entrances and exits of Utopia.”

“Colonel, are you saying that one can enter or leave Utopia from any city and street?” Locke was in disbelief.

Xio thought for a moment before saying, “From the looks of it, yes. But I have a feeling that there’s something wrong. Hmm… How does Utopia connect to different places? What does it rely on?”

As her voice trailed off, Xio said to Locke, “Tell Wendel that he’ll spend the following two weeks here until that subpoena expires.”

“Yes, Colonel.” Locke turned around and left Xio’s office.

Wendel didn’t have any objections to Colonel Derecha’s arrangements. He could even say that he would only feel safe inside MI9’s headquarters.

His temporary residence was a simply refurbished duty room. Through the window, he could see the lawn, garden, and trees outside.

At a glance, Wendel saw a pitch-black raven standing on a tree branch, silently looking over.

†

Night in Bansy was abnormally creepy. From time to time, the cries of ravens or other seabirds could be heard.

Verdu stood at the window, watching the approaching dilapidated dock and the city that had already been reduced to ruins. The pressure in his heart grew.

After a few days at sea, the ship he boarded was about to reach Bansy Harbor.

The captain had already informed Verdu in the morning that they would only wait for two hours. If he exceeded the two hours, Verdu could only wait for the next ship on this deserted island. Who knew when the next ship would come.

After taking a deep breath, Verdu retracted his gaze and took off his coat.

Then, he opened his suitcase, took out a classic black robe, and put it on.

The surface of the robe was embroidered with golden and silver threads, and there were many gems the size of rice grains attached to it. It was a Sealed Artifact of the Abraham family.

After making preparations, Verdu left the pirate ship and entered Bansy Harbor.

Along the way, the ancient robe tightened, causing his face to turn purple as he nearly fainted.

As they walked, Verdu found the spot where the telegraph office stood based on the map he had bought. In the middle of the rubble, there were two bloody red marks—ones that remained fresh. It was as if they were left behind after two people were crushed into minced meat.

Beside the two figures, on a broken wall, there was an octopus-headed monster wearing armor. It stood on waves and was holding a trident.

Verdu raised the lantern in his hand high and was about to take a closer look when he suddenly felt a drop of cold liquid land on his neck.

Gripped with terror, he subconsciously reached out his hand. He found it sticky, nothing like rain. It was colorless. Not blood.

It's a little similar to saliva… Verdu's forehead twitched slightly and he slowly raised his head to look at the place where the drop of liquid could have dripped from.

It was a swath of pitch-black. It was the night sky without the moon or stars.

Chapter 1338 - Exploration

◆

Verdu subconsciously swallowed his saliva, feeling an indescribable sense of fear.

He didn’t know what he was afraid of. There wasn’t any real danger; yet, a drop of unknown liquid falling from above was enough to chill his spine and tighten his pores.

Perhaps it was because the environment was too eerie and silent, or perhaps it was because of the identity and unknown origins of the liquid… Verdu cautiously moved two steps outside and patiently observed.

In the next few minutes, nothing abnormal happened. No more liquid fell from above.

This made Verdu suspect that it was only a bird passing by. There was a freshwater fish from the island’s streams or a sea fish in its mouth and a slightly sticky liquid dripped from its surface.

He calmed himself and then checked on the ruins of the telegraph office.

Ten minutes later, Verdu confirmed that there were only traces of blood and simple murals that were related to mysticism. It was worth researching.

He didn’t rashly extract samples of the blood-colored soil or make copies of the strange mural. Instead, he took out a pure dreamy crystal ball from his pocket.

As an Astrologer, he naturally had to use his best techniques to confirm if he should take action.

Holding the crystal ball in his left hand, his right hand touched the top of the crystal ball as Verdu entered the state of an Astrologer.

In the next second, the crystal ball shone brightly.

Bang!

It exploded and scattered shards in every direction.

"…" Verdu's gaze froze. He stood rooted to the ground, completely ignoring the pain brought to him by the shards piercing into his body.

"It exploded… it actually exploded…" he muttered to himself in disbelief.

The crystal ball shards that stabbed into his body didn't seem to break through the classic robe. At that moment, they fell without any blood on them.

Of course, there were a few shards left on Verdu's jaw and face, peppering them with small wounds.

"Who is it?" Verdu suddenly came to his senses and turned to face another direction.

In the ruins opposite him, a figure walked out. It was the woman in scantily-clad clothes from the pirate ship.

She had hidden herself very well and wasn't discovered by Verdu. However, the explosion from the crystal ball gave her a fright and made her react excessively, causing her to fail to maintain her hidden state.

Verdu's injured face immediately twisted.

"Why are you here?"

The lady curled her lips and put on an indifferent attitude.

"This is Bansy Harbor, not your home. Why can't I be here?

"I felt bored and came down to take a stroll, hoping to pick up some jewelry from the ruins. Is there any problem with that?"

She retorted with a few questions without any intention of distancing herself from Verdu.

Verdu didn't argue with her. He took out the medicine and medical alcohol that he had prepared beforehand and treated his facial and chin injuries. He then pulled out the crystal ball shards and put them back into his pocket.

He didn't want his blood to remain in such a strange place.

Following that, Verdu pulled on an accessory on the classic robe.

It was a door-shaped symbol formed from three rubies, three emeralds, and three diamonds.

In an instant, the long robe tightened, accentuating the flesh on Verdu's body.

Just as Verdu's bones were about to be crushed, his figure gradually faded and he disappeared.

Then, he "Teleported" to the coastal mountain outside Bansy Harbor.

The mountain had collapsed and turned into rubble.

According to what Verdu knew, this was once the place where the Bansy residents used to worship the God of Weather. It was also the main target of the Church of Storms.

After the crystal ball exploded to warn him that the Bansy telegraph office was hiding an unknown danger, Verdu didn't dare to continue exploring the area or search for mysticism materials. He could only forcefully move to the next location.

And this allowed him to escape the woman's tailing.

As soon as Wilder's figure appeared, he bent down and took a deep breath. It was as if he had finally recovered from his suffocating state.

At the same time, Verdu felt a sharp pain in his right rib, as if a bone had fractured.

After taking several deep breaths, he endured the pain and walked a few steps forward with sweat on his forehead, arriving at the altar marked on the map.

Without a doubt, the altar had been destroyed. There was only a glassified, slightly-charred crater. There was gravel with different shapes scattered around it.

The gravel had traces of being engulfed in fire and lightning to various degrees.

After Verdu Abraham surveyed the area, he raised his right hand and waved his sleeve.

With a whoosh, a small portion of the gravel was "pushed" away from the spot, revealing the ground beneath it.

This was a Trickmaster's Wind Trick. Verdu used it to replace the need for manual labor to fully ensure his safety.

As the gravel flew, Verdu saw the charred ground. There were a few parts left in some areas that had extremely incomplete patterns, drawings, and symbols.

Woo!

The sound of the wind grew more intense as it resonated in Verdu's ears, causing him to look up in surprise.

The wind that could only blow small gravel had somehow turned into a hurricane. It even “pushed” him into a state of staggering about.

Wild clouds gathered in the sky, as if a storm was brewing.

Although he had heard that Bansy was a “Weather Museum,” he had never thought that the changes would happen so suddenly.

For a split second, Verdu suspected that his “Wind Trick” had triggered a storm, or perhaps it had caused some changes to the cleared ruins of the altar.

This guess made his forehead break out into a cold sweat.

As the storm raged, Verdu saw the rubble in front of him fly up, revealing a boulder that was buried underneath.

The surface of the boulder was crisscrossed with deep cracks, giving off a feeling that it would shatter once it was touched.

At this moment, the wind had calmed down, but the heavy rain was still brewing.

Thinking about how he was already in Bansy Harbor, and couldn’t afford to be scared off just like that, he mustered up his courage and approached the boulder covered in charred black cracks.

He then took out a magnifying glass that was engraved with strange patterns, and he seriously checked the state of the boulder.

Seven to eight minutes later, Verdu put away the magnifying glass, a mystical item, and sighed in regret and dismay.

He had already confirmed that there was nothing wrong with the boulder. It didn’t involve anything related to mysticism.

Verdu was about to retract his gaze and leave when he suddenly saw that at the interface of the boulder's bottom and the earth, bright redness seeped out.

The bright redness gradually expanded, like blood flowing out.

However, it didn't spread into a huge area. It was limited to a very small area.

The two blood-red figures in the telegraph office's ruins instantly flashed across Verdu's mind. His scalp couldn't help but tingle.

His lips quickly turned dry as he instinctively thought that this wasn't a good development.

After swallowing another mouthful of saliva, Verdu raised his right hand and created another gust of wind, causing quite a number of miniature rocks to roll over to fill the bottom of the boulder completely, covering up the bright redness that seeped out.

He didn't stay here any longer. He forced himself to activate "Teleportation" again and headed for his final destination.

This time, another one of his ribs fractured again, causing him to almost faint from the pain.

In addition to the suffocation caused by the tightening, Verdu felt like he was hovering around the edge of death.

He took several seconds to recover and cast his gaze forward.

This place was also in ruins. A collapsed house covered the weeds.

According to a pirate who had once explored the ruins of Bansy, there was an item here worth researching.

It was an ordinary wooden door, but it was the only thing that remained intact in Bansy.

The pirate didn't find anything special about the wooden door, so he got his subordinate to carry it in an attempt to move it back to the ship.

However, they had only taken two steps when they suddenly collapsed. Dragging their spines, their heads separated from their bodies and rolled to the side.

This frightened the pirate. He didn't dare to stay any longer and led the rest of the crew away in a hurry.

Verdu didn't fully believe the story that the other party had told him. Although he hadn't experienced much life at sea, he knew that the sailors liked to exaggerate, often exaggerating something several times.

However, even if it was an exaggeration, Verdu believed that the door was worth studying.

After a round of searching, he discovered his target.

The ordinary-looking wooden door was leaning against a collapsed wall with brass locks and handles.

There were no corpses around it, nor were there any traces of blood. It was identical to the majority of the ruins.

Indeed, he's exaggerating. Heh, perhaps the pirate heard about this wooden door from somewhere else. Both he and his subordinates didn't dare to move it… Verdu looked around and suddenly said, "Who is it?

"Why are you monitoring me?"

He actually didn't notice anyone around him, but based on his experience and lessons, he could use words and a reaction to deceive the possible presence of a monitor.

A second later, a middle-aged man with a belly appeared in the shadows.

He said nothing and silently left the place.

Verdu heaved a sigh of relief as he didn't waste any time to approach the wooden door.

According to the information he had obtained, no matter which way he opened the wooden door, it wouldn't bring about any abnormal changes. There would be no danger if he didn't attempt to move it.

After thinking for a few seconds, Verdu retracted his hand into his sleeve and used his classical robe as a "glove" to pull the wooden door up.

He raised the wooden door, and the surroundings fell silent.

Verdu pushed the wooden door like he was normally opening a door, but there were no changes.

He tried many other methods, but he failed to make the wooden door display any abnormalities. It seemed to have just been lucky to be preserved in its entirety under the bombardment of the Church of the Lord of Storms.

Taking a deep breath, Verdu tried to calm himself down.

He thought for a moment and tried to open the door again.

However, unlike before, he held the handle and gently twisted it down.

After hearing the light click of metal colliding, Verdu pushed the wooden door backward and let it lean against a collapsed wall.

This time, a grayish-white fog appeared before Verdu.

In the fog, there was a faintly discernible street and a row of terraces.

Outside one of the houses, there was a wooden signboard. On them were a few Loenese words:

"Bansy Harbor Telegraph Office."

While Verdu's pupils dilated, a calm voice sounded from the telegraph office that was shrouded in fog.

“Are you… here to send… a telegram?

“Please come in.”

Chapter 1339 - Behind the Door

Although the voice coming from the telegraph office wasn't anything out of the ordinary, it was just a little intermittent. It lacked the obvious changes in tone. Normally, it wouldn't strike terror in others, but Verdu's heart suddenly erupted with a surge of fear.

It was like a bullet with flames shooting into an ammunition dump. It accurately hit a barrel of flammable gunpowder and ignited the fear that Verdu had accumulated and suppressed previously.

The horror that swept into every corner of his body was like a hand that grabbed Verdu's heart and blanked out his brain. He turned around abruptly and ran frantically towards the remnant pier where the pirate ship was.

During this process, Verdu had completely forgotten to think. He didn't remember wearing a classic robe that could "Teleport." All he did was run through the ruins with his feet, occasionally tripping over random items and falling heavily to the ground. Sometimes, his face would turn purple from his tightening clothes, and he had no choice but to stop to catch his breath.

However, every time he composed himself a little, he would crawl up and continue running. He looked like he had lost his rationality and was acting purely on instinct.

Without the force he provided, the wooden door couldn't maintain its balance. It slid down from the collapsed wall and fell to the floor covered with bricks.

The grayish-white fog and the shadowy houses disappeared.

After five minutes, Verdu ran back to the pier under the storm.

His eyes were wide open, filled with panic and confusion. He didn't notice that there was a figure standing on the deck of the pirate ship, quietly looking down at him.

This was the young man wearing a half top hat and a long black trench coat. He had a cold expression.

Verdu didn't even think about it and immediately used the gangway to return to the pirate ship. He rushed into the cabin and rushed to the second floor before rushing into his room.

Bang!

He slammed the door shut and curled up on the small, narrow bed. He wrapped himself tightly with the blanket and shivered.

When another of his ribs fractured again, the excruciating pain struck him and he finally recovered from his horror. He realized that his limbs were sore and his body was hot. Every breath he took was like thunder.

He struggled with all his might, and finally, he took off his classic robe and fell back into the bed. He felt dizzy and nauseous. The air just felt insufficient.

Outside the cabin, the cold-looking man suddenly raised his hand. He took out a human-skinned glove and wore it on his left palm.

Suddenly, the man vanished into thin air and appeared in a corner of the ruins. He appeared beside the ordinary wooden door.

He bent down and raised the wooden door, allowing it to stand in front of the collapsed wall.

Right on the heels of that, the man in the black trench coat mimicked Verdu's actions. He reached out for the handle and twisted it downwards.

Then, he pushed the wooden door forward and let it lean against the wall.

Almost at the same time, he saw a grayish-white fog. He saw the faintly discernible streets and houses in the fog.

Amidst the houses, the clearest, most eye-catching one was the Bansy Harbor Telegraph Office. The rest were more or less blurry.

At this moment, the calm voice in the telegraph office asked through the door, “Who… are… you?”

“I’m… Gehrman… Sparrow,” the young man in a half top hat replied in the same staccato.

The interior of Bansy Harbor Telegraph Office suddenly fell silent as though someone was walking silently towards the door.

At that moment, Gehrman Sparrow turned his head to the other side.

In the deep end of the street, a figure walked over. He was wearing a straw hat and had a towel around his neck. He was bending over to pull something.

As the figure approached, the outline of the object behind him gradually became clear.

It was a black vehicle with two wheels. It had a roof that could block the scorching sun and rain.

In the vehicle sat a lady wearing a waist-length dress with an embroidered fan.

Both she and the driver were concealed by thick fog, making it difficult for anyone to see their exact appearances.

When they passed Gehrman Sparrow, he barely managed to see a few details through the fog.

The hunched man pulling the carriage had a rotten face with pale-yellow pus flowing. In areas where the lady wasn't covered by the fan and clothes, her skin was swollen with a glisten amidst many blue and black spots.

With a ring, a bell sounded. A blue train with two carriages sped out from in front of Gehrman Sparrow.

At this moment, Gehrman Sparrow realized that there was an iron-black track on the ground. Above him were long lines.

On the top of the train carriage, there was a rather complicated metal frame that slid over the long lines.

Through the glass window of the train, Gehrman Sparrow saw the passengers inside.

They faced the streets, but only their heads remained. Each head was dragging a bloody spine.

Gehrman Sparrow's pupils dilated as he silently watched this scene without moving for a long time.

After nearly a minute, he took a step forward in an attempt to enter the blurry street beneath the grayish-white fog.

However, the fog blocked him. No matter what method he used, he couldn't pass through it.

Fifteen minutes later, Gehrman Sparrow stopped his attempts and closed the wooden door, eliminating the fog. Then, he dragged the wooden door and "Teleported" directly to the pirate ship. He wasn't worried about being cursed at all.

He then placed the wooden door on the deck and reached out his left hand again to grab the door handle.

Suddenly, there was a cracking sound from Gehrman Sparrow's neck. His head seemed to be raised by an invisible hand as it dragged out a bloody spine.

[image]

Gehrman Sparrow's expression didn't change as he coldly raised his right hand and pressed it above his head, pressing his head back to its original position.

Immediately after, he turned the handle as though unaffected and pushed the wooden door open again, allowing it to lean against the shipboard.

However, this time, there was no grayish-white fog to be seen, nor were there any visible streets, houses, or trains. It could be said that there was nothing unusual.

In the next second, the wooden door rapidly decayed, turning into a pile of mud, as if it was trying to avoid the fate of being tested.

Gehrman Sparrow didn't stop it. He took out a golden ring embedded with a ruby and wore it for nearly ten seconds.

After the ring vanished, Gehrman Sparrow reached out with his right hand and pulled out the same ordinary wooden door from the void before continuing his attempts.

After confirming that the wooden door would lose its effects once it left Bansy, Gehrman Sparrow casually waved his hand, allowing it to vanish in midair.

Two hours later, the dark clouds in the sky gradually dissipated. The storm that had been brewing for a long time ultimately did not descend.

When the pirate ship was far away from Bansy Harbor, Verdu, who had finished treating his injuries, took a bottle of medicine and allowed himself to quickly fall asleep so that he could adjust his mental state.

In the hazy dream world, he ran in a desolate moor, looking for something frantically, but he found nothing.

Suddenly, Verdu heard a faint voice coming from deep in the moor:

“The great… God of War…

“The symbol… of… iron… and… blood…

“The ruler… of… chaos… and… strife…”

This sentence repeated over and over again, but it didn’t alarm Verdu enough to snap him out of his dreams.

After some time, Verdu woke up and opened his eyes.

At that moment, the morning sun shone into the cabin outside the window, bringing with it a faint light.

Verdu slowly sat up and realized that he didn’t need to use the powers of an Astrologer to recall the three lines of the honorific name that he had heard in his dream.

And his relatively rich mysticism knowledge told him that it was referring to a hidden existence at the level of a deity.

Is this the result of the incomplete symbols and labels around the altar, or a result of me witnessing that street in the grayish-white fog? Verdu frowned and fell into deep thought.

He didn’t rashly attempt to recite that honorific name, because he knew how miserable people who had done something like that had died.

God of War… Verdu vaguely remembered that he had seen this deity’s name in a book in his family. He decided to do some research before considering how to deal with it later.

†

Bansy Harbor, on the collapsed coastal mountain.

Red, blazing-white, or orange flames emerged from the crevices of the gravel, forming a figure.

This figure was wearing a black blood-stained armor, with a half-grown fiery red hair. He looked young and handsome.

There was a blood-colored mark on his glabella that resembled a flag. There were traces of decay on his face. It was none other than the Red Angel evil spirit, Sauron Einhorn Medici.

"If 'He' didn't have Sefirah Castle and an Attendant of Mysteries characteristic to allow his marionettes to run around the world without considering the limitations of distance, I wouldn't need to take such a roundabout route." The Red Angel evil spirit tsked, a mystery as to who "He" was speaking with.

In midair, a raven landed on the top of a boulder.

There was a circle of white on its right eye, and a human voice sounded from its mouth.

"You actually used 'Him' and not him. This isn't like your style."

The Red Angel evil spirit chuckled.

"That's because 'He' wishes others to call 'Him' as him, and not 'Him.'"

As "He" spoke, Sauron Einhorn Medici glanced at the raven.

"This form of yours looks cuter than your true self, don't you think? Lil' Raven?"

The white-eyed raven replied without any hint of anger, "Your mockery is just like you. Still living in the previous epoch."

The Red Angel evil spirit smiled and said, “The developments have been rather smooth, and ‘He’ has been fooled. However, I believe that even if ‘He’ discovers it, ‘He’ will probably turn a blind eye. For the two of you to become Great Old Ones, ‘Door’ has to return. The hypocritical ‘Him’ might still be hesitating about whether to do it, because if ‘He’ isn’t careful, it will bring about a huge disaster. Haha, I like disasters.

“Lil’ Raven, when are you going to make your payment? If you don’t have enough strength, I won’t be able to gain the trust of the brainless Abraham.”

“When he prays to you,” said the white-eyed raven. “If you’re worried that such a state won’t last long, I can parasitize a Worm of Time into your body and help you maintain it. There’s no need to thank me.”

As “He” spoke, the raven spread its wings and disappeared into the vast night sky.

The Red Angel evil spirit turned “His” head and, with the advantage of the terrain, wore a solemn expression as “He” looked down at the Bansy ruins.

Chapter 1340 - Travel Diaries

◆ ◆ ◆

“This small city called Utopia is intrinsically no different from the ones I had been to in the past. Be it the folk culture, the people, or architectural style, it follows very closely to the standard Loen styles.

“I’ve heard that the Southern Continent has many peculiar and unusual traditions. I hope that I can experience it myself one day. Of course, that’s after East and West Balam’s peace is restored.

“Speaking of which, the most special thing about this place is that the weather is always changing and there’s always a storm. As a result, most people have umbrellas and raincoats that are smeared with Donningsman Tree Sap. The hotel attendant told me that for a person of a certain income level, which also has a need to work outdoors, they would have to save quite a sum of money to purchase a raincoat. Otherwise, the sickness would only take more away.

“There are no meteorologists here. I have no idea why there are so many changes in the weather here. I can only guess that it has something to do with it lining the sea and being close to places with hurricanes. Yes, there’s a deep water harbor a few kilometers away from Utopia. However, they’re lacking in manpower, and it isn’t very well-managed. It can only maintain its operations on a small scale.

“They don’t have local newspapers either. After all, it’s just a small city with a few thousand people. The paperboys mainly sell the Tussock Times, Desi Mirror, and Seawind News…

“The second reason I like this place is because many people in Utopia are optimistic and are very enthusiastic about life.

“When I wrote this down, a band happened to pass by outside the hotel.

“It’s not a professional band, but a group formed purely from amateur enthusiasts. Among them, there are civil servants, law enforcement officers, solicitors, professional policemen, school teachers, candy factory workers, shop owners… Among them, those with the money are responsible for the larger musical instruments, such as cello, violins, and other difficult musical instruments. The lower- and middle-class citizens use relatively simple instruments like seven-string guitars and harmonicas.

“On some rest days, they will walk the streets and set off from the municipal square. They will circle the city before returning to the Saint Arianna Cathedral near the square. They call this a ‘musical tour.’”

“In the tour, not only do they not reject other citizens from joining, but they even encourage them to sing or dance along with the procession. According to my observations, the participants are very happy and very satisfied as they freely express their love for life. This gives me a feeling of being full of vigor.

“I have to admit that it’s very infectious. I’ve tried to join the tour, and I’ve forgotten my troubles in the revelry of music, dancing, and singing. I only remember happiness…

“They aren’t on a tour today. Instead, they’re showering their blessings to a newly-wed couple at the cathedral.

“Speaking of weddings, what I don’t understand the most is that it only has the Evernight Goddess’s cathedral. One ought to know that in most of the kingdom, even in a small town, there would be at least two cathedrals, one belonging to the Evernight Goddess and the other, the Lord of Storms.

“Before today, I couldn’t imagine that an ordinary town in the kingdom would only believe in one deity.

“However, this doesn’t cause too much trouble for me. Before I turned eighteen, I could only believe in the Lord of Storms under the influence of my family. However, after I graduated from grammar school, I came to truly understand that the Goddess is the most compassionate and benevolent deity.

“Back to the wedding, I participated in a wedding a couple of days ago. I discovered that Utopia has some special customs in this area.

“Out of all of them, what I admire the most is that when the priest pronounces them man and wife, the groom and bride will bow to each other. No one is superior in this relationship as they only sincerely express their gratitude to be able to spend the rest of their lives together.

“This might be an expression of equality between man and woman in the Goddess’s teachings…

“In addition, there will be some special game segments after the wedding. For example, let the groom and the bride publicly describe their love story.

“This may be a rather embarrassing matter for them, but to the guests, it’s rather interesting. Yes, I think so too, but I definitely won’t add similar segments to my wedding.

“At the wedding, I heard the best love story I’ve heard so far. If there’s a chance, and if you my dear readers of this particular column enjoy it, I’ll consider retelling it. Of course, I’ll change the names and some details to prevent the couple from feeling troubled…

“The most important reason why I like Utopia is its food. The food here is very delicious. The limited number of restaurants are all very good, and the best is undoubtedly the attached restaurant to the Irises Hotel I’m staying at.

“Be it the most basic beef steak, fried pig chop, charcoal barbecued meat, spiced fried fish, or even more complicated, more difficult stewed mutton with peas, thick cream soup, butter potatoes, and roasted potato skin, all of them have reached the level of a master chef in the city. In addition, the chefs here are quite skilled in creating unique dishes and food. There are sweet-and-sour meat cubes, and grilled fish smeared with various condiments…

“In the staples that don’t seem to allow for experimentation, the chefs of Utopia haven’t given up. I’ve eaten all kinds of toasts in this city: yam, potatoes, butter, creamed, and ones with fruits… As long as I was willing to, I could make it so that I don’t eat the same thing twice during the week.

“The best food of praise here is their desserts.

“Cream pudding, fruit pudding, black forest cakes, carrot cakes, milk cakes, muffins, egg tarts…

“I feel hungry writing this. This is the reason why I still don’t wish to leave after staying here for a week. What I’m most worried about now is not my wallet but my weight. I’m glad that the hotel doesn’t have a weight scale, and at the same time, I blame them for not including one.

“The red wine in Utopia is also rather outstanding. The only problem is that they lack the age to settle down. It seems like the vineyards around the city haven’t realized this.

“Here, I need to seriously recommend a drink. Utopia’s Fizzling Ice Tea. It’s very special, and it has an even more amazing experience besides the sweetness and bubbles…

“Every night, I would go for a stroll in the municipal square. That’s also the place where most Utopians like to go for entertainment. They have an extraordinary love for the pigeons.

“I met an artist at the municipal square. His name is Anderson. He’s handsome, and his artistic skills are superb. Unfortunately, he's a mute…

"I also know another writer. His name is Alzu. It's a rather strange name. He said that he's writing a long novel and asked me to appraise the beginning.

"I won't comment on his novel, but I was just curious about a few familiar names at the beginning of the novel.

"It included Anderson, Wendy, oh yes, this is the boss of my favorite bakery…

"I raised this question, and Alzu told me very seriously that when a writer can't think of names for characters, it's very reasonable for them to use someone they know as reference.

"I agree.

"…

"Since this column is too narrow to contain my thoughts, I'll end it here.

Love,

Charlotte"

Monica put down her fountain pen and seriously read the manuscript twice. She changed certain words and any grammatical errors.

She was a writer. She wasn't famous at first, so she could only rely on writing third-rate romance novels to maintain her life. After she changed her faith to the Evernight Goddess, her father had almost cut off all ties with her.

However, ever since Miss Fors Wall, who had written "Stormwind Mountain Villa," established a travel column, and had received quite a warm response after the war, Monica had also started to write about her travels in some Backlund newspapers. This perfectly matched her hobby, and her hobby gave her a unique vitality to help her become a famous travel columnist.

Charlotte was her pen name.

After her writing dried completely, Monica specially wrote another copy and stuffed it into an envelope before affixing it with a stamp.

After confirming that the address was correct, the black-haired lady with a Desi Bay style carried her handbag and left the hotel, heading to the Utopia post office.

The post office was next to the telegraph office. Whenever Monica passed by the latter, she would always find it a waste.

From her point of view, Utopia rarely needed to send telegrams. It was too extravagant to specially build a telegraph office.

After sending the letter, Monica looked at the sky and walked towards the municipal square.

When she arrived at the entrance of Saint Arianna's Cathedral, she met Biles.

He was a police officer. He had once questioned Monica at the Irises Hotel due to the homicide witness.

Unfortunately, Monica didn't know that man named Wendel.

After greeting each other with a nod, Monica entered the cathedral and found a seat. She listened quietly to the sermon of the priest named Townsend.

This was a priest she found to be most clergyman-like ever since she changed her faith to the Evernight Goddess. His hair was half-white, and he spoke slowly and mellowly. His voice was deep and low, always calming down people without them realizing it.

Monica closed her eyes and listened attentively to the sermon.

†

East Chester County, in a forest belonging to the Hall family.

Alfred, Hibbert, and Audrey led their respective foxhounds with their servants around the forest and chased after their prey.

This was the first time the three of them had hunted together since they became adults.

In front of their sister, Alfred and Hibbert had a great time—at least on the surface.

And to Alfred, the biggest problem was how to control himself and not show that he was too extraordinary. Otherwise, if a Disciplinary Paladin were to join the hunt, no one else would have the chance.

He knew that his sister was a Beyonder, but he also knew that a Sequence 7 Beyonder of the Spectator pathway didn't have any actual combat ability.

As they chased their prey, they rushed out of the forest and saw a wheat field.

"Where are we?" Audrey, dressed in hunting gear, asked casually.

This was her first time hunting in this forest, and she didn't know where it led to.

Hibbert wasn't too familiar with the area as well. He turned his head and said to his attendant, "Ask someone."

As they waited, the three siblings laughed as they discussed their trophies. As for the golden retriever, Susie, she glanced at the foxhounds that wanted to get close to her and made them distance themselves.

After a while, Hibbert's attendant returned and reported, "Sir, there's a village called Hartlarkh nearby…"

Hartlarkh… That village with the dragon-worship customs? I came here from somewhere else? Audrey was taken aback when she heard that.

Chapter 1341 - In the Dream

◆

After regaining her senses, Audrey maintained her faint smile as she became wary.

She could vaguely feel a mysterious force pushing her to Hartlarkh, the village with the tradition of dragon-worship.

This was like an arrangement of fate.

Audrey had once entered the Hall of Truth, and she discovered that the murals inside had turned into reality. Furthermore, she knew that the Spectator pathway’s Sequence 1 was Author. From this name, she had made some connections, so it was inevitable for her to suspect that something was amiss.

At this moment, Hibbert laughed.

“I’ve heard of this village. I remember that our family has a manor nearby.”

As he spoke, he looked up at the sky.

“It’s almost evening. Why don’t we stay there and continue hunting tomorrow?”

Alfred wasn’t opposed to his elder brother’s suggestion. To him, staying the night at whichever manor was essentially the same.

He nodded and said, “Send someone back to inform Father and Mother.”

Audrey didn't say a word. Her green eyes turned slightly, and her gaze swept across the faces of her two brothers.

Hibbert's brows immediately furrowed as he said, "I think it's best we return. This manor wasn't informed in advance, so they definitely weren't prepared. Perhaps there's no way for them to service so many horses, hounds, and servants.

"Besides, there's still an hour before the evening. There's enough time for us to return."

When Alfred saw his brother change his mind so quickly, he wanted to act contrary to him. However, on second thought, he felt that what his brother said made sense.

Considering that his sister was also here, he tersely agreed and said, "Then let's head back quickly."

With that said, he didn't wait for Hibbert. Squeezing at the horse's side and brandishing the horsewhip, he led the way.

Hibbert frowned, then relaxed.

Without saying anything else, he led his sister, the group of attendants, servants, and hounds, and turned around, following the edge of the forest and returning to a manor on the other side.

Audrey quietly followed behind him, not expressing her opinion on the development of the matter.

†

Late at night, in a manor in East Chester County.

Having used her Manipulator powers to change the thoughts of her two brothers to prevent them from approaching Hartlarkh, Audrey lifted the velvet blanket and crawled into bed, entering a deep sleep.

In her reverie, she suddenly sat up.

She then looked around and saw the familiar dressing table and the bathroom entrance. She realized that she was still in the room, but the crimson moon outside the window was gone. There were no stars, only darkness.

This isn't the real world… Audrey instantly made a judgment and inspected herself.

Soon, she came to a conclusion:

This was a dream. It was a rather strange dream that made her remain lucid.

It's really here… Audrey didn't feel any panic. She was just a little vexed.

She hadn't handled the development properly in the afternoon, which led to the problem extending to the manor where her parents were.

In hindsight, she believed that she should've followed Hibbert's idea and headed straight to the family manor near Hartlarkh. Then, she could reasonably "arrange" for Hibbert and Alfred to return here, leaving her to stay behind and wait for any possible developments.

This way, even if anything happened, it wouldn't affect their parents, brothers, and most of the servants.

However, at that time, her main goal wasn't to follow the arrangement of fate. As long as she could avoid Hartlarkh, she would try her best to avoid it.

To her surprise, danger would, at times, spring on you even if you didn't seek it out.

To avoid it and stall for time wasn't a universal solution.

Audrey immediately got off the bed and stood barefoot on the thick carpet.

She had already confirmed that, with her level of a demigod as a Dreamwalker, she could directly escape this strange dream and return to the real world, avoiding the suspected “invitation” once more.

After looking around, Audrey pursed her lips, removed the blue cloak hanging on the clothes rack beside her, and wore it.

She took a deep breath and walked towards the door.

During this process, a crimson star “tattoo” appeared on the back of her hand.

The “tattoo” vanished as though it had never appeared.

This was the mark left on her after her first entry into the ancient palace above the gray fog. For a very long time, it hadn’t shown any special traits. It was only at the beginning of this year that Mr. Fool informed them that in situations in which they couldn’t pray, they could use the triggering of the corresponding “tattoo” to skip the chanting of the honorific name.

Simply put, this was a treatment that a Blessed of a deity enjoyed.

Of course, there was no way to transmit any information. It could only be used in critical situations, allowing Mr. Fool to cast “His” gaze over.

And more importantly, the star-like crimson mark was rather eye-catching. It could be easily discovered by others and people who were secretly monitoring them. Therefore, under a situation where she needed to hide her uniqueness, Audrey was more inclined to use the various abilities of a Manipulator to implant the idea of praying to Mr. Fool to some inconspicuous human nearby. She got them to complete the prayer at suitable times and locations and pray for her protection.

At this moment, she believed that the owner of the dreamscape knew that she was problematic, so she felt that there was no need to go through all that trouble. All she needed to do was to hide the entity she was praying to.

When she reached the door, Audrey reached out for the handle and gently twisted it before pulling it backward.

The slightly dark corridor entered her vision.

The main building of this manor had a history of over a hundred years. Many places still had their former characteristics, especially the corridor section. It didn't have any gas lamps, and the walls were decorated with candle stands made of silver or copper. There were countless candles placed on them, emitting a dim yellow light that illuminated the entire corridor and creating all kinds of shadows. They gave a feeling that a phantasm might appear on the corridor at any moment.

Even this has been replicated in the dreamscape … Audrey looked around and entered the corridor.

As this thought flashed across her mind, a long, thick pale-yellow carpet appeared beneath her feet.

Stepping on the carpet, Audrey followed her spiritual intuition and walked to the right.

After taking two or three steps, she suddenly stopped. She felt as if there was something hidden behind the two tightly shut doors, giving her a strong desire to explore.

This is Father and Mother's bedroom. That is Hibbert's room. That is Alfred's room… Audrey made a slight note of it and frowned.

The ancient doors with relief were extremely mysterious under the dim candlelight. It made one eager to know what was hidden behind them.

As her thoughts raced, Audrey suddenly understood what they represented in a dream.

This was the door to the mind world. Behind each door was the mind world of their owner.

In other words, after Audrey pushed open Alfred's door, she would see the various secrets hidden deep in his heart.

By the same logic, she could pry into the secrets of Lord Hall and Lady Catelyn.

She slowly retracted her gaze. Audrey closed her eyes and continued walking forward, preventing herself from being affected.

After all her experiences, she gradually understood a principle:

A demigod in the mind domain needed to control themselves and respect others.

Under the premise that she could read people's true thoughts through their body language, facial expressions, and emotional fluctuations, if she wasn't satisfied, she could greedily explore the inner thoughts of others and dig out their secrets. In the end, she would suffer a backlash.

This was a very simple principle: Everyone had some darkness in them in varying amounts or nasty thoughts. However, they had control over them, preventing them from affecting their actions. Under such circumstances, if a demigod in the mind domain still insisted on digging these thoughts and dug out the ugly parts under the mask, it was very easy for them to be disappointed in human nature, be tainted by all kinds of negative thoughts, gradually becoming crazy without realizing it.

This was also one of the reasons why, despite Spectators being able to "Placate" themselves and treat corresponding mental problems, they were also one of the pathways who would easily go mad or lose their composure.

They were both safe and dangerous.

Therefore, Audrey established rules for herself to observe. She only did observations and read the minds of people she knew. She tried her best not to enter their dreams. This restriction didn't apply to strangers. If it wasn't necessary, she wouldn't enter the mind world of anyone.

Following the corridor, Audrey, who was wearing a blue cloak, reached its end.

She opened her eyes and cast her gaze at the room on the left.

It was a half-open solarium.

Pursing her lips again, Audrey held the door handle with her breathing steady.

As the wooden door opened, the scene inside was gradually revealed.

This was no longer a room. On the ground were round pebbles and bundles of bluish-black weeds. It was so dark deep within that space that one couldn't see clearly.

Audrey slowly walked in and closed the door behind her.

In the darkness, the silhouettes of some objects were quickly outlined.

A huge stone pillar that was tens of meters tall stood there. There was a tall lizard-like monster situated above it.

The monster was squatting at the top of the stone pillar like a tiny mountain. Its body was covered with huge grayish-white stone scales, and its eyes were pale-fold and vertical.

This was a mind dragon as spoken in myths.

With a whoosh, the two wings of the mind dragon spread open, almost covering the entire sky.

Their bones were like metallic leaf veins, covered with a gray membrane with mysterious patterns.

As Audrey looked up, the mind dragon emitted a buzzing sound:

"You've been to Liveseyd."

Without a doubt, it used Dragonese.

City of Miracles, Liveseyd… How does it know… Just as Audrey had these two thoughts, she heard the mind dragon say, “Everyone’s consciousness in one’s heart will make a certain exchange with the sea of collective subconscious. And for a unique place like Liveseyd, it likewise left a special impression in you. When your Virtual Persona roams the sea of collective subconscious and isn’t too far from me, I can naturally sense this.”

This exceeds the limits of my abilities, and it’s not something a Dreamweaver can do… This mind dragon corresponds to a Sequence 2 Discerner? “He” actually didn’t directly control me… As Audrey’s thoughts flashed, the mind dragon spoke again.

“I’m sure you don’t have any ill intentions at the moment.”

Audrey fell silent for two seconds before looking up and asking, “Aren’t you worried that it’s a trap?”

Chapter 1342 - Simultaneously

◆

At that moment, Audrey even suspected that the “arrangement of fate” wasn’t for her to head to Hartlarkh to investigate the dragon-worshiping customs. Instead, it was to make her realize that something was wrong, causing her to feel conflicted. It made her use a Virtual Persona in the vicinity of Hartlarkh to secretly guide her two brothers into changing their minds without realizing it. This would inevitably result in her consciousness being specially related to Liveseyd to be discovered by the mind dragon, thus attracting “Him.”

Despite being the one that had been arranged, Audrey couldn’t help but feel a sense of awe. It had to be said that to achieve such an effect, one had to have an extremely high level of confidence in the reactions different people had. It struck fear into the bottom of her heart.

After all, Audrey, a Sequence 4 Manipulator, had felt that the development of the matter was in line with her expectations. She had completely fulfilled her wishes and wasn’t alert at all.

The mind dragon retracted its huge wings and looked down at the blue-cloaked Audrey.

“This is a dream maze formed by many minds. Even if the one who set the trap personally descends, it will take some time to find this room. Besides, I won’t stay long.”

Clearly, “He” had been wary of traps, but “He” believed that certain matters were worth the risk.

Dream maze… This is a Beyonder power of a Dreamweaver, or perhaps the power after a qualitative change? Audrey reined in her thoughts and asked calmly, “What do you wish to know?”

The gigantic grayish-white dragon buzzed and said, “My name is Ariehogg, one of the three remaining ancient dragons.”

“He” means that “He” is one of the three surviving dragons of the Second Epoch, and the rare, known dragons are only descendants of the dragons during the era of the ancient gods? Audrey nodded slightly and didn’t interrupt “Him.”

Behind her was a wooden door that stood without any support in the plains filled with bluish-black weeds. It looked extremely strange.

Ariehogg didn’t waste any time. After introducing “Himself,” “He” asked, “Where did you find Liveseyd?”

Audrey was already prepared as she answered frankly, “In a book named Groselle’s Travels. Rumor has it that it was personally created by the Dragon King Ankewelt.”

“Groselle…” Ariehogg clearly hadn’t heard of this name before. After repeating it, “He” pressed, “What kind of book is that?”

The blonde-haired Audrey gave a simple description:

“That’s a book with a world that’s almost real inside it. At the same time, it can suck in people who meet the requirements or offer their own blood to be sucked in by the book, allowing them to live in that world.”

Ariehogg fell silent for two seconds.

“Is there a sea of collective subconscious in that book world?”

“Yes,” Audrey answered with great certainty. “The City of Miracles, Liveseyd, I saw was deep in the sea of collective subconscious in the book world.”

Ariehogg suddenly breathed harder.

“What did you see in that Liveseyd?”

Audrey recalled and said, “A city filled with towering pillars and majestic palaces.

“In addition, I’ve also entered the residence of the Dragon King. That place can allow every living being’s inner thoughts to echo in the surrounding area. I call it the ‘Hall of Truth.’

“At the end of the Hall of Truth, behind the Dragon King’s throne, there’s an ancient and mysterious bronze door. I’m not sure what’s sealed behind. In short, it’s very dangerous and I didn’t dare approach it at all.”

Audrey was speaking the complete truth; she just didn’t mention the speculations that Mr. World, Mr. Star, and she had come up with.

Ariehogg fell completely silent. It was unknown what “He” was thinking of, or if “He” was analyzing the current situation regarding Liveseyd.

During this process, “His” head drooped down bit by bit, as though “He” was going to fall from the top of a hundred-meter-tall pillar to the ground.

Just as Audrey tensed up from this rather bizarre scene and was about to ask a question, Ariehogg suddenly raised “His” head.

The golden vertical pupil in “His” eyes turned colder as “His” voice once again resounded in the wilderness.

“Liveseyd…”

With a low rumbling of thunder, the things that were hidden in the dark behind Ariehogg quickly became clear. In the gradually brightening scene, their outlines appeared.

They were huge stone pillars that were more than a hundred meters tall. They were either standing alone or collectively propping up numerous majestic and ancient palaces.

These stone pillars and palaces were mainly grayish-white in color as they landed on the island-like foundations. It was identical to the City of Miracles, Liveseyd, which Audrey had just described.

No, this was probably the City of Miracles, Liveseyd.

Only then did Audrey realize that the ancient mind dragon, Ariehogg, was squatting at the top of the thickest, tallest stone pillar.

At this moment, she could faintly feel a subtle change in Ariehogg.

Her green eyes darted about slightly, and the sound of a metal handle being twisted sounded from behind her.

This… Audrey held back the urge to turn her head abruptly. She turned her body warily to the side, allowing her gaze to fall sideways.

The individual wooden door that had lost its external support slowly opened, revealing the visitor's appearance:

A huge, white rabbit with wiggling ears that walked upright.

Above the gray fog, in the ancient palace, a figure was shrouded in grayish-white fog. He sat at The Fool's seat at the end of the long mottled table as he silently observed the crimson star representing Justice.

†

Backlund, West Borough, 9 Bellotto Street.

The closer Wendel was to the end of the two weeks, the more he suffered from insomnia. He had to rely on medication to fall asleep.

When he woke up, he was also restless and extremely anxious. He had lost all interest in food and only forced himself to eat the three meals sent by his colleagues to ensure his energy.

He didn't know what would happen on the date of the trial, nor did he know if there would be an irreversible change in his body.

This kind of fear towards the unknown often made him feel stifled. It was extremely tortuous.

Sometimes, Wendel would even think that it might not be a wise choice resisting his return to Utopia.

Based on his limited experience there, if he obediently returned to Utopia and testified in court, there was a high chance that he would leave safely.

At least up to this point, Wendel hadn't heard of anyone dying or going crazy because of Utopia. The people there were rather friendly apart from being a little bizarre.

I'm just going to help. They should be grateful to me instead of being antagonistic… The more he thought about it, the more he felt that it would be more comfortable to face the danger.

Of course, he had no doubts about MI9's protective capabilities. If it wasn't possible, he felt that he could only consider meeting the Lord of Storms early.

Phew… Wendel exhaled and sat down on his chair. He casually picked up a novel to pass time.

However, his frustration made it impossible for him to immerse himself in the plot. He flipped through the pages more frequently and finally, he snapped the book close.

He closed his eyes and prepared to take a nap.

In a daze, Wendel seemed to return to Utopia and arrived at the court. However, the role he was in wasn't as a witness but a member of the audience.

Tracey was deemed by the judge to have provided insufficient evidence to support a claim for self-defense and had been transferred to the criminal courts. He saw this lady tearing up in a daze, her smile extremely miserable.

Wendel woke up and stared silently at the wall lamp in front of him. He sat there motionless for a long time.

If the problem is Utopia, and not the residents of Utopia, then me avoiding it might end up killing a poor lady… Wendel retracted his gaze. His resolve had wavered slightly, but he was unable to overcome the fear in his heart.

With his hands on the table, he stood up and walked to the door. He planned to wander about MI9's headquarters to ease his mood.

After leaving the room and taking a few steps forward, Wendel suddenly heard a colleague in the office discussing the related case of the Utopia.

"Have you heard? The person who entered Utopia was a carriage driver. He sent a merchant from Utopia to the dock area, and with just taking two turns at a crossroads, he found himself somewhere unfamiliar."

"There's a need to warn all the carriage drivers in Backlund. Yes, it's best to draw a parallel between Utopia and the spies, so that they can understand."

"The way of entering and exiting Utopia is really frightening."

"Yes. Sometimes, I even suspect that the entrance to Utopia might appear anywhere."

“There’s definitely a limit to this. It’s not as omnipotent as we imagine… Otherwise, I might find myself in Utopia just by paying a visit to the washroom.”

“According to the current patterns we’ve figured, this is theoretically valid.”

†

When Wendel heard that, his blood vessels on his forehead began to throb. He suddenly felt that even if he was in the headquarters of MI9, he wouldn’t be that safe.

Unless there’s a demigod watching me the entire time, it’s very difficult for me to avoid the fate of returning to Utopia. Perhaps, after I wash my hands and open the washroom door, I’ll discover that it’s the Irises Hotel outside… No, ordinary demigods might not be able to stop such a thing. This doesn’t seem like it’s something humans can accomplish. It’s already extremely close to that of a deity… Wendel instantly panicked, unable to suppress the fear in his heart.

He returned to the room and took out the subpoena from the Utopian court.

Immediately following that, Wendel entered the washroom and held the document as he muttered in fear, “I’m willing to go to court to testify.

“I’m willing to go to court to testify.

“…”

After repeating himself a few times, he reached out to grab the handle of the bathroom door.

At that moment, a black raven flew through the ventilation hole like a ghost and landed in a corner of the washroom that no one would notice.

In the next second, Wendel twisted the handle, pulled the door back, and opened the washroom door.

It was no longer his familiar bedroom but an unfamiliar lobby.

Chapter 1343 - Weaved Nightmare

* * *

I really returned to Utopia… Upon seeing the scene outside, Wendel felt a baffling sense of relief and ease. He no longer had any doubts about his choice to go to testify in court.

It had to be known that he was in the washroom of MI9’s headquarters. It was a place that was impossible to invade even with a fully armed army.

Wendel slowly exhaled as he walked out of the washroom and towards the entrance of the lobby.

Behind him, in a corner of the washroom where no one was paying attention to, the pitch-black raven had draped over a shadow-like veil, losing its physical presence. Even if one were to directly look at it, it would be difficult to discover it.

Then, its body became more and more transparent as it rapidly dissipated until it vanished.

At this moment, Wendel had already walked a few meters out of the lobby when he saw a police officer in a black-and-white checkered uniform.

This was the young officer who had requested him to testify, Biles.

“I knew you’d come, because you’re a kind person.” Biles smiled at Wendel.

When he heard the compliment, Wendel’s strung up heart finally returned to normal. Then, he instinctively turned his head back and saw that the bathroom that he had come out of had changed completely in style. It was no longer familiar to him.

†

In the dream maze formed by many minds, the huge white rabbit that walked upright squeezed through the open door and entered the vast wilderness with the grayish-white pillars and magnificent palaces.

Mr. Wrath… Although it wasn't wearing the persona mask, its unforgettable characteristics were enough for Audrey to recognize him at a glance.

This was out of her expectations, but it wasn't too surprising.

From her point of view, just Mr. Wrath alone likely wasn't enough to deal with an ancient mind dragon like Ariehogg. Even if Mr. Fool had warned her to be wary of Mr. Wrath.

After all, the leader behind the Psychology Alchemists, the former King of Angels, had already become a Sequence 0 true god. According to the knowledge shared by the Tarot Club, there shouldn't be any other Author Beyonders in the real world. This way, no matter how powerful Mr. Wrath was, as long as it was still part of the Spectator pathway, it would at most be on the same level as Ariehogg. The only things that would differ were combat experience, psychological research, and self-cultivation.

At this moment, as the giant white rabbit entered, the large, grayish-white, scaled Ariehogg spread open "His" wings which covered "His" skin. The surrounding area was instantly covered in a shadow.

With a leap, the white rabbit's legs suddenly became extremely huge, like a tiny hill.

At the same time, the gloomy sky above "Him" lit up. The ground beneath “His” feet cracked open, spewing out crimson lava.

Immediately after, a blurry and distorted figure appeared behind it.

This figure was dressed in a simple white robe. It was difficult to see his face clearly, and it was impossible to tell his age. One could only vaguely tell that he was a man.

A bright halo hung at the back of his head like a miniature sun. Beneath his feet was an illusory clock that was divided into twelve segments. Each segment represented a different symbol of time. Behind him, there was a shadow that looked like a curtain. Eyes seemed to be looking out from the shadow.

Just after this figure appeared, the entire dream maze shook violently, and gray fragments fell from the void.

The contrast of depravity and pure sunlight rapidly spread around the huge white rabbit, eroding or assimilating the area.

However, that simple white-robed figure had trouble truly taking shape. He was unable to enter reality from history and illusions.

Every time his silhouette became clear, his figure would distort like a machine that had its signal disrupted.

At that moment, Audrey instinctively retracted her gaze, not daring to look directly at the huge white rabbit.

Perhaps it was because she was in a dream and was closely connected to the mind island and the sea of collective subconscious. She didn’t need anyone to explain to her because she knew what Mr. Wrath was doing.

The other party knew the latent psychological problems of Ariehogg and knew what “He” feared the most. Then, according to this, it produced a nightmare that contained the specific images.

In a battle between High-Sequence Beyonders of the Spectator pathway, if both parties were at the same level, it would be difficult to produce any true effects using the various means available to them. One could sneak into the island of consciousness and attempt deep hypnosis. The other could guard the door to the Body of Heart and Mind, preventing any foreign consciousness from entering. The other could spread a Mental Plague and use the sea of collective subconscious to intrude on the enemy without them realizing it. The other would be able to "Placate" themselves, treat the psychological ailments, and maintain their mental health…

Therefore, the battle between same-Sequence Spectator saints often had three fixed styles: First, set up a trap ahead of time as a multi-pronged attack preparation. Then, by secretly leading on and guiding the opponent, one could break down their mental defenses in one strike and complete the hypnosis. Second, one focused on their physical defense and as support, relying on powerful Sealed Artifacts to defeat their enemy. Third, when the Beyonder powers such as Mental Plague, Mind Deprivation, Dragon's Breath, Consciousness Control, and other Beyonder powers were unable to deal with their opponent, engaging in self-hypnotism and using Dragon Transformation would result in an intense melee battle that exchanged claw swipes and tail lashes.

In the third battle, whoever had a deeper understanding of the mind domain, and whose will was stronger and firmer, would be able to gain the upper hand by relying on the extended usage of 'Dragon Transformation.' Of course, the prerequisite was that the other party had no chance of escaping.

And at the level of an angel, everyone was a true Mythical Creature. The maintenance time of "Dragon Transformation" became meaningless. At this moment, it mainly depended on "observation." Whoever could find a flaw in the opponent's mind could weave a corresponding nightmare, directly attacking the enemy's weaknesses, slowly destroying their mental defenses and reaching the effect of going "mad" or "dying" out of fear.

As Audrey was in the same dream, even if the nightmare wasn't directed at her, she was still affected by the corresponding emotions, characteristics, status, and even corruption.

Now, she clearly knew that the nightmare that Mr. Wrath had weaved represented the ancient sun god. This was the most terrifying existence in Ariehogg's mind. At the same time, the ancient sun god's influence would uncontrollably corrupt the surroundings until it reached the entire dream.

When the time came, once Audrey woke up, she would either become an untreatable mentally ill patient, or she would become an incomplete Mythical Creature, completely losing all reason and ending up wildly attacking the surrounding creatures.

Of course, there was another possibility that she unknowingly became depraved. She would become cold, cruel, and bloodthirsty without realizing it, as if someone had replaced her.

At this moment, Ariehogg, who was squatting at the top of the grayish-white pillar, let out a painful howl.

As the dragon's roar echoed, the top of "His" head turned dark, revealing a "sea" of secrets and colors that was difficult to describe with words.

In the sea, an even bigger grayish-white dragon spanning a thousand meters long rose up. One of "His" vertical pupils was pale gold and the other was bright red color.

There was a third eye on the dragon's forehead. It seemed to be hiding a thick shadow.

Similarly, there was no need for anyone to explain. With the uniqueness of her present state, Audrey immediately knew what nightmare Ariehogg had weaved.

This was something that left a deep trauma in the giant white rabbit's heart. This was the Ankewelt that had been corrupted by the "underground world." This was the Virtual Persona and mental corruption which was sealed behind the bronze door—things that had been split off from that ancient god.

At that moment, Audrey was in an indescribable nightmare. Although she hadn't been corrupted, her mental state was in turmoil, as though she had been awed.

She immediately used "Placate" on herself, and didn't hesitate to rely on her own consciousness to forcefully escape the dream maze.

During this process, she didn't encounter any obstruction not just because she wasn't Ariehogg's and Mr. Wrath's target, but also because she had reached Sequence 4 and possessed a certain amount of godhood. Therefore, she quickly woke up from her dream.

Audrey suddenly opened her eyes and saw a crystal chandelier dyed in faint crimson. She saw the deep darkness of the room.

Without any delay, she got out of bed and ran to the window to look outside.

The entire manor was completely silent, as if it was deep asleep. Everything was normal.

Audrey frowned and immediately split out a Virtual Person, allowing it to enter the mind island of a night patroller.

She remembered very clearly that the dream maze was formed by many minds. Once the two nightmares spread, the result was unimaginable.

Therefore, before this, she had to wake up everyone in the manor.

In the next second, the patrolling guard suddenly raised his hand and removed the grenade hanging from his belt. He pulled out the pin and threw it towards an empty garden.

Boom!

The loud explosion jolted awake the sleeping people.

Immediately after, the guard shouted loudly, “Enemy assault!

“Enemy assault!”

Earl Hall and his wife were already over fifty years old, so as light sleepers, they jolted awake immediately. Regardless of how good Hibbert’s sleep quality was, he woke up in a reverie thanks to such a loud explosion. Alfred had opened his eyes the moment the grenade was thrown.

The remaining butler, maids, footmen, and bodyguards woke up one after another. They looked confused and dumbfounded, not knowing what had happened.

And at the far end of the manor’s main building, a few servants heard the commotion and didn’t wake up in time.

A few seconds later, they struggled on the bed in pain. Like a snake shedding its skin, they broke free from their skin, turning into hideous bodies of blood.

They didn’t wake up until they died.

At that moment, Audrey saw a grayish-white dragon spread its wings in the sea of collective subconscious as it rapidly departed. A huge white rabbit followed closely behind.

In the blink of an eye, the dragon’s voice resounded in the illusory sea.

“Adam isn’t necessarily Adam, just like how I might not necessarily be Ariehogg.”

The giant white rabbit suddenly slowed down and gradually stopped.

All the abnormalities came to an end as the entire area returned to normal.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Adam didn’t attack? The Fool Klein frowned slightly as he turned his attention back to Utopia and replaced the instinctual monitoring of the Worms of Spirit.

He carefully inspected his marionette town and didn’t find anything abnormal.

Chapter 1344 - Humanity

◆

Seeing that there weren’t any abnormalities in the town of marionettes, Klein began thinking about Miss Justice’s encounter.

It wasn’t Adam who set up an attack against Ariehogg, but Hermes who masterminded it?

Otherwise, it wouldn’t be possible for Adam to not descend. It would also be impossible for Ariehogg to escape so easily. “He” had to rely on the second City of Miracles to have some hope of doing so.

If Hermes was the mastermind, the development of this whole episode becomes logical… Hermes never thought of capturing or killing Ariehogg. “He” only hopes to learn some information from this ancient mind dragon. When Ariehogg said “Adam isn’t necessarily Adam,” the operation came to a natural end.

Yes, from the looks of it, Hermes already had some doubts about Adam’s true state. However, due to the limitations of “His” status, “He” has been unable to make Ariehogg appear on “His” own accord, so “He” used Miss Justice.

Adam isn’t necessarily Adam; Ariehogg isn’t necessarily Ariehogg… This sentence is very interesting. The upper echelons of the Spectator pathway are more mysterious than Seers. Back then, Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt clearly occupied Sequence 0, but “He” had a Sequence 1 son of the same pathway as “Him”—Dragon of Nightmare, Alzuhod…

If Adam really isn't Adam, then who is "He"? Is it that Adam from the myth in the time before the First Epoch, or part of the Primordial One? Or is "He" related to the resurrection of the ancient sun god? From the looks of it, the meaning behind why Medici addresses "Him" as a zealot has a far more profound meaning…

Klein quickly conjured a gold coin and flicked it into the air, making a divination.

The results of the divination indicated that today's development was nothing dangerous.

Klein immediately dispersed the gold coin and prepared to descend his consciousness into his body beneath Saint Arianna Cathedral.

At this moment, his actions became slightly sluggish.

The moment Miss Justice met Ariehogg and Hermes was almost simultaneous as the moment the MI9 personnel returned to Utopia to testify in court.

Just looking at them individually, there was no problem; but the word "simultaneous" made Klein somewhat alert.

He was very sensitive to words like "happened to," "coincidence," "simultaneous," and "almost the same." This was a mark left behind by his past experiences.

He tapped his finger on the edge of the long mottled table and decided to make preparations for his worries.

He quickly condensed a light that contained certain words and some kind of will, and he threw it into a prayer light.

After doing this, Klein made his consciousness sink and left Sefirah Castle, allowing his mind to return to his original body.

Immediately after, he began to influence Utopia. He planned to use all sorts of arrangements to temporarily make all the foreigners “leave.”

This way, even if anything happened, it wouldn’t affect the innocent.

This also meant that Klein was prepared to abandon Utopia and change locations to rebuild his marionette town. After all, a ritual could be repeated many times, but he could only afford one resurrection.

†

“Have a good rest for the next two days. There’s still some time left before court begins.” Biles sent Wendel to the entrance of the Irises Hotel.

Wendel replied with a smile, “I’m already feeling sleepy.”

It was in the middle of the night. He had trouble sleeping previously because of his anxiety and nervousness. That was why he thought of walking around the headquarters of MI9 to ease his mood. However, when he heard the conversation between his colleagues at night, it triggered an eruption in his emotions, and he decided to return to Utopia and face the problem.

After checking in, Wendel took his luggage and went to the third floor.

When he passed through the door, he vaguely felt that his surroundings were abnormally dark.

In order to sleep better, Wendel walked to the window and drew the curtains.

During this process, he felt that the scenery outside the window was unusually familiar.

However, under the cover of the night, he couldn’t tell what was happening too clearly. Thinking that it might have been the scene he had seen in Utopia previously, he covered his mouth with his hand and yawned. He took off his clothes and walked towards the bed.

†

Monica slept until midnight when she suddenly needed to pee.

Unable to hold it in any longer, she eventually got out of bed and walked towards her room's attached bathroom.

When she pushed the bathroom door open, she found it a little heavier.

Rubbing her eyes that were almost unable to open, Monica didn't care about this small change. She quickly relieved herself and ran out of the bathroom to her bed.

When she entered the covers, she felt that the temperature was much lower and she had no choice but to wrap herself up tightly in layers.

It didn't take long for her to fall asleep again.

†

About 15 minutes later, the patrolling Biles rubbed his hands and turned towards the street where the police station was. He was about to hand over duties with his colleagues.

Suddenly, his body froze in the alley.

The black and dense Spirit Body Threads on his body peeled off at the same time as they floated upwards.

A pruned and exquisite paper figurine landed and connected to the Spirit Body Threads, quickly turning into another Biles.

At the same time, a torrent of mixed knowledge surged over and reassembled him into a man wearing gorgeous clothes with long chestnut hair.

The man had blue eyes, a high nose bridge, and thin lips. It was Roselle Gustav's Sequence 1 historical projection.

Right on the heels of that, the projection reached out and sucked all the information in the surroundings into its palm, forming an illusory ball of light.

This information included all the details that involved Biles.

In the next second, Roselle Gustav's historical projection forged a piece of information that was completely normal, allowing it to follow the Spirit Body Threads connected to the paper figurine to the Saint Arianna Cathedral in the municipal square, moving straight underground of the cathedral.

After this series of actions, another torrent of information surged in midair. With Roselle's help, they reformed into three figures.

A middle-aged man wearing a black robe and a hood with a long, thick, white beard; another, who was draped in a cloak, had black hair, blue eyes, and a rather squarish face. He was a middle-aged man with a dignified bearing; on one of the trees, there was a huge tree that seemed to be drenched with petroleum. On the tree, there were arms with all sorts of strange protruding objects that rolled with bloodshot eyes.

"They" were:

The leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul!

Loen's Protector, the first King, William Augustus I's historical projection!

A historical projection of Abomination Suah!

After making the necessary preparations, Zaratul used the location provided by the historical projection to sneak into Utopia.

"He" didn't waste any time. "He" reached out with "His" right hand and used the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics to suck out the Worm of Spirit in Biles.

Elsewhere, the palm of Abomination Suah's historical projection made an ugly doll the size of a palm appear.

The doll was wet and sticky. It had no eyes, ears, or nose. It only had a pinhole-like mouth that emitted and sucked grayish-white fog.

As the Worm of Spirit and the doll approached, the black-and-white eyeballs that rolled out on the Suah tree trunk looked at them at the same time.

Silently, the Worm of Spirit fused with the ugly doll, causing it to distort as it squirmed, growing out eyes, nose, and ears, making it look like Klein Moretti.

At this point, Zaratul no longer did any concealment, nor could "He" do so. "He" took out a black shroud and abruptly wrapped Klein's doll up!

All the marionette's Spirit Body Threads in Utopia were severed at the same time—they were unable to connect to the true body.

This wasn't because there was something wrong with them, but that the true body was isolated from them.

All of a sudden, the duty personnel in the police station, tenants in the hotel, Tracey and the thieves in the cell, Anderson in another apartment, Alzu, and the other citizens all stopped breathing and turned stiff.

Regardless of whether they were sleeping or doing something else, it was as if a pause button had been pressed.

Klein, who was at the bottom of Saint Arianna Cathedral, suddenly woke up. He knew that an accident had happened.

He didn't hesitate. With a thought, he returned to Sefirah Castle. With the level and strength of a King of Angels, he was able to resist enemies that had shown or had yet to show themselves.

This was the best choice in the current situation.

Even if he wasn't able to protect his true body, Klein still had a chance to revive.

At that moment, his floating consciousness touched an invisible, dark barrier, making it difficult to penetrate it and enter Sefirah Castle.

This… Klein's heart tightened, believing that the enemy might be more troublesome than he had imagined.

Few high-level existences knew he could return to Sefirah Castle with a thought!

In the next second, the thick, petroleum-slathered tree had arrived above Saint Arianna Cathedral.

In addition, a deep and dignified voice resounded:

"Wandering is prohibited here!

"Teleportation is prohibited here!

"…"

Klein wasn't led by his emotions. Seeing that he couldn't return to Sefirah Castle at the moment, he immediately changed his strategy and leaped towards the fog of history.

The moment the grayish-white fog entered his eyes, it turned into a whirlpool formed by countless transparent maggots. The vortex extended out slippery tentacles covered with strange patterns.

Unlike previously, the vortex emitted a powerful suction force, causing Klein's figure to speed up and be entangled by countless tentacles.

Law of Beyonder characteristics convergence!

The law of Beyonder characteristic convergence between angels!

A subtle beam of light flashed as Klein, who was firmly controlled by Zaratul's Mythical Creature form, turned into a paper figurine.

This was an angel-level application of Paper Figurine Substitutes, as well as the help of "Grafting."

Although Klein couldn't return to Sefirah Castle, he could influence the Worms of Spirit above the gray fog, allowing them to use the "curtain" to provide help.

After dodging Zaratul's fatal blow, Klein ran into the fog of history and fled towards the former metropolis from a time before the First Epoch.

At this moment, many marionettes, who had been dead for a long time in Utopia, rapidly decayed from losing the Spirit Body Threads maintaining them. Their limbs dropped to the ground or mutated because of their Beyonder characteristics. The latter transformed into different monsters, ones far more terrifying than imaginable.

Some swallowed their heads; others were left with only squirming flesh, while others grew dense eyes…

Soon, Klein ran into the old metropolis situated inside the fog of history.

To him, this was a safe room that could be trusted. This was because only a Scholar of Yore who was a human from before history could enter.

Without any hesitation, Klein habitually surveyed the area and began praying to the Evernight Goddess in the stacked city.

[image]

Oof!

A faint sound rang out as an ancient wooden stake with traces of blood penetrated Klein's heart from behind.

A figure phased into existence behind him. It was a cold-looking man wearing a half top hat and a black trench coat:

Gehrman Sparrow.

Klein’s pupils dilated as the crazy adventurer said in a deep voice, “Adam has given me humanity.”

Chapter 1345 - Meeting Again

◆

Klein turned around and looked at the familiar yet unfamiliar figure.

He had imagined all kinds of attacks on Utopia, but he had never expected such a scene to occur.

If Amon had "Parasitized" the marionette, Gehrman Sparrow, then with Klein's current status and the Spirit Worms on Sefirah Castle, he definitely would have immediately discovered the problem. And if Zaratul were to swap the Spirit Body Threads, "He" could only temporarily hide it from him. Furthermore, "He" needed help from an angel like a Knowledge Emperor or a Servant of Concealment to ensure the element of surprise in the sudden attack. Only the humanity provided by a Spectator could slowly ferment, without revealing any abnormalities on the surface.

To prevent such a situation, he could only sever the Spirit Body Threads and allow the marionette to deteriorate till it died. That way, regardless of whether it had any humanity in it or not, it would ultimately cease to exist.

Unfortunately, Klein had never heard of such methods before. All he did was guard against the invasion of a Virtual Persona on his marionettes.

This might be the power of a Visionary, giving life to everything virtual and immaterial, a unique sense of humanity.

The carved and cold face was reflected in Klein's eyes as he felt a force pushing him away.

He immediately fell backward, falling from the layers of ruins of the old metropolis out from the fog of history.

During this process, he wanted to control himself, but there was nothing he could do. This was because the wooden stake at his heart had sealed all his Beyonder powers.

With a thought, Klein looked at Gehrman Sparrow and snapped his fingers.

Pa!

The Worms of Spirit in Sefirah Castle received his will and gave up the marionette's Spirit Body Threads. They also picked up the Staff of the Stars and prepared to give Klein a fatal blow so as to commit suicide.

After his main body completely died, Klein would be able to revive above the gray fog and escape from his predicament.

He no longer held any hope after finding out that Adam was the mastermind behind the scenes.

At this moment, a stone square floating in the void appeared beneath Klein's feet.

Black stone pillars rose up and propped up a grand and holy cathedral, enveloping Klein inside.

The corpse cathedral—Adam's corpse cathedral—the divine kingdom of a Visionary!

Boom!

Countless bolts of silver lightning smote down from Sefirah Castle, penetrating the fog of history and struck the cathedral, but failed to shake it at all.

At the same time, in the ancient palace, the figure sitting in The Fool's seat suddenly collapsed to the side, forming a vortex formed from transparent maggots.

The vortex extended out slippery and strange tentacles, crazily smacking the surroundings, overturning the junk pile, and destroying the long mottled table.

Klein's avatar had lost contact with his true body, and because his true body hadn't really died, they had lost control and went crazy, just like Zaratul from before.

In the old metropolis before the First Epoch, Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing a half top hat and a black trench coat, looked up at Sefirah Castle, his expression mixed.

He was basically a corpse. After his Spirit Body Threads were abandoned, he naturally couldn't maintain his existence.

The only thing Adam gave him was humanity. There was no envisioned life for him, as that would result in the discovery of there being something wrong with Gehrman Sparrow.

Gehrman Sparrow slowly collapsed as he looked at the rooms in the old metropolis.

He died in this ruin.

†

Klein's feet landed on the ground and stood in the middle of the cathedral. He saw that every arch of each pillar was embedded with the skulls of different races. Most of them were pale-white in color as they were packed densely together, staring at the intruder with their hollow eyes.

On the walls, windows, and doors of the cathedral, transparent, distorted, and painful faces appeared, separating the interior from the outside world.

And in front of the cathedral stood a cross that was more than a hundred meters tall.

In front of the cross were rows of black pews.

Adam, who was wearing a simple white robe and had a pale gold beard, was standing under the cross with a silver cross hanging from “His” neck. “He” faced the pews like a priest who was preparing to deliver a sermon.

[image]

“His” expression was warm and “His” eyes were limpid, as though “He” was only inviting Klein to listen to the scriptures.

Klein lowered his head and looked at the cross-shaped wooden stake that was stuck in his chest. He slowly walked to the first pew and sat in the middle.

For a true Mythical Creature formed from many Worms of Spirit, the wound on its chest wasn’t fatal. The main purpose of the ancient bloody cross stake was to seal his Beyonder powers.

If not for the true god standing in front of him, Klein could’ve used his physical strength to pull out the wooden stake and remove the seal.

At this moment, he didn’t make any attempts because he was afraid that he would turn the thought of “not daring to” to “not willing to.”

“I didn’t expect you to directly interfere in this matter. If you wanted to deal with me, you didn’t have to wait until today.” Klein looked at his blood-stained shirt and seriously voiced his doubts.

He wasn’t afraid at all, as if he was certain that Adam wouldn’t kill him.

Adam held the silver cross pendant with one hand and calmly said, "Before now, you were able to be of quite some use in many ways."

"He" took two steps forward and continued with limpid eyes, "When Amon came to steal the corpse cathedral, I made a deal with 'Him.' By helping me obtain the first Blasphemy Slate, I'll help 'Him' capture you."

Is that so… Klein was instantly enlightened.

On the one hand, Adam didn't wish to be obstructed by existences like the True Creator when "He" became a god, and on the other hand, "He" wanted to obtain the first Blasphemy Slate. Therefore, "He" used the Unshadowed Crucifix and other methods to give Klein an impetus to head for the Giant King's Court, open the door to the chamber where Sasrir was sleeping, and attract the attention of the True Creator and other existences. On the other hand, "He" used "His" brother, Amon, to steal the first Blasphemy Slate at the critical moment.

And to capture Klein, who was about to obtain preliminary control of Sefirah Castle, it would definitely be most appropriate to have a Visionary arrange the developments for "Him."

Although Amon and Adam usually appear distant, "They" are still brothers and can work together more easily… Klein nodded slightly and looked at the stained glass that had distorted faces.

"I also didn't expect Zaratul to cooperate with you. Isn't 'He' afraid of becoming food for Amon?"

When Klein established Utopia, he had considered Amon's attack and Zaratul's destruction. However, he never expected that "They" would work together in a certain way.

From his point of view, the chances of Zaratul completely siding with the Mother Tree of Desire were higher than this, unless Adam had unknowingly arranged such a development for "Him."

Adam's limpid eyes showed sympathy.

"To 'Him,' you becoming a Great Old One means that 'He' will definitely perish. However, if Amon becomes one, as long as 'He' expresses 'His' loyalty, 'He' can still retain 'His' present level and status. A Lord of the Mysteries still requires an Attendant of Mysteries.

"Therefore, 'He' chose to cooperate with me. During this process, if 'He' can seize the opportunity and turn you into a marionette before I do, using you to enter Sefirah Castle and become the owner of the sefirah, then 'He' has the right to demand an opportunity to face Antigonus at Evernight's place and have an ultimate showdown with Amon. On the contrary, 'He' will completely admit defeat and pledge allegiance to Amon.

"On this point, 'He' was very decisive."

"It doesn't seem like your style to explain so much," Klein replied casually before frowning. "You don't need all the Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics of the corresponding pathway to become a Great Old One?"

He had deduced this from the relationship between the ancient sun god and the eight Kings of Angels. However, he believed that one had to first become a Great Old One or a quasi one before dividing the characteristics.

Adam replied gently, "For neighboring pathways, all that's needed is a Uniqueness and a Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic. It's easy to lose control if one forcefully occupies more. Therefore, after Zaratul pledged allegiance to Amon, 'He' still has the chance to become a King of Angels. And 'He' isn't able to pledge allegiance to you because 'He' can't separate a Sequence 2 avatar like those from the Marauder pathway, and then stealing 'His' main body's Spirit Body, consciousness, and psyche over, turning the avatar into the main body."

This was the qualitative difference between a Seer's marionette and a Marauder's Worm of Time. The former involved Spirit Body Threads, while the latter relied on themselves.

Furthermore, the reason the Marauder angel could do this was because "Their" Sequence 2 was Trojan Horse of Destiny.

Just as Klein nodded, he suddenly saw Adam turn "His" body, revealing something beneath the cross.

It was a gray stone slab. There were many mottled marks on its surface, making it look rather ancient.

This was very similar to the first Blasphemy Slate, but it didn't have that abnormally ancient feeling to it.

It also had words that looked like the source of all languages. They were written with the names of Sequences and potion formulas.

"The second Blasphemy Slate?" Klein asked in surprise.

His gaze quickly swept across the stone slab. He didn't read the first few paragraphs, but instead looked at the last few lines.

His intuition told him that there was a very important piece of information there.

"There's no need to rush. Amon has to complete the ritual and become a Sequence 0 before stealing your fate. Otherwise, 'He' wouldn't be able to withstand the identity as Sefirah Castle's owner. And before that, it's best to let you continue staying in my kingdom." Adam acted as though he was consoling a repentant.

Kill me… Klein muttered inwardly.

At this moment, he figured out the last few lines.

God Almighty, Creator, Maker, The Omnipotent and Omniscient, Lord of the Astral World:

Sea of Chaos + Visionary Uniqueness + The Sun Uniqueness + Tyrant Uniqueness + White Tower Uniqueness + The Hanged Man Uniqueness + 1 Author Beyonder characteristic + 1 White Angel Beyonder characteristic + 1 Thunder God Beyonder characteristic +1 Omniscient Eye Beyonder characteristic +1 Dark Angel Beyonder characteristic.

Lord of the Mysteries, King of Space-Time, Beacon of Destiny, Embodiment of Sefirah Castle, Dominator of the Spirit World:

Sefirah Castle + The Fool Uniqueness + Error Uniqueness + Door Uniqueness + 1 Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic + 1 Worm of Time Beyonder characteristic + 1 Key of Stars Beyonder characteristic.

Upon seeing this, Klein turned his head to look at Adam and asked in puzzlement, “Why are you showing me these?”

Wouldn’t it be safer to hypnotize me and put me to sleep until Amon becomes a god?

Adam’s eyes were clear as “He” said with a warm expression, “To be frank, if the other party wasn’t Amon, then I’d be more willing to help you become the Dominator of the Spirit World.

“We have too many things in common. In a sense, we are old friends who have met before.”

With that said, “He” smiled and said, “We meet again, Mysteries.”

Chapter 1346 - The Specialness of a Visionary

◆ ◆ ◆

Mysteries… The last time Klein heard this title was from the consciousness of the True Creator that had descended. The penultimate instance was from the ancient sun god from history, the City of Silver’s Creator.

In a sense, the two of them were equal:

The True Creator was equivalent to the ancient sun god “evil spirit” after retrieving Sasrir’s personality.

However, unlike before, Klein wasn’t flustered when he heard this manner of addressing him. Neither his heart trembled nor his teeth chattered.

At this moment, he felt as if he had finally seen a suspended rock fall to the ground.

Of course, he wasn’t that calm either. To a certain extent, surprise, shock, and disbelief were inevitable. It was because of the words “Adam isn’t necessarily Adam” from Ariehogg that he had already come up with many speculations and was mentally prepared.

We meet again. Mysteries… Adam is equivalent to the ancient sun god? Or is this the resurrection contingency of the ancient sun god? “He” knows of this, but “He” still wishes to revive “His” father, so that’s why Medici calls “Him” a zealot? Thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind as he gained a brand new understanding of certain matters.

It was no wonder Adam never promoted teachings about "Himself." "He" only spread what was left of the ancient sun god!

Klein originally believed that this was due to the special trait of a Visionary, and how "He" could use "His" Uniqueness to create a bunch of realistic believers as anchors. This way, "He" didn't need to build a congregation, but from the looks of it, this was probably only one of the reasons.

After two seconds of silence, he looked into Adam's pure eyes and said, "You are the ancient sun god?"

Adam maintained his warm smile and said in an illuminating tone, "Don't you think I'm the most unique among the eight Kings of Angels?

"After reading the contents of the second Blasphemy Slate regarding the Great Old Ones, you should be able to clearly understand this point."

Indeed… Klein nodded, indicating that he could tell.

"Of the five Kings of Angels related to omnipotence and omniscience, you are the only one with a Uniqueness."

According to the mysticism knowledge that Klein currently possessed, when the City of Silver's Creator was still alive, the eight Kings of Angels were in the same state:

Dark Angel Sasrir digested two Sequence 1 characteristics of The Hanged Man pathway and controlled the first Blasphemy Slate, allowing "Him" to use a portion of the power of the Chaos Sea. Therefore, "He" was Heaven's deputy, the left hand of God, a king among Kings of Angels.

White Angel Aucuses contained two Sequence 1 characteristics of The Sun pathway;

Wind Angel Leodero, Angel of Wisdom Herabergen, Angel of Fate Ouroboros also possessed two Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics of

"Their" respective pathways.

Angel of Time Amon, Red Angel Medici were the ones with a Uniqueness of their own pathway and a corresponding Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic.

Angel of Imagination Adam had the Spectator pathway's Uniqueness and two Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics.

This didn't seem problematic at first glance, but it appeared strange on careful thought.

Angel of Time Amon and Red Angel Medici didn't belong to the five pathways of omnipotence and omniscience, and there was no problem about the ancient sun god using different methods to give "Them" "Their" Uniqueness. However, Adam was different. Visionary belonged to one of the five pathways of omnipotence and omniscience, and the corresponding Uniqueness was one of the foundations needed by the ancient sun god to become a Great Old One. In other words, this was equivalent to one of the three Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics needed of a Sequence 0. How could it be randomly separated?

After all, Sasrir, as the deputy of Heaven, the left hand of God, didn't obtain the Uniqueness of The Hanged Man pathway, much less Wind Angel Leodero, Angel of Wisdom Herabergen, and White Angel Aucuses.

Klein originally believed that the ancient sun god had sensed the awakening of the Primordial One, so "He" had deliberately used the method of having children to separate one of the five Uniquenesses from "Himself," taking the initiative to lower "His" level to resist the corruption and invasion.

This was probably the thoughts of other deities and Kings of Angels back then.

When he heard Ariehogg say "Adam isn't necessarily Adam," Klein felt that there might be a deeper secret hidden in this matter and came up with some guesses.

After witnessing the last few lines of the second Blasphemy Slate, he found it even stranger. This was because a Uniqueness was one of the foundations of becoming a Great Old One. If the sefirah was the foundation, then the corresponding Uniquenesses were weight-bearing columns. It would be deeply problematic no matter which one was lost. If the ancient sun god wanted to lower “His” level, the better choice would be to separate the Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics. That would be relatively safer.

Dressed in a simple white robe and wearing a thick golden beard, Adam walked to Klein’s side and turned around. “He” looked at the Blasphemy Slate and said, “A Visionary has something very special.

“Normal Sequence 0s are made up of the Uniqueness and three Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics. Missing any one of them prevents ‘Them’ from being considered a true deity—they can only be considered a King of Angels. And after becoming a Sequence 0, a Visionary is able to split two Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics and replace the corresponding characteristic via ‘Envisioning.’

“The object produced by ‘Envisioning’ is real enough. It can work perfectly under the framework of the Uniqueness and a Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic, allowing a Visionary’s level and strength to not decrease.

“The two real separated Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics can be combined with one’s other identity or a certain lifeform that’s ‘Envisioned.’ It can make ‘Them’ become an Author with complete freedom. When necessary, one can use a certain method or some mediums to transform”Him” into the true form.

“And for The Omnipotent and Omniscient, ‘He’ can ‘Create’ a Uniqueness that borders between reality and illusory to maintain ‘His’ state. As long as it doesn’t exceed the necessary limitations.”

This is the relationship between Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt and "His" child, Dragon of Nightmare Alzuhod? I once thought that the Seer and Marauder pathways were the most bizarre. From the looks of it, they can't compare to a Spectator… Sigh, be careful of the Spectator… Klein completely resolved the question on his mind. He also understood why Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt had arranged for 0-08 to meet Groselle's Travels.

Once they met, 0-08's quill, which originated from the Dragon of Nightmare Alzuhod, would awaken and become the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt at a lower level. Then, this resurrected ancient god would use the negative persona sealed behind the bronze door to activate the Chaos Sea's power, instantly reaching the level of the strongest King of Angels below that of true deities.

With such a foundation, "He" had the chance to compete with Adam for the position of Visionary and completely revive.

It's simpler, neater, and cleaner compared to the Black Emperor's resurrection… Klein nodded slightly and said, "The relationship between Dragon of Imagination and the Dragon of Nightmare?"

Adam sat down beside Klein.

"Yes."

"However, the Dragon of Imagination had been corrupted, and 'He' had characteristics of other pathways, putting 'Him' in a poor condition. All 'He' could do was separate an Author. Otherwise, 'He' would have directly lost control."

Klein ignored Adam beside him and looked at the second Blasphemy Slate in front of him.

"What's the difference between this and a Marauder's avatar?

"If Amon can become an Error, 'He' too can create at least two Sequence 1 avatars."

Adam leaned forward and simply explained, “The avatar and the main body are still the same, but they are located in different areas.”

Does that mean that the Sequence 1 that’s “Envisioned” is completely separated from the real body, and can be considered another person? Only by using some method or using some medium can one awaken? Klein asked thoughtfully, “You awakened when you became a Visionary?”

“No.” Adam looked straight ahead and replied with a gentle expression, “When I perished, and ‘True’ was born.”

Klein asked in surprise, “Was no one suspicious?”

If the deities knew that the ancient sun god had long been “resurrected” in Adam, the history of the Fourth Epoch would most likely be to besiege the Solomon Empire, the Twilight Hermit Order, and the Amon family.

“Apart from ‘True’ knowing about this, perhaps only Evernight had ‘Her’ suspicions,” Adam said, “His” voice neither fast nor slow. “I disguised myself as a zealot, a zealot wanting my father to awaken in my body. It’s not difficult for a King of Angels from the Visionary pathway to do so.”

“Then, Medici…” Klein suddenly felt pity for the Red Angel.

Thinking up to this point, he lowered his head to look at the blood-stained wooden stake on his chest. He felt that he deserved more sympathy.

Adam said calmly, “It was a necessary sacrifice.

“Why do you think ‘He’ can remain alive for so many years after becoming an evil spirit without being discovered?”

Klein fell silent for two seconds before asking, “Are you going to let me wait just like this?”

“You can also choose to leave this corpse cathedral, but Zaratul will be waiting for you at the entrance. In your present state, you can only become ‘His’ marionette,” Adam said without any emotion.

Klein fell silent as he read the remaining contents of the second Blasphemy Slate.

†

In the Fog Sea, the Dawn silently sailed through the undulating blue waves.

Bernadette suddenly opened her eyes and sat up.

She frowned and picked up an item on the table.

The item was completely golden in color, and there were mysterious symbols engraved on its surface, making it look like a miniature water flask.

This was Sealed Artifact 0-05, Magic Wishing Lamp.

Bernadette held the wishing lamp and bowed her head as she chanted an honorific name:

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

Chapter 1347 - Pillar

◆

Above the gray fog, in the ancient palace, beside The Fool's seat.

A prayer point of light expanded to produce a rippling halos.

It was as though someone had suddenly drawn the curtains in a dark, sealed room, allowing sunlight to shine in, piercing into the eyes of the sleeping one.

The whirlpool of maggots, which had already quietened down, once again went berserk as it began to flail the slippery and strange tentacles.

†

Klein's gaze swept past the parts that were related to the Lord of the Mysteries, and he read the subsequent content on the slate:

Eternal Darkness, Singularity of All, Space-Time-in-One:

River of Eternal Darkness + Evernight Uniqueness + Death (Eternal Sleeper) Uniqueness + Twilight Giant Uniqueness + 1 Knight of Misfortune Beyonder characteristic + 1 Pale Emperor Beyonder characteristic + 1 Hand of God Beyonder characteristic.

Goddess of Origins, Mother of All, Brood Hive of Filth:

Brood Hive + Mother Uniqueness + The Moon Uniqueness + 1 Naturewalker Beyonder characteristic + 1 Beauty Goddess Beyonder characteristic.

The Anarchy, Shadow of Order:

Nation of Disorder + Black Emperor Uniqueness + Justiciar Uniqueness + 1 Prince of Abolition Beyonder characteristic + 1 Hand of Order Beyonder characteristic.

Calamity of Destruction, Origins of Disaster:

City of Calamity + Demoness (Chaos Demoness, Primordial Demoness) Uniqueness + Red Priest Uniqueness + 1 Apocalypse Beyonder characteristic + 1 Conqueror Beyonder characteristic.

Father of Devils, Lord of Deviants, Source of Curses:

Tenebrous World + Abyss Uniqueness + Chained Uniqueness + 1 Filthy Monarch + 1 Abomination Beyonder characteristic.

Demon of Knowledge, Aracana of Madness:

Knowledge Moor + The Hermit Uniqueness + Paragon Uniqueness + 1 Knowledge Emperor Beyonder characteristic + 1 Illuminator Beyonder characteristic.

Key of Light, Endless Disorder, Incarnation of Fate:

Key of Light + Wheel of Fortune Uniqueness + 1 Giant Serpent Beyonder characteristic.

These are the Great Old Ones' title corresponding to the nine sefirot… After reading it, Klein sighed inwardly.

If he and Emperor Roselle knew this mysticism knowledge earlier, neither of them would've ended up in their present situations.

At certain times, even without using Beyonder powers, knowledge is completely equivalent to power… The titles of the combined pathways of Earth and Moon are somewhat different from Mother Goddess of Depravity. From the looks of it, it is indeed just a part of "Her," which means that the title and authority left to the Outer Deity on the moon is: Mother Goddess of Depravity, Origin of Evil, The Indestructible… By the same logic, the Mother Tree of Desire's full name should be: Mother Tree of Desire, Heartless God, Perpetual Blatherer… The situation regarding the Son of Chaos isn't very clear. It's as though "He" vanished, and no one can fully understand "Him"… Klein nodded indiscernibly.

He then asked, "From the looks of it, the Omnipotent and Omniscient is the strongest. The Lord of the Mysteries and the Space-Time-in-One are ranked second. The rest are ranked third."

This was determined by the number of Beyonder pathways each needed, excluding the Outer Deities.

Adam looked at the Blasphemy Slate and calmly said, "That's not how it is.

"The number of authorities has a certain connection to level and status, but not entirely. The corresponding characteristics, power, and symbols are equally important.

"After the original Creator split apart, the Three Pillars stood above all the Great Old Ones. One was God Almighty, Omnipotent and Omniscient; the other was Lord of the Mysteries, the King of Space-Time; and the last was Mother Goddess of Depravity, Origin of Evil."

Upon hearing Adam's last sentence, Klein couldn't help but look down at his left sleeve. Arrodes was hiding inside.

No wonder Arrodes said that he saw a pillar and support from me… Klein had suddenly arrived at a state of enlightenment as he was a little more convinced by what Visionary Adam had said.

At this moment, Adam added at an adequate pace, "Currently, the first two pillars only exist in the form of sefirot. And after the Mother Goddess of Depravity had the Brood Hive and two Beyonder pathways separated from"Her," "She" became not much different from the other Outer Deities. Only "Her" symbol as a pillar remains."

If it wasn't for the blood-stained stake in his chest, Klein definitely would've felt that the ambiance was great for a conversation. In moments when his mind trailed, he even imagined that he and Adam were friends and were happily discussing some mysticism knowledge, waiting for "His" child, Amon, to return home for dinner.

Of course, I'm "dinner"… I have to say that a Spectator's ability to influence others' knowledge, experience, and state is really too powerful… As Klein told himself to be on guard, he asked in puzzlement, "I thought that the Outer Deities like the Mother Goddess of Depravity, who has two or even three sefirot, are considered pillars."

Adam looked down at the silver cross pendant hanging across "His" chest and said, "She" only has one sefirah.

"Under normal circumstances, the sefirot can't be separated. Only when the original Creator split and created an embodiment of convergence and separation did the sefirot tear apart, allowing some of them to be sucked into our planet."

"In other words, the present sefirah the Mother Goddess of Depravity has is incomplete. The future Great Old One, Mother of All, won't be a complete Great Old One?" Klein pressed.

Adam's lips twitched as though "He" was smiling.

"It was so at the beginning, but the sefirot has the ability to mend itself. The present Mother Goddess of Depravity's sefirah isn't incomplete, and the Brood Hive can also create a Great Old One itself. The only problem is that the Mother Goddess of Depravity can only use a portion of pillar 'She' symbolizes, unless she has fused with the Brood Hive again.

"This has also caused the birth of life and the feminist powers in the entire universe to undergo a certain anomaly. However, thousands of years of time at astronomical scales is a very short period of time, and the corresponding influence hasn't spread.

“And if any Outer Deity obtains a sefirah that is neighboring ‘Theirs,’ making it equivalent to having two sefirot—I can’t predict what will happen. Before that, only the original Creator had contained more than singular sefirah. However, as long as ‘He’ awakens, ‘He’ will definitely split apart.”

Klein nodded and asked thoughtfully, “In the beginning, the Creator accommodated at least nine sefirot. This doesn’t mean that having two sefirot or even three will not result in problems. There should be a critical point.”

“No one can verify this at the moment.” Adam held the silver cross pendant in front of “His” chest and said, “I’m guessing that some existences have attempted it before. After all, convergence is a very strong instinct, but the outcome is unknown.”

“Which existences?” Klein rubbed the bloody cross wooden stake that was stuck in his chest.

Adam cast “His” gaze at the gigantic cross that was more than a hundred meters tall in front of “Him” and calmly said,

“The God Almighty from the early First Epoch. ‘He’ can also be called the Primordial One. In addition, there’s also the Lord of the Mysteries—the one you often recite…”

As “He” spoke, Adam turned to look at Klein and said in an imitating manner, “The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.”

…These two seem to have vanished… The outcome of “Their” attempts doesn’t seem too good? Klein hadn’t thought of what he wanted to say when Adam turned “His” head and looked at the second Blasphemy Slate.

“What I can be sure of is that some sefirot cannot be accommodated at the same time.

“In this universe, there is a hidden fourth pillar. It represents everything, including the end of the Great Old Ones and the universe itself. It corresponds to the two sefirot—River of Eternal Darkness and City of Calamity.

“Simply put, if Evernight can become an Eternal Darkness, Singularity of All, Space-Time-in-One, ‘She’ can further occupy the two pathways of Demoness and Red Priest, encompassing the City of Calamity, and becoming the true fourth pillar. However, when that happens, ‘She’ will either enter a deep sleep, be passively split apart, or it will cause the entire Universe, including”Her” and us, to be annihilated, starting everything all over again.”

Never expected that… Once Above the Sequences level is reached, the symbolism is more important than authority… Adam, no, the ancient sun god’s mysticism knowledge is simply too terrifying. As expected of a quasi Great Old One… Klein sighed when he heard that.

He thought and said, “In other words, a demigod from the Sleepless pathway can transfer to the Demoness pathway?”

“That’s right.” Adam looked straight ahead. “But in that case, there’s no way to become a Great Old One, unless one thinks of a way to separate the Beyonder characteristics from before.”

As Klein looked up, he read the demigod potion formulas of the Spectator, Sleepless, and Arbiter pathways and changed the topic:

“Where did the potion formula related to the Great Old Ones come from?

“The first Blasphemy Slate didn’t seem to contain them… Were they hidden in the different Sequence 0 potions?”

Adam’s expression changed slightly, and “His” face seemed to be more radiant.

“After I gained initial control of the omnipotence and omniscience authority, I began to deduce the method and pathway to become a Great

Old One. Finally, I found a suitable formula and figured out the different symbolism.

"Unfortunately, at that time, the Primordial One had also awoken inside me..."

Therefore, when the ancient sun god perished, you used a portion of your body and will to create a second Blasphemy Slate? Klein sighed and said, "From now on, there will be light for the apocalypse."

It also ended the chaotic battle between the deities due to anger, emotions, and other reasons. It initiated the era of working towards becoming Great Old Ones.

Adam maintained "His" previous expression and didn't say anything.

Klein fell silent. After a few seconds, he suddenly asked, "What kind of humanity did you fabricate in that marionette of mine?"

Adam turned "His" head and said with clear eyes, "He was too tired. He wanted rest and freedom, even if it was only for a few seconds."

Klein gaped, not knowing how to respond.

"Why didn't you address him as Gehrman Sparrow, but refer to him as 'that marionette'?" Adam asked warmly, as though "He" was trying to straighten out the thoughts of a member of "His" congregation.

Klein turned his head to look at "Him," and suddenly said with a smile, "I'm Gehrman Sparrow. Gehrman Sparrow is a part of me. If I separate them, even if I can escape your divine kingdom, it will be difficult for me to avert the fate of losing control."

Having said that, Klein paused and looked ahead. He asked in a deep voice, "You only have godhood left?"

†

Rorsted Archipelago, City of Generosity, Bayam.

After returning here, Verdu Abraham learned that the God of War was a rather active existence in the Fourth Epoch. It was possible for “Him” to respond to believers.

Then, he hired a poor person who willingly risked his life to pray to the God of War to confirm that there was no danger.

And the price of all of that was 300 gold pounds.

Now, he received a report that not only was that poor person not dead, he even had some of his wishes fulfilled!

Chapter 1348 - Preparation for the Ritual

◆

Blue Mountain Island, within a primitive forest.

Worried that official Beyonders would discover the ritual outside the city, Verdu Abraham, who had finished making preparations, used a Sealed Artifact to “Teleport” away from Bayam and arrived in someplace that was nearly uninhabited.

Rubbing the pain in his ribs, Verdu took off his classic robe and placed it aside.

Following that, he set up an altar, lit the candles, and burnt the correct essential oils, extracts, herbal powder, etc.

After finishing the setup, Verdu took two steps back and lowered his voice to chant in ancient Hermes, “The great God of War;

“The symbol of iron and blood;

“The ruler of chaos and strife…”

A howling wind echoed in the dark forest.

Amidst the rustling of the branches and leaves, two of the candles on the altar suddenly emitted crackling sounds.

The corresponding candle flames rose from the size of a “sapling” to a “towering tree.”

At the same time, the color of the candlelight changed from orange to bright white.

The wind that passed through the forest became even more intense. Two fiery pillars of fire intertwined together, twisting into a blurry and huge figure.

At that moment, Verdu Abraham felt an indescribable gaze cast from high above and onto his body.

He hurriedly bowed his head and said, “Great God of War. Your lowly believer would like to pray for your help.”

As he spoke, he kept adjusting his attitude and tried his best to remain calm.

He knew from his family’s books that the most important thing to take note of when praying to the God of War was to “not be angry.”

The massive figure formed from a blinding white flame constantly spewed out flames as it used a language that Verdu could understand, but had no idea what it was.

“Lowly mortal, a god is not used to satisfy your wishes.

“Speak, say your prayers, and I’ll decide whether to help you in the end.”

Verdu had already drafted out his request, so he said after some thought, “Great God of War, what should I do to make my ancestor, Mr. Door Bethel Abraham, return to the real world?”

“A ritual. Sacrifice a Bizarro Sorcerer, a Secrets Sorcerer, and a Parasite. You should already know about it,” the flaming giant said in a deep and dignified manner.

It’s the same as the answer given by Dorian’s student… Verdu sighed and said,

“Great God of War, what must I pay to request you to complete this ritual for me?”

The flaming giant looked down at the Astrologer and said, “The corresponding price is not something you can afford. Your pale and puny soul isn’t even qualified to be embers.”

Just as Verdu was disappointed and abnormally depressed, the flaming giant continued, “But Mr. Door can.

“Besides, I’m in a good mood today.

“Sacrifice a portion of your blood to me as the mark of the contract. I will request the corresponding price from Mr. Door.”

That’s possible? Verdu subconsciously had his suspicions, but after some thought, he felt that there was nothing wrong with it.

Indeed, only his ancestor, Bethel Abraham, had the right to trade with a secret existence like the God of War!

As for whether Mr. Door was willing to proceed with the deal, Verdu had never considered it. From his point of view, anyone who was in an exiled and sealed state would undoubtedly want to escape, even if they had to pay a huge price!

“Yes, great God of War.” After pondering for a moment, Verdu agreed.

He then changed the ritual and added the sacrifice and bestowment parts of a ritual. He then used a metal dagger to pierce through his arm and let out dark red blood.

When his blood turned into red “pearls” and passed through the Door of Sacrifice and Bestowment, it became extremely dark, as though there were countless monsters lurking in it.

In the next second, an object was spat out from behind the illusory door.

It was a semi-transparent meat blob with slippery tentacles. On the meat blob, twisted maggots crawled out one after another.

Upon seeing the object, Verdu's head turned dizzy as though large amounts of gunk had been injected into it.

At this moment, a flame landed, enveloping his body, turning his vision red.

With this layer of red light, Verdu no longer suffered any anomalies when looking at the blob of meat.

Right on the heels of that, another object was spat out of the Door of Sacrifice and Bestowment.

It was a bird with a deformed head. Every feather shimmered with a faint stellar radiance. Strands of insect-like brilliance drilled into its body and occasionally emanated out.

Worm of Stars… Is this a monster with a Secrets Sorcerer's Beyonder characteristic? The previous one corresponds to a Bizarro Sorcerer… Indeed, Secrets Sorcerer and Bizarro Sorcerer are only names of potions. They aren't just referring to humans. It's the same with the title of demigods. Unless the term half-man is added to the title… Verdu has a deep understanding of his pathway, allowing him to understand the current situation.

And this meant that the ritual to help Mr. Door escape could be done by sacrificing demigod monsters of the Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder pathways. Furthermore, there was no need for Verdu to do it himself. The great God of War had already prepared everything.

This made it difficult for Verdu to suppress the joy in his heart. He looked at the Door of Sacrifice and Bestowment light with great anticipation, waiting for the third sacrifice to be spat out.

In just a second, an object flew out from the darkness behind the door and landed on the altar.

It was an unconscious crow. Of course, it only looked like a crow. Its right eye had a ring of black, and its feathers were almost transparent. On it were rings.

A monster corresponding to Parasite… Verdu was delighted as he sincerely praised the great God of War.

†

Inside the corpse cathedral.

“You only have godhood left?” Klein asked in a low voice as he looked at the huge cross in front of him.

He felt that using a certain identity or a particular persona to revive definitely had problems. Even if the identity, the persona, had a real body, real Beyonder characteristics, and a certain level of self-awareness, it still wouldn’t be nearly perfect.

And Adam’s behavior had deepened his suspicions.

Sitting beside him, Adam, who was dressed in a simple white robe, didn’t show any change in expression. “He” maintained “His” composure when preaching.

“Yes.

“I’ll only be complete if I fuse with ‘True.’”

Indeed… Klein sighed and said, “Although the True Creator is an embodiment of negative personalities and extreme emotions, ‘He’ has also inherited your humanity?”

“That’s why ‘He’ went mad.” Adam appeared to be speaking about a stranger.

Klein thought for a moment before interpreting the remaining contents of the second Blasphemy Slate. He asked, “If the two of you really fuse as one, who among you will take center stage?”

“This is what we have been competing for after we awakened,” Adam said as “He” released the hand holding the silver cross pendant.

Therefore, you obtained the first Blasphemy Slate through Amon, hoping to use it to gain control of the Chaos Sea and gain the upper hand? Klein was enlightened as he nodded with a frown.

“All of you seem to have a tacit understanding regarding this matter. The True Creator has never made an issue out of your identity or used external forces to deal with you.”

“This is between us,” Adam replied calmly.

Klein fell silent for a few seconds before staring at the Blasphemy Slate.

“I have a nagging feeling that the Red Angel’s death and many of the things that happened during the Fourth Epoch weren’t that simple.”

Klein kept asking and probing. Apart from trying to understand more secrets and gain more knowledge, he was stalling for time and maintaining their present interaction.

Compared to being hypnotized by Adam and turning muddle-headed, or sleeping directly, he wished to stay awake.

With this in mind, Klein lowered his head to look at the blood-stained wooden stake embedded in his chest. He felt that the pain it brought was so real.

“Why do you say that?” Adam asked in return, as if “He” would begin praying at any moment.

Klein deliberated over his words and said, “Before the Black Emperor returned, the Solomon Empire only had one true god, the True Creator, and the Red Priest’s Uniqueness. The nobles and powers who supported Alista Tudor occupied the four Uniquenesses of Visionary, Door, Error, The Fool. Together, even adding on the King of Angels Ouroboros, ‘They’ wouldn’t be able to fend off the six orthodox deities like Evernight and company. Furthermore, ‘They’ still had the Justiciar Uniqueness on hand…

“In such a situation, even if you didn’t plan on scheming to target the Red Angel, no one will suspect you. Of course, a crazy Blood Emperor might be more useful to you.”

Adam’s gaze remained unchanged as “He” stared at the huge cross.

“You don’t understand because you don’t know enough.

“In the Fourth Epoch, apart from the three great empires and the true deities and Kings of Angels behind them, there were also the Demoness Sect and the Moses Ascetic Order. There was also the Abyss’s infiltration and secretly developed Artisans, as well as the Southern Continent’s Balam.

“And that wasn’t all. In addition, there were many crucial factors at stake.”

Klein nodded thoughtfully and said, “For example, the conflict between the six deities?”

Adam smiled warmly and said, “More than that.”

Without waiting for Klein to ask further, Adam added calmly, “You should have been to Bansy.”

Klein’s heart stirred as he opened his mouth but didn’t say a word.

Adam continued, “In addition, after I perished, the invasion on reality by the Outer Deities clearly deepened.”

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Due to the lack of response to the prayer light representing Bernadette, it kept expanding and contracting, emitting rippling halos.

This provoked the vortex formed by the transparent maggots. It frantically flailed its slippery tentacles and lashed towards that direction.

After repeated misses, one of the tentacles touched the correct prayer light.

Chapter 1349 - Door

◆ ◆ ◆

After Bernadette received no response, she held the Magic Wishing Lamp and walked to the window in the captain’s cabin to take in the deep blue sea.

She wasn’t impatient, nor did she attempt to use her powers of prophecy, patiently waiting for any further developments.

After a few minutes, a grayish-white fog suddenly appeared in front of her eyes.

Right on the heels of that, the fog was dyed golden, as though it was coated with a layer of sticky syrup.

Bernadette immediately bowed her head and looked at the Magic Wishing Lamp in her hand. She saw that the wick at the mouth of the lamp had automatically ignited itself.

Above the gray fog, in the ancient palace, beside The Fool’s chair, the prayer light, which was the size of a human head, was instantly occupied by a distorted, blurry golden figure.

The figure’s gaze penetrated the prayer light and penetrated the grayish-white fog, looking at the “maggot vortex” that was attempting to destroy everything around it.

“His” voice immediately reverberated within Sefirah Castle, dignified and grand:

“You actually lost control?”

The tone of Genie was clearly mocking; “He” didn’t care whether the crazy Worms of Spirit could understand “Him.”

At this moment, a strange door of light formed from countless balls of light appeared above the chair of The Fool that had already collapsed.

It was faintly discernible and emitted a bright light, forming a complicated symbol in midair.

This symbol originally existed behind The Fool’s chair, formed from the Pupil-less Eye and the Contorted Lines.

As the symbol took form, the strange light became fainter and eventually completely fused into this space.

In the next second, Klein’s voice came from the symbol representing The Fool:

“Genie, I want to make a deal with you.”

The blurry and distorted figure immediately laughed.

“Haha, I said that you would eventually agree.”

After laughing for a few seconds, Genie calmed down and said, “I was just wondering how is it possible for the new owner of Sefirah Castle to so easily lose control.”

“This was a preparation I made for the worst-case scenario.” The voice in the symbol of The Fool wasn’t impatient at all.

Genie laughed and said, “Aren’t you afraid that I’ll raise the price at the last minute?”

Klein replied unhurriedly, “This is just one of my preparations, but for you, it might be the only chance for many years.”

Genie’s light-gold figure swayed as though it had been blown by a gust of wind as a grand voice sounded:

"My condition is the same as before. As long as you can remove the seal and release me, I will take what belongs to me back to the cosmos. I will leave the rest to you and grant you three wishes.

"Of course, from the looks of it, you seem to need my advance payment."

Klein's voice sounded again from the symbol of The Fool:

"The promise I'll give you is to send the Magic Wishing Lamp into the cosmos before the end of 1368 in this epoch Age. As for how you get out of your predicament, that is your own problem. My request is even simpler, and I only need two wishes.

"This is the deal I'm talking about. Whether you agree with it is up to you."

1368 was the year when the Oldest One's barrier disappeared. It was acknowledged by the world's prophets as the apocalypse.

The blurry and distorted figure fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "If you don't remove the seal, the wishes I can grant will be very limited. Once it exceeds a certain level, it will be granted in an extremely twisted fashion."

Inside the symbol of The Fool that was cast with a brilliant light, Klein's calm voice sounded:

"You can fulfill the two wishes I need now."

Genie fell silent again and didn't speak for a long time.

†

Bayam, inside the primitive forest.

Verdu, who was burning up both internally and externally, didn't waste any time. According to the God of War's instructions, he modified the altar and engraved the correct symbols, magic labels, and strange patterns.

He was originally worried that the three demigod monsters would suddenly wake up, but when the ritual was ready, the sacrificial items remained unconscious, unable to resist.

After placing the squirming meat blob, the deformed star bird, and the white raven with a dark eye circle onto the right spot, Verdu looked at the only candle on the altar and lit it.

Then, he took a few steps back and chanted solemnly in Jotun, "Great Door of All Doors;

"Guide of the endless cosmos;

"Key to all mysterious worlds."

"I pray for your response, praying for you to descend into this world…"

Before he could finish his sentence, three loud bangs sounded from the altar.

The three demigod monsters that corresponded to Bizarro Sorcerer, Secrets Sorcerer, and Parasite seemed to be being held by an invisible hand. They only struggled slightly before exploding, turning into blobs of flesh and blood that shimmered with different colors.

The flesh and blood seemed to have a life of its own. Under the guidance of some indescribable force, they gathered in the air, forming strange and filthy symbols.

Countless symbols combined together, forming a huge door that was still squirming like flesh and blood, one that was more than five meters tall.

The door stood on the altar. It was pitch black inside, and it was unknown where it went.

Flames from the candle representing Mr. Door suddenly soared, illuminating the entire Door of Flesh and Blood, illuminating the darkness within.

In the darkness, there were tiny balls of stellar light condensing into spherical lights. On closer inspection, they looked like strange insects with bent bodies.

The spherical light rapidly rose, forming a gigantic arm that passed through the Doors of Flesh and Blood.

This arm, which clearly didn't belong to a human, pressed against the altar and forcefully squeezed out, causing the entire Door of Blood and Flesh to shake. Even the forest and the entire island began to shake as though it was an earthquake.

Verdu watched this scene happily, and his vision suddenly blurred.

Pa!

Something fell from his face into the bushes.

Verdu subconsciously lowered his head and saw an eye with bulging blood vessels rolling around.

Pa, Pa, Pa. His nose, ears, and remaining eye, as well as his muscles, plopped to the ground one after another, each seeping with a stellar radiance.

Thump!

His body collapsed as his flesh and blood completely collapsed.

At that moment, the arm finally squeezed through the Door of Flesh and Blood and attempted to pull out the rest of its body.

Boom!

In the darkness behind the door, thick lightning bolts formed a storm and descended, but they were swallowed by the sudden appearance of a blood-colored tide.

Finally, a gigantic figure formed from pure spherical lights passed through the Door of Flesh and Blood.

In the next second, the spherical light began to collapse and fold, as though they were going to undergo a qualitative change. Following that, dark cracks appeared out of the void in the surrounding forest.

These cracks directly engulfed the different parts of the trees, turning them into strange shapes.

At the same time, a hurricane from unknown origins blew out from a crack and swept in all directions. The entire Blue Mountain Island that Bayam was on trembled as though it was about to sink.

Inside the Cathedral of Waves, Alger Wilson, who was vexed over failing to monitor Verdu after he “Teleported,” suddenly heard the sounds of doors opening.

Every door in the city was opened automatically at this moment.

This… Alger turned his head and looked into the forest outside the city that seemed to be the source of the anomaly.

Thud!

The moment the door opened, Derrick, who had been woken up by the earthquake, frowned.

Creak! Creak! Creak!

In the cities like Backlund, Trier, and St. Millom, all things that could be called doors opened.

†

Above the gray fog, in the half-collapsed ancient palace, the crazy maggot vortex instinctively attacked the light-gold figure and The Fool symbol, but nothing came out of it.

After nearly a minute, Genie suddenly chuckled.

“You really aren’t ‘Him.’ Otherwise, I’d have distorted the promise you made just now and made ‘His’ seal be removed automatically.”

“This effect can only be achieved by twisting the original owner’s words? You previously used this method to realize that I’m not the Lord of the Mysteries?” Klein’s voice sounded from the symbol of The Fool.

Genie scoffed and said, “I have at least ten ways to verify that it’s ‘Him.’”

Without waiting for Klein’s reply, the pale-gold figure smiled and said, “You don’t seem like you can maintain this state for too long. Alright, the deal has been made. After I complete your two wishes, you must send the Magic Wishing Lamp into the cosmos before 1368 of this epoch.”

Genie’s voice gradually turned solemn, as if “He” was proclaiming a law.

At that moment, “He” seemed to have established a particular rule based on this deal. There was no need to worry that Klein would go back on his word in the future.

“If you can’t fulfill this promise, even if you become the Lord of the Mysteries, you will perish and split,” warned the Genie as he asked, “Tell me your two wishes. Take note. Don’t involve higher-level Beyonder characteristics, and don’t exceed the limit of my present powers. Otherwise, the wish will be granted in a distorted way. This is a rule that has been set. I can’t violate it now.”

In the symbol of The Fool that was outlined by the bright light, Klein’s voice calmly said, “The first wish: The two wishes that Bernadette Gustav previously made are to be brought under my name. This should be very simple for you.”

Genie immediately said with a smile, “Indeed, you want to make use of the terrible outcome from making a third wish to deal with your current predicament. Not bad, this is something that stems from my level. I will satisfy your wish and let you die in pain.”

Klein’s voice sounded again:

“The second wish: Let my Utopia give rise to a corresponding region in the spirit world. This doesn’t involve the advancement of a Sequence, nor does it have anything to do with higher-level Beyonder characteristics. You can definitely do it.”

Genie’s light-gold figure wavered before “He” said with a smile, “Your wish will be granted.”

†

Inside the corpse cathedral.

Klein touched the bloody wooden stake on his chest, as though he was considering how to get it out.

During this process, he casually asked Adam, “You didn’t attempt to become a god in the Fourth Epoch because you didn’t obtain 0-08?”

“It was one factor. More importantly, there were still many latent dangers that haven’t been resolved at that time.” Adam looked at the huge cross in front of “Him” with a warm gaze.

Klein turned his head to the side and looked at the Visionary and said, “For example, during that period, the remnant will of the Primordial One was still very strong…”

Before he finished his sentence, a large amount of bright-red blood flowed down Klein’s head.

However, the corner of his lips curled up slightly.

Chapter 1350 - Wish

◆

Adam turned “His” head and looked at Klein. “His” limpid, light-colored eyes reflected the face that was stained with blood.

“His” expression remained unchanged, and there was a hint of pity in its warmth. It was as if a god was looking down upon the world.

Klein smiled at “Him” as his head cracked apart.

This trend on his body caused him to collapse into a pool of blood.

In the pool of blood were his clothing, the blood-soaked stake, and an ancient mirror.

In the corpse cathedral, in the divine kingdom of Visionary Adam, Klein had died a strange death.

Adam, dressed in a simple white robe, looked at the scene before “Him” with gentleness and calmness. It was unknown if “He” had expected it or if “He” had avoided having any emotions.

In the ancient palace above the fog.

That crazy maggot vortex instantly stopped as they broke apart into numerous frozen, dead Worms of Spirit.

In the next second, these Worms of Spirit turned illusory as they became stained with grayish-white as though they had fused into the fog of history.

Then, they came back to life. As they shimmered with a dark glow, they gathered together.

In just a few seconds, the Worms of Spirit reassembled into a figure. It was Klein Moretti, who had black hair, brown eyes, and a formal suit.

With the return of the owner of Sefirah Castle, the destroyed mottled table and the twenty-two high-back chairs rapidly restored to normal. The junk scattered all over the floor was piled up again.

Klein picked up the Staff of the Stars embedded with various gems and sat on the seat belonging to The Fool.

The entire space above the gray fog quaked as boundless and mighty invisible forces surged out.

Klein immediately nodded at the golden figure that occupied Bernadette's prayer.

"I will fulfill my promise."

Genie laughed and said, "It looks like you haven't inherited 'His' cunningness and shamelessness. Very good."

As soon as "He" said that, the blurry and distorted golden figure rapidly receded, no longer projecting itself on Bernadette's prayer light.

"Well done." As Klein separated a Worm of Spirit to respond to Queen Mystic's prayers, he lowered his head and made a wish to himself. "I wish to be restored to how I was like before tonight."

When his main body died, he had only taken away the core portion of the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic, leaving behind the remains in Adam's corpse cathedral. He was unable to retrieve them.

Of course, Klein still had a large portion of the characteristics in the Worms of Spirit in his body above the gray fog and the remaining marionettes in Utopia. Zaratul didn't need any additional Beyonder characteristics, nor did “He” want them to end up affecting “His” condition. Therefore, “He” didn’t directly use the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics to suck all the characteristics of the same pathway in Utopia. “He” collected them using a different method which was relatively slow and would require a certain amount of time.

After making this wish, Klein summoned the “curtain,” draped it behind him, and snapped his fingers.

Inside the junk pile, the Seer pathway’s Sequence 9 and 3 Beyonder characteristics that were separated from the “curtain” previously floated up at the same time, transforming into pure light dots that drilled into Klein’s body.

His condition instantly returned to the time when he was almost done digesting the Miracle Invoker potion. Apart from the lack of a physical body, he was no different from when he was attacked.

Right on the heels of that, Klein cast his gaze at Utopia, which was closely connected to him.

†

Inside Utopia, the hooded, black-robed Zaratul, whose face was covered in white whiskers, stood on the roof of Saint Arianna Cathedral. Beside him were Roselle Gustav’s, William Augustus’s, and Abomination Suah’s historical projection. “They” patiently waited for the door to the corpse cathedral to open and for Gehrman Sparrow to walk out.

He controlled some of “His” marionettes, dealing with a few of the mutated Utopian marionettes, leaving the remaining portion of marionettes which remained normal to the end.

At that moment, dense, illusory Spirit Body Threads suddenly floated up from the rigid Utopian marionettes into an infinitely high height away.

They instantly came to life and turned around, looking at Zaratul and "His" historical projections.

The pairs of eyes sparkled in the darkness.

At the same time, a huge shadow descended from the faint grayish-white fog, enveloping the entirety of Utopia.

Zaratul and "His" historical projections instinctively raised "Their" heads and looked up at the sky that suffused a faint gray fog.

"Sealing is prohibited here." In the next second, William Augustine's historical projection raised the sword in "His" right hand and solemnly made an announcement.

The shadow that enveloped Utopia immediately shook as many gaps appeared. It was unable to completely isolate the marionette town from the outside world.

Roselle Gustav's historical projection immediately transformed into a torrent of information that surged towards Klein's remaining marionettes in an attempt to interfere with their movements. As for the historical projection of Abomination Suah, it attacked the shadow that appeared like a curtain in a bid to expand the corresponding gaps.

Zaratul extended "His" hand and "Grafted" the void in front of "Him" to another island in the Berserk Sea that "He" had previously fixed.

Following that, as long as "He" took a step forward, "He" would be able to leave Utopia.

At that moment, Klein's marionettes snatched the opportunity before the torrent of information entered their Spirit Bodies. At the same time, they opened their mouths and chanted in Jotun, "Leodero!"

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, with the remnant divine powers of a Tyrant, Klein could directly trigger the power of a deity based on this name alone, but that wasn't the case in the outside world. As for whether or not “He” wanted to punish the fellow for calling out “His” true name, it was decided by the Lord of Storms.

Klein had his marionettes recite the honorific name at the same time only to get the Lord of Storms to cast “His” gaze over.

As one of the members of the five pathways of Omnipotence and Omniscience, the Lord of Storms was probably one of the true deities that didn’t wish for Adam’s plot to succeed. If Amon became the Lord of the Mysteries, the King of Space-Time, this Tyrant would be in a very dangerous situation. “He” would have to constantly worry that the son of the Creator would deal with “Him” and help Adam or the True Creator to ascend to the position of the Lord of the Astral World.

Therefore, compared to the Evernight Goddess and Earth Mother, Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom were probably the existences who didn’t wish to see Adam and Amon succeed.

If there was a chance, Klein planned on getting his marionettes to continue shouting “Aucuses” and “Herabergen”!

Utopia’s surroundings instantly turned gloomy, as if it contained the indescribable wrath of nature.

Before Zaratul could take that step, the night sky instantly produced different colors of lightning. They bared their fangs and brandished their claws as they wantonly expanded. They seemed to envelop the entire sky in a sea of lightning.

Boom! Boom! Before the deafening sounds could be heard, the lightning blasted like a torrential rain at Utopia.

†

The Rorsted Archipelago, New City of Silver, the top of the spire.

Derrick Berg, who was looking at the source of the earthquake, heard the sound of doors and windows opening at the same time. Furthermore, it repeated thousands of times.

Although it didn't bring him any direct danger, the bizarre change still made Derrick very wary.

With some hesitation, he prepared to seek out the current Chief, Waite Chirmont, and suggest using the god-level Sealed Artifact, Proof of Glory. He wanted to first protect the New City of Silver and the nearby New Moon City. Then, he decided to pray to Mr. Fool based on the progress of the anomaly.

Just as he turned around and walked to the door, Waite Chirmont, who had a dark-blue symbol engraved on his head, walked out from the corridor's light. He said in a deep voice, "The seal underground has failed."

The seal has failed… Derrick instinctively believed that it had something to do with the anomaly in Blue Mountain Island.

Compared to doors and windows opening, the consequences of the seal's failure were extremely terrifying!

"Immediately use the Proof of Glory!" Derrick said without hesitation.

This was a god-level Sealed Artifact that could be used for a short period of time. It had once helped the City of Silver avert repeated disasters in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, allowing them to persist until the present era and obtain salvation.

Derrick's thoughts were very clear. He was using the Proof of Glory to suppress the other god-level Sealed Artifact—Gift of the Land. The suppression effect would soon affect the saint-level Sealed Artifacts that would have negative effects on the surroundings.

Waite Chirmont didn't say anything else. He immediately made up his mind and brought Derrick underground using the light as concealment.

Proof of Glory required at least two saints before it could be utilized. This was also the reason why Waite Chirmont didn't immediately head underground and came to find Derrick first. Of course, if he wanted to make use of it simply, there were tricks to do so, but he had to be prepared in advance to brand the corresponding mark on his body.

†

Bayam, Cathedral of Waves.

A bolt of lightning shot into Alger Wilson's room, turning into a hurried voice.

"Your Eminence, most of the underground seals have failed! Only certain items remain in a balanced state thanks to their effects!"

Alger's brows twitched as he combined it with the phenomena of opening doors and windows in Bayam City happening at the same time. He sensed that something was amiss.

He immediately said to the void, "All of you immediately form groups of three. Take out the Grade 2 and 3 Sealed Artifacts that won't cause immediate danger, or those with living characteristics from underground to prevent any chain reactions."

This way, the underground area would become uninhabited. The dangerous Sealed Artifacts wouldn't be able to cause casualties within a short period of time.

With the passage of time, when the anomaly of the seals losing their effects passed, the Mandated Punishers would have the time to deal with the items.

However, the premise was that they hadn't lost control of the three Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts.

Once there was a problem with them, the negative effects would soon affect the entirety of Bayam.

However, with the seal no longer working, it was very difficult for the three items to remain without problems.

The first thought that flashed through Alger's mind was to bring along the one whose negative effects had the greatest range. Then, using his own powers to make temporary restrictions, he would fly to the sea and away from Bayam.

This wasn't too dangerous for him for a short period of time. After all, he was a demigod. The biggest problem was that the remaining two Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts would undoubtedly cause serious damage to Bayam.

At least I did my best… Alger felt that this method was safe and could handle the subsequent investigations from the Church of the Lord of Storms. It was pretty good.

His gaze subconsciously looked out of the window. It corresponded to the few schools and the workhouses near the cathedral.

Alger retracted his gaze and fell silent for two seconds before sighing. He continued, "Leave the rest to me."

His words transformed into electric waves that transformed into silver lightning that flew underground.

Chapter 1351 - Seizing The Opportunity

◈◈◈

While transmitting information to the Mandated Punishers, Alger quickly came up with a plan in his mind:

He was to immediately pray to the Lord of Storms, hoping to obtain the Lord's blessings or help. Then, he would immediately rush underground and use his Beyonder powers to forcefully suppress the three Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts inside Azure Gate.

During this process, if the Lord of Storms responded to his prayers, or if the abnormality regarding the seal's ended in time, there was naturally no need for him to consider any other response. However, if neither of the two outcomes occurred, and he began to find it difficult to handle the situation, then he would seek Mr. Fool's help.

To Alger, once he had to do so, no matter what method he used or how he concealed it, it would be difficult for him to escape the fate of being suspected. After all, it was unbelievable for a single person to suppress three Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts single-handedly.

When the time came, his only option was to immediately abandon his post after the abnormality ended or the seal began working again. His departure would waste all his years of diligence and hard work, causing him to lose his post as cardinal which he had painstakingly obtained.

However, compared to his own life, this was a price he was willing to pay.

As for the consequences resulting in him almost not having any chance of obtaining the Book of Calamity, Alger didn’t care about it at the moment. He was still a great distance from considering such problems. Of course, as a demigod of the Church of Storms and a cardinal, he believed that he was definitely under the watch of the Lord of Storms. After abandoning his job and escaping, he needed the protection of other existences to survive. Otherwise, his outcome would be unimaginable.

And regarding this matter, he could only rely on Mr. Fool.

Taking a deep breath, Alger quickly chanted.

“The King ruling over the Skies, the Emperor who controls the Seas, the Great God of Storms, I pray for your watch and pray for your blessings.”

After chanting, Alger reached out with his hand, bringing with him a hurricane as he flew underground.

About ten seconds later, outside the Cathedral of Waves, there was a tidal wave that surged into the air.

The blue sea water poured down, enveloping the cathedral in a thick barrier.

Inside the barrier, silver bolts of lightning flashed as they drilled underground.

†

Rumble!

The lightning struck down like torrential rain, illuminating all of Utopia, illuminating more than half of the Berserk Sea.

At that moment, a pitch-black cathedral with many embedded skulls appeared in midair.

It was situated above Zaratul, and drew all the surrounding lightning towards it, causing bolts of lightning to snake across the countless white skulls, causing the stained glass to reflect a bright light.

Rumble!

In the places Adam's corpse cathedral couldn't shelter, Zaratul's marionettes, Abomination Suah's historical projection, as well as Klein's marionettes, were instantly obliterated by the tempestuous lightning. Then, they either vanished or were reduced to tiny marks.

Even Roselle Gustav's historical projection that had turned into a flux of information wasn't spared. A strong electromagnetic hurricane wreaked havoc in this city, destroying all information structures.

Taking advantage of the moment the Visionary was fending off the Tyrant, Zaratul took a step forward and entered the void ahead.

And this void was connected to another island—one "He" had previously set in the Berserk Sea—using "His" Beyonder powers of an Attendant of Mysteries. The distance between the two was reduced to zero.

The black-robed, hooded Zaratul quickly vanished into the void illuminated by lightning. But in the next second, "He" didn't appear on the distant island, but above the Irises Hotel in Utopia.

Just a moment ago, when Zaratul was stunned by the might of the storm, Klein, who was in Sefirah Castle, took the opportunity to use the "curtain" that was draped over his body and used the power of the sefirah to forcefully "Graft" the void in front of his target to the Irises Hotel. He had secretly changed Zaratul's key arrangement.

This was the suppression effect of a King of Angels against a Sequence 1 angel of the same pathway.

Rumble!

The ceaseless lightning smote down, enveloping Zaratul, who had long and white whiskers on “His” face.

Zaratul’s pitch-black eyes didn’t show any change in expression. “His” body rapidly faded and disappeared in the bolts of lightning.

“He” had only come in the form of a Historical Void projection.

“His” true body was hiding in a particular fragment in the fog of history.

Sitting in The Fool’s chair, Klein immediately cast his gaze at the grayish-white fog below him, as well as the countless spots of light in the fog.

He was temporarily unable to find Zaratul because the latter definitely used a secret fragment of history that only “He” or a very small number of existences knew. However, being unable to find “Him” didn’t mean that Klein could only watch and patiently wait until Zaratul reached “His” limits and was unable to stay in the fog of history. As the owner of Sefirah Castle and an existence with the level of a King of Angels, Klein’s preliminary control of the sefirah was already enough to complete many things.

In the next second, Klein opened the box and summoned The Fool card, accommodating it inside his body.

In the blink of an eye, he transformed into The Fool who wore colorful clothes and a gorgeous headdress. He exuded a deep, terrifying aura, as well as a somewhat ridiculous feeling. The entire Sefirah Castle began to shake gently.

Tak!

The Fool Klein held the end of the Staff of the Stars in his right hand and struck the edge of the long mottled table.

In the real world, grayish-white fog appeared, one that had a faintly-visible ancient palace situated high above.

In the ancient and majestic palace, a strange light formed from countless spherical lights quickly outlined itself, emitting an invisible and terrifying suction force.

The fog of history instantly boiled as Zaratul's figure quickly appeared in a spot where Klein hadn't lit up. "He" was hoisted up without being able to stop it.

Law of Beyonder characteristics convergence!

With the help of Sefirah Castle, Klein projected the convergence power of Beyonder characteristics into the fog of history!

At this moment, Zaratul's black-robed and hooded figure collapsed and became a pale paper figurine.

"His" true body appeared on another island in the Berserk Sea. "He" quickly used the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder powers to connect the convergence inclination effect to various paper figurines.

Seizing the opportunity given to "Him" by the paper figurines, Zaratul quickly made a wish:

"I wish for my Beyonder characteristic to temporarily calm down."

Just as "He" finished speaking and pressed "His" palms together, "He" had already caught sight of "His" fulfilled wish. This allowed "Him" to escape the suction force from Sefirah Castle, The Fool card, and the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic collective.

At the same time, "He" took a step back and accurately stepped on a milky-white rock.

The stone had long been connected to somewhere else by "Him," and had been solidified in some form.

As Zaratul stepped down, "His" figure instantly vanished. It was unknown where "He" had gone, but the stone seemed to experience extreme weathering as it disintegrated.

The Fool Klein cast his gaze down from an infinite height and scanned his surroundings, but he couldn't find Zaratul.

This meant that the other party had left his line of sight.

Without any hesitation, Klein immediately placed his focus on something else.

He had already made all the gems on the Staff of the Stars light up as he simulated the Marauder pathway's ability to deceive rules. He changed the location of his body's revival to a marionette that wasn't in Utopia.

Previously, a few residents of Utopia had gone to other cities for various reasons. By going there, they would further deepen their relationship with the real world. Klein had chosen a travel enthusiast. He was now in a particular mountain range.

As the second half of his "resurrection" was carried out, Klein took out The Fool card. He summoned the nine unique spirit world specialties he had prepared previously and placed them together with the "curtain."

Right on the heels of that, he used the Staff of the Stars to activate the power of Sefirah Castle and once again simulated the powers of the Marauder pathway's ability to deceive the rules, allowing the nine spirit world specialties and that "curtain" to "become" a part of his body.

In the next second, countless fragments of light appeared around the marionette that was halfway up the mountain.

And inside the marionette's body, a Worm of Spirit flew out. It kept fracturing and fused with the fragments of light.

Soon, the fragments of light condensed into a ball of light as it solidified into Klein's figure.

Just as Klein's figure finished outlining, he turned into transparent maggots that scattered in all directions, allowing the “curtain” and the nine spirit world specialties to drop to the ground.

Then, the Worms of Spirit completed the reassembly process, and part of them turned into a half top hat, a shirt, a vest, a formal suit, and trousers.

Klein didn’t waste any time. He immediately grabbed the “curtain” and the specialties of the spirit world and began to carefully concoct the potion.

To him, this was the best time to advance to Attendant of Mysteries.

On the one hand, the effects of the ritual had been completed with the help of the Genie. This wouldn’t last long, and it would gradually disappear. On the other hand, Adam, who was most likely to destroy his ritual, was being suppressed by the Lord of Storms and had no time to interfere.

If he were to consume the potion and advance to Sequence 1 at any other time, Klein was really worried that Visionary Adam would make use of the sea of collective subconscious to inject a negative emotion into him at a critical moment. That way, losing control was inevitable.

The reason why he had called Leodero wasn’t to deal with Zaratul, but to hold back the true god, Adam!

During the Attendant of Mysteries ritual, there was no way to use the power of Sefirah Castle to produce a nascent form of a divine kingdom in advance, isolating Klein from the outside world. This would result in the ritual being unable to establish a connection with the corresponding region in the spirit world, resulting in failure.

In less than ten seconds, a potion that was as dark as the night sea appeared in Klein’s palm. At the same time, the figure left in Sefirah Castle snapped his fingers, granting the small number of wishes accumulated in the prayer lights and the crimson stars, allowing him to digest the last bit of his Miracle Invoker potion.

The figure inside Sefirah Castle immediately faded away, allowing Klein's body to become complete so that he could consume the potion in his best condition.

As the lightning lit up the sea once again, Klein raised his right hand and brought the bottle that came from his marionette to his mouth. He gulped down the potion that was as light as air.

Chapter 1352 - Attendant of Mysteries

◆

As the Attendant of Mysteries potion entered his body, Klein immediately felt a burgeoning feeling.

In the blink of an eye, he lost his perception of his body and Worms of Spirit. He watched helplessly as they dissipated and fused into the spirit world that couldn’t be described with ordinary words or common sense. It was as though he was about to disintegrate into abstract and random pieces of information.

At that moment, Klein only barely maintained his consciousness and had self-awareness.

Just like that, “he” floated in the spirit world filled with countless strange figures. After losing the ability to sense his body and Beyonder characteristics, he began to experience all kinds of thoughts, information, knowledge, symbols, and labels. He completely lost himself and was teetering on the border of fusing with the spirit world.

If this continued, Klein would definitely be completely lost, but at this moment, there was a connection between the spirit world and his consciousness.

That place corresponded to a town. The people inside lived ordinary lives. They had their own names, their stories, and their fates. They intertwined with each other, bringing about complete information in the spirit world, which was the concept of abstractness.

This town was eventually destroyed by a calamity and buried in the dust of history.

Klein dispersed like a mist, almost fusing into the spirit world’s body. Under the guidance of fate, he fused with the spirit world projection of the different Utopian marionettes, allowing him to become corporeal again.

†

Bayam, deep underground in the Cathedral of Waves, in a room that was no longer sealed.

Alger extended his hands and pressed down on the door in front of him.

The surface of the door was blue in color, with numerous mysterious and odd reliefs protruding out.

It was ajar, and there was no light behind the door. It was unknown which world it was connected to.

The darkness seemed to have a life of its own. At this moment, a stream of water silently surged out, eroding the surrounding area.

Bang!

Alger’s feet exerted strength, causing the ground to crack and spew out scarlet—nearly white—lava.

This was a “calamity” he had created. His goal was to prevent the darkness from advancing.

However, after the surging lava entered the darkness, it disappeared without a trace.

The darkness shrank back a little and paused for a second before continuing its corrosion.

Boom!

Alger continuously created hurricanes, torrential rain, and lightning calamities, blocking the darkness again and again.

He held the Azure Gate firmly with both hands, not letting it open further.

If he were to only face this Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, Alger would've been completely fine. He would even have the capacity to attempt sealing it, but at that moment, he still had two similarly dangerous items around him.

This forced him to sing loudly. He used the melody of death to influence his surroundings and disrupt the operations of the other Sealed Artifacts. Then, he built a wall formed from blue seawater beside him.

However, the wall was slowly being dyed grayish-white, as if it had been petrified.

Yet, the pandemonium didn't yield as it extended towards Alger's body.

I can last for at most thirty seconds. The Lord of Storms hasn't responded the entire time… Thoughts raced through Alger's mind as he suppressed his unwillingness and reluctance. He quickly made a decision.

Without any hesitation, he immediately accentuated a hexagonal crystalline snowflake on his palm.

This was the mark left behind after he participated in the Tarot Club for the first time. It could substitute the reciting of an honorific name, and allow Mr. Fool to cast "His" gaze over.

†

Blue Mountain Island, within the primitive forest.

At the Door of Flesh and Blood, spherical lights collapsed and converged in an attempt to undergo a qualitative change. They seemed to form a body consisting of a series of doors. The body wore the blood-colored tidal wave as its robe as its body constantly warped and changed, reflecting different regions and planets.

At this moment, a blinding ray of sunlight shone through the darkness. It descended from the astral world and melted everything it encountered along the way.

Other than this ray of sunlight, an inscrutable darkness of the night surged over, attempting to devour Mr. Door Bethel Abraham who was seeking to advance to Sequence 0.

The land where the altar was quaked violently, tearing open a huge hole in a bid to devour the Door of Flesh and Blood and Bethel Abraham to fall deep into the core and face the Chaos Sea that contained all possible colors and possibilities.

Following that, a blurry light seeped out from the void and enveloped the forest, attempting to restore the basic structure of the trees, mud, and altar.

And at the only gap in the light, a pair of brass-colored eyes emerged.

They stared at the Door of Flesh and Blood and Bethel Abraham, hoping to reflect them into their eyes.

Mr. Door let out a low roar, causing his blood-colored robe to flare up.

The robe connected to the evil tide that surged behind the Door of Flesh and Blood, spreading out to the crimson moonlight.

The moment it touched the moonlight, the inscrutable night that could not be seen gathered on its own. It stretched out its limbs and head, turning into a shadowy female human.

It possessed its own life, and its consciousness was no longer controlled by its user.

Without any exception, the blinding sunlight transformed into a young man wearing fiery armor. The shaking ground grew eyes and closed its mouth. The screen that was transformed from a faint light revealed terrifying facial features. Around the brass-colored eyes, eyelashes emerged, transforming into wings.

These obstructions and interferences fell into chaos, giving Mr. Door a chance for a breather.

Seizing this opportunity, “He” entered the final step of becoming a god.

At that moment, the Door of Flesh and Blood suddenly collapsed and covered Mr. Door’s body, making “Him” seem to turn into another person.

†

Klein’s body seemed to dissociate into countless people. They had their own preferences, their personalities, their determination, and their fates. They lived in a town known as Utopia.

These people quickly lived their short lifespans, waking up under the heavy storm. They came to their senses and realized what their identity was in essence.

It was Zhou Mingrui, and also Klein Moretti. They were also Sherlock Moriarty, Gehrman Sparrow, Dwayne Dantès, and Merlin Hermes.

One thing could have many names, but its nature wouldn’t change.

The “people” raised their heads and looked up into infinity from the illusory city in the spirit world.

They saw the illusory and thin Spirit Body Threads, and they saw a symbol made up of the Pupil-less Eye and the partially Contorted Lines.

With the symbol as the core, Klein's figure outlined itself, his eyes tightly shut.

Worms of Spirit, bits of Beyonder characteristics, and bits of his self-awareness flew out from the spirit world corresponding to the Utopia area and towards Klein's slightly illusory body, allowing it to slowly become corporeal.

At this point, there was no clear boundary between Klein's Spirit Body and his physical body. They were both one and separate, and also in a rather delicate state.

In other words, a Spirit Body could be equivalent to a body of flesh and blood. His physical body could also fuse with his Spirit Body. As long as Klein was willing, he could switch between two states. Of course, he could also separate his physical body from his Spirit Body. All of them had their individual traits, and they could be decided based on a mere thought.

Two seconds later, the reassembly process was completed. Klein, who was floating in the depths of the spirit world, opened his eyes. His pupils were dark, without any light.

He had already advanced to Sequence 1 and became an Attendant of Mysteries.

THE SEER PATHWAY
ATTENDANT OF MYSTERIES
1
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Without a sound, a grayish-white fog appeared behind him. Above the fog was an ancient palace. Inside the palace stood a door that was stained bluish-black, formed from countless spherical lights.

The door of light appeared rather clearly in the spirit world. It separated out a rather blurry phantom and cast it at Klein's body.

As the phantom turned into a complicated symbol, it imprinted itself between Klein's brows. The entire spirit world and the real world outside began to gently shake as though they had encountered an earthquake from afar.

At that moment, Klein's surroundings turned dark as illusory stars appeared one after another. They surrounded the strange door of light as though they wanted to lump together.

In these illusory stars, the largest two overlapped and corresponded to an area in the real world.

The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth stars were located somewhere else.

Through these illusory stars, Klein saw Mr. Door and Amon on a particular island. He saw Antigonus in the dilapidated palace inside the concealed world, and Zaratul who was hiding somewhere unknown. He saw Pallez Zoroast in Leonard's body and Dark Demonic Wolf Kotar…

With the help of the changes caused by further deepening his control over Sefirah Castle, Klein found the angels and Kings of Angels corresponding to the three pathways of Mysteries.

Of course, such a "vision" only lasted for a few seconds. Once Amon and Zaratul reacted and used the correct method to conceal themselves, Klein would no longer be able to lock onto "Their" true bodies.

Without any hesitation, Klein raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

The Staff of the Stars that was originally placed in Sefirah Castle had appeared in his palm. He also split a portion of the Worms of Spirit to let them enter Sefirah Castle to prevent any abnormalities and respond to his believers.

After becoming an Attendant of Mysteries, Klein's control over Sefirah Castle deepened, allowing him to take out items from inside at any time.

In the next second, the various gems on the Staff of the Stars lit up as Klein's figure vanished from the spirit world. He instantly "Wandered" to a swamp and arrived in front of Zaratul.

Dressed in a hood and a black robe, the white-bearded Zaratul didn't panic. "He" used "His" Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder powers to make all kinds of connections as "He" extended "His" left hand and grabbed into the void ahead.

†

Gradually, Alger's body turned grayish-white, almost about to petrify.

Could it be that Mr. Fool doesn't favor me because of my failure to monitor Verdu? He frowned slightly, wanting to give up, but he stayed underground.

At that moment, a grayish-white fog appeared in front of him. All the Sealed Artifacts fell silent.

†

After Mr. Door Bethel Abraham was enveloped by the Door of Flesh and Blood, a familiar voice echoed in his ears:

"You wish to bring the disaster back to the real world?"

Bethel Abraham's actions instantly slowed down.

“Give up. I have a way to deal with it. I’ll let you sleep and let you get the peace you want.” That familiar voice sounded again.

Chapter 1353 - Sacrificial Victim

◆

Mr. Door’s figure that had shrunk from the ball of light came to a halt as though “He” had fallen into an intense internal struggle.

The layered doors in “His” body were just a little short of fully being reassembled.

Amidst the illusory whooshing sounds, the crimson tide that barely squeezed through the gap in the Door of Flesh and Blood became even more turbulent. The blood-colored robe landed heavily, about to envelop Bethel Abraham once again.

However, as it descended, the brass-colored eyes, the young man in the fiery armor, the hazy barrier of light that accentuated terrifying facial features, the ground with opened eyes and closed mouth, and the shadowy woman vanished silently from the world.

In that instant, a blazing sun appeared above the forest. Day replaced the night, causing all the shadows to rapidly disperse.

This caused the blood-colored robe to rise once again, scattering even more crimson moonlight, causing all the disturbances to return to their mother’s embrace.

Seizing this opportunity, Mr. Door’s illusory eyes closed as “He” lowered “His” head.

“Alright…” “He” painfully said the first word after “His” return to reality.

[image]

“His” figure completely froze as “He” raised “His” right hand and pressed it to “His” face.

The next second, Mr. Door lifted “His” head and wore a crystal monocle on “His” right eye.

A beam of light erupted from the monocle, illuminating the entire world.

At that moment, all the errors of the seals that had failed were fixed. Everything that seemed normal showed errors. All the clocks jumped several seconds forward.

The Marauder Sequence 0 Error’s ritual was:

To replace someone during “Their” apotheosis ritual!

And Mr. Door’s return seemed to directly trigger “His” apotheosis ritual.

The light converged immediately, and Mr. Door had turned into Amon with “His” pointed hat and classic black robe.

The Blasphemer held a simple and unadorned key that seemed to be forged from pure starlight in “His” hand.

Above “Him,” the blood-colored robe descended, wanting to embrace “Him” into its arms. Behind “Him,” the crimson tide angrily squeezed through the remnants of the Door of Flesh and Blood in a last bid to enter the world.

In that short moment, the blood-colored moon glowed even brighter, blocking the sun, night, earth, blurry light, and the strange white tower outside.

Faced with the corruption from an Outer Deity, Amon’s lips curled up slightly. “He” extended “His” right hand and took out an abnormally ancient stone slab from an unknown location.

The first Blasphemy Slate!

Then, “He” used the stone slab formed from the Chaos Sea to block the remnant opening of the Door of Flesh and Blood. Then, “He” used it as a substitute to receive the falling blood-colored robe.

The first Blasphemy Slate turned illusory, as though it was connected to an infinite sea that contained all the possible colors.

The sea surged and swallowed the blood-colored robe, blocking the crimson tide from the cosmos.

The already collapsed Door of Flesh and Blood rapidly shrank before quickly disappearing. An angry and terrifying roar resounded in the air from within.

In the next second, the crimson moon appeared in the sky. The color quickly faded and turned pure. On it was a huge, distorted, crimson figure.

Wearing a pointed hat and a classic black robe, Amon adjusted the monocle on “His” right eye and waved “His” hand at the crimson figure and the bright moon that were staring at him. “He” then smiled and bowed slightly in all directions.

†

In the corpse cathedral that had an erected gigantic cross where countless skulls were watching with their hollow “eyes.”

Adam, who was dressed in a simple white robe, took a look at the ceaseless lightning outside the stained glass. “He” slowly got up and walked to the pool of blood that Klein had left behind. “He” bent down and picked up the ancient and mysterious mirror.

Following that, “He” turned around and walked towards the second Blasphemy Slate.

†

The first figure that Zaratul summoned out of the fog of history was still Roselle Gustav, who wore a dark red coat embroidered with gold thread, and had chestnut-colored curly long hair.

To this Attendant of Mysteries, there were quite a number of angels that “He” got to know in “His” long life. There were only a few that were stronger than a Sequence 1 Knowledge Emperor. For example, the Antigonus ancestor before “He” became The Half-Fool, Angel of Fate Ouroboros, or the Red of War brass who could indirectly obtain the strength of the Red Angel.

But under such circumstances, Zaratul believed that summoning Roselle Gustav’s Historical Void projection first was safer.

Before the Antigonus family’s ancestor became The Half-Fool, “He” too was a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries. Therefore, “He” would be suppressed by the enemy who had deeper control of Sefirah Castle and a level that surpassed most Kings of Angels. After all, “His” enemy was the closest to a true god.

After Zaratul chose to cooperate with the Rose School of Thought and Adam, the success rate of summoning the Angel of Fate Ouroboros would undoubtedly drop. It wasn’t suitable for him to attempt it at a critical moment.

The Red of War brass that could borrow the Red Angel’s powers didn’t possess the strength directly, so the actual effects produced weren’t any stronger than that of Knowledge Emperor Roselle Gustav.

In comparison, Zaratul would definitely choose the historical projection that he was most familiar with and the easiest to successfully summon.

“His” plan was to seize the opportunity that Gehrman Sparrow had directly “Wandered” here without preparing any Historical Void projections in advance to use Knowledge Emperor Roselle Gustav, the Red of War army brass, and Abomination Suah to hold him back and leave “Him” enough time to create a miracle for “Himself.”

As soon as Roselle’s figure appeared, he immediately condensed into complicated and illusory symbols in his eyes in a bid to infuse large amounts of miscellaneous and useless knowledge into “His” target’s mind, causing “His” brain to explode.

At the same time, Zaratul used the various connections he had set up in advance to move “Himself.” This swamp was “His” home ground. As he made slippery and transparent tentacles penetrate the hooded black robe and stretch into the fog of history, he summoned the Red of War brass.

At that moment, Roselle Gustav’s historical projection suddenly turned his head and used a subtle connection to look towards Zaratul’s true form.

Zaratul’s mind was instantly filled with information and useless knowledge. “His” brain nearly exploded as “He” was unable to process “His” thoughts for a short period of time.

“He” froze on the spot, “His” gaze not even changing!

The historical projection, Knowledge Emperor Roselle Gustav, that “He” had summoned had betrayed “Him”!

Klein was both surprised and unsurprised by this outcome.

It wasn’t surprising because this was his own doing. The Worms of Spirit in Sefirah Castle had already “Grafted” Roselle’s present state to the concealed state that Klein had met!

The surprising thing was that Adam had never reminded Zaratul to be careful of Roselle Gustav.

Klein had previously sensed the coincidences in certain matters. His preparations included using The Fool symbol's connection to Roselle Gustav's seal. Through the corresponding prayer point of light, he could throw a Worm of Spirit that contained certain words or intent to his fellow Earthling who was in deep sleep, and awaken "Him." Then, using a "Miracle," "He" could temporarily suppress the corruptive powers of the Mother Goddess of Depravity.

Back then, the worst-case scenario that Klein took precautions against was if something happened to him that prevented him from contacting Sefirah Castle. As such, the Worms of Spirit in Sefirah Castle and the Worms of Spirit that were scattered in different places would end up losing control and be unable to save him.

Once the Worm of Spirit he gave Roselle mutated, Roselle would know that there was something wrong. "He" could then use the powers of a Black Emperor to distort order to maintain the Worm of Spirit's lucidity for a certain period of time.

As for what plan the Worm of Spirit and Roselle would come up with to save himself, Klein didn't know either.

This was the real reason why he could hide from Adam!

With his experience in the Hall of Truth, Klein knew that he wouldn't have any secrets when facing the Visionary. Any rescue plans, be it figured out from the past or on the spot, would be seen and heard clearly by Adam.

At his level, the only way to avoid it was if even he himself didn't know how to save himself.

Of course, Visionary Adam knew without a doubt that Klein had a Worm of Spirit in Roselle Gustav's Black Emperor mausoleum. "He" knew that his backup plan definitely came from this, but "He" wasn't able to pry into the secrets of it because it was contaminated by the Mother Goddess of Depravity. It was a place that had been corrupted by the cosmos, and the thought of prying into Roselle Gustav was like prying into an Outer Deity!

This was the difference in level.

It was precisely because of this that Klein could calmly ask all kinds of secrets and read the second Blasphemy Slate. On the one hand, knowledge was indeed tempting. And on the other hand, he was stalling for time, waiting for the other side to complete the task of rescuing him. At the same time, he didn't want to occupy his mind; otherwise, he couldn't help but think about how he could save himself.

As a result, Klein began to suspect that other than the unknown reasons as to why Adam had shared so many secrets with him, was because "He" was also trying to lure him into thinking of the solutions he would use to save himself, so as to find clues and stop him in advance.

Therefore, the question-and-answer session in the corpse cathedral was a clash of minds. Klein had to constantly control himself to prevent his thoughts from going astray.

And under this premise, Adam clearly knew that there might be problems with Roselle Gustav, but "He" didn't remind Zaratul!

Regardless of the reason, Klein had no intention of letting the opportunity slip. He immediately raised the Staff of the Stars in his hand and skillfully simulated Amon's Worm of Time's powers.

Gong!

An ancient mottled stone clock phantom appeared. Its face was separated into twelve different segments by grayish-white and bluish-black colors. Each segment represented a different symbol of time.

Gong!

One of the three needles in the middle of the stone clock jumped, and Zaratul's body froze on the spot.

Klein immediately transformed into a maggot vortex that extended countless slippery tentacles. In the middle of the vortex was a strange door of light.

The door of light didn't move as the vortex swirled around it. A terrifying suction force forcefully pulled out the Beyonder characteristics within Zaratul's body.

This was the method Pallez Zoroast had used to deal with Amon's avatar back then. He had relied on his position to forcibly gather characteristics!

Bit by bit, the Beyonder characteristics flew out at an accelerating rate. By the time Zaratul escaped "His" frozen state and the mental explosion, "He" was already unable to extricate himself. "He" could only watch helplessly as "He" was completely carried into the dark and gloomy maggot whirlpool!

A few seconds later, the vortex outlined its body again, and Klein landed his feet on the ground.

In the fog of history, Zaratul's figure appeared again and again, but it was impossible for "Him" to retrieve "His" Beyonder characteristics. In the end, it could only fade away silently, making it difficult for him to completely revive.

Klein used the ritual's remnant effects that hadn't completely dissipated and directly swallowed Zaratul's characteristic!

He wanted to use this to lower the influence of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings!

†

As the corpse cathedral was still floating in the sea of lightning, Adam, who wore a simple white robe and had a faint blond beard, suddenly appeared at the edge of the waters near the ruins of the battle of gods.

The sea split apart, and a path appeared. It led straight to the spot which was stained with the ancient sun god's blood. It led straight to the Giant King's Court's projection—the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

In the depths of the Forsaken Land of the Gods, at the top of a mountain peak, there was a huge cross erected, and there was an indistinct figure hanging upside down on it.

The Hanged Man - The End

[image]

[image]

Chapter 1354 - This Night

◆

Late at night, the clanging sound of the door and windows opening woke Wendel up from his deep sleep. He warily rolled off the bed and surveyed his surroundings.

What happened? Utopia encountered a super heavy storm? It wasn’t easy for the recently insomniac Wendel to fall asleep, but he had no choice but to get out of bed. His mind was still lethargic, and he looked rather lost.

He soon realized that there was no wind blowing in from the open window, nor did the rain enter. It was like he had opened it while sleepwalking to take in fresh air.

Wendel suddenly thought of the supernatural events that he had experienced and learned from the dossier. He was reminded of the fear of the unknown that once ruled his heart.

He didn’t know what else would happen next, nor could he guess what he would encounter. He felt a chill run down his back as he shivered again.

At this moment, he heard the commotion outside the door. All sorts of voices entered his ears.

There were the loud sounds of running, the sounds of judgment, the declarations of orders to be changed, and unconcealed shouts.

“Something is wrong with the underground seal!”

"Be on high alert!"

Underground seal? What kind of item is sealed beneath the Irises Hotel? Wendel was surprised and confused. He couldn't help but walk to the door and look around.

He then saw an MI9 colleague, who he barely knew, and Colonel Xio Derecha, who was on duty tonight.

Did MI9 find Utopia because of me? They're here to handle the abnormality? Wendel instinctively frowned just as the thought flashed through his mind.

He discovered that the corridor outside was completely different from the Irises Hotel. Not only were there gas lamps on both sides, but there were also classical candle stands. The floor was very bright, and the ceiling was more than three meters high…

This… This isn't the Irises Hotel… Wendel suddenly turned around and sized up the room he was in.

He quickly recognized that this was his sleeping quarters at MI9 headquarters. His luggage was placed quietly in a corner without any signs of movement.

Wendel clearly remembered that he had headed to Utopia through the washroom in his room. He wasn't too confident in the process, so he didn't bring his luggage and only held the subpoena from Utopia's courts.

Tap! Tap! Tap! He quickly ran to the window and looked outside.

What greeted his eyes was the garden and lawn at MI9 headquarters.

I-I'm back in Backlund again? Or perhaps, I didn't return to Utopia at all. I was just too tired and ended up having a dream in my sleep? Wendel dazedly walked back to his bed and sat down.

After about ten seconds, he suddenly jumped up and picked up his coat from the ground.

Then, he saw the Utopian subpoena in the inner pocket of the coat when it should be inside a drawer.

Wendel fell silent, as though he had become a statue.

†

Travel columnist, Monica, also woke up from the banging of the doors and windows.

She sat up straight, pulled the blanket up, and placed it in front of her chest.

The sleepy-eyed Monica’s first reaction was that a robber had barged into the hotel. She was about to scream and call for the police.

But in the next ten to twenty seconds, Monica didn’t hear any footsteps entering her room. However, there were more and more people gathered along the corridor.

“What happened?”

“It doesn’t seem like a hurricane…”

“Was it a prank?”

“Damn clown, if I knew who it was, I would definitely kick his ass hard!”

†

The voices of discussion were mixed with all kinds of curses.

Monica didn’t think much of it when she heard it. Instead, she thought of using the crowd’s discussion to consider the reason underlying the paranormal activity and write it in her traveling column.

But as she listened, she gradually realized something was amiss.

How could Irises Hotel have so many guests?

She remembered clearly that on this floor, there were at most five rooms with guests. This included her room.

At that moment, Monica thought of the ghost stories she had heard. She immediately felt as if there were wraiths and shadows outside.

She had originally stretched her feet towards the bedside, preparing to leave the room to participate in the discussion and grasp more details for her writing material. But now, she retracted her feet and curled into a ball, trembling.

A few seconds later, she heard a man say, “I asked the hotel owner, and he said that he had no idea what happened. Perhaps there was a short storm just now.

“Return to your room and get some rest. Remember to lock the windows. Yawn. I have to get up early tomorrow to go to the Royal Museum.”

Royal Museum… Monica was stunned.

As a travel columnist, as a traveler who had been in Utopia for a long time, she naturally knew that there was no Royal Museum.

In the Loen Kingdom, a museum with such a royal name would definitely be in Backlund.

To take a steam locomotive from Utopia to Backlund required many hours. Even if he woke up early, he wouldn’t be able to arrive before the Royal Museum closed.

Monica was puzzled. She slowly lifted the blanket. She heard the sound of the door and windows closing continuously.

She got off the bed carefully and walked towards the door.

During this process, she gradually saw the room through the moonlight.

Hiss… Monica almost screamed.

This wasn't the guest room she had slept in previously!

Regardless of the layout or arrangement, they were completely different!

The ghost stories that she had thought of earlier surged into her mind again, causing her legs to give way, and she almost couldn't support herself.

Just as Monica's teeth were chattering, she saw a hotel name card on the table. It was prepared for guests. If she brought it out, she would be able to get someone to guide her back when she was lost—even if she didn't know the language.

Monica subconsciously approached it and used the moonlight to identify the words on the name card.

Carlpensa Hotel, Backlund West Borough, 19 Mourning Street.

Backlund West Borough… Backlund… Monica's eyes widened as she felt like space and time had gone topsy-turvy.

†

Backlund, Hillston Borough, in a house with a fireplace.

Fors heard the door and windows open, but she didn't immediately wake up. This was because she had fallen into a strange nightmare and couldn't break free.

She dreamed that her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham, had been influenced by the family’s Sealed Artifact, dying in front of her with blood dripping. She dreamed that she had lost control and mutated, turning into a series of starlight insects that warped into the shape of doors. She couldn’t help but fly towards a Door of Flesh and Blood. She dreamed that the apocalypse had dawned, and the surging blood-colored tide had drowned the entire world, preventing Xio, Gehrman Sparrow, and company from escaping…

Finally, Fors escaped the dream and sat up, panting heavily.

As a demigod, one who was once an Astrologer, she knew what such a dream meant. She hurriedly suppressed her emotions and looked up ahead.

The glass on the oriel window in the bedroom all bore open at some point in time.

Something must’ve happened… Furthermore, it has a certain relationship with the apocalypse, the Abraham family, and the Apprentice pathway… Fors silently muttered to herself before standing up and wearing a cloak, preparing to “Teleport” to her teacher to confirm his safety.

Such a change made her feel a sense of urgency towards advancing to Sequence 3 or even Sequence 2.

After learning about the apocalypse from Mr. Fool and The World Gehrman Sparrow, Fors had actually been working hard, but the Secrets Sorcerer potion wasn’t something that she could digest in a short period of time. Furthermore, without making any contributions, she couldn’t bring herself to ask her teacher for the Wanderer’s formula and ingredients.

Of course, if she was willing, she could’ve obtained it from Mr. Door. However, how could she have been bewitched after receiving all kinds of reminders?

Phasing away, Fors vanished from the room.

A few seconds later, she appeared at Dorian Gray Abraham's residence and saw her teacher sitting there, pressing down on his heart as though he had been frightened.

"…Do you need medicine?" Fors asked carefully.

She had purchased medicine from Mr. Moon to treat ailments of age.

Dorian took a deep breath and shook his head.

"There's no need."

Fors immediately relaxed.

"Teacher, I dreamed that you were affected by the negative effects of the Sealed Artifact. Uh, the windows and doors around me had undergone unnecessary changes, so I came over to take a look."

Dorian looked up at the window open and said with a serious expression,

"Your dream wasn't wrong. I nearly died just now, but at the most critical moment, the seal came into effect…"

Having said that, he suddenly stood up and said to Fors, "Quick! Bring me somewhere else. I'm worried that something might happen to the other family members!"

Without any hesitation, Fors immediately grabbed her teacher's arm and asked for the exact location.

Their figures rapidly faded away and disappeared.

After traveling through the spirit world that was covered in gray fog for several seconds, Fors and Dorian suddenly left their present environment and landed in a place that looked like a study.

There were quite a few people standing there. They were members of the Abraham family who wielded different Sealed Artifacts and could "Travel."

"Vilos? Why are all of you here?" Dorian blurted out.

Vilos and the others shook their heads at the same time, both confused and terrified.

In the next second, countless dazzling stars appeared out of the void.

The starlight quickly gathered together, turning into objects that fell to the ground one after another.

There was a miniature door of starlight, a crystal ball formed from insects. There was a translucent, strange-looking key, a resplendent torch that burned slightly…

For some reason, names after names appeared in Dorian and company's minds:

Sequence 3 Wanderer Beyonder characteristic… Sequence 4 Secrets Sorcerer Beyonder characteristic… Sequence 1 Key of Stars Beyonder characteristic, Sequence 2 Planeswalker Beyonder characteristic…

Furthermore, there wasn't just one of each Beyonder characteristic. There were even two Sequence 1 Key of Stars Beyonder characteristics! In addition, there were three Planeswalker Beyonder characteristics, and even more of the rest.

The key members of the Abraham family and Fors slowly turned agape, unable to close them for a long time.

By the time all the Beyonder characteristics dropped to the ground, nothing abnormal happened again. There was silence.

Chapter 1355 - Wrapping Up The Matter

◆

The nearly frozen silence lasted for nearly ten seconds before the Abraham family members uniformly cast their gaze at Fors.

After sensing the mixed emotions of wariness, guardedness, and fear, Fors took the initiative to take a few steps to the side and warned, “Be careful of the negative effects.”

Even if the Beyonder characteristics hadn’t fused with the surroundings and formed Sealed Artifacts, they contained certain negative effects. However, most of the time, it would only have effects from direct contact. Of course, the Beyonder characteristics here were all High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics. No one could be certain if they would actively expand their area of influence.

Seeing that Fors didn’t show any obvious greed, Dorian nodded and said, “When you finish digesting the Secrets Sorcerer potion, you can consider advancing to Sequence 3 Wanderer. I’ll give you the potion formula and prepare the corresponding ingredients for you. Of course, at this level, the higher the Sequence, the greater the danger you face. This is an objective situation. It doesn’t change because of your personal will and arrangements. When the time comes, you can decide whether you wish to advance or not.”

He said these words because he cared for his student, and on the other hand, he wanted to assure her that whatever the Abraham family possessed was equivalent to her possessing it. No one would treat her as an outsider and deliberately make things difficult for her on the matter of raising her Sequence.

This could effectively eliminate the heat brought by greed.

And after obtaining so many High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics, Vilos and the other members of the Abraham family weren't unwilling to part with a Wanderer Beyonder characteristic. They even believed that using it to exchange for "peace" was absolutely worth it. After all, there was only one demigod here—Fors.

Without the time to bring out their Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, and because of the ineffectiveness of the seals, the Abraham family members didn't dare take out most of the Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts. Under such a situation, Fors had the ability to finish all of them off.

Faced with her teacher's promise, Fors tersely acknowledged.

"Was the 'door' to the concealed space opened?

She thought that the High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics in front of her were all from the Abraham family's treasure vault and had been thrown into the real world due to the recent abnormality. However, she did feel that there were too many of them.

"No." Dorian slowly shook his head, looking confused.

The other Abraham family members remained silent, equally confused.

No one would believe that treasure would fall from the skies unless it happened before their eyes!

"Should we pray to Mr. Fool?" Fors tried giving a suggestion.

Dorian, who had a vague guess, immediately looked at the other Abrahams. He saw the ones who had changed faiths to Mr. Fool nod in agreement. Those who hadn't changed faiths were clearly hesitant and eager to object.

After some consideration, Dorian composed himself and said, "Gather the ones with negative area-of-effect traits while using the correct method. Prevent them from combining with the surroundings.

“I’ll pray to Mr. Fool at the side.”

“Alright.” The few members of the Abraham family hesitated for two seconds before agreeing.

Following that, they seized the opportunity to identify the characteristics and attempt to gather them.

After some of the members had obtained a certain amount, Dorian finally retreated to Fors’s side and bowed his head to pray to Mr. Fool.

Soon, a grayish-white fog and an ancient palace deep in the fog appeared in front of him. A high and solemn voice resounded in his ears:

“These are the relics of Mr. Door.

“Your bloodline curse has been completely removed.”

Relics of Mr. Door… Relics… Dorian ruminated over the word and opened his eyes, casting his gaze at the High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics.

He looked on silently, his vision gradually blurring.

†

East Chester County, the Hall family manor.

Alfred and the others, who had just figured out the source of the explosion and the “enemy attack” shout, saw the doors and windows opening at the same time as they crashed into the walls.

During this process, several pieces of glass shattered.

There is indeed something abnormal… Alfred raised his hand with a solemn expression. He said to his adjutant, squire, personal guards, and bodyguards, “Retreat back to the main house to prevent any accidents that might happen next.

“At the same time, send a telegram to the archbishop of East Chester diocese, and request for assistance.”

He felt that the most important thing right now was not to investigate the anomaly, but to protect his father, mother, and sister.

He had plenty of time to do the former after daybreak. But if anything happened to the latter, it would be impossible to make up for it.

After returning to the manor’s main house and arranging for strict patrols, Alfred walked into the living room and said to Earl Hall, “There was indeed something abnormal, but the guard couldn’t describe what he saw. He only felt extreme fear at that moment.”

Earl Hall nodded calmly and said, “We’ll do further investigations after daybreak.

“Sit down and get some rest.”

Beside him, Audrey was holding her mother’s arm as she quietly listened to her father and two brothers talking.

Of course, this was only an image. She had been continuously releasing Virtual Personas in an attempt to find the reason for the sudden opening of doors and windows from the memories of eyewitnesses.

After a few minutes, she ended the investigation, somewhat disappointed. For the time being, she temporarily attributed it to the influence left behind by the mind dragon, Ariehogg, and Mr. Wrath.

At that moment, she realized that the golden retriever, Susie, had a strange look in her eyes. She quickly sent out a Virtual Persona and entered the mind island of the other party’s soul to have a private conversation.

“What did you discover?” Audrey asked directly.

On Susie’s mind island, a voice resounded:

“I smell a thick scent of blood. At the edge of the manor, It happened sometime before the doors and windows opened. Yes, it happened about ten seconds after the explosion.”

After hearing that, Audrey pursed her lips and fell silent for a few seconds.

“Go take a look.”

Susie immediately stood up and tiptoed out of the living room. She left the manor’s main house from a side door on the first floor.

During this process, there would be people looking at her from time to time, but they didn’t mind her and didn’t attempt to stop her. After all, she was just a dog, a dog who had mastered Psychological Invisibility.

After walking the path to the furthest building from the manor’s main house, Susie twitched her nose and chose an open window before jumping in.

Then, she saw a bloody corpse on the bed. Its skin had shed.

And what she saw was equivalent to Audrey seeing it through the Virtual Persona that she planted in her mind island.

In the living room inside the main house of the manor, Audrey, who was holding her mother’s arm, lowered her head.

Then she lifted her head, and her eyes swept slowly and deeply across her family’s faces—Earl Hall, Lady Catelyn, Hibbert, and Alfred.

She maintained her silence, becoming increasingly silent.

†

Bayam, inside the Cathedral of Waves.

Alger, who was wearing a robe embroidered with the Storm symbol, walked out from the underground area one step at a time. He nodded at the Mandated Punishers and priests who were waiting by the sides.

“The seals were restored to normal in time.

“You can return the items under your watch.”

“Yes, Your Eminence.” The Mandated Punishers, priests, and bishops heaved a sigh of relief as they struck their left chest with their right fists.

Alger didn’t say anything else as he responded with the same salute.

After returning to his room, he slowly looked around. He took a deep breath and found a seat to sit down.

The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era… Alger silently prayed to Mr. Fool, expressing his thoughts of preparing to leave the Church of Storms.

The explanation that the seal was restored to normal in time could only convince relatively low-level members of the Church. It was impossible to hide from any cardinal or high-ranking deacon, much less the pontiff and the Lord of Storms.

And if he didn’t get Mr. Fool’s approval and protection, Alger didn’t dare leave the Church of Storms so casually. He would definitely suffer the wrath of a god.

A few seconds later, he saw the familiar boundless gray fog and heard Mr. Fool’s reply:

“Okay.

“Go to the Church of the Sea God.”

Phew… Alger relaxed, stood up, and took off his Storm robe.

After changing into a linen shirt, brown jacket, and pantaloons, Alger looked at the cardinal robe on the table and fell silent for a while.

Then, he reached out and folded the robe neatly.

After carefully examining it for a few seconds, Alger retracted his gaze and flew out of the cathedral through the open board window by controlling a strong wind.

He first flew to the bell tower and landed on the top. He looked down at the surrounding streets and down at Bayam.

During this process, Alger stepped on the edge of the roof and slowly circled it.

Finally, he closed his eyes.

A hurricane suddenly stirred as it swept Alger towards the Church of the Sea God.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein silently sat on the high-back chair belonging to The Fool.

His figure would occasionally turn incorporeal, as though he was wearing a mysterious and classical black robe. During such instances, he wore a hood that made his face indiscernible. At other times, he would return to normal. However, he was enveloped in a faint gray fog.

The frequency of this change gradually slowed down.

And every time Klein transformed into the black-robed, hooded figure, slippery tentacles with strange patterns growing would extend out from under his clothes.

These nearly transparent tentacles flailed about, striking everywhere as if taking the palace for itself.

After a while, Klein’s figure finally stabilized.

Out of habit, he raised his right hand and rubbed his temples as he muttered to himself, The awakening of the Celestial Worthy’s will is faster and more intense than I expected… If I hadn’t devoured Zaratul’s Beyonder characteristic and used the remnant mental imprint to balance it and stalled for time, I wouldn’t have been able to adjust my state and stop “Him” from awakening…

However, this made Klein’s mental state rather unstable.

And he didn’t lose control because his Miracle Invoker potion had already been completely digested, and the new Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic he consumed was mostly digested shortly after consumption. The identity of The World was a Blessed of the owner of Sefirah Castle, making it directly equivalent to the Attendant of Mysteries. Therefore, Klein had already acted the role of Attendant of Mysteries for a very long time, and it had been quite successful.

As for the second Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic, he still needed some time to digest it.

[image]

Chapter 1356 - Urgency

◆

After stabilizing his anchors, the will of the Celestial Worthy, and the weak balance of his consciousness, Klein leaned back in his chair and observed the various powers brought about by the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic.

Among them, there were three most important ones. They were all grasped by Klein using Sefirah Castle and the “curtain,” ahead of time, but he just didn’t know the exact names.

The first was “Regenerate”: If the materials that made up an item once had a Spirit Body, then the Attendant of Mysteries could use the powers of “Regenerate” to summon the corresponding Spirit Body Threads, making the item become his marionette. Then, he could establish a deep connection with the item and also naturally transform it into a marionette.

To put it simply, an Attendant of Mysteries couldn’t allow something that didn’t have Spirit Body Threads to produce Spirit Body Threads, but he could allow some items to regenerate their Spirit Body Threads that had long disappeared. The former represented metallic items, gold coins, gold pounds, and so on. The latter mainly consisted of beef, fish, and other food. Once humans ate food that were marionettes, they would also transform into marionettes, as though they had encountered intense corruption.

The second was “Reassembly,” which was also known as “Tampering”: It could reassemble many physical objects or abstract concepts into something different, resulting in an unbelievable effect. It was like changing the definition, logic, orientation, or rules.

The third was the “Realm of Mysteries”: This was an ability used to create an embryonic form of a divine kingdom. It could bring about a certain concealment effect.

“Reassembly” represents the authority of “change,” while the “Realm of Mysteries” represents “concealment.” The two essential elements of The Fool’s symbol are in place… However, “Reassembly” and “Tampering” doesn’t sound nice, and the meaning isn’t clear enough. “Grafting” is still better. It’s obvious at a glance… Klein mumbled inwardly before casting his gaze around.

Now, he had deepened his control of Sefirah Castle, he could directly borrow the powers nearing Sequence 0 of the Seer pathway. He could also use most of the Beyonder powers below Sequence 0 of the Marauder and Apprentice pathways. It was quite similar to Dark Angel Sasrir from back then.

Of course, Dark Angel Sasrir could only use the first Blasphemy Slate to indirectly use the powers of the Chaos Sea. As for Klein, he was the owner of Sefirah Castle, one that hadn’t fully gained control of the sefirah. Therefore, his level was higher than Dark Angel Sasrir’s.

As for strength, in theory, he was stronger, but his strength was affected by too many factors. Having only become a Beyonder after a few years, Klein couldn’t guarantee that he would definitely be able to defeat Heaven’s deputy and the left hand of God.

In short, he was now considered a king of the King of Angels, and he was very close to the level of a true god.

After gaining a deeper grasp of Sefirah Castle, the difference between me in here and in the outside world is almost gone. It wouldn’t result in me being a King of Angels outside but having the power of a true god in Sefirah Castle… The greatest advantage here is it provides me a defensive barrier that even a true god can't break. Yes, whether the Outer Deities can do it remains to be seen… Klein slowly exhaled as he focused his attention on the current situation.

There were two things he was most worried about at present:

The first was the Primordial Moon, which was also the Mother Goddess of Depravity. Although "She" failed to fully descend into the real world with Mr. Door's return, a little portion of "Her" strength had invaded. Furthermore, "She" maintained it for a few seconds under the attacks of the five orthodox deities of Evernight, Steam, and company. Whether this would affect the surroundings, the corresponding pathways, and exert certain effects on some matters remained to be seen.

Second, Angel of Time Amon has already stolen Mr. Door's ritual and became Sequence 0 of the Marauder pathway. "He" would be Klein's most direct and most powerful enemy.

I wonder if Amon has taken the opportunity to accommodate Mr. Door's Uniqueness and Sequence 1 Key of Stars. If "He" has completed this step, "He" will be the most powerful true god in the real world. Hmm, I wonder how "He" compares to the Evernight Goddess. No one knows how much of the Death and God of Combat Uniquenesses the Goddess has accommodated.

Typically speaking, Amon shouldn't have the time to accommodate the Apprentice pathway's Uniqueness. Although Mr. Door's return is equivalent to the ritual itself, the most important matter at that moment was to replace Mr. Door, allowing the three Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics and the Uniqueness of the Marauder pathway to gather together, resulting in a qualitative change. There's no time to accommodate the Uniqueness of the Apprentice pathway. Also, this operation has a high chance of awakening the Celestial Worthy. Amon wouldn't take such a risk…

In other words, Amon's subsequent focus is to accommodate the Uniqueness of the Apprentice pathway and become a true god of two pathways. Otherwise, under the watch of the other true deities, it will be very difficult for “Him” to finish off a King of Angels like me.

Furthermore, even if “He” does take the risk and succeeds, “Him” having accommodated the Apprentice pathway’s Uniqueness means that “He” has to slowly adapt and stabilize “His” condition, making it impossible to deal with me in a short period of time.

I have to make use of the time to become The Fool. Only by doing so can I use Sefirah Castle and my own level to resist Amon.

I don’t have much time left… Klein silently gave a self-deprecating comment. He leaned forward and gently tapped the edge of the long mottled table.

He was analyzing the possibility of him becoming The Fool in a short period of time.

The digestion of the Attendant of Mysteries potion was relatively simple. By the time Klein used his anchor and consciousness to suppress the awakening of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings, and not lose control or become someone else, he could use Sefirah Castle to create an avatar like Amon. Then, he could use the power of Sefirah Castle to steal the undigested Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic he got from Zaratul.

At this point, Klein would immediately turn the avatar into a marionette to prevent any unexpected developments.

This way, Klein would drop to the level of an Attendant of Mysteries who had fully digested the potion, and he would have an Attendant of Mysteries marionette—this was one of the main ingredients of the potion.

And the Attendant of Mysteries who had digested the potion was qualified to consume The Fool’s potion and become a Sequence 0 true god.

These series of operations weren’t too complicated, but it was prone to mistakes. Furthermore, an ordinary dual Sequence 1 King of Angels from the Seer pathway couldn’t do it unless “They” have a Sequence 2 Trojan Horse of Destiny friend of the Marauder pathway who’s willing to sacrifice “Himself” to provide help. Of course, a Sequence 1 Worm of Time friend could do it.

Therefore, to Klein, the most troublesome thing was the other two matters: First, how to deal with The Half-Fool of the Antigonus family, and secondly, how to complete the ritual of “fooling time, history, or fate.”

With my current level and strength, it isn’t impossible to deal with the Antigonus family’s ancestor. Of course, the prerequisite is that I should first familiarize myself with the corresponding Beyonder powers and changes in Sefirah Castle… Sigh, I don’t have any idea on how to approach The Fool’s ritual at all. Klein raised his hand and pinched his forehead, casting his gaze at the grayish-white fog beneath Sefirah Castle.

Among time, history, and fate, he was undoubtedly more familiar with history.

Now, he could use Sefirah Castle to directly influence the fog of history, allowing the corresponding powers of the Seer pathway to become stronger or weaker.

This was the embodiment of authority.

Fooling history… Fooling history… Klein tapped the edge of the long mottled table again as various thoughts flashed through his mind, but he repeatedly wrote them off.

In his opinion, all the possible solutions didn’t satisfy the requirements of “fooling history.” This was because history objectively recorded what had happened. Whatever happened was definitely reasonable. And the solutions that could satisfy the requirements, such as returning to the past, consuming the potion, and becoming The Fool that came from history, wasn't able to achieve it. At the very least, Klein had never seen the ability to reverse time.

As his gaze moved deep into the fog of history, Klein suddenly had a feasible idea.

The present reality of history was this: The Tarot Club members believed that they were following The Fool that didn't belong to this era—an awakened ancient god or an existence that surpassed an ancient god. In fact, Mr. Fool was originally just an ordinary person hanging above the gray fog. He used all sorts of resources to package himself and improve himself.

Klein's thoughts were inspired by Amon.

He could use Sefirah Castle to create an avatar, and let the avatar use Sefirah Castle to steal the fate, consciousness, anchors, and Zaratul's Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic.

Therefore, the main body's Beyonder characteristic was formed purely from the one inside the "curtain," in which the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings was slowly awakening in.

This way, the understanding of the Tarot Club members was correct. Mr. Fool was a great existence that was awakening.

This went against the true history, but it was a fact grounded in reality. It could fulfill the requirements of the ritual.

Of course, the premise was that the act of stealing an avatar needed to happen in Sefirah Castle or other concealed areas. Otherwise, it would also be recorded in history, preventing it from achieving the effects of "fooling."

As for how he was to deal with the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings when "He" awakened, and how his avatar was to kill his true form and make "Him" a potion, Klein was temporarily out of a solution.

The result of this attempt is equivalent to suicide. Heh, before being killed by the Celestial Worthy, my avatar's Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic would've been digested by then. After all, I successfully revived the Lord of the Mysteries… Klein shook his head and threw the incomplete plan to the back of his mind.

Under the circumstances where he couldn't think of a solution, he decided to seek advice from the existences that might know what to do.

He had two targets: One was Snake of Fate Will Auceptin, and the other was the Evernight Goddess.

The former might have some thoughts about "fooling fate," while the latter probably knew what kind of ritual the ancestor of the Antigonus family used to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness.

After stabilizing his mental state, Klein left Sefirah Castle and directly "Teleported" to Backlund.

Chapter 1357 - Meeting

◆

Deep in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, on the peak of a mountain stood a gigantic cross that bordered the realm of reality and illusion.

There was a blurry figure hanging there. Ancient wooden stakes dyed with fresh blood that didn't drip down passed through "His" body, nailing "Him" to the cross.

At the bottom of the cross was the Angel of Fate Ouroboros, who was wearing a simple linen robe and had silver hair that reached "His" waist. "He" sat there cross-legged with a gentle and pious expression as "He" closed "His" eyes and prayed.

[image]

Adam, whose face was half-covered by a pale blond beard, walked over and stopped in front of the huge cross. "He" raised "His" head and silently looked at the hanging figure.

"He" held Arrodes in one hand and held the second Blasphemy Slate in the other. "His" eyes were limpid and his expression was calm.

After an unknown period of time, the image of The Hanged Man on the huge cross suddenly faded away, connecting to the sky and to the land below with a shadow curtain. Behind the curtain, there seemed to be a pair of cold eyes watching over the world.

In the next second, a rift appeared in the shadow curtain. It was dark inside, faintly reverberating with an illusory tidal wave.

Adam raised “His” left hand and let the ancient and mysterious magic mirror emit a faint glow.

In the light, a sticky but illusory black liquid surged out. A boundless sea that seemed to contain all colors appeared. It looked like it was at arm’s length but couldn’t affect reality.

Following that, Adam placed the second Blasphemy Slate into the illusory scene.

The illusory sea scene in the distance ebbed gently as it circled the second Blasphemy Slate, forming a certain connection with it.

The second Blasphemy Slate was a manifestation of the corpse of the ancient sun god—one which was extremely close to being a Great Old One, and almost equivalent to the owner of the Chaos Sea.

Upon seeing this scene, Adam’s left hand moved slightly, allowing Arrodes to fly up and fall towards the Angel of Fate Ouroboros under the huge cross.

The second Blasphemy Slate that “He” held underwent some subtle changes, and through the rift on the curtain, “He” walked inside.

The shadow curtain closed and quickly faded away, leaving behind a huge empty cross.

No one said a word throughout the entire process. Everything was carried out silently. Angel of Fate Ouroboros didn’t even attempt to open “His” eyes.

At the same time, Amon became a god and used the first Blasphemy Slate to block the tunnel that the Mother Goddess of Depravity was trying to enter through. The Lord of Storms finally smote apart the corpse cathedral that Adam had envisioned out of nothing, and one of Adam’s identities.

After a while, Tail Devourer Ouroboros opened “His” eyes and cast “His” gaze at Arrodes, which had landed on “His” lap.

On the surface of the mirror, silver words appeared in the swirling illusory water:

“You should know the feeling of piously believing and following a great existence, right?”

Ouroboros nodded indifferently.

“So, can you send me back to my Lord?” On the surface of the mirror, silver words squirmed and formed a new sentence. “Once you answer, you can ask me two questions.”

Ouroboros silently looked at the ancient mirror in silence for a long time.

Finally, Arrodes couldn’t help but produce a new question:

“Why aren’t you answering?”

Ouroboros looked at “Himself” in the mirror and replied calmly, “I haven’t thought through it yet.”

“Three questions…” On the surface of the magic mirror, the silver light slowly outlined two words.

†

In Backlund, on a lawn that belonged to a bungalow.

Will Auceptin, who was already over two years old, was happily chasing a fat golden cat with glistening fur. Beside “Him” was a nanny and a maid.

Ever since this Snake of Fate was born, Aaron Ceres’s career had improved by the day. Now, he owned a private hospital that provided medical services to high society.

As “He” ran, Will Auceptin stepped on a spot that was slippery. With a slip, “His” body involuntarily leaned back.

“He” took a few steps back and stepped on another rock.

This provided an impetus to stop Will Auceptin’s fall, miraculously allowing him to maintain “His” balance.

In regards to this encounter, alarms started ringing in this chubby toddler’s head. This was because with “His” luck, it was impossible for “Him” to step on a spot that could make people slip.

A familiar figure quickly appeared in “His” eyes.

It was Sherlock Moriarty wearing a half top hat and a black double-breasted coat.

Will Auceptin turned “His” head abruptly and looked at “His” nanny and maid. “He” discovered that they hadn’t noticed the appearance of the stranger on the lawn.

“I have a nagging feeling you would say: ‘Go ahead and scream. No one will hear you,’” the two-year-old toddler mumbled as he turned around.

Without waiting for Klein’s reply, “He” spread “His” hands and said, “In short, I must congratulate you on becoming a King of Angels.

“Bullying children doesn’t suit your current status.”

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“Do you know how to fool fate?”

Will Auceptin raised “His” head and looked warily at Klein.

“Giving me fake ice cream isn’t equivalent to fooling fate.”

With that said, “He” grumbled, “Why don’t you squat down? At my age, it’ll be bad for my neck’s development if I have to keep raising my head like this.”

Klein didn’t have the air of a newly advanced King of Angels. He squatted down with a smile, allowing Will Auceptin to look him straight in the eye.

Will Auceptin held “His” nanny’s hand and said, “Unless I’ve advanced to Sequence 0 and become a Wheel of Fortune, fooling me in any form doesn’t count as fooling fate.”

Klein thought and asked, “You haven’t found the opportunity to accommodate the Die of Probability?”

“No.” Will Auceptin shook “His” head before adding, “I have a premonition that it’s coming soon.”

Klein carefully looked at the chubby two-year-old toddler for a few seconds before suddenly smiling.

“If I were to give you and the Die of Probability to Ouroboros, would ‘He’ quickly advance to Sequence 0?”

Will Auceptin glared at Klein and said, “He will also need to wait for an opportunity to accommodate it. Furthermore, the opportunity to become a Wheel of Fortune, and the requirement to accommodate the Die of Probability isn’t the same.”

As “He” spoke, Will Auceptin curled “His” lips.

“If you wish to accommodate The Fool’s Uniqueness, the corresponding ritual can be simplified. It won’t be that difficult.

“In such a situation, by ingeniously using the abilities of a Trojan Horse of Destiny and making a sacrifice to a certain degree, there’s a chance of fooling fate.

“However, when you attempt to advance to Sequence 0, even if you accommodate the Uniqueness and absorb three Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics on separate occasions, you will still have to hold a ritual, allowing the corresponding items to fuse and undergo a qualitative change."

Is that so… In other words, choosing to first accommodate the Uniqueness is just a trick, but in the end, I have to truly fool time, history, or fate… Klein nodded slightly and said, "I roughly understand."

He smiled and added, "Enjoy your childhood. I wonder how long it will last."

With that said, Klein's figure turned transparent and vanished from the lawn.

Will Auceptin's other empty hand instinctively grabbed forward before retracting it weakly.

"He left just like that… He's so rude. He actually didn't prepare a present when he visited…" the child couldn't help but mutter.

†

North Borough in Backlund. Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Klein, who had transformed into Dwayne Dantès, walked into the prayer hall and found a corner to sit down.

He looked at the Evernight Sacred Emblem on the altar, lowered his head, clasped his hands, and began to pray.

"The Evernight Goddess who stands higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity. You are also the Mother of Concealment, the Empress of Misfortune and Horror…"

As he prayed, Klein's body and mind gradually settled down as though he had entered a half-awake state.

After an unknown period of time, a boundless darkness appeared in front of him. Beside his feet was a clump of night vanilla and slumber flowers.

This place was so quiet that even breathing seemed to disturb those in slumber around him.

Before Klein could survey his surroundings, a figure suddenly descended from the depths of the darkness.

[image]

There was clearly no sky or land here, but the figure seemed to come from the crimson moon or the stars in the sky.

“She” was wearing a long, layered black dress that didn’t seem complicated at all. It was adorned with countless resplendent lights, as though the starry night sky had been draped upon it.

“Her” head was indistinct and difficult to discern. He could only confirm that it was a female.

“Long time no see,” the figure said gently before Klein spoke.

“Her” voice was like a lullaby.

Klein bowed in a gentlemanly manner and said, “Is this directed at the former Lord of the Mysteries, or me who was previously hung above Sefirah Castle?”

Klein was very certain that this was a dream, but a dream didn’t mean that it was fake.

The Evernight Goddess’s projection said with a smile, “I’m not sure where you were hanging above that door of light. After I left, I never went back again.”

Indeed… Klein sighed inwardly. From the details, he confirmed the origins of the Evernight Goddess Amanises.

“The three cocoons of light that tore open were side by side,” he replied simply.

The Evernight Goddess’s projection was silently floating in the darkness, giving off a surreal feeling.

“She” said softly, “The people there were all candidates meant for the Lord of the Mysteries’s revival, but due to some unknown incident,”He” lost control of many things.

“If it wasn’t for that, I would’ve died long ago, and lived with the identity of the Lord of the Mysteries. Then, you and Roselle wouldn’t have had the chance to return to reality.”

This means that the death of the Celestial Worthy is more thorough. “He” can only rely on the will left inside the Beyonder characteristic and the mechanical arrangements of Sefirah Castle to revive? Klein sighed and smiled.

“I can already hear ‘Him’ whispering into my ears.”

Chapter 1358 - Conversation

◆

The Evernight Goddess's projection calmly said, "For 'Him' or 'Them,' we are unable to defeat or stop 'Them.' All we can do is resist and suppress 'Them.'"

Perhaps, at certain times, a tiny oversight or relaxing even the slightest will turn us into "Him"… On the path of being a Beyonder, danger is always accompanying us. No one knows when one will fall into the abyss… Klein silently added a few words for the Evernight Goddess.

He thought for a moment and asked, "Did you cause some sort of disturbance when I was born?"

Seemingly fused with the surroundings, the Evernight Goddess nodded slightly.

"I used the Uniqueness in Antigonus to indirectly affect Sefirah Castle to 'Tamper' the Beyonder characteristic that accompanied your birth to the Forsaken Land of the Gods."

Indeed… Klein sighed and frowned.

"The Uniqueness of Antigonus can indirectly influence Sefirah Castle?"

The Evernight Goddess's projection replied gently like a lullaby, "'He' has already lost control.

"This also means that 'His' self-awareness is no longer able to suppress the Lord of the Mysteries's will in 'Him.' The two psyches are stitched together, revealing the most primitive, most instinctual, and also most bloody and crazy side.

“And the Lord of the Mysteries is the former owner of Sefirah Castle. The present Antigonus can indirectly influence Sefirah Castle by using this identity very naturally.”

It’s no wonder the Evernight Goddess has a greater understanding of the strange door of light than Emperor Roselle. On the one hand, “She” was born from Sefirah Castle, and on the other hand, “She” had imprisoned the crazy Antigonus… Klein was enlightened as he continued asking, “Why didn’t you have any Beyonder characteristics accompanying you and Roselle when both of you were born?”

In that case, be it the Evernight Goddess or Emperor Roselle, they definitely would’ve chosen one of the Seer, Apprentice, or Marauder pathways.

The Evernight Goddess’s projection said indifferently, “This is also why I said that something unknown had happened to the Lord of the Mysteries, causing many of the prior arrangements to be out of control.

After two consecutive failures, Sefirah Castle experienced a certain change.

“This is also a good thing for you. As the apocalypse arrives, the remnant will of the Lord of the Mysteries has dissipated. In the end, all that’s left is a mental imprint that’s attempting to awaken.

“If you were born in the Fourth Epoch, you would’ve become ‘Him’ the moment you became an Attendant of Mysteries.”

This was because Klein had used the “curtain” left behind by the Celestial Worthy during his advancement. As for the Beyonder characteristics in the bodies of Antigonus and Zaratul, they had undergone generations of Beyonders and Beyonder creatures, diluting and wearing off the will.

Klein had a nagging feeling that the Evernight Goddess had some guesses about what had happened to the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings. However, since “She” deliberately didn’t mention it, it wasn’t appropriate for him to probe further. All he could do was say, “How did Antigonus manage to accommodate The Fool’s Uniqueness?”

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection didn’t hide anything as “She” replied gently, “‘He’ sought the help of Adam and Amon.

“‘They’ were supporting Alista Tudor back then.”

Using the abilities of the Trojan Horse of Destiny? Klein acutely grasped the core reason based on Will Auceptin’s explanation and his inference.

The Evernight Goddess’s projection that was like the starry sky of the night quietly comforted “Her” surroundings.

“‘They’ captured a demigod from the Solomon Empire and got Adam to do a deeper level hypnotism act and a transplant of the corresponding memory, making him believe that he was Antigonus.

“Then, with Amon working with Antigonus, ‘He’ stole Antigonus’s identity and fate while Antigonus used the ‘Tampering’ authority to combine the identity and fate with the experimental subject.

“That demigod from the Solomon Empire began living in the state of Antigonus, and after some time, he took the initiative to accommodate The Fool’s Uniqueness.

“‘He’ undoubtedly lost control. At this moment, the real Antigonus removed the ‘Tampering,’ allowing ‘His’ identity and fate to return into Amon’s hands. Amon ended the theft and returned them to the original owner.”

Klein listened attentively and added thoughtfully, “If that’s the case, it’s equivalent to ‘Antigonus failing to accommodate the Uniqueness and turning into a monster’ and ‘a perfectly well Antigonus with no problems at all.’ The two completely different fates existed in the real world at the same time. Therefore, fate has been fooled to a certain extent…

Before he finished his sentence, Klein sensed some latent problems and hurriedly asked, “Aren’t there problems with this?”

“It’s very risky,” the Evernight Goddess’s dream projection calmly replied. “Fate isn’t easy to bear. If one can’t retrieve the fate from the target in that short period of time while he’s losing control, things will undoubtedly fail. Retrieving it a second earlier will not achieve the effect of the ritual. Retrieving it a second later will lead to Antigonus shouldering the fate of losing control and inevitably end up with the same outcome.”

That’s right. One has to naturally bear the burden of the troubles brought about by fate… If not for that, Amon would’ve long stolen my fate and swaggered into Sefirah Castle… Klein mumbled inwardly as he began to think about how he should imitate the ritual of the Antigonus family’s ancestor.

It was difficult to complete a normal ritual, and with the urgency of the matter, using a simplified ritual to accommodate The Fool Uniqueness was the best option.

Once I become The Half-Fool, my control over Sefirah Castle will improve. My level and strength will at least reach the level of a true god. This way, even if I face a dual pathway true god like Amon, I’ll be able to protect myself and wait for reinforcements even if I’m not a match for “Him”… As Klein thought about the strength match-up and development he hoped for, he began coming up with a preliminary ritual plan.

He planned on using the Evernight Goddess’s help to suppress the Antigonus family’s ancestor and use Sefirah Castle to steal “His” identity, fate, and self-awareness.

This way, his body would have his own consciousness, the will of the

Celestial Worthy, Antigonus ancestor's self-awareness, as well as the anchors from the New City of Silver, New Moon City, and Rorsted Archipelago. He would also become Antigonus to a certain extent and accept "His" fate of losing control and going mad.

The reason why Antigonus went crazy was that "His" self-awareness could no longer suppress the awakening Celestial Worthy—the two psyches were stitched together. When "His" self-awareness reached Klein's body, "He" would undoubtedly repeat the same process. This was because the Celestial Worthy's will in Klein's body was no less than the one in "His" actual body.

In other words, the fate of losing control and madness was unavoidable. Klein believed that there wouldn't be any additional burden when bearing it. At the same time, with him having more anchors than Antigonus, his own consciousness could remain center stage and in a harmonious state, maintaining a sliver of rationality.

In such a state, he would use the identity of the Antigonus family's ancestor to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness. And in the corresponding fate, this was something that "He" had long accommodated, so it wouldn't bring about any further repercussions.

Hence, fate had been fooled.

After the ritual ended, Klein would remove his theft and restore his original identity and fate, and no longer be affected by the madness, allowing him to become The Half-Fool.

The main problem of this plan was in two places: First, it was to maintain his own state. Any slight accident could easily cause Klein to go crazy and be powerless to save himself. Second, no one knew for sure how much the Celestial Worthy's will in the body of the Antigonus family's ancestor would awaken or bring about unsuppressed changes. He could only rely on the Evernight Goddess to balance it out.

At this moment, the Evernight Goddess's projection seemed to have guessed his thoughts.

“If you wish to steal the fate of Antigonus, it’s best to let ‘Him’ enter a temporary state of eternal slumber.

“I can try to help you, but I need a medium to have the necessary confidence. This is an angel that had accommodated The Fool’s Uniqueness.”

“What medium?” Klein asked, seemingly in thought.

The Evernight Goddess’s projection said with a smile, “The river water of the River of Eternal Darkness.”

As expected… To Klein, this answer wasn’t surprising at all. It was even within his expectations. This made him feel rooted to the ground.

He deliberated for a moment and said, “Just the river water?”

The Evernight Goddess’s projection nodded slightly and said, “You won’t be able to take away the entire River of Eternal Darkness at the moment. You’ll understand once you reach the depths of Calderón City.

“You can ask the questions when you’re back.”

Without waiting for Klein to answer, “She” added, “For you, there’s an unusual danger there. You better wait until your mental state is stable before you go.”

“Alright.” Although Klein didn’t know what he would encounter in the depths of Calderón City, he knew that he wasn’t in the right state to take risks, especially when it involved a sefirah.

The Evernight Goddess’s projection continued, “When you wake up, hold a bestowment ritual. I will give you an item that can be used to scoop up the river water of the River of Eternal Darkness.”

Klein nodded and said without a word, “Adam is part of the ancient sun god, one of ‘His’ identities.”

The Evernight Goddess's projection didn't show any obvious signs of emotion. "She" gently said, "'He' has already gone to the Forsaken Land of the Gods and met the True Creator."

That's fast… After feeling a little surprised, Klein felt that it was only right.

The reason why Adam allowed the secret to be exposed was that the secret was no longer of value.

The Evernight Goddess's projection continued, "No matter what happens next, it will take a long period of time. You don't have to pay attention to it for now."

After Klein nodded, the figure in front of him quickly turned blurry. The night vanilla and slumber flowers under his feet flew up one after another, scattering throughout the darkness.

He opened his eyes and saw the dark hall and the pure light shining through the holes in the wall. The latter were like stars embedded into a velvet night sky.

Chapter 1359 - Early Morning

◆

Klein watched as scarlet flames suddenly appeared and engulfed him.

When the sparks scattered, his figure had already vanished from Saint Samuel Cathedral.

In an ordinary inn's empty room, Klein walked out of the sudden rising flames and began setting up a bestowment ritual.

Soon, the mysterious door formed by candlelight opened. An ancient accessory flew out from the endless darkness and landed on the altar.

This accessory seemed to be made out of gold. It looked like a slender bird, surrounded by a pair of wings formed by white flames. The bronze eyes shimmered with layers of light as though there were illusory doors hidden within.

Klein sincerely thanked the Evernight Goddess, ended the ritual, and picked up the golden bird-shaped accessory.

This seems to be the image of the legendary Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace…

Beyond this ancient Death's own pathway, "She" had apparently grasped partial authority of the Apprentice pathway. This is a preliminary conclusion from the city ruins in the Forsaken Land of the Gods that believed in the Phoenix…

It's no wonder most ancient gods find it difficult to control their emotions. They were on the edge of madness. No, they were constantly teetering between madness and rationality… Before the first Blasphemy Slate appeared, none of the Beyonder creatures had the concept of a Sequence pathway. They only had the concept of convergence, reproduction, and blind attempts… As Klein carefully examined the golden bird-shaped accessory, he sighed inwardly.

As the owner of Sefirah Castle, he could sense that there was a subtle connection between the accessory and the River of Eternal Darkness.

So it can contain the river water of the River of Eternal Darkness? Yes, the river water of the River of Eternal Darkness is definitely not river water in the true sense of the phrase, but an abstract concept or symbol. Klein nodded in thought and threw the golden bird-shaped accessory into Sefirah Castle, sealing it in the junk pile to prevent any unnecessary accidents.

†

On a mountain peak outside Bayam City.

The Red Angel evil spirit watched as the edge of the sea gradually lit up as an orange sun slowly left the horizon.

At some point in time, a young man wearing a pointed hat and a classic black robe appeared beside “Him.”

The man played with a crystal monocle and wore it on “His” right eye. It was Amon, who had become Mr. Error.

Sauron Einhorn Medici turned “His” head and glanced at Amon.

“The sacrifice you provided was actually the original body.”

“If it wasn’t my true body, how could I have the time to steal the ritual and replace Bethel?” Amon replied with a smile. “As a qualified Conspirer, you shouldn’t have not thought of this.”

The Red Angel evil spirit scoffed.

“How would I know that you weren’t trying to trick me? Perhaps you’d predicted my prediction?”

Amon smiled and didn’t answer directly. Instead, “He” took out a strange crown covered in rust and blood.

“This is your reward.” “He” threw the item to Sauron Einhorn Medici.

After the Red Angel evil spirit caught the strange crown, “He” was somewhat surprised.

“Wow, you actually didn’t try to go back on your word.”

“Doing something that doesn’t match your expectations is also a form of deception.” Amon pinched the monocle on “His” right eye and said with a smile, “I’m looking forward to you becoming the Red Priest and devouring that Demoness. When that happens, your image will definitely be extremely interesting.”

As Amon said this, “His” smile carried an unconcealable sense of warped humor.

Sauron Einhorn Medici fell silent for a moment before saying, “I don’t think it will be very different from how I am now.”

Two bloody mouths opened on both sides of “His” face before quickly closing.

Amon adjusted the monocle on “His” right eye and looked to the other side of the sea.

“The situation in the Western Continent seems interesting.”

With that said, the present Mr. Error, the former Angel of Time turned into light and dissipated.

The Red Angel evil spirit looked in the direction of where Amon was looking at and tossed the strange crown in “His” hand.

On both sides of "His" face, the bloody mouths appeared once again as "They" said, "After absorbing this Beyonder characteristic, you'd better stay away from Bansy."

"If you wish to grow breasts and have your body swell up, you can continue staying there."

Medici curled "His" lips and said, "Isn't this something you both wish for?"

†

Facing the altar filled with materials and artifacts, Klein raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

The table in front of him instantly became empty and clean. All the junk had been split up in categories and returned to their original location.

This was a Miracle that stemmed from one of Klein's accumulated wishes.

Compared to the past Miracle Invokers and Attendants of Mysteries, the "Miracles" I can create can be described as quite varied. It's very practical, including but not limited to building houses, interior design, garbage classification, and environment protection… Klein looked at the cleared and laughed self-deprecatingly.

He then opened the door and left.

He wanted to return to the real world and return to human society to strengthen his humanity and stabilize his mental state. His problem now was relatively problematic. If he directly sought Miss Justice's treatment before first suppressing the awakening will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings, he would only contaminate her and allow his psychiatrist to suffer mental illnesses. Of course, if Miss Justice had reached Sequence 2, the effects wouldn't be too great.

The current Backlund had been rebuilt, and the number of pedestrians coming and going had returned to their previous peak. Just as Klein pushed open the inn's door, he heard all sorts of voices.

"Wait! Wait!"

"Fresh fish from Pritz Harbor. It has plenty of meat and little bones. It's great for frying!"

"Special ginger beer matched with muffins and potato wedges!"

"Hot and fresh oyster soup!"

"The freshest vegetables!"

†

Most of the noise came from the street vendors, and some came from a small number of passengers who were chasing the public carriage or pedestrians who were knocked down by people in a rush. The early morning rush painted such a noisy, sonorous, and chaotic scene.

Klein listened to these unfamiliar yet familiar shouts and silently looked at the scene in front of him. He didn't move for a few minutes.

Only when a thief came close did he put his hands into the black coat's pockets and walk towards the nearest coffee shop.

"A cup of good coffee, a set of mutton stewed with peas, and a piece of oatmeal bread," Klein said to the affordable coffee shop's owner.

"A total of 11 pence," the boss said after a mental calculation.

Then he added, "The price of everything is rising now."

Klein didn't say anything. He took out a one-soli note from the junk pile in Sefirah Castle and handed it to the boss.

He then found a seat by the window which wasn't very greasy. He took out a few pieces of tissue to line the table.

Following that, Klein placed a piece of letter paper on top of it and took out a dark red fountain pen.

After watching the morning scenery and pedestrians, he finally wrote:

“Dear Mr. Azik,

“I haven’t written to you for another month, because I had no choice but to sleep for some time. This isn’t because I’m hurt, but because the ritual requires it.

“When I woke up and walked into human society again, on the streets, it suddenly reminded me of the life I had when I was in Tingen.

“At that time, it was always very noisy in the morning. A large number of citizens would leave their homes, rushing to the factories or companies. The mobile peddlers gathered on the street and peddled their vegetables, food, and fruits of questionable quality. They were always cheap.

“I would always protect my wallet and carefully squeeze through them before heading to the station and wait for the public carriage with many people.

“I worked at the Blackthorn Security Company at 36 Zouteland Street, and had a group of good colleagues.

“Dunn Smith was the Captain, the supervisor there. He was an experienced, kind, and responsible Beyonder. He had a mild personality and was experienced in his job. He also cared for all the members in the team, and his only flaw was his bad memory. For matters which weren’t too important, he might forget about it the moment he turned around. He often said ‘hold on, there’s still another thing.’ Of course, there was a reason why: he had lost too many companions. He hoped that they would all stay in his dreams, so he often became lost as to which matter was reality and which belonged to dreams.

“Old Neil was my first mysticism teacher. The most useful skill he taught me was expense claims. He always designed strange ritualistic magic, hoping to obtain help from the Goddess. Some of it succeeded, while others produced ridiculous accidents. Until today, I can still recall them. He was a very kind person. Even when he was seeking to fulfill his everlasting dream, he didn’t wish to harm others.

“Leonard is a poet with his own secrets. At first, I thought he was very mysterious, and a hidden expert that needed attention to be placed on. Later, I realized that he was a crude, simple, impulsive, rebellious, aloof, and rude young man. Furthermore, he really doesn’t have any literary talent, so he could only rely on memorizing things to complete the acting requirement. Yes, he barely has some merits. He’s considered rather brave, and he has sharp intuition and terrifying reasoning abilities in certain matters. However, this is limited to certain matters.

“Frye was a cold-looking Beyonder who no one dared to approach. But in fact, he has a sense of responsibility and a warm heart. He would always extend his hand when others needed help.

“Kenley was very short. He used to be a civilian staff member, and he then took the initiative to apply to become an official member. He was quite smart, but he would never decline a case. Every time he played cards, he would talk about his fiancée.

“Rozanne is the receptionist at the Blackthorn Security Company. She’s lively and lazy, and she’s loved by everyone. To us, she’s like a younger sister. She also likes every single one of us, but she also hates all the official members because her father was once an official Beyonder who later died in the course of duty. Perhaps, in her heart, official members were equivalent to people who received a notice that they were infected with a critical illness.

“Mrs. Orianna is an accountant, a victim of a supernatural case. She’s delicate and gentle, and she pursues an exquisite life. She usually doesn’t speak much, but she takes good care of everyone and doesn’t make things difficult for us regarding finances. For example, she rarely rejects Old Neil's expense claims—no matter how ridiculous the reason was. She would only leave it to the Captain to make a decision.

"Ma'am Seeka Tron has rare natural white hair, and she's an unsuccessful author. She has an outstanding temperament and a quiet personality. She doesn't seem like a Beyonder who fights at night. She's also very brave and very firm. Even when facing death, she doesn't flinch.

"Ma'am Royale is very similar to Frye. They don't talk much but are very concerned about their colleagues. Yes, except at the card table.

"Bredt is the best at writing reports among the clerks. He's a romantic gentleman. Even though he's been married for fifteen years, he still loves his wife very much. I think he'll live a good life because he lives by the maxim that the less he knows, the longer he'll live.

"Cesare Francis is our carriage driver. Despite being a civilian staff member, he often encounters dangerous situations. Therefore, the Captain handed over the matters regarding the purchase of goods and applications to him. He doesn't make his presence known, and perhaps this is the key to his survival.

"I occasionally think about it. If it weren't for the things that happened later, I would definitely still be living in Tingen. I would work on time every day. I'll be on duty to man the basement, and I would deal with the few cases that crop up while playing cards with my colleagues. I would occasionally accompany Melissa and Benson to watch a play or a circus show. If I can come home early one day, I'll study cooking. That's a huge hobby of mine. When the weekend comes, I might come to visit you and talk about the history of various fields…

"It's a pity that life is always pushing us forward and making us face changes."

Chapter 1360 - Choice

◆◆◆

After Klein wrote down his impression of Tingen, he briefly mentioned that he had completed the ritual to become a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries, as well as resolve one of his long-time traumas—the leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul.

He didn't describe his predicament in detail, only seriously discussing the mental problems that angels suffered.

Putting away the fountain pen and folding the paper, Klein reached out to take out Azik's copper whistle from Sefirah Castle and blew at it.

Inside the cheap coffee shop, white bones spewed out like fountains, forming a huge messenger.

The messenger then shrank his body, becoming only the height of a normal person.

At the same time, it knelt down on one knee and stretched out its palm.

“There's no need to be afraid of me.” Upon seeing this, Klein laughed. “It's not like I would do anything to you?”

As he spoke, he picked up the letter and placed it in the skeleton messenger's hand.

The messenger nodded heavily a few times; it was unknown what it was agreeing with.

Then, its body disintegrated, turning into bones that drilled into the ground.

At this moment, the boss brought coffee, oatmeal bread, and mutton stewed with peas.

As Klein enjoyed breakfast that wasn't too delicious but was filled with a bourgeois style, he looked out the window and enjoyed the morning scenery without any reason. He admired the pedestrians, carriages, trees, mist, food, and machinery that made up the scene.

If there was no apocalypse, it's best to be a Sequence 7 Beyonder to maintain the life in Tingen and live rather leisurely while being capable of handling most cases. When prepared, a Magician, who has many tricks up his sleeve, won't appear too weak when facing Sequence 6 and Sequence 5 Beyonders. As for Faceless and Marionettist, one can easily get lost while acting. It's relatively easy to lose control when one advances, making it rather dangerous. Of course, if one has a sealed Creeping Hunger, it would be perfect… Klein casually thought as he recalled Creeping Hunger which had landed in Amon's hands.

He didn't know how Amon would treat this Sealed Artifact, but he only felt that an item of this level was of no value to an Angel of Time. After playing for a while, "He" would probably throw it into a secret "warehouse" in the darkness.

I wonder if there's a chance to retrieve it. Just as this thought flashed through Klein's mind, he suddenly felt a little guilty.

This was because even if he could snatch Creeping Hunger back from Amon's hands, he would throw it into the junk pile, making it wait to be bestowed to the Blessed or believers that needed it.

This was no different from being in Amon's hands.

Klein quickly diverted his attention.

I lost the mirror again.

Adam shouldn't be interested in a mirror at the saint level. Perhaps, I can get it back…

No, Arrodes seems to have been spewed out from the Chaos Sea. In certain matters, it's possible that it can be a medium… Sigh, I only hope that Adam doesn't damage it, and that I have the time to retrieve it…

After becoming an Attendant of Mysteries and gaining a deeper control of Sefirah Castle, Klein already possessed a certain level of authority in the "Concealment" domain.

Whenever he was thinking about important matters, there would always be a thin shadow around him that no one else could see.

This was equivalent to the embryonic form of a divine kingdom, the Realm of Mysteries.

Therefore, he dared to directly think of Adam's name.

After sighing, Klein suddenly recalled something and hurriedly got the Worms of Spirit on duty in Sefirah Castle, to "Graft" a certain area in the spirit world he fixed when he advanced over.

Immediately after, he finished the leftover mutton and the last bit of oatmeal bread that he dipped into the soup. He finished the coffee beside him.

After putting on his hat and standing up, Klein took a step forward and entered the spirit world that corresponded to Utopia.

Then, he removed the "Grafting" and returned to the ruins of Utopia.

This was to use the abilities of "Grafting" and his ability to freely enter the spirit world to indirectly achieve a "Teleportation" effect. Of course, the prerequisite was that he could locate the corresponding region in the spirit world. On this point, as the owner of Sefirah Castle, Klein had a unique advantage. As for Zaratul and the other Attendants of Mysteries, they could only rely on "Their" preparations.

As soon as he stepped into the ruins of Utopia, Klein surveyed the area and discovered that the collapsed houses and charred corpses were shimmering with different colors.

They were the Beyonder characteristics inside the monster marionettes, the wealth accumulated by Klein back in the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

This might be useless to him, but he still had many believers and Blessed that would gradually increase in numbers. As a “deity,” he had to stock up some Beyonder characteristics in order to bestow them.

Thankfully, the Lord of Storms didn’t take the opportunity to sweep them away… As Klein silently muttered to himself, he couldn’t help but thank Leodero.

†

East Chester County, inside the Hall family manor.

After the sun finally rose, the suffering people returned to their rooms one after another to make up for their lack of sleep. Only Alfred, Earl Hall’s personal bodyguards, the deacons, and Nighthawks sent by the Church of Evernight to investigate the reason behind the incident last night remained.

As Audrey used the golden retriever, Susie, to monitor the development of the situation, she opened her bedroom door and walked in.

Through the curtains and the weak sunlight in the room, a figure sat quietly on a high stool like a large doll.

It was a huge, snow-white rabbit.

Audrey’s brows twitched as she whispered, “Mr. Wrath.”

This was Mr. Wrath from the Psychology Alchemists that had pursued the mind dragon, Ariehogg. It was suspected to be one of Hermes’s identities.

As she spoke, Audrey reached out her hand and closed the door.

And with this action, the back of her hand flashed with a star-like crimson tattoo.

“I’m sorry; I made use of you.” When the door closed, the giant white rabbit took the initiative to say, “However, I might have been used by someone else as well.”

Audrey thought of the opening of the doors and windows in the middle of the night and took two steps forward. She replied in thought, “There’s no need to apologize. Just don’t disturb me in the future.”

She was tactfully expressing that she wanted to leave the Psychology Alchemists, hoping that no one would come looking for her again.

The huge white rabbit stared at her with its bright red eyes for a few seconds and said, “Your previous wish was to protect your parents and family, but don’t you think that you’ve been embroiled in too much trouble? The danger that you’ve brought them is greater than the help you provide?”

Audrey fell silent. She didn’t speak for a long time.

“Normally speaking, a saint can indeed allow the family and family to gain more safety, but the premise is that they do not involve themselves in the struggle between angels or deities. Or perhaps, they are part of a powerful organization that can be relied on in the true sense of the word.” Upon saying this, the huge white rabbit slowly said, “I have two gifts to express my apology. You can choose one.”

“Two?” Audrey asked in a low voice.

The giant white rabbit nodded, its ears constantly wiggling.

“One is to truly become Miss Pride of the Psychology Alchemists. We can ignore all your other secrets and tacitly allow your other operations—as long as you don't reveal our matters and bring danger to the Psychology Alchemists. Of course, there will be a certain disadvantage. You will shoulder the burden of certain matters and might be embroiled in quite a bit of trouble. The only difference is that you will receive a lot of help and be rescued in time."

"What about the second one?" Audrey had no intention of getting compensation from the Psychology Alchemists. To not have the secret organization disturb her again was the best form of apology.

Furthermore, she suspected that Mr. Wrath's true intention behind "His" apology was just another form of exploitation.

The huge white rabbit answered calmly, "I can help you divide another identity for you so that 'she' can stay by your family and provide them with some protection and emotional comfort. As for you, you will stay away from them and live on in this world with another identity.

"This way, your troubles will not affect the people you want to protect.

"In the supernatural world, under certain circumstances, distancing yourself is the best form of love and protection."

Audrey fell silent once again as her green eyes seemed like a still lake.

"You don't need to answer me at once. Or you can combine the two methods." The giant white rabbit got off the high stool and stood up. "You know how to get into the Garden of Eden."

As it spoke, its figure gradually disappeared into the sea of collective subconscious.

†

Bayam, in a room in the Church of the Sea God.

The Oracle, Danitz, dressed in a gorgeous robe, sat on a chair, silently looking at Alger Wilson.

The sleepiness from waking up in the middle of the night was gone from the fright.

The cardinal of the Church of Storms actually wanted to defect to the Church of the Sea God!

This was a huge matter in the field of religion, in the world of mysticism and international politics!

Even though he only had a rough understanding of the Church of Storms, Danitz believed that with their style in handling matters, they definitely wouldn't let this matter go. Perhaps a calamity was already on its way to the entire Rorsted Archipelago to destroy it.

Furthermore, a cardinal is definitely highly valued by the Lord of Storms. Alger's betrayal might attract a god's punishment at any time… The more Danitz thought about it, the more he trembled, afraid that he would be affected.

This made him recall a saying from his hometown:

"Don't be near people abandoned by the gods."

This was because those guys might get implicated when lightning smote down.

If not for the fact that Gehrman Sparrow had sent me a message in the name of being Mr. Fool's attendant to help me settle Alger Wilson in, I would've already tied up this ticking bomb and sent him back to the Church of the Lord of Storms… The more afraid Danitz was, the more he couldn't help but mutter inwardly.

Of course, he was just letting his thoughts run wild. He didn't even consider their difference in strength.

After a while, someone knocked on his door.

Danitz jumped up and quickly walked to the door, opening a crack.

“Any results?” he asked in a low voice.

The intel supervisor of the Church of the Sea God said simply, “Lord Oracle, the Church of Storms has switched cardinals.”

“What about the original one?” Danitz pressed in surprise.

“It’s said that he was transferred back to their headquarters,” the intel supervisor recounted what he learned from some of the servants at the Cathedral of Waves.

Transferred back to their headquarters… As Danitz was confused, a grayish-white fog suddenly appeared in front of him.

He heard Mr. Fool’s words:

“From this day forth, Alger shall wear a mask and become the pontiff of the Church of the Sea God.”

Chapter 1361 - Joint Operation

◆ ◆ ◆

Pontiff… Danitz jumped in fright, nearly unable to believe the revelation he had received.

If it wasn't for the fact that this order directly came from Mr. Fool, he would have definitely cursed.

Of course, if the person opposite him was Gehrman Sparrow, he would suck it up.

"Lord Oracle, is there anything else?" The intel supervisor of the Church of the Sea God saw that Lord Danitz's expression was rather odd. This left him a little afraid.

Danitz retracted his thoughts and forced a smile.

"Pay close attention to the development at the Cathedral of Waves."

"Yes, Lord Oracle." The intel supervisor heaved a sigh of relief and hurriedly bowed to bid farewell.

Danitz turned his head and looked at Alger Wilson as he said with a brilliant smile, "Mr. Fool has already issued a revelation."

Alger didn't hesitate. He immediately stood up and pressed his right palm against his left chest.

Danitz straightened his back and solemnly said, "God said that from this day forth, Alger shall wear a mask and become the pontiff of the Church of the Sea God."

“Mr. Fool’s will is my will!” Alger couldn’t hide his smile as he bowed.

Half of his smile was for Danitz to see, showing his humility, while the other half was from the bottom of his heart. This was because the revelation meant two things:

Mr. Fool and the Lord of Storms had reached a certain agreement. With a tacit understanding, his betrayal would no longer be pursued. Of course, he had to wear masks and use a fake name to prevent humiliation to the Church of Storms.

Becoming the pontiff of the Church of the Sea God was a critical step to reaching the throne of Sea God.

From Alger’s point of view, this meant that he had officially become Mr. Fool’s subordinate. In the future, be it the exchange for the identity of Sea God or being the leader of the Church of The Fool, there would be plenty of opportunities. As for Mr. Fool, “He” was a great existence that was at the same level as a true god, or even higher. How could “His” proxy not be an angel?

After the bow, Alger waited patiently for Oracle Danitz to bring him a silver-black mask.

He received the mask and wore it solemnly.

†

While wearing a red glove, Leonard strolled along the shores of Midseashire, enjoying the R&R earned from closing a supernatural case.

As for the mysterious opening of doors and windows last night, he had already received the orders from the Holy Cathedral not to pursue it through investigations or learn more about the matter.

Regarding this order, Leonard couldn’t do anything about it because he had long learned the general truth from Old Man Pallez Zoroast:

Mr. Door had returned to the real world, and Angel of Time Amon took the opportunity to steal “His” apotheosis ritual and advance to Sequence 0 Error. Almost at the same time, Mr. Fool awakened further. Through Sefirah Castle, “He” had briefly and weakly connected to Beyonders of the Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder pathways.

As an angel of the Marauder pathway, Pallez Zoroast was undoubtedly able to sense the changes in Amon’s corresponding authority and “His” apotheosis. “He” also discovered that Sefirah Castle had established a connection with “Him.”

“Old Man, Amon has already advanced to Sequence 0. You shouldn’t be of much use to ‘Him’ now. Why do you still want to Parasitize my body?” Leonard took in the fresh morning air as he suppressed his voice and asked with a hint of concern and confusion.

In his mind, Pallez Zoroast scoffed.

“Naive.

“Do you think that you don’t need my guidance anymore after becoming a saint and having mastered a lot of mysticism knowledge?”

“You can choose to teach me face-to-face,” Leonard said after some deliberation.

To him, having an angel “Parasitizing” his body was both a boon and bane for him.

The good thing was that even if he encountered a real Mythical Creature, he wouldn’t be completely defenseless. As long as he softly shouted “Old Man,” the problem might be resolved. In addition, history and various rare mysticism knowledge from the Fourth Epoch were also rather useful.

The greatest disadvantage was that his life was in the hands of the Parasite. If the other party had any evil intentions, he couldn’t stop it.

This question was once Leonard's greatest worry, but it wasn't too problematic now. This was because Mr. Fool's awakening was deepening, allowing "Him" to completely suppress Pallez Zoroast. Furthermore, Leonard had also become a high-ranking deacon of the Church of Evernight. He would definitely be under the watch of the Evernight Goddess, and he could even be specially marked by "Her." Under such circumstances, it was impossible for a deity with the "Concealment" authority to not discover Pallez Zoroast. If Old Man had any nefarious thoughts, he would've been resolved long ago.

What Leonard was most vexed about was that many things weren't too convenient as a result.

Although he was already used to having an old man "Parasitizing" his body, and he would even casually chat with him while on the toilet, he still preferred having that time to himself in such situations.

Therefore, he felt that having Old Man leave his body, and letting "Him" live in his house like an elder would be a better way of getting along with "Him." When he needed to deal with more dangerous matters, he could get Old Man to temporarily "Parasitize" him.

Upon hearing Leonard's suggestion, Pallez Zoroast scoffed.

"Are you still thinking about removing the"Parasitizing" when you return home, and 'Parasitize' when out?

"Do you think I'm your bodyguard?"

Leonard laughed dryly before saying, "If you haven't fully recovered and wish to continue 'Parasitizing,' I have no objections."

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for two seconds before his slightly-aged voice resounded in Leonard's mind.

"Next up is actually the most dangerous period. For the position of the Lord of the Mysteries, The Fool and Amon will definitely have a battle. When the time comes, under the influence of all kinds of Beyonder characteristics, angels of the same pathway might be affected. Heh, it's better to be kept under the protection of Evernight's gaze.

"When the Lord of the Mysteries is born, I won't even bother with you even if you were to beg me to be 'Parasitized'!"

Leonard was slightly taken aback as he subconsciously repeated the name.

"Lord of the Mysteries?"

"This isn't something you can fully understand. Of course, with me around, there's no need to worry," Pallez Zoroast sighed and said with pride.

Leonard was just about to take the opportunity to ask when he suddenly saw a Red Gloves team member running over with a telegram.

"Reverend, a telegram from the Holy Cathedral," the team member said respectfully.

Leonard nodded slightly and received the telegram. He quickly scanned it.

"Head to the Southern Continent and participate in the besieging of the Rose School of Thought."

Southern Continent… Rose School of Thought… Leonard narrowed down to two keywords.

He quickly returned to the largest cathedral in this city and used large-scale ritualistic magic to establish a connection with the Holy Cathedral. In his dream, he met the Pope, Ma'am Arianna, and other high-ranking officials.

After a simple exchange, Leonard roughly understood the essence of the mission:

The various orthodox Churches would delegate three to four demigods to head to the Southern Continent to besiege the Rose School of Thought which had become very active after the world war.

This was a long-term mission. As the Rose School of Thought's demigods knew how to hide their tracks, they did things in a rather secretive manner, they weren't easy to locate or lock onto. It wasn't easy to deal with them either.

According to what the Pope had said, it was already considered quite good to see enough results within three years.

During this process, the Holy Cathedral would observe the situation and rotate demigods to ensure that the archbishops and high-ranking deacons were in a relatively stable mental state.

After leaving the dream, Leonard looked around and suppressed his voice.

"Old Man, things are a little strange. Why would the various Churches suddenly target the Rose School of Thought?"

This wasn't an easy task. In the past few centuries, it wasn't as if the orthodox Churches hadn't made similar attempts, but they could only suppress and weaken them, without being capable of eradicating the Rose School of Thought.

On the one hand, it was because there were cracks in their alliances. There was suspicion among each other and a lack of cooperation. On the other hand, due to the Rose School of Thought's demigods' indulgence, their mental states might be abnormal, but when faced with danger, they knew how to avoid, hide, and conceal. They wouldn't throw themselves into danger for no reason.

In addition, with the blessings of the Chained God and the Mother Tree of Desire, it was difficult for the deities to provide precise guidance for their actions.

Pallez Zoroast didn't immediately answer Leonard's question. After about ten seconds, “He” sighed and said with a slightly-aged voice, “This is to eliminate potential threats, and to prepare for the apocalypse.”

Prepare for the apocalypse… Leonard turned agape and wanted to say something, but he eventually fell silent.

†

Backlund, Harvest Church.

Emlyn White had just entered the hall, but before he could head to his room and change his clothes, he saw Father Utravsky stand up in the front pew, like a mountain rising from the ground.

“Earth Mother has instructed us to head to the Southern Continent and bury the evil-doers.” The Blessed spoke in a low voice.

His voice reverberated in the hall, like a slow clap of thunder, causing the praying Sanguine believers to open their eyes.

So the dream last night was real… Emlyn was enlightened.

Last night, he dreamed of the Ancestor, and he dreamed that “She” wanted him to work with Father Utravsky and the Rose School of Thought’s temperance faction to head to the Southern Continent to deal with the Rose School of Thought members who believed in the Primordial Moon.

Of course, if there was a chance, the enemies who believed in the Mother Tree of Desire would not be spared.

As he often had fake revelations, Emlyn didn’t take this dream to heart. He planned on changing his clothes and completing his prayers before seeking confirmation with Father Utravsky.

He tersely acknowledged before replying to Father Utravsky in a rather composed manner.

“There’s no rush.

“I’ll first contact the members of the Rose School of Thought’s temperance faction.”

Father Utravsky nodded nonchalantly and said, “Select some volunteer Sanguine too.”

†

In the Intis Republic, in the capital, Trier, a supervisor of an intelligence agency was assigning tasks to his subordinates.

Suddenly, his vision blurred as he heard a distant voice ring in his ears.

“Orville… Dylan… Orville… Dylan…”

Chapter 1362 - Witness

◆

As a Beyonder who joined the Intis Public Security Bureau as a member of the Secret Order, it wasn't the first time that Antoine encountered something like that.

In the past, whenever he advanced, he would hear "Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…" He nearly lost control of himself several times.

Unlike before, the content of the whispers seemed to have changed.

After the ravings died down, everything in front of him returned to normal. Antoine frowned and muttered to himself, My mental state has been very stable recently, and I haven't consumed the potion or attempted to advance. Why would I hear the whispers of a secret existence?

This doesn't seem to be the same as before…

What does Orville mean? I lack enough information. I can't understand it at all…

Dylan, Dylan, yes, the brass of the Order have mentioned that our mysterious and terrifying leader once hid an ancient castle called Dylan…

Tsk, once I recall that existence, I can't help but shiver. Although "He" has returned to normal in the past two years, the terrifying legends and physical destruction that "He" left behind is enough to give people a lifetime of nightmares…

Antoine calmed himself down and suppressed his puzzlement. He continued to assign missions to his subordinates.

†

In front of a tombstone, Klein, who had just put down the white flowers, turned his head slightly, as though he was listening to something.

Although he didn’t hear anything, as a King of Angels who wielded control over a portion of his pathway’s authority, he could acutely sense that something was amiss. Some secret information was being transmitted to specific targets.

Zaratul isn’t completely dead yet? Klein retracted his gaze and muttered to himself.

Back then, he had relied on his level, status, and authority to forcefully stop Zaratul’s resurrection. He didn’t sense anything abnormal, but after studying himself, he realized something problematic.

The Beyonder characteristic he had absorbed from Zaratul was one that contained an entire set of Sequence 9 to 1 Beyonder characteristics.

That also meant that this only included a single Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic.

And Snake of Fate Will Auceptin had mentioned that Zaratul and the ancestor of the Antigonus family had both taken an additional Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic in “Them.”

Therefore, the reality of the situation was that there was no doubt that there was an additional Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic on Zaratul which had vanished. As for whether there were any additional Beyonder characteristics like Scholar of Yore and Bizarro Sorcerer, Klein had no way of guessing due to his lack of understanding of Zaratul.

Based on this situation, Klein had long suspected that Zaratul wasn't completely dead.

Of course, if the other party wanted to revive, it wouldn't be that simple. This was because using too simple a method would result in a lack of concealment. It would definitely be discovered by the higher Sequence Beyonders of the same pathway, and thus, an effective prevention method would be set up.

When Zaratul was able to separate a Sequence 2 Beyonder characteristic from "Himself," "He" was undoubtedly a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries. There weren't many enemies that could restrain "Him"—ones that had to be dealt with using the most cautious of attitudes.

Therefore, Klein believed that "He" had used the portion of the Beyonder characteristics that "He" had dissociated from himself to seize an opportunity. However, it wasn't to directly use it to revive. Instead, it was a way to make plenty of preparations. "He" needed an opportunity or some mediums to make the preparations play out.

From the looks of it, "He" hid that portion of the Beyonder characteristic that contained the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic in a particular manner and concealed it carefully. Otherwise, when I advanced to Attendant of Mysteries, I should've been able to use Sefirah Castle to directly see it…

Yes, the next step should be to use some concealed method to guide or entice a specific target to revive "Him." Heh, "He" hasn't accommodated a Uniqueness, so "He" can't "broadcast on all channels." Besides, "He" has to be sure that the advanced me or Amon doesn't hear the corresponding content and spoil "His" plans. Therefore, the number of targets "He" can entice is rather limited… All members of the Secret Order, or a portion of the members? Klein, who was genuflecting, nodded in thought.

He exhaled and grumbled without hiding anything.

Why are High-Sequence Beyonders of the Seer pathway so difficult to kill?

There were all sorts of preparations and trump cards.

This made him truly understand why the Goddess didn't directly kill the ancestor of the Antigonus family.

For The Half-Fool, death might mean a new lease of life!

However, an intricate and complicated setup often means that the ability to take risks is inferior. Who knows if Zaratul's resurrection plan will benefit some lucky Secret Order member. The possibility of this happening might even be higher than "Him" returning from the fog of history. Also, there's a chance of being interfered, influenced, or exploited by the Outer Deities… Klein sneered inwardly as he slowly stood up.

He temporarily didn't have any thoughts of finding the Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic. This was because, under the immense pressure brought by Error Amon, he had no choice but to seize the opportunity to strengthen his humanity and stabilize his mental state. He had to head to Calderón City in the spirit world to retrieve the river water of the River of Eternal Darkness, so as to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness. He had no time to waste on non-urgent matters.

By the time he successfully advanced and restored a new balance for the situation he was in, he didn't mind heading to Intis and dealing with the members of the Secret Order in search of the hidden treasure vault that Zaratul had hidden. This would completely put the angel who had lived since the Fourth Epoch to eternal rest.

He reined in his thoughts and lowered his head to look at the tombstone in front of him. Klein slowly retreated, inserted his hand into his pocket, and turned to the side to enter the spirit world.

In recent times, he was like a tourist in mysticism. Occasionally, he would return to where he used to be, and occasionally, under the guidance of fate, he would casually travel around the spirit world, heading to different realities to witness different scenes.

As a result, his self-awareness and self-consciousness gradually recovered and solidified. He was now able to use his anchors to suppress the awakening will of the Celestial Worthy to a certain extent.

This made his mind a lot more stable than when he met the Evernight Goddess.

In the spirit world—the saturated layers that resembled an abstract oil painting—Klein wandered aimlessly as he walked a few steps in a direction that wasn't in the usual meaning of the word direction.

Following the guidance of fate and spirituality, he left this place and returned to the real world.

The first thing that appeared before him was a small square and a cathedral belonging to the Evernight Goddess.

At this moment, many people were entering the cathedral, looking delighted.

I'm back in Backlund? Klein looked up at the sun that penetrated the thin clouds and followed the crowd to the cathedral's door.

The moment he passed the entrance, his gaze suddenly froze.

He saw Benson.

Benson Moretti.

The black-haired, brown-eyed man's face looked somewhat similar to Klein's. However, the slightly older-looking man had his hair combed neatly backward, revealing his broad forehead.

He stood beside the altar, wearing a well-ironed suit, looking a little nervous.

Klein stared for two seconds before quickly looking away.

Following that, he swept his gaze across the front pew and saw Melissa in a white, conservative dress.

Compared to before, the young lady's face no longer had that adolescent look on it. There was more meat to her face, making her no longer look so skinny.

She kept chatting with the people around her, skillfully handling all kinds of matters and socializing.

She still dresses in such an old-fashioned manner. Thankfully, she didn't wear black… The corners of Klein's lips curled up as he mumbled. He walked to a corner of the cathedral and found a seat to sit down.

About ten minutes later, Melissa finished her work and sat in her seat.

The joyous music started to play as it gradually turned solemn.

A lady wearing a clean, white wedding gown held her father's arm in one hand and held her mother's arm with her other. She walked down the aisle towards the altar.

Benson, who was standing near the altar, gulped a mouthful of saliva and couldn't help but smile.

This was his wedding.

Klein, who was in the corner, saw this scene and leaned back a little. He lowered his head slightly and muttered, "He smiles like a curly-haired baboon…"

After the bride was brought to the front of the altar by her parents, she bowed to Benson before facing the Sacred Emblem and the priest.

Benson bowed and turned around.

After the bride’s parents sat down, the priest said, “Dear friends and family, we are gathered here today to witness and celebrate the union of this couple in marriage under the auspices of the benevolent Goddess.

“Praise the Lady.” All the guests present raised their right hands as long as they were believers of the Evernight Goddess before drawing four points in a clockwise fashion, drawing out a star.

This included Klein.

When everyone settled down, the priest turned his head and said to the bride, “Do you, Lucy Brook, take Benson Moretti to be your lawfully wedded husband, promising to love and cherish, through joy and sorrow, sickness and health, and whatever challenges you may face, for as long as you both shall live?”

The lady named Lucy looked at the Evernight Goddess’s Sacred Emblem and nodded solemnly.

“I do.”

Benson’s smile reappeared.

The priest turned to look at him and said, “Do you, Benson Moretti, take Lucy Brook to be your lawfully wedded wife, promising to love and cherish, through joy and sorrow, sickness and health, and whatever challenges you may face, for as long as you both shall live?”

Benson immediately nodded and said, “I do!”

Upon seeing this and hearing him, Melissa’s vision turned blurry. Her heart winced along with joy.

After going through all sorts of ups and downs, their family was finally welcoming a new member.

Suddenly, she turned her head subconsciously to the corner and saw an empty seat. There was no one there.

Melissa immediately pursed her lips and shook her head slightly.

After scanning the area for several seconds, she slowly retracted her gaze and looked back at the altar.

It wasn't until the priest announced that Benson and Lucy were man and wife did Melissa smile again.

†

In the Hall family manor in East Chester County, Klein walked out of the void.

He had stabilized his mind, and could now seek treatment from his psychiatrist. At the same time, he needed to solve a problem.

Chapter 1363 - Treatment Plan

◆

On the veranda covered by the autumn sun, Audrey wore a refreshing vacation straw hat and sat on a lawn chair as she leisurely flipped through a fashion magazine.

There were exquisite pastries and a cup of black tea made from tea leaves from her family's manor on the round table beside her.

Suddenly, she looked up to the edge of the veranda and saw Gehrman Sparrow walking over in a black trench coat and silk top hat.

Audrey turned her head and glanced at her maid, Annie, and realized that she, like the servants around her, ignored the stranger who had appeared out of nowhere.

At the same time, Audrey noticed that the surroundings seemed to darken a little.

She stood up, lifting the corners of her skirt as she curtsied.

During this process, she had originally planned on seriously discussing the matter between the Psychology Alchemists and Mr. Wrath, but on second thought, she smiled again and said in that infectious and brisk tone, "Mr. World, are you here to seek psychological counseling, or to deal with Mr. Wrath's problem?"

If it was just the former, Audrey believed that The World Gehrman Sparrow would let her meet him above the gray fog. That would be more convenient and faster. Therefore, this angel was definitely here under Mr. Fool's instructions to complete a mission in the real world.

At the same time, she acutely sensed that Mr. World's emotions were rather mixed. He was satisfied and happy, yet depressed and sad.

As Gehrman Sparrow's main doctor, this situation wasn't rare. It often meant that he needed a certain degree of counseling or comfort.

"Both." Klein pulled a chair over and sat by the round table.

"Do you want black tea or coffee?" Although Audrey hadn't taken the initiative to investigate Mr. World, she had met Dwayne Dantès many times before. They had attended meetings, banquets, and dances together, and under the keen observation of a Spectator, many details weren't secrets.

For example, Audrey knew that when Dwayne Dantès was Gehrman Sparrow, he preferred food that was sweet with a little sourness. He liked to drink coffee with sugar without milk; for black tea, he loved having lemon slices; out of all the pastries, his first choice was the cream pastries. He loved foie gras, roasted chicken skin, and loved rib-eye steaks more than beef tenderloin. His love for Desi pie far exceeded bread.

In addition, Audrey was undoubtedly certain that the other party was a spice enthusiast. He had high expectations of condiments, and his preferences in this aspect were inclined towards that of Desi County.

Due to these details, Audrey believed that it would be very rude to not invite Mr. World to enjoy the pastries on the table. And the beverage of choice to match these snacks was undoubtedly either black tea or coffee.

"Black tea," Klein answered after some thought.

Miss Justice's relaxed and amiable attitude made him feel much more at ease. He felt that this state would be more beneficial for the subsequent "Placating."

Since that was the case, it would definitely be better for him to enjoy the pastries while receiving psychological treatment.

“Give me another cup of black tea and add a lemon slice,” Audrey said to her maid, Annie.

Annie wasn’t surprised by the instructions, finding everything reasonable. She turned around and walked to the veranda’s entrance, giving instructions to the servants standing there.

Audrey wasn’t in a rush to begin the psychological treatment process, nor did she ask Mr. World why he was in a complicated mood. She smiled as she carefully introduced the local products of the manor. She made a comparison with Dwayne Dantès’s Maygur Manor and naturally informed him of the present situation regarding his butler and servants.

Some stayed in the manor and continued their previous work. With Maygur Manor’s production, it was perfectly fine sustaining them. There was even some surplus that could be converted to funds to repair the houses and be donated to charity organizations. Audrey only sent an accountant, an assistant butler, and a staff member from the foundation to do a check on them. Some felt that, without a true employer, they couldn’t play their role to their fullest potential. They felt ashamed of the salary they received and chose to resign and look for work. Some of them developed an interest in charity work and found a new calling to life and joined one of the foundations under Audrey’s name…

Klein listened silently, occasionally raising a question, as though he was chatting with a friend.

When the tea was served, he took a sip and nodded in satisfaction.

After watching him eat a piece of cream cake, Audrey’s green eyes darted around as she said with a smile, “Food doesn’t seem to be necessary for an angel, right?”

“Yes, it’s just a hobby,” Klein answered simply before adding, “It can be used to maintain one’s humanity.”

Maintain one’s humanity… Audrey ruminated over the sentence. “This is to resist the godhood within you? Your mental problems come under such a category?”

She gently guided the topic to his psychological treatment.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “That’s right.

“You should’ve experienced it. Every Beyonder who has obtained godhood will definitely experience it in some way. The difference is in the quantity.”

Audrey seriously recalled and said, “I occasionally dream of a ball of light that illuminated the entire world. Occasionally, I would hear an indescribable sound, and I would see a blurry, strange, illusory ocean that seemed to contain many conflicting thoughts. I’m certain that it was an illusion, but it was also so real.

“Well, I occasionally dream of a huge cross. I heard someone praying softly but I couldn’t tell the specifics no matter how I tried.”

The second is likely from the sefirah, Chaos Sea, and the indirect corruption from within. The third is Visionary Adam beginning to exert influence on the Beyonders of the same pathway… The first one is the Primordial One awakening in the ancient sun god’s body, the ancient God Almighty? Klein thought for a moment before saying in a deep voice, “The original Creator created all living things and also split into various Beyonder characteristics. This is the source of being extraordinary.

“Therefore, every one of us has godhood in our bodies. They have the original Creator’s will. The more Beyonder characteristics gathered, the more ‘He’ will awaken and replace us.”

He used the most common and most ambiguous method to explain the root of the problem in a way that wouldn't lead to corruption.

This had been discussed to a certain extent at the Tarot Club, so Audrey didn't find it difficult to understand. She said thoughtfully, "That's why one needs to use one's humanity to resist godhood. At the same time, anchors are needed?"

"Yes, the light you dream of, the indescribable sounds you hear, and the illusory ocean that you see are all a type of corruption. And the gigantic cross and prayer sounds should be a result of the influence that Visionary Adam has on the Beyonders of the same pathway," Klein explained the two different situations.

Audrey subconsciously sat up straight and looked around. She appeared a little afraid.

Gehrman Sparrow actually said the name of the He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named!

"Don't worry. 'He' can't hear me with me by your side," Klein explained.

Audrey retracted her gaze and didn't hide her surprise and astonishment.

"You've already advanced to Sequence 1?"

Isn't that too fast… "He" had only become a Sequence 2 angel slightly more than half a year ago!

Klein answered frankly, "More like a King of Angels."

"…" Audrey was silent for a few seconds. She pursed her lips and said with a "vexed" smile, "I nearly had a psychological problem just now."

Klein chuckled as well.

"To me, becoming a King of Angels isn't necessarily a good thing.

"Yes, High-Sequence Beyonders of the Spectator pathway have to pay particular attention to their mental state. To other pathways, the enhancement of godhood and the worsening corruption is rather obvious. But this isn't the case for a Spectator. You have to constantly inspect and check yourself. Any tiny changes to one's personality and their understanding of things should be traced back to the source. It must be confirmed that there are no problems and that the difference can be considered a normal change. Otherwise, you'll unknowingly become another person who can coldly kill those who you originally wanted to protect.

"It's not easy for Beyonders of the Spectator pathway to go crazy, but it's also the easiest for them to go crazy."

Audrey replied in shock, "I understand."

She continued the topic and began asking, "Your mental state is unstable, and you have a psychological problem. Is it because you became a King of Angels in such a short period of time that it exceeded your expectations?"

"Yes." Klein drank a mouthful of black tea and said, "The will that doesn't belong to me within me has mostly awakened. I can only barely suppress it and maintain some basic level of mental stability."

As Audrey listened to Gehrman Sparrow's description, she used her Beyonder powers to observe and analyze him.

After the other party finished speaking, she revealed a comforting smile and said, "I roughly understand your current situation. The initial treatment plan is divided into two steps: I'll first enter your mind world and awaken the memories related to your humanity. Oh, it doesn't include the kind that will make you so miserable that you wish to give up. Then, when your godhood reacts, I'll use Placate, Hypnotism, and other Beyonder powers to reduce the corruption and the negative effects it brings, so as to help you better suppress it."

Klein was silent for a moment before saying, "Okay."

He decided to use his unique trait of maintaining lucidity in the dream and the mind world, and first gather up the memories related to The Fool before “Grafting” them to the Worms of Spirit above the gray fog.

At that moment, Audrey got her maid, Annie, to bring over a white silk scarf.

Then, she used the thin scarf to cover her eyes and ears.

Klein watched this scene in puzzlement as he waited for Miss Justice to explain.

After tying the scarf, Audrey smiled and said, “This is a hypnotism that allows me to seal my Spirit Body’s perception.

“This way, even if I were to enter your mind world, I wouldn’t be able to hear or see those awakened memories. Of course, I’ll keep my spiritual intuition; otherwise, I wouldn’t be able to find your island of consciousness, and I wouldn’t be able to sense the changes in your godhood.

“I could’ve just hypnotized you, but you’re already a King of Angels. I’m worried that I’ll be affected by your consciousness, so I’m using this symbolic ritual to achieve the state of being hypnotized and strengthen the effects.”

She calmly explained, calming Klein’s mood without him realizing it.

He nodded gently and said, “Alright, let’s begin.”

Chapter 1364 - Proactive Klein

◆◆◆

After opening the “door” to the Body of Heart and Mind, Klein carefully extracted the memories related to The Fool. He gathered them together and “Grafted” them above the gray fog.

Following that, he saw the blonde-haired Audrey, who had a light white silk scarf covering her eyes, appear on the ancient stone steps. Step by step, she landed onto his mind island via the sea of collective subconscious.

After some hesitation, Klein no longer allowed his consciousness to stay high in the sky. He gave up the corresponding control and allowed them to return and fuse together.

If he didn’t do that, he would maintain absolute rationality in the subsequent treatment, making him unable to be moved by all kinds of memories and lose the possibility of strengthening his humanity.

This meant that Audrey’s treatment was destined to fail right from the start.

After arriving at the mind island that resembled a dream world using her spiritual intuition, Audrey stopped and spread her arms slightly.

She recalled her parents’ love for her, the excitement she felt when she first became a Beyonder, and the joy she felt after helping others to change her emotions and emit corresponding fluctuations.

This was a method of awakening Gehrman Sparrow’s memories related to his humanity. It was a Beyonder manifestation of the effects of "empathy."

Scenes that were worth cherishing, or those hiding deep within, flashed across Audrey's mind one after another. Beneath her feet, from the surface of the island that represented Klein's mind, firefly-like light points seeped out of the "soil" and floated up.

[image]

Every point of light presented a different scene:

"A kid taking a stride forward with his short legs, receiving an ice-cream;

"A student secretly reading novels and comics under the cover of a textbook."

"A teenager sitting in front of his computer and playing games with full focus. Hearing the sound of a key suddenly being inserted into a keyhole, he jumped up and performed a force shutdown on his computer. Rushing back to his room, happy that his actions weren't discovered, he had a bounce in his step. Going to the living room, he asked his mother for pocket money, before appearing beside his father to casually ask questions about his studies;

"A young adult and his companions pushing a bashful friend to the corridor, right up to the person he had a crush on. Then, turning around, he laughed loudly;

"A young adult with some hint of adolescence to him stealing a glance downstairs, watching a figure leave, but unable to open his mouth no matter what;

"An employee with a slightly protruding belly waving his hand impatiently when he returned home for the holidays. After telling his parents not to serve him food or set up blind dates for him, he sees his parents' white hair and loses himself in thought when he calmed down;

"A scholarly-looking man and his brother and sister moving out. When they saw the dirt and dust on each other's faces, they laughed;

"…"

Klein sat at the round table at the veranda, one hand holding his top hat and the other hanging in midair, as though he wanted to cover his face.

Two transparent drops of water slowly slid past the two sides of his nose bridge and dripped into the void.

Klein closed his eyes, his expression soft and pained.

In his mind island, Audrey seemed to have transformed into a whirlpool of emotions as she pulled together similar memories.

After the entire island was covered in firefly-like points of light, a faint gray fog emerged.

In the fog, there was a door of light that was dyed bluish-black. It was formed from illusory and brilliant spherical light.

The main body of each spherical light was composed of transparent, ringed, or starlight-like worms and insects. They embraced each other and intertwined like mythical creatures.

The door of light looked a little odd at first glance, but if one looked closely, they would discover that its surroundings were dark. It was as though it was wearing a hooded black robe.

Thus, on a whole, it looked like an unknown mysterious person hiding under a robe.

In the next second, a slippery, illusory tentacle appeared under the deep black robe of the mysterious person.

At that moment, although Audrey's consciousness couldn't see or hear anything, her spiritual intuition gave her a strong sense of danger. She had a feeling that a sea consisting of corruption was about to drown her.

No, this isn’t an illusion! She believed that if things continued to develop like this, she would get infected with a severe mental illness, or even lose control and go crazy on the spot!

Audrey was just about to “Placate” herself with all her might, weakening the corruption ahead of her when the firefly-like light dots floating above the island rapidly gathered. They illuminated the grayish-white fog, diluting the darkness around the strange door of light, making the tentacles covered in mysterious patterns shrink back.

This was also the reason why Klein could receive psychological treatment only after barely suppressing the awakening Celestial Worthy’s consciousness.

This made Audrey sense the weakening of the danger, and she quickly did a Psychoanalysis. Then, she immediately “Placated” the corruption, performing a true act of hypnosis.

After repeating it over and over again, Audrey took an unknown amount of time before she finally managed to obtain the initial results she expected.

She then left Gehrman Sparrow’s mind island and returned to her body.

This treatment was very difficult, so she didn’t use a “Virtual Persona” and directly used her Body of Heart and Mind.

After sensing the end of the treatment, Klein raised his hand to wipe his face, allowing The Fool’s memories “Grafted” above the gray fog to return to his true body.

A few seconds later, Audrey removed the white silk scarf wrapped around her eyes and nose, snapping herself out of her self-hypnosis.

She looked at Mr. World opposite her and muttered to herself poignantly, “Is this the mental problem brought by godhood?”

How terrifying…

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Yes, every angel has one. The only difference is whether it’s serious or very serious.”

“Saints have it too. Even Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders who aren’t demigods will have it

too.” Audrey added with Gehrman Sparrow’s former explanation.

“To a Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder, the remnant mental imprint of the former owner of the characteristic is relatively more dangerous.” Klein picked up the gold-lined cup and took a sip. “This is the cruel law of the mysterious world. This is because our Beyonder powers come from external objects, from the Beyonder characteristics.”

Audrey nodded before shaking her head gently. As she contemplated, she said, “I don’t think it’s that pessimistic, just like the source of every human life comes from something else: air, bread, meat, water, etc.

“When we absorb them, we will also absorb their negative effects, accumulating all kinds of problems that eventually make us fall sick. However, this doesn’t mean that we have to completely resist them and treat them as external objects. Once they’re absorbed, there will always be some part of it that belongs to us.

“I didn’t express it well, but I believe you should understand what I mean.”

Klein was taken aback for a moment before replying thoughtfully, “A Beyonders acquisition of a Beyonder characteristic is like humans having food?

“Then, one should have peace of mind and not have too many repulsive thoughts; it’s about resisting it, but also working alongside it; and suppressing it, but also fusing together with it?”

“Roughly like that.” After Audrey said that, she laughed self-deprecatingly. “However, this also seems to imply a negative message: humans will eventually die, but Beyonders…”

She didn’t finish her sentence, unwilling to agitate the patient opposite her.

She switched topics and said, “Pay a visit another two times this week. I’ll be able to stabilize you under normal conditions. Yes, normal conditions.

“Also, you can reminisce about things when you’re free, or go somewhere you yearn to go.”

Klein nodded and said, “What do you have in mind about Wrath’s suggestion?”

The smile on Audrey’s face slowly disappeared as her expression gradually turned serious.

“Do you have any suggestions?”

Klein put down his teacup and calmly said, “Strictly speaking, the danger you bring is divided into two categories: One is when you actively or passively involve yourself in certain matters, attracting powerful enemies to your side, implicating your family, relatives, friends, and the innocent. The other is that your very existence allows some factions to target the people you value the most, doing so to threaten you.

“For the latter, unless you’re dead, there’s no way for you to ever avoid them. Of course, most of these things are a result of the former.

“If you give up on all your current identities in the mysticism world, and only be Mr. Fool’s believer and Miss Audrey Hall from now on, no longer taking the initiative to participate in matters related to Beyonder or other matters with unpredictable elements, you can avoid most of the risks of the former and drastically reduce the latter.

"Under such circumstances, with the Evernight Goddess favoring the Hall family, and Mr. Fool's protection provided to you is enough to deal with the rare instances of dangers, ensuring your family's safety.

"That's why there's no need to split off another identity."

Audrey fell silent for a while. She bit her lower lip indiscernibly and asked, "What if I do want to split off an identity?"

"As long as you let that identity believe in Mr. Fool, it's not much different from what I said just now. The only difference is that, from this point forth, you'll have to stay away from your family and friends and live with another identity." Klein's voice sank slightly as he said in a serious tone, "Also, are you really fine with Hermes splitting off an identity for you?"

Audrey's emotions were disrupted by this question. Her eyes flickered as she said, "However, splitting identities should be a Beyonder powers of a Sequence 3 Dreamweaver."

She definitely wouldn't be able to accomplish it by herself.

The corners of Klein's mouth curled up as he suddenly asked, "You're able to use that Pride mask to enter the Garden of Eden directly?"

As Audrey couldn't take the initiative to mention the Psychology Alchemists, he very directly pointed it out.

Audrey nodded gently, surprised, puzzled, and guessed something.

"I'm unable to pay the equivalent price, and…"

Without waiting for her to finish, Klein said with a cold expression,

"On the one hand, Adam has drifted from Mr. Fool and nearly killed me. On the other hand, with the apocalypse approaching, Mr. Fool has prophesied something: when the time comes, 'He' might fall asleep again. As 'His' Blessed, I won't be able to escape a similar fate. The payment you need to pay is that, when such an anomaly happens, perform certain dangerous things according to Mr. Fool's instructions and try hard to awaken 'Him.'"

Without giving Miss Justice a chance to digest this sentence, Klein extended his right hand and grabbed a few times at the void ahead of him, pulling out a grayish-white, cold persona mask.

Using his status and Audrey's trust in him, he forcefully summoned the projection of the Pride mask from the Historical Void.

"It's connected to my mind, so no one else can use it." Audrey subconsciously pointed out the problem when she saw this.

"Give me a strand of hair," Klein said calmly.

Audrey didn't think too much about it. She plucked out a strand of blonde hair and handed it to Gehrman Sparrow.

Klein took the strand of hair and wrapped it in the eye holes in the persona mask.

Then, he held his silk hat in one hand and the grayish-white mask in the other as he slowly stood up.

During this process, he mobilized Sefirah Castle and "Deceived" the rules.

Pa!

Klein wore the Pride mask without facing any resistance. Immediately, he saw human-clothed animals walking upright.

He had entered the Garden of Eden directly.

Looking at the black cathedral in the middle of the city, Klein curled his lips and took out the Staff of the Stars and wore the silk top hat over his head.

Chapter 1365 - Destruction

◆

The moment they sensed the intrusion of a stranger, the animals wearing cloaks or exquisite long skirts stirred as they looked at Klein with the desire to attack.

At that instant, Klein, who was wearing the Pride mask, felt as though he was an enemy of the entire city.

He wasn’t unfamiliar with the situation in the Garden of Eden. He knew that the upright animals dressed as humans were in different aspects of Bestial Desires. They were more like conceptual and abstract entities instead of being physical.

In other words, they didn’t have Spirit Body Threads, so they wouldn’t suffer any physical harm. Otherwise, Klein could’ve hoisted these animals up, allowing them to sway with the wind.

In the next second, with the bear whose suit was about to rip apart taking the lead, the animals in the Garden of Eden either bared their fangs or let out low growls as they surged towards Klein from all directions.

Once bitten or hugged by them, one would be corrupted by the corresponding Bestial Desire. One could only rely on their willpower or the various Beyonder powers of the Spectator pathway to resist them.

Faced with such a situation, Klein, who was wearing a half top hat, tapped the Staff of the Stars. Without panicking in the slightest, he raised his left hand, spread his fingers, and suddenly closed them.

The Garden of Eden, formed from gothic-style architecture, was suddenly covered in a layer of gloom, as if a giant curtain had draped over it.

“Realm of the Mysteries,” the embryonic form of a divine kingdom!

Klein sealed off the Garden of Eden to prevent the powerhouses inside from escaping.

Following that, he walked forward one step at a time, like a gentleman taking an after-meal stroll.

The animals who mimicked humans by wearing human clothes rushed to his side when they naturally changed directions and embraced each other.

The python with its flicking tongue devoured a canine creature filled with the desire to mate; the strange person with a colorful spider as a face bound a huge, red-eyed rat up with a web; a violent werewolf bit the languid cat; the brown bear walking upright gave the fox with shiny fur a bear hug…

These animals that represented Bestial Desire fused together as they canceled each other out in pairs.

Klein, who had grasped the authority of “Grafting,” slowly walked through them, as though he was inspecting the concepts of humanity and Bestial Desires.

Just like that, he walked to the eighty-meter-tall cathedral and stopped.

Then, he lifted his head and looked at the skulls embedded in the black pillar for two seconds.

Klein’s expression didn’t change at all. He raised his left hand to press down his hat and walked up the stairs into the cathedral.

He immediately saw a grand and spacious hall, with a huge cross and a grayish-white dragon statue wrapped around the cross.

In front of the cross was a small long table with five seats on both sides of the long table.

At this moment, at the end of the long table, there was a man in a black wheelchair. His face was abnormally pale, and his pale yellow eyebrows were long. His hair was neatly combed, and there were some wrinkles on his forehead.

This was the leader of the Psychology Alchemists, Pauli Derlau.

At the same time, he was also the famous hermit Eric Drake, and the King of the Black Throne Barros Hopkins.

Of course, whether he was the main body or one of his various identities, no one knew.

Seeing Gehrman Sparrow, who was wearing a silk top hat and a black trench coat, walk over slowly and in an extremely oppressive manner, Pauli Derlau clasped the armrest of the wheelchair with both hands.

When the other party entered the Garden of Eden, he didn't hesitate to leave this mind city, but he failed to do so.

The eyes beneath the Pride mask that seemed to move towards his forehead seemed to be mocking him.

Phew… Pauli Derlau quickly "Placated" his emotions before his eyes lit up with a pure, illusory light.

This light formed a pair of holy wings in front of him. Under the layers of wings, there was a pious person of light genuflecting in prayer.

This was an angel.

At the same time, an elder with white hair and ordinary looks appeared to the left of Pauli Derlau. To his right, a priest with a pale blond beard covering his face stood up.

Ancient angel, Hermes! Visionary Adam!

Klein didn't stop walking forward as he muttered to himself, "I wish for all illusions to disappear."

Just as he said that, he raised his left hand and snapped his fingers.

The Angel of Light, Hermes, and Visionary Adam, instantly dissipated and vanished, leaving behind a single Pauli Derlau sitting in the black wheelchair.

He had just used the Beyonder powers of a Dreamweaver to weave a few almost realistic images. Once the enemy believed that they were real, they would become real. Although the damage they caused didn't have any physical manifestations, it would make the target die for unknown reasons.

Pauli Derlau has made countless targets die from fright in such nightmares.

Unfortunately, he had encountered Klein—a King of Angels who could maintain his lucidity in dreams and also possessed true vision. He used the "Wishes" power of a Miracle Invoker to easily crack the illusion.

Seeing this, Pauli Derlau's eyelids twitched. Without any hesitation, he pushed himself up from the black wheelchair.

During this process, his body rapidly expanded as he transformed into a huge grayish-white dragon.

Dragon Transformation!

An incomplete Mythical Creature form!

Compared to a Sequence 4 Manipulator, the incomplete Mythical Creature form that Pauli Derlau exhibited was even larger. Furthermore, there was a certain change to his head, making it closer to a lizard and not a human. It had golden vertical pupils and scales that were intertwined with mysterious patterns, making it cold and warped.

As the incomplete Mythical Creature form appeared, all kinds of thoughts, consciousness, desires, and wills swept out like a storm, attacking Klein's mind island in half-illusory and half-realistic ways.

This was a combination of "Mind Deprivation" and "Mental Plague," allowing every creature that was affected to experience corruption and go crazy on the spot.

To an angel, such attacks were the most sinister. This was because all of "Them" had certain problems with "Their" mental states. "They" could lose control at any moment due to the tilting of the scales!

Klein, who was wearing the grayish-white Pride mask and half top hat, didn't stop walking forward. He didn't attempt to avoid the plague storm at the mental level. He remained firm and stoic as he walked step by step towards Pauli Derlau.

In the next second, transparent insects appeared on the back of his hand. His clothes expanded as though countless indescribable monsters were crawling underneath.

Suddenly, Klein lost control and turned into a huge whirlpool formed by transparent maggots.

The vortex extended out slippery tentacles with strange patterns. In the middle, there was a door of light that was dyed bluish-black.

Upon seeing this scene, even in his incomplete Mythical Creature form, Pauli Derlau, found it difficult to stop his thoughts from coming to a halt as he stood rooted to the ground.

The massive grayish-white dragon seemed to have become a puppet; its head was filled with mush and its joints were all rusted.

He had stared straight at a great existence that he shouldn't look at!

Above the gray fog, Klein, who was sitting at The Fool's seat, immediately dispersed the out-of-control historical projection.

After entering the Garden of Eden and pulling out the Staff of the Stars, he had switched places with the Historical Void projection that the Worms of Spirit inside Sefirah Castle had summoned, and directly returned to his ancient palace.

He clearly knew that Visionary Adam had gone to the Forsaken Land of the Gods and was attempting to fuse with the True Creator, making it impossible for "Him" to descend with "His" true body any time in the short foreseeable future. At most, "He" would send out one of "His" other identities, but it would be useless against a king of Kings of Angels. However, Klein still felt that he should be cautious, lest he fall into Adam's or Amon's trap.

Following that, he summoned himself from the fog of history. He wore the Pride mask and held the Staff of the Stars in his hand as he projected himself back into the cathedral of the Garden of Eden.

Seeing that Pauli Derlau had lost most of his rationality and was unable to control his body, Klein didn't directly control his Spirit Body Threads to turn the mind dragon into his marionette. He maintained his pace as he slowly approached the target.

In Pauli Derlau's eyes, Gehrman Sparrow was like death incarnate. He approached him slowly with his own rhythm, but there was no chance of escape.

At that moment, the grayish-white dragon statue on the huge cross behind him moved.

Almost simultaneously, Klein raised his left hand and pulled downwards.

The shadow curtain that enveloped the Garden of Eden instantly contracted, enveloping the huge cross, the grayish-white dragon statue, and Pauli Derlau within.

In the next second, Klein raised the “curtain.”

The incomplete Mythical Creature that Pauli Derlau had transformed into combined with the gigantic cross as though it was a knotted giant tree.

And the grayish-white dragon statue connected the entirety of the Garden of Eden, turning the city outside the cathedral into an abnormally illusory sea that contained all colors.

This wasn’t the Chaos Sea, rather the “loaning” of its strength. It had been “Tampered” by Klein and “Reassembled.”

At that moment, Gehrman Sparrow, who had been walking slowly forward, arrived beside the knotted giant tree. He raised his right hand, and under the vacant yet slightly fearful gaze of Pauli Derlau, he lashed out with the Staff of the Stars.

This cane that was embedded with many gems hit the target heavily, separating it into two.

Between the sounds of parts falling to the ground, Pauli Derlau’s body that had been combined with the huge cross fell to the ground.

The leader of the Psychology Alchemists died before he could even say his last words.

While waiting for Pauli Derlau’s Beyonder characteristic to appear, Klein looked around and chuckled inwardly.

As expected, Hermes’s true goal was to use the faction backing Miss Justice to destroy the Garden of Eden and use it to escape from Adam.

The mind dragon, Ariehogg’s words made “Him” steel his resolve…

However, “He” should’ve still left a few Sealed Artifacts for me. There’s no need to abscond with everything… Could it be that the rabbit should be wearing a Greed mask instead of Wrath?

The Psychology Alchemists might appear again in the future, but the one controlling it in the shadows is no longer the Twilight Hermit Order, but Hermes “Himself.”

Chapter 1366 - Set Up

◆ ◆ ◆

Retracting his gaze, Klein cast his gaze at the Beyonder characteristic that Pauli Derlau's body had produced.

It was formed from thin mist, seemingly an unreal, grayish-white brain from a dream.

He believed that the Garden of Eden was the safest place, so he placed his true body here. All activities in the outside world are just his many different identities? Who would've known that Hermes, who was supposed to be a defensive barrier, had abandoned this place. If a real angel were guarding the Garden of Eden and had fully utilized the uniqueness of this mind city, I wouldn't be able to so easily "Deceive" the rules and successfully infiltrate it… As Klein thought to himself, he randomly made a wish to accelerate the Beyonder characteristic's formation and condensation.

Pa! He snapped his fingers and fulfilled his wish.

Following that, he picked up the Dreamweaver Beyonder characteristic and something that could be used as the supplementary material. He took off the Pride mask on his face and left the Garden of Eden.

As he left, the remaining parts of the city collapsed and merged into the boundless sea of collective subconscious.

From that point onward, the legend of the Garden of Eden would emerge in many dreams, eventually drawn out by some artists, or fabricated into widespread stories.

And all of the stories would come to a consensus—the Garden of Eden was eventually destroyed.

Returning to the Hall family manor's veranda, Klein looked at Miss Justice, who had already composed herself, and handed over the Dreamweaver Beyonder characteristics, the corresponding ingredients, and the potion formula he had seen from the second Blasphemy Slate.

Before Audrey could say anything, he said in a deep voice, "You can go back on your word before officially advancing."

Audrey received Mr. World's gift and nodded silently, indicating that she would seriously consider it.

Wearing the exquisite straw hat, she watched Gehrman Sparrow turn around and walk to the edge of the veranda, disappearing step by step.

†

After removing his traces and concealing the clues, Klein cleverly used "Grafting" and the uniqueness of Sefirah Castle to return to Backlund, appearing in front of Judgment Xio, who was on holiday.

The MI9 colonel, who was munching on an apple, immediately put down the food in her hands. As she wiped her mouth with a tissue, she stood up.

"W-what's the matter?"

She cautiously didn't address him as Mr. World, nor did she call him Gehrman Sparrow.

Klein nodded slightly and said, "Mr. Fool got me to ask you if you wish to obtain the potion formula, Beyonder characteristic, and supplementary ingredients for Sequence 4 Imperative Mage?"

Xio frowned slightly, not feeling any joy. She asked solemnly, "Then, what's the price?"

Klein nodded approvingly.

“The apocalypse is coming. Many changes are beginning to happen, and Mr. Fool has prophesied some matters.

“When the time comes, it’s very likely that ‘He’ will enter a period of slumber again. And as ‘His’ Blessed, ‘His’ left-hand man, I’m unable to escape the same fate. The price you need to pay is that when such a situation really appears, follow the revelation left behind by Mr. Fool, doing something that might be dangerous or simple. It might be an attempt that will take a long while, or just a short moment, so as to awaken Mr. Fool.”

As a King of Angels Seer, the owner of Sefirah Castle, Klein had long been able to make certain levels of prophecies. Recently, he had seen some blurry visions and inspiration. Therefore, without any solid plan, he consciously started putting in place various arrangements.

Right now, I’m a real charlatan… he lampooned himself in thought.

Before Xio could speak, he added, “You can choose to decline. You are not the only person chosen.”

Xio believed that Mr. World wouldn’t use sarcasm when it came to such matters. She didn’t immediately answer as she seriously considered the matter.

Without the pending apocalypse, she felt that she would’ve rejected the offer. Although a demigod was powerful and terrifying, being able to rule a battlefield and control the fates of others, and was a creature that truly possessed godhood, becoming a Sequence 4 wasn’t a matter that was urgent for her.

As a Sequence 5 Disciplinary Paladin, she was able to ensure that she completed most of the missions as a colonel of MI9, with her own capabilities. With her salary and additional income, she could maintain a very decent life for her family.

Even if she were to encounter danger, she could obtain sufficient aid from the official factions. Furthermore, she could make preparations by getting Leymano's Travels in advance, and ask her friend, Fors, to protect her in secret.

In addition, she had investigated the cause of her father's death and fulfilled her wish to restore his honor.

Therefore, no matter what, she didn't have to pay the huge price to become a Sequence 4 Beyonder. Besides, it wasn't impossible for her to get an opportunity from MI9.

Of course, Xio had no idea how much longer until this would happen in the future.

Be it Mr. Fool's warning, or the various prophecies I deliberately gathered using my job, it clearly or vaguely points out that the apocalypse is coming… There are only sixteen years left… Xio subconsciously turned her body to look at the second floor.

Under my present living conditions, Mom will definitely be able to live for another sixteen years. At that time, she wouldn't be too old. Furthermore, Mr. Moon has provided all kinds of medicine to maintain her health… Sixteen years later, Rio will be a young man in his prime, at the peak of his career… Fors might already become a Sequence 3 Beyonder, and in order to deal with the apocalypse and seek hope, she would be busy running around, but I wouldn't be of much help… Xio slowly retracted her gaze as she fell silent.

Then, she looked at The World Gehrman Sparrow and nodded solemnly.

"Okay."

"You can set up a ritual at any time and make a wish to Mr. Fool. 'He' will fulfill your wish." Klein didn't waste any time and gave a simple explanation.

His Imperative Mage Beyonder characteristic and potion formula were all obtained from the New Moon City's sacrifice. Of course, he had also bestowed his believers with the Sealed Artifact, General of the Pupilless Eye, in exchange.

After Xio made her decision, she stopped worrying about the matter and said, "Wendel apparently went to Utopia, but strangely, he returned that very night and didn't go to court to testify.

"That makes him puzzled and worried."

"Tell him that there's no need to worry about this matter anymore. All the people of Utopia were buried in a natural disaster." With that said, Klein turned and walked into the spirit world.

†

In the outskirts of Backlund East Borough, in a cemetery.

Klein silently looked at the niches filled with urns of ashes and didn't look away for a long time.

After a while, he slowly walked under a tree's shade. He took out the historical projection of the adventurer's harmonica and blew it.

With four blonde, red-eyed heads and dressed in a dark and complicated long dress, Reinette Tinekerr immediately walked out of the void.

Without waiting for Miss Messenger to speak, Klein asked, "The various Churches are preparing to besiege the Rose School of Thought and plan on joining forces with you.

"Is there anything I can help you with?"

He had learned of the matter from Leonard and Emlyn.

Reinette Tinekerr's four blonde, red-eyed heads said, "There's…"

“Nothing…” “For…” “Now…”

“Talk…” “After…” “Locking on…” “Target…”

That is to say that, with the interference in divination, and prophecies, and the protection from Outer Deities like the Mother Tree of Desire, Primordial Moon, as well as Kings of Angels like the Chained God, the Rose School of Thought demigods aren’t that easy to find. They need a certain amount of time to employ various strategies? That’s right. Even Arrodes wouldn’t dare spy on them under such circumstances. Perhaps I can summon its Historical Void projection… Klein thought for a moment and said, “If there are items directly related to them, using them as a medium I can lock onto the corresponding target.”

When the time came, he could use Sefirah Castle’s power to penetrate the shield.

“Alright!” Reinette Tinekerr’s four beautiful heads bobbed up and down at the same time.

With nothing left to discuss, he planned on letting Miss Messenger return.

He had originally intended to jokingly ask, “Do I need to pay for the summoning this time?” His spiritual perception suddenly stirred as he fell silent.

A few seconds later, he took out a gold coin from Sefirah Castle.

This was one of the five gold coins that had been tainted by Sefirah Castle’s aura.

“The payment this time.” Klein handed over the gold coin with a smile.

“No need…” “This time…” After Reinette Tinekerr’s two blonde, red-eyed heads said that, the remaining two didn’t say anything.

“She” had powerful spiritual perception capabilities, and appeared as though “She” had sensed something.

In the next second, one of the two blonde, red-eyed heads that didn’t open its mouth rose up and bit the gold coin at Klein’s fingertip.

“Alright,” Klein retracted his hand and said with a smile.

Then, he casually asked, “Is Miss Sharron and Maric still in Backlund?”

“Yes…” Miss Messenger informed Klein about “Her” student’s address.

†

In a house, Maric sat at a long table and skillfully played cards with his zombies.

Suddenly, Sherlock Moriarty appeared on an empty chair. He put down his hat and took the covered cards from a zombie without any hesitation.

Maric looked up at him. His lips moved, but he didn’t open them in the end.

He let the zombie in charge of croupier duties continue to hand out the cards.

Just like that, Klein joined them. He played a few rounds, winning and losing at times.

In the corner, Sharron, who was wearing a black regal dress and a small and delicate bonnet, appeared at some point in time. She held her face with one hand and quietly watched the game.

After playing for about two hours, Klein stood up and formally bowed to Miss Sharron and Maric.

Then, he chuckled, put on his hat, walked towards the door, and disappeared.

†

Deep in the spirit world, Klein, who had finished a course of three treatments, appeared outside Calderón City.

Chapter 1367 - Distributary

◆

As he didn’t know what state Amon was in right now, Klein didn’t dare delay. After his mental problems were resolved, he immediately came to Calderón City and prepared to obtain the river water of the River of Eternal Darkness.

And because it involved a sefirah, he could only vaguely see some visions when using divination or making a prophecy. He couldn’t accurately make a judgment.

After surveying the area, Klein raised his hand to summon the Historical Void projection from a few minutes ago, allowing his true body to return to Sefirah Castle.

His consciousness then shifted to the projection, making it corporeal.

Following that, Klein grabbed at the void again and pulled out the Staff of the Stars’s historical projection.

To be honest, after being able to use most of the Beyonder powers below Sequence 0 of the Apprentice pathway through Sefirah Castle, Klein no longer needed a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact like the Staff of the Stars. He could basically replicate whatever mystical effects it had without the negative effects.

However, he always felt that an angel still had to possess a close-combat weapon because it was possible to fall into a region that nullified Beyonder powers at some point in time.

In the mysterious world, this was definitely something that could happen. Be it the law restrictions from the Arbiter pathway, or the Beyonder effects of a particular Outer Deity, it was possible to achieve similar effects.

Under such circumstances, if he picked up a hard staff that came with passive effects and directly smashed it in the enemy's head, it would prove to be rather effective.

As a King of Angels of the Seer pathway, making preparations in all aspects was an instinct!

After weighing the Staff of the Stars and pressing down on his top hat, Klein took out the golden bird-shaped accessory from Sefirah Castle and placed it in his left breast pocket.

Then, he took a step and entered Calderón City, the divine kingdom of ancient Death—Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace.

The first thing that entered his vision was a huge bottomless pit. All sorts of strange buildings circled the deep pit and extended downwards in circles, forming a grand city that was beyond the understanding of ordinary people.

Some of the buildings were standalone houses that stood atop pale-white stone pillars, while others were huge rectangular coffins. There were no windows, and the doors were on the roofs. Some of them were just tombs with gravestones at the entrance, while others were constructed from all kinds of bones, making them seem rather messy…

The closer to the bottom of the pit, the more intact the buildings were. The closer they got to the top, the more they collapsed, filled with the decay and ruin of time.

With just a glance, Klein made a faint grayish-white fog appear around him. He directly used Sefirah Castle's status to resist the laws of Calderón City which turned all living beings into the dead.

To him, becoming a dead person wasn't a negative effect, but he didn't like that cold and indifferent feeling.

The grayish-white tide that rose previously has receded… Klein, who was wearing a top hat and trench coat while carrying the staff, nodded in thought. With one step, he stepped deep into Calderón City, which could be seen with the naked eye.

This time, he used the Marauder pathway's Beyonder powers to steal the distance of his perception so as to avoid being entangled with the various dangerous monsters that were active in this mysterious city.

This wasn't something he was afraid of. The ones who should be afraid were the monsters. If it wasn't for the fact that he didn't wish to waste time, he wouldn't have minded taking the opportunity to gather a batch of marionettes to make up for the losses caused by the destruction of Utopia.

Apart from this reason, Klein was still cautious about something else.

Calderón City was a city of the dead. It was very likely that in the deepest depths of the city flowed the River of Eternal Darkness. And in essence, marionettes were already dead, so once they approached anywhere close to the bottom, there was a possibility of a mutation.

Venturing deeper one step at a time, Klein realized that he had thought too much.

None of the monsters hidden in this strange city dared to appear. The aura of Sefirah Castle allowed their instinctual desire to live to overcome their inclinations of madness and their habits of hunting.

The deeper he went, the quieter his surroundings became. The strange buildings remained intact, but they seemed to be dead for years. Even their auras were cold, gloomy, and decadent.

It's the same as looking at a black-and-white film. If I didn't hear my breathing and heartbeat, I would've suspected that I was deaf… Klein coughed lightly and used his grumbling to resist the silence of death.

His intuition told him that once he got used to this environment, his body and mind would become still and silent. Then, he would truly die in the full meaning of the word.

The closer he got to the ground, the stronger this feeling became.

As he kept stealing the distance, Klein proceeded forward for a long time before finally seeing the bottom of the pit.

No, this wasn't the true base of the pit. It was just a huge, black palace that stood in the way.

The palace was propped up by columns. There were all kinds of bones and different corpse pieces embedded in them. Some parts of the palace were even covered in blood. They belonged to different races.

Klein stared at it for a few seconds. Without any hesitation, he carried the Staff of the Stars and entered the palace through the open door.

On both sides of the hall were different types of coffins in different colors. They sat there silently, as if they had already been weathered by death.

As Klein entered, there was a sudden noise coming from inside the coffins. It sounded like a rusted joint opening.

The grayish-white fog around Klein thickened again as all the coffins suddenly quietened down.

Ignoring them, Klein walked to the depths of the hall. There was a grayish-white stone staircase descending with a huge stone monument erected at the entrance.

At the top of the stone monument stood a long and slender statue that resembled a giant bird made of bronze. Its wings had all kinds of pale-white symbols.

Under the bronze bird-shaped statue, the surface of the stone monument was written in text that originated from the Language of the Dead. Their shapes were all different, looking like simplified birds or coiled snakes that looked different. They formed a few indistinct words:

“Even deities cannot escape;

“Imprisonment even in death.”

Is this a warning to all living beings who come to Calderón City to not go down the stairs? It directly leads to the River of Eternal Darkness? Klein’s thoughts raced as he carefully read the words on the stone monument.

From his point of view, this meant that, even if a Sequence 0 true deity were to approach the River of Eternal Darkness, they would be trapped there and unable to escape. And even if they were to die, they would still be imprisoned by this abstract river, this sefirah. Although they wouldn’t dissipate, they wouldn’t be able to escape.

From the looks of it, it’s just like the Chaos Sea. Without any sefirot protection, merely approaching the River of Eternal Darkness will result in a terrifying mutation… Klein retracted his gaze and tidied up the golden bird-shaped accessory attached to his breast pocket. He walked past the bronze statue’s stone monument and walked down the grayish-white staircase.

He didn’t steal the distance again, to prevent himself from slamming headfirst into danger.

In the dark, silent, and cold environment, the golden bird-shaped accessory in front of Klein’s chest released a pale-white glow, illuminating a small area. It was like a tiny lifeboat struggling in the waves of death.

After descending for an unknown period of time, the aura of Sefirah Castle around him expanded out of reflex and became extremely thick, like a grayish-white cocoon.

At the same time, Klein turned his head slightly and heard a faint, illusory whooshing sound.

This seemed to indicate that a dark river was slowly flowing deep underground not far from him.

In the next second, Klein looked down at his feet.

At some point in time, there was a dark stream of incorporeal water surging out from somewhere.

Even light couldn't exist on its surface.

This is different from what I saw last time… Klein frowned slightly.

Back when he came to Calderón City to hunt the Spirit World Plunderer, he had caused a certain change, causing large amounts of grayish-white illusory tidal water to surge up the bottom of the pit.

The colors that he saw the two times were completely different.

Just as Klein's thoughts raced, at the bottom of the stone staircase, where the dark tide surged over, a thin grayish-white fog spread up. Together with the illusory liquid, it expanded into a grayish-white liquid that was more mist-like.

When the water reached Klein's feet, it silently shrank back as though it was constantly ebbing up and down at a particular frequency.

This faint gray fog is a little familiar… Klein's expression turned solemn.

After pausing for a few seconds, he continued down.

This time, the rising illusory tide drowned him, causing his body to turn light, causing his emotions to quickly turn cold and his thoughts to gradually weaken.

If not for the protection of Sefirah Castle's aura around him, Klein suspected that he would passively fuse with the tide without being able to resist.

Following that, the grayish-white cocoon rose and bobbed up and down in the water before slowly reaching the end of the staircase.

At the end was a void. Amidst the emptiness flowed a straight, wide, illusory, colorless, dark river.

This river was so blurry that it was difficult to see it clearly. This was because its surroundings were covered with a swath of grayish-white like a thin layer of fog.

"Indeed…" Klein couldn't help but mutter when he saw this.

He was no stranger to this kind of fog. He had seen it behind the door in Bansy's ruins before. He had seen it at the easternmost end of the Forsaken Land of the Gods before, as well as beneath Sefirah Castle!

And unlike other places, there was a portion of the water from the River of Eternal Darkness that penetrated the grayish-white fog and fused to some extent with the latter, changing colors between dark-black and pale-white.

The river water here kept swirling up before falling down, like a stream that was running through the illusory darkness.

On both sides of the distributary stood huge and pale-white stone pillars. They seemed to be supporting something, preventing whatever it was from collapsing.

At this moment, between the stone pillars, and on the banks of the distributary, countless blurry, translucent figures were pacing back and forth, slowly but unceasingly.

Among them, the most eye-catching one was a seemingly lost figure that would occasionally enter into the depths of the distributary before turning around. Yet, it didn’t seem like it could leave the river.

It was huge, similar to the stone pillars around it. It had a heavy black robe draped over it, and from its side profile, it looked very old.

Suddenly, it turned its head and looked at Klein.

Its face had obvious Southern Continent characteristics, but it had already rotted while white feathers stained with pale yellow oil grew out.

Klein knew “Him,” and “He” was Mr. Azik’s father, the Death of the Fourth Epoch:

Emperor of the Underworld Salinger.

Chapter 1368 - Death Imprint

◆◆◆

Death Salinger, who was pacing around the River of Eternal Darkness, looked at Klein, who was enveloped in the grayish-white cocoon.

“His” eyes that had pale-white flames that were about to be extinguished instantly reflected the golden bird-shaped accessory on Klein’s chest.

In the next second, a deep roar came from “His” rotting mouth, reverberating above the river, causing the entirety of Calderón City to visibly shake.

The distributary that occasionally rose up or plunged down, sometimes dark and sometimes pale-white, reached the end of the stone staircase with the rising of tides, surging towards Klein.

During this process, the illusory tide fused with the grayish-white fog, creating a similar color.

The grayish-white torrent slammed into Klein’s body repeatedly, but it failed to destroy the cocoon around him.

Death Salinger’s rotting body took steps to the edge of the distributary, but “He” couldn’t escape no matter what. All “He” could do was stand there and roar wildly.

Klein’s gaze swept past “Him” as he looked at the blurry figures loitering around the banks.

One of them had already been swept to the center of the distributary by the surging tide. They couldn't help but sink to the bottom of the river, melting like ice.

The remaining ones didn't show any fear as they maintained their blank and lost state, moving back and forth endlessly.

At a glance, Klein saw many familiar figures.

They were the same person—Azik Eggers with "His" bronze skin and soft facial features.

This Death Consul seemed to have dissociated into multiple selves. "They" constantly paced between the pale-white stone pillars on both sides of the River of Eternal Darkness.

This… As Klein's heart stirred, his right leg suddenly turned cold.

He subconsciously lowered his head and saw a pale-white hand.

The palm penetrated the grayish-white cocoon and grabbed his calf.

And the owner of the palm floated in the surging torrent was like a water ghost as it attempted to pull Klein into the depths of the water.

Its attack could actually ignore the aura of Sefirah Castle!

Sensing Klein's gaze, the pale-white palm's owner raised his head to reveal his face.

He had black hair and brown eyes. His facial features were ordinary and he had a scholarly air.

Klein Moretti!

The "water ghost" was Klein Moretti!

In the next second, Klein's left leg, right shoulder, and left arm were grabbed by different pale-white hands.

This made him feel cold all over as his Spirit Body seemed to freeze. He couldn’t even use all his Beyonder powers. It was impossible to resist.

The three pale-white hands belonged to different blurry figures, while the different blurry figures all had the same face—Klein Moretti’s face!

Under the pull of the four “water ghosts,” Klein’s body gradually separated from the grayish-white cocoon and sank into the torrent.

His body became colder and colder, and his thoughts gradually fell into silence. His vision gradually darkened, and eventually, there were only dark ebbing waves.

Above the gray fog, in the ancient palace, Klein’s consciousness returned to his original body.

Then, without any hesitation, he extended his palm and used the power of Sefirah Castle to steal an item from the latter through his connection with the historical projection.

A golden beam of light flashed as Klein held the golden bird-shaped accessory.

At the same time, he stopped maintaining the Historical Void projection.

The “drowning” figure disappeared from the Eternal Night flood.

It can ignore the aura of Sefirah Castle, which means that those four figures truly are “me”… But why would I be trapped in the stream of the River of Eternal Darkness, pacing about endlessly? Four figures, four figures… Klein’s expression was solemn as he gently tapped the edge of the long mottled table. He gained some inspiration amidst the tapping.

The words “four,” “souls,” and “death” corresponded to the reality that he had died four times and had revived four times.

Of course, after becoming an Attendant of Mysteries, the four resurrection opportunities had been reset again.

Every time I die, regardless of whether I successfully revive or not, I will leave an imprint in the River of Eternal Darkness? I died four times, so there are four figures wandering the banks of the River of Eternal Darkness? Klein roughly grasped the crux of it before he sighed inwardly. The River of Eternal Darkness is indeed a sefirah. As expected of the symbol of death, repose, destination, endpoint, and darkness… This is what the Goddess meant when "She" pointed out that I'll encounter a different kind of danger? Hmm, when the historical projection was "drowned," I suffered some mental damage. If my mental state was unstable, I might've suffered some terrible consequences by now.

Based on this deduction, Klein had a brand new understanding of the many Azik figures and the wandering Death Salinger.

"They" were the corresponding imprints of death.

Mr. Azik has indeed died many times in the process of searching for his memories, but he comes back to life every time. According to the present situation, although an Undying doesn't die, it leaves behind a lot of hidden dangers. Once the number of deaths reaches a certain level, their true bodies might be attracted to the River of Eternal Darkness one day, ending up as one of the figures that wander around there for an eternity… Only Salinger's figure is there… This means that, after accommodating the Uniqueness, "His" death imprint also becomes unique. As Klein's thoughts raced through his mind, he became worried about Mr. Azik's state of survival.

And there were two solutions to resolving this problem: One was to make Azik's soul whole and make "Him" stop repeating "His" resurrection process. And second, to help the Evernight Goddess become a Great Old One and gain control of the River of Eternal Darkness.

Heh heh, perhaps this is another binary choice. When the Goddess becomes a Great Old One, there's no need for "Her" to make use of half of Mr. Azik's soul again. Klein reined in his thoughts and focused his attention on his goal.

He had entered the depths of Calderón City, not to resolve the death imprint of Death Salinger, and destroy any chances of "Him" reviving; instead, he was here to retrieve the river water from the River of Eternal Darkness.

Clearly, the illusory tide's water that flows out of the river doesn't work. It's only an aura that flows out, not the river water itself. Also, water that has fused with the grayish-white fog won't do either. It's not pure enough, so it wouldn't be able to accomplish the desired effect. From the looks of it, only when the distributary turns back into its deep and dark state can I get the water. Heh, there's definitely no way to get it from the main river. That grayish-white fog is definitely a solid barrier. Klein quickly formulated a plan based on his analysis.

That was to avoid going close to the River of Eternal Darkness, and not attract the attention of Death Salinger. He would wait for the distributary's water to recede and turn dark before he headed over before allowing his four death imprints to drag his historical projection to the bottom of the river.

During this process, the historical projection would seize the opportunity and use the golden, bird-shaped accessory to scoop the river water. Then, he would return his consciousness back to Sefirah Castle. Using the powers of "Theft," as well as the close connection between the two items, he could take away the golden, bird-shaped accessory.

After considering the finer details to the procedure, Klein returned to Calderón City and summoned his Historical Void projection.

He repeated the previous process and soon returned to the stone tablet next to the giant bronze bird statue. He walked down the grayish-white stone steps, step by step.

The aura of Sefirah Castle around him gradually thickened, turning into a thin “cocoon.”

It didn’t take long before Klein arrived at the end of the staircase. He saw the River of Eternal Darkness flowing in the void, the pale-white columns on both banks, and the countless blurry figures that lingered at the banks of the distributary.

This time, he wasn’t in a hurry to go forward. He left the staircase and waited patiently at the same spot for the distributary’s water to recede. The grayish-white colors faded and the water darkened.

Right now! Klein’s figure flashed as he “stole” the distance and appeared in Death Salinger’s blind spot.

Without any surprise, as his body sank into the River of Eternal Darkness, the pale-white hands immediately penetrated the aura of Sefirah Castle and grabbed his limbs.

His four death imprints appeared around him, eager to drag him to the bottom of the river!

Klein’s head submerged under the dark river water, making his body turn cold as his thoughts turned still.

Before he completely lost his senses, transparent and distorted maggots crawled out from Klein’s neck. They quickly crawled to the side of the golden, bird-shaped accessory, clustered around it, and lifted it up, preparing to scoop the water of the River of Eternal Darkness.

At that moment, a massive shadow appeared in the swirling illusory river in front of Klein.

It was a giant bird floating in the water, one that was completely submerged by the River of Eternal Darkness’s distributary.

The giant bird’s surface was covered with white flames, and the feathers formed from mysterious patterns, but most of them had been melted away by the River of Eternal Darkness. The exposed parts were pitch-black and rotten with pale-yellow pus on the surface.

The giant bird's eyes seemed to be made of bronze, and layers of illusory doors were hidden within.

Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace!

The ancient Death who had opened up the Underworld!

In front of Gregrace's eyes, a bronze beam burst out, enveloping the golden, bird-shaped accessory and Klein's historical projection in a bid to drag them over together.

After weighing his current situation, Klein instantly made a decision and gave up the attempt of scooping the river water.

His consciousness immediately returned to Sefirah Castle, and he stole the golden, bird-shaped accessory.

His historical projection dissipated.

There's danger in the water too… The ancient god, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace, has completely sunk into the River of Eternal Darkness… If the Goddess can truly accommodate the Uniqueness of the Death pathway, and if Salinger can't use that opportunity to revive in "His" body, "He" should also sink into the water like Gregrace. And the death imprint of Gregrace will melt further… Klein silently sighed as he modified the plan.

Following that, he summoned the Historical Void projection and returned to the end of the stairs.

After waiting for a while, when Death Salinger turned around and slowly walked towards the bank, Klein suddenly "stole" the distance and appeared in front of "Him."

In the next second, Salinger let out a low growl, rapidly increasing the flow of the distributary.

At the same time, Klein was grabbed by his death imprints, and forcefully dragged to the bottom of the river. He sensed the Phoenix Ancestor, Gregrace.

Like before, Gregrace's bronze eyes lit up.

However, what enveloped this light wasn't Klein and the golden, bird-shaped accessory, but Death Salinger.

Grafting!

Seizing this brief opportunity, the Worms of Spirit crawled out from Klein's historical projection and lifted the golden, bird-shaped accessory.

The bronze eye of the accessory also released a beam of light, scooping up a tiny portion of the river water.

In the next moment, Klein's consciousness returned to Sefirah Castle. He raised his hand and retrieved the accessory.

Phew, I'm finally done… Looking at the golden, bird-shaped accessory in his hand, he slowly exhaled.

As the owner of Sefirah Castle, this mission wasn't too difficult. As long as he didn't rashly enter with his main body, he could rely on repeated failures to accumulate experience and figure out the situation.

And if it wasn't for the fact that there were two Deaths in the distributary of the River of Eternal Darkness, one wandering and the other sinking, Klein wouldn't have failed twice.

Chapter 1369 - Pomp

◆

After weighing the bird-shaped, golden accessory in his hand, Klein quickly returned to the real world. He casually picked an empty plot of land and set up an altar to hold a sacrificial ritual.

With regards to the other secrets hidden in Calderón City, as well as the loitering figures around the River of Eternal Darkness, he temporarily didn't have any thoughts of starting a deeper exploration of it. This was because he still had more important matters to prepare for. He also had a key question to ask the Evernight Goddess.

Soon, he held the ritual and allowed the candlelight and spirituality materials to fuse together, forming a Door of Sacrifice and Bestowment.

Without any hesitation, Klein placed the bird-shaped, golden accessory into the wind, allowing it to slowly pass through the mysterious door and vanish into the endless darkness.

In the next second, he sharply noticed that he had been dragged into a dream.

In the center of the dreamscape was a gothic palace that seemed to blend with the darkness around it. Its details were exquisite, its color dim, but it was still gorgeous.

Klein passed through bushes of night vanilla and slumber flowers before stepping into the palace.

In the deepest part of the hall, the Evernight Goddess was sitting on an ancient high-back chair. “She” was still wearing the layered black dress that didn’t seem complicated.

The sparkling spots on the dress reflected the dome and the walls, and the pillars of the palace created a quiet and dreamy starry sky.

The Evernight Goddess, whose face seemed to be covered in layers of fishnet veils, held the bird-shaped, golden accessory and slowly stood up. “She” walked down the stairs to Klein.

“Her” voice sounded, sounding like a lullaby:

“What do you have to ask?”

Klein politely took off his top hat and bowed slightly.

“I want to know if the grayish-white fog that envelops the River of Eternal Darkness has something to do with that Lord of the Mysteries.”

That was also the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.

Although he couldn’t see the Evernight Goddess’s face clearly, Klein felt like “She” was smiling when he looked straight at “Her.”

“Yes. Furthermore, not only is the River of Eternal Darkness enveloped by the grayish-white fog, but the city behind Bansy Harbor, and the entire Western Continent is enveloped by the same grayish-white fog.”

Klein hesitated for a moment before saying, “This is a kind of seal?”

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection nodded.

“That’s right. Apart from Sefirah Castle and the Chaos Sea, all the other sefirot were sealed in the Western Continent by that mysterious Lord of the Mysteries.

River of Eternal Darkness, Brood Hive, City of Calamity, Tenebrous World, Nation of Disorder, Knowledge Moor, and Key of Light have all been sealed in the Western Continent by the Celestial Worthy? Isn’t this too much? What pomp… It's no wonder that the city behind Bansy Harbor's door is like the former Shanghai… This is the City of Calamity affecting that city in the real world, as well as Bansy. Then, to a certain extent, it has caused certain changes? Klein was enlightened and amazed.

Back when he saw the scene behind the door in Bansy, he had suspected that it had something to do with the Western Continent. Furthermore, according to the clue that Bansy was the headquarters of Red Angel Medici's family, he suspected that behind the door was the reflection of the sefirah, the City of Calamity.

After a moment of silence, Klein didn't conceal his feelings. He sighed and said, "The power of that Lord of the Mysteries far exceeds my imagination…

"How could such a Great Old One, who is known as one the pillars of the universe, silently perish?"

The Evernight Goddess's dream projection shook "Her" head.

"It wasn't silent.

"From the clues that were available, 'He' died together with the God Almighty of ancient times.

"That God Almighty's corpse formed the first Blasphemy Slate in the Chaos Sea. And beside it was the Uniqueness of the Marauder pathway."

In other words, in the middle of the First Epoch, the Lord of the Mysteries and God Almighty had a battle that was abnormally intense but didn't cause much of a stir. In the end, both perished? This can explain why the ancient sun god had the Uniqueness or a Grazed Uniqueness of the Marauder pathway when "He" walked out of the Chaos Sea. It was ripped off by the ancient God Almighty from the Lord of the Mysteries… Amidst his thoughts, Klein asked in puzzlement, "Why would 'They' want to kill each other? 'They' are both pillars and aren’t from similar pathways. There shouldn’t be any life-and-death conflicts that cannot be resolved.”

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection said gently, “Convergence is an instinct.

“The higher the level, the stronger the instinct.

“That Lord of the Mysteries and God Almighty of ancient times were unable to restrain themselves from converging together, becoming the embodiment of the entire Universe, which is also the innate instinct of the original Creator.”

The crazier one becomes the stronger they become? And beyond cunning, powerful, terrifying, and filled with wisdom, there’s such a side to the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings? Klein thought for a moment and said, “That Lord of the Mysteries and God Almighty of ancient times, are, in essence, different sides of the original Creator?”

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection said in a comforting voice, “Using the same existence but different personas as an analogy will be more accurate.

“The original Creator was the maker of the Universe, and also its destroyer. It is both day and also night. It’s the light of holiness, and also the decadent abyss. It is an amalgamation of all contradicting concepts and symbolism.

“That’s why ‘He’ naturally has a tendency to be dissociative in a way that cannot be controlled. Once ‘He’ splits, there will be a strong trend towards convergence.

“In a time more ancient than the era we lived in our past lives, the original sleeping Creator had naturally split into multiple personas. They were also in a state of slumber, but they began to use the authority and Beyonder characteristics they controlled to influence the world, making many preparations for the true dissociation when the original Creator awakened.

“Here, the most powerful and active ones were God Almighty and the Lord of the Mysteries. The latter had another honorific name in the Western Continent.

“In the early-mid stages of the First Epoch, ‘They’ should’ve used different methods to grasp the additional sefirot. This made ‘Their’ inclination to converge more intense, making it impossible for them to control themselves, and began taking actions against each other.

“According to the ancient sun god’s research, the pillar of support is the highest level of stability one can achieve. If a Great Old One exceeds this limit, just accommodating an additional sefirah will lead to being controlled by the convergence instinct in an irreversible manner.

“No one knows the exact situation of the battle. Even the Seven Lights of the spirit world do not know. We only know that, from that fateful moment onwards, the two Great Old Ones known as the ‘Pillars’ vanished completely. As for the other sefirot other than the Chaos Sea and Sefirah Castle, they were sealed by Sefirah Castle’s powers in the Western Continent. That was once the territory ruled by the Lord of the Mysteries.

“This setup led to a problem. It was that, before the reappearance of the Lord of the Mysteries and God Almighty, and before removal and breaking of the Western Continent’s seal, no Sequence 0 in this world could become a Great Old One to resist the Outer Deities.

“As the apocalypse approaches, this problem will force all the true deities to nurture a Lord of the Mysteries or God Almighty. And the former Lord of the Mysteries and God Almighty are very likely to awaken in ‘Their’ bodies.”

This… Therefore, the sealing of the other sefirots was done deliberately by the Celestial Worthy, preventing the later Sequence 0 true deities from deliberately avoiding this pathway, killing the chances of the birth of a new Lord of the Mysteries? And as long as a new Lord of the Mysteries is born, "He" has a high chance of being revived and completely awakening… Isn't this too sinister? From a certain point of view, there's no need to be afraid of others knowing this arrangement. The more entities that know of it, the more they will be inclined to quickly support the growth of a Lord of the Mysteries, so as to prevent them from only having a few years towards the end to gain control of their corresponding sefirot… The more Klein thought about it, the more terrifying the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings appeared.

This made him sigh inwardly.

As expected of a pillar that can make the Genie fall into such a predicament to this day…

Klein immediately asked, "Then why didn't you support the growth of a Lord of the Mysteries in the Fourth Epoch?"

He actually knew the answer to this question. As time passed, as the original Creator's different personas, the Celestial Worthy and God Almighty will have "Their" wills constantly weaken. The closer they got to the apocalypse, the weaker the corresponding will became. This made those of the future be able to resist and suppress "Them," and avoid losing "Themselves."

This could be proven by the fact that Adam had waited until recently to advance to Visionary.

The Evernight Goddess's dream projection revealed a smile.

"Back then, Amon and Bethel were unwilling. All of them wished to make all sorts of preparations, hoping to make the attempt when the apocalypse was approaching.

"As for Salinger, 'He' planned to use the River of Eternal Darkness to fuse with the Red Priest’s Uniqueness to create a brand new Great Old One path. Then, ‘He’ went mad. ‘He’ wasn’t able to resist the desire for converging the Twilight and Evernight pathway.”

Death was also forced into such circumstances. On the one hand, the apocalypse was only a thousand years or so away, and on the other hand, the River of Eternal Darkness had been sealed by the Celestial Worthy, a pillar. This prevented “Him” from attempting to control it… It’s too sinister, too much! Klein couldn’t help but inwardly criticize the Celestial Worthy.

At this moment, the Evernight Goddess’s dream projection continued, “The seal on the Western Continent is gradually weakening with time. The sefirot will instinctively or consciously use their symbolism to corrode the Uniqueness and High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics that land on them to influence the outside world.

“The first to seep out energy was the River of Eternal Darkness. In the Second Epoch, it formed a distributary through Gregrace. After that, in the Fourth Epoch, traces of more sefirot began to appear on the Northern and Southern Continents and the islands over the Five Seas.

“This is an important factor hidden behind many of the anomalies in the Fourth Epoch.”

The sefirot had indirectly exacted their influence through the seal in the Fourth Epoch… It’s no wonder Adam said that my understanding of the Fourth Epoch’s history isn’t deep enough… From the looks of it, Bansy Harbor retained the elven customs not because it was an elven settlement, but also because of other factors… Klein thought for a few seconds before smiling.

“I roughly understand.

“Is that why you’ve been helping me all this while?”

Chapter 1370 - Decisive

◆

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection replied with a smile, “If it’s just to nurture a Lord of the Mysteries, I should be betting on Amon. At the very least, the chances of ‘Him’ succeeding is much higher than yours.”

Without waiting for Klein to ask any further, “She” continued with a voice as ethereal as a dream:

“The era that was buried in the past is a memory shared between us, and also the critical period in which our humanity was born, sprouted, and nourished. Even if I’ve had a long life, it still remains my fondest of memories.

“You have its imprint in you, so I’m more willing to help you.”

The love for the house extends even to the crows perching on its roof… Klein made a conclusion in the form of an idiom.

At that moment, he recalled the words Emperor Roselle had written in his diary:

Home.

In his wistful silence, the dream projection of the Evernight Goddess switched to saying,

“When you’re ready, you can go to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range anytime.

“Of course, it’s your freedom to choose. No one will force you, and no one can force you either. You can choose to stop at a certain stage and not become a Great Old One, nor allow the Lord of the Mysteries to awaken in your body. Then, at the last moment of the apocalypse, you can bring the people and objects you want to protect and ‘Wander’ to other planets in other solar systems to avoid the attention of the Outer Deities, and create another civilization.”

Klein had long thought of this problem. After a moment of silence, he said, “I’m not sure if Roselle had said one thing: You can hide for a moment, but you can’t hide forever.”

He was speaking in Jotun with the Evernight Goddess, so it was a little odd when translating the proverb.

Escaping was just a temporary strategy. It couldn’t be used as a long term plan.

After a pause, Klein continued, “Although the Universe is vast and without an end, the Outer Deities are clearly more familiar with it than we are. They’re also stronger, directly representing a certain aspect of the universe. It’s very difficult to avoid ‘Their’ pursuit. Besides, even if we succeed, peace will only last for some time. The recreated civilization will be destroyed in less than a thousand years. When that happens, we won’t even have the chance to become Great Old Ones, never capable of any form of self-redemption.”

This was because if one wanted to successfully escape during the invasion of the Outer Deities, they had to give up all the sefirot. Otherwise, they would definitely become the focus of “Their” attention. Let alone wandering the cosmos, even withstanding the first wave of attacks was an unknown.

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection spoke slowly,

“Apart from the items ripped from the Outer Deities, only taking away the Uniquenesses and High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics of the other pathways might not necessarily garner the attention of the Outer Deities. ‘They’ wouldn’t spend too much time searching.”

“You also said that it’s not necessarily the case. The Outer Deities should still have a certain desire for the Uniqueness and High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics of similar pathways. This can help ‘Them’ approach the level of a pillar,” Klein replied calmly. “We can’t place our hopes on ‘Their’ feelings. ‘They’ aren’t benevolent.”

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection nodded and said, “In this aspect, you’re more aware than Roselle. Of course, it’s because he had learned of the Great Old Ones and the Outer Deities a little too late.”

“She” continued, “You have another choice: use Pallez’s method to personally lower your level and let Amon steal Sefirah Castle. This way, you can live well as a Sequence 1 angel. You don’t have to constantly worry that the Lord of the Mysteries will awaken in you. It won’t be that exhausting.”

In the Church of Evernight’s bible, there was the division of angels and archangels. Klein had always guessed that the latter referred to Sequence 1, and today, he had finally obtained confirmation.

Of course, this was only the standard of one Church, not necessarily the rest.

After hearing the Evernight Goddess’s words, Klein fell silent for a long time before asking, “Can Amon be trusted?”

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection said frankly, “I can’t give you a definite answer.”

Klein asked again, “If the Lord of the Mysteries awakens in Amon’s body, will ‘He’ take back all the High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics of the Seer, Marauder, and Apprentice pathways?”

“I don’t know,” the Evernight Goddess’s dream projection replied in the same tone.

Klein fell silent again. After a while, he said, “Personally, I don’t wish to become a Great Old One, but I can’t let down and betray those existences who have placed their bets on me. ‘They’ have more or less helped me.

“Once Amon becomes the Lord of the Mysteries, ‘He’ will definitely help the ancient sun god retrieve the Uniqueness and Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic from the Lord of Storms and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, causing ‘Their’ deaths.

“Besides, Amon is a reckless god.”

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection nodded slightly and said, “Your humanity has been maintained well.”

After making up his mind, Klein freed himself from his low spirit state. He smiled and said,

“If I hadn’t maintained my humanity, and allowed the godhood to gain an advantage, I would’ve also made a similar choice. That’s because a godhood’s instinct is convergence upon oneself.”

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection gently chuckled.

“Make your preparations. Meet Antigonus as soon as possible.”

Klein nodded and suddenly recalled something. He hurriedly asked, “Has Amon already used Mr. Door’s ritual to accommodate the Uniqueness of the Apprentice pathway?”

The Evernight Goddess’s dream projection slowly replied, “If it were another existence, then definitely not.

“But if it’s Amon, there’s a 50% chance.

“‘He’ likes to take risks and seek thrills.”

Klein didn’t say another word as he watched the Evernight Goddess’s projection vanish before him as the dream gently collapsed.

The altar that he had yet to clear occupied his vision again.

To him, heading to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range to face the Antigonus family's ancestor didn't require much preparation from him. He would mainly rely on Sefirah Castle to produce an avatar to steal the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic—the one from Zaratul—that he hadn't digested yet, allowing his main body to be in a unique state that could accommodate the Uniqueness.

As his mental state stabilized, even without Zaratul's remnant mental imprint, Klein could still rely on his humanity, consciousness, and anchors to barely suppress the partial consciousness of the Celestial Worthy.

However, before that, Klein's spiritual intuition told him that he needed to do something.

After looking around, he tidied up the altar and dragged Dwayne Dantès out of the fog of history.

Sitting at the table, Klein spread out a piece of paper and wrote a letter to Mr. Azik.

As it hadn't been a while since he wrote the previous letter, there wasn't much content. He only mentioned the River of Eternal Darkness that was situated underground in Calderón City, as well as the death imprints on both banks of the distributary. He emphasized the numerous Azik Eggers he had seen, and his guesses.

After folding the letter, Klein took out Azik's copper whistle and blew at it.

The skeleton messenger appeared at the size of a normal human. It knelt down on one knee and opened its palm.

After Klein handed the letter to it, he took out a gold coin from Sefirah Castle.

“This is to thank you for all the work you’ve done.

“If you can’t accept it, hand it to your master and let ‘Him’ decide.”

This gold coin was one of the transformed gold coins that had been tainted by the aura of Sefirah Castle.

He had already used one of them to pay Miss Messenger’s fee, and he had lost one to Maric when they played cards.

The skeleton messenger was stunned for nearly five seconds, but he didn’t dare disobey Klein’s words. He clasped the letter and the gold coin with his bony fingers.

It disintegrated and fell to the ground like a waterfall before drilling into the ground.

Following that, Klein took out another gold coin and placed it in his pocket.

At the same time, he made the Worms of Spirit on duty in Sefirah Castle to take a look at a certain crimson star.

†

East Balam, in a cathedral belonging to the Evernight Goddess.

As the first batch of demigods participating in the besieging of the Rose School of Thought, Leonard Mitchell had already used a Sealed Artifact to reach the Southern Continent.

However, he had no progress for the time being. This was because the Rose School of Thought demigods seemed to sense the danger in the air as they simultaneously hid themselves.

This made Leonard have no choice but to wait patiently, ready to answer the call of any dispatches.

While he had nothing to do, he wore his red glove and entered the cathedral's prayer hall. He did his daily prayer in a rather devout manner.

In the dark and serene environment, he seemed to fall asleep.

After an unknown period of time, Leonard opened his eyes and stood up. He walked down the aisle towards the door.

At that moment, he saw a familiar figure. It was Klein Moretti, wearing a top hat and formal suit with black hair and brown eyes.

Leonard's pupils dilated as his brows pricked up. Klein, who was also praying, lowered his hands and stood up. He walked past him and slowly approached the altar.

During this process, neither of them spoke, as if the other party was just a stranger.

After reaching the donation box near the altar, Klein took out a gold coin from his pocket and threw it in with a serious expression.

Then, he changed direction and left the cathedral from another door.

Leonard stood in the middle of the aisle and watched this scene with a puzzled look. He frowned slightly.

At this moment, in his mind, Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice echoed:

"Find a chance to get that gold coin."

†

Backlund, in a particular house.

Will Auceptin held a silver spoon and focused on digging at the pale green ice-cream in front of "Him."

Suddenly, “He” extended “His” left hand to block the side of the food.

On the chair beside “Him,” Dwayne Dantès’s figure instantly appeared.

“I seem to have missed your birthday twice,” Klein said with a smile. “This is a belated present.”

As he spoke, he took out a gold coin and pushed it to Will Auceptin.

“This is a lucky gold coin for you.”

Will was stunned for two seconds before muttering, “The gift celebrating my birth was a lucky amulet. For a birthday gift, it’s a lucky gold coin. You really don’t have any creativity.”

As “He” spoke, “He” reached out “His” chubby hand and quickly took the gold coin.

Klein smiled, stood up, and vanished.

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Chapter 1371 - Who are Allies and Who are Foes

◆ ◆ ◆

Bayam, inside the Church of the Sea God.

After the Mass, Alger Wilson returned to his room and saw a figure appear by the window.

It was Gehrman Sparrow in a top hat and trench coat.

Without waiting for Alger to speak, Klein took two steps forward and solemnly said, “I have come under Mr. Fool’s orders.”

He habitually acted as the Attendant of Mysteries.

Alger immediately lowered his head and pressed his right hand to his left chest.

“Praise Mr. Fool.”

Klein nodded slightly and took out an item from the junk pile of Sefirah Castle.

Alger’s eyes immediately reflected a short scepter made of bones.

The tip of the scepter was embedded with tiny blue gems. A small number of them were dyed black, and a small number was covered in the light of dawn. Around it were countless pure points of light, and the sounds of illusory prayers emitted from it, stacked and holy.

Alger’s eyes widened as he couldn’t help but reveal a hint of greed.

As a Sequence 4 demigod of the Sailor pathway, he was extremely certain that the white bone scepter before him was the symbol of the Sea God's identity, level, and strength.

As he endured the slight dizziness from the prayers, he cast his gaze at The World Gehrman Sparrow, waiting for the deity's attendant to speak.

Klein raised the Sea God Scepter with one hand and said with a solemn expression, "This is Mr. Fool's gift and a sign of trust, as well as a reward for protecting a large number of believers.

"No matter what happens in the future, you are to keep following Mr. Fool's instructions and do your best to complete the missions 'He' gives."

"..." Alger acutely sensed the hidden meaning.

He suspected that Mr. Fool would encounter something in the future, causing "Him" to suffer injuries or enter a nadir state.

At the thought that he had already left the Church of Storms and had no way out, Alger pressed his right hand to his left chest and replied loudly, "My faith lies only with Mr. Fool!"

Upon seeing this, Klein secretly nodded before repeating what he had said to Miss Justice and Miss Judgment.

This made Alger heave a sigh of relief. After all, knowing what might happen in the future was better than not knowing anything.

Without hesitation, he repeated his words in a serious tone.

Klein handed the Sea God Scepter to him.

"You should get used to this Sealed Artifact and the daily life as a Sea God. Once you finish digesting the Cataclysmic Interrer potion, use it to concoct the potion. The prior acting will reduce the difficulty of advancing."

In fact, Klein could now remove the "Grafting" and transfer the concept of "Sea God" which was directed at him and Sefirah Castle to Alger, allowing him to directly become half a Sea God. It would allow him to better adapt to his identity and better act in advance.

However, considering how he was about to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness, he needed sufficient anchors to balance the consciousness of the Celestial Worthy's awakening. He couldn't be missing the Sea God's believers. Klein decided to wait until his condition had stabilized before completely transferring everything that was related to Sea God.

Currently, Alger was an attendant more suitable to wield the authority, helping the deity listen and respond to prayer without enjoying the corresponding anchors and identity. The Sea God Scepter's owner was still Klein, as everything still pointed at him. This was the miraculous use of "Grafting."

Alger suppressed his excitement and joy as he answered Gehrman Sparrow sincerely and received the Sea God Scepter.

Then, he deliberated and asked, "What negative effects does this Sealed Artifact have?"

"Mr. Fool has already applied certain seals to it. The negative effects of the Sea God Scepter have been greatly reduced," Klein said simply. "It will only make the wielder more irritable and cause the spirit to be in a certain state of chaos. In addition, it will drain the blood of the surrounding creatures every month. You can fly to the sea or an uninhabited island ahead of time."

That's still manageable… Alger secretly heaved a sigh of relief before asking what Beyonder powers the scepter had.

After Klein briefly described it, he vanished.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

After finishing the additional preparations, Klein sat on The Fool's chair and conjured a piece of goatskin and a dark red fountain pen. He began analyzing the possible developments at the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range when he faced the Antigonus family's ancestor.

If everything goes smoothly, and I enter the final stage of accommodating The Fool's Uniqueness, the Goddess will definitely have to remove the Concealment. This is because this is the only way to allow the region to interact with reality, allowing fate to connect, thus achieving the effect of fooling fate.

From Mr. Door's apotheosis ritual, the commotion caused by accommodating a Uniqueness is definitely not trivial. Once it's not concealed, this matter will definitely be detected by the other deities. Furthermore, those who are concerned about this matter must've been watching the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range recently. Once there are any changes there, "They" will immediately know.

In such a situation, there's no doubt that there will be interference, destruction, assistance, and support. It's very important to find out who the foes and allies are. Otherwise, there's no way to make targeted preparations.

The Goddess is definitely on my side. If "She" were an enemy, I would've been concealed countless times. It's impossible for me to grow to this level. To put it simply, "She" had many opportunities to sell me out. Furthermore, "She" could sell it at a very good price previously. Furthermore, to "Her," it wouldn't affect "Her" ability to support who becomes the Lord of the Mysteries. That's why "She" can make a decision based on "Her" preferences. Adam is currently unable to bypass the seal and obtain the River of Eternal Darkness.

The ones who do not wish for Amon to become the Lord of the

Mysteries the most are the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Once someone attempts to destroy my ritual to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness, "They" would definitely help me and directly provide help.

Apart from these four true deities, the remaining Sequence 0s are:

Visionary Adam and the True Creator are Amon's father. The probability of helping "Him" is definitely higher than "Them" being on the sidelines; Earth Mother has placed a bet on me through Emlyn, but it's not necessarily the case that "She" would definitely help me at the critical moment. To "Her," waiting patiently for the outcome when there are no interests at play is the best choice. The Primordial Demoness's condition is odd. It's possible for "Her" to make any choice. The attitude of the God of Steam and Machinery is ambiguous. It's more likely for "Him" to remain neutral or privately make a deal with Amon and Adam. I don't have any chips to move "Him."

Other than these true deities, there are some uncommon Sequence 0s or the consciousnesses in existence that are nearly at Sequence 0.

The Lord of the Abyss, also known as the Dark Side of the Universe, is suspected to have been invaded by the Mother Tree of Desire. "He" would occasionally respond to the prayers of the Blood Sanctify Sect. It has been a long time since "He" exerted any influence on the real world. Likewise, the Chained God is in a similar situation.

What "They" will do will only depend on the Mother Tree of Desire's thoughts. And to the Outer Deities, delaying the birth of a Lord of the Mysteries should be a consensus. Under such circumstances, stopping me from being able to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness will only cause me to be at an absolute disadvantage in the competition with Amon, allowing the competition to quickly determine a winner.

The most plausible strategy of the Mother Tree of Desire is tacit consent. "She" might even help me to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness, preventing the scale between me and Amon from tilting.

After that, “She” will repeatedly destroy our inclinations and attempts to converge, delaying the birth of the Lord of the Mysteries to the apocalypse.

The Red Angel evil spirit definitely hasn’t recovered to the level where “He” can be involved in such matters. The Hidden Sage is very mysterious, making it difficult to guess “His” thoughts, but “He” should know that I am hostile towards “Him.”

At this point in the analysis, Klein made a conclusion:

“Allies: The Evernight Goddess, Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom:

“Foes: Visionary Adam, True Creator, and Mr. Error Amon.

“Neutral with tendencies to support me: Earth Mother, Dark Side of the Universe, and Chained God.

“Neutral with tendencies to support Amon: Hidden Sage.

“Neutral and ambiguous attitudes: Primordial Demoness, God of Steam and Machinery.”

Yes, I’ll ignore how far Adam and the True Creator have fused. I’ll consider the worst-case scenario. I’ll treat “Them” as the ancient sun god and treat them as a dual-pathway Sequence 0 true god… The Goddess has the Uniqueness of the Twilight Giant and Death. Although “She” hasn’t accommodated them, “She” has some level of control of them using that bird-shaped, golden accessory as a medium. Even if “She” can’t compare to the ancient sun god, she can definitely stall “Him”…

I’ll also consider Amon as a dual-pathways Sequence 0 true god. At least two of the Lord of Storms trio have to be diverted to have a chance to fend “Him” off… From the surface, I still hold a certain advantage… Klein looked at the content listed on the piece of paper as he thought silently.

However, this advantage didn't consider the neutral factions.

Klein tapped the edge of the long mottled table and considered the worst situation.

The Primordial Demoness, Hidden Sage, and God of Steam and Machinery might all choose to help Amon based on their own secret dealings or "Their" morality.

This way, even if Earth Mother participated in the battle, Klein's side would be at a disadvantage. The God of Steam and Machinery and the other god from the omnipotent and omniscient pathway would cancel out each other. The Primordial Demoness would hold back the Earth Mother, who had just taken back the Uniqueness of The Moon. The Hidden Sage would face the Universe's Dark Side and the Chained God which were controlled by the Mother Tree of Desire—the powers that the Outer Deities could sneak into the world were extremely limited. This gave the Hidden Sage a likely advantage.

Furthermore, this cancellation was a calculation based on ideal conditions. In reality, under the chaotic situation, Amon, who was in charge of the "Error" authority, could play many tricks. It was possible that "He" would be able to find weaknesses in an instant and bypass the obstacles, causing Klein's ritual to fail and make him lose control on the spot. In addition, some deities who supported Klein on the surface might turn to help Amon due to reasons he wasn't aware of.

As for the Sealed Artifacts that could change the power balance between the deities, Klein didn't know much about them and wasn't able to make an analysis.

Heh, I didn't expect that there would be a day when I fleeced the Mother Tree of Desire. Yes, I have to make some preparations for the worst-case scenario to prevent things from developing in this direction. Klein dispersed the paper and fountain pen in front of him and cast his gaze at a particular prayer light.

His figure vanished from Sefirah Castle and appeared on Bernadette’s Dawn.

Chapter 1372 - The Other Use of the Magic Wishing Lamp

◆

Queen Mystic Bernadette seemed to have a sense of foreboding when she saw Gehrman Sparrow’s arrival. Without any surprise, she put down the ancient scroll in her hand and cast her gaze at the visitor at the door.

Klein didn’t stand on ceremony and said directly, “I wish to borrow the Magic Wishing Lamp for a day.”

Bernadette nodded gently and raised “Her” hand to pick up the Magic Wishing Lamp beside “Her.”

“Her” invisible servant immediately held the unique lamp and brought it to Klein.

Klein took it and said in a deep voice, “Thank you.”

Bernadette didn’t make any requests. It was as though she wasn’t afraid that she would end up having accumulated an additional wish and dying a strange death.

She believed that Mr. Fool would be able to resolve this problem because the existence had displayed this ability the last time.

In the next second, Klein, who had transformed into Gehrman Sparrow, vanished from the Dawn and returned to Sefirah Castle.

When he placed the Magic Wishing Lamp on the table in front of him, he immediately saw the candlewick light up, emitting a sticky light that formed a distorted, blurry golden figure.

"You haven't fulfilled your promise yet, so I won't fulfill your wishes according to your will again," Genie said with a majestic and dignified voice. "You should know that the current owner of this lamp is Roselle's daughter. The first wish you made was to place 'Her' accumulated wishes that could allow 'Her' to suffer a backlash at the level Above the Sequences on you. And this time, I won't permit you to transfer 'Her' wishes onto yourself."

When Klein had used the Magic Wishing Lamp to escape, he hadn't changed the ownership of this Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. It still belonged to Bernadette, and its wielder was still Queen Mystic.

Therefore, his wish would simultaneously be accumulated on himself and Bernadette.

At that time, his first wish was to transfer the two wishes that Bernadette had previously made under his name. This cleared Bernadette's accumulated wishes, and he was burdened with two wishes.

But at the same time, this first wish was also accumulated. Therefore, after it was fulfilled, Bernadette's count became 1, and Klein's was 3.

Following that, Klein made a second wish. It would undoubtedly be counted towards both Bernadette and him.

Finally, Bernadette's wish count was 2 without exceeding the critical point, while Klein reached 4. Without any surprises, he encountered the backlash from the rules that were at the level of an Outer Deity. He died on the spot in Adam's corpse cathedral and successfully escaped.

Under the premise that Klein made another wish, it would make Bernadette's wish count reach 3, causing her to unavoidably suffer something terrifying.

Of course, he could also mimic the first wish he did previously, transferring Bernadette's wish count onto himself and spending one chance at "revival." However, the Genie had already made it clear that "He" would distort any similar wishes, allowing the wish to be realized in a way that Klein didn't wish to see.

Sigh, it's also because I was in a rush the last time. And Roselle was affected by the Primordial Moon, so the wish we came up with was definitely flawed… At that time, I should've added a description to make the first wish only count under my name. Or perhaps, I should've added another wish between the first and second wish to transfer the ownership of the Magic Wishing Lamp to me. After all, my death would result in the ownership being cleared, and the Magic Wishing Lamp would return to its wielder… As Klein sighed inwardly, he smiled at Genie.

"You should be no stranger to 'Tampering' and 'Reassembly.'

"With your level and current state as this lamp, I can now rely on Sefirah Castle to 'Graft' its ownership from Bernadette onto me. Or perhaps, we can use a different method and directly use 'Theft'?"

Genie's blurry golden figure fell silent. After a few seconds, "He" said, "Although you aren't as cunning as 'Him,' you're just as shameless.

"However, this is of no use. After you accumulate your wishes and die, the ownership of this lamp will still return to Roselle's daughter. And I will distort the rules and place your wish count onto 'Her.'

"Also, I said earlier that before you fulfill your promise, I won't fulfill your wish normally again."

Klein maintained his smile.

"I once heard a story regarding investors.

"When a company is in trouble, the ones who are more willing to provide aid will definitely be the original investors. Although they have already paid a lot, if they don't continue investing, they might not be able to recoup their investment and end up losing all their money.

“Of course, if they could use other means to retrieve their own share, or exchange their investment for greater benefits, it would be another story.

“Which type do you think you are?”

Genie stared at Klein, who was sitting in The Fool’s seat, and laughed.

“After you gain a deeper grasp of Sefirah Castle, you also seem to have obtained the eloquence of a Swindler. However, unless you help me remove the seal now, it will be difficult for me to affect matters at the level of Sequence 0. At most, you will encounter a backlash from Above the Sequences laws and die again.

“However, this won’t be of any help to what you wish to do now. Death means failure. Furthermore, you should know very well that losing control during your advancement will affect all your avatars. It’s not something that can be avoided by cutting off all connections.”

Klein smiled and nodded.

“Indeed, I haven’t thought of a wish yet. I’m just making preparations.”

With that said, he looked at the Magic Wishing Lamp.

“Actually, this lamp has another use that can affect matters at Sequence 0.

“I heard that a true god once attempted to destroy this lamp, but failed in the end. Indeed, how can a lamp that can seal an Outer Deity be so easily damaged? It definitely has the power of the Lord of the Mysteries or Sefirah Castle.”

As he spoke, the smile on Klein’s face gradually became obvious.

“It’s such a waste not to use something as sturdy as this as a shield.”

"…" Genie fell silent for a long time.

After such a friendly exchange, Klein and Genie exchanged their views. The fact that both of them were connected by fate had allowed "Them" to come up with a preliminary agreement.

Then, Klein placed the Magic Wishing Lamp into his pocket, prepared to use it at any time.

After completing all of this, he cast his gaze at the fragments of light related to the Hornacis mountain range in the fog of history.

He was almost done with his preparations. Next, he would create another avatar and steal the undigested Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic from himself. Then, he could face the ancestor of the Antigonus family.

And this might very well trigger a divine battle.

To be frank, Klein didn't wish for that to happen. This was because a war of deities would likely have a negative impact on the real world.

Back when the Rose Redemption stopped the resurrection of the Primordial One, in the divine battle to assassinate the ancient sun god, which involved the help of Dark Angel Sasrir, it directly brought about a disaster that affected the entire Eastern Continent. This caused more than 99% of the living creatures there to die, making large swaths of the terrain to resemble the abyss.

The War of the Four Emperors and the Pale Disaster had nearly destroyed the Northern Continent, causing countless people to die and mutate. This caused the mountains to turn into lakes, valleys into peaks, rivers changing paths, the land to collapse, and the ocean to go berserk.

The battle between the Evernight Goddess and the God of Combat happened in the astral world. It happened in the Evernight Goddess's divine kingdom, and it was relatively brief. Therefore, it had the least impact on the real world. However, before that, the world war that exceeded a year had drained the blood and tears of countless people.

If it was possible, Klein was actually willing to give up on Sefirah Castle and live on as a Sequence 1 or even a Sequence 2 angel. The matter would then develop in the most peaceful way.

However, along the way, there were already too many existences who provided him with kindness, help, and faith. At this moment, if Klein were to give up, he would put them into danger. This wasn't being kind, but selfish.

From time immemorial, which successful person didn't bear the fates of many people?

If he gave up, what about the rest?

The members of the Tarot Club, The Fool believers of the City of Silver and Moon City, Azik Eggers, Reinette Tinekerr, Will Auceptin… Various faces quickly flashed across Klein's mind.

Finally, he let out a long sigh.

If Amon could be trusted, it wasn't that Klein couldn't hand over all of this to "Him." However, this God of Deceit had always been reckless. Even "His" believers were all "Himself."

If Klein were to give up just like that—notwithstanding his own safety—the people or demigods he had just thought of might be caught by his enemies or directly end up wearing a monocle on their right eye. Among them, Will Auceptin and The Fool's believers were in the most danger.

Believe in the might of deities, but do not trust "Their" benevolence!

This was Klein's decision. When facing the Evernight Goddess, he had used the Lord of Storms and company as an example. This was telling "Her" that he wouldn't let "Her" down after all the help "She" had given.

This was the existence that had bet the most on him. If Klein were to give up, the Evernight Goddess might have to pay a greater price to obtain the River of Eternal Darkness. “She” might even not be able to obtain it forever. This was because after the appearance of the two pillars—Lord of the Mysteries and God Almighty—it meant that the threat from the Outer Deities would be reduced to its lowest level. There wouldn’t be any need for additional Great Old Ones to appear.

Phew, I’ll later use Sefirah Castle to “Graft” the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range to the astral world. This can prevent the war of deities from bringing any harm to the real world to the greatest extent. It can also allow the deities who are guarding the cracking barrier to unleash “Their” full strength. After all, most of my supporters are orthodox deities… Klein’s mind raced as he came up with a solution.

He then snapped his fingers and used Sefirah Castle to create an avatar to stand beside him.

Chapter 1373 - Facing

◆

The avatar Klein created was a blueprint of his present state, and not Dwayne Dantès, Sherlock Moriarty, or Merlin Hermes, so as to avoid any obstacles in his self-awareness.

After experiencing the mutation brought by Adam, he became more careful in such aspects.

Glancing at his avatar, Klein's thoughts made his face turn blank.

The avatar extended its right hand and stirred Sefirah Castle's strength to grab at the main body.

Again and again, it failed more than ten times. Finally, it managed to extract bits of dark light from the main body.

Finally… Klein sighed and extinguished the thought of trying to execute this attempt during the actual battle.

Despite not resisting at all, with his body and mind at ease, his avatar had still spent so much time failing while using Sefirah Castle's level and strength. It was easy to imagine its value in actual combat.

As more and more Beyonder characteristics left his body, Klein felt relaxed. He felt like he had finally abandoned a heavy burden after a long walk.

Of course, there was a certain fluctuation in his mental state. After losing the lingering mental imprint from Zaratul, the awakening of the Celestial Worthy's consciousness began to invade his mind.

This was within Klein's expectations; therefore, he wasn't flustered at all. With his self-awareness that had long stabilized, his tenacious willpower, and his ample anchors, he gradually resisted the corruption of the Celestial Worthy's will and found a new balance.

At the same time, when the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic that Klein hadn't fully digested entered his avatar's body, its blank face suddenly twisted, growing out dark, lusterless eyes, and an indistinct white long beard.

At this moment, it greatly resembled Zaratul.

However, it was unable to withstand the madness brought about by the Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic. Its body rapidly developed towards collapse as transparent, distorted maggots crawled out and slippery and sinister tentacles extended out.

It lost control on the spot.

Klein didn't stay idle. Without any hesitation, he moved his finger, making the avatar turn into his marionette.

This terminated the process of losing control.

At this point, he had already made all preparations. His main body had completely digested the potion, allowing him to be in a state to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness. He also had a Sequence 1 marionette.

Following that, Klein leaned back into his chair and replayed what he was about to do in his mind to see if there were any fatal flaws.

This is the most I can do for the battle of the deities. I can only do my best afterwards… Hmm, am I being too optimistic about the first stage because of the Goddess's help and the supplementary River of Eternal Darkness's water? That's why I'm not worried that the Antigonus family's ancestor won't cause any accidents? After a round of scrutiny, Klein felt that he was still not cautious enough. There was a little arrogance and carelessness in the matter.

After some thought, he created another avatar which still had a blank face.

After completing this, Klein stood up, took out Creeping Hunger from the fog of history, and wore it on his left hand.

This was a preparation for any possible small-scale battles. Under such a scene, “Blink” was faster and more convenient than “Grafting.”

After adjusting his collar, Klein slowly surveyed the area and made his gaze fall on the strange door of light that was stained with bluish-black. It landed on the humans who were hanging there, wrapped in transparent “cocoons.”

As he scanned each and every one of them, his gaze landed on the three shattered transparent “cocoons.”

In the next second, Klein’s figure vanished and appeared in the grayish-white fog of history. He walked to the time before the First Epoch, and he arrived at the stacked metropolis of old.

He stood at the top of a dilapidated skyscraper that barely stood erect. He looked down at the pile of wreckage, the public transportation vehicles that had turned into metal pancakes, and numerous overlapping sedans.

Amidst the silence, he swept his gaze across the remaining buildings. It seemed to pass through the barriers of history, allowing him to see the electric lamps lit up inside them.

The light from the lamps spread out gently, illuminating the glass and skyscrapers, streets, and every corner of metropolis ruins.

After staring at it for a long time, Klein retracted his gaze and took a step back to the real world.

Right on the heels of that, he directly teleported to the summit of the Hornacis mountain range. He “saw” that ancient palace that was shrouded in fog, dilapidated, and overgrown with weeds.

His marionette and avatar appeared in front of him, like two guards.

Facing the ancient palace, Klein pressed his top hat, raised his right hand, and snapped his fingers.

The peak of the Hornacis mountain range instantly turned dark. Illusory stars appeared around them.

Klein had “Grafted” this place to the astral world.

Without any hesitation, he led his marionette and avatar to the main door of the ancient palace.

The marionette that looked almost identical to him was one step ahead. It bent down, stretched out its hands, and slowly pushed the heavy stone door open.

The door slowly creaked open, revealing the scene inside.

And it was different from the last time Klein sent the Trunsoest Brass Book over. It was dark inside, making it impossible for anyone to see the numerous corpses hanging above the hall, nor could he see the cluster of transparent maggots that were sitting on the huge stone chair.

Without needing to guess, Klein made use of the intuition of a Seer at the King of Angels level to confirm that this was the change caused by the Evernight Goddess using the River of Eternal Darkness’s water to allow the ancestor of the Antigonus family to enter a state of eternal slumber.

After the marionette and avatar entered, he slowly walked through the door and entered the palace.

The darkness swayed and changed.

Numerous buildings appeared in the surroundings as figures walked along the streets. Their voices spread out, causing the surroundings to become lively and noisy.

The people ignored Klein and his marionette and avatar as they headed for their destinations while chatting with each other.

They and the buildings were dark in color, almost close to black-and-white. They were like old photos that came from deep within history that had suddenly come to life.

This made Klein think of black-and-white holographic projections, the scenes in the Historical Void, and those in real dreams.

He strolled through this town and walked along the elevating streets.

And the higher they went, the more magnificent the buildings became. The massive stone pillar supported an exaggerated dome.

The people living in this "black-and-white photo" were generally tall. They seemed to be learning, working, and resting.

The scenes here changed continuously, showing the birth of a baby, the growth of a child, the ignorance of youth, the worries of an adult, the pressure of a middle-aged man, and the sorrow of aging.

Of course, they were all interlinked with each other. Only a portion would become the main theme at times.

As Klein ventured deeper, he saw the residents of the towns die.

Their loved ones weren't overly sad. They carried the dead back home, placed them on the bed with a pillow as if the corpses were still alive.

When Klein was about to leave the town's borders, the dead got up from bed, left their family, and walked out of their homes, heading towards the highest point of the street.

There was also a city there. It seemed to be the City of the Dead, the eventual refuge of life, a kingdom of eternal repose.

This was very close to where normal people lived. The latter was distributed by the mountainside to the peak, while the former was on the peak.

Others might be surprised by such a state, but Klein instantly understood what this scenery meant.

This was because he directly saw Spirit Body Threads on the deceased.

The moment they were about to die, their Spirit Body Threads floated towards the peak, controlled by an unknown existence.

That also meant that they had become marionettes.

Therefore, the deceased could leave their own families and head to the peak after dying for some time.

And this was completely in line with the details mentioned in the "Research of the Hornacis Main Peak's Relics."

The Nation of the Evernight belonged to the Mother of the Sky from the Evernight pathway, but at the peak, there was a town used by the Antigonus family's ancestor.

Therefore, the residents of the Nation of the Evernight were respectful and afraid of Evernight. They believed in the Mother of the Sky. At the same time, they believed that death was not the end. They believed that their dead loved ones would bless them from Evernight.

Indeed, death wasn't the end. The City of Dead was just beside them—at the peak. They could reach it just by walking, and the dead would continue living their lives as marionettes.

In the eyes of ordinary people, this was undoubtedly the same as still being alive.

The nation of the living and the City of Dead were like two ends of a road. The distance between life and death was so close that they were like neighbors.

This also explained why the Nation of the Evernight didn't have tombs, as the deceased didn't need to be buried. They turned into marionettes and headed for the peak.

This should be the Nation of the Evernight from back then… Klein nodded slightly and proceeded towards the peak in the dark environment.

What entered his eyes was indeed a seemingly normal town, but everyone here was a marionette.

After passing through the marionettes who dressed and looked different, Klein entered the magnificent palace that seemed to honor a deity.

Deep in the palace, on the huge stone chair, a figure propped its elbow on the armrest, its head leaning back against the chair.

"His" face was rather young, but "His" long hair was half-white. Half of it was concealed, the other revealed; "His" appearance was that of a man, and "His" eyes were darker than Zaratul's, and they contained an indescribable sense of the vicissitudes of life. "His" facial features were pretty good, but "His" cheeks had a thick, black tuft of fur that resembled a wolf fur. "He" gave off a feeling of both old-age and youthfulness, rationality and madness.

This was the ancestor of the Antigonus family. This time, "He" didn't appear in the form of a Mythical Creature, and instead sat on a huge stone chair in "His" original appearance.

At that moment, "His" eyes were tightly shut as though "He" was in a deep sleep. And inside the hall, there were corpses wearing simple or luxurious clothes hanging from the ceiling.

[image]

They were like inverted forests that swayed gently in the wind.

After entering a state of eternal slumber, the ancestor of the Antigonus family finally managed to temporarily free himself from the state of losing control and madness, and returned to how he was before? Klein stood in the middle of the hall, looking at his target as he sighed.

The scene he saw of the Nation of the Evernight and the City of Dead earlier was the dream belonging to Antigonus—a dream that lasted for more than a thousand years.

Chapter 1374 - Trojan Horse of Destiny

◆

Looking at The Half-Fool on the huge stone chair, the scenes from before, as well as the relevant scenes of the Nation of the Evernight flashed through Klein's mind. This evoked thoughts in him.

He didn't know much about Antigonus. In fact, he had almost lost control because of the ravings of "His" "Hornacis… Flegrea…" Therefore, he didn't feel any sympathy at the moment, at best some form of empathy.

The lingering memories were undoubtedly one of the best memories of the past.

Even though "He" was born extraordinary, Antigonus seemed to be deeply fond of the small, peaceful, and isolated nation.

Klein slowly exhaled as he looked away from the man with the thick, black, sharp beard, and his gaze landed on the huge stone chair to the side.

A book made of thin, yellow brass was quietly placed there. It kept having three mercury-colored lines of rules being superseded on it.

0-02, Trunsoest Brass Book.

Using powers similar to "Grafting" to complete the seal? Yes, it seems to have gone a step further. Not only is the beginning directly connected to the end, but the intelligence of the Trunsoest Brass Book has also been fooled, allowing it to ignore the middle parts that had been skipped, and not making attempts to change things. It just keeps repeating actions over and over again… Klein glanced at 0-02 and muttered to himself in thought.

This made him have some guesses about the abilities of The Fool.

Without thinking further, Klein got the Attendant of Mysteries marionette to "Graft" the starting point to the endpoint as he walked to the huge stone chair and picked up the Trunsoest Brass Book.

On the one hand, this was to eliminate any possible interference, and on the other hand, he was trying to test out Antigonus's current condition.

Seeing that The Half-Fool was still sleeping and unable to escape from "His" eternal slumber, Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He made his marionette take the Trunsoest Brass Book and retreat to the entrance of the palace to wait for him.

The reason he didn't allow his avatar to retrieve the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact was that he was worried that the Trunsoest Brass Book, which had a certain connection with a sefirah, would be able to produce passive negative effects during the critical moment he was accommodating The Fool's Uniqueness. This might lead to the situation developing in a terrible direction.

When it came to avoiding the negative effects of the Sealed Artifact, marionettes were definitely better than avatars.

This was also why Klein didn't bring the Staff of the Stars. He couldn't place a time bomb beside him.

Usually, it was fine. He could rely on his level, status, and abilities so as to forcefully suppress the Staff of the Stars, but in the process of accommodating The Fool's Uniqueness, he would be very weak. He couldn't interfere with the people or things around him. Any mistakes could cause him to lose control on the spot.

To deal with the situation of Sefirah Castle being sealed, thus causing him to be unable to use its powers, Klein had no choice but to bring a Sealed Artifact that could provide "Teleportation" powers. Therefore, he chose Creeping Hunger.

At that moment, Klein felt the glove on his left hand tremble while facing a King of Angels that controlled a Uniqueness.

He then used his right hand to caress Creeping Hunger and whispered jokingly, "Don't worry. You're just a projection from the Historical Void."

Using this method to ease his taut nerves, Klein surveyed the area and confirmed that there was nothing else he needed to do.

Immediately after, he placed his hand on his chest and bowed deeply to Antigonus.

When he straightened his body and lifted his head, a complicated, mysterious, illusory brand appeared on his forehead.

This brand was like a strange door of light that was tainted with hints of bluish-black. It constantly emitted a faint grayish-white fog.

In the next second, Klein reached out his right hand. Although it wasn't too far away, not was it too close. He "contained" Antigonus's body within his fingers.

His fingers quickly closed, and with a twist of his wrist, he completed the "Theft."

He obtained nothing.

This attempt failed.

Klein wasn't depressed. He once again began stealing Antigonus's identity, fate, and self-awareness.

Although he was already a King of Angels, his powers in stealing came from Sefirah Castle. At present, he was only at Sequence 1, while Antigonus had been corrupted by the Lord of the Mysteries, a King of Angels that had accommodated the Uniqueness. There was still an obvious difference between the two.

Therefore, even if Antigonus had entered a temporary state of eternal slumber and was unable to resist, Klein suffered failure many times.

He wasn't nervous or disappointed in such a situation. This was something he had expected previously. After all, as long as the theft wasn't completed, the Evernight Goddess wouldn't dispel the concealment effect and let the fate here interact with the real world. There wouldn't be any external interference either. Klein had plenty of time and a stable environment to continue his attempts.

After failing countless times, Klein suddenly had a flash of inspiration and predicted something.

He reached out his right hand again, closed his fingers, and twisted them gently.

Suddenly, he felt something invisible leave Antigonus's body and float towards him.

At the same time, an indescribable river of light with countless distributaries appeared in front of him.

The illusory river continued to flow forward, drowning one distributary after another, allowing them to become part of the main river.

This was a symbol of fate. It also had many different images, such as a slowly rotating segmented wheel, or a giant serpent that had its head and tail connected. At that moment, when fate was swapped, Klein saw the river of light.

In the next second, fragmented images and scenes appeared in Klein's mind:

An eight-legged demonic wolf, who had just been born, was sprawled on the hill. Amidst the thick and black short fur on its body, transparent and distorted maggots crawled about. “He” was the youngest son of the ancient god, Flegrea, a natural Mythical Creature. At that moment, “He” was looking at “His” sister, brother, and a portion of “His” clansmen playing amongst corpses. “He” despised the crude methods they employed when dealing with their prey. “He” believed that prey should be hoisted up for slow, refined enjoyment to match their status.

This demonic wolf that could be called a subsidiary god was most afraid of his father, the powerful, terrifying, crazy ancient god. Although Flegrea had already produced many children through instinctual mating, removing plenty of “His” Beyonder characteristics, it was uncontrollable with no way to guarantee progress. Therefore, “He” was still crazy, cruel, bloodthirsty, and filled with an instinct for destruction. “He” had even killed several descendants.

This demonic wolf who could create miracles and fulfill all kinds of wishes chased after “His” prey, biting or killing them, thus enjoying a state of pure happiness.

“He” didn’t have a deep impression of the subsidiary gods of “His” father, Flegrea. “He” clearly remembered that “He” hated the God of Wishes, Kotar. Even if “He” was also a demonic wolf.

Also, “He” didn’t like the God of Death, Salinger. “He” found “Him” gloomy, solitary, and that “He” exuded a rotting and disgusting aura. On the other hand, Goddess of Misfortune, Amanises, met the beauty standards of both a demonic wolf and a human. “She” had a gentle personality and was very good at placating one’s heart. “She” wasn’t annoying, but this female subsidiary goddess rarely appeared. “She” was always like a shadow, hiding in a place that wasn’t easily discovered. Of course, the demonic wolf remembered that a few of his older sisters and brothers were rather against Amanises, hoping to seize “Her” position.

The demonic wolf witnessed his father’s death, the death of a powerful ancient god, and saw the blood of the ancient god splattered all over the body of the Goddess of Misfortune, Amanises. And in the chaos, the Uniqueness and a Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic were pulled into “Her” hands.

“He” and one of “His” sisters escaped the kingdom of the demonic wolves and hid everywhere.

Without the protection of “His” father, the demonic wolf and “His” sister realized that their former reckless life wasn’t normal. Pain and danger were present in everything. Finally, “They” crossed the sea and came to the Northern Continent. They established a concealed kingdom in the uninhabited Hornacis mountain range.

“He” and “His” sister didn’t dare expose “Themselves.” All “They” did was gather believers and amass a population. In this situation, “He” created the City of Dead that existed alongside a living nation, making the dead believers become “His” marionettes to complete an advancement ritual.

Although this period was filled with anxiety, it was the best time period in the memories of this demonic wolf. As “He” saw “His” sister having more and more believers, and how “His” marionette town was becoming more complete, “He” seemed to have forgotten the troubles and dangers of the outside world and achieved the first peaceful time period since “His” birth.

Under the influence of the believers, “He” and “His” sister gradually gained some so-called humanity.

After the Cataclysm, “He” finally advanced to Attendant of Mysteries and turned “Himself” into a human. With the last name of Antigonus, “He” left the Hornacis mountain range and returned to the real world outside the concealed kingdom.

From this moment onwards, Antigonus’s memories and knowledge became increasingly fragmented. Many times, “He” even found “Himself” a little unfamiliar.

After “He” accommodated The Fool’s Uniqueness, the situation became worse…

As the images flashed, Klein quickly came to a realization.

I am Antigonus, I am The Half-Fool!

With a loud boom, his body constantly changed. At times, he had black hair, brown eyes, and a scholarly air, a Klein Moretti who had fused with Zhou Mingrui’s appearance. Occasionally, he had long white hair and a thick black beard like Antigonus. Other times, he wore a dark black cloak that made it difficult to see his face, and this mysterious person constantly extended slippery tentacles to the side.

At that moment, Klein’s thoughts were extremely chaotic. His mental state was completely imbalanced.

He was barely able to maintain his self-awareness. Under the impact of the two mental storms, he teetered.

At the same time, he had received the fate of Antigonus’s losing control and was on the verge of collapse.

A series of prayers rang out in his ears. Each and every word of praise was mixed together, forming an illusory image that joined the chaotic battlefield.

†

Rorsted Archipelago, Bayam, the bell tower of the Church of The Fool.

A young man wearing a pointed hat and monocle suddenly appeared here and stood behind the railing, looking down at the entire city.

Mr. Error Amon!

In the next second, “He” saw Bayam and the distant New City of Silver and New Moon City disappear as though someone had wiped them off the map with an eraser.

“How boring.” Upon seeing this scene, Amon shook “His” head with a smile. “He” wasn’t disappointed either.

He only wanted to test if Klein or the Evernight Goddess had repaired the bug in this aspect.

After striking the bell, “He” could be considered The Fool’s Angel of Time to a certain extent. “He” could use this loophole to directly steal a portion of his anchors.

Such theft was of little value, but it was very useful at the critical moment of a ritual:

The sudden decrease in anchors would definitely tip the balance, causing Klein to lose control on the spot!

Amon then retracted “His” gaze and raised “His” hand to straighten the monocle on “His” right eye.

It was as if the light from the stars suddenly lit up in the crystal monocle.

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Chapter 1375 - Beginning the Accommodation

◆

Thud! Thud!

The doors of Backlund, Trier, Lenburg, and St. Millom opened and closed at the same time without a breeze.

Inside a white tower in the headquarters of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom.

Lucca, who was on duty underground, sensed that something was amiss and stood up abruptly.

As a Prophet, he acutely sensed that something was happening.

The elder in a brass-threaded, white robe immediately used a mystical technique and arrived at the entrance of the underground area. He pushed the door open.

However, the door that wasn’t considered heavy to a demigod didn’t budge as though it was sealed by an invisible force.

Lucca Brewster didn’t attempt to forcibly open it as he cast his gaze deep underground.

There was silence. There was no sound.

This isn’t normal… Lucca didn’t need to rely on his Beyonder powers to determine the problem here.

Usually, in the deepest part of the ground, there would always be sounds that made people’s hair stand on end. But now, it was as if it had disappeared as though it never existed.

Others might not know, but as a high-ranking member of the Church of Knowledge, Lucca knew that the voice came from an extremely terrifying Sealed Artifact that even he didn’t know the exact details of, so it was impossible for it to be erased out of thin air.

The current situation could only mean one thing:

Either the Sealed Artifact had already escaped the restrictions and entered a more bizarre state, or it had been sealed further, preventing it from affecting the outside world.

Regardless of the possibility, it meant that there was extreme danger lurking in the surroundings. This was because the Sealed Artifact’s number was:

0-01!

At the top of Bayam’s remaining bell tower, the light on Amon’s monocle gradually faded, returning to normal.

Mr. Error hadn’t held back from showcasing “His” new Beyonder powers, doing so to make a statement to all the existences watching “Him”:

“He” had already accommodated Door’s Uniqueness and obtained the corresponding authority!

“He” had used this opportunity to shut off everything related to the concept of a door in the entire world, greatly strengthening the effects of any seals.

This caused the orthodox Churches and secret organizations to be unable to use sealed items for a short period of time because no one could remove the seal.

Even if a true deity descended from the astral world, it would still take "Them" a certain amount of time before "They" could break the restrictions.

Therefore, Amon eliminated most Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts in the subsequent battle of gods. "He" no longer needed to consider the corresponding interference.

Of course, such authority wouldn't be able to influence the entire world for too long unless Mr. Error had put all "His" energy into this matter. It was precisely because of this that "He" didn't do it ahead of time. Only when "He" observed the disturbance in Klein's anchors did "He" suddenly act.

The more powerful a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact was, the more terrifying the negative effects would be. It was even more so for those that could produce effects at the level of a deity. Even a Sequence 0 true deity might not be able to withstand it for too long. Therefore, true deities wouldn't unseal them unless it was necessary; otherwise, this would bring about an even greater disturbance to "Them," causing them to suffer a net loss.

After doing this, Amon held up "His" palm and gently leaped up. Without the bearing of a true god, "He" sat on the railing at the top of the bell tower.

As "He" gazed at the horizon out into the sea, "He" leisurely waited for the concealment to be removed. That was when Klein's ritual to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness officially began.

When that happened, "He" would strike the death knell for him.

†

In the concealed world of the Evernight Goddess.

Under the repeated impact of the awakening of the Celestial Worthy of

Heaven and Earth for Blessings, and Antigonus's self-awareness and mental imprint, Klein's consciousness was like a sailboat in a storm. It would sometimes be thrown high while being struck down. At times, it would suffer corrosion, and at other times be slammed to the side.

This made his thoughts turn extremely chaotic. He was about to split into two different personalities, known as Antigonus, and the Lord of the Mysteries.

At the same time, his avatar also lost its rationality. It was in a state of being about to collapse into a whirlpool of maggots. Only the marionette remained standing there in a daze due to the lack of any control.

The prayers from the believers resounded in Klein's ears, forming a corresponding image of what he knew.

This was like a dam that was resisting a surging flood.

Klein wasn't too unfamiliar with such a situation. He had a similar experience after becoming an Attendant of Mysteries and swallowing Zaratul's Beyonder characteristic. Therefore, with the help of his anchors, he managed to survive the initial chaos. With great familiarity, he directed the self-awareness and mental imprint of Antigonus towards the awakening will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings. This caused both parties to corrode each other and be occupied with each other.

The "mind storm" weakened a lot, finally giving Klein's self-consciousness a breather.

Before he could calm down, he immediately directed the image of him as a god formed by many anchors, into the two mental corruption's struggle and tried to find a new balance.

However, this didn't go smoothly. Compared to before, the essence of Antigonus's mental imprint, resilience, and madness were clearly stronger than Zaratul's. After all, this was a King of Angels that had accommodated the Uniqueness and was known as The Half-Fool.

Furthermore, Klein had also stolen the other party's identity and fate. This brought about two other negative effects.

His personality was constantly on the edge of dissociating. From time to time, he would think that he was Antigonus, attempting to fuse "His" mental imprint with his own mind. Having accepted the fate of Antigonus's loss of control, his entire body was collapsing uncontrollably. This brought about even more mental corruption.

In addition, Antigonus's mental imprint and the awakened will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings wasn't completely incompatible. In some aspects of "Their" "battle," "They" showed signs of fusing together. It was as if "They" originated from the same existence.

This gave Klein preliminary confirmation. As a natural Mythical Creature, Antigonus was born with some of the Celestial Worthy's will. When "He" advanced to Attendant of Mysteries, the problem suddenly became serious, causing "Him" to undergo unexpected changes without "Him" realizing it. By the time "He" managed to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness, madness had apparently become another side of "Him."

In other words, before completely losing control, Antigonus was already a mentally-sutured monster to a certain level. "His" self-awareness and mental imprint were part of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings, and this was something that couldn't be separated by using "Theft."

Compared to "Him," Zaratul's mental imprint was much cleaner. There was only a small portion that belonged to the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings. Most of it came from Zaratul's intense emotions at "His" deathbed.

The reason why the two were different was that, apart from the fact that Antigonus had accommodated The Fool's Uniqueness, the former had become the Attendant of Mysteries at the beginning of the Fourth Epoch. At that time, the will of the Celestial Worthy hadn't weakened to the state it was in during the late Fifth Epoch.

Without being able to form a new balance, the speed of Klein's breakdown became faster and faster. More than half of his body was formed from transparent and distorted maggots, and he extended slippery and sinister tentacles into his surroundings.

Just as he was trying his best to maintain his consciousness and not give up searching for a new balance, his collapsed body, Antigonus's crazy mental state, and the consciousness of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings all fell into a deep sleep.

This caused all the changes to stop abruptly and return to normal.

As for Klein's self-consciousness, he used his trait of resisting dreams and the invasion of his mind to maintain his clarity of mind.

That's right. The fate that I stole includes the fate of being in a state of eternal slumber outside the fate of going crazy and losing control… As for me, I can resist eternal slumber to a certain extent… Klein grabbed the sliver of clarity and gained a certain understanding of his present state.

To him, this was an opportunity.

It was only at this moment that he fully understood why the Evernight Goddess needed the river water of the River of Eternal Darkness to use as a medium to attempt this.

This wasn't only because it was difficult to put a King of Angels who had accommodated the Uniqueness, and the awakening will of the Lord of the Mysteries in "Him" to temporarily enter a state of eternal sleep, but it was beneficial to Klein for this state of eternal slumber. This could create an excellent environment of him being the only one with a sliver of consciousness while the other interference was all sleeping!

At the same time, Klein also confirmed one thing:

The reason why he was able to remain clear-headed in a dream and during the instances where his mind was intruded wasn't because of the special traits from Sefirah Castle. This was because the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings in his body was also sleeping.

Although the awakening of the Lord of the Mysteries was still greatly limited, "His" level and "His" connection with Sefirah Castle were undoubtedly stronger than Klein's. If "He" couldn't completely resist a state of eternal slumber, why could Klein?

Therefore, Klein believed that this trait was likely due to the blessings of the Evernight Goddess, a gift he received when he came to life.

The blessings given by a true goddess who wielded the power of the dream domain, and the aura, strength, and magical powers that Sefirah Castle augmented him with had combined together to form such a special trait!

It was as if a gentle song came from deep within the dream. Klein's consciousness became clearer.

Without any hesitation, he immediately adjusted the sleeping imprint and corruption in his body and found a new balance.

Following that, he extended slippery tentacles with strange patterns and used Sefirah Castle's powers to steal The Fool's Uniqueness inside Antigonus's body.

Perhaps it was because he was now Antigonus, the theft this time was successful after a small number of failures.

A translucent mask with the symbol of The Fool flew out from Antigonus's body!

The man with the thick black beard was still sleeping, as though “He” would sleep forever.

At the same time, the fog dissipated and illusory starlight shone into the hall.

This ancient palace suddenly appeared in the dark and mysterious astral world, appearing at the peak of the Hornacis mountain range.

The Concealment had been removed, and fate began to be exchanged.

At this moment in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, on one of the mountain peaks, a shadow-like curtain appeared on the surface of a huge cross. It cracked open and a man walked out from it.

“He” was Adam, dressed in a simple white robe with a thick blond beard. Behind “Him” was a thick shadow with five heads.

This shadow had partially merged with “Him,” but it hadn’t completely become one.

Adam raised “His” head and looked at the astral world which had been distorted from authority and symbolism. “He” smiled calmly and said to the shadow behind “Him.”

“They don’t seem to be aware of the reason why I used Visionary as the foundation this time.

“I’ve never told anyone about the results of this research.”

Just as “He” said that, “He” proclaimed in a solemn and deep voice, “I am One, and also Infinity, the Beginning and the End.”

“His” eyes suddenly turned illusory as an ocean that seemed to contain all possible colors that appeared around “Him.”

Adam then raised “His” hand and grabbed the silver cross pendant hanging in front of “His” chest.

A burning but illusory sun suddenly appeared above “His” head. To “His” left, lightning, squalls, and waves formed a supercilious phantom. On “His” right, there was a white tower with numerous brass eyes.

The authorities and symbols that Adam had envisioned entered “His” body one after another under the influence of the Chaos Sea.

Finally, the shadow that clung tightly to Adam’s back shrank into “His” body.

Suddenly, the sea that contained all the colors began to rise. Adam expanded into a giant shadow that seemed capable of holding up the world.

The shadow slowly walked on the “water surface” of the illusory, chaotic darkness. It pointed at the astral world and solemnly declared, “Let there be light!”

In a blink of an eye, the entire astral world lit up. There were no other secrets that could be concealed. Even portions of the astral world that connected to Earth, the entire astral world, and the invisible barrier that had been separated from the universe appeared.

At that moment, giant, indescribable faces seemed to cling to the transparent, cracked barrier, silently watching the developments inside.

Chapter 1376 - Half a Great Old One

◆ ◆ ◆

Inside the astral world—which was even more abstract than the spirit world, looking as though all the authorities and symbolism in the universe were included inside—every object appeared. And the light that illuminated this area wasn’t spread uniformly. It was mainly concentrated in a few places, stacking together, forming spots created by a prism.

There were a total of three spots in such a state, each sealing the various illusory kingdoms.

One of the kingdoms was covered in bright flowers in perpetual daylight. Another seemed to be formed from books that were opened or closed. Different figures shuttled between them as they read as a form of entertainment. One was covered in storms as lightning and thunder continued without end in the boundless ocean.

In the next second, the three different kingdoms underwent a violent change.

In the area with perpetual daylight, all the flowers emitted light, as if they had become burning, miniature suns.

The countless miniature suns intertwined together and surged deep into the kingdom before rising into an abnormally blinding golden sun. It emitted a scorching light that could illuminate the entire world, an entire solar system.

However, no matter how much energy was released by this almost-real sun, or how many flares of super high-temperature flames it created, it was unable to break through the prism-like spots of light.

Every destroyed layer had a new layer produced at an equal speed.

In another part of the astral world, on the surface of the mysterious country formed from all kinds of books, bits of brass points of light rapidly circulated on the spot of light, forming mysterious symbols that seemed to be searching for a critical point or effective method to destroy the barrier.

During this process, the faint light formed a pair of illusory eyes that directly saw the weak spots and created eyes there.

Meanwhile, inside the spot of light, there was also faint light swirling in it. It repeatedly took form, changing the critical points of the structure.

This made it seem as though both sides were in a contest of their calculative abilities, with neither side clinching victory.

In the boundless sea that was enveloped by lightning, wind, and rain, the spot of light suddenly lit up.

It brought a portion of matter and approached the limit to speed, creating a violent “wave” that could destroy a planet.

Such a “wave” and the tiny bits of light constantly struck the prism-like spot of light, turning it into countless falling specks of light.

At some point in time, the spot of light began to ripple like an illusory ocean that seemed to contain all colors. It seemed to solidify the surrounding environment, causing the light spots that carried the storm to slow down uncontrollably. Then, the points of light repeated a state of acceleration and deceleration. This kept repeating, but they refused to give up.

With the Chaos Sea as a source, Adam used “Himself” and the True Creator as a pillar, “Envisioned” three Uniquenesses, and accommodated them into this system. Adam seemed to exceed the limitations of Above the Sequences and became Half a Great Old One. “He” was able to forcefully suppress the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom by “Himself,” trapping the three Sequence 0 true gods within “Their” respective divine kingdoms!

At that moment, “He” seemed to return to “His” peak condition, becoming that ancient sun god who slew one ancient god after another.

“He” chose the two pathways of Visionary and The Hanged Man as “His” foundation for “His” resurrection because, apart from them having the trait of resurrecting, this was also the result of “His” research: this had the highest chance of becoming God Almighty.

After using either one of the two pathways of Visionary and The Hanged Man to become a true god and gaining initial control over the Chaos Sea, “He” could take back the remaining Uniquenesses and Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics. This was the easiest path to advance to the Lord of the Astral World.

And in this matter, there was something more special about Visionary than The Hanged Man.

When the Visionary first gained control of the Chaos Sea and accommodated a second Uniqueness and corresponding Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic to a certain extent, “He” could “Envision” the remaining, fake symbolism and authority, allowing “Him” to briefly obtain strength that transcended the Sequences, giving “Him” half a Great Old One’s strength.

However, at the end of the Third Epoch, the ancient sun god’s plan was: after being assassinated, “He” would immediately revive in the Giant King’s Court where Sasrir was. “He” would first take back The Hanged Man’s Uniqueness and three Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics and became a Sequence 0 true god. Then, with the first Blasphemy Slate placed beside “Him,” “He” would gain preliminary control over the

Chaos Sea. With this foundation, he would allow Angel of Imagination Adam to awaken and return to "His" main body to form a support.

After building such a system, the ancient sun god would make use of The Hanged Man's "Grazing" ability and a Visionary's Virtual Persona means to control the Uniquenesses and Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics of the Sun, Reader, and Sailor pathways to allow "Himself" to become infinitely close to a Great Old One and to maintain a minimum level of stability.

"He" didn't directly accommodate the Chaos Sea and the other three pathways' Uniqueness and Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics, because "He" didn't want to advance to become a Great Old One, a pillar, in that era. That would inevitably lead to the resurrection of God Almighty, causing "Him" to lose "Himself."

"He" planned on controlling the situation and materials. When the apocalypse approached, "He" would finish the last few steps and become a pillar with self-consciousness.

And back then, "He" didn't plan on using Visionary as a foundation because he hadn't obtained the Quill of Alzuhod. "He" lacked the main ingredient. When the Kings of Angels betrayed "Him" and the plan failed miserably, "He" decided to take advantage of the disaster to take the best path when "He" was revived in Adam.

At this moment, Adam, who had transformed into a giant shadow, stood on the water surface of the illusory, chaotic darkness, reflecting the astral world into his eyes, making it difficult for the three true gods to break through the restrictions.

Surrounding "Him" were beams of light that constantly fell from high above with blazing tails, illuminating the entire Forsaken Land of the Gods, making both the Northern and Southern Continents experience midday conditions simultaneously.

In Bayam's remaining bell tower, Amon, who was sitting on the railing, nudged the crystal monocle. With both hands propped up, “He” suddenly leaped up and entered the astral world.

During this process, “His” left hand had an ancient mottled stone slab appear at some point in time.

The first Blasphemy Slate!

Amon had once used it to seal the gap caused by Mr. Door’s returning ritual, to prevent the invasion of the Mother Goddess of Depravity.

After the return ritual ended, and the Door of Flesh and Blood completely collapsed without a tunnel to maintain anymore, “He” retrieved the Blasphemy Slate.

At that moment, Amon casually threw the ancient, mottled stone slate down from the astral world and allowed it to land somewhere in the Fog Sea.

It was a mountain that tore out of the boundless black fog.

There was no end to its depth. Its surroundings appeared like a continent.

After the first Blasphemy Slate landed, it accurately stabbed into the peak of the mountain, forming an illusory sea that contained all the colors.

At the same time, Amon entered the astral world and saw the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range that had been “Grafted” here. “He” saw the ancient and dilapidated palace on the mountain peak.

Wearing a pointed hat and a classic black robe, “His” body rapidly expanded, instantly reaching the scale of a mountain.

“He” opened “His” mouth, as though “He” was about to swallow Antigonus’s magnificent but dilapidated palace.

Suddenly, “He” saw a blurry figure.

This figure was wearing a long, layered black dress that was not complicated but had countless stars speckled on it.

“She” was as big as the current Amon. A pair of huge arms covered in dark black short hair grew out from both “Her” torso and waist, but there was a beautiful and gentle face that was covered in thin black gauze.

“Her” eyes seemed to compress the starry night sky. It made one feel at peace, but it also made one feel an uncontrollable fear.

One of “Her” two hands held a huge scythe, and another pair held a bird-shaped, golden accessory. The remaining pair held nothing as though “She” was holding an invisible object.

Evernight Goddess!

In the next second, Amon, who was wearing a monocle on “His” right eye, was quickly wiped away by an eraser like “He” was a sketch.

The Evernight Goddess raised “Her” two empty arms as she held up an almost invisible fog.

On the surface of the fog, multiple “doors” of different shapes rapidly opened in different spots, but they were instantly blocked, preventing any loopholes from taking place.

The Evernight Goddess floated above the peak of the Hornacis mountain range in the astral world as “She” focused on controlling the fog world in “Her” hand, preventing Amon’s true body from escaping.

As more and more doors appeared, the opening of doors became faster and faster. This goddess was unable to deal with it alone. All “She” could do was raise “Her” other two arms and raise the huge scythe.

The dark black scythe rapidly turned into a corporeal coffin made of black fog.

The almost invisible fog world was stuffed into the coffin, and all the movements instantly ceased. It was as though death had occurred.

However, this silence only lasted for a second. On the surface of the black fog-formed coffin, a series of “doors” took form and opened again.

As the Evernight Goddess sealed the doors, “She” raised “Her” arm that held a bird-shaped, golden accessory.

The orange glow of twilight fell, adding a sense of decay and extinction to the heavy black coffin.

The formation and opening of the doors slowed down as both parties entered a tug-of-war.

At that moment, at the foot of the Evernight Goddess, the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range collapsed.

It was like the apocalypse had arrived early.

At the same time, python-like black tentacles extended out from somewhere in the astral world.

There was an eye at the end of each tentacle, either opened or closed. Any object that was seen by them would instantly turn into grayish-white rock. And anything touched by the tentacles distorted as limbs and heads stretched out, turning into good-looking women of all sizes.

As the grayish-white spread rapidly, the tentacles surged towards the ancient and dilapidated palace, rushing towards Klein who was about to accommodate The Fool’s Uniqueness.

Primordial Demoness Cheek!

Chapter 1377 - Crazy Ravings

◆ ◆ ◆

Countless demonesses of varying sizes brought with them the destruction of all matter, causing the scene of the entire Hornacis mountain range to develop in the direction of turning into a huge stone sphere.

This made the dilapidated walls of the ancient palace collapse rapidly, exposing Klein, who was in the middle of the hall, along with his avatar and marionette out into the middle of the astral world.

Just as the python-like black tentacles were about to rush into the palace, a crimson moon rose up like a scene from the apocalypse.

In the perimeter of the hall that was bathed in moonlight, a cluster of wheat instantly grew out. There were flowers, mushrooms, and trees. They intertwined with each other, layer by layer, sealing the palace that belonged to Antigonus.

At that moment, the hall where Klein was in seemed to be a ruin that had been sealed in history and a forest for thousands of years, as though it had been swallowed up by nature.

The python-like black tentacles with eyes on their tips were blocked by plants growing wildly.

They rose up as they constantly struck the “screen” that originated from nature, causing the latter to collapse or peel under layer after layer of petrification effects.

However, no matter whether it was the wheat, flowers, mushrooms, trees, or newborns, they quickly returned to Earth Mother's embrace and grew again.

Just like that, the barriers of nature were reborn and destroyed, layer by layer, as layer after layer was reborn. This showdown entered a stalemate.

Earth Mother, who controlled The Moon's Uniqueness, fended off Primordial Demoness Cheek.

At this moment, a "light" that couldn't be seen by most Beyonders landed from high above and crashed into the barrier of nature that used plants as a foundation.

The light didn't have a physical body, as though it was formed from a flux of massive and miscellaneous information. In its illusory form, it tore through the gaps between the plants, like a torrent, heading straight for Klein, who was about to retrieve the translucent mask.

Hidden Sage!

At this moment, a blurry light shot out from the void, revealing picture-like projections around Klein.

Some of them recorded the helplessness and misery humans felt when facing supernatural beings. Some of them used an epic-like brush to reenact the scenes of humans using their own bodies as experiments to attempt fusing with Beyonder ingredients to obtain strength and save the race. Some described the unique cultures and traditions due to a Black Emperor, while others carried various viewpoints, books, and inventions. Some resembled the dawn of the present world, starting from the massive machinery that spewed steam, buildings that rose higher and higher, and clothes that made movement easier…

The contents made the seemingly thin painting exude a heaviness. This was because they bore the inspiration and development of civilization, of human society at different stages.

Back then, the God of Craftsmanship didn't properly digest the Sequence 1 Civilization Enlightener potion before advancing to Sequence 0 due to various reasons. "He" maintained "His" rationality and lucidity. However, this made "Him" have to focus more on resisting the madness and inclination towards losing control. Amongst the seven orthodox gods, "He" was slightly weaker than the other existences.

The reason why the Church of Steam was the weakest orthodox organization was that, apart from having the shortest history and the least heritage, its corresponding god was also not in the best of conditions.

By the time Roselle raised the Industrial Revolution as the Son of Steam, a member of the Church, and brought with him all sorts of ideas, the God of Craftsmanship took the opportunity to change "His" name to the God of Steam and Machinery, sharing in the progress of the enlightenment of civilization, and digested the corresponding potion.

As a true god in a neighboring pathway, "He" eventually chose to stand on the orthodox deities' side after the Hidden Sage chose to be Klein's enemy.

The terrifying flood of information crashed into the illusory pictures and rapidly expanded, attempting to crack the cage.

However, the tens of thousands of years of civilizations were thick and vast. The history left behind by generations of humans that numbered hundreds of millions was so vast and magnificent. It was enough to contain the information flux of the Hidden Sage.

When the Hidden Sage tried breaking through the limitations of the God of Steam and Machinery, in the hall of the Antigonus hall that was sealed by layers of plants, Klein extended his slippery and strange tentacles to grab the translucent mask that represented The Fool's

Uniqueness before moving it towards his face.

Just as the mask covered Klein's face, numerous figures appeared around him.

Some of them were men wearing postman uniforms. Some were ordinary birds, while others were microbes that couldn't be seen with the naked eye. There were hundreds or thousands of them.

The hall that only had corpses hanging in the air suddenly became crowded.

[image]

And the commonality of these figures was that they wore crystal monocles, or had a circular emblem of different colors in the same position.

Amon!

The avatars of Mr. Error Amon!

It was unknown if "They" had used the Primordial Demoness's or the Hidden Sage's attacks to open a back door and use a loophole to secretly arrive near the target.

Looking at Klein, who had just put on the translucent mask and was beginning to accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness, these Amons revealed a "smile" at the same time. "They" open "Their" mouths and said words that ordinary people wouldn't be capable of understanding.

These words intertwined and formed terrifying and crazy ravings:

"You overlooked the Primordial Demoness…

"For 'Her,' Medici, who has only recovered to Sequence 1, is no threat at all…

"Her" greatest wish right now is to immediately produce a Lord of the

Mysteries and open the seal of the Western Continent, allowing ‘Her’ to have a chance of finding the City of Calamity…

“It’s obvious that, compared to you, I’m the better choice. You’re too weak…

“Heh heh, are you still waiting for the Mother Tree of Desire or the Mother Goddess of Depravity to provide you with help?

“It’s useless. I placed the first Blasphemy Slate into the Fog Sea and placed it near the Abyss’s entrance—not far from that primitive island.

“Also, the enhanced seal brought about by the corresponding authority of ‘doors’ and half of the Lord of the Astral World’s control towards the world barrier prevents any Outer Deity from being able to have ‘Their’ powers penetrate inside for a short period…

“And without the influence of the Outer Deities, the Dark Side of the Universe and the Chained God currently do not wish to interfere in the battle of gods. ‘They’ would rather seize this opportunity to escape ‘Their’ restraints.

“‘They’ also wish that a Lord of the Mysteries would be born as soon as possible to help ‘Them’ escape from the predicament… If it wasn’t for the fact that stirring ‘Them’ would also trigger the Outer Deity corruption in ‘Them,’ I can promise you that I would’ve already reached an agreement with ‘Them’ to deal with you together…”

Amon was deliberately using real information to fill up the ravings, using this to make Klein suffer the effects of a two-pronged approach—one was the mental corruption brought about by the ravings, and the other was the corresponding content that distracted him.

In any case, it wasn’t a waste of time to “Him.” On the one hand, “He” had sufficient avatars. Each Worm of Time saying one word was enough for “Him” to form many words. On the other hand, “He” forcefully fused the information together, making a single word represent many things.

At that instant, the ravings of Amon echoed in Klein's mind like sharp blades that pierced through his psyche, tearing through his mind.

Normally, Klein could use his own status to suppress the ravings that were at most at the level of a Sequence 1. It wouldn't affect him, but at this moment, he was accommodating The Fool's Uniqueness. His mental state was in a weak and subtle balance.

Under such a scene, a straw might crush the camel's back, much less so many of Amon's avatars.

Furthermore, while Klein felt a sharp pain in his psyche and his self-awareness was in a mess, the sleeping mental imprint of Antigonus and the will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings showed signs of awakening.

In a sense, eternal slumber was an extreme seal. The Amons, who had accommodated Door's Uniqueness, could undoubtedly be able to weaken the seal or even make it lose its effectiveness!

Also, the translucent mask that Klein had just worn on his face—The Fool's Uniqueness—obtained an even stronger remnant will from the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings. It was also gradually breaking free from the influence of eternal slumber, and it had a certain resonance effect with the same being in Klein's body.

Without using any Beyonder powers, the Amons, who had simply created a few ravings, had thrown Klein into a state of imbalance, and he was on the brink of losing control.

Furthermore, all of this seemed irreversible unless there was more river water from the River of Eternal Darkness that allowed Antigonus's mental imprint and the even more powerful will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings to continue sleeping.

But at this moment, even if there was still the river water of the River of

Eternal Darkness, the Evernight Goddess wasn't able to divert "Her" attention. This was because "She" was trying her best to suppress the dual-pathway true god, Amon.

From this point of view, the Amons were deliberately "sacrificing" "Their" true body to stall the Evernight Goddess, to create an opportunity for the avatars to destroy Klein's ritual.

This was a little risky, but the result looked pretty good.

At that moment, Klein's pocket lit up.

The light was a pale golden color like sticky syrup. It instantly enveloped the surrounding area.

Illuminated by this light included Klein and his avatar, as well as the book that was suddenly thrown over by the distant marionette.

0-02, Trunsoest Brass Book!

The Sealed Artifact extended its "body" in midair. As it bathed in the pale-golden light, a rule suddenly appeared on the blank page. It was completely different from the repeated laws from before:

"Speaking is prohibited here!"

Amon's avatars kept opening and closing "Their" mouths, but they could no longer make a sound.

A line appeared under the previous rule an instant later:

"Attacking each other is prohibited here!"

Pa! The Trunsoest Brass Book fell to the ground and spread open by Klein's feet.

Under the illumination of the Magic Wishing Lamp, it actually managed to break free from the repeated cycle from before, and it set up rules that were beneficial to Klein.

With just a glance, the Amons made different responses.

A portion of “Them” adjusted “Their” monocles, and together, “They” raised “Their” right hands and gently clenched it, using the corresponding authority to strengthen the seal.

On the Trunsoest Brass Book, a line of text before those rules gradually formed:

“All the following rules are ineffective…”

Another portion of Amons locked onto Klein, who was on the boundary of losing control.

Not being able to attack him didn’t mean that stealing and gifting were prohibited!

Chapter 1378 - Change of Plans

◆

On the different Amons' faces, the monocles in different forms emitted pure light.

This was something "They" had stolen from the depths of the ruins of the battle of gods. It came from the ancient sun god's eternal daytime effect there. It could purify filthy and evil objects, and awaken sleeping creatures.

"They" "gifted" this to Klein.

This, combined with the ability to control the strength of seals obtained from the Apprentice domain's authority, was enough to break the state of eternal slumber.

In that instant, the mental imprint of Antigonus and the will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings in Klein's body awakened. The madness, the vastness, cruelty, bloodthirstiness, and coldness were like an invisible storm that wreaked havoc in Klein's mind.

Almost at the same time, in The Fool's Uniqueness that he wore on his face without fully accommodating it, the powerful will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings seemed like a terrifying monster that had been sleeping in the darkness for thousands of years. It suddenly opened its eyes.

The former chaos and loss of control swept over again at that instant, but Klein didn't panic. Following one of his contingency plans, he calmly used the “Grafting” ability to guide the mental imprint of Antigonus to Celestial Worthy’s will in The Fool’s Uniqueness, allowing the two thousand years of entanglement between “Them” to collide again.

Meanwhile, Klein relied on his own consciousness and the anchors from The Fool and the Sea God believers to balance out the Celestial Worthy’s will contained within his Beyonder characteristic, just like when he separated out the Attendant of Mysteries marionette.

If there weren’t any accidents, and if this continued, there was a chance that Klein would be able to balance between the two sides and completely accommodate The Fool’s Uniqueness. He would enter the final stage of the ritual, but how could there be no accidents when he was surrounded by Amons?

Several Amons strengthened the seal of the Trunsoest Brass Book and the Magic Wishing Lamp to resist the former’s rule limitations. Some Amons gave the “eternal daytime” to Klein, and a small number of Amons locked onto Klein and attempted a “Theft.”

“They” were trying to steal his lucidity.

One Amon failed after another, but in the end, there were still a few Amons who succeeded. “They” “Stole” away Klein’s self-awareness for the next two seconds.

Klein’s thoughts blurred. Without his guidance, the Antigonus’s mental imprint, the two wills of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings, as well as the anchors from his believers instantly lost their balance and began to madly invade, influence, and corrupt each other.

[image]

Everything became extremely chaotic, and it was as if it was developing irreversibly.

Klein’s body collapsed inch by inch, turning into clusters of transparent and distorted maggots as he extended even more slippery and sinister tentacles.

And at this moment, the rules on the Trunsoest Brass Book were wiped away and began writing:

“Speaking is prohibited here!”

“Attacking each other is prohibited here!”

Soon after, a familiar text appeared before the two rules.

“All the following rules are ineffective.”

After the seal was strengthened, the Trunsoest Brass Book seemed to enter a new cycle. And the influence the Genie exerted on it became rather limited.

Klein’s consciousness quickly regained lucidity, but the situation in his body was completely chaotic and out of control.

This made him completely unable to deal with the different influences or have any hope of finding a new sense of balance.

In other words, he would run down the path of losing control until he became a monster.

Without any time to think, Klein initiated his final contingency plan using his instincts and experience.

He instantly gave up on saving his body and no longer focused on this matter.

Not only that, but Klein had also even allowed the Attendant of Mysteries marionette to turn into a whirlpool of maggots and let it fuse with his body along with Zaratul’s mental imprint.

He wanted to mess things up!

However, Amon's avatars wouldn't allow him to make any attempts. Apart from the Amons, who were fighting against the Magic Wishing Lamp and the Trunsoest Brass Book, the rest of them began to "Steal" once again, trying to throw Klein's thoughts into chaos again until he completely lost control.

The Amon in the postman uniform succeeded, but what "He" stole wasn't Klein's lucidity, but a drop of fresh blood.

This blood immediately seeped into Postman Amon's palm.

Right on the heels of that, Postman Amon's eyes turned crimson as "His" stomach bulged at an unimaginable speed as it squirmed.

"He" seemed to be pregnant with a child!

"He" had stolen the blood blessed by the Primordial Moon, or in other words, the Mother Goddess of Depravity!

Klein no longer placed most of his consciousness on balancing the Antigonus's mental imprint, the awakening will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings, and his anchors. There was no need for him to endure it passively like before. He could barely respond to Amon's theft.

He used "Grafting" to change the target that Amon had stolen to Sefirah Castle and "Tampered" it to the junk pile, replacing it with the blessed blood of the Primordial Moon.

This was from Shaman King Klarman.

There was no doubt that there was a certain connection between Amon's avatars. Furthermore, it was impossible for "Their" levels to reach Sequence 0. Therefore, when the Postman Amon was contaminated by that drop of blood, the other Amons also showed levels of chaos. Some of "Their" stomachs protruded as well. Some of "Their" eyes were dyed crimson, while others had invisible babies in their arms as "They" walked in circles on the spot…

This caused the other “Theft” to inevitably fail.

Klein seized this opportunity and used the brief moment of lucidity to stir the power of Sefirah Castle to cast a shadow over the ancient palace.

This place was once again concealed.

Then, he ignored the mental imprint of Antigonus in his body, Zaratul’s mental imprint, and the two wills of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings that was beginning to fuse together. He made the blank-faced avatar which stood nearby without having shown any breakdown to extend his hand towards his main body.

Its five fingers quickly closed, and its wrist quickly twisted.

As Klein’s self-consciousness didn’t resist and even took the initiative to cooperate, his avatar didn’t suffer many failures before using the help from Sefirah Castle to successfully steal his own consciousness, fate, anchors, and most of his identities.

The only identity he left behind in his main body was his identity related to The Fool.

At the same time, he had also “Stolen” the identity, fate, and mental imprint of the Antigonus family’s ancestor, the mark of fate and spirit. This could only succeed in a few tries thanks to his self-consciousness cooperating.

As the stream of light with countless distributaries appeared, Klein’s avatar’s face contorted as it turned into Klein Moretti, who had fused with Gehrman Sparrow’s traits.

He had become the main body, the main body without any Beyonder characteristics!

Of course, his self-consciousness and anchors were still resisting the mental imprint of the Antigonus family’s ancestor, but compared to before, this was undoubtedly much easier to deal with.

Having already adapted to the identity of Antigonus, he quickly found a new balance, delaying the fate of losing control.

Although this remained unavoidable, it gave him a certain amount of time for his subsequent actions.

On the other side, in the spot where Klein's original body was, there was only The Fool's Uniqueness, all the Beyonder characteristics from the "curtain," the Beyonder characteristics that originated from Zaratul, the tiny number of Beyonder characteristics which Klein had consumed and digested previously, as well as the awakening will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings, the remnant mental imprint of Zaratul, as well as The Fool's identity.

And without Klein's self-consciousness, Antigonus's mental imprint, and the large number of anchors involved, Zaratul's remnant mental imprint was quickly destroyed and corroded by the awakening will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.

In the next second, Klein's "main body" suddenly fell silent.

The collapse of his body stopped. He lowered his head and stopped extending the slippery and sinister tentacles around him. He was so quiet that he appeared to have lost his soul.

In such a scene, the silence was even more terrifying than madness.

That frozen body seemed to be giving birth to an extremely terrifying monster!

Klein didn't care about what was happening. He quickly "Grafted" the partial connection between himself and his "main body" above the gray fog.

Then, he shifted his target and locked onto Antigonus who was on the huge stone chair.

Without receiving Amon's help, the former Half-Fool failed to escape from “His” state of eternal slumber.

Klein once again reached out his right hand, stealing the remaining Sequence 9 and 1 Beyonder characteristics of the other party.

Although he was currently using the identity and fate of Antigonus, it was still difficult for him to complete the “Theft.” Failure was inevitable.

At that moment, outside the Realm of Mysteries created by Sefirah Castle, Amon regained “His” consciousness from the initial chaos.

“They” raised “Their” hands and adjusted “Their” monocles, causing the redness in “Their” eyes to vanish. Others looked down at “Their” stomachs and reached out to stroke them.

A second later, the bulging stomachs split open, and baby after baby with faint crimson colors appeared.

These infants didn’t cry, nor were they deformed. All of them took out crystal monocles from the void in smooth succession and wore them to their right eye.

The number of Amons increased.

“He” had converted the babies which were due, turning them into “His” avatars so as to prevent the corruption of the Primordial Moon from interfering with “Him.”

At this moment, Earth Mother and God of Steam and Machinery had achieved the upper hand to some extent on their respective battlefields. They could finally make use of this small advantage to interfere with the situation inside the palace.

Instantly, a portion of Amons turned into plants as they bloomed or bore fruit, returning to the land. A portion of Amons became knowledge, information, and words, as “They” ended up imprinted into an illusory book.

However, there were still some Amons who had used “Blink,” relied on loopholes, or from using the deception of the rules to successfully avoid the influence of the two true deities. As “They” continued to strengthen the seal of the Magic Wishing Lamp and the Trunsoest Brass Book, “They” opened a “door” in Klein’s Realm of Mysteries.

At the same time, the angels also noticed the changes in the astral world, but “Their” gazes were unable to penetrate the Earth Mother’s natural barrier and the God of Steam and Machinery’s civilization picture. “They” couldn’t see the interior at all.

This also meant that, even if “They” wanted to exert influence, there was nothing “They” could do.

Inside the Realm of Mysteries created by Sefirah Castle, Klein finally succeeded in stealing the Beyonder characteristics of Antigonus from Sequence 9 to Sequence 1, ones that had been digested!

Due to the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence, the latter had attracted many Beyonders of the same pathway over a long span of history. While turning them into marionettes, “He” had also absorbed their Beyonder characteristics. Therefore, at that moment, there was still a large number of Seer pathway Beyonder characteristics left in Antigonus’s body, including a Miracle Invoker Beyonder characteristic.

The dark points of light quickly merged into Klein’s body and fused with him.

As he was now Antigonus, and as all the Beyonder characteristics had been digested by Antigonus, his fate of losing control didn’t speed up as he maintained his previous progress.

This way, Klein had once again become a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries, one who had already digested the potion, with a fate that pointed towards losing control.

At this moment, his original “main body” raised his head, his eyes dark.

However, from this glance, the present Klein's mind instantly slowed down as his body turned cold. He almost had no way of resisting it.

The powerful will that he was very familiar with began to slowly rise, attempting to influence Sefirah Castle.

The Lord of the Mysteries had awakened to a certain threshold in Klein's "main body."

The Fool had become a truly great existence that was being awakened. It matched the guess of the Tarot Club and was in conflict with true history.

Before Klein's thoughts slowed down, he took the initiative to cooperate with Amon and dispelled the Realm of Mysteries, allowing the situation inside to interact with the outside world.

He had already "fooled" history without any problems, just like the first plan he came up with. As for how to end it, he never had a good idea.

According to the changes in the situation, the final plan he activated at this critical moment was:

To not leave himself any way out. He would go from accommodating The Fool's Uniqueness to advancing to the true Fool!

In any case, this wouldn't be worse than the previous situation.

Chapter 1379 - Combining Forces

◆

The “curtain” that enveloped the Antigonus palace instantly vanished. An indescribable aura returned to reality, causing the entire astral world to shake.

Outside the world barrier that was covered in cracks, the terrifying, indescribable faces suddenly changed.

The invisible barrier began to tremble violently as if it would collapse at any moment.

Every continent on the planet within experienced an earthquake. It wasn’t a serious one, just rather obvious.

Above the Five Seas, waves surged, as if they had encountered a sudden tidal force.

Amid the “noon” sky, the crimson moon suddenly appeared. Its color became extremely saturated and expanded in an exaggerated manner. It was as if it had hung off the roofs of every house. Other than that, the Brown Planet, Orange Planet, Scarlet Planet, Gold Planet, and Blue Planet lit up at the same time, emitting light of different textures.

If one looked down from the cosmos, the entire Earth appeared to be swept up by an invisible storm and trembled in place.

This was a slight change brought about by the Outer Deities’ attempt to break the barrier.

The aura that floated inside the ancient palace in the astral world had made “Them” collectively recall that terrifying existence. Agitated by this, either a result of rage or madness, all of “Them” tried to stop “His” revival.

Compared to “Them,” who were blocked outside the real world, the first to react was the Magic Wishing Lamp in the pocket of Klein’s “main body.”

The sticky pale-golden light penetrated through the Amon’s enhanced seal, turning into a blurry and distorted figure.

It stretched out its arm and pulled the Trunsoest Brass Book into its palm.

The rules that were written previously had all disappeared, and a new article immediately formed:

“Resurrection of the deceased is prohibited here!”

A faint grayish-white fog flashed and a familiar text appeared in front of this rule:

“All the following rules are ineffective!”

Even though he hadn’t really resurrected and had yet to absorb The Fool’s Uniqueness and two Sequence 9 to Sequence 1 Seer pathway Beyonder characteristics, the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings in Klein’s main body could also control Sefirah Castle and use its status to direct its powers.

At this moment, “His” existence and the fog of history had completed their interactions. Fragments of light began to distort as they merged into one, sometimes breaking apart, unable to completely form a piece of history.

A sense of self-conflict appeared in that piece of history!

True history clearly involved the prehistoric human soul, Klein Moretti, disguising himself as The Fool and establishing the Tarot Club. He became stronger one Sequence at a time, and eventually reached the level of the true Fool. However, the present history was that Mr. Fool was a great existence that was awakening, the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings from ancient times. "He" had finally awakened!

At that moment, although the rule restriction put in effect by the Genie using the Trunsoest Brass Book could only be effective for less than a second, it still significantly weakened the will of the Lord of the Mysteries inside Klein's "main body," as though "He" had suffered a fatal blow.

As for Earth Mother and God of Steam and Machinery, "They" had given up on interfering with Amon's avatars, as though they wanted this Mr. Error to have the time to deal with the awakening Lord of the Mysteries.

However, "They," who clearly had some power to spare, didn't attempt to affect Klein's "main body," but continued suppressing the Primordial Demoness and the Hidden Sage.

The subsequent attacks and interferences from the latter two were no longer intense, as if "They" were waiting for an outcome.

To "Them," the resurrection of the Lord of the Mysteries was the achieving of "Their" goals:

Produce a "Pillar" as quickly as possible; and prevent entities that had animosity towards "Them" from becoming the Lord of the Mysteries.

In addition, the pathways that "They" were in didn't belong to the three pathways that were controlled by the Lord of the Mysteries. Furthermore, "They" didn't have any feuds or conflicts of interest with the other party.

Amon, who was no longer affected, immediately changed "His" target and focused most of “His” attention on Klein’s “main body.”

There was no need for any explanation. “They” clearly knew that this was “Their” greatest threat!

Without any hesitation, the Amons raised “Their” right hands at the same time and gently squeezed it, seriously “Stealing” the effects of the “eternal daytime” from the target.

However, the Amons didn’t give up influencing Klein. With “Their” numbers, “They” split off a small number of members and looked at Klein, who was currently a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries. Furthermore, Klein also bore the identity of Antigonus.

The monocles of these Amons suddenly lit up. Using the authority related to “doors,” “They” moved Klein out of the real world and into the cosmos.

In the dark and vast Universe, Klein’s figure appeared. Then, it instantly became thin, turning into a paper figurine.

The paper figurine first had its belly bloated before giving birth to a paper baby. Then, it rapidly rotted into dust.

Klein had used “Grafting” and “Paper Figurine Substitutes” to block the attacks of the Amons.

At the same time, the other Amons had succeeded in stealing the effects of the “eternal daytime” from Klein’s main body.

However, in the next second, the effects of the “eternal daytime” were once again “stolen” back.

This was the Lord of the Mysteries’s control over powers from “His” pathway. Even though “He” had yet to fully revive, “He” had already begun this process.

Amon’s eyes flickered as “He” immediately gave up on Klein and focused on three matters:

Most of “Them” continued to steal the effects of the “eternal daytime” and resist the Lord of the Mysteries, while a small number of “Them” locked onto Antigonus, who was sitting on the huge stone chair. “They” began to “Steal” the other party’s state of eternal slumber.

In addition, all the Amons had dispelled the strengthening of seals, and even weakened them.

Klein, who was no longer being attacked by Amon, similarly didn’t counterattack. His attention was focused on his “main body.”

The awakening of the Lord of the Mysteries was the biggest problem!

At that instant, an illusory mark appeared on Klein’s glabella. It was a strange door of light that was stained with hints of bluish-black. It constantly emanated a faint grayish-white fog.

Klein began to snatch control over Sefirah Castle from the Lord of the Mysteries, so that it wouldn’t be so easy for “Him” to make use of the level and power!

And with the Lord of the Mysteries not fully resurrected and having yet to accommodate The Fool’s Uniqueness and the corresponding Beyonder characteristics, he could effectively reduce “His” strength, allowing “His” failure rate to increase significantly and for the effects to be inferior.

With his addition, with his control over Sefirah Castle, the “Fooling” received by the Trunsoest Brass Book immediately weakened. The chances of Amons’ “Theft” also increased.

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, at the foot of the giant shadow formed by the ancient sun god, on the surface of the sea that was covered in all colors, words written in the most ancient language quickly appeared:

"The revival of the Lord of the Mysteries failed due to many interferences."

With this sentence forming, as Klein fought for control over Sefirah Castle, the Amons once again "Stole" the effects of the "eternal daytime" effects that had augmented the Lord of the Mysteries.

Elsewhere, "They" had also "Stolen" Antigonus's state of eternal slumber.

Without any hesitation, the Amons transferred the state of "eternal slumber" to Klein's "main body" and gifted it to the Lord of the Mysteries.

The ancient existence's aura immediately fell silent, but it quickly rebounded.

At this moment, the corresponding text appeared on the weakly-sealed Trunsoest Brass Book:

"Resurrection of the deceased is prohibited here!"

Suddenly, the terrifying will in Klein's "main body" rapidly weakened, producing a strong urge to fall asleep again.

However, this will was so powerful that, even after a long period of time, it was unable to completely wear it down. Under these two restrictions, it was still tenacious and slowly recovering. It also attempted to use "Tampering" and "Fooling" to get out of the predicament.

Klein sensed that the other party was using Sefirah Castle's power, so he immediately focused and interfered.

At the same time, the Evernight Goddess, who was floating above the ancient palace, slightly relaxed "Her" control over Amon's true body. "She" pulled back the bird-shaped, golden accessory and aimed its head downwards.

Inside the bronze eye of the bird-shaped, golden accessory, illusory layers of doors surged out, allowing a drop of colorless water that had a strong aura of stillness to drop onto Klein's "main body" in the ancient palace.

This was a drop of river water from the River of Eternal Darkness!

While the Evernight Goddess was doing this, Amon's actual body's attempt to escape by opening "doors" also tacitly slowed down.

The drop of water plummeted at an extremely fast speed. The natural barrier formed by Earth Mother, and the portrait formed by the God of Steam and Machinery simultaneously pulled back to give way for it.

With a smack, the river water of the River of Eternal Darkness accurately dripped onto Klein's head and silently entered.

The aura of the Lord of the Mysteries, which was slowly growing, immediately receded. It stopped its fluctuation and fell into a state of eternal slumber.

However, this condition wasn't very stable, as if it could be broken at any moment.

At this moment, the Evernight Goddess's empty hand pulled out a gigantic sword from the void.

The sword's surface was covered with orange-red light as it exuded the dawn of twilight, the aura of decay.

This was the symbol of the Twilight Giant.

The Evernight Goddess's arm that was covered with short black fur extended, striking down with the exaggerated sword.

"She" had always kept some energy as though prepared to deliver this moment!

In the strange sound of the void shattering and decaying, the sword that was covered with the light of twilight slashed through the dome of the Antigonus palace, causing the hanging corpses to drop to the ground.

Right on the heels of that, it struck Klein's "main body," which had yet to escape the state of eternal slumber.

The portion of the awakening of the Lord of the Mysteries rapidly vanished, and the body began to wane uncontrollably. It broke down along with The Fool's Uniqueness and the two sets of Sequence 9 to 1 Beyonder characteristics in his body. They also collapsed and gathered together.

Upon seeing this, Klein followed his plan without any thought. He used Sefirah Castle to pull down a quarter of the fog of history and enveloped it.

Amidst the grayish-white fog, The Fool's Uniqueness and the Beyonder characteristics fully converged.

They frantically absorbed the fog of history around them, turning into a shapeless and dark liquid.

This blob of liquid stretched out as though it was forming a strange, translucent hooded cloak or a person whose internal organs and flesh were emptied out.

The Fool's potion

The Amons reached out "Their" right hands at the same time in a bid to "Steal" the potion.

Chapter 1380 - A Miracle

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More than a thousand Amons each committed “Theft.”

With “His” numbers, as long as “He” wasn’t extremely unlucky, there would always be a few who would’ve succeeded. Furthermore, The Fool’s potion was ownerless, so it wasn’t difficult to steal.

While carrying out the “Theft,” Amon removed a particular seal on “His” body, allowing the Apprentice and Marauder Beyonder characteristics to release their powers of convergence.

This was rather effective towards The Fool’s potion, allowing Amon to increase “His” success rate to the greatest extent.

However, all the Amons ultimately failed.

This was because a new rule had appeared on the Trunsoest Brass Book:

“Acts of theft are prohibited here!”

In order to deal with the awakening Lord of the Mysteries, Amon had weakened all the seals here and helped the Trunsoest Brass Book escape the “Fooling.” It could now have a limited number of effective rules for a brief moment amidst its repeated cycles, but now, this had adversely affected “Them.”

Seizing this opportunity, the illusory brand between Klein’s brows became more obvious.

A faint grayish-white fog gathered around him, forming a thin cocoon.

He activated Sefirah Castle with all his might. Together with his Attendant of Mysteries Beyonder characteristic, he created an extremely powerful convergence effect on The Fool's potion.

The black liquid that didn't have a fixed form seemed to be a starving beast that saw food. It immediately pounced onto Klein.

It kept extending and changing like a translucent skin, wrapping Klein inside.

[image]

Klein's face appeared underneath this liquid. His facial features were sometimes distinct, sometimes blurred, sometimes distorted, and sometimes blank.

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, under the giant shadow formed by the ancient sun god, words in the most ancient of languages rapidly took form on the illusory surface of the sea that contained all possible colors:

"Antigonus's efforts at advancing to The Fool ultimately failed due to various reasons."

The reason why this existence that once dominated the entire planet didn't use Klein Moretti's name was that he was now carrying the identity and fate of Antigonus.

If the subject in the sentence had been the former name, then Klein could completely ignore it.

What had Klein Moretti's failed advancement got to do with Antigonus becoming The Fool?

But when the subject became Antigonus, it was like a prophecy, as if it was an arrangement that had the outcome already be decided. Such a sentence could make the situation turn very grim.

If Klein didn't give up on Antigonus's identity and fate, he would be restricted by those words.

If he gave up Antigonus's identity and fate, then the Sequence 9 and 1 Beyonder characteristic in his body would no longer belong to him in the true sense of the word. He had never digested them before—they were Beyonder characteristics that Antigonus once controlled. At present, it had nothing to do with Klein Moretti. All he did was forcefully devour them.

Under such circumstances, even if there were no other factors, just the undigested Beyonder characteristics would likely cause Klein to lose control on the spot. And consuming The Fool's potion in such a state and completing the advancement ritual was without a doubt impossible!

As the ancient sun god wrote this sentence, the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, who were situated in the astral world, sensed something. Each of them launched the most intense of counterattacks in an attempt to interfere with the other party's actions.

However, even though a large portion of "His" energy was spent restricting the three true deities, making it rather difficult, the ancient sun god quickly completed the sentence.

However, "His" giant shadow embodiment dimmed, as though "He" was unable to maintain it for too long.

In the astral world, within the floating ancient palace.

In the battle that pit the Earth Mother and the God of Steam and Machinery against the Primordial Demoness and Hidden Sage, the situation became even more intense. However, the former two were still able to divert a certain amount of strength to affect Amon's avatar, preventing "Them" from destroying Klein's advancement ritual.

The Amons were forced to “Blink” everywhere, but some of them still turned into plants, blooming and bearing fruit before returning to the land. Others collapsed into words as they were imprinted into illusory books.

Apart from that, a large number of “Them” were strengthening the seal, limiting the Trunsoest Brass Book, preventing the rules it enacted from being effective, or be effective for only an instant.

Under the influence of these three factors, even with Amon’s numbers, it appeared to be insufficient.

But even so, a small number of “Them” managed to seize the opportunity to make crystal monocles and similar circular symbols reflect Klein’s figure.

In the next second, the monocles and circular symbols emitted pure light.

This wasn’t “Theft,” but the act of “returning” things.

At this moment, Amon’s decision was to return an item that “He” had formerly “Stolen” from Klein.

It was Klein’s thoughts of suicide!

Back when Klein was captured by Amon and brought to the Forsaken Land of the Gods, he had tried on many occasions to commit suicide but failed to succeed. He had such thoughts “Stolen” by the other party.

At the critical moment of his advancement, once he had the intention to commit suicide, the outcome could be imagined!

At that moment, Klein, who was tightly enveloped by The Fool’s potion, felt his thoughts turn chaotic and wander. His hair spread out as he felt an extremely cold, sticky liquid slowly invade him.

Then, he had the thought of committing suicide and giving up.

This was a change that Klein had never expected. He had long forgotten how Amon had "Stolen" his thoughts of committing suicide. Furthermore, he didn't expect that not only was the other party unwilling to abandon these thoughts, "He" had even kept them carefully.

If it were anytime in the past, this thought might've been strong, but Klein could still use his self-control to resist it forcefully, suppressing it until it dissipated on its own. It would be akin to dealing with nasty thoughts.

But now, he was in the midst of an advancement ritual. He was being influenced by the potion, and his mind had lost its stability. He was unable to effectively suppress the thought of committing suicide.

The Amons always had various strange but rather effective methods.

Fortunately, Klein wasn't only Klein, but also Antigonus.

What relation did Klein Moretti's thoughts of committing suicide have to do with Antigonus?

With this level of knowledge from this additional identity, Klein didn't immediately give up and end his life. He pulled the Antigonus mental imprint in his body and mixed it with the idea of suicide, barely suppressing it.

Under such a balance, Klein's mind and body were further corroded by The Fool's potion.

His thoughts were the same as when he advanced to Attendant of Mysteries—completely dispersed.

But the difference was that he didn't fuse with the spirit world this time. Instead, he continued to extend, enveloping the entire planet, the entire spirit world, and part of the astral world like a gaseous body.

At that moment, Klein felt that he was in the bodies of different believers, in every human's body, in every animal's body, in every living thing.

Everything had godhood in them.

At the same time, he was still scattered within the fog of history, scattered through fleeting time, and scattered inside the silent flow of a river of light with multiple distributaries.

One was also Infinity.

At the level of godhood, an experience like this made Klein's thoughts wear away even further, as though all that was left was a coldness that looked down on everything.

Even this coldness was dissipating slowly.

It wouldn't be long before Klein completely lost himself and was led by the various mental seals in The Fool's potion, becoming a true monster.

This coincided with Antigonus's crazy fate, allowing the latter to accelerate.

At this moment, he felt something off. It was unharmonious, unnatural, and abnormal.

In the fog of history, there were a small number of light fragments twisting and distorting, unable to take form. It was as if there was a fundamental conflict between them.

They gradually separated, breaking out into different branches to record the different content, allowing the twisting to achieve the initial state of recovering.

Being imbued into everything, Klein's mind was "thrown out" due to this tiny disharmonious abnormality. He found some aspect of self-awareness again.

With this self-awareness as the core, he quickly gathered his scattered mind and guided the fusion process between The Fool's potion and his body.

But at this moment, the fate of Antigonus losing control thanks to the ancient sun god's "Prophecy" erupted early. Klein's body collapsed once again, unable to withstand The Fool's potion.

Without any hesitation or having the luxury of time to hesitate, Klein immediately removed a portion of the "Theft" effects and returned Antigonus "His" identity, fate, and self-awareness, allowing the "Him" sitting on the huge stone chair to slowly open his eyes. The dazed Antigonus gradually regained "His" clarity of mind.

"He" didn't immediately lose control, because the main reason "He" lost control was that the Lord of the Mysteries's will had awakened to a large extent. And now, The Fool's Uniqueness and most of the Beyonder characteristics that contained a portion of the will was no longer in "His" body.

Therefore, Antigonus could use his own will to resist the madness and try to stop the fate of losing control.

The prophecy of the ancient sun god came true: Antigonus really failed to advance to Sequence 0 The Fool.

And without "His" identity, the Sequence 9 and Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic of the Seer pathway in Klein's body turned into something that he hadn't digested. This threw him to the edge of losing control immediately.

The Fool's potion that wrapped around his body like a cloak instantly completed the act of seeping through. The will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings was awakened once again!

"Give up…

"Leave everything to me…

"This time, I won't accommodate another sefirah…

"I won't help you protect the living creatures you wish to protect, but I won't harm them either…

"It's not that I won't keep my promises, but it's just that they're too weak and not worth my attention…

"This place is an area that is off-limits to Outer Deities…

"…"

The unfamiliar yet weirdly familiar ravings reverberated in Klein's heart, giving him the idea of giving up.

And the thought of committing suicide that he had been suppressed by Antigonus's mental imprint previously, surfaced again after the balance created by it was lost.

The outcome of failing an advancement attempt was about to occur.

At this moment, the Evernight Goddess, who was originally powerless to slash downwards with the Twilight Sword, suddenly gave up on controlling Amon's true body.

As Amon's true body leaped out, and just as the avatars waited for Klein to fail the ritual, the goddess once again dragged the exaggerated sword that was covered in orange light.

This time, the target was Klein!

A thought flashed through Klein's mind as he took the initiative to be controlled by the thought of committing suicide, not making any attempts to resist.

With a poof, he was slashed by the symbolic sword of twilight, shattering into a rotten body of "meat" that seeped out Beyonder characteristics.

Klein died. Before the Amons took any sort of measures against him, he was killed by the Evernight Goddess before the ritual failed and before he completely lost control.

In the next second, the Evernight Goddess wore the bird-shaped, golden accessory on “Her” head as “Her” body expanded and enveloped the ancient palace. She instantly erased Amon’s true body, avatars, Earth Mother, Primordial Demoness, God of Steam and Machinery, Hidden Sage, and Antigonus, as though “They” were erased by an eraser.

Concealment!

The ancient sun god seemed to understand what the Evernight Goddess wanted to do, but having already made two prophecies, there was no way for “Him” to write a third sentence. As for the three true gods, they continued throwing what they had at “Him,” holding “Him” back.

In the next second, a miracle happened. Klein returned from the fog of history.

The Uniqueness of The Fool that had already belonged to him and the three Sequence 9 to Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics rapidly returned to his body.

Afraid that he would be disturbed, the Genie quickly made use of the Trunsoest Brass Book to add a rule:

“This place is suitable for the return of Beyonder characteristics.”

Suddenly, Klein returned to his previous state of him “drinking” The Fool potion.

But the thing that was different from before was that, back then, his body’s pillar of support belonged to the Sequence 9 to Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics of Antigonus—ones he hadn’t digested yet. And now, the first to return to him was undoubtedly the digested Sequence 9 and 1 Beyonder characteristic that once belonged to him.

This way, he would have a true pillar of support that could accommodate The Fool's Uniqueness and the remaining characteristics.

Klein was in a state that was the same as when he first arrived at the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, an Attendant of Mysteries who had finished digesting the potion and was capable of attempting to advance to Sequence 0 The Fool.

By relying on his resurrection, Klein had completely overturned his state!

This was the flash of inspiration he had obtained from Roselle's resurrection. Of course, the entire process was different from the resurrection of a Black Emperor.

The character that Klein had arranged to kill him was the Genie. He never expected that the Evernight Goddess, who he hadn't discussed this with, would share such tacit understanding with him.

In that instant, his body split apart, turning into a thin gray fog and dark liquid.

The gray fog and black liquid blended together, and the countless maggots that resembled meat tendrils sprouted on the surface. Then, they intertwined into a translucent dark-colored cloak.

There was no body under the cloak, just darkness.

This process was very brief. In less than two seconds, the Evernight Goddess's concealment of so many deities was clearly unable to last that long.

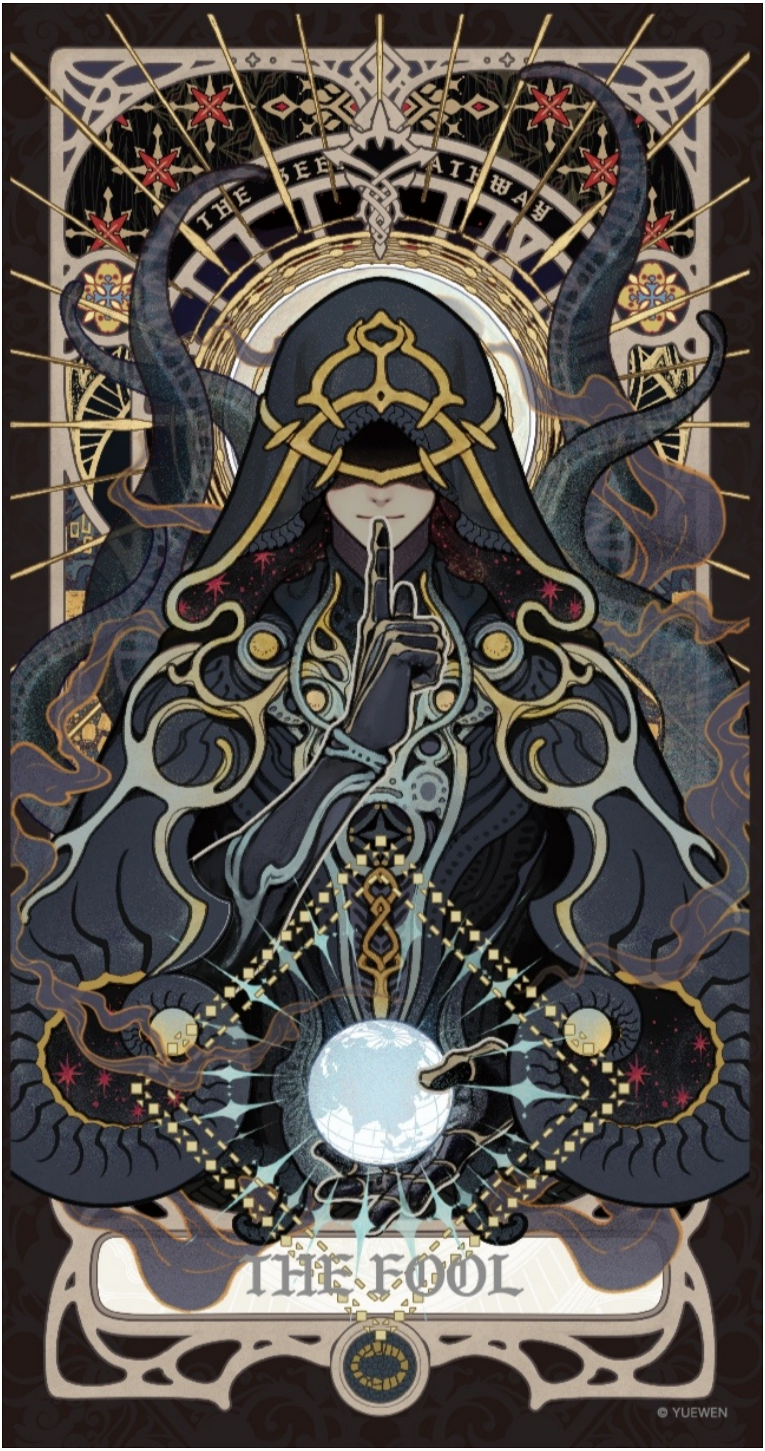
In an instant, a door of light traveled across the surface of the concealed world at an extremely high speed.

The door suddenly opened, and Amon, who was wearing a pointed hat and wearing a classic black robe, leaped out.

At the same time, “He” saw an illusory mask with blank facial features appear under the translucent dark-colored cloak.

The mask instantly outlined Klein, who had fused with Gehrman Sparrow’s traits. Amon’s thoughts turned chaotic as though “He” had his intelligence forcefully lowered.

The Fool was born.



THE FOOL
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The Fool Pathway Potion Formula (Sequence 1-0):

[image]

Chapter 1381 - Authority

◆

Inside the white tower, the headquarters of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom.

After Lucca Brewster, who was trapped underground, completed his prayer, he focused his attention back on the seal autonomously strengthening itself.

He wanted to find out exactly what was going on, to see if he could decipher the secrets hidden within and use them to invent some mystical techniques.

As he proceeded down each level, checking each and every Sealed Artifact, Lucca was taken aback and stopped in his tracks.

His expression became rather confused. He was lost on whether to take his next step with his left foot or right foot.

This seemed to be a very profound, esoteric question to comprehend.

In the Southern Continent, beside a cathedral belonging to the Evernight Goddess.

Leonard picked up the cup of coffee made from local ground beans and wanted to take a sip.

During this process, his thoughts wandered to the closed windows and the bright sky, trying to figure out the anomaly.

However, he was unable to leave the room and was sealed here. As for

Old Man, Pallez Zoroast, "He" had fallen into a strange state of silence without answering his questions.

Thankfully, there wasn't any additional danger. Therefore, Leonard could still sit in peace, using thoughts to replace action.

After an unknown period of time, he looked down at the cup of coffee that had been placed back on the table. He frowned slightly and muttered to himself in puzzlement, "What did I want to do just now?"

The Rorsted Archipelago, in the concealed Bayam City.

Having not noticed the changes in the environment, Danitz carefully fiddled with the telegraph device in his room.

The Golden Dream had recently come to the Sonia Sea and stopped at a port with a telegraph office. Danitz wanted to invite them over to Bayam as guests to take in the grandeur of a Lord's Oracle.

If possible, he wished that the Golden Dream could use Bayam as its primary harbor. This way, he could return to the ship at any time to participate in adventures and seek out treasures. At the same time, he could choose to listen to the captain's lectures.

As an all-rounder, Danitz had no doubt mastered all the knowledge and techniques needed to send a telegram. At that moment, he sat in front of the machine and quickly tapped his fingers, sending out the words he had constructed.

At the very beginning, his thoughts were clear and his words were proper. This left him somewhat smug.

Gradually, his eyes stared straight and his hands didn't stop moving, as if he was doing it on instinct.

After the telegram was sent out, Danitz exhaled, picked up a cup, and gulped down a mouthful of beer.

It was quicker than I expected. Even if I lose my job in the future, I can still go to the telegraph office to get a job with a good salary, Danitz thought proudly and worriedly.

He casually picked up the telegram draft and recalled the process of how he sent it out. His expression gradually turned odd.

“What did I send in the end?” Danitz couldn’t help but whisper.

Apparently, he had very likely mocked the first mate, second mate, Iron Skin, and Barrel towards the latter half of the telegram. Then, he passionately confessed to the captain.

I’m finished, I’m finished… Why would I express what’s hidden in my heart… Danitz’s face turned pale as he suspected that he had been controlled by the potion. The content he had written didn’t actually go through his head.

He hurriedly sent a telegram to indicate that the content from before had nothing to do with him. It was all a result of Anderson deliberately causing trouble.

At this moment, he realized that something was amiss outside. The sky was gray and there wasn’t a single cloud.

†

In the astral world, the existences and objects that had been concealed by the Evernight Goddess broke through the restrictions and returned to reality one after another.

“They” were like Amon’s actual body, looking somewhat dazed without making any immediate reaction.

In addition, the Evernight Goddess also paused in midair in confusion, as though “She” hadn’t thought about “Her” subsequent actions. However, “Her” first instinct was to protect “Herself.”

The Lord of Storms, the Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, who had been restricted by the thick prism-like spots of light in "Their" own kingdoms, also experienced certain changes. The intensity of their counterattacks was clearly lower, giving people a sense of self-doubt, unsure if the entity before them was an enemy.

The Genie abandoned the Trunsoest Brass Book and directly returned to the Magic Wishing Lamp. "He" seemed to have fought to "His" limits and had no choice but to retreat into the seal. He also seemed to recall something as he subconsciously evaded.

Antigonus, who had just regained "His" self-awareness and lucidity, was once again confused. His face was filled with question marks:

Who am I? Where am I? What am I doing? What is happening around me?

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, the ancient sun god's giant shadow sighed and said, "Let there be light!"

The light in the astral world brightened as it stabbed into the "eyes" of Amon's true body, avatars, Primordial Demoness, Hidden Sage, and other existences.

"They" immediately regained "Their" senses and made use of the time to respond differently.

The flood of information suddenly dispersed and fused with the various symbols around it, instantly disappearing.

The black, python-like tentacles with an eyeball on their ends retracted rapidly. No one knew where they went.

Amon's true body looked at Klein, who had just advanced, and gave up the chance to exert "His" influence while his condition was unstable. "He" raised "His" hand and adjusted the crystal monocle on "His" right eye.

"His" figure split into multiple seemingly illusory and realistic doors.

The doors opened and closed at the same time, preventing any existences like the Evernight Goddess from knowing where Amon's true body had gone to.

After Amon's true body left, "His" avatars faded and disappeared in a bizarre manner.

This was using a loophole, turning the act of "Amon's true body leaving" to being equivalent to "Amons leaving."

At the same time, the giant shadow that the ancient sun god had, expanded only to shrink and transform back into Adam, who carried a thick shadow on "His" back.

Beneath the feet of this Visionary, the sea that contained all colors instantly dissipated as though it had returned underground.

Looking up at the astral world, Adam returned to the back of that shadow screen through a crack.

The fusion between "Him" and the True Creator had just begun, and it wasn't over yet. The attempt to raise "Himself" to the level of half a Great Old One was actually rather difficult and risky. This would make "Their" progress a lot slower in the future.

In the astral world, as the war subsided, the natural barrier formed by plants and the portraits of civilization faded away, along with the illusory crimson moon.

The Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom first shattered the thick spots of light outside "Their" divine kingdoms. Then, "They" calmed down and returned to continue blocking the world barrier's cracks.

The Evernight Goddess, who was floating above the ancient palace, put away the pitch-black coffin; the Twilight Sword; the bird-shaped, golden accessory; and “Her” four arms. “She” cast “Her” gaze downwards.

After the translucent dark-colored cloak produced the mask, it transformed into Klein’s body.

Klein pressed one hand against the almost invisible mask on his face, and he placed the other at his abdomen. His back was slightly arched, as though he was suffering indescribable pain.

Just as he raised his head and looked at the Evernight Goddess’s face that was covered with a thin black veil, a pitch-black cloak appeared outside his body. Slippery and sinister tentacles extended from beneath the cloak.

After becoming The Fool, the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings in him had undoubtedly awakened further.

The crazy ravings and roars continued to echo in Klein’s ears, tearing through his mind, letting him know that this was going to be his future.

There was no way to kill the Lord of the Mysteries. Even if “His” will was slowly worn down by time, “His” consciousness would remain forever. “He” could snatch Klein’s body at any moment and completely revive.

If it wasn’t for the fact that “He” had just “killed” the Lord of the Mysteries’s will, making the awakening “Him” weaker than what Klein expected, Klein suspected that he might not be able to survive. All he could do was watch as his body collapsed and he became another existence.

Of course, he could still seek the Evernight Goddess’s help to give him a drop of the River of Eternal Darkness’s river water. However, this wasn’t a long-term solution. He could only delay it for some time before ultimately facing it.

Relying on his own consciousness and anchors, Klein stabilized the consciousness of the Celestial Worthy in him.

At this moment, he was unable to speak.

The Evernight Goddess above nodded gently and said, “What you need now is stability.”

With that said, “Her” figure was wiped inch by inch as “She” returned to the divine kingdom in the astral world.

Klein turned his head to look at the slightly dazed Antigonus. With a thought, he returned to Sefirah Castle.

Sitting in the half-collapsed palace, Antigonus sat on a huge stone chair. “He” felt as though “He” had just been through a very, very long dream.

†

Inside Sefirah Castle, Klein sat at The Fool’s seat and focused on stabilizing his mental state.

Just like before, before he achieved an initial level of stability, he had no way of seeking treatment from a psychiatrist. Unless he paid a visit to Adam, it was very likely that he would go even crazier.

With some stability, Klein quickly checked the authorities he obtained.

It was called “Fooling”!

Not only did it contain history, time, fate, change, and concealment, but it also included the mind domain’s of “Blind Stupidity”—the simplest application was to lower an enemy’s intelligence.

Just as Klein was about to research them further, his spiritual perception was triggered.

Someone had invaded Sefirah Castle!

And only when the enemy successfully invaded did Klein obtain a "notification"!

Klein suddenly looked up and saw that the grayish-white fog had formed a door at the other end of the long mottled table.

A figure wearing a pointed hat, a classic black robe, and a monocle walked out.

Amon!

There was a tinge of darkness in Mr. Error's eyes as "His" smile appeared somewhat crazy.

"He" leisurely looked around and nudged "His" monocle. "He" said with a smile, "Are you pleasantly surprised?"

Klein wanted to use Sefirah Castle to expel "Him," but he realized that at some point in time, Amon had gained control over Sefirah Castle!

Amon cast "His" gaze at him, pulled out a chair and sat down, chuckling.

"I released the suppression of the Lord of the Mysteries in my body.

"'Him' being the owner of Sefirah Castle makes me equivalent to being the owner of Sefirah Castle. Of course, I can enter.

"This is very risky. Even in the past, I didn't dare to try it before, but since you've grown to this extent, I can only take the risk.

"This is very exciting. I'm quite pleased with the effects."

As Amon spoke, slippery and sinister tentacles appeared beneath "His" clothes.

"He" took the initiative to revive part of the Lord of the Mysteries, allowing "Himself" to enter a half-crazy state.

Chapter 1382 - Home Ground Advantage

As Amon spoke, Klein appeared to be listening, but he had actually attempted to leave Sefirah Castle.

This wasn't because he wanted to give up or surrender, nor was it because he was too timid and subconsciously considered fleeing first. Instead, he believed that this was the best solution for the current situation.

If he stayed in Sefirah Castle, Klein would face three difficult questions.

Firstly, he had just advanced to The Fool and his condition was extremely unstable. He had to divert a large portion of his mental strength to suppress the awakening will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings. Secondly, there was no way for him to obtain the help of his allies; he could only fight alone. Thirdly, under the situation that everyone could influence Sefirah Castle, even if Klein had a deeper level of control over Sefirah Castle, he wouldn't be able to express an overwhelming advantage. He might even be disrupted in his use of Sefirah Castle because his opponent was good at making use of loopholes and creating bugs, making it difficult for him to reach the same level as "Him."

This way, when a Sequence 0 The Fool faced a half-crazed, dual-pathway Error and Door, even if he wasn't in a scenario of facing a 100% failure rate, the chances of winning were extremely minute.

And by taking the opportunity to escape Sefirah Castle, Klein could immediately obtain the help of his allies to reverse the situation between the two.

If Amon were to chase after “Him,” Klein would interfere with “His” return to Sefirah Castle and make “Him” face “His” allies. At that time, the Primordial Demoness would definitely not attack again. The ancient sun god might not be able to reproduce the power of half a Great Old One anytime soon. With the lead of the Evernight Goddess, the six orthodox deities were enough to deal with Amon.

Even if Amon, who was in control of all the authorities of the Error and Door domains, wasn’t easily killed, the orthodox deities would definitely be able to weaken “Him” and seal “Him.” After Klein stabilized his mental state and deepened his control over Sefirah Castle, he could then kill “Him” in a targeted manner.

This process was almost irreversible—even if the ancient sun god could still produce the level, status, and strength from before. “His” limit appeared to be suppressing three orthodox deities at the same time, and this didn’t include the Evernight Goddess.

Of course, the Outer Deities were undoubtedly unwilling to see the birth of a new Lord of the Mysteries. Once such a situation happened, “They” would definitely try their best to interfere, preventing Amon from dying. However, before the world barrier collapsed, the influence “They” could exert would be rather limited, and it might not be of much use. Just like before, Klein believed that the combined powers of the Dark Side of the Universe and the Chained God were inferior to the Hidden Sage.

Even if the Outer Deities managed to affect the situation, Klein wouldn’t suffer any losses. After all, those existences wouldn’t allow Amon to kill him either. He could find a place to hide and stabilize his mental state. Once he was prepared, he could make new plans again—the foggy town of the Evernight Goddess was a very good choice.

If Amon didn’t chase after him and remained inside Sefirah Castle. Klein could use his identity as the owner of Sefirah Castle to influence the control of all kinds of matters within at any moment, preventing Amon from doing anything in Sefirah Castle. Even if "He" wanted to use the crimson star to deal with the Tarot Club members, it would be impossible.

In short, it would be extremely difficult for either of "Them" to use Sefirah Castle well, but destroying the other party's attempts was definitely simple.

Under such a stalemate, Klein had time to stabilize his mental state, deepening his control over Sefirah Castle, slowly turning the situation around.

Towards the end, Amon would either flee and hide, or "He" would let the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings completely revive, choosing to have an internecine outcome with Klein.

Therefore, although he didn't have the time to analyze the pros and cons, Klein quickly came to a conclusion.

Leaving Sefirah Castle now was the best choice.

However, just as his consciousness sank to the edge of Sefirah Castle, he saw a crystal monocle.

This item appeared in time, crushing Klein's hopes of escaping.

"Did you think I'd leave such an obvious loophole? Of course, you can stop me from leaving Sefirah Castle at any time." Amon curled "His" index finger and pressed it against the monocle as "He" smiled.

Behind the chair that "He" was sitting on, the resplendent symbol rapidly changed. At times, it was formed from symbols corresponding to parasitizing, time, and fate. At times, it was a series of doors.

These two different symbols appeared one after another, making it impossible to truly be fixed.

Klein didn't hear what Amon said. The moment he failed, he created a real Realm of Mysteries—a complete divine kingdom of The Fool.

Light and shadows instantly changed in front of Amon's eyes. It brought with it the disappearance of the grand palace, mottled table, and luxurious high-back chair, bringing with it an ancient castle.

Amon wasn't sure what the ancient castle looked like. This was because "He" was standing in a corridor inside the castle. "He" could only sense the various changes in Sefirah Castle and see with the limited vision "He" had.

The corridor was unusually dark and gloomy. The corridor stretched endlessly. There were silver-colored elegant candle stands spaced widely apart, each producing a dim and yellow glow.

There were dark red wooden doors on both sides of the corridor that seemed to connect to different rooms.

There was no sound from the rooms, making it virtually impossible to know what was hidden inside.

Amon casually glanced at it and smiled with interest.

"Interesting."

As the most powerful Cryptologist, "He" naturally knew that this was a divine kingdom, one that couldn't be broken through with brute force.

This was because every door was "Reassembled" with different items. If "He" forcefully broke through them, he would trigger unknown effects. Amon didn't underestimate the abilities and intelligence of a Sequence 0 The Fool. "He" didn't plan on experiencing any more surprises or accidents.

However, once the divine kingdom's rules were fixed, its owner would similarly be restricted to a certain extent.

To put it simply, Klein was definitely in one of the rooms, not somewhere else.

One had to bear the corresponding responsibility for the benefits obtained.

"You want to use this method to stall for time and stabilize your mental state?" Amon whispered as though "He" was talking to an invisible person.

Then, wearing a pointed hat and a classic black robe, "He" walked to the nearest dark red wooden door.

There were no holes on the wooden door, so "He" couldn't see the exact situation inside.

In other words, it was very difficult for Amon to know if Klein was here without opening the door.

The corners of Amon's mouth curled up slightly. Amon extended "His" right hand and drew a long rectangular shape on the dark red wooden door.

Inside the rectangle, bits of starlight emerged and turned transparent, revealing the scene in the room.

With the authority of Door and the ability of Bug, Amon forcibly opened a window without triggering the effects.

Following that, "He" cast "His" gaze into the room.

There were no tables, chairs, carpets, and other furniture, but a blue sea.

"Indeed, this door has been connected with the sea outside," Amon said without any surprise.

Once "He" twisted the door, "He" would leave Sefirah Castle and appear in the sea outside.

And at that time, with Klein being wary, it was almost impossible for “Him” to enter Sefirah Castle again, just like how Klein was unable to leave Sefirah Castle.

This was the reason why Amon didn’t forcibly destroy The Fool’s divine kingdom but opened one door at a time.

Destruction led to similar effects. The repeated effects would affect Amon again and again. Even if there were many loopholes that “He” could use, “He” wouldn’t be completely immune to them.

Retracting “His” gaze, Amon walked to the opposite room and opened a window according to the method from before.

However, this time, it was pitch-black inside, and “He” couldn’t see anything.

Amon raised “His” hand and pinched the edge of “His” monocle and coughed lightly.

“His” figure instantly split into two.

The number of Amons increased.

The split Amon glanced at Amon, who stood in the same spot and tsked.

“Why aren’t you seeking the thrill yourself?”

As “He” spoke, this Amon extended “His” right palm and grabbed the handle of the dark red wooden door.

Just as “He” began twisting, “His” expression suddenly turned blank as “He” sat down, as though “He” had lost the ability to think.

“Fooling effect.” The original Amon nodded slightly.

The retarded Amon immediately collapsed and turned into a transparent worm with twelve segments.

Tiny bits of Beyonder characteristic seeped out and returned to Amon's body.

"He" relied on using the loophole to avoid the negative effects of "His" avatars from acting on "His" actual body.

After all the Beyonder characteristics returned, Amon released a flame that had been stolen and burned the corpse of the Worm of Time.

After doing this leisurely, "He" looked up and adjusted the monocle on "His" right eye.

On the crystal monocle, countless symbols, patterns, and labels appeared. They moved quickly, interweaving, reforming, or changing, as though they were making calculations.

This was a combination of a Cryptologist's power of decryption and the Key of Star's authority on position.

The two attempts Amon made were mainly to gather intelligence, grasp the rules, and prepare for cracking the secrets of The Fool's divine kingdom.

Soon, the symbols, patterns, and labels formed a scene on the monocle:

Behind a dark red wooden door, a few slippery tentacles extended out from Klein's body. He sat on a high-back chair and calmly watched the entrance.

The corners of Amon's mouth curled up. With a flash, "He" appeared in the room.

However, everything before "His" eyes suddenly collapsed.

Klein with The Fool's aura quickly turned thin, turning into a card.

On the card, Roselle Gustav was wearing a gorgeous head accessory and colorful clothes, holding a stick with luggage hanging from it. His eyes were filled with longing.

The Fool card.

The Fool card from the Cards of Blasphemy.

Klein knew that relying solely on Paper Figurine Substitutes and adding the “Fooling” effect and “Grafting” his true aura onto it wouldn’t be able to deceive a top-notch Swindler like Amon. Therefore, he used The Fool card which had some convergence powers as his paper figurine.

Although Sefirah Castle couldn’t be used again, this was Klein’s home ground after all. There was his junk pile, the various items he had gathered, and the newly obtained Trunsoest Brass Book and the borrowed Magic Wishing Lamp.

Chapter 1383 - Stipulated Rules

With the Klein in front of Amon turning into The Fool card, the room shrank and revealed its original appearance.

It was an iron cigar case that had marks of being corroded slightly. It had fused with the aura of Sefirah Castle.

Klein’s figure appeared out of nowhere as the entire divine kingdom of The Fool collapsed. As the magnificent palace reappeared, he grabbed the vessel that carried The Fool card and Amon’s true body and suddenly closed it.

He didn’t have hopes of using this item to seal Amon, who wielded the corresponding authority of the Door pathway. All he wanted was to buy some time and find a chance to throw Amon out of Sefirah Castle and retrieve the initiative.

But at that moment, Klein, who was wearing a black trench coat, paused.

His other hand took out a crystal monocle from the void with his other hand and placed it in his right eye.

Behind him, Amon, who was wearing a pointed hat and a classic black robe, quickly outlined “His” figure. “His” eyes were dark and wild as “He” laughed.

“What made you think that I didn’t use an avatar?”

Before “He” finished his sentence, Klein’s figure that had been parasitized rapidly turned thin, turning into a crude paper figurine.

Klein was cautious and hadn't used his true form either. He relied on a Paper Figurine Substitute that had Spirit Body Threads "Grafted."

He knew very well that he would rather give up an opportunity than make mistakes when fighting Amon. Once he made a mistake, under the suppression effect of a Bug, it would be very difficult for him to turn the tables.

With regards to the situation of the prey turning into a paper figurine, Amon didn't seem to be surprised. All "He" did was raise "His" hand to touch the crystal monocle.

At the other end of the grand palace, Klein, who was wearing a top hat and a trench coat, uncontrollably walked out of The Fool's automatic concealment.

He raised his right hand and took out a crystal monocle from the void with great difficulty, slowly moving it towards his right eye.

During this process, Klein's expression was filled with resistance and rather warped, as though he couldn't control his hand.

The half-crazy Amon smiled leisurely.

"You can use paper figurines to replace you, but so can paper figurines replace you.

"It being 'Parasitized' is equivalent to you being 'Parasitized.'

"Everything is relative, and all of them have loopholes. No Beyonder power is uncrackable. They can be used in any suitable situation."

"He" made use of the relationship of the Paper Figurine Substitute and the main body to create a bug.

Although Amon looked like "He" was unable to control "His" desire to speak due to "His" madness, it didn't stop "Him" from corroding Klein with “His” full strength. “He” strengthened the “Parasitizing” bit by bit, making Klein truly wear a monocle and become “Him.”

At that moment, Klein’s body suddenly collapsed. He had taken the initiative to do so.

He split into countless transparent maggots that swam in all directions.

Among these Worms of Spirit, there were a few Worms of Time with twelve segments mixed in.

Strictly speaking, Amon’s Worms of Time could forcefully “Parasitize” very tiny creatures like the Worms of Spirit. However, when Klein split up, he took the initiative to use his “Fooling” authority to confuse the order of time. He “Fooled” the few Worms of Time, making them split up only towards the end. Unable to find the cluster of Worms of Spirit, they lost their target for “Parasitizing.”

In the next second, the scene in Sefirah Castle changed again. Klein once again used the Realm of Mysteries powers to create a new divine kingdom for The Fool.

Amon instantly entered a room.

This place was covered with a thick yellow carpet with a crystal chandelier hanging from it. There was a door on each wall, and it was unknown where they led to.

At the same time, there were oil paintings depicting various eyes hanging from the four walls.

There was no need for any special scrutiny. With just a glance, Amon knew that the four doors corresponded to different effects. The main purpose was to delay “His” actions and create enough time for Klein to make subsequent preparations.

The corners of Mr. Error curled up slightly as “He” cast “His” gaze to the ground.

“He” extended “His” right fist and stretched out “His” fingers.

An illusory door appeared on the thick yellow carpet.

The door quickly moved for a second before it became fixed in place and silently opened.

However, with the opening of the illusory door, the doors around the room began to move strangely. The doors creaked and opened!

Almost at the same time, in the pitch-black wilderness, in a dark tower that led to the sky, Klein was holding the Magic Wishing Lamp and removing the effects of “Fooling” on the Trunsoest Brass Book.

The candlewick of the Magic Wishing Lamp lit up as it spewed out a sticky, pale-gold glow.

These rays of light transformed into a distorted, blurry figure.

Klein didn’t consider making a wish with the Genie to transfer Bernadette’s wishes onto him and change the ownership of the Magic Wishing Lamp. This was because there would only be one outcome. He would die on the spot and return from the fog of history with the Miracle Invoker’s powers.

Normally, this was a good way to escape, especially since Klein could revive several times.

However, the situation this time was completely different from before.

Once Klein died, it would mean that he had temporarily given up on his identity as the owner of Sefirah Castle, making this place a paradise for Amon. “He” could use this sefirah without any obstruction.

Under such circumstances, Amon could completely “Fool” history, interfere with fate, and suppress Klein’s resurrection, making him truly die.

The ones who were most effective against a Beyonder were definitely

Higher-Sequence Beyonders of the same pathway.

Therefore, Klein's current plan was to use the status of the Genie to better use the Trunsoest Brass Book.

If the Genie didn't exert a certain influence, the rules set by the Trunsoest Brass Book definitely wouldn't be biased towards Klein. It would only restrict all existences other than itself.

As the Genie's blurry, pale-gold figure took form, the Trunsoest Brass Book produced the sound of colliding metal and quickly flipped to the second half of the book that allowed writing.

Without any gap in time, new text appeared on the brass page:

"Theft is prohibited here!"

If Klein had the choice, the most suitable rule would be "Acts of theft are prohibited here" because the former clause was a law. It couldn't stop someone from committing theft ahead of time, and it could only deliver punishment after the act. Furthermore, punishment for first-time thieves was inevitably light, something the Amons could withstand. His idea restricted the possibility of such actions—there was no such thing as theft.

However, there was no way for the Trunsoest Brass Book to make such a rule right now. One had to wait until the provisions were watertight enough, and that it had awakened to a certain extent before that was possible.

Previously, the Genie had relied on "His" close connection with the Trunsoest Brass Book, "His" high status, and all "His" strength before "He" could enforce similar rules. At this moment, "He" was already drained and unable to do such things.

At present, all Klein could do was try his best to stall for time so that the Trunsoest Brass Book could produce a sufficiently strict setup of laws to target Amon so as to act in concert with his "Fooling" authority.

At this moment, in the room that trapped Amon.

As the illusory door on the ground opened, the four real doors shook and cracks appeared.

This would bring about many unknown effects.

Suddenly, the sound of a bell rang out from an endless distance away.

At some point in time, Amon had transformed into an ancient, mottled stone wall clock. On the wall clock, the second hand formed by the Worm of Time suddenly paused.

Gong!

As the bell reverberated, everything in the room froze strangely, including the four doors.

The only exception was Amon. “He” had transformed back to “His” pointy-hatted, classic black-robed look. With a smile, “He” calmly raised “His” left hand and tightened “His” five fingers.

In the next second, the strange frozen state was broken. The four doors that were about to open had closed again with a bang, leaving no gaps behind.

Amon’s figure descended and burrowed into the illusory door that wasn’t closed.

Just as “He” used this method to leave the room, “He” discovered that “He” had arrived in a pitch-black wilderness. There was a dark tower that seemed to pierce the sky in the distance.

Inside the tower, the Trunsoest Brass Book in front of Klein had formed a second rule:

“Deception is prohibited here!”

Although Amon couldn’t see what was happening, it was as though

"He" had sensed something. After all, a high-ranking person who used the rules of deception as entertainment was undoubtedly able to sense the changes in the rules. Otherwise, there was no way of accurately finding loopholes.

"He" immediately raised "His" hand and adjusted the monocle stuck in "His" right eye.

On the surface of the crystal monocle, a blinding, pure white light spewed out, illuminating the wilderness. There were no longer any concealed existences here.

This was the "eternal daytime" that "He" had previously given to Klein and retrieved from Klein's "main body"!

In such an environment, the dark tower melted inch by inch. Klein floated in midair with one hand holding the Magic Wishing Lamp, and the other holding the Staff of the Stars. In front of him was the open Trunsoest Brass Book.

[image]

Amon took the opportunity to stretch out "His" hand that was holding onto the monocle. From a distance, "He" gripped Klein's projection to his palm.

Behind him, the shadow that had been dragged out by the "eternal daytime" seemed to become fainter as it twisted with vitality.

Without a sound, Amon began "Stealing" Klein's various Beyonder powers.

"He" didn't deliberately seek out the "Fooling" authority. Instead, "He" chose to be random to increase the success rate.

However, with a flash of light, what fell into "His" palm was only a simple paper figurine.

Grafting!

Pa!

The shadow behind Amon’s back was lashed by an invisible whip, and “He” was completely unharmed.

“He” created an error, letting “His” shadow replace “Him.”

Following that, Amon laughed as “His” voice resounded in Klein’s ears.

“Genie, I can also promise to send you back to the cosmos.

“Look, I wasn’t punished. This means that I’m not swindling you.”

Chapter 1384 - Conceptualization

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing Amon’s words, Klein’s heart sank.

Before this, he wasn’t worried that Amon would collude with Genie, because “He” was a top-notch Swindler. No promises “He” made could be believed. As for Genie, “He” had encountered the former Lord of the Mysteries. “He” was considered a victim of such matters in a similar vein. Therefore, “He” would definitely use “His” most wary of approaches to deal with Mr. Error.

This was the result of a lack of trust.

Sometimes, lying, cheating, and swindling could indeed increase the profits in the short-term, but in the long-term, it was better to be honest.

But now, the Trunsoest Brass Book had just formulated the rule of “deception is prohibited here.”

And Amon didn’t receive any punishment after making the promise!

At the same time, Klein and Genie didn’t notice “Him” using any loopholes.

This proved how true and effective Amon’s words were. It was from the bottom of “His” heart and wasn’t a scam.

Genie could even rely on “His” own level and traits to distort the sentence from “I can promise” to “I promise.” It would make it impossible for Amon to go back on “His” word. If “He” did, “He” would suffer damage at the level of a Great Old One.

This made Klein not help but wonder if the rule that “deception is prohibited here” was secretly guided by Amon or deliberately created by Genie, making any Lord of the Mysteries candidate to promise to return “Him” to the cosmos.

To Genie, “He” didn’t suffer any losses in such a deal because Klein himself owed “Him” a promise.

If it were any other scene, Klein would still have the time to communicate with Genie and rebuild “His” trust. However, at this moment, Amon’s threat was right before his eyes. “He” wouldn’t give him the chance to resolve this problem.

If he chose to continue to believe in Genie, Klein would be putting his life in the hands of this Outer Deity and be under “His” control. In the subsequent battle, as long as Genie was able to formulate a few rules that appeared to be fine but were biased towards Amon through the Trunsoest Brass Book, Klein, who was already at a great disadvantage, would rapidly lose with no way to reverse the situation.

As his thoughts raced, Klein made the choice of this gamble.

A translucent dark-colored cloak instantly appeared around him. His face was covered with a strange and distorted mask.

The Fool!

Invisible rings rippled from his body and instantly enveloped Genie, the Trunsoest Brass Book, and the entire wilderness, as well as Amon.

“Blind Stupidity” authority!

Amon’s monocle temporarily lost its luster, as though “He” had lost “His” vision. “His” gaze also turned dull.

The speed of text being written on the Trunsoest Brass Book clearly slowed down as though it would take fifteen minutes or even hours to think up the next rule.

Genie's blurry and distorted golden figure shook as it suddenly shrank back into the golden magic lamp that looked like a water flask. It was unknown if it was escaping or if it was purely an instinctual reaction.

Seizing this opportunity, Klein attempted to escape Sefirah Castle as he prepared to "Graft" something to himself.

Just as his consciousness sank, the crystal monocle appeared at the edge of Sefirah Castle, blocking his "path."

Even though "His" intelligence had been reduced briefly, Amon still seemed to remember to stop Klein from leaving Sefirah Castle.

"His" eyes quickly regained clarity as they were still dyed black. "His" mouth slowly opened as "He" laughed uncontrollably.

"I've written this matter into my instinct. This is a good way to resist the effects of Blind Stupidity."

Clearly, "He" had cheated the rules and lied to "Himself," making "His" instincts believe that this was what "He" wanted.

Klein wasn't depressed. He immediately completed the "Grafting" he had prepared long ago.

In the cosmos, a giant star that emitted light and heat suddenly dimmed.

In the wilderness with the effects of "eternal daylight," an orange sun with a destructive aura and a heavy feeling descended from the sky.

The entire wilderness collapsed and curled up as though it was going to charge straight into the star.

At the same time, everything here was ignited, including Amon.

In the next second, the surrounding void began to shrink as they revolved around the real sun. Everything in the world either disintegrated or vaporized. All that was left was the Magic Wishing Lamp and the Trunsoest Brass Book, which were still struggling to withstand the flames, barely suffering any damage.

Klein, who was floating in midair, had long disappeared.

He had "Grafted" himself to that star.

Of course, his "Grafting" was only with the concept of a star, not a physical entity. Otherwise, with The Fool's obviously lower defense than most Sequence 0s, he would be directly swallowed by a real star and die on the spot thanks to his relatively weak body.

The Fool was a very extreme deity. "He" had the ability to destroy a star, but he was unable to face it directly. "His" strengths and weaknesses were equally obvious.

In addition, conceptualized objects couldn't directly affect the surrounding environment and harm the enemy. It wasn't enough to write the words "immense mass, gravity, high temperatures, high heat, and fusion" to create similar effects, but as Mr. Fool, Klein held the authority of "Fooling."

He made his surroundings change according to the concept of a star!

This was an intense "change" and also a type of "Fooling."

Amon, who was wearing a pointed hat and a classic black robe, was completely ignited under the illumination of the star. "He" began to vaporize.

At this moment, his figure distorted as "He" was instantly dyed with resplendent starlight. "He" turned extremely illusory, as though "He" had transformed into an astral door.

At that moment, Amon no longer resembled a physical creature. "He" was closer to a collective body of the symbols like “wandering,” “astral world tunnel,” “key,” and “door.”

This was the ability of a Planeswalker to use the astral world to head to different planets and worlds. “They” were able to transform “Themselves” into symbols, allowing “Them” to effectively use the astral world.

At Sequence 0 Door’s stage, the qualitative change in such powers became “conceptualized.”

Amon transformed “Himself” into a concept creature and avoided the damage brought by the star.

A figure suddenly appeared behind “Him.” It was Klein, who was wearing a trench coat and a top hat.

Almost at the same time, Amon’s thoughts slowed down a little.

“His” Spirit Body Threads were grabbed by Klein.

Using the chaos brought by the “star,” Klein dispelled the combination he had with the corresponding concepts, and he secretly “Grafted” the location of both parties and arrived behind Amon.

Originally, without the concept of “Reassembly,” the star’s influence on the surroundings would immediately stop. However, Klein had “Fooled” time, allowing the effects of the first two seconds to linger until now, allowing him to fool Amon.

If possible, what Klein wished to do now was to deepen the control of Amon’s Spirit Body Threads and turn “Him” into his marionette. However, he knew very well that in the present situation, the probability of success was very low: On the one hand, Amon could withstand damage and steal the Spirit Body Threads back. On the other hand, “He” might be able to use the connection established between the two of them via the Spirit Body Threads to use a bug and influence Klein and “Parasitize” him.

Before he had absolute confidence, Klein didn't want his actions to appear rash.

The main goal of capturing Amon's Spirit Body Threads was to give the other party a certain sense of sluggishness.

This was a performance of the "Fooling" authority during the stage of transforming into a marionette. And with Klein's present state, he was naturally more willing to choose such a low-level but effective method. This would be less of a burden on him, and it wouldn't seriously affect his mental stability like when he used the authority of "Fooling."

At this moment, apart from Amon, his enemy also included the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings in his body.

Of course, Amon was the same. If "He" didn't suppress the Celestial Worthy's madness, the latter would have already revived in "His" body.

After creating a brief pause in Amon's thoughts, Klein had three choices:

The first was to take this opportunity to escape Sefirah Castle, but he wasn't sure if Amon's instincts were still working and would still attempt to stop him from escaping.

Second, it was to summon the projections of the Historical Void, but it wasn't of much use. The effects of an angel-level existence could do little in this battle of gods. It was possible that they couldn't withstand Amon's gaze, much less "Their" historical projections. Even if Klein wanted to use it to transmit information, it lacked sufficient value—the other deities couldn't enter Sefirah Castle and provide help.

Third, he could use this opportunity to exert a certain amount of influence on Amon's true body.

Without any hesitation, Klein chose the third plan.

He wanted to take the opportunity to "Graft" Amon, Sefirah Castle, and the door of light that was stained with bluish-black together.

Klein felt that Amon's half-crazy state wasn't bad enough. "He" just appeared rather talkative, with him occasionally not grasping an opportunity. He wanted to make "Him" go crazier.

When Amon and Sefirah Castle completed the "Reassembly," the Celestial Worthy's will in "His" body would clearly strengthen, and the chaos in "His" mind would intensify.

That way, Amon would lack the rationality to restrain "Himself," making "His" actions more instinctive than being the result of a contemplative thinking process.

To Mr. Error who was an expert at "deceit," this would be fatal.

Of course, Klein could only maintain this kind of "Grafting" for a second. Exceeding this limit might mean that he would no longer be facing Amon, but the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings.

When the time came, the other party would definitely gladly accept the gift of Sefirah Castle. "He" could then fight Sequence 0 The Fool with a sefirah, two Uniquenesses, and the corresponding Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics.

Originally, Klein could've relied on his "Fooling" authority to reduce Amon's intelligence, but firstly, he wasn't able to use power at this level for a long time in his current state. Secondly, as a dual-pathway true god, and a wielder of many authorities, the duration of the "Blind Stupidity" effect on "Him" was rather limited. Therefore, Klein had no choice but to take the risk of "Grafting" things in such a way.

And madness would accompany Amon, doing so until "He" found a new balance or met the best Psychiatrist.

In the blink of an eye, the translucent, cold mask appeared on Klein's face once again. A strange door of light that was stained with a hint of bluish-black suffused from Amon’s body.

Sefirah Castle.

Chapter 1385 - “Madness”

◆ ◆ ◆

Amon and the strange door of light were “Grafted” together.

“His” face grimaced as the darkness in “His” eyes intensified.

At the same time, more slippery tentacles appeared under “His” classic black robe, fully showcasing the crazy feeling was completely displayed.

Just as Klein was preparing to sever the connection between Amon and Sefirah Castle and make “Him” maintain “His” madness, the corners of Amon’s mouth curled up.

It was as if he was saying:

“Congratulations, you have fallen into a trap.”

“His” face was immediately covered with a translucent mask that was similar to The Fool’s Uniqueness, but one that was even more illusory.

Klein’s mind tensed up, and without a second thought, he immediately used the authority of “Fooling” without any regard for the consequences.

But before he could react, his thoughts slowed down. He was in a dazed state that he didn’t know what to do.

Fooling!

Amon actually used the temporary “Reassembly” between “Him” and

Sefirah Castle to escape Klein's interference and activate the power of The Fool's domain.

Such an action completely exceeded his instincts and was more like a meticulous trap.

Amon didn't seem to be crazy enough!

This true god of the Error and Door pathways immediately removed the "Grafting" of "Himself" to Sefirah Castle, allowing the mysterious door that was tainted with hints of bluish-black to quickly fade away to prevent "Him" from being tainted further.

After dealing with this latent danger, Amon raised both hands, "His" thumbs and index fingers touching each other to form an oval.

In the oval, starlight lit up, perfectly embracing Klein's figure.

Right on the heels of that, Amon's hands suddenly parted to the side as though they were tearing something apart. This seemed to be a heavy task.

With the tearing sounds of paper, the area where Klein's body was in seemed to turn into glass. Under the intense impact, countless cracks appeared as they shattered bit by bit.

This was a form of regression and the destruction of space. Unable to withstand it at all, Klein's body could only turn into paper fragments that flew in the air as the surrounding void collapsed and shattered. These bits of paper were instantly swallowed up by the darkness.

By the time the space collapsed, Klein's paper figurines were almost exhausted.

Of course, he also relied on the level and traits of The Fool to forcefully escape the effects of "Blind Stupidity."

And at this moment, Amon had already split into countless figures.

Some of them were purely avatars, some were replicas on the level of symbolism, while others were left behind from constantly "Blinking."

At that moment, the sky above Klein's head and the surrounding wilderness were occupied by Amons. "They" wore pointed hats and monocles, blocking every single loophole.

Some of these Amons transformed into old, mottled, bluish-black wall clocks. Some of "Them" turned into pure starlight, as though "They" were trying to create a cage. Some extended "Their" hands, doing different levels of "Theft." Some of the monocles glowed as "They" used various items that "They" had stolen from the past. Some simulated various abilities, either exerting limitations, interference, or attacks.

In the Marauder pathway, "Theft" was a core skill, one of its main symbols. The difference between it and a Seer's control of Spirit Body Threads was that, as one advanced through the Sequences, not only did its effects and success rate increase, it also obtained a deeper level of conceptualization.

At Sequence 9 to Sequence 7, "Theft" happened on items. At Sequence 6, "Theft" happened on Beyonder powers. After advancing to Sequence 5, "Theft" happened on thoughts and ideas. At Sequence 4 and Sequence 3, "Theft" became life, including parasitic theft at the physical level. And at Sequence 2 level, the range of "Theft" broadened to fate, identity, self-awareness, and Beyonder characteristics. As for Sequence 1, "Theft" could temporarily happen on time, anchors, and authorities.

Therefore, when an Error faced a true deity, "He" could also use "Theft" that had reached the level of authority.

With a gong, the ancient wall clocks paused in unison.

This caused the surrounding environment to freeze, causing the destroyed wilderness from the sun's blast to become extremely quiet. Even the destruction was frozen.

At that moment, Klein seemed to lose his body. All that was left was a translucent dark-colored cloak and a bizarre ice-cold mask.

Under the cloak and mask was rich darkness. Nothing could be seen other than the slippery and sinister tentacles that extended out.

In such a state, Klein seemed to escape the limitations of time. In a frozen environment, he moved like a fish. Through various cracks in reality or concept, he emerged from the encirclement of the Amons.

He once again used his “Fooling” authority.

This time, he “Fooled” time.

The ancient wall clocks vanished, and in the desolate wilderness that had almost completely collapsed, time returned to its normal flow. The Amons stopped “Their” attempts, suddenly merged into one, and “Blinked” behind Klein, preventing him from having a breather.

“His” left palm reached out, and as “He” retracted it, “He” clenched “His” fingers.

Around Klein, the space suddenly became shrouded in shadows, making it look like a thin fishnet veil.

The “fishnet veil” began to twist and reassemble, as though they formed a sufficiently strong cage that trapped Klein inside.

An illusory door appeared above the cage as it moved quickly without being fixed in place.

However, Klein’s figure suddenly appeared outside the cell, as though he had never been sealed by Amon’s Door authority.

He had “Fooled” history and had split his previous and future self.

Hence, the one imprisoned in the cell became his historical projection.

This was the Scholar of Yore’s powers deepening under the “Fooling” authority.

As he had relied on an advancement ritual based on “Fooling” history, Klein’s The Fool powers in such a domain were stronger than when he “Fooled” time and fate.

As soon as he escaped the spatial cell, Klein immediately used the Realm of Mysteries to create a new divine kingdom of The Fool. This was to stall for time and find a chance to stabilize his mental state. He had used the Fooling authority multiple times, and the weak balance in his body was on the verge of collapsing. If he didn’t stabilize his mental state as soon as possible, the will of the Celestial Worthy would awaken further.

This was also a serious problem.

At this moment, a huge crystal monocle appeared in front of him.

On this monocle, layers of sparkling lights surged out and flooded him instantly.

Klein’s mental state suddenly stabilized, but the price was to lose all his emotions and desires. He didn’t even want to resist. All he wanted was to stand there quietly and wait for the impending destruction.

This was like an ordinary person being injected with a huge dose of anesthetic.

At the same time, an illusory book appeared in the layers of light.

The book opened, revealing a sentence:

“Tormented by the Lord of the Mysteries’s mental corruption, Klein Moretti had always been in great pain and a state of extreme exhaustion. After the intense battle, he has finally reached his limits due to the influence of his mind. He had decided to give up and stop resisting.”

Behind the huge crystal monocle, Amon, who was wearing a pointed hat and classic black robe, quickly outlined “Himself” like a mountain.

“He” looked at Klein, who had given up resisting, and “His” dark eyes turned lighter as the corners of “His” lips curled up.

“I stole it. How is it?”

Klein raised his head to look at Mr. Error, and he tried hard to open his mouth. He said weakly, “You were pulling off a deception from the beginning?”

[image]

Amon raised “His” hands and said with a smile, “Unfortunately, you realized it too late.”

“He” made “His” thumbs and index fingers touch each other, forming an oval.

In the oval, starlight lit up, illuminating Klein’s figure.

Right on the heels of that, Amon solemnly separated “His” hands, tearing apart the void where Klein and the surrounding environment relied on to live.

The void was like glass, shattering into pieces like the collapse of a skyscraper.

However, all the collapsing and destruction circled Klein’s body without directly affecting him.

He was like a small fishing boat that calmly cruised through a storm. It appeared out-of-place and disharmonious, as though it didn’t seem to belong here.

Amon raised “His” hand and adjusted “His” monocle on “His” right eye, the smile on “His” face somewhat faded.

A translucent cloak kept popping up and disappearing over the surface of Klein's body.

He looked at the mountain-like Amon, his eyes turning darker.

"From the moment you entered Sefirah Castle and said the first word, you began your deceit."

At that time, Amon said that "He" had taken the risk to release the suppression of the Lord of the Mysteries in "His" body, in exchange for the identity of Sefirah Castle's owner.

At that moment, Amon didn't take the opportunity to continue attacking Klein. "He" floated in midair and looked down at Mr. Fool.

Klein didn't make any attempts either. His tone was strangely calm, as though he was preparing something.

"If simply releasing the suppression of the Lord of the Mysteries's will allows you to enter Sefirah Castle at the cost of being half-crazy, Antigonus could've done so back then. The Annihilation Demonic Wolf, Flegrea, from even earlier could've done it as well. You and Mr. Door previously had countless opportunities.

"Clearly, it's impossible to invade Sefirah Castle by just making the Lord of the Mysteries awaken to a certain extent, and using half-craziness in concert with Error. There's no way you can find a usable bug in this matter unless you directly get 'Him' to replace you.

"Only when you possessed the Door authority to go anywhere did you see hope. By creating a back door and using bugs, you could make Sefirah Castle treat you as the Lord of the Mysteries and give you the corresponding authority.

"Of course, this will definitely require the awakening of the Lord of the Mysteries to a rather dangerous state. Without this hidden identity, you won't be able to deceive Sefirah Castle without any reason.

“After absorbing Door’s Uniqueness, you didn’t immediately infiltrate Sefirah Castle to deal with me who was even weaker back then. It was because at that time, you were unable to completely withstand the awakening of the Lord of the Mysteries’s will, with you having just advanced.

“I believe you’ve already found a relatively safer solution. If I hadn’t advanced to The Fool so quickly, you would’ve been able to enter Sefirah Castle in the best state to resolve everything sometime later. And now, you have no choice but to bring this plan forward. There’s definitely a very serious problem with you.

“You took the initiative to throw out the price of becoming half-crazy to, on the one hand, make me think of countermeasures in this direction so as to lay a deadly trap in key areas, and on the other hand, you also wanted to divert attention and use this opportunity to conceal other problems.

“You’re not half-mad at all.”

Amon quietly listened to Klein’s words. Rather abnormally, “He” didn’t interrupt him, nor did “He” attempt to attack. Only when Klein was done did “He” say with an odd expression, “You’re crazy.”

Chapter 1386 - Narrow Path

◆ ◆ ◆

Upon hearing Amon's "you're crazy," Klein raised his head and laughed out loud.

"I just gave up according to your arrangements. It's just that it's more complete than you think."

As he spoke, an illusory brand appeared on the forehead of the ice-cold and bizarre mask he was wearing.

It was a strange door of light that was tainted with bluish-blackness.

As for Klein, he was also enveloped in something similar.

Under the translucent dark-colored cloak, more and more slippery and sinister tentacles appeared. They were densely packed and extended until they occupied the nearby sky.

As his dark eyes flashed, Klein looked at Amon and said with a smile, "For me, instead of you becoming the Lord of the Mysteries, wouldn't it be better if we let the past 'Him' revive?"

After his mental state stabilized and he figured out the key to Amon's surprise attack, Klein's thoughts of "giving up" removed his resistance towards the Lord of the Mysteries's will in his body, allowing "Him" to further revive.

It was precisely because of this that he was able to control Sefirah Castle at critical moments and borrow the power of "Error" to avoid the collapse of the space created by Amon.

Without waiting for Amon's response, the corners of Klein's lips curled up as he said with a smile, "After you were corrupted by Sefirah Castle and showed signs of madness, you immediately recovered and could use Sefirah Castle to create the effects of 'Blind Stupidity.' After releasing the suppression of the Lord of the Mysteries's will in you, you didn't enter a half-crazy state, as there are external powers helping you.

"You should have an extremely key important avatar. It might even be like Pallez's choice to lower 'His' level. It's sleeping at Adam's place, and it allows a Visionary like 'Him' to personally protect your mental state. As long as the awakening of the Lord of the Mysteries's will doesn't exceed the limits of what Adam can withstand, you won't go crazy here if you don't lose control there.

"Therefore, your most serious problem is that you have to maintain a normal connection with that body. Once it's interfered with, your condition will be in trouble. And this connection is actually very weak under Sefirah Castle's isolation effect.

"You deliberately showed a half-crazed state for two reasons. Other than luring me to find an opportunity in this direction and stepping on the trap you set up, you were also hiding this fact so that I won't be able to target this aspect while engaging in a battle with you.

"Of course, there are plenty of problems outside these ones. After all, you aren't fully prepared. If I had discovered these problems earlier, even if I was a King of Angels with the Uniqueness, there's no way for me to defeat you."

Amon listened quietly and raised "His" hand to adjust the crystal monocle in "His" right eye. The corners of "His" lips curled up as "He" let out a sigh with a smile.

Upon seeing this, Klein smiled and shook his head.

"You truly are powerful, cunning, and terrifying, truly worthy of the title of 'God of Deceit.' If it wasn't for the fact that I had long considered what I would do when forced into a corner by you and had no other choice, I definitely would've hesitated just now. And if I hesitated slightly, I would've already died."

In that case, Amon would completely control Sefirah Castle, preventing Klein from returning from the fog of history for a resurrection.

Amon stared at the increasing number of sinister tentacles extending out from under Klein's dark-colored cloak. "He" slowly took a deep breath and said with a smile, "The Lord of the Mysteries in you is about to truly awaken."

Klein's smile had a nerve-wracking feeling to it.

"You can also compete with me on this point.

"Our next battle is very simple: It's a competition of who awakens the Lord of the Mysteries's will to a greater extent, a competition of whose control over Sefirah Castle is deeper. 50%, 70%, 90%, until we reach 100%. Then, with a bang, we explode and 'He' returns.

"What do you think? Are you going to take the bet? Let's see who can't hold on any longer first? It's very thrilling, very interesting, and very suited to your preferences. It's like the roulette that's popular in Feysac. Two people, each having a revolver and a bullet inside. They take turns pulling the trigger at their temples. Whoever gives up first results in his opponent winning. And if no one gives up and persists until the end, there won't be a winner. 'He' will be the winner."

Amon's brows pricked up as "He" smiled without saying a word.

Klein looked at "Him," and said with a smile, "Although you've always been pursuing thrills and are known to be a risk-taker, you achieve your goals most of the time. Not only do you not lose much, you often gain a lot. And in the few failures that you do experience, you only lose some of your avatars and some items. You've never suffered any serious injuries or been placed in a desperate situation.

"Your every action is a product of meticulous planning. Even if you fail, you will have a way out.

"Does this mean that you value your life more than I imagined? You do like thrills and seek it for pleasure, but to do so regardless of the price is just an image you portray. How can a real God of Deceit wager a bet with 'Himself' at stake?

"Of course, this is just my own guess. Perhaps it's wrong. Anyway, do you want to take the bet?"

Amon stroked the crystal monocle and made a tsk like Medici.

"You're really crazy."

Klein replied with a smile, "In the eyes of others, this is indeed insane.

"But to me, it's just a choice.

"Compared to you, I'm more willing to believe in the former Lord of the Mysteries. 'He' is a true Great Old One, looking down on the Universe from high above and treating most of the living beings as insects. This would make 'Him' distance 'Himself' from reality.

"Besides, I should still have time to get the Genie to be my witness. I'll get the Lord of the Mysteries to promise me certain things. To 'Him,' it's very simple and worthless."

Having said that, the corners of Klein's mouth curled up as he said,

"I won't lose too much, just myself.

"There are always some things that are more important than others."

Amon maintained "His" smile but didn't say a word.

Klein then surveyed the area and found the Magic Wishing Lamp and Trunsoest Brass Book among the floating fragments of the wilderness.

He immediately laughed out loud.

"Look, I didn't get punished. This means that I'm not lying. I'm telling the truth."

In fact, the laws set up by the Trunsoest Brass Book had long been abolished since the divine kingdom was destroyed during the star's descent. Later on, the Amons dared to attempt to use "Steal," but Klein's main goal wasn't to prove anything, but to show his determination, firmness, or perhaps madness.

Of course, what he said was the truth. He was indeed willing to put them into practice. Otherwise, there was no way he could hide it from Amon or exert enough pressure on "Him."

Amon smiled and said without a hint of panic, "Sounds interesting."

"Isn't it? Let's begin," Klein replied without hesitation as his eyes turned darker.

Amon's smile froze as "His" palms suddenly gathered together.

Beneath "His" classical black robe, there were also slippery and sinister tentacles.

"His" aura changed a little as "His" body seemed to have a dark cloak on it.

At that moment, Amon became more like the Lord of the Mysteries.

However, "He" wasn't competing with Klein in the progression of the awakening of the Lord of the Mysteries. Instead, "He" was using this to deceive Sefirah Castle to create a corresponding "Bug" and creating a chance to escape.

If the authority of the Error were to take effect at the same level, it would often have different preconditions:

First, the medium and target had to be similar enough; second, there was a certain connection between the two; third, there were certain logical contradictions between certain matters or objects; fourth, some of the rules were indeed incomplete; fifth, while not directly affecting the target, construct an “Erroneous” environment as a divine kingdom…

In this aspect, the restrictions of “Fooling” were even fewer, but once an “Error” satisfied the conditions, it would be difficult to defend against or terminate it.

Amon now wanted to take the initiative to disguise “Himself” and satisfy the first category.

This was similar to the invasion of a virus. First, it had to make the other party believe that they were on the same side to avoid detection and then paralyze any defenses to achieve their respective goals.

When a fruit looked like a strawberry, smelled like a strawberry, tasted like a strawberry, then it would basically be considered as a strawberry.

But in reality, there might be an exception.

At this moment, Amon’s appearance resembled that of the Lord of the Mysteries. “His” aura was like the Lord of the Mysteries, and “His” powers were like the Lord of the Mysteries. “His” mental imprint was also similar to the Lord of the Mysteries. With the authority of an “Error,” it would naturally make Sefirah Castle believe that “He” was the Lord of the Mysteries.

Suddenly, Klein’s damaged The Fool divine kingdom completely collapsed. The grand and ancient palace and the mottled table inside appeared.

The grayish-white fog beneath Sefirah Castle rose and enveloped the space.

The grayish-white fog split into two waves. They clashed fiercely in a particular spot, producing vortexes one after another. They tore open a gap that led to reality.

The power of Sefirah Castle was at odds with itself in this second. It was as though it didn't know which Lord of the Mysteries to obey.

Amon's figure immediately vanished, using Door's authority to rush out of Sefirah Castle.

Just as "He" touched the edge, "His" body paused before being sent flying backward.

At The Fool's seat, the corners of Klein's lips curled up as he sat there. His glabella and the strange door of light around him became more obvious, as though they were corporeal.

This released an immense convergence force that reached an unimaginable level. It was like an invisible hand that pulled Amon back!

Amon's body suddenly split apart, transforming into countless "selves."

And in front of every Amon, an illusory astral door appeared.

Silently, the astral doors opened at the same time, but in the endless darkness behind the doors, slippery and sinister tentacles appeared, blocking Amon's escape.

At the tip of the tentacles, resplendent starlight lit up as they instantly enveloped the Amons.

The Amons couldn't help but gather together, turning into a conceptual cluster.

These concepts included but weren't limited to pointed hats, classical black robes, monocles, fate, time, keys, doors, bugs, and trojan horses.

Klein slowly stood up and smiled at the conceptualized Amon who was now in a passive state.

"You can also awaken the Lord of the Mysteries's will further, but this is different from death. It'll definitely affect the body at Adam's side."

A conceptualized Amon rapidly gained a physical form. "He" relied on the "Door" authority to escape from "His" current state.

The corners of "His" mouth curled into a smile, but "He" didn't respond to Klein. "He" seized this opportunity to use the "Error" authority to deceive; using an avatar outside that "He" had prepared ahead of time, it could be used to replace "Him" and swap places with "Him."

This was similar to the swapping of marionettes in the Seer domain, but at this level, the principles were different. It wouldn't be affected in most situations.

However, Amon still failed.

"He" realized that "His" "Error" authority had been forcefully suppressed.

As Klein slowly got up, more slippery and sinister tentacles appeared around him. The smile on his face became more exaggerated.

Right on the heels of that, Amon's eyes glazed over and the smile on his face froze as the crystal monocle lost its luster.

At the same time, the cold, bizarre mask on Klein's face squirmed.

The "Blind Stupidity" effect!

In the next second, he "Grafted" himself to a certain concept in the cosmos, and he used his authority to influence the corresponding environment.

The surrounding slippery tentacles aimed at Amon, like revolvers.

In Amon's eyes that were still glazed over, a supernova exploded.

[image]

An unimaginable sea of scorching light surged out, shattering “His” monocle and drowning “His” body.

Chapter 1387 - Method

◆

Behind the endless curtain of darkness, in the darkness with aqueous light ebbing gently.

A young man with black hair, black eyes, a broad forehead, and a thin face suddenly sat up as though he had experienced a nightmare.

Dressed in a classic black robe, “He” stretched out “His” right hand, attempting to take out a crystal monocle from the void and wear it over “His” right eye.

But this time, “He” didn’t obtain anything.

“His” right hand paused in midair for two seconds before “He” retracted it and pinched the right eye rim.

At this moment, “He” heard a gentle but emotionless voice:

“To him, there’s something more important than life.

“To you, apart from yourself, there’s nothing worth caring about.

“When the matter develops to a point where one’s life is put on the line, it would imply your loss.”

The corners of Amon’s mouth curled up as though “He” wanted to smile and reply, but “He” ultimately didn’t say anything.

The voice continued:

“Born as a Mythical Creature, your lack of normal anchors is also a

problem.

“This makes you know what courage and sacrifice are, but it’s hard for you to understand.”

Amon’s expression changed as “He” stood up from the slightly glistening darkness.

“He” looked at the human-skinned glove that was thrown to the side before but seemed to be very happy. “He” retracted “His” gaze and curled the corners of “His” lips.

“This seems very interesting.

“I plan to leave this place and enter the cosmos. That place is much more exciting than the real world. Perhaps I’ll understand the two things you mentioned as a result of this.”

“That’s very dangerous. Once you enter the cosmos, and before I succeed, I won’t be able to provide any help. However, this will let you avoid ‘Him’ at least,” the calm and indifferent voice replied without any emotion.

Amon didn’t say another word. “He” raised “His” hand and pinched “His” right eye rim and vanished from the endless shadow screen.

†

In the ancient palace above the fog.

As Amon was completely obliterated under the power of a supernova, Klein couldn’t help but heave a sigh of relief.

If he had a choice, he naturally didn’t want to sacrifice himself to revive the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings. He hoped to personally protect this world and seek out the meaning of life again.

Of course, if he didn’t have a choice, he wouldn’t hesitate to awaken the

Celestial Worthy. He was certain that he could do this, and Amon was also aware of this. Therefore, “He” didn’t force him, and only attempted to escape.

In the battle just now, it had developed into a battle of courage towards the end. The one who wasn’t afraid of true death would yield the absolute advantage.

Clearly, Amon wasn’t prepared to sacrifice “Himself” for this matter.

After heaving a sigh of relief, Klein’s face under the cold and bizarre mask suddenly grimaced.

Under his translucent dark-colored cloak, the slippery and sinister tentacles that extended out were either hitting the ground or rising up high. It was completely out of his control.

He could feel that the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings in his body was rapidly waking up, and it seemed like he couldn’t stop it.

Even if Klein directly died with his will and relied on the powers of a Miracle Invoker to revive, he wouldn’t be able to escape, as the Lord of the Mysteries also wielded the authority of “Miracles.”

At that moment, Klein recalled the words of Dark Angel Sasrir, which was also from the ancient sun god:

“The Primordial One had awoken in my body…”

In the next second, at the spot where Amon’s body had shattered, beams of light were pulled by a vague invisible form of gravity as they charged towards Klein.

Some were Worms of Time with twelve rings, some were insects made of resplendent starlight, while some were just large numbers of light dots…

Klein wanted to stop the Beyonder characteristics from fusing with him, but the increasingly powerful Celestial Worthy's will prevented him from succeeding.

His body swelled into a balloon, and then suddenly became thin as paper. This repeated itself in an endless loop.

The mask on his face became brighter and more bizarre. The slippery and evil tentacles that extended out from under his cloak increased and became more uncontrollable.

One Worm of Time Beyonder characteristic, one Key of Star Beyonder characteristic, and one… Klein's mind felt like he was being devoured by an invisible monster, producing excruciating pain.

Finally, a pair of eyes, which seemed to be formed from pure starlight, formed from layers of illusory doors and crystal monocles, rushed towards Klein's face, straight for the mask's eye sockets.

Almost at the same time, the strange door of light that was tainted with bluish-blackness appeared on Klein's body again.

Sefirah Castle!

At that moment, Klein, Sefirah Castle, Door's Uniqueness, and Error's Uniqueness, all had a strong inclination to congregate.

Once they fused together, the Lord of the Mysteries would completely awaken and complete "His" resurrection process.

Klein suddenly used his right hand to cover half of his face.

His entire body bent down as if he was fighting with another "self."

With the anchoring and image disruption from his anchors, Klein finally slowed down the awakening of the Lord of the Mysteries's will, reducing the power of convergence by a little.

The starlight eyes and the crystal monocle stopped in front of Klein's face, floating only a few centimeters in the air like planets revolving around the sun.

Klein believed that he couldn't maintain this extreme imbalance for too long. Perhaps a few minutes or even dozens of seconds later, the convergence would continue without restraint, bringing about an unbearable change.

"Haha, this can be considered a form of fusion." Klein laughed in an unstable manner.

Then, he "Fooled" the Trunsoest Brass Book, allowing it to enter a sealed state and fly into the junk pile.

Right on the heels of that, Klein left Sefirah Castle and arrived in the astral world formed from symbolism and authority.

This place seemed similar to the cosmos. It was dark and vast, but in fact, there were many unique aspects to it. For example, even though there was a sun-like star hanging in the distance, emitting normal light and heat, if one tried to get close to it, without getting injured, one would realize that the astral world there was like a black curtain. The sun was directly painted with pastel colors, and there were a bunch of concepts and symbols surrounding it.

Furthermore, the drawing of the sun wasn't that nice, like a child without any foundation in art casually scrawled about. It was both comical and frightening.

From another perspective, this might be a manifestation of the chaos and madness that underlay everything.

As soon as Klein entered, he immediately sensed invisible gazes.

Some of them came from areas protected by the world barrier, while others came from broader areas with obvious malice.

The corners of Klein's mouth couldn't help but curl up. He suddenly turned his head and looked outside the world barrier, raising his slippery and sinister tentacles.

This pair of eyes that seemed forged from starlight and the crystal monocle also moved.

All of a sudden, all the attention from the cosmos shrank back. Only the hand-drawn crimson moon was left hanging there as it flashed with light.

“Haha.” Klein laughed as he came to a dark kingdom filled with night vanilla and slumber flowers.

At the same time, the Evernight Goddess appeared at the borders of the divine kingdom in a layered, star-speckled dress. “Her” face was covered in a translucent black veil.

“She” didn’t transform into “Her” giant form as “She” looked at him at eye level before raising “Her” right hand and revealing the bird-shaped, golden accessory.

[image]

At the head of the bird-shaped, golden accessory, a series of illusory doors appeared in the bronze-like eyes, allowing a drop of colorless water that had a strong aura of eternal stillness to land on Klein’s cold and bizarre mask.

The will of the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings entered a state of eternal slumber. Likewise for a majority of Klein’s consciousness. All he had was a tiny bit of lucidity.

Under such circumstances, he made the mask retract, and he transformed the cloak into a black windbreaker.

Then, he made the crystal monocle turn into a pair of black gloves, making the eyes forged from starlight to turn into a cane inlaid with star speckles.

This was only a change in appearance, but it didn’t change anything in reality. Once the two items were separated from Klein, they would return to their original state. Of course, if Klein stabilized himself, he could accommodate them and change their corresponding concepts and symbols over and over again, allowing them to change their forms forever.

“This can’t be sustained for too long. It just delays the matter for a while.” The Evernight Goddess gently reminded him. “If the River of Eternal Darkness’s water is used repeatedly, the Lord of the Mysteries will awaken even faster. This is because ‘He’ will trigger some unknown changes and adjust ‘His’ condition. Similarly, the specialness of Sefirah Castle and my blessing will gradually be erased, allowing you to enter a state of eternal slumber.”

It was as though Klein wasn’t discussing his own matters. He smiled and nodded.

“Got it.”

The Evernight Goddess said in a tone that seemed to be comforting Klein’s psyche,

“Regarding this matter, the method Amon used, and the actions ‘He’ did had exceeded my expectations. ‘He’ is indeed the true God of Deceit.

“It’s not that you have no chance at all in what comes next. You can first try to completely control Sefirah Castle and pull the will of the Lord of the Mysteries to enter a state of eternal slumber. In the dream, you can resist and fuse with ‘Him.’ I can bless you, but the most important thing is still left to you.

“Becoming a Great Old One doesn’t have any rituals involved. No ritual can change the awakening of the Primordial One’s will, but the ancient sun god believes that the order to accommodate them can increase one’s self-awareness to a certain extent, increasing the success rate of the matter.

“First become a Sequence 0 of a pathway, then control and fuse with the sefirah. Only then do you accommodate the other Uniquenesses. That’s the best order.

“Become a dual-pathway true god and then controlling and fusing with a sefirah is an order that isn’t good or bad.

“Only fusing with the sefirah at the final step will be the worst choice.”

Klein smiled and said, “That’s a good idea. As long as one wakes up, a Lord of the Mysteries will be born.

“This might be ‘Him,’ or me. Yes, after completely controlling Sefirah Castle and entering a state of eternal slumber, I should be able to weaken the seal of the Western Continent, creating a weak spot that allows one to enter and exit.”

The Evernight Goddess didn’t say a word when “She” heard Klein’s words.

Klein continued smiling.

“This is my choice.

“I had anticipated this day a long time ago. I will finally face ‘Him.’”

A little fan-art for our beloved half Lord of Mysteries Klein:

[image]

Chapter 1388 - A Sudden Gathering

◈

The Evernight Goddess nodded and didn’t say anything else. “She” reached out “Her” palm and grabbed a corner of the void and tugged lightly.

A thin layer of a “night curtain” gently floated down, covering Klein’s body as it silently seeped in.

Klein silently took in the blessings from the dream for two seconds. He pressed his hand to his chest and bowed.

He took two steps back and left the astral world.

The Evernight Goddess stood at the borders of the divine kingdom as “She” watched him leave.

In the next second, Klein landed in the projection of the Giant King’s Court in the ruins of the battle of gods.

Then, like Amon, he walked to the edge of the grayish-blue door and raised his hand to create a blue illusory door.

Through the door, Klein entered the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Following the guidance of fate, he “Wandered” straight to the peak of a mountain range.

There was a huge crucifix erected there, one covered with a faint shadow.

Klein stared at the shadow for a few seconds before sighing slightly. He bent down and picked up an ancient silver mirror that was placed near the huge cross.

Then, he turned around and vanished from the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

At the same time, the Worms of Spirit, who didn't need to be on duty in Sefirah Castle, informed him of Queen Mystic's current location. Klein raised his hand and took out the Magic Wishing Lamp from the junk pile. Using the ownership connection between it and Bernadette, he used another "Wandering" to appear on a rather hidden island where Emerald City was.

Bernadette was flipping through the latest album catalog from Intis. Just as she sensed something, she saw Gehrman Sparrow hand her the Magic Wishing Lamp.

"Thank you," Klein said in a very normal voice.

Bernadette pursed her lips as though she wanted to say something, but at that moment, her eyes flashed as though she had seen something and prophesied something. Hence, she silently reached out and took the Magic Wishing Lamp.

Klein then took out a metal cigar case that had signs of corrosion on its surface.

"This is your payment."

Even without the Eye of Mystery Prying, Bernadette could sense that the iron cigar case was extraordinary. She could roughly guess what kind of corrosion had happened to it.

However, she didn't choose to accept it because of that reason, but she suddenly felt that she had no reason to reject it.

She hesitated for a moment before taking the iron cigar case.

If he was still in a rather crazy state like before, Klein definitely would've smiled and said in an exaggerated manner the moment Bernadette hesitated. "This is a gift from Uncle. Take it!"

But now, he was only left with that last bit of lucidity. He had to put in a lot of effort to prevent himself from falling asleep and not having the impulse to act like a clown.

After leaving Bernadette's Emerald City, Klein seized the opportunity to "Wander" to Backlund, to Dr. Aaron Ceres's home.

Will Auceptin, who was sitting in a pile of toys, raised his head and looked at Dwayne Dantès in front of him. His tears suddenly streamed down as he choked.

"I finally feel the opportunity."

"He" was referring to the opportunity for accommodating the Fate pathway's Uniqueness.

Klein squatted down and said without any expression, "I am here to help you accommodate it.

"I'll steal your childhood and youth and allow you to instantly grow up. Then, by relying on a level of Above the Sequences but below that of a Great Old One, I'll forcefully help you to accommodate the Die of Probability.

"Of course, that alone won't be enough. It will require an additional 'Fooling' and use of a 'Bug.'"

The tears that Will Auceptin dripped down suddenly stopped. "He" muttered in astonishment, "So the two choices are actually the same."

Typically speaking, the accommodation of a pathway's Uniqueness required one to be naturally born with it, seek an existence at the level of a Great Old One to help, or rely on a simplified advancement ritual to complete it. There was no other possibility.

The Snake of Fate, Will Auceptin, clearly wasn't born with the Uniqueness, and only had the two options left to consider.

"His" focus had been on holding a simplified ritual, which was to wait for the opportunity of fate. Who knew that this opportunity was actually when Klein was approaching the level of a Great Old One. In essence, it was the second method.

With this in mind, the chubby child, Will Auceptin, cried even harder. He felt as though he had been deceived by fate.

"Let the Life School of Thought's demigod send over the Die of Probability. Normally, with your luck, the Die of Probability should be by your side." Klein ignored Will's crying. "Let's begin as soon as possible. I don't have much time left."

Will stopped and looked at Klein for a moment before he said, slightly choking, "Forget it, let's wait for the next opportunity.

"Given your current state, it would be a huge burden for you to forcibly help me accommodate it. Perhaps you would lose control on the spot. I don't want to face the Lord of the Mysteries.

"Okay, next time. I have a premonition…"

With that said, Will looked into Klein's eyes and said, "I have a feeling that the next opportunity will be better."

Klein maintained his reverie-like expression as he said in a low voice, "Is this a prophecy?"

Will Auceptin's tears flowed again.

"No, it's a blessing."

Klein nodded slightly, stood up, and took a step back.

During this process, his figure gradually faded away and soon disappeared.

He returned to Sefirah Castle and sat on the high-back chair, allowing the grayish-white fog to envelop him.

After surveying the area and confirming the states of the crimson stars, Klein leaned back in his chair in exhaustion and slightly raised his right hand.

This time, he didn't create the fake World again.

On the two sides of the long mottled table, crimson beams of light shot out at the same time, freezing into the members of the Tarot Club—The Hanged Man, The Sun, The Hermit, The Magician, and the rest.

This sudden gathering was clearly beyond Audrey's and company's expectations. It left them surprised and alarmed.

Before that, although they had come to Mr. Fool's divine kingdom on occasions that weren't a Monday afternoon, it was all planned. They knew in advance that they would be dragged here—they would've either applied for a mini gathering in advance, avoid the full moon ravings, or treat Mr. World with psychological problems.

It could be said that, apart from the first time, this was the second time they were summoned by Mr. Fool without any warning.

This made even the slowest members of the club catch the hint of uneasiness and feel the air freeze.

Thinking back to The World Gehrman Sparrow's visit and the words of Mr. Fool's Blessed, Audrey, Alger, and Xio simultaneously had similar thoughts:

Is it finally here?

Audrey subconsciously turned her head and looked down at the bottom end of the long mottled table. There was no one there.

Although she was already mentally prepared, Audrey couldn't help but be stunned as emotions of uncontrollable sadness surged within her.

In her heart, The World Gehrman Sparrow's image had long since turned from a crazy adventurer and an extremely dangerous Beyonder to a person who wore a cold and tough facade but was a gentle, powerful, loving, mysterious, and lonely man who was burdened with many friends on his back.

She believed that amongst the Tarot Club members, she knew The World the best apart from Mr. Star.

And now, this friend seemed to have encountered some misfortune, leaving behind only an empty seat.

The Tarot Club lost its first official member.

Where did Klein go… Leonard suddenly felt a little flustered.

In this world, he was the only one he could befriend.

Previously, when Klein suddenly appeared in the Southern Continent and threw the gold coin into the cathedral's donation box, Leonard had already had a strange premonition. He had the feeling that Klein was about to receive the judgment of fate and was bidding farewell to the past.

This was the same as the time back in Tingen when they decided to step out together and face Megose.

Old Man's recent silence has been a little bizarre… Could something really have happened to Klein? With Mr. Fool's level and status, as long as there's a chance, he should be able to be saved… Leonard's heart tightened as he suddenly turned his body and cast his gaze at Mr. Fool at the top end of the long mottled table.

This mighty existence was still enveloped by the grayish-white fog, preventing others from seeing "His" condition.

At this moment, Emlyn, Cattleya, and Derrick also discovered Mr. World's absence.

Coupled with the suddenness of this gathering, they were both shocked and puzzled. They didn't know what had happened, but their instincts told them that it wasn't a good thing.

As a Clairvoyant who had recently advanced, Cattleya even felt that there was a certain problem with Mr. Fool.

Mr. World isn't here… Xio had previously mentioned that Mr. Fool and "His" few Blessed were about to face a major challenge, and it's very likely that they would suffer a bad fate… Fors was also somewhat alarmed, inevitably having a strong fear due to some unknown change.

She had once thought that she would sigh in relief because of Mr. World's disappearance, but from the looks of it, it wasn't like that. Instead, she found her heart heavy and a little horrified.

Only then did she realize that at some point in time, The World had become the pillar of support for the Tarot Club outside of Mr. Fool. It made everyone feel at ease when they saw him.

Of course, some fear was unavoidable.

As Justice Audrey and company turned around and looked at the top end of the long mottled table, Klein, who was already the real Fool, said in a low voice, "This is a last-minute gathering."

[image]

Mr. Fool is very exhausted… Audrey, who sensed this, felt her heart tighten.

She looked around and stood up as usual.

After the members of the Tarot Club stood up one after another, Audrey lifted the ends of her skirt with a heavy heart and curtsied at the end of the long mottled table.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool.”

Chapter 1389 - The Fool's Commission

◆ ◆ ◆

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool.”

The other members of the Tarot Club appeared rather solemn as they followed Miss Justice’s usual greeting.

After they sat down again, The Fool Klein surveyed the area and slowly said, “I will be entering a state of slumber.”

Upon hearing this, Alger, Audrey, Xio, and Fors felt like their speculations had finally been confirmed. Leonard, Emlyn, Derrick, and the other Tarot Club members felt their hearts sink as they became increasingly flustered and filled with puzzlement.

Of course, they weren’t that surprised. The abnormal last-minute gathering and the abnormality of The World’s absence seemed to indicate that something important had happened today.

Klein maintained his last bit of clarity and said in his previous tone, “This involves a war that’s at the level of ‘Above the Sequences.’ It has something to do with the apocalypse to a certain extent.”

Indeed… Alger acutely caught the words “Above the Sequences.”

He had long suspected that there was another level above Sequence 0: the one occupied by the ancient sun god when “He” had eight Kings of Angels.

Now, Mr. Fool had finally confirmed his guess and resolved many of his doubts.

Cattleya and company also noticed the hidden message in Mr. Fool's words. Those who had similar guesses like The Hanged Man felt enlightened, while the ones who had never had such guesses were inevitably surprised and confused when they heard it. However, they quickly combined what they had learned from the past and came to a realization.

The Fool Klein continued, "Only after you become an angel do you have the right to know the exact situation. Otherwise, just understanding it will bring corruption."

This made the Tarot Club members think of the words "underground" and "cosmos." They were momentarily unable to contain their thoughts.

Klein looked at the end of the long mottled table and said, "My Blessed, The World, has entered a deep slumber. It's unknown when he will wake up."

Then what should be done? Leonard nearly blurted out, but he could clearly sense that Mr. Fool hadn't finished his sentence. Therefore, he forcefully held back his urge.

The Fool Klein swept his gaze across him.

"Next is a long-term commission for all members:

"Spread my name more widely, but don't clash with the orthodox Churches. When necessary, you can choose to use a more concealed method to proselytize.

"This will aid in my awakening.

"Also, spread the news of The World being my Blessed, and record it in the Church's Holy Bible. Of course, do not include information that involves his personal information.

"Remember one sentence: The awakening of The World spells The

Fool's return."

Klein wanted to increase his number of anchors. This might be useful in the battle with the Lord of the Mysteries in his dream.

At the same time, he wanted to mold The World into a saint of the Church of The Fool, an angel beside the divine throne, so that this image could also greatly share an image with the believers and obtain his own anchors.

To put it simply, Klein planned on having a believer contribute two sets of anchors. After all, to him, be it The Fool or The World, all of them were just an identity of his. Furthermore, the image created by anchors wouldn't be uniform. They were different and wouldn't affect him.

At the level of The Fool, the Church would spread the name of the deity, The Fool's Sacred Emblem, and all kinds of religious teachings without any concrete images. As for The World, he had quite a number of identities, such as Gehrman Sparrow, Dwayne Dantès, and Merlin Hermes. It wouldn't fixate on a single image.

"The reward is the convenience you have enjoyed in the past, the responses you received, and the corresponding help given to your future prayers," The Fool Klein said without a change in tone. "After I begin my slumber, I can still respond to my prayers in a certain way, but not every time. If there's something very important that needs help, pray a few more times."

He could tell from Antigonus's state of eternal slumber, that dreams could be projected outside. As long as the correct method was used, a sleeping deity could make use of the dream to a certain extent to respond to prayers.

Regarding this situation, the members of the Tarot Club weren't stumped by it at all.

On the one hand, most of them were either openly or secretly spreading the faith of The Fool. On the other hand, it was very common to pray to deities without receiving a response. Mr. Fool's responses from before were considered extremely rare. They had almost never heard of anything like this happening elsewhere.

To be able to receive a response through repeated prayers on important matters was better than most of the clergymen of the orthodox Churches!

"Yes, Mr. Fool." The Tarot Club members didn't hesitate at all as they accepted the long-term commission.

Among them, Leonard was the one that answered from the bottom of his heart. He was most eager and impatient.

To him, spreading the faith and biblical canon of Mr. Fool was to awaken Klein.

This made him instantly find the motivation to do something else other than his usual work.

At this moment, The Fool Klein nodded slightly and cast his gaze at Cattleya.

"The previous commission—to gather all the information regarding the Hidden Sage suddenly coming to life—is still effective.

"If you wish to take the risk, then go further and investigate the present state of the Hidden Sage.

"This will be very dangerous. You can reject it, and the reward is a wish."

Cattleya thought for a moment and said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, is this related to awakening you? Is it related to surviving the apocalypse?"

"Perhaps, perhaps not. I can't give you a definite answer right now. I just see some visions." This time, Klein didn't deliberately create a high-level persona of The Fool, because he was already The Fool. “Also, watch over all your subordinates that are Beyonders of the Earth and Moon pathway.”

Cattleya fell silent for a moment before slowly saying, “I’ll accept this commission.”

The Fool Klein cast his gaze to the other side and said to Derrick, “Your mission is to protect the New City of Silver and New Moon City and protect the Rorsted Archipelago. The more believers I have and the safer they are, the higher the chances of me waking up.

“On this foundation, think about how to expand the Church and spread the faith.

“Your payment is to become my Blessed.”

Derrick’s eyes suddenly burned as he recalled the encouraging gaze he had received from the Chief when he pushed open the final door of the Giant King’s Court.

He took a deep breath and said in a firm tone, “Yes, Mr. Fool!”

Klein nodded and looked at Fors.

“You need to protect the Abraham family well to prevent them from suffering the temptation of the cosmos.

“Also, gather more information regarding the Fourth Epoch and figure out Mr. Door’s condition at that time. Uncover some of the latent problems of the Abraham family.”

“That’s something I wish to do.” Fors hesitated for a moment, but she still expressed that she would do such things even if she wasn’t given the commission.

The Fool Klein didn’t give his approval or disapproval. Instead, he said, “If you’re willing, you can write down biographies and stories of The

World's different identities using different aliases.

"The reward for above is that when you have a chance of becoming a Planeswalker and have to head to the cosmos, you will receive my blessings."

Although Klein knew that he could use a dream to give a response to a certain extent in his sleep, he wasn't sure if he was the one who had the upper hand or the Lord of the Mysteries. Therefore, he wished to use verbal contracts of providing a reward after the completion of a mission on more important matters. When the time came, even if he was at a disadvantage, he would be able to make use of this sort of invisible promise to give an ingenious response.

Planeswalker? Fors was taken aback.

To be frank, she had never considered this problem before. What she was worried about was the digestion of the Secrets Sorcerer potion and the Wanderer ritual.

Soon, she composed herself and said, "Yes, Mr. Fool."

Klein then cast his gaze at Emlyn.

"The besiegement of the Rose School of Thought involves preparations for the apocalypse. It's rather dangerous. Even if an angel is participating in it, you have to pay attention to your own safety.

"Your commission is to try your best to gather blessings, auras, and items given by the Primordial Moon to 'Her' believers in the Rose School of Thought. These might be more dangerous than a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact."

At that moment, although Klein still maintained The Fool's tone, there were hints that resembled a friend's warning.

This made Audrey, who had stabilized her initial mental state, sense something different.

Recalling what Mr. Fool had said to the other members, she sighed inwardly.

Mr. Fool's humanity seems to have become richer just as "He" is about to enter a deep sleep…

While Emlyn was slightly surprised and puzzled, Klein continued, "Apart from participating in the besieging of the Rose School of Thought's mission, I hope that you can form a pharmaceutical company and perform research on how to mass-produce the medicine with magical effects."

"If it's mass-produced, there's no way the products can be equipped with a magical effect," Emlyn replied instinctively.

The Fool Klein nodded.

"Seek out a compromise.

"Your main goal is to spread my name through this pharmaceutical company.

"The reward will also be a wish."

This isn't a matter of danger, but whether it's possible… The simplest solution is to give me a thousand Apothecary potions. I can form an Apothecary factory for mass production… Emlyn mumbled inwardly before replying seriously, "Yes, Mr. Fool."

Klein looked to the other side and said to Xio, "The apocalypse is approaching. Be it the Red Priest or the Demoness pathways, they will become active. Your mission is to rely on the official factions to investigate the whereabouts of the three Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics and the Uniqueness of the Red Priest pathway. If there's a chance, find a clue to confirm the Primordial Demoness's present condition. It's very dangerous."

Klein didn't mention the payment, because he had already paid for it.

Xio had her wish fulfilled by holding a ritual and becoming a Sequence 4 Imperative Mage.

As for the three Sequence 1 Conqueror Beyonder characteristics of the Red Priest pathway, Klein had previously learned that one was in the hands of the Sauron family—the former Intis royal family—the other in the hands of the Feysac's Einhorn royal family, and the other was in the hands of the Loen's Augustus royal family. Later, as a reward, it was given to the Demoness Sect.

Of course, this was only a preliminary answer. The corresponding situation could very well have changed:

The Sauron family had already been in decline since Roselle's era. It might not necessarily be able to keep the Conqueror's Beyonder characteristic or corresponding Sealed Artifact under its control. Klein even suspected that it might have been obtained by the Iron and Blood Cross Order;

The failure of the war had significantly damaged the Einhorn family. Klein didn't rule out the possibility of the death of a high-level angel or the loss of a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

The location of the Conqueror Beyonder characteristic that the Augustus family gave to the Demoness Sect was currently the clearest. However, Klein knew that the Red Angel evil spirit, Sauron Einhorn Medici, had been eyeing it all this time. Perhaps "He" had succeeded, or perhaps "He" was carrying out whatever plans "He" had.

There were no clues to the corresponding Red Priest Uniqueness at the moment. The last time the mysterious world knew of it was at the end of the Fourth Epoch, during the Pale Disaster.

Chapter 1390 - Questions and Answers

◆

Xio had always been looking forward and uneasy as to what her mission was.

She looked forward to it because she had already chosen to accept Mr. Fool's gift, so she definitely had to pay the corresponding price. Knowing the mission earlier allowed her to prevent unnecessary second-guessing due to the unknown, guesses that only led to greater fear.

She was uneasy because she knew that the remuneration she received was too generous. She believed that the final mission wouldn't be simple and would definitely be filled with danger.

At that moment, after hearing Mr. Fool's words, her heart finally settled. At the same time, she secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

Investigating the three Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics and the Uniqueness of the Red Priest pathway and their locations, and even confirming the present state of the Primordial Demoness was indeed very dangerous. It was a mission that would result in a terrifying corruption if she wasn't careful, but it was at least better than snatching the Uniqueness and Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics or directly facing the Primordial Demoness.

If it were the latter, even with the official factions supporting her, Xio didn't think that she could accomplish it. All she could do was write a will, ready to sacrifice herself at any moment. And if it was just the former, she could use a more roundabout method to obtain the information. She didn't need to encounter powerful existences with high statuses. As a Sequence 4 demigod, Xio was confident.

Without any hesitation, she immediately replied, "Yes, Mr. Fool."

The Fool Klein had planned on looking to the other side. After some consideration, he added, "Be careful of Bansy."

Without waiting for the Tarot Club members to start making connections, Klein said to Leonard, "Your mission is similar to The Moon's. During the besiegement of the Rose School of Thought, gather blessings, auras, and items from the Mother Tree of Desire from their members. It's equally dangerous."

He only gave a single warning, without saying as much as he did like when he gave Emlyn the mission.

This was because Leonard had a senior angel from the Marauder pathway "Parasitizing" him. "He" knew many secrets and knew how dangerous the Outer Deities were. "He" wouldn't allow Leonard to act recklessly.

Seeing that Leonard was about to nod, The Fool Klein maintained his tone and continued, "You don't have to do too much in promoting my name. You can even choose not to do it."

As one of the twenty-two high-ranking members of the Church of Evernight, as one of the few high-ranking deacons of the Nighthawks, it was very easy for something to happen if Leonard spread the faith of The Fool in private. He would be misunderstood by his colleagues and cause unnecessary conflicts.

Miraculously, to Klein, The Moon Emlyn's actions didn't seem to be misunderstood in the same way. To the people and Sanguine around him, anything he did wasn't too strange.

That's right… Leonard had already recovered from his previous eagerness and realized the cruelty of reality.

However, he still wanted to do something.

At this moment, The Fool Klein added, “You can share the stories of The World with songs and poetry.”

Songs and poetry… Leonard instinctively frowned. He didn’t immediately respond to Mr. Fool.

Klein then said, “Other than that, try your best to raise your own level to prepare for the apocalypse.

“The reward for all the missions is a wish.”

Although many Beyonder characteristics had fallen into the real world when the God of Combat died, bringing with them a batch of Beyonder creatures, mutated monsters, and abnormal lands, Klein didn’t know how many Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics the Evernight Goddess had obtained from the Warrior pathway other than the Uniqueness, but at the very least, a number of the Sequence 2 angels of the Church of Evernight had the possibility of becoming a Sequence 1 angel.

At the same time, if “They” had obtained additional Beyonder characteristics, “They” could still switch to the corresponding Sequence of the Death pathway.

This would open a path for the saints to advance, not limiting them to just one pathway.

Of course, not every Sequence 3 saint wished to become an angel, but Leonard was currently only a Sequence 4 Nightwatcher. Furthermore, if the corresponding Sequence 3 Horror Bishop position was limited, he could consider Silver Knight and Ferryman—Klein had one set of the former.

Leonard fell silent for two seconds before he slowly exhaled.

“Yes, Mr. Fool.”

The Fool Klein immediately cast his gaze at Miss Justice who had been waiting.

“Apart from promoting my name, you have two missions: One is to assist Judgment and investigate the whereabouts of the Red Priest pathway’s Uniqueness and Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics, confirming the present state of the Primordial Demoness. The other is to work hard to raise your level.”

One of the missions is to increase my Sequence… Audrey was somewhat puzzled about this mission.

In her opinion, this seemed to be telling an ordinary person: Your mission is to earn even more money.

Furthermore, this isn’t of any value to Mr. Fool. Could it be that he wants me to treat Mr. World? Just as this thought flashed across Audrey’s mind, The Fool Klein added, “The higher your Sequence, the more opportunities you have to awaken The World.

“In this aspect, you can make use of external forces to help. The Psychology Alchemists that Hermes rebuilds will be one of the choices, but you need to be careful and take precautions.

“You have to pay a certain price for this.

“You can give up the reward you received before. This depends on your will and thoughts.”

Audrey no longer had any doubts. After a moment of silence, she nodded solemnly.

“Yes, Mr. Fool.”

Klein’s gaze landed on Alger.

“You will know what your mission is in time to come.”

Klein had already foreseen the corresponding scene.

Without waiting for Alger to speak, he continued, “You can bring the Sea God Scepter, but during this period of time, all the prayers of the Sea God believers will be transferred to The Sun, directly pointing at me.”

Although Alger still couldn’t accurately guess what his mission was, he already had a vague premonition. After a moment of thought, he replied in an upright manner, “Yes, Mr. Fool.”

Klein retracted his gaze and looked around before slowly saying, “After this, on the first Monday afternoon of every month, you can still gather here, but there will be no convener.

“If you need to do a private, mini discussion, pray in advance and wait for a response.”

At this point, The Fool Klein closed his eyes and said, “Let us end today’s gathering here.”

The Tarot Club members couldn’t help but feel a baffling sense of sorrow. It was as though a grand ball was coming to an end.

They stood up at the same time and solemnly bowed towards the end of the long, mottled table.

“Your will is our will.”

Klein waited until they finished speaking before he dispelled his control of them. He watched as the crimson starlight scattered and quickly fell.

After staring at the scene for a few seconds, he conjured a yellowish parchment and a dark red fountain pen.

After some thought, Klein simply wrote:

“Dear Mr. Azik,

“Due to some complicated reasons, I might be sleeping for a long time. I’m sorry, but I might not be able to write a letter to you for a long time…”

With just that sentence, Klein stopped and made the pen disappear.

Although he had conjured that piece of paper, with his current status, level, and strength, he could sustain it for more than a hundred years—even if it was brought to the outside world.

He closed his eyes again, summoned Azik's copper whistle, and blew it.

At the same time, he released some of the restrictions that came from Sefirah Castle.

The skeleton messenger appeared, and every bone in its body trembled intensely as if it would collapse at any moment.

If not for the letter that Klein had handed over, it might've prostrated itself.

After the skeleton messenger received the letter and left Sefirah Castle in a hurry, Klein rubbed his temples.

This wasn't because the will of the Celestial Worthy had already escaped from "His" state of eternal slumber, nor was it because of the pain from maintaining his lucidity; it was just a habit.

Klein slowly leaned back into his chair and sighed.

On both sides of the long, mottled table, Justice Audrey, The Hanged Man Alger, The Sun Derrick, The Magician Fors, The Moon Emlyn, The Hermit Cattleya, The Star Leonard, and Judgment Xio appeared in the order they joined the Tarot Club.

But this time, they weren't real. They were only projections. They no longer appeared blurry, revealing their images from Klein's memory.

Soon after, more figures appeared. They were:

A mature man with a receding hairline with deep eyes; a beautiful witch with blue eyeshadow and red blush; a middle-aged man with black hair mixed with silver hair, his voice unusually loud and sonorous; a woman in her late forties with ear-length short-hair; a youth that gamed on his phone while eating delicacies; a happy young lady who kept giggling; a civil servant who looked old than his age with a high hairline; a young girl dressed in an old-fashioned skirt who focused on machinery; a doll-like lady with a pale face; a teacher with soft facial features and bronze skin; a child licking on ice cream; a madam holding four heads; and an elder looking all serious at a bill…

They either sat or stood, gathering beside the people they knew. In the flickering candlelight on the long table, they discussed different things, followed the music, and danced.

[image]

Klein silently watched the lively scene as his expression gradually softened.

After an unknown period of time, he stood up, passed through them, and walked into the depths of this space.

Behind him, the figures, the candlelight, and the music faded away and disappeared.

When he saw the strange door of light above the grayish-white cloud, Klein beckoned for the magic mirror, Arrodes.

At that moment, the transparent or opaque worms and insects that clustered together to form spherical lights in the strange door of light turned bluish-black.

It was like a thick layer of fog that made one unable to see what was behind the door.

After Klein arrived, he didn’t immediately enter. He felt as though there was an extremely terrifying monster behind the door, waiting to devour him.

He raised his head and looked at the transparent cocoons hanging above the door of light. He looked at the “modern” humans with different skin colors inside the cocoons.

Closing his eyes to sense them, Klein raised his right hand and closed his five fingers.

The cocoons cracked open as the people inside transformed into specks of light. They flew out of Sefirah Castle and landed in the real world, into the bodies of those who had just died.

After doing this, Klein lowered his head and looked at the magic mirror in his hand.

“Are you scared?”

The aqueous light on the surface of the ancient silver mirror swirled and the pale words outlined itself:

“No.”

In the next second, Arrodes raised his own question according to the rules:

“Great Master, are you afraid?”

The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched.

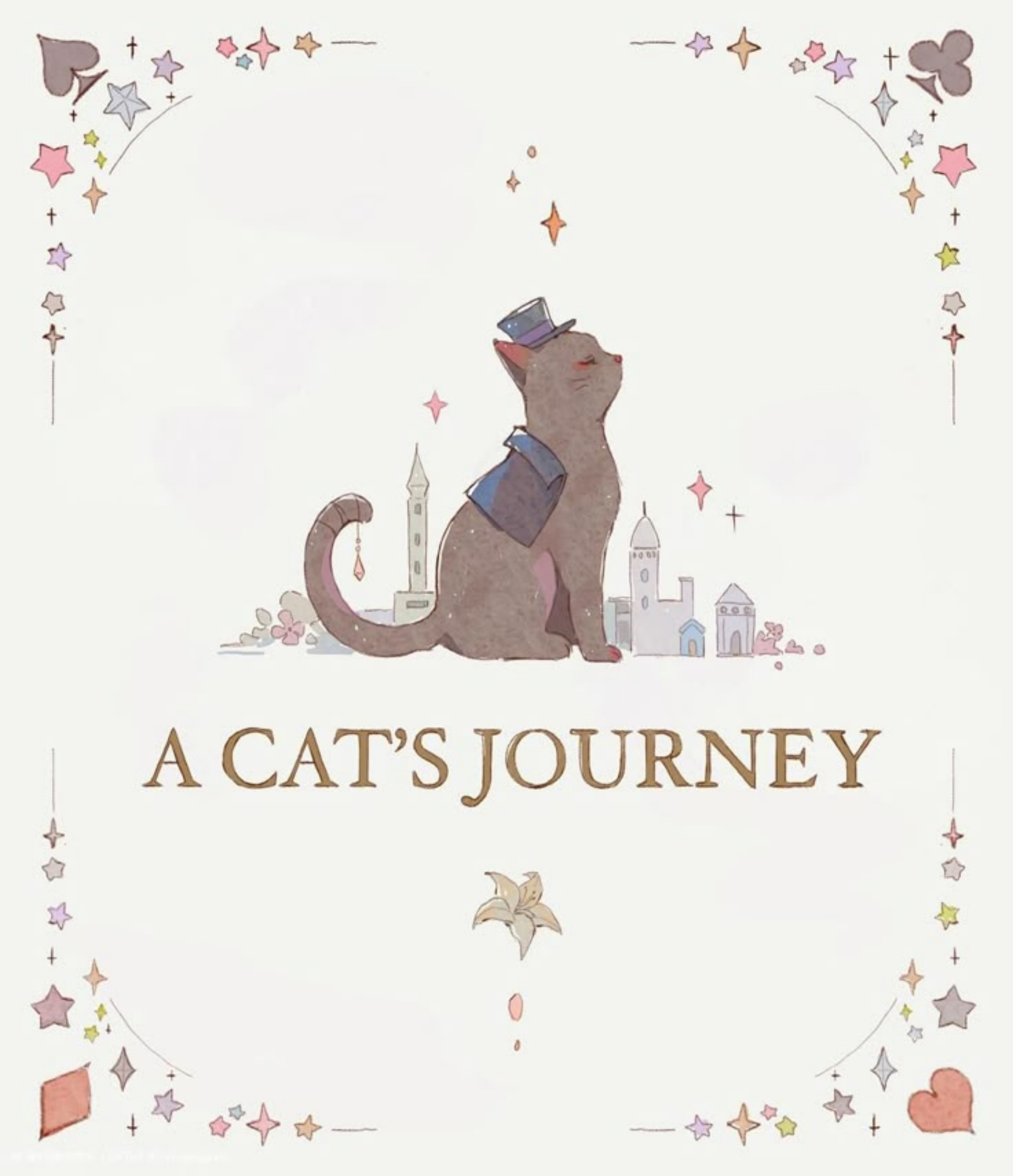
“Yes.”

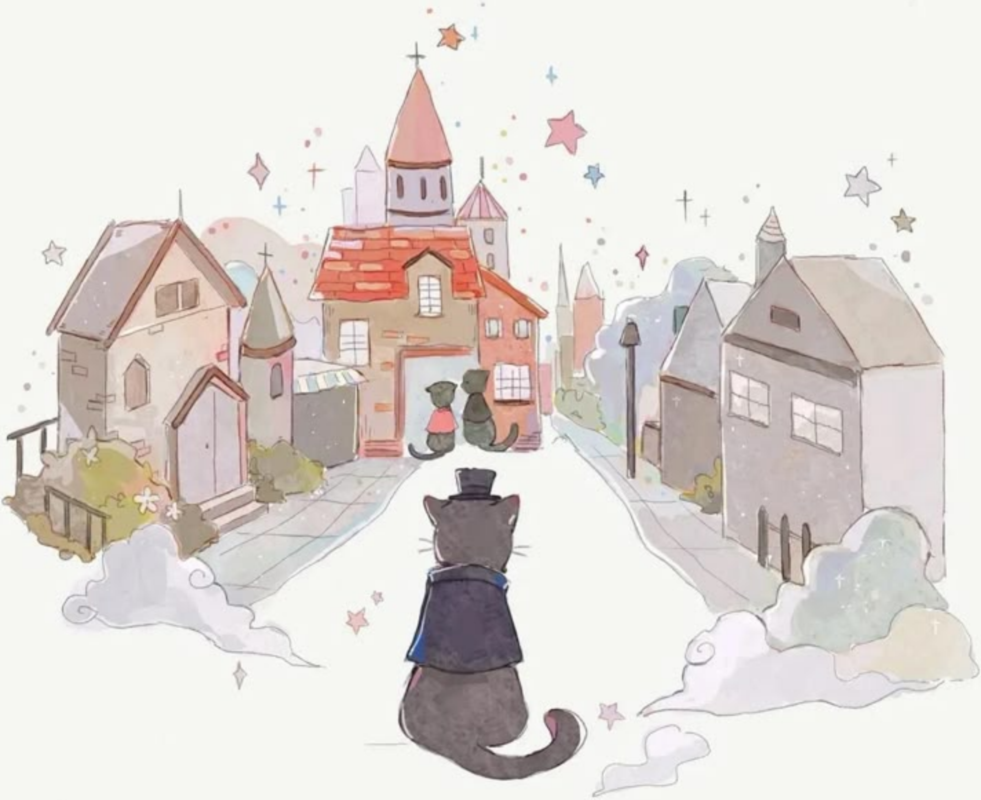
With that said, he took a step forward with the magic mirror in hand and walked towards the bluish-black fog in the middle of the strange door of light, passing through it.

[image]

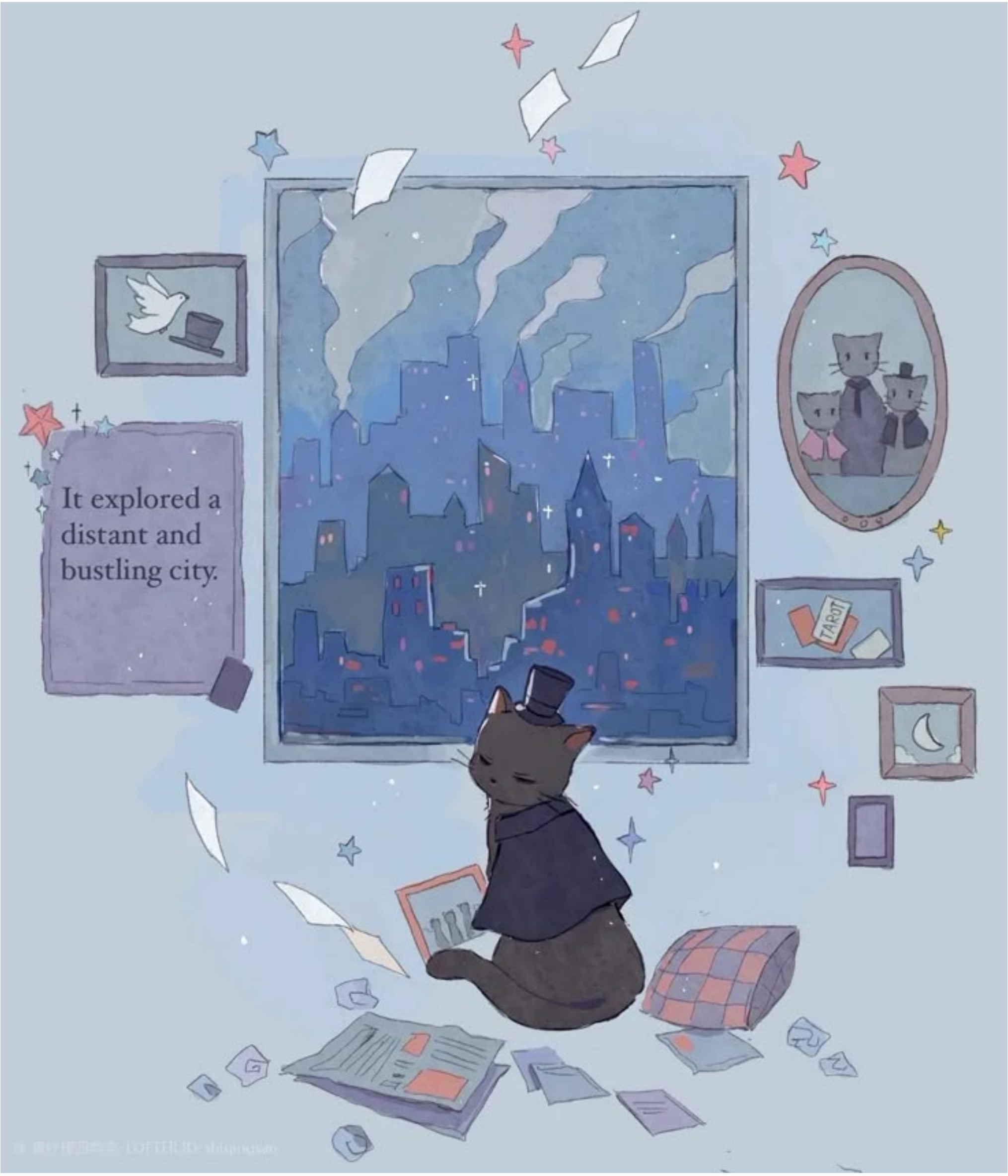
His figure disappeared behind the door that had the unknown hidden behind.

The cracked “cocoons” were still gently swaying.


A CAT'S JOURNEY



Like the start of any good adventure tale, one sunny afternoon, the black cat bid farewell to its homeland andventured into the unknown.



It explored a distant and bustling city.

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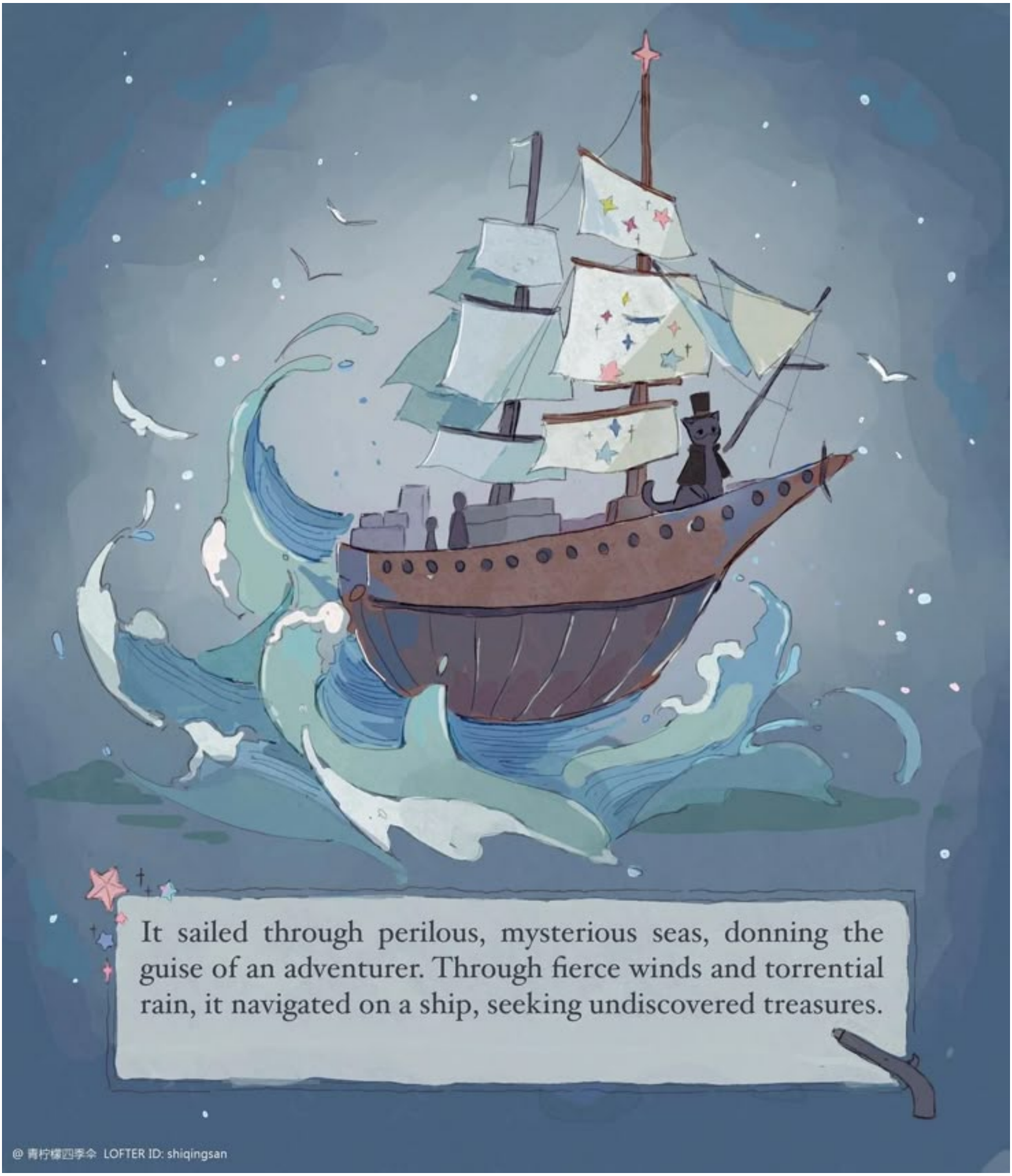

It sailed through perilous, mysterious seas, donning the guise of an adventurer. Through fierce winds and torrential rain, it navigated on a ship, seeking undiscovered treasures.

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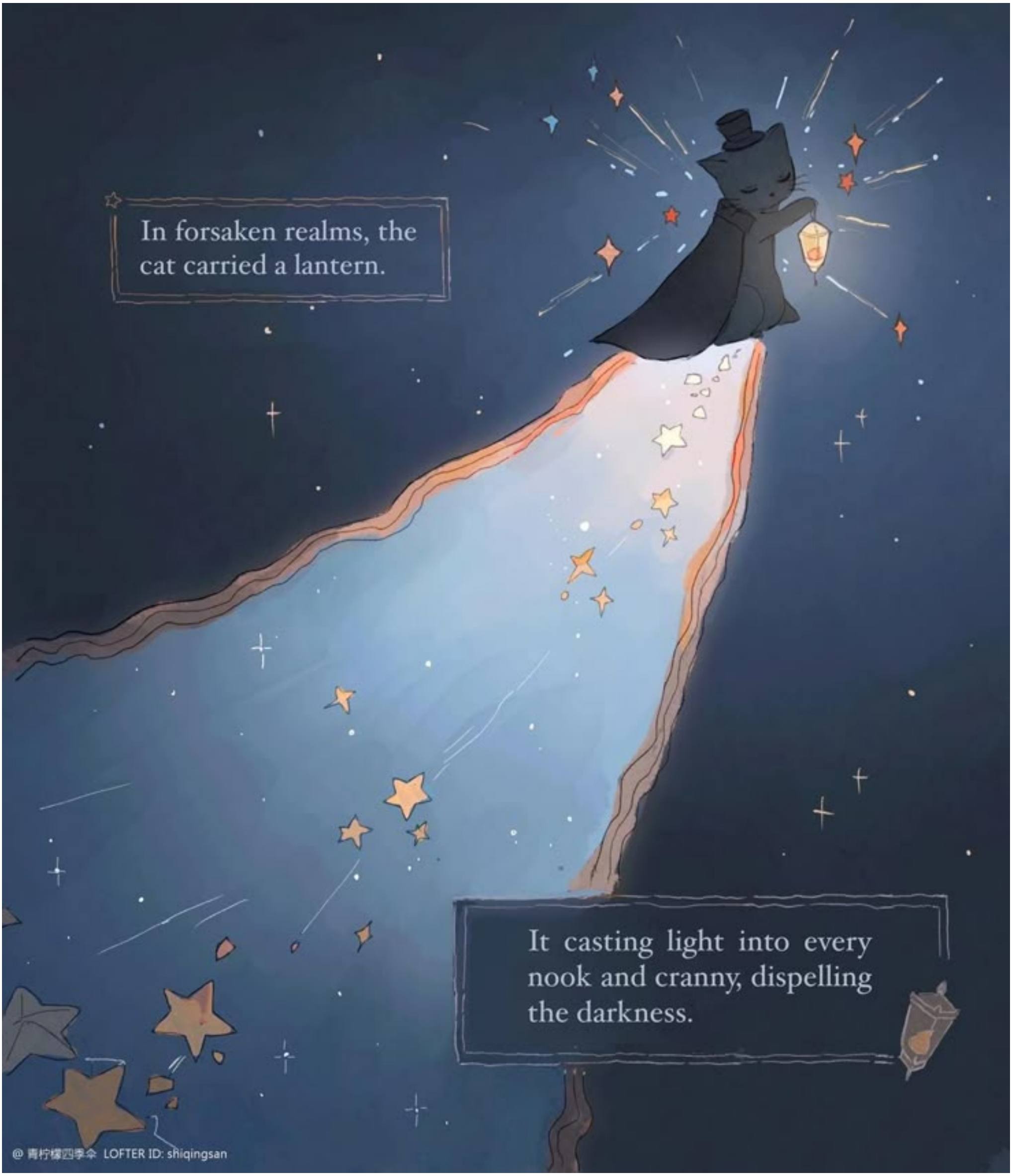

In forsaken realms, the cat carried a lantern.

It casting light into every nook and cranny, dispelling the darkness.

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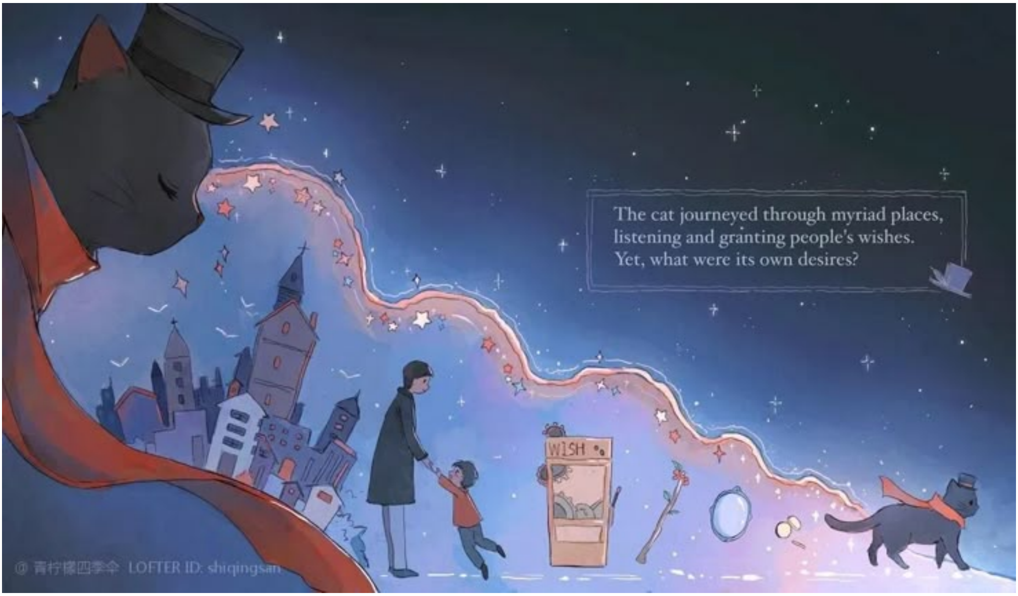

The cat journeyed through myriad places,
listening and granting people's wishes.
Yet, what were its own desires?

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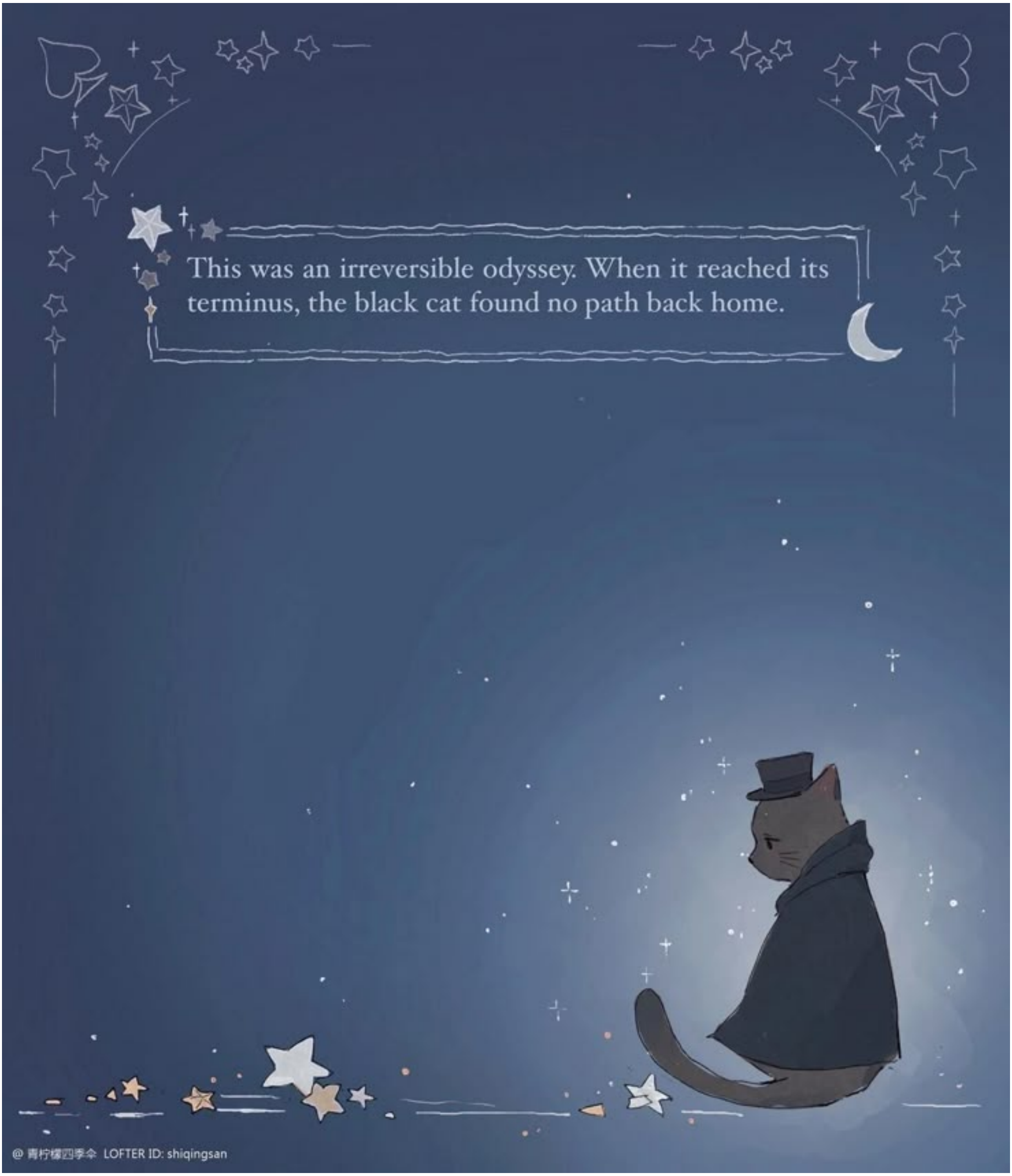

This was an irreversible odyssey. When it reached its terminus, the black cat found no path back home.

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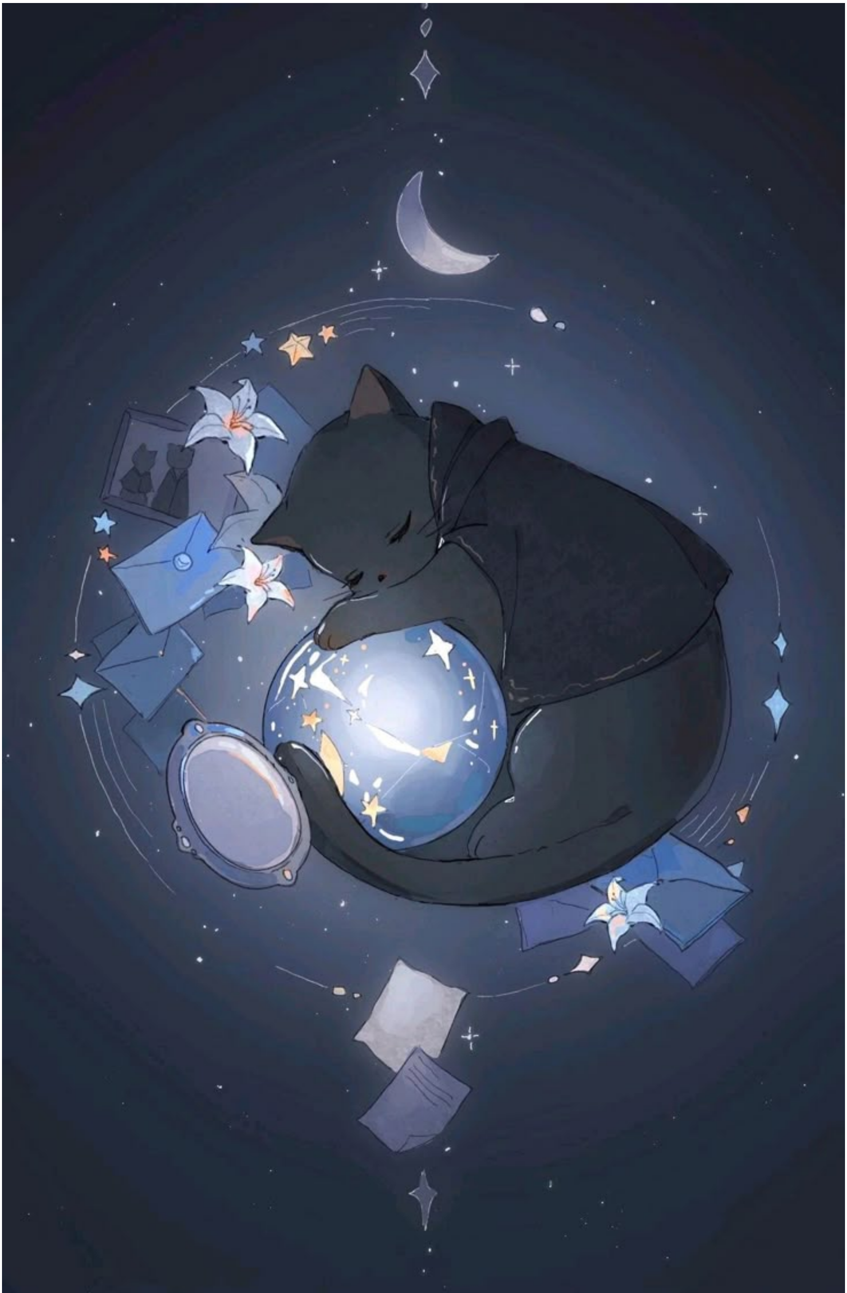


In the depths of its dreams, the homeland's
silver moon still shone brilliantly.

Whiteley

Chapter 1391 - Facing It

* * *

In the dark blue waves that seemed to never stop in the Berserk Sea, the Future was like a leaf, being thrown high up at times and smacking down at other times.

In these waters, there were still some pirate ships that were cruising. They were used to such situations and felt that it was as natural as the sun rising.

After Cattleya returned to the real world, she pondered for a moment before spreading open a piece of paper and writing.

She wanted to ask the Queen what happened recently.

In fact, before Mr. Fool announced that "He" would enter deep sleep, Cattleya had already sensed the impending monumental change.

Whether it was the sudden closing of the doors or the meteor shower streaking across the sky to illuminate the world, it gave her some inspiration as a Clairvoyant, allowing her to see some blurry visions.

Of course, she was limited by her own level, position, and status. She didn't have enough knowledge of what had happened, and she was unable to grasp what exactly had caused Mr. Fool to choose to sleep. All she could do was ask Queen Mystic Bernadette, who had long advanced to the level of an angel and led a mysterious organization while being in control of many powerful Sealed Artifacts.

Just as Cattleya summoned the messenger and took out the letter she had written, she was taken aback.

At that moment, a purple light was accentuated in her eyes. It became extremely saturated and slowly flowed like a river.

She felt that Mr. Fool had entered a deep sleep.

Unconcealable hesitation, confusion, and sadness arose in the Admiral of Stars' heart.

For some reason, she felt an inexplicable palpitation, and two drops of tears unknowingly slid down her face.

She seemed to understand something, yet nothing. She only knew that it was unknown how much time it would take for Mr. Fool to wake up from "His" slumber.

Taking off the heavy glasses on her nose bridge, Cattleya wiped the corners of her eyes, allowing her emotions to return to normal.

She walked to the window and looked at the deck.

Frank Lee warmly invited the crew to taste his newly brewed beer, but none of the pirates dared to try it.

Thankfully, I sent Cielf to the Queen ahead of time. Now, all I need to do is watch over Frank… Without Mr. Fool's watch, I have to be more careful and pay more attention to him. Yes, I have to find something for Frank to do other than research. He's a first mate, so he can't always be working on something else… Cattleya thought with a heavy expression.

After considering how to deal with Frank, as well as how to reorganize the small number of pirates from the Earth and Moon pathway onto other ships, and not frequently interact with Frank, Cattleya focused her focus on the Hidden Sage.

Although she was already one of the ten pillars of the Moses Ascetic

Order, due to her background and the influence of the Hidden Sage, she had never received the trust of the president and the other higher-ups. She could only be an ostracized person who teetered on the periphery of the organization who had her own circle and respective faction.

From a certain perspective, her relationship with the Moses Ascetic Order was closer to that of a partner. On the one hand, she needed a faction and a powerhouse to project her will over the Five Seas. On the other hand, she yearned to obtain corresponding knowledge and materials.

And to obtain the information regarding the Hidden Sage that represented a deity suddenly coming to life and confirming "His" current state would necessarily require her to become a core member of the Moses Ascetic Order.

With my present identity, there's no problem with me participating in the internal decisions of the Moses Ascetic Order. Only by truly participating in these will I be able to come into contact with more information and elevate my own status… However, this will be rather dangerous. Even if the Hidden Sage's condition isn't right, and doesn't interfere with the Moses Ascetic Order's operations, the other higher-ups will also be subjected to the infringement of interests and be in constant suspicion. They will counterattack to a certain degree… There are at least two of the ten pillars that I can't see through, making me instinctively feel danger…

And confirming the state of the Hidden Sage will be even more dangerous. If anything goes wrong, I'll immediately be corrupted and eroded by "Him"… The more Cattleya thought about it, the more she felt that the mission given by Mr. Fool was difficult.

She had always been teetering at the periphery of the Moses Ascetic Order with her identity as a pirate. In fact, she had her worries about this matter. She was afraid that if she went too deep into the organization's internal affairs, it would expose the fact that she was still in contact with Queen Mystic. She was afraid that the other ten pillars would one day suddenly point her out as a spy and eliminate her on the spot.

At that moment, Cattleya even wanted to abandon Mr. Fool's mission and identity as one of the ten pillars of the Moses Ascetic Order. She wished to return to the Dawn and returned to the Queen's side.

That way, she wouldn't need to worry about this matter anymore—if there were any problems, the Queen would be able to stop them.

Ever since she left the Dawn, she had to shoulder everything by herself. Cattleya had always felt exhausted as her shoulders remained heavy.

However, this thought was quickly given up by Cattleya.

She sighed softly. She understood that she would never be able to return to the time when she was a little girl without worries.

She wasn't only responsible for her own life, but also the fate of Frank, Heath, Nina, and the other crew members.

Furthermore, she had predicted the arrival of the apocalypse. She hoped that she could become the Queen's most powerful helper and do something for this world.

Cattleya closed her eyes and muttered to herself, "Then face it."

To truly integrate into the Moses Ascetic Order and gather the relevant information.

After making this decision, Cattleya no longer concealed her strength. She raised her hands and used a fairy tale magic.

In the eyes of the surrounding pirate ship crew, the Future and its fleet became illusory at the same time, turning into countless bubbles.

The bubbles reflected a dreamy color under the light's illumination.

Then, they slowly melted into the sea.

Just like that, the Future and its fleet disappeared from everyone's eyes.

Many knowledgeable pirates were first shocked and stunned. Then, they had a thought:

A new Queen over the seas has been born.

Queen of Stars!

†

Backlund, in a particular house.

Xio, who had yet to sort out her thoughts after returning to the real world, saw Fors's figure appear in front of her as she shouted, "That mission of yours is too dangerous!"

Xio was taken aback as she instinctively pointed out a problem.

"You didn't knock."

This was the worst part of living together with a demigod of the Apprentice pathway.

Fors first reflected on herself for a second before confidently saying, "You didn't close the door."

She pointed at the ajar bedroom door.

I actually didn't close the door. That's right. This was a last-minute gathering. I wasn't prepared for it before the matter… Xio opened her mouth, but she couldn't say a word.

Both of them looked at each other speechlessly for a long time, but none of them broke the silence.

Finally, Fors decided to forget the accusation and focused on the mission itself.

“A mission that involves Sequence 1 and a Uniqueness is too dangerous.”

With that said, she recalled that Xio had already accepted Mr. Fool’s gift. Her eyes reddened uncontrollably as she couldn’t help but mumble, “Remember to get my help. At the very least… I can help you escape.”

To them, the things they experienced before had involved very few matters at the Sequence 1 level. Apart from Mr. Fool and The World Gehrman Sparrow, at most it was them being watched by He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.

At other times, they would at most do trivial matters at the periphery of corresponding matters. They had never faced an enemy that could be addressed as “Him.”

Therefore, when she thought of how her friend’s mission involved Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic, or even a Uniqueness and true deity, Fors couldn’t help but feel nervous and worried.

Xio smiled and said, “I’m just seeking clues and investigating the truth. It’s not like I need to face ‘Them’ directly.”

She paused for a second and said, “The apocalypse is approaching. We have to do something.

“Look, even Mr. Fool has fallen into a deep sleep. What’s more, trivial figures like us? If I didn’t quickly become a demigod, perhaps there’s nothing I can do. Now… There’s at least some hope. At the very least, I can try to awaken Mr. Fool.”

Fors had experienced many things and had long understood this principle. She had only been venting her emotions, but now, she had calmed down.

She thought for a moment and said, “What are you going to do next?”

"Just relying on myself to investigate it will definitely be very difficult. I'll definitely need to use MI9's intelligence network. I plan on finding a suitable opportunity to let them know that I'm a Sequence 4 demigod. In order to not be suspected, I might need Miss Justice to give me some hints and make some arrangements," Xio answered seriously.

Fors's thoughts raced.

"I'll come up with a script for you. Uh, I'll act as an antagonist and simulate a lunatic who attempted to advance to Sequence 4 Imperative Mage, and then be defeated by you…"

As she spoke, a story took form. She immediately sat beside Xio's desk, took out a pen and paper, and started writing.

"After I write up the story, I'll get Miss Justice to make some amendments and make it appear reasonable," Fors said as she wrote.

As a Secrets Sorcerer, there was no doubt that she could prevent their conversation from leaking out.

Xio thought for a moment and said, "Isn't your most important task now to write the biographies and stories?"

"Ha, that's simple. I've already thought of plenty of scenes, and there's a lot of material on my mind. No, nothing of that sort…" After muttering a few words, Fors placed all her focus on writing a script for Xio so as to gain MI9's approval.

Seeing her good friend focused on her matter, a smile gradually appeared on Xio's face.

She then cast her gaze to the ajar door and heard her brother, Dio Derecha, seemingly reciting the ancient Feysac words. This was a requirement for studying law to become a lawyer.

Their mother was instructing two servants to clean up the living room.

Their voices reached Xio's ears, and her expression gradually became firm.

Although she had no idea what would happen when she faced the MI9 brass, and even though she would encounter unknown dangers when completing Mr. Fool's mission, as well as the unknown future during the dawn of the apocalypse, Xio knew that if she didn't do anything or take on certain risks and just enjoyed the pleasant times with her family just like that, she would ultimately be drowned by the floods like most people who were unprepared.

And now, there was at least a path filled with brambles, one that had a glimmer of light at the end of it.

It needed the realization of sacrifice, and to grasp it with courage.

Chapter 1392 - Yesterday No More

◆

In a room beside the Evernight cathedral in the Southern Continent, East Balam, Leonard's consciousness returned to the real world.

After a few seconds of silence, he picked up the cup of coffee that had turned cold and took a sip.

The bitter taste filled his mouth, gradually waking his mind up.

"Old Man, what happened today?" Finally, Leonard couldn't help but ask.

After a moment of silence, Pallez Zoroast replied wistfully, "Error has perished."

Error… Leonard almost didn't realize which existence Old Man was referring to.

In the next second, he couldn't hide his astonishment as he nearly forgot to whisper, "Amon?"

This was a standard true god!

"Yes." Pallez Zoroast's voice sounded like "He" had aged considerably. "To be precise, Amon's main body perished."

Leonard wasn't in the mood to distinguish the subtle meaning behind Old Man's words. He asked in disbelief, "W-why was there no sign of it?"

He had witnessed the phenomena before and after the God of Combat died. He knew that it was a change that would affect the entire world and bring about many terrifying monsters and dangerous regions.

And just now, the only two abnormalities were:

The doors and windows suddenly closing, and him seemingly forgetting something.

In reality, the latter wasn't strange at all. Most people would encounter something similar during their daily lives.

Pallez Zoroast's tone sank.

"'He' should've perished in Sefirah Castle."

Sefirah Castle? Leonard was shocked.

The venue of the gathering he had just attended was inside Sefirah Castle!

A war between gods has just erupted there? Amon actually infiltrated Sefirah Castle? Amidst Leonard's thoughts, his expression gradually turned solemn.

"Old Man, Mr. Fool was injured because of this and had no choice but to enter a state of slumber?"

"Is 'He' about to enter a state of slumber?" Pallez Zoroast asked in return.

"He" didn't seem to be too surprised about this.

Leonard tersely acknowledged.

"The reason 'He' summoned us today was because of this matter."

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a few seconds before saying,

"'His' choice to enter a state of slumber is indeed related to the previous battle of gods and Amon's infiltration, but it's not because of injuries, but because of corruption.”

“Corruption?” Leonard blurted out in surprise.

Even at Mr. Fool’s level, irreversible corruption can still be encountered by “Him?”

Pallez Zoroast regained “His” previous poignant tone:

“Everything has godhood. By relying on godhood to become a powerhouse, one can never escape the shackles of godhood.

“On this point, it’s the same for you and me. Likewise for The Fool. Heh, perhaps ‘He’ shouldn’t be called ‘The Fool’ anymore. ‘He’ is equivalent to half a ‘Lord of the Mysteries.’”

Lord of the Mysteries… Regarding the problem of the mental imprint in a Beyonder characteristic, Leonard indeed had a deeper understanding of it than demigods at his level. However, he still had several holes in the knowledge on this matter. Even though he had heard Old Man mention the term “Lord of the Mysteries,” he didn’t understand what it meant.

However, at present, he could confirm that Mr. Fool’s level had transcended Sequence 0 according to Mr. Fool’s words during the gathering, and what Old Man had just said, “His” strength was enough to kill a true god.

Leonard cleverly didn’t probe further. He changed the topic in a deep voice:

“Old Man, why is Klein sleeping as well?

“Are you able to wake him up as soon as possible?”

Pallez Zoroast’s tone was somewhat odd.

“How could an old and weak angel like me know about matters at the level of gods?

"As for the awakening, even The Fool has no better solution, much less me?"

Leonard remained silent for a moment. He picked up his coffee cup and took another sip.

After a while, he asked hesitantly, "Old Man, do you have any way of 'Stealing' the artistic flair of others?"

Pallez Zoroast scoffed.

"The definition of artistic flair is vague with no clear categorization. There's no way to 'Steal' it.

"However, if you change it to natural talent, there's a way."

"…Forget it." Leonard ultimately couldn't do anything about "Stealing" the natural talent of others to help him resolve his problem.

Pallez Zoroast added with a smile, "If you can't accept this method, then you can find a natural talent that you want of someone who's very poor. Make a deal with him and give him the money he wants to exchange for the corresponding natural talent."

"It's a little like a deal with the devil…" Leonard commented objectively.

Pallez Zoroast chuckled and said, "There's another simple solution. That is to spend money to hire naturally talented people to help you resolve the corresponding problems."

"…Old Man, why didn't you say so earlier?" Leonard instantly saw hope.

Pallez Zoroast scoffed.

"You didn't manage to think of something that simple?

"I thought you had eliminated this option before consulting me."

Leonard ignored Old Man's mockery. After some serious thought, he felt that this idea was indeed feasible.

However, he soon felt a little guilty and uneasy, as if he was avoiding his responsibility.

Regarding this matter, I still have to do something personally… Apart from inviting someone to write songs and poems, I have to write a little… With this in mind, Leonard suddenly stood up and walked to the door.

“Where are you going?” Pallez Zoroast asked in surprise.

Leonard frowned slightly as he said firmly, “I’m going to the nearby bookstore to buy some poem anthologies.”

Ever since he advanced to Nightmare, he had given up the collection of poems he had bought in the past, making most of them nothing but decorations. When he became a Spirit Warlock, he began to collect poem anthologies that were suitable for some spirits to read, allowing him to chant the appropriate parts in a battle to create Beyonder effects that worked in concert with him.

Therefore, when he came to the Southern Continent, he didn’t bring a single poem anthology book. He only remembered a few of those that he often used in the past.

I never expected that, after becoming a high-ranking deacon, I would need to read poem anthologies again… Leonard sighed inwardly as his steps became firmer.

Pallez Zoroast had never imagined that Leonard’s next step would be to buy poem anthologies. After a while, “He” probed, “Is this an order from The Fool?”

“Yes, for promoting the corresponding legendary stories,” Leonard answered simply as he opened the door and walked out.

Pallez Zoroast fell silent once again before saying, “Apart from writing poems, you have to pay more attention to the besiegement of the Rose School of Thought.”

Leonard walked down the stairs and entered the streets. He looked at the pedestrians and nodded gently.

“Yes.”

At that moment, as he walked towards the bookstore, he felt as though he had returned to Tingen, back to the time when he was still a Midnight Poet. At that time, he had also walked along the bustling streets, preparing to buy a copy of “Classical Poems Anthology of the Loen Kingdom” and “Selected Poems of Roselle.”

†

Backlund, at the Harvest Church south of the Bridge.

After Emlyn White regained his senses, he found himself standing in front of a window.

The sun was already dim outside, and the flowers were flourishing.

His feelings towards Mr. Fool’s slumber were slightly different from the other Tarot Club members.

Other than heaviness, poignancy, sadness, and confusion, there was also the confidence that things would end well.

Internally within the Sanguine, some of the Marquises and Earls were rather old. Even though they lived longer than most demigods at the same level, they were still in advanced stages of their lives. At this time, they often chose to sleep and use similar methods to extend their lifespans. The effects were pretty good.

Therefore, Emlyn had long been accustomed to matters regarding slumbers. He knew that it wasn’t equivalent to passing away, nor was it equivalent to perishing. He believed that if the correct solution was found, Mr. Fool would have a high chance of waking up.

He looked out the window and muttered to himself, “Mr. Fool has entered a state of slumber, and the Ancestor’s revelation is often interfered with. It’s obvious that ‘She’ can’t provide help frequently…”

After a brief silence, Emlyn sighed silently.

Indeed. In the end, I have to face it myself and bear it.

This is the destiny of the messiah.

At the mention of the word “messiah,” Emlyn clearly smiled with a self-deprecating hint.

He then repeated inwardly, I can only rely on myself.

Just as this thought flashed through his mind, Father Utravsky’s voice sounded behind Emlyn.

“Time to set off.”

Emlyn turned his head and saw a huge sword on the back of the priest dressed in brown priest robes.

The sword’s length exceeded Emlyn’s height, and its width was close to his waist.

Together with Father Utravsky’s hill-like body, the terrifying pressure felt corporeal.

As a Sanguine Earl, Emlyn recovered from his stifled feeling and nodded gently.

“Okay.”

Today, they would head to the Southern Continent to participate in the besiegement of the Rose School of Thought.

Just as he replied, Emlyn suddenly recalled something and hurriedly said, “Wait for half a day.”

He wanted to gather most of the Sanguine in Backlund to discuss the pharmaceutical company.

Bishop Utravsky didn’t ask anything and nodded.

“Come find me when you’re ready.”

After watching Father Utravsky enter the depths of the cathedral, Emlyn turned his head to the Sanguine that were following him to the Southern Continent.

“Inform all the Sanguine in Backlund to come over. There’s something we need to discuss.”

“Yes, Lord Earl,” the Sanguine replied respectfully.

After they split up, Emlyn turned his head to look at the altar and the Sacred Emblem of Life in front of the cathedral. It was a simply drawn infant that was surrounded by symbols like wheat, flowers, spring water, and other symbols.

This made Emlyn’s thoughts suddenly turn adrift.

He had forgotten when he started spending less time in his bedroom, spending less time with his dolls. Even his hobby of studying history became more targeted and efficient.

This change didn’t take form in an instant. Instead, it was slowly formed over time. It was something that made it difficult for others to notice. By the time Emlyn discovered it, he had already adapted to this new life.

Emlyn retracted his gaze, raised his chin slightly, and shook his head with a smile.

This is the destiny of the messiah…

Chapter 1393 - Where the Dream Begins

◆ ◆ ◆

After returning to the real world, Alger patiently waited for the mission Mr. Fool had mentioned.

On this day, he, wearing the pontiff’s clothes and the silver-black mask, was discussing the internal affairs of the Church of the Sea God with Oracle Danitz when he suddenly saw a bishop enter.

“Your Holiness, the Church of Storms has sent two gifts to congratulate you on becoming a proxy of God.” The bishop held a tin box and bowed respectfully.

Danitz, who had been secretly rejoicing over the malfunction of Bayam’s telegram, blurted out in surprise, “Where’s that messenger?”

“He left after leaving the present,” the bishop at the door answered helplessly.

Although the members of the Church of Storms often had impulsive moments, such behavior was still quite rare.

Alger nodded slightly and said, “If they don’t view us as enemies, sending a messenger to deliver a gift is enough.”

With that said, he raised his right hand and gently made the tin box in the bishop’s hand fly over.

After catching the small box, Alger’s actions suddenly slowed down as though he found it heavy.

He slowly opened the container and saw a book made of yellowish-brown goatskin.

On the surface of the book, there was a line of words written in Elven:

“Book of Calamity.”

Book of Calamity… After seeing the words clearly, Alger felt a little dazed as though he was dreaming.

But very quickly, he understood what the mission Mr. Fool was talking about was.

Alger sighed silently and looked at the bishop at the door.

“What’s the second gift?”

“It’s a ghost ship called the Blue Avenger. It has already moored at the harbor,” the bishop answered without any abnormalities.

The Blue Avenger… When Danitz heard the name, he instinctively cast his gaze at the pontiff, Alger.

He remembered very clearly that this was the ship Alger used back when he was a pirate.

This meant that the Church of the Lord of Storms knew that the pontiff Church of the Sea God was once their cardinal!

Is this a congratulation gift, or a challenge to war? As Danitz’s heart tightened, he realized that he was rather familiar with the other gift.

It was the extremely sinister Book of Calamity he had seen when he followed Gehrman Sparrow.

“Help me return a letter to the Church of Storms, and thank them for their gifts,” Alger composed himself as he calmly instructed.

After the bishop left the room, he turned to Danitz and said, “Oracle, I've received Mr. Fool's revelation. I'll have to complete a mission in the time to come. It will perhaps take me a few years before I return."

"A revelation?" Danitz blurted out in surprise.

At this moment, there was only one thought in his mind:

Why don't I know about this?

Alger nodded.

"Mr. Fool is about to enter a deep slumber.

"However, this will not affect responses to your prayers."

"…" Danitz was so shocked that he couldn't speak.

Alger continued, "Gehrman Sparrow has also entered a state of slumber.

"After I leave, the Church's matters will be handed over to Elder Derrick Berg of the New City of Silver. You need to cooperate with him and write into the bible that the Sea God is Mr. Fool and get all believers to accept it.

"Our faith is key to Mr. Fool's awakening. You are 'His' Oracle, and you have to make an example in this aspect.

"Of course, 'He' will give you a new revelation at any time and give you other missions."

Danitz was a little dizzy and confused when he heard that, but he still understood the seriousness of the matter.

He hesitated for a moment before nodding heavily.

"Okay."

After settling the matter, Alger stood up and returned to his room with the Book of Calamity.

He looked at himself in the mirror and laughed. He slowly removed the papal tiara from his head and removed the silver-black mask on his face.

A few days later, at the crowded Bayam Harbor.

Alger raised his head and looked at Derrick, who was taller than him, and said with a smile, “You’ve been doing very well recently. The Church of the Sea God has been running smoothly.”

Derrick subconsciously wanted to raise his hand to scratch the back of his head, but he ultimately held back. He said with some melancholy and reluctance, “Mr. Hanged… Your Holiness Wilson, when will you return?”

Alger shook his head and said, “Everything ahead is still uncertain. No one can tell.”

Without waiting for Derrick Berg to respond, he said, “You’re already mature and reliable. I don’t have any advice for you.”

Having said that, Alger paused before saying, “If the Rorsted Archipelago encounters a disaster you cannot stop, don’t sacrifice yourself in order to protect it.”

“Ah?” Derrick was stunned.

This was the most important place of worship for Mr. Fool. It was the new home of the City of Silver, so how could he give up just like that?

Alger had already expected Derrick’s reaction and explained with a serious expression, “To Mr. Fool, the most important thing is the believers here, not these islands. To the City of Silver, the most important thing is the people, not the city.

“As long as you can protect Mr. Fool’s believers and protect the citizens of the City of Silver, migrating them away in time. Even if we lose Bayam, the New City of Silver, and the Rorsted Archipelago, we can rebuild a new city elsewhere and rebuild a new home.

“Remember, don’t lose sight of the forest for the trees.”

Derrick was deeply moved when he heard that. He grasped the crux of the problem.

He replied sincerely, “I understand. Thank you, Mr. Hanged… Your Holiness Wilson. I will protect Mr. Fool’s believers and the citizens well.”

Alger didn’t say a word as he turned around and walked towards the Blue Avenger that was moored at the dock.

The ghost ship was a three-masted sailboat that was still behind the present era era, no different from before.

Alger looked at it and looked at the crew members on the deck. He suddenly felt something and looked down at himself.

He was wearing a linen shirt, brown jacket, and trendy pantaloons. He had a custom-made belt around his waist. Attached to it were a dagger and a scepter made of bone.

The corners of Alger’s lips curled up as he took a step forward and landed on the deck of the Blue Avenger.

He then turned his head to look at the boundless blue sea, raised his right hand and said in a deep voice, “Set sail!”

†

Backlund, Empress Borough, inside the Hall family’s luxurious mansion.

Audrey sat on a comfortable sofa and watched her father, Earl Hall, her brothers, Hibbert and Alfred, discuss the recent developments of the kingdom. She watched as her mother Lady Caitlyn constantly convene the butler and footmen to make final preparations for the ball.

She didn't say a word. She wore a faint smile as she quietly observed this common scene in her daily life.

After some time, Earl Hall smiled and looked over.

"What is our little princess thinking about?"

Audrey pursed her lips and replied with a faint smile, "Guess."

"I'm guessing you're thinking about which dress you'll be wearing today, and what kind of hair and makeup you'll be matching it with," Hibbert said casually on behalf of his father.

Audrey smiled and said, "Correct, but there are no rewards."

She slowly stood up and said to her parents and brothers, "I'm going upstairs to change into my gown."

Earl Hall smiled and nodded.

"There's no hurry. Everyone believes that you're worth the wait."

Audrey bit her lower lip and maintained her smile as she walked towards the door.

When she was about to leave the room, she paused and looked back.

Her parents and her two brothers continued with their discussion or arrangements.

Audrey's gaze froze as she slowly retracted her gaze.

She walked out of the room and went upstairs to the bedroom.

Susie was already waiting there.

Audrey inhaled indiscernibly and raised her right hand. She used her index finger to draw lines of faint light.

They seemed to come from the deepest part of a dreamscape.

A few seconds later, the faint glow turned into a blonde, green-eyed, abnormally beautiful girl—Audrey Hall.

But unlike Audrey, this girl still carried a little childishness and a slight romantic bearing.

“Good evening, Miss Justice~” The girl greeted her cheerfully.

Audrey smiled and replied, “Good evening, Miss Audrey.”

After the last-minute Tarot Gathering, she finally made up her mind to advance to Dreamweaver and prepare to split an identity to accompany her family. She would stay away from them and not let the various dangerous matters she had attracted affect them.

After staring at her for two seconds, she turned to look at the golden retriever beside her and said, “Susie, are you sure you want to follow me?”

“Yes, we are friends forever,” Susie replied seriously.

Audrey didn’t say another word. She split off a Virtual Person and entered Susie’s Body of Heart and Mind which she opened up for Audrey.

Then, she raised her hand again and outlined another Susie in midair.

The moment Susie formed, she opened her mouth and let out a woof.

Audrey retracted her gaze and looked at herself.

After a moment of silence, although she knew that their thoughts and ideas were synced, she couldn’t help but say to the blonde girl in front of her, “I-I’ll leave it to you in the future.

“Remember to wheedle to Father often and get him to not be so busy. He’s not young anymore, so he needs to be mindful of his health. He can hand over many things to Hibbert and Alfred or the butlers.

“Also, slowly counsel Mother and tell her that she doesn’t have to pay too much attention to the opinions of others. She doesn’t have to maintain a perfect image at social events. It would be very tiring.

“Yes, don’t forget about Hibbert. Cheer him up often and don’t let him be so gloomy. He shouldn’t complicate matters too much from overthinking things. Alfred won’t threaten his position.

“Alfred, Alfred, he needs a good wife to stop him from taking any more risks…

“Oh, why are you crying? We’ve already grown up. We can’t be little girls anymore.”

[image]

Audrey lowered her eyes slightly and smiled at her crying self.

“I know, I know.” After Audrey said that, she pursed her lips tightly and nodded heavily with a sad expression.

Audrey retracted her gaze, picked up her cloak, and draped it over her.

Then, she led Susie out of the bedroom and into the corridor.

The hall below was lit with lights, and the guests came one after another to attend the ball. Lord Hall, Lady Caitlyn, Hibbert, and Alfred were already at the door.

Audrey stood behind the railing and watched silently for a while.

She then lifted the ends of her skirt and slowly and solemnly bowed to her parents and brother from a distance away.

After maintaining such a posture for two seconds, she straightened her body and raised the hood from her dark blue cloak to cover her face.

To her side, behind her, there were bright lights and a bustling din. In front of her, many dark lights formed a sea of collective subconscious.

“Let’s go,” Audrey said hoarsely to Susie.

With that said, she walked into the dark illusory sea.

Audrey rushed out from the bedroom and cried out with a sobbing tone, “You must come back!”

Audrey didn’t turn back. She raised her right hand and waved it, indicating that she understood.

The figure wearing a blue cloak gradually disappeared into the distance amidst the deep, silent darkness.

Chapter 1394 - A New Journey

◆ ◆ ◆

In a room of an abandoned castle, sunlight shone through the gaps in the thick curtains, illuminating a pitch-black coffin.

Suddenly, the lid of the coffin creaked and slowly moved to the side.

With a thud, it fell to the ground.

A few seconds later, Azik Eggers sat up, looking rather lost.

At that moment, he was wearing loose pajamas that had been popular in Loen years ago. He resembled a noble who had woken up in his manor.

After a while, Azik narrowed his eyes slightly. He looked around in confusion as though he didn't know who he was.

He then saw the brilliant sunlight that penetrated through the cracks and saw the dust dancing in the sunlight. He saw letters scattered on the table, ground, and coffin lid around him.

They were like giant snowflakes that blanketed half the area.

Azik got out of the coffin. With a puzzled expression, he bent down to pick up a letter and began reading.

As he read, the confusion on his face disappeared a little, as if he had remembered many things from the past.

Azik immediately found a chair and sat down, allowing all the letters to fly in front of him to stack up like a mountain.

[image]

He opened the letters one by one, reading them one after another. There would be pauses in between as he fell deep in thought as if he was seriously recalling something.

The sunlight that passed through the gap in the curtains gradually dimmed. After a long time, it shone inside again.

At that moment, Azik finally finished reading all the letters and completed the long contemplations that resembled Cogitation.

"He" looked at the letters that had been stacked on the table and slowly let out a long sigh.

Following that, he took out a piece of paper, a fountain pen, and some ink that he could still use. He wrote with a warm expression:

"…I've already woken up and received all your letters. They made me recall who I am and who you are. I also remember many memories of the past.

"Your experiences, no matter how complicated and exciting, have exceeded my imagination. It also makes me understand some of the problems that previously plagued me.

"I can feel your joy, your exhaustion, your faith in life, and the heavy responsibility that you have borne from your letters.

"I can roughly guess why you ultimately made that choice. If it were me, I might not even be able to make such a decision.

"From the beginning, you've been a guardian. You mimicked others until you were mimicked by others.

"Next, I will begin a journey to pursue the past and witness the changes in this world.

“You seem to still be asleep, but it doesn’t matter. I’ll write to tell you about the interesting things that I’ve encountered, the interesting traditions, and interesting people.

“I think I should be able to send these letters to you via sacrifice…”

The tip of the golden pen reflected the sunlight as it rustled on the white piece of paper, continuously penning down more content.

†

Backlund, in a solarium of a terrace house.

Melissa walked in with a girl who was clearly less than ten years old.

“Aunt Melissa, why here?” the little girl asked, puzzled. “All the stories I heard had mysterious rituals held in the basement.”

With her hair tied up, the bespectacled Melissa smiled and said, “Those are unconventional mysticism rituals.”

She pointed at the altar that had been set up and the unlit candles and said, “You may begin.”

“Really?” The little girl tilted her head to look at the bright sunshine outside the window. “Do we need to draw the curtains?”

“There’s no need. It’s pretty good this way.” After Melissa answered, she smiled at the little girl while she awkwardly mimicked her usual method of holding rituals in a clumsy and unfamiliar manner.

During this process, she would instruct her from time to time and even personally help her to complete the pre-ritual preparations.

“Alright, repeat after me.” Melissa took a deep breath as her expression gradually turned staid.

“Yes, yes.” The little girl tried her best to appear stern.

Melissa looked at the candle flames on the altar for a few seconds before slowly reciting in ancient Hermes, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…”

“Da Pool that dun pelong to diz ela…” The little girl had never learned ancient Hermes before. Although she tried her best to imitate her aunt, she still didn’t know what she was saying.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog…” Melissa continued reciting.

“Da Mesterwes luler apove the gway pog…” the little girl recited in all seriousness.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…” After Melissa finished reciting, the candle at the end didn’t wait for the little girl to imitate her. It immediately burgeoned to the size of a human head.

In the large flame, a slippery tentacle with a somewhat sinister pattern extended out in an indiscernible manner. It was extremely slow.

The little girl was stunned. She retreated and hid behind her aunt.

Melissa pursed her lips and said with a gentle smile, “Don’t be afraid, go greet him.”

The little girl timidly poked her head out from behind her aunt and saw the terrifying, slimy tentacle gently swaying in the brilliant sunlight that shone through the windows. It seemed to be attempting to swat away the dust or was waving at her.

“Go ahead, don’t be afraid,” Melissa repeated.

The little girl finally mustered her courage and stood in front of the altar.

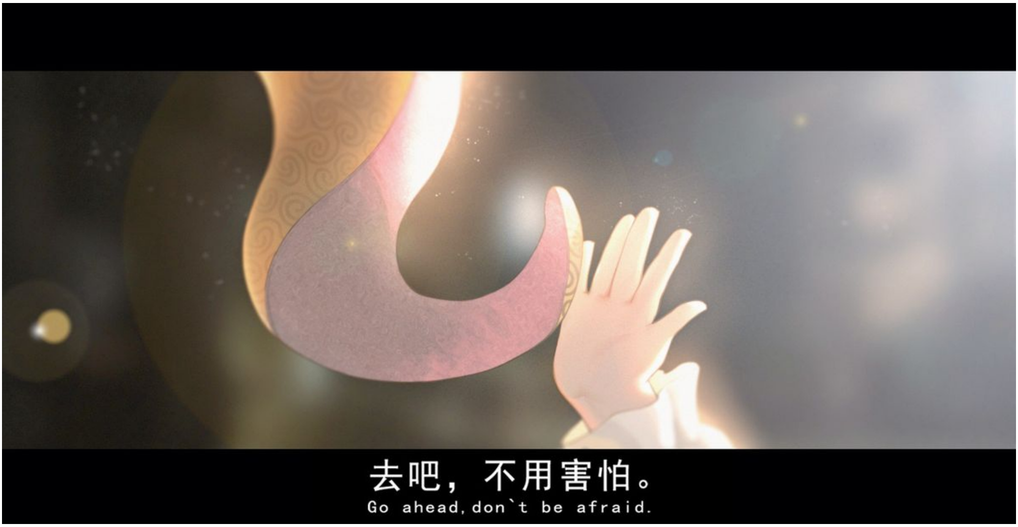
She recited the incantations she had just invented before revealing a sincere smile and raised her palm.

The slippery tentacle whose patterns had disappeared paused for a few seconds. It seemed hesitant and somewhat out of practice.

[image]

Then, it raised its head and curled up slightly, lowering itself inch by inch.

Amidst the sunlight, it high-fived that tiny palm.


去吧，不用害怕。
Go ahead, don`t be afraid.

◆

Lord of the Mysteries

-THE END-

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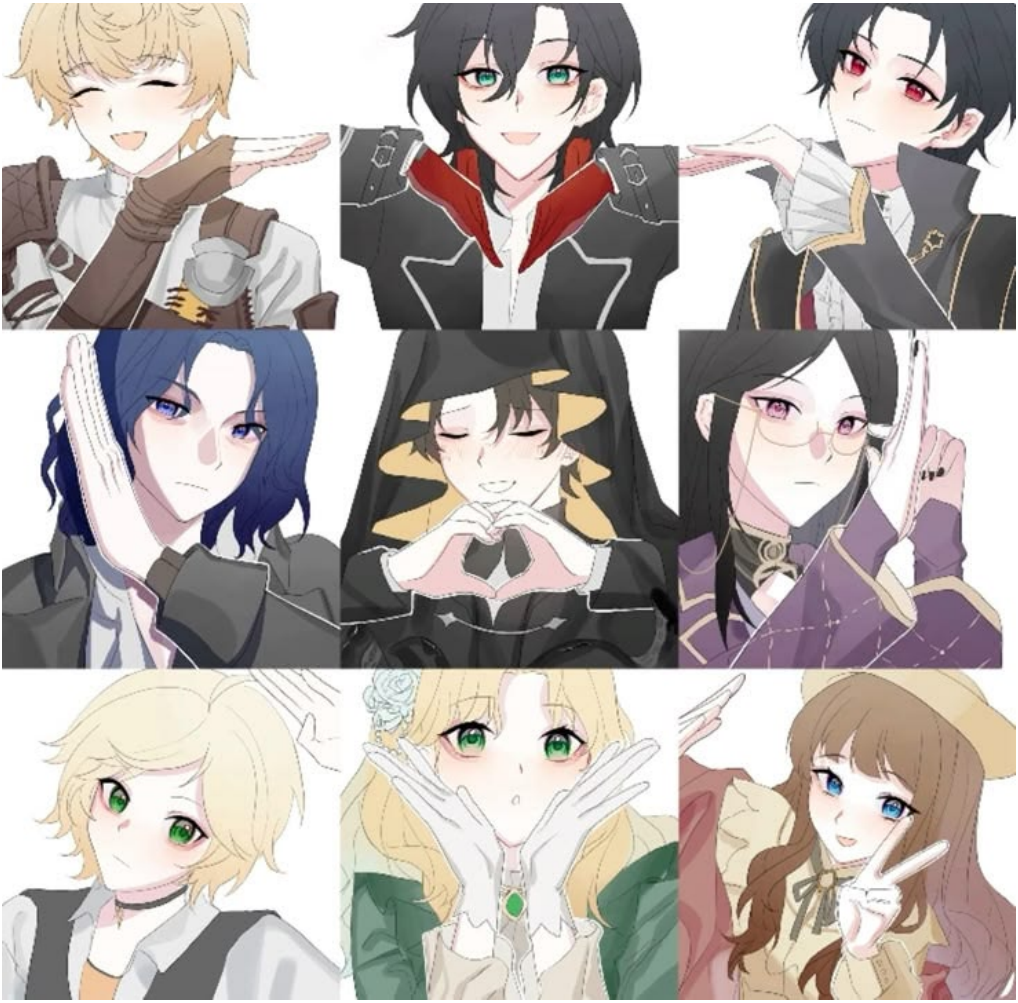

[image]

Chapter 1395 - An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (1/8)

◆ ◆ ◆

“You have a chance to meet His Holiness.”

Barton heard a man in a dark-blue bishop robe say to him.

No matter how hard he tried, the other man’s face was indiscernible. It felt like his face was covered with a gray, blurry gas.

Of course, this wasn’t an important matter. As a devout believer of the Lord, it was definitely the greatest honor for Barton to meet a proxy of “Him.”

This made him so excited that he couldn’t say a word. His body trembled as he followed the bishop to the back, entering the hall one step at a time.

Barton couldn’t describe the hall in detail either. He only knew that it was very grand and magnificent, one that exuded an immense pressure. He could only bow his head obediently.

Finally, he arrived in front of the steps.

At that moment, he seemed to receive permission as he subconsciously raised his head.

Then, he saw a golden retriever.

This dog wore a deep blue, gorgeous robe that resembled a curtain. It wore a papal tiara with many gems embedded in it. It sat on a huge throne and watched him quietly.

"…" Barton was stunned.

This, this is the Pontiff? Barton was shocked and panicked, a strong sense of fear rising in his heart.

He opened his eyes abruptly and saw the morning light illuminating the ceiling.

Phew… Barton sat up, panting slightly, trying to extricate himself from the influences of the dream as quickly as possible.

"What happened?" His wife sensed something amiss and got up.

Barton shook his head.

"A nightmare."

He didn't tell his wife the truth—he dreamed that the pontiff was a golden retriever.

He could bet that his wife would say in horror, "How can you have such sacrilegious thoughts?"

If that were to happen, he could only shrug his shoulders and say, "Just kidding."

I can't bring my troubles into my family life. This is a paradise for humans, meant for relaxing… Moreover, women can hardly understand more profound questions. They have traits in being perceptive to thoughts, and love… Barton didn't dwell on the contents of his dream anymore. He got out of bed and went to the bathroom to brush his teeth.

After breakfast, he kissed his wife and children before leaving his residence and taking a trackless public carriage to the working district at the edge of the city.

He was under the employment of the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation with a sizable salary. In places like the capital of East Chester County, Stoen City, he was considered to be upper-middle class.

On the way, Barton studied the streets outside out of boredom.

Due to not being directly affected by the war, Stoen City still retained its former prosperity. Carriages, bicycles, pedestrians, and wild dogs came and went; it was lively and noisy.

Barton was already used to such a scene. He didn't have much of an impression of it, but the dream from last night made him uncomfortable every time he saw a dog on the street. It was as if it was the incarnation of the pontiff, one that he needed to bow to and greet.

"Holy Lord of Storms, please forgive your penitent servant." Barton raised his right hand, clenched his fist, and gently struck his left chest.

After a while, he arrived at the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation. As he greeted his colleagues, he walked into his office.

After hanging up his hat and coat, Barton relaxed and leisurely prepared some special black tea for himself—he was almost middle-aged, and his energy was dropping. He always hoped to use a simpler method to supplement his body without suffering any hardship.

After preparing the black tea, Barton picked up a few newspapers on the desk and wanted to prep himself before starting work.

The economic situation in Backlund last season has greatly improved…

Another pirate at the level of King has appeared in the Sonia Sea and the Berserk Sea, Queen of Stars…

Desi Bay Fruits Trade Fair…

After reading the newspaper slowly, Barton took a sip of black tea and started his work.

A letter from Vernal? Barton found a letter from an old friend as he examined the documents on his table.

He was an archaeologist who had a close relationship with the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation.

Barton immediately took out a letter cutter, took out the letter, and read it seriously.

“My dear friend,

“My students and I found some interesting ruins in the mountains of Sivellaus County. Perhaps they originated from refugees from the Fourth Epoch…

“In that period of history that we don’t know much about, they left the city for reasons unbeknown to us. They entered the forests, and stopped interacting with the outside world again. They existed in the form of a tribe…

“They might still be guarding something, but it has long been drowned out by time, leaving behind only ruins and corpses…

“My students and I will excavate this place while employing conservation practices. We hope to find something more useful that can help us restore the history of the Fourth Epoch. I wonder if your foundation is interested in this.

“…Here, I solemnly invite you to send a team over to confirm if our work is real and effective…”

Going into the mountains… The first thing that surfaced in Barton’s mind was not the relics or the history, but the buzzing mosquitoes, the humid, dark environment, and the camp that became a temptation to the wild beasts.

He shook his head and picked up a pen and paper. He prepared to file this letter and send it to his superiors.

Chapter 1396 - An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (2/8)

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After drafting the document's header, Barton was preparing to add some details into the document when he realized that Vernal hadn't submitted any supporting information.

Does he think that he can apply for funding with just a letter by simply relying on his relationship with the foundation? Barton looked around the table and muttered to himself in puzzlement.

In his opinion, Vernal wasn't an arrogant archaeologist. Apart from being feisty and impatient, he was considered a typical Loen gentleman in all other aspects.

Under normal circumstances, when one requested funding from the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation, they had to provide a lot of information, such as photos, ancient supplementary documents, and other related information other than a cover letter that described the project. Otherwise, the foundation wouldn't be able to do a review and make a decision, much less spend large amounts of gold pounds to send a team to the project location for inspection.

Or rather, could it be that Vernal Fnarr was just too careless and forgot to send the information out as well? Of course, with the relationship between Vernal and the foundation, it's entirely possible the upper management will send a person or two to arrange a meeting to verify the information when they see it… Yes, as a friend, I should still help him… Barton shook his head and didn't think further. He stood up and walked to the bookshelf.

He then stretched out his right palm and used his fingers to stroke the back of a book spine, selecting the information he needed.

Finally, he took out a few books and journals, and combined his various viewpoints to give a detailed description of the history of the Sivellaus mountain range in the document he was about to submit.

“In the scientific community, there’s a common viewpoint:

“In a period that’s unknown to be long or short, the Solomon Empire and the Tudor Dynasty coexisted in the Northern Continent, and their border could very likely be situated where the Hornacis mountain range and the Feynapotter Highlands are today.

“There’s a high chance that the Hornacis mountain range’s extension in Sivellaus County was a contested ground between both parties…”

Barton didn’t endorse Vernal. He only provided references to show that there were indeed possible ruins of the Fourth Epoch in the mountains of Sivellaus County.

This way, if it was proven that Vernal was lying, no one would hold him responsible, because all of the descriptions came from famous historians. Barton had only extracted snippets in a selective fashion.

At the end of the document, he listed out his references:

“…‘Private Historical Research of Sivellaus County’, Azik Eggers, Khoy University’s Department of History lecturer…”

After completing this document, Barton read through it from top to bottom and modified his choice of words and certain sentences.

Then, he took the draft and entered the clerk’s room next door. He asked them to type up a formal document with mechanical typewriters.

The Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation had always hired plenty of female employees. From the lowest level of ordinary clerks to the deputy director of the upper echelons, at least half of them were female.

Barton actually had some things to say about this, but he didn't, nor did he dare to object. He could only choose to accept the state of things.

Of course, he had to admit that when he needed to wait, it was quite nice watching these young female clerks busying themselves.

At least it enriches the colors here… As Barton listened to the tapping sounds, he mumbled silently.

Once the documents were done, he signed and submitted them. Then, just like before, he continued with his work as usual.

This included but wasn't limited to the trial projects, providing professional opinions and gathering research materials for the foundation's papers and commentary.

A day quickly passed, and Barton left the company at six in the evening. He took a public carriage and returned home after an hour.

This was a common occurrence in all the major cities in Loen. That was why high tea became a trend—after lunchtime from 12 to 1, it would be half-past seven or eight in the evening before people reached home. If not for high tea sessions, most people would definitely be abnormally hungry.

Of course, this was only limited to the middle-class and above. Many poor people might only eat two meals a day. Moreover, couples with the conditions to work would both be working. They would have to prepare dinner after returning home at around eight in the evening. And the food wasn't for their enjoyment.

"Vernal came to visit you in the afternoon," Barton's wife said casually as she helped him take off his coat and hat.

"Vernal?" Barton was taken aback momentarily.

The archaeologist who discovered a Fourth Epoch ruins in Sivellaus County had returned to East Chester County?

As soon as he said that, Barton frowned and muttered to himself, He really did forget to send the information, so he came back personally?

No, there's no need to go through so much trouble. The Royal Mail is rather reliable.

Besides, he should know that I'll definitely be at the foundation if it's not a weekend. Yes, I might've been sent elsewhere for an inspection review…

With this in mind, Barton asked, "Where is he?"

"He only waited in your study for fifteen minutes before he left," Barton's wife said.

Barton pressed, "Did he say which hotel he's living in? When will he come again?"

The archaeologist, Vernal, was from East Chester County, but he wasn't a Stoen resident. He didn't have a place here.

"He didn't say. He seemed to be in a hurry." Barton's wife paused for a moment before continuing, "He looked very impatient."

Barton touched his receding hairline and nodded gently.

"I'll be in the study."

His study was on the second floor, and there were many bookshelves and some porcelain placed there. He wasn't too passionate about porcelain, but he actively searched for unique items.

After some searching, Barton didn't find any note or letter left behind by Vernal.

He quickly threw the matter to the back of his mind.

This was his usual rule—he tried not to be troubled by work once he got home.

After dinner, he shared a beautiful time with his wife and children, then quickly washed up and went to bed.

In the dead of night, he suddenly woke up and opened his eyes.

Ever since the danger he encountered during an archaeological excavation ten years ago, Barton had gained a sense of awareness—spiritual perception—that exceeded what ordinary people had. He could always sense some movements that others couldn't detect. For example, others might realize that someone was looking for them when visitors arrived at the door, but Barton could sense whether the other party was related to him once they walked down the corridor.

Someone sneaked in… Barton suddenly sat up, his eyes wide open.

He looked at his wife who was sleeping soundly beside him and didn't wake her up. With very slight movements, he flipped out of bed and removed the double-barreled hunting rifle hanging on the wall.

After grabbing the rifle, he gently opened the door and looked down the corridor.

This place was shrouded in the darkness of the night, and a faint crimson glow outlined certain objects.

Barton didn't hesitate. He entered the corridor and scanned the area.

However, he didn't find the burglar.

Was I mistaken? Barton turned around, feeling a lack of confidence.

There was no sign of any of the rooms on the second floor being opened.

After thinking for a while, Barton came to the door of the study, grabbed the handle, and gently twisted it.

The door opened silently. Everything inside was immersed in the darkness, resembling all kinds of monsters.

After drawing the curtains, Barton carefully examined the interior with the aid of the moonlight, and he confirmed that the interior was exactly the same as he remembered.

I really am too sensitive… An aftereffect of the nightmare yesterday? Barton exhaled and left the study quickly.

Behind him, the curtains that were drawn lightly swayed, as if a gust of wind was blowing.

The next day, Barton continued his daily routine.

He kissed his wife and children, took a rental carriage, read newspapers, brewed black tea, read letters…

Eh, there’s another letter from Vernal. Barton felt relieved and opened the letter.

However, there was nothing in the letter. The sender seemed to have forgotten to stuff the letter into the envelope.

Has Vernal been suffering from absentmindedness recently? Barton glanced at the envelope in his hand and suddenly realized that the pattern on it was a little strange.

This was an envelope with a commemorative sense.

According to what Barton knew, many high-end hotels in Backlund and Stoen City would provide special envelopes and paper to their guests. It was equivalent to a tourist souvenir.

Which hotel is this? Barton put the envelope to his nose and prepared to smell the fragrance on it. It was also unique and recognizable.

In the next second, he smelled a faint scent of blood.

Chapter 1397 - An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (3/8)

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Instantly, Barton's hair stood on end.

Although he couldn't be sure that he smelled blood, his spiritual perception told him that this was the smell of blood.

Vernal encountered some misfortune? Just like the archaeological team that I was in back then? No, there's no blood on the envelope. How can it emit the smell of blood? After a brief, extreme fright, Barton stood up immediately.

As an ordinary person, he had only one reaction when facing such a situation.

That was to call the police!

As Barton took the envelope and left his seat, he suddenly remembered something.

There were clear rules of how to deal with such situations within the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation. If a project were to produce a phenomenon that was terrifying or incomprehensible, employees were to immediately halt everything and report to the Compliance Department. They would be responsible for the follow-up.

Barton didn't understand why he needed to go to the Compliance Department. From what he knew, this was a department that handled provisions and audit projections for any violations of the rules. It had nothing to do with handling unknown dangers.

However, the founder of the foundation, Miss Audrey Hall, didn't make many changes during the internal auditing of the departments. She only added this one clause. Therefore, the higher-ups didn't wish to argue with her over this.

And obviously I'd prefer to meet the head of security… Barton muttered as he walked out of his office, heading straight for the Compliance Department at the end of the corridor.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He tried his best to compose himself and knocked on the door three times in a gentlemanly manner.

"Come on in." A voice without any uniqueness came from inside.

To be frank, Barton didn't know much about his colleagues at the Compliance Department. He only knew that they were cold and heartless. They acted quickly and easily caught any parasites within the foundation who tried to cheat the foundation for funding.

Taking a deep breath, Barton turned the doorknob and pushed open the door.

In his mind, the Compliance Department likely worked in an abnormally dark environment. Everyone maintained their silence and exchanged a few words from time to time, deciding the fate of a project and its principal investigator. However, the first thing that entered his eyes was bright sunlight, colorful decorations, and an open and bright setting.

"What's the matter?" A black-haired, brown-eyed employee with no special features from the Compliance Department greeted him.

He was wearing a thick black coat, which didn't seem to be able to withstand the cold winter weather in East Chester.

In addition, Barton sensed that the voice of this Compliance

Department employee had a Backlund accent to it. Either he was born there, or he had stayed there for quite some time.

He isn't cold, mechanical, and difficult to get along with. He even feels friendly… As such thoughts flashed through Barton's mind, he said hurriedly, "A partner of ours seems to have encountered a situation!

"The letter he sent only consisted of an envelope. There's no content inside, and there's the smell of blood coming from it."

The employee from the Compliance Department didn't show any change in expression. He nodded and said, "Show me the envelope."

Barton passed Archaeologist Vernal's "letter."

Only then did he realize that he was being rude. He hurriedly asked, "I'm sorry; how should I address you?"

The employee from the Compliance Department raised the envelope and carefully looked at it against the sunlight. He then casually replied, "Pacheco Dwayne, deputy director of the Compliance Department, an experienced solicitor. Just call me Pacheco."

Without waiting for Barton's reply, Pacheco lowered his arm and said with a serious expression, "Indeed, there are some abnormalities.

"A preliminary conclusion is that this letter is from the Clough Hotel in the city. I once lived there for some time, and I know that they like to emboss Lavender Castle on their envelopes and paper."

"Do we need to call the police?" Barton blurted out.

Pacheco shook his head.

"Not for now. Let's go to the venue to confirm the situation.

"This requires your assistance. I don't know that partner."

"…Alright. I'll go with you." Barton hesitated.

After exiting the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation and boarding a rental carriage, Barton found the silence rather awkward. He took the initiative to ask, “Pacheco, you’re from Backlund?”

“No.” Pacheco shook his head. “I’m from Midseashire. I just happen to have lived in Backlund for nearly fifteen years.”

“Why did you leave Backlund? I heard that it’s the city most suitable for lawyers to develop their career,” Barton said casually.

Pacheco smiled and said, “But it’s also a place full of competition.

“Alright, I was just joking. I was once a personal lawyer and partner of Framis Cage, a steam car mogul. Later, he invested in the Backlund Bike Company, and I began to work as the company’s legal advisor.”

Barton was suddenly enlightened.

“Miss Audrey has a large number of shares in that company. Did you get to know her because of that?”

“That’s right.” Pacheco sighed. “In the war, Framis unfortunately passed away. His estate fell into dispute. As his friend, I helped his widow and children obtain quite a large share. As a result, I offended some people. This made my situation in Backlund become difficult. Fortunately, Miss Audrey extended an olive branch to me and invited me to East Chester County to work at the foundation as deputy director of the Compliance Department.”

With Pacheco telling him such matters, Barton felt a closer bond with him.

He was slightly puzzled and asked, “Why did they target you? You were just carrying out your duty as a friend and a lawyer.

“Those people should aim at the widow and children of Framis Cage.”

Pacheco laughed self-deprecatingly and said, “I used some inappropriate methods.

“Also, Framis has other friends to take care of his widow and children.”

As they chatted, the rental carriage arrived at the Clough Hotel in Stoen City.

The location of the hotel was rather good. The street was beautiful and quiet, and they only needed to walk for ten minutes to reach the most bustling streets in the city.

After entering the hotel and finding the boss, Pacheco asked directly, “We’ve come to find a friend named Vernal.”

Through their casual conversation, he had already grasped the general situation of the target.

The boss frowned in puzzlement.

“If I remember correctly, there shouldn’t be any customer here named Vernal.”

Barton quickly added, “He’s a little taller than me, and he looks very well-built. His nose is always very red, and his body often reeks of alcohol…”

He described the characteristics of Vernal in detail.

The boss recalled and looked at the attendant beside him.

“There’s a guest like that,” the attendant replied immediately. “He lives in Room 309.”

Under the attendant’s lead, Barton and Pacheco arrived outside the room and knocked on the door.

The knocking echoed, but there was no movement inside.

Just as Barton was about to suggest calling the police again, Pacheco suddenly bent down and picked up a white, soft tuft of hair from the crack at the bottom of the door.

No, it wasn't hair. It resembled the condensation of fog.

With Pacheco's fingers touching it, it spread out and merged into the air.

At the same time, Barton, whose spiritual perception was slightly different from ordinary people, vaguely heard a faint male voice:

"Tamara… Tamara…"

Chapter 1398 - An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (4/8)

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Tamara… Barton ruminated over the name and wondered what it meant.

He was no longer the same person who realized that he could hear sounds that others couldn't. He didn't look around in panic, hoping to find someone who was hiding and speaking in a dark corner. There were no signs of him constantly being prepared to grab a wooden pole and rushing over to strike the person. He stood on the spot calmly, observing the reaction of the deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco.

Pacheco glanced at him and said, "Have you done any research in the history of the Fourth Epoch?"

"A little," Barton replied modestly.

At this moment, he didn't pretend that he didn't know anything about the history of the Fourth Epoch. Firstly, his character didn't allow for that. Secondly, his position was a direct result of his academic background in history. If he had any major flaws in this field, he might be fired by the foundation tomorrow.

Pacheco looked at the door and said, "Have you heard of the name Tamara before?"

"I've heard of it." Barton instinctively turned his head to glance at Pacheco. "In the little-known history of the Fourth Epoch, the name

‘Tamara’ has appeared several times, and its frequency is only second to Tudor, Solomon, and Trunsoest. From this, it can be determined that this represents a great noble of some empire in the Fourth Epoch.”

After saying this, Barton paused and said, “Vernal recently discovered some ruins from the Fourth Epoch.”

As the hotel waiter was by his side, he didn’t directly mention that the name “Tamara” might have something to do with the current abnormality Vernal was facing.

Pacheco didn’t respond. He turned to the hotel attendant and said, “I’m a police officer in charge of a criminal investigation. I suspect that the tenant in this room has encountered some misfortune. Please open the door immediately.”

As he spoke, he took out an identification document and showed it to the other party.

The hotel attendant was shocked and looked at the identification carefully.

“Okay, okay. I’ll get the keys!”

As he spoke, he turned around and ran towards the staircase.

“You’re a policeman?” Barton, who was watching from the sidelines, blurted out in shock.

Pacheco looked down at the identification in his hand and chuckled.

“This document is 100% real. It was obtained through legal channels.”

Why do you need to make it sound so complicated… Barton habitually replied, “I don’t care about its authenticity. I just want to know if you’re a police officer.”

Pacheco laughed.

"That depends on how you view it."

This answer left Barton rather irritated, but as a typical Loen gentleman, he knew that the other party was unwilling to give him an answer directly, so he politely shut his mouth.

Of course, one of the reasons included the other party being one of the deputy directors of the Compliance Department.

The two of them remained silent as the hotel owner and the attendant returned to the third floor.

After carefully inspecting the identification document in Pacheco's hands and matching it to the face, the hotel owner took out his keys and opened the door. He grumbled, "How did something happen? Nothing was heard."

If a high-end hotel was involved in a murder case, it would definitely affect their image and reputation. They might even go bankrupt.

"Don't worry too much. Perhaps it's just a small problem." Pacheco gave him some friendly consolation.

"I hope so. May the Goddess bless me." The hotel owner retracted his hand and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion, outlining the stars.

Then, he gently pushed the door open.

At that moment, the interior of the room seemed to connect to the outside world. A faint smell of blood filled the air.

"Oh…" The hotel owner noticed this and could only use an exclamation to express his disappointment and fear.

Only an environment like this can make the envelope not stained with blood have the smell of blood… This thought flashed through Barton's mind immediately.

It was only then that he noticed that the furniture was neatly arranged in the room, and there were no obvious wrinkles on the carpet. It stood in contrast with the smell of blood.

It didn't seem like there was a fight… A fatal shot? Barton's hobbies included reading popular novels, especially those that mixed murder and love. Therefore, he had a rather rich "experience" in such situations.

And among all the best-selling authors, the one he loved the most was undoubtedly Fors Wall.

In the beginning, the one who bought Fors Wall's few novels was his wife. Barton had once read through one of them and ended up being engrossed in it.

Of course, he wouldn't reveal this in front of his wife. He would always use an authoritative tone, saying, "These kinds of novels are shallow and worthless. They're only suitable for killing time."

Amidst Barton's thoughts, Pacheco put on a pair of white gloves and walked into the room.

After surveying the area, this experienced solicitor walked to the desk and picked up the stack of letters with the Lavender Castle pattern embossed on it. He said to the hotel owner and waiter, "Do you know how many pieces there were originally?"

"W-we d-don't replenish them e-every day." The attendant looked at his boss and stuttered.

What he was trying to say was that after having the guests living in this room rotate out a few times, he had no idea how many letters were left when Vernal moved in.

Pacheco scoffed and shook his head. He said to Barton, who was standing beside him, "That's why this world needs order and rules.

"If they used a set of strict rules, replenishing the number of letters to a set number every time a customer checks out, we could've used this to find some clues."

"I don't understand what you mean," Barton answered truthfully.

Pacheco smiled and said, "Simply put, only light can cause shadows.

"Of course, enough chaos also means an opportunity."

Barton nodded and said, "Yes, Emperor Roselle once said that chaos is a staircase that leads one up."

"No one knows if he's the one who said that. There are too many people in this world who don't dare to directly express their views, so they can only rely on the names of others," Pacheco casually replied.

Then, he picked up the blank piece of paper at the top and held it against the sunlight that passed through the glass windows.

"I love dealing with people who are careless." Pacheco suddenly laughed.

After saying this, he put the letter back in its original position.

The next second, he took out a sharpened pencil from his pocket and lightly scribbled it over the letter paper.

Before long, the traces of Loenese text appeared one after another, forming several scattered sentences:

"…I've been targeted…

"…The ruins have traces of some religious rituals…

"…I took away the items on the altar…

"…It… It saw me!

"…No! It's always been by my side!"

When he wrote these few sentences, the archaeologist, Vernal, seemed to be undergoing upheavals in his mood, so he had used plenty of force, leaving the most obvious of traces with his pen.

Chapter 1399 - An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (5/8)

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After seeing the marks on the paper, Pacheco turned his head and said to Barton, “What happens next will be quite complicated. I will seek the police’s help.

“And you can return to the foundation and wait for further questioning.”

Barton, who was staring at the paper, wasn’t disappointed. Instead, he felt relieved, and he hurriedly nodded.

“Alright.”

After reading the traces left behind by Vernal, Barton’s intuition told him that the matter was very dangerous.

As an ordinary person, avoiding danger was an instinctive choice.

Of course, this was also because Vernal could only be considered one of his ordinary friends. It wasn’t worth taking a huge risk and getting involved in this matter.

After answering, Barton turned around immediately and walked past the hotel owner and attendant and arrived at the street.

This time, he didn’t choose to take public transport and instead boarded a rental carriage.

Barton’s trip outside was considered as a special matter. It was rather urgent, and with the deputy director of the Compliance Department to testify for him, he could make a claim for the expenses incurred.

The difference between spending the foundation's money and using one's own salary was two completely different feelings.

On the way, Barton looked at the scenery outside the window and couldn't help but think about Vernal's current situation.

Is he still alive?

The room was filled with a strong stench of blood…

I hope he's still alive. May the Lord bless him.

If he's still alive, where will he be now?

Where…

Could it be?

There!

As his thoughts raced, Barton suddenly thought of a possibility. He quickly instructed the coach driver to change routes and head home.

Not long after, he returned home.

"What happened?" Barton's wife approached him with a surprised look.

It was still quite some time before lunch, let alone getting off work.

Barton didn't take off his hat or jacket. Without answering her question, he directly asked, "Was Vernal here?"

"He came to visit you fifteen minutes ago. I told him to wait in the study room and send Wells to the foundation to look for you," Barton's wife replied honestly.

Wells was their family's valet. And clearly, fifteen minutes wasn't enough for him to reach the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation.

This was what puzzled Barton's wife the most.

"Right." Barton nodded heavily. He hurriedly passed through the living room, went up to the second floor, and entered the study.

In the study room, the windows were wide open and the curtains were slightly rolled. There was no one there.

"Vernal?" Barton shouted, but there was no answer.

He jumped out of the window and left… Barton frowned. He looked around seriously and discovered that the books on the bookshelf were in a mess.

It was a set of historical books that were split into three-parter volumes.

Barton's habit was to arrange them from right to left, and now it was going from left to right.

He took a deep breath and quickly walked over to retrieve the three books.

After a thorough examination, Barton found that a page in the middle had been folded.

He quickly flipped to that page and opened a corner.

Scribbled there simply with a pencil were the words:

"The refugees of the Fourth Epoch worshiped an evil god."

Man… Barton panicked and turned horrified. He stuffed the book back.

Without much thought, he ran out of the study and towards the stairs, preparing to find the deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco. He wanted to tell him about his discovery and get him to request the police to protect his family.

After exiting the house, Barton slowed down and considered an important question:

Where do I go to find Pacheco?

The Clough Hotel, the Stoen police headquarters, or the foundation?

After a brief moment of thought, Barton decided to return to the foundation and look for other employees of the Compliance Department.

At that moment, a rental carriage stopped outside his door as Pacheco Dwayne alighted.

“We discovered that Vernal came to your house again,” the deputy director of the Compliance Department explained quickly.

Barton heaved a sigh of relief and replied without hesitation, “Yes, but he has already left.

“However, he left some clues behind.”

After saying this, Barton led Pacheco into his own house, went to his study, and handed him the book.

Pacheco looked at it for a while, then gently slid his finger across the surface of the text.

Right on the heels of that, he took out the pencil he had used previously and wrote beside Vernal’s comment.

“Call the police!”

After doing all of this, Pacheco stuffed the book back to its original position.

However, he didn't push the book in completely.

This way, the entire row of books had one book bulging out.

"Alright, let's return to the foundation and have lunch. We'll wait for the good news from the police." Pacheco clapped his hands.

Barton didn't understand the reason behind this senior lawyer's actions, but he didn't ask why.

He really didn't want to get involved in this matter. He felt that he couldn't bear it at all.

Barton then fabricated a few reasons to his wife before returning to the foundation with Pacheco to begin his daily work.

When it was tea time, he had just finished an ancient book's appraisal when he heard someone knocking on the door.

"We've got some clues. We need to go to your place," said Pacheco, who was wrapped in a gray scarf and standing by the door.

"Clues?" Barton rose in surprise.

Pacheco didn't give a direct answer. He spread out his hands and made an inviting gesture.

Barton couldn't refuse and went home with the other party.

"Vernal came again!" His wife clearly sensed that something was amiss and went to the door in horror.

"It's fine. Just some minor problems." Barton maintained his image as a man and consoled his wife.

When he arrived at the study, he and Pacheco discovered that, yet again, Vernal had escaped.

"Damn it, can't he just wait for a while?" Barton couldn't help but grumble.

“It’s alright.” Pacheco walked up to the bookshelf and pulled out the book.

Clearly, Vernal had read his suggestion, as the book was completely stuffed into the bookshelf.

“I guess I know where Vernal is.” Pacheco closed his eyes, smiling.

Barton was stunned.

“How do you know?”

Pacheco opened his eyes and replied with a smile, “He accepted my bribe—no, a gift. But that isn’t right either. The most accurate description should be a suggestion.

“Of course, he might not accept it.”

With that said, the deputy director of the Compliance Department walked past Barton and out of the study.

Barton followed behind him subconsciously, leaving his own borough and turning into a nearby street.

At the end of the street, there was a house that had collapsed due to a fire.

“They actually haven’t started reconstruction efforts,” Barton whispered.

Pacheco put on a pair of white gloves again, and his expression became a little stern.

Through the rather intact main door, he entered the half-collapsed hall.

Black pieces of wood were strewn across the ground, blocking the lower half of a person’s body.

The figure was wearing a brown jacket with a red nose. He looked very stocky and was none other than the archaeologist, Vernal.

Barton secretly exhaled and asked anxiously, “Why didn’t you call the police?”

“They’re monitoring the police station,” Vernal replied without a change in expression.

Barton blurted out, “Why didn’t you leave Stoen and go to other cities to report to the police?”

“They’re monitoring the steam locomotive station,” Vernal replied in the same tone.

Barton thought for a moment and frowned.

“You have many ways to leave Stoen. They can’t seal off a city.”

Upon hearing this question, Vernal’s expression gradually changed as he said with a slightly ethereal tone, “I sensed the will of that great existence…”

Chapter 1400 - An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (6/8)

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Great existence… As soon as Barton heard Vernal, certain memories hidden deep within his heart surged out.

This made it difficult for him to contain his fear. His feet unconsciously took a few steps back.

In that the archaeological expedition many years ago, all the nightmares had started with similar descriptions!

Just as Barton's body trembled and was about to turn around and run away, the deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco Dwayne, brought up a question:

"Since you've already sensed the will of that great existence, why didn't you reconcile with the Fourth Epoch refugees who are pursuing you?"

Vernal's breathing suddenly became heavier, as if a faint white fog had spewed out.

His voice also became louder.

"Their faith wasn't accepted with their whole body and mind. They still had some reservations!"

As Vernal spoke, a faint white fog spread out from the half-collapsed house, emitting a strong smell of blood.

Barton seemed to come to a realization, but he wasn't in the mood to think.

He only wanted to leave this place and escape the danger that was about to erupt.

However, Pacheco was rather calm. He looked at Vernal and asked warmly, “You’ve been visiting Mr. Barton all this while, and writing letters to the foundation. What kind of help do you want us to provide?”

Upon hearing this, Barton was taken aback.

If it were another occasion, he would definitely imagine that Pacheco was asking what kind of legal advice Vernal needed!

At a time like this, didn’t he only have two options? He could either escape and report this to the police, or take out his weapon and fire a bullet at Vernal or smack him in the head with a pole… Barton was full of doubts about Pacheco’s way of handling things.

With faint white fog lingering at the tip of his nose, and with his eyes that were glowing with gray light, Vernal didn’t show any resistance to this kind of exchange. His expression became solemn as he replied in a dignified tone, “Two things:

“First, bring this item to the suburbs and return in the evening.”

While speaking, Vernal threw a glass bottle with a slender neck.

The glass bottle seemed to be very sturdy. Even when it fell to the ground, it didn’t seem damaged at all despite hitting a rock.

Its interior was filled with pale white, thin, almost illusory fog.

At that moment, Barton acutely sensed that the body of this deputy director of the Compliance Department had stiffened a little, as though he had sensed something unusual.

Vernal didn’t observe their reactions and continued, “Secondly, when you are searching for ancient artifacts, help me find similar items."

As he spoke, he took out a piece of paper and spread it open.

There was a strange-looking lamp on the paper. It was like a tiny water flask that had a candlewick extend out of its mouth.

"…No problem." After two seconds of silence, Pacheco replied in a low voice, one different from his previous tone.

"That's good. Haha, don't you think that our encounter was a coincidence?" Then Vernal tossed the piece of paper aside and leaped up high onto the half-collapsed building.

He was like a baboon as he nimbly climbed up and jumped, quickly disappearing from Barton's and Pacheco's sights.

"What are we going to do next…" Barton turned to look at the deputy director of the Compliance Department.

Before he could finish speaking, he suddenly stopped. He realized that Pacheco was still standing there, breathing heavily.

In addition to that, Pacheco's body was covered with thick black fur. His muscles swelled up, causing the black coat to tighten.

… Monster… Monster… Barton's eyes widened as if he wanted to see clearly Pacheco's current appearance.

In the blink of an eye, the abnormality on Pacheco vanished. He let out a long breath and said, "We'll wait here."

"…Do you need to pick them up?" Barton pointed at the bottle and paper on the ground.

The corners of Pacheco's mouth twitched as he said, "You can pick it up.

"But you have to keep a distance from me later."

Barton blurted out, “Will the fog in that glass bottle affect you?”

“There are things that even if you can’t be certain about, it’s best to not rashly attempt them.” Pacheco still didn’t give a direct answer.

It’s really tiring to communicate with him… After pondering for a while, Barton took a few steps forward and stopped in front of the bottle and paper.

Just as he bent down to grab the two items, his eyes suddenly lit up with a weak light.

Immediately after, a pair of boots appeared before his eyes.

The front of one of the boots was curled up high. The other was similar to the rounded-top boots that were popular nowadays, as though they belonged to two different people.

Barton’s heart tightened. He suddenly straightened his body and looked forward.

There was a lady standing opposite him.

This lady was wearing clothes that could be considered as two dresses. One side was complex, and the other was simple. One side was colorful, and the other side pure black.

This asymmetrical attire made Barton flare up instinctively. He wanted to tear off her clothes and give her a normal dress and a pair of normal boots.

This impulsiveness didn’t contain any trace of a male’s desire to harm women. It was purely because of his disgust and repugnant feeling towards such a sense of aesthetics.

After enduring the discomfort, Barton cast his gaze at the lady’s head.

She had a pretty face, a high nose bridge, full lips, and a pair of dark gray eyes that were rarely seen. She looked to be in her twenties.

Barton didn't feel any amazement. Instead, he felt that the lady's appearance was rather strange.

After a few seconds, he finally understood the reason.

The lady's face was devoid of expression, unlike a real person. It was closer to a wax statue.

"Vernal has already left." The deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco, seemed to have completely recovered and took the initiative to speak.

The lady's gaze swept across the bottle and paper in Barton's hand.

"What does he want you to do?"

"Bring this bottle to the suburbs and return only in the evening. Also, we are to help him find the item drawn on the paper," Pacheco answered frankly, putting on an attitude as though he was unwilling to be the lady's enemy.

The lady nodded and said, "Give me the bottle."

As soon as she finished speaking, Barton seemed to have heard an order that couldn't be disobeyed. He instinctively threw the thin-necked bottle in his hand at the other party.

Pacheco seized this opportunity and asked, "You're a member of the Tamara family?"

The lady caught the bottle and looked down.

"I didn't expect anyone to remember us."

Pacheco replied with a smile, "In truth, from the end of the Fourth Epoch until now, there have always been active members of the Tamara family, but there are very few of them.

"Have you heard of the Theosophy Order?"

“They are them. We are us,” the lady answered simply before her body rapidly faded away and vanished.

Chapter 1401 - An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (7/8)

* * *

After seeing the lady disappear for a few seconds, Pacheco turned his head and said to Barton, “Let’s go back to the foundation.”

“Aren’t we going to the suburbs?” Barton asked subconsciously.

Pacheco said with a smile, “Didn’t you already give the bottle away?

“We no longer have a reason to go to the suburbs.

“Perhaps his true aim was for us to hand the bottle to the lady of the Tamara family. What he said before were all lies.

“Of course, this has nothing to do with us. Next, there is no innocent party among them, so it doesn’t matter who dies. All we need to do is perform a certain amount of surveillance to prevent their battle from affecting ordinary people. This will be handled by the police, not by the foundation or the Compliance Department.”

Vernal doesn’t look like he’s capable of this kind of devious plot… Barton mumbled. He didn’t ask further and turned to walk out the door.

Frankly speaking, returning to the foundation was the answer he wanted to hear the most.

It was just a spur of the moment when he asked if they were heading to the suburbs. It was an old habit he hadn’t overcome for many years.

After returning to the foundation, Barton spent the rest of the day feeling rather uneasy. He went through the menial, repetitive routine until evening came.

I originally felt that life was too boring, but I now realize that a monotonous life is so precious. Sigh, I only hope that nothing unexpected happens like in the afternoon… May the Lord bless me… Barton stopped at his doorstep, stretched out his right hand, clenched his fist, and gently struck his left chest.

After finishing his prayer, he opened the door and entered. He took off his hat, coat, and handed them over to his wife who had come forward.

“What happened to Vernal?” his wife asked carefully.

Barton replied calmly in both tone and expression, “He offended some people and was being followed. The police have taken over this matter.

“In the future, if Vernal visits again, don’t let him in. Remember to send someone to inform the police.”

Barton’s wife heaved a sigh of relief when she heard that the police had intervened.

After dinner, Barton played with his children for a while before finding an excuse to go to his study and sit near the window.

He needed a private space to completely calm his emotions and walk out of the panic brought about by the incident with Vernal.

As such, Barton took out a cigarette from his drawer and put it to his mouth.

He wasn’t addicted to smoking, but he had to socialize sometimes, so he prepared a pack of cigarettes at home and on his body.

He lit the matchstick, lit the cigarette, and took a deep suck.

He then leaned back in his chair and watched the smoke coming out from his mouth and nose.

The white gas quickly spread out in all directions, making Barton suddenly think of the fog coming out of Vernal's mouth and nose.

He vaguely smelled the faint scent of blood.

To Barton, this wasn't a very strange discovery. After all, Vernal had stayed in his study before, so he definitely left some traces behind. Ordinary people wouldn't be able to detect him.

Barton didn't smell it before, but because he was too nervous and flustered, his attention had been focused on the whereabouts of Vernal and the words he had left behind.

Of course, the smell of blood in the study room was very faint. It was also one of the reasons why it couldn't compare with the hotel room and the burnt ruins at all.

As the smoke from the cigarette spread, Barton suddenly narrowed his eyes.

He had an ominous feeling!

In an instant, the pale white gas shrank in a certain direction with the smell of blood, forming a figure.

The figure's upper body was normal with an iconic red nose. It was none other than the archaeologist, Vernal.

The lower half of his body was completely shrouded in air, like a monster drawn out by smoke.

"V-Vernal…" Barton shouted, almost suffocating.

His voice reverberated in the study, unable to penetrate the wall.

"Haha, I've already acquired an immortal body. As long as there's still some fog left, I'll be able to come back to life!" Vernal burst into laughter.

Compared to before, his expression became more and more crazed, and his eyes seemed to be slightly palish-white.

H-he was already dead just now? This thought subconsciously flashed across Barton's mind.

Then, he forced himself to remain calm and said, “What's the matter?”

As he spoke, Barton wanted to stand up on impulse, but sadly he discovered that his body was covered by a cold and thin fog, and he had lost most of his senses.

Vernal stopped laughing and looked into Barton's eyes. He said word by word, “You didn't bring that bottle to the suburbs.”

Although Barton had a rash personality, he knew that he couldn't answer this question directly. He quickly thought of a solution.

A few seconds later, he changed the topic before he spoke again.

“Why did you convert to believing in that entity?

“Aren't you a loyal believer of the Lord?”

Vernal fell silent for a moment before his expression gradually became fervent.

“I've seen an even larger world, a much more vast world.

“Compared to that, the planet we are currently living on is like a grain of sand in the desert.

“There are innumerable civilizations, ancient ruins left behind from hundreds of thousands of years, millions of years, or even tens of millions of years ago.

“This is what the universe looks like!”

Seeing that his question only made things worse, Barton fell silent. He thought about whether there were any non-sensitive topics that would garner Vernal's interest.

He slowly took a deep breath and said, "Other than the altar, what else did you discover at the Fourth Epoch ruin?

"How much do you know of the Tamara family?"

"The Tamara family had its coat of arms replaced once.

"This means that they had encountered something rather major."

As he spoke, the archaeologist who was just an upper half of a body had extended his right hand. Using the smoke, he drew out two symbols in midair.

The first symbol was formed from a layer of brambles, a shield wall, and a longsword that was vertically inserted into them from above. The main part of the second symbol was a pair of double doors that swung open, and the gap in the middle was taken up by the vertical longsword.

As a barely famous historian, Barton immediately thought of the words of the Tamara family member:

"They are them. We are us."

"Did the Tamara family fracture?" Barton blurted out.

"I thought so," said Vernal, smiling with gratification. Then he leaned close to Barton, his face burning with zeal. "Your brain is more tempting than I imagined, and it's the best supplement for me. Relax a little. Your mind will merge with mine, and we can witness those great civilizations together."

He looked very weak and eager to recover.

Barton's heart thumped wildly, and he tried his best to avoid the other party. But no matter how hard he struggled, his body seemed to freeze.

He was unable to move at all.

Just as he was about to close his eyes, Barton suddenly felt a sharp pain in his right hand, and he immediately regained consciousness.

The pale white fog in front of him and the monster-like Vernal disappeared as if they had never appeared.

Barton lowered his head numbly and saw that the cigarette in his right hand had reached its limit, burning his fingers.

It was a dream? But I found it so realistic. Barton threw away the cigarette in his hand and instinctively stood up using his spirituality and walked to the window.

He looked out at the streets and saw that under the street lamps, many pedestrians were passing by in the darkness, wanting to rush home as soon as possible.

Among them, an ordinary golden retriever was taking a casual stroll.

Chapter 1402 - An Ordinary Person's Daily Life (8/8)

◆

The scene in front of him was so ordinary that Barton didn't feel that there was anything wrong with it.

Although he vaguely felt that there was something familiar about it, he didn't think that it was worth puzzling over it.

How could a daily scene not be familiar?

His gaze shifted as he looked up into the sky. He saw the crimson moon quietly hanging in the sky, shining with light, causing his mood to settle down involuntarily.

At that moment, Barton seemed to have let go of an invisible burden. His body and mind were unusually relaxed. He no longer had the same fear, anxiety, and frustration from before.

His spiritual intuition told him that Vernal's matter had come to an end, and it would no longer affect his life.

"Holy Lord of Storms. Lord, thank you for your blessings." Barton immediately struck his left chest with his right fist and muttered to himself.

Without anxiety and tension, he felt exhaustion overwhelm him like a flood. It surged from the depths of his soul, drowning his brain, limbs, and every cell in his body.

Barton couldn't help but use the back of his hand to cover his mouth.

He yawned, but a satisfied smile appeared on his face.

He didn't stay in the study any longer and turned around to leave. He returned to the bedroom and took a pleasant bath, enjoying himself as he drank a small glass of red wine.

That night, Barton didn't dream anymore and slept exceptionally soundly.

When he woke up in the morning, his mind was relaxed and his spirits were rising. It was as if he had obtained a new life.

Looking at his wife who was still sleeping beside him, Barton carefully got up, changed his clothes, and walked around the neighborhood.

He had never realized how wonderful his district was.

The air was fresh, the environment was peaceful, and the scenery was pleasant. Even the pedestrians were cultured.

This made Barton's mood even better. Once again, he deeply understood that the matter with Vernal had come to an end, and he had returned to his normal, peaceful life.

He maintained his mood and went home to enjoy breakfast with his wife and children.

During this process, he even told his wife about a joke he read in the newspapers and fulfilled his children's tiny requests.

Seeing the smiles on his wife and children's faces, Barton felt satisfied.

Then, he put on his coat, hat, and cane before heading out to take a trackless public carriage. He walked all the way to the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation at the periphery of the city.

After entering his office, Barton found his usual daily pace. He didn't get right down to work but prepared the special herbal black tea he had prepared himself.

With the black tea, he leisurely read the newspapers that he didn't subscribe to at home. Then, he picked up the letters and documents he had received and read them.

Such a process and pace made him feel exceptionally comfortable.

The only difference was that Barton was still a little worried about receiving yet another letter from Vernal.

However, this concern didn't turn into a reality.

About fifteen minutes later, someone knocked on his office door.

"Please come in." Barton picked up his cup and took a sip of his black tea.

The person who entered was the ordinary-looking deputy director of the Compliance Department, Pacheco Dwayne, who didn't have any characteristics that stood out but still managed to give off a warm and friendly vibe.

"Did you sleep well last night?" asked Pacheco as he stood at the door.

"Excellent." Baton didn't hide anything.

Pacheco nodded and smiled.

"Seems like you've really gotten rid of the effects from this matter."

Barton didn't mention the "nightmare" he had had. Instead, he asked, "What about you?"

"I also slept very well," Pacheco replied with a smile. "The police have already taken over this matter. It's said that they found Vernal last night. Unfortunately, he apparently encountered some misfortune."

"Poor soul, I hope he can rest in peace." Barton didn't pray that the Lord would protect him, because Vernal had already abandoned his faith in the Lord of Storms. If there were really any blessings to be bestowed, then it would definitely be lightning blasts and storms.

With that said, he thought of the help that Pacheco had provided and his friendly attitude. He said, “Shall we have lunch together later?”

“Are you treating?” asked Pacheco with a smile.

“Of course. It’s a pleasure to meet a friend like you.” Barton stood up and bowed gentlemanly.

Pacheco nodded slightly and said, “Then I’ll wait at the Compliance Department for your invitation.

“Before 12?”

“No problem.” Apart from being grateful to him, Barton also felt that knowing the deputy director of the Compliance Department would be a great help to his future work.

Furthermore, he believed that Pucheco was just like him. In some aspects, he was stronger than the average person.

After seeing Pacheco leave his office, Barton sat down again, silently and slowly exhaling.

As an ordinary person with a normal IQ, he could tell that the matters regarding Vernal were very strange. It involved the problems of mysticism and religion.

In addition, he was actually very interested in the details of the Tamara family’s fracturing and the secret history of the Fourth Epoch, and the details to which Vernal had encountered.

However, he knew that he couldn’t probe further. It was thanks to the great luck of an ordinary person for him to be able to see the tip of the iceberg without dying. If he wanted to figure out the situation beneath the water surface, he would definitely drown to death.

The past archaeological expedition made Barton not dare to take the risk, nor did he want to take any risks.

To him, curiosity was probably the most worthless thing.

After pondering for a while, Barton continued his work.

When it was almost noon, he tidied the items on the table and picked up the coat and top hat hanging on the clothes rack. He left the office and walked to the door of the Compliance Department.

Knock! Knock! Knock! Barton knocked on the wooden door in front of him.

Soon, Pacheco opened the door and glanced at Barton.

“Give me another five minutes. I still have some matters to settle.”

“No problem.” Barton didn’t mind at all.

“Come on in and wait,” Pacheco said casually.

Barton didn’t stand on ceremony. He walked into the Compliance Department and found a chair to sit down.

As his gaze moved, he realized that there were about six to seven members in the Compliance Department.

Just then, he heard someone knocking on the door.

Without waiting for the employees of the Compliance Department to get up, the door creaked open.

The first to enter was the vice president of the Loen Relic Search and Preservation Foundation.

He was a lively old man. He looked around and paused for a second before saying, “Seems like everyone is here.

“Let me introduce you to a new colleague.”

As he spoke, the vice-president took a few steps forward, revealing the new employee of the Compliance Department behind him.

She was a woman in her twenties. She had a high nose bridge and a pair of moist, full lips. Her eyes were dark gray and her face was pretty. She wore a common blue dress.

However, there was no expression on her face. She didn't look like a real person. She looked more like a wax statue.

The gazes of Barton and Pacheco froze.

The vice president continued smiling and said, "She will be like Pacheco, taking on the role of the deputy director of the Compliance Department. Her name is Alicia Tamara."

Author's Note:

There's no way to go in-depth in the end to "An Ordinary Person's Daily Life." This is just a showcase of the tip of the iceberg without going deep. Yes, it's also an experimental form of narrating the story.

If the ending is meant to have the effect of horror without any consideration of values, then it will be written as such:

As he spoke, the vice-president took a few steps forward, revealing the new employee of the Compliance Department behind him.

She was a woman in her twenties. She had a high nose bridge and a pair of moist, full lips. Her eyes were dark gray and her face was pretty. She wore a common blue dress.

The gazes of Barton and Pacheco froze.

At that moment, the lady's lips curled up as she said with a radiant smile, "Hello everyone. I'm Alicia Tamara."

Chapter 1403 - In Modern Day (1)

◆

I'm an ordinary company employee. My greatest joy every day is that I can clock off on time.

This isn't something that can be realized often, because it's only from working overtime that I can receive a higher salary. Only from doing so can I gain a little sense of security.

In this aspect, my boss isn't that bad. At the very least, he'll pay for overtime, unlike the company next door who only knows how to shout slogans. All they do is pump up the employees without sparing a single penny.

Based on my observations, they aren't far from closing down, because their boss is already trying to sell off second-hand computers on his WeChat Moments.

This isn't something I discovered. I'm not friends with their boss on WeChat. This comes from the mouths of the employees.

In this world, it's sexist to say that there's gossip where there are women present. Instead, there's gossip wherever there are people.

Of course, I don't have absolute confidence in those words. There was once a time when a dog and a cat made me feel that they were watching us humans with amusement and gossiping.

Just like now, the golden retriever that always appears near my office building is sitting at the entrance.

Seriously, looking at the grooming of its fur, it doesn't look like it doesn't have a master. How can someone walk a dog without a leash? This kind of person shouldn't be rearing pets. They have no morals at all! Eh, there's a necklace around its neck, a rope, and the end of the rope is in its mouth… As I mumble, I recall of an emoticon that has been trending online:

It has strong self-control!

I snort and cast my eyes beyond the glass doors. The sky is so dark, and large beads of raindrops pummel through the stuffy humid environment and crash into the ground.

F*ck, it rained so quickly! At this moment, I want to question God.

It hadn't been easy for me to get off work on time today. To think that I would encounter a storm; furthermore, I didn't bring an umbrella with me!

Back when I was in the office, I noticed that it was dark and gloomy outside and knew that a storm was coming, but I thought I had enough time to get to the bus stop.

By the time my bus arrives close to my rented apartment, the rain should've stopped or be reduced to a drizzle. After all, it's summer and the rain comes and goes quickly.

I can't help but raise my middle finger at God. Helpless, I turn my head to look at the golden retriever by the door and casually say, "You didn't bring an umbrella as well?"

That was just a self-deprecating comment of mine, but the next moment I'm shocked.

The big golden retriever rolls its eyes at me.

It rolled its eyes at me.

Its eyes.

I knew it. This dog has some humanity in it! I look away and mutter.

I examine the storm outside again, wondering if I should just run to the bus stop.

I sniff and, considering how I haven't recovered fully from my cold, I hold back the urge.

Sigh, as a grown man, isn't it normal to only bring a phone, a transportation card, and a key access card?

Who would carry a bag and have an umbrella inside for no reason?

These days, I don't even keep change on me.

Forget it. I'll just go back to the office and kill time. I'll browse through websites and wait until the rain becomes a drizzle before I leave. If it really doesn't pan out as I expect, then I'll order takeout… I sigh and turn to walk to the elevator.

Suddenly, I notice an additional vending machine in one corner of the building lobby.

Somein Coffee? I suddenly feel like drinking something.

I did as I thought. With the financial freedom to buy beverages below 10 yuan, I confidently walk over to the vending machine and take a gander at the beverages on sale.

Mizone, Nongfu Spring, Master Kong ice tea, and Jasmine tea… Eh… I notice something strange when I look through the beverages on display.

It's a box, placed in the corner of the topmost row of beverages.

What the hell? I glance at the screen and read the scrolling images and text.

Soon, I understand what the box is.

It’s the recently popular real-life “loot box!”

There are loot boxes even with beverages these days? It really is a tax on one’s intelligence… Gambling is indeed exciting… I mutter as I scan what possible contents might be in the loot box.

D*mn, this is interesting.

This loot box is actually related to a new beverage product. It has never appeared on the market before, the bottle has a unique design, and the names are very stylish!

Seer, Apprentice, Bard, Warrior, Sleepless—Ha, I like that. There’s also Lawyer, Assassin, Hunter… I glance at the price of the loot box and realize that it only costs 5 yuan.

It’s cheaper than I expected, so I decide to give it a try.

Life is short, so why not give it a try?

As a slave of society, the daily working hours go from nine to six, seven, eight, nine, ten… Excluding work time, eating, sleeping, and commuting, there’s very little free time for leisure.

Even the monotonous life would get to robots with this happening day after day. It’s just so boring.

The property prices are even more depressing. They make you lose the motivation to work hard. One becomes dejected or just takes on a mantra of letting things come as they may.

To be able to find a new thrill in cheap forms of entertainment other than novels, comics, videos, and games can be considered a surprise.

Taking my phone out, I start scanning the QR code.

At the same time, I mutter a few names in my mind:

Seer, Sleepless, Spectator, Assassin…

These are the beverages that I hope for the most from the loot box.

I will be satisfied as long as it's one of them.

After paying, the vending machine seemed to be stuck. It didn't move for quite a while.

I suspect that it's trying to cheat me.

Is it packaging it on the spot? I complain as I seriously consider making a complaint.

At this moment, the vending machine finally showed signs of movement. The loot box is pushed out and falls to the dispenser with a thud.

It's time to witness a miracle! I bend down and push open the sliding panel of the dispenser and pull out the loot box that I really can't consider exquisitely packaged.

After I quickly open the box, I see a bottle wrapped in coiled snakes.

Based on what I saw on the screen, I'm able to recognize which drink it is.

As an Assassin's Creed gamer, this is an outcome I've been looking forward to:

Assassin!

Chapter 1404 - In Modern Day (2)

◆

Nice!

I can’t help but snap my fingers with my free hand.

As someone who has never even won a consolation prize, to be able to get a beverage I wanted is simply exciting.

Furthermore, the most important thing is that I only spent five yuan. Otherwise, I’ll definitely hit it trying it ten times in a row.

I need to keep this bottle well! I put away my phone, open the can, and take a mouthful of the beverage.

In the next second, my head suddenly turns a little numb. I feel like everything around me has become abnormally blurry, and my entire body becomes light as though I’m about to turn into a feather.

In this strange feeling, I vaguely hear muffled ravings that sound like fingernails scratching a blackboard:

“The taste of a Demoness ain’t bad…”

“The taste of a Demoness ain’t bad…”

“The taste of a Demoness ain’t bad…”

This brings an indescribable pain, and I lose all my ability to think.

By the time the torture ends, I can’t remember what happened towards the end, but I know that my face must have been very twisted and hideous.

F*ck. What the hell is this beverage? I turn angrily to look at the vending machine.

At that moment, my head is spinning, and my eyes swell. I have the feeling that I'll collapse at any moment.

However, this doesn't stop me from discovering a fact:

The vending machine that still existed moments ago has disappeared!

… Holy sh*t… I can't take my spinning head and the soreness in my eyes. I quickly remove my glasses and prepare to squeeze my nose bridge.

However, just as I take off my glasses, everything returns to normal. My head doesn't spin and my eyes no longer ache.

My vision remains clear, clearer than even before my myopia.

…I scan my surroundings, and every detail is reflected in my eyes. Even a dozen meters away, a mosquito silently suspended on a black stone is vividly clear.

I've recovered from my short-sightedness? That bout of fainting was because of the glasses? I glance around once more, and for some reason, I feel that my vision has exceeded that of a normal person's.

As I try hard to recall, I gradually come to a realization:

I can change part of my body's structure for a short amount of time. I can obtain feather-like lightness. Even if I jump from high above, I won't be hurt…

A hawk-like vision that allows me to see through the darkness…

I'm good at hiding in the shadows…

My steps are nimble and my body is agile. The instantaneous strength I can release is tremendous…

I can concentrate all my strength into a single strike…

This… As I suspect that the Assassin beverage that I had just taken was actually some mental drug that gives me hallucinations, I also feel that something might have really happened due to my recovery from short-sightedness.

I put on my glasses again and realize that it does leave me faint.

No way this is real… The vending machine is gone… It was still there a moment ago… Did I have a fortuitous encounter? I cast my gaze out of the lobby and see people carrying umbrellas or have their backpacks raised in the heavy rain, running about in a hurry.

Before this, I could only barely see silhouettes in this scene, but now, I can confirm the features of every pedestrian.

Of course, the prerequisite is that they aren't wearing face masks.

A fortuitous encounter… Don't tell me it's really a fortuitous encounter… I would occasionally fantasize about having a fortuitous encounter, for example, striking lottery worth 10–20 million yuan, but I never expected such a day!

Moreover, it's the Assassin ability that I wanted the most!

Even if it's fake, just healing my short-sightedness makes me give this fortuitous encounter full marks! I control my excitement and joy and carefully examine my body.

After confirming that there's nothing wrong with it, I close my eyes and mutter to myself, Thank you, God!

Thank you, vending machine!

Thank you, loot box!

I have to find a place to test the Leap of Faith… Eh, I've recovered from my cold too… I'll think further about it after the rain stops… I look around again, eager to test what it means to have dexterous steps, agility, and explosive power.

Of course, as a normal person with regular intelligence, I know that I should avoid others in times like this, lest I expose my fortuitous encounter and create a series of unknown developments.

At this moment, due to the heavy rain, the people inside the building either have to work overtime or have already left. Those without umbrellas either have realized the reality of things or haven't left the office. They either return to the office or bravely run to the bus stop. Therefore, other than the two security guards who have their backs to me, there's no one else in the lobby.

I can give it a try. Yes, there's a dog… Heh, so what if I'm seen by a dog? It doesn't understand anything. Would it be able to tell anyone? I immediately widen my pace and run toward the elevator.

I can feel the changes in my body.

Using a machine as an analogy, my body used to be a rusted machine that had been soaked in water. Now, it was a new, lubricated machine.

A few steps later, I suddenly remember something: Previously, several companies in the building had been a victim of theft. Through the surveillance cameras, the police found the criminal.

In other words, there are surveillance cameras in the lobby, and my every move is being monitored.

Bear with it, bear with it… I stop my attempts and turn back to look at the spots where there might be cameras.

My gaze sweeps across the huge golden retriever at the door. It's still impassively looking at the rain outside.

I'll wait till I get home… I let out a slow sigh, hold my glasses, and head for the elevator.

I heard from my gossiping colleagues at the company that the theft was done by a young rag-and-bone man from nearby.

In the past, this guy was the son of a rich man. Later on, his family waned, and he could only make a living being a rag-and-bone man.

However, the police never found him.

I take the elevator and go back to the tenth floor. My mind is filled with how to be an assassin hiding in the city's shadows.

Nothing is true, everything is permitted! I mutter a few slogans and exit the elevator.

Glancing around, I see a figure standing by the window at the elevator lobby.

He has rare, long silver hair. His features are very distinctive.

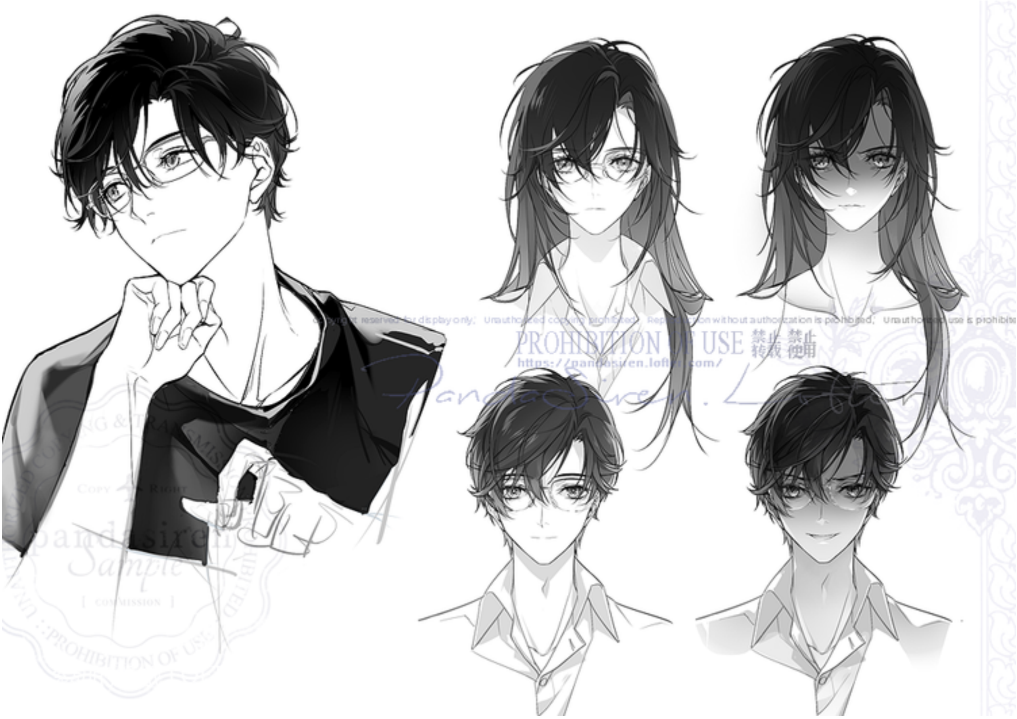
So I recognize him. He's the vice president of the company next door, whose surname is Wu.

Of course, this might only be his Chinese surname, because he's either a foreigner or a mixed-blood.

It's such a pity that this guy isn't an idol. He's so good-looking that even the girls in our company often try to "coincidentally" bump into him. They give him flowers and food. It's like he has everything easy in the game of life… The boss next door really has bad taste. With such an employee, I'd have long changed to running an entertainment company… I don't know what the company next door is busy with every day. Until today, I don't even know what they do. All of them are garrulous, completely unlike Rozanne when she's joking. They're probably doing multi-level marketing, right? I quickly retract my gaze and not greet him. After all, we're not familiar with each other.

But just at this moment, I see that guy turn around and walk over.

Sadly, Zhou mingrui will not have chance to become Sequence-7 Witch in this side story. But, atleast we have fan-art what if he does become demoness haha:



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Chapter 1405 - In Modern Day (3)

* * *

Under normal circumstances, I wouldn't be nervous if the vice-president from next door came to me. After all, I'm not under his jurisdiction.

And I'm not a girl either. My sexual orientation is very normal. No matter how good he looks, it has nothing to do with me. I'm even a little jealous.

But now, I've just drunk a bottle of some strange beverage of unknown origins and obtained the abilities of an Assassin I've been dreaming of. No matter who comes near me, I can't help but feel uneasy, afraid that others might discover my secret.

At this moment, the silver-haired guy stops in front of me and says coldly, "Do you have a lighter?"

Uh… This isn't an attitude a person should have when asking someone for help. Why are you looking at someone like you're looking at an object?

Also, the greatest hobby of youngsters nowadays is to stay up late instead of smoking. Why would I bring a lighter with me?

"No." I shake my head.

At the same time, I sigh inwardly.

If the female colleagues in my company find out that the handsome vice-president next door smokes, they would definitely have their fantasies crushed. This vice-president's appearance and temperament easily makes one believe he's some untainted immortal. It's impossible to associate him with vices like smoking.

With this in mind, I can't help but ask casually, "Smoking?"

The vice president, who has long silver hair and a beautiful face, raises his right hand, revealing a cigarette between his fingers.

"People are under the impression that you don't smoke," I reply with a smile.

As a slave of society, it's normal for me not to be afraid of the vice-president of the company next door. However, ensuring a cordial relationship is almost definite. After all, one has no idea when they will need to job hop and become their subordinate. Having one more friend means one more outlet.

Of course, if this gentleman keeps staying in the company next door, then I won't consider such matters. I don't want to enter a weirdo company that just yells slogans eight hundred times a day.

However, if they're willing to pay me a salary of more than 30,000 yuan a month, I dare say that I'll jump ship today. This is the business world, and the first principle is to not go against money. Anyway, as long as I don't violate the law and do not commit crimes, what's wrong with shouting slogans? If I get paid a hundred yuan with every shout, I can shout until I make the company go bankrupt!

Hearing my words, the vice-president seems to fall silent for a moment before saying, "A friend of mine taught me."

When it comes to vices like smoking, who doesn't get introduced to it by friends? Only a small number of parents will lead their children astray… Just as I lampoon inwardly, the vice-president next door says in fluent Mandarin, "He's been dead for many years."

"I'm sorry," I respond reflexively.

After that, I find it strange.

Why are you telling me this?

This vice president doesn't look too smart…

Since we aren't familiar with each other, I exchange a few pleasantries and stop. I'm too lazy to bother. I point to the corridor leading to my workplace.

"I have matters to tend to."

The vice president nods without any change in expression. He turns around and walks back to the window by the elevator lobby, as if he's watching the rainy scene below.

I leave the elevator lobby and take a right turn into my workplace and head to the office where my department is located.

They're all gone? They took all the umbrellas? I switch on the lights and scan the room.

That's right. It hadn't rained when clocking off at regular hours. I left ten minutes later and happened to be caught in the rain…

Seeing that there was no one in the office, my thoughts became active.

I originally thought of watching videos in the office, checking out the young ladies dancing indoors and finding inspiration from live eating broadcasts to figure out what to eat for dinner. But now, I'm very restless, and I want to test out the various abilities of an Assassin.

Among them, the thing that attracts me the most is Leap of Faith, no—Feather Drop spell. No, that's not right either. Who knows what it's called. In short, it's the ability to temporarily change my body structure and land on the ground like a light feather.

This is undoubtedly the most surreal ability of Assassins.

Of course, it is also equally important to me that I've had my short-sightedness cured and gained excellent vision.

I have to give it a try…

I slip my glasses into my pocket and dash to the side window of the big office.

It faces a small alley. There's a refuse room that's erected there and no one usually walks past it, let alone when it's heavily raining now.

Ten stories, an empty alley. It's the best place to test the Leap of Faith. I open the window and cast my gaze down.

There are no signs of any pedestrians in the heavy rain. The roads are bleak and gloomy. It's dark everywhere.

The refuse room looks like a small hand could cover it from the tenth floor.

†

Forget it.

It's better to find somewhere lower for the first test.

Just as I reveal an embarrassed and polite smile, I hear a voice behind me.

"What are you doing?"

"…" Startled, I turn quickly.

Then, I see my boss.

He had walked into the large office with one hand in his pocket at some point in time. He's looking at me.

"…Mr. Huang, I'm checking to see if the rain has stopped." I quickly think of one reason.

My President’s surname is Huang, with the first name Tao, a very handsome, fashionable man.

At the same time, he’s a strange man who became a father at the age of 18. His daughter has already started college this year. He’s only thirty-six years old and is still swimming through the gals. He stays on the periphery amidst the embrace of news anchors and actresses.

CEO Huang doesn’t seem to have any doubts about my reason. He nods and says, “You didn’t bring an umbrella?”

The more you live, the younger you become… Glancing at the president’s hair which had been dyed chestnut, I honestly reply, “Don’t have such a habit.”

CEO Huang lifts his hand and strokes his chin.

“I have a few spare umbrellas in my office. Come over and take one.”

“You prepared so many?” I ask in a respectful tone. After all, he’s the one paying my salary, and it’s quite sizable.

CEO Huang smiles and says, “It’s from the few ladies from before. As you know, they always like to bring umbrellas with them.”

You’ve extended the battlefield of your flings to the office? Didn’t you say that the thing you’re afraid of the most is letting your daughter know about this? Doesn’t your daughter visit your office every week? I’m first left surprised before nodding.

“Alright.”

CEO Huang doesn’t say anything else as he turns and walks towards the door.

The way he’s standing and how his body is posed gives me a strange feeling. I believe that if I were to seize this opportunity and unleash my full strength, I'll definitely be able to backstab him.

Is this an Assassin's instinct? Just as I have this thought, I see CEO Huang stop in his tracks and turn his head back.

Did he sense my ill intent? My body stiffens.

CEO Huang seems to be deep in thought as he slowly asks, "How's your accent?"

"Passable," I mutter carelessly.

CEO Huang nods.

"Help me pick up a VIP at the airport tomorrow morning. I'll get Old Ai to send you the details."

"Okay." I don't dare to say no.

After agreeing, I ask, "Mr. Huang, the VIP is a foreigner?"

"Yes." CEO Huang gives an affirmative reply.

At the mention of this topic, I can't help but ask, "Mr. Huang, why are there so many foreigners around us? We even have to come up with a foreign name in the company?"

CEO Huang leans back slightly and says, "What is an international metropolitan city?

"This is it."

Chapter 1406 - In Modern Day (4)

◆

After borrowing an umbrella from CEO Huang, I decided to immediately leave the company and return to my rented apartment. I plan on testing out my new-found Assassin powers in what's considered the safest environment.

I live in those old districts that haven't been spruced up. I spend nearly an hour commuting via public transport. The place is filled with old and shabby houses. It's completely different from the high-end buildings found in the new city districts. But living here is more convenient. Besides, the rent is quite cheap.

Since I'm clocked off on the dot today, and there wasn't much of a delay during the journey back and forth, it's still not yet six o'clock. Even if I settle my dinner near my neighborhood, I'll arrive home before seven o'clock. It's in line with the habits of a modern person. Therefore, I didn't consider settling my dinner near the office. Instead, I rush to the bus stop with my umbrella.

This umbrella is colorful, and it has rabbit ears on it. It really isn't suitable for a stealthy man like me… I look up and run out the door.

One has to bow when under the umbrella after all.

By now, the storm has gone on for about ten minutes, and the ground is beginning to pond. If it were in the past, I would've stepped into a puddle and stained my shoes and pants with dirt and mud. But now, my feet are deft, sharp, accurate, and each step is light—I manage to keep my pants and shoes clean in the rain.

As expected of an assassin… I glance at the bus stop that's just a few feet away from me. Just as I'm about to cross the non-motor vehicle lane, I suddenly see a man walk past me without an umbrella or raincoat.

His hair is already wet under the heavy rain. His clothes cling to his body as they droop down, water streaming down continuously.

His image is so pathetic, yet his posture remains so relaxed. He isn't running at all. All he does is keep his hands in his pockets as he strolls forward.

Impressive… Due to the rain and the dark sky, I'm unable to discern his face clearly. I only watch him walk past me.

Perhaps sensing my gaze, the man suddenly takes out a cigarette from his pocket and puts it in his mouth. He mutters softly, "Wimp."

"…" I dig my ear with my empty right hand.

Who is he talking about?

Forget it, I won't argue with a lunatic.

I'm in a good mood today.

I ignore the man, step up to the bus stop platform, and wait for my bus to arrive.

My luck isn't bad. It takes about a minute before Bus 35 arrives.

Taking out my travel card, I close the umbrella and rush forward.

Hearing the beep, I suddenly feel a little emotional.

If only the travel card can be stored on my phone's NFC, it would be more convenient… I only need to bring my phone when I'm out. Door locks, the subway, and public buses can all be resolved through my cell phone… If I switch my door lock to a fingerprint one, I don't even need to bring my keys with me. That’s what I call convenience… As I think about it, I find a seat.

Perhaps due to the heavy rain and that it’s some time after peak hour, there are still quite a few empty seats left on the usually crowded bus.

Unfortunately, the prerequisite for switching to a fingerprint lock is for me to have my own house… My fantasy is defeated by cold reality.

In this international metropolitan city, with my salary, I don’t know when I’ll be able to afford a house if I don’t get help from my parents.

I can’t help but wonder how to use the powers of an Assassin to make money.

Take on assassin missions? No, it’s illegal. Although I’m a real, powerful assassin now, I can’t beat bullets. Besides, I don’t know where to take on such missions either…

It’s against the law to break into houses and steal. Besides, other people don’t have their money dropping from trees, unless I can lock onto a corrupt official…

I have agile footwork, nimble limbs, and eagle-like vision. How do I earn money with these?

Be a security guard?

But how much can a security guard earn every month?

Or, try dancing? With this kind of control over the body, my dancing will definitely be very impressive. Then, I can do a live broadcast? However, I’m tone-deaf…

As I think through the possibilities, I suddenly feel a little depressed.

It wasn’t easy for a miracle to fall from the sky, yet I can’t use it to improve my life or earn lots of money with it.

It cured my short-sightedness at the very least. It’s a medical miracle that can’t be bought even with millions… I exhale slowly and tell myself not to be too greedy.

At this moment, I suddenly feel a chill.

It’s not from the air-conditioning, but a coldness that pierced through my skin.

I turn my head and look to the side, only to see that there’s no one sitting there.

My instincts tell me that there’s something invisible there.

Hiss, a ghost? I can sense ghosts after becoming an assassin? I first widen my eyes and carefully observe. Then, I retract my gaze and pretend not to notice anything.

If the ghost realizes that I can see it, I’m doomed!

Assassins do not have abilities to deal with ghosts!

My body uncontrollably tenses up. I try to act as if nothing had happened, but I’m helpless.

The chilly feeling grows stronger, as if it’s getting closer and closer to me.

I look straight, but a vision appears in my mind.

A blurry man with a bluish-black face draws nearer and nearer to me. He leans to my ear and blows his breath on my face to test my reaction.

This cold lasts for nearly a minute before it gradually weakens.

Before long, the bus stops and the two doors open at the same time.

The cold and terrifying aura disappears.

The ghost reached its stop? Even ghosts use buses to travel? Amazing…

I relax and have a better understanding of the changes in my body.

I'm not surprised that there are ghosts because I have become an Assassin. Everything is possible.

The bus stops along the way and I arrived at Ankang North Road 50 minutes later.

My rental apartment is nearby.

Since the storm has stopped, I don't use the umbrella. I get off the bus and go straight for the place I had planned on eating while on the bus.

"Yuzhou Stir-fry."

There are many old shops in this old district that serve delicious food at cheap prices. This is one of them. If it weren't for the rain earlier, many tables would be set up outside.

Inside the store, I casually glance around.

"Eh…" I smile as I walk to a table and sit opposite a young man.

He ordered only a bowl of Yuxiang shredded pork and white rice. He's looking at his phone while eating with full focus.

"Not on a date?" I rap the table, startling the guy opposite me.

He's my childhood friend, Peng Deng. Recently, he's also been working in this international metropolitan city. As I helped him find a place to live, we ended up living very close to each other. It's all in the same neighborhood.

"How can I have a date when the weather is so bad?" Peng Deng looks up at me.

He doesn't put down his phone and asks, "Want to play some ranked matches tonight?"

“I’m not free.” I have no intention of playing games right now. I just want to try the “Leap of Faith.”

Peng Deng studies me intently for a few seconds.

“You have a girlfriend?”

“I hope so too.” I turn my head to the boss. “One stir-fried sliced beef, one tomato fried egg soup, and a bottle of Coke.”

When something good befalls one, celebrations are in order.

Chapter 1407 - In Modern Day (5)

◆

Upon hearing my reply, Peng Deng lowered his head again. As he looks at his phone, he feeds himself and casually asks, “What else is there after work?

“Don’t you work overtime if something’s up?”

Good question… I lean the umbrella and seriously think of an excuse.

Peng Deng is a typical smartphone zombie who doesn’t even focus on eating. Most of his attention is on his cell phone, but he’s actually a very sharp person. He’s good at capturing details and can always easily see through my lies.

Of course, most of those lies were a product of not putting enough thought into it. They’re more like jokes.

I can’t tell him that I’m trying to jump off a building, right? After some thought, I rap the table.

“My boss wants me to pick up a foreign guest at the airport tomorrow.

“And he’ll only give me the details at night. I’ll have to make some preparations. I need to practice my accent and contact a driver to confirm the schedule. It’s plenty of work.”

“Yeah, yeah…” Peng Deng takes a bite of rice and the meat shreds before swallowing it.

Then, he asks with a smile, “The Casanova boss you mentioned before?”

“I never said that.” I outright deny Peng Deng’s claim.

When he looked up at me, I smiled.

“I said he fooled around.

“You mustn’t make mistakes when passing judgment.”

“Tch.” Peng Deng replies before looking down at his phone.

Before long, the dishes I ordered are served. One is stir-fried sliced beef, and the other is tomato fried egg soup.

The oil on the former glistened, and the aroma of celery perfectly fused with the beef’s aroma. The meat was very tender, and its juices were salty, but not excessive. The sauce was filled with flavors, and with just one plate of this meat, I could finish it with three bowls of rice.

The tomato fried egg soup is part of Sichuan cuisine. Lard is used first. After it’s heated up, beaten eggs with water and salt are added to the mix until it’s completely cooked.

This way, the fried eggs would be fluffier, and there will be a certain level of saltiness to it. Following that, water and processed tomatoes are put in, along with a few green vegetables.

Finally, the soup will have the obvious fragrance of oil and eggs, mixed with the sweet and sourness of tomatoes. The freshness of the green vegetables make the soup have the delight of a meat soup, but without the cloyed taste at all.

Just as I drink a bowl of delicious egg soup, the boss walks over with a bowl of rice and a bottle of cold Coke.

“Ice Cock.” I can’t help laughing inwardly as I heard his accent.

Considering that I have to “jump off a building” later, it wouldn’t be good to eat too much. I ultimately only have two bowls of rice. Of course, I definitely wouldn’t waste the meat and eggs.

At this moment, Peng Deng still has a third of his food left.

“Don’t use your phone while eating; don’t eat while using your phone.” I stand up and give him a heartfelt lecture.

At the same time, I boldly pay only for my share.

Peng Deng and I aren’t hypocritical friends who insist on footing the bill.

Furthermore, it’s the end of the month. Finances are always a little tight during this time of the month.

“F*ck, you didn’t even give me a bottle of Coke.” It only took this long before Peng Deng realized it.

“I’m done eating.” I pick up the umbrella leaning against the table.

“Extravagant.” Peng Deng appraises my choice of buying a bottle of Coke. “Something good happened to you? Or are you moonlighting…”

Before he can ask me, his gaze suddenly stops on the umbrella with the rabbit ears in my hand.

“Hey.” He makes a strange sound.

“My boss lent it to me. You know that he has many girlfriends.” I understand what Peng Deng is thinking.

“How boring.” Peng Deng turns his attention back to his phone again.

I enter the old compound of my rented apartment after leaving the shop.

The tallest building is only six stories, so there aren’t any elevators.

When I pass the entrance to the first floor, I catch a glimpse of the mailbox through the corner of my eye.

“Uh…” Some memories churn, making me walk over involuntarily and open the letterbox that belongs to Unit 602.

There’s a postcard lying quietly inside.

Even without looking, I know that she was the one who had sent it.

She was a middle school classmate and high school classmate with me and Peng Deng. She later went overseas for studies and is currently working in this city.

Her family background is good, and she often travels. From time to time, she’ll send local specialties or postcards to friends in the same city.

I hesitate for two seconds before picking up the postcard.

The back is indeed familiar as graceful handwriting is plastered across it:

“This is the famous Sedlec Ossuary around here…”

I flip the postcard and take a look. The pillars and walls that are lined with skulls make me feel horrified.

Then, I feel that strange sense of holiness.

Shaking my head, I put away the postcard and return to Unit 602.

This is an old apartment with two bedrooms and one bathroom. It has a history of at least 20 years. I live in a guest room, and a young couple lives in the master bedroom.

This couple are nice people. Not only do they have a sense of hygiene, but they often cook by themselves and invite me to eat together. The only problem is that they quarrel at least twice a week. It’s quite annoying.

I plan to move to stay with Peng Deng when the rental contract is over.

Of course, the prerequisite is that he hasn't started living with his girlfriend yet.

After putting down the umbrella, I go to the window of the guest room. I peek out and look outside, considering whether I should jump.

Although the rain has stopped, the sky is already dark and there aren't many pedestrians.

Sixth floor… Forget it, I'll go to the building with the small supermarket. I think it's better to be safe for the first time.

It's only three stories.

This neighborhood is very old, and it has a large population. Hence, there are plenty of stores on the first floor. There are hairdressers, eateries, as well as grocery stores and repair shops. One doesn't even need to leave the compound to have access to these amenities.

I change into black clothes as a protective color and take my keys and phone. I arrive at a small supermarket after circling the compound for a while.

I go up the stairs to the rooftop. Looking at the height, I finally feel confident.

When I headed downstairs just now, I tried to jump from one flight of stairs to the other. It greatly improved my confidence in the "Leap of Faith."

Waiting until there's no one below me, I take a deep breath, climb over the railing fence, and pose in a ready stance.

It's raining and the road is very slippery. How about next time?

If I fall and get sent to the hospital, I'll die a societal death if everyone misunderstands this as me attempting suicide…

It's only three stories. There was nothing wrong with the feeling I had just now…

After some random thought, I raise my middle finger at myself and exhale slowly.

With a tremble, I leap up and adjust my body.

The speed I descend at is slower than normal. The wind turns into a blanket, holding me up in silence.

This kind of slowness is only relative. I still quickly land on the ground steadily, without wobbling or splashing up the muddy water on the ground.

At that moment, I feel like a sharp feather.

What a marvelous feeling.

10 points! I praise myself.

Th-this is really too exciting!

I'm a true-blue assassin who has surpassed all mortals!

Heart blazing, I dash back to the building where my rented apartment is.

I can't wait to test the Leap of Faith from the sixth floor.

The experience just now tells me that six floors isn't a problem. If it's any higher, I'll have to be like Jackie Chan, finding items in the middle, like an air-conditioner, to break my fall, jumping down several floors at a time.

On the way, I widen my eyes in an attempt to find any acts of sexual misconduct by hooligans, robberies by ruffians, or extortions by baddies. I want to let them have a taste of the power of an assassin, but…

Sigh, the security in the neighborhood is really good…

I sigh and head home.

At this moment, my phone rings twice.

I take it out and discover that it's from my company's Old Ai. It's the information regarding our VIP.

Zaratulstra… what a complicated name. I smirk and decide on reading the details after another Leap of Faith.

Sigh, even if I'm an extraordinary assassin, I still have to work on stuff my boss instructs me to do after work like, as the Japanese put it, a shachiku—a corporate cattle.

Otherwise, I won't be able to survive!

What can an assassin do? Buy a Spider-Man's mask and do a Parkour live-stream session? Without being in a rush to enter the bedroom. I once again think about how to make money using my assassin abilities.

At this moment, someone knocks on the door.

"Who is it?" I ask loudly.

"I'm here to check on temporary living permits!" someone outside replies.

I don't have it, goodbye… I lampoon as I walk to the door and look outside through the peephole.

Two people in police uniforms stand outside the door, with one of them standing in front, blocking the face of the other.

He has a receding hairline and his eyes are slightly gray.

For some reason, I suddenly quiver and feel inexplicably sad.

I open the door.

“My surname is Deng, and I’m the officer in charge of this compound,” the gray-eyed officer introduces himself with a smile.

Then, he looks at the information in his hand.

“Zhou Mingrui, am I right?”

Chapter 1408 - In Modern Day (6)

◆

“Yes.” For some reason, I’m restrained and a little sad—it’s almost indescribable. It’s as if someone had punched my nose. My eyes are sore and I’m about to cry.

I can understand the restraint. Apart from a few people, most ordinary people would definitely be rather cautious when facing the police. I’m no exception.

But why do I have the sudden urge to cry?

These emotional changes and fluctuations are beyond my expectations.

From what I know, such a situation wouldn’t even happen to an extremely sensitive artistic youth.

Could this be the side effects of the Assassin potion?

Is this the price for obtaining superpowers?

I blink and control my emotions. Then, I hear Officer Deng say, “Your temporary living permit…”

Before he can finish, another officer whispers, “Captain, it’s called a residence permit now. You’ve forgotten again…”

“Yes, yes, yes. I forgot.” Officer Deng wasn’t embarrassed at all. He smiled and said to me, “Where’s your residence permit?”

“I didn’t apply for it.” I didn’t lie, nor do I wish to lie.

"This won't do." Officer Deng shook his head. "Although we won't do anything to you because you don't have a residence permit, this is still rather important. Before you become a permanent resident here, if your child wants to study in a public kindergarten here, a residence permit is required."

"I don't even have a girlfriend." I smirk forcefully but politely again.

Needless to say, I don't have children.

"Even for you as an individual, a residence permit is very important. As you know, it's very difficult to settle down in our city. Apart from special talents that we let in or people who take different paths, your residence permit, under normal circumstances, needs eh… a few years. Anyway, it's a few years before you're qualified to apply for settlement. This is as important as paying for social security." Officer Deng added.

This makes me feel the concern of an elder. I don't argue with him and nod.

"Yes, I'll get it done this week."

Officer Deng smiled and said, "Opposite to your compound is a police station that can help you in the residential application."

He then looks at me.

"By the way, in the past two to three months, an illegal religion has been illegally proselytizing in the city. They also use the classic multi-level marketing techniques. They use more modern terms like a 'Fully Automatic Wishing Machine' to entice ordinary people to walk the path of evil. If you encounter them, make sure to be careful and remember to report it to us."

Fully Automatic Wishing Machine… My heart skips a beat at the mention of it.

It sounds very similar to a vending machine.

However, no one tried to proselytize to me back then!

"…Okay." I don't dare to show any hesitation. I think for a second before answering.

"Thank you for your cooperation." Officer Deng doesn't say anything else as he smiles and puts away the tiny notebook in his hand.

Just as he turns around halfway, he suddenly stops.

"By the way, I forgot something."

For some reason, my eyes blur upon hearing that.

"It's a joint tenancy, right? Who's living in the other room?" Officer Deng asks in a mellow voice.

I close my eyes and calm my fluctuating emotions.

"It's a couple."

"A lady with the surname Sia, and her overseas boyfriend."

"I see." Officer Deng nods. "Remember to remind them to register their residence."

"Alright." I watch as Officer Deng turns around.

Only then do I see the officer standing behind him.

His black hair and green eyes make him look like a celebrity.

Green eyes? He's mixed blood? Or is he wearing colored contacts? I mumble inwardly.

The green-eyed officer looks at me for a few seconds before suddenly smiling.

"That evil cult's means are more secretive than you can imagine. It's very hard to defend against them.

"At times, you won't need to pay any price to benefit from them, but believe me, you will definitely suffer immensely in the future."

My heart palpitates when I hear this fellow. I recall the Assassin potion and the "Leap of Faith" I obtained.

I got it for five yuan.

Could it really be that cult?

What do they want from me after giving me superpowers?

"I understand. I'll make a report." I try hard not to show my fear as I reply to the green-eyed police officer.

After sending them off, I return to the cramped guest room and sit down on the bed. I face the computer desk as I contemplate over what happened today.

It doesn't make much sense.

If that vending machine really was created by that cult, there's no need for them to hide. If they give every believer a bottle like the Assassin beverage, then they can rule the world!

Perhaps, there are restrictions?

But an organization that can obtain superpowers is definitely not simple. It's not something the likes of ordinary cults can achieve.

But what's the point of giving me superpowers?

To get a fighter?

It's not like I'd go. If they dare to look for me, I-I'll dare to call the police!

Money?

I'm just from an ordinary family in a small city. Although my family has a place to stay, in order to provide for my other two siblings, my parents haven't managed to save up much money. It wasn't until Benson and I started working that our family situation improved slightly…

After some thought, I pick up my phone and tap open WeChat. I find my brother, Benson Zhou, who works as a civil servant.

"B, did you offend anyone recently?" I send a message.

B is the nickname I gave Benson. It stems from the "B" in his name since he's balding.

"Who can I offend?" Very quickly, Benson replies. "I'm just a puny civil servant. I work cautiously every day, and I'm not a politician. I don't even serve the public at a window. Who can I offend?"

Before I can respond, he sends another message:

"What's wrong? What happened?"

"I encountered something that I suspect to be fraud, but I don't have anything worth being scammed of," I reason.

Benson replies one line at a time:

"No matter how poor a person is, there's still value in scamming them.

"Who doesn't have any friends or family? If you don't have money, can't you borrow it? Borrow from the people around you or on the Internet. Get all kinds of micro-loans, and that adds up to a huge sum.

"Besides, you still have your body. Can't you sell your kidney, cornea, and blood?

"Besides, there are many female clubs nowadays. Who knows which customer would like your type…"

"WTF, stop scaring me." After sending this text, I quickly add, "Thankfully I didn't take the hit."

I don’t want Benson to worry about my drinking of the Assassin beverage.

I have to be careful. I need to immediately make a report to the police for any abnormalities around me.

After chatting for a while, Benson reminds me:

“Anyway, don’t be greedy. Also, Sa Sa will be here before school starts. Remember to pick her up.”

“Got it.” I send him a popular emoji.

It’s a monocle-wearing emoji: ▯

After ending the conversation, I lose the urge to continue attempting the leap of faith. I sit by the bed, feeling a little frightened and worried.

After a while, I subconsciously pick up my phone and look at WeChat and QQ.

Among them, one of the QQ group chats has plenty of messages.

It was a group that I built because we play horror and mystery games. It’s called the Tarot Club, and it’s filled with other netizens.

I take a quick scan at it and see someone named The Star send a message:

“Everyone, be careful. A mysterious cult has appeared.”

Chapter 1409 - In Modern Day (7)

◆

Cult? My attention is immediately drawn to this word.

“What has a cult got to do with us?” a group member named “Judgment” asks.

“Mysterious? How mysterious?” a group member named “Justice” asks.

All kinds of messages appear in the group. It’s rather overwhelming.

I originally created this group when I was playing a horror, mystery game. I invited friends who were quite good at the game back then, and such games often contain mysticism-related elements. Therefore, after the game gradually lost its popularity, the group turned into a group that leaned towards discussing mysticism.

Of course, in any chat group, daily interactions take up the majority of the content, except for sex-related chat groups.

Amongst the members, the lady named Justice is most curious about mysticism. From her daily conversations, I can tell that her family background is quite good and she isn’t too old. I think she’s a student.

After the group members are done asking, The Star types:

“That cult likes to attack ordinary people.

“Especially those who like mysticism!

“They will use all sorts of methods to allow you to obtain powers that exceed the limit of mortals. For example, the later it is at night, the more energetic you are.”

“I already have this superpower!” a group member named The Magician replies excitedly.

She’s also a girl. I remember her mentioning that she has a sizable income from writing novels on a certain green-colored website, and is considered one of the phenomenal writers there.

However, from the way she makes all kinds of suggestive comments when she speaks, perhaps the green-colored website I’m aware of isn’t the same website she was talking about.

“Compared to the day, I prefer the night,” says a group member named “The Moon.”

What is this fellow trying to say? Is he like a night owl, or is he hinting at something? I scratch my chin, unable to read the thoughts of The Moon.

This fellow has always been like this. If you want to say that he has deep knowledge, he will post links regarding exquisite dolls in the group chat from time to time, asking everyone to help him at some price slashing site. It’s obvious that he’s some type of shut-in. But to call him naive and immature, he often says profound things. Whether it’s Chinese medicine, Western medicine, or even all kinds of relatively unknown medical knowledge, he gives off impressive vibes with his theories and examples, even if I can hardly understand it.

Previously, he had diagnosed that one of our group members—The Hermit—had a rare disease. He successfully helped her recovery from an old ailment of hers, making everyone see him in a different light.

The Star ignores The Moon and replies to The Magician:

“Then can you only sleep two hours a day?”

"I can, but I can only maintain it for a week. I have to catch up on my sleep after that. Furthermore, my body will feel like it's been run over by a car, with tire tracks on my face 😪," The Magician replies.

The Star continues:

"Anyway, the cult will first allow you to obtain Superman-like powers. For example, you can remain extremely energetic despite sleeping for two hours every day. You can see all kinds of spirits, jump off tall buildings without suffering any damage, and control flames, etc., etc."

"Isn't this good?" Justice immediately replies.

The Sun, Judgment, and Magician say:

"Isn't this good?"

"+1"

"+1"

I think for a moment and used my alternate account, The World.

"+1"

The Star sends an emoji:

"😠 A price is always exacted for what fate bestows."

"I didn't say that—Lu Xun.webp." The Magician replies immediately.

I suspect this is a subconscious reflex of hers.

"Is there really a power that transcends the mortal world?" Justice asks.

Clearly, she had imagined that The Star was joking.

Without waiting for The Star to respond, The Moon says:

"There are too many things in the world that go beyond your imagination.

“It doesn’t mean they don’t exist just because you don’t see them.”

The Sun immediately replies: “There’s some mysticism that’s real?”

“…Stop fooling kids 😤.” a group member named The Hanged Man sends an emoji.

“That’s right, that’s right. There are still young schooling children. One shouldn’t talk about the strange and supernatural to children or make suggestive comments!” The Magician echos in all seriousness.

The Sun replies: “I-I’m already in middle school!

“I’m more than 1.9 meters tall!”

When everyone sees the claim of being 1.9 meters tall, everyone falls silent.

After a while, The Star sends an emoji:

“😓 In short, once one is bewitched by the cult and accepts their gift, they will definitely have to pay a huge price after joining them. I heard that some people went mad and got admitted into a mental hospital. Some of them committed suicide in various ways, dying rather hideously. Others transformed…”

Before he can finish, he suddenly stops. His profile picture indicates he has gone offline.

“What transformation?” I ask with my alt, The World.

My main account is The Fool, a mature man worthy of trust. Therefore, I can’t ask questions casually.

“Could The Star be held down by those cultists?” The Magician gives a very imaginative idea.

“Haha, how could there be such a thing? I’m talking about a mysterious cul-dfflfnejkd…” Judgment is also a girl who always echoes The Magician.

After making this joke, The Star comes online again and says:

“F*ck, there was a sudden blackout just now. I had no choice but to switch phones.

“Well that’s all from me. I have to head out. I have matters to tend to.

“Anyway, there’s no such thing as a free lunch, so don’t eat it. Don’t be bewitched by the cult.

“Bye~”

As The Star goes offline, I suddenly receive private messages.

They come from The Hanged Man and The Hermit.

“Take note. I think The Star might be a member of the cyber police.”

“The Star might be a policeman. Be careful what you say in the group chat.”

…It’s really possible. To actually know about mysterious cults… I immediately reply to the two group members:

“It’s fine. We’re not a cult 😏.”

It’s not like I’m always the one making suggestive comments.

Most importantly, when discussing international and domestic situations, I would stop it in time and send a picture that says “improper discussion about the imperial court is a crime that leads to death.”

Glancing at the group chat again, I quit QQ and once again start thinking about what I should do.

After some thought, I'm still out of solutions. It's impossible for me to spit out the Assassin beverage, nor can I vomit it out.

I can only pretend that I don't know anything and ignore recruitment attempts of any cults. If I meet them, I'll immediately call the police… I force myself to focus on my savings and wallet.

At the thought of this, I immediately free myself from my worries and begin to work.

This is about being a slave of society.

After confirming the flight details, the chauffeur, the hotel arrangements, and the pick-up sign, I do a round of oral practice.

By the time I'm done with all of that, it's already ten in the evening.

I feel hungry.

I guess I'll go down and buy some snacks… I decide not to treat myself shabbily.

As soon as I walk out of the guest room, I hear a quarrel from next door.

Of course, it's mainly that lady named Sia Tas, who's shouting at her overseas boyfriend.

Don't you get tired of that… Just as I'm about to lampoon, I realize that the quarrel is getting softer and softer.

Uh…

According to my experience, something inappropriate for minors will happen next.

Although I'm not a minor, I'm single.

After some thought, I return to my room, open the window, and jump onto the window sill before jumping down with great familiarity.

In the wind, my body feels light as if all my worries have been blown away.

After landing safely, I heave a sigh of relief. I feel like I've completely grasped the power of Assassin.

The area outside the compound I live in remains lively late into the night. There are a few barbecue stalls, some selling fried rice, some selling stir-fried noodles. Some sell street food, like stewed meat, cold vegetables, duck necks, and crayfish. People who pass by will unknowingly sit down or come in front of a stall before sadly putting on a kilogram.

Taking into consideration my little tummy, wait, my tummy seems to be missing!

That tiny tummy I've worked so hard to get from all my meals is gone!

This is a change brought about by Assassin? I feel surprised once again.

This gives me a lot more options besides the snacks. I can have barbecue food to celebrate.

Forget it. I have to restrain myself. If an assassin is 170 cm tall, but ends up being 100 kilograms, wouldn't my target end breaking out into a laughing fit when they see me? I slowly exhale and decide to go to the 24-hour convenience store.

To the left is a FamilyMart. To the right is Lawson. It's very unfriendly for an indecisive consumer like me.

I heard that Lawson has launched a few new types of ice cream recently… I recall and turn to the right.

Just as I enter Lawson, my eyes light up as I see a gorgeous woman.

Chapter 1410 - In Modern Day (8)

◆

As an international metropolitan city, there are definitely countless beauties dressed fashionably out on the streets. Even if I don't pay attention to them, I would often find women that catch my attention.

But even so, this person that's inside Lawson is a rare gem. I can't help but steal another look after seeing her.

Her brown-dyed hair cascades down like a waterfall, and two crystal-like accessories hang from her earlobes. Her eyes sparkle, looking as clear and beautiful as the eyes of deers in forests. She has plenty of charisma.

Out of courtesy and habitual shyness, I tear my eyes away from the girl and walk past her to the area where the fridge is.

During this process, I can't help but turn around to take a few more looks, but I suppress my actions to avoid offending her.

Hmm, which ice cream should I buy? I gaze at the transparent sliding door of the coolbox and fall into deep thought.

Recently, the more popular ones are "Fat Crabs," "Iron Cauldron Stew"…

Taking into account my successful "weight loss" and my need to prevent any rebounds, as well as my tight financial situation at the end of the month, I ultimately chose "Fat Crabs."

Then, I go to the neighboring room to get a bottle of chilled CR and a packet of cucumber-flavored potato chips.

All three combined form my supper for the night.

If it was the beginning of the month, I definitely would've bought more. I'll keep them at home and eat them when there's a need. I don't have to go downstairs every time, but there's no need to be so carefree with my expenses now.

CEO Huang had once said: "Don't let trivialities take up your most important liquidity."

Without any hesitation, I take my snacks and walk to the counter to stand in line to settle the bill.

At this moment, I suddenly smell a faint fragrance.

In the next second, I turn my head and see the gorgeous beauty walk past two rows of shelves. She smiles and says with her eyes shimmering, "Can I add you on WeChat?"

?

Me? I arch my arms a little and express my puzzlement in my speech and pose.

I've never had girls ask me for my contact details all my life!

"That's right." The beauty nods happily and says with a smile, "Your looks and temperament matches my taste. I want to get to know you."

If she were to praise me for being handsome or good-looking, I definitely wouldn't have believed her. However, it's not impossible that my looks and temperament matches her tastes.

Maybe she likes my type, right?

For a moment, I understand what it means to be overwhelmed and flattered.

In the next second, I become more wary.

Could it be some multi-level marketing scheme?

Or some honey trap?

As an aficionado of legal shows, a fan of the Legal Report of many years, I am instinctively wary of good things falling into my lap.

As I hesitate, the eyes of that beautiful woman standing in front of me fogs up. It makes me feel ashamed and guilty.

Perhaps it's not some multi-level marketing or honey trap… Even if it is, she's just adding me on WeChat. It won't be a problem if I pay more attention in the future… I think for a moment and hurriedly say, "Alright."

I turn around and place the bottle of CR on the counter before taking out my phone from my pocket.

However, when I look at that girl again, she has already disappeared.

It's not as if I can't see her. I can still see instances of her back appearing through the cracks of the shelves.

…What about appreciating my looks and temperament… How did you have a change of heart so quickly? Just as this thought flashes through my mind, I heard a chime!

The door of the convenience store opens automatically, and a figure walks in.

It's Officer Deng who had checked on my residence permit in the evening, but he has already changed into casual wear.

He walks to the front desk and tugs at the bottom of his black jacket's bottom. He says to the staff, "A cup of coffee."

As he speaks, Officer Deng turns to look at me.

"A-are you footing your bill?"

Before he can finish, he pinches his forehead.

"You are, you are Zhou, Zhou…"

"Zhou Mingrui, Officer Deng. We just met this evening," I reply with a smile.

At that moment, from the corner of my eye, I catch the woman leaving the convenience store.

She gave up striking up a conversation with me and ran off in a hurry because she saw Officer Deng? Is she really involved in multi-level marketing or pulling a honey trap?? Feeling regretful and puzzled, I hand over the items in my hand to the shop assistant and say without minding, "Give Officer Deng his coffee first."

The shop assistant spends some time making the coffee before giving it to Officer Deng.

He gives me a friendly smile and heads out with the cup in hand.

After taking a few steps, he stops and says with a self-deprecating smile, "I forgot to remind you that the cult will use all kinds of means to approach the target. Be careful."

Cult… Suddenly, I am aware of a possibility:

Could that beauty from before be from that cult?

She hit on me because I drank the Assassin beverage and became their target?

Th-this method really makes it impossible to guard against! They actually used a honey trap! I'm alarmed. With Officer Deng about to turn around and leave the convenience store, I rush forward and say to him, "Just now, a woman wanted to add me on WeChat."

Officer Deng doesn't laugh at me. He asks very formally, "What does she look like?"

“Very beautiful, more beautiful than many celebrities…” I give a simple description and conclude, “I don’t think I have the charm to make a beauty hit on me.”

“Not bad. Many victims only get deceived because they feel that they are very charming,” says Officer Deng with a smile. “We will track and investigate this. As for you, you should just try your best. Try not to speak to strangers as depicted in television dramas. Speaking is fine, just don’t establish more connections.”

My heart warms as I nod vigorously.

“Alright.”

After seeing Officer Deng leave, I return to the counter to settle the bill. I take the snacks and walk to the entrance of my residential compound.

Along the way, after passing the barbecue stall, the strong fragrance inundates my nostrils again. It tempts me to sit down and order a pile of food.

I sweep a glance, and I see a group of gangsters.

They’re sitting on simple plastic stools at the barbecue stall, waiting for the food to be cooked.

Their hair is dyed in all sorts of colors, and it’s obvious that they’re punks following the scene subculture.

If it were in the past, I definitely would’ve upped my pace and widened my distance to avoid any unnecessary conflicts.

But now, I’m looking forward to them making things difficult for me. I want them to have a good taste of an assassin’s prowess.

Just then, one of the hoodlums glances at me and stands up abruptly.

Holding a stack of paper, he jogs towards me.

I'm thrilled and begin to imagine what pose I should put on later.

The charred yellow-eyebrowed hoodlum quickly comes in front of me and says, "Hi there, perhaps you would be interested in Dream Tutoring Classes?"

?

Dream Tutoring Classes?

This development is completely different from what I expected!

As he speaks, the hoodlum hands a flyer to me.

"Our Dream Tutoring Classes covers many topics. Even if you're already working, you can learn things from the courses to improve yourselves and even switch careers."

I blankly receive the flyer and subconsciously ask, "Are you a tutor?"

"Yes, I'm a foreign language teacher." The hoodlum smiles arrogantly. "My surname is Da."

Before he can finish his sentence, a few of the hoodlums shout, "Dani, the food is ready. It's time to dig in!"

"**!" The hoodlum in front of me turns around and flips his middle finger before running back.

I shake my head in disappointment and wrap my snacks in the flier before entering my compound and return to my rented apartment building.

As this place is old, there are a few lamps along the stairs that are out. Some of the floors are dark. I have to take out my cell phones to turn on the flashlight function before I can see where I'm placing my feet clearly.

The surroundings are very quiet. My phone suddenly flashes a few times, turning extremely dim.

At the same time, I feel a cold wind blow past me.

Chapter 1411 - In Modern Day (9)

◆ ◆ ◆

As the cold wind blows, the flashlight on my phone dims. I shiver and my hair stands on end.

To be honest, after becoming an Assassin, even if there isn’t any light, I can still see the surroundings clearly without worrying about what’s on the ground.

But there’s no conflict between me being able to see in the darkness and my need for a flashlight.

Who isn’t afraid of the dark?

At that moment, my heart beats faster, pounding like a drum.

Almost at the same time, I sense someone watching me. The cold wind is the breath of a monster lurking deep in the darkness.

Recalling what happened on the bus previously, I pretended not to notice anything amiss and look down at my phone.

It’s broken again?

I had previously encountered the sudden experience of my phone’s flashlight dimming, but I was using a crappy phone. At this moment, the “experienced” me habitually blamed it on the phone.

After “checking” the phone and making the lights turn on again, I continue forward without anything happening.

The eerie wind is still lingering in the corridor. The light flickers in brightness, digging up the fear hidden at the bottom of my heart.

As I walk, I seriously consider what powers an Assassin has against ghosts.

The answer is:

Nothing.

Since I have nothing, I don’t look forward to slaying evil or dealing with the possible existence of a ghost as if dealing with gangsters.

One step, two steps, three steps. I calmly walk up the flight of stairs and arrive at the top floor.

The lights in the building are working fine as they shine down with their yellow light.

Everything returns to normal.

Following that, the cold gust of wind stops. The light stops flickering. I successfully return to the sixth floor and stop at the entrance of my rented apartment.

Phew, there’s actually a ghost present here! I have to move out as soon as possible! This thought subconsciously flashes across my mind.

I don’t feel any shame. This is an instinctual response that anyone can have!

However, if I quietly moved away, Sia Tas and her boyfriend would definitely not know what’s happening here. They’ll continue living here. Who knows whether the devil might pester them… Also, there are twelve units in this building. It’s impossible for me to inform every household, right? Also, how do I say it? Ghosts? Who would believe me? I hold my key, momentarily held in a difficult spot.

Quickly hire a capable Daoist priest or monk to exorcise the ghost? But I don't know any. Before today, I didn't even know that there are supernatural powers in this world. It was all fantasy… Yes, the Tarot Club's The Star knows that the mysterious cult provides all kinds of superpowers, which means he has a certain level of understanding in such matters… Will he know a few masters who are good at busting ghosts? Phew, I'll give it a try. If there's nothing I can do, I'll make an anonymous call to inform the police. I'll post a flyer that mentions how this place is haunted at every household's door, No, not flyer, a bulletin… I quickly come up with a plan.

As for the outcome, I don't have any demands. After all, I don't have any experience in this area. Besides, I should prioritize protecting myself.

Opening the door, I enter the room and return to my room. I think for a while before logging on to QQ and entering a private chat with The Star.

Uh, The Hanged Man and The Hermit suspect that he's a member of cyber police. If I were to directly look for him, he will definitely be able to find my IP address and lock onto my identity… Just as I'm about to type the message, I remember the warning from two other members of the Tarot Club.

After tinkering for a while, I use a proxy and use my alt, The World, to say to The Star:

" Are you there? I have something to ask you."

"…Don't use that emoji. It scares me." The Star replies quickly.

"Why?" I ask.

The Star says:

" This emoji has become popular recently. It's very strange.

"Furthermore, something tragic happened to a family last week. Everyone in that family wore a monocle and died in different places. The only survivor was a girl who went mad from the trauma. She repeatedly tells people not to go near her.

“I suspect that those who use this emoji will be targeted by an unknown existence. They will automatically put on a monocle and commit suicide or kill each other.”

“Don’t scare me .” I reply, unsure if I should believe him.

“Haha, it’s just a joke. The monocle in this emoji is on a different eye from the tragedy. Furthermore, there are thousands of people using this emoji. Which unknown existence can keep an eye on everyone?” The Star switches to asking, “Why are you looking for me?”

I directly say:

“My area is haunted. Do you know anyone who’s good at ghostbusting?”

“I’m very good at that.” The Star replies without hesitation.

Then wouldn’t I be exposed? I quickly send an emoji:

” I won’t trouble you for the time being. You seem very busy.

“Do you have anyone else that you could introduce to me?”

“Yes, a lady, a medium. She’s skilled in techniques from overseas, but I can guarantee that it’s effective. There’s another foreigner, a priest. He’s also good at setting up exorcism rituals.” The Star replies.

“They’re all foreigners? You don’t have Daoist priests or monks to introduce?” I’m more trusting towards local ones.

The Star replies:

“I only know foreign ones!”

“Okay. Who’s better?” I had wanted to ask who’s cheaper, but considering how someone cheap might not do the job, I don’t dare to skimp on that.

The Star immediately says:

“Ma’am Da.”

“I’ll give you her QQ number. Add her directly and contact her.

“XXXXXXXXXXXX.”

“Okay, thank you.” I quickly copy the QQ number and paste it into the search box.

Ma’m Da’s QQ name is “SleepingWithCorpses,” and adding her requires one to answer a verification question: “How old are you?”

How old? This question is strange… Do I need to use a countersign? I’m puzzled for a moment. I take a screenshot and send it to The Star.

“What’s the answer?”

The Star replies:

“Just answer that you’re an adult.”

“What’s the meaning of this? She doesn’t entertain underaged clients?” I’m confused.

“No. She just wants to determine the extent she can go in the conversation.” The Star answered simply, and then used an image to supplement it: Open to suggestions, ready to be suggestive.

“…” For some reason, I’m at a loss on how to respond. I fill up the verification according to The Star’s answer and fill in “Adult.”

Da doesn’t seem online. I didn’t get added even after a few minutes. After thanking The Star, I use snacks to console myself.

After eating and drinking, I head to the bathroom outside to wash up and prepare to head to bed.

Ma’am Da still hasn’t added me.

I switch on the bathroom light and turn on the tap. I reach for the towel.

Turning around, I suddenly see a figure in the mirror.

That figure is blurry. Vaguely, I see it wearing a small hat. It’s a woman in a black dress.

Clearly, this isn’t my projection!

It can’t be Sia Tas, who wears pajamas as home!

Instantly, my mind explodes and I hurriedly retreat.

“Don’t be afraid,” the woman in the mirror says in an ethereal voice. “Someone hired me to protect you.”

“Who?” I ask subconsciously.

The figure in the mirror replies calmly, “A detective named Sherlock Moriarty.”

Chapter 1412 - In Modern Day (10)

◆

Sherlock Moriarty?

Sounds like a foreigner…

Moriarty… seems to be the professor in Holmes… Sherlock seems to be Holmes’s first name… This detective is using a fake name, right? It has a style reminiscent of coming up with a name when creating a game avatar… Perhaps he isn’t a foreigner…

I sense something from the ghost in the mirror and ask after some thought:

“Who is he?

“Why does he want to protect me?”

At this moment, due to the other party’s ability to communicate, my sense of fear has been greatly reduced.

I’ve become an Assassin. Isn’t it normal for ghosts to exist in this world?

It isn’t hard to accept something that goes against common sense!

Besides, it’s not like I didn’t sense something on the bus on the way home.

The blurry woman wearing a petite bonnet in the mirror replies in a flat voice, “Someone wants to harm you.”

She didn't tell me who Sherlock Moriarty is. Why does he want to protect me… It looks like it's a secret. What is it that can't be said? Many thoughts flash through my mind.

Suddenly, I think of a possibility and blurt out, "That cult wants to harm me?

"Sherlock Moriarty is their archenemy?"

That makes sense!

Otherwise, I wouldn't believe that someone would send a female ghost to protect me for no reason, unless it's the police who serve the people.

The female ghost in the mirror falls silent for two seconds before nodding indiscernibly.

"You can put it that way."

At that moment, I feel a subtle change in her eyes, but I can't decipher what emotions are contained within them.

Under normal circumstances, a person without any training would more or less reveal their emotions in their eyes. This would help me understand their attitude.

But the entity right in front of me is a ghost.

More importantly, the things that can be discerned through the eyes most of the time are the more intense fluctuations in emotions or unconcealed emotions. Not only is the female ghost in the mirror blurry, but she also has a mosaic over her. Furthermore, her emotions are very mild, almost as though she's emotionless.

After pondering for a moment, I probe, "Which people around me are from the evil cult?"

The female ghost in a black dress opens her mouth.

"They…"

Her voice becomes increasingly ethereal as it turns weaker and weaker.

Following that, a fine layer of snow appears on the surface of the mirror, just like an old television that has its reception hampered.

The female ghost vanishes amidst the static.

This…

What happened?

I'm not afraid of ghosts anymore, so why did the ghost disappear instead?

Did something happen again?

I turn wary and look around, but everything's normal.

When I look back, the mirror has returned to its original state, reflecting my fearful and blank face.

Splash.

The water from the tap gushes out incessantly.

Unconsciously, I grab my wet towel and wash my face.

Nothing has changed.

At the same time, I don't sense anything unusual.

Yes, no matter what, I still have to brush my teeth… I force myself to stay calm.

Since things are already like this, what's there to worry about?

After brushing my teeth and wiping my mouth, I return to my room.

The moment I enter, I feel an indescribable feeling.

My eyes are drawn to my cell phone, which I have set on the computer table.

It seems to be the source of all the abnormalities.

Instinctively, I charge over, wanting to hurl the phone out of the window so it's far away from me.

However, it's very expensive. I changed it not too long ago… I don't know if there's something wrong with it… I'm already an Assassin, and there's the female ghost protecting me. What's there to be afraid of? I console myself, walk over, pick up my phone, and plaster my fingerprint on it.

After unlocking the screen, the first thing I see is a message:

'SleepingWithCorpses has added you.'

In the next second, my cell phone darkens suddenly, and the lights around me seem to be attracted by this bottomless pit. They are all thrown into the pitch-black darkness.

Before I can react, the faint light on my phone ripples, revealing a translucent face that's without any eyes, nose, or mouth.

"There's a ghost in your room."

The mouth of the face opens and closes, revealing a long and bright red tongue. There are five slender fingers at the tip of the tongue, and embedded on the two sides are rows of irregular sharp teeth.

Don't tell me you're not one too? I have the urge to give such a reply, but I hold myself back.

Recalling the message I just read, I ask with a slightly trembling voice, "Ma'am Da?"

Impressive!

She really is psychic and can control ghosts!

“Yes, I’ve already made some initial restrictions via the messenger. That ghost won’t affect you tonight, and it won’t have the chance to suck you dry.” The translucent wobbles shook. “I’ll come personally tomorrow morning to deal with it. Give me the address.”

“Tomorrow morning? I have work to do.” I am thrown into a dilemma.

CEO Huang wants me to pick up the VIP at the airport!

If I stand him up, I will lose my job!

“Work? Is your boss beautiful?” Madam Da asks through the translucent face.

“He’s a guy,” I point out the truth.

“You like men?” Madam Da asks without pause.

“How is that possible?” I deny it, amused and exasperated.

“Since that’s not the case, why are you still in the mood for work even though you’re haunted by ghosts? Or perhaps, you have a female colleague that you have a crush on? You can’t skip a day of seeing her?” Madam Da scoffs.

“…Can’t it be because I’m poor? If I don’t work, who will take care of me?” I have a nagging feeling that I’m being led astray by Madam Da. The conversation is filled with logical errors.

Although I have some savings, it’s not a lot, and I have to pay for the exorcism.

Of course, I’m in the mood to work because the female ghost hasn’t shown any malice.

Madam Da’s translucent face opens its mouth and says, “What about your family?”

"They aren't well-off," I answer frankly.

"Uh… how are your looks?" Madam Da asks another strange question.

"Average." I feel lost.

"Height?"

"A little over 1.7 meters."

"Strong?"

"Ordinary."

"How big?"

"Huh?"

"How big is that thing of yours?"

"Hey!"

"It's like this: I can introduce you to some part-time work. The other party consists of rich and idle mature ladies. They value young people very much. They're willing to provide the necessary help and become friends with mutual benefits. Do you want to consider them?" the translucent face rambles on.

"…Auntie, am I just going to give up on my hard work?" I roughly understand what the other party was talking about.

"As long as you understand." The translucent, terrifying face lets out a suspicious laugh.

"I don't plan on doing so," I say without hesitation.

I have my integrity!

Madam Da doesn't bother with the topic and instead says, "Then, when will you get off work tomorrow? Let's schedule an appointment."

"Nine in the evening." I include the possibility of working overtime.

"Alright, give me the address. I'll contact you on QQ when the time comes." Madam Da's translucent face yawns.

This lady's extraordinary performance has exceeded the limits of my knowledge, so I no longer have any doubts about her abilities. I immediately give her an address and ask, "Eh… Eh… How much will it cost?"

"The basic cost is 20,000 yuan. The price can go higher depending on the difficulty. If you can't afford it, you can consider the part-time job." Madam Da is rather direct.

I recall my savings and feel a wave of pain.

"What's the maximum it can go?"

Why don't I just forget it?

Besides, the female ghost doesn't seem to have any ill intentions.

"The highest it can go is 50,000 yuan," Madam Da calmly says.

"50,000. Only 50,000?" I'm surprised.

The translucent face snorts.

"I'll give up missions that exceed 50,000. Money is nice, but I need to be alive to spend it."

"… Okay." I see myself on the brink of bankruptcy.

"By the way, I'll give you a document. You can download it and read about how to get along with ghosts." The translucent face slowly slides back into the phone.

Then I see SleepingWithCorpses send me a BitTorrent seed.

I open it and realize that there are a few videos in it. They're quite large in size and are named “1,” “2,” and “3.”

Due to the seriousness of the matter, I don’t hesitate and turn on my computer to download it.

While I initiate the download, I start playing games to pass time.

After a while, the download completes. I open the video file named “1.”

In just a few seconds, a title appears in front of me:

“A Chinese Ghost Story.”

“I…”

On the glass window, a blurry female ghost wearing a long black dress appears. She holds her cheek with one hand and quietly stares at the computer screen.

Chapter 1413 - In Modern Day (11)

◆

…Ma'am Da really has a sense of humor… It's a good thing that my broadband company doesn't charge based on data usage… I control the twitch in the corner of my lips and turn to look out the window.

She's here again… A female ghost watching A Chinese Ghost Story. It feels weird…

Since she doesn't show any malice and had pointed out the problem of the cult, while I lack the ability to fend off ghosts—Assassins aren't capable of doing such things—I ask after some consideration, "Do you want to continue watching?"

I watched this movie a long time ago. There's no need for me to rewatch it.

Besides, I still have to go to the airport to pick up the VIP tomorrow; I can't stay up all night.

If I'm late or something goes wrong, I'll definitely have my salary deducted or maybe even get fired!

Thankfully, I haven't taken any housing loans, or bought things on credit. I don't have any credit card payments and promissory notes to pay. Otherwise, I would've rejected Madam Da just now and looked for someone cheaper.

The female ghost on the glass window turns her head and looks at me.

"Will it affect your sleep?"

“Just wear headphones. Don’t worry about the light,” I answer frankly.

The female ghost nods and suddenly disappears from the window.

Then, her figure appears on the screen, almost merging with the movie scene.

At the same time, the sound of the computer speaker mutes, and the light on the screen dims.

Impressive. As expected of a female ghost… I don’t know why, but I feel that my fear of ghosts is decreasing.

Thinking back to when I was young, I was often scared out of my wits by horror movies; yet, I couldn’t help but secretly watch them, feeling both pain and happiness.

I get up, switch off the light in the room, climb into bed, pull the duvet over me, and drape it over my chest.

I close my eyes as I prepare to sleep. Vaguely, I feel like I’ve forgotten something.

A minute later, I snap awake. I open my mouth and say, “Goodnight.”

As a successor of socialism, I have to be polite even when facing female ghosts.

A few seconds later, an ethereal voice reverberates in my ears.

“Goodnight.”

With this done, I begin to sleep with ease. Not long after, I fall into a deep sleep.

When I wake up, I realize that the sky is already bright. Sunlight passes through the curtains, scattering across my bed.

Out of habit, I laze in bed for a few minutes, and slowly I become conscious. I sit up slowly.

Turning my head instinctively, I see that the monitor screen has been switched off. However, the computer hasn't switched off. It's still blinking red.

"…Did she leave after she was done watching?" I gradually recover my memories from last night, like I've experienced a clear dream.

Shaking my head, I pick up my cell phone to check the time.

F*ck!

I scramble up and dash to the bathroom.

I'm almost late!

If I were to mess things up, CEO Huang will skin me alive!

He only treats pretty girls kindly!

At that moment, there's no Assassin, cult, female ghost, or medium to interfere with my thoughts.

For humans, living takes the utmost priority.

And the most important thing needed to live is to have money.

After five minutes, I finish washing up and changing my clothes. I rush downstairs.

Here, I have to thank my two roommates. They always sleep late and wake up late. They don't clash with the time when I need to use the bathroom. They don't delay my getting to work.

Peng Deng had said before that the person he rented an apartment with in another city would always take hour-long baths in the morning, making him either have to wake up early or bring his toothbrush and towel to the office.

I suddenly feel regret when I reach the staircase. I'm an assassin. I could've jumped from the sixth floor.

This could've saved me plenty of time!

However, there must be a lot of pedestrians outside at this point. If I dare go up the windowsill, they would probably call the cops. That would only waste more time.

Without another thought, I jump down the more than tens steps at a time, allowing me to quickly reach the ground floor.

During this process, I even had the time to unlock my phone and hire a car to send me to the airport.

I can make a claim for transportation expenses since it's for business!

My luck isn't bad. Very soon, someone takes my request. Furthermore, he's nearby. After I rush out of the compound, a white peer-to-peer ridesharing car stops in front of me in less than a minute.

Perfect!

As I heave a sigh of relief, I pull the door open and climb in.

"Airport."

"Okay." The driver is wearing a mask and has no habit of striking up a conversation.

This is what I like.

Just like I like having a mute for my haircuts.

I glance at my phone again. After confirming that I still have time even if I encounter a traffic jam, I call the chauffeur and confirm that he's on his way to the airport.

This driver isn't part of our company. He's from the local office branch that the foreign VIP is part of.

In other words, there's no need for me to pick up Mr. Zaratulstra as his own employee will be responsible for it. However, CEO Huang still sent me to receive him to show his sincerity.

After making sure that everything is fine, I start using my phone.

In the process, I see a joke post:

"Why is the person I'm seeing suddenly ignoring me?

"She insisted on going to my house to watch a movie yesterday. I still had to wake up early for work, so I got her to sit by the bed and watch it alone…"

Heh… I mock this guy and check the replies.

About an hour later, the car arrives at the airport.

Thankfully, I'm still early… I breathe a sigh of relief and give the driver a five-star rating.

Then, I open the flight schedule and confirm the arrival time.

"…NH6567 landed at the alternate airport, Ning Bei Airport, due to an engine malfunction…"

Holy sh*t, is this for real? I quickly call the other party's chauffeur.

"Hey, there's a problem with the flight. It was redirected to Ning Bei."

"I'll immediately give Mr. Zaratulstra a call and confirm if he will immediately make a domestic transfer or if he will come by high-speed rail. Or whether we should wait for tomorrow," the chauffeur says rather calmly.

"Okay, where are you? I'll come and meet you first." I'm having a headache just thinking that I might have to wait at the airport for a few more hours.

After asking for the location of the car park, I walk all the way there and find the chauffeur.

This driver is a foreigner with black hair and blue eyes. He had a mustache that isn't too thick, and he looks rather handsome.

“Hello? How do I address you?” I ask as I approach.

Previously, Old Ai only gave me a number and a Chinese name. Now, I would like to call him by his actual name.

The driver nods and says, “Mr. Zaratulstra has already bought a ticket that will fly off in an hour. He will be here very soon. Please inform CEO Huang about the developments.”

“Okay.” I stifle my inner groan.

This means that I might have to stay at the airport until noon.

The chauffeur continues, “My name is Rosago.

“I'm a staff member from the MISTER Company.”

“Your Chinese is very good. Which country are you from?” I casually compliment as I comfort myself.

“France,” Rosago smiles and replies.

Chapter 1414 - In Modern Day (12)

“France is great.” I had plans of politely complimenting his country, but perhaps because I’m used to lampooning, I almost blurt out: “Great at surrendering.”

“Cough…” I cough dryly and say no more, lest he finds Chinese-styled sense of humor unacceptable.

After chatting for a while, I point in the direction of the airport.

“Mr. Zaratulstra will take a few more hours before he arrives. Shall we head inside and have something to drink?”

“Wine?” Rosago looks at me.

“No. I mean coffee, tea, cola, and so on. Don’t drink and drive.” I’m surprised that his first reaction towards the suggestion is wine.

You’re a professional chauffeur!

Aren’t you a little too rash?

The foreigner, Rosago, clearly didn’t understand my humor. After thinking for a few seconds, he says, “Sorry, I woke up too early today and am still a little sleepy. I’ll be sleeping in the car for a while.”

“Okay.” I secretly breathe a sigh of relief.

Although I’m not against social interactions, and I’m even willing to be on good terms with people from a partnered company, I still feel a little uncomfortable thinking about having to spend a few hours with a stranger I'm not familiar with.

Even if the other party were a beauty, this feeling wouldn't be any less.

Yes, that's the case for me. Perhaps he shares the same thoughts. That's probably why he chose to sleep in the car.

Returning from the parking lot to the airport, I randomly find an empty seat and sit down, not putting what I said about drinking something into practice.

It all costs money!

Based on my understanding of CEO Huang, he's quite generous. But at the same time, as the big boss, he wouldn't pay attention to the reimbursements of a mere employee. These sorts of trivial matters are usually handled by the finance department that follows a particular procedure.

Therefore, if I waited until noon at the airport, I would definitely be able to claim the expenses for lunch, but I would have to bear the expenses for coffee, cola, tea, snacks, etc. Those are unnecessary expenses.

Of course, if I could get Comrade Rosago to join me for the meal, then I would be able to claim such expenses—client entertainment!

For this reason, when I invited him earlier, I was actually quite sincere. At least half of it was true.

After sitting for a while and using my phone, I suddenly realize a serious issue:

I hadn't had breakfast yet!

I had left in a hurry this morning!

As I listen to the rumbling of my stomach and feel my thirst and hunger, I decide to find something to eat.

Food at the airport is expensive. Shall I look for KFC or McDonalds, or get some random slice of bread? I stand up and head to the side of the lobby.

When I see the first shop that looks like it sells local delights, I turn in and look for food that's cost-efficient.

My phone buzzes as I approach the frozen foods section.

"Hello, Mr. Rosago. What's the matter?" I glance at the caller ID.

Rosago's voice comes from the other end of the line:

"Ning Bei is undergoing a thunderstorm. All flights are canceled.

"Mr. Zaratulstra will switch to using the high-speed railway."

Isn't this fellow too unlucky… I'm amused yet helpless.

"Then shall we wait at the railway station?"

There's definitely more than enough time because the high-speed railway station is just below the airport.

Even if Mr. Zaratul couldn't buy a ticket to stop at this station, it would take a maximum of 90 minutes from the airport to the municipal high-speed railway station. It takes less time than the time it takes from Ning Bei to this city.

"Wait a little longer. I'll wait for confirmation," Rosago replies calmly.

As we speak, I see the door to the ice cabinet push open. A small, fair, fat hand reaches in and picks up a Baxy-branded white peach oolong-flavored ice cream.

I trace this hand and see a child that looks around one year old.

I have no clue regarding its gender. Sitting in a pram, its face is chubby and it cannot stop chirping. It’s really adorable.

Such a young child eating ice cream? The parents are so irresponsible! I gaze up at the adult pushing the pram, and find a gentle, beautiful woman.

I have no intention of stopping them. It’s none of my business.

As long as they don’t abuse the child, all I’ll do is lampoon.

However, is letting a one-year-old eat ice cream a form of abuse?

Anyways, the child appears quite happy.

After hanging up the phone, I consider the possibility that we have to rush over to the high-speed railway station at any time. I simply make a choice, getting some packaged pastries and bottled water before paying for it at the cashier.

Just as I find a place to sit down and quickly finish breakfast, Rosago calls again.

“The tickets for today’s high-speed railway have been sold out. Mr. Zaratulstra will have to stay there and come tomorrow.”

He sure is filled with bad luck… That’s good too. I can head back directly. I don’t have to wait until noon or head to the railway station… I tersely acknowledge.

“Then let’s head back first?”

“Yes, we’ll come again tomorrow,” Rosago says immediately. “Come to the parking lot. I’ll send you back. I’m returning to the city anyway.”

“…Sure,” I reply with a smile.

It’s not that I’m saving money and being greedy. After all, I can also claim my travel expenses for my trip back.

However, there’s nothing wrong with having good relations with the employees of a partnered company at work.

Even if I don’t end up getting an additional order, it gives me another outlet for job-hopping in the future.

The only problem is how I’ll get along with him later.

It can be quite awkward if two unfamiliar people were to get together.

Let’s just talk about work. It’s only about an hour anyway… I console myself. I leave the airport and find Rosago and his Mercedes.

I get into the car and buckle my seatbelt. Before I can say anything, Rosago turns his head to give me a glance.

“Sit tight.”

Huh? I feel lost for a moment.

The next second, the car starts and speeds off.

Hey, hey, hey, hey. This is still a parking lot. You’re driving too fast! Ah!

After a series of bends, the car slows down and exits the parking lot through the gantry.

Then, the Mercedes continues to race. It swerves left and right on the road, taking up any empty spots. Not only is he on the verge of exceeding the speed limit, but he also shows no signs of stopping.

On several occasions, I imagined that there would be a car accident, but with Rosago’s control, the car nimbly avoids danger.

“This—aren’t you driving too fast?” I ask, coming back to my senses and gulping.

“Don’t worry. I used to be a racer,” Rosago says as he looks ahead, his eyes bright.

But isn’t it too fast? This is a city road, not a race track… I lampoon nervously.

I don’t dare to say another word, afraid that Master Rosago would be distracted and might end up hitting a guardrail or harming the innocent.

At this moment, I recall my ability as an Assassin. I decide that if anything were to go wrong, I would jump out of the car to seek refuge or forcefully control Rosago to stop the vehicle.

40 minutes later, the racing car stops outside the building where my company is located.

“…Thank you. Thank you.” My face is a little pale as I unbuckle the seat belt.

If it weren’t for my abilities as an Assassin and my outstanding balance, I definitely would’ve gotten carsick and puked all over the ground.

“You’re welcome. See you tomorrow.” Rosago waves with a smile.

“…” I exhale and bid the racer farewell.

Entering the building, I glance subconsciously at the spot where the vending machine had appeared. It’s empty.

Fortunately… I head upstairs and press the “up” button.

As I wait, I lower my head and straighten my clothes.

Suddenly, a pair of long legs wearing leather boots walk over.

Chapter 1415 - In Modern Day (13)

* * *

I raise my head subconsciously and glance to the side.

This instantly makes me feel a little uncomfortable.

This isn't because the other party is a gorgeous beauty, but because she's CEO Huang's daughter.

Miss Bernie Huang!

This lady's eyebrows are straight, her nose high, and she wears a pair of blue-tint colored contacts. Together with her slightly curled hair that she dyed a chestnut color, she has a level of beauty belonging to foreigners.

Seeing her look at me, I instinctively open my mouth to greet her.

Miss Huang?

No, that might bring about negative connotations…

My lady, Miss Huang?

It's too exaggerated, just like a brainless idol drama…

Madam Huang?

This clearly doesn't suit a young girl. She'll get angry…

Teacher Huang?

She's still a student…

As my thoughts run through my mind, the young lady, Miss Bernie Huang, nods at me.

"Hello."

"Hello," I respond reflexively, using an honorific greeting.

"Is my dad in the office?" Miss Huang asks softly.

"Oh, sorry. I don't know. I just came back from some work outside. I haven't stepped into the office yet," I answer honestly.

Miss Huang nods slightly and doesn't say anything else because the lift we're waiting for has already reached the first floor.

As the lift moves up, I try my best to find a topic to prevent the situation from being awkward, but I don't dare to strike up a random conversation.

CEO Huang treasures his daughter very much. If I were to offend her by saying something wrong, I might be fired today!

"Zhou…" At this moment, Miss Huang turns to look at me and says hesitantly, as if she's trying to recall my name.

"Zhou Mingrui." I hurriedly say my name.

Although Miss Huang often comes to the office to help her mother check on her father, I believe that she definitely doesn't know a mere employee like me. To be able to have a slight impression of my surname means that her memory is beyond imagination.

"Mr. Zhou, I have something I need your help on." Miss Huang asks politely.

"No problem. As long as I can do it!" I reply without hesitation.

As long as Miss Huang is satisfied, a promotion and a pay raise would not be too far away.

As we speak, we exit the elevator and enter the company.

“Help me translate a batch of documents for me.” Bernie Huang walks in her leather boots as she says.

“Translate… What language is it?” I ask hurriedly.

“Cursive script,” Miss Huang replies simply.

Cursive script… I haven’t learned that before… Just as I’m about to answer, Miss Huang suddenly picks up her pace.

We have already arrived outside CEO Huang’s office.

This lady doesn’t give CEO Huang any face at all. She walks past the female secretary that is stationed outside, nimbly reaching out her hand and pushing open the door gently.

Let’s hope that CEO Huang isn’t spreading his love early in the morning… I silently pray in my heart before taking an indiscernible step to the side in case I get embroiled in CEO Huang’s family matters.

Of course, I’m not that nervous either. After all, CEO Huang is experienced. If he were to do any sordid deeds in the office, he would definitely lock the door from the inside.

As expected, there’s no one in the office.

“CEO Huang is at a meeting.” The female secretary stands up nervously and tells Miss Huang.

“I’ll wait for him inside.” Miss Huang nods and walks into the room.

One step later, she turns her head and says, “Mr. Zhou, please come in.”

“Alright.” I walk over and quickly say, “I don’t have much knowledge about cursive script.”

“Take a look first.” Miss Huang stops by the door and says.

When I enter, she casually closes the door.

Then, she flips her sling bag and takes out a stack of paper.

“Try and see if you can read it. If possible, read it to me.”

“Okay.” I take the stack of papers from her.

“…” My whole body turns stiff from that cursory look.

If I’m not wrong, the cursive script on the paper is from CEO Huang!

I’ve seen the comments he had written on documents on several occasions!

Th-this is CEO Huang’s diary? Damn, don’t tell me he writes down every affair? Which decent person writes a diary! I can’t help but sweat.

If I read it, I offend CEO Huang.

If I don’t read it, I offend Miss Huang.

What does it mean to be in a dilemma? This is what it means to be in a dilemma!

Wait, I don’t know cursive script. Haha, I can’t read it! Although I can barely make out what CEO Huang has written, I really don’t know any cursive script! I immediately open my mouth.

“M-Miss Huang, I can’t…”

Before I finish, the office door is pushed open.

Thud!

CEO Huang rushes in and he scans the both of us with his widened eyes.

He retracts his gaze from the gap between me and Miss Huang, and he smiles.

“Bebe, why didn’t you give me a call? I could’ve gone down to bring you up.”

“I’m already of age.” Miss Huang glances at me from the corner of her eye. “I’m just making a request to Mr. Zhou for his help.”

I Immediately understand her intention. Secretly, I pull the documents behind my back.

“Call him Uncle Zhou!” CEO Huang smiles as he emphasizes. Then, he turns his head to look at me. “You may leave. I’ll holler if there’s anything.”

“Okay.” I use this opportunity to leave the office and return to my seat, where I hide the papers.

Before I can switch on the computer, Rozanne leans in and says with a suppressed voice, “You’re finished.”

“Ah?” I stare blankly.

“Don’t you know that CEO Huang dotes on his daughter to the point of having an obsession? He hates seeing other men get close to his daughter the most. During Miss Huang’s past few visits, the men who took the initiative to offer their help have either ‘quit’ or transferred to a branch company at a Tier 3 city,” Rozanne said with a chuckle.

“…It can’t be. I was just in proximity to her. I mainly did so because I wanted to please CEO Huang.” I grit my teeth from hearing that.

“Tsk, don’t you know what kind of man CEO Huang is? In his eyes, all men are the same as him. If one has money, they’ll definitely be playing around, loving everyone they see—no, making love to everyone they see. If one doesn't have money, then they'll seduce the rich and beautiful lady, take up the post of CEO, and elevate themselves to the peak point of life. Therefore, in the eyes of men like you, Miss Huang is the most tempting of prey," Rozanne said half-jokingly.

"It's just that… It's just that Miss Huang asked me for help. I wasn't playing around at all!" I feel wronged.

"You really weren't playing around?" Rozanne casually asks.

"Of course." I immediately raise my fingers in an oath. "Think about it. To develop and maintain a relationship, you'll need about two to three hours a day, right? If it's two relationships, it'll take four to five hours. There are seven hours for sleep every night, an hour's nap in the afternoon, nine hours of work, and three meals which add up to an hour. That's already 18 hours, leaving only six hours left in a day. If I were playing around and tried to two-time, I wouldn't have the time to play games, watch videos, or read novels! How tiring, how boring!"

"Makes sense…" Rozanne slowly nods before saying with a smile, "Right now, you need a book on time management."

Before I can answer, she continues, "But how does CEO Huang manage to 'N-time' so many women?"

"He's different. If it's just one partner, then he might take one hour out of his two-to three-day schedule to maintain the relationship," I answer thoughtfully.

Rozanne tersely acknowledges.

"That's right. CEO Huang is different from us. He's handsome and rich…"

"Sigh." Rozanne and I sigh at the same time.

Rozanne, who's quite the gossipmonger, suddenly shrinks back.

“Old Ai is here, I’ll be returning to my seat first.”

Just as Rozanne leaves, CEO Huang’s person-in-charge, the corporate office’s Director Ai appears and stops in front of me.

He’s already old. His hair is completely white, and his face is pale.

“Send everything you need to claim today to finance. You don’t have to receive Mr. Zaratulstra anymore,” Old Ai says to me as I hurriedly stand up.

…No way… They’re firing me already? I’m going to get some severance pay? I’m momentarily stunned.

Old Ai passes me a document and continues,

“Liaise with the members involved in this project. It’s a project the company is working on with the police.”

Oh… The turn of events is too sudden that I don’t know how to respond.

Realizing that I don’t have to ride with Rosago tomorrow, I have the baffling feeling that it might not be a bad idea.

Chapter 1416 - In Modern Day (14)

* * *

After finding the project team and gaining an understanding of the situation, I spend quite a bit of time organizing the information. I also leave the company at three in the afternoon, preparing myself to head towards the city's police station to visit the staff in charge.

After leaving my company's building, I take out my phone, open my ride-sharing app, and submit my destination.

Since it's not the evening rush hour, I get a driver in just a few seconds.

He's in the vicinity, one minute… I glance at the notification and am very pleased that I don't need to wait too long.

One minute passes quickly, but as I look left and right, I don't see the license plate that I remember.

Suspecting that I've misremembered, I hurriedly unlock my phone to confirm the situation.

At this moment, I heard the chiming of a bicycle bell.

Uh… I subconsciously look up and see a green-orange bicycle.

Sitting on the bicycle is a young man wearing a dark baseball cap and a thin black coat.

Ring! Ring! Ring!

The bicycle stops in front of me as the man extends his right foot to support the bicycle against the ground.

His forehead is wide and his face is thin. His short black hair is slightly curled, and his eyes are darker than an ordinary person's—close to pure black.

His biggest characteristic was that, like a cosplayer, he wore a crystal monocle on his right eye.

Holding the bicycle's handle with one hand, the man adjusts his monocle with the other. He smiles at me and says, "You were the one who requested a ride?"

†

I did, but I requested a car, not a bicycle…

I open my mouth, unsure if I should answer.

At that moment, I even underwent existential questions: Who I am. Where am I? Where am I going?

"You're going to the police station, right?" The young man with the monocle didn't care that I didn't respond as he asked with a smile.

…No way? Is there really an option for getting a bicycle? And I selected it somehow? I slowly nod.

At this moment, there are only two clear thoughts in my mind:

Should I take a photo or video to post on my Moments?

Should I call the customer service to complain?

At that moment, the young man wearing the monocle points to the side of the building and says, "Wait another minute, my car is parked there."

As he speaks, he takes out his phone and waves it.

"Huh?" I still don't understand what's happening.

The young man presses the edge of his monocle and smiles.

"I did something in the nearby alley just now. I couldn't drive through, and the distance to walk here was a little far, so I rented a shared bike.

"I'm sorry, please wait a minute or two."

Since the other party has already said so and I'm not in a rush. I politely reply, "It's fine."

The young man immediately puts away his phone and rode his bicycle to the side of the building.

Soon, a white car drives over and stops in front of me.

"Alright, you can board it now." The car window rolls down, revealing the face with the monocle.

Just as I'm about to open the car door, I suddenly realize a problem:

The car displayed on the app is black!

Uh… I'm just about to walk to the back to look at the car plate when the driver waves his phone at me across the passenger seat.

"I have two cars.

"I'm driving this car today, but I bound my account to the other one.

"Look, my phone is right."

With that, he calls me.

Seeing that the number displayed isn't a problem, and considering how I've encountered similar situations before, I'm relieved. I open the car door and get in.

It's broad daylight in a bustling city. What is there to be afraid of?

However, the reviewing and verifications undertaken by the platform are really problematic.

When I get into the car, the driver with a monocle looks ahead as he picks up a cigarette box and hands it back.

“Want a cigarette?”

“Isn’t smoking banned?” I blurt.

“As long as I don’t mind it.” The thin driver smiles through the rearview mirror.

“I don’t smoke.” I instinctively shake my head.

The driver holds the steering wheel with one hand, not really paying attention to the situation on the road.

“It’s good that you don’t smoke. I don’t smoke either. Smoking causes one to have a ghastly appearance.”

“Then why do you have cigarettes…” I follow up quickly.

As the car drives down the road, the driver uses his empty hand to touch the monocle on his right eye.

“There will always be some friends you need to meet despite you being unwilling to meet.”

“That’s true.” I nod.

At this moment, I recall Vice President Wu from the company next door. Although he smokes, his appearance is definitely not ghastly. However, there’s no need to say it out loud. I’m not someone who gets into debates with others in a professional manner.

“You don’t look like a rideshare driver.” I glance at the obviously expensive cigarettes, and glance around the luxurious interior of the car.

"Heh heh," the driver replies with a smile. "Is my performance that obvious?"

"You don't look like you make a living from ridesharing. You look like you come from a rich family." I give a random reason.

Either way, I can't tell.

"Heh heh, being born with a silver spoon doesn't bar me from making a living from ridesharing. It allows me to experience a completely different life from my past, and being able to see all kinds of unique people is a form of entertainment. Don't you find it interesting?" the driver says with a smile.

How philosophical… I nod and casually say, "That may be the case, but I think you occasionally only take a few ride orders and are usually busy with other things."

"Yes, I went to your building to investigate." The driver looks at the rearview mirror again, and his smile makes me feel a little strange.

"Investigate…" I'm at a loss.

"It's about an evil cult. They like to use vending machines to harm others." The corner of the driver's lips curls up.

†

If it wasn't for the fact that I already knew about it, I would've lost my composure!

"You're a private detective? Do you know a detective named Sherlock Moriarty? This might be his nickname." I suddenly have an idea.

The driver raises his hand to pinch the edge of his monocle and chuckles.

"Of course. We're old friends."

I don't know if it's my imagination, but I feel like he emphasized the words "old friend."

"D-did you, or any of you find anything?" I try my best to act like a bystander.

The driver half-turns his head to glance at me and says with an obvious smile, "Guess."

That's such a punchable smile… I rein in my emotions.

"I guess so."

"Then it's as you say," the driver says with an expression of "I know a lot, but I won't tell you."

"…" As I think about what to say, he suddenly straightens his back and looks ahead.

Then, he pushes the monocle on his right eye.

Suddenly, countless fragments appear in my mind.

Overlapping roads, tunnels, mixed colors, different signboards, pedestrians, cars that swept backwards rapidly…

They simultaneously explode in my mind at the same time, making me feel like I'm suffering from motion sickness.

"We're here." The driver's voice enters my ears the next second.

I get out of the car in a daze and squat down at the side of the road, feeling like I might vomit at any moment.

I recover after a while, but the ridesharing car has already left.

Thinking back, I suddenly shudder.

The driver resembled the emoji that The Star had mentioned:

Chapter 1417 - In Modern Day (15)

◆

No way… Is the driver related to the monocle incident that The Star mentioned? He's been corrupted, or is he the source of corruption? Wait, why did I use the word "corruption"… At that moment, I feel like my heart stopped beating for two seconds.

I forget my stupor as I quickly check my belongings.

My phone is still here!

My keys are still here!

My travel card is still here!

My seven yuan change is still here!

My shoes are still here, my pants are still here, my clothes are still here, and my body is still here!

Phew… I didn't lose anything. Nothing happened… I heave a sigh of relief. I feel as though I was just overthinking things.

People just love to scare themselves.

Since I've already taken out my phone, I take a look at the time.

3:25 p.m.

That driver drove really fast—five to six minutes earlier than the estimated time on the app. No wonder I got motion sickness… I gain a new understanding of the situation.

So that's what happened!

However, I keep having the feeling as though I wasn't in the car for more than fifteen minutes, and that we didn't exchange many words.

Maybe it was due to the motion sickness I experienced towards the end of my journey, probably… I raise my head, get my bearings, and head for the eye-catching police station.

It's a compound with several buildings inside. Two fully armed police officers stand guard at the entrance.

At this moment, I suddenly think of a problem. I connect it to a question from my prior inspection of my personal belongings.

I didn't bring a paper notebook or pen!

Of course, this isn't a result of my negligence. It's just that I'm used to using my cell phone to record matters. If it were something grander in scale, or in a more professional setting, I would bring a notebook computer. I haven't used a paper notebook in the last two years.

Uh, in a work environment like a police station, the leaders in charge of matters definitely can't stand the situation of someone holding a cell phone and tapping on it during business exchanges. That's not polite at all! When dealing with them, it's better to be more conservative and traditional. Hmm, I'll first find a stationery shop, buy a pen, buy a notebook, and then go in. Heh heh, in a business environment, putting on an act is also a skill… I immediately look around to find my target.

At times like this, I'll always praise my habit of leaving some buffer time. This gives me enough time to not be in a rush, and allows me to be calm.

The leader in charge of the project and I agreed to meet at 4:00 p.m., so I have 35 minutes of spare time.

Normally speaking, taking a taxi from the company to this place would take about 20 minutes. With the series of actions like going downstairs, waiting for the ride, and entering the compound, the total time required is about 35 minutes. I set off at 3:00 p.m., giving myself plenty of buffer time to arrive at the scheduled time of 3.45 p.m., but considering the possibility of traffic jams, registrations, inspections, and unknown accidents, I ultimately scheduled the appointment to be at 4:00 p.m.

To my surprise, the driver with the monocle drove so fast that I arrived ahead of time.

I don't find any stationery stores despite looking around. I hurriedly take out my phone and use the map app to search for a nearby store.

The nearest stationery store is two kilometers away… Get a rideshare to go over? Just as I'm hesitating, I suddenly see a small shop on the opposite side of the road.

"Star Dream Provisions Store."

Provisions store… maybe there's stationery… I'll go take a look first. There's no need to get a rideshare… Heh, Star Dream. It feels like a celebrity management agency… I quickly make up my mind and quicken my pace. Taking advantage of the flashing green light, I cross the pedestrian crossing.

Soon, I arrive at the Star Dream Provisions Store.

The restaurant is very cramped, and the lighting isn't good. It's rather dim inside, giving me the feeling of going from afternoon to evening instantly.

Lining both sides of the store are shelves that are about 1.8 meters tall. The items placed on the shelves are dazzling, but they all look rather strange.

The cashier is right at the back where a woman in a black dress sits at the back. She has her back against two wooden cabinets and is facing a tablet computer. She’s playing with her phone.

There’s an ancient serial drama playing on the tablet computer, adding a bit of life to the dark shop. However, it’s obvious that the cashier is only listening to the sounds with zero concern about the content.

This store’s design is illogical, and the boss isn’t meticulous. If I were a thief, I could take a few items and turn around to leave. She wouldn’t be able to discover it at all… I lampoon silently before walking to the cashier and rap the wooden counter thrice.

“Hello, do you have a notebook and pen? I’m referring to a paper notebook.”

The woman in a black dress looks up and replies with a smile, “Yes, we do. Over there.”

Her voice is very gentle, calming me down instantly. Her looks are pretty good. Even the dark environment can’t mask her beauty.

Without taking another look, I trace the shop owner’s finger and look towards the corner of the third rack of the shelf on the right.

There is something that appears to be a notebook there, but its design is very strange, as if it’s made of brass pages.

“This is a notebook?” I reach for the brass book.

It feels cold to the touch, as if it’s made of metal. However, there is indeed paper inside.

“Yes.” The shop owner in a black dress says with a calm smile, “My shop’s theme is ‘mystery.’ All the products in this area have this characteristic.”

Product differentiation strategy… This phrase flashes across my mind.

At the same time, I survey my surroundings and see an antique quill, a silver mirror with black eyeballs on both sides, and a few dice of different shapes—too many to count.

Mirror… I subconsciously pick up the mirror with my other hand.

I want to confirm my current condition. I can't look terrible just because of my motion sickness and have it affect the business exchange later.

The mirror quickly reflects my face:

Black hair, brown eyes, deep facial features, hard lines…

Damn, when did I become so handsome? I can't believe that I'm the one in the mirror!

After being stunned for two seconds, I quickly put down the brass notebook, take out my phone, and use the screen to examine myself.

This is very normal. It's still my original appearance… I turn my head to look at the mirror again. I'm still very handsome in the mirror.

"…What's going on with this mirror?" I can't help but ask.

The woman in the black dress smiles.

"This is a smart mirror."

"Ah, I understand." I suddenly understand.

It's a smart mirror with its own beautifying features, filters, and Photoshop effects!

To put it simply, it's actually a special tablet that's directly connected to TikTok and BeautyCam apps.

With this in mind, I lose interest and immediately place the mirror back in its original position.

For some reason, I feel like the mirror is a little sticky. I use a lot of strength to retract my hand.

"How much is this notebook? And this quill." I don't waste any time. I pick up the brass notebook again and ask for the price.

The boss in a black dress purses her lips and chuckles.

"Ten million."

Pfft… I almost spit on her face.

"The two of these are antiques," the boss added.

"… Is there anything that isn't an antique? Something more normal?" I take a deep breath and ask directly.

"Yes." The woman in the black dress points behind me.

I turn around and see a black, ordinary notebook.

I pick it up and flip through it. I'm certain that the surface of the notebook is made of hard paper. The paper inside is an imitation of goatskin. One of the pages is painted with The Fool, who's wearing gorgeous clothes and dazzling head accessories.

With The Fool as my online nickname, how can I not recognize The Fool?

"How much is it?" I ask casually.

"30 yuan," the boss replies with a good attitude.

"It's a little expensive. What about this pen?" I casually pick up another dark red, classic fountain pen.

"25 yuan. If you buy both of them, you can have them for 50 yuan," the boss in the black dress says with a smile.

I hesitate for a few seconds and feel that 50 yuan isn't an unacceptable price compared to traveling two kilometers by taxi—not only is it a waste of time, but the transport cost would be around 20 yuan.

Including the cost of the notebook and pen, it would be about 30 to 40 yuan.

“Okay.” I take out my phone and complete the transaction.

After leaving the Star Dream Provisions Store and returning to the police station, I register at the guard house.

During this process, a police car drives out.

“Is there an emergency mission?” the policeman on duty asks.

While waiting for the barrier to rise, the driver replies indifferently, “Damn it, a car thief appeared. He stole two sedan cars!”

Chapter 1418 - In Modern Day (16)

◆ ◆ ◆

Stole two sedan cars in a row… This is probably a crime syndicate. How can one person drive two cars? I can't help but mutter inwardly.

This is the cultivation I've gone through as a fan of courtroom dramas and detective series, as well as me being a loyal reader of crime deduction novels.

Of course, I don't say it out loud. I believe that people with standard intelligence can come to a similar conclusion.

When the guard on duty calls to confirm my identity, I take out my phone and check the time.

There's more than enough time… I let out a sigh of relief as I unhurriedly circle around the pond in the middle of the courtyard and enter the building facing the main entrance.

After I run through the possible exchange in my mind, I knock on the door of the target's office three minutes early.

"Please come in." A mellow voice sounds from inside.

"O-Officer Deng…" As soon as I push open the door and enter, I realize that the officer sitting behind the desk is the one who had come to check on my residence permit!

I always imagined that he's a police officer at the police station, but I never expected him to have an office at the Municipal Public Security Bureau. He even has the room to himself!

"You are?" Officer Deng raises his hand to comb his receding hairline and asks with a puzzled look, "Do we know each other?"

"Last night, you checked on my residence permit and reminded me of a mysterious cult. Later, we met again in Lawson. I even reported a woman suspected to be a member of the cult." I begin to suspect that the person in front of me is Officer Deng's biological brother, but I still give the details.

Officer Deng is enlightened.

"Zhou-Zhou Mingrui, right?

"I'm face-blind, and I don't have a good memory. It was night, so I couldn't see clearly."

I don't need you to tell me that your memory isn't good or how you have face-blindness. I can tell… I politely smile.

"Today, I'm representing the Intis Group to take over the previous project."

"Yes, we agreed to meet at four." Officer Deng points at the chair opposite his desk.

I immediately approach it and plan on placing the black notebook that I just bought on the table. I will then flip it to the middle—I can't let Officer Deng notice that I just bought it and have never written on it.

Officer Deng glances at the notebook and frowns slightly.

Following that, he picks up the phone and dials an internal department number.

"Hey, the Intis Group is here. Come over for a meeting."

After a simple briefing, he puts down the phone and smiles at me.

"This is an international collaboration project. We can't decide on our own. Yes, the other party's representative will be here soon."

"I'm aware of that." I've read the relevant documents in the morning and know what's going on.

Of course, even if I'm lazy and didn't read it, I'll still have given such an answer. I can't let the partner I'm working with find out that I'm skiving and not doing my job well.

Not long after I sit down, I hear Officer Deng's office door open.

I stand up politely and look back. I see an old man in a long black robe.

His hair is white, and the wrinkles at the edge of his eyes and mouth are deeply recessed. His dark red eyes appear slightly turbid.

A red moon pendant hangs on his chest. He looks like a priest from a cathedral.

A foreign priest… I nod with a smile, fully displaying my courtesy.

For some reason, I find this old man a little familiar, just like the first time I met Officer Deng.

Strange… Recently, I've been feeling sad for some inexplicable reason. Is this the after-effect of the Assassin beverage? I silently inhale and control my emotions.

At that moment, Officer Deng introduces, "Old Neil, an Interpol representative, a clergyman."

"Hello, Mr. Neil." I quickly greet him.

Old Neil doesn't speak. He sizes me up and chuckles.

"Lad, have you been troubled by ghosts recently?"

…You can tell? I'm shocked. I don't know if I should admit it or hide it from a stranger.

"Don't lie. My eyes are very sharp." Old Neil smiles and points at his eyes.

"A little…" I mutter.

"Haha." Old Neil immediately laughs. "You're still too young. You confessed the moment I called you out. Actually, I'm not that sure. Yes, I'm a priest. I have the ability to expel wraiths and shadows. Do you need my help?"

…Is it okay to discuss such feudal superstitions in front of a police officer? I open my mouth, speechless.

Old Neil walks to Officer Deng's table and very naturally picks up the coffee can on it.

"Don't worry. I don't charge much. If you're still a believer of the Goddess, I can even do it for free."

I wasn't a believer of the Goddess in the past, but I am now! At this moment, my heart is palpitating.

I hesitate for two seconds before sighing.

"But, I've already found a helper."

"Who is it? There aren't many people with such abilities. Most of them are cheats." Old Neil skillfully brews his coffee and asks casually.

"…Daly, do you know her?" I ask hesitantly.

"Daly… Ah, then that's fine." Old Neil retracts his smile and asks, "Are you the representative of the Intis Group? Let's begin."

At the same time, Officer Deng shakes his head with a smile, looking helpless.

"You know Madam Daly?" I ask.

Old Neil sighs and points at Officer Deng.

“His fiancée.”

“Oh, oh…” Everyone knows each other! I can’t help but sigh.

This boosts my confidence in Madam Daly.

I stop chatting and begin communicating with Officer Deng and Old Neil about the project, taking note of their requests.

An hour passes.

“Yawn.” Old Neil stretches his back. “It’s finally over. These old bones of mine really can’t withstand the torment of such meetings. I no longer have the energy.”

With that said, he stands up and smiles at me and Officer Deng.

“It’s time for me to retire.

“It’s time for me to leave. I’ll go to a faraway village. I’ll grow some flowers, feed the chickens, and play the piano for my wife. I don’t have to worry about things here anymore.”

Officer Deng stands up as well. As he sends Old Neil out, he smiles and says, “Let’s go together.”

As I watch them leave, I suddenly feel speechless.

Chapter 1419 - In Modern Day (17)

◆

It’s not even 5:30, and I can get off work normally again! I’ve already composed myself by the time when I walk out of the police station, feeling happy that I don’t have to work overtime today.

Before I left in the afternoon, I communicated with the administration department and was told that I didn’t need to return to the company. After all, we didn’t know how long the meeting would take.

What if Officer Deng got me to stay for dinner, sing some karaoke, and enjoy a spa, right?

Although the probability of this happening is low, even if it wouldn’t happen to me, I still have to be prepared.

The distance from the old estate where my rented apartment is to the police station is shorter than it is from my company, but I still chose to take public transport, because the company doesn’t reimburse the transportation fees for returning home.

Metro line 3,600 meters… Bus 72, 150 meters… I take out my phone and search for a route home.

After careful consideration, I choose to take the bus.

The weather is hot in the summer, so it’s best if I can minimize the steps taken.

As I wait at the bus stop for the bus, I can’t help but doubt my life.

I'm already a real, powerful, and extraordinary assassin. Why do I have to live like a slave of society?

But I can't get any money without work.

Assassins also need to save money to buy a house, food, and clothes!

Sigh, at times like this, it should be like a game. Give me an assassin manager and help me gather missions. After confirming how evil my target is, I'll shave my head and flash through the crowd. No, being bald is too ugly. Forget it…

What can I do?

Record videos of extreme sports?

I still have to practice and learn. I've never paid attention to it before…

Actually, I can consider joining the police academy. As an assassin, I'm capable of capturing thieves and scammers. I won't disappoint with my abilities. The only problem is that I've heard that a policeman's income isn't too high.

Perhaps it's better after the probation period?

As I seriously consider the future, I board the bus. I hold the handle and notebook with one hand, and I pull out my phone with the other.

I'm a refined person. I definitely won't blast out any sounds in public. I don't have wireless earphones, so I can only browse Weibo and HUPU, an online sports community website.

As the bus drives, it suddenly stops. The driver's voice sounds from the speaker.

"Get off the bus. There's a malfunction. Wait for the next one."

The passengers curse as they get out of the bus. I'm among them as I sigh at my bad luck today.

There's only one stop left. There's no need to wait. I'll just walk back. I open the map app and confirm my current location.

If I knew this would happen, I might as well have taken the subway!

I follow the GPS—walking straight, taking a bend, crossing the street—to the old estate I live in.

At this moment, I see a five or six-year-old girl jump out from the roadside, and an SUV is speeding over.

"..." I'm stunned at first, but then I realize that I'm an assassin, an expert that surpasses ordinary people.

Without any hesitation, I run towards the girl.

Seeing that I might not make it in time, I exert strength into my legs and kick out, relying on my assassin's ability to unleash all of my strength in one strike to pounce forward.

During this process, I feel like a sharp arrow that had been shot from a bow.

In the blink of an eye, I lunge for the little girl and hug her.

Then, I straighten my back and quickly adjust my body structure, making myself as light as a feather.

The SUV finally stops. I take a few steps to the side and steady myself.

To be honest, I was hit, but because I made myself seemingly weightless, I didn't suffer any damage.

"Are you alright?" The SUV driver gets out of the car and frantically asks.

His face is drenched in sweat.

"I'm fine. It was a close one." I put down the dazed little girl and pat her shoulder.

She has long, jet-black hair which makes her qualified to be a model in a shampoo commercial.

“That’s good, that’s good.” The SUV driver is relieved to see that I didn’t dirty or injure myself.

At this moment, a middle-aged man rushes out from the side of the road.

When he sees that the little girl is fine, he’s obviously relieved.

His skin is bronze in color and he has soft facial features. He has a pair of eyes that are closer in color to brown. They appear to have been through a lot.

“Thank you, thank you. Are you okay?” he asks, concerned.

“No, my luck isn’t bad. I just happened to avoid the collision,” I reply with a smile, inexplicably in a good mood.

I’ve finally used the ability belonging to an assassin.

The SUV driver points at his license plate.

“Contact me if you have any problems. I still have something to do, so I’ll be leaving first.”

The middle-aged man nods before saying to me,

“Why don’t you come to my shop to have a drink to calm yourself down?”

For some reason, I feel a sense of closeness with him. And since it’s free, I don’t reject him.

“Okay.”

As I speak, I pick up the black notebook.

After leaving the road and passing through the non-motorcar lane, I see this gentleman’s shop.

This is a themed bookstore. It’s renovated to look like a coffee shop. The other door leads to a nearby park with a wooden swing hanging on it.

“Don’t wander around in the future. It’s very dangerous. Come on, thank Uncle.” The bookstore owner pulls the little girl over.

“Call me Brother. Don’t make me sound so old,” I joke.

“Thank you, Brother.” The little girl follows his instructions.

Without waiting for my reply, she cleverly says, “Then my father is your elder!”

Damn, did I just get taken advantage of… I can only smile helplessly.

The bookstore owner immediately asks, “What would you like to drink?”

“A cold beverage would do.” I’m not a picky eater.

“Okay.” The bookstore owner points at the surrounding bookshelves and says, “You can also pick a book to read.”

“Okay.” As he mixes the cold beverage, I curiously walk to the bookshelf to see what’s on it.

Groselle’s Travels

Book of Secrets

Roselle and his 100 Mistresses

The Self-Cultivation of Evil Gods

How to Make the Believers Offer Money

What kind of books are these? I’m stunned as I read them. Finally, I choose the seemingly normal Groselle's Travels.

Just as I find a seat and sit down, the bookstore owner walks over with a glass.

The drink is brownish-red in color, and there's quite a few pieces of ice in it. After drinking it in one gulp, it's slightly sour and sweet. It's cold and very refreshing. Great for the summer.

"Not bad," I praise.

The boss doesn't say anything else and returns to the cashier.

I then leisurely lean back in my chair and flip through Groselle's Travels. From time to time, I take a mouthful of the cold beverage, feeling very pleased.

After a while, the girl runs to the back door and shouts, "Daddy, Daddy, I want to sit on the swing."

The bookstore owner sighs and walks over with a smile.

I smile and take another sip of my drink. I can't help but sigh.

An afternoon like this is really nice…

Chapter 1420 - In Modern Day (18)

◆

Having had half a day to spare, I stay in the bookstore until it's almost seven.

During this time, I can't refuse the owner's repeated offers. I reluctantly take a small slice of lemon cake, a set of pasta with minced meat, and two grilled sausages that had been battered and fried with spicy chicken powder.

I don't need dinner… I rub my belly and decide to take a walk home.

This helps with digestion.

The only problem is that the weather is hot and stuffy. If I walk in this weather for a while, I'll definitely sweat.

However, ever since I entered society, I've always had the habit of taking a shower everyday. And today, I'm also preparing to wash some clothes, so I'm not too averse to sweating.

To my surprise, perhaps because of the Assassin beverage, I managed to passively lose weight. I don't even have a tummy. Furthermore, I'm good at using the shadows to hide myself. When I return to my rented apartment, I've only sweated a fifth of what I expected.

That medium lady, Madam Daly, will be here at nine. There's still about two hours left. With more than enough time, I decide to use the fan after my shower, and to play some games.

As for using the air conditioner, the weather isn't too hot. Besides, after becoming an Assassin, I feel that I have a strong tolerance for heat and stuffy conditions.

To be honest, this cannot be considered unbearable. It's just that I don't really feel that hot and stuffy.

When I enter the bathroom, I glance at the mirror and suddenly think of a question:

That female ghost was introduced by Detective Sherlock Moriarty to protect me and investigate that mysterious cult. She hasn't shown any intention of harming me. Should I remind her that I've found a medium, so she should hide in advance?

She doesn't have any ill intentions. She's very friendly. Besides, my reason for dealing with that mysterious cult is reasonably convincing… She must've sensed Madam Daly's power last night. Even if I don't tell her, she should be able to guess what will happen next… I think for a moment and make up my mind.

However, a new problem rears its head:

How should I warn her?

I don't even know where she is or how I should contact her!

Looking around, I can't find any clues. It seems like I'm the only person in the room.

Uh, yes, there's only one person, but who knows if there are any ghosts.

Perhaps she's hiding somewhere and I can just talk to the air? It's rather silly talking to myself… I recall last night and cast my gaze back at the mirror.

Looking at my reflection in the mirror, I whisper, "I've hired a medium. She'll be here at nine."

As soon as I finish speaking, the mirror in front of me turns dark, as if the surrounding light had been sucked in.

The pale female ghost wearing a small bonnet and a retro dress appears in the mirror and nods gently.

“Thank you.”

In a second, her image disappears and the mirror returns to normal.

I heave a sigh of relief and hang up my clothes before I start to take a shower.

As I shower, I suddenly freeze.

Since the female ghost has already left, why am I spending so much money to hire a medium?

The female ghost clearly has no ill intentions, and she’s even secretly protecting me. Why would I spend so much money to hire a medium?

That’s 20,000 yuan, with a maximum of 50,000!

Wouldn’t that be a waste of money?

While taking pity on my wallet, I feel the need to think of a way to cancel the contract.

Anyways, it’s still early. As long as Madam Daly doesn’t live in the suburbs, she probably hasn’t set off yet.

But I can’t be sure that the female ghost doesn’t have any ill intentions… In my hesitation, I wipe myself dry and put on my clothes.

After careful consideration, I decided to use the strategy of delaying things to hold back on the exorcism assignment.

During this process, if I discover something amiss, I’ll immediately get Madam Daly to come over!

Sigh, it’s really embarrassing to break a contract… I return to my room, pick up my phone, and send a message to SleepingWithCorpses.

“Madam Daly, the ghost that is haunting me seems to have left.”

This is the truth, but I didn’t explain why.

“Indeed…” After more than ten seconds, Madam Daly replies, “Could it be that the restrictions I did last night scared her away? Or maybe you were too much of a pervert and scared her away. Didn’t I ask you to watch ‘A Chinese Ghost Story’ and learn how to interact with female ghosts?”

I feel that it’s more likely that ‘A Chinese Ghost Story’ will make the female ghost shy… I didn’t dare reply as I cautiously say,

“I don’t know.

“How about this? Don’t come over today. I’ll keep an eye out for a few more days. If the female ghost really doesn’t appear again, then forget it. If there’s any problem, I’ll let you know again. How about that?”

After some hesitation, I add, “I can reimburse you for your preparations. No, I mean pay a reasonable fee.”

“Let’s do this for now. I thought I could catch a female ghost and play with it.” Madam Daly sends an emoji.

Hearing this, I relax. I feel like I’ve earned a huge sum of money.

After settling this matter, I happily play games.

At eleven o’clock, I decided to go downstairs to buy some delicious food to reward myself as I didn’t spend any money for dinner and didn’t have to pay for the exorcism.

“Eggplants, I have to have roasted eggplants…” I mutter as I rush out of the estate.

Before I can choose the barbecue stall, I see those punks again.

Among them, the hooligan nicknamed “Dani” is seriously handing out flyers.

His dyed, charred-yellow hair, eyebrows, and his introduction of the description of tutoring class form a strong contrast.

This tutoring class is interesting… I glance around and see an acquaintance sitting at the barbecue stall on the right.

Miss Bernie Huang!

How is a rich young lady like her eating at a roadside barbecue stall? Does CEO Huang know? I casually size up Miss Huang’s companion.

If it was a guy, hehe, that would be amazing gossip!

Uh, a girl wearing black-framed glasses. She’s not too old, about the same age as Miss Huang… I feel full of regret and was about to retract my gaze.

At this moment, Miss Huang raises her head and looks over.

At this moment, our eyes meet.

She immediately stands up and walks towards me.

This is a little awkward… However, there’s nothing to feel awkward about. I live nearby, so what’s wrong with coming out to eat some barbecue? I stand my ground and wait for Miss Huang and her friend to come over.

Miss Huang stops in front of me and tersely acknowledges my presence.

“I have something I need your help with.”

The girl in black-framed glasses beside her asks curiously, “Father, who is he?”

Pfft… What kind of address is that? The relationship between youngsters nowadays is so complicated… I'm actually at a loss as to how to respond. I can only force the corners of my mouth to curl up as I express my doubts with a smile.

"We had a bet in our dorm. Whoever lost had to address the winner as father," Miss Bernie Huang explains.

She points at the girl beside her.

"Her family runs a tutoring class.

"I would like you to register for the Dream Tutoring Classes and sit in for their classes.

"I'll pay for it. I'll also pay you a fee for the work you do later."

Register for the tutoring class… I can't help but turn my head to look at the hooligans who are seriously handing out flyers.

Chapter 1421 - In Modern Day (19)

◆

“Why don’t you sign up for it yourself?” I don’t really want to get involved in Miss Huang’s matters.

On the one hand, CEO Huang is both a playboy, but he also has a daughter complex. His thoughts go astray the moment he sees any man getting close to Miss Huang. Alarm bells would go off in his head and he would overreact. Considering how it’s a rather good source of income for me, I don’t want to lose my job over this. Yes, although I’ve been working overtime for quite a while, I’m still paid enough for overtime work. CEO Huang has always been generous in terms of remuneration.

On the other hand, attending a tutoring class is so troublesome. If I have the time, wouldn’t it be better to spend my time on something else?

Of course, if it’s just to scout for information, and I don’t have to spend my own money, then I can do anything I like while attending the class as long as it doesn’t affect the students around me.

Miss Bernie Huang points at the girl in black-framed glasses and says, “Her family’s company and this company are competitors, and they know each other. Regardless of whether it’s her or her staff at the tutoring center, they definitely won’t be able to sign up for it.”

“You can…” I discover a blind spot.

Miss Huang shakes her head.

"I can't either."

"The boss and part-time lecturer of this tutoring center knows me."

"You're kidding?" I subconsciously ask.

Miss Huang glances at the group of hooligans who are handing out flyers and says, "She's Uncle Ai's granddaughter."

Director Ai? I laugh.

"This is friendly fire—conflicts arising between people on the same side."

Without waiting for Miss Huang and her "daughter" to speak, I sincerely give a suggestion:

"To be honest, why do you need someone to attend their tutoring classes?

"You can all work together.

"Everyone can establish an indirect relationship. You invest in me, and I'll invest in you. Wouldn't a merger be better?

"Only by becoming larger and stronger will you be able to fight against other tutoring center chains!"

With that said, I silently apologize.

Sorry, I've been reading more business reports recently.

"I'll consider that. However, we have to first grasp the style and quality of their tutoring classes before we can talk about anything else," Miss Huang replies in a business-like manner.

This is the result of an in-home upbringing… I sigh inwardly and casually say,

"Then you can find a random passerby."

"They aren't trustworthy. I still have to do background checks. It's too expensive to find a professional company. The cost is too high," Miss Huang answers the questions that I haven't even thought of.

She continues, "You don't need to attend the classes often. You just need to attend four to five lessons. After that, it will be up to your own preferences."

Four to five lessons, which means one or two weekends. I'll treat it as overtime… I hesitate for a moment before saying, "I'll ask."

Miss Huang and the girl in black-framed glasses immediately replies, "Thank you."

I then walk towards the group of hooligans and stop in front of the guy whose hair and eyebrows are dyed a charred-yellow.

Dani… This definitely isn't a proper nickname. It's best that I don't address him like that, lest we fight on the spot… Although I'm already an Assassin and am unparalleled, there's no need for that… I cough lightly and say, "What are the fees like for the tutoring classes?"

The hooligan with the yellowish eyebrows looks at me with a happy expression and says, "It depends on the situation. For example, what kind of class you'll be taking? Is it an evening class, weekend class, or classes during the daytime? All of them have different prices.

"Also, what do you primarily want to learn? Foreign languages, mathematics, Chinese, history? Or everything? And what level are you at?"

Of course, it has to be weekend classes. I usually don't have time. I'm dead tired after work every day. I just want to have some fun… Considering how I had to receive a foreign VIP previously, I reply, "Weekend class, foreign languages, more verbal in style, adult standards. It's best to be more business-oriented."

"Sure, no problem." The hooligan nicknamed "Dani" turns over the flyer in his hand and hands it to me. “Weekend business English classes, 8,888 yuan a semester…”

He rambles on.

“I’ll consider it.” I take the flyer and say, “When can I sign up?”

“The registration period is currently underway. There are discounts for registering now. It only costs 6,666… The location is the address on the flyer. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the morning,” Dani” introduces in detail.

“Is that so…” I look around and casually ask, “This is the first time I’ve seen people handing out flyers at night. Don’t you guys have time to rest?”

“We have to wait for the barbecue anyway, so we’re just handing out flyers while we wait. Moreover, the foot traffic is the highest here at night,” “Dani” explains indifferently.

“I see.” I ask, “What’s your name? Do I need to mention your name when signing up?”

I would like to confirm if they get any commissions from successfully recruiting students when handing out flyers.

“No need. There’s no need.” Dani shakes his head in a slight daze.

“You don’t get any commissions? All you do is hand out flyers?” I press in puzzlement.

Isn’t this too professional?

Besides, as a hooligan, what isn’t better than handing out flyers?

Upon hearing my words, Dani is taken aback. He smiles and says, “My main job is being a tutor at the tutoring center.

“I teach foreign languages.”

"…" At this moment, I feel that this tutoring center is a little unreliable.

It was at this time that their barbecue was done. The other hooligans stop handing out flyers and walk towards the stall.

Dani panics.

"Sh*t!

"Wait for me."

As he runs to the barbecue stall, he turns around and says to me, "My surname is Da.

"Call me Teacher Da!"

The accent of the foreign language sounds quite authentic… I shake my head and return to another barbecue stall to find Miss Huang and her dormitory daughter.

"I'll go take a look this weekend," I say simply.

"How much is it?" the girl in black-framed glasses asks.

"They claim that there's a discount. 6,666." I don't hide anything.

Miss Huang nods.

"Perhaps there are other small expenses. I'll give you a total of twenty thousand. The rest will be considered your hire fee."

No, I don't need that much… I originally wanted to modestly decline, but Miss Huang offered just too much.

"Okay," I exhale.

"Add me on WeChat, I'll transfer it to you." Miss Huang takes out her phone.

Just as I'm about to "Scan" her QR code, I suddenly think of a problem.

"Why don't you transfer it to her, and then she'll transfer it to me?"

The "she" refers to Miss Huang's dormitory daughter.

"Huh?" Miss Huang is a little confused.

"If CEO Huang finds out that you transferred money to me privately, it would be a little troublesome…" I say after some deliberation.

When that happens, not only will I lose my job, I might even get run over by CEO Huang's car.

"Alright." Miss Huang tilts her head and says to the girl in black-framed glasses, "Catie, add him and transfer 20,000 to him."

The girl obviously knows that Miss Bernie Huang has astonishing wealth and isn't worried that she would default on any debts.

She takes out her phone and adds me on WeChat.

Catie Huang… The name sounds like that of a family member… I glance at the girl's WeChat name and mutter to myself.

After collecting the money, I point to the side.

"I'll be buying some barbecue."

"Shall we eat together?" Miss Huang invites.

"No, no need." I'm very timid.

At this moment, Catie Huang—the student in black-framed glasses, takes out two bags of snacks.

"Thank you for your help. This is a specialty of my tutoring center."

"What are these?" I glance at the two bags of snacks.

"Dried mushrooms. It's not worth much. It's made by a biology teacher under our employ. His family farms mushrooms," Catie Huang explains.

“Alright then, thank you.” Since it isn’t anything valuable, I accept it without qualms.

However, the black things in the snack bag gives me the nagging feeling that they’re poisonous.

Chapter 1422 - In Modern Day (20)

◆ ◆ ◆

“Looks delicious,” I politely say after retracting my gaze from the dried mushrooms.

Then, I bid farewell to Bernie Huang and Cattie Huang and go to the barbecue stall that I frequently dine at.

It still isn’t the time when the nightwalkers are most active. The small tables placed on the streets are a lot emptier. I easily occupy one of them and shout at the boss:

“I’d like to place my order!”

The boss focuses on grilling the skewers, completely unperturbed. The lady boss walks over with a small notebook and a ballpoint pen.

Without exchanging pleasantries or any small talk, I directly say, “Ten sticks of pork belly, ten sticks of pork ribs, five sticks of chicken skin, one set of chives, and one eggplant.”

The beef kebabs and lamb skewers at this barbecue stall aren’t very good, so I didn’t order them.

Of course, the amount of food I ordered has already exceeded my initial expectations, but it doesn’t matter. Not only did I save tens of thousands of dollars from the exorcism today, but I even earned more than 10,000 yuan from Miss Huang.

I have to treat myself!

As a normal person, after ordering so many meat dishes, I should always have some vegetarian dishes. I need to balance my diet with some greens. As for eggplants, I don't view them as vegetables. They transcend the concept of vegetables and meat dishes, and are unique existences in the barbecue world.

Sigh, Miss Huang is really generous. If I wasn't worried that CEO Huang would overreact, I would really like to add her on WeChat and ask her to trouble me more often. If there are any commissions, then just hand them to me. Of course, I can't take on things that are illegal and matters that go below the neck… I watch as the lady boss returns to the grill and repeats what I had just ordered.

Looking around, I notice that the other tables are occupied by groups of twos or threes. There are also people like me who eat barbecue alone, but they choose to have it "to go," so as to eat it at home.

Hmm, it's good to have more people. That will allow us to eat a greater variety of food. We can even have a few drinks… I ponder for a while and feel that I should get someone to join me.

Then, I suddenly think of a suitable candidate:

Peng Deng!

My childhood friend Peng Deng who lives nearby!

Without hesitation, I take out my phone and send him a WeChat message:

"Come out for barbecue!"

With my understanding of this fellow, he definitely won't let go of the opportunity to rip me off.

However, Peng Deng doesn't reply to my message.

He's in a ranked game? I randomly guess the reason for this and start thinking about who else I could invite.

In this city, I don't only have Peng Deng as a friend, but the rest of them live quite far away. It doesn't seem like a good idea to get someone to take a taxi all the way here to eat barbecue at around eleven in the evening. After all, I don't have anything to discuss with them, and I didn't make an appointment beforehand.

It might be better to just eat by myself… I stand up and prepare to go to the nearby FamilyMart, Lawson, or a local mini-mart to buy some drinks.

How can I not have cold drinks with barbecue?

A few years ago, when the roadside stalls weren't under strict supervision, there was usually a mobile ice box placed beside these barbecue stalls. Then, they would lay some cables to siphon off electricity from somewhere to sell iced beer and various cold beverages. Not only was it convenient for customers, but they could also earn some extra money.

Unfortunately, it's difficult for such situations to happen now, unless it's a barbecue shop with a shop front.

Looking around, I decide to head to the nearest local mini-mart.

"Boss, help me watch my seat. I'm going to buy some drinks." I inform the lady boss, worried that there wouldn't be a place to sit when I return later.

"Okay." The lady boss isn't worried that I would run away. My order is still being roasted. Even if I don't want it anymore, there will still be many people who can have it.

When I'm almost at the entrance of the mini-mart, my phone vibrates.

Taking it out, I see that Peng Deng has finally replied:

“Don’t you have a nightlife?”

“Do you?” I respond reflexively.

“Of course. My girlfriend is at my place here today,” Peng Deng replies quickly.

Following that, he sends another message:

“Eating supper isn’t good for your health. Take it easy!”

“Bring your girlfriend along.” I emphasize, “I’m treating!”

“Ah, okay, we’ll be right there.” Peng Deng never needs to use transitional words in his speech.

“Hurry up. Also, what do you want to drink?” I ask.

Peng Deng doesn’t reply immediately. He only sends a message after I enter the mini-mart.

“I’m not coming. My girlfriend says she’s on a diet and doesn’t eat supper.”

“She already looks so thin, why would she need to go on a diet?” I think for a while and reply: “You can come alone.”

Peng Deng sent ellipses:

“…

“She said that this is flaunting, a great insult towards her.”

Tch! I despise this adulterous pair for two seconds before deliberately saying:

“Show me your masculinity!”

“…Alright, I’ll show you my masculinity.” Peng Deng replies quickly.

Oh, has the world turned upside down today? I'm stunned.

Then, Peng Deng sends a message:

"As a man, since I said I'm not coming, it means I'm not coming!"

"…" I'm speechless.

Putting my phone away, I head to the freezer and fridge to consider what to drink.

Frankly speaking, I don't like alcohol, but it's not that I can't drink it; it's just that I don't like it and feel that it tastes bad.

Therefore, unless it's a request from a friend, I won't expressly buy alcohol.

In all these years, there are only two types of alcohol that suits my taste:

One is rice wine, and the other is ice wine.

The thing they have in common is…

Sweetness!

As my gaze shifts, I see a strange man.

He's actually wearing a shirt, vest, suit, and pants in the middle of the night, as if he had just attended a business dinner.

This stands out in the stark contrast with a mini-mart or barbecue stall.

Oh, his eyes are red. He's quite handsome… I tsk and retract my gaze.

What does his attire have to do with me!?

At this moment, the young man walks over.

He hesitates for a moment before asking, "Hello, can you give me directions to the nearest hospital?"

“You don’t know the way?” I’m surprised.

The man answers with hesitation, “I just moved here.”

“Oh.” I point to the door. “Turn right and walk straight when you’re out. You’ll be able to see the hospital when you turn right at the crossroads.”

“Thank you.” The man nods politely.

I don’t watch him leave as I continue to lower my head and choose my drink.

After careful consideration, I buy a can of pineapple beer.

These beverages are divided into two types: one is pineapple-flavored beer, while the other is pineapple-flavored carbonated drinks which don’t contain any alcohol. It only contains a slight beer taste to drive away the heat.

Without a doubt, I choose the latter.

After exiting the mini-mart and returning to the stall, I wait for a while longer before I finally see my barbecue.

Just as I’m about to enjoy it, a figure appears in front of me.

The red-eyed man in the three-piece suit walks over and politely asks,

“Hello, can you give me directions to the nearest hospital?”

“…You just asked me.” I point that out.

The man seems to finally recognize me. His expression changes as he blurts out, “I’m lost again…”

Why are you saying “again?” I wonder.

Chapter 1423 - In Modern Day (21)

◆

Looking at the young man with bright red eyes, I snap to my senses. The first thought I have is:

What a waste of a handsome face!

After two seconds, I become somewhat worried.

Is this guy mentally challenged, or just simply mental?

Is he the type of person who easily loses his way to the point that a missing report pamphlet is handed out the very next day?

No, he answered me very fluently just now. He looks fine on the surface… Perhaps he's just bad with directions? Woah! How can someone like this be allowed outside the house on their own? I hesitate for a moment before asking, "Do you have your family's number? Do you need to give them a call?"

The man's expression instantly turns extremely ugly, giving off the feeling that he wants to bury his head in the ground.

"There's no need!" he answers firmly. "It was just a mistake. A mistake. I wasn't focused, as I was thinking about other problems."

"There's no need to explain," I immediately respond.

Trying to explain it just shows your attempts to hide things… I add inwardly.

Following that, I stand up, turn around, and point at the end of the road.

“Follow this path to the crossroads, then turn right, understand? Turn right.”

I move my right arm as I face the same direction as him.

The man gloomily says, “I’m not a juvenile.

“I’ll concentrate this time. There definitely won’t be a problem!”

I ignore his emphasis and instead remind him, “If you encounter any more accidents, you can look for the police.”

I originally wanted to mischievously say “Mr. Policeman,” but since he has already said that he isn’t a juvenile, I’ll just forget about it.

However, is this guy living in some stage play? His choice of words are quite literal!

Juvenile?

Using the term “primary school student” would be more down-to-earth!

The man falls silent for two seconds before taking a deep breath.

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.” I suppress my urge to make a joke.

After watching this guy walk far down the road, I sit back down and enjoy the barbecue.

I have to say that meat kebabs have to have fat in order to be delicious. Otherwise, they need to be marinated. Otherwise, it would definitely be dry, woody, and tasteless.

In this aspect, chicken skin is definitely the type of food that can take up the challenge. In my heart, it's better than pork belly.

However, the chicken skin's quality is hard to guarantee. Some barbecue stalls use the kind that were frozen for god knows how long. As for the one I chose, I can be quite certain of its standards.

I bite down on a piece of condiment-infused chicken skin that's been coated with grease. Combined with a mouthful of pineapple and the chilling taste of beer, I find this summer evening simply wonderful in a way that cannot be described.

This pineapple beer isn't bad. It's refreshing and quenches my thirst… I'm completely engrossed in the food to the point that I even neglect my phone.

Meat, chives, eggplant, and an iced beverage. As I take in this assortment of delicacies, the food in front of me decreases.

Phew, nice… I rub my belly in satisfaction.

In the next second, I start to have regrets.

No, I have to control myself! What if I get fat!?

In the near future, I can only indulge myself once a month—no, once a week.

While I'm in a dilemma, I look up and see a figure.

He's wearing a three-piece attire that isn't suited to proper nightlife. He has two bright red eyes.

Almost at the same time, the figure seems to sense my gaze. He turns his head and casts his gaze at me.

Me: "…"

Him: "…"

Why the f**k are you back?

Don't tell me that you got lost?

The man stands by the roadside, neither advancing nor retreating. He seems to be embroiled in an intense inner struggle.

Uh… I look around, but I don't see any patrolling policemen.

I hesitate for a moment before standing up and walking towards the man.

I've already paid for the barbecue when the kebabs were delivered, so the lady boss doesn't stop me from leaving.

"Why don't I take you there?" I don't mention the fact that he's lost.

As a person, one has to know when to joke and when not to.

The man's expression changes. After a few seconds, he whispers, "Alright."

"Let's go." I turn and lead.

"Thank you…" The wind nearly scatters his voice from behind.

As I walk along the road to the crossroads, I casually chat.

"Which country are you from? You speak pretty good Mandarin."

"I'm a minority." The man hesitates for a moment before replying.

"Oh, no wonder. Which ethnic group are you from? How should I address you?" I'm enlightened.

The man walks to my side and falls silent for a moment before saying,

"My surname is Bai[1]. My name is Ailin."

"It's a nice name, just a little feminine," I tease.

To be honest, a superficial joke like this definitely doesn't match the sarcasm in my heart. I've already given Bai Ailin a feminine nickname in my mind:

Lin Lin, or Lyn Lyn.

Bai Ailin ignores my joke and walks forward before turning left.

"Wait. Wrong. That's wrong. Over here." I quickly correct him.

You really are a primary school student!

Bai Ailin immediately turns around and follows me to take the right turn.

I don't look at his face, and I don't say a word. I give him time to calm down, lest he gets angry.

To be honest, who gave him the courage to come out in the middle of the night to look for a hospital with such a terrible sense of direction?

Couldn't he just get a taxi?

Or let his parents accompany him!

After turning right, it's only a fifty to sixty-meter walk. The hospital appears before us.

"This hospital isn't big. This is the inpatient building. If you go straight ahead, you'll see the Emergency Department and the outpatient building. Do you need me to bring you there?"

"No need, I'm just going to the inpatient building." Bai Ailin is visibly relieved. "Thank you."

As he speaks, he takes out a simple brass key from his pocket.

Strange… People actually use a key like that in this day and age? In actuality, it just appears like that on the surface. It's essentially a smart key? I don't probe further and wave.

“Goodbye.”

After walking for a few meters, I look back worriedly, only to find Bai Ailin gone.

I can no longer see him on this road. It's as if he vanished into thin air!

The hospital's side door didn't open either!

Could he have fallen into the sewers? I look over and realize that the manhole cover is fine.

Perhaps he used the key to open the door and enter… Heh heh, the old man guarding the side door must be asleep, right? I shake my head and stop thinking about this.

I head all the way home. I find myself feeling a little thirsty thanks to the barbecue, so I take out a cup from my room, open the fridge, and pour the cold water that has been chilled the entire day into the cup.

This is a habit of mine during the summer. Before I head out in the morning, I boil a pot of water, pour it into the large container, and place it in the fridge. I can then drink it after work.

Gulp! Gulp! Gulp… I drink two glasses in a row and finally feel fine.

After pouring another glass, I saunter back to my bedroom and sit at the computer table.

As I sweep my gaze, I suddenly sense something amiss.

Eh…

The black notebook I bought this afternoon is laying open.

I remember that before I went out for barbecue, it was clearly closed. Besides, I didn't open the windows for fear of mosquitoes!

---

†

Literally ”White” in Chinese Back.

Chapter 1424 - In Modern Day (22)

◆

Without the window being opened, the notebook flipped open by itself?

Did someone enter my room?

Or rather, is it a paranormal incident?

Erm, there’s a ghost following me. It’s normal to have paranormal incidents…

In that second, countless thoughts flash through my mind.

At the same time, I see a monster drawn on the page of the open notebook.

The monster is humanoid, but it’s made of tiny squirming worms.

This sounds very bizarre and terrifying, but in reality, it feels nothing of the sort. This is because this drawing is very simple and crude. It resembles the random scribbling of a kindergarten child.

No way? Some brat entered my room? A relative of one of my flatmates? As I think about it, I pick up my notebook and flip through it quickly, searching for other traces.

After flipping through two pages, I see lines of text:

“My drawing expertise is really bad.

“The main problem isn’t me. I was once called a master artist.

"War is art! War is aesthetics!

"It's like I've had a dream that I often had. The dream is filled with such strange languages.

"I'm such a decadent fellow!

"We really are women!"

†

These lines of text weren't that difficult to read, but the things written down look very chaotic. It gives me a headache as I instinctively stop reading and close the notebook.

There's a problem with this!

This is like an incantation for dark magic!

I've experienced quite a few things in the past two days. I barely managed to calm myself down as I cast my gaze towards the window.

On the glass window, the blonde female ghost that looks like she's cosplaying appears.

"Do you know who did it?" I ask in a suppressed voice.

"It was done by an evil spirit," the female ghost replies with an ethereal voice.

Evil spirit sounds more advanced than some spirit or poltergeist… As a modern youth who has played many foreign games and watched some foreign television series, I think the name sounds pretty cool.

"Er… Is an evil spirit more powerful?" I ask after some deliberation.

The female ghost nods her head in agreement.

"Will this be more troublesome?" I think of asking Madam Daly to exorcise the ghosts again, but I'm also worried that she won't be able to deal with ghosts at the level of evil spirits.

"I'm also an evil spirit," the female ghost says simply.

"…Okay." I don't know how to respond.

"W-what's that evil spirit's intention behind scrawling in my notebook?" It takes me a few seconds to recall the main purpose of my question.

The female ghost shakes her head.

"I don't know."

"…" I open my mouth and change the topic. "How should I address you?"

I can't just keep calling her female ghost, right? That's not polite.

"Sharron." After the female ghost says that, her figure gradually fades and disappears from the glass window.

Seeing that she's very calm and composed, I'm relieved. I tease myself, It's a huge incident. There's no use panicking. Just focus on sleeping!

Then I wash up and go to bed. It ends up being an uneventful night.

The next morning, I wake up on time as usual. I laze in bed for ten minutes and take my time to leave the house. On the way to the bus stop, I buy a burrito that can virtually wrap everything.

With the burrito in hand, I take the bus and arrive at the company. I sit in my seat, then I get some water from the water dispenser and get down to eating breakfast.

Sigh, if I hadn't treated myself last night, then I should be having a cup of sweet soy milk.

Thinking of sweet soy milk, I associate it with the new product that has just been released at the store I frequently buy from.

Salted soy milk!

This seems to be the unique way to eat in a few places. Soy milk with soy sauce added to it!

I don't know what it tastes like… I eat my breakfast seriously and start preparing for work.

At this moment, Rozanne, who is almost late, rushes in with a huge bag in her hand.

"Here, have some beverages. My treat," she says to everyone in the office.

She's a lady with good personal relations. Including me, most of the people stand up and surround her.

"What beverages are there?" I ask casually.

Rozanne puts down her bag and hands the bag to everyone.

"Aiya, I bought a lot of bottles to get what I wanted.

"They all have different flavors.

"Sigh, if you're alive, then you should have a gambler inside you!

"Come, let's see what I picked."

What in the world is she talking about?… I'm beginning to doubt Rozanne's ability to express herself.

However, I still understood the last sentence. I quickly reach into the bag and take out a beverage.

I wonder what flavor it will be? Just as I have this thought, I see a familiar bottle design.

It’s a bottle formed by twisted snake-like patterns!

This is very similar to the Assassin beverage I drank before, but the color is a little different!

It was black before, but now it’s blue!

“…” I quickly turn the bottle around and see the name on the front:

Instigator

“Aren’t you going to drink it? You don’t like this? Why don’t you drink this last bottle instead?” Rozanne points at the last bottle in the bag, puzzled.

The beverage bottle is like a ball of extended flames. It’s very cool.

“No, I’m just thinking, I’m thinking…” I subconsciously refuse, searching for an excuse.

As these thoughts flash through my mind, I blurt out, “I’m wondering if I should match it with some snacks!”

As I speak, I take out the snack that was given to me by CEO Huang’s non-blood-related granddaughter, Cattie Huang.

That small bag of dried mushrooms.

Chapter 1425 - In Modern Day (23)

◆

“These dried mushrooms don’t look… very delicious.” Rozanne looks at the bag of dried mushrooms in my hand seriously for a few seconds before replying hesitantly.

It’s obvious that she’s a little embarrassed to say that the mushroom looks dry and black—it causes alarms to go off, and it can hardly whet up an appetite. After all, I’d offered it out of kind intentions.

Hehe… I take this opportunity to change the topic.

“What’s your drink called?”

Rozanne immediately turns around and picks up the beverage bottle on the table. She says with a smile, “This is it! The design looks cool, right?”

The beverage bottle has a streamlined design with a footprint theme. The name is:

“Reporter.”

That’s different from mine… I politely compliment, “Looks good.”

Rozanne twists the cap that has been opened a long time ago as if she’s preparing to take a sip.

I instinctively want to stop her, but after opening my mouth, I realize that I don’t have a reason.

Furthermore, a third of the Reporter beverage is gone. This means that

Rozanne has already drank it. There's no point in stopping her now.

Gulp… Rozanne lowers the bottle and twists the cap back on.

"It doesn't taste bad. Try it."

"Okay, okay," I say perfunctorily.

Rozanne doesn't urge me any further. Instead, she points at the remaining beverage bottles in the plastic bag.

"You can also switch bottles."

"No need, there's no need," I reply without hesitation.

Either way, I don't intend to drink it. It doesn't matter if I switch it or not.

After two seconds of deliberation, I look at Rozanne and probe, "How do you feel after drinking it? Any special sensations?"

"Special sensations? Do you think this is a drug? Erm, it's moderately sweet and refreshing. The fragrance will definitely be better after chilling it." Rozanne says, a little pissed.

She doesn't look like she's lying… This means that she probably didn't obtain superpowers from the Reporter beverage… I subconsciously survey my surroundings and realize that my fellow colleagues have more or less drunk some of Rozanne's beverages, but none of them show any signs of abnormality.

They don't even appear dazed or confused.

Could it be that only the Assassin beverage I picked last time has a special effect? I wonder if that's considered being lucky or not… I quickly control my doubts and wave the Instigator beverage in my hand.

"I'll need to get down to work."

“Go ahead. Don’t let me stop you.” Rozanne waves her hand casually.

Returning to my seat, I sit down. I look at the Instigator beverage in front of me and fall into deep thought.

After about twenty seconds, I use my large mug meant for drinking water. This is something I prepare for taking pleasant gulps of water. I open the cap of the Instigator beverage and pour the liquid inside.

Although I don’t plan on drinking this beverage, I’m curious about what the liquid inside looks like, and whether it contains some special powers.

Splash. I pour all of the Instigator beverage into my mug.

That’s too little, isn’t it? That definitely isn’t 500 milliliters! I can’t help but look down on this beverage’s manufacturer.

My mug isn’t small, but it usually can’t hold the entirety of a 550-ml bottle of mineral water.

In other words, while there appeared to be quite a bit of “Instigator” in it, the manufacturer had actually cut corners!

Hmm, it’s dark blue. It’s clear, and it’s quite enticing… I carefully observe the liquid in the mug and gather some preliminary information.

Other than that, the drink is no different from anything else, at least not on the surface.

After some thought, I decide to throw something into the mug to see if there will be any changes.

What do I throw? I look around when I suddenly get a bout of inspiration.

Those dried mushrooms!

Anyway, this isn't something I plan on eating, so I can use it for experiments.

I really am a genius!

Without any hesitation, I tear open the packaging and throw the black dried mushrooms into the dark blue liquid, watching them stretch out and expand slightly.

There aren't any changes. I'm starting to think that I'm overthinking matters.

Suddenly, messages come from my work's chat group. I start to get busy.

About fifteen minutes later, I finish my work and raise my head, preparing to stretch my neck.

Suddenly, I see a mushroom!

A white and tender mushroom with red star dots all over it!

…Where did this mushroom come from? I glance over and discover that it's growing in my mug.

It's about the size of a palm. Its skin, no—its surface is so tender and supple. On the cap, there are mushrooms of the same breed, just like its hands and feet.

What the hell is this? I'm confused.

At that moment, the mushroom sways and the cap moves upwards as though it has lifted its head.

The two slightly larger red stars that look like eyes meet my gaze.

Just like that, I look at it, and it seems to be looking at me.

A few seconds later, the mushroom reaches out its many "hands," and using the edge of the mug as leverage, it jumps out.

In the next second, it jumps to the floor and wildly runs towards the office door.

F*ck… I'm still confused.

At the same time, I discover a problem: All of the Instigator beverage in the mug is gone.

Almost subconsciously, I stand up and chase after the mushroom.

I suspect that it's a product from the fusion of the Instigator beverage and the dried mushrooms!

I have to resolve this accident I caused, as soon as possible!

The mushroom is "short" and extremely fast. It passes through the office without being obstructed, and wasn't even discovered. On the other hand, I'm stopped by my colleagues several times and have no choice but to slow down.

So, although the mushroom's footsteps are obviously smaller than mine, it still escapes from the company.

I-it charged into the company next door!

I subconsciously follow.

At this moment, the security guard next door stops me.

"What are you here for?" the tall and strong security guard asks.

My mind races as I come up with an excuse:

"I'm here for Vice President Wu."

"Vice President Wu?" The security officer doesn't believe me. "I'll ask the front desk."

While he's walking to the front desk, I approach the door and gaze inside.

I'm shocked by what I'm seeing.

The employees of the company next door are either wearing black hooded robes or wearing strange costumes. They're dancing with something similar to an "Employees' Dance for Business."

A cosplay convention? A masquerade ball? It's only nine in the morning… I'm confused again, forgetting to sneak inside.

"What's your boss doing?" I ask when the security guard returns.

It's so strange!

The security officer shakes his head.

"I don't know either.

"I'm just a worker."

Tsk, the moment I hear that, it's obvious that he's trying to draw a clear line between him and them… I press, "Is your boss inside too?"

"Yes, that one over there who isn't wearing anything," the security guard replies nonchalantly.

I focus my gaze, and the corner of my mouth twitches involuntarily.

Pervert!

Chapter 1426 - In Modern Day (24)

◆

Even though I’m separated from them at a distance, with all the weirdly dressed people in the way, I still see the naked man bound in dark red ropes.

As for whether he’s wearing something over the lower half of his body, or what he’s wearing, I can’t see it because of the table, chairs, and other things that are in the way.

In short, the impression that guy gives me is:

A pervert!

And he might even be into S&M.

Of course, it’s unclear whether he’s a real pervert or just cosplaying.

“Alright, you can go in now,” the security guard says casually.

“Huh?” I doubt my ears.

I had lied about being here for Vice President Wu in my rush to give an excuse. I didn’t expect to get permission at all. My original plan was to sneak in while the security guard went to inquire at the front desk, and catch that “mushroom man.” However, the large-scale cosplay scene inside gave me a shock, causing me to temporarily fall into a dazed state of questioning myself: “Who am I,” “Where am I from,” and “What am I doing?” I didn’t have the chance to take advantage of this opening.

“Vice President Wu has given you permission to enter. Why? Do you not understand what I'm saying?" The security guard senses my confusion.

I'm even more surprised.

"V-Vice President Wu personally said to allow me entry?"

This…

Is he trying to pull me into his marketing team?

The security officer glances at me.

"You aren't very familiar with Vice President Wu?"

"I've only met him a few times," I quickly emphasize.

The security guard turns to look at the company's interior. Seeing that Vice President Wu wasn't nearby, he says, "Vice President Wu doesn't like to talk. He doesn't answer questions or give instructions.

"Later, we figured out the rules. Whatever he doesn't object to on the spot is him giving tacit approval for."

Is that so… But it could also be because of other reasons. I once knew a friend who wasn't smart and had a slow reaction. He only understood the first joke when someone was beginning the second joke. Perhaps Vice President Wu is such a person. He doesn't answer the question because he's still digesting the information. He needs more than ten minutes to think about the answer… I don't argue with the security guard and just mutter inwardly.

Since I have an opportunity like this, I obviously wouldn't care if Vice President Wu really acquiesced or if the Creator had given him looks but forgot to give him intelligence. I immediately walk past the security guard and enter the neighboring company.

I carefully circle the edge of the room which is in a noisy din with all kinds of crazy dancing happening, searching for the mushroom man I created by mistake.

Skull decorations… Blood-colored juice… painting made of leather… This… Not only is the perverted boss next door a multi-level marketing person, but he also believes in some strange cult? As I scan my surroundings, my heart beats faster as my urge to escape increases.

If I wasn't already an Assassin and was able to do a Leap of Faith and be in possession of extraordinary powers, I definitely wouldn't have dared to stay any longer.

As I walk, I see a long table filled with breakfast.

At this moment, a man in a long black robe with a hood suddenly turns his head and looks at me.

"Who are you?" he asks hesitantly.

I reply without any scruples, "I'm cosplaying an employee!"

Just because all of you are cosplaying cultists or all kinds of strange figures, does that forbid me from doing a serious role?

"Employee…" The man repeats my words in confusion.

He doesn't seem to have a high IQ… That's true. If I'm doing a MLM business, I'll definitely like this kind of member more. They're easy to deceive! I take this opportunity to walk past the black-robed man and to the long table.

As I sweep my gaze, joy suddenly surges in my heart.

I see that "mushroom man"!

It's lying in a pile of roasted mushrooms, wrapping itself with a layer of sauce, pretending to be ordinary, normal food.

However, its seductive aura betrays it.

Even though there's a lot of food on the long table, it still stands out.

It doesn't seem to have a high IQ as well… I pretend not to notice as I slowly approach.

Then, I extend my hand toward the mushroom man.

At this moment, a fork stabs the "mushroom man" and lifts it up before I can get to it.

The "mushroom man" attempts to struggle, but to no avail. It's stuffed into the mouth of a "beautiful-looking" man with a fork and is chewed.

Poor thing. As it had no mouth, it was eaten by the other party before it could even scream.

Me: "…"

"What? What's wrong?" the man with the androgynous looks asks in a muffled voice while eating the mushroom.

"Are you alright?" I ask hesitantly.

Gulp… The beautiful man swallows the last mouthful of mushroom.

"I'm good."

"Really? You're fine?" I ask subconsciously.

I have a nagging feeling that a strange creature like the "mushroom man" wouldn't die so easily.

"I'm fine." The beautiful man shakes his head. "You are?"

"I'm with Vice President Wu. How may I address you?" I carefully observe the other party's condition.

The beautiful man's expression sinks.

"I'm Mr. A."

I stare at him for a few seconds before smiling.

"I'm heading to Vice President Wu's side."

Without any hesitation, I maintain my smile and quickly leave the long table and walk out the door.

After leaving the neighboring company, I turn to the stairwell and hold in my expressions. I take out my phone.

"Hello, is this the police? I found the site of a large-scale pyramid scheme!"

Chapter 1427 - In Modern Day (25)

◆

I honestly inform Mr. Policeman about my suspicions of the company next door. After all, this company has existed since before I was employed at my present company. To be able to remain hidden for so many years meant that they knew how to hide the evidence and cover up their tracks.

Also, I actually can’t prove that the company next door is involved in a pyramid scheme.

Strange costumes and eccentric behavior are never valid charges.

The reason I called the police was because I was worried about Mr. A’s safety. He had eaten that mutated mushroom man. Who knew what would happen if he waited a little while. It wasn’t as though I could monitor him and resolve the problem in time.

As for whether the police could solve anything that involved supernatural events, I’m quite confident.

This is a result of simple deduction through logic.

The medium who’s good at exorcism, Madam Dai, is Officer Deng’s fiancée;

The police department collaborator, Old Neil, is also sensitive to ghosts and obviously has a solution for dealing with them;

The mysterious cult that Officer Deng reminded me to watch out for can create extraordinary beings.

Based on these points, it's easy to conclude that the police have a deeper understanding of supernatural powers.

Since they have a deeper understanding, they definitely wouldn't lack the strength and solutions to deal with it.

Putting away my phone, I glance sideways at the company next door that's still "normal." Suppressing my concern, I return to my desk and start working.

I'm plagued by all kinds of trivial matters for my last project the entire morning. I was so busy that I didn't even have time to poop on company time.

As noon approaches, my phone suddenly buzzes.

I pick it up and see an unfamiliar number.

Who is it? A scammer? Some advertising agent? It's not listed… I mutter as I pick up.

"Hello, were you the one who called the police. You said that Aurora Company at 10-188 at Fengfei Road is suspected to be involved in a pyramid scheme?" A slightly tired voice comes from the other end of the phone.

The police are already here? Have they done the investigation? At that moment, questions flashed through my mind before a scene surfaces:

The cosplayer cultist, Mr. A who looks like a beautiful man, is covered in mushrooms with golden spots. He wobbles as he walks towards the police.

How terrifying… I can't help but shiver and hurriedly reply, "Yes, I called the police.

"I think their behavior is very suspicious. Did… did you find anything?"

"They're a legit company." The policeman on the other end of the line sighs and says, “You can’t think that they’re involved in a pyramid scheme just because they hold parties early in the morning. There are countless companies that shout slogans and even dance every morning.”

“But, one look at their gathering and you can tell it’s not normal,” I subconsciously retort.

The policeman on the other end of the line says helplessly, “Can’t they cosplay in the morning? Can’t they have a masquerade party in the morning?

“You can complain about them disturbing the peace, but you can’t say that they’re running a pyramid scheme.

“They already explained that this is the company’s corporate culture.”

Can we define a company with such corporate culture as a cult? I originally want to say that, but when I think about the news of punishing employees to crawl like dogs, I feel that the company next door hasn’t gone too far.

“Yes, I’m sorry. I was too sensitive,” I apologize hastily.

The policeman on the other end of the line heaves a sigh of relief.

“Don’t do this again in the future…”

Without waiting for him to finish, I forcefully interrupt, “Did you discover anything?”

Was there anyone who got food poisoning because of mushrooms?

“What can we discover? They’re all working hard,” the policeman on the other end of the line says impatiently.

He emphasizes that I shouldn’t be too sensitive and hangs up.

It seems Mr. A is fine… I’m relieved. I stand up and look around.

At this moment, there are only two or three people left in the office waiting for their food to be delivered. The other colleagues have already gone to the office canteen on the second floor.

CEO Huang has always been very generous to his employees. He gives plenty of meal allowance, but all of it is transferred to our employee card. It can only be used at the canteen.

Of course, the company canteen's standard is quite good. Regardless of the ingredients, quantity, or culinary skills, they're all satisfactory.

The only problem is that there isn't much variety in staples—only rice, noodles, and wontons. Some of the employees can only rely on delivery food when they want to eat rice noodles or pancakes.

To me, this doesn't pose a problem. As long as the dishes have variety, it doesn't matter what the staple is.

It would be a waste not to use my meal allowance. It's not like it can be used outside!

Rubbing my stomach, I open my drawer, take out my employee card, and run towards the elevator.

After entering the canteen, I look for a window seat first.

Just then, through the window, I see a row of people standing downstairs.

The leader is CEO Huang.

CEO Huang quickly gets into a Rolls-Royce, and it drives off behind another car.

I know that leading car. I just sat in it yesterday—it belongs to our partner company's Rosago.

Thinking of this racer, I suddenly feel a little nauseous. I feel like I'm suffering from motion sickness.

This… Mr. Zaratulstra has arrived via high-speed rail? CEO Huang is going to personally fetch him… He places great importance on this. I rein in my thoughts and cast my gaze back at the food selection window.

Besides, this job has already been handed over. What happens next has nothing to do with me!

After having a perfect lunch, I saunter back into the office and lean my neck against a neck pillow.

I have a habit to sleep for a while at noon, or else I'll be groggy in the afternoon.

And I need to listen to music during my afternoon nap to avoid being disturbed by the random noises in the office.

I quickly put on my inner ear headphones, open on a music player, and start searching for today's lullaby.

Eh? There's a new song. It's from overseas, and it's doing pretty well. I glance at it, my interest piqued.

During my afternoon nap, my music of choice has always been more inclined towards songs in foreign languages, because if I don't focus on listening, it won't be easy to understand, and I wouldn't care too much about the lyrics. I won't let my imagination run wild.

The reviews are okay… I quickly decide to buy the song.

When translated, the song's title is "Advance! Advance!"

Its singer is Alger Wilson.

I check the information on this singer and find that he is rather inspirational. He was originally just a crew member who drifted out at sea, but after much hardship, he became a singer.

Chapter 1428 - In Modern Day (26)

◆ ◆ ◆

In a daze, I open my eyes.

Holy sh*t, when did I fall asleep? I have no recollection at all!

I glance around blankly and find my colleagues working in their respective cubicles.

I only remember that I was getting ready to listen to a song, and here I am? Did I black out? I didn’t drink… Ouch, my head hurts, I’m so dizzy, I want to vomit… At this moment, I feel like I’ve just woken up from a hangover.

Of course, this is just a feeling, as I’ve never been drunk.

Raising my hands to rub my temples, I glance at the music player and find that it has stopped playing.

Advance! Advance! …Yes, I was listening to this song! I can’t remember its melody at all… Puzzled, I click on the song’s reviews again.

“Nice!”

“An unprecedented experience.”

“Excellent pleasure.”

†

Because I’ve read the reviews on the first few pages, I only take a few casual glances and scroll to the end:

“Thank you so much for this song! It cured my chronic insomnia.”

“The purest and most punk death rock!”

“This song made me faint. This isn’t a description, but literally what happened!”

“I can’t imagine how humans can make such sounds…”

“If you’re a man, try lasting 30 seconds!”

†

This… This song is a little problematic… I won’t listen to this so-called “death rock” again… I grit my teeth for a few seconds before deciding to add another review:

“An unprecedented form of music! It transcends human understanding!”

I have to let others experience it too. I can’t be selfish!

After getting a preliminary explanation for the mysterious blackout, I take off my headphones and prepare for work.

However, my head is dizzy and my forehead is throbbing in pain. From time to time, I feel disgusted.

This is a lot worse than the heatstroke I previously suffered from. Even the office’s powerful air-conditioning is unable to ease my discomfort.

No, I have to go to the hospital for a checkup. I feel like I’m going to crash… I try to calm myself down, but I still can’t hold on.

Luckily, CEO Huang has always been generous. Every employee has two days of paid medical leave without a doctor’s note.

I quickly write a request for time off and head to Director Ai's office to ask for his signature.

Perhaps it's because my complexion is really bad, Director Ai doesn't make things difficult for me. Out of concern, he even asks me if I need someone to send me to the hospital.

"There's no need. It's not that serious." I still care about my face. I would never ask for help if I can solve it myself.

"Okay, go back and have a good rest. If there's anything urgent in the afternoon, I will arrange someone else to do it." Director Ai doesn't insist.

Out of the building, I get a rideshare without hesitation. I don't put on a strong front by taking the bus.

I've always been willing to spend money when the time calls for it.

"Mushu Hospital." Very soon, the car arrives. I board it and first verify my destination.

Mushu Hospital is one of the better public hospitals in the surrounding areas, but it's not one of the best. Hence, there are fewer patients and there wouldn't be a long line for the Emergency Department.

The hospital that Bai Ailin went to last night is at the district level. Although I haven't been there before, I have a nagging feeling that it's very reliable.

"Okay," the driver answers simply and starts the car.

Time ticks by as I gradually feel alive. My head isn't that dizzy anymore, and I no longer have cold sweat. The throbbing pain completely disappears.

Holy f*ck… Did I choose a hospital that's too far away? I'm scared that I'll be alright by the time I make it to the hospital… I can't help but have a strange thought.

As it turns out, this isn't wishful thinking. When the driver arrives at my destination, I'm completely awake and alive. I even feel a little hungry.

There's no need to go to the Emergency Department… After a round of inspection, I'm certain I'm in a good condition.

Thus, my only option is to enjoy this spare time for myself. After all, I've already taken time off, and there's no way to cancel it.

Return home to play games? Find a movie to watch? Ah, right. I still have to register at the Dream Tutoring Classes. I can't not do anything after being paid. I happen to be free right now anyway. I pick up my phone, look for the picture of the address of the tutoring center that I took, call another rideshare, and head there.

"Hello, I'd like to know more about your tutoring class." I don't directly say that I'm going to sign up while facing the male receptionist.

To be honest, I think this tutoring center is a little strange. It actually uses men as receptionists instead of women.

I'm not discriminating against men, but I feel that women are more patient and gentle.

The receptionist briefly introduces the courses they have before asking, "What would you like?"

This fellow is so silly that he's comparable to that Dani… Is this the theme of this tutoring center? I cough lightly and say, "Weekend, business English."

"This is the best course out of our Dream Tutoring Classes. Our principal is in charge of it, and she has even invited a few foreign teachers—real foreign teachers," the receptionist says without end. "We can still get you a discount if you sign up now. The original price is

8,888 yuan, but it's only 6,666 now!"

"Is your principal very capable?" I take the opportunity to ask.

The receptionist points to the corridor.

"She's been studying abroad for many years and has mastered a lot of languages. She even has a PhD in education."

I trace the receptionist's finger and gaze at the ajar classroom door in the corridor.

The one holding the class is a woman. Her side is facing the outside, and she's wearing a pair of loose jeans. Her upper body is wearing a white slim fit shirt with flowers. Her hair is dyed brown, and she has tied her hair up in a bun.

In addition, based on my Assassin vision, I can clearly see the principal's side profile. She's not too old—only in her twenties. She has some baby fat on her face, and the contours of her face are very exquisite. She's probably pretty good-looking.

"Our principal is very knowledgeable. Other than being a polyglot, she knows how to draw, do oil paintings, sketches, watercolor paintings, and all kinds of paintings. She also knows how to appraise antique, and different musical instruments. She's practically an all-rounder!" The receptionist's tone is filled with admiration.

Just as I'm about to respond, a man walks into the tutoring center.

"Look, this is our foreign teacher, Mr. Anderson Hood." The receptionist immediately introduces him, "He's proficient in at least ten languages. He can communicate with you alone and train your accent."

From the corner of my eye, I see a foreign young man with blond hair and blue eyes. He's wearing a white shirt and black vest. With the intention of testing him, I switch to English.

“Hello, what languages do you know? How long have you been teaching at this tutoring center?”

The tutor named Anderson Hood has his hands in his pockets as he smiles and says, “#@%%#*()()——”

Me: “…”

What is he saying…

Also, why does this guy look so familiar with the way he has his hands in his pockets?

Anderson glances at me and chuckles.

“How is it? My Mauritian Creole isn’t bad, right?”

This time, he uses English.

He then translates it into Chinese.

“I don’t understand…” I answer honestly.

I can’t be sure what language he said the first time.

Anderson tsks and says, “It looks like you don’t have any talent in languages.

“Why don’t you learn how to paint from me?”

Chapter 1429 - In Modern Day (27)

◆

“…” For a moment, I’m at a loss on how to respond to Anderson Hood. I’m afraid that I would end up quarreling with him the moment I open my mouth.

After a few seconds, I finally find a relatively euphemistic solution.

“Oh, you’re even able to paint?”

The receptionist eagerly says, “Heh, he knows a lot of things. He originally came to our country to learn banter, claiming that he’s proficient in all kinds of things.”

That sounds like sarcasm… The receptionist and this foreign teacher don’t seem to be on good terms… I wonder if he’s speaking the truth or just joking… Although I’m not particularly good at observing people, his behavior is a little obvious.

“Haha, if you wish to learn banter, I can teach you as well,” Anderson Hood says with a well-enunciated Chinese accent.

“We’ll see?” I’m a little confused about the current situation, and I have no choice but to say something perfunctory like “I’ll check my schedule.”

After watching Anderson walk into the office, I turn my head and ask the male receptionist, “Can I not sign up for his class?”

“That’s one of your rights.” The male receptionist looks excited. “A wise choice!”

He then gives me a thumbs up.

“T-this… foreign teacher—Anderson… Is he that bad?” I glance in the direction of the office.

The male receptionist chuckles.

“To be honest, he’s very capable. His only flaw is…”

He pauses.

“What is it?” I can’t help but ask in response.

The male receptionist turns solemn.

“That he’s not a mute!”

“Hahaha.” I laugh, half-sincere and half-polite.

Then, I ask curiously, “Do people sign up for his classes?”

“Yes, quite a lot.” The male receptionist curls his lips.

“Aren’t they aware that you can’t withdraw from classes and switch teachers after signing up?” I take the opportunity to gather more details.

“No.” The male receptionist quickly corrects me. “We have one trial lesson. If you’re not satisfied, you can switch to another teacher.”

He pauses and laughs.

“Well, you know, some people just like to get mocked and trampled on.”

It sounds like they have a special fetish… I stop asking further.

“Then I’ll sign up for your principal’s class. Are there weekend classes?”

“Yes.” The male receptionist quickly does the introductions.

I don’t waste any time. After paying 6,666 yuan, I sign up for the Dream

Tutoring Classes' weekend business English class.

After leaving the Dream Tutoring Classes, I don't leave the building. Instead, I find a quiet corner and take in the feel of the air conditioner. I then make a record of today's events.

To be a commercial spy, one has to act like a commercial spy. I have to live up to Miss Huang's payment!

Done! I casually tap my phone and look at the department chat to prevent myself from missing any important notices.

Rozanne: "Take note, take note: CEO Huang is bringing a VIP over to visit. Everyone, please be more professional."

VIP… Oh, that client named Zaratulstra. Heh heh, I actually missed him again. Looks like we aren't fated to meet… I hold my phone and consider what to do next.

It's rare for me to have free time in the afternoon on a non-weekend day. I can't waste it.

Hmm, I'll go catch a movie. There shouldn't be a lot of people at this time. With that thought in mind, I immediately head to the larger mall next door. Then, I take the elevator to the fourth floor and start searching for the cinema.

Eh, there's a signing event… Looking around, I see many people lining up at the entrance of a large bookstore.

It's obvious that a famous author is here to do a fansigning event.

With some level of curiosity, I deliberately pass by and see a few poster stands.

Romance Queen… Slacker Without a Dream… This pen name, heh, the authors nowadays really have weird pen names… I don't know the author of the fansign event, nor do I have any intention of joining in the fun.

Of course, I'm still a little curious as to what the author looks like. After all, the few poster stands that aren't blocked mainly introduced the Romance Queen's new book without any pictures.

I'll come take a look after the movie… I mutter to myself and follow the road signs to the other side of the mall. At the end of the road, I find the cinema.

Because I haven't thought of what to watch, I stay in the lobby and look for something that piques my interest from the promotional pictures.

Suddenly, I feel the light in front of me dim.

A tall man appears beside me!

He's so tall. He's almost two meters… I look at him from the corner of my eye and realize that he looks like a basketball player.

Wait, he seems to be wearing the junior high school uniform near my neighborhood!

Holy sh*t, he's only in middle school and he's already two meters tall?

What do children nowadays eat?

A-and he dyed his hair brownish-yellow…

Does he need to attend classes? Well, it's summer vacation now.

But why are you wearing your school uniform during the summer vacation?

As I lampoon, I take a stealthy step in the opposite direction, in case the child makes me look like a dwarf.

Meanwhile, I find the movie that I'll be watching. I don't have to wait too long.

“The Pirate 3: Crazy Adventurer”

In the corresponding promotional pictures, a man in a top hat and trench coat is standing between lightning, waves, and storms with three retro pirate ships surrounding him. And at the bow of each ship stands a beautiful female pirate.

Chapter 1430 - In Modern Day (28)

◆

“The Pirate 3: Crazy Adventurer”…

It looks okay, it should be the kind of popcorn flick that I enjoy…

I look around and make a preliminary decision. I quickly take out my phone and log in to the film review website to check out its score and reviews.

“The aesthetics are shallow…”

“The plot is simple and crude…”

“Other than the special effects and the few actresses, there’s nothing else…”

“The protagonist only knows how to act cool and has zero acting skills…”

“Nothing deep at all.”

“It’s a passable commercial film, but it’s only passable.”

F*ck, reviews like these… I like movies like this. I’m just watching it to kill time and don’t need deep, thought-provoking shows… I read the reviews and find that it isn’t that bad. I have a rough idea.

The giant middle-school student standing beside me in front of the poster has already left to buy the tickets.

“One ticket for The Pirate 3, the earliest time slot.” I go over only after the middle-school student heads elsewhere in the mall, I don't want the contrast to be that apparent. It makes me feel inferior.

"There's still 15 minutes to the next time slot," the ticket sales staff informs me.

"That's fine." I don't plan on shopping, so I decide to find a place to sit and wait. After all, they'll allow entry inside very soon.

Of course, before that, I buy a medium-sized iced Coke and a serving of butter popcorn.

I obviously have to match a popcorn flick with popcorn!!

Otherwise, how can it be called enjoyment?

In the past, I rarely watched movies, just to stop myself from overeating!

And now, my weight has returned to my university days, and it's very muscular.

This is the beauty of life!

Not long after, I enter the venue according to the signs and find my seat.

Even though it's office hours, there are quite a lot of people in the audience. A large portion of them are clearly students.

Summer vacation. I also want a summer vacation… I take a sip of iced Coke and put on my 3D glasses.

At this moment, the two-meter tall middle-school student walks along the aisle towards me.

Under normal circumstances, the gap between me and the row in front is sufficient for a person to pass through. However, the figure before me is simply too huge, and it isn't possible for me to grant him passage by just pulling in my legs.

I have no choice but to stand up and lean back.

The middle-school student successfully passes through. He turns his head and smiles sincerely.

“Thank you, Uncle.”

“…No problem.” I still think I’m young.

This interlude doesn’t hinder me from eating popcorn, drinking iced Coke, and watching the various trailers on the big screen.

Very quickly, The Pirate 3 officially begins. My smile only lasts for five minutes before it stiffens.

It’s not that the movie is worse than I expected, but that the male lead’s fortuitous encounter is from drinking a potion.

The potion gives me the feeling that it’s the Assassin beverage I drank before!

Man… The Assassin beverage is actually a potion? Who produced this movie? Hmm, I remember seeing the dragon logo just now… Hall Film Company? This can’t be a reflection of reality, can it? I instantly immerse myself in the plot, but there aren’t any other potions later in the film. Instead, it shows the serious side-effects of the potion.

My heart grows heavier as I watch it. I even feel like I’m the male lead.

After the movie, I can’t help but curse inwardly.

Is this guy that clueless?

Three beautiful female pirates are surrounding him, but in the end, he only took a silly boatswain with him!

Seriously! Where’s the treasure they promised, and them heading off into the sunset while accompanied by beauties? Yes, it’s all disappeared off into the sunset…

After watching the easter egg, I pick up my empty Coke and popcorn bucket and walk towards the aisle.

At this moment, a short girl who's clearly less than 1.6 meters tall suddenly comes over and suppresses her voice.

"Someone is monitoring you."

Monitoring me… Who? I subconsciously look around, but I can't find the suspect.

And the woman who warned me has already followed the crowd and walked to the exit.

For real? I think for a moment and decide to leave the cinema first before confirming the situation.

There are too many people here, and it's too noisy. Calling the police wouldn't work!

†

At the same time, a train stops at a high-speed rail station in the city.

One of the carriages slowly opens, but there are only four to five people inside. They form a stark contrast with the crowd in the other carriages.

Those few people are dressed as if they're going to a comic convention. After exchanging a glance, they stand up and walk out with heavy footsteps.

What they see is an extremely modern platform and crowds of people.

—End of the first Installment of the Lord of Mysteries Trilogy—

TL Note:

This chapter is in a way the prologue to the second installment of the

LoM trilogy which will happen about 2 years from now when Cuttlefish's new book—Embers Ad Infinitum—ends!

Advertising his book! Be prepared for a well-thought out and detailed apocalyptic, cyberpunk world with a setting superseding Lord of Mysteries!

Take note that the beginning of the story is slow (maybe even slower) like LoM, but make sure to unlock all available chapters with COINS so that the book is continued! Otherwise, it will be dropped in Trial Reads! Have faith in Cuttlefish! Also, please continue supporting Cuttlefish by unlocking chapters in Coins even if it's continued!

Synopsis below:

Our protagonist, Shang Jianyao, is crazy—literally crazy, at least that's what the doctors said. Living in a huge, underground building of Pangu Biology, one of the few remaining factions in this apocalyptic wasteland known as the Ashlands, he acts in unfathomable ways that's head-scratching, comical, and shrewd. So is he really crazy? Probably.

He has a grand dream: to save all of humanity. Intricately tied to this dream is something everyone in the Ashlands believes in: Deep in a particular ruin buried away by danger and famine, a path leading to a new world awaits. To step into the new world, one only needs to find a special key and open that certain door. There, the land is bountiful, as if milk and honey flows freely. The sunlight is dazzling, as if all coldness and darkness are washed away. The people will no longer have to face desolation, monsters, infections, mutations, and all kinds of dangers. There, children are joyous, adults are happy, everything is fine as they are supposed to be.

Every Antiquarian, Ruin Hunter, and Historian roaming the Ashlands knows: That's the New World.

Side Story: A Day in The Year 1346

◆

Note: It was published as an exclusive side story of Lord of Mysteries in the “Chinese Physical Book Volume 3.” It corresponds to Web Novel Chapter 139: Studying 3-0782 to Chapter 213: Another Look aka. End of Volume 1.

This is a Bullet Point Paraphrasing Summary by Windvally, not the complete translation of the story.

- In the Year 1346, Leonard Mitchell was testing his Sleepless abilities and ended up rolling down the staircase of Blackthorn Security Company like a meatball.
- Dunn Smith was a Sequence 9 Sleepless for 3 years, a Sequence 8 Midnight Poet for 9 years. He used over 2 weeks to adapt and control his Sequence 7 Nightmare powers.
- Dunn is bringing Leonard to answer a request for help from Tingen University Department of History. An associate professor Mrs. Sinel is experiencing auditory hallucinations and having the same nightmare every night. This will be Leonard’s debut, officially getting in touch with supernatural cases. Mrs. Sinel is a believer of the Evernight Goddess, thus Blackthorn took the case even though Tingen’s University District is under the jurisdiction of Machinery Hivemind.
- Rule of Jurisdiction: When a case does not involve believers of multiple Gods (meaning all involved individuals believe in only one of the Orthodox Gods), Supernatural Cases’ management rights are

delegated based on religion and not based on district.

- Nighthawks are responsible for Tingen City's North District, West District, and Golden Maple District.
- Daly Simone (on that day in the year 1346) wore a black color schemed shirt, trousers, and jacket. Looks smooth and clean but not overly masculine. She wore a Smokey Eyeshadow makeup, a style that was invented by Emperor Roselle and spread from Intis to the Loen Kingdom. Her clothing in addition to her unique aura, making her appear overall gloomy and cold as if a female ghost walking out of a folktale.
- Cuttlefish knifing us with Daly teasing Leonard, Dunn said don't tease the young ones, Daly rebuked with "not the young ones, that means you would be okay?" Dunn changing subjects.
- Daly insisted on going with Dunn and Leonard, commenting on how her abilities complement Dunn's, while Leonard is the extra one that's useless as he's just a "lower sequence Dunn".
- Leonard is surprised why Daly is a lot quieter on their way to the University, only occasionally making fun of Dunn. Leonard inferred that Daly has some things on her mind.
- The University District is divided into two parts by Khoy River, one side is Tingen University, the other side is Khoy University.
- Mrs. Sinel is a middle-aged female who wears a pair of gold-rimmed glasses with small chains attached. She has heavy bags under her eyes, her skin appears rather pale and gloomy, her whole condition doesn't seem too good.
- Mrs. Sinel has been having very similar nightmares every night since two weeks ago. In this nightmare, she's placed within a battlefield filled with corpses. The smell of blood that permeates the battlefield is extremely real, she could even remember the smell at

this moment.

- Dunn: Similar? Not “The Same”? Mrs. Sinel stated the nightmares sometimes are the same battlefield scene, sometimes the nightmare “progresses forward”.
- Initially, it was just corpses littered everywhere on the ground, blood-soaked the place full. After that, gradually the sky was painted red as well. And without me noticing, countless wounds and cuts appeared on my body as well, blood pouring out from each and every one of them nonstop. At which point I was scared awake.
- No matter how I sleep, when I sleep, where I sleep, this dream will always appear. Just since a few days ago, I even started hearing shouts and screams of agony under broad daylight. Almost as if two armies that I could not perceive are fighting around me. Since a few days ago, even in my dreams, figures are gradually manifesting in the distance as well, under the blood-red sky.
- Daly walked around Mrs. Sinel’s room a bit. her eyes first turned gray-white, then turned again into a colorless state.
- Daly leaned close to Dunn’s ears and whispered her results, making Dunn feel uneasy about their body position lol.
- Two weeks ago, Mrs. Sinel bought a batch of artifacts that supposedly originated from The 4th Epoch. Recently she has been constantly studying and researching these artifacts, trying to determine if they are indeed from The 4th Epoch.
- There were many artifacts, but one caught Dunn’s eye immediately - A dark golden-colored coin.
- This dark golden-colored coin:
- Size approximately the same as a 1£ gold coin
- One side is comparatively more simple designed; The protruding

patterns constituted a war chariot

- The other side is rather complicated; Its pattern is a combination of several different parts
- Mrs. Sinel “It’s a money coin from The Tudor Empire in The 4th Epoch” (Dunn agrees)
- The complicated side: The main component part is a Crown with a Cape that falls down naturally under it, attached to the crown. The lower part of the Crown is surrounded by 5 symbols. Among those 5 symbols, the one on the furthest left, left of the cape, and parallel to the cape, is a “layers of doors” drawn using simple lines. The one on the furthest right is a disk, its surface is divided into 12 spaces, making it resemble a clock, but there’s only one clock hand in the center. In addition, those 12 spaces aren’t evenly distributed. They are of varying sizes with either dark or bright coloration. Giving viewers a very uneven, unbalanced feeling.
- Aside from those two symbols that clearly stood higher than the other three, the remaining three symbols are located on the very bottom. They are parallel with each other, in the order of from left to right they are: a vertical eye made from many small and thin patterns, five fingers (normal humanoid length difference) without the hand part - ring finger and little finger are curled up, the other three fingers are naturally spread out as if symbolizing the hour hand, minute hand, and second hand, and lastly a door that’s being split in the middle by a vertical long sword.
- Dunn stated the coin has problems and needs to be purified by holy water and ritual. Mrs. Sinel stated if the purification is unsuccessful she’s donating the coin to the church.
- Dunn wrapped the coin in three layers of white paper, on each paper he drew an Evernight Goddess’s holy emblem.
- After Dunn and Co. left, Mrs. Sinel’s mind manifested Dunn’s face

without her realizing it, she focused on his gray pupils, as if gazing onto a clam and deep lake. She fell asleep till noon without a nightmare.

- After the case is solved. When they are chatting and writing the report, Dunn asked Daly why she’s so quiet today, Leonard listened.
- Daly raised up a piece of white paper and block it in front of her and said “I’m pregnant”. Dunn and Leonard simultaneously spit their coffee which gets blocked by the paper.
- Daly stated she was just joking and said it’s just that she’s ready for sequence 7 advancement. By then she would be high enough to be appointed captain at a Different Location.
- Dunn, without any understanding of the situation, supported her decision. Daly only watched quietly as he’s talking.
-

Side Story: Rebellious Teenager

* * *

Note: It was published as an exclusive side story of Lord of Mysteries in the “Taiwanese Physical Book, Lord of Mysteries 01: Commission of Gold Pound” that covers from Web Novel Chapter 213: Another Look to Chapter 242: Bakerland.

This is a Bullet Point Paraphrasing Summary by Windvally, not the complete translation of the story.

Intis Southern Region, The Town of Nosil.

beautiful day is about to beginning.

Danitz said as he smiled at his friends around him. He is currently sitting atop metal fences situated near the edge of the town.

beautiful day!

His friends shouted loudly, appearing very energetic.

For teens like them, their clothing isn’t exactly the best in quality, but most definitely trendy, their choices closely resembles the current tending styles of Trier.

Of course, they were only following, but not matching, because there’s a very big difficulty that’s preventing them from doing so - No money!

Bullet Point Summary to Skip some segments:

- After goofing with friend for the whole day, Danitz went back to him.

- His father tried to beat him, but he dodges skillfully, never got hit once, and his father is dead tired and angry.
- Parents stated he's 16 now and needs to take up responsibilities. They talked with the servant head working for the owner of a grape farm in the town. Danitz could be an apprentice servant.
- Danitz wants to go to Trier and be rich
- The next day Danitz slipped out of home before his parents could catch him.
- He met up with his friends told him a new group of sailors and a bard arrived at the town's local bar.
- They went to the bar together.

The town's bar almost have no interior decorations, only the wall was painted, and a few pictures cut from old magazines and newspapers were plastered on the wall.

At the bar counter, above the alcohol shelf, hanged the head of a giant snake, already white and cleaned to the bone.

That empty eye socket, is large enough to swallow the mouth of a normal adult, causing every drunkard who visits this bar to lower their head unconsciously when meeting its eyes.

Danitz was no exception.

According to what he knew, this giant snake skull was brought back from the Southern Continent by this bar's owner. It's that man's souvenir for remembering many years of adventure.

That's also why, even though this mister is rather quiet and introverted, no one dares to have greedy thoughts about his bar.

Even if a mafia from the big cities come to this place, when they see that giant snake skull, that owner's ridiculous and exaggeratedly muscular arms, legs, and just muscle in general, most would probably wisely choose to interact peacefully. After all, a small town's bar isn't exactly that profitable, it's not worth the trouble.

Danitz was always a little disappointed by this.

It's not that he wanted a fellow native to be bullied, but rather he desired to witness how strong the bar owner is, as someone who used to work as a mercenary and adventurer on the Southern Continent.

In a way, the owner could be counted as a legendary person of the small town of Nosil. No competition within the past 30 years at the very least.

He left this place at a very young age, headed towards the Southern Continent for adventure. Around his middle age, he returned to his home town, carrying with him a decent fortune, a body of muscle, and a giant snake skull. He opened up a bar, married a widow, and had a kid.

He stayed absolutely silent in regards to his nearly 20+ years of adventurous life on the Southern Continent. No matter who asked, he only responded with unimportant things to change the subject.

Danitz was very disappointed by this.

However, Danitz once heard from a friend who live close to the bar owner, that the man will always do one of two things every single night: He either drink until it's nearly morning before dropping, or fuck his wife until very very late into the night.

He seemed to be afraid of entering sleep.

If I have a beautiful wife, I will also screw her up and down until late into the night…Dantiz mumbled to himself in a low voice, while keeping an eye out for the sailors his friend mentioned.

Bullet Point Summary to Skip some segments:

- They mingled and drank with the sailors, acting like kids pretending to be mafia adults.
- The sailors are friendly, here in town only to stock up on wine and fresh water.
- They told Danitz and his friend about the life of a secret-treasure hunter on the sea.
- They told the story of a ship called [Laurel Flower.]
- [About 100 years ago, Leon Kingdom had a ship called Laurel Flower. It was filled with old, jewelry, and valuables they ransacked from the Southern Continent. It strayed off course and sank to the bottom at a location somewhere in the Berserk Sea and Sonia Sea. Finding it means obtaining things that can sell for a couple billion Verl Gold.
  ]

The young adult sailor who's now drunk with a rather red face, looked around at these teenagers listening to his stories and laughed.

that much money was able to surprise all of you? There are many more legends on the seas.

a certain location on the Berserk Sea, the treasure of The God of Death is waiting. It is waiting for a person with a very specific, special key to open it. And that person? He will become the new God of Death….On the seas, every single individual is chasing after the [Fountain of Youth, just one single sip from it, will grant a person eternal youth.Not only will he never growing old ever again, but he will also become extremely powerful…]

At this point, the bard who traveled here along with the sailors started playing his lyre:

raised their head and looked at the sky, that fire like cloud looked like a seas of crimson, wide and glittering.

looked down at the ocean, reflections of light scattered forth, a round bright moon is rising from the surface of the sea.

walked across flat yet harden surface of sand

walked into caves corroded by years of rain and wind

’s like a home delicately designed just for them, there are halls, gem filled ceilings, and living rooms… (Altered from a irl poem)

Bullet Point Summary to Skip some segments:

- Danitz asked the guy if he can be a treasure hunter too. The guys told him to grow more muscle first. And stated pure treasure hunters are a rare sight, as most are also pirates on the side.
- Danitz isn’t giving up and is angry. When these people are done drinking, as soon as they turned around a corner out of Danitz sight, he gave them a middle finger and said Dogshit!
- As Danitz is about to leave the closing bar, he passed by the bar owner who is about to close the front door. The bar owner slowly said in a very deep voice:
- [Never go onto the sea.]
- Danitz was stunned for a second, and looked towards the bar owner with unfocused eyes. The bar owner stood still in the dim environment, neither his eyes nor his facial expressions were definable in the darkness. With a bam, the owner closed the door, blocking Danitz’s view of him.
- Danitz stayed home the next morning, not wanting to meet his friends, as he’s unsure if his friend heard the sailors rejecting his question of becoming a treasure hunter.
- For a teenager, saving face, his self-esteem is perhaps even more important than his life!
- His father was angry, guessing that he probably went to goof at the

bar yesterday.

- His father told him that the sailors was only able to carry part of their wine and water cargo with them. The grape farm owner still need to send the rest of the goods to Sali Port for the sailors.
- His parents used their connection and some money to get this job for Danitz. Knowing that he would use this chance to do what he always wanted to do. They love him after all.
- His father told Danitz [Do not die out there.]
- Dantiz was excited. He's going to have leave right now.

said he doesn't want to come out and see you, because he will get angry every time he sees you.

Danitz's mother said while wiping away some tears on the corner of her eyes.

Danitz cursed that stubborn old man with a few sentence inside his heart, he hugged his mother, and turned around to walk towards the waiting caravans.

As the caravans started moving, after traveling about 10-20 meters, Dantiz turned his head around unconsciously, his old man was standing next to his mother, not knowing when he already came out.

A bright smile appeared on Danitz's face, he waved his right hand at them, and shouted silently inside his heart:

, Mother, I will return after becoming rich!

Multi-Character Audio Drama - Special Episode: Klein's Niece

◆ ◆ ◆

Note: This is a non-canon special episode of Lord of Mysteries released on May 28th, 2021 on Himalaya Audio Book APP. It is translated by Windvally.

Klein's Niece POV:

Today, I greeted Mr. Fool~

I told Dakye[1] about this, but he didn't believe me.

I wasn't lying to him though. ヽ(ಠ_ಠ)ノ

Ah!

That's right!

At the time, why did I not tell him what Mr. Fool looked like?

He has……scribbling noise

He……has……scribbling noise

Eh? The ink ran out? scribbling noise

Huh, it's working again~ (^.^)

scribbling noise

Anyways, Dakye is a big dummy!

All he does is reciting weird poem lines.

The book he lent me last time, <The World’s World>, was not enjoyable to read in the slightest!

disappointed humpfh

Forget it! I will listen to auntie, from now on I will never bring this up with someone else again, that I’ve met Mr. Fool.

Today’s dinner, we are having Mr. Fool’s holy meal[2].

That’s what father said: “This is a holy meal.”

But aren’t these type of food what we normally have in our family anyways?

Ummh……

Lamb boiled with soft tofu.

Beef soup.

Mashed potato.

Fried Tussock fish.

Stewed rhubarb.

giggles There’s also sweet ice tea!

Sweet ice tea taste so delicious~ ఌ(♡▯♡ఌ)

Mmh……After we finished the holy meal, my father was once again busy discussing about curly baboons. He won’t play with me.

Uhm……That’s why, I am not telling him ~

~ that I had ice cream this morning!

Mmh, the little big brother[3] who gifted me ice cream was really nice.

Mmh~~~ hiccup

Mmh…I am really full.

Auntie said, if I pray to Mr. Fool before I go to sleep, there will be angels descending into my dream world and giving me good dreams.

Mmh, Mr. Fool is so great! I have decided to give this a try.

scribbling noise

It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Fool.

Have a good night!

closing diary noise

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†

The name sound like "Dakye" [达克耶], no script to see the actual Chinese word used for the name, so I can only guess. Seems like

I know there's words like Sacrament/Communion/Mass etc., but those are Christian terms. I will just use holy meal for the sake of simplicity.

Basically, probably Will. She calls him "little big brother", a Chinese term used for a boy/male older than you but within the same developmental stage as you. And often not used on people past 40 years old. It's not used for family members or friends, only for neighbors and strangers that you have good impressions of.

Bonus Chapter: That Corner (1)

◆

“There! It’s right there!” A young man with long brown hair and a pirate-like bandana shouted as he pointed at a nearby island.

He was standing on the starboard of a three-masted sailboat. The rolling waves drowned out most of his voice.

A muscular man with a black eye patch reached out to hold the shipboard. He frowned and muttered to himself in shock and suspicion, “I don’t remember there being such an island on this sea route…”

This was not the first time their ship had plied this sea route.

The young man who had shouted replied excitedly, “This means that it’s usually hidden. It only appears at specific moments.

“There must be treasures on such an island!

“Captain, in the words of that strange monk, a fortuitous opportunity has presented itself!”

He spoke in the Loen language. “Fortuitous opportunity” was a term pieced together by two words.

“That monk spouts words indecipherable to us. Pay no heed to them.” The muscular man wearing an eye patch raised his hand and ruffled his slightly messy short yellow hair. “And I often tell you guys that treasures are often accompanied by danger.”

As he spoke, he pointed at his right eye which was covered by the eye patch.

“That’s the cost.”

The young man with the pirate-like bandana sincerely said, “But, Captain, isn’t this the purpose of our adventure? For treasure!”

They were a group of treasure hunters from different places. Of course, they occasionally worked as pirates and ‘borrowed’ food, drinks, and necessities from passing merchant ships. After all, ideals alone couldn’t feed them.

The captain fell silent for a moment before saying, “Gather four to five people, and we’ll step foot on the island to take a look. The rest of you, prepare to set sail at any time.”

The young man’s eyes lit up.

“You agreed? Captain, you agreed!”

The captain chuckled.

“Weimer, if not for the fact that there’s no other choice, no one at my age would continue to be a treasure hunter.”

He appeared to be in his thirties, but his blue eyes showed signs of age.

“Fine.” Weimer held up his hands. “Whatever you say.”

He immediately became excited.

“I’ll get Ol’ Keaton!”

Ol’ Keaton was the ship’s first mate. He believed in the God of Knowledge and Wisdom and had mastered many languages. If they didn’t bring him along on such an expedition, it was very likely that they would throw away whatever treasures they found as trash.

More importantly, Ol’ Keaton was also very strong.

When the ship docked at the dock that seemed to have long been abandoned, an exploration team of four had already gathered beside the gangway.

They were Captain Gray, First Mate Ol' Keaton, Boatswain Parvi, and Veteran Seaman Weimer.

"No one..." Parvi looked into the distance and muttered regretfully.

The weather in the Berserk Sea today wasn't bad. Visibility was extremely high under the blue sky, and the small port hid no secrets from her.

This place was incomparably quiet as if it had been dead for many years.

"It'll be more terrifying if there were people!" Weimer added.

It implied many things if such a hidden island remained inhabited.

Parvi was wearing a white shirt and brown pantaloons. She had a pair of beautiful light-blue eyes and a slightly androgynous appearance.

She glared at Weimer.

"You want to stay behind and clean the deck?"

Weimer shrugged and shut his mouth.

Having become a boatswain as a woman, she needed to manage many unruly crew members; she would never go easy on her threats.

Captain Gray, who was surveying the area, gave an order.

"Let's get ashore!"

He then exhorted, "We'll do it the old way. During the first exploration, don't touch anything. Just look and listen."

"No problem!" Weimer was the first to rush out of the ship and run down the gangway to the dock.

He jumped up excitedly mid-run and glided to the ground like a big bird.

The sound caused by his actions spread out in all directions, mixed with some echoes.

Behind him, Gray, Ol' Keaton, and Parvi followed carefully.

"If you continue that recklessness of yours and act on your own like an uncivilized wild dog, I'll tie you up and hang you at the stern to fish for sharks!" Parvi quickly walked to Weimer's side and warned him in a hushed voice.

Weimer nodded solemnly and muttered, "Girlboss, with your personality, you should join the Church of Storms instead of believing in the Evernight Goddess..."

Parvi didn't say anything. She looked around and followed Captain Gray and First Mate Ol' Keaton.

The port was not big. There was only a lighthouse, two simple docks, five warehouses, and a few buildings that served as a hotel, restaurant, bar, and police station. It did not take long for the four of them to circle the area.

Apart from the fact that there was no one around, everything seemed normal.

Weimer looked at the tables in the house facing the street through a relatively clear glass window and did not speak for a long time.

His expression was a little solemn given his personality.

Inside the house, on the dining table, there was a cup with brownish-black liquid and two pieces of moldy toast.

Next to them were several neatly folded newspapers.

It looked like the owner was about to enjoy breakfast when he suddenly encountered an emergency and had to leave in a hurry. He did not even have time to flip open the newspapers.

He never returned.

It would be considered normal if there was only one such example. After all, accidents were unavoidable. However, the entire port was in a similar situation. It was inevitable that it would make one's hair stand on end and imagination run wild.

In that instant, all the local residents, no, all the living creatures, seemed to have evaporated.

"They haven't been gone for long…" Captain Gray's slightly hoarse voice broke the team's silence.

Parvi subconsciously replied, "Indeed, if this port has been abandoned for a long time, the food will not just be moldy."

It seemed like only a few days or weeks had passed since the bizarre incident had happened.

Ol' Keaton retracted his gaze from the street and nodded gently.

"That's what the plants here say."

There were obvious wrinkles at the corners of the First Mate's mouth. His hair was already mottled with natural curls. He was wearing a white robe and brass-framed glasses.

"Ah?" Weimer was momentarily slow to react.

He then looked at the place where Ol' Keaton had sized up and quickly understood why he said that.

There weren't many weeds in the harbor. There were some plain or gorgeous mushrooms growing sporadically on the wooden buildings. They seemed to have existed all along.

The natural world had obviously not had enough time to invade this place.

Ol' Keaton saw Weimer's enlightened expression and didn't explain further. He turned to Captain Gray and solemnly said, "I'm worried that something might happen if we stay here for too long."

"What might happen? Could it be that we will also disappear into thin air…" Before Weimer could finish speaking, a tanned palm appeared over his mouth.

This palm pushed his head and pressed him against the wall.

"There won't be a next time!" Parvi glared at Weimer and warned under her breath.

Weimer nodded with difficulty, indicating that he understood.

When Parvi released him, he muttered softly, "This isn't like you, Girlboss. You actually didn't slam the back of my head against the wall…"

Parvi chuckled.

"I'm afraid that the commotion will be too great and awaken up the bizarreness hidden here."

Captain Gray didn't care about their little bout. He took out his silver-white pocket watch and opened the lid.

"We'll return to the ship in another fifteen minutes.

"If everything remains normal, we'll prepare a second exploration tomorrow."

"Alright!" Weimer was the first to agree.

The four of them maintained a fine battle formation as they skirted the buildings in front of them and headed for the edge of the port.

There was a slightly stained steam locomotive parked here. The two tracks extended deep into the island.

Parallel to the tracks was a cement road.

This was exactly what Gray and the others had imagined. After all, the port bore the responsibility of loading and unloading goods, traveling passengers, and connecting other towns with convenient road traffic.

However, to their surprise and confusion, the railway was only one to two hundred meters long. At the end of it stood a sizable town.

Even though they were still at the edge of the port, the four of them could see the situation there with their naked eyes.

“Wh—” Weimer could not express his feelings in words. He could only curse under his breath. “If I were the owner of this island, I would definitely tie up the bastard who suggested such repairs at the stern to fish for sharks!”

Based on their experience in many ports, this arrangement was simply abnormal.

The town 100 meters away had to be closer and connected to this side to form a port city, or it should be a few kilometers away and be independent, unlike now!

“There might be a deeper meaning,” Ol’ Keaton said with a frown. “This might have something to do with the bizarre happenings here.”

After he finished speaking, no one responded for a moment.

After a few seconds, Weimer looked at the town not far away and said, “Captain, do we head over to take a look?”

Captain Gray nodded.

“Sure. Twelve minutes left.”

They then walked along the cement road toward the small town.

On both sides of the road, weeds flourished and mushrooms dotted the area. The closer they got to their destination, the more it was like this.

Before long, the four treasure hunters arrived at the edge of the town.

There was a wooden board erected there. On it was a word written in Loen: “Utopia.”

“This place is called Utopia,” Weimer muttered to himself as he cast his gaze at Ol’ Keaton.

Ol’ Keaton shook his head slowly, indicating that he had never heard of it.

It was the same for Parvi and Captain Gray.

They observed the situation inside from the edge of the town and confirmed that the streets were also empty. It was so quiet that even the wind seemingly found it unbearable to pass.

As they walked forward step by step, the four of them saw the Iris Hotel, Utopia’s Telegraph Office, and many buildings. However, without exception, the interior of these buildings revealed that their owners had left in a hurry and never returned.

There were also cups with some water left, dry clothes that were halfway through their washing, cutlery that had been laid out, musical instruments that had not been put away, books that had been flipped through, carriages that had stopped by the roadside without any horses… These things all reconstructed the appearance of the town before the bizarre situation happened.

“I keep feeling that something is missing…” Weimer couldn’t help but whisper when he saw the municipal square in sight.

Bonus Chapter: That Corner (2)

◆

Parvi shot him a glance.

“People are missing!”

“No, no, no, that’s not it. I know that.” Weimer shook his head seriously.

His eyes lit up.

“I know what’s missing!”

“What?” Captain Gray and First Mate Ol’ Keaton asked in unison.

Weimer laughed.

“Money, notes, and gold coins!”

He straightened his back and continued explaining, “Although we haven’t entered the houses to conduct a detailed search, according to my experience, even if we just look from the outside, we should be able to find some. However, there’s nothing at all!”

“Perhaps it’s just that the people here aren’t very rich and don’t have the habit of leaving their money around.” Parvi didn’t agree.

This was not an important problem. The four of them quickly diverted their attention. After entering the municipal square, they looked at the tallest building.

It was a black-spired cathedral.

Mushrooms tenaciously grew out of the cracks in the bricks of the cathedral. They were either simple and plain, or gorgeous and colorful. They strung together, showing a presence that couldn't be ignored in front of the green vines.

"This place feels like it's been abandoned for even longer." Parvi paused before saying, "From the architectural style, this looks like the cathedral of the Goddess. Do the people here also believe in the Goddess?"

She found this rather peculiar.

The residents of such a hidden island and strange town seem to believe in the Evernight Goddess…

Ol' Keaton stared at it for a few seconds before saying, "Seems so."

Then, he immediately added, "It feels like the closer we get to the square and the cathedral, the longer it appears to be abandoned."

Be it the weeds on the road, the green plants on the surface of the buildings, or the mushrooms of all kinds, the closer they got to the center of the town, the more numerous they became. And the cathedral seemed to be covered in a green coat with many speckled holes.

After a moment of silence, Parvi suggested, "Let's go to the cathedral. As long as the Goddess is still watching this land, there won't be any particularly serious problems there."

Captain Gray and Ol' Keaton didn't object, but the former reiterated the rules of this exploration.

"After entering the cathedral, you can only use your eyes to see and ears to hear. Don't do anything else."

"No problem." Weimer walked towards the cathedral at the side of the square.

This left Parvi with no choice but to gesture a circle on her chest and simply ask for the Goddess's protection.

As there wasn't much time left, the four of them sped up and quickly arrived at the cathedral's entrance.

They were in no hurry to push the door open and enter. They "sized up" their surroundings individually.

"Very quiet," Captain Gray concluded.

The other three also expressed that they did not find any problems.

The black cathedral's door was ajar. After Weimer exerted force with his hands, it slowly opened.

The bottom of Captain Gray's black eye patch immediately lit up, helping him see the scene inside clearly.

There were no tables or chairs in the hall. There were windows on both sides that shone with light, and it was dark red above.

Drip, drip, drip. Drops of viscous, pale-yellow liquid fell from the sky and hit the ground like rain, giving people the feeling that the dome was severely damaged and was facing a storm.

Before Gray could speak, he saw the viscous, disgusting liquid dissolve into puddles.

The puddles rolled and bubbled endlessly.

The bubbles popped, and deformed babies with moist skin and pale yellow dirt crawled out.

As these babies grew rapidly, they dripped more viscous yellow liquid, creating more puddles and stirring more bubbles…

"Waaa! Waaa! Waaa!"

They began to cry.

Just seeing this scene caused blood to flow from Gray's eyes. The eye patch turned dark red as if he was moved to tears by the birth of life.

His mind was blank. He felt that every part of his body was nurturing a new life.

The sharp pain snapped him to his senses, and he instinctively took a step back.

The scene in front of Gray returned to normal. It was still the empty cathedral hall with wide windows that lacked maintenance, and a tall and magnificent dome. There was no viscous liquid that fell like rain, nor were there countless deformed babies and puddles everywhere.

"Huff, puff" Gray panted heavily.

The next second, he turned around and shouted as he ran, "Run!"

Thud thud thud! Gray rushed out of the municipal square.

He did not care about Parvi, Ol' Keaton, and Weimer at all.

He was already considered a responsible captain for still remembering to warn his teammates under the current circumstances.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Gray didn't dare stop at all. Relying on his amazing physique despite his blurred vision, he ran all the way out of the strange town, back to the crude port, and onto his ship.

Ol' Keaton, Parvi, and Weimer rushed back in less than ten seconds.

"Set sail!" Gray ordered.

Gray waited until the ship set sail before he bothered to check his injuries. He raised a hand to his eye and instantly felt moisture.

However, when he brought his hand to his eyes, he realized that it was not blood—just tears.

As he ran, he kept crying.

Grey's brows knitted together, startled and suspicious.

Soon, he confirmed that he was not injured at all.

“What did you guys see?” He turned to look at Ol' Keaton and the others.

Weimer looked at the captain. His eyes were red as if he had just cried.

He said with lingering fear, “I saw fireball after fireball.

“They fell from the roof with a whoosh and then exploded!

“Light. My eyes were filled with light. I felt like I was going blind. No, I'm already blind! Then, I felt like I was melting. It hurt. It really hurt.”

Weimer heaved a sigh of relief.

“Fortunately, Captain woke me up at that moment.”

He rubbed his eyes and said in confusion and relief, “I'm fine now. It's just that I kept crying at first, but then I got better. It was like a bad dream.”

What he meant was that the dream was very real. There were still lingering fears when he woke up, but he would be fine after a while.

Captain Gray nodded and carefully examined Weimer's eyes.

After confirming that there was really no problem, he looked at First Mate Ol' Keaton.

“What about you?”

Ol' Keaton looked at the distant coastline and the shrinking port and said in a reminiscent tone, “The entire cathedral collapsed. I fell to the ground with the surrounding pillars and stone bricks.

“It was bottomless. Moreover, my head, my flesh, and my skin fell at different speeds. They began to pull at each other. It hurt, it really hurt…”

The slightly loose skin and deep wrinkles on Ol’ Keaton’s face trembled as if he didn’t want to recall any more of the incident.

He exhaled and said after a while,

“My entire body was about to be torn apart. Then, it was as if there were invisible hands around me. They pressed my hands, legs, head, skin, flesh, and bones to my internal organs with great force…

“I wished I could die as quickly as possible. Fortunately, I woke up the next second thanks to you, Captain.”

Weimer sighed with emotion.

“This is even more painful than what happened to me. If you hadn’t woken up in time, you might have seen yourself turn into a blood-colored meatball.”

Parvi listened quietly and said thankfully, “I wasn’t in that much pain.

“I saw darkness—darkness that made me feel at ease.

“Then, I fell asleep. It was like I was back in my bed until I was woken up by you, Captain.”

Captain Gray nodded slowly.

“From the looks of it, what we encountered or experienced is different. Moreover, we are left without any injuries.”

“It’s just some stress.” Ol’ Keaton affirmed the captain’s statement.

He then voiced his guess.

“Perhaps we were under an illusion or hallucinated for some other reason. And because everyone has different personalities and experiences, what we saw and experienced were different.”

Before Ol’ Keaton finished speaking, Parvi blurted out, “Mushrooms! Could it be those mushrooms? Those mushrooms were the strangest!”

“Yes, definitely!” Weimer agreed after being momentarily taken aback.

It was common knowledge that one could be poisoned and end up hallucinating after eating certain mushrooms. In such a strange place, it was reasonable for one to be affected just by approaching the mushrooms.

Captain Gray seriously recalled for a moment and said, “That’s possible. There was a very faint, sweet smell in the air… The fragrance of some mushrooms?”

†

In the middle of a small town called Utopia, on the surface of the cathedral that was suspected to belong to the Church of Evernight, mushrooms suddenly became active.

They squirmed and crazily spewed out large amounts of spores. Before the spores landed, they had already grown into different mushrooms in the air. Then, they continued to create more spores.

And in the gap between the black bricks occupied by the mushrooms and green plants, pale-white, tiny, baby-like deformed palms squeezed out.

Silently, the entire cathedral collapsed, and a bottomless pit appeared in the ground.

The huge pit spread out, pulling the buildings over and shattering them into pieces.

Elsewhere in the town, the large number of houses that had originally stood tall had long disappeared, leaving behind large pieces of colorful glass-like traces.

In the depths of the ground, muffled sounds came one after another.

In just a few seconds, the place had completely fallen silent.

Buildings rose from the ground one after another, and the town quickly recovered as if it had a vitality of its own.

The furnishings in the houses were almost the same as before, but there were certain differences in their details. What was left had switched to the right, and what was far became close.

†

Late at night, on the ship.

Weimer, who could not sleep because of what happened during the day, came to the deck and breathed in the moist sea breeze.

“You’re still awake?” He saw the boatswain, Parvi.

Parvi was still wearing the clothes she wore during the day. She looked at the dark sea in the distance and said, “I was going to sleep, but I suddenly recalled some details after I closed my eyes.”

“What details?” Weimer asked curiously.

Parvi’s face reflected the red moonlight as she said, “There’s something else under the darkness I saw in the cathedral…”

Without waiting for Weimer to ask, she muttered to herself dreamily, “There were many skeletons, some children’s and some babies’. Some of them were normal, while others looked like monsters. It was packed with them, everywhere.

“Also, there seemed to be a raven hidden in the depths of the darkness.”

†

Thanks for reading!

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Afterword

Originally I was planning on taking a rest, and start writing this tomorrow. But maybe because this is a sensitive time period (due to the recent developments). Many friends private messaged me with all kinds of text message and mails, asking me questions. I was thinking of having a good afternoon nap, relaxing the excitement that I built up from writing the conclusion, but my phone kept going verrrrrr…….

I……Do you guys want me to sleep or not.

Ending before June is something that has been planned ahead a long time ago. I've stressed this point quite early, it's just that at the time I could not predict it exactly, so I said it very vaguely, stating no later than June. After all, I have to leave out enough room for flexibility, right? If it weren't for the Corona virus, I probably would be packing my things and going on a tour in Spain in the next few days.

Also, my contract was signed at the end of 2016. And the contract ends at early 2022. There's one more book (under the contract) left, and it's going to be about 3,000,000 words. This new book is definitely going to be released on Qidian.

Now that we finished the unrelated topics, let us get back to the book itself.

If we talk about the tail end part of Volume 7, where I chose the more logical development (Adam not waiting for Klein), leading to the story suddenly speeding up, unable to have more detailed and fulfilling development. Then it really was my fault in Volume 7. But, in Volume 8, starting from chapter 1 of this volume, everything is within my control, as I've made up my mind beforehand. Which chapter should write what? Where to have a twist? How to wrap up the end? I've finished thinking about all those things. So the problem of "story suddenly speeding up", and "too many side quests/branches getting cut off" don't exist.

This ending, I have already decided on ending it this way before I even started writing LoM 1. Every Member of the Tarot Club, after experiencing a myriad of Passive-ness, hope/expectation, Lose/confusion, and stagnation/hesitation, finally escape from each of their own comfort zones, to face this world, to face all types of difficulties. And for Klein and Azik, they achieved a reincarnation and cycling on their roles.

When the ending arrived (Klein's Niece), Eerie Mysteries and Innocence, Dimmed light and Blazing sun (the room and the window), Darkness and Rebirth becoming vivid comparisons. Forming a scenery that's rather unique and amazing, a mix of Cthulhu vibe and warmth at the same time. At the same time it pointed out the detail and fact of - "Klein has achieved initial stage of waking up". This makes sure people know that this book series isn't "eunuch-ed".

As for the hidden storyline buried by the five gold coins, each Tarot Club member's experience and stories, and every other hole that I dug in LoM 1 that wasn't a part of the Main Storyline (Klein's Story), they are of course material left purposely for LoM 2. I really really was very blatantly clear with my writing, that this last part is both an ending, but also a prologue.

Mmh, LoM 2 story is going to be set in-between "Klein Sleeping or even a little bit before he went to sleep" and ends with "He wakes up".

Even this time frame setting about LoM 2 was something that was decided before LoM 1 was even written. Why did I consider a second book when doing my settings? For one, I feel my world setting is too huge and detailed, there are way too many things to write about. If I were to dump everything into one book, then inevitably there will be a confusion of Main storyline and Side storyline; Unnecessarily long Side

Storyline; Scattered and Boring; Structurally Bloated to an unsightly degree. Secondly, the growth curve of the Tarot Club Members cannot keep up with our MC Klein. If I gave them too many Side Quests and more stories, for the sole purpose of justifying and making their "improvement" logical enough, then it will crash against the Main Story's structure. This will also cause the problem of confusion of Main/Side Storyline. If I don't give them those extra quests and stories in LoM 1, and still let them grow, making the Tarot Club members exert critical influence and usefulness at crucial moments, then it will only make the readers feel cheap. There will be a great number of readers/friends who will feel that the Tarot Club members just rode on the Klein Train and sucked off of the Main Character's plot armor aura. They will feel that the Tarot Club members obtained everything "too easily" or "Because they are main side characters needed to defeat Error, etc., etc."

So, after balancing all my options, combining all situations from different perspectives, I made the final decision and oath to at least MUST write an LoM 2. In this way, LoM 1 could leisurely walk its Main Storyline, doesn't have to go "dungeoning" and "farming exp" all over the world map, keeping the focus in one country, in Backlund. And Tarot Club members are only finishing up their life's first half, completing metamorphosis and growth, and leaving their comfort zones. They will go to LoM 2 to demonstrate to us, an even grander, more amazing, and more exciting life and story.

For me, this is also a challenge. How to, after a few years later (remember it won't be until AT LEAST 2022 for LoM 2), to bring every reader back into this world. How to allow new readers, who never read LoM 1, to also smoothly read LOMT 2 without any difficulties and limit. Before LoM, I don't have experience with writing series/trilogy type books. I don't have the experience of writing a second book under the same world setting. On one side, I didn't even think about going "series" when making the setting for the previous few books, lacking the appropriate amount of space to expand. Secondly, I was afraid to repeat the formulas and cliches of "the first book" in "the second", unable to make breakthroughs in my writing ability. But this kind of fear is also a self-limit in of itself, now I feel confident enough to try challenging it, as I have already found my own writing philosophy.

I said in the past, my favorite saying…no…my motto is:

“Never satisfied, always challenging.”

For LoM2, I haven’t decided on the Main Character, and how this character is going to cut into the story. but right now within my mind some story scenes have already popped up:

It will be Hidden Storyline composed of: Every single member of the Tarot Club, and their many attempts at awaking Klein; Using the five gold coins and the iron cigar box to represent different characters.

The Main Character of LoM 2 may encounter a Hunter Pathway who light up a cigar and talk about the past; He may occasionally peek/be shown a beautiful, half-covered face; He may hear about a NEW CONTINENT being discovered abroad; He may interact with the Kings and Queens of the Five Seas; He may go on an adventure to explore those remaining, shrouded legends of treasures; He may come into conflict and interaction with “Transmigraters” of all kinds (released from cocoon), and “infiltrators” of all kinds; As for the exact “genre”, I will have to decide on it later. All in all, from a world setting perspective, I left a crap-load of space for LoM 2. I am absolutely not worried about not having anything to write about.

As for The Apocalypse, it’s not something that can be solved with one book. And in order to make The Apocalypse in the second book more “Pressing” and “Choking”, I decided to give Mother Goddess of Depravity a mythical grade upgrade and reinforcement. Joking! Anyways, using a Chinese novel synopsis written in comedy style, I want to say: Why are male pigs pregnant? Why is a man having a bloated belly? Why did a rock give birth to a child? Behind all these incidents, was it the distortion of human morality? or the corruption of virtues?………As for how this upgrade is done, it will probably be put into LoM 3 that is about the Western Continent. But I might not write that book, Serious Face.

Western Continent related settings - I actually didn't create these settings beforehand, all I did was leave an "electric outlet", an opening ready for connection at any time. The remaining 7 Sefirot that are stuck there, the very few beyonder characters there (There's no Sequence 1 BC and Uniqueness on Western Continent - cuttlefish word), what kind of world would this situation create, and what kind of power system would that isolated continent have?

I recently confirmed my fundamental ideas for the Western Continent, I know what kind of setting I will be making, hehehe.

Mhh, Western Continent will have Orthodox Sect system with the Sefirot as the core; And the Alternative/Demonic/Freelancer sect system that uses the 9 through 2 beyonder characteristics as the basics and foundation; And the Lower/Third Grade "Normie" Sect system who has to use a mixture of Sefirot and Beyonder Characteristics to level themselves.

The Sefirot as Orthodox Sect is inspired by Daoism's concept of "Ordained", and created following that line of thinking. Mmmh, "Ordained" means if you are recognized by the "Heaven Palace" (Sefirot), you will become a part of this system, and you can happily summon "Servant God" to help you fight. For those who aren't ordained by a divine realm, when they want to summon "Servant Gods", why would these summons even give a fuck about you? So this create a "class separation" between the ordained and the un-ordained. Those who are "ordained" are basically "within the political system" per se. After that, if I change the "Heavenly Palace" and "Sacred Land" in Cultivation genre into Sefirot. Tada ~ the whole setting of this cultivation-ish world becomes eerily mysterious and lively.

I've written this much Afterwords, now I'm hungry. My wife is pushing me along and wants me to go out to buy food right now....after all, this

Afterwords was a sudden decision. Mmmh, I should finish writing it right here, I will continue this Afterwords tomorrow. I will talk about this Book - LoM 1's thoughts and lessons after creation. I will talk about my writing and creation methods and philosophies.

Also, extremely grateful to XXXBig Boss's donations, when I opened up Qidian Reader just now I was almost scared by the surprise. Also, after this, I will release a bonus 20,000 to 30,000 words bonus chapter as a fixed schedule update. Then from that point onward, future bonus chapters will be irregular, non-fixed time updates.

Originally I wasn't planning on writing these bonus chapters. But then I discovered that there are so many things I could write that don't involve contents in LoM 2. For example, Klein's dreams when he's sleeping. Fragments of stories and tales from the 4th Epoch, etc., etc.

In regards to how Lord of Mysteries' revival backup plan using cocooned people was disrupted, causing Both Evernight and Rosselle to get out without much trouble, and only started self-correcting by the time Klein was released (and he was helped by Evernight to escape that correction in Volume 1 chapter 1). I have already done a certain amount of hidden hints and allusions:

"Magic Mirror" Arrodes, as an existence that came out of the Sea of Chaos, why does it insist on 100%, must follow Klein around? Why did Klein bring Arrodes with him when he decided to go to sleep against LoM?

Also, the physical published version of the book's revised edition is out. This time the cover is a cover that I liked personally. The content also corrected some words that don't exist in dictionaries or online dictionaries, such as the "HIM" for gods. For the detailed way of purchase, you can look at my Weibo. For the release time for the irregular Bonus Chapters, you can subscribe to my Wechat official account. The Wechat official account ID is "wuzei1985", the one with an anime avatar as profile icon.

Mmh huh, tomorrow we will continue with Afterwords (Part 2).

†

CL Note: No one has translated the Afterwords (Part 2) yet. I'll add the Part 2 once it is translated. In the meantime, you can try the raw version and read it using Google Translate.

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[image]